John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

This book, in the Hebrew copies of the Bible, and by the Jewish writers, is generally called Bereshith, which signifies "in the beginning", being the first word of it; as the other four books of Moses are also called from their initial words. In the Syriac and Arabic versions, the title of this book is "The Book of the Creation", because it begins with an account of the creation of all things; and is such an account, and so good an one, as is not to be met with anywhere else: the Greek version calls it Genesis, and so we and other versions from thence; and that because it treats of the generation of all things, of the heavens, and the earth, and all that are in them, and of the genealogy of men: it treats of the first men, of the patriarchs before the flood, and after it to the times of Joseph. It is called the "first" book of Moses, because there are four more that follow; the name the Jewish Rabbins give to the whole is hrwt yvmwx hvmx, "the five fifths of the law", to which the Greek word "pentateuch" answers; by which we commonly call these books, they being but one volume, consisting of five parts, of which this is the first. And that they were all written by Moses is generally believed by Jews and Christians. Some atheistical persons have suggested the contrary; our countryman Hobbes {a} would have it, that these books are called his, not from his being the author of them, but from his being the subject of them; not because they were written by him, but because they treat of him: but certain it is that Moses both wrote them, and was read, as he was in the Jewish synagogues, every sabbath day, which can relate to no other writings but these, **Joh 1:45**. And Spinosa, catching at some doubts raised by Aben Ezra on **De 1:1** concerning some passages which seemed to him to have been added by another hand, forms objections against Moses being the author of the book of Genesis; which are sufficiently answered by Carpzovius {b}. Nor can Ezra be the author of the Pentateuch, as Spinosa suspects; since it is plain these writings were in being before his time, in the times of Josiah, Amaziah, yea, of David, and also of Joshua, 2Ch 34:14 nay, they are even referred to in the book of Ezra as the writings of Moses, **Ezr 3:2** to which may be added, in proof of the same, De 31:9. Nor are there any other writings of his authentic; what are ascribed to him, as the Analepsis of Moses, his Apocalypse, and his Last Will and Testament, are apocryphal. That this book of Genesis particularly was written by him, is evident from the testimony of Philip, and even of our Lord Jesus Christ, who both testify that he wrote concerning the Messiah, **Joh 1:45** as he did in this book, where he speaks of him as the seed of the woman that should break the serpent's head; as the seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and as the Shiloh, to whom the gathering of the people should be, **Ge 3:15**. Nor is there any reason to believe that he wrote this book from the annals of the patriarchs, since it does not appear, nor is it very probable, that they had any; nor from traditions delivered down from one to another, from father to son, which is more probable, considering the length of the lives of the patriarchs: but yet such a variety of particulars respecting times, places, persons, their genealogies and circumstances, so nicely and exactly given, can scarcely be thought to be the fruit of memory; and much less is it to be imagined that he was assisted in it by Gabriel, when he lived in solitude in Midian: but it is best of all to ascribe it to divine inspiration, as all Scripture is by the apostle, **2Ti 3:16** for who else but God could have informed him of the creation, and the manner and order in which every creature was brought into being, with a multitude of things recorded in this book? the design of which is to lead men into the knowledge and worship of the one true God, the Creator of all things, and of the origin of mankind, the fall of our first parents, and their posterity in them; and to point at the means and method of the recovery of man by the Messiah, the promised seed; and to give an account of the state and case of the church of God, in the times of the patriarchs, both before and after the flood, from Adam, in the line of Seth, to Noah; and from Noah to the times of Joseph, in whose death it ends: and, according to Usher {c}, it contains an history of two thousand, three hundred, and sixty nine years.

{a} Leviath. par. 3. c. 33. {b} Introduct. ad Libr. Bib. V. T. c. 4. sect. 2. {c} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 17.

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 1

This chapter contains an account of the creation of the universe, and all things in it; asserts the creation of the heaven and earth in general, and describes the state and condition of the earth in its first production, **Ge 1:1** and then proceeds to declare the work of each of the six days of creation, and to give an account of light, its separation from darkness and the names of both, the work of the first day, **Ge 1:3** of the firmament, its use and name, the work of the second day, **Ge 1:6** of the appearance of the earth, and the production of grass, herbs, and trees in the earth, the work of the third day, **Ge 1:9** of the sun, moon, and stars, their situation, and use, the work of the fourth day, **Ge 1:14** of the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, the work of the fifth day, **Ge 1:19** of all kinds of cattle, and beasts, and creeping things, **Ge 1:24** and then of man, created male and female, after the image of God, having a grant of dominion over the rest of the creatures, the fruit of divine consultation, **Ge 1:26** and of a provision of food for man and beast, **Ge 1:29**. And the chapter is concluded with a survey God took of all his works, and his approbation of them; all which were the work of the sixth day, and closes the account of the creation in that space of time, **Ge 1:31**.

Ver. 1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. By the heaven some understand the supreme heaven, the heaven of heavens, the habitation of God, and of the holy angels; and this being made perfect at once, no mention is after made of it, as of the earth; and it is supposed that the angels were at this time created, since they were present at the laying of the foundation of the earth,
Job 38:6 but rather the lower and visible heavens are meant, at least are not excluded, that is, the substance of them; as yet being imperfect and unadorned; the expanse not yet made, or the ether and air not yet stretched out; nor any light placed in them, or adorned with the sun, moon, and stars: so the earth is to be understood, not of that properly so called, as separated from the waters, that is, the dry land afterwards made to appear; but the whole mass of earth and water before their separation, and when in their unformed and unadorned state, described in the next verse: in short, these words represent the visible heavens and the terraqueous globe, in their chaotic state, as they were first brought into being by almighty power. The h prefixed to both words is, as Aben Ezra observes, expressive of notification or demonstration, as pointing at "those" heavens, and "this earth"; and shows that things visible are here spoken of, whatever is above us, or below us to be seen: for in the Arabic language, as he also observes, the word for "heaven", comes from one which signifies high or above {a}; as that for "earth" from one that signifies low and beneath, or under {b}. Now it was the matter or substance of these that was first created; for the word
ta set before them signifies substance, as both Aben Ezra and {c} Kimchi affirm. Maimonides {d} observes, that this particle, according to their wise men, is the same as "with"; and then the sense is, God created with the heavens whatsoever are in the heavens, and with the earth whatsoever are in the earth; that is, the substance of all things in them; or all things in them were seminally together: for so he illustrates it by an husbandman sowing seeds of divers kinds in the earth, at one and the same time; some of which come up after one day, and some after two days, and some after three days, though all sown together. These are said to be "created", that is, to be made out of nothing; for what pre-existent matter to this chaos could there be out of which they could be formed? And the apostle says, "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made

of things which do appear", Heb 11:3. And though this word is sometimes used, and even in this chapter, of the production of creatures out of pre-existent matter, as in **Ge 1:21** yet, as Nachmanides observes, there is not in the holy language any word but this here used, by which is signified the bringing anything into being out of nothing; and many of the Jewish interpreters, as Aben Ezra, understand by creation here, a production of something into being out of nothing; and Kimchi says {e} that creation is a making some new thing, and a bringing something out of nothing: and it deserves notice, that this word is only used of God; and creation must be the work of God, for none but an almighty power could produce something out of nothing. The word used is "Elohim", which some derive from another, which signifies power, creation being an act of almighty power: but it is rather to be derived from the root in the Arabic language, which signifies to worship {f}, God being the object of all religious worship and adoration; and very properly does Moses make use of this appellation here, to teach us, that he who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth is the sole object of worship; as he was of the worship of the Jewish nation, at the head of which Moses was. It is in the plural number, and being joined to a verb of the singular, is thought by many to be designed to point unto us the mystery of a plurality, or trinity of persons in the unity of the divine essence: but whether or no this is sufficient to support that doctrine, which is to be established without it; yet there is no doubt to be made, that all the three Persons in the Godhead were concerned in the creation of all things, see Ps 33:6. The Heathen poet Orpheus has a notion somewhat similar to this, who writes, that all things were made by one Godhead of three names, and that this God is all things {g}: and now all these things, the heaven and the earth, were made by God "in the beginning", either in the beginning of time, or when time began, as it did with the creatures, it being nothing but the measure of a creature's duration, and therefore could not be until such existed; or as Jarchi interprets it, in the beginning of the creation, when God first began to create; and is best explained by our Lord, "the beginning of the creation which God created", Mr 13:19 and the sense is, either that as soon as God created, or the first he did create were the heavens and the earth; to which agrees the Arabic version; not anything was created before them: or in connection with the following words, thus, "when first", or "in the beginning", when "God created the heavens and the earth", then "the earth was without form", &c {h}. The Jerusalem Targum renders it, "in wisdom God created"; see **Pr 3:19** and some of the ancients have interpreted it of the wisdom of God, the Logos and Son of God. From hence we learn, that the world was not eternal, either as to the matter or form of it, as Aristotle, and some other philosophers, have asserted, but had a beginning; and that its being is not owing to the fortuitous motion and conjunction of atoms, but to the power and wisdom of God, the first cause and sole author of all things; and that there was not any thing created before the heaven and the earth were: hence those phrases, before the foundation of the world, and before the world began, &c. are expressive of eternity: this utterly destroys the notion of the pre-existence of the souls of men, or of the soul of the Messiah: false therefore is what the Jews say {i}, that paradise, the righteous, Israel, Jerusalem, &c. were created before the world; unless they mean, that these were foreordained by God to be, which perhaps is their sense.

{a} "altus fuit, eminuit", Golius, col. 1219. {b} "quicquid humile, inferum et depressum" ib. col. 70. Hottinger. Smegma Orient. c. 5. p. 70. & Thesaur. Philolog. l. 1. c. 2. p. 234. {c} Sepher Shorash. rad. ta. {d} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 30. p. 275, 276. {e} Ut supra. (Sepher Shorash.) rad. arb {f} hla "coluit, unde" hwla "numen colendum", Schultens in Job. i. 1. Golius, col. 144. Hottinger. Smegma, p. 120. {g} See the Universal History, vol. 1. p. 33. {h} So Vatablus. {i} Targum Jon. & Jerus. in Gen. iii. 24. T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 54. 1. & Nedarim, fol. 39. 2.

Genesis 1:2

Ver. 2. And the earth was without form, and void,.... It was not in the form it now is, otherwise it must have a form, as all matter has; it was a fluid matter, the watery parts were not separated from the earthy ones; it was not put into the form of a terraqueous globe it is now, the sea apart, and the earth by itself, but were mixed and blended together; it was, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it, a waste and desert, empty and destitute of both men and beasts; and it may be added, of fishes and fowls, and also of trees, herbs, and plants. It was, as Ovid {k} calls it, a chaos and an indigested mass of matter; and Hesiod {l} makes a chaos first to exist, and then the wide extended earth, and so Orpheus {m}, and others; and this is agreeably to the notion of various nations. The Chinese make a chaos to be the beginning of all things, out of which the immaterial being (God) made all things that consist of matter, which they distinguish into parts they call Yin and Yang, the one signifying hidden or imperfect, the other open or perfect {n}: and so the Egyptians, according to Diodorus Siculus {o}, whose opinion he is supposed to give, thought the system of the universe had but one form; the heaven and earth, and the nature of them, being mixed and blended together, until by degrees they separated and obtained the form they now have: and the Phoenicians, as Sanchoniatho {p} relates, supposed the principle of the universe to be a dark and windy air, or the blast of a dark air, and a turbid chaos surrounded with darkness, as follows;

and darkness was upon the face of the deep: the whole fluid mass of earth and water mixed together. This abyss is explained by waters in the next clause, which seem to be uppermost; and this was all a dark turbid chaos, as before expressed, without any light or motion, till an agitation was made by the Spirit, as is next observed:

and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, which covered the earth, Ps 104:6 the earthy particles being heaviest sunk lower, and the waters being lighter rose up above the others: hence Thales {q} the philosopher makes water to be the beginning of all things, as do the Indian Brahmans {r}: and Aristotle {s} himself owns that this was the most ancient opinion concerning the origin of the universe, and observes, that it was not only the opinion of Thales, but of those that were the most remote from the then present generation in which he lived, and of those that first wrote on divine things; and it is frequent in Hesiod and Homer to make Oceanus, or the ocean, with Tethys, to be the parents of generation: and so the Scriptures represent the original earth as standing out of the water, and consisting of it, **2Pe 3:5** and upon the surface of these waters, before they were drained off the earth, "the Spirit of God moved"; which is to be understood not of a wind, as Onkelos, Aben Ezra, and many Jewish writers, as well as Christians, interpret it; since the air, which the wind is a motion of, was not made until the second day. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call it the spirit of mercies; and by it is meant the Spirit of the Messiah, as many Jewish writers {t} call him; that is, the third Person in the blessed Trinity, who was concerned in the creation of all things, as in the garnishing of the heavens, so in bringing the confused matter of the earth and water into form and order; see Job 26:13. This same Spirit "moved" or brooded {u} upon the face of the waters, to impregnate them, as an hen upon eggs to hatch them, so he to separate the parts which were mixed together, and give them a quickening virtue to produce living creatures in them. This sense and idea of the word are finely expressed by our poet {w}. Some traces of this appear in the
nouv or mind of Anaxagoras, which when all things were mixed together came and set them in order {x}; and the "mens" of Thales he calls God, which formed all things out of water {y}; and the "spiritus intus alit", &c. of Virgil; and with this agrees what Hermes says, that there was an infinite darkness in the abyss or deep, and water, and a small intelligent spirit, endued with a divine power, were in the chaos {z}: and perhaps from hence is the mundane egg, or egg of Orpheus {a}: or the firstborn or first laid egg, out of which all things were formed; and which he borrowed from the Egyptians and Phoenicians, and they perhaps from the Jews, and which was reckoned by

them a resemblance of the world. The Egyptians had a deity they called Cneph, out of whose mouth went forth an egg, which they interpreted of the world {b}: and the Zophasemin of the Phoenicians, which were heavenly birds, were, according to Sanchoniatho {c}, of the form of an egg; and in the rites of Bacchus they worshipped an egg, as being an image of the world, as Macrobius {d} says; and therefore he thought the question, whether an hen or an egg was oldest, was of some moment, and deserved consideration: and the Chinese say {e}, that the first man was produced out of the chaos as from an egg, the shell of which formed the heavens, the white the air, and the yolk the earth; and to this incubation of the spirit, or wind, as some would have it, is owing the windy egg of Aristophanes {f}.

(Thomas Chamlers (1780-1847) in 1814 was the first to purpose that there is a gap between verse 1 and 2. Into this gap he places a pre-Adamic age, about which the scriptures say nothing. Some great catastrophe took place, which left the earth "without form and void" or ruined, in which state it remained for as many years as the geologist required. {g} This speculation has been popularised by the 1917 Scofield Reference Bible. However, the numerous rock layers that are the supposed proof for these ages, were mainly laid down by Noah's flood. In Ex 20:11 we read of a literal six day creation. No gaps, not even for one minute, otherwise these would not be six normal days. Also, in **Ro 5:12** we read that death is the result of Adam's sin. Because the rock layers display death on a grand scale, they could not have existed before the fall of Adam. There is no direct evidence that the earth is much older than six thousand years. However, we have the direct eyewitness report of God himself that he made everything in six days. Tracing back through the biblical genealogies we can determine the age of the universe to be about six thousand years with an error of not more than two per cent. See Topic 8756. Editor.)

{k} "Quem dixere chaos, rudis indigestaque moles", Ovid Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 1. {l} htoi men protista caov &c. Hesiodi Theogonia. {m} Orphei Argonautica, ver. 12. {n} Martin. Sinic. Hist. l. 1. p. 5. {o} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 7. {p} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 2. c. 10. p. 33. {q} Laert. in Vita Thaletis, p. 18. Cicero do Natura Deorum, l. 1. {r} Strabo. Geograph. l. 15. p. 491. {s} Metaphysic. l. 1. c. 3. {t} Zohar in Gen. fol. 107. 3. and fol. 128. 3. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 2. 4. and 6. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 156. 4. Baal Hatturim in loc. Caphtor Uperah, fol. 113. 2. {u} tpxrm "incubabat", Junius, Tremellius, Piscator, "as a dove on her young", T. Bab. Chagigah, fol. 15. 1. {w} ----and, with mighty wings outspread, Dovelike satst brooding on the vast abyss, And mad'st it pregnant.---- Milton's Paradise Lost, B. 1. l. 20, 21, 22. The same sentiment is in B. 7. l. 234, 235. {x} Laert. in Vita Anaxagor. p. 91.

Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 10. c. 14. p. 504. {y} Cicero de Nat. Deorum, l. 1. Lactant, de falsa Relig. l. 1. c. 5. {z} Apud Drusium in loc. {a} Hymn. protogon, ver. 1, 2. {b} Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 3. c. 11. p. 115. {c} Apud Ib. l. 2. c. 10. p. 33. {d} Saturnal. l. 7. c. 16. {e} Martin. Sinic. Hist. l. 1. p. 3, 4. {f} In Avibus. {g} Ian Taylor, p. 363, 364, "In the Minds of Men", 1984, TEF Publishing, P.O. Box 5015, Stn. F, Toronto, Canada.

Genesis 1:3

Ver. 3. And God said,.... This phrase is used, nine times in this account of the creation; it is admired by Longinus the Heathen in his treatise "of the Sublime", as a noble instance of it; and it is most beautifully paraphrased and explained in Ps 33:6 as expressive of the will, power, authority, and efficacy of the divine Being; whose word is clothed with power, and who can do, and does whatever he will, and as soon as he pleases; his orders are always obeyed. Perhaps the divine Person speaking here is the Logos or Word of God, which was in the beginning with God, and was God, and who himself is the light that lightens every creature. The words spoke were,

let there be light, and there was light: it at once appeared; "God commanded light to shine out of darkness"; as the apostle says, **2Co 4:6** this was the first thing made out of the dark chaos; as in the new creation, or work of grace in the heart, light is the first thing produced there: what this light was is not easy to say. Some of the Jewish Rabbins, and also some Christian writers, think the angels are designed by it, which is not at all probable, as the ends and use of this light show: others of them are of opinion, that it is the same with the sun, of which a repetition is made on the fourth day, because of its use and efficacy to the earth, and its plants; but others more rightly take it to be different from the sun, and a more glimmering light, which afterwards was gathered into and perfected in the body of the sun {f}. It is the opinion of Zanchius {g}, and which is approved of by our countryman, Mr. Fuller {h}, that it was a lucid body, or a small lucid cloud, which by its circular motion from east to west made day and night {i}; perhaps somewhat like the cloudy pillar of fire that guided the Israelites in the wilderness, and had no doubt heat as well as light; and which two indeed, more or less, go together; and of such fiery particles this body may well be thought to consist. The word "Ur" signifies both fire and light.

{f} Vid. Menasseh ben Israel conciliator in Gen. qu. 2. {g} De Operibus Dei, par. 3. l. 1. c. 2. col. 239. and l. 2. c. 1. {h} Miscell. Sacr. l. 1. c. 12. {i} Milton seems to be of the same mind:----- -----and forthwith light. Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure, Sprung from the deep, and from her native east To journey thro' the airy gloom began, Sphered in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle Sojourned the while.----- Paradise Lost, B. 7. l. 243, &c.

Genesis 1:4

Ver. 4. And God saw the light, that it was good,.... Very pleasant and delightful, useful and beneficial; that is, he foresaw it would be good, of great service, as Picherellus {k} interprets it; for as yet there were no inhabitants of the earth to receive any advantage by it; see Ec 11:7 besides, it was doubtless good to answer some present purposes, to prepare for the work of the two following days, before the great luminary was formed; as to dispel the darkness of heaven, and that which covered the deep; to rarefy, exhale, and draw up the lighter parts of the chaos, in order to form the wide extended ether, the expanded air, and the surrounding atmosphere, while the Spirit of God was agitating the waters, and separating them from the earthy parts; and which also might serve to unite and harden those which were to form the dry land, and also to warm that when it appeared, that it might bring forth grass, herbs, and fruit trees:

and God divided the light from the darkness: by which it should seem that they were mixed together, the particles of light and darkness; but "by what way is the light parted", severed and divided from darkness, is a question put to men by the Lord himself, who only can answer it, Job 38:24 he has so divided one from the other that they are not together at the same place and time; when light is in one hemisphere, darkness is in the other {l}; and the one by certain constant revolutions is made to succeed the other; and by the motion of the one, the other gives way; as well as also God has divided and distinguished them by calling them by different names, as Aben Ezra, and is what next follows:

{k} In Cosmopoeiam, p. 267. {l} Milton in the place above referred to says, it was divided by the hemisphere. Paradise Lost, B. 7. l. 243, &c.

Genesis 1:5

Ver. 5. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night,....

Either by the circulating motion of the above body of light, or by the rotation of the chaos on its own axis towards it, in the space of twenty four hours there was a vicissitude of light and darkness; just as there is now by the like motion either of the sun, or of the earth; and which after this appellation God has given, we call the one, day, and the other, night:

and the evening and the morning were the first day: the evening, the first part of the night, or darkness, put for the whole night, which might be about the space of twelve hours; and the morning, which was the first part of the day, or light, put also for the whole, which made the same space, and both together one natural day, consisting of twenty four hours; what Daniel calls an "evening morning", **Da 8:26** and the apostle nucyhmeron, a "night day", 2Co 11:25. Thales being asked which was first made, the night or the day, answered, the night was before one day {m}. The Jews begin their day from the preceding evening; so many other nations: the Athenians used to reckon their day from sun setting to sun setting {n}; the Romans from the middle of the night, to the middle of the night following, as Gellius {o} relates; and Tacitus {p} reports of the ancient Germans, that they used to compute not the number of days, but of nights, reckoning that the night led the day. Caesar {q} observes of the ancient Druids in Britain, that they counted time not by the number of days, but nights; and observed birthdays, and the beginnings of months and years, so as that the day followed the night; and we have some traces of this still among us, as when we say this day se'nnight, or this day fortnight. This first day of the creation, according to James Capellus, was the eighteenth of April; but, according to Bishop Usher, the twenty third of October; the one beginning the creation in the spring, the other in autumn. It is a notion of Mr. Whiston's, that the six days of the creation were equal to six years, a day and a year being one and the same thing before the fall of man, when the diurnal rotation of the earth about its axis, as he thinks, began; and in agreement with this, very remarkable is the doctrine Empedocles taught, that when mankind sprung originally from the earth, the length of the day, by reason of the slowness of the sun's motion, was equal to ten of our present months {r}. The Hebrew word bre, "Ereb", rendered "evening", is retained by some of the Greek poets, as by Hesiod {s}, who says, out of the "chaos" came "Erebus", and black night, and out of the night ether and the day; and Aristophanes {t}, whose words are,

"chaos, night, and black "Erebus" were first, and wide Tartarus, but there were neither earth, air, nor heaven, but in the infinite bosom of Erebus, black winged night first brought forth a windy egg, &c."

And Orpheus {u} makes night to be the beginning of all things.

(Hugh Miller (1802-1856) was the first person to popularise the "Day-Age" theory. In his book, "Testimony of the Rocks", that was published in the year after his untimely death, he speculated that that the days were really long ages. He held that Noah's flood was a local flood and the rock layers were laid down long periods of time. {v} This theory has been popularised by the New Scofield Bible first published in 1967. See Topic 8757. Editor.)

{m} Laert. in Vita Thaletis. p. 24. {n} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 77. {o} Noct. Attic. l. 3. c. 2. {p} De Mor. German. c. 11. {q} Commentar. l. 6. p. 141. {r} Vid. Universal History, vol. 1. p. 79. {s} ek caeov d'erebov, &c. Hesiod. Theogonia. {t} caov hn kai nux erebov te melan proton &c. Aristophanes in Avibus. {u} Hymn. 2. ver. 2. {v} Ian Taylor, p. 360-362, "In the Minds of Men", 1984, TEV Publishing, P.O. Box 5015, Stn. F, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 2T1.

Genesis 1:6

Ver. 6. And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters,.... On which the Spirit of God was sitting and moving, **Ge 1:2** part of which were formed into clouds, and drawn up into heaven by the force of the body of fire and light already produced; and the other part left on the earth, not yet gathered into one place, as afterwards: between these God ordered a "firmament to be", or an "expanse" {v}; something stretched out and spread like a curtain, tent, or canopy: and to this all those passages of Scripture refer, which speak of the stretching out of the heavens, as this firmament or expanse is afterwards called; see
Ps 104:2 and by it is meant the air, as it is rendered by the Targum on Ps 19:1 we call it the "firmament" from the {w} word which the Greek interpreter uses, because it is firm, lasting, and durable: and it has the name of an expanse from its wide extent, it reaching from the earth to the third heaven; the lower and thicker parts of it form the atmosphere in which we breathe; the higher and thinner parts of it, the air in which fowls fly, and the ether or sky in which the sun, moon, and stars are placed; for all these are said to be in the firmament or expanse, **Ge 1:17**. These are the stories in the heavens the Scriptures speak of, **Am 9:6** and the air is divided by philosophers into higher, middle, and lower regions: and so the Targum of Jonathan places this firmament or expanse between the extremities of the heaven, and the waters of the ocean. The word in the Syriac language has the sense of binding and compressing {x}; and so it

is used in the Syriac version of **Lu 6:38** and may denote the power of the air when formed in compressing the chaos, and dividing and separating the parts of it; and which it now has in compressing the earth, and the several parts that are in it, and by its compression preserves them and retains them in their proper places {y}:

and let it divide the waters from the waters; the waters under it from those above it, as it is explained in the next verse; of which more there.

{v} eyqr "expansio", Montanus. Tigurine version; "extensio", Munster, Fagius, Vatablus, Aben Ezra; "expansum", Junius, Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Schmidt, sterewma Sept. "firmamentum", V. L. {w} Id. {x} Vid. Castell. Lex. col. 3647. Fuller. Miscell. Sacr. l. 1. c. 6. {y} Vid. Dickinson. Physica "vetus et vera", c. 7. sect. 13, 14. p. 88, 89.

Genesis 1:7

Ver. 7. And God made the firmament,.... By a word speaking, commanding it into being, producing it out of the chaos, and spreading it in that vast space between the heaven of heavens and our earth {z}.

And divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; the lower part of it, the atmosphere above, which are the clouds full of water, from whence rain descends upon the earth; and which divided between them and those that were left on the earth, and so under it, not yet gathered into one place; as it now does between the clouds of heaven and the waters of the sea. Though Mr. Gregory {a} is of opinion, that an abyss of waters above the most supreme orb is here meant; or a great deep between the heavens and the heaven of heavens, where, as in storehouses, the depth is laid up; and God has his treasures of snow, hail, and rain, and from whence he brought out the waters which drowned the world at the universal deluge. Others suppose the waters above to be the crystalline heaven, which for its clearness resembles water; and which Milton {b} calls the "crystalline ocean".

And it was so: the firmament was accordingly made, and answered this purpose, to divide the waters below it from those above it; or "it was firm" {c}, stable and durable; and so it has continued.

{z} ------and God made The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure, Transparent, elemental air, diffused In circuit to the uttermost convex Of this great round.------ Milton, Paradise Lost, B. 7. l. 263, &c. {a} Notes and Observations, &c. c. 23. p. 110, &c. {b} Ibid. l. 291. {c} Nk yhyw "et factum est firmum", Fagius & Nachmanides in ib.

Genesis 1:8

Ver. 8. And God called the firmament heaven,.... Including the starry and airy heavens: it has its name from its height in the Arabic language, it being above the earth, and reaching to the third heaven; though others take the word "shamaim" to be a compound of two words, "sham" and "maim", that is, there are waters, namely, in the clouds of heaven:

and the evening; and the morning were the second day; these together made up the space of twenty four hours, which was another natural day; the body of light, created on the first day, having again moved round the chaos in that space of time; or else the chaos had turned round on its own axis in that time, which revolution produced a second day; and which, according to Capellus, was the nineteenth of April, and according to Bishop Usher the twenty fourth of October. It is an observation that everyone may make, that the phrase,

and God saw that it was good, is not used at the close of this day's work, as of the rest: the reason some Jewish writers give is, because the angels fell on this day; but it is a much better which Jarchi gives, and that is, because the work of the waters was not finished; it was begun on the second day, and perfected on the third {d}; and therefore the phrase is twice used in the account of the third day's work: the Septuagint version adds it here indeed, but without any foundation.

{d} Vid. Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 30.

Genesis 1:9

Ver. 9. And God said, let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place,.... Which are before called the waters under the firmament; and which were either on the surface of the earth, or in the bowels of it, or mixed with it, which by the compressure of the expanse or air were separated from it and these, by apertures and channels made, were caused to flow as by a straight line, as the word {e} used signifies, unto the decreed place that was

broke up for them, the great hollow or channel which now contains the waters of the ocean: this was done by the word of the Lord, at his rebuke; and when it seems there was a clap thunder, and perhaps an earthquake, which made the vast cavity for the sea, as well as threw up the hills and mountains, and made the valleys; see
Job 38:10,

and let the dry land appear: clear of the waters, dried by the expanded air, hardened by the fiery light, and as yet without any herb or tree upon it:

and it was so; immediately done, the waters were drained off the earth, directed to their proper channels, and caused to run as by line to their appointed place; and the solid parts of the earth became dry, and appeared in sight.

{e} wwqy "congregentur tanquam ad amussim et regulam", Fagius; "recto et equabili cursu contendant et collineant", Junius.

Genesis 1:10

Ver. 10. And God called the dry land earth,.... The whole chaos, that was a turbid fluid, a mixture of earth and water, a rude unformed mass of matter, was called earth before; but now that part of the terraqueous globe, which was separated from the waters, and they from it, is called "earth": which has its name in the Arabic language from its being low and depressed; the lighter parts having been elevated, and moved upwards, and formed the atmosphere; the grosser parts subsiding and falling downwards, made the earth, which is low with respect to the firmament, which has its name in the same language from its height {f}, as before observed.

And the gathering together of the waters called he seas; for though there was but one place into which they were collected, and which is the main ocean, with which all other waters have a communication, and so are one; yet there are divers seas, as the Red sea, the Mediterranean, Caspian, Baltic, &c. or which are denominated from the shores they wash, as the German, British, &c. and even lakes and pools of water are called seas, as the sea of Galilee and Tiberias, which was no other than the lake of Gennesaret.

And God saw [that it was] good; that these two should be separate, that the waters should be in one place, and the dry land appear, and both have the names he gave them: and this is here mentioned, because now the affair of the waters, the division aud separation of them, were brought to an end, and to perfection: but because this phrase is here used, and not at the mention of the second day, hence Picherellus, and some others, have thought, that this work is to be ascribed to the second day, and not to the third, and render the beginning of the ninth verse, and "God had said", or "after God had said, let the waters under the heaven", &c. **Ge 1:9**

{f} Mymv "a verbo", hmv "sublimis, elatus, altus fuit"; Ura "lingua Arabica, humilis, depressus fuit significat", Bottinger. Thesaur, Philolog. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 6. p. 234.

Genesis 1:11

Ver. 11. And God said, let the earth bring forth grass,.... Which had been impregnated by the Spirit of God that moved upon it when a fluid; and though now become dry land, it retained sufficient moisture in it, and was juicy and fit to produce vegetables; and especially as it had the advantage of the expanded air about it, and the warmth of the primordial light or fire; though all this would have been insufficient to produce plants and trees at full growth, with their seed in them, and fruit on them, without the interposition of almighty power: this seems to intend the germination or budding out of the tender grass, and the numerous spires of it which cover the earth, and by their verdure and greenness give it a delightful aspect, as well as afford food for the creatures:

the herb yielding seed; this is distinct from the former; that denotes herbage in general, which grows up of itself without being sown or manured, and is the food of beasts; this in particular, herbs and plants for the use of man, which yield a seed which either falling from it sows itself again, or is taken from it and sown on purpose to reproduce it, being useful or delightful:

[and] the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind; as apples, pears, plums, apricots, nectars, peaches, oranges, lemons, &c.

whose seed is in itself upon the earth; each of which produce a seed according to the nature of them, which being sown produce the like, and so there is a continuance of them upon the earth:

and it was so; as God commanded it should, as appears from the following verse.

Genesis 1:12

Ver. 12. And the earth brought forth grass,.... In great abundance at once; the hills and vales were clothed with it, and so a rich provision was made the beasts and cattle of the earth two or three days before they were created:

[and] herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself after his kind: wholesome and healthful herbs and plants, and delicious fruit to be meat and food for man, ready prepared for him when created; see **Ge 1:29** on this day, though after related, were made the garden of Eden, and all the trees in it, pleasant for sight, and good for food; and particularly the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil;

and God saw that it [was] good; which he had now caused to spring forth, grass, herbs, and fruit trees, which were good for men and beast, and this he foresaw would be so; See Gill on "Ge 1:4".

Genesis 1:13

Ver. 13. And the evening and the morning were the third day. The space of twenty four hours ran out, and were measured, either by the rotation of the body of light and heat around the earth, or of the earth upon its axis: and this was according to Capellus the twentieth day of April, and, according to Bishop Usher, the twenty fifth of October; though those who suppose the world was created in autumn make the first day to be the first of September, and so this must be the third of that month; the Jews are divided about the season of the creation; some say Nisan or March, others Tisri or September {g}

{g} Vid. T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 11. 1.

Genesis 1:14

Ver. 14. And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven,.... In the upper part of it, commonly called the starry heaven: some writers, both Jewish and Christian, and even modern astronomers, understand this only of the appearance of them, and not of the formation of them; they suppose they were made on the first day, but did not appear or shine out so clearly and

visibly as now on the fourth day: but it seems rather, that the body of fire and light produced on the first day was now distributed and formed into several luminous bodies of sun, moon, and stars, for these were
tram, "from light"; lights produced from that light, or made out of it; or were instruments of communicating and letting down that light upon the earth {h}, which was collected and put together in them, especially in the sun: and the uses of them were

to divide the day from the night; which is the peculiar use of the sun, which by its appearance and continuance makes the day, and by withdrawing itself, or not appearing for a certain time, makes the night; as the light by its circular motion did for the first three days, or the diurnal motion of the earth on its axis, then and now:

and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; for "signs" of good and bad weather; for the times of ploughing, sowing, reaping, &c. and for the "seasons" of summer and winter, spring and autumn; for "days" by a circular motion for the space of twenty four hours; and for "years" by annual motion for the space of three hundred sixty five days and odd hours. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"and let them be for signs and the times of the feasts, and to reckon with them the number of days, and, sanctify the beginnings of the months, and the beginnings of the years, and the intercalations of months and years, the revolutions of the sun, and the new moons, and cycles."

And so Jarchi interprets "seasons" of the solemn festivals, that would hereafter be commanded the children of Israel; but those uses were not for a certain people, and for a certain time, but for all mankind, as long as the world should stand.

{h} rwa "significat lucem illam primam per sese lucentem";
rwam "vero corpus per quod lux illa prima splendorem suum demittit". Nachmanides, apud Fagium in loc.

Genesis 1:15

Ver. 15. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven,.... To continue there as luminous bodies; as enlighteners, as the word signifies, causing light, or as being the instruments of conveying it, particularly to the earth, as follows:

to give light upon the earth; and the inhabitants of it, when formed:

and it was so: these lights were formed and placed in the firmament of the heaven for such uses, and served such purposes as God willed and ordered they should.

Genesis 1:16

Ver. 16. And God made two great lights,.... This was his own work which he himself did, and not by another; and may be particularly observed to express the folly of idolaters in worshipping these luminaries which were the creations of God, and were placed by him in the heaven to serve some purposes on earth beneficial to men, but not to be worshipped. These two "great lights" are the sun and the moon; and they may well be called great, especially the former, for the diameter of the sun is reckoned to be about eight hundred thousand miles. According to Mr. Derham {i} its apparent diameter is computed at 822,145 English miles, its ambit at 2,582,873 miles, and its solid contents at 290,971,000,000,000,000: the lowest account makes the sun a hundred thousand times bigger than the earth; and according to Sir Isaac Newton it is 900,000 bigger. The moon's diameter is to that of the earth is about twenty seven per cent, or 2175 miles, its surface contains fourteen hundred thousand square miles {k}: it is called great, not on account of its corporeal quantity, for it is the least of all the planets excepting Mercury, but because of its quality, as a light, it reflecting more light upon the earth than any besides the sun.

The greater light to rule the day: not to rule men, though the heathens have worshipped it under the names of Molech and Baal, which signify king and lord, as if it was their lord and king to whom they were to pay homage; but to rule the day, to preside over it, to make it, give light in it, and continue it to its proper length; and in which it rules alone, the moon, nor any of the other planets then appearing: this is called the "greater" light, in comparison of the moon, not only with respect to its body or substance, but on account of its light, which is far greater and stronger than that of the moon; and which indeed receives its light from it, the moon being, as is generally said, an opaque body:

and the lesser light to rule the night; to give light then, though in a fainter, dimmer way, by reflecting it from the sun; and it rules alone, the sun being absent from the earth, and is of great use to travellers and sailors; it is called the lesser light, in comparison of the sun. Astronomers are of opinion, as Calmet {l} observes, that it is about fifty two times smaller than the earth, and four thousand one hundred and fifty times smaller than the sun; but these proportions are otherwise determined by the generality of modern astronomers: however, they all agree that the moon is abundantly less than the sun; and that it is as a light, we all know.

[He made] the stars also; to rule by night, Ps 136:9 not only the planets, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Venus, but the vast numbers of stars with which the heavens are bespangled, and which reflect some degree of light upon the earth; with the several constellations, some of which the Scriptures speak of, as Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades, and the chambers of the south, **Job 9:9** Job 38:31 though some restrain this to the five planets only.

Ed. Contrast the foolishness of modern cosmology with the writings of the early church father, Theophilus when he states {j}:

"On the fourth day the luminaries came into existence. Since God has foreknowledge, he understood the nonsense of the foolish philosophers who were going to say that the things produced on earth came from the stars, so that they might set God aside. In order therefore that the truth might be demonstrated, plants and seeds came into existence before stars. For what comes into existence later cannot cause what is prior to it."

{i} Astro-Theology, B. 1. c. 2. & B. 6. c. 2. {j} Cited from Impact 251. ICR "Acts and Facts" (May 1994); Theophilus, "To Autolycus" 2. 4, Oxford Early Christian Texts, as cited in Louis Lavalle, "The Early Church Defended Creation Science" Impact 160. ICR "Acts and Facts" (October 1986): ii. {k} Chambers's Dictionary in the word "Moon". {l} Dictionary in the word "Moon".

Genesis 1:17

Ver. 17. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven,.... He not only ordered that there they should be, and made them that there they might be, but he placed them there with his own hands; and they are placed, particularly the sun, at such a particular distance as to be beneficial and not hurtful: had it been set nearer to the earth, its heat would have been intolerable; and had it been further off it would have been of no use; in the one case we should have been scorched with its heat, and in the other been frozen up for the want of it. The various expressions used seem to be designed on purpose to guard against and expose the vanity of the worship of the sun and moon; which being visible, and of such great influence and usefulness to the earth, were the first the Heathens paid adoration to, and was as early as the times of Job, Job 31:26 and yet these were but creatures made by God, his servants and agents under him, and therefore to worship them was to serve the creature besides the Creator.

To give light upon the earth; this is repeated from **Ge 1:15** to show the end for which they were made, and set up, and the use they were to be of to the earth; being hung up like so many lamps or chandeliers, to contain and send forth light unto the earth, to the inhabitants of it, that they may see to walk and work by, and do all the business of life, as well as be warmed and comforted thereby, and the earth made fertile to bring forth its precious fruits for the use of creatures in it: and it is marvellous that such light should be emitted from the sun, when it is at such a vast distance from the earth, and should reach it in so short a space. A modern astronomer {m} observes, that a bullet discharged from a cannon would be near twenty five years, before it could finish its journey from the sun to the earth: and yet the rays of light reach the earth in seven minutes and a half, and are said to pass ten millions of miles in a minute.

{m} Huygen. Cosmotheoros. l. 2. p. 125.

Genesis 1:18

Ver. 18. And to rule over the day, and over the night,.... The one, namely the sun, or greater light, to rule over the day, and the moon and stars, the lesser lights, to rule over the night: this is repeated from **Ge 1:16** to show the certainty of it, and that the proper uses of these lights might be observed, and that a just value might be put upon them, but not carried beyond due bounds:

and to divide the light from the darkness; as the day from the night, which is done by the sun, **Ge 1:14** and to dissipate and scatter the darkness of the night, and give some degree of light, though in a more feeble manner, which is done by the moon and stars:

and God saw that [it was] good; or foresaw it would be, that there should be such lights in the heaven, which would be exceeding beneficial to the inhabitants of the earth, as they find by good experience it is, and therefore have great reason to be thankful, and to adore the wisdom and goodness of God; see Ps 136:1.

See Gill on "Ge 1:4".

Genesis 1:19

Ver. 19. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. Made by the rotation of the earth on its own axis, in the space of twenty four hours: this according to Capellus was the twenty first of April, and according to Bishop Usher the twenty sixth of October; or, as others, the fourth of September: and thus, as on the fourth day of the creation the sun was made, or appeared, so in the fourth millennium the sun of righteousness arose on our earth.

Genesis 1:20

Ver. 20. And God said, let the waters bring forth abundantly,.... The waters gathered together in one place, the waters of the ocean, and those in rivers, pools and lakes, and which, before their collection into those places, had been sat on, moved, and impregnated by the Spirit of God; so that they could, as they did, by the divine order accompanied with his power, bring forth abundance of creatures, next mentioned:

the moving creature that hath life: an animal life, of which sort of creatures as yet there had been none made; vegetables, or such as have a vegetative life, were made on the third day; but those that have a sensitive and animal life not till this day, the fifth; and the less perfect, or lower sort of these, were first produced, even such as move or "creep" {n}, as the word used signifies; which is applied to fishes as well as creeping things, because in swimming their bellies touch the water, and are close to it, as reptiles on the earth: and of these creeping things in the seas there are innumerable, as the Psalmist says, Ps 104:25. Pliny {o} reckons up an hundred and seventy six kinds of fishes, which he puts in an alphabetical order:

and fowl [that] may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven; which according to our version were to be produced out of the waters also; not out of mere water, but out of earth and water mixed together, or out of the earth or clay {p} that lay at the bottom of the waters: and it may be observed of some fowls, that they live on the waters, and others partly on land and partly on water; and as the elements of fowl and fish, the air and water, bear a resemblance to each other, so do these creatures, some fowls both fly and swim; and what wings are to the one, fins are to the other; and both steer their course by their tails, and are both oviparous: though it should seem, according to **Ge 2:19**, that the fowls were produced from the earth, and the words may be rendered here, "let the fowl fly above the earth", &c. as they are in the Samaritan and Syriac versions, and in others {q}.

{n} Urv "reptile", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "reptilia", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 32. c. 11. {p} Vid. T. Bab. Cholin. fol. 27. 2. {q} Ppwey Pwew "et volatile volet", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Amama, "et volatile volitet", Tigurine version; "et volucres volent", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "et aves volent", Drusius; "et volucris volet", Cartwrightus; "et avis volitet", Schmidt.

Genesis 1:21

Ver. 21. And God created great whales,.... Which the Targums of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret of the Leviathan and its mate, concerning which the Jews have many fabulous things: large fishes are undoubtedly meant, and the whale being of the largest sort, the word is so rendered. Aelianus, from various writers, relates many things of the extraordinary size of whales; of one in the Indian sea five times bigger than the largest elephant, one of its ribs being twenty cubits {r}; from Theocles, of one that was larger than a galley with three oars {s}; and from Onesicritus and Orthagoras, of one that was half a furlong in length {t}; and Pliny {u} speaks of one sort called the "balaena", and of one of them in the Indian sea, that took up four aces of land, and so Solinus {w}; and from Juba, he relates there were whales that were six hundred feet in length, and three hundred sixty in breadth {x} but whales in common are but about fifty, seventy, eighty, or at most one hundred feet. Some interpret these of crocodiles, see Eze 29:3 some of which are twenty, some thirty, and some have been said to be an hundred feet long {y} The word is sometimes used of dragons, and, if it has this sense here, must be meant of dragons in the sea, or sea serpents, leviathan the piercing serpent, and leviathan the crooked serpent, Isa 27:1 so the Jews {z}; and such as the bishop of Bergen {a} speaks of as in the northern seas of a hundred fathom long, or six hundred English feet; and who also gives an account of a sea monster of an enormous and incredible size, that sometimes appears like an island at a great distance, called "Kraken" {b}; now because creatures of such a prodigious size were formed out of the waters, which seemed so very unfit to produce them; therefore the same word is here made use of, as is in the creation of the heaven and the earth out of nothing, **Ge 1:1** because this production, though not out of nothing, yet was an extraordinary instance of almighty power.

And every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind; that is, every living creature that swims in the waters of the great sea, or in rivers, whose kinds are many, and their numbers not to be reckoned;
See Gill on "Ge 1:20"

and every winged fowl after his kind; every fowl, and the various sorts of them that fly in the air; these were all created by God, or produced out of the water and out of the earth by his wonderful power:

and God saw [that it was] good; or foresaw that those creatures he made in the waters and in the air would serve to display the glory of his perfections, and be very useful and beneficial to man, he designed to create.

(Some of the creatures described by the ancients must refer to animals that are now extinct. Some of these may have been very large dinasours. Ed.)

{r} Hist. Animal. l. 16. c. 12. {s} Ib. l. 17. c. 6. {t} Ibid. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 3. {w} Polyhistor. c. 65. {x} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 32. c. 1. {y} See Thevenot's Travels, par. 1. c. 72. p. 246. Harris's Voyages, &c. vol. 1. p. 287, 485, 759. {z} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 74. 2. {a} History of Norway, p. 199. {b} Ibid. p. 210, &c.

Genesis 1:22

Ver. 22. And God blessed them,.... With a power to procreate their kind, and continue their species, as it is interpreted in the next clause;

saying, be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas: and these creatures do multiply exceedingly, and vast quantities there are of them in the mighty waters, though the consumption of some sorts of them is very great. Our English word "fish" is derived from the Hebrew word vwp, "fush", which signifies to multiply and increase:

and let fowl multiply in the earth; as they did, and continue to do to this day.

Genesis 1:23

Ver. 23. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. The sun now in the firmament, where it was fixed the day before, having gone round the earth, or the earth about that, in the space of twenty four hours; and according to Capellus this was the twenty second of April; or, as others, the fifth of September; and according to Bishop Usher the twenty seventh of October.

Genesis 1:24

Ver. 24. And God said, let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind,.... All sorts of living creatures that live and move upon the earth; not that the earth was endued with a power to produce these creatures of itself, without the interposition of God: for though it might be impregnated with a quickening virtue by the Spirit of God, which moved on it whilst a fluid, and had been prepared and disposed for such a production by the heat of the body of light created on the first day, and of the sun on the fourth; yet no doubt it was by the power of God accompanying his word, that these creatures were produced of the earth, and formed into their several shapes. The Heathens had some traditionary notion of this affair: according to the Egyptians, whose sentiments Diodorus Siculus {c} seems to give us, the process was thus carried on; the earth being stiffened by the rays of the sun, and the moist matter being made fruitful by the genial heat, at night received nourishment by the mist which fell from the ambient air; and in the day was consolidated by the heat of the sun, till at length the enclosed foetus having arrived to a perfect increase, and the membranes burnt and burst, creatures of all kinds appeared; of whom those that had got a greater degree of heat went upwards, and became flying fowl; those that were endued with an earthly concretion were reckoned in the class or order of reptiles, and other terrestrial animals; and those that chiefly partook of a moist or watery nature, ran to the place of a like kind, and were called swimmers or fish. This is the account they give; and somewhat like is that which Archelaus, the master of Socrates, delivers as his notion, that animals were produced out of slime, through the heat of the earth liquefying the slime like milk for food {d}: and Zeno the Stoic says {e}, the grosser part of the watery matter of the world made the earth, the thinner part the air, and that still more subtilized, the fire; and then out of the mixture of these proceeded plants and animals, and all the other kinds; but all this they seem to suppose to be done by the mere efforts of nature; whereas Moses here most truly ascribes their production to the all powerful Word of God:

cattle, [and] creeping things, and beast of the earth after his kind; the living creatures produced out of the earth are distinguished into three sorts; "cattle", which seem to design tame cattle, and such as are for the use of man, either for carriage, food, or clothing, as horses, asses, camels, oxen, sheep, &c. and "creeping" things, which are different from the creeping things in the sea before mentioned, are such as either have no feet, and go upon their bellies, or are very short, and seem to do so, whether greater or lesser, as serpents, worms, ants, &c.

and the beast of the earth seems to design wild beasts, such as lions, bears, wolves, &c.

and it was so; such creatures were immediately produced.

{c} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 7. {d} Laert. in Vita Archelai, p. 99. {e} Ib. in Vita Zenonis, p. 524.

Genesis 1:25

Ver. 25. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind,.... The wild beasts, and the several sorts of them; beginning the account with the last mentioned, as is frequent in the Hebrew language, and so he made all the rest:

and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind; tame creatures, and all the reptiles of the earth: this most clearly shows and proves that the above creatures were not produced by the mere force of nature, or the powers the earth were possessed of, however the matter of it might be disposed and prepared, but by the omnipotent hand of God:

and God saw [that it] was good; that every creature he had made would some way or other be for his glory, and for the benefit of man. Picherellus thinks that all this belongs to the work of the fifth day, not the sixth; because as the vegetables, herbs, and trees were produced on the same day, the third day; so animals, whether in the waters, air, or earth, were made on one and the same day; and that it was proper a separate day should be allotted for the formation of rational creatures, Adam and Eve, and that it might appear that the same blessing was not conferred on brutes as on reasonable beings; and therefore the words with which **Ge 1:24** begins should be rendered, "but after God had said, let the earth", &c. that is, after God had ordered this, and it was done, then "the evening and the morning were the fifth day"; which is what rhetoricians call an "hysteron proteron".

Genesis 1:26

Ver. 26. And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness,.... These words are directed not to the earth, out of which man was made, as consulting with it, and to be assisting in the formation of man, as Moses Gerundensis, and other Jewish writers {f}, which is wretchedly stupid; nor to the angels, as the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, and others, who are not of God's privy council, nor were concerned in any part of the creation, and much less in the more noble part of it: nor are the words spoken after the manner of kings, as Saadiah, using the plural number as expressive of honour and majesty; since such a way of speaking did not obtain very early, not even till the close of the Old Testament: but they are spoken by God the Father to the Son and Holy Ghost, who were each of them concerned in the creation of all things, and particularly of man: hence we read of divine Creators and Makers in the plural number, Job 35:10 and Philo the Jew acknowledges that these words declare a plurality, and are expressive of others, being co-workers with God in creation {g}: and man being the principal part of the creation, and for the sake of whom the world, and all things in it were made, and which being finished, he is introduced into it as into an house ready prepared and furnished for him; a consultation is held among the divine Persons about the formation of him; not because of any difficulty attending it, but as expressive of his honour and dignity; it being proposed he should be made not in the likeness of any of the creatures already made, but as near as could be in the likeness and image of God. The Jews sometimes say, that Adam and Eve were created in the likeness of the holy blessed God, and his Shechinah {h}; and they also speak {i} of Adam Kadmon the ancient Adam, as the cause of causes, of whom it is said, "I was as one brought up with him (or an artificer with him), **Pr 8:30** and to this ancient Adam he said, "let us make man in our image, after our likeness": and again, "let us make man"; to whom did he say this? the cause of causes said to "`jod', he, `vau', he"; that is, to Jehovah, which is in the midst of the ten numerations. What are the ten numerations? "`aleph', he, `jod', he", that is, hyha, "I am that I am, **Ex 3:14** and he that says let us make, is Jehovah; I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God: and three jods yyy testify concerning him, that there is none above him, nor any below him, but he is in the middle:

and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air; that is, to catch them, and eat them; though in the after grant of food to man, no mention as yet is made of any other meat than the herbs and fruits of the earth; yet what can this dominion over fish and fowl signify, unless it be a power to feed upon them? It may be observed, that the plural number is used, "let them", which shows that the name "man" is general in the preceding clause, and includes male and female, as we find by the following verse man was created:

and over the cattle, and over all the earth; over the tame creatures, either for food, or clothing, or carriage, or for all of them, some of them for one thing, and some for another; and over all the wild beasts of the earth, which seem to be meant by the phrase, "over all the earth"; that is, over all the beasts of the earth, as appears by comparing it with **Ge 1:24** so as to keep them in awe, and keep them off from doing them any damage:

and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; to make use of it as should seem convenient for them.

{f} Vet. Nizzachon, p. 5. Lipman. Carmen Memorial. p. 108. apud Wagenseil. Tela ignea, vol. 1. {g} De confusione Ling. p. 344. De Profugis, p. 460. De Opificio, p. 16. {h} Tikkune Zohar, correct. 64. fol. 98. 2. {i} Ibid. correct. 70. fol. 119. 1.

Genesis 1:27

Ver. 27. So God created man in his own image,.... Which consisted both in the form of his body, and the erect stature of it, different from all other creatures; in agreement with the idea of that body, prepared in covenant for the Son of God, and which it was therein agreed he should assume in the fulness of time; and in the immortality of his soul, and in his intellectual powers, and in that purity, holiness, and righteousness in which he was created; as well as in his dominion, power, and authority over the creatures, in which he was as God's viceregent, and resembled him. The Jerusalem Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord created man in his likeness;"

even that Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God, and in time became incarnate, by whom all things were made, **Joh 1:1**

in the image of God created he him; which is repeated for the certainty of it, and that it might be taken notice of, as showing man's superior glory and dignity to the rest of the creatures,
1Co 11:7

male and female created he them; not that man was created an hermaphrodite, or with two bodies, back to back united together, and afterwards cleaved asunder, as the Jews fabulously say; but first God made man, or the male, out of the dust of the earth, and infused a rational soul into him; and then out of one of his ribs made a female, or woman, who was presented to him as his wife, that so their species might be propagated; and only one male and one female were created, to show that hereafter a man was to have at a time no more wives than one; see **Mal 2:15** for all that is said in the following chapter, concerning the formation of man out of the dust of the earth, and the making of woman out of his rib, and presenting her to him, and his taking her to be his wife, were all done on this sixth day, and at this time. It is a tradition among the Heathens, that man was made last of all the creatures; so says Plato {k}; and this notion the Chinese also have {l}. The Jews give these reasons why man was made on the evening of the sabbath, to show that he did not assist in the work of creation; and that if he was elated in his mind, it might be told him that a fly was created before him, and that he might immediately enter on the command, i.e. of the sabbath {m}.

{k} Protagor. p. 320, 321. {l} Martin. Sinic. Hist. l. 1. p. 4. {m} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 38. 1.

Genesis 1:28

Ver. 28. And God blessed them,.... The man and the woman he had made, with all the blessings of nature and Providence; with all the good things of life; with his presence, and with communion with himself in a natural way, through the creatures; and particularly with a power of procreating their species, as follows;

and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth: if this is not an express command, as the Jews understand it, for marriage and procreation of children, it seems to be more than a bare permission; at least it is a direction and an advice to what was proper and convenient for the increase of mankind, and for the filling of the earth with inhabitants, which was the end of its being made, Isa 45:18. This shows that marriage is an ordinance of God, instituted in paradise, and is honourable; and that procreation is a natural action, and might have been, and may be performed without sin,

and subdue it; the earth; not that it was in the hands of others, who had no right to it, and to be conquered and taken out of their hands; but is to be understood of their taking possession, and making use of it; of their tilling the land, and making it subservient to their use:

and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the face of the earth; which was giving them an universal and unlimited dominion over all the creatures; of which see an enumeration in **Ps 8:6**.

Genesis 1:29

Ver. 29. And God said,.... That is, to Adam and Eve, whom he had made in his image and likeness, and to whom he had given the dominion of the earth and sea, and all things in them:

behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth; every herb or plant which had a seed in it, by which it sowed itself again; or being taken off, might be sown by man, even everyone that was wholesome, healthful, and nourishing, without any exception; whatever grew in any part of the earth, be it where it would:

and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; all but the tree of knowledge, of good and evil, afterwards excepted; and both these take in all kind of vegetables, all herbs, plants, roots, even corn, wheat, barley, pease, beans, &c. and the various fruits of all sorts of trees, but that before mentioned:

to you it shall be for meat: which is generally thought to be the food of the antediluvians {n}, it not being proper, at least very soon, to kill any of the animals, until they were multiplied and increased, lest their species should be destroyed; though here is no prohibition of eating flesh; nor is it said that this only should be for meat, which is before mentioned; and by the early employment of some in keeping sheep, and by the sacrifice of creatures immediately after the fall, part of which used to be eaten by the offerers; and by the distinction of clean and unclean creatures before the flood, it looks probable that flesh might be eaten: and Bochart {o} refers this clause to what goes before in the preceding verse, as well as to what is in this, and takes the sense to be, that the fishes of the sea, and fowls of the air, and every living creature man had dominion over, as well as herbs and fruits, were given him for his food: but the Jews {p} are of opinion, that the first man might not eat flesh, but it was granted to the sons of Noah.

(From **Ro 5:12** there was no death before Adam's sin, hence up until at least the fall, man did not eat meat. Ed.)

{n} "Panis erant primus virides Mortalibus Herbae", Ovid. Fast. l. 4. {o} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 1. c. 2. col. 11. {p} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 59. 2.

Genesis 1:30

Ver. 30. And to every beast of the earth,.... Wild or tame, the cattle on a thousand hills; God took care and provided for these, being all his creatures, and designed to answer some end or other by their creation:

and to every fowl of the air; that flies in it;

and to every creeping thing upon the earth; even the meanest and lowest insect:

wherein there is life; or "a living soul"; that has an animal life, which is to be supported by food:

[I have given] every green herb for meat; the leaves for some, and seed for others; and here is no mention made of flesh; and perhaps those creatures which are now carnivorous were not so at their first creation:

and it was so; every creature, both man and beast, had food suitable to their nature and appetite, and a sufficiency of it.

(From **Ro 5:12**, it is certain that up until the fall no animal ate other animals, otherwise there would have been death before Adam's first sin, which is said to be the cause of death. Ed.)

Genesis 1:31

Ver. 31. And God saw everything that he had made,.... Either all that he had made on the several six days of the creation, he took a survey of them, looked over them again, as workmen do when they have finished their work, to see if anything is amiss or wanting; not that anything of this nature can be supposed in the works of God, but such a survey is attributed to him after the manner of men, to show the completeness of his works, and the excellency of them. Picherellus {q} limits this to what had been done on this day, with respect to man, who alone, as he thinks, was the subject of this day's work; and so it respects the creation of man after the image and likeness of God; the forming of the woman out of his rib, and so providing a suitable helper for him; giving them dominion over all the creatures, and suitable food for the support of the animal life; and God reflected on this, and foresaw it would be good in the issue, as it was in itself.

And behold, [it was] very good; it had been said of everything else, at the close of each day's work, excepting the second, that it was good; but here the expression is stronger upon the creation of man, the chief and principal work of God, that it was "very good"; he being made upright and holy, bearing the image of his Creator upon him, and in such circumstances as to be happy and comfortable himself, and to glorify God: the phrase may be expressive not only of the goodness of everything God had made, as it was in itself, and in its use; but of his complacency, and delight therein, every thing being made for himself and for, his pleasure, **Re 4:11**

and the evening and the morning were the sixth day; by that time all these works on this day were finished; the sun had gone round the earth, or the earth about that, for the space of twenty four hours, which completed the sixth day, within which term of time God had determined to finish all his works, as he did. This day, according to Capellus, was the twenty third of April, and, according, to Archbishop Usher, the twenty eighth of October, or, as others, the sixth of September. Mr. Whiston, as has been before observed, is of opinion, that the six days of the creation were equal to six years: and the Persians have a tradition, which they pretend to have received from Zoroastres, that God created the world, not in six natural days, but in six times or spaces of different length, called in their tongue "Ghahan barha". The first of these spaces, in which the heavens were created, was a space of forty five days; the second, in which the waters were created, sixty days; the third, in which the earth was created, seventy five days; the fourth, in which grass and trees were created, thirty days; the fifth, in which all creatures were made, eighty days; the sixth, in which man was created, seventy five days; in all three hundred sixty five days, or a full year {r}. The first of the six principal good works they are taught to do is to observe the times of the creation {s}. And the ancient Tuscans or Etrurians allot six thousand years to the creation; the order of which, with them, is much the same with the Mosaic account, only making a day a thousand years: in the first thousand, they say, God made the heaven and the earth; in the next, the firmament, which appears to us, calling it heaven; in the third, the sea, and all the waters that are in the earth; in the fourth, the great lights, the sun and moon, and also the stars; in the fifth, every volatile, reptile, and four footed animal, in the air, earth and water, (which agrees with Picherellus); See Gill on "Ge 1:25" and in the sixth, man; and whereas they say God employed twelve thousand years in all his creation, and the first six being passed at the creation of man, it seems, according to them, that mankind are to continue for the other six thousand years {t}. And it is a notion that obtains among the Jews, that, answerable to the six days of creation, the world will continue six thousand years. It is a tradition of Elias {u}, an ancient Jewish doctor, that

"the world shall stand six thousand years, two thousand void, two thousand under the law, and two thousand, the days of the Messiah."

And Baal Hatturim {w} observes, there are six "alephs" in the first verse of this chapter, answerable to the six thousand years the world is to continue: and R. Gedaliah says {x}, at the end of the sixth millennium the world shall return without form and void, (to its former condition, "tohu" and "bohu",) and the whole shall be a sabbath: and very particular is another writer {y} of theirs concerning these six days of the creation, who having spoken of the day of judgment, the resurrection of the dead, and the world to come, observes, that the six days' work is an intimation and sign of these things: on the sixth day man was created, and the work was perfected on the seventh; so the kings of the nations shall be in the world five thousand years, answerable to the five days in which the fowls, and creeping things of the waters, and the rest, were created; and the holding of their kingdoms will be a little within the sixth millennium, answerable to the creation of cattle and beasts, who were now created on the beginning of it, the "sixth day"; and the kingdom of the house of David will be in the sixth millennium, answerable to the creation of man, who knew his Creator, and ruled over them all; and at the end of that millennium will be the day of judgment, answerable to man's being judged at the end of it, "the sixth day; and the seventh millennium will be the sabbath". And a like notion obtains among the Persian Magi; it is said that Zerdusht, or Zoroastres, was born in the middle age of the world, so it was told him from the age of Keiomaras (the first man) unto thy age are 3000 years, and from this thy age unto the resurrection are 3000 years {z}.

{q} In Cosmopoeiam, p. 2841. {r} Hyde Hist. Relig. vet. Pers. p. 164, 166, 168, 483, 484. {s} Lib. Sad-der, port. 6. 94. apud Hyde, ib. p. 439, 483. {t} See Universal History, vol. 1. p. 64. {u} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. Avoda

Zara, fol. 9. 1. {w} Comment. in Gen. i. 1. {x} Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 36. 1. {y} Comment. in Maimon. Hilch. Teshuva, c. 9. sect. 2. {z} Lib. Sad-der, port. 11. Vid. Hyde, ut supra, (Hist. Relig. vet. Pers. p. 481.)

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 2

In this chapter are contained a summary of the works of creation on the six days, and God's resting from his works on the seventh day, and the sanctification of that, **Ge 2:1** and an account of various things relating to several parts of the creation enlarged on and explained, and of various circumstances omitted in the preceding chapter, which could not so well be taken notice of there; as of a mist arising out of the earth, which watered the herbs and plants before there was any rain to fall upon them, or a man to cultivate them, **Ge 2:5** and of the matter and manner of man's formation, **Ge 2:7** and of the planting of the garden of Eden, and the trees that were in it, and the rivers that watered it, and sprung from it, and the course they steered, the countries they washed, and what those countries abounded with, **Ge 2:8** of man's being put into it to dress it, and keep it, and of the grant he had to eat of the fruit of any of the trees in it, excepting one, which was forbidden under a penalty of death, **Ge 2:15** and of all the creatures, beasts and fowls, being brought to him, to give them names, **Ge 2:18** and of God's providing an help meet for him, and forming Eve out of one of his ribs, and of their marriage together, and the institution of marriage, **Ge 2:21** and the chapter is concluded with observing the present state and circumstances of our first parents before they fell, **Ge 2:25**.

Ver. 1. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished,.... Perfected and completed in the space of six days, gradually, successively, in the manner before related; by the word and power of God they were on the first day created out of nothing, but they were not perfected, beautified, and adorned, and filled, until all the creatures in the were made:

and all the host them, of the heavens and the earth; the host of heavens are the sun, moon, and stars, often so called in Scripture, and also the angels; see **Lu 2:13** wherefore this may be considered as a proof of their creation within the above space of time, probably on the first day, though the Jews commonly say on the second; for if all the host of heaven were made at this time, and angels are at least a part of that host, then they must be then made, or otherwise all the host of heaven were not then and there made, as here affirmed: and the host of the earth, or terraqueous globe, are the plants, herbs, and trees, the fowls, fishes, animals, and man; and these are like hosts or armies, very numerous, and at the command of God, and are marshalled and kept in order by him; even some of the smallest of creatures are his army, which are at his beck, and he can make use of to the annoyance of others, as particularly the locusts are called, **Joe 2:11**.

Genesis 2:2

Ver. 2. And on the seventh day God ended his work, which he had made,.... Not that God wrought anything on the seventh day, or finished any part of his work on that day, because he could not then be said to rest from all his work, as be is afterwards twice said to do; and because of this seeming difficulty the Septuagint, Samaritan, and Syriac versions, read, "on the sixth day". The two latter versions following the former, which so translated for the sake of Ptolemy king of Egypt, as the Jews say {a}, that he might not object that God did any work on the sabbath day: and Josephus {b} observes, that, Moses says the world, and all things in it, were made in those six days, as undoubtedly they were; and were all finished on the sixth day, as appears from the last verse of the preceding chapter; and yet there is no occasion to alter the text, or suppose a various reading. Some, as Aben Ezra observes, take the sense of the word to be, "before the seventh day God ended his work", as they think b may be rendered, and as it is by Noldius {c}: or the words may be translated, "in the seventh day, when God had ended", or "finished his work" {d}, which he had done on the sixth day, then

he rested on the seventh day from all his works which he had made: not as though weary of working, for the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, nor is weary, Isa 40:28 but as having done all his work, and brought it to such perfection, that he had no more to do; not that he ceased from making individuals, as the souls of men, and even all creatures that are brought into the world by generation, may be said to be made by him, but from making any new species of creatures; and much less did he cease from supporting and maintaining the creatures he had made in their beings, and providing everything agreeable for them, and governing them, and overruling all things in the world for ends of his own glory; in this sense he "worketh hitherto", as Christ says, **Joh 5:17**.

{a} T. Bab. Megilla fol. 9. 1. & Gloss. in ib. {b} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 1. sect. 1. {c} Concord. part. Eb. p. 144. No. 1007. Perfecerat. "ante diem septimum"; some in Yatablus. {d} lkyw "et compleverat", Drusius; "quum perfecisset", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "had finished", Ainsworth.

Genesis 2:3

Ver. 3. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it,.... A day in which he took delight and pleasure, having finished all his works, and resting from them, and looking over them as very good; and so he pronounced this day a good and happy day, and "sanctified" or appointed it in his mind to be a day separated from others, for holy service and worship; as it was with the Jews when they became a body of people, both civil and ecclesiastical: or this is all said by way of prolepsis or anticipation, as many things in this chapter are, many names of countries and rivers, by which being called in the times of Moses, are here given them, though they were not called by them so early, nor till many ages after: and according to Jarchi this passage respects future time, when God "blessed" this day with the manna, which descended on all the days of the week, an omer for a man, and on the sixth day double food; and he "sanctified" it with the manna which did not descend at all on that day: besides, these words may be read in a parenthesis, as containing an account of a fact that was done, not at the beginning of the world, and on the first seventh day of it; but of what had been done in the times of Moses, who wrote this, after the giving of the law of the sabbath; and this being given through his hands to the people of Israel, he takes this opportunity here to insert it, and very pertinently, seeing the reason why God then, in the times of Moses, blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it, was, because he had rested on that day from all his works, Ex 20:11 and the same reason is given here, taken plainly out of that law which he had delivered to them:

because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made; which shows, that this refers not to the same time when God blessed and hallowed the seventh day, which was done in the times of Moses, but to what had been long before, and was then given as a reason enforcing it; for it is not here said, as in the preceding verse, "he rested", but "had rested", even from the foundation of the world, when his works were finished, as in **Heb 4:3** even what "he created to make" {e}, as the words may be here rendered; which he created out of nothing, as he did the first matter, in order to make all things out of it, and put them in that order, and bring them to that perfection he did.

{e} twvel-arb "creavit ut faceret", V. L. "creaverat ut faceret", Pagninus, Montanus.

Genesis 2:4

Ver. 4. These [are] the generations of the heavens and the earth, when they were created,.... That is, the above account, delivered in the preceding chapter, is a history of the production of the heavens and earth, and of all things in them; the creation of them being a kind of generation, and the day of their creation a sort of birthday; see **Ge 5:1**

in the day that the Lord God made the earth, and the heavens; meaning not any particular day, not the first day, in which the heavens and the earth were created; but referring to the whole time of the six days, in which everything in them, and relating to them, were made. Here another name is added to God, his name "Jehovah", expressive of his being and perfections, particularly his eternity and immutability, being the everlasting and unchangeable "I am", which is, and was, and is to come: this name, according to the Jews, is not to be pronounced, and therefore they put the points of "Adonai", directing it so to be read; and these two names, "Jehovah Elohim", or "Adonai" and "Elohim", with them make the full and perfect name of God, and which they observe is here very pertinently given him, upon the perfection and completion of his works.

Genesis 2:5

Ver. 5. And every plant of the field, before it was in the earth,.... That is, God made it, even he who made the heavens and the earth; for these words depend upon the preceding, and are in close connection with them; signifying that the plants of the field, which were made out of the earth on the third day, were made before any were planted in it, or any seed was sown therein from whence they could proceed, and therefore must be the immediate production of divine power:

and every herb of the field before it grew: those at once sprung up in perfection out of the earth, before there were any that budded forth, and grew up by degrees to perfection, as herbs do now:

for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth: so that the production of plants and herbs in their first formation could not be owing to that; since on the third day, when they were made, there was no sun to exhale and draw up the waters into the clouds, in order to be let down again in showers of rain:

and there [was] not a man to till the ground; who was not created till the sixth day, and therefore could have no concern in the cultivation of the earth, and of the plants and herbs in it; but these were the produce of almighty power, without the use of any means: some Jewish writers {f}, by the plant and herb of the field, mystically understand the first and second Messiah, for they sometimes feign two; see **Isa 4:2**

{f} Zohar in Gen. fol. 32. 4.

Genesis 2:6

Ver. 6. But there went up a mist from the earth,.... After the waters had been drained off from it, and it was warmed by the body of light and heat created on the first day, which caused a vapour, which went up as a mist, and descended:

and watered the whole face of the ground; or earth, and so supplied the place of rain, until that was given: though rather the words may be rendered disjunctively, "or there went up" {g}; that is, before a mist went up, when as yet there was none; not so much as a mist to water the earth, and plants and herbs were made to grow; and so Saadiah reads them negatively, "nor did a mist go up"; there were no vapours exhaled to form clouds, and produce rain, and yet the whole earth on the third day was covered with plants and herbs; and this is approved of by Kimchi and Ben Melech.

{g} hley daw "aut vapor ascendens", Junius & Tremellius.

Genesis 2:7

Ver. 7. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground,.... Not of dry dust, but, as Josephus {h} says, of red earth macerated, or mixed with water; the like notion Hesiod {i} has; or out of clay, as in Job 33:6 hence a word is made use of, translated "formed", which is used of the potter that forms his clay into what shape he pleases: the original matter of which man was made was clay; hence the clay of Prometheus {k} with the Heathens; and God is the

Potter that formed him, and gave him the shape he has, see Isa 64:8, there are two "jods", it is observed, in the word, which is not usual; respecting, as Jarchi thinks, the formation of man for this world, and for the resurrection of the dead; but rather the two fold formation of body and soul, the one is expressed here, and the other in the following clause: and this, as it shows the mighty power of God in producing such a creature out of the dust of the earth, so it serves to humble the pride of man, when he considers he is of the earth, earthy, dust, and ashes, is dust, and to dust he must return.

And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; which in that way entered into his body, and quickened it, which before was a lifeless lump of clay, though beautifully shapen: it is in the plural number, the "breath of lives" {l}, including the vegetative, sensitive, and rational life of man. And this was produced not with his body, as the souls of brutes were, and was produced by the breath of God, as theirs were not; nor theirs out of the earth, as his body was: and these two different productions show the different nature of the soul and body of man, the one is material and mortal, the other immaterial and immortal:

and man became a living soul; or a living man, not only capable of performing the functions of the animal life, of eating, drinking, walking, &c. but of thinking, reasoning, and discoursing as a rational creature.

{h} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 1. {i} Opera & dies, ver. 60. {k} Martial. l. 10. Epigram. 38. {l} Myyx tmvn Heb. "spiraculum vitarum", Pareus.

Genesis 2:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden,.... Or "had planted" {m}, for this was not now done after the formation of man, but before; and so the word translated "eastward" may be rendered, as it is by some, "before" {n}: for the plain meaning is, that God had planted a garden before he made man, even on the third day, when all herbs, and plants, and trees were produced out of the earth. The whole world was as a garden, in comparison of what it is now since the fall: what then must this spot of ground, this garden be, which was separated and distinguished from the rest, and the more immediate plantation of God, and therefore is called the garden of the Lord, Ge 13:10 and which Plato {o} calls diov
khpov, "Jove's garden?" This garden was planted in the country of Eden, so called very probably from its being a very pleasant and delightful country; and

though it is not certain, and cannot be said exactly where it was, yet it seems to be a part of Mesopotamia, since it is more than once mentioned with Haran, which was in that country,
2Ki 19:12 and since it was by the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, when they were become one stream, which ran through this country, and parted again at this garden; and the country there, as Herodotus {p} says, is the most fruitful he ever saw; and it seems to be much better to place it here than in Armenia, where the fountain of these rivers is said to be: so Tournefort {q} thinks it lay in the country, or plain of the three churches (or Ejmiadzit), in Armenia, about twenty French leagues distant from the heads of Euphrates and Araxes, and near as many from the Phasis, a country exceeding pleasant and fruitful. A very learned man {r} is of opinion, that the garden of Eden was in the land of Judea to the east, by the lake of Gennesaret or Tiberias, and the lake of Asphaltites, called the Dead sea, and takes in, in its compass, the famous valley, or the great plain, and the plains of Jericho, and great part of Galilee, and all that tract which Jordan flows by, from Gennesaret to the country of Sodom; and he takes the river Jordan to be Nde ray, "the river of Eden", from whence it has its name of Jordan; and Gennesaret he interprets as if it was rv Ng, "Gansar", the garden of the prince, that is, of Adam, the prince of all mankind. He argues from the situation of the place, and the pleasantness and fruitfulness of it, the balsam of Jericho, and other odoriferous plants that grew there, and what are called the apples of paradise: and it must be owned, that this country abounded with gardens and orchards: it is mentioned in the Jewish Misnah, where the commentators {s} say, it was a country in the land of Israel, in which were many gardens and orchards, that produced excellent fruit; and the fruits of Gennesaret are spoken of in the Talmud {t} as exceeding sweet: and with this agrees the account Josephus {u} gives of it, that it is

"wonderful in nature and goodness, and through its fertility refuses no plant; everything is set here; the temper of the air suits with different things; here grow nuts, and more winter fruit; and there palms, which are nourished with heat, and near them figs and olives, which require a softer air--not only it produces apples of different sorts, beyond belief, but long preserves them; and indeed the most excellent of fruit; grapes and figs it furnishes with for ten months, without intermission, and other fruit throughout the whole year, growing old, with them."

And it may be further observed, that it is asked by the Jewish Rabbins, why it is called Genesar? and the answer is, because
Myroyng, "the gardens of princes"; these are the kings who have gardens in the midst of it: another reason is given, because it belonged to Naphtali, a

portion in the midst of it, as it is said, and of "Naphtali a thousand princes", 1Ch 12:34. {w} And it is worthy of remark, that Strabo calls Jericho, which was within this tract, "the paradise of balsam" {x}; and there, and hereabout, as Diodorus Siculus {y}, and Justin {z} relate, grew this aromatic plant, and nowhere else; it was not to be found in any other part of the world. And it appears from Scripture, that if the plain of Jordan was not the garden of Eden, it is said to be, "as the garden of the Lord", Ge 13:10 and if the "caph" or "as" is not a note of similitude, but of reality, as it sometimes is, it proves it to be the very place; and the above learned writer takes it to be not comparative, but illative, as giving a reason why it was so well watered, because it was the garden of the Lord: and the Jews have some notion of this, for they say, if that the garden of Eden is in the land of Israel, Bethshean is the door of it, or entrance into it; the gloss gives this reason, because the fruits were sweeter than any other {a}; and this was near, at the entrance of the great plain before mentioned; and before which was this place, as Josephus says {b}: and if the garden of Eden was in those parts, it may be observed, that where the first Adam first dwelt, and where he sinned and fell, Christ the second Adam frequently was; here he conversed much, taught his doctrines, wrought his miracles; and even here he appeared after his resurrection from the dead. But the opinions of men about this place are very many, and there is scarce any country in the whole world but one or another has placed the garden of Eden in it; nay, some have assigned a place for it out of the earth, in the eighth sphere. Such a garden undoubtedly there was somewhere, and it is said to be placed "eastward", either in the eastern part of the country of Eden, see **Ge 4:16** or to the east of the desert where Moses was when he wrote; or to the east of Judea, as Mesopotamia was: and if this garden was in Judea, the place assigned for it by the above learned person, it was in the eastern part of that country; see Nu 32:19. This garden was an emblem either of the church of Christ on earth, which is a garden enclosed, surrounded with divine power, and distinguished with divine grace; a small spot in comparison of the world; is of Jehovah's planting, and is his property; and is an Eden to his people, where they enjoy much spiritual pleasure and delight: or however of the place and state of the happiness of the saints in the other world, often called a paradise in allusion to this, Lu 23:43 and which is of God's planting, and therefore called the paradise of God, and is an Eden, where are pleasures for evermore: and this seems to be what the Jews mean when they say {c}, that the garden of Eden, or paradise, was created before the world was; which is no other than what Christ says of it in other words, Mt 25:34

and there he put the man whom he had formed; not as soon as he had planted the garden, but as soon as he had made man; and from hence it is generally concluded, that man was made without the garden, and brought from the place where he was formed, and put into it; and which some say was near Damascus: but be it where it will, it is most probable that it was not far from the garden; though there seems no necessity for supposing him to be made out of it; for the putting him into it may signify the appointing and ordering him to be there, and fixing and settling him in it, for the ends and uses mentioned, see **Ge 2:15**.

(After the global destruction of Noah's flood, it is doubtful that the location of the Garden of Eden could be determined with any degree of certainty today. Ed.)

{m} ejyw "plantaverat", V. L. Vatablus, Piscator, Pareus, Drusius, Cartwright; "ornaverat plantis", Junius & Tremellius. {n} Mdqm "a principio", V. L. so Onkelos; "antes vel antequam", same in Fagius, Cartwright. {o} In Symposio, apud Euseb. praepar. Evangel. l. 12. c. 11. p. 584. {p} Clio sive, l. 1. c. 193. {q} Voyage to the Levant, vol. 3. p. 161, 162. {r} Nichol. Abrami Pharus Vet. Test. l. 2. c. 16. p. 56. So Texelius (Phoenix, l. 3. c. 7. sect. 7.) takes it to be in the land of Promise, not far from the Dead sea, or sea of Sodom, and in the country about Jordan; and of the same opinion is Heidegger (Hist. Patriarch. Exerc. 4. sect. 42. p. 15.) {s} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Maaserot, c. 3. sect. 7. {t} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 44. 1. Erubin, fol. 30. 1. & Pesachim, fol. 8. 2. {u} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 9. sect. 8. {w} Aruch in voce rong, fol. 37. 1. {x} Geograph. l. 16. p. 525. {y} Bibliothec. l. 19. p. 734. {z} E Trogo, l. 36. c. 3. {a} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 19. 1. {b} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 8. sect. 5. 1 Maccab. v. 52. {c} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 54. 1. Nedarim, fol. 39. 2.

Genesis 2:9

Ver. 9. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food,.... That is, out of the ground of the garden of Eden; and this was done on the third day, when the whole earth brought forth grass, herbs, and trees: but a peculiar spot of ground was fixed on for man, and stocked with trees of all sorts for his use, not only to bear fruit, which would be suitable and agreeable food for him, but others also, which would yield him delight to look at; such as the tall cedars for their loftiness, spreading branches and green leaves, with many others; so that not only there were trees to gratify the senses of tasting and smelling, but that of sight; and such a sightly goodly tree to look at was the tree of knowledge, **Ge 3:6**. These trees may be an emblem of the saints, the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, and made to grow by him through the influence of his Spirit and grace; and whom he plants in his gardens, the churches, and transplants into the heavenly paradise, and are often compared to palm trees, cedars, olive trees, pomegranates, &c.

the tree of life also in the midst of the garden; set there as in the most excellent place, where it might be most conspicuous, and to be come at; for before Adam sinned, as there was no prohibition of his eating of it, so there was no obstruction to it; and as he had a grant to eat of it, with the other trees, it was designed for his use, to support and maintain his natural life, which would have been continued, had he persisted in his obedience and state of innocence, and very probably by means of this chiefly: hence the son of Sirach calls it the tree of immortality,

"The knowledge of the commandments of the Lord is the doctrine of life: and they that do things that please him shall receive the fruit of the tree of immortality." (Sirach 19:19)

and it might be also a sign, token, and symbol to him of his dependence on God; that he received his life from him; and that this was preserved by his blessing and providence, and not by his own power and skill; and that this would be continued, provided he transgressed not the divine law: and it seems to have a further respect, even to eternal life; by Christ; for though it might not be a symbol of that life to Adam in his state of innocence, yet it became so after his fall: hence Christ is sometimes signified by the tree of life, **Pr 3:18** who is not only the author of natural and spiritual life, but the giver of eternal life; the promise of it is in him, and the blessing itself; he has made way for it by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and is the way unto it; it is in his gift, and he bestows it on all his people, and it will lie greatly in the enjoyment of him. The situation of this tree in the midst of the garden well agrees with him who is in the midst of his church and people, **Re 1:13** stands open, is in sight, and is accessible to them all now, who may come to him, and partake of the fruits and blessings of his grace, which are many, constant, and durable, Re 22:2 and who will be seen and enjoyed by all, to all eternity:

and the tree of knowledge of good and evil; so called, either with respect to God, who by it tried man, when he had made him, whether he would be good or evil; but this he foreknew: rather therefore with respect to man, not that the eating the fruit of it could really give him such knowledge, nor did he need it; for by the law of nature inscribed on his heart, he knew the difference between good and evil, and that what God commanded was good, and what he forbid was evil: but either it had its name from the virtue Satan ascribed to it, **Ge 3:5** or from the sad event following on man's eating the fruit of it, whereby he became experimentally sensible of the difference between good and evil, between obedience and disobedience to the will of God; he found by sad experience what good he had lost, or might have enjoyed, and what evil he had brought on himself and his posterity, he might have avoided. What this tree was is not certain; there are various conjectures about it, and nothing else can be come at concerning it. Some take it to be the fig tree, as Jarchi, and some in Aben Ezra on **Ge 3:6** because fig leaves were at hand, and immediately made use of on eating the fruit of it; some the vine, and particularly the black grape, as in the book of Zohar {d}; others, as Baal Hatturim on **Ge 1:29** the pome citron, or citron apple tree {e}; others, the common apple, as the author of the old Nizzechon {f}, and which is the vulgar notion; evil and an apple being called by the same Latin word "malum": in the Talmud {g}, some say it was the vine, some the fig tree, and others wheat {h}: the Mahometans say it was a tree, called by the Africans by the name of Musa {i}.

{d} In Exod. fol. 59. 4. & in Numb. fol. 53. 3. So in Bereshit Rabba, sect. 12. fol. 155. 2. {e} Vid. Caphtor Uperah, fol. 49. 1. & 60. 2. & 63. 2. {f} P. 147. Ed. Wagenseil. {g} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 40. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 70. 1. 2. So in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 15. 2. Tikkune Zohar correct. 24. fol. 68. {h} Vid. Bartenora in Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 2. {i} Leo. African. Desriptio Africae, c. 9. p. 772.

Genesis 2:10

Ver. 10. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden,.... Before man was created, as Aben Ezra observes, this river went out of Eden and watered it on every side; but what river is here meant, is hard to say. It is more generally thought to be the river Euphrates, when that and the Tigris met, and became one stream or river, and as such entered and passed through Eden; and as it was parted into four rivers afterwards, in two of which they retained their names: the learned Reland {k} thinks, this river is now lost; but the learned writer before referred to thinks, as has been observed, that it is the river Jordan; see note on "Ge 2:8" and which, as Pliny {l} says, was a very pleasant river:

and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads; after it had passed through Eden, and the garden in it, watering it, it divided into four parts or heads of water, or four chief principal rivers, hereafter mentioned; and which circumstance the above writer thinks makes it the more probable to be the river

Jordan, which and with the four rivers are spoken of together by the son of Sirach, in the Apocrypha:

"25 He filleth all things with his wisdom, as Phison and as Tigris in the time of the new fruits. 26 He maketh the understanding to abound like Euphrates, and as Jordan in the time of the harvest. 27 He maketh the doctrine of knowledge appear as the light, and as Geon in the time of vintage." (Sirach 24)

of which in the following verses. This river may be an emblem of the everlasting love of God, that pure river of water of life, which springs from the throne of God, and of the Lamb, from divine sovereignty, and not from the faith, love, and obedience of man; that river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, and which water the garden, the church, revive its plants, and make it fruitful and delightful; the four heads or branches of which are eternal election of God, particular redemption by Christ, regeneration and sanctification by the Spirit, and eternal life and happiness, as the free gift of God through Christ; see Ps 46:4.

{k} Dissert. de Paradiso, p. 53. {l} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 15.

Genesis 2:11

Ver. 11. The name of the first is Pison,.... Not the river Nile in Egypt, as Jarchi, who thinks it is derived from "Pashah", which signifies to increase, expand, and diffuse, as that does at certain times, and spreads itself over the land of Egypt, or from "Pishten", linen, which grows there, Isa 19:9 nor the river Ganges in India, as Josephus {m}, and others; for the country where it is afterwards said to run agrees with neither Egypt nor India: rather it seems to be the same river, which is the Phasis of Pliny {n}, and Strabo {o}, and the Physcus of Xenophon {p}, and the Hyphasis of Philostorgius {q}, a river in Armenia, and about Colchis; and which is sometimes called Pasitigris, being a branch of that river, and mixed with, or arising from channels, drawn from Tigris, Euphrates, and other waters {r}

that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; this country had its name from Havilah, one of the sons of Cush, Ge 10:7 who very probably seated himself near his brother Seba, from whom came the Sabeans, who inhabited one part of Arabia; and Havilah, it is plain, was before Egypt, in the way to Assyria, and bordered upon the Ishmaelites, who inhabited Arabia Deserta, Ge 25:16. So that it seems to be a country in Arabia, near unto, or a part of Cush or Arabia Cusea, and near to Seba or Arabia Felix: and so Strabo, among the nations of the Arabians, and along with the Nabatheans, places the Chaulotaeans {s}, who seem to be no other than the posterity of Havilah: according to the learned Reland {t}, it is the same with Colchis, a part of Scythia, and Phasis is well known to be a river of Colchis; and which runs into Pontus, as appears from Pliny {u} and includes Scythia, as Justin {w} says; and then it must have its name from Havilah, the son of Joktan, Ge 10:29 and in either of these countries there was gold, and an abundance of it, and of the best, as follows:

(After the global destruction of Noah's flood, it is doubtful that the location of these rivers could be determined with any degree of certainty today. Ed.)

{m} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 1. sect. 3. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 4. 17. {o} Geograph. l. 11. p. 343, 345, 364. {p} Cyr. Minor. l. 2. {q} Hist. Ecclesiast. l. 3. c. 10. {r} Curtius, l. 5. c. 3. Strabo. Geograph. l. 15. p. 501. {s} Ib. p. 528. {t} De Paradiso, p. 16, &c. {u} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 4. 17.) {w} E Trogo, l. 2. c. 2.

Genesis 2:12

Ver. 12. And the gold of that land is good,.... Arabia was famous for gold: Diodorus Siculus {x} speaks of gold in Arabia, called "apyrus", which is not melted by fire out of small filings, as other; but as soon as dug is said to be pure gold, and that in the size of chestnuts, and of such a flaming colour, that the most precious stones are set in it by artificers for ornament: and in Colchis and Scythia, as Strabo {y} relates, there are rivers which produce gold; and from whence came the fable of the golden fleece, the Argonauts went to Colchis for:

there is the bdellium, and the onyx stone; the first of these is either an aromatic gum; the tree, according to Pliny {z}, is black, and is of the size of an olive tree, has the leaf of an oak, and its fruit is like capers; it is found in Arabia, India, Media, and Babylon; but the best, according to him, is in Bactriana, and, next to that, the bdellium of Arabia: or else it is a precious stone, and which the Jewish writers {a} commonly take to be crystal; and, according to Solinus {b}, the best crystal is in Scythia. Bochart {c} would have it that the pearl is meant, because of its whiteness and roundness, for which the manna is compared to it, Nu 11:7 and the rather because of the pearl fishery at Catipha, taking Havilah to be that part of Arabia which lies upon the Persian gulf. The latter, the onyx, is a precious stone, which has its name from its being of the colour of a man's nail; and, according to Pliny {d}, the onyx marble is found in the mountains of Arabia, and the ancients thought it was nowhere else; and he speaks elsewhere of the Arabian onyx precious stone, and of the sardonyx, as in the same country {e}; and some think that is here meant; though the word is sometimes by the Septuagint rendered the emerald; and the best of these, according to Solinus {f} and Pliny {g}, were in Scythia.

(After the global destruction of Noah's flood, it is doubtful that the location of these places could be determined with degree of certainty today. Ed.)

{x} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 133. {y} Geograph. l. 1. p. 31. & l. 11. p. 344. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 9. {a} Jarchi in Numb. xi. 7. David de Pomis Tzemach David, fol. 8. 3. {b} Polyhistor. c. 25. {c} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 5. p. 675, &c. {d} Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 7. {e} lb. l. 37. c. 6. {f} Polyhistor. ut supra. (c. 25) {g} Ut supra, (Nat. Hist. l. 36.) c. 5.

Genesis 2:13

Ver. 13. And the name of the second river [is] Gihon,.... There was one of this name in the land of Israel, which, or a branch of it, flowed near Jerusalem, **1Ki 1:33** this Aben Ezra suggests is here meant, and which favours the notion of the above learned man, that the garden of Eden was in the land of Israel. Josephus {h} takes it to be the river Nile, as do many others; it seems to have been a branch of the river Euphrates or Tigris, on the eastern side, as Phison was on the west; and so Aben Ezra says it came from the south east. The learned Reland {i} will have it to be the river Araxes: it has its name, according to Jarchi, from the force it goes with, and the noise it makes. And it seems to have its name from xwg, which signifies to come forth with great force, as this river is said to do, when it pours itself into the Baltic sea.

The same [is] it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia; either Ethiopia above Egypt; and this favours the notion of those who take Gihon to be the Nile: for Pausanias {k} says, that it was commonly reported that the Nile was Euphrates, which disappearing in a marsh, rose up above Ethiopia, and became the Nile, and so washed that country, and is thought to agree very well with the Mosaic account: or else that Cush or Ethiopia, which bordered on Midian, and was a part of Arabia, and may be called Arabia Chusea, often meant by Cush in Scripture. Reland {l} thinks the country of the Cossaeans or Cussaeans, a people bordering on Media, the country of Kuhestan, a province of Persia, is intended.

(After the global destruction of Noah's flood, it is doubtful that the location of these rivers could be determined with any degree of certainty today. Ed.)

{h} Antiqu, l. 1. c. 1. sect. 3. Philostorg. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 10. p. 482. {i} De situ Paradisi, p. 32. {k} Corinthiaca sive, l. 2. p. 94. {l} Ut supra, (De situ Paradisi) p. 38.

Genesis 2:14

Ver. 14. The name of the third river is Hiddekel,.... A river which ran by Shushan in Persia, and retained its name in the times of Daniel, Da 10:4 where it is called the great river; and it seems it bears the same name now among the Persians; at least it did an hundred and fifty years ago, when Rauwolff {m} travelled in those parts. The Targum of Jonathan here calls it Diglath, the same with the Diglito of Pliny {n}; and according to him it is called Tigris, from its swiftness, either from the tiger, a swift creature, or from
arg, "to dart", in the Chaldee language; and so Curtius {o} says, that in the Persian language they call a dart "tigris": and with this agrees the word "Hiddekel", which in the Hebrew language signifies sharp and swift, as a polished arrow is; and Jarchi says it is so called, because its waters are sharp and swift: though this is contradicted by some modern travellers {p} who say it is a slower stream than the Euphrates, and is not only very crooked, and full of meanders, but also choked up with islands, and great banks of stone:

that is [it] which goeth towards the east of Assyria: a country which had its name from Ashur, a son of Shem, Ge 10:11 it became a famous kingdom and monarchy, Nineveh was the metropolis of it, which was built on the river Tigris or Hiddekel; and, as before observed, it ran by Shushan in Persia; and so, as Diodorus Siculus {q} says, it passed through Media into Mesopotamia; and which very well agrees with its being, according to Moses, one of the rivers of Eden. Twelve miles up this river, from Mosul, near which Nineveh once stood, lies an island, called the island of Eden, in the heart of the Tigris, about ten English miles in circuit, and is said to be undoubtedly a part of paradise {r}:

and the fourth river [is] Euphrates: or "Phrat", as in the Hebrew tongue. Reland {s} seems rightly to judge, that the syllable "eu", prefixed to it, is the Persian "au" or "cu", which in that language signifies "water"; so that "Euphrates" is no other than "the water of Phrat", so called from the fruitfulness of it; for its waters, as Jarchi says, fructify, increase, and fatten the earth; and who rightly observes that these names, and so those of other rivers, and of the countries here mentioned, are named by a prolepsis or anticipation, these being the names they bore when Moses wrote; unless it may be thought to be the Hebrew awh, "Hu, the, that Phrat"; and which the Greeks have made an "eu" of.

(After the global destruction of Noah's flood, it is doubtful that the location of these rivers could be determined with any degree of certainty today. Ed.)

{m} Travels, part. 2. c. 9. p. 159. ed. Ray. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 27. {o} Hist. l. 4. c. 9. {p} De la Valle & Thevenot, apud Universal History, vol. 4. p. 248. {q} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 99. {r} Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 91. {s} Ut supra, (De Situ Paradisi) p. 45.

Genesis 2:15

Ver. 15. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden,.... This is observed before in Ge 2:8 and is here repeated to introduce what follows; and is to be understood not of a corporeal assumption, by a divine power lifting him up from the place where he was, and carrying him into another; rather of a manuduction, or taking him by the hand and leading him thither; so Onkelos renders it, he "led" him, that is, he ordered and directed him thither: hence Jarchi paraphrases it, he took him with good words, and persuaded him to go thither: the place from whence he is supposed by some to be taken was near Damascus, where he is by them said to be created; or the place where the temple was afterwards built, as say the Jewish writers: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"the Lord God took the man from the mount of Service, the place in which he was created, and caused him to dwell in the garden of Eden."

And elsewhere {t} it is said,

"the holy blessed God loved the first Adam with an exceeding great love, for he created him out of a pure and holy place; and from what place did he take him? from the place of the house of the sanctuary, and brought him into his palace, as it is said, Ge 2:15 "and the Lord God took", &c."

though no more perhaps is intended by this expression, than that God spoke to him or impressed it on his mind, and inclined him to go, or stay there:

to dress it, and to keep it; so that it seems man was not to live an idle life, in a state of innocence; but this could not be attended with toil and labour, with fatigue and trouble, with sorrow and sweat, as after his fall; but was rather for his recreation and pleasure; though what by nature was left to be improved by art, and what there was for Adam to do, is not easy to say: at present there needed no ploughing, nor sowing, nor planting, nor watering, since God had made every tree pleasant to the sight, good for food, to grow out of it; and a river ran through it to water it: hence in a Jewish tract {u}, before referred to, it is said, that his work in the garden was nothing else but to study in the words of the law, and to keep or observe the way of the tree of life: and to this agree the Targums of Jonathan and of Jerusalem,

"and he placed him in the garden of Eden, to serve in the law, and keep the commands of it."

And in another tract {w} it is said,

"God brought Adam the law, Job 28:27 and "he put him in the garden of Eden"; that is, the garden of the law, "to dress it", to do the affirmative precepts of the law, "and to keep it", the negative precepts:"

though Aben Ezra interprets this service of watering the garden, aud keeping wild beasts from entering into it. And indeed the word may be rendered to "till", as well as to dress, as it is in **Ge 3:23** and by Ainsworth here; so Milton {x} expresses it; and some have thought Adam was to have planted and sowed, had he continued in the garden.

{t} Pirke Eliezer, c. 2. fol. 72. 2. {u} Pirke Eliezer, c. 2. fol. 72. 2. {w} Tikkune Zohar, correct. 54. fol. 91. 2. {x} Paradise Lost, B. 8. l. 320.

Genesis 2:16

Ver. 16. And the Lord God commanded the man,.... Over whom he had power and authority; and he had a right to command him what he pleased, being his Creator, benefactor, and preserver; and this is to be understood not of man only, but of the woman also, whose creation, though related afterwards, yet was before this grant to eat of all the trees of the garden but one, and the prohibition of the fruit of that; for that she was in being, and present at this time, seems manifest from **Ge 3:2**

saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: a very generous, large, and liberal allowance this: or "in eating thou mayest eat" {y}; which was giving full power, and leaving them without any doubt and uncertainty about their food; which they might freely take, and freely eat of, wherever they found it, or were inclined to, even of any, and every tree in the garden, excepting one, next forbidden.

{y} lkat lka "comedendo comedas", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, &c.

Genesis 2:17

Ver. 17. But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil,.... Of the name of this tree, and the reasons of it,
See Gill on "Ge 2:9"

thou shalt not eat of it; not that this tree had any efficacy in it to increase knowledge, and improve in science and understanding, as Satan suggested God knew; and therefore forbid the eating of it out of envy to man, which the divine Being is capable of; or that there was anything hurtful in it to the bodies of men, if they had eaten of it; or that it was unlawful and evil of itself, if it had not been expressly prohibited: but it was, previous to this injunction, a quite indifferent thing whether man ate of it or not; and therefore was pitched upon as a trial of man's obedience to God, under whose government he was, and whom it was fit he should obey in all things; and since he had a grant of all the trees of the garden but this, it was the greater aggravation of his offence that he should not abstain from it:

for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die; or "in dying, die" {z}; which denotes the certainty of it, as our version expresses it; and may have regard to more deaths than one; not only a corporeal one, which in some sense immediately took place, man became at once a mortal creature, who otherwise continuing in a state of innocence, and by eating of the tree of life, he was allowed to do, would have lived an immortal life; of the eating of which tree, by sinning he was debarred, his natural life not now to be continued long, at least not for ever; he was immediately arraigned, tried, and condemned to death, was found guilty of it, and became obnoxious to it, and death at once began to work in him; sin sowed the seeds of it in his body, and a train of miseries, afflictions, and diseases, began to appear, which at length issued in death. Moreover, a spiritual or moral death immediately ensued; he lost his original righteousness, in which he was created; the image of God in him was deformed; the powers and faculties of his soul were corrupted, and he became dead in sins and trespasses; the consequence of which, had it not been for the interposition of a surety and Saviour, who engaged to make satisfaction to law and justice, must have been eternal death, or an everlasting separation from God, to him and all his posterity; for the wages of sin is death, even death eternal, **Ro 6:23**. So the Jews {a} interpret this of death, both in this world and in the world to come.

{z} twmt twm Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {a} Tikkune Zohar, correct. 24. fol. 68. 1. correct. 54. fol. 90. 2. correct. 66. fol. 100. 1.

Genesis 2:18

Ver. 18. And the Lord God said,.... Not at the same time he gave the above direction and instruction to man, how to behave according to his will, but before that, even at the time of the formation of Adam and which he said either to him, or with himself: it was a purpose or determination in his own mind, and may be rendered, as it is by many, he "had said" {b}, on the sixth day, on which man was created,

[it is] not good that man should be alone; not pleasant and comfortable to himself, nor agreeable to his nature, being a social creature; nor useful to his species, not being able to propagate it; nor so much for the glory of his Creator:

I will made him an help meet for him; one to help him in all the affairs of life, not only for the propagation of his species, but to provide things useful and comfortable for him; to dress his food, and take care of the affairs of the family; one "like himself" {c}, in nature, temper, and disposition, in form and shape; or one "as before him" {d}, that would be pleasing to his sight, and with whom he might delightfully converse, and be in all respects agreeable to him, and entirely answerable to his case and circumstances, his wants and wishes.

{b} rmayw "dixerat", Vatablus, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {c} wdgnk "simile sibi", V. L. Sam. Syr. {d} "Tanquam coram eo", Montanus.

Genesis 2:19

Ver. 19. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air,.... Or "had formed them" {e} on the fifth and sixth days; and these were formed two and two, male and female, in order to continue their species; whereas man was made single, and had no companion of the same nature with him: and while in these circumstances, God

brought them unto Adam; or "to the man" {f}; either by the ministry of angels, or by a kind of instinct or impulse, which brought them to him of their own accord, as to the lord and proprietor of them, who, as soon as he was made, had the dominion of all the creatures given him; just as the creatures at the flood went in unto Noah in the ark; and as then, so now, all creatures, fowl and cattle, came, all but the fishes of the sea: and this was done

to see what he would call them; what names he would give to them; which as it was a trial of the wisdom of man, so a token of his dominion over the creatures, it being an instance of great knowledge of them to give them apt and suitable names, so as to distinguish one from another, and point at something in them that was natural to them, and made them different from each other; for this does not suppose any want of knowledge in God, as if he did this to know what man would do, he knew what names man would give them before he did; but that it might appear he had made one superior to them all in wisdom and power, and for his pleasure, use, and service; and therefore brings them to him, to put them into his hands, and give him authority over them; and being his own, to call them by what names he pleased:

and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof; it was always afterwards called by it, by him and his posterity, until the confusion of languages, and then every nation called them as they thought proper, everyone in their own language: and as there is a good deal of reason to believe, that the Hebrew language was the first and original language; or however that eastern language, of which the Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic, are so many dialects; it was this that he spoke, and in it gave names to the creatures suitable to their nature, or agreeable to some property or other observed in them: and Bochart {g} has given us many instances of creatures in the Hebrew tongue, whose names answer to some character or another in them: some think this was done by inspiration; and Plato says, that it seemed to him that that nature was superior to human, that gave names to things; and that this was not the work of vain and foolish man, but the first names were appointed by the gods {h}; and so Cicero {i} asks, who was the first, which with Pythagoras was the highest wisdom, who imposed names on all things?

{e} ruyw "finxerat", Drusius. {f} Mdah la "ad ipsum hominem", Pagninus, Montanus. {g} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 1. c. 9. p. 59, &c. {h} In Cratylo, apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 11. c. 6. p. 515. {i} Tusculan. Quaest. l. 1.

Genesis 2:20

Ver. 20. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowls of the air, and to every beast of the field,.... As they came before him, and passed by him, paying as it were their homage to him, their lord and owner:

but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him; and perhaps this might be one reason of their being brought unto him, that he might become sensible that there was none among all the creatures of his nature, and that was fit to be a companion of his; and to him must this be referred, and not to God; not as if God looked out an help meet for him among the creatures, and could find none; but, as Aben Ezra observes, man could not find one for himself; and this made it the more grateful and acceptable to him, when God had formed the woman of him, and presented her before him.

Genesis 2:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept,.... This was not a common and natural sleep that Adam fell into, occasioned by any weariness of the animal spirits, in viewing the creatures as they passed by him, and in examining them, and giving them suitable and proper names; but it was supernatural, and from the Lord, his power and providence, who caused it to fall upon him: it was not a drowsiness, nor a slumber, but a sound sleep: his senses were so locked up by it, that he perceived not anything that was done to him; and it seems to have been on purpose, that he might feel no pain, while the operation was made upon him, as well as that it might appear that he had no hand in the formation of the woman; and that he might be the more surprised at the sight of her, just awaking out of sleep, to see so lovely an object, so much like himself, and made out of himself, and in so short a time as while he was taking a comfortable nap:

and he took one of his ribs; with the flesh along with it: men have commonly, as anatomists {k} observe, twelve ribs on a side; it seems by this, that Adam had thirteen. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"and he took one of his ribs; that is, the thirteenth rib of his right side:"

but our English poet {l} takes it to be one of the left side, and also a supernumerary one {m}. God made an opening in him, and took it out, without putting him to any pain, and without any sensation of it: in what manner this was done we need not inquire; the power of God was sufficient to perform it; Adam was asleep when it was done, and saw it not, and the manner of the operation is not declared:

and closed up the flesh instead thereof: so that there was no opening left, nor any wound made, or a scar appeared, or any loss sustained, but what was made up by an increase of flesh, or by closing up the flesh; and that being hardened like another rib, and so answered the same purpose.

(Adam probably had the same number of ribs as we do today. Otherwise the genetic code for creation of an extra rib would cause at least some people today to have thirteen ribs. I know of no such case. Also, we know that acquired characteristics cannot be passed on to the next generation. A man who loses both legs in an accident, usually has children who have two legs. Ed.)

{k} Bartholini Anatomia, l. 4. c. 17. p. 516. Vid. Scheuchzer. Physica Sacra, vol. 1. tab. 27. p. 28. {l} Who stooping opened my left side, and took From thence a rib.--- Milton's Paradise Lost, B. 8. l. 465. {m} Ib. B. 10. l. 887.

Genesis 2:22

Ver. 22. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he woman,.... It is commonly observed, and pertinently enough, that the woman was not made from the superior part of man, that she might not be thought to be above him, and have power over him; nor from any inferior part, as being below him, and to be trampled on by him; but out of his side, and from one of his ribs, that she might appear to be equal to him; and from a part near his heart, and under his arms, to show that she should be affectionately loved by him, and be always under his care and protection: and she was not "created" as things were, out of nothing, nor "formed" as Adam was, out of the dust of the earth, being in the same form as man; but "made" out of refined and quickened dust, or the flesh and bones of man, and so in her make and constitution fine and lovely; or "built" {n}, as the word signifies, which is used, because she is the foundation of the house or family, and the means of building it up: or rather to denote the singular care and art used, and fit proportion observed in the make of her:

and brought her unto the man: from the place where the rib had been carried, and she was made of it; or he brought her, as the parent of her, at whose dispose she was, and presented her to Adam as his spouse, to be taken into a conjugal relation with him, and to be loved and cherished by him; which, as it affords a rule and example to be followed by parents and children, the one to dispose of their children in marriage, and the other to have the consent of their parents in it; as well as it is a recommendation of marriage, as agreeable to the divine will, and to be esteemed honourable, being of God: so it was a type of the marriage of Christ, the second Adam, between him and his church, which sprung from him, from his side; and is of the same nature with him, and was presented by his divine Father to him, who gave her to him; and he received her to himself as his spouse and bride; see **Eph 5:29**.

{n} Nbyw "et aedificavit", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator, &c.

Genesis 2:23

Ver. 23. And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,.... Of "his bones", because made out of a pair of his ribs, as some think, one on each side, and therefore expressed in the plural number, "and of his flesh", a part of which was taken with the rib; this Adam knew, either being awake while she was made, though asleep when the rib was taken out; or by divine revelation, by an impress of it on his mind; or it might have been declared to him in a dream, while asleep, when, being in an ecstasy or trance, this whole affair was represented unto him: and this was "now" done, just done, and would be done no more in like manner; "this time" {o}, this once, as many render it; so it was, but hereafter the woman was to be produced in the way of generation, as man:

she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man: her name was "Ishah", because taken from "Ish", as "vira" in Latin from "vir", and "woman" in our language from "man".

{o} Meph taz "hac vice", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus, so the Targum; touto apax, Symmachus & Theodotion; "hoc semel", Fagius.

Genesis 2:24

Ver. 24. Therefore shall a man leave his father, and his mother,.... These are thought by some to be the words of Moses, inferring from the above fact, what ought to be among men; and by others, the words of Adam under divine inspiration, as the father of mankind instructing his sons what to do, and foretelling what would be done in all succeeding ages: though they rather seem to be the words of God himself, by whom marriage was now instituted; and who here gives direction about it, and declares the case and circumstance of man upon it, and how he would and should behave: and thus our Lord Jesus Christ, quoting these words, makes them to be the words of him that made man, male and female, and supplies and prefaces them thus, and said, "for this cause", &c. Mt 19:5 so Jarchi paraphrases them,

"the Holy Ghost said so:"

not that a man upon his marriage is to drop his affections to his parents, or be remiss in his obedience to them, honour of them, and esteem for then, or to neglect the care of them, if they stand in need of his assistance; but that he should depart from his father's house, and no more dwell with him, or bed and board in his house; but having taken a wife to himself, should provide an habitation for him and her to dwell together: so all the three Targums interpret it, of quitting "the house of his father, and his mother's bed",

and shall cleave unto his wife; with a cordial affection, taking care of her, nourishing and cherishing her, providing all things comfortable for her, continuing to live with her, and not depart from her as long as they live: the phrase is expressive of the near union by marriage between man and wife; they are, as it were, glued together, and make but one; which is more fully and strongly expressed in the next clause:

and they shall be one flesh; that is, "they two", the man and his wife, as it is supplied and interpreted by Christ, Mt 19:5 and so here in the Targum of Jonathan, and in the Septuagint and Samaritan versions: the union between them is so close, as if they were but one person, one soul, one body; and which is to be observed against polygamy, unlawful divorces, and all uncleanness, fornication, and adultery: only one man and one woman, being joined in lawful wedlock, have a right of copulation with each other, in order to produce a legitimate offspring, partaking of the same one flesh, as children do of their parents, without being able to distinguish the flesh of the one from the other, they partake of: and from hence it appears to be a fabulous notion, that Cecrops, the first king of Athens, was the first institutor of matrimony and joiner of one man to one woman; whence he was said to be "biformis" {p}, and was called difuhv; unless, as some {q} have thought, that he and Moses were one and the same who delivered out the first institution of marriage, which is this.

{p} Justin. e Trogo, l. 2. c. 6. {q} Vid. Saldeni Otia Theolog. Exercitat. 1. sect. 14. p. 13, 14.

Genesis 2:25

Ver. 25. And they were both naked, the man and his wife,.... Were as they were created, having no clothes on them, and standing in need of none, to shelter them from the heat or cold, being in a temperate climate; or to conceal any parts of their bodies from the sight of others, there being none of the creatures to guard against on that account:

and were not ashamed; having nothing in them, or on them, or about them, that caused shame; nothing sinful, defective, scandalous or blameworthy; no sin in their nature, no guilt on their consciences, or wickedness in their hands or actions; and particularly they were not ashamed of their being naked, no more than children are to see each other naked, or we are to behold them: besides, they were not only alone, and none to behold them; but their being naked was no disgrace to them, but was agreeably to their nature; and they were not sensible that there was any necessity or occasion to cover themselves, nor would they have had any, had they continued in their innocent state: moreover, there was not the least reason to be ashamed to appear in such a manner, since they were but one flesh. The Jerusalem Targum is,

"they knew not what shame was,"

not being conscious of any sin, which sooner or later produces shame. Thus Plato {r} describes the first men, who, he says, were produced out of the earth; and for whom the fertile ground and trees brought forth fruit of all kind in abundance of themselves, without any agriculture; that these were gumnoi kai arrwtoi, "naked and without any covering"; and so Diodories Siculus {s} says, the first of men were naked and without clothing. The word here used sometimes signifies wise and cunning; it is rendered "subtle" first verse of the next chapter: and here the Targum of Jonathan is,

"they were both wise, Adam and his wife, but they continued not in their glory;"

the next thing we hear of is their fall.

{r} Politico, apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 12. c. 13. p. 588. {s} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 8.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 3

In this chapter an account is given of the temptation of our first parents, of the instrument of it, and of their fall into it, and of the effect of it, **Ge 3:1** their summons upon it to appear before God, against whom they had sinned, **Ge 3:8** their examination by him, and the excuses they made, **Ge 3:11** the various sentences passed of the serpent, the woman, and the man, **Ge 3:14** some incidental things recorded, expressive of faith and hope in man, and of favour to him, **Ge 3:20** and his expulsion from the garden of Eden, **Ge 3:22**.

Ver. 1. Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, which the Lord God had made,.... Many instances are given of the subtlety of serpents, in hiding their heads when struck at, rolling themselves up, stopping their ear at the voice of the charmer, putting off their skin, lying in sand of the same colour with them, and biting the feet of horses, and other things of the like kind; but by these it does not appear to be now more subtle than any other creature, whatever it might be at its first creation; particularly the fox greatly exceeds it: the words therefore may be rendered, "that serpent"; that particular serpent, of which so much is spoken of afterwards; "or the serpent was become" {t}, or "made more subtle", that is, not naturally, but through Satan being in it, and using it in a very subtle manner, to answer his purposes, and gain his point: for though a real serpent, and not the mere form or appearance of one, is here meant, as is clear from this account, and the curse afterwards pronounced on it; yet not that only, but as possessed and used by Satan as an instrument of his to accomplish his designs, as is evident from its having the faculty of speech, and the use of reason, employed in a very artful and sophistic manner: nor is it rational to suppose that human nature, in the height of its glory and excellency, should be outwitted and seduced by a creature so inferior to it; besides, the Scriptures always ascribe the seduction of man to the devil; who, because he acted his deceitful part in and by the serpent, is called the serpent, and the old serpent, and the devil and Satan, 2Co 11:3. The Targum of Jonathan restrains this subtlety to wickedness, paraphrasing the words

"but the serpent was wise to evil."

Some Jewish writers {u} interpret the passage of the nakedness of the serpent, taking the word in the sense it is used in **Ge 2:25** and render it, "more naked than any beast of the field", the rest having a clothing, as hair, &c. but this none; and so might be more agreeable to Eve, being in this respect like herself; but it is generally interpreted of subtlety. The serpent early became the object of religions worship. Taautus, or the Egyptian Thoth, was the first that attributed deity to the nature of the dragon, and of serpents; and after him the Egyptians and Phoenicians: the Egyptian god Cneph was a serpent with an hawk's head; and a serpent with the Phoenicians was a good demon: what led them to have such veneration for this animal, were its plenty of spirits, its fiery nature, its swiftness, its various forms it throws itself into, and its long life {w}; and so Pherecydes {x} speaks of a deity of the Phoenicians called Ophioneus; and who also affirms {y}, that this was the prince of demons cast down from heaven by Jupiter; and Herodotus {z} makes mention of sacred serpents about Thebes; and Aelianus {a} of sacred dragons; and Justin Martyr says {b}, the serpent with the Heathens was a symbol of all that were reckoned gods by them, and they were painted as such; and wherever serpents were painted, according to Persius {c}, it was a plain indication that it was a sacred place. Serpents were sacred to many of the Heathen deities, and who were worshipped either in the form of one, or in a real one {d}; all which seem to take their rise from the use the devil made of the serpent in seducing our first parents.

And he said to the woman; being alone, which he took the advantage of; not the serpent, but Satan in it; just as the angel spoke in Balaam's ass; for we are not to imagine with Philo, Josephus, Aben Ezra, and others, that beasts in their original state had the faculty of speech, and whose language Eve understood: it is very probable that good angels appeared in paradise to our first parents, in one form or another, and conversed with them; it may be in an human form, and it may be in the form of a beautiful flying serpent, which looked very bright and shining, and that sort called Seraph, Nu 21:6 hence angels may bear the name of Seraphim, as some have thought; so that it might not be at all surprising to Eve to hear the serpent speak, it being what she might have been used to hear, and might take this to be a good angel in such a shape, that was come to bring a message to her from God, and to converse with her for her good, and who thus accosted her:

yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? or "of any tree" {e}; so ambiguously does he speak, in order to reproach the divine goodness, and draw into a disbelief of it. The speech is abrupt; and, as Kimchi observes {f}, supposes some discourse, as to this purpose; surely God hates you, for though you are greater than the rest of the creatures, he has not provided any superior excellency for you, and especially since he has said, "ye shall not eat", &c. Or as others, taking occasion from their being naked, **Ge 2:25** he observes, that that was unbecoming them, of which they might be ashamed; yea, also, that it was unjust to forbid them to eat of the tree of good and evil: he might, it is suggested, first endeavour to persuade the woman, that it was indecent for her, and her husband, to be naked; which they not being convinced of, he insinuated that this was owing to a defect of knowledge, and that there was a tree in the garden, which if they ate of, would give them that knowledge, and therefore God had forbid it, to keep them in ignorance: but he seems to put this question, to cause them to doubt of it, whether there was such a prohibition or not, and as amazing that it should be, and as not believing it to be true; it being, as he would have it, contrary to the perfections of God, to his goodness and liberality, and to his profession of a peculiar respect to man: wherefore the Targum of Onkelos renders it, "of a truth", and that of Jonathan, "is it true?" surely it cannot be true, that a God of such goodness could ever deny you such a benefit, or restrain you from such happiness; he can never be your friend that can lay such an injunction on you.

{t} hyh "factus est", Schmidt. {u} Tikkune Zohar, correct. 59. fol. 96. 1. {w} Philo Byblius, apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. c. 10. p. 41. {x} Apud, Euseb. ib. {y} Apud L. Vivem in Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 4. c. 11. {z} Euterpe sive, l. 2. c. 74. {a} De Animal l. 11. c. 2, 17. {b} Apolog. 2. p. 71. {c} "Pinge duos angues pueri, sacer est locus." Satyr. 1. {d} See more of this in a Sermon of mine, called The Head of the Serpent bruised, &c. {e} Ue lkm "ex ulla arbore", Piscator. {f} Sepher Shoresh in voce Pa.

Genesis 3:2

Ver. 2. And the woman said unto the serpent,.... Or to him that spoke in the serpent, which she might take to be a messenger from heaven, a holy angel: had she known who it was, she might be chargeable with imprudence in giving an answer, and carrying on a conversation with him; and yet even supposing this, she might have a good design in her answer; partly to set the matter in a true light, and assert what was truth; and partly to set forth the goodness and liberality of God, in the large provision he had made, and the generous grant he had given them: from this discourse of Eve and the serpent, no doubt Plato {g} had his notion of the first men discoursing with beasts:

we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; of all and every one of them, which is to be understood, excepting the one after mentioned; so far are we from being debarred from eating of any, which the speech of the Serpent might imply, that they were allowed to eat of what they pleased, but one.

{g} In Politico, ut supra, (apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 12.) c. 14.

Genesis 3:3

Ver. 3. But of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midst of the garden,.... This tree stood near the tree of life, as is highly probable, since that is described in the same situation, **Ge 2:9** she does not give it any name, which perhaps was not as yet given it; or she was not acquainted with it, its name in the preceding chapter being given by anticipation; and most likely it is, it had its name from the event, and as yet was without one:

God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die: here the woman is charged by some both with adding to, and taking from the law of God; and if so, must have sinned very heinously before she eat of the fruit; but neither of them are sufficiently proved; not the former by her saying, "neither shall ye touch it", which though not expressed in the prohibition, is implied, namely, such a touching the fruit as to pluck it off the tree, take it in the hand, and put it to the mouth, in order to eat it: nor the latter by these words, "lest ye die", or "lest perhaps ye die" {h}; as if it was a matter of doubt, when it was most strongly assured; for the word used is not always to be understood of doubting, but of the event of a thing; see **Ps 2:12** and may be rendered, "that ye die not" {i}; which would certainly be the case, should they pluck the fruit and eat of it.

{h} Np "ne forte", V. L. Tigurine version, Fagius. {i} ina mh apoyanhte, Sept.

Genesis 3:4

Ver. 4. And the serpent said unto the woman,.... In reply to her answer:

ye shall not surely die; in direct contradiction to the divine threatening, and which he would insinuate was a mere threatening, and which God never intended to put in execution; so that they had nothing to fear from that, God would never be so rigid and severe, and beat so hard upon them as to put them to death for such an offence, if it was one; he only gave out the menace to frighten them, and deter from it: however, at most it was not a certain thing they should die, and they might safely conclude they would not.

Genesis 3:5

Ver. 5. For God doth know,.... Or "but {k} God doth know", who knows all things, and has foreknowledge of all future events; he foreknows what will be the consequence of this event, eating the fruit of this tree, that it would be so far from issuing in death, which he has threatened, that the effect of it would be a clearer understanding, and a greater degree of knowledge of things, which he is unwilling should be enjoyed, and therefore has endeavoured to prevent it by this prohibition; suggesting hereby, even in God, hatred of the creatures he had made, and unwilling they should be as happy as they might:

that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened; not the eyes of their bodies, as if they were now blind, but the eyes of their understanding; meaning, that their knowledge should be enlarged, and they should see things more clearly than they now did, and judge of them in a better manner; yea, even together with the light of their mind, the sight of their bodily eyes would receive some advantage; and particularly, that though they saw the nakedness of their bodies, yet it was as if they saw it not, and were unconcerned about it, and heedless of it; did not see it as unseemly and indecent, and so were not ashamed; but now they should see it as it was, and be filled with shame and confusion:

and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil: as "Elohim", which word is sometimes used of civil magistrates, sometimes of angels, and sometimes of God himself, and of the divine Persons in the Godhead: the Targum of

Onkelos seems to respect the former, rendering it "as great personages", princes, judges, civil magistrates, who ought to know the difference between good and evil, or otherwise would be unfit for their office; but this cannot be the sense here, since there were no such persons in being, to whom the reference could be made; nor could it convey any proper idea to the mind of Eve, unless by them are meant principalities and powers, or "the mighty angels", as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases the word; and so it intimates, that upon eating this fruit they should be as wise and as knowing as those intelligent creatures: though perhaps Satan might mean, such angels as himself and his were, and that they should by sad experience know the difference between good and evil, as they did: but rather it is to be understood of that Elohim that made the heavens and the earth, for as yet the word had never been used, but of the true God, and of the divine Persons in the Trinity: and this agrees with what is ironically said, **Ge 3:22** "behold the man is become as one of us", as the devil told him he should, and as he believed he would: this was the bait laid for than, suited to his intellectual mind, and to the ambitious desires of it, not being content with finite knowledge, but aiming at omniscience, or something like it: now the temptation began to take place and operate.

{k} yk "sed", Piscator; "quin", Schmidt.

Genesis 3:6

Ver. 6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food,.... She being near the tree, and perhaps just at it when the serpent first attacked her; wherefore looking more wishfully at it, she could discern nothing in the fruit of the tree which showed it to be bad, and unfit to be eaten, or why it should be forbidden for food; but, on the contrary, had a most promising aspect to be very delicious, nourishing and salutary, as any other fruit in the garden:

and that it was pleasant to the eyes; of a beautiful colour, and very inviting to the taste:

and a tree to be desired to make one wise; which above all was the most engaging, and was the most prevailing motive to influence her to eat of it, an eager desire of more wisdom and knowledge; though there was nothing she could see in the tree, and the fruit of it, which promised this; only she perceived in her mind, by the discourse she had with the serpent, and by what he had told her, and she believed, that this would be the consequence of eating this fruit, which was very desirable, and she concluded within herself that so it would be:

she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; she took it off of the tree, and not only tasted of it, but ate of it; what quantity cannot be said, enough to break the divine law, and to incur the divine displeasure: so Sanchoniatho says {l}, that Aeon (the same with Eve) found the way of taking food from trees:

and gave also to her husband with her; that he might eat as well as she, and partake of the same benefits and advantages she hoped to reap from hence; for no doubt it was of good will, and not ill will, that she gave it to him; and when she offered it to him, it is highly probable she made use of arguments with him, and pressed him hard to it, telling him what delicious food it was, as well as how useful it would be to him and her. The Jews infer from hence, that Adam was with her all the while, and heard the discourse between the serpent and her, yet did not interpose nor dissuade his wife from eating the fruit, and being prevailed upon by the arguments used; or however through a strong affection for his wife, that she might not die alone, he did as she had done:

and he did eat; on which an emphasis may be observed, for it was upon his eating the fate of his posterity depended; for not the woman but the man was the federal head, and he sinning, all his posterity sinned in him, and died in him; through this offence judgment came upon all to condemnation; all became sinners, and obnoxious to death, **Ro 5:12**. If Eve only had eaten of the forbidden fruit, it could only have personally affected herself, and she only would have died; and had this been the case, God would have formed another woman for Adam, for the propagation of mankind, had he stood; though since he fell as well as she, it is needless to inquire, and may seem too bold to say what otherwise would have been the case.

{l} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 34.

Genesis 3:7

Ver. 7. And the eyes of them both were opened,.... Not of their bodies, but of their minds; not so as to have an advanced knowledge of things pleasant, profitable, and useful, as was promised and expected, but of things very disagreeable and distressing. Their eyes were opened to see that they had been deceived by the serpent, that they had broke the commandment of God, and incurred the displeasure of their Creator and kind benefactor, and had brought ruin and destruction upon themselves; they saw what blessings and privileges they had lost, communion with God, the dominion of the creatures, the purity and holiness of their nature, and what miseries they had involved themselves and their posterity in; how exposed they were to the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and to eternal death:

and they knew that they were naked; they must know before that they were naked in their bodies, but they did not perceive that their nakedness was at all uncomely, or any disadvantage to them; but now they were sensible of both, that whereas they could look upon it before, and not blush or feel any sinful emotions in them, now they could not behold it without shame, and without finding evil concupiscence arising in them; and it being now the cool of the day, and their spirits also seized with fear of the divine displeasure, they might feel a shivering all over them, and wanted something to cover them: but more especially this may respect the nakedness of their souls they were now conscious of, being stripped of that honour and glory, privileges and power, they were vested with; and having lost the image of God that was upon them, and that robe of purity, innocence, and righteousness, the rectitude of their nature, with which they were arrayed, and finding themselves naked and defenceless, and unable to screen themselves from the curses of a righteous law, and the fury of vindictive justice:

and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons; not to cover their whole bodies, but only those parts which, ever since, mankind have been ashamed to expose to public view, and which they studiously conceal from sight: the reason of which perhaps is, because by those members the original corruption of human nature has been from the beginning, and still is propagated from parents to children. The leaves of the fig tree were pitched upon because of the largeness of them; the leaves of the common fig tree are very large, as everyone knows; and perhaps those in the eastern countries, and especially in paradise, were much larger than ours. Pliny {m} says of the fig tree, that its leaf is the largest, and the most shady. Some think the Indian fig tree is meant; so John Temporarius, as Drusius relates; and so our Milton {n}; and according to Pliny {o}, the breadth of the leaves of this tree has the shape of an Amazonian shield. And when they are said to sew these together, it is not to be supposed that they sewed them as tailors sew their garments together, since they cannot be thought to be furnished with proper instruments, or that they tacked them together with some sort of thorns, or made use of them instead of needles; but they took the tender branches of the fig tree with leaves on them, as the word signifies, see **Ne 8:15** and twisted them round their waists; which served for "girdles", as some render the word {p}, and the broad leaves hanging down served for aprons; but these, whatever covering they may be thought to have been to their bodies, which yet seem to be but a slender one, they could be none to their souls, or be of any service to hide their sin and shame from the all seeing eye of God; and of as little use are the poor and mean services of men, or their best works of righteousness, to shelter them from the wrath of God, and the vengeance of divine justice.

{m} Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 26. {n} ----There soon they chose The fig tree; not that kind for fruit renowned, But such as at this day in India known. Paradise Lost, B. 9. l. 1100, &c. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 5. {p} trgx, perizwmata, Sept. "perizomata", V. L. "cinctoria", Tigurine version, Fagius; "cingulos", Pagninus, Montanus; so the Targums; "subligacula", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus, Drusius.

Genesis 3:8

Ver. 8. And they heard the voice of the Lord God,.... Which they had heard before, and knew, though perhaps now in another tone, and very terrible, which before was mild and gentle, pleasant and delightful: some by it understand a clap of thunder, sometimes called the voice of the Lord, Ps 29:3 and the rather because mention is made afterwards of a wind; but rather the voice of the Son of God, the eternal Word, is here meant, who appeared in an human form, as a pledge of his future incarnation, and that not only as a Judge, to arraign, examine, and condemn the parties concerned in this act of disobedience to God, but as a Saviour of men, to whom, as such, he made himself known, as the event shows, and therefore they had no reason to entertain such terrible apprehensions of him, as to flee from him; and so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase it, "the voice of the Word of the Lord God", the essential Word of God then with him, and since made flesh, and dwelt among men as the Saviour of them; and to him agrees what follows:

walking in the garden in the cool of the day; or "at the wind of the day" {q}; of "that day" in which man was created and fell, as some conclude from hence; in the evening, at sun setting; for very often when the sun sets a wind rises, at least a gentle breeze; and this might bring the sound of the voice, and of the steps of this glorious Person, the sooner to the ears of Adam and his wife, which gave them notice of his near approach, and caused them to hasten their flight: some render it emphatically, "at the wind of that day" {r}; as if it was a violent wind which arose at that time, as a sign and testimony of the indignation of God, as the sound of a violent wind was a testimony of the coming of the Spirit of God, **Ac 2:2**

and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden; conscious of their guilt, and vainly imagining they could flee from his presence, which is everywhere, and hide themselves from his sight, before whom every creature is manifest, be it where it will; and very foolishly fancying, that the thick trees and bushes in the garden would be a screen and shelter for them: and sad shifts do wretched mortals make to secure themselves from the wrath of God, who are ignorant of the justifying righteousness and atoning sacrifice of the Son of God: it is in the singular number in the original text, "in the midst of the tree of the garden" {s}; which some understand of the fig tree, whose leaves they covered themselves with, and under the shade of which they hid themselves; and particularly of the Indian fig tree, which is so large, that it is said that fifty horsemen may shade themselves at noon day under it; nay, some say four hundred {t}; but tree may be put for trees, the singular for the plural.

{q} Mwyh xwrl "ad ventum diei", Munster, Vatablus, Cartwright, Schmidt. {r} "Ad ventum illius diei", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Picherellus. {s} Ue Kwtb "intra arborem", Fagius. {t} Strabo. Geograph. l. 15. p. 477.

Genesis 3:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord God called unto Adam,.... The Jerusalem Targum is, the Word of the Lord God, the second Person in the Trinity; and this is the voice he is said to have heard before:

and said unto him, where [art] thou? which is said, not as ignorant of the place where he was, nor of what he had done, nor of the circumstances he was in, or of the answers he would make; but rather it shows all the reverse, that he knew where he was, what he had done, and in what condition he was, and therefore it was in vain to seek to hide himself: or as pitying his case, saying, "alas for thee" {u}, as some render the words, into what a miserable plight hast thou brought thyself, by listening to the tempter, and disobeying thy God! thou that wast the favourite of heaven, the chief of the creatures, the inhabitant of Eden, possessed of all desirable bliss and happiness, but now in the most wretched and forlorn condition imaginable; or as upbraiding him with his sin and folly; that he who had been so highly favoured by him, as to be made after his image and likeness, to have all creatures at his command, and the most delightful spot in all the globe to dwell in, and a grant to eat of what fruit he would, save one, and who was indulged with intercourse with his God, and with the holy angels, should act such an ungrateful part as to rebel against him, break his laws, and trample upon his legislative authority, and bid, as it were, defiance to him: or else as the Saviour, looking up his straying sheep, and lost creature, man: or rather as a summons to appear before him, the Judge of all, and answer for his conduct; it was in vain for him to secrete himself, he must and should appear; the force of which words he felt, and therefore was obliged to surrender himself, as appears from what follows.

{u} hkya, "hei tibi", Oleaster.

Genesis 3:10

Ver. 10. And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden,.... The voice of thy Word, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan: this was not the true cause of his hiding himself; he had heard his voice in the garden before, when it did not strike him with terror, but gave him pleasure;

and I was afraid, because I was naked. This also was not the true reason; he was naked from his creation as to his body, and it caused no shame in him, nor any dread to appear before God; he conceals the true cause, which was sin, that made the nakedness of his body shameful, and had stripped his soul of its native clothing, purity and holiness; and therefore it was, he could not appear before a pure and holy Being:

and I hid myself; among the trees of the garden, and his wife also; or therefore {w} "hid myself"; through fear of God, his wrath and displeasure, which he had justly incurred by his disobedience, and because of his sin which had made his soul naked, though he was not as yet ingenuous enough to confess it.

{w} w "ldeo", Vatablus.

Genesis 3:11

Ver. 11. And he said,.... The Lord God, or the Word of the Lord;

who told thee that thou [wast] naked? or showed it to thee; by what means hast thou got knowledge of it? what hast thou done that thou perceivest it, so as to cause shame and fear? man was made naked, and so he continued, and he must be sensible of it, but it gave him no uneasiness, because he was without shame on account of it; so that it was as if it was not, and he was regardless of it, as if he was not naked; but now, having sinned, he could not look upon his nakedness without blushing, and sin being what had produced this sensation, he was afraid to appear before God, against whom he had sinned; though he did not choose to acknowledge it, only alleges his outward nakedness, without confessing the inward nakedness of his soul, and being humbled for that as he ought to have been; and in order to bring him to this, is this question and the following put unto him;

hast thou eaten of the tree, wherever I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? The Lord knew he had; but he puts this question to bring him to a confession of it, as well as to aggravate his crime; that it was a violation of a precept of his, who had been so kind and bountiful to him, who had crowned him with glory and honour, and set him over the works of his hands, and had put all creatures under his feet, and had allowed him to eat of every tree in the garden but one; there was but one tree restrained from him, but one command he gave him, and this he broke; sin is a transgression of the law, **1Jo 3:4**. And in this light it is here put to bring Adam under a conviction, and to a confession of it; though he made it in a very lame manner, having covered it as long as he could; being found he excuses it, as loath to bear the blame and scandal of it. See
Job 31:33.

Genesis 3:12

Ver. 12. And the man said,.... Not being able any longer to conceal the truth, though he shifts off the blame as much as possible from himself:

the woman whom thou gavest to be with me: to be his wife and his companion, to be an help meet unto him, and share with him in the blessings of paradise, to assist in civil and domestic affairs, and join with him in acts of religion and devotion:

she gave me of the tree, and I did eat; she first ate of it herself, through the solicitations of the serpent, and then she persuaded me to eat of it; and accordingly I did, I own it. By this answer Adam endeavours to cast the blame partly upon his wife, and partly upon God; though in what he said he told the truth, and what was matter of fact, yet it carries this innuendo, that if it had not been for his wife he had never ate of it, which was a foolish excuse; for he, being her head and husband, should have taught her better, and been more careful to have prevented her eating of this fruit, and should have dissuaded her from it, and have reproved her for it, instead of following her example, and taking it from her hands: and more than this he tacitly reflects upon God, that he had given him a woman, who, instead of being an help meet to him, had helped to ruin him; and that if he had not given him this woman, he had never done what he had: but at this rate a man may find fault with God for the greatest blessings and mercies of life bestowed on him, which are abused by him, and so aggravate his condemnation.

Genesis 3:13

Ver. 13. And the Lord God said unto the woman,.... Who was first in the transgression, and drew her husband into it, and upon whom he seemingly casts the blame of his eating the forbidden fruit:

what is this that thou hast done? dost thou know how great an offence thou hast committed in breaking a command of mine, and how aggravated it is when thou hadst leave to eat of every other tree? what could move thee to do this? by what means hast thou been brought into it, and not only hast done it thyself, but drawn thine husband into it, to the ruin of you both, and of all your posterity? so heinous is the sin thou hast been guilty of:

and the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat; that is, a spirit in the serpent, which she took for a good one, but proved a bad one, with lying words and deceitful language imposed upon her, told her that the fruit forbidden was very good food, and very useful to improve knowledge; even to such a degree as to make men like God; and this God knew, and therefore out of envy and ill will to them forbid the eating of it; nor need they fear his menaces, for they might depend upon it they should never die; and thus he caused her to err from the truth, and to believe a lie; and by giving heed to the seducing spirit she was prevailed upon to eat of the fruit of the tree, which was forbidden, and which she owns; and it is an ingenuous confession that she makes as to the matter of fact; but yet, like her husband, and as learning it from him, she endeavours to shift off the blame from herself, and lay it on the serpent.

Genesis 3:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord God said unto the serpent,.... And to the devil in it; for what follows may be applied to both; literally to the serpent, and mystically to Satan; both are punished, and that very justly, the serpent in being the instrument Satan made use of, and is cursed for his sake, as the earth for man's; and the punishing the instrument as well as the principal, the more discovers God's detestation of the act for which they are punished, as appears in other instances, Ex 21:28. Nor could it have been agreeable to the justice of God, to punish the instrument and let the principal go free; and therefore the following sentence must be considered as respecting them both: and it must be observed, that no pains is taken to convince Satan of his sin, or any time spent in reasoning and debating with him about it, he being an hardened apostate spirit, and doomed to everlasting destruction, and without any hope of mercy and forgiveness; but to show the divine resentment of his crime, the following things are said:

because thou hast done this; beguiled the woman, and drawn her in to eat of the forbidden fruit,

[thou art] cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; the serpent is the most hateful of all creatures, and especially the most detestable to men, and Satan is accursed of God, banished from the divine presence, is laid up in chains of darkness, and reserved for the judgment of the great day, and consigned to everlasting wrath and ruin, signified by everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels;

upon thy belly shalt thou go, or "breast", as Aben Ezra, and others; Jarchi thinks it had feet before, but were cut off on this account, and so became a reptile, as some serpents now have feet like geese, as Pliny {x} relates; or it might go in a more erect posture on its hinder feet, as the basilisk, which is one kind of serpent, now does; and if it was a flying one, bright and shining in the air, now it should lose all its glory, and grovel in the dust, and with pain, or at least with difficulty, creep along on its breast and belly; and this, as it respects the punishment of the devil, may signify, that he being cast down from the realms of bliss and glory, shall never be able to rise more, and regain his former place and dignity:

And dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life; meaning not that particular serpent, and as long as that should live, but all of the same kind, as long as there were any in the world, even to the end of it: it is probable, that when the serpent moved in a more erect posture, it lived on herbs and plants as other creatures; but when it was obliged to go upon its belly or breast, it licked up the dust of the earth, and which it could not well avoid in eating whatsoever food it did; and some serpents are said to live upon it. This is applicable to Satan, designs the mean and abject condition in which he is, and the sordid food he lives upon; no more on angels' food and joys of heaven, but on the base, mean, earthly, and impure lusts of men; and this will be his case, condition, and circumstances, for ever.

{x} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 47.

Genesis 3:15

Ver. 15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman,.... Between whom there had been so much familiarity, not only while they had the preceding discourse together, but before; for it is conjectured by some {y}, that she took a particular liking to that creature, and was delighted with it, and laid it perhaps in her bosom, adorned her neck with its windings, or made it a bracelet for her arms; and being a peculiar favourite, the devil made choice of it as his instrument to deceive her; but now being beguiled hereby, she conceived an antipathy against it, and which is become natural between the serpent and man; man abhors the sight of a serpent, and the serpent the sight of man; and the spittle of a man and the gall of a serpent are poison to each other; and this antipathy is observed to be stronger in the female sex: and this was not only true of the particular serpent that deceived Eve, and of the particular woman, Eve, deceived by him, but of every serpent and of every woman in successive ages; and is also true of Satan and the church of God in all ages, between whom there is an implacable and an irreconcilable hatred, and a perpetual war:

and between thy seed and her seed; the posterity of Eve, mankind, and the production of serpents, between whom the antipathy still continues, and mystically the evil angels and also wicked men called serpents; and a generation of vipers on the one hand, and the people of God on the other, the seed of the church; the latter of which are hated and persecuted by the former, and so it has been ever since this affair happened: and especially by the seed of the woman may be meant the Messiah; the word "seed" sometimes signifying a single person, **Ge 4:25** and particularly Christ, **Ga 3:16** and he may with great propriety be so called, because he was made of a woman and not begotten by man; and who assumed not an human person, but an human nature, which is called the "holy thing", and the "seed of Abraham", as here the "seed of the woman", as well as it expresses the truth of his incarnation and the reality of his being man; and who as he has been implacably hated by Satan and his angels, and by wicked men, so he has opposed himself to all them that hate and persecute his people:

it shall bruise thy head; the head of a serpent creeping on the ground is easily crushed and bruised, of which it is sensible, and therefore it is careful to hide and cover it. In the mystical sense, "it", or "he, Hu", which is one of the names of God, Ps 102:27 and here of the Messiah, the eminent seed of the woman, should bruise the head of the old serpent the devil, that is, destroy him and all his principalities and powers, break and confound all his schemes, and ruin all his works, crush his whole empire, strip him of his authority and sovereignty, and particularly of his power over death, and his tyranny over the bodies and souls of men; all which was done by Christ, when he became incarnate and suffered and died, **Heb 2:14**

And thou shall bruise his heel; the heel of a man being what the serpent can most easily come at, as at the heels of horses which it bites, Ge 49:17 and which agrees with that insidious creature, as Aristotle {z} describes it: this, as it refers to the devil, may relate to the persecutions of the members of Christ on earth, instigated by Satan, or to some slight trouble he should receive from him in the days of his flesh, by his temptations in the wilderness, and agony with him in the garden; or rather by the heel of Christ is meant his human nature, which is his inferior and lowest nature, and who was in it frequently exposed to the insults, temptations, and persecutions of Satan, and was at last brought to a painful and accursed death; though by dying he got an entire victory over him and all his enemies, and obtained salvation for his people. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase this passage of the days of the Messiah, and of health and salvation in them: what is here delivered out in a way of threatening to the serpent the devil, carries in it a kind intimation of grace and good will to fallen man, and laid a foundation for hope of salvation and happiness: reference seems to be had to this passage in Ps 40:7 "in the volume", in the first roll, en kefalidi, as in the Greek version, at the head, in the beginning "of the book, it is written of me, to do thy will, O my God."

{y} See the Universal History, vol. 1. p. 126. {z} Hist. Animal. l. 1. c. 1.

Genesis 3:16

Ver. 16. Unto the woman he said,.... The woman receives her sentence next to the serpent, and before the man, because she was first and more deeply in the transgression, and was the means of drawing her husband into it.

I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, or "thy sorrow of thy conception" {a}, or rather "of thy pregnancy" {b}; since not pain but pleasure is perceived in conception, and besides is a blessing; but this takes in all griefs and sorrows, disorders and pains, from the time of conception or pregnancy, unto the birth; such as a nausea, a loathing of food, dizziness, pains in the head and teeth, faintings and swoonings, danger of miscarriage, and many distresses in such a case; besides the trouble of bearing such a burden, especially when it grows heavy: and when it is said, "I will greatly multiply", or "multiplying I will multiply" {c}, it not only denotes the certainty of it, but the many and great sorrows endured, and the frequent repetitions of them, by often conceiving, bearing, and bringing forth:

in sorrow shall thou bring forth children, sons and daughters, with many severe pangs and sharp pains, which are so very acute, that great tribulations and afflictions are often in Scripture set forth by them: and it is remarked by naturalists {d}, that women bring forth their young with more pain than any other creature:

and thy desire [shall be] to thy husband, which some understand of her desire to the use of the marriage bed, as Jarchi, and even notwithstanding her sorrows and pains in child bearing; but rather this is to be understood of her being solely at the will and pleasure of her husband; that whatever she desired should be referred to him, whether she should have her desire or not, or the thing she desired; it should be liable to be controlled by his will, which must determine it, and to which she must be subject, as follows;

and he shall rule over thee, with less kindness and gentleness, with more rigour and strictness: it looks as if before the transgression there was a greater equality between the man and the woman, or man did not exercise the authority over the woman he afterwards did, or the subjection of her to him was more pleasant and agreeable than now it would be; and this was her chastisement, because she did not ask advice of her husband about eating the fruit, but did it of herself, without his will and consent, and tempted him to do the same.

{a} Knwbue Knrhw "tuum dolorem etiam conceptus tui", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "tuum dolorem conceptus tui", Drusius, Noldius, p. 315. No. 1978. {b} "Praegnationis sive gestationis", Gataker. {c} hbra hbrh "multiplicando multiplicabo", Pagninus, Montanus. {d} Aristotel. Hist. Animal. l. 7. c. 9.

Genesis 3:17

Ver. 17. And unto Adam he said,.... Last of all, being the last that sinned, but not to be excused:

because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife; which was not only mean but sinful, since it was opposite to the voice of God, which he ought to have hearkened to God is to be hearkened to and obeyed rather than man, and much rather than a woman; to regard the persuasion of a woman, and neglect the command of God, is a great aggravation of such neglect; see **Ac 4:19**

and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee; saying, thou shall not eat of it; that is, had eat of the fruit of the tree which God had plainly pointed unto him, and concerning which he had given a clear and an express command not to eat of it; and had delivered it to him in the strongest manner, and had most peremptorily and strictly enjoined it, adding the threatening of death unto it; so that he could by no means plead ignorance in himself, or any obscurity in the law, or pretend he did not understand the sense of the legislator. The righteous sentence therefore follows,

cursed is the ground for thy sake; the whole earth, which was made for man, and all things in it, of which he had the possession and dominion, and might have enjoyed the use of everything in it, with comfort and pleasure; that which was man's greatest earthly blessing is now turned into a curse by sin, which is a proof of the exceeding sinfulness of it, and its just demerit: so in later instances, a "fruitful land" is turned "into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein", Ps 107:34 hence, whenever there is sterility in a country, a want of provisions, a famine, it should always be imputed to sin; and this should put us in mind of the sin of the first man, and the consequence of that:

in sorrow shall thou eat of it all the days of thy life, meaning that with much toil and trouble, in manuring and cultivating the earth, he should get his living out of the produce of it, though with great difficulty; and this would be his case as long as he was in it.

Genesis 3:18

Ver. 18. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee,.... Not for his advantage, but to give him more trouble, and cause him more fatigue and sorrow to root them up: these include all sorts of noxious herbs and plants, and troublesome weeds, which added to man's labour to pluck up, that those more useful might grow and flourish: and Rabbi Eliezer {e} was of opinion, that if there had not been a new blessing upon the earth, it would have brought forth nothing else, as that which is rejected and nigh unto cursing does, **Heb 6:8** and this curse continued, at least it was not wholly removed, until the times of Noah, **Ge 8:21** which made it hard and difficult to the antediluvian patriarchs to get their bread.

And thou shall eat the herb of the field; not the fruits of the garden of Eden, but only the common herbs of the field, such as even the beasts of the earth fed upon: to such a low condition was man, the lord of the whole earth, reduced unto by sin; and this was according to the law of retaliation, that man, who could not be content with all the fruits of Eden, save one, by eating the forbidden fruit should be deprived of them all.

{e} Apud Fagium in loc.

Genesis 3:19

Ver. 19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,.... Or "of thy nose" {f}, sweat appearing first and chiefly on the forehead, from whence it trickles down by the nose in persons employed in hard labour; and here it takes in all the labour used in cultivating the earth for the production of herbs, and particularly of corn, of which bread is made; with respect to which there are various operations in which men sweat, such as ploughing, sowing, reaping, threshing, winnowing, grinding, sifting, kneading, and baking; and it may have regard to all methods and means by which men get their bread, and not without sweat; and even such exercises as depend upon the brain are not excused from such an expense: so that every man, let him be in what station of life he will, is not exempt, more or less, from this sentence, and so continues till he dies, as is next expressed:

till thou return unto the ground, his original, out of which he was made; that is, until he dies, and is interred in the earth, from whence he sprung; signifying that the life of man would be a life of toil and labour to the very end of it: and nothing else can man expect in it:

for dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return; his body was composed of the dust, was of the earth, earthly, and should be reduced to that again by death, which is not an annihilation of man, but a bringing him back to his original; which shows what a frail creature man is, what little reason he has to be proud of himself, when he reflects from whence he came and whither he must go; see Ec 12:7.

{f} Kypa "nasi tui", Picherellus.

Genesis 3:20

Ver. 20. And Adam called his wife's name Eve,.... Whom he had before named "Ishah", a woman, because taken from him the man, **Ge 2:23** and now gives her a new name upon this scene of things, which had taken place; which is derived not from "Chavah", to "show forth", to "declare"; as if she was called so, because of her discourse with the serpent, being loquacious and talkative, and telling everything she knew, according to some Jewish writers {g}; but from "Chayah, to live", as the reason given in the text shows. She is called Aeon "(Aevum)" by Philo Byblius, the interpreter of Sanchoniatho {h}. The word "Eve" is retained in many Heathen writers, and used to be frequently repeated in the Bacchanalian rites, when the idolaters appeared with serpents platted on their heads {i}; which plainly refers to the affair between the serpent and Eve; hence Bacchus is sometimes called Evius {k}: the reason of Adam's giving her this name follows,

because she was the mother of all living; which reason is either given by Moses, when from her had sprung a numerous offspring, and would be continued to the end of the world; or if given by Adam was prophetic of what she would be; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "because she would be the mother of all living"; and the ground of this faith and persuasion of his, that he and his wife should not die immediately for the offence they had committed, but should live and propagate their species, as well as be partakers of spiritual and eternal life, was the hint that had been just given, that there would be a seed spring from them; not only a numerous offspring, but a particular eminent person that should be the ruin of the devil and his kingdom, and the Saviour of them; and so Eve would be not, only the mother of all men living in succeeding generations, but particularly, or however one descending from her, would be the mother of him that should bring life and immortality to light, or be the author of all life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; and who is called zwh, "the life", which is the same word by which the Greek version renders Eve in the preceding clause. It was with pleasure, no doubt, that Adam gave her this name; and it appears that this affair of her being seduced by the serpent, and of drawing him into the transgression, did not alienate his affection from her; and the rather he must needs cleave unto her, and not forsake her, since her seed was to break the serpent's head, and procure life and salvation for them; and by means of her there would be a race of living men produced, which would propagate his species to the end of time: for all living can only respect them, and not other animals, though in some sense they may be included, as our English poet {l} hints.

{g} Apud Fagium in loc. vid. Baal Hatturim in loc. {h} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 34. {i} Virgil. Aeneid. l. 6. v. 518, 519. Pers. Satyr 1. v. 101, 102. vid. Clement. Alex. ad Gentes, p. 9. {k} Horat. Carmin. l. 2. ode 11. v. 17. {l} Mother of all things living, since by thee Man is to live, and all things live for man. Milton's Paradise Lost. B. 11. l. 160, 161.

Genesis 3:21

Ver. 21. Unto Adam also, and to his wife,.... Besides the kind intimation of grace and favour to them, another token of God's good will towards them was shown, in that whereas they were naked and ashamed,

did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them; not that before this they were only bone and flesh, and now God brought a skin over them, and covered them with it, or ordered a beast, which was very like a man, to have its skin stripped off, and put on him, as some in Aben Ezra foolishly imagined; but these were made of the skins of beasts, not of the skin of the serpent, as the Targum of Jonathan; but of creatures slain, not merely for this purpose, nor for food, but for sacrifice, as a type of the woman's seed, whose heel was to be bruised, or who was to suffer death for the sins of men; and therefore to keep up and direct the faith of our first parents to the slain Lamb of God from the foundation of the world, and of all believers in all ages, until the Messiah should come and die, and become a sacrifice for sin, the sacrifices of slain beasts were appointed: and of the skins of these the Lord God, either by his almighty power, made coats for the man and his wife, or by the ministry of angels; or he instructed and directed them to make them, which was an instance of goodness to them; not only to provide food for them as before, but also raiment; and which though not rich, fine, and soft, yet was substantial, and sufficient to protect them from all inclemencies of the weather; and they might serve as to put them in mind of their fall, so of their mortality by it, and of the condition sin had brought them into; being in themselves, and according to their deserts, like the beasts that perish: as also they were emblems of the robe of Christ's righteousness, and the garments of his salvation, to be wrought out by his obedience, sufferings, and death; with which being arrayed, they should not be found naked, nor be condemned, but be secured from wrath to come. The Heathens had a notion, that the first men made themselves coats of the skins of beasts: the Grecians ascribe this to Pelasgus, whom they suppose to be the first man {m} among them, and Sanchoniatho {n} to Usous, who lived in the fifth generation.

{m} Pausanias in Arcadicis, sive, l. 8. p. 455, 456. {n} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 35.

Genesis 3:22

Ver. 22. And the Lord God said,.... The Word of the Lord God, as the Jerusalem Targum; not to the ministering angels, as the Targum of Jonathan but within himself, or to the other two divine Persons:

behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; which is generally understood as an irony or sarcasm at man's deception by Satan, who promised man, and he expected to be as gods, knowing good and evil; behold the man, see how much like a god he looks, with his coat of skin upon his back, filled with shame and confusion for his folly, and dejected under a sense of what he had lost, and in a view of what he was sentenced to; yet must be understood not as rejoicing in man's misery, and insulting over him in it, but in order the more to convince him of his folly, and the more to humble him, and bring him to a more open repentance for affecting what he did, and giving credit to the devil in it: though I rather think they are seriously spoken, since this was after man was brought to a sense of the evil he committed, and to repentance for it, and had had the promised seed revealed to him as a Saviour, and, as an emblem of justification and salvation by him, was clothed with garments provided by God himself: wherefore the words are to be considered either as a declaration of his present state and condition, in and by Christ, by whose righteousness he was made righteous, even as he is righteous, though he had lost his own; to whose image he was conformed, now bearing the image of the heavenly One, though he was deprived of that in which he was created, having sinned, and come short of the glory of God; and was now restored to friendship and amity with God, favoured with his gracious presence, and having faith and hope of being with him for evermore; the eyes of his understanding were enlightened by the Spirit and grace of God, to know the good things which God had provided for him in Christ, and in the covenant of grace, a better covenant than that under which he was made, and which he had broke; and to know the evil nature of sin, its just demerit, and the atonement of it, by the death and sacrifice of the promised seed: or else the words are a declaration of man's past state and condition, and may be rendered, "behold, the man was as one of us" {o}; as one of the Persons in the Deity, as the Son of God, after whose image, and in whose likeness, he was made; both as to his body, that being formed according to the idea of the body of Christ in the divine mind, and which was not begotten, but made out of the virgin earth; and as to his soul, which was created in righteousness and holiness, in wisdom and knowledge, and was like him in the government he had over all the creatures: and besides, he was in many things a type of Christ, a figure of him that was to come; especially in his being a federal head to his posterity, and in his offices of prophet, priest, and King; and being created in knowledge, after the image of him that created him, and having the law of God inscribed on his heart, he knew what was good and to be done, and what was evil and to be avoided: but now he was in a different condition, in other circumstances, had lost the image of God, and friendship with him, and his government over the creatures; and had ruined himself, and all his posterity, and was become unholy and unwise; for being tempted by Satan to eat of the forbidden fruit, under an expectation of increasing his knowledge, lost in a great measure what he had:

and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life; as well as of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; which some take to be a continued sarcasm; and others, that it was in pity to him, that he might not live a long life of sorrow; and others, as a punishment, that having sinned he was justly deprived of the sacrament and symbol of life; or else to prevent a fresh sin; or rather to show that there could be no life without satisfaction for the sin committed, and this in no other way than by Christ, the antitype of the tree of life:

and eat, and live for ever; not that it was possible, by eating of the fruit of the tree of life, his natural life could be continued for ever, contrary to the sentence of death pronounced upon him; or so as to elude that sentence, and by it eternal life be procured and obtained; but he was hindered from eating of it, lest he should flatter himself, that by so doing he should live for ever, notwithstanding he was doomed to die; and very probably the devil had suggested this to him, that should he be threatened with death, which he made a question of, yet by eating of the tree of life, which stood just by the other, he might save himself from dying: wherefore to prevent him, and to cut off all hopes of securing life to himself in this way, it is suggested that something must be done, which may be supplied from the following verse, let us send him out of the garden.

{o} hyh "fuit", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt. So Abarbinel. apud Abendana in Miclol. Yophi in loc.

Genesis 3:23

Ver. 23. Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden,.... Gave him orders to depart immediately; sent or put him away as a man does his wife, when he divorces her; or as a prince banishes a rebellious subject: for how long Adam was in the garden
See Gill on "Ps 49:12", however, he did not send him to hell at once, as he did the apostate angels, but

to till the ground, from whence he was taken: either the earth in general, out of which he was made, and to which he must return, and in the mean while must labour hard, in digging and ploughing, in planting and sowing, that so he might get a livelihood; or that particular spot out of which he was formed, which is supposed from hence to have been without the garden of Eden, though very probably near unto it: some say it was a field near Damascus; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"he went and dwelt in Mount Moriah, to till the ground out of which he was created;"

and so other Jewish writers say {p}, the gate of paradise was near Mount Moriah, and there Adam dwelt after he was cast out.

{p} Pirke Eliezer, c. 20. fol. 20. 2.

Genesis 3:24

Ver. 24. So he drove out the man,.... Being unwilling to go out upon the orders given, some degree of force was used, or power exerted, in some way or other, to oblige him to depart; the word it is expressed by is used of divorces: there was a conjugal relation between God and man, the covenant between them had the nature of a matrimonial contract; which covenant man broke, though he was an husband to him, by committing idolatry, that is, spiritual adultery, not giving credit to him, but believing the devil before him; wherefore he wrote him a bill of divorce, and sent him away; drove him from his presence and communion with him, from his house and habitation, from his seat of pleasure, and garden of delight, and from all the comfortable enjoyments of life; an emblem of that separation and distance which sin makes between God and his creature, and of that loss which is sustained thereby:

and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubims; the Septuagint version is,

"and he placed him, or caused him (Adam) to dwell over against the paradise of pleasure, and he ordered the cherubim"

But the words are not to be understood either of placing man, or placing the cherubim, but of Jehovah's placing himself, or taking up his habitation and residence before the garden of Eden, or at the east of it: while man abode in a state of innocence, the place of the divine Presence, or where God more gloriously manifested himself to him, was in the garden; but now he having sinned, and being driven out of it, he fixes his abode in a very awful manner at the entrance of the garden, to keep man out of it; for so the words may be rendered, "and he inhabited the cherubim, or dwelt over, or between the cherubim, before or at the east of the garden of Eden" {q}; so the Jerusalem Targum,

"and he made the glory of his Shechinah, or glorious Majesty, to dwell of old at the east of the garden of Eden, over or above the two cherubim;"

or between them, as the Targum of Jonathan; and very frequently is Jehovah described as sitting and dwelling between the cherubim, **1Sa 4:4** by which are meant not flying animals or fowls, whose form no man ever saw, as Josephus {r}; nor angels, which is the more generally received opinion; for these were not real living creatures of any sort, but forms and representations, such as were made afterwards in the tabernacle of Moses, and temple of Solomon; and which Ezekiel and John saw in a visionary way, and from whom we learn what figures they were: and these were hieroglyphics, not of a trinity of persons, as some of late have stupidly imagined; for these were the seat of the divine Majesty, and between which he dwelt: and besides, as these had four faces, they would rather represent a quaternity than a trinity, and would give a similitude of the divine Being, which cannot be done, and be contrary to the second command; to which may be added, that the word is sometimes singular as well as plural: but these were hieroglyphics of the ministers of the word, whose understanding, humility, and tenderness, are signified by the face of a man; their strength, courage, and boldness, by that of a lion; their labour and diligence by that of an ox; and their quick sight and penetration into divine things by that of an eagle, which are the forms and figures of the cherubim; See Gill on "Eze 1:10". Among these Jehovah is; with these he grants his presence, and by them signifies his mind and will to men; and these he makes use of to show them the vanity of all self-confidence, and to beat them off of seeking for life and righteousness by their own works, and to direct them alone to Christ, and point him out as the alone way of salvation; and of this use the hieroglyphic might be to fallen Adam, now driven out of Eden:

and a flaming sword, which turned every way; a drawn sword, brandished, and which being very quick in its motion, as it was turned to and fro, glittered and looked like a flame of fire: this is not to be understood as by itself, and as of itself, turning about every way without a hand to move it, nor as with the cherubim, or as in the hands of angels, as in 1Ch 21:16 or as being they themselves, which are made as flames of fire; but as in the hand of the Lord God, that dwelt between the cherubim; for so it may be rendered, "he inhabited the cherubim and that with a flaming sword" {s}; that is, with one in his hand, an emblem of the fiery law of God now broken, and of the fire of divine wrath on the account of that, and of the flaming justice of God, which required satisfaction; and this turning on all sides,

to keep the way of the tree of life; showing, that life and salvation were not to be had, unless the law and justice of God were satisfied; and that they were not to be expected on the foot of men's works, but only through Christ, the way, the truth, and the life; that no happiness was to be looked for from the covenant of works, now broke, nothing but wrath and vengeance; and that there must be another way opened, or there could be no enjoyment of the heavenly paradise.

{q} Mybrkh ta--Nkvyw "et habitavit super `seu' cum cherubim", Texelii Phoenix, p. 256. So ta sometimes signifies "upon", "above", or "with". See Nold. Ebr. part. Concord. p. 116, 121. {r} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 6. {s} brxh jhl taw "idque cum gladio evaginato", Texelius, ib.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 4

In this chapter an account is given of the two eldest children of Adam and Eve, their names and calling, **Ge 4:1** and of their different offerings to the Lord, and the different respect had unto them by him, which in Cain issued in wrath and envy, which appeared in his countenance, and were taken notice of by the Lord, and about which he reasoned with him, **Ge 4:3** but it had no effect upon him, he murdered his brother, upon which he was examined about him, but denied he knew anything of him where he was, **Ge 4:8** he is arraigned, convicted and condemned, sentence passed upon him, and that executed, which he complains of, and is mitigated, or however a protection is granted him, and a mark set on him for his security, **Ge 4:10** after which we have an account of his posterity for several generations, their names, and the business of some of them, **Ge 4:16** and the chapter is closed with the birth of another son, and of a grandson to Adam and Eve, in whose days was the beginning of social religion.

Ver. 1. And Adam knew Eve his wife,.... An euphemism, or modest expression of the act of coition. Jarchi interprets it, "had known", even before he sinned, and was drove out of the garden; and so other Jewish writers, who think he otherwise would not have observed the command, "be fruitful and multiply": but if Adam had begotten children in a state of innocence, they would have been free from sin, and not tainted with the corruption of nature after contracted; but others more probably think it was some considerable time after; according to Mer Thudiusi, or Theodosius {t}, it was thirty years after he was driven out of paradise:

and she conceived and bare Cain; in the ordinary way and manner, as women ever since have usually done, going the same time with her burden. Whether this name was given to her first born by her, or by her husband, or both, is not said: it seems to have been given by her, from the reason of it after assigned. His name, in Philo Byblius {u}, is Genos, which no doubt was Cain, in Sanchoniatho, whom he translated; and his wife, or the twin born with him, is said to be Genea, that is,
hnyq, "Cainah": the Arabs call her Climiah {v} and the Jewish writers Kalmenah {w}; who are generally of opinion, that with Cain and Abel were born twin sisters, which became their wives.

And said, that is, Eve said upon the birth of her firstborn,

I have gotten a man from the Lord; as a gift and blessing from him, as children are; or by him, by his favour and good will; and through his blessing upon her, causing her to conceive and bear and bring forth a son: some render it, "I have gotten a man, the Lord" {x}; that promised seed that should break the serpents head; by which it would appear, that she took that seed to be a divine person, the true God, even Jehovah, that should become man; though she must have been ignorant of the mystery of his incarnation, or of his taking flesh of a virgin, since she conceived and bare Cain through her husband's knowledge of her: however, having imbibed this notion, it is no wonder she should call him Cain, a possession or inheritance; since had this been the case, she had got a goodly one indeed: but in this she was sadly mistaken, he proved not only to be a mere man, but to be a very bad man: the Targum of Jonathan favours this sense, rendering the words,

"I have gotten a man, the angel of the Lord."

{t} Apud Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 6. {u} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. c. 10. p. 34. {v} Abulpharag. ib. {w} Shalshaleth Hakabala, fol. 74. 2. {x} hwhy ta vya "virum Dominum", Fagius, Helvicus, Forster, Schindler, Luther, Pellican, Cocceius; "virum qui Jehovah est", Schmidt.

Genesis 4:2

Ver. 2. And she again bare his brother Abel,.... Or "added to bare" {y}, not directly or immediately, but perhaps the following year; though some have thought, because no mention is made of her conceiving again, that she brought forth Abel at the same time she did Cain, or that the birth of the one immediately followed upon that of the other: and it is the common opinion of the Jews {z} that with Abel, as with Cain, was born a twin sister, whom the Arabic writers {a} call Lebuda: the name of Abel, or rather Hebel, signifies not "mourning", as Josephus {b} observes, but "vanity", Eve not making that account of him as she did of Cain; or perhaps because by this time she became sensible of her mistake in him, or had met with something which convinced her that all earthly enjoyments were vanity; or by a spirit of prophecy foresaw what would befall this her second son, that he should be very early deprived of his life in a violent manner:

and Abel was a keeper of sheep: a calling which he either chose himself, or his father put him to, and gave him; for though he and his brother were born to a large estate, being the heirs of Adam, the lord of the whole earth, yet they were not brought up in idleness, but in useful and laborious employments:

but Cain was a tiller of the ground: of the same occupation his father was, and he being the first born, was brought up in the same business, and might be a reason why he was put into it.

{y} tdll Potw "et addidit ut pareret", Pagninus, Montanus; "addidit autem parere", Cocceius, Schmidt. {z} Pirke Eliezer. c. 21. {a} Abulpharag. ut supra. (Hist. Dynast. p. 6.) {b} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 1.

Genesis 4:3

Ver. 3. And in process of time it came to pass,.... Or "at the end of days" {c}; which some understand of the end of seven days, at the end of the week, or on the seventh day, which they suppose to be the sabbath day, these sons of Adam brought their offerings to the Lord: but this proceeds upon an hypothesis not sufficiently established, that the seventh day sabbath was now appointed to be observed in a religious way; rather, according to Aben Ezra, it was at the end of the year; So "after days" in Jud 11:4 is meant after a year; and which we there render, as here, "in process of time". This might be after harvest, after the fruits of the earth were gathered in, and so a proper season to bring an offering to the Lord, in gratitude for the plenty of good things they had been favoured with; as in later times, with the Israelites, there was a feast for the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, Ex 23:16. The Targum of Jonathan fixes this time to the fourteenth of Nisan, as if it was the time of the passover, a feast instituted two thousand years after this time, or thereabout; and very stupidly one of the Jewish writers {d} observes, that

"the night of the feast of the passover came, and Adam said to his sons, on this night the Israelites will bring the offerings of the passovers, offer ye also before your Creator."

That Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord; corn, herbs, seeds, &c. the Targum of Jonathan says it was flax seed; so Jarchi makes mention of an "agadah" or exposition, which gives the same sense; and another of their writers {e} observes, that Cain brought what was left of his food, or light and trifling things, flax or hemp seed. This he brought either to his father, as some think, being priest in his family; or rather he brought and offered it himself at the place appointed for religious worship, and for sacrifices; so Aben Ezra, he brought it to the place fixed for his oratory. It is highly probable it was at the east of the entrance of the garden of Eden, where the Shechinah, or the divine Majesty, was, and appeared in some remarkable manner.

{c} Mymy Uqm "in fine dierum", Pagninus, Montanus; "a fine dierum", Schmidt. {d} Pirke Eliezer, c. 21. {e} Ib. Vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 8. 2.

Genesis 4:4

Ver. 4. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock,.... As he was a shepherd, his flock consisted of sheep; and of the firstlings of these, the lambs that were first brought forth, he presented as an offering to the Lord; and which were afterwards frequently used in sacrifice, and were a proper type of Christ, Jehovah's firstborn, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, a Lamb without spot and blemish; fitly signified by one for his innocence, harmlessness, and meekness:

and of the fat thereof; which is to be understood either of the fat properly, which in later time was claimed by the Lord as his own, **Le 3:16** or of the fattest of his flock, the best lambs he had; the fattest and plumpest, and which were most free from defects and blemishes; not the torn, nor lame, nor sick, but that which was perfect and without spot; for God is to be served with the best we have. Josephus {f} says it was milk, and the firstlings of his flock; and a word of the same letters, differently pointed, signifies milk; and some learned men, as Grotius and others, have given into this sense, observing it to be a custom with the Egyptians to sacrifice milk to their gods: but the word, as here pointed, is never used for milk; nor were such sacrifices ever used by the people of God; and Abel's sacrifice is called by the apostle yusik, a "slain" sacrifice, as Heidegger {g} observes:

and the Lord had respect to Abel, and to his offering; as being what he had designed and appointed to be used for sacrifice in future time, and as being a suitable type and emblem of the Messiah, and his sacrifice; and especially as being offered up by faith, in a view to the sacrifice of Christ, which is of a sweet smelling savour to God, and by which sin only is atoned and satisfied for, see Heb 11:4. God looked at his sacrifice with a smiling countenance, took, and expressed delight, well pleasedness, and satisfaction in it; and he first accepted of his person, as considered in Christ his well beloved Son, and then his offering in virtue of his sacrifice: and this respect and acceptance might be signified by some visible sign or token, and particularly by the descent of fire from heaven upon it, as was the token of acceptance in later times, **Le 9:24** and Theodotion here renders it, he "fired" it, or "set" it on "fire"; and Jarchi paraphrases it,

"fire descended and licked up his offering;"

and Aben Ezra,

"and fire descended and reduced the offering of Abel to ashes;"

so Abraham Seba {h}.

{f} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 1. {g} Hist. Patriarch. Exercit. 5. sect. 20. {h} In Tzeror Hammor, fol. 8. 2.

Genesis 4:5

Ver. 5. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect,.... Not because of the matter of it, as some have thought; but because it was not offered in faith and sincerity, but in a formal and hypocritical manner, without any regard to the Messiah and his sacrifice, and without any view to the glory of God: no notice was taken, no approbation was given of it by the above token, or any other; so that it was manifest to Cain himself, that God did not approve of it, or was well pleased with it, as with his brother's:

and Cain was very wroth; with God, to whom he offered it, because he did not accept of it, and with his brother, because he and his sacrifice were preferred to him and his:

and his countenance fell; the briskness and cheerfulness of his countenance went off, and he looked dejected; and instead of lifting up his face towards heaven; he looked with a down look to the earth; he looked churlish, morose, and sullen, ill natured, full of malice and revenge, and as if he was studying which way to vent it; he knit his brows and gnashed his teeth, put on a surly countenance; and there might be seen in his face all the signs, not only of grief and disappointment, but of rage and fury; though {i} some interpret it of shame and confusion.

{i} R. Jonah apud R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 9. p. 2.

Genesis 4:6

Ver. 6. And the Lord said unto Cain, why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?.... Which was said not as being ignorant of his wrath and resentment, but to bring him to a conviction of his sin or sins, which were the cause of God's rejecting his sacrifice, and to repentance and amendment; and to show him that he had no cause to be displeased, either with him or his brother, for the different treatment of him and his offering; since the fault lay in himself, and he had none to blame but his own conduct, which for the future he should take care to regulate according to the divine will, and things would take a different turn.

Genesis 4:7

Ver. 7. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?.... That is, either if thou doest thy works well in general, doest good works in a right way and manner, according to life will of God, and directed to his glory, from right principles, and with right views: so all the Targums,

"if thou doest thy works well;"

for it is not merely doing a good work, but doing the good work well, which is acceptable to God; hence that saying,

"that not nouns but adverbs make good works:"

or particularly it may respect sacrifice; if thou doest thine offering well, or rightly offereth, as the Septuagint; or offers not only what is materially good and proper to be offered, but in a right way, in obedience to the divine will, from love to God, and with true devotion to him, in the faith of the promised seed, and with a view to his sacrifice for atonement and acceptance; then thine offering would be well pleasing and acceptable. Some render the latter part of the clause, which is but one word in the original text, "there will be a lifting up" {k}; either of the countenance of the offerer, and so, if Cain had done well, his countenance would not have fallen, but have been lifted up, and cheerful as before; or of sin, which is the pardon of it, and is often expressed by taking and lifting it up, and bearing it away, and so of easing a man of it as of a burden; and in this sense all the Targums take it; which paraphrase it,

"it or thy sin shall be forgiven thee:"

and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door; if thou dost not do good works, nor offer an offering as it should be offered, sin lies at the door of conscience; and as soon as that is awakened and opened, it will enter in and make sad work there, as it afterwards did, Ge 4:13 or it is open and manifest, and will be taken cognizance of, and punishment be inflicted for it; or else the punishment of sin itself is meant, which lies at the door, is at hand, and will soon be executed; and so all the Targums paraphrase it.

"thy sin is reserved to the day of judgment,"

or lies at the door of the grave, reserved to that day, as Jarchi. Some render the word a sin offering, as it sometimes signifies; and then the sense is, that though he had sinned, and had done amiss in the offering he had offered, nevertheless there was a propitiatory sacrifice for sin provided, which was at hand, and would soon be offered; so that he had no need to be dejected, or his countenance to fall; for if he looked to that sacrifice by faith, he would find pardon and acceptance; but the former sense is best:

and unto thee shall be his desire; or "its desire", as some understand it of sin lying at the door, whose desire was to get in and entice and persuade him to that which was evil, and prevail and rule over him. The Targum of Jonathan, and that of Jerusalem, paraphrase it of sin, but to another sense,

"sin shall lie at the door of thine heart, but into thine hand I have delivered the power of the evil concupiscence; and to thee shall be its desire, and thou shalt rule over it, whether to be righteous, or to sin:"

but rather it refers to Abel; and the meaning is, that notwithstanding his offering was accepted of God, and not his brother Cain's, this would not alienate his affections from him, nor cause him to refuse subjection to him; but he should still love him as his brother, and be subject to him as his eider brother, and not seek to get from him the birthright, or think that that belonged to him, being forfeited by his brother's sin; and therefore Cain had no reason to be angry with his brother, or envious at him, since this would make no manner of alteration in their civil affairs:

and thou shall rule over him, as thou hast done, being the firstborn.

{k} tav "elevare", Montanus; "erit sublevatio", Fagius, "elatio", Drusius, "elevatio erit", some in Vatablus, Mercerus; so Aben Exra; "remissio", Junius & Tremellius, Schmidt; "venia erit", Pagninus; so Ainsworth.

Genesis 4:8

Ver. 8. And Cain talked with Abel,.... Or "said", or "spoke unto" him {l}; either what the Lord God said to him in the foregoing verses, as Aben Ezra; or he spoke to him in a kind and friendly manner, and thereby got him to take a walk in the field with him. The Vulgate Latin version adds, "let us go abroad"; and the Septuagint and Samaritan versions, "let us go into the field"; not to fight a duel, which Abel doubtless would have declined, had that been declared, but to have some friendly conversation; and there being a large pause here in the Hebrew text, the Jerusalem Targum gives us an account of what passed between them when in the field;

"Cain said to Abel his brother, there is no judgment, nor Judge, nor will a good reward be given to the righteous; nor will vengeance be taken of the wicked; neither is the world created in mercy nor governed in mercy; otherwise, why is thine offering received with good will, and mine not?"

Abel answered and said to Cain,

"there is a judgment," &c.

and so goes on to assert everything Cain denied, and to give a reason why the offering of the one was accepted, and the other rejected: and to the same purpose the Targum of Jonathan:

and it came to pass, when they were in the field; alone and at a distance from their parents, or from any town or city, if any were now built, as some think there were, and out of the sight of any person that might come and interpose and rescue: about a mile from Damascus, in a valley, yet on the side of a hill, are now shown the place, or the house on it, where Cain slew Abel {m}; and so Mr. Maundrel {n} speaks of a high hill near Damascus, reported to be the same they offered their sacrifice on, and Cain slew his brother, and also of another hill at some distance from Damascus, and an ancient structure on it, supposed to be the tomb of Abel:

that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him; in a furious manner assaulted him, without any just provocation, and took away his life, by some instrument or other, perhaps that was used in husbandry, which might be in the field where they were. The Targum of Jonathan is, "he fixed a stone in his forehead, and slew him;"

and so the Jews say {o} elsewhere: our poet {p} says, he smote him in the breast with a stone, into the midriff or diaphragm: it must be by some means or other, by which his blood was shed; but it is not material to inquire what the instrument was, as Aben Ezra observes; since though there might be swords, yet there were stones and clubs enough, as he takes notice; and there must be even instruments for agriculture, one of which might be taken up, as being at hand, with which the execution might be made. The Jewish writers {q} say Abel was an hundred years old when he was slain; and some of them {r} make Abel to be the first aggressor: they say, that Abel rose up against him, and threw him to the ground, and afterwards Cain rose up and slew him; however this was not likely the case.

{l} rmayw "et dixit", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Fagius, Vatablus, Drusis. {m} Lud. Vartoman, Navigat. l. 1. c. 6. {n} Journey from Aleppo, &c. l. 1. p. 131, 133, 134. {o} Pirke Eliezer, c. 21. {p} ----------------And, as they talk'd, Smote him into the midriff with a stone, That beat out life.---------- Milton's Paradise Lost, B. 11. l. 444, &c. {q} Josippon apud Abendana in Miclol. Yophi in loc. {r} Tikkune Zohar, correct. 69. fol. 112. l. 2.

Genesis 4:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord said unto Cain, where is Abel thy brother?.... Perhaps this was said to him the next time he came to offer, he not being with him: this question is put, not as being ignorant where he was, but in order to bring Cain to a conviction and confession of his sin, to touch his conscience with it, and fill it with remorse for it; and, for the aggravation of it, observes the relation of Abel to him, his brother:

and he said, I know not; which was a downright lie; for he must know where he had left him or laid him: this shows him to be under the influence of Satan, who was a liar, and the father of lies, as well as a murderer from the beginning; and that he was so blinded by him, as to forget whom he was speaking to; that he was the omniscient God, and knew the wickedness he had done, and the falsehood he now delivered, and was capable of confronting him with both, and of inflicting just punishment on him.

[Am] I my brother's keeper? which was very saucily and impudently spoken: it is not only put by way of interrogation, but of admiration, as Jarchi observes, as wondering at it, that God should put such a question to him, since he knew he had not the charge of his brother, and his brother was at age to take care of himself; and if not, it rather belonged to God and his providence to take care of him, and not to him: so hardened was he in his iniquity, he had stretched out his hand against his brother, and now he stretched it out against God, and ran upon him, even on the thick bosses of his buckler.

Genesis 4:10

Ver. 10. And he said,.... Not Cain, the last speaker, but the Lord God,

what hast thou done? what an heinous crime hast thou committed! how aggravated is it! I know what thou hast done; thou hast slain thy brother, thine own, thine only brother, a holy, righteous, and good man, who never gave thee any offence, or any just occasion of shedding his innocent blood: this he said as knowing what he had done, and to impress his mind with a sense of the evil, and to bring him to a confession of it, before the sentence was passed, that it might appear to all to be just, and of which there was full proof and evidence, as follows:

the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground; where it was split, and in which it was covered and hid, and where perhaps Cain had buried his body, that it might not be seen, and the murder not discovered; but God saw what was done, and the voice of innocent blood came into his ears, and cried for vengeance at his hands: it is in the original, "the voice of thy brother's bloods" {s}, in the plural; which the Jews generally understood of the posterity that would have descended from Abel, had he not been murdered: the Targum of Onkelos is,

"the voice of the blood of the seeds or generations that should come from thy brother;"

see **2Ki 9:26** or it may respect the blood of the seed of the woman, of all the righteous ones that should be slain in like manner. The Jerusalem Targum is,

"the voice of the bloods of the multitude of the righteous that shall spring from Abel thy brother,"

or succeed him; see Mt 23:35. Jarchi thinks it has reference to the many wounds which Cain gave him, from whence blood sprung; and every wound and every drop of blood, as it were, cried for vengeance on the murderer.

{s} ymd lwq "vox Sanguinum", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Genesis 4:11

Ver. 11. And now [art] thou cursed from the earth,.... From receiving benefit by it, and enjoying the fruits of it as before, and from having a settled dwelling in it, as is afterwards explained:

which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; the blood of his brother, which was shed by his own hand, was received and sucked into the earth, where it was spilt, through the pores of it, and drank up and covered, so as not to be seen; in which it was as it were more humane to Abel, and as it were more ashamed of the crime, and shuddered more, and expressed more horror at it, than Cain.

Genesis 4:12

Ver. 12. When thou tillest the ground,.... Which was the business he was brought up in and followed, **Ge 4:2**

it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; the earth had been cursed for Adam's sin, and was not so fruitful as in its original state; and now it was cursed again for Cain's sin; not the whole earth, but that part which belonged to Cain, and was cultivated by him; and so it must be supposed to be cursed, not only in the spot where he had been settled, but in every other place where he should come and occupy, and which through this additional curse became so barren that it did not yield such good fruits, and such an increase of it as before; it lost its native and vital juice, by which seed cast into it became not so fruitful, and did not increase; but instead of this, though much pains were taken to manure it, and much was sown, yet it brought forth little, at least but little to Cain, whatever it did to others; and therefore it is said, "shall not yield unto thee"; it would not turn much to his account, or yield much profit and increase to him, or bring forth much fruit; see Job 31:38

a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth; being obliged to quit his former habitation, and remove to a place at some distance from the house of his father Adam, which was near the garden of Eden, as Aben Ezra observes; and to wander about from place to place, having no quiet settlement in anyone place: the Septuagint render it "groaning and trembling"; the guilt of his sin lay heavy on his conscience, and filled him with such horror and terror that he was continually sighing and groaning, and was seized with such a tremor that he shook in all his limbs; so the Arabic writers {t} say, that he was trembling and quivering, and had a shaking in his head all the days of his life; and Aben Ezra observes, that there are some that say that the first of these words signifies to moan and lament; but it may be, it was not so much his sin, at least the evil of it, that he lamented, as the mischief that came by it, or the calamities and misfortunes it brought upon him.

{t} Patricides, apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 223.

Genesis 4:13

Ver. 13. And Cain said unto the Lord,.... In the anguish of his spirit and the distress of his mind:

my punishment is greater than I can bear; thus complaining of the mercy of God, as if he acted a cruel part, inflicting on him more than he could endure; and arraigning his justice, as if it was more than he deserved, or ought in equity to be laid on him; whereas it was abundantly less than the demerit of his sin, for his punishment was but a temporal one; for, excepting the horrors and terrors of his guilty conscience, it was no other than a heavier curse on the land he tilled, and banishment from his native place, and being a fugitive and wanderer in other countries; and if such a punishment is intolerable, what must the torments of hell be? the worm that never dies? the fire that is never quenched? and the wrath of God, which is a consuming fire, and burns to the lowest hell? some render the words, "my sin is greater than can be forgiven" {u}; as despairing of the mercy of God, having no faith in the promised seed, and in the pardon of sin through his atonement, blood, and sacrifice; or, "is my sin greater than can be forgiven" {w}? is there no forgiveness of it? is it the unpardonable sin? but Cain seems not to be so much concerned about sin, and the pardon of it, as about his temporal punishment for it; wherefore the first sense seems best, and best agrees with what follows.

{u} avnm ynwe lwdg "major est iniquitas mea, quam ut veniam merear", V. L. "iniqutas mea? major est quam ut remittatur", Tigurine version, Fagius; "quam ut remittat, sub. Deus mihi", Vatablus; so the Targum of Onkelos, Sept. Syr. &

Ar. {w} "Ergone majus est delictum meum, quam ut remittatur"; Schmidt.

Genesis 4:14

Ver. 14. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth,.... Not from being upon the earth, or had chased him out of the world as a wicked man is at death, but from a quiet settlement in it, and from society and converse with the inhabitants of it; and especially he was driven from that part of it, where he was born and brought up, and which he had been employed in manuring; where his parents dwelt, and other relations, friends, and acquaintance: and to be banished into a strange country, uninhabited, and at a distance from those he had familiarly lived with, was a sore punishment of him:

and from, thy face shall I be hid; not from his omniscience and omnipresence, for there is no such thing as being hid from the all seeing eye of God, or flying from his presence, which is everywhere; but from his favour and good will, and the outward tokens of it, as well as from the place where his Shechinah or divine Majesty was; and which was the place of public worship, and where good men met and worshipped God, and offered sacrifice to him: and from the place of divine worship and the ordinances of it, and the church of God and communion with it, an hypocrite does not choose to be debarred:

and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; as was threatened him, See Gill on "Ge 4:12":

and it shall come to pass, that everyone that findeth me shall slay me; that is, some one, the first that should meet him, for he could be slain but by one; so odious he knew he should be to everyone, being under such marks of the divine displeasure, that his life would be in danger by whomsoever he should be found: and this being near an hundred and thirty years after the creation of man, see **Ge 4:25** **Ge 5:3** there might in this time be a large number of men on earth; Adam and Eve procreating children immediately after the fall, and very probably many more besides Cain and Abel, and those very fruitful, bringing many at a birth and often, and few or none dying, the increase must be very great; and we read quickly after this of a city being built, **Gen 4:17**. Cain seems to be more afraid of a corporeal death than to have any concern about his soul, and the eternal welfare of it, or to be in dread and fear of an eternal death, or wrath to come; though some think the words should be rendered in a prayer {x}, "let it be that anyone that findeth me may kill me"; being weary of life under the horrors of a guilty conscience.

{x} Lightfoot, vol. 1. p. 3,

Genesis 4:15

Ver. 15. And the Lord said unto him,.... In order to satisfy him, and make him easy in this respect, that: he need not fear an immediate or bodily death, which was showing him great clemency and lenity; or in answer to his begging for death, "therefore", or as some render the word, taking them for two, "not so" {y}; it shall not be that whoever finds thee shall slay thee, thou needest not be afraid of that; nor shall thy request be granted, that thou mightest be slain by the first man that meets thee: it was the will of God, that though Cain deserved to die, yet that he should not die immediately, but live a long miserable life, that it might be a terror to others not to commit the like crime; though rather the particle should be rendered "verily, surely, of a truth" {z}; so it will certainly be, it may be depended on:

whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold; seven times more than on Cain; that is, he shall be exceedingly punished; vengeance shall be taken on him in a very visible manner, to a very great degree; the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are

"unto or through seven generations;"

the meaning of which is, that the slayer of Cain should not only be punished in his own person, but in his posterity, even unto seven generations; and not as Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it, that God deferred his vengeance on Cain unto seven generations, and at the end of them took vengeance on him by Lamech, one of his own posterity, by whom he is supposed by that Jewish writer to be slain:

and the Lord set a mark upon Cain; about which there is a variety of sentiments {a}: some say it was a horn in his forehead: others, a leprosy in his face; others, a wild ghastly look; others, a shaking and trembling in all his limbs; and others, that there was an earthquake wherever he stepped: and others will have it, that the dog which guarded Abel's flock was given him to accompany him in his travels, by which sign it might be known that he was not to be attacked, or to direct him from taking any dangerous road: some say it was a letter imprinted on his forehead, either taken out of the great and glorious name of God, as the Targum of Jonathan, or out of his own name, as Jarchi; others the mark or sign of the covenant of circumcision {b}: but as the word is often used for a sign or miracle, perhaps the better rendering and sense of the words may be, "and the Lord put", or "gave a sign" {c}; that is, he wrought a miracle before him to assure him, that "whoever found him should not kill him": so that this was not a mark or sign to others, to direct or point out to them that they should not kill him, or to deter them from it; but was a sign or miracle confirming him in this, that no one should kill him; agreeably to which is the note of Aben Ezra,

"it is right in my eyes that God made a sign (or wrought a miracle) for him, until he believed;"

by which he was assured that his life would be secure, go where he would; even that no one should "strike" {d} him, as the word is, much less kill him.

{y} Nkl "quasi" Nk al ouc outw, Sept. "nequaquam ita fiet", V. L. {z} "In veritate, certe", Vatablus; "profecto, utique", De Dieu. {a} See Bayle's General Diet. art. "Cain". {b} Tikkune Zohar, correct. 69. fol. 115. 1. & 117. 1. 2. {c} twa Nyql hwhy Mvyw, "sed et posuit Kaino miraculum (in confirmationem) quod non caesurus esset ipsum quisque", &c, Schmidt. {d} wta twkh, "ne percuteret eum", Pagninus; "ad non percutiendum eum", Montanus.

Genesis 4:16

Ver. 16. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord,.... Either from the place where the Lord was talking with him; or from the place where his glorious Majesty usually resided, where was some visible token of his presence, some stream of light and glory which showed him to be there, and which was at the east of the garden of Eden; from whence Cain was obliged to go, not being suffered to appear any more before God, or among his worshippers: there was a place near Tripoli in Syria, near where Mount Lebanon ends, called
proswpon tou yeou, "the face of God", made mention of by Polybius {e}, and Strabo {f}: and was near those parts where some place the garden of Eden; and it is possible might have its name from some tradition that this was the place where the face of God was seen, or his presence enjoyed by our first parents after their ejection from Eden, and from whence Cain went forth:

and dwelt in the land of Nod; so called, not before he went there, but from his wandering up and down in it; continuing in no one place in it, as well as his mind was restless and uneasy; Jarchi mentions another reason of its name, that in every place where he went the earth shook under him, and men said, Depart from him, this is he that slew his brother:

on the east of Eden; further east from the place where his father Adam and his other children dwelt; not being allowed to continue any longer with them, or converse with them, after he had been guilty of so horrid a crime.

{e} Hist. l. 5. p. 260. {f} Geograph. l. 16. p. 519.

Genesis 4:17

Ver. 17. And Cain knew his wife,.... Who this woman was is not certain, nor whether it was his first wife or not; whether his sister, or one that descended from Adam by another of his sons, since this was about the one hundred and thirtieth year of the creation. At first indeed Cain could marry no other than his sister; but whether he married Abel's twin sister, or his own twin sister, is disputed; the Jews say {g}, that Cain's twin sister was not a beautiful woman, and therefore he said, I will kill my brother and take his wife: on the other hand, the Arabic writers say {h}, that Adam would have had Cain married Abel's twin sister, whom they call Awin; and Abel have married Cain's twin sister, whom they call Azron; but Cain would not, because his own sister was the handsomest; and this they take to be the occasion of the quarrel, which issued in the murder of Abel.

And she conceived and bare Enoch; which signifies "trained up", not in the true religion, and in the ways of God and godliness, as one of this name descending from Seth was, who is said to walk with God; but in the practices of his father Cain, and in a wicked course of life:

and he builded a city: for a settlement on earth, thinking of nothing but this world, and the things of it; or to secure himself from being slain by men; or it may be for his amusement, to divert his thoughts from the melancholy scene always presented to his mind, by being thus employed; and his posterity growing numerous, he took this method to keep them together, and that they might be able to defend themselves from the assaults of others. Some render the words, "he was building a city" {i}; as if he did not live to finish it; but it looks as if it was finished by him, by what follows:

and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch: not after his own name, which was odious and infamous, but after his son's name, to show his affection to him, and that his name might be continued in ages to come; see Ps 49:11. This was the first city that was built, that we read of. Sir Walter Raleigh conjectures {k} that the Henochii or Heniochi of Pliny, Ptolemy, and other writers, took their name from this city of Henoch, or from the country where it stood, when it was repeopled after the flood, since these people were due east from the garden of Eden.

(For Cain to marry his sister or any other close relation was not harmful as it is today. There would be few if any genetic disorders at this time. However, as time past, the human race accumulated more and more genetic defects, so by the time of Moses, the laws against incest, as given in Le 18:1, were necessary. These laws helped prevent deformed children. Ed.)

{g} Pirke Eliezer, c. 21. {h} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 4. Patricides apud Selden, de Jure Nat. & Gent. l. 3. c. 2. & l. 5. c. 9. {i} hnb yhyw "et fuit aedificans", Montanus, Drusius; "era aedificans". Fagius; so Ainsworth; "studebat aedificare", Junius & Tremellius. {k} History of the World, par. 1. B. 1. c. 5. sect. 2. p. 43.

Genesis 4:18

Ver. 18. And unto Enoch was born Irad,.... But of neither of them is any other mention made, either in sacred or profane history; nor is it said how old Enoch was when Irad was born, nor how long he lived after; as is recorded of Adam, Seth, and their posterity:

[and] Irad begat Mehujael, [and] Mehujael begat Methusael; of whom also we have no other account;

[and] Methusael begat Lamech; and it seems for the sake of Lamech that the genealogy of Cain's posterity is described and carried down thus far, some things being to be taken notice of concerning him. The names of the immediate posterity of Genos or Cain, according to Sanchoniatho, and, as Philo Byblius {l} has translated them, were light, fire, and flame; who found out fire by rubbing pieces of wood together, and taught the use of it, from whence they seem to have their names. These begat sons that exceeded others in bulk and height, whose names were given to the mountains they first possessed, and from them were called Cassius, Libanus, Antilibanus, and Brathy; and of them

were begotten Memrumus and Hypsuranius, so called by their mothers, women, who, without shame, lay with everyone they could meet with; of these came Agreus and Halieus, the inventors of fishing and hunting; and these seem to answer to the generations from Cain to Lamech; and it is no wonder Moses should take no more notice of such a set of men; which, according to their own historian, deserved but little regard.

{l} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 34, 35.

Genesis 4:19

Ver. 19. And Lamech took unto him two wives,.... He was the first we read of that introduced polygamy, contrary to the first institution of marriage, whereby only one man and one woman were to be joined together, and become one flesh, Ge 2:24. This evil practice, though it began in the race of wicked Cain, was in later ages followed by some among the people of God, which was connived at because of the hardness of their hearts; otherwise it was not so from the beginning. This was the first instance of it known; Jarchi says it was the way of the generation before the flood to have one wife for procreation of children, and the other for carnal pleasure; the latter drank a cup of sterility, that she might be barren, and was adorned as a bride, and lived deliciously; and the other was used roughly, and mourned like a widow; but by this instance it does not appear, for these both bore children to Lamech.

The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah; whose daughters they were cannot be said, no doubt of the race of Cain; the name of the one signifies an "ornament", or beauty, and might seem to answer to the account Jarchi gives of the wife for pleasure, if there were any foundation for it; and the other signifies a "shadow", being continually under the shadow of her husband.

Genesis 4:20

Ver. 20. And Adah bare Jabal,.... According to Hillerus {m}, this name, and Jubal and Tubal, after mentioned, all signify a river; why Lamech should call all his sons by names signifying the same thing, is not easy to say.

He was the father of such as dwelt in tents, and [of such as have] cattle: not in a proper sense the father of them, though his posterity might succeed him in the same business; but he was the first author and inventor of tents or movable habitations, which could be carried from place to place, for the convenience of pasturage for cattle: he was not the first that had cattle in his possession, or that first fed and kept them, for Abel, the son of Adam, was a keeper of sheep; but he was the first that found out the use of tents, and the pitching of them to abide in at proper places, so long as the pasturage lasted, and then to remove elsewhere; as we find in later times the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did, and as the Scenitae and Nomades among the Arabs, and who retain the same method of keeping cattle to this day; and so the words may be rendered according to Bochart {n} and Noldius {o},

"he was the father of such that dwell in tents "with" cattle."

Heidegger {p} thinks this Jabal to be the same with Pales, the god of shepherds {q}, to whom the Palilia were sacred with the Heathens; and that from Jabal may be formed "Bal", leaving out the "jod", as is sometimes done, and by adding the termination, it will be "Bales", and by changing the letters of the same organ, "Pales".

{m} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 35, 45, 349. {n} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 44. col. 466. {o} Ebr. Part. Concord. p. 273. No. 1196. {p} Hist. Patriarch. Exercit. 6. sect. 11. {q} Vid. Servium & Probum in Virgil. Georgic. l. 3. ver. 1.

Genesis 4:21

Ver. 21. And his brother's name was Jubal,.... This was another son of Lamech by Adah, and his name differs only in one letter from his brother's;

he was the father of all such that handle the harp and organ: he was the inventor of instrumental music, both of stringed instruments, such as were touched by the fingers, or struck with a quill, as the "harp"; and of wind instruments, such as were blown, as the "organ", which seems not to be the same we call so, being a late invention; but however a pleasant instrument, as its name signifies. Jubal is thought by some to be the same with Apollo, to whom with the Greeks the invention of the harp is ascribed; and some have been of opinion, that the jubilee trumpet was so called from Jubal, Le 25:9. Sanchoniatho {r} makes Chrysor or Vulcan, the same with Tubalcain, the brother of Jubal, to exercise himself in eloquence, songs and divination, confounding or mistaking the employment of the two brothers. The Arabs have such a notion of the Cainites being the inventors of music, that they commonly call a singing girl "Cainah" {s}; and the Arabic writers {t} make Jubal to be the first inventor of music, and that the beasts and birds gathered together to hear him; the same that is said of Orpheus.

{r} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 35. {s} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 9. {t} Elmacinus, p. 8. apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 232.

Genesis 4:22

Ver. 22. And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain,.... Thought by many to be the same with Vulcan, his name and business agreeing; for the names are near in sound, Tubalcain may easily pass into Vulcan; and who, with the Heathens, was the god of the smiths, and the maker of Jupiter's thunderbolts, as this was an artificer in iron and brass, as follows: his name is compounded of two words, the latter of which was no doubt put into his name in memory of Cain his great ancestor; the former Josephus {u} reads Thobel, and says of him, that he exceeded all in strength, and had great skill in military affairs:

an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron; he taught men the way of melting metals, and of making armour and weapons of war, and other instruments, for various uses, out of them; and he seems to be the same with the Chrysor of Sanchoniatho; for he says {w} of them (Agreus and Halieus) were begotten two brothers, the inventors of iron, and of working of it: one of these, called Chrysor, is said to be Hephaestus or Vulcan; and Chrysor, as Bochartus {x} seems rightly to conjecture, is rwa-vrx, "Choresh-Ur, a worker in fire"; that, by means of fire, melted metals, and cast them into different forms, and for different uses; and one of these words is used in the text of Tubalcain; and so, according to Diodorus Siculus {y}, Vulcan signifies fire, and was not only the inventor of fire, but he says he was the inventor of all works in iron, brass, gold, and silver, and of all other things wrought by fire, and of all other uses of fire, both by artificers and all other men, and therefore he was called by all
pur, "fire". Clemens of Alexandria {z} ascribes the invention of brass and iron to the Idaeans or priests of Cybele in Cyprus; and so Sophocles in Strabo {a}:

and the sister of Tubalcain was Naamah; whose name signifies "pleasant", fair and beautiful; and is thought by some to be the Venus of the Heathens; the Arabic writers {b} say she was a most beautiful woman, and found out colours and painting; and by others Minerva; and Josephus {c} says she excelled in the knowledge of divine things; and Minerva is by the Greeks called Nemanoum {d}. The Jews say {e} she was the wife of Noah; and some of them say {f} she was the wife of one Shimron, and the mother of the evil spirit Asmodeus, mentioned in Tobit, and of whom other demons were begotten: the Targuru of Jonathan adds,

"she was the mistress of lamentation and songs;"

but our Bishop Cumberland {g} conjectures, that she was the wife of Ham, was with him in the ark, and after the flood was the means of leading him into idolatry: what led him to this conjecture was, that he observed in Plutarch, that the wife of Cronus, the same with Ham, is by some called Nemaus, which brought Naamah to his mind. Josephus {h} makes the number of children Lamech had by his two wives to be seventy seven.

{u} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 2. {w} Ut supra. (Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 35.) {x} Canaan, l. 2. c. 2. col. 706. {y} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 11, 13. & l. 5. p. 341. {z} Stromat. l. 1. p. 307. Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 34. c. 1, 2. {a} Geograph. l. 10. p. 326. {b} Elmacinus, p. 8. apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. C. 8. p. 232. {c} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 2. {d} Plutarch. de Jide. {e} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 20. 3. Jarchi in loc. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 1. 2. {f} R. Elias Levita in Tishbi, fol. 19, 21. {g} History of Sanchoniatho, p. 107. {h} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 2.

Genesis 4:23

Ver. 23. And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah,.... Confessing what he had done, or boasting what he would do should he be attacked; or in order to make his wives easy, who might fear from his fierceness and cruelty; and the murders he had committed, or on account of Abel's murder, **Ge 4:15** that either the judgments of God would fall upon him and them, or some man or other would dispatch him and his; wherefore calling them together, he thus bespeaks them,

hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech; this he said in an imperious manner to them, demanding their attention and regard, and as glorying in, instead of being ashamed of his polygamy, and in a blustering way, as neither fearing God nor man; or rather speaking comfortably to them, to remove their fears:

for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt; which, as some say, were his great-grandfather Cain, and his son Tubalcain: according to a tradition of the Jews {i}, it was after this manner; Cain being old, and blind, and weary, sat in a thicket among the trees to rest himself; when Lamech, who was blind also, and led by Tubalcain hunting, who seeing Cain, and taking him for a wild beast, bid Lamech draw his bow, which he did, and killed him; but coming nearer, and finding it was Cain, was wroth and angry, and slew the young man: the Arabic writers {k} tell the story with a little variation, and

"Lamech being in a wood with one of his sons, and hearing a noise in it, supposing it to be a wild beast, cast a stone, which fell upon Cain, and killed him ignorantly; and the lad that led him said, what hast thou done? thou hast killed Cain; at which being very sorrowful after the manner of penitents, he smote his hands together, and the lad standing before him, he struck his head with both his hands, and killed him unawares; and coming to his wives, Adah and Zillah, said to them, hear my word, he that slew Abel shall be avenged sevenfold, but Lamech seventy times seven, who killed a man with a cast of a stone, and a young man by clapping of his hands."

And our version, and others, imply, that he killed both a man, and a young man, or some one person or more, and that he was sorry for it, made confession of it; it was to the wounding and grief of his soul, which does not so well agree with one of the wicked race of Cain: wherefore the words may be rendered, "though I have slain a man" {l}, that is nothing to you, you are not accountable for it, nor have any thing to fear coming upon you by reason of that; it is to my own wounding, damage, and hurt, if to any, and not to you. Some versions render it, "I would slay a man", &c. {m} any man, young or old, that should attack me; I fear no man: if any man wounds me, or offers to do me any hurt, I would slay him at once; I doubt not but I should be more than a match for him, be he who he will that shall set upon me, and kill him; though I might receive some slight wound, or some little hurt in the engagement, and therefore you need not be afraid of any man's hurting me. The Arabic version reads interrogatively, "have I killed a man &c.?" and so some others {n}, I have not; with which agree the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan,

"I have not killed a man;"

for which he or his posterity should be punished, as they interpreted it; and therefore his wives had no need to fear any ill should befall him or them, or that the murder of Abel should be avenged on them, this being the seventh generation in which it was to be avenged, **Ge 4:15** wherefore it follows, {i} R. Gedaliah, Shalshaleth Hakabala, fol. 74. 2. Jarchi in loc. {k} Elmacinus, p. 7. apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 224, 225. {l} So the particle yk is sometimes used; see Nold. Part. Ebr. Concord. p. 399. {m} ytgrh "interficerem", Vatablus; "certe ausim interficere", Piscator; "sane occiderem, ant occiderim", Muis, Rivet. {n} "An virum inferfeci?" De Dieu.

Genesis 4:24

Ver. 24. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold. Which if understood of him as confessing and lamenting his sin of murder, the sense is, if Cain was so severely punished for killing one man, of how much sorer punishment am I deserving, and shall have, who have killed two persons, and that after I had seen the punishment of Cain, and yet took no warning by it? or if he that killed Cain, who slew his brother, was to be avenged sevenfold, or to seven generations, then how much more, or longer, shall he be avenged, that shall slay me, who have slain none, or however not designedly; and therefore you may be easy and quiet, your fears, either from God or man, are groundless.

Genesis 4:25

Ver. 25. And Adam knew his wife again,.... The Targum of Jonathan adds, at the end of a hundred and thirty years after Abel was killed, see Ge 5:3 but, according to Bishop Usher, Seth was born the same year, which is most probable.

And she bare a son, and called his name Seth, that is, "put, placed, set"; not with any respect to Cain, who had no settled fixed abode, but wandered about; or to Seth as a foundation of the church and true religion, being a type of Christ the only foundation, though he may be considered in such a light; but the reason of his name follows:

for God, [said she], hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew; that is, another son in his room; and by calling him a "seed", she may have respect unto the promised seed, whom she once thought Cain was, or however expected him in his line, as being the firstborn; but he proving a wicked man, and having slain his brother Abel, on whom her future hope was placed, has another son given her, and substituted in his room, in whom, and in whose family, the true religion would be preserved, and from whom the Messiah, the promised seed, would spring see **Ga 3:16**.

Genesis 4:26

Ver. 26. And to Seth, to him also there was born a son,.... When he was an hundred and five years old, **Ge 5:6** and this is mentioned as a further proof and instance of God's goodness to Adam's family in this line, that there was a succession in it, where the true worship of God was kept, and from whence the Messiah was to arise, and as a pledge and confirmation of it:

and he called his name Enos; which is generally interpreted a weak, feeble, frail, mortal, miserable man; which Seth being sensible of, and observing the sorrows of human life, and especially an increase of them among good men through the growing corruptions of the age, gave this name to his son; though it may be observed, that the derivation of this name may be from the Arabic word "anas" {o}, to be sociable and familiar; man being a sociable creature, not only in civil but in religious things, and so a reason of the name may be taken from what follows;

then began men to call upon the name of the Lord; not but that Adam and Abel, and all good men, had called upon the name of the Lord, and prayed to him, or worshipped him before this time personally, and in their families; but now the families of good men being larger, and more numerous, they joined together in social and public worship: or since it may be thought there were public assemblies for religious worship before this time, though it may be they had been neglected, and now were revived with more zeal and vigour; seeing the Cainites incorporating themselves, and joining families together, and building cities, and carrying on their civil and religious affairs among themselves, they also formed themselves into distinct bodies; and not only separated from them, but called themselves by a different name; for so the words may be rendered: "then began men to call themselves", or "to be called by the name of the Lord" {p}; the sons of God, as distinct from the sons of men; which distinction may be observed in **Ge 6:2** and has been retained more or less ever since: some choose to translate the words, "then began men to call in the name of the Lord" {q}; that is, to call upon God in the name of the Messiah, the Mediator between God and man; having now, since the birth of Seth, and especially of Enos, clearer notions of the promised seed, and of the use of him, and his name, in their addresses to God; see Joh 14:13. The Jews give a very different sense of these words; the Targum of Onkelos is, "then in his days the children of men ceased from praying in the name of the Lord;"

and the Targum of Jonathan is,

"this was the age, in the days of which they began to err, and they made themselves idols, and surnamed their idols by the name of the Word of the Lord;"

with which agrees the note of Jarchi,

"then they began to call the names of men, and the names of herbs, by the name of the blessed God, to make idols of them:"

and some of them say, particularly Maimonides {r}, that Enos himself erred, and fell into idolatry, and was the first inventor of images, by the mediation of which men prayed to God: but all this seems to be without foundation, and injurious to the character of this antediluvian patriarch; nor does it appear that idolatry obtained in the posterity of Seth, or among the people of God so early; nor is such an account agreeable to the history which Moses is giving of the family of Seth, in opposition to that of Cain; wherefore one or other of the former senses is best.

{o} "Consuevit, assuevit, et familiaris evasit", Golius, col. 169. {p} hwhy Mvb arql "vocari de nomine Jehovae", Piscator. {q} "Ad invocandum in nomine Domini", Montanus, "vel vocare in nomine Domini", Cartwright. {r} Hilchot Obede Cochabim, c. 1. sect. 1. R, Gedaliah, Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 74. 2. Juchasin, fol. 134. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 5

This chapter contains a list or catalogue of the posterity of Adam in the line of Seth, down to Noah; it begins with a short account of the creation of Adam, and of his life and death, **Ge 5:1** next of five of the antediluvian patriarchs, their age and death, namely Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, **Ge 5:6** then a particular relation of Enoch, his character and translation, **Ge 5:21** then follows an account of Methuselah, the oldest man, and Lamech's oracle concerning his son Noah, **Ge 5:12** and the chapter is closed with the life and death of Lamech, and the birth of the three sons of Noah, **Ge 5:30**.

Ver. 1. This is the book of the generations of Adam,.... An account of persons born of him, or who descended from him by generation in the line of Seth, down to Noah, consisting of ten generations; for a genealogy of all his descendants is not here given, not of those in the line of Cain, nor of the collateral branches in the line of Seth, only of those that descended one from another in a direct line to Noah:

in the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; this is repeated from **Ge 1:27** to put in mind that man is a creature of God; that God made him, and not he himself; that the first man was not begotten or produced in like manner as his sons are, but was immediately created; that his creation was in time, when there were days, and it was not on the first of these, but on the sixth; and that he was made in the likeness of God, which chiefly lay in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and in dominion over the creatures.

Genesis 5:2

Ver. 2. Male and female created he them,.... Adam and Eve, the one a male, the other a female; and but one male and one female, to show that one man and one woman only were to be joined together in marriage, and live as man and wife for the procreation of posterity; and these were not made together, but first the male, and then the female out of him, though both in one day:

and blessed them; with a power of propagating their species, and multiplying it, and with all other blessings of nature and providence; with an habitation in the garden of Eden; with leave to eat of the fruit of all the trees in it, but one; with subjection of all the creatures to them, and with communion with God in their enjoyments:

and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created; which, as Philo {s} observes, signifies "earth"; and according to Josephus {t} red earth, out of which Adam was made; and as soon as he was made, this name was imposed upon him by God, to put him in mind of his original, that he was of the earth, earthly; and the same name was given to Eve, because made out of him, and because other marriage with him, and union to him; on that account, as ever since, man and wife bear the same name: wherefore I should rather think the name was given them from their junction and union together in love; so the name may be derived from the Arabic word {u} signifying to "join": though some think they had it from their beauty, and the elegance of their form {w}, being the most fair and beautiful of the whole creation. The names of Adam and Eve in Sanchoniatho {x}, as translated into Greek by Philo Byblius, are Protogonos, the first born, and Aeon, which has some likeness to Eve: the name of the first man with the Chinese is Puoncuus {y}.

{s} Leg. Allegor. l. 1. p. 57. {t} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 1. sect. 2. {u} "junxit, addiditque rem rei---amore junxit", Golius, col. 48. {w} Mda "pulcher fuit, nituit", Stockius, p. 13. Vid Ludolph. Hist. Ethiop. l. 1. c. 15. {x} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 34. {y} Martin. Hist. Sinic. l. 1. p. 3.

Genesis 5:3

Ver. 3. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years,.... The Septuagint version, through mistaken, gives the number two hundred and thirty years:

and begat [a son]; not that he had no other children during this time than Cain and Abel; this is only observed to show how old he was when Seth was born, the son here meant; who was begotten

in his own likeness, after his image; not in the likeness, and after the image of God, in which Adam was created; for having sinned, he lost that image, at least it was greatly defaced, and he came short of that glory of God, and could not convey it to his posterity; who are, and ever have been conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; are polluted and unclean, foolish and disobedient; averse to all that is good, and prone to all that is evil: the sinfulness of nature is conveyed by natural generation, but not holiness and grace; that is not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the flesh, but of God, and produced of his own will, by his mighty power impressing the image of his Son in regeneration on his people; which by beholding his glory they are more and more changed into by the Spirit of God. The Jewish writers understand this in a good sense, of Seth being like to Adam in goodness, when Cain was not: so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and he begat Seth, who was like to his image and similitude; for before Eve had brought forth Cain, who was not like unto him---but afterwards she brought forth him who was like unto him, and called his name Seth."

So they say {z} Cain was not of the seed, nor of the image of Adam, nor his works like Abel his brother; but Seth was of the seed and image of Adam, and his works were like the works of his brother Abel; according to that, "he begat (a son) in his own likeness". And they assert {a}, that Adam delivered all his wisdom to Seth his son, who was born after his image and likeness; and particularly Maimonides {b} observes, that all the sons of Adam before Seth were rather beasts than men, and had not the true human form, not the form and image of men; but Seth, after Adam had taught and instructed him, was in human perfection, as it is said of him, "and he begat in his likeness": but the text speaks not of the education of Seth, and of what he was through that, but of his birth, and what he was in consequence of it; and we are told by good authority, that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh", carnal and corrupt, and such are all the sons of Adam by natural generation; see
Job 14:4.

{z} Pirke Eliezer, c. 22. {a} Shalshalet Hakabala, apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 212. {b} More Nevochim, par. 1. c. 7.

Genesis 5:4

Ver. 4. And the days of Adam, after he had begotten Seth, were eight hundred years,.... The Septuagint version is seven hundred; for having added one hundred years more the should be, to the years of his life before the birth of Seth, here they are taken away to make the number of his years complete:

and he begat sons and daughters; not only after the birth of Seth, but before, though we have no account of any, unless of Cain's wife; but what their number was is not certain, either before or after; some say he had thirty children, besides Cain, Abel, and Seth; and others a hundred {c}. Josephus says the number of children, according to the old tradition, was thirty three sons and twenty three daughters. {d}

(These families had at least five children, for one son is named as well as other sons and daughters. Therefore there must be at least three sons and two daughters in each family. For a family to have at least three sons and two daughters, according to the laws of chance, a family must on the average have nine children for this to be a near certainty. Hence the families listed in this chapter must have been large by today's standards. Given their long life, this is not at all unusual. However even today, the Old Order Mennonites of Waterloo County in Ontario and Lancaster County in Pennsylvannia, have many families this large. Ed.)

{c} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 74. 2. {d} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 1. c. 1. footnote on point 3.

Genesis 5:5

Ver. 5. And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years,.... Not lunar years, as Varro {d}, but solar years, which consisted of three hundred and sixty five days and odd hours, and such were in use among the Egyptians in the times of Moses; and of these must be the age of Adam, and of his posterity in this chapter, and of other patriarchs in this book; or otherwise, some must be said to beget children at an age unfit for it, particularly Enoch, who must beget a son in the sixth year of his age; and the lives of some of them must be very short, even shorter than ours, as Abraham and others; and the time between the creation and the deluge could not be two hundred years: but this long life of the antediluvians, according to the Scripture account, is confirmed by the testimony of many Heathen writers, who affirm that the ancients lived a thousand years, as many of them did, pretty near, though not quite, they using a round number to express their longevity by; for the proof of this Josephus {e} appeals to the testimonies of Manetho the Egyptian, and Berosus the Chaldean, and Mochus and Hestiaeus; besides Jerom the Egyptian, and the Phoenician writers; also Hesiod, Hecataeus, Hellanicus, Acusilaus, Ephorus and Nicolaus. And though the length of time they lived may in some measure be accounted for by natural things as means, such as their healthful constitution, simple diet, the goodness of the fruits of the earth, the temperate air and climate they lived in, their sobriety, temperance, labour and exercise; yet no doubt it was so ordered in Providence for the multiplication of mankind, for the cultivation of arts and sciences, and for the spread of true religion in the world, and the easier handing down to posterity such things as were useful, both for the good of the souls and bodies of men. Maimonides {f} is of opinion, that only those individual persons mentioned in Scripture lived so long, not men in common; and which was owing to their diet and temperance, and exact manner of living, or to a miracle; but there is no reason to believe that they were the only temperate persons, or that any miracle should be wrought particularly on their account for prolonging their lives, and not others. But though they lived so long, it is said of them all, as here of the first man,

and he died, according to the sentence of the law in **Gen 2:17** and though he died not immediately upon his transgression of the law, yet he was from thence forward under the sentence of death, and liable to it; yea, death seized upon him, and was working in him, till it brought him to the dust of it; his life, though so long protracted, was a dying life, and at last he submitted to the stroke of death, as all his posterity ever since have, one or two excepted, and all must; for "it is appointed unto men once to die". **Heb 9:27**. The Arabic {g} writers relate, that Adam when he was near death called to him Seth, Enos, Kainan, and Mahalaleel, and ordered them by his will, when he was dead, to embalm his body with myrrh, frankincense, and cassia, and lay it in the hidden cave, the cave of Machpelah, where the Jews {h} say he was buried, and where Abraham, Sarah, &c. were buried; and that if they should remove from the neighbourhood of paradise, and from the mountain where they dwelt, they should take his body with them, and bury it in the middle or the earth. They are very particular as to the time of his death. They say {i} it was on a Friday, the fourteenth of Nisan, which answers to part of March and part of April, A. M. nine hundred and thirty, in the ninth hour of that day. The Jews are divided about the funeral of him; some say Seth buried him; others, Enoch; and others, God himself {k}: the primitive Christian fathers will have it that he was buried at Golgotha, on Mount Calvary, where Christ suffered.

{d} Apud Lactant. Institut. l. 2. c. 13. {e} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 9. {f} More Nevochim, par. 2. p. 47. {g} Patricides, p. 5. Elmacinus, p. 6. apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 216, 217. {h} Pirke Eliezer, c. 20. Juchasin, fol. 5. 1. {i} Patricides & Elamacinus, apud Hottinger. ib. {k} Juchasin, ut supra. (fol. 5. 1.)

Genesis 5:6

Ver. 6. And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos. Not that this was his firstborn, no doubt but he had other children before this time; but this is only mentioned, because it carried the lineage and descent directly from Adam to Noah, the father of the new world, and from whom the Messiah was to spring; whose genealogy to give is a principal view of this book, or account of generations from Adam to Noah.

Genesis 5:7

Ver. 7. And Seth lived, after he begat Enos, eight hundred and seven years,.... The Septuagint version makes the same mistake in the numbers of Seth as of Adam, giving him two hundred and five years before the birth of Enos, and but seven hundred and seven years after:

and begat sons and daughters; very probably both before and after Enos was born; but how many is not said.

Genesis 5:8

Ver. 8. And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died. As his father Adam before him. Seth, according to Josephus {l}, was a very good man, and brought up his children well, who trod in his steps, and who studied the nature of the heavenly bodies; and that the knowledge of these things they had acquired might not be lost, remembering a prophecy of Adam, that the world should be destroyed both by fire and by water, they erected two pillars, called Seth's pillars; the one was made of brick, and the other of stone, on which they inscribed their observations, that so if that of brick was destroyed by a flood, that of stone might remain; and which the above writer says continued in his time in the land of Siriad. The Arabic writers {m} make Seth to be the inventor of the Hebrew letters, and say, that when he was about to die he called to him Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, their wives and children, and adjured them by the blood of Abel not to descend from the mountain where they dwelt, after the death of Adam, nor suffer any of their children to go to, or mix with any of the seed of Cain, which were in the valley; whom he blessed, and ordered by his will to serve the Lord, and then died in the year of his age nine hundred and twelve, on the third day of the week of the month Ab (which answers to part of July and part of August), A. M. 1142, and his sons buried him in the hidden cave in the holy mountain, and mourned for him forty days.

{l} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 3. {m} Elmacinus, Patricides, apud Hottinger, p. 228, 229.

Genesis 5:9

Ver. 9. And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan. According to the Septuagint a hundred and ninety years; it can hardly be thought but that he had sons or daughters before, but this is only taken notice of for a reason before given.

Genesis 5:10

Ver. 10. And Enos lived, after he begat Cainan, eight hundred and fifteen years,.... The Septuagint version is seven hundred and fifteen; the hundred which is wanting is to be supplied from the preceding verse, which in that version has an hundred too much:

and begat sons and daughters; others besides Enos, as very likely he had before he was born.

Genesis 5:11

Ver. 11. And all the days or Enos were nine hundred and five years, and he died. According to the Arabic writers {n}, this man was a very good man, governed his people well, and instructed them in the ways of righteousness, and the fear of God; and when his end drew nigh, his offspring gathered about him for his blessing; and calling them to him, he ordered them by his will to practise holiness, and exhorted them not to mix with the offspring of Cain the murderer; and having appointed Cainan his successor, he died in the year of his age nine hundred and five, A. M. 1340, and was buried in the holy mountain; but according to Bishop Usher it was A. M. 1140.

{n} Elmacinus, apud Hottinger, p. 231.

Genesis 5:12

Ver. 12. And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel. Here the Septuagint version adds an hundred years, as before.

Genesis 5:13

Ver. 13. And Cainan lived, after he begat Mahalaleel, eight hundred and forty years,.... The Septuagint has seven hundred and forty, which, added to the years given him before, makes the same sum:

and begat sons and daughters; as his progenitors did.

Genesis 5:14

Ver. 14. And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years, and he died. The Arabic writers {o} also commend him as a good ruler of his people; and at his death he charged them not to desert the holy mountain, and join themselves with Cain's posterity; and having appointed Mahalaleel, who they say was his eldest son, his successor, he died on the fourth day of the week, and the thirteenth of the month Cheziran, A. M. 1535, and was buried in the double cave, and they mourned for him, according to custom, forty days: according to Bishop Usher it was in A. M. 1235.

{o} Elmacinus, apud Hottinger, p. 233.

Genesis 5:15

Ver. 15. And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared. A hundred and sixty, according to the Septuagint version.

Genesis 5:16

Ver. 16. And Mahalaleel lived, after he begat Jared, eight hundred and thirty years,.... Seven hundred and thirty, as the above version, still making the same mistake:

and he begat sons and daughters; how many cannot be said.

Genesis 5:17

Ver. 17. And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years, and he died. He also is spoken well of by the Arabic writers {p} as a good governor, a pious man that walked in the way of righteousness; and when he died blessed his children, and adjured them by the blood of Abel, not to suffer any of theirs to descend from the mountain to the sons of Cain: according to Bishop Usher he died A. M. 1290.

{p} Elmacinus, & Patricides in ib. p. 234.

Genesis 5:18

Ver. 18. And Jared lived an hundred and sixty two years, and he begat Enoch. Here the Septuagint agrees with the Hebrew text, and the Samaritan version differs, reading only sixty two; but this can hardly be thought to be his first son at such an age.

Genesis 5:19

Ver. 19. And Jared lived, after he begat Enoch, eight hundred years,.... And so, the Greek version, but the Samaritan is seven hundred and eighty five:

and begat sons and daughters; in that time, as well as before; for it is not to be imagined in this, or either of the foregoing or following instances, that these sons and daughters were begotten after living to such an age, since it is plain at that age they died.

Genesis 5:20

Ver. 20. And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years, and he died. The name of this patriarch signifies "descending"; and, according to the Arabic writers {q}, he had his name from the posterity of Seth, descending from the holy mountain in his time; for upon a noise being heard on the mountain, about an hundred men went down to the sons of Cain, contrary to the prohibition and dehortation of Jared, and mixed themselves with the daughters of Cain, which brought on the apostasy: when Jared was near his end, he called to him Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah, and their children, and said unto them, ye know what some have done, that they have gone down from the mountain, and have had conversation with the daughters of Cain, and have defiled themselves; take you care of your purity, and do not descend from the holy mountain; after which he blessed them, and having appointed Enoch his successor, he died the twelfth of Adar, answering to February, A. M. 1922: according to the Samaritan version, he lived only eight hundred and forty seven years: he died, according to Bishop Usher, A. M. 1422.

{q} Elmacinus, & Patricides in ib. p. 235.

Genesis 5:21

Ver. 21. And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah. Here the Septuagint version adds again an hundred years; and that Enoch had a son, whose name was Methuselah, is affirmed by Eupolemus {r}, an Heathen writer; and Enoch being a prophet gave him this name under a spirit of prophecy, foretelling by it when the flood should be; for his name, according to Bochart {s}, signifies, "when he dies there shall be an emission", or sending forth of waters upon the earth, to destroy it,

{r} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 17. p. 419. {s} Thaleg. l. 2. c. 13. col. 88. so Ainsworth.

Genesis 5:22

Ver. 22. And Enoch walked with God, after he begat Methuselah, three hundred years,.... The Greek version is two hundred. He had walked with God undoubtedly before, but perhaps after this time more closely and constantly: and this is observed to denote, that he continued so to do all the days of his life, notwithstanding the apostasy which began in the days of his father, and increased in his. He walked in the name and fear of God, according to his will, in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord then made known; he walked by faith in the promises of God, and in the view of the Messiah, the promised seed; he walked uprightly and sincerely, as in the sight of God; he had familiar converse, and near and intimate communion with him: and even the above Heathen writer, Eupolemus, seems to suggest something like this, when he says, that he knew all things by the angels of God, which seems to denote an intimacy with them; and that he received messages from God by them:

and begat sons and daughters; the marriage state and procreation of children being not inconsistent with the most religious, spiritual, and godly conversation.

Genesis 5:23

Ver. 23. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty five years. A year of years, living as many years as there are days in a year; not half the age of the rest of the patriarchs: our poet {t} calls him one of middle age; though his being taken away in the midst of his days was not a token of divine displeasure, but of favour, as follows; see Ps 55:23.

{t} Milton's Paradise Lost, B. 11. l. 665.

Genesis 5:24

Ver. 24. And Enoch walked with God,.... Which is repeated both for the confirmation of it, and for the singularity of it in that corrupt age; and to cause attention to it, and stir up others to imitate him in it, as well as to express the well pleasedness of God therein; for so it is interpreted, "he had this testimony, that he pleased God",
Heb 11:5

and he was not; not that he was dead, or in the state of the dead, as Aben Ezra and Jarchi interpret the phrase following,

for God took him, out of the world by death, according to
1Ki 19:4 "for he was translated, that he should not see death", Heb 11:5 nor was he annihilated, or reduced to nothing, "for God took him", and therefore he must exist somewhere: but the sense is, he was not in the land of the living, he was no longer in this world; or with the inhabitants of the earth, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it; but the Lord took him to himself out of the world, in love to him, and removed him from earth to heaven, soul and body, as Elijah was taken; See Gill on "Heb 11:5". The Arabic writers {u} call him Edris, and say he was skilled in astronomy and other sciences, whom the Grecians say is the same with Hermes Trismegistus; and the Jews call him Metatron, the great scribe, as in the Targum of Jonathan: they say {w}, that Adam delivered to him the secret of the intercalation of the year, and he delivered it to Noah, and that he was the first that composed books of astronomy {x}; and so Eupolemus {y} says he was the first inventor of astrology, and not the Egyptians; and is the same the Greeks call Atlas, to whom they ascribe the invention of it. The apostle Jude speaks of him as a prophet,
#Jude 14 and the Jews say {z}, that he was in a higher degree of prophecy than Moses and Elias; but the fragments that go under his name are spurious: there was a book ascribed to him, which is often referred to in the book of Zohar, but cannot be thought to be genuine.

{u} Elmacinus, Patricides, apud Hottinger. p. 239. 240. Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 9. {w} Juchasin, fol. 5. 1. Pirke Eliezer, c. 8. {x} Shalshalet

Hakabala, fol. 74. 2. {y} Ut supra. (Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 17. p. 419.) {z} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 1, 2.

Genesis 5:25

Ver. 25. And Methuselah lived an hundred and eighty and seven years, and beget Lamech. The Septuagint version is an hundred and sixty seven; the Samaritan only sixty seven; the same names were given to some of the posterity of Seth as were to those of Cain, as Lamech here, and Enoch before.

Genesis 5:26

Ver. 26. And Methuselah lived, after he begat Lamech, seven hundred eighty and two years,.... The Greek version is eight hundred and two years, and so makes the sum total of his life the same; but the Samaritan version only six hundred and fifty three, and so makes his whole life but seven hundred and twenty; and thus, instead of being the oldest, he is made the youngest of the antediluvian patriarchs, excepting his father Enoch:

and begat sons and daughters; some, it is highly probable, before he beget Lamech, since then he was near two hundred years of age, as well as others after

Genesis 5:27

Ver. 27. And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty nine years, and he died,.... This was the oldest man that ever lived, no man ever lived to a thousand years: the Jews give this as a reason for it, because a thousand years is God's day, according to
Ps 90:4 and no man is suffered to arrive to that. His name carried in it a prediction of the time of the flood, which was to be quickly after his death, as has been observed, See Gill on "Ge 5:21". Some say he died in the year of the flood; others, fourteen years after, and was in the garden of Eden with his father, in the days of the flood, and then returned to the world {a}; but the eastern writers are unanimous that he died before the flood: the Arabic writers {b} are very particular as to the time in which he died; they say he died in the six hundredth year of Noah, on a Friday, about noon, on the twenty first day of Elul, which is Thout; and Noah and Shem buried him, embalmed in spices, in

the double cave, and mourned for him forty days: and some of the Jewish writers say he died but seven days before the flood came, which they gather from **Ge 7:10** "after seven days"; that is, as they interpret it, after seven days of mourning for Methuselah {c}: he died A. M. 1656, the same year the flood came, according to Bishop Usher.

{a} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 74. 2. {b} Apud Hottinger, p. 244. {c} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 32. fol. 27. 3. Juchasin, fol. 6. 1. Baal Habturim in Gen. vii. 10.

Genesis 5:28

Ver. 28. And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat son. According to the Septuagint version he was an hundred and eighty eight years old; but according to the Samaritan version only fifty three; the name, of his son, begotten by him, is given in the next verse, with the reason of it.

Genesis 5:29

Ver. 29. And he called his name Noah,.... Which signifies rest and comfort; for rest gives comfort, and comfort flows from rest, see 2Sa 14:17, where a word from the same root is rendered "comfortable", and agrees with the reason of the name, as follows:

saying, this same shall comfort us, concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground, which the Lord hath cursed; this he spake by a spirit of prophecy, foreseeing what his son would be, and of what advantage to him and his family, and to the world, both in things temporal and spiritual. In things temporal: the earth was cursed for the sin of man immediately after the fall, and continued under it to this time, bringing forth thorns and thistles in great abundance of itself, which occasioned much trouble to root and pluck them up, and nothing else, without digging, and planting, and sowing; and being barren through the curse, it was with great difficulty men got a livelihood: now Noah eased them in a good measure of their toil and trouble, by inventing instruments of ploughing, as Jarchi suggests, which they had not before, but threw up the ground with their hands, and by the use of spades, or such like things, which was very laborious; but now, by the use of the plough, and beasts to draw it, their lives were made much more easy and comfortable; hence he is said to begin to be an "husbandman", or a "man of the earth", that brought agriculture to a greater perfection, having found out an easier and quicker manner of tilling the earth: and as he was the first that is said to plant a vineyard, if he was the inventor of wine, this was another way in which he was an instrument of giving refreshment and comfort to men, that being what cheers the heart of God and men, see **Ge 9:20** and if the antediluvians were restrained from eating of flesh, and their diet was confined to the fruits of the earth; Noah, as Dr. Lightfoot {d} observes, would be a comfort in reference to this, because to him, and in him to all the world, God would give liberty to eat flesh; so that they were not obliged to get their whole livelihood with their hands out of the ground: and moreover, as Lamech might be apprised of the flood by the name of his father, and the prediction of his grandfather, he might foresee that he and his family would be saved, and be the restorer of the world, and repeople it, after the destruction of it by the flood. And he may have respect to comfort in spiritual things, either at first taking him to be the promised seed, the Messiah, in whom all comfort is; or however a type of him, and from whom he should spring, who would deliver them from the curse of the law, and from the bondage of it, and from toiling and seeking for a righteousness by the works of it; or he might foresee that he would be a good man, and a preacher of righteousness, and be a public good in his day and generation.

{d} Works, vol. 1. p. 9.

Genesis 5:30

Ver. 30. And Lamech lived, after he begat Noah, five hundred ninety and five years,.... The Septuagint version is five hundred and sixty five; and the Samaritan version six hundred:

and begat sons and daughters; of which we have no account.

Genesis 5:31

Ver. 31. And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years, and he died. According to the Greek version, he lived but seven hundred and fifty three; and according to the Samaritan version, only six hundred and fifty three: but it is best and safest in these, and all the above numbers, to follow the original Hebrew, and the numbers in that, with which the Targum of Onkelos exactly agrees, written about the time of Christ; and these numbers were just the same when the two Talmuds were composed. Some of the Jewish writers, and so some Christians, confound this Lamech with the other Lamech, who was of the race of Cain, spoken of in the preceding chapter, and say he was a bigamist and a murderer; and that in his days sins were committed openly, and witchcraft was throughout the whole world {e}: he died, according to Bishop Usher, A. M. 1651. Eight times in this chapter the phrase is used, "and he died", to put us in mind of death; to observe that it is the way of all flesh; that those that live longest die at last, and it must be expected by everyone.

{e} Shalshalet Hakabal, fol. 1. 2. & 74. 2.

Genesis 5:32

Ver. 32. And Noah was five hundred years old,.... Or "the son of five hundred years" {f}; he was in his five hundredth year: it can hardly be thought that he should live to this time a single life, and have no children born to him, which he might have had, but were dead; though some think it was so ordered by Providence, that he should not begin to procreate children until of this age, because it being the will of God to save him and his family from the flood, had he began at the usual age he might have had more than could conveniently be provided for in the ark; or some of them might have proved wicked, and so would deserve to perish with others:

and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth; not together, but one after another; and since Ham was the younger son, see **Ge 9:24** and Shem was an hundred years old two years after the flood, Ge 11:10 he must be born in the five hundred and second year of his father's age; so that it seems most probable that Japheth was the eldest son, and born in the five hundred and first year of his age; though Shem is usually mentioned first, because of his superior dignity and excellency, God being in an eminent manner the God of Shem, **Ge 9:26** and from whom the Messiah was to spring, and in whose line the church of God was to be continued in future ages. The name of Japheth is retained in Greek and Latin authors, as Hesiod {g} Horace {h}, and others {i}, by whom he is called Japetos and Japetus.

{f} hnv twam vmx Nb "filius quingentorum annorum", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {g} "Theogonia prope principium et passim". {h} Carmin. l. 1. Ode 3. {i} Apollodorus de Deorum Orig. l. 1. p. 2, 4. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 6

This chapter gives an account of the wickedness of the old world, both among the profane and the professors of religion, which was taken notice of and resented by God, upon which he determined the destruction of it, **Ge 6:1** only one man, Noah, is excepted, who found favour with God, and whose character is given, **Ge 6:8** and to whom was observed by God the general corruption of the earth, **Ge 6:11** and to whom he gave orders and directions for the building an ark for himself, and his family, being determined to destroy the earth with a flood, and all creatures in it, **Ge 6:14** only he would preserve him and his wife, his three sons and their wives, and two of every living creature, for which, and for himself and his family, he was to take food into the ark when built, **Ge 6:18** and the chapter is concluded with observing, that Noah did as he was commanded, **Ge 6:22**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when men began to multiply upon the face of the earth,.... Either mankind in general, or rather the posterity of Cain, who were mere natural men, such as they were when born into the world, and as brought up in it, destitute of the grace of God, and of the knowledge and fear of him; and who in proportion much more multiplied than the posterity of Seth, because of the practice of polygamy, which by the example of Lamech, one of that race, might prevail among them:

and daughters were born unto them; not daughters only, but sons also, though it may be more daughters than sons, or it may denote remarkable ones, for their beauty or immodesty, or both; and chiefly this is observed for the sake of what follows.

Genesis 6:2

Ver. 2. That the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair,.... Or "good" {k}, not in a moral but natural sense; goodly to look upon, of a beautiful aspect; and they looked upon, and only regarded their external beauty, and lusted after them: those "sons of God" were not angels either good or bad, as many have thought, since they are incorporeal beings, and cannot be affected with fleshly lusts, or marry and be given in marriage, or generate and be generated; nor the sons of judges, magistrates, and great personages, nor they themselves, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra; but this could be no crime in them, to look upon and take in marriage such persons, though they were the daughters of the meaner sort; and supposing they acted a criminal part in looking at them, and lusting after them, and committing fornication with them, and even in marrying irreligious persons; yet this could only be a partial, not an universal corruption, as is after affirmed, though such examples must indeed have great influence upon the populace; but rather this is to be understood of the posterity of Seth, who from the times of Enos, when then began to be called by the name of the Lord, **Ge 4:25** had the title of the sons of God, in distinction from the children of men; these claimed the privilege of divine adoption, and professed to be born of God, and partakers of his grace, and pretended to worship him according to his will, so far as revealed to them, and to fear and serve and glorify him. According to the Arabic writers {l}, immediately after the death of Adam the family of Seth was separated from the family of Cain; Seth took his sons and their wives to a high mountain (Hermon), on the top of which Adam was buried, and Cain and all his sons lived in the valley beneath, where Abel was slain; and they on the mountain obtained a name for holiness and purity, and were so near the angels that they could hear their voices and join their hymns with them; and they, their wives and their children, went by the common name of the sons of God: and now these were adjured, by Seth and by succeeding patriarchs, by no means to go down from the mountain and join the Cainites; but notwithstanding in the times of Jared some did go down, it seems; See Gill on "Ge 5:20" and after that others, and at this time it became general; and being taken with the beauty of the daughters of Cain and his posterity, they did as follows:

and they took them wives of all that they chose; not by force, as Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom interpret, for the Cainites being more numerous and powerful than they, it can hardly be thought that the one would attempt it, or the other suffer it; but they intermarried with them, which the Cainites might not be averse unto; they took to them wives as they fancied, which were pleasing to the flesh, without regard to their moral and civil character, and without the advice and consent of their parents, and without consulting God and his will in the matter; or they took women as they pleased, and were to their liking, and committed fornication, to which the Cainites were addicted; for they spent their time in singing and dancing, and in uncleanness, whereby the posterity of Seth or sons of God were allured to come down and join them, and commit fornication with them, as the Arabic writers {m} relate.

{k} tbj kalai, Sept, "bonae" Cocceius. {l} Elmacinus, Patricides apud Hottinger. Smegma, l. 1. c. viii. p. 226, 227, 228. {m} Elmacinus, Patricides apud Hottinger. Smegma, l. 1. c. viii. p. 232, 235, 236, 242, 247.

Genesis 6:3

Ver. 3. And the Lord said,.... Not to Noah, as in **Ge 6:13** for, as yet, he is not taken notice of, or any discourse addressed to him; but rather to or within himself, he said what follows, or thus concluded, and resolved on in his own mind:

my Spirit shall not always strive with man; meaning either the soul of man, called the Spirit of God, Job 27:3 because of his creation, and is what he breathes and puts into men, and therefore is styled the Father of spirits; and which is in man, as some in Aben Ezra observe to be the sense the word used, as a sword in the scabbard; and so the meaning is, it shall not always abide there, but be unsheathed and drawn out; man shall not live always, since he is corrupt, and given to carnal lusts: or else, as Jarchi thinks, God himself is meant, and that the sense is, my Spirit shall not always contend within myself; or there shall not always be contention within me concerning man, whether I shall destroy him, or have mercy on him; I am at a point to punish him, since he is wholly carnal: or rather this is to be understood of the Holy Spirit of God, as the Targum of Jonathan, which agrees with **1Pe 3:18** and to be thus interpreted; that the Spirit of God, which had been litigating and reasoning the point, as men do in a court of judicature, as the word signifies, with these men in the court, and at the bar of their own consciences, by one providence or by one minister or another, particularly by Noah, a preacher of righteousness, in vain, and to no purpose; therefore, he determines to proceed no longer in this way, but pass and execute the sentence of condemnation on them:

for that he also is flesh; not only carnal and corrupt, but sadly corrupted, and wholly given up to and immersed in sensual lusts and carnal pleasures, so as not to be restrained nor reformed; even the posterity of Seth, professors of religion also, as well as the profane world and posterity of Cain:

yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years: meaning not the term of man's life, reduced to this from the length of time he lived before the flood; but this designs the space that God would give for repentance, before he proceeded to execute his vengeance on him; this is that "longsuffering of God" the apostle speaks of in the afore mentioned place, "that waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing"; and so both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan interpret it of a space of an hundred and twenty years given them to repent: now whereas it was but an hundred years from the birth of Japheth to the flood, some think the space was shortened twenty years, because of their impenitence; but it is more probable what Jarchi observes, that this decree was made and given out twenty years before his birth, though here related, by a figure called "hysteron proteron", frequent in the Scriptures.

Genesis 6:4

Ver. 4. There were giants in the earth in those days,.... That is, in the days before the sons of God took the daughters of men for wives, in such a general manner as before declared, or before the declension and apostasy became so universal; even in the times of Jared, as the Arabic writers {n} understand it, who say that these giants were begotten on the daughters of Cain by the children of Seth, who went down from the mountain to them in the days of Jared, see **Ge 5:20** the word "Nephilim" comes from a word which signifies to fall; and these might be so called, either because they made their fear to fall upon men, or men, through fear, to fall before them, because of their height and strength; or rather because they fell and rushed on men with great violence, and oppressed them in a cruel and tyrannical manner; or, as some think, because they fell off and were apostates from the true religion, which is much better than to understand them of apostate angels, whom the Targum of Jonathan mentions by name, and calls them Schanchazai and Uziel, who fell from heaven, and were in the earth in those days:

and also after that, which shows that the preceding clause respects giants in former times,

when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, came into their houses and chambers, and lay with them:

and they bare [children] unto them, or giants unto them, as may be supplied from the former clause; for the sense is, as there were giants before this general defection, so there were at this time, when there was a mixture of the Cainites and Sethites; which were the offspring of the sons of God, or posterity of Seth, mixing with the daughters of men, or the posterity of Cain; for this is not to be understood after the flood, as Aben Ezra, Ben Melech; and so they are described in the following words, the same [became] mighty men; for tallness and strength, for power and dominion, for tyranny and oppression:

which [were] of old: like those that were of old before; or who in after times were spoken of, as in the days of old:

men of renown, or "of name" {o}; whose names were often made mention of, both for their size and for their wickedness; they were much talked of, and extolled for their exploits, and even wicked ones: they were famous men, or rather infamous; for some men get a name in the world, not for their goodness, but for their greatness, and sometimes for their great wickedness; which sense is countenanced by what follows: that there were giants in these early times is confirmed by the testimony of many Heathen writers; such were the Titans that made war against Saturn, begotten by Ouranus, who were not only of bulky bodies, but of invincible strength, as Apollodorus {p} relates, and Berosus {q} speaks of a city about Lebanon, called Enos, which was a city of giants, who were men of vast bodies, and of great strength, inventors of arms and music, were cannibals, and exceedingly debauched.

{n} Elmacinus & Patricides apud Hottinger, p. 235, 236. {o} Mvh yvna "viri nominis", Montanus. {p} De Origine Deorum, l. 1. p. 14. {q} Antiqu. l. 1. fol. 5. 2. vid. Horat. Carmin, l. 2. Ode. 19. Ovid Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 1.

Genesis 6:5

Ver. 5. And God saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth,.... That it spread throughout the earth, wherever it was inhabited by men, both among the posterity of Cain and Seth, and who indeed now were mixed together, and become one people: this respects actual transgressions, the wicked actions of men, and those of the grosser sort, which were "multiplied" {r} as the word also signifies; they were both great in quality and great in quantity; they were frequently committed, and that everywhere; the degeneracy was become universal; there was a flood of impiety that spread and covered the whole earth, before the deluge of waters came, and which was the cause of it: this God saw, not only by his omniscience, by which he sees everything, but he took notice of it in his providence, and was displeased with it, and determined in his mind to show his resentment of it, and let men see that he observed it, and disapproved of it, and would punish for it:

and [that], every imagination of the thoughts of his heart [was] only evil continually: the heart of man is evil and wicked, desperately wicked, yea, wickedness itself, a fountain of iniquity, out of which abundance of evil flows, by which it may be known in some measure what is in it, and how wicked it is; but God, that sees it, only knows perfectly all the wickedness of it, and the evil that is in it: the "thoughts" of his heart are evil; evil thoughts are formed in the heart, and proceed from it; they are vain, foolish, and sinful, and abominable in the sight of God, by whom they are seen, known, and understood afar off: the "imagination" of his thoughts is evil, the formation of them; they were evil while forming, the substratum of thought, the very beginning of it, the first motion to it, yea, "every" such one was evil, and "only" so; not one good among them, not one good thing in their hearts, no one good thought there, nor one good imagination of the thought; and so it was "continually" from their birth, from their youth upwards, throughout the whole of their lives, and all the days of their lives, night and day, and day after day, without intermission: this respects the original corruption of human nature, and shows it to be universal; for this was not only true of the men of the old world, but of all mankind; the same is said of men after the flood as before, and of all men in general without any exception, **Ge 8:21**. Hence appears the necessity of regeneration, and proves that the new creature is not an improvement of the old principles of corrupt nature, since there is no good thing in man but what is put into him; also the disability of man to do that which is good, even to think a good thought, or do a good action; therefore the works of unregenerate men are not properly good works, since they cannot flow from a right principle, or be directed to a right end.

{r} hbr "augescere", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "multiplicaretur", Schmidt.

Genesis 6:6

Ver. 6. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth,.... Because of the wickedness of man, the wickedness of his heart, and the wickedness of his life and conversation, which was so general, and increased to such a degree, that it was intolerable; wherefore God could have wished, as it were, that he had never made him, since he proved so bad; not that repentance, properly speaking, can fall upon God, for he never changes his mind or alters his purposes, though he sometimes changes the course and dispensations of his providence. This is speaking by an anthropopathy, after the manner of men, because God determined to do, and did something similar to men, when they repent of anything: as a potter, when he has formed a vessel that does not please him, and he repents that he has made it, he takes it and breaks it in pieces; and so God, because of man's wickedness, and to show his aversion to it, and displicency at it, repented of his making him; that is, he resolved within himself to destroy him, as in the next verse, which explains this:

and it grieved him at his heart; this is to be understood by the same figure as before, for there can, no more be any uneasiness in his mind than a change in it; for God is a simple Being, uncompounded, and not subject to any passions and affections. This is said to observe his great hatred to sin, and abhorrence of it.

Genesis 6:7

Ver. 7. And the Lord said,.... Not to the angels, nor to Noah, but within himself, on observing to what a height the sin of man had got, and what a spread it made on the earth:

I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth; though he is my creature, the work of my hands, I have made him out of the earth, and made him lord of it; I am now determined to show my detestation of his wickedness, and for the honour of my justice to destroy him from off it; just as a potter takes a vessel he dislikes, when he has made it, and dashes it to pieces: or "I will wipe men off of the earth" {s}; like so much dust; man was made of the dust of the earth, he is dust, yea, sinful dust and ashes; and God resolved to send a flood of waters on the earth, which should wash off man from it, like so much dust upon it, just as dust is carried off by a flood of water, see 2Ki 21:13 or "I will blot out man" {t}, as most render the words; that is, out of the book of the living, he shall no longer live upon the earth; out of the book of creation, or of the creatures, he shall have no more a being, or be seen among them, any more than what is blotted out of a book:

both man and beast; or "from man to beast" {u}; even every living creature upon the earth, from man to beast, one as well as another, and one for the sake of the other, the beasts for the sake of man; these were made for his use and benefit, but he sinning against God, and abusing his mercies, they are to be taken away, and destroyed for his sake, and as a punishment for his sins:

and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air; not the creeping things in the great and wide sea, for the fishes died not in the deluge, but the creeping things on the earth, **Ge 6:20** for it repenteth me that I have made them; man, male and female, whom he created; Adam and Eve, and their posterity, and particularly the present inhabitants of the earth: but though it may respect men principally, yet is not to be restrained to them, but takes in all the creatures before mentioned, made for the use of man; and the ends not being answered by them, God repented that he had made them, as well as man. Some think the repentance, attributed to God in this and the preceding verse, is not to be understood of him in himself, but of his Spirit in good men, particularly Noah, producing grief, sorrow, and repentance in him, who wished that man had never been, than to be so wicked as he was; but for such a sense there seems to be no manner of foundation in the text.

{s} hxma "abstergam; verbum Hebraeum" hxm "significat aqua aliquid extergere", Pareus. {t} Delebo, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {u} hmhb de Mdam "ab homine usque ad jumentum", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Genesis 6:8

Ver. 8. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. This man and his family were the only exception to the general apostasy; God always reserves some, in the worst of times, for himself; there is a remnant, according to the election of grace; it was but a small one, and that now appeared; and this was owing to the grace of God, and his choice upon that, and not to the merits of the creature. This grace, which Noah found and shared in, was the favour and good will of God; Noah was grateful and acceptable to him; he was well pleased with him in Christ; his person, services, and sacrifices, were acceptable to him through the Beloved; though he might not be acceptable in the eyes of men, who derided him for his piety and devotion, and especially for his prediction of the flood, and making an ark to save him and his family from it; yet he was very acceptable in the eyes of the Lord, and grateful in his sight, and was favoured with grace from him, who is the God of all grace, and with all the supplies of it: the Jerusalem Targum is, he

"found grace and mercy;"

the grace he found was not on account of his own merit, but on account of the mercy of God: and this shows that he was not without sin, or he would have stood in no need of the mercy and grace of God to save him; and as he found grace and favour in things spiritual, so in things temporal; he found favour with God, and therefore he and his family were spared, when the whole world of the ungodly were destroyed; he found favour with God, and therefore was directed by him to build an ark, for the saving of himself and his; he found favour with him, and therefore he had the honour of being the preserver of mankind, and the father of a new world.

Genesis 6:9

Ver. 9. These are the generations of Noah,.... Or this is the account of his posterity, of the persons that were generated by him, that sprung from him, and peopled the earth after the flood, who are mentioned in the next verse, what follows being to be put in a parenthesis; as the genealogy of Adam is carried on from Adam to Noah, **Ge 5:1** so the old world ending at the flood, the genealogy of the new world begins with Noah: though Aben Ezra and Ben Gersome interpret the word "events", things which days bring forth, Pr 27:1 these are the events or the things which befell Noah, of which an account is given in this and some following chapters, whose character is next observed:

Noah was a just man; not only before men, but in the sight of God; and not by his own works of righteousness, for no man is just by them before God, but by the righteousness of the promised seed, the Messiah; for he "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith", Heb 11:7 the righteousness which was to be brought in by the Son of God, and which was revealed to him from faith to faith; and which by faith he received and lived upon, as every just man does, and believed in as his justifying righteousness before God; though he also lived a holy and righteous conversation before men, which may rather be intended in the next part of his character:

and perfect in his generations; not that he was perfectly holy, or free from sin, but was a partaker of the true grace of God; was sincere and upright in heart and life; lived an unblemished life and conversation, untainted with the gross corruptions of that age he lived in, which he escaped through the knowledge, grace, and fear of God; and therefore it is added, that he was holy, upright, and blameless "in his generations": among the men of the several generations he lived in, as in the generation before the flood, which was very corrupt indeed, and which corruption was the cause of that; and in the generation after the flood: or "in his ages" {w}, in the several stages of his life, in youth and in old age; he was throughout the whole course of his life a holy good man.

[And] Noah walked with God: walked according to his will, in the ways of truth and righteousness; walked in a manner well pleasing to him, and enjoyed much communion with him, as Enoch had done before him, **Ge 5:22**.

{w} wytrdb "in aetatibus suis", Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Genesis 6:10

Ver. 10. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. When he was five hundred years of age, and before the flood came upon the earth; and when it was so wicked as is next described: of these sons of his, and of the order in which they are placed, See Gill on "Ge 5:32".

Genesis 6:11

Ver. 11. The earth also was corrupt before God,.... That is, the inhabitants of the earth were corrupt in their lives and conversations; they were corrupt both in principle and practice, and did abominable things; and those corruptions were, according to Jarchi, uncleanness and idolatry; they were corrupt in the worship of God, worshipping the creature more, or besides the Creator; and they were corrupt in their manners and behaviour to one another, being guilty of fornication and adultery, and other enormous crimes; of some against God, and of others against their neighbours; and these they committed openly and impudently, without any fear of God, or dread of his wrath and displeasure, and in contempt of him, his will and laws:

and the earth was filled with violence; with doing injury to the persons and properties of men; with oppression and cruelty, by tyrannical decrees and unrighteous judgments; or with rapines and robberies, as the Targums and Jarchi; and with rapes, as Aben Ezra adds: the account that Lucian {x} gives from tradition agrees with this; that the present race of men is not the first, they totally perished by a flood; and those men were very insolent and addicted to unjust actions; for they neither kept their oaths, nor were hospitable to strangers, nor gave ear to suppliants, for which reason they were destroyed.

{x} De Dea Syria.

Genesis 6:12

Ver. 12. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt,.... This is spoken as if he had never looked upon it before; whereas his eyes are always upon the earth, and the inhabitants of it, and upon all their ways and works: but this denotes the special notice he took, and the particular observation he made upon the condition and circumstances the earth, and its inhabitants, were in. And this is remarked, as well as the particle "behold" is used, to denote the certainty of this corruption; it must needs be true, that the earth was corrupted, since the omniscient God had declared it to be so, who sees and knows all things:

for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth: that is, all men, excepting Noah; who were flesh, carnal and unregenerate persons; these had corrupted the way of God, the true religion, with their idolatries: and they had corrupted their own way, their manners, their life and conversation with their uncleanness and wickedness of various sorts: the Arabic writers {y} say, that after Enoch was taken away, the children of Seth and of Cain worshipped idols, everyone as he pleased, and were immersed in wickedness, and gave their right hands to each other, and joined in fellowship in committing sin and vice; and that in the times of Noah, none were left in the holy mount but he and his wife, and his three sons and their wives; all went down below and mixed with the daughters of Cain, and were immersed in sins, and worshipped strange gods, and so the earth was corrupted and filled with lasciviousness. The Jewish writers also observe {z}, that the generations of Cain were guilty of uncleanness, men and women, like beasts, and defiled themselves with all kind of fornication and incest, everyone with his mother, and with his own sister, and with his brother's wife, and that openly, and in the streets: and Sanchoniatho {a}, the Heathen historian, the writer of the history of Cain's line, says of the fifth generation before the flood, that the women of those times, without shame, lay with any man they could meet with.

{y} Elmacinus & Patricides, apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 242, 247. {z} Pirke Eliezer, c. 22. {a} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 34, 35.

Genesis 6:13

Ver. 13. And God said unto Noah,.... This is a proof that he found favour in his eyes, since he spake to him, and told him what he had observed, and what he was determined to do, and gave him directions to make an ark for the security of himself and family, when he should destroy the world:

the end of all flesh is come before me; that is, it was determined to put an end to the lives of all men, and of all cattle, and fowl and creeping things on the earth; all which are included in the phrase, "all flesh", even every living substance on the earth:

for the earth is filled with violence through them; that is, through men, for they are principally intended in the preceding clause, though not only; and it was through them, and not through other creatures, that the earth was filled with violence, in the sense in which it is explained in See Gill on "Ge 6:11":

and behold, I will destroy them with the earth; meaning, that he would destroy all men, together with the cattle and creeping things of the earth, the trees, and herbs, and plants in it, yea, that itself, for that is said to perish by the flood, **2Pe 3:6**. Some render it, "out of the earth" {b}; that is, would destroy them from it, that they should be no more on it.

{b} Urah ta "e terra", Cartwright; some in Vatablus; so Ar. vers. Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Ben Gersom & Ben Melech.

Genesis 6:14

Ver. 14. Make thee an ark of Gopher wood,.... It is not called a ship, for it was not made for sailing to any distant parts, but an ark or chest, being like one, flat bottomed, and ridged and sloping upwards, and was made for floating on the waters for a little way. So Lucian {c}, and other Heathen writers, call it larnax, "an ark" or "chest": this was made of "Gopher wood", which all the Targums, and the more ancient Rabbins, understand of cedar wood; some the box tree, as the Arabic version; others, the pine; others, fir; the Mahometans say it was the Indian plane tree; and others, the turpentine tree: but the cypress tree bids fairest to be the wood of which, the ark was made, as Fuller {d}, Bochart {e}, and others {f} have shown; that being nearest to "Gopher" in sound, and being a wood very durable and incorruptible, and fit for shipping. Alexander made a navy of cypress trees in the groves and gardens about Babylon, as Strabo {g} relates: where this ark was made, is not easy to say: some think in Palestine; others, near Mount Caucasus, on the borders of India; others, in China: but it is most likely it was near the garden of Eden, where Noah lived, and not far from Ararat, where the ark rested. Bochart {h} conjectures, that "Gopher" is the name of the place where it was made, as well as of the wood of which it was made; and that it might be Cupressetum or Cyparisson, which Strabo {i} places in Assyria. How long Noah was building the ark is variously conjectured: a Jewish {k} writer says fifty two years; and an Arabic writer {l} an hundred years; others think Noah was building it the whole one hundred and twenty years {m}, the time of God's longsuffering and forbearance, which some conclude from **1Pe 3:20** but though it would require not a few years to build such a vessel, and prepare everything necessary for the use of it, yet one would think it should not take so many years as the least account gives unto it: it may be observed, the order is, "make thou", or "for thyself" {n}; for thy use and benefit, for the saving of thyself and family, as well as for the preservation of the several creatures which were for the service of him and his posterity:

rooms shalt thou make in the ark; or "nests" {o}; little apartments, and many of them for the several creatures, and for their provisions, as well as for Noah and his family. The Targum of Jonathan gives us the number of them, paraphrasing the words thus,

"one hundred and fifty cells shalt thou make for the ark on the left hand, and ten apartments in the middle to put food in, and five cabins on the right, and five on the left:"

and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch; it was pitched without to keep out the waters, and that they might more easily slide off, and to preserve the ark from being eat with worms, or hurt with the wind and sun; and it was pitched within, to take off the ill smell that might arise from the several creatures, as well as for the better security of the ark. Some take it to be bitumen, a sort of clay or slime like pitch, such as was used at the building of Babel, and of the walls of Babylon. De Dieu conjectures it was that kind of bitumen which the Arabs calls Kaphura, which agrees in sound with the word here used; but why not the pitch of the pine tree, or the rosin of the cypress tree, and especially the latter, if the ark was made of the wood of it {p}?

{c} De Dea Syria. {d} Miscellan. Sacr. l. 4. c. 5. {e} Phaleg. l. 1. c. 4. col. 22, 23. {f} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 1. p. 35. {g} Geograph, l. 16. p. 510. {h} Ut supra. (Phaleg. l. 1. c. 4. col. 22, 23.) {i} Ib. p. 508. {k} Pirke Eliezer, c. 23. {l} Elmacinus, p. 11. apud Hottinger, Smegma, l. 1. c. 8. p. 249. {m} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 1, 2. {n} Kl "tibi", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {o} Mynq "nidos", Pagninus, Montanus. {p} Vid. Scheuchzer. p. 35.

Genesis 6:15

Ver. 15. And this [is the fashion] which thou shall make it of,.... The form and size of it, its length, breadth, and height, as follows:

the length of the ark [shall be] three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits; which some interpret of geometrical cubits, each of which contained six ordinary cubits; others of sacred cubits, which were larger by an hand's breadth than the common cubit; but the general opinion of learned men now is, that they were common cubits of eighteen inches long; and by the geometrical calculations made by them it is found, that the ark of such dimensions was abundantly sufficient to contain Noah, and his family, and the various creatures, and all necessary provisions for them {q}. But if the Jewish and Egyptian cubit, the cubit of the Scriptures, as Dr. Cumberland {r} has shown it to be, consisted of twenty one inches and upwards, the ark according to them must be very near twice as great, and so more convenient for all the ends to which it was designed; for, as he observes, the cube of such a cubit is very near double to the cube of eighteen inches, and therefore so must the capacity be.

(Noah's Ark was the largest sea-going vessel ever built, until, the late nineteenth century when giant metal ships were first constructed. The Ark was approximately 450 feet by seventy five feet; but as late as 1858

"the largest vessel of her type in the world was the P&O liner, "Himalaya", 240 feet by thirty five feet..."

In that year, Isambard K. Brunel produced the "Great Eastern", 692 feet by 83 feet by 30 feet of approximately 19000 tons ... five times the tonnage of any ship then afloat. So vast was Brunel's leap that even forty years later in an age of fierce competition the largest liners being built were still smaller than the "Great Eastern" ... {s}. Editor.)

{q} Vid. Buteonem de Area Noe, Hostum in fabricam Areae Noc, & Poli Synopsin. Scheuchzer, ut supra, (Physic. Sacr. vol. 1.) pp. 37, 38. {r} Of Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 2. p. 56, 57. {s} The World that Perished, John C. Witcomb, published by Baker Book House, 1988, p. 22.

Genesis 6:16

Ver. 16. A window shalt thou make to the ark,.... Or a "light", such as is that at noon, for which the word in the dual number is used; and therefore Junius and Tremellius translate it a "clear light". The Jewish writers {s} will have it to be a precious stone, a pearl which Noah fetched from the river Pison, and hung up in the ark, and it gave light to all the creatures, like a large chandelier; but a window no doubt it was to let light into the several apartments, and to look out at on occasion, since Noah is afterwards said to open it; but what it was made of is difficult to say, since it does not appear that as yet glass was invented. Some think it was made of crystal, which would let in light, and keep off the water. A very learned {t} man is of opinion, that Noah understanding chemistry, prepared a fine subtle fragrant spirit, of an oily nature and luminous, which he put into vessels made of crystal or glass, and hung them up in every room in the ark, and which was both illuminating and refreshing; and this he thinks is what is meant by the "Zohar", or "light", which we translate a "window"; but this is afterward said to be opened by Noah, to send forth the raven and the dove, which will not agree with such a vessel of spirituous liquor:

and in a cubit shall thou finish it above; not the window, as some think, which they place at top of the ark, and suppose to be a cubit in length, but the ark itself, which was finished with a roof raised up a cubit high in the middle:

and the door of the ark shall thou set in the side thereof; on which it is not said; an Arabic writer {u} places it on the east side of it, on which side he supposes Noah and his sons dwelt, and on the west side his wife and his sons' wives. How large this door was is not said; it is reasonably supposed {w} to be ten cubits high and eight broad, that there might be room enough for an elephant to enter in by it; and it seems it was so large, that Noah, and those with him, could not shut it, but it was done by the Lord, **Ge 7:16**

[with] lower, second, and third [stories] shalt thou make it: the above Arabic writer {x} makes the lower story to be for the beasts, the second for the birds, and the third for Noah and his children; and with him agrees a Jewish writer {y}: but as by this distribution no place is left for provisions, they seem most correct who place the beasts in the lower story, and the birds with Noah and his family in the uppermost, and the provisions for all in the middle. This ark was a type of the church of God. As to the form and pattern of it, it was of God, so the separation of men from the world in a church state is of God; it is by his appointment, and it is his will, that when any numbers of men are converted in a place, that they should be incorporated together in a church

state, the form of which is given by him, its officers appointed, and the laws and ordinances of it fixed by him: and as to the matter of it, "Gopher wood", a lasting and incorruptible wood, denoting the duration of the church; God ever had, and ever will have a church in the world: as to the parts of it, and rooms in it, the rooms may point at particular churches, of which there have been many; or may signify, that there is always room enough in the church of God to receive saints. The ark had three stories in it, as the tabernacle and temple had three divisions, which were types of the same also; and may have respect to the visible church, consisting of believers and unbelievers, the invisible church, or general assembly of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, and the church triumphant. The door into the ark may signify Christ, who, and faith in him, may be said to be the door into the church, and to all the ordinances of it: the window may either typify the glorious light of the Gospel, held forth in the church, or the ordinances of it, to which sensible souls betake themselves, as doves to their windows,
Isa 60:8. Into this ark not only Noah and his family, but creatures of all sorts were admitted, as sinners of all sorts called by grace, and become peaceable, are received into the church of God; yea, even good and bad have a place here, though the latter under the notion and character of the former, but are hypocrites in Zion: here also were plenty of provisions for all in it, as there are in the church of God fulness of spiritual provisions for all the people of God. The ark was of the use of a ship, and was the means of saving a few men, even Noah and his family; so the church of God has the nature and use of a ship, of which Christ is the pilot, and conducts it through the sea of this world, in which it is often tossed with tempests, and distressed; but at last brought to its haven, in which a few are saved, not as the cause, which alone is Christ, but as the means. The Apostle Peter makes baptism its antitype, **1Pe 3:21** which is God's ordinance, and not man's, of his appointing; as to the form and manner of it, is the object of the world's scorn, when rightly administered, as Noah's ark was; represents a burial, as that did when Noah entered into it; and was an emblem of Christ's resurrection and ours, when he came out of it: it was a type of baptism in its salutary effect, it saves by water, as that does by leading to the resurrection of Christ; it saves not as a cause, but as a means of directing to Christ, the author of salvation; and saves not all in the water, only those that are in the ark, that is, truly and rightly in the church, and real members of it, or that are in Christ; and so many make the ark also a type of Christ.

{s} Targum Jonathan in loc. Pirke Eliezer, c. 23. {t} Dickinson. Physic. vet & vera, c. 20. p. 324, 325. {u} Patricides, apud Hottinger. p. 248, 250. {w} Scbeuchzer. Physica Sacra, vol. 1. p. 40. {x} Patricides, apud Hottinger. p. 248, 250. {y} Pirke Eliezer, c. 23.

Genesis 6:17

Ver. 17. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth,.... That there was such a flood of waters brought upon the earth, is confirmed by the testimonies of Heathen writers of all nations; only instead of Noah they put some person of great antiquity in their nation, as the Chaldeans, Sisithrus or Xisuthrus; the Grecians and Romans, Prometheus or Deucalion, or Ogyges. Josephus {z} says, all the writers of the Barbarian or Heathen history make mention of the flood and of the ark; and he produces the authorities of Berosus the Chaldean, and Hieronymus the Egyptian, who wrote the Phoenician antiquities, and Mnaseas, and many others, and Nicolaus of Damascus: and there are others that Eusebius {a} makes mention of, as Melo, who wrote against the Jews, yet speaks of the deluge, at which a man with his sons escaped; and Abydenus the Assyrian, whose account agrees with this of Moses that follows in many things; as do also what Lucian {b} and Ovid {c} have wrote concerning it, excepting in the name of the person in whose time it was: and not only the Egyptians had knowledge of the universal deluge, as appears from the testimony of Plato, who says {d}, that an Egyptian priest related to Solon, out of their sacred books, the history of it; and from various circumstances in the story of Osiris and Typhon, which name they give to the sea, and in the Chaldee language signifies a deluge; and here the Targum of Onkelos renders the word by "Tuphana"; and the Arabs to this day call the flood "Al-tufan"; but the Chinese also frequently speak of the deluge {e}; and even it is said the Americans of Mexico and Peru had a tradition of it {f}; and the Bramines also {g}, who say that 21,000 years ago the sea overwhelmed and drowned the whole earth, excepting one great hill, far to the northward, called "Biudd"; and that there fled thither one woman and seven men (whose names they give, see **Ge 7:13**) those understanding out of their books that such a flood would come, and was then actually coming, prepared against the same, and repaired thither; to which place also went two of all sorts of creatures (see **Ge 6:19**) herbs, trees, and grass, and of everything that had life, to the number in all of 1,800,000 living souls: this flood, they say, lasted one hundred and twenty years (see **Ge 6:3**) five months and five days; after which time all these creatures that were thus preserved descended down again, and replenished the earth; but as for the seven men and woman, only one of them came down with her, and dwelt at the foot of the mountain.

And this flood was not topical or national only, but general and universal: it was brought "upon the earth", upon the whole earth, as the following account shows; and by the Lord himself, it was not through second causes, or the common course of things: and to show it possible and certain, this form of expression is used, "behold, I, even I, do bring"; it was wonderful, beyond the power of nature, and therefore a "behold" is prefixed; it was possible, because the Almighty God declares he would bring it; and it was certain, which the redoubling of the word points at; and would be quickly, since he said, "I am bringing", or "do bring"; just about to do it; wherefore the ark was not so long preparing as some have thought, and the command to build it was not long before the flood came. The word for the flood comes from one which signifies to fall {h}, either because of the fall of the waters at it, or because it made all things to fall, wither, and decay, as herbs, plants, men, beasts, and all creatures; or from one that signifies to consume, or to mix and confound, and bring all things to confusion, as Jarchi suggests {i}: and the end and intention of it, as here expressed, was

to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; every living creature, men and women, the beasts and cattle of the earth, and every creeping thing on it, and the fowls of the heaven, man principally, and these for his sake.

[And] everything that is in the earth shall die; but not what was in the waters, the fishes of the sea, which could live in the flood.

{z} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 6. {a} Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 12, 19. {b} De Dea Syria. {c} Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 7. {d} In Timaeo, & de Iside & Osir. {e} Sinic. Hist. l. 1. p. 3, 26. {f} See Bishop Patrick, in loc. {g} Miscellanea Curiosa, vol. 8. p. 261, 262. {h} lbn "cecidit". {i} hlb "consumpsit, vel" llb "confudit, miscuit".

Genesis 6:18

Ver. 18. But with thee will I establish my covenant,.... Made with Noah at this time, though not expressed, that on his making an ark, as God directed him, and going into it at his command, he would preserve him while building it from the rage of wicked men, and save him in it and his family, when the flood should come; and that they should come safe out of it, and repeople the world, which should be no more destroyed by one; for this covenant respects that later mentioned, **Ge 9:11** so Aben Ezra; or the promise of the Messiah, which should spring from him, for the fulfilment of which Noah and his family were spared; and this in every article God would confirm, of which he might be assured from his power, veracity, and faithfulness, and other perfections of his:

and thou shalt come into the ark; when the covenant would begin more clearly to be established, and more plainly to be fulfilling; Noah on the one hand being obedient to the divine will, having built an ark, and entering into it; and on the other, God giving him leave, and an order to enter into it, and shutting him up in it to preserve him:

thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee; that is, Noah and his wife, and his sons and their wives, in all eight persons; and eight only, as the Apostle Peter observes, **1Pe 3:20** by this it appears that Noah's three sons were married before the flood, but as yet had no children. Jarchi concludes, from the mode of expression used, that the men and women were to be separate; that they entered the ark in this manner, and continued so, the use of the marriage bed being forbidden them while in the ark.

Genesis 6:19

Ver. 19. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark,.... That is, of fowls, cattle, and creeping things, as after explained; and two of each sort at least were to be brought, as Jarchi observes, and not fewer; though of the clean sort there were to be more, even seven, as after directed; and these were to be brought, that they might preserve their species, as it follows:

to keep [them] alive with thee; to be fed and nourished by him in the ark, while others perished by the flood, that so they might propagate their own species, and be continued, for which reason it is further ordered:

they shall be male and female; not any two, but one male and one female, for the end before mentioned.

Genesis 6:20

Ver. 20. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind,.... What before is generally expressed by "every living thing", is here particularly explained of every sort of them; and from the order of them some have thought that in the same manner they were disposed of in the ark, the fowls in the first story, the cattle in the next, and the creeping things in the lowermost: but others place them in a different manner, See Gill on "Ge 6:16" the roots and grain in the lower story, the living creatures of all sorts in the second, and their hay and litter in the third: the second story being three hundred cubits long, and fifty broad, contained in the whole fifteen thousand cubits, which is supposed to be divided into an hundred and fifty equal rooms; so the Targum of Jonathan on **Ge 6:14** of these, four are allowed for Noah and his family, two with earth for those animals that live underground, one for those which live on herbs and roots, and the other for those which live on flesh; and the other one hundred and forty four rooms are divided into three parts, that is, twenty four for birds, twenty five for beasts, and the other ninety five for such animals as are designed to be food for the rest; and according to the calculations of learned men, there appear to have been in this story rooms sufficient for all sorts of birds, beasts, and creeping things {k}:

two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive; that is, they shall come of themselves, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe, the providence of God so directing and impelling them, just as the creatures came to Adam; so that there was no need for Noah to take any pains by hunting or hawking to get such a number together: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"they shall come unto thee by the hand of an angel, who shall take and cause them to come."

So says another Jewish {l} writer, that they were collected by the angels who presided over each species; in which, except the notion of angels presiding over every kind of creature, there is no incongruity, as Bishop Patrick observes; and two of every sort were to come to the ark, to be preserved alive there, that they might propagate their species. So Lucian says {m}, that swine, and horses, and lions, and serpents, and all other creatures which were on the earth, entered into the ark "by pairs".

{k} Vid. Bedford's Scripture Chronology, c. 12. p. 155. {l} Pirke Eliezer, c. 23. {m} De Dea Syria.

Genesis 6:21

Ver. 21. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten,.... By man and beast; of which see **Ge 1:29** and thou shall gather [it] to thee; to lay up in the ark:

and it shall be for food for thee, and for them: during the flood, a quantity sufficient for them: and according to the calculation of learned men {n}, well versed in mathematics, there was room enough in the ark, and to spare, to put food for them all during the time the flood was on the earth.

{n} Buteo de Area Noe, Wilkins's Essay towards a real Character, Bedford's Chronology, &c.

Genesis 6:22

Ver. 22. Thus did Noah,.... Or "and" or "therefore Noah made" {o} the ark; and "all things", as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions:

according to all that God commanded him, so did he; he made the ark according to the pattern God gave him, he gathered together food for himself and family, and for all the creatures, and laid it up in the ark as God directed him; and when the time was come, he and they not only entered into it, but he took with him all the creatures he was ordered, as after related; in this we have an instance of his fear of God, of his faith in his word, and of his obedience to his will, see
Heb 11:7 in all which he was a type of Christ, the builder of his church the ark was a figure of, and the pilot of it through the tempestuous sea of this world, and the provider of all good things for it, for the sustenance of it, and of those who are in it.

{o} veyw "et fecit", Pagninus, Montanus; "fecit itaque", Schmidt.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 7

This chapter begins with an order to Noah to come with his family and all the creatures into the ark, that they might be safe from the flood, which would quickly be upon the earth, **Ge 7:1** and then gives an account of Noah's obedience to the divine command in every particular, **Ge 7:5** and of the time of the beginning of the flood, and its prevalence, **Ge 7:10** then follows a repetition of Noah, his family, and the creatures entering into the ark, **Ge 7:13** and next a relation is given of the increase of the waters, and of the height they arrived unto, **Ge 7:17** and of the consequences of the flood, the death and destruction of every living creature, except those in the ark, fowl, cattle, beast, creeping things, and men, **Ge 7:21** and the chapter is closed with an account how long the waters continued before they began to ebb, even one hundred and fifty days, **Ge 7:24**.

Ver. 1. And the Lord said unto Noah,.... After Noah had built the ark, and got all things ready as were commanded him; and when it was but seven days ere the flood would begin:

Come thou and all thy house into the ark; that is, he and his wife, his three sons and their wives;

for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation: this was a great character of Noah; that he was a "righteous" person, not by his own righteousness, but by the righteousness of faith he was both heir and preacher of; and this he was "before" God, in his sight, seen, known, and acknowledged by him as righteous; and therefore must be really so: and this shows that he was not so by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of Christ; because by them no flesh living is justified in the sight of God: and Noah was a rare instance of this character; there was none besides him in that wicked generation, so that he was very conspicuous and remarkable; and it was wonderful grace to him, that he should have this blessing to be righteous in an age so sadly corrupt, which was the cause of his being saved; for whoever are justified shall be saved eternally, **Ro 8:30** as well as they are often saved from temporal calamities, see **Isa 3:10**.

Genesis 7:2

Ver. 2. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens,.... From hence it appears, that the distinction of clean and unclean beasts, at least for sacrifice, if not for food, was known before the flood, and so before the law of Moses; though some think this is said by anticipation, and as providing a large stock of such creatures for the propagation of their species; because they would be most serviceable to men both for food and sacrifice: but as it is certain that sacrifices were offered ever since the fall of man; by the same way, namely, by divine revelation, that men were taught to sacrifice creatures as typical of the sacrifice of Christ, they were directed what sort of creatures to offer, as were most suitable figures of him; those beasts that were clean, and used under the law, and so no doubt, at this time, were oxen, sheep, and goats: and these were to be taken into the ark by "sevens", or "seven seven" {p}; either only three pairs, male and female, for procreation, and the seventh a male for sacrifice, when the flood was over; or rather fourteen, seven couple, an equal number of male and female, as Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom, that there might be enough for propagation; since a large number of them would be consumed, both for food and sacrifice:

the male and his female, or "the man and his wife" {q}; which confirms the sense given, that there were seven pairs, or otherwise, if there had been an odd seventh, there would not have been a male and his female:

and of beasts that are not clean by two, or only two:

the male and his female, or "the man and his wife"; which was a number sufficient for the propagation of creatures neither used for food nor sacrifice; and many of which are harmful to mankind, as lions, wolves, tigers, bears, &c.

{p} hebv hebv "septena septena", Pagninus, Montanus; "septem septem", Vatablus, Drusius. {q} wtvaw vya "virum et uxorem ejus", Pagninus, Montanus.

Genesis 7:3

Ver. 3. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and his female,.... That is, of such as were clean; seven couple of these were to be brought into the ark, for the like use as of the clean beasts, and those under the law; and so at this time, and here meant were turtledoves, and young pigeons that were for sacrifice; and the rest were for food: and the design of bringing both into the ark was,

to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth; that the species of creatures might be continued, both of beasts and birds, clean and unclean.

Genesis 7:4

Ver. 4. For yet seven days,.... Or one week more, after the above orders were given, which, the Jews say, were for the mourning at Methuselah's death;

others, that they were an additional space to the one hundred and twenty given to the old world for repentance; in which time some might truly repent, finding that the destruction of the world was very near, and who might be saved from everlasting damnation, though not from perishing in the flood: but it rather was a space of time proper for Noah to have, to settle himself and family, and all the creatures in the ark, and dispose of everything there, in the best manner, for their sustenance and safety:

and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights: this was not an ordinary but an extraordinary rain, in which the power and providence of God were eminently concerned, both with respect to the continuance of it, and the quantity of water that fell:

and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth: not every substance that has a vegetative life, as plants, herbs, and trees, which were not destroyed, see **Ge 8:11** but every substance that has animal life, as fowls, cattle, creeping things, and men.

Genesis 7:5

Ver. 5. And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him,.... He prepared for his entrance into the ark, and all the creatures with him; got everything ready for them, the rooms for their habitation, and food for their sustenance.

Genesis 7:6

Ver. 6. And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth,.... When it began, for he was in his six hundred and first year when it ended, **Ge 8:13** his eldest son was now an hundred years old, since when Noah was five hundred years old he begat children, **Ge 5:32**.

Genesis 7:7

Ver. 7. And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark,.... Within the space of the seven days, between the command of God to go into it, and the coming of the flood; or rather on the seventh day, on which it began to rain; when he saw it was coming on, see **Ge 7:11** because of the waters of the flood; for fear of them, lest, before he entered into the ark with his family, he and they should be carried away with them; or "from the face of the waters" {r}, which now began to appear and spread; or rather, "before the waters" {s}, before they came to any height.

{r} ym ygpm "a facie aquarum", Pagninus, Montanus. {s} "Ante aquas diluvii", Schmidt.

Genesis 7:8

Ver. 8. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean,.... Seven couple of the one, and a couple of the other:

and of fowls, clean and unclean, also a like number:

and of everything that creepeth upon the earth; and upon that only, not in the water, for these had no need of the ark, they could live in the waters.

Genesis 7:9

Ver. 9. There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark,.... Of themselves, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, being impressed with an instinct from God so to do; or by the ministry of angels, as observed
See Gill on "Ge 6:20" there were two of a sort, and some think four:

the male and the female; and of some seven, or seven pairs, as before observed:

as God commanded Noah; which respects his own and his family's entrance and the creatures; both were commanded by God, and attended to by Noah, who was obedient in all things.

Genesis 7:10

Ver. 10. And it came to pass after seven days,.... Were ended, or on the seventh day, after God had given the orders to Noah, to prepare for his going into the ark, with his family, and all the creatures:

that the waters of the flood were upon the earth: that is, they began to be upon the earth; for it continued to rain from hence forty days and forty nights; and still the waters continued to increase, and it was an hundred and fifty days before they began to ebb.

Genesis 7:11

Ver. 11. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life,.... Not complete, but current, for otherwise Noah would have lived after the flood three hundred and fifty one years, whereas he lived but three hundred and fifty; **Ge 9:28**

in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month: as the Jews had two ways of beginning their year, one at the spring, and the other at autumn; the one on ecclesiastical accounts, which began at Nisan, and which answers to March and April; and then the second month must be Ijar, which answers to part of April and part of May: and the other on civil accounts, which began at Tisri, and answers to part of September and part of October; and then the second month must be Marchesvan, which answers to part of October and part of November; so they are divided about this month in which the flood was: one says it was Marchesvan; another that it was Ijar {t}; a third in particular says {u} it was on the tenth of Marchesvan that all the creatures came together into the ark, and on the seventeenth the waters of the flood descended on the earth; and this is most likely, since this was the most ancient way of beginning the year; for it was not until after the Jews came out of Egypt that they began their year in Nisan on sacred accounts; and besides the autumn was a proper time for Noah's gathering in the fruits of the earth, to lay up in the ark, as well as for the falling of the rains; though others think it was in the spring, in the most pleasant time of the year, and when the flood was least expected: the Arabic writers {w}, contrary to both, and to the Scripture, say, that Noah, with his sons, and their wives, and whomsoever the Lord bid him take into the ark, entered on a Friday, the twenty seventh day of the month Adar or Agar: according to the Chaldean account by Berosus {x}, it was predicted that mankind would be destroyed by a flood on the fifteenth of the month Daesius, the second month from the vernal equinox: it is very remarkable what Plutarch {y} relates, that Osiris went into the ark the seventeenth of Athyr, which month is the second after the autumnal equinox, and entirely agrees with the account of Moses concerning Noah: according to Bishop Usher, it was on the seventh of December, on the first day of the week; others the sixth of November; with Mr. Whiston the twenty eighth:

the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened; and by both these the flood of waters was brought upon the earth, which drowned it, and all the creatures in it: by the former are meant the vast quantities of subterraneous waters, which are more or greater than we know; and might be greater still at the time of the deluge:

"there are large lakes, (as Seneca observes {z},) which we see not, much of the sea that lies hidden, and many rivers that slide in secret:"

so that those vast quantities of water in the bowels of the earth being pressed upwards, by the falling down of the earth, or by some other cause unknown to us, as Bishop Patrick observes, gushed out violently in several parts of the earth, where holes and gaps were made, and where they either found or made a vent, which, with the forty days' rain, might well make such a flood as here described: it is observed {a}, there are seas which have so many rivers running into them, which must be emptied in an unknown manner, by some subterraneous passages, as the Euxine sea; and particularly it is remarked of the Caspian sea, reckoned in length to be above one hundred and twenty German leagues, and in breadth from east to west about ninety, that it has no visible way for the water to run out, and yet it receives into its bosom near one hundred rivers, and particularly the great river Volga, which is of itself like a sea for largeness, and is supposed to empty so much water into it in a year's time, as might suffice to cover the whole earth, and yet it is never increased nor diminished, nor is it observed to ebb or flow: so that if, says my author, the fountains of the great deep, or these subterraneous passages, were continued to be let loose, without any reflux into them, as Moses supposes, during the time of the rain of forty days and forty nights; and the waters ascended but a quarter of a mile in an hour; yet in forty days it would drain all the waters for two hundred and forty miles deep; which would, no doubt, be sufficient to cover the earth above four miles high: and by the former, "the windows" or flood gates of heaven, or the "cataracts", as the Septuagint version, may be meant the clouds, as Sir Walter Raleigh {b} interprets them; Moses using the word, he says, to express the violence of the rains, and pouring down of waters; for whosoever, adds he, hath seen those fallings of water which sometimes happen in the Indies, which are called "the spouts", where clouds do not break into drops, but fall with a resistless violence in one body, may properly use that manner of speech which Moses did, that the windows or flood gates of heaven were opened, or that the waters fell contrary to custom, and that order which we call natural; God then loosened the power retentive in the uppermost air, and the waters fell in abundance: and another writer upon this observes {c}, that thick air is easily turned into water; and that round the earth there is a thicker air, which we call the "atmosphere"; which, the further it is distant from the earth, the thinner it is, and so it grows thinner in proportion, until it loseth all its watery quality: how far this may extend cannot be determined; it may reach as far as the orb of the moon, for aught we know to the contrary; now when this retentive quality of waters was withdrawn, Moses tells us, that "the rain was upon the earth forty days" and "forty nights": and therefore some of it might come so far as to be forty days in falling; and if we allow the rain a little more than ten miles in an hour, or two hundred and fifty miles in a day, then all the watery particles, which were 10,000 miles high, might descend upon the earth; and this alone might be more than sufficient to cover the highest mountains.

(We now know that the earth's atmosphere does not extent more than a few miles above the earth's surface, before thinning out rapidly. If all the water vapour in our present atmosphere fell as rain, the ground would be covered to an average depth of less than two inches {d}. Even if there was a vapour canopy, this would not be a major source or water. Most of the water came from subterranean sources or volcanic activity. We know that volcanic eruptions spew much steam and water vapour into the atmosphere. This would later fall as rain. For a complete discussion of this see the book in footnote {e}. Ed.)

{t} In Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 11. 2. {u} Pirke Eliezer, c. 23. {w} Elmacinus, p. 11. apud Hottinger. p. 251. Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 8. {x} Apud Syncell. p. 30, 31. {y} De Iside & Osir. {z} Nat. Quaest. l. 3. c. 30. {a} Bedford's Scripture Chronology, c. 12. p. 154. {b} History of the World. B. l. c. 7. sect. 6. {c} Bedford's Scripture Chronology. p. 153. See Scheuchzer. Physica, vol. 1. p. 45. Ray's Physico-Theolog. Discourses, Disc. 2. c. 2. p. 71. {d} The Genesis Flood, Whitcomb and Morris, 1978, The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, p. 121. {e} Ib.

Genesis 7:12

Ver. 12. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights,.... So long it was falling upon it, after the windows of heaven were opened. Aben Ezra would have it, that all things were in such confusion, during the flood, that there was no difference between day and night, since, it is said, "day and night shall not cease any more"; and that after the waters ceased, then Noah knew that forty days and nights had passed, for God had revealed this secret to him;

but the text seems more to make against him than for him.

Genesis 7:13

Ver. 13. In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah,.... That is, on the seventeenth day of the second month; See Gill on "Ge 7:11" the names of Noah and his three sons are expressed, but not the names of his wife, and of the wives of his sons; they are only described by their relation as follows:

and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons, into the ark: but other writers pretend to give us their names; Berosus {c} calls the wife of Noah "Tytea", the great, and Aretia, plainly from "Tit", clay, and "Aerets", the earth; and his sons' wives Pandora, Noela, and Noegla: according to Sanchoniatho {d}, the name of Noah was "Epigeus", a man of the earth, see **Ge 9:20** and afterwards "Ouranus", heaven; and he had a sister whom he married, called "Ge", earth; and with this agrees the account that the Allantes give of their deities; the first of which was Uranus, and his wife's name was Titaea; who, after her death, was deified, and called "Ge" {e}: so the Jewish writers say {f}, the wife of Noah was called Titzia, and others say Aritzia, from the word "Eretz", earth {g}; though others will have it, that she was Naamah, the daughter of Lamech: the Arabic writers {h} tell us, that the name of Noah's wife was Hancel, the daughter of Namusa, the son of Enoch; that the name of Shem's wife was Zalbeth, or, as other copies, Zalith or Salit; that the name of Ham's Nahalath; and of Japheth's Aresisia; who were all three the daughters of Methuselah; and they also relate {i}, that when Noah entered the ark, he took the body of Adam with him, and placed it in the middle of the ark.

{c} De temporibus ante diluvium, l. 1. fol. 8. 20. l. 2. fol. 11. 1. l. 3. fol. 24. 2. {d} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evang. l. 1. p. 36. {e} Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 190. {f} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 75. 1. {g} Shalshalet, fol. 1. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 20. 3. Jarchi in Gen. 4. 22. {h} Eutych. Annal. p. 34. Patricides, p. 8. apud Hottinger. p. 245. {i} Ibid. p. 250.

Genesis 7:14

Ver. 14. They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind,.... They, Noah and his family, went into the ark; as did all sorts of beasts and cattle, reckoned one hundred and thirty sorts, by some one hundred and fifty, including serpents:

and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind; supposed to be scarce thirty sorts; not one sort of creature was left out, though ever so small, and despicable:

every fowl after his kind; Bishop Wilkins has divided them into nine sorts, and reckons them up to be one hundred and ninety five in the whole;

every [bird of] every sort, or "bird of every wing" {k}, let their wings be what they will; some, as Ainsworth observes, are winged with feathers, others with skin, as bats.

{k} Pnk lk rwpu lk "omnes aves cujuscunque alae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Genesis 7:15

Ver. 15. And they went in unto Noah into the ark,.... Noah went in first, and the creatures of themselves came to him, or were conducted by the ministry of angels; and they were delivered into his hands, and he placed them in the ark as was most convenient for them: it is very likely he went in and out as occasion required, for the better management and disposition of things; for he seems to be the last of all that went in, see **Ge 7:16**:

two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life; they that went by sevens, yet being seven couples, as has been observed, as those which were only two or four, went by pairs: this is true of them all.

Genesis 7:16

Ver. 16. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh,.... These pairs were not two males or two females, but one male and one female; so they were coupled for the propagation of their species, which was the end of their entering into the ark, and being preserved:

as God had commanded him: Noah, who took care, as they entered, that there were so many of a sort as was enjoined, and these were male and female:

and the Lord shut him in; or shut the door after him {l}, he being the last that entered; and which he could not so well shut himself, at least so close, as was done by the Lord, or by the angels; and this was done to keep out the waters, and all within in safety; and to shut out others, and preserve Noah from the rage of wicked men, as well as the violence of the waters: some {m} have thought that not so much the door of the ark is meant, as the way to it, the pensile bridge which was necessary for the creatures to enter the ark; which being carried away by the force of the waters near the ark, that not being joined to it, precluded all access of the scoffers, whose scoffs were soon turned to lamentation and howling.

{l} wdeb "post ipsum", Vatablus, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Schmidt. "Pone eum", Piscator. {m} Scheuchzer. Physica Sacra, vol. 1. p. 45.

Genesis 7:17

Ver. 17. And the flood was forty days upon the earth,.... This is said with respect to what follows, and the meaning is, that when and after the flood had been upon the earth so long, then

the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth; after this they were so many and so strong that they lifted up the ark from the place where it stood, and bore it up, that it touched not the earth; and Aben Ezra from hence infers, that the ark did not remove from its place after the flood began, until forty days.

Genesis 7:18

Ver. 18. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth,.... Still they became greater and more powerful, as to bear up the ark, so to cast down houses, trees, &c. by the continual rains that fell, though perhaps they were not so violent as before, and by the constant eruptions of water out of the earth:

and the ark went upon the face of the waters; it floated about upon them, in an easy gentle manner; for there were no storms of wind or tempests raised, which might endanger it.

(If much of the water came from volcanic activity, and if earthquakes accompanied the breaking forth of the fountains of the deep, many tidal waves would result. This would completely destroy and remains of the old civilisation and as well give the ark a rough sea to drift in. The ark's dimensions would give make it almost impossible to upset. Ed.)

Genesis 7:19

Ver. 19. And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth,.... Yet more and more, so that the people without the ark were obliged to remove, not only from the lower to the higher rooms in their houses, and to the tops of them, but to the highest trees; and when these were bore down, to the highest hills and mountains; and to those it was in vain to fly, by what follows:

and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered: whence it appears there were hills before the flood, and that these were not caused by it, and that the deluge was universal, since there was not a hill under the whole heaven but what was covered with it. In Deucalion's flood all men are said to perish, except a few who fled to the high mountains {n}; which story seems to be hammered out of this account.

{n} Apollodorus, de Deor. Origin. l. 1. p. 19.

Genesis 7:20

Ver. 20. Fifteen cubits upwards did the waters prevail,.... Either to such an height above the earth, upwards from that, or from the high hills; for though the words do not necessarily imply that, yet it may be allowed, since there was water enough to cover the highest of them; and fifteen cubits of water were enough to drown the tallest man, or largest beast that should be upon the top of any of them:

and the mountains were covered, with water, even it may be allowed fifteen cubits high; nor will this furnish out so considerable an objection to the history of the flood as may be thought at first sight, since the highest mountains are not near so high as they are by some calculated. Sir Walter Raleigh allows thirty miles for the height of the mountains, yet the highest in the world will not be found to be above six direct miles in height. Olympus, whose height is so extolled by the poets, does not exceed a mile and a half perpendicular, and about seventy paces. Mount Athos, said to cast its shade into the isle of

Lemnos (according to, Pliny eighty seven miles) is not above two miles in height, nor Caucasus much more; nay, the Peak of Teneriff, reputed the highest mountain in the world, may be ascended in three days (according to the proportion of eight furlongs to a day's journey), which makes about the height of a German mile perpendicular; and the Spaniards affirm, that the Andes, those lofty mountains of Peru, in comparison of which they say the Alps are but cottages, may be ascended in four days' compass {o}.

{o} See the Universal History, vol. 1. p. 218. marg. Bedford's Scripture Chronology, ch. 12. p. 152, 153.

Genesis 7:21

Ver. 21. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth,.... That had animal life in them, of which motion was a sign:

both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth; excepting those that were in the ark. This general destruction of the creatures, as it was for the sins of men, whose they were, and by whom they were abused, and is expressive of God's hatred of sin, and of his holiness and justice in the punishment of it; so, on the other hand, it is a display both of the wisdom of God, in causing a decrease of the creatures, in proportion to the decrease of men, who now would not need so many; and of the goodness of God to those that were spared, that so the beasts of the field, especially the wilder sort, might not multiply against them, and prevail over them, see Ex 23:29

and every man: except those in the ark; and the number of them is supposed to be as great, if not greater, than of the present inhabitants of the earth, by those who are skilful in the calculation of the increase of men. It is thought it may be easily allowed, that their number amounted to eleven billion; and some have made their number to be eighty billion {p}. The Apostle Peter calls them, the world of the ungodly, **2Pe 2:5**.

{p} Scheuchzer. Physica Sacra, vol. 1. p. 55.

Genesis 7:22

Ver. 22. All in whose nostrils [was] the breath of life,.... Whether of fowls, beast, cattle, or creeping things:

of all that was in the dry land, died; by which description fishes were excepted, since they breathe not, having no lungs, and are not on the dry land, where they cannot live, but in the waters. Some pretend it to be the opinion of some Jewish writers, that the fishes did die, the waters being made hot, and scalded them; but this fable I have not met with.

Genesis 7:23

Ver. 23. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground,.... Not everything, particularly trees; for after the flood was abated there was an olive tree, a leaf of which was brought to Noah by the dove, **Ge 8:11** but all animals,

both men and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven, and they were destroyed from the earth; this is repeated, partly for explanation of the preceding clause, and partly for confirmation of this general destruction, which might seem almost incredible; there never was such a destruction of creatures before, or since, nor never will be till the general conflagration; and is a proof of the sovereignty of God, his almighty power, the purity and holiness of his nature, and the strictness and severity of his justice, and shows what a fearful thing it is to fail into his hands:

and Noah only remained [alive], and they that [were] with him in the ark; besides those, of the millions of mankind that were upon the earth, not one was left, the flood came and destroyed them all,
Lu 17:27 the fable some Jewish writers relate of Og being found alive, and which they gather from **De 3:11** by sitting upon a piece of wood of one of the ladders of the ark, to whom Noah reached out food every day, and so he remained alive {q}, deserves no regard; though perhaps from hence arose the Grecian fable of the flood of Ogyges, which seems to be the same with this of Noah.

{q} Pirke Eliezer, c. 23. fol. 23. 1, 2.

Genesis 7:24

Ver. 24. And the waters prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.

Which is to be reckoned not from the end of the forty days' rain, but from the beginning of the flood; for from the seventeenth day of the second month, when the fountains of the deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, unto the seventeenth day of the seventh month, when the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat, and the waters decreased, were just five months, or one hundred and fifty days; until which time the waters increased yet more and more, even after the forty days' rain; so that it seems there was a continual rain afterwards, as Aben Ezra observes, though not so vehement; or otherwise it is not so easy to account for the increase of the waters.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 8

This chapter gives an account of the going off of the waters from the earth, and of the entire deliverance of Noah, and those with him in the ark, from the flood, when all the rest were destroyed: after an one hundred and fifty days a wind is sent over the earth, the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven are stopped, the waters go off gradually, and the ark rests on Mount Ararat, **Ge 8:1** two months and thirteen days after that the tops of the mountains were seen, **Ge 8:5** and forty days after the appearance of them, Noah sent forth first a raven, and then a dove, and that a second time, to know more of the abatement of the waters, **Ge 8:6**. When Noah had been in the ark ten months and thirteen days, he uncovered it, and the earth was dry, yet not so dry as to be fit for him to go out upon, until near two months after, **Ge 8:13** when he had an order from God to go out of the ark, with all that were with him, which was accordingly obeyed, **Ge 8:15** upon which he offered sacrifice by way of thankfulness for his great deliverance, which was accepted by the Lord; who promised him not to curse the earth any more, nor to drown it, but that it should remain, and as long as it did there would be the constant revolutions of the seasons of the year, and of day and night, **Ge 8:20**.

Ver. 1. And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that [was] with him in the ark,.... Not that God had forgotten Noah, for he does not, and cannot forget his creatures, properly speaking; but this is said after the manner of men, and as it might have seemed to Noah, who having heard nothing of him for five months, and having been perhaps longer in the ark than he expected, might begin to think that he was forgotten of God; but God remembered him, and his covenant with him, and the promise that he had made to him, that he and his family, and all the living creatures in the ark, should be preserved alive during the flood, **Ge 6:17** and God may be said particularly to remember him, and them, when he began to take measures for removing the waters from the earth, as he did by sending a wind, next mentioned: and thus God's helping his people when in difficulties and in distress, and delivering out of them, is called his remembrance of them; and he not only remembered Noah and his family, who are included in him, but every living creature also, which is expressed; for as the creatures suffered in the flood for the sins of men, so those in the ark were remembered and preserved for the sake of Noah and his family, and the world of men that should spring from them:

and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged; not a stormy blustering one, that would have endangered the ark, but a gentle, hot, drying one; which stopped the increase of the waters, and made them less, and both drove away the rain, as the north wind does, as this perhaps was {r}, and caused the waters to move wards their proper channels and receptacles: this was the work of God, who has the command of the winds and waters, brings the former out of his storehouses, and restrains the latter at his pleasure; and this wind had this effect to assuage the waters, not from its own nature, but was attended with the mighty power of God to make it effectual, in an extraordinary manner: and it was, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call it, "a wind of mercies", or a merciful wind; or a wind of comforts, as Jarchi; for so it was to Noah and his family, and to all the creatures, since it served to dry up the waters of the flood, and caused them to subside.

{r} ------------for clouds were fled, Driv'n by a keen north wind, that, blowing dry, Wrinkled the face of Deluge, as decay'd. Milton, B. 11. l. 841, &c.

Genesis 8:2

Ver. 2. The fountains also of the deep, and the windows of heaven, were stopped,.... The passages which let out the subterraneous waters in great quantity upon the earth, and the clouds of heaven, which poured down water upon it like spouts, were stopped from sending forth any more, as they had from the first of the flood unto one hundred and fifty days from thence: Jarchi observes, that it is not said that "all" the fountains of the deep, as when they were broken up, **Ge 7:11** because some of them were left open for the use and benefit of the world; besides, some must be left for the return of the waters:

and the rain from heaven was restrained: which seems to confirm what has been before observed, that after the rain of forty days and nights it ceased not to rain, more or less, though not so vehemently, until the end of an hundred and fifty days, and then it entirely ceased.

Genesis 8:3

Ver. 3. And the waters returned from off the earth continually,.... Or "going and returning" {s}; they went off from the earth, and returned to their proper places appointed for them; some were dried up by the wind, and exhaled by the sun into the air: and others returned to their channels and cavities in the earth, or soaked into it:

and after the end of the hundred and fifty days, the waters were abated; or began to abate, as Jarchi and the Vulgate Latin version; which days are to be reckoned from the beginning of the flood, including the forty days' rain; though Jarchi reckons them from the time of the ceasing of it; so that there were from the beginning of the flood one hundred and ninety days; six months, and ten days of the year of the flood now past; and in this he is followed by Dr. Lightfoot {t}: but the former reckoning seems best, and agrees better with what follows.

{s} bwvw Kwlh, "eundo et redeundo", Pagninus, Montanus. {t} Works, vol. 1. p. 6.

Genesis 8:4

Ver. 4. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month,.... That is, five months after the flood began, and when the waters began to decrease; for this is not the seventh month of the flood, but of the year, which being reckoned from Tisri, or the autumnal equinox, must be the month Nisan, which answers to part of our March, and part of April; and so the Targum of Jonathan explains it,

"this is the month Nisan;"

but Jarchi makes it to be the month Sivan, which answers to part of May, and part of June, taking it to be the seventh month from Cisleu, when the forty days' rain ceased; in which he is followed by Dr. Lightfoot {u}; and according to Bishop Usher {w} the seventeenth day of the seventh month, on which the ark rested, was Wednesday the sixth of May: and then it rested

upon the mountains of Ararat; that is, on one of them, for Ararat is said to be a long ridge of mountains like the Alps, or the Pyrenean mountains; which, as Sir Walter Raleigh {x} thinks, are the same which run through Armenia, Mesopotamia, Assyria, &c. and are by Pliny {y} called Taurus. But what is now called Ararat, and by the Armenians Messis or Macis, and by the Turks Augri-daugh or Agrida, is a single mountain, and is so high that it overtops all the mountains thereabout; and that which makes it seem so very high is, that it stands by itself in the form of a sugar loaf, in the middle of one of the greatest plains one can see; it has two tops, one greater, and the smaller is most sharp pointed of the two {z}. The Vulgate Latin version renders it the mountains of Armenia; and so Ararat in the Septuagint of Isa 37:38 is rendered Armenia, and in our version also; and it is the more commonly received opinion, that Ararat was a mountain there; and this agrees with the testimonies of various Heathen writers, which are produced by Josephus and Eusebius. Berosus the Chaldean {a} says,

"it is reported that in Armenia, on a mountain of the Cordyaeans, there is part of a ship, the pitch of which some take off, and carry about with them, and use it as an amulet to avert evils."

And Nicholas of Damascus {b} relates, that in Minyas in Armenia is an huge mountain called Baris, to which, as the report is, many fled at the flood, and were saved; and that a certain person, carried in an ark or chest, struck upon the top of it, and that the remains of the timber were preserved a long time after; and, adds he, perhaps he may be the same that Moses, the lawgiver of the Jews, writes of. Now this mountain seems plainly to have its name from the ark of Noah, for a boat, or ship, is, with the Egyptians, called Baris. Herodotus {c} gives a large account of ships they call by this name; and the boat in which Charon is said to carry the dead bodies over the lake Acherusia, near Memphis, is said by Diodorus Siculus {d} to have the same name. Abydenus the Assyrian {e} tells us, that

"Saturn having foretold to Sisithrus, that there would be a vast quantity of rain on the fifteenth of the month Daesius, he immediately sailed to the Armenians; and that the ship being driven to Armenia, the inhabitants made amulets of the wood of it, which they carried about their necks, as antidotes against diseases."

And hence Melo {f}, who wrote against the Jews, suggests, as if the deluge did not reach Armenia; for he says,

"at the deluge a man that had escaped with his sons went from Armenia, being driven out of his possession by those of the country, and passing over the intermediate region, came into the mountainous part of Syria, which was desolate."

And with what Berosus says of a mountain of the Cordyaeans, in Armenia, agree the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and the Syriac and Arabic versions, who all render the words here the mountains of Cardu or Carda: from the resting of the ark on this day on the mountains of Ararat, Jarchi concludes, and Dr. Lightfoot {g} after him, that the ark drew eleven cubits water, which, according to them, thus appears; on the first day of the month Ab, the mountain tops were first seen, and then the waters had fallen fifteen cubits, which they had been sixty days in doing, namely, from the first day of Sivan, and so they had abated the proportion of one cubit in four days: by this account we find, that on the sixteenth day of Sivan they had abated but four cubits, and yet on the next day, the seventeenth, the ark resteth on a hill, where the waters yet lay eleven cubits above it.

{u} Works. vol. 1. p. 8. {w} Annales Vet. Test. p. 4. {x} History of the World, B. 1. ch. 7. sect. 13. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 27. {z} Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 32. Tournefort's Voyage to the Levant, vol. 3. p. 177, 183, 186. {a} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 6. {b} Apud ib. {c} Euterpe sive, l. 2. c. 96. {d} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 87. {e} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 12. p. 414, 415. {f} Apud ib. c. 19. p. 420. {g} Ut supra, (Works. vol. 1.) p. 8.

Genesis 8:5

Ver. 5. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month,.... That is, from the seventeenth of the seventh month, to the first of the tenth month, a space of two months and thirteen days, and being summer time, through the heat of the sun, they decreased apace:

in the tenth [month], on the first [day] of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen; not the tenth month of the flood, but of the year; the month Tammuz, as the Targum of Jonathan, and answers to part of June, and part of July; and the first day of this month, according to Bishop Usher {h}, was Sunday the nineteenth of July: but according to Jarchi, whom Dr. Lightfoot {i} follows, this was the month Ab, which answers to July and August, the tenth from Marchesvan, when the rain began.

{h} Ut supra. (Annales Vet. Test. p. 4.) {i} Ut supra. (Works, vol 1. p. 6.)

Genesis 8:6

Ver. 6. And it came to pass at the end of forty days,.... From the appearance of the mountains, that is, from the first day of the tenth month, to forty days after; and being ended, this must be the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the month Ab, which answers to July and August; and according to Bishop Usher {k} it was Friday the twenty eighth of August:

that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made; of which
See Gill on "Ge 6:16".

{k} Ut supra. (Annales Vet. Test. p. 4.)

Genesis 8:7

Ver. 7. And he sent forth a raven,.... That by it he might make his observation, how high or low the waters were upon the earth; and the rather he sent out the raven, a bird of prey, which feeds on carrion, that if the earth had been dry, the smell of the dead carcasses would have invited it to go far off from the ark, and not return; but if not, he would see it again:

which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from the earth; or, "and it went forth, going forth and returning" {l}; it went forth out of the ark, and returned, but might not go into it, but went forth again, and then returned; and thus it continued going backwards and forwards, until the waters were dried up, when it returned no more: the Septuagint version is, "and it returned not"; and so some Jewish writers {m} say, it found the carcass of a man on the top of the mountains, and sat upon it for food, and returned not: hence came the fable of Apollo's sending a raven to fetch water, while he was sacrificing, which lighting on a large corn field, yet green, and being willing to enjoy some grains of it, waited till it was ripe, and neglected its orders {n}; and hence is the proverb, "corvus nuntius". Some make this creature to be an emblem of the law, first sent forth, but brought no good tidings of the waters of God's wrath being assuaged, but worketh wrath, and is the ministration of condemnation and death: rather it is an emblem of unregenerate men, who are, like it, black through original sin and actual transgressions; are unclean and polluted in all the powers and faculties of their souls; are hateful, hating one another, and live in carnal and sensual lusts pleasures.

{l} bwvw awuy auyw "et exiit egrediende et redeundo", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt. {m} Pirke Eliezer, c. 23. {n} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 1. c. 47.

Genesis 8:8

Ver. 8. Also he sent forth a dove from him,.... Seven days after he had sent out the raven, as in Ge 8:10

to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; for the dove is a creature that delights in cleanness, flies low, and goes far off, so that if it returned not again, he might conclude that the waters were gone off the earth; but being a sociable creature, and familiar to men, and especially loving to its mate, if they were not gone off, it would certainly return again. This some take to be an emblem of the Gospel, bringing the good tidings of peace, pardon, righteousness and salvation by Jesus Christ: rather it is an emblem of a sensible sinner, and true believer in Christ, being mournful, timorous, swift, modest, and affectionate; such persons, like doves of the valley, mourn for their iniquities; tremble at the sight of their sins, and the curses of the law, at the apprehension of divine wrath, at the awful judgment of God; and are fearful lest Christ should not receive them, to whom they swiftly fly for refuge, as doves to their windows; and who are modest, meek, and lowly, and affectionate to Christ, and one another. The Targum of Jonathan calls this an house dove, or tame one: hence, perhaps, came the practice of making use of doves as messengers to carry letters from place to place {o}.

{o} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 37.

Genesis 8:9

Ver. 9. But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, [and] she returned unto him into the ark,.... It being a creature that feeds upon seeds it picks off from the ground, and loving cleanness, it could find no place where it could alight, and have food to live upon, and retain its cleanness; for though the tops of the mountains were clear of the waters, yet they might be muddy and filthy with what the waters had raised up in them, or left upon them; and therefore it returned to Noah again, and not only like the raven unto the ark, but into it:

for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: there was no place dry, and so neither food nor footing for this creature; and which was an emblem of a sensible sinner, who finds no rest in anything short of Christ; not in worldly enjoyments; nor in external duties, not in hearing, reading, praying, fasting, nor in external humiliation and tears; nor in the law, and in the works of it; nor in natural descent, nor in education principles, nor in a profession of religion, and subjection to ordinances; only in Christ, where it finds rest from the burden and guilt of sin, and the tyrannical power of it; from the bondage, curse, and condemnation of the law, and from a sense of divine wrath and fear of it; and though not from afflictions, yet it finds rest in Christ amidst them:

then he put forth his hand and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark: she hovered about it, and got near the window, which Noah opened and took her in; which may represent the gracious reception sensible souls meet with from Christ, who apply to him; he kindly embraces them, and they find room in his heart and affections, fulness of everything they want, and security from all danger.

Genesis 8:10

Ver. 10. And he stayed yet other seven days,.... As he had stayed seven days between the sending out of the raven and the dove, so he stayed seven days more after he had sent out the dove, and it returned to him, waiting patiently for his deliverance, and the signs of it; though he could have been glad to have known its near approach, for which he made the experiments be did:

and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; very probably the selfsame dove he had sent out before.

Genesis 8:11

Ver. 11. And the dove came in to him in the evening,.... It having been out all day delighting itself in a free air, and perching upon the trees, but yet not finding sufficient food, or a proper lodging, it returned to Noah at the evening for food and dwelling in the ark:

and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off: which might easily be done, and even an "olive branch", as the word sometimes signifies, and is by some {p} rendered; for it being now the summer season, young branches sprouted out, which being tender, were easily cropped: the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"which it had took from the mount of Olives;"

but there is no necessity to suppose it went so far from the ark, since Assyria, a country nearer, was a land of olive oil, like that of Judea;
2Ki 18:32 and besides, olives grew in Armenia itself, where the ark rested. Gogarene, in Armenia, is said by Strabo {q} to produce olive trees; though a modern author says {r}

"I do not see where the dove which was sent out of the ark could find an olive branch, if the ark be supposed to have rested on Mount Ararat, or any of the mountains in Armenia; for this sort of trees is not found hereabout, where the species must be lost, and yet olives are known to be a kind of trees which never die:"

but the above accounts show it to be otherwise in ancient times:

so Noah knew the waters were abated from off the earth: by this he perceived not only that they were gone off the mountains, but the lower grounds, at least the hills on which olive trees delight to grow; and yet that they were only abated, and not entirely gone off, since the dove returned to him: this dove sent out the second time, and returning, may be considered as an emblem of a Gospel minister, comparable to a dove, for the dove like gifts of the Spirit of God, by which he is qualified for his work, and for his simplicity, harmlessness, meekness, and humility; and the olive leaf in its mouth may be an emblem of the Gospel, which is from Christ, the good olive; is the Gospel of peace, which an olive branch is a symbol of, proclaiming and publishing peace and reconciliation by Christ; and as that is ever green, the Gospel always continues, and is the everlasting Gospel, and which was brought, and more fully and clearly dispensed in the evening of the world; and by it, it is known that the waters of divine wrath are assuaged, and the people of God may be assured they will never return to come upon them.

{p} tyz hle "ramum olivae", V. L. so Ainsworth, see Neh. viii. 15. {q} Geograph. l. 11. p. 363. {r} Tournefort's Voyage to the Levant, vol. 3. p. 173.

Genesis 8:12

Ver. 12. And he stayed yet other seven days,.... After the dove had returned:

and sent forth the dove; the same dove again;

which returned not again unto him any more: the earth being dry, it found rest for the sole of its feet, sufficient food to eat, and a proper place for its habitation; and liking to be at liberty, and in the open air, chose not to return to the ark, even though its mate was there: of those birds sent out, the Heathen writers make mention: Abydenus says {s}, that Sisithrus, the same with Noah, sent out birds making an experiment to see whether the earth was emersed out of the water, which returned again to him; and after them he sent out others; and having done so three times, obtained what he wished for, since the birds returned with their wings full of clay or mud; and so Josephus {t} says, the dove which brought the olive leaf was all over with clay or mud: and Plutarch {u} makes particular mention of the dove, and says that, according to the mythologists, a dove was let out of the ark; and that her going out was to Deucalion, (the same with Noah) a sign of fair weather, and her return of foul: and the story that Lucian {w} tells of a golden dove upon the head of a statue in the temple of Hierapolis, supposed to be Deucalion's, seems plainly to refer to this dove of Noah; for the report, he says, was, that this golden dove flew away twice in a year, at the commemoration there made of the flood, by pouring out abundance of water into a chasm or cleft of the earth, then not very large; and which, it was told him, was formerly a very great one, and swallowed up all the flood that drowned the world.

{s} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 12. p. 414, 415. {t} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 3. p. 5. {u} De Solert. Animal. {w} De Dea Syria.

Genesis 8:13

Ver. 13. And it came to pass, in the six hundred and first year,.... Of Noah's life, and so the Septuagint adds, in the first month,

[the first day] of the month; so that it was the first day of the year, New Year's Day, and a joyful one it was to Noah and his family, when they saw dry ground; which they had not seen for above ten months: according to R. Joshua, this was the month Nisan, which was the first month with the Jews on sacred accounts; but according to R. Eliezer it was the month of Tisri, as Jarchi observes, which was their first month on civil accounts, and was their most ancient way of reckoning; and so the Targum of Jonathan explains it, adding, and Tisri; which answers to part of September, and part of October; and according to Bishop Usher {x}, this day was Friday, October 23, A. M. 1657:

the waters were dried up from off the earth: by the wind that continued to pass over it, and by the sun, which exhaled great quantities of it throughout the whole summer season; as it was from the end of the one hundred days, when the wind was first made, and the waters began to assuage to this time; as well as also by their soaking into the earth, and by returning to the cavities and receptacles in it:

and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked; not the roof of it, at least not the whole, only a board or two; though perhaps this was a covering made of skins, that was thrown over the ark, like that which was put over the tabernacle of Moses, and was made of skins,
Ex 26:14 where the same word is used as here: the use of this might be to hang over the window and defend it from the rain; so that the uncovering of the ark was only putting by, or turning up this covering, that he might be able more clearly to see, out of the window, how things were:

and, behold, the face of the ground was dry; the ground or surface of the earth looked dry; but was not so dry and hard as to bear heavy bodies, or the foot to tread on it, being soft and tender, through the water so long upon it, and had left mud and slime, not yet sufficiently hardened by the wind and sun to walk upon.

{x} Ut supra. (Annales Vet. Test. p. 4.)

Genesis 8:14

Ver. 14. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month,.... This was the month Marchesvan, as the Targum of Jonathan, which answers to part of our October, and part of our November; though according to Bishop Usher {y}, this day was Friday the eighteenth of December, A. M. 1657; it was on the seventeenth of this month that Noah went into the ark, **Ge 7:11** so that be was in it twelve months and ten days, according to a solar year; but if the reckoning is made according to Jewish months, six of which consisted of thirty days, and six of twenty nine only, then the twelve months made but three hundred and fifty four days, add to which eleven days to the twenty seventh, fully ended, it makes three hundred and sixty five days; so that he was in the ark just a full year, according to the course of the sun; but it seems very plain that the months here reckoned consisted of thirty days, since the one hundred and fifty, days when the waters abated are reckoned, from the seventeenth day of the second month, to the seventeenth day of the seventh month; which make exactly five months, and allow thirty days to a month: and at this time, when Noah had waited almost two months, after he had removed the covering of the ark,

was the earth dried; so that it was fit to walk upon, and was become commodious both for man and beast: a different word from that in the preceding verse is here used for "dry", this being a different kind, or, however, a greater degree of dryness than the other.

{y} Ut supra. (Annales Vet. Test. p. 4.)

Genesis 8:15

Ver. 15. And God spake unto Noah, saying,.... Whether in a dream or vision, or by an articulate voice, appearing in an human form, or by an impulse on his mind, is not certain; however, the Lord spoke so to him, that he heard him and understood him: it was, no doubt, very rejoicing to him, since he had not heard his voice for a year or more, at least that we read of; and what he said to him was as follows.

Genesis 8:16

Ver. 16. Go forth of the ark,.... Though the earth was dry and fit to be inhabited, yet be would not go out without orders, as he had to go in; which he waited for before he would, and now he has them:

thou and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives, with thee: the Jewish writers {z} observe, that the manner of Noah and his family coming out of the ark is different from that of their going into it: when they went into it then went the men by themselves, and the women by themselves, and so continued apart in the ark, the use of the marriage bed being forbidden them, being a time of distress; but now when they came out they are coupled together, signifying that they were now free to cohabit together.

{z} Pirke Eliezer, c. 23. Jarchi in loc.

Genesis 8:17

Ver. 17. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee,.... There is a various reading of the word for "bring forth"; according to the margin, as Jarchi observes, the sense is, order them to come forth; and according to the Scripture, if they will not, oblige them to come:

of all flesh, [both] of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; for of each of these there were some that went with him into the ark, and continued there:

that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth, for which end they were preserved in the ark. Jarchi observes, it is said "on the earth", not in the ark, which shows he thinks that birds and beasts were not allowed to couple, and that they did not breed there. It is a question with some, how the creatures, which were only in Asia at their coming out of the ark, could spread themselves all over the earth; particularly how they could get into islands, and especially into America: to which it may be answered, that this might be done by many of them, by swimming over narrow seas, for some wild creatures will swim whole days and nights together, when they are forced to it; and by men's carrying others in vessels to distant and different parts, on one account or another, either for profit or pleasure; and especially, what is it the power and providence of God cannot do, who could not be at a loss for ways and means to replenish a world in all the parts of it he had made desolate, when it was his pleasure?

(Most creationists think the earth entered an ice age after the flood. This would make the sea level lower than it is today. If the average sea level was lowered by only six hundred feet, all the major continents would be connected by land bridges. Animals could easily migrate to any continent. Ed.)

Genesis 8:18

Ver. 18. And Noah went forth,.... Being obedient to the divine command, and no doubt with great pleasure in his countenance, and with a heart full of thankfulness for so great a deliverance;

and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: in all eight persons, and no more were saved in the ark, as Peter observes, **1Pe 3:20** and the Arabic writers say {a}, Noah and his sons built a city near the place where they came out of the ark, and called it Themanin, giving this as a reason of the name, we are eight, that is, who have escaped; so Berosus says {b}, that the earth being dried of the waters, there were then only eight men in Armenia, from whence all mankind sprung.

{a} Elmacleus, p. 12. Patricides, p. 10. apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 282. {b} Hist. l. 2. fol. 11. 1.

Genesis 8:19

Ver. 19. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, [and] whatsoever creepeth upon the earth,.... All went out, not one was left, and they went out

after their kind; not in a confused disorderly manner, mixing with one another; but as they went in by pairs, male and female of every sort, so they came forth in like manner, or, "according to their families" {c}; by which it seems as if the creatures did breed in the ark, and had their families of young ones; and which is the sense of some in Aben Ezra, and he himself thinks it not foreign, though he interprets it as we do, and as the Greek version does, "after their kind": thus they

went forth out of the ark; everyone with his mate, in order to procreate and multiply upon the earth.

{c} Mhytxpvml "juxta familias suas", Tigurine version, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Genesis 8:20

Ver. 20. And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord,.... Not an house for himself and his family, but an altar for God; his first and greatest concern being for the glory of God, and not for the temporal good of himself and his: this altar was erected, and devoted to the service of God; it was built according to his will, and by his direction: Noah's view was to renew the worship of God, preserve and propagate it by his example; and this was done by way of thanksgiving to

God for his wonderful preservation of him, and was also propitiatory and typical of Christ: the Jewish writers {d} say, this was the altar on which Adam sacrificed, when expelled the garden of Eden, and on which Cain and Abel offered; and being demolished by the flood, was rebuilt by Noah, which is not at all probable; it is much more likely what Aben Ezra says, that it was built on one of the mountains of Ararat, and that as Noah took the first opportunity, so he built it in the first place he came to, or at least not far from the place where he came out of the ark:

and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar; the clean beasts were the bullock, the sheep, and goat, and the clean fowl, the turtle and young pigeon, one of each sort at least was taken. The Targum of Jonathan says, he offered four upon the altar: these were typical of Christ; the bullock or heifer might denote his strength, the sheep or lamb his patience and harmlessness, the turtle or dove his meekness; and being burnt offerings, may signify the painful and dolorous sufferings of Christ, when the wrath of God was poured on him like fire.

{d} Zohar in Gen. fol. 51. 3, 4. Targum Jon. in loc. Pirke Eliezer, c. 23.

Genesis 8:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour,.... Or a "savour of rest" {e}; he was delighted and well pleased with his sacrifice, which was offered up in the faith of the sacrifice of Christ; the apostle says, "is for a sweetsmelling savour", **Eph 5:2** referring to this passage; that being a satisfaction to the justice of God, an appeasing of his wrath, and a propitiation for the sins of men:

and the Lord said in his heart; within himself; it was awhile a secret there, but Noah being a prophet, as Aben Ezra observes, he revealed it to him, or "to his heart" {f}, that is, to the heart of Noah, as some interpret it, he spoke comfortably to him, as follows, when the Jewish writers {g} say he stretched out his right hand and swore, agreeably to Isa 54:9

I will not again curse the ground for man's sake, or drown it for the sin of man, as he had cursed it for the sin of Adam, and which continued till this time; but now was taken off, and it became more fruitful, and very probably by means of the waters which had been so long upon it, and had left a fructifying virtue in it, as the waters of the Nile do in Egypt. Some interpret the phrase, "for man's sake", for the man Christ's sake, for the sake of his sacrifice, of which Noah's was a type, and the sense be, that God would no more curse the earth; for by his sacrifice the curse of the law is removed, with respect to his people; they are redeemed from it, and shall inherit that new earth, of which this earth, renewed after the flood, was a type, in which there will be no more curse, Re 21:1 which sense, though evangelical, cannot be admitted, because of the reason following, unless the first word be rendered "though", as it may:

for the imagination of man's heart [is] evil from his youth; his nature is depraved, his heart is corrupt, the thoughts of it evil, yea, the imagination of it, and of them, is sinful, and that originally, even from his birth; from the time he is shook out of his mother's womb, as Jarchi interprets the phrase: man is conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, and is a transgressor from the womb, and so a child of wrath, and deserving of the curse of the law upon himself, and all that belong to him; and yet this is given as a reason why God will not any more curse the ground for his sake: that which was a reason for destroying the earth, is now one against it, see **Ge 6:5** which may be reconciled thus, God for this reason destroyed the earth once, for an example, and to display his justice; but such is his clemency and mercy, that he will do it no more to the end of the world; considering that man has brought himself into such a condition, that he cannot but sin, it is natural to him from his birth; his nature is tainted with it, his heart is full of it, and all his thoughts and imaginations are wicked and sinful, from whence continually flow a train of actual sins and transgressions; so that if God was to curse and drown the world as often as man sins, he must be continually doing it; for the words may be rendered, "though the imagination of man's heart is evil", &c. {h}; yet I will not do it; and so they are expressive of the super abounding grace of God over abounding sin:

neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done; this hinders not but that there might be, as has been since, partial calamities, or particular judgments on individual persons, towns, and cities, as those of Sodom and Gomorrah, or partial inundations, but not a general deluge, or an universal destruction of the world and creatures in it, at least not by water, as has been, but by fire, as will be; for that the earth will have an end, at least as to its present nature, form, and use, may be concluded from the following words.

{e} xxynh xyr "odorem quietis", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, &c. {f} wbl la "ad cor suum", Montanus, Tigurine version; "prophetae suo", Arab. {g} Jarchi in loc. Pirke Eliezer, c. 23. {h} yk "quamvis", Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Genesis 8:22

Ver. 22. While the earth remaineth,.... Which as to its substance may remain for ever, Ec 1:4 yet as to its form and quality will be changed; that and all in it will be burnt up; there will be an end of all things in it, for so the words are in the original, "as yet all the days of the earth", or "while all the days of the earth" are {i}; which shows that there is a time fixed for its continuance, and that this time is but short, being measured by days: but however, as long as it does continue,

seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease; as they had done, or seemed to do during the flood; for the year past there had been no seedtime nor harvest, and it must have been for the most part damp and cold, through the rains, and the abundance of water on earth, that the difference of seasons was not very discernible; as neither of days and nights at some times, especially when the clouds were so black and thick over the heavens, that neither sun, moon, or stars could be seen; and such floods of water continually pouring down, that it must be difficult to know when it was day, and when night; but for the future it is promised, that these should not cease as long as the world stands: "seedtime and harvest"; the time of sowing seed in the earth, and the time of gathering in the fruits of it when ripe, so necessary for the sustenance of man and beast: once in seven years, and once in fifty years indeed, these ceased in the land of Judea, while the people of Israel resided there; but then this was not general all the world over, in other places there were seedtime and harvest: "and cold and heat, and summer and winter"; in some places indeed there is but little cold, in others but little heat, and the difference of summer and winter is not so discernible in some places as in others, yet there is of all these in the world in general. According to Jarchi, "cold" signifies a more severe season than "winter", or the severer part of the winter; and "heat" a hotter season than the summer, or the hotter part of it. The Jews observe, that the seasons of the year are divided into six parts, and two months are to be allowed to each part; which Lyra, from them, and chiefly from Jarchi, thus gives,

"to seedtime the last half of September, all October, and half November; to cold, the other half of November, all December, and half January; to winter, half January, all February, and half March: to harvest, half March, all April, and half May; to summer, half May, all June, and half July; to heat, half July, all August, and the first half of September."

But these accounts refer to the land of Judea only: it is enough for the fulfilment of the promise, that they are more or less, at one time of the year or another, in all parts of the world, and so will be until the world shall be no more; and may, in a mystic sense, denote the continuance of the church of God in the world, as long as it endures, and its various vicissitudes and revolutions; sometimes it is a time of sowing the precious seed of the Word; and sometimes it is an harvest, is an ingathering of souls into it; sometimes it is a winter season with it, and all things seem withered and dead; and at other times it is summer, and all things look smiling and cheerful; sometimes it is in a state of coldness and indifference, and at other times exposed to the heat of persecution, and more warm and zealous usually then; sometimes it is night with it, and sometimes day, and so it is like to be, until that state takes place described in **Re 7:16**.

{i} Urah ymy lk de "cunctis diebus terrae", V. L. "adhuc omnes dies terrae", Pagninus, Montanus; so Drusius, Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 9

In this chapter we have an account of God's blessing Noah and his sons, being just come out of the ark, with a renewal of the blessing of propagating their species, and replenishing the earth, the dominion over the creatures, and a freedom from the fear of them; with liberty to eat flesh, only it must not be eaten with blood; with a providential care and preservation of their lives from men and beasts, by making a law that that man or beast should die that shed man's blood, **Ge 9:1** and after repeating the blessing of procreation, **Ge 9:7** mention is made of a covenant God made with Noah, his sons, and all the creatures, that he would drown the world no more, the token of which should be the rainbow in the cloud, **Ge 9:8** the names of the sons of Noah are observed, by whom the earth was repeopled, **Ge 9:18** and seem to be observed for the sake of an event after recorded; Noah having planted a vineyard, and drank too freely of the wine of it, lay down uncovered in his tent, which Ham seeing, told his two brothers of it, who in a very modest manner covered him, **Ge 9:20** of all which Noah being sensible when he awoke, cursed Canaan the son of Ham, and blessed Shem and Japheth, **Ge 9:24** and the chapter is concluded with the age and death of Noah, **Ge 9:28**.

Ver. 1. And God blessed Noah and his sons,.... With temporal blessings, not spiritual ones; for though some of them were blessed with such, yet not all, particularly Ham:

and said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth; depopulated by the flood: this is a renewal of the blessing on Adam, a power and faculty of propagating his species, which was as necessary now as then, since there were so few of the human race left in the world; and the renewal of this grant was the rather necessary, if, as has been observed, Noah and his sons were restrained from cohabiting with their wives while in the ark: but though these words are not an express command for the propagation of their species, yet more than a bare permission, at least they are a direction and instruction to it, and even carry in them a promise of fruitfulness, that they should multiply and increase, which was very needful at this time.

Genesis 9:2

Ver. 2. And the fear or you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth,.... This is a renewal, at least in part, of the grant of dominion to Adam over all the creatures; these obeyed him cheerfully, and from love, but sinning, he in a good measure lost his power over them, they rebelled against him; but now though the charter of power over them is renewed, they do not serve man freely, but are in dread of him, and flee from him; some are more easily brought into subjection to him, and even the fiercest and wildest of them may be tamed by him; and this power over them was the more easily retrieved in all probability by Noah and his sons, from the inhabitation of the creatures with them for so long a time in the ark:

and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; as appears by fowls flying away, by beasts and creeping things getting off as fast as they can, and by fishes swimming away at the sight of men:

into your hand are they delivered; as the lords and proprietors of them, for their use and service, and particularly for what follows, see **Ps 8:6** where there is an enumeration of the creatures subject to men.

Genesis 9:3

Ver. 3. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you,.... That is, every beast, fowl, and fish, without exception; for though there was a difference at this time of clean and unclean creatures with respect to sacrifice, yet not with respect to food; every creature of God was good then, as it is now, and it was left to man's reason and judgment what to make use of, as would be most conducive to his health, and agreeable to his taste: and though there was a distinction afterwards made under the Levitical dispensation among the Jews, who were forbid the use of some creatures; yet they themselves say {k}, that all unclean beasts will be clean in the world to come, in the times of the Messiah, as they were to the sons of Noah, and refer to this text in proof of it; the only exception in the text is, that they must be living creatures which are taken, and used for food; not such as die of themselves, or are torn to pieces by wild beasts, but such as are taken alive, and killed in a proper manner:

even as the green herb have I given you all things; as every green herb was given for meat to Adam originally, without any exception, **Ge 1:29** so every living creature, without exception, was given to Noah and his sons for food. Some think, and it is a general opinion, that this was a new grant, that man had no right before to eat flesh, nor did he; and it is certain it is not before expressed, but it may be included in the general grant of power and dominion over the creatures made to Adam; and since what is before observed is only a renewal of former grants, this may be considered in the same light; or otherwise the dominion over the creatures first granted to Adam will be reduced to a small matter, if he had no right nor power to kill and eat them; besides, in so large a space of time as 1600 years and upwards, the world must have been overstocked with creatures, if they were not used for such a purpose; nor will Abel's offering the firstling and fattest of his flock appear so praiseworthy, when it made no difference with him, if he ate not of them, whether they were fat or lean; and who will deny that there were peace offerings before the flood, which the offerer always ate of? to which may be added the luxury of men before the flood, who thereby were given to impure and carnal lusts; and our Lord expressly says of the men of that age, that they were "eating and drinking", living in a voluptuous manner, which can hardly be accounted for, if they lived only on herbs, see Lu 17:22 though it must be owned, that it was a common notion of poets and philosophers {l}, that men in the golden age, as they call it, did not eat flesh, but lived on herbs and fruit.

{k} In Bereshit Rabba, apud Ainsworth in loc. {l} Pythagoras, apud Ovid. Metamorph. l. 15. Fab. 2. Porphyr. de abstinentia, l. 4. sect. 2.

Genesis 9:4

Ver. 4. But flesh with the life thereof, [which is] the blood thereof, shall you not eat. This is the only exception to the eating of flesh; it was not to be eaten with the blood in it, which is said to be its life; not that the blood is of itself the life, but because it is a means of life, and that being exhausted, the creature must die, and because the animal and vital spirits appear to us most vigorous in it; yea, it is the ailment and support of them, and which furnishes out the greatest quantity of them: or rather it may be rendered, "the flesh with its life in its blood" {m}; while there is life in the blood, or while the creature is living; the meaning is, that a creature designed for food should be properly killed, and its blood let out; that it should not be devoured alive, as by a beast of prey; that raw flesh should not be eaten, as since by cannibals, and might be by riotous flesh eaters, before the flood; for notwithstanding this law, as flesh without the blood might be eaten, so blood properly let out, and dressed, or mixed with other things, might be eaten, for aught this says to the contrary; but was not to be eaten with the flesh, though it might separately, which was afterwards forbid by another law. The design of this was to restrain cruelty in men, and particularly to prevent the shedding of human blood, which men might be led into, were they suffered to tear living creatures in pieces, and feed upon their raw flesh, and the blood in it. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"but the flesh which is torn from a living beast at the time that its life is in it, or which is torn from a beast while it is slain, before all its breath is gone out, ye shall not eat."

And the Jewish writers generally interpret this of the flesh of a creature taken from it alive, which, they say, is the seventh precept given to the sons of Noah, over and above the six which the sons of Adam were bound to observe, and they are these;

1. Idolatry is forbidden. 2. Blasphemy is forbidden. 3. The shedding of blood, or murder is forbidden. 4. Uncleanness, or unjust carnal copulations is forbidden. 5. Rapine or robbery is forbidden. 6. The administration of justice to malefactors is required. 7. The eating of any member or flesh of a creature while alive {n} is forbidden.

Such of the Heathens who conformed to those precepts were admitted to dwell among the Israelites, and were called proselytes of the gate.

{m} wmd wvpnb rvb Kaw "carnem cum anima, "seu" vita ejus, sanguine ejus", Cartwright. {n} Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 9. sect. 1.

Genesis 9:5

Ver. 5. And surely your blood of your lives will I require,.... Or "for surely your blood", &c. {o}; and so is a reason of the preceding law, to teach men not to shed human blood; or though, "surely your blood", as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; though God had given them liberty to slay the creatures, and shed their blood, and eat them, yet he did not allow them to shed their own blood, or the blood of their fellow creatures; should they do this, he would surely make inquisition, and punish them for it:

at the hand of every beast will I require it; should a beast kill a man, or be the instrument of shedding his blood, it should be slain for it; not by means of another beast, God so ordering it, as Aben Ezra suggests, but by the hands or order of the civil magistrate; which was to be done partly to show the great regard God has to the life of man, and partly to punish men for not taking more care of their beasts, as well as to be an example to others to be more careful, and to lessen, the number of mischievous creatures:

and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man; which may be reasonably supposed; for if it is required of a beast, and that is punished for the slaughter of a man, then much more a man himself, that is wilfully guilty of murder; and the rather, since he is by general relation a brother to the person he has murdered, which is an aggravation of his crime: or it may signify, that though he is a brother in the nearest relation, as his crime is the greater, he shall not go unpunished.

{o} kai gar, Sept. "enim", V. L.

Genesis 9:6

Ver. 6. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,.... That is, he that is guilty of wilful murder shall surely be put to death by the order of the civil magistrate; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"by witnesses the judges shall condemn him to death," that is, the fact being clearly proved by witnesses, the judges shall condemn

"him to death,"

that is, the fact being clearly proved by witnesses, the judges shall pass the sentence of death upon him, and execute it; for this is but the law of retaliation, a just and equitable one, blood for blood, or life for life; though it seems to be the first law of this kind that empowered the civil magistrate to take away life; God, as it is thought, reserving the right and power to himself before, and which, for some reasons, he thought fit not to make use of in the case of Cain, whom he only banished, and suffered not others to take away his life, but now enacts a law, requiring judges to punish murder with death: and which, according to this law, ought never to go unpunished, or have a lesser punishment inflicted for it: the reason follows,

for in the image of God made he man; which, though sadly defaced and obliterated by sin, yet there are such remains of it, as render him more especially the object of the care and providence of God, and give him a superiority to other creatures; and particularly this image, among others, consists in immortality, which the taking away of his life may seem to contradict; however, it is what no man has a right to do.

Genesis 9:7

Ver. 7. And you, be ye fruitful and multiply,.... Instead of taking away the lives of men, the great concern should be to multiply them; and this indeed is one reason of the above law, to prevent the decrease and ruin of mankind; and which was peculiarly needful, when there were so few men in the world as only four, and therefore it is repeated in stronger terms:

bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein; that the whole earth might be overspread with men, and repeopled sufficiently, as it was by the sons of Noah, see **Ge 9:19**.

Genesis 9:8

Ver. 8. And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him,.... Not only what is contained in the preceding verses, but in the subsequent ones:

saying; as follows.

Genesis 9:9

Ver. 9. And [I], behold, [I] establish my covenant with you,.... Not the covenant of grace in Christ, but of the preservation of the creatures in common, a promise that they should not be destroyed any more by a flood; to which promise it seems an oath was annexed, as appears from Isa 54:9 which passage refers to this covenant, as Aben Ezra on the place observes; and both to raise attention to what is here affirmed, and to show the certainty of it, the word "behold" is prefixed to it; nor is it amiss what Jarchi observes, that this follows upon the direction and exhortation to procreation of children, and is an encouragement to it; since it is assured that posterity should be no more cut off in the manner it had been; for this covenant was made and established not only with Noah, and his sons, but with all their succeeding offspring, as follows:

and with your seed after you; with all their posterity to the end of the world; so that this covenant was made with all the world, and all the individuals in it, from Noah's time to the end of it; for from him and his sons sprung the whole race of men that peopled the world, and still continue to inhabit it; hence here is nothing in it peculiar to the seed of believers.

Genesis 9:10

Ver. 10. And with every living creature that is with you,.... This is a further proof that this was not the covenant of grace, but of conservation, since it is made with irrational as well as rational creatures:

of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; the birds of the air, the tame cattle, and the wild beasts:

from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth; which take in the creeping things not mentioned, for these were in the ark, and came out of the ark with Noah; and this covenant not only included all the several kinds of creatures that came out of the ark with Noah, but it reached to all that should spring from them in future ages, to the end of the world.

Genesis 9:11

Ver. 11. And I will establish my covenant with you,.... This is repeated to denote the certainty of it, as well as to lead on to the particulars of it:

neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither man nor beast, at least not all of them, and especially by water:

neither shall there be any more a flood to destroy the earth; not a general deluge, otherwise notwithstanding this promise there might be, as there have been, particular inundations, which have overflowed particular countries and places, but not the whole earth; and this hinders not but that the whole earth may be destroyed by fire, as it will be at the last day, only not by water any more; and this is the sum and substance of the covenant with Noah, his sons, and all the creatures that have been, or shall be.

Genesis 9:12

Ver. 12. And God said, this is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you,.... Meaning the bow in the cloud, and which might be formed in the cloud at this time, that Noah might see it, and know it when he saw it again, and seems to be pointed unto: "this is the token"; or sign of the covenant made between God and Noah, and his sons:

and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations; which more clearly shows and proves, that this covenant reaches to all creatures that then were, or should be in all ages, to the end of the world.

Genesis 9:13

Ver. 13. I do set my bow in the cloud,.... Or "I have given", or "have set it" {p}; which seems as if it was at that instant set; this is the same we call the "rainbow": and so Horace {q} calls it "arcus pluvius": it is called a "bow", because of its form, being a semicircle, and a "rainbow", because it is seen in a day of rain, and is a sign of it, or of its being quickly over, **Eze 1:28** and this appears in a moist dewy cloud, neither very thick nor very thin, and is occasioned by the rays of the sun opposite to it, refracted on it: and this God calls "his bow", not only because made by him, for, notwithstanding the natural causes of it, the cloud and sun, the disposition of these to produce it, such a phenomenon is of God; but also because he appointed it to be a sign and token of his covenant with his creatures; so the Heathen poets {r} call the rainbow the messenger of Juno. It is a question whether there was a rainbow before the flood, and it is not easily answered; both Jews and Christians are divided about it; Saadiah thought there was one; but Aben Ezra disapproves of his opinion, and thinks it was first now made. The greater part of Christian interpreters are of the mind of Saadiah, that it was from the beginning, the natural causes of it, the sun and cloud, being before the flood; and that it was now after it only appointed to be a sign and token of the covenant; but though the natural causes of it did exist before, it does not follow, nor is it to be proved, that there was such a disposition of them to produce such an effect; and it might be so ordered in Providence, that there should not be any, that this might be entirely a new thing, and so a wonderful one, as the word for "token" {s} signifies; and the Greeks calls the rainbow the "daughter of Thaumas" or "Wonder" {t}; and be the more fit to be a sign and token of the covenant, that God would no more destroy the earth with water; for otherwise, if this had been what Noah and his sons had been used to see, it can hardly be thought sufficient to take off their fears of a future inundation, which was the end and use it was to serve, as follows:

it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth; that is, between God and the creatures of the earth; or of a promise that God would no more destroy the earth, and cut off the creatures in it by a flood; for though it is a bow, yet without arrows, and is not turned downwards towards the earth, but upwards towards heaven, and so is a token of mercy and kindness, and not of wrath and anger.

{p} yttn "dedi", Montanus; so Ainsworth; "posui", Pisator, Drusius, Buxtorf. {q} De Arte Poetica, ver. 18. {r} Nuntia Junonis varios induta colores Concipit Iris aquas--------- Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 7. {s} twa "signum, tam nudum, quam prodigiosum", Buxtorf. {t} Plato in Theaeeteto, Plutarch. de Placit, Philosoph. 3, 4. Apollodor. Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 5.

Genesis 9:14

Ver. 14. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth,.... Or "cloud a cloud" {u}, cause the clouds to gather thick in the heavens, and to hang over the earth ready to pour down great quantities of water; by reason of which the inhabitants might dread another flood coming upon them: wherefore, in order to dissipate such fears, it shall be so ordered, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud; after it has pretty much discharged itself; for the rainbow is always in a thin, not a thick cloud; after the heavy showers are fallen from the thick clouds, and a small thin one remains, then the rainbow is seen in it; not always, but very frequently, and when the sun and clouds are in a proper position: and this is often so ordered, to put men in mind of this covenant, and to divest them of, or prevent their fears of the world being drowned by a flood; for when they see this, it is a sure sign the rain is going off, since the cloud is thinned, or otherwise the rainbow could not appear: and a most glorious and beautiful sight it is, having such a variety of colours in it, and in such a position and form. Some think that it serves both to put in mind of the destruction of the old world by water, through its watery colours, and of the present world by fire, through its fiery ones. Others make the three predominant colours to denote the three dispensations before the law, under the law, and under the Gospel: rather they may signify the various providences of God, which all work together for the good of his people; however, whenever this bow is seen, it puts in mind of the covenant of preservation made with all the creatures, and the firmness, stability, and duration of it; and is by some considered as an emblem of the covenant of grace, from Isa 54:9 which is of God's making, as this bow is; is a reverberation of Christ the sun of righteousness, the sum and substance of the covenant; consists of various blessings and promises of grace; is expressive of mercy and peace, and is a security from everlasting destruction: or rather it may be thought to be an emblem of Christ himself, who was seen by John clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow on his head, Re 10:1 this being a wonderful thing, as Christ is wonderful in his person, office, and grace; and as it has in it a variety of beautiful colours, it may represent Christ, who is full of grace and truth, and fairer than the children of men; and may be considered as a symbol of peace and reconciliation by him, whom God looks unto, and remembers the covenant of his grace he has made with him and his chosen ones in him; and who is the rainbow round about the throne of God, and the way of access unto it; **Re 4:3** the Jews have a saying,

"till ye see the bow in its luminous colours, do not look for the feet of the Messiah, or his coming {w}."

{u} Nne ynneb "cum obnubilavero nubem", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Schmidt. {w} Tikkune Zohar, correct. 18. fol. 32. 2. correct. 37. fol. 81. 1.

Genesis 9:15

Ver. 15. And I will remember my covenant which is between me and you, and every living creature of all flesh,.... See **Ge 9:11**

and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh; this is repeated to remove those fears which would naturally arise, upon the gathering of the clouds in the heavens; but as God would remember his covenant, which he can never forget; and is always mindful of, so men, when they see the bow in the cloud, may be assured, that whatever waters are in the heavens, they shall never be suffered to fall in such quantity as to destroy all creatures as they have done.

Genesis 9:16

Ver. 16. And the bow shall be in the cloud,.... Not whenever there is a cloud, but at some certain times, when that and the sun are in a proper position to form one, and when divine wisdom sees right there should be one; then it appears and continues for a time, and as the cloud becomes thinner and thinner, it disappears:

and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth; not that forgetfulness, or remembrance, properly speaking, belong to God, but this is said after the manner of men; who by this token may be assured, whenever they see the bow in the cloud, that God is not unmindful of the covenant he has made with all creatures, and which is to continue to the end of the world.

Genesis 9:17

Ver. 17. And God said to Noah, this is the token of the covenant,.... Which is repeated for the greater confirmation and certainty of it, since the fears of men would be apt to run very high, especially while the flood was fresh in memory;

which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth: see **Ge 9:9**, it is highly probable, that from the rainbow being the token of the covenant between God and Noah, and the creatures, sprung the fable of the Chinese concerning their first emperor, Fohi, who seems to be the same with Noah, and whom they call the son of heaven, and say he had no father; which is this, that his mother, walking on the bank of a lake near Lanthien, in the province of Xensi, trod upon a large footstep of a man impressed upon the sand, and from thence, being surrounded with the rainbow, conceived and brought forth Fohi {x}.

{x} Martin. Sinic. Hist. p. 11.

Genesis 9:18

Ver. 18. And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth,.... These were born before the flood, and went into the ark with Noah, and came out with him; see **Ge 5:32**

and Ham [is the] father of Canaan; this is observed for the sake of the following history, concerning the behaviour of the one to Noah, and of the curse of the other by him, which would not have been so well understood if this remark had not been made: the father and the son, as they were, related in nature, they were much alike in manners and behaviour. Cush, the firstborn of Ham, is not mentioned, but Canaan, his youngest son, because he was cursed, as Aben Ezra observes; and who remarks that the paragraph is written to show that the Canaanites were accursed, the father of whom this Canaan was; and who is the same Sanchoniatho {y} calls Cna, and says he was the first that was called a Phoenician.

{y} Apud. Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. p. 39.

Genesis 9:19

Ver. 19. These are the three sons of Noah,.... And his only ones; and if he had any more, they left no posterity behind them, since it follows,

and of them was the whole earth overspread, with inhabitants, by them and their posterity only: Berozus {z} indeed says, that Noah, after the flood, begat more sons, and giants; and his commentator, Annius, talks of seventeen of them, among whom was Tuiscon, the father of the Germans; and the author of Juchasin {a} ascribes a fourth son to Noah, whose name he calls Joniko, who taught astronomy in the world, and taught Nimrod the art of war; but these are fabulous stories, and contrary to the sacred Scriptures, which speak of three sons of Noah, and no more, and say that by these the earth was replenished after the flood: hence, among the Heathen writers, we read of Saturn and his three children, who by many circumstances appears to be the same with Noah, as Bochart {b} hath proved at large.

{z} Antiqu. l. 2. fol. 13. 2. {a} Fol. 135. 1. {b} Phaleg. l. 1. c. 1.

Genesis 9:20

Ver. 20. And Noah began to be an husbandman,.... Or "a man of the earth" {c}, not lord of it, as Jarchi, though he was, but a tiller of the earth, as he had been before the flood, and now began to be again; he returned to his old employment, and which perhaps he improved, having invented, as the Jews {d} say, instruments of husbandry; it may be, the use of the plough, which made the tillage of the ground more easy; he was expert in husbandry, as Aben Ezra observes, and which, as he remarks, is great wisdom; and though he was so great a man, yet he employed himself in this way:

and he planted a vineyard; not vines, but a vineyard; there were vines before scattered up and down, here one and there another, but he planted a number of them together, and set them in order, as the Jewish writers say {e}; and some of them {f} will have it that he found a vine which the flood brought out of the garden of Eden, and planted it; but this is mere fable: where this plantation was cannot be said with certainty; the Armenians have a tradition that Noah, after quitting the ark, went and settled at Erivan, about twelve leagues from Ararat, a city full of vineyards; and that it was there he planted the vineyard, in a place where they still make excellent wine, and that their vines are of the same sort he planted there {g}; which contradicts what Strabo {h} says of the country of Armenia, its hills and plains, that a vine will not easily grow there.

{c} hmdah vya "vir terrie", Montanus. {d} Zohar, apud Hottinger, Smegma Oriental. p. 253. {e} Ben Melech in loc. so Abarbinel & Bechai, apud Muis, in loc. {f} Targum Jon. in loc. Pirke Eliezer, c. 23. {g} See Tournefort's Voyage to the Levant, vol. 3. p. 178. Universal History, vol. 1. p. 261. {h} Geograph. l. 11. p. 363.

Genesis 9:21

Ver. 21. And he drank of the wine, and was drunken,.... Either not being acquainted with the strength of it, as is thought by many; or having been used to weaker liquor, as water; or through the infirmity of his age; however, he was overtaken with it, and which is recorded, not to disgrace him, but to caution men against the evil of intemperance, as well as to encourage repenting sinners to expect pardon: and this shows that the best of men are not exempted from sin, nor secure from falling; and that though Noah was a perfect man, yet not as to be without sin; and that whereas he was a righteous man, he was not so by the righteousness of works, but by the righteousness of faith:

and he was uncovered within his tent; being in liquor when he laid down, he was either negligent of his long and loose garments, such as the eastern people wore without breeches, and did not take care to wrap them about him; or in his sleep, through the heat of the weather, or of the wine, or both, threw them off.

Genesis 9:22

Ver. 22. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father,.... Which, had it been through surprise, and at an unawares, would not have been thought criminal; but be went into his father's tent, where he ought not to have entered; he looked with pleasure and delight on his father's nakedness: Ham is represented by many writers as a very wicked, immodest, and profligate creature: Berosus {i} makes him a magician, and to be the same with Zoroast or Zoroastres, and speaks of him as the public corrupter of mankind; and says that he taught men to live as before the flood, to lie with mothers, sisters, daughters, males and brutes, and creatures of all sorts; and that he actually did so himself, and therefore was cast out by his father Janus, or Noah, and got the name of "Chem", the infamous and immodest:

and told his two brethren without; he went out of the tent after he had pleased himself with the sight; see **Hab 2:15** and in a wanton, ludicrous, and scoffing manner, related what he had seen: some of the Jewish Rabbins {k}, as Jarchi relates, say that Canaan first saw it, and told his father of it; and some say {l}, that he or Ham committed an unnatural crime with him; and others {m}, that he castrated him; and hence, it is supposed, came the stories of Jupiter castrating his father Saturn, and Chronus his father Uranus: and Berosus {n} says, that Ham taking hold of his father's genitals, and muttering some words, by a magic charm rendered him impotent: and some {o} will have it that he committed incest with his father's wife; but these things are said without foundation: what Noah's younger son did unto him, besides looking on him, we are not told, yet it was such as brought a curse on Canaan; and one would think it would be more than bare sight, nay, it is expressly said there was something done, but what is not said, **Ge 9:24**.

{i} Antiqu. l. 3. fol. 25. 1. {k} In Bereshit Rabba, sect. 36. fol. 32. 1. {l} Some in Jarchi. {m} Pirke Eliezer, c. 23. Some Rabbins in Ben Gersom & Jarchi in loc. {n} Antiqu. l. 3. fol. 25. 1. {o} Vander Hart, apud Bayle Dict. vol. 10. Art. "Ham", p. 588.

Genesis 9:23

Ver. 23. And Shem and Japheth took a garment,.... Who were the two brothers Ham told what he had seen, and who, no doubt, reproved him for his ill behaviour, and then took a garment, a coat of their own, very probably, some large garment fit for the purpose;

and laid it upon both their shoulders; one part of it on the right shoulder of the one, and the other on the left shoulder of the other:

and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; going backward when they came into the tent, and to the place where their father lay, they threw the garment off from their shoulders over him, and so covered him:

and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness: which they purposely shunned, for which reason they went backwards, and their faces were backwards to their father; which showed their modesty, and their filial piety and duty, and thus by their actions reproved Ham, as well as doubtless they did by words.

Genesis 9:24

Ver. 24. And Noah awoke from his wine,.... From his sleep, which his wine brought on him; when the force and strength of that was gone, and when not only he awaked, but came to himself, and was sober;

and knew what his younger son had done to him; either by revelation, as some, or prophecy, as Ben Gersom, or by the relation of his two sons, whom, when finding himself covered with another's garment, he might question how it came about, and they told him the whole affair: some, as Aben Ezra, Ben Gersom, and Abendana, think that this was not Ham, the younger son of Noah, and whom some also will have not to be the youngest, being always placed middlemost, but Canaan, the fourth and youngest son of Ham; and whom Noah indeed might call his younger, or "his son, the little one" {p}; as it was

usual for grandchildren to be called the sons of their grandfather; see Ge 29:5 and Noah might be informed how his little son, or rather grandson Canaan, had been in his tent, and seeing him in the posture he was, went very merrily, and told his father Ham of it, who made a jest of it also; and this seems the more reasonable, since Canaan was immediately cursed by Noah, as in the following verse; See Gill on "Ge 9:22" this affair must happen many years after Noah's coming out of the ark, since then his sons had no children; whereas Ham had at this time four sons, and Canaan was the youngest of them; and he was grown up to an age sufficient to be concerned in this matter, of treating his grandfather in an ill way, so as to bring his curse upon him: Jarchi interprets "little" by abominable and contemptible, supposing it refers not to age, but character, and which was bad both in Ham and Canaan:
See Gill on "Ge 9:22".

{p} Njqh wnb "filius suus parvus", Montanus; "filius ejus parvus", Cartwright.

Genesis 9:25

Ver. 25. And he said,.... Not in a drunken fit, as some profane persons would suggest, for he was awaked from his wine; nor in the heat of passion, but by inspiration, under a spirit of prophecy:

cursed [be] Canaan; or, "O cursed Canaan", or rather, "Canaan is", or "shall be cursed" {q}; for the words are either a declaration of what was his case, or a prediction of what it should be. It may seem strange that Canaan should be cursed, and not Ham, who seems to he the only aggressor, by what is said in the context; hence one copy of the Septuagint, as Ainsworth observes, reads Ham, and the Arabic writers the father of Canaan; and so Saadiah Gaon supplies it, as Aben Ezra relates; and the same supplement is made by others {r}: but as both were guilty, as appears from what has been observed on the former verses, and Canaan particularly was first in the transgression; it seems most wise and just that he should be expressly named, since hereby Ham is not excluded a share in the punishment of the crime he had a concern in, being punished in his son, his youngest son, who perhaps was his darling and favourite, and which must be very afflicting to him to hear of; and since Canaan only, and not any of the other sons of Ham were guilty, he, and not Ham by name, is cursed, lest it should be thought that the curse would fall upon Ham and all his posterity; whereas the curse descends on him, and very justly proceeds in the line of Canaan; and who is the rather mentioned, because he was the father of the accursed race of the Canaanites, whom God abhorred, and, for their wickedness, was about to drive out of their land, and give it to his people for an inheritance; and in order to which the Israelites were now upon the expedition, when Moses wrote this account, and which must animate them to it; for by this prediction they would see that they were an accursed people, and that they were to be their servants:

a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren; the posterities of Shem and Japheth, who stood in the relation of brethren to Canaan and his posterity; and to those he and his offspring were to become the most mean abject servants, as the phrase implies: this character agrees with the name of Canaan, which may be derived from enk, "to depress", "humble", and "make mean and abject".

{q} Nenk rwra "maledictus erit Cenahan", Junius & Tremellius. {r} So some in Vatablus.

Genesis 9:26

Ver. 26. And he said, blessed be the Lord God of Shem,.... Shem was blessed before Japheth, because he was the first and principal in advising and conducting the affair before ascribed to them, as Jarchi on **Ge 9:23** suggests; and though the words are in the form of an ascription of blessedness to God, the fountain of all good, and by whose grace Shem was influenced and enabled to do the good he did, for which the Lord's name was to be praised and blessed; yet it includes the blessing of Shem, and indeed the greatest blessing he could possibly enjoy; for what greater blessing is there, than for a man to have God to be his God? this includes everything, all blessings temporal and spiritual; see Ps 144:15 some interpret the God of Shem of Christ, who, according to the human nature, was a descendant of Shem; and according to the divine nature the God of Shem, God over all, blessed for ever, **Ro 9:4**.

And Canaan shall be his servant; the posterity of Canaan be servants to the posterity of Shem: this was fulfilled in the times of Joshua, when the Israelites, who sprung from Shem, conquered the land of Canaan, slew thirty of their kings, and took their cities and possessed them, and made the Gibeonites, one of the states of Canaan, hewers of wood and drawers of water to them, or the most mean and abject servants.

Genesis 9:27

Ver. 27. God shall enlarge Japheth,.... Or give him a large part of the earth, and large dominions in it, as his posterity have had; for, as Bochart {r} observes, to them belonged all Europe, and lesser Asia, Media, Iberia, Albania, part of Armenia, and all those vast countries to the north, which formerly the Scythians, and now the Tartars inhabit; not to say anything of the new world (America), into which the Scythians might pass through the straights of Anian;

and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; inhabit the countries belonging to the posterity of Shem: this was verified by the Medes, who were the descendants of Japheth, together with the Babylonians seizing upon the Assyrian empire and overthrowing that, for Ashur was of Shem; and in the Greeks and Romans, who sprung from Japheth, when they made conquests in Asia, in which were the tents of Shem's posterity; and who, according to the prophecy in Nu 24:24 that ships from the coast of Chittim, Greece, or Italy, or both, should afflict Ashur and Eber, the Assyrians and the Hebrews, or those beyond the river Euphrates, who all belonged to Shem; and particularly this was fulfilled when the Romans, who are of Japheth, seized Judea, which had long been the seat of the children of Shem, the Jews; and at this day the Turks {s}, who are also Japheth's sons, literally dwell in the tents of Shem, or inhabit Judea: the Targums understand this in a mystical sense. Onkelos thus:

"God shall cause his Shechinah or glorious Majesty to dwell in the tents of Shem;"

which was remarkably true, when Christ, the brightness of his Father's glory, the Word, was made flesh, and tabernacled in Judea: Jonathan Ben Uzziel thus;

"and his children shall be proselytes, and dwell in the school of Shem;"

and many Christian writers interpret them of the conversion of the Gentiles, and of their union and communion with the believing Jews in one Gospel church state, which was very evidently fulfilled in the first times of the Gospel: and they read these words in connection with the former clause thus, "God shall persuade Japheth {t}, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem"; that is, God shall persuade the Gentiles, the posterity of Japheth, by the sweet alluring voice of his Gospel, and through the power of his grace accompanying it, to embrace and profess Christ and his Gospel, and join with his churches, and walk with them in all the commandments and ordinances of Christ; and at this day all the posterity of Japheth, excepting Magog, or the Turks, bear the name of Christians: the Talmudists {u} interpret the passage of the language of

Japheth being spoken in the tents of Shem; which had its accomplishment when the apostles of Christ spoke and wrote in Greek, one of the languages of Japheth's sons. Some understand this of God himself, he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, or in Israel, as Jarchi, and was verified remarkably in the incarnation of the Son of God;

and Canaan shall be his servant; the posterity of Canaan servants to the posterity of Japheth; as they were when Tyre, which was built by the Sidonians, and Sidon, which had its name from the eldest son of Canaan, fell into the hands of Alexander the Grecian, who sprung from Japheth; and when Carthage, a colony of the Phoenicians of Canaan's race, was taken and demolished by the Romans of the line of Japheth, which made Hannibal, a child of Canaan, say, "agnoscere se fortunam Carthaginis" {w}, that he owned the fate of Carthage; and in which some have thought that he refers to this prophecy.

{r} Phaleg. l. 3. c. 1. col. 149. {s} This was written about 1750. Ed. {t} tpy "alliciet", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "persuadebit", Cocceius; so Ainsworth. {u} T. Hieros. Megillah, fol. 71. 2. T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 9. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 36. fol. 32. 1. {w} Liv. Hist. l. 27. c. 51.

Genesis 9:28

Ver. 28. And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. So that he not only saw the old world, and the wickedness of that, and the destruction of it for it, but an increase of wickedness again, the building of the tower of Babel, the confusion of languages, the dispersion of his offspring, and the wars among them in the times of Nimrod, and others: however, it was a blessing to mankind that he lived so long after the flood in the new world, to transmit to posterity, by tradition, the affairs of the old world; and to give a particular account of the destruction of it, and to instruct them in the doctrines and duties of religion. By this it appears, that he lived within thirty two years of the birth of Abraham. The Jews conclude from hence, that he lived to the fifty eighth year of Abraham's life: it may be remarked, that it is not added here as usual to the account of the years of the patriarchs, "and he begat sons and daughters"; from whence it may be concluded, that he had no more children than the three before mentioned, as well as from the silence of the Scriptures elsewhere, and from the old age of himself and his wife, and especially from what is said, See Gill on "Ge 9:19".

Genesis 9:29

Ver. 29. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years,.... He lived twenty years more than Adam did, and within nineteen of Methuselah, and his age must be called a good old age; but what is said of all the patriarchs is also said or him,

and he died: the Arabic writers say {w}, when the time of his death drew nigh, he ordered his son Shem by his will to take the body of Adam, and lay it in the middle of the earth, and appoint Melchizedek, the son of Peleg, minister at his grave; and one of them is very particular as to the time of his death; they say {x} he died on the second day of the month Ijar, on the fourth day (of the week), at two o'clock in the morning.

{w} Elmacinus, p. 12. Patricides, p. 11. apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 254. {x} Patricides, ib. p. 256.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 10

This chapter gives an account of the posterity of the three sons of Noah, by whom the world was peopled after the flood, Ge 10:1 of the posterity of Japheth, Ge 10:2 of the posterity of Ham,
Ge 10:6 and of the posterity of Shem, Ge 10:21.

Ver. 1. Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah,.... The genealogy of them, and which is of great use to show the original of the several nations of the world, from whence they sprung, and by whom they were founded; and to confute the pretended antiquity of some nations, as the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Chinese, and others; and to point out the particular people, which were to be the seat of the church of God for many ages, and from whom the Messiah was to spring; which seems to be the principal view of the history of Moses, and of this genealogy, with which should be compared **1Ch 1:1** Shem, Ham, and Japheth; see **Ge 5:32**

and unto them were sons born after the flood; for they had none born to them either before the flood or in it; they were married before the flood, for their wives went into the ark with them; but it does not appear they had any children before, though they then were near an hundred years old; and if they had, they were not in the ark, and therefore must perish with the rest, which is not likely: Shem's son Arphaxad was born two years after the flood, Ge 11:10 when the rest were born, either his or his brethren's, is not said; however they were all born after the flood; though some pretend that Canaan was born in the ark {y}, during the flood, for which there is no authority; yea, it is confuted in this chapter, where Canaan stands among the sons of Ham, born to him after the flood.

{y} See Bayle's Dictionary, vol. 10. art. "Ham", p. 587.

Genesis 10:2

Ver. 2. The sons of Japheth,.... Who though mentioned last, the genealogy begins with him, by a figure which rhetoricians call a "chiasm". The posterity of Japheth are those whom Hesiod {z} often calls iapetionidhv, "Iapetionides", and him iapetov, "Iapetus". According to Josephus {a}, the sons of Japheth inhabited the earth, beginning from the mountains Taurus and Amanus, and then went on in Asia unto the river Tanais, and in Europe unto Gadira. Seven of his sons are mentioned, and the first is Gomer; from whom, according to the same writer {b}, came the Gomareans or Gomerites, in his time called by the Greeks Galatians, that is, the Gauls of Asia minor, who inhabited Phrygia; both Gomer and Phrygia signifying the same, as Bochart {c} observes, and the country looking as if it was torrified or burnt; and Pliny {d} makes mention of a town in Phrygia, called Cimmeris; and the Cimmerians and Cimbri are derived by some from this Gomer, whom Herodotus {e} makes mention of as in Asia and Scythia, and speaks of a country called Cimmerius, and of the Cimmerian Bosphorus; and these seem to be the Gauls before mentioned, under a different name; and it is to be observed, that the Welsh, who sprung from the Gauls, call themselves to this day Cumero, or Cymro and Cumeri. It is plain from
Eze 38:6 that Gomer and his people lay to the north of Judea, and the posterity of Japheth went first into the northern parts of Asia, and then spread themselves into Europe: six more of his sons follow, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras; the first of these, Magog, was the father of a northern people which bore his name, see Eze 38:2 and according to Josephus {f}, who is generally followed, are the same that were called Scythians; from Madai came the Medes, often spoken of in Scripture, along with the Persians; so Josephus {g} says, from him came the nation of

Madaeans, whom the Greeks call Medes; and very frequently in Scripture the Medes go by the name of Madai, their original ancestor; see **Da 5:28** but Mr. Mede {h} is of opinion, that Macedonia was the seat of this Madai, which was formerly called Aemathia; that is, as he gives the etymology of it, aia, "Madai", the country of Madai; but the former sense is generally received. Javan is by all agreed to be the father of the Grecians; hence Alexander, king of Grecia, is in **Da 8:21** called king of Javan; and one part of Greece bore the name of Ionia; and the sea that washed it is called the Ionian sea. And his posterity are
iaonev, "Iaonians", in Homer {i} and Aristophanes {k}; and the scholiast of the latter says, that the Barbarians call all Greeks Iaonians. The next son of Japheth is Tubal or Thobel, as Josephus calls him, who says {l} the Thobelians in his time were called Iberians, a people in Asia, that dwelt near the Euxine sea; and in Albania was a place called Thabilaca, as may be seen in Ptolemy {m}, and another called Thilbis, from whom might spring the Iberians in Europe, now called Spaniards; but Bochart {n} thinks that the Tibarenes are the descendants of Tubal, a people that dwelt between the Trapezuntii and Armenia the less; and he wonders that this never was thought of by any; but in that he is mistaken, for our countryman Mr. Broughton {o} makes the Tibarenes to spring from Tubal; and Epiphanius {p} many hundreds of years before him. Meshech, his next son, is mentioned along with Tubal in Eze 27:13 from him came the Mosocheni, as Josephus {q}, who in his time were called Cappadocians, with whom there was a city then named Mazaca, since Caesarea {r}; and these seem to be the same that Pliny {s} calls Moscheni, who inhabited the mountains Moschici, which were at the north east of Cappadocia. Some derive the Muscovites from them, which is not improbable: the last of Japheth's sons is Tiras or Thiras, which Jarchi interprets very wrongly by Paras, or Persia; much better the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, and so a Jewish chronologer {t}, by Thracia; for the descendants of Thiras, as Josephus {u} observes, the Greeks call Thracians; and in Thrace was a river called Atyras {w}, which has in it a trace of this man's name; and Odrysus, whom the Thracians worshipped, is the same with Tiras, which god sometimes goes by the name of Thuras; and is one of the names of Mars, the god of the Thracians.

{z} In Theogonia. {a} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1. {b} Ib. {c} Phaleg. l. 3. c. 8. col. 171, 172. {d} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 30. {e} Clio sive, l. 1. c. 16, 103. & Melpomene sive, l. 4. c. 11, 12, 13. {f} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.) {g} Ib. {h} Dissert. 48. {i} Iliad. 13. ver. 685. {k} Acharneus. act. 1. scen. 3. p. 376. {l} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1. {m} Geograph. l. 5. c. 12. {n} Phaleg. l. 3. c. 12. col. 180. {o} See his Works, p. 2, 58. {p} Ancorat. p. 546. {q} Ut supra.

(Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.) {r} Vid. Ammian. Marcellin. l. 20. p. 170. Ed. Vales. {s} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 9, 10. {t} Sepher Juchasin, fol. 145. 1. Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 10. 1. {u} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.) {w} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 11.

Genesis 10:3

Ver. 3. And the sons of Gomer,.... Who was the first of the sons of Japheth, three of whose sons are mentioned, and they are as follow:

Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah; the first of these seated himself in the lesser Asia, in Pontus and Bithynia, where were some traces of his name in the river Ascanius, and in the Ascanian lake or bay; and also in the lesser Phrygia or Troas, where was a city called Ascania, and where were the Ascanian isles {x}, and the Euxine Pontus, or Axeine {y}, as it was first called, which is the sea that separates Asia and Europe, and is no other than a corruption of the sea of Ashkenaz. It seems to have been near Armenia, by its being mentioned along with Minni or Armenia, in Jer 51:27. Germany is by the Jews commonly called Ashkenaz; perhaps some of the posterity of Ashkenaz in Asia might pass into Europe, and Germany might be a colony of them; so Mr. Broughton {z} observes of the sons of Gomer, that they first took their seat in Asia, and then came north and west into Muscovy and Germany. The next son of Gomer was Riphath. Josephus {a} says, that the Riphathaeans which came from him are the Paphlagonians, a people of Asia Minor, near Pontus, so that he settled near his brother Ashkenaz; perhaps his posterity are the Arimphaei of Pliny {b}, and the Riphaeans of Mela {c}, who inhabited near the Riphaean mountains, which might have their name from this son of Gomer, who in **1Ch 1:6** is called Diphath, the letters r and d being very similar. His third son is called Togarmah, who had his seat in the north of Judea, see Eze 38:6 his posterity are the Phrygians, according to Josephus {d}; but some place them in Galatia and Cappadocia; and Strabo {e} makes mention of a people called Trocmi, on the borders of Pontus and Cappadocia; and Cicero {f} of the Trogmi or Trogini, who may have their name from hence; for the Greek interpreters always call him Torgama or Thorgana. The Jews make the Turks to be the posterity of Togarmah. Elias Levita says {g}, there are some that say that Togarmah is the land of Turkey; and Benjamin of Tudela {h} calls a Turkish sultan king of the Togarmans, that is, the Turks; and among the ten families of Togarmah, which Josephus ben Gorion {i} speaks of, the Turks are one; and perhaps this notion may not be amiss, since the company of Togarmah is mentioned with Gog, or the Turk, See Gill on "Eze 38:6". The

Armenians pretend to be the descendants of Togarmah, who, with them, is the son of Tiras, the son of Gomer, by his son Haik, from whom they and their country, from all antiquity, have bore the name of Haik {k}.

{x} Strabo Geograph. l. 12. p. 387, 388. & l. 14. p. 468. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 4. 12. & 5. 30, 31, 32. {y} Vid. Orphei Argonautic, ver. 84. {z} See his Works, p. 2, 58. {a} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.) {b} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 2. {c} De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 2. {d} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.) {e} Geograph. l. 4. p. 130. & l. 12. p. 390. {f} De Divinatione, l. 2. {g} In Tishbi, p. 259. {h} ltinerarium, p. 27, 54. {i} Hist. Heb. l. 1. c. 1. p. 3. {k} See the Universal History, vol. 1. p. 377.

Genesis 10:4

Ver. 4. And the sons of Javan,.... Another son of Japheth; four sons of Javan are mentioned, which gave names to countries, and are as follow:

Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim; the first of these, Elishah, gave name to the Elysaeans, now called Aeoles, as Josephus {l} says; hence the country Aeolia, and the Aeolic dialect, all from this name; and there are many traces of it in the several parts of Greece. Hellas, a large country in it, has its name from him; so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem interpret Elishah by Allas. Elis in Peloponnesus, Eleusis in Attica, the river Elissus, or Ilissus, and the Elysian fields, are so called from him. Tarshish, second son of Javan, gave name to Tarsus, by which Cilicia was formerly called, as Josephus says {m}, of which the city named Tarsus was the metropolis, the birth place of the Apostle Paul, Ac 22:3. Hence the Mediterranean sea is called Tarshish, because the Cicilians were masters of it; and Tartessus in Spain might be a colony from them, as Broughton observes; and so Eusebius says, from the Tarsinns are the Iberians, or Spaniards; and which Bochart {n} approves of, and confirms by various evidences; and Hillerus, {o} makes Tarshish to be the author of the Celtae, that is, of the Spanish, French, and German nations. The third son of Javan is Kittim, whom Josephus {p} places in the island of Cyprus, a city there being called Citium, from whence was Zeno the Citian: but rather the people that sprung from him are those whom Homer {q} calls Cetii; and are placed by Strabo {r} to the west of Cilicia, in the western parts of which are two provinces, mentioned by Ptolemy {s}, the one called Cetis, the other Citis: likewise this Kittim seems to be the father both of the Macedonians and the Latines; for Alexander the great is said to come from Cittim, and Perseus king of Macedon is called king of Cittim, "And it happened, after that Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came out of the land of Chettiim, had smitten Darius king of the Persians and Medes, that he reigned in his stead, the first over Greece," (1 Maccabees 1:1)

"Beside this, how they had discomfited in battle Philip, and Perseus, king of the Citims, with others that lifted up themselves against them, and had overcome them:" (1 Maccabees 8:5)

and Macedonia is sometimes called Macetia, as it is in Gellius {t}, which has something of the name of Cittim or Cetim in it; and also the Latines or Romans seem to spring from hence, who may be thought to be meant by Cittim in Nu 24:24 Da 11:30 and Eusebius says the Citians are a people from whom came the Sabines, who also are Romans; and in Latium was a city called Cetia, as says Halicarnassensis {u}; and Bochart {w} has shown, that Latium and Cethem signify the same, and both have their names from words that signify to hide; "latium a latendo", and "celhem", from Mtk, "to hide", see **Jer 2:22** in which sense the word is frequently used in the Arabic language; and Cittim in the Jerusalem Targum is here called Italy. The last son of Javan mentioned is Dodanim; he is omitted by Josephus: his country is by the Targum of Jonathan called Dordania; and by the Jerusalem Targum Dodonia; and he and his posterity are placed by Mr. Mede in part of Peloponnessus and Epirus, in which was the city of Dodona, where were the famous temple and oracle of Jupiter Dodonaeus, under which name this man was worshipped. In **1Ch 1:7** he is called Rodanim, and in the Samaritan version here; and the word is by the Septuagint translated Rodians; which have led some to think of the island of Rhodes as the seat, and the inhabitants of it as the posterity of this man; but Bochart {x} is of opinion, that they settled in the country now called France, gave the name to the river Rhodanus, and called the adjacent country Rhodanusia, and where formerly was a city of that name, much about the same tract where now stands Marseilles; but this seems too remote for a son of Javan.

{l} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.) {m} Ib. {n} Phaleg. l. 3. c. 7. {o} Onomastic. Saer. p. 944. {p} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.) {q} Odyss. 11. ver. 520. {r} Geograph. l. 13. p. 423. {s} Ibid. l. 5. c. 8. {t} Attic. Noct. l. 9. c. 3. {u} Hist. l. 8. p. 376. {w} Phaleg. l. 3. c. 5. col. 159, 160. {x} Phaleg. l. 3. c. 6. col. 163, 164.

Genesis 10:5

Ver. 5. By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands,.... That is, by those sons of Japheth before mentioned; and by "isles" are meant, not countries surrounded with water, for the isles in this sense would not have been sufficient for the posterity of Japheth; nor can it be thought they would leave the continent, where there was room enough for them, and go into islands; and besides must have found it difficult to get there, when shipping and navigation were little known: but it is usual with the Hebrews, of whom Moses, the writer of this history, was, to call all places beyond the Mediterranean sea, or whatsoever they went to by sea, or that were upon the sea coasts, islands, as Greece, Italy, &c. Moreover, the word sometimes signifies countries, as it does in Job 22:30 and so should be rendered here, as it is by some {y}, "the countries of the Gentiles"; so called, because in the times of Moses, and at the writing of this history, those countries were inhabited by Heathens and idolaters, strangers to the true religion: and this division was not made at random, and at the pleasure of a rude company of men, but in an orderly regular manner, with the consent, and by the advice and direction of the principal men of those times; and especially it was directed by the wise providence of the most High, who divided to the nations their inheritance, and set the bounds of the people,
De 32:8.

everyone after his tongue, after their families, in their nations; this shows, that what is said concerning the division of countries to the sons of Japheth is by way of anticipation; and that, though thus related, was not done till after the confusion of languages, since the partition was made according to the different languages of men; those that were of the same language went and dwelt together, the several nations of them, and the several families in those nations; by which it appears that this was done by consultation, with great care and wisdom, ranging the people according to their tongues; of which nations were formed, and with them were taken the several families they consisted of.

{y} Mywgh yya "regiones gentium", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Patrick.

Genesis 10:6

Ver. 6. And the sons of Ham,.... Next to the sons of Japheth, the sons of Ham are reckoned; these, Josephus {z} says, possessed the land from Syria, and the mountains of Amanus and Lebanon; laying hold on whatever was towards the sea, claiming to themselves the countries unto the ocean, whose names, some of them, are entirely lost, and others so greatly changed and deflected into other tongues, that they can scarcely be known, and few whose names are preserved entire; and the same observation will hold good of others. Four of the sons of Ham are mentioned,

Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan; the first of these, Cush, Josephus {a} says, has suffered no loss by time; for the Ethiopians, whose prince he was, are to this day by themselves, and all in Asia, called Chusaeans: but though this word Cush, as used in Scripture, is generally rendered by us Ethiopia, this must not be understood of Ethiopia in Africa, but in Arabia; and indeed is always to be understood of one part of Arabia, and which was near to the land of Judea; so Moses's wife is called an Ethiopian, when she was an Arabian, or of Midian, Nu 12:1 and Chusan and Midian are mentioned together, **Hab 3:7** see 2Ki 19:9 2Ch 14:9 and Bochart {b} has shown, by various arguments, that the land of Cush was Arabia; and so the Targum of Jonathan interprets it here Arabia. There was a city called Cutha in Erac, a province in the country of Babylon {c}, where Nimrod the son of Cush settled, which probably was called so from his father's name. Here the eastern writers say {d} Abraham was born, and is the same place mentioned in 2Ki 17:24. The second son of Ham was Mizraim, the same with the Misor of Sanchoniatho {e}, and the Menes of Herodotus {f}, the first king of Egypt, and the builder of the city of Memphis in Egypt, called by the Turks to this day Mitzir {g}. Mitzraim is a name by which Egypt is frequently called in Scripture, and this man was the father of the Egyptians; and because Egypt was inhabited by a son of Ham, it is sometimes called the land of Ham, Ps 105:23. The word is of the dual number, and serves to express Egypt by, which was divided into two parts, lower and upper Egypt. Josephus says {h}, we call Egypt, Mestres, and all the Egyptians that inhabit it, Mestraeans; so the country is called by Cedrenus {i}, Mestre; and Kairo, a principal city in it, is to this day by the Arabians called Al-messer, as Dr. Shaw {k} relates. The third son of Ham is Phut; of whom Josephus {l} says, that he founded Libya, calling the inhabitants of it after his name, Phuteans; and observes, that there is a river in the country of the Moors of his name; and that many of the Greek historians, who make mention of this river, also make mention of a country adjacent to it, called Phute: mention is made of this river as in Mauritania, both by Pliny {m} and Ptolemy {n} and by the latter of a city called Putea: this Phut is the Apollo Pythius of the Heathens, as some think. The last son of Ham is Canaan, the father of the Canaanites, a people well known in Scripture. Concerning these sons of Ham, there is a famous fragment of Eupolemus preserved in Eusebius {o}; and is this;

"the Babylonians say, that the first was Belus, called Cronus or Saturn (that is, Noah), and of him was begotten another Belus and Chanaan (it should be read Cham), and he (i.e. Ham) begat Chanaan, the father of the Phoenicians; and of him another son, Chus, was begotten, whom the Greeks call Asbolos, the father of the Ethiopians, and the brother of Mestraim, the father of the Egyptians."

{z} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect 1.) {a} Ibid. {b} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 2. {c} Vid. Hyde Hist. Relig. Pers. c. 2. p. 39, 40. {d} Vid. Hyde Hist. Relig. Pers. c. 2. p. 72. {e} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. p. 36. {f} Enterpe sive, l. 2. c. 4. 99. {g} See Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p. 59. {h} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect 1.) {i} Apud Grotium de vera Christ. Relig. l. 1. p. 8. & Ainsworth in loc. {k} Travels, ch. 3. p. 294. Ed. 2. {l} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect 1.) {m} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 1. {n} Geograph. l. 4. c. 1, 3. {o} Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 17. p. 419.

Genesis 10:7

Ver. 7. And the sons of Cush,.... The first born of Ham, who had five sons, next mentioned, besides Nimrod, spoken of afterwards by himself:

Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha; the first of these is Seba, the founder of the Sabaeans, according to Josephus {p}, a people seated in Arabia Deserta, which seem to be the Sabaeans brought from the wilderness, Eze 23:42 and very probably the same that plundered Job of his cattle, **Job 1:14**. The second son is Havilah, who, as Josephus {q} says, was the father of the Evilaeans, now called Getuli; but the posterity of Havilah seem to be the same whom Strabo {r} calls Chaulotaeans, and whom he speaks of along with the Nabataeans and Agraeans, a people near Arabia Felix; and by Pliny {s} they are called Chavelaeans, and whom he speaks of as Arabians, and places them to the east of the Arabian Scenites. The third son is Sabtah; from him, Josephus {t} says, came the Sabathenes, who, by the Greeks, are called Astabari; the posterity of this man seemed to have settled in some part of Arabia Felix, since Ptolemy {u} makes mention of Sabbatha as the metropolis of that country, called by Pliny {w} Sabotale, or rather Sabota, as it should be read; Ptolemy places another city in this country he calls Saphtha, which seems to have its name from this man. The fourth son is Raamah or Ragmas, as Josephus calls {x} him, from whom sprung the Ragmaeans he says; and most of the ancients call him Rhegmah, the letter e being pronounced as a "G", as in Gaza and Gomorrah: his posterity were also seated in Arabia

Felix, near the Persian Gulf, where Ptolemy {y} places the city Rhegama, or as it is in the Greek text, Regma. The fifth son is Sabtecha, whom some make to be the father of a people in the same country, Arabia Felix, near the Persian Gulf, called Sachalitae; but Dr. Wells {z} thinks, that the descendants of this man might be from him regularly enough styled at first by the Greeks, Sabtaceni, which name might be afterwards softened into Saraceni, by which name it is well known the people of the northern parts of Arabia, where he places the descendants of this man, were formerly denominated; though Bochart {a} carries them into Carmania in Persia, there being a short cut over the straits of the Persian Gulf, out of Arabia thither, where he finds a city called Samydace, and a river, Samydachus, which he thinks may come from Sabtecha, the letters "B" and "M" being frequently changed, as Berodach is called Merodach, and Abana, Amana, and so in other names.

And the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan; no account is given of any of the posterity of the other sons of Cush, only of this his fourth son Raamah, who is said to have two sons; the first is called Sheba, from whom came the Sabaeans, according to Josephus {b}; not the Sabaeans before mentioned in Arabia Deserta, but those in Arabia Felix, where Pomponius Mela {c} and Strabo {d} seat a people called Sabaeans, and whose country abounded with frankincense, myrrh, and cinnamon; the latter makes mention of a city of theirs called Mariaba, and seems to be the same that is now called Mareb, and formerly Saba {e}, very likely from this man. The other son, Dedan, is called by Josephus {f} Judadas, whom he makes to be founder of the Judadaeans, a nation of the western Ethiopians; but the posterity of this man most probably settled in Arabia, and yet are to be distinguished from the Dedanim in Isa 21:13 who were Arabians also, but descended from Dedan the son of Jokshan, a son of Abraham by Keturah, Ge 25:3 as well as from the inhabitants of Dedan in Edom, Jer 25:23 it is observed, that near the city Regma before mentioned, on the same coast eastward, was another city called Dedan; and to this day Daden, from which the neighbouring country also takes its name, as Bochart {g} has observed, from Barboza, an Italian writer, in his description of the kingdom of Ormus: so that we need not doubt, says Dr. Wells {h}, but that here was the settlement of Dedan the son of Raamah or Rhegma, and brother of Sheba.

{p} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.) {q} Ibid. {r} Geograph. l. 16. p. 528. {s} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 11. {t} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.) {u} Geograph. l. 6. c. 7. {w} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {x} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.) {y} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 6. c. 7.) {z} Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 1. p. 198. {a} Phaleg l. 4. c. 4. col. 218. {b} Ut supra. (Antiqu.

l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.) {c} De Situ Orbis, l. 3. c. 8. {d} Geograph. l. 16. p. 536. {e} Via. Pocock. Specimen Arab. Hist p. 57. {f} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.) {g} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 6. col. 219. {h} Ut supra, (Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 1.) p. 197.

Genesis 10:8

Ver. 8. And Cush begat Nimrod,.... Besides the other five sons before mentioned; and probably this was his youngest son, being mentioned last; or however he is reserved to this place, because more was to be spoken of him than of any of the rest. Sir Walter Raleigh {i} thinks that Nimrod was begotten by Cush after his other children were become fathers, and of a later time than some of his grandchildren and nephews: and indeed the sons of Raamah, the fourth son of Cush, are taken notice of before him: however, the Arabic writers {k} must be wrong, who make him to be the son of Canaan, whereas it is so clear and express from hence that he was the son of Cush. In the Greek version he is called Nebrod, and by Josephus, Nebrodes, which is a name of Bacchus; and indeed Nimrod is the same with the Bacchus of the Heathens, for Bacchus is no other than Barchus, the son of Cush; and Jacchus, which is another of his names in Jah of Cush, or the god the son of Cush; and it is with respect to his original name Nebrod, or Nebrodes, that Bacchus is represented as clothed with the skin of
nebriv, "nebris", or a young hind, as were also his priests; and so in his name Nimrod there may be an allusion to armn, "Nimra", which, in the Chaldee language, signifies a tiger, and which kind of creatures, with others, he might hunt; tigers drew in the chariot of Bacchus, and he was sometimes clothed with the skin of one; though the name of Nimrod is usually derived from drm, "to rebel", because he was a rebel against God, as is generally said; and because, as Jarchi observes, he caused all the world to rebel against God, by the advice he gave to the generation of the division, or confusion of languages, the builders of Babel: he seems to be the same with Belus, the founder of Babel and of the Babylonian empire, whom Diodorus Siculus {l} confounds with Ninus his son:

he began to be a mighty man in the earth: that is, he was the first that formed a plan of government, and brought men into subjection to it; and so the Jews {m} make him to be the first king after God; for of the ten kings they speak of in the world, God is the first, and Nimrod the second; and so the Arabic writers {n} say, he was the first of the kings that were in the land of Babylon; and that, seeing the figure of a crown in the heaven, he got a golden one made like it, and put it on his head; hence it was commonly reported, that the crown descended to him from heaven; for this refers not to his gigantic stature, as if he was a giant, as the Septuagint render it; or a strong robust man, as Onkelos; nor to his moral character, as the Targum of Jonathan, which is,

"he began to be mighty in sin, and to rebel before the Lord in the earth;"

but to his civil character, as a ruler and governor: he was the first that reduced bodies of people and various cities into one form of government, and became the head of them; either by force and usurpation, or it may be with the consent of the people, through his persuasion of them, and on account of the mighty and heroic actions done by him.

{i} History of the World, B. 1. ch. 10. sect. 1. p. 109. {k} Elmacinus, p. 29. apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 270. See the Universal History, vol. 1. p. 276. {l} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 90. {m} Pirke Eliezer, c. 11. {n} Elmacinus, p. 29. Patricides, p. 16. apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 271, 272. Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 18.

Genesis 10:9

Ver. 9. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord,.... Which might be literally true; for, from the time of the flood to his days, wild beasts might increase very much, and greatly annoy men who dwelt very likely for the most part in tents scattered up and down in divers places: so that he did a good office in hunting and destroying them. An Arabic writer {o}, of some authority in the eastern parts, says, that by hunting he got food sufficient for the builders of Babel, while they were employed therein; and Aben Ezra interprets it in his favour, that he built altars, and the creatures he took in hunting he offered them on them a burnt offering to God. But neither of these is probable; however, it may be observed, that in this way by hunting he arrived to the power and dominion over men he afterwards had; for not only he ingratiated himself into their favour by hunting down and destroying the wild beasts which molested them, but by these means he might gather together a large number of young men, strong and robust, to join him in hunting; whereby they were inured to hardships, and trained up to military exercises, and were taught the way of destroying men as well as beasts; and by whose help and assistance he might arrive to the government he had over men; and hunting, according to Aristotle {p}, is a part of the military art, which is to be used both on beasts, and on such men who are made to be ruled, but are not willing; and it appears, from

Xenophon {q}, that the kings of Persia were fitted for war and government by hunting, and which is still reckoned in many countries a part of royal education. And it may be remarked, that, as Nimrod and Bacchus are the same, as before observed, one of the titles of Bacchus is zagreuv, "an hunter". Cedrenus {r} says, that the Assyrians deified Nebrod, or Nimrod, and placed him among the constellations of heaven, and called him Orion; the same first discovered the art of hunting, therefore they joined to Orion the star called the dog star. However, besides his being in a literal sense an hunter, he was in a figurative sense one, a tyrannical ruler and governor of men. The Targum of Jonathan is;

"he was a powerful rebel before the Lord;"

and that of Jerusalem,

"he was powerful in hunting in sin before the Lord,"

and another Jewish writer {s} says, he was called a mighty hunter, because he was all his days taking provinces by force, and spoiling others of their substance; and that he was "before the Lord", truly so, and he seeing and taking notice of it, openly and publicly, and without fear of him, and in a bold and impudent manner, in despite of him, see **Ge 6:11**. The Septuagint render it, "against the Lord"; he intended, as Jarchi's note is, to provoke him to his face:

wherefore it is said; in a proverbial way, when any man is grown mighty and powerful, or is notoriously wicked, or is become a tyrant and an oppressor of the people, that he is

even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. This was a proverb used in the times of Moses, as it is common now with us to call a hunter Nimrod.

{o} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 18. {p} Politic. l. 1. c. 8. {q} Cyropaed. l. 1. c. 5. {r} Apud Abrami Pharum, l. 5. sect. 6. p. 128. {s} R. Gedaliah, Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 76. 2.

Genesis 10:10

Ver. 10. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel,.... The city of Babel, or Babylon, which was built by his direction; for though Babylon is by some writers said to be built by Semiramis, the wife of Ninus, and others by Ninus himself, yet the truest account is, that it was built by Belus, the same with Nimrod. Curtius {t} says, Semiramis built it; or, as most believe, adds he, Belus, whose royal palace is shown: and Berosus {u}, the Chaldean, blames the Greek writers for ascribing it to Semiramis; and Abydenus {w}, out of Megasthenes, affirms, that Belus surrounded Babylon with a wall: however, this was the head of the kingdom of Nimrod, as Onkelos renders it, or his chief city, or where he first began to reign. Here he set up his kingdom, which he enlarged and extended afterwards to other places; and from hence it appears, that what is related in this context, concerning Nimrod, is by way of anticipation; for it was not a fact that he was a mighty man, or a powerful prince possessed of a kingdom, until after the building of Babel, and the confusion of languages there; when those that continued on the spot either chose him for their ruler, or he, by power or policy, got the dominion over them. Artapanus {x}, an Heathen writer, relates, that the giants which inhabited Babylon being taken away by the gods for their impiety, one of them, Belus, escaped death and dwelt in Babylon, and took up his abode in the tower which he had raised up, and which, from him the founder of it, was called Belus; so that this, as Moses says, was the beginning of his kingdom, together with

Erech, and Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar, where the city and tower of Babel were built: for of these four cities, which were all in the same country, did the kingdom of Nimrod consist; they all, either by force or by consent, were brought into subjection to him, and were under one form of government, and is the first kingdom known to be set up in the world. Erech, according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, is Hades, or Edessa, a city in Mesopotamia; but it is rather thought to be the name with the Aracca of Ptolemy {y}, and the Arecha of Marcellinus {z}, placed by them both in Susiana; though one would think it should be that city in Chaldea which took its present Arabic name of Erak from Erech: the Arabic writers say {a}, when Irac or Erac is absolutely put, it denotes Babylonia, or Chaldea, in the land of Shinar; and they say that Shinar is in Al-Erac. The next city, Accad, according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, is Netzibin, or Nisibis, a city in Mesopotamia; in the Septuagint version it is called Archad; and Ctesias {b} relates, that at the Persian Sittace was a river called Argad, which Bochart {c} thinks carries in it a manifest trace of this name; and observes, from Strabo {d}, that that part of Babylon nearest to Susa was called Sitacena. And the other city, Calneh, according to the above Targums, is Ctesiphon, and is generally thought to be the place intended, and was a town upon the Tigris, near to Seleucia in Babylon; it was first called Chalone, and its name was changed to Ctesiphon by Pacorus, king of the Persians. It is in Isa 10:9 called Calno, and by the Septuagint version there the Chalane, which adds,

"where the tower was built;"

and from whence the country called the Chalonitis by Pliny {e} had its name, the chief city of which was Ctesiphon; and who says {f} Chalonitis is joined with Ctesiphon. Thus far goes the account of Nimrod; and, though no mention is made of his death, yet some writers are not silent about it. Abulpharagius {g}, an Arabic writer, says he died in the tower of Babel, it being blown down by stormy winds; the Jewish writers say {h} he was killed by Esau for the sake of his coat, which was Adam's, and came to Noah, and from him to Ham, and so to Nimrod. When he began his reign, and how long he reigned, is not certain; we have only some fabulous accounts: according to Berosus {i}, he began to reign one hundred and thirty one years after the flood, and reigned fifty six years, and then disappeared, being translated by the gods: and, indeed, the authors of the Universal History place the beginning of his reign in the year of the flood one hundred and thirty one, and thirty years after the dispersion at Babylon {k}; and who relate, that the eastern writers speak of his reign as very long: a Persian writer gives his name a Persian derivation, as if it was Nemurd, that is, "immortal", on account of his long reign of above one hundred and fifty years: and some of the Mahometan historians say he reigned in Al-Sowad, that is, the "black country", four hundred years {l}.

{t} Hist. l. 5. c. 1. {u} Apud Joseph. contra Apion. l. 1. c. 20. {w} Apud. Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 41. p. 457. {x} Apud. Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 18. p. 420. {y} Geograph. l. 6. c. 3. {z} Lib. 23. {a} Vid. Hyde in notis ad Peritsol. Itinera Mundi, p. 65. {b} Apud Aelian. Hist. Animal. l. 16. c. 42. {c} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 17. {d} Geograph. l. 15. p. 503. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 26. {f} Ibid. c. 27. {g} Hist. Dynast. p. 12. {h} In Pirke Eliezer, c. 24. {i} Antiqu. l. 4. p. 28, 29. {k} Vol. 1. p. 282. and vol. 21. p. 2. {l} Apud Hyde's Hist. Relig. Pers. c. 2. p. 43.

Genesis 10:11

Ver. 11. Out of that land went forth Ashur,.... It is a question whether Ashur is the name of a man or of a country; some take it in the latter sense, and render the words, "and out of that land he went forth into Assyria"; so Onkelos; and in this way go Junius and Tremellius, Piscator, Bochart, Cocceius, and others, and the margin of our Bible, and interpret it of Nimrod; and the Targum of Jonathan is express for him, which is this:

"out of that land went forth Nimrod, and reigned in Assyria, because he would not be in the council of the generation of the division, and he left four cities; and the Lord gave him therefore a place (or Assyria), and he built four other cities, Nineveh, &c."

so Theophilus of Antioch says {m}, that Nebroth (Nimrod) built the same; but then the generality of interpreters which take this way give another and better reason for Nimrod's going out of Shinar or Babylon into Assyria than the Targumist gives; which is, that not content with his own dominions, and willing to enlarge them, he went out and made war upon Assyria, and seized upon it, and built cities in it, and added them to his former ones; in favour of this sense it is urged, that Moses is speaking of what Nimrod the son of Cush did, of the line of Ham, and not of the sons of Shem, among whom Ashur was; and that it is not probable he should introduce a passage relating to a branch of Shem, when he is professedly writing about that of Ham; nor is it agreeable to the history to speak of what Ashur did, before any mention of his birth, which is in Ge 10:22 nor was it peculiar to him to go out of the land of Shinar, since almost all were dispersed from thence; add to which, that Assyria is called the land of Nimrod, **Mic 5:6** to which it may be replied, that parentheses of this sort are frequent in Scripture, see **2Sa 4:4** besides, it seems appropriate enough, when treating of Nimrod's dominion and power, in order to show his intolerable tyranny, to remark, that it was such, that Ashur, a son of Shem, could not bear it, and therefore went out from a country he had a right unto; and as for the text in **Mic 5:6** the land of Nimrod and the land of Assyria are manifestly distinguished from one another: add to this, that, if Nimrod so early made a conquest of Assyria, it would rather have been called by his own name than his uncle's; and it is allowed by all that the country of Assyria had its name from Ashur, the son of Shem; and who so likely to have founded Nineveh, and other cities, as himself? Besides these, interpreters are obliged to force the text, and insert the particle "into", which is not in it; and the order and construction of the words are more natural and agreeable to the original, as in our version and others, which make Ashur the name of a man, than this, which makes it a country: but then it is not agreed on who this Ashur was; some will have him to be of the posterity of Ham, and a son of Nimrod, as Epiphanius {n} and Chrysostom {o}; but this is not probable, nor can any proof be given of it; Josephus {p} is express for it, that Ashur, the son of Shem, built Nineveh, and gave the name of Assyrians to those that were subject to him. The reason of his going out from Shinar, as given by Jarchi, is, when he saw his sons hearkening to Nimrod, and rebelling against the Lord, by building a tower, he went out from them; or it may be, he was drove out by Nimrod by force, or he could not bear his tyrannical government, or live where such a wicked man ruled: and as Nimrod built cities and set up an empire, Ashur did the same in his own defence and that of his posterity:

and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah. The first of these cities, Nineveh, the Greeks commonly call Ninus, is placed by Strabo {q} in Atyria, the Chaldee name of Assyria, who generally suppose it had its name from Ninus, whom Diodorus Siculus {r} makes the first king of the Assyrians, and to whom he ascribes the building of this city; and who, one would think, should be Ashur, and that Ninus was another name of him, or however by which he went among the Greeks; and so this city was called after him; or rather it had its name from the beauty of it, the word signifying a beautiful habitation, as Cocceius {s} and Hillerus {t} give the etymology of it; or perhaps, when it was first built by him, it had another name, but afterwards was called Nineveh, from Ninus, who lived many years after him, who might repair, adorn, and beautify it. It was destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians, as foretold by Nahum, and it is difficult now to say where it stood; the place where it is supposed to have been is now called Mosul; of which place Rauwolff {u} says, who was there in 1574, that

"there are some very good buildings and streets in it, and it is pretty large, but very ill provided with walls and ditches;--besides this, I also saw, (says he,) just without the town, a little hill, that was almost quite dug through, and inhabited by poor people, where I saw them several times creep in and out as pismires in ant hills: in this place, or thereabouts, stood formerly the potent town of Nineveh, built by Ashur, which was the metropolis of Assyria;--at this time there is nothing of antiquities to be seen in it, save only the fort that lieth upon the hill, and some few villages, which the inhabitants say did also belong to it in former days. This town lieth on the confines of Armenia, in a large plain:"

See Gill on "Jon 1:2" see Gill on "Jon 3:1" see Gill on "Jon 3:2" see Gill on "Jon 3:3" see Gill on "Na 1:8" The next city, Rehoboth, signifies "streets", and so it is rendered in the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; and, because in the Chaldee language streets are called "Beritha", Bochart {w} thinks that this Rehoboth is the city which Ptolemy {x} calls Birtha, on the west of Tigris, at the mouth of the river Lycus, though he places it by Euphrates; wherefore it should rather be Oroba, he places at the river Tigris {y}, near to Nineveh also. The last city, Calah, or Calach, was a principal city in the country, by Ptolemy {z} called Calacine, and by Strabo {a} Calachene, and mentioned by both along with Adiabene, a country in Assyria.

{m} Ad Autolycum, l. 2. p. 106. {n} Contra Haeres. l. 1. p. 3. {o} In Genes. Homil. 29. {p} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4. {q} Geograph. l. 16. p. 507. {r} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 90, 91. {s} In Jonam, 1, 2. {t} Onomast. Sacr. p. 304, 431. {u} Travels, part 2. c. 9. p. 166. {w} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 21. col. 256. {x} Geograph. l. 5. c. 19. {y} Ibid. l. 6. c. 1. {z} Ibid. {a} Geograph. l. 11. p. 347, 365. & l. 16. p. 507.

Genesis 10:12

Ver. 12. And Resen, between Nineveh and Calah,.... This was another city built by Ashur, situated between those two cities mentioned: the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call it Talsar, or Thalassar, see Isa 37:12 The conjecture of Bochart {b} is more probable, that it is the Larissa of Xenophon, situated on the Tigris; though Junius thinks it is either Bassora, or Belcina, which Ptolemy {c} places on the Tigris, near Nineveh:

the same is a great city: which Jarchi interprets of Nineveh, called a great city, and was indeed one, being sixty miles in circumference, **Jon 1:2** but the construction of the words carries it to Resen, which might be the greatest city when first built; and, if understood of Larissa, was a great city, the walls of it being one hundred feet high, and the breadth twenty five, and the compass of it eight miles. Benjamin of Tudela says {d}, that in his time Resen was called Gehidagan, and was a great city, in which were 5000 Israelites; but according to Schmidt, this refers to all the cities in a coalition, Nineveh, Rehoboth, Calah, and Resen, which all made that great city Nineveh; or were a Tetrapolis, as Tripoli was anciently three cities, built by the joint interest of the Aradians, Sidonians, and Tyrians, as Diodorus Siculus {e} relates.

{b} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 23. {c} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 5. c. 19.) {d} Itinerarium, p. 75. {e} Bibliothec. l. 16. p. 439.

Genesis 10:13

Ver. 13. And Mizraim begat Ludim,.... Mizraim was the second son of Ham, of whom See Gill on "Ge 10:6". Ludim he is said to beget, the word being plural, is not the name of a man, but of his posterity; and the sense is, that

Mizraim begat the father of the Ludim, whose name very probably was Lud, which name is preserved in Isa 66:19. These Ludim are the same with the Lydians, Jer 46:9 and whose country is called Lydia, Eze 30:5 but to be distinguished from Lydia in Asia Minor, and the Lydians there who sprung from Lud, a son of Shem, Ge 10:22 for, as these sprung from Mizraim, the founder of Egypt, they must be somewhere thereabout; and Bochart {f} has proved, by various arguments, that they are the Ethiopians in Africa, now called Abyssines, whose country lies to the south of Egypt, a people formerly famous for archery, as Lud and the Lydians are said to be, Isa 66:19 and whoever reads the accounts Diodorus Siculus {g} gives of the Egyptians and Ethiopians, will easily discern a likeness between them, and that the one sprung from the other; both deifying their kings; showing a like carefulness about their funerals; both using hieroglyphics; having the like order of priests, who used shaving; and circumcision was common to them both, as Herodotus observes {h}:

and Ananzim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim: the name of the father of the Anamim very probably was Anam, though we have no account of him elsewhere: according to Hillerus {i}, the Anamim were called so from the pastoral life they led; and, by a transposition of letters, were the same with the Maeonians, who inhabited that tract of land in Asia which was washed by the river Maeonia, or Maeander, and bordered on Lydia; but, as these were the descendants of Mizraim, they must be sought for somewhere about Egypt: much better therefore does Mr. Broughton {k} take them to be the Nubians and Numidians, which were near both Egypt and Ethiopia; though Bochart {l} seems to be most correct, in making them to be the Ammonians, who, Herodotus says, were a colony of the Egyptians and Ethiopians; these lived about Ammon and Nasamonitis, and in that part of Lybia in which the temple of Jupiter Ammon stood, and are the Nomades, that lived a pastoral life; and Bochart {m} thinks they are called Anamim, from Anam, which, in the Arabic language, signifies a "sheep", because they fed sheep, and lived upon them, and clothed themselves with their skins. The word Lehabim, the name of another people from Mizraim, signifies "flames"; and were so called, as Jarchi observes, because their faces were like flames, see Isa 13:8 burnt with the heat of the sun, living near the torrid zone; and therefore could not be the Lycians, as Hillerus {n} thinks, the inhabitants of a country in Asia, between Caria and Pamphylia, formerly called Lycia, now Aidimelli, which he observes abounds with places that have their names from fire and flames, as Mount Chimaera, the cities Hephaestium, Myra, Lemyra, Habessus, Telmessus, Balbura, and Sirbis; but these were too far from Egypt, near which it is more probable the Lehabim were, and seem to be the same with the Lubim, which came with

Shishak out of Egypt to invade Judea,
2Ch 12:3 and who were called Lybians, Jer 46:9 and their country Lybia, Eze 30:5 of which Leo Africanus {a} says, that it is a desert, dry and sandy, having neither fountains nor springs; which was near Egypt as well as Ethiopia, with which it is joined in the above place, see **Ac 2:10**. The word Naphtuhim, the name of another people that sprung from Mizraim, according to Hillerus {o}, signifies "open"; and he thinks they are the Pamphylians, who used to admit promiscuously all into their ports and towns, which were open to all strangers, and even robbers, for the sake of commerce; but, as these were a people in lesser Asia, they cannot be the people here meant. Bochart {p} observes, from Plutarch, that the Egyptians used to call the extreme parts of a country, and abrupt places and mountains adjoining to the sea, Nepthys, the same with Nephthuah; and therefore he is of opinion, that these Naphtuhim dwelt on the shores of the Mediterranean sea, near Egypt, in Marmorica; not far from whence was the temple of Aptuchus, mentioned by Ptolemy {q}, and placed by him in Cyrene, which carries in it some trace of the name of Naphtuhim; and he suspects that Neptune had his name from hence; he being a Lybian god, as Herodotus {r} says; for none ever used his name before the Lybians, who always honoured him as a god: and it may be observed, from Strabo {s}, that many of the temples of Neptune were on the sea shore. Some place these people about Memphis, the name of which was Noph,
Isa 19:13 but perhaps it may be much better to place them in the country of Nepate, between Syene and Meroc, where Candace, queen of Ethiopia, had her royal palace in the times of Strabo {t}.

{f} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 26. {g} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 143, &c. {h} Euterpe sive, l. 2. c. 104. {i} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 283. {k} See his Works, p. 4, 60. {l} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 30. col. 284. {m} Ib. c. 42. {n} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 281, 583. {a} Descriptio Africae, l. 1. p. 74. {o} Onomastic Sacr. p. 161, 178, 283, 421. {p} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 26. {q} Geograph. l. 4. c. 4. {r} Herodot. Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 21. Euterpe sive, l. 2. c. 50. {s} Geograph, l. 8. p. 237. {t} Geograph. l. 17. p. 564.

Genesis 10:14

Ver. 14. And Pathrusim,.... These are other descendants of Mizraim, the name of whose father very probably was Pathros, from whom the country of Pathros was called, and which is not only spoken of in Scripture along with Egypt, but as a part of it, Isa 11:11 and these Pathrusim were doubtless the inhabitants of it; which, as Bochart {u} has shown, is no other than Thebais, or the upper Egypt. Hillerus {w} takes the word to be compounded of tap and Myowr, and renders it the corner of the Rosians, and makes it to be the same with the bay of Issus, where was a colony of Egypt, called Cilicians; but the former is more probable.

And Casluhim; these also were the posterity of Mizraim, by another son of his, from whence they had their name: according to Hillerus {x}, they are the Solymi, a people near the Lycians and Pisidians, that came out of Egypt, and settled in those parts; but it is much more likely that they were, as Junius {y} observes, the inhabitants of Casiotis, a country mentioned by Ptolemy {z} in lower Egypt, at the entrance of it, where stood Mount Casius: but Bochart {a} is of opinion that they are the Colchi, the inhabitants of the country now called Mingrelia, and which, though at a distance from Egypt, the ancient inhabitants came from thence, as appears from several ancient authors of good credit, as the above learned writer shows.

Out of whom came Philistim, or the Philistines, a people often spoken of in Scripture: these sprung from the Casluhim, or were a branch of that people; according to Ben Melech they sprung both from them and from the Pathrusim; for Jarchi says they changed wives with one another, and so the Philistines sprung from them both; or these were a colony that departed from them, and settled elsewhere, as the Philistines did in the land of Canaan, from whence that part of it which they inhabited was called Palestine: and, if the Casluhim dwelt in Casiotis, at the entrance of Egypt, as before observed, they lay near the land of Canaan, and could easily pass into it. Some think this clause refers not to what goes before, but to what follows after,

and Caphtorim, and read the whole verse thus: "and Pathrusim, and Casluhim, and Caphtorim, out of whom came Philistim"; that is, they came out of the Caphtorim. What has led to such a transposition of the words in the text is **Am 9:7** "and the Philistines from Caphtor": but though they are said to he brought from a place called Caphtor, yet did not spring from the Caphtorim: to me it rather seems, that the two latter were brothers, and both sprung from the Casluhim; since the words may be rendered without a parenthesis: "and Caluhim, out of whom came Philistim and Caphtorim"; though perhaps it may be best of all to consider the two last as the same, and the words may be read, "out of whom came Philistim, even", or that is, "the Caphtorim"; for the Philistines, in the times of Jeremiah, are said to be the remnant of the country of Caphtor, Jer 47:4 and as in Amos the Philistines are said to come out of Caphtor, in **De 2:23** they are called Caphtorim, that came out of Caphtor, who destroyed the Avim, which dwelt in Hazerim, even unto Azzah, or Gaza, afterwards a principal city of the Philistines: for then, and not before their

settlement in the land of Canaan, were they so called; for the word Philistim signifies strangers, people of another country; and the Septuagint version always so renders the word: their true original name seems to be Caphtorim. Bochart {b} indeed will have the Caphtorim to be the Cappadocians, that dwelt near Colchis, about Trapezunt, where he finds a place called Side, which in Greek signifies a pomegranate, as Caphtor does in Hebrew; and so Hillerus {c} takes it for a name of the Cappadocians, who inhabited rwh tpk "Cappath Hor", or the side of Mount Hor, or
rwth Pk, the side of Mount Taurus; and in this they both follow the Jewish Targumists, who everywhere render Caphtorim by Cappadocians, as the three Targums do here, and Caphtor by Cappadocia, and as Jonathan on **De 2:23** but then thereby they understood a people and place in Egypt, even Damietta, the same they suppose with Pelusium; for other Jewish writers say {d}, Caphutkia, or Cappadocia, is Caphtor, and in the Arabic language Damietta: so Benjamin of Tudela says {e}, in two days I came to Damietta, this is Caphtor; and it seems pretty plain that Caphtor must be some place in Egypt, as Coptus, or some other, and that the Caphtorim, or Philistines, were originally Egyptians, since they descended from Mizraim.

{u} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 31. {w} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 161, 585. {x} Ibid. p. 161, 583, 777. {y} In loc. {z} Geograph. l. 4. c. 5. {a} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 31. {b} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 32. {c} Onamastic. Sacr. p. 160, 282. {d} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Cetubot, c. 13, p. 11. {e} ltinerarium, p. 125.

Genesis 10:15

Ver. 15. And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn,.... Canaan is the fourth son of Ham; the posterity of Phut, his third son, are omitted: the firstborn of Canaan was Sidon, from whom the city of Sidon had its name, being either built by himself, who called it after his own name, or by some of his posterity, who called it so in memory of their ancestor: it was a very ancient city, more ancient than Tyre, for that was built by the Sidonians; Homer makes mention of it, but not of Tyre: it is now called Said, as it was in the times of Benjamin of Tudela {f}. Justin {g} says it had its name from the plenty of fish on its coasts; but, since Canaan had a son of this name, it was no doubt so called from him.

And Heth; the father of the Hittites, who dwelt about Hebron, on the south of the land of Canaan; for when Sarah died, the sons of Heth were in possession of it, Ge 23:2 of this race were the Anakim, or giants, drove out from hence by

Caleb, Nu 13:22 and these Hittites became terrible to men in later times, as appears from **2Ki 7:6** hence htx signifies to terrify, affright, and throw into a consternation.

{f} Itinerarium. p. 34. {g} E. Trogo, l. 18. c. 3.

Genesis 10:16

Ver. 16. And the Jebusite,.... Who had their name from Jebus, a third son of Canaan, and from whom Jerusalem was called Jebus, Jud 19:10 and where his posterity continued to dwell when the land of Canaan was possessed by the Israelites; for they were so strong and powerful, that the men of Judah could not drive them out from thence, and here they remained until the times of David, who dispossessed them of it, Jos 15:63. There is an island near Spain, formerly called Ebusus, now Ibissa, where was one of the colonies of the Phoenicians, in which, Bochart {g} observes, the name of the Jebusites is thought to remain.

And the Emorite; so called from Emor, the fourth son of Canaan, commonly called the Amorite, a people so strong and mighty, that they are compared to cedars for height, and to oaks for strength, **Am 2:9** they dwelt both on this and the other side Jordan: Sihon, one of their kings, made war on the king of Moab, and took all his country from him unto Arnon, Nu 21:26 and in the times of Joshua there were several kings of the Amorites, which dwelt on the side of Jordan westward, **Jos 5:1** hence it may be Amor, in the Arabic tongue signifying to command, and Emir, a commander.

And the Girgasite; the same with the Gergesene in **Mt 8:28** who, in the times of Christ, lived about Gerasa, or Gadara: a Jewish writer {h} says, that when they left their country to Israel, being forced to it by Joshua, they went into a country which to this day is called Gurgestan.

{g} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 36. fol. 304. {h} R. Zacuth. Sepher. Jachasin, fol. 135. 2.

Genesis 10:17

Ver. 17. And the Hivite,.... These dwelt in Hermon, a part of Mount Lebanon from Mount Baal Hermon unto the entering in of Hamath, Jos 11:3 to the east of the land of Canaan; hence they were sometimes called

Kadmonites, or Easterlings, Ge 15:19 and are thought to have their name from dwelling in holes and caves like serpents; hence Cadmus the Phoenician, and his wife Hermonia, who seem to have their names from hence, are reported to be turned into serpents, they being Hivites, which this word signifies, as Bochart {i} observes.

And the Arkite; the same with the Aruceans, or Arcaeans, Josephus {k} speaks of in Phoenicia about Sidon, and from whom the city Arce had its name, which he places in Lebanon; and is mentioned by Menander {l} as revolting to the king of Assyria, with Sidon and old Tyre; and which is reckoned by Ptolemy {m} a city of Phoenicia, and placed by him near old Byblus; and hence Bothart {n} thinks Venus had the name of Venus Architis, said by Macrobius {o} to be worshipped by the Assyrians and Phoenicians.

And the Sinite: either the inhabitants of the wilderness of Sin, who dwelt in the northern part of the desert of Arabia, or the Pelusiotae, as Bochart {p} thinks, the inhabitants of Pelusium, which was called Sin, Eze 30:15 the former being its Greek name, the latter its Chaldee or Syriac name, and both signify "clay", it being a clayey place; but Canaan or Phoenicia seems not to have reached so far; Jerom speaks of a city not far from Arca called Sin, where rather these people may be thought to dwell.

{i} Ut supra. (Phaleg. l. 4. c. 36. fol. 304.) {k} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 2. & l. 5. c. 1. sect. 23. {l} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 9. c. 14. sect. 2. {m} Geograph. l. 5. c. 15. {n} Ut supra. (Phaleg. l. 4. c. 36. fol. 304.) {o} Saturnal. l. 1. c. 21. {p} Ut supra. (Phaleg. l. 4. c. 36. fol. 304.)

Genesis 10:18

Ver. 18. And the Arvadite,.... The inhabitants of Arvad, or Aradus, an island in the Phoenician sea; it is mentioned with Sidon,
Eze 27:8 so Josephus says {q}, the Arudaeans possessed the island Aradus: it is about a league distant from the shore; Strabo {r} says it is twenty furlongs from land, and about seven in circumference, and is said to be built by the Sidonians; it is now, as Mr. Maundrel {s} says, by the Turks called Ru-ad, or, as Dr. Shaw says {t}, Rou-wadde;
See Gill on "Eze 27:8".

And the Zemarite; who perhaps built and inhabited Simyra, a place mentioned by Pliny {u}, not far from Lebanon, and along with Marathos, and Antarados, which lay on the continent, right against the island Aradus, or Arvad, and near the country of the Aradians. Strabo {w} makes mention of a place called Taxymira, which Casaubon observes should be Ximyra, or Simyra; and Mela {x} speaks of the castle of Simyra as in Phoenicia. There was a city called Zemaraim in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:22 which Bishop Patrick suggests, and Ainsworth before him, that Zemarus, the son of Canaan, might be the founder of; and there is also a mountain of the same name in Mount Ephraim, 2Ch 13:4.

And the Hamathite: who dwelt in Amathine, as Josephus {y}, and was in his time called by the inhabitants Amathe; but the Macedonians called it, from one of their race, Epiphania, which seems to have been the country called Amathite,

He removed from Jerusalem, and met them in the land of Amathis: for he gave them no respite to enter his country. (1 Maccabees 12:25)

there was another Hamath, called Antiochia, but cannot be meant, since Hamath was the northern border of the land of Israel, then called the entrance of Hamath, which border was pretty near to Epiphania, but not so far as Antioch; this is the Amathus of Syria, twice mentioned by Herodotus, as Hillerus {z} observes: but both Reland {a} and Vitringa {b} are of opinion, that the Hamath so often mentioned in Scripture, which doubtless had its name from the Hamathite, is neither Antiochia nor Epiphania, but the city Emesa, or Emissa, which lay below Epiphania, upon the Orontes, nearer Damascus and the land of Canaan; and Hamath is mentioned with Damascus and Arpad, or Arvad, Isa 10:9 and, according to Eze 47:16. Hamath must lie between Damascus and the Mediterranean sea.

And afterwards were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad; not only these eleven, but two more which are not mentioned, the Canaanites properly so called, and the Perizzites; these families at first dwelt in one place, or within narrow limits; but, as they increased, they spread themselves further every way, and in process of time possessed all the country from Idumea and Palestine to the mouth of the Orontes, and which they held about seven hundred years, when five of these families, with the two other above mentioned, were cast out of the land for their sins, and to make way for the people of Israel.

{q} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 2. {r} Geograph. l. 16. p. 518. {s} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 19. Ed. 7. {t} Travels, p. 267. Ed. 2. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 20.

{w} Geograph. l. 16. p. 518. {x} De situ orbis, l. 1. c. 12. {y} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 2.) {z} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 780. {a} Palestina Illustrata, tom. 1. l. 1. p. 121, 123, 317. {b} Comment. in Jesaiam, c. 10, 9.

Genesis 10:19

Ver. 19. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon,.... This is to be understood, not of the Canaanites, properly so called, but of them in general; and is a description of the bounds of the land of Canaan, as possessed by the people of Israel: the northern or north west border of it was Sidon, see Ge 10:15 and is to be understood of the country which reached from that city towards the east almost as far as Jordan:

as thou comest from Gerar unto Gaza; two cities of the Philistines, well known in Scripture, the former for being the place where Abraham and Isaac sometimes sojourned, and the latter for Samson's exploits in it; these were the southern or south west border of the land of Canaan:

as thou goest unto Sodom and Gomorrah, and Admah and Zeboim; four cities destroyed by fire from heaven, as is after related in this book; these lay to the south or south east part of the land:

even unto Lashah; which, according to the Targum of Jonathan, is Callirrhoe, a place famous for hot waters, which run into the Dead sea, and who in this is followed by Jerom; but since it was not in the southern part of Judea, as Lashah was, Bochart proposes {a} Lusa, as being more likely to be the place, a city of the Arabs, which Ptolemy {b} puts in the midway between the Mediterranean and the Red sea; but this is objected to by Reland {c}, since the southern borders of the land of Canaan were from the extremity of the Dead sea unto the Mediterranean sea, from which Lusa was at a great distance: the Samaritan version of this verse is very different from the Hebrew, and is this,

"and the border of the Canaanites was from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates, and unto the hinder sea:"

i.e. the western or Mediterranean.

{a} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 37. col. 309. {b} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17. {c} Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. p. 871.

Genesis 10:20

Ver. 20. These are the sons of Ham,.... His sons and grandsons, which some reckon to be thirty, others thirty one, if the Philistines are taken in:

after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, [and] in their nations: families of the same language joined together and dwelt in the same country, See Gill on "Ge 10:5" all Africa and a considerable part of Asia were possessed by the four sons of Ham and their posterity; Mizraim had Egypt, and Phut all the rest of Africa; and Cush and Canaan had a large portion in Asia.

Genesis 10:21

Ver. 21. Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber,.... And for the sake of those Shem is particularly said to be the father of, is this genealogy given, and indeed the whole book of Genesis wrote: Eber was the great-grandson of Shem, and is here spoken of by anticipation, and Shem is called not the father of either of his immediate sons, but of the posterity of this man; because the Hebrews sprung from him in his line, among whom the church of God and the true religion were preserved, and from whom the Messiah was to come, as he did: the word Eber, Jarchi interprets, "beyond the river, Euphrates" or "Tigris", or both, as describing the seat of the posterity of Shem; but as this too much straitens them, since they inhabited on both sides, Dr. Hyde {d} has shown that the word used may refer to both, to those beyond these rivers, and to those on this side; see Nu 24:24

the brother of Japheth the elder; he was the brother of Ham too, but he is not mentioned because of the behaviour towards his father, and because of the curse that was upon him and his; but Shem's relation to Japheth is expressed to show that they were alike in their disposition; and it may be to signify, that in times to come their posterity would unite in spiritual things, which has been fulfilled already in part, and will be more fully by the coalition of the Jews, the posterity of Shem, and of the Gentiles, the posterity of Japheth, in the Christian church state: and from hence we learn that Japheth was the eldest of Noah's sons, though some render the words, "the elder brother of Japheth" {e}; and so make Shem to be the eldest; but as this is contrary to the accents, so to the history: for Noah was five hundred years old when he began to beget sons, **Ge 5:32** he was six hundred when he went into the ark, **Ge 7:11** two years after the flood Shem begat Arphaxad, when he was one hundred years old, and

Noah six hundred and two, Ge 11:10 so that Shem must be born when Noah was five hundred and two years old; and since he begot children, there must be one two years older than Shem, which can be no other than Japheth, since Ham is called his younger son, **Ge 9:24**.

even to him were [children] born, who are reckoned as follow.

{d} Hist. Relig. Pers. c. 2. p. 47, 48. {e} lwdgh tpy yxa "fratre Japheth majore". V. L. Samar. Syr. Ar. "frater major natu ipsius Japheth", Tigurine version; "fratri Japheti majori", Cocceius; so some in Vatablus.

Genesis 10:22

Ver. 22. The children of Shem,.... Whose names are

Elam and Ashur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram; and who, as Josephus {f} says, inhabited Asia, from Euphrates to the Indian ocean: his first born, Elam, was the father of the Elymaeans, from whom sprung the Persians, as the same writer observes, and his posterity are called Elamites, **Ac 2:10** their country Elam, and is sometimes mentioned with Media, when the Persians and Medes are intended, Isa 21:2 see also Isa 22:6, &c. in Daniel's time, Shushan, in the province of Elam, was the seat of the kings of Persia: the country of Elymais, so called from this man, is said by Pliny {g} to be divided from Susiane by the river Eulaeus, and to join with Persia; and the famous city of Elymais, the metropolis of the country, is placed by Josephus {h} in Persia. Ashur, the second son of Shem, gives name to Assyria, a country frequently mentioned in Scripture; and which, according to Ptolemy {i}, was bounded on the north by part of Armenia the great, and the mountain Niphates, on the west by Mesopotamia and the river Tigris, on the south by Susiane, and on the east by part of Media. Strabo says {k} they call Babylonia, and great part of the country about it, Assyria, in which was Ninus or Nineveh, the chief city of the Assyrian empire; and which was built by Ashur, as Josephus {l} affirms, and says he gave the name of Assyrians to his subjects: Arphaxad, the third son of Shem, from him that part of Assyria, which lay northward next to Armenia, was called Arphaxitis, as it is probable that was its original name, though corruptly called by Ptolemy {m} Arrapachitis: Josephus says {n}, he gave name to the Arphaxadaeans, whom he ruled over, now called Chaldeans; and indeed the name of the Chaldeans may as well be derived from the latter part of Arphaxad's name, dvk, "Chashad", as from Chesed, the son of Nahor, and brother of Abraham, as it more commonly is; since the Chaldeans were called

Chasdim before Chesed was born, and were a nation when Abraham came out of Ur, before Chesed could be old or considerable enough to build towns and found a nation; see Ge 11:31 though Bochart treats this as a mere dream, yet he is obliged to have recourse to the usual refuge, that Ur was called Ur of the Chaldees, by anticipation. The fourth son of Shem was Lud, from whom sprung the Lydians, a people of Asia minor, and whose country is called Lydia, including Mysia and Caria, which all lay by the river Maeander; and Lud, in the Phoenician language, signifies bending and crooked, as that river was, being full of windings and turnings: some think that the posterity of Lud are carried too far off from those of his brethren, but know not where else to fix them. From Aram, the last son of Shem, sprung the Aramaeans, called by the Greeks Syrians, as Josephus {o} observes; and by Homer {p} and Hesiod {q} arimoi, and so says Strabo {r}; some by the Arimi understand the Syrians, now called Arami; and elsewhere {s} he observes, that they who are by us called Syrians, are by the Syrians themselves called Aramaeans, and this is the name they give to themselves to this day: the country inhabited by them included Mesopotamia and Syria, and particularly all those places that have the name of Aram added to them, as Padan Aram, and Aram Naharaim (which is Mesopotamia), Aram of Damascus, Aram Zobah, Aram Maacha, and Aram Beth Rehob, Ge 28:2 and the title of Ps 60:1: the Septuagint version here adds, "and Cainan", but without any authority.

{f} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4. {g} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 27. {h} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 8. sect. 1. {i} Geograph. l. 6. c. 1. {k} Ib. l. 16. p. 507. {l} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4. {m} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 6. c. 1.) {n} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4.). So R. Gedaliah, in Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 76. 2. {o} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4.) {p} Iliad. 2. {q} Theogonia. {r} Geograph. l. 13. p. 431. l. 16. p. 540. {s} Ib. l. 1. p. 28.

Genesis 10:23

Ver. 23. And the children of Aram,.... The four following persons are called the sons of Shem, **1Ch 1:17** being his grandsons, which is not unusual in Scripture,

Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash: the first of these sons of Aram, Uz, is generally thought to be the founder of Damascus; so Josephus {t} says. Usus founded Trachonitis and Damascus, which lies between Palestine and Coelesyria: there was a place called Uz in Idumea, **La 4:21** and another in Arabia, where Job dwelt, **Job 1:1** but neither of them seems to be the seat of this man and his posterity, who, in all probability, settled in Syria: his second son Hul, whom Josephus {u} calls Ulus, according to him, founded Armenia; which notion may be strengthened by observing that Cholobotene is reckoned a part of Armenia by Stephanus {w}; which is no other than Cholbeth, that is, the house or seat of Chol, the same with Hul; and there are several places in Armenia, as appears from Ptolemy {x}, which begin with Chol or Col, as Cholus, Cholua, Choluata, Cholima, Colsa, Colana, Colchis: but perhaps it may be better to place him in Syria, in the deserts of Palmyrene, as Junius and Grotius; since among the cities of Palmyrene, there is one called Cholle, according to Ptolemy {y}. Gether, the third son, is made by Josephus {z} to be the father of the Bactrians; but these were too far off to come from this man, and were not in the lot of Shem: Bochart {a} finds the river Getri, which the Greeks call Centrites, between Armenia and the Carduchi, whereabout, he conjectures, might be the seat of this man; but perhaps it may be more probable, with Grotius and Junius, to place him in Coelesyria, where are the city Gindarus of Ptolemy {b}, and a people called Gindareni, by Pliny {c}; though Bishop Patrick thinks it probable that Gadara, the chief city of Peraea, placed by Ptolemy {d} in the Decapolis of Coelesyria, had its name from this man: Mr. Broughton derives Atergate and Derceto, names of a Syrian goddess, from him, which was worshipped at Hierapolis in Coelesyria, as Pliny says {e}. The last of the sons of Aram, Mash, is called Meshech, in **1Ch 1:17** and here the Septuagint version calls him Masoch; his posterity are supposed to settle in Armenia, about the mountain Masius, thought to be the same with Ararat, and which the Armenians call Masis; perhaps the people named Moscheni, mentioned by Pliny {f}, as dwelling near Armenia and Adiabene, might spring from this man.

{t} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4.) {u} Ibid. {w} Apud Bochart. Phaleg. l. 2. c. 9. col. 81. {x} Geograph. l. 5. c. 13. {y} Geograph. l. 5. c. 15. {z} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4.) {a} Phaleg. l. 2. c. 10. {b} Geograph. l. 5. c. 15. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 23. {d} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 5. c. 15.) {e} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 23. {f} Ib. l. 6. c. 9.

Genesis 10:24

Ver. 24. And Arphaxad begat Salah,.... Or Shelach which signifies "a sending forth"; that is, of waters: it is part of the name of Methuselah, given him by his father, as prophetic of the flood, see **Ge 5:21** and Arphaxad, who was born two years after the flood, gives this name to his first born, as commemorative of it: according to some, from him are the Susians {g}; and in Susiana is found a city called Sele, by Ptolemy {h}; but this seems not to be a sufficient proof:

and Salah begat Eber; from whom, Josephus {i} says, the Jews were called Hebrews from the beginning; and which, perhaps, is as good a derivation of their name as can be given, and seems to be confirmed by Nu 24:24 though some derive it from Abraham's passing over the rivers in his way from Chaldea into Syria; but be it so, why might not this name be given to Eber, as prophetic of that passage, or of the passage of his posterity over the Euphrates into Canaan, as well as Eber gave to his son Peleg his name, as a prediction of the division of the earth in his time? the Septuagint version of this text inserts a Cainan between Arphaxad and Salah, but is not to be found in any Hebrew copy, nor in the Samaritan, Syriac, and Arabic versions, nor in Josephus, see **Lu 3:36**.

{g} Vid. Bochart. Phaleg. l. 2. c. 13. col. 92. {h} Geograph. l. 6. c. 3. {i} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4.)

Genesis 10:25

Ver. 25. And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg,.... Bochart {k} thinks, that either Peleg, or one of his posterity, in memory of him, gave the name of Phalga to a town situated on the Euphrates; though the reason of the name, as given by Arrianus, as he himself observes, was because it divided between the two Seleucias, as the reason of Peleg's name was;

for in his days was the earth divided; among the three sons of Noah, and their respective posterities; their language was divided, and that obliged them to divide and separate in bodies which understood one another; hence that age, in which was this event, was usually called by the Jews the age of division; whether this was done about the time of his birth, and so this name was given him to perpetuate the memory of it, or in some after part of his life, and so was given by a spirit of prophecy, is a question: Josephus, Jarchi, and the Jewish writers, generally go the latter way; if it was at the time of his birth, which is the sense of many, then this affair happened in the one hundred and first year after the flood, for in that year Peleg was born, as appears from Ge 11:11

and his brother's name was Joktan, whom the Arabs call Cahtan, and claim him as their parent, at least, of their principal tribes; and say he was the first that reigned in Yaman, and put a diadem on his head {l}; and there is a city in the territory of Mecca, about seven furlongs or a mile to the south of it, and one station from the Red sea, called Baisath Jektan, the seat of Jektan {m}, which manifestly retains his name; and there are a people called Catanitae, placed by Ptolemy {n} in Arabia Felix.

{k} Phaleg. l. 2. c. 14. col. 93. {l} Vid. Pocock. Specimen. Arab. Hist. p. 39. 55. {m} Arab. Geograph. apud Bochart. Phaleg: l. 2. c. 15. col. 98. {n} Geograph, l. 6. c. 7.

Genesis 10:26

Ver. 26. And Joktan begat Almodad,.... And twelve more mentioned later: the Arabic writers {o} say be had thirty one sons by one woman, but all, excepting two, left Arabia, and settled in India; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"who measured the earth with ropes,"

as if he was the first inventor and practiser of geometry: from him are thought to spring the Allumaeotae, a people whom Ptolemy {p} places in Arabia Felix, called so by the Greeks, instead of Almodaei: Mr. Broughton {q} sets Eldimaei over against this man's name, as if they were a people that sprung from him; whereas this word is wrongly put in Ptolemy {r} for Elymaeans, as it is in the Greek text, a people joining to the Persians:

[and] Sheleph and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah: to the first of these, Sheleph, the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"who drew out the water of the rivers;"

his people are supposed by Bochart {s}, to be the Alapeni of Ptolemy {t}, which should be read Salapeni, who were, he says, more remote from the rest, almost as far as the neck of Arabia, and not far from the spring of the river Betius. The next son, Hazarmaveth, or Hasermoth, as in the Vulgate Latin, is thought to give name to a people in Arabia, called by Pliny {u} Chatramotitae, and by Ptolemy Cathramonitae, whose country, Strabo says {w}, produces myrrh; according to Ptolemy {x} they reached from the mountain Climax to the Sabaeans, among whom were a people, called, by Pliny {y}, Atramitae, who inhabited a place of the same name, and which Theophrastus calls Adramyta, which comes nearer the name of this man, and signifies the court or country of death: and in those parts might be places so called, partly from the unwholesomeness of the air, being thick and foggy, and partly from the frankincense which grew there, which was fatal to those that gathered it, and therefore only the king's slaves, and such as were condemned to die, were employed in it, as Bochart {z} has observed from Arrianus; as also because of the multitude of serpents, with which those odoriferous countries abounded, as the same writer relates from Agatharcides and Pliny. The next son of Joktan is Jerah, which signifies the moon, as Hilal does in Arabic; and Alilat with the Arabians, according to Herodotus {a}, is "Urania", or the moon; hence Bochart {b} thinks, that the Jeracheans, the posterity of Jerah, are the Alilaeans of Diodorus Siculus {c}, and others, a people of the Arabs; and the Arabic geographer, as he observes, makes mention of a people near Mecca called Bene Hilal, or the children of Jerah; and he is of opinion that the island Hieracon, which the Greeks call the island of the Hawks placed by Ptolemy {d}, in Arabia Felix, adjoining to the country which lies upon the Arabian Gulf, is no other than the island of the Jeracheans, the posterity of this man: the Arabs {e} speak of a son of Joktan or Cahtan, they call Jareb, who succeeded his father, which perhaps may be a corruption of Jerah; and another, called by them Jorham.

{o} Apud Pocock. Specimen. Arab. Hist., p. 40. {p} Geograph. l. 6. c. 7. {q} See his Works, p. 3. 59. {r} Ut supra, (Geograph. l. 6.) c. 5. {s} Phaleg. l. 2. c. 16. col. 99. {t} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 6. c. 5.) {u} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {w} Geograph. l. 16. p. 528. {x} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 6. c. 5.) {y} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 14. {z} Phaleg. l. 2. c. 17. col. 102. {a} Thalia sive, l. 3. c. 8. {b} Ut supra, (Phaleg. l. 2.) c. 19. {c} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 179. {d} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 6. c. 5.) {e} Apud Pocock. Specimem. Arab. Hist. p. 40.

Genesis 10:27

Ver. 27. And Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah. The posterity of Hadoram, from the likeness of the name and sound, might seem to be the Adramitae of Ptolemy {f}, but Bochart {g} thinks they are the Drimati of Pliny {h}, who dwelt in the extreme corner of Arabia, to the east, near the Macae, who were at the straits of the Persian Gulf; and he observes, that the extreme promontory of that country was called Corodamum, by transposition of the letters "D" and "R": Uzal gave name to a city which is still so called; for R. Zacuth {i} says, the Jews which dwelt in Yaman, the kingdom of Sheba, call Samea, which is the capital of the kingdom of Yaman, Uzal; and who also relates, that there is a place called Hazarmaveth unto this day, of which see Ge 10:26 the kingdom in which Uzal is said by him to be was the south part of Arabia Felix, as Yaman signifies, from whence came the queen of the south, Mt 12:42 and Uzal or Auzal, as the Arabs pronounce it, is the same the Greeks call Ausar, changing "L" into "R"; hence mention is made by Pliny {k} of myrrh of Ausar, in the kingdom of the Gebanites, a people of the Arabs, where was a port by him called Ocila {l}, by Ptolemy, Ocelis {m}, and by Artemidorus in Strabo, Acila {n}, and perhaps was the port of the city Uzal, to the name of which it bears some resemblance: Diklah signifies a palm tree, in the Chaldee or Syriac language, with which kind of trees Arabia abounded, especially the country of the Minaei, as Pliny {o} relates; wherefore Bochart {p} thinks the posterity of Diklah had their seat among them, rather than at Phaenicon or Diklah, so called from the abundance of palm trees that grew there, which was at the entrance into Arabia Felix at the Red sea, of which Diodorus Siculus {q} makes mention; and so Artemidorus in Strabo {r} speaks of a place called Posidium, opposite to the Troglodytes, and where the Arabian Gulf ends, where palm trees grew in a wonderful manner, on the fruit of which people lived, where was a Phaenicon, or continued grove of palm trees; and here is placed by Ptolemy {s} a village called Phaenicon, the same with Diklah.

{f} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 6. c. 5.) {g} Ut supra, (Phaleg. l. 2.) c. 20. {h} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {i} Juchasin, fol. 135. 2. {k} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 16. {l} lb. c. 19. {m} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 6. c. 5). So Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 23. {n} Geograph. l. 16. p. 529. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {p} Ut supra. (Phaleg. l. 2. c. 22.) {q} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 175. {r} Geograph. l. 16. p. 34. {s} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 6. c. 5.)

Genesis 10:28

Ver. 28. And Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba. The first of these, Obal, or Aubal, as the Arabs pronounce, Bochart {t} is obliged to make his posterity pass over the straits of the Arabian Gulf out of Arabia Felix into Arabia Troglodytice; where he finds a bay, called by Pliny {u} the Abalite bay, which carries in it some trace of this man's name, and by Ptolemy {v} the Avalite bay; and where was not only an emporium of this name, but a people called Avalites and also Adulites, which Bishop Patrick believes should be read "Abulites", more agreeably to the name of this man, but Pliny {w} speaks of a town of the Adulites also: Abimael is supposed by Bochart {x} to be the father of Mali, or the Malitae, as his name may be thought to signify, Theophrastus {y} making mention of a place called Mali along with Saba, Adramyta, and Citibaena, in spicy Arabia, which is the only foundation there is for this conjecture: Sheba gave name to the Sabaeans, a numerous people in Arabia; their country was famous for frankincense; the nations of them, according to Pliny {z}, reached both seas, that is, extended from the Arabian to the Persian Gulf; one part of them, as he says {a}, was called Atramitae, and the capital of their kingdom Sabota, on a high mountain, eight mansions from which was their frankincense country, called Saba; elsewhere he says {b}, their capital was called Sobotale, including sixty temples within its walls; but the royal seat was Mariabe; and so Eratosthenes in Strabo {c} says, the metropolis of the Sabaeans was Mariaba, or, as others call it, Merab, and which, it seems, is the same with Saba; for Diodorus Siculus {d} and Philostorgius {e} say, the metropolis of the Sabaeans is Saba; and which the former represents as built on a mountain, as the Sabota of Pliny is said to be,

{t} Ut supra, (Phaleg. l. 2.) c. 23. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 26. c. 29. {v} Geograph. l. 4. c. 7, 8. {w} Nat. Hist. l. 26. c. 29. {x} Ut supra. (Phaleg. l. 2. c. 24.) {y} Ut supra, (Hist. Plant. l. 9.) c.4. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {a} Ib. l. 12. c. 14. {b} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28.) {c} Geograph. l. 16. p. 528. {d} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 180. {e} Hist. Ecclesiast. l. 3. p. 477.

Genesis 10:29

Ver. 29. And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab,.... If several of the sons of Joktan went into India, as the Arabs say, one would be tempted to think that Ophir in India, whither Solomon sent his ships once in three years, had its name from the first of these;
See Gill on "Ge 10:26" but as this would be carrying him too far from the rest of his brethren, who appear to have settled in Arabia, some place must be found for him there; and yet there is none in which there is any likeness of the name, unless Coper can be thought to be, a village in the country of the Cinaedocolpites, on the Arabian Gulf, as in Ptolemy {f}, or Ogyris, an island in the same sea, Pliny {g} makes mention of the same with the Organa of Ptolemy {h}, placed by him on the Sachalite bay; wherefore Bochart {i} looks out elsewhere for a seat for this Ophir, or "Oupheir", as in the Septuagint version, and finding in a fragment of Eupolemus, preserved by Eusebius {k}, mention made of the island of Ourphe, which he thinks should be Ouphre, or Uphre, situated in the Red sea, seems willing to have it to be the seat of this man and his posterity, and that it had its name from him; or that their seat was among the Cassanites or Gassandae, the same perhaps with the tribe of Ghassan, Aupher and Chasan signifying much the same, even great abundance and treasure: Havilah, next mentioned, is different from Havilah, the son of Cush, Ge 10:7 and so his country; but it is difficult where to fix him; one

would rather think that the Avalite bay, emporium, and people, should take their name from him than from Obal, Ge 10:28 but Bochart {l} chooses to place him and his posterity in Chaulan, a country in Arabia Felix, in the extreme part of Cassanitis, near the Sabaeans: and Jobab, the last of Joktan's sons, was the father of the Jobabites, called by Ptolemy {m} Jobarites, corruptly for Jobabites, as Salmasius and Bochart think; and who are placed by the above geographer near the Sachalites in Arabia Felix, whose country was full of deserts, as Jobab in Arabic signifies, so Bochart {n} observes, as the countries above the Sachalite bay were, by which these Jobabites are placed:

all these were the sons of Joktan; the thirteen before mentioned, all which had their dwelling in Arabia or near it, and which is further described in the following verse.

{f} Geograph. l. 6. c. 7. {g} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {h} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 6. c. 7.) {i} Phaleg. l. 2. c. 27. {k} Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30. p. 457. {l} Ut supra, (Phaleg. l. 2.) c. 20. {m} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 6. c. 7.) {n} Ut supra, (Phaleg. l. 2.) c. 29.

Genesis 10:30

Ver. 30. And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Zephar, a mount of the east. Mesha, which is thought to be the Muza of Ptolemy and Pliny, was a famous port in the Red sea, frequented by the merchants of Egypt and Ethiopia, from which the Sappharites lay directly eastward; to whose country they used to go for myrrh and frankincense, and the like, of which Saphar was the metropolis, and which was at the foot of Climax, a range of mountains, which perhaps might be formerly called Saphar, from the city at the bottom of it, the same with Zephar here: by inspecting Ptolemy's tables {o}, the way from one to the other is easily discerned, where you first meet with Muza, a port in the Red sea, then Ocelis, then the mart Arabia, then Cane, and so on to Sapphar or Sapphara; and so Pliny says {p}, there is a third port which is called Muza, which the navigation to India does not put into, only the merchants of frankincense and Arabian odours: the towns in the inland are the royal seat Saphar; and another called Sabe; now the sons of Joktan had their habitations all from this part in the west unto Zephar or Saphar eastward, and those were reckoned the genuine Arabs: Hillerus {q} gives a different account of the situation of the children of Joktan, as he thinks, agreeably to these words of Moses; understanding by Kedem, rendered the east, the mountains of Kedem, or the Kedemites, which sprung from Kedem or Kedomah, the youngest son of Ishmael, Ge 25:15 and Zephar, the seat of the Sepharites, as between Mesha and Kedem; for, says he, Mesha is not Muza, a mart of the Red sea, but Moscha, a famous port of the Indian sea, of which Arrian and Ptolemy make mention; and from hence the dwelling of the Joktanites was extended, in the way you go through the Sepharites to the mountainous places of Kedem or Cadmus: perhaps nearer the truth may be the Arabic paraphrase of Saadiah {r}, which is

"from Mecca till you come to the city of the eastern mountain, or (as in a manuscript) to the eastern city,"

meaning perhaps Medina, situate to the east; so that the sense is, according to this paraphrase, that the sons of Joktan had their dwelling from Mecca to Medina; and so R. Zacuth {s} says, Mesha in the Arabic tongue is called Mecca; and it is a point agreed upon by the Arabs that Mesha was one of the most ancient names of Mecca; they believe that all the mountainous part of the region producing frankincense went in the earliest times by the name of Sephar; from whence Golius concludes this tract to be the Mount Zephar of Moses, a strong presumption of the truth of which is that Dhafar, the same with the modern Arabs as the ancient Saphar, is the name of a town in Shihr, the only province in Arabia bearing frankincense on the coast of the Indian ocean {t}.

{o} Geograph. l. 6. c. 7. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 23. {q} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 116. {r} In Pocock. Specimen Hist. Arab. p. 34. {s} In Juchasin, fol. 135. 2. {t} Universal History, vol. 18. p. 353.

Genesis 10:31

Ver. 31. These are the sons of Shem,.... His sons, and grandsons, and great grandsons, in all twenty six, no doubt but there were many more, but these are only mentioned; for none of the sons of Elam, Ashur, and Lud, are named, and but one of Arphaxad's, and one of Salah's, and two of Eber's, and none of Peleg's; when it is not to be questioned but they had many, as is certain of Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, and Peleg, Ge 11:13

after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations: from hence sprung various families at first, and these of different languages upon the confusion of Babel, which thenceforward formed different nations, dwelt in different lands; which have been pointed at as near as we can at this distance, and with the little helps and advantages we have: it seems from hence that Shem's posterity were of different languages as well as those of Ham and Japheth.

Genesis 10:32

Ver. 32. These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations,.... This is the account of their families, from whom the several nations of the earth sprung:

and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood; not immediately, not till they were so increased as to form distinct nations; not till Peleg's time, when the division was made; not until the building of the city and tower of Babel, for unto that time these families were together, and then and not before were they dispersed abroad upon the face of the earth; and by degrees peopled all the known parts of the world, Asia, Africa, and Europe, and no doubt America, though the way of their passage thither is unknown to us; and to this partition of the earth by the three sons of Noah, Pindar {u} seems to have respect, when he says,

"according to the ancients, Jupiter and the immortal ones parted the earth;"

and he speaks of one man having three sons, who dwelt separate, the earth being divided into three parts.

{u} Olymp. Ode 7.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 11

This chapter gives an account of the inhabitants of the earth before the confusion of tongues at Babel, of their speech and language, which was one and the same, and of the place where they dwelt, Ge 11:1 and of their design to build a city and tower, to make them a name and keep them together, which they put in execution, Ge 11:3 of the notice the Lord took of this affair, and of the method he took to put a stop to their designs, by confounding their speech, and dispersing them abroad upon the face of the earth, Ge 11:5 then follows a genealogy of Shem's posterity down to Abraham, Ge 11:10 and a particular relation is given of Terah, the father of Abraham, and his family, and of his going forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, in order to go into the land of Canaan, and of his death at Haran by the way, Ge 11:27.

Ver. 1. And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech,.... Or had been {w}, before the flood, and from that time to this, and still was, until the confusion took place; the account of which, and the occasion of it, are given in this chapter: by the whole earth is meant the inhabitants of it, see Isa 37:18 and so the Jerusalem Targum paraphrases the words,

"and all the generations of the earth were of one language, and of one speech, and of one counsel, for they spoke in the holy tongue in which the world was created at the beginning;"

and to the same purpose the Targum of Jonathan: all the posterity of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, used the same language, though it does not appear that they were all in one counsel or consultation, or of one mind about building a city or tower, which the Targum seems to suggest; for it is not likely that Shem and his sons were in it: nor by "one lip" and "the same words or things" {x}, as these phrases may be rendered, are we to understand the same simplicity of speech and business, and likeness of manners; for it appears there was a difference with respect to these in the immediate sons of Noah, and it may be supposed to be much more in their remote offspring; nor as if they were all of the same religion, embraced the same doctrines, and spoke the same things; for as idolatry and superstition obtained in the race of Cain before the flood, so Ham and his posterity soon fell into the same, or the like, afterwards: and it may be observed that the same distinction was made of the children of God, and of the children of men, before the confusion and dispersion, as was before the flood,
Ge 11:5 from whence it appears they were not in the same sentiments and practice of religion: but this is to be understood of one and the same language, without any diversity of dialects, or without any hard and strange words, not easily understood; and perhaps it was pronounced by the lip and other instruments of speech in the same way; so that there was no difficulty in understanding one another, men, women, and children, all the people in common, princes and peasants, wise and unwise, all spoke the same language and used the same words; and this the Targumists take to be the holy or Hebrew language; and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra, and the Jewish writers in general, and most Christians; though some make a question of it, whether it might not be rather the Syriac, or Chaldee, or Arabic; but there is no need of

such a question, since these with the Hebrew are all one and the same language; and no doubt it was the eastern language, without giving it any other name, which now subsists in the above dialects, though not in anyone alone, which was first spoken; though more purely and without the difference of dialects it now consists of, or without the various different inflexions now made in it; for nothing is more reasonable to suppose, than that the language Adam spoke was used by Noah, since Adam lived within one hundred years and a little more of the birth of Noah; and it is not to be questioned but Noah's sons spoke the same language as he did, and their posterity now, which was but little more than one hundred years after the flood: there are various testimonies of Heathens confirming this truth, that originally men spoke but one language; thus Sibylla in Josephus {y}, who says,

"when all men were omofwnwn, of the same language, some began to build a most high tower, &c."

so Abydenus {z} an Heathen historian, speaking of the building of the tower of Babel, says,

"at that time men were omoglwssouv, of the same tongue;"

in like manner Hyginus {a}, speaking of Phoroneus, the first of mortals, that reigned, says,

"many ages before, men lived without towns and laws, "una lirgua loquentes", speaking one language, under the empire of Jove."

{w} yhyw "et fuerat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "caeterum fuit olim", Schmidt. {x} Mydha Myrbdw txa hpv "unum labium et verba eadem", Schmidt; "Labii unius et sermonum eorundem, vel rerum", Clarius. {y} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 4. sect. 3. {z} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 14. p. 416. {a} Fabulae, Fab. 143.

Genesis 11:2

Ver. 2. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east,.... That is, the inhabitants of the whole earth; not Ham and his posterity only, or Nimrod and his company; but as all the sons of Noah and his posterity for a while dwelt together, or at least very near each other, and finding the place where they were too scanty for them, as their several families increased, they set out in a

body from the place where they were, to seek for a more convenient one: it seems a little difficult how to interpret this phrase, "from the east", since if they came from Ararat in Armenia, where the ark rested, as that lay north of Shinar or Babylon, they might rather be said to come from the north than from the east, and rather came to it than from it: so some think the phrase should be rendered, "to the east" {b}, or eastward, as in
Ge 13:11. Jarchi thinks this refers to Ge 10:30 "and their dwelling was", &c. at "the mountain of the east"; from whence he supposes they journeyed, to find out a place that would hold them all, but could find none but Shinar; but then this restrains it to Joktan's sons, and besides, their dwelling there was not until after the confusion and dispersion. But it is very probable the case was this, that when Noah and his sons came out of the ark, in a little time they betook themselves to their former habitation, from whence they had entered into the ark, namely, to the east of the garden of Eden, where was the appearance of the divine Presence, or Shechinah; and from hence it was that these now journeyed: and so it was as they were passing on,

that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; which the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases the land of Babylon; and Hestiaeus {c}, a Phoenician historian, calls it Sennaar of Babylon; there are plain traces of this name in the Singara of Ptolemy {d} and Pliny {e}, the Hebrew letter e being sometimes pronounced as "G", as in Gaza and Gomorrah; the first of these place a city of this name in Mesopotamia, near the Tigris, and that of the other is reckoned a capital of the Rhetavi, a tribe of the Arabs, near Mesopotamia. This plain was very large, fruitful, and delightful, and therefore judged a fit place for a settlement, where they might have room enough, and which promised them a sufficient sustenance:

and they dwelt there; and provided for their continuance, quickly beginning to build a city and tower, afterwards called Babylon: and that Babylon was built in a large plain is not only here asserted, but is confirmed by Herodotus {f}, who says of it, that it lay
en pediw megalw, in a vast plain, and so Strabo {g}; which was no other than the plain of Shinar.

{b} Mdqm "ad Orientem, sive Orientem versus"; so some in Schmidt. Vid. Drusium in loc. & Fuller. Miscell. Sacr. l. 1. c. 4. {c} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 1. c. 4. sect. 3. {d} Geograph. l. 5. c. 18. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 24. {f} Clio sive, l. 1. c. 178. {g} Geograph. l. 16. p. 508.

Genesis 11:3

Ver. 3. And they said one to another, go to,.... Advising, exhorting, stirring up, and encouraging one another to the work proposed, of building a city and tower for their habitation and protection; saying,

let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly; they knew the nature of bricks, and how to make them before: according to Sanchoniatho {h}, the brothers of Vulcan, or Tubalcain, before the flood, were the first inventors of them; for he relates, that

"there are some that say that his brothers invented the way of making walls of bricks: he adds, that from the generation of Vulcan came two brothers, who invented the way of mixing straw or stubble with brick clay, and to dry them by the sun, and so found out tiling of houses."

Now in the plain of Shinar, though it afforded no stones, yet they could dig clay enough to make bricks, and which they proposed to burn thoroughly, that they might be fit for their purpose. According to an eastern tradition {i}, they were three years employed in making and burning those bricks, each of which was thirteen cubits long, ten broad, and five thick, and were forty years in building:

and they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar: they could not get stone, which they would have chosen, as more durable; they got the best bricks they could make, and instead of mortar they used slime; or what the Septuagint version calls "asphaltos", a bitumen, or kind of pitch, of which there was great plenty in that neighbourhood. Herodotus {k} speaking of the building of Babylon, uses language very much like the Scripture;

"digging a foss or ditch (says he), the earth which was cast up they formed into bricks, and drawing large ones, they burnt them in furnaces, using for lime or mortar hot asphaltos or bitumen."

And he observes, that

"Eight days journey from Babylon was another city, called Is, where was a small river of the same name, which ran into the river Euphrates, and with its water were carried many lumps of bitumen, and from hence it was conveyed to the walls of Babylon."

This city is now called Ait, of which a traveller {l} of the last century gives the following account;

"from the ruins of old Babylon we came to a town called Ait, inhabited only with Arabians, but very ruinous; near unto which town is a valley of pitch, very marvellous to behold, and a thing almost incredible wherein are many springs throwing out abundantly a kind of black substance, like unto tar and pitch, which serveth all the countries thereabout to make staunch their barks and boats; everyone of which springs makes a noise like a smith's forge, which never ceaseth night nor day, and the noise is heard a mile off, swallowing up all weighty things that come upon it; the Moors call it "the mouth of hell.""

Curtius relates {m}, that Alexander, in his march to Babylon, came to a city called Mennis, where was a cavern, from whence a fountain threw out a vast quantity of bitumen or pitch; so that, says he, it is plain, that the huge walls of Babylon were daubed with the bitumen of this fountain; and he afterwards speaks of the walls, towers, and houses, being built of brick, and cemented with it; and so Diodorus Siculus says {n} from Ctesias, that the walls of Babylon were built of bricks, cemented with bitumen; and not only these, but all Heathen authors that write of Babylon, confirm this; and not only historians, but poets, of which Bochart {o} has made a large collection; as well as Josephus {p} speaks of it, and this sort of pitch still remains. Rauwolff says {q} near the bridge over the Euphrates, where Babylon stood, are several heaps of Babylonian pitch, which is in some places grown so hard, that you may walk over it; but in others, that which hath been lately brought over thither is so soft, that you may see every step you make in it.

{h} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. p. 35. {i} Elmacinus, p. 14. apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 263, 264. {k} Clio sive, l. 1. c. 179. {l} Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 105, 106. {m} Hist. l. 5. c. 1. {n} Bibliothec l. 2. p. 96. {o} Phaleg. l. 1. c. 11. {p} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 4. sect. 3. {q} Travels, par. 2. ch. 7. p. 138.

Genesis 11:4

Ver. 4. And they said, go to, let us build us a city and a tower,.... Some Jewish writers {r} say, these are the words of Nimrod to his people; but it is a question whether he was now born, or if he was, must be too young to be at the head of such a body of people; but they are spoken to one another, or by the principal men among them to the common people, advising and encouraging to such an undertaking. It is generally thought what led them to it was to secure them from another flood, they might be in fear of; but this seems not likely, since they had the covenant and oath of God, that the earth should never be destroyed by water any more; and besides, had this been the thing in view, they would not have chosen a plain to build on, a plain that lay between two of the greatest rivers, Tigris, and Euphrates, but rather one of the highest mountains and hills they could have found: nor could a building of brick be a sufficient defence against such a force of water, as the waters of the flood were; and besides, but few at most could be preserved at the top of the tower, to which, in such a case, they would have betook themselves. The reason of this building is given in a following clause, as will be observed. Some think by "a city and tower" is meant, by the figure "hendyadis", one and the same thing, a city with towers; and, according to Ctesias {s}, there were two hundred and fifty towers in Babylon: but no doubt the city and tower were two distinct things; or there was one particular tower proposed to be built besides the city, though it might stand in it, or near it, as an acropolis or citadel to it; as it is not unusual in cities to have such, to betake unto in case of danger:

whose top [may reach] unto heaven: not that they imagined such a thing could be literally and strictly done, but that it should be raised exceeding high, like the cities in Canaan, said to be walled up to heaven, **De 1:28** hyperbolically speaking; and such was the tower of Babel, by all accounts, even of Heathens: the Sibyl in Josephus {t} calls it a most high tower; and so Abydenus {u} reports;

"there are (says he) that say, that the first men that rose out of the earth, proud of their strength and largeness (of their bodies), and thinking themselves greater than the gods, erected a tower of a vast height, near to heaven, where Babylon now is."

And the temple of Belus, which some take to be the same with this tower, at least was that perfected, and put to such an use, was, according to Ctesias {w}, of an immense height, where the Chaldeans made their observations of the stars: however, the tower that was in the middle of it, and which seems plainly to be the same with this, was exceeding high: the account Herodotus {x} gives of it is,

"in the midst of the temple a solid tower is built, of a furlong in length, and of as much in breadth; and upon this tower another tower is placed, and another upon that, and so on to eight towers."

mhkov, the word used by Herodotus, translated "length", signifies also "height", and so it is taken here by some; and if so, it looks as if every tower was a furlong high, which makes the whole a mile, which is too extravagant to suppose, though it may denote the height of them all, a furlong, which makes it a very high building. This agrees with Strabo's account of it, who calls it a pyramid, and says it was a furlong high {y}: according to Rauwolff {z}, the tower of Babel is still in being; this, says he, we saw still (in 1574), and it is half a league in diameter; but it is so mightily ruined, and low, and so full of vermin, that hath bored holes through it, that one may not come near it for half a mile, but only in two months in the winter, when they come not out of their holes. Another traveller {a}, that was in those parts at the beginning of the last century, says,

"now at this day, that which remaineth is called the remnant of the tower of Babel; there standing as much as is a quarter of a mile in compass, and as high as the stone work of Paul's steeple in London--the bricks are three quarters of a yard in length, and a quarter in thickness, and between every course of bricks there lieth a course of mats, made of canes and palm tree leaves, so fresh as if they had been laid within one year."

Not to take notice of the extravagant account of the eastern writers, who say the tower was 5533 fathoms high {b}; and others, beyond all belief, make it 10,000 fathoms, or twelve miles high {c}; and they say the builders were forty years in building it: their design in it follows,

and let us make us a name; which some render "a sign" {d}, and suppose it to be a signal set upon the top of the tower, which served as a beacon, by the sight of which they might be preserved from straying in the open plains with their flocks, or return again when they had strayed. Others take it to be an idol proposed to be set upon the top of the tower; and the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem intimate as if the tower was built for religious worship, paraphrasing the words,

"let us build in the midst of it a temple of worship on the top of it, and let us put a sword into his (the idol's) hand."

And it is the conjecture of Dr. Tennison, in his book of idolatry, that this tower was consecrated by the builders of it to the sun, as the cause of drying up the waters of the deluge: but the sense is, that they proposed by erecting such an edifice to spread their fame, and perpetuate their name to the latest posterity, that hereby it might be known, that at such a time, and in such a place, were

such a body of people, even all the inhabitants of the world; and all of them the sons of one man, as Ben Gersom observes; so that as long as this tower stood, they would be had in remembrance, it being called after their names; just as the Egyptian kings afterwards built their pyramids, perhaps for a like reason; and in which the end of neither have been answered, it not being known who were by name concerned therein, see
Ps 49:11 though a late learned writer {e} thinks, that by making a name is meant choosing a chief or captain, which was proposed by them; and that the person they pitched upon was Nimrod, in which sense the word he supposes is used, 2Sa 23:17 but what has been observed at the beginning of this note may be objected to it; though Berosus {f} says, that Nimrod came with his people into the plain of Sannaar, where be marked out a city, and founded the largest tower, in the year of deliverance from the waters of the flood one hundred and thirty one, and reigned fifty six years; and carried the tower to the height and size of mountains, "for a sign" and "monument", that the people of Babylon were the first in the world, and ought to be called the kingdom of kingdoms; which last clause agrees with the sense given:

lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth: which they seemed to have some notion of, and feared would be their case, liking better to be together than to separate, and therefore were careful to avoid a dispersion; it being some way or other signified to them, that it was the will of God they should divide into colonies, and settle in different parts, that so the whole earth might be inhabited; or Noah, or some others, had proposed a division of the earth among them, each to take his part, which they did not care to hearken to; and therefore, to prevent such a separation, proposed the above scheme, and pursued it.

{r} In Pirke Eliezer, c. 24. {s} Apud Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec, l. 2. p. 96. {t} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 4. sect. 3. {u} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 14. p. 416. {w} Apud Diodor. ut supra, (Sicul. Bibliothec, l. 2.) p. 98. {x} Clio sive, l. 1. c. 181. {y} Geograph. l. 16. p. 508. {z} Travels, ut supra. (pars. 2. ch. 7. p. 138.) {a} Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 99, 100. {b} Elmacinus, p. 14. Patricides, p. 13. apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 264. {c} Vid. Universal History, vol. 1. p. 331. {d} Perizonius, apud Universal History, ib. p. 325. {e} Dr. Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 56. {f} Antiqu. l. 4. p. 28, 29.

Genesis 11:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower,.... Not locally or visibly, being immense, omnipresent, and invisible; nor in order to see and take notice of what he otherwise could not see from heaven, for he is omniscient; but this is spoken after the manner of men, and is to be understood of some effects and displays of his power, which were manifest, and showed him to be present: the Targum is,

"and the Lord was revealed to take vengeance on them on account of the business of the city and tower the children of men built."

This shows the patience and longsuffering of God, that he did not immediately proceed against them, and his wisdom and justice in taking cognizance of the affair, and inquiring into it; examining the truth and reality of things before he passed judgment and took measures to hinder them in the execution of their design; all which must be understood agreeably to the divine Majesty, and as accommodated to the capacities of men, and as an instruction to them in judging matters they have a concern in:

which the children of men builded; or were building, for they had not finished their building, at least not the city, as appears from Ge 11:8. These were either the whole body of the people, under the general appellation of "the children of men": or else a part of them, distinguished by this character from the "sons of God", who were truly religious; by which it seems that Noah, Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, and others, were not concerned in this affair, who though they might come with the rest unto Shinar, yet when they understood their design, refused to join with them in it; so that it was only the carnal and irreligious part of them, who very probably were by far the majority, and therefore there was no overruling their debates, and stopping them in their works, that were the builders; and these might be the posterity of Ham in general, with others of Shem and Japheth mixed with them. Josephus {g} makes Nimrod to be the head of them, which is not likely, as before observed.

{g} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 4. sect. 2, 3.

Genesis 11:6

Ver. 6. And the Lord said,.... Not to the angels, as Aben Ezra, but rather to the Son and Spirit, or within himself:

behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; which some think is spoken ironically; but I see no reason why it may not be understood seriously, that the people who were concerned in this building were unanimous, not only in their religious principles, such as they were, as Aben Ezra, but in their counsel, purpose, and design in building; they went on with great concord, harmony, and vigour, and being of one language, they understood one another, and so could carry on their work with the greater expedition:

and this they begin to do; to build the city and the tower, and had made considerable progress in it:

and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do; they had prepared bricks, and slime or bitumen, a sufficient quantity for their use, or could easily come at more if they wanted; and they were not to be prevailed upon to desist from their work, by any advice that the sons of God could give them; they were obstinate and self-willed, and not to be argued with and persuaded to leave off; and there was no power on earth superior to them, to oblige them to it; they could only be restrained from their enterprise, and hindered from executing it, by divine power; and which was judged necessary to exert, as appears by what follows: and the words may be rendered, "shall they not be restrained? &c." they shall.

Genesis 11:7

Ver. 7. Go to, let us go down, [and] there confound their language,.... These words are not spoken to the angels, as the Targum and Aben Ezra; for, as Philo the Jew observes {h}, they are said to some as co-workers with God, which angels could not be in this work of confounding the language of men; it being above the power of creatures so to work upon the mind, and on the faculty of speech, as to make such an alteration as was at the confusion of tongues, when men were made to forget their former language, and had another put into their minds, and a faculty of speaking it given; or, however, the first language was so differently inflected and pronounced, that it seemed another, and various; all which could not be done but by him who is almighty, even that Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, said Ge 11:8 to confound man's language; and the first of these speaks to the other two, with whom he consulted about doing it, and with whom he did it. Not that every man had a new and distinct language given him, for then there could have been no society and converse in the world, but one was given to each family; or rather to as many families as constituted a nation or colony, designed for the same place of habitation; how many there were, cannot be said with any certainty. Euphorus, and many other historians {i}, say they were seventy five, according to the number of Jacob's posterity that went down into Egypt; others say seventy two: the Jewish writers generally agree with the Targum of Jonathan in making them seventy, according to the number of the posterity of Noah's sons, recorded in the preceding chapter; but several of them spoke the same language, as Ashur, Arphaxad, and Aram, spoke the Chaldee or Syriac language; the sons of Canaan one and the same language; and the thirteen sons of Joktan the Arabic language; Javari and Elisha the Greek language; so that, as Bochart {k} observes, scarce thirty of the seventy will remain distinct: and it is an observation of Dr. Lightfoot {l} not to be despised, that

"the fifteen named in **Ac 2:5** were enough to confound the work (at Babel), and they may very well be supposed to have been the whole number."

The end to be answered it was,

that they may not understand one another's speech; or "hear" {m}, that is, so as to understand; the words were so changed, and so differently pronounced from what they had used to hear, that though they heard the sound, they could not tell the meaning of them: hence, as Jarchi observes, when one asked for a brick, another brought him clay or slime, on which he rose up against him, and dashed his brains out.

{h} De Confus. Ling. p. 344. {i} Apud Clement. Alexandr. Strom. l. 1. p. 338. {k} Phaleg. l. 1. c. 15. col. 55. {l} See his Works, vol. 1. p. 694. {m} wemv "audiant", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Genesis 11:8

Ver. 8. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence, upon the face of all the earth,.... Hence that which they feared came upon them, and what they were so careful to guard against befell them, occasioned by those measures they took to secure themselves from it; for not being able to understand one another, they left off their design, and as many as spoke the same language joined together, and so parted in bodies; some went one way, and some another, and settled in different places, until at length, by degrees, the whole world was peopled by them, which was the will of God should be done, and was brought about in this way. The Heathen writers themselves ascribe this dispersion to a divine Being, as well as speaking different tongues. Eupolemus {n} says, that first the city of Babylon was built by those that were saved from the flood, who were giants;

and then they built tower, so much spoken of in history, which falling by the power of God, the giants were "scattered throughout the whole earth". One would think this writer, by his language, must have read this account of Moses: some of them say the fall of the tower was by storms and tempests raised by the gods. So the Sybil in Josephus {o} says,

"the gods sending winds overthrew the tower, and gave to every one his own speech, and hence the city came to be called Babylon."

Agreeably to which Abydenus {p}, an Assyrian writer, relates, that

"the winds being raised by the gods overthrew the mechanism (the tower) upon them (the builders of it), and out of the ruins of it was the city called Babylon, when those who were of the same language, from the gods spoke a different one, and of various sounds."

And so Hestiaeus {q}, a Phoenician writer, speaking of those who came to Sennaar or Shinar of Babylon, says, from thence they were scattered; and, because of the diversity of language, formed colonies everywhere, and everyone seized on that land which offered to him. These writers indeed seem to be mistaken as to the destruction of the tower, and that by tempestuous winds; otherwise they agree with Moses in the confusion of languages, and scattering of the people at the tower of Babel: in what year this was done is not certain; it was in the days of Peleg, who was born in the year one hundred and one after the flood; and if it was at the time of his birth, as many are of opinion, both Jews {r} and Christians, it must be in the above year; but the phrase used does not determine that: the eastern writers {s} say, that it was in the fortieth year of the life of Peleg, and then it must be in the year after the flood one hundred and forty one; but others, and which is the common opinion of the Jewish chronologers {t}, say it was at the end of Peleg's days; and whereas he lived two hundred and thirty nine years, this must happen in the year three hundred and forty after the flood, and so it was ten years, as they observe, before the death of Noah, and when Abraham was forty eight years of age. But of this see more in Buxtorf's dissertation concerning the confusion of the Hebrew language. It follows here,

and they left off to build the city; it seems they had finished the tower, but not the city, and therefore are only said to leave off building that; though the Samaritan and Septuagint versions add, "and the tower"; for not understanding one another, they were not able to go on with their work, for when they asked for one thing, as before observed out of Jarchi, they had another brought them;

which so enraged them, that the Targum of Jonathan says they killed one another; and, say some Jewish writers {u}, they fought one with another upon this occasion, until half the world fell by the sword.

(Unlike traditions of the Flood, legends of the Tower of Babel and confusion of speech are not common. {12} That said, noteworthy support for the biblical account comes from Babylonia itself, where a damaged inscription reads:

"Babylon corruptly proceeded to sin, and both small and great mingled on the mound. ...All day they founded their stronghold, but in the night he put a complete stop to it. In his anger he also poured out his secret counsel to scatter them abroad, he set his face, he gave a command to make foreign their speech." {13-15}

This appears to have some basis in an historical event and is very close to the biblical account. Likewise, the Roman mythographer Hyginus (floruit 10 BC) writes:

"Men for many generations led their lives without towns or laws, speaking one tongue under the rule of Jove. But after Mercury interpreted the language of men--whence an interpreter is called hermeneutes, for Mercury in Greek is called Hermes; he, too, distributed the nations--then discord began amoug the mortals." {16}

Taken from p. 47, "Creation Technical Journey". Volumn Nine, Part 1, 1995, published by "Creation Science Foundation Ltd.", Brisbane, Australia.

{12} Strickling, J. E., 1974. "Legendary evidence for the confusion of tongues." Creation Research Society Quarterly, 11:97-101. {13} Sayce, A. H. (ed.), "Records of the Past" (old Series), Vol. VII, p. 131f. {14} "Journey of American Oriental Society", 88:108-111 (1968) {15} Smith, J., 1876. "Chaldean Account of Genesis", Scribners, New York. {16} Hyginus, C. Julius, Fabulae 143. Editor)

{n} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 17. p. 418. {o} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 4. sect. 13. {p} Apud Euseb. ut supra, (Praepar. Evangel. l. 9.) c. 14. p. 416. {q} Apud Joseph. ut supra. (Antiqu. 1. 1. c. 4. sect. 13.) {r} Vid. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 75. 2. {s} Elmacinus, p. 28. Patricides, p. 13. apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. p. 267. {t} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 1. p. 1. Juchasin, fol. 8. 1. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 1. 2. {u} Pirke Eliezer, c. 24.

Genesis 11:9

Ver. 9. Therefore is the name of it called Babel,.... The name of the city mentioned, and the tower also, which signifies "confusion", as the Septuagint version renders it; and so Josephus {w} says the Hebrews call confusion "Babel": perhaps this name was given it by the sons of Eber, or it might be a common name preserved in all languages, as some are; and though the first builders desisted from going on with building it, yet it seems that afterwards Nimrod went on with it, and completed it, and made it the beginning of his kingdom, or his capital city; and perhaps he and his family might continue after the confusion and dispersion somewhere near unto it, see Ge 10:10. The reason of its name is given,

because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth; and therefore it is false what is said by some, that the above city had its name from Babylon, the son of Belus:

and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and that it might be taken notice of and observed as a very wonderful and important event. These Babel builders were an emblem of self-righteous persons, who, as those were, are the greater part of the world, and, under different forms of religion, are all upon the same foot of a covenant of works; they all speak the same language; and indeed all men naturally do, declaring and seeking for justification by their own works; and journey from the east, depart from Christ, one of whose names is the east, or rising sun; they turn their backs on him and his righteousness; build on a plain, not on a rock or mountain, but on the sandy bottom of their own works, in a land of Shinar, or shaking, on a tottering foundation; their view is to get themselves a name, to be seen of men, and be applauded for their work sake, and that they might reach heaven, and get to it this way; but the issue of all is confusion and scattering abroad; for upon the foot of their own righteousness they can never enter into the kingdom of heaven.

{w} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 4. sect. 13.)

Genesis 11:10

Ver. 10. These are the generations of Shem,.... Or a genealogy of the posterity of Shem; not of all of them, only of those of the line which led to Abraham, by which might appear the true line in which the Messiah from Adam through Abraham sprung:

Shem was one hundred years old, and begat Arphexad two years after the flood; by which it is pretty plain that he was younger than Japheth; See Gill on "Ge 10:21" of Arphaxad his son,
See Gill on "Ge 10:22".

Genesis 11:11

Ver. 11. And Shem lived, after he begat Arphaxad, five hundred years,.... So that his whole age was six hundred years, and therefore must live to the times of Abraham, and even throughout the life of that patriarch, or near the end of it; and if he was the same with Melchizedek, as is the general opinion of the Jews, and is embraced by many Christians, they had an interview with each other:

and begat sons and daughters; of whom we have no account, because the Messiah did not spring from them; the design of this genealogy being to carry down his direct line from Shem to Abraham: it is to be observed, that in the account of the patriarchs, and their children after the flood, it is not added as before the flood, "and he died", their lives being long, that remark is made; but the lives of these being shorter, and gradually decreasing, it is omitted. An Arabic writer {x} says, that Shem died in the month Elul, on a Friday, at the close of the year of the world 2758. A Jewish writer {y} says, he died in the fifteenth year of Jacob, and that he saw twelve generations; according to Bishop Usher, he died A. M. 2158.

{x} Elmacinus, p. 13. apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 258. {y} R. Gedaliah, Shalshalet, fol. 1. 2.

Genesis 11:12

Ver. 12. And Arphaxad lived thirty five years, and begat Salah. Arphaxad is the first on record that had a son born to him so early; of Salah, See Gill on "Ge 10:24".

Genesis 11:13

Ver. 13. And Arphaxad lived, after he begat Salah, four hundred and three years,.... In all four hundred and thirty eight; the Vulgate Latin wrongly reads, three hundred and three:

and begat sons and daughters; not mentioned by name: he died, as the above Arabic writer {z} says, in the month Nisan, A. M. 2696; and a Jewish writer {a} says he died in the forty eighth year of Isaac, and who also says {b}, that in his days they began to build the city of Babel.

{z} Apud Ibid. p. 260. {a} R. Gedaliah, ut supra. (Shalshalet, fol. 1. 2.) {b} Ib. fol. 75. 1.

Genesis 11:14

Ver. 14. And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber. He had a son born to him five years sooner than his father had; of Eber,
See Gill on "Ge 10:25".

Genesis 11:15

Ver. 15. And Salah lived, after he begat Eber, four hundred and three years,.... In all four hundred and thirty three:

and begat sons and daughters; of whom also there is no other account: the same Arabic writer {c} says, he died in the month, Adar, which is called Barhamath, at the close of A. M. 2950; and the Jewish chronologer {d} says, he died in the fourteenth year of Jacob.

{c} Ut supra, (Apud Ibid.) p. 261. {d} R. Gedaliah, ut supra. (Shalshalet, fol. 1. 2.)

Genesis 11:16

Ver. 16. And Eber lived thirty four years, and begat Peleg. Of Peleg, See Gill on "Ge 10:25".

Genesis 11:17

Ver. 17. And Eber lived, after he begat Peleg, four hundred and thirty] years,.... All the years of his life were four hundred and sixty four:

and he begat sons and daughters; one of which is elsewhere mentioned, whose name is Joktan, Ge 10:25 according to the above Jewish writer {e}, he died in the seventy ninth year of Jacob.

{e} R. Gedaliah, Shalshalet, fol. 1. 2.

Genesis 11:18

Ver. 18. And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu. Or Ragau, as he is called in the Septuagint version, the letter e being pronounced as a "G", as in Gaza and Gomorrah: he is supposed to give name to a large plain called Ragau, near Assyria, about Tigris and Euphrates,

"Even in those days king Nabuchodonosor made war with king Arphaxad in the great plain, which is the plain in the borders of Ragau." (Judith 1:5)

and to Ragis in Media,

"In that day Tobit remembered the money which he had committed to Gabael in Rages of Media," (Tobit 4:1)

where Strabo {f} makes mention of a city of the same name.

{f} Geograph. l. 11. p. 354.

Genesis 11:19

Ver. 19. And Peleg lived, after he begat Reu, two hundred and nine years,.... In all two hundred and thirty nine, little more than half the age of his father:

and begat sons and daughters; but not named the Arabic writers {g} say he begat Melchizedek the priest, and that he died in the month Elul, A. M. 3126; and a Jewish writer {h} says he died in the forty eighth year of Abraham.

{g} Elmacinus apud Hottinger. p. 269. {h} R. Gedaliah, ut supra. (Shalshalet, fol. 1. 2.)

Genesis 11:20

Ver. 20. And Reu lived thirty two years, and begat Serug. He is thought to give name to a city called Sarug, which, according to the Arabic geographer {i}, was near Charrae, or Haran, in Chaldea; and another Arabic writer {j} speaks of a city called to this day "Sarug", which he places in Mesopotamia.

{i} Apud Bochart. Phaleg. l. 2. c. 14. col. 95. {j} Comment. ad Tab. Ilchanic apud Hyde, Hist. Relig. Pers. c. 2. 57.

Genesis 11:21

Ver. 21. And Reu lived, after he begat Sarug, two hundred and seven years,.... So that the whole of his life was two hundred and thirty nine years, the exact age of his father: in his days various kingdoms arose; according to the Arabic writer {k}, in the one hundred and thirtieth year of his life began Nimrod to reign at Babylon, the first king that reigned on earth: and according to the Jewish writers {l}, in his days began the kingdom of Egypt, which continued to the times of Octavian; and the kingdom of the Bohemians, the metropolis of which was Prague, and the kingdom of the Amazons, which continued to the times of Alexander: in his time also, the Arabic writers {m} say, idolatry prevailed, the worship of the sun, moon, and stars, and other things; and images of men and women were made by the Babylonians and Egyptians, and worshipped by them:

and he begat sons and daughters of whom no account is given; according to a Jewish writer {n}, he died in the seventy fifth year of Abraham.

{k} Elmacinus, p. 29. apud Hottinger. p. 270. {l} Juchasin, fol. 135. 2. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 76. 1. Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 3. 2. {m} Elmacinus, p. 20. Patricides, p. 14. apud Hottinger. p. 275, 276. {n} R. Gedaliah, Shalshalet, fol. 2. 1.

Genesis 11:22

Ver. 22. And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor. The grandfather of Abraham, one of the same name was Abraham's brother,
Ge 11:26.

Genesis 11:23

Ver. 23. And Serug lived, after he begat Nahor, two hundred years,.... The years of his life were two hundred and thirty:

and he begat sons and daughters; nowhere else mentioned: he died, according to the above Jewish writer {o}, in the one hundredth year of Abraham, and in his days, according to the eastern writers {p}, idolatry began, and the kingdom of Damascus was set up {q}; and Samirus, king of the Chaldeans, invented weights and measures, weaving silk, and the art of dying {s}.

{o} R. Gedaliah, Shalshalet. fol. 2. 1. {p} Apud Hyde, ut supra. (Hist. Relig. Pers. c. 2. 57.) {q} Juchasin, fol. 135. 2. {s} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 18.

Genesis 11:24

Ver. 24. And Nahor lived twenty nine years, and begat Terah. The father of Abraham, and the first of the patriarchs of this line of Shem that fell off from the true religion to idolatry.

Genesis 11:25

Ver. 25. And Nahor lived, after he begat Terah, one hundred and ninteen years,.... In all one hundred and forty eight years; so sensibly did the lives of the patriarchs decrease: in the days of Nahor, the Arabic writers {t} say, was a great earthquake, which had never been observed before; idolaters increasing and offering their children to demons, God raised a tempest like a deluge, which broke their images and destroyed their temples in Arabia, and covered them in heaps of sand, which remained to the days of those writers, as they affirm: in his days it is also said Spain, Portugal, and Arragon were founded {u}:

and begat sons and daughters; of whom no other account is given: he died, as a Jewish chronologer says {w}, in the one hundred and tenth year of Abraham.

{t} Patricides, p. 15. Elmacinus, p. 30. apud Hottinger. p. 279, 280. {u} Juchasin, fol. 135. 2. {w} R. Gedaliah, ut supra. (fol. 2. 1.)

Genesis 11:26

Ver. 26. And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Abram, though named first, does not appear to be the eldest, but rather Haran; nay, it seems pretty plain that Abram was not born until the one hundred and thirtieth year of his father's life, for Terah was two hundred and five years old when he died, Ge 11:32 and Abram was but seventy five years of age when he went out of Haran to Canaan, Ge 12:4 and that was as soon as his father died there; and so that if seventy five are taken out two hundred and five, there will remain one hundred and thirty, in which year and not before Abram must be born: the wife of Terah, of whom Abram was born, according to the Jewish writers {x}, her name was Chamtelaah, the daughter of Carnebo, or as others {y} call her, Amthalai; but by the Arabic writers {z} she is called Juna: the Jews say {a} Terah was the first that found out the way of coining money, and that in his days men began to worship images, and that he was the chief of their priests, but afterwards repented; and that he was an idolater appears from Jos 24:2.

{x} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 2. 1. & Bathra in ib. {y} Pirke Eliezer, c. 26. {z} Elmacinus, p. 31. Patricides, p. 17. apud Hottinger. p. 281. {a} Shalshalet, fol. 76. 1.

Genesis 11:27

Ver. 27. Now these are the generations of Terah,.... Or the genealogy of his posterity, which is a very short one; for it only gives an account of his three sons as before,

Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran: and of three grand children, Lot, Milcah, and Iscah, the children of Haran; and chiefly for the sake of Abram it is given, and indeed the above genealogy of Shem, which ends with him; and of whom and whose posterity the remaining part of this book of Genesis treats:

and Haran begat Lot: of whom we have some further account in Ge 13:1.

Genesis 11:28

Ver. 28. And Haran died before his father Terah,.... In his father's presence, before his face, in his life time, as Jarchi; he seeing him, as Aben Ezra: it does not so much respect the time of his death, that it was before his father, though that is true, as the place where he died, his father being present there at the time this was;

in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees; Ur, which Ben Melech renders a valley, was the place of his birth, as it was of Abram's; it was in Mesopotamia, that part of it next to Assyria being called the land of the Chaldeans; hence these are spoken of as the same by Stephen, Ac 7:2 mention is made by Pliny {b}, of a place in those parts called Ura, which seems to be the same with this: Eupolemus {c} says,

"that Abram was born at Camarine, a city of Babylon, some call Urie, and is interpreted a city of the Chaldeans;"

now Camarine is from rmk, "Camar", to heat or burn, and Ur signifies fire, so that both words are of the same signification: Josephus {d} says, that Haran died among the Chaldeans, in a city called Ur of the Chaldees, where, he adds, his grave is shown to this day: the Jews {e} have a fable concerning the death of Haran; they say that Terah was not only an idolater, but a maker and seller of images; and that one day going abroad, he left his son Abraham in the shop to sell them, who, during his father's absence, broke them all to pieces, except one; upon which, when Terah returned and found what was done, he had him before Nimrod, who ordered him to be cast into a burning furnace, and he should see whether the God he worshipped would come and save him; and while he was in it, they asked his brother Haran in whom he believed? he answered, if Abraham overcomes, he would believe in his God, but if not, in Nimrod; wherefore they cast him into the furnace, and he was burnt; and with respect to this it is said, "and Haran died before the face of Terah his father"; but Abraham came out safe before the eyes of them all.

{b} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 24. {c} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 17. p. 418. {d} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 5. {e} Shalshalet, fol. 2. 1, 2. Jarchi in loc.

Genesis 11:29

Ver. 29. And Abram and Nahor took them wives,.... Very probably after the death of their elder brother Haran, whose daughters they married, at least one of them did, and some think both;

the name of Abraham's wife was Sarai: it is not said whose daughter she was, unless she is the same with Iscah, the daughter of Haran, and so had two names, Iscah her name before marriage, Sarai after it, Abram calling her "my mistress", as "Sarai" signifies, as she called him my lord: so the Targum of Jonathan, Iscah, this is Sarai; in like manner Jarchi, Baal Hatturim, and other Jewish writers {f}, take them to be the same; but according to Ge 20:12 Sarai should be the daughter of Terah, the father of Abraham, by another woman; and so the Arabic writers {g} say,

"the mother of Abraham died, whose name was Juna; and Terah married another wife, whose name was Lahazib; she bore him Sarah, whom Abraham afterwards married:"

[and] the name of Nahor's wife Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah: so that Nahor married his brother's daughter, which sort of marriage was then allowed of, as formerly that of own brothers and sisters, but afterwards was strictly forbidden in the Levitical law: this account is given of Nahor's wife, as Aben Ezra observes, to show the pedigree of Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah: some think, as before observed, that Abram married the other daughter of his brother Haran, Iscah, and that she is the same with Sarai; and indeed, without supposing that, it is difficult to conceive for what reason this should be observed, that Haran, the father of Milcah, was also the father of Iscah; and if Sarai is not Iscah, no account is given by Moses of her descent, which may seem strange; and it can hardly be thought he would omit it, when it must be so agreeable to his people to know from whom they descended, both by the father's and mother's side.

{f} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 38. fol. 33. 3. 4. {g} Ut supra, (Elmacinus, p. 31. Patricides, p. 17.) apud Hottinger. p. 281.

Genesis 11:30

Ver. 30. But Sarai was barren; she had no child. Aben Ezra observes, there are some that say that Abraham was impotent, and not Sarai barren; the very reverse of the Scriptures; but as he rightly adds, his son Ishmael and his sons

by Keturah show the contrary, see
Ge 15:2.

Genesis 11:31

Ver. 31. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife,.... Many words are made use of in describing Lot and Sarai, and yet still we are left pretty much in the dark who Sarai was; for, as Aben Ezra observes, if she was the sister of Abram and daughter of Terah, the Scripture would have said, Terah took Abram his son and Sarai his daughter, and wife of Abram; and if she was the sister of Lot, it would have said, and Sarai the daughter of his son, as it does of Lot:

and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; that is, as Jarchi interprets it, Terah and Abram went forth with Lot and Sarai, or "with them" may mean with Nahor and Milcah: for Josephus {h} says, that all went into Charan of Mesopotamia, the whole family of Terah; and the Arabic historian {i} is express for it,

"Terah went out from Chorasan, and with him Abram, Nahor, Lot, his children, and their wives, and he went to Charan, where he dwelt:"

and it is certain, if Nahor and his wife did not set out with them, they followed them afterwards, for Haran was the city of Nahor, where his family in later times dwelt, see Ge 14:10 what moved Terah to depart from Ur of the Chaldees seems to be the call of God to Abram, which, though after related, was previous to this; and he acquainting his father Terah with it, he listened to it, being now convinced of his idolatry and converted from it, and readily obeyed the divine will; and being the father of Abram, is represented as the head of the family, as he was, and their leader in this transaction; who encouraged their departure from the idolatrous country in which they were, and set out with them to seek another, where they might more freely and safely worship the true God. Though Josephus {j} represents it in this light, that Terah hating the country of Chaldea, because of the mourning of Haran, he and all his went out from thence:

and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there; which Josephus {k} calls Charan of Mesopotamia, and yet Stephen speaks of Abraham being in Mesopotamia before he dwelt in Charan; but then Mesopotamia is to be taken both in a more general and a more limited sense; in general, it took in Mesopotamia and Chaldea, and in the eastern part of it was Ur of the Chaldees, and when Abram came from thence to Haran, he came into Mesopotamia, strictly so called. Stephen calls it Charran it is by Herodian {l} called karrai, by Ptolemy {m} Carrae, by Pliny {n} Carra, a city famous in Lucan {o} for the slaughter of Crassus, by whom it is called an Assyrian city. Benjamin of Tudela {p} speaks of it as in being in his time, and as two days journey from the entrance into the land of Shinar or Mesopotamia; and says, that in that place where was the house of Abraham, there is no building on it, but the Ishmaelites (the Mahometans) honour the place, and come thither to pray. Rauwolff, who was in this town A. D. 1575, calls it Orpha; his account of it is this {q}, that it is a costly city, with a castle situated on the hill very pleasantly; that the town is very pleasant, pretty big, with fortifications well provided; and that some say it was anciently called Haran and Charras: a later traveller {r} says, who also calls it Orpha,

"the air of this city is very healthful, and the country fruitful; that it is built four square, the west part standing on the side of a rocky mountain, and the east part tendeth into a spacious valley, replenished with vineyards, orchards, and gardens: the walls are very strong, furnished with great store of artillery, and contain in circuit three English miles, and, for the gallantness of its sight, it was once reckoned the metropolitical seat of Mesopotamia."

What detained Terah and his family here, when they intended to go further, is not said. Aben Ezra suggests, that the agreeableness of the place to Terah caused him to continue there; but it is very probable he was seized with a disease which obliged them to stay here, and of which he died.

{h} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 5.) {i} Elmacinus, p. 31. apud Hottinger. p. 282. {j} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 5.) {k} Ibid. {l} Hist. l. 4. sect. 24. {m} Geograph. l. 5. c. 18. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 24. {o} -----------Miserando funere Crassus, Assyrias latio maculavit sanguine Carrhas. Lucan. Pharsal. l. 1. v. 105. {p} Itinerarium, p. 60. {q} Travels, par. 2. ch. 10. sect. 176. by Ray. {r} Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 14, 15.

Genesis 11:32

Ver. 32. And the days of Terah were two hundred years,.... His days are summed up as none of the rest are in this genealogy, that it might be observed; his death being the time of Abram's leaving Chaldea and coming into the land of Canaan, given to him and his seed for an inheritance; see **Ac 7:4**

and Terah died in Haran: the Arabic historian {s} says, he died in Haran in the month Elul, in the year of his age two hundred and sixty five; but he gives him sixty years too many: a Jewish chronologer {t} says he died in the thirty fifth year of Isaac. Perhaps he gave the name to this place, where he dwelt a while, in memory of his son Haran, which before might be called by another name, Padanaram, as it seems to be called even after this; see Ge 24:10.

{s} Elmaaciuns, ut supra. (p. 31. apud Hottinger. p. 282.) {t} R. Gedaliah, Shalshalet, fol. 2. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 12

In this chapter an account is given of the call of Abram to depart from his own country, with a promise of a divine blessing, Ge 12:1 of his obedience to it, Ge 12:4 of his journey through the land of Canaan, and of the Lord's appearance to him in it, and his promise of it to his seed, and of Abram's building altars in it, and calling on the name of the Lord, Ge 12:6 and of a famine there, which occasioned him to go into Egypt, Ge 12:10 where, through fear of being slain, he desired his wife to call herself his sister, Ge 12:11 and she being greatly admired by the Egyptians for her beauty, it went well with Abram for her sake, Ge 12:14 but the Egyptians were plagued because of her, who, when they understood she was Abram's wife, sent them both away, and all that belonged to them, Ge 12:17.

Ver. 1. Now the Lord had said unto Abram,.... In Ur of the Chaldees, before he came and dwelt in Charran, as seems from **Ac 7:2** and so Aben Ezra interprets it; but Jarchi and others think, that what follows was said to him in Haran, and so the words may be more literally rendered {u}, "and the Lord said unto Abram"; after the death of Terah, who died in Haran; and indeed it is highly probable there were two appearances of God to Abram, and that the same words, or very near the same, were spoken to him at two several times, first in Ur of the Chaldees, and then in Haran:

get thee out of thy country; the land of Chaldea, and the city of Ur, which was in it, or out of Mesopotamia, in which, when taken in a large sense, were both Ur and Haran; and this country was now become idolatrous, for though it was first inhabited and peopled by the posterity of Shem in the time of Arphaxad, yet these, in process of time, degenerated from the true religion, and fell into idolatry. The same Maimonides {w} calls Zabaeans, in whose faith and religion, he says, Abram was brought up, and who asserted there was no other God but the sun, moon, and stars; and these Zabaeans, as he relates from their books and annals, say of Abram themselves, that he was educated in Cuthia, and dissented from the common people; and asserted, that besides the sun, there was another Creator; to whom they objected, and so disputes arose among them on this subject: now Abram being convinced of idolatry, is called out from those people, and to have no fellowship with them; it is literally in the Hebrew text {x}, "go to thee out of thy country"; for thy profit and good, as Jarchi interprets it; as it must be to quit all society with such an idolatrous and superstitious people:

and from thy kindred; as Nahor his brother, and his family, who are not mentioned, and seem to be left behind when Terah, Abram, Lot, and Sarai, came out of Ur of the Chaldees; though it looks as if afterwards Nahor did follow them to Haran or Padanaram, which are the same, and where he continued, and therefore is called his city; see Ge 24:10 so with great propriety Abram might be called a second time to leave his kindred as well as his country; and certain it is, Haran, or Padanaram, as well as Ur of the Chaldees, is called by himself his country, and Nahor and his family his kindred, Ge 24:4

and from thy father's house; or household, his family, which better agrees with the second call at Haran, than with the first at Ur; for, upon the first call, Terah and his family came along with Abram, and therefore this phrase is omitted by Stephen, who speaks of that call, **Ac 7:3** but Terah dying at Haran, his house or family went no further, but continued there with Nahor; only Abram and Lot, upon this second call, went from thence, as the following history makes it appear; and so Abram left, as he was bid, his father's house and family to go, as it follows:

unto a land that I will show thee; meaning the land of Canaan, though not mentioned, and seems to be omitted for the trial of Abram's faith; hence the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, Heb 11:8 observes, that "he obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went"; and yet it is said, that, when he and Terah came out of Ur of the Chaldees, "they went forth to go into the land of Canaan", Ge 11:31 and, when he and Lot went first from Haran, the same is said of them, Ge 12:5 it is probable the case was this; there was no mention made at first what land he was to go to, and when he prepared for his journey he knew not where he was to go, but afterwards it was revealed to him that Canaan was the land, and therefore set out in order to go thither; and still, though he might know the place by name where he was to go, he might neither know the way to it, nor what sort of country it was for quality or quantity; and therefore God promises to show him the way, and direct his course right unto it, and give him a view of it, that he might see what sort of a country, and how large it was, that he would give to his posterity. This call of Abram is an emblem of the call of men by the grace of God out of the world, and from among the men of it, and to renounce the things of it, and not be conformed unto it, and to forget their own people and their father's house, and to cleave to the Lord, and follow him whithersoever he directs them.

{u} rmayw "et dixit", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius. {w} More Nevochim, par. 3. c. 29. p. 421. {x} Kl Kl "vade tibi", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, &c.

Genesis 12:2

Ver. 2. And I will make of thee a great nation,.... In a literal sense, as the people of the Jews were that descended from him, and in a spiritual sense believers in all ages and of all nations, that walk in the steps of the faith of Abram, who are his children, and are blessed with him:

and I will bless thee; not only with temporal blessings, but principally with spiritual ones, since Abram in person had no share of the land of Canaan; even with the adoption of children and friendship with God; with justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, which blessedness came upon him when uncircumcised; with a large measure of faith, and every other grace; with the sanctification of the Spirit, and an increase of it until brought to perfection; and with eternal glory and happiness, a right, title, and meetness for it, and the full possession of it:

and make thy name great; as it was among the Jews his descendants, who boasted of having Abram for their father; and among the several nations of the world; his name is famous in profane history, and is in high esteem with the Mahometans to this day; and especially his name is great and famous, and the memory of him precious among all those who have obtained like precious faith with him, in every age and in every nation:

and thou shall be a blessing; to all that knew him and conversed with him, they receiving spiritual light and knowledge by means of his instruction, and to all that should hear and read of his faith and piety, being encouraged by his example: or, "shall be blessing"; blessing itself, that is, most blessed, exceedingly blessed; as a very wicked man may be called wickedness itself; as "scelus" for "scelestus" with the Latins; so a good man may be called blessing itself, extremely happy.

Genesis 12:3

Ver. 3. And I will bless them that bless thee,.... Not the priests only that should bless his children, the children of Israel, as the Targum of Jonathan, but all men of all nations, and of every age, that speak well of him, commend him for his faith and holiness, and tread in his steps, these are blessed with faithful Abraham, **Ga 3:7**.

And curse him that curseth thee; here is a change of numbers, before the plural, here the singular, denoting, it may be, that many would bless him, and but few curse him, and that every individual person that did curse him should be cursed himself: the Targum of Jonathan wrongly restrains this to Balaam's cursing Abraham's children, and was cursed by God; Maimonides {y} thinks, there is no doubt to be made of it, that the Zabaeans, the idolatrous people Abram was brought up with, when he contradicted them, loaded him with curses and reproaches; and, because he bore them all patiently for the glory of God, as became him, therefore these words are said; but they, without question, respect future as well as present times, and regard all such, in every age and of every nation, that disapproves of, or rejects and reproaches Abram's God, his faith, his religion, and his people.

And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed; that is, in his seed, as in Ge 22:18 and which is interpreted of Christ, **Ac 3:25** meaning not every individual of all the families or nations of the earth; but that as many as believe in Christ, of all nations, are blessed in him; and that whoever of them are blessed, they are blessed and only blessed in him, and that they are blessed for his sake with all spiritual blessings; see **Eph 1:3** such as redemption, justification, remission of sins, sanctification, adoption, and eternal life.

{y} More Nevochim, ut supra. (par. 3. c. 29. p. 421.)

Genesis 12:4

Ver. 4. So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him,.... Or, "when the Lord had spoken to him", as Cocceius renders the words; when he had called him a second time, even when in Haran, immediately after the death of his father Terah; as soon as ever the words were spoken to him before recorded, he immediately prepared and got all things ready for his journey, and departed from Haran, as he had done before from Ur of the Chaldees:

and Lot went with him; of his own accord, and he only, besides his wife Sarai and his servants, for Terah was dead, and Nahor and his family stayed behind.

And Abram was seventy five years old when he departed out of Haran; by which it appears, as has been observed, that he was not Terah's eldest son, born when he was seventy years of age, Ge 11:26 for then he must have been at this time, one hundred and thirty five years old, since his father, who was just now dead, lived to be two hundred and five years old, Ge 11:32 so that Abram must be born in the one hundred and thirtieth year of Terah: how many years before this time he was converted from idolatry cannot be said with any certainty; various are the accounts given by the Jewish writers; some say that at three years of age he knew his Creator; others at eight; others thirteen; others more probably when forty; others fifty one; others fifty two; and others say he was sixty years old when he began publicly to assert the unity of God in heaven {z}: however, all agree it was before the age here mentioned, as it may well be concluded.

{z} Vid. Pirke Eliezer, c. 26. Maimon. Hilchot obede cocabim, c. 1. sect. 3. & Comment. in ib. Juchasin, fol. 9. 2. Shalshelet, fol. 2. 2.

Genesis 12:5

Ver. 5. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son,.... The son of Haran his brother, not against their wills, but with their full consent: Sarai went readily with him, not only as being his wife, and so obliged by the law of marriage and tie of relation, but on the score of religion; and Lot as being a good man, and so willing to go with him, as his near relation too, for the sake of religion.

And all their substance that they had gathered; either in Ur of the Chaldees, or in Haran, and indeed in both; which, as it was their own property, they had a right to take with them, and it was their wisdom so to do, both for the support of their families, and for the service of religion; and it appears from hence that they were not slothful, but industrious persons, and by the blessing of God were succeeded in their employments:

and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; the more excellent part of man being put for the whole; and the meaning is, either that were procreated {a}, as some render it, or begotten by them; for, though Abram had no children, Lot had, and possibly some that might be begotten while there; and their servants might have children by their fellow servants, and to which Abram and Lot had a right, and therefore took them with them; or rather it means servants which they had bought with their money there, and so had gotten or obtained them as their own property: some understand it of the proselytes made during their stay there; and no doubt they were as industrious in spreading and propagating the true religion, as in acquiring substance and servants; and to this sense are the several Chaldee paraphrases; that of Onkelos is,

"and the souls which they made subject to the law in Haran;"

the Targums of Jerusalem and Jonathan are,

"and the souls of the proselytes, or which they proselyted in Haran;"

and with this agrees the note of Jarchi,

"which they brought under the wings of the Shechinah; Abram proselyted the men, and Sarai the women;"

though in the literal sense he takes it to be the acquiring of servants and handmaids; there might be of both sorts, both proselytes and servants bought with money, which made up the number of three hundred and eighteen trained servants, Ge 14:14 how long Abram stayed in Haran is not certain, it must be some time, to gather more substance, increase servants, and make proselytes; the Jews {b} generally say he was there five years.

And they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came: which last clause is very fitly added, since, when they came out of Ur, they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, Ge 11:31 but they did not then come into it, but stopped by the way at Haran; but now, when they went out from thence, they proceeded on in their journey, and made no stay any where of any length, until they came into the land of Canaan; which is reckoned to be three hundred miles from the one to the other, and by some four hundred to Sichem, and a troublesome way through the deserts of Palmyrene, and over the mountains of Lebanon and Hermon {c}: of Ura, Pliny says {d}, which seems to be the same with Ur, it is a place where, turning to the east, we leave the Palmyrene deserts of Syria, which belong to the city Petra, and the country called Arabia Felix; and, as it was at the northern part of Canaan they entered, they must come over Lebanon, which was the northern border of it.

{a} wve, "procreaverant", Piscator. {b} Seder Olam Rabba, Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 5. 2. {c} See Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World, par. 1. b. 2. sect. 3. p. 130. and Bunting's Travels, p. 56. {d} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 24.

Genesis 12:6

Ver. 6. And Abram passed through the land,.... Entering the northern part of it, as appears by his going southward, Ge 12:9 he went on

unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh; the place afterwards called Shechem, from a prince of that name in the times of Jacob; and so it was called when Moses wrote, and therefore, by way of anticipation, calls it so here; it was about the middle of the land of Canaan, and the same with Sychar, a city of Samaria, in the times of Christ, **Joh 4:5**. Moreh was the name of a man, from whence the plain took its name, which was near Sichem; some render it the oak of Moreh {e}, perhaps the same with that in Ge 35:4 or a grove of oaks of that name; the Syriac and Arabic versions render it the oak of Mamre wrongly.

And the Canaanite [was] then in the land; in that part of the land where they were in Jacob's time, see Ge 34:30 this land belonged to the posterity of Shem, but Canaan's offspring seized upon it and held it, as they did in the times of Moses, but were then quickly to be removed from it; but now they were settled in it in Abram's time, which was a trial of his faith, in the promise of it to his seed, as well as it was troublesome and dangerous to be in a country where such wicked and irreligious persons lived.

{e} hrwm Nwla "quercetum More", Tigurine version, "quercum Moreh", Pagninus, Montanus.

Genesis 12:7

Ver. 7. And the Lord appeared unto Abram,.... Perhaps in an human form, and so it was the Son of God; for whenever there was any visible appearance of a divine Person, under the former dispensation, it seems to be always of the essential Word, that was to be incarnate, and who spake with an articulate voice:

and said, unto thy seed will I give this land; the whole of it inhabited by Canaanites and others; and it was for this end chiefly that Abram was called out of Chaldea into Canaan, to be shown the land, and have the grant of it for his posterity:

and there builded an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him: by way of gratitude and thankfulness for his kind and gracious appearance, and for the gift of the land of Canaan to his offspring; for on this altar he no doubt offered sacrifice in a way of thanksgiving, as Noah did when he came out of the ark.

Genesis 12:8

Ver. 8. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel,.... As it was afterwards called by Jacob, which before and at this time had the name of Luz, Ge 28:19 now to the east of this place was a mountain, whither Abram removed his tent from Sichem, which was about twenty miles from it, as Sir Walter Raleigh {f} observes, some say twenty eight {g}:

and pitched his tent; that is, upon the mountain, as before upon the plain, fitly representing the state of the people of God, as sojourners in this world, living like Abram in tents and tabernacles, having no abiding place:

having Bethel on the west, or "on the sea" {h}, the Mediterranean sea, which Aben Ezra calls the Spanish sea, and lay to the west of the land of Canaan:

and Hai on the east; the same which is called "Ai", and said to be on the east side of Bethel, **Jos 7:2** hard by this place, Rauwolff {i} says, you shall still find some old ruins of old stones, where first Abraham the patriarch did build a tent, as you read in
Ge 12:8 and he says that Bethel is still called to this day Bethisella, and is situated half a league further towards the west, at the foot of the hill, in a very

fruitful country:

and there he builded an altar unto the Lord: as he had done at Sichem; for wherever he went he worshipped God, and offered sacrifice unto him:

and called upon the name of the Lord: prayed unto him for fresh mercies, as well as gave thanks for past ones; or, "he called in the name of the Lord" {k}, he called upon Jehovah the Father, in the name of his Son, the glorious Mediator, who had appeared unto him, and whose day he saw and was glad.

{f} History of the World, par. 1. b. 2. sect. 3. p. 132. {g} Bunting's Travels, p. 56. {h} Mym "a mari", Montanus, Piscater, Schmidt. {i} Travels, part 3. ch. 21. p. 317. Ed. Ray. {k} hwhy Mvb arqyw "et invocavit in nomine Domini", Montanus, Tigurine version.

Genesis 12:9

Ver. 9. And Abram journeyed,.... He did not stay long in the mountain between Bethel and Hai, but moved from thence, and kept on journeying in the land of Canaan:

going on still toward the south; the southern part of the land of Canaan, which lay nearest Egypt, into which he is said to go next, the occasion of which follows.

Genesis 12:10

Ver. 10. And there was a famine in the land,.... The land of Canaan, which was a very fruitful country, abounding with all kind of provisions usually; but now there was a scarcity of all; and which was both for the sins of the inhabitants of the land, and for the trial of Abram's faith, who was brought out of his own country, where was bread enough and to spare, into one in which there was a famine; and this might be a temptation to Abram to return from whence he came, and to slight and despise the country that was given him:

and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; not to dwell there, only till the famine was over; and rightly is he said to go down to Egypt, since that lay lower than the land of Canaan; and his going thither only to sojourn, and with an intention to return again to Canaan, shows the strength of his faith in the promise; and so far was he from going back to his own country, from whence he came, that he went directly the contrary, for Chaldee lay north east of Canaan, and Egypt south west: this country is in the Hebrew text called Mizraim, from the second son of Ham, see Ge 10:6 it had its name Egypt not from Aegyptus, one of its kings, as some {l} say, but from the blackish colour of its soil, and also of its river Nile, and of its inhabitants; which colour is by the Greeks called "aegyptios", from "aegyps", a vulture, a bird of that colour: it is bounded on the south by the kingdom of Sennar, tributary to the king of Ethiopia, and the cataracts of the Nile; on the north by the Mediterranean sea; on the east by the Arabian Gulf, or Red sea, and the isthmus of Suez; and on the west by a region of Lybia, called Marmorica {m}.

For the famine was grievous in the land; in the land of Canaan, and perhaps nowhere else; God ordering it so in his wise providence, that there should be plenty of food in one land, when there is a scarcity in another, that countries may be helpful to one another: of this famine, and of Abram's going down to Egypt on account of it, mention is made by Heathen writers; Nicolaus of Damascus says {n}, that Abram came out of Chaldee into Canaan, now called Judea, and a grievous famine being there, and understanding there was plenty in Egypt, he readily went thither, partly to partake of their plenty, and partly to hear what the priests would say of the gods; and Alexander Polyhistor relates, from Eupolemus {o}, that Abram removed from the place of his nativity, Camarine, called by some Urie, and settled in Phoenicia, where being a famine, he went with all his family into Egypt, and dwelt there.

{l} Apollodorus, l. 2. in initio. {m} Vid. Universal History, vol. 1. p. 391. {n} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 16. p. 417. {o} Apud ib. c. 17. p. 418, 419.

Genesis 12:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt,.... Just entering into it, having travelled from the mountain between Bethel and Hai, two hundred and forty miles {p}; or when he "caused to come near" {q}, either his camp, as Aben Ezra supplies it, or his tent, or his family, as others:

that he said unto Sarai his wife, behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon; though sixty five years of age, being ten years younger than her husband, see Ge 17:17 who was now seventy five years old, Ge 12:4 yet might still be a fair woman, having a good complexion and comely features, and having never bore children, and especially she would be reckoned so among the Egyptians, whose women were of a blackish, sallow, swarthy complexion.

{p} Travels of the Holy Patriarchs, &c. p. 56. {q} byrqh rvak "quum admoveret, sub tentorium", so some in Vatablus; "familiam", Munster.

Genesis 12:12

Ver. 12. Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee,.... Who were a lustful people, and whose eyes would soon be fastened upon, and be taken with the beauty of Sarai:

that they shall say, this is his wife; this beautiful woman is such a man's wife:

and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive; so great a regard had they in those times, and even in Heathen countries, to the laws of marriage, that they chose rather to be guilty of murder than of adultery, though a lustful people; and therefore would, as Abram feared, take away his life, that it might be free and lawful for them to marry Sarai.

Genesis 12:13

Ver. 13. Say, I pray thee, that thou art my sister,.... Which though it was not putting a direct lie into her mouth, she being his sister in some sense, as appears from Ge 20:12 yet it was done to conceal truth, and to deceive the Egyptians, and tended to endanger his wife's chastity, as well as showed great timorousness in him, and distrust of the divine care and protection of him; and upon the whole it must be criminal in him, and shows that the best of men are liable to sin, and the strongest believer to fall, and that a saint may fail in the exercise of that grace for which he is most eminent, as Abram was for his faith, and yet fell into unbelief, and through that into other sins; this he said to his wife, and desired her to say on occasion, when she found it necessary:

that it may be well with me for thy sake; his life spared, as follows:

and my soul shall live because of thee; his life be safe and secure for her sake, being reckoned her brother, whereas he feared it would be in the utmost danger should it be known she was his wife.

Genesis 12:14

Ver. 14. And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt,.... To the city of Heliopolis; for there it was that Abram had his abode, as Eupolemus {r} says, when upon the famine he went into Egypt, and where he conversed with the Egyptian priests, and taught them astrology, and other things belonging to it; and of this descent of Abram into Egypt, and teaching astrology, Artapanus {s}, another Heathen writer, speaks; Abram, he says, having learned the science of astrology, went first into Phoenicia and taught it the Phoenicians, and afterwards went into Egypt, and taught it there.

[The] Egyptians beheld the woman, that she was very fair; Abram knew that Sarai was a fair woman; but in the eyes of the Egyptians she was very fair, exceeding fair, they not being used to see very beautiful women.

{r} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praepar. Evangel. c. 17. p. 418, 419.) {s} Apud ib. c. 18. p. 420.

Genesis 12:15

Ver. 15. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh,.... The king of Egypt; so it seems by this, that Abram and Sarai were at the place where the court was kept, which the Arabic writers {t} say was Mesr (or Memphis), the capital of the kingdom. And these princes were the king's courtiers, who taking notice of Sarai, and admiring her beauty, praised her for it to the king, and recommended her to be taken into the number of his wives or concubines, they understanding that she was a single woman and the sister of Abram: and this they did to gratify their king, and gain his favour:

and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house; or palace, as the Jerusalem Targum; his royal palace, as the Targum of Jonathan; very probably into that part of his palace where his women were kept, or to some apartment where she might be purified and prepared for him; and this requiring time, was the means of preserving her from the danger she was exposed unto, see **Es 2:8**. The kingdom of Egypt, according to the Jewish and Arabic writers {u}, was set up in the times of Reu, about three hundred years before Abram was here; its first king was Mizraim, a son of Ham, the same with the Menes of Herodotus; by whom also mention is made of a king of Egypt, whose name was Pheron {w}, which seems to bear some likeness to the name of this king, who by Artapanus

{x} is called Pharethone, and whom, he says, Abram taught astrology. It is generally thought that Pharaoh was a common name to the kings of Egypt, and continued to be so to the times of Ezekiel, as Ptolemy was some time after, and as Caesar with the Romans: whether this king was the first of the name is not certain, but probable; according to some {y}, he was one of the Hycsi, or shepherd kings. Mr. Bedford {z} calls him Janias, their fifth king, and this was about A. M. 2084, and before Christ 1920. A Jewish chronologer {a} asserts, he was the first Pharaoh, who was in the times of Abram, and that his name was Totis, or Tutis, as the Arabic writers {b}, one of which {c} says, that in the times of Serug lived Apiphanus king of Egypt (the same with Apophis; who according to Bishop Usher {d} was this Pharaoh); after him was Pharaoh, the son of Sancs, from whom they (the kings of Egypt) were called Pharaohs. The name of Pharaoh is derived by some {e} from
erp, which signifies both to be free, and to revenge; and so kings were called, because free from laws themselves, and were revengers of them that do evil: but it rather seems to come from the Arabic word {f}, which signifies to be above others, and rule over them; and so may be thought to be not the proper name of a man, but an appellative, or the name of an office; or in other words, a king, see Ge 41:44 and so it may be always rendered, where it is used, as here, the king's courtiers saw her, and commended her to the king, and she was taken into the king's house; though to this may be objected, that Pharaoh is sometimes called Pharaoh king of Egypt, and then there would be a tautology; wherefore it may be better perhaps to take it in the former sense.

{t} In the Universal History, vol. 2. p. 115. {u} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 76. 1. Elmacinus, p. 29. apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 274. {w} Euterpe sive, l. 2. c. 111. {x} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 16. p. 417.) {y} Vid. Rollin's Ancient History, vol. 1. p. 68. {z} Scripture Chronology, p. 314. {a} Juchasin, fol. 135. 1. {b} In the Universal History, vol. 2. p. 115. {c} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 19. {d} Annal Vet. Test. p. 7. {e} Malvenda, Ainsworth, &c. {f} "in summo fuit, summumque cepit vel tenuit", Golius, col. 1787. Castel. col. 3077.

Genesis 12:16

Ver. 16. And he entreated Abram well for her sake,.... Pharaoh was very complaisant to him, showed him great respect, and bestowed many favours on him on account of Sarai, whom he took to be his sister, and which were done, that he would consent that she might be his wife:

and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels; which were, some at least, if not all, the gifts of Pharaoh to him, or otherwise there seems to be no reason why they should be made mention of here. The Jews say {g}, that Pharaoh, because of the love he had to Sarai, gave to her by writing all his substance, whether silver or gold, or servants or farms, and also the land of Goshen for an inheritance; and therefore the children of Israel dwelt in the land of Goshen, because it was Sarai our mother's, say they.

{g} Pirke Eliezer, c. 26.

Genesis 12:17

Ver. 17. And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues,.... Perhaps with the same sort that Abimelech and his servants were smote with on a like account, Ge 20:17. The Jews {h} say they were smitten with ulcers; not only Pharaoh was plagued, but those of his household also, his courtiers and servants, who were accessary to the bringing of Sarai into his house; for all this was

because of Sarai, Abram's wife; or "upon the word of Sarai" {i}, as it may be literally rendered: hence the Jews have a notion, that an angel stood by Sarai with a scourge in his hand, and when Sarai bid him smite Pharaoh, he smote him {k}; but rbd signifies not a word only, but thing, matter and business: and so Onkelos renders it here: and the sense is, that Pharaoh and his courtiers were smitten, because of the affair and business of Sarai; because she was taken by them, and detained in Pharaoh's house, and designed to be made his wife or concubine; and thus for evil intentions was this punishment inflicted; so that evil designs, not brought into execution, are punishable; though the word of Sarai may mean what she was bid to say, and did.

{h} Jarchi in loc. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 41. fol. 35. 4. {i} yrv rbd le "propter verbum Sarai", Montanus; "super verbo", Munster, Piscator. {k} Jarchi in loc. Bereshit Rabba, ut supra. (sect. 41. fol. 35. 4.)

Genesis 12:18

Ver. 18. And Pharaoh called Abram, and said,.... Understanding how it was, that Sarai was his wife, which he came at the knowledge of, either by consulting his priests and diviners, as some say, on account of the plagues inflicted; or rather suspecting they were on the account of Sarai, from the nature of them, sent for her, and questioned her about this affair, who confessed the whole matter to him; unless it can be thought that he was warned of God in a dream, as Abimelech was on a like occasion; however he sent for Abram on what intelligence he had, and justly, though gently, reproved him:

what is this that thou hast done unto me? to impose upon me, and deceive me after this manner, by giving out that Sarai was thy sister, when she is thy wife; by which means I have been led to prepare to take her for my wife, and have brought plagues upon myself and family? and thus he resented it as an injury done him, as he well might:

why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? when he first took her into his house, and no doubt Abram was present then, and very often afterwards was in company with Pharaoh, and conversed with him, having respect for him for the sake of Sarai, he took to be his sister, and yet would never tell him she was his wife.

Genesis 12:19

Ver. 19. Why saidst thou, she is my sister?.... He could not imagine what could be the reason of it, what could induce him to give out such a story as this; for he knew not the fears that Abram was possessed with, which led him to it, and which might be in a good measure groundless, or else Pharaoh might have guessed at the reason; or this he said as being willing to be satisfied of the true one;

so I might have taken her to me to wife; ignorantly, and without any scruple, supposing her to have been free; and so should have been guilty of taking another man's wife, and of depriving him of her; which with him were crimes he did not choose to commit, though polygamy was not accounted any by him, for no doubt he had a wife or wives when about to take Sarai for one:

now therefore, behold thy wife, take [her], and go thy way; Sarai it seems was present at this interview, who was delivered to her husband untouched, as his own property, and is ordered to depart the country, that so neither the king, nor any of his courtiers or subjects, might be under any temptation to do him an injury, by violating the chastity of his wife. The whole of this affair is related by Eupolemus {l}, an Heathen historian, in a few words, in great agreement with this account; only he represents Sarai as married to the king of Egypt; he says, that Abram, on account of a famine, went to Egypt, with all his family, and there dwelt, and that the king of the Egyptians married his wife, he saying she was his sister: he goes on to relate more at large, says Alexander Polyhistor that quotes him, that the king could not enjoy her, and that his people and family were infected with a plague, upon which he called his diviners or prophets together, who told him that the woman was not a widow; and when the king of the Egyptians so understood it, that she was the wife of Abram, he restored her to her husband.

{l} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 18. p. 420.)

Genesis 12:20

Ver. 20. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him,.... His courtiers and servants, not to do him any hurt or injury in his person or substance; who he might suppose would be enraged at hearing how the king and they had been imposed upon and deceived; he ordered a guard about him while he was there, and to conduct him, and all that belonged to him, safely out of his dominions, as appears by what follows: but Dr. Lightfoot {m} is of opinion, that he gave charge to the Egyptians, making it as it were a law for the time to come, that they should not converse with Hebrews, nor with foreign shepherds, in any so near familiarity, as to eat or drink with them, which the Egyptians observed strictly ever after, Ge 43:32

and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had; they did not drive him out by force, or in any disgraceful manner, but being committed to a guard of men, appointed by the king, he had safe conduct out of the land, with his family, and all that he had; all that he brought with him, and all the increase he had made there, and all the gifts he had received of the king. The Jews {n} interpret it of the writings and gifts he had given to Sarai; and they {o} observe a great likeness between Abram's descent into Egypt, his being there, and departure out of it, and that of his posterity in later times; as that they both went thither on account of a famine; that they both went down to sojourn there; and that they both went out with great substance; with other particulars observed by them.

{m} See his Works, vol. 1. p. 694. {n} Pirke Eliezer, c. 26. {o} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 40. fol. 35. 3.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 13

This chapter gives an account of the return of Abram from Egypt to the land of Canaan, and to the same place in it he had been before, Ge 13:1 and of a strife between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot, and the occasion of it, Ge 13:5 which was composed by the prudent proposal of Abram, Ge 13:8 upon which they parted; Abram continued in Canaan, and Lot chose the plain of Jordan, and dwelt near Sodom, a place infamous for wickedness, Ge 13:10 after which the Lord renewed to Abram the grant of the land of Canaan to him, and to his seed, Ge 13:14 and then he removed to the plain of Mamre in Hebron, and there set up the worship of God, Ge 13:18.

Ver. 1. And Abram went up out of Egypt,.... That country lying low, and so more easy to be watered by the river Nile, as it was, and Canaan being higher; whither he went, but not till the famine in Canaan ceased: he went out of Egypt, as the Jewish {p} chronologers say, after he had been there three months; but Artapanus {q} an Heathen writer, says, he stayed there twenty years:

he and his wife, and all that he had; servants and cattle:

and Lot with him: from whence it is clear that he went down with him into Egypt, and it is highly probable had great respect and favour shown him on account of his relation to Abram and Sarai; for it appears by what follows, that he was become very rich: and they all went up

into the south; into the southern part of the land of Canaan, for otherwise they came to the north; for as Egypt lay south with respect to Canaan, Canaan was north from Egypt; but they journeyed to that part of that land which was commonly called the south, either Negeb, as here, or Daroma; See Gill on "Zec 7:7".

{p} Seder Olam Rabba, p. 2. {q} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 18. p. 420.

Genesis 13:2

Ver. 2. And Abram was very rich,.... He was rich in spiritual things, in faith, and in all other graces, and was an heir of the kingdom of heaven; and in temporal things, as it sometimes is the lot of good men to be, though but rarely, at least to be exceeding rich, as Abram was; or "very heavy" {r}, as the word signifies, he was loaded with wealth and riches, and sometimes an abundance of riches are a burden to a man, and, instead of making him more easy, create him more trouble; and, as we may observe presently, were the occasion of much trouble to Abram and Lot. Abram's riches lay

in cattle, in silver, and in gold; cattle are mentioned first, as being the principal part of the riches of men in those days, such as sheep and oxen, he and she asses and camels, see Ge 12:16 and besides these he had great quantities of silver and gold: the Jews say {s} he coined money in his own name, and that his coin had on one side an old man and an old woman, and on the other side a young man and a young woman. His riches no doubt were greatly increased by the gifts and presents he received from the king of Egypt during his stay there.

{r} dam dbk "gravis valde", Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Schmidt. {s} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 2. 1.

Genesis 13:3

Ver. 3. And he went on in his journeys from the south,.... He took the same tour, went the same road, stopping at the same resting places, as when he went down to Egypt; having learned, as Jarchi observes, the way of the earth, that a man should not change his host. Though some, as Ben Gersom, understand it of his taking his journeys as were suitable for his cattle, as they were able to bear them, and not overdrive them, lest he should kill them, but made short stages, and frequently stopped and rested. And thus he went on through the southern part of the land, until he came

even to Bethel; as it was afterwards called, though now Luz,
Ge 28:19

unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning; when he first came into the land of Canaan, to a mountain

between Bethel and Hai; afterwards called Mount Ephraim, and was four miles from Jerusalem on the north {t}; see Ge 12:8.

{t} Bunting's Travels, &c. p. 59.

Genesis 13:4

Ver. 4. Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first,.... When he first came to that place, and before he went down to Egypt: it is not said he came to the altar, but "to the place", where it had stood, for it seems now to have been demolished, either having fallen of itself, being made of earth, or had been destroyed by the Canaanites, since Abram left it; or perhaps it might be pulled down by Abram himself before he went from thence, that it might not be used and polluted by the idolatrous Canaanites.

And there Abram called on the name of the Lord; prayed unto him, and gave him thanks for the preservation of him and his wife in Egypt; for the support of himself and his family there during the famine in Canaan; for the increase of his worldly substance, and for the protection of him, and all that belonged to him, in his journey from Egypt thither; and for all the instances of his grace, and the rich experiences of his goodness he had favoured him with;
See Gill on "Ge 12:8" where the same form of expression is used.

Genesis 13:5

Ver. 5. And Lot also, which went with Abram,.... into Egypt, and was now come back with him;

had flocks, and herds, and tents; flocks of sheep, and herds of cattle, of oxen, asses and camels, and tents for himself and his servants to dwell in, and put his substance in.

Genesis 13:6

Ver. 6. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together,.... That part of the country where Abram and Lot were could not afford them room enough for their several tents; or however could not furnish them with sufficient pasturage for their flocks and herds, they were so numerous; at least could not do it so as to be contiguous to each other, that there was a necessity of one of them going further off:

for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together; we have before an account of the substance of each of them, how great it was; and here now is noted an inconvenience which arises from a large increase of riches, that relations and friends are obliged to part, and cannot dwell together; what one would think would make them more comfortable together, is the cause and occasion of their separation.

Genesis 13:7

Ver. 7. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle,.... Not between the two masters, but between their servants, their upper servants, that had the care of their herds to feed them, and water them; and it is very probable their strife was about pasturage and watering places, the one endeavouring to get them from the other, or to get the best; which is much more likely than what Jarchi suggests, that the herdmen of Lot were wicked men, and fed their cattle in the fields of others, and the herdmen of Abram reproved them for their robbery; but they said, the land is given of Abram, and he hath no heir, but Lot is his heir, and what robbery is this? and to this sense are the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem:

and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land; which observation is made by Moses to point to a reason why they could not both of them have a sufficiency for their large flocks and herds, because the country was in the possession of others; and though there was to spare, yet not enough for them both. The Canaanite, though it was a general name for the people of the whole land, yet was given to a particular family in it, and was derived from their first founder Canaan, the son of Ham; the Perizzite was another family or tribe of the same nation, who had their name from zwrp, "a village"; these being Pagans or villagers, living in huts, or houses, or tents scattered up and down in the fields, and were a rough, inhuman, and unsociable sort of people, and therefore it could not be expected that they would oblige them with much pasturage and water for their flocks: and besides, this may be remarked, partly to show the danger that Abram and Lot were in through the dissension of their herdmen, since those people that were so nigh might take the advantage of their quarrels among themselves, and fall upon them both, and destroy them, and therefore a reconciliation was necessary; and partly to observe the reproach that was like to come upon them, and upon the true religion, for their sakes, should they differ among themselves, which such sort of men would gladly catch at, and improve against them.

Genesis 13:8

Ver. 8. And Abram said unto Lot,.... Being either an ear witness himself of the contentions of their servants, or having it reported to him by credible persons, he applied himself to Lot, in order to make peace, being a wise and good man; and though he was senior in years, and superior in substance, and higher in the class of relation, and upon all accounts the greatest man, yet he makes the proposal first, and lays a scheme before Lot for their future friendship, and to prevent quarrels, and the mischievous consequences of them:

let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee; there had been none yet, but it was very likely there would, if the dissension should go on between their servants; they could not well avoid interesting themselves in it, when it related to their respective properties; and there must be a right and wrong in such cases to be looked into and adjusted, which might occasion a difference between them; and this Abram was desirous of preventing, and therefore bespeaks his kinsman in this loving, affectionate, and condescending language:

and [or] between my herdmen and thy herdmen; as he understood there was, and which, if not timely put an end to, might be of bad consequence to them both, especially as to their peace and comfort, giving this excellent reason to enforce his request:

for we [be] brethren; or "men brethren we [be]" {u}; we are men, let us act like such, the rational and humane part; they were brethren being men, so by nature all are brethren; by natural relation, Lot being the son of his brother Haran; brethren in religion, of the same faith in the one true and living God, and worshippers of him; and therefore on all accounts, by the ties of nature, relation, and religion, they were obliged to seek and cultivate peace and love.

{u} wnxna Myxa Myvna "viri fratres vos", Pagninus Montanus, Drusius, Schmidt.

Genesis 13:9

Ver. 9. [Is] not the whole land before thee?.... Signifying, that though there were not room and convenience for them both in that part of the country in which they were, yet there were in other parts; and though the land was given to Abram, he did not desire Lot to depart out of it; nay, he sets it all before him to choose what part he would dwell in, which was great condescension in him:

separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; not that he was weary of his company and fellowship with him, but, as things were circumstanced, a separation was necessary for the subsistence of their herds and flocks, and for the peace and comfort of their respective families; nor did he desire him to go out of the land, or be so far from him, that he could be of no advantage to him; but though separate, yet so near him as to give him help and assistance, as there might be occasion for it, and as there was some time after, which appears from the history of the following chapter.

If [thou wilt take] the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if [thou depart] to the right hand, then I will go to the left; or as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are,

"if thou wilt go to the north, I will go to the south, or if thou wilt go to the south, I will go to the north:"

for when a man stands with his face to the east, the principal part, the north is on his left hand, and the south on his right; and this was an usual way of speaking in the eastern countries; but they were not, as Grotius observes, Aristotelians, who make the east the right hand, and the west the left. This was an instance of the peaceable disposition of Abram, and of his humility and condescension to give his nephew leave, who was in all respects inferior to him, to make his choice, to go which way he would, and take what part of the country he pleased.

Genesis 13:10

Ver. 10. And Lot lifted up his eyes,.... He immediately fell in with Abram's proposal, but had not the ingenuity to return back the choice to Abram which he gave him, but took the advantage of it; nor did he show any uneasiness or unwillingness to part from Abram, though so near a relation, and so wise and good a man, and by whose means greatly he had obtained his riches; but without giving himself any concern about this, he at once cast about in his mind where to make his choice; he considered within himself which was the best part of the country, and most convenient for his flocks and herds, and where he was most likely to increase his substance; for this phrase chiefly has respect to the eyes of the understanding, he made use of, consulted with himself with his rational powers what was fittest to be done; unless we can suppose him situated on some considerable eminence, from whence he could have a view of the whole country he made choice of, as follows:

and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it [was] well watered every where; a large plain, full of rich pasturage, which had its name from the river Jordan, which by various windings and turnings ran through it, and which at harvest time overflowed its banks, and greatly contributed to the richness of the soil:

before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah: as he afterwards did by fire from heaven, and then that part of the plain on which those cities stood was turned into a sulphurous lake:

[even] as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt; as any most excellent garden that is full of plants and trees, well watered, and well cultivated, and taken care of; as things most excellent are sometimes expressed by having the name of God, or the Lord, added to them, as the "cedars of God", &c. or as the garden of Eden, which was planted by the Lord, abounding with all kind of trees, and was well watered by a river running through it: and some think that the plain of Jordan, and the parts thereabout, were the real garden of Eden; wherefore one learned {w} man takes the "as" here not to be a note of similitude, but of reality, and not merely comparative but causal, giving a reason why it was so watered, being the garden God; so that the plain was not like unto, but really was the garden of Eden: and another observes {x}, that the words should be rendered, "so was the garden of the Lord, as the land of Egypt", and that the repetition of the similitude only makes one comparison, and not two; not that the plain of Jordan is first compared with the garden of the Lord, and then with the land of Egypt; but the plain of Jordan, or garden of the Lord, is only compared with the land of Egypt; and with that undoubtedly it is compared, it being once a year overflowed by the river Jordan, as the land of Egypt was with the Nile, and was a most delightful and fruitful spot like that:

as thou comest unto Zoar; which is not to be connected with the land of Egypt, for Zoar was at a great distance from Egypt, but with the plain of Jordan, well watered everywhere till you come to Zoar, at the skirts of it, and which is by an anticipation called Zoar; for at this time, when Abram and Lot parted, it was called Bela, and afterwards, on another account, had the name of Zoar; see Ge 14:2.

{w} Nic. Abram. Pharus Ver. Test. p. 59. {x} Texelii Phoenix, l. 3. c. 7. p.

Genesis 13:11

Ver. 11. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan,.... Because of its good pasturage, and because of the plenty of water there; the want of both which was the inconvenience he had laboured under, and had occasioned the strife between his and Abram's servants:

and Lot journeyed east, or "eastward"; for the plain of Jordan, and that part of the land on which Sodom and Gomorrah stood, were to the east of Bethel: the phrase is by some rendered "from the east" {y}, and the particle used most commonly so signifies; and Jarchi observes, that he journeyed from east to west; and Aben Ezra says, that Sodom was at the west of Bethel, in which he is most certainly wrong, for it was most clearly in the eastern part of the land; wherefore others, that follow this version, interpret it, that he went from the east of Bethel, or he went into that country situated at the east with respect to the land of Canaan; but it is best to render it as we do, east or eastward, to or towards the east {z}:

and they separated themselves the one from the other; that is, Abram and Lot, they parted good friends by consent; and the one went with his family, flocks, and herds, to one place, and settled there; and the other in another place, and so further animosities and contentions were prevented.

{y} Mdqm "ab Oriente", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Schmidt. {z} "Orientem versus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Cartwrightus.

Genesis 13:12

Ver. 12. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan,.... In that part of the land strictly so called, where the family of the Canaanites had their abode; for otherwise taking Canaan in a more general sense, the plain of Jordan, and cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, were in the land of Canaan.

And Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain; in the neighbourhood of them, or near those cities, which were built on the plain of Jordan, for he could not dwell in more than one, if in one; for it looks as if at his first settlement he did not dwell in any, but near them all, especially Sodom: since it follows,

and pitched [his] tent toward Sodom, or "even unto Sodom" {a}; and it may be rendered, as it is by some, "he pitched his tents" {b}, for himself, his family, and his servants, his shepherds and his herdsmen, which reached unto Sodom, and where he afterwards dwelt, at least at the gate of it.

{a} Mdo de "usque Sodom", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt. {b} lhayw "movens tentoria", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator & Tigurine version; so Jarchi.

Genesis 13:13

Ver. 13. But the men of Sodom [were] wicked,.... Which either he knew not, and so ignorantly made this bad choice, to take up his abode among such very wicked men, which occasioned a great deal of grief, trouble, and vexation to him; or if he knew it, the pleasing prospect of convenience for his cattle, and of enriching himself, was a temptation to him, and prevailed upon him to take such a step; and so Jarchi interprets it, "although" they were so, Lot was not restrained from dwelling among them:

and sinners before the Lord exceedingly; exceeding great sinners, guilty of the most notorious crimes, and addicted to the most scandalous and unnatural lusts that can be thought of; and these they committed openly and publicly in the sight of God, in the most daring and impudent manner, and in defiance of him, without any fear or shame. The Targum of Jonathan reckons up many of their sins, as defrauding of one another in their substance, sinning in their bodies, incest, unclean copulation, shedding of innocent blood, worshipping of idols, and rebelling against the name of the Lord; see **Isa 3:9**.

Genesis 13:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him,.... The Lord appeared unto him as he had before, and with an articulate voice spoke unto him, to comfort him upon the separation of his kinsman from him, and to renew the grant of the land of Canaan to him and his seed, and to assure him, that though Lot had chosen the most delightful and fruitful part of the country, yet it should not be an inheritance to him and his posterity, but the whole land should be Abraham's and his seed's.

Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art; being upon Mount Ephraim, between Bethel and Hai, see Ge 12:8; from whence his view of the land might be extended very far:

northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; the north of the land of Canaan was Mount Lebanon, the south of it Edom or Idumea, the east the plain and river of Jordan, the west the Mediterranean sea; and the word for "westward" here is "to the sea" {c}; northward of it was Babylon, southward Egypt, eastward Arabia, and westward the Mediterranean sea.

{c} hmyw "et ad mare", Montanus, Schmidt.

Genesis 13:15

Ver. 15. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it,.... Not only so much of it as his eye could reach, but all of it, as far as it went, which way soever he looked; and this he gave him to sojourn in now where he pleased, and for his posterity to dwell in hereafter; he gave him the title to it now, and to them the possession of it for future times:

and to thy seed for ever; the meaning is, that he gave it to his posterity to be enjoyed by them until the Messiah came, when a new world would begin; and which Abram in person shall enjoy, with all his spiritual seed, after the resurrection, when that part of the earth will be renewed, as the rest; and where particularly Christ will make his personal appearance and residence, the principal seed of Abram, and will reign a thousand years; see Gill "Mt 22:32"; besides, this may be typical of the heavenly Canaan given to Abram, and all his spiritual seed, and which shall be enjoyed by them for evermore.

Genesis 13:16

Ver. 16. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth,.... An hyperbolical expression denoting the great multitude of Abram's posterity, as they were in the days of Solomon, and as they will be in the latter day; and especially as this may respect all the spiritual seed of Abram, Jews and Gentiles, and as they will be in the spiritual reign of Christ, see **Ho 1:10**;

so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, [then] shall thy seed be numbered; but as it is impossible to do the one, so the other is not practicable, see Nu 23:10.

Genesis 13:17

Ver. 17. Arise, walk through the land,.... And take a survey of it, and see what a land it is, how good and how large, and take possession of it for himself and his, though he was only to be a sojourner in it; and so the Targum of Jonathan adds, and making in it a possession, which in civil law was done by walking:

in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; the extent of it is variously settled by geographers; some giving it no more than about one hundred and seventy or eighty miles in length, from north to south, and about one hundred and forty in breadth from east to west, where broadest, as it is towards the south, and but about seventy where narrowest, as it is towards the north: but it is observed {d} from the latest and most accurate maps, that it appears to extend near two hundred miles in length, and about eighty in breadth about the middle, and ten or fifteen more or less where it widens or shrinks:

for I will give it unto thee; that is, to his seed, the whole of it, in its utmost extent, as to length and breadth; which if he pleased for his own satisfaction he might take a tour through, whereby he would be a judge what was bestowed on him and his

{d} Vid. Universal History, vol. 2. p. 385.

Genesis 13:18

Ver. 18. Then Abram removed [his] tent,.... From the mountain between Bethel and Hai, Ge 13:3;

and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, or "in the oaks of Mamre" {e}; in a grove of oaks there, as being shady and pleasant to dwell among or under, and not through any superstitious regard to such trees and places where they grew; which has obtained since among the Heathens, and particularly among the Druids, who have their name from thence. Indeed such superstitions might take their rise from hence, being improved and abused to such purposes; and both Jerom {f} and Sozomen {g} speak of the oak of Abram being there in the times of Constantine, and greatly resorted to, and had in great veneration; and they and others make mention of a turpentine tree, which it is pretended sprung from a walking stick of one of the angels that appeared to Abram at this place, greatly regarded in a superstitious way by all sorts of persons: this plain or grove of oaks, here spoken of, was called after a man whose name was Mamre, an Amorite, a friend and confederate of Abram:

which [is] in Hebron; or near it, an ancient city built seven years before Zoan or Tanis in Egypt, Nu 13:22; it was first called Kirjath Arbab, but, in the times of Moses, Hebron, Ge 23:2. The place they call the Turpentine, from the tree that grows there, according to Sozomen {h}, was fifteen furlongs distant from Hebron to the south; but Josephus {i} says it was but six furlongs, or three quarters of a mile; who speaking of Hebron says,

"the inhabitants of it say, that it is not only more ancient than the cities of that country, but than Memphis in Egypt, and is reckoned to be of 2300 years standing: they report, that it was the habitation of Abram, the ancestor of the Jews, after he came out of Mesopotamia, and that from hence his children descended into Egypt, whose monuments are now shown in this little city, made of beautiful marble, and elegantly wrought; and there is shown, six furlongs from it, a large turpentine tree, which they say remained from the creation to that time."

A certain traveller {j} tells us, that the valley of Mamre was about half a mile from old Hebron; from Bethel, whence Abram removed to Mamre, according to Sir Walter Raleigh {k}, was about twenty four miles; but Bunting {l} makes it thirty two:

and built there an altar unto the Lord; and gave thanks for the prevention of strife between Lot and him, and for the renewal of the grant of the land of Canaan to him and his seed; and performed all acts of religious worship, which the building of an altar is expressive of.

{e} armm ynlab "juxta quercetum Mamre", Tigurine version, Pagninus, Montanus; so Ainsworth. {f} De loc. Heb. fol. 87. E. tom. 3. {g} Eccles. Hist. l. 2. c. 4. p. 447. {h} Ibid. {i} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 7. {j} Baumgarten. Peregrinatio, l. 2. c. 4. p. 79. {k} History of the World, par. 1. B. 2. sect. 3. p. 132. {l} Travels, p. 57.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 14

This chapter gives an account of a war that was waged, and a battle fought between four kings on one side, and five on the other, and of the occasion and issue of it, who were the first kings, and this the first battle the Scriptures speak of, Ge 14:1; Lot and his goods being taken and carried off, with those of Sodom, by the conquerors, Abram hearing of it armed his men, and pursued after them, and overtook and overcame them, and rescued Lot and his goods, with others, and returned, Ge 14:12; when he was met by the kings of Sodom and Salem, who congratulated him on his victory, Ge 14:17; and what passed between him, and those great personages, is related, Ge 14:20.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar,.... Or Babylon, as Onkelos, where Nimrod began his kingdom, Ge 10:8. This was Nimrod himself, as the Jewish writers generally says; though more likely Ninyas the son of Ninus and Semiramis, and grandson of Nimrod; or rather some petty prince or deputy governor of Shinar, under the king of Babylon; since, though named first, he was not the principal in this war, but fought under the king of Elam, and as an ally and auxiliary of his; and it may be the kingdom of Babylon was not as yet of any great extent and power, and that all those stories told of Ninus, Semiramis, and Ninyas, are mere fables; and indeed we hear nothing in Scripture of this kingdom, and the kings of it, from this time, until the times of Merodach Baladan, the son of Baladan king of Babylon, in the reign of Hezekiah king of Judah; nor of the Assyrian kingdom, and the kings of it, until Pul king of Assyria, in the times of Menahem king of Israel; wherefore it is greatly to be questioned, whether those kingdoms rose to any considerable height until these times: though some think that Shinar here does not intend Shinar in Chaldea or Babylon, which was too far distant from Abram, but Shinar in Mesopotamia, a large city at the foot of a mountain, three days distant from Mansil, which is now, in Arabic, called Singjar, and by Ptolemy, Singara {n}

Arioch king of Ellasar; or Telassar, according to the Targum of Jonathan, a place in Mesopotamia, inhabited by the children of Eden, Isa 37:12; and Stephanus {o} makes mention of a city in Coelesyria, upon the borders of Arabia, called Ellas, of which this prince may be thought to be the governor; or rather he was king of a people called Elesari, whose country is placed by Ptolemy {p} in Arabia; and could Ninyas be thought to be

Amraphel, this king would bid fair to be Ariaeus a king of Arabia, or a son of his of the same name, that was a confederate of Ninus, as Diodorus Siculus {q} relates out of Ctesias. Next follows,

Chedorlaomer king of Elam; or the Elamites, as the Vulgate Latin version, the Persians, see **Ac 1:9**. This led Diodorus {r} to say, that the war Moses speaks of is what the Persians waged against the Sodomites. This seems to have been the most powerful prince at this time, to whom the five kings of Sodom, &c. had been subject for twelve years, but now had rebelled, and to subdue them again he came forth, with three other kings his allies, see Ge 14:4; but if Elam is the same with Persia, as it often signifies, or with Elymais, a part of Persia, that kingdom could not be at this time so large and potent as it has been since; or Chedorlaomer would not have stood in need of the assistance of other princes against such petty kings as those of Sodom, &c. Nor does it seem credible that he should come out of Persia, and pass through so great a part of the world as the countries of Assyria, Chaldea, Mesopotamia, Syria, and part of Arabia and of Canaan, to bring five such small towns or cities into subjection to him, as he must, as Sir Walter Raleigh {s} observes; nor could the trifle of goods, as they may be comparatively called, he carried off, be an equivalent to the expense he must be at in so long a march. It is more probable, therefore, that this was the name of some place near to the land of Canaan, built by some of the posterity of Elam, the son of Shem, and called after the name of their ancestor; or it may be a colony of the Elamites in those parts, of which this prince was their head and chief:

and Tidal king of nations; that is, either of other nations distinct from those before mentioned, so Aben Ezra; or else, as he also observes, the name of a province; or as Jarchi and Ben Melech, the name of a place called Goim, because there were gathered together many out of various nations and places, and they set a man to reign over them, whose name was Tidal; just as one of the Galilees in later times was called Galilee of the nations, for a like reason. Sir Walter Raleigh {t} conjectures, that as there were many petty kingdoms joining to Phoenicia and Palestine, as Palmyrene, Batanea, Laodicene, Apamene, Chalcidice, Cassiotis and Celibonitis, these might be gathered together under this man. According to Eupolemus {u}, an Heathen writer, these several princes were Armenians that fought with the Phoenicians, and overcame them, by whom Lot was carried captive. Josephus {w} indeed, accommodating himself to the Greek historians, and in favour of them, says that the Assyrians at this time were masters of Asia, and led out an army under four generals, and made the kings of Sodom, &c. tributary to them; and they rebelling against them, made another expedition upon them under these four kings as their generals, and conquered them: but it seems not likely that the Assyrian monarchy was so large at this time; or if it was, these live petty kings of the plain of Jordan, who had not so much ground as our Middlesex, as Sir Walter Raleigh {x} observes, and perhaps not a quarter of the people in it, would never have dared to have engaged with so powerful an adversary.

{n} Hyde Hist. Relig. Pers. c. 2. p. 46. {o} De Urbibus. {p} Geograph. l. 6. c. 7. {q} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 90. {r} Apud Drusium in loc. {s} History of the World, par. 1. B. 2. c. 1. sect. 13. p. 138. {t} Ibid. sect. 11. p. 137. {u} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 17. p. 418. {w} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 9. {x} Ut supra, (History of the World, par. 1. B. 2. c. 1.) sect. 10. p. 136.

Genesis 14:2

Ver. 2. [That these] made war with Bera king of Sodom,.... A city in the plain of Jordan, which with the four following made the Pentapolis, or five cities of the plain. Strabo {y} says, in this place formerly were thirteen cities, the metropolis of which was Sodom, and which yet had remaining a compass of sixty furlongs; according to Dr. Lightfoot {z}, it should be placed in the southern extremity of the lake Asphaltites, whereas it is usually set in the maps in the northern bounds of it:

and with Birsha king of Gomorrah; another city in the plain of Jordan, called by Solinus {a} Gomorrum:

Shinab king of Admah; a third city situated in the same plain:

and Shemeber king of Zeboiim; a fourth city of the plain, which seems to have its name from the pleasantness of its situation:

and the king of Bela, which is Zoar; so it was afterwards called by Lot, being a little city, Ge 19:20; but before, Bela; the name of its king is not mentioned, being a person of no great note and importance, and his city small.

{y} Geograph. l. 16. p. 526. {z} Works, vol. 2. p. 6. Vid. Reland. Palestina illustrata, tom. 2. p. 1020. {a} Polyhistor. c. 48.

Genesis 14:3

Ver. 3. All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim,.... Or "of fields", or "ploughed lands" {b}, a fruitful vale abounding with corn; or of gardens or paradises, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, being full of gardens and orchards, and was as the garden of the Lord, even as Eden, see Ge 13:10; though Aben Ezra thinks it had its name from the slime or bitumen, of which there was great plenty in it, see Ge 14:10. Now the above five kings, as they all dwelt in the plain, they entered into a confederacy, met together, and joined their forces in this vale, to oppose the four kings that were come to make war with them, as being an advantageous place, as they judged, perhaps on more accounts than one; and here they stayed to receive the enemy, and give him battle, see Ge 14:8;

which is the salt sea; afterwards so called, not at this time, for then it would not have been fit for armies to be drawn up in battle array in it; but it was so called in the times of Moses, and after this fine vale was turned into a bituminous lake, and had its name from the saltness of the waters of the lake, or from the city Melach, or city of salt, which was near it, Jos 15:62.

{b} Mydvh qme la "valle amaenissimorum agrorum", Munster; "in planitie agrorum", Fagius; so Jarchi; "in valle occationum", Hiller. Onomastic. Sacr. p. 937. "dicta ab agris occatis", Schmidt.

Genesis 14:4

Ver. 4. Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer,.... King of Elam, who was of the race of Shem, and so the prophecy of Noah began to be fulfilled, that Canaan should be servant to Shem, **Ge 9:26**; for the kings of Sodom, &c. and their subjects, were of the race of Ham in the line of Canaan, who had by violence seized on that part of the earth which was allotted to the sons of Shem, and therefore Chedorlaomer being a descendant of his claimed his right, and made them tributary to him, which they were for the space of twelve years:

and in the thirteenth year they rebelled; refused homage to Chedorlaomer and to pay tribute to him.

Genesis 14:5

Ver. 5. And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer,.... Not in the fourteenth year of their rebellion against him, as Jarchi, but from their becoming vassals to him:

and the kings that [were] with him; those kings before mentioned:

and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim; which were in their way to Sodom, &c. and very probably were confederates with the five kings; the Targum, and so the Septuagint, render the word "giants", as it is in **De 2:11**; but they were one of the nations or tribes of the Canaanites, Ge 15:20; and had their name either from the Hebrew word apr, which signifies to be healthful and robust, as those people might be, or from Rephas, the Remphan of Stephen, **Ac 7:43**; called Chiun, **Am 5:26**; and with Cronus or Ham the father of Canaan, as Bishop Cumberland {c} observes; and these dwelt in Ashteroth Karnaim, which was a place in Bashan, **De 1:4**; it is about six miles, as Eusebius {d} says, from Adraa or Edrei, and in the Apocrypha:

"Then Maccabeus marched forth to Carnion, and to the temple of Atargatis, and there he slew five and twenty thousand persons." (2 Maccabees 12:26)

mention is made of a place called Carnion, where was a temple of Atergates, a Phoenician deity, as Ashteroth or Astarte, was; and this city here had its first name from Astarte the wife of Cronus or Ham, and whose name may be preserved in Carnaim, as Bishop Cumberland thinks; though as Astarte is said by Sanchoniatho {e} to put on her head the mark of her sovereignty, a bull's head, that is, with its horns, this might be another of her names retained in this city; and it is certain that she was a Phoenician goddess, called the goddess of the Zidonians, 1Ki 11:5; and Sanchoniatho relates {f}, that the Phoenicians say, that Astarte is she, who among the Greeks is called Aphrodite or Venus; and Astarte is called by Lucian {g} the Phoenician Venus, and by Cicero {h} the Syrian Venus; and if she was the same with Diana or the moon, as some think, she might have the name of Carnaim from its two horns, as the word signifies: our English poet {i} seems to have this in his thoughts, when he speaks of Astoreth as the goddess of the Phoenicians: however the in habitants of this place who belonged to the Canaanites were first attacked by the four kings and routed, though not utterly destroyed, because we hear of them afterwards, as well as they that follow:

and the Zuzims in Ham; or Hemtha, as Onkelos and Jonathan render it, a place so called from Ham the father of Canaan, and was somewhere in the land of Canaan or near it, and near the former place; for it can hardly be thought the land of Egypt, sometimes called the land of Ham, is meant; these Zuzim are supposed by Jarchi to the same with the Zamzummim in **De 2:20**; the word is by Onkelos and Jonathan rendered strong and mighty ones, as also by the Septuagint, mighty nations:

and the Enims in Shaveh Kiriathaim: a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakim, and were accounted giants as they, and who in later times were by the Moabites called Emim, **De 2:10**; and therefore Moses gives them the same name here, which they had from the dread and terror they injected into men, and so the word in all the three Targums is rendered terrible ones; and these dwelt in Kiriathaim, a city in the tribe of Reuben, taken from Sihon, king of the Amorites, and which seems to be situated in a plain, see Jos 13:19.

{c} Sanchoniatho's Phoenician History, p. 220, 221. {d} Apud Reland. Palest. illustrata, tom. 2. p. 5. 98. {e} Sanchoniatho's Phoenician History, p. 35. {f} Ibid. p. 36. {g} De Dea Syria. {h} De Natura Deorum, l. 3. {i} ------------with these in troop Came Astoreth, whom the Phoenicians call'd Astarte queen of heav'n, with crescent horns. --Milton's Paradise Lost, B. 1. l. 437, 438, 439.

Genesis 14:6

Ver. 6. And the Horites in their Mount Seir,.... Or the Horim who dwelt in Mount Seir, so called from Seir the Horite, who continued here till they were drove out by the sons of Esau or Edom, from whom their country was afterwards called Edom or Idumea, see Ge 36:20 **De 2:12**;

unto Elparan, which [is] by the wilderness; so far these Horites inhabited, and the four kings smote all they met with unto this place, which was either the plain or oak of Paran, near a wilderness of the same name; the wilderness of Arabia, through which the Israelites travelled forty years, in their way to Canaan.

Genesis 14:7

Ver. 7. And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh,.... Pursuing their victories as far as Elparan by the wilderness, they had passed by the country of the Amalekites; wherefore they "returned", or came back to fall upon them, and they came to a place called Enmishpat, or the "fountain of judgment"; which was not its future name, as Jarchi thinks, because there Moses and Aaron were to be judged concerning the business of that fountain, even the waters of Meribah, with which agrees the Targum of Jonathan;

"and they returned and came to the place where the judgment of Moses the prophet was determined by the fountain of the waters of contention:"

but it seems to have been the ancient name of the place, and by which it was called at this time, as Kadesh was the name of it at the time of Moses writing this; and therefore he adds,

which [is] Kadesh; that is, which is now called Kadesh, because there the Lord was sanctified, when the rock at that place was smitten, and waters gushed out: it was a city on the uttermost border of the land of Edom, Nu 20:1, and seems formerly to have been a place where causes were heard and judgment passed; and so Onkelos paraphrases it,

"to the plain of the division or decision of judgment;"

which, as Jarchi himself interprets it,

"is a place where the men of the province gathered together for all judgment;"

or for hearing all causes and determining them:

and smote all the country of the Amalekites; which, according to Josephus {k}, reached from Pelusium in Egypt to the Red sea; they inhabited Arabia Petraea, for he {l} says, the inhabitants of Gobolitis and Petra are called Amalekites; which name is generally supposed to have been given them here by way of anticipation, since the commonly received opinion is, that they were the descendants of Amalek, a grandson of Esau, who was not born when this war was waged, see
Ge 36:12; but the Mahometan writers derive the pedigree of Amalek, from whom these people had their name, from Noah in the line of Ham, and make him to be some generations older than Abram, which with them stands thus, Noah, Ham, Aram, Uz, Ad, Amalek {m}; and they speak of the Amalekites as dwelling in the country about Mecca, from whence they were driven by the Jorhamites {n}: and indeed it seems more probable that the Amalekites were of the posterity of Ham, since Chedorlaomer, a descendant of Shem, falls upon them, and smites them; and they being confederates with the Canaanites, and are with the Amorites, Philistines, and other Canaanitish nations, always mentioned, seem to be a more ancient nation than what could proceed from Amalek the son of Eliphaz, since Amalek is said to be the first of the nations,

Nu 24:20; nor does there ever appear to be any harmony and friendship between them and the Edomites, as it might be thought there would, if they were a branch of Esau's family; nor did they give them any assistance, when destroyed by Saul, so that they seem rather to be a tribe of the Canaanitish nations; and they are, by Philo {o} the Jew, expressly called Phoenicians:

and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar; the same with the Emorites, see Ge 10:16; another tribe or nation of the Canaanites descended from Amor or Emor, a son of Canaan: the place of their habitation has its name of Hazezontamar from the multitude of palm trees which grew there: for Tamar signifies a palm tree, and Hazezon is from Uux "to cut"; and this part of the name seems to be taken from the cutting of the top, crown, or head of the palm tree, for the sake of a liquor which has a more luscious sweetness than honey; and is of the consistence of a thin syrup, as Dr. Shaw {p} relates; the head of the palm tree being cut off, the top of the trunk is scooped into the shape of a basin, as he says, where the sap in ascending lodges itself at the rate of three or four quarts a day during the first week or fortnight, after which the quantity daily diminishes; and at the end of six weeks or two months the juices are entirely consumed, and the tree becomes dry, and serves only for timber or, firewood. This place is the same with Engedi, 2Ch 20:2; and so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan here translate it, "in Engedi"; and which place Pliny {q} says was famous for groves of palm trees; it was a city near the Dead sea, see Eze 47:8; and Josephus says {r} it was situated by the lake Asphaltites, that is, the place where Sodom and Gomorrah stood; and he adds, that it was three hundred furlongs distant from Jerusalem, where were the best palm trees and balsam: so that now the four kings had got pretty near Sodom; wherefore it follows,

{k} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 7. sect. 3. {l} Ibid. l. 3. c. 2. sect. 1. {m} Taarich, M. S. apud Reland. Palestina illustrata, tom. 1. p. 81. {n} Alkodaius, apud Pocock. Specimen Arab. Hist. p. 173. {o} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 636. {p} Travels, tom. 1. p. 143. Ed. 2. {q} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 17. {r} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 1. sect. 2.

Genesis 14:8

Ver. 8. And there went out the king of Sodom,.... With his armed men to meet the four kings, and give them battle, being so near him, and in so much danger from them, that if they could not stand their ground, they might flee to the mountains, and not perish in the city:

and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the King of Zeboiim; whose names are before given, Ge 14:2:

and the king of Bela, the same [is] Zoar: as in Ge 14:2:

and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim; where the five Canaanitish kings met, of which see Ge 14:3; and fought the four kings that were come forth against them, and whose names are repeated, and are as follow:

Genesis 14:9

Ver. 9. With Chedorlaomer king of Elam,.... Who is here mentioned first, being the principal in the war, and against whom the kings of Sodom, &c. had rebelled:

and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; who were his allies, confederates, and auxiliaries:

four kings with five; those four last mentioned, with the other five before spoken of, that is, they fought with them; or rather four kings against five, as the Vulgate Latin and Tigurine versions, and some others.

Genesis 14:10

Ver. 10. And the vale of Siddim [was full of] slimepits,.... Or "wells" or "fountains of slime" or bitumen {s}; a liquid of a pitchy nature, cast out of fountains, and which was used for a cement in buildings; such fountains were near Babylon, See Gill on "Ge 11:3"; so that this place was naturally prepared for what it was designed to be, a bituminous lake; and hence, when turned into one, it was called the lake Asphaltites, from this slime or bitumen, called by the Greeks "asphaltos". Brocardus {t} says, these pits or wells of bitumen are at this day on the shore of the lake, each of them having pyramids erect, which he saw with his own eyes; and such pits casting out bitumen, as fountains do water, have been found in other countries, as in Greece {u}. Now this vale being full of such pits, the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah chose it to fight in, and here drew up in a line of battle, hoping that the enemy, being ignorant of them, would fall into them and perish, and their ranks be broke and fall into confusion; but as it often is, that the pit men dig and contrive for others they fall into themselves, so it was in this case:

and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled: the battle going hard against them, and they not able to stand before their enemies:

and fell there, or "into them" {w}; the slimepits, or fountains of bitumen, into which they precipitately fell, and many perished; or of their own accord they threw themselves into them for their own safety, as some think; though the sense may be this, that there was a great slaughter of them made there, as the word is frequently used, see **1Sa 4:10**; this is to be understood not of the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah; for it is certain that they were preserved alive, at least the king of Sodom, for we hear of him afterwards, Ge 14:17; but of their soldiers:

and they that remained fled to the mountain: or mountains hard by, where Lot after went when Sodom was destroyed, Ge 19:30; hither such fled that escaped the sword of the enemy, or perished not in the slimepits, judging it more safe to be there, than to be in their cities, which would fall into the hands of their enemies, and be plundered by them, and where they would be in danger of losing their lives.

{s} rmh trab trab "putei, putei bituminis", Vatablus, Piscator, Cartwright, Drusius, Schmidt; so Jarchi. {t} Apud Adricom. Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 44. {u} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 13. c. 16. {w} hmv "in eos", Cocceius.

Genesis 14:11

Ver. 11. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah,.... They entered these cities and pillaged them, and carried off everything valuable in them, that was portable or could be driven, as their cattle, &c. they did not burn these cities, nor take possession of them, and leave garrisons in them, which shows them to be petty princes that came for plunder, and to get an equivalent for nonpayment of tribute to one of them:

and all their victuals, and went away; all the meat and drink they could light of, with which they refreshed their troops, and then departed.

Genesis 14:12

Ver. 12. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son,.... The son of Haran, his elder brother, who was now, as the Jews say {x}, fifty years of age:

who dwelt in Sodom, or near it, in the country adjacent to it, see Ge 13:12; and so being a neighbour of the men of Sodom, and a sojourner among them, he partakes of their punishment; and this was a just correction of him for choosing to dwell among such a people: and they took

his goods, and departed; as him and his family, so all his substance, his cattle, wealth, and riches of every sort, and went off with it: Eupolemus {y}, an Heathen writer, makes mention of this circumstance in his relation of this war, and says, that the Armenians, as he calls the four kings, baring conquered the Phoenicians, carried away captive the brother's son of Abram.

{x} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 77. 1. {y} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 17. p. 418.

Genesis 14:13

Ver. 13. And there came one that escaped,.... Both the sword of the enemy and the slimepits; either one of the inhabitants of Sodom, who had an acquaintance with Lot and a friendship for him, and knew his relation to Abram; or one of Lot's family, that might escape being taken and carried captive: for not Michael the prince, so called, because when the angels fell they would have drawn him with them, but God delivered him, and therefore his name was called jylp, or "one that escaped", as the Jews {z} say; nor Og, that escaped the waters of the flood, as they also say {a}, and now from this war, and was the only one left of the Rephaim, or giants, whom Amraphel slew, which they gather from **De 3:11**; who they suppose came with the following message to Abram with an ill design, that he might go out to war with the kings, and be slain, and then he thought to marry his wife; but these are idle fancies, what is first suggested is right.

And told Abram the Hebrew; that there had been a battle of four kings with five, that the latter were beaten, among whom were the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah; and that Lot, his kinsman, who dwelt in or near Sodom, was carried captive, with all his goods. Abram is called the Hebrew, either from his passing over or coming beyond the river Euphrates, from Chaldea into Canaan; with which the Septuagint version agrees, rendering it the "passer over"; and so Jarchi says he is called, because he came beyond the river: or rather from his having lived beyond it, as such as dwelt there were called; for it can hardly be thought that he should peculiarly have this name from that single action of his passing the river, which multitudes did besides him: but rather, why should he not be called Ibri, the word here used, from the place of his birth? For, according to the Talmudists {b}, Ur of the Chaldees was called aryez arbye, "little Ibra"; though it is more generally thought he had this name from his being a descendant of Eber, and who was not only of his sons' sons, and spoke the same language, but professed the same religion, and which was continued in his posterity, who to the latest ages were called Hebrews, and sometimes Eber, Nu 24:24; and which is the opinion of many Jewish writers {c}, and seems most probable:

for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite; see Ge 13:18; it was about forty miles from Sodom, but from it to Dan, whither he pursued the four kings, and where he overtook, fought, and smote them, is by some computed one hundred and twenty four miles {d}: this Mamre, from whom the plain or grove of oaks were called, was the

brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner; who are particularly mentioned, because of their concern in the following expedition:

and these [were] confederate with Abram; or "[were] masters" or "authors of a covenant" {e} with him; they had entered into a league to defend one another, their persons and properties, from the insults of invaders and tyrants, or thieves and robbers: and it may be lawful to form such leagues with irreligious persons on such accounts, where there is no prohibition from God, as there was none as yet, though there afterwards was one; and the Israelites, were forbid to make covenants with the Canaanites, but that was after they were drove out of the land for their sins, **De 7:1**; besides, it is not improbable that these men were religious men, and worshipped the same God with Abram, for such there were among the Canaanitish princes, of which Melchizedek, after spoken of, is an instance; and as yet the sin of the Amorites was not full, of which tribe or nation these men were.

{z} Pirke Eliezer, c. 27. {a} Targum Jon. & Jarchi in loc. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 2. T. Bab. Niddah, fol. 61. 1. {b} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1. & Gloss. in ib. {c} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 3. Sepher Cosri, par. 1. sect. 49. fol. 24. 2. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 75. 1. Aben Ezra on Exod. i. 16. {d} Bunting's Travels, p. 57. {e} tyrb yleb, "Domini vel antores foederis", Piscator, Oleaster.

Genesis 14:14

Ver. 14. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive,.... That is, his brother's son Lot, as in Ge 14:12; which was contrary to the law of nations; since Lot was only a sojourner, and not an inhabitant n Sodom, and therefore had no concern in the quarrel between the kings, and this justified Abram's taking up arms on his behalf:

he armed his trained [servants]; such as were trained up by him in religious exercises, see Ge 18:19; in the affairs and business of civil life, in the care of flocks and herds, and particularly in the art of war; which was both lawful and necessary, for the preservation of his family and substance from oppressors:

born in his own house; of his servants, and so were his property, and at his disposal and command; their number was

three hundred and eighteen, a large number for servants, and which showed how great a man Abram was, what possessions he must have to employ so many, and yet but a small number for an army, to go forth with against four kings who had conquered five; though how many his confederates brought with them is not certain:

and pursued [them] unto Dan; the Jerusalem Targum is, to Dan of Caesarea, meaning Caesarea of Philippi, as in the times of Christ and his apostles it was called; which at first had the name of Leshem, or Lais, and was not called Dan until the times of the judges,
Jud 18:29; wherefore, if the same place is intended here, it is so called not only by anticipation, but by a spirit of prophecy; since it had not the name of Dan even in the times of Moses, the writer of this history, unless it may be thought to be inserted by Samuel or some other inspired writer, after Moses; though there is no need to suppose either of these, seeing there might be a town or city of this name in those parts at this time, or however one of the springs of Jordan might be so called, from whence the river had its name as early, Ge 13:11; and so Josephus {f} expressly says, speaking of this expedition, that Abram fell upon them at Dan, for so, adds he, the other fountain of Jordan is called.

{f} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 10. sect. 1.

Genesis 14:15

Ver. 15. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants by night,.... Together with his confederates; and very probably their whole three was divided into four parts, under their four leaders; and this might be done in order to attack the four kings and their soldiers, who might be in four separate bodies; or to fall upon their camp in the four quarters of it, and to make a show of a greater army, thereby to intimidate the enemy: Abram seems to have understood the art of war, and the use of stratagems in it; and, as it might be night before he could come up to them, he took the advantage of that, and fell upon them unawares, when some were asleep in their beds, and others drunk, as Josephus {g} relates; and who also says, it was on the fifth night after Abram had knowledge of what had happened at Sodom:

and smote them, and pursued them unto Hoba, which [is] on the left hand of Damascus; a famous city in Syria; it was in later times the metropolis of that country, **Isa 7:8**; and was most delightfully situated in a vale, See Gill on "Jer 49:25"; according to Josephus {h} it was built by Uz, the son of Aram and grandson of Shem, and some say {i} by Shem himself, and that it is to this day called Sem in the Saracene language, and lay between Palestine and Coelesyria; on the left hand of this city, or on the north of it, as all the Targums paraphrase it, lay a place called Hoba, and is completed to be eighty miles from Dan, from whence he pursued them hither, after he had discomfited them there.

{g} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 10. sect. 1. {h} Ibid. c. 6. sect. 4. {i} Baumgarten. Peregrinatio, l. 3. c. 4. p. 111.

Genesis 14:16

Ver. 16. And he brought back all the goods,.... Taken from Sodom and Gomorrah, Ge 14:11;

and also brought again his brother Lot; his brother's son, Ge 14:12, for whose sake chiefly he engaged in this enterprise: and his goods; money, cattle, &c.

and the women also, and the people; not only that belonged to Lot, but to Sodom and Gomorrah, who had been taken and carried captive; these were all rescued and brought back by Abram, see Ge 14:21;

Genesis 14:17

Ver. 17. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him,.... While Abram was in pursuit of the four kings, the king of Sodom came down from the mountain whither he and those that escaped with him fled, and came to Sodom: and from hence he went out, not alone, but accompanied with his retinue, to meet Abram:

after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that [were] with him; to congratulate him upon the victory he had obtained over them; and this meeting was

at the valley of Shaveh; a most plain and even valley, as the word signifies, clear of trees and everything that obstructs sight or passage, as Jarchi observes, and so a proper place to have an interview in:

which [is] the king's dale; some say King Melchizedek's, but one should rather think it was the king of Sodom's; the Targum of Jonathan calls it the place of the king's exercise, where he had his diversions in riding, walking, &c. it can hardly be that in 2Sa 18:18; though some are of this opinion, being near to Jerusalem, which they suppose to be the same with Salem in Ge 14:18.

Genesis 14:18

Ver. 18. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine,.... Both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem say, this is Shem the son of Noah, and which is the sense of the Jewish writers in general, and of many Christian ones; but, though it is highly probable he was living at this time, yet it is not easy to account for it why his name should be changed, or that he should reign in a country in the possession of his brother's son; or that he should meet Abram, and congratulate him on the slaughter of one of his own descendants, as Chedorlaomer was; and especially it cannot be said of him that he was without father or mother, or that those were not known, since Shem's parentage and pedigree are famous enough; some have thought him to be more than a mere man, even the Son of God himself, but he is manifestly distinguished from him in **Heb 7:3**; he seems to be what Josephus {k} says he was, a Canaanitish prince, a pious and religious man, eminently raised up by God, and whose genealogy was kept a secret, that he might be in this as in other things a type of Christ; but that he should be Canaan himself, as Dr.

Clayton {l} thinks, a brother of Metsir, or Mizraim, the second son of Ham, being by Sanchoniatho called Sedec, is not likely, since he was cursed by Noah. Salem, of which he was king, is by the above Targums said to be Jerusalem, and which is the opinion of many writers, Jewish and Christian, and of which opinion I myself was formerly, See Gill on "Heb 7:1"; Jerusalem being plainly called Salem, Ps 76:2, but it seems clear from hence that it must be near to Sodom, and lay in the way between Damascus and Sodom; whereas Jerusalem was in a contrary situation, and lay nearly forty miles from Sodom; for Josephus says {m}, the lake Asphaltites, where Sodom once stood, was three hundred furlongs from Jerusalem, which is about thirty eight miles; and Jerom relates {n}, that Salem was a town near Scythopolis, which was so called in his times, and where was showed the palace of Melchizedek, which, by the largeness of the ruins, appeared to have been very magnificent, and takes it to be the same place with Shalem in Ge 33:18; and Salim, near to which John was baptizing, **Joh 3:23**: this great man "brought forth bread and wine"; not as a priest for an offering, but as a munificent king, to refresh Abram and his weary troops, and which the king of Sodom could not do, because the victuals of that place were carried off by the four kings, Ge 14:11; and as Abram had the land of Canaan by promise, and now had made conquest in it over the invaders of it, Melchizedek, sensible of his right unto it, brings forth the best fruits of it, and, as Dr. Lightfoot observes {o}, tenders them to him as "livery and seisin" of it: in this Melchizedek was a type of Christ, who comforts and refreshes his hungry and weary people with himself, the bread of life, and with the wine of his love, as well as his name and title agree with him, who is a righteous King and Prince of Peace, Jer 23:5:

and he [was] the priest of the most high God; a priest as well as a king, as in many countries princes were both {p}; and in this he was a type of Christ in his kingly and priestly offices, who is a priest upon the throne, both king and priest, **Zec 6:13**. Melchizedek was a priest not of any of the Phoenician deities, but of the true and living God, who is above all gods, dwells in the highest heaven, and is the most High over all the earth; by him was he called to this office and invested with it, and he ministered to him in it.

{k} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 10. {l} Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 100. {m} Autiqu. l. 15. c. 6. sect. 2. {n} Ad Evagrium, tom. 3. fol. 13. E. {o} Works, vol. 1. p. 694. {p} "Rex Anius, rex idem hominum Phoebique sacerdos", Virgil. Aeneid. l. 3. vid. Servium in loc.

Genesis 14:19

Ver. 19. And he blessed him,.... Melchizedek blessed Abram, which was one part of his office as a priest, to wish and pray for a blessing on others, see **Nu 6:23**, &c. and herein typified Christ, who really blesses or confers blessings on all his people, even spiritual blessings, such as redemption, remission of sins, and justifying righteousness, adoption, and eternal life:

and said, blessed [be] Abram of the most high God; that is, may he be blessed by him who is the most high God, with all kind of blessings, both temporal and spiritual; or he declares him to be blessed of him, as he undoubtedly was, or foretells that he would be, as was certainly his case: and another epithet of God is added, which abundantly shows he was able to bless him, since he is the

possessor of heaven and earth; is the Maker of both, and has a right to dispose of all things in them, both heavenly and earthly.

Genesis 14:20

Ver. 20. And blessed be the most high God,.... Let his name be praised, and thanks be given to him for all mercies temporal and spiritual, since all flow from him, and particularly for the mercies Abram and others through him were now made partakers of; for whoever were the instruments, God was the efficient cause, and to him all the glory was to be given:

which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand; the four kings, who are called Abram's enemies, because the enemies of God and of true religion, and because they had been injurious to a relation of his; and especially they may be so called, if their intention was, as, say the Jewish writers {q} to slay him, beginning first with Lot: and those four kings, according to them, signify the four monarchies, the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman {r} who in their turns distressed his posterity, but in the latter day shall fall into their hands, as those did into Abram's, and fall by them:

and he gave him tithes of all; not Melchizedek to Abram, but Abram to Melchizedek, as appears from **Heb 7:4**; and these tithes were given not out of the goods that were recovered, for they were restored to the proprietors of them, but out of the spoils that were taken from the enemy, as is evident from the same place referred to; and these were given both as a return for the respect shown him by Melchizedek, and by way of thankfulness to God for the victory, whose priest he was; otherwise, as a king, he stood in no need of such a present; nor was it for his maintenance as a priest, or what Abram was obliged unto, but was a voluntary action, and not out of his own substance, but out of the spoils of the enemy, and to testify his gratitude to God: this was imitated by the Heathens in later times; so the Tarentines, having got a victory over the Peucetians, sent the tenth (of the spoil) to Delphos {s}: the Jews {t} say Abraham was the first in the world that began to offer tithes; but they are mistaken, when they say in the same place, that he took all the tithes of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of Lot his brother's son, and gave them to Shem the son of Noah. Eupolemus {u} makes mention of this interview between Abram and Melchizedek by name; he says, Abram was hospitably entertained in the holy city Argarizin, which is by interpretation the mountain of the most High (but seems to be the Mount Gerizzim) and that he received gifts from Melchizedek, the priest of God, who reigned there.

{q} Pirke Eliezer, c. 27. {r} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 1. {s} Pausan. Phocica, sive l. 10. p. 633. {t} Pirke Eliezer, c. 27. {u} Apud Euseb. Evang. Praepar. l. 9. c. 17. p. 419.

Genesis 14:21

Ver. 21. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram,.... After the conversation between him and Melchizedek was over:

give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself; meaning by "persons" or "souls", as in the original, his own subjects that had been taken and carried away by the four kings, and were now brought back by Abram; and by "the goods", those of his own and his subjects, which their conquerors had spoiled them of, but were now recovered, and which he was very willing Abram should have as his right, according to the laws of war, and as a reward of his labours; and very modestly asks for the other, which he did not deny but he might claim as the fruits of his victory: and this also shows, that the king of Sodom, though a Heathen prince, and perhaps a wicked man, yet had more regard to the persons of his subjects than to his own or their goods: the word for "goods" includes all the substance and possession of a man, gold, silver, cattle, and all movables {w}.

{w} R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 21. 2.

Genesis 14:22

Ver. 22. And Abram said to the king of Sodom,.... In reply to his request:

I have lifted up mine hand unto the Lord; which was both a gesture of praying and of swearing, and both may be intended here; when he set out on his expedition, it is very probable he prayed to God for success, and swore that if he prospered him, that he would receive no profit or advantage from it to himself; or now in the presence of Melchizedek he lift up his hands and swore that he would take none of the goods he had recovered to his own line; and in this form of praying or swearing, he makes use of the same epithets of God Melchizedek had just used:

the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth: having his heart struck with those just and glorious representations of God, and awed with a sense of such a glorious Being, and being forward to learn and retain everything that tended to make for the glory of God.

Genesis 14:23

Ver. 23. That I will not [take] from a thread even to a shoelatchet,.... That is, from a thread used in sewing garments to, a shoelatchet, or the string which fastens the shoes to the foot, the least belonging to that; or from the hair lace of the head, to the shoelatchet of the foot; that is, he would take nothing of his from head to foot: the meaning is, that he would not take that which was of the least value and importance that could be conceived of, and which is more clearly expressed by what follows:

and that I will not take anything that [is] thine; the least thing that belonged to him, or to any of his subjects, for this reason:

lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich; lest he should upbraid him with it afterwards, and say, that all his riches were owing to him; whereas God had promised to bless him, and make him rich and great, as he had begun to do, and still would more and more; and in whom his trusted, and to whom he was desirous all the glory of his greatness and riches should be ascribed.

Genesis 14:24

Ver. 24. Save only that which the young men have eaten,.... His three hundred and eighteen trained servants, and those of his confederates, who having recovered the victuals taken away from the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, had eaten of it for their refreshment, as it was but just and right they should:

and the portion of the men which went with me; the part in the spoil which belonged unto them by the laws of war; wherefore, though he abridged himself of rights and privileges that belonged unto him, which he might do, and thereby showed his great generosity, and that it was not covetousness but kindness that moved him to do what he did; yet he did not take upon him to abridge the rights and privileges of others, which would have been injurious to them: the men he means were Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; his confederates, who went with him in the pursuit of the enemy, and were assisting to him in recovering the men and goods they had carried away: and as it was but justice they should have their share in the spoils, therefore he says,

let them take their portion; in the goods recovered, and in the spoils taken. Eupolemus {x}, the Heathen writer above quoted, relates this affair thus, that

"Abram being assisted by his servants became master of those who had captivated others, and carried captive the wives and children of the soldiers; and when ambassadors came to him to ransom them with money, he would not suffer the conquered to be insulted, but taking food for the young men, returned the captives freely."

{x} Ut supra. (Apud Euseb. Evang. Praepar. l. 9. c. 17. p. 419.)

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 15

This chapter informs us of a gracious appearance of God to Abram, and of a kind promise made unto him, Ge 15:1; of Abram's request for an heir, Ge 15:2; of an answer to it, that he should have one, and even a numberless seed, Ge 15:4; which he gave credit to, Ge 15:6; upon which he has a fresh promise of the land of Canaan, Ge 15:7; of his inheriting of which he desires a sign, and this was given him, Ge 15:8; and at the same time it was predicted to him how long his posterity should be afflicted in a land not theirs, and afterwards come out with great substance, Ge 15:13; and the grant of the land of Canaan to his seed is renewed, Ge 15:17.

Ver. 1. After these things,.... The battle of the kings, the captivity of Lot, the rescue of him and his goods, and of those of Sodom and Gomorrah by Abram, and the conversation that passed between him, and the kings of Sodom and Salem:

the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision; Christ, the essential Word, appeared to Abram in an human form, visible to him, and with an articulate voice spoke unto him:

saying, as follows,

fear not, Abram; calling him by his name, the more to encourage him, and to dissipate his fears to which he was subject; which might be, lest the nations that belonged to the four kings he had conquered and slain should recruit their armies, and come against him with greater force; and the brethren and relations of those he had slain should avenge themselves on him, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem suggest; and therefore the Lord bids him not give way to those fears, for, adds he,

I [am] thy shield; to protect him against all his enemies, be they ever so strong and numerous; as Christ is the shield of his people against all their spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, which being held up in the hand of faith, called therefore the shield of faith, is a security against them:

[and] thy exceeding great reward; though he had generously refused taking any reward for the service he had done in pursuing the kings, and slaughtering them, and bringing back the persons and goods they had took away; yet he should be no loser by it, the Lord would reward him in a way of grace with greater and better things; nay, he himself would be his reward, and which must be a great one, an exceeding great one; as Christ is to his people in his person, offices, and grace, all being theirs, and he all in all to them; all the blessings of grace and glory coming along with him, and he being their portion here and hereafter, to all eternity; for since he is theirs, all are theirs, all things appertaining to life and godliness, and eternal life itself.

Genesis 15:2

Ver. 2. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless,.... As if he should say, what signifies what thou givest me of temporal blessings, if thou withholdest from me the blessing of a child; from whom it might be hoped and believed would spring the promised Messiah, in whom all nations of the earth shall be blessed. All my wealth and riches, victories and honours, are of no avail to me, while I am deprived of this favour; and since I am advanced in years, and going the way of all the earth; or out of the world, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it, and which is the sense of the word in many places, see Jos 23:14. Should I depart from hence childless, as I am like to do, what pleasure can I take in them, and comfort from them, when I have none to inherit them?

and the steward of my house [is] this Eliezer of Damascus; who was his head servant, perhaps the same with him in Ge 24:2 called the eldest servant of his house, who had the care of it, of providing food for it, and supplying with it, and giving to everyone their portion in due season. Some render it, "the son of leaving my house" {y}; to whom he left the care of his house, and should leave the administration of all things in it after his death, making him heir should he die childless; and so it may be supplied, "he Eliezer of Damascus is" or "shall be my heir". Strange and various are the fancies of the Jewish writers concerning this Eliezer; the Targum of Jonathan on Ge 14:14 calls him the son of Nimrod; others say he was the grandson of Nimrod, and others, a servant of his, who gave him to Abram for a servant; and when Isaac married Rebekah he was made free, and through Abram's influence became a king, and was Og king of Bashan {z}; and others say he was Canaan the son of Ham {a}; and others again, that he was Lot, who was very desirous of being Abram's heir {b}: but with neither of these wilt this description of him agree, who is said to be of Damascus; either he was born there, or his parents, one or other, were from thence, who very probably were Abram's servants; and this Eliezer was born in his house, as seems from Ge 15:3: or the words may be rendered Damascus Eliezer {c}, that is, Damascus the son of Eliezer; so that Eliezer was his father's name, and Damascus the proper name of this servant: and some say Damascus was built by him, and had its name from him, which is not likely, since we read of it before, and it is ascribed to another builder, See Gill on "Ge 14:15". Indeed Justin {d} says it had its name from a king of it, so called; but who, according to him, was much more ancient than Abram, whom he also makes to be a king of Damascus: after King Damascus, he says, was Azelus, then Adores, and Abram and Israel were kings in that place. And Nicolas of Damascus {e} relates, that Abram reigned at Damascus, when with an army he came out of the land of Chaldea, beyond Babylon; and that the name of Abram was still famous in the region of Damascus, and a certain village was shown, called Abram's habitation: and the Jewish writers say {f}, that the servants of Abram built Damascus, and he reigned over it: that Abram lived there some time seems reasonable from this Eliezer, who was born in his house, being called Eliezer of Damascus; for which no other reason can well be assigned than his being born there, which must be therefore when Abram dwelt there, since he was born in his house; and this might be the foundation of the above traditions.

{y} ytyb qvm Nb "is cui relinquetur domus mea", Junius & Tremellius; Heb. "filius derelictionis domus meae", Piscator; so Joseph Kimchi and Abendana. {z} Pirke Eliezer, c. 16. {a} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 2. 1. {b} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 43. fol. 39. 1. {c} rzeyla qvmd "Damascus Eliezer", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius. {d} E Trogo, l. 36. c. 2. {e} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 90. c. 16. p. 417. {f} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 77. 1.

Genesis 15:3

Ver. 3. And Abram said, behold, to me thou hast given no seed,.... He had bestowed many temporal blessings on him, as well as spiritual ones, having given himself in covenant, and all things in it, but he had not given him a child:

and lo, one born in my house is mine heir; meaning either Eliezer or his son, whom he had made his heir, or intended to make him, since he had no child; or of course he would have been to, Lot his nephew having no sons; and this Eliezer descending from Aram, the youngest son of Shem, was like to be next heir, if Abram should have no child of his own, as Dr. Lightfoot observes {g}.

{g} Works, vol. 1. p. 695.

Genesis 15:4

Ver. 4. And behold, the word of the Lord [came] unto him,.... Either having disappeared, and then came a second time, or he again spoke unto him:

saying, this shall not be thine heir; this Eliezer, this servant of thine, as thou hast made him, or hast intended to make him, giving up all hopes of having issue by Sarai:

but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir; that is, one shall inherit all thou hast, that shall be begotten by thee; an own son of Abram's, and not a servant born in his house; one that should spring out of his own loins: the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "out of thy womb", that is, out of his wife's, which was his; the phrase designs a genuine and legitimate son of his, who would be legally his heir.

Genesis 15:5

Ver. 5. And he brought him forth abroad,.... Out of his tent into the open air, which was done through his call, and at his direction; or by an impulse upon his mind; or this might not be real and local, only vision:

and said, look now towards heaven; either with his bodily eyes, or with the eyes of his mind:

and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; this looks as if it were in a vision that this was said to him, and what follows done in the day, since it was in the daytime, before the sun was set,
Ge 15:12, when the stars could not be seen; and therefore were represented to his mind, and he was directed to consider them in it, whether they could be numbered by him or not: but this might be in the preceding night, or early in the morning, before the sun arose, that Abram was directed to go out of his tent, and view the heavens, and the multitude of stars in them, and try if he could number them; and he might be employed all the day following till sunset, in preparing the creatures for the sacrifice, in cutting them asunder, laying their pieces in order, and watching them, and driving the fowls from them. The multitude of his seed is before signified by the dust of the earth, which cannot be numbered, Ge 13:16, and here by the stars of the sky innumerable; as they are to man, though not to God: some have pretended to number them, as Aratus, Eudoxus, and Hipparchus, among the ancients, and also modern astronomers; but then they are such only that are visible to the eye, and in one hemisphere, and their accounts are very various; whereas there are multitudes to be discerned by glasses, and some not to be distinguished, as in the galaxy, or milky way, and others in the other hemisphere. Now Abram here is bid to try what he could do, and this was in his own way; for he is said by many Heathen writers {h} to be famous for arithmetic and astrology, or astronomy; but as great a master as he was in these sciences, be was not able to number the stars, which is here plainly intimated, since it follows:

and he said, so shall thy seed be: as innumerable as the stars, as they were, even his natural seed, Heb 11:12; and especially his spiritual seed, who have the same kind of faith he had, and as they will be in the latter day particularly, **Ho 1:10**.

{h} Apud Euseb. ut supra, (Evangel. Praepar.) l. 9. c. 16, 17. Orpheus apud Clement. Stromat. l. 5. p. 607.

Genesis 15:6

Ver. 6. And he believed in the Lord,.... The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are,

"in the Word of the Lord;"

in the essential Word of the Lord, in Christ the Lord his righteousness; he believed in the promise of God, that he should have a seed, and a very numerous one; he believed that the Messiah would spring from his seed; he believed in him as his Saviour and Redeemer; he believed in him for righteousness, and he believed in his righteousness as justifying him before God:

and he counted it to him for righteousness; not the act of his faith, but the object of it; and not the promise he believed, but what was promised, and his faith received, even Christ and his righteousness this was imputed to him without works, and while he was an uncircumcised person, for the proof of which the apostle produces this passage, **Ro 4:3**; wherefore this is not to be understood of any action of his being esteemed and accounted a righteous one, and he pronounced and acknowledged a righteous person on account of it; for Abram was not justified before God by his own works, but by the righteousness of faith, as all that believe are, that is, by the righteousness of Christ revealed to faith, and received by it: what is imputed is without a man, and the imputation of it depends upon the will of another; such the righteousness of Christ without works imputed by God the Father. This is the first time we read of believing, and as early do we hear of imputed righteousness.

Genesis 15:7

Ver. 7. And he said unto him,.... After he had expressed his faith in him, and in his word, and the blessedness of a justifying righteousness came openly upon him, and he was declared a justified person:

I [am] the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees; not only called him, but brought him out of it; not out of a furnace there, as the Jews fable; but out of a place so called, an idolatrous one, where fire was worshipped, and from whence it might have its name; God had brought him out of this wicked place, and separated him from the men of it, and directed him to the land of Canaan for the following end and purpose:

to give thee this land to inherit it; to be an inheritance to his posterity for ages to come; he gave him the promise of it, and in some sense the possession of it, he being now in it; and he mentions his having brought him out of Chaldea into it, to confirm his faith in the promise of it; that that God who had called him, and brought him from thence, and had protected him, and given him victory over his enemies, was able to make good, and would make good the promise and grant of this land for an inheritance to him, that is, to his posterity.

Genesis 15:8

Ver. 8. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?] Not as questioning or doubting whether he should or not; but this he asked for the further confirmation of his faith in the promise, and for the sake of his posterity, that they might more easily and strongly believe that they should inherit the land given and promised to them; nor is it culpable to ask a sign of God with such a view; good men have done it, as Gideon, **Jud 6:36**, and Hezekiah,
2Ki 20:8, without being blamed for it; yea, Ahaz is blamed for not asking one, **Isa 7:10**.

Genesis 15:9

Ver. 9. And he said unto him, take me an heifer of three years old,.... This, with what follows, is the sign by which Abram might know that he, that is, his seed, should inherit the land of Canaan; for the whole of this is an emblem of the state and condition of his posterity, until they should enter into that land: wherefore he is ordered to "take" out of his herds and flocks this and the following creatures, which were used in sacrifice before the ceremonial law was given, as well as under it; and the distinction of creatures for sacrifice, though not for food, was known as early, as appears from **Ge 8:20**; hence Onkelos renders the phrase, "offer before me"; and the Targum of Jonathan is,

"take unto me oblations, and offer before me."

Though this difference is to be observed, that the Levitical law required creatures of a year old only to be offered; whereas these were three years old, because they are then at their full growth, and in their full strength and greatest perfection; and such were used among the Heathens for sacrifice; so Lucian {h} represents Ganymedes as proposing to Jupiter, that if he would let her go she would offer a ram of three years old: but it should be remarked, that these creatures here were not taken merely for sacrifice, nor is there any mention made of their being offered; though it is probable they might be offered after they had answered the principal end, which was to be a sign, whereby Abram might know that his seed should inherit the land; but the intention of God was, that as by them Abram's seed might be taught what sort of creatures they were to offer for their sins, so chiefly to show that they themselves would fall a sacrifice to the rage and fury of their enemies, in a land not theirs, and be used as these creatures were: and the number three may denote the three complete centuries in which they would be afflicted, and in the fourth come out safe and whole like the undivided birds, the turtle, dove, and pigeon, to which they were comparable. Ramban {i} thinks, that this number represents the three sorts of sacrifices, the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the peace offering; and that of these three kinds of animals, only one individual of them was taken, and is called "treble", because each individual were joined together. Onkelos renders it three heifers, and so three goats and three rams afterwards; in which he is followed by Jarchi and Ben Melech; the former thinks the three heifers refer to the heifer of the day of atonement, that for uncertain murder, and the red heifer; and in like manner he interprets the three goats and rams; but the Targum of Jonathan, and Aben Ezra, interpret them as we do of creatures of three years old: it follows,

and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove and a young pigeon. Some Jewish writers {k} have a notion that these creatures represent the four monarchies; the "heifer", the Babylonian monarchy, which had three kings, Nebuchadnezzar, Evilmerodach, and Belshazzar; but others make this to be the fourth monarchy, they call Idumaean or Roman, which is like an heifer at grass, Jer 50:11, which passage better suits with Babylon; the "goat", Media (or Persia), which had three kings, Cyrus, Darius, and Ahasuerus; and the "ram", Grecia; but others say the goat signifies the Grecian monarchy, and the ram the Medo-Persian monarchy, which latter agrees with **Da 8:3**; and by the "turtle", the word for which, in the Syriac language, signifies an ox, they understand, some the children of Ishmael, or the Turkish empire, and others Edom, or the Roman: but it is much better to interpret them of Abram's posterity, comparable to these creatures, both for their good and bad qualities; to an "heifer" for laboriousness in service, and patience in sufferings; and for their backslidings, **Ho 4:16**; to a "goat" for their vicious qualities, their lusts and lasciviousness; and to a "ram", for their strength and fortitude; and to a "turtle", and a young pigeon, for their simplicity, innocence, and harmlessness, when they were in their purest state, see Ps 74:19; and it may be observed, that these were the only fowl used in sacrifice.

{h} Dialogis Deorum. {i} Apud Munster in loc. {k} Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 43. fol. 39. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 28.

Genesis 15:10

Ver. 10. And he took unto him all these,.... The heifer, goat, ram, turtle, and young pigeon, not to himself, but to the Lord, as he was bid, and offered them before him, as the above Targums paraphrase it; or however he took them for his use, and set them before him, and did with them as he directed him:

and divided them in the midst; that is, the three animals, the heifer, goat, and ram; he did not take off their several limbs, and cut them up in small parts, but cut them in halves;

and laid each piece one against another; one half against the other, the left side against the right, shoulder against shoulder, and leg against leg, so that they might seem to join, or might be easily joined together again, or however answer one another; though it is generally thought there was such a distance of the one from the other, as that there might be a passage between them; it being usual in making covenants for the covenanters to pass between the parts of a creature slain, signifying, that should they break the covenant made, they deserved to be cut asunder as that creature was, See Gill on "Jer 34:18". So a burning lamp, or lamp of fire, an emblem of the divine Being, is said, Ge 15:17, to pass between those pieces: all this was expressive of the afflictions of the posterity of Abram, of their being distressed in the land of Egypt, cut as it were in twain there, and of their various dispersions in other countries; and yet, like the bones in Ezekiel's vision, were gathered together, and united again: and it may be this may have respect to the division of the people of Israel into two kingdoms, in the times of Rehoboam, and their after reunion, and especially in the latter day, Eze 37:7:

but the birds divided he not; but laid them one against another, as the pieces were laid; so the birds used in sacrifice under the law were not to be divided, **Le 1:17**; which may signify, that when the people of the Jews, in the latter day, are converted, and brought together into their own land, when they will better answer the character of turtles and doves than they ever did, will be no more divided and separated from each other.

Genesis 15:11

Ver. 11. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses,.... Upon the birds, as Aben Ezra and Ben Melech interpret it, whose carcasses were whole; or rather upon the divided carcasses of the animals, and indeed on both: this is to be understood of birds of prey, as eagles, vultures, kites, crows, &c. and are an emblem of the Egyptians chiefly, and other enemies of Israel, who came upon them to devour them; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and the idolatrous nations descended, who were like to an unclean fowl, to spoil the goods of the Israelites;"

and likewise the Targum of Jerusalem,

"this unclean fowl are the idolatrous kingdoms of the earth:"

Abram drove them away: that they might not settle upon the carcasses, and devour them: the Septuagint version is, "Abram sat with them"; he sat by the carcasses and watched them, that no hurt came to them, and to take notice of them, and consider and learn what they were an emblem of. The Jews {l} also observe, that

"Abram sat and waved over them with his napkin or handkerchief, that the birds might not have power over them until the evening."

This may respect not the merit of Abram, as the above Targums, by which his posterity were protected, and the designs of their enemies frustrated; but the effectual fervent prayer of Abram, his prayer of faith for them, in answer to which they were delivered out of the hands of the Egyptians, and other enemies, whom Abram foresaw they would be distressed with.

{l} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 28)

Genesis 15:12

Ver. 12. And when the sun was going down,.... Just setting, descending below the hemisphere; or "about to enter" {m} into his chamber, as Piscator observes, from whence he went forth in the morning, as a strong man to run his race; which at sunset is finished according to human appearance, and the common apprehensions of men, who have thought it goes under the earth, or drops into the ocean, see Ps 19:5:

a deep sleep fell upon Abram: through the great fatigue he had had the preceding day, in doing what is before related; or rather through a more than ordinary influence of God upon him, which bound up his senses, and cast him into an ecstasy or trance, when he had the following prophecy and vision, which more fully explained to him the emblem he had been conversant with; this was such a sleep as fell on Adam, **Ge 2:21**:

and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him; or such darkness as was horrible and terrible, so it was represented to his mind in vision; which signified the great afflictions after expressed by darkness, that should come upon his children in Egypt and elsewhere: and so Jarchi says it refers to the distresses and darkness of their captivities in Egypt, and in other places. The Targumists observe, that Abram in this vision saw the four monarchies that should bring his children into bondage.

{m} awbl vmvh yhyw "et fuit sol ad intrandum", Montanus, Piscator.

Genesis 15:13

Ver. 13. And he said unto Abram,.... While he was in a deep sleep; this he said to him in a vision of prophecy:

know of a surety, or "in knowing thou shall or mayest know" {n}; and be assured of it, being now told it by the Lord himself, who foreknows all things that ever come to pass; many of which he acquaints his people with beforehand, nor would he hide from Abram his friend what should befall his posterity, as follows:

that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land [that is] not theirs; this prophecy could not take place at this time, since Abram had then no seed; but at the birth of Isaac, in whom his seed was called, who sojourned, or was a stranger in Gerar, a part of the land of Canaan, as Jacob also in the same land, Ge 36:3; as well as he and his posterity sojourned or lived as strangers in the land of Ham, in Egypt, Ps 105:23; and neither of these countries were theirs; for though there was a grant of Canaan to Abram and his seed, yet it was not in possession; though a land of promise, it was a strange land, a land of their pilgrimage, and where all the patriarchs lived in it as such, see **Ex 6:4**:

and shall serve them; the inhabitants of the land not theirs, that is, the Canaanites and the Egyptians, especially the latter; and these they served after the death of Joseph, by whom their lives were made bitter with hard bondage:

and they shall afflict them four hundred years; this term "four hundred years" is not to be joined either with the word "afflict" or "serve"; for their hard servitude and severe affliction did not last long, but a few years at most; but with the phrase, "a stranger in a land not theirs"; and the rest is to be included in a parenthesis thus, and "thy seed shall be a stranger in the land not theirs ([and] shall serve them, and they shall afflict them) four hundred years"; so long they should be strangers and sojourners, as they were partly in the land of Canaan, and partly in the land of Egypt, neither of which were in their own land, however not in possession; within which space of time they would be in a state of subjection and servitude, and be greatly afflicted and oppressed, as they were particularly by the Egyptians before their deliverance from them, see **Ex 1:11**. These four hundred years, as before observed, are to be reckoned from the birth of Isaac to the Israelites going out of Egypt, and are counted by Jarchi thus; Isaac was sixty years of age when Jacob was born, and Jacob when he went down into Egypt was one hundred and thirty, which make one hundred and ninety; and the Israelites were in Egypt two hundred and ten years, which complete the sum of four hundred: according to Eusebius, there were four hundred and five years from the birth of Isaac to the Exodus of Israel; but the round number is only given, as is very usual; and though the sojourning of the Israelites is said to be four hundred and thirty years, Ex 12:40, this takes in the sojourning of Abram in that land, who entered into it sixty five years before the birth of Isaac, which added to four hundred and five, the sum total is four hundred and thirty; for Abram was seventy five years of age when he left Haran and went to Canaan, and Isaac was born when he was an hundred years old, see Gen 12:4.

{n} edt edy "cognoscendo cognosces", Pagninus, Montanus; so Schmidt.

Genesis 15:14

Ver. 14. And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge,.... It is not said "the land" in which they were strangers, though God did judge, condemn, and punish the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, and drove them out of it, to make way for Israel; but the "nation" they should "serve", meaning the Egyptians, to whom they became servants, and were very hardly and severely used by them; those the Lord threatens to enter into judgment with, and take vengeance upon them, as he did by inflicting the ten plagues on them, which brought them at last to be willing to let Israel go:

and afterward shall they come out with great substance; as they did after the four hundred years were ended, and after the Egyptian nation was judged and punished; then they came out of Egypt, with much gold, silver, jewels, and raiment, which they borrowed of the Egyptians, who were spoiled by them, though very justly; this being but a payment of them for the hard and long service with which they had served them; see the exact fulfilment of prophecy, Ex 11:2.

Genesis 15:15

Ver. 15. And thou shall go to thy fathers in peace,.... Or die, which is a going the way of all flesh, to a man's long home, out of this world to another, to the world of spirits, to those that are gone before them; which is no inconsiderable proof of the immortality of the soul. Jarchi infers from hence, that Terah, Abram's father, was a penitent, and died a good man, and went to heaven, the place and state of the blessed, whither Abram should go at death; but the phrase of going to the fathers is used both of good and bad men: it is moreover said of Abram, that he should go in peace; being freed from all the fatigues of his journeying from place to place in his state of pilgrimage, and not living to see the afflictions of his posterity, and to have any share in them; and dying in spiritual peace, in tranquillity of mind, knowing in whom he had believed, and where his salvation was safe and secure, and whither he was going; for a good man dies with peace of conscience, having his sins freely forgiven, and he justified from them by the righteousness of the living Redeemer, and enters into eternal peace, see Ps 37:37:

thou shall be buried in a good old age; this signifies that he should live long, see many days and good ones, enjoy much health and prosperity, continue in the ways of truth and righteousness to the end, and come to his grave like a shock of corn fully ripe, and fit for an other world; and that he should have a decent interment in the land of Canaan, where he purchased a burial place, and which was a pledge and earnest of the future possession of it by his seed, the thing here promised.

Genesis 15:16

Ver. 16. And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again,.... The seed of Abram were in the land of Canaan before their descent into Egypt; and it is here predicted and promised, that they should come thither again, as they did, in the fourth generation of those that descended thither; for Moses and Aaron were the fourth from Levi, or Eleazar from Kohath, and Caleb from Judah; or rather this was in the fourth age or century from the birth of Isaac, when the four hundred were up before mentioned, men living at that time about an hundred years: Grotius interprets this of the fourth generation of the Amorites, because of what follows:

for the iniquity of the Amorites [is] not yet full; and therefore as yet would not be turned out of the land, and the seed of Abram could not till then inherit it: wicked people have a measure of iniquity to fill up, which is known of God; some are longer, some are quicker in filling it up, during which time God waits patiently and bears with them; but, when it is completed, he stays no longer, but takes vengeance on them, Mt 23:32. The Amorites were only one of the nations of the Canaanites, but were a very strong and powerful one, and are put for them all, and are the rather mentioned, because Abram at this time dwelt among them; and it seems as if there were some good men among them, such as the confederates of Abram might be, and they were not arrived to that depth of wickedness they afterwards would and did, and which brought on their ruin, and so made way for the posterity of Abram to inherit their land. Ben Melech interprets it of the punishment of the sin of the Amorites, the time for that was not come to dispossess them of their land.

Genesis 15:17

Ver. 17. And it came to pass, when the sun went down,.... It was going down when the deep sleep fell on Abram, and now it was quite gone or set:

and it was dark; which is not always the case as soon as the sun is set, there is a twilight for a while, and if a clear night the stars appear; but, as Aben Ezra observes, this was a dark and cloudy night; so it was a dark night, a time of great affliction and distress to the posterity of Abram, when their sun was set, or after the death of Joseph:

behold a smoking furnace; or the likeness of one, as Aben Ezra notes; for all this was represented in a visionary way to Abram, and was an emblem of the great troubles and afflictions of the children of Israel in Egypt, called the iron furnace, **De 4:20**, and may have respect to the furnaces in which they burnt the bricks they made, see **Ex 9:8**; the Jewish paraphrases make this to be a representation of hell, which is prepared for the wicked in the world to come, as a furnace surrounded with sparks and flames of fire; and Jarchi says, it intimated to Abram, that the kingdoms would fall into hell:

and a burning lamp, that passed between those pieces; or a lamp of fire {o}; an emblem of the Shechinah, or majesty of God, who afterwards appeared in a pillar of fire before the Israelites in the wilderness, after their deliverance out of Egypt, and when their salvation went forth as a lamp that burneth, of which this was a token: this burning lamp passed between the pieces of the heifer, goat, and ram, that Abram had divided in the midst, as was usually done when covenants were made, see Jer 34:18; and here God made a covenant with Abram, as appears from Ge 15:18; and, as a confirmation of it, passed between the pieces in a lamp of fire, showing that he was and would be the light and salvation of his people, Abram's seed, and an avenger of their enemies; only God passed between the pieces, not Abram, this covenant being as others God makes with men, only on one side; God, in covenanting with men, promises and gives something unto them, but men give nothing to him, but receive from him, as was the case between God and Abram: however, it is very probable, that this lamp of fire consumed the pieces, in like manner as fire from heaven used to fall upon and consume the sacrifices, in token of God's acceptance of them.

{o} va dypl "lampas ignis", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; so Vatablus, Schmidt.

Genesis 15:18

Ver. 18. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram,.... Which he confirmed by passing between the pieces and accepting his sacrifice:

saying, unto thy seed have I given this land; he had given it in his purpose, and he had given the promise of it, and here he renews the grant, and ratifies and confirms it, even the land of Canaan, where Abram now was, though only a sojourner in it; and which is described by its boundaries and present occupants, in this and the following verses, as is usually done in grants of lands and deeds of conveyance:

from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river of Euphrates; the river of Egypt is the Nile, which overflowed it annually and made it fruitful; so the Targum of Jonathan calls it the river of Egypt; it may be rendered, "from the river Mizraim or Egypt", for the name of Egypt was given to the river Nile as well as to the country, and so it is called by Homer {p}; and Diodorus Siculus {q} says, the Nile was first called Egypt; some {r} think the Nile is not here meant, but a little river of Egypt that ran through the desert that lay between Palestine and Egypt; but it seems to be a branch of the river Nile, which was lesser about Palestine or Damiata, at the entrance of Egypt, than at other places. Brocardus {s} says,

"from Delta to Heliopolis were three miles, where another river was separated from the Nile, and carried to the city of Pelusium; and, adds he, this river is properly called in Scripture the river of Egypt, and at it is bounded the lot of the tribe of Judah."

This river of Egypt, or the Nile, was the southern boundary of the land of Canaan, and from hence to the river Euphrates, the eastern boundary, was the utmost extent of it in which it was ever possessed, as it was in the times of David and Solomon, **2Sa 8:3**.

{p} Odyss. 14. vid. Pausan. Boeotica, sive l. 9. p. 859. {q} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 56. {r} See Rollin's Ancient History, vol. 1. p. 92. {s} Apud Drusium in loc.

Genesis 15:19

Ver. 19. The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites. In this and the following verses ten nations are reckoned as occupying the land of Canaan at this time, whereas only seven are mentioned in the times of Moses and Joshua; and these three are not among them, and seem before those times to have been extinct, or were mixed with the other nations, and were no more distinct ones; though Aben Ezra thinks these people had two names, and Jarchi interprets them of the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, who shall be the inheritance of the children of Israel in future times, according to Isa 11:14; and so the Jerusalem Talmud {t}, from whence he seems to have taken it; and some are of opinion that the Midianites are meant by the Kenites, since Jethro, Moses's father in law, who was of Midian, is called the Kenite, as was also Heber, who was of the same race, **Jud 1:16**; there were Kenites near to the Amalekites in the times of Balaam, and who dwelt among them in the times of Saul, Nu 24:20; as there were also some of this name that descended from the father of the house of Rechab, or the Rechabites, who were associates and proselytes to the people of Israel, **1Ch 2:55**; the Kenizzites are supposed by some to be the descendants of Kenaz, a grandson of Esau, Ge 36:11; but then they must be so called here by anticipation, since Kenaz was not now born, and rather then would have had the name of Kenazites; besides, none of the land of the children of Esau, at least of those that dwelt about Mount Seir, was to be given to the children of Israel, **De 1:5**; could indeed the Edomites or Idumeans be intended, it might be thought this had its accomplishment in the times of David, and more especially when the Idumeans became Jews, embraced their religion, and were one people with them, in the times of Hyrcanus {u}: the Kadmonites, or the Orientals, were, as Bochart {w} very probably thinks, the Hivites, who inhabited the eastern part of the land of Canaan about Mount Hermon, and from thence might have their name, as they are in the Jerusalem Targum called the children of the east; and hence came the names of Cadmus and Hermione his wife, who were Hivites, and the fable of their being turned into serpents, which the word Hivites signifies.

{t} Sheviith, fol. 37. 2. {u} Joseph Antiqu. l. 13. c. 9. sect. 1. {w} Canaan, l. 1. c. 19. col. 447.

Genesis 15:20

Ver. 20. And the Hittites,.... Who had their name from Heth, a son of Canaan, see Ge 10:15; they dwelt about Hebron, in the south of the land of Canaan:

and the Perizzites; these dwelt in the wood country of the land, Jos 17:15; and seem to have their name from dwelling in villages, and at a distance from towns and cities, and were a boorish and uncivilized people, see Ge 13:7:

and the Rephaims; or "giants", as the Targums of Onkelos, and Jonathan; they dwelt near the Perizzites, Jos 17:15; of these see Ge 14:5.

Genesis 15:21

Ver. 21. And the Amorites,.... The same with the Amorite, Ge 10:16; they inhabited both on this and the other side Jordan:

and the Canaanites; which were a particular tribe or nation that bore the name of their great ancestor Canaan, see Ge 13:7:

and the Girgashites; the same with the Gergesenes in **Mt 8:28**; of these see Ge 10:16:

and the Jebusites; who inhabited Jerusalem and about it, which was first called Jebus, from the founder of this nation,
See Gill on "Ge 10:16".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 16

This chapter gives an account of Abram's marrying his maid, at the instance of his wife Sarai, Ge 16:1, who, upon conceiving, despised her mistress; of which complaint is made to Abram, who leaving his maid to his wife, to deal with her as she pleased, dealt harshly by her, and therefore fled from her, Ge 16:4; when she was met by an angel, who advised her to return and submit herself to her mistress, and told her her seed would be greatly multiplied, gave a name to the child she went with, and described his temper and disposition, Ge 16:7; and then we have the name of God that spoke to her, and of the place where the discourse passed between them, Ge 16:13; and the chapter is concluded with the birth of Ishmael, and the age of Abram at his birth, Ge 16:15.

Ver. 1. Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bare him no children,.... She is before said to be barren, and he to be childless, Ge 11:30; God had promised him a seed, but as yet he had none, which was a trial of his faith; he had been married many years to Sarai his wife, she was his wife when they came out of Ur of the

Chaldees, and how long before cannot be said; they stayed and dwelt some time at Haran, the Jews {x} say five years, and they had been now ten years in the land of Canaan,
Ge 16:3; and were advanced in years, the one being seventy five, and the other eighty five, so that there was no great probability of having any children, wherefore the following step was taken:

and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name [was] Hagar; no doubt but she had many, but this was a principal one, that might be over others, and was chiefly entrusted with the care and management of family affairs under her mistress; she might be the daughter of an Egyptian, born in Abram's house, as Eliezer was the son of a Syrian of Damascus, born there also; or she might be one of the maidservants Pharaoh, king of Egypt, gave to Abram, Ge 12:16; the Jews {y} have a tradition, that she was a daughter of Pharaoh, who, when he saw the wonders done for Sarai, said, it is better that my daughter should be a handmaid in this house, than a mistress in another, and therefore gave her to Sarai; others say {z} she was a daughter of his by a concubine, but neither is probable: from her came the people called Hagarites, **1Ch 5:10**, and Hagarenes, Ps 83:6; and there were a people in Arabia called Agraei, both by Strabo {a} and Pliny {b}; and the latter speaks of a royal city in that country called Agra, which seem to have their names from this person. Melo {c}, an Heathen writer, speaking of Abram, says, that he had two wives, one of his own country, and akin to him, and the other an Egyptian, a servant; of the Egyptian he beget twelve sons, who, going into Arabia, divided the country among them, and were the first that reigned over the inhabitants of it; as to her twelve sons, he mistakes, for these were not Hagar's sons by Abram, but her grandsons, the sons of Ishmael, see Ge 17:20.

{x} Seder Olam Rabba, p. 2. {y} Targum Jon. & Jarchi in loc. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 45. fol. 40. 2. {z} Pirke Eliezer, c. 26. {a} Geograph. l. 16. p. 528. {b} Hist. Nat. l. 6. c. 28. {c} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 19. p. 420, 421.

Genesis 16:2

Ver. 2. And Sarai said unto Abram, behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing,.... Or, "hath shut me up" {d}; that is, her womb, as were the wombs of the house of Abimelech, Ge 20:18; so that she could not conceive and bear children; she now at this age despaired of having children, perceiving very probably that it ceased to be with her after the manner of women; and this she refers to the will and power of God; for, as children are his gift, and an heritage from him, Ps 127:3, so it is his will and pleasure sometimes to withhold this blessing from those who are very desirous of them:

I pray thee go in unto my maid; Hagar, the Egyptian before mentioned; her meaning is, that he would take her to wife, and use her as such:

it may be that I may obtain children by her; for whatsoever were born of her handmaid, and in her house, were her own, and so she should account them, and especially as they would be her husband's, see
Ex 21:4; or, "may be builded by her" {e}; for women, by bearing children, build up an house, see **Ru 4:11**; hence a son in Hebrew is called "ben", from "banah", to build:

and Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai; without consulting God about it, the proposal being agreeable to the flesh, which may be imputed to the infirmity of the good man; though it does not appear to arise from previous lust predominant in him; but both Sarai's proposal, and his compliance with it, might be owing to the eager desire of each after the promised seed; they both believed the promise, but did not know it, being not as yet revealed, that Abram should have a son by Sarai; so that Sarai knowing her own case and circumstances, might conclude it was to be by another, and by her handmaid; and Abram might reason and judge after the same manner, which inclined him to listen to her: Josephus {f} says, indeed, that Sarai moved this to Abram by the direction and order of God himself; and the Jewish writers say {g}, that Abram hearkened to the Holy Spirit of God that was in her.

{d} ynrue "couclusit me", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Schmidt; "occlusit me", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {e} hnba "aedificatur", Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt, Cartwright; so Ainsworth. {f} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 10. sect. 4. {g} Jarchi in loc. Bereshit Rabba, ut supra. (sect. 45. fol. 2.)

Genesis 16:3

Ver. 3. And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian,.... Took her by the hand, it is probable, and led her into the apartment where Abram was, and presented her to him; their characters are very exactly described, and the contrast beautifully given, that the affair might be the more remarkable and observable:

after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan; so that he was now eighty five years of age, for he was sventy five when he departed from Haran and came into Canaan, Ge 12:4; and Sarai, being ten years younger than he, must be sventy five; the Jews from hence have formed a rule or canon; that if a man marries a woman, and she has no children in ten years, he is obliged to marry another {h}:

and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife; his secondary wife, or concubine; which, though contrary to the first institution of marriage, was connived at of God, and was practised by good men: nothing can excuse them but their earnest desire after the Messiah, the promised seed; and one may conclude, that nothing but this especially could move Sarai to take such a step, so contrary to the temper and disposition of women in common.

{h} Bereshit Rabba, ut supra. (sect. 45. fol. 40. 2.). Jarchi & Aben Ezra in loc.

Genesis 16:4

Ver. 4. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived,.... The formality of the marriage being over, he enjoyed her as his wife, and she immediately conceived by him:

and when she saw that she had conceived; when she perceived that she was with child:

her mistress was despised in her eyes; she thought herself above her, and treated her as her inferior, with contempt, and reproached her for her barrenness, as Peninnah did Hannah, **1Sa 1:6**; and it was the more ungrateful, as it was at the motion of her mistress that she was given to Abram for wife.

Genesis 16:5

Ver. 5. And Sarai said to Abram,.... Being affronted with the behaviour of her maid to her, she applies to Abram for the redress of her grievance, judging it, perhaps, below her dignity to enter into an altercation with her maid:

my wrong [be] upon thee; in her passion imprecating evil on him, as a just punishment upon him for suffering wrong to be done her by her maid; or, "is upon thee" {i}; pointing at his duty, and suggesting to him what he ought to do; that it was incumbent on him as her husband to right her wrongs, and do her justice, and vindicate her from the calumnies and reproaches of her servant; and tacitly complaining of him, and accusing him with indolence and unconcern at the injury done her, being silent when it became him to check her insolence and chide her for it: or, "is for thee" {k}; for thy sake; it was for the sake of Abram chiefly, that he might have a son and heir, which he was very solicitous, that she gave him her maid to wife; the consequence of which was, that she was now insulted and abused by her, and so suffered wrong for his sake; and the rather she might be tempted to say it was on his account, as she might be jealous of a growing affection in him to Hagar, and that he showed greater respect to her, being likely to have a child by her, and so connived at her haughtiness and arrogance:

I have given my maid into thy bosom; to be his wife, **Mic 7:5**; Sarai had no reason to upbraid Abram with this, since it was not at his solicitations she gave her to him, but it was her own motion:

and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes; when she found herself with child, and hoped to bring forth a son, that should be heir to Abram's large possessions, and inherit the land of Canaan, given to his seed, she began to think highly of herself, and looked with disdain upon her mistress, set lightly by her, made no account of her, showed her no respect, carried it haughtily to her, as if she was beneath her, and as if she had more authority in the house, and a better claim to the affection of Abram, and deserving of more honour and respect, as she was favoured of God with conception, a blessing Sarai never enjoyed:

the Lord judge between me and thee: which was very rashly and hastily said, as if Abram was not inclined and was unwilling to do her justice, and therefore she appeals to God against him, as an unrighteous man, and desires that he would interpose, and by his providence show who was in the right and who in the wrong: or "the Lord will judge" {l}; expressing her confidence not only in the justness of her cause, but in the appearance of divine Providence in her favour; believing that the Lord would arise and help her, and defend her against the insults made upon her, and resent the injury done her.

{i} Kyle yomx "injuria mea super te est", Cocceius; so Ainsworth. {k} "Vel injuria mea est propter te", Cocceius; "quid si legamus propter te?" Drusius. {l} jpvy "judicabit", Junius & Tremellius.

Genesis 16:6

Ver. 6. But Abram said unto Sarai,.... In a meek, mild and gentle manner:

behold, thy maid [is] in thine hand; though Hagar was Abram's secondary wife he still considers her as Sarai's maid, and as subject to her, and allows her to exercise authority over her; for he still retained the same love and affection for Sarai, his first and lawful wife, and showed the same respect he ever did, and supported her in her honour and dignity:

do to her as it pleaseth thee: not giving her liberty to take away her life, nor even to use her cruelly, but to deal with her as a mistress might lawfully do with a servant, or however exercise that power which a first wife had over a second: perhaps Abram, in complaisance to Sarai, gave her too large a commission, and left it too much in her power to distress Hagar; and it might have been more correct to have heard both sides, and judged between them, and used his own authority, by reproving and correcting as he saw meet; had she been only Sarai's maid and not his wife, it would have been less exceptionable; however, for peace sake, he gave leave to Sarai to do as she would:

and when Sarai dealt hardly with her; or afflicted her {m}, not only with words but with blows, as some think, and unmercifully beat her, and laid hard service upon her she was not able to go through, especially in her circumstances; though it may be she only chastised her in such a manner as a mistress may chastise her maid, since the angel seems to approve of what she did, Ge 16:9; which her proud spirit not being able to bear,

she fled from her face; which was set against her, and was full of wrath and fury: she deserted her service, quitted Abram's house though with child by him; unmindful of the various relations she stood in, which should have obliged her to have kept her place, and especially until she had made proper remonstrances of her ill usage, and could have no redress; but, unable to bear the treatment she met with, meditated a flight into her own country, Egypt, for by what follows it appears she steered her course that way; this flight of hers was agreeable to her name, for Hagar in the Arabic language signifies to "flee", hence the flight of Mahomet is called the Hegira.

{m} hynet "eam affligeret", Tigurine version, Schmidt; "afflixit eam", Fagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Genesis 16:7

Ver. 7. And the angel of the Lord found her,.... This is the first time that mention is made of an angel in Scripture, but is not to be understood of a created angel, but of a divine Person, as appears from Ge 16:10, the uncreated angel, the Logos or Son of God, called the Angel of God's presence, and the Angel of the covenant, Isa 63:9 **Mal 3:1**; who often appeared in an human form before his incarnation, being sent by his divine Father on one account or another; and hence called an angel, a messenger, or one sent, as in the fulness of time he was sent in human nature to be the Redeemer of his people; though many of the Jewish writers take this angel to be a man sent of God. Gersom {n} says he was one of the prophets that lived in those times, and observes, that some of their Rabbins say {o} he was Shem, the son of Noah; and Maimonides {p} suggests, that this angel was but a mere man, by comparing this passage with that in Ge 37:15, "a certain man found him", &c. but the context most clearly confutes this notion, and proves him to be the almighty and omniscient God; since he promises to do what none but the omnipotent Being could do, and declares such things as none but the omniscient God could know: and when it is said he "found Hagar", it is not to be understood as if it was a chance matter, or the fruit and effect of search and inquiry, or as if he had not seen her before; but rather it shows that his eye was upon her, and he had a concern for her, and at a proper time and place appeared to her at once, and unawares, and unthought of by her. And the place where he found her was

by a fountain of water in the wilderness; which lay between Egypt and Canaan, the same through which the Israelites passed afterwards from the one to the other: here was a fountain of water, and meeting with it she stopped to refresh herself,

by the fountain in the way to Shur; a place before or over against Egypt, from whence the wilderness had its name, see Ge 25:18, which shows that she was making her way to Egypt, as fast as she could, her native country, where in all probability she proposed to continue, and never return more: what the name of the place the angel found her at was, at that time, is not certain, or whether it had any; for it seems to be so called from the Lord's "looking" upon her here, which "Shur" signifies: the Jerusalem Targum calls it Chalaza; and both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan name it Chagra or Hagra, after her own name, as it should seem: and it is remarkable, that this very place, and the wilderness, and parts adjacent, were the habitation of her posterity, the sons of

Ishmael, Ge 25:18; and must be in Arabia Petraea, which they inhabited; and Ptolemy {q} speaks of a city called Suratta, in that country.

{n} Comment in loc. {o} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 45. fol. 41. 1. {p} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 42. p. 311. {q} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17.

Genesis 16:8

Ver. 8. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid,.... He calls her by her name, which might surprise her, and describes her by her character and condition, in order to check her pride, and put her in mind of her duty to her mistress; and to suggest to her, that she ought to have been not where she was, but in the house of her mistress, and doing her service:

whence camest thou? this question the angel asked, not as ignorant, for he that could call her by her name, and describe her character and state, knew from whence she came; but he said this not only to lead on to what he had further to say to her, but to put her upon considering from whence she came, what she had left behind, and what blessings she had deprived herself of; she had not only left her husband and her mistress, but the house of God; for such Abram's family was, where the worship of God was kept up, and where the Lord granted his presence, and indulged with communion with himself:

and whither wilt thou go? he knew her intention and resolution was to go to Egypt, and he would have her think of the place whither she intended to go, as well as that she had left, as that her journey to it was dangerous, through a wilderness; that the country she was bound for was a wicked and an idolatrous one, where she would not have the free exercise of her religion she had embraced, nor any opportunity of attending the pure worship of God, and would be liable to be drawn into a sinful course of life, and into idolatrous worship:

and she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai; this was very ingenuously said, she acknowledges Sarai to be her mistress, and owns that, she had displeased her, and caused her face to be against her; and confesses the truth, that she had fled from her, not being able to bear her frowns and corrections, at least her spirit was too high to submit to them.

Genesis 16:9

Ver. 9. And the angel of the Lord said unto her,.... The same angel; though Jarchi thinks that one angel after another was sent, and that at every speech there was a fresh angel; and because this phrase is repeated again and again, some of the Rabbins have fancied there were four angels {r}, and others five, but without any reason:

return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands; go back to her, humble thyself before her, acknowledge thy fault, enter into her service again, and be subject to her; do her work and business, bear her corrections and chastisements; and "suffer thyself to be afflicted" {s}, by her, as the word may be rendered; take all patiently from her, which will be much more to thy profit and advantage than to pursue the course thou art in: and the more to encourage her to take his advice, he promises the following things, Ge 16:10.

{r} Bereshit Rabba, ut supra. (sect. 45. fol. 41. 1.) {s} yneth "te patere affligi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "quid si, patere te affligi?" Drusius.

Genesis 16:10

Ver. 10. And the angel of the Lord said unto her,.... The same as before, who, by what follows, appears to be Jehovah himself:

I will multiply thy seed exceedingly; not that she should have many children herself, for that she had more than this one she now went with, is not certain; but that that seed she had conceived should be exceedingly multiplied, and he should have a numerous posterity, as he had twelve princes sprung from him, the heads of Arab nations:

that it shall not be numbered for multitude; such the Turks are at this day, supposed to be the seed of Ishmael, Hagar's son.

Genesis 16:11

Ver. 11. And the angel of the Lord said unto her,.... Continued his discourse with her, informing her she should have a son, and what his name should be, and what his character, and the place of his habitation:

behold, thou [art] with child; this she knew, and it is said, not for her information, as to this respect, but to lead on to something else he had to acquaint her with, she did not know. Jarchi indeed would have the sense to be, "thou shall conceive" or "be with child", as was said to Manoah's wife, Jud 13:5; for it is a fancy of his, that Hagar had miscarried, and he, supposes the angel to promise her, that if she would return, or when she should return, she should conceive again; but this is said and supposed without any foundation:

and shalt bear a son; this was what she hoped for, but was not certain of; but the angel assures her of it, that the child she went with was a son, which none could foretell but God, that is omniscient:

and shall call his name Ishmael; the Jews {s} observe, there were six persons who had their names given them before they were born, and Ishmael is one of them; the six were Isaac, Ge 17:19; Ishmael, here; Moses, **Ex 2:10**; Solomon, 2Sa 12:24; Josiah, 1Ki 13:2; and the Messiah, **Isa 7:14**: the reason of his name follows,

because the Lord hath heard thy affliction: heard of it, had took notice of it, and observed, and fully understood the nature and cause of it; he had heard her groans and sighs under it, and her prayer and cries for deliverance from it; and so the Targum of Onkelos,

"for the Lord hath received thy prayer,"

which she had put up in her affliction, both when in the service of her mistress, and since her flight from her.

{s} Pirke Eliezer, c. 32. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 2. 1.

Genesis 16:12

Ver. 12. And he will be a wild man,.... Living in a wilderness, delighting in hunting and killing wild beasts, and robbing and plundering all that pass by; and such an one Ishmael was, see Ge 21:20; and such the Saracens, his posterity, were, and such the wild Arabs are to this day, who descended from him; or "the wild ass of a man" {t}; or "a wild ass among men", as Onkelos; or "like to a wild ass among men", as the Targum of Jonathan; wild, fierce, untamed, not subject to a yoke, and impatient of it, see Job 11:12; such was Ishmael, and such are his posterity, who never could be subdued or brought into bondage, neither by the

Assyrians, nor Medes and Persians, nor by the Greeks nor Romans, nor any other people {u}; and at this day the Arabs live independent on the Turks, nay, oblige the Turks to pay a yearly tribute for the passage of their pilgrims to Mecca, and also to pay for their caravans that pass through their country, as travellers into those parts unanimously report; wherefore Aben Ezra translates the word rendered "wild", or "wild ass", by yvpx, "free", and refers to the passage in Job 39:5. These people having been always free, and never in bondage, always lived as free booters upon others:

his hand [will be] against every man, and every man's hand against him; signifying, that he would be of a quarrelsome temper and warlike disposition, continually engaged in fighting with his neighbours, and they with him in their own defence; and such the Arabs his posterity always have been, and still are, given to rapine and plunder, harassing their neighbours by continual excursions and robberies, and pillaging passengers of all nations, which they think they have a right to do; their father Ishmael being turned out into the plains and deserts, which were given him as his patrimony, and as they suppose a permission from God to take whatever he could get. And a late traveller into those parts observes {w}, that they are not to be accused of plundering strangers only, or whomsoever they may find unarmed or defenceless; but for those many implacable and hereditary animosities which continually subsist among themselves, literally fulfilling to this day the prophecy of the angel to Hagar, Ge 16:12; the greatest as well as the smallest tribes are perpetually at variance with one another, frequently occasioned upon the most trivial account, as if they were from the very days of their first ancestor naturally prone to discord and contention.

And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren; the sons of Abram by Keturah, the Midianites, and others; and the Edomites that sprung from Esau, the son of his brother Isaac; and the Israelites, the descendants of Jacob, another son of Isaac; and his kinsmen the Moabites and Ammonites, upon all which he and his posterity bordered, see Ge 25:18. It may be rendered, "he shall tabernacle" {x}, or dwell in tents, as he did, and his posterity afterwards; particularly the Scenite Arabs, so called from their dwelling in tents, and the Bedouins, such were the tents of Kedar, one of his sons, **So 1:5**; the same with them to this day: according to Jarchi, the sense of the phrase is, that his seed should be large and numerous, and spread themselves, and reach to the borders of all their brethren.

{t} Mda arp "onager hominis", Cocceius, Schmidt. {u} Vid. Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 131. {w} Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 238, 239. Ed. 2. {x} Nkvy "figet tabernacula", V. L. "tabernaculabit", Malvenda.

Genesis 16:13

Ver. 13. And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her,.... Either she called on the name of the Lord, and prayed unto him, that he would forgive her sin and give her some fresh tokens of his love; and also gave him thanks for his gracious regards unto her, that he should look upon, and look after so mean a creature, and such a backslider as she was, and return her, and make such gracious promises to her; so the Targum of Onkelos,

"she prayed in the name of the Lord;"

and the Targum of Jonathan is,

"and she confessed, or gave thanks before the Lord, whose Word spake unto her;"

and the Jerusalem Targum takes in both prayer and praise,

"and Hagar gave thanks, and prayed in the name of the Word of the Lord, who was revealed unto her:"

in which may be observed the sense of the ancient synagogue, that this angel that appeared to Hagar, and talked with her, was the Word of the Lord, the eternal Logos, or Son of God: or else the sense is, that she gave the following name or epithet to the Lord, that vouchsafed to discourse with her,

thou God seest me; she perceived by experience his eye was upon her wherever she was, and saw all she did; saw all her transgressions, her contempt of her mistress, and her flight from her; saw her when she was at the fountain, and reproved and recalled her, and sent her back; saw all the workings of her heart, her repentance and sorrow for her sins; looked and smiled upon her, and gave her exceeding great and precious promises: he looked upon her, both with his eye of omniscience and providence, and with his eye of love, and grace, and mercy; yea, she was sensible that he was not only the God that saw her, but saw all things; was God omniscient, and therefore gives him this name under a thorough conviction and deep sense of his omniscience; and so Onkelos paraphrases the words, "thou art he, the God that sees all things;"

for she said, have I also here looked after him that seeth me? this she said within herself, either as blaming herself, that she should not look after God in this desolate place until now, and call upon him, and praise his name, whose eye was upon her, and had a concern for her, and care over her; and yet so ungrateful she had been as to neglect him, and not seek after him as it became her: or as wondering that here, in this wilderness, she should be favoured with the sight of God, and of his angel, whom she had seen in Abram's house; where to see him was not so strange and marvellous, but it was to have a sight of him in such a place, and under such circumstances as she was: or else as admiring that she should be alive after she had had such a vision of God, it being a notion that pretty much obtained, that none could see God and live, only his back parts were to be seen; wherefore others read the words, and they will bear such a version, "have not I also seen here the back parts of him that seeth me?" {y} so Moses did, Ex 33:23.

{y} So Fagius.

Genesis 16:14

Ver. 14. Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi,.... That is, the fountain where the angel found her, Ge 16:7; this, from the appearance of God to her at it, was afterwards called by her and others by this name, which signifies "the well of him that liveth and seeth me"; that is, of the living and all seeing God, and who had taken a special care of her, and favoured her with a peculiar discovery of his love to her: or this may have respect to herself, and be rendered, "the well of her that liveth and seeth"; that had had a sight of God, and yet was alive; lived though she had seen him, and after she had seen him, and was still indulged with a sight of him. Aben Ezra says, the name of this well, at the time he lived, was called Zemum, he doubtless means Zemzem, a well near Mecca, which the Arabs say {z} is the well by which Hagar sat down with Ishmael, and where she was comforted by the angel,
Ge 21:19:

behold, [it is] between Kadesh and Bered; Kadesh is the same with Kadesh Barnea in the wilderness, Nu 13:3. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call it Rekam, the same with Petra, the chief city of Arabia Petraea, inhabited in later times by the Nabathaeans, the posterity of Ishmael: and Bered is nowhere else mentioned, it is called by Onkelos Chagra or Hagra, by which he interprets Shur, Ge 16:7; and by the Targum of Jonathan it is called Chaluza, a noted town in Idumea, the same with Chelus, mentioned with Kades in the Apocrypha;

"And to all that were in Samaria and the cities thereof, and beyond Jordan unto Jerusalem, and Betane, and Chelus, and Kades, and the river of Egypt, and Taphnes, and Ramesse, and all the land of Gesem," (Judith 1:9)

and so Jerom {a} speaks of a place called Elusa, near the wilderness of Kadesh, which in his times was inhabited by Saracens, the descendants of Ishmael; and this bids fair to the Bered here spoken of, and seems to be its Greek name, and both are of the same signification; for Bered signifies hail, as does Chalaza in Greek, which the Targumists here make Chaluza; between Kadesh and Barath, as Jerom {b} calls it, Hagar's well was shown in his days.

{z} See Pitts's Account of the Mahometans, c. 7. p. 103. {a} In Vita Hilarionis, fol. 84. 1. {b} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. E.

Genesis 16:15

Ver. 15. And Hagar bare Abram a son,.... Being returned to his house, and received by him, and reconciled to Sarai, she brought forth a son to Abram, according to the prediction of the angel:

and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael; and this name Jarchi suggests he gave by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that dwelt in him: but it is highly reasonable to suppose, that Hagar upon her return reported to Abram the whole of the conversation she had with the angel; wherefore Abram believing what she said, in obedience to the order and command of the angel, gave him this name.

Genesis 16:16

Ver. 16. And Abram [was] eighty years old when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram. Which is easily reckoned, for he was seventy five years of age when he left Haran, Ge 12:4; and he had been ten years in Canaan when Hagar was given him by Sarai for his wife, Ge 16:3; and so must be then eighty five years of age, and of course must be eighty six when Ishmael was born.

Genesis 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 17

This chapter treats of a covenant made with Abram, sometimes called the covenant of circumcision, the time when God appeared to him, and promised to make it, and did, Ge 17:1; the particulars of it, both with respect to himself, whose name was now changed, and to his posterity, Ge 17:4; the token of it, circumcision, the time of its performance, and the persons obliged to it, Ge 17:9; the change of Sarai's name, and a promise made that she should have a son, to the great surprise of Abraham, Ge 17:15; a prayer of his for Ishmael, and the answer to it, with a confirmation of Sarah's having a son, whose name should be called Isaac, and the establishment of the covenant with him, Ge 17:18; and the chapter is closed with an account of the circumcision of Abraham, and all his family of the male sort, agreeably to the command of God, Ge 17:23.

Ver. 1. And when Abram was ninety years old and nine,.... Which was thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael last mentioned; so many years more it was before be is expressly told he should have a son by Sarai, or had the promise of Isaac, which was for the trial of his faith; and his age is here observed, that the power of God might be more manifest in fulfilling his promise, and giving him a son by Sarai:

the Lord appeared to Abram; in a visible manner, in an human form very probably, even the Logos, the Word and Son of God: it seems as if the Lord had not appeared to him since the birth of Ishmael, until this time; and if so, it may be thought to be a correction of him for listening to the voice of his wife in marrying Hagar, without asking counsel of God:

and said unto him, I [am] the Almighty God; as the Word of God is, as appears by his creation of all things, his in sustaining of them, his government of the church, his redemption of it, and preservation of his people safe to glory, see **Re 1:8**; and this epithet is very appropriate here, when the Lord was about to give out a promise of a son to Abram and Sarai, so much stricken in years. Some render it "all sufficient" {c}, as Jehovah is, sufficient in and of himself, and for himself, and stands in no need of any, or of anything from another; and has a sufficiency for others, both in a way of providence and grace:

walk before me: not as though Abram had not so walked, or had discontinued his walk before God, but that he would go on to walk by faith in a dependence on him for everything he wanted, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual; and to walk in all his commandments and ordinances, that he either had given, or should give him; and all this as in his presence, and under his watchful eye, that sees and observes all things, and before whom all things are naked and open, as all are to the essential Word of God, **Heb 4:12**;

and be thou perfect: upright and sincere in acts of faith, and in duties of religion, and go on to perfection; which though a sinless one is not attainable in this life, is desirable, and is to be had in Christ, though not in ourselves: but here it chiefly denotes an holy and unblamable life and conversation, which though not entirely free from sin, yet without any notorious ones, which bring dishonour to God, and disgrace upon a man's character and profession, see **Ge 6:9**. This respects not perfection in his body or flesh, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it, through circumcision, by which the Jews {d} fancy Abram became perfect, but was not till circumcised.

{c} ydv la "Deus sufficiens", Cocceius; so Jarchi and Ainsworth. {d} Jarchi in loc. Pirke Eliezer, c. 29. Misn. Nedarim, c. 13. sect. 11.

Genesis 17:2

Ver. 2. And I will make my covenant between me and thee,.... The covenant of circumcision, so called from the token of it, which God is said to make or give {e}, being his own constitution, and depended on his sovereign will and pleasure, see **Ac 7:8**;

and will multiply thee exceedingly; as he had before promised at several times, and now renews it, lest be should think that Ishmael was the promised seed; for though Hagar's seed is promised to be multiplied, yet here Abram's seed by Sarai is intended, which should be exceeding exceedingly, or in great abundance multiplied; and especially as this may include both his natural seed by her, and his spiritual seed among all nations, who are of the same faith with him, see
Ge 12:2.

{e} hnta "dabo", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt.

Genesis 17:3

Ver. 3. And Abram fell on his face,.... At the sight of so glorious a Person that appeared to him, and in reverence of his majesty, and as sensible of his unworthiness of such a visit, and of having such favours bestowed upon him; and not because he was not as yet circumcised, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it; and so other Jewish {f} writers observe, that before he was circumcised he fell, when God spoke to him, but afterwards he sat and stood, Ge 18:1; but it may be observed, that not only uncircumcised persons, as Balaam,
Nu 22:31, in whom Jarchi instances, but circumcised ones, as Ezekiel, **Eze 1:28**, Joshua, **Jos 5:14**, and others, have fallen on their faces at a divine appearance:

and God talked with him; after he was raised up, and was strengthened and encouraged to stand up before God, and hear what he had to say to him; for after this we read of his falling on his face again,
Ge 17:17; which shows that he had been erect, after he first fell on his face: saying; as follows.

{f} Jarchi in loc. Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 29.)

Genesis 17:4

Ver. 4. As for me, behold, my covenant [is] with thee,.... Who was gracious to make it, faithful to keep it, and immutable in it, though Abram was but a man, and sinful:

and thou shalt be a father of many nations: as he was of many Arabian nations, and of the Turks in the line of Ishmael; and of the Midianites, and others, in the line of his sons by Keturah; and of the Israelites in the line of Isaac, as well as of the Edomites in the line of Esau; and in a spiritual sense the father of all that believe, in all the nations of the world, circumcised or uncircumcised, as the apostle explains it, **Ro 4:11**.

Genesis 17:5

Ver. 5. Neither shall thy name be any more called Abram,.... Which signifies an "high father", which name he bore for many years before he was the father of anyone:

but thy name shall be Abraham: with all addition of the letter h inserted into it, and makes the last syllable two, "raham": which word in the Arabic language, as Hottinger {g} observes, signifies "numerous" {h}; so that with this addition his name Abraham may be interpreted, the father of a numerous offspring; and with this agrees the reason of it, as follows:

for a father of many nations have I made thee; not that he was so already in fact, but in the purpose and promise of God, **Ro 4:17**; Abraham has not only been the father of many nations, in a literal sense, as before observed, but in a mystical sense, of the whole world; that is, of all in it that believe, whether Jews or Gentiles; and so the Rabbins {i} interpret it: at first, they say, he was the father of Aram, and therefore his name was called Abram, but now he is the father of the whole world, and therefore called Abraham; and so Maimonides {k} himself says, quoting this passage,

"behold he is the father of the whole world, who are gathered under the wings of the Shechinah."

{g} Smegma Oriental. p. 88. {h} , "numerus", "copiosus", Golius, col. 1055, 1056. Castel. col. 3537. {i} In Massechet Biccurim, apud Galat. in Arcan. Cathol. Ver. l. 5, 13. & 9, 12. in Maimon. in Misn. ib. c. 1. sect. 4. {k} Hilchot Biccurim, c. 4. sect. 3.

Genesis 17:6

Ver. 6. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful,.... In children, for he had not only a son by Sarai, from whom sprung a numerous offspring, but he had six sons by Keturah, who became the heads of large nations:

and I will make nations of thee; as the nations of Israel and Judah, of the Midianites and Edomites, of the Arabs, Saracens, and Turks:

and kings shall come out of thee; as the twelve princes of Ishmael, the kings of Edom and Midian, of the Arabs, Saracens, and Turks, and of Israel and Judah, and especially, as observed by Grotius, and others, the King Messiah: to which may be added, in a mystical sense, all Christian kings and princes of the same faith with him; nay, all believers, who are all kings and priests unto God.

Genesis 17:7

Ver. 7. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee,.... Not only renew it, but confirm it by the following token of circumcision:

and thy seed after thee, in their generation; such blessings in it as belonged to his natural seed, as such he confirmed to them, to be enjoyed by them in successive ages; and such as belonged to his spiritual seed, to them also, as they should be raised up in future times in one place and another:

for an everlasting covenant; to his natural seed, as long as they should continue in the true worship of God; and in their own land; or until the Messiah came, in whom the covenant of circumcision had its accomplishment, and was at an end; and to all his spiritual seed, with respect to the spiritual blessings of it, which are everlasting, and are never taken away, or become void;

to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee; to his natural seed, as the God of nature and providence, communicating the good things of life unto them; protecting, preserving, and continuing them in the land he gave them, and in the possessive of all the good things in it, so long as they were obedient to him as their King and their God; and to his spiritual seed, as the God of all grace, supplying them with grace here, and bestowing upon them glory hereafter.

Genesis 17:8

Ver. 8. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee,.... To him in right, and to them in possession, and for an inheritance:

the land wherein thou art a stranger; or "the land of sojournings" or "pilgrimages" {l}, which were many; for he often removed from place to place, and sometimes sojourned in one place, and sometimes in another:

all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; this respects only the natural seed of Abraham, and those in the line of Isaac and Jacob, to whom this land was given to hold for ever, in case they were obedient to the will of God; and therefore whenever they were disobedient, they were carried captive from it, as they are at this day; but when they shall be converted, they will return to this land and possess it to the end of the world; and which was a figure of the heavenly inheritance, which is an eternal one, and will be enjoyed by all his spiritual seed to all eternity:

and I will be their God; as he was to all the natural seed of Abraham in a spiritual sense, to whom the adoption belonged, and whom he chose and separated as a peculiar people to himself, and bestowed in providence many peculiar favours upon them, both in a civil and religious way; and as he is to all his spiritual seed in an evangelic sense, to whom he stands in the relation of their covenant God and Father in Christ, in whom he blesses them with all spiritual blessings, and will continue to be so unto death, and to all eternity.

{l} Kyrgm Ura "terram peregrinationum tuarum", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Genesis 17:9

Ver. 9. And God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep my covenant therefore,.... Observe the sign or token of it, circumcision, in the manner after related:

thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations; in successive ages until the Messiah come, the end of the law for righteousness.

Genesis 17:10

Ver. 10. This [is] my covenant,.... The token of it, for the promise itself was given before, which is more properly the covenant; circumcision is so called in an improper sense, being only the sign of it:

which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; which was to be observed by Abraham, and the males in his house then with him, as Ishmael, and those that were born in his house, or bought with his money, and by his posterity in succeeding ages, and it is what follows:

every man child among you shall be circumcised; this was the first institution of circumcision, and it was an institution of God, and not of man. Indeed Herodotus says {m}, that

"the Colchi, Egyptians, and Ethiopians only of all men circumcised from the beginning; and the Phoenicians and Syrians, which are in Palestine, learnt it of the Egyptians, as they themselves confess."

So Diodorus Siculus {n} speaks of circumcision as an Egyptian rite, and says there are some who make the nation of the Colchi, and of the Jews, to come from the Egyptians: hence he observes, that with these nations there is an ancient tradition to circumcise their newborn infants, which rite was derived from the Egyptians: but as the original of the Jewish nation is mistaken, so likewise the original this rite. And they may as well be thought to be mistaken in the one as in the other. Those in Palestine that were circumcised were the Jews only, as Josephus {o} observes; but they did not learn this rite from the Egyptians, nor do they ever confess it, but on the contrary suggest, that the Egyptians learnt it from them in the times of Joseph; for their principal lexicographer says {p}, the Egyptians were circumcised in the times of Joseph, and when Joseph died they drew over the foreskin of the flesh. The Colchi indeed, who were a colony of the Egyptians, might learn it from them; and so the Ethiopians, who were their neighbours likewise, and agreed with them in many things. Artapanus {q}, an Heathen writer, says, indeed, that the Ethiopians, though enemies, had such a regard for Moses, that they learned from him the rite of circumcision; and not only they, but all the priests, that is, in Egypt; and indeed the Egyptian priests only, and not the people, were circumcised. It is not very difficult to account for it, how other nations besides the Jews should receive circumcision, which was first enjoined Abraham and his seed; the Ishmaelites had it from Ishmael the son of Abraham; from them the old Arabs; from the Arabs, the Saracens; and from the Saracens, the Turks to this day: other Arabian nations, as the Midianites, and others, had it from the sons of Abraham by Keturah; and perhaps the Egyptians and Ethiopians from them, if the former had it not from the Israelites; and the Edomites had it from Edom or Esau, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham; so that all originally had it from Abraham, and he by a divine command. It is not so much to be wondered at, that Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, men either imposed upon by the Egyptian priests, as the former, or wrote in favour of that nation, as the latter, and wholly ignorant of divine revelation, should assert what they have done; but that Christian writers, who have the advantage of divine revelation, and have read the history of the Bible, such as Marsham, Spencer, and Le Clerc, should incline to the same sentiment, is amazing; and especially when our blessed Lord has expressly said in **Joh 7:22**, that circumcision is "of the fathers", Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, first given to them, and practised by them. Even Theodotus {s}, an Heathen writer, agrees with this sacred testimony of Moses, when speaking of the circumcision of Shechem, in the times of Jacob, he traces this rite to its original, and observes, that when Abraham was brought out of his own country, he was ordered "from heaven" to circumcise every man in his house. It may indeed seem strange how it should obtain in the islands of the West Indies, as in Jucatana, Sancta Crux, and others, where the Spaniards found in the beginning of the sixteenth century those isles inhabited by idolaters, who were circumcised {t}.

{m} Euterpe sive, l. 2. c. 104. {n} Bibliothec. l. 4. p. 24. & l. 3. p. 165. {o} Contr Apion. l. 1. c. 22. {p} Raal Aruch in Rad. lm fol. 91. 1. {q} Apud Euseb. Evangel Praepar. l. 9. c. 27. p. 433. {s} Apud Euseb. ut supra, (Evangel Praepar. l. 9.) c. 22. p. 428. {t} Vid. P. Martyr. Decad. 3. lib. 10. & de Insul. Ind. Occident.

Genesis 17:11

Ver. 11. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin,.... Or "the foreskin of your flesh" {u}; by an hypallage {v}, the manner in which this was performed may be seen in the Jewish writers {w}, as well as the cure of the wound made, is particularly described by Leo Modena {x}, and which when performed, they used to provide a dish full of sand to put the foreskin into; which was done, as Buxtorf {y} relates, to show that their seed should be as the sand of the sea, and to call to mind what Balaam said of them, Nu 23:10; and with respect to the old serpent that deceived man, whose food is the dust of the earth, **Ge 3:14**: the instrument with which this operation was performed, according to the Jewish canons, was as follows {z},

"they may circumcise with anything, with a flint, or with glass, and with anything that cuts, excepting with a cane or reed, because of danger; but it is best to circumcise with an iron instrument, either with a knife or a razor; all Israelites use a knife."

The persons who might perform it, according to their rules, are these;

"all are fit to circumcise (says Maimonides {a}), even an uncircumcised person, and a servant, and a woman, and a little one may circumcise where there is no man, but a Gentile may not circumcise at all; and if he does circumcise, there is no need to repeat it, and to circumcise a second time."

It is a little differently expressed by another {b} writer of theirs,

"all are fit to circumcise, even a servant, a woman, and a little one, and an uncircumcised Israelite, whose brethren died through circumcision; but it there is an Israelite grown, and knows how to circumcise, he is to be preferred before them all; (some say a woman may not circumcise;) but an idolater, though he is circumcised, may not circumcise at all; but if he does, there is no need to repeat it, and to circumcise else a second time:"

and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you: of the promise of God to Abraham, that he should be the father of many nations. The apostle explains it, **Ro 4:11**; to be a seal, or what gave assurance to Abraham, or was a sure token to him, that righteousness would be wrought out by Christ, by his obedience, and the shedding of his blood, which is received by faith; and that this was imputed to him while he was uncircumcised, Ge 15:6; and that this also would "be in the uncircumcision", or uncircumcised Gentiles that should believe as he did, and be imputed to them, as to him, and so he would appear to be the father of them all. Moreover, this was a sign or token of that part of the promise or covenant, which gave to his seed the land of Canaan: this was a seal of the lease of that land, which was made while Abraham was in it, and which the Israelites were obliged to submit to, upon entrance into it in Joshua's time, as a token of it; and which they were to observe while in it until the Messiah's coming, and by which they were distinguished from other nations, and kept a distinct nation, that it might appear he came of them: and to use the words of Tacitus {c}, this rite was instituted "ut diversitate noscantur", that they might be distinguished and known from others; it was typical of Christ, the end of it, who submitted to it, that it might appear he was really man, a son of Abraham, and a minister of the circumcision, and was made under the law, and so laid under obligation to fulfil it; and that he was to satisfy for the sins of men by the effusion of his blood, and endure pains and sufferings, signified thereby: it was also an emblem of spiritual circumcision, or circumcision of the heart, which ties in the putting off the body of sin, in renouncing man's own righteousness, and in his being by the grace of God, and blood of Christ, cleansed from the impurity of his nature, propagated by carnal generation, in which the member circumcised has a principal concern.

{u} Mktlre rvb ta "praeputium carnis vestrae", Drusius, Piscator. {v} According to E. W. Bullinger, "hypallage" "relates to an interchange of construction whereby an adjective or other word, which `logically' belongs to one connection, is grammatically united with another, so that what is said or attributed to one things ought to be said or attributed to another". {w} Maimon. Hilchot Milah, c. 2. sect 2. Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. Jore Dea Hilchot Milah, c. 264. sect. 3. {x} History of the present Jews, part 4. c. 8. p. 206. {y} Synagog. Jud. c. 4. p. 104, 105. {z} Maimon. ib. c. 2. sect. 1. Schulchan Aruch, ib. sect. 2. {a} Maimon. ib. Schulchan Aruch, ib. sect. l. {b} Schulchan Aruch, ib sect 1. {c} Hist. l. 5. c. 5.

Genesis 17:12

Ver. 12. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you,.... A son or infant of eight days old; it might not be circumcised before, but for some reasons might be deferred longer. The reasons why this rite was ordered to be performed in infancy, according to Maimonides {d}, were, because if it had been deferred to riper age it might have been neglected, and never performed; and because at such an age the pain is not so sensibly felt, by reason of the tenderness of the skin, and the weakness of the imagination; as also because the affections of parents are not then so strong as they are when one year, and especially three or four years old; and particularly it was ordered on the eighth day, because all animals, as soon as born, on account of their great humidity, are very weak, and scarce any other than they were in their mother's womb, until the end of seven days, after which they begin to be reckoned among those that perceive the air of this world; and so he remarks the same is to be observed in beasts, that seven days they were to be with their dam, Ex 22:30. According to the Jewish canon {e},

"an infant might be circumcised on the eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth, neither less nor more; (not less than eight days, nor more than twelve {f};) according to the usual custom on the eighth; if he was born between the two evenings, he is circumcised on the ninth; if between the two evenings of the evening of the sabbath, he is circumcised on the tenth; if on a festival day, after the sabbath, he is circumcised on the eleventh; if on the two days of the beginning of the year, he is circumcised on the twelfth: an infant that is sick, they do not circumcise it until it is well."

Which sickness they interpret not of sore eyes, and the like, but of an ague or fever; and when a child on the eighth day is red or yellow, or a woman has lost her children through circumcision, two or three one after another, then it is deferred; and they reckon seven days from a child's recovery from sickness, and then circumcise it {g}; but circumcision on the eighth day was always reckoned most valid and authentic, and according to rule, See Gill on "Php 3:5"; and the Jews were careful to do it on the eighth day as soon as they could, though only when and while it was day. Their canon or rule runs thus {h},

"they do not circumcise until the sun shines out on the eighth day of a child's birth, and all the day is fit for circumcision; but they that are prepared hasten to the commandment, and circumcise immediately in the morning; and indeed circumcision, which is not in its proper time, is never performed but in the day:"

for they observe {i}, it is said on the eighth day, Le 12:3; the day, and not the night. And this was to be done to

every man child in your generations; in all succeeding ages until the Messiah came, the end of the law; and when the lease of the land of Canaan, of which this was a seal, would be out; and when the righteousness of faith, it was also a seal of, would come upon the uncircumcised Gentiles:

he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which [is] not of thy seed; concerning which Maimonides {k} gives these rules,

"a servant is born in the power of an Israelite, and another that is taken from Heathens, the master is bound to circumcise them; but he that is born in the house is circumcised on the eighth day; and he that is bought with money is circumcised on the day that he is received, even if he received him on the day he is born, he is circumcised on that day; if he receives a grown servant of Heathens, and the servant is not willing to be circumcised, he bears with him a whole year, but more than that it is forbidden to keep him, seeing he is uncircumcised, but he must send him again to the Heathens."

No man was to be forced to embrace the true religion, or obliged against his will to submit to its ordinances.

{d} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 49. p. 506. {e} Misn. Sabbat, c. 19. sect. 5. {f} Misn. Eracin, c. 2. sect. 2. {g} Maimon. Hilchot Milah, c. 1. sect. 16, 17, 18. Schulchan Aruch, ib. c. 262. sect. 2. 263. sect. 1, 2. {h} Schulchan Aruch, c. 262. sect. 1. {i} Maimon. Hilchot Milah, c. 1. sect. 8. {k} Ibid sect 3, 6.

Genesis 17:13

Ver. 13. He that is born in thine house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised,.... Or "in circumcising shall be circumcised" {l}, shall certainly be circumcised; this is repeated to denote the necessity of it, and what care should be taken that this be done, because there was to be no uncircumcised male among them,
Ge 17:10; nor any conversation and communion to be had among them,

especially in a religious way.

And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant; circumcision was to be seen in their flesh, and no methods were to be taken to draw over the foreskin again, but it was to continue as long as they lived; and so in their posterity, in all succeeding ages, as a sign of the covenant and promise which should remain until the Messiah's coming.

{l} lwmy lwmh "circumcidendo circumcidetur", Pagninus, Montanus &c.

Genesis 17:14

Ver. 14. And the uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised,.... Whose circumcision was neglected by his father, or by his mother, or by the civil magistrate, or by himself; for each of these, according to the Jewish canons, were obliged to see this performed;

"the commandment lies upon a father to circumcise his son, and upon a master to circumcise his servants born in his house, or bought with money {m}:"

and it is elsewhere said {n},

"if a father does not circumcise his son, the sanhedrim are bound to circumcise him; and if they do not circumcise him, he is obliged when he is grown up to circumcise himself; and if he does not circumcise himself, he is guilty of cutting off,"

as it here follows:

that soul shall be cut off from his people; which Jarchi interprets of his being childless, and dying before his time; and which, according to some in Aben Ezra, is, when a man dies before he is fifty two years of age; and some erroneous persons, as the same writer calls them, thought that if a child died, and was not circumcised, it had no part in the world to come. The simplest and plainest meaning of the phrase seems to be, that such should be cut off, and deprived of all civil and religious privileges with the Israelites in the land of Canaan, and be reckoned as Heathens. Concerning this matter, Maimonides {o} thus writes;

"a father or a mother that transgress, and circumcise not, make void the affirmative commandment, but are not guilty of cutting off; for no cutting off depends but upon the uncircumcised person himself; and the sanhedrim are commanded to circumcise a son or a servant in its time, that they may not leave an uncircumcised person in Israel, nor among their servants; if the thing is hid from the sanhedrim, and they do not circumcise him, when he is grown up, he is bound to circumcise himself; and every day that passes over him, after he is grown up, and he does not circumcise himself, lo, he maketh the commandment to cease; but he is not guilty of cutting off until he dies, and he is a presumptuous uncircumcised person;"

and so, according to him, this must respect his punishment after death in another world:

he hath broken my covenant; made it null and void, neglecting the token of it, circumcision.

{m} Maimon. ut supra, (Hilchot Milah) c. 1. sect. 1. {n} Schulchan Aruch, ib. c. 361. sect. 1. {o} Maimon. Hilchot. Milah, c. 1. sect. 1, 2.

Genesis 17:15

Ver. 15. And God said unto Abraham,.... After he had changed his name, and given him the covenant of circumcision:

as for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah her name [shall be]; her former name Sarai signifies "my princess", or rather "princesses", being to him in the room of many, and better than ten thousand; yet only a princess to him, and in his family, being sole mistress there: but Sarah signifies, as Jarchi observes, "princess" absolutely, because she was princess over all the princes and people that should come of her, as well as be the mother and princess of all female believers, who are called her daughters, **1Pe 3:6**.

Genesis 17:16

Ver. 16. And I will bless her,.... The Targum of Jonathan adds, "in her body", with fruitfulness, who before was barren, and in her soul with spiritual blessings, and in both with the blessing of eternal life:

and give thee a son also of her; as he had given him one of Hagar: God had before promised Abraham a son that should be his heir, but he had not till now told him that he should be born of Sarah his wife:

yea, I will bless her; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and for the greater strengthening Abraham's faith in it:

and she shall be [a mother] of nations; of the twelve tribes of Israel; of the two nations of Israel and Judah;

kings of people shall be of her; as David, Solomon, and others, and especially the King Messiah.

Genesis 17:17

Ver. 17. Then Abraham fell upon his face,.... In reverence of the divine Being, and as amazed at what was told him:

and laughed; not through distrust and diffidence of the promise, as Sarah did, for he staggered not at that through unbelief, but for joy at such good news; and so Onkelos renders it, "and he rejoiced", with the joy of faith; it may be our Lord refers to this in **Joh 8:56**; he saw Christ in the promise of Isaac, and rejoiced that he should spring from his seed: the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it, "and he wondered"; he was amazed at the grace of God that gave him such a promise, and he was astonished at the power of God that must be exerted in the fulfilment of it: and therefore it follows,

and said in his heart; within himself, without expressing anything as to be heard and understood by any creature; but the omniscient God knew what he said, and the language of it, whether of unbelief or not:

shall [a child] be born unto him that is an hundred years old? not that he was now a full an hundred years old, he was ninety nine, and going in his hundredth year; but then he would be, as he was, an hundred years old when this child was born to him, Ge 21:5. It had been no unusual thing for a child to be born to a man when an hundred, and even many hundred years old, but it was so in Abraham's time; though indeed after this we read that Abraham himself had six sons by Keturah, when, his natural strength was afresh invigorated, and his youth was renewed like the eagle's; and besides Abraham said this, not so much with respect to himself, though his age was a circumstance that served to heighten the wonder, as with respect to Sarah, and the circumstances in which she was, who was to bear this son to him:

and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? and with whom it had ceased to be after the manner of women, which made it more difficult of belief how it could be. Some think that Abraham said this, as somewhat doubting of it, until he was more strongly assured by the Lord that so it would be indeed, as is expressed in Ge 17:19; but meeting with no reproof for what he said and did, as Sarah, it seems to show the contrary.

Genesis 17:18

Ver. 18. And Abraham said unto God,.... Being told he should have a son by Sarah, that should be his heir, he is concerned for Ishmael what would become of him; and who, being grown up, had doubtless a large share in his affections, and it is highly probable he began to think he was the promised seed, since he had lived to such an age, and had no other son, and Sarah was past bearing children: but now perceiving it would be otherwise, he puts up a petition for Ishmael, whom he did not neglect upon the promise of another, and to show his love to him, and regard for his welfare:

O that Ishmael might live before thee; he prays that his life might be preserved, and that it might be spent in the fear, worship, and service of God; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"O that Ishmael might live and worship before thee,"

and to the same sense Jarchi also; that he might enjoy the favour of God, his gracious presence and communion with him; that he might live a holy spiritual life here, acceptable and well pleasing to God, and possess eternal life hereafter: for we must take this prayer in as large a sense as we can suppose the heart of a father to be drawn forth in it for the good of his child; though it may greatly respect his sharing with the promised son in his blessings, and particularly regards the propagation of his offspring, or his living in his posterity at least; this was what the Lord took notice of, and answered him in.

Genesis 17:19

Ver. 19. And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed,.... This is repeated for the confirmation of it, and thus expressed to remove all doubt about it, if any there were, that hung upon Abraham's mind; as well as to let him know that the promise of a son by Sarah was not to be superseded by his prayer for Ishmael, for whom he might have a greater flow of natural affection than for his unborn son, in whom his seed should be called:

and thou shall call his name Isaac; which signifies "laughter"; and which name was given him from the laughter of Abraham at the promise of him, and not from the laughter of Sarah, which as yet was not; wherefore Josephus {p} is wrong when he suggests, that Isaac had this name from Sarah's laughing at God's saying, that she should bear a son: though his birth was matter of laughter and joy to both, as it was to all good people that heard of it, Ge 21:8. So Polyhistor {q} from Melo, an Heathen writer, speaking of Abraham, says, that of his married or lawful wife one son was born to him, whose name in Greek is "Gelos", that is, laughter. Isaac is one of those the Jews {r} observe had his name given him before he was born, See Gill on "Ge 16:11":

and I will establish my covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant, [and] with his seed after him; the covenant of circumcision just made with Abraham, the promise of the land of Canaan to him and his posterity, and of the Messiah that should spring from him, until whose coming this covenant would continue, and therefore called everlasting.

{p} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 12. sect. 2. {q} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 19. p. 421. {r} Pirke Eliezer, c. 32. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 2. 1.

Genesis 17:20

Ver. 20. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee, &c, Took notice of his prayer for him, and accepted of and would answer him, and did, as follows:

behold, I have blessed him; determined in his mind to bless him, promised to bless him, Ge 16:10; had blessings laid up and in reserve for him:

and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; as he did, many of the Arabian nations, the Hagarenes, Saracens, and Turks, all springing from him:

twelve princes shall he beget; whose names are given, Ge 25:13; and their number there exactly agrees with this prophecy. Melo {s}, the Heathen writer above mentioned, says, that Abraham, of his other wife, the Egyptian servant (that is, Hagar), begat twelve sons, which he mistakes for twelve sons of Ishmael, his son by Hagar; and, adds he, these going into Arabia, divided the country among them, and were the first that reigned over the inhabitants of it; hence down to our times the kings of the Arabians have twelve names like to those. So the Saracens were divided into twelve tribes, of which there were so many "phylarchi", or governors; and the Turks also are divided into the same number of tribes {t}. And

I will make him a great nation; as the nation of the Turks especially is; and the Turkish empire is frequently called in Jewish writings the kingdom of Ishmael, as the Arabic language is called the Ishmaelitish language.

{s} Apud. Euseb. ut supra. (Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 19. p. 421.) {t} Vid. Vales. Not. in Ammian. Marcellin. l. 24. p. 283.

Genesis 17:21

Ver. 21. But my covenant will one establish with Isaac,.... The covenant of circumcision; for though Ishmael was circumcised, and his posterity practised that rite, yet it was not enjoined them of God; nor was it to them, or served the same purpose as to the Israelites; and particularly the promise of the land of Canaan, made in that covenant, belonged only to the posterity of Isaac, and to those only in the line of Jacob, and especially that of the Messiah springing from him, which circumcision had a respect unto:

whom Sarah shall bear unto thee, at this set time, in the next year: that is, at the end of nine months, which is the set time a woman goes with child.

Genesis 17:22

Ver. 22. And he left off talking; with him,.... After he had finished all he had to say to him at this time. It was great condescension in the divine Being to talk with a creature; it was wonderful grace and kindness to make such promises to him, as he did, and indulge him with answers of prayer and communion with him; but the highest enjoyments of God here are not lasting; uninterrupted communion with him is reserved for another world:

and God went up from Abraham; from the earth, where he had been with

Abraham, and ascended above him up to heaven, in a visible, and very likely in an human form, in which he descended: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase it, "the glory of the Lord", the glorious Shechinah, the Lord of life and glory.

Genesis 17:23

Ver. 23. And Abraham took Ishmael his son,.... To circumcise him; he took his son first, to set an example to his servants, and that they might the more readily comply when they saw that Abraham's son, and at that time his only son, was circumcised before their eyes:

and all that were born in his house; which were three hundred and eighteen when he rescued Lot from the kings, Ge 14:14; and perhaps they might be now increased:

and all that were bought with his money; how many those were, it is not easy to say, no doubt they were many:

every male among the men of Abraham's house; whether children or servants, and those little or grown up:

and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin, in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him; he performed this operation in the manner God directed him, the same day he spoke to him of it; he was not disobedient, nor dilatory to obey the command of God, but at once complied with it, not consulting flesh and blood, not regarding the pain he and his should endure, or the shame or danger they should be exposed unto through the Heathens about them; but trusting in God, and committing himself to him, and having his fear before his eyes, he hesitated not, but cheerfully did the will of God. In doing this work he might have some assistance: it is highly probable he began it himself, and circumcised several; and having taught some of his servants how to perform it according to the divine prescription, they might assist him in going through with it.

Genesis 17:24

Ver. 24. And Abraham [was] ninety years old and nine,.... See Ge 17:1. This circumstance of his age is observed the more to commend his faith and obedience, that though he was an old man, he did not consider his age, or make that an objection; that he was unable to bear the pain, or it would be shameful for a man of his years to be uncovered before his servants:

when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin; who circumcised him is not said, very probably Eliezer his head servant: the Jews, who affect to know everything, say {u}, that he sent for Shem, the son of Noah, who circumcised him and his son Ishmael; but it is most likely that Ishmael was circumcised by Abraham himself, as seems from
Ge 17:23; and Abraham might circumcise himself, as Ben Melech thinks.

{u} Pirke Eliezer, c. 29.

Genesis 17:25

Ver. 25. And Ishmael his son [was] thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.. Hence the Arabians, as Josephus {w} relates, circumcise their children when at thirteen years of age, because Ishmael, the founder of their nation, was circumcised at that age; and Origen {x} asserts the same; and with which agrees what an Arabic writer says {y} of the Arabians before Mahomet, that they used to circumcise at a certain age, between the tenth and fifteenth years of their age. So Rauwolff says {z}, there are some, chiefly among the Arabians, that imitate their patriarch Ishmael. As for the Mahometans, though they circumcise, they do not always do it in the thirteenth year, as some write; for it is performed by them sometimes in the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, or sixteenth, and sometimes in the sixth or seventh year {a}. The Egyptians, according to Ambrose {b}, circumcised their children at fourteen years of age, which comes pretty near to the time of the Ishmaelites or Arabs, from whom they might receive circumcision, if not of the Israelites, as before observed. A certain traveller says {c}, the modern Egyptians, as the rest of the Mahometans, are not circumcised until the thirteenth year. The Africans circumcise on the seventh day, which comes nearer to the Jews {d}.

{w} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 12. sect. 2. {x} Philocalia, c. 23. p. 77. {y} Ebnol Athir apud Pocock. Specimen Arab. Hist. p. 319. {z} Travels, part 1. ch. 7. p. 59. by Ray. {a} Vid. Reland. de Relig. Mohammed. p. 75. {b} De Abraham, l. 2. c. 11. p. 266. {c} Baumgarten. Peregrin. l. 1. c. 16. {d} Leo. African. Descriptio Africae, l. 3. p. 33.

Genesis 17:26

Ver. 26. In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. This is repeated, that it might be taken notice of that both were circumcised according to the command of God, and on the very day in which it was given. Jarchi observes, it was in the day, and not in the night; which shows, says he, he was not afraid of the Heathen, and of mockers; and that his enemies, and the men of that generation, might not say, if we had seen him, we would not have suffered him to be circumcised, and keep the commandment of God: and some of the Jewish writers {e} fable, that he was circumcised on the day afterwards appointed by Moses for the day of atonement, and that in the place where he was circumcised the altar was built; but all this is without any foundation. This affair was transacted, according to Bishop Usher {f}, A. M. 2107, and before Christ 1897.

{e} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 29.) {f} Annales Ver. Test. p. 8.

Genesis 17:27

Ver. 27. And all the men of his house,.... All the males, whether children or adult:

born in the house, or bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him; by their will, and with their consent; not forced to it, as Aben Ezra rightly observes; and these being before trained up by him in religious exercises, were more easily prevailed upon by him to follow his example; this also is repeated, that it might be served, and be an example to follow in after generations.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 18

Another appearance of God to Abraham is here recorded; three persons are seen by him in an human form, whom he kindly invites to stop with him, and generously entertains them, Ge 18:1; they inquire concerning Sarah his wife, and one of them renews the promise of her bearing a son to him, which occasions laughter in her, for which she is reproved, Ge 18:9; upon their departure the Lord thought fit, for reasons given, to make known to Abraham his intention to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Ge 18:16; when Abraham intercedes for the preservation of those cities in a most importunate and affectionate manner, Ge 18:23.

Ver. 1. And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre,.... That is, to Abraham; and very likely this appearance of God was quickly after the affair of the circumcision, to show his approbation of his ready obedience to his command; and at this time he was in the plains, or at the oaks of Mamre, the oaken grove there, as has been observed on Ge 13:18; and which seems to be the best rendering of the words, since in Ge 18:4; mention is made of a tree to sit and stand under; and Abraham might choose this place for his habitation, because of the shadiness of it, in those hot countries:

and he sat in the tent door, in the heat of the day; partly to cool and refresh himself, and partly to observe if any passengers passed by, to invite them in; this being a time of day when such needed refreshment, and it was proper for them to lie by a while, and not proceed on their journey until it was cooler: or rather to or "near" the tent door, as Noldius {g}, or before it, without or under the shade of the tree, after mentioned.

{g} Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 13.

Genesis 18:2

Ver. 2. And he lifted up his eyes and looked,.... To see if he could observe any passengers coming that way:

and, lo, three men stood by him; having perhaps descended at once from heaven upon the spot near where Abraham sat; for these, whoever they were, appeared in an human form, and they were took by Abraham at first sight to be men, and as such he treated them: some have taken these to be the three divine Persons, as some of the ancients; of which opinion was Dr. Lightfoot, who expressly says {h},

"three months after this, (i.e. the institution of the circumcision,) the three Persons in the Trinity dine with Abraham, and foretell the birth of Isaac; again, the Son and the Holy Ghost go down to Sodom, but the first Person in the

Trinity stayeth with Abraham"

and elsewhere {i},

"the three Persons in the Trinity, in the shape of three men, appear to Abraham and dine with him, and eat the first flesh mentioned eaten in all the Scripture."

But to this may be objected, that the Father and the Holy Spirit are never said to appear in an human form, see **Joh 5:37**; or are ever called angels, as these are, Ge 19:1; but they rather seem to be angels, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call them, in the likeness of men, who were sent on three messages, as they suggest; one to bring the news of Sarah's bearing Isaac; the other to deliver Lot; and the third to overthrow Sodom and Gomorrah; which is a much better sense than that of Ben Gersom, who takes them to be three prophets, and mentions the names of two of them, Shem and Heber; for two of these are expressly called angels, Ge 19:1; and the apostle seems to refer to this history, Heb 13:2; in the Talmud {k} they are said to be Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael: the truth of the matter seems to be this, that one of them was the son of God in an human form, that chiefly conversed with Abraham, and who rained from heaven brimstone on Sodom; and the other two were angels in the like form that accompanied him in that expedition:

and when he saw [them], he ran to meet them from the tent door; for, though they are before said to stand "by him", it must be understood of their being near him, but at some little distance; and as soon as he saw them, he did not stay for their coming up to him, but, to show how ready he was to entertain them, he arises from his seat at the tent door and ran to meet them, and gave them an hearty welcome to what he would provide for them:

and bowed himself toward the ground; not in a way of religious adoration, for, had he took them for angels, be could not have done that, and he knew not as yet that one of them was Jehovah; but in a civil manner, as was the custom of those countries when in the presence of, or when they received? great personages, and such, by their look and habit, Abraham took these to be.

{h} Works, vol. 1. p. 13. {i} Ib. p. 695. {k} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 37. 2.

Genesis 18:3

Ver. 3. And said, my Lord,.... He addressed himself to one of them who appeared to him to be the greatest and most honourable, either by the appearance of his countenance, or by his dress, or by the situation in which he was between the other two, and by their carriage and behaviour to him:

if now I have found favour in thy sight; signifying he should esteem it an honour done him, that he and his companions would vouchsafe to stop and refresh themselves:

pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant; they might seem, by some motion they made, as if they were going another way, and declined turning in to him.

Genesis 18:4

Ver. 4. Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet,.... Which was very refreshing to travellers in hot countries, who walked barefoot or in sandals; and this he proposes to be done by one of his servants, whose business it was, only desires they would give him leave to order it, 1Sa 25:41; and so it was usual in other countries, and in later times, for servants to fetch water to wash the hands and feet of guests {l}:

and rest yourselves under the tree; before the tent door, under which doubtless were seats to sit down upon, where they might rest their weary limbs; it is very probable this was an oak tree, and which, and a turpentine tree the ancient writers speak of, continued unto the times of Constantine, See Gill on "Ge 13:18"; and the Jewish writers say {m}, that now near the city (Hebron), between the vineyards, are the oaks of Mamre, where is the house of Abraham our father, on whom be peace, and the tree under which the angels ate, and the stone on which he (Abraham) sat when he was circumcised.

{l} "----- dant manibus famuli lymphas." --Virgil. Aeneid. l. 1. {m} Cippi Hebr. p. 9. Ed. Hottinger.

Genesis 18:5

Ver. 5. And I will fetch a morsel of bread,.... A piece or a loaf of bread, as De Dieu shows the word signifies; bread being put for all the necessaries of life:

and comfort ye your hearts; eat to refresh your spirits and renew your strength, that ye may be able to pursue your journey: and after that ye shall pass on your way; I will retard you no longer:

for therefore are ye come to your servant; not that he thought they came this way on purpose to take some refreshment with him, but so it was ordered by the providence of God; and since it was, he desires that they would accept of his invitation:

and they said, so do as thou hast said; they agreed to it, that water should be fetched to wash their feet, and food for them to eat.

Genesis 18:6

Ver. 6. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah,.... In order to acquaint her with his guests, and to give proper instructions for providing food for them; and this he hasted to do, being hearty in the entertainment of them, and that he might not keep them too long from their journey:

and said, to Sarah his wife,

make ready quickly three measures of fine meal; which was ready sifted from the bran, and was the finest flour that was in the house, and only wanted to be mixed and kneaded and made up into cakes; and he ordered three measures or seahs of them, each of which held more than our peck, and all three made an ephah or bushel, being willing to have enough, and to make a generous entertainment for them; this he enjoined Sarah to do, but not of herself, but by her maids, and no doubt, for quicker dispatch, she might assist herself, wherefore it follows:

knead [it], and make cakes upon the hearth; after the fine flour was made dough and kneaded, it was made into round cakes, and these were put upon an hearth made hot, and then covered with hot embers, by which means they were soon baked and fit to eat; this was done "upon hot stones" {n}; and a traveller {o} into those parts some years ago reports, that, passing through the deserts of Arabia, when they chose to eat new bread, instead of, or for want of biscuits, they made a paste of flour and water, and wrought it into broad cakes about the thickness of a finger, and put them in a hot place on the ground, heated on purpose by fire, and covered them with ashes and coals, and turned them several times until they were enough, and that these cakes were savoury and good to eat: some of the Arabians, he says: have in their tents stones or copper plates, made on purpose to bake them, and gives {p} an instance of a woman they met with in a country lying between Mesopotamia and Media, making such cakes for them in the same manner.

{n} Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 34. col. 328. {o} Rauwolff's Travels, par. 2. ch. 4. p. 120. {p} Ib. c. 9. p. 163.

Genesis 18:7

Ver. 7. And Abraham ran unto the herd,.... While Sarah and her maids were kneading the dough and making the cakes:

and fetched a calf tender and good; a fine fat calf, which was reckoned very delicious food, and much in use with the ancients {q} and generally made a part in any grand entertainment, and was accounted fit for a king, see 1Sa 28:24:

and gave [it] unto a young man: one of his servants, to kill and dress as soon as possible; Jarchi says this was Ishmael, whom he trained up to such service:

and he hasted to dress it; the young man made all the haste he could to get it ready, according to the orders of Abraham.

{q} autar egwn agelhyen elassav piona moscon --Orpheus de lapidibus, ver. 63.

Genesis 18:8

Ver. 8. And he took butter and milk,.... Jarchi says, it was the fat of the milk gathered from the top of it, he means cream, and is different both from butter and from milk: this was either Abraham himself, who took and brought these, as Sarah or her maidens might bring the cakes when baked; or else Abraham's young man, since it follows:

and the calf which he had dressed; either the whole of it, or some principal parts of it, reckoned the finest and choicest; though by what follows it seems to be Abraham himself, who may be said to dress the calf, it being done by his orders:

and set [it] before them; a table being placed under the tree, he set, or ordered to be set, all those provisions before the three men, to feed upon, the cakes and butter, the milk and fatted calf:

and he stood by them under the tree; not only to bid them welcome, but to minister to them; nor will this seem strange, or that the above several things were chiefly done by Abraham and Sarah, when it is observed that the greatest personages in the eastern countries, in early times, used to perform such services, and still do to this day, as a late traveller {r} informs us:

"it is here (says he) no disgrace for persons of the highest character to busy themselves in what we should reckon menial employments; the greatest prince assists in the most laborious actions of husbandry; neither is he ashamed to fetch a lamb from his herd and kill it, while the princess his wife is impatient till she has prepared her fire and her kettle to seethe and dress it: the custom that still continues of walking either barefoot or with slippers requires the ancient compliment of bringing water upon the arrival of a stranger to wash his feet; and who is the person that presents himself first to do this office, and to give the "mar habbeh", or welcome, but the master of the family himself? who always distinguishes himself by being the most officious; and, after his entertainment is prepared, accounts it a breach of respect to sit down with his guests, but stands up all the time and serves them."

All which serves greatly to illustrate this passage; and the same learned author observes, that in this manner we find Achilles and Patroclus employed, as described by Homer {s}, in providing an entertainment:

and they did eat; or seemed to eat, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi; though as they assumed bodies so animated as to be capable of talking and walking, why not of eating and drinking? and there must have been a consumption of food some way or other, or Abraham would have known they had not eaten: we read of angels' food, Ps 78:25; our English poet had a notion of angels eating, and represents Eve providing a repast for the angel, which he owns to be no ungrateful food {t}.

{r} Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 237, 238. Ed. 2. {s} Iliad. 9. ver. 205. {t} Milton's Paradise Lost, B. 5. ver. 412, &c.

Genesis 18:9

Ver. 9. And they said unto him, where [is] Sarah thy wife?.... One of them put the question; and so the Septuagint version renders it, "and he said unto him", the principal of them, whom Abraham at first addressed and called him "my Lord", and was no other than the Son of God in an human form; and various things in the context show him to be a divine Person, particularly his promise of return next year, and Sarah should have a son: and the question here put by him was not out of ignorance, for he who knew the name of Abraham's wife, knew where she was; but this was asked in order to lead on to say something more concerning her, and that, hearing her name, she might draw nearer and listen to what was said of her:

and he said, behold, in the tent; for in those times they dwelt in tents, and this was either the tent common to the family, or rather was Sarah's own tent, Ge 24:67; Sarah was where she should be, in her own apartment, attending to the business of her family, and answered to the description the apostle gives of a good housewife, a keeper at home, **Tit 2:5**;

Genesis 18:10

Ver. 10. And he said,.... The same that put the question, Jehovah himself, as appears by what follows:

I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; not by a personal appearance as now, but by the fulfilment of his promise which he had before given to Abraham, that he should have a son by Sarah, and now renews it; and this would be about the same time in the next year, perhaps at the spring of the year, which may be called "a time of life", when all things revive, which in the winter season seem to be dead; a fit emblem this of the case and condition of Abraham and Sarah, both as they now were, and afterwards would be; for, though their bodies were as it were dead and unfit for generation, yet nature would revive in them again: unless it be understood of the whole time of the conception, quickening, and birth of an infant, at the usual time a woman goes with child, which is nine months, when the infant is a perfect living child. All the Targums paraphrase it,

"in which ye shall be alive,"

safe and well, and so most of the Jewish commentators; as if it was a promise to Abraham and Sarah, that they should live to see the promise made good next given; but this seems not so agreeable as either of the former, see **2Ki**

4:16:

and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son; it was by degrees that this was made known to Abraham; first he was told he should have a son, but it was not said by whom he should have it; some years after that he is informed he should have a son by Sarah, but not when; but now it is revealed to him, that he should have one by her the next year;

and Sarah heard [it] in the tent door, which [was] behind him; or, "and it was behind him" {u}; that is, the tent door was at the back of the person speaking; Sarah, hearing her name mentioned, got to the tent door to listen to what might be further said; and the place where she was, was behind the speaker, who stood between her and Abraham, with whom he was conversing; Abraham was before high, and Sarah behind him, so that he could not see her when she laughed, and yet he knew she did; and for the sake of that, this circumstance is remarked: both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase the clause,

"and Ishmael stood behind it,"

the tent door; and the former adds, and hearkened to what the angel said.

{u} wyrxa awhw "et ipsum post eum", Montanus.

Genesis 18:11

Ver. 11. Now Abraham and Sarah [were] old, [and] well stricken in age,.... The one being ninety nine years of age, and the other eighty nine; and which is observed to make it the more surprising that they should have a son at such an age; and what follows still makes it more so:

[and] it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women; her monthly visitors had left her, so that she was unfit for conception, and there could be no hope of it in a natural way; though the philosopher {w} intimates, that there are some, that it is possible, may conceive without them.

{w} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 7. c. 2.

Genesis 18:12

Ver. 12. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself,.... Not for joy of a son, and as pleased with it, believing so it would be; but as disbelieving it, and perhaps deriding it, and confuting it with a laugh, which, though it did not appear in her countenance, was secretly in her heart:

saying, not with her mouth, but in her mind,

after I am waxed old, being almost ninety years of age,

shall I have pleasure? in conception, or rather in having a son, and in suckling and nursing him, and bringing him up; for in bearing and bringing forth is sorrow:

and my Lord being old also; which increased the difficulty and her unbelief: the Apostle Peter seems to have respect to this in **1Pe 3:6**.

Genesis 18:13

Ver. 13. And the Lord said unto Abraham,.... This discovers who the person was that had been conversing with Abraham, that he was a divine Person, as appears by his name "Jehovah", as well as by his knowledge of Sarah's behaviour; he did not turn himself to her, that it might be more manifest that it was not upon the sight of her he judged she laughed, but from his own omniscience; and he chose rather to speak to her husband than to her, appearing as a stranger, and that he might reprove her:

wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? suggesting there was no reason for it, and signifying his displeasure and indignation at it.

Genesis 18:14

Ver. 14. Is anything too hard for the Lord?.... Whose power is infinite; or "too wonderful" {x}, so wonderful and beyond all belief, that it can never be thought it will be done by him; and why then should it be thought incredible or impossible that Sarah should have a child, though she is old? Or, is "anything hidden from the Lord" {y}? Nothing can be, not Sarah's laughter.

At the time appointed will I return to thee, according to the time of life, and

Sarah shall have a son; which words are repeated not merely for the confirmation of Abraham's faith, which staggered not, but to remove Sarah's unbelief, and to encourage her faith in the divine promise.

{x} alpyh "nunquid mirabile vel mirificabitur", Munster, Piscator, Schmidt.
{y} "Nunquid abscondetur", Pagninus, Cartwright; "an potest occultari", Junius & Tremellius, Fagius; so the Targum of Jonathan and Aben Ezra.

Genesis 18:15

Ver. 15. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not,.... Some render the words, "Sarah lied" {z}; and indeed it was no other than a lie, to say she did not laugh when she did; which she might be tempted to say in her confusion, partly because the back of the speaker was to her, and he could not see her, and partly because it was inward, and very little at least discoverable in her countenance:

for she was afraid; of the reproof of her husband; and of the charge of ill manners to a stranger; and especially as she had reason to believe that it was the Lord himself that had spoken these words, and therefore could gladly have excused herself, and wiped off the reproach:

and he said, nay, but thou didst laugh; it is not true what thou sayest, for thou didst certainly laugh; this he knew, being the omniscient God, notwithstanding, as he appeared as a man, his back was to her, and though her laughter was more internal than external.

{z} vxkt "mentita est", Drusius.

Genesis 18:16

Ver. 16. And the men rose up from thence,.... From their seats at Abraham's table under the tree, all three of them:

and looked toward Sodom; set their faces and steered their course that way, by which it appeared they intended to go thither: the Targum of Jonathan says, that he that brought the news to Sarah went up, to the highest heavens, and two of them looked toward Sodom; but it seems most likely, that, when the two went on their way to Sodom, the third stayed with Abraham:

and Abraham went with them, to bring them on the way; which was another piece of civility to strangers used in those early times, as well as in later ones, Ac 20:38.

Genesis 18:17

Ver. 17. And the Lord said,.... Either unto Abraham himself, so leading on to what he was about to make known to him; and without supposing this it will be difficult to account for Abraham's intercession for Sodom upon this: or to the two angels with him; not as consulting them whether he should or no do what he next suggests, but to give to them Abraham's just character, and the reasons of his using him in such a friendly manner: or it may be, to the other divine Persons, the Father and Spirit, one with the Son of God, and always present with him:

shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do? which he was about to do, namely, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: the Jewish writers {a} observe, that these cities were given in the grant of the whole land to Abraham, and therefore it was right to acquaint him with it first: but other and better reasons are given in the next words; Abraham was a friend of the Lord, and he had showed himself friendly to him, not only now, but heretofore, and therefore will treat him as his friend, by imparting his secrets to him.

{a} Targ. Jerus. & Jarchi in loc.

Genesis 18:18

Ver. 18. Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation,.... Which was fulfilled in the nation of Israel, so called, not so much for the largeness of the place they dwelt in, and the number of its inhabitants, as for the law of God that was given them, and the worship of God kept up among them; on account of which there was no nation so great, **De 4:8**;

and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him; in his seed, the Messiah, in whom some of all nations are blessed with all spiritual blessings. Now, since God had promised, and would do such great things for him and his, he judged it right and proper not to hide from him what he was about to do at Sodom, and the rather, as he had a near relation that dwelt there.

Genesis 18:19

Ver. 19. For I know him,.... Not only by his omniscience, but with a special knowledge, such as is accompanied with peculiar love and affection; and so Jarchi says, it is expressive of love. God loved Abraham, he was a peculiar favourite of his, and therefore he would reveal his secrets to him, see **Am 3:2**; and he knew not only who he was, but what he was, a holy good man, made so by his own grace, and what he would do by the assistance of that grace, and particularly what follows:

that he will command his children, and his household after him; to serve and worship the Lord: not his own children only, but his servants also, all in his family; lay his injunctions on them, use his authority with them, give them all needful instructions, and take such methods with them as would tend to propagate and preserve the true religion after his death:

and they shall keep the way of the Lord; which he has prescribed to men, and directed them to walk in, even everything respecting instituted worship then revealed, and particularly,

to do justice and judgment; to attend to all the laws, statutes, and judgments of God; to do that which is just and right between man and man; not as a justifying righteousness, by which Abraham himself was not justified before God; but to show their regard to the will of God, in gratitude for favours received from him, and to glorify him, as well as for the good of their fellow creatures:

that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him: not only on Abraham personally, but upon his posterity, they walking in the ways of the Lord, according to his command and direction: the word "that" here rather signifies, as Vatablus rightly observes, the consequence than the cause, what would follow upon these things, rather than as procured by them; these being the way in which God designed to bestow them, though not for them.

Genesis 18:20

Ver. 20. And the Lord said,.... The Targum of Jonathan adds, to the ministering angels, the two angels that were with him in the likeness of men; or to Abraham, at least in his hearing, by which he understood that Sodom and other cities were about to be destroyed for their sins:

because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great; either of Lot in it, whose righteous soul was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked, and cried to heaven against them; or of the inhabitants that were oppressed by others, either in their bodies, being forced to submit to their unnatural usage of them, or in their estates, of which they wronged them; particularly the cry of the poor among them, whom they suffered to starve, though there were fulness of bread in the midst of them, see Eze 16:49; the Jews {b} say, they appointed false judges, who oppressed all strangers that came to Sodom, and made a law, that whoever relieved a poor person should be burnt with fire: or the cry of their sins, which were many and great, and openly and impudently committed; the cry of which came into the ears of the Lord of hosts, and called for vengeance. Those two cities, which perhaps were the greatest and the most remarkable for their sins, are put for all the five cities of the plain, called Pentapolis.

And because their sin is very grievous; attended with very aggravated circumstances, they enjoyed great plenty of good things; and were not to be bore with, being so exceeding sinful, and so publicly and audaciously committed, especially that sin so frequent among them, which has its name from Sodom, see Ge 13:13.

{b} Pirke Eliezer, c. 25.

Genesis 18:21

Ver. 21. I will go down now,.... The Son of God in an human form now with Abraham, who proposes to go from the place where he was, which perhaps was on higher ground, to the plain in which Sodom and Gomorrah stood; and whither it seems certain he did go down, after he had done talking with Abraham, see Ge 19:24:

and see whether they have done altogether; committed all the sins, and in such manner, and with such circumstances as reported; or, "have made a full end" {c}, have tilled up the measure of their iniquities, and so are ripe for ruin:

according to the cry of it which is come unto me; this is spoken after the manner of men; for otherwise God saw all their wickedness, and knew full well the nature and circumstances of it, and how general it was; but this method he proposes to take, to show the justice of his proceedings, and to instruct judges, and set an example to them, not to condemn any without thoroughly examining their cause:

and if not, I will know: the reason of this cry, and what is proper to be done. The note of Aben Ezra is,

"if they have so done (according to the cry) I will make a consumption among them (so he takes the sense of the word {d} we render "altogether"); but if not, "I will know", I will have mercy on them."

{c} hlk wve "fecerint consummationem", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Drusius, Cocceius. {d} "Fecerint consumptionem", Piscator, Schmidt; so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem.

Genesis 18:22

Ver. 22. And the men turned their faces from thence,.... From the place to which Abraham brought them on; these were only two of them, for the third continued with Abraham:

and went towards Sodom; and are the two angels said to come thither at evening, Ge 19:1:

but Abraham stood yet before the Lord; before the third person, whom Abraham now began to know more clearly; he stood before him with all reverence and humility, to hear what he had further to say to him, as well as to say something to him himself; he stood "yet", he continued to stand after the departure of the two angels that were gone to Sodom. Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase it,

"he ministered in prayer before the Lord."

Genesis 18:23

Ver. 23. And Abraham drew near,.... To the Lord; he approached nearer to him, to have more close and intimate conversation with him on the subject of the destruction of Sodom, which he perceived, by what had been said, was like to be; he drew nigh to God in prayer; so the Targum of Jonathan, "and Abraham prayed and said;"

he drew nigh with faith and freedom, and an holy boldness and confidence, and yet with great reverence of the divine Majesty, and in all humility, under a deep sense of his own meanness and unworthiness:

and said, wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? having in his mind righteous Lot, who dwelt in Sodom, whom he knew to be a just man, though he had departed from him, and was dwelling in such a wicked place; and he might charitably hope there were more in so large a city and in the parts adjacent, at least that were not so flagitious and abominably wicked as the greater part were, and who, in comparison of them, were sober and moral people.

Genesis 18:24

Ver. 24. Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city,.... Within the Pentapolis, which consisted of five cities; and so ten righteous persons are supposed to be in each, as Jarchi observes, agreeably to the Targum of Jonathan;

"perhaps there may be fifty righteous persons in the city who pray before thee, ten for every city, answerable to the five cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar:"

wilt thou also destroy, and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that [are] therein? here Abraham becomes an advocate and intercessor for all the inhabitants of the place, even the wicked, that they might not be destroyed, but spared and be delivered from impending ruin, for the sake of the fifty righteous among them; before he seemed only concerned for the righteous, lest they should perish with the rest, and that some method might be found out and taken to distinguish them from them; but here he expresses himself in favour of the wicked also, that they might be spared, provided such a number of righteous ones was found among them.

Genesis 18:25

Ver. 25. That be far from thee to do after this manner,.... He represents it as a thing unbecoming the divine Majesty, and contrary to the nature and perfections of God,

to slay the righteous with the wicked; which is true of eternal punishment, but not of temporal calamities, in which the righteous are often involved with the wicked, though not for the same reasons, and under the same considerations, and for the same ends:

and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee; the one suffer as the other; that he judged was not agreeable to his divine Majesty; nor are they treated without any difference; what befalls the righteous is not for their sins, nor considered as a punishment for them, nor intended for their hurt, but for their good, as the issue of them proves; but it is the reverse with the wicked:

shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? meaning the Lord, to whom he drew nigh, and was praying to, and pleading with, even the Son of God in human form, who, as he made the world, was the Governor of it and Judge in it; and indeed, as Mediator, has all judgment committed to him, and is appointed to be Judge of quick and dead at the last day, and who does all things that are just and equitable in Providence now; for there is no unrighteousness in him, nor in any of ways and works, and who will judge righteous judgment hereafter. Though by "right" Abraham seems to mean, not strict rigorous justice, but a mixture of mercy with justice, even moderation and clemency; for such are used by earthly judges, with whom it is a maxim, "summum jus summa injuria" (i.e. extreme law, extreme injustice); and therefore Abraham argues, surely the supreme Judge of all the earth will show mercy, and in the midst of deserved wrath remember it, and not deal according to the rules of inexorable and inflexible justice; and to this sense the answer of the Lord inclines.

Genesis 18:26

Ver. 26. If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city,.... Sodom is particularly mentioned because Lot dwelt there, and being the metropolis, and the city of greatest note, as Jarchi observes, it is put for the rest; and the sense is, if fifty righteous persons could be found in all the five cities, mercy should be shown them:

then will I spare all the place for their sakes; not Sodom only, but the whole country, of which Sodom was the chief; the Lord takes up and agrees to the number Abraham pitched upon, and grants the request he makes.

Genesis 18:27

Ver. 27. And Abraham answered and said,.... In a very humble and modest manner, encouraged by the answer given him:

behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord; suggesting that it was bold and daring in him, and was what he was unfit for and unworthy of; or, "I have begun to speak" {e}; and since he had, he intimates, it would be a favour, and what he was undeserving of, might he be permitted to proceed; or, "I am desirous to speak" {f}; it is a pleasure to me, as well as an honour done me, to be permitted to speak unto the Lord, though I deserve it not,

which [am but] dust and ashes; whose original was out of the dust, and to which he would return, and was now a frail, feeble, mortal creature, mean and despicable, unworthy to speak to God; the disproportion between the speaker and the person spoken to was infinite; wherefore the most profound humility and self-abasement are necessary in a creature's approach to the divine Being.

{e} rbdl ytlawh "coepi, loquar", V. L. "loqui", Pagninus, Montanus; so Targum Jon. {f} "Gestio, volo, eupio", Vatablus; "cuperem alloqui", Junius & Tremellius; so Jarchi and Aben Ezra, and Ben Gersom.

Genesis 18:28

Ver. 28. Peradventure there should lack five of the fifty righteous,.... Or there should be but forty five; for Abraham perceived, by the Lord's answer, that there were not fifty righteous persons in the place:

wilt thou destroy all the city for [lack of] five? Abraham proceeds gradually in his requests, and does not ask too much at once, lest he should not succeed:

and he said, if I find there forty and five, I will not destroy [it]; that is, forty five righteous persons.

Genesis 18:29

Ver. 29. And he spake [unto him] yet again, and said,.... Being encouraged by such a gracious answer:

Peradventure there shall be forty found there; forty righteous persons; and, from preceding passages, it must be supplied,

"wilt thou destroy and not spare the place for their sakes?"

and he said, I will not do [it] for forty's sake; but spare them for their sake.

Genesis 18:30

Ver. 30. And he said unto him, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak,.... He feared, through his importunity, he should be wearisome to him and incur his displeasure; this being often the case among men, especially when inferiors are soliciting their superiors, and, not content with one favour, are pressing for more:

Peradventure there shall thirty be found there; the abatement is larger than before; he only made an abatement of five at a time, now ten at once, and so he proceeds;

and he said, I will not do [it], if I find thirty there; not destroy the place for their sake.

Genesis 18:31

Ver. 31. And he said, behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord,.... See Gill on "Ge 18:27":

Peradventure there shall be twenty found there; wouldest thou destroy it, such a number being in it; or, wouldest thou spare it for their sakes?

and he said, I will not destroy [it] for twenty's sake; if there were no more in it, I would spare it for their sake.

Genesis 18:32

Ver. 32. And he said, Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once,.... This should be the last request he should make on this account, and therefore he desired he might be heard without any marks of his displeasure;

Peradventure ten shall be found there: how would the place be dealt with then? would it be consumed or not?

and he said, I will not destroy [it] for ten's sake; though no more righteous persons were found in it. Some of the Jewish writers say {g}, he ended at ten, because he supposed there were ten righteous persons in Lot's family, Lot and his wife, and their four daughters, and their four husbands; but they forgot that two of Lot's daughters were unmarried, and how many he had married is not known; ten they say make a congregation, and wherever there are ten righteous persons, a place is saved for their sakes.

{g} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 49. fol. 44. 3.

Genesis 18:33

Ver. 33. And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham,.... It is great and wonderful condescension for God to commune with a creature; it is an act of sovereignty how long he will continue to do so; communion with him always is not to be expected in this life; he communes for a while, and then leaves off and goes his way, see Jer 14:8; the Son of God in an human form, as soon as he had done talking with Abraham, perhaps disappeared to him, and went his way to Sodom, for there we find him in the next chapter:

and Abraham returned unto his place; to his tent in the plains of Mamre, waiting to observe or hear what would be the issue and event of things respecting Sodom and Gomorrah.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 19

The contents of this chapter are Lot's entertainment of two angels that came to

Sodom, Ge 19:1; the rude behaviour of the men of Sodom towards them, who for it were smote with blindness, Ge 19:4; the deliverance of Lot, his wife and two daughters, by means of the angels he entertained, Ge 19:12; the sparing of the city of Zoar at the entreaty of Lot, to which he was allowed to flee, Ge 19:18; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, Ge 19:23; Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt for looking back, Ge 19:26; Abraham's view of the conflagration of the cities, Ge 19:28; Lot's betaking himself to a mountain, and dwelling in a cave with his two daughters, by whom he had two sons, the one called Moab, and the other Benammi, Ge 19:30.

Ver. 1. And there came two angels to Sodom at even,.... Or "the two angels" {h}, the two men who were angels in the likeness of men, that had been with Abraham in the heat of the day at Hebron, on the evening of the same day came to Sodom:

and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: not as a civil magistrate to try causes there, being appointed a judge over them, as Jarchi relates; yea, the Jews say {i}: that that day five judges were appointed by the men of Sodom, and Lot was the chief of them; but this is not likely, and seems to be contradicted, Ge 19:9; but he sat there to observe strangers that might pass by, and invite them into his house, and that they might not fall into the hands of the wicked Sodomites, who might abuse them; this being a time when not only travellers would be glad to put up and take refreshment, but his wicked neighbours lay in wait for them to satisfy their lusts on them: he had learnt this hospitality from Abraham;

and Lot seeing [them], rose up to meet them: he arose from his seat and went forward to meet them, which showed his readiness and heartiness to receive them:

and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; not in a religious way, as paying worship to angels, for as yet he did not know them to be such, and if he had, would not have given them divine adoration; but in a civil way, as was the custom of the eastern countries to bow very low in their civil respects to men, especially to great personages; and such Lot took these to be by their goodly looks and by their dress, as appears by his salutation of them in Ge 19:2.

{h} Mykalmh ynv "duo illi angeli", Tigurine version, Cocceius; so Ar. "duobus illis angelis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {i} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 50. fol. 44. 4.

Genesis 19:2

Ver. 2. And he said, behold now, my lords,.... Taking them to be, and bespeaking them as persons of quality, who appeared with majesty in their countenances, and looked as if they had been well brought up, and were upon their travels; not knowing them to be angels, whom he received and entertained unawares, as the apostle, referring to Lot and Abraham, observes, Heb 13:2;

turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house; meaning himself, who was their humble servant, and entreats them to turn in to his house, which perhaps was hard by, and take up their lodging with him: the ancient Jews {k} give the sense of the phrase thus, go a roundabout, winding, crooked way to my house, that the men of Sodom may not see you go in there, and know you are there. This is taken from the signification of the word to "turn in", which in a different construction signifies to decline, to go back; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"turn here, and there, and go into the house of your servant:"

and tarry all night, and wash your feet; the meaning is, that they would stay all night, and take up their lodging with him, when they had washed their feet, which was usually done before they laid down, and even before they supped; and indeed was the first thing that was done to a stranger upon his entering into the house, Ge 18:4:

and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways: signifying that he would not detain them longer than they thought fit; they might rise as soon in the morning as they pleased, and pursue their journey, only he entreats they would accept of a night's lodging with him:

and they said, nay, but we will abide in the street all night; which they said partly out of modesty, it not becoming strangers to be too forward in accepting an invitation, and partly to try whether Lot was hearty in the invitation he gave them; and hereby also reigning ignorance of the manners and behaviour of the men of Sodom, as if they might be safe from their insults in the street in the night; and this made Lot the more pressing upon them, that they might not be exposed to his wicked neighbours.

{k} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 50. fol. 44. 4.

Genesis 19:3

Ver. 3. And he pressed them greatly,.... He prayed, he entreated, he persuaded, he made use of a multitude of words, and of all the arguments he could think of, to prevail upon them; and might not only press them with words, but make use of gestures, as taking them by the hand, or by their clothes, and as it were forcing them into his house, whereby it plainly appeared he was cordial and hearty in his invitation:

and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house: went along with him to it, and instead of proceeding forward, or continuing where they were, or steering their course to a street in the city, they turned in to Lot's house:

and he made them a feast; a large, liberal, and generous entertainment, as Abraham did, consisting of a variety of eatables and drinkables; indeed it has its name only from drinking, wine being a principal part of a banquet:

and did bake unleavened bread; not because it was the time of the passover, as Jarchi suggests, for as yet that was not instituted; but for quicker dispatch, that his guests might have their supper the sooner, and get to bed the earlier, and rest themselves; bread without leaven in it being sooner baked than that which is made with it:

and they did eat; the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem are,

"they seemed as if they ate."

See Gill on "Ge 18:8";

Genesis 19:4

Ver. 4. But before they lay down,.... Upon their beds to sleep; it was between supper time and bedtime that the following affair happened, while the angels were talking to Lot about the men of Sodom, and inquiring what sort of men they were, as the Jewish writers {l} suggest:

the men of the city, [even] the men of Sodom, compassed the house round about; the house of Lot, where the angels were:

both old and young: the males of the city of every age; some that were past committing the sin they were so infamous for, as well as those that burned with that unnatural lust; some that could not be actors were willing to be spectators; and all were curious to see the lovely persons, that it was reported all over the city were seen to go into Lot's house:

all the people from every quarter; all from one end of the city to the other, and from every corner in it: which shows the general corruption and depravity of the city, that it was so far from having ten righteous persons in it, that of the proper inhabitants of it, there was not, as Jarchi notes, one righteous person, no, not one.

{l} Bereshit Rabba, ut supra. (sect. 50. fol. 44. 4.)

Genesis 19:5

Ver. 5. And they called unto Lot,.... With a loud voice, that he might hear, they being in the street, and he within doors; and perhaps there might be a court before his house, through which there was a passage up to it, as seems from Ge 19:6:

and said unto him, where are the men which came in to thee this night? for though they were angels, they appeared like men, and they seemed to be so to them who saw them go into Lot's house:

bring them out unto us, that we may know them; not who they were, and from whence they came, and what their business was; nor did they pretend anything of this kind to hide and cover their design from Lot, but they were open and impudent, and declared their sin without shame and blushing, which is their character, **Isa 3:9**; their meaning was, that they might commit that unnatural sin with them, they were addicted to, and in common used, and which from them to this day bears the name of Sodomy. As lawful copulation with a man's wife is modestly expressed by knowing her, **Ge 4:1**; so this unlawful and shocking copulation of man with man is expressed by this phrase; and that this was their meaning is plain from Lot's answer to them, Ge 19:8.

Genesis 19:6

Ver. 6. And Lot went out at the door unto them,.... At the door of his house:

and shut the door after him; the door of the passage to his house, the courtyard door, for another word is here used; unless the one was properly the door, and the other a hatch: however, this precaution of shutting it was used to prevent the men of Sodom rushing in, and taking away the men by violence; and that Lot might have some opportunity of trying what he could do by arguments, to prevail upon them to desist from their attempt.

Genesis 19:7

Ver. 7. And said, I pray you, brethren,.... Not by family or nation, for the Sodomites were of the race of Ham, in the line of Canaan, and Lot was a descendant of Shem, in the line of Arphaxad; nor by religion, for the one were idolaters, and the other a worshipper of the true God, but by community of nature; and especially he called them so by reason of their having been neighbours considerable time, and on the score of friendship, see **1Ki 9:13**; and with this soft and loving language Lot hoped to win his neighbours, and to persuade them from pursuing their unlawful measures: for which purpose and that alone he used it, saying to them,

do not so wickedly; as to use ill a man's guests, to abuse strangers, to break the laws and rules of hospitality, and especially to commit that unnatural sin they were bent upon.

Genesis 19:8

Ver. 8. Behold now, I have two daughters, which have not known man,.... Though some think they were espoused to men, but had not yet cohabited with them, see Ge 19:14:

let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as [is] good in your eyes; this was a very great evil in Lot to make such an offer of his daughters; it was contrary to parental love and affection, an exposing the chastity of his daughters, which should have been his care to preserve; nor had he a power to dispose of them in such a manner: and though fornication is a lesser evil than sodomy, yet all evil is to be avoided, and even it is not to be done that good may come: nothing can be said to excuse this good man, but the hurry of spirit, and confusion of mind that he was in, not knowing what to say or do to prevent the base designs of those men; that he might be pretty certain they would not accept of his offer, their lust burning more after men than women; that this showed his great regard to the laws of hospitality, that he had rather sacrifice his daughters to their brutal lusts, than give up the men that were in his house to them; and that he might hope that this would soften their minds, and put them off of any further attempt; but after all it must be condemned as a dangerous and imprudent action:

only unto these men do nothing; for as yet he knew them not to be angels; had he, it would not have given him the concern it did, since he must have known that they were able to defend themselves, and that the sin these men offered to commit could not be perpetrated on them: but he took them for mere men, and his request is, that no injury might be done to their persons in any respect, and especially in that way which their wicked hearts put them upon, and is so shocking to nature:

for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof; for though it was not their intention in coming, nor the design of Providence in bringing them into Lot's house, to secure them from the violence of the men of Sodom, but for the preservation of Lot and his family, which as yet he knew nothing of, yet it was what Lot had in view in giving the invitation to them: and the laws of hospitality being reckoned sacred and inviolable, a man's house was accounted an asylum for strangers when taken into it.

Genesis 19:9

Ver. 9. And they said, stand back,.... Turn on one side, get away from the door, that we may come to it:

and they said [again]: to one another:

this one [fellow] came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge; this one man, and he a stranger and sojourner, no freeman or citizen of this city, sets himself against the whole body of the inhabitants, and takes upon him to judge what is right and wrong to be done; and if he is let alone in "judging he will judge" {m}, as it may be rendered; he will take upon him this office, and continue to exercise it, and determine and decide all matters among us at his pleasure. This confutes the above notion of the Jews, that Lot was appointed a judge by the men of Sodom, yea, the president of the court for that day;

See Gill on "Ge 19:1":

now will we deal worse with thee than with them: the men in his house, both by abusing his body in their unnatural way, and by beating and bruising him, and pulling him in pieces, limb from limb; something of this kind they seem to threaten him with, and attempted to effect, as follows:

and they pressed sore upon the man, [even] Lot; not only with words in a bullying way, with menaces and threats, with oaths, and curses, and imprecations; for it is the same word that is used of Lot, pressing the angels with words and arguments to come into his house, Ge 19:3; but they rushed in upon him in a body, and pushed him away, and pulled him about, and would in all probability have torn him to pieces, had he not been rescued by the angels:

and came near to break the door: that which was shut, the door of the passage that led to the house.

{m} jwpv jpvy "judicabit judicando", Drusius.

Genesis 19:10

Ver. 10. But the men put forth their hand,.... They came to the door, and opened it, and put out their hands, one on one side the door, and the other on the other:

and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door; and thus they rescued Lot from the fury and rage of the men of Sodom, and prevented his daughters being exposed unto them, as he had offered. This action showed them to be more than men, that they should open the door, take in Lot, and shut it so suddenly, that the men of Sodom could take no advantage of it, could neither retain Lot, nor enter the door when opened, and especially what follows.

Genesis 19:11

Ver. 11. And they smote the men that [were] at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great,.... with "blindnesses" {n}; with extreme blindness, with blindness both of eye and heart, as Aben Ezra interprets it; and indeed had they not been given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart, such a stroke upon them might have convinced them that their ways were evil, and their works not right, and that by them they had incurred the displeasure of God, and would desisted from their enterprise; but, on the contrary, they went on with it, and sought with all diligence and labour as much as possible to effect it. The word for "blindness" is only used here and in **2Ki 6:18**, and denotes a peculiar sort of blindness; not an entire blindness with respect to every object, but only with regard to that they were intent upon; for otherwise they would not have continued about Lot's house, or fatigued themselves with searching for the door of it, but would rather have been glad to have groped to their own houses as well as they could: and thus it was with the Syrians, when they were smitten at the prayer of Elisha, it was not total, for they could follow the prophet in the way he went and led them, but they could not see their way to the place where they intended to go; and so these men of Sodom could see other objects, but not the door of Lot's house, their heads were so confused, and their imaginations so disturbed as in drunken men; or the medium of the visive faculty, the air, so altered, or the form of the object to be seen so changed, that they could not discern it; when they saw the door, it looked like the wall, and that which seemed to them to be the door, proved to be the wall:

so that they wearied themselves to find the door; went backwards and forwards, fancying the door was here, and then it was there, and when they came to it, they perceived it was not; and thus they went to and fro, until they were quite weary of seeking it, and despaired of finding it, and left off.

{n} Myrwnob "caecitatibus", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Genesis 19:12

Ver. 12. And the men said unto Lot,.... When they had got him into the house again, they began to make themselves known unto him, and to acquaint him with the business they came to do:

hast thou here any besides? which they ask not as being ignorant, though angels know not everything relative to men, but to show their great regard to Lot, who had been so kind to them, and so careful of them; that for his sake they would save them all, if they would take the benefit of their protection, and in this they doubtless had the mind of God revealed to them:

son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters; it should be rendered either "son-in-law, or thy sons, or thy daughters" {o}; if thou hast any son-in-law that has married a daughter of thine, or any sons of thine own that live from thee; or grandsons, the sons of thy married daughters, as Jarchi interprets it; or any other daughters besides those two we here see:

and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring [them] out of this place; that is, whatsoever relations he had, whether more near or remote; for as for his goods, whether in his own house, or in any other part of the city, there was no time for saving them.

{o} Kytnbw Kynbw Ntx "generum aut filios aut filias", V. L. so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Genesis 19:13

Ver. 13. For we will destroy this place,.... Or "we are destroying it" {p}, are about to do it, and will quickly and immediately do it:

because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; the cry of the sins of the inhabitants of it, which were many, and openly, and daringly committed, and reached to heaven, and called for immediate vengeance and punishment:

and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it; by which they discovered themselves to be angels, and what their business was, to destroy Sodom; and which confutes the notion of the Jews, that they were sent on different errands; whereas it is clear from hence, these two were sent to do one and the same thing; See Gill on "Ge 18:2".

{p} wnxna Mytxvm "disperdentes nos", Montanus; "nos perdituri mox sumus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Drusius, Schmidt.

Genesis 19:14

Ver. 14. And Lot went out,.... From his house, after the men of Sodom were gone from it, and before the morning, very probably about midnight:

and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters: according to Aben Ezra, he had two other daughters that perished in Sodom, which he gathers from Ge 19:15, "which are here", as if he had some elsewhere; and so Jarchi says, he had two daughters married in the city. And the Jewish writers {q} speak of one of them, whose name was Pelothith, married to one of the grandees of Sodom: but it seems rather, that these were the daughters Lot had at home with him; who, according to Josephus {r} were espoused to men in the city, but not yet married; and on account of such espousals, as were usual in the eastern countries, Lot calls them his sons-in-law, as they were intended, and so the words may be rendered, "that were about to take his daughters" {s}; to take them for wives, and to their own houses, neither of which they had as yet done; for if these had been daughters of his married, and taken home, he would not only have spoke unto their husbands, but to them also; and would have been still more pressing upon them to arise and make their escape; of which nothing is said, nor of any answer of theirs to him, only of his sons-in-law, as they are called on the above account:

and said, up, get ye out of this place; that is, get up from your beds, anne immediately, and make your escape out of the city:

for the Lord will destroy this city; now, directly, immediately; therefore there is no time to be lost, but at once prepare for your safety:

but he seemed as one that mocked to his sons in law; as one that was in jest, and had a mind to have a little sport with them, to get them out of their beds, and put them into a flight, and then laugh at them.

{q} Pirke Eliezer, c. 25. {r} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 11. sect. 4. {s} wytnb yxql "qui brevi fuerant ducturi filias suas", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so some in Vatablus & Drusius.

Genesis 19:15

Ver. 15. And when the morning arose,.... When it was break of day, for as yet the sun was not risen, nor did it rise until Lot got to Zoar, Ge 19:23. He was now returned from his sons-in-law, and by this time it began to be light:

then the angels hastened Lot; urged him to get out of his house as fast as he could:

saying, arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; from whence Aben Ezra, and others, have concluded, as has been observed, that he had other daughters elsewhere, which they suppose were married to men of Sodom; but the phrase, "which are here", or "are found", or "are present" {t}, relates to his wife, as well as his daughters, and only signifies, that he should take all his relations that were present; and these may be only opposed to and distinguished from his sons-in-law that were absent, and refused to hearken to his advice and exhortations. Onkelos paraphrases the words, "who are found faithful with thee"; who believed what the angels said concerning the destruction of Sodom, as well as he, as did his wife and two daughters:

lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city; in the punishment inflicted on the city for their iniquity. See Re 18:4.

{t} taumnh "quae inveniuntur", Pagninus, Montanus; "quae adsunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "quae praesentes", Fagius, Munster, Cocceius.

Genesis 19:16

Ver. 16. And while he lingered,.... Delayed going out of his house, either loath to leave his goods and substance behind him; or waiting to see whether his sons-in-law would come to him; or, as others, praying that God would spare the city: though rather the sense is, that he was so amazed, and filled with horror and trembling at the thought of what judgments were coming on the city, that he was like one stupid, that had no power to stir nor move, which seems best to agree with the sense of the word used {u}:

the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; one of them took hold of his hand with one of his hands, and on his wife's with the other, and the second took hold of one of his daughters with one hand, and of the other with his other hand, and so led them out:

the Lord being merciful unto him; and so saved them from the ruin and destruction of the city, in which had they stayed a little longer they would have been involved. It was not owing to their merits, but to the mercy of God that they were spared:

and they brought him forth, and set him without the city; not him only, but his wife and two daughters also, and having so done, left them and returned to the city; for so the last clause may be rendered, "and left him without the city" {w}, to shift for themselves; or rather well knowing that there would be one that would immediately appear and take them under his care and protection, as the event shows.

{u} hmhmtyw a hmt "admiratus est". {w} whxnyw "et reliquerunt", Drusius, Schmidt.

Genesis 19:17

Ver. 17. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad,.... Into the fields of Sodom, or the suburbs of it:

that he said, escape for thy life; not one of the two men or angels that had been with him all the night past, for they had now left him, and were gone back to the city: but Jehovah the Son of God, who had been communing with Abraham, and now came to Sodom, and appeared to Lot, just at the time the two angels left him, and bid him escape with all haste, if he had any regard for his life, and that of those with him:

look not behind thee; as showing any concern for his goods and substance he had left behind him, or for his sons-in-law, who refused to come with him, and much less for the wicked inhabitants of the city; and this command was not given to Lot only, but to his wife and daughters, as appears by the sequel:

neither stay thou in all the plain: in the plain of Jordan, for the whole plain, and the cities in it, were to be destroyed:

escape to the mountain, lest thou be destroyed, lest thou be consumed; the same mountain the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, and they that were with them after the battle of the kings, fled to, Ge 14:10; here only he and his could be safe from the conflagration of the plain.

Genesis 19:18

Ver. 18. And Lot said unto them,.... Supposing three present, not observing that the two angels had left him that had brought him thither; though it is but to one of them he addresses himself, even to him who had bid him make the best of his way to the mountain, as appears by what follows:

oh, not so, my Lord; that is, let me not be obliged to go so far as to the mountain; though R. Samuel takes it to be an assent, and interprets the phrase of his being willing: but this does not agree with what follows, and is rejected by Aben Ezra, who relates it; and who also observes, that the word "Lord" is a common name, that is, that belongs to a creature; but Jarchi says their Rabbins take it to be an holy name, that is, a name that belongs to God, and gives a good reason why it is so to be understood here; since the person spoken to had it in his power to kill or make alive, to save or destroy, as the following words show; so Ben Melech and the Targum of Oukelos render it by Jehovah.

Genesis 19:19

Ver. 19. Behold, now thy servant hath found grace in thy sight,.... In sending two of his angels to him, to inform him of the approaching destruction of Sodom; to pluck him out of it as a brand out of the burning, and to place him without the city, and in directing and encouraging him to escape for his life:

and thou hast magnified thy mercy which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; he owns it was owing to the mercy of this illustrious Person, whom he knew and acknowledges, by what he says, to be a divine one, that his life was saved; and that this appeared exceeding great in it, that he should spare him and his family, when such multitudes of souls would perish; and he might have perished with the rest, if he had not had timely notice in such a gracious manner:

and I cannot, or, "but now {x}, I cannot"

escape to the mountain; it is too far for me; he signifies that his strength would not hold out through the fatigues of the night past, and want of sleep and rest; but this was owing more to the infirmity of his mind than of his body, for he could go to this same mountain afterwards:

lest some evil take me, and I die; or "that evil" {y}, the burning of Sodom, and the cities of the plain, lest that should overtake him before he got to the mountain: thus he began to distrust the power of God to strengthen him to go thither, who had appeared so wonderfully for him in his present deliverance; and he might have assured himself, that he that brought him out of Sodom would never suffer him to perish in the destruction of it.

{x} ykna "jam vero ego non-potero", Schmidt. {y} herh "malum hoc", Tigurine version; some in Drusius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Genesis 19:20

Ver. 20. Behold now, this city [is] near to flee unto,.... Pointing to Bela, afterwards called Zoar, from what follows: it is said to be two miles distant from Sodom {z}. But the Jews {a} say it was four miles, and some say {b} five; for they reckon that a man may go five miles from the ascent of the morning (or break of day) till the sun shines out:

and it [is] a little one: a little city, and the houses and buildings in it few, the inhabitants few; and the sins of it few, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, in comparison of Sodom and Gomorrah; and therefore Lot hoped this favour would be granted him, that this city might be saved, and he be allowed to flee to it, and go no further; but others think this refers not to the city, which some say {c} was a large and spacious one, but to his request, that it was a small thing he asked, and hoped therefore it would not be denied, and in which he was very importunate:

oh, let me escape thither, ([is] it not a little one?); or "is it not a little thing" {d}? a small request that I make:

and my soul shall live: I shall not only be able to get thither, and so my life will be preserved; but I shall be in good spirits, rejoice and be glad, that I am got safe and out of the reach of danger; my spirits, which are now faint, and therefore can never think of getting so far as to the mountain, but, if this favour is granted me, they will revive, and I shall cheerfully pursue my journey thither, and be comfortable.

{z} Bunting's Travels, p. 63. {a} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 2, 3. & Gloss. in ib. {b} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 94. 1. {c} Bunting's Travels, p. 63. {d} "Nonne perexigua res est?" Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Genesis 19:21

Ver. 21. And he said unto him, see, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also,.... Accepted thy prayer and granted thy request, as well as in other things; shown grace and mercy to thee: or, "have lifted up thy face" {e}; alluding to the custom of the eastern countries, where persons, when they come into the presence of their superiors, used to prostrate their faces to the ground; when, as a token of their acceptance of them, and good will to them, they used to order them to be lifted up, or them to lift up their faces, and stand before them:

that I will not overthrow this city for the which thou hast spoken; for, though he had not in express words petitioned that the city might be spared, yet he had tacitly done it, insomuch as he had requested he might flee unto it, where he could not have been safe had it been destroyed.

{e} Kynp ytavn "suscepi faciem tuam", Pagninus, Moatanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Piscator.

Genesis 19:22

Ver. 22. Haste thee, escape thither,.... Seeing he had granted him his request, he is urgent upon him to be gone, and not to delay upon any account, or make other excuses:

for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither; that is, consistent with the decree of God, that Lot and his family should be delivered and preserved, and with his promise made to him, that he would not overthrow that city; and therefore the catastrophe which would befall all the cities at once could not begin until he was safely arrived there:

therefore the name of the city was called Zoar; in later times, and probably first by Lot, from his use of the word "little", which was his request, which Zoar signifies; it before was called Bela, see Ge 14:2.

Genesis 19:23

Ver. 23. And the sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Which is observed partly to point at the time of his entrance into the city, and of the burning of Sodom, which began at the same time; and partly to show what a fine morning it was, and what little appearance there was of such a tempest rising as quickly did; so that the inhabitants of Sodom, who were up so early, little thought of so sudden a catastrophe, and those that were in their beds were at once surprised with it: it was a morning of light and joy to Lot, who was so wonderfully delivered, but a dreadful one to the men of Sodom and the rest of the cities of the plain, with whom the scene was soon altered;

likewise from hence it appeared, that the following tempest was extraordinary, and did not proceed from natural causes.

Genesis 19:24

Ver. 24. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom, and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And not upon those two cities only, but upon Admah and Zeboiim also, see De 29:23; this was not a common storm of thunder and lightning, with which often there is a smell of sulphur or brimstone; but this was a continued shower of sulphurous fire, or of burning flaming brimstone, which at once consumed those cities and the inhabitants of them; and the land adjacent being bituminous, or however some parts of it, full of slimepits, or pits of bitumen, a liquid of a pitchy quality,
Ge 14:10; this flaming sulphur falling thereon, must burn in a most fierce and furious manner; and which utterly consumed not only houses, goods, and everything upon the land, but the land itself, and turned it into a bituminous lake, called to this day, from thence, the Lake Asphaltites, the Greek word for bitumen being "asphaltos". Of this conflagration some Heathen writers speak, as particularly Tacitus {f} who says, some large and famous cities, or, as some copies have it, Jewish ones, not far from Jordan, were struck with thunderbolts, and were fired "igni ceolesti", with fire from heaven, and were consumed; and so Solinus {g} relates, that,

"at some distance from Jerusalem, a sorrowful lake appears, which the black ground testifies was stricken by heaven and turned into ashes; where were two towns, the one called Sodomum, the other Gomorrum."

This was a righteous judgment on those cities, and a just retaliation for their sin; their sin was an unnatural one, and nature is inverted to punish them, fire comes down from heaven, or hell from heaven, as Salvian's words are, to consume them; they burned with lusts one against another, and flaming sheets of sulphurous fire fall upon them, burn and destroy them; and, in allusion to this terrible conflagration, hell is called the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, **Jude 1:7**
Re 20:14; and this destruction was brought upon them by Jehovah the Son of God, who had appeared to Abraham in an human form, and gave him notice of it, and heard all he had to plead for those cities, and then departed from him to Sodom, and was the author of this sad catastrophe; this amazing shower of fire and brimstone was rained by him from Jehovah his Father, out of heaven; so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem both call him, the Word of the Lord.

{f} Hist. l. 5. c. 7. {g} Polyhistor. c. 48.

Genesis 19:25

Ver. 25. And he overthrew those cities,.... Of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim: very probably at the same time that this fiery tempest was in the heavens, there was an earthquake which overthrew the cities; and so Strabo {h} makes the lake, which is now the place where they stood, to be owing to earthquakes and eruptions of fire, and of hot bituminous and sulphurous waters; and says nothing of fire from heaven, which yet Tacitus and Solinus do, being unacquainted with the sacred history:

and all the plain; the plain of Jordan, and the cities on it, all but Zoar; not all the five cities, as Josephus {i}: Egesippus {k} and other authors mistake, only the four above mentioned. Strabo {l} speaks of thirteen cities being formerly upon this spot, of which Sodom was the metropolis:

and all the inhabitants of the cities; none were spared, all were destroyed, but Lot, his wife, and two daughters:

and that which grew upon the ground; the trees, herbs, and plants; these were all turned up by the earthquake, and burnt with fire from heaven: Tacitus, in his account of this conflagration, says,

"the fields, which were formerly fruitful, and inhabited by many cities, were burnt up with lightning; and there are traces (he adds) yet remain; the earth itself looks torrid, and has lost its fruitful virtue; for whatsoever grows up of itself, or is sown and rises up in the plant or flower, or grows up to its usual species, becomes black and empty, and vanishes into ashes."

The place where those cities stood is now a lake, and is sometimes called the salt sea, Ge 14:3; and sometimes the dead sea, because it is said, no creature can live in it; and sometimes called the Lake Asphaltites, from its bituminous and pitchy quality: though Reland {o} has attempted to confute the notion that the cities of Sodom, &c. stood where this lake now is: and the many things that have been reported of this lake and parts adjacent, by various historians, supposed to be of good credit, are by modern travellers exploded {p}; as those of no living creature being bred in it; of bodies not sinking in it; and of birds being unable to fly over it; and of the cities appearing under water in a clear day; and of the apples of Sodom, which look beautiful to the eye, but when touched fall into ashes; many of which Josephus {q} himself relates: indeed, Ludovicus Vartomanus {r}, a traveller in those parts in the beginning of the sixteenth century, says,

"there yet remain the ruins of the destroyed city, as a witness of God's wrath; we may affirm, there are three cities, and each of them situated on the decline of three hills, and the ruins appear about the height of three or four cubits; there is yet seen, I scarce know what, something like blood, or rather like red wax mixed with earth:"

and our countryman Mr. Sandys {s}, though he questions some of the above things before related, especially concerning the apples, yet says,

"not far from thence grows a tree whose fruit is like a green walnut, which he saw, and which they say never ripens."

This lake of Sodom, according to Josephus {t}, is five hundred and eighty furlongs in length unto Zoar, and one hundred fifty broad; but, according to modern accounts, it is twenty four leagues in length, and six or seven in breadth {u}; the Arabic geographer {w} says, it is sixty miles in length, and twelve in breadth; it is now called by the Arabs, Bahar Louth, Lot's lake.

{h} Geograph. l. 16. p. 526. {i} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 4. {k} De excidio urb. l. 4. c. 18. {l} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 16. p. 526.) {o} Palestina illustrata, tom. 1. l. 1. c. 38. p. 254, &c. {p} Vid. Universal History, vol. 2. p. 421, &c. See Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 341. {q} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 4. {r} Navigat. l. 1. c. 10. {s} Travels, l. 3. p. 110, 111. Ed. 5. {t} Ut supra. (De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 4.) {u} Universal History, ib. p. 424. See Egmont, &c. ib, p. 342. {w} Scherif Ibn Idris, apud Reland. ib. p. 249.

Genesis 19:26

Ver. 26. But his wife looked back from behind him,.... That is, the wife of Lot, whose name the Jewish writers {x} say was Adith, or as others Irith {y}; and, according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, she was a native of Sodom: now, as they were going from Sodom to Zoar, she was behind Lot, his back was to her, so that he could not see her; this was a temptation to her to look back, since her husband could not see her; and this she did, either, as the above paraphrases suggest, that she might see what would be the end of her father's house and family, or whether her married daughters, if she had any, were following her, after whom her bowels yearned; or being grieved for the goods and substance left behind, and for the people of Sodom in general, for whom she had too much concern; however, be it on what account it may, she was severely punished for it:

and she became a pillar of salt; was struck dead at once, either by the immediate hand of God, or by the shower of fire and brimstone; and her body was at once changed into a metallic substance, a kind of salt, hard and durable, such as Pliny {z} speaks of, cut out of rocks, with which houses were built, and hardened with the sun, and could scarcely be cut with an iron instrument; so that she did not fall to the ground, but stood up erect as a pillar, retaining very probably the human form, Josephus {a} says, this pillar continued to his times, and that he saw it; Irenaeus {b} and Tertullian {c} speak of it as in their times, a thing incredible; and Benjamin of Tudela says {d}, it stood in his times two parsas from the sea of Sodom; and though the flocks were continually licking it, yet it grew again to its former size. Rauwolff {e} relates something of the same kind by information, but not on his own testimony; that the pilgrims who visit it used to beat off some small pieces, and yet was found whole again; nay, which is beyond all credit, that they once knocked off a whole hand and took it away, and when they returned found it whole again: and one {f} that travelled in those parts in the beginning of the sixteenth century affirms, that almost in the midway to Zoar is seen to this day the pillar of salt into which Lot's wife was turned; he does not say indeed that he saw it, but leaves his reader to think so; and the Jerusalem Targum says, it will remain until the resurrection; but modern travellers of credit and intelligence could never see it; and when they have inquired of the country people about it, they either tell them there is no such thing, or say it stands in the mountains, where it cannot be come at, because of the Arabs, or because of wild beasts {g}: but no doubt there was such a statue, but how long it continued cannot be said; nor should it be thought incredible, when there are similar facts affirmed by authors of the best credit and reputation: Aventinus {h} reports, that in Bavaria, in 1348, more than fifty peasants, with the cows they had milked, at the time of an earthquake were struck with a pestilential air, and stiffened into statues of salt, and which he himself saw, and the chancellor of Austria: and Bisselius relates {i}, that Didacus Almagrus, who was the first person that with his army penetrated through the cold countries from Peru into Chile, lost abundance of his men, through the extremity of the cold and a pestiferous air; and that, returning to the same place five months afterwards, he found his men, horse and foot, standing unmoved, unconsumed, in the same situation, form, and habit, the pestilence had fastened them; one lying on the ground, another standing upright, another holding his bridle in his hand, as if about to shake it; in short, he found them just as he left them, without any ill smell or colour, common to corpses: indeed, the very fables of the Heathens, which seem to be hammered out of this history, serve to confirm the truth of the whole of it: as the fable of Jupiter and Mercury coming to a certain place in Phrygia, where they were hospitably entertained by Baucis and Philemon, when the doors were shut against them by others; wherefore they directed their guests, after being entertained by them, to leave the place and follow them to the mountains, when they turned the town into a standing lake {k}: and also that of Niobe being changed into a marble stone while weeping for the death of her children: and of Olenus and Lethaea, turned into stones also {l}. But, leaving these, and passing by other instances that might be observed, we are directed to remember this wonderful case by our Lord himself, Lu 17:32; and it should be an instruction to us not to look back nor turn back from the profession of the true religion we have made, but to follow Christ, and abide by his truths and ordinances.

{x} Pirke Eliezer, c. 25. {y} Baal Hatturim in loc. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 31. c. 7. {a} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 11. sect. 4. {b} Adv. Haeres. l. 4. c. 51. {c} In Carmine Sodoma. {d} ltinerarium, p. 44. {e} Travels, par. 3. c. 21. p. 313. by Ray. {f} Baumgarten. Peregrinatio, l. 3. c. 12. p. 96. {g} Universal History, ib. p. 124. Witsii Miscellan. Sacr. tom. 2. p. 195. {h} Annal. Bojor. apud Heidegger. Hist. Patriarch. tom. 2. exercitat. 8. p. 270. & Witsii Miscellan. tom. 2. exercitat. 7. p. 201. {i} Argonaut. Americ. l. 14. c. 2. apud Witsium, ib. p. 202. {k} Ovid. Metamorph. l. 8. fab. 8. {l} Ib. l. 6. fab. 4. & l. 10. fab. 1. Apollodor. de Deorum Orig. l. 3. p. 146.

Genesis 19:27

Ver. 27. And Abraham got up early in the morning,.... Perhaps he had had but little sleep the whole night, his thoughts being taken up with what was to befall the cities of the plain; and especially being in great concern for Lot and his family:

to the place where he stood before the Lord; Ge 18:22; to the very spot of ground where he had stood the day before in the presence of the Lord, and had conversed with him, and prayed unto him; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"to the place where he ministered in prayer before the Lord;"

here he came and stood waiting for an answer to his prayers; and perhaps this place was an eminence, from whence he could have a view of the plain of Jordan and the cities on it; and so it appears from
Ge 19:28.

Genesis 19:28

Ver. 28. And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain,.... To see how it fared with them: very probably the Lord had hinted it to him, that the destruction would be that morning, and therefore he rose early, got to the place bearly, and being on an eminence, looked wistly to see if he could observe any sign of it:

and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace; after the fiery shower was over, and the cities burnt down, the smoke ascended toward heaven, as the smoke of mystical Babylon will do, Re 19:3; like the reek of a boiling cauldron; or, as Jarchi, like the smoke of a lime kiln always burning.

Genesis 19:29

Ver. 29. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain,.... Not when he had destroyed them, but when he was about to destroy them; for Lot was sent out from them, and delivered out of them, before they were destroyed; and therefore Noldius rightly renders the words, "before God destroyed" {m} them:

that God remembered Abraham; his promise to him, that he would bless them that blessed him, Ge 12:3; and his prayer to him for Lot in
Ge 18:23; for, though he does not mention him by name, he bore him on his heart, and he was always in the number of the righteous ones, on whose account he interceded for the sparing of the cities; and, though God did not hear and answer him with regard to the cities, yet he did with respect to the righteous men in them:

and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow; by two angels, who took him by the hand and brought him out of Sodom, now overthrown:

when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt; that is, in one of which Lot dwelt, namely, Sodom, as Aben Ezra rightly observes, comparing the passage with Jud 12:7; unless it can be thought that Lot first dwelt in one of those cities and then in another, and first and last in them all, which is not very likely.

{m} txvb "antequam perderet", Nold. Ebr. concord. partic. p. 144. No. 679.

Genesis 19:30

Ver. 30. And Lot went up out of Zoar,.... Which lay in the plain, and therefore when he went from thence to the mountain, it was by an ascent:

and dwelt in the mountain; which the Lord had directed him to go to before, but was unwilling, and chose Zoar, and desired he might flee thither, and that that might be spared; but now he likes God's advice for him better than his own, and therefore betook himself to the mountain, where he might think himself safest, and where he continued; very probably this was the mountain Engaddi, under which Zoar is said to lie by Adrichomius {n}:

and his two daughters with him: his wife was turned into a pillar of salt, and these two were all of his family that with him were saved from the destruction; and these are the rather mentioned for the sake of an anecdote hereafter related:

for he feared to dwell in Zoar; it being near to Sodom; and the smoke of that city and the rest might not only be terrible but troublesome to him, and the tremor of the earth might continue and reach as far as Zoar; and perceiving the waters to rise and overflow the plain, which formed the lake where the cities stood, he might fear they would reach to Zoar and swallow up that; and especially his fears were increased, when he found the inhabitants were as wicked as those of the other cities, and were unreformed by the judgment on them; and so he might fear that a like shower of fire would descend on them and destroy them, as it had the rest, though it had been spared for a while at his intercession; and, according to the Jewish writers {o}, it remained but one year after Sodom:

and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters; which was in the mountain, the mountain of Engedi. Josephus {p} makes mention of the mountains of Engedi; and here was a cave, where David with six hundred men were, in the sides of it, when Saul went into it, 1Sa 24:1; and perhaps may be the same cave where Lot and his two daughters lived.

{n} Theatrum Terrae S. p. 54. {o} Juchasin, fol. 8. 1. {p} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 13. sect. 4.

Genesis 19:31

Ver. 31. And the firstborn said unto the younger,.... That is, the firstborn of those two, or the elder of them; for, if Lot had other daughters that were married in Sodom, it is probable they were elder than either of these: Aben Ezra intimates, that Lot had another wife, who died first, and these were by his second; the following motion is made by the eldest of them to the youngest, as being bolder, having more authority, and a greater influence to persuade:

our father [is] old; if he was fifty years of age when he was taken captive by the kings, as says the Jewish chronologer {q} he must now be sixty five, since the destruction of Sodom, according to Bishop Usher {r}, was fifteen years after that:

and [there] is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth; to marry them, cohabit with them, and procreate children of them, which was the common way of the propagation of mankind in the earth; they thought the whole world was destroyed by fire, as it had been by a flood; they understood it would be no more consumed by water, but they had been told it would be by fire, and they imagined the time was now come, and this was the case; that not only Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire, and that by this time the fire had reached to Zoar, and had consumed that, but that the whole earth was destroyed, and not a man left but their father, and therefore thought it could be excusable in them, and lawful for them to take the following method to repopulate the world; or else they supposed there were none in the land, the land of Canaan, not of any of their kindred and relations, for they might be ignorant of Abraham and his family, or however of any good man that they knew of, that they could be joined to in marriage; for as for the inhabitants of Zoar, they had just left, they were as wicked as any, and therefore could not think of living with them in such a near relation: but all this is not a sufficient excuse for contriving and executing what is after related; for they should have inquired of their father, who could have informed them better.

{q} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 77. 1. {r} Annales Vet. Test. p. 8, 9.

Genesis 19:32

Ver. 32. Come, let us make our father drink wine,.... Meaning to excess, so as to be inebriated with it, and not know what he did: this wine might be brought with them from Sodom, with other provisions for their refreshment and support; or it may be rather from Zoar, where they furnished themselves with a quantity for their support in the mountain they betook themselves unto:

and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the seed of our father; have children by him, and propagate and preserve the human species; this they might think lawful, such incestuous copulations being usual among their neighbours the Arabs, as appears from Strabo {s} and other writers, and especially when there seemed to them to be a necessity for it; and it may be this did not arise from a spirit of uncleanness, or a brutish lust prevailing in them, having been religiously educated, and having preserved their chastity among such an impure generation as the men of Sodom: wherefore this might rather arise, as Bishop Patrick and others have thought, from an eager desire after the Messiah, they might hope would spring from them; their father being a descendant of Shem, a son of Abraham's elder brother, and now remarkably saved from Sodom, which they might conclude was for this purpose; and they knew of no way in which it could be brought about but in this they proposed; and the rather this may be thought to be their view, as the above learned commentator observes, when we remark their former chaste life in Sodom; their joining together in this contrivance, which, had it been a lustful business, they would have been ashamed to have communicated their thoughts of it to one another; and their imposition of names on their children to perpetuate the memory of this fact, which they rather gloried in, than were ashamed of: to which may be added, that the ancient Jewish writers {t} interpret this of the Messiah; and they observe,

"it is not said a son, but seed, that seed, which is he that comes from another place: and what is this? this is the King Messiah:"

and Ruth, the Moabitess, who was of the race of the eldest daughter of Lot, stands in the genealogy of our Lord, **Mt 1:5**: however, let the intention be ever so good, it will, not justify an action so monstrously vile.

{s} Geograph. l. 16. p. 538. Vid. Pocock, Specim. Arab. Hist. p. 337, 338. {t} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 51. fol. 46. 1. Midrash Ruth, fol. 35. 4.

Genesis 19:33

Ver. 33. And they made their father drink wine that night,.... They persuaded him to drink liberally, urged him to it again, in order to make him drunk, and so complete their design; and Lot might be the more prevailed upon to drink freely, in order to remove his sorrow, and refresh his spirits under the loss of his wife, and his daughters, if he had any married in Sodom, as some suppose, and his sons-in-law, and of all his goods and substance; though this will not excuse his drinking to excess, nor can ignorance of the strength of wine be pleaded, since he must needs know it as well as his daughters, who, it is plain, did, and therefore plied him with it:

and the firstborn went in and lay with her father; went to his bed, and lay down by him, which she would not have dared to have done, but that she knew he was drunk and insensible:

and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose: never heard her come to bed nor get up, so dead drunk and fast asleep was he; but finding a woman in bed with him, lay with her, taking her to be his wife, forgetting, through the force of liquor, that she was dead. There is an extraordinary prick on the Vau in Kumah, rendered "she arose", which the Jews say {u} is to show that he knew her not when she lay down, but when she arose he knew her; and indeed it may be rendered, but in her rising up.

{u} T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 10. 2.

Genesis 19:34

Ver. 34. And it came to pass on the morrow,.... The day following the night, in which the above was transacted:

that the firstborn said to the younger, behold, I lay yesternight with my father; informed her, that what they had contrived succeeded according to their wish, and therefore, for her encouragement to go on, proposes to take the same method again:

let us make him drink wine this night also, and go thou in [and] lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father; may have children by him, and so our family be kept up, from whence it may be hoped the Messiah will spring, See

Gill on "Ge 19:32".

Genesis 19:35

Ver. 35. And they made their father drink wine that night also,.... Until he was drunk; which is an aggravation of his sin, that he should be overtaken a second time, and that so soon as the next night, when he ought to have been upon his guard, knowing how he had fallen into it the night before:

and the younger arose and lay with him; arose from her own bed, and went to her father's, and lay down by him:

and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose;
See Gill on "Ge 19:33".

Genesis 19:36

Ver. 36. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. We learn from hence what the best of men are when left to themselves; a good man, a righteous Lot, is guilty of crimes the most shocking; he exposed the chastity of his daughters to the men of Sodom, and now his daughters attacked him, and succeeded, being both with child by him; and this brought about by excessive drinking, a sin which often leads on to the foulest crimes, and therefore to be carefully avoided; these sins Lot fell into when as it were alone, on a mountain, in a cave, none but his family with him, and these only his two daughters; he that had stood his ground in the midst of Sodom, notwithstanding all the excesses of that place, the impurities in it, and the temptations that every day offered, now falls when seemingly out of the way of all: these sins and failings of good men are recorded for our admonition and caution, that we may shun all appearance of evil, and be careful lest we fall, and neither be presumptuous not self-confident, see 1Co 10:12.

Genesis 19:37

Ver. 37. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab,.... As if it was "Meab", from the father, as Aben Ezra, and so Josephus, that is, which she had by her father; and she was so far from being ashamed that it might be known in time to come, she gave him this name. Hillerus {w} makes it to be a compound of ba and abwm, and to signify "going into", or "lying with a father", which still more notoriously points to her own action. Drusius has another derivation of the word, at least proposes it, and renders it "aqua patris"; "mo" in the Egyptian language signifying "water", which is sometimes used for seed, see Isa 48:1:

the same [is] the father of the Moabites unto this day; a people that lived on the borders of the land of Canaan, often troublesome to the Israelites, and frequently spoken of in the Old Testament.

{w} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 414.

Genesis 19:38

Ver. 38. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi,.... That is, "the son of my people", being the son of her father; which though it does not so manifestly appear in this name, as in the other, yet there is some trace of it; and she would have it be known by this, that he was not the son of a stranger, but of a relation of her own: some attribute this to her being more modest than her elder sister; but it looks as if neither of them were sensible of any crime they had been guilty of, but rather thought it a commendable action, at least that it was excusable:

the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day; a people that lived near their brethren the Moabites, and were both enemies to the people of God; they quickly falling into idolatry, and whose names we often meet with in the sacred writings; and of these two sons, Josephus says {x}, the one begat the Moabites, being still a great nation, and the other the Ammonites, and both inhabit Coelesyria; they are both called the children of Lot, Ps 83:8. After this we hear no more of Lot in this history; and it is remarkable, that there never was, as we know of, any town or city that had in it any, trace of his name; but we are not from hence to conclude that he was a wicked man, whose memory perished with him; for mention is made of him in the New Testament, where he has a very honourable character, and is called "just Lot", **2Pe 2:7**.

{x} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 11. sect. 5.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 20

This chapter relates the removal of Abraham to Gerar, Ge 20:1; the king of Gerar's taking to him Sarah, whom Abraham had called his sister, Ge 20:2; who is rebuked of God for it in a dream,
Ge 20:3; for which he makes an apology that is admitted, only he is ordered to restore to Abraham his wife, Ge 20:4; and accordingly early in the morning he called his servants, and acquainted them with what had happened, Ge 20:8; and then sent for Abraham, and expressed his resentment at his usage of him, Ge 20:9; which Abraham defended as well as he could,
Ge 20:10; the issue of all which was, great kindness was shown to Abraham, and his wife restored to him, though with a reproof to her from the king, Ge 20:14; upon which Abraham prayed for the healing of Abimelech and his family, in which he was heard and answered, Ge 20:17.

Ver. 1. And Abraham journeyed from thence towards the south country,.... He returned from the plains or oaks of Mamre, where he had lived fifteen or twenty years, into the more southern parts of the land of Canaan: the reason of this remove is not certain; some think, because he could not bear the stench of the sulphurous lake, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were become; and others, because of the scandal of Lot's incest with his daughters, which prejudiced the idolatrous people in those parts more against the true religion; neither of which are likely, by reason of the distance; but the better reason seems to be, that it was so ordered in Providence that he should remove from place to place, that it might appear that he was but a sojourner in the land:

and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur; two wildernesses, as Jerom says {y}, one of which joined to Egypt, to which the people of Israel went when they passed over the Red sea, and the other, Kadesh, reached to the desert of the Saracens. Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase the words between Rekam and Chagra, or Hagra, the same place where the angel of the Lord met with Hagar at the well, See Gill on "Ge 16:7" and
See Gill on "Ge 16:14":

and sojourned in Gerar; or Gerara, as Jerom {z} calls it,

"from whence he says the Geraritic country in his time beyond Daroma, or the south, had its name, and was twenty five miles distance from Eleutheropolis to the south, and was formerly the southern border of the Canaanites, and the metropolis of Palestine."

According to the Samaritan version, Gerar is the same with Ashkelon, which was afterwards, when aristocracy took place in this country, one of the five lordships of the Philistines; and so says Africanus {a}; and that Gerar was in the country of the Philistines, and Abimelech was king of them, is clear from Ge 21:32. This place was about six miles from Mamre {b}, from whence Abraham removed.

{y} De loc. Heb. fol, 91. I. {z} De loc. Heb. fol. 91. I. {a} Apud Syncell. Chronic. p. 100. {b} Bunting's Travels, p. 57.

Genesis 20:2

Ver. 2. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, she [is] my sister,.... This he gave out in all conversation he came into, and said it to every one that asked who she was, which was little better than a lie; it at least was an equivocation and deception, and not at all justifiable, and tended to expose his wife's chastity, and discovered a distrust of divine Providence; the same infirmity be had given way to, and the same evil he had fallen into in Egypt, Ge 12:11, and therefore was the more inexcusable now; good men not only fall into sin, but have their relapses:

and Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah; having heard or seen what a beautiful woman. Sarah was, though ninety years of age, having never bore children; and understanding she was a single person, sent his servants to take her, and bring her to his house, in order to be his wife, which seems to be done with some kind of force; and it can hardly be thought that Abraham and Sarah would freely agree to it, at least it must be done with reluctance on their parts. Whether Abimelech was the first king of Palestine of this name, is not certain; if he was, which is not improbable, it became usual afterwards for the kings thereof to be so called, as Pharaoh was a common name to the kings of Egypt; it signifies "father" and "king", as kings should be the fathers of their people.

Genesis 20:3

Ver. 3. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night,.... Put a dream into his mind, by which he cautioned him against taking Sarah to be his wife; so careful was the Lord that no wrong should be done to such a godly and virtuous person, to which she was exposed through the weakness of her husband. Aben Ezra wrongly interprets this of an angel, when it was God himself:

and said unto him, behold, thou [art but] a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; that is, God would punish him with death, unless he restored the woman, whom he had taken, to her husband; not for any uncleanness he had committed with her, but for taking her without her free and full consent, and without inquiring more strictly into her relation to Abraham, and connection with him, and for his impure and unlawful desires after her, if persisted in:

for she [is] a man's wife, or "married to an husband" {c}; and therefore it was unlawful in him to take her to be his wife.

{c} leb tleb "maritata marito", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Schmidt.

Genesis 20:4

Ver. 4. But Abimelech had not come near her,.... Sarah had been put into an apartment in his palace, and not yet admitted into his company, not at least to his bed; he had not lain with her, which is the design of the expression: the Septuagint version is, "had not touched her", as in Ge 20:6; which is another phrase expressive of the same thing:

and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? meaning either his family, the greater part of which were not accessory to this affair; or rather his kingdom, as Aben Ezra, see Ge 20:9; which though not a nation of righteous men, in a strict sense, see Ge 20:11; yet with regard to this business of Sarah were no ways criminal: either God had threatened to destroy his people, as well as himself, if he did not return Sarah to her husband, or committed iniquity with her; or he knew that this had been usual for people to suffer for the crimes of their governors, and like a true father of his country shows an affectionate concern for their welfare in the first place; for this may be the sense of the word "also", on which an emphasis is put; wilt thou not only slay me, but also a whole nation for my sake, a nation free from all fault and blame in this matter? though some think he has reference to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, a recent action, and fresh in his mind; as if he should say, thou hast justly destroyed a wicked people for their sins, and wilt thou also destroy a nation that at least, in comparison of them, is a just and righteous one?

Genesis 20:5

Ver. 5. Said he not unto me, she [is] my sister?.... By this it appears, that Abimelech had a personal conversation with Abraham, and inquired of him about Sarah, who she was, and what relation she was to him, who told him that she was his sister; and for the truth of this he appeals to the omniscient God, who knew that Abraham had told him this:

and she, even she herself said, he [is] my brother; when Sarah was asked what relation she stood in to Abraham, and he to her, she declared he was her brother; so that Abimelech had reason to conclude, from what both of them had said, that this was the truth of the matter, and especially from what Sarah said, who he thought might be depended on, and would speak out the whole truth on such an occasion:

in the integrity of my heart, and innocency of my hands, have I done this; hereby declaring, that his design was not to defile the woman, and to gratify his lust, but to take her to be his wife; and this he thought to be no evil, though he had a wife, Ge 20:17; polygamy not being reckoned a sin in those times; and that he had used no violence in taking her, they both seemingly agreeing to it.

Genesis 20:6

Ver. 6. And God said unto him in a dream,.... The same dream continued:

yea, or "also"

I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; not only thou knowest, but I, who know all things, know and acknowledge that this was so done by thee. Abimelech's plea is admitted, and a very great testimony borne to his integrity in this matter; and throughout the whole account he appears to be a man of great honour and uprightness, especially in this affair, if not a good man:

for I also withheld thee from sinning against me; for had he committed adultery with her, it had been not only a sin against her, and against her husband, but against God being contrary to his will revealed in the minds of men by the law and light of nature, before the law of Moses was given: and indeed all sin against the neighbour is ultimately against God, see Ps 51:4; and now from the commission of this sin God restrained Abimelech, either by some impulse upon his mind not to take her to be his wife as yet, or by throwing some thing or other in the way of it, in his providence, or by inflicting some disease upon him, which rendered him incapable of it, Ge 20:17;

therefore suffered I thee not to touch her; that is, to have carnal knowledge of her, see **1Co 7:1**; as there is nothing done but what is done by divine permission, so many more evils would be committed than there are, were it not that men are restrained from them by the power and providence of God, not suffering them to do them; and in particular this sin was prevented, that it might not in any respect be a doubtful point whether Isaac, whom Sarah had now conceived, was a legitimate son of Abraham; and these expressions of Abimelech not coming near her,
Ge 20:4; and not touching her as here, are used for that purpose.

Genesis 20:7

Ver. 7. Now therefore restore the man [his] wife,.... Which will be a full proof and evidence to all of the integrity of thy heart, and the innocence of thine hands, which thou pleadest, and which I own:

for he [is] a prophet; familiar with God, dear unto him, a friend of his, to whom he communicates his secrets; is able to foretell things to come, as well as to interpret the mind of God, and instruct in the knowledge of divine things, all which agrees with Abraham's character; and he is the first man that is dignified in Scripture with the title of a prophet; so he is called in the Apocrypha:

"Beware of all whoredom, my son, and chiefly take a wife of the seed of thy fathers, and take not a strange woman to wife, which is not of thy father's tribe: for we are the children of the prophets, Noe, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: remember, my son, that our fathers from the beginning, even that they all married wives of their own kindred, and were blessed in their children, and their seed shall inherit the land." (Tobit 4:12)

Jarchi thinks this is observed to encourage Abimelech to return his wife to him, because being a prophet he knew he had not touched her, and therefore would receive her more readily, and entertain no ill opinion of her; but rather it is mentioned for the reason following:

and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live; it being one part of the business of a prophet to pray for others, and make intercession for them, especially in any distress or trouble, see Jer 27:18. Prophets were praying persons, had usually a great gift in prayer, and great power with God, and prevailed with him for the good of others; and such an one was Abraham; and it is here intimated, that upon the restoration of his wife to him, as he was familiar with God, and had an interest with him, he would make use of it, and pray for Abimelech, that whatsoever offence he had been guilty of to God or men, it might be forgiven, and that he might be healed of the disease with which he was smitten, and so recover of it, and live in health and happiness:

and if thou restore [her] not, know thou, that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that [are] thine: if he proceeded to take her to be his wife, and defile her, he is strongly assured that he should die, death being the punishment for adultery before the law of Moses, see Ge 38:24; and not only he, but all his family, especially such who had been, or would be accessory to this affair, and even all who might he justly punished of God for other sins they had committed; and Abimelech being punished, both in his own person, and in his servants and subjects, the greater his punishment was, the greater abhorrence and detestation was shown to the sin he would be guilty of, to deter him from which this threatening is given out.

Genesis 20:8

Ver. 8. Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning,.... Awaking upon the dream, could sleep no more, his thoughts running upon what had been said to him by the Lord in it: wherefore as soon as it was light he rose from his bed,

and called all his servants; his household servants, and particularly his courtiers and counsellors, who had advised him to take Sarah for his wife, and had been assisting in it:

and told all those things in their ears: how that God appeared to him in a dream, and told him that Sarah, whom he had taken into his house, was another man's wife, and that if he did not immediately return her to her husband, he would die, and all that belonged to him:

and the men were sore afraid; lest they should be struck with death; and perhaps they might call to mind the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah for their sins, they had lately heard of, and might fear that some such calamity would befall them.

Genesis 20:9

Ver. 9. Then Abimelech called Abraham,.... Who might be in the king's palace, being taken into it caressed by the king for the sake of Sarah:

and said unto him; not in a passion, as might have been expected, but in a mild and gentle manner, yet with great strength of reasoning, and making very just expostulations with him:

what hast thou done unto us? what evil to him, his family, and his subjects? this was very probably said in the presence of his servants he had called, and therefore the plural number is used:

and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me, and on my kingdom, a great sin? the sin of adultery, he had been in danger of committing, which by the light of nature was known and acknowledged to be a great sin, and therefore was avoided by Heathens, and prohibited and punished by them; or else a "great punishment" {d}, as death to him, and all his subjects: and now Abimelech expostulates with him, and desires to know what he had done to incur his displeasure, that he should take such a method as this to avenge himself of him; he plainly intimates that he was not conscious to himself that he had done any thing to offend him; he had suffered him to come into his kingdom, and sojourn in it, and used him well, and in no instance, as he knew of, had done anything to affront him:

thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done; in saying Sarah was his sister, and persuading her to say the same, and so virtually disowning his marriage with her, equivocating in this affair, and dissembling truth, and thereby exposing the chastity of his wife, and the king to the commission of sin with her; things that ought not to be done by any man, and much less by a man professing religion and godliness.

{d} hldg hajh "noxam magnam", Junius & Tremellius; "poenam peccati", Menochius; so Abendana.

Genesis 20:10

Ver. 10. And Abimelech said unto Abraham,.... Continuing his discourse with him:

what sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? he desires to know what he had observed, either in him or his people, that gave him any reason to conclude that they were a lustful people, and would stick at nothing to gratify their lusts, which put him upon taking such a method to secure his life, lest they should kill him for his wife's sake.

Genesis 20:11

Ver. 11. And Abraham said,.... In defence of himself, as well as he could:

because I thought; within himself, concluding from the general depravity of the Canaanites, that this was the case of the inhabitants of Gerar:

surely the fear of God [is] not in this place; this is a certain truth, which he thought might be depended upon, and taken for granted, since so it was everywhere: or "only" {e}, as the word used signifies; this was the only thing he had to plead, that he verily thought with himself that there was no true religion and godliness in Gerar: that the inhabitants of it were without any fear of God before their eyes, or in their hearts; and he knew, where this is the case, there is nothing to restrain from the commission of the grossest sins:

and they will slay me for my wife's sake; that they might marry her, see Ge 12:12.

{e} qr "tantum", Montanus; so Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius; so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and Ben Melech.

Genesis 20:12

Ver. 12. And yet indeed [she is] my sister,.... In the same sense as Lot was his brother; for she was sister to Lot, and both were the children of Haran, the brother of Abraham:

she [is] the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; she was the daughter of his father, being his granddaughter, grandchildren are sometimes called children, but not the daughter or granddaughter of Abraham's mother; Terah having had two wives, by the one he had Haran, the father of Sarah, and by the other Abraham. According to the Arabic writers {f}, Abraham and Sarah were the immediate children of Terah, but by two mothers:

"the mother of Abraham (they say) died, whose name was Juna, and Terah married another wife, whose name was Lahazib, some say Tahuitha, who bore him Sarah, afterwards married to Abraham; hence Abraham said, she is my sister on my father's side, but not on my mother's side:"

and she became my wife; as in those times it was judged lawful, and so it has been accounted lawful in many nations to marry sisters on the father's side, when those on the mother's were prohibited {g}.

{f} Elmacinus, p. 51. Patricides, p. 17. apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. p. 281. {g} Vid. Philo. de Special. Leg. p. 779. Clement. Alex. Stromat. l. 2. p. 421.

Genesis 20:13

Ver. 13. And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house,.... In Ur of the Chaldees, from whence God called him to go forth; which laid him under an obligation to depart from thence, and move from place to place, and go he knew not where, as in
Heb 11:8; or "the Gods", as it is in the plural number, and so the verb in construction with it; not the idol gods, the gods of the Gentiles, as the Targum of Jonathan, who interprets the words thus,

"and it was when the worshippers of idols sought to cause men to err, and I went from my father's house;"

but the true God, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Ben Melech acknowledge, and is by many Christian interpreters understood of the three Persons in the Godhead:

that I said unto her, this [is] thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me; this I shall take as a favour done me, as an instance of tender affection unto me:

at every place whither we shall come, say of me; or for the sake of me, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi, in order to save me from the hands of wicked men, whom he feared would slay him for her sake:

he [is] my brother; and so he hoped, instead of being ill used, he should meet with favour and friendship on her account, being thus nearly related to her: this he observes to Abimelech, to show that this was an old agreement, near thirty years ago, when they first set out on their travels, and was no new device and scheme which they pursued on account of him and his people in particular; but what they had formerly agreed upon should be said in all places wherever they came, and therefore there was no intention to affront Abimelech; only it supposed they might come into places where wicked men dwelt.

Genesis 20:14

Ver. 14. And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave [them] unto Abraham,.... In a good measure satisfied with what Abraham had said to excuse himself; and these gifts he gave unto him, that he might, as Jarchi observes, pray and intercede for him, that he and his family might be healed, having understood by the divine oracle that he was a prophet, and if he prayed for him he would be restored to health: and these were not given to bribe him to give his consent that Sarah might be continued with him, since it follows,

and restored him Sarah his wife; untouched by him, as he was directed by God to do.

Genesis 20:15

Ver. 15. And Abimelech said, behold, my whole land [is] before thee,.... Instead of bidding him be gone, and sending him away in haste out of his country, as the king of Egypt did in a like case, he solicits his stay in it; and to encourage him to it, makes an offer of his whole kingdom to him, to choose which part of it he would to dwell in:

dwell where it pleaseth thee; if there was anyone part of it better than another, or more convenient for him, his family and his flocks, he was welcome to it.

Genesis 20:16

Ver. 16. And unto Sarah he said, behold, I have given thy brother a thousand [pieces] of silver,.... Or shekels of silver, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, which, if two shillings and sixpence of our money, amount to one hundred and twenty five pounds; though perhaps little pieces of silver, current in this country, may be meant, that were not worth so much. Some think that the sheep, oxen, &c. Abimelech had given to Abraham, were worth so many pieces of silver: but it rather seems that he gave these over and above them, and chiefly for Sarah's use, as will be observed hereafter; since the words are directed to her, and in which there is a sharp cutting expression, calling Abraham her brother, and not her husband, thereby putting her in mind and upbraiding her with her equivocation and dissimulation:

behold, he [is] to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that [are] with thee; a protection of her person and chastity: so an husband, in our language, is said to be a cover to his wife, and she under a cover: thus Abraham being now known to be the husband of Sarah, would for the future be a covering to her, that no one should look upon her, and desire her, and take her to be his wife; and he would also be a protection to her maidens that were with her, the wives of his servants, that these also might not be taken from him: but it seems best to refer this to the gift of the thousand pieces of silver, and read the words, "behold, this is to thee {h} a covering of the eyes"; so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; for the words are a continued biting sarcasm on Sarah; as Abimelech twits her with calling Abraham her brother in the preceding clause, so in this he tells her that he had given him so much money to buy her a veil with, and to supply her with veils from time to time to cover her eyes, that nobody might be tempted to lust after her, and that it might be known she was a married woman; for in these countries married women wore veils for distinction,
Ge 24:65; and so not to be had by another, nor would any be deceived by her; and not only was this money given to buy veils for her, but for her female servants also that were married, that they might be knows to be another's property; though this latter phrase "unto", or "with all that [are] with thee" {i}, may be understood, not of persons, but of things, even of all the girls which Abimelech had given her while in his house; these he did not, take back again, but continued them with her, either for the above use, or whatever she pleased; and the following phrase,

and with all [other], as we render it, making a considerable stop, should, according to the accents, be read with what follows thus, "and with all this was she reproved" {k}; so Aben Ezra; and so they are the words of Moses, observing, that by and with all this that Abimelech had said and done,

thus she was reproved; Sarah was reproved for saying that Abraham was her brother: or the words may be rendered thus, "and so before all she was reproved" {l}; before her husband, and before Abimelech's courtiers, and perhaps before her own servants; though Ainsworth, and others, take them to be the words of Abimelech, and render them, "and all that", or "all this is that thou mayest be rebuked" {m}, or instructed; all that I have said and done is for this end, that thou mayest be warned and be careful for the future to speak out truth, without any equivocation, and not call Abraham thy brother, when he is thy husband.

{h} Kl awh tauta estai soi, Sept. "hoe erit tibi", V. L. Schmidt; so Tigurine version, Montanus, Jarchi & Ben Melech. {i} Kta rva lkl "cum omni quod tecum est", Schmidt. {k} txknw lk taw "et sic cum omnibus reprehensa est", Munster. {l} "Atque ita coram omnibus increpata fuit", Noldii Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 314. No. 1219. {m} "Atque haec omnia, ut erudita sis", Junius & Tremellius; "reprehensa es", De Dieu.

Genesis 20:17

Ver. 17. So Abraham prayed unto God,.... As the Lord had told Abimelech be would, Ge 20:7; he might pray for the forgiveness of him and his wife, and might give thanks that Sarah had been restored to him; but chiefly it was on account of Abimelech and his family:

and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants: who by reason of some disease were rendered unfit for and incapable of cohabitation with their husbands, and they with them; but upon Abraham's prayer for them, who was heard, they were healed, and the disorder removed; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"his wife and concubines;"

and they bare [children]; cohabited and conceived, and bare and brought forth children, all which are comprehended in this expression.

Genesis 20:18

Ver. 18. For the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech,.... With large tumours probably, so that they could not cohabit with their husbands and conceive; nor could those that had conceived bring forth: and this disorder they were smitten with,

because of Sarah Abraham's wife; who was taken into the house of Abimelech, in order to be his; to rebuke and punish for which, and to convince of the evil of it, and cause to abstain from it, this disorder was inflicted on them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 21

This chapter gives an account of the conception, birth, circumcision, and weaning of Isaac, Ge 21:1; of the mocking of Ishmael, and of the casting out of him and his mother from Abraham's house, at the request of Sarah, which, though grievous to Abraham, he complied with at the direction of God, Ge 21:9; of the provision Abraham made for their departure, and of the supply they met with in the wilderness from God, where Ishmael was brought up, and where he married,
Ge 21:14; and of a covenant between Abraham and Abimelech, king of Gerar, Ge 21:22; and of Abraham's planting a grove, and calling on the name of the Lord, Ge 21:33; and the chapter is closed with this observation, that Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines many days, Ge 21:34.

Ver. 1. And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said,.... To Abraham,
Ge 17:16; in a way of mercy and kindness, by fulfilling his promise, giving strength to conceive and bear a child; see **1Sa 2:21**:

and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken; which intends the same thing in different words; and the repetition is made to cause attention to God's fulfilment of his promise, who is always faithful to his word, even in things very difficult and seemingly impossible, as in the present case: hence the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it, God did a wonder or wonders for Sarah in causing her to conceive when she was so old, and in such circumstances as she was.

Genesis 21:2

Ver. 2. For Sarah conceived,.... This explains what is meant by the Lord's visiting her, and doing to her according to his word, see Heb 11:11;

and bare Abraham a son in his old age; which circumstance is remarked, that the favour might appear the greater, and the more wonderful; or, "unto", or "for his old age" {n}, for the comfort of him in his old age, who having lived so many years under the promise of a son, and in the expectation of one, even of the promised seed, from whom the Messiah should spring, now has one, than which nothing could yield him greater consolation:

at the set time of which God had spoken to him, Ge 17:21; God was not only faithful in fulfilling his promise, but in keeping the exact time of it.

{n} wynqzl "pro senectute ejus", Vatablus; "senectuti ejus", Junius & Tremellius.

Genesis 21:3

Ver. 3. And Abraham called the name of his son that was borne unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. Which is the name he was directed to give him, Ge 17:19; and he remembers the order, and is obedient to it; the reason of which name, which signifies laughter, was on account of his laughing for joy at the promise made him, as well as there might be afterwards a further reason for it, from Sarah's laughing through distrust; and it might presignify the joy and laughter that would be expressed by others at his birth; and perhaps also that he would be the object of the laughter and derision of his brother; such a number of events agreeing with his name.

Genesis 21:4

Ver. 4. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old as, God had commanded him. Ge 17:12, and was the first that we read of that was circumcised on that day, according to the divine precept, which Abraham strictly observed; for though this was the son of the promise, and of his old age, for whom he had the most affectionate regard, yet he administered this bloody ordinance on him; nor did he defer it beyond the time, and was himself the operator, as it seems; all which shows his strict regard, and ready and cheerful obedience to the command of God.

Genesis 21:5

Ver. 5. And Abraham was an hundred years old when son Isaac was born unto him. So that this was years after his departure from Haran, and coming into the land of Canaan, for then he was seventy five years of age,
Ge 12:4; and this exactly agrees with the account of Demetrius, as related by Polyhistor, an Heathen writer {o}, who makes Isaac to be born just twenty five years from Abraham's coming into the land of Canaan, and who must be now an hundred years old, being ninety nine at the time the Lord appeared unto him, and promised him a son at the set time the next year, Ge 17:1. This is observed, both to show the wonderful favour to Abraham, and the faithfulness of God in the exact performance of his promise: according to Bishop Usher {p}, Isaac was born A. M. 2108, and before Christ 1896, and probably at Beersheba, see Ge 21:33.

{o} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 21. p. 425. {p} Annales Vet. Test. p. 9.

Genesis 21:6

Ver. 6. And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh,.... This she said on occasion of the name of her son Isaac, which name her husband had given him by divine direction, and to which she assented. This doubtless brought to her mind her former laughing, when she first heard that she should have a son, which was in a way of diffidence and distrust; but now God having given her a son, laid a foundation for laughter of another kind, for real, solid, joy and thankfulness:

[so that] all that hear will laugh with me; not laugh at her, and deride her, as Piscator interprets it; but congratulate her, and rejoice with her on this occasion, as on a like one the neighbours of Elisabeth did with her, **Lu 1:58**.

Genesis 21:7

Ver. 7. And she said, who would have said unto Abraham,.... No one a year ago could ever have thought of such a thing, much less have come and told Abraham that he should have a child or children by Sarah; the thing was incredible, and next to impossible; none but God himself, or an angel from him, could have declared this, as none but he could bring it about, the thing is so marvellous and astonishing:

that Sarah should have given children suck? that she who was ninety years of age should bear a child, and suckle it, as she did; and in doing which she set an example to her daughters to do the like, since neither age nor grandeur, nor the business of her family, were any objection to this duty of nature; and her being able to do this was a clear proof that this was truly a child of her own. The plural number may be put for the singular, as it often is, see Ge 46:23; or Sarah might think, as she had strength given her to bear and suckle one child, she might bear and suckle more; though the phrase seems only to be expressive and descriptive of her as a nursing mother:

for I have borne him a son in his old age; See Gill on "Ge 21:2".

Genesis 21:8

Ver. 8. And the child grew, and was weaned,.... He throve under the nursing of its mother, and through the blessing of God upon him; and being healthy and robust, and capable of digesting stronger food, and living upon it, he was weaned from the breast: at what age Isaac was when weaned is not certain, there being no fixed time for such an affair, but it was at the discretion of parents, and as they liked it, and the case of their children required; and in those times, when men lived to a greater age than now, they might not be weaned so early, as we find their marrying and begetting children were when they were more advanced in years. The Jewish writers are not agreed about this matter. Jarchi and Ben Melech say that Isaac was weaned twenty four months after his birth; a chronologer of theirs says {q} it was in the hundred and third year of Abraham, that is, when Isaac was three years old, which agrees with the Apocrypha:

"But she bowing herself toward him, laughing the cruel tyrant to scorn, spake in her country language on this manner; O my son, have pity upon me that bare thee nine months in my womb, and gave thee such three years, and nourished thee, and brought thee up unto this age, and endured the troubles of education." (2 Maccabees 7:27)

According to Jerom {r}, it was the opinion of some of the Hebrews that he was five years old; and at this age Bishop Usher {s} places the weaning of him; for to make him ten or twelve years of age, as some of the Rabbins do {t}, when this was done, is very unlikely. Philo the Jew {u} makes him to be seven years of age at this time:

and Abraham made a great feast the [same] day that Isaac was weaned; because he had now escaped the dangers of infancy, and had gone through or got over those disorders infants are exposed unto, and had his health confirmed, and there was great likelihood of his living and becoming a man, since now he could eat and digest more solid and substantial food; and this was great joy to Abraham, which he expressed by making a grand and sumptuous entertainment for his family, and for his neighbours, whom he might invite upon this occasion. Jarchi says, the great men of that age were at it, even Heber and Abimelech. The Jews very impertinently produce this passage, to show the obligation they lie under to make a feast at the circumcision of their infants {w}; for this was not at Isaac's circumcision, but at his weaning.

{q} R. Gedaliah, Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 2. 2. {r} Quaestion. in Genesin, fol. 68. K. tom. 3. {s} Annal. Vet Test. p. 9. {t} Pirke Eliezer, c. 30. Vid. Hieron. Quaest. ut supra. (in Genesin, fol. 68. K. tom. 3.) {u} De his Verb. Resipuit. Noe, p. 275. {w} Pirke Eliezer, c. 29. fol. 30. 1.

Genesis 21:9

Ver. 9. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian,.... That is, Ishmael, who is not expressed by name, but described by being a son of Hagar, a servant of Sarah's, and an Egyptian woman; all which seems to be observed by way of slight, both to Hagar and her son;

which she had born unto Abraham; not unto Sarah, as she proposed to herself, when she gave her maid to Abraham, Ge 16:2. This son of Abraham she saw

mocking; either at the entertainment made at the weaning of Isaac; or rather at Isaac himself, laughing at his name, and treating him with contempt as his younger brother, and boasting that he was the firstborn, and that the inheritance belonged to him; and threatening what he would do to him, should he hereafter offer to dispute it with him, under pretence of the promise of God that he should be Abraham's heir, and at which promise also he may be supposed to mock: and that this contention was about the inheritance seems plain from the words of Sarah in Ge 21:10; and in it Ishmael might not only rise to high words, but come to blows, and beat his brother; for it is observed the word used sometimes so signifies, **2Sa 2:14**; wherefore the apostle might truly call it a persecution, **Ga 4:29**; and as even cruel mockings are, Heb 11:35. As for the various senses the Jewish commentators put upon this, there does not seem to be any foundation for them, as that Ishmael was committing idolatry, and endeavouring to draw his brother into it; or was talking in an indecent and lascivious manner, in order to corrupt his mind; or that he was intending and attempting to take away his life, by shooting an arrow at him, and pretending it was but in jest and in play; See Gill on "Ga 4:29".

Genesis 21:10

Ver. 10. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, cast out this bondwoman and her son,.... Hagar, Sarah's handmaid and bondservant, and her son Ishmael; by this it appears that Hagar was concerned in this affair, and set her son on to mock Isaac, at least she encouraged him in it, buoying: him up with his being the firstborn, and having a right to the inheritance; wherefore Sarah saw plainly that there would be no peace nor comfort for her and her son, unless Hagar and her son were turned out of doors, for which she moves Abraham; and this not merely in a passion, but by divine direction and influence, as is evident from God's approbation of it:

for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, [even] with Isaac; which he would seem to be, if continued, and would think himself so, and there would be continual bickerings about it; wherefore, to put it out of all doubt who was heir, she desires that he and his mother both might be cast out of the house, which would be a clear determination of this matter. Sarah may seem to take upon her too much, to be so peremptory, as to declare who should, and who should not be heir, which more properly belonged to Abraham, whom she called her lord, Ge 18:12; but what will sufficiently free her from any charge of this kind is the revelation of the divine will, and the promise of God that so it should be; namely, that the covenant God had so often renewed with Abraham should be established with Isaac, and not with Ishmael, Ge 17:19. Now what was the design of God, in guiding Sarah to make such a motion as this to Abraham, is taught us by the Apostle Paul, who makes these two women to be types and figures of the two covenants, and their sons of those that are under them, see **Ga 4:22**.

Genesis 21:11

Ver. 11. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight,.... The motion that Sarah made to turn out of his house Hagar and Ishmael was not agreeable to him, but the reverse; it seemed an ill thing to him; it was greatly displeasing to him, and he was unwilling to come into it:

because of his son; his son Ishmael; not grieved and uneasy for what he had done; not for committing idolatry, as the Targum of Jonathan suggests, or for mocking at Isaac; but for what was proposed to be done to him, the ejection of him from his house, because of the great love he had for him, and the great concern he had for his education, and that he might enjoy the blessing promised him, he, was loath to have him cast out of his family: no concern is expressed for Hagar, though both by what God said to Abraham, and by the provision he made for her, he had a regard unto her; but his chief concern was for his son, who perhaps had a greater share in his natural affections than as yet Isaac had; nor did express so much reluctance when he was bid to him up, as he did at this time, that being at the command of God, this at the instance of his wife, and which he supposed only proceeded from passion and resentment: the Hebrew writers say {x}, that of all the evils that came upon Abraham this was the hardest and most grievous in his sight.

{x} Pirke Eliezer, c. 30.

Genesis 21:12

Ver. 12. And God said unto Abraham,.... Either by an articulate voice, or by an impulse on his mind, suggesting to him what he should do, being no doubt in great perplexity how to conduct between his wife and his son, but God determines the case for him, and makes him easy:

let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of the bondwoman: that is, let not the motion displease thee, which Sarah has made, to turn out the bondwoman and her son; let not thine affection to the one and to the other hinder compliance with it; do not look upon it as an ill thing, or as an hard thing; it is but what is right and proper to be done, and leave the bondwoman and her son to me; I will take care of them, be under no concern for them and their welfare:

in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken to her voice; the Targum of

Jonathan adds, for she is a prophetess: and indeed in this affair she spoke under a spirit of prophecy, according to the will of God; at least what she said became a divine oracle, and is called the Scripture, **Ga 4:30**; for the word "all" here must be restrained to what she had said concerning Hagar and Ishmael, and their ejection, and not to be extended to everything she had said, or should say to Abraham, to which he was always to be attentive: whereas on the other hand, it became her, as a wife, to hearken and be obedient to the voice of her husband: but in this particular Abraham is bid to listen to her, and do accordingly, for the following reason,

for in Isaac shall thy seed be called; he, and those that descended from him, should be called and reckoned the seed of Abraham more especially; and Abraham's seed in his life should inherit the land of Canaan, given to him and his seed for an inheritance: and this is a good reason why the bondwoman and her son should be cast out, that they or their offspring might not inherit the land with Isaac, or his descendants; and particularly from Abraham in his line, and not in the line of Ishmael, should the Messiah spring, that seed in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and therefore a separation was necessary, that this might abundantly appear.

Genesis 21:13

Ver. 13. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation,.... A great nation, as is promised, Ge 17:20; and such the Ishmaelites and Saracens have been, and the Turks now are, the descendants of Ishmael. The Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it, a people of thieves, or a thieving people; as were the Saracens, and who are thought to have that name from the Arabic word "sarac" {y}, to thieve; though they would have it derived from Sarah: but it is not agreeable to the promise of God to Abraham, that when for his comfort he is told that his son Ishmael and his descendants should become a great nation, that they should be described as a company of thieves and robbers; and especially when the reason of the promise is given,

because he [is] thy seed; or thy son; here the word "seed" is again used of a single individual; see **Ge 4:25**.

{y} "furatus fuit, furto abstulit", Golius, col. 1167. Castel. col. 2626.

Genesis 21:14

Ver. 14. And Abraham rose up early in the morning,.... It was in the night the Lord spoke to him, and bid him hearken to the voice of Sarah; and, as soon as it was morning, he arose, and was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; for, though the thing he was directed to was disagreeable to flesh and blood, and contrary to his natural affection, yet, it being the will of God, he readily complied with it:

and took bread and a bottle of water; a loaf of bread very probably, and a leathern or wooden bottle of water, as Aben Ezra supposes it to be; for there is no need to say that these are put for all necessaries, and a liberal provision that might be made by Abraham; but it is to be taken strictly, according to the letter and history, as a matter of fact, since it could be no more than Hagar could carry, and did carry upon her shoulder: and, though Abraham could have sent cattle laden with provisions, and servants to attend them, yet he did not, which his natural affection and liberal disposition might dictate to him; but, as he was to hearken in this affair to whatsoever Sarah said, and act accordingly, perhaps this was all she would grant; or it might be so ordered by the providence of God, as a chastisement for their ill behaviour, and that they might know the difference between being in Abraham's house and out of it; and that there might be an opportunity given to show favour to them for Abraham's sake, who might probably direct them to some place where to go; and, till they came there, this might be a sufficient supply, when he gave them reason to expect more from him; but they got into the wilderness, wandered about and lost their way, and so became destitute of provisions; and this may be an emblem of the low, mean, and starving condition such are in who are under the law, and seek for happiness by the works of it:

and gave [it] unto Hagar, putting [it] on her shoulder; that is, the bread and the water, which might be put in one parcel or bundle, or in a basket, and so laid and carried on her shoulder: the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"and bound it to her loins, to show that she was an handmaid:"

and the child; not that the child was "on her shoulder", which is quite improbable; for, since he was thirteen years of age when he was circumcised, he must be fourteen when Isaac was born; and if Isaac was two years old when weaned, Ishmael must be sixteen; and if he was three years of age, he must be seventeen; and if five years, he must be nineteen: some of the Jewish writers say {z}, he was twenty seven years of age when he went out of his father's house; but they seem to come nearest the truth that make this event to be when he was at the age of seventeen {a}, and when he must be too big to be carried on his mother's shoulder: but the sense is, that Abraham, when he put the provision on her shoulder, gave Ishmael to her, delivered him into her hand, to be taken care of by her; and very probably she led him in her hand:

and sent her away out of his house to some place assigned for her; the Targum of Jonathan adds, with a bill of divorce, dismissing her not only from his house, but as his wife; and so the Jewish writers {b} generally understand it: but there is no reason to believe there was any such custom before the law of Moses: nay, they go further, and say, that he dismissed her from himself, and from Isaac his son, and from this world, and from the world to come:

and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba; or, as the Targum of Jonathan, in the wilderness which was near to Beersheba; the place where it is probable Abraham now lived, and where Isaac was born, and the above affair was transacted, which was afterwards called by this name; for this is said by way of anticipation, see Ge 21:31. Beersheba is said {c} to be twelve miles from Gerar, and twenty miles from Hebron, to the south {d}.

{z} Pirke Eliezer, c. 30. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 53. fol. 47. 4. {a} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 2. 2. {b} Pirke Eliezer & Shalshalet, ut supra. ({z}, {a}.) {c} Bunting's Travels, p. 57. {d} Hieron. de loc. Heb. fol. 89. E.

Genesis 21:15

Ver. 15. And the water was spent in the bottle,.... It was all drank up by them, being thirsty, having wandered about some time in a wilderness, where they could not replenish their bottle: the Jewish writers say {e} that when Hagar came into the wilderness, she began to wander after the idols of the house of Pharaoh her father, and immediately the water ceased from the bottle, or was drank up by Ishmael, being seized with a burning fever:

and she cast the child under one of the shrubs; not from off her shoulder, but out of her hand or bosom; being faint through thirst, he was not able to walk, and she, being weary in dragging him along in her hand, perhaps sat down and held him in her lap, and laid him in her bosom; but, imagining he was near his end, she laid him under one of the shrubs in the wilderness, to screen him from the scorching sun, and there left him; the Greek version is, "under one of the fir trees", and so says Josephus {f}: some Jewish writers {g} call them juniper trees; and some make this to be Ishmael's own act, and say, that, being fatigued with thirst, he went and threw himself under the nettles of the wilderness {h}, see Job 30:7.

{e} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 30.) Targ. Jon. in loc. {f} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 12. sect. 3. {g} Bereshit, ut supra. (sect. 53. fol. 47. 4.) {h} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 30.)

Genesis 21:16

Ver. 16. And she went and sat her down over against [him], a good way off,.... Not being able to bear the sight of her child in his agonies, and, as she apprehended, ready to expire, she went from the place where she had laid him, and sat down under one of the shrubs or trees to shade herself, right over against that where her child was, though at some distance, which is next expressed:

as it were a bowshot; about as far off from him as an arrow can be shot, or is usually shot out of a bow; according to the Jews this was about half a mile, for they say {i} two bowshots make a mile; here she sat waiting what would be the issue, whether life or death, which last she expected:

for she said, let me not see the death of the child; she could not bear to hear his dying groans, and see him in his dying agonies:

and she sat over against [him], and lift up her voice and wept; on account of her desolate and forlorn condition, being in a wilderness, where she could get no water, and her child, as she thought, dying with thirst: the Septuagint version is, "and the child cried and wept"; and certain it is, from Ge 21:17, that the child did lift up its voice and cry, but that is not expressed in the text; it is quite clear in the original that it was Hagar and not her son that is said to weep, since the verb is feminine.

{i} Bereshit Rabba, ut supra. (sect. 53. fol. 47. 4.)

Genesis 21:17

Ver. 17. And God heard the voice of the lad,.... By which it appears that he cried also; but whether it was in prayer to God, or through the distress and misery he was in, is not certain; and, be it which it will, his cries came up into the ears of the Lord, and he had compassion on him, and supplied his wants, and delivered him out of his miserable condition:

and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven; not a created angel, but the eternal one, the Son of God, the Angel of the covenant, who appeared in the visible heavens, and called to Hagar from thence with an articulate voice, and so loud that she could hear him:

and said unto her, what aileth thee, Hagar? or, what has befallen thee? what is the matter with thee? why criest, why weepest thou? this he said, not as being ignorant of her case, but in order to relieve and comfort her:

fear not; distrust not the power and providence of God in taking care of thee and thy son; do not be afraid of the death of the child:

for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he [is]; though in a wilderness, and under one of the shrubs in it: God is everywhere, and he can hear the cries of men be they where they will, or in ever so desolate a condition: by this Hagar would know that her son was alive, that he had been crying, and God had heard his cry; he that regards the prayer of the destitute, Ps 102:17, heard the cry of Ishmael under a shrub.

Genesis 21:18

Ver. 18. Arise, lift up the lad,.... She had set herself down at some distance, and now she is bid to rise up and go to the place where she had left her son, and raise aim up from the ground, on which he lay along:

and hold him in thine hand: or take hold on him with thine hand, and hold him up with it, he being so weak that he could not sit up without being supported:

for I will make him a great nation: which is a renewal of a promise before made both to her and to Abraham, Ge 16:10; and by this Hagar is assured that he would recover and live, and become a man and the father of children, who in time would become a great nation;
See Gill on "Ge 16:10",
See Gill on "Ge 17:20",
See Gill on "Ge 21:13", this shows that the Angel of God here speaking is God himself, or a divine Person, since none but he could make him a great nation.

Genesis 21:19

Ver. 19. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water,.... Which she saw not before; not that she was really blind and had her eyes opened, or her sight restored, but they might be holden or restrained by the providence of God, that she should not see it before; or, through inattention and distraction of mind, might not observe it; or her eyes might be swelled with weeping and crying, that she saw it not; though it is not improbable that this well was not in being before, but was immediately produced by the power of God, who when he pleases can open mountains in the midst of the valleys, and make the wilderness a pool of water, Isa 41:18: the Jewish writers {k} say, it was created between the two evenings, that is, on the evening of the seventh day of the creation. Happy are those whose eyes are opened, by the Spirit and grace of God, to see the well of living water, the fountain and fulness of grace that is in Christ, where thirsty souls may come and drink and take their fill.

And she went and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad to drink; with which he was refreshed and recovered from his fainting, and was restored to health again.

{k} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 30.)

Genesis 21:20

Ver. 20. And God was with the lad,.... To confirm his health, to provide for him the necessaries of life, to protect him from danger in the wilderness where he was, and to prosper and succeed him in temporal things; all which is owing to the providential goodness of God:

and he grew; increased in bodily stature, and arrived to manhood; or, "he became great", in riches and in substance, as Ben Melech interprets it:

and dwelt in the wilderness; of Beersheba, where he now was, or of Paran after mentioned, a fit place for a wild man to dwell in, as it was said he should be; and by this means the oracle was fulfilled,
Ge 16:12:

and became an archer; skilful in the use of the bow and arrow, both for hunting and slaying of wild beasts, on whose flesh he lived, and for lighting with men,

against whom his hand would be: the Jewish writers {l} say he was born with a bow, and brought up with one, and that he shot an arrow at his brother Isaac, with an intention to kill him, while he was in Abraham's house; but it does not appear that he had any knowledge or use of the bow until he was in the wilderness and was grown up, by which he lived and defended himself; and so his posterity the Kedarenes, who sprung from his son Kedar, were famous for archery,
Isa 21:17; and the Ituraeans, from Jetur, another of his sons,
Ge 25:15, were remarkable for their bows, of which Virgil {m} speaks; and so the Arabians that live in the deserts and round about them, called Nabathees, from Nabaioth, another son of Ishmael, are now extraordinary marksmen for bows and arrows, and to sling darts which are made of cane {n}: the Saracens got their living not by the plough, but chiefly by the bow, and were all of them warriors, and lived upon wild flesh, and as rapacious as kites {o}; and now the troops of the governor of Mecca, whereabout Ishmael, by the Arabs, is supposed to live, which are only infantry, are called Al-Harrabah, that is, archers, or dart men {p}.

{l} Pirke, c. 30. Ammian. Marcellin. Hist. l. 14. {m} "Ithyraeos taxi curvantur in arcus". Georgic. l. 2. ver. 448. {n} Rauwolff's Travels, par. 2. ch. 4. p. 118. by Ray. {o} Ammian. Marcellin. l. 14. p. 8. Ed. Vales. {p} Sharif al Edrisi, apud Pocock. Specim. Arab. Hist. p. 122, 124.

Genesis 21:21

Ver. 21. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran,.... So called from Paran, a city in Arabia Petraea; it reached from the wilderness of Shur to Mount Sinai: the account Adrichomius {q} gives of it is this; Paran or

"Pharan is a wilderness, very large, desolate, impassable, and without water, containing, from Mount Sinai to Kadeshbarnea, a journey of eleven days; its land can neither be ploughed nor sown, is wholly dry, barren, and uncultivated; uninhabitable to men, destitute of villages, houses, and cottages; where neither men are seen, nor beasts nor birds; yea, neither trees nor any grass, only rocks and high rough stony mountains; it is taken sometimes for the first part of the desert of Arabia, near Mount Sinai, and sometimes for the last part, towards the land of promise; sometimes it is called the desert of Sin, and sometimes the desert of Sinai, from the mount; but this name Pharan seems to be the most general of the names of this very long desert:"

this is the wilderness the Israelites wandered in thirty eight years; what this writer says of it must be understood only of some parts of it, otherwise Ishmael could not have lived in it:

and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt: her own country, for she was an Egyptian, Ge 16:1; and where they dwelt was not far from it: according to the Jewish writers, he had two wives; the first he divorced, and then married the Egyptian; his first wife, they say {r}, he sent for, and took out of the plains of Moab, whose name was Aishah, and the other Phatimah; so the Targum of Jonathan here,

"and he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, and took to wife Adisha (or Aisha), whom he divorced, and then his mother took him Phatimah to wife, out of the land of Egypt:"

the names of Ishmael's wives seem to be taken from the Arabic writers; for Aishah, or Ayesha, was the name of a daughter of Abubeker, and one of the wives of Mahomet, and Phatimah the name of one of his daughters.

{q} Theatrum Terrae, S. p. 116. {r} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 30.)

Genesis 21:22

Ver. 22. And it came to pass at that time,.... Not when Ishmael was grown up and married, but when Isaac was weaned and Ishmael was expelled:

that Abimelech, and Phichol, the chief captain of his host, spake unto Abraham; Abimelech was king of Gerar, the same that is spoken of in the preceding chapter, and Phichol was the general of his army; these two great personages came together and paid Abraham a visit, and had some conversation with him, who was still in Gerar, or however in some part of that country not far from it:

saying, God [is] with thee in all that thou doest; greatly prospered him in the things of the world, for of them only could they make a judgment; they saw that he increased in worldly substance, and that his family was increased, and that he succeeded in everything in which he engaged; and, being jealous of his growing greatness and power, were desirous of securing an interest in him and in his favour.

Genesis 21:23

Ver. 23. Now therefore swear unto me here by God,.... By the true and living God, by whom only an oath is to be taken, who was Abraham's God, and whom Abimelech seems to have known and to have been a worshipper of; and therefore moves for an oath to be taken by him, which he knew would be sacred and binding to Abraham, could he prevail upon him to swear:

that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son; perhaps he had heard that God had promised to give the whole land of Canaan to him and his posterity, and among the rest his kingdom, which was a part of it; and, seeing him grow great and powerful, he could not tell how soon it might be ere he was put in the possession of it, whether in his own time, or his son's, or his grandson's; and therefore desires Abraham that he would swear to do no hurt to them whenever it should be;

[but] according to the kindness I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned; that, as he had given him full liberty to sojourn in any part of his kingdom where he pleased, so, when the whole country should come into his possession, that he, or his son, or his grandson, in whatsoever time it should be, might quietly enjoy their own land, and all the inhabitants of it; at least that they might not be driven out of it, but sojourn in it as he had done.

Genesis 21:24

Ver. 24. And Abraham said, I will swear. Sensible of the many favours he had received from Abimelech in times past, and was still indulged with, he very readily agreed to his proposal; and the rather, as he knew by the vision between the pieces, that it would be four hundred years before his posterity should be put into the possession of the land of Canaan; and therefore could take an oath that neither he, nor his son, nor his grandson, should be injured or dispossessed.

Genesis 21:25

Ver. 25. And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water,.... Before he swore and entered into covenant with him, he thought it advisable to inform him of an affair that had happened concerning a well of water, which in those hot and dry countries, as the southern parts of the land of Canaan were, was an affair of great importance; and to make complaint of the ill usage of Abimelech's servants with respect to it, and to reason with him about it, that the thing might be adjusted to mutual satisfaction, and so a firm basis and foundation be laid for the continuance of friendship for the future; which was wisely done before their league and covenant was ratified: this it seems was a well

which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away: that is, had by force taken the use of it to themselves for their cattle, and had deprived Abraham of it, though it was of his own digging; and perhaps there might be more than one, and the singular may be put for the plural; and so the Septuagint version has it, "the wells": see
Ge 26:15.

Genesis 21:26

Ver. 26. And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing,.... He pleads ignorance; he knew nothing of it before, nor now which of his servants had done it; intimating, that if he could know who it was, he should severely reprimand him for it:

neither didst thou tell me: signifying that he was to blame he did not complain of it sooner; and at least he had no reason to blame him, since he had never informed him before of it, and therefore could not expect to be redressed:

neither yet heard [of it] but today: he had not heard of it from others, as the Targum of Jonathan rightly adds, by way of explanation, but that very day, and very probably not till the moment he had it from Abraham himself.

Genesis 21:27

Ver. 27. And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech,.... In gratitude for former favours he had received from him, in token of the friendship that subsisted between them, and for the confirmation of it; and to show that he was fully satisfied with Abimelech's answer to his complaint, as well as willing to enter into covenant by sacrifice, when such creatures were divided, and the covenanters passed between the pieces, for so it follows:

and both of them made a covenant; or, "cut or struck a covenant" {s}; cut the sacrifice in pieces and passed between them, in token of the compact and agreement they entered into with each other; signifying that whoever broke it deserved to be cut in pieces as those creatures were.

{s} wtrky "foedus percusserunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "secuerunt", Cocceius.

Genesis 21:28

Ver. 28. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. Separate from the sheep and oxen he gave to Abimelech, and from those that were used in making the covenant.

Genesis 21:29

Ver. 29. And Abimelech said unto Abraham,.... Observing what he had done, and not knowing the design of it:

what [mean] these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? he understood what the sheep and oxen were for, that they were presents to him, at least some of them, and the rest were for the solemnizing and ratifying the covenant between them; but what these were for he could not devise.

Genesis 21:30

Ver. 30. And he said,.... That is, Abraham replied to Abimelech:

for these seven ewe lambs shall thou take of my hand; as a present from him, to be retained as his own:

that they may be a witness to me that I have digged this well: these were to be a testimony that the well that had been taken away from Abraham was one that he had dug, and was his property, and which Abimelech acknowledged by his acceptance of these seven lambs; and very probably Abraham received a note from the hand of Abimelech, owning his reception of the seven lambs, and his title to the well, which these were a witness of.

Genesis 21:31

Ver. 31. Wherefore he called that place Beersheba,.... Either Abraham or Abimelech, or both, called it so; or it may be read impersonally, "therefore the place was called Beersheba" {t}, for two reasons, one implied, the other expressed; one was, because of the seven lambs before mentioned; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and therefore he called the well the well of seven lambs;"

"Beer" signifying a well, and "sheba" seven; the other, and which is more certain, being expressed, is as follows;

because there they sware both of them; by the living God, to keep the covenant inviolably they had made between them.

{t} arqy "vocatus", V. L. Calvin, Piscator.

Genesis 21:32

Ver. 32. Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba,.... Which took its name from the oath annexed to the covenant there made; and which is observed for the sake of what follows, to show that when they finished their agreement, and the ceremony of it,

then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol, the chief captain of his host; from the place where they had been conversing and covenanting with Abraham:

and they returned into the land of the Philistines; from Beersheba, which was in the extreme border of it, unto Gerar, which lay in the midst of it, and was the capital city in it; otherwise both places were in Palestine, or the land of the Philistines, a people that came out of Egypt originally, and settled here: in Jerom's {u} time Beersheba was a large village, twenty miles from Hebron to the south.

{u} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. F.

Genesis 21:33

Ver. 33. And [Abraham] planted a grove in Beersheba,.... The Jewish writers {w} are divided about the use of this grove, as Jarchi relates; one says it was for a paradise or orchard, to produce fruits out of it for travellers and for entertainment; another says it was for an inn to entertain strangers in; it rather was for a shade, to shelter from the sun in those sultry and hot countries; and perhaps for a religious use, and to be an oratory, as the following words seem to suggest: in the midst of it very likely Abraham built an altar, and sacrificed to the Lord; hence might come the superstitious use of groves among the Heathens; and, when they came to be abused to idolatrous purposes, they were forbidden by the law of Moses, which before were lawful. And, though the name of Abraham is not in the text, there is no doubt but he is designed, and was the planter of the grove, and which is expressed in the Septuagint version, as it is supplied by us. What sort of trees this grove consisted of cannot with certainty be said, very probably the oak. R. Jonah {x} thinks it may be the tree which in Arabic they call "ethel", and is a tree like that which is called tamarisk in general it signifies any tree, and especially large trees {y};

and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God; who, is from everlasting to everlasting, or "the God of the world" {z}, the Creator and upholder of it, and the preserver of all creatures in it; him Abraham invoked in this place, prayed unto him, and gave him thanks for all the mercies he had received from him.

{w} In T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1. {x} Apud Kimchi, Sepher Shorash. rad. lva. {y} Vid. R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 72. 1. {z} Mlwe la "Dei seculi", Pagninus, Hontanus, Calvin; so Ainsworth.

Genesis 21:34

Ver. 34. And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days. Even many years, days being sometimes put for years; having entered into covenant with Abimelech, the king of the country, and settled a good correspondence with him, and having his friendship and good will, which commanded respect from his subjects, Abraham sojourned very quietly and comfortably for many years, chiefly at Beersheba; the Jewish writers say {a} he sojourned here twenty six years.

{a} Jarchi & Bereshit Rabba, sect. 54. fol. 48. 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 22

In this chapter we have an account of an order given by God to Abraham to sacrifice his son, Ge 22:1; of his readiness to obey the will of God, he immediately preparing everything for that purpose, Ge 22:3, of the order being reversed, and another sacrifice substituted in its room, which occasioned the giving a new name to the place where it was done, Ge 22:11; upon which the promise of special blessings, of a numerous offspring, and of the seed in whom all nations should be blessed, is renewed, Ge 22:15; after this Abraham returns to Beersheba, where he is informed of the increase of his brother Nahor's family, Ge 22:19.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass after these things,.... Recorded in the preceding chapter: according to the Talmudists {b}, the following affair was transacted quickly after the weaning of Isaac, when he was about five years old, which is the opinion of some, as Aben Ezra on Ge 22:4; makes mention of; but that is an age when it can hardly be thought he should be able to carry such a load of wood as was sufficient to make a fire to consume a burnt offering, Ge 22:6; the age of thirteen, which he fixes upon, is more likely: Josephus {c} says, that Isaac was twenty five years of age; and in this year of his age Bishop Usher {d} places this transaction, twenty years after the weaning of him, in A. M. 2133, and before Christ 1871; and near to this is the computation of a Jewish chronologer {e}, who makes Isaac to be at this time twenty six years of age; but some make him much older: according to the Targum of Jonathan, he was at this time thirty six years old; and it is the more generally received opinion of the Jewish writers {f} that he was and with whom the Arabic writers {g} agree: so that this affair, after related, was thirty years after the weaning of Isaac and the expulsion of Ishmael, supposing Isaac to be then five years old. But, however this be, what came to pass was after many promises of a son had been given him, and those fulfilled; and after many blessings had been bestowed upon him; and when he seemed to be well settled in the land of the Philistines, having entered into an alliance with the king of the country; his family in peace, and his son Isaac, the son of the promise, grown up and a hopeful youth; the first appearance of which seemed to threaten the destruction of all his comforts, hopes, and expectations; and it was so,

that God did tempt Abraham; not to sin, as Satan does, for God tempts no man, nor can he be tempted in this sense; and, had Abraham slain his son, it would have been no sin in him, it being by the order of God, who is the Lord of life, and the sovereign disposer of it; but he tempted him, that is, he tried him, to prove him, and to know his faith in him, his fear of him, his love to him, and cheerful obedience to his commands; not in order to know these himself, which he was not ignorant of, but to make them known to others, and that Abraham's faith might be strengthened yet more and more, as in the issue it was. The Jewish writers {h} observe, that Abraham was tempted ten times, and that this was the tenth and last temptation:

and said unto him, Abraham: calling him by his name he well knew, and by that name he had given him, to signify that he should be the father of many nations, Ge 17:5; and yet was going to require of him to slay his only son, and offer him a sacrifice to him:

and he said, behold, [here] I [am]; signifying that he heard his voice, and was ready to obey his commands, be they what they would.

{b} T. Bab. Sanhedrin: fol. 89. 2. {c} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 13. sect. 2. {d} Annales Vet. Test. p. 10. {e} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 6. 1. {f} Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 2. & 74. 4. & 76. 2. Targ. Hieros. in Exod. xii. 42. Praefat. Echa Rabbat. fol. 40. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 31. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 1. p. 3. Juchasin, fol. 9. 1. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 3. 1. {g} Patricides, p. 19. Elmacinus, p. 34. Apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 327, &c. {h} Targum. Hieros. in loc. Pirke Eliezer, c. 31.

Genesis 22:2

Ver. 2. And he said, take now thy son,.... Directly, immediately; not thine ox, nor thy sheep, nor thy ram, nor thy lamb, nor thy servant, but thy son:

thine only [son] Isaac; for, though Ishmael was his son, he was a son by his maid, by his concubine, and not by his wife; Isaac was his only legitimate son, his only son by his lawful wife Sarah; the only son of the promise, his only son, in whom his seed was to be called:

whom thou lovest; on whom his affections were strongly set, being a lovely youth, a dutiful son, and the child of promise; on whom all his hope and expectation of a numerous offspring promised him was built, and in whose line the Messiah was to spring from him; even Isaac, which stands last in the original text: so that, if what had been said was not sufficient to describe him, he is expressed by name, and the description is gradually given, and the name of his son reserved to the last, that he might be by degrees prepared to receive the shocking order; every word is emphatic and striking, and enough to pierce any tender heart, and especially when told what was to be done to him. The Jews {i} represent God and Abraham in a discourse together upon this head: God said, take now thy son; says Abraham, I have two sons; take thine only son; says he, they are both only sons to their mothers; take him whom thou lovest; I love them both, replied he; then take Isaac; thus ended the debate:

and get thee into the land of Moriah; so called by anticipation, from a mountain of that name in it; the Septuagint render it, "the high land", the hill country of the land of Canaan, particularly that part of it where Jerusalem afterwards stood, which was surrounded with hills: hence Aquila, another Greek interpreter, renders it, "conspicuous", as hills and mountains are, and a mountainous country is; Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase it, "a land of worship", of religious worship; for in this country afterwards the people of God dwelt, the city of the living God was built, and in it the temple for divine service, and that upon Mount Moriah; and the Targum of Jerusalem has it here,

"to Mount Moriah;"

the Jews are divided about the reason of this name, some deriving it from a word {k} which signifies to "teach", and think it is so called, because doctrine or instruction came forth from thence to Israel; others from a word {l} which signifies "fear", and so had its name because fear or terror went from thence to the nations of the world {m}; but its derivation is from another word {n}, which signifies to "see", and which is confirmed by what is said Ge 22:14:

and offer him there for a burnt offering; this was dreadful work he was called to, and must be exceeding trying to him as a man, and much more as a parent, and a professor of the true religion, to commit such an action; for by this order he was to cut the throat of his son, then to rip him up, and cut up his quarters, and then to lay every piece in order upon the wood, and then burn all to ashes; and this he was to do as a religious action, with deliberation, seriousness, and devotion:

upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of; for there were several of them adjoining to, or pretty near each other, which afterwards went by different names, as Mount Sion, **De 4:48**; the hill Acra; Mount Calvary, Lu 23:33; and Mount Moriah, **2Ch 3:1**; supposed to be the mount intended; and so Aben Ezra says it was the place where the temple was built, and where was the threshing floor of Araunah, **2Ch 3:1**. Some learned men are of opinion, that the account which Sanchoniatho {o} gives of Cronus or Saturn sacrificing his own son, refers to this affair of Abraham's; his words are,

"there being a pestilence and a mortality, Cronus offered up his only son a whole burnt offering to his father Ouranus;"

which Porphyry {p}, from the same historian, thus relates; Cronus, whom the Phoenicians call Israel, (a grandson of Abraham's, thought, through mistake, to be put for Abraham himself,) having an only son of a nymph of that country called Anobret, (which according to Bochart {q} signifies one that conceived by grace, see Heb 11:11;) whom therefore they called Jeoud (the same with Jehid here, an only once); so an only one is called by the Phoenicians; when the country was in great danger through war, this son, dressed in a royal habit, he offered up on an altar he had prepared. But others {r} are of a different sentiment, and cannot perceive any likeness between the two cases: however, Isaac may well be thought, in the whole of this, to be a type of the Messiah, the true and proper Son of God, his only begotten Son, the dear Son of his love, in whom all the promises are yea and amen; whom God out of his great love to men gave to be an offering and a sacrifice for their sins, and who suffered near Jerusalem, on Mount Calvary, which very probably was a part of Mount Moriah; and which, with other mountains joining in their root, though having different tops, went by that common name.

{i} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 89. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 31. Jarchi in loc. {k} hry "docuit". {l} ary "timuit". {m} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 16. 1. {n} har "vidit". {o} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praeparat. p. 38. {p} Apud ib. p. 40. & l. 4. c. 15. p. 156. {q} Canaan, l. 2. c. 2. col. 711, 712. {r} See Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p. 37, 38, 134, &c.

Genesis 22:3

Ver. 3. And Abraham rose up early in the morning,.... For it seems it was in a dream or vision of the night that the above orders were given; and as soon as it was morning he rose and prepared to execute them with all readiness, and without any hesitation and delay:

and saddled his ass; for his journey, not to carry the wood and provision on, which probably were carried by his servants, but to ride on; and this Jarchi thinks he did himself, and the words in their precise sense suggest this; but it does no, necessarily follow, because he may be said to do what he ordered his servant to do; of the Jews' fabulous account of this ass, see **Zec 9:9**:

and took two of his young men with him; the Targum of Jonathan says, these were Ishmael his son, and Eliezer his servant; and so other Jewish writers {r}, who tell us, that just at this time Ishmael came out of the wilderness to visit his father, and he took him with him; but for this there is no foundation: they were two of his servants, of whom he had many:

and Isaac his son: who was the principal person to be taken, since he was to be the sacrifice: whether Abraham acquainted Sarah with the affairs and she consented to it, cannot be said with certainty; it is plain Isaac knew not what his father's design was; and though Sarah and the whole family might know, by the preparation made, he was going to offer a sacrifice, yet they knew not where, nor what it was to be;

and clave the wood for the burnt offering; not knowing whether he should find wood sufficient on the mountain, where he was to go; and that he might not be unprovided when he came there, takes this method, which shows his full intention to obey the divine command:

and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him; that is, he mounted his ass, and rode towards the place God had spoken of to him, and who had directed him which way to steer his course.

{r} Pirke Eliezer, c. 31. Jarchi in loc.

Genesis 22:4

Ver. 4. Then on the third day,.... After he had received the command from God, and from his setting out on his journey; for he had now travelled two days, Mount Moriah being forty miles from Beersheba, where Abraham dwelt {s}; or, as others compute it, forty: Hebron {t} was twenty miles from Beersheba, and Jerusalem twenty two from Hebron; and to travel twenty miles a day on foot, as Isaac and the servants seem to have done, there being but one ass among them, was far enough in those hot countries. Now all this while

Abraham had time to reconsider things in his mind, and deliberate thoroughly what he was going about; and by proceeding in it, after he had such leisure to revolve things in his mind, it appears that he was satisfied it was not an illusion, but an oracle of God he was going to obey; and that he did not do this rashly and hastily, and that his faith and obedience were sufficiently tried, and found genuine. The Jews {u} take great notice of this third day, and compare the passage with **Ho 6:2**; and which they interpret of the third day of the resurrection; and the deliverance of Isaac on this third day was doubtless typical of Christ's resurrection from the dead on the third day; for from the time that Abraham had the command to offer up his son, he was reckoned no other by him than as one dead, from whence he received him in a figure on this third day, Heb 11:19:

Abraham lift up his eyes, and saw the place afar off; where he was to offer his Son. Baal Hatturim says, the word "place", by gematry, signifies Jerusalem: it seems by this, that as God had signified to Abraham that he would tell him of the place, and show it to him, where he was to sacrifice, so that he gave him a signal by which he might know it, which some of the Jewish writers {w} say was a cloud upon the mount; with which agrees the Targum of Jonathan,

"and Abraham lift up his eyes and saw the cloud of glory smoking upon the mountain, and he knew it afar off."

And others say {x}, he saw the glory of the divine Majesty standing upon the mount, in a pillar of fire, reaching from earth to heaven; and they further observe, that the place where he was, when he saw this, was Zophim, a place not far from Jerusalem; and from hence, when the city and temple were built, a full view might be taken of them {y}, from whence it had its name.

{s} Bunting's Travels, p. 57. {t} Reland. Palestina illustrata, tom. 2. p. 620. {u} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 56. fol. 49. 3. {w} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 56. fol. 49. 3. Jarchi in loc. {x} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 31.) {y} Gloss. in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 49. 2. Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. Crach Chayim, c. 3. sect. 6.

Genesis 22:5

Ver. 5. And Abraham said unto the young men, abide you here with the ass,.... At the place from whence he had his first sight of Mount Moriah: he chose not to take his two servants with him, lest when they saw him binding his son, and going about to sacrifice him, they should lay hold upon him, and restrain him from doing it; and to prevent this he takes this precaution, which shows how fully intent he was to yield obedience to the divine precept:

and I and the lad will go yonder and worship; pointing to the place where the signal was, but whether they saw it or no is not certain: the Jews say {z} Isaac did see it, but they did not; however, Abraham made them to understand that he was going to one of the mountains which were in sight, and there worship God by offering sacrifice to him. Isaac is here called a "lad"; of what age he was at this time,
See Gill on "Ge 22:2"; and he might be at the largest number of years there mentioned, and yet be so called, since Joshua the son of Nun has this appellation when he was fifty six years of age, Ex 33:11:

and come again to you, both he and Isaac; this he said under a spirit of prophecy, as Jarchi thinks, or in the faith of Isaac's resurrection from the dead, Heb 11:19.

{z} Bereshit Rabba (sect. 56. fol. 49. 2, 3.) and Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 31.)

Genesis 22:6

Ver. 6. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering,.... Which Josephus {a} says was laid upon the ass, and carried by that; and if so, he took it from thence: but it is probable it was carried by his two servants, since it was not more than Isaac himself afterwards carried, as in the next clause:

and laid [it] upon Isaac his son: who was a grown man, and able to carry it: in this also he was a type of Christ, on whom the wood of his cross was laid, and which he bore when he went to be crucified,
Joh 19:17; and this wood may be also a figure of our sins laid on him by his Father, and which he bore in his body on the tree, **1Pe 2:24**; and which were like wood to fire, fuel for the wrath of God, which came down upon him for them:

and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; a vessel in one hand, in which fire was to kindle the wood with, and a knife in the other hand to slay the sacrifice with; the one to slay his son with, and the other to burn him with; and to carry these for such purposes must be very trying. This is the first time we read in Scripture of fire for use, or of a knife. Some say the first inventor of fire was Prometheus, others Phoroneus {b}, from whence he seems to have his name;

but according to Sanchoniatho {c}, the immediate posterity of Cain first invented it, whose names were light, fire, and flame; and these, he says, found out the way of generating fire, by rubbing pieces of wood against each other, and taught men the use of it. "Knife", in the Hebrew language, has its name from eating and consuming, as Ben Melech observes; some render it a "sword" {d}, but wrongly, and which has led the painter into a mistake, to represent Abraham with a sword in his hand to slay his son:

and they went both of them together; from the place where they left the young men, to the place where the sacrifice was to be offered.

{a} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 13. sect. 2. {b} Pausan. Corinthiaca sive, l. 2. p. 119. {c} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. c. 10. p. 34. {d} tlkamh "gladium", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin.

Genesis 22:7

Ver. 7. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father,.... As they were walking together:

and said, my father; a cutting word to Abraham, who knew what he was going to do with him, so contrary to the relation and affection of a parent:

and he said, here [am] I, my son; what hast thou to say to me? I am ready to answer thee; he owns the relation he stood in unto him, a sense of which he had not put off, and curbs his affections, which must be inwardly moving towards him, and showed great strength of faith to grapple with such a trying exercise:

and he said, behold the fire and the wood; the fire which his father had his hand, and the wood which was upon his own, shoulders:

but where [is] the lamb for a burnt offering? he perceived by the preparation made, by the fire and the wood, that it was to be a burnt offering which they were going to offer; but there being no creature provided for the sacrifice, he puts this question, by which it appears that as yet he was quite ignorant of the true design of this journey, and little thought that he was to be the sacrifice: however, from what he said, it plain he had been used to sacrifices, and had been trained up in them, and had seen them performed, and knew the nature of them, and what were requisite unto them.

Genesis 22:8

Ver. 8. And Abraham said, my son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering,.... In which answer Abraham may have respect to the Messiah, the Lamb of God, **Joh 1:29**, whom he had provided in council and covenant before the world was; and who in promise, and type, and figure, was slain from the foundation of the world, Re 13:8; and whom in due time God would send into the world, Joh 10:36, and make him an offering for sin, Isa 53:10, and accept of him in the room and stead of his people: and this was a provision that could only be made by the Lord, and was the produce of his infinite wisdom, and the fruit of his grace, favour, and good will and of which Abraham had a clear sight and strong persuasion, see **Joh 8:56**; though as the words may be considered as a more direct answer to Isaac's question, which related to the sacrifice now about to be offered, they may be regarded as a prophecy of Abraham's, and of his faith in it, that God would, as in fact he did, provide a lamb or ram in the room of that he was called to offer; or he may mean Isaac himself, whom he was bid to take and offer, and so was a lamb of God's providing; though he did not choose directly to say this, but puts him off with such an answer, suggesting that it was best for him to leave it with God, who, as he had called them to such service, would supply them with a proper sacrifice; and in speaking in this manner he might give room for Isaac to suspect what was intended, and so by degrees bring him to the knowledge of it. Some Jewish writers {e} say, that Abraham to this answer added in express terms,

"my son, thou art the lamb:"

so they went both of them together; they proceeded on in their journey until they came to the place they were directed to go. The Targum of Jonathan says,

"they went both of them with a perfect heart as one;"

the Jerusalem Targum is,

"with a quiet, easy, and composed mind or heart;"

and Jarchi,

"with a like heart;"

all intimating that Isaac was thoroughly acquainted with what was to be done, that he was to be the sacrifice, and that he heartily agreed to it, and that he and his father were of one mind in it, and that he went with the same will to be offered up, as his father did to offer him; and indeed the expression being repeated from Ge 22:6, seems to suggest something remarkable and worthy of attention.

{e} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 31.)

Genesis 22:9

Ver. 9. And they came to the place which God had told him of,.... Mount Moriah. Maimonides {f} says,

"it is a tradition in or by the hands of all, that this is the place where David and Solomon built an altar in the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, and where Abraham built an altar, and bound Isaac on it; and where Noah built one when he came out of the ark, and is the altar on which Cain and Abel offered; and where the first man offered when he was created, and from whence he was created."

And so the Targum of Jonathan, and other Jewish writers {g}. The Mahometans say {h}, that Meena or Muna, a place about two or three miles from Mecca, is the place where Abraham went to offer up his son Isaac, and therefore in this place they sacrifice their sheep.

And Abraham built an altar there; of the earth, and turf upon it he found on the mount, erected an altar for sacrifice, even for the sacrifice of his own son: he had built many before, but none for such a purpose as this, and yet went about it readily, and finished it. But if there was one before, Abraham could not with any propriety be said to build it, at most only to repair it; but there is no doubt to be made of it that he built it anew, and perhaps there never was an altar here before:

and laid on the wood in order: for the sacrifice to be put upon it:

and bound Isaac his son: with his hands and feet behind him, as Jarchi says; not lest he should flee from him, and make his escape, as Aben Ezra suggests, but as it was the usual manner to bind sacrifices when offered; and especially this was so ordered, that Isaac might be a type of the Messiah, who was bound by the Jews, Joh 18:12; as well as he was bound and fastened to the cross:

and laid him on the altar upon the wood; it is highly probable with his own consent; for if he was twenty five, and as some say thirty seven years of age, he was able to have resisted his father, and had he been reluctant could have cleared himself from the hands of his aged parent: but it is very likely, that previous to this Abraham opened the whole affair to him, urged the divine command, persuaded him to submit to it; and perhaps might suggest to him what he himself had faith in, that God would either revoke the precept, or prevent by some providence or another the fatal blow, or raise him again from the dead; however, that obedience to the will of God should be yielded, since disobedience might be attended with sad consequences to them both; and with such like things the mind of Isaac might be reconciled to this affair, and he willingly submitted to it; in which he also was a type of Christ, who acquiesced in the will of his Father, freely surrendered himself into the hands of justice, and meekly and willingly gave himself an offering for his people.

{f} Hilchot Beth Habechirah, c. 2. sect. 1. 2. {g} In Pirke, ut supra. (c. 31.) {h} See Pitts's Account of the Mahometans, c. 7. p. 97.

Genesis 22:10

Ver. 10. And Abraham stretched forth his hand,.... All things being ready for execution, the altar built, the wood laid on it, the sacrifice bound and laid on that, nothing remained but to cut the throat of the sacrifice; and in order to that, the instrument for it laying by him, he put forth his hand, one would think in a trembling manner, for it is enough to make one tremble to think of it:

and took the knife to slay his son; with a full intention to do it, which was carrying his obedience to the divine will to the last extremity, and shows he was sincere in it, and really designed to complete it; and this was taken by the Lord as if it was actually done. He had his knife in his hand, and was near the throat of his son, and just ready to give the fatal thrust; in another moment, as it were, it would have been all over; but in the nick of time God appeared and prevented it, as follows:

Genesis 22:11

Ver. 11. And the Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven,.... Not a created angel, but the eternal one, the Son of God, who perhaps appeared in an human form, and spoke with an articulate voice, as be frequently did; for that this was a divine Person is clear from his swearing by himself, and renewing the promise unto Abraham,
Ge 22:16:

and said, Abraham, Abraham; the repeating his name denotes haste to prevent the slaughter of his son, which was just upon the point of doing, and in which Abraham was not dilatory, but ready to make quick dispatch; and therefore with the greater eagerness and vehemency the angel calls him by name, and doubles it, to raise a quick and immediate attention to him, which it did:

and he said, here [am] I: ready to hearken to what shall be said, and to obey what should be ordered, See Gill on "Ge 22:1".

Genesis 22:12

Ver. 12. And he said, lay not thine hand upon the lad,.... Which he was just going to stretch out, with his knife in it, to slay him; and though the Lord had bid him take his son, and offer him for a burnt offering, to try his faith, fear, love, and obedience, yet he meant not that he should actually slay him, but would prevent it when it came to the crisis; for he approves not of, nor delights in human sacrifices; and that this might not be dawn into an example, it was prevented; though the Gentiles, under the influence of Satan, in imitation of this, have practised it:

neither do thou anything unto him; by lacerating his flesh, letting out any of his blood, or wounding him ever so slightly in any part:

for now I know that thou fearest God; with a truly childlike filial fear; with such a reverence of him that has fervent love, and strong affection, joined with it; with a fear that includes the whole of internal religious worship, awe of the divine Being, submission to his will, faith in him, and love to him, and obedience springing from thence. And this is said, not as though he was ignorant before how things would issue; for he knew from all eternity what Abraham would be, and what he would do, having determined to bestow that grace upon him, and work it in him, which would influence and enable him to act the part he did; he knew full well beforehand what would be the consequence of such a trial of him; but this is said after the manner of men, who know things with certainty when they come to pass, and appear plain and evident: or this may be understood of a knowledge of approbation, that the Lord now knew, and approved of the faith, fear, love, and obedience of Abraham, which were so conspicuous in this affair, see **Ps 1:6**; Saadiah Gaon {i} interprets it, "I have made known", that is, to others; God by trying Abraham made it manifest to others, to all the world, to all that should hear of or read this account of things, that he was a man that feared God, loved him, believed in him, and obeyed him, of which this instance is a full and convincing proof:

seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only [son] from me: but as soon as he had the order to offer him up, prepared for it, took a three days' journey, and all things along with him for the sacrifice; when he came to the place, built an altar, laid the wood in order, bound his son, and laid him on it, took the knife, and was going to put it to his throat; so that the Lord looked upon the thing as if it was really done: it was a plain case that he did not, and would not have withheld his son, but would have freely offered him a sacrifice unto God at his command; and that he loved the Lord more than he did his son, and had a greater regard to the command of God than to the life of his son, and preferred the one to the other. And thus God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, **Ro 8:32**.

{i} Apud Aben Ezram, in ver. 1.

Genesis 22:13

Ver. 13. And Abraham lifted up his eyes,.... They were before fixed upon his son lying upon the altar, and intent upon that part he was going to thrust his knife into; but hearing a voice from heaven above him, he lift up his eyes thitherward:

and looked, and, behold, behind [him] a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; the ram making a noise and rustling among the bushes behind the place where Abraham was, he turned himself, and looked and saw it: the Targum of Onkelos introduces the clause thus, "after these things"; and so the Arabic version: after Abraham had heard the voice of the angel, and had lift up his eyes to heaven, he was directed to look behind him; and both that and the Targum of Jonathan paraphrase it,

"and he saw and beheld one ram;"

and so the Septuagint, Syriac and Samaritan versions, reading dxa instead of rxa. This ram was caught and held by his horns in a thicket of briers, brambles, and thorns, or in the thick branches of the shrubs or bushes which grew upon the mount; and the horns of a ram being crooked, are easily implicated in such thickets, but not easily loosed. From whence this ram came is not known; it can hardly be thought to come from Abraham's fold, or to be his property, since he was three days' journey distant from home; very likely it had strayed from neighbouring flocks, and was by the providence of God directed hither at a seasonable time. The Jewish writers {k} say, it was from the creation of the world; and there is no absurdity or improbability to suppose it was immediately created by the power of God, and in an extraordinary manner provided; and was a type of our Lord Jesus, who was foreordained of God before the foundation of the world, and came into the world in an uncommon way, being born of a virgin, and that in the fulness of time, and seasonably, and in due time died for the sins of men. The ram has its name from "strength", in the Hebrew language, and was an emblem of a great personage, **Da 8:3**; and may denote the strength and dignity of Christ as a divine Person; being caught in a thicket, may be an emblem of the decrees of God, in which he was appointed to be the Saviour; or the covenant agreement and transactions with his Father, in which he voluntarily involved himself, and by which he was held; or the sins of his people, which were laid upon him by imputation, were wreathed about him, and justice finding him implicated with them, required satisfaction, and had it; or the hands of wicked men, sons of Belial, comparable to thorns, by whom he was taken; or the sorrows of death and hell that encompassed him, and the curses of a righteous law which lay upon him; and perhaps he never more resembled this ram caught in a thicket, than when a platted crown of thorns was put upon his head, and he wore it;

and Abraham went and took the ram; without regarding whose property it was, since God, the owner and proprietor of all, had provided it for him, and brought it to him at a very seasonable time, and directed him to take it:

and offered him for a burnt offering in the stead of his son; in which also was a type of Christ, who was made an offering for sin, and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savour; and its being a burnt offering denotes the sufferings of Christ, and the severity of them; and which were in the room and stead of his people, of God's Isaac, of spiritual seed of Abraham, of the children of God of the promise, of all his beloved ones; who therefore are let go, justice being satisfied with what Christ has done and suffered, it being all one as if they had suffered themselves; as here in the type, the ram having, its throat cut, its blood shed, its skin flayed, and the whole burnt to ashes, were as if Isaac himself had been thus dealt with, as Jarchi observes. Alexander Polyhistor {l}, an Heathen writer, has, in agreement with the sacred history, given a narrative of this affair in a few words,

"God (he says) commanded Abraham to offer up his son Isaac to him for a burnt offering, and taking the lad with him to a mountain, laid and kindled an heap of wood, and put Isaac upon it; and when he was about to slay him, was forbidden by an angel, who presented a ram to him for sacrifice, and then Abraham removed his son from the pile, and offered up the ram."

{k} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 31.). Targum Jon. & Jarchi in loc. {l} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 19. p. 421.

Genesis 22:14

Ver. 14. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh,.... Which may be rendered either "the Lord hath seen", as the Septuagint, or "has provided", the future being put for the past, as Abendana observes, and so it is called, in answer to what Abraham had said,
Ge 22:8; "God will provide": now he had provided, and, as a memorial of it, gives the place this name; or "he will see or provide" {m}; as he has provided for me, so he will for all those that trust in him; as he has provided a ram in the room of Isaac, so he has provided, and will send his only Son in the fulness of time to be a sacrifice for the sins of his people:

as it is said [to] this day, in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen; from this time to the times of Moses, and so on in after ages, even until now, it has been used as a proverbial saying, that as God appeared to Abraham, and for his son, in the mount, just as he was going to sacrifice him, and delivered him, so the Lord will appear for his people in all ages, in a time of difficulty and distress, and when at the utmost extremity, who call upon him, and trust in him. This may also refer to the presence of God in this mount, when the temple should be built on it, as it was, **2Ch 3:1**; and to the appearance of Christ in it, who was often seen here: some choose to render the words, "in the mount the Lord shall be seen" {n}; "God manifest in the flesh", **1Ti 3:16**, the "Immanuel", "God with us", **Mt 1:23**, who was frequently in the temple built on this mount, and often seen there in his state of humiliation on earth.

{m} hary hwhy "Dominus videbit", V. L. Montanus, Drusius, Schmidt;

"Dominus providebit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {n} hary hwhy rhb "in monte Dominus videbitur", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.

Genesis 22:15

Ver. 15. And the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time. The Angel having restrained him from slaying his son, and having provided another sacrifice, which he offered, calls to him again; having something more to say to him, which was to renew the covenant he had made with him, and confirm it by an oath.

Genesis 22:16

Ver. 16. And said, by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord,.... Which Aben Ezra observes is a great oath, and abides for ever; for because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, his own nature, perfections, and life, **Heb 6:13**; hence it appears, that the Angel that called to Abraham was a divine Person, the true Jehovah:

for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only [son]; that is, from the Lord, as in Ge 22:12; and is here repeated as being a most marvellous thing, a wonderful instance of faith in God, and fear of him, and of love and obedience to him; for, with respect to the will of Abraham, and as far as he was suffered to go, it was as much done as it was possible for him to do, and was looked upon as if actually done: yet this is not observed as meritorious of what follows; the promise of which had been made before, but is now repeated to show what notice God took of, and how well pleased he was with what had been done; and therefore renews the promise, which of his own grace and good will he had made, for the strengthening of Abraham's faith, and to encourage others to obey the Lord in whatsoever he commands them.

Genesis 22:17

Ver. 17. That in blessing I will bless thee,.... With temporal and spiritual blessings; with the Spirit and all his graces; with Christ and redemption, justification, and salvation by him; and with eternal life, as the gift of God, through him:

and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which [is] upon the sea shore: both his natural seed, descending from him in the line of Isaac, and his spiritual seed, both among Jews and Gentiles, that tread in his steps; see
Ge 13:15:

and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies: "gate" for "gates", where courts of judicature were held, and which are the security of cities and put for them, and which also include the whole country round about: so that this phrase is expressive of an entire jurisdiction and dominion over them; and was literally fulfilled in the times of Joshua, David, and Solomon; and spiritually in Christ, Abraham's principal seed, when he destroyed Satan and his principalities and powers; overcame the world; made an end of sin and abolished death; and delivered his people out the hands of all their enemies; and in all Abraham's spiritual seed, who are made more than conquerors over them, through Christ that has loved them.

Genesis 22:18

Ver. 18. And in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed,.... That is, in his one and principal seed, the Messiah, that should spring from him, **Ga 3:16**, in whom all the elect of God, of all nations under the heavens, are blessed with all spiritual blessings, with peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, with grace here and glory hereafter; See Gill on "Ge 12:3"; or, "shall bless themselves" {o} in him; or, "account themselves blessed"; apply to him for blessings, claim their interest in them, and glory in them, and make their boast of them:

because thou hast obeyed my voice; in taking his son and offering him up unto him, as much as he was permitted to do; and thus honouring God by his obedience to him, he of his grace and goodness honours him with the promise of being the father of multitudes, both in a literal and spiritual sense, and with being the ancestor of the Messiah, in whom all the blessings of grace and goodness meet.

{o} wkrbth "benedicent se", Munster; to the same purpose Vatablus, Tigurine version, Piscator.

Genesis 22:19

Ver. 19. So Abraham returned to his young men,.... He had left at a certain place with the ass, while he and Isaac went to the mount to worship; and who stayed there till he came to them, according to his order, Ge 22:5; no mention is made of Isaac, but there is no doubt that he returned with Abraham, since we hear of him afterwards in his house; for as to what the Targum of Jonathan says, it cannot be depended on, that the angels took Isaac and brought him to the school of Shem the great, and there he was three years:

and they rose up, and went together to Beersheba; that is, when Abraham and Isaac came to the place where the young men were, they got up and proceeded on in their journey along with them to Beersheba, from whence Abraham came, and where he had for some time lived:

and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba; there he continued for some time afterwards, and but for a time, for in the next chapter we hear of him at Hebron, Ge 23:2.

Genesis 22:20

Ver. 20. And it came to pass, after these things,.... Abraham's taking his son Isaac to the land of Moriah, building an altar on one of the mountains there, and laying him on it with an intention to sacrifice him, and offering of a ram in his stead, and the return of them both to Beersheba:

that it was told Abraham; by some person very probably who was lately come from those parts where the following persons lived; though Jarchi suggests this was told him by the Lord himself, and while he was thinking of taking a wife for Isaac of the daughters at Aner, or Eshcol, or Mamre; and to prevent which the following narration was given him:

saying, behold Milcah, she hath also borne children unto thy brother Nahor; as Sarah, supposed to be the same with Iscah, a daughter of Haran, had borne a son to him, and whom he had received again as from the dead; so Milcah, another daughter of Harsh, had borne children to his brother Nahor, whom he had left in Ur of the Chaldees, when he departed from thence, and who afterwards came and dwelt in Haran of Mesopotamia; see Ge 11:27.

Genesis 22:21

Ver. 21. Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother,.... The first of these gave name to the land of Uz, where Job dwelt, and who seems to be a descendant of this man, **Job 1:1**; and from whom sprung the Ausitae of Ptolemy {p}, who dwelt near Babylon and by the Euphrates. The latter, was the father of the Buzites, of which family Elihu was, that interposed between Job and his friends, Job 32:2:

and Kemuel the father of Aram; not that Aram from whom the Syrians are denominated Arameans, he was the son of Shem, Ge 10:22, but one who perhaps was so called from dwelling among them, as Jacob is, called a Syrian, De 26:5, or he had this name given him in memory and honour of the more ancient Aram: from this Kemuel might come the Camelites, of which there were two sorts mentioned by Strabo {q}, and who dwelt to the right of the river Euphrates, about three days' journey from it.

{p} Geograph. l. 5. c. 19. {q} Geograph. l. 16. p. 515.

Genesis 22:22

Ver. 22. And Chesed,.... From whom it is generally thought sprung the Chaldees, who are commonly called Chasdim; but mention is made of the Chaldees before this man was born, unless they are called so by anticipation; See Gill on "Ge 10:22":

and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel; of these men and their posterity we hear no more, excepting: the last, for whose sake the rest are mentioned. Hazo or Chazo settled in Elymais, a country belonging to Persia, where is now a city called Chuz after his name, and from whence the whole country is called Chuzistan; and the inhabitants of it are by the Assyrians called Huzoye or Huzaeans {r}; the same which Strabo {s} makes mention of under the name of Cossaeans, who are described as a warlike people, inhabiting a barren and mountainous country, and given to spoil and robbery; and are mentioned by him along with Elymaeans, Medes, and Persians. Some Arabic writers say the Persians are from Pars, the son of Pahla; and Dr. Hyde {t} queries whether Pahla is not the same with Paldas, that is, Pildash, another of the sons of Nahor.

{r} Hyde's Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers. c. 35. p. 415. {s} Geograph. l. 11. p. 359, 361. & l. 16, p. 512. {t} Ut supra, (Hyde's Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers. c. 35) p. 419.

Genesis 22:23

Ver. 23. And Bethuel begat Rebekah,.... Who was to be and was the wife of Isaac; and, for the sake of her genealogy, the above account is given, as Aben Ezra observes, and so Jarchi; and this is observed to pave the way for the history of the chapter; for no notice is taken of any other of Bethuel's children but her, not even of Laban her brother:

these eight Milcah did bear, to Nahor, Abraham's brother; this is observed, and the exact number given, as well as their names, to distinguish them from other children of Nahor he had by another woman, as follows:

Genesis 22:24

Ver. 24. And his concubine, whose name [was] Reumah,.... Not an harlot, but a secondary wife, who was under the proper and lawful wife, and a sort of a head servant in the family, and chiefly kept for the procreation of children; which was not thought either unlawful or dishonourable in those times such as was Hagar in Abraham's family:

she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah, of whom we have no account elsewhere; only it may be observed, that here Maachah is the name of a man, which sometimes is given to a woman, 1Ki 15:13.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 23

This chapter treats of the age, death, and funeral of Sarah, and the place of her interment: of her age, Ge 23:1; of her death,
Ge 23:2; of the motion Abraham made to the sons of Heth, to obtain a burial place among them, Ge 23:3; of the answer of them to him, giving him leave to bury in any of their sepulchres, Ge 23:5; of a second motion of his to them, to use their interest with Ephron the Hittite, to let him have the cave of Machpelah for the above purpose,
Ge 23:7; of Ephron's consent unto it, Ge 23:10; of the purchase Abraham made of it for four hundred shekels of silver,

Ge 23:12; and of its being secured unto him, which he interred Sarah his wife, Ge 23:17.

Ver. 1. And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old,.... This following immediately upon the account of the offering up of Isaac, led many of the Jewish writers to conclude, that Isaac was when thirty seven years of age, as he must be when Sarah his mother was one hundred and twenty seven, for he was born when she was ninety years of age; but this seems not to be observed on that account, but to give the sum of her age at her death, since it follows:

[these were] the years of the life of Sarah; who, as it is remarked by many interpreters, is the only woman the years of whose life are reckoned up in Scripture.

Genesis 23:2

Ver. 2. And Sarah died in Kirjatharba,.... Which was so called, either, as Jarchi says, from the four Anakims or giants that dwelt here, Jos 15:13; or else, as the same writer observes, from the four couple buried here, Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah; but then it must be so called by anticipation; rather, as Aben Ezra thinks, it had its name from Arba, a great man among the Anakims, and the father of Anak, Jos 14:15; though some take it to be a Tetrapolls, a city consisting of four parts; but be it as it will, here Abraham and Sarah were at the time of her death; when they removed from Beersheba hither is not said:

the same [is] Hebron, in the land of Canaan; so it was afterwards called: here Abraham and Sarah had lived many years ago, see Ge 13:18; and hither they returned, and here they ended their days and were buried:

and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her; Aben Ezra observes, that, when Sarah died, Abraham was in another place, and therefore is said to come to mourn for her; and the Targum of Jonathan is,

"and Abraham came from the mount of worship (Moriah), and found that she was dead, and he sat down to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her."

Others {u} report, that, upon hearing of the offering up of Isaac, she swooned away and died. But the meaning is, that he came from his own tent to Sarah's, see Ge 24:67, where her corpse was, to indulge his passion of grief and sorrow for her; which, in a moderate way, was lawful, and what natural affection and conjugal relation obliged him to. The Hebrews {w} observe, that, in the word for "weep", one of the letters is lesser than usual, and which they think denotes, that his weeping for her was not excessive, but little; but both phrases put together seem to denote that his sorrow was very great; and the one perhaps may refer to his private, and the other to his public mourning for her, according to the custom of those times.

{u} Pirke Eliezer, c. 32. Jarchi in loc. {w} Baal Hatturim in loc.

Genesis 23:3

Ver. 3. And Abraham stood up from before his dead,.... The corpse of Sarah, by which he sat pensive and mourning, perhaps upon the ground, as was the custom of mourners, **Job 1:13**; where having sat awhile, he rose up and went out of the tent, to provide for the funeral of his wife as became him:

and spake unto the sons of Heth; the descendants of Heth the son of Canaan, see Ge 10:15; who were at this time the inhabitants and proprietors of that part of the land where Abraham now was: saying; as follows:

Genesis 23:4

Ver. 4. I [am] a stranger and a sojourner with you,.... Not a native of the place, only dwelt as a sojourner among them for a time; but had not so much as a foot of ground he could call his own, and consequently had no place to inter his dead:

give me a possession of a buryingplace with you; not that he desired it as a free gift, but that he might be allowed to make a purchase of a piece of ground to bury his dead in; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"sell me a possession," &c.

Ge 23:9; and this he was the rather desirous of, not only because it was according to the rules of humanity, and the general custom of all nations, to provide for the burial of their dead; but he was willing to have such a place in the land of Canaan for this purpose, to strengthen his faith and the faith of his posterity, and to animate their hope and expectation of being one day put into the possession of it; hence the patriarchs in later times, as Jacob and Joseph, were desirous of having their hones laid there:

that I may bury my dead out of my sight; for, though Sarah was a very lovely person in her life, and greatly desirable by Abraham, yet death had changed her countenance and was turning her into corruption, which rendered her unpleasant, and began to make her loathsome; so that there was a necessity of removing her out of his sight, who before had been so very agreeable to him; and this is the case of the dearest relation and friend at death.

Genesis 23:5

Ver. 5. And the children of Heth answered Abraham,.... In a very civil and respectful manner:

saying unto him, as follows:

Genesis 23:6

Ver. 6. Hear us, my lord,.... One of them spake in the name of the rest, who calls Abraham not "our lord", but "my lord"; addressing him very honourably, and desires he would hear what he had to say on the behalf of others with himself; "hear us", representing not the body of the common people, but the princes among them, the heads of their families:

thou [art] a mighty prince amongst us; though he was pleased to call himself a stranger and a sojourner, yet they had an high opinion of him, as a person of great wealth and substance, and of great power and authority; and who lived like a prince, and was a potent one, having a large train of servants under him: or, "a prince of God" {x}, as it may be rendered; one raised up to grandeur and dignity by him; with whom he was, find in whose sight he had favour, and was very grateful and acceptable; and by whom he was highly honoured, and had in great esteem as a friend of his:

in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; as they had many, every family a distinct sepulchre for itself, they made offer of them to him, to bury his dead in the choicest of them, the most grand and magnificent, or in which of them soever he pleased; which was very kind, generous, and respectful:

none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead; there is not a man among us but what has such a regard for thee, that he will not deny thee the use of his sepulchre to bury thy dead in; and therefore need not scruple to make use of any that may be judged most proper and convenient: no doubt the speaker full well knew the mind of those in whose name he addressed Abraham.

{x} Myhla ayvn "princeps Dei", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus, Drusius, Schmidt, &c.

Genesis 23:7

Ver. 7. And Abraham stood up,.... For, having made his speech to the children of Heth, he sat down waiting for an answer; or rather perhaps they obliged him to sit down, out of reverence to so great a personage; and when they had done speaking, he rose up:

and bowed himself to the people of the land; the principal of them, in token of the grateful sense he had of the honour they had done him, and of the great civility with which they had used him:

[even] to the children of Heth; this seems to be added to distinguish them from the common people, and as an explanation of the preceding clause; See Gill on "Ge 23:3".

Genesis 23:8

Ver. 8. And he communed with them,.... Entered into a discourse and conversation with them upon the above subject:

saying, if it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; that is, in some place belonging to them, otherwise they could have no objection to the burying of his wife anywhere else: if now what they had said were not spoken in a complaisant way, but it was their real mind and will, and they were sincere and hearty in it, and very desirous of obliging him with a place among them for the interment of his dead; then he had this favour to ask of them:

hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar; a principal man among the Hittites, who had a field and a cave in it, near where Abraham dwelt, and very convenient for him, and for this purpose of his now under consideration: this man seems to be present at this time, as appears from Ge 23:10; but Abraham did not think fit to address him himself, lest he should not so well and so easily succeed; and therefore entreats the princes of Heth to unite in a request to Ephron for the favour after mentioned, which he supposed they would not be backward to, if they were hearty in this affair; and, if Ephron was present, as he seems to be, it was a very handsome, honourable, and modest address to him through his brethren, which he could not with any politeness well withstand. The request follows:

Genesis 23:9

Ver. 9. That he may, give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which [is] in the end of his field,.... The Targum of Jonathan renders it, "the double cave", and so do the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; and, according to Aben Ezra and Ben Melech, it was so called because there was a cave within a cave in it; and, as Jarchi thinks, because it was a house and chamber over it {y} or, as he adds, because it was fit for couples, for two corpses to be laid in it; and the Jews say {z}, here Adam and Eve were buried, which made Abraham so desirous of having it for a buryingplace: but it seems rather to be the proper name of a place, and indeed of a tract of land, in which the field and the cave in the corner of it lay, and which all belonged to Ephron; for both the field and the cave in it are distinguished from Machpelah, in which they were, and that from them, Ge 23:17; and it is highly probable, that this cave was never made use of before for such a purpose as it was now sought for, since Abraham did not think fit to accept of the offer made him of any of their sepulchres; and chose rather that his dead should not lie with them, but in a separate place, though among them, they being Heathens and idolaters, and unacquainted with the resurrection of the dead, and would have no part in the first resurrection, which Abraham believed and hoped for;

for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me, for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you; or, "for full money" {a}, that which is full weight, for money was paid by weight in those times, as appears from Ge 23:16; or for the full price and value of it: for, as Abraham did not desire to have it as a free gift, so neither at an under price; he was very willing to give the full worth of it; he did not ask it with any covetous view, or to encroach upon them.

{y} So in T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 53. 1. {z} Pirke Eliezer, c. 20. & 36. {a} alm Pokb "in vel pro argento pieno", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt.

Genesis 23:10

Ver. 10. And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth,.... Or "sat" {b} among them, in the present assembly of them; and, according to Jarchi, as their president for the time on this occasion; but if so, Abraham would have directed his speech to him: however, he was upon the spot, as appears from what follows,

and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth; he rose up in the assembly upon the mention of his name, and in the hearing of the rest of the princes gave an answer himself to Abraham's request:

[even] of all that went in at the gates of his city; the city of Kirjatharba, afterwards called Hebron, Ge 23:2, where he was born, or however where he now lived; and perhaps it, or the greater part of it, was his possession and property: it was now at one of the gates of this city, where the assembly of the princes was held; it being usual to hold assemblies on any business, or courts of judicature, in such places, they being public, where multitudes resorted, or were continually passing and repassing, and so had the opportunity of hearing, and of being witnesses:

saying; as follows:

{b} bvy, ekayhto Sept. "sedens", Montanus; "sedebat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Schmidt.

Genesis 23:11

Ver. 11. Nay, my lord, hear me,.... Or not so, my lord, as Aben Ezra paraphrases it; not that he denied his request entirely, or refused him the cave at any rate, but that he should not buy it of him, he would give it to him, and therefore he desires he would hear what he had to say further:

the field give I thee, and the cave that [is] therein I give it thee; which was more than Abraham asked to purchase; he only desired to have the cave, which lay in one corner of the field, but Ephron proposes both to give him the cave, and the field also:

in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee; both field and cave; three times he says, "I give it thee", to show that he freely gave it, and that Abraham was welcome to it, and for the confirmation of the grant:

bury thy dead; in the cave, at once, immediately, without any more ado.

Genesis 23:12

Ver. 12. And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. Showing hereby great respect, and giving much honour both to them and Ephron; and signifying that he had something to say, and desired audience of them, and humbly submitted to them what he should say.

Genesis 23:13

Ver. 13. And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land,.... He addressed himself to Ephron who spoke last, with an audible voice, so that all could hear him:

saying, but if thou [wilt give it], I pray thee, hear me; the words are very concise, and in the original text are only "if thou", and differently supplied; by some, "if thou art he" {c}, Ephron, whom it is supposed Abraham knew not by face, or that he was present; which is not likely, since Abraham had lived in those parts now so as to be well known himself, and must know his neighbours; and had lived formerly here, and could not but know so great a prince as Ephron, whose city he dwelt in. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"if thou art willing to do me a kindness, hear me;"

it will be taken as a favour to admit me to speak once more, and to grant what shall be desired. Others read the words thus,

"if thou wilt hear me, or I pray thee hear me, or if thou, if (I say) thou wilt hear me {d}:"

then follows his proposal,

I will give thee the money for the field; Abraham did not choose to receive it as a free gift, but to make a purchase of it, that it might be sure to him and his posterity; for though Ephron was now in this generous mood, he might change his mind, or hereafter upbraid Abraham with it, should he fall out with him, or his posterity might claim it again, and dispute his right to it:

take [it] of me: the purchase money, the full worth of the field:

and I will bury my dead there, or "then will I bury", &c. {e}; and not before.

{c} hta Ma "si tu is es", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth. {d} "Auscultares", so Tigurine version; "si tu", Schmidt. {e} hrbqaz "et tum sepeliam", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "tunc", Schmidt.

Genesis 23:14

Ver. 14. And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him. The following words:

Genesis 23:15

Ver. 15. My lord, hearken unto me,.... Since it is your mind to buy the field, and not receive it as a gift, then hear what I have to say as to the value of it:

the land [is worth] four hundred shekels of silver; which, reckoning a shekel at two shillings and sixpence, comes to fifty pounds of our money;

what [is] that betwixt thee and me? between two persons so rich, the sum was trifling and inconsiderable, whether the one paid it, and the other received it, or not; or between two such friends it was not worth speaking of, it was no matter whether it was paid or not: or else the sense is, between us both it is honestly worth so much; it is a good bargain, and must be owned to be so, what is it? the sum is so small, and it is so clearly the worth of it, that there needs no more to be said about it:

bury therefore thy dead: in it, and give thyself no more trouble and concern about it.

Genesis 23:16

Ver. 16. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron,.... He agreed at once to give him the sum proposed, judging it to be a moderate price between man and man, and he was satisfied with it, and well content to pay him the money:

and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver: for in those times money had no mark or stamp upon it to show its value, and therefore was not told by pieces, but weighed, by which its full worth was known; and that Ephron might have his whole and just demand, the silver was weighed to him:

which he had named, in the audience of the sons of Heth; who were witnesses of the bargain, of the price set by Ephron, and of the payment of it by Abraham:

four hundred shekels of silver: the sum before mentioned,
Ge 23:15:

current [money] with the merchant; such as was used by merchants in buying and selling; such as they would receive, who knew the value of it, and were careful not to take any that was bad; wherefore such as would pass, with them would go anywhere, was current money; how all this is consistent with what Stephen says; See Gill on "Ac 7:16".

Genesis 23:17

Ver. 17. And the field of Ephron, which [was] in Machpelah,.... This clearly shows that Machpelah is the proper name of a place or tract of ground, and not an appellative, or to be rendered the double cave, since a field could never be said to be in a cave: and yet some have been so stupid, as Vatablus observes, as to render the words,

"the field of Ephron, which was in the double cave,"

whereas, on the contrary, the cave was in that field; and so the Vulgate version, to better sense, though not agreeably to the Hebrew text,

"the field of Ephron, in which was the double cave:"

which [was] before Mamre; or over against it, the place where Abraham dwelt, which was in Hebron, Ge 13:18;

the field, and the cave which [was] therein, and all the trees that [were] in the field, that [were] in all the borders round about, were made sure; or "rose", or "stood up" {f}. Jarchi thinks the reason of this phrase, or way of speaking, is, because this field, with all belonging to it, came into the hands of a greater person; out of the hands of a private man into the hands of a king; and so Abraham indeed is called by some Heathen writers {g}; but Aben Ezra and Ben Melech much better interpret it,

"it was confirmed and stood;"

that is, it was ensured to him, and remained with him, even that, and all upon it and in it, throughout the whole circumference of it.

{f} Mqy Heb. "surrexit", Munster, Vatablus, Piscator; "stetit", Montanus, Schmidt. {g} Nicolaus Damascenus apud Euseb. Praepar. l. 9. c. 6. p. 417. Justin. e Trogo, l. 38. c. 2.

Genesis 23:18

Ver. 18. Unto Abraham for a possession,.... To be enjoyed by him and his for ever, as his own property, being purchased by his money:

in the presence of the children of Heth; they being witnesses of the bargain, and of the payment of the money by Abraham, and of the surrender of the field unto him, for his own use:

before all that went in at the gates of his city; not of Abraham's city, for he had none, but of Ephron's city, which was Hebron, see Ge 23:10; these are either the same with the children of Heth, and so the clause is added by way of explanation, and including all the inhabitants of the place; or else different from them, they intending the princes of the people that composed the assembly Abraham addressed, and these the common people, the inhabitants of the place. Aben Ezra takes them to be the travellers that passed and repassed through the gates of the city: however, the design of the expression is to show in what a public manner this affair was transacted, and that the field was made as firm and as sure to Abraham as it could well be, no writings on such occasion being used so early.

Genesis 23:19

Ver. 19. And after this,.... After this affair was over, the bargain struck, the money paid, and possession secured:

Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre; and here he himself was buried, and also Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah, Ge 25:9. Benjamin of Tudela {h} says, in his time (who lived in the latter end of the twelfth century), in the field of Machpelah was a city or town, and in it a large temple called Saint Abraham, where were shown the sepulchres of the six persons before mentioned, and inscriptions over each of them, showing whose they were; and that at the end of the field was the house of Abraham, and before the house a fountain, and no other was suffered to be built there in honour to Abraham:

the same [is] Hebron in the land of Canaan; that is, Mamre is the same place which afterwards was called Hebron, a city in the land of Canaan, in the tribe of Judah, about twenty two miles from Jerusalem to the south, and was one of the cities of refuge. Hebron has the title of Hhaleah, i.e. the chosen or beloved, among the Arabs, where the (Maggarel Mamra) cave of Mamre or Machpelah is still shown, and is always lighted up with lamps, and held in extraordinary veneration by the Mahometans {i}.

{h} Itinerarium, p. 48, 49. {i} Shaw's Travels, p. 339. Marg. Ed. 2.

Genesis 23:20

Ver. 20. And the field, and the cave that is therein, was made sure to Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace, by the sons of Heth. Who were witnesses of the transaction between Abraham and Ephron; and this was further made sure by Sarah's being buried in it, which was taking possession of it, for the use for which it was bought; and was a pledge and earnest of the future possession of the land of Canaan by the seed of Abraham: this was the first piece of ground in it possessed by Abraham and his seed; and it being called the possession of a buryingplace, shows that there is no contradiction between this and what Stephen says, **Ac 7:5**; he had a possession to bury in, but not to live upon; not any ground of his own to till and sow, or build upon.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 24

This chapter shows Abraham's concern to get a suitable wife for his son Isaac, for which purpose he commits the affair into the hands of his eldest servant, and makes him swear that he will not take one from among the Canaanites, but out of his own country, and from among his own kindred, Ge 24:1; which his servant agreed to, after having the nature of his charge, and of the oath, explained to him, Ge 24:5; upon which he departed to Mesopotamia, and coming to the city of Nahor, and to a well near it, he prayed for success, and desired direction by a token, which was granted him, Ge 24:10; and inquiring of the damsel, who answered to the token, whose daughter she was, and whether they had room for him and his in their house; and an agreeable answer being returned, he gave thanks to God that had directed him, and had so far made his journey prosperous, Ge 24:23; the damsel acquainting her parents whom and what she met with at the well, a brother of her steps out, and invites the servant in, and makes him welcome, Ge 24:28; but before he would eat anything, he tells his errand he was come upon, at the instance of his master; how, he had prayed for direction, and was heard, and for which he had given thanks, Ge 24:34; and then treats with the relations of the damsel about her marriage to his master's son, to which they agreed, Ge 24:49; and after having blessed God, and given his presents he brought with him to the damsel, and her family, and ate and drank with them, was for departing the next morning, Ge 24:52; but the friends of the damsel being desirous of her stay with them some few days, and he urgent to be gone, the affair was referred to her, and she agreed to go with him directly, Ge 24:55; upon which they dismissed her with their blessing, Ge 24:59; who being met by Isaac in the way, was received and introduced into his mother's tent, and married by him, Ge 24:61.

Ver. 1. And Abraham was old, [and] well stricken in age,.... Being now one hundred and forty years of age, for as he was an hundred years old when Isaac was born, and Isaac was forty years of age when he married Rebekah, which was at this time, Abraham must be of the age mentioned, see Ge 21:5;

and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things; with all kind of blessings, with temporal and spiritual blessings; the former seems chiefly designed here, because of what follows; God had blessed him, as Aben Ezra observes, with long life, and riches, and honour, and children, things desirable by men.

Genesis 24:2

Ver. 2. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house,.... To Eliezer his servant, according to the Targum of Jonathan, and as is generally thought; and who may well be called an old servant, and his oldest servant, since he must have lived with him fifty years and upwards; one may trace him near sixty years in Abraham's family, and it is highly probable he lived much longer; he was his servant when he had the vision between the pieces, Ge 15:2; and then he was the steward of his house, and bid fair to be his heir; which was some time before Hagar was given to Abraham; and Ishmael his son by Hagar was fourteen years of age when Isaac was born, and he was now forty years old, which make fifty five years, or thereabout. Bishop Usher places the vision of the pieces in A. M. 2092, and the marriage of Isaac in 2148, some fifty six years from each other; and so long Eliezer, if he is the servant here meant, must have been in Abraham's family, and how much longer cannot with certainty be said:

that ruled over all that he had; had the care and management of his house, and the affairs of it under him; this agrees with the character of Eliezer in Ge 15:2:

put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: as a token of his subjection to him as a servant, and of his readiness, willingness, and fidelity to execute any commands he should lay upon him, and in order to take an oath, as appears by what follows; for it seems this rite was used in swearing, and is still used in India, as Aben Ezra affirms; and some say among the Ethiopians. The Jewish writers are pretty much of opinion that respect is had to the covenant of circumcision, by which Abraham made his servant to swear, which is not likely: rather respect is had to his seed, the promised Messiah, that should spring from his thigh, by whom the adjuration was made, as follows: though Dr. Clayton {k} thinks this is no other than an equivalent term for approaching in an humble servile manner, and means no more than "come near me", and I will make thee swear; and that, as a respectable method of approach with the Egyptian, as Herodotus {l} relates, was by bowing the body reciprocally when they met, and saluted one another, and by carrying their hands to each other's knee; so some such like ceremony as embracing the knee, and putting the hand under or round the thigh, might be used by servants when they approached their masters; but it should be observed, that this same rite or ceremony was required of Joseph, governor of Egypt, by his father Jacob; see Ge 47:29.

{k} Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 130, 131. {l} Euterpe sive, l. 2.

Genesis 24:3

Ver. 3. And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of earth,.... The Maker and possessor of heaven and earth, by whom Abraham used to swear whenever he did, and by whom only men should swear, see Ge 14:22. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"I will make thee swear by the name of the Word of the Lord God,"

which strengthens the sense given of the rite before observed:

that thou wilt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; these being not only idolaters, and very wicked people, degenerated yet more and more, but were the seed of the accursed Canaan; and who in process of time would be dispossessed of the land, and be destroyed. Now though Isaac was forty years of age, and one would think at an age sufficient to have chosen a wife for himself; but as Abraham knew that he had a great respect for this servant, and would be influenced by him in such a choice, and especially as this affair was now about to be committed to his care, and no doubt with the consent of Isaac, therefore he thus charges and adjures him.

Genesis 24:4

Ver. 4. But thou shalt go unto my country,.... Not Canaan, which though his by promise, yet not in possession, but Mesopotamia, as appears from Ge 24:10; which taken largely included the Chaldea, see **Ac 7:2**, the country where Abraham was born, and from whence he came:

and to my kindred; the family of Nahor his brother, which now dwelt at Haran in Mesopotamia, called the city of Nahor, Ge 24:10; see Ge 29:4; of the increase of whose family Abraham had heard a few years ago, Ge 22:20:

and take a wife to my son Isaac; from among them, who though they were not clear of superstition and idolatry, yet they worshipped the true God with their "idols"; and a woman taken out of such a family, and removed at a distance from it, it might be reasonably concluded would be brought off of those things, and adhere to the pure and undefiled religion; and the rather this family was chosen, not only because related to Abraham, but because it had sprung from Shem, who was blessed of God, and whose God the Lord was; nearness of kin was no objection and hinderance to such a marriage, the laws relating to marriage not being given till the time of Moses.

Genesis 24:5

Ver. 5. And the servant said unto him,.... Before he would take the oath, being cautious of it, and desirous of knowing how far it reached, and what it would or would not oblige him to, which was prudently done:

peradventure the woman will not be to follow me into this land; supposing this should be the case, as it is not unlikely that the woman would object to coming along with him to the land of Canaan, and insist upon Isaac's coming into her country, and dwelling there, what must then be done?

must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? that is, must I agree with the woman on these terms, and promise that Isaac shall come and dwell with her in Mesopotamia? Now there was good reason for the servant's putting this question, since he was neither ignorant of the call of Abraham out of that laud, no more to return to it, nor of the promise of the land of Canaan to him and his posterity: and as for bringing Isaac "again", where he never had been in person, this may be accounted for by his being in the loins of Abraham when he was there, and came from thence, as Levi is said to be in his loins when he paid tithes to Melchizedek, and to pay them in him, **Heb 7:9**; and in like manner he might be said to be brought again, or return to Abraham's country, should he ever go there, as all the seed of Abraham are said in the fourth generation to come to Canaan again, though they had none of them been in person there before, Ge 15:16; besides, as Drusius observes, to bring again, or return, signifies sometimes only to bring on, or to go to some certain place, see **Ru 1:10**; however, the justness of the expression is confirmed by Abraham's answer in the next words.

Genesis 24:6

Ver. 6. And Abraham said unto him,.... Not blaming him for putting such a question, nor charging him with impertinence, but plainly seeing the propriety of it: and in order to clear up this matter to him, gives the following instructions,

beware thou, that thou bring not my son thither again; for the command to come out of the land of Chaldea, never to return more, and to come into the land of Canaan, and there abide, respected both Abraham and his posterity; and besides, it was dangerous for Isaac to go into a family, where, though there was some knowledge of the true God, yet there was much superstition and idolatry in it, as appears by various hints in the sequel of this history, lest he should be corrupted, and degenerate from the true religion.

Genesis 24:7

Ver. 7. The Lord God of heaven, which took from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred,.... Jarchi distinguishes between his father's house, and the land of his kindred; the former he takes to be Haran, in which he seems to be right; for his father and his family came with him from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran, and there stayed, from whence Abraham was taken and separated from them; by the latter he understands Ur of the Chaldees, interpreting the phrase of the land in which he was born, as Onkelos and Jonathan, and the Septuagint version render it: but the same is meant as before, for Haran was the land of his kindred, where Terah his father died, and Nahor his brother and family lived; from whence he was taken and removed into the land of Canaan, by the call, direction, and providence of the Lord God, who made the heavens, and dwells therein:

which spake unto me, and that swore unto me; made a promise to him, and confirmed it with an oath, Ge 15:18:

saying, unto thy seed will I give this land; the land of Canaan; and therefore his son, in whom his seed was to be called, must not be removed from hence, and settled in another country:

he shall send his angel before thee; Aben Ezra takes this to be a prayer or wish, "may he send his angel before thee"; for if it was a prophecy, he adds, why did he say "if the woman will not be willing?" but from Ge 24:10; and from what follows, that the servant should take a wife to his son from thence, and the encouragement he had for his faith in it, and from what God bad done for him, and said unto him, it seems as if he was fully assured in his own mind of the event: this angel may be either understood of a created angel, such being frequently made use of in the affairs of Providence, directing and succeeding men, or of the uncreated Angel, the Son of God, since the servant attributes his direction and success wholly to the Lord.

Genesis 24:8

Ver. 8. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee,.... Or "but" if {m}, which is said by Abraham, not as doubting she would be willing, of which he was satisfied, being persuaded that that God that had made him willing to leave his own country, and his father's house, would make her willing to do the like, and come and settle with his son in the land that God had given him; but this, and what follows, he said to make the mind of his servant easy, who had some doubt about it, or however was desirous of knowing how he must act should that be the case; and what it was he was to take an oath to do, and how far, and how far not, that would oblige him:

then thou shalt be clear from this my oath; which he enjoined his servant to take; the sense is, when he had done all he could to get the consent of the damsel, and her friends, to go with him and marry his master's son; and after all she could not be prevailed upon to come with him, then he was free from his oath, having done all that that obliged him to, and he not attempting to take one from any other quarter:

only bring not my son thither again; neither agree with the damsel and her parents, that he shall come to them, nor persuade him to comply with such terms.

{m} Maw "sin autem", V. L.

Genesis 24:9

Ver. 9. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master,.... Or "then" or "therefore the servant", &c. {n} being satisfied of the nature and extent of his oath, and thoroughly understanding how he was to act upon it, readily took it by using this rite, See Gill on "Ge 24:2";

and sware to him concerning that matter; of taking a wife to his son, engaging to do everything he had directed and enjoined him relative to it.

{n} Mvyw "posuit ergo", V. L. "igitur", Tigurine version; "itaque", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ita", Drusius; "tum", Schmidt.

Genesis 24:10

Ver. 10. And the servant took ten camels, of the camels of his master, and departed,.... Camels were much in use in the eastern countries; where, as Pliny {o} says, they were brought up among their herds of cattle, and their riches much consisted in them. Arabia abounded with them; Job had three thousand of them, **Job 1:3**; how many Abraham had is not said, only ten of them his servant took, being sufficient for his present purpose, and which he took with his master's leave, and by his order. These creatures are very strong and fit for carrying great burdens, even a thousand pound weight, as is affirmed; and for riding, especially such as have two humps on their backs, for some have but one; and for long journeys, being very swift, and will travel without water many days, and so very proper to take on such journeys in hot and desert countries, See Gill on "Le 11:4";

for all the goods of his master [were] in his hand; which agrees with what is before said, that he was the steward of his house, and ruled over all that he had; this in our version, and others, is put in a parenthesis, and given as a reason why the servant took, as it may seem of himself, so many camels as he did, and then set forward on his journey: though it may be rendered, "and of all the goods of his master in his hand"; that is, he took some of the choicest and most valuable things his master had, and carried them along with him as presents to the damsel and her friends; to which sense the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions interpret the words, as well as some others, and which may receive confirmation from Ge 24:22, Jarchi thinks that Abraham's servant carried a schedule of all his master's goods and substance, which he had under his hand given to his son, whereby it would appear how rich he was, and how good a match Isaac would be to the woman, and which might the more incline her and her friends to listen to the proposal. Other Jewish writers {p} say, it was his testament or will that he carried:

and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia; or Aram Naharaim, Syria of the rivers, which lay between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates, called therefore by the Greeks Mesopotamia; the three Targums render it Aram or Syria, which is by Euphrates:

unto the city of Nahor; this was the brother of Abraham, and his city was Haran, whither he came, either with his father, or with Abraham, out of Ur of the Chaldees, or followed them thither, and where he and his family stayed and settled. From Hebron, where Abraham now was, to Haran, is reckoned a journey of seventeen days; the distance between them, according to Ptolemy, as Drusius observes, were eight degrees, which make one hundred and twenty German miles; the journey Abraham's servant took is computed to be four hundred and sixty eight miles {q}.

{o} Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 18. {p} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 59. fol. 52. 2. {q} Bunting's Travels, p. 69.

Genesis 24:11

Ver. 11. And he made his camels to kneel down,.... Which these creatures are used to do when they are loaded and unloaded, and also when they take rest, and it was for the sake of the latter they were now made to kneel. It seems that this is what is not natural to them, but what they are learned to do: it is said {r},

"as soon as a camel is born they tie his four feet under his belly, put a carpet over his back, and stones upon the borders of it, that he may not be able to rise for twenty days together; thus they teach him the habit of bending his knees to rest himself, or when he is to be loaded or unloaded."

This was done

without the city; the city of Nahor, Haran, near to which the servant was now come: and it was

by a well of water: which place was chosen for the refreshment of his camels, as well as of himself and his men. Rauwolff {s} says, that near Haran, now called Orpha,

"there is a plentiful well still to this day (1575), called Abraham's well, the water of which hath a more whitish troubledness than others. I have (says he) drank of it several times, out of the conduit that runs from thence into the middle the great camp, and it hath a peculiar pleasantness, and a pleasant sweetness in its taste."

The time of Abraham's servant coming hither was

at the time of the evening, [even] the time that women go out to draw [water]; which was the custom for women to do, for the necessary uses of their families; as it was especially in the eastern countries: and the Arabian women to this time, after they have been hard at work all day, weaving, or grinding, or making bread, at evening they set out with a pitcher or a goat's skin, and, tying their sucking children behind them, trudge it in this manner two or three miles to fetch water {t}.

{r} Calmet's Dictionary in the word "Camel". {s} Travels, par. 2. ch. 10. p. 177. Ed. Ray. {t} Shaw's Travels, p. 241. Ed. 2.

Genesis 24:12

Ver. 12. And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham,.... He does not call the Lord his God, though no doubt he was, since he appears throughout the whole to be a good man; but the God of Abraham, because God had often manifested and renewed his covenant with Abraham in an eminent manner, and had bestowed many favours upon him, and admitted him to much nearness and communion with him; and it was not on his own account, but on his master's business he now was:

I pray thee, send me good speed this day; or "cause [something] to happen before me this day" {u}; some extraordinary event, which depends not upon the will, or skill, or contrivance of men, but upon the pleasure of God; and which, with respect to second causes, men call hap or chance, but with respect to God, is according to his determinate counsel and will. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"prepare now a decent wife before me this day."

But the servant's meaning is, that something might turn up in providence that would lead on to such an event:

and shew kindness unto my master Abraham; which he would be ready to acknowledge as a favour, an instance of kindness and mercy, and not merit.

{u} ynpl an hrqh "occurere fae nune coram me", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so Junius & Tremellius, Schmidt, Ainsworth.

Genesis 24:13

Ver. 13. Behold, I stand [here] by the well of water,.... Wishing, hoping, and expecting that something would turn out that would direct and instruct what further to do, and that would lead on to the business he came about:

and the daughters of the men of the city came out to draw water; which was the usual custom in those parts about that time. So Homer speaks {w} of meeting a girl before the city udreuoush, drawing or fetching water. And this was a principal reason why Abraham's servant stopped at the well, not only to refresh himself, his men, and his cattle, but in hopes he should meet with the damsel there he was come for; or at least should hear of her, or meet with some one or another that would direct him to her; or something would fall out there that would be a means in Providence of bringing about what he was sent to do.

{w} Odyss. 10. ver. 109.

Genesis 24:14

Ver. 14. And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink,.... The pitcher of water she should have upon her shoulder, after she had drawn it out of the well:

and she shall say, drink, and I will give thy camels drink also; not only very readily and courteously invite him to drink himself but also propose to draw water for his camels too:

[let the same be] she [that] thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; to be his wife; he desired this might be the token by which he might know who the person was God had appointed, and whom he approved of as a proper wife for Isaac, and whom he pointed at in his Providence most clearly to be the person he had designed for him; and this was a very agreeable sign and token; for hereby he would know that she was a careful and industrious person, willing to set her hand to business when necessary; that she was humane and courteous to strangers; humble and condescending, and willing to do the meanest offices for the good of others; and such a wife as this he sought for, and knew would be a good one, and greatly acceptable to his master and to his son:

and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness to my master; by directing to so good a wife for his son, and prospering the journey of his servant according to his wishes.

Genesis 24:15

Ver. 15. And it came to pass, before he had done speaking,.... In his heart, Ge 24:45; for his prayer was mental; while the last words were dropping from him, that very moment, as the Targum of Jonathan; so soon were his prayers heard and answered, Isa 65:24;

that behold Rebekah came out; out of Haran, the city of Nahor:

who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother; a daughter of Bethuel, which Bethuel was the eighth and last son of Milcah, and who was the daughter of Haran and the wife of Nahor, both brothers to Abraham: this is the genealogy of Rebekah, and for the sake of her is the account of Nahor's family given, Ge 22:20:

with her pitcher upon her shoulder; to fetch water from the well for the use of the family; which, though the daughter of a wealthy person, she did not disdain to do; an instance of diligence and humility this.

Genesis 24:16

Ver. 16. And the damsel [was] very fair to look upon,.... Of a good countenance and beautiful aspect: a virgin,

neither had any man known her; not only was reckoned a virgin, but was really one, pure and incorrupt:

and she went down to the well and filled her pitcher, and came up; by which it appears the well lay low, there was a descent unto it, and an ascent from it. Rebekah was very diligent and speedy in doing her work, she did not stay to look at strangers, or hold an idle conversation with other damsels that came thither on the same account; but, having filled her pitcher, was making the best of her way home.

Genesis 24:17

Ver. 17. And the servant ran to meet her,.... He did not stop her as she went to the well, but stayed till she had been there and filled her pitcher, and then he made all the haste he could to meet her, in order to have the sign and token answered he had requested, which could not be done until she returned:

and said, let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher; or taste a little of it, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; or suffer me to swallow a little of it; for it was not so much to quench his thirst that he asked for this, for he could have got, and perhaps had had water out of the well before this time, or however could easily have supplied himself; but this was done to try whether she was the person, and whether her conduct and carriage would answer the token. Josephus {x} says, he asked other virgins and they refused him, for which churlishness Rebekah rebuked them, and gave him water liberally.

{x} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 16. sect. 2.

Genesis 24:18

Ver. 18. And she said, drink, my lord,.... Signifying at once that he was welcome to drink what he would, giving him a very honourable title, observing that he had a pretty large retinue with him of men and camels; so that she took him for some considerable personage:

and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand; from off her shoulder, and let it rest upon her hand or arm:

and gave him drink; let him drink what he would of it.

Genesis 24:19

Ver. 19. And when she had done giving him drink,.... Whatever he pleased to have:

she said, I will draw [water] for thy camels also, until they have done drinking; she proposed to go back to the well, and did, and fill her pitcher, and repeat it as often as was necessary, until the camels had enough; and this now was the sign or token the servant had desired might be, by which he would know who was the person intended for the wife of his master's son; and this was granted him, which shows that it was not a rash and ill thing which he asked, but what was agreeable to the will of God, and to which he was directed by an impulse of his.

Genesis 24:20

Ver. 20. And she hasted and emptied her pitcher into the trough,.... The place out of which cattle drank water, being put there for that purpose, which was of wood or of stones made hollow; into this Rebekah poured out what was left in her pitcher after the servant had drank:

and ran again to the well to draw [water]; and which must be repeated several times to have enough for all the camels, for it follows:

and drew for all his camels; and there were ten of them; and these, being thirsty after so long a journey, required a great deal of water to satisfy them; therefore Rebekah must take a vast deal of pains and labour to draw water for them all until they had enough.

Genesis 24:21

Ver. 21. And the man wondering at her,.... At her affability and courteousness to a stranger; at her humility and condescension to take upon her such a service; at her readiness, diligence, and laboriousness in it; and the quick dispatch she made; and at her expressions and conduct being so exactly agreeable to the token he desired to have; and at the providence of God in bringing him to this place so seasonably; and at the damsel, that she should come just at this time, and every way answer his expectations and desires:

held his peace, to wit; or to know, to think and consider further with himself,

whether, or "if"

the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not; or if not; he was musing and saying within himself, surely God had made his journey prosperous; or if not, how was it that such strange surprising circumstances should occur? or what else must be done by him? or what methods must be taken for the future.

Genesis 24:22

Ver. 22. And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking,.... Having had enough to abate their thirst and satisfy them, by means of Rebekah's drawing water for them:

that the man took a golden earring; out of his pocket, or out of a box or parcel that was upon the camels; it is in the margin of our Bibles, "a jewel for the forehead"; or, as some render it, a "nose jewel" {y}; and so in Ge 24:47, "an earring upon her face", or "nose"; and this was a jewel that hung from the forehead upon a lace or ribbon between the eyes down upon the nose; and such the daughters of Sion wore in later times, **Isa 3:21**; see Eze 16:12; and nose jewels are still in use with the Levant Arabs, as Dr. Shaw {z} relates. Rauwolff {a}, who travelled through Mesopotamia and the parts adjacent in 1574, says of the women in those parts that are of greater substance, and have a mind to be richer and finer in their dress, that they wear silver and gold rings in one of their nostrils, wherein are set garnets, turquoise, rubies, and pearls: and in Egypt they wear nose jewels {b} and small gold rings in their right nostrils, with a piece of coral set in them {c} and this earring or jewel was

of half a shekel weight; which was eighty barley corns, for a whole shekel weighed one hundred and sixty. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"the weight of a drachma, which was the half of a didrachma or common shekel:"

and two bracelets for her hands, of ten [shekels] weight of gold; a shekel of gold, according to Calmet {d}, was worth eighteen shillings and three pence of English money, so that ten of them amount to nine pounds two shillings and six pence; according to Waserus {e}, these made twenty Hungarian pieces of gold, which were worth upwards of ninety pounds of Swiss money. A handsome present this was, and suitable to a virgin. Jarchi and Jonathan allegorize the two bracelets of the two tables of the law, and the ten shekels of the ten commands on them.

{y} Mzn "imponeret naso ejus monile aureum", Junius & Tremellius. {z} Travels, p. 241. Ed. 2. {a} Travels, par. 2. ch. 5. p. 128, 129. {b} Pitts's Account of Mahometanism, p. 68. {c} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 2.

p. 85. {d} Dictionary, in the word "Shekel". {e} De Antiqu. numis, Heb. l. 2. c. 10.

Genesis 24:23

Ver. 23. And said,.... After he had given her the earring and the bracelets, he put the following question, according to Jarchi, and so our version seems to intimate the same; but, as it is related in
Ge 24:47; the question was put before those were given, therefore some render the words, "and he had said", or, "and after he had said" {f}, namely, what follows; though, as Schmidt observes, the matter is easily reconciled, and both accounts stand clear and plain, if it be only remarked, that he took out the earring and bracelets before he put the question, but it was after it that he gave her them, or put them upon her:

whose daughter [art] thou? the reason of this question is, because by her answer to it he would know whether she was of the family related to Abraham or not; from whom only, according to his oath, he was to take a wife for Isaac, and which would in a good measure satisfy him as to what he had been musing about, whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not:

tell me, I pray thee, is there room [in] thy father's house for us to lodge in? by her answer to this he would know whether her family was wealthy, and so fit to be in connection with his master's; and besides, if she appeared to be the person he hoped she was, he was desirous of lodging in her father's house, that he might have the better opportunity of managing the affair he was come about.

{f} rmayw "et dixerat", Drusius; "postquam dixisset", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Genesis 24:24

Ver. 24. And she said unto him, I [am] the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah,.... Which Milcah was the daughter of Haran, Abraham's elder brother, and, as thought by many, sister to Sarah, Abraham's wife, see
Ge 11:29:

which she bare unto Nahor; Abraham's brother; so that her father was Nahor's son, not by his concubine Reumah, but by his lawful wife Milcah, which sets Rebekah's descent in a true light, see Ge 22:20; whether she told her own name is not certain, it may be, since the servant bade it, Ge 24:45.

Genesis 24:25

Ver. 25. She said moreover unto him,.... In answer to the second question:

we have both straw and provender enough; for the camels, straw for their litter, and provender for their food, as hay, barley, &c.

and room to lodge in; for him and his men; this she could venture to say, and invite him to come and take up his quarters in her father's house, without going home to relate the question put to her, and to have leave to give the invitation, knowing full well the generosity, liberality, and hospitable spirit of her father.

Genesis 24:26

Ver. 26. And the man bowed down his head,.... To show what a deep sense he had of the divine goodness, and in humble acknowledgment of the favours he had received in being thus providentially directed:

and worshipped the Lord; gave thanks unto him, that he had thus far prospered him, hoping and believing that things were in good forwardness, according to his master's mind and will.

Genesis 24:27

Ver. 27. And he said, blessed [be] the Lord God of my master Abraham,.... See Gill on "Ge 24:12":

who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and truth; or hath not withdrawn his mercy, grace and goodness, truth and faithfulness; for his loving kindness he does not take away from his people, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail; his mercy and grace in making kind and gracious promises continue, and his truth in performing them sooner or later appear, and both in this case; as Abraham believed in the grace and goodness of God, that he would send his angel and direct his servant, and make his way prosperous, here was now an appearance of his truth and faithfulness, in making good the promise or prophecy on which Abraham's faith was built, see Ge 24:7:

I [being] in the way; by the way of the well; in the right way, as Jarchi, in which he was directed; in the way of his duty, following the steps of divine Providence, and observing them. It is good to be in the way which God directs to and prescribes, especially in religious things, where the blessing and presence of God may be expected:

the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren: Nahor, whose granddaughter Rebekah was, was Abraham's brother, and Bethuel her father might be called so, as Lot was, who stood in the same relation to Abraham as he did, Ge 14:16; and, though the servant was not as yet come to the house where they lived, he had met with one of the family, and had got an invitation to it, and was on his way thither and near it.

Genesis 24:28

Ver. 28. And the damsel ran,.... Having invited him to come and lodge at her father's house, that he might not be brought in abruptly, she ran before to acquaint the family of what had passed:

and told [them] of her mother's house these things; she did not go to her father to inform him of it; some think he was dead, as Josephus {g}, but the contrary appears from Ge 24:50; rather the reason was, because her mother had an house, a tent, or an apartment to herself, as women in those times and places used to have, see Ge 24:67; and because daughters are generally more free to converse with their mothers and impart things to them than to their fathers, which may be the true reason of Rebekah's conduct.

{g} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 16. sect. 2.

Genesis 24:29

Ver. 29. And Rebekah had a brother, and his name [was] Laban,.... Perhaps he was her only brother, or however the elder brother, the principal in the family, her father Bethuel being old:

and Laban ran out: out of his house, and out of the city of Haran:

unto the man unto the well; this was after Rebekah had got home, and had related to the family whom she had met with at the well, and what had passed between them, as follows:

Genesis 24:30

Ver. 30. And it came to pass, when he saw the earring, and bracelets upon his sister's hands,.... From whence he concluded that he was a rich and generous man she had met with, and might hope to receive a gift also upon giving him an invitation to his house; or however might judge he should be no loser by receiving him kindly and entertaining him generously; therefore it was that he made haste, and ran to him to bring him in; for that Laban was of a covetous disposition, appears from the whole story of him:

and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, thus spake the man unto me; inquiring whose daughter she was, and whether there was any room in her father's house for him and those that were with him to lodge in:

that he came unto the man; made haste and ran till he came to him:

and, behold, he stood by the camels at the wall; he did not follow Rebekah, but kept still at the well, expecting somebody would come out of the house and give him an invitation into it, upon Rebekah's representation of him.

Genesis 24:31

Ver. 31. And he said, come in, thou blessed of the Lord,.... Both with temporal and spiritual blessings; he concluded he was blessed with the former by the presents he had made to his sister, and by the men that attended him, and the number of camels that were with him; and with the latter by his devotion, his worshipping of God, and thankfulness to him, which Rebekah had observed and related: some Jewish writers say {h}, he thought he was Abraham, and therefore gave him this title and this invitation to come into the house:

wherefore standest thou without? this he said either as reproving him that he did not follow his sister upon her invitation, or rather as pressing him to make no more delay:

for I have prepared the house: swept it clean, or ordered it to be so, as the word {i} signifies; had fitted and furnished it with everything convenient for him and those with him: Jonathan and Jarchi interpret it of purging the house from idols and strange worship, which he knew would be offensive to Abraham, or any that belonged to him; but the former sense is best:

and room for the camels; he had ordered the stable to be cleansed also, and everything provided there fit for the camels; so that some time elapsed between Rebekah's return home and Laban's coming to the well, though no doubt everything was done with as much dispatch as possible.

{h} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 60. fol. 52. 4. Targ. Jon. in loc. {i} ytygp "repurgavi", Drusius; "verri", Schmidt.

Genesis 24:32

Ver. 32. And the man came into the house,.... Upon the pressing instance made unto him; for so it may be rendered, "wherefore the man came", &c. {k}

and he ungirded his camels; took off their bridles, which hindered them from eating, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi; or loosed their girts and took off their burdens, that they might have rest: this may be interpreted either of the servant and of his men by his order doing this, it being the first thing that travellers do when they come to an inn to take care of their cattle; or rather of Laban, as what follows must be interpreted of him:

and gave straw and provender for the camels; straw for their litter, and provender to eat; this Laban did, or ordered to be done: the Targum of Jonathan expresses his name, and no doubt he is intended, for who should give these but he?

and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that [were] with him: which was usually done to strangers and travellers in those hot countries, see Ge 18:4. The Vulgate Latin version is, "and water to wash the feet of the camels"; which, though it is possible might be done, yet is without any foundation in the text.

{k} abyw "intravit itaque", Tigurine version, Piscator; "quare", Schmidt.

Genesis 24:33

Ver. 33. And there was set [meat] before them to eat,.... By the order of Bethuel or Laban, or both; or, "afterwards was set" {l}; that is after care had been taken the camels, then food being provided was set before the men to refresh them:

but he said, I will not eat until I have told mine errand; or, "spoke my words" {m}; delivered the message he was sent with, and declared the business he came about; which shows him to be a diligent faithful servant, who had his master's interest at heart, and preferred it to his necessary food:

and he said; either Bethuel or Laban, for both were present, to whom the servant directed his discourse, Ge 24:47; perhaps Laban spoke in the name of his father, and bid him

speak on; go on with his discourse until he had said all he had to say, signifying that they were ready to give attention to him.

{l} Mvyyw "post appositum", Drusius, Schmidt. {m} yrbd ytrbd "donec loquar sermones meos", V. L. "vel mea verba", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.

Genesis 24:34

Ver. 34. And he said, I [am] Abraham's servant. Not Abraham himself, this undeceived Laban, if he so thought, but a servant of his; which was enough to introduce his discourse, his master being a near relation of theirs, and well known to them by name, if not in person.

Genesis 24:35

Ver. 35. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly,.... With temporal blessings, after enumerated, which are of God, and are here ascribed to him, the Father, fountain, author, and giver of all such mercies:

and he is become great; in the world, and highly honoured and esteemed among men:

and he hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and menservants and maidservants, and camels and asses; though many of them were obtained in the diligent use of means, yet with the blessing of God; and others were the gifts of princes to him, as of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and Abimelech king of Gerar; yet, as it was the Lord that put it into their hearts to be so liberal to him, they are here called his gifts; see Ge 12:16.

Genesis 24:36

Ver. 36. And Sarah, my master's wife,.... Who must be well known to this family, by name at least, being, as is generally supposed, the sister of Milcah, Nahor's wife, and Bethuel's mother; the same

bare a son to my master when she was old; even when ninety years of age, Ge 17:17; this is mentioned because it was an extraordinary thing, and an instance of divine power and of the favour of God; and this son of their old age must be very dear unto Abraham, as it follows:

and unto him hath he given all that he hath; by his will: Jarchi says, the servant had now the schedule of all in his hands, which he showed; but this is mere conjecture.

Genesis 24:37

Ver. 37. And my master made me swear,.... See Gill on "Ge 24:3". In Ge 24:37, the servant relates the oath his master made him take, and the charge he gave him, much in the same language as in
Ge 24:3.

Genesis 24:38

Ver. 38. But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred,
and take a wife unto my son. See Gill on "Ge 24:4".

Genesis 24:39

Ver. 39. And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me. See Gill on "Ge 24:5".

Genesis 24:40

Ver. 40. And he said unto me, the Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee. See Gill on "Ge 24:7".

Genesis 24:41

Ver. 41. Then shalt thou be clear from [this] my oath,....
See Gill on "Ge 24:8".

Genesis 24:42

Ver. 42. And I came this day unto the well,.... Hither he was come at length by several days' journey; not on the same day he came from Abraham, as the Jewish writers say {n}, by means of a miracle:

and said, O Lord God of my master Abraham; being come to the well, he prayed as follows:

if now thou do prosper the way which I go; his meaning is, that if it was the pleasure of God that he should succeed in what he was come about, that he would let him know it by a token; and in Ge 24:42 he relates the token he desired, which was granted him, and his success, as before recorded, from Ge 24:21.

{n} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 95. 1. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 59. fol. 52. 2. Jarchi in loc.

Genesis 24:43

Ver. 43. Behold, I stand by the well of water, and it shall come to pass,.... See Gill on "Ge 24:14".

Genesis 24:44

Ver. 44. And she say to me, both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels,.... See Gill on "Ge 24:14".

Genesis 24:45

Ver. 45. And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder,....
See Gill on "Ge 24:15".

and she went down unto the well, and drew [water]:
See Gill on "Ge 24:16".

and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee.
See Gill on "Ge 24:17".

Genesis 24:46

Ver. 46. And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her [shoulder],....
See Gill on "Ge 24:18".

And said, drink, and I will give thy camels drink also.
See Gill on "Ge 24:19".

so I drank, and she made the camels drink also.
See Gill on "Ge 24:20".

Genesis 24:47

Ver. 47. And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter [art] thou?....
See Gill on "Ge 24:23".

And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: See Gill on "Ge 24:24".

and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands.
See Gill on "Ge 24:22".

Genesis 24:48

Ver. 48. And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the Lord,....
See Gill on "Ge 24:26".

And blessed the Lord God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son.
See Gill on "Ge 24:27".

Genesis 24:49

Ver. 49. And now, if you deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me,.... The servant directs himself to more than one, to the whole family, especially to Laban and Bethuel; if you will do my master a kindness, and grant him the favour he requests, that a damsel of this family may be given for a wife to his son; and, if you are hearty and sincere in granting this, tell me at once:

and if not, tell me: if you do not choose to gratify my master, and are not hearty in this matter, let me know:

that I may turn to the right hand or to the left; look out elsewhere among the daughters of some of the other sons of Nahor; for he had seven more which Milcah bare to him besides Bethuel, as well as four others by a concubine, Ge 22:20; though some of the Jewish writers {o} by "the right hand" understand the daughters of Ishmael, that dwelt to the right, and by "the left [hand]" the daughters of Lot, who were to the left, which is not likely: it seems to be only a proverbial expression, that, if they did not choose to attend to his proposal in his master's name, he must take some other method, as he might be directed; he knew not for the present which way, whether he should steer his course to the right or left, but some way he must take. The Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"to the south or to the north;"

because when a man stands with his face to the east, the south is on his right hand, and the north on his left.

{o} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 60. fol. 53. 1. Jarchi in loc.

Genesis 24:50

Ver. 50. Then Laban and Bethuel answered,.... The order of the words in the original is, "then answered Laban and Bethuel"; the word for "answered" is in the singular number, from whence it may be concluded, that Laban gave the answer in the name of Bethuel, he consenting to it, who might be an old man, and left the management of his family affairs to his son, who, Aben Ezra thinks, excelled his father in wisdom and honour; but Jarchi represents him as a wicked and impudent man, who took upon him to speak before his father: but some have thought that this Bethuel was not old Bethuel, the father of Rebekah, but young Bethuel his son, the younger brother of Laban and Rebekah, their father Bethuel being dead, as Josephus says, before observed; and this seems to be countenanced by Ge 24:59, where they are represented as blessing Rebekah, and calling her their sister:

and said, the thing proceedeth from the Lord: that Rebekah should be given to Isaac, as the Targum of Jonathan adds: this matter appears to be according to his will and pleasure, he seems to have appointed it in his decree, and to be bringing it about by his providence; for these men, though they were in part idolaters yet had some good notions of the true God, and of his government of the world, and of his ordering all things in it according to the counsel of his will:

we cannot speak unto thee good or bad; cannot deny the request; the thing was so plain that they had not anything to object to it.

Genesis 24:51

Ver. 51. Behold, Rebekah [is] before thee,.... Not only was present, but she was delivered to him, or his request was granted:

take [her], and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife; not that they meant he should go away directly with her; for they afterwards solicit her stay with them some time; but they agreed that he should bare her and conduct her to Isaac, to be taken by him for his wife:

as the Lord hath spoken; for so they understood the token given to the servant to know her by, as the determination of God.

Genesis 24:52

Ver. 52. And it came to pass, that when Abraham's servant heard these words,.... That Laban and Bethuel said; and no doubt but the mother of Rebekah, and she herself consented that she should be the wife of Isaac, believing it was agreeable to the will of God:

he worshipped the Lord, [bowing himself] to the earth; in the most humble manner he prostrated himself before the Lord, acknowledging his kindness, and goodness, his faithfulness and truth, his power and his providence in this affair.

Genesis 24:53

Ver. 53. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold,.... Ornaments for women, which he had brought along with him for presents, and which were a proof of the riches of his master, and of his generosity and liberality, who had furnished him with such a profusion of rich things to bestow on the person that should be got for his son's wife:

and raiment, and gave [them] to Rebekah; costly suits of clothes such as in those times were given to persons at their marriage, or in order to it; and which custom still continues among the Arabs, who, as Dr. Shaw says {p}, have the marriage contract previously made between the parents, wherein is express mention made not only of the "saddock", as they call that particular sum which the bridegroom settles on the bride; but of the several changes of raiment, and the quantity of jewels, and the number of slaves that the bride is to be attended with when she first waits upon her husband; a gold and silver "sarmah", he says {q}, which is a thin flexible plate of gold or silver, of a triangular shape, artfully cut through and engraven in imitation of lace; one or two sets of earrings bracelets and shekels, a gold chain to hang over their breasts, with half a dozen vests, some of brocades, others of rich silk, were usually the wedding clothes of a lady of fashion. And so in Barbary, the man buys his bride a suit of apparel, earrings, bracelets, a chest, &c. and gives the father a considerable sum of money, according to the qualities and circumstances of the parties {r}:

and he gave also to her brother, and to her mother, precious things; things of worth and value, which were part of the good things he brought with him from Abraham, Ge 24:10; the word being sometimes used for fruit, Jarchi interprets it of various kinds of the fruits {s} of the land of Israel; but it is not likely that these should be carried by him on so long a journey; much better Aben Ezra understands by them honourable and costly raiment; and it is observed by some {t}, that the word in general signifies everything valuable and excellent, as gold, silver, &c. no mention being made of her father, only of her brother Laban, and of her mother, seems to confirm the notion of Josephus that he was dead; or however he concerned himself no further in this affair than to give his consent to the marriage, and left everything else to his wife and son to take care of, and therefore the presents are only made to them.

{p} Travels, p. 239. {q} Ib. No. 9. p. 229. {r} Ockley's Account of Southwest Barbary, c. 6. p. 76. {s} So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed. fol. 76. 1. Aruch in voce dgm. {t} Ib.

Genesis 24:54

Ver. 54. And they did eat and drink, he, and the men that [were] with him,.... Every thing being settled with respect to the affair he came about, he then sat down at table, and ate of the provisions set before him; he and the men that came along with him; and refreshed themselves:

and tarried all night; lodged there all night;

and they rose up in the morning; the servant and his men:

and he said, send me away to my master; either to Abraham, who was waiting to hear what success his servant would have; or to Isaac, who also was solicitous about the matter: the sense is, that he desired leave to go away, and begged he might not be detained any longer, having now done the business he came about; still showing himself a diligent faithful servant, heartily and sincerely attached to his master's interest, and not consulting his own ease and pleasure, which might have been indulged by staying longer in a family, where he would have been entertained in a sumptuous manner.

Genesis 24:55

Ver. 55. And her brother and her mother said,.... Here her brother Laban is set before his mother, as above before his father, being the chief speaker and the principal manager of business:

let the damsel abide with us [a few] days, at the least ten; which was but a reasonable request; and if no more time is intended, it is much the servant should object, and not readily agree to it; but in the margin it is, "a full year" or "ten months"; and so Onkelos and Jonathan, and other Jewish writers {u}, who say it was customary for a virgin to have twelve months allowed her to furnish herself with ornaments; and therefore if a full year could not be admitted of, it is requested that at least ten months would be granted: this by many is thought to be unreasonable, that a servant should be desired to stay so long from his master, and especially it would not be asked, when it was perceived he was in such haste to be gone directly; but when it is observed that it was the usual custom of those times for virgins espoused to continue in their father's house a considerable time before the marriage was consummated, and that Rebekah was going into a distant country, and very likely she and her friends would never see each other, the motion will not appear so very extravagant:

after that she shall go; when that time is elapsed, but cannot think of it before.

{u} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 60. fol. 53. 2. Jarchi, Ben Gersom & Ben Melech in loc.

Genesis 24:56

Ver. 56. And he said unto them, hinder me not,.... Do not detain me, let me set forward on my journey:

seeing, the Lord hath prospered my way; succeeded him in what he came about; and by his being succeeded so well, and so soon, it seemed to be the mind of the Lord that he should hasten his journey homeward:

send me away, that I may go to my master; and carry him the good news of his success, and attend his domestic affairs, over which he was set.

Genesis 24:57

Ver. 57. And they said, we will call the damsel,.... Who perhaps through modesty had withdrawn herself to her own apartment, while the man and her friends were discoursing on this subject:

and inquire at her mouth; what she says to it, whether willing to go directly or not; the matter in question was referred to her, and left to her decision.

Genesis 24:58

Ver. 58. And they called Rebekah,.... Or ordered her to be called by one of the servants:

and said unto her, wilt thou go with this man? that is, directly; the question was not about her marriage of Isaac, that was agreed upon, and she had doubtless given her consent, and which she tacitly did by accepting of the presents, but about taking the journey immediately:

and she said, I will go; the note of Jarchi is,

"of myself, and even if you are not willing,"

which seems to make her answer rude, as well as resolute; but it must be interpreted consistent with her decent and modest behaviour, and as expressive of her agreeing to go with the man directly, having no manner of objection on her mind to it; but on the contrary found a strong inclination to it, and was determined on it; and perhaps was under a divine impulse, which strongly wrought upon her, and caused her to be so willing to leave her own people, and her father's house.

Genesis 24:59

Ver. 59. And they sent away Rebekah their sister,.... Not in a pet or angry humour, but with good will; they agreed she should go, and took their leave in a very honourable and affectionate manner. This is to be understood of her brother Laban, and of other brethren and sisters she might have; though by the connection of the words with the preceding, they seem to design her brother and mother, who spoke last; and probably all her relations are meant, who call her their sister, because so nearly related to them:

and her nurse: who had been her nurse in former times, as Aben Ezra observes, in her infancy, for whom she had a particular affection, as is often the case; her name was Deborah, as appears from Ge 35:8:

and Abraham's servant, and his men; who were dismissed in an handsome manner by the family.

Genesis 24:60

Ver. 60. And they blessed Rebekah,.... That is, her parents and her friends, they wished the best and choicest of blessings might descend upon her:

and said unto her, thou [art] our sister; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"hitherto thou hast been our sister,"

as if the relation now ceased, having entered into another; and especially as she was going away from them into a distant country, and might never see her more, it was as if she was no more to them or to be enjoyed by them:

be thou [the mother] of thousands of millions; as she was, the Edomites and Israelites both springing from her:

and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them; exercise dominion and authority over their enemies: let them not only be numerous, but powerful and victorious, as both the nations were at times, and especially the latter; and particularly this had its accomplishment in Christ, who sprung from her in the line of Jacob, **Mt 1:2**; some respect seems to be had to the promise made to Abraham, Ge 22:17; of which this family might have knowledge from Abraham's servant, who might report not only how great his master was, but what promises were made to him with respect to his posterity.

Genesis 24:61

Ver. 61. And Rebekah arose, and her damsels,.... Her maids that were given her by her parents to wait upon her, as was usual in those times and countries:

and they rode upon the camels; that Abraham's servant had brought with him:

and followed the man; who rode before and directed the way; the sense is only, that she went along with him:

and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way; took her under his care, and to be the wife of his master's son, at the hands of her friends, and then set forward on his journey.

Genesis 24:62

Ver. 62. And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi,.... The well at which the angel met with Hagar, when she fled from her mistress, Ge 16:7. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem say, that Isaac came from the school of Shem the great:

for he dwelt in the south country: at Beersheba, to which Abraham, it seems, was returned again; for that they dwelt together as yet, is clear from his mother Sarah's tent, into which he introduced Rebekah,
Ge 24:67; see Ge 22:19.

Genesis 24:63

Ver. 63. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide,.... Both the time and place were very proper for meditation: the place, "in the field": where he might view the works of nature, and be led to the Creator of them, and the praise of him, and where he might be alone, and nothing to disturb his thoughts: and the time, "at evening"; after the labour, care, and hurry of the day were over, and before repose at night, and when the air was cool and refreshing, and everything was assisting to, and served to compose the mind, and help thought and contemplation. Onkelos and Jonathan render the word "to pray", and the time and place he chose were very fit for that service; and perhaps his thoughts in prayer might be directed to, and greatly employed in desiring success to his father's servant in the business he was gone on his account, and that he might safely and speedily arrive, and if so, his prayers were quickly answered:

and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels [were] coming; which his servant had took with him in his journey, and was now returning with them, and which Isaac knew full well.

Genesis 24:64

Ver. 64. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes,.... And looked about:

and when she saw Isaac; whom she suspected him to be, and therefore inquired of the servant, who told her who he was:

she lighted off the camel; or "fell" {w} from it, not accidentally, or through surprise, but willingly, and in honour to Isaac, as was customary; for had she sat on her camel when she met him, it would not have seemed respectful enough to him; though Jarchi thinks she did not get off, but only bowed herself upon the camel, when she came near him.

{w} lptw "et cecidit", Montanus, Drusius.

Genesis 24:65

Ver. 65. For she [had] said unto the servant,.... As soon as she saw a man walking towards them, who she thought with herself might be Isaac:

what man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? for by the course he steered, she perceived that he was coming towards them, and so concluded it must be one of the family, and probably the person she was to be married to; for otherwise, had he not by his look and motion discovered that he knew the servant, and was coming towards them, she would have took no notice of him

and the servant [had] said, it is my master: meaning not Abraham, but his son, who also was his master:

therefore she took a veil, and covered herself; both out of modesty, and as a token of subjection to him: for the veil was put on when the bride was introduced to the bridegroom, as among the Romans {x} in later times. The Arab women always have veils when they appear in public, so that their faces cannot be seen; and though in the summer months they walk abroad with less caution, yet then, upon the approach of a stranger, they put on their veils {y}.

{x} Vid. Lucan. l. 2. & Martial. Epigr. l. 2. 74. {y} See Shaw's Travels, p. 228. Tertullian. de Virgin. Veland, c. 17.

Genesis 24:66

Ver. 66. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. By what means he found out the person designed for his wife, and got knowledge of her father's house, to which he was introduced, and where he was made welcome; and what agreement he had made with the parents and relations of Rebekah to be his wife, whom he had brought with him.

Genesis 24:67

Ver. 67. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent,.... The apartment in which she dwelt when living; for women in those times and places had separate apartments from their husbands; this was done after many other things had passed, not here recorded; a conversation with her, an espousal of her, and an introduction of her to Abraham, with whose consent, no doubt, she had his wife's apartment allotted to her:

and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; consummated the marriage, first contracted by his servant, then confirmed by himself, and now finished:

and he loved her; as a man ought to love his wife, even as his own body, **Eph 5:28**; and she was a person to be beloved, being very fair, and of a goodly countenance, Ge 24:16. The Jews say {z} she was but fourteen years of age at this time:

and Isaac was comforted after his mother's [death]; which was three years ago, See Gill on "Ge 25:20"; and had made such impressions upon his spirit, that at times he was very sorrowful, and much distressed on that account; but now being blessed with so agreeable a yokefellow, his sorrow for his mother subsided, and he became cheerful and comfortable.

{z} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 1. p. 3.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 25:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 25

This chapter contains an account of Abraham's marriage with another woman, and of the children he had by her and of their posterity
Ge 25:1; of Abraham's disposal of his substance; and his sons,
Ge 25:5; of the years of his life, his death and burial,

Ge 25:7; of the children of Ishmael, and of the years of his life, and of his death, Ge 25:12; and of the sons of Isaac the fruit of prayer, and of the oracle concerning them before they were born, and of their temper and disposition, conduct and behaviour, Ge 25:19.

Ver. 1. Then again Abraham took a wife,.... Three years after the death of Sarah, and when his son Isaac was married, and he alone, and now one hundred and forty years of age:

and her name [was] Keturah; who she was, or of what family, is not said. An Arabic writer {z} says she was a daughter of the king of the Turks; another {a} of them calls her the daughter of King Rama; and another {b} the daughter of Pactor, king of Rabbah; but there were then no such people in being. Very probably she was one of Abraham's handmaids born in his house, or bought with his money, perhaps the chief and principal of them. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem say she is the same with Hagar, and so, Jarchi; but this is rejected by Aben Ezra, since mention is made of Abraham's concubines, Ge 25:6; whereas it does not appear he ever had any other than Hagar and Keturah, and therefore could not be the same; and besides, the children of Hagar and Keturah are in this chapter reckoned as distinct. Cleodemus {c}, a Heathen writer, makes mention of Keturah as a wife of Abraham's, by whom he had many children, and names three of them. Sir Walter Raleigh {d} thinks, that the Kenites, of whom Jethro, the father- in-law of Moses, was, had their name from Keturah, being a nation of the Midianites that descended from her.

{z} Abul. Pharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 14. {a} Elmacinus, p. 34. apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 309. {b} Patricides, p. 19. in ib. {c} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 20. p. 422. {d} History of the World, l. 2. c. 4. sect. 2. p. 157.

Genesis 25:2

Ver. 2. And she bare him Zimran,.... That Keturah should bear children who probably, was a young woman, is not strange; but that Abraham, whose body forty years before this was dead should now have any bore to him, may seem difficult to account for, and only can be attributed to the fresh vigour his body was endued with at the generation of Isaac; and which still continued for the fulfilment of the promise to him of the multiplication of his seed. But if the notion of a late learned bishop {e} is right, there will be no need to have recourse to any thing extraordinary; which is, that Abraham took Keturah for his concubine, about twenty years after his marriage with Sarah, she being barren, and long before he took Hagar; though not mentioned till after the death of Sarah, that the thread of the history might not be broken in upon; and there are various things which make it probable, as that she is called his concubine, **1Ch 1:32**, which one would think she should not be, if married to him after the death of Sarah, and when he had no other wife, and seeing before he died he had great grandchildren by her, and the children of her are reckoned down to the third generation; whereas there are only mention of two generations of Hagar, as in Ge 25:1; and therefore seems to have been taken by him before Hagar, and even when he was in Haran, and the children by her are thought to be the souls gotten there; nor does it seem very probable that he should take a wife after the death of Sarah, when he was one hundred and forty years of age, and was reckoned an old man forty years before this; and Dr. Lightfoot {f} is of opinion, that Abraham married her long before Isaac's marriage, or Sarah's death; and if this was the case, the difficulty of accounting for Abraham's fitness for generation vanishes. The first son of Keturah, born to him, was called Zimran, from whence came the Zamareni, a people in Arabia Felix mentioned by Pliny {g}; and hereabout the sons of Keturah settled, being sent by Abraham into the east country, even into Arabia, which lay east of the place where he then was; and very probably Zabram; or it may be rather Zamram, a royal city in the country of the Cinaedocolpites, a part of Arabia Felix, as placed by Ptolemy {h}, may have its name from this man: five more of Abraham's sons by Keturah follow,

and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah: some think that the first of these is the same with Cahtan, whom the Arabs call the father of their nation; but that Cahtan rather seems to be Joktan the son of Eber, see Ge 10:25. Philostorgius {i} speaks of a nation in his time, called Homerites, who were a people that sprung from Keturah, and inhabited Arabia Felix, and who used circumcision on the eighth day: and Bishop Patrick observes from Theophanes, a chronologer of the ninth century, that the Homerites, who lived in the interior parts of Arabia, descended from Jectan, which he conjectures should be read Jocshan, though perhaps he is no other than the Joktan before mentioned. From Medan and Midian sprung the Midianites, so often mentioned in Scripture; their posterity seem to be confounded together, for the same people are called Medanites and Midianites, Ge 37:28; from these men the towns in Arabia might have their names, as the Modiana and Madiana of Ptolemy {k}: as for Ishbak, there is no tracing of his name anywhere, unless, as Bishop Patrick observes, some footsteps of it are to be found in Bacascami, a town of the Zamareni, who descended from his brother Zimran, and in the people Backliltae, both mentioned by Pliny {l}; though Junius think that Scabiosa Laodicea, in Laodicene of Syria, has its name from him; which seems not likely. The name of Shuah or Shuach may be traced in Socacia, Soaca, and Socheher, cities placed by Ptolemy {m} in Arabia Felix: though some think the posterity of this man are those whom the geographers call Sauchites, Sauchaeans, and Saccaeans, who settled in Arabia Deserta, and from whom Bildad the Shuhite, **Job 2:11**, descended; which is not improbable. But others have been of opinion, that the town of Suez, which Pliny calls Suaza, had its name from this Shuah, situate at the extremity of the Red sea {n}.

{e} Dr. Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 83, &c. {f} Observations on the Book of Genesis in his Works, vol. 1. p. 695. {g} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {h} Geograph. l. 6. c. 7. {i} Eccl. Hist. l. 3. sect. 4. p. 477. {k} Ut supra. ({h}) {l} Ut supra. ({g}) {m} Ut supra. ({h}) {n} See Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 2. p. 184.

Genesis 25:3

Ver. 3. And Jokshan begat Sheba and Dedan,.... Bochart {o} is of opinion, that the posterity of this Sheba are the same with the Sabeans who inhabited at the entrance of Arabia Felix, not far from the Nabathaeans; and who, by Strabo {p}, are mentioned together as near to Syria, and used to make excursions on their neighbours; and not without some colour of reason thought to be the same that plundered Job of his cattle, **Job 1:15**. From Dedan came the Dedanim or Dedanites, spoken of with the Arabians in Isa 21:13; Junius thinks Adada in Palmyrene of Syria had its name from this man, and in which country is the mountain Aladan or Alladadan. Bochart {q} more probably takes Dedan, a city in Idumea, to derive its name from him. There is a village called Adedi in the country of the Cassanites, a people of Arabia Felix, which Ptolemy {r} makes mention of, and seems to have some appearance of this man's name:

and the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim; these names being plural are thought not to be proper names of men, but appellatives, descriptive of their places of abode, or of their business: hence the Targum of Onkelos represents them as such that dwelt in camps, in tents, and in islands; and the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call them merchants, artificers and heads of the people: however, Cleodemus {s} the Heathen historian is wrong in deriving Assyria from Asshurim, whom he calls Ashur; since Assyria and Assyrians are so called from Ashur, the son of Shem, Ge 10:22.

{o} Phaleg. l. 2. c. 9. col. 227. {p} Geograph. l. 16. p. 536. {q} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 6. col. 219. {r} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 6. c. 7.) {s} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praepar. Evangel. 9. c. 20. p. 432.)

Genesis 25:4

Ver. 4. And the sons of Midian,.... The fourth son of Abraham by Keturah; he had five sons next mentioned, who were heads of so many tribes or families in Midian: hence we read of five kings of Midian;
Nu 31:8; their names follow,

Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abidah, and Eldaah: the two first of these, whom Cleodemus {t} calls Aphra and Apher, and makes them to be sons of Abraham by Keturah, when they were his grandsons, he says, from them the city Aphra, and all Africa, had their names, and that these accompanied Hercules into Lybia, he having married a daughter of Aphra. Ephah is mentioned along with Midian in Isa 60:6; but of the rest no notice is taken in Scripture. Ptolemy {u} makes mention both of a mountain, and of a village, near Madiana in Arabia Felix, called Hippos, which perhaps had their name from this man. Some trace of Epher is thought to be in Taphuron which Philostorgius says {w} was the metropolis of the Homerites, before mentioned; and Arrianus, as Bishop Patrick observes, expressly says, the metropolis of the Homerites, is called Aphar: to which may be added, that Ptolemy {x} speaks of a people called Tappharites, near the Homerites. Hanoch, the next son, is thought to have some footsteps of his name in Cane, a mart, which Ptolemy {y} places in the country of the Adramites in Arabia Felix, and also in the country of Canauna in Arabia, mentioned by, Pliny {z}: near Cananua is placed, by the same writer, the island Devadae, called by Philostorgius {a} dibouv, "Divus", in which it is supposed there is some trace of the name of Abidah, by an inversion of the two last syllables; and perhaps also in Abissa, which Ptolemy {b} places in the country of the Sachalites in Arabia Felix. As for Eldaah, Bishop Patrick thinks there are no remains of this name, unless in the city of Elana, from whence there was a gulf called Elanites, and a people that lived there Elanitae; but one would think there are some traces of it in the cities Alata, Lattha, and Leaththa, all, according to Ptolemy {c}, in Arabia Felix:

all these [were] the children of Keturah; her children and grandchildren.

{t} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 20. p. 432.) {u} Ut supra.

(Geograph. l. 6. c. 7.) {w} Eccl. Hist. l. 3. sect. 4. 478. {x} Ut supra. ({u}) {y} lb. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {a} Ut supra, ({w}) sect. 3. {b} Ut supra. ({u}) {c} lb.

Genesis 25:5

Ver. 5. And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. By his last will and testament; not all out of his own hand, while he lived, at least he reserved somewhat for himself, and for gifts to his other children; so his servant declared to the parents and friends of Rebekah, Ge 24:35; wherefore some render the words here "had given" {d}; or the sense is, that he had at that time purposed and promised to give all that he had to Isaac, and now he actually did it.

{d} Ntn "dederat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Genesis 25:6

Ver. 6. But unto the sons of the concubines which Abraham had,.... These were Hagar and Keturah, though they are both called his wives, Ge 16:3; yet they were concubines; so Keturah, **1Ch 1:32**; they were, as some render the word, "concubine wives" {e}; they were half wives or secondary ones: the Jewish writers say that they were espoused, but not by writing, as wives were; they were under the lawful wife, when there were any, and a kind of head servants in the family, and their children did not inherit; now the sons of the concubines of Abraham were Ishmael by Hagar, and the six above mentioned by Keturah: to these

Abraham gave gifts; money, gold and silver, of which he had plenty: the Targum of Jonathan calls them substance and movable goods; by this it appears, that though he had sent Ishmael away without anything, yet he afterwards remembered him, and gave him a portion with the rest of the children of his, concubines:

and sent them away from Isaac his son; that they might not be troublesome to him and his family; and that there, might be no contention among them about inheriting the land of Canaan given to him and his seed: and this Abraham did

while he yet lived; or otherwise after his death a separation would not have been easily made; but his authority had weight with them: and they were sent by him

eastward, into the east country; into Arabia, and the parts thereabout, which lay east from the place where Abraham was; these are the children of the east, mentioned along with the Midianites, who sprung from Keturah, **Jud 6:3**.

{e} Myvglyph "concubinarum uxorum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Genesis 25:7

Ver. 7. And these [are] the days of the years of Abraham's life, which he lived,.... Being about to die, an account is given of his age, which was

an hundred threescore and fifteen years; one hundred and seventy years; so that Isaac was now seventy five years of age, for he was born when Abraham was an hundred years old, and Jacob and Esau must how be fifteen years of age at this time, since they were born when Isaac was sixty years of age, Ge 25:26; and Ishmael must be eighty nine years old; it may be observed, that as Abraham was seventy five years old when he went from Haran into the land of Canaan, Ge 12:4; he had been just an hundred years a sojourner in this country.

Genesis 25:8

Ver. 8. Then Abraham gave up the ghost,.... Very readily and cheerfully, without any previous sickness or present pain, but through the decay of nature by reason of old age, in a very easy quiet manner:

and died in a good old age, an old man; for quantity, in those times few arriving to a greater; for quality, not attended with those inconveniences and disadvantages with which old age generally is, and therefore called evil:

and full [of years]; in the original it is only, "and full"; the Targum of Jonathan adds, "of all good"; temporal and spiritual, with which he was filled and satisfied; or he had had enough of life, and was willing to depart, and was full of desires after another and better world:

and was gathered to his people; which is to be understood not of his interment, there being only the body of Sarah in the sepulchre in which he was laid; but of the admission of his soul into the heavenly state upon its separation from the body, when it was at once associated with the spirits of just men made perfect. The Arabic writers {f} say that he died in the month of Nisan, others say Adar, in the year of the world 3563; but, according to Bishop Usher, he died A. M. 2183, and before Christ 1821.

{f} Elmacinus, p. 34. Patricides, p. 21. Apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. p. 315.

Genesis 25:9

Ver. 9. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah,.... Isaac, though the younger brother, is set first, because he was born of the lawful wife of Abraham, the free woman, whereas Ishmael was born of a concubine and a bondwoman; Isaac was heir not only to Abraham's temporal estate, but of the promise made concerning the Messiah, (not so Ishmael,) and was on all accounts the greater man. It appears from hence, that, though them had been a quarrel between Ishmael and Isaac, and the latter had been persecuted by the former, yet the difference was now made up, and they were reconciled, at least they agreed in this act of showing their last respect to their father; and that, though Ishmael had been expelled his father's house, yet he was not at any great distance from him, and there was a correspondence between him and his father; nor was he forgotten by him, as is clear from Ge 25:6; and he retained a filial affection for him; and Jarchi from hence concludes, that he was a penitent and a good man. The place where these two brothers buried their father was the cave of Machpelah,

in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hittite, which [is] before Mamre; see Ge 23:8; wherefore very false is the tradition of the Mahometans {g}, that Abraham's sepulchre is at Mecca, which they, now show, and stands about twelve paces from the temple there, enclosed with iron rails.

{g} Pitt's Account of the Religion of the Mahometans, c. 7. p. 93.

Genesis 25:10

Ver. 10. The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth,.... Of one of them, Ephron, the rest being witnesses of it, Ge 23:16;

there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife; Sarah had been buried there thirty eight years before, which was the reason why his sons buried, him there; if he died in Beersheba, as seems probable, see Ge 24:62; from thence to Hebron were sixteen miles {h}; so far was he carried to be interred.

{h} Bunting's Travels, p. 57.

Genesis 25:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac,.... Yet more and more, both with spiritual and temporal blessings; showing hereby, that, though Abraham was dead, he was not unmindful of his covenant, which should be established with Isaac, Ge 17:19:

and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahairoi; which was near the wilderness of Beersheba and Paran, where Ishmael dwelt; so that they were not far from one another, see Ge 16:14.

Genesis 25:12

Ver. 12. Now these [are] the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son,.... Or the genealogy of his posterity; and which is given to show that the Lord was not unmindful of his promise made to Abraham, concerning the multiplication of his seed, Ge 16:10:

whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham; see Ge 16:1.

Genesis 25:13

Ver. 13. And these [are] the names of the sons of Ishmael,.... After mentioned: by their names, according to their generations; which were imposed upon them at their birth, and are recited according to the order in which they were born, as follows:

the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth: mentioned in Isa 60:7; and from whence a people of the Arabs are called Nabathaeans, and their country Nabathaea. Josephus {i} says, that all the country from Euphrates to the Red sea is called the Nabatene country. The posterity of this man inhabited part of Arabia Deserta and of Arabia Petraea, even to the entrance of Arabia Felix. Strabo {k} reckons the Nabataeans among the Arabians, and calls Petra the metropolis of Arabia Petraea, Petra Nabataea, and Petra of the Arabian Nabataeans, who he says dwelt about Syria, and often made excursions into it; and observes, that their country is populous and abounds with pastures; hence the rams of Nebaioth, mentioned in Isa 60:7; Pliny also {l} places them in Arabia, and says they inhabit the town called Petra, and that they border upon Syria.

And Kedar is the second son of Ishmael; and the posterity of this man and their country are reckoned in Arabia by Isaiah, Isa 21:13; and they are so well known to be Arabians, that the Arabic language is most frequently, in Jewish writings, called the language of Kedar. These are the people whom Pliny {m} names Cedrei, and mentions them along with the Nabathaeans, as near unto them, and indeed they dwelt in the same country, Arabia Petraea, and in tents, living by pasturage, hence they are sometimes called Scenites; and mention is made of the tents of Kedar in **So 1:5**; these are the Scenite Arabs, called Saracens by Ammianus Marcellinus {n}. Two other sons of Ishmael follow:

and Adbeel and Mibsam; of whom no mention is made elsewhere, nor are there any traces of their names, unless the Agubeni, placed by Ptolemy {o} near Arabia Felix.

{i} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 12. sect. 4. {k} Geograph. l. 16. p. 528, 534, 536. {l} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 11. & l. 6. c. 28. & l. 12. c. 17. {m} lbid. l. 5. c. 11. {n} L. 22. p. 228. l. 23. p. 250. Ed. Vales. {o} Geograph. l. 5. c. 19.

Genesis 25:14

Ver. 14. And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa. Of Mishma and Massa, and of their posterity, there is not anything said elsewhere, unless the Masani, Ptolemy {p} places near Arabia Felix, came from Massa. Dumah seems to be the same Isaiah speaks of in Ge 21:11; and in Arabia Deserta, where some of Ishmael's posterity settled, is a place called Dumaetha, by Ptolemy {q}, which perhaps had its name from this son of his. The Targum of Jonathan translates these three names,

"hearing, silence, and patience;"

which the Jews use as a proverb, when they would signify that there are some things to be heard and not spoken of, and to be patiently borne. If Ishmael had in view to teach such lessons by the names he gave his children, he will seem to be a better man than he is usually thought to be.

{p} Georaph. l. 16. p. 528. 534. 536. {q} lbid.

Genesis 25:15

Ver. 15. Hadar and Tema,.... From the first of these the city Adra in Arabia Petraea, and from the other the city Themma in Arabia Deserta, both mentioned by Ptolemy {r}, may be thought to have their names; or the city Adari and the Athritae in Arabia Felix {s}; and the inhabitants of the land of Tema are mentioned as Arabians,
Isa 21:13; and Pliny {t} speaks of a people called Thimaneans, whom he says the ancients joined to the Nabathaeans: the troops of Tema mentioned in Job were of this people, **Job 6:19**; and Eliphaz the Temanite, **Job 2:11**, is thought by some not to be the descendant of Teman the grandson of Esau, but to be of this man's people and country. The three last sons follow:

Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah; the two first of these are reckoned among the Hagarites, as the Ishmaelites were sometimes called, **1Ch 5:19**; from Jetur came the Itureans, whom Pliny {u} places in Coelesyria; and their country Iturea is reckoned by Strabo {w} along with Arabia; and the Ithyreans with Virgil {x} are famous for their bows, as Ishmael and his posterity were for archery in all ages, and still are,
See Gill on "Ge 21:20". As for the posterity of Naphish and Kedomah, we have no account elsewhere, nor any traces of their names, unless those of the latter should be meant by the men of the east, or the men of Kedem, Jer 49:28, which is not improbable, since they are mentioned with the posterity of Kedar the second son of Ishmael; and the Nubaeans by Lebanon may be from Naphish.

{r} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17, 19. {s} Ibid. l. 6. c. 7. {t} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 23. {w} Geograph. l. 16. p. 520. {x} Georgic. l. 2. ver. 448.

Genesis 25:16

Ver. 16. These [are] the sons of Ishmael,.... The twelve before mentioned, Ge 25:13:

these [are] their names, by their towns and by their castles; their towns and their castles being called after their names, some of which we are able to trace at this distance, as the above notes show:

twelve princes according to their nations; these were princes, or heads of tribes, and there were twelve of them, and continued so, see Ge 17:20; where is the prophecy, and here an accomplishment of it.

Genesis 25:17

Ver. 17. And these [are] the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years,.... one hundred and thirty seven years old. So that he lived forty eight years after the death of Abraham, Ge 25:8; and, though he did not live to be so old as he, yet it was a considerable age he attained unto, See Gill on "Ge 25:7":

and he gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people; some of the same expressions being used of him as of his father, Ge 25:8, have led some to conclude that he was a penitent and died a good man, and was gathered to the same people; but these phrases are used both of good and bad men.

Genesis 25:18

Ver. 18. And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur,.... That is, the posterity of Ishmael, whose country reached from one place to the other; not from India to Chaluza, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; but the extent is that vast desert of Arabia, which eastward was called the wilderness of Havilah, and westward the wilderness of Shur; so that they inhabited it from east to west:

that [is] before Egypt, as thou goest to Assyria; which last place was over against Egypt, and bordered on that part where lies the way to the land of Assyria:

[and] he died in the presence of all his brethren; they being present when he died, or in peace with them, in all prosperity along with them: but since his

death is spoken of before, and here the situation of his posterity, the words may be read, "it fell {y} in the presence of his brethren"; his lot, or the habitation of his posterity fell by lot between his brethren the Egyptians on one side of him, and the Israelites on the other; or between the sons of Keturah on the east, and the posterity of Isaac on the west.

{y} lpn "cecidit habitatio ipsi", Schmidt; "cecidit sors ejus", Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Ben Gersom, and Ben Melech.

Genesis 25:19

Ver. 19. And these [are] the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son,.... Moses, having given the genealogy of Ishmael and his posterity, returns to Isaac, the other son of Abraham, with whom and his children the following part of his history is chiefly, if not altogether concerned:

Abraham begat Isaac; for the further confirmation of his being his proper legitimate son this clause is added.

Genesis 25:20

Ver. 20. And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife,.... Which was three years after the death of his mother; Isaac was born when she was ninety, and therefore must be thirty seven when she died. The Jews say Rebekah was but fourteen, though it is highly probable she was older; who is described as

the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian, of Padanaram; so called to distinguish it from other Arams, as Aram of Damascus, &c. this seems to be the same with Aram Naharaim, or Mesopotamia, which lay between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris; for Padan, as Jarchi observes from the Targum, signifies two; but rather, as he, and Aben Ezra, and others say, Padan in the Arabic language signifies a field; it here intends the field or country of Syria, as in Ho 12:12. Haran, in Syria or Mesopotamia, was the place where Bethuel and Laban lived, see
Ge 28:5. Some traces of Padan in Mesopotamia are thought to be in the cities of Aphphadana and Aphadana, which are placed by Ptolemy {z} in that country. Moreover, Rebekah is also said to be

the sister to Laban the Syrian, the son of Bethuel, who are both called Syrians, because they now lived in Syria: otherwise they were originally Chaldees, being descended from Nahor the brother of Abraham, who both were of Ur of the Chaldees; so Jacob is called a Syrian, because he lived long in the same place, De 26:5.

{z} Geograph. l. 5. c. 18.

Genesis 25:21

Ver. 21. And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife,.... Was very earnest and constant in his supplications for her, as the word signifies, as is observed by Jarchi; or, "before his wife" {a}, she being present, and joining with him in his prayers: the reason was,

because she [was] barren; which appeared by the length of time they had been married, which was near twenty years, see Ge 25:26. The Jewish writers {b} say, that, after twenty years, Isaac took her and went with her to Mount Moriah, to the place where he was bound, and prayed that she might conceive; putting the Lord in mind of the promise he there made of the multiplication of Abraham's seed, Ge 22:17:

and the Lord was entreated of him; he granted him his request; for, though God has purposed and promised to do many things for his people, yet he will be sought unto by them to do them for them:

and Rebekah his wife conceived; two sons at once, as it follows.

{a} wtva xknl "praesente uxore sua", Munster, Fagins. {b} Pirke Eliezer, c. 32. Targum. Jon. in loc. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 3. 1.

Genesis 25:22

Ver. 22. And the children struggled together within her,.... When she was quick with child: this was some time before her delivery, and was not a common and ordinary motion felt by women in such circumstances, but an extraordinary one; the two children in her strove with each other, as if it was for mastery, or who should get out first before the proper time; which not only gave her great uneasiness of mind, but pain of body: this was an emblem of the future difference between those two children, Esau and Jacob, and of the contentions that would be between their respective offspring, and of the enmity and war between good and bad men in all ages, and of the conflict between flesh and spirit in all good men:

and she said, if [it be] so, why [am] I thus? that is, either if it be so with me as is not with others in the like condition; for, as Aben Ezra suggests, she had inquired of other women, whether it had ever been so with them, and they replied, no: then, says she, how comes it to pass that it should be different with me from others? or, if those children by struggling should kill one another, or be abortive and kill me, why should I have been so desirous of conception? or prayed for it, as Jarchi observes? or, if so it is, and this will be the case, "why am I thus" {c}? this unhappy woman, to be in such circumstances, to endure so much pain, and to no purpose? why have I conceived and carried my burden so long, and at last cannot be delivered, or bring forth a live child? all my prayers and pains have been in vain:

and she went to inquire of the Lord; to the school of Shem the great, say the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, and so Jarchi: the Arabic writers say {d}, she inquired of Melchizedek; and, according to Aben Ezra, of some prophet, or of Abraham, who lived fifteen years after this event: and indeed, if she inquired of any particular person of note for religion, and as a prophet, there is none so likely as he, who was the friend of God, and had great intimacy with him, and to whom he revealed his secrets. But perhaps no more is meant by it, than that she went either to some proper and private place, and prayed unto the Lord that he would show her the reason of what had happened unto her; or to some public place of worship, and where prayer was wont to be made, and where she inquired by means of such as were engaged therein concerning this matter; see Ps 73:17.

{c} ykna hz hml "eur ego hoc?" Tigurine version, Montanus, Fagius. {d} Patricides, apud Hottinger, Smegma Oriental. p. 335. Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 15.

Genesis 25:23

Ver. 23. And the Lord said unto her,.... Either by one or other of the above persons she acquainted with this affair, and entreated to seek the Lord for her; or by an impulse upon her own mind:

two nations [are] in thy womb; or two persons, from whom two nations will spring, the Edomites and Israelites, the one from Esau, the other from Jacob:

and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; different in their bodies, complexions, manner of life, religion, as well as place of abode:

and [the one] people shall be stronger than [the other] people: the Edomites, the posterity of Esau, were a very potent people, and had a succession of dukes and kings, before the Israelites, the posterity of Jacob, made any figure in the world, and while they were slaves in Egypt, see Ge 36:1; though in later times the Israelites became the stronger:

and the elder, or "greater",

shall serve the younger, or "lesser": the offspring of Esau, the eldest, should become tributary to the posterity of Jacob, the younger; which was verified in the times of David, when the Edomites were subdued by him, **2Sa 8:14**; and still more in the times of Hyrcanus, when the Edomites or Idumeans became one people with the Jews, and embraced their religion {e}, rather than to be dispossessed of their country; and will have a further accomplishment in the latter day, when the prophecies in **Ob 1:18** shall be fulfilled. Of the use which the Apostle Paul makes of this passage, See Gill on "Ro 9:11",
See Gill on "Ro 9:12".

{e} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 13. c. 9. sect. 1.

Genesis 25:24

Ver. 24. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled,.... The nine months were up from the time of her conception; or, as the Targum of Jonathan, when the two hundred and seventy days she went with child were completed:

behold, [there were] twins in her womb; as was perceived by the midwife; a double mercy was granted, more given than asked for; probably only one child was asked for, but two given.

Genesis 25:25

Ver. 25. And the first came out red,.... Either his body, or rather the hair it was covered with, red; which was a sign, as Jarchi observes, that he would be a shedder of blood, fierce and cruel as were he and his posterity:

all over like an hairy garment; his body was all over full of hair, which stood as thick as a garment made of hair, and was a sign of the roughness of his disposition, as well as of the strength of his body:

and they called his name Esau; his parents, and those present at his birth, all that saw him thus covered with hair; for he had his name not from the colour of his body or hair; for the word does not signify "red", but comes from a word which signifies "to make", he being a "maker": that made his way out before his brother, or an active man as afterwards, or because of his hair was "made" or born more like a man than a child; and so the Targum adds,

"because he was wholly perfect, with the hair of his head and beard, and with his teeth and grinders:"

but chiefly because of his hairiness, for Esau in the Arabic language signifies "covered" {f}, as he was with hair: some say, a word in that language signifies a hairy garment made of camel's hair {g}.

{f} "texit", "operuit", Castel. col. 2930. {g} Vid. Stockium. p. 923.

Genesis 25:26

Ver. 26. And after that came his brother out,.... Out of his mother's womb, either by his own strength, or by the help of the midwife:

and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; to pluck him back and get out first; and this was not casual, but was so ordered in Providence, and had a meaning and mystery in it:

and his name was called Jacob; by his parents and others, and that for the above reason, because he took his brother by the heel, which his name has the signification of, and Esau has respect to in Ge 27:36:

and Isaac [was] threescore years old when she bare them; and so it was twenty years after he had been married to her; so long was his faith tried and exercised about the promised seed that was to spring from him.

Genesis 25:27

Ver. 27. And the boys grew,.... In stature, became strong and fit for business, and betook themselves to different employments:

and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field: whose business lay in tilling and sowing it, which his father Isaac followed sometimes; or rather he chose to range about the field and hunt after beasts and birds, in which he was very expert, and contrived traps and snares to catch them in; and this course of life was most agreeable to his temper and disposition, being active, fierce, and cruel; according to the Targum of Jonathan, he was also a hunter and slayer of men, Nimrod and Henoch his son:

and Jacob was a plain man; an honest plain hearted man, whose heart and tongue went together; a quiet man, that gave no disturbance to others; a godly man, sincere, upright, and perfect, that had the truth of grace and holiness in him, as well as the perfect righteousness of his Redeemer on him:

dwelling in tents; keeping at home and attending the business of the family, as we afterwards find him boiling pottage, Ge 25:29; or rather this denotes his pastoral life, being a shepherd, he dwelt in tents, which could be removed from place to place for the convenience of pasturage: Jarchi's note is,

"in the tent of Shem and in the tent of Eber;"

agreeably to the Targum of Jonathan,

"a minister in the school of Shem, seeking doctrine from the Lord;"

a student there, where he resided awhile, in order to be instructed in the doctrines of truth and righteousness.

Genesis 25:28

Ver. 28. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of [his] venison,.... Better than Jacob, not only because he was his firstborn, but because he brought him of the flesh of creatures, which he took in hunting, and being dressed, were savoury food to him: it is in the original, "because venison (or what he hunted) [was] in his mouth" {h}, into which he put it, and was very grateful to his taste:

but Rebekah loved Jacob; more than Esau, being more at home with her, and of a milder disposition; and more especially being a good man, a partaker of the grace of God, and to whom she knew by the oracle the blessing and promise belonged.

{h} wypb dyu yk "quia venatio in ore ejus", Pagninus, Montanus.

Genesis 25:29

Ver. 29. And Jacob sod pottage,.... Or boiled broth; this he did at a certain time, for this was not his usual employment; the Targum of Jonathan says, it was on the day in which Abraham died; and whereas this pottage was made of lentiles, as appears from Ge 25:34; this the Jewish writers {i} say was the food of mourners; and so this circumstance furnishes out a reason for Jacob's boiling pottage of lentiles at this time: and hence also they {k} gather, that Jacob and Esau were now fifteen years of age; for Abraham was an hundred years old when Isaac was born, and Isaac was sixty at the birth of his sons; and Abraham lived to be one hundred and seventy five, and therefore Esau and Jacob must be fifteen years old when he died:

and Esau came from the field, and be [was] faint: for want of food, and weary with hunting, and perhaps more so, having toiled and got nothing.

{i} Pirke Eliezer, c. 35. {k} Seder Olam Rabba, p. 3. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 1.

Genesis 25:30

Ver. 30. And Esau said to Jacob, feed me, I pray thee, with that same red [pottage],.... Or, "with that same red {l}, red"; not knowing what it was, or what it was made of, and therefore only calls it by its colour; and the word being doubled, may denote that it was very red; or he, being in haste and greedy of it through hunger, repeats it in a quick and short way: this pottage was made of lentiles, as we learn from Ge 25:34; which sort of food was much in use with the Egyptians, Egypt abounding with lentiles; and particularly Alexandria was famous for them, from whence they were carried into other countries, as Austin {m} relates. The lentiles of Pelusium, a city in Egypt, are made mention of by Virgil {n} and Martial {o}, for which that place was famous; where, as Servius says {p}, lentiles were first found, or where they grew the best; and, in the Misnah {q}, an Egyptian lentil is spoken of, as neither large nor small, but middling. Pliny {r} speaks of two sorts of it in Egypt, and says he found it in some authors, that eating of these makes men even tempered, good humoured, and patient; and observes {s}, that they delight in red earth, or where there is much ruddle, or red ochre, from whence they may receive a red tincture; and the pottage made of them is of such a colour. And Dr. Shaw {t} says, that lentiles dissolve easily into a mass, and make a pottage or soup of a chocolate colour, much used in the eastern countries: and, as Scheuchzer observes {u}, coffee is of the bean kind, and not unlike a lentil, and makes a red decoction. The colour of it took with Esau, as well as it was sweet and savoury, as Athenaeus {w} reports; and especially, he being faint and hungry, desires his brother to give him some of it, and even to feed him with it:

for I [am] faint; so faint that he could not feed himself, or however wanted immediate sustenance, and could not wait till other food he had used to live upon was dressed:

therefore was his name called Edom; not from his red hair, but from this red pottage; for Edom signifies "red", and is the same with the names Pyrrhus and Rufus.

{l} hzh Mdah Mdah-Nm "de rufo, rufo isto", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; so Piscator, Schmidt. {m} Comment. in Psal. xlvi. tom. 8. p. 174. {n} Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. ver. 228. {o} Martial. l. 13. epigr. 9. {p} In Virgil. ut supra. (Georgic. l. 1. ver. 228) {q} Misn. Celim. c. 17. sect. 8. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 12. {s} Ibid. c. 17. {t} Travels, p. 140. Ed. 2. {u} Physica Sacra, vol. 1. p. 78. {w} Deipno Sophist. l. 4. c. 14, 15.

Genesis 25:31

Ver. 31. And Jacob said, sell me this day thy birthright. Which had many privileges annexed to it, as honour and authority in the family next to parents; a double portion of inheritance; some say the exercise of priesthood, but that is questioned; the parental blessing, and especially in this the promises of the Messiah, and of inheritance of the land of Canaan, and which was typical of the heavenly inheritance: all which Rebekah knew by the divine oracle were designed for Jacob, and which no doubt she had acquainted him with, and advised him to deal with his brother about parting with his birthright as he had opportunity; and very likely they had talked together about it before in a distant manner, and Esau had shown some indifference to his right, and made no great account of it; and now, an opportunity offering to get him in the mind to part with it, he takes it, and moves for a sale of it immediately, at once, without any more delay, and even before he had his pottage; thus taking the advantage of his brother's necessity: or, sell it me "as the day" {x}, let the bargain be as clear as the day, as Jarchi interprets it; let it be made in plain and full terms, that there may be no dispute about it hereafter, or any revocation of it: but the former sense seems best, as appears from Ge 25:33, where the same way of speaking is used.

{x} Mwyk "juxta hunc diem", Fagius, Drusius.

Genesis 25:32

Ver. 32. And Esau said, behold, I [am] at the point to die,.... Or, "going to die" {y}, going the way of all flesh; which he might say on account of the common frailty and mortality of man, and the brevity of life at most, or by reason of the danger of life he was always exposed to in hunting of wild beasts, as Aben Ezra suggests; or rather, because of his present hunger and faintness, which, unless immediately relieved, must issue in death. Dr. Lightfoot {z} thinks it was now the time of the famine spoken of in the following chapter, Ge 26:1:

and what profit shall this birthright do to me? a dying man, or when dead? In such a case, all the privileges of it in course would devolve on Jacob; and as for the promises of the Messiah, and of the land of Canaan, made to Abraham and his seed, these seemed to be at a great distance, and if he lived ever so long might never enjoy them; and therefore judged it most advisable to consult his present interest, and have something in hand, than to trust to futurity; and, by thus saying, he signified an entire willingness to part with his birthright on the terms proposed.

{y} twml Klwh "vadens ad moriendum", Montanus. {z} Works, vol. 1. p. 15, 696.

Genesis 25:33

Ver. 33. And Jacob said, swear unto me this day,.... For the more sure and certain confirmation of the bargain; and by this oath oblige himself to let him peaceably enjoy the birthright, nor seek to revoke it, or dispute it with him, or disturb him in the possession of it:

and he sware unto him; that he would abide by the bargain, and never give him any trouble on that account; and hereby he made it over to Jacob as firm as it could be; God himself being appealed to as a witness of it, whose will it was that Jacob should have the birthright, the blessing, and the promises:

and he sold his birthright unto Jacob; with all the privileges and appurtenances of it, and that for one morsel of meat, as in Heb 12:16.

Genesis 25:34

Ver. 34. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles,.... This shows what the pottage was made of, of which see Ge 25:30; and that Jacob gave to Esau more than he asked and bargained for, bread as well as pottage; but neither of them until the bargain was made and swore to, and be had got the birthright secured unto him; as cunning as Esau, and as simple and plain as Jacob were, the latter outwitted the former, and was too crafty for him:

and he did eat, and drink, and rose up, and went his way; following his former course of life, without any remorse of conscience, reflection of mind, or repentance for what he had done; for though he afterwards carefully sought the blessing with tears he had parted with, yet not until his father was upon his deathbed, Heb 12:17;

thus Esau despised [his] birthright; by setting it at so mean a price, and by not repenting of it when he had so done; having no regard especially to spiritual blessings, to the Messiah, and to the heavenly inheritance, eternal glory and happiness by Christ: the Jerusalem Targum adds,

"and he despised his part in the world to come, and denied the resurrection of the dead;"

and the Targum of Jonathan on Ge 25:29 says, that

"on that day he committed five transgressions; he performed strange worship (or committed idolatry), he shed innocent blood, he lay with a virgin betrothed, he denied the life of the world to come (or a future state), and despised the birthright;"

which confirms the character the apostle gives of him, that he was a fornicator and a profane person, Heb 12:16.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 26:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 26

This chapter treats of Isaac's removal to Gerar, occasioned by a famine, Ge 26:1; of the Lord's appearance to him there, advising him to sojourn in that place, and not go down to Egypt; renewing the covenant he had made with Abraham, concerning giving that country to him and his seed, Ge 26:2; of what happened unto him at Gerar on account of his wife, Ge 26:7; of Isaac's great prosperity and success, which drew the envy of the Philistines upon him, Ge 26:12; of his departure from hence to the valley of Gerar, at the instance of Abimelech; and of the contentions between his herdsmen, and those of Gerar, about wells of water, which caused him to remove to Beersheba,
Ge 26:16; of the Lord's appearance to him there, renewing the above promise to him, where he built an altar, pitched his tent, and his servants dug a well, Ge 26:24; of Abimelech's coming to him thither, and making a covenant with him, Ge 26:26; which place had its name from the oath then made, and the well there dug,
Ge 26:32; and lastly, of the marriage of Esau, which was a great grief to Isaac and Rebekah, Ge 26:34.

Ver. 1. And there was a famine in the land,.... In the land of Canaan, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it;

besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham; of which see
Ge 12:10; which was an hundred years before this;

and Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines, unto Gerar; where his father Abraham had sojourned before he was born; and therefore the present king of this place can scarce be thought to be the same Abimelech that was king of it in Abraham's time; but it is highly probable that this Abimelech was the son of the former king, and that this was a common name to the kings of Gerar or the Philistines, as Pharaoh was to the kings of Egypt. Isaac came to this place from Lahairoi, where he had dwelt many years, see Ge 24:62; which was at or near Beersheba, and was about eight miles from Gerar {a}.

{a} Bunting's Travels, p. 70.

Genesis 26:2

Ver. 2. And the Lord appeared unto him,.... In a vision or dream, when he was at Gerar:

and said, go not down into Egypt; as his father had done in the like case, and where Isaac thought to have gone, and the rather, as that was a fruitful country; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and it was in the heart of Isaac to go down into Egypt, and the Lord appeared unto him, &c."

and charged him not to go thither; partly to try his faith in him, and dependence on his providence for support in this time of famine, and partly lest he should think of continuing there, and be unmindful of the promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham's seed:

dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of; even the land of Canaan, which he was now about to give him on account of the promise of it to Abraham and his seed, and to renew it to him and to his seed.

Genesis 26:3

Ver. 3. Sojourn in this land,.... The land of Canaan, where he now was; either in Gerar, which though in the land of the Philistines was a part of Canaan, the place of his present residence; or in any other part of it he should be directed to: however, by this it appears it was the pleasure of God that he should not go out of that land, and which Abraham his father was careful of, that he should not while he lived; see Ge 24:6:

and I will be with thee, and I will bless thee; with his presence; with protection from all enemies; with a supply of all the necessaries of life; and with all spiritual blessings, and with eternal life and happiness:

for unto thee, and to thy seed, will I give these countries; inhabited at that time by the Philistines, Canaanites, and the several tribes of them:

and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; concerning the promise of the Messiah from him and his seed, the gift of the land of Canaan to them, and the multiplication of them,
Ge 22:16.

Genesis 26:4

Ver. 4. And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven,.... Meaning in the line of Jacob especially, if not only; from whom sprung twelve patriarchs, the heads of so many tribes, which in process of time became very numerous, even as the stars of heaven:

and I will give unto thy seed all these countries; which is repeated from Ge 26:3 for the greater confirmation of it:

and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; meaning in the Messiah that should spring from him, see Ge 22:18.

Genesis 26:5

Ver. 5. Because that Abraham obeyed my voice,.... In all things, and particularly in offering up his son at his command:

and kept my charge; whatever was given him in charge to observe; this, as Aben Ezra thinks, is the general, of which the particulars follow:

my commandments, my statutes, and my laws; whether moral, ceremonial, or civil and judicial; all and everyone which God enjoined him, he was careful to observe. Here seems to be something wanting, for the words are not to be joined with the preceding, as if Abraham's obedience was the cause of the above promises made to Isaac, or to himself: but this is mentioned rather as an example to Isaac, and to stir him up to do the like, as if it was said, because or seeing that Abraham thy father did so and so, do thou likewise.

Genesis 26:6

Ver. 6. And Isaac dwelt in Gerar. Continued there; in this he was obedient to the command and will of God.

Genesis 26:7

Ver. 7. And the men of the place asked [him] of his wife,.... The inhabitants of Gerar inquired of Isaac who she was, whether she was his wife or not, or in what relation she stood in to him; this was not a mere civil inquiry, but what arose from the prevalence of lust in them towards her; and yet it was under some restraint, they being not so abandoned to their lusts as to exercise them upon any; not upon a man's wife, the sin of adultery being detestable to them, though that of fornication was made no account of by them:

and he said, she [is] my sister; herein imitating his father Abraham in his infirmity and unbelief, who in the same place had made such an answer to a like question concerning Sarah, Ge 20:1; and which if Isaac knew of, as probably he did, one would wonder that he should fall into the same evil, and especially when he had not so much to say to support his assertion as Abraham had; for Rebekah was not so near akin to him as Sarah was to Abraham; and though cousins might be called sisters, yet this was mere dissimulation to call his wife sister, and was done with an intention to deceive, and therefore not justifiable:

for he feared to say, [she is] my wife; which was the real truth; but the fear of men, which brings a snare, led him to this, and from which good men are not always free:

lest, [said he], that is, within himself, in his own mind; and so the Targum of Jonathan, he thought in his heart;

the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; that they might marry her, one or other of them; for, it seems, they had not so great a sense of the sin of murder, as of adultery:

because she [was] fair to look upon; which he feared would be a temptation to them, and stir up their impure desires after her, in order to gratify which he was afraid they would kill him; Rebekah retaining her beauty still, though she had been married in all probability forty years or more, see Ge 24:16.

Genesis 26:8

Ver. 8. And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time,.... Perhaps some years: for though it is in the original, "when days were prolonged to him there" {b}; yet days are sometimes put for years:

that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window; in his own palace, near to which, in all likelihood, were the apartments that Isaac and Rebekah dwelt in; and this he did accidentally, and not out of curiosity, or with any intention to observe or pry into the behaviour and conduct of these two persons one towards the other:

and saw, and, behold, Isaac [was] sporting with Rebekah his wife; laughing and joking with her, which by his motions and gestures, and the airs and freedoms he took, Abimelech could perceive were such as were not usual between brothers and sisters, though honest and lawful between man and wife; such as embracing her in his arms, and frequently kissing her, and the like.

{b} Mymyh Mv wl wkra yk "cum prolongati essent ei ibi dies", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt.

Genesis 26:9

Ver. 9. And Abimelech called Isaac,.... Sent a messenger to desire him to come to him:

and said, behold, of a surety she [is] thy wife: and then perhaps told him of what he had observed that passed between them; which was a clear proof that they must be man and wife, or he would never have took such liberties with her:

and how saidst thou, she [is] my sister? what reason hadst thou for it? what could induce thee to say so?

and Isaac said unto him; not alleging, as Abraham did, any relation that was between them before marriage:

because I said; that is, within himself, for, he did not speak it out to others:

lest I die for her; for her sake, that another might have and enjoy her; it was fear of losing his life that led him to take such a step, and give out that she was his sister.

Genesis 26:10

Ver. 10. And Abimelech said, what is this thou hast done unto us?.... By entertaining suspicions and jealousies of us as bad men, and by exposing us to the temptation of committing iniquity; why hast thou dealt thus with us, and what have we done, or is in our character, that thou shouldest act after this manner?

one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife; it is much one or other had not before this time, not looking upon it criminal to have to do with a single woman, when they would not have meddled with another man's wife, Jarchi interprets this of Abimelech himself; and so the Targum of Jonathan, who perhaps had been thinking of taking her to his bed; and was "within a little" {c}, as the word for "lightly" may be rendered, of accomplishing his design:

and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us: been the occasion of their committing the sin of adultery, which was heinous in the eyes of Heathens, and of bringing on them the punishment due thereunto.

{c} jemk "parum abfuit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Genesis 26:11

Ver. 11. And Abimelech charged all [his] people,.... All his subjects throughout his kingdom, and particularly the inhabitants of Gerar, and more especially his courtiers and servants about him:

saying, he that toucheth this man or his wife; that does any injury to one either by words or deeds, or behaves immodestly to the other, or attempts to ravish her; this being sometimes used as a modest expression carnal knowledge of a woman; or that does either of them any harm or hurt in any respect whatever:

shall surely be put to death; this severe edict he published, in order to deter his subjects from using them ill, to which they might be provoked by Isaac's dissimulation, and by his evil suspicions of them.

Genesis 26:12

Ver. 12. Then, Isaac sowed in that land,.... In the land of Gerar; after matters were settled between him and Abimelech, and he had ordered his servants to do him no hurt, he sowed wheat or barley, or some such grain:

and received in the same year an hundred fold; in which he sowed it, and which many take to be a year of famine; and so it was the more extraordinary, that there should be such a plentiful crop produced on Isaac's ground, when there was such barrenness elsewhere: but it does not seem likely that it should be the same year of famine in which Isaac came to Gerar, since he is said to have been them a "long time",
Ge 26:8; before this sowing and plenty upon it were. This increase is far from being incredible; for Pliny {d}, besides instances he gives of an hundred fold, says, that in a field at Byzacium in Africa one bushel produced one hundred and fifty bushels; and from the same place, the deputy of Augustus there sent him from one grain very few less than four hundred, and to Nero three hundred stalks from, one grain. Herodotus {e} speaks of a country, near to the place where the Euphrates runs into the Tigris, on which the city Ninus was, which nowhere failed of producing two hundred fold, and the better sort of it even three hundred; see Mt 13:23:

and the Lord blessed him; and prospered and succeeded all his endeavours; and this was the true reason of the fertility of the land he manured and sowed.

{d} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 10. {e} Clio sive, l. 1. c. 193.

Genesis 26:13

Ver. 13. And the man waxed great,.... In substance, as well as in honour and glory, among men;

and went forward; in the world, and in the increase of worldly things:

and grew until he became very great: as he must needs be, since Abraham his father left him all that he had, who was very rich in cattle, in gold and silver, and had been increasing ever since; and especially since he came to Gerar, where he was gradually increasing, until he became to be exceeding great indeed, even the greatest man in all the country, yea, greater than King Abimelech himself, as it seems, from Ge 26:16.

Genesis 26:14

Ver. 14. For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds,.... Many flocks of sheep, and herds of cattle, of oxen, asses and camels, in which the riches of men in those times and countries chiefly lay:

and great store of servants; to look after his flocks and herds, and fields; or "much husbandry" {f}; Jarchi interprets it much tillage; as, much land, many farms, fields, and vineyards, and the like; to cultivate which required many servants:

and the Philistines envied him; for his prosperity and success, that his land should bring forth so plentifully, and that he should have such an increase of flocks, and herds, and servants, which made him so very significant great, and honourable.

{f} hbr hdbe "cultura multa", Drusius; "proventus multus", Pagninus; "servitium multum", Schmidt; gewrgia polla, Sept.

Genesis 26:15

Ver. 15. For all the wells which his father's servants had digged, in the days of Abraham his father,.... For the watering of his flocks and herds, see Ge 21:25:

the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth; that they might be of no use; and this they did through envy to him, and is mentioned as a proof of it.

Genesis 26:16

Ver. 16. And Abimelech said unto Isaac, go from us,.... Which was either said by way of advice, consulting Isaac's good, and the peace of his own kingdom; or else by way of command, enjoining him to depart, having a secret envy to him himself, or at least was jealous of his growing power and wealth:

for thou art much mightier than we; in riches or goods, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; or in number; his family being greatly increased, his servants numerous, many being born of them in his house; Abraham had three hundred and eighteen trained servants in his house, Ge 14:14; how many Isaac had is not certain; they must be a large number for Abimelech to fear anything from them. Some choose to interpret the words, thou hast increased, or thou hast got much from us, and by us; and therefore it is high time for thee to be gone from us.

Genesis 26:17

Ver. 17. And Isaac departed thence,.... At once, peaceably and quietly, though to his loss and disadvantage, without taking himself either to argument or arms, in favour of himself; he departed immediately, as soon as he perceived his abode was disagreeable to the king and his people; which gives us a very agree, able idea of the calm and peaceable disposition of Isaac:

and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there; at some distance from the city of Gerar, as Jarchi observes. Josephus {g} says it was not far from it; but how far is not certain; very probably it was not out of the country, though on the borders of it. Some render it, "the brook of Gerar" {h}, and interpret it, that he pitched his tent, and dwelt by it; and the word used does signify a brook as well as a valley; and there was a brook of Gerar, which Sozomen {i} makes mention of.

{g} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 18. sect. 2. {h} rrg lxnb "ad torrentem Gerarae", V. L. {i} Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 32.

Genesis 26:18

Ver. 18. And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father,.... This seems to refer to the same wells made mention of in Ge 26:15, since it follows,

for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham; these were what Abraham's servants had dug, when he lived at Gerar, and which the Philistines durst not stop during his life; but when he was dead and particularly out of envy to Isaac his son, whom they observed to prosper much, they stopped them up, that he might have no benefit by them; for otherwise they would scarcely have stopped them, if he had not been upon the spot, but would have made use of them themselves. The opening of them again by Isaac seems to be done, as Jarchi observes, before he removed from Gerar to the valley, though it is here related; unless it can be thought that Abraham dwelt in the valley also, and had dug wells there, which the Philistines stopped up after his death, and Isaac opened when he came there; and if so one would think he should have had no occasion to have dug other new wells, as we find he afterwards did; besides, this seems to be out of the jurisdiction of the Philistines, and not in their power to have stopped them here; it seems therefore most probable that these were Abraham's wells at Gerar, and not in the valley. Origen {k} makes mention of wonderful wells being dug in the land of the Philistines by righteous men, meaning Abraham and Isaac; and particularly in Askelon which, according to some, is the same with Gerar; See Gill on "Ge 20:1";

and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them; which he did out of respect to his father, to preserve the memory of his name, as well as to make his title and claim to them the more dear and certain.

{k} Contr. Cels. l. 4. p. 193.

Genesis 26:19

Ver. 19. And Isaac's servants digged in the valley,.... In the valley of Gerar, as the Septuagint version expresses it:

and found there a well of springing water; or "living water" {l}, which continually flows, as Aben Ezra rightly interprets it: hence this phrase is used of the perpetual and ever living graces of the Spirit of God, **Joh 4:10**.

{l} Myyx Mym "aquarum viventium", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius.

Genesis 26:20

Ver. 20. And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen,.... About the well which was dug in the valley; and this shows it was near Gerar or at least was upon the border of the country, and so it was a disputable point to whom it belonged:

saying, the water [is] ours; though the well was dug by Isaac's servants, yet they laid claim to the water, pretending it was their ground, being on their borders:

and he called the name of the well Esek: which signifies "contention": the reason of the name follows,

because they strove with him; wrangled, contended, and disputed with him about whose right it was.

Genesis 26:21

Ver. 21. And they digged another well,.... That is, Isaac's servants:

and strove for that also; the herdsmen of Gerar disputed their right to that also, and strove to get it from them:

and he called the name of it Sitnah; which signifies "hatred", it being out of hatred and malice to him that they gave him so much trouble; from this word Satan has his name, and these men were of a diabolical spirit, envious, spiteful, and malicious.

Genesis 26:22

Ver. 22. And he removed from thence,.... A little further from their border, to cut off all pretence, and put a stop to all dispute and controversy for the future:

and digged another well; in the place he removed to:

and for that they strove not; it being at such a distance from their border, they could not have the face to claim any right to it:

and he called the name of it Rehoboth; which signifies broad and spacious, places, enlargements:

for now hath the Lord made room for us; for himself, his family, his herds, and flocks, and freed them, from those difficulties under which they laboured, and the straits into which they were brought through the contention of the herdsmen of Gerar:

and we shall be fruitful in the land; his flocks and his herds increase, having good pasturage and watering for them, and so he and his family be in prosperous circumstances.

Genesis 26:23

Ver. 23. And he went up from thence to Beersheba. From the place he last, removed unto Beersheba; the famine being over, he returns to the place where he and his rather formerly lived, Ge 21:33.

Genesis 26:24

Ver. 24. And the Lord appeared to him in the same night,.... The first night he came to Beersheba, in a dream or vision, in which the Lord was represented as speaking to him:

and said, I [am] the God of Abraham thy father; though he was dead, he remembered the covenant he made with him, and the promises he made unto him: and besides, though Abraham was dead as to his body, yet alive in his soul; for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, Mt 22:32:

fear not; any future famine, nor want of any good things, nor any enemies, the Philistines his neighbours, who had driven him from their country, and had harassed him from place to place:

for I [am] with thee, and will bless thee; and if God is with his people, they have nothing to fear from men; and if he blesses them, they are blessed, and no curse can light upon them:

and multiply thy seed, for my servant Abraham's sake; who was a faithful, diligent, servant of his; whose service was, not forgotten by him, but would be rewarded in a way of grace, though not of debt.

Genesis 26:25

Ver. 25. And he builded an altar there,.... At Beersheba, where his father Abraham had planted a grove before, and very probably had built an altar also, though it might not be now standing, Ge 21:33;

and called upon the name of the Lord; and gave him thanks for all his mercies to him; for the care he had taken of him, and provision he had made for him and his during the time of famine; and for the protection and preservation of him in Gerar; and for his deliverance of him out of the hands of envious, malicious, and unreasonable men; as well as prayed unto him for present and future mercies, for providential care of him and his; and for communications of special grace, and for meetness for eternal glory; all which every good man daily prays to God for:

and pitched his tent there: intending to take up his abode and settle there:

and there Isaac's servants digged a well; in order to find water for the family, and for the flocks and herds; and which was necessary to be done, as they perceived their master designed to fix his habitation here; wells of water being of great moment and consequence in those hot and desert countries, as the above contentions about them abundantly show.

Genesis 26:26

Ver. 26. Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar,.... After Isaac was settled at Beersheba, and was still increasing in his family and substance, of which Abimelech very probably was informed; and fearing lest he should resent his being sent out of his country by him, and the ill treatment he met with afterwards from the herdmen of Gerar in the valley about the wells, and should employ his riches and power against him, and fall upon him, and take his kingdom from him, he took a journey from Gerar to Beersheba, to pay Isaac a visit, and make a covenant with him: and

Ahuzzath one of his friends; Jarchi and Jonathan take Ahuzzath for an appellative, and interpret it of a collection or company of his friends, which the king took along with him to attend him in his journey: but it seems rather to be the proper name of a man, who was very intimate and familiar with the king, and always kept him company, and so went along with him to Beersheba:

and Phichol the chief captain of his army; his general, as the other was his principal counsellor or prime minister. There was one of this name, and in the same office, in the days of Abraham, and who attended the then present king, who also was called Abimelech on a like account as here, Ge 21:22; but as the one affair was at the distance of an hundred years or more from the other, it is probable, that as this Abimelech might be the son of that Abimelech that lived in the times of Abraham, so this Phichol might be the son of him that lived then, and who succeeded his father in his office; though some think that Phichol is the name of an office, and signifies "the mouth of all", by whom the addresses of the people were made to the king; but this is not likely, since he is described by his office as general of the army; which is very different from the master of the ceremonies, or anything of that kind, and plainly shows it to be the name of a man.

Genesis 26:27

Ver. 27. And Isaac said unto them, wherefore come ye to me,.... What is the meaning of this visit? what has brought you hither? it cannot be from affection and friendship to me:

seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? the latter he mentions as a proof of the former; they envied his prosperity, and hated him on that account, and therefore expelled him their country, or at least would not suffer him to dwell among them; and still more glaring proofs were given of the hatred of the men of Gerar to him, not only by stopping up his father's wells, but by striving and contending with him about those he dug in the valley after he was gone from them; one of which he called "Sitnah", from their hatred of him.

Genesis 26:28

Ver. 28. And they said, we saw certainly that the Lord was with thee,.... Not only while he was among them, by the fruitfulness of the land he sowed, by the increase of his family, his flocks and herds, but also since he was gone from them, in the valley of Gerar, and now in Beersheba:

and we said; one to another, assembled in privy council, in which this affair was talked over and debated:

let there now be an oath betwixt us, [even] betwixt us and thee: what was between us and thy father, or between thine ancestors and ours, let it be

renewed and confirmed before us; so Onkelos and Jarchi; see
Ge 21:23:

and let us make a covenant with thee; the articles of which follow.

Genesis 26:29

Ver. 29. That thou wilt do us no hurt,.... Neither to our persons nor properties, to our kingdom and subjects, by invading our land, and seizing on our kingdom, all which was feared from Isaac's growing wealth and power:

as we have not touched thee; not done the least injury to him, to his person, family, and substance, but suffered him to go away with all he had untouched:

and as we have done unto thee, nothing but good; by royal authority, or by the command and direction of the king and his nobles; for as for the stopping up the wells his father's servants had dug, and the controversy that was about those in the vale, and the trouble Isaac had on that account, these things were not by the order of the king and council, and perhaps without their knowledge:

and have sent thee away in peace; no one being suffered to do any injury to him, or molest him in carrying off everything that belonged unto him:

thou [art] now blessed of the Lord; so it appeared by the prosperity he was attended with, and by the Lord's protection of him, and the constant and continual favours he was bestowing on him; and this induced Abimelech and his nobles to seek to cultivate friendship, and be on good terms with him. De Dieu gives a different sense of these words, and considers them in the form of an oath or imprecation,

"if thou shouldest do us any hurt, seeing we have not touched thee, &c. be thou now accursed of the Lord,"

taking the word used in a contrary sense, as in **Job 1:5**
1Ki 21:10.

Genesis 26:30

Ver. 30. And he made them a feast,.... Made a feast like a king, for the king and his grandees; he treated them in a generous way, according to their dignity, and agreeable to his own disposition and substance:

and they did eat and drink; freely, cheerfully, and in a friendly manner; for both having spoken their minds, they agreed to bury all former things oblivion, and live in peace and friendship; though this feast was not on account of the covenant made between them, as is observed by some interpreters, but as an hospitable act, and a token of good will; for the covenant and the oath confirming it seem to be made next morning, as follows:

Genesis 26:31

Ver. 31. And they rose up betimes in the morning,.... Abimelech and his friends, in order to return home, and Isaac to take his leave of them, and both to make the covenant between them in form, and confirm it by an oath, for which the morning was the fitter time; when the mind is quite free and composed, and attentive to what is done, as so solemn a transaction should be performed with the utmost attention and seriousness:

and swore one to another; to live in amity and friendship, and not distress and disturb each other:

and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace; he took his leave of them in a friendly manner, and they departed well pleased with the reception they had met with, and the success they had had, having agreed on and settled articles of peace to mutual satisfaction.

Genesis 26:32

Ver. 32. And it came to pass the same day,.... That the above things were transacted:

that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged; they had dug it before Abimelech came to Isaac, but they had not had an opportunity of acquainting him with it until he was gone, and then they came to give him an account of it, what sort of a well it was, and how it answered their expectations and wishes; and which in those countries was a very great blessing, and served very much to recommend a place to dwell in:

and said unto him, we have found water; not only had dug a well, but they had found plenty of water, and that which was good; or otherwise it would not have been worth while to have troubled Isaac with the account of it.

Genesis 26:33

Ver. 33. And he called it Sheba,.... Which, according to Jerom, signifies "fulness", as if it had its name from the abundance of water in it; but rather it signifies an "oath", and was so called from the oath, which he and Abimelech had just took to one another; and these circumstances meeting together, the taking of the oath, and the account of the well,

therefore the name of the city is Beersheba unto this day; that is, the well of the oath: it had been so called by Abraham an hundred years ago or more; but now upon this occasion it was renewed and confirmed, and so continued until the times of Moses, and many ages after.

Genesis 26:34

Ver. 34. And Esau was forty years old,.... The same age his father was of when he married, Ge 25:20:

when he took to wife Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite; Josephus {m} makes her to be the same with Aholibamah; but her father's name was Zibeon, and an Hivite, and must therefore be another person, not only the name being different, but the tribe, Ge 36:2:

and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite; whom Aben Ezra takes to be the same with Adah, and so does Josephus; and in this they may be right, since the name of her father, and his nation or tribe, agree, Ge 36:2. The fathers of these two women are represented by Josephus as men of great power and authority among the Canaanites, as very probably they were. Esau had another wife of the same name with this last, but she was daughter of Ishmael, and sister of Nebajoth, Ge 36:3; for he had more wives than those; these were his two first, who very probably were not taken together, but one after another, though it may be but at a short distance from each other.

{m} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 18. sect. 4.

Genesis 26:35

Ver. 35. Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac, and to Rebekah. The marriage of them itself was a trouble to them, it being contrary to their will that any of their children should marry with the Canaanites, and those the worst sort of them, the Hittites; it having been the care of Abraham, the father of Isaac, that his son should not marry with them, and laid a strict injunction on his servant not to take a wife for his son from among them; and which was an example to be followed in later times, and which Esau very likely was not ignorant of: and besides this, the women themselves he took for wives were very disagreeable on all accounts, partly because of their religion, being idolaters, and partly by reason of their temper and behaviour, being proud, haughty, and disobedient; as all the three Targums intimate.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 27:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 27

In this chapter we are informed, that Isaac, being old and dim sighted, sent for Esau to get him venison, that he might eat of it, and bless him before he died, Ge 27:1; that Rebekah hearing of this formed a scheme for Jacob to get the blessing before him, which she communicated to Jacob, to which he at first objected, but afterwards complied,
Ge 27:5; and also how that he succeeded in the attempt, and got the blessing from his brother, Ge 27:18; and that this was confirmed to him by his father, even when his mistake was discovered upon Esau's coming, Ge 27:30; which occasioned a most bitter cry in Esau, a severe reflection on his brother, and an earnest expostulation with his father for a blessing, which he obtained, Ge 27:34; the consequence of this were hatred in Esau to Jacob, and an intention to kill him, which Rebekah hearing of, advised Jacob to flee to her brother Laban,
Ge 27:41; and to facilitate this, complains to Isaac of Esau's wives, and suggests, that should Jacob marry among the same people, it would add to the distress of their lives; and therefore hints it to him, that it was necessary and proper he should go to her family for a wife, Ge 27:46; and whether Isaac sent him, as the following chapter shows.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old,.... He is generally thought to be about one hundred and thirty seven years of age at this time, which was just the age of his brother Ishmael when he died, Ge 25:16; and might put him in mind of his own death as near at hand; though if he was no older, he lived after this forty three years, for he lived to be one hundred and eighty years old, Ge 35:28:

and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see; which circumstance is mentioned, not only as a sign of old age, and as common to it, but for the sake of the following history, and as accounting for it, that he should not know Jacob when he blessed him; and this was so ordered in Providence, that by means of it the blessing might be transferred to him, which otherwise in all probability would not have been done, if Isaac had had his sight:

he called Esau his eldest son; who though he was married, and had been married thirty seven years at this time, yet still lived in his father's house, or near him; for as he was born when his father was sixty years of age, and he married when he himself was forty, and his father must be an hundred, so if Isaac was now one hundred and thirty seven, Esau must have been married thirty seven years; and though he had disobliged his father by his marriage, yet he retained a natural affliction for him; nor had he turned him out of doors, nor had he any thoughts of disinheriting him; but on the contrary intended to bestow the blessing on him as the firstborn, for which reason he is here called "his eldest son":

and said unto him, my son; owning the relation, expressing a tender affection for him, and signifying he had something further to say unto him:

and he said unto him, behold, [here am] I; by which Esau intimated he was ready to hear what his father had to say to him, and was willing to obey him. The Targum of Jonathan says, this was the fourteenth of Nisan, when Isaac called Esau to him.

Genesis 27:2

Ver. 2. And he said, behold, now I am old,....
See Gill on "Ge 27:1":

I know not the day of my death; how soon it will be; everyone knows he must die, but the day and hour he knows not, neither young nor old; and though young men may promise themselves many days and years, an old man cannot, but must or should live in the constant expectation of death.

Genesis 27:3

Ver. 3. Now therefore, take, I pray thee, thy weapons,.... Or "thy vessels", or "instruments" {n}, his instruments of hunting: as

thy quiver and thy bow; the former is the vessel or instrument, in which arrows were put and carried, and has its name in the Hebrew language from its being hung at the girdle, though another word is more commonly used for a quiver; and Onkelos and Jarchi interpret this of a sword; and which is not disapproved of by Aben Ezra and Ben Melech, who explain it either a quiver or a sword; and the latter was as necessary for hunting as the former, see Ge 27:40; and such a sword may be meant, as Mr. Fuller observes {o}, which we call a "hanger" (i.e. a small sword often worn by seamen); and of the bow being an instrument of hunting, not anything need be said:

and go out to the field, and take me [some] venison; this does not necessarily intend what we commonly call so, but anything hunted in the field, as hares, wild goats, &c. and indeed the latter seems to be what Isaac loved, by the preparation Rebekah afterwards made.

{n} Kylk "instrumenta tua", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "vasa tua", Vatablus. {o} Miscell. Sacr. l. 1. c. 17.

Genesis 27:4

Ver. 4. And make me savoury meat, such as I love,.... For, though he had lost his sight, he had not lost his taste, nor his appetite for savoury food:

and bring [it] to me, that I may eat; this, was enjoined to make trial of his filial affection and duty to him, before he blessed him:

that my soul may bless thee before I die; not only that he might do it with cheerfulness and vivacity, having eaten a comfortable meal, and being refreshed with it, but that having had proof of his son's duty and affection to him, he might confer the blessing on him heartily: this blessing was not an ordinary and common one, but what parents used to bestow upon their children at the time of their death, or a little before it; and good men oftentimes did this under a spirit of prophecy, declaring what would be the case and circumstances of their children in time to come; and particularly the principal part of the blessing of Isaac, which Abraham had entailed upon him by divine direction, and he thought to have entailed on Esau his firstborn, was the promise of the descent of the Messiah from him and his seed, and of the possession of the land of Canaan by them: and this shows that Rebekah had not made known the oracle to Isaac, that the "elder should serve the younger", Ge 25:23: or, if she had, he had forgot, or did not understand it, and might think it respected not the persons of his sons, but their posterity; or however, from a natural affection for Esau his firstborn, and that the blessing and inheritance might go in the common channel, he was desirous he should have it; and he might also be ignorant of Esau's having sold his birthright to Jacob, or that he made no account of it.

Genesis 27:5

Ver. 5. And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son,.... She might hear Isaac call to him by one means or another, that he had sent for him, or might see him go into his father's tent, and might stand at the door of it and listen to hear what he said to him; though the Targum of Jonathan says, she heard by the Holy Spirit;

and Esau went to the field to hunt [for] venison, [and] to bring [it]; as his father directed and enjoined him; and thus it was ordered by divine Providence, that there might be time and opportunity for Jacob to get the blessing before his broker.

Genesis 27:6

Ver. 6. And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son,.... Who was in the tent with her, and for whom she had the strongest affection:

saying, behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother; heard the conversation that passed between them, and particularly what Isaac had given in charge to Esau,

saying, as follows:

Genesis 27:7

Ver. 7. Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat,.... Fetch him venison out of the field, and dress it in a savoury manner, and bring it to him:

that I may eat, and bless thee before the Lord before my death; the phrase "before the Lord" is here added, which yet perhaps might be expressed by Isaac, though before omitted by the historian, and has a very considerable emphasis in it; for this solemn blessing was given not only in the presence of the Lord, and before him as a witness, but by calling upon him, and praying for direction in it, and then pronouncing it in his name and by his authority, he approving of it, so that it was ever after irrevocable.

Genesis 27:8

Ver. 8. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice,.... Hearken to what I am about to say, and do

according to that which I command thee, in every particular; she required of him filial obedience to all that she enjoined him; which, though not difficult to be performed, she was aware Jacob would make objections to, as he did; and therefore she is so pressing and peremptory in her injunctions, as well knowing it was respecting an affair of the greatest moment and importance.

Genesis 27:9

Ver. 9. Go now to the flock,.... To the flock he had the care of, and that immediately, for the case required haste:

and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; two young kids that were fat, as Jonathan and Ben Melech interpret it; and, though two may seem to be too much to be dressed for Isaac only; it may be observed, that Rebekah intended only to take out some of the choicest and most tender and delicate parts of them, and which would best suit her purpose, and which she would make most like to venison; and the rest could be disposed of for the use of the family: and, if it should be questioned whether Rebekah had a right to do this without her husband's leave, the Jewish writers have an answer ready; that, in her dowry or matrimonial contract, Isaac had allowed her to take two kids of the goats every day {p}:

and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth; such as would pass with him for venison: Jarchi says, that the taste of a kid is like the taste of a young roe or fawn; however, by seasoning, the natural taste might be altered so as not to be distinguished, as we find it was; and such as have the best skill in venison may be imposed upon and deceived by more ways than one, as well as Isaac was.

{p} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 65. fol. 57. 4. Jarchi in loc.

Genesis 27:10

Ver. 10. And thou shall bring [it] to thy father,.... For venison; and as if he was Esau that brought it:

that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death; to whom she knew by the divine oracle the blessing belonged, Ge 25:23, as well as by virtue of the sale of the birthright to him by his brother, Ge 25:33, and through Esau's forfeiting of it by marrying with the Canaanites, Ge 26:34; in these her sentiments she was right, but wrong in the ways and means she took to get it for him.

Genesis 27:11

Ver. 11. And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother,.... Being timorous lest he should do an ill thing, and be accounted a deceiver, and bring a curse upon himself:

behold, Esau my brother [is] a hairy man; covered all over with hair; as with a hairy garment; so he was born, and so he continued, and no doubt his hair increased, Ge 25:25:

and I [am] a smooth man: without hair, excepting in those parts where it is common for all men to have it.

Genesis 27:12

Ver. 12. My father peradventure will feel me,.... For, though he could not see him, and so discern whether he had any hair or no on him, yet, suspecting him by his voice, he might call him to him to feel him, as he did; for Jacob understood his mother right, that he was to represent his brother Esau in the transaction of this affair:

and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; one that imposes upon another and causes him to err, leads him to say or do wrong things: and not only appear as one, but be really one, and even a very great one, as the doubling of the radical letters in the word shows; yea, the worst of deceivers, a deceiver of a parent, of one that was both aged and blind:

and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing; and he might justly fear, that should he be found out, it would so provoke his father, that instead of blessing him, he would curse him, see
De 27:18.

Genesis 27:13

Ver. 13. And his mother said unto him, upon me [be] thy curse, my son,.... That is, if thy father should curse thee, which I am well assured he will not, let the curse, be what it will, fall upon me, and not on thee; I shall bear the blame and the punishment: this she said in the strong faith of the divine oracle, being fully persuaded her scheme would succeed, and that Jacob would have the blessing, and therefore she feared no curse falling upon her or her son; and this she said to encourage him: the Targum of Onkelos is,

"to me it has been said in prophecy, that the curses shall not come upon thee, my son:"

only obey my voice, and go fetch me [them]; the two fat kids of the goats from the flock.

Genesis 27:14

Ver. 14. And he went and fetched and brought [them] to his mother,.... Being satisfied with what his mother had said, he went to the field where the flock was, and took out of it two young kids, and brought them to his mother; and thus far he did right to obey her commands:

and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved; by picking out proper pieces, and seasoning them well, it was as grateful to him as if it had really been venison, such as he loved.

Genesis 27:15

Ver. 15. And Rebekah took goodly garments of her eldest son Esau,.... Or "desirable" {q} ones, exceeding good ones:

which [were] with her in the house; which she had the care and keeping of, and were wore only on particular occasions: some think these were priestly garments, which belonged to him as the firstborn, and were not in the keeping of his wives, being idolaters, but in his mother's keeping; which is not very probable, yet more likely than that they were, as some Jewish writers {r} say, the garments of Adam the first man, which Esau seeing on Nimrod, greatly desired them, and slew him for them, see Ge 10:10; and hence called desirable garments:

and put them upon Jacob her younger son; that be might be took for Esau, should Isaac examine him and feel his garments, or smell them.

{q} tdmxh "desideratissimis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {r} Targum Jon. in loc. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 65. fol. 58. 1. Pirke Eliezer, c. 24. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 3. 1.

Genesis 27:16

Ver. 16. And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands,.... Upon both his hands, and the whole of them that was bare, that he might appear to be like Esau:

and upon the smooth of his neck; which in Esau was covered with hair as his hands; and Hiscuni, a Jewish writer {s}, observes, that the skins of goats are rough, and like the skin of a hairy man; and so Bochart {t} remarks, that goats' hair in the eastern countries is not much unlike human hair; see 1Sa 19:13.

{s} Apud Drusium in loc. {t} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 51. col. 626.

Genesis 27:17

Ver. 17. And she gave the savoury meat,.... Seasoned and dressed in such a manner as might be taken for venison:

and the bread which she had prepared to eat with it,

into the hand of her son Jacob; the dish of meat in one hand, and the bread in the other.

Genesis 27:18

Ver. 18. And he came unto his father,.... Into the tent and apartment where he was:

and said, my father; to try whether he was awake, and to let him know that he was come, since he could not see him:

and he said, here [am] I; what hast thou to say to me?

who [art] thou, my son? for, from the voice and the quick dispatch made, he suspected it was not his son Esau.

Genesis 27:19

Ver. 19. And Jacob said unto his father, I [am] Esau thy firstborn,.... Had he only said that he was his firstborn, he might have been excused from lying, because he had bought the birthright of Esau; but when he says, I am Esau, he can by no means be excused; for to say he impersonated Esau will not do; besides, he afterwards says he was his very son Esau, Ge 27:24:

I have done according as thou badest me; which is another lie; for Isaac had not bid him bring him any venison, nor go into the field for it, and take it and dress it for him; nor indeed had Jacob done either of these:

arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison; or "hunting" {u}, what he had hunted; another untruth, for it was not venison he brought him, nor anything that was hunted by him: by this it seems that Isaac lay upon a bed or couch through infirmity, and therefore is bid to arise and put himself in a proper posture for eating, which in those times and countries was usually sitting:

that thy soul may bless me; as this was the thing in view, so speaking of it as soon as he came in, and which he desired might be done after his father had eat and drank, might serve to take off the suspicion of his being another person; since this was what Isaac himself proposed to Esau to do; and this he said when there were none else present.

{u} ydyum "de venatione mea", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

Genesis 27:20

Ver. 20. And Isaac said unto his son,.... Supposing him to be Esau:

how [is it] that thou hast found [it] so quickly, my son? that is, the venison; that he had met with it so soon in, the field, and got it dressed and ready in so short a time, which was not common, and seemed to be too little for doing all this in it, and so still created some suspicion of deceit:

and he said, because the Lord thy God brought [it] to me; which was another falsehood; for it was not the Lord, but his mother brought it to him: and this seems to be the most marvellous of all, that so good a man should dare to bring the name of the Lord God into this affair; indeed he does not say the Lord my God, or our God, but thy God; which some think was done on purpose, the more to cover the deceit, because they suppose that Esau, whom Jacob impersonated, was an idolater, but this is not so evident; rather it looks as if Jacob had not the confidence to call the Lord his God with a lie in his mouth.

Genesis 27:21

Ver. 21. And Isaac said unto Jacob, come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son,.... Still suspecting some fraud in the case; and whereas he knew that Esau was a hairy man, and Jacob smooth, he thought by feeling he could discover the imposture, if there was any:

whether thou [be] my very son Esau, or not; which he still pretty much questioned.

Genesis 27:22

Ver. 22. And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father,.... Boldly and without trembling; which he could the better do, as his father could not see him, and so not capable of discerning any change in his countenance or outward behaviour:

and he felt him; some parts of his body, especially his hands:

and said, the voice [is] Jacob's voice; very like it, as if it was the same, as indeed it was:

but the hands [are] the hands of Esau; are like them, being hairy as they; or, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem,

"the feeling of the hands is as the feeling of the hands of Esau;"

they feel like them.

Genesis 27:23

Ver. 23. And he discerned him not,.... As he could not see, he could make no judgment by that sense; and, though he had his hearing, and thought the voice was like Jacob's, he might imagine there might be an alteration in Esau's voice, coming in haste and weary from the fields; yet, as there could not be any deception in his feeling, he thought it safest to trust to that, as it follows:

because his hands were hairy as his brother Esau's hands; which could not in a short time become so naturally; it was more reasonable to think that Esau's voice should be altered and become like Jacob's, than that Jacob's hands should become like Esau's:

so he blessed him; or intended and determined within himself to bless him, for the blessing was not given till afterwards; unless this is to be understood of a common blessing, congratulating him on the quick dispatch he made, and the great success he met with; and after this gave him the patriarchal blessing, which as yet he had not, being not thoroughly satisfied of him, as appears by what follows.

Genesis 27:24

Ver. 24. And said, [art] thou my very son Esau?.... Still having some doubt on his mind whether he really was so or not, because of his voice:

and he said, I [am]; as for the observation of Jarchi upon this, in order to excuse Jacob from lying, that he does not say, "I am Esau", only "I", it will not do, since it is an answer to Isaac's question, with a design to deceive him; and he intended by it that he should understand him as he did, that he was really Esau.

Genesis 27:25

Ver. 25. And he said, bring [it] near to me,.... Being in a good measure satisfied that it must be Esau that was with him, he agreed that he should set his savoury meat before him he had prepared and brought to him:

and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee; this showed that as yet he had not blessed him, at least that the main and principal blessing was yet to come:

and he brought [it] near to him, and he did eat; set it on a table before him, and guided his hands to it, or fed him with it, and he made a meal of it:

and he brought him wine, and he drank; and so was comfortably refreshed, and in a good temper and disposition of mind to confer the blessing.

Genesis 27:26

Ver. 26. And his father Isaac said unto him,.... After he had eat and drank, and the repast was over, and all were took away:

come near now, and kiss me, my son; which was desired either out of affection to him, excited by this instance of preparing such savoury and agreeable food; or else having some suspicion still, and willing to have more satisfaction before he proceeded further to bless, from the smell of his breath, and of his garments,

Genesis 27:27

Ver. 27. And he came near, and kissed him,.... Jacob came near and kissed Isaac his father:

and he smelled the smell of his raiment; which being not like the smell of a sheep coat, but of a field, might give him more full satisfaction that it was truly Esau:

and he blessed him; with his patriarchal and prophetic blessing, which here begins:

and said, see, the smell of my son [is] as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed; like a field fall of fragrant herbs, flowers, and spices, watered with the dews and rain of heaven, and so made fruitful, which emits a most, delightful odour; this may respect the scent of Esau's clothes, now on Jacob's back, which they received from the fields, which Esau continually frequented; or rather from the odoriferous herbs and fruits which were put among them in the chest, in which Rebekah had laid them up; and it may be, that whereas the goatskins on his hands and neck would be apt to send forth a rank and disagreeable smell, these might be so scented by Rebekah as to prevent that. Some render these words, "see the smell of my son, whom the Lord hath blessed {w}, as the smell of a field"; and so Isaac pronounces him blessed of the Lord, as well as by himself; the sense is the same: as to the smell many interpreters consider this as a type and figure of the acceptance of believers with God, being clothed with the goodly, excellent, and desirable garment of the righteousness of Christ their elder brother, even of their persons, services, and sacrifices; which is indeed truly spiritual and evangelical; but is liable to this objection, that it makes profane Esau a type of Christ. I see not that anything can well be objected to the application of this son of Isaac's to the Messiah himself, whom he may have a special regard unto in this prophetic blessing, reading the words, "the smell of my son [shall be] as the smell of a field": or "my son, whom the Lord hath blessed", and came before with all the blessings of goodness, and in whom all nations shall be blessed, shall be "as the smell of a field"; all whose garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, Ps 45:8, even Isaac's principal son, that should be of his seed, of whom Jacob his present son was a type, and who was to spring from him.

{w} So Junius, Tremellius, Gesner. & Walther. apud Calov.

Genesis 27:28

Ver. 28. Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven,.... Or "shall" or "will give thee" {x}, seeing he was blessed of God, and the blessed seed should spring from him, as well as his posterity should inherit the land of Canaan; for this is said rather by way of prophecy than wish, and so all that follow; and the dew of heaven is the rather mentioned, not only because that makes the earth fruitful on which it plentifully falls, but likewise because the land of Canaan, the portion of Jacob's posterity, much needed it, and had it, for rain fell there but seldom, only twice a year, in spring and autumn; and between these two rains, the one called the former, the other the latter rain, the land was impregnated and made fruitful by plentiful dews; and these signified figuratively both the doctrines and blessings of grace, which all Jacob's spiritual offspring, such as are Israelites indeed, are partakers of, and especially under the Gospel dispensation, see
De 32:2:

and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine; and such the land of Canaan was, a fat and fertile land, abounding with all good things, see **De 8:8**; by which are figured the plenty of Gospel provisions, the word and ordinances, which God has given to his Jacob and Israel in all ages, as he has not given to other people, and especially in the times of the Messiah, Jacob's eminent seed and son, see Ps 147:19.

{x} Kl Ntyw "dabit ergo tibi", Schmidt; so Ainsworth.

Genesis 27:29

Ver. 29. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee,.... Which was literally true in the times of Joshua and the judges, when the Canaanites were conquered and subdued, and those that remained became tributary to the Israelites; and still more so in the times of David, a son of Jacob, in the line of Judah, when the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, Ammonites, and Edomites, became subject to him, his servants and tributaries; and yet more so in the times of the Messiah that was to spring from Jacob, and did, to whom many nations have been already subject, and all will in the latter day, Ps 72:11. And this passage is applied to the Messiah, and his times, by the Jews, in an ancient book {y} of theirs, at least said to be so. The Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it of the children of Esau or the Edomites, and of the children of Keturah; and that of Jerusalem, of the children of Esau, and of Ishmael:

be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee; these seem rather to be the children of Esau, Jacob's brother, and his mother's sons; the Targum of Jerusalem interprets the latter of the sons of Laban, his mother's brother, the Arabians and Syrians; which will be more fully accomplished when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, Re 11:15; who will then appear to be King of kings, and Lord of lords, Re 17:14, even the King of the whole earth:

cursed [be] everyone that curseth thee; it signifies, that those who were the enemies of Jacob, or would be the enemies of the church and people of God, his spiritual Israel, and of the Messiah, would be reckoned the enemies of God, and treated as such;

and blessed [be] he that blesseth thee; and that those that were his friends, and the friends of the people of God, and heartily wish well to the interest of Christ, these should be accounted the friends of God, and be used as such. The same blessing is pronounced on Abraham the grandfather of Jacob, Ge 12:3.

{y} Zohar in Gen. fol. 84. 4.

Genesis 27:30

Ver. 30. And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of, blessing Jacob,.... So that he had the whole entire blessing, and nothing wanting; and takes in blessings of all sorts, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, of which the land of Canaan, and the fruits of it, were typical:

and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father; which no doubt he made haste to do, as soon as he had got the blessing; partly to avoid his brother, whom he might expect to come in every moment, and partly to relate to his mother the success he had met with: or "scarce in going out was gone out" {z}, was just gone out, and that was all; the Targum of Jonathan says, he was gone about two hands' breadths; that is, out of the door of his father's tent, which was a small space indeed. Jarchi interprets this doubling of the word, of the one going out and the other coming in at the same time; but Ainsworth more rightly observes, that it makes the matter the more remarkable, touching God's providence herein:

that Esau his brother came in from his hunting; and not only was come out of the field from hunting, but had been at home some time, and had dressed what he had caught in hunting, and was just coming in with it to his father, as appears from Ge 27:31.

{z} auy auy Ka "tantum, vel vix exeundo exierat", Montanus, Piscator, Vatablus, Schmidt.

Genesis 27:31

Ver. 31. And he also made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father,.... Which was made of real venison, or of creatures taken in hunting, and not like Jacob's, made of other flesh, in imitation of it; for what the Jewish writers {a} say is not to be regarded, that he was hindered from getting true venison, by angels loosing the deer he bound; still less what the Targum of Jonathan says, that he killed a dog, made savoury meat of it, and brought it to his father:

and said unto his father, let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me; this address is made by Esau to his father in a very respectful manner, as became a dutiful son to an aged and honoured parent; who in obedience to his command had prepared agreeable food for him, and now brought it to him, in order to receive his blessing, which he had himself proposed to give him upon it.

{a} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 67. fol. 59. 3.

Genesis 27:32

Ver. 32. And Isaac his father said unto him, who [art] thou?.... Hearing another voice more like Esau's than what he had heard before surprised him, and therefore in haste puts this question:

and he said, I [am] thy son, thy firstborn Esau; all which was true in a sense; he was his son, and he was Esau, and he was his firstborn by nature, but not by right, for he had sold his birthright.

Genesis 27:33

Ver. 33. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly,.... Or "trembled with a great trembling exceedingly" {b}; he was amazed, and astonished, and seized with a trembling all over his body, and with terror and confusion of mind; at the craft of Jacob in getting the blessing; at the disappointment of Esau in losing it; at his own act in blessing Jacob instead of Esau, contrary to his inclination and intention; and at the overruling providence of God in bringing this about in so strange a manner, agreeably to the oracle he had given Rebekah; which now perhaps came fresh into the mind of Isaac, if he had heard it before; and all together threw him into this amazement:

and he said, who? where [is] he; which words spoken in haste, and without order, show the hurry and consternation of mind he was in:

that hath taken venison, and brought [it] me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest; he was here but just now; he was scarce gone out before thou camest in; who, and where is he, that has done this? He knew it must be Jacob that had prepared and brought him food he called venison, which he had eaten sufficiently of, though in the confusion of his mind he puts these questions: and

have blessed him? yea, [and] he shall be blessed; for he now saw clearly that it was according to the divine will that Jacob should be blessed, though his natural affection led him to bless Esau; and no doubt, while he was pronouncing the blessing on Jacob, he felt an uncommon impulse upon his mind, by which he was assured that he was right in blessing him, that it was according to the will of God, was by his direction, and with his approbation; and therefore he here, even after Jacob's deceit was detected, confirms and ratifies it; and this is added, lest any question should be made of the validity of the blessing of Jacob, when it was given through mistake, and got by deceit; but this Isaac did and said knowingly, and by faith, as the apostle says, Heb 11:20.

{b} dam-de hldg hdrx drxyw "contremuit tremore magno usque valde", Montanus; Pagninus, Schmidt.

Genesis 27:34

Ver. 34. And when Esau heard the words of his father,.... That another person had been before him, and got the blessing; and especially when he heard this ratified, and confirmed, and made irrevocable:

he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry; as loud as he possibly could, and in as doleful and hideous a manner as can be imagined; according to the Vulgate Latin version, he roared like a lion:

and said unto his father, bless me, [even] me also, O my father; thou art my father, and I am a child of thine as well as Jacob, show paternal affection to me; give me also a child's blessing, one at least equal to what thou hast given Jacob, if not a greater, as being the firstborn.

Genesis 27:35

Ver. 35. And he said, thy brother came with subtilty,.... The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and so Jarchi, interpret it, "with wisdom", taking it in a good sense, and as excusing the fact; or rather commending it, as if it was wisely and prudently managed; but the word signifies fraud and deceit, and so it must be understood; though it may be Isaac says this, not so much to blame Jacob for what he had done, as to excuse himself to Esau, that he did not intend to give the blessing from him, but that he was imposed upon through the craft and subtilty of his brother, who feigned himself to be Esau; pretending he had been hunting, and had had wonderful success, and had got venison, and had prepared it; and came with goat, skins upon his hands and neck, that he might seem to be hairy as Esau was, and by these artful tricks he had deceived him, and therefore Esau could not blame him for what he had done:

and hath taken away thy blessing; which belonged to him as the firstborn, and he expected to have, and Isaac intended to have given it to him.

Genesis 27:36

Ver. 36. And he said, is not he rightly named Jacob?.... As he was by his parents, and those that were at his birth, because he took his brother by the heel as he came out of his mother's womb; for Jacob signifies "heeler", a supplanter, and was given him to keep up the memory of what he had done, to which Esau here refers:

for he hath supplanted me these two times; to supplant another is to put his foot under the heel of another, in order to trip him up, to which Esau alludes;

but uses the word in a figurative sense, for circumventing him, and dealing fraudulently and deceitfully with him, though he is not able to support his charge; for if he dealt fraudulently with any, it was with his father, and not with him, and the two times he refers to prove it not:

he took away my birthright; which is not true, he did not take it away from him either by force or fraud, Esau sold it to him for a mess of pottage, Ge 25:29; he had despised and made light of it himself, and had parted with it at so mean a price, and now falsely charges his brother with taking it away from him, and wrongly accuses him of being a supplanter on that account:

and behold, now he hath taken away my blessing; this also is not true, he had not taken it away; it was given him by his father; and though he had used some artful methods with him to get it, Ge 27:15, he had neither supplanted Esau, but if anyone, his father; nor had he done any injustice to Esau, since as he had bought of him the birthright, the blessing annexed to it went along with it, and of right belonged to Jacob:

and he said, hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? is the whole fund of blessings exhausted? are all bestowed upon Jacob? is there not one left for me? he hoped there was, and that as good a one as he had bestowed on his brother, and entreats he might have it.

Genesis 27:37

Ver. 37. And Isaac answered and said unto Esau,.... Giving an account of the blessing be had bestowed upon his brother:

behold, I have made him thy lord; the lord of his posterity, who would be subdued and become tributary to his seed:

and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; the Edomites, who sprung from his brother Esau, who, according to this prophetic blessing, became servants to David, who was a son of Jacob's,
See Gill on "Ge 27:29";

and with corn and wine have I sustained him; promised him a fruitful country, the land of Canaan, abounding with all good things, particularly with corn and wine, which are put for all the rest:

and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? what is there remains? what can be bestowed upon thee? there is nothing left; dominion over others, even over all nations, yea, over thyself and thy posterity, and plenty of all good things, are given already to Jacob; what is there to be done for thee, or thou canst expect?

Genesis 27:38

Ver. 38. And Esau said unto his father, hast thou but one blessing, my father?.... He seems to speak diminutively of what had been given to Jacob, calling it one blessing: whereas there were many, and of different sorts, both temporal and spiritual; but it may be Esau had not so clear and comprehensive a view of what was contained in Jacob's blessing; or at least was willing to think and hope that there was not so much given, but there might be some behind for him, and that his father had a greater stock than to be drained of all at once:

bless me, [even] me also, O my father: with another blessing, with one equal to what has been given my brother:

and Esau lift up his voice, and wept; in order to move the affections of his father, and to prevail upon him to reverse the blessing he had bestowed on Jacob, and give it to him; but he could not bring his father to repentance, to change his mind, and revoke the blessing, and give it him, with all his crying and tears, as the apostle observes,
Heb 12:17.

Genesis 27:39

Ver. 39. And Isaac his father answered and said unto him,.... Being willing to bestow what he could upon him, without lessening or breaking in upon the grant made to Jacob:

behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above: this agrees with part of the blessing of Jacob, only the clauses are inverted, and no mention made of corn and wine; the land of Edom not being so fat and fruitful as the land of Canaan. Castalio renders the words very differently, "thy habitation shall be from the fatness of the earth, or without the fatness of the earth, and without the dew of heaven from above" {c}; or otherwise he thinks Esau would have the same blessing with Jacob, and so would have no occasion of complaint or grief, or to have hated his brother and sought his life; to which may be added, that the land of Edom, which Esau and his posterity inhabited, was a very desert country, see **Mal 1:3**.

{c} See the Bishop of Clogher's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 142.

Genesis 27:40

Ver. 40. And by thy sword shalt thou live,.... By what he could get by it; his land being so poor that he could not live upon it, but must be obliged to such methods for a livelihood; or his country being surrounded with enemies, his posterity would be obliged to defend themselves by the sword, and other weapons of war:

and shalt serve thy brother; which is the sense and language of the oracle, Ge 25:23; and which Isaac perhaps now remembered, and had a clear understanding of it, and delivers out his prophetic blessing agreeably to it:

and it shall come to pass, when thou shalt have the dominion; not over the Israelites, the posterity of Jacob, which the Edomites, Esau's posterity, never had; but when they should get a greater degree of strength, power, authority, and dominion in the world:

that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck; the Edomites should revolt from the posterity of Jacob, and shake off the yoke of bondage and subjection they had been long under; as they did in the times of Joram, king of Judah, and set up a king of their own, and continued in such a state of freedom a long time, see **2Ki 8:20**.

Genesis 27:41

Ver. 41. And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him,.... It being a better blessing than his; giving him a better country, and greater plenty of good things, a larger dominion, and even dominion over him and his seed; for as for the promise of the Messiah, and spiritual blessings, he seems to have no concern about them, only temporal ones:

and Esau said in his heart; within himself, but he did not long keep it there, but told somebody of it; or otherwise, how should Rebekah be informed of it, as afterwards related? what he said follows,

the days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob: that is, the time of his father's death was drawing nigh, when there would be a mourning for him for some days; at which time, or at the end of it, he proposed to pick a quarrel with Jacob about his title to his father's substance, and in the quarrel kill him, and so regain the birthright and the blessing; and Jacob dying unmarried, and without issue, would defeat both the oracle of God, and the prophetic benediction of his father; but he failed in all, the time of his father's death was not so near as he imagined, for he lived forty three years after this; and this design of his being discovered, was the occasion of Jacob's going to Haran, where he married two sisters, and by them and their maids had a numerous offspring, whereby both the oracle and the blessing had their accomplishment. Esau seems to have retained some affection for his father, and therefore put off the execution of this wicked design until his death, being unwilling to grieve him, but had no regard for his mother, who he knew loved Jacob better than he, and was assisting to him in getting the blessing from him. Schmidt gives a sense of this passage different from all interpreters, and renders the words, "the days of my father's mourning will draw nigh"; not in which his father would be mourned for, being dead, but in which his father, being alive, would himself mourn for his son Jacob, being slain by Esau; and accordingly he renders the next clause, "for I will slay my brother Jacob"; and that will make him mourn, and perhaps die of his grief; and so he shows an ill will to his father because he confirmed the blessing to Jacob, as well as to Jacob because he had it.

Genesis 27:42

Ver. 42. And these words of Esau her eldest son were told to Rebekah,.... Jarchi and Jonathan say, by the Holy Ghost; but Aben Ezra thinks, by one of Esau's friends and confidants, to whom out of the abundance of his heart he had revealed this secret, which is not at all unlikely:

and she sent and called Jacob her younger son; who might be in another tent or apartment, or with the flocks in the field:

and said unto him, behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, [purposing] to kill thee; he has determined on it, and has laid a scheme for it, and comforts himself with the thought of it, that he shall be able to accomplish it, and so be the heir of the promise, and get the blessing; and even such is his nature, that thy death will be a comfort to him under the loss of his blessing, though he gets nothing by it, so sweet is revenge unto him.

Genesis 27:43

Ver. 43. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice,.... Hearken to what I say, and do according to it, as he had already in many instances, and particularly in a late one, in which he succeeded, and therefore had good reason to attend to her advice and direction, see Ge 27:13;

and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother, to Haran; where Laban her brother, dwelt.

Genesis 27:44

Ver. 44. And tarry with him a few days,.... Which Aben Ezra interprets a few years; rather, as Hiscuni, one year; perhaps it may be better should it be said one or two years; but instead of so short a time Jacob stayed there twenty years, and perhaps Rebekah never saw him anymore, being dead before he returned; after this account, no more mention is made of her:

until thy brother's fury turn away; which she hoped would abate, subside, and be entirely gone in process of time, and especially when the object of it was out of sight, and so it might be thought would be out of mind.

Genesis 27:45

Ver. 45. Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee,.... Which is repeated from the preceding verse, to carry on the connection:

and he forget [that] which thou hast done to him; in getting the blessing from him; being convinced that Jacob had done him no injury, and that he had no just cause of being angry with him, it being the will of God that he should have the blessing; and besides, having bought the birthright of him, the blessing belonged to him in course; or however would in time forgive and forget what he thought was an injury done him:

then I will send, and fetch thee from thence; send messengers to him that should acquaint him with the disposition of his brother towards him, and, if agreeable, bring him along with them to his mother again; this is said to encourage him to go:

why should I be deprived also of you both in one day? who might either in the quarrel kill one another; or however, as one would be murdered, so the other, the murderer, must die by the hand of the civil magistrate, according to the law in **Ge 9:6**; or should he escape justice being done him by men, yet the hand of God would find him; or if obliged to flee and hide himself, it would be as if he was not.

Genesis 27:46

Ver. 46. And Rebekah said to Isaac,.... Not what she had told Jacob concerning the enmity of Esau to Jacob, and his intention to kill him, lest it should grieve him, and bring his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave; but what follows, as an excuse to get Isaac's leave for Jacob's departure, concealing the true reason of it:

I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; whom Esau had married, Ge 26:34; who were continually vexing and teasing her by their impiety and idolatry, their irreligion and profaneness, their disobedience and contradiction, their froward temper and behaviour;

if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth; as his brother has done, and after his example, as the best are too apt to be led by bad examples:

such as these [which are] of the daughters of the land: like those Esau had married, of the same tribe, or of other of the tribes of the Canaanites, which were in religion and manners like unto them:

what good shall my life do me? I shall have no comfort in it; death would be more eligible than such a life: this she said with great vehemence and affection, to move and work upon Isaac to lay him commands on Jacob, and give him orders and directions to go to her family and friends, and there take him a wife; and the succeeded according to her wishes, as the following chapter shows.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 28:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 28

In this chapter an account is given of the charge Isaac gave to Jacob not to marry a Canaanitess, but to go to Padanaram, and take a wife from his mother's family, and of his blessing him before he sent him away, Ge 28:1; of the notice that Esau took of this blessing and charge, which led him to take a wife of the family of Ishmael,
Ge 28:6; of the dream of the ladder, which Jacob had in his way to Haran, Ge 28:10; of the blessing which God conferred upon him there, Ge 28:13; of the awfulness of the place upon his awaking, and of his erecting a pillar in it, and giving a name to it,
Ge 28:16; and of the vow he made to God, should he be supplied with the necessaries of life, and be kept in safety by him,
Ge 28:20.

Ver. 1. And Isaac called Jacob,.... Or therefore {d}, because of what Rebekah had said to him, related in the latter part of the preceding chapter, he sent for Jacob to come to him from his tent or apartment where he was, or from the field where he was keeping the flocks; thus paying a great regard to what his wife Rebekah had suggested to him, and which appeared to him very right and reasonable:

and blessed him; he did not send for him to chide and reprove him for his fraudulent dealings with him to get the blessing from his brother, much less to revoke it, but to confirm it; which was necessary to prevent doubts that might arise in the mind of Jacob about it, and to strengthen him against the temptations of Satan; since he was about to be sent away from his father's house solitary and destitute, to go into another country, where he was to be for awhile in a state of servitude; all which might seem to contradict the blessing and promises he had received, and would be a trial of his faith in them, as well as a chastisement on him for the fraudulent manner in which he obtained them:

and charged him, and said unto him, thou shall not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; it was time that he was married; for he was now, as the Jewish writers {e} say, seventy seven, years of age, which exactly agrees with what Polyhistor {f}, an Heathen writer, relates from Demetrius, that Jacob was seventy seven years of age when he came to Haran, and also his father Isaac was then one hundred and thirty seven years old; and so it is calculated by the best chronologers, and as he must be, since he was born when his father was sixty years of age, See Gill on "Ge 27:1"; and being now declared the heir of the promised land, it was proper he should marry, but not with any of the Canaanites, who were to be dispossessed of the land of Canaan, and therefore their seed, and Abraham's, to whom it was given, must not be mixed. Isaac takes the same care, and gives the same charge concerning the marriage of his son Jacob, on whom the entail of the land was settled, as his father Abraham did concerning his, Ge 24:3.

{d} arqyw "itaque", V. L. Schmidt, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "igitur", Drusius. {e} Pirke Eliezer, c. 35. Vid. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 2. p. 4. {f} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 21. p. 422.

Genesis 28:2

Ver. 2. Arise, go to Padanaram,.... Of this place,
See Gill on "Ge 25:20"; either he is bid to go directly, in haste and alone; perhaps by this time Rebekah had given Isaac some hint of the ill design of Esau against him, which made Isaac the more urgent upon him to be gone, as well as it was high time he had took to himself a wife:

to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; who though now dead in all probability, yet the house and family went by his name:

and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother: who had daughters unmarried, of which no doubt Isaac and Rebekah had knowledge, a correspondence being kept up between the two families, though at a great distance.

Genesis 28:3

Ver. 3. And God Almighty bless thee,.... This is not a new blessing, distinct from that in Ge 28:1, but the same; there it is expressed in general, here the particulars of it are given; and by which it appears, that Isaac's blessing Jacob was a prayer, wishing a blessing from God upon him, and was the prayer of faith, delivered out under the spirit of prophecy; and they are blessed indeed that are blessed of God, and they must needs be blessed who are blessed by the Almighty; for what is it he cannot do or give? The Targum of Jonathan adds,

"with much riches;"

but no doubt all kind of blessings are included, both temporal and spiritual:

and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee; with a numerous offspring:

that thou mayest be a multitude of people; or an "assembly" or "congregation" {g} of them; which may all unite in one body and make one nation, as the twelve tribes descending from Jacob did.

{g} lhql "in Coetum", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Genesis 28:4

Ver. 4. And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee,.... Which was promised to Abraham, and was entailed upon Isaac and his seed, and now upon Jacob and his seed, which follows:

that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave to Abraham; the land of Canaan, which was given to Abraham by promise, but not in possession; he was a sojourner and stranger in it, and so Isaac had been all his days, and now Jacob, who through the blessing was become heir of it; but as yet neither he nor his posterity must enjoy it, but be strangers and sojourners in it, for the exercise of faith, and for the leading of their minds off of all earthly enjoyments, to the better and heavenly country God has provided for his people; see Heb 11:9.

Genesis 28:5

Ver. 5. And Isaac sent away Jacob,.... From Beersheba; not in anger, or in a dishonourable way, but took his leave of him no doubt in an affectionate manner; as it is clear he went with his blessing, and had his good wishes for a prosperous journey:

and he went to Padanaram; which from Beersheba, according to some {h}, was four hundred and eighty miles:

unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian; some versions make Laban to be the Syrian, others Bethuel; it is a matter of no great moment which is here so called, since they were both called Syrians, see Ge 25:20:

the brother of Rebekah; this refers to Laban, for Bethuel was her father:

Jacob's and Esau's mother; Jacob is set first, not only as being most beloved by his mother, but as now having the birthright and the blessing.

{h} Bunting's Travels, p. 72.

Genesis 28:6

Ver. 6. And when Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob,.... Had conferred the blessing before given, or had wished him a good journey; which perhaps may be all that Esau understood by it, and so was not so much offended with it:

and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; which likewise might not be displeasing to him, partly as he understood it to be only on account of taking a wife, and not on account of his ill design upon him, which he might imagine his parents knew nothing of; and partly as he would now be out of the way, and he might find means the easier to ingratiate himself into his father's favour, and get him to revoke the blessing, and settle the inheritance upon him:

and that as he blessed him, he gave him a charge, saying, thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; or of the Canaanites, of any of the tribes or nations that belonged to that people, whether Hittites or others.

Genesis 28:7

Ver. 7. And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother,.... As it became him, and as it becomes all children to be obedient to their parents in all things lawful they command them; and it would have been well if Esau had been obedient to them also in a like case, the case of his marriage:

and was gone to Padanaram; as they had enjoined him, to take a wife from thence.

Genesis 28:8

Ver. 8. And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father. Who he perceived was displeased with the daughters of Canaan, or that they were "evil in [his] eyes" {i}, offensive to him, and disapproved of by him, because of their ill manners: Rebekah is not mentioned, whose displeasure he cared not for.

{i} ynyeb twer "malae in oculis", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Schmidt.

Genesis 28:9

Ver. 9. Then went Esau unto Ishmael,.... Not to Ishmael in person, for he was now dead, Ge 25:17, and had been dead as is reckoned about fourteen years before this, but to the house of Ishmael:

and took unto the wives which he had; the daughters of Heth, and who seem by this to be both alive at this time:

Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son; the same with Bashemath, Ge 36:3; as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, this person having two names, and is further described,

the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife; who was the eldest son of Ishmael, and, his father being dead, was the principal in the family; and this woman Esau took to wife was his sister by his mother's side, as the above Targum expresses, as well as by his father's; whereas he might have other sisters only by his father's side, he having had more wives than one. This Esau seems to have done in order to curry favour with his father, who was displeased with his other wives, and therefore takes one of his father's brother's daughters; but in this he acted an unwise part, on more accounts than one; partly as it was taking to wife the daughter of one that was cast out of his grandfather's house, and had been a persecutor of his father, and therefore not likely to be agreeable to him; and partly as being a daughter of the bondmaid's son: children born of her could not inherit the land promised to Abraham and Isaac.

Genesis 28:10

Ver. 10. And Jacob went out from Beersheba,.... Where Isaac and Rebekah now lived: from hence he went alone, without any servants to attend him, though perhaps not without letters of recommendation from his parents, testifying their affection to him, and that he came with their knowledge and consent, and was their heir, as Isaac had been to Abraham; nor without provisions, at least not without money to purchase them by the way, as appears by the oil he had, Ge 28:18:

and went toward Haran: for thither he could not get in one day, being many days' journey; See Gill on "Ge 28:5".

Genesis 28:11

Ver. 11. And he lighted upon a certain place,.... Without any design to take up there, but as it were casually to him, though very providentially, after he had travelled forty eight miles; for so far it seems it was from Beersheba to Luz or Bethel {k}, as this place was called:

and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; which hindered his pursuing his journey any further that day, and therefore took a night's lodging here: and he took of the stones of that place; one of the stones that lay there, as Aben Ezra and Ben Melech rightly interpret it, as appears from Ge 28:13; though the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem will have it, that these were four stones that he took, and that by a miracle they became one, and is one of the five miracles they say were done for Jacob on that day:

and put [them for] his pillows, and lay down in that place and slept; being weary with his journey though he had no other bed than the earth, and for his pillow a stone, and for his canopy or curtain the open heaven; a different lodging this from what he had been used to in his father's house, and under the indulgence of his mother; and one would wonder how he could sleep in such circumstances, and that he did not take cold, after such a journey: but it must be considered that it was in a warm climate, and in an age when they did not use themselves to such soft beds as now, and especially that he was under the particular care of divine Providence.

{k} Bunting's Travels, p. 72.

Genesis 28:12

Ver. 12. And he dreamed,.... As he slept; not a common dream, but under divine direction and influence:

and, behold, a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: denoting either the providence of God, and the various steps of it, bringing about his own glory and the good of his people; and which is steady, firm, and sure, and reaches to all things here on earth; and in an especial manner is concerned about the people of God, their protection and safety; and is directed and governed according to the will, counsels, and purposes of God in heaven; a view of which must be very encouraging to Jacob in his present circumstances: or else the incarnation and mediation of Christ, who in his human nature was to be in the fulness of time on earth, there to live a while, obey, suffer, and die, and so was the ladder set on earth; and his divine nature was the top of it, which reached heaven; here he was in that nature before his incarnation, and from hence he came; and indeed here he was in that when on earth; and as man, he ascended on high when he had done his work, and is now higher than the heavens; he may be fitly represented hereby as the Mediator, who has reconciled things in heaven and things on earth, and has as it were joined and united heaven and earth together: and the various rungs in this ladder, so considered, are Christ's interposition as a surety front eternity; his incarnation in time; his being under the law, and his obedience to it; his sufferings, the shedding of his blood, and the death of the cross; his resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of God, and intercession there. Moreover this may point out to us Christ as the way to his Father, of access unto him, and acceptance with him, by which he communicates the blessings of his grace to men, and by which they ascend to God with their prayers and praises to him: as also as being the way to heaven and eternal happiness; the various steps to which are election in him, redemption by him, regeneration by his Spirit and grace, the several graces of his Spirit, faith, hope, and love, justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, adoption through him, and the resurrection of the dead:

and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it: which may be expressive of the employment of angels in the affairs of Providence, who receive their commission from heaven, and execute it on earth, in which they are diligent, faithful, and constant; and of the ministry of them, both to Christ personal, and to his church and people, even to every particular believer; see **Joh 1:51**.

Genesis 28:13

Ver. 13. And behold, the Lord stood above it,.... Ordering, directing, and overruling all things in Providence, for the glory of his name and the good of his people; and may signify, as the ladder may be a figure of Christ, that Jehovah the Father, is above him, as man and Mediator, and makes himself known in and by him, and delivers out all his blessings and promises through him, both temporal and spiritual, and such as follow:

and said, I [am] the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: their covenant God and Father in Christ, who had made promises unto them, and bestowed blessings upon them; and the same was and would continue to be the God of Jacob, which is strongly intimated:

the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; meaning not that small pittance of land only on which his body then lay, and which it covered, but all the land of which it was a part, even the whole land of Canaan; hereby entailing it on him and his seed, and so explaining and confirming the blessing of his father Isaac; and by which it appears, that all that had been done was under a divine direction, and according to the will of God.

Genesis 28:14

Ver. 14. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth,.... Innumerable, see Ge 13:16;

and thou shalt spread abroad to the west; or "the sea", the Mediterranean sea, which was west of the land of Canaan:

and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; not of the whole world, but of the land of Canaan: the meaning is, that his posterity should be numerous, and break out and spread themselves like a flood of water, and reach to the utmost bounds of the land on all sides:

and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed; that is, in that eminent and principal seed that should spring from him, the Messiah, in whom some of all nations should, as they have been, be blessed with all spiritual blessings, as redemption, peace, pardon, justification, adoption, and eternal life; the same promise had been made to Abraham, was renewed to Isaac, and now confirmed to Jacob, see Ge 22:18.

Genesis 28:15

Ver. 15. And, behold, I [am] with thee,.... Though alone, at a distance from his father's house, no friend to keep him company, or servant to attend him; but the presence of God here promised is abundantly more than an equivalent for all this:

and will keep thee in all [places], whither thou goest; from beasts of prey, in lonesome places through which he might travel; from thieves and robbers, to whom he might be exposed; from his brother Esau, and all his ill designs against him; and from being always under the bondage of Laban, into which he would be brought:

and will bring thee again into this land: the land of Canaan, which was entailed on him and his seed for an inheritance; but, as he would now soon be out of it, and continue in another land for many years, as he did, which would make it look very unpromising that he and his seed should inherit it, this is said unto him:

for I will not leave thee, until I have done [that] which I have spoken to thee of; made good all his promises to him: and the sense is, not that he would then leave him when he had done so, but as not before, so never after; for God never does, nor never will, utterly forsake his people.

Genesis 28:16

Ver. 16. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep,.... Which had been sweet unto him, and out of his dream, it being now over; and it having left such a weight upon his mind, and such an awe upon his spirits, it might tend the sooner to awaken him; what time it was is not said, perhaps it was in the middle of the night or towards morning, since after this it is said that he rose early in the morning:

and he said, surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew [it] not; God is everywhere, in a general way, upholding all things by his power, as he is immense and omnipresent; but here he was in a special sense, by some signal token of his presence; by a stream of light and glory darting from the heavens, hence Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase it,

"the glory of the Lord, and the glory of the majesty of the Lord;"

and by the appearance of angels, and by the communications of his mind and will, and grace to Jacob, and that communion he had with him in his dream, of which he was very sensible: for, when he says, "I knew it not", the meaning is, he did not think or expect to meet with God in such a place; he did not know that God ever appeared anywhere but in the houses of his people, such as his father's house; and in the congregation of the faithful, or where the saints met for public worship, or where an altar was erected for God: though sometimes God is present with his people, and they are not sensible of it; as the church in Isa 41:10; and as Mary, when Christ was at her elbow, and she knew him not, Joh 20:13.

Genesis 28:17

Ver. 17. And he was afraid,.... Not with a servile but filial fear; not with a fear of the wrath and displeasure of God, but with a fear of his grace and goodness; not with a fear of distrust of it, of which he had just had such a comfortable assurance; but with an awe of the greatness and glory of God, being conscious of his own unworthiness to receive such favours from him;

and said, how dreadful [is] this place! not terrible and horrible, being not like Mount Sinai, but like Sion; not as the suburbs of hell, but as the gate of heaven majestic and venerable, because of the glory of God that appeared in it, whose name is holy and reverend and because of the holy angels here present: and so the church, of which this was an emblem, is a solemn assembly, awful and venerable; a city of solemnities, because of the worship of God in it, and his presence there; who is to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are about him; and where persons should behave in a serious and solemn manner. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"how tremendous and praiseworthy is this place! this is not a common place:"

this [is] none other but the house of God; wherefore he afterwards called it Bethel, which signifies the house of God; and so the church of God is often called, Ps 23:6; which is of God's building, where he dwells, and his family is, of which he is the master and governor; which he beautifies and adorns, fills, repairs, and defends:

and this [is] the gate of heaven: Mr. Mede renders it "the court of heaven", because of the angels; since in gates justice was administered by kings, attended with their retinue; but royal courts were not kept there, only courts of judicature: this place seems to be so called, because the heavens were opened and the glory of God was seen, attended by his angels, who were passing and repassing, as people through the streets of a city; and was an emblem of the church of Christ, who is figured by the ladder set on earth, whose top reached to heaven, the door, the gate, the way of ascent to it; here he is preached in the word as the way of salvation, the way to heaven and eternal happiness; here he is held forth in the ordinances; here he grants his presence to his people, and indulges them with communion with him, which makes it like and next to heaven unto them: and, generally speaking, though not always, God brings his people to heaven this way, through a Gospel church state, and by means of the word and ordinances; and here angels also attend, 1Co 11:10.

Genesis 28:18

Ver. 18. And Jacob rose up early in the morning,.... In order to proceed on his journey, being comfortably refreshed both in body and mind: but first he

took the stone that he had put [for] his pillows, and set it up [for] a pillar; not for a statue or an idol to be worshipped, but for a memorial of the mercy and goodness of God unto him, see **Jos 4:3**; indeed, among the Heathens, stones, even rude and unpolished ones, were worshipped as gods; and this was the ancient custom among the Greeks, and which, as Pausanias {l} says, universally obtained among them:

and poured oil upon the top of it; which he had brought with him for necessary uses in his journey, or fetched from the neighbouring city; the former is most likely: and this he did, that he might know it again when he returned, as Aben Ezra remarks, and not for the consecration of it for religious use; though it is thought, by some learned men {m}, that the Phoenicians worshipped this stone which Jacob anointed; and that from this anointed stone at Bethel came the Boetylia, which were anointed stones consecrated to Saturn and Jupiter, and others, and were worshipped as gods; the original of which Sanchoniatho {n} ascribes to Uranus, who, he says, devised the Boetylia, forming animated stones, which Bochart renders anointed stones; and so Apuleius {o}, Minutius Felix {p}, Arnobius {q}, and others, speak of anointed stones, worshipped as deities; and hence it may be through the early and ancient abuse of such pillars it was, that they were forbidden by the law of Moses, and such as the Heathens had erected were to be pulled down, Le 26:1.

{l} Achaiaca sive, l. 7. p. 441. {m} Bochart. Canaan. l. 2. c. 2. col. 707, 708. Marsham. Chronicon, p. 56. & alii. {n} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 37. {o} Florida, c. 1. {p} Octav. p. 2. {q} Adv. Gentes, l. 1. p. 2.

Genesis 28:19

Ver. 19. And he called the name of that place Bethel,.... The house of God, which he took this place to be:

but the name of that city [was called] Luz at the first; which signifies an almond or hazel nut, Ge 30:37; perhaps from the number of this sort of trees that grew there, under which Jacob might lay himself down, which was probably in the field of Luz; and being at night, he might not know there was a city so near, until the morning. Though Josephus {r} says he did it purposely, out of hatred to the Canaanites, and chose rather to lie under the open air. This was about twelve miles from Jerusalem, as Jerom {s} says.

{r} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 19. sect. 1. {s} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. C.

Genesis 28:20

Ver. 20. And Jacob vowed a vow,.... Which is the first vow we read of in Scripture:

saying, if God will be with me; the word if is not a sign of doubting, but is either an adverb of time, and may be rendered, "when God shall be with me" {t}; or as a supposition, expressive of an inference or conclusion drawn, "seeing God will be with me" {u}; which he had the utmost reason to believe he would, since he had not only promised it, but had so lately granted him his presence in a very singular and remarkable manner, referring to the promise of God, Ge 28:15:

and will keep me in this way that I go; as he had said he would, and as hitherto he had, and for the future he had reason to believe he still would:

and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on; which is included in that clause, "I will not leave thee", &c. Ge 28:15, even not without food and raiment; which is all men can desire or use, and therefore with them should be content.

{t} Ma "quum", Junius & Tremellius; so Ainsworth. {u} Quandoquidem, Tigurine version.

Genesis 28:21

Ver. 21. So that I come again to my father's house in peace,.... In safety from Esau, and all other enemies, as God promised him he should:

then the Lord shall be my God; not as if he should not be his God if he did not do all this for him; which would savour not only of a mercenary spirit, but of great impiety; neither of which were to be found in Jacob: but the meaning is, that he should not only continue to own him as his God, and to worship him, but having fresh obligations upon him, should be stirred up more eagerly and devoutly to serve him in a very singular way and manner, and particularly by doing what is expressed in Ge 28:22. Some think he has respect to the Messiah, owning him to be the true God with the Father and the blessed Spirit, who had appeared to Abraham, and was the fear of Isaac, and whom Jacob now owned as his God: this receives some confirmation from the Targum of Jonathan, which begins the paragraph thus,

"if the Word of the Lord will be my help, &c. then the Lord shall be my God."

Genesis 28:22

Ver. 22. And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house,.... Building an altar of it with some others, and sacrificing to God on it; and wherever God is worshipped, that place is his house, be it what or where it will; and Jacob did as he promised to do, see Ge 35:3:

and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee; for the support of his worship; for the maintenance of such that were employed in it; for the provision of sacrifice, and for the relief of the poor, or for any use or service in which God might be glorified: this was imitated by the Heathens in later times, who gave the tenth of their substance to their gods, Jupiter, Hercules, and others {w}.

{w} Herodot. Clio sive, l. 1. c. 89. Varro apud Macrob. Saturnal. l. 3. c. 12. Pompon. Laet. de Sacerdot. Rom. c. 3.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 29:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 29

This chapter informs us of Jacob's coming to a well near Haran, where meeting with some shepherds he inquires after Laban, Ge 29:1; and there also with Rachel his daughter, the shepherds made known to him, and acquainted her who he was, Ge 29:9; upon which she ran to her father, and told him who was at the well, who went forth and brought him to his house, and kindly entertained him, Ge 29:13; with whom he agreed to stay and serve seven years for Rachel his daughter, Ge 29:15; at the end of which Jacob demands his wife, but instead of Rachel, Leah was brought to him as his wife, Ge 29:21; which being discovered, and complained of, it was proposed he should have Rachel also, provided he would serve yet seven years more, to which he agreed, Ge 29:26; and the chapter is concluded with an account of four sons being born to Jacob of Leah, Ge 29:31.

Ver. 1. Then Jacob went on his journey,.... After the above vow at Bethel, and having had some intimation that what he desired would be granted him; or "he lift up his feet" {x}, which not only shows that he walked afoot, but that he went on his journey with great cheerfulness; for having such gracious promises made him, that God would be with him, and keep him, and supply him with all necessaries, and return him again to the land of Canaan, which made his heart glad; his heart, as the Jewish writers say {y}, lift up his legs, and he walked apace, and with great alacrity:

and came into the land of the people of the east; the land of Mesopotamia or Syria, which lay to the east of the land of Canaan, see **Isa 9:11**; hither he came by several days' journeys.

{x} wylgr-avyw "et levavit pedes suos", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Fagius; "sustulit", Drusius, Schmidt. {y} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 70. fol. 62. 2. Jarchi in loc.

Genesis 29:2

Ver. 2. And he looked, and behold a well in the field,.... Near Haran; he might purposely look out for a well, as knowing that there people frequently came for water for their families, or shepherds to water their flocks, of whom he might get intelligence concerning Laban's family, and where they dwelt; or he might lookout for this particular well, where his grandfather's servant had met with his mother Rebekah, of which he had been informed, and very probably had some directions how to find it: of this well, See Gill on "Ge 24:11"; to which may be added what another traveller says {z}, there is in this city (Orpha, the same with Haran) a fountain, which both Jews, Armenians, and Turks, reported unto us was Jacob's well, and that here he served his uncle Laban: near Alexandretta is a fine well, called Jacob's well, and its water is excellent; not far from which the Greeks say are the remains of Laban's house {a}:

and, lo, there [were] three flocks of sheep lying by it; in order to be watered, when it should be opened:

for out of that well they watered the flocks; the shepherds:

and a great stone [was] upon the well's mouth; so that until that was rolled off, they could not be watered, which was the reason of their lying by it: this stone was laid upon it, partly to keep the water from flowing out, and being wasted, that there might be a sufficiency for the flocks; and partly to keep the water pure and clean, that it might be wholesome for the flocks, as well as entire for the use of those that had a property in it.

{z} Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 15. {a} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 2. p. 329.

Genesis 29:3

Ver. 3. And thither were all the flocks gathered,.... The three above mentioned, Ge 29:2:

and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep; that is, when they watered the sheep, they used to roll away the stone from the mouth of the well in order to do it; for as yet the flocks, now lying by it, had not been watered, as appears from
Ge 29:7:

and put a stone upon the well's mouth in this place; this they were wont to do every time they watered the flocks.

Genesis 29:4

Ver. 4. And Jacob said unto them,.... To the shepherds, though not expressly mentioned; it cannot be imagined he spoke to the flocks, but to the keepers of them:

my brethren, whence [be] ye? a kind and affable way of speaking, used even to strangers, since all men are brethren by nature; or might be used by Jacob, because they were of the same occupation with himself, shepherds, asking them of what city they were, and from whence they came? and which being answered, would lead on to a conversation, which was what he wanted:

and they said, of Haran [are] we; the very place he was bound for, and was sent unto, Ge 27:43.

Genesis 29:5

Ver. 5. And he said unto them, know ye Laban the son of Nahor?.... He was the son of Bethuel, and grandson of Nahor; grandsons being called the sons of their grandfather; and Nahor might be more known than Bethuel, Haran being Nahor's city, Ge 24:10; and not Bethuel his mother's father, but Laban her brother is inquired after; perhaps Bethuel was dead, and Laban was the head of the family, and well known, and it was to him he was sent:

and they said, we know him; perfectly well; he lives in our city, and is our neighbour.

Genesis 29:6

Ver. 6. And he said unto them, [is] he well?.... In good health, he and his family, or "is peace unto him" {b}; does he enjoy prosperity and happiness? for this word was used in the eastern nations, and still is, for all kind of felicity:

and they said, [he is] well; or has peace; he and his family are in good health, enjoying all the comforts and blessings of life:

and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep; at that very instant she was coming out of the city with her father's flock of sheep, to water them at the well; an instance of great humility, diligence, and simplicity; this was very providential to Jacob.

{b} wl Mwlvh "nunquid pax ei", Montanus, Vatablus, Fagius, Cartwright, Schmidt.

Genesis 29:7

Ver. 7. And he said, lo, [it is] yet high day,.... Noonday, when the sun is highest; at which time in those hot countries flocks used to be made to lie down in shady places, and by still waters, to which the allusion is in Ps 23:2; or however the sun was still up very high, and there was a great deal of the day yet to come; for so the phrase is, "yet the day is great" or "much" {c}, a long time still untonight:

neither [is it] time that the cattle should be gathered together; off of the pastures, to be had home, and put into folds, which was usually done in the evening:

water ye the sheep, and go [and] feed [them]; give them water out of the well to drink, and then lead them out the pastures, and let them feed until the night is coming on: this he said not in an authoritative way, or in a surly ill natured manner, and as reproving them for their slothfulness; but kindly and gently giving his advice, who was a shepherd himself, and knew what was proper to be done; and this appears by the shepherds taking in good part what he said, and returning a civil answer.

{c} lwdg "magnus", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "multus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt; "multum adhuc suparet diei", Vatablus.

Genesis 29:8

Ver. 8. And they said, we cannot,.... That is, water the sheep; either because the stone was a great one, as Jarchi observes, and therefore used to be removed by the joint strength of all the shepherds when they came together, though

Jacob rolled it away of himself afterwards; but this is imputed to his great strength: or rather it was a custom that obtained among them, or an agreement made between them, that the stone should not be removed from the mouth of the well, and any flock watered,

until all the flocks be gathered together; and therefore they could not fairly and rightly do it, without violating the law and custom among them:

and [till] they roll the stone from the well's mouth; that is, the shepherds of the several flocks:

then we water the sheep; and not till then.

Genesis 29:9

Ver. 9. And while he yet spake with them,.... While Jacob was thus discoursing with the shepherds:

Rachel came with her father's sheep; to water them at the well. She was within sight when Jacob first addressed the shepherds, but now she was come to the well, or near it, with the sheep before her:

for she kept them: or "she was the shepherdess" {d}; the chief one; she might have servants under her to do some parts of the office of a shepherd, not so fit for her to do; it may be Laban's sons, for some he had, Ge 31:1; were not as yet grown up, and Leah, the eldest daughter, having tender eyes, could not bear the open air, and light of the sun, nor so well look after the straying sheep; and therefore the flock was committed to the care of Rachel the younger daughter, whose name signifies a sheep. The Jews say {e}, that the hand of God was upon Laban's flock, and there were but few left, so that he put away his shepherds, and what remained be put before his daughter Rachel, see Ge 30:30; and some ascribe it to his covetousness that he did this; but there is no need to suggest anything of that kind; for keeping sheep in those times and countries was a very honourable employment, and not below the sons and daughters of great personages, and still is so accounted. Dr. Shaw {f} says it is customary, even to this day, for the children of the greatest Emir to attend their flocks; the same is related of the seven children of the king of Thebes, of Antiphus the son of Priam, and of Anchises, Aeneas's father {g}.

{d} awh her yk "quia pastor illa", Montanus, "pastrix", Schmidt. {e} Targ. Jon.

in loc. Pirke Eliezer, c. 36. {f} Travels, p. 240. No. 2. Ed. 2. {g} Hom. II. 1. ver. 313. II. 6. ver. 424. II. 11. ver. 106.

Genesis 29:10

Ver. 10. And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban his mother's brother,.... Coming with her flock towards the well, and for whom and whose flock only the shepherds might be waiting:

and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother; wherefore out of respect to him and his, he being so nearly allied to him, it was

that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, either with the help of the shepherds, or of himself by his own strength; which the Jewish writers {h} say amazed the shepherds, that he should do that himself, which required their united strength. The Targum of Jonathan says, he did it with one of his arms; and Jarchi, that he removed it as easily as a man takes off the lid cover of a pot:

and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother; this he did partly out of respect to his relations, and partly that he might be taken notice of by Rachel.

{h} Pirke Eliezer, c. 36.

Genesis 29:11

Ver. 11. And Jacob kissed Rachel,.... Which he did in a way of courtesy and civility; this was done after he had acquainted her with his relation to her; he saluted her upon that:

and lifted up his voice, and wept; for joy at the providence of God that had brought him so opportunely to the place, and at the sight of a person so nearly related to him; and who he hoped would be his wife, and was the person designed of God for him.

Genesis 29:12

Ver. 12. And Jacob told Rachel,.... Or "had told" {i} her; before he kissed her, and lift up his voice and wept, as Aben Ezra observes:

that he [was] her father's brother; his nephew by his sister, for such were sometimes called brethren, as Lot, Abraham's brother's son, is called his brother, Ge 14:12:

and that he [was] Rebekah's son; sister to her father, and aunt to her, and whose name and relation she doubtless knew full well:

and she ran and told her father; leaving the care of her flock with Jacob; Rebekah, in a like case, ran and told her mother, Ge 24:28, which is most usual for daughters to do; but here Rachel runs and tells her father, her mother very probably being dead, as say the Jewish writers {k}.

{i} dgyw "et puntiaverat", Pagninus, Montanus; "renuntiaverat", Vatablus. {k} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 70. fol. 62. 4. Jarchi in loc.

Genesis 29:13

Ver. 13. And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son,.... That there was such a man at the well, thus related to him, and what he had done there, had rolled away the stone, and watered his flock. The Jewish writers {l} make this report chiefly to respect his great strength showed in the above instance, with other things:

that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house; Jarchi and other interpreters represent this as done with avaricious views, and that he expected Jacob had brought presents with him, as pieces of gold, pearls and jewels, and such like precious things Abraham's servant brought and gave him when he came for Rebekah, Ge 24:53; but I see not why we may not take all this to be hearty, sincere, and affectionate, arising from nearness of relation, and a sense of it:

and he told Laban all these things; how he was sent hither by his parents on account of the hatred of his brother Esau, because he had got the birthright and blessing from him; how God had appeared to him at Luz, and the promises he had made him; how providentially he had met with Rachel at the well, and perhaps might him at, if he did not openly declare, the end of his coming thither for a wife.

{l} Targ. Jon. in loc. Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 36.)

Genesis 29:14

Ver. 14. And Laban said to him, surely thou [art] my bone and my flesh,.... Nearly allied in blood, being his sister's son:

and he abode with him the space of a month; or "a month of days" {m}, a full month to a day; all this while feeding his flocks, and doing whatsoever service he had for him to do.

{m} Mymy vdx "mensem dierum", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Schmidt.

Genesis 29:15

Ver. 15. And Laban said unto Jacob, because thou [art] my brother,.... Or nephew, his sister's son, See Gill on "Ge 29:12":

shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? nearness of kin was no reason why he should serve him freely, or for nothing, but rather why he should be more kind to him than to a stranger, and give him better wages:

tell me, what [shall] thy wages [be]? by the day, or month, or year; signifying he was willing to give him anything that was just and reasonable, which was very well spoken; and this gave Jacob a fair opportunity of opening his mind more freely to him, and for answering a principal end for which he came, as follows:

Genesis 29:16

Ver. 16. And Laban had two daughters,.... Grown up and marriageable:

and the name of the elder was Leah; which signifies labour or weariness:

and the name of the younger was Rachel; before mentioned, whom Jacob met with at the well, Ge 29:10; and whose name signifies a sheep, as before observed, See Gill on "Ge 29:9".

Genesis 29:17

Ver. 17. Leah [was] tender eyed,.... Blear eyed, had a moisture in them, which made them red, and so she was not so agreeable to look at; though Onkelos renders the words,

"the eyes of Leah were beautiful,"

as if her beauty lay in her eyes, and nowhere else;

but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured; in all parts, in the form of her countenance, in her shape and stature, and in her complexion, her hair black, her flesh white and ruddy, as Ben Melech observes.

Genesis 29:18

Ver. 18. And Jacob loved Rachel,.... As he seems to have done from the moment he saw her at the well, being beautiful, modest, humble, affable, diligent, and industrious:

and he said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter: signifying, that he desired no other wages for his service than that, that he might have her for his wife, at the end of seven years' servitude, which he was very willing to oblige himself to, on that condition; for having no money to give as a dowry, as was customary in those times, he proposed servitude instead of it; though Schmidt thinks this was contrary to custom, and that Laban treated his daughters like bondmaids, and such as are taken captives or strangers, and sold them, of which they complain, Ge 31:15.

Genesis 29:19

Ver. 19. And Laban said,.... Deceitfully, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, pretending great respect for Jacob, and that what he had proposed was very agreeable to him, when he meant to impose upon him:

[it is] better that I should give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man; by which he not only intimates that he preferred him, a relation, to another man, a stranger; but as if he did not insist upon the servitude for her,

but would give her to him; unless he means upon the terms proposed, and so it should seem by what follows:

abide with me: the term of seven years, and serve me; suggesting, that then he agreed Rachel should be his wife; and so Jacob, a plain hearted man, understood him; but he designed no such thing.

Genesis 29:20

Ver. 20. And Jacob served seven years for Rachel,.... The whole term of time, diligently, faithfully, and patiently. Reference is had to this in Ho 11:12:

and they seemed unto him [but] a few days, for the love he had to her; for though to lovers time seems long ere they enjoy the object beloved; yet Jacob here respects not so much the time as the toil and labour of service he endured in it; he thought that seven years' service was a trifle, like the service of so many days, in comparison of the lovely and worthy person he obtained thereby; all that he endured was nothing in comparison of her, and through the love he bore to her: besides, the many pleasant hours he spent in conversation with her made the time slide on insensibly, so that it seemed to be quickly gone; which shows that his love was pure and constant.

Genesis 29:21

Ver. 21. And Jacob said unto Laban, give [me] my wife,.... Meaning Rachel, who was his wife by contract; the conditions of her being his wife were now fulfilled by him, and therefore he might challenge her as his wife:

for my days are now fulfilled; the seven years were up he agreed to serve him for his daughter; and therefore it was but just and right she should be given him:

that I may go in unto her; as his lawful wife, and it was high time Jacob had her; for he was now, as the Jewish writers generally say {n}, and that very rightly, eighty four years of age; and from him were to spring twelve princes, the heads of twelve tribes, which should inhabit the land of Canaan.

{n} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 70. fol. 63. 1. Jarchi in loc. and others.

Genesis 29:22

Ver. 22. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place,.... Of the city of Haran, which may be understood of the chief and principal of them, to make the marriage of his daughter public and authentic:

and made a feast; a marriage or marriage feast, as the Septuagint version, see Mt 22:2; which was usual, when a marriage was solemnized, expressive of joy on that account.

Genesis 29:23

Ver. 23. And it came to pass in the evening,.... After the feast was over, and the guests were departed; when it was night, a fit season to execute his designs, and practise deceit:

that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him, to Jacob, in his apartment, his bedchamber, or to him in bed: for it is still the custom in some eastern countries for the bridegroom to go to bed first, and then the bride comes, or is brought to him in the dark, and veiled, so that he sees her not: so the Armenians have now such a custom at their marriages that the husband goes to bed first; nor does the bride put off her veil till in bed {o}: and in Barbary the bride is brought to the bridegroom's house, and with some of her female relations conveyed into a private room {p}; then the bride's mother, or some very near relation, introduces the bridegroom to his new spouse, who is in the dark, and obliged in modesty not to speak or answer upon any account: and if this was the case here, as it is highly probable it was, the imposition on Jacob is easily accounted for:

and he went in unto her; or lay with her as his wife; a modest expression of the use of the bed.

{o} Tournefort's Voyage to the Levant, vol. 3. p. 255. {p} Ockley's Account of Southwest Barbary, c. 6. p. 78.

Genesis 29:24

Ver. 24. And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid, [for] an handmaid. It was usual to have many given them at this time, as Rebekah seems to have had, Ge 24:59; but Leah had but one, and this was all the portion Jacob had with her. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"and Laban gave her Zilpah his daughter, whom his concubine bore unto him:"

hence the Jews say {q}, that the daughters of a man by his concubines are called maids.

{q} Pirke Eliezer, c. 36.

Genesis 29:25

Ver. 25. And it came to pass, that, in the morning, behold, it [was] Leah,.... The morning light discovered her, and her veil being off, her tender eyes showed who she was: it is much her voice had not betrayed her; but perhaps there might be a likeness of voice in her and her sister; or she might keep silence, and so not be discovered in that way; but to excuse her from sin is not easy, even the sin of adultery and incest. Manythings may be said indeed in her favour, as obedience to her father, and, being the eldest daughter, might be desirous of having an husband first, and especially of having the promised seed, which God promised to Abraham, and was to be in the line of Jacob: and it may be, as Schmidt observes, that Laban had persuaded her to believe, that the matrimonial contract he had made with Jacob was on her account, and that she was truly his spouse; and the same he might say to Rachel, which made her easy, or otherwise it is difficult to account for it that she should acquiesce in it; for it can hardly be thought to be done without her knowledge, when it was for the solemnity of her marriage that the men of the city were called together, and a feast made for them; for that she should deliver up to her sister the things or signs that Jacob had given her to carry on the fraud, as the Jewish writers {r} say, is beyond belief:

and he said to Laban; when he arose in the morning, and at first meeting with him:

what is this that thou hast done unto me? what a wicked thing is it? as it was, to put another woman to bed to him that was not his wife, and in the room of his lawful wife; or why hast thou done this to me? what reason was there for it? what have I done, that could induce thee to do me such an injury? for Jacob knew what he had done, of that he does not inquire, but of the reason of it, and expostulates with him about the crime, as it was a sin against God, and an injury to him:

did I not serve thee, for Rachel? even seven years, according to agreement? was not this the covenant I made with thee, that she should be my wife at the end of them?

wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? by giving Leah instead of her: though Laban is not to be justified in this action, yet here appears in Providence a righteous retaliation of Jacob; he beguiled his own father, pretending he was his brother Esau; and now his father-in-law beguiles him, giving him blear eyed Leah instead of beautiful Rachel.

{r} Targum Jon. & Jarchi in loc.

Genesis 29:26

Ver. 26. And Laban said, it must not be so done in, our country,.... Or "in our place" {s}; in this our city it is not usual and customary to do so; he does not deny what he had done in beguiling him, nor the agreement he had made with him, but pleads the custom of the place as contrary to it:

to give the younger, that is, in marriage,

before the firstborn; but it does not appear there was any such custom, and it was a mere evasion; or otherwise, why did not he inform him of this when he asked for Rachel? and why did he enter into a contract with him, contrary to such a known custom? and besides; how could he have the nerve to call the men of the city, and make a feast for the marriage of his younger daughter, if this was the case?

{s} wnmwqmb "in loco nostro", Pagninus, Montanus, &c

Genesis 29:27

Ver. 27. Fulfil her week,.... Not Rachel's week, or a week of years of servitude for her, but Leah's week, or the week of seven days of feasting for her marriage; for a marriage feast used to be kept seven days, according to the Jewish writers {t}, and as it seems from

Jud 14:17; and the Targum of Jerusalem fully expresses this sense,

"fulfil the week of the days of the feast of Leah;"

and to the same sense the Targum of Jonathan, Aben Ezra and Jarchi:

and we will give this also; meaning Rachel that stood by; and the sense is, that he and his wife, if he had any, or his friends about him, would give to Jacob Rachel also to be his wife, upon the following condition:

for the service which thou shall serve with me yet seven other years; which shows the avaricious temper of the man.

{t} T. Hieros. Moed Katon, fol. 80. 4. Pirke Eliezer, c. 16, 36.

Genesis 29:28

Ver. 28. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week,.... The week of the days of the feast of Leah, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; he agreed to it; during which time he cohabited with Leah as his wife, and which confirmed the marriage: how justifiable this was, must be left. The marrying of two sisters was forbidden by the law of Moses, Le 18:18; and polygamy was not allowed of in later times, and yet both were dispensed with in times preceding; and there seems to be an overruling Providence in this affair, which oftentimes brings good out of evil, since the Messiah was to spring from Leah, and not Rachel;
See Gill on "Ge 29:35"; and having more wives than one, and concubines also, seems to be permitted for this reason, that Jacob might have a numerous progeny, as it was promised he should: and indeed Jacob was under some necessity of marrying both sisters, since the one was ignorantly defiled by him, and the other was his wife by espousal and contract; and though he had served seven years for her, he could not have her without consenting to marry the other, and fulfilling her week, and serving seven years more; to such hard terms was he obliged by an unkind uncle, in a strange country, and destitute:

and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also; not after seven years' service, as Josephus {u} thinks, but after the seven days of feasting for Leah; though on condition of the above service, as appears from various circumstances related before the seven years' service could be completed; as his going in to Rachel, Ge 29:30; her envying the fruitfulness of her sister, Ge

30:1; giving Bilhah her handmaid unto him, Ge 30:3; and the whole series of the context, and life of Jacob.

{u} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 19. sect. 7.

Genesis 29:29

Ver. 29. And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid. As he had given Leah an handmaid he gave Rachel another; and this in the Targum of Jonathan is said to be a daughter of Laban by a concubine also, as the former.

Genesis 29:30

Ver. 30. And he went in also unto Rachel,.... Cohabited with her as his wife:

and he loved also Rachel more than Leah; she was his first love, and he retained the same love for her he ever had; as appears by his willingness to agree to the same condition of seven years' servitude more for her sake, and which he performed as follows:

and served with him, yet seven other years; that is, Jacob served so many years with Laban after he had married his two daughters, and fulfilled the weeks of feasting for each of them.

Genesis 29:31

Ver. 31. And when the Lord saw that Leah [was] hated,.... Not properly and simply hated by Jacob, as appears by his doing the duty of an husband to her, but comparatively; she was less loved than Rachel: and there are many things to be said for it; she was not beautiful as Rachel was; she was not Jacob's choice, as she was but imposed upon him through deceit, and he was forced to marry her, or he could not have Rachel his beloved wife: but the Lord had pity on her, and that she might have a share in her husband's affections,

he opened her womb; or gave her conception; as Onkelos paraphrases it:

but Rachel [was] barren; bare no children as yet, and for many years after, Ge

30:22.

Genesis 29:32

Ver. 32. And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben,.... That is, "see the son", as if she by this name called upon her husband, her friends, and all about her, to look at him, and view him; perhaps hoping and imagining he might be the famous son, the promised seed, the Messiah that was to spring to Abraham, in the line of Jacob; but if she so thought, she was greatly mistaken; for this son of hers proved unstable, and did not excel; or rather God hath seen or provided a son, as Hillerus {w} gives the signification of the name, which seems better to agree with what follows:

for she said, surely the Lord hath looked on my affliction; being deceived by her father, not so much loved by her husband as her sister was, and perhaps slighted by her:

now therefore my husband will love me: more than he has done, and equally as my sister, having bore him a son.

{w} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 918.

Genesis 29:33

Ver. 33. And she conceived again, and bare a son,.... As soon as she well could. The Jews {x} have a notion, that Leah brought forth her sons at seven months' end:

and said, because the Lord hath heard that I [was] hated; or less loved than her sister:

he hath therefore given me this [son] also; to comfort her under the trial and exercise, and engage her husband's love the more unto her:

and she called his name Simeon: which signifies "hearing", and answers to the reason of her having him as she concluded.

{x} Pirke Eliezer, c. 36.

Genesis 29:34

Ver. 34. And she conceived again, and bare a son,.... A third time, as soon as she well could after the former birth:

and said, now this time will my husband be joined to me; in greater affection and stronger ties of love, and cleave unto her:

because I have born him three sons; which she considered as a threefold cord, binding his affections to her, which could not be easily broke;

and therefore was his name called Levi; which signifies "joined"; from him the Levites sprung, and had their name.

Genesis 29:35

Ver. 35. And she conceived again, and bare a son,.... A fourth son, a son in whose line, and from whose tribe, the Messiah was to spring:

and she said, now will I praise the Lord; she had praised him before for looking on her affliction, and hearing her cries, and giving her one son after another; but now she determines to praise him more than ever, having a fresh instance of his goodness to her: the Targum of Jonathan adds this as a reason,

"because from this my son shall come forth kings, and from him shall come forth David the king, who shall praise the Lord."

And why may it not be as well supposed that she had knowledge of the Messiah springing from him, which would greatly heighten and increase her joy and praise?

and therefore she called his name Judah; which signifies "praise". A further improvement is made of this name, and the signification of it, in Ge 49:8. According to the Jewish writers {y}, these four sons of Jacob were born, Reuben on the fourteenth day of Chisleu, or November, and lived one hundred and twenty four years; Simeon on the twenty first of Tebeth, or December, and lived one hundred and twenty years; Levi on the sixteenth of Nisan, or March, and lived one hundred and thirty seven years; and Judah on the fifteenth of Sivan, or May, and lived one hundred and nineteen years. And all these names being of the Hebrew language, and derived from words in it, show that this language, or what was much the same with it, was spoken in Laban's family, and had been continued from Nahor, as it had been in Isaac's family from Abraham:

and left bearing; that is, for a while, for after this she bore two sons and a daughter; see Ge 30:17.

{y} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 3. 2. & 4. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 30:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 30

This chapter gives an account of Rachel's envy of her sister for her fruitfulness, and of her earnest desire of having children, which she expressed to Jacob in an unbecoming manner, for which he reproved her, Ge 30:1, of her giving her maid Bilhah to Jacob, by whom he had two sons, Dan and Naphtali, Ge 30:3; and of Leah's giving her maid Zilpah to him, by whom he had two other sons, Gad and Asher, Ge 30:9; and of Reuben's mandrakes he found in the field, and the agreement made between Rachel and Leah about them, Ge 30:14; and of Leah's bearing Jacob two more sons and one daughter, Ge 30:17, and of Rachel's also bearing him a son, whose name was Joseph, Ge 30:22; upon which he desires leave of Laban to depart into his own country, his time of servitude being up, Ge 30:25; which brought on a new agreement between him and Laban, that for the future he should have all the speckled, spotted, and brown cattle for his service, Ge 30:27; and the chapter is concluded with an account of a cunning scheme of Jacob's to increase that sort of cattle, which succeeded, and by which he became rich, Ge 30:37.

Ver. 1. And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children,.... In the space of three or four years after marriage, and when her sister Leah had had four sons:

Rachel envied her sister; the honour she had of bearing children, and the pleasure in nursing and bringing them up, when she lay under the reproach of barrenness: or, "she emulated her sisters" {z}; was desirous of having children even as she, which she might do, and yet not be guilty of sin, and much less of envy, which is a very heinous sin:

and said unto Jacob, give me children, or else I die; Rachel could never be so weak as to imagine that it was in the power of Jacob to give her children at his pleasure, or of a barren woman to make her a fruitful mother of children; though Jacob at sight seems so to have understood her: but either, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it, that he would pray the Lord to give her children, as Isaac prayed for Rebekah; so Aben Ezra and Jarchi: or that he would, think of some means or other whereby she might have children, at least that might be called hers; and one way she had in view, as appears from what follows: or otherwise she suggests she could not live comfortably; not that she should destroy herself, as some have imagined; but that she should be so uneasy in her mind, that her life would be a burden to her; that death would be preferred to it, and her fretting herself for want of children, in all probability, would issue in it.

{z} anqt "aemulata est", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Schmidt.

Genesis 30:2

Ver. 2. And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel,.... Whom yet he dearly loved, hearing her talk in such an extravagant manner, as her words seemed to be, and were not: only expressive of great uneasiness and impatience, but implied what was not in the power of man to do:

and he said, [am] I in God's stead: do you take me to be God, or one that has a dispensing power from him to do what otherwise no creature can do; and which also he never gives to any? for, as the Targum of Jerusalem on Ge 30:22 says, this is one of the four keys which God delivers not to an angel or a seraph; even the key of barrenness. Children are the gift of God, and his only, and therefore he is to be sought unto for them: hence Onkelos land Jonathan paraphrase it;

"wherefore dost thou seek them of me? shouldest thou not seek them of the Lord?"

who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? children,
Ps 127:3; not Jacob, but the Lord.

Genesis 30:3

Ver. 3. And she said,.... in order to pacify Jacob, and explain her meaning to him; which was, not that she thought it was in his power to make her the mother of children, but that he would think of some way or another of obtaining children for her, that might go for hers; so the Arabic version, "obtain a son for me": but, since no method occurred to him, she proposes one:

behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her, take her and use her as thy wife:

and she shall bear upon my knees; either sit on her knees in the time of labour, and so bring forth as if it was she herself; or rather bear a child, which Rachel would take and nurse, and dandle upon her knees as her own, see Isa 66:12;

that I may also have children by her; children as well as her sister, though by her maid, and as Sarah proposed to have by Hagar, whose example, in all probability, she had before her, and uses her very words; See Gill on "Ge 16:2".

Genesis 30:4

Ver. 4. And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid,.... To be enjoyed as a wife, though she was no other than a concubine; yet such were sometimes called wives, and were secondary ones, and were under the proper lawful wife, nor did their children inherit; but those which Jacob had by his wives' maids did inherit with the rest:

and Jacob went in unto her; consenting to what Rachel his wife proposed to him: having concubines, as well as more wives than one, were not thought criminal in those times, and were suffered of God, and in this case for the multiplication of Jacob's seed; and perhaps he might the more readily comply with the motion of his wife, from the example of his grandfather Abraham, who took Hagar to wife at the instance of Sarah.

Genesis 30:5

Ver. 5. And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. This was so far countenanced by the Lord, that he blessed her with conception, and Jacob with a son by her.

Genesis 30:6

Ver. 6. And Rachel said,.... As soon as she heard that Bilhah had bore a son:

God hath judged me: and hereby testified his approbation, as she understood it, of the step she had took in giving her maid to her husband, and she was justified in what she had done:

and hath also heard my voice: of prayer; she had prayed to God that her maid might have a child, or she have one by her:

and hath given me a son; whom she reckoned her own, Bilhah being her servant, and so her children born of her, hers; or whom she adopted and called her own, and therefore took upon her to give it a name, as follows: and here let it be observed, that she looked upon this child as a gift of God, as the fruit of prayer, and as in mercy to her, God dealing graciously with her, and taking her part, and judging righteous judgment:

therefore called she his name Dan; which signifies "judgment"; the reason of it lies in the first clause of the verse.

Genesis 30:7

Ver. 7. And Bilhah, Rachel's maid, conceived again,.... Soon after the birth of her first child:

and bare Jacob a second son; this was his sixth son, but the second by Bilhah.

Genesis 30:8

Ver. 8. And Rachel said, with great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister,.... Or, "with the wrestlings of God" {a}, wrestling and striving in prayer with God; being vehement and importunate in her petitions to him, that she might have children as well as her sister: some render it, "I used the craftinesses of God", or "great craftiness with my sisters" {b}; by giving her maid Bilhah to her husband, and having children by her:

and I have prevailed; as she strove in her desires and prayers to have another child before her sister had; in that she prevailed, or she was succeeded in her desires, she had children as she wished to have:

and she called his name Naphtali; which signifies "my wrestling", being a child she had been striving and wrestling for: these two sons of Bilhah were born, as say the Jews, Dan on the twenty ninth day of Elul or August, and lived one hundred and twenty seven years; Naphtali on the fifth of Tisri or September, and lived one hundred and thirty three years.

{a} Myhla ylwtpn "luctationibus Dei", Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Cartwright. {b} "Calliditatibus Dei, Oleaster, astutiis Dei", Schmidt.

Genesis 30:9

Ver. 9. When Leah saw that she had left bearing,.... For a little while, for she afterwards bore again, and observing also what her sister had done;

she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife: in this she was less excusable than Rachel, since she had four children of her own, and therefore might have been content without desiring others by her maid; nor had she long left off bearing, and therefore had no reason to give up hope of having any more.

Genesis 30:10

Ver. 10. And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore Jacob a son. For it seems he consented to take her to wife at the motion of Leah, as he had took Bilhah at the instance of Rachel; and having gratified the one, he could not well deny the other; and went in to her, and she conceived, though neither of these things are mentioned, but are all necessarily supposed.

Genesis 30:11

Ver. 11. And Leah said, a troop cometh,.... A troop of children, having bore four herself, and now her maid another, and more she expected; or the commander of a troop cometh, one that shall head an army and overcome his enemies; which agrees with the prophecy of Jacob, Ge 49:19;

and she called his name Gad: which signifies a "troop", glorying in the multitude of her children, that she had or hoped to have.

Genesis 30:12

Ver. 12. And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bare Jacob a second son. As well as Bilhah, and no more.

Genesis 30:13

Ver. 13. And Leah said,.... Upon the birth of the second son by her maid:

happy am I; or, "in my happiness"; or, "for my happiness" {c}; that is, this child is an addition to my happiness, and will serve to increase it: for the daughters will call me blessed; the women of the place where she lived would speak of her as a happy person, that had so many children of her own, and others by her maid; see Ps 127:5:

and she called his name Asher, which signifies "happy" or "blessed". These two sons of Zilpah, according to the Jewish writers {d}, were born, Gad on the tenth day of Marchesvan or October, and lived one hundred and twenty five years; and Asher on the twenty second day of Shebet or January, and lived one hundred and twenty three years.

{c} yrvab "in felicitate mea", Montanus; "ob beatitatem meam", Drusius; "hoc pro beatitudine men", V. L. "pro beatitudine mihi est", Schmidt. {d} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 4. 1.

Genesis 30:14

Ver. 14. And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest,.... Leah's eldest son, who is supposed to be at this time about four or five years of age {e}, who went out from the tent to the field, to play there perhaps; and this was at the time of wheat harvest, in the month Sivan, as the Targum of Jonathan, which answers to part of our May; a time of the year when the earth is covered with flowers:

and found mandrakes in the field; the flowers or fruit of mandrakes, mandrake apples, as the Septuagint. This plant is said to excite love, provoke lust, dispose for, and help conception; for which reasons it is thought Rachel was so desirous of these "mandrakes", which seem to have their name "dudaim" from love: the word is only used here and in **So 7:13**; where they are commended for their good smell, and therefore cannot be the plant which goes now by that name; since they neither give a good smell, nor bear good fruit, and are of a cold quality, and so not likely to produce the above effects ascribed unto them. It is very probable they were lovely and delightful flowers the boy picked up in the field, such as children delight in; some think the "jessamin", others lilies, and others violets {f}; it is not easy to determine what they were; See Gill on "So 7:13";

and brought them unto his mother Leah; as children are apt to do, to show what line flowers or fruit they have gathered:

then Rachel said to Leah, give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes; being taken with the colour or smell of them; for as for the notion of helping conception, or removing barrenness and the like, there is no foundation for it; for Rachel, who had them, did not conceive upon having them; and the conception both of her and Leah afterwards is ascribed to the Lord's remembering and hearkening to them.

{e} Shalshaley Hakabala, fol. 3. 2. {f} Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

Genesis 30:15

Ver. 15. And she said unto her,.... Leah to Rachel, taking this opportunity to bring out a thing which had some time lain with uneasiness upon her mind:

[is it] a small thing that thou hast taken away my husband? got the greatest share of his affections, and had most of his company; which last was very probably the case, and more so, since Leah had left off bearing; and this she could not well stomach, and therefore upon this trifling occasion outs with it:

and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? which were poor things to be mentioned along with an husband; and besides, Rachel did not offer to take them away from the child without her leave, which she in very humble manner asked of her:

and Rachel said, therefore he shall lie with thee tonight for thy son's mandrakes; which showed no great affection to her husband, and a slight of his company, to be willing to part with it for such a trifle; and it seems by this as if they took their turns to lie with Jacob, and this night being Rachel's turn, she agrees to give it to Leah for the sake of the mandrakes: or however, if she had engrossed him to herself very much of late, as seems by the words of Leah above, she was willing to give him up to her this night, on that consideration; which Leah agreed she should have, as appears by what follows.

Genesis 30:16

Ver. 16. And Jacob came out of the field in the evening,.... From feeding his flocks;

and Leah went out to meet him; knowing full well the time he used to come home:

and said, thou must come in unto me; into her tent, for the women had separate tents from the men; as Sarah from Abraham; and so these wives of Jacob had not only tents separate from his, but from one another:

for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes: that is, she had hired that night's lodging with him of Rachel, with the mandrakes her son Reuben had brought out of the field. Jacob made no objection to it; but consented, being willing to please both his wives, who he perceived had made this agreement between themselves:

and he lay with her that night; and that only, for the present: for, by the way of speaking, it looks as if he did not continue with her more nights together at that time, but went, as before that evening, to Rachel's tent.

Genesis 30:17

Ver. 17. And God hearkened unto Leah,.... To the prayer of Leah, as the Targum of Jonathan, for more children: the desire of these good women for the company of their husband was not from lust, or an amorous desire in them, but for the sake of having many children, as appears by giving their maids to him;

and the reason of this was, as Bishop Patrick well observes, that the promise made to Abraham of the multiplication of his seed, and of the Messiah springing from thence, might be fulfilled; and is the true reason of Moses's taking such particular notice of those things, which might seem below the dignity of such a sacred history:

and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son; the fifth he had by her, but the ninth in all, that were born unto him.

Genesis 30:18

Ver. 18. And Leah said, God hath given me my hire,.... Of the mandrakes with which she had hired of Rachel a night's lodging with Jacob, and for which she had a sufficient recompense, by the son that God had given her: and she added another reason, and a very preposterous one, and shows she put a wrong construction on the blessing she received:

because I have given my maiden to my husband; which, she judged, was so well pleasing to God, that he had rewarded her with another son;

and she called his name Issachar, which signifies "hire" or "reward"; or, there is a reward, or a man of reward.

Genesis 30:19

Ver. 19. And Leah conceived again,.... For bearing children Jacob took more to her, and more frequently attended her apartment and bed:

and bare Jacob a sixth son; the sixth by her, but the tenth by her and his two maids.

Genesis 30:20

Ver. 20. And Leah said, God hath endued me [with] a good dowry,.... Having so many children; for though her husband could give her nothing at marriage, and her father gave her no more than one handmaid, yet God had abundantly made it up to her, in giving her so many sons: these are the heritage of the Lord, Ps 127:3;

now will my husband dwell with me; constantly; and not come to her tent now and then only, as he had used to do;

because I have borne him six sons; this she thought would fix his affections to her, and cause him to cleave to her, and continue with her:

and she called his name Zebulun; which signifies "dwelling". These two sons of Leah, according to the Jewish writers {g}, were born, Issachar on the tenth day of Ab or July, and lived one hundred and twenty two years, and Zebulun on the seventh of Tisri or September, and lived one hundred and twenty four years.

{g} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 4. 1.

Genesis 30:21

Ver. 21. And afterwards she bare a daughter,.... Which some writers, as Aben Ezra observes, say, was at the same birth with Zebulun, a twin with him; but being said to be afterwards shows the contrary:

and called her name Dinah; which signifies "judgment": perhaps she may have some reference to the first son of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, whom she called Dan, a name of the same signification; intimating as if it was a clear case that judgment went on her side; and that by the number of children she had, it was plain God had determined in her favour.

Genesis 30:22

Ver. 22. And God remembered Rachel,.... In a way of mercy and kindness, whom he seemed to have forgotten, by not giving her children:

and God hearkened to her; to her prayer, which had been made time after time, that she might have children; but hitherto God had delayed to answer, but now gives one:

and opened her womb; gave her conception, and made her fruitful, and she became the mother of a child she so much desired.

Genesis 30:23

Ver. 23. And she conceived and bare a son,.... Through the goodness of God unto her, and for which she was greatly thankful;

and said, God hath taken away my reproach; the reproach of barrenness with which she was reproached among her neighbours; and perhaps by her sister Leah, and indeed it was a general reproach in those times; and especially, it was the more grievous to good women in the family of Abraham, because they were not the means of multiplying his seed according to the promise, and could have no hope of the Messiah springing from them.

Genesis 30:24

Ver. 24. And she called his name Joseph,.... Which signifies "adding", or rather, "to be added"; or, "God shall add", giving this reason for it;

and said, the Lord shall add to me another son: which is expressive of strong faith; that as she had begun to bear children, she should bear another, as she did; though some read the words as a wish or prayer, "may the Lord", or, "and that the Lord would add", &c. {h}; but our version seems best: the name Joseph is composed of two words, one which signifies to gather or take away, used in Ge 30:23, and another which signifies to add; and so has respect to the Lord's taking away her reproach, and adding to her another son: Melo, an Heathen writer, makes mention of Joseph by name, as Polyhistor {i} relates, and makes him the twelfth and last son of Abraham, whereas he was the eleventh of Jacob. He was born, as the Jews say {k}, the twenty seventh of Tammuz or June, and lived one hundred and ten years.

{h} Poy "addat", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {i} Apud. Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 19. p. 421. {k} Shalshal. ibid.

Genesis 30:25

Ver. 25. And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph,.... At which time his fourteen years of servitude were ended; for Jacob was in Laban's house twenty years, fourteen were spent in serving for his wives, and the other six for his cattle, which begun from this time, as the context clearly shows; see Ge

31:41; so that, as the Jewish writers {l} truly observe, in seven years' time Jacob had twelve children born to him, eleven sons and one daughter; for he had served seven years before he had either of his wives: they also pretend that a twin was born with each, except with Joseph, but for that there is no foundation:

that Jacob said unto Laban, send me away; give me leave to depart thy house: he had a right to demand his liberty, and to insist upon it, since the time of his servitude was up; but he chose to have leave, and part in a friendly manner:

that I may go unto mine own place, and to my own country; to Beersheba, where his father and mother lived, and whom, no doubt, he longed to see; and to the land of Canaan, in which that place was, which was his native country and was given him by promise, and was to be the inheritance of his seed.

{l} Pirke Eliezer, c. 36. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 6. 2.

Genesis 30:26

Ver. 26. Give [me] my wives,.... His two wives, Leah and Rachel, and the two maids, Bilhah and Zilpah, which he had given him for wives also; he desires leave not to have them, but to take them away with him:

and my children; his twelve children; he did not desire his father-in- law to take any of them, and keep them for him, but was desirous of having them with him: no doubt, for the sake of their education, though he had nothing of his own wherewith to support them; not doubting that God would make good his promise in giving him food and raiment, and returning him to his country; and which his faith applied to his family as well as to himself:

for whom I have served thee; not for his children, but for his wives, his two wives;

and let me go; free from thy service, and to my own country;

for thou knowest my service which I have done thee: how much and great it is, and with what diligence and faithfulness it has been performed, and that the time of it fixed and agreed upon was at an end.

Genesis 30:27

Ver. 27. And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry,.... One would think he could not expect to have much from him, by his treatment of him; but he craftily cajoles him in this fawning, flattering way, in order to gain a point, and begs of him, in a very humble and suppliant manner, if he had any love for him, that he would not depart from him, but stay with him, which he should take as a great favour; for he could not insist upon it, as bound in duty, or as a point of justice:

for I have learned by experience; by the observations made in the fourteen years past;

that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake: Laban had so much religion as to ascribe the blessings, the good things he had, to the Lord, as the author and giver of them; and so much honour, or however, thought it was more his interest to own it, that it was for Jacob's sake that he was thus blessed: the word translated is used sometimes of divination, and the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem render it, "I have used divinations"; and according to Jarchi and Aben Ezra, Laban was a diviner and soothsayer; and by the teraphim he had in his house,
Ge 31:19; he divined, and knew thereby that he was blessed for the sake of Jacob; but, as Schmidt observes, it is not credible that the devil should give so famous a testimony to Laban of Jehovah and Jacob.

Genesis 30:28

Ver. 28. And he said, appoint me thy wages, and I will give [it]. Say what thou wilt have, fix what salary thou thinkest sufficient, and I will agree to it, and punctually pay it: this he craftily said, not choosing to propose anything himself, but leaving it to Jacob, knowing very well the honesty and modesty of Jacob, that he would mention less wages than he could have the face to offer him.

Genesis 30:29

Ver. 29. And he said unto him,.... Jacob to Laban,

thou knowest that I have served thee; not only diligently and faithfully, without any salary, excepting for his wives; otherwise he had no wages for his service all this time, which therefore should be considered for the future:

and how thy cattle was with me: always under his care, and he ever watchful of them; spent all his time and labour with them, and had no opportunity of getting anything for himself.

Genesis 30:30

Ver. 30. For [it was] little which thou hadst before I [came],.... Perhaps but a single flock, and that not a very large one, since Rachel, his youngest daughter, had the care of it:

and it is [now] increased unto a multitude; or "broke forth" {m}, spread itself over the fields and plains, hills and mountains adjacent, so that they were covered with his sheep, these bringing forth thousands and ten thousands, Ps 144:13;

and the Lord hath blessed thee since my coming; or "at my foot" {n}; ever since he set foot in his house. Aben Ezra observes it as a proverbial saying, such an one has a good foot, a lucky one, wherever he comes a blessing or success goes with him; or the meaning may be, wherever Jacob went or led his flock, and fed it, it prospered, the blessing of God going with him. Onkelos renders it, "for my sake"; and so it is the same with what Laban had observed and owned, Ge 30:27;

and now, when shall I provide for mine own house? suggesting it was his duty to do it, and it was high time he did it, since he had a large family to provide for; see **1Ti 5:8**.

{m} Urpy "erupit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius. {n} ylgrl "ad pedem meum", Montanus, Piscator, Drusius, Schmidt.

Genesis 30:31

Ver. 31. And he said, what shall I give thee?.... So said Laban to Jacob, still avoiding making any offer himself, but waiting for Jacob, and pressing upon him to fix his wages:

and Jacob said, thou shalt not give me anything; a speech Laban liked very well: his meaning is, that he should give him no certain settled salary, nor even of anything that Laban was now possessed of, and God had blessed him with for his sake he did not desire any part of it;

but if thou wilt do this thing for me; which he was about to mention, and does in Ge 30:32;

I will again feed [and] keep thy flock; there is an elegance in the original; "I will return, I will feed, I will keep thy flock": it seems by this that Jacob had relinquished the care of the flock, upon the time of his servitude being out; but, upon the following condition, proposes to return to it, lead it out to the pastures, and feed it on them, and keep it night and day, as he had used to do.

Genesis 30:32

Ver. 32. I will pass through all thy flock today,.... Not alone, but Laban and his sons with him;

removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle; that is, such as were black and had white spots on them, or were white and had black spots on them; and the "speckled", according to Jarchi and Ben Melech, were such as had small spots on them; and the "spotted" were such as had larger:

and all the brown cattle among the sheep; the russet coloured ones, or the "black" {o} ones, as some render it; and so Aben Ezra, and who makes mention of another sort, called "barud", which signifies spotted with white spots like hailstones, but is not to be found in the text here, but in Ge 31:10; and besides coincide with those before described:

and the spotted and speckled among the goats: that had larger and lesser spots upon them as the sheep;

and [of such] shall be my hire; not those that were now in the flock, but such as were like them, that should be brought forth for the time to come; which seems to be a strange proposal, and what was not likely to turn out much to the advantage of Jacob; but he knew what he did, and very probably was directed of God, if not in a vision, yet by an impulse on his mind, that such a method would be right, and would succeed; see Ge 31:10.

{o} Mwx "nigrum", Montanus, Fagius; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 98. 1.

Genesis 30:33

Ver. 33. So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come,.... Either by the success I shall have, and the blessing of God upon me, making it prosperous; it will appear in time to come, and to all posterity, that I have most righteously and faithfully served thee: or rather, such a separation being made in Laban's flock, all the spotted ones being removed, and only white ones left with Jacob to keep; it would be a clear case hereafter, if any such should be found with Jacob, they were not taken from Laban's flock, but were what in Providence he was blessed with, and came by honestly and righteously:

when it shall come for my hire before thy face; when any spotted ones would be brought forth, it would be plain and manifest to his face, that they belonged to him for his hire or wages; or, as Schmidt, when any complaint should come before Laban concerning his hire, or about any speckled and spotted cattle that were Jacob's hire, as if he had wronged him of it, the action now done, by making such a separation, would be a sufficient vindication of him, and justify him from such an aspersion:

and everyone that [is] not speckled and spotted amongst the goats,
and brown among the sheep, that shall be accounted stolen with me; if any such were found among those that Jacob should hereafter call his flock, as were without specks and spots, or were not brown, he was content they should be reckoned as stolen, and what he had no right unto.

Genesis 30:34

Ver. 34. And Laban said,.... Being well pleased with the proposal Jacob made, as knowing that, generally speaking, cattle of a colour produced those that were of the same; and whereas Jacob proposed to have a flock of sheep of only white in colour, committed to his care, and to have such for his own that should be produced of them, that were speckled, spotted, and brown, Laban concluded from the general nature of things that he could have but very few, if any, and therefore was for striking the bargain at once:

behold, I would it might be according to thy word; he agreed it should be as

Jacob had settled it, and he hoped and wished he would abide by it; he was afraid he would not keep to it.

Genesis 30:35

Ver. 35. And he removed that day the he goats that were ringstraked and spotted,.... That had strakes of a different colour from the rest on their shoulders, thighs, logs, or feet, or in any part of the body: the word here used stands in the room of that before translated "speckled"; this Laban did, as the context shows; he went about it immediately at the motion of Jacob, with which he was pleased:

and all the she goats that were speckled and spotted; so that there might be neither male nor female of those mixed colours; this he did to prevent any generation of them:

[and] everyone that had [some] white in it; any white spot in it, as the Targum of Jonathan; that is, everyone of the brown or black colour, that had any white in it:

and all the brown among the sheep: that were entirely so:

and, gave [them] into the hands of his sons; not the sons of Jacob, as some in Aben Ezra; for they were not fit for the care of a flock, the eldest son, Reuben, not being seven years of age; but the sons of Laban, who were now grown up and fit for such service.

Genesis 30:36

Ver. 36. And he set three days' journey between himself and Jacob,.... Not three days' journey for a man, but for cattle; this distance there was between the place where Laban and his sons kept the spotted, speckled, and brown cattle, and that in which Jacob kept the flock only consisting of white sheep; and this was done, that the flocks might not be mixed, and that there might be no opportunity to take any of the spotted ones, and that they might not stray into Jacob's flock; or lest any of his seeing them might bring forth the like, such precaution was used:

and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flock; those that remained after the spotted, speckled, and brown were taken out; and Jacob having none but white sheep, there was no great likelihood, according to the course of nature, of his having much for his hire; since he was only to have the spotted, speckled, and brown ones that came from them, and generally like begets like; and, according to the Jewish writers {p}, those that were committed to his care were old and barren, and sick, and infirm, that so he might have no profit from them.

{p} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 73. fol. 64. 1. Targum Jon. & Jarchi in loc.

Genesis 30:37

Ver. 37. And Jacob took him rods of green poplar,.... Of the white poplar tree, called green, not from the colour, but from the moisture, being such as were cut off of the tree:

and of the hazel and chestnut tree; the former some take to be the almond tree, as Saadiah Gaon, and others; and the latter to be the plantain or plane tree, so Ainsworth, and others:

and pilled white strakes in them; took off the bark of them in some places, and left it on in others, which made white strakes:

and made the white appear which [was] in the rods; that part of the rods which was stripped of the bark appeared white; and it appeared the whiter for the bark that was left on in other parts; and both made the rods to appear to have various colours, which was the design of Jacob in pilling them.

Genesis 30:38

Ver. 38. And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks,.... Opposite them, in the view of them:

in the gutters in the watering troughs, when the flocks came to drink; that is, in places of water, where troughs or vessels were made, into which the water ran convenient for the cattle to drink out of; and here he placed his party coloured rods right over against the flocks:

that they should conceive when they came to drink; as it was most likely they should when they were together at the water, and had refreshed themselves with it; and being "heated" {q}, as the word signifies, with a desire of copulation, might conceive in sight of the above rods; which were set to move upon their imagination at the time of their conception, in order to produce cattle of different colours; to which no doubt he was directed of God, and it had, through his blessing, the wished for success, as follows:

{q} hnmxy "incalescebant", Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius; "ut incalescerent", Junius & Tremellius.

Genesis 30:39

Ver. 39. And the flocks conceived before the rods,.... At them, and in sight of them; which had such influence upon them through thee force of imagination, and a divine power and providence so directing and succeeding this device, that they

brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted; such as Jacob was to have for his hire; and, though there was no doubt a more than ordinary concourse of divine Providence attending this affair; yet there have been many strange things brought about in a natural way by the strength of imagination, as may be observed in those marks which women are said to mark their children with, while with child of them; as also in conceiving and bearing such like unto them they have fancied, as the woman that bore a blackamoor, through often looking at the picture of one in her chamber; and an Ethiopian queen, who by the same means bore a white child, fair and beautiful, which she exposed, lest she should be thought an adulteress {r}: and what comes nearer to the case here, Jerom reports {s} the like things done in Spain among horses and mares, by placing beautiful horses before mares at the time of leaping; and the Apis, or Egyptian ox, which had peculiar spots in it, was produced in like manner, so that there was always in succession one of the same form and colour, as Austin asserts {t}; and it may be observed, what is affirmed by some writers {u}, that sheep will change their colours according to the different waters they drink of at the time of their being covered; and that some rivers drank of will make white sheep black, and black white, and others red and yellow. But as Jacob was directed of God to take this method, this is sufficient to justify him, and upon his blessing and providence the success depended, whatever there may be in nature to bring about such an effect; and as it was to do himself justice, who had been greatly injured by Laban, it was equally as just and righteous a thing to take this course, as it was for the Israelites by a divine direction to borrow jewels, &c. of the Egyptians, whereby they were repaid for their hard service.

(This was written over one hundred years before the laws of genetics were discovered. We know that the result was from God not of Jacob's schemes. Ed.)

{r} Heliodor. Ethiopic. l. 4. c. 8. {s} Quaest. Heb. in Gen. fol. 70. L. M. {t} De Civit. Dei, l. 18. c. 5. {u} Aelian. de Animal. l. 8. c. 21. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 103.

Genesis 30:40

Ver. 40. And Jacob did separate the lambs,.... The ringstraked, speckled, and spotted;

and set the faces of the flocks, that were all white,

towards the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; either to go before those that were all white, that they by looking at them might conceive and bring forth such, which was another artifice of Jacob's to increase his own sheep; or else he set at the water troughs the white sheep on one side of them, and on the opposite side the speckled ones, &c. that the same effect might also be produced the more successfully both by the rods and by the speckled lambs:

and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle; partly that they might not be mixed together, but kept distinct, that what was his property might be discerned from Laban's; and partly, lest his spotted ones, being mixed with Laban's white sheep, by continual looking at them, should conceive and bring forth such likewise, and so his flocks be lessened.

Genesis 30:41

Ver. 41. And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive,.... Whose limbs were well compact, and were strong and healthy:

that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters,
that they might conceive among the rods; and bring forth party coloured ones, and such as were robust and strong like themselves; and this was another device of Jacob's to get the best of the flock. Aben Ezra thinks this refers to the

two seasons of the year, when the flocks conceived; the one was in Nisan, in the spring, and such as were brought on that conception were strong, and therefore Jacob chose to lay the rods in the gutters at that time, that he might have the best cattle; and so the Targum of Jonathan calls these here the forward ones, as it does those in Ge 30:42 we render feeble, the latter ones; which, according to Aben Ezra, conceived in Tisri or September, and what they brought were weak and feeble.

(Based on the laws of genetics, Jacob's breeding of the best of the flock would produce higher quality offspring. Ed.)

Genesis 30:42

Ver. 42. And when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in,.... Or "when covered", as Menachem, that is, with wool, and so not so desirous of copulation with the males, nor so fit and strong for generation; and therefore he put not in the rods into the gutters, partly that he might have none feeble in his flock, and partly that he might not spoil Laban of his whole flock, strong and weak:

so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's; not only his flocks became more numerous than Laban's, but were a better quality.

Genesis 30:43

Ver. 43. And the man increased exceedingly,.... Jacob grew very rich:

and had much cattle; the greater part of Laban's flocks brought forth speckled, spotted, and brown cattle, which, according to agreement, were Jacob's:

and maidservants, and menservants; which he got to take care of his household affairs, and to assist him in keeping his flocks:

and camels, and asses; for his flocks increasing so very much, he sold many of his sheep at a good price, as Jarchi observes, and with it bought camels and asses; and these were very fit for his use, when he should be obliged or think fit to remove into his own country, and which he was meditating, and had a direction from the Lord for, as in the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 31:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 31

This chapter relates how that Jacob observing that Laban and his sons envied his prosperity, and having a call from God to return to his own country, acquaints his wives with it; and reports to them Laban's ill usage of him, and the wonderful appearance of God to him, and for him, and his orders to him to depart from thence, Ge 31:1; to which they agreed, knowing full well their father's unkindness, and that they had nothing to expect from him, and therefore judged it best to go off with what they had got through the gift of God unto them, Ge 31:14; upon which Jacob set out privately, with all he had, towards his own country, while Laban was shearing his sheep, Ge 31:17; three days after, Laban, being informed of it, pursued after Jacob, and overtook him at Mount Gilead; but was warned by the way to be cautious what he said to him, Ge 31:22; yet nevertheless he warmly expostulated with him about his secret flight, not giving him the opportunity of taking his leave of his children, and especially for taking away his gods, Ge 31:26; to which Jacob gave an answer, Ge 31:31; and in his turn was warm likewise, and chided Laban severely for his hot pursuit of him, his charge of stealth, when he could find nothing on him, his hard labour for the space of twenty years with him, and his ill requital of him for it, Ge 31:36; however, upon the whole, an amicable agreement was made between them, and they parted in a friendly manner, Ge 31:43.

Ver. 1. And he heard the words of Laban's sons,.... That is, Jacob, as is expressed in the Septuagint and Syriac versions, either with his own ears, overhearing their discourse in their tents, or in the field, or from the report of others, his wives or some of his friends, who thought proper to acquaint him with it; these were the sons of Laban, who had the care of the cattle committed to them, separated by the direction of Jacob, and with the consent of Laban, Ge 30:35;

saying, Jacob hath taken away all that [was] our father's; meaning not precisely all that their father had, for that would have been a downright lie; for what was become of them that were committed to their care? besides, we afterwards read of Laban's shearing his sheep, Ge 31:19; but that all that Jacob had was their father's, and he had taken it away from him, if not by force and stealth, yet by fraud; and so Jacob might fear he would treat him in an ill manner, and therefore began to think it was high time for him to be gone:

and of [that] which [was] our father's hath he gotten all the glory; his many servants, numerous cattle, sheep, camels and asses, in which carnal men place all their happiness; or those riches, as the Targum of Jonathan, by which he got the name and glory of a rich man among men: and it was so far true what they say, that it was out of their father's flock that Jacob got all his increase; but then it was according to a covenant that Laban and he entered into, and therefore was obtained in a just and lawful manner.

Genesis 31:2

Ver. 2. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban,.... Upon this he observed Laban's looks, that he might gather from thence how he took his prosperity; what were his thoughts about it, and what he might expect from him on that account:

and, behold, it [was] not towards him as before; he said nothing to Jacob, nor charged him with robbing of him, or any false dealing with him, yet was uneasy at his growing prosperity; he put on sour looks, and an envious countenance, sad, and surly, and lowering; so that Jacob saw it foreboded no good to him, and therefore thought it most advisable to depart as soon as he could; though perhaps he first sought the Lord about it, who spoke to him as in Ge 31:3.

Genesis 31:3

Ver. 3. And the Lord said unto Jacob,.... In answer to a prayer of his; or seeing what difficulties and discouragements Jacob laboured under, he appeared unto him for his encouragement and instruction how to proceed:

return unto the land of thy fathers; the land of Canaan, given to Abraham and Isaac by promise:

and to thy kindred: his father and mother, and brother, who all dwelt in the land of Canaan at this time, or as many as were living: or "to thy nativity" {w}, the place where he was born, and to which he must have a natural desire to return: and

I will be with thee; to protect him from any injury that might be attempted to be done unto him, either by Laban or Esau.

{w} Ktdlwml "ad natale solum", Tigurine version; "ad nativitatem tuam", Vatablus, Drusius.

Genesis 31:4

Ver. 4. And Jacob sent,.... Having this encouragement and direction from the Lord, which seems to have been given him in the field, while he was attending his flocks, he dispatched a messenger home to his wives, one of his servants or under shepherds. The Targum of Jonathan says it was his son Naphtali, whom he sent, because he was a swift messenger; the Targumist alludes to Ge 49:21; but the former is more probable;

and called Rachel and Leah; Rachel is mentioned first, as being his proper and lawful wife, and is only called so, Ge 46:19; and it was for her sake Jacob had Leah. Jacob, like a prudent man and an affectionate husband, thought proper to acquaint his wives with his case, and advise with them, and neither leave them nor take them away suddenly and by force; and therefore sent for them,

to the field unto his flock; where he was feeding his flock: this he might do for divers reasons; he might not judge it so proper and convenient to go home to them, since it might be difficult to get one of them to come to the apartment of the other; and it was proper they should be together, and that might cause some suspicion in Laban's family, who might listen to overhear what passed between them; and besides, he might be afraid of Laban and his sons, that being in such an ill temper they would lay violent hands on him, and do him a mischief; and therefore he sent for his wives to him in the field, where they could more privately and freely converse together, without being overheard or interrupted, and the flock in the mean while not neglected.

Genesis 31:5

Ver. 5. And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it [is] not towards me as before,.... See Gill on "Ge 31:2"; no notice is taken of what their brethren, the sons of Laban, had said:

but the God of my father hath been with me; not only by affording him his gracious presence with him, which supported him under all his troubles; but by his good providence prospering and succeeding him in his outward affairs, as well as he had lately appeared to him, and encouraged him to return to his own country.

Genesis 31:6

Ver. 6. And ye know, that with all my power I have served your father. With all faithfulness and uprightness; with all diligence and industry; with all wisdom and prudence; with all my might and main, contriving the best methods, and sparing no pains by day or night to take care of his flocks, and increase his substance: of this his wives had been witnesses for twenty years past, and to them he appeals for the truth of it; so that there was no just reason for their father's behaviour towards him.

Genesis 31:7

Ver. 7. And your father hath deceived me,.... In the bargain he had made with him about his wages for keeping his cattle the six years past, after the fourteen years' servitude were ended:

and changed my wages ten times; that is, either very often, many times, as the number ten is sometimes. Used for many, see Le 26:26; or precisely ten times, since he repeats it afterwards in the same form to Laban's face, Ge 31:41; he had now served him six years upon a new bargain; that he should have all that were of such and such different colours, which were produced out of his flock of white sheep. Laban was at first highly pleased with it, as judging it would be a very good one to him, as he might reasonably think indeed: and it is highly probable he did not attempt any alteration the first year, but observing Jacob's cattle of the speckled sort, &c. prodigiously increasing, he did not choose to abide by the any longer. Now it must be observed, that the sheep in Mesopotamia, as in Italy {x}, brought forth the young twice a year; so that every yeaning time, which was ten times in five years, Laban made an alteration in Jacob's wages; one time he would let him have only the speckled, and not the ringstraked; another time the ringstraked, and not the speckled; and so changed every time, according as he observed the prevailing colour was, as may be concluded from
Ge 31:8:

but God suffered him not to hurt me; to hinder his prosperity, or having justice done him for his service; for whatsoever colour Laban chose for Jacob to have the next season of yeaning, there was always the greatest number of them, or all of them were of that colour, whether speckled or ringstraked, &c.

{x} "Bis gravidae pecudes.----", Virgil. Georgic. l. 2.

Genesis 31:8

Ver. 8. If he said thus, the speckled shall be thy wages,.... Sometimes Laban would say to Jacob, only the speckled lambs which the ewes shall bring forth shall be thine hire, and not the spotted; or the ringstraked, or the brown, which according to the bargain should have been his, the one and the other:

then all the cattle bare speckled; that season, God ordering it so in his providence, that Laban might be disappointed, and Jacob might have his full hire; that is, the greatest part of the cattle bore such, as Ben Melech observes:

and if he said thus, the ringstraked shall be thine hire; observing the cattle to bring forth only speckled, or the greatest part such, then he changed his hire, and would have it be not the speckled, nor the brown, only the ringstraked, there being none or few of that colour the last yeaning time:

then bare all the cattle ringstraked; or the greatest part of them were such; so that let Laban fix on what colour he would as Jacob's wages, there were sure to be the greatest part of that colour; which shows the hand of God in it, as is next observed by Jacob.

Genesis 31:9

Ver. 9. Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father,.... Not all of them, see Ge 31:19; but a great part of them; his flock was much lessened by those means, and more were taken away, and came to Jacob's share, than if Laban had abode by the original agreement:

and gave [them] to me; who has the disposing of all things in the world, whose the world, and all in it, are, and gives of it to the sons of men as he pleases. Jacob takes no notice of any artifice of his, or of any means and methods he made use of, but wholly ascribes all to the providence of God, and points to his wives the hand of God only; and indeed it seems to be by his direction that he took the method he did, as appears from Ge 31:11.

Genesis 31:10

Ver. 10. And it came to pass, at the time that the cattle conceived,.... Whether in spring or in autumn cannot be said, for it seems this was twice a year; this probably was at the beginning of the six years' servitude, or just before the agreement was made between Laban and Jacob, and was an instruction to the latter how to make his bargain with the former:

that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream; in a vision of the night, so things were represented to his fancy and imagination:

and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle [were] ringstraked, speckled, and grisled; from whence he might conclude, that the cattle they leaped upon would bring forth the like, and so be a direction to him to make his agreement with Laban to have such for his hire; not that the rams in the flock were really of those colours, for they were all white, but so they were represented to Jacob in the vision, to suggest to him, that such would be produced by them; and it is not improbable by the artifice Jacob was directed to, and took, that the ewes, when they came to the watering troughs to drink, upon seeing the party coloured rods in the water, these made such an impression upon their imaginations, that they fancied the rams that leaped upon them were of those colours, and so conceived and brought forth the like. Here is another colour mentioned, not taken notice of before, at least by this name, "grisled"; it stands in the place of "spotted", and seems to be the same with that, and signified such as had spots on them like hailstones, and distinguishes them from the speckled: the speckled were such as were white with black spots, these such as were black, and had white spots like hail.

Genesis 31:11

Ver. 11. And the Angel of God spake unto me in a dream,.... In the same dream before related, and to direct him to observe what was presented to him, and to confirm what he saw, and lead him to the design and use of it. This was not a created angel, but the eternal one, the Son of God, and who is afterwards called God, and to whom Jacob had made a vow, which he would never have done to an angel; but to God only, as Ben Melech observes:

[saying], Jacob; and I said, here [am] I; the Angel called him by his name, to which he answered, and signified that he was ready to attend to whatsoever he should say to him.

Genesis 31:12

Ver. 12. And he said, lift up now thine eyes, and see,.... This was all visionary, Jacob was still in a dream; but it was so impressed upon his mind, that he was spoke to, and bid to observe, and take notice, as follows: that

all the rams that leap upon the cattle [are] ringstraked, speckled, and grisled; thereby assuring him, that such would be those the ewes would bring forth, which would be right in him to agree with Laban for as his hire; and it is probable that there was some distance of time, at least a night, between the first motion of Laban's to Jacob to settle his wages, Ge 30:28; and his repeating that, and being urgent to have it done, Ge 31:31; and in this interval of time might be the night Jacob had this dream and vision in, for his direction; or if it was after the bargain made, since it is said to be at the time the cattle conceived, he had it to assure him of God's approbation of it, and of his success in it:

for I have seen all that Laban doeth to thee; had took notice how he had made him serve fourteen years for his wives, and had given him nothing for his service; and how he now was taking advantage of Jacob's modesty to get him to fix his own wages, which he supposed would be lower than he could have the face to, offer him.

Genesis 31:13

Ver. 13. I [am] the God of Bethel,.... The same Angel that appeared to Jacob in a dream, at the beginning of his six years' servitude, now appeared to him at the close of it, declaring himself to be the God of Bethel; or that God that manifested himself to him at Bethel, as Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase the words; for this is a distinct vision from that in the preceding verses, concerning the rams of different colours, and are both put together for the sake of brevity, and because they belong to the same affair:

where thou anointedst the pillar, [and] where thou vowedst a vow unto me: See Gill on "Ge 28:19",
See Gill on "Gen 28:20"; hereby signifying the divine approbation of the name Jacob gave to that place, and of what he did in it, and to put him in mind of his promise there made:

now arise, get thee out from this land: of Mesopotamia, or Syria, and out of Haran, a city there, where Jacob now was, and Laban lived:

and return unto the land of thy kindred: to the land of Canaan, the place of his nativity, and where his relations dwelt: this shows, that this appearance of God to him, as the God of Bethel, was at the close of his six years' service.

Genesis 31:14

Ver. 14. And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him,.... One after another, and their answers agreeing, are put together; it may be Rachel answered in the name of Leah, and for herself, since she is mentioned first, and the verb is singular. The Targum of Jonathan is, Rachel answered with the consent of Leah;

[is there] yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? it was what might have been justly expected, as they were his children, that they should have been used as such, and have had children's portions given them; but by the whole of Laban's attitude towards them, both at their marriage, and ever since, it was plain he never intended to give them anything; but kept all he had to himself, or designed it for his sons, and therefore it was in vain for them to hope for anything; signifying to Jacob hereby, that they were willing to leave their father's house, and go with him when he pleased, since they could expect nothing by their stay here.

Genesis 31:15

Ver. 15. Are we not accounted of him strangers?.... He had not treated them as children, nor even as freeborn persons; but as if they were foreigners that he had taken in war, or bought of others; or at least, that they were born bondmaids in his house, and so had a right to sell them as he had:

for he hath sold us; he had sold them to Jacob for fourteen years' service, as if they had been his slaves, instead of giving dowries with them as his children:

and hath quite devoured also our money; that which he got by the servitude of Jacob, instead of giving it to them as their portion; he spent it on himself and his sons, and there was nothing left for them.

Genesis 31:16

Ver. 16. For all the riches which God hath taken from our father,.... And given to Jacob for his labour:

that [is] ours, and our children's; it belonged to us by the law of nature, before it came into thine hands; and our right unto it is still more manifest, and is confirmed by the service thou hast done for it, by which means it came into thy possession; and therefore it is no point of conscience with us, nor need it be any with thee especially, to go off with it:

now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do; for that must needs be right: this was well spoken indeed; they mean, that he should leave their father's house, and go into the land of Canaan, as God had directed him; and they signified that they were willing: to go along with him.

Genesis 31:17

Ver. 17. Then Jacob rose up,.... And went with them to Laban's house, where his children were, as is plain from Rachel's theft, Ge 31:19:

and set his sons and his wives upon camels; which were his own, see Ge 30:43; creatures fit for travelling; on these he set his wives, Rachel and Leah, and his concubine wives, Bilhah and Zilpah; for these went with him, as appears from Ge 33:6; and "his sons", or rather "his children": for they were not all sons, there was one daughter, and they were all young; his eldest son Reuben could not be much more than twelve years of age, and his youngest son Joseph about six.

Genesis 31:18

Ver. 18. And he carried away all his cattle,.... His sheep, camels, and asses: the

Jews say {y} he had 5,500 head of cattle:

and all the goods which he had gotten: all the rest besides his cattle; his menservants, and maidservants, and all his gold and his silver, and whatsoever else he had:

the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padanaram: or Mesopotamia: this seems to be purposely observed, to show that he took nothing but what was his own getting, not anything that belonged to Laban:

for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan; but it was some years before he got to his father's house, staying at several places by the way. No mention is made of his mother Rebekah, she perhaps being now dead.

{y} Pirke Eliezer, c. 37. fol. 41.

Genesis 31:19

Ver. 19. And Laban went to shear his sheep,.... Which were under the care of his sons, and were three days' distance from Jacob's flocks; this gave Jacob a fair opportunity to depart with his family and substance, since Laban and his sons were at such a distance, and their servants with them also:

and Rachel had stolen the images that [were] her father's; afterwards called gods, which he made use of in an idolatrous and superstitious manner, one way or other: they seem to be a kind of "penates", or household gods; in the Hebrew they are called "teraphim"; and which De Dieu thinks were the same with "seraphim" {z}; and were images of angels, consulted on occasion, and placed in the house for the protection of it, and to increase the substance thereof: some take them to be plates of brass describing the hours of the day, a sort of sundials; or were such forms, that at certain times were made to speak, and show things to come: but they rather seem to be images of an human form, as say the Jewish writers, and as seems from 1Sa 19:13; and which it is supposed were made under certain constellations, and were a sort of talismans, and were consulted as oracles, and in high esteem with the Chaldeans and Syrians, a people given to astrology, and by which they made their divinations; See Gill on "Ho 3:4" and also
See Gill on "Zec 10:2"; and therefore Rachel took them away, that her father might not consult them, and know which way Jacob fled, as Aben Ezra; but this looks as if she had an opinion of them, and that they had such a power of

discovering persons and things that were attributed to them: and indeed some think she took them away from an affection and veneration for them, supposing she should not be able to meet with such in Canaan in Isaac's family; and what is observed in
Ge 35:2 seems to countenance this; but one would think she had been better instructed by Jacob during his twenty years' conversation with her; and besides, had she been tinctured with such sort of superstition and idolatry, she would never have used them so indecently, as to have sat upon them in the circumstances in which she was, Ge 31:34; it is more to her credit and character to say with Jarchi, that she did this to take off her father from the idolatrous worship of them, and to convince him that they were no gods; since they could not inform him of the designs of Jacob, and of his flight, nor secure themselves from being carried away by her; unless it can be thought that she took them because of the metal of which they were made, gold or silver, being willing to have something of her father's goods as her portion, which she thought she had a right unto, or in recompence of her husband's service. Dr. Lightfoot {a} thinks she took them for a civil use, to preserve the memory of some of her ancestors, of which these were the pictures, and Laban had idolized; but whether pictures were so early is questionable.

{z} So Hyde, Hist. Relig. Ver. Pers. c. 20. p. 272. {a} Works, vol. 1. p. 696.

Genesis 31:20

Ver. 20. And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian,.... Went away without his knowledge, or giving him any notice of it; he was too cunning for Laban the Syrian; notwithstanding his astrology and superstitious arts, which the Syrians are addicted to, he had no foresight of this matter: or he "stole away the heart of Laban" {b}, that which his heart was set upon; not his gods, these Rachel stole away; nor his daughters, for whom he does not appear to have had any great affection and respect; but rather the cattle and goods Jacob took with him, which Laban's eye and heart were upon, and hoped to get into his possession by one means, or at one time or another; but the former sense, that he "stole from" his heart {d}, or stole away without his knowledge, seems best to agree with what follows;

in that he told him not that he fled; or that he designed to go away, and was about to do it.

{b} bl ta-bngy "furatus est cor", Tigurine version, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Drasius, Cartwright. {d} "Furatus a corde Labanis", Piscator.

Genesis 31:21

Ver. 21. So he fled with all that he had,.... His wives, his children, cattle and substance;

and he rose up, and passed over the river; the river Euphrates, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, which lay between Mesopotamia and Canaan;

and set his face [toward] the mount Gilead: he travelled and bent his course that way: this, was a mountain on the border of the land of Canaan, adjoining to Lebanon, near which was a very fruitful country, which had its name from it: it is so called here by way of anticipation; for this name was afterwards given it from the heap of stones here laid, as a witness of the agreement between Laban and Jacob, Ge 31:45.

Genesis 31:22

Ver. 22. And it was told Laban on the third day, that Jacob was fled. Three days after Jacob was gone he had the report of it, by some means or another; by some of his neighbours, or servants left at home, and sooner he could not well have it, since the flock he went to shear was three days' distance from Jacob's, Ge 30:36.

Genesis 31:23

Ver. 23. And he took his brethren with him,.... Some of his relations, the descendants of his father's brethren, the sons of Nahor, of whom there were seven, besides Bethuel; and who all perhaps lived in Haran the city of Nahor, see Ge 22:20; or some of his neighbours and acquaintance whom he might call to:

and pursued after him seven days' journey; which must be reckoned, not from Jacob's departure from Haran, but from Laban's; for Laban being three days' journey from thence, whither he had to return, after he received the news of Jacob being gone; Jacob must have travelled six days before Laban set out with his brethren from Haran; so that this was, as Ben Gerson conjectures, the thirteenth day of Jacob's travel; for Laban not having cattle to drive as Jacob, could travel as fast again as he, and do that in seven days which took up Jacob thirteen:

and they overtook him in the mount Gilead; said to be three hundred and eighty miles from Haran {e}.

{e} Bunting's Travels, p. 72.

Genesis 31:24

Ver. 24. And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night,.... It is probable that Laban came to Mount Gilead late in the evening, and so had no sight of, or conversation with Jacob until the morning; and that night God came to him, and in a dream advised him as follows: or it may be rendered, "and God had come", &c. {f}; in one of the nights in which he had lain upon the road; though the former seems best to agree with Ge 31:29; the Targum of Jonathan has it, an angel came; and the Jews {g} say it was Michael; by whom, if they understand the uncreated Angel, the Son of God, it is right:

and said unto him, take heed that thou speak not to, Jacob either good or bad; not that he should keep an entire silence, and enter into no discourse with him on any account, but that he should say nothing to him about his return to Haran again; for it was the will of God he should go onward towards Canaan's land; and therefore Laban should not attempt to persuade him to return, with a promise of good things, or of what great things he would do for him; nor threaten him with evil things, or what he would do to him if he would not comply to return with him.

{f} abyw "et venerat", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version; so Aben Ezra.
{g} Pirke Eliezer, c. 36.

Genesis 31:25

Ver. 25. Then Laban overtook Jacob,.... He was come to the mount the overnight, but now in the morning he came nearer to him, so as to hold a conversation with him:

now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount, and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead; both on the same mount; one perhaps at the bottom, and the other at the top; or one on one hill of it, and the other on another, or right over against one another.

Genesis 31:26

Ver. 26. And Laban said unto Jacob,.... Upon their meeting together; perhaps in some middle place between their two tents:

what hast thou done? what evil hast thou committed? what folly art thou guilty of? and what could induce thee to take such a step as this? suggesting that he could see no necessity for it; and as if he had done nothing that should occasion it, and that Jacob had done a very ill thing

that thou hast stolen away unawares to me: of this phrase
See Gill on "Ge 31:20";

and carried away my daughters, as captives [taken] with the sword; as were commonly done by a band of robbers that made incursions upon their neighbours, and plundered them of their substance, and carried away by force their wives and daughters; and such an one Laban represents Jacob to be, a thief and a robber; who had not only stolen away from him, but had stole away his goods, and even his gods, and carried away his daughters against their will: all which were false, and particularly the latter, since they went along with him with their free and full consent.

Genesis 31:27

Ver. 27. Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me?.... Intimating as if he should not have been against his departure, if he had but acquainted him with it, and the reasons of it; so that he had no need to have used such privacy, and go away like a thief by stealth, as if he had done something he had reason to be ashamed of:

and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth,
and with songs, with tabret and with harp: pretending that he would have given him leave to depart; and not only have dismissed him from his house and

service in an honourable way, but very cheerfully and pleasantly: he would have got a band of music, men singers and women singers, and others to play on musical instruments, as the tabret and harp; and so had a concert of vocal and instrumental music, which would have shown that they parted by consent, and as good friends: whether this was an usual custom in this country, of parting with friends, I cannot say, but it seems to be very odd; for usually relations and friends, that have a cordial affection for each other, part with grief and tears: by this Laban appears to be a carnal man, and had but little sense of religion, as well as acted the hypocritical part.

Genesis 31:28

Ver. 28. And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters?.... Did not give him an opportunity of taking his farewell, which used to be done with a kiss, as it is with us at this day: by his sons he means his grandsons, and so the Targum of Jonathan, my daughters' sons; and by his daughters Rachel and Leah, and Dinah his granddaughter:

thou hast done foolishly in [so] doing: since, as he would have him believe that he was both a loser by this step he took, and exposed himself to danger, seeing it was in the power of Laban to do him hurt, as in Ge 31:29; but Jacob knew what he did, and that it was the wisest part to follow the direction of God.

Genesis 31:29

Ver. 29. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt,.... Jacob and his family, wives, children, and servants, who were not able to stand against Laban and the men he brought with him; and so the Jerusalem Targum paraphrases it,

"I have an army and a multitude;"

a large force, which Jacob could not withstand: or, "my hand could have been for a god" {h} to me: you could have no more escaped it, or got out of it, or withstood me, than you could God himself: such an opinion had he of his superior power and strength, and that this would have been the case:

but the God of your father spoke unto me yesternight; the night past, or the other night, some very little time ago, since he came from home at least: by his father he means either his father Isaac, or his grandfather Abraham, whose

God the Lord was, and who came to Laban and told him who he was. This serves to strengthen the opinion that Laban was an idolater, and adhered to the gods of his grandfather Terah, from whom Abraham departed, and which Laban may have respect to; intimating that he abode by the religion of his ancestors at a greater remove than Jacob's: however, though he does not call him his God, he had some awe and reverence of him, and was influenced by his speech to him;

saying, take heed that thou spake not to Jacob either good or bad: this, though greatly to Jacob's honour, and against Laban's interest, yet his conscience would not allow him to keep it a secret; though, doubtless, his view was to show his superior power to Jacob, had he not been restrained by Jacob's God.

{h} ydy lal vy "esset mihi pro deo manus mea", Schmidt.

Genesis 31:30

Ver. 30. And now, [though] thou wouldest needs be gone,.... Or, "in going wouldest go" {i}, was determined upon it, and in haste to do it:

because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, or "desiring didst desire it" {k}; had a vehement desire for it, which Laban signifies he should not have opposed, if he had let him know his mind: but be it so that he had ever so great desire to leave him and return to his father's house, says he,

[yet], wherefore, hast thou stolen my gods? what reason had he for that? if he took away himself, his wives, his children, his goods, what business had he with his gods? he could not claim these as his, meaning the images or teraphim before mentioned, Ge 31:19; by which it appears that Laban was some way or other guilty of idolatry in the use of these images; looking upon them as types, or representations of God, as Josephus {l} calls them, and worshipped God in them, or along with them and by them; for he could never think they were truly and really gods, that could not preserve themselves from being stolen away, and that must be a poor god that a man may be robbed of.

{i} tklh Klh "eundo ivisti", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius. {k} htpokn Pok "desiderando desiderabis", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Piscator. {l} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 19. sect. 9.

Genesis 31:31

Ver. 31. And Jacob answered and said to Laban, because I was afraid,.... That he would have done all he could to have hindered him from going away himself; and not only so, but would have prevented his taking his daughters with him; and especially would have detained his cattle; but of this last Jacob makes no mention, only of the former:

for I said; either within himself, or to his wives;

peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me; which of right belonged to him; for though they were Laban's daughters, they were Jacob's wives; and being given in marriage to him, he had a right unto them, and to take them with him; nor had Laban any right to detain them, which Jacob feared he would have attempted to have done, had he known his design; and this must have been done by force if done at all; for neither Jacob nor his wives would have agreed that they should stay with Laban upon his departure: what Laban charges Jacob with, in going away with his wives, he himself would have done, namely, using force to them. Laban's charge was false, but there was much reason for Jacob's suspicion.

Genesis 31:32

Ver. 32. With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live,.... This is the answer to his last question, as what goes before is to his first: Jacob knew nothing of their being taken away by any, and thought himself safe in saying what he did, being confident that no one with him could ever take them; but it was too rashly spoken by him, giving leave to Laban to put to death the person with whom they should be found, or imprecating death on him by the hand of God; "may he not live", but die, die immediately or before his time, as the Targum of Jonathan: hence the Jewish writers {m} observe, that Rachel died in giving birth in consequence of this imprecation, but without any foundation:

before our brethren discern thou what [is] thine with me, and take [it] to thee: not only his gods, but any of his goods or cattle, whatsoever he could find in his tents, or in his flocks, that were his property, he was welcome to take; and this he declared before the men that Laban brought with him, whom he also calls his brethren, being his kinsfolks and neighbours; and these he appeals to as witnesses of his honesty, integrity, and fair dealing; being conscious to himself that he had took nothing but what was his own:

for Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them; the images or gods; or he would have been more careful of his expression, in love and tenderness to his most beloved wife.

{m} Jarchi in loc. Pirke Eliezer, c. 36.

Genesis 31:33

Ver. 33. And Laban went into Jacob's tent,.... Into that first where he most suspected they were, being taken not out of value for them, but contempt of them;

and into Leah's tent; and not Leah's tent next, whom next to Jacob he might suspect of taking them, out of veneration to them, because her tent lay next:

and into the two maidservants' tents: Bilhah and Zilpah; or "the" tent of them; for the word is singular, and perhaps they had but one tent for them both, which distinguished them from the principal wives:

but he found [them] not; in neither of these tents:

then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent; which he went into last of all, as least suspecting her, being less addicted to the superstition and idolatry of his family than Leah and the maidservants: Aben Ezra thinks that he was twice in Leah's tent, and at the last time came out of that into Rachel's; and that Jacob's tent lay between Leah's and Rachel's. From this account it more clearly appears that men and their wives had separate tents or apartments; see
Ge 24:67.

Genesis 31:34

Ver. 34. Now Rachel had taken the images,.... Hearing her father inquire about them, and her husband having given leave to search for them, and to put to death whoever should be found to have them, took them from the place where she had before laid them:

and put them into the camel's furniture; perhaps the camel's furniture she rode on, and therefore it was in her tent, which some understand of the saddle on which she rode; rather, it seems to be the saddle cloth or housing, in which she might wrap the images and put them under her clothes; though some interpret it of the straw or litter of the camel, which is not so probable:

and sat upon them; the images, which, if she had the veneration for, as some suggest, she would never have used in such a manner:

and Laban searched all the tent, but found [them] not; excepting the place where Rachel sat; but Aben Ezra thinks she was not in the tent, but in some place without it, and if so, there needs no exception.

Genesis 31:35

Ver. 35. And she said to her father,.... As he approached nearer to her, having searched her tent all over:

let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee: she addresses him with great honour and respect; calling him her lord, being her father, though an unkind one, and entreats him not to be displeased that she did not rise up and yield that obeisance to him which was due from her to a father:

for the custom of women [is] upon me; her menstrues; which before the law of Moses were reckoned a pollution, and such persons were not to be touched or come near unto, and everything they sat upon was unclean, and not to be touched also; Le 15:19;

and he searched; all about her, and around her; but did not oblige her to get up, nor could he imagine that ever the images could be under her in such circumstances:

but found not the images; and so left off searching; nor do we find that he searched the flock for any of his cattle there, knowing full well Jacob's honesty and integrity.

Genesis 31:36

Ver. 36. And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban,.... Having answered Laban's questions to the silencing of him, and nothing of his upon search, being found with him, Jacob took heart, and was of good courage and in high spirits, and in his turn was heated also; and perhaps might carry his passion a little too far, and is not to be excused from some degree of sin and weakness; however, his reasoning is strong and nervous, and his expostulations very just and pathetic; whatever may be said for the temper he was in, and the wrath and resentment he showed:

and Jacob answered and said to Laban; that whereas he had suggested that he had done a very bad thing, he asks him,

what [is] my trespass? what [is] my sin? what heinous offence have I committed? what law of God or man have I broke?

that thou hast so hotly pursued after me? with so much haste and swiftness, and with such a number of men, as if he came to take a thief, a robber, or a murderer.

Genesis 31:37

Ver. 37. Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff,.... Or all my vessels {n}, or utensils; whether household goods, or such as were used with regard to the cattle, or armour for defence:

what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? is there any vessel or utensil, or anything whatever thou canst claim as thine own? is there anything that has been taken away from thee either by me or mine?

set [it] here before my brethren and thy brethren; publicly before them all, and let it be thoroughly inquired into whose property it was, and whether lawfully taken or not:

that they may judge betwixt us both; Jacob was so conscious to himself of his own uprightness, that he could safely leave anything that might be disputed in arbitration with the very men that Laban had brought with him: it was so clear a case that he had not wronged him of anyone thing.

{n} ylk lk "omnia vasa mea", Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Drusius, Schmidt.

Genesis 31:38

Ver. 38. This twenty years [have] I been [with] thee,.... So that he now must have been ninety seven years of age:

thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young: or very few of them: it was a rare case for any to be abortive, if ever: this, though owing to the blessing of God, was for Jacob's sake, and, under God, to be ascribed to his care and diligence in watching and keeping the flock, and doing everything needful for them:

and the rams of the flock have I not eaten: being content with meaner food, as lentil pottage and the like; see the contrary of this in shepherds, Eze 34:3.

Genesis 31:39

Ver. 39. That which was torn [of beasts] I brought not unto thee,.... To show what had befallen it; that so it might appear he had one the less to account for to him:

I bore the loss of it; took it upon himself, as if it had been somewhat blameworthy in him, as the word used signifies; and so made satisfaction for it; which, how he did, when he had no wages, is difficult to say: he might have some perquisites allowed him by Laban, though he had no settled salary; or he might lay himself under obligation to make it good whenever it was in his power, as follows:

of mine hand didst thou require it, [whether] stolen by day, or stolen by night; whether by men or beasts; or by men in the daytime, and by beasts in the night, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem distinguish: Laban was so rigorous and unjust as to require the restoration of them, or an equivalent for them at the hand of Jacob; all which were contrary to the law of God, Ex 22:10.

Genesis 31:40

Ver. 40. [Thus] I was,.... In such a situation, as well as in the following uncomfortable plight and condition:

in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night: the violent heat in the daytime scorched him, and the severe frosts in the night pinched him: that is, in the different seasons of the year, the heat of the day in the summertime, and the cold of the night in the wintertime; for it cannot well be thought that there should be excessive heat in the day and sharp frosts in the night, in the same season of the year: it looks as if Laban did not allow Jacob the proper conveniencies of clothes, and of tents to secure him from the inclemency of the weather, which other shepherds usually had:

and my sleep departed from mine eyes; through diligent care and watchfulness of the flocks in the night season, which on some occasions were necessary; see **Lu 2:8**.

Genesis 31:41

Ver. 41. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house,.... Attended with these difficulties, inconveniencies, and hardships;

I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters; Rachel and Leah; first seven years for Rachel; and having Leah imposed upon him instead of her, was obliged to serve seven years more, which he did for her sake; whereas he ought to have given them, and a dowry with them, to one who was heir to the land of Canaan, and not have exacted servitude of him:

and six years for thy cattle, to have as many of them for his hire, as were produced from a flock of white sheep, that were speckled, spotted, or ringstraked, or brown:

and thou hast changed my wages ten times; See Gill on "Ge 31:7";

Genesis 31:42

Ver. 42. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me,.... One and the same God is meant, who was the God of his father Isaac, and before him the God of Abraham, and now the fear of Isaac, whom he feared and served with reverence and godly fear, being at this present time a worshipper of him: now Jacob suggests, that unless his father's God had been on his side, and had protected and preserved him, as well as before blessed and prospered him,

surely thou hadst sent me away now empty: coming with such force upon him, he would have stripped him of all he had, of his wives and children, and servants and cattle:

God hath seen my affliction, and the labour of my hands; what hardships he endured in Laban's service, and what pains he took in feeding his flocks:

and rebuked [thee] yesternight; in a dream, charging him to say neither good nor evil to Jacob, which he himself had confessed, Ge 31:29.

Genesis 31:43

Ver. 43. And Laban answered and said unto Jacob,.... Not denying the truth of what he had said, nor acknowledging any fault he had been guilty of, or asking forgiveness for it, though he seemed to be convicted in his own conscience of it:

[these] daughters [are] my daughters: though thy wives, they are my own flesh and blood, and must be dear to me; so pretending strong natural affections for them:

and [these] children [are] my children; his grandchildren, for whom also he professed great love and affection:

and [these] cattle [are] my cattle; or of my cattle, as the Targum of Jonathan, sprung from them, as indeed they did:

and all that thou seest [is] mine; all this he observed in a bragging way, that it might be thought that he was generous in not insisting upon having it, but giving all back to Jacob again:

and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born? I cannot find in my heart to do them any hurt, or wrong them of anything, and am therefore willing all should be theirs.

Genesis 31:44

Ver. 44. Now therefore, come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou,.... Let us be good friends, and enter into an alliance for mutual safety, and make an agreement for each other's good. Laban perceiving that Jacob's God was with him, and blessed him, and made him prosperous, and protected him, was fearful, lest, growing powerful, he should some time or other revenge himself on him or his, for his ill usage of him; and therefore was desirous of entering into a covenant of friendship with him:

and let it be for a witness between me and thee; that all past differences are made up, and former quarrels subside, and everything before amiss is forgiven and forgotten, and that for the future peace and good will subsist; of which a covenant made between them would be a testimony.

Genesis 31:45

Ver. 45. And Jacob took a stone, and set it up [for] a pillar. To show his readiness to agree to the motion, he immediately took a large stone that lay upon the mount, and set it up on one end, to be a standing monument or memorial of the agreement now about to be made between them.

Genesis 31:46

Ver. 46. And Jacob said unto his brethren, gather stones,.... Not to his sons, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi; these would not be called brethren, and were not fit, being too young to be employed in gathering large stones, as these must be, to erect a monument with; rather his servants, whom he employed in keeping his sheep under him, and might so call them, as he did the shepherds of Haran, Ge 29:4; and whom he could command to such service, and were most proper to be made use of in it; unless it can be thought the men Laban brought with him, whom Jacob before calls his brethren, Ge 31:37, are meant; and then the words must be understood as spoken, not in an authoritative way, but as a request or direction, which was complied with:

and they took stones, and made an heap; they fetched stones that lay about here and there, and laid them in order one upon another, and so made an heap of them:

and they did eat there upon the heap; they made it like a table, and set their food on it, and ate off of it; or they "ate by" it {o}, it being usual in making covenants to make a feast, at least to eat and drink together, in token of friendship and good will. The Chinese {p} call friendship that is most firm and stable, and not to be rescinded, "stony friendship": whether from a like custom with this does not appear.

{o} le "apud", "juxta", "prope"; see Nold. Concord. Part. Heb. p. 691. {p} Martin. Hist. Sinic. p. 178.

Genesis 31:47

Ver. 47. And Laban called it Jegarsahadutha,.... Which in the Syriac and Chaldee languages signifies "an heap of witness"; it being, as after observed, a witness of the covenant between Laban and Jacob:

but Jacob called it Galeed; which in the Hebrew tongue signifies the same, "an heap of witness"; or "an heap, [the] witness", for the same reason. Laban was a Syrian, as he sometimes is called, Ge 25:20, wherefore he used the Syrian language; Jacob was a descendant of Abraham the Hebrew, and he used the Hebrew language; and both that their respective posterity might understand the meaning of the name; though these two are not so very different but Laban and Jacob could very well understand each other, as appears by their discourse together, these being but dialects of the same tongue.

Genesis 31:48

Ver. 48. And Laban said, this heap [is] a witness between me and thee this day. A witness of the covenant now about to be made between them that day, and a witness against them should they break it:

therefore was the name of it called Galeed; by Jacob, as before observed; See Gill on "Ge 31:47".

Genesis 31:49

Ver. 49. And Mizpah,.... Which being an Hebrew word, it looks as if the heap had also this name given it by Jacob, which signifies a "watch" or "watchtower"; though, by what follows, it seems to be given by Laban, who could speak Hebrew as well, as Syriac, or Chaldee:

for he said, the Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another; or "hid one from another" {q}; when being at a distance, they could not see each other, or what one another did in agreement or disagreement with their present covenant: but he intimates, that the Lord sees and knows all things, and therefore imprecates that God would watch over them both, them and their actions, and bring upon them the evil or the good, according as their actions were, or as they broke or kept this covenant.

{q} rton "abscondemur", Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius; "absconditi erimus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Genesis 31:50

Ver. 50. If thou shall afflict my daughters,.... In body or mind, by giving them hard blows, or ill words, and by withholding from them the necessaries of life, food and raiment, and the like:

or if thou shall take [other] wives besides my daughters; which also would be an affliction and vexation to them, see Le 18:18. Laban, though he had led Jacob into polygamy, and even obliged him to it, did not choose he should go further into it, for the sake of his daughters, to whom he professes now much kindness and affection, though he had shown but little to them before; as well as talks in a more religious strain than he had been used to do:

no man [is] with us; the sense is not that there were none with them at the present time, for the men or brethren that Laban brought with him were present: or that there were none fit to be witnesses, because these were kinsmen, for they are appealed to by Jacob as judges between them, Ge 31:33; but this refers to time to come, and may be supplied thus, "when no man be with us"; when there is none to observe what is done by either of us, contrary to mutual agreement, and to report it to one or other: then

see, take notice, and observe,

God [is] witness betwixt me and thee; who is omniscient and omnipresent, sees, observes all the actions of men, and deals with them accordingly; and so will be a witness for or against each of us, as we shall behave in observing, or not observing, the terms of our covenant.

Genesis 31:51

Ver. 51. And Laban said to Jacob,.... Continued speaking to him, as follows:

behold this heap, and behold [this] pillar which I have cast betwixt me and thee; the heap of stones seems to be gathered and laid together by the brethren, and the pillar to be erected by Jacob; and yet Laban says of them both, that he cast them, or erected them, they being done by his order, or with his consent, as well as Jacob's; unless the pillar can be thought to design another beside that which Jacob set up, and was like that, a single stone at some little distance from the heap: but the Samaritan and Arabic versions read, "which thou hast seen or set", &c. agreeably to Ge 31:45.

Genesis 31:52

Ver. 52. This heap [be] witness,.... Agreeably to its name, which both he and Jacob gave unto it:

and [this] pillar [be] witness: which was set up for the same purpose:

that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm; not that these were to be the boundaries of their respective countries; for neither of them at present were possessed of lands that reached hither, if of any at all; nor that it would be a breach of covenant to pass over or by those, from one country into another, but so as to do, or with an intent to do, hurt to each other.

Genesis 31:53

Ver. 53. The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us,.... And the father of these was Terah, so that the god of them was not the true God, and is not meant, at least not as truly worshipped; but the god or gods of Terah, Nahor and Abraham worshipped while idolaters, and Laban still continued to do, though perhaps not in so gross a manner as some did:

and Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac; that is, by the true God his father Isaac feared, served, and worshipped: or "but Jacob" {r}, &c. which seems plainly to suggest, that the God whom Laban called upon to be a judge between them, should they break covenant, and swore by, and he whom Jacob swore by, were different; each swore by their own deities.

{r} ebvyw "sed juravit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Genesis 31:54

Ver. 54. Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount,.... On Mount Gilead, not in a religious way, in which he could not join with Laban, or admit him to it; but in a civil way he "slew a slaughter" {s}, or rather made one; that is, as Jarchi explains it, he slew cattle for a feast, as it was usual to make feasts for the several parties concerned in covenant, see Ge 26:30:

and called his brethren, to eat bread; the, men that came with Laban, and him also, these he invited to his feast, for all sorts of food is called bread:

and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount; this affair between Laban and Jacob had took up the whole day, at evening they feasted together upon the covenant being made, and then tarried all night to take their rest.

{s} hbz-xbzyw "et mactavit mactationem", Drusius, Cartwright, Schmidt, Ainsworth.

Genesis 31:55

Ver. 55. And early in the morning Laban rose up,.... In order to prepare for, and set forward on his journey home:

and kissed his sons and his daughters; Jacob and his sons, who were his grandsons, and his daughters Rachel and Leah, with Dinah his granddaughter, as was the custom of relations and friends in those countries and times, at parting:

and blessed them; wished all happiness to them:

and Laban departed, and returned unto his place; to the city of Haran, where he dwelt; and after this we hear no more of him, nor of any transaction of his in life, or when and where he died, only his name is once mentioned by Jacob, Ge 32:4.

Genesis 32:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 32

This chapter informs us of Jacob's proceeding on in his journey, and of his being met and guarded by an host of angels, Ge 32:1; of his sending messengers to his brother Esau, acquainting him with his increase, and desiring his favour and good will, Ge 32:3, who return and report to him, that Esau was coming to him with four hundred men, which put him into a panic, and after devising ways and means for the security of himself; and those with him, at least a part, if not the whole, Ge 32:6; then follows a prayer of his to God, pressing his unworthiness of mercies, and his sense of them, imploring deliverance from his brother, and putting the Lord in mind of his promises, Ge 32:9; after which we have an account of the wise methods he took for the safety of himself and family, by sending a present to his brother, dividing those who had the charge of it into separate companies, and directing them to move at a proper distance from each other, he, his wives and children, following after, Ge 32:13; when they were over the brook Jabbok, he stopped, and being alone, the Son of God in an human form appeared to him, and wrestled with him, with whom Jacob prevailed, and got the blessing, and hence had the name of Israel, Ge 32:24; and though he could not get his name, he perceived it was a divine Person he had wrestled with, and therefore called the name of the place Penuel, Ge 32:29; the hollow of his thigh being touched by him with whom he wrestled, which put it out of joint, he halted as he went over Penuel, in commemoration of which the children of Israel eat not of that part of the thigh, Ge 32:31.

Ver. 1. And Jacob went on his way,.... From Gilead towards the land of Canaan:

and the angels of God met him; to comfort and help him, to protect and defend him, to keep him in all his ways, that nothing hurt him, Ps 91:11; these are ministering spirits sent forth by God to minister to his people, the heirs of salvation; and such an one Jacob was.

Genesis 32:2

Ver. 2. And when Jacob saw them,.... These appeared in a visible form, most probably human, and in the habit, and with the accoutrements of soldiers, and therefore afterwards called an host or army. Aben Ezra thinks that Jacob alone saw them, as Elisha first saw the host of angels before the young man did that was with him, **2Ki 6:17**:

he said, this [is] God's host: or army, hence he is often called the Lord of hosts; angels have this name from their number, order, strength, and military exploits they perform:

and he called the name of the place Mahanaim; which signifies two hosts or armies; either his own family and company making one, and the angels another, as Aben Ezra observes; or they were the angels, who very probably appeared in two companies, or as two armies, and one went on one side of Jacob and his family, and the other on the other side; or the one went before him, and the other behind him; the latter to secure him from any insult of Laban, should he pursue after him, and distress him in the rear, and the former to protect him from Esau, near whose country Jacob now was, and of whom he was in some fear and danger; thus seasonably did God appear for him. The Jewish writers {t} say, the host of God is 60,000, and that the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, never dwells among less, and that Mahanaim, or two hosts, are 120,000; there was afterwards a city of this name near this place, which very likely was so called in memory of this appearance, Jos 21:38; and there seems to be an allusion to it in the account of the church, **So 6:13**; it was in the land of Gilead, and tribe of Gad, forty four miles from Jerusalem to the southeast {u}.

{t} In Bereshit Rabba, sect. 75. fol. 66. 1. {u} Bunting's Travels, p. 74.

Genesis 32:3

Ver. 3. And Jacob sent messengers before him unto Esau his brother,.... Or "angels": not angels simply, as Jarchi, for these were not under the command, and in the power of Jacob to send, nor would they have needed any instruction from him afterwards given, but these were some of his own servants. Esau it seems was removed from his father's house, and was possessed of a country after mentioned, called from his name; and which Aben Ezra says lay between Haran and the land of Israel; but if it did not directly lie in the road of Jacob, yet, as it was near him, he did not choose to pass by without seeing his brother; and therefore sent messengers to inform him of his coming, and by whom he might learn in what temper and disposition of mind he was towards him:

unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom: which had its first name from Seir the Horite; and Esau having married into his family, came into the possession of it, by virtue of that marriage; or rather he and his sons drove out the Horites, the ancient possessors of it, and took it to themselves, from whom it was afterwards called Edom, a name of Esau, which he had from the red pottage he sold his birthright for to his brother Jacob, Ge 25:30; perhaps it is here called Edom by an anticipation, not having as yet that name, though it had in Moses's time, when this history was wrote; see Ge 36:18.

Genesis 32:4

Ver. 4. And he commanded them,.... Being his servants:

saying, thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; being not only a lord of a country, but his eldest brother, and whom he chose to bespeak in this manner, to soften his mind, and incline it to him; and that he might see he did not pique himself upon the birthright and blessing he had obtained; and as if these were forgotten by him, though hereby he does not give up his right in them:

thy servant Jacob saith thus, expressing great humility and modesty; for though his father Isaac by his blessing had made him lord over Esau, the time was not come for this to take place, his father not being yet dead; and besides, was to have its accomplishment not in his own person, but in his posterity:

I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now; had been a sojourner and a servant in Laban's family for twenty years past, and had had an hard master, and therefore could not be the object of his brother's envy, but rather of his pity and compassion.

Genesis 32:5

Ver. 5. And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants,.... This he would have said, lest he should think he was come to ask anything of him, and put himself and his family upon him; and lest he should treat him with contempt, as a poor mean beggarly creature, and be ashamed of the relation he stood in to him:

and I have sent to tell my lord; of his coming, and of his state and circumstances:

that I may find grace in thy sight; share in his good will, which was all he wanted, and that friendship, harmony, and brotherly love, might subsist between them, which he was very desirous of.

Genesis 32:6

Ver. 6. And the messengers returned to Jacob,.... After they had delivered their message, with the answer they brought back:

saying, we came to thy brother Esau; which, though not expressed, is implied in these words, and is still more manifest by what follows:

and also he cometh to meet thee; and pay a friendly visit, as they supposed:

and four hundred men with him; partly to show his grandeur, and partly out of respect to Jacob, and to do honour to him; though some think this was done with an ill design upon him, and which indeed seems probable; and it is certain Jacob so understood it, as is evident by the distress it gave him, and by the methods he took for his safety, and by the gracious appearance of God unto him, and the strength he gave him on this occasion, not only to pray to and wrestle with him, but to prevail both with God and men, as the following account shows. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call these four hundred men leaders or generals of armies, which is not probable; they were most likely Esau's subjects, his tenants and servants.

Genesis 32:7

Ver. 7. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed,.... Knowing what he had done to his brother in getting the birthright and blessing from him, and what an enmity he had conceived in his mind against him on that account, and remembering what he had said he would do to him; and therefore might fear that all his professions of respect to him were craftily and cunningly made to take him off of his guard, and that he might the more easily fall into his hands, and especially when he heard there were four hundred men with him; this struck a terror into him, and made him suspicious of an ill design against him; though herein Jacob betrayed much weakness and want of faith, when God has promised again and again that he would he with him, and keep him, and protect him, and return him safe to the land of Canaan; and when he had just had such an appearance of angels to be his helpers, guardians, and protectors:

and he divided the people that [was] with him, and the flocks, and the herds, and the camels, into two bands: some of his servants and shepherds, with a part of the flocks and herds, in one band or company, and some with the rest of them, and the camels, and his wives, and his children, in the other.

Genesis 32:8

Ver. 8. And said, if Esau come to the one company, and smite it,.... The first, which perhaps consisted only of some servants, with a part of his cattle; so that if Esau should come in an hostile manner, and fall upon that, and slay the servants, and take the cattle as a booty:

then the other company which is left shall escape; by flight, in which most probably were he himself, his wives and children, and the camels to carry them off who would have notice by what should happen to the first band; but one would think, that, notwithstanding all this precaution and wise methods taken, there could be little expectation of escaping the hands of Esau, if he came out on such an ill design; for whither could they flee? or how could they hope to get out of the reach of four hundred men pursuing after them, unless it could be thought, or might be hoped, that the first company falling into his hands, and the revenge on them, and the plunder of them, would satiate him, and he would proceed no further? but Jacob did not trust to these methods he concerted, but betakes himself to God in prayer, as follows.

Genesis 32:9

Ver. 9. And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac,.... In this distress he does not consult the teraphim Rachel had taken from her father; nor does he call upon the hosts of angels that had just appeared to him, to help, protect, and guard him; but to God only, the God of his fathers, who had promised great things to them, and had done great things for them; who was their God in covenant, as he was his also, though he makes no mention of it, and who was heir of the promises made to them, the birthright and blessing being entailed upon him:

the Lord which saidst unto me, return unto thy country, and to thy kindred; the same God had appeared to him, when in Laban's house, and bid him return to his own country, and father's house; in obedience to which command he was now on his journey thither, and being in the way of his duty, and acting according to the will of God, though he had no dependence on, nor put any confidence in anything done by him, as appears by what follows; yet he hoped God of his grace and goodness would have a regard unto him, as he was doing what he was directed to by him, and especially since he had made the following gracious promise:

and I will deal well with thee: bestow good things on thee, both temporal and spiritual, and among the former, preservation from evils and dangers is included.

Genesis 32:10

Ver. 10. I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies,.... Or of any of them, according to his humble sense of things his mind was now impressed with; he was not worthy of the least mercy and favour that had been bestowed upon him; not even of any temporal mercy, and much less of any spiritual one, and therefore did not expect any from the hands of God, on account of any merit of his own: or "I am less than all thy mercies" {w}; Jacob had had many mercies and favours bestowed upon him by the Lord, which he was sensible of, and thankful for, notwithstanding all the ill usage and hard treatment he had met with in Laban's house, and those were very great ones; he was not worthy of all, nor any of them; he was not deserving of the least of them, as our version truly gives the sense of the words:

and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; in performing promises made to him; grace, mercy, and goodness are seen making promises, and truth and faithfulness in the performance of them; Jacob had had a rich experience of both, and was deeply affected therewith, and which made him humble before God:

for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; the river Jordan, near to which he now was, or at least had it in view, either with the eyes of his body, or his mind; this river he passed over when he went to Haran with his staff in his hand, and that only, which was either a shepherd's staff, or a travelling one, the latter most likely: he passed "alone" over it, as Onkelos and Jonathan add by way of illustration; unaccompanied by any, having no friend with him, nor servant to attend him. Jarchi's paraphrase is,

"there was not with me neither silver nor gold, nor cattle, but my staff only."

And now I am become two bands; into which he had now divided his wives, children, servants, and cattle; this he mentions, to observe the great goodness of God to him, and the large increase he had made him, and how different his circumstances now were to what they were when he was upon this spot, or thereabout, twenty years ago.

{w} Mydoxh lkm ytnjq "minor sum cunctis misericordiis", Pagninus, Drusius & Schmidt.

Genesis 32:11

Ver. 11. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau,.... For though his brother, it was his brother Esau, that had formerly vowed revenge upon him, and had determined to kill him, Ge 27:41, and he knew not but that he was still of the same mind; and now having an opportunity, and in his power to do it, being accompanied with four hundred men, he feared he would attempt it; and therefore entreats the Lord, who was greater than he, to deliver him from falling into his hands, and being destroyed by him:

for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, [and] the mother with the children; for whom Jacob seems to be more concerned than for himself; the phrase denotes the utter destruction of his family, and the cruelty and inhumanity that would be exercised therein; which shows what an opinion he had of his brother, and of his savage disposition.

Genesis 32:12

Ver. 12. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good,.... All kind of good, most certainly and constantly; so Jacob rightly interpreted the promise, "I will be with thee", Ge 31:3; for the promise of God's presence includes and secures all needful good to his people; and from this general promise Jacob draws an argument for a special and particular good, the preservation of him and his family, he was now pleading for; and the rather he might hope to succeed, since the following promise was also made him:

and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude; which could not be fulfilled, if he and his family were cut off at once, as he feared; but God is faithful who has promised.

Genesis 32:13

Ver. 13. And he lodged there that same night,.... At Mahanaim, or some place near it:

and took of that which came to his hand; not what came next to hand, for what he did was with great deliberation, judgment, and prudence; wherefore the phrase signifies what he was possessed of, or was in his power, as Jarchi rightly interprets it:

a present for Esau his brother: in order to pacify him, gain his good will, and avert his wrath and displeasure, see Pr 18:16; though Jacob had prayed to God, committed himself and family to him, and left all with him, yet he thought it proper to make use of all prudential means and methods for his safety: God frequently works in and by means made use of: the account of the present follows.

Genesis 32:14

Ver. 14. Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams. And it seems this proportion of one he goat to ten she goats, and of one ram to ten ewes, is a proper one, and what has been so judged in other times and countries {x}.

{x} Varro de rustica, l. 2. c. 3. apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 43. col. 439. &c. 53. col. 648.

Genesis 32:15

Ver. 15. Thirty milch camels with their colts,.... Milch camels were in great esteem in the eastern countries; their milk being, as Aristotle {y} and Pliny {z} say, the sweetest of all milk:

forty kine and ten bulls; one bull to ten cows; the same proportion as in the goats and rams:

twenty she asses and ten foals; and supposing thirty colts belonging to the camels; the present consisted of five hundred and eighty head of cattle: a large number to spare out of his flocks and herds, that he had acquired in six years' time; and showed a generous disposition as well as prudence, to part with so much in order to secure the rest.

{y} Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 26. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 41. & 28. 9.

Genesis 32:16

Ver. 16. And he delivered [them] into the hand of his servants,.... To present them to Esau as from him:

every drove by themselves; there seems to have been three droves, see Ge 32:19; very probably the two hundred and twenty goats, male and female, were in the first drove; and the two hundred and twenty sheep, ewes, and rams, were in the second drove; and the thirty camels, with their colts, and the fifty cows and bulls, with the twenty she asses and ten foals, which made in all one hundred and forty, were in the third drove: though Aben Ezra thinks there were five droves; nor is it improbable, the goats in one drove, the sheep in another, the camels and colts in a third, and the kine and bulls might make a fourth, and the asses with their foals a fifth:

and saith unto his servants, pass over before me: over the brook Jabbok, Ge 32:22, a day's journey or less before him, as Jarchi observes, or rather a night's journey, as seems by the context; for these were sent out at evening, and Jacob stayed behind all night, as appears by what follows:

and put a space betwixt drove and drove; his meaning is, that they should not follow each other closely; but that there should be a considerable distance between them, and which he would have them careful to keep: his view in this was, partly to prolong time, Esau stopping, as he supposed he would, at each drove, and asking questions of the men; and partly that he might the better and more distinctly observe the largeness of his present, and his munificence in it, and so, both by the present, and by the frequent repetition of his submission to him as his servant, his wrath, if he came out in it, would be gradually abated, and before he came to him he would be in a disposition to receive him with some marks of affection and kindness, as he did.

Genesis 32:17

Ver. 17. And he commanded the foremost,.... He that had the care of the first drove, which consisted of goats, male and female:

saying, when Esau my brother meeteth thee; as there was reason to believe he would, being on the road, and him first of all, being the foremost:

and asketh thee, saying, what [art] thou? that is, whose servant art thou? to whom dost thou belong?

and whither goest thou? what place art thou travelling to?

and whose are these before thee? whose are these goats? to whom do they belong thou art driving? for in driving and travelling on the road, sheep and goats went before those that had the care of them; whereas, in leading out to pastures, the shepherds went before, and the flocks followed, Joh 10:4.

Genesis 32:18

Ver. 18. Then thou shall say, [they be] thy servant Jacob's,.... Both the goats before them, and they themselves that had the care of them, belonged to Jacob, who directed them to speak of him to Esau as his "servant":

it [is] a present sent unto my lord Esau; which is the answer to the second question:

and behold also he [is] behind us: that is, Jacob: this they were bid to tell, lest he should think that Jacob was afraid of him, and was gone another way; but that he was coming to pay a visit to him, and might expect shortly to see him, which would prepare his mind how to behave towards him.

Genesis 32:19

Ver. 19. And so commanded he the second and third,.... Those who had the care of the second and third droves, he ordered them to say the same things, and in the same words as he had the first:

and all that followed the droves; either all that were with the principal driver; that if any of them should happen to be interrogated first, they might know what to answer; or those that followed the other droves, besides the three mentioned, which countenances Aben Ezra's notion of five droves, before observed:

saying, on this manner shall you speak to Esau, when you find him; that is, when they met him and perceived it was he that put questions to them.

Genesis 32:20

Ver. 20. And say ye moreover, behold, thy servant Jacob [is] behind us,.... This is repeated to impress it upon their minds, that they might be careful of all things, not to forget that, it being a point of great importance; for the present would have signified nothing, if Jacob had not appeared in person; Esau would have thought himself, at best, but slighted; as if he was unworthy of a visit from him, and of conversation with him:

for he said: that is, Jacob, or "had said" {a}, in his heart, within himself, as might be supposed from the whole of his conduct; for what follows are the words of Moses the historian, as Aben Ezra observes, and not of Jacob to his servants, nor of them to Esau:

I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterwards I will see his face: he hoped the present would produce the desired effect; that it would turn away his wrath from him, and pacify him; and then he should be able to appear before him, and see his face with pleasure: or, "I will expiate his face" {b}, as some render the words, or make him propitious and favourable; or cover his face, as Aben Ezra interprets it, that is, cause him to hide his wrath and resentment, that it shall not appear; or cause his fury to cease, as Jarchi; or remove his anger, wrath, and displeasure, as Ben Melech; all which our version takes in, by rendering it, "appease him"; and then,

peradventure he will accept of me: receive him with marks of tenderness and affection, and in a very honourable and respectable manner.

{a} rma yk "dicebat enim", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Drusius. {b} wyup hrpka "expiabo faciem ejus", Montanus; "propitium reddam", Drusius, Munster.

Genesis 32:21

Ver. 21. So went the present over before him,.... Over the brook Jabbok, after mentioned, the night before Jacob did:

and himself lodged that night in the company; or "in the camp" {c}, either in the place called Mahanaim, from the hosts or crowds of angels seen there; or rather in his own camp, his family and servants; or, as Aben Ezra distinguishes, in the camp with his servants, and not in his tent, lest his brother should come and smite him; and so Nachmanides.

{c} hnxmb "in castris", Vatablus, Drusius, Schmidt; "in acie sua", Junius & Tremellius; "in exercitu", Piscator.

Genesis 32:22

Ver. 22. And he rose up that night,.... In the middle of it, for it was long before break of day, as appears from Ge 32:24;

and took his two wives, Rachel and Leah,

and his two womenservants, Bilhah and Zilpah, or, "his two concubines", as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; which distinguishes them from other womenservants or maidservants, of which, no doubt, he had many:

and his eleven sons; together with Dinah his daughter, though not mentioned, being the only female child, and a little one:

and passed over the ford Jabbok; over that river, at a place of it where it was fordable, or where there was a ford or passage: this was a river that took its rise from the mountains of Arabia, was the border of the Ammonites, washed the city Rabba, and ran between Philadelphia and Gerasa, and came into the river Jordan, at some little distance from the sea of Gennesaret or Galilee {d}, about three or four miles from it.

{d} Hieron, de loc. Heb. fol. 92. f. Adrichom, Theatrum Terrae, S. p. 32.

Genesis 32:23

Ver. 23. And he took them, and sent them over the brook,.... His wives and children, under the care of some of his servants:

and sent over that he had: all that belonged to him, his servants and his cattle or goods.

Genesis 32:24

Ver. 24. And Jacob was left alone,.... On the other side of Jabbok, his family and cattle having passed over it; and this solitude he chose, in order to spend some time in prayer to God for the safety of him and his:

and there wrestled a man with him; not a phantasm or spectre, as Josephus {e} calls him; nor was this a mere visionary representation of a man, to the imagination of Jacob; or done in the vision of prophecy, as Maimonides {f}; but it was something real, corporeal, and visible: the Targum of Jonathan says, it was an angel in the likeness of a man, and calls him Michael, which is not amiss, since he is expressly called an angel, Ho 12:4; and if Michael the uncreated angel is meant, it is most true; for not a created angel is designed, but a divine Person, as appears from Jacob's desiring to be blessed by him; and besides, being expressly called God, Ge 32:28; and was, no doubt, the Son of God in an human form; who frequently appeared in it as a token and pledge of his future incarnation: and "this wrestling" was real and corporeal on the part of both; the man took hold of Jacob, and he took hold of the man, and they strove and struggled together for victory as wrestlers do; and on Jacob's part it was also mental and spiritual, and signified his fervent and importunate striving with God in prayer; or at least it was attended with earnest and importunate supplications; see Ho 12:4; and this continued

until the breaking of the day: how long this conflict lasted is not certain, perhaps not long; since after Jacob rose in the night he had a great deal of business to do, and did it before this affair happened; as sending his wives, children, servants, and cattle over the brook: however, this may denote, that in the present state or night of darkness, wrestling in prayer with God must be continued until the perfect state commences, when the everlasting day of glory will break.

{e} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 20. sect. 2. {f} Morch Nevochim, par. 2. c. 42. p. 310.

Genesis 32:25

Ver. 25. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him,.... That he, the man, or the Son of God in the form of man, prevailed not against Jacob, by casting him to the ground, or causing him to desist and leave off wrestling with him; not because he could not, but because he would not, being willing to encourage the faith of Jacob against future trials and exercises, and especially under his present one: besides, such were the promises that this divine Person knew were made to Jacob, and so strong was Jacob's faith at this time in pleading those promises in prayer to God, that he could not do otherwise, consistent with the purposes and promises of God, than suffer himself to be prevailed over by him:

he touched the hollow of his thigh; the hollow part of the thigh or the groin, or the hollow place in which the thigh bone moves, and is said to have the form of the hollow of a man's hand recurved:

and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him; that is, the huckle bone, or the thigh bone, was moved out of the hollow place in which it was: this was done to let Jacob know that the person he wrestled with was superior to him, and could easily have overcome him, and obliged him to cease wrestling with him if he would; and that the victory he got over him was not by his own strength, but by divine assistance, and by the sufferance of the himself he wrestled with; so that he had nothing to boast of: and this shows the truth and reality of this conflict; that it was not visionary, but a real fact, as well as it teaches the weakness and infirmities of the saints, that attend them in their spiritual conflicts. The word used in this and the preceding verse comes from a root which signifies dust; it being usual with wrestlers to raise up the dust with their feet when they strive together, as Kimchi {g} remarks, as well as it was common with the ancients to wrestle in dust, and sand {h}; and hence the phrase "descendere in arenam", combatants were called "arenarii".

{g} Sepher Shorash rad qba. {h} "Fulva luctantur arena." --Virgil.

Genesis 32:26

Ver. 26. And he said, let me go, for the day breaketh,.... This was said that he might seem to be a man that was desirous of going about his business, as men do early in the morning; though the true reason perhaps was, that his form might not be more distinctly seen by Jacob, and much less by any other person:

and he said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me; for by his touching his thigh, and the effect of that, he perceived he was more than a man, even a divine Person, and therefore insisted upon being blessed by him: thus faith in prayer lays hold on God, and will not let him go without leaving the blessing it is pleading for; which shows the great strength of faith, and the efficacy of the prayer of faith with God; see Ex 32:10.

Genesis 32:27

Ver. 27. And he said unto him, what [is] thy name?.... Which question is put, not as being ignorant of it, but in order to take occasion from it, and the change of it, to show that he had granted his request, and had blessed him, and would yet more and more:

and he said, Jacob; the name given him at his birth, and by which he had always been called, and therefore tells it him at once, not staying to ask the reason of the question.

Genesis 32:28

Ver. 28. And he said, thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel,.... That is, not Jacob only, but Israel also, as Ben Melech interprets it, or the one as well as the other; or the one rather and more frequently than the other: for certain it is, that he is often after this called Jacob, and his posterity also the seed of Jacob, though more commonly Israel, and Israelites:

for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed: this is given as a reason of his name Israel, which signifies a prince of God, or one who as a prince prevails with God; which confutes all other etymologies of the name, as the upright one of God, the man that sees God, or any other: he now prevailed with God in prayer, and by faith got the blessing, as he had prevailed before with Esau and Laban, and got the better of them, and so would again of the former: hence some render the word, "and shall prevail" {i}; and indeed this transaction was designed to fortify Jacob against the fear of his brother Esau; and from whence he might reasonably conclude, that if he had power with God, and prevailed to obtain what he desired of him, he would much more be able to prevail over his brother, and even over all that should rise up against him, and oppose him; and this may not only be prophetic of what should hereafter be fulfilled in the person of Jacob, but in his posterity in future times, who should prevail over their enemies, and enjoy all good things by the favour of God: for it may be rendered, "thou hast behaved like a prince with God, and with men", or, "over men thou shalt prevail".

{i} lkwt "praevalebis", V. L. dunato esh Sept. so the Targum of Onkelos.

Genesis 32:29

Ver. 29. And Jacob asked [him], and said, tell [me], I pray thee, thy name,.... Being asked his own name, and told it, and having another given him more significative and expressive, he is emboldened to ask the person that wrestled with him what was his name; **Ex 3:13**; for Jacob knew that he was God, as appears by his earnest desire to be blessed by him; and he knew it by the declaration just made, that he had power with God as a prince; but he hoped to have some name, taken by him from the place or circumstance of things in which he was, whereby he might the better remember this affair; as he was pleased to call himself the God of Bethel, from his appearance to Jacob there, Ge 31:13; therefore since he did not choose to give him his name, Jacob himself imposed one on the place afterwards, as a memorial of God being seen by him there:

and he said, wherefore [is] it [that] thou dost ask after my name? which is both a reproof of his curiosity, and a denial of his request; signifying that he had no need to put that question, it was enough for him that he had got the blessing, and which he confirms:

and he blessed him there; in the same place, as the Vulgate Latin version, where he had been wrestling with him, as he was taking his leave of him; for this was a farewell blessing, and a confirmation of that he had received, through the name of Israel being given him.

Genesis 32:30

Ver. 30. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel,.... In

Ge 32:31; Penuel, which signifies the face of God, or God hath looked upon me, or hath had respect to me: there was afterwards a city built here, called by the same name; see **Jud 8:8**; it is said {k} to be four miles from Mahanaim; the reason of it follows:

for I have seen God face to face: it may be observed, that in wrestling men are face to face, and in this position were Jacob and the man that wrestled with him; which he seems to have respect unto, as well as to the familiarity and intimate communion he was admitted to:

and my life is preserved: though he had wrestled with one so vastly superior to himself, who could have easily crushed this worm Jacob to pieces, as he is sometimes called; and though he had had such a sight of God as face to faces referring, as is thought, to a notion that obtained early, even among good men, that upon sight of God a man instantly died; though we have no example of that kind: but perhaps he observed this for his encouragement; that whereas he had met with God himself, and wrestled with him in the form of a man, and yet was preserved, he doubted not that, when he should meet with his brother and debate matters with him, he should be safe and unhurt.

{k} Bunting's Travels, p. 72. 74.

Genesis 32:31

Ver. 31. And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him,.... It was break of day when the angel desired to be let go, and by that time the parley held between them ceased, and they parted, the sun was rising; and as Jacob went on it shone upon him, as a token of the good will and favour of God to him, and as an emblem of the sun of righteousness arising on him with healing in his wings, **Mal 4:2**;

and he halted upon his thigh; it being out of joint, of which he became more sensible when he came to walk upon it; and besides, his attention to the angel that was with him caused him not so much to perceive it until he had departed front him: some think he went limping all his days; others, that he was healed immediately by the angel before he came to Esau; but of either there is no proof.

Genesis 32:32

Ver. 32. Therefore the children of Israel eat not [of] the sinew which shrank,.... Which was contracted by the touch of the angel, and by which it was weakened and benumbed; or the sinew of the part that was out of joint, the sinew or tendon that keeps the thigh bone in the socket, together with the flesh that covered it, or the muscle in which it is; or that sinew, others, that contracts itself and gives motion to the thigh bone to work itself: of this the Israelites eat not:

which [is] upon the hollow of the thigh; or the cap of it:

unto this day; when Moses wrote this history:

because he [the angel] touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, in the sinew that shrank; and very superstitiously do they abstain from it unto this day: they have a whole chapter in one of their treatises in the Misnah {l}, giving rules concerning it; where it is forbidden to eat of it, whether in the land of Israel or out of it; whether in common food or sacrifices, even in burnt offerings it was to be taken out; and whether in cattle of the house or of the field; and both in the right and left thigh, but not in fowls, because they have no hollow, and butchers are not to be trusted; and whoever eats of it to the quantity of an olive is to be beaten with forty stripes; and because the Jews are more ignorant of this nerve, as Mercer observes, therefore they abstain from all nerves in the posteriors of animals. Leo of Modena says {m}, of what beast soever they eat, they are very careful to take away all the fat and the sinew which shrunk: and hence it is, that in many places in Italy, and especially in Germany, they eat not at all of the hinder quarters of ox, lamb, or goat; because there is in those parts of the beast both very much fat, and also the forbidden sinew; and it asketh so much care to cleanse the parts of these, that there are few that are able to do it, or dare to undertake it.

{l} Cholin. c. 7. sect. 1. 3. {m} History of the Rites, Customs, &c. of the Jews, part 2. c. 7. sect. 3. p. 91. 92.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 33:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 33

In this chapter we find Esau meeting Jacob in a friendly manner, contrary to his fears and expectation, having set his family in order in case of the worst, Ge 33:1; putting questions to Jacob concerning the women and children with him, who make their obeisance to him as Jacob had done before, Ge 33:5; and concerning the drove he met, which was a present to him, and which he refused at first to take, but at the urgency of Jacob accepted of it, Ge 33:8; proposing to travel with him, unto which Jacob desired to be excused, he, with the women, children, and flocks, not being able to keep pace with him, Ge 33:12, and to leave some of his men with him to guard him, which Jacob judged unnecessary, upon which they parted friendly, Ge 33:15; and the chapter is concluded with an account of Jacob's journey, first to Succoth, then to Shalem, where he pitched his tent, bought a field and built an altar, Ge 33:17.

Ver. 1. And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked,.... After he had passed over the brook, and was come to his wives and children; which was done either accidentally or on purpose, to see if he could espy his brother coming: some think this denotes his cheerfulness and courage, and that he was now not distressed and dejected, as he had been before:

and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men; see Ge 32:6;

and he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids; some think he made four divisions of them; Leah and her children, Rachel and her son, Bilhah and hers, and Zilpah and hers: but others are of opinion there were but three: the two handmaids and their children in one division, Leah and her children in another, and Rachel and her son in the third; which seems to be confirmed in Ge 33:2, though the word for "divide" signifies to halve or divide into two parts; according to which, the division then must be of the two wives and their children in one company, and of the two handmaids and theirs in the other: and this Jacob did partly for decency and partly for safety.

Genesis 33:2

Ver. 2. And he put the handmaids and their children foremost,.... In the first division, as being less honourable and less beloved by him:

and Leah and her children after; still according to the degree of honour and affection due unto them; Leah being a wife that was imposed and forced upon him:

and Rachel and Joseph hindermost; being most beloved by him, and therefore most careful of them; Rachel being his principal and lawful wife, and who had the greatest share in his affection, and Joseph his only child by her.

Genesis 33:3

Ver. 3. And he passed over before them,.... At the head of them, as the master of the family, exposing himself to the greatest danger for them, and in order to protect and defend them in the best manner he could, or to endeavour to soften the mind of his brother by an address, should there be any occasion for it:

and bowed himself to the ground seven times; in a civil way, as was the manner in the eastern countries towards great personages; and this he did to Esau as being his elder brother, and as superior to him in grandeur and wealth, being lord of a considerable country; and at the same time religious adoration might be made to God; while he thus bowed to the ground, his heart might be going up to God in prayer, that he would appear for him at this instant, and deliver him and his family from perishing by his brother; and so the Targum of Jonathan introduces this clause,

"praying, and asking mercies of the Lord, and bowed, &c."

seven times, perhaps, may not design an exact number, but that he bowed many times as he came along:

until he came near to his brother; he kept bowing all the way he came until they were within a small space of one another.

Genesis 33:4

Ver. 4. And Esau ran to meet him,.... If he rode on any creature, which is likely, he alighted from it on sight of his brother Jacob, and to express his joy on that occasion, and affection for him, made all the haste he could to meet him, as did the father of the prodigal,
Lu 15:20,

and embraced him; in his arms, with the greatest respect and tenderness:

and fell on his neck; laid his head on his neck, where it remained for a while, not being able to lift it up, and speak unto him; the word is in the dual number, and signifies, as Ben Melech thinks, the two sides of the neck, the right and the left; and he might lay his head first on one side, and then on the other, to show the greatness of his affection:

and kissed him; in token of the same: there are three pricks over this word in the original more than ordinary, directing the attention of the reader to it, as something wonderful and worthy of observation: the Jewish writers {n} are divided about it; some think that this points at the insincerity of Esau in kissing his brother when he hated him; others, on the contrary, to his sincerity and heartiness in it, and which was matter of admiration, that he who laid up hatred in his heart against his brother, and had bore him a grudge for so many years, and it may be came out now, with an intention to destroy him, should have his heart so turned toward him, as to behave in this affectionate manner, which must be owing to the power of God working upon his heart, changing his mind, and making him thus soft, flexible, and compassionate; and to Jacob's humble submission to him, subservient to divine Providence as a means; and thus as he before had power with God in prayer on this same account, the effect of which he now perceived, so he had power with men, with his brother, as it was intimated to him he should:

and they wept; they "both" wept, as the Septuagint version adds, both Jacob and Esau, for joy at the sight of each other, and both seriously; and especially there can be no doubt of Jacob, who must be glad of this reconciliation, if it was only outward, since hereby his life, and the lives of his wives and children, would be spared.

{n} Zohar in Gen. fol. 99. 1. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 78. fol. 68. 3. Jarchi in loc.

Genesis 33:5

Ver. 5. And he lift up his eyes, and saw the women and children,.... After the salutation had passed between him and his brother Jacob, he looked, and saw behind him women and children, Jacob's two wives and his two handmaids, and twelve children he had by them,

and said, who [are] those with thee? who do those women and children belong to that follow thee? for Jacob had made no mention of his wives and children, when he sent his messengers to him, Ge 32:5; and therefore Esau might very well ask this question, which Jacob replied to:

and he said, the children which God hath graciously given thy servant; he speaks of his children as gifts of God, and as instances and pledges of his favour and good will to him, which he thankfully acknowledges; and at the same time speaks very respectfully to his brother, and in great condescension and humility owns himself his servant, but says nothing of his wives; not that he was ashamed, as Abarbinel suggests, that he should have four wives, when his brother, who had less regard for religion, had but three; but he mentions his children as being near kin to Esau, and by whom he might conclude who the women were, and of whom also he might give a particular account, though the Scripture is silent about it; since Leah and Rachel were his own first cousins, Ge 29:10; and who they were no doubt he told him, as they came to pay their respects to him, as follows.

Genesis 33:6

Ver. 6. Then the handmaids came near, they and their children,.... Being foremost, and next to, Jacob, as Bilhah and her two sons, Dan and Naphtali, and Zilpah and her two sons, Gad and Asher:

and they bowed themselves; in token of respect to Esau, as Jacob had done before them, and set them an example, and no doubt instructed them to do it.

Genesis 33:7

Ver. 7. And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves,.... Who were in the next division or company; their children were seven, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah, six sons and one daughter:

and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves; it is observed that Joseph is mentioned before his mother; it may be, because they might put him before her in the procession, for greater safety; or she might present him to Esau, being a child of little more than six years of age, and teach him how to make his obeisance to him, which she also did herself.

Genesis 33:8

Ver. 8. And he said, what [meanest] thou by all this drove which I met?.... Not as being ignorant of the design of it; for no doubt the several drovers, according to their instructions from Jacob, had acquainted him with it; but he chose not to take the present on what they said, but was willing to have it from Jacob's own mouth, and that he might have the opportunity of refusing it:

and he said, [these are] to find grace in the sight of my lord; to gain his favour and good will; and which, as it was a token of Jacob's good will to him, so, by his acceptance of it, he would know that he bore the same to him also. It was usual in the eastern countries to carry presents to friends, and especially to great men, whenever visits were paid, as all travellers in general testify to be still the usage in those parts, to this day.

Genesis 33:9

Ver. 9. And Esau said, I have enough, my brother,.... Or "I have much" {o}, and stand in no need of this present, or have much more than thou hast:

keep that thou hast unto thyself; for the use of himself and family, which is large; in this Esau showed himself not only not a covetous man, but that he was truly reconciled to his brother, and needed not anything from him, to make up the difference between them.

{o} br yl vy "est mihi multum", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "plurima", V. L. "quamplurima", Vatablus.

Genesis 33:10

Ver. 10. And Jacob said, nay, I pray thee,.... Do not say so, as the Targum of Jonathan supplies it, or do not refuse my present:

if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand; signifying, that the acceptance of his present would be a token to him, and give him full satisfaction that he bore a good will to him, and did not retain anger and resentment against him:

for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God; or of princes, as Onkelos, as the face of some great personage, as he was; or as the face of an angel, very pleasant and lovely; or as the face of God himself, he observing the love and favour of God to him, in working upon the heart of Esau, and causing him to carry it so lovingly to him; wherefore for this reason receive it, because I have had such an agreeable sight of thee:

and thou wast pleased with me; accepted of me, and kindly received me:

Genesis 33:11

Ver. 11. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee,.... The present he had sent him, now carrying home to his house, which was a part of what God had blessed Jacob with; and which he from a beneficent generous spirit gave his brother, wishing the blessing of God to go along with it; it was an insinuation, and so he would have it taken, that he wished him all happiness and prosperity;

because God hath dealt graciously with me; in giving him so much substance, and now in giving him so much favour in the sight of Esau, whom he dreaded:

and because I have enough; a sufficiency of all good things, being thoroughly contented with his state and circumstance; or "I have all things" {p}, all kind of good things, everything that was necessary for him; the expression is stronger than Esau's; and indeed Jacob had besides a large share of temporal mercies, all spiritual ones; God was his covenant God and Father, Christ was his Redeemer, the Spirit his sanctifier; he had all grace bestowed on him, and was an heir of glory:

and he urged him, and he took [it]: being pressing on him, or importunate with him, he accepted of his present.

{p} lk yl vy "sunt mihi omnia", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Drusius, Cartwright.

Genesis 33:12

Ver. 12. And he said, let us take our journey, and let us go,.... To Seir, where Esau lived, and whither he invited Jacob to stop a while, and refresh himself and his family:

and I will go before thee; to show him the way to his palace, and to protect him on the road from all dangers; or "besides thee" {q}, alongside of him, keeping equal pace with him, thereby showing great honour and respect, as well as in order to converse with him as they, travelled.

{q} Kdgnl "e regione tui", Montanus, Fagius, Drusius; "a latere tuo", Vatablus; "juxta te", Cartwright.

Genesis 33:13

Ver. 13. And he said unto him, my lord knoweth the children [are] tender,.... The eldest being but thirteen years of age, and the youngest about six; and Esau might easily perceive by their stature that they were young and tender, and not able to bear either riding or walking very fast:

and the flocks and herds with young [are] with me; or "upon me" {r}; the charge of them was upon him, it was incumbent on him to take care of them, and especially in the circumstances in which they were, being big with young, both sheep and kine; or "suckling", giving milk to their young, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and so having lambs and calves, some of them perhaps just yeaned and calved, they required more attendance and greater care in driving them, not being able to travel far in a day:

and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die; if he, and the servants under him, should push them on too fast, beyond their strength, even but one day, all in the above circumstances would be in danger of being lost through overmuch fatigue and weariness.

{r} yle "super me", Montanus, Vatablus, "incumbere mihi", Junius & Tremellius, so Aben Ezra.

Genesis 33:14

Ver. 14. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant,.... He desired in a very respectable manner that he would not keep his pace in complaisance to him, but proceed on in his journey, and go on with his men, and he with his family and flocks would follow after as fast as he could, and their circumstances would admit of:

and I will lead on softly; slowly, gently, easily, step by step:

according as the cattle that goeth before me, and the children be able to endure; or "according to the foot" {s} of them; of the cattle, whom he calls the "work" {t}, because his business lay in the care of them, and these were the chief of his substance; and of the children, as the feet of each of them were able to travel; or because of them, for the sake of them, as Aben Ezra, consulting their strength, he proposed to move on gently, like both a wise, careful, and tender father of his family, and shepherd of his flock:

until I come unto my lord unto Seir; whither, no doubt, he intended to come when he parted with Esau; but for reasons which after appeared to him he declined it: or more probably he did go thither then, or quickly after; though the Scripture makes no mention of it, he might go with some of his servants directly, and send his family, flocks, and herds, under the care of other servants, forward on their journey, and quickly come up to them again; for that he should tell a lie is not likely, nor does he seem to be under any temptation to it: and besides, it would have been dangerous to have disobliged his brother when on his borders, who could easily have come upon him again with four hundred men, and picked a quarrel with him for breach of promise, and destroyed him and his at once.

{s} lgrl "ad pedem", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Cartwright. {t} hkalmh "operis", Montanus, Munster, Fagius, Drusius, Cartwright, Schmidt.

Genesis 33:15

Ver. 15. And Esau said, let me now leave with thee [some] of the folk that [are] with me,.... To show him the way, and guard him on the road, and he appear the more honourable when he entered into Seir:

and he said, what needeth it? Jacob saw not the necessity of it; he knew the direct way very probably; he thought himself in no danger, since he was at peace with Esau, and he did not affect the grandeur of an equipage:

let me find grace in the sight of my lord; having his favour and good will, that was enough for him; and among the rest of the favours he received from him, he begged this might be added, that he might be excused retaining any of his retinue with him.

Genesis 33:16

Ver. 16. So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir. Took his leave of Jacob the same day he met him, and proceeded on in his journey towards Seir; whether he arrived there the same day is not certain, probably it was more than a day's journey.

Genesis 33:17

Ver. 17. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth,.... Perhaps after he had been at Seir, and stayed there some little time. Succoth was on the other side of Jordan, so called by anticipation, for it had its name from what follows; as yet there was no city built here, or at least of this name; afterwards there was, it lay in a valley, and belonged to Sihon king of Heshbon, and was given to the tribe of Gad, Jos 13:27; it is mentioned along with Penuel, and was not far from it, **Jud 8:8**. It is said to be but two miles distant from it {u}, but one would think it should be more:

and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle; an house for himself and family, and booths or tents for his servants or shepherds, and for the cattle they had the care of, some for one, and some for the other. This he did with an intention to stay some time here, as it should seem; and the Targum of Jonathan says he continued here a whole year, and Jarchi eighteen months, a winter and two summers; but this is all uncertain:

therefore the name of the place is called Succoth; from the booths or tents built here, which this word signifies.

{u} Bunting's Travels, p. 72.

Genesis 33:18

Ver. 18. And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem,.... Not Salem, of which Melchizedek was king, much less Jerusalem, for it was forty miles from it {w}; more likely Salim near Aenon, where John was baptizing, **Joh 3:23**; though it perhaps is the same with Shechem; for the words may be read, he "came to Shalem, the city Shechem", a city which Hamor had built, and called by the name of his son Shechem, the same with Sychar, **Joh 4:5**; this was on this side Jordan, and therefore Jacob must have passed over that river, though no mention is made of it; it is said to be about eight miles from Succoth {x}: though some think Shalem is not the name of a place, but an appellative, and to be rendered "safe [and] sound", or "whole"; and so the Jewish {y} writers generally understand it of his coming in peace, health, and safety:

which [is] in the land of Canaan; it belonged to that tribe of the Canaanites called Hivites; for Hamor, the father of Shechem, from whom it had its name, was an Hivite, Ge 34:2, so that Jacob was now got into the land of Canaan, his own country, and where his kindred dwelt:

when he came from Padanaram; from Mesopotamia, from Haran there; Shechem was the first place in the land of Canaan he came to, when he came from thence, and whither he came in the greatest safety, he himself, wives, children, and servants, in good health, without any loss of any of his cattle and substance; and without any ill thing befalling: him all the way thither, being delivered from Laban and Esau, and from every danger, and from every enemy: and to signify this is this clause added, which may seem otherwise superfluous:

and pitched his tent before the city; the city of Shechem, not in it, but near it.

{w} Bunting's Travels, p. 75. {x} Ib. p. 72. {y} Targum Jon. Jarchi, Aben Ezra & Ben Gersom in loc.

Genesis 33:19

Ver. 19. And he bought a parcel of a field,.... Not the whole, but a part of it; this he did, though he was heir of the whole country, because, as yet, the time was not come for him or his to take possession of it:

where he had spread his tent; the ground that it stood upon, and what was adjoining to it, for the use of his cattle: this he bought

at the hand of the children of Hamor; of some one of them, in whose possession it was, and perhaps with the consent of the rest, and before them, as witnesses:

for an hundred pieces of money; Onkelos, the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Samaritan, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it a hundred lambs or sheep, cattle being used to be given in exchange for things in trade and commerce;

but as money was in use before the times of Jacob, and Stephen expresses it as a "sum of money", **Ac 7:16**; and this best agrees with the use of the word in Job 42:11, the only place besides this, excepting Jos 24:32, in which it is used, it seems best so to interpret it here; and the pieces of money might be such as were of the value of a lamb or sheep, or rather had the figure of one impressed upon them. Laban, from whom Jacob might have them, or his neighbours, and also Jacob himself, being shepherds, might choose thus to impress their money; but the exact value of these pieces cannot be ascertained: the Jewish writers generally interpret them of a "meah", which was the value of one penny of our money, and twenty of them went to a shekel; so that a hundred of these must make a very small and contemptible sum to purchase a piece of ground with.

Genesis 33:20

Ver. 20. And he erected there an altar,.... To offer sacrifice upon to God, by way of thanksgiving, for the many mercies he had received since he went out of the land of Canaan, whither he was now returned; and especially for his safety in journeying hither from Padanaram, and for deliverance from Laban and Esau, and for all other favours that he and his had been partakers of. And this he also erected for the sake of religious worship, to be continued in his family; he intending to reside here for some time, as appears by the purchase he had made, and as it is certain he did:

and called it Elelohe-Israel: God, the God of Israel; that is, he called the altar the altar of God, who is the God of Israel, who had been his God, his preserver and protector; and had lately given him the name of Israel, and had made good what answered to it, and was designed by it, that as he had had power with God, and prevailed, so he should with man; and as a memorial of all these favours and mercies, he erected this altar, and devoted it to God and his service, and called it by this name: or "he called upon God, the God of Israel", as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; he prayed unto him at the time he offered sacrifice on the altar, and gave him praise for all the great and good things he had done for him. Jacob must have stayed at Succoth, and at this place, many years, especially at the latter; since, when he came into those parts, Dinah was a child of little more than six years of age, and Simeon and Levi were very young, not above eleven or twelve years of age; and yet, before he left Shechem, Dinah was marriageable, and Simeon and Levi were grown strong and able bodied men, and did a most strange exploit in slaying all the males in Shechem, as recorded in the next chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 34:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 34

This chapter gives an account of the ravishment of Dinah by Shechem, Ge 34:1; of his father Hamor and him treating with Jacob and his sons about the marriage of her, Ge 34:6; of the condition proposed by Jacob's sons, circumcision of all the males in Shechem, which was agreed to by Shechem and his father, Ge 34:13; of the men of Shechem being persuaded to yield to it, Ge 34:20; and of the destruction of them on the third day by Simeon and Levi, and of the plunder of their city and field, and of the captivity of their wives and children by Jacob's sons, which gave Jacob great offence, and in which they justified themselves, Ge 34:25.

Ver. 1 And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob,.... Who is supposed to be at this time about fourteen or fifteen years of age: for that she was but about nine or ten years old is not to be credited, as some compute it {z}: she is observed to be the daughter of Leah, partly that the following miscarriage might bring to mind her forwardness to intrude herself into Jacob's bed, and be a rebuke unto her; and partly to account for Simeon and Levi being so active in revenging her abuse, they being Leah's sons: of Dinah it is said, that she

went out to see the daughters of the land; of the land of Canaan, to visit them, and contract an acquaintance with them; and she having no sisters to converse with at home, it might be a temptation to her to go abroad. According to the Targum of Jonathan, she went to see the manners, customs, and fashions of the women of that country, to learn them, as the Septuagint version renders the word; or to see their habit and dress, and how they ornamented themselves, as Josephus {a} observes; and who also says it was a festival day at Shechem, and therefore very probably many of the young women of the country round about might come thither on that occasion; and who being dressed in their best clothes would give Dinah a good opportunity of seeing and observing their fashions; and which, with the diversions of the season, and shows to be seen, allured Dinah to go out of her mother's tent into the city, to gratify her curiosity. Aben Ezra's note is, that she went of herself, that is, without the leave of either of her parents: according to other Jewish writers {b} there was a snare laid for her by Shechem, who observing that Jacob's daughter dwelt in tents, and did not go abroad, he brought damsels out of the city dancing and playing on timbrels; and Dinah went forth to see them playing, and he took her, and lay with her, as follows.

{z} R. Ganz. Tzemach David, par. l. fol. 6. 2. {a} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 21. sect. 1. {b} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. fol. 42. 2.

Genesis 34:2

Ver. 2. And when Shechem the son of Hamor,.... From whom the city had its name, near which Jacob and his family now were:

the Hivite, prince of the country; Hamor was an Hivite, which was one of the nations of the land of Canaan, and this man was the prince or a principal man of that nation, as well as of Shechem. Josephus {c} calls him a king: when the son of this man

saw her; that is, Dinah, what a beautiful person she was, and was enamoured with her:

he took her: by force, as the Targum of Jonathan:

and lay with her, and defiled her; or "humbled" or "afflicted her" {d}; and it is a rule with the Jews, that every such act, which is done by force, is called an humiliation and affliction {e}: the child begotten in this act of fornication is said {f} by them to be Asenath, who was had into Egypt, and brought up by Potipherah's wife as her daughter, and afterwards married to Joseph, Ge 41:45.

{c} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 21. sect. 1.) {d} hneyw, kai etapeinwsen authn, Sept. & afflixit eam, Pagninus, Montanus. {e} Gerundensis apud Munster, & Drusium in loc. {f} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 33. fol. 42. 2.)

Genesis 34:3

Ver. 3. And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob,.... His inclination was to her, she was always in his thoughts; it was not a mere lustful desire that was suddenly raised, and soon over, but a constant and continued affection he bore to her, as follows:

and he loved the damsel; sincerely and heartily:

and spake kindly unto the damsel; or "to the heart" {g} of her, such things as tended to comfort her, she being sad and sorrowful; or to soften her mind towards him, and take off the resentment of it to him, because of the injury he had done her, and to gain her good will and affection, and her consent to marry him; professing great love to her, promising her great things, what worldly grandeur and honour she would be advanced to, and how kindly he would behave towards her; which might take with her, and incline her to yield to his motion, which having obtained, he took the following method.

{g} bl le "ad cor", Pagninus, Vatablus, Drusius, Schmidt; super cor, Montanus, Munster; "cordi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Genesis 34:4

Ver. 4. And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor,.... And told him the whole affair, at least what a strong affection he had for Dinah:

saying, get me this damsel to wife; by which he meant not only that he would give his consent that he might marry her, but that he would get her parents' consent unto it, and settle the matter with them; by which it appears how early, and that even among Heathen nations, consent of parents on both sides was judged necessary to marriage. It seems by this as if Dinah was now detained in the house of Hamor or Shechem, and was upon the spot, or near at hand, when Shechem addressed his father about her, see Ge 34:26.

Genesis 34:5

Ver. 5. And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter,.... That is, that Shechem had defiled her; the report of this was brought him very probably by one of the maids which attended her to the city; for it was hardly to be thought that she should go thither alone, and which must be very distressing to Jacob to hear of: this was his first affliction in his own family, but it was not the only one, nor the last, others quickly followed:

now his sons were with his cattle in the field; he had bought, or in some other hired by him for his cattle, feeding and keeping them, being arrived to an age fit for such service; here they were when the above report was brought to Jacob:

and Jacob held his peace until they were come; neither murmuring at the providence, but patiently bearing the chastisement; nor reflecting upon Leah for letting Dinah go out, or not keeping a proper watch over her; nor saying anything of it to any in the family; nor expressing his displeasure at Shechem, nor vowing revenge on him for it, nor taking any step towards it until his sons were come home from the field; with whom he chose to advise, and whose assistance he would want, if it was judged necessary to use force to get Dinah out of the hands of Shechem, or to avenge the injury done her.

Genesis 34:6

Ver. 6. And Hamor, the father of Shechem, went out unto Jacob,.... Unto the tent of Jacob without the city:

to commune with him; to talk with him about the affair of Dinah, to pacify him, and endeavour to gain his consent, that his son might marry her, and to settle the, terms and conditions of the marriage.

Genesis 34:7

Ver. 7. And the sons of Jacob came out of the field, when they heard [it],..... Either by a messenger Jacob sent to them, to acquaint them with it, or by some other hand: however, be it as it will, as soon as they heard of the abuse of their sister, they immediately left their flocks to the care of their servants, and came to their father's tent:

and the men were grieved and were very wroth; they were grieved for the sin committed against God, very probably, as well as for the injury done to their sister, and they were wroth against Shechem the author of it:

because he had wrought folly in Israel, in lying with Jacob's daughter; all sin is folly, being a transgression of the law of God founded in the highest wisdom, and particularly uncleanness, and that branch of it, deflowering a virgin; and this action being committed on Jacob's daughter, whose name was Israel, is said to be "in", or rather "against" Israel {h}, to his grief, and to the reproach of him and his family: though these words may be rather the words of Moses, than of the sons of Jacob; or however are expressed not in the language used by them, but in what was in use in the times of Moses, when Israel was the name of a nation and church, whereas it was now but a personal name, and at most but the name of a family; and though this was done to one of the family, yet not in it, but in the house of Hamor or Shechem:

which thing ought not to be done; being against the law and light of nature to do such an action by force and violence, and against the law of nations to suffer it to go with impunity.

{h} larvyb "contra Israelem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Calovius; so Ainsworth.

Genesis 34:8

Ver. 8. And Hamor communed with them,.... With Jacob and his sons, who came in just at that time:

saying, the soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: the daughter of the family, and the only daughter in it; for her Shechem had a vehement affection, a strong desire to marry her, and could not be satisfied without her:

I pray you, give her him to wife; he not only requests the consent of the parents of the damsel, but of her brothers also, which in those times and countries seems to have been usual to ask and have, see Ge 24:50.

Genesis 34:9

Ver. 9. And make ye marriages with us,.... There was no objection on their side, it lay on the other; Abraham's servant was charged by him not to take a wife of the Canaanites to his son Isaac; and the same charge was given Jacob by Isaac, Ge 24:3; and therefore Jacob would never agree that his children should marry any of that nation; and marriages with them were afterwards forbidden by the law of Moses, **De 7:3**;

[and] give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you; for though at present there were no other daughters in Jacob's family, yet there might be hereafter; and the request is, that for the future there might be intermarriages

between them, as would be practicable in a course of time.

Genesis 34:10

Ver. 10. And ye shall dwell with us,..... Peaceably and quietly, not as sojourners only, but as inhabitants:

and the land shall be before you; to choose what part of it they pleased to dwell in, and which they should have in their own power and possession:

dwell and trade you therein; in any sort of traffic and commerce the land would admit of, and they should best choose:

and get you possessions therein; buy houses and land, and enjoy them, they and their posterity; these are the arguments used by Hamor to gain the consent of Jacob and his family that his son might marry Dinah; and the proposals are honourable and generous.

Genesis 34:11

Ver. 11. And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren,.... To the father and brethren of Dinah; he addressed them after his father Hamor had done speaking:

let me find grace in your eyes; forgive the offence committed, the injury done to Dinah, and grant the request of her marriage, and it will be considered as a great favour:

and what ye shall say unto me, I will give; to her, to her parents, to her brethren and relations; let what will be fixed, shall be given; which showed great affection for her, and that he was willing to do any thing to make amends for the injury done; he cared not what it was that might be demanded of him, so be it that she became his wife.

Genesis 34:12

Ver. 12. Ask me never so much dowry and gift,.... Or "multiply [them] exceedingly" {i}, fix them at as high a rate as may be thought fit; the "dowry" was what a man gave to a woman at her marriage; for in those times and countries, instead of a man having a portion with his wife, as with us in our times, he gave one to his wife, or to her parents for her; and especially in after times this was used, and became a law in Israel, in the case of a vitiated virgin, see Ex 22:16; and "the gift" was either of jewels and clothes to the women, or of such like precious things to her brethren and friends, see Ge 24:53;

and I will give according as ye shall say unto me; determine among yourselves whatever shall be the dowry and gift, and it shall be punctually observed:

but give me the damsel to wife; only agree to that, and I care not what is required of me.

{i} dam-zbrh "multiplicate super me admodum", Drusius, Schmidt.

Genesis 34:13

Ver. 13. And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor deceitfully,.... Proposing the marriage of their sister on terms after mentioned, when they never intended it should ever be: Onkelos, Jonathan, and Jarchi interpret it, "with wisdom", as if they answered wisely and prudently, but the word is never used in a good sense; and if it was wisdom, it was carnal wisdom and wicked cunning, and was disapproved of by plain hearted Jacob:

and said: or spoke in this deceitful manner:

because he had defiled Dinah their sister; and therefore were filled with indignation at him, and fired with resentment against him, and vowed within themselves revenge upon him.

Genesis 34:14

Ver. 14. And they said unto them,.... Levi and Simeon, to Hamor and Shechem:

we cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; not that there was any law against it at that time; and there were, on the other hand, precedents for it both in Isaac and Jacob, who had married the daughters of uncircumcised persons; nor indeed do they plead any law, only that it was not becoming their character, nor agreeably to their religion, nor honourable in their esteem:

for that [were] a reproach unto us; and they should be reflected upon for slighting the institution of circumcision, which was of God: so they pretend it might be interpreted, should they enter into affinity with uncircumcised persons.

Genesis 34:15

Ver. 15. But in this will we consent unto you,.... Upon the following condition, that Dinah should be given in marriage:

if ye will be as we [be], that every male of you be circumcised; as the sons of Jacob were, according to the command given to Abraham their great grandfather, Ge 17:10.

Genesis 34:16

Ver. 16. Then will we give our daughters unto you,.... Meaning Dinah, whom they call their daughter, Ge 34:17; because she was the daughter of their family, and because they were entreating in the name of their father, and in conformity to the language used by those they were treating with, Ge 34:9;

and we will take your daughters to us; in marriage for wives:

and we will dwell with you; not as sojourners but as fellow citizens:

and we will become one people; being so nearly related by marriage, and professing one religion, alike submitting to circumcision, which was the distinguished badge of Abraham's seed.

Genesis 34:17

Ver. 17. But if ye will not hearken to us to be circumcised,.... Will not agree to this condition, circumcision:

then will we take our daughter; by force, as the Targum of Jonathan adds:

and we will be gone: depart from this part of the country, and go elsewhere.

Genesis 34:18

Ver. 18. And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son. The condition proposed was acceptable to them both, and they agreed to comply with it; Hamor, because of the great love he had for his son; Shechem, because of the great love he had for Dinah.

Genesis 34:19

Ver. 19. And the young man deferred not to do the thing,.... To be circumcised himself, and to get all the males of the city circumcised; he delayed not a moment, but made all the haste he could to get it accomplished:

because he had delight in Jacob's daughter; he really loved her, and delighted in her person and company: it was not the effect of a brutish lust, but a true affection he bore to her, that he desired her in marriage:

and he [was] more honourable than all the house of his father; for though he had done a base thing in defiling Jacob's daughter, yet in this he was honourable, that he sought to marry her, and to do any thing that was in his power to recompence the injury; and he was honourable in keeping covenant and compact with men; and was honest, upright, and sincere, to fulfil the condition imposed on him, and he had agreed to, as well as he was in greater esteem among the citizens than any of his father's house, which made it the more easy to him to get their consent to be circumcised; they having a very high and honourable opinion of him, and ready to oblige him in anything they could.

Genesis 34:20

Ver. 20. And Hamor and Shechem his son went unto the gate of their city,.... Where courts of judicature were held, and all public affairs respecting the common interest of the city were transacted: here, no doubt, Hamor their prince summoned them to come, by the usual method in which the citizens were convened on certain occasions:

and communed with the men of their city; upon the subject of entering into an alliance with Jacob's family, of admitting them to be fellow citizens with them, and of their being incorporated among them, and becoming one people with them, taking no notice of the true reason of this motion:

saying, as follows.

Genesis 34:21

Ver. 21. These men [are] peaceable with us,.... Meaning Jacob and his sons, pointing to their tents which were near their city; and no doubt more was said than is here expressed, and that these words were introduced with a preface, in which notice was taken of Jacob and his family, and their names mentioned, as here their character is given; that they were men of peaceable dispositions, harmless and inoffensive, as appeared they had been ever since they came into these parts; and there was a great deal of reason to believe they still would be, and which was an argument in their favour, to admit them to a residence among them:

therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; give them leave to dwell where they please, and carry on what trade and traffic in the land they think fit; since they are not likely to be quarrelsome and troublesome, but will deal honestly and honourably, and pay duly for what they agree for or merchandise in:

for the land, behold, [it is] large enough for them; there is room enough for them to dwell in, and pasturage enough for their cattle, and land enough to manure and till, without in the least incommoding the inhabitants: yea, it is likely to be to their advantage, since they would pay for what they should purchase or hire, and would improve the land which lay uncultivated:

let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters; this was the thing principally aimed at; and the rest, both what goes before, and what follows after, were in order to this.

Genesis 34:22

Ver. 22. Only herein will the men consent unto us,.... The only term or condition insisted upon, to come into an alliance and affinity with us, and

for to dwell with us, to be one people, to become one body politic, is the following one:

if every male among us be circumcised, as they [are] circumcised; submitting to this rite, they agree to take up their residence with us, and be incorporated among us, and become one people.

Genesis 34:23

Ver. 23. Shall not their cattle, and their substance, and every beast of theirs, [be] ours?.... Which would in course come into their families in process of time, by intermarrying with them, or, being more numerous and powerful than they, could seize upon them when they pleased, and take all they had: thus they argue from the profit and advantage that would accrue to them by admitting them among them, upon their terms; and this argument, taken from worldly interest, they knew would have great influence upon them:

only let us consent unto them; in the affair of circumcision:

and they will dwell with us; and what by trading with them, and marrying among them, all their wealth and riches will come into our hands.

Genesis 34:24

Ver. 24. And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city,.... That is, all the inhabitants of the city who came to the gate of it, upon the summons given them, and departed from thence to their habitations, having a great opinion of their prince and his son; and moved either with awe of them or love to them, and influenced both by their arguments and example, they agreed to what was proposed to them:

and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city; all the men citizens; and not only the adult, and who now went out by the gate of the city, but all their male children likewise were circumcised.

Genesis 34:25

Ver. 25. And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore,.... Or in "pain" {k}, when their pains were strong upon them, as the Targum of Onkelos; or when they were weak through the pain of circumcision, as the Targum of Jonathan; for it seems that the pain of circumcision was more intense on the third day {l}, and the part the more inflamed, and the person more feverish, and which is observed by physicians of other wounds; and therefore Hippocrates {m} advised not to meddle with wounds on the third or fourth days, or do anything that might irritate them, for on those days they were apt to rankle or be inflamed, and bring on fevers; and in this case, not only the wound was sore in itself and distressing, but being in such a part of the body, motion must give great uneasiness: nor could persons in such circumstances easily arise and walk, and go forth to defend themselves; and of this Jacob's sons availed themselves: so

that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren; by the mother's side as well as the father's, being Leah's children, and so most provoked at this indignity and abuse of their sister:

took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly; not fearing the inhabitants of it, and their rising up against them to defend themselves, knowing in what circumstances they were: or "upon the city that dwelt securely"; as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; for the men of the city had no suspicion of any such attempt that would be made upon them, and therefore were quite easy and secure, not expecting nor fearing anything of this kind:

and slew all the males; the males that were grown up, for the little ones are after said to be carried captive, Ge 34:29; Josephus {n} takes no notice of this circumstance of their being circumcised, but represents them as surprised in the night of their festival, overcharged with feasting, and their watch asleep, who were first killed. Though only two of Jacob's sons were mentioned, they might be assisted by the rest; at least, no doubt, they were attended with servants, who were aiding: in accomplishing this cruel and bloody attempt.

{k} Mybak "dolore affecti", Pagninus, Schmidt, "essent in dolore", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius. {l} Pirke Eliezer, c. 29. {m} De fracturis, sect. 33. apud Scheuchzer. Physica Sacra, vol. 1. p. 93. {n} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 21. sect. 1.

Genesis 34:26

Ver. 26. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword,.... Whom they had been just treating with in a seeming friendly manner: Shechem was the chief aggressor, and his crime was very heinous; but considering that he did all he could, after the fact was committed, to make recompence for the injury done, he deserved other treatment, at least mercy should have been shown him. Hamor, perhaps, was too indulgent to his son, connived at his sin, and did not punish him for it; and, it may be, approved of it, and now dies for it:

and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out; where she was kept from the time of her being ravished by Shechem, with an intention to marry her, could the consent of her parents and relations be obtained; for it does not appear that he kept her to carry on a criminal conversation with her, but a courtship in order to marriage.

Genesis 34:27

Ver. 27. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain,.... That is, the rest of them, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it; understanding what their two brothers had done, they came and joined them, and partook of stripping the slain of their clothes, or from them what they found of any worth about them:

and spoiled the city; plundered it of all its goods and substance, spoiled all the inhabitants of it of their wealth:

because they had defiled their sister; one of them had done it, which is imputed to them all, they not restraining him from it, when it was in their power; and perhaps approving of it, and made a laugh of and jest at it; or however did not punish him for it.

Genesis 34:28

Ver. 28. They took their sheep, their oxen, and their asses,.... The Shechemites hoped to have the cattle and substance of Jacob's family, and in a hypocritical manner submitted to circumcision, for the sake of worldly advantage; for that, and pleasing their prince, seem to be the only views they had in it; wherefore, in this there is a just retaliation of them in Providence:

and that which [was] in the city, and that which [was] in the field; the cattle that were kept at home, and those that were brought up in the field, all became a prey.

Genesis 34:29

Ver. 29. And all their wealth,.... Or "power" {o} or "strength"; every thing that made them mighty and powerful; their gold and silver, their jewels, and rich furniture of their houses, their arms and weapons of war, their goods and substance, in which they trafficked:

and all their little ones and their wives took they captive: they spared the women and children, as was usual war, and in the plunder of towns and cities:

and spoiled even all that [was] in the house; of Shechem or Hamor, or in any of the houses of the inhabitants; they rifled and plundered everyone, and took away whatsoever they found in them; but as Jacob disapproved of this unjust, cruel, bloody, and perfidious action, so no doubt, as he set the captives at liberty, he restored to them their cattle and substance.

{o} Mlyx "siquidem" lyx "proprie potentia, robur", Drusius; so Ainsworth.

Genesis 34:30

Ver. 30. And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi,.... who were the principals concerned in this affair:

ye have troubled me; because of the sin they had committed, because of the dishonour brought upon religion, and because of the danger he and his family were hereby exposed unto; it greatly disquieted him, made him very uneasy, he was at his wit's end almost, knew not what to do, what course to take to wipe off the scandal, and to defend himself and family; since it served, he says,

to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land; to make him odious and abominable, to be hated and abhorred by all the people round about, and to be looked upon and treated as a deceitful, treacherous, and perfidious man, that had no regard to his word, to covenants and agreements made by him; as a cruel and bloodthirsty man that spared none, made no difference between the innocent and the guilty; and as a robber and plunderer, that stopped at nothing, committing the greatest outrages to get possession of the substance of others:

amongst the Canaanites and the Perizzites: who were the principal inhabitants of the land, the most numerous, and the most rustic and barbarous, and perhaps nearest, and from whom Jacob had most to fear:

and I [being] few in number; or men of number {p}; he and his sons and servants, in all, making but a small number in comparison of the nations about him:

they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house; not that Jacob was afraid that this would be really the case, for he knew and believed the promises of God to him, of the multiplication of his seed, and of their inheriting the land of Canaan, and of the Messiah springing from him; but this he said to aggravate the sin and folly of his sons, in exposing him and themselves to so much danger, which not only on the face of things appeared probable, but even certain and inevitable, without the interposition of divine power and Providence.

{p} rpom ytm "viri numeri", Montanus, Schmidt.

Genesis 34:31

Ver. 31. And they said,.... Simeon and Levi, in a very pert and unseemly manner:

should he deal with our sister as with an harlot? make a whore of her, and then keep her in his house as such? is this to be borne with? or should we take no more notice of his behaviour to our sister, or show no more regard to her than if she was a common prostitute, whom no man will defend or protect? so say the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem,

"nor let Shechem the son of Hamor mock at us, or boast and say, as an harlot whom no man seeks after, or no man seeks to avenge her; so it is done by Dinah the daughter of Jacob:"

they tacitly insinuate as if Jacob had not that regard for the honour of his daughter and family, and showed his resentment at the wicked behaviour of Shechem, as he ought to have done. It is observed that there is a letter in the word for "harlot" greater than usual, which may either denote the greatness of the sin of Shechem in dealing with Dinah as an harlot, or the great impudence and boldness of Jacob's sons, in their answer to him, and their audaciousness in justifying such baseness and cruelty they had been guilty of. The whole of this history, as related in this chapter, is given by Polyhistor out of Theodotus the poet {q}.

{q} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 22. p. 427, &c.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 35:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 35

This chapter gives an account of Jacob's going to Bethel, and building an altar there by the order and direction of God, Ge 35:1, where Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried, Ge 35:8, and where God appeared to Jacob, confirmed the new name of Israel he had given him, and renewed to him the promises of the multiplication of his seed, and of their inheriting the land of Canaan, Ge 35:9; all which is gratefully acknowledged by Jacob, who erected a pillar in the place, and called it Bethel, in memory of God's gracious appearance to him there, Ge 35:14; from hence he journeyed towards his father's house, and on the way Rachel his wife fell in travail, and bore him a son, and died, and was buried near Ephrath, Ge 35:16; near this place Reuben committed incest with Bilhah, Ge 35:22, and the names of the twelve sons of Jacob are given, Ge 35:23; and the chapter is closed with an account of Jacob's arrival at his father's house, of the death of Isaac, and of his burial at the direction of his two sons,
Ge 35:27.

Ver. 1. And God said unto Jacob,.... When he was in great distress, on account of the slaughter of the Shechemites by his sons, not knowing what step to take, or course to steer for the safety of him and his family; then God, for his comfort and direction, appeared and spoke to him, either in a dream or vision, or by an impulse on his mind, or by an articulate voice: perhaps this was the Son of God, the second Person, who might appear in an human form, as he often did; since he afterwards speaks of God as of another divine Person, distinct from him, even his divine Father:

arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; which is said to be twenty eight miles from Shechem {r}; hither he is bid to go in haste, and where, it is suggested, he would be safe, and where it would be right and proper for him to dwell awhile:

and make there an altar to God; and offer sacrifice to him, praise him for salvation and deliverance wrought, pray to him for present and future mercies that were needful, and pay the vows he had there made, even to that God,

that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother; who, resenting his getting the birthright and blessing from him, threatened to kill him; which obliged him to flee from his father's house, and go into Mesopotamia, and in his way thither God appeared to him, at the place called by him from thence Bethel, and gave him many precious promises; and Jacob there made a solemn vow, that if God would be with him, and keep him, and give him food and raiment, and return him to his father's house, the pillar that was then and there set up should be God's house, as well as he should be his God. Jacob had now been nine or ten years in the land of Canaan, and had all done for him he desired, and much more abundantly, and yet had not been at Bethel to make good his vow, either through forgetfulness or neglect; and therefore, as Jarchi thinks, was chastised for it in the affair of Dinah; or rather, for one can hardly think so good a man could forget, or would wilfully neglect such a vow as this, that he wanted opportunity of going thither, or waited for a divine order, and now he had both, which he readily embraced.

{r} Bunting's Travels, p. 72.

Genesis 35:2

Ver. 2. Then Jacob said unto his household,.... His wives and children;

and to all that [were] with him; his menservants and maidservants, and such as remained with him of the captives of Shechem, who might choose to continue with him:

put away the strange gods that [are] among you; meaning not the teraphim or images of Laban's, which Rachel had stolen from him; for it can hardly be thought that these should be retained so many years in Jacob's family, and used in an idolatrous manner; but rather such as might be among the Canaanitish servants that had been lately taken into Jacob's service, or that were among the captives of Shechem, or taken along with the spoil of that city; and so the Targum of Jonathan calls them the idols of the people, which they brought from the idols' temple at Shechem; and the words may be rendered, "the gods of the strangers" {s}, that is, of the Shechemites, who were Heathens and aliens, strangers to the true God, the knowledge and worship of him:

and be clean; either by abstaining from their wives, as some interpret it, from Ex 19:10; or rather by washing their bodies, as Aben Ezra gives the sense of it; their hands were full of the blood of the Shechemites, and needed to be washed and purified, as the Targum of Jonathan has it, from the pollutions of the slain, before they went to Bethel, the house of God; and these outward ablutions and purifications were significative of inward cleansing by the grace of God, and of outward reformation of life and manners; see **Isa 1:15**;

and change your garments: which might be stained with blood, and therefore not fit to appear in before God, or were old and worn out, or sordid apparel: changing and washing of garments were also emblems of renewing of the mind, and cleansing of the soul, and of the change of heart and life, as well as of pleasure, delight, and cheerfulness in appearing before God.

{s} rknh yhla ta "deos alenigenarum", Pagninus; "alienigenae", Montanus, Schmidt; "alieni populi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Genesis 35:3

Ver. 3. And let us arise and go up to Bethel,.... Thus prepared and purged, their tents clear of idols, their bodies washed with pure water, and their garments new, neat, and clean; all symbolical of inward purity, and of freedom from idolatry and evil works, as became those who go to the house of God, and are his worshippers, see
Heb 10:22.

I will make there an altar unto God; as he has directed, and sacrifice to him, and worship him, and give the tenth unto him, and so make it a Bethel, an house of God indeed, as he had vowed, Ge 28:22;

who answered me in the day of my distress; on account of his brother Esau, from whose wrath he fled:

and was with me in the way which I went; from his father's house to Padanaram; in which journey he was alone and destitute, and exposed to many difficulties and dangers, but God was with him, and preserved him, and directed and brought him to Laban's house in safety.

Genesis 35:4

Ver. 4. They gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which [were] in their hands,.... Whether in the hands of his servants or of the captives taken at Shechem, or in the hands of his sons, who had them along with the spoil they took there; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"they delivered, into the hand of Jacob all the idols of the people which were in their hands, which they had took of the idols of Shechem:"

and [all their] earrings which [were] in their ears; not the earrings that women wore in common, such as Abraham's servant gave to Rebekah, and which Jacob's wives might wear, for such were not unlawful; but either which were worn in the ears of the strange gods or idols; for such used, it seems, according to some writers, to be decorated and ornamented after that manner; or rather in the ears of the idolaters themselves, worn by them in a superstitious way, having the images of these idols on them: so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and the earrings which were in the ears of the inhabitants of the city of Shechem, in which were formed the likeness of their idols:"

and Jacob hid them under the oak which [was] by Shechem; that is, the idols, which, after he had broke to pieces, perhaps, he dug a hole under an oak, and there buried them, that they might be no more made use of in an idolatrous way; and he chose to put them under an oak, because it is a tree which often stands many years before it is cut down, and besides was used for religious purposes, and had in great veneration, and therefore seldom felled. Those idols seem not to be made of anything valuable, perhaps of wood or stone, for had they been of gold or silver, Jacob would doubtless have melted them, and converted them to other uses, and not have buried them under ground. The Jews {t} say, that the idol Jacob hid under the oak was in the form of a dove, which the Samaritans after some time found, and set it on the top of Mount Gerizim. Some take this oak to be the same with that mentioned in Jos 24:26; but of that there can be no certainty, since Jacob, as it is highly probable, laid these images alone, and never intended any should know anything of them where they were.

{t} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 3. 2.

Genesis 35:5

Ver. 5. And they journeyed,.... Jacob and his family, with all that were with them, from Shechem to Bethel:

and the terror of God was upon the cities that [were] round about them; an exceeding great panic seized the inhabitants of the cities of the land of Canaan, all about Shechem, which was from God himself impressing it on their minds, through what the sons of Jacob had done to that city:

and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob; as it might have been thought they would, and take revenge on them for their ill usage of the inhabitants of a neighbouring city; but instead of this, they were afraid they should be used in the same manner; wherefore Jacob and his family journeyed in safety, and came to Bethel in peace.

Genesis 35:6

Ver. 6. So Jacob came to Luz, which [is] in the land of Canaan, that [is] Bethel,.... The place Jacob had called Bethel, when he was there before, was formerly called Luz, Ge 28:19; and is here said to be in the land of Canaan, that is, in that part of the land which was inhabited by those who were properly called Canaanites, to distinguish it from another Luz, which was in the land of the Hittites; **Jud 1:26**;

he and all the people that [were] with him; wives, children, servants, or whoever else came from Shechem, these all came safe to Luz without any molestation or loss.

Genesis 35:7

Ver. 7. And he built there an altar,.... As he was bid to do, and as he promised he would, Ge 35:1;

and called the place Elbethel; the God of Bethel; a title which God takes to himself, Ge 31:13; or rather the sense is, that he called the place with respect God, or because of his appearance to him there, Bethel, confirming the name

he had before given it, Ge 36:19; see
Ge 35:15; as the following reason shows:

because there God appeared; or the divine Persons, for both words are plural that are used; the Targum of Jonathan has it, the angels of God, and so Aben Ezra interprets it; but here, no doubt, the divine Being is meant, who appeared

unto him; to Jacob in this place, as he went to Mesopotamia, and comforted and encouraged him with many promises;

when he fled from the face of his brother; his brother Esau, who was wroth with him, and sought to take away his life, and therefore was forced to flee for it.

Genesis 35:8

Ver. 8. But Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died,.... That is, when, and quickly after they were come to Bethel; a nurse of Rebekah's came with her to Canaan, when she married Isaac, and is generally thought to be this Deborah, which is not improbable, Ge 24:59, though she might have more nurses than one, as great personages sometimes have, and then it will not be so difficult to answer the objection made here; that Rebekah's nurse, whom Jacob is supposed to leave in Canaan when he went to Padanaram, should now be in his family when he returned from hence; since the reply would be, that that nurse and this Deborah were not the same; but supposing them to be the same, which is most likely, this is accounted for several ways: according to Jarchi, who had it from an ancient writer of theirs {u}, Rebekah sent her to fetch Jacob home, according to her promise, Ge 27:45; but it is not very probable that she should send a woman, and one so ancient, on such an errand: rather, this nurse of hers, after she had accompanied her to Canaan, and stayed awhile with her there, returned to Haran again, and being very useful in Jacob's large family, and having a great respect for them, returned again with them, and which she might choose in hopes of seeing Rebekah once more, whom she had a strong affection for; or, when Jacob was come into the land of Canaan to Shechem, he might send for her from Hebron to be assisting in his family; or going to visit his parents, which he might do before he went with his whole family to them, might bring her with him to Shechem, who travelling with him to Bethel died there: her name signifies a bee, as Josephus {w} observes:

and she was buried beneath Bethel; at the bottom of the hill or mountain on which Bethel stood:

under an oak; of which there were many about Bethel, 1Ki 13:14 **2Ki 2:23**; and it was not unusual to bury the dead under trees, see
1Sa 31:13;

and the name of it was called Allonbachuth; the oak of weeping, because of the weeping and mourning of Jacob's family at her death, she being a good woman, an ancient servant, and in great esteem with them. The Jews have a tradition that the occasion of this weeping, or at least of the increase of it, was, that Jacob at this time had the news of the death of Rebekah his mother; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"there tidings were brought to Jacob of the death of Rebekah his mother, and he called the name of it another weeping;"

and so Jarchi.

{u} R. Moses Hadarsan. {w} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 2.

Genesis 35:9

Ver. 9. And God appeared unto Jacob again,.... At Bethel, as he had at Shechem, when he bid him go thither, Ge 35:1; or rather as he had at the brook Jabbok, where he said to him the same things as here,
Ge 32:24, though Jarchi interprets it of his appearing again to him at the same place at Bethel, where he had appeared to him the first time, at his going to Haran, and now a second time:

when he came out of Padanaram; or returned from thence:

and blessed him; with the same blessings as before, renewing and confirming them. Jarchi says, with the blessing of mourners, because of the death of his mother, and her nurse.

Genesis 35:10

Ver. 10. And God said unto him, thy name [is] Jacob,.... Which his parents gave him at his birth, and by, which he had been always called:

thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name; not Jacob only, as Aben Ezra and Ben Melech interpret it, but Israel also, and that more commonly and frequently, and not only he himself personally, but his posterity also:

and he called his name Israel; confirmed the name he had before given him, Ge 32:28; and by this confirmation of it signifying, that as he had prevailed over his brother Esau, and escaped his hands, so he should prevail over all that rose up against him, and opposed him, even as he had power with God, and prevailed: though some think this name was only promised him before, but now actually given him; but then they take the angel that appeared wrestling with him in the likeness of a man to be a created angel, and that what he promised in the name of God was now made, good by God himself; there is great reason to believe that that angel was the increased one, the Son of God, as here also.

Genesis 35:11

Ver. 11. And God said unto him, I [am] God Almighty,.... And so able to protect and defend him, and to fulfil all promises made to him, and to supply him with everything he wanted; being, as some choose to render the word, "God all sufficient", having a sufficiency of all good things in him to communicate to his people:

be fruitful and multiply; which carries in it a promise or prophecy that he should increase and multiply, though not he himself personally, he having but one son born after this, yet in his posterity:

a nation, and a company of nations, shall be of thee; the nation of Israel, called so after his name, and the twelve tribes, which were as so many nations, of which the above nation consisted:

and kings shall come out of thy loins; as Saul, David, Solomon, and, many others, who were kings of Israel and of Judah, and especially the King Messiah; yea, all his posterity were kings and priests, or a kingdom of priests, Ex 19:6.

Genesis 35:12

Ver. 12. And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it,.... Meaning the land of Canaan, which, as he had by promise given it to his grandfather, and father, so he would give it to him; thus renewing the grant of it for his comfort, and the encouragement of his faith, when he had been in danger of being destroyed by the inhabitants of it, and was obliged to remove from one part of it to another:

and to thy seed after thee will I give the land; and not only make a grant of it to them, but put them into the possession of it, as in process of time he did.

Genesis 35:13

Ver. 13. And God went up from him,.... Or "from above" him {x}; by this it seems that there was a visible appearance of the glory of the Lord, as Onkelos, or of the Shechinah, as Jonathan; even of the Son of God in an human form, who either appeared just above him, or on the same spot with him, conversing with him as above related; and when he had done, ascended in a visible manner from him, till he disappeared:

in the place where he talked with him; whether it was over him, or by him; thence he removed from him, and ceased talking with him; for communion with a divine Person is not constant and uninterrupted in the present state.

{x} wylem "desuper eum", Montanus.

Genesis 35:14

Ver. 14. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him,.... He had set up a pillar in this place before he went to Padanaram, Ge 28:18; and some, think this pillar is here referred to, and render the words, "had set up a pillar" {y}; but as that was done thirty years ago, it is very likely it was demolished by the Heathens before this time, or was fallen to ruin, wherefore this must be at least a renewal or reparation of it: though it rather seems to be another pillar, and quite a new one, being set up in that very spot of ground, over or on which God had been talking with him: and the following account of it seems to confirm the same,

[even] a pillar of stone; made of several stones hewed and polished, and well

put together; whereas the former was but a single stone, rude and unpolished, though it is probable it was one of these:

and he poured a drink offering thereon; of wine, of which drink offerings under the law were, thereby consecrating it to the worship and service of God. Aben Ezra says it was either of water or of wine, with which he washed it, and after that poured oil on it; and the Targum of Jonathan says, he poured a drink offering of wine, and a drink offering of water:

and he poured oil thereon; as he did before;
See Gill on "Ge 28:18".

{y} buyw "erexerat", Vatablus; "et statuerat", Piscator; so Aben Ezra.

Genesis 35:15

Ver. 15. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel. He confirmed the name he had before given it, when he went to Mesopotamia, and now upon his return renews and establishes it; or he gave this name more especially to that particular spot where God conversed with him, and on which he erected a pillar, and consecrated it to religious worship, and so made it God's house, as he promised he would, Ge 28:22, both building an altar for sacrifice, and setting up a pillar, which was beginning an house for God.

Genesis 35:16

Ver. 16. And they journeyed from Bethel,.... Jacob and his family; how long they stayed there is not certain, some say four months {z}; hence they removed towards Bethlehem, which was twelve miles from Bethel {a}, in their way to Hebron:

and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath; or Bethlehem, as it was also called, Ge 35:19; a mile off of it, according to the Targums of Onkelos and Jerusalem; or about a mile, as Saadiah Gaon; for it was not a precise exact mile, but something less than a mile, as Ben Melech observes; and so Benjamin of Tudela, who was on the spot, says {b}, that Rachel's grave is about half a mile from Bethlehem. Ben Gersom thinks the word here used signifies cultivated land, and that the sense is, that there were only fields, vineyards, and gardens to go through to the city, see Ge 48:7:

and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour; the time of childbirth was come, and which came suddenly upon her, as travail does, even while journeying, which obliged them to stop; and her pains came upon her, and these very sharp and severe, so that she had a difficult time of it: pains and sorrow in childbearing are the fruit of sin, and more or less attend all in such a circumstance; but, in some, labour is more painful than in others, and more at one time than at another, and is the most painful in women than in other creatures.

{z} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 1. {a} Bunting's Travels, p. 72. {b} Itinerar. p. 47.

Genesis 35:17

Ver. 17. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour,.... In the midst of it, and at the worst:

that the midwife said unto her, fear not; for Rachel big with child, it was necessary to take a midwife with them in the journey; and perhaps this might be one that was always kept in the family, and had been assisting to all Jacob's wives and concubines at their labours; and this seems probable from what follows, since she not only bids her be of good courage, and not fear, comforting her under her pains, giving her hopes they would soon be over, and that she would have a safe delivery, and do well: but this she assures her of,

thou shalt have this son also; as she had one before, at whose birth she said, "the Lord shall add to me another son"; and therefore called his name Joseph, Ge 30:24; this the midwife remembered, and endeavours to comfort her with the accomplishment of it.

Genesis 35:18

Ver. 18. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, for she died,.... In childbirth; she had most passionately desired children, without which she could not live with ease and peace of mind, and now she dies by having one; see Ge 30:1; and by this account of her death it appears, that death is the separation and disunion of soul and body; that at death the soul departs from the body; that the soul does not die with it, but goes elsewhere, and lives in a separate state, and never dies; it goes into another world, a world of spirits, even unto God that gave it, Ec 12:7:

that she called his name Benoni; which signifies "the son of my sorrow", having borne and brought him forth in sorrow, and now about to leave him as soon as born, which might increase her sorrow; or "the son, of my mourning"; as Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom interpret it; or "the son of my strength", all her strength being exhausted in bringing him forth:

but his father called him Benjamin; that is, "the son of the right hand", being as dear to him, and as beloved by him as his right hand; or who would be as the right hand to him, his staff and support in his old age; or else as being the son of her who was as his right hand, dear and assisting to him. Some render it, "the son of days", or years, that is, the son of his old age, as he is called, Ge 44:20; Jarchi and Ben Gerson interpret it, "the son of the south"; the right hand being put for the south; and they think this son was so called, because he only was born in the land of Canaan, which lay, they say, to the south with respect to Mesopotamia, where the rest were born; but be the etymology of the word as it will, the change of the name seems to be made by Jacob, because that which Rachel gave her son would have perpetually put Jacob in mind of the sorrow of his beloved Rachel, and therefore gave him a name more pleasant and agreeable. The Jews say {c} he was born the eleventh of October, and lived one hundred and eleven years.

{c} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 4. 1.

Genesis 35:19

Ver. 19. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which [is] Bethlehem. Hence called Bethlehem Ephratah, **Mic 5:2**; with great pertinency is Rachel represented as if risen from her grave, and weeping for her children, when the children of Bethlehem, and thereabout, were slain by Herod, she being buried so near that place, **Mt 2:16**; at what age she died is not said. Polyhistor, out of Demetrius {d}, reports, that she died after Jacob had lived with her twenty three years.

{d} Apnd Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 21. p. 424.

Genesis 35:20

Ver. 20. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave,.... A sepulchral monument erected in memory of her; this according to Benjamin of Tudela {e} was made of twelve stones, according to the number of the sons of Jacob, and over it was a vault or roof, supported by four pillars:

that [is] the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day; it continued to the times of Moses, the writer of this history, and to the times of Samuel, as appears from 1Sa 10:2; and even travellers of late times affirm it to be seen still, to the north of Bethlehem, on the right hand of the way as you go from Bethlehem to Jerusalem; but the present sepulchral monument, as Mr. Maundrel says {f}, can be none of that which Jacob erected, for it appears plainly to be a modern Turkish structure. Near the grave are found some little black stones, which strangers pick up, and are fancied to be helpful to women, to give them an easier birth, the same the above traveller says resemble peas. The Jews that pass by it were used to engrave their names on the stones, of the pillars {g}.

{e} ltinerar. p. 47. {f} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 87. {g} Benjamin. Itinerar. ib. Adrichom. Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 19. Bunting's Travels, p. 75.

Genesis 35:21

Ver. 21. And Israel journeyed,.... Having stayed near Bethlehem, as it is said, about two months {h}; this is the first time Jacob is by Moses called Israel, after this name, was given him; the reason of which the Jews say is, because he bore the death of Rachel with so much patience:

and spread his tent beyond the tower of Eder; which was a place of pasturage, and fit for his flocks, see **Mic 4:8**; it was about a mile from Bethlehem to the south {i}, and is supposed to be the place where the shepherds were watching their flocks, when the angel reported to them the birth of Christ, **Lu 2:8**; pretty remarkable are the words added here in the Targum of Jonathan,

"the place from whence the King Messiah will be revealed in the end of days."

{h} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 2. {i} Bunting's Travels, p. 76.

Genesis 35:22

Ver. 22. And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land,.... In that part of it near Bethlehem:

that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; his concubine wife; she was the maid that Rachel gave him, and this added to his affliction, and made it double, to lose Rachel by death, and to have her favourite maid, his concubine, defiled by his own son, and whom it is highly probable he abstained from hereafter. This, though a very heinous sin of his son's, yet might be suffered as a chastisement to Jacob, for making use of concubines:

and Israel heard [it]; though the crime was committed secretly, and was thought it would have been concealed, but by some means or other Jacob heard of it, and no doubt severely reproved his son for it; and though nothing is here related, as said by him on this occasion, it is certain it gave him great offence, grief and trouble, and he remembered it to his dying day, and took away the birthright from Reuben on account of it, Ge 49:3; an empty space here follows in the original text, and a pause in it, denoting perhaps the amazement Jacob was filled with when he heard it; and the great grief of his heart, which was such, that he was not able to speak a word; the Septuagint version fills up the space by adding, "and it appeared evil in his sight":

now the sons of Jacob were twelve; who were the heads of twelve tribes, Benjamin the last being born, and Jacob having afterwards no more children, they were all reckoned up under their respective mothers, excepting Dinah, a daughter, from whom there was no tribe, in the following verses.

Genesis 35:23

Ver. 23. The sons of Leah,.... Jacob's first wife, which are six, and are reckoned in order, according to their birth, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun.

Genesis 35:24

Ver. 24. The sons of Rachel,.... Then Rachel's, Jacob's next wife, though in right his first and only one, who had two children, Joseph and Benjamin.

Genesis 35:25

Ver. 25. And the sons of Bilhah,.... Then Bilhah's sons, who was Rachel's handmaid, and these were two, Dan and Naphtali.

Genesis 35:26

Ver. 26. And the sons of Zilpah,.... And lastly, the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, which were two also, Gad and Asher; it is added,

these [are] the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padanaram, all excepting Benjamin; and because they were by far the greater part, even all but one, that were born there, this is said in general; and there having been given in the context such a particular account of the birth of Benjamin, and of the place of it, them was no need for the historian particularly to except him, since the reader would be in no danger of being led into a mistake.

Genesis 35:27

Ver. 27. And Jacob came unto Isaac his father,.... No mention being made of his mother, it is very probable she was dead; and Isaac being alone, and very old, and the time of his death drawing nigh, he might send for Jacob to come with his family, and be with him; for it can hardly be thought that this was the first time of Jacob's visiting his father since he came into the land, of Canaan, which must be about ten years; but as yet he had not come with his family to him, and in order to abide with him:

unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which [is] Hebron; Mamre was a plain, so called from the name of a man, a friend and confederate of Abraham, Ge 13:18; where, or near to which, stood a city, called Kirjath Arbah, or the city of the four, Arbah and his three sons; so that it might be called Tetrapolls, and was later called Hebron:

where Abraham and Isaac sojourned; lived good part of their days, see Ge 13:18; it was about twenty miles from Bethlehem, and the tower of Eder {k}, where Jacob was last.

{k} Bunting's Travels, p. 72.

Genesis 35:28

Ver. 28. And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years. He lived, forty years after he had made his will, and blessed his two sons. Jacob was now one hundred and twenty years of age, being born when his father was sixty; and Joseph was now twenty nine years of age, so that Isaac lived twelve years after the selling of Joseph into Egypt; he was five years older than his father Abraham was when he died.

Genesis 35:29

Ver. 29. And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died,.... According to an Arabic writer {l}, he died at the end of the year 3,668, in the month Jiar, when Jacob was one hundred and twenty years old, and his children buried him in the cave in which Abraham was buried, in the city Chabil: According to Ussher this at about 1,716 B.C.

and was gathered unto his people; his soul was gathered to the righteous, his body was laid where Abraham and Sarah were buried:

[being] old, and full of days; the number of which is observed in
Ge 35:28;

and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him; in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, where he lived and died, and where his parents had been buried, and Rebekah his wife. Esau very probably was sent for upon his father's death, or a little before it. This shows that there was a reconciliation between Jacob and Esau, and that it continued; and that Jacob did not decline the visit of him at Seir, nor in a clandestine manner took his journey another way, and avoided going thither on his invitation.

{l} Elmacin. p. 26. apud Hottinger. Smegma Orient. p. 341.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 36:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 36

This chapter gives us a genealogical account of Esau's family, of his wives and sons, with whom he removed from Seir, Ge 36:1; of his sons' sons, or grandsons, who were dukes in the land of Edom, Ge 36:11; after which is inserted a genealogy of Seir the Horite, into whose family Esau married, and of his children, and the dukes among them, Ge 36:20; then follows a list of the kings of Edom, before there were any in Israel, Ge 36:31; and the chapter is closed with a brief narration of the dukes of Esau, according to their families, Ge 36:40.

Ver. 1. Now these [are] the generations of Esau, who [is] Edom. Who was surnamed Edom, from the red pottage he sold his birthright for to his brother Jacob, Ge 25:30; an account is given of him, and his posterity, not only because he was a son of Isaac, lately made mention of as concerned in his burial; but because his posterity would be often taken notice of in the sacred Scriptures, and so their genealogy would serve to illustrate such passages; and Maimonides {m} thinks the principal reason is, that whereas Amalek, a branch of Esau's family, were to be destroyed by an express command of God, it was necessary that all the rest should be particularly described, lest they should all perish together; but other ends are answered hereby, as partly to show the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, concerning the multiplication of his seed, and the accomplishment of the oracle to Rebekah, signifying that two nations were in her womb, one of which were those Edomites; as also to observe how the blessing of Isaac his father came upon him with effect, Ge 22:17.

{m} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 50. p. 510.

Genesis 36:2

Ver. 2. And Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan,.... Of the Canaanites, the posterity of cursed Canaan, most of them were of them, though not all, the two following were, and so those, if different from them in Ge 26:34, one of his wives was of the family of Ishmael, as after related:

Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite; according to Jarchi and Aben Ezra, this is the same with Bashemath, Ge 26:34; and that she had two names:

and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; the daughter of the one, and the granddaughter of the other, it being usual in Scripture to call grandchildren children, for Zibeon and Anah were father and son, Ge 36:24; and the Samaritan, Septuagint, and Syriac versions read here, "the daughter of Anah the son of Zibeon": there are an Anah and a Zibeon who were brethren, Ge 36:20; wherefore Aben Ezra supposes that these two brothers, or the father and son, lay with the same woman, and it could not be known whose child it was that was born of her, and therefore this was called the daughter of them both. Jarchi supposes this wife of Esau to be the same with Judith, Ge 26:34; but not only the names differ, but also the names of their fathers, and of the tribe or nation they were of.

Genesis 36:3

Ver. 3. And Bashemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebaioth,.... The eldest son of Ishmael, see Ge 28:9; called there Mahalath.

Genesis 36:4

Ver. 4. And Adah bare to Esau Eliphaz,.... This son of Esau, according to Jerom {n}, is the same with him mentioned in the book of Job, as one of his friends that came to visit him, **Job 2:11**; and so says the Targum of Jonathan on Ge 36:10; but he rather was the grandson of this man, since he is called the Temanite:

and Bashemath bare Reuel; the name is the same with Reuel or Raguel, the name of Jethro; but cannot be the same person as is said by some, for he was a Midianite and not an Edomite, **Ex 2:18**.

{n} Trad. Heb. in Gen. fol. 71. L. tom. 3.

Genesis 36:5

Ver. 5. And Aholibamah bare Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah,.... In this genealogy mention is made of another Korah among the sons of Eliphaz, Ge 36:16; which Jarchi thinks is the same with this, and takes him to be a bastard, and begotten in incest by Eliphaz, on his father's wife Aholibamah; but Aben Ezra observes, that some are of opinion that there were two Korahs, one the son of Aholibamah, and the other the son of Adah; but he thinks there were but one, which was the son of Aholibamah, and is reckoned among the sons of Eliphaz, because he dwelt among them; or perhaps his mother died when he was little, and Adah brought him up with her sons, and so was reckoned her son; such were the children of Michal, Saul's daughter:

these [are] the sons of Esau, which were born to him in the land of Canaan; and we do not read of any born to him elsewhere; so that of all his wives, which some think were four, others five, he had but five sons; what daughters he had is not related, though from Ge 36:6, it appears he had some.

Genesis 36:6

Ver. 6. And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters,.... The names of his wives and sons are before given; but what were the names of his daughters, or their number, is not said:

and all the persons of his house: his menservants and maidservants that were born in his house, or bought with his money; the word for "persons" signifies "souls" {o}, and is sometimes used for slaves that are bought and sold, see Eze 27:13:

and his cattle, and all his beasts; his sheep and oxen, camels and asses:

and all his substance which he had got in the land of Canaan: before he went to Seir the first time, part of which he might leave behind in Canaan, with servants to improve it; and also that part of his father's personal estate which fell to him at his death, as well as what he might further acquire after his death, during his stay in Canaan:

and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob; not into another part of the same country; but into another country, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan supply it, and so the Arabic version, even unto Seir, as appears by what follows; and whither he had been before, and had obtained large possessions, and now having got all he could at his father's death, and collecting together all his other substance, thought fit to retire from thence to Seir, which he liked better, and for a reason afterwards given; God thus disposing his mind, and making the circumstances of things necessary, that he should remove in order to make way for Jacob, and his posterity, to dwell in a land which was designed for them: and so the Samaritan and Septuagint versions read it, "and he went out of the land of Canaan": and the Syriac version is, "and he went to the land of Seir". Some render the words to this sense, that he went thither "before the coming of Jacob" {p}; and it is true that he did go thither before his brother came again into Canaan; but of this the text speaks not, for what follows will not agree with it; others better, "because of Jacob" {q}; not for fear of him, as the Targum of Jonathan, which paraphrases the words,

"for the terror of his brother Jacob was cast upon him;"

but because he knew, by the blessing of his father, and the oracle of God, and his concurring providence in all things, that the land of Canaan belonged to him, and also for a reason that follows.

{o} twvpn "animus", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {p} bqey ynpm "ante adventum", Jahakobi, Junius & Tremellius. {q} "Propter Jacobum", Piscarat.

Genesis 36:7

Ver. 7. For their riches were more than that they might dwell together,.... And therefore it was proper to part, as Abraham and Lot had done before, Ge 13:6;

and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them, because of their cattle; their cattle were so numerous that they could not get pasturage for them, there not being enough left them by the inhabitants of it for them to occupy; nor could they hire land of them sufficient for them both; they being not possessors but sojourners in it, and therefore could have no more of it than the inhabitants thought fit to let unto them.

Genesis 36:8

Ver. 8. Thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir,.... Before he is said to be in the land of Seir, Ge 32:3; now to dwell in a mount of that name; from which driving the Horites, he seized upon and dwelt in it; it had not its name from his own rough, shaggy hair, as Josephus says {r}, much less from the satyrs, and hairy demons that frequented it, as R. Abraham Seba {s}, but rather from Seir the Horite who inhabited the land, Ge 36:20; unless he had his name from the mountain which might be so called, from its being rough and rugged like shaggy hair, and being covered with bushes and brambles which carried such a resemblance; and so it stands opposed to Mount Halak near it, Jos 11:17, which signifies the bald or smooth mountain, being destitute of shrubs, &c. The Targum of Jonathan calls this mountain Mount Gabla, and one part of the land of Edom, or Idumea, was called Gobolites, as Josephus {t} relates, perhaps the same with Gebal, Ps 83:7; hither Esau went and took up his residence, after things were amicably adjusted between him and his brother Jacob; the Jews say {u}, that Isaac left, all he had to his two sons, and that after they had buried him, Esau said to Jacob, let us divide what our father has left us into two parts, and I will choose because I am the firstborn; so Jacob divided it into two parts; all that his father had left he made one part, and the land of Israel the other part, and Esau took what his father left, see Ge 36:6; and the land of Israel and the cave of Machpelah he delivered to Jacob, and they drew up everlasting writings between them. Now this or something like it being the case, and those the circumstances of fixings, thus, and by that means, so it came to pass, that Esau dwelt in Seir; and Jacob remained secure and quiet in the land of Canaan;

Esau [is] Edom, so called from the red pottage he had of Jacob, which is repeated to fix the odium of that transaction upon him, as well as for the sake of what follows, showing the reason why his posterity were called Edomites.

{r} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 20. sect. 3. {s} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 47. 1. {t} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 1. sect. 2. {u} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. fol. 43. 1.

Genesis 36:9

Ver. 9. And these are the generations of Esau,.... Or the posterity of Esau, his children and grandchildren, as before and hereafter related:

the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir; from whom they of that mountain and in the adjacent country had the name of Edomites or Idumeans.

Genesis 36:10

Ver. 10. These are the names of Esau's sons,.... In this and some following verses, an account is given of the sons of Esau, which agrees with what is before observed, and of his sons' sons:

Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau: who seems to be his first wife, and this his first son:

Reuel the son of Bashemath and wife of Esau; his second son by another wife, a daughter of Ishmael, Ge 36:3.

Genesis 36:11

Ver. 11. And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman,.... This was his firstborn, and from him the city of Teman in Edom or Idumea had its name, see Jer 49:7; and Eliphaz is called the Temanite from hence, **Job 2:11**; four more sons are mentioned,

Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz; but I do not find that any towns or cities, or any part of the land of Edom, were denominated from any of them; only it may be observed that Zepho is called Zephi in **1Ch 1:36**; the account seems fabulous and not to be depended on, which Josephus Ben Gorion {w} gives of him, of opposing the burial of Jacob, being taken by Joseph and carried into Egypt, and at his death fleeing to Carthage, and from thence to the Romans, and was king of them {x}.

{w} Hist. Heb. l. 1. c. 2. vid. Chizzuk Emunab, par. l. c. 6. p. 66. & Nachman apud Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. col. 31, 32. {x} Vid. Huls. Theolog. Jud. par. 1. p. 132, &c.

Genesis 36:12

Ver. 12. And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz, Esau's son,.... She is said to be the sister of Lotan, the eldest son of Seir the Horite, Ge 36:22; in **1Ch 1:36** mention is made of Timna among the sons of Eliphaz, and of Duke Timnah here, Ge 36:40; and Gerundinsis {y} is of opinion, that Timnah the concubine of Eliphaz, after she had bore Amalek, conceived and bore another son, and she dying in childbirth, he called it by her name to perpetuate her memory: but Jarchi says, that Eliphaz lay with Lotan's mother, the wife of Seir the Horite, of whom was born Timna, and when she grew up she became his concubine, and so was both his daughter and his concubine:

and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek; from whence the Amalekites sprung, often mentioned in Scripture, whom the Israelites were commanded utterly to destroy, 1Sa 15:18:

these [were] the sons of Adah, Esau's wife; that is, her grandsons.

{y} Apud Menasseh ben Israel, conciliator in Gen. Quaest. 57. p. 81.

Genesis 36:13

Ver. 13. And these [are] the sons of Reuel,.... Another son of Esau's; this man had four sons, as follow,

Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah: of whom we know no more than their names, unless Maps or Massa, which Ptolemy {z} places in Idumea, should have its name from Mizzah:

these were the sons of Bashemath, Esau's wife; her grandsons, as before.

{z} Geograph. l. 5. c. 16.

Genesis 36:14

Ver. 14. And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife,.... See Gill on "Ge 36:2"; here also the Samaritan and Septuagint versions read, "the daughter of Anah, the son of Zibeon":

and she bare to Esau, Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah; this is repeated from Ge 36:5; no mention is made of her grandchildren, as of his other wives.

Genesis 36:15

Ver. 15. These were dukes of the sons of Esau,.... Ben Melech says, the difference between a duke and a king was, that a king is crowned and a duke is not crowned; but Jarchi interprets the word of heads of families, which seems probable; so that as Esau's sons and grandsons are before related, here it is suggested that they had large and numerous families, of which they were the heads and governors; and in this and the following verses, Ge 36:16; the sons and grandsons of Esau by his several wives are rehearsed as in the preceding verses, with the title of "duke" given to each of them.

Genesis 36:16

Ver. 16. Duke Korah,.... Only among the sons of Eliphaz is reckoned Duke Korah, not before mentioned among his sons, and is left out in the Samaritan version; See Gill on "Ge 36:7"; to which it may be added, that according to Gerundinsis {a}, this is the same with Timna, related among the sons of Eliphaz, **1Ch 1:36**; who was called by his father Korah: or this might be a grandson of Eliphaz.

{a} Apud Menaasseh ut supra. (conciliator in Gen. Quaest. 57. p. 81.)

Genesis 36:17

Ver. 17. And these [are] the sons of Reuel....
See Gill on "Ge 36:15".

Genesis 36:18

Ver. 18. And these [are] the sons of Aholibamah Esua's wife;....
See Gill on "Ge 36:15".

Genesis 36:19

Ver. 19. These [are] the sons of Esua,....
See Gill on "Ge 36:15".

Genesis 36:20

Ver. 20. These [are] the sons of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land,.... "Before", as the Targum of Jonathan adds, that is, before it was inhabited by Esau and his posterity, and called Edom, and had from him the name of Seir; but the Horites dwelt here before him, even in Abraham's time, Ge 14:6; and who were so called from their dwelling under ground in holes and caves, with which the further part of the land of Edom abounded, and are the same the Greeks call Trogloditae: Jarchi says, from their Rabbins, these were very expert in the nature of the land, and knew what was fit for olives and what for vines. Now the genealogy of this man is here given, partly to show who were the ancient inhabitants of this land before they were drove out, and succeeded by Esau and his sons, **De 1:12**; and partly because of the intermarriages of Esau and his posterity with them, whereby they more easily came into the possession of the country; for Esau married the daughter of Anah, the son of Zibeon, a son of Seir, Ge 36:11; and Eliphaz took Timna, a sister of Lotan the son of Seir, to be his concubine, Ge 36:12; the names of the sons of Seir follow,

Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah: the first of these is said {b} to be the same with Latinus, a king that reigned in Italy, which seems to be taken from the fancied resemblance of names. Zibeon and Anah are here spoken of as brethren, the sons of Seir; whereas in Ge 36:24; they are made mention of as father and son, See Gill on "Ge 36:2"; Zibeon, according to the Jewish writers {c}, committed incest with his mother, whence came Anah, and is called his brother, because of the same mother, and his son, as being begotten by him. They seem to seek for such kind of copulations to reproach the Edomites.

{b} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 79. 1. {c} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 54. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 115. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 82. fol. 72. 1.

Genesis 36:21

Ver. 21. And Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan,.... These were three others of the sons of Seir, which with the other four before mentioned made seven:

these [are] the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom; these were in the land of Edom before it was so called and possessed by the Edomites, and whose posterity afterwards became tributary to them.

Genesis 36:22

Ver. 22. And the children of Lotan were Hori and Heman,.... The first of these seems to have his name from the general name of the tribe or nation, and the other is called Homam, **1Ch 1:39**;

and Lotan's sister [was] Timna: whom Eliphaz the firstborn of Esau took for his concubine, Ge 36:12; for the sake of which her relation to Lotan is here mentioned; and she is said to be the sister of this man particularly, though there were seven brethren of them, because she might be his sister both by father and mother's side, when she was not of the other only by the father's side.

Genesis 36:23

Ver. 23. And the children of Shobal [were] these,.... Who was the second son of Seir, and whose sons were the five following:

Alvan, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam; in **1Ch 1:40** Alvan is called Alian, and Shepho is Shephi.

Genesis 36:24

Ver. 24. And these are the children of Zibeon,.... The third son of Self, and who had two sons;

both Ajah and Anah; of the latter it is observed:

this [was that] Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father; who observed, while he was feeding his father's asses in the wilderness, that the he asses coupled with mares, or horses with the she asses, and produced another sort of creatures called mules; and by this means found out the way how such creatures might be produced, and practised it: so Aelianus says {d}, that mules are not the produce of nature, but you may call it an adulterous invention of human contrivance and boldness, and a theft: this is the common interpretation, and to which our version leads: but against it it may be observed, that the word for "mules" is different from this here used, nor is this word ever used of mules, nor does it appear that there were any creatures of this sort before the days of David; nor is the word translated "found" ever used of that which before was not in being, but of what already existed; nor is there any mention of horses or mares in this account also; had it referred to a mixture of these creatures with asses, it would not have been omitted. Some think therefore the words are to be rendered, "he found waters in the wilderness"; sources and collections of waters which were not usual in a wilderness, and of great worth and use in desert lands, as Edom was, and in those hot countries, and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "hot waters"; but then to the fixing of either of these versions, the word must be altered either in its points or letters, for which there is no authority. The Targum of Onkelos renders it mighty ones or giants, and may signify the "Emim", the "aleph" being changed for "yod", as Aben Ezra observes; and then the sense is, that

these gigantic people, who were so called from the terror they taught upon their neighbours, and, who dwelt near the Horim in Seir, **De 2:10**, as they used to steal from their flocks, Anah lighted on them in the wilderness, and fell upon them, and took them; and with this agrees the Samaritan version, "he found giants, in the wilderness"; and so Abendana interprets the words: Aben Ezra observes that many interpret the word of plants or herbs; and a very learned {e} man is of opinion that the word used is the name of an useful herb or plant, first discovered by Anah. This Anah, though a keeper of his father's asses, is afterwards called Duke Anah; it being the custom of the sons of great personages to be the keepers of flocks and herds;
See Gill on "Ge 29:9".

{d} De Animal. l. 12. c. 16. {e} Wagenseil, in Sota, p. 217, 218.

Genesis 36:25

Ver. 25. And the children of Anah [were] these,....

Dishon, the name of one of his uncles. Ge 36:21;

and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah; Aben Ezra thinks this is not the same Anah that was mentioned in the beginning of this verse; since, if he was the same, there was no need to mention him again, but that he is the same that is mentioned in Ge 36:2; but if he is not the same that is spoken of in this verse and Ge 36:24, it is difficult to account for the mention of him at all in this place: that he is the same as in Ge 36:2 seems to be right, though it is attended with this difficulty, that the Anah and Aholibamah there are represented as of the Hivites, whereas here they are reckoned among the Horites; but it may be, as Ainsworth observes on Ge 36:20, that the Horites were of the race of the Hivites originally; and indeed this Aholibamah being the wife of Esau seems to be the reason of this particular notice taken of her here. She is omitted in **1Ch 1:41**.

Genesis 36:26

Ver. 26. And these [are] the sons of Dishon,.... Not of Dishon the son of Anah, but of Dishon the son of Seir, Ge 36:21; and they are the four following:

Hemdan, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran; the first of these is called

Amram, or rather Chamram, **1Ch 1:41**.

Genesis 36:27

Ver. 27. The children of Ezer are these,.... Another son of Seir, who had the following sons:

Bilhan, and Zaavan, and Achan; the two last are called Zavan and Jakan, in **1Ch 1:42**.

Genesis 36:28

Ver. 28. The children of Dishon are these,.... The last of the seven sons of Seir, and who had two sons,

Uz and Aran; from the former of these the land of Uz, inhabited by the Edomites, had its name, **La 4:21**; some have taken this to be the country of Job, **Job 1:1**.

Genesis 36:29

Ver. 29. These [are] the dukes [that came] of the Horites,.... Not that succeeded one after another, as the kings next mentioned did, but were together, at the same time, heads of respective families, and governors of them; and then the seven sons of Seir are rehearsed in this verse and Ge 36:30 in their order, with the title of "duke" annexed to each of them, "Duke Lotan", &c.

Genesis 36:30

Ver. 30. These [are] the dukes [that came] of Hori,.... The ancestor of Seir, whence he is called the Horite, unless the singular is put for the plural, used in Ge 36:29:

among their dukes in the land of Seir; not that there were other dukes besides them in the land of Seir until Esau got among them, but these were they whose habitations were before in the land of Gabla (or Seir); as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it; or "in", or "according to their dukedoms", as the

Septuagint version; in their respective families where they had the government, and which became very numerous.

Genesis 36:31

Ver. 31. And these [are] the kings that reigned in the land of Edom,.... In the land that was afterwards called the land of Edom; for this laud was not so called when these kings began to reign: for, according to Bishop Cumberland {f}, and those that follow him {g}, these were Horite kings, who, after their defeat by Chedorlaomer, Ge 14:5; in order to secure themselves the better from such a calamity for the future, set up a kingdom, and which appears, by the following account, to be elective; and so Maimonides {h} observes, that not one of these kings were of Edom: and these were,

before there reigned any king over the children of Israel; and there being no kings over Israel until many years after the times of Moses, hence some have thought these words are inserted by some other writer after him; but there is no need to suppose that; for Moses knew, from foregoing prophecies and promises, that kings would arise out of them and reign over them, Ge 17:6; and this he was so certain of, that he himself, by divine direction, gave laws and rules to the children of Israel respecting their future kings, De 17:14; besides Moses himself was king in Jeshurun or Israel, De 33:5, so that it is the same as if he had said, these are the kings that reigned in Edom, before this time.

{f} Orig. Gent. Antiq. p. 1-24. {g} Bedford in his Scripture Chronology, and the Authors of the Universal History. {h} Morch Nevochim, par. 3. c. 50. p. 510.

Genesis 36:32

Ver. 32. And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom,.... His name was not Balac, as the Septuagint version, which may lead to think of Balak king of Moab; nor is this the same with Balaam, the son of Beor, who lived ages after, as some in Aben Ezra: who he was we know no more of than what is here said; he was the first Horite king, and is placed by Mr. Bedford {i} in A. M. 2002:

and the name of his city [was] Dinhabah, the place either where he was born, or where he had been governor before, but of it we read nowhere else.

{i} Scripture Chronology, p. 316.

Genesis 36:33

Ver. 33. And Bela died,.... How long he reigned is not known with any certainty, nor whether he left any sons behind him; if he did, they did not succeed him in the throne; for

Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead: this king some have thought to be the same with Job, and from whom one of the books of Scripture has its name; but neither their names, nor age, nor country agree: who this Jobab and his father Zerah were cannot be said: they seem to be of the same country in which Jobab reigned, since he is said to be of Bozrah, a famous city of Idumea, after spoken of in the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah and others, Isa 34:6; Jarchi takes it to be a city of Moab, and indeed it is sometimes placed in Moab, and sometimes in Edom, it being on the borders of both, and sometimes belonged to the one and sometimes to the other. According to Mr. Bedford {k}, this king began his reign, A. M. 2135, so that the former king must have reigned about forty two years; which is a space of time he allows to each successor, taking them one with another, the particular and exact time of each reign he not being able to fix.

{k} Scripture Chronology, p. 327.

Genesis 36:34

Ver. 34. And Jobab died,.... According to Mr. Bedford, A. M. 2177:

and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his stead; or of the land of the south, as the Targum of Jonathan, of the southern part of the land of Idumea, as it was afterwards called; the metropolis of which was the city of Teman, after spoken of in Scripture, which had its name from Teman the son of Eliphaz; See Gill on "Ge 36:11".

Genesis 36:35

Ver. 35. And Husham died,.... As is thought, about A. M. 2219, above forty years after the death of Abraham, as computed by the above writer:

and Hadad the son of Bedad (who smote Midian in the field of Moab) reigned in his stead: who he or his father were we have no other account, nor of this warlike action of his; probably the Midianites came out to invade him, hearing of which, he went out against them, and met with him in the fields of Moab, which were near to Midian, and fought them and conquered them: Jarchi says, the Midianites came out to make war against the Moabites, and the king of Edom went out to help the Moabites, and hence, he says, we learn, that Midian and Moab were near each other; and in the days of Balaam they made peace, that they might combine against Israel: this battle is supposed to be fought in the twelfth year of his reign; and it is thought to be in his reign that Esau came with his family and dwelt in Seir {l}; though some place it later, either in the following reign, or in that of his successors {m}:

and the name of his city [was] Avith: where it was is not certain.

{l} Bedford's Scripture Chronology, p. 343, 349. {m} Universal History, vol. 2. p. 170.

Genesis 36:36

Ver. 36. And Hadad died,.... As is supposed, about A. M. 2241.

and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead; but who he was, or the place he was of, cannot be said.

Genesis 36:37

Ver. 37. And Samlah died,.... As is supposed, about A. M. 2283.

and Saul of Rehoboth [by] the river reigned in his stead; Rehoboth was one of the cities built by Ashur, Ge 10:11; and was situated near the river Euphrates; and so the Targum of Jonathan calls it Rehoboth which is by Euphrates; but Jerom {n}, from Eusebius, takes it to be another city by a river in Edom, and says, that there was in his days a garrison in the country of Gabalena (a part of Idumea), a large village called by that name.

{n} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. M. & 94. A.

Genesis 36:38

Ver. 38. And Saul died,.... About A. M. 2325;

and Baalhanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead: whose name, inverted, is observed by Grotius to be the same with Hannibal; it signifies a gracious lord or king.

Genesis 36:39

Ver. 39. And Baalhanan the son of Achbor died,.... About A. M. 2367.

and Hadar reigned in his stead; the last of the Horite kings, when an end was put to this monarchy by the united families of Seir and Esau, and changed into dukedoms; of which there were seven of the race of Seir, and fourteen of the race of Esau, of whom an account is given in the preceding part of this chapter: as for this last king it is further said of him:

and the name of his city [was] Pau; but where it was cannot be said:

and his wife's name [was] Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab; this woman seems to be a person of note, by the particular mention made of her; but whether the names of her ancestors are the names of men or women it is not certain: some take Matred to be the name of her father, and Mezahab the name of her grandfather; but according to Aben Ezra, Marred was the name of her mother, who was the daughter of Mezahab her grandfather; whom the Targum of Jonathan interprets melter of gold, as does Saadiah Gaon.

Genesis 36:40

Ver. 40. And these [are] the names of the dukes [that came] of Esau,.... After the regal monarchy ceased, the government in Edom was by dukes, and of these there were two sons, one of which an account has been given of already, who were partly of the race of Seir, and partly of the race of Esau; and who were dukes not by succession, but together, in and over their respective families: and it may be observed, that neither Esau, nor his sons by his two first wives, Eliphaz and Reuel, are called dukes, only his three sons by his last wife; all the rest are his grandsons and sons of the two former, which seems to give some light as to the time when those dukedoms took place; and very probably it was by the joint influence of Seir and Esau, whose families had intermarried, that an end was put to the regal power, and who, for a course of years, governed in the above manner: and they of Esau's race in those times are said to be "dukes in the land of Edom", as a learned man {o} has observed; whereas those that follow, which are a second race of them, are called "dukes of Edom", Ge 36:43; who took possession of the country and ruled in it, driving out the Horites and succeeding in their stead: these are described

according to their families; they were the heads of:

after their places, by their names; the places where they lived, which were called after their names, and are as follow:

Duke Timnah, Duke Alvah, Duke Jetheth; these were both the names of the dukes, and of the places where they governed, called after their names; so Timnah or Themna, as Jerom calls it, is by him said to be a city of the princes of Edom, the same he says of Jetheth {p}, so the like may be concluded of Alvah.

{o} Shuckford's Connection, p. 192. {p} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. F. 95. C.

Genesis 36:41

Ver. 41. Duke Aholibamah, Duke Elah, Duke Pinon. The former is the name of a woman, Ge 36:2; here the name of a man, and also of the place of which he was duke; for Jerom observes {q}, that Oolibama is a city of the princes of Edom, and who also makes mention of Elath, a country of the princes of Edom, and a city of Esau, ten miles from Petra to the east {r}, and the seat of Duke Pinon was very probably Phinon, which lay between Petra and Zoar {s}.

{q} De Loc. Heb. fol. 93. K. {r} Ib. fol. 91. E. {s} Eusebius apud Reland. Palestin. illustrat. p. 71.

Genesis 36:42

Ver. 42. Duke Kenaz, Duke Teman, Duke Mibzar. There was a Kenaz the son of Eliphaz, and so a Teman a son of his, who were both dukes; but these seem to be different from them, though the latter might be duke of the place called Teman from him: which, in Jerom's time {t}, was a village five miles distant from Petra, and where was a Roman garrison, and so Mabsar in his times {u}, was a large village in the country of Gabalena (a part of Idumea), and called Mabsara, and belonged to the city Petra.

{t} De loc. Heb. 3. fol. 95. B. {u} Ib.

Genesis 36:43

Ver. 43. Duke Magdiel, Duke Iram,.... Magdiel also, Jerom {w} says, was in the country of Gabalena, formerly possessed by the dukes of Edom; and the Targum of Jonathan says, this duke was called Magdiel from the name of his city, which was a strong "migdal" or tower: and Jarchi's note upon this word is, this is Rome; so the Jewish writers elsewhere say {x}, that Esau had an hundred provinces from Seir to Magdiel; as it is said, "Duke Magdiel, Duke Iram", this is Rome:

these [be] the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations, in the land of their possession; the former race of dukes, as has been observed, were dukes in the land of Edom, were sojourners in the land, at least had not sovereign dominion, or were not the only dukes in it; there were dukes of the race of Seir at the same time; but now these having driven out the Horites, were sole possessors and sovereign lords; and thus while Israel and his posterity were sojourners in a strange land, Esau and his family were possessors and lords of a country they could call their own:

he [is] Esau the father of the Edomites; that is, Edom, the dukes of whose race are before reckoned up; the same is Esau, who had the name of Edom from selling his birthright for a mess of red pottage: and this is the man from whom the Edomites or Idumeans sprung, often hereafter spoken of in the Scripture, though no more in this history. He is said {y} to be killed by the tribes of Israel, at the funeral of Jacob, he coming forth with a great army to hinder his interment in the cave of Machpelah: it is a tradition of the Jews {z}, he was slain by Judah.

{w} De loc. Heb. 3. fol. 93. B. {x} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. {y} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 1. {z} T. Hieros. Gittin, fol. 47. 2.

Genesis 37:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 37

In this chapter begins the history of Joseph, with whom the remaining part of this book is chiefly concerned; and here are related the hatred of his brethren to him, because he brought an ill report of them to his father, and because his father loved him, and which was increased by the dream he dreamed, and told them of, Ge 37:1; a visit of his to his brethren in the fields, whom he found after a long search of them, Ge 37:12; their conspiracy on sight of him to slay him, but by the advice of Reuben it was agreed to cast him into a pit, which they did, Ge 37:18; and after that, at the motion of Judah, sold him to the Ishmaelites, who were going to Egypt, Ge 37:25; this being done, Reuben being absent, and not finding Joseph in the pit, was in great distress, Ge 37:29; their contrivance to deceive their father, and make him believe that Joseph was destroyed by a wild beast, which on the sight of the coat he credited, and became inconsolable, Ge 37:31; and the chapter concludes with the sale of Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, Ge 37:36.

Ver. 1. And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger,.... And this stands opposed unto, and is distinguished from the case and circumstances of Esau and his posterity, expressed in the preceding chapter, who dwelt in the land of their possession, not as strangers and sojourners, as Jacob and his seed, but as lords and proprietors; and so these words may be introduced and read in connection with the former history; "but Jacob dwelt", &c. {a}; and this verse would better conclude the preceding chapter than begin a new one. The Targum of Jonathan paraphrases the words, "and Jacob dwelt quietly"; or peaceably, in tranquillity and safety; his brother Esau being gone from him into another country, he remained where his father lived and died, and in the country that by his blessing belonged to him:

in the land of Canaan, and particularly in Hebron, where Isaac and Abraham before him had dwelt.

{a} bvyw "at habitavit", Schmidt.

Genesis 37:2

Ver. 2. These [are] the generations of Jacob,.... But no genealogy following, some interpret this of events or of things which befell Jacob, and his family, particularly with respect to his son Joseph, as Aben Ezra and Ben Melech take the sense of the word to be from
Pr 27:1; but the words may refer to what goes before in the latter end of chapter 35, where an account is given of Jacob's sons, with regard to which it is here said, "these are the generations of Jacob"; the whole of chapter 36, which contains the genealogy of Esau, being a parenthesis, or at least an interruption of the above account, the history of Jacob and his posterity is here reassumed and carried on:

Joseph [being] seventeen years old, was feeding his flock with his brethren; or "in the flock" {b}; he was with them in the pastures, where the flocks were fed, not so much to assist them in it, as to be taught by them how to feed, they being older than he:

and the lad [was] with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: his secondary wives or concubines, called his wives, because their children shared in the inheritance. These sons of theirs were Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Bilhah; and Gad and Asher, the sons of Zilpah; with these Jacob rather chose Joseph should be, than with the sons of Leah; and especially that he should be with the sons of Bilhah, who was the handmaid of Rachel, Joseph's mother, and she being dead, it might be thought that Bilhah and her sons would have the most respect for Joseph:

and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report; for not being able to bear with their evil deeds, and yet not having authority enough, being a junior, to reprove, correct, and check them, he reported them to his father: what the things were reported is not said, perhaps their quarrels among themselves, their contempt of Joseph, their neglect of their flocks, &c. Some of the Jewish writers make them to be abominable acts of uncleanness {d}, others eating of the member of a creature alive, particularly the flesh of the tails of lambs while living {e}.

{b} Naub "in pecudibus", Montanus; "in grege", Vatablus. {d} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 84. fol. 73. 1. Jarchi in loc. {e} Targum Jon. in loc. Pirke Eliezer, c. 38.

Genesis 37:3

Ver. 3. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children,.... He being the firstborn of his beloved Rachel, and a lovely youth, of a beautiful aspect, very promising, prudent and pious: the reason given in the text follows,

because he [was] the son of his old age; being ninety one years of age when he was born; and the youngest children are generally most beloved, and especially such as are born to their parents when in years. Benjamin indeed was younger than Joseph, and is described in like manner, Ge 44:20; and for this reason one would think had the greatest claim to his father's affections; wherefore some give a different sense of this phrase, and render it, the "son" or disciple of "elders", "senators", i.e. a wise and prudent man: and indeed, if being the son of his old age was the reason of his affection, Benjamin had the best claim to it, being the youngest, and born to him when he was still older; and this sense is countenanced by Onkelos, who renders it,

"because he was a wise son to him:"

and so the reason why he loved him more than the rest was, because of his senile wisdom; though a child in years, he was old in wisdom and knowledge. Abendana observes, that it was a custom with old men to take one of their little children to be with them continually, and attend upon them, and minister to them, and lean upon their arm; and such an one was called the son of their old age, because he ministered to them in their old age:

and he made him a coat of [many] colours; that is, had one made for him, which was interwoven with threads of divers colours, or painted, or embroidered with divers figures, or made with different pieces of various colours: according to Jerom {f}, it was a garment which reached down to the ankles, and was distinguished with great variety by the hands of the artificer, or which had long sleeves reaching to the hands; and so the Jewish writers {g} say it was called "passim", because it reached to the palms of the hands: this might be an emblem of the various virtues which early appeared in him; or rather of the several graces of the Spirit of God implanted in him, and of the raiment of needlework, the righteousness of Christ, with which he was clothed, Ps 45:14; and of the various providences which Jacob, under a spirit of prophecy, foresaw he would be attended with.

{f} Trad. Heb. in Gen. fol. 72. A. {g} Bereshit Rabba, ut supra. (sect. 84. fol 73.1.)

Genesis 37:4

Ver. 4. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren,.... Which they perceived by various things in his behaviour to him, by his words, his looks, his gestures, and particularly by the coat he had made him, which distinguished him from the rest:

they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him; they not only inwardly hated him, but they could not conceal their hatred, but betrayed it by their speech unto him; they could not speak to him on any occasion, but in a cross, surly, ill natured manner; they could not salute him, or give him the common salutation, Peace be to thee, as Aben Ezra suggests.

Genesis 37:5

Ver. 5. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told [it] his brethren,.... As a dream, in the simplicity of his heart; not understanding it, or imagining there was any meaning in it; he told it not with any design to affront them, but as an amusement, and for their diversion, there being something in it odd and ridiculous, as he himself might think:

and they hated him yet the more; not only because he had carried an ill report of them to his father, and because he loved him more than they, but still more because of this dream; the meaning of which they at once understood, though he did not, which yet they supposed he did, and that he told them it in a boasting manner, and to irritate them.

Genesis 37:6

Ver. 6. And he said unto them, hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed. Hear now, so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, immediately, directly, lest he should forget it, having perhaps dreamt it the night before; though our version expresses more modesty and submission. The dream follows:

Genesis 37:7

Ver. 7. For, behold, we [were] binding sheaves in the field,.... So it was represented in his mind in a dream, as if it was harvest time, and he and his brethren were at work together in the field binding up sheaves of corn that were reaped, in order to be carried home:

and, lo, my sheaf arose, and stood upright; it seemed to him, that after he had bound and laid it on the ground, that it rose up of itself, and stood erect:

and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf; the sheaves which his brethren bound up, they also stood upright, and all around his sheaf, and bowed unto it; so it appeared to him in his dream. This was a fit emblem of their coming to him into Egypt for corn, and bowing to him, when their sheaves were empty, and his was full. In an ancient book of the Jews {h} Joseph's sheaf is interpreted of the Messiah, whom they call the son of Ephraim. Joseph no doubt was a type of the true Messiah, and in this of his exaltation and glory, and of that honour given him by all his saints who come to him, and receive from him all the supplies of grace.

{h} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Gen. fol. 87. 2.

Genesis 37:8

Ver. 8. And his brethren said unto him,.... After he had told his dream, being highly offended with him, understanding the dream, and the meaning of it, better than he did:

shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shall thou indeed have dominion over us? denying that he ever should, and reproving him for his vanity, in concluding from hence that he would have the dominion over them. So the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, dost thou think, suppose, or imagine that thou shall rule over us? it looks as if by telling us this dream that such a whim and fancy has got into thine head:

and they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words; for it seems by this that he had dreamt, and told them more dreams besides this, and they hated him both for them, and for his telling them to them; though Jarchi thinks the phrase, "for his words", refers to the ill report he gave of them to his father, Ge 37:2.

Genesis 37:9

Ver. 9. And he dreamed yet another dream,.... Relating to the name subject as the former, and, for the confirmation of it, only the emblems are different, and more comprehensive:

and told it his brethren, and said, behold, I have dreamed a dream more; another dream, and which he told, either as not knowing fully the resentment of his brethren at his former dream, or in order to clear himself from any charge of feigning the dream, or having any ill intention in telling it; seeing he had another to the same purpose, and therefore thought fit to acquaint them with it, that they might more seriously consider of it, whether there was not something divine in it, which he himself began to think there was:

and, behold, the sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars, made their obeisance to me: in his dream it seemed to him, either that he was taken up into the starry heaven, and these luminaries bowed unto him, or else that they descended to him on earth, and paid their respects unto him.

Genesis 37:10

Ver. 10. And he told [it] to his father, and to his brethren,.... After he had told it to his brethren, he told it to his father a second time in their hearing, that he might pass his judgment on it, and give his sense of it before them:

and his father rebuked him; not as being ignorant of the meaning of the dream, for by what follows he had a clear understanding of it, or as if he thought it was an idle dream, and would never have any accomplishment: but he thought fit, in his great wisdom and prudence, to put on such an air, partly to check young Joseph, lest he should grow proud, and haughty, and insolent upon it, and behave in a disagreeable manner to himself and to his brethren; and partly to conciliate the minds of his brethren to him, which he perceived were exasperated by his dreams:

and said unto him, what [is] this dream that thou hast dreamed? what dost thou take to be the meaning of it? canst thou imagine that it is of God? is it not a mere whim and imagination of thine own wandering brain in thy sleep? why dost thou tell such an idle dream as this, as if there were something divine in it, when it appears the most absurd and irrational?

shall I, thy mother, and thy brethren, indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? whereby it plainly shows he understood the meaning of the dream, though he would not seem to countenance it. By the "sun" he understood himself, the principal and head of the family, the active instrument of the generation of it, the light, life, and support of it; and by the "moon" his wife, the passive instrument of generation, who had the lesser share of rule in the family, yet contributed much to its good and welfare; by whom is meant not Rachel, the real mother of Joseph, who was dead, unless this is observed to show the seeming absurdity of it, from whence the whole might appear ridiculous; but rather Leah, who was now Jacob's only true wife, and the stepmother of Joseph; or else Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, who since her death was a mother to Joseph; and by the eleven "stars" he understood the eleven brethren of Joseph, who were as stars that receive their light from the sun; and in allusion to the twelve constellations in the Zodiac, to which Joseph and his eleven brethren answered. This had its fulfilment, in some measure, when Jacob sent presents to Joseph when governor of Egypt, though unknown to him, and when he and his family went thither, when, no doubt, Jacob showed a civil respect according to his dignity, and in regard to the office he bore: and so his wife, if he then had any, that went with him, and if not personally, yet in her posterity paid a deference to him, as it is certain all his brethren did. Grotius observes from the Oneirocritics or interpreters of dreams, particularly Achmes, that according to the doctrine of the Persians and Egyptians, that if anyone should dream that he rules over the stars, he shall rule over all people.

Genesis 37:11

Ver. 11. And his brethren envied him,.... Notwithstanding all the precaution Jacob took to prevent it; they suspecting and fearing that these dreams portended the pre-eminence of Joseph over them, or however served to fill his mind with the hopes and expectation of it:

but his father observed the saying; what Joseph had said in relating his dream; he laid it up in his mind and kept it there, often thought of it, and waited to see its accomplishment.

Genesis 37:12

Ver. 12. And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. Very probably some considerable time after the telling of the above dreams; it was usual to remove flocks from place to place for the sake of pasturage; and sometimes at a great distance, as Shechem was from Hebron, where Jacob now dwelt, said {i} to be about sixty miles; but this is not so much to be marvelled at as the place itself, whither they went, for though Jacob had bought a parcel of a field in this place, Ge 33:19; which might be a reason for their going thither to feed their father's flocks in his own field; yet it was the place where they had committed a most outrageous action in destroying all, the males there, and therefore might fear the inhabitants of the neighbouring cities would rise upon them and cut them off.

{i} Bunting's Travels, p. 79. Ainsworth in loc.

Genesis 37:13

Ver. 13. And Israel said unto Joseph,.... After his brethren had been gone some time to Shechem:

do not thy brethren feed [the flock] in Shechem? this question is put, not as ignorant of it, or doubting about it, but to put Joseph in mind of it, and in order to what follows:

come, and I will send thee unto them; which is pretty much he should, considering the length of the way, sixty miles, the dangerous place in which they were feeding their flocks, and especially seeing his brethren envied and hated him; but Jacob might think that by this time things had wore off of their minds; and it is certain he had no suspicion of their hatred rising so high as to attempt his life; and it is plain he had none concerning them, when his coat was brought to him, but believed it was wild beasts that had devoured him:

and he said unto him, here [am I]; showing his readiness to obey his father, and go on this errand, though it was a long journey, and he to go it alone, and his brethren also bore no good will to him.

Genesis 37:14

Ver. 14. And he said to him, go, I pray thee,.... Or "now" {k}, directly, immediately, which is more agreeable to the authority of a father:

see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; it having been many days, and perhaps months, since he had heard anything of them; and the rather Jacob might be under a concern for them, because of the danger they were exposed to from the neighbouring tribes and nations of the Canaanites, on account of their having some time ago destroyed the Shechemites; so the Targum of Jonathan, paraphrasing on the preceding part, makes Jacob to say,

"I am afraid, lest the Horites should come and smite them, because of their smiting Hamor and Shechem, and the inhabitants of that city; come, and I will send thee, &c."

and bring me word again; of their welfare, and of the state of their flocks:

so he sent him out of the vale of Hebron: the same with the plains of Mamre near the city of Hebron, which was built on a hill:

and he came to Shechem: after he had travelled sixty miles.

{k} an "nunc", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius.

Genesis 37:15

Ver. 15. And a certain man found him,.... Many of the Jewish writers {l} say, this was an angel, the angel Gabriel, in the likeness of a man; but according to Aben Ezra, it was a traveller he met on the road; but it is more probable, as Schimidt observes, that it was some man at work in the field that came upon him and took notice of him:

and, behold, [he was] wandering in the field; in some field near Shechem, perhaps the same his father Jacob had purchased, and where he expected to have found his brethren, and was looking out for them, going to and fro in search of them; which the labouring man in the field observed:

and the man asked him, saying, what seekest thou? seeing him walking about, and first looking one way, and then another, concluded he was in search of something, either of some man or of some creature, a sheep or an ox that was lost; and therefore put this question to him, with a view to give him what direction and assistance he could.

{l} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. Targum Jon. & Jarchi in loc.

Genesis 37:16

Ver. 16. And he said, I seek my brethren,.... Whom, no doubt, he described to the man, and told him who they were, and to whom they belonged; or otherwise the man would have been at a loss to know who he meant, and what further to say to him, and without which Joseph would never have made the following request to him:

tell me, I pray thee, where they feed [their flocks]; in what part of the country they are, what field they are in, how far to it, and which the way.

Genesis 37:17

Ver. 17. And the man said, they are departed hence,.... They had been there, in the field where he and Joseph were, and which was probably the field before mentioned; but for good reasons, perhaps for want of pasture, or in order to find better feeding for their cattle, they were gone from thence, from the fields about Shechem:

for I heard them say, let us go to Dothan; this was, as some say, four miles from Shechem, others eight {m}; according to Brochardus {n}, it was a plain country between fruitful hills, contiguous to fountains, was pasture ground, and very fit for feeding cattle; and its very name, as Hillerus {o} notes, signifies grassy, or a place of tender grass: here, afterwards, was a city built, not far from Samaria, **2Ki 6:13**; about twelve miles to the north of it, as says Jerom {p}; it was in the tribe of Manasseh, about forty four miles from Jerusalem to the north, and six miles from Tiberias to the west {q}:

and Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan; which shows that he had a real desire to see them, and know their state and condition, that he might report it to his father; since he might have returned on not finding them at Shechem, that being the place he was sent to, and would have been sufficient to have shown obedience to his father's commands, though perhaps it might not have come up to his full sense and meaning.

{m} Bunting's Travels, p. 79. Ainsworth in loc. {n} Apud Drusium in loc. {o} Onomastic. Sacra, p. 526. {p} Loc. Heb. fol. 90. H. {q} Bunting, ut supra, ({m}) p. 80.

Genesis 37:18

Ver. 18. And when they saw him afar off,.... They knew him as soon as they saw him, by his stature, his gesture or manner of walking, and especially by his coat of various colours he now had on, Ge 37:23;

even before he came near unto them; the distance he was from them when they first spied him is particularly remarked and repeated, not to show the quickness of their sight, but for the sake of what follows; to observe how soon their passions were raised, how intense and prepense their malice, and which put them upon devising ways and means to destroy him, for it follows:

they conspired against him, to slay him; they entered into a consultation, and devised the most crafty methods they could think of to take away his life, and yet conceal the murder.

Genesis 37:19

Ver. 19. And they said one to another,.... According to the Targum of Jonathan, Simeon and Levi said what follows: nor is it unlikely, since they were hot, passionate, cruel, and bloody minded men, as appears by the affair of Shechem; and perhaps this may be the reason why Joseph afterwards, when governor of Egypt, took Simeon and bound him,
Ge 42:24; which was but a just retaliation for his advice to cast him into a pit when slain:

behold, this dreamer cometh; or "master of dreams" {r}; not of the interpretation of them, but of dreaming them; that had them at his command when he pleased, as they jeeringly flouted him; as if he was a framer and contriver of them, and only pretended to them when he had none, or else that he was frequently dreaming and telling his dreams; this they said in a sarcastic way, and, perhaps, as pleased, and rejoicing that such an opportunity offered to take their revenge on him: this shows that it was on the account of his dreams chiefly that they bore such a grudge against him, that this was uppermost on their minds, and was revived at first sight of him, and from whence their malice sprung.

{r} twmlxh leb "magister somniorum", Tigurine version, Montanus; "dominus somniorum", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius

Genesis 37:20

Ver. 20. Come now therefore, and let us slay him,.... Agree to do it, and actually do it:

and cast him into some pit; or, "one of the pits" {s}, which were near, and were dug for the collection of rainwater, as was usual in those countries where water was scarce:

and we will say, some evil beast hath devoured him; which would seem plausible, since wild beasts were frequent in those parts, as lions and bears, see 1Ki 13:24;

and we shall see what will become of his dreams; who will be the lord then, and reign, and have the dominion, he or we.

{s} twrbh dxab "in unam cisternarum", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "in unam ex cisternis istis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "in unam fovearum", Schmidt.

Genesis 37:21

Ver. 21. And Reuben heard [it],.... Overheard what they said, not being in the consultation; perhaps knowing his temper and disposition to be more mild and gentle, and being the elder brother, might fear he would overrule matters against them, and therefore Simeon and Levi did not choose to have him in the debate; or he might be at some distance and entirely absent when the consultation was held, and their intention was reported to him by some of them:

and he delivered him out of their hands; from slaying him; that is, he endeavoured to do it by proposing another scheme:

and said, let us not kill him; or let us not smite the soul {t}; the dear soul, or take away life.

{t} vpn wnkn al "ne percutiamus vel occidamus animam", Sam. Ar. Syr.

Genesis 37:22

Ver. 22. And Reuben said unto them, shed no blood,.... Innocent blood, as the Targum of Jonathan; the blood of a man, a brother's blood, one that had not done anything wherefore it should be shed, and which would involve in guilt, and bring vengeance on them: he seems to put them in mind of the original law in Ge 9:6;

[but] cast him into this pit that [is] in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him: which might seem to answer the same purpose, namely, by depriving him of his life in another way, by starving him; but this was not Reuben's intention, as appears by the next clause, and by his going to the pit afterwards, as it should seem, with a view to take him out of it privately; this advice he gave,

that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again; safe and sound, in order, as it is thought by many interpreters, to reconcile his father to him, whose bed he had abused.

Genesis 37:23

Ver. 23. And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren,.... To the very place where they were, and had, in a kind and obliging manner, asked of their welfare, and related their father's concern for them, who had sent him on this errand:

that they stripped, Joseph out of [his] coat; his coat of [many] colours, that [was] on him; according to Jarchi and Aben Ezra, this was not one and the same coat, but divers, and that the sense is, that with his coat of many colours, and besides that, they stripped him of his lower garment, which was next to his skin, his shirt; so that he was quite naked when they cast him into the pit, and this they did as soon as he came up to them, so cruel and hardhearted were they.

Genesis 37:24

Ver. 24. And they took him, and cast him into a pit,.... Into the same that

Reuben pointed to them, whose counsel they gladly took and readily executed, supposing he meant the same thing they did, starving him to death:

and the pit [was] empty, [there was] no water in it; only serpents and scorpions, as the Targum of Jonathan; and Jarchi adds, this remark, that there was no water in it, seems to be made either to furnish out a reason why Reuben directed to it, that he might be the more easily got out of it, and not be in danger of losing his life at once, or of being drowned in it; or else to show the uncomfortable situation he was in, having not so much as a drop of water to refresh him; see **Zec 9:11**. Dothan is said to remain to this day, and the inhabitants of it show the ancient ditch into which Joseph was cast {u}.

{u} Bunting's Travels, p. 80.

Genesis 37:25

Ver. 25. And they sat down to eat bread,.... Not at all concerned at what they had done, nor in the least grieved for the affliction of Joseph, and without any pity and compassion for him in his distress, but joyful and glad they had got him into their hands, and like to get rid of him for ever:

and they lifted up their eyes, and looked, after they had eaten their food, or while they were eating it:

and, behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead; a place of merchandise for spices and balm, and such like things after mentioned. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call them Arabians; and the Targum of Jerusalem, Saracens; these were the posterity of Ishmael, who came out of Arabia to Gilead, where they took up their merchandise, at least part of it, and were travelling to Egypt with it, and their way thither lay by Dothan; these travelled in companies, now called "caravans", partly on the account of robbers, and partly by reason of wild beasts, with both which they were sometimes beset in the deserts through which they travelled:

with their camels bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh; the first word is general according to our version, and others, and signifies various spices, a collection of them; and so Jarchi takes it; but Aquila translates it "storax"; and Bochart {w}, by various arguments, seems to have proved, that this is particularly intended; though the Targum of Jonathan renders it "wax" {x}; and so other versions: and "balm" is by some taken to be "rosin", since there was no balm or balsam in Gilead, on the other side Jordan, nor indeed any in Judea, until it was brought thither from Arabia Felix, in the times of Solomon; and what we render "myrrh", is in the Hebrew called "lot", and is by some thought to be the same with "laudanum": this their merchandise was carried on camels, very fit for their purpose every way, as they were strong creatures made to carry burdens, and could travel many days without water, which they were sometimes obliged to do in the deserts:

going to carry [it] down to Egypt; where these things grew not, and were much in use, at least some of them, both in medicines, and in embalming dead bodies, much practised in Egypt; an Arabic writer {y} makes this merchandise to consist of, nuts, turpentine, and oil.

{w} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 12. col. 532. {x} So in Bereshit Rabba & Targum Jerusalem in R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 20. 2. {y} Patricides, p. 21. apud Hottinger. Smegma Orient. p. 367, 368.

Genesis 37:26

Ver. 26. And Judah said unto his brethren,.... In sight of the Ishmaelites, a thought came into his mind to get Joseph sold to them;

what profit [is it] if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? it could be no advantage to them even if they could have concealed his blood from men; and if it was discovered, as it would, in all likelihood, by come means or another, then they must be answerable for it; and if not, God would take vengeance on them, from whom they could never conceal it; and therefore it would be most profitable and advantageous to them to sell him, and not destroy him, or take away his life; and to suffer him to lie in the pit and die was the same thing.

Genesis 37:27

Ver. 27. Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites,.... For a slave, and that will defeat his dream; and as these were going down to Egypt, where they would sell him, he would be far enough from them, and there would be no probability of his ever being lord over them:

and let not our hand be upon him; to take away his life, either by stabbing or starving him:

for he [is] our brother, [and] our flesh; they had all one father, though different mothers, and therefore, as the relation was so near, some sympathy and compassion should be shown; some degree of tenderness at least, and not savageness and cruelty:

and his brethren were content; they agreed to the motion, inasmuch as they supposed it would answer their end as well, which was to prevent his dominion over them.

Genesis 37:28

Ver. 28. Then there passed by Midianites, merchantmen,.... The same with the Ishmaelites before mentioned, as appears from the latter part of this verse; for as these were near neighbours, so they might join together in merchandise, and travel in company for greater safety, and are sometimes called the one, and sometimes the other, as well as they might mix together in their habitations and marriages; and are hence called Arabians by the Targums, as before observed, and so by Josephus, which signifies a mixed people:

and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit: not the Midianites, but his brethren:

and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty [pieces] of silver; for twenty shekels, which amounted to twenty five shillings of our money. The Jews {z} say, they each took two shekels apiece, and bought with them a pair of shoes, according to **Am 8:6**; but there were but nine of them, Reuben was absent:

and they brought Joseph into Egypt; some think these Midianites were different from the Ishmaelites, and that Joseph was sold many times, first to the Midianites, and then by them to the Ishmaelites, and by the latter to Potiphar. Justin {a}, an Heathen writer, gives an account of this affair in some agreement with this history;

"Joseph (he says) was the youngest of his brethren, whose excellent genius they feared, and took him secretly, and sold him to "foreign merchants", by whom he was carried into Egypt."

{z} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. {a} E. Trogo, l. 36. c. 2.

Genesis 37:29

Ver. 29. And Reuben returned unto the pit,.... It is very probable he had pretended to go somewhere on business, with an intention to take a circuit, and come to the pit and deliver his brother, and go home with him to his father. The Jews say {b} he departed from his brethren, and sat down on a certain mountain, that he might descend in the night and take Joseph out of the pit, and accordingly he came down in the night, and found him not. So Josephus {c} says, it was in the night when Reuben came to the pit, who calling to Joseph, and he not answering, suspected he was killed:

and, behold, Joseph [was] not in the pit; for neither by looking down into it could he see him, nor by calling be answered by him, which made it a clear case to him he was not there:

and he rent his clothes; as a token of distress and anguish of mind, of sorrow and mourning, as was usual in such cases; Jacob afterwards did the same, Ge 37:34.

{b} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 38.) {c} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 3. sect. 3.

Genesis 37:30

Ver. 30. And he returned unto his brethren,.... From the pit, and whom he suspected had took him and killed him, as was their first design, not being with them when they proposed to sell him, and did:

and said, the child [is] not; not in the pit, nor in the land of the living, but is dead, which is sometimes the meaning of the phrase, Jer 31:15; he calls him a child, though seventeen years of age, because the youngest brother but one, and he himself was the eldest, and also because of his tender concern for him:

and I, whither shall I go? to find the child or flee from his father's face, which he could not think of seeing any more; whom he had highly offended already in the case of Bilhah, and now he would be yet more incensed against him for his neglect of Joseph, who, he might have expected, would have taken particular care of him, being the eldest son: he speaks like one in the utmost perplexity, not knowing what to do, what course to steer, being almost distracted and at his wits' end.

Genesis 37:31

Ver. 31. And they took Joseph's coat,.... After they had told Reuben what they had done with him, who being willing to make the best of things as it was, joined with them in the following scheme: by this it appears, that when they took Joseph out of the pit they did not put his coat on him, but sold him naked, or almost so, to the merchants:

and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; that being, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi observe, most like to human blood.

Genesis 37:32

Ver. 32. And they sent the coat of [many] colours,.... Which was what they dipped in the blood of the kid; this they sent to Jacob in such a condition, by the hand of some messenger; the Targum of Jonathan says, the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah; but more probably some of their servants, whom they instructed what to say to their father when they presented it to him; not caring to appear in person at first, lest they be thrown into such commotion and confusion at their father's distress, as might tend to lead on to a discovery of the whole affair:

and they brought [it] to their father, and said, this we have found; that is, the messengers carried to the father of Joseph's brethren, who were sent with it, and taught to say, that they found it in some field in this condition, but found no man near it, only that by itself, and suspected it might be the coat of his son Joseph, if he had sent him out in it:

know now whether it [be] thy son's coat or no; look upon it, see if any marks can be observed in it, by which it may with any certainty be known whether it his or not.

Genesis 37:33

Ver. 33. And he knew [it], and said, [it is] my son's coat,.... He took it, and examined it, and was soon convinced, and well assured it was his son's coat;

read the words without the supplement "it is", and the pathos will appear the more, "my son's coat!" and think with what a beating heart, with what trembling limbs, with what wringing of hands, with what flowing eyes, and faultering speech, he spoke these words, and what follow:

an evil beast hath devoured him; this was natural to conclude from the condition the coat was in, and from the country he was sent into, which abounded with wild beasts, and was the very thing Joseph's brethren contrived to say themselves; and in this view they wished and hoped the affair would be considered, and so their wickedness concealed:

Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces; or "in rending is rent" {d}; he is most certainly rent in pieces, there is no question to be made of it; it is plain, and it must be the case.

{d} Prj Prj "discerpendo discerptus est"; Drusius, Schmidt.

Genesis 37:34

Ver. 34. And Jacob rent his clothes,.... As expressive of his grief and mourning for the death of his son, as he supposed:

and put sackcloth upon his loins; put off his usual apparel, and put on a coarse garment on his loins next to his flesh, as another token of his great trouble and affliction for the loss of his son; which though afterwards was frequently done in times of public or private mourning, yet this is the first time we read of it; whether Jacob was the first that used it, whom his posterity and others imitated, is not certain; however it appears that this usage, as well as that of rending clothes on sorrowful occasions, were very ancient:

and mourned for his son many days: or years, as days sometimes signify; twenty two years, according to Jarchi, even until the time he went down to Egypt and saw him alive.

Genesis 37:35

Ver. 35. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him,.... His sons must act a most hypocritical part in this affair; and as for his daughters, it is not easy to say who they were, since he had but one daughter that we read of, whose name was Dinah: the Targum of Jonathan calls them his sons wives; but it is a question whether any of his sons were as yet married, since the eldest of them was not more than twenty four years of age; and much less can their daughters be supposed to be meant, as they are by some. It is the opinion of the Jews, that Jacob had a twin daughter born to him with each of his sons; these his sons and daughters came together, or singly, to condole his loss, to sympathize with him, and speak a word of comfort to him, and entreat him not to give way to excessive grief and sorrow:

but he refused to be comforted; to attend to anything that might serve to alleviate his mind, and to abstain from outward mourning, and the tokens of it; he chose not to be interrupted in it:

and he said, for I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning; the meaning is, not that he would by any means hasten his own death, or go down to his son in the grave, strictly and literally taken; since, according to his apprehension of his son's death he could have no grave, being torn to pieces by a wild beast; but either that he should go into the state of the dead, where his son was, mourning all along till he carne thither; or rather that he would go mourning all his days "for [his] son" {e}, as some render it, till he came to the grave; nor would he, nor should he receive any comfort more in this world:

thus his father wept for him; in this manner, with such circumstances as before related, and he only; for as for his brethren they hated him, and were glad they had got rid of him; or, "and his father", &c. {f}; his father Isaac, as the Targum of Jonathan, he wept for his son Jacob on account of his trouble and distress; as well as for his grandson Joseph; and so many Jewish writers {g} interpret it; and indeed Isaac was alive at this time, and lived twelve years after; but the former sense seems best.

{e} ynb la "propter filium suum", Grotius, Quistorpius; so Jarchi and Abendana. {f} Kbyw "et flevit", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {g} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Abendana, in loc.

Genesis 37:36

Ver. 36. And the Midianites sold him into Egypt,.... Or Medanites, who sprung from Medan, a brother of Midian, and son of Keturah, Ge 24:2; and were distinct from the Midianites, though they dwelt near them, and were now in company with them, and with the Ishmaelites, and were all concerned in the buying and selling of Joseph, and therefore this is sometimes ascribed to the one, and sometimes to the other:

unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh; the word is sometimes used for an eunuch, but cannot design one here, since Potiphar had a wife, and some say a child; but he either was a chamberlain, or however some officer at court, besides what follows:

[and] captain of the guard; of Pharoah's guard, his bodyguard; some render it, "of the slaughterers" {h}; meaning either cooks or butchers, of whom he was the chief; or rather executioners, he having the charge of prisoners, and the care of executing them, like our sheriffs. Joseph was a most eminent type of Christ, and there are so many things in this chapter which show an agreement between them that cannot be passed over. Joseph was the son of his father's old age, Christ the son of the Ancient of days; Joseph was in a peculiar manner beloved by his father, Christ is the dear son of his Father's love; Jacob made for Joseph a coat of many colours, God prepared a body in human nature for Christ, filled and adorned with the various gifts and graces of the Spirit without measure. Joseph was hated by his brethren, and they could not endure to think he should have the dominion over them. The Jews, of whom Christ was according to the flesh, hated him, and would not have him to reign over them; Joseph was sent by his father a long journey to visit his brethren, and know the welfare of them and their flocks, Christ was sent from heaven to earth to seek and save the lost sheep of the house of Israel; Joseph's brethren, when they saw him come to them, conspired to take away his life, the Jews, who were Christ's own, when he came to them, received him not, but said, this is the heir, let us kill him, and they consulted to take away his life; Joseph was stripped of his clothes, and sold for twenty pieces of silver at the motion of Judah, and Christ, by one of the same name, was sold for thirty pieces of silver, and was stripped of his clothes by the Roman soldiers; Joseph was delivered into the hands of foreigners, and Christ into the hands of the Gentiles; Joseph being reckoned as dead by his father, and yet alive, may be herein an emblem of Christ's death, and his resurrection from the dead.

{h} Myxbjx rv arcimageirw Sept. "principi coquorum", Cartwright; so Josephus, "principi lanionum", Pagninus, Montanus, "capitalium rerum praefecto", Tigurine version.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 38:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 38

This chapter is wholly taken up with matters relating to Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, from whom the Jews have their name, and from whom Christ sprung: it treats of his marriage with a Canaanitess, his children by her, their character and end, Ge 38:1; of his incest with his daughter-in-law, though unknown by him, Ge 38:12; of his resentment against her, when he heard she was with child, and his confusion when he found it was by himself, Ge 38:24; and of the birth of twins by her, named Pharez and Zarah, Ge 38:27.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass at that time,.... This some refer to the time of Jacob's coming from Padanaram into Canaan, soon after he came to Shechem, and before the affair of Dinah; but to this may be objected the marriage of Judah at an age that may seem too early for him, his separation from his brethren, and having a flock of his own to keep, which seems not consistent with the above history: wherefore it is better to connect this with the history of Joseph's being sold into Egypt; for though there were but twenty three years from hence to Jacob's going down into Egypt, Joseph being now seventeen, and was thirty years when he stood before Pharaoh, after which were seven years of plenty, and two of famine, at which time Jacob went thither with two of Judah's grandsons, Hezron and Hamul, Ge 46:12, which make the number mentioned; yet all this may be accounted for; at seventeen, Er, Judah's firstborn, might marry, being the eighteenth from the selling of Joseph, and the marriage of his father; and Onan at the same age, which was the nineteenth; and allowing two or three years for Tamar's staying for Shelah, there was time for her intrigue with Judah, and bearing him two sons at a birth, before the descent of Jacob into Egypt; as for his two grandsons, they may be said to go into Egypt; as Benjamin's sons did in their father's loins, being begotten there during Jacob's abode in it:

that Judah went down from his brethren: not from Dothan to Adullam, as Ben Melech observes, as if this separation was at the time and place of the selling of Joseph; but rather from Hebron thither, after he and his brethren were come home to their father, and had reported and condoled the death of Joseph; and Judah is said to go down, because he went from the north to the south, as Aben Ezra notes; whether this departure from his brethren was owing to a misunderstanding or quarrel between them on account of the affair of Joseph, or on any account, is not certain:

and turned in to a certain Adullamite; an inhabitant of Adullam, a city which afterwards fell to the tribe of Judah, and where was a famous cave, that had its name from thence in David's time; it was ten miles from Eleutheropolis to the east {i}, and eight from Jerusalem to the southwest {k}; hither he turned, or stretched out {l}; that is, his tent, with his flock, which he extended to Adullam, as Ben Melech interprets it, and joined to this man,

whose name [was] Hirah; whom the Jews {m} fabulously report to be the same with Hiram king of Tyre, in the days of David and Solomon, and that he was the husband of Nebuchadnezzar's mother, and lived twelve hundred years.

{i} Jerom de loc. Heb. fol. 88. F. {k} Bunting's Travels, p. 78. {l} jyw "et tentorium fixerat", Schmidt. {m} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 8. 2.

Genesis 38:2

Ver. 2. And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite,.... Onkelos and Jonathan, and so Jarchi and Ben Gersom, interpret it a "merchant", to take off the disgrace of his falling in love with, and marrying a Canaanitish woman, which was forbidden by his ancestors Abraham and Isaac, and which his father avoided:

whose name [was] Shuah; not the name of the woman he married, but the name of her father, as appears from Ge 38:12; and who very probably was a man of note in the country:

and he took her; to be his wife, with her and her father's consent, not by force:

and went in unto her; cohabited with her as his wife.

Genesis 38:3

Ver. 3. And she conceived, and bare a son, and he called his name Er. Which signifies a "watchman": but the reason of the name given by the Targum of Jonathan is,

"because he should die without children;"

as if it was the same with Ariri, "childless".

Genesis 38:4

Ver. 4. And she conceived again, and bare a son,.... As soon as she well could:

and she called his name Onan; the first son Judah gave the name to, but his wife named this, so called from grief or sorrow; the reason of it, according to the above Targum, was,

"because his father would mourn for him;"

he was a Benoni, see Ge 35:18, whose sin and immature death caused sorrow.

Genesis 38:5

Ver. 5. And she conceived, and bare a son,.... A third son:

and called his name Shelah; which signifies tranquil, quiet, peaceable and prosperous, and is a word that comes from the same root as Shiloh, that famous son of Judah that should spring from him, Ge 49:10 the reason of the name, as given by the Targum, is,

"because her husband forgot her:"

and she was at Chezib when she bare him; Chezib is the name of a place, by some taken to be the same with Achzib or Ecdippe, now Zib, see **Mic 1:14**; it seems to be a city in the tribe of Judah; and Jerom {n} says, in his time there was a desert place of this name near Adullam, on the borders of Eleutheropolis; the reason of her being here at the time of her delivery, and of this circumstance being related, is not certain.

{n} De loc. Heb. fol. 90. E.

Genesis 38:6

Ver. 6. And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn,.... Chose one for him, and presented her to him for his liking, whom he approving of married:

whose name [was] Tamar; which signifies a "palm tree": the Targum of Jonathan says, she was the daughter of Shem; but it is altogether improbable that a daughter of his should be living at this time, and young enough to bear children: it is much more probable that she was daughter of Levi, Judah's brother, as an Arabic writer {o} asserts; but it is more likely still that she was the daughter of a Canaanite, who was living in the same place, though his name is not mentioned,
Ge 38:11.

{o} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 16.

Genesis 38:7

Ver. 7. And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord,.... That is, exceedingly wicked, as this phrase signifies,
Ge 13:13, was guilty of some very heinous sin, but what is not mentioned; according to the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi, it was the same with his brother Onan's, Ge 38:9, which it is suggested he committed, lest his wife should prove with child, and lose her beauty; but if it had been the same with his, it would have been expressed as well as his. An Arabic writer {p} says, that he cohabited with his wife not according to the course of nature, but in the "sodomitical" way:

and the Lord slew him; by his immediate hand, striking him dead at once, as Ananias and Sapphira were stricken, **Ac 5:5**; or by sending some distemper, which quickly carried him off, as a token of his displeasure at his sin.

{p} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 16.

Genesis 38:8

Ver. 8. And Judah said unto Onan,.... Some time after his brother's death:

go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her; Moses here uses a word not common for marriage, but which was peculiar to the marrying of a brother's wife according to a law given in his time: it appears to have been a custom before, and which the patriarch might be directed to by the Lord, in such a case when a brother died, and left no issue, for the sake of multiplication of seed, according to the divine promise, and which in the time of Moses passed into a law, see De 25:5;

and raise up seed unto thy brother; that might bear his name, and enjoy his inheritance. For this law or custom was partly political, to continue the paternal inheritance in the family, and partly typical, to direct to Christ the firstborn among many brethren, **Ro 8:29**, who in all things was to have the preeminence, **Col 1:18**; and this was not taken from the Canaanites, among whom Judah now was, but from the ancient patriarchs, which they had no doubt from divine revelation, and was taught in the school of Shem, and handed down from father to son; for as to this being a law among the Egyptians in later times, and which continued to the days of Zeno Augustus {q}, it is most likely they took it from the Jews.

{q} Justinian. Cod l. 5. tit. 6. leg. 8.

Genesis 38:9

Ver. 9. And Onan knew that the seed should not be his,.... Should not be called a son of his, but a son of his brother Er; this is to be understood only of the firstborn; all the rest of the children born afterwards were reckoned the children of the real parent of them; this shows this was a custom in use in those times, and well known, and was not a peculiar case:

and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife; to cohabit with her, as man and wife, he having married her according to his father's direction:

that he spilled [it] on the ground, lest he should give his seed to his brother: lest his brother's wife he had married should conceive by him, and bear a son that should be called his brother's, and inherit his estate; and this is the sin, which from him is called Onania, a sin condemned by the light of nature, as well as by the word of God, and very prejudicial to mankind, as well as displeasing to God, as follows:

Genesis 38:10

Ver. 10. And the thing which he did displeased the Lord,.... Being done out of envy to his brother, and through want of affection to the memory of his name; and it may be out of covetousness to get his estate into his own hands, and especially as it frustrated the end of such an usage of marrying a brother's wife;

which appears to be according to the will of God, since it afterwards became a known law of his; and it was the more displeasing, as it was not only a check upon the multiplication of Abraham's seed as promised, but since the Messiah was to come from Judah. This was doing all to hinder it that lay in his power:

wherefore he slew him also; in like manner as he had slain his brother, Ge 38:7.

Genesis 38:11

Ver. 11. Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law,.... After the death of his two sons, who had successively married her:

remain a widow at thy father's house till Shelah my son be grown: who was his third and youngest son, though perhaps not more than a year younger than Onan; but he might not choose he should marry so soon as his brethren had done, for a reason following: according to the custom and law of marrying a brother's wife, who died without issue, she in course was to be the wife of Shelah; since if there were ever so many brothers, they all married such an one in turn, until there was issue by one of them, see Mt 22:25; as Judah knew this, he pretended at least to give her to his son for wife, only would have it put off till he was at age of maturity, or was more grown; and therefore desires her to keep herself unmarried to any other person until that time; and advises her to go to her father's house, and continue there, which he did to prevent any intrigues between them, lest his son should be tempted to marry her sooner than it was his will, and she should solicit him to it:

for he said; not to Tamar, but within himself:

lest peradventure he die also as his brethren [did]; by which it seems, that he was ignorant of the true cause of their death, but thought it was either owing to their marrying too young, or to something in the woman unfortunate and unhappy; and he might not really intend he should marry her at all, only made use of an excuse for the present:

and Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house; she had dwelt in Judah's house in the time of her two husbands, but now by his advice she removed to her own father's house; which very probably was in the same place, and her father yet living, who received her, and with whom she continued, see Le 22:13.

Genesis 38:12

Ver. 12. And in process of time the daughter of Shuah, Judah's wife, died,.... Shuah was his wife's father, who was a Canaanite, Ge 38:2; what her name was is not certain, nor the exact time of her death; it was some time after Tamar was sent home to her father's house; and some take the death of Judah's wife to be a correction and reproof to him for his ill usage of his daughter-in-law, in neglecting to give her to his son, or not designing to do it at all:

and Judah was comforted: he mourned awhile for the death of his wife, according to the custom of the country, and of those times, and then he laid aside the tokens of it, and his sorrow wore off, and he appeared in company and conversed with his friends:

and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath; a city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:57, said {s} to be six miles from Adullam, where Judah lived; here he had his flocks of sheep, at least this was judged a proper place for the shearing and washing of them, and this time of the year a proper time for it, at which it was usual to have a feast; and Judah went up to his shearers, not only to see how they went on with their work, but with this view to make an entertainment for them, see 1Sa 25:3:

he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite; he took him along with him for a companion, and to partake of the entertainment.

{s} Bunting's Travels, p. 78.

Genesis 38:13

Ver. 13. And it was told Tamar,.... By some of her neighbours, or by some of Judah's family;

saying, behold, thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep; which might be told her as an indifferent thing, without any design in it; but she took notice of it, and it gave her an opportunity she wanted.

Genesis 38:14

Ver. 14. And she put her widow's garments off from her,.... By which it appears that in those times and countries it was usual for widows to have a different apparel from others, especially in the time of their mourning, as it has been since in other nations, and with us at this day, and which is commonly called "the widow's weed":

and covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself; in it, or in a cloak, or some such like garment, which the Arabs now call "hykes"; this she did that she might not be known, and not that she might appear as an harlot; for it was common to all women in those countries to go abroad with their veils: and on the contrary, whatever might be the custom here in those early times, which cannot be said what it was; in other countries, and in later times, harlots have been used to appear unveiled {t} and open to the view of all; though Juvenal {u} represents the Empress Messalina as covering herself with a night hood, and hiding her black hair under a yellow bonnet or peruke, that she might appear as an harlot going to the stews: and so the Arabs now, their whores as well as other women, veil themselves in the streets, but in Egypt they are used to sit at the door, or walk in the streets unveiled {w}:

and sat in an open place, which [is] in the way to Timnath; the Septuagint version renders it, "at the gates of Aenan"; some take it to be the name of a place, and suppose it had its name, as Aben Ezra observes, from two fountains of water that were in the way, like a door, through which Judah passed when he returned home: so Philo the Jew {x} reads, Ge 38:21; "where is the harlot which was in Ainan by the way?" and Jerom {y} speaks of Aenan as you go to Timnath, now a desert place, and near to the great village Timnath, which is between Aelia and Diospolis (i.e. Jerusalem and Lydia), and there is a fountain in the above place, from whence it has its name: the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"in the division of the ways where all eyes look;"

for the word has the signification of eyes as well as of fountains; and seems to design a place where two ways or more met, which were not only open and obvious to every eye, but required persons to make use of their eyes, and look about them, and consider which way they should go; and where perhaps a way mark was set up for them to look to, to direct them; and here Tamar placed herself as harlots used to do: hence Catullus {z} calls common prostitutes "semitariae moechae", pathway whores; and on the contrary, such an one as was a secret whore, and less exposed, Horace {a} calls "devium scortum", an whore that was at some distance from the public road, not so common as others: so in the Apocryph,

"The women also with cords about them, sitting in the ways, burn bran for perfume: but if any of them, drawn by some that passeth by, lie with him, she reproacheth her fellow, that she was not thought as worthy as herself, nor her cord broken." (Baruch 6:43)

whorish women are represented as sitting in the ways and by the roadside, girt with cords (of bulrushes, and so easily broken), to be picked up by men as they passed by; referring to what Herodotus {b} reports of the women in the temple of Venus at Babylon. This method Tamar took:

for she saw that Shelah was grown: was at least at the age of her former husbands when, married, if not older: this might be two or three years after his brother's death: for it was in process of time, or when there had been a multiplication of days after this, that Judah's wife died, and now his mourning for her was over, Ge 38:12;

and she was not given unto him for wife: as he had given her reason to expect, Ge 38:11, and as was usually done.

{t} Alex. ab Alexand. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 18. {u} Satyr. 6. {w} Pitts's Account of the Mahometans, p. 56, 67. and Norden's Travels in Egypt, vol. 2. p. 47. {x} De profugis, p. 471. {y} De loc. Heb. fol. 87. F. G. {z} Epigram, 35. 16. {a} Carmin. l. 2. Ode 11. {b} Clio sive, l. 1. c. 199.

Genesis 38:15

Ver. 15. When Judah saw her, he thought her [to be] an harlot,.... By her posture and the place she was in:

because she had covered her face; with her veil, that he did not know her; for this is not given as a reason why he took her to be an harlot; the reason of this was, because she sat in the public road; but having covered her face he could not discern who she was, and therefore, from the other circumstance, concluded that she was an harlot, and sat there to prostitute herself to any that passed by.

Genesis 38:16

Ver. 16. And he turned unto her by the way,.... Which led to her; he turned out of the way in which he was to that where she sat; and very probably it was at some little distance from the way, and therefore he turned aside to it, his lust towards her being excited at the sight of her; perhaps he left his friend Hirah the Adullamite, and sent him on his way, while he committed the following crime:

and said, go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; that is, lie with her:

for he knew not that she [was] his daughter in law; or otherwise, it is suggested by the historian, he would not have offered such a thing to her; but though this may excuse him from wilful incest, yet not from fornication; for he took her to be an harlot, and however knew she was not his wife, and whom he ought not to have had any concern with in such a manner:

and she said, what wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me? perhaps she said this with a very low voice, that he might not know her by it; and she behaved like an harlot by requiring an hire, on condition of which she consented: she knew Judah though he did not know her, and therefore cannot be excused from wilful incest: some indeed extenuate her crime, by supposing that she, though a Canaanite, was become a proselyte to the true religion by marrying into Judah's family, and had knowledge of the Messiah being to be born of Jacob's line; and therefore was desirous of being the mother or ancestor at least of that great Person, and so took this method; that since she could not have the son for her husband, was desirous of enjoying the father, not for the gratification of her lust, but in hopes of the promised seed; and accordingly she has a place in the genealogy of the Messiah, **Mt 1:3**.

Genesis 38:17

Ver. 17. And he said, I will send [thee] a kid from the flock,.... Either from Timnath, where his flock was shearing, or rather from Adullam, where he lived; since it is probable he was now returning from Timnath, where he had been feasting and making merry with his shearers, and so in a disposition to commit such an action:

and she said, wilt thou give [me] a pledge, till thou send [it]? she made no objection to the hire or present, only required a pawn, or security for it till she had it; and this was her view indeed in asking an hire that she might have something to produce, should she prove with child by him, to convince him by whom it was.

Genesis 38:18

Ver. 18. And he said, what pledge shall I give thee?.... Being willing to part with anything for the gratification of his lust:

and she said, thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that [is] in thine hand; she asks all these, that if one should be lost, or fail of being sufficient proof, the other might: the first of these the Septuagint version renders, "thy ring"; the ring upon his finger, which had a seal on it, and was the signet of his right hand; so Onkelos and Ben Melech: the second word seems not so well rendered, since "bracelets" were wore by women and not men: Jarchi takes it to be a garment with which he was covered; so Ben Melech and the Targum, a cloak, which is not likely, that she should desire him to strip off his clothes: it seems to be either a covering of his head, a wrap of linen such as the Turks wear, or else a handkerchief he had in his pocket; and the staff in his hand was either his walking staff or a shepherd's crook or staff:

and he gave [it] her, all the above things as a pledge:

and came in unto her; not on the public road, but in some private place at some distance, to which they retired. Maimonides {c} says, before the law was given, if a man met a woman in the street, and he and she agreed, he gave her hire, and he lay with her, and went away, and such an one was called "Kedeshah", a harlot, the word used afterwards for Tamar:

and she conceived by him; she proved with child upon it.

{c} Hilchot lshot, c. 1. sect. 4.

Genesis 38:19

Ver. 19. And she arose and went away,.... To her father's house immediately, as soon as ever she had parted with Judah; and lest she should be found by the person that would be sent with the kid, and be discovered, she made all the haste she could:

and laid by her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood; that it might not be known or suspected that she had been abroad.

Genesis 38:20

Ver. 20. And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite,.... Who went with him to Timnath, and was privy to all this wickedness, and kept the secret; but would have acted the more friendly and faithful part had he dissuaded him from it: him he employed to carry the kid he had promised, and not any of his servants, for the greater secrecy: and

to receive [his] pledge from the woman's hand; his signet, bracelets, and staff, or whatever they were:

but he found her not; she was gone from the place where she sat, or where she retired to with Judah.

Genesis 38:21

Ver. 21. Then he asked the men of that place,.... Or "of her place" {d}, of the woman's place, supposing that she dwelt somewhere thereabout:

saying, where [is] the harlot that [was] openly by the wayside? that sat there very publicly some little time ago: the word for "harlot" {e} comes from another, which signifies to sanctify or separate to holy uses; and harlots were so called, either by an antiphrasis, by way of contradiction, being unholy; or because, as Jarchi observes, they were separated and destined to whoredom; or because they were such as were devoted to Venus, and the worshippers of her, and prostitutes in her temple, and in the temples of other Heathen deities; but it is questionable whether such practices as yet were used;

and they said, there was no harlot in this [place]; they had not known any harlot to frequent that place lately, and Tamar sat there so small a time as not to have been observed by them.

{d} hmqm yvna "viros loci ejus, scil mulieris", Piscator, Schimdt. {e} hvdqh

Genesis 38:22

Ver. 22. And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her,.... That is, the Adullamite returned to him, and informed him that he could not find the harlot to whom he was sent to deliver the kid and receive the pledge, after he had made the strictest inquiry for her he could:

and also the men of the place said, [that] there was no harlot in this [place]; by which it appears, that near the place where Tamar was, there was a town or city, and which was so free from such infamous persons, that there was not one in it that was known to be of such a character, at least, that in such a public manner exposed herself: it would be well if the same could be said of many other places.

Genesis 38:23

Ver. 23. And Judah said, let her take [it] to her,.... The pledge, and make no further inquiry after her;

lest we be shamed; Judah for committing fornication, which even among Heathens, at least at that time of day, was reckoned a shameful action; and be laughed at also, for committing such a pledge to an whore, who had tricked him out of it; and his friend Hirah for conniving at the sin, and being employed on such an errand:

behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her: who could be a witness for him, if there should be any occasion, that he was faithful to his promise.

Genesis 38:24

Ver. 24. And it came to pass about three months after,.... The above affair happened, and when the pregnancy of Tamar began to be somewhat visible, as it does in women with child about that time:

that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot: her being with child being observed by some of the family, or her neighbours, and knowing that she did not cohabit with Shelah, who, according to custom, ought to have been her husband, concluded that she had had a criminal conversation with some other person, which they were officious enough to report to Judah:

and also, behold, she [is] with child by whoredom; which was judged to be a plain proof and evidence that she had played the harlot:

and Judah said, bring her forth, and let her be burnt: not that Judah can be thought to be a civil magistrate in a Canaanitish and Heathen city where he sojourned, and as such pronounced this sentence on her at once, or even had the power of life and death in his own family; and besides Tamar was not in his, but in her own father's house: but the sense seems to be, that as he was a man of credit and esteem in the neighbourhood, and had an influence and interest in it; he moved that she might be brought out of her father's house, and take her trial before the civil magistrates, and be committed to prison until she was delivered, for it would have been barbarous, and contrary to the law and light of nature, to have burnt her when quick with child, and then indeed to be burnt to death, according to the usage of this country; and as we find adultery in later times was punished with this kind of death, even among Heathens, Jer 29:22; as it was in Egypt in the times of Sesostris the second {f}; so Salaethus, prince of Croton in Italy, made a law that adulterers should be burnt alive, as Lucian {g} relates; as did also Macrinus the emperor, that those that were guilty of adultery should be burnt alive together, their bodies joined to each other {h}: and this criminal action of Tamar was judged adultery, because she was, of right, and according to a custom or law then in use, the wife of Shelah: the Targum of Jonathan intimates, she was judged deserving of this death, because the daughter of a priest; the same law obtaining among the patriarchs as did in the times of Moses,
Le 21:9; and some, as Jarchi relates, say she was the daughter of Shem {i}, the same with Melchizedek, priest of the most high God: one reason why Judah was in haste to have the sentence pronounced on her, and as soon as could be executed, was not only the disgrace she brought upon his family, but that she might be dispatched, and so his son Shelah freed from being obliged to marry her, which he did not care he should, and was glad of this opportunity to prevent it.

{f} Diodor. Sicul. l. 1. p. 54. {g} "Pro mercede conductis". {h} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 1. {i} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 4. 1.

Genesis 38:25

Ver. 25. When she [was] brought forth,.... From her father's house, not to the place of execution, or in order to be burnt, but to the court of judicature, in order to take tier trial:

she sent to her father in law, saying, by the man whose these [are, am] I with child; she sent a messenger to him, and by him the signet, bracelets, and staff, be they what they may, she had received from him as a pledge for the kid he promised her; and ordered the messenger to say, at the same time he showed him these things, that she was with child by the person to whom they belonged; which was a very modest way of laying it to his charge, and yet very striking and convincing:

and she said; by the messenger she sent:

discern, I pray thee, whose [are] these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff; which were the things given her as a pledge till she received the kid, the hire she was to have for his lying with her.

Genesis 38:26

Ver. 26. And Judah acknowledged [them],.... He knew them, and owned them to be his:

and said, she hath been more righteous than I; he means, not with respect to the sin of uncleanness committed by them, in which she was the greatest criminal; she sat not only in the way to tempt him to it, but she knew who he was, and wilfully committed incest with him; whereas he thought and knew of nothing else but simple fornication; but with respect to the affairs in connection between them: she had on her part, according to his direction, kept herself a widow, in expectation of being given to his son Shelah for a wife; but he had not made good his part, he had not fulfilled his promise, he had neglected to give her to his son, which he ought to have done, according to the usage of those times, and as he had suggested to her he would; and his neglect of this had been the cause and occasion of this criminal conversation between them; and this is the reason he himself gives of her being more righteous than he:

because I gave her not to Shelah my son; as he ought to have done, and as he promised he would:

and he knew her again no more; in a carnal way; he did not repeat the sin, but abstained from it having, no doubt, true repentance for it; though Jarchi observes, that some interpret the words, and Ben Melech says some copies read, "he did not cease to know her"; but took her for his wife and married her, which is supposed to be as justifiable as other things done before the law of Moses; but this is not likely, and it looks as if he never married any wife after, or, if he did, had no more children, since we read of no other but Shelah, and the twins he had by Tamar; and it seems as if Shelah also did not marry Tamar upon this, such an incest being committed with her, since he appears to have had children by another woman, Nu 26:20.

Genesis 38:27

Ver. 27. And it came to pass in the time of her travail,.... When her time to bring forth was come, and her pains were on her, and her midwife with her:

that, behold, twins [were] in her womb; which the midwife could discover before the birth of either.

Genesis 38:28

Ver. 28. And it came to pass when she travailed,.... Her birth throes came strong and quick upon her:

that [the one] put out [his] hand; which showed that she was like to have a difficult and dangerous time of it; that the birth was not like to be according to the usual and natural order, which may be considered as a correction for her sin:

and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, this came out first; she tied this to his wrist, that she might know whose hand it was, and so which was the firstborn; which, to know was a matter of consequence, since to the firstborn there were some special and peculiar privileges.

Genesis 38:29

Ver. 29. And it came to pass as he drew back his hand,.... Into the "uterus" again;

that, behold, his brother came out; out of his mother's womb, and so was properly born first:

and she said; either Tamar, or rather, her midwife:

how hast thou broken forth? it was astonishing to her how it could be, having never met with the like in her practice before; she could not imagine how it was possible for him to come forth first, when his brother lay in the way of him, and nearest the birth, as appeared by his putting out his hand:

[this] breach [be] upon thee; if any damage comes either to the mother or to the brother, and so carries in it the nature of an imprecation; or rather, that the memory of so strange an event might be preserved, she imposed a name on him that should continue it:

therefore his name was called Pharez: or "therefore he called", &c. {k}; Judah called his name Pharez, agreeably to what the midwife had related. From him, in a line of succession, sprang the Messiah, the Pharez or breaker, **Mic 2:13**; for the sake of which the whole history of this chapter seems to be recorded, **Mt 1:3**.

{k} arqyw "vocavit", Pagninus, Montanus; "ideoque vocavit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Genesis 38:30

Ver. 30. And afterward came out his brother that had the scarlet thread upon his hand,.... By which it was known that he so far came out first; which confirms the remarkable birth of his brother, who notwithstanding got the start of him:

and his name was called Zarah; not from "rising", or his coming forth like the rising sun, as is usually observed; but rather from his return, or drawing back his hand, and as it were returning to his mother's womb; and so, according to Hillerus {l}, Zarah, by a transposition of letters, comes from rzx "Chazar", to return: but Jarchi thinks he had his name from the refulgent appearance of the scarlet thread on his wrist.

{l} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 372.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 39:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 39

In this chapter the history returns to Joseph again, who being brought down to Egypt was sold to Potiphar, with whom he found favour, and who set him over his house, the Lord prospering everything in his hands, Ge 39:1; and being a young man of a comely aspect, his mistress lusted after him, and tempted him to lie with her from time to time, but he as constantly refused it, as being both ingratitude to his master, and a sin against God, Ge 39:7; at a certain time they being alone in the house, she renewed her solicitations, and laid hold on his garment, which he left in her hand and fled, Ge 39:11; upon which she called to her servants without, and accused Joseph of an ill design upon her, and reported the same to her husband when he came home, Ge 39:13; upon which his master put him into prison, but he found favour also with the keeper of it, who committed the prisoners and all things relative to them into his hands, Ge 39:20.

Ver. 1. And Joseph was brought down to Egypt,.... By the Ishmaelites, Ge 37:28; as in a following clause:

and Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian; as his name also shows, which signifies the fruit of Pot or Phut, that is, the son or grandson of one of that name {m}; which might be common in Egypt, since it was the name of a son of Ham, Ge 10:6, from whom the land of Egypt is called the land of Ham, Ps 105:23; of this man and his offices, See Gill on "Ge 37:36";

he bought him: that is, "Joseph",

of the hands of the Ishmaelites, who had brought him down thither; what they gave for him we know, but what they sold him for to Potiphar is not said; no doubt they got a good price for him, and his master had a good bargain too, as appears by what follows.

{m} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 671, 672.

Genesis 39:2

Ver. 2. And the Lord was with Joseph,.... Blessing him with his gracious presence, with discoveries of his love, and communion with himself, though destitute of the means of grace and ordinances of worship he enjoyed in his father's house; favouring him with bodily health, and protecting him from all evils and enemies:

and he was a prosperous man; in worldly things, and which was owing to the presence of God with him, and his blessing on him:

and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian; he continued there, and did not attempt to make his escape; or his employment lay chiefly, if not altogether, in the house, and herein he was prosperous, and continued to be so as long as he was in it; the Jews {n} say, he remained here twelve months. Near the pyramids built in the neighbourhood of Memphis, as is affirmed unanimously by the ancients, to this day is shown a hill, on which they say the house of Potiphar was built, whose servant the patriarch Joseph was, and some of the rubbish of the bricks are yet to be seen {o}.

{n} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 2. p. 5. {o} Jablonski de Terra Goshen, Dissert. 6. sect. 6.

Genesis 39:3

Ver. 3. And his master saw that the Lord [was] with him,.... He knew nothing of the spiritual and gracious presence of God that was with him, he was no judge of that; but he perceived by the ingenuity of his mind, by his ready and speedy learning the Egyptian language, by his dexterity in business, and by the prudence and faithfulness with which he did everything, that he was highly favoured by the divine Being, and had great endowments bestowed upon him, and was an extraordinary person for his age:

and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand; and though Potiphar might have no knowledge of the true Jehovah, whose name he uses, yet he might have a notion of a supreme Being, and that all outward prosperity was owing to him; and knowing Joseph to be an Hebrew, as it is plain his wife did, Ge 39:14; and Jehovah to be the God of the Hebrews, he imputes all the prosperity that attended Joseph and his services unto his God.

Genesis 39:4

Ver. 4. And Joseph found grace in his sight,.... In the sight of his master, as he did in the sight of God, he had favour both with God and man; his master had a high esteem of him, and a great value for him, and showed him much kindness and respect:

and he served him; readily, willingly, cheerfully, and faithfully; or he served him personally; his master took such a liking to him, that he selected him from the rest of his servants to wait on his person, and to be what we now call a "valet de chambre", whose business was to dress and undress him, to wait upon him at table, &c.

and he made him overseer over his house, and all [that] he had he put into his hand; that is, after he had served him some time, in the capacity of a valet, he advanced him, and made him the head servant, or steward of his house, and committed all his business, cash, and accounts to his care, and put all his servants under him.

Genesis 39:5

Ver. 5. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had,.... How long he was in this office is not certain; there must be some time for the following observation; and during all the time he was in it, it was easily discerned,

that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; that is, much more than before; everything under his hands succeeded before, but now much more abundantly; Potiphar's family was blessed with health, his substance increased, he grew rich and wealthy, and abounded with all good things:

and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field; his domestic affairs prospered, his fields brought forth plentifully, his cattle were fruitful and stood well; every thing belonging to him within doors and without happily succeeded, through the blessing of God upon it, and all for Joseph's sake.

Genesis 39:6

Ver. 6. And he left all he had in Joseph's hand;.... His master took no care of anything, but committed all to him, trusted him with his money and with his accounts, and with the management of all his affairs; such confidence did he put in him;

and he knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat; some understand this of Joseph, that though he had all his master's substance in his hands, yet he made no use of it for himself, enjoyed nothing of it but the bread he ate; and it is the observation of a Jewish writer {p}, that he ate nothing but dry bread, and yet, like Daniel and his companions, was well favoured and of a goodly countenance, as in the next clause: but it is better to interpret it of Joseph's master, who was so satisfied with Joseph's good management and fidelity, that he never concerned himself about his affairs, how they stood or what money he had in his house, or what effects he was possessed of; all that he regarded was his food, and perhaps he knew not what that would be till it came to his table; though some take the expression in this light, that he gave himself unto a luxurious life, regarding nothing but eating and drinking, and taking his pleasure, having so good and faithful a servant: but according to Aben Ezra the sense is, that Joseph had all committed to his care, excepting the bread, or making provision of that for him and his family, which he might not touch being an Hebrew, and had all things common with him but that, see Ge 43:32; which is a much better sense than what the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi give, who interpret bread of his wife, whom only he reserved for himself of all things in his house;

and Joseph was [a] goodly [person], and well favoured; being like his mother, as Aben Ezra observes, see Ge 29:17; this is remarked for the sake of what follows, and as leading on to that.

{p} R. Abraham Sepharadi apud Munster. in loc.

Genesis 39:7

Ver. 7. And it came to pass after these things,.... After he was the overseer of his house; in which office, after he had been some time, so it was that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; he being a handsome young man, caught her eye, and that her heart, and led her on to lust after him, and frequently fed her eyes with amorous glances at him;

and at length being fired with lust, and having an opportunity,

she said, to him, in a bold and impudent manner, in plain words, having given signs and hints, and dropped expressions tending thereto before, as it is probable:

lie with me; now directly, there being both opportunity and convenience, perhaps her chamber was near: this was a very great temptation to a young man in single life and living well, from his mistress, who had it greatly in her power to make him should he consent, or ruin him should he deny.

Genesis 39:8

Ver. 8. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife,.... Reasoning with her about the evil nature of the crime she tempted him to, which to commit would be ingratitude, as well as injury to his master, and a sin against God; by which it appears that Joseph was a partaker of the grace of God, and that this was in strong exercise at this time, by which he was preserved from the temptation he was beset with:

behold, my master wotteth not what [is] with me in the house; what goods or money are in it:

and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand: such confidence did he repose in him, wherefore to do such an injury to him as to commit adultery with his wife, would be making a sad return, and acting a most ungrateful part for such favour shown him.

Genesis 39:9

Ver. 9. [There is] none greater in this house than I,.... Not any of the servants of the house, he was the chief of them, who had all the rest under him; or rather, "he himself is not greater {q} in this house than I"; that is, his master was not greater than he: he had a greater propriety in the house and the things of it, and he had the original power and authority in it, but had not a greater use of it; Joseph had authority over all the servants, and everything in the house at his command, and the free use of everything his master had, excepting what follows:

neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou [art] his wife; and is a reason not only why his master retained her for his own use, but why he should not touch her, and why she should not solicit him to it:

how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? the words are emphatic in the original, "this! this wickedness! this great one!" adultery was reckoned a great sin among all nations, and this, had Joseph committed it, would have been greatly aggravated by the favours his master had conferred upon him; and not only a sin against himself, his soul and body, and against his master, but, above all, a sin against God, contrary to his holy nature, revealed will, and righteous law; all which prevailed upon Joseph to refuse the offer made him, which he could not comply with, in honour or with a good conscience.

{q} lwdg wnnya "non ipse magnus", Montanus; "ne ipse quidem est me major", Junius & Tremellius, Munster, Fagius, Drusius, Mercerus, Cartwright.

Genesis 39:10

Ver. 10. And it came to pass, that as she spake to Joseph day by day,.... Continually, incessantly, hoping in time to prevail upon him to comply with her desires; so that the temptation, as it was strong, and very ensnaring, it was urgent, and frequent, and pressed with great importunity; which required the more grace and spiritual strength to resist:

that he hearkened not unto her; not only did not yield to her, but would not give her an hearing, at least as little as possible he could, lest he should be overcome by her persuasions:

to lie by her, [or] to be with her; she might tempt him to lie by her, if he would not lie with her; or to lie, as Aben Ezra interprets it, in a place near her, in a chamber next to hers, in hopes by degrees to gain her point; but he would not yield to either, nor to be in her company, and have any conversation with her, at least as little as possible, that he might not be in the way of temptation, and be led into it; though these phrases may all signify carnal copulation with her, which was what his mistress solicited, and he would not hearken to her in, and comply with her.

Genesis 39:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass about this time,.... About a week, or a month, or rather a year, as Aben Ezra thinks, after she first began her solicitations to him. According to Josephus {r}, it was a public festival, at which women used to attend; but she excused herself, pretending illness; and so Jarchi takes it to be some noted day at the idol's temple, to which all used to go; but she pretended she was sick, and could not go, knowing that Joseph would not be there, but at home, and therefore judged this a fit opportunity to attack him once more: and so it was,

that [Joseph] went into the house to do his business: to inspect the accounts, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase it, and settle them:

and [there was] none of the men of the house there within; being all gone to the public festival, or however there were none in that part of the house where Joseph was.

{r} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 4. sect. 3.

Genesis 39:12

Ver. 12. And she caught him by his garment, saying, lie with me,.... It is very probable that before this time, as soon as ever she began to speak to him, he got away as fast as he could, and would not hear her; wherefore she now laid hold on his garment, in order to detain him, that she might have time to parley with him, and so prevail:

and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out; it was his outward loose garment she laid hold on, out of which he slipped himself, and so got clear of her, and ran away, and got out of the house as fast as he could: this he did, because he would not struggle with his mistress for his garment, which no doubt by his strength he could have got from her; and partly lest he should by handling of her have carnal desires excited in him, and so be overcome with her temptation.

Genesis 39:13

Ver. 13. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand,.... And so all hopes of succeeding in her addresses to him were over:

and [he] was fled forth; into the streets, or into some out house, where business was carried on by servants under him.

Genesis 39:14

Ver. 14. That she called unto the men of her house,.... Of that part of the house which belonged to her; her eunuchs that waited upon her, or that were in another part of the home, at some distance:

and spake unto them; when they came to her:

saying, see, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us: she means her husband, whom through contempt, and in her passion, she names not, having lost all affection for him, as her addresses to Joseph showed; and so the Targum of Jonathan supplies it,

"your master hath brought, &c."

and Joseph she calls an Hebrew by way of reproach, and with a view to set her servants against him; who before this might not have any great regard to him through envy at him, for the favours he enjoyed, and the authority he had; and because he prevented their doing wrong things to serve themselves, and hurt their master: and holding up his garment in her hand, which they knew full well, bid them look at it, and observe, that this was the issue of his Being brought into the house by their master; that though it was not with such an intention, which can hardly be thought to be her sense, yet this was the event of it; an attempt to abuse, vitiate, and corrupt her, and so bring contempt upon the whole family, and expose them to the scorn and mockery of men, for their mistress to be abused by a base foreigner: she explains herself more fully by saying,

he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice; both of them lies; for it was she that solicited him to lie with her, and not he; nor did she cry out at all; and if she did, how came it she was not heard by them, as well as when she called unto them; thus her impure love was turned into hatred, which put her upon framing lies and calumnies; and which has been also done in cases similar to this {s}, as Sthenobaea against Bellerophon.

{s} Vid. Juvenal Satyr. 10. Apollodorum de Deorum Origin. l. 2. p. 70.

Genesis 39:15

Ver. 15. And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried,.... He attempting to ravish her, as she would have it understood, but afraid, lest upon her outcry those that were in the house should come in to her assistance, and seize on him:

that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out: but why should he strip himself of his garment, and leave that behind him? he might have fled with it.

Genesis 39:16

Ver. 16. And she laid up his garment by her,.... As a proof of what she laid to his charge, and as a testimony against him:

until her lord came home; or until his lord came home, for the pronoun refers to Joseph, and so Jarchi interprets it; who either was gone a journey, or gone to court that day, being an officer of Pharaoh's, or to the public place where the festival was kept that day, if it was such an one.

Genesis 39:17

Ver. 17. And she spake unto him according to these words,.... When her husband came home she related to him the above affair, according to the purport of the above words, and in much the same manner, and to the same import as she had to the men of her house:

saying, the Hebrew servant which thou hast brought unto us came in unto me to mock me; in an obscene manner, using filthy words and actions, contrary to the rules of chastity as well as good manners; or, in other words, to lie with her, which she pretended he solicited.

Genesis 39:18

Ver. 18. And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried,.... For help from the servants, and frightened at his insolent attempt:

that he left his garment with me, and fled out; and then she brought it forth, and showed him it.

Genesis 39:19

Ver. 19. And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife,.... The story she related concerning Joseph, which was her own invention, and a lie:

which she spake unto him, saying, after this manner did thy servant to me; attempting to violate her chastity, as she pretended:

that his wrath was kindled; that is, against Joseph, without strictly examining her words, which they would not bear, her story being but ill put together, and without hearing Joseph's defence.

Genesis 39:20

Ver. 20. And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison,.... Which was in or adjoining to his house, Ge 40:3; of himself he had power to do this, as the captain of the guard; and as he was the chief of the executioners, as some take his office to be, it is much he did not in his passion deliver him up into their hands to put him to death at once; but it may be through the great respect he had had for Joseph, which was not wholly extinguished by this impeachment of him; and especially if he heard Joseph's apology for himself before he committed him, his passion might subside a little, though for the credit of his wife he might take this step; or however things were so overruled by the providence of God, who has the hearts of all men in his hands, that he should do what he did. The word for "prison" has the signification of roundness, and may be rendered the "round house" {t}, or "round tower"; and some Jewish writers, as Mercer observes, take it to be in this form, that it was made under ground, and at the top of it was an hole which let in light, and at which they went into it. Aben Ezra is at a loss to say whether it is an Hebrew or Egyptian word, and inclines to the latter, because he thinks it is explained in the next clause:

a place where the king's prisoners [were] bound; such as were guilty of high treason, or however of high crimes and misdemeanours against him; and so was a prison in which men were strictly kept and used hardly, as was Joseph at first, as appears from Ps 105:18:

and he was there in the prison; he continued there, some of the Jewish writers say {u} ten years, others twelve {w}; and so long he must be, if he was but one year in Potiphar's house; for there were thirteen years between his being sold into Egypt, and his appearance before Pharaoh; he was seventeen when he was sold, and he was thirty when he stood before Pharaoh, being took out of prison, see Ge 37:2; but it is more likely that he was a longer time in Potiphar's house, and a lesser time in prison.

{t} rhoh tyb "rotundam turrim", Junius & Tremellius; "domum rotundi carceris", Piscator: "round house", Ainsworth; "vox Hebraea significat carcerem rotundum in modum lunae", Vatablus; so Ben Melech. {u} Pirke Eliezer, c. 39. {w} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 2. p. 5. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 3. 2.

Genesis 39:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord was with Joseph,.... Comforting him with his presence under his afflictions; supporting him with his right hand; sanctifying all his troubles to him, and so causing him to bear them patiently and cheerfully:

and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison; who was the underkeeper to Potiphar; God so wrought upon the heart of this man, that he was merciful to him, and took off the iron fetters, which hurt his feet, and gave him liberty to walk about; and many other favours and kindnesses he showed unto him, as follow.

Genesis 39:22

Ver. 22. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that [were] in the prisons,.... Who, as they were state prisoners, were a considerable charge; and this gave Joseph great honour, credit, and influence in the prison:

and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer [of it]; not that he learned and exercised every trade the prisoners were of, to get a living by, which is the sense of some, as Aben Ezra relates; or that he in fact did everything that was done in the prison: but the meaning is, that he gave orders for the doing of everything, and there was nothing done without him; all that was done, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it, he commanded it to be done; or, as Onkelos, all that was done was done by his word, that is, by his authority and command.

Genesis 39:23

Ver. 23. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything [that was] under his hand,.... Under the hand of Joseph; he did not inquire into and examine his conduct and management of things; he took no account of what was in his hands, nor required any of him; so satisfied was he with what he did, and had such an opinion of his prudence and faithfulness. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase it,

"he saw no crime in him,"

either in the management of affairs he committed to him, or for which he was put into prison, and therefore did not use him as he did other prisoners:

because the Lord was with him; supplying him with his grace, giving him wisdom to do everything in the best manner committed to him, which caused the keeper of the prison to respect him as he did:

and [that] which he did the Lord made [it] to prosper; every method he took to secure the prisoners, every scheme he formed to bring them to confession of their crimes, or to clear those that were innocent; and every other thing relative to prison affairs, all through the good hand of God upon him, guiding, directing, and blessing him, succeeded well, which gained him the favour and good will of the keeper and the prisoners.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 40:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 40

The history of this chapter is, the imprisonment of two of Pharaoh's officers, his chief butler and chief baker, who by the captain of the guard were made the charge of Joseph, Ge 40:1; they both dreamed in prison, which made them sad; Joseph taking notice of their sadness, asked the reason of it, and encouraged them to tell him their dreams,
Ge 40:5; the chief butler told his dream of the vine and three branches, which Joseph interpreted of his restoration to his office within three days, and desired him to remember him unto Pharaoh when he stood before him, telling him his case, Ge 40:9; then the chief baker told his dream of three white baskets of food on his head, which the birds ate, and this Joseph interpreted of his being hanged within three days, Ge 40:16; and the events answered to the interpretation, but Joseph was forgot by the chief butler,
Ge 40:20.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass after these things,.... After Joseph had been accused and cast into prison, where he had been for some time:

[that] the butler of the king of Egypt and [his] baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt; committed some fault, at least were accused of one, which raised his displeasure at them. The Targum of Jonathan says, that they consulted to put poison into his drink and food; which, it is not improbable, considering their business and office, they might be charged with; at least it is much more probable than what Jarchi suggests, that the one put a fly into his cup, and the other a little stone or sand into his bread.

Genesis 40:2

Ver. 2. And Pharaoh was wroth against two [of] his officers,.... The same above mentioned:

against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers; for as there were several butlers and bakers that belonged unto him, who were employed in providing wine and food for him, there was one of each who was over the rest; and as their business was to see that those under them did their work well, when they were faulty the principal officers were answerable for it: wherefore, if in this case they had not been guilty of anything criminal themselves personally, yet they might have neglected to look after those that were under them, and so were culpable, and drew upon them the wrath and resentment of their lord and sovereign.

Genesis 40:3

Ver. 3. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard,.... Who is generally thought to be Potiphar, since this was the office he was in, Ge 39:1; unless he was dead, and there was another put into his room, or there were more than one in the same office:

into the prison, the place where Joseph [was] bound; that is, where he had been bound, and where he was still a prisoner, though not fettered and in that close confinement he had been in.

Genesis 40:4

Ver. 4. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them,.... Committed them to his care and custody, he being very probably recommended to him by the keeper of the prison for his prudence and fidelity; and if it was Potiphar, he knew his character full well, and might be now reconciled unto him, as having had a more full and clear account of the affair between him and his wife from the keeper of the prison; and therefore though he might not think fit for his own and his wife's reputation to remove him from prison as yet, nevertheless might be inclined to do him what service he could, as well as honour, as this was, to have two such state prisoners committed to his care. Some render it, "he committed Joseph with them" {x}; to be with them, as Jarchi interprets it; they were put together, not merely for the sake of company, but that Joseph might wait upon them, which might be beneficial as well as creditable, as it follows:

and he served them; he ministered unto them, and brought them every thing they wanted:

and they continued a season in ward; or "days" {y}; some certain days, many days, a year, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom interpret it, and which is sometimes the use of the word. The story of the butler and baker is told, partly to show the divine faculty of interpreting dreams Joseph was possessed of; and partly to observe the remarkable steps in Providence, though secret, towards his advancement in Pharaoh's court.

{x} Mta Powy ta-dqpyw "et commisit Josephum cum eis", Junius &

Tremellius. {y} Mymy "per annum", Pagninus, Vatablus, Schmidt.

Genesis 40:5

Ver. 5. And they dreamed a dream both of them,.... Not one and the same dream:

each man his dream in one night; which made it the more remarkable, and the more impressed their minds, concluding from hence there must be something of importance in their dreams:

each man according to the interpretation of his dream; they dreamed each what was suitable to his office and character, and which portended what should hereafter befall them, as the interpretation of them by Joseph afterwards, and the event showed; so that it was not a vain idle dream, but divine and certain:

the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which [were] bound in the prison; this is added for explanation's sake, showing who were the persons spoken of that dreamed the dreams.

Genesis 40:6

Ver. 6. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning,.... For though Joseph and they were in the same prison, yet not in the same ward. Aben Ezra thinks that Joseph lodged in the dungeon in the night, Ge 40:15; and was let out in the morning to wait on these prisoners; but the great interest he had in the keeper of the prison, and the favour shown him by the captain of the guard, in putting such prisoners under his care, will easily make one conclude, that Joseph now had a better lodging than that; though it had been his case, he was now provided with a better apartment in the prison; and when he arose in the morning, like a careful and faithful servant, he came to the ward where the prisoners under his care were, to see that they were safe, and what they wanted:

and looked upon them, and, behold, they [were] sad; they looked sorrowful, dejected, and uneasy.

Genesis 40:7

Ver. 7. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that [were] with him,.... The chief butler and baker that were committed to his care, and with whom he now was,

in the ward of the lord's house; this seems to confirm what is before observed, that the captain of the guard that charged Joseph with them was Potiphar his master; though indeed the keeper of the prison that was under Potiphar, the captain of the guard, might be called Joseph's lord or master, but the house could not with so much propriety be called his:

saying, wherefore look ye [so] sadly today? as they were officers, who had been in lucrative places, they lived well and merrily, and expected very probably they should be released in a short time, nothing appearing against them; but now there was a strange alteration in them, which was very visible to Joseph, and for which he expresses a concern, being of a kind, tender, and benevolent disposition, as the question he puts to them shows.

Genesis 40:8

Ver. 8. And they said unto him, we have dreamed a dream,.... Each of them:

and [there is] no interpreter of it; in that place in which they were, the prison; otherwise there were persons enough in the land that pretended to the interpretation of dreams, Ge 41:8; but they could not come at them, being in prison:

and Joseph said unto them, [do] not interpretations [belong] to God? that is, of dreams, and to him only, meaning the true God whom he worshipped; for as dreams themselves, which are of importance, and predict things to come, are of God; for none can foretell future events but he, and such to whom he imparts the gift of prophecy; so none can interpret dreams with any certainty but God himself, and those to whom he gives the faculty of interpretation of them; this Joseph said to take off their minds from the magicians and wise men, and interpreters of dreams among the Egyptians, these officers were hankering after, and wished they had them with them to interpret their dreams to them; and to suggest unto them, that though he did not arrogate such a power to himself, as having it of himself, yet intimates that he doubted not, but upon an address to his God, he would favour him with the interpretation of their dreams, and therefore encourages them to relate them to him:

tell me [them], I pray you; or "now" {z}, directly, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; signifying, that he would immediately interpret them to them; no doubt Joseph said this under a divine impulse.

{z} an "nunc", Drusius.

Genesis 40:9

Ver. 9. And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph,.... He listened to what Joseph said, and paid a regard to it, and began to think he might be able to interpret his dream, and therefore was forward, and the first to tell him it at once; whereas the chief baker did not seem disposed to do it, until he observed the good interpretation given of the butler's dream, Ge 40:16:

and said unto him, in my dream, behold, a vine [was] before me; it appeared to him in his dream, as if a vine sprung up at once, and stood before him; which was very suitable to his office as a butler, wine being the fruit of the vine, which he provided for the king his master, and presented to him at table.

Genesis 40:10

Ver. 10. And in the vine [were] three branches,.... Which shot out from the root or body of it:

and it [was as] though it budded; the branches seemed to sprout out:

[and] her blossoms shot forth; it knotted, and the flowers of the vine appeared, which blowing off, the tender grapes were seen:

and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes; all which is agreeably to the order nature observes, from the first putting forth of the vine, to its producing ripe fruit; and which in this dream immediately followed one another, as it seemed according to the representation of things to the, mind of the butler, and which he perfectly remembered, it having made a strong impression upon him.

Genesis 40:11

Ver. 11. And Pharaoh's cup [was] in his hand,.... So it seemed to him in his dream, as it often had been when in his office:

and I took the grapes; from off the vine that was before him:

and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup; which some think was the custom of those times, to take a bunch of grapes and squeeze them into a cup, especially when they would make trial of what sort of wine they would produce; for it can hardly be thought that this was usually done, or that it was customary to drink such new wine; but it is more probable that the grapes were first pressed into another vessel, and so made wine of, and then poured into Pharaoh's cup, or mixed in it, though this circumstance is omitted. Indeed Herodotus {a} relates of the Egyptian priests, that wine pressed out of the vine is given them:

and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand; as he had used to do.

{a} Euterpe sive, l. 2. c. 37.

Genesis 40:12

Ver. 12. And Joseph said unto him, this [is] the interpretation of it,.... Of the dream:

the three branches [are] three days; signify three days, or, as Jarchi expresses it, are a sign of three days; which Joseph could know only by divine revelation; for there is no more likeness between branches and days, than between them and months or years, and bid as fair to signify one as the other, if the interpretation depended on similarity, or bare conjecture.

Genesis 40:13

Ver. 13. Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head,.... The Targum of Jonathan adds, with glory; and the sense is, either that Pharaoh would raise him up from the low estate in which he now was, to the same exalted station in which he had been before; or that he would reckon and number him among his servants, when he should take a catalogue of them, or make a new list, so Jarchi and Aben Ezra; and this phrase is used of taking the sum of persons, or the number of them, and is so rendered, Ex 30:12; the allusion is thought to be to a custom used by great personages, to have the names of their servants called over on a certain day, as Pharaoh perhaps used to do on his birthday, Ge

40:20; when they struck out of the list or put into it whom they pleased, and pardoned or punished such as had offended; and this sense is the rather inclined to, because Pharaoh is said to lift up the head of both the butler and the baker, Ge 40:20; yet it may be observed, that the phrases used by Joseph concerning them differ; for of the baker he says, "Pharaoh shall lift up thy head from off thee", Ge 40:19; wherefore, though the heads of them both were lift up, yet in a different sense: the one was lifted up to the gallows, and the other to his former dignity, as follows:

and restore thee unto thy place: to his office in ministering: to Pharaoh as his cup bearer:

and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler; which was signified in the dream, by squeezing the grapes into Pharaoh's cup he had in his hand, and gave unto him.

Genesis 40:14

Ver. 14. But think on me, when it shall be well with thee,.... He desires no reward for the interpretation of his dream, only that he would remember him in adversity, when he should be in prosperity in Pharaoh's court, and speak a good word for him, which was the least he could do; and though Joseph knew by his own dreams that he should be raised from his low estate to a very high and advanced one, yet he thought proper, in a dependence on God, to make use of all lawful means for his deliverance; nor is he to be blamed, as if he sought help of man and not of God, as he is by some writers, both Christian and Jewish, particularly by the Targum of Jonathan,

"Joseph lost his superior confidence, and retained the confidence of men;"

whereas means are always to be used in order to the end, in subordination to the divine will; and what Joseph asked of the butler was but reasonable, and what he ought to have done for him, and was prudently moved by Joseph, as a rational method of his deliverance, and in which he was, no doubt, guided and directed by the providence of God, as the event shows:

and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me; he pleads no merit for what he had done in interpreting his dream, but puts the good office he desires him to do for him upon the foot of kindness to a man in distress, and asks it as a favour, by way of entreaty and request:

and make mention of me and bring me out of this house: the prison in which he was; for though he had much favour shown him, and had more liberty granted him than other prisoners had, yet a prisoner he was, and a prison he dwelt in, and deliverance from it was desirable, could it be had; and this was a likely way to obtain it, if the butler would speak a good word for him to Pharaoh, which he would have an opportunity to do, being often in his presence, and frequently when cheerful.

Genesis 40:15

Ver. 15. For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews,.... Not the whole land of Canaan, so called, either from the Hebrews sojourning: in it, or from its being given unto them by God; neither of which could be a reason why Joseph, when talking with an Egyptian, should give it this name, and which, it must be supposed, was known to him; but that part of the land of Canaan where the Hebrews had sojourned for three generations, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had lived, even at or near Hebron; and being persons of great note, and having done great exploits, their names were well known, and the country where they lived, and particularly among the Egyptians: now Joseph does not expose the sin of his brethren in selling him to the Ishmaelites, by whom he was brought into Egypt and sold there; only relates that he was stolen out of his native country, being taken from it without his own or his father's consent:

and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon; since he had been in the land of Egypt, he had not been guilty of any criminal action wherefore he should be put into a prison, and especially into a dungeon, a dark and filthy place under ground, as dungeons usually were, and into which Joseph was put when first in confinement, though since took out of it: he makes no mention of the wickedness of his mistress, and of her false accusation of him, nor of the injustice of his master in putting him into prison without hearing him; only asserts his own innocence, which was necessary to recommend himself to the butler, that he might not think he was some loose fellow that was committed to prison for some capital crime, and so it would have, been a disgrace to him to have spoken for him.

Genesis 40:16

Ver. 16. When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good,.... Meaning not that it was right and just, though it was; but that it was agreeable and pleasing, and portended good in the event; and therefore hoped a like interpretation would be given of his dream, and this encouraged him to tell it, which perhaps otherwise he would not have done:

he said unto Joseph, I also [was] in a dream; or had a dream, and in it things were represented to his mind as follows:

and, behold, [I had] three white baskets on my head; which were made of wicker, of rods that had the bark pulled off, and so were white; or which had holes in them, baskets wrought with holes, after the manner of network; though some think this denotes not the colour or form of the basket, but of the bread in them, and interpret the words, baskets of white bread, as Saadiah Gaon, and so the Targum of Jonathan, baskets of most pure bread, and the Targum of Jerusalem, baskets of hot bread; this dream was very agreeable to his office and business as a baker.

Genesis 40:17

Ver. 17. And in the uppermost basket [there was] of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh,.... All sorts of pastry, as tarts, pies, &c. Josephus {b} says, two of the baskets were full of bread, and the third had various sorts of food, such as is usually, prepared for kings:

and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head; all the three baskets were upon his head, but this seems to be the uppermost, which the birds could more easily come at; though if the baskets were full of holes, they might through them peck the bread with their bills.

{b} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 5. sect. 3.

Genesis 40:18

Ver. 18. And Joseph answered and said,.... Immediately, directly, without any further thought and meditation, being divinely instructed:

this [is] the interpretation thereof; of the above dream:

the three baskets [are] three days; signify three days.

Genesis 40:19

Ver. 19. Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head from off thee,.... Order thee to be beheaded; so the Targum of Jonathan and Ben Melech interpret it,

"Pharaoh shall remove thy head from thy body with a sword:"

and shall hang thee on a tree; his body after his head was severed from it, this should be hung upon a gallows or gibbet, and there continue:

and the birds shall eat the flesh from off thee; as they usually do when bodies are thus hung up, see 2Sa 21:9; this was signified by the birds eating the bakemeats out of the uppermost basket when upon his head, as it seemed to him in his dream.

Genesis 40:20

Ver. 20. And it came to pass the third day, [which was] Pharaoh's birthday,.... The third day from the time the dreams were told, and the interpretation of them given, was the birthday of Pharaoh; either the day in which a son of his was born, or in which he himself was born, as Ben Melech observes; but the latter is more probable, since the former could not with propriety be called Pharaoh's birthday; and this might be either the day of his natural birth, or of his political birth, the time of his accession to the throne, which with the Romans was called "natalis imperii", and was observed with feasting and rejoicing {c}, as well as the former, both among them and other nations: it is most likely this was Pharaoh's natural birthday, which was observed among the Egyptians as birthdays were among the Persians {d}, and as Herod's was at his court in the days of Christ, Mt 14:6; and as is usual in our times in most countries:

that he made a feast unto all his servants; his ministers of state, his courtiers, and all in his palace:

and he lifted up the head of his chief butler and of his chief baker, among his servants; that is, among his servants, when their names were called over; or at this festival, these two were taken notice of, as being charged with crimes, and their cases were looked into and examined, and their heads were lifted up in a different sense: they were both lifted out of prison, but the one was lifted up to his former post and place in Pharaoh's court, and the other was lifted up to a gallows or gibbet, as follows; though perhaps this lifting of them both may only signify the trial of them, when they were set on high to be seen by the judge and all the court, see 1Ki 21:9.

{c} Plin. Ep. l. 1. ep. 61. Herodot. Calliope, sive, l. 9. c. 109. {d} Herodot. Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 133.

Genesis 40:21

Ver. 21. And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again,.... Put him into the same office he was in before:

and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand; ministered to him in his office the same day, according to his dream and the interpretation of it: the Targum of Jonathan adds this as a reason of his being restored,

"because he found that he was not in that counsel,"

in which it was consulted to poison Pharaoh, See Gill on "Ge 40:1".

Genesis 40:22

Ver. 22. But he hanged the chief baker,.... The is, he ordered him to be hanged; because, as the same Targum says, he consulted to kill him (Pharaoh):

as Joseph had interpreted to them; the events as to both answered to the interpretation Joseph had given of their several dreams.

Genesis 40:23

Ver. 23. Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph,.... To speak of him to Pharaoh, neither on that day in which he was restored, nor for a long time after, even for the space of two years, as seems from the following chapter:

but forgot him; never more thought of him, of the favour he had done him in interpreting his dream; of the request he made to him, and of the promise which he had probably given him; which was an instance of great ingratitude, and is frequently the case and character of courtiers, who being in high places themselves, neglect others, their petitions to them, and their own promises to do all they can for them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 41:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 41

In this chapter are related Pharaoh's dreams, which his magicians could not interpret, Ge 41:1, upon which the chief butler now remembering Joseph, recommended him to Pharaoh as an interpreter, having had an happy experience of him as such himself, Ge 41:10, when Joseph was sent for out of prison; and Pharaoh having related his dreams, he interpreted them of seven years of plenty, and seven years of famine, that should be in the land of Egypt, Ge 41:14; and having done, he gave his advice to provide in the years of plenty against the years of famine, and proposed a scheme for doing it, which was approved of by Pharaoh and his ministers, Ge 41:33; and Joseph himself was pitched upon as the most proper person to execute it, and was appointed chief over the kingdom next to Pharaoh, who gave him a new name and a wife upon this occasion, Ge 41:38; accordingly, in the years of plenty he took a tour throughout the whole land, and gathered and laid up food in vast quantities in every city, Ge 41:46; an account is given of two sons born to Joseph, and of their names, Ge 41:50; and of the seven years of famine, beginning to come on at the end of the seven years of plenty, which brought great distress on the land of Egypt, and the countries round about, who all came to Joseph to buy corn,
Ge 41:53.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass at the end of two full years,.... It is not a clear case, as Aben Ezra observes, from whence these years are to be reckoned, whether from the time of Joseph's being put into prison, or from the time that the chief butler was taken out of it; the latter seems more probable, and better connects this and the preceding chapter:

that Pharaoh dreamed, and, behold, he stood by the river; it seemed to him, in his dream, as if he stood near the river Nile, or some canal or flow of water cut out of that river.

Genesis 41:2

Ver. 2. And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine, and fatfleshed,.... Seven cows or heifers, sleek, fat, and plump, goodly to look at; these seemed in the dream, as if they came out of the river, because they were fed with the fruits of the earth, which the overflowing of the river Nile, and its canals, produced:

and they fed in a meadow; adjoining to the river, where there was good pasture for them, and gives a reason of their being in so good a condition.

Genesis 41:3

Ver. 3. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured, and leanfleshed,.... Thin and haggard, their bones stuck out, having scarce any flesh upon them, and made a wretched figure:

and stood by the [other] kine; and looked so much the worse, when compared with them:

upon the brink of the river; it not being overflowed, so that there was no grass to be had, but just upon the bank, where these kept for that purpose; for the fruitfulness of Egypt was owing to the river Nile; as that overflowed or did not, there was plenty or famine; hence both these sorts of creatures came up out of that.

Genesis 41:4

Ver. 4. And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine,.... So it seemed in the dream as if this was done, was very strange and surprising that animals should devour one another; and especially that tame ones, cows or heifers, should eat those of their own species, which was never known to be done:

so Pharaoh awoke; through surprise at the strange sight he had in his dream.

Genesis 41:5

Ver. 5. And he slept, and dreamed the second time,.... He fell asleep again quickly, and dreamed another dream the same night, and to the same purpose, being much of the like kind with the former:

and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good; which were very uncommon even in those fruitful countries; though Dr. Shaw {e} observes of Barbary, which vied with Egypt for fruitfulness, that it sometimes happens that one stalk of wheat will bear two ears, while each of these ears will as often shoot out into a number of lesser ones, thereby affording a most plentiful increase.

{e} Travels, p. 137. Ed. 2.

Genesis 41:6

Ver. 6. And, behold, seven thin ears, and blasted with the east wind,.... Which is very fatal to corn, to dry, burn, smite, or blast it; and especially to the corn in Egypt, whither it blew from the desert of Arabia: these

sprung up after them; after the seven full ears, in the same place the other did, or near unto them.

Genesis 41:7

Ver. 7. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears,.... So it appeared to Pharaoh in his dream, which must be very amazing to behold, and unaccountable how it should be:

and Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, [it was] a dream; not a real fact, but a dream; yet not a common dream, but had some important signification in it; it not vanishing from his mind, but abode upon it, which made him conclude there was something more than common in it, and made him very desirous to have the interpretation of it.

Genesis 41:8

Ver. 8. And it came to pass in the morning, that his spirit was troubled,.... With the thoughts of his dreams; they were uppermost in his mind; he was continually thinking of them; it was as if he had always the same images before him now awake, as well as when asleep, and therefore could not be easy without getting knowledge of the meaning of them:

and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof; who pretended to have great skill in the things of nature, and in astrology and other sciences, by which they pretended to know future events, and to interpret dreams among other things; and show what they portended, and what things would happen for the accomplishment of them:

and Pharaoh told them his dream; both his dreams, which for the similarity of them, and there being so little interruption between them, are represented as one dream; for that both were told them appears by what follows:

but [there was] none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh; they were nonplussed and confounded, and did not know what to say; the things were so strange and surprising that he related, that they could not offer any conjectures about them, or, if they did, they were very unsatisfactory to Pharaoh.

Genesis 41:9

Ver. 9. Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh,.... When the magicians and wise men could not interpret his dreams, he was in distress of mind on that account:

saying, I do remember my faults this day; which some interpret of his forgetfulness of Joseph and his afflictions, and of his ingratitude to him, and breach of promise in not making mention of him to Pharaoh before this time; but they seem rather to be faults he had committed against Pharaoh, and were the reason of his being wroth with him, as in Ge 41:10; and these were either real faults, which the king had pardoned, or however such as he had been charged with, and cleared from; and which he now in a courtly manner takes to himself, and owns them, that the king's goodness and clemency to him might appear, and lest he should seem to charge the king with injustice in casting him into prison; which circumstance he could not avoid relating in the story he was about to tell.

Genesis 41:10

Ver. 10. Pharaoh was wroth with his servants,.... Not with all of them, but with the butler and the baker. Aben Ezra observes here, that Pharaoh was not the proper name of this king, but a title of office, and signifies the king; for it cannot be thought that the butler would use such freedom in his presence as to call him by his name: the true name of this prince, according to the eastern writers {f}, was Rian ben Walid; others take him to be Aphophis, the third of the Hycsi, or pastor kings: but, according to Bishop Usher {g}, his name was Mephramuthosis:

and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house: in consequence of his wrath and displeasure, for crimes really or supposed to be committed by him; and the captain of the guard's house was a prison, or at least there was a prison in it for such sort of offenders; and this was Potiphar's, Joseph's master's, house:

[both] me and the chief baker; which explains who the officers were Pharaoh was wroth with, and who were for their offences committed to prison.

{f} Juchasin, fol. 135. 2. {g} Annales Ver. Test. p. 14.

Genesis 41:11

Ver. 11. And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he,.... In one and the same night:

we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream; they both dreamed exactly what should befall them, as it was interpreted to them; the dreams, the interpretation of them, and the events, answered to each other.

Genesis 41:12

Ver. 12. And [there was] there with us a young man,.... Who was in the prison with them, had the care of them, and waited upon them; he was then about twenty eight years of age; for it was two years ago he speaks of, and Joseph was thirty when he stood before Pharaoh, Ge 41:46:

an Hebrew servant to the captain of the guard; he first describes him by his age, a young man, then by his descent, an Hebrew, and by his state and condition, a servant; neither of them tended much to recommend him to the king:

and we told him; that is, their dreams:

and he interpreted to us our dream, to each man according to his dream did he interpret; told them what their dreams presignified, what the events would be they portended; the interpretation was different according to their dreams.

Genesis 41:13

Ver. 13. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was,.... The event answered to the interpretation, and showed it to be right; this is frequently hinted and repeated, to show the exactness and certainty of the interpretation given, in order to recommend Joseph to Pharaoh the more:

me he restored unto my office, and him he hanged: that is, Joseph interpreted the butler's dream to such a sense, that he should be restored to his butlership, and accordingly he was; and the baker's dream, that he should be hanged, and so he was. Aben Ezra and Jarchi interpret this of Pharaoh, that he restored the one, and hanged the other, or ordered these things to be done, which answered to Joseph's interpretation of the dreams; but the former sense seems best, for Joseph is the person immediately spoken of in the preceding clause; nor would it have been so decent for the butler, in the presence of Pharaoh, to have spoken of him without naming him, and which would have been contrary to his usage before.

Genesis 41:14

Ver. 14. Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph,.... Sent messengers to him to come to him directly, ordered the captain of the guard, or keeper of prison, to loose him, and let him free, see Ps 105:20;

and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon; that is, out of the prison house; which, as Jarchi says, was made like a ditch or dungeon, or in which the dungeon was where Joseph was first put when he was brought to prison; though it cannot be thought that he continued there when he had so much respect shown him by the keeper, and had other prisoners committed to his care: however, he was fetched in great haste from his place of confinement, by the messengers that were sent for him; or "they made him to run" {h}, from the prison to the palace, the king being so eager to have his dream interpreted to him:

and he shaved [himself]; or the barber shaved him, as Aben Ezra; his beard had not been shaved, nor the hair of his head cut very probably for a considerable time; it being usual for persons in such circumstances to neglect such things:

and changed his raiment; his prison garments being such as were not fit to appear in before a king, and put on others, which either the king sent him, or the captain of the guard his master furnished him with:

and came in unto Pharaoh: into his palace, and his presence; what city it was in which this Pharaoh kept his palace, is no where said; very probably it was which the Scriptures call Zoan, that being the ancient city of Egypt, Nu 13:22.

{h} whuryw "et currere fecerunt eum", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus; "et fecerunt ut curreret", Piscator.

Genesis 41:15

Ver. 15. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph,...., Immediately, upon his being introduced to him:

I have dreamed a dream, and [there] is none that can interpret it; that he could yet meet with; none of his magicians or wise men, who made great pretensions to skill in such matters:

and I have heard say of thee, [that] thou canst understand a dream to interpret it; it had been reported to him, particularly by the chief butler, that when he heard a dream told him, he had such knowledge and understanding, that he could interpret it, tell the meaning of it, what it portended, and what would be the events signified by it.

Genesis 41:16

Ver. 16. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, [it is] not in me,.... Which expresses his great modesty, that he did not arrogate such skill and wisdom to himself; declaring that he had no such power and abilities in and of himself, to interpret dreams; what he had was a gift of God, and wholly depended upon his influence, and the revelation he was pleased to make to him of such things:

God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace; such an answer to his request in the interpretation of his dream, as shall give him full content, and make his mind quiet and easy, and which shall tend to the welfare of him and his kingdom. Some render the words as a prayer or wish, "may God give Pharaoh", &c. {i}; so as it were addressing his God, that he would be pleased to make known to him his interpretation of the dream to the satisfaction of Pharaoh: but the other sense seems best, which expresses his faith in God, that he would do it, and to whom it should be ascribed, and not unto himself.

{i} hney "respondeat", Vatablus.

Genesis 41:17

Ver. 17. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph,.... Relating both his dreams in a more ample manner, though to the same purpose, than before related:

in my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river; the river Nile, where he could have a full sight of what were after presented to his view.

Genesis 41:18

Ver. 18. And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine,.... Cows or heifers, See Gill on "Ge 41:2"; the account of them is the same here as there, and of the place where they fed, only the words are transposed.

Genesis 41:19

Ver. 19. And, behold, seven other kine,.... Here some addition is made: these are said not only to be

very ill favoured, and leanfleshed, See Gill on "Ge 41:3", but

poor, thin, meagre, exhausted of their flesh and strength through some disease upon them, or want of food: and it follows, what was not before expressed,

such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt, for badness; so poor, so lean, and so ill favoured; for whatever might be seen in other countries, never were such seen in Egypt, which was famous for good cattle.

Genesis 41:20

Ver. 20. And the lean and the ill favoured kine,.... The same as previously described; See Gill on "Ge 41:4".

Genesis 41:21

Ver. 21. And when they had eaten them up,.... Or "were come into their bowels" {k}, into their inward parts, their bellies, being swallowed and devoured by them:

it could not be known that they had eaten them: or were in their bellies, they seemed never the fuller nor the fatter for them:

but they [were] still ill favoured as at the beginning; looked as thin and as meagre as they did when they first came out of the river, or were first seen by Pharaoh:

so I awoke; surprised at what he had seen; this was his first dream.

{k} hnbrq la hnabtw "et venerunt ad interiora earum", Pagninus, Montanus; "in ventrem istarum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Tigurine version.

Genesis 41:22

Ver. 22. And I saw in my dream,.... Falling asleep again quickly, he dreamed a second time; and this dream being of a like kind with the former, and so small a space between them, they are represented as one, and this is the continuation of it:

and, behold, seven ears, &c. See Gill on "Ge 41:5".

Genesis 41:23

Ver. 23. And, behold, seven ears withered,.... Here a new epithet of the bad ears is given, and expressed by a word nowhere else used, which Ben Melech interprets, small, little, according to the use of the word in the Misnah; Aben Ezra, void, empty, such as had no grains of corn in them, nothing but husk or chaff, and observes that some render it images; for the word is so used in the Arabic language, and may signify that these ears were only mere shadows or images of ears, which had no substance in them: Jarchi says, the word, in the Syriac language signifies a rock, and so it denotes that these ears were dry as a rock, and had no moisture in them, laid dried, burnt up, and blasted with the east wind.

Genesis 41:24

Ver. 24. And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears,....
See Gill on "Ge 41:7";

and I told [this] unto the magicians; just in the same manner as he had to Joseph:

but [there was] none that could declare [it] unto me; the meaning of it; what all this should signify or portend.

Genesis 41:25

Ver. 25. And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, the dream of Pharaoh [is] one,.... Though there were two distinct dreams expressed under different images and representations, yet the meaning, sense, and signification of them were the same; one interpretation would do for both:

God hath showed Pharaoh what he [is] about to do; that is, by the above dreams, when they should be interpreted to him; for as yet he understood them not, and therefore there could be nothing showed him, but when interpreted it would be clear and plain to him what events were quickly to be accomplished: God only knows things future, and those to whom he is pleased to reveal them, and which he did in different ways, by dreams, visions, articulate voices, &c.

Genesis 41:26

Ver. 26. The seven good kine [are] seven years,.... Signify seven years, and these years of plenty, as appears from the antithesis in
Ge 41:26:

and the seven good ears [are] seven years; signify the same:

the dream [is] one; for though the seven good kine were seen in one dream, the seven good ears in another, yet both dreams were one as to signification.

Genesis 41:27

Ver. 27. And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them [are] seven years,.... Signify other seven years, and these different from the former, as follows:

and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine: or there will be seven years of famine that will answer to them, and are signified by them: Grotius, from the Oneirocritics or interpreters of dreams, observes, that years are signified by kine, and particularly he relates from Achmes, that according to the doctrine of the Egyptians, female oxen (and such these were) signified times and seasons, and if fat (as the good ones here also were) signified fruitful times, but if poor and thin (as the bad ones here were) barren times: it seems as if all this skill of theirs was borrowed from

Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams here given. Josephus {l} relates a dream of Archelaus the son of Herod, who dreamed that he saw ten ears of corn, full and large, devoured by oxen; he sent for the Chaldeans and others to tell him what they signified; one said one thing and another another; at length one Simon, an Essene, said that the ears signified years, and the oxen changes of affairs, because, when they plough up the earth, they turn it up and change it; so that he should reign as many years as were ears of corn seen, and after many changes should die, as he accordingly did.

{l} Antiqu. l. 17. c. 15. sect. 3. & de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 7. sect. 3.

Genesis 41:28

Ver. 28. This [is] the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh,.... As an interpretation of his dreams:

what God [is] about to do, he sheweth unto Pharaoh: the events of fourteen years with respect to plenty and sterility.

Genesis 41:29

Ver. 29. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. Not only a sufficiency but an abundance, even to luxury, as when the Nile rose to sixteen cubits, as Pliny observes {m}; which, though a natural cause, was owing to God, and that it should thus overflow for seven years successively, and cause such a continued plenty, can be ascribed to no other.

{m} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 9.

Genesis 41:30

Ver. 30. And there shall arise after them seven years of famine,.... Which might be occasioned by the river Nile not rising so high as to overflow its banks, as, when it did not rise to more than twelve cubits, a famine ensued, as the above writer says {n}; and it must be owing to the overruling providence of God that this should be the case for seven years running:

and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; the seven years of plenty being all spent, it should be as if it never was; the minds of men would be so intent upon their present distressed case and circumstances, that they should wholly forget how it had been with them in time past; or it would be as if they had never enjoyed it, or were never the better for it: this answers to and explains how it was with the ill favoured kine, when they had eaten up the fat kine; they seemed never the better, nor could it be known by their appearance that they had so done:

and the famine shall consume the land: the inhabitants of it, and all the fruits and increase of it the former years produced.

{n} Nat Hist. l. 5. c. 9.

Genesis 41:31

Ver. 31. And the plenty shall not be known in the land, by reason of that famine following,.... That is, before it would be over; otherwise the former plenty was in some measure known by the stores of provisions laid up in the seven years of it, and which were brought forth when the famine became very pressing; but by that time, and before the seven years of it were ended, there were no traces of the foregoing plenty to be observed:

for it [shall be] very grievous; as it was both in Egypt and in all the countries round about.

Genesis 41:32

Ver. 32. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice,.... Or was repeated to him under different figures and images:

[it is] because the thing [is] established by God; by a firm decree of his, and is sure, and will most certainly be accomplished; of which Pharaoh might be assured, and to assure him of it was the repetition of the dream made:

and God will shortly bring it to pass: or "make haste to do it" {o}, that is, would soon begin to accomplish these events; for, as Bishop Usher {p} observes, from the harvest of this (the then present) year, the seven years of plenty are reckoned.

{o} wtvel-rhmm "festinans Deus ad faciendum", Montanus; "accelerat facere", Drusius; "festinat facere", Piscator. {p} Annal. Ver. Test. p. 15.

Genesis 41:33

Ver. 33. Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise,.... Of good judgment and conduct, of abilities equal to the execution of a scheme hereafter proposed: it can scarcely be thought consistent with the great modesty of Joseph that he meant himself, or that indeed, he ventured to give any advice at all, until it was first asked of him by the king; who being so well satisfied with the interpretation of his dreams, thought him a proper person to consult with what to be done in this case; who, as a true father of his country, as every king should be, was concerned for the good of it, and to provide against the worst for them:

and set him over the land of Egypt; not to be governor of it in general, but with a particular respect to the present case, to take care of provision for it.

Genesis 41:34

Ver. 34. Let Pharaoh do [this],.... Appoint such a person; who as a sovereign prince could do it of himself:

and let him appoint officers over the land; not Pharaoh, but the wise and discreet governor he should set over the land, who should have a power of appointing officers or overseers under him to manage things according to his direction:

and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years; not the officers appointed, but the appointer of them, the chief governor under Pharaoh, for the word is singular; it is proposed that he should, in Pharaoh's name, and by his order, take a fifth part of all the corn in the land of Egypt during seven years of plenty; not by force, which so good a man as Joseph would never advise to, whatever power Pharaoh might have, and could exercise if he pleased; but by making a purchase of it, which in such time of plenty would be bought cheap, and which so great a prince as Pharaoh was capable of. It is commonly asked, why an half part was not ordered to be took up, since there were to be as many years of famine as of plenty? and to this it is usually replied, that besides this fifth part taken up, as there might be an old stock of former years, so there would be something considerable remain of these seven years of plenty, which men of substance would lay up, as Pharaoh did; and besides, a fifth part might be equal to the crop of an ordinary year, or near it: to which may be added, that in times of famine men live more sparingly, as they are obliged, and therefore such a quantity would go the further; as well as it may be considered, that notwithstanding the barrenness of the land in general, yet in some places, especially on the banks of the Nile, some corn might be produced; so that upon the whole a fifth part might be judged sufficient to answer the extremity of the seven years of famine, and even to allow a distribution to other countries.

Genesis 41:35

Ver. 35. And let them, gather all the food of those good years that come,.... That is, let the under officers collect together the fifth part of all fruits of the land during the seven years of plenty:

and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh; as his property, and only to be disposed of by his orders; for as it was to be purchased with his money, it was right that it should be in his hands, or in the hands of his officers appointed by him, as the Targum of Jonathan:

and let them keep food in the cities; reserve it in the several cities throughout the land, against the years of famine.

Genesis 41:36

Ver. 36. And that food shall be for store to the land,.... A deposit in the said cities, to be brought forth and used in a time of public distress; the Targum of Jonathan is, it

"shall be hidden in a cave in the earth:"

against the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt: and so be a supply to the inhabitants of the land, when they should be sore pressed with a famine, and know not what to do, nor where to go for food:

that the land perish not through the famine; that is, that the people of the land perish not, as the above Targum, which, without such a provision, they would have been in great danger of perishing. Justin, an Heathen writer {q}, confirms this account of the advice of Joseph, of whom he says, that

"he was exceeding sagacious of things wonderful, and first found out the meaning of dreams; and nothing of right, divine or human, seemed unknown to him, so that he could foresee the barrenness of land many years beforehand; and all Egypt would have perished with the famine, if the king, by his advice, had not commanded an edict, that the fruits of the earth, for many years, should be preserved."

{q} E. Trogo, l. 36. c. 32.

Genesis 41:37

Ver. 37. And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh,.... He approved of the advice Joseph gave, and of the scheme and plan which he proposed:

and in the eyes of all his servants; his nobles, ministers of state and courtiers, all highly commended and applauded it; and it was with the general and unanimous consent of all agreed that it should be put into execution: but then the next question, and the thing to be considered, was, who was a person fit to be engaged in such an affair?

Genesis 41:38

Ver. 38. And Pharaoh said unto his servants,.... That were about him, and with whom he was consulting about a proper person to be over this affair of gathering in the fruits of the earth in the time of plenty, and laying them up against a time of famine:

can we find [such an one] as this [is], in whom the Spirit of God [is]? if we search among all the ranks and degrees of men throughout the kingdom, let them be of what character they will, we shall never find a man like this, who appears to have the Spirit of God, or "of the gods", as he in his Heathenish way spoke, and which he concluded from his vast knowledge of things; and especially of things future: hence the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan interpret it, the spirit of prophecy from the Lord.

Genesis 41:39

Ver. 39. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph,.... After his servants had agreed to his being the man: at least Pharaoh had declared his mind that he should be the person; which if any of them disliked, as probably might be the case of some through envy, and as desirous of the post themselves, yet durst not make any opposition to it:

forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this; the interpretation of his dreams, what would be hereafter for fourteen years to come, what was advisable to be done for the good of the nation, and had proposed a plan so well contrived and formed:

[there is] none so discreet and wise as thou [art]; and consequently none so fit for this business, since he was so divinely qualified; and Justin, the Heathen writer {r}, observes that he had such knowledge and experience of things, that his answers seemed to be given not from men, but from God.

{r} E. Trogo, l. 36. c. 32.

Genesis 41:40

Ver. 40. Thou shall be over my house,...., Have the care of his domestic affairs, and be the principal man in his palace and court:

and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled; not only in his family, but in his whole kingdom; whatever he ordered and commanded them to do, they should it, or "all my people shall kiss" {s}, that is, either their hand at the sight of him, or meeting him, in token of respect and veneration shall yield a ready and cheerful obedience to him, of which the kiss was a sign, see **Ps 2:12**. The Targum of Onkelos renders it, "shall be fed" {t}, supplied with corn, and with all necessary provisions, and so Jarchi interprets it; which is restraining it to that part of his office which concerned the gathering and laying up their stores for time to come; but the Targum of Jonathan is, "shall be armed" {u}; and so Aben Ezra makes him the prince or general of the army, or who had the militia at his command, and could arm them when he pleased; but it seems to denote a more large and unlimited power than either of these, even the government of the whole land under the king, who only excepts himself:

only in the throne will I be greater than thou; that is, he alone would be king, wear the crown sit upon the throne, and have all the ensigns of royal majesty, in which Joseph was to have no share; otherwise he was to have an executive power and authority over all his subjects in the land, even to bind his princes at pleasure, and to teach, instruct, and direct his senators, Ps 105:21.

{s} qvy "osculabitur", Montanus, Junius, & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt. {t} Cibabitur, Fagius; "cibum capiet", Tigurine version. {u} Armabitur, Pagninus, Munster, Drusius, Cartwright; so Kimchi.

Genesis 41:41

Ver. 41. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph,.... He continued speaking to him for the greater confirmation of what he had said, and for further explanation of it:

see, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt; not merely as the corn master general, to take care of a provision of corn in time of plenty, against a time of scarcity, but as a viceroy or deputy governor over the whole land, as appears by the ensigns of honour and dignity bestowed on him; of which in the following verses.

Genesis 41:42

Ver. 42. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand,.... Which, as it was expressive of the interest he had in his royal favour, so was a token of that high office and great dignity to which he was promoted: thus among the Romans, in later times, when anyone was put into the equestrian order, a ring was given to him {w}; for originally none but knights were allowed to wear rings; and it was sometimes used to design a successor in the kingdom, as, when Alexander was dying, he took his ring from off his finger, and gave it to Perdicca {x}, which was understood, though he did not express it, that he should be his successor, in the Apocrypha:

"14 Then called he for Philip, one of his friends, who he made ruler over all his realm, 15 And gave him the crown, and his robe, and his signet, to the end he should bring up his son Antiochus, and nourish him up for the kingdom." (1 Maccabees 6)

Now, though Pharaoh did not by this intend to point out Joseph for his successor in the kingdom, yet he gave him his ring as a mark of honour, and as being in place next unto his viceroy or deputy: and besides, as it is observed by many, this might be his signet, or the ring which had his seal upon it, by which he sealed patents and public deeds, and which he gave to Joseph to make use of in his name; though Schmidt doubts whether this was such a ring, since kings and princes have been used to have larger for such purposes, than what are wore on the finger: by this it appears, that Pliny {y} was mistaken that there were no rings in and before the time of Troy:

and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen; of which there was the best sort in Egypt, and which great personages used to wear:

and put a gold chain about his neck; another badge of honour and dignity, see **Da 5:16**.

{w} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 1. {x} Diodor. Sic. Bibliothec. l. 18. p. 587. Justin. e. Trogo, l. 12. c. 15. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 1.

Genesis 41:43

Ver. 43. And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had,.... By which it appeared that he was next to Pharaoh, but not above him; as kings were wont to have more chariots than one, those were distinguished by first, second, &c. being of greater state the one than the other, see 2Ch 35:24:

and they cried before him, bow the knee; that is, his guard that attended him, when he rode out in his chariot, called to the people, as they passed along, to bow the knee to Joseph, as a token of veneration and respect; or they proclaimed him "Abrech", which Onkelos paraphrases, this is the father of the king; and so Jarchi, who observes, that "Rech" signifies a king in the Syriac language; and this agrees with what Joseph himself says, that God had made him a father to Pharaoh, Ge 45:8. Others render it a tender father; and the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem take in both senses,

"this is the father of the king, (or let the father of the king live, so the Jerusalem,) who is great in wisdom, and tender in years:"

though rather he may be so called, because he acted the part of a tender father to the country, in providing corn for them against a time of scarcity:

and he made him [ruler] over all the land of Egypt; appointed him to be governor of the whole land, and invested him with that office, and made him appear to be so, by the grandeur he raised him to.

Genesis 41:44

Ver. 44. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I [am] Pharaoh,.... Or I am king, which the word Pharaoh signifies, as Josephus {z} says; and that this is not a proper name, but a title of office, seems plain from these words; and the sense either is, that though Pharaoh had raised Joseph to such high honour and dignity, yet he alone was king: or this he said to show his power and authority to do what he had done, and would stand by him, and support him in his office and grandeur:

and without thee shall not a man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt; which is to be taken not in a strict literal sense, but proverbially, signifying, that nothing should be done in the nation of any moment or importance, relating to political affairs, but what was by his order and authority; the hands and feet being the principal instruments of action. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"without thy word (or order) a man shall not lift up his hand to gird on armour, or his foot to mount a horse;"

signifying thereby, that all things relating to war and peace should be altogether under his direction.

{z} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 2.

Genesis 41:45

Ver. 45. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah,.... Which, according to the paraphrase of Onkelos, signifies one to whom hidden things are revealed; or, as Jonathan, a revealer of secrets; and so most of the Jewish writers explain it; and which seems to be given him from his interpreting Pharaoh's dreams, and revealing what was hereafter to come to pass. The word is only used in this place, at least the latter part of it and Aben Ezra confesses his ignorance of it, whether it is an Egyptian word or not; Kircher {a} most asserts it, and says it signifies a prophet (or foreteller) of future things. Though some think the first part of the name has some respect to the Egyptian idol Baal Zephon, Ex 14:2, and that, in this new name Pharaoh gave Joseph upon his promotion, he inserted the name of his god, as Nebuchadnezzar, when he gave new names to Daniel and his comparisons, **Da 1:7**:

and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah; not the same with Potiphar, Joseph's master, as Jarchi says, not only their, names differ, but also their offices; nor would Joseph, it is imagined, marry the daughter of such a woman, so wicked as his mistress was, and had so much abused him, and been the cause of all his troubles; nor was this Asenath the daughter of Dinah by Shechem, as some Jewish writers {b} assert, whom Potiphar's wife, having no child, brought up as her own, which is not at all probable; but an Egyptian woman, the daughter of the person before named: who was

priest of On: the same with Aven; See Gill on "Eze 30:17"; and which in Ptolemy {c} is called Onii, about twenty two miles from Memphis, and said to be the metropolis of the "Heliopolitan home"; and has been since called "Heliopolis", as it is here in the Septuagint version, which signifies the city of the sun, and is the same with

Bethshemesh, the house of the sun, Jer 43:13; where, as Herodotus {d} says, the sun was worshipped, and sacrifice offered to it, and the inhabitants of this place are by him said to be the wisest and most rational of the Egyptians {e}; here Potipherah, Joseph's father-in-law, was "priest"; and Strabo {f} says, at Heliopolis we saw large houses, in which the priests dwelt; for here especially of old it was said, that this was the habitation of priests, of philosophers, and such as were given to astronomy: the Septuagint version and Josephus {g} call this man Petephre; and an Heathen writer {h}, Pentephre, a priest of Heliopolis; which a very learned man {i} says, in the Egyptian tongue, signifies a priest of the sun; and so Philo says {k}, that Joseph married the daughter of a famous man in Egypt, who had the priesthood of the sun. But the word may as well be rendered "prince" {l}, as it is when there is nothing to determine its sense otherwise, as there is none here; and it is more likely, that Pharaoh should marry his prime minister into the family of one of his princes than of his priests; this seems to be more agreeable to the high rank that Joseph was raised to, as well as more suitable to his character as a worshipper of the true God, who would not choose to marry the daughter of an idolatrous priest: though, according to Diodorus Siculus {m}, the Egyptian priests were second to the king in honour and authority, and were always about him, and were of his council; and Aelianus, says {n}, that formerly with the Egyptians the judges were priests, and the eldest of them was a prince, and had the power of judging all; and even Sethon, king of Egypt, was a priest of Vulcan: whether this prince or priest was of the king's family, or whether the kings of Egypt had a power to dispose of the daughters of their subjects, especially of their priests or princes when dead, is not certain: perhaps no more, as Bishop Patrick observes, is meant, than that Pharaoh made this match, and which was a mark of great honour and affection to Joseph; and which, if even disagreeable to him, being an idolater, he could not well refuse:

and Joseph went out over [all] the land of Egypt; either the name and fame of him, as Aben Ezra interprets it, see **Mt 4:24**; or rather he himself went forth in all his grandeur before related, and took a tour, throughout the whole land to observe the fruitfulness of it, and make choice of proper places to lay up his intended stores.

{a} Prodrom. Copt. p. 124, &c. {b} Targ. Jon. in loc. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 3. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. {c} Geograph l. 4. c. 5. {d} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 59. 63. {e} Ib. c. 3. {f} Geograph. l. 17. p. 554. {g} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 6. sect. 1. {h} Polyhistor. ex Demetrio apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 21. p. 424. {i} Jablonski de Terra Goshen. Dissert. 8. sect. 4. {k} De Josepho, p. 543. {l} Nhk "praesidis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "principis", Pagninus, Vatablus; so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan. {m} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 66. {n} Var. Hist. l. 14. c. 34.

Genesis 41:46

Ver. 46. And Joseph [was] thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt,.... Interpreting his dreams, and had such honour conferred upon him as to be made his prime minister; from whence it appears that Joseph had now been thirteen years in Egypt, partly in Potiphar's house, and partly in prison, since he was seventeen years of age when he was sold thither, see Ge 37:2:

and Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh; from standing before him, and ministering to him as his counsellor and chief statesman, or he went out from his court and palace for a while:

and went throughout all the land of Egypt: this seems to be a second tour; before he went to survey the land, and pitch upon the most proper places for granaries to lay up store of corn in; and now he went through it, to gather in and give directions about it, and see it performed, for the years of plenty were now begun.

Genesis 41:47

Ver. 47. And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. Such as the gatherers take up in their hands when reaped, in order to bind up in sheaves: now such was the fruitfulness of the land during the seven years of plenty, that either one stalk produced as many ears as a man could hold in his hand; or one grain produced an handful, as Ben Melech observes; though Onkelos paraphrases the words,

"the inhabitants of the earth in the seven years of plenty gathered even into their treasuries:"

and this they did by the order and direction of Joseph as he passed through the land; what he bought of them they brought, and put into the granaries, as he directed them.

Genesis 41:48

Ver. 48. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years,.... That is, of plenty; not all the fruits of the earth, or all that was eatable, but the corn, as in Ge 41:49; and not all of that the earth produced, but the fifth part of it, as he proposed, which he bought with Pharaoh's money, and therefore: had a right to sell it again as he did:

which were in the land of Egypt; in which only he had a concern, and where only was this plenty:

and laid up the food in the cities; in places built for that purpose, and whither the people round about could easily bring it, and fetch it, when it was wanted:

the food of the field, which [was] round about every city, laid he up in the same; which was very wisely done, for present carriage, and for the convenience of the people in time of famine. At this day, at old Cairo, is an edifice the most considerable in it, called Joseph's granary; it occupies a square, surrounded by a wall, and has divers partitions contrived within it, where is deposited the corn, that is paid as a tax to the Gram

Seignior, brought from different parts of Egypt {o}.

{o} Norden's Travels in Egypt, &c. vol. 1. p. 72.

Genesis 41:49

Ver. 49. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering,.... At first he took an account of the quantities that were bought and laid up, how much there was in each granary, until it amounted to so much, that there was no end of numbering it; it was like the sand of the sea, an hyperbolical expression, denoting the great abundance of it:

for [it was] without number; not only the grains of corn, but even the measures of it, whatever were used; so Artapanus, an Heathen writer, says {p}, Joseph, when governor of Egypt, got together the corn of seven years, an immense quantity.

{p} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 23. p. 430.

Genesis 41:50

Ver. 50. And unto Joseph were born two sons,.... The word for "born" is singular; hence Ben Melech conjectures that they were twins: and this was

before the years of famine came; or "the year of famine" {q}; the first year:

which Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah priest of On, bare unto him; which is observed, to show that he had them by his lawful wife; whom the Targum of Jonathan wrongly again makes the daughter of Dinah, and her father prince of Tanis, the same with Zoan; whereas this was "On" or "Heliopolis", a very different place; so Artapanus says {r}, that Joseph married the daughter of the priest of Heliopolis, by whom he had children; and another Heathen writer {s} mentions their names, Ephraim and Manesseh.

{q} berh tnv "annus famis", Tigurine version, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "annus (primus) famis", Schmidt. {r} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 23. p. 429. {s} Polyhistor. apud ib. p. 424.

Genesis 41:51

Ver. 51. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh,.... Which signifies forgetfulness, as the reason of it shows:

for God, [said he], hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house; all his toil and labour in Potiphar's house, and especially in the prison; and all the injuries his brethren had done him; all this he was made to forget by the grandeur and honour, wealth and riches, power and authority he was possessed of; and indeed he had so much business upon his hands, that he had scarce time to think of his father, and his family.

Genesis 41:52

Ver. 52. And the name of the second called he Ephraim,.... Which signifies fruits or fruitfulness; and being of the dual number, may intend both his spiritual and temporal fruitfulness God had blessed him with:

for God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction; in the land of Egypt, where he had been long afflicted, even for the space of thirteen years, more or less, in his master's house, and in the prison; but God had made him fruitful in grace and good works, in holiness, humility, &c. and oftentimes afflictive seasons are the most fruitful ones in this sense. God also bestowed great gifts upon him, as skill in the interpretation of dreams, wisdom in political affairs, a large abundance of wealth, and riches, honour and glory; to which may be added, the fruit of his body, his two children.

Genesis 41:53

Ver. 53. And the seven years of plenteousness that was in the land of Egypt were ended. Perhaps quickly after the birth of Ephraim, Joseph's second son; since the account follows upon that, and it is certain that he was born before the years of famine began, Ge 41:50; some connect the words, "moreover when" the seven years of plenty were ended, then began, as follows, seven years of famine; these events were fulfilled just as Joseph had predicted.

Genesis 41:54

Ver. 54. And the seven years of dearth began to come, as Joseph had said,.... In the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams; as soon as the seven years of plenty were over, there were quickly some appearances of the famine coming on; as particularly the river Nile not flowing to its usual height at the season of it; hence there was a drought, the earth was parched, and everything began to wither and decay, and the seed that was sown sprung not up:

and the dearth was in all lands; adjoining to Egypt, as Syria, Arabia, Palestine, Canaan, &c.

but in all the land of Egypt there was bread; which was in the hands of everyone, and remained of their old stores in the years of plenty not yet exhausted, and which continued for some time after the dearth began. It is very probable that to this seven years' drought in Egypt Ovid {t} refers, which he makes to be nine; as does also Apollodorus {u}.

{t} "Dicitur Aegyptus caruisse juvantibus arva Imbribus, atque annis sicca fuisse novem." --Ovid de Artc Amandi, l. 1. ver. 647. {u} De Deor Orig. l. 2. p. 104.

Genesis 41:55

Ver. 55. And when all the land of Egypt was famished,.... Their old stock and store eaten up, and the inhabitants ready to starve with hunger:

the people cried to Pharaoh for bread; as their common father, and knowing that he had stores of provision laid up in all cities against this time:

and Pharaoh said to the Egyptians, go unto Joseph; whom he had appointed over this business of providing and laying up corn against this time, and of distributing it:

what he saith to you, do; give the price for the corn he fixes or requires; for this was the principal thing they had to do with him, to get corn for their money.

Genesis 41:56

Ver. 56. And the famine was over all the face of the earth,.... Not over the whole world, but the land of Egypt; all the inhabitants of it were pinched with it, rich and poor; it reached all parts and all sorts of men:

and Joseph opened all the storehouses; in the several cities throughout the land where he had laid up corn:

and sold unto the Egyptians; for, as he had bought it with Pharaoh's money, it was no injustice to sell it; and as it could be sold at a moderate price, and yet Pharaoh get enough by it, being bought cheap in a time of plenty, no doubt but Joseph, who was a kind and benevolent man, sold it at such a price:

and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt; there being no overflow of the Nile year after year, and nothing left of the old stock but what was in the storehouses.

Genesis 41:57

Ver. 57. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy [corn],.... All the neighbouring nations (Syria, Arabia, Palestine, Canaan, &c.), when they heard there was corn there for money, came from all parts for it, and were glad to get it at such expense and trouble:

because that the famine was [so] sore in all lands; that there was no bread to be got for money elsewhere. It is thought by many, that for this care of Joseph in laying up provision against this time of need, and which was the preservation of the Egyptians, he was worshipped by them under various names; as the Apis, which was an ox, a sign of fruitfulness; and Serapis, sometimes figured as a young man carrying a basket of bread on his head; and Osiris, who is sometimes represented with a bushel on his head. However, this is certain, that he was an eminent type of Christ in all this, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation: as Joseph was wrongly charged by his mistress, so was Christ falsely accused by the Jews; as he was cast into prison and bound there, so Christ was taken and bound as a prisoner; as Joseph was raised to great honour and glory in Pharaoh's court, so Christ was exalted by his Father, and crowned with glory and honour; and if the new name given him, "Zaphnathpaaneah", signifies the Saviour of the world, as some interpret it, it agrees well with Christ, who was sent into the world for that purpose; and indeed, if it means a revealer of secrets, it suits with him, who hath declared his Father's mind and will, and revealed the mysteries of his grace to the sons of men: and as Joseph had all the stores of corn under his care, and the needy were bid to go to him for it, so Christ has all the treasures of grace in his hand, and all that are sensible of their need of it are directed to go to him for it; and it is from him that men of all nations and countries receive grace for grace, and have all their supplies, and spiritual sustenance and nourishment.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 42:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 42

This chapter relates how that Jacob having heard there was corn in Egypt, sent all his sons but Benjamin thither to buy corn, Ge 42:1; and coming before Joseph, they bowed to him, and he knowing them, though they knew not him, spoke roughly to them, and charged them with being spies, Ge 42:6; they in their defence urged that they were the sons of one man in Canaan, with whom their youngest brother was left, on which Joseph ordered them to send for him, to prove them true men, Ge 42:10; and put them all into prison for three days, and then released them, and sent them away to fetch their brother, Ge 42:17; this brought to mind their treatment of Joseph, and they confessed their guilt to each other, which Joseph heard, and greatly affected him, they supposing he understood them not, and before he dismissed them bound Simeon before their eyes, whom he retained till they returned, Ge 42:21; then he ordered his servants to fill their sacks with corn, and put each man's money in his sack, which one of them on the road found, opening his sack for provender, filled them all with great surprise and fear, Ge 42:25; upon their return to Jacob they related all that had befallen them, and particularly that the governor insisted on having Benjamin brought to him, Ge 42:29; their sacks being opened, all their money was found in them, which greatly distressed them and Jacob also, who was very unwilling to let Benjamin go, though Reuben offered his two sons as pledges for him, and himself to be a surety, Ge 42:35.

Ver. 1. Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt,.... That is, to be sold there, or otherwise it being there, unless it could be bought, would have been of no avail to foreigners; wherefore the Septuagint version is, that there was a sale {w} there, a sale of corn; the word has the signification of "breaking" {x} in it, because that bread corn is broke in the mill, or is broken from the heap when sold or distributed, or because when eaten it breaks the fast. Now Jacob had either seen persons passing by with corn, of whom he inquired from whence they had it, who replied, from Egypt; or he understood by the report of others that corn was to be bought there; though some of the Jewish writers would have it, as Jarchi observes, that he saw it by the revelation of the Holy Spirit:

Jacob said unto, his sons, why do ye look one upon another? like persons in surprise, distress and despair, at their wits' end, not knowing what to do, what course to take, and which way to turn themselves, and scarce able to speak to one another, and consult with each other what was proper to be done; for it seems not so agreeable that they should be charged as idle persons, careless and unconcerned, indifferent and inactive; but rather, if the other sense is not acceptable, the meaning may be, "why do ye look?" {y} here and there, in the land of Canaan, where it is to no purpose to look for corn; look where it is to be had.

{w} rby prasiv Sept. "frumentum venale", Schmidt; so Ainsworth, and the Targum of Jonathan. {x} "Fractio", Montanus, Munster, Piscator. {y} wartt hml "ut quid circumspicitis", Schmidt.

Genesis 42:2

Ver. 2. And he said, behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt,.... This explains what is meant by the phrase he saw, one sense being put for another:

get ye down thither; as fast as you can without delay; Egypt lay lower than Canaan, and therefore they are bid to go down, as when they went from thence to Canaan they are said to go up, Ge 45:25;

and buy for us from thence, that we may live, and not die; which shows the famine was very pressing, since, unless they could buy corn from Egypt they could not live, but must die.

Genesis 42:3

Ver. 3. And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. They obeyed their father's orders, and immediately set out for Egypt; "ten" of them went down in a body together, all but Benjamin, so that it is easily reckoned who they were, and they are called not Jacob's sons, as they were; but Joseph's brethren, whom they had sold into Egypt, and to whom now they were going, though they knew it not, to buy corn of him in their necessity, and to whom they would be obliged to yield obeisance, as they did.

Genesis 42:4

Ver. 4. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren,.... Benjamin is called Joseph's brother, because he was so both by father and mother's side, as the rest were not; him Jacob kept with him, being the youngest and his darling, the only son he had with him of his beloved wife Rachel; and was very probably the more beloved by him since he had been bereft of Joseph; and it was not only to keep him company that he retained him at home, but for the reason following:

for he said, lest peradventure mischief befall him; as had to Joseph his brother, as he imagined; either that the journey would be too much for him, being young, or lest he should be seized with sickness on the road, or rather with death, as Aben Ezra interprets it according to the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan.

Genesis 42:5

Ver. 5. And the sons of Israel came to buy [corn] among those that came,.... Either among the Egyptians that came to buy, or among those who came from different countries, or rather particularly among the Canaanites, as the Targum of Jonathan; with these they might join upon the road, and go together in a body where the market for corn was:

for the famine was in the land of Canaan: which obliged the inhabitants of it as well as Jacob's family to seek for corn elsewhere, and confirms the sense of the preceding clause: this, though a very fruitful land, yet when God withheld a blessing from it, it became barren, as it had been before, Ge 12:10, and was to try the faith of those good men to whom God had given it, and to wean their hearts from being set upon it, and to put them upon seeking a better country, as they did.

Genesis 42:6

Ver. 6. And Joseph [was] the governor over the land,.... Not the land of Canaan last mentioned, but the land of Egypt; under Pharaoh, he had the chief and sole authority, and especially in the affair of the corn, and the disposal of that;

[and] he [it was] that sold to all the people of the land: of Egypt, and also to all that came out of other lands; not that he in person could do all this, but by those that acted under him:

and Joseph's brethren came; to Joseph to buy corn of him:

and bowed down themselves before him, [with] their faces to the earth; not only bowed the knee as the Egyptians did, but prostrated their whole bodies, stretching out their hands and feet, and touching the ground with their faces, as was the manner of the eastern countries, at least some of them; and so of Canaan; and thus did they submit themselves to him in the most humble manner, and thereby, though without their knowledge, fulfilled his dream of their sheaves making obeisance to his sheaf, Ge 37:7.

Genesis 42:7

Ver. 7. And Joseph saw his brethren,.... Among those that came to buy corn, and when they prostrated themselves before him:

and he knew them; some of them being at man's estate, and their beards grown when they sold him, and their habits and dress now being much the same it was then, and by them he knew the younger:

but made himself strange unto them; took no notice of them as his relations, but carried himself to them as he did to other foreigners, and yet more strangely:

and spake roughly unto them; or hard {z} things or words; put on a stern countenance, and spoke with a high tone and in a rough surly manner to them:

and he said unto them, whence come ye? who are ye? of what country are ye? what is your business here?

and they said, from the land of Canaan to buy food; which they could not get in Canaan, the famine being there so great.

{z} twvq "dura", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Genesis 42:8

Ver. 8. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. It being about twenty two years since they saw him, and then he was young, and his beard not grown, as now it was; and besides, he was clothed as a prince, and spoke the Egyptian language; and being in such great grandeur and splendour, and in such power and authority, and having such a retinue attending him, they never once thought of him, whom they supposed might be dead, having never heard of him all this time; or, however, it could not come into their minds, that he whom they sold for a slave could ever be governor of the land of Egypt.

Genesis 42:9

Ver. 9. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them,.... Their bowing and prostrating themselves before him brought to his remembrance his dreams of their sheaves making obeisance to his, and of the sun, moon, and eleven stars, doing the same to him, Ge 37:7;

and said unto them, ye [are] spies; not believing they were, nor absolutely asserting that they were such; but this he said to try them, and what they would say for themselves, and in order to lead on to further discourse with them, and to get knowledge of his father and brother Benjamin, whether living or not: he dealt with them as a judge on the bench, when examining persons, whose charges have the nature of an interrogation, as this has: "ye [are] spies"; are ye not? surely ye must be, and unless you give a better account of yourselves, I must take you up as such:

to see the nakedness of the land ye are come: what parts of it are weakest, most defenceless, and less fortified, and most easy to break in at, and invade the land; and it was not without reason that the Egyptians might suspect the neighbouring nations round about them, being in distress, and hearing of corn in Egypt, of forming a design of coming upon them and taking away their corn by force, and might be the reason why foreigners that came to buy corn were brought before Joseph and examined by him.

Genesis 42:10

Ver. 10. And they said unto him, nay, my lord,.... One in the name of the rest, or each in his turn, denying that they were spies, and addressing him with the greatest reverence and submission, calling him their lord, and thus further accomplishing his dreams:

but to buy food are thy servants come; that and no other was the errand they came upon.

Genesis 42:11

Ver. 11. We [are] all one man's sons,.... Therefore not likely to be spies; it could hardly be thought that a single family should engage in such an affair; or that one man would, send his sons as spies, and especially all of them, it being a dangerous affair, and they being liable to be taken up and put to death; and as more families than one must be concerned in such an enterprise, it is reasonable to suppose, that if they had been spies they would have been of different families, and also not together, but in different parts of the kingdom, to observe the fittest place to enter in at and execute their design:

we [are] true [men]: that spoke truth when they said they came to buy corn; were honest, upright, and sincere in what they said, nor would they, nor durst they, tell a lie:

thy servants are no spies; this they expressed in the strongest terms, and with the fullest assurance they could, detesting the charge and character of being spies.

Genesis 42:12

Ver. 12. And he said unto them, nay,.... This argument will not do, I am not to be put off with such words as these; if you can produce no better proof of your being honest men than this, or give no better account of yourselves, I must abide by it, that,

to see the nakedness of the land ye are come; this he urged in order to get a further account from them of their family and the state of it, which he was anxious to know.

Genesis 42:13

Ver. 13. And they said, thy servants [are] twelve brethren,.... Or rather, "were twelve", since one afterwards is said not to be:

the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; of Jacob, who dwelt there; this is said with the same view as before, to show the improbability of their being spies;

and, behold, the youngest [is] this day with our father: meaning Benjamin, whom Joseph was eager to hear of, and no doubt was glad to hear he was alive, and his father also, and that they were both together in the land of Canaan:

and one [is] not; is not in the land of the living, is dead; for so they thought Joseph was, who is the person intended, as appears from what both Reuben and Judah afterwards say, Ge 42:22; and yet he was before them, and was the person they were speaking to: this must be very striking and affecting to Joseph, who knew full well they meant himself.

Genesis 42:14

Ver. 14. And Joseph said unto them, that [is it] that I spake unto you, saying, ye [are] spies. This proves it, at least gives strong suspicion of it; since at first they seemed to speak of themselves, as if they were the only sons of one man and there were no more, now they speak of twelve, and make mention of one being at home with his father; but seeing he sent so many of them, why not all? why should one only be left at home?

Genesis 42:15

Ver. 15. Hereby ye shall be proved,.... Whether spies, or not, namely, by producing their youngest brother, said to be at home with his father:

by the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither: the phrase, "by the life of Pharaoh", seems to be the form of an oath, as it was common with many nations, especially with the Scythians, who used to swear by the royal throne {a}, and the Romans, in later times, by the life, health, and genius of their emperor; and this custom of swearing by the life of their king, or by his head, continued with the Egyptians, as Aben Ezra says, unto his times; though some take this to be a wish or prayer for the life of Pharaoh, and render it, "may Pharaoh live" {b}, or, at most, but a strong asseveration, that as dear as the life of Pharaoh was to him, so surely they should not stir from the place where they were, unless their youngest brother Benjamin was brought thither.

{a} Herodot. Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 68. {b} herp yx "vivat Parhoh", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; so Ainsworth and Lightfoot.

Genesis 42:16

Ver. 16. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother,.... He proposes that one of them might be sent by them to their father's house, and bring, Benjamin down to Egypt:

and ye shall be kept in prison; the rest of them till he came:

that your words may be proved, whether [there be any] truth in you; by this it would be seen whether they were men of truth and honesty or not; and should their brother be brought they would appear to be good men and true:

or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely ye [are] spies; should not their brother they spoke of be produced, it would be a plain case that they were not the honest men they pretended to be, nor did they come merely to buy corn, but had an ill intention.

Genesis 42:17

Ver. 17. And he put them all together into ward three days. In order to consult together, and agree who should be sent to fetch their brother; and which it seems probable in this length of time they could not agree upon, no one caring to be the bringer of such evil tidings to their father.

Genesis 42:18

Ver. 18. And Joseph said unto them the third day,.... His heart yearning towards them, though he put on such an appearance; finding they could not come to an agreement among themselves who should go on the errand, he thought fit to recede from his former order, and to give them another:

this do, and live: meaning what he was about to say to them, which if they punctually observed and performed, it would be the means of saving their lives:

[for] I fear God; and therefore would not do either an unjust or cruel thing. This might have given them an him who he was: but there being among the Gentiles, in all nations, some few that feared God, they took no further notice of it than this, that they might expect just and equitable dealings by

him; since, though he was in such an high place, he knew and owned there was one higher than he, to whom he was accountable.

Genesis 42:19

Ver. 19. If ye [be] true [men],.... As you say you are:

let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison; agree among yourselves which of you (for one of you must) remain in prison where you are: and the rest being set at liberty,

go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses; Joseph, though he dealt with them after this manner to get what knowledge he could of his family, and to get sight of his brother, yet was concerned for the good of them and theirs, lest they should be in extreme want through the famine, and that they might have a speedy supply of corn, was not willing to detain them any longer.

Genesis 42:20

Ver. 20. But bring your youngest brother unto me,.... Upon their return for more corn:

so shall your words be verified; that they were true men, and had no ill design upon the land, but were come only to buy corn:

and ye shall not die; as spies, which they were otherwise threatened with; and as it is customary in all nations to put such to death when found out:

and they did so; they left one of their brethren behind; they carried corn to their houses or families in Canaan, and brought their brother Benjamin with them when they returned to Egypt.

Genesis 42:21

Ver. 21. And they said one to another,.... Before they went out of the prison, at least while in the presence of Joseph:

we [are] verily guilty concerning our brother; meaning Joseph, whom they had sold for a slave, and who they supposed was dead through grief and hard servitude; and now being in trouble themselves, it brings to mind the sin they had been guilty of, which, though committed twenty two years ago, was still fresh in their memories, and lay heavy on their consciences; for length of time neither makes sin less, nor the conscience lighter, when it is revived and charged home upon it, and which was aggravated particularly by the following circumstance:

in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; when in the utmost agony, with trembling limbs, and quivering lips, and floods of tears, as they stripped him of his coat, he most earnestly and importunately requested of them they would not put him into the pit, and leave him there; and in the same manner entreated them they would not put him into the hands of strangers, but restore him alive to his father; but they turned a deaf ear to all his cries and entreaties, and hardened themselves against him:

therefore is this distress come upon us; the same measure that was measured by them to him, was now measured to them again, and they were dealt with according to "lex talionis": they cast Joseph into a pit, and now they were committed to a prison; they would not attend to his cries and tears, and the anguish of his soul did not move their pity, and now he is inexorable to them, and will not at least appear to have any compassion on them, or show pity to them; and perhaps their being dealt with in this similar way brought to their remembrance what they had done.

Genesis 42:22

Ver. 22. And Reuben answered them,.... Being the eldest, and who had been most concerned for the life of Joseph, and most tender and careful of him:

saying, spake I not unto you, saying, do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear? it seems by this that Reuben endeavoured to dissuade his brethren from selling Joseph, when they first proposed it, to which they would not attend; since it is certain they did hearken to him as not to kill him directly, as they first consulted, and they hearkened to him to cast him into a pit, where he did not intend he should continue, but till he had an opportunity of taking him out, and returning him to his father: but it seems probable that Reuben was with them when they first spied the Ishmaelites, and proposed to sell Joseph to them, which he objected to, and entreated they would not do it; and perhaps he went out from them, and took a circuit, with a view to get to the pit and take Joseph out, but before he got thither his brethren had taken him out, and sold him: or this may refer to the general advice he always gave them, to do nothing that might endanger the life of Joseph, or be the means of his death, which selling him for a slave he supposed had been:

therefore, behold, also, his blood is required; the Targum of Jonathan adds, "of us"; they were accessary to his death, and guilty of it; for Reuben supposed he was dead, and now they must suffer for it, as a just retaliation, being threatened with death unless they could clear themselves.

Genesis 42:23

Ver. 23. And they knew not that Joseph understood [them],.... For what is above related they spoke in his presence and hearing; but speaking to one another in the Hebrew language, and he being an Egyptian, as they took him to be, they did not imagine that he could understand them, and therefore were not at all upon their guard in what they said: and what confirmed them in this was,

for he spake unto them by an interpreter; which he the rather chose to do, that they might have no suspicion of him; and which shows, that though there was a likeness between the Hebrew language and the Egyptian in many things, yet in some they differed, and the difference was such that there was need of an interpreter, where the parties did not understand both languages: this interpreter between Joseph and his brethren, according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, was Manasseh, the eldest son of Joseph, and so Jarchi; which is very improbable, he being but a child at this time, if not an infant; see Ge 41:50.

Genesis 42:24

Ver. 24. And he turned himself about from them, and wept,.... Hearing his brethren confess their sin and guilt to one another in selling him, and Reuben's affectionate concern for him, it wrought so much upon his affections, being naturally of a tender spirit, that he could no longer act the part he had, and keep up the sternness and severity of his countenance; wherefore he turned his face from them, that they might not discern it, and his back upon them, and went into another room: and after he had given vent to his passion, and composed himself,

and returned to them again, and communed with them; upon the same subject, of going with their corn to Canaan, and bringing their youngest brother with them upon their return, and promising moreover, for their encouragement, a free traffic in the land of Egypt, Ge 42:34:

and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes; who perhaps was the most cruel and hardhearted among them; and it appears from the affair of Shechem, that he was a man of a fierce and bloody disposition. According to Jarchi, it was he that said to Levi, on sight of Joseph, behold this dreamer cometh; and that it was he that cast him into the pit; and, as the Targum says, advised to kill him: and perhaps Joseph might pitch upon him as the hostage, not only because he had used him more evilly than the rest, but because he might observe he was less concerned, and not so much humbled now for the evil he had done as the rest were; as also he might choose to detain him, as being not so much in his father's affection, because of the affair of Shechem, and so be a less affliction to him than if it was another; and besides, he might fear that being of a perverse and boisterous disposition, he would vehemently oppose the sending of Benjamin into Egypt, which Joseph was so very desirous of: and he bound him in their presence to terrify them, and let them know what they must expect if they did not obey his orders, and the more to humble them for the sin they had been guilty of, and was now upon their minds; though perhaps, as Jarchi observes, when they were gone he let him out, and gave him food and drink; or however might give him some liberty, and use him with mildness and gentleness.

Genesis 42:25

Ver. 25. Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn,.... Which was as much as they came for:

and to restore every man's money into his sack; the money paid by each for his quantity of corn delivered to him, not into the person's hands, but to be put into his sack privately, and unknown to him;

and to give them provision for the way; sufficient both for themselves and for their cattle, that they might carry the whole of what corn they bought to their families:

and thus did he unto them; that is, not Joseph, but his steward or deputy, or however the servant that he gave the above order to.

Genesis 42:26

Ver. 26. And they laded their asses with the corn,.... Cattle very fit to carry burdens, and no doubt they had each of them one at least:

and departed thence; from the place where Joseph was, and from the land of Egypt.

Genesis 42:27

Ver. 27. And as one of them opened his sack,.... According to the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi, this was Levi; but Aben Ezra thinks it is more likely to be Reuben the firstborn, who was one, that is, the first of them:

to give his ass provender in the inn; at which they lay very probably the first night of their journey; a good man regards the life of his beast, and takes care of that as well as of himself, and generally in the first place:

he espied his money; the money which he paid for his corn:

for, behold, it [was] in his sack's mouth; just as he opened it.

Genesis 42:28

Ver. 28. And he said unto his brethren, my money is restored,.... The money paid for the corn is returned:

and, lo, [it is] even in my sack; this put them all upon opening their sacks, where every man found his money, though not expressed, see Ge 43:21:

and their heart failed [them]; through surprise and fear; or "went out" {c} front them, as it were, they were ready to faint and swoon away:

and they were afraid; their consciences being awakened, and loaded with the guilt of their former sins, they were afraid that more evil was coming upon them for them; and that this was a scheme laid to entrap them, and that they should be pursued and seized, and fetched back, and charged with a fraud and trick, as going off with their corn without paying for it:

saying one to another, what [is] this [that] God hath done unto us? for whoever was the instrument, they concluded the overruling hand of divine Providence was in it, for the further chastisement and correction of them for their iniquity: instead of being thus frightened and distressed, it is very much it did not give them suspicion of Joseph, that he was the person they had been conversing with, and that he had done this in kindness to them; but their minds were so pressed with the guilt of their sin, that they were possessed of nothing but fears and dreadful apprehensions of things, and put the worst construction upon them they could, as men in such circumstances usually do, even fear where no fear is, or no occasion for it.

{c} Mbl auyw "et exiit cor eorum", Montanus, Drusius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Genesis 42:29

Ver. 29. And they came unto Jacob their father, unto the land of Canaan,.... Without being pursued and fetched back, or retarded in their journey as they might fear:

and told him all that befell unto them; chiefly what befell them while in Egypt:

saying, as follows.

Genesis 42:30

Ver. 30. The man, [who is] the lord of the land,.... Of Egypt; not the king, but the deputy governor of it, whose authority under Pharaoh was very great, and reached to the whole land, and all political affairs, and especially what related to the corn, and the sale of it; he, say they,

spake roughly to us; gave them hard words, and stern looks, and used them in a very rough manner, see Ge 42:7;

and took us for spies of the country; laid such a charge against them, and treated them as such; or "gave" them {d}, committed them to prison as such.

{d} Ntyw "et dedit", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt; "[sive] tradidit", Fagius, Vatablus.

Genesis 42:31

Ver. 31. And we said unto him, we [are] true [men],.... Honest, upright men, not given to treacherous and treasonable practices, either in the country where they lived, or any other; they came to Egypt with no ill design upon the country, only to buy corn for the relief of their families in necessity:

we are no spies; or never were {e}: they had never been guilty of such practices, and never charged with anything of that kind; they denied the charge, and detested the character.

{e} wnyyh al "non fuimus", Montanus; "nunquam fuimus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Genesis 42:32

Ver. 32. We [be] twelve brethren, sons of our father,.... All brethren by the father's side, though not by the mother's, and by one father; they had been twelve, and were so now, though they knew it not, supposing that one was dead, as is next observed:

one [is] not; is not alive, but dead; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"what is become of one we know not"

and the youngest [is] this day with our father in the land of Canaan; see Ge 42:13.

Genesis 42:33

Ver. 33. And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, hereby shall I know that you [are] true [men],.... This will be a proof and demonstration of it:

leave one of your brethren [here] with me; as an hostage; they do not say "bound in the prison", Ge 42:19, as Joseph did, because they would not grieve their father, at least would not tell him of it at once, lest it should too much affect him:

and take [food for] the famine of your household, and be gone; that is, corn for the relief of their families, being distressed with a famine.

Genesis 42:34

Ver. 34. And, bring your youngest brother unto me,.... Their brother Benjamin:

then shall I know that you [are] no spies, but [that] you [are] true [men]; he knew they were no spies now, but true, honest, upright men, with respect to any designs upon the country; but then he should own and acknowledge them to be such, having such plain proof that what they said was true:

[so] will I deliver your brother; their brother Simeon, who was left bound; though this circumstance they also here studiously conceal from their father:

and ye shall traffic in the land; not only for corn, but for any other commodity Egypt furnished its neighbours with.

Genesis 42:35

Ver. 35. And it came to pass, as they emptied their sacks,.... Both those in which were the corn they had bought, and those in which were their provender for their cattle, and provision for themselves:

that, behold, every man's bundle of money [was] in his sack; the same purse, and the same pieces of money, gold or silver, they had paid to the steward:

and when [both] they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"because of Simeon, whom they had left there;"

fearing that they should he charged with theft or fraud, and that Simeon would be put to death; they had opened their sacks before, and found their money in them, but put it up again as it was, in order to open them in their father's presence, from whom they thought proper to conceal this circumstance, lest he should blame them for not returning to the governor with their money upon the first notice of it, when they had travelled but one day's journey; wherefore they make no mention of it in the account of things that befell them, and express their surprise and fear upon finding it when they opened their sacks, as if they had known, nothing of it before; though it may be their fears were renewed and increased by what Jacob might observe to them, as the consequence of it, which they had not so thoroughly considered before.

Genesis 42:36

Ver. 36. And Jacob their father said unto them, me have ye bereaved [of my children],.... Which looks as if Jacob suspected that they had either sold or slain Joseph, and had done one or the other by Simeon:

Joseph [is] not, and Simeon [is] not: neither of them were with him, and both were given up by him as dead, or, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it, "of Joseph ye have said an evil beast hath devoured him; and Simeon, ye say, the king of the country hath bound him;"

as for Joseph he knew not but he was dead, he feared he was; and as for Simeon, he being in the hands of so rough a man as they had represented the lord of the land to be, and especially as his release depended upon sending Benjamin, which he was determined at present not to do; he was reckoned by him as a lost or dead man:

and ye will take Benjamin [away]; they were desirous of it, and what their design was he could not tell; he seems to have a strong suspicion that it was not good:

all these things are against me; against his will, his peace, and comfort, and happiness, though they were all working and would work as they did for his good, and for the good of his family, for the preservation of it during the seven years of famine; or are "upon me" {f}, as heavy burdens, too heavy for him to bear, ready to sink him down to the earth.

{f} yle "super me", Montanus, Schmidt; "[vel.] in me", V. L. Vatablus.

Genesis 42:37

Ver. 37. And Reuben spoke unto his father,.... Being the eldest son, it most property lay upon him to make answer to his father in the name of his brethren, and to offer a word of comfort to him:

saying, slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee; meaning not Simeon, who was in Egypt, but Benjamin, whom it was proposed to take thither, and whom Jacob was very loath to part with; and to persuade him to it Reuben offers to him, and gives him leave to slay his two sons, or rather two of his sons {g}, since he had four, Ge 46:9; if he did not bring Benjamin again to him: this was a strange proposal, for what were two sons of his to his own son, so exceedingly beloved by him? besides, to lose his own son, and to have two of his grandchildren slain, would have been an increase of his sorrow and grief, instead of being an alleviation of it; but Reuben's meaning was, not that his children should be slain, but this he says, to show that he would be as careful and solicitous for the return of Benjamin as if the life of two sons of his lay at stake, and was so confident of it that he could risk the life of them upon it, who were as dear to him as one Benjamin was to his father:

deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again; he undertook to be responsible for him.

{g} ynb ynv ta "duos filiorum meorum", Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Genesis 42:38

Ver. 38. And he said, my son shall not go down with you,.... He gives a peremptory denial; this was his then present resolution and determination:

for his brother is dead; meaning Joseph, Benjamin's own brother by father and mother's side; him he supposed to be dead, such circumstances being related and produced, which made it highly probable, and he had not heard anything of him for twenty two years:

and he is left alone; Benjamin being the only surviving child of his dearly beloved Rachel, as he thought:

if mischief befall him by the way in which ye go; that is, to Egypt, whether by thieves and robbers, or by the fatigue of the journey, or by any means whatever, so that he loses his life. All the Targums interpret this mischief of death:

then shall ye bring down my gray heirs with sorrow to the grave; the sense is, should this be the case he should never lift up his head, or have any more comfort in this world, but should pass his time with continual sorrow until his gray head was laid in the grave, or till he came to the state of the dead.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 43:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 43

This chapter informs us how that the famine continued in the land of Canaan,

and the corn that Jacob's family had from Egypt being consumed, Jacob pressed his sons to go down for more, which they refused to do, unless Benjamin was sent with them, for whose safety Judah offered to become a surety, Ge 43:1; Jacob with reluctance was prevailed upon to let him go, and dismissed them with a present to the governor of Egypt, and with double money to buy corn with, and with his blessing upon them, Ge 43:11; upon which they set out for Egypt; and when they came into the presence of Joseph, he seeing Benjamin with them, ordered his steward to have them to his house, and get dinner ready, it being his pleasure that they should dine with him that day,
Ge 43:15; this threw them into a fright, supposing they were going to be called to an account for the money they found in their sacks; wherefore they related to the steward very particularly the whole of that affair, who bid them not be uneasy, for he had had their money; and as a proof that things would go well with them, brought Simeon out to them, and treated them very kindly and gently, Ge 43:18; and having got their present ready against Joseph came home, they delivered it to him with great veneration and submission; who asked of the welfare of their father, and whether that was not their younger brother they spoke of, the sight of whom so affected him, that he was obliged in haste to retire to his chamber, and weep, Ge 43:25; and having washed his face, and composed himself, he returned and ordered dinner to be brought, which was set on different tables, one for himself and the Egyptians, and the other for his brethren, whom he placed according to their age, to their great surprise; and sent them messes from his table to each, and to Benjamin five times more than the rest, and they were so liberally entertained, that they became cheerful and merry, Ge 43:31.

Ver. 1. And the famine [was] sore in the land. In the land of Canaan; it increased yet more and more: this is observed for the sake of what follows, showing the reason and necessity of Jacob's sons taking a second journey into Egypt.

Genesis 43:2

Ver. 2. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt,.... Which, in so numerous a family as Jacob's was, having so many children, grandchildren, and servants, what nine men on so many asses could bring with them must be consumed in a short time, how long cannot be said; no doubt they lived sparingly on it in such a time of scarcity, to make it last as long as they could, and perhaps only he, his children and grandchildren, might eat of it; the servants, as Calvin observes, might live on meaner food, as acorns, herbs, and roots; and it must not be thought that all this corn was eaten up entirely, and none left, but the far greater part of it, and but very little remaining; or otherwise, how should Jacob, and his sons' wives and children be supported until the return of his sons from Egypt with fresh provisions? indeed it may be supposed, that the land of Canaan produced some corn, though but little; and it is certain there were other fruits which were serviceable for food, as appears from Ge 43:11:

their father said, go again, buy us a little food; just enough for him, and them, and theirs, for the present; hoping that the famine would be over quickly, and therefore orders them to go once more to Egypt, and buy some provisions: they made no motion themselves to go, as it is highly probable they determined they would not, since Jacob had resolved Benjamin should not go, but waited for their father's motion, and which he did not make until necessity obliged him.

Genesis 43:3

Ver. 3. And Judah spake unto him,.... Reuben the eldest son had met with a repulse already, Ge 42:36; Simeon the next was now in Egypt, Ge 42:24, and Levi, perhaps on account of the affair of Shechem, Ge 34:25, did not yet stand well in his father's favour and affection; wherefore Judah being next, with the consent of his brethren, undertakes to manage the affair with him, who had doubtless an interest in him, as well as authority among his brethren, and was a prudent man, and could speak well:

saying, the man did solemnly protest unto us; meaning Joseph, though he then knew not that it was he; whom he calls "the man", not by way of contempt, or as thinking and speaking meanly of him, but the reverse, the great man, the honourable man, the governor of Egypt; and so the Septuagint version adds, "the man, the lord of the land"; he in the strongest terms, and in the most solemn manner, protested by the life of Pharaoh:

saying, ye shall not see my face; with acceptance, should not be admitted to come near him, or treat with him, and purchase any corn of him:

except your brother [be] with you; their youngest brother Benjamin.

Genesis 43:4

Ver. 4. If thou wilt send our brother with us,.... Give orders for his going with us, and put him under our care:

we will go down and buy thee food; signifying, on the above condition, that they were ready and willing to take a journey into Egypt, and buy provisions for him and his family, otherwise not.

Genesis 43:5

Ver. 5. But if thou wilt not send [him], we will not go down,.... This they said not as undutiful, and from a spirit of rebellion and disobedience to their father, or of stubbornness and obstinacy, but because they durst not go down, nor could they with any safety; they might expect to be taken up as spies, and put to death as they were threatened; and besides, it would be in vain, and to no purpose, since there was no likelihood of succeeding, or of getting any provision:

for the man said unto us, ye shall not see my face, except your brother [be] with you; which they repeat both for the confirmation of it, and as an apology for themselves, to clear them from any charge of unfaithfulness.

Genesis 43:6

Ver. 6. And Israel said,.... In answer to the speech of Judah:

wherefore dealt ye [so] ill with me; had done that which brought so much evil upon him, gave him so much grief and trouble, and threw him into such perplexity and distress, that he knew not what to do, or course to take:

[as] to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? which he thought was done imprudently and unadvisedly, and that there was no need of it; which, had it not been done, would have prevented this anxiety of mind he was now in, and the mischief he feared would follow.

Genesis 43:7

Ver. 7. And they said,.... Not Judah only, in the name of the rest, but each of them in turn, being all charged with doing an ill thing:

the man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred; or "in asking asked" {h}; very particularly and closely, putting many questions to us, who we were? to whom we belonged? of what family we were? and inquired into the particulars and circumstances of our relations:

saying, [is] your father yet alive? have ye [another] brother? they told him they were all one man's sons, as they were obliged, when they were charged with being spies, in order to clear themselves,
Ge 42:10; upon which he inquired whether their father was living, and whether they were all the sons their father had:

and we told him according to the tenor of these words; they answered to these questions put to them, and which were so closely put, that they could do no other than say what they did:

could we certainly know that he would say, bring your brother down? could they have foreseen this, they would have been more upon their guard; though in all probability had they been ever so cautious this would have been the case; it would have been required of them to bring their brother with them, so desirous was Joseph of seeing him.

{h} lav lav "interrogando interrogavit", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Genesis 43:8

Ver. 8. And Judah said unto Israel his father, send the lad with me,
and we will arise and go,.... Directly to Egypt for corn; Judah calls Benjamin a lad, because the youngest brother, and tenderly brought up by his father, who had an affectionate fondness for him as if he had been a child; otherwise he must be thirty two years of age, for he was seven years younger than Joseph, who was now thirty nine years of age; yea, Benjamin must have children of his own, who went with him and his father into Egypt, Ge 46:21; for the computation of Benjamin's age, see Ge 30:22;

that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, [and] also our little ones; he argues, that if they with Benjamin went down to Egypt for corn, there was a possibility, yea, a probability that they would all live, even Benjamin also; but if not, they must all in course die, and Benjamin likewise; and therefore it was most prudent and advisable, for the sake of all their lives, of them and theirs, and for the sake of Benjamin among the rest, for whom Jacob was so particularly concerned, to let him go with them to Egypt for corn, since he must die if they did not go, and he could but die if he did go; and there was great likelihood, if not a certainty, he would not; at least Judah was confident he would not, as appears by what follows.

Genesis 43:9

Ver. 9. I will be surety for him,.... Engage for his safe return:

of my hand shall thou require him; I will be answerable for him:

if I bring him not to thee, and set him before thee: do not return him from Egypt, and bring him to Canaan, into his father's house and presence safe, and sound:

then let me bear the blame for ever; of persuading his father to let him go with him; all this he said, to show what care he would take of him, and what confidence he had that no evil would befall him, that he would be returned with them in safety; which he might ground upon the assurance that Joseph had given, that they should not die if they brought their brother with them, Ge 42:20; and perhaps Judah, as Schmidt thinks, might be under a special instinct of divine Providence, which directed him to say these things: and it may be added, that Jacob also might be under a divine impulse, which influenced him to regard what Judah said, or otherwise his suretyship was but a poor security, and of little avail.

Genesis 43:10

Ver. 10. For except we had lingered,.... Delayed going down to Egypt, through the demur Jacob made of tending Benjamin with them:

surely now we had returned this second time; they would have made their journey to Egypt, and returned again with their corn, and their brother Benjamin too, as Judah supposed, before this time; so that by these delays they were losing time, and involving themselves and families in distress for want of corn.

Genesis 43:11

Ver. 11. And their father said unto them,.... Being in some measure convinced by their reasonings, and in part at least reconciled to let Benjamin go with them, there being nothing to be done, he perceived, unless he consented to it:

if [it must be] so now, do this; if nothing else will do but Benjamin must go, which after all he was reluctant to, then he advises them to do as follows:

take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels; such as were the peculiar produce of the land of Canaan, and the best of it; for which it was most famous, and praised, as the word used signifies; these Jacob advises to take and put into their sacks they carried to bring back their corn in:

and carry down the man a present; the great man and governor of Egypt, whose name was not known, little thinking it was his son Joseph; this he proposed to be done, in order to procure his friendship, that he might carry it kindly and respectfully to them, release Simeon, and send back Benjamin with them. The present consisted of the following things,

a little balm: or rosin, of which there was great quantity in and about Gilead; See Gill on "Jer 8:22":

and a little honey; the land of Canaan in general is called a land flowing with milk and honey; and some parts of it were famous for it, as the, parts about Ziph, called from thence the honey of Ziphim {i}: this is the first time mention is made of "honey" in Scripture. Some say {k} Bacchus was the inventor of it. Justin {l} makes a very ancient king of a people in the country, now called Spain, to whom he gives the name of Gorgoris, to be the first that found out the way of gathering honey; but by this it appears to be of a more early date. Dr. Shaw {m} thinks, that not honey, properly so called, is meant, but a kind of "rob" made of the juice of grapes, called by the Arabs "dibsa", a word near in sound with, and from the same root as this. And who further observes, that Hebron alone (the place were Jacob now was) sends every year to Egypt three hundred camel loads, i.e. near two thousand quintals of this rob: and Leo Africanus says {n}, there is but little honey to be found in Egypt, wherefore it made this part of the present the more acceptable:

spices; of various sorts, a collection of them; though it is thought, by Bochart and others, that the "storax" is particularly meant; the best of that sort being, as Pliny {o} says in Judea. The Targum and Jarchi take it to be "wax", as do also other Jewish writers:

and myrrh; the liquor called "stacte", that drops from the myrrh tree. Some will have this "lot", as the word is, the same with "ladanum"; one should rather think that it should be the lotus or lote tree, the fruit of which, Pliny {p} says, is the size of a bean, and of a saffron colour, and Herodotus {q} says, it is sweet like a date; but that it was frequent in Egypt, and needed not be carried there. The Targum renders it "chestnuts", and so Ben Melech, as it does what follows,

nuts, and almonds, the oil of nuts, and the oil of almonds: the former design not common, but the pistachio nuts, as Jarchi observes from R. Machir; and these, as Pliny {r} says, were well known in Syria, and were good for food and drink, and against the bites of serpents; and, as Bochart {s} observes, are frequently mentioned by naturalists along with almonds, and as like unto them.

{i} Misn. Machshirin, c. 5. sect. 9. {k} "Et a Baccho mella reperta ferunt", Ovid. Fast. l. 3. {l} E Trogo, l. 44. c. 4. {m} Travels, p. 339. No. 6. Ed. 2. {n} Descriptio Africae, l. 8. p. 682. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 25. {p} Ib. l. 13. c. 17. {q} Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 177. Vid. Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 92. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 5. {s} Canaan, l. 1. c. 10. col. 389.

Genesis 43:12

Ver. 12. And take double money in your hand,.... Than what they carried before, either to buy as much more as they then did; or rather because of the greater scarcity of corn, as Jarchi observes, which made it doubly dearer; for this seems to be different from the money they are also bid to take in return for that found in their sacks, which was a third parcel, as follows:

and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry [it] again in your hand; that it might be ready to pay upon demand, should they be charged with nonpayment for the corn they had before:

peradventure it [was] an oversight; a mistake of the governors, or of those that were under him, concerned in the sale of the corn, and receiving money for it, or of Jacob's sons; he could not tell how it was, but some way or other he supposed a mistake was made.

Genesis 43:13

Ver. 13. Take also your brother,.... Their brother Benjamin, committing him into their hands and to their care, hereby declaring his consent and willingness that he should go with them:

and arise, go again to the man; the governor of Egypt, to buy corn of him.

Genesis 43:14

Ver. 14. And God Almighty give you mercy before the man,.... Who has the hearts of all men in his hands, kings, princes, governors, even those who are the most cruel and hardhearted, rough and severe in their tempers and dispositions, and such an one they had represented this man to be; one that had spoke roughly to them, and used them roughly: Jacob therefore sent him a present to soften his mind, and now he puts up a prayer to God, and dismisses his sons with his good wishes for them, that God would incline the heart of the governor to show kindness to them, and let them have corn, nor use any of them ill: particularly,

that he may send away your other brother and Benjamin; release Simeon, and send him and Benjamin aiming with them when they returned:

if I be bereaved [of my children], I am bereaved; this he said, not as utterly despairing of their return, but as expressive of his patient submission to the divine will, be it as it may be.

Genesis 43:15

Ver. 15. And the men took the present,.... Their father directed them to:

and they took double money in their hand; besides what they found in their sacks mouths, which they also carried with them:

and Benjamin; they took him likewise with their father's leave:

and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph; presented themselves to him, and their petitions for more corn, as well as to answer to any questions that should be asked them.

Genesis 43:16

Ver. 16. And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them,.... Whom he knew, though he had not seen him twenty two years, and though he must be very much altered, being but about ten years of age when Joseph was said into Egypt, yet being with the rest of his brethren, whom he knew very well, concluded it must be him:

he said to the ruler of his house; his steward, as be is after called, not his son Manasseh, as the Targum of Jonathan:

bring [these] men home; to his own house, for Joseph was now at or near the place where were the granaries of corn, and where that was said and distributed:

and slay, and make ready; or "slay a slaughter" {t}, that is, of beasts for food; a sheep, or a lamb, or a calf, very probably, and order it to be dressed, boiled or roasted, or both, that it might be fit for food: wherefore Aben Ezra must be mistaken when Ge 46:34; he says, that the Egyptians in those times did not eat flesh, nor might any kill a sheep; for it cannot be thought that Joseph could order a dinner for his brethren, to whom as yet he did not choose to make himself known, in direct violation of the customs and laws of Egypt, and who, it is plain by what follows, dined as an Egyptian, and with the Egyptians, and not as an Hebrew, and with his brethren as Hebrews; besides, for what purpose did Pharaoh get and possess such herds and flocks of cattle, if not for food as well as other uses? see Ge 47:6; though in later times they abstained from eating various animals, as Porphyry {u} from Chaeremon relates, and particularly from sheep and goats, according to Juvenal {x}:

for [these] men shall dine with me at noon; which was the usual time of dining with the eastern people, as it is now with us, though with the Romans at evening.

{t} xbj xbj "macta mactationem", Drusius, Schmidt; "macta animalia", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {u} De abstinentia, l. 4. sect. 6, 7. {x} "-----lanatis animalibus abstinet omnis Mensa, nefas illic foetus jugulare capellae." Satyr 15. ver. 11, 12.

Genesis 43:17

Ver. 17. And the man did as Joseph bade: and the man brought the men into Joseph's house. Showed them the way to it, and introduced them into it, and led them into some apartment in it, and ordered every thing to be got ready for dinner as his master had bid him, being a diligent and faithful servant: at old Cair is shown to travellers {y} the house of Joseph in the tower, and a very surprising well, said to be made by him, and here, they say; the granaries were, in which the corn was laid up.

{y} Radzivil, Thevenot, Le Brun & Lucas apud Jablonski de Terra Goshen, Dissert. 5. sect. 6.

Genesis 43:18

Ver. 18. And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house,.... It not being usual, as Jarchi observes, for those that came to buy corn to lodge there, but at an inn in the city:

and they said, because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; to examine and inquire of them how they came to go away without paying for their corn, take up their money again after they had laid it down, and take it away with them, and so were guilty of tricking and defrauding, if not of theft:

that he may seek occasion against us: or "roll on us" {z}; cast all the shame on them, and leave the reproach and scandal of it on them:

and fall upon us; with hard words, and severe menaces, if not with blows:

and take us for bondmen, and our asses; imprison them, which was the punishment for fraud and theft, and take their asses as a forfeiture.

{z} wnyle llnthl "ut devolvat (hoc) in nos", Tigurine version.

Genesis 43:19

Ver. 19. And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house,.... The same person before called the ruler of his house, under whose direction they were; just before they came to the house, as it seems by what follows, they made up to him as having something to say to him:

and they communed with him at the door of the house; before they went into it, being uneasy and eager to know what should be the meaning of their being brought thither, which was unusual.

Genesis 43:20

Ver. 20. And said, O sir,.... Or, "on me, my lord" {a}, one said in the name of the rest, perhaps Judah, on me let the blame lie, if guilty of rudeness in making our address to thee; or as the Vulgate Latin version, "we pray, sir, that thou wouldest hear us"; and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra say the phrase is expressive of beseeching, entreating, and supplicating:

we came indeed down at the first time to buy food; not to spy the land but to buy corn, and not to get it by fraud or tricking but by paying for it the price that was required.

{a} ynda yb "in me Domine mi", Montanus.

Genesis 43:21

Ver. 21. And it came to pass when we came to the inn,.... Upon the road, on the first day's journey, to refresh themselves and their cattle:

that we opened our sacks; to give provender to our cattle; by which it appears that they all did this, though it is only said of one of them at the inn, and of all of them when they came home, Ge 42:27;

and, behold, [every] man's money [was] in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; nothing wanting of it; it being usual in those times to pay money by weight, and not by the tale of pieces:

and we have brought it again in our hand; in order to pay it for the corn we have had, having no design to defraud.

Genesis 43:22

Ver. 22. And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food,.... Double money for a double quantity, or because the price of corn was now doubled; and their bringing this besides the other showed their honest and upright intentions:

we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks; we are quite ignorant of it, and can by no means account for it, and therefore hope no blame will be laid on us.

Genesis 43:23

Ver. 23. And he said, peace [be] unto you, fear not,.... Do not be uneasy and disturbed, you have nothing to fear, you are in no danger:

your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks; the hidden treasure, as the word signifies, found in their sacks; was there by the providence of God, so disposing the heart of Joseph to order it to be put there, as the steward interpreted it; who by being Joseph's family had got some knowledge of the true God, and of his all wise and disposing Providence:

I had your money; he received it of them, which he acknowledges, and that was sufficient to acquit them from guile and theft, though he does not say that he put the money into their sacks, or by whose order it was done:

and he brought Simeon out unto them; either out of prison, or out of some other room to them, which was, no doubt, done by the direction of Joseph.

Genesis 43:24

Ver. 24. And the man brought the men into Joseph's house,.... After the above discourse had passed between them, and he had made their minds easy, both with respect to the money, and by bringing Simeon unbound to them:

and gave [them] water, and they washed their feet; which was usually done in the eastern countries after travelling, and when about to take a meal, and was both for refreshment and cleanliness:

and he gave their asses provender; thus were they hospitably entertained, they and all that belonged to them.

Genesis 43:25

Ver. 25. And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon,.... They took it out of their vessels or bags in which they brought it, having unladen their asses, and disposed of it in a proper manner to present it to him when he came home at noon to dine:

for they heard that they should eat bread there; dine there, bread being put for all provision: this was told them, very probably, by the steward, or by some of the servants in the house, or they overheard what Joseph said to the steward, Ge 43:16.

Genesis 43:26

Ver. 26. And when Joseph came home,.... In order to dine, it being noontime:

they brought him the present which [was] in their hand into the house; everyone took a part of it in his hand, and brought it to Joseph in the parlour where he was, and delivered it to him as a present from their father, or from themselves, or it may be as from both:

and bowed themselves to him to the earth; in the most prostrate and humble manner, now again fulfilling his dream, and more completely than before, for now all his eleven brethren were together, signified by the eleven stars in the dream, that made obeisance to him, see
Ge 37:9

Genesis 43:27

Ver. 27. And he asked them of [their] welfare,.... Or "peace" {b}, their prosperity, especially of the health of their bodies, whether they were well and in good health after so long a journey:

and said, [is] your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? when they were with him before, and told him they were all the sons of one man, who dwelt in

Canaan:

[is] he yet alive? which he was very desirous of knowing; for, being advanced in years, he might fear he was removed by death in the time between their going and returning.

{b} Mwlvl "ad pacem", Montanus, "de pace", Vatablus, Drusius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Genesis 43:28

Ver. 28. And they answered, thy servant our father [is] in good health, he [is] yet alive,.... Which is an answer to both his questions; and by calling their father Joseph's servant, he did obeisance to him in them, as well as by sending a present to him, which they delivered as coming from him his servant; and it is not improbable that Jacob sent his salutation to him as his servant, and so that part of the dream of Joseph's was also fulfilled, which represented the sun doing obeisance to him, Ge 37:9:

and they bowed their heads, and made obeisance; a second time, as they did, no doubt, at every time they gave answer to Joseph's questions; and this is again observed, to show the full completion of the above dream.

Genesis 43:29

Ver. 29. And he lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin,.... He had seen him before when his brethren first presented themselves to him, but then took no particular and special notice of him, only gave him a side look as it were, but now he looked wistly at him:

his mother's son; the son of Rachel his mother, and who was his only brother by his mother's side, the rest, though his brethren, yet only by his father's side, not his mother's sons:

and said, [is] this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? he knew he was the same, but was willing to have it from their mouths, to lead on to what he had further to say:

and he said; after they had answered his question, and told him it was he:

God be gracious unto thee, my son; speaking as a superior, a governor, in which capacity he was a father to his inferiors; and as a man, a relation, a brother, though not as yet discovered; he spoke in the most tender and affectionate manner, and, as a religious good man, he wishes the best thing he could for his brother, the grace and goodness of God; and which may be understood in the largest and most expressive sense, as including all good things, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

Genesis 43:30

Ver. 30. And Joseph made haste,.... To get out of the room where he was with his brethren as fast as he could:

for his bowels did yearn upon his brother; his passions grew strong, his affections were raised, his heart was full of tenderness, and there was such a flow of love and joy at the sight of his brother, and the little conversation he had with him, that he was ready to burst out, and must have discovered himself if he had not immediately turned and got out of the room:

and he sought [where] to weep; a proper place to vent his passion in tears of joy, and relieve himself

and he entered into [his] chamber, and wept there; where he could be the most retired, and not likely to be overheard.

Genesis 43:31

Ver. 31. And he washed his face,.... From the tears on it, that it might not be discerned that he had been weeping:

and went out; of his chamber into the room again, where his brethren were:

and refrained himself; from weeping, or showing any excess of passion, love, joy, &c.

and said, set on bread; gave orders to his servants to bring in dinner, and set it upon the table; bread, as before, being put for all kind of food.

Genesis 43:32

Ver. 32. And they set on for him by himself,.... A table was placed and provisions set upon it in one part of the room for Joseph by himself; which was done either because he was an Hebrew, and the Egyptians might not eat with him, nor he with them; or rather for the sake of grandeur, he being the next man in the kingdom to Pharaoh:

and for them by themselves; another table was placed and spread for Joseph's brethren by themselves, the reason of which is after given:

and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves; a third table was laid for such Egyptian noblemen and others, who were at this time Joseph's guests, or used to dine with him:

because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that [is] an abomination unto the Egyptians; the reason of which, as given by the Targums of Onkelos and, Jonathan, is, because the creatures the Egyptians worshipped the Hebrews eat; but it is a question whether such creatures as oxen, sheep, goats, &c. which were eaten by the Hebrews, were so early worshipped by the Egyptians; though they were in later times, and particularly the Apis or ox, which is supposed by many to be worshipped on the account of Joseph, and so after his time; rather the abhorrence the Egyptians had the Hebrews in was on account of their being shepherds, on a political account, they having before this time suffered much by the insurrections and rebellions of such sort of persons among themselves, who set up a kingdom and kings of their own, called the "Hycsi", or pastor kings: or else this difference made between the Egyptians and Hebrews at eating, was not on account of what they did eat, as of the certain rites and customs the Egyptians had peculiar to themselves in dressing their food, and eating it; and therefore would not eat with any of another nation; so that this was not any particular distaste they had to the Hebrews, but was their usage towards men of all nations; for so Herodotus says {c}, that

"no Egyptian, man or woman, might kiss the month of a Greek, or use a knife, or spit, or pot;"

that is, a knife a Greek had cut anything with, or a spit he had roasted meat on, or a pot he had boiled it in; and adds, "nor might taste of the flesh of an ox, cut with the knife of a Greek."

And indeed they would not eat nor converse with any of another religion {d}, be they who they would.

{c} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 41. {d} Chaeremon apud Porphyr. de abstinentia, l. 4. sect. 6.

Genesis 43:33

Ver. 33. And they sat before him,.... At a table, so placed that they were in his sight, and he had a full view of them:

the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth; everyone according to his age, Reuben, the firstborn, first, and so on to Benjamin the youngest: thus they placed themselves as they used to be in their father's family, or they were so placed by Joseph; and if this was the case, it may be a reason, and a principal one, of what follows:

and the men marvelled one at another; not the Egyptians, the guests of Joseph, seeing eleven brethren placed in this manner, and these being Hebrews, taken so much notice of; but Joseph's brethren, who either wondered at the manner of their being seated so regular, according to their age; or at the honour done them to dine with the governor, and at the grandeur of the entertainment, and at the separate manner in which the governor, and the nobles of Egypt, sat at meals; or at what follows.

Genesis 43:34

Ver. 34. And he took [and sent] messes unto there from before him,.... The several dishes were brought before him, who cut them up, and sent to everyone their part and portion, as was usual in those times and countries, and afterwards elsewhere {e}, for the master of the family or feast to divide the food into parts, and to give to every guest his part; and these were called, from their being sent, "missus", and from whence seems to be our English word "messes", here used:

but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs; which was done out of his great affection to him, being his own brother both by father and mother's side; and, as some think, to try his brethren, how they stood affected to Benjamin, and observe if this did not raise their envy to him, as his father's particular respect to him had raised it in them against himself; and that, if it should, he might provide for his safety, lest they should use him in like manner as they had used him. This undoubtedly was designed as a peculiar favour, and a mark of special honour and respect, it being usual for princes to send messes from their tables to such as they favoured; and particularly it was usual with the Egyptians for their kings to have double messes more than the rest, in honour of them, as Herodotus {f} relates: Benjamin's mess consisted either of five parts, or it was five times bigger than what was sent to the rest; not but that they had all what was sufficient; there was no want to any, but great plenty of everything for them all; nor was this designed Benjamin, that he should eat the larger quantity, only to show him distinguishing respect:

and they drank, and were merry with him; after dinner they drank wine liberally and plentifully, but not to excess and intemperance, yet so as to be cheerful and in good spirits; their fears being all dissipated by this generous entertainment they met with.

{e} Athenaei Deipnosophist. l. 1. {f} Erato, sive, l. 6. c. 57.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Genesis 44:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 44

This chapter relates the policy of Joseph in making an experiment of his brethren's regard and affection for Benjamin; he ordered his steward to put every man's money into his sack, and his silver cup in Benjamin's, and when they were got out of the city, to follow after them, and charge them with the theft, as he did; and having searched their sacks, as they desired he would, found the cup with Benjamin, which threw them into the utmost distress, and obliged them to return to Joseph, Ge 44:1; who charged them with their ill behaviour towards him; they acknowledge it, and propose to be his servants; but he orders them to depart to their father, retaining Benjamin in servitude, Ge 44:15; upon which Judah addressed him in a very polite and affectionate manner, and relates the whole story, both of what passed between Joseph and them, concerning Benjamin, the first time they were in Egypt, and between their father and them upon the same subject, when he directed them to go a second time thither to buy corn, and how he became a surety to his father for him, and therefore proposed to be his bondman now, not being able to see his father's face without Benjamin, Ge 44:18.

Ver. 1. And he commanded the steward of his house,.... Whom the Targum of Jonathan again calls Manasseh, the eldest son of Joseph:

saying, fill the men's sacks [with] food, as much as they can carry; this he ordered out of his great affection for them, and that his father and his family might have sufficient supply in this time of famine:

and put every man's money in his sack's mouth; not that which had been put into their sacks the first time, for the steward acknowledged his receipt of it, but what they had paid for their present corn, they were about to carry away.

Genesis 44:2

Ver. 2. And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest,.... Benjamin; this he ordered to be done, partly to put him in apparent danger, and try how his brethren would behave towards him in such circumstances, and thereby know how they stood affected to him; and partly that he might have an excuse for retaining him with him. This cup was valuable both for the matter of it, being of silver, and for the use of it, being what Joseph himself drank out of: and by the word used to express it, it seems to have been a large embossed cup, a kind of goblet, for it has the signification of a little hill. Jarchi says it was a long cup, which they called "mederno". The Septuagint render it by "condy", which is said to be a Persian word, and a kind of an Attalic cup, that held ten cotylae {g}, or four or five quarts, and weighed ninety ounces; but a cup so large seems to be too large to drink out of:

and his corn money; what he had paid for his corn:

and he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken; put every man's money in the mouth of his sack, and his silver cup with the corn money into Benjamin's sack.

{g} Nicomachus de festis Aegypt. apud Athenaeum, l. 11. c. 7.

Genesis 44:3

Ver. 3. As soon as the morning was light,.... When it was break of day, before the sun rose:

the men were sent away, they and their asses; the men being refreshed with food, and their asses having provender given them, and saddled and loaded, they were handsomely and honourably dismissed.

Genesis 44:4

Ver. 4. [And] when they were gone out of the city, [and] not [yet] far off,.... Which perhaps was Tanis, the Zoan of the Scriptures; see Eze 30:14, margin;

Joseph said unto his steward, up, follow after the men; who no doubt was ready provided with men and horses, to go out and pursue when Joseph should give the orders, he being privy to Joseph's intentions, and with whom the scheme was concerted, and the secret was. Joseph appears to have been up very early this morning, and had observed the exact time of his brethren's departure, and guessed whereabouts they might be when he sent his steward, and others after them; for it can hardly be thought he was sent alone after eleven men, and to charge them with a theft, and bring them back again:

and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? in taking away the silver cup, when they had been so kindly and bountifully entertained. This he was to represent as base ingratitude, as it would have appeared, had it been fact. In much such manner was Esop used by the inhabitants of Delphos; they, being displeased with him, put a sacred cup or vial into his bags, which he, being ignorant of, went on his way towards Phocis; and they ran after him, and seized him, and charged him with sacrilege {h}.

{h} Scholia ad Vespes Aristophanis, p. 534. Ed. Genev. 1607.

Genesis 44:5

Ver. 5. [Is] not this [it], in which my lord drinketh,.... Which was for his own particular use, and so the more ungrateful in them to take it,

and whereby indeed he divineth? according to our version and others, Joseph is here represented by his steward as a diviner or soothsayer, and so he might be thought to be by the Egyptians, from being such an exact interpreter of dreams, foretelling things to come, and that he made his divinations by the silver cup; and we are told that the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Egyptians, used to fill basins with water, in which they put plates of silver and precious stones, marked with certain characters, and pronouncing certain words, called to the devil, who uttered a voice in the water like an hissing, and returned answers to the things inquired about {i}: a like practice is used by the Africans now {k}; which method Andronicus took to know who would be his successor, but was reckoned among the most infamous and scandalous parts of the magic art {l} wherefore, as Joseph never practised any thing of this kind, so neither would he dissemble, or make as if he did; though it must be owned that the Arabs {m} in Egypt at this day pretend to consult with the cup and divine by it: but the words will bear another version and sense, for it may signify to tempt, to try, to make an experiment, and by experience to know a thing, as in Ge 30:27; and so the Arabic version, "and indeed he hath tried you by it": so Aben Ezra interprets it of his trying of them by it, whether they were thieves or not, whether they were a parcel of light fingered filching fellows: the cup, he pretends, was set before them, and he turned himself another way, either Joseph or the steward, and they took the opportunity of carrying it off; or else, as others think, he tried them by drinking in it very freely and liberally, what sort of men they were, how they would behave themselves in their cups, when truth is commonly spoke, the wit being out when the wine is in: but of these two senses the former is to be preferred; though it seems best of all to understand this not of the cup as the instrument by which he tried, searched, and inquired into things, but as the object searched after and inquired of; for the word signifies to inquire, and make a strict observation of things, and thereby make shrewd guesses and conjectures, as in 1Ki 20:33; and so the sense is, either according to R. Jonah {n}, that his master would diligently inquire of the soothsayers concerning it, in order to find out who took it away, and so Ben Melech; for the words may be rendered, "for which he certainly makes", or has made, or will make "divination", which agrees with Ge 44:15; for if the cup was gone, how could he make divination with it? it must be for it; or indeed they might well conclude themselves, that as such a thing would soon be missed, diligent inquiry would be made after it, and it would be at once conjectured that it was taken away, not by any of the household, but by those strangers that had dined with Joseph; and a man of his sagacity and penetration would soon find it out, and therefore it was madness and folly to do such an action, and think to get off clear:

ye have done evil in so doing: both a mad and foolish action, and a base, wicked, and ungrateful one, as well as what was infamous and scandalous; for nothing was reckoned more so than for a guest at a prince's table to carry away a cup, or anything of that kind, with him: so Claudius the Roman emperor, a guest of his, the day before, having taken away a golden cup, as was supposed, ordered an earthen one to be put in its place {o}, which was a putting him to public shame and reproach: Dioxippus the Athenian, being at table with Alexander the great, a golden cup was taken away privately, by some that envied him; and the hint being given as if he had done it, all eyes were turned on him as the thief, which he could not bear, but went out, and wrote a letter to the king, and then killed himself {p}.

{i} Julius Serenus de fato, l. 9. c. 18. apud Rivet. Exercit. 165. p. 808. {k} R. Leo. African. Descriptio Africae, l. 3. p. 335. {l} Nic. Choniates in Andronico, l. 2. {m} Norden's Travels in Egypt, vol. 2. p. 150. {n} Apud Aben Ezram in loc. {o} Suetonius in Vita Claudii, c. 32. {p} Curtii Hist. l. 9. c. 7.

Genesis 44:6

Ver. 6. And he overtook them,.... Their asses being laden with corn could not travel very fast, and he and his attendants being mounted on swift horses:

and he spake unto them these same words; that Joseph had ordered him to say, and so what follows particularly, Ge 44:10.

Genesis 44:7

Ver. 7. And they said unto him, wherefore saith my lord these words?.... One of them, in the name of the rest, perhaps Judah, made answer, as astonished at the charge laid against them, suggesting that there was not the least foundation for it, and were quite surprised to hear anything of this kind alleged against them:

God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing; expressing the utmost detestation of such a fact, as being what they could never be guilty of.

Genesis 44:8

Ver. 8. Behold, the money which we found in our sacks mouths;.... Upon their return from Egypt, the first time they went thither for corn:

we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan; which was a full proof of their honesty: they might have kept it until it was called for and demanded of them, but of themselves they brought it with them, as being money not their own; and they did not wait to be examined about it when they came to Egypt again, but of their own accord related the story of it, and offered the money to this same man the steward they were now speaking to, which he could not deny: yea, they brought it to him out of the land of Canaan, a foreign country at a considerable distance, and out of the jurisdiction of Egypt, and where they were not liable to be called to an account for it:

how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? that is, vessels of silver or vessels of gold, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; it could not be reasonably thought they would, for if they would not retain the governor's money when in their own land and out of his reach, much less would they steal anything out his house, which they might conclude would soon be missed, and they easily apprehended and committed to prison, and suffer for it.

Genesis 44:9

Ver. 9. With whomsoever of thy servants it be found,.... The silver cup:

both let him die; which was rashly said, since they might have thought the cup might be put in one of their sacks unknown to them, as their money had been before; and besides, death was a punishment too severe for such a crime, and therefore is by the steward himself moderated; but this they said the more strongly to express their innocence:

and we also will be my lord's bondmen; his servants, as long as they lived: this was likewise carrying the matter too far, and exceeding all bounds of justice, which could only require satisfaction of the offender.

Genesis 44:10

Ver. 10. And he said, now also [let] it [be] according unto your words,.... Not according to the full extent of their words, but according to a part of them; that be only should be a servant that was found guilty; so moderating the punishment which they had fixed, and were willing to submit to, and therefore could not object to what he next proposes:

he with whom it is found shall be my servant; speaking in the name of Joseph, whom he represented, and who had directed him what to say:

and ye shall be blameless; acquitted of the charge, and pronounced innocent, and let go free.

Genesis 44:11

Ver. 11. Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground,.... To be opened and examined, and this they did in all haste, as having a clear conscience, and being confident that nothing could be found upon them, and desirous of having the affair issued as soon as possible, that the steward might have full satisfaction, and they proceed on in their journey:

and opened every man his sack; showing neither reluctance nor fear, being conscious of their innocence.

Genesis 44:12

Ver. 12. And he searched,.... To the bottom of them, not content to look into the mouth of them being opened, but rummaged them, and searched deeply into them to find the cup, which was the thing charged upon them he was solicitous to find; as for the money in the sack's mouth he took no notice of that, nor is there any mention of it:

[and] began at the oldest; at Reuben, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it: the steward might know their different ages in course, by the order in which they were placed at Joseph's table when they dined with him:

and left off at the youngest; at Benjamin, he ended his scrutiny with him; this method he took partly to hold them in fear as long as he could, and partly to prevent any suspicion of design, which might have been entertained had he went directly to Benjamin's sack:

and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack; where the steward himself had put it, and as it is usually said, they that hide can find.

Genesis 44:13

Ver. 13. Then they rent their clothes,.... In token of sorrow and distress, being at their wits' end, like distracted persons, not knowing what to do: this was usually done in the eastern countries when any evil befell, as did Jacob, Ge 37:34; and as the Egyptians themselves did when mourning for their dead, as Diodorus Siculus {q} relates:

and laded every man his ass; put their sacks of corn on their asses again, having tied them up:

and returned to the city; to the metropolis, as Jarchi, which was either Tanis, that is, Zoan, or, as others think, Memphis: hither they returned to see how it would go with Benjamin, to plead his cause and get him released, that he might go with them, they being afraid to see their father's face without him; otherwise, could they have been content to have gone without him, they might have proceeded on in their journey, see Ge 44:17.

{q} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 65.

Genesis 44:14

Ver. 14. And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house,.... Judah is particularly mentioned because he was the principal spokesman, and was chiefly concerned for the safety of Benjamin, being his surety:

for he [was] yet there; Joseph was yet at his own house, was not as yet gone to the granaries, to look after the affairs of the corn, and the sale and distribution of it, but was waiting for the return of his brethren, which he expected quickly:

and they fell before him on the ground; not only in a way of reverence, again fulfilling his dream, but as persons in the utmost distress and affliction, throwing themselves at his feet for mercy.

Genesis 44:15

Ver. 15. And Joseph said unto them, what deed is this ye have done?.... An action so wicked, base, and ungrateful, attended with such aggravated circumstances, that it can scarcely be said how bad a one it is, and may be well wondered at, that men who had received such favours could ever be guilty of; this he said, putting on a stern countenance, and seemingly in great anger and wrath:

wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? either that he could divine himself, though not by the cup, of which here no mention is made, but in some other way used by the Egyptians; or that he had diviners with him, as Aben Ezra, with whom he could consult, to find out the person that took the cup; or surely they must needs think that such a man as he, who had such great knowledge of things, natural and political, and whose name was Zaphnathpaaneah, a revealer of secrets, would be able to search into and find out an affair of this kind;
See Gill on "Ge 41:45"; and they might well conclude, that a man so sagacious and penetrating would easily conjecture who were the persons that took away his cup, even the strangers that had dined with him so lately, and therefore could never expect to go off with it.

Genesis 44:16

Ver. 16. And Judah said, what shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak?.... Signifying that they were nonplussed, confounded, knew not what to say; they could not acknowledge guilt, for they were not conscious of any, and yet could not deny the fact, the cup being found on one of them; and though they might have a suspicion of fraud, yet were afraid to speak out what they suspected, and therefore were at the utmost loss to express themselves:

or how shall we clear ourselves? to assert their innocence signified nothing, here was full proof against them, at least against their brother Benjamin:

God hath found the iniquity of thy servants; brought it to their remembrance, fastened the guilt of it on their consciences, and in his providence was bringing them to just punishment for it; meaning not the iniquity of taking away the cup, which they were not conscious of, but some other iniquity of theirs they had heretofore been guilty of, and now God was contending with them for it; particularly the iniquity of selling Joseph; this was brought to their minds before, when in distress, and now again, see Ge 42:21:

behold, we [are] my lord's servants, both we, and [he] also with whom the cup is found; hereby fulfilling his dream more manifestly than ever; for, by bowing down to the earth to him, they might be thought to do no other than what all did, that came to buy corn of him; but here they own themselves to be his servants, and him to be lord over them, and to have dominion over them all, and them to be his slaves and bondmen.

Genesis 44:17

Ver. 17. And he said, God forbid that I should do so,.... This would be doing an unjust thing, Joseph suggests, should he take them all for bondmen, for the offence of one:

[but] the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; not die, as they had supposed, but become his servant:

and as for you, get ye up in peace unto your father; they had leave, yea, an order to return to their father in the land of Canaan, with their corn and cattle, in peace and plenty; there being no charge against them, nor would any hurt or damage come to them: this Joseph said to try their affection to their brother Benjamin, and see whether they would leave him to distress, and then he should know better how to conduct both towards him and them.

Genesis 44:18

Ver. 18. Then Judah came near unto him,.... Being the spokesman of his brethren, and the surety of Benjamin: he plucked up a spirit, put on courage, and drew nearer to the governor, and with much freedom and boldness, and in a very polite manner, addressed him:

and said, O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears; not admit him to private audience, or suffer him to whisper something to him, but give him the hearing of a few words he had to say to him:

and let not thine anger burn against thy servant; do not be displeased with his boldness, and the freedom he takes, but hear him patiently:

for thou [art] even as Pharaoh; next, if not equal in power and authority with him; could exercise justice or show mercy, punish or release from punishment, at his pleasure; and having leave granted him, he began his speech, and made the following narrative.

Genesis 44:19

Ver. 19. My lord asked his servants,.... The first time they came down to Egypt to buy corn; he puts him in mind of what passed between them at that time:

saying, have ye a father or a brother? which question followed upon their saying that they were the sons of one man, Ge 42:11.

Genesis 44:20

Ver. 20. And we said unto my lord, we have a father,.... Yet living in the land of Canaan:

an old man; being one hundred and thirty years of age, Ge 47:9;

and a child of his old age; who was born when he was near an hundred years of age: and

a little one; not in stature, but in age, being the youngest son, and much younger than they: so they represented him, on that account, and because he was tenderly brought up with his father, and not inured to business and hardship, and so unfit to travel:

and his brother is dead; meaning Joseph: so they thought him to be, having not heard of him for twenty two years or more, and they had so often said he was dead, or suggested as much, that they at length believed he was:

and he alone is left of his mother; the only child left of his mother Rachel:

and his father loveth him; being his youngest son, and the only child of his beloved Rachel, and therefore most dear unto him.

Genesis 44:21

Ver. 21. And thou saidst unto thy servants, bring him down unto me,.... Judah does not relate the reason of his order, which was to give proof that they were no spies, but as if Joseph designed to show favour to Benjamin, as undoubtedly he did:

that I may set mine eyes upon him; not barely see him, as Aben Ezra interprets it, though that would be, and was, very desirable by him, and agreeable to him; but he desired to set his eyes upon him, not only for his own pleasure, but for the good of Benjamin, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; he intimated that he should receive him kindly, show favour unto him, and use him well: the Septuagint version is, "and I will take care of him": Joseph's brethren had told him, that Benjamin was at home with their father, who they suggested was afraid to let him go with them, lest evil should befall him; wherefore to encourage him to let him go with them, Joseph promised to take care of him, that no hurt should be done to him, but he should be provided with everything that was proper and necessary; and this Judah improves into an argument with the governor in favour of Benjamin, that since he desired his coming, in order to show him a kindness, he hoped he would not detain him, and make a slave of him.

Genesis 44:22

Ver. 22. And we said unto my lord, the lad cannot leave his father,.... That is, his father will not be willing to part with him:

for [if] he should leave his father, [his father] would die; with grief and trouble, fearing some evil was befallen him, and he should see him no more.

Genesis 44:23

Ver. 23. And thou saidst unto thy servants,.... In answer to the representation of things made by them, and notwithstanding that:

except your youngest brother come down with you, you shall see my face no more; which though not before related in the discourse, which passed between Joseph and his brethren, in express terms, yet might be justly inferred from what he said; nay, might be expressed in so many words, though not recorded, and as it seems plainly it was, as appears from
Ge 43:3.

Genesis 44:24

Ver. 24. And it came to pass, when we came unto thy servant my father,.... In the land of Canaan:

we told him the words of my lord; what he had said to them, particularly respecting Benjamin.

Genesis 44:25

Ver. 25. And our father said,.... After some time, when the corn was almost consumed they had bought in Egypt:

go again, [and] buy us a little food; that may suffice fill the famine is over; see Ge 43:1.

Genesis 44:26

Ver. 26. And we said, we cannot go down,.... With any safety to their persons, which would be in danger, or with any profit to their families, since their end in going down to buy corn would not be answered:

if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; let it be agreed to, that Benjamin go along with us, to Egypt, and then no difficulty will be made of it:

for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother [be] with us; the face of the great man, the governor of Egypt; for that this phrase, "the man", is not used diminutively, but as expressive of grandeur, is clear, or otherwise it would never have been made use of in his presence, and in such a submissive and polite speech as this of Judah's.

Genesis 44:27

Ver. 27. And thy servant my father said unto us,.... When thus pressed to let Benjamin go with them:

ye know that my wife bare me two [sons]; Rachel, by whom he had Joseph and

Benjamin, and whom he calls his wife, she being his only lawful wife; Leah was imposed upon him, Ge 29:20; and the other two were concubines, Ge 30:4.

Genesis 44:28

Ver. 28. And the one went out from, me,.... Being sent by him to see how his brethren did, who were feeding his flocks at Shechem, and he had never returned to him to that day:

and I said, surely he is torn in pieces; by some wild beast; this he said on sight of his coat, being shown him all bloody:

and I saw him not since; now twenty two years ago; for though Joseph was not such a great way off his father, especially if he was at Memphis, as some think; yet what through his confinement as a servant in Potiphar's house, and then for some years in prison, and through the multiplicity of business when advanced in Pharaoh's court, he had no leisure and opportunity of visiting his father; and especially so it was ordered by the providence of God that he should not, that he might be made known at the most proper time for the glory of God, and the good of his family.

Genesis 44:29

Ver. 29. And if ye take this also from me,.... His son Benjamin, as he perhaps suspected they had taken Joseph, and made away with him:

and mischief befall him; either in Egypt, or on the road, going or returning, any ill accident, especially death, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, or what may issue in it:

ye shall bring my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave; it would be the means of his death, and while he lived he should be full of sorrow and grief; see Ge 42:38.

Genesis 44:30

Ver. 30. Now therefore, when I come to thy servant my father,.... That is, should he return to him in the land of Canaan with the rest of his brethren:

and the lad [be] not with us; his brother Benjamin, so called here, and in the following verses, though thirty years of age and upwards, see
Ge 43:8;

seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; he is as closely united to him in affection, and is as dear to him as his own soul; quite wrapped up in him, and cannot live without him; should he die, he must die too; see 1Sa 18:1; so it follows:

Genesis 44:31

Ver. 31. It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad [is] not [with us], that he will die,.... As soon as ever he sees us, without asking any question and observes that Benjamin is missing he will conclude at once that he is dead, which will so seize his spirits, that he will expire immediately:

and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant, our father, with sorrow to the grave; as he said would be the case,
Ge 44:29; and which would be very afflicting to his sons to be the cause of it, and could not be thought of without the utmost uneasiness and distress.

Genesis 44:32

Ver. 32. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father,.... Which is another argument used for the release of Benjamin, though he should be detained for him, which he offers to be:

saying, if I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame unto my father for ever; See Gill on "Ge 43:9".

Genesis 44:33

Ver. 33. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord,.... Being, as Jarchi observes preferable to Benjamin for strength, for war, and for service: in this Judah was a type of Christ, from whose tribe he sprung, who became the surety of God's Benjamins, his children who are beloved by him, and as dear to him as his right hand, and put himself in their legal place and stead, and became sin and a curse for them, that they might go free, as Judah desired his brother Benjamin might, as follows:

and let the lad go up with his brethren; from Egypt to Canaan's land, to their father there.

Genesis 44:34

Ver. 34. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad [be] not with me?.... Signifying that he must abide in Egypt, and chose to do it, and could not go up to the land of Canaan any more or see his father's face without Benjamin along with him, to whom he was a surety for him:

lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father; see him die, or live a life of sorrow worse than death: this he could not bear, and chose rather to be a slave in Egypt, than to be the spectator of such an affecting scene. By this speech of Judah, Joseph plainly saw the great affection which his brethren, especially Judah, had for his father and his brother Benjamin, as well as the sense they had of their evil in selling him, which lay uppermost on their minds, and for which they thought themselves brought into all this trouble; wherefore he could no longer conceal himself from them, but makes himself known unto them, which is the principal subject of the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis **45:1**

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 45

This chapter contains an account of Joseph's making himself known to his brethren, which was done when they were alone, Ge 45:1; when he encouraged them not to distress themselves on account of their selling him into Egypt, for God in his providence had sent him there for their good, Ge 45:5; and he ordered them to go forthwith to Canaan, and acquaint his father with all the honour and glory they saw him in, and to desire him to come thither to him, where he should be provided for during the five years of famine yet to come, in the best part of the land of Egypt, Ge 45:9; upon which he expressed the strongest affection to Benjamin, and to all his brethren, Ge 45:14; the fame of this was soon spread in the house of Pharaoh, which gave the king great pleasure, who immediately expressed his earnest desire that his father might come and settle in Egypt, and ordered provisions to be sent him, and carriages to bring him down, and all that belonged to him, Ge 45:16; and Joseph accordingly delivered to his brethren wagons and provisions for the way, and gave gifts to them, and sent a present to his father, and dismissed his brethren with an exhortation not to fall out by the way, Ge 45:21; and when they came to Canaan, they acquainted their father with all these things, who at first could not believe them; but when he saw the wagons, his spirit revived, and determined to go and see his son, Ge 45:25.

Ver. 1. Then Joseph could not refrain himself,.... That he should not weep, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; at least he could not much longer refrain from tears, such an effect Judah's speech had on his passions:

before all them that stood before him; his servants that attended him and waited upon him, the steward of his house, and others, upon whose account he put such a force upon himself, to keep in his passions from giving vent, that they might not discover the inward motions of his mind; but not being able to conceal them any longer,

and he cried; or called out with a loud voice, and an air of authority:

cause every man to go out from me; out of the room in which he and his brethren were; perhaps this order was given to the steward of the house to depart himself, and to remove every inferior officer and servant upon the spot; or other people that might be come in to hear the trial of those men, and to see how they would be dealt with:

and there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren; not that Joseph was ashamed of them, and of owning before them the relation he stood in to them; but that they might not see the confusion his brethren would be thrown into, and have knowledge of the sin they had been guilty of in selling him which could not fail of being mentioned by him, and confessed by them; and besides, it was not suitable to his grandeur and dignity to be seen in such an extreme passion he was now going into.

Genesis 45:2

Ver. 2. And he wept aloud,....; Or "gave forth his voice in weeping" {r}; as he wept he cried aloud; for having put such a violent restraint on himself, as the flood of tears was the greater, so his voice was the stronger and louder for it:

and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard; the Egyptians, that were in the room or rooms adjoining to that where Joseph was, heard his cry, and perhaps a great deal of what was said; which they soon reported to others, and it quickly reached Pharaoh's court, which might not be at any great distance.

{r} ykbb wlq ta Ntyw "et dedit vocem suam in fletu", Montanus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Genesis 45:3

Ver. 3. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I [am] Joseph,.... As soon as he could compose himself a little, and utter his words, the first thing he said was, that he was Joseph; that was his right name, his Hebrew name; though he was called by the Egyptians Zaphnathpaaneah, and by which name Joseph's brethren only knew him, if they knew his name at all; and it must be very startling to them to bear this sound, and to be told by himself that that was his name; and which was not all he meant and they understood, but that he was Joseph their brother as afterwards expressed:

doth my father yet live? this he knew before, for they had told him he was alive; wherefore he puts this question not through ignorance, or as doubting but to express his affliction for his father, and his joy that he was alive:

and his brethren could not answer him; they were so surprised and astonished; they were like men thunderstruck, they were not able to utter a word for awhile:

for they were troubled at his presence; the sin of selling him came fresh into their minds, the guilt of it pressed their consciences, and the circumstances that Joseph was in filled them with fear that he would avenge himself on them.

Genesis 45:4

Ver. 4. And Joseph said unto his brethren, come near to me, I pray you,.... Very probably Joseph sat in a chair of state while they were under examination, and through reverence of him they kept at a proper distance; or being frightened at what he had said, he might observe them drawing back, as Jarchi remarks, and so encourages them in a kind and tender manner to return and come nearer to him, and the rather, that they might more privately converse together without being overheard; as also that they might, by approaching him discern and call to mind some of his features still remaining, by which they might be assured he was Joseph indeed:

and they came near, and he said, I [am] Joseph your brother; not only his name was Joseph, but he was that Joseph that was their brother; he claims and owns the relation between them, which must be very affecting to them, who had used him so unkindly:

whom ye sold into Egypt: which is added, not so much to put them in mind of and upbraid them with their sin, but to assure them that he was really their brother Joseph; which he could not have related had he not been he, as well as to lead on to what he had further to say to them for their comfort.

Genesis 45:5

Ver. 5. Now therefore be not grieved,.... To an excess, so as to be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow; otherwise it became them to be grieved for their sin, and to show a godly sorrow and true repentance for it:

nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; reflect upon themselves, and afflict themselves in an immoderate way; or break forth into anger and wrath with one another, upbraiding and blaming each other for their conduct in that affair, and so foment contentions and quarrels among themselves:

for God did send me before you to preserve life; the life of thousands of persons in Egypt, Canaan, and other countries; and particularly to preserve their lives was he sent before them into Egypt; where, by interpretation

Pharaoh's dreams, by which he understood and did foretell the seven years of plenty and seven years of famine, he was to great honour and trust, and laid up a sufficiency of corn in the time of plenty to answer the exigencies of various countries in the time of famine, and, among the rest, of his own family; and therefore would have this attributed by them to the wise disposing providence of God.

Genesis 45:6

Ver. 6. For these two years [hath] the famine [been], in the land,.... In the land of Egypt and in the countries round about:

and yet [there are] five years; still remaining, which he knew by the above dreams and the interpretation of them:

in the which [there shall] neither [be] earing nor harvest; that is, no tillage of land, neither ploughing nor sowing, and so no reaping, or gathering in of the fruits of the earth, as used to be in harvest; at least, there would be very little ground tilled, only it may be on the banks of the Nile, since they had no corn to spare for seed; and besides, as the Egyptians knew by Joseph's prediction that the Nile would not overflow, it was to no purpose to attempt to plough their land, which through seven years of drought was become very difficult, or to sow, could they get the seed into the ground, since there was no likelihood of its springing up again.

Genesis 45:7

Ver. 7. And God sent me before you,.... This he repeats to impress the minds of his brethren with a sense of the good providence of God in bringing him to Egypt before them, to make provision for their future welfare, and to alleviate their grief, and prevent an excessive sorrow for their selling him into Egypt, when by the overruling hand of God it proved so salutary to them:

to preserve you a posterity in the earth; that they and theirs might not perish, which otherwise, in all human probability, must have been the case; and that the promise of the multiplication of Abraham's seed might not be made of none effect, but continue to take place, from whence the Messiah was to spring:

and to save your lives by a great deliverance; from the extreme danger they were exposed unto, through the terrible famine, and in which deliverance were to be observed the great wisdom, goodness, power, and providence of God.

Genesis 45:8

Ver. 8. So now [it was] not you [that] sent me hither, but God,.... Which is to be understood not absolutely, as if they had no concern at all in sending him thither; they sold him to the Ishmaelites, who brought him down to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, and so were instrumental in his coming to Egypt; but comparatively, it was not they so much as God that sent him; whose providence directed, disposed, and overruled all those events, to bring Joseph to this place, and to such an high station, to answer the purposes and designs of God in providing for and preserving Jacob's family in a time of distress:

and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh: to be a teacher to him, as Aben Ezra, that is, to be his counsellor, to advise him well in all things, as a father his children; or to be his partner and patron, as Jarchi, to have a share with him in power and authority, and to be reckoned as a father to him, see Ge 41:43; and to provide for him and the welfare of his kingdom, as parents do for their children: the following phrases explain it of rule and government; and the meaning is, that he was a great man, and a prince {s} in Pharaoh's court:

and lord of all his house; his prime minister, chief counsellor and courtier:

and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt; to whom all the deputies of the several provinces were subject under Pharaoh, and especially in the affair of the corn.

{s} So it is interpreted by R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 50. 1.

Genesis 45:9

Ver. 9. Haste you, and go up to my father,.... In Canaan, which lay higher than Egypt; being desirous he should know as soon as possible that he was alive, and in what circumstances he was:

and say unto him, thus saith thy son Joseph; without any title, such as the father and counsellor of Pharaoh and governor of Egypt, only Joseph his son, which would be enough to revive the heart of Jacob:

God hath made me lord over all Egypt: his exaltation to this dignity he ascribes, not to Pharaoh, but to God; civil honour and promotion to worldly grandeur and dignity are from God, and not from man:

come down unto me, tarry not; the great business on his hands not permitting him to go to his father and fetch him to Egypt, he desires that he would come to him without delay, which would be greatly to the advantage of him and his family, and to their mutual comfort.

Genesis 45:10

Ver. 10. And thou shall dwell in the land of Goshen,.... Called by Artapanus {t} Kaisan or Kessan; the Septuagint version Gesan of Arabia, as it was that part of Egypt which bordered on Arabia: it seems to be the same with the land of Rameses, see Ge 47:11; and the Heliopolitan home, which, Strabo {u} says, was reckoned to be in Arabia, and in which were both the city of Heliopolis and the city Heroopolis, according to Ptolemy {w}; for in the Septuagint version of Ge 46:28, instead of Goshen is Heroopolis, or the city of the Heroes in the land of Rameses, with which agrees Josephus {x}: wherefore Dr. Shaw {y} observes, the land of Rameses or Goshen could be no other than the Heliopolitan home, taking in that part of Arabia which lay bounded near Heliopolis by the Nile, and near Heroopolis by the correspondent part of the Red Sea. Now either before this time Joseph had got a grant of this country, of Pharaoh, to dispose of at pleasure, or he had so much power and authority of himself as to put his father into it: or it may be, it was the domains of his father in law the priest of On, since On or Onii, according to Ptolemy {z}, was the metropolis of the Heliopolitan home, and by some thought to be Heliopolis itself, and perhaps might be Joseph's own country, which he had with the daughter of the priest of On: indeed if what the Jewish writers say {a}, that Pharaoh, king of Egypt in Abraham's time, gave to Sarah the land of Goshen for an inheritance, and therefore the Israelites dwelt in it, because it was Sarah their "mother's"; it would account for Joseph's proposing to put them into the possession of it without the leave of Pharaoh; but Goshen seems to have been in the grant of Pharaoh, who agreed and confirmed what Joseph proposed, Ge 47:6;

and thou shalt be near unto me; as he would be in Goshen, if Memphis was the royal seat at this time, as some think {b}, and not Tanis or Zoan; or Heliopolis, or both, in their turn; and Artapanus {c} is express for it, that Memphis was the seat of that king of Egypt, in whose court Moses was brought up; and especially Heliopolis, nay be thought to be so, if Joseph dwelt at On or Heliopolis, where his father in law was priest or prince, which was near if not in Goshen itself: and according to Bunting {d}, On or Oni was the metropolis of Goshen; and Leo Africanus says {e}, that the sahidic province, in which was Fium, where the Israelites dwelt, see Ge 47:11, was the seat of the nobility of the ancient Egyptians:

thou and thy children, and thy children's children: for Jacob's sons had all of them children, even Benjamin the youngest, as appears from the following chapter:

and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast; and Goshen, being a place of pasturage, was fit and suitable for them; and so Josephus says {f}, of Heliopolis, which he takes to be the place where Jacob was placed, that there the king's shepherds had their pastures.

{t} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 23. p. 27. {u} Geograph. l. 17. p. 555. {w} Geograph. l. 4. c. 5. {x} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 7. sect. 5. {y} Travels, 305, 306. Ed. 2. {z} Ut supra. ({w}) {a} Pirke Eliezer, c. 26. {b} Dr. Shaw. ut supra, ({y}) p. 304, &c. Jablonski de Terra Goshen, Dissert. 4. sect. 3, 4, 5. & Sicardus in ib. Dissert. 5. sect. 1. {c} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 23, 27. {d} Travels, &c. p. 76. {e} Descriptio Africae, l. 8. p. 669. {f} Ut supra, ({x}) sect. 6.

Genesis 45:11

Ver. 11. And there will I nourish thee,.... Provide for him and his family:

for yet [there are] five years of famine; still to come, two of the seven only being past:

lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty; his whole posterity be consumed, as it would be in all probability, if he did not procure food for his family during the famine.

Genesis 45:12

Ver. 12. And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin,.... They were eyewitnesses of his being alive, having themselves seen him, and even Benjamin, who could not be suspected by his father of a fraud in imposing on him; and some of them could doubtless remember his features, and had an ocular proof of his being the very person, which they could with great evidence relate unto Jacob; as also his voice in speaking:

that [it is] my mouth that speaketh unto you; without an interpreter, as Aben Ezra, and in the Hebrew language, as the Targum and Jarchi; which might confirm them, and likewise their father upon their report, that the governor was not an Egyptian, but an Hebrew; and by that and other concurrent testimonies that he must be Joseph.

Genesis 45:13

Ver. 13. And you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt,.... His wealth and riches, his grandeur and dignity, his power and authority:

and of all that you have seen; what a magnificent house he dwelt in; what a numerous train of servants he had; in what majesty he rode in the second chariot to the king; and what authority he exercised over the people, and what reverence they gave him, and what power he had, particularly in the distribution of corn:

and ye shall haste, and bring down my father hither; for Joseph had an eager desire to see him, wherefore this is repeated.

Genesis 45:14

Ver. 14. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept,.... On his neck first, because he was his own brother by father and mother's side; and he wept over him for joy that he had a sight of him once more: the word for "neck" is in the plural number, and being used, may signify that he fell first on one side of his neck, and then on the other, to show his great affection for him:

and Benjamin wept upon his neck; their love and the tokens of it were reciprocal.

Genesis 45:15

Ver. 15. Moreover, he kissed all his brethren,.... In their turns, to testify his real affection for them, and hearty reconciliation to them:

and wept upon them; that is, upon their necks, as he had on Benjamin's:

and after that his brethren talked with him: being emboldened by this carriage of his to them, and encouraged to believe that he really forgave them their sin against him, and was truly reconciled unto them, and had a real affection for them, and had no reason to fear he would avenge himself on them: they entered into a free conversation, and talked of their father and their family, and the concerns of it, and of what passed since the time he was separated from them.

Genesis 45:16

Ver. 16. And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house,.... The report was carried to court, and there it was told by some from Joseph's house, who had overheard what had passed, at least somewhat of it:

saying, Joseph's brethren are come; perhaps they might call him by his Egyptian name, though the historian gives him his Hebrew name, and which was his right name, and by which he was best known to the Hebrews, for whose sake chiefly he wrote:

and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants; for Joseph being greatly beloved both by the king and his courtiers, who are meant by his servants, they were glad of an opportunity of showing their further regard to him, by their respect and civilities to his relations and friends, who had been the means of providing for the welfare of the whole kingdom, and of saving all their lives; Pharaoh's expressions of pleasure on this occasion were, no doubt sincere, whatever were those of his courtiers; who might not so well affect a stranger, and one that had been in a very low estate of life, to be raised above them, and have so much trust reposed is him, and honour conferred upon him, and might dissemble in their respect to Joseph before their sovereign; though such might be the prudence and affability of Joseph, and such the sense they had of their obligations to him in point of gratitude, that they might be really pleased to hear that his brethren were come; and the rather Pharaoh and his court might be the more delighted, because that it appeared that he came of a good family in Canaan; whereas they knew no more of him than of his having been a slave in Potiphar's house, and then cast into a prison for a crime charged upon him, out of which he was taken, and made the great man he was.

Genesis 45:17

Ver. 17. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph,.... Who, it is highly probable, waited upon Pharaoh to acquaint him with the coming of his brethren; for it cannot be imagined that Pharaoh should say what follows upon a bare report, without having a further account of things from Joseph, or that he would neglect giving it, but take the first opportunity to inform him, whereupon he gave him the following order:

say unto thy brethren, this do ye; give them directions and instructions to do as follows:

lade your asses: with provisions for the present necessity of their father's household in Canaan, and for their journey back to Egypt:

and go, get you into the land of Canaan; with all the haste they could make.

Genesis 45:18

Ver. 18. And take your father, and your households,.... Or families, for they were all married persons, and had children, and no doubt servants also: all were to be brought with them, and come unto me; into his kingdom, to his metropolis, and to his palace, and into his presence:

and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt; the best things which it affords, and the best and most fruitful part of it, as he afterwards did, which was the land of Goshen:

and ye shall eat the fat of the land; the choicest fruits of the earth, such as were produced in fields and gardens; meaning that they should have the finest of the wheat for themselves, and the fattest pastures for their flocks.

Genesis 45:19

Ver. 19. Now thou art commanded, this do ye,.... Had his orders from Pharaoh; had full power and authority to do the above things, and what follows: the sense Joseph Kimchi gives of this clause is, that Joseph was ordered by Pharaoh not to let any wagons go out of Egypt with corn, lest the Egyptians should want; but now Pharaoh said to him, though thou wert thus ordered, yet bid thy brethren do as follows:

take you wagons out of the land of Egypt: and lade them with corn, as the same writer observes; the Targum of Jonathan adds, which were drawn by oxen:

for your little ones, and for your wives: the wagons were to carry the women and children in when they returned:

and bring your father, and come; in one of the carriages, or in what way was most agreeable to him in his old age.

Genesis 45:20

Ver. 20. Also regard not your stuff,.... Or "your vessels" {g}, utensils, household goods; he would not have them to be concerned if they could not bring all their goods with them, but were obliged to leave some behind, and which, because of the distance of the way and difficulty of the road, lying through sandy deserts, could not well be brought, since there was enough to be had in the land of Egypt; therefore, as it may be rendered, "let not your eye spare" {h}, or "pity": do not be grieved at it, or say it is a pity to leave these good things behind. Some render and explain the words just the reverse, "leave nothing of your household goods" {i}; bring all away with you, as if he would not have them think of returning again, but of settling and continuing in Egypt; but this does not so well agree with what follows as the former sense does:

for the good of all the land of Egypt [is] yours: whatever good things were in it, whether for food or use for themselves, their houses, or their flocks, all were at their service, and they were welcome to them; or the best or most fruitful part of the country was designed for them, and would be given to them, or was at their option.

{g} Mkylk le "vasis vestris", Fagius, Drusius, "supellectilibus vestris", Pagninus, Schmidt; "propter vestra supellectilia", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {h} oxt la Mknye "oculus vester non parcat", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Drusius, Schmidt. {i} "Nee dimittatis quicquam de supellectili vestra", V. L. so Mercerus.

Genesis 45:21

Ver. 21. And the children of Israel did so,.... As Pharaoh commanded, and Joseph from him directed them to do:

and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh: and beasts, either horses or oxen to draw them, and these not empty, though the principal use of them was to fetch his father and his family, and their goods:

and gave them provision for the way: both going and returning, as much as would suffice for both.

Genesis 45:22

Ver. 22. To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment,.... Rich apparel, two suits of clothes, to shift and change upon occasion, such as Homer {k} calls imatia exameiba, "changeable garments"; those he gave to everyone of his brethren, partly that they might have something to show to their father and to their wives, which would cause them to give credit to the report they should give of Joseph, and his great prosperity; and partly that they might, upon their return, be provided with suitable apparel to appear before Pharaoh, and chiefly this was intended to show his great respect and affection for them, and reconciliation to them:

but to Benjamin he gave three hundred [pieces] of silver; or shekels, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, which amounted to between thirty and forty pounds of our money; the Septuagint very wrongly renders it three hundred "pieces of gold"; and besides these he gave him also

five changes of raiment; because of his greater love and affection for him.

{k} Odyss. 8.

Genesis 45:23

Ver. 23. And to his father he sent after this [manner],.... Or "according to" this {l}; either in like manner, as he gave his brethren change of raiment, &c. so he sent the like to him, as Aben Ezra and Ben Melech interpret it, referring it to what goes before; or rather as Jarchi, according to this account or number, even which follows: namely,

ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt: the best things the land afforded; the Targum of Jonathan says with wine, but that Egypt did not abound with; and so Jarchi, out of the Talmud, observes, that it was old wine that was sent, such as is agreeable to ancient men:

and ten she asses laden with corn; not made up into bread, next mentioned, and so distinguished from it:

and bread: ready made and baked:

and meat for his father by the way; food and fruit of various sorts; Aben Ezra reckons many, peas, beans, lentils, millet, fetches, figs, currants, and dates.

{l} tazk "sicut hoc", Pagninus, Montanus; "in hunc modum", Tigurine

version.

Genesis **45:24**

Ver. 24. So he sent his brethren away, and they departed,.... From Egypt to Canaan with the wagons, asses, and rich presents:

and he said unto them, see that ye fall not out by the way; the Targum of Jonathan adds, about the affair of selling me; which he had reason to fear they would, from what they, and particularly Reuben, had said in his presence, Ge 42:21; he was jealous this would be the subject of their discourse by the way, and that they would be blaming one another about it, and so fall into contentions and quarrels; that one would say it was owing to the reports of such an one concerning him, that they entertained hatred against him; that it was such an one that advised to kill him, and such an one that stripped him of his clothes, and such an one that put him into the pit, and such an one that was the cause of his being sold; and thus shifting of things from one to another, and aggravating each other's concern in this matter, they might stir up and provoke one another to wrath and anger, as the word used signifies, which might have a bad issue; to prevent which Joseph gives them this kind and good advice; and especially there was the more reason to attend to it, since he was reconciled unto them, and was desirous the whole should be buried in oblivion.

Genesis **45:25**

Ver. 25. And they went up out of Egypt,.... That lying lower than the land of Canaan:

and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father; they found him alive and well.

Genesis **45:26**

Ver. 26. And told him,.... What had happened to them in Egypt:

saying, Joseph [is] yet alive; who was thought by him and them to have been dead long ago:

and he [is] governor over all the land of Egypt; deputy governor, and had such power and authority that nothing was done without his order; the executive power or administration of government was put into his hands, and all the officers of the kingdom were under him, he was next to Pharaoh:

and Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not; it was too great and too good news to be true; though it was desirable, it was unexpected; it amazed him, he knew not what to think, or say or believe about it; there was such a conflict of the passions in him, that he could not compose himself, or reason with himself about it; and what might serve the more to hinder his belief of it was, that this report of theirs was contrary to what they themselves had before related of his death; and very likely upon the mention of the thing he fell into a swoon, and was not himself for a while; and when he came a little to himself, they went on with their account, as follows.

Genesis 45:27

Ver. 27. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them,.... Not concerning their selling of him, and his forgiveness of them, and reconciliation to them, which perhaps Jacob never heard of to his dying day, since he makes no mention of it, nor hints at it in his dying words to them; but of his great advancement in the court of Pharaoh, and how desirous he was to have his father and family with him, and provide for them, since there were five years of famine yet to come:

and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, and his sons wives and children, down to Egypt in; and which were so grand and magnificent, that he was easily persuaded could never have been provided by his sons, if what they had said concerning Joseph was not true: and then

the spirit of Jacob their father revived: not the Holy Spirit, or spirit of prophecy, as the Targums, which the Jews say departed from him, and had not been with him since the loss of Joseph, but now returned; but his own natural spirit, he became lively and cheerful, giving credit to the report of his sons.

Ver. 28. And Israel said, [it is] enough, Joseph my son [is] yet alive,.... Or it is "much" or "great" {m}; he had much joy, as the Targums; this was the greatest blessing of all, and more to him than all the glory and splendour that Joseph was in; that he was alive, that was enough for Jacob, which gave him content and pleasure; not so much the news of his grandeur in Egypt, as of his being in the land of the living:

I will go and see him before I die; though his age was great, the journey long and difficult, so great was his desire of seeing Joseph, that he determines at once upon going, expecting death shortly: no doubt but this was said in submission to the will of God, and in seeking him by prayer and supplication, and in the exercise of faith, believing that God would grant him his desire, than which nothing in life could be more desirable to him, and he only wished to live to enjoy this favour. In Joseph's making himself known unto his brethren, he was a type of Christ, who manifests himself to his people alone, and as he does not unto the world, saying unto them, that he is Jesus the Saviour, their friend and brother, and whom they crucified, whose sins were the cause of his sufferings; and yet encourages them to draw nigh unto him with an humble and holy boldness, giving them abundant reason to believe that he will receive them kindly, seeing that all that were done to him were by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, and for their good, even for their eternal salvation; and that they might not perish, but have everlasting life; and to whom he now gives change of raiment, riches and honour, yea, durable riches and righteousness; and declares it to be his will, that where he is, they may be also, and behold his glory: and this is sufficient to engage them to reckon all their worldly enjoyments as mere stuff, contemptible things in comparison of the good and glories of another world they are hastening to, where there will be fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore; and therefore should not fall out by the way, as they too often do.

{m} br "multum", Montanus, Munster, Drusius, Schmidt; mega moi estin Sept.

In this chapter we are told, that Jacob with all his family and substance took a journey to Egypt to see his son Joseph, as he determined, in which he was encouraged to proceed by a vision from God, Ge 46:1; and an account is given of all his sons, his sons' sons and daughters that went thither with him, Ge 46:8; when he came near to Egypt he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to acquaint him of his coming, who met him at Goshen, where there was a most affectionate interview between them, Ge 46:28; and when he gave directions and instructions what answers to give to Pharaoh's questions, when they should appear before him, to whom he proposed to go and inform him of their being come into Egypt, Ge 46:31.

Ver. 1. And Israel took his journey with all that he had,.... Set forward in it immediately, as soon as possible after he had resolved to take it, and with him he took all his children and grandchildren, and all his cattle and goods; which shows that he took his journey not only to see his son Joseph, but to continue in Egypt, at least during the years of famine, as his son desired he would, otherwise there would have been no occasion of taking all along with him:

and came to Beersheba: where he and his ancestors Abraham and Isaac had formerly lived; a place where sacrifices had often been offered up, and the worship of God performed, and much communion enjoyed with him. This is said to be sixteen miles from Hebron {n}, where Jacob dwelt, and according to Musculus was six German miles from it:

and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac; which were attended with prayer and praise; with praise for hearing that his son Joseph was alive, and with prayer that he might have a good, safe, and prosperous journey.

{n} Bunting's Travels, p. 72.

Genesis 46:2

Ver. 2. And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night,.... He appeared to Jacob as he lay upon his bed in the night season, and with an articulate voice spoke to him as follows:

and said, Jacob, Jacob: not "Israel", the more honourable name he had given him, but Jacob, putting him in mind of his former low estate; and doubling this name, either out of love and affection to him, as Jarchi intimates; or rather in order to awake him, at least to stir up his attention to what he was about to say to him:

and he said, here [am] I; signifying his readiness to hearken to him in what he should say to him, and to obey him in whatsoever he should command him.

Genesis 46:3

Ver. 3. And he said, I [am] God, the God of thy father,.... His father Isaac, who was now dead, and who is the rather mentioned, because in him Abraham's seed was to be called, and in his line the promise both of the land of Canaan, and of the Messiah, ran, and from him Jacob received the blessing; and this might be a confirmation of it to him, in that Jehovah calls himself his God; he first declares himself to be his God, and so able to perform whatever he should promise him, and his father's God, who would show him favour, as he had to him:

fear not to go down into Egypt; Jacob might have many fears arise in his mind about this journey, as interpreters generally observe; as lest it should not be agreeable to the will of God, since his father Isaac was forbidden to go into Egypt, when in like circumstances with him, Ge 26:1; as well as he, might fear it would be too great a journey for him in his old age, some evil would befall him, or he die by the way and not see his son; or lest going with his family thither, and there continuing for some time, they might be tempted with the pleasantness and fruitfulness of the land, and settle there, and forget and neglect the promised land of Canaan; and especially lest they should be drawn into the idolatry of the Egyptians, and forsake the worship of the true God; and very probably he might call to mind the prophecy delivered to Abraham, of his seed being strangers and servants, and afflicted in a land not theirs for the space of four hundred years, Ge 15:13; and Jacob might fear this step he was now taking would bring on, as indeed it did, the completion of this prediction, by which his offspring would be oppressed and diminished. The Targum of Jonathan makes this to be Jacob's principal fear;

"fear not to go down into Egypt, because of the business of the servitude decreed with Abraham;"

as also he might fear his going thither might seem to be a giving up his title to, and expectation of the promised land: to remove which fears the following is said,

for I will there make of thee a great nation: as he did; for though in process of time his seed were greatly afflicted here, yet the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied; and their increase in Egypt was vastly greater than it had been in a like space of time before; for in the space of two hundred fifteen years before their descent into Egypt, they were become no more than seventy persons, whereas in the like number of years in Egypt, they became 600,000, besides children; see Ge 46:27 Ex 12:37.

Genesis 46:4

Ver. 4. I will go down with thee into Egypt,.... Which was enough to silence all his fears; for if the presence of God went with him to protect and defend hide, to bless and prosper him, and to direct, support, and comfort, he had nothing to fear from any quarter:

and I will also surely bring thee up [again]: Jarchi takes this to be a promise that he should be buried in the land of Canaan, which had its fulfilment, when his corpse was carried out of Egypt to Machpelah, and there interred; but rather this refers to the bringing up of his posterity from thence in due time, for which Jacob might be most solicitous, and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and I will bring up thy children from thence:"

and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes: and so close them when he was dead; this, as Aben Ezra says, was a custom of the living to the dead, and it used to be done by the nearest relations and friends, though now with us commonly by strangers, or those that are not akin: this was a custom among the Greeks and Romans, as appears from Homer {o}, Virgil {p}, Ovid {q}, and other writers {r}; and so, among the Jews, Tobias is said to shut the eyes of his wife's father and mother, and to bury them honourably, "Where he became old with honour, and he buried his father and mother in law honourably, and he inherited their substance, and his father Tobit's." (Tobit 14:13)

Of the Vulgate Latin version: Maimonides {s} reckons this of closing the eyes of the dead, among the rites used towards them, and so in the Talmud {t}: now by this expression Jacob was assured that Joseph was alive, and that he should live to see him, and that Joseph would outlive him, and do this last office for him; and, as Ben Melech observes, by this he had the good news told him that Joseph should remain behind him, to sustain and support his sons, and his sons' sons, all the years that he should live after him.

{o} Odyss. 11. {p} Aeneid. l. 9. {q} Trist. l. 1. Eleg. 2. {r} Vid. Kirchman, de Funer. Rom. l. 1. c. 6. & Kipping. Rom. Antiqu. l. 4. c. 6. {s} Hilchot Ebel, l. 4. sect. 1. {t} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 151. 2.

Genesis 46:5

Ver. 5. And Jacob rose up from Beersheba,.... In high spirits, and proceeded on in his journey, being encouraged and animated by the promises of God now made unto him:

and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him; it may be wondered at that Joseph did not send his chariot to fetch his father; it could not be for want of due respect and honour to him, but it may be such a carriage was not fit for so long a journey, and especially to travel in, in some parts of the road through which they went: no mention being made of Jacob's wives, it may be presumed they were all now dead; it is certain Rachel was, see Ge 35:19; and it is more than probable that Leah died before this time, since Jacob says he buried her himself in Machpelah in Canaan, Ge 49:31; and it is very likely also that his two concubine wives Bilhah and Zilpah were also dead, since no notice is taken of them.

Genesis 46:6

Ver. 6. And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan,.... Some interpreters add, by way of explanation, and in Mesopotamia; much of Jacob's substance being yet there, though the greatest part was got in Canaan, and so that is put for the whole; and Jarchi supposes that Jacob gave all that he got in Padanaram to Esau for his part in the cave of Machpelah, and therefore mention is only made of his substance in Canaan; but there is no need of any such additions or suppositions, since the text only speaks of the substance of Jacob's sons, and what they had was only gotten in Canaan, into which they came very young; all which they brought with them as being their property, and not obliged to leave it behind to strangers; though they were bid not to regard their stuff, yet they were not willing to live upon others, but upon their own, and as much as they could independent of others; and that they might not be upbraided hereafter that they came into Egypt poor and destitute of everything:

and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him; safe and well.

Genesis 46:7

Ver. 7. His sons, and his sons' sons with him,.... His eleven sons, and their sons, his grandchildren:

and his daughters; his own daughter Dinah, and his daughters in law, the wives of his sons; for these came with him into Egypt, as appears from Ge 46:5; though the plural may be put for the singular, as in Ge 46:23:

and his sons' daughters; and mention is made of Sarah the daughter of Asher, Ge 46:17; Jarchi adds, Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, but it is certain she was born in Egypt, Nu 26:59:

and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt; left none behind him in Canaan, son or daughter; no mention is made of servants, though no doubt many came along with him: the design of the historian is to give an account of Jacob's children, who they were, and their number, when they came into Egypt, that the increase of them might be observed.

Genesis 46:8

Ver. 8. And these [are] the names of the children of Israel which came into Egypt,.... Not meaning precisely Jacob's seed and offspring, but the body of the people of Israel, as they were when they went into Egypt, including Jacob himself:

Jacob and his sons; for he went with them to Egypt, and was the head and principal of them:

Reuben, Jacob's firstborn; see Ge 29:32.

Genesis 46:9

Ver. 9. And the sons of Reuben, Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi. From whom came the families named after them, of which they were the heads, Nu 26:5.

Genesis 46:10

Ver. 10. And the sons of Simeon,.... Who was the second son of Jacob:

Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar; the first of these is called Nemuel, Nu 26:12; the third, Ohad, is omitted in the places referred to, he dying without children, as may be supposed, and so was not the head of any family; and the fourth, Jachin, is called Jarib, **1Ch 4:24**; and the fifth is called Zerah, in the above place, by a transposition of letters:

and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman; whom Simeon married, very probably after the death of his first wife, by whom he had the above five sons, or she was his concubine: many Jewish writers {u} say, this was Dinah, married to a Canaanite, but this is impossible: according to the Targum of Jonathan, this Shaul was Zimri, who did the work of the Canaanites at Shittim, Nu 25:14, which is not at all likely, the distance of time will not admit of it.

{u} Jarchi in loc. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 80. fol. 70. 3. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 3. 2.

Genesis **46:11**

Ver. 11. And the sons of Levi, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. From these sprung the priests and Levites, see **Nu 3:1**.

Genesis **46:12**

Ver. 12. And the sons of Judah, Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zarah,.... Five of them:

but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan; and so did not go with Jacob into Egypt; and which is observed that they might not be reckoned among them, though it was proper to take notice of them in the genealogy:

and the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul; some think that these could not be born in Canaan, but in Egypt; and that they are mentioned among those that went down to Egypt, because they went there in the loins of their father, and to supply the places of Er and Onan, who died before, and have the honour to be here named, because they might be the first of Jacob's great grandchildren born there; though others suppose that Pharez was at this time fourteen years of age, and instances are given of some, who before that age have been fathers of children; the difficulty is not easily solved: the Targum of Jonathan expressly says,

"Shelah and Zarah did not beget children in Canaan, but there were two sons of Pharez who went down into Egypt, Hezron and Hamul."

Genesis **46:13**

Ver. 13. And the sons of Issachar, Tola, and Phuvah; and Job, and Shimron. The first of these was the father of a numerous race in the days of David, their number was 22,600; See Gill on "1Ch 7:2"; the second is called Puah, and the third Jashub, and the fourth Shimrom, **1Ch 7:1**; and were all the heads of families, as appears from the places referred to.

Genesis **46:14**

Ver. 14. And the sons of Zebulun, Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel. Whose names are the same in Nu 26:26.

Genesis 46:15

Ver. 15. These are the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padanaram,.... Which must be restrained to the six sons only, who were properly Leah's, and not to their sons' sons, for they were not born in Padanaram, but in Canaan:

with his daughter Dinah; who also was by Leah:

all the souls of his sons and daughters [were] thirty and three; that is, together with himself, or otherwise it will be difficult to give the exact number; if all before mentioned are to be reckoned there will be thirty four, wherefore some are for excluding Dinah; but she is not only expressly mentioned, but is the only one intended by his daughters here, the plural being put for the singular; and there is as much reason for retaining her here, as Sarah the daughter of Asher hereafter: some think Er and Onan are to be excluded, as indeed they are, because they died in the land of Canaan, and then there will be but thirty two; wherefore some are for adding Jochebed the daughter of Levi, but she is neither mentioned in the genealogy, nor did she go with Jacob into Egypt, but was born in Egypt long after: it seems best therefore to take Jacob himself into the account, as several Jewish writers do {w}, and who is expressly named and set at the head of this account, Ge 46:8, which will make thirty three.

{w} Aben Ezra, Gersom, & Abarbinel.

Genesis 46:16

Ver. 16. And the sons of Gad,.... A son of Jacob by Zilpah, Leah's maid; for the historian, before he proceeds to give an account of his sons by Rachel, finishes the account of all his sons by Leah and her maid;

Ziphion, and Haggi, Shuni, and Ezbon, and Eri, and Arodi, and Areli; in all seven; the same number is given, and in the same order, Nu 26:15.

Genesis 46:17

Ver. 17. And the sons of Asher,.... Another son of Jacob by Leah's maid Zilpah, whose sons were,

Jimnah, and Ishuah, and Isui, and Beriah, and Serah their sister; who is called Sarah, Nu 26:46, and by the Septuagint here. She seems to have been a person of some note, being so particularly remarked in both places:

and the sons of Beriah, Heber and Malchiel; this Beriah seems to be the youngest son of Asher, and yet had two sons; who, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, went down into Egypt; he must marry, and have sons when very young; the thing is not impossible: See Gill on "Ge 46:12";

Genesis 46:18

Ver. 18. These [are] the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter,.... To be her maid, when she was married to Jacob, by whom he had Gad and Asher:

and these she bare unto Jacob, [even] sixteen souls; not that Zilpah bare sixteen children to Jacob, for she bore but two; but the children and grandchildren of these two with them made sixteen.

Genesis 46:19

Ver. 19. The sons Rachel, Jacob's wife,.... The wife of his affection and choice, his principal wife, yea, his only lawful wife; Zilpah and Bilhah were his concubines, and as for Leah, she was imposed and forced upon him:

Joseph and Benjamin; the first was in Egypt already, the other now went down with Jacob.

Genesis 46:20

Ver. 20. And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim,.... And therefore not to be reckoned with those that went down with Jacob thither; for which reason the clause, "in the land of Egypt", is inserted, see Ge 41:50;

which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, bare unto him; here again the Targum of Jonathan makes Asenath to be the daughter of Dinah, who it says was educated in the house of Potipherah prince of Tanis; See Gill on "Ge 41:50".

Genesis 46:21

Ver. 21. And the sons of Benjamin,.... The second son of Jacob by his wife Rachel; whose sons

[were] Belah, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard; in all one hundred and ten. It is a difficulty to account for it, that Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son, often called a lad at this time, and generally supposed to be about twenty three or four years of age, should have so many sons: some think he had more wives than one, which is not likely, since we never read of any of Jacob's sons that had more than one at a time; and others, that his sons were born twins, and so had them in a little time, which is a much better solution of the difficulty: but others are of opinion, that though the greater part of them might be born in Canaan, yet others might be born in Egypt; and being denominated from the greater part, and that being put for the whole, may be reckoned among the descendants into Egypt; and even those that were in Egypt, being born while Jacob was alive, might be said to descend there in his loins; which may be the best of the ways proposed for removing this difficulty: though I should rather think they were all born before the descent into Egypt, the whole narrative seems to require this of them all; for otherwise many more might be, said to descend in the loins of Jacob, or in the loins of his sons, which would greatly increase the number of those said to go down with him, after mentioned: to which it may be added, that Benjamin was at least thirty two years of age, and so may very well be thought to have had these children before he went to Egypt.

Genesis 46:22

Ver. 22. These are the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob,.... That is, sons and grandsons:

all the souls [were] fourteen; two sons, Joseph and Benjamin; twelve grandsons, two of Joseph's, and ten of Benjamin's.

Genesis 46:23

Ver. 23. And the sons of Dan, Hushim. He had but one son, wherefore the plural is put for the singular, see Ge 46:7; Aben Ezra thinks he had two sons, and that one of them was dead, and therefore not mentioned; but the other way best accounts for the expression; though, as Schmidt observes, the plural may be indefinitely put, and the sense be this, as for the sons of Dan, there was only one, whose name was Hushim. Dan was a son of Jacob by Bilhah, Rachel's maid, as the following was another.

Genesis 46:24

Ver. 24. And the sons of Naphtali, Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shillem. The last is called Shallum in **1Ch 7:13**.

Genesis 46:25

Ver. 25. These [are] the sons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter,.... To be her maid, when she was married to Jacob:

and she bare these unto Jacob, all the souls [were] seven; not that she bare seven sons to Jacob, she bore but two, Dan and Naphtali; but the children of these with them made seven, one of Dan's, and four of Naphtali's, who went down with Jacob into Egypt.

Genesis 46:26

Ver. 26. All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt,.... These are in parcels before mentioned, but here they are brought to a sum total; and by this phrase are excluded those that died before, as Er and Onan, and those that were in Egypt before, as Joseph and his two sons; and I should think also all that were born in Egypt afterwards, even while Jacob was living: those reckoned are only such,

which came out of his loins: such as were his seed and offspring. This is observed for the sake of what follows, and to exclude them:

besides Jacob's sons' wives; these do not come into the account, because they did not spring from him:

all the souls [were] threescore and six; thirty two of Leah's, leaving out Er and Onan, sixteen of Zilpah's, fourteen of Rachel's, and seven of Bilhah's, make sixty nine; take out of them Joseph and his two sons, who were in Egypt before, and you have the exact number of sixty six.

Genesis 46:27

Ver. 27. And the sons of Joseph, which were born in Egypt, [were] two souls,.... Ephraim and Manasseh; which is observed to show that they do not come into the above reckoning, but are to be taken into another that follows:

all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, [were] threescore and ten; here it may be observed, the phrase is varied; it is not said, "all the souls which came out of the loins of Jacob", but "all the souls of the house" or family of Jacob; all that that consisted of, and takes in Jacob himself, the head of his house or family; nor is it said, "which came with Jacob into Egypt", as before, but "which came into Egypt"; not which came with him thither, but yet were there by some means or another, as Joseph and his two sons; Joseph by being brought down, and sold there, and his two sons by being born there; if therefore Jacob, Joseph, and his two sons, are added to the above number of sixty six, it will make seventy; as for the account of Stephen, making the number seventy five, See Gill on "Ac 7:14".

Genesis 46:28

Ver. 28. And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph,.... Who was the more honourable of his sons, and in greater esteem with Jacob than his elder brethren were, Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, who by their conduct had greatly displeased him: moreover, he was a man of a polite address, and had endeared himself to Joseph by his speech to him, in which he discovered so much affection both to his father, and his brother Benjamin, and was upon all accounts the fittest person to be sent to Joseph:

to direct his face unto Goshen; to inform Joseph of his father's coming, that a place might be prepared for him to dwell in, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it; and particularly to direct what place in Goshen he would have him come to, and meet him at:

and they came into the land of Goshen; which was the first part of the land of Egypt that lay nearest to Canaan: the Greek version of the whole verse is,

"he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to meet him at Heroopolis, or the city of the heroes, in the land of Rameses,"

which is confirmed by Josephus {x}; See Gill on "Ge 45:10".

{x} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 7. sect. 5.

Genesis 46:29

Ver. 29. And Joseph made ready his chariot,.... Or "bound" {y} it, fastened the horses to it, harnessed them, and put them to; this he did not himself, as Jarchi thinks, for the honour of his father; but rather, as Aben Ezra, by ordering his servants to do it:

and went up to meet Israel his father in Goshen; that being higher than the other part of Egypt, as it must be, if it was in Thebes, or upper Egypt, as some Jewish writers say {z}; and Fium, supposed to be the place the Israelites dwelt in, see Ge 47:11, stood very high {a}:

and presented himself unto him; alighted from his chariot, and came up to his father, and stood before him, and showed himself to him, declaring who he was:

and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while: either Jacob fell on the neck of Joseph, and wept over him a good while before he could speak to him, as the father of the prodigal son fell on his neck and kissed him, Lu 15:20; or, as Jarchi, Joseph fell on his father's neck, as he had done upon his brethren before, but wept over him longer; their embraces were no doubt mutual and extremely affectionate, that for a while they were not able to speak a word to each other.

{y} roayw "et ligavit", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "tum alligavit", Schmidt. {z} Hieron. Quaestion. in Genesim, fol. 72. M. tom. 3. {a} Leo. African. Descriptio Africae, l. 8. p. 722.

Genesis 46:30

Ver. 30. And Israel said unto Joseph,.... He broke silence first:

now let me die, since I have seen thy face; not that he was impatient to die, and not desirous to live any longer; for it could not but yield pleasure to him, and make the remainder of his life more comfortable to live with such a son, his darling, and now in so much honour and grandeur; but this he said to express his great satisfaction at the sight of him, that he could now be content to die, having all his heart could wish for, an interview with his beloved son:

because thou [art] yet alive; whom he had looked upon as dead, and the receiving him now was as life from the dead, and could not but fill him with the greatest joy, see Lu 15:23; Jacob lived after this seventeen years, Ge 47:28.

Genesis 46:31

Ver. 31. And Joseph said unto his brethren, and to his father's house,.... To them and their families, after he had paid his filial respects to his father, in honour, reverence, and affection:

I will go up and shew Pharaoh; acquaint him that his father and all his family were come to Egypt; he says, "I will go up"; which same phrase is used of him, Ge 46:29; when he came, and carries some difficulty in it how to account for it, that he should be said to go up when he came, and to go up when he returned. Some have thought of upper Egypt, others of the upper part of the Nile, and others, that Pharaoh's palace was situated on an eminence; but then, as it is to be supposed he went the same road he came, it would have been said, that when he came, he came down; what Ben Melech suggests seems most agreeable, I will go up to my chariot, mount that, and return to Pharaoh, and give him an account of his father's arrival, which it was very proper, prudent, and politic to do:

and say unto him, my brethren, and my father's house, which [were] in the land of Canaan, are come unto me; not merely to pay him a visit, but to continue there.

Genesis 46:32

Ver. 32. And the men [are] shepherds,.... That was their occupation and employment, by which they got their livelihood. Joseph was not ashamed of the business his father and brethren followed, even though mean; and besides, such men were an abomination to the Egyptians: this he thought proper to tell Pharaoh, lest he should think of putting them into some offices of the court or army, which would expose them to the envy of the Egyptians, and might endanger the corruption of their religion and manners, as well as be the means of separating them one from another, which he was careful to guard against, as Josephus {b} the historian suggests:

for their trade hath been to feed cattle; this was what they were brought up to from their youth, and were always employed in, and for which only they were fit:

and they have brought their flocks and their herds, and all that they have; in order to carry on the same business, and lead the same course of life.

{b} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 2. c. 7. sect. 5.)

Genesis 46:33

Ver. 33. And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you,.... Order them to come before him, to see them, and have some conversation with them:

and shall say, what [is] your occupation? or your works {c}, their business and employment, whether they exercised any manufacture or handicraft, and what it was.

{c} Mkyvem "opus vestrum", Pagninus, Montanus, "opera vestra", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius.

Genesis 46:34

Ver. 34. That ye shall say, thy servants' trade hath been about cattle,.... Breeding, feeding, and selling them:

from our youth, even until now: this had been their constant employment, they never followed any other:

both we, [and] also our fathers; their father, grandfather, and great grandfather, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were all of the same occupation:

that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; Joseph instructed his brethren to be very particular in the account of their occupation to Pharaoh, that it might be a direction to him how to dispose of them, and where to settle them, namely, in the land of Goshen; which was a country that abounded with good pasture, and so the fittest place for them to be fixed in: and besides this, Joseph had some other reasons for placing them there, as that they might be near to him, who might dwell at On or Heliopolis, to which place, or province, Goshen belonged; and that being also the nearest part of the land to Canaan, they might the more easily and sooner get away when there was an occasion for it; as well as he was desirous they should not be brought into the heart of the land, lest they should be corrupted with the superstition, and idolatry, and vices of the people; and being afar off, both from the court, and the body of the people, might be less subject to their contempt and insults, since it follows:

for every shepherd [is] an abomination unto the Egyptians; not because shepherds ate of the milk and flesh of the creatures they fed, which the Egyptians abstained from; for the Egyptians in those times did eat the flesh of slain beasts, see Ge 43:16; nor because they fed, and slew, and ate those creatures, which the Egyptians worshipped as gods, as Jarchi; for it does not appear that the Egyptians were so early worshippers of such creatures; nor is this phrase, "every shepherd", to be understood of any other than foreign shepherds; for one of the three sorts of the people of Egypt, as distinct from, and under the king, priests, and soldiers, according to Diodorus Siculus {d}, were shepherds, and were not despised on that account; for, as the same writer says, all the Egyptians were reckoned equally noble and honourable {e}; and such it is plain there were in Egypt, in the times of Joseph, see Ge 47:6; and goat herds were had in esteem and honour by those about Mendes, though swine herds were not {f}: wherefore this must be understood of foreign shepherds, the Egyptians having been greatly distressed by such, who either came out of Ethiopia, and lived by plunder and robbery {g}, or out of Phoenicia or Arabia; for, according to Manetho {h}, it was said that they were Arabians or Phoenicians who entered into Egypt, burnt their cities, &c. and set up kings of their own, called their Hycsi, or pastor kings: and therefore Joseph might the rather fear his brethren and father's family would be the more contemptible in that they came from Canaan, which was near to Arabia and Phoenicia; but Dr. Lightfoot {i} is of opinion, that the Egyptians, being plagued for Abraham's and Sarah's sake, made a law, that for the future none should converse with Hebrews, nor with foreign shepherds, so familiarly as to eat or drink with them.

{d} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 67. {e} Ibid. p. 83. {f} Herodot. Euterpe, sive, l. 2. p. 46, 47. {g} Gaulmin. Not. in Dfore Hayamim, p. 267. {h} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. sect. 14. {i} Works: vol. 1. p. 694.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Genesis 47:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 47

This chapter gives an account of the presentation of five of Joseph's brethren, and then of his father, to Pharaoh, and of what passed between them, Ge 47:1; of Joseph's settlement of them, according to the direction of Pharaoh, in the land of Rameses in Goshen, and of his provision for them there, Ge 47:11; of his getting into his hands, for Pharaoh, the money, cattle, and lands, of the Egyptians, excepting the lands belonging to the priests, for corn he had supplied them with, Ge 47:13; of his giving them seed to sow with, on condition of Pharaoh's having a fifth part of the produce, Ge 47:23, of the increase of Jacob's substance in Egypt, and that of his children; of the time of his living there, and his approaching death, when he called Joseph to him, and obliged him by an oath to bury him in the burying place of his fathers, Ge 47:27.

Ver. 1. Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh,.... After he had been with his father, had had an interview with him, and had took his leave of him for a time, he came to Pharaoh's court:

and said, my father, and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; Pharaoh had desired they might come, and Joseph now acquaints him they were come; not being willing it should be said that they were come in a private manner, and without his knowledge; nor to dispose of them himself without the direction and approbation of Pharaoh, who was superior to him; and he makes mention of their flocks and herds, and other substance, partly to show that they were not a mean beggarly family that came to live upon him, and partly that a proper place of pasturage for their cattle might be appointed to them:

and behold, they [are] in the land of Goshen; they are stopped at present, until they should have further directions and orders where to settle; and this is the rather mentioned, because it was the place Joseph proposed with himself to fix them in, if Pharaoh approved of it.

Genesis 47:2

Ver. 2. And he took some of his brethren,.... Along with him, when he left his father in Goshen; the word for "some" signifies the extremity of a thing: hence some have fancied that he took some of the meanest and most abject, so Jarchi, lest if they had appeared to Pharaoh strong and robust, he should have made soldiers of them; others on the contrary think he took those that excelled most in strength of body, and endowments of mind, to make the better figure; others, that he took of both sorts, or some at both ends, the first and last, elder and younger; but it may be, he made no choice at all, but took some that offered next:

[even] five men: whom the Targum of Jonathan names as follow, Zebulun,

Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher; but Jarchi will have them to be Reuben, Simeon and Levi, Issachar and Benjamin; but on these accounts no dependence is to be had:

and presented them, unto Pharaoh; introduced them into his presence, that he might converse with them, and ask them what questions he thought fit.

Genesis 47:3

Ver. 3. And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, what [is] your occupation?.... Which is the question he had told his brethren beforehand would be asked them, and prepared them to give an answer to it, Ge 46:33; which was perhaps an usual question Pharaoh asked of persons that came to settle in his dominions, that he might have no idle vagrants there, and that he might know of what advantage they were like to be of in his kingdom, and might dispose of them accordingly:

and they said unto Pharaoh, thy servants [are] shepherds, both we [and] also our fathers; see Ge 46:34.

Genesis 47:4

Ver. 4. They said moreover unto Pharaoh, for to sojourn in the land are we come,.... Not to obtain possessions and inheritances, as if natives, and to abide there always, but to continue for a little time; for they kept in mind that the land of Canaan was given to them as an inheritance, and would be possessed by then, in due time, and therefore had no thought for the present of continuing here long:

for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine [is] sore in the land of Canaan: they say nothing of the want of corn for themselves, because they could have it from Egypt, fetching it, and paying a price for it, but of pasture for their cattle; for the land of Canaan lying higher, was so scorched with the heat of the sun, and parched with drought, that scarce any grass grew upon it; whereas Egypt, and especially the land of Goshen, lying lower, and being marshy and fenny places, near the Nile, had some grass growing on it, even when the Nile did not overflow to make it so fruitful as it sometimes was:

now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen: which request Joseph, no doubt, directed them to make, it being the spot he had chosen for them in his own mind, and even had promised it to his father; and which his brethren, by their short stay in it as they came along, saw would be very convenient for them, and was the true reason why Joseph instructed them to be particular in the account of their trade and business, that Pharaoh might be inclined of himself to propose it to them or however to grant it when requested.

Genesis 47:5

Ver. 5. And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph,.... Who was present at the conversation that passed between him and his brethren:

saying, thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee; which is observed, not for Joseph's information, but to lead on to what he had to say further.

Genesis 47:6

Ver. 6. The land of Egypt [is] before thee,.... To choose what part of it he should judge most suitable and agreeable to his father and brethren:

in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell, in the land of Goshen let them dwell; as is requested; and which was, as Pharaoh here suggests, the best part of the land, the most fertile and fruitful, and the fittest for cattle, being full of pastures through the river Nile and the canals of it, and Goshen being the most fertile portion in the land of Rameses, as in Ge 47:11; this, Dr. Shaw observes {k}, could be no other than what lay within two or three leagues at the most from the Nile, because the rest of the Egyptian Arabia, which reaches beyond the influence of this river to the eastward, is a barren inhospitable wilderness:

and if thou knowest [any] man of activity among them; strong in body, and of great parts, and endowments of mind, and of great skill, and diligence, and industry in the management of flocks and herds:

then make them rulers over my cattle; or "rulers of cattle over those that are mine" {l}: that is, over his shepherds, to take care that they do their work well and faithfully: from whence it appears that Pharaoh had flocks and herds and shepherds; and therefore it cannot be thought that the Egyptians in those times abstained from eating of animals, or that all shepherds, without exception, were an abomination to them, only foreign ones that lived on spoil and plunder, and made excursions into their country for such purposes: the office he assigned to men of skill and industry was like that which Doeg the Edomite was in, who was the chief of the herdsmen of Saul, 1Sa 21:7.

{k} Travels, p. 306. {l} yl rva le hnqm yrv "magistros pecuariae super illos, qui sunt mihi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Schmidt and Answorth.

Genesis 47:7

Ver. 7. And Joseph brought in Jacob his father,.... That is, some time after he had introduced his five brethren, and had gotten the grant of Goshen for them, when he sent, for his father from thence, or he came quickly after to Tanis or Memphis, where Pharaoh's court was:

and set him before Pharaoh; presented Jacob to him, and placed his father right before Pharaoh, perhaps in a chair, or on a seat, by Pharaoh's order, because of his age, and in honour to him:

and Jacob blessed Pharaoh; wished him health and happiness, prayed for his welfare, and gave him thanks for all his kindness to him and his; and he blessed him not only in a way of civility, as was usual when men came into the presence of princes, but in an authoritative way, as a prophet and patriarch, a man divinely inspired of God, and who had great power in prayer with him: the Targum of Jonathan gives us his prayer thus,

"may it be the pleasure (i.e. of God) that the waters of the Nile may be filled, and that the famine may remove from the world in thy days."

Genesis 47:8

Ver. 8. And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, how old [art] thou?] Or, "how many are the days of the years of thy life?" which way of speaking Jacob takes up, and very pertinently makes use of in his answer that follows: Dr. Lightfoot {m} thinks Pharaoh had never seen so old a man before, so grave a head, and so grey a beard, and in admiration asked this question.

{m} Works, vol. 1. p. 667.

Genesis 47:9

Ver. 9. Jacob said unto Pharaoh, the days of the years of my pilgrimage [are] an hundred and thirty years,.... He calls his life a "pilgrimage"; as every good man's is; they are not at home in their own country, they are seeking a better, even an heavenly one: Jacob's life was very emphatically and literally a pilgrimage; he first dwelt in Canaan, from thence he removed to Padanaram, and sojourned there awhile, and then came to Canaan again; for some time he dwelt at Succoth, and then at Shechem, and after that at Hebron, and now he was come down to Egypt, and he had spent one hundred and thirty years of his life in this way: and with this perfectly agrees the account of Polyhistor from Demetrius {n}, an Heathen writer, who makes the age of Jacob when he came into Egypt one hundred and thirty, and that year to be the third year of the famine, agreeably to Ge 45:6;

few and evil have the days of the years of my life been; see Job 14:1; he calls his days but "few", in comparison of the long lives of the patriarchs in former times, and especially in comparison of the days of eternity: and "evil", because of the many afflictions he had met with; as from Esau, from whose face he was obliged to flee lest he should kill him, Ge 27:41; and in Laban's house, where he served for a wife fourteen years, and endured great hardships, Ge 31:41; and at Shechem, where his daughter was ravished, Ge 34:2, and his sons made that slaughter of the Shechemites, Ge 34:25, which he feared would cause his name to stink, Ge 34:30; and at Ephrath, where he buried his beloved Rachel, Ge 35:16; and at Hebron, where his sons brought him such an account as if they believed his beloved son Joseph was destroyed by a wild beast, Ge 37:32;

and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage; his grandfather Abraham lived to be one hundred amnd seventy five years of age, Ge 25:7, and his father Isaac lived to the age of one hundred and eighty, Ge 35:28.

{n} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. p. 21. p. 425.

Genesis 47:10

Ver. 10. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh. When he took his leave of him, he blessed him, in like manner as when he came into his presence, by wishing all happiness to him, and giving him thanks for the honour he had done him, and the favours he had conferred on him and his.

Genesis 47:11

Ver. 11. And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt,.... Houses to dwell in, lands to till, and pastures to feed their flocks and herds in:

in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh commanded; according to Jarchi and Aben Ezra, the land of Rameses was a part of the land of Goshen: Jerom {o} says, that Rameses was a city the children of Israel built in Egypt, and that the province was formerly so called in which Jacob and his sons dwelt; but if it is the same with the city which was built by them, it is here called so by anticipation: but Aben Ezra is of opinion that it is not the same, and indeed the names are differently pointed and pronounced; that built by the Israelites is Raamses, and was one of the treasure cities of Pharaoh, and never inhabited by the Israelites; the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call this land the land of Pelusium; but this part of the country lay not in the Pelusiac, but rather in the Heliopolitan home: Sir John Marsham is of opinion {p} that Rameses is the name of Pharaoh, the then present king of Egypt, as there were several of the kings of Egypt of that name; and therefore he thinks this land was the king's land, the land of King Rameses, which Joseph placed his father and brethren in by the order of Pharaoh: but it seems rather to be the name of a place, and is thought by Dr. Shaw {q} to be the same with Cairo: a very learned man {r} takes this to be the name of the land of Goshen, after the coming of the Israelites into it, and observes, that, in the Egyptian language, "Remsosch" signifies men that live a pastoral life, and so this country was called Ramses or Remsosch, as being the country of the shepherds; and the same learned writer {s} is of opinion, that the land of Goshen is the same with the

Heracleotic nome, or district, which lies in the great island the Nile makes above Memphis, and which is now called by the Arabs Fioum, it being the best and most fruitful part of all Egypt; which is confirmed by the testimony of Strabo, who says {t} it excels all the rest of the nomes, or districts; that it is the only one that produces olives, large and perfect, with fine fruit, which, if well gathered, make good oil, but all the rest of Egypt is without oil; moreover it produces wine not a little (whereas Herodotus says {u} vines were wanting in Egypt, i.e. in other parts of it), also corn and pulse, and other seeds: and that Fioum, as it is now called, is the most fruitful, and is the most pleasant part of all Egypt, having vines, olives, figs, and fruits of all sorts, the most excellent, and some of which are not to be found in other parts of the country, the same, writer proves from various travellers and historians {w}; particularly Leo Africanus says {x}, that the Sahidic nome, in which he places Fium, excels all the other parts of Egypt in plenty of pulse, as peas, beans, &c. and of animals and linen, though all Egypt is very fruitful: and Vansleb {y} says, the province of Fium has been always esteemed one of the most excellent in all Egypt, because of its fruitful fields, its great riches, and pleasant gardens,--all that grows here is of a better taste than in other provinces: here are fields full of rose trees, and woods of fig trees, which are not in other parts of Egypt; the gardens are full of all manner of trees, pears, oranges, lemons, peaches, plums, and apricots:--in Fium only, says he, of all the provinces of Egypt, are vineyards--nor is any province so much cut into channels as this: they all proceed from Joseph's river, and have bridges over them, made with burnt bricks very strong; and tradition says they were built in the days of the Pharaohs; and it is the opinion of the Coptics, that these kings employed the Israelites in making: bricks for those bridges, which is very probable, from the infinite number of men needful to make such a prodigious quantity: this part of Egypt where Israel dwelt, by all relations, being so excellent, the impudence of Celsus {z} the Heathen is very surprising, when he affirms that the nation of the Jews, becoming numerous in Egypt, were ordered to dwell apart as sojourners, and to feed their flocks in places vile and despicable.

{o} De locis Heb. fol. 94. A. {p} Canon. Chron. Aegypt, &c. p. 90. {q} Travels, p. 307. Ed. 2. {r} Jablonski de Terra Goshen, Dissert. 4. sect. 7. {s} Ib. Dissert. 3. sect. 2. {t} Geograph. l. 17. p. 556. {u} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 77. {w} Paulus Lucas, Wilhelm. Tyrius, &c. apud Jablonski, ibid. sect. 7. {x} Descriptio Africae, l. 8. p. 666, 669. {y} Relation of a Voyage to Egypt, p. 148, 154, 155. {z} Apud Origen. contr. Cels. l. 4. p. 195.

Genesis 47:12

Ver. 12. And. Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and his father's household, with bread,.... For though there might be in Rameses pasture sufficient for their cattle, yet not corn for their families, the famine still continuing; during which time Joseph, as a dutiful and affectionate son, and as a kind brother, supplied them with all necessary provision, signified by bread:

according to [their] families; according to the number of them, some of his brethren having more and others less in their families; and in proportion to their number he distributed food unto them, so that there was no want: or "according to the mouth of an infant" {a}; he nourished them like infants, he put as it were the bread into their mouths, and fed them with as much care and tenderness as infants are fed; and they had no more care to provide food for themselves than children have, such a full and constant supply was handed forth to them: in this Joseph was an eminent type of Christ, who supplies the wants of his people.

{a} Pjh ypl "ad os parvuli", Montanus, Schmidt.

Genesis 47:13

Ver. 13. And [there was] no bread in all the land,.... The land of Egypt and the parts adjacent, but in Pharaoh's storehouses, all being consumed that were in private hands the first two years of the famine:

for the famine [was] very sore; severe, pressed very hard:

so that the land of Egypt, and [all] the land of Canaan, fainted by reason of the famine; that is, the inhabitants of both countries, their spirits sunk, as well as their flesh failed for want of food: or "raged" {b}; became furious, and were like madmen, as the word signifies; according to Kimchi {c}, they were at their wits' end, knew not what to do, as Aben Ezra interprets it, and became tumultuous; it is much they had not in a violent manner broke open the storehouses of corn, and took it away by force; that they did not must be owing to the providence of God, which restrained them, and to the care and prudence of Joseph as a means, who, doubtless, had well fortified the granaries; and very probably there were a body of soldiers placed everywhere, who were one of the three parts or states of the kingdom of Egypt, as Diodorus Siculus {d} relates; to which may be added, the mild and gentle address of Joseph to the people, speaking kindly to them, giving them hopes of a supply during the famine, and readily relieving them upon terms they could not object to.

{b} hlt "insanivit vel acta fuit in rahiem", Vatablus; "furebat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {c} In Sepher Shorash rad hhl; so Ben Melech in loc. {d} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 67.

Genesis 47:14

Ver. 14. And Joseph gathered up all the money,.... Not that he went about to collect it, or employed men to do it, but he gathered it, being brought to him for corn as follows: even all

that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: by which means those countries became as bare of money as of provisions:

and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house: into his repository, as the Targum of Jonathan, into his treasury, not into his own house or coffers, in which he acted the faithful part to Pharaoh; for it was with his money he bought the corn, built storehouses, kept men to look after them to sell the corn; wherefore the money arising from thence belonged to him; nor did he do any injury to the people: they sold their corn in the time of plenty freely; he gave them a price for it, it then bore, and he sold it out again to them, at a price according to the season; nor was it ever complained of, that it was an exorbitant one; it was highly just and necessary it should be at a greater price than when it was bought in, considering the great expense in the collection, preservation, and distribution of it: it must be a vast sum of money he amassed together, and Dr. Hammond {e} thinks it probable that this Pharaoh, who, by Joseph's advice, got all this wealth, is the same with Remphis, of whom Diodorus Siculus {f} says, that he spent his time in minding the taxes and heaping up riches from all quarters, and left more behind him than any of the kings that reigned before, even in silver and gold four million talents, the same that Herodotus {g} calls Rhampsinitus, who, he says, had the greatest quantity of money of any of the kings of Egypt.

{e} Annotat. on Acts vii. 43. {f} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 56. {g} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 121.

Genesis 47:15

Ver. 15. And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan,.... It had been all spent in the third, fourth, and fifth years of the famine; for it seems to be at the end of the fifth, or beginning of the sixth year of the famine, that this was the case, since we after read of a second or following year, which was very plainly the last, since seed was given them to sow the land with, which shows the time of drought to be near at an end:

all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, give us bread; freely, for nothing, since they had no money to buy any with: no mention is made of the Canaanites, who could not presume to come and ask for corn on such a footing:

for why should we die in thy presence? before his eyes, he not relieving them when it was in his power to do it; they knew such an argument as this would work upon a mind so humane, tender, and generous as was Joseph's:

for the money faileth; all was gone, they had none left to purchase corn with; or they suggest they should not have desired to have had it at free cost.

Genesis 47:16

Ver. 16. And Joseph said, give your cattle,.... Oxen, sheep, horses, asses, as follows:

and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail; that is, corn for cattle, if they had no money to give.

Genesis 47:17

Ver. 17. And they brought their cattle unto Joseph,.... Which they might the more readily do, since there was scarce any grass to feed them with; and though some of them were creatures used for food, yet might be so lean and poor for want of grass, as not to be fit to eat; and besides, they could do better without flesh than without bread:

and Joseph gave them bread [in exchange] for horses; with which Egypt abounded, to which many places of Scripture have respect, De 17:16;

and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds; the sheep and the oxen; which shows that these creatures were bred and fed by them, and were, no doubt, slain, and used for food:

and for the asses; which were used for carrying burdens:

and he fed them with bread for all their cattle, for that year; which seems to be the sixth year of the famine: one would wonder what Joseph should do with all their cattle, where put them, and feed them, in such a time of drought; though it is probable the number was not exceeding large, since they only fetched one year's provision of bread.

Genesis 47:18

Ver. 18. When the year was ended, they came unto him the second year,.... Which seems to be the seventh and last year of the years of famine; not the second year of the famine, as Jarchi, but the second year of their great distress, when having spent all their money they parted with their cattle; for it cannot be thought that they should be drained of their money and cattle too in one year:

and said unto him, we will not hide [it] from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; both these were well known to Joseph, and therefore cannot be the things which they say they would not hide: Musculus thinks it should be rendered in the past tense, "we have not hid"; this they told him the last year, that their money was gone, and he knew he had their cattle for their last year's provision: the sense seems to be this, that seeing their money was spent, and their cattle were in the hands of Joseph, they would not, and could not conceal from him what follows:

there is not enough left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies and our lands; and the one were starving and the other desolate.

Genesis 47:19

Ver. 19. Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land?.... Beholding their miserable condition, and not helping them; die they must unless they had bread to eat, and their land die also if they had not seed to sow; that is, would become desolate, as the Septuagint version renders it; so Ben Melech observes, that land which is desolate is as if it was dead, because it produces neither grass nor fruit, whereas when it does it looks lively and cheerful:

buy us and our land for bread; they were willing to sell themselves and their land too for bread to support their lives, nothing being dearer to a man than life:

and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh; both should be his; they would hold their land of him, and be tenants to him:

and give [us] seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land may not be desolate; entirely so; some parts of it they could sow a little upon, as on the banks of the Nile, or perhaps that river might begin to overflow, or they had some hopes of it, especially from Joseph's prediction they knew this was the last year of famine, and therefore it was proper to sow the ground some time in this, that they might have a crop for the provision of the next year; and they had no seed to sow, and if they were not furnished with it, the famine must unavoidably continue, notwithstanding the flow of the Nile.

Genesis 47:20

Ver. 20. And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh,.... Not for himself, nor did he entail it on his posterity, but for Pharaoh, who became sole proprietor of it:

for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them; everyone that had a field sold it to buy bread for his family, so great was the famine; no mention is made of their houses, either because these went with their lands, or they were so mean that they were of little account, and would scarce bear any price; for as Diodorus Siculus {h} reports of the Egyptians, they were less careful of the structure of their houses, and exceeded all bounds in the magnificence of their sepulchres:

so the land became Pharaoh's; not only with respect to dominion and government, so it was before, but with respect to property; before, every man's field, and garden, and vineyard were his own, and he was in possession thereof for his own use, but now being sold, were Pharaoh's; and they held them of him, and paid a rent for them in a manner hereafter directed by a law.

{h} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 47.

Genesis 47:21

Ver. 21. And as for the people, he removed them,.... From the places where they dwelt, that it might appear they had no more property there, and might forget it, and be more willing to pay rent elsewhere; and their posterity hereafter could have no notion of its being theirs, or plead prescription; and besides, by such a removal and separation of the inhabitants of cities, some to one place, and some to another, sedition and mutiny might be prevented: he had them

to cities, from [one] end of the borders of Egypt, even unto the [other] end thereof; according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, those that dwelt in provinces, or in country towns and villages, he removed to cities, and those that dwelt in cities he removed into provinces, and placed them at the utmost distance from their former habitations, for the reasons before given; and the above Targums suggest another reason, to teach the Egyptians not to reproach the Israelites with being exiles and strangers, when they were all of them removed from their native places, and were strangers, where they were.

Genesis 47:22

Ver. 22. Only the land of the priests bought he not,.... Not from any special affection for them, or any superstitious veneration of them, which can never be thought of so good a man, but for a reason following, which shows they had no need to sell them:

for the priests had a portion [assigned them], by Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them; they had a certain allowance by the day of provision granted them, on which they lived; so Herodotus says {i} of the priests of Egypt, that they spend nothing of their own, but sacred food is provided for them, and great plenty of the flesh of geese and oxen is given daily to everyone of them. And this was a delicate affair, which Joseph could not intermeddle with, but in prudence must leave it as he found it, and do as had been used to be done; this depending on the will and pleasure of Pharaoh, if not upon the constitution of the land, as it seems to be from Diodorus Siculus {k}, who divides Egypt into three parts; and the first part he assigns to the priests, who, according to him, were maintained out of their own revenues. Some understand this of "princes" {l}, the word sometimes being used of them, and interpret it of the officers and courtiers of Pharaoh, his nobles, that dwelt in his palace, and had their portion of food from him; but the former sense seems best:

wherefore they sold not their lands; they were not obliged to it, having provision from the king's table, or by his appointment.

{i} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 37. {k} Ut supra, (Bibliothec. l. 1.) p. 66. {l} Mynhkh tmda "agros praesidum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Genesis 47:23

Ver. 23. Then Joseph said unto the people,.... After he had bought their land, and before the removal of them to distant parts:

behold, I have bought you this day, and your land, for Pharaoh: which he observes to them, that they might take notice of it, and confirm it, or object if they had anything to say to the contrary:

lo, [here is] seed for you, and ye shall sow the land: by which it should seem that they were not removed from the spot where they lived, but retained their own land under Pharaoh, and had seed given them to sow it with, which may seem contrary to Ge 47:21; wherefore that must be understood of a purpose and proposal to remove them, and not that it was actually done; or, as Musculus gives the sense, Joseph by a public edict called all the people from the extreme parts of Egypt to the cities nearest to them, and there proclaimed the subjection of them, and their lands to Pharaoh, but continued them to them as tenants of his; unless it should be said, that in those distant parts to which they were sent, land was put into their hands to till and manure for the king, and have seed given them to sow it with; but this seems to be said to them at the same time the bargain was made.

Genesis 47:24

Ver. 24. And it shall come to pass, in the increase,.... When the land shall produce an increase, and it shall be gathered in:

that you shall give the fifth [part] unto Pharaoh; a fifth part of the increase:

and four parts shall be your own; for the following uses, one part

for seed of the field: to sow again with for the next year: a second part

for your food; for food for themselves: a third part

for them of your household; their servants and maids: and the fourth part

for food for your little ones; for their children, be they young or old; or however four parts of five he proposed they should have for their own use, and for the maintenance of their families, which was a kind and generous proposal, when all might have been demanded, and they and theirs treated as slaves.

Genesis 47:25

Ver. 25. And they said, thou hast saved our lives,.... Preserved them from death through famine, by laying up stores of corn, which he had sold out to them for their money, cattle, and land, or otherwise they must have perished, they and theirs, and this favour they thankfully acknowledge:

let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants;

signifying, that they esteemed it a great favour to be so on the foot of the bargain made with them, and they desired a continuance in it.

Genesis 47:26

Ver. 26. And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day,.... With the consent of Pharaoh, his nobles, and all the people of the land, who readily came into it; and so it became, a fundamental law of their constitution, and which continued to the times of Moses, the writer of this history:

[that] Pharaoh should have the fifth [part]; that is, of the increase the whole land of Egypt produced:

except the land of the priests only, [which] became not Pharaoh's; it not being bought by him; so Diodorus Siculus {m}, as he assigns the first part of the land to the priests, so he says they were free from all taxes and tribute, and next to the king were possessed of honour and authority.

{m} Ut supra. (Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 47.)

Genesis 47:27

Ver. 27. And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen,.... The historian returns to the account of the Israelites, having before observed the placing of them in Goshen by Joseph, at the direction of Pharaoh, in compliance with their own request; and here they continued until they were grown more numerous, when they were obliged to spread themselves further in this same country:

and they had possessions therein; fields and vineyards, as the Targum of Jonathan; all the land was Pharaoh's, and they rented of him as his people did, it may be supposed:

and grew, and multiplied exceedingly; even in Jacob's lifetime they grew rich and numerous.

Genesis 47:28

Ver. 28. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years,.... He lived just the same term of years with Joseph in Egypt as he had lived with him in Syria and Canaan, Ge 37:2; about two hours' walk from Fium are now to be seen the ruins of an ancient town, which the Coptics say was inhabited by the patriarch Jacob, and for this cause they name it, yet, Modsellet Jacub, or the tabernacle of Jacob {n}, which place is supposed to be in the land of Goshen, see Ge 47:11;

so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years; he was one hundred and thirty when he stood before Pharaoh, Ge 47:9; and now had lived in Egypt seventeen years, as in the above clause, which together make up the sum; and this exact time of the years of his life is given by Polyhistor from Demetrius, an Heathen writer {o}.

{n} Vansleb's Relation of a Voyage to Egypt, p. 167. {o} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 21. p. 425.

Genesis 47:29

Ver. 29. And the time drew nigh that Israel must die,.... As all men must, by the appointment of God, even good men, the Israel of God; though they shall not die a spiritual death, nor an eternal one, yet a corporeal one, which is for their good, and is a blessing to them; the sting being removed, and so not a penal evil, which is owing to Christ's dying for them, who has abolished death as such; and there is a time fixed for their death, beyond which they must not live, and before which they must not die, but when the time comes there is no avoiding it; the time of Jacob's death was drawing on, as he perceived by the great decline of his natural strength, and perhaps by a divine impulse on his mind:

and he called his son Joseph; sent for him, by a messenger, to come to him:

and said unto him; when he was come:

if now I have found grace in thy sight; which is not spoken in a way of submission, as from an inferior to a superior, as the phrase is sometimes used; or as signifying what would be esteemed as a favour should it be granted, but it is as if he should say, if thou hast any filial affection for me as a parent, and art willing to show love and respect to me, do as follows:

put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: a gesture in swearing, as Jarchi observes, Ge 24:2; adding, for explanation's sake,

and deal kindly and truly with me; "kindly", by promising and swearing to do what he after desires; and "truly", by observing his oath, and fulfilling his promise:

bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt; not choosing to lie among idolaters at death, with whom he cared not to have any fellowship in life.

Genesis 47:30

Ver. 30. But I will lie with my fathers,.... Abraham and Isaac, whose bodies lay in the land of Canaan, where Jacob desired to be buried; partly to express his faith in the promised land, that it should be the inheritance of his posterity; and partly to draw off their minds from a continuance in Egypt, and to incline them to think of removing thither at a proper time, and to confirm them in the belief of their enjoyment of it; as well as to intimate his desire after, and faith in the heavenly glory he was going to, of which Canaan was a type:

and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt; into the land of Canaan:

and bury me in their burying place; in the burying place of his fathers, in the cave of Machpelah, near Hebron; see Ge 49:30;

and he said, I will do as thou hast said; Joseph promised his father to fulfil his request, and do as he had desired of him.

Genesis 47:31

Ver. 31. And he said, swear unto me,.... This he required, not from any distrust of Joseph, but to show his own eagerness, and the intenseness of his mind about this thing, how much he was set upon it, and what an important thing it was with him; as also, that if he should have any objections made to it, or arguments used with him to divert him from it, by Pharaoh or his court, he would be able to say his father had bound him by an oath to do it, which would at once stop their mouths, and be judged a sufficient reason for what he did, see Ge 50:5:

and he sware unto him; not only gave his promise, but confirmed it with an oath:

and Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head: not in a way of civil respect to Joseph, giving him thanks for the assurance he had given him, that he would bury him, not in Egypt, but in Canaan; but in a religious way to God, giving thanks to him that he had lived to see his son Joseph, who, according to the promise, would close his eyes, and that he had inclined his heart to fulfil his request; though some think that no more is meant, than that after Jacob had spent himself in discoursing with Joseph, he sunk down and reclined on his pillow at his bed's head, to take some rest; for as for what the apostle says in Heb 11:21; that refers to another thing at another time; See Gill on "Heb 11:21".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 48:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 48

Joseph, hearing that his father Jacob was sick, paid him a visit, Ge 49:1; at which time Jacob gave him an account of the Lord's appearing to him at Luz, and of the promise he made unto him, Ge 49:3; then he adopted his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and blessed them, and Joseph also, Ge 49:5; and whereas he crossed his hands when he blessed the sons of Joseph, putting his right hand on the youngest, and his left hand on the eldest, which was displeasing to Joseph, he gave him a reason for so doing, Ge 49:17; and then assured him that God would bring him, and the rest of his posterity, into the land of Canaan, where he assigned him a particular portion above his brethren, Ge 49:21.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass after these things,.... Some little time after Jacob had sent for Joseph, and conversed with him about his burial in the land of

Canaan, and took an oath to bury him there, for then the time drew nigh that he must die:

that [one] told Joseph, behold, thy father [is] sick; he was very infirm when he was last with him, and his natural strength decaying apace, by which he knew his end was near; but now he was seized with a sickness which threatened him with death speedily, and therefore very probably dispatched a messenger to acquaint Joseph with it. Jarchi fancies that Ephraim, the son of Joseph, lived with Jacob in the land of Goshen, and when he was sick went and told his father of it, but this is not likely from what follows:

and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim; to see their grandfather before he died, to hear his dying words, and receive his blessing.

Genesis 48:2

Ver. 2. And [one] told Jacob,.... The same that came from Jacob to Joseph might be sent back by him to, his father, to let him know that he was coming to see him, or some other messenger sent on purpose; for it can hardly be thought that this was an accidental thing on either side:

and said, behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee; to pay him a visit, and which no doubt gave him a pleasure, he being his beloved son, as well as he was great and honourable:

and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon his bed; his spirits revived, his strength renewed, he got fresh vigour on hearing his son Joseph was coming; and he exerted all his strength, and raised himself up by the help of his staff, and sat upon his bed to receive his son's visit; for now it was when he blessed the sons of Joseph, that he leaned upon the top of his staff and worshipped, as the apostle says, Heb 11:21.

Genesis 48:3

Ver. 3. And Jacob said unto Joseph,.... Being come into his bedchamber, and sitting by him, or standing before him:

God Almighty appeared unto at Luz in the land of Canaan; the same with Bethel, where God appeared, both at his going to Padanaram, and at his return from thence, Ge 28:11; which of those times is here referred to is not certain; very likely he refers to them both, since the same promises were made to him at both times, as after mentioned:

and blessed me; promised he would bless him, both with temporal and spiritual blessings, as he did as follows.

Genesis 48:4

Ver. 4. And said unto me, behold, I will make thee fruitful,.... In a spiritual sense, in grace and good works; in a literal sense, in an increase of worldly substance, and especially of children:

and multiply thee; make his posterity numerous as the sand of the sea:

and I will make of thee a multitude of people; a large nation, consisting of many tribes, even a company of nations, as the twelve tribes of Israel were;

and I will give this land unto thy seed after thee, [for] an everlasting possession; the land of Canaan, they were to possess as long as they were the people of God, and obedient to his law; by which obedience they held the land, even unto the coming of the Messiah, whom they rejected, and then they were cast out, and a "Loammi" (i.e. not my people, **Ho 1:9**) written upon them, and their civil polity, as well as church state, at an end: and besides, Canaan was a type of the eternal inheritance of the saints in heaven, the spiritual Israel of God, which will be possessed by them to all eternity.

Genesis 48:5

Ver. 5. And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh,.... Ephraim was the youngest, but is mentioned first, as he afterwards was preferred in the blessing of him:

which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt; and therefore must be twenty years of age, or upwards: for Jacob had been in Egypt seventeen years, and he came there when there had been two years of famine, and Joseph's sons were born to him before the years of famine began, Ge 41:50; of these Jacob says, they

[are] mine: as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine; that is, by adoption; should be reckoned not as his grandchildren, but as his children, even as his two eldest sons, Reuben and Simeon; and so should be distinct tribes or heads of them, as his sons would be, and have a distinct part and portion in the land of Canaan; and thus the birthright was transferred from Reuben, because of his incest, to Joseph, who in his posterity had a double portion assigned him.

Genesis 48:6

Ver. 6. And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine,.... The children of Joseph, that either were, or would be begotten after Ephraim and Manasseh; though whether ever any were is not certain; and this is only mentioned by way of supposition, as Jarchi interprets it, "if thou shouldest beget", &c. these should be reckoned his own, and not as Jacob's sons, but be considered as other grandchildren of Jacob's were, and not as Ephraim and Manasseh:

[and] shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance; they should not have distinct names, or make distinct tribes, or have a distinct inheritance; but should be called either the children of Ephraim, or the children of Manasseh, and should be reckoned as belonging either to the one tribe, or the other, and have their inheritance in them, and with them, and not separate.

Genesis 48:7

Ver. 7. And as for me, when I came from Padan,.... From Syria, from Laban's house:

Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan; his beloved wife, the mother of Joseph, on whose account he mentions her, and to show a reason why he took his sons as his own, because his mother dying so soon, he could have no more children by her; and she being his only lawful wife, Joseph was of right to be reckoned as the firstborn; and that as such he might have the double portion, he took his two sons as his own, and put them upon a level with them, even with Reuben and Simeon. By this it appears, as by the preceding account, that Rachel came with him into the land of Canaan, and there died:

in the way, when yet [there was] but a little way to come unto Ephrath; about a mile, or two thousand cubits, as Jarchi observes:

and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; where she died, and dying in childbed, could not be kept so long as to carry her to Machpelah, the burying place of his ancestors; and especially as he had his flocks and herds with him, which could move but slowly; and what might make it more difficult to keep her long, and carry her thither, it might be, as Ben Melech conjectures, summertime; and the Vulgate Latin adds to the text, without any warrant from the original, "and it was springtime"; however, she was buried in the land of Canaan, and which is taken notice of, that Joseph might observe it: it follows,

the same [is] Bethlehem; that is, Ephrath; and so Bethlehem is called Bethlehem Ephratah, **Mic 5:2**; whether these are the words of Jacob, or of Moses, is not certain, but said with a view to the Messiah, the famous seed of Jacob that should be born there, and was.

Genesis 48:8

Ver. 8. And Israel beheld Joseph's sons,.... Ephraim and Manasseh, of whom he had been speaking as if they were absent, and he might not know until now that they were present, for his eyes were dim that he could not see clearly, Ge 49:10; he saw two young men standing by Joseph, but knew not who they were, and therefore asked the following question:

and said, who [are] these? whose sons are they? the Targum of Jonathan is,

"of whom were these born to thee?"

as if he knew them to be his sons, only inquired who the mother of them was; but the answer shows he knew them not to be his sons, and as for his wife, he could not be ignorant who she was.

Genesis 48:9

Ver. 9. And Joseph said unto his father, they [are] my sons, whom God hath given me in this [place],.... In the land of Egypt; he accounts his sons as the gifts of God, as children are, Ps 127:3; and it was not only a sentiment of the Jews, that children are the gift of God; hence the names of Mattaniah, Nathaniel, &c. but of Heathens, as the Greeks and Romans, among whom are frequent the names of men which show it, as Theodorus, Deodatus, Apollodorus, Artemidorus, &c.

and he said, bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them; not in a common way, barely wishing them prosperity and happiness, but as a patriarch and prophet, under the influence and inspiration of the Spirit of God, declaring what would befall them, and what blessings they should be partakers of, in time to come.

Genesis 48:10

Ver. 10. Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age,.... Or "heavy" {p}, that he could not lift them up easily and see clearly; his eyebrows hung over, his eyes were sunk in his head, and the humours pressed them through old age, that it was with difficulty he could perceive an object, at least not distinctly:

[so that] he could not see; very plainly, otherwise he did see the sons of Joseph, though he could not discern who they were, Ge 49:8;

and he brought them near unto him; that he might have a better sight of them and bless them:

and he kissed them, and embraced them: as a token of his affection for them.

{p} wdbk "graves erant", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Genesis 48:11

Ver. 11. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face,.... Some years ago he never expected to have seen him any more; he had given him up for lost, as a dead man, when his sons brought him his coat dipped in blood; and by reason of the long course of years which passed before ever he heard anything of him:

and, lo, God hath showed me also thy seed; it was an additional favour to see his offspring; it can hardly be thought, that in a course of seventeen years he had been in Egypt, he had not seen them before, only he takes this opportunity, which was the last he should have of expressing his pleasure on this occasion.

Genesis 48:12

Ver. 12. And Joseph brought them out from between his knees,.... Either from between his own, where they were kneeling, as he was sitting, in order that they might be nearer his father, to receive his blessing by the putting on of his hands; or rather from between his father's knees, he, as Aben Ezra observes, sitting on the bed, having kissed and embraced them, they were still between his knees; and that they might not be burdensome to his aged father, leaning on his breast, and especially, in order to put them in a proper position for his benediction, he took them from thence, and placed them over against him to his right and left hand:

and he bowed himself with his face to the earth; in a civil way to his father, and in reverence of him; in a religious way to God, expressing his thankfulness for all favours to him and his, and as supplicating a blessing for his sons through his father, under a divine influence and direction.

Genesis 48:13

Ver. 13. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand,.... He took Ephraim his youngest son in his right hand, and led him up to his father, by which means he would stand in a right position to have his grandfather's left hand put upon him:

and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand; Manasseh his eldest son he took in his left hand, and brought him to his father, and so was in a proper position to have his right hand laid upon him, as seniority of birth required, and as he was desirous should be the case:

and brought [them] near unto him; in the above manner, so near as that he could lay his hands on them.

Genesis 48:14

Ver. 14. And Israel stretched out his right hand,.... Not directly forward, but across, or otherwise it would have been laid on Manasseh, as Joseph designed it should by the position he placed him in:

and laid [it] upon Ephraim's head, who [was] the younger, the right hand being the strongest and most in use, as it was reckoned most honourable to sit at it, so to have it imposed, as being significative of the greater blessing:

and his left hand upon Manasseh's head; who was the older:

guiding his hands wittingly; this was not done accidentally, but on purpose: or made his "hands to understand" {q}, they acted as if they understood what he would have done, as Aben Ezra; as if they were conscious of what should be, or would be; though he could not see clearly and distinctly, yet he knew, by the position of them before him, which was the elder and which was the younger: he knew that Joseph would set the firstborn in such a position before him as naturally to put his right hand on him, and the younger in such a position as that it would be readiest for him to put his left hand on him; and therefore, being under a divine impulse and spirit of prophecy, by which he discerned that the younger was to have the greater blessing, he crossed his bands, or changed them, and put his right hand on Ephraim, and his left hand on Manasseh:

for Manasseh [was] the firstborn; or rather, though {r} he was the firstborn, as Aben Ezra.

{q} wydy ta lkv "intelligere fecit suas manus", Paguinus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Cartwright. {r} yk "tametsi", Tigurine version; "quamvis", Piscator; so some in Fagius.

Genesis 48:15

Ver. 15. And he blessed Joseph,.... In his sons who were reckoned for him, and became the heads of tribes in his room:

and said, God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk; in whom they believed, whom they professed, and whom they feared, served, and worshipped, and with whom they had communion:

the God which fed me all my long unto this day; who had upheld him in life, provided for him all the necessaries of life, food and raiment, and had followed him with his goodness ever since he had a being, and had fed him as the great shepherd of the flock, both with temporal and spiritual food, being the God of his life, and of his mercies in every sense.

Genesis 48:16

Ver. 16. The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads,.... Ephraim and Manasseh, now about twenty years old or upwards: this is not to be understood of a created angel he wishes to be their guardian, but of an eternal one, the Son of God, the Angel of God's presence, the Angel of the covenant; the same with the God of his father before mentioned, as appears by the character he gives him, as having "redeemed [him] from all evil"; not only protected and preserved him from temporal evils and imminent dangers from Esau, Laban, and others; but had delivered him from the power, guilt, and punishment of sin, the greatest of evils, and from the dominion and tyranny of Satan the evil one, and from everlasting wrath, ruin, and damnation; all which none but a divine Person could do, as well as he wishes, desires, and prays, that he would "bless" the lads with blessings temporal and spiritual, which a created angel cannot do; and Jacob would never have asked it of him:

and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; having adopted them, he foretells they would be called not only the sons of Joseph, but the children of Israel or Jacob, and would have a name among the tribes of Israel, and be heads of them, as well as would be called the seed of Abraham and of Isaac, and inherit their blessings: and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth; where they increased as fishes, as the word signifies {s}, and more than any other of the tribes; even in the times of Moses the number of them were 85,200 men fit for war, Nu 26:34; and their situation was in the middle of the land of Canaan.

{s} wgdyw "et instar piscium sint", Pagninus, Montanus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Ainsworth, and the Targum of Onkelos, and Jarchi.

Genesis 48:17

Ver. 17. And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him,.... To see the younger preferred to the elder; parents, generally speaking, having the greatest regard to the firstborn with respect to honour and estate, and to them, in those times, the patriarchal blessing particularly was thought to belong; but it did not always go to them, but to the younger, as in Jacob's own case:

and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head; he took him by the right hand, and lifted it up from the head of Ephraim, and held it in order that he might put it by his direction on the head of Manasseh.

Genesis 48:18

Ver. 18. And Joseph said unto his father, not so, my father,.... It is not right, it should not so be, that the right hand should be put on the youngest, and the left hand on the eldest;

for this [is] the firstborn; directing him to Manasseh, and seeking to guide his hand towards him:

put thy right hand upon his head; Joseph was for proceeding according to the order of birthright, but Jacob was directed by a spirit of prophecy, as follows.

Genesis 48:19

Ver. 19. And his father refused,.... To have any alteration made, and therefore, though Joseph lifted it up from. Ephraim's head and held it over it, Jacob put it on again and went on with the blessing:

and said, I know [it], my son, I know [it]; he knew what he did, and he repeats it to confirm it, as well as to show the vehemency of his mind, and his resolution to abide by what he had done; he knew on whom he laid his right hand, and he knew that Manasseh was the firstborn: so the Targum of Jonathan:

and he also shall become a people; a tribe or nation:

and he also shall be great; in number, riches, and honour:

but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he; more numerous, as the tribe of Ephraim was, than that of Manasseh, when they came out of Egypt; for in numbering them there appeared to be 8300 more in the one tribe than in the other, **Nu 1:33**, as well as more honourable; Ephraim's standard was placed before Manasseh's, **Nu 2:18**; and upon the division of the tribes in Rehoboam's time, as Jeroboam was of the tribe of Ephraim, that tribe was at the head of the ten tribes, and the seat of the kingdom was in it, and the whole kingdom of Israel often goes by the name of Ephraim:

and his seed shall become a multitude of nations; that is, of families, for as nations are called families, **Am 3:1**; so families may be called nations; the Targum of Onkelos is,

"his sons shall be rulers among the people,"

so Joshua, who was of the tribe of Ephraim, conquered and subdued the nations of the Canaanites, and Jeroboam of this tribe ruled over the ten tribes or nations of Israel: it may be rendered, "his seed shall fill the nations" {t}, or be "the fulness" of them; which Jarchi interprets of the whole world being filled with the fame and renown of Joshua, who was of this tribe, when the sun and moon stood still in his days; but it is best to understand this of the large share he should have of the land of Canaan among the rest of the tribes or nations of Israel.

{t} mywgh alm hyhy "implebit nationes", Munster; "erit plenitudo gentium", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt; "impletio gentium", Tigurine

version.

Genesis 48:20

Ver. 20. And he blessed them that day,.... That Joseph visited him, and this be did "by faith"; believing that what he had said concerning them would be accomplished, as the apostle observes, Heb 11:21;

saying, in thee shall Israel bless; in Joseph, as the Targum of Jonathan, that is, in his seed, in his sons Ephraim and Manasseh, when the Israelites blessed any, they should make use of their names:

saying, God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh: as great and honourable, as rich and wealthy, as fruitful and prosperous as they; and the Targum says, this custom continues with the Jews to this day, to put their hands on persons to bless them; if a son, they say,

"God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh;"

if a daughter,

"God make thee as Sarah and Rebekah:"

and he set Ephraim before Manasseh; not only in this form of benediction, but in all that he had said and done before; he preferred him to Manasseh by putting his right hand upon him, and giving him the superior blessing: and it is no unusual thing for the younger to be set before the elder, both by God and man, but especially by the Lord, who seeth not as man seeth, and proceeds not according to carnal descent, or those rules men go by: there had been many instances before this, as Abel was preferred to Cain, Shem to Japheth, Abraham to Nahor, Isaac to Ishmael, and Jacob to Esau; as there were after it, as Moses to Aaron, and David to his brethren.

Genesis 48:21

Ver. 21. And Israel said unto Joseph, behold, I die,.... Expected to die very shortly; and he not only speaks of it as a certain thing, and what would quickly be, but with pleasure and comfort, having no fear and dread of it on him, but as what was agreeable to him, and he had made himself familiar with:

but God shall be with you; with Joseph and his posterity, and with all his brethren, and theirs, to comfort and support them, to guide and counsel them, to protect and defend them, to carry them through all they had to endure in Egypt, and at length bring them out of it; he signifies he was departing from them, but God would not depart from them, whose presence would be infinitely more to them than his; and which, as it made him the more easy to leave them, so it might make them more easy to part with him:

and bring you again unto the land of your fathers; the land of Canaan, where their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had dwelt, and which was given to them and theirs for an inheritance, and where Joseph and his brethren had lived, and would be brought thither again, as the bones of Joseph were, and as all of them in their posterity were in Joshua's time.

Genesis 48:22

Ver. 22. Moreover, I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren,.... The word for "portion" is "Shechem", and which some take to be, not an appellative, as we do, but the name of a city, even Shechem; so the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret it; and though that is not directly meant, yet there is a reference had to it, and it seems to be enigmatically understood; for this portion or parcel spoken of was near to Shechem, and not only that, but the city itself, and all the adjacent country, came to the lot of Ephraim, and were possessed by that tribe:

which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow; not referring, as some think, to the taking and spoiling of the city of Shechem by his sons, and so said to be done by him in them; for Jacob would never make that his act and deed, which he so much abhorred and detested, and still did, as appears by what he says of it in the following chapter; nor was this taken from the Amorite, but from the Hivite, and not by his sword and bow, whether taken literally or metaphorically, and so interpreted of his prayer and supplication, as by Onkelos; but he was so far from assisting in that affair by supplication, that his imprecations fell on Levi and Simeon, for that fact of theirs: if this is to be understood of the city of Shechem, what Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom propose seems most agreeable, that this is said by way of anticipation, the past tense being put for the future; Jacob, under a spirit of prophecy, foreseeing and declaring that his sons, and he in his sons in future time, would take it out of the hands of the Amorites, the principal of the Canaanitish nations, and then it should be given to Joseph's seed; but the first and special regard is to the part or parcel of ground which lay near Shechem; and this Jacob is said to take by his sword and bow, which some interpret of his money, which were his arms and defence, and which he had got by much labour; and if it could be proved that his money was marked with a sword and bow upon it, as the Persian Darics were with an archer with his bow and arrow, and therefore called sagittaries or archers {u}, it would countenance this sense; though even then it could not with propriety be said that he by this means obtained it of the Amorite, since he bought it of the children of Hamor the Hivite; but it seems more likely, that after Jacob departed from Shechem to Hebron, the Amorite came and seized on this parcel of ground; which he hearing of, went with his sons and servants, and recovered it out of their hands by his sword and bow; though this warlike action of his is nowhere recorded in Scripture, the Jewish writers {w} say, that Jacob and his sons had very grievous war with the Amorites on account of the slaughter and captivity of the Shechemites: by giving to Joseph this portion above his brethren, it appears that the birthright was become his, he having the double portion, and indeed all that Jacob had of his own in the land of Canaan; and hence Joseph's bones were buried here, it being his own ground; see Jos 24:32.

{u} Vid. Heidegger. Hist. Patriarch. tom. 2. Exercit. 22. sect. 12. p. 690.
{w} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Genesis 49:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 49

This chapter contains a prophecy of future things, relating to the twelve sons of Jacob, and to the twelve tribes, as descending from them, and which he delivered to his sons on his death bed, having called them together for that purpose, Ge 49:1, he begins with Reuben his firstborn, whose incest he takes notice of, on which account he should not excel, Ge 49:3, next Simeon and Levi have a curse denounced on them for their cruelty at Shechem, Ge 49:5, but Judah is praised, and good things prophesied of him;

and particularly that Shiloh, or the Messiah, should spring from him, the time of whose coming is pointed at, Ge 49:7, the predictions concerning Zebulun, Issachar, and Dan, follow, at the close of which Jacob expresses his longing expectation of God's salvation, Ge 49:13 and after foretelling what should befall Gad, Asher, and Naphtali, Ge 49:19, a large account is given of Joseph, his troubles, his trials, and his blessings, Ge 49:22, and Benjamin the youngest son is taken notice of last of all, all the tribes being blessed in their order according to the nature of their blessing, Ge 49:27, and the chapter is closed with a charge of Jacob's to his sons to bury him in Canaan, which having delivered, he died, Ge 49:29.

Ver. 1. And Jacob called upon his sons,.... Who either were near at hand, and within call at the time Joseph came to visit him, or if at a distance, and at another time, he sent a messenger or messengers to them to come unto him:

and said, gather yourselves together; his will was, that they should attend him all together at the same time, that he might deliver what he had to say to them in the hearing of them all; for what he after declares was not said to them singly and alone, but when they were all before him:

that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days; not their persons merely, but their posterity chiefly, from that time forward to the coming of the Messiah, who is spoken of in this prophecy, and the time of his coming; some things are said relating to temporals, others to spirituals; some are blessings or prophecies of good things to them, others curses, or foretell evil, but all are predictions delivered out by Jacob under a spirit of prophecy; some things had their accomplishment when the tribes of Israel were placed in the land of Canaan, others in the times of the judges, and in later times; and some in the times of the Messiah, to which this prophecy reaches, whose coming was in the last days, **Heb 1:1** and Nachmanides says, according to the sense of all their writers, the last days here are the days of the Messiah; and in an ancient writing of the Jews it is said {x}, that Jacob called his sons, because he had a mind to reveal the end of the Messiah, i.e. the time of his coming; and Abraham Seba {y} observes, that this section is the seal and key of the whole law, and of all the prophets prophesied of, unto the days of the Messiah.

{x} Zohar in Gen. fol. 126. 1. {y} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 57. 4. & 58. 1.

Genesis 49:2

Ver. 2. Gather yourselves together,.... This is repeated to hasten them, and to suggest that he had something of importance to make known unto them, which he chose to do, when they were together:

and hear, ye sons of Jacob, and hearken to Israel your father: these words are used and doubled to excite their attention to what he was about to say, and which is urged from the near relation there was between them.

Genesis 49:3

Ver. 3. Reuben, thou art my firstborn,.... Jacob addressed himself to Reuben first, in the presence of his brethren, owned him as his firstborn, as he was, Ge 29:31 did not cashier him from his family, nor disinherit him, though he had greatly disobliged him, for which the birthright, and the privileges of it, were taken from him, **1Ch 5:1**

my might, and the beginning of my strength; begotten by him when in his full strength {z}, as well as the first of his family, in which his strength and glory lay; so the Septuagint, "the beginning of my children"; and because he was so, of right the double portion belonged to him, had he not forfeited it, De 21:17. Some versions render the words, "the beginning of my grief", or "sorrow" {a}, the word "Oni" sometimes so signifying, as Rachel called her youngest son "Benoni", the son of my sorrow; but this is not true of Reuben, he was not the beginning of Jacob's sorrow, for the ravishing of Dinah, and the slaughter and spoil of the Shechemites, by his sons, which gave him great sorrow and grief, were before the affair of Reuben's lying with Bilhah:

the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power; that is, to him of right belonged excellent dignity, power, and authority in the family, a preeminence over his brethren, a double portion of goods, succession in government, and, as is commonly understood, the exercise of the priesthood; and so the Targums interpret it, that he should, had he not sinned, took three parts or portions above his brethren, the birthright, priesthood, and kingdom. Jacob observes this to him, that he might know what he had lost by sinning, and from what excellency and dignity, grandeur and power, he was fallen.

{z} "Nate. meae vires. --------" Virgil. {a} ynwa tyvar kefalaion luphv mou, Aquila; arch odunhv, Symmachus apud Drusium; "principium doloris mei", V. L. Tigurine version.

Genesis 49:4

Ver. 4. Unstable as water,.... Which is not to be understood of the levity of his mind, and his disposition to hurt, and the impetuous force of that breaking forth like water, and carrying him into the commission of it; but rather of his fall from his excellency and dignity, like the fall of water from an high place; and of his being vile, mean, and contemptible, useless and unprofitable, like water spilled on the ground; and of his weak and strengthless condition and circumstances, being deprived of the prerogatives and privileges of his birthright, and having lost all his honour and grandeur, power and authority. The word in the Arabic language signifies {b} to be proud and haughty, to lift up one's self, to swell and rise like the turgent and swelling waters: but though he did thus lift himself, yet it follows,

thou shall not excel; not have the excellency of dignity and power which belonged to him as the firstborn; the birthright and the double portion were given to Joseph, who had two tribes descending from him, when Reuben had but one; the kingdom was given to Judah, and the priesthood to Levi, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem observe: as he did not excel his brethren in honour and dignity, so neither in wealth and riches, nor in numbers; see De 33:6 where the word "not" is wrongly supplied; nor in his share in the land of Canaan, his posterity being seated on the other side of Jordan, at their request; nor did any persons of note and eminence spring from his tribe: because thou wentest up to thy father's bed, then defiledst thou it; referring to his incest with Bilhah, his father's concubine wife, Ge 35:22 which, though done forty years ago, was now remembered, and left an indelible spot on Reuben's character, and his posterity:

he went up to my couch: turning himself to his other sons, to take notice of the crime, as very abominable and detestable; affirming the truth of it, and speaking of it with some vehemency, his affections being moved; and it may be could not bear to look at Reuben, but turned himself to his brethren; though he had forgiven the sin, and very probably Reuben had repented of it, and had forgiveness of God, which he might have, though in some sense vengeance was taken on this sinful invention of his, Ps 99:8. There are various senses given of this phrase; some, as Aben Ezra, "my bed departed from me"; that is, he departed from his bed; or, as Kimchi {c}, "it ceased to be my bed"; he left it, he abstained from the bed of Bilhah upon its being defiled by Reuben: and others separate these words, and read hle, singly, "it went up" {d}; either the excellency of Reuben went up, vanished and disappeared like smoke; or, as Ben Melech connects it with the beginning of the verse, "unstable as water", giving the sense, "it", the inundation of water, "ascended" and prevailed over thee; as waters ascend, meaning his lust ascended, and got the prevalence over him; but the accents will not admit of such a separation of the words; it is best to understand them in the first sense. As to the manner of the expression, of going up to a bed, it may be observed, that not only their beds in those times might be raised higher than ours, but that they were placed in an higher part of the room, and so there was an ascent to them: and Dr. Shaw {e} says this is the custom of the eastern people to this day,

"at one end of each chamber there is a little gallery, raised three, four, or five feet above the floor, with a balustrade in the front of it, with a few steps likewise leading up to it, here they place their beds."

{b} "superbivit, semet extulit gloria fastuque", Golius, col. 1767. so Castel. col. 2980. {c} Sepher Shorash. rad. hle. {d} hle "ascendit", i.e. "abiit" "et evanuit", Vatablus. {e} Travels, p. 209. Ed. 2.

Genesis 49:5

Ver. 5. Simeon and Levi are brothers,.... Not because they were so in a natural sense, being brethren both by father and mother's side, for there were others so besides them; but because they were of like tempers, dispositions, and manners {f}, bold, wrathful, cruel, revengeful, and deceitful, and joined together in their evil counsels and evil actions, and so are joined together in the evils predicted of them:

instruments of cruelty are in their habitations: or vessels, utensils, household goods gotten by violence and rapine, and through the cruel usage of the Shechemites; these were in their dwellings, their houses were full of such mammon of unrighteousness, or spoil; or, as others, "instruments of cruelty" are "their swords" {g}; what they should only have used in their own defence, with these they shed the blood of the Shechemites very barbarously, Ge 34:25. Some think the word here used is the Greek word for a sword; and the Jews say {h} that Jacob cursed the swords of Simeon and Levi in the Greek tongue; and others say it is Persic, being used by Xenophon for Persian swords; but neither of them seems probable: rather this word was originally Hebrew, and so passed from thence into other languages; but perhaps the sense of it, which Aben Ezra gives, may be most agreeable, if the first sense is not admitted, that it signifies covenants, compacts, agreements {i}, such as these men made with the Shechemites, even nuptial contracts; for the root of the word, in the Chaldee language, signifies to espouse {k}; and these they abused to cruelty, bloodshed, and slaughter, in a most deceitful manner: in the Ethiopic language, the word signifies counsels; so De Dieu takes it here.

{f} "--------par nobile fratrum Nequitia et nugis pravorum et amore gemellum." Horat. Sermon. l. 2. Satyr. 3. {g} Mhytrkm "Machaerae eorum", Montanus, Tigurine version, Schmidt; and so R. Sol. Urbin Ohel Moed, fol. 31. 2. {h} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. {i} So Castell. Lexic. col. 2058. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {k} rkm Chald. & Syr. "despondit", "desponsavit", Schindler. Lex. col. 998.

Genesis 49:6

Ver. 6. O my soul, come not thou into their secret,.... Their cabinet counsels, combinations and conspiracies; this Jacob said, as abhorring the wicked counsel they had took of slaying the Shechemites; and lest any should think he was concerned in it, or connived at it, he expressed a detestation of the fact on his dying bed: the future tense may be put for the past; and so Onkelos renders it, "my soul was not in their secret"; and so the other two Targums paraphrase it, that when they got and consulted together, his soul was not pleased and delighted with their counsel, but abhorred it; or "my soul shall not come", which Jarchi thinks prophetical refers to the case of Zimri, the son of Salu, of the tribe of Simeon, as the following clause to the affair of Korah, of the tribe of Levi, as foreseeing and disapproving them, and desiring they might not be called by his name, or his name called upon them, Nu 25:14

unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united; the same thing expressed in different words; by his "honour or glory" he means his soul, the more honourable part of man, or his tongue, with which man glorifies God; and hereby Jacob intimates, that he did not in thought, and much less in express words, give any consent unto, and approbation of the deed of those two sons of his, and that he never was, nor never desired to be with them in their meetings and consultations:

for in their anger they slew a man; Hamor or Shechem, together with all the males of the city; and so "man" may be put for "men", the singular for the plural, as is frequent. The Targum of Jonathan is, a king and his governor; and the Targum of Jerusalem, kings with governors:

and in their selfwill they digged down a wall; not the wall of the city of Shechem, which does not appear to be walled, by their easy access into it; and if it was, they do not seem to have had proper instruments for such an undertaking, nor a sufficient number for such work, and which would have required longer time than they used, unless it was a poor wall indeed: rather the wall of Shechem's house, or the court before it, which they dug down, or broke through to get in and slay Hamor and Shechem, and take away their sister; though the word, as here pointed, always signifies an ox; and so the Samaritan and Septuagint versions render it, they hamstringed a bull, or houghed an ox, just in like manner as horses are said to be houghed, Jos 11:6 and which some understand {l} figuratively of a prince or ruler; so great personages are called bulls of Bashan, Ps 22:12 and interpret it either of Hamor or of Shechem, who was a prince among his people, and furious in his lust towards Dinah, and so this clause is much the same with the former: and besides, him they enervated by circumcision, and took the advantage of this his condition at the worst, and slew him, which seems to be the true sense of the text, agreeably to Ge 34:25 but the Jerusalem Targum paraphrases it of Joseph, whom his brethren sold, who was like unto an ox; and so Jarchi interprets it of him, whom they designed to slay, see De 33:17 but it is better to take the words in a literal sense, either of the oxen that Simeon and Levi took from the Shechemites, which they plucked or drove away from their mangers, as some render the words {m}; and some of them they might hough or hamstring, that they might not get away from them, see Ge 34:28 or rather of Shechem himself, who was rv, "a prince", a word which has some likeness and affinity to this in the text.

{l} R. Jacob Ben Eleazer in Ben Melech, in loc. {m} rwv wrqe "avulserunt boves", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; others, "enervarunt bovem", Schmidt; so Ainsworth.

Genesis 49:7

Ver. 7. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce,.... It was sinful anger in the nature of it, and so criminal and detestable; it was strong, fierce, and furious in its operation and effects, and so justly cursed; not their persons, but their passions:

and their wrath, for it was cruel; it issued in the cruel and barbarous slaughter of the inhabitants of Shechem; the same thing as before in other words repeated, to express his great abhorrence of their wrath and rage. Aben Ezra thinks that the words may be considered either as a prophecy or a prayer, that their anger might cease: what follows is certainly a prophecy,

I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel; which he is said to do, because he foretold it would be done; as Jeremiah is said to root out and pull down kingdoms, because he prophesied thereof, **Jer 1:10** and this was fulfilled in the tribes of Simeon and Levi; as for the tribe of Simeon, that had not a distinct part by itself in the land of Canaan, but had their inheritance out of the portion, and within the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, Jos 19:1 and their cities did not join to one another, as Aben Ezra observes, but lay scattered up and down in the tribe of Judah; and when they were increased and straitened for room, many of them went without the land, to the entrance of Gedor, where they of Ham, or the Egyptians, had dwelt, and others to Mount Seir in Edom, **1Ch 4:39** and it is a notion which prevails with the Jews, and which Jarchi takes notice of, that a great many of this tribe were scribes and teachers of the law, and even teachers of children, and by which they lived among the several tribes; and so the Jerusalem Targum,

"I will divide the tribe of Simeon, that they may be scribes and teachers of the law in the congregation of Jacob."

And as for the tribe of Levi, it is well known that they had no inheritance in the land of Canaan, but had forty eight cities assigned them in the several tribes here and there; and thus Jacob's prophecy had an exact accomplishment.

Genesis 49:8

Ver. 8. Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise,.... His name signifies praise, and was given him by his mother, her heart being filled with praises to God for him, Ge 29:35 and is here confirmed by his father on another account, because his brethren should praise him for many excellent virtues in him; and it appears, by instances already observed, that he had great authority, and was highly esteemed among his brethren, as his posterity would be in future times for their courage, warlike expeditions and success, and being famous for heroes, such as David, and others; and especially his famous seed the Messiah, and of whom he was a type, should be praised by his brethren, who are so through his incarnation, and by divine adoption, and who praise him for the glories and excellencies of his person, and the blessings of his grace:

thine hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; pressing them down by his superior power, subduing them, and causing them to submit to him, and which was verified in David, who was of this tribe, Ps 18:40 and especially in the Messiah, in a spiritual sense, who has conquered and subdued all his and his people's enemies, sin, Satan, the world and death:

thy father's children shall bow down before thee; before the kings that should spring from this tribe, and should rule over all the rest, as David and Solomon, to whom civil adoration and respect were given by them; and before the King Messiah, his son and antitype, in a way of religious worship, which is given him by the angels, the sons of God, and by all the saints and people of God, who are his father's children by adoption; these bow before him, and give him religious adoration as a divine Person, and submit to his righteousness as Mediator, and bow to the sceptre of his kingdom, and cast their crowns at his feet, and give him the glory of their whole salvation. This in some Jewish writings {n} is applied to the time of the Messiah's coming.

{n} Zohar in Gen. fol. 127. 2.

Genesis 49:9

Ver. 9. Judah is a lion's whelp,.... Or as one; the note of similitude being wanting, as Aben Ezra and Ben Melech observe; he was comparable to a young lion for his strength, courage, and generosity; and it may refer to the infant state of this tribe in the times of the judges, who first went up against the Canaanites and overcame them, **Jud 1:1**

from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; alluding to the lion going up to the mountains, where it chiefly resides, after it has found its prey and satiated itself with it:

he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; one that is grown up, and has arrived to its full strength, such an one is a proper emblem of David king of Israel, of his royalty, courage, valour and conquests; and who having subdued the nations round about him, couched like a lion, and had rest from all his enemies; and especially this was verified in the times of Solomon his son, when he had peace on all sides, and Judah and Israel dwelt safely under their vines and fig trees, **1Ki 4:24**

who shall rouse him up? a lion grown up and in its full strength, or a lioness, as some choose to interpret it, and which is the fiercest, and therefore the most dangerous to rouse up when laid down, either in its den, or with its prey in its paws: so dangerous it was to provoke the tribe of Judah, as its enemies after found, especially in the times of David: all this may be applied to Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah; the lion being the king of beasts, and the strongest among them, may denote the kingly power and authority of Christ, his great strength as the mighty God and mighty Saviour, his courage in engaging with all the powers of darkness, and valour in vanquishing all enemies; his generosity and lenity to those that stoop to him, and his fierceness to his adversaries, who took the prey from the mighty, and then ascended on high, leading captivity captive; where he sat down at the right hand of God at rest and ease, and who will dare to rouse him up, or be able to stand before him when once he is angry? This verse in some ancient {o} writings of the Jews is interpreted of Messiah the son of David.

{o} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 49. 3. 4.

Genesis 49:10

Ver. 10. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,.... Which some understand of the tribe, that Judah should not cease from being a tribe, or that it should continue a distinct tribe until the coming of the Messiah, who was to be of it, and was, and that it might appear he sprung from it; but this was not peculiar to this tribe, for the tribe of Benjamin continued, and so did the tribe of Levi unto the coming of Christ: besides, by Judah is meant the tribe, and to say a tribe shall not depart from the tribe, is not only a tautology, but scarcely sense; it rather signifies dominion, power, and authority, as the sceptre always does, it being an emblem of it, see Nu 24:17 and this intends either the government, which was in the heads and princes of the tribe, which commenced as soon as it became a tribe, and lasted as long as it remained one, even unto the times of the Messiah; or kingly power and government, which the sceptre is generally thought to be an emblem of, and which first commenced in David, who was of the tribe of Judah, and continued unto the Babylonish captivity, when another sort of governors and government took place, designed in the next clause:

nor a lawgiver from between his feet; which may be rendered disjunctively, "or a lawgiver"; any ruler or governor, that has jurisdiction over others, though under another, as the word is used, **Jud 5:14** and the sense is, that till the Messiah came there should be in the tribe of Judah, either a king, a sceptre bearer, as there was unto the captivity; or a governor, though under others, as there were unto the times of Christ under the Babylonians, Persians, Grecians, and Romans; such as Gedaliah, Zorobabel, &c. and particularly the sanhedrim, a court of judicature, the members of which chiefly consisted of the tribe of Judah, and the ayvn, or prince of it, was always of that tribe, and which retained its power to the latter end of Herod's reign, when Christ was come; and though it was greatly diminished, it had some power remaining, even at the death of Christ, but quickly after had none at all: and if by the "lawgiver" is meant a scribe or a teacher of the law, as all the Targums, Aben Ezra, Ben Melech, and others interpret it, who used to sit at the feet of a ruler, judge, or prince of the sanhedrim; it is notorious there were of these unto, and in the times of the Messiah: in short, it matters not for the fulfilment of this prophecy what sort of governors those were after the captivity, nor of what tribe they were; they were in Judah, and their government was exercised therein, and that was in the hands of Judah, and they and that did not depart from thence till Shiloh came; since those that were of the other tribes, after the return from the captivity all went by the name of Judah:

until Shiloh come; which all the three Targums interpret of the Messiah, as do many of the Jewish writers, ancient and modern {p}; and is the name of the Messiah in their Talmud {q}, and in other writings {r}; and well agrees with him, coming from a root which signifies to be "quiet", "peaceable", and "prosperous"; as he was of a quiet and peaceable disposition, came to make peace between God and men, and made it by the blood of his cross, and gives spiritual peace to all his followers, and brings them at length to everlasting peace and happiness; having prospered and succeeded in the great work of their redemption and salvation he undertook:

and unto him shall the gathering of the people be; not of the Jews, though there were great gatherings of them to hear him preach, and see his miracles; as there were of all his people to him at his death, and in him as their head and representative, **Eph 1:10** but of the Gentiles; upon his death, the Gospel being preached to all nations, multitudes among them were converted to Christ, embraced his doctrines, professed his religion, and abode by him, see Isa 11:10 some render it, the obedience of the people {s}, from the use of the word in Pr 30:17, which sense agrees with the former; for those who are truly gathered by the ministry of the word yield an obedience to his doctrines and ordinances; and others read, "the expectation of the people" {t}; the Messiah being the desire of all nations, **Hag 2:6** this, with what goes before, clearly shows that the Messiah must be come, since government in every sense has departed from Judah for 1900 years or thereabout, and the Gentiles have embraced the Messiah and his Gospel the Jews rejected: the various contradictory senses they put upon this prophecy show the puzzle and confusion they are in about it, and serve to confirm the true sense of it: some apply it to the city Shiloh, others to Moses, others to Saul, others to David; nay, some will have Shiloh to be Jeroboam, or Ahijah the Shilonite, and even Nebuchadnezzar: there are two senses they put upon it which deserve the most notice, the one is, that "Shebet", we render "sceptre", signifies a "rod"; and so it does, but such a rod as is an ensign of government, as it must here, by what follows, see Eze 19:11, but they would have it to signify either a rod of correction {u}, or a staff of support; but what correction or affliction has befallen the tribe of Judah peculiar to it? was it not in a flourishing condition for five hundred years, under the reign of David's family? and when the rest of the tribes were carried captive and never returned, Judah remained in its own land, and, when carried captive, after seventy years returned again to it; add to which, that this is a prediction, not of affliction and distress, that should abide in the tribe of

Judah, but of honour and glory to it: and besides, Judah has had a far greater share of correction since the coming of the true Messiah than ever it had before: and what support have the Jews now, or have had for many hundred years, being out of their land {v}, destitute of their privileges, living among other nations in disgrace, and for the most part in poverty and distress? the other sense is this, "the sceptre and lawgiver shall not depart from Judah for ever, when Shiloh comes {w}"; but this is contrary to the accents which separate and divide the phrase, "between his feet", from that, "for ever", as this version renders the word; though de never signifies "for ever", absolutely put, without some antecedent noun or particle; nor does yk signify "when", but always "until", when it is joined with the particle de, as it is here; besides, this sense makes the prophecy to pass over some thousands of years before any notice is taken of Judah's sceptre, which, according to the Jews, it had thousands of years ago, as well as contradicts a received notion of their own, that the Messiah, when he comes, shall not reign for ever, but for a certain time, and even a small time; some say forty years, some seventy, and others four hundred {x}.

{p} Zohar in Gen. fol. 32. 4. & in Exod. fol. 4. 1. & in Numb. fol. 101. 2. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 98. sect. 85. 3. Jarchi & Baal Hatturim, in loc. Nachmanidis Disputat. cum Paulo, p. 53. Abarbinel. Mashmiah Jesbuah, fol. 10. 1. R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 36. 4. & 62. 2. {q} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. {r} Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. {s} Myme thqy "obedientia populorum", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Ainsworth; with which agree the Targums of Onkelos and Jerusalem, Aben Ezra, Kimchi in Sepher Shorash. rad. hqy {t} prosdokia eynwn, Sept Theodotion; "expectatio Gentium", V. L. {u} R. Joel Ben Sueb apud Menasseh, Ben Israel. Conciliator in Gen. Quaest. 65. sect. 8. {v} Written about 1750. Ed. {w} Vid. Menasseh, ib. sect. 3. {x} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1.

Genesis 49:11

Ver. 11. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine,.... Which may be understood either of the tribe of Judah, and signify that vines should grow in such plenty, and so large and strong, that a man might fasten his ass to one of them, and if it ate and destroyed it, it would give no great concern, since the country abounded with them; or they would be so full of clusters that a man might load an ass from one of them. Some

parts of the tribe of Judah were famous for vines, especially Engedi; hence we read of the vineyards of Engedi, **So 1:14** or else of Shiloh the Messiah, which some interpret literally of him, when the prophecy in **Zec 9:9** was fulfilled, as is recorded in Mt 21:2 but others better, figuratively, of Christ's causing the Gentiles, comparable to an ass's colt, for their impurity, ignorance of, and sluggishness in spiritual things, to cleave to him the true vine,
Joh 15:1 in the exercise of faith, hope, and love, or to join themselves to his church and people, sometimes compared to a vine or vineyard, **Isa 5:1**

and he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: an hyperbolical expression, setting forth the great abundance of wine in this tribe, of which there was such plenty, that if they would, they might have used it instead of water to wash their clothes in, but not that they did do so, only might if they would; and may denote the great quantity of spiritual blessings flowing from the love of God, which come by Christ; and of his word and ordinances, which are comparable to wine and milk, and are a feast of fat things, of wine on the lees, well refined, Isa 26:6 and may be applied to Christ, to the garment of his human nature, which, through his sufferings and death, was like a vesture dipped in blood, and he became red in his apparel, Isa 63:1 or to his church and people, which cleave to him as a garment, and whose garments are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, **Re 1:5** these words are interpreted of the Messiah in the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, and are applied to him and his times in the Talmud {y}, and in other Jewish writings {z}: so wine is called the blood of the grape by the son of Sirach in the Apocrypha:

"The principal things for the whole use of man's life are water, fire, iron, and salt, flour of wheat, honey, milk, and the blood of the grape, and oil, and clothing." (Sirach 39:26)

"He stretched out his hand to the cup, and poured of the blood of the grape, he poured out at the foot of the altar a sweetsmelling savour unto the most high King of all." (Sirach 50:15)

{y} T. Bab. Berac. fol. 57. 1. {z} Zohar in Gen. fol. 127. 3. & 128. 2, 3.

Genesis 49:12

Ver. 12. His eyes shall be red with wine,.... Signifying, not the intemperance of this tribe, and their immoderate use of wine, and the effect of it on them; but the goodness and generosity of their wine, that if drank plentifully of, and especially to excess, would have such an effect, see Pr 23:29 and, as applied to the Messiah, the antitype of Judah, and who was of this tribe, it may denote not so much the beauty of his eyes, as the Targums paraphrase it; as the joy and pleasure that sparkled in his eyes when he shed his blood on the cross, enduring that, and despising the shame of it, for the joy of the salvation of his people; or the clearness of his sight in beholding the actions of his enemies, and especially of the fierceness and fury of his wrath against them, whose eyes are said to be an flames of fire, **Re 1:14**

and his teeth white with milk; denoting the fruitfulness of his land, producing fine pastures, on which flocks and herds fed, and gave abundance of milk; and so Onkelos paraphrases the whole verse,

"his mountains shall be red with his vineyards, and his hills shall drop wine, and his valleys shall be white with corn and flocks of sheep;"

and much the same are the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem: the mystical sense may respect Christ and his people, and be expressive of the purity of his nature, life, and doctrine, and of the holiness of his members, their faith and conversation; or the clauses may be rendered, redder than wine, whiter than milk; but though whiteness recommends teeth, yet not redness the eyes; wherefore some {a} by transposing the first letters of the word for "red", make it to signify black, as it does with the Arabs, and that colour of the eye is reckoned beautiful.

{a} Danzius apud Stockium, p. 334.

Genesis 49:13

Ver. 13. Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea,.... Of the sea of Galilee, sometimes called the sea of Tiberias and of Gennesaret; and of the Mediterranean sea; and accordingly we find that the border of this tribe, when settled in the land of Canaan, was toward the sea, Jos 19:10 and this was done, not at the discretion of Joshua, or at the choice of this tribe, but by lot; and which shows that Jacob said this under a spirit of prophecy, and which had its fulfilment two hundred years after; and is a full proof of the prescience and providence of God; and who, as he sets the bounds of the people, or of the nations of the world, and of the tribes of Israel, so the bounds of the habitations of particular persons, Ac 17:26 and he shall be for an haven of ships; shall have good ports commodious for ships to station in, and to cover them from storms and tempests; this tribe being situated by the sea shore {b}:

and his border shall be unto Zidon; not the city Zidon, for the tribe of Zebulun reached no further than Carmel, as Josephus observes;

"the Zebulunites (says he) obtained the land from Carmel, and the sea to the lake of Gennesaret."

Now Carmel was forty miles at least from Zidon; but Phoenicia is meant, of which Zidon was the chief city; and so the Septuagint in Isa 23:2 put Phoenicia instead of Zidon; and whereas Carmel was the border of this tribe that way, it is also said by Jerom {d} to be the border of Phoenicia; so that Zebulun reaching to Carmel, its border may be truly said to be to Zidon or Phoenicia.

{b} Mymy Pwxl "in litore maris", V. L. "ad litus marium", Drusius, Cocceius, Schmidt. {d} Comment. in Amos, 9. 3.

Genesis 49:14

Ver. 14. Issachar is a strong ass,.... Or as one, the note of similitude being wanting, as Ben Melech observes; "a bony" {e} one, as the word signifies; not one that is lean, and nothing but skin and bones, as some interpret it, but that is strong and robust, able to carry burdens; and this tribe is compared to an ass, not for stupidity and sluggishness, but for its strength, and its use in husbandry, in which this tribe was chiefly occupied: the Targums of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret this figuratively, of his being strong to bear the yoke of the law: and it is a notion of the Jews, that this tribe were skilful in the doctrines of the law, and the intercalation of years, &c. from 1Ch 12:32 couching down between two burdens: one hanging on one side, and another on the other; which Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret of bales of goods; and may as well be understood of sacks of corn, or anything else, carried by these creatures, which, when they come into a good pasture, and for the sake of that and ease, will lie down with their burdens on them, and rise up again with them: the Targums of Onkelos and Jerusalem paraphrase it, "between two borders" {f}, or the borders of his brethren, as Jonathan, Zebulun and Dan, between which this tribe lay; and this is the reason Aben Ezra gives why Issachar, who was older than Zebulun, is mentioned after him, and between him and Dan, because his land lay between them; and so it may be observed, that in the division of the land in Joshua's time, Issachar's lot came up after Zebulun's, Jos 19:10 but Doctor Lightfoot thinks {g} it refers to the two kingdoms, between which it lay, that of Phoenicia on one side, and that of Samaria on the other.

{e} Mrg rmx "Asinus osseus", Montanus, Tigurine version, Munster, Vatablus, Drusius, Piscator, Cartwright. {f} Mytpvmh Nyb "inter terminos", V. L. "inter terminos duos", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Cartwright; so Ainsworth, "inter duos finos", Tigurine version. {g} Works, vol. 1. p. 698.

Genesis 49:15

Ver. 15. And he saw that rest was good,.... Not the house of the sanctuary, and attendance there, and the service of that, as the Targum of Jerusalem; nor the rest of the world to come, the happiness of a future state, as that of Jonathan; but rather, as Onkelos, the part and portion of the good land allotted him; he saw that a quiet industry exercised in a diligent cultivation and manuring his land was preferable to the hurry of a court, or the fatigue of a camp, or the dangers of the seas:

and the land that it was pleasant; a fine delightful country, which, if well looked after and improved, would produce plenty of pleasant fruits; and within this tribe were the rich vale of Esdraelon or Jezreel, and the fruitful mountains of Gilboa: of the former it is agreed by all travellers the like has never been seen by them, being of vast extent and very fertile, and formerly abounded with corn, wine, and oil;
See Gill on "Ho 1:5" and the latter were famous for their fruitfulness, through the dews that descended on them, **2Sa 1:21**

and bowed his shoulders to bear; the fatigues of ploughing and sowing, and reaping, and carrying in the fruits of the earth:

and became a servant unto tribute; which greatly arises from agriculture and the fruits of the earth; and this tribe chose rather to pay more tribute than the rest, that they might abide at home and attend the business of their fields, when others were called to go forth to war.

Genesis 49:16

Ver. 16. Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. There is an elegant paronomasia, or an allusion to the name of Dan in those words, which signifies to judge, and the sense of them is, there should be heads, rulers, and judges of it, as the other tribes had; and this is the rather mentioned of him, because he is the first of the children of concubine wives as yet taken notice of; and what is here said of him is also to be understood of the rest of the sons of the concubines; for the meaning is not, that a judge should arise out of him as out of the other tribes, that should judge all Israel, restraining it to Samson, who was of this tribe, as the Targums and Jarchi; for no such judge did arise out of all the tribes of Israel; nor was Samson such a judge of Israel as David, who, according to Jarchi, is one of the tribes of Israel, namely, of Judah; for David did not judge as Samson, nor Samson as David, their form of government being different.

Genesis 49:17

Ver. 17. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path,.... Or be like that sort of serpents called the adder; or rather, that which has the name of Cerastes, which lies among sand, and being of the same colour is not easily discerned, and is often trampled upon unawares, and bites at once, unexpected; as Bothart {h} from various writers has shown; particularly Diodorus Siculus {i} says, of this kind of serpents, that their bites are deadly, and being of the same colour with the sand, few discern them, so that many ignorantly treading on them fall into danger unawares; and so Onkelos paraphrases it, that lies in wait by the way; and is by another writer {k} interpreted, a very grievous and hurtful serpent as the adder is:

that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward; for this sort of serpents lying in horse ways and cart ruts, snaps at and bites horses as they pass along, which bites affecting their legs and thighs, cause them to fall and throw their riders: this, by the Jewish writers, who are followed by many Christian interpreters, is applied to Samson, who by craft and policy managed the Philistines, as in the affair of the foxes, and especially in his last enterprise, when he got placed between the two pillars of the house, which answer, as some think, to the horse heels, as the multitude on the roof of the house to the riders: but though this may be illustrated in a particular person in this tribe, as a specimen of the genius and disposition of the whole tribe, yet the prophecy respects the whole tribe, and points at the situation of it, which was "by the way", at the extreme part of the country; so that they had need of craft and policy as well as power to defend themselves against encroachers and invaders, and describes the general temper and disposition of this tribe, of which an instance may be seen in Jud 18:1 and it may have respect to the stumblingblocks and offences laid in this tribe to the rest of the tribes, by the idol of Micah, and more especially by the golden calf set up in Dan by Jeroboam.

{h} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 3. c. 12. col. 418, 419, 420. {i} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 183. {k} R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed. fol. 57. 1.

Genesis 49:18

Ver. 18. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.. Jacob finding his spirits faint and flag, stops and breathes awhile before he proceeded any further in blessing the tribes; and as he found he was a dying man, and knew not how soon he should expire, expresses what he had been thoughtful of and concerned about in time past, and still was; that he had been waiting and hoping for, and expecting a state of happiness and bliss in another world, where he should be saved from sin and Satan, and the world, and from all his enemies, and out of all his troubles; and this he firmly believed he should enjoy, and hoped it would not be long ere he did; and especially he may have a regard to the Messiah, the promised Saviour, and salvation by him he had knowledge of, faith in, and expectation of; who may be truly called the salvation of God, because of his contriving, providing, and appointing, whom he had promised and spoken of by all the prophets; and whom in the fulness of time he would send into the world to work out salvation for his people; and to him all the Targums apply the words, which are to this purpose:

"said our father Jacob, not for the salvation of Gideon, the son of Joash, which is a temporal salvation, do I wait; nor for the salvation of Samson the son of Manoah, which is a transitory salvation; but for the salvation of Messiah the son of David, (which is an everlasting one,) who shall bring the children of Israel to himself, and his salvation my soul desireth:"

and though Jacob might be affected with the evils he foresaw would rise up in the tribe of Dan, he had last mentioned, and with the troubles that should come upon all the tribes; and had some pleasing sights of the deliverances and salvations, that should be wrought for them, by judges and saviours that should be raised up; yet his chief view was to the Messiah, and salvation by him.

Genesis 49:19

Ver. 19. Gad, a troop shall overcome him,.... There is a paronomasia, or an allusion to the name of Gad almost in every word of the verse, which signifies a troop: the whole is a prediction that this tribe would be a warlike one, and have the common fate of war, sometimes be conquered, and at other times conquer, but however should be at last entirely victorious; all the three Targums refer this to this tribe passing over Jordan at the head of the armies of Israel, into the land of Canaan, in Joshua's time, which, when they had subdued, they returned to their own inheritance on the other side Jordan, **Jos 1:12** and so Jarchi; but it rather seems to refer to what befell them in their own tribe, which being seated on the other side Jordan was exposed to the incursions and spoils of the Moabites and Amonites; who came upon them like troops of robbers, and seized upon their possessions and retained them for some years; as in the times of the judges, see Jud 10:7 and in after times we find the Ammonites in possession of their country, Jer 49:1 whereby this part of the prophecy had its accomplishment:

but he shall overcome at the last; as the Gadites with the Reubenites and half tribe of Manasseh did overcome the Hagarites and Arabians, the war being of God, and succeeded, and they dwelt in their stead until the captivity of the ten tribes, **1Ch 5:18** and thus it is with the people of God in their present warfare state, who are often foiled with sin, Satan, and the world, their spiritual enemies; but at last they are more than conquerors over them all through Christ that has loved them.

Genesis 49:20

Ver. 20. Out of Asher his bread shall be fat,.... Which signifies that this tribe would have a sufficiency of food out of their own land, without being obliged to others, and that it would be of the best sort; it occupied a tract of land, as Andrichomius {l} says, reaching from great Zidon to Carmel of the sea, a space of twenty miles in length; and in breadth, from the great sea to Asor, and even to Naason, a space of nine miles; the land of this tribe is very fat, he says, and exceeding fruitful in wine and oil, especially in the best wheat: and in this tribe, as the same writer {m} observes, among other very fruitful places was the valley of Asher, called the fat valley, which began five miles from Ptolemais, and reached to the sea of Galilee, and contained more than ten miles in length; the soil of which was exceeding fat and fruitful, and produced the most delicate wine and wheat, and might be truly called the fat valley, see De 33:24

and he shall yield royal dainties; food fit for kings, of all sorts, flesh, fish, and fowl: here King Solomon had one of his purveyors to provide food for him and his household, **1Ki 4:16**. Asher's country answered to his name, which signifies happy or blessed: in those parts Christ was much in the days of his flesh on earth; in Cana of this tribe he turned water into wine and in this country discoursed concerning the bread of life himself, who is the best of bread and royal dainties.

{l} Theatrum Terrae sanctae, p. 1. {m} lb. p. 13.

Genesis 49:21

Ver. 21. Naphtali is a hind let loose,.... Onkelos applies it to the tribe itself, and to the goodness of its land,

"as for Naphtali, his lot fell in a good land, and his inheritance a fruit bearing one,"

as it was; for in it was the most fruitful country of Gennesaret, which gave name to a sea or lake by it, and which abounded with gardens, with palm trees, fig trees, and olive trees; and which, Josephus says {n} one might call the ambition of nature; and Strabo {o}, an Heathen writer, says of it, that it was an happy blessed country, and bearing all sorts of good things; and Jarchi on the place observes, this is the vale of Gennesaret, which is as quick to bring forth fruit, as a hind is swift to run. Some will have this prophecy to be fulfilled in Barak, as Ben Gersom, Abendana, and others, who was of this tribe, and who at first was fearful like the hind, and backward to go out to war when called, but afterwards readily went out with Deborah, and at last gave goodly words in the song they both sung: but it better describes the genius, disposition, and manners of the tribe, who were kind and loving, swift and expeditious in their affairs; lovers of liberty, well spoken persons, humane, affable, courteous, of a good address and pleasing language, as follows:

he giveth goodly words; to those he converses with; and it may be applied, particularly to Christ and his disciples, and to the inhabitants of this tribe in his time, among whom they much were, see **Mt 4:13** he himself is compared to the hind of the morning, Ps 22:1 in the title, and to a roe or a young hart, **So 2:9** **So 8:14** for his amiableness and loveliness in himself, and for his lovingness to his people, and for his swiftness to do the will and work of his father, being sent out {p}, as the word here used signifies, by him into this world, on the business of man's salvation: and so his disciples, who were Galilaeans, were swift to obey his call, and left all and followed him, and were sent out by him to preach his Gospel; and both he and they may be said to "give goodly words", as the doctrines of the Gospel are, words of grace, truth, and life; wholesome, comfortable, pleasant and delightful; good tidings of good things, of peace, pardon, righteousness, salvation and eternal life by Christ: and the inhabitants of this country in Christ's time were swift to run after him, and hear him; panted after him as the hart after the water brooks, and both received and gave out the goodly words of the Gospel, and were made free thereby, and so like an hind let loose. Bochart gives a different version of these words, which is countenanced by the Septuagint version, Naphtali is a tree full of shoots, or "a tree shot out, sprouting out beautiful branches"; but as this is contrary to the points, and coincides with the next verse, it is rejected by many learned men.

{n} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 9. sect. 3. {o} Geograph. l. 16. p. 519. {p} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 18. col. 896.

Genesis 49:22

Ver. 22. Joseph is a fruitful bough,.... Or as one, like the bough or branch of a tree laden with fruit, as he was with children; one of which he called Ephraim from his fruitfulness, and both his sons became numerous, and the heads of two tribes in Israel; and with other temporal fruits and blessings, as riches, honour, &c. and especially with the fruits of grace and righteousness:

[even] a fruitful bough by a well; those are the most fruitful that are near a well or fountain of water, as such trees are which are planted by rivers of water, see **Ps 1:3** this being repeated may have respect to the two boughs or branches of Joseph's family, or the two fruitful and numerous tribes that sprung from him:

whose branches run over the wall; as such trees that are set against one, and by the reflected heat of the sun grow the more, and become more fruitful. The word for "branches" is "daughters", which some refer to the daughters of Manasseh and Zelophehad, who received their inheritance on both sides of Jordan; and others interpret it of the cities of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, as cities are sometimes called.

Genesis 49:23

Ver. 23. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him. His brethren who grieved him with their ill usage, shot out bitter words against him, and hated him for his dreams, and because his father loved him; and they could not speak peaceably to him, they mocked at him, conspired to kill him, stripped him of his clothes, cast him into a pit, and then sold him; in all which he was a type of Christ, as used by the Jews. His mistress also, and Satan by her, grieved him with her temptations and solicitations to sin, which were as fiery darts shot at him; but being resisted, her impure love was turned into hatred to him, and she shot her lies, calumnies, and reproaches, as so many darts at him; and, as the Targum of Jonathan, the magicians of Egypt, who envied him for his superior knowledge, and perhaps many others in Pharaoh's court, who were displeased at his preferments, might bring accusations to Pharaoh against him, out of hatred to him; and Satan and his principalities and powers, whose temptations are compared to fiery darts, are not to be exempted, which they shoot at and grieve the people of God, who are hated by them. Perhaps reference may be had to the wars of the posterity of Joseph under Joshua, who was of the tribe of Ephraim, with the Canaanites.

Ver. 24. But his bow abode in strength,.... For as his enemies were archers, and had bows and arrows, so had he, and repelled force by force; but then his bow and arrows were of a different sort, the virtues and graces that he was possessed of, as innocence and integrity, chastity, fortitude, wisdom, prudence and patience, faith, hope, and the like, which remained unmoved, and in their full exercise, notwithstanding the powerful attacks made upon them; and so his posterity were unmoved and unshaken, and stood firm and undaunted, notwithstanding the powerful enemies they had to deal with, until they were wholly subdued:

and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; so that he held his bow, and drew it with great strength against his enemies, as an archer being used to the bow, his nerves become strong, and he is not weakened by drawing it, nor weary of using it; but Joseph had not his strength of himself, but from the Lord, the mighty One, that had strengthened his father Jacob, and supported him under all his trouble: saints, like Joseph, have their strength, as well as their righteousness, in and from Christ; and when they are weak in themselves, they are strong in him, to exercise grace and perform duty:

from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel; from Jacob descended Joseph; or from the God of Jacob it was that Joseph through divine Providence was sent into Egypt to be as a shepherd, to feed his father's family, and as a stone to uphold and support it; in which he was a type of Christ, the great and good Shepherd of the flock, and the stone that is laid in Zion, on which the whole spiritual Israel of God is built; the foundation stone on which they are laid, and are safe, and the corner stone which knits them together. And some think that Christ is principally meant, who in his office capacity was from the mighty God of Jacob, a Shepherd of his providing and appointing, and a stone of his laying; and so Nachmahides says, the stone here made mention of is the same as in Ps 118:22.

Ver. 25. Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee,.... The same with the mighty God of Jacob, by whom his hands had been made strong, and he would be still helped, protected, and defended against his powerful enemies; and by whom Christ, the antitype, was helped as man and Mediator against his enemies, and to do all the work he engaged in; and by whom all the Lord's people are helped to fight his battles with their spiritual enemies, to withstand temptations, exercise every grace, and do the will and work of God:

and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above; with those blessings which may be ascribed to the sun, moon, and stars, and their influences as means, and to the rain and dew which descend from thence; and as with such temporal blessings, so with spiritual ones in heavenly things in Christ:

blessings of the deep that lieth under; of rivers, fountains and springs that rise out of the earth from below, which water and make fruitful:

blessings of the breasts, and of the womb an increase of children, and of cattle, and those healthy, thriving, and prosperous, which are great temporal mercies; as are the word and ordinances spiritual ones, those breasts of consolation, which such that are born again partake of, and grow thereby.

Genesis 49:26

Ver. 26. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors,.... Jacob's blessings were greater and more numerous, both those which he himself had, and bestowed upon his offspring, than those that Abraham and Isaac had, he having more children than they, and blessings for everyone of them; whereas they each of them had but two, and one of these two were excluded the blessing: and besides, though these blessings were the same in substance bestowed on his progenitors, and by them on him, yet these were more clearly and distinctly given out by him to his posterity, and were nearer their accomplishment:

unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills, they shall be on the head of Joseph: that is, continue on him as long as the everlasting hills continue, particularly those of a spiritual kind, for they endure for ever. The word for "bounds" signifies "desire"; and Onkelos paraphrases the words,

"which the princes that were of old desired:"

meaning either the angels who desire to look into heavenly things, or the patriarchs, who were desirous of the coming of the Messiah, and salvation by him; and so the Vulgate Latin version is, "until the desire of the everlasting hills should come"; that is, Christ, who is the desire of all nations, in whom all nations of the earth are to be blessed, and therefore desirable; blessings of all kinds are upon the head of the just, as they were on Joseph, Pr 10:6

and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren; who shunned company and conversation with him, and at length sold him into Egypt, where he was parted from them, and remained separate for many years; and when they came to dwell in the land of Egypt, they lived in Goshen, and he at Pharaoh's court, where he was distinguished with peculiar honours, and advanced above them. Of Christ his antitype, see **Heb 7:26**.

Genesis 49:27

Ver. 27. Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf,.... All the three Targums apply this prophecy to the priests offering the daily sacrifice, morning and evening, in the temple, which stood in the lot of Benjamin, and dividing what was left, and eating it. But it respects the tribe itself, compared to a wolf for its fortitude, courage, and valour, as well as for its rapaciousness, it being a warlike tribe; and the Jewish writers {q} say, that it is compared to a wolf, because of its strength. Wolves, said to be devoted to Mars, are called "martial" wolves by Virgil {r} and Horace {s}; and we have an early instance of the valour and success of this tribe in a war waged with all the other tribes, and in two pitched battles, in one with 26,000 men it beat 400,000, Jud 20:15, and if this tribe is compared to a wolf for rapaciousness, this may be illustrated by the remainder of those, after the loss of a third battle, catching and carrying away the daughters of Shiloh, and making them their wives, Jud 21:23. Some apply this to particular persons of this tribe, as to Saul the first king of Israel, who was of Benjamin; and who as soon as he took the kingdom of Israel, in the morning, in the beginning of that state, fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines, and the Amalekites, 1Sa 14:47 and to Mordecai and Esther, who were of the same tribe, who after the captivity, and in the evening of that state, divided the spoil of Haman, **Es 8:1** this is observed by Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Ben Gersom. Some of the Christian fathers have applied the prophecy to the Apostle Paul, who was of the tribe of Benjamin; who in the morning of his youth was a fierce and ravenous persecutor, and made havoc of the church of God: and in the evening, or latter part of his life, spent his days in dividing the spoil of Satan among the Gentiles, taking the prey out of his hands, turning men from the power of Satan unto God, and distributed food to the souls of men. In a spiritual sense he was a warlike man, a good soldier of Christ, and accoutred as such, had a warfare to accomplish, and enemies to fight with; and did fight the good fight of faith, conquered, and was more than a conqueror through Christ, and is now crowned: and why may it not be applied to Christ himself, seeing the blessing of Benjamin by Moses, De 33:12 seems to belong to him? he is God's Benjamin, the son and man of his right hand, as dear to him as his right hand, in whom his power has been displayed, and who is exalted at his right hand; and may as well be compared to a wolf as to a lion, as he is the lion of the tribe of Judah, and as God himself is compared to a lion and bear, Ho 13:7 and who is expressly said to divide the spoil with the strong, Isa 53:12 spoiled principalities and powers, delivered his people as a prey out of the hands of the mighty, and will make an utter destruction of all his and their enemies. Some of these things were done in the morning of the Gospel dispensation, and others will be done in the evening of it, **Col 2:15**.

{q} Targum Jon. Aben Ezra & Gersom, in loc. {r} Virgil. Aeneid. 9. {s} Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode. 17.

Genesis 49:28

Ver. 28. All these are the twelve tribes of Israel,.... The twelve sons of Jacob before mentioned were heads of twelve tribes, who were afterwards seated, and had their part in the land of Canaan; there were indeed thirteen tribes, two springing from Joseph; but then the tribe of Levi had no part in the land of Canaan, which was divided into twelve parts; this shows that the above predictions respect not the persons of the patriarchs, but their tribes:

and this [is it] that their father spake unto them, and blessed them: the above is the sum and substance of what he had delivered in his patriarchal benediction of them, a little before his death; and though some of them, as Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, may seem rather to be cursed than blessed, yet the greater part of them were clearly and manifestly blessed; and what he said by way of correction and rebuke to the others, might be blessed to them for their good; nor is it improbable, that after he had delivered out the above predictions, he might wish for and implore a blessing on them all; and certain it is, that they all had a part in the blessing of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as it related to the land of Canaan:

everyone according to his blessing he blessed them; according to the blessing which was appointed to them of God, and was in later times bestowed on them, Jacob under a spirit of prophecy was directed to bless them with, or to foretell what blessings should come upon them, and which accordingly did.

Genesis 49:29

Ver. 29. And he charged them, and said unto them,.... The same charge he had given to Joseph he here renews, and lays it upon his sons, who were everyone of them to go along with Joseph to bury him in Canaan:

I [am] to be gathered unto my people; the people of God, the spirits of just men made perfect, the souls of all the saints who before this time had departed this life, and were in a state of happiness and bliss; called his people, because he and they were of the same mystical body the church, belonged to the same general assembly, and church of the firstborn; the company of God's elect, who were in the same covenant of grace, and partakers of the same blessings and promises of grace: this shows that the souls of men are immortal; that there is a future state after death, which is a state of happiness, and into which saints immediately enter as soon as they die, and where Jacob expected to be in a short time:

bury me with my fathers; the other part of himself, his body, which should not be gathered to his people, as his soul would be, he orders to be interred with his fathers Abraham and Isaac:

in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite; which is more particularly described in the following verse, being the place of his father's sepulchre.

Genesis 49:30

Ver. 30. In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan,.... This is so exactly described, that there might be no mistake about the place, see Ge 23:17:

which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying place; this is observed if any of the successors of Ephron, or any of the Hittites, should lay any claim unto it, or dispute the right of Jacob's sons to bury him there.

Genesis 49:31

Ver. 31. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife,.... Abraham buried Sarah there himself, and his two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried him there:

there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; we have no other account of the death of Rebekah, and her burial, but here; it is probable she died before Isaac, and that Isaac buried her in this cave; and here Esau and Jacob buried him:

and there I buried Leah; of whose death and burial we also read nowhere else but here; it is probable she died before Isaac, and that Isaac buried her in this cave; and here Esau and Jacob buried him:

Genesis 49:32

Ver. 32. The purchase of the field, and of the cave that is there, was from the children of Heth. Which is repeated for the certainty of it, and that it might be taken notice of, that both the field and cave were bought by Abraham of Ephron the Hittite, and that the children of Heth were witnesses of the bargain, and of the payment of the money, and by whom the estate was made sure to Abraham; all which might be urged, if any controversy should arise about it; see Ge 23:16

Genesis 49:33

Ver. 33. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons,.... Had given all the proper directions and instructions concerning his interment in the land of Canaan: he gathered up his feet into the bed; on which he sat while he blessed his sons, and gave orders to them about his burial; but now he gathered up his feet into the bed, laid himself along, and composed himself in a proper posture to die. What authority the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem on Ge 49:21 had for saying this bed was a bed of gold, I know not:

and he yielded up the ghost; he expired, he died an easy death, without any pain or sickness: which Ben Melech says this phrase is expressive of. He died in the year of his age one hundred and forty seven, and not one hundred and forty four, as a Jewish chronologer {t} wrongly puts it, and in the year of the world 2315, and before Christ 1689, according to Bishop Usher {u}: and was gathered unto his people: See Gill on "Ge 49:29".

{t} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 6. 2. {u} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 2315.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Genesis 50:1

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 50

This chapter contains a short account of what happened from the death of Jacob to the death of Joseph, and is chiefly concerned with the funeral of Jacob; it first gives an account how Joseph was affected with his father's death, of his orders to the physicians to embalm him, and of the time of their embalming him, and of the Egyptians mourning for him, Ge 50:1, next of his request to Pharaoh to give him leave to go and bury his father in Canaan, and his grant of it, Ge 50:4 and then of the grand funeral procession thither, the mourning made for Jacob, and his interment according to his orders, Ge 50:7 upon the return of Joseph and his brethren to Egypt, they fearing his resentment of their former usage of him, entreat him to forgive them; which they said they did at the direction of their father, to which Joseph readily agreed, and comforted them, and spoke kindly to them, and bid them not fear any hurt from him, for whatever were their intention, God meant it, and had overruled it for good, Ge 50:14 and the chapter is concluded with an account of Joseph's age and death, and of his posterity he saw before his death, and of the charge he gave to his brethren to carry his bones with them, when they should depart from Egypt, Ge 50:22.

Ver. 1. And Joseph fell upon his father's face,.... Laid his own face to the cold face and pale cheeks of his dead father, out of his tender affection for him, and grief at parting with him; this shows that Joseph had been present from the time his father sent for him, and all the while he had been blessing the tribes, and giving orders about his funeral:

and wept upon him; which to do for and over the dead is neither unlawful nor unbecoming, provided it is not carried to excess, as the instances of David, Christ, and others show:

and kissed him; taking his farewell of him, as friends used to do, when parting and going a long journey, as death is. This was practised by Heathens, who had a notion that the soul went out of the body by the mouth, and they in this way received it into themselves: so Augustus Caesar died in the kisses of Livia, and Drusius in the embraces and kisses of Caesar {w}. Joseph no doubt at this time closed the eyes of his father also, as it is said he should, and as was usual; see Ge 46:4.

{w} Vid. Kirchman. de Funer. Rom. l. 1. c. 5.

Genesis 50:2

Ver. 2. And Joseph commanded his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father,.... Which he did, not merely because it was the custom of the Egyptians, but because it was necessary, his father's corpse being to be carried into Canaan to be interred there, which would require time; and therefore it was proper to make use of some means for the preservation of it, and these men were expert in this business, which was a branch of the medicinal art, as Pliny {x} and Mela {y} suggest; and of these Joseph had more than one, as great personages have their physicians ready to attend them on any occasion, as kings and princes, and such was Joseph, being viceroy of Egypt. Herodotus {z} says the Egyptians had physicians peculiar to every disease, one for one disease, and another for another; and Homer {a} speaks of them as the most skilful of all men; though the Septuagint render the word by entafiastai, the "buriers", such who took care of the burial of persons, to provide for it, and among the rest to embalm, dry, and roll up the bodies in linen:

and the physicians embalmed him; the manner of embalming, as Herodotus {b} relates, was this,

"first with a crooked iron instrument they extracted the brain through the nostrils, which they got out partly by this means, and partly by the infusion of medicines; then with a sharp Ethiopian stone they cut about the flank, and from thence took out all the bowels, which, when they had cleansed, they washed with palm wine (or wine of dates), and after that again with odours, bruised; then they filled the bowels (or hollow place out of which they were taken) with pure myrrh beaten, and with cassia and other odours, frankincense excepted, and sewed them up; after which they seasoned (the corpse) with nitre, hiding (or covering it therewith) seventy days, and more than that they might not season it; the seventy days being ended, they washed the corpse, and wrapped the whole body in bands of fine linen, besmearing it with gum, which gum the Egyptians use generally instead of glue."

And Diodorus Siculus {c}, who gives much the same account, says, that every part was retained so perfectly, that the very hairs of the eyebrows, and the whole form of the body, were invariable, and the features might be known; and the same writer tells us, that the expense of embalming was different; the highest price was a talent of silver, about one hundred and eighty seven pounds and ten shillings of our money, the middlemost twenty pounds, and the last and lowest were very small. The embalmers he calls tariceutai, and says they were in great esteem, and reckoned worthy of much honour, and were very familiar with the priests, and might go into holy places when they pleased, as the priests themselves.

{x} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 37. {y} De Orbis Situ, l. 1. c. 9. {z} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 84. {a} Odyss. 4. {b} lbid. c. 86. {c} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 81, 82.

Genesis 50:3

Ver. 3. Forty days were fulfilled for him,.... Were spent in embalming him:

for so are fulfilled the days of those that are embalmed; so long the body lay in the pickle, in ointment of cedar, myrrh and cinnamon, and other things, that it might soak and penetrate thoroughly into it: and so Diodorus Siculus {d} says, that having laid more than thirty days in such a state, it was delivered to the kindred of the deceased:

and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days; during the time of their embalming him; for longer than seventy days the body might not lie in the pickle, as before observed, from Herodotus. According to Diodorus Siculus {e}, the Egyptians used to mourn for their kings seventy two days: the account he gives is, that

"upon the death of a king, all Egypt went into a common mourning, tore their garments, shut up their temples, forbid sacrifices, kept not the feasts for seventy two days, put clay upon their heads {f}, girt linen clothes under their breasts; men and women, two or three hundred together, went about twice a day, singing in mournful verses the praises of the deceased; they abstained from animal food, and from wine, and all dainty things; nor did they use baths, nor ointments, nor lie in soft beds, nor dared to use venery, but, as if it was for the death of a beloved child, spent the said days in sorrow and mourning."

Now these seventy days here are either a round number for seventy two, or two are taken from them, as Quistorpius suggests, to make a difference between Jacob, and a king of theirs, who yet being the father of their viceroy, they honoured in such a manner. Jarchi accounts for the number thus, forty for embalming, and thirty for mourning; which latter was the usual time for mourning with the Jews for principal men, and which the Egyptians added to their forty of embalming; see Nu 20:29

{d} lBibliothec. l. 1. p. 82. {e} lbid. p. 65. {f} Vid. Pompon. Mela de Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 9.

Genesis 50:4

Ver. 4. And when the days of his mourning were past,.... The forty days before mentioned, in which both the Egyptians and Jacob's family mourned for him. An Arabic writer {g} says, the Egyptians mourned for Jacob forty days, which was the time of embalming; but the text is express for sventy days:

Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh; to the court of Pharaoh, the principal men there; so the Targum of Jonathan and the Septuagint version, to the great men or princes of the house of Pharaoh: it may seem strange that Joseph, being next to Pharaoh in the administration of the government, should make use of any to speak for him to Pharaoh on the following account. It may be, that Joseph was not in so high an office, and in so much power and authority, as in the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine; and it is certain that that branch of his office, respecting the corn, must have ceased; or this might have been a piece of policy in Joseph to make these men his friends by such obliging treatment, and by this means prevent their making objections to his suit, or plotting against him in his absence; or if it was the custom in Egypt, as it afterwards was in Persia, that no man might appear before the king in a mourning habit, **Es 4:2** this might be the reason of his not making application in person: moreover, it might not seem so decent for him to come to court, and leave the dead, and his father's family, in such circumstances as they were: besides, he might speak to them not in person, but by a messenger, since it is highly probable he was now in Goshen, at a distance from Pharaoh's court; unless it can be supposed that these were some of Pharaoh's courtiers who were come to him in Goshen, to condole his father's death:

saying, if now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh; however, as these men had the ear of Pharaoh, and an interest in him, Joseph entreats the favour of them to move it to him:

saying, as follows, in his name.

{g} Elmacinus, p. 43. apud Hottinger. Smegma, c. 8. p. 380.

Genesis 50:5

Ver. 5. My father made me swear, saying, lo, I die,.... Having reason to believe he should not live long, he sent for Joseph, and took an oath of him to do as follows; this Joseph would have observed to Pharaoh, to show the necessity of his application to him, and the reasonableness of his request. The words of dying men are always to be regarded; their dying charge is always attended to by those who have a regard to duty and honour; but much more when an oath is annexed to them, which among all nations was reckoned sacred:

in the grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me; it was usual with persons in their lifetime to prepare graves or sepulchres for themselves, as appears from the instances of Shebna, Joseph of Arimathea, and others, and so Jacob provided one for himself; and when he is said to "dig" it, it is not to be supposed that he dug it himself, but ordered it to be dug by his servants, and very probably this was done at the time he buried Leah. Onkelos renders it, "which I have bought", possessed or obtained by purchase; and so the word is used in **Ho 3:2** but the cave of Machpelah, in which Jacob's grave was, was not bought by him, but by Abraham; for to say, as some Jewish writers {h} suggest, that he bought Esau's part in it with a mess of pottage, is without foundation; it is better to take the words in the first sense. And now, since it was Jacob's desire, yea, his dying charge, to be buried in the grave he had provided for himself, the mention of this to an Egyptian king could not fail of having its desired effect; since the Egyptians, as the historian {i} says, were more careful about their graves than about their houses:

now therefore let me go up, I pray thee; to the land of Canaan, which lay higher than Egypt;

and bury my father; there, in the grave he has provided for himself:

and I will come again: to the land of Egypt; this he would have said, lest it should be thought he only contrived this to get an opportunity of going away to Canaan with all his wealth and riches.

{h} R. David Kimchi Sepher Shorash. rad. hrk Ben Melech in loc. {i} Diodor. Sic. Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 47.

Genesis 50:6

Ver. 6. And Pharaoh said,.... To Joseph, by the courtiers that waited upon him at Joseph's request, who having delivered it to him had this answer:

go up, and bury thy father, as he made thee swear; the oath seems to be the principal thing that influenced Pharaoh to grant the request, it being a sacred thing, and not to be violated; otherwise, perhaps, he would not have chosen that Joseph should have been so long absent from him, and might have thought a grave in Egypt, and an honourable interment there, which he would have spared no cost to have given, might have done as well, or better.

Genesis 50:7

Ver. 7. And Joseph went up to bury his father,.... According to his request; having obtained leave of Pharaoh, and being desirous of paying his last respects, and doing his last office to so dear a parent, with all the honour and decency this service could be done with:

and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh; a great number of them, some must be left to wait upon him; who these were the next words explain:

the elders of his house: his senators and counsellors, his courtiers and principal officers of state:

and all the elders of the land of Egypt; governors of provinces and cities, the chief officers, civil and military; all which was done by the orders of Pharaoh, out of respect to Joseph and his family, and to make the funeral procession grand and honourable.

Genesis 50:8

Ver. 8. And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house,.... Joseph and his two sons, and his servants, and his eleven brethren and their sons that were grown up, and as many of his father's domestics as could be spared attended the funeral:

only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen; there must be some servants left, though they are not mentioned, to take care of the little ones, and of the flocks and herds; and these being left behind, plainly show they intended to return again, and did not make this an excuse to get out of the land.

Genesis 50:9

Ver. 9. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen,.... Which was done both for the sake of honour and grandeur, and for safety and defence, should they be attacked by robbers in the deserts, or opposed by the Canaanites, and be refused the use of the cave of Machpelah, and the right to it disputed:

and it was a very great company; both for quantity and quality; the attendants at this funeral were very numerous, and many of them great personages, and upon the whole was a very honourable company, as the word {k} signifies, and made a very great figure and grand appearance:

or a very great army {l}, consisting of chariots and horsemen fit for war; if there should be any occasion for it: and the Jews {m} pretend that Esau came out with a large army, and met Joseph at the cave of Machpelah, and endeavoured to hinder the burial of Jacob there, where he lost his life, having his head struck off with the sword of Chushim, the son of Dan: some say it was Zepho, the grandson of Esau, with the sons of Esau, that made the disturbance there, on which a battle ensued, in which Joseph was the conqueror, and Zepho was taken captive, See Gill on "Ge 36:11", the Jews {n} give us the order and manner of the above procession thus; first Joseph, next the servants of Pharaoh, or the princes, then the elders of the court of Pharaoh, then all the elders of the land of Egypt, then the whole house of Joseph, next to them the brethren of Joseph, who were followed by their eldest sons, and after them were the chariots, and last of all the horses.

{k} dbk "honorabilis"; so Abendana. {l} hnxmh "exercitus ille"; Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Schmidt. {m} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 13. 1. Targum Jon. in ver. 13. Pirke Eliezer, c. 39. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 1. {n} R. Bechai apud Hottinger. Smegma, c. 8. p. 381.

Genesis 50:10

Ver. 10. And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad,.... Which was either the name of a man the owner of it, or of a place so called from the thorns and brambles which grew here, and with which the threshingfloor was surrounded, as Jarchi says, see **Jud 9:14** and it was usual to make a hedge of thorns round about a threshingfloor {o}, that it might be preserved;

mention is made in the Talmud {p} of the wilderness of Atad, perhaps so called from the thorns and brambles in it: Jerom says {q} it was three miles from Jericho and two from Jordan, and was in his time called Bethagla, the place of a circuit, because there they went about after the manner of mourners at the funeral of Jacob. This, according to some {r}, was two hundred and forty miles from On, where Joseph was supposed to live, sixteen from Jerusalem, and forty from Hebron, where Jacob was buried: nay, Austin {s} says it was above fifty miles from that place, as affirmed by those who well knew those parts:

which is beyond Jordan; as it was to those that came out of Egypt:

and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation; being now entered into the country where the corpse was to be interred; and perhaps they might choose to stop here and express tokens of mourning, that the inhabitants might be apprised of their design in coming, which was not to invade them and make war upon them, only to bury their dead: this mourning seems to be made chiefly by the Egyptians, which was done in an external way, and it may be by persons brought with them for that purpose; since both the name of the place after given was from their mourning there, and the mourning of Joseph is next observed as distinct from theirs:

and he made a mourning for his father seven days; which was the time of mourning, afterwards observed by the Jews, see 1Sa 31:13, this Joseph ordered and observed after he had buried his father, as Aben Ezra says, is affirmed by their ancient Rabbins, and perhaps might be at this same place upon their return.

{o} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 13. 1. & Gloss. in ib. Aruch in voc. Nrg fol. 39. 4. {p} T. Hieros. Nedarim, fol. 40. 1. {q} De locis Heb. fol. 87. G. {r} Bunting's Travels, p. 79, 80. {s} Quaest. is Gen. l. 1. p. 54. "inter opera ejus", tom. 4.

Genesis 50:11

Ver. 11. And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites,.... Who were at this time in the possession of the country where the threshingfloor of Atad was: when they saw the mourning in the floor of Atad; for so large a company of people, and such a grand funeral procession, brought multitudes from all the neighbouring parts to see the sight; and when they observed the lamentation that was made, saw their mournful gestures and actions, and heard their doleful moan:

they said, this is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians; they concluded they must have lost some great man, to make such a lamentation for him:

wherefore the name of it was called Abelmizraim, which is beyond Jordan; they changed the name of the place, and gave it another upon this occasion, which signifies the mourning of Egypt or of the Egyptians, they being the principal persons that used the outward and more affecting tokens of mourning; though the whole company might be taken for Egyptians by the Canaanites, because they came out of Egypt.

Genesis 50:12

Ver. 12. And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them. Not only Joseph, but all the sons of Jacob were concerned in the burial of him, being all charged by him with it, and who were obedient to his commands as follows; see Ge 49:29.

Genesis 50:13

Ver. 13. For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan,.... That is, they took care that he was carried there, as he desired to be; for it cannot be thought that they carried him on their shoulders thither, in like manner as the devout men carried Stephen to his burial, **Ac 8:2**

and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, &c. the very place where he chose to be buried, Ge 47:29.

Genesis 50:14

Ver. 14. And Joseph returned into Egypt,.... As he promised he would, Ge 50:5

he and his brethren; the eleven sons of Jacob; for though they had not made the same promise, nor Joseph for them, yet they returned, having left their little ones, flocks and herds, in Egypt:

and all that went up with him to bury his father; the elders and great men of the land of Egypt, with their attendants:

after he had buried his father; in the land of Canaan, which, though given to the seed of Jacob, the time was not come for them to possess it, nor the time of their departure out of Egypt thither, which was to be a good while hence, and after another manner.

Genesis 50:15

Ver. 15. And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead,.... And buried; for this and what follows were after their return to Egypt, from the burial of their father; though some think it was before, and as soon as they saw their father was dead, when they thought it a proper time, while Joseph's heart was tender and affected with his father's death, to compromise matters with him: but there is no reason to invert the order of the narration, for this "seeing" is not to be understood of their bodily sight, but of the contemplation of their minds; they considered with themselves that their father was now dead and buried, they had lost an affectionate parent, who was concerned for the welfare and peace of all his family, but what a turn things would now take they knew not:

they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him; their sin came fresh to their remembrance, guilt arose in their consciences and flew in their faces, and this caused fear and distrust where there was no reason for it, and led them to treat Joseph's character very ill; who was far from being of such a temper and disposition suggested by them, as if he retained hatred in his breast, and was of a revengeful spirit, only hid it during his father's life, because he would not grieve him.

Genesis 50:16

Ver. 16. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph,.... Not Bilhah, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, nor her sons, Dan and Naphtali, as Jarchi, grounding it on Ge 37:1 though it is not improbable that some from among themselves were deputed, who were most interested in Joseph; since it is not very likely they would commit such an affair to a stranger or to a servant; and the most proper persons to be sent on such an errand seem to be Judah and Benjamin, the latter as having had no concern in the affair of selling him, and was his own brother by father and mother's side, and very dear to him; and the former, because he saved his life, when the rest, excepting Reuben, were for shedding his blood, and had endeared himself also to Joseph, by his tender concern both for his father and his brother Benjamin; however, they thought fit first to sound Joseph by a messenger, how he stood affected to them, before they appeared in a body in person, to whom they gave a charge, as the words may be rendered, "they commanded unto Joseph" {t}; that is, they commanded those that were deputed by them to him:

saying, thy father did command before he died; some think, this was no better than a lie, which their fear prompted them to; and that they framed the following story, the more to work upon the mind of Joseph, and dispose it in their favour; seeing it is a question whether Jacob ever knew anything of the affair of their ill usage to Joseph; since otherwise it would have been, in all likelihood, taken notice of in his last dying words, as well as the affair of Reuben, and that of Simeon and Levi; and besides, had he been apprised of it, he knew such was the clemency and generosity of Joseph, that he had nothing to fear from him, nor could he entertain any suspicion of a malevolent disposition in him towards his brethren, or that he would ever use them ill for former offences:

saying, as follows:

{t} Powy-la wwuyw "et mandaverunt ad Joseph", Montanus; "nuntio misso", Pagninus; "aliquos ad Josephum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Genesis 50:17

Ver. 17. So shall ye say unto Joseph, forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin,.... Their very great sin, and therefore more words than one are used to express it: unless this repetition should be intended, and signifies that their crime was a trespass against God, and a sin against their brother; and however they are directed to ask forgiveness for it, and urge the relation they stood in to Joseph, in order to obtain it, which they were ready to acknowledge as a very great evil, and of which they repented:

and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father; they urge not only the common relation they stood in to Jacob, but what they stood in to the God of Jacob, being his servants, his worshippers, as Joseph also was; and therefore, being his brethren not only in nature but in religion and grace, they hoped he would forgive their trespass:

and Joseph wept when they spake unto him; by their messenger; being troubled that they should be in such anxiety and distress of mind, which he had a fellow feeling with, and that they should have no better opinion of him, but entertain such distrust of him, notwithstanding all the kindness he had shown them, as to imagine that he should ever deal hardly with them for their former ill usage of him, which was forgiven and forgotten by him long ago.

Genesis 50:18

Ver. 18. And his brethren also went,.... The messengers being returned to them, and acquainting them with what Joseph had said, they took courage and went from Goshen to Joseph's house or palace, be it where it may:

and fell down before his face; in an humble suppliant manner:

and they said, behold, we be thy servants; they were content to be so, would he but forgive their sin, and not resent their ill behaviour to him; thus they further fulfilled his dream of the eleven stars making obeisance to him, Ge 37:9.

Genesis 50:19

Ver. 19. And Joseph said unto them, fear not,.... That any hurt would be done by him to them, or that he would use them ill for their treatment of him:

for am I in the place of God? to receive such homage from you, that you should be my servants, as Saadiah Gaon gives the sense; or rather to take vengeance for injury done, which belongs to God alone: or, "am I not under God" {u}? subject to him, a servant of his, and why should you be mine? nor is it in my power, if I had a will to it, to change his purposes, to alter his providences, or contradict his will, and do hurt to those whom God hath blessed; and so may have regard to the late patriarchal benediction of his father, under the direction of the Holy Spirit: or, "am I in the place of God?" and under him a father of them, as he had been a provider for them, and a supporter of them, and still would be.

{u} yna Myhla txth "annon enim sub Deo sum?" Vatablus.

Genesis 50:20

Ver. 20. But as for you, ye thought evil against me,.... That must be said and owned, that their intentions were bad; they thought to have contradicted his dreams, and made them of none effect, to have token away his life, or however to have made him a slave all his days:

[but] God meant it unto good; he designed good should come by it, and he brought good out of it: this shows that this action, which was sinful in itself, fell under the decree of God, or was the object of it, and that there was a concourse of providence in it; not that God was the author of sin, which neither his decree about it, nor the concourse of providence with the action as such supposes; he leaving the sinner wholly to his own will in it, and having no concern in the ataxy or disorder of it, but in the issue, through his infinite wisdom, causes it to work for good, as follows:

to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive; the nation of the Egyptians and the neighbouring nations, as the Canaanites and others, and particularly his father's family: thus the sin of the Jews in crucifying Christ, which, notwithstanding the determinate counsel of God, they most freely performed, was what wrought about the greatest good, the salvation of men.

Genesis 50:21

Ver. 21. Now therefore, fear ye not,.... Which, is repeated to dispossess them of every fear they might entertain of him on any account whatever:

I will nourish you, and your little ones; provide food for them, and their families, not only for themselves and their sons, now grown up, but their grandchildren and even the youngest and latest of their families should share in his favours:

and he comforted them, and spake kindly to them; even "to their heart" {w}; such things as were quite pleasing and agreeable to them, served to banish their fears, revive their spirits, and afford comfort to them. Just so God and Christ do with backsliding sinners, and would have done with his own people by his servants; see Isa 40:1.

{w} Mbl le "ad cor eorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, &c.

Genesis 50:22

Ver. 22. And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house,.... Comfortably, quietly, and in great prosperity, not only he, but his brethren and their families, as long as he lived:

and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years; and all but seventeen of them in Egypt, for at that age it was when he was brought thither: thirteen years he lived in Potiphar's house, and in prison, for he was thirty years of age when he was brought to Pharaoh, and stood before him, and fourscore years he lived in the greatest honour and prosperity that a man could well wish for.

Genesis 50:23

Ver. 23. And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation,.... His great grandchildren's children; and which shows, as most interpreters observe, that Jacob's prediction, that Ephraim should be the greatest and most numerous, very early began to take place:

and the children also of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were brought up upon Joseph's knees; Machir had but one son by his first wife, whose name was

Gilead; but marrying a second wife, he had two sons, Peresh and Sheresh; see **1Ch 7:14** who might be born before the death of Joseph, and be said to be brought up upon his knees, being educated by him, and often took up in his lap, and dandled on his knees, as grandfathers, being fond of their grandchildren, are apt to do.

Genesis 50:24

Ver. 24. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die,.... Some time before his death he called them together, and observed to them, that he expected to die in a little time, as all must:

and God will surely visit you; not in a way of wrath and vindictive justice, as he sometimes does, but in a way of love, grace, and mercy:

and bring you out of this land; the land of Egypt, in which they then dwelt:

unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; meaning the land of Canaan, which he swore to those patriarchs that he would give to their posterity.

Genesis 50:25

Ver. 25. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel,.... Not of his brethren only, but of their posterity, as many of them as were now grown up, that so it might be communicated from one to another, and become well known to that generation which should depart out of Egypt:

saying, God will surely visit you; which he repeats for the certainty of it, and that it might be observed:

and ye shall carry up my bones from hence; when they should go from thence to Canaan's land; he did not desire them to carry him thither when he should die, which he knew would give umbrage to the Egyptians, and they would not be so able to obtain leave to do it as he had for his father. This was accordingly done; when Israel went out of Egypt, Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, and they were buried in Shechem; see Ex 13:19.

Ver. 26. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old,.... The exact age assigned him by Polyhistor {x}, from Demetrius an Heathen. The Jewish writers {y} say, that he died the first of the twelve patriarchs, though he was the youngest of them; he died, according to Bishop Usher {z}, in the year of the world 2369, and before Christ 1635:

and they embalmed him; his servants, the physicians, according to the manner of the Egyptians, and as his father Jacob had been embalmed, See Gill on "Ge 50:2",

and he was put into a coffin in Egypt; in an ark or chest, very probably into such an one in which the Egyptians had used to put dead bodies when embalmed; which Herodotus {a} calls a yhka, or chest, and which they set up against a wall: in what part of Egypt this coffin was put is not certain, it was most likely in Goshen, and in the care and custody of some of Joseph's posterity; so Leo Africanus says {b}, that he was buried in Fioum, the same with the Heracleotic nome, supposed to be Goshen; See Gill on "Ge 47:11", and was dug up by Moses, when the children of Israel departed. The Targum of Jonathan says, it was sunk in the midst of the Nile of Egypt; and an Arabic writer {c} says, the corpse of Joseph was put into a marble coffin, and cast into the Nile: the same thing is said in the Talmud {d}, from whence the story seems to be taken, and where the coffin is said to be a molten one, either of iron or brass; which might arise, as Bishop Patrick observes, from a mistake of the place where such bodies were laid; which were let down into deep wells or vaults, and put into a cave at the bottom of those wells, some of which were not far from the river Nile; and such places have been searched for mummies in late times, where they have been found, and the coffins and clothes sound and incorrupt. And so some of the Jewish writers say {e} he was buried on the banks of the river Sihor, that is, the Nile; but others {f} say he was buried in the sepulchre of the kings, which is much more likely.

{x} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 21. p. 425. {y} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 4. 1. & T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 13. 2. {z} Annalea Vet. Test. A. M. 2369. {a} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 86, 91. {b} Descriptio Africae, l. 8. p. 722. {c} Patricides, p. 24. apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. c. 8. p. 379.

{d} T. Bab. Sotah, c. 1. fol. 13. 1. {e} Sepher Hajaschar, p. 118. apud Wagenseil Sotah, p. 300. {f} In T. Bab. Sotah, ut supra. (c. 1. fol. 13.1.)

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS

This book is called by the Jews Veelleh Shemoth, from the first words with which it begins, and sometimes Sepher Shemoth, and sometimes only Shemoth. It is by the Septuagint called Exodus, from whom we have the name of Exodus, which signifies "a going out"; see **Lu 9:31**, because it treats of the going of the children of Israel out of Egypt; and hence in the Alexandrian copy it is called the Exodus of Egypt; and so the Syriac version entitles it the second book of the law, called "the going out"; and to the same purpose the Arabic version. The Jews sometimes give it the name of Nezikin, as Buxtorf {a} observes out of the Masora on Ge 24:8 because in it some account is given of losses, and the restitution of them. That this book is of divine inspiration, and to be reckoned in the canon of the sacred writings, is sufficiently evident to all that believe the New Testament; since there are so many quotations out of it there by Christ, and his apostles; particularly see Mr 12:26 and that it was wrote by Moses is not to be doubted, but when is not certain; it must be after the setting up of the tabernacle in the wilderness; the greatest part of what is contained in it, he was an eye and ear witness of; it plainly points out the accomplishment of the promises and prophecies delivered to Abraham, that his posterity would be very numerous, that they would be afflicted in a land not theirs, and in the fourth generation come out of it with great substance. It treats of the afflictions of the Israelites in Egypt, after the death of Joseph, until their deliverance by Moses; of his birth, calling, and mission to Pharaoh, to demand of him to let the children of Israel go; of the ten plagues upon him and his people, for refusing to dismiss them; of the departure of Israel from Egypt, and the institution of the passover on that account; of their passage through the Red sea into the wilderness, and of the various exercises and afflictions, supplies and supports they met with there; of the giving of a body of laws unto them, moral, ceremonial, and judicial; and of the building of the tabernacle, and all things appertaining to it; and throughout the whole, as there is a figure and representation of the passage of the people of God out of spiritual Egypt, through the wilderness of this world, to the heavenly Canaan, and of various things they must meet with in their passage, so there are many types of Christ, his person, office, and grace, and of his church, his word, and ordinances, which are very edifying and instructing. The book contains a history of about one hundred and forty years, from the death of Joseph, to the erection of the tabernacle.

{a} Lexic. Talmud. col. 1325.

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 1

This chapter begins with an account of the names and number of the children of Israel that came into Egypt with Jacob, **Ex 1:1** and relates that increase of them after the death of Joseph, and the generation that went down to Egypt, **Ex 1:6** and what methods the Egyptians took to diminish them, but to no purpose, as by obliging to cruel bondage and hard service; and yet the more they were afflicted, the more they increased, **Ex 1:9** by ordering the midwives of the Hebrew women to slay every son they laid them of; but they fearing God, did not obey the order of the king of Egypt, which when he expostulated with them about, they excused, and so the people multiplied, **Ex 1:15** and lastly, by ordering every male child to be cast into the river, **Ex 1:22** and which is the leading step to the account of the birth of Moses, which follows in the next chapter.

Ver. 1. Now these are the names of the children of Israel which came down into Egypt,.... Of the twelve patriarchs, the sons of Jacob, who were heads of the twelve tribes, whose names are here given; since the historian is about to give an account of their coming out of Egypt, and that it might be observed how greatly they increased in it, and how exactly the promise to Abraham, of the multiplication of his seed, was fulfilled: or, "and these are the names" {b}, &c. this book being connected with the former by the copulative "and"; and when this was wrote, it is highly probable there was no division of the books made, but the history proceeded in one continued account:

every man and his household came with Jacob; into Egypt, all excepting Joseph, and along with them their families, wives, children, and servants; though wives and servants are not reckoned into the number of the seventy, only such as came out of Jacob's loins: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"a man with the men of his house,"

as if only male children were meant, the sons of Jacob and his grandsons; and Aben Ezra observes, that women were never reckoned in Scripture as of the household or family; but certainly Dinah, and Serah, as they came into Egypt with Jacob, are reckoned among the seventy that came with him thither, Ge 46:15.

{b} hlaw "et haec", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius.

Exodus 1:2

Ver. 2. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. The first sons of Jacob by Leah.

Exodus 1:3

Ver. 3. Issachar, Zebulun,.... The other two sons of Jacob, by Leah:

Benjamin; the youngest of all Jacob's sons is placed here, being his son by his beloved wife Rachel. Joseph is not put into the account, because he did not go into Egypt with Jacob.

Exodus 1:4

Ver. 4. Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. Who are last mentioned, being sons of the concubine wives.

Exodus 1:5

Ver. 5. And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls,.... "Souls" are put for persons; of the number seventy, and how reckoned, See Gill on "Ge 46:27". This was but a small number that went down to Egypt, when compared with that which went out of it; and that it should be compared with it is the design of its being mentioned, see Ex 12:37:

for Joseph was in Egypt already; and is the reason why he is not reckoned among the sons of Jacob, that came thither with him; though rather it may be better rendered, "with Joseph who was in Egypt" {c}; for he must be reckoned, and indeed his two sons also, to make up the number seventy; therefore Jonathan rightly supplies it, "with Joseph and his sons who were in Egypt,"

See Gill on "Ge 46:27".

{c} Poyw "cum Josepho qui erat in Aegypto", Junius & Tremellius, Ainsworth, Noldius, No. 1197. p. 273. so the Arabic version, Kimchi, and Ben Melech.

Exodus 1:6

Ver. 6. And Joseph died, and all his brethren,.... It is a notion of the Jews, that Joseph died before any of his brethren,
See Gill on "Ge 50:26" and they gather it from these words; but it does not necessarily follow from hence, they might die some before him and some after him; and as they were all born in about seven years' time, excepting Benjamin, they might all die within a little time of each other: according to the Jewish writers {d}, the dates of their death were these,

"Reuben lived one hundred and twenty four years, and died two years after Joseph; Simeon lived one hundred and twenty years, and died the year after Joseph; Levi lived one hundred and thirty seven years, and died twenty four years after Joseph; Judah lived one hundred and nineteen years, Issachar one hundred and twenty two, Zebulun one hundred and twenty four, and died two years after Joseph; Dan lived one hundred and twenty seven years, Asher one hundred and twenty three years, Benjamin one hundred and eleven years, and died twenty six years before Levi; Gad lived one hundred and twenty five years, and Naphtali one hundred and thirty three years;"

but though this account of the Jews, of their times, and of the times of their death, is not to be depended upon, yet it is certain they all died in Egypt, though they were not buried there; but as Stephen says, **Ac 7:16** they were carried over to Shechem and interred there, either quickly after their decease, or, however, were taken along with the bones of Joseph by the children of Israel, when they departed out of Egypt: and it is also evident that they all died before the affliction and oppression of the children of Israel in Egypt began; and this account seems to be given on purpose to point this out unto us, being placed in the order it is. Levi lived the longest of them all, and the affliction did not begin till after his death; and the Jewish chronologers say {e} that from his death to the children of Israel's going out of Egypt were one hundred and sixteen years; and they further observe {f}, that it could not last more than one hundred and sixteen years, and not less than eighty seven, according to the years of Miriam:

and all that generation; in which Joseph and his brethren had lived. These also died, Egyptians as well as Israelites, before the oppression began.

{d} R. Bechai apud Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 3. 2. & 4. 1. {e} R. Gedaliah in Shalshalet, fol. 5. 1. Ganz. Tzemach David: par. 1. fol. 6. 1. {f} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 3. p. 9.

Exodus 1:7

Ver. 7. And the children of Israel were fruitful,.... In their offspring; became like fruitful trees, as the word signifies:

and increased abundantly; like creeping things, or rather like fishes, which increase very much, see **Ge 1:20**

and multiplied; became very numerous, whereby the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were fulfilled:

and waxed exceeding mighty; were hale, and strong, of good constitutions, able bodied men, and so more dreaded by the Egyptians: a heap of words is here used to express the vast increase of the people of Israel in Egypt:

and the land was filled with them; not the whole land of Egypt, but the land of Goshen: at first they were seated in a village in that country, but now they were spread throughout the towns and cities in it.

Exodus 1:8

Ver. 8. Now there arose up a new king over Egypt,.... Stephen calls him another king, **Ac 7:18** one of another family, according to Josephus {g}; who was not of the seed royal, as Aben Ezra; and Sir John Marsham {h} thinks this was Salatis, who, according to Manetho {i}, was the first of the Hycsi or pastor kings that ruled in lower Egypt; but these kings seem to have reigned before that time, See Gill on "Ge 46:34" and Bishop Usher {k} takes this king to be one of the ancient royal family, whose name was Ramesses Miamun; and gives us a succession of the Egyptian kings from the time of Joseph's going into Egypt to this king: the name of that Pharaoh that reigned when Joseph was had into Egypt, and whose dreams he interpreted, was Mephramuthosis; after him reigned Thmosis, Amenophis, and Orus; and in the reign of the last of these Joseph died, and after Orus reigned Acenehres a daughter of his, then Rathotis a brother of Acenchres, after him Acencheres a son of Rathotis, then another Acencheres, after him Armais, then Ramesses, who was succeeded by Ramesses Miamun, here called the new king, because, as the Jews {l} say, new decrees were made in his time; and this Pharaoh, under whom Moses was born, they call Talma {m}, and with Artapanus {n} his name is Palmanothes:

which knew not Joseph; which is not to be understood of ignorance of his person, whom he could not know; nor of the history of him, and of the benefits done by him to the Egyptian nation, though, no doubt, this was among their records, and which, one would think, he could not but know; or rather, he had no regard to the memory of Joseph; and so to his family and kindred, the whole people of Israel: he acknowledged not the favours of Joseph to his nation, ungratefully neglected them, and showed no respect to his posterity, and those in connection with him, on his account; though, if a stranger, it is not to be wondered at.

{g} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 1. {h} Canon. Chron. Sec. 8. p. 107. {i} Apud Joseph. Contr. Apion. l. 1. sect. 14. {k} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 17. 18. {l} T. Bab. Erubin. fol. 53. 1. {m} Juchasin, fol. 135. 2. {n} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 431.

Exodus 1:9

Ver. 9. And he said unto his people,.... His princes, nobles, and courtiers about him, his principal ministers of state:

behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: which could not be true in fact, but is said to stir up his nobles to attend to what he was about to say, and to work upon them to take some speedy measures for the crushing of this people; for that they were more in number, and mightier in power and wealth than the Egyptians, it was impossible; and indeed it may seem strange, that the king should tell such an untruth, which might be so easily contradicted by his courtiers; though the words will bear to be otherwise rendered, as that "the children of Israel are many" {o}; as they were very greatly multiplied, and became very numerous; and they might be "mightier", that is, more robust and strong, and fitter for war than the

Egyptians, and therefore, were formidable, and a people to be guarded against; and it was high time to think of securing themselves from them, before they grew too mighty and powerful; or they might be more numerous and mighty in that part of the land in which they were, in Goshen, though not more and mightier than the Egyptians in general.

{o} br "multus", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Rivet.

Exodus 1:10

Ver. 10. Come on,.... Which is a word of exhortation, stirring up to a quick dispatch of business, without delay, the case requiring haste, and some speedy and a matter of indifference:

let us deal wisely with them; form some wise schemes, take some crafty methods to weaken and diminish them gradually; not with open force of arms, but in a more private and secret manner, and less observed:

lest they multiply; yet more and more, so that in time it may be a very difficult thing to keep them under, and many disadvantages to the kingdom may arise from them, next observed:

and it come to pass, that when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies; their neighbours the Arabians, and Phoenicians, and Ethiopians: with the latter the Egyptians had wars, as they had in the times of Moses, as Josephus {p} relates, and Artapanus {q}, an Heathen writer, also: Sir John Marsham {r} thinks these enemies were the old Egyptians, with whom the Israelites had lived long in a friendly manner, and so more likely to join with them, the Thebans who lived in upper Egypt, and between whom and the pastor kings that reigned in lower Egypt there were frequent wars; but these had been expelled from Egypt some time ago:

and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land; take the opportunity, by joining their enemies and fighting against them, to get away from them out of Egypt into the land of Canaan, from whence they came: this, it seems, the Egyptians had some notion of, that they were meditating something of this kind, often speaking of the land of Canaan being theirs, and that they should in a short time inherit it; and though they were dreaded by the Egyptians, they did not care to part with them, being an industrious laborious people, and from whom the kingdom reaped many advantages.

{p} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 10. {q} Ut supra. (Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 431.) {r} Canon Chron. See 8. p. 107.

Exodus 1:11

Ver. 11. Therefore they did set taskmasters over them, to afflict them with their burdens,.... This was the first scheme proposed and agreed on, and was carried into execution, to appoint taskmasters over them; or "princes", or "masters of tribute" {r}, commissioners of taxes, who had power to lay heavy taxes upon them, and oblige them to pay them, which were very burdensome, and so afflictive to their minds, and tended to diminish their wealth and riches, and obliged them to harder labour in order to pay them, and so every way contributed to distress them:

and they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses; these might be built with the money they collected from them by way of tribute, and so said to be built by them, since it was chiefly in husbandry, and in keeping flocks and herds, that the Israelites were employed; or they might be concerned in building these cities, some of them understanding architecture, or however the poorer or meaner sort might be made use of in the more laborious and servile part of the work; those two cities are, in the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, called Tanis and Pelusium; but Tanis was the same with Zoan, and that was built but seven years after Hebron, an ancient city, in being long before this time, see Nu 13:22. Pelusium indeed may be one of them, but then it is not that which is here called Raamses, but Pithom, as Sir John Marsham {s} and others think: Pithom is by Junius thought to be the same with the Pathumus of Herodotus {t}, a town in Arabia Petraes, upon the borders of Egypt, where a ditch was dug from the Nile to the Red sea, and supposed to be the work of the Israelites: Raamses is a place different from Ramesses, Ge 47:11 and had its name from the then reigning Pharaoh, Ramesses Miamun, as Pithom is thought by some to be so called from his queen: Pliny {u} makes mention of some people called Ramisi and Patami, who probably were the inhabitants of these cities, whom he joins to the Arabians as bordering on Egypt: the Septuagint version adds a third city, "On", which is Hellopolls: and a learned writer {w} is of opinion that Raamses and Heliopolis are the same, and observes, that Raamses, in the Egyptian tongue, signifies the field of the sun, being consecrated to it, as Heliopolis is the city of the sun, the same with Bethshemesh, the house of the sun, Jer 43:13 and he thinks these cities were not properly built by the Israelites, but repaired, ornamented, and fortified, being by them banked up against the force of the Nile, that the granaries might be safe from it, as Strabo {x} writes, particularly of Heliopolis; and the Septuagint version here calls them fortified cities; and with this agrees what Benjamin of Tudela says {y}, that he came to the fountain of "Al-shemesh", or the sun, which is Raamses; and there are remains of the building of our fathers (the Jew says) even towers built of bricks, and Fium, he says {z}, (which was in Goshen, See Gill on "Ge 47:11") is the same with Pithom; and there, he says, are to be seen some of the buildings of our fathers. Here these cities are said to be built for treasure cities, either to lay up the riches of the kings of Egypt in, or as granaries and storehouses for corn, or magazines for warlike stores, or for all of these: some think the "pyramids" were built by the Israelites, and there is a passage in Herodotus {a} which seems to favour it; he says, the kings that built them, the Egyptians, through hatred, name them not, but call them the pyramids of the shepherd Philitis, who at that time kept sheep in those parts; which seems to point at the Israelites, the beloved people of God, who were shepherds.

{r} Myom yrv "principes tributorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Fagius, Drusius, Cartwright; so Tigurine version. {s} Ut supra. (Canon Chron. Sec. 8. p. 107.) {t} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 158. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {w} Jablonski de Terra Goshen, dissert. 4. sect. 8. {x} Geograph. l. 17. p. 553. {y} Itinerar. p. 120. {z} Ib. p. 114. {a} Ut supra, ({t}) c. 128.

Exodus 1:12

Ver. 12. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew,.... Became more numerous, "and broke out" {b}, as it may be rendered, like water which breaks out and spreads itself; so the Israelites, increasing in number, spread themselves still more in the land; the Egyptians thought, by putting them to hard labour in building cities, to have weakened their strength, and made them unfit for the procreation of children; but instead of that, the more hard labour they were put unto, the more healthful and the stronger they were, and begot more children, and multiplied exceedingly: and so it is that oftentimes afflictive dispensations are multiplying and growing times to the people of God, in a spiritual sense; who grow like the palm tree, which the more weight it has upon it the more it grows; when the church of God has been most violently persecuted, the number of converts have been greater, and saints under affliction grow in grace, in faith and love, in holiness, humility, patience, peace, and joy; see
Ac 12:1

and they were grieved because of the children of Israel; because of their multiplication and increase, and because their schemes for lessening them did not succeed; they were as thorns in their eyes, as some interpret the word, as Jarchi {c} observes.

{b} Uypy "erumpebat", Junius & Tremellius, Drusius, Tigurine version. {c} Krpb "in fractione", Cajetan. apud Rivet.

Exodus 1:13

Ver. 13. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour. Or with breach {c}, with what might tend to break their strength; they laid heavier burdens upon them, obliged them to harder service, used them more cruelly and with greater fierceness, adding to their hard service ill words, and perhaps blows.

{c} Krpb "in fractione", Cajetan. apud Rivet.

Exodus 1:14

Ver. 14. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage,.... So that they had no ease of body nor peace of mind; they had no comfort of life, their lives and mercies were embittered to them:

in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service of the field; if Pelusium was one of the cities they built, that had its name from clay, the soil about it being clayish, and where the Israelites might be employed in making brick for the building of that and other cities: Josephus {d} says, they were ordered to part the river (Nile) into many canals, to build walls about cities, and raise up mounds, lest the water overflowing the banks should stagnate; and to build pyramids, obliging them to learn various arts, and inure themselves to labour: so Philo the Jew says {e}, some worked in the clay, forming it into bricks, and others in carrying straw: some were appointed to build private houses, others the walls of cities, and to cut ditches and canals in the river, and obliged day and night to carry burdens, so that they had no rest, nor were they suffered to refresh themselves with sleep; and some say that they were not only employed in the fields in ploughing and sowing and the like, but in carrying of dung thither, and all manner of uncleanness: of their being employed in building of pyramids and canals, See Gill on "Ge 47:11"

all their service wherein they made them serve was with rigour; they not only put them to hard work, but used them in a very churlish and barbarous manner, abusing them with their tongues, and beating them with their hands: Philo in the above place says, the king not only compelled them to servile works, but commanded them heavier things than they could bear, heaping labours one upon another; and if any, through weakness, withdrew himself, it was judged a capital crime, and the most merciless and cruel were set over them as taskmasters.

{d} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 1. {e} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 608.

Exodus 1:15

Ver. 15. And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives,.... It is difficult to say who these midwives were, whether Egyptian or Hebrew women. Josephus is of opinion that they were Egyptians, and indeed those the king was most likely to succeed with; and it may seem improbable that he should offer such a thing to Hebrew women, who he could never think would ever comply with it, through promises or threatenings; and the answer they afterwards gave him, that the Hebrew women were not as the Egyptian women, looks as if they were of the latter: and yet, after all, it is more likely that these midwives were Hebrew women, their names are Hebrew; and besides, they are not said to be the midwives of Hebrew women, but Hebrew midwives; nor does it seem probable that the Hebrew women should have Egyptian midwives, and not those of their own nation; and they were such as feared the Lord; and the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem are express for it, and they pretend to tell us who they were: "of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah"; the one, they say, was Jochebed, the wife of Amram, and mother of Moses and Aaron, and the other Miriam their sister; and this is the sense of many of the Jewish writers {f}: but whatever may be said for Jochebed, it is not credible that Miriam should be a midwife, who was but a girl, or maid, at this time, about seven years of age, as the following chapter shows, and much less one of so much repute as to be spoke to by the king. It may seem strange, that only two should be spoke to on this account, when, as Aben Ezra supposes, there might be five hundred of them: to which it may be answered, that these were the most noted in their profession, and the king began with these, that if he could succeed with them, he would go on to prevail on others, or engage them to use their interest with others to do the like; or these might be the midwives of the principal ladies among the Israelites, in one of whose families, according as his magicians had told, as the Targum of Jonathan observes, should be born a son, by whom the land of Egypt would be destroyed; of which Josephus {g} also takes notice; and therefore he might be chiefly solicitous to destroy the male children of such families; but Aben Ezra thinks, that these two were the chief over the rest of the midwives, and who collected and paid to the king the tribute out of their salaries, which was laid upon them, and so he had an opportunity of conversing with them on this subject.

{f} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 11. 2. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 74. 1. Jarchi in loc. {g} Ut supra. (Antiq. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 1.)

Exodus 1:16

Ver. 16. And he said, when ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women,.... Deliver them of their children:

and see [them] upon the stools; seats for women in labour to sit upon, and so contrived, that the midwives might do their office the more readily; but while they sat there, and before the birth, they could not tell whether the child was a son or a daughter; wherefore Kimchi {h} thinks the word here used signifies the place to which the infant falls down from its mother's belly, at the time of labour, and is called the place of the breaking forth of children, and takes it to be the "uterus" itself; and says it is called "Abanim", because "Banim", the children, are there, and supposes "A" or "Aleph" to be an additional letter; and so the sense then is, not when ye see the women on the seats, but the children in the place of coming forth; but then he asks, if it be so, why does he say, "and see them" there? could they see them before they were entirely out of the womb? to which he answers, they know by this rule, if a son, its face was downwards, and if a daughter, its face was upwards; how true this is, must be left to those that know better; the Jewish masters {i} constantly and positively affirm it: he further observes, that the word is of the dual number, because of the two valves of the womb, through which the infant passes:

if it be a son, then ye shall kill him; give it a private pinch as it comes forth, while under their hands, that its death might seem to be owing to the difficulty of its birth, or to something that happened in it. This was ordered, because what the king had to fear from the Israelites was only from the males, and they only could multiply their people; and because of the above information of his magicians, if there is any truth in that:

but if it be a daughter, then she shall live, be kept alive, and preserved, and brought up to woman's estate; and this the king chose to have done, having nothing to fear from them, being of the feeble sex, and that they might serve to gratify the lust of the Egyptians, who might be fond of Hebrew women, being more beautiful than theirs; or that they might be married and incorporated into Egyptian families, there being no males of their own, if this scheme took place, to match with them, and so by degrees the whole Israelitish nation would be mixed with, and swallowed up in the Egyptian nation, which was what was aimed at.

{h} Sepher Shorash. rad. Nba. {i} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 11. 1. Niddah, fol. 31. 2.

Exodus 1:17

Ver. 17. But the midwives feared God,.... And therefore durst not take away the life of an human creature, which was contrary to the express law of God, **Ge 9:6**:

and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them; knowing it was right to obey God rather than man, though ever so great, or in so exalted a station:

but saved the men children alive; did not use any violence with them, by stifling them in the birth. The scheme was so barbarous and shocking, especially to the tender sex, to whom it was proposed, and so devoid of humanity, that one would think it should never enter into the heart of man.

Exodus 1:18

Ver. 18. And the king called for the midwives,.... Perceiving, by the increase of the Israelites, that they did not obey his commands:

and said unto them, why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? not only did not kill them, but did everything for them that was necessary for their future preservation and health; see
Eze 16:4.

Exodus 1:19

Ver. 19. And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women,.... Not so tender, weak, and feeble, nor so ignorant of midwifery, and needed not the assistance of midwives, as the Egyptian women:

for they [are] lively; or midwives themselves, as Kimchi {k} says the word signifies; and so {l} Symmachus translates the words, "for they are midwives"; or are skilful in the art of midwifery, as Jarchi interprets it; and so the, Vulgate Latin version is, "for they have knowledge of midwifery"; and so could help themselves; or, "for they are as beasts" {m}, as animals which need not, nor have the assistance of any in bringing forth their young; and so Jarchi observes, that their Rabbins {n} explain it, they are like to the beasts of the field, who have no need of a midwife; or they were so lively, hale, and strong, as our version, and others, and their infants also, through a more than common blessing of God upon them at this time, that they brought forth children as soon as they were in travail, with scarce any pain or trouble, without the help of others: nor need this seem strange, if what is reported is true, of women in Illyria, Ireland, Italy {o}, and other places {p}, where it is said women will go aside from their work, or from the table, and bring forth their offspring, and return to their business or meal again; and especially in the eastern and hotter countries, women generally bring forth without much difficulty, and without the use of a midwife {q}:

and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them; which doubtless was true in some cases, though not in all, because it is before said, they saved the men children alive; and had it been so at all times, there would have been no proof and evidence of their fearing God, and obeying his commands, rather than the king's; and in some cases not only the strength and liveliness of the Hebrew women, and their fears also, occasioned by the orders of the king, might hasten their births before the midwives could get to them; and they might not choose to send for them, but use their own judgment, and the help of their neighbours, and do without them, knowing what the midwives were charged to do.

{k} Sepher Shorash. hyx "sie alii", hnh twyx yk "quia obstetrices ipsae", Pagninus, Montanus; so the Syriac version. {l} maiai gar eisi, Symmachus apud Drusium. {m} In T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 11. 1. Chronicon Mosis, fol. 2. 1. {n} Vid Wagenseil. Sotah, p. 249. & Varro & Gataker in ib. {o} Posidonius apud Strabo. Geograph. l. 3. p. 114. {p} See Harte's History of the Life of

Gustavus Adelphus, vol. 1. p. 233. {q} Ludolph. Ethiopic. l. 1. c. 14.

Exodus 1:20

Ver. 20. Wherefore God dealt well with the midwives,.... He approved of their conduct upon the whole, however difficult it may be to clear them from all blame in this matter; though some think that what they said was the truth, though they might not tell all the truth; yea, that they made a glorious confession of their faith in God, and plainly told the king, that it was nothing but the immediate hand of God that the Hebrew women were so lively and strong, and therefore were resolved not to oppose it, let him command what he would; so Dr. Lightfoot {r}, who takes the midwives to be Egyptians:

and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty; became very numerous, and strong, and robust, being the offspring of such lively women.

{r} Works, vol. 1. p. 700.

Exodus 1:21

Ver. 21. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God,.... And regarded his command, and not that of the king, though they risked his displeasure, and their lives:

that he made them houses; which some understand of the Israelites making houses for them, being moved to it by the Lord, to preserve them from the insults of the Egyptians; others of Pharaoh building houses for them, in which he kept them, until the Hebrew women came to their time of delivery, who were ordered to be brought to these houses, that it might be known by others, as well as the midwives, whether they brought forth sons or daughters, neither of which is likely: but rather the sense is, that God made them houses, and hid them from Pharaoh, as Kimchi interprets it, that he might not hurt them, just as he hid Jeremiah and Baruch: though it seems best of all to understand it of his building up the families of these midwives, increasing their number, especially their substance and wealth, making them and their households prosperous in all worldly good; but because the word is in the masculine gender, some choose to interpret it either of the infants themselves, the male children the midwives preserved, and of their being built up families in Israel, or by means of whom they were built up; or of the Israelites themselves, whose houses were built up by their means: and others are of opinion that material houses or buildings are meant, built for the Israelites, that the midwives might know where to find them and their wives, when ready to lie in, who before lived up and down in fields and tents: but the sense of God's building up the families of the midwives is to be preferred, there being an enallage or change of the gender, which is not unusual; see Ex 15:21.

Exodus 1:22

Ver. 22. And Pharaoh charged all his people,.... Finding he could not carry his point with the midwives, he gave a general order to all his people everywhere:

saying, every son that is born ye shall cast into the river; the river Nile; not every son born in his kingdom, for this would have ruined it in time; but that was born to the Jews, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; and it is added in the Septuagint version, to the Hebrews:

and every daughter ye shall save alive; for the reasons given
See Gill on "Ex 1:16".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 2

This chapter relates the birth of Moses, and his preservation in an ark of bulrushes, **Ex 2:1**. His being found by Pharaoh's daughter, took up, and put out to nurse by her, and adopted for her son, **Ex 2:4**, some exploits of his when grown up, taking the part of an Hebrew against an Egyptian whom he slew, and endeavouring to reconcile two Hebrews at variance, when one of them reproached him with slaying the Egyptian, **Ex 2:11**, which thing being known to Pharaoh, he sought to slay Moses, and this obliged him to flee to Midian, **Ex 2:15** where he met with the daughters of Reuel, and defended them against the shepherds, and watered their flocks for them, **Ex 2:16**, which Reuel being informed of, sent for him, and he lived with him, and married his daughter Zipporah, by whom he had a son, **Ex 2:18** and the chapter is concluded with the death of the king of Egypt, and the sore bondage of the Israelites, and their cries and groans, which God had a respect unto, **Ex 2:23**.

Ver. 1. And there went a man of the house of Levi,.... This man was Amram, the son of Kohath, and grandson of Levi, as appears from **Ex 6:18**

and took to wife a daughter of Levi; one of the same house, family, or tribe; which was proper, that the tribes might be kept distinct: this was Jochebed, said to be his father's sister, See Gill on "Ex 6:20": her name in Josephus {s} is Joachebel, which seems to be no other than a corruption of Jochebed, but in the Targum in **1Ch 4:18** she is called Jehuditha.

{s} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 4.

Exodus 2:2

Ver. 2. And the woman conceived, and bare a son,.... Which was not her first child, nor indeed her first son, for she had both Aaron and Miriam before this: this son, which was Moses, was born, as the Jews say {t}, in the thirty seventh year after the death of Levi, A. M. 2365, (or, as others, 2368,) on a Wednesday, the seventh of the month Adar, in the third hour of the day: some say it was on the twenty fourth of Nisan; but, according to Bishop Usher {u}, he was born forty one years after the death of Levi, A. M. 2433, and in the year before Christ 1571,

and when she saw him that he was a goodly child; exceeding fair and beautiful, as Stephen expresses it, **Ac 7:20**, the Jews say {w} his form was like an angel of God, and Trogus {x}, an Heathen writer, says his beautiful form recommended him: this engaged the affections of his parents to him, and who, from hence, might promise themselves that he would be a very eminent and useful person, could his life be preserved:

she hid him three months; in her bedchamber, some Jewish writers say {y}; others {z}, in a house under ground, that is, in the cellar; however, it was in his father's house, **Ac 7:20**.

{t} Shatshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 2. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 7. 1. {u} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 18. {w} Pirke Eliezer, c. 48. fol. 57. 2. {x} Justin e Trogo, l. 36. c. 2. {y} Chronicon Mosis, fol. 3. 2. {z} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c.48. fol. 57.2)

Exodus 2:3

Ver. 3. And when she could no longer hide him,.... Because of her neighbours, who might hear the crying of the child, or because of the diligent search made by Pharaoh's officers, which some think was made every three months: the Jews {a} have a notion that his mother was delivered of him at six months' end, and therefore when the other three months were up women usually go with child, she could hide him no longer, a birth of a child being then expected, and would be inquired about:

she took for him an ark of bulrushes; the word, according to Kimchi {b}, signifies a kind of wood exceeding light, so Gersom and Ben Melech; an Arabic writer {c} calls it an ark of wood; it is generally taken to be the "papyrus" or reed of Egypt, which grew upon the banks of the Nile, and of which, many writers say, small vessels or little ships were made, See Gill on "Isa 18:2"

and daubed it with slime and with pitch; with pitch without and slime within, as Jarchi observes; which being of a glutinous nature, made the rushes or reeds stick close together, and so kept out the water:

and put the child therein; committing it to the care and providence of God, hoping and believing that by some means or another it would be preserved; for this, no doubt, was done in faith, as was the hiding him three months, to which the apostle ascribes that, Heb 11:23

and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink; among the sedge, weeds, and rushes, that grew upon the banks of the river Nile; there she laid it, that it might not be carried away with the stream of the river, and that it might be seen and taken up by somebody that would have compassion on it, and take care of it: the Arabic writers {d} say, that Jochebed made an ark of the papyrus, though in the law it is said to be of cork, and pitched within and without, and put the child into it, and laid it on the bank of the Nile, where the water was not so deep, by the city Tzan (or Zoan, that is, Tanis), which was the metropolis of the Tanitic nome; but very wrongly adds, that it might be killed by the dashing of the waves, and she might not see its death.

{a} Targum Jon. & Jarchi in loc. {b} Sepher Shorash. rad. amg. {c} Elmacius apud Hottinger. p. 402. {d} Patricides, p. 25. Elmacinus, p. 46. apud Hottinger. Smegma, c. 8. p. 400.

Exodus 2:4

Ver. 4. And his sister stood afar off,.... This was Miriam, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it; who is supposed to be about ten or twelve years of age, others say seven: she was placed {e}, as the word may be rendered, by her parents, or, "she placed herself" {f}, by their instruction, at some distance from the place where the ark was, that she might not be observed and be thought to belong to it, and yet so near as to observe what became of it, which was the intent of her standing there, as follows:

to wit what would be done to him; to know, take notice, and observe, what should happen to it, if anyone took it up, and what they did with it, and where they carried it, for, "to wit" is an old English word, which signifies "to know", and is the sense of the Hebrew word to which it answers, see **2Co 8:1**.

{e} butt "collocata fuerat", Vatablus. {f} "Stiterat sese", Junius & Tremellius, "stitit sese", Piscator, Drusius.

Exodus 2:5

Ver. 5. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river,.... Her name, in Josephus {g}, is called Thermuthis, and by Artapanus {h}, an Heathen writer, Merrhis, perhaps from Miriam, and frequently by the Jewish writers {i}, Bithia, which is the name of a daughter of another Pharaoh, **1Ch 4:18** from whence they seem to have taken it: she came down from the palace of her father, the gardens of which might lead to the Nile; for Zoan or Tanis, near to which, the Arabiac writers say, as before observed, the ark was laid, was situated on the banks of the river Nile, and was the royal seat of the kings of Egypt; though perhaps the royal seat at this time was either Heliopolis, as Apion testifies {k}, that it was a tradition of the Egyptians that Moses was an Heliopolitan, or else Memphis, which was not far from it; for Artapanus, another Heathen writer, says {l}, that when he fled, after he had killed the Egyptian, from Memphis, he passed over the Nile to go into Arabia: however, no doubt a bath was there provided for the use of the royal family; for it can hardly be thought that she should go down and wash herself in the open river: here she came to wash either on a religious account, or for pleasure: the Jews {m} say it was an extraordinary hot season throughout Egypt, so that the flesh of men was burnt with the heat of the sun, and therefore to cool her she came to the river to bathe in it: others {n} of them say, that they were smitten with burning ulcers, and she also, that she could not wash in hot water, but came to the river:

and her maidens walked along by the river's side; while she washed herself; though it is highly probable she was not left alone: these seem to be the maids of honour, there might be others that might attend her of a meaner rank, and more fit to do for her what was necessary; yet these saw not the ark, it lying lower among the flags, and being nearer the bath where Pharaoh's daughter was, she spied it from thence as follows:

and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it; the maid that waited on her while the rest were taking their walks; her she sent from the bath among the flags to take up the ark: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and R. Eliezer {o}, render it,

"she stretched out her arm and hand, and took it;"

the same word, being differently pointed, so signifying; but this is disapproved of, by the Jewish commentators.

{g} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 5. {h} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 432. {i} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 13. 1. Derech Eretz, fol. 19. 1. Pirke Eliezer, c. 48. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 2. {k} Apud Joseph. Contr. Apion, l. 2. sect. 2. {l} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 433. {m} Chronicon Mosis, fol. 3. 2. Ed. Gaulmin. {n} Targum Jon. in loc. Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c.48. fol. 57.2.) {o} Ibid. Vid. T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 12. 1.

Exodus 2:6

Ver. 6. And when she had opened it,.... The ark, for it was shut or covered over, though doubtless there were some apertures for respiration:

she saw the child [in it], and, behold, the babe wept; and which was a circumstance, it is highly probable, greatly affected the king's daughter, and moved her compassion to it; though an Arabic writer says {p}, she heard the crying of the child in the ark, and therefore sent for it:

and she had compassion on him, and said, this is one of the Hebrews' children; which she might conclude from its being thus exposed, knowing her father's edict, and partly from the form and beauty of it, Hebrew children not being swarthy and tawny as Egyptian ones: the Jewish writers {q} say, she knew it by its being circumcised, the Egyptians not yet using circumcision.

{p} Patricides apud Hottinger. p 401. {q} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 12. 2. Aben Ezra in loc.

Exodus 2:7

Ver. 7. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter,.... Miriam the sister of Moses, who observing the ark taken up, and the maidens that were walking upon the bank of the river, and other women perhaps, gathering about it to see it; she made one among them, and after hearing their discourse about it, proposed what follows to Pharaoh's daughter: Jarchi says, that Pharaoh's daughter tried several Egyptian women to suckle it, but it would not suck of them: Josephus {r} says the same, and it also is in the Talmud {s}; and that, if true, gave Miriam a fair opportunity to offer to do the following message for her:

shall I go and call for thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? for she perceived that she was desirous of having the child brought up as her own.

{r} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 5. {s} T. Bab. Sotah, ut supra. (fol. 12.1)

Exodus 2:8

Ver. 8. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, go,.... She fell in at once with the proposal, being, no doubt, overruled, by the providence of God, to agree to have such a person called:

and the maid went and called the child's mother; and her own, whose name was Jochebed the wife of Amram, as observed in **Ex 2:1**.

Exodus 2:9

Ver. 9. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her,.... Being come, having made all possible haste:

take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages; by which means she had not only the nursing of her own child, but was paid for it: according to a Jewish writer {t}, Pharaoh's daughter agreed with her for two pieces of silver a day.

{t} Dibre Hayamim; sive Chronicon Mosis, fol. 4. 1.

Exodus 2:10

Ver. 10. And the child grew,.... In stature and in strength, thriving under the care of its mother and nurse, through the blessing of God:

and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter; when grown up and weaned, and needed a nurse no longer: a Jewish chronologer {u} says, this was two years after his birth; and another says {w}, that when he was three years old, Pharaoh sitting at table, and his queen was at his right hand, and his daughter, with Moses, at his left, and his mother before him, when Moses in the sight of them all took the crown from Pharaoh's head:

and he became her son; by adoption, for though she was a married woman, as some say, yet had no children, though very desirous of them, which accounts the more for her readiness in taking notice and care of Moses; so Philo the Jew says {x}, that she had been married a long time, but never with child, though she was very desirous of children, and especially a son, that might succeed her father in the kingdom, or otherwise it must go into another family: yea, he further says, that she feigned herself with child, that Moses might be thought to be her own son: and Artapanus {y}, an Heathen writer, says that the daughter of Pharaoh was married to one Chenephres, who reigned over the country above Memphis, for at that time many reigned in Egypt; and she being barren, took a son of one of the Jews, whom she called Moyses, and being grown up to a man's estate, was, by the Greeks, called Musaeus:

and she called his name Moses, and she said, because I drew him out of the water; by which it appears, that this word is derived from the Hebrew word hvm, "Mashah", which signifies to draw out, and is only used of drawing out of water, 2Sa 22:17 which Pharaoh's daughter gave him, he being an Hebrew child, and which language she may very well be thought to understand; since there were such a large number of Hebrews dwelt in Egypt, and she was particularly conversant with Jochebed her Hebrew nurse; and besides, there was a great affinity between the Hebrew and the Egyptian language, and therefore there is no need to derive the word from the latter, as Philo {z} and

Josephus {a} do; who observe that "Mo" in the Egyptian language signifies "water", and "Yses", "saved"; besides, the Egyptian name of Moses, according to Aben Ezra, who had it from a book of agriculture in that language, is Momos: the Jewish writers {b} give to Moses many names, which he had from different persons, no less than ten: and Artapanns {c} says, that by the Egyptian priests he was called Hermes or Mercury, and probably was the Hermes of that people; he is called by Orpheus {d} udogenhv, "born in water", because drawn out of it.

{u} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 2. {w} Chronicon. ib. Shalshal. ib. {x} De Vita Mosis, c. 1. p. 604, 605. {y} Apud Euseb, Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 432. {z} Ut supra. ({x}) {a} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9.) sect. 6. {b} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 146. 3. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 2. Chronicon Mosis, fol. 4. 1. {c} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 432.) {d} De Deo, v. 23.

Exodus 2:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown,.... To man's estate; some of the Jewish writers say he was eighteen, others twenty years of age {e}, but Stephen, who is most to be credited, says he was full forty years of age, **Ac 7:23**,

that he went out unto his brethren the Hebrews: whom he knew to be his brethren, either by divine revelation, or by conversing with his nurse, who was his mother; who, doubtless, instructed him while he was with her, as far as he was capable of being informed of things, and who might frequently visit her afterwards, by which means he became apprised that he was an Hebrew and not an Egyptian, though he went for the son of Pharaoh's daughter, which he refused to be called when he knew his parentage, Heb 11:24 now he went out from Pharaoh's palace, which in a short time he entirely relinquished, to visit his brethren, and converse with them, and understood their case and circumstances:

and looked on their burdens; which they were obliged to carry, and were very heavy, and with which they were pressed; he looked at them with grief and concern, and considered in his mind how to relieve them, if possible:

and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren; the Egyptian was, according to Jarchi, a principal of the taskmasters of Israel, who was beating the Hebrew for not doing his work as he required, and the Hebrew, according to him, was the husband of Shelomith, daughter of Dibri, Le 24:11, though others say it was Dathan {f}.

{e} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 2. {f} Ibid.

Exodus 2:12

Ver. 12. And he looked this way, and that way,.... All around, to observe if there were any within sight who could see what he did; which did not arise from any consciousness of any evil he was about to commit, but for his own preservation, lest if seen he should be accused to Pharaoh, and suffer for it:

and when he saw that there was no man; near at hand, that could see what he did, and be a witness against him:

he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand; in a sandy desert place hard by, where having slain him with his sword, he dug a hole, and put him into it; See Gill on "Ac 7:24". Of the slaughter of the Egyptian, and the following controversy about it, Demetrius {g}, an Heathen writer, treats of in perfect agreement with the sacred Scriptures.

{g} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 19. p. 439.

Exodus 2:13

Ver. 13. And when he went out the second day,.... The day following:

behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together; which the Jewish writers {h} take to be Dathan and Abiram:

and he said to him that did the wrong; who was the aggressor, and acted the wicked part in abusing his brother:

wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? friend and companion; signifying, that it was very unbecoming, unkind, and unnatural, and that brethren and friends ought to live together in love, and not strive with, and smite one another, and especially at such a time as this, when they were so oppressed by, and suffered so much from their enemies;

See Gill on "Ac 7:26".

{h} Targum Jon. & Jarchi in loc. Shemoth Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 91. 4. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 48.

Exodus 2:14

Ver. 14. And he said, who made thee a prince and a judge over us?.... God had designed him for one, and so he appeared to be afterwards; but this man's meaning is, that he was not appointed by Pharaoh's order then, and so had nothing to do to interfere in their differences and quarrels; though Moses did not take upon him to act in an authoritative way, but to exhort and persuade them to peace and love, as they were brethren:

intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? if this was Dathan, or however the same Hebrew that he had defended and rescued from the Egyptian, it was very ungenerous in him to upbraid him with it; or if that Hebrew had made him his confident, and acquainted him with that affair, as it was unfaithful to betray it, since it was in favour of one of his own people, it was ungrateful to reproach him with it:

and Moses feared; lest the thing should be discovered and be told to Pharaoh, and he should suffer for it: this fear that possessed Moses was before he fled from Egypt, and went to Midian, not when he forsook it, and never returned more, at the departure of the children of Israel, to which the apostle refers, Heb 11:27 and is no contradiction to this:

and said, surely this thing is known; he said this within himself, he concluded from this speech, that either somebody had seen him commit the fact he was not aware of, or the Hebrew, whose part he took, had through weakness told it to another, from whom this man had it, or to himself; for by this it seems that he was not the same Hebrew, on whose account Moses had slain the Egyptian, for then the thing would have been still a secret between them as before; only the other Hebrew this was now contending with must hereby come to the knowledge of it, and so Moses might fear, that getting into more hands it would come out, as it did; See Gill on "Ac 7:27".
See Gill on "Ac 7:28".
See Gill on "Ac 7:29".

Exodus 2:15

Ver. 15. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses,.... Both for his killing the Egyptian, which by the laws of Egypt {i} was death, whether bond or free; and for his taking part with the Hebrews against the Egyptians, and knowing him to be a wise and valiant man, might fear he would put himself at the head of the Hebrews, and cause a revolt of them; and if there was anything in his dream, or if he had such an one, and had the interpretation of it given by his magicians, that an Hebrew child should be born, by whom Egypt would be destroyed, See Gill on "Ex 1:15", he might call it to mind, and be affected with it, and fear the time was coming on, and Moses was the person by whom it should be done; and he might be stirred up by his courtiers to take this step, who doubtless envied the growing interest of Moses in his court:

but Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh; not through want of courage, but through prudence, to avoid danger, and preserve his life for future usefulness; and no doubt under a divine impulse, and by the direction of divine Providence, the time for him to be the deliverer of Israel not being yet come:

and dwelt in the land of Midian: a country so called from Midian, one of Abraham's sons by Keturah, Ge 25:2. Jerom {k} calls it a city, and says it was on the other side of Arabia, to the south, in the desert of the Saracens, to the east of the Red sea, from whence the country was called Midian; and Philo {l} says, that Moses went into neighbouring Arabia; and which is confirmed by Artapanus {m} the Heathen historian, who says, that from Memphis, crossing the river Nile, he went into Arabia; and this country was sometimes called Cush or Ethiopia; hence Moses's wife is called an Ethiopian woman, Nu 12:1

and he sat down by a well; weary, thoughtful, and pensive. It may be observed, that it was usual with persons in such like circumstances, being strangers and not knowing well to whom to apply for assistance or direction, to place themselves at a well of water, to which there was frequent resort, both for the use of families and of flocks; see Ge 24:11. This well is now called, as some say, Eyoun el Kaseb, fourteen hours and a half from Magare Chouaib, or "the grot of Jethro" {n}; but if this was so far from Jethro's house, his daughters had a long way to go with their flock: but some other travellers {o} speak of a very neat and pleasant village, called Hattin, where they were shown the grave of Jethro, Moses's father-in-law; and in the neighbourhood of that place is a cistern, now called Omar, and is said to be the watering place where Moses met with the daughters of the priest of Midian. A late learned man {p} thinks, that Sharma, which is about a day and a half's journey southeast from Mount Sinai, is the place where Jethro lived. The Arabic geographer {q} says, at the shore of the Red sea lies the city Madian, greater than Tabuc, and in it is a well, out of which Moses watered the flocks of Scioaib, that is, Raguel.

{i} Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 70. {k} De locis Heb. fol. 93. A. B. {l} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 609. {m} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 433. {n} See a Journey from Grand Cairo to Mecca, in Ray's Travels, vol. 2. p. 468. {o} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 2. p. 29. {p} See the Origin of Hieroglyphics, at the end of a Journal from Cairo, to Mount Sinai, p. 55. Ed. 2. {q} Climat. 3. par. 5.

Exodus 2:16

Ver. 16. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters,.... Who being a descendant of Abraham might have retained the knowledge of the true God, and might be a priest of his, as Melchizedek was, or otherwise it may be thought improbable that Moses would have married his daughter, as he afterwards did; and so Aben Ezra says, he was a priest of God; though the word is sometimes used of a prince, ruler, and governor; and is so rendered here by the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; and Artapanus {r}, an Heathen writer, expressly calls him arcwn, a "prince" of those places, that is, of Arabia; he might be both prince and priest, as Melchizedek before mentioned was, and as has been the usage of many countries:

and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock; which is no contradiction to their being daughters either of a priest or a prince, which were both high titles and characters; since it was usual in those early times, and in those countries, for the sons and daughters of considerable persons to be employed in such services; See Gill on "Ge 29:9".

{r} Ut supra, (Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27.) p. 434.

Exodus 2:17

Ver. 17. And the shepherds came and drove them away,.... The daughters of the priest of Midian, and their flock likewise; these were shepherds of some neighbouring princes or great men, who were so rude and slothful, and to save themselves a little trouble of drawing water, brought up their flocks to drink of the water those virgins had drawn, and to do this forced them and their flocks away:

but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock; moved to see such rude and uncivil treatment of the weaker sex, rose up from the ground on which he sat, and took their parts, and obliged the shepherds to give way, and brought up their flock to the troughs, and drew water for them, and gave them it; either he did this alone, or together with the servants that waited upon the priest's daughters, perhaps alone; and if it be considered that shepherds being usually not of a very martial spirit, and these also in a wrong cause, and Moses a man of an heroic disposition, and had doubtless the appearance of a man of some eminence and authority, they were the more easily intimidated and overcome.

Exodus 2:18

Ver. 18. And when they came to Reuel their father,.... Or Ragouel, as the Septuagint; and so Artapanus {s} calls him. The Targum of Jonathan has it, their father's father; and so Aben Ezra says he was; and is the sense of others, induced thereto by Nu 10:29, but it does not follow from thence: he said,

how is it that you are come so soon today? it being not only sooner than they were wont to come, but perhaps their business was done in so short a time; that it was marvellous to him that it could be done in it, so quick a dispatch had Moses made, and they through his assistance; and especially it might be more strange, if it was usual, as it seems it was, to be molested by the shepherds.

{s} Ut supra. (Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 434.)

Exodus 2:19

Ver. 19. And they said, an Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds,.... A man, who by his habit and by his speech appeared to them to be an Egyptian, and upon their inquiry he might tell them so, being born in Egypt, though of Hebrew parents:

and also drew water enough for us; or "in drawing drew" {t}; drew it readily, quickly and in abundance:

and watered the flock; by which means their business was done, and they returned home earlier than usual.

{t} hld hld "hauriendo bausit", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.

Exodus 2:20

Ver. 20. And he said unto his daughters, and where is he?.... By the account Reuel's daughters gave of Moses, of his courage and humanity, he was very desirous of seeing him:

why [is it] that ye have left the man? behind them at the well, and had not brought him along with them; he seemed to be displeased, and chides them, and tacitly suggests that they were rude and ungrateful not to ask a stranger, and one that had been so kind to them, to come with them and refresh himself:

call him, that he may eat bread; take meat with them, bread being put for all provisions.

Exodus 2:21

Ver. 21. And Moses was content to dwell with the man,.... After he had been called and brought into the house, and had had some refreshment, and after some conversation had passed between them, and perhaps after some days' stay in Reuel's house; Reuel having observed his disposition and behaviour, and being delighted therewith, proposed to him to take up his residence with him, with which motion Moses was well pleased, and accepted of it:

and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter; to be his wife. It is not to be supposed that this was done directly; though both Philo {u} and Josephus {w} intimate as if it was done at first meeting together; but it is not likely that Reuel would dispose of his daughter so suddenly to a stranger, though he might at once entertain an high opinion of him; nor would Moses marry a woman directly he had so slender an acquaintance with, so little knowledge of her disposition, endowments of mind and religion. The Targum of Jonathan says it was at the end of ten years; and indeed forty years after this a son of his seems to have been young, having not till then been circumcised, **Ex 4:22**. The author of the Life of Moses says {x}, that he was seventy seven years of age when he married Zipporah, which was but three years before he returned to Egypt. This circumstance of Moses's marrying Reuel's daughter is confirmed by Artapanus {y} an Heathen historian; and also by Demetrius {z}, and expressly calls her Sapphora, who he says was a daughter of Jother or Jethro; and likewise by Ezekiel the tragedian {a}.

{u} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 611. {w} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 11. sect. 2. {x} Chronicon Mosis, fol. 9. 1. {y} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 27. p. 434. {z} Ib. c. 29. p. 439. {a} lb. c. 28.

Exodus 2:22

Ver. 22. And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom,.... Which signifies a "desolate stranger"; partly on his own account, he being in a foreign country, a stranger and sojourner; but not by way of complaint, but rather of thankfulness to God for providing so well for him in it; and partly on his son's account, that when he came to years of maturity and knowledge, he might learn, and in which Moses no doubt instructed him, that he was not to look upon Midian as his proper country, but that he was to be heir of the land of Canaan, and which he might be reminded of by his name:

for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land; so Midian was to him, who was born in Egypt, and being an Hebrew, was entitled to the land of Canaan; this looks as if he had been at this time some years in Midian.

Exodus 2:23

Ver. 23. And it came to pass in process of time that the king of Egypt died,.... According to Eusebius, Orus reigned in Egypt when Moses fled from thence, and that two more reigned after him, Acenchres and Achoris, who both died before the deliverance of the children of Israel; but according to Bishop Usher {b}, this was the same king of Egypt under whom Moses was born, and from whose face he fled, who died in the sixty seventh year of his reign, Moses being now sixty years of age, and having been in the land of Midian twenty years; and it was about twenty years after this that he was called from hence, to be the deliverer of his people; for things are often put close together in Scripture, which were done at a considerable distance. And the intention of this notice of the death of the king of Egypt is chiefly to show that it made no alteration in the afflictions of the children of Israel for the better, but rather the worse:

and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage; the severity of it, and its long duration, and seeing no way for their escape out of it:

and they cried, and their cry came up unto God; they not only sighed and groaned inwardly, but so great was their oppression, that they could not forbear crying out aloud; and such was the greatness and vehemency of their cry, that it reached up to heaven, and came into the ears of the Almighty, as vehement cries are said to do, whether sinful or religious; see Ge 18:20

by reason of the bondage; which may either be connected with their "cry", that that was because of their bondage; or with the "coming" of it unto God, he was pleased to admit and regard their cry, because their bondage was so very oppressive and intolerable.

{b} Annal Vet. Test. p. 19. A. M. 2494.

Exodus 2:24

Ver. 24. And God heard their groaning,.... The petitions they put up to him with groans and cries:

and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob; that he would bring their seed out of a land not theirs, in which they were strangers, and were afflicted, into the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.

Exodus 2:25

Ver. 25. And God looked upon the children of Israel,.... With an eye of pity and compassion, and saw all the hardships they laboured under, and all the injuries that were done unto them:

and God had respect unto [them]; had a favourable regard to them; or "knew" {b} not only them, the Israelites, and loved them, and approved of them, and owned them as his own, all which words of knowledge sometimes signify; but he knew their sorrows and sufferings, and took notice of what was done to them secretly; see **Ex 3:7**.

{b} edyw "et eognovit", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 2

In this chapter we are informed how that the Lord appeared to Moses in a bush on fire, but not consumed, **Ex 3:1**, declared unto him that he had seen and observed the afflictions of the children of Israel, and was determined to deliver them, **Ex 3:7**, that he gave him a call to be the deliverer of them, answered his objections to it, and instructed him what he should say, both to the elders of Israel and to Pharaoh, **Ex 3:10**, and assured him, that though at first Pharaoh would refuse to let them go, yet after many miracles wrought, he would be willing to dismiss them, when they should depart with great substance, **Ex 3:19**.

Ver. 1. Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian,.... Who was either the same with Reuel or Raguel, spoken of in the preceding chapter; or, as others think, a son of his, the father being now dead; seeing it was now forty years since Moses came into Midian, **Ac 7:30**. Demetrius {c}, an Heathen writer, expressly says that Jothor a son of Raguel, and Zipporah or Sepphora, as he calls her, was his daughter, whom Moses married: now this was the business Moses was chiefly concerned in during his stay in Midian; keeping the sheep of his father-in-law, in which great personages have have employed, and who have afterwards been called to the kingly office, as David; and this was an emblem of his feeding and ruling the people of Israel, and in it he was an eminent type of Christ, the great shepherd and bishop of souls: no doubt there were other things besides this in which Moses exercised himself in this course of time, and improved himself in the knowledge of things, natural, civil, and religious, and which the more qualified him for the important work he was designed for: it is thought that in this interval he wrote the book of Genesis, and also the book of Job:

and he led the flock to the backside of the desert; of Sinai or Arabia, on the back part of which, it seems, were goodly pastures; and hither he led his flock to feed, which was about three days' journey from Egypt, **Ex 5:3** or rather into the desert {d}, for Horeb or Sinai was not behind the desert, but in it:

and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb; so called either because of the appearance of God at this time, after related, or because of his giving the law and making the covenant with the people of Israel there; and it should be observed that that transaction was past when Moses wrote this book. Hither he led the sheep, they delighting in mountains, hence sometimes mountainous places are called
oiopola, {e}, because sheep delight to feed upon them {f}.

{c} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 29. p. 439. {d} rbdmh rxa upo thn eremon, Sept. "in desertum", Syr. Samar, so Noldius, p. 11. No. 76. {e} Homer. Odyss. 11. prope finem. {f} En ouresi mala nomeuwn, Theocrit. Idyll. 3.

Exodus 3:2

Ver. 2. And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him,.... Not a created angel, but the Angel of God's presence and covenant, the eternal Word and Son of God; since he is afterwards expressly called Jehovah, and calls himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which a created angel would never do: the appearance was,

in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush; not in a tall, lofty, spreading oak or cedar, but in a low thorny bramble bush, which it might have been thought would have been consumed in an instant of time:

and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush [was] not consumed; this was not imaginary, but a real thing; there was

such a bush, and Jehovah appeared in it in this manner, and though it was all on fire yet was not consumed, but remained entire after it: reference is frequently had to it as a matter of fact, De 33:16. Artapanus {g}, an Heathen writer, had got some hint of it; his account is this, that while Moses was praying to God, and entreating the afflictions of his people might cease, he was propitious to him, and on a sudden fire broke out of the earth and burned, when there was no matter nor anything of a woody sort in the place: nor need this account Moses gives be thought incredible, when so many things similar to it are affirmed by Heathen writers, who speak of a whole forest in flames without fire, and of a spear that burned for two hours, and yet nothing of it consumed; and of a servant's coat all on fire, and yet after it was extinguished no trace or mark of the flames were to be seen on it; and several other things of the like kind are related by Huetius {h} out of various authors: as to the mystical signification of this bush, some make it to be a type of Christ, and of his manifestation in the flesh; of the union of the two natures in him, and of their distinction of the glory of the one, and of the meanness of the other; of his sustaining the wrath of God, and remaining fearless and unhurt by it; and of his delivering and preserving his people from it: the Jews commonly interpret it of the people of Israel, in the furnace of affliction in Egypt, and yet not consumed; nay, the more they were afflicted the more they grew; and it may be a symbol of the church and people of God, in all ages, under affliction and distress: they are like to a thorn bush both for their small quantity, being few, and for their quality, in themselves weak and strengthless, mean and low; have about them the thorns of corruptions and temptations, and who are often in the fire of afflictions and persecutions, yet are not consumed; which is owing to the person, presence, power, and grace of Christ being among them; See Gill on "Ac 7:30".

{g} Apud Euseb. ib. c. 27. p. 434. {h} Alnetan. Quaest. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 10. p. 193, 194.

Exodus 3:3

Ver. 3. And Moses said, I will now turn aside,.... From the place where he was, and the flock he was feeding, and get nearer to the bush, which seems to have been on one side of him and not directly before him:

and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt; inquire into, and find out, if he could, the reason of this strange and amazing sight; how it could be that a bush should be on fire and yet not burnt up, which might have been expected would have been destroyed at once; for what is a thorn or bramble bush to devouring flames of fire, as these appeared to be?

Exodus 3:4

Ver. 4. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see,.... Who is before called the Angel of the Lord, here Jehovah, the omniscient and omnipresent Being, who observing Moses turning aside and going onward to gratify his curiosity, by examining more narrowly this strange phenomenon:

God called unto him out of the midst of the bush; with an articulate voice, being the eternal Word:

and said, Moses, Moses; for the Lord knows his people distinctly, and can call them by name; and the repetition of his name not only shows familiarity and a strong vehement affection for him, but haste to stop him, that he might proceed no further; and this was done in order to stir him up to hearken to what would be said to him:

and he said, here am I; ready to hear what shall be said, and to obey whatever is commanded.

Exodus 3:5

Ver. 5. And he said, draw not nigh hither,.... Keep a proper distance:

put off thy shoes from off thy feet; dust and dirt cleaving to shoes, and these being ordered to be put off from the feet, the instrument of walking, show that those that draw nigh to God, and are worshippers of him, ought to be of pure and holy lives and conversations:

for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground; not that there was any inherent holiness in this spot of ground more than in any other, which ground is not capable of; but a relative holiness on account of the presence of God here at this time, and was not permanent, only while a pure and holy God was there: hence, in after times, the temple being the place of the divine residence, the priests there performed their services barefooted, nor might a common person enter into the temple with his shoes on {k}; and to this day the Jews go to their synagogues barefooted on the day of atonement {l}, to which Juvenal {m} seems to have respect; and from hence came the Nudipedalia among the Heathens, and that known symbol of Pythagoras {n}, "sacrifice and worship with naked feet": in this manner the priests of Diana sacrificed to her among the Cretians and other people {o}; and so the priests of Hercules did the same {p}; the Brahmans among the Indians never go into their temples without plucking off their shoes {q}; so the Ethiopian Christians, imitating Jews and Gentiles, never go into their places of public worship but with naked feet {r}, and the same superstition the Turks and Mahometans observe {s}.

{k} Misn. Beracot, c. 9. sect. 5. {l} Buxtorf. Jud Synagog. c. 30. p. 571. {m} "Observant ub. festa mero pede Sabbata reges." Satyr. 6. {n} Jamblichus de Vita Pythagor. Symbol. 3. {o} Solin. Polyhistor. c. 16. Strabo, l. 12. p. 370.

{p} Silius de Bello Punic, l. 3. {q} Rogerius de Relig. Brachman. l. 2. c. 10. apud Braunium de vest. sacerdot. l. 1. c. 3. p. 66. {r} Damianus a Goes apud Rivet. in loc. {s} Pitts's Account of the Relig. and Manners of the Mahometans, c. 6. p. 38. 81. Georgieviz. de Turc. Moribus, c. 1. p. 11. Sionita de Urb. Oriental. & Relig. c. 7. p. 18. c. 10. p. 34.

Exodus 3:6

Ver. 6. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy fathers,.... Of every one of his fathers next mentioned:

the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; with whom the covenant respecting the land of Canaan, and the promise of the blessed seed the Messiah, was made: this again shows that the Angel of the Lord that now appeared was God himself, Jehovah the Son of God. Our Lord makes use of this text to prove the resurrection of the dead against the Sadducees, God being not the God of the dead, but of the living; Mr 12:26

and Moses hid his face; wrapped it in his mantle or cloak, as Elijah did, 1Ki 19:13, because of the glory of the divine Majesty now present, and conscious of his own sinfulness and unworthiness:

for he was afraid to look upon God; even upon this outward appearance and representation of him in a flame of fire; otherwise the essence of God is not to be looked upon and seen at all, God is invisible; but even this external token and symbol of him was terrible to behold; the thought that God was there filled him with fear, considering the greatness and awfulness of his majesty, and what a poor, weak, and sinful creature he was.

Exodus 3:7

Ver. 7. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt,.... Or, "in seeing I have seen", which not only denotes the certainty of it, as we express it; but the clear, distinct, and full sight he had of it, with sympathy towards them, an affectionate concern for them, and a fixed, settled, determination in his mind to deliver them; he had long took notice of, and had thoroughly observed their affliction, and was afflicted with them in it, and was bent upon their deliverance out of it:

and have heard their cry, by reason of their taskmasters; who were set over them to see that they did their work, and to lay heavy burdens on them, and afflict them by all manner of ways and methods they could devise; and who abused and beat them for not doing what was not to be done, which made them cry out because of their barbarous usage of them, and cry unto God for help and deliverance:

for I know their sorrows; the pains of body they were put unto, and the inward grief and trouble of their minds on account of them.

Exodus 3:8

Ver. 8. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians,.... Which must be understood consistent with the omnipresence of God, who is everywhere, and strictly speaking cannot be said to remove from place to place, or to descend; but such a way of speaking is used, when he gives some eminent display of his power or goodness, as here in a wonderful manner he appeared in a burning bush, and manifested himself in a way of grace and kindness to his people, signifying that he would shortly save them: so Christ in our nature came down from heaven to earth, to save his spiritual Israel out of the hands of all their enemies:

and to bring them out of that land; the land of Egypt, where they were in bondage, and greatly oppressed:

unto a good land, and a large; the land of Canaan, which was not only a good land, but a large one in comparison of Goshen, where the Israelites were pent up and straitened for room through their great increase; and though it was but a small country in itself, and when compared with some others, being but one hundred and sixty miles from Dan to Beersheba, and but forty six from Joppa to Bethlehem, and but sixty from Joppa to Jordan, yet, for so small a country, it had a great deal of good land in it; for Hecataeus {t} an Heathen writer, says it had in it three hundred myriads of acres of the best and most fruitful land:

unto a land flowing with milk and honey; which is not to be restrained merely to the abundance of cattle fed here, and the plenty of milk they produced, or the number of bees that swarmed here, and the quantity of honey they made; for the land abounded with other good things, and excellent fruits, as corn, and wine, and oil, and with figs, pomegranates, palm trees, &c. but this is a proverbial and hyperbolical expression, setting forth the great affluence of all sorts of good things in it, for the necessity and delight of human life:

unto the place of the Canaanites; who are mentioned first, as being the general name for the inhabitants of the land, as Aben Ezra suggests, though they are often spoken of as a distinct nation or tribe from the rest, and a principal one, denominated from Canaan the son of Ham:

and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: the Hittites and Amorites had their names from Heth and Emor, sons of Canaan; the Perizzites, Aben Ezra says, are the same with Sidon, who was the firstborn of Canaan: and the Hivites and Jebusites were the descendants also of sons of Canaan,
Ge 15:19, the Girgashites are not here mentioned, either because they were a lesser people than the rest, as Aben Ezra thinks; or their land was not a land flowing with milk and honey, as Abendana observes; or they were gone out of the land before Israel went into it, according to other Jewish writers, or immediately yielded to Joshua, without fighting against him.

{t} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 22.

Exodus 3:9

Ver. 9. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me,.... See **Ex 2:23**:

and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them; which is repeated to observe the great notice he took of it; and the reason of his descent and appearance in this wonderful manner, as well as of the urgent necessity of Moses's going to deliver the people from their oppression.

Exodus 3:10

Ver. 10. Come now therefore,..... Leave thy flock, thy family, and the land of Midian:

and I will send thee unto Pharaoh: this Pharaoh, according to Eusebius, was Cenchres, the successor of Achoris; but according to Bishop Usher {u}, his name was Amenophis, who immediately succeeded Ramesses Miamun, under whom Moses was born. Clemens of Alexandria {w} relates from Apion, and he, from Ptolemy Mendesius, that it was in the times of Amosis that Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt; but Tacitus {x} says, the name of this king was Bocchoris, who obliged them to go out, being advised by an oracle to do so; and so says Lysimachus {y}:

that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt; and conduct them through the wilderness to the land of Canaan, and so be their deliverer, guide, and governor under God, who now gave him a commission to act for him.

{u} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 19. {w} Stromat. l. 1. p. 320. {x} Hist. l. 5. c. 3. {y} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion, l. 1. c. 34.

Exodus 3:11

Ver. 11. And Moses said unto God, who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh,.... A private person, an exile in a foreign country, a poor shepherd, unknown to Pharaoh, and had no interest in him; and he a great king, and possessed of numerous forces to defend his country, and prevent the Israelites' departure out of it: time was when he was known to a Pharaoh, dwelt in his court, and made a figure there, and had great interest and authority there, being the adopted son of the king's daughter; but now it was otherwise with him:

and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt: who though a people numerous, yet unarmed, and held in great bondage; and he might remember how he had been repulsed and rejected by some of them forty years ago, which might be discouraging to him.

Exodus 3:12

Ver. 12. And he said, certainly I will be with thee,.... To encourage and strengthen him; to protect, defend, and preserve him, and to succeed and prosper him; to give him credit and respect with the people of Israel, and influence over Pharaoh to prevail upon him at length to let Israel go:

and this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee; not the promise now made, nor the vision he had seen, but what follows:

when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain: Mount Horeb or Sinai, as they did at the time of the giving of the law on it, when an altar was built upon a hill, and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, Ex 24:4 and this was a sign, "a posteriori", confirming the divine mission of Moses; and besides the promise of this, on which Moses might depend, being made by the Lord, assured him of success, that he should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, since he and they would serve the Lord together at this mountain, and from whence he might conclude he had a mission and commission from God. Of a like kind is the sign or token given of the deliverance of Jerusalem from the army of Sennacherib, Isa 37:30.

Exodus 3:13

Ver. 13. And Moses said unto God,.... Having received full satisfaction to his objection, taken from his own unfitness for such a service, and willing to have his way quite clear unto him, and his commission appear firm and valid to his people, he proceeds to observe another difficulty that might possibly arise:

when I come unto the children of Israel: out of Midian into Egypt;

and shall say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; with a message to them to receive him as his ambassador and their deliverer:

and they shall say unto me, what is his name? a question it was probable they would ask, not through ignorance, since in their distress they had called upon the name of the Lord, and cried unto him for help and deliverance; but either to try Moses, and what knowledge he had of God: or there being many names by which he had made himself known; and especially was wont to make use of a new name or title when he made a new appearance, or any eminent discovery of himself, they might be desirous of knowing what was the present name he took:

what shall I say unto them? what name shall I make mention of?

Exodus 3:14

Ver. 14. And God said unto Moses, I am that I am,.... This signifies the real being of God, his self-existence, and that he is the Being of beings; as also it denotes his eternity and immutability, and his constancy and faithfulness in fulfilling his promises, for it includes all time, past, present, and to come; and the sense is, not only I am what I am at present, but I am what I have been, and I am what I shall be, and shall be what I am. The Platonists and Pythagoreans seem to have borrowed their to on from hence, which expresses with them the eternal and invariable Being; and so the Septuagint version here is o wn: it is said {z}, that the temple of Minerva at Sais, a city of Egypt, had this inscription on it,

"I am all that exists, is, and shall be."

And on the temple of Apollo at Delphos was written ei, the contraction of eimi, "I am" {a}. Our Lord seems to refer to this name, **Joh 8:58**, and indeed is the person that now appeared; and the words may be rendered, "I shall be what I shall be" {b} the incarnate God, God manifest in the flesh:

thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you; or as the Targum of Jonathan has it,

"I am he that is, and that shall be."

This is the name Ehjeh, or Jehovah, Moses is empowered to make use of, and to declare, as the name of the Great God by whom he was sent; and which might serve both to encourage him, and strengthen the faith of the Israelites, that they should be delivered by him.

{z} Phutarch. de Iside & Osir. {a} Plato in Timaeo. {b} hyha rva hyha "ero qui ero", Pagninus, Montanus, Fagius, Vatablus.

Exodus 3:15

Ver. 15. And God said moreover unto Moses,.... As a further explanation of the above name, and of the design and use of it:

thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: for their further instruction in the said name, and for the confirmation of the mission of Moses, and the success of it:

the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; he who is Jehovah, and the covenant God of the ancestors of the people of Israel, and of them, so he is called, **Ec**

3:6

this [is] my name for ever: meaning either "Ehjeh, I am", in the preceding verse, or, which is the same, Jehovah in this, and so both of them, and including also the name of the God of Abraham, &c. which he was always to be known by:

and this is my memorial unto all generations; the name by which he should be made mention of both by himself and others, and by which he would be called to remembrance by his people, and what he had promised unto them, and done for them.

Exodus 3:16

Ver. 16. Go and gather the elders of Israel together,.... Not all the ancient men among them, nor the "judges" of the people of Israel; for it does not appear there were such among them in Egypt, until they came into the land of Canaan, but the heads of tribes or families:

and say unto them, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me; in a flame of fire in the midst of a bush at Horeb:

saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt; inspected into their state and circumstances, took notice of their afflictions and oppressions, and determined to deliver them out of them, as follows.

Exodus 3:17

Ver. 17. And I have said,.... Within himself, resolved in his own mind, and had declared it to Moses:

I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt: with which they were afflicted in Egypt, and by the Egyptians; this he both purposed and promised to bring them out of: unto the land of the Canaanites, &c. then in the possession of the Canaanites, and others after named;
See Gill on "Ex 3:8".

Exodus 3:18

Ver. 18. And they shall hearken to thy voice,.... The elders of Israel, who would give credit to his commission, attend to what he said, and obey his orders, and follow the directions that he should give them, and not slight and reject him, as some had done before:

and thou shall come, thou, and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt: the elders of Israel in a body, and Moses at the head of them; though we do not read of their approaching to Pharaoh, and addressing him in such a manner, only of Moses and Aaron applying to him:

and you shall say unto him, the Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us; with one of them, who had reported to the rest what he had said; the children of Israel are here called Hebrews, because that seems to be a name the Egyptians most commonly called them, and by which they were best known to them, see Ge 39:14

and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness; the wilderness of Sinai and Arabia, and to Mount Horeb in it; which from the borders of Egypt was three days' journey going the direct road, but the Israelites going somewhat about, and stopping by the way, did not get to it until the third month of their going out of Egypt, Ex 19:1:

that we may sacrifice to the Lord God; in the place where he had appeared to a principal man among them, and where they would be in no danger of being insulted and molested by the Egyptians. Some think the reason of this request they were directed to make, to sacrifice out of the land of Egypt, was, because what they sacrificed the Egyptians worshipped as gods, and therefore would be enraged at such sacrifices; but for this there is no sufficient foundation; See Gill on "Ge 46:34", rather the design was under this pretence to get quite away from them, they being no subjects of the king of Egypt, nor had he a right to detain them; nor were they obliged to acquaint him with the whole of their intentions, and especially as they were directed of God himself to say this, and no more, and which being so reasonable, made Pharaoh's refusal the more inexcusable.

Exodus 3:19

Ver. 19. And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go,.... Or "but" {c} "I am sure", &c. though so reasonable a request was made him, yet it would not be granted; this is observed to them, that they might not be discouraged when he should refuse to dismiss them, which the omniscient God knew beforehand, and acquaints them with it, that, when it came to pass, they might be induced to believe that the mission of Moses was of God, rather than the contrary:

no, not by a mighty hand; the mighty power of God displayed once and again, even in nine plagues inflicted on him, until the tenth and last came upon him; or "unless by a mighty hand" {d}, even the almighty hand of God; prayers, entreaties, persuasions, and arguments, will signify nothing, unless the mighty power of God is exerted upon him.

{c} yna "ego autem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "sed ego", V. L. {d} alw ean mh Sept. "nisi", V. L. Pagninus, Vatablus; so Noldius, p. 344. No. 1246.

Exodus 3:20

Ver. 20. And I will stretch out my hand,.... Or "therefore" {e} he would stretch out his mighty hand, exert his almighty power; and for this purpose was Pharaoh raised up, and his heart hardened, that God might show his power in him, and on him:

and smite Egypt with all my wonders, which I will do in the midst thereof: with those wondrous plagues, the amazing effects of his almighty power, which were wrought by him in the midst of Egypt, by which their land, their rivers, their persons, and their cattle, were smitten:

and after that he will let you go; this is said for their encouragement, that their faith and patience might hold out, who otherwise seeing him so obstinate and inflexible, might be ready to despair of ever succeeding.

{e} w "ideo", "propterea", Noldius, p. 279.

Exodus 3:21

Ver. 21. And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians,.... That is, give the Israelites favour in their sight, a little before their departure, who should be ready to do anything for them, or bestow anything upon them;

or however lend them what they would desire, being glad to be at peace with them, or get rid of them, for whose sakes they would perceive all those sore calamities came upon them, they were distressed with:

and it shall come to pass, that when ye go, ye shall not go empty; destitute of what was necessary for them, but even with great substance, as was foretold by Abraham they should, and which prophecy was now about to be fulfilled, Ge 15:14.

Exodus 3:22

Ver. 22. But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house,.... Or "shall ask" {f}, desire them to give or lend, what follows; and by this it appears, that the Israelites by reason of their great increase were spread about, and mixed with the Egyptians; and hence it was that there was such a mixed multitude that went up with them out of Egypt, who either were in connection with them in civil things, or were proselyted by them:

jewels of silver, and jewels of gold; that is, jewels set in silver and in gold; or "vessels of silver, and vessels of gold" {g}, plate of both sorts, cups, dishes, &c:

and raiment; rich and goodly apparel, which they might borrow to appear in at their feast and sacrifices in the wilderness, whither they asked leave to go to:

and ye shall put [them] upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and so deck and ornament them with them at the time of their departure:

and ye shall spoil the Egyptians; and very justly, for the hard service they put them to; for which all this was but their wages due unto them, and which they would stand in need of in their travels to Canaan's land, and for the erection of the tabernacle, and providing things appertaining to it in the wilderness.

{f} hlav aithsei Sept. "postulabit", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Drusius; "petet", Junius & Tremellius. {g} ylk "vasa", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Tigurine version, Drusius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 4

This chapter is a continuation of the discourse that passed between God and Moses; and here Moses makes other objections to his mission; one is taken from the unbelief of the people of Israel, which is removed by giving him power to work miracles, by turning the rod in his hand into a serpent, and then into a rod again; and by putting his hand into his bosom at one time, when it became leprous, and again into the same place, when it became sound and whole, and by turning the water of the river into blood, **Ex 4:1**, another objection is formed from his want of eloquence, which is answered with an assurance, that God, that made man's mouth, would be with his mouth, and teach him what to say; and besides, Aaron his brother, who was an eloquent man, should be his spokesman, **Ex 4:10** upon which he returned to Midian, and having obtained leave of his father-in-law to depart from thence, he took his wife and his sons, and returned to Egypt, **Ex 4:18** at which time he received some fresh instructions from the Lord what he should do before Pharaoh, and what he should say unto him, **Ex 4:21** then follows an account of what befell him by the way, because of the circumcision of his son, **Ex 4:24** and the chapter is closed with an account of the meeting of Moses and Aaron, and of their gathering the elders of Israel together, to whom the commission of Moses was opened, and signs done before them, to which they gave credit, and expressed their joy and thankfulness, **Ex 4:27**.

Ver. 1. And Moses answered and said,.... In reference to what Jehovah had declared to him in the latter end of the preceding chapter:

but, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice; this seems to contradict what God had said to him, **Ex 3:18** that they would hearken to his voice; but it can hardly be thought, that so good a man, and so great a prophet as Moses was, would directly fly in the face of God, and expressly contradict what he had said. To reconcile this it may be observed, that what the Lord says respects only the elders of Israel, this all the people; or Jehovah's meaning may be, and so this of Moses, that neither the one nor the other would regard his bare word, without some sign or miracle being wrought; for as his call was extraordinary, so it required something extraordinary to be done that it might be credited:

for they will say, the Lord hath not appeared unto me: in the bush, as he would affirm he did, and might do it with the greatest assurance; yet the thing being so marvellous, and they not eyewitnesses of it, might distrust the truth of it, or be backward to receive it on his bare word; and this Moses might rather fear would be the case, from the experience he had had of them forty years ago, when it was more likely for him to have been a deliverer of them.

Exodus 4:2

Ver. 2. And the Lord said unto him,.... Not reproving him for contradicting him, or showing any diffidence of what he had said; but rather as approving the hint he gave of having some sign or miracle wrought, to command from the Israelites an assent unto him, as commissioned of God to deliver them:

what [is] that in thine hand? which question is put, not as being ignorant of what it was, but to lead on to what he had further to say, and to the working of the miracle:

and he said, a rod; or staff, such as shepherds use in the management of their flocks, for Moses was now feeding the flock of his father-in-law; but Aben Ezra seems rather to think it was a walking staff, such as ancient men lean upon, since Moses did not go to Pharaoh after the manner of a shepherd; yea, it may be added, he went with the authority of a prince or ruler of Israel, and even with the authority of the ambassador of the King of kings.

Exodus 4:3

Ver. 3. And he said, cast it on the ground,.... That is, the rod or staff:

and he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; not in appearance only, but in reality, it was changed into a real living serpent; for God, who is the author of nature, can change the nature of things as he pleases; nor is it to be supposed that he would only make it look to the sight as if it was one, by working upon the fancy and imagination to think it was one, when it was not; no doubt but it was as really turned into a true serpent, as the water was turned really and truly into wine by our Lord; this was the first miracle that ever was wrought, that we know of. Dr. Lightfoot {h} observes, that as a serpent was the fittest emblem of the devil, **Ge 3:1** so was it a sign that Moses did not these miracles by the power of the devil, but had a power over and beyond him, when he could thus deal with the serpent at his pleasure, as to make his rod a serpent, and the serpent a rod, as he saw good:

and Moses fled from before it; the Jews say {i} it was a fiery serpent, but for this they have no warrant: however, without supposing that it might be terrible and frightful, inasmuch as a common serpent is very disagreeable to men, and such an uncommon and extraordinary one must be very surprising, to see a staff become a serpent, a living one, crawling and leaping about, and perhaps turning itself towards Moses, whose staff it had been. Philo the Jew {k} says, it was a dragon, an exceeding large one.

{h} Works, vol. 1. p. 702. {i} Pirke Eliezer, c. 40. {k} De Vita Mosls, l. 1. 614.

Exodus 4:4

Ver. 4. And the Lord said to Moses, put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail,.... Which to do might seem most dangerous, since it might turn upon him and bite him; this was ordered, partly that Moses might be assured it was really a serpent, and not in appearance only; and partly to try his courage, and it suggested to him, that he need not be afraid of it, it would not hurt him: the above learned doctor observes {l}, that he is commanded to take it by the tail; for to meddle with the serpent's head belonged not to Moses, but to Christ that spake to him out of the bush:

and he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand; as it was before. Some think this refers to the threefold state of the Israelites, first to their flourishing estate under Joseph, when they were as a rod or staff, then to their dejected state, by this rod cast to the ground, and become a serpent, and lastly to their restoration and liberty, by its becoming a rod again: others refer it to Christ, who is the power of God, and the rod of his strength, and who in his state of humiliation was like this rod, cast to the ground and became a serpent, of which the brazen serpent was a type, and who by his resurrection from the dead regained his former power; but perhaps they may be most right who think it refers to the service and ministry of Moses, which seemed terrible to him at first, like a hurtful serpent, from which he fled; but after he was confirmed by the word of God, he readily undertook it.

{l} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. 614.

Exodus 4:5

Ver. 5. That they may believe,.... The elders and people of Israel; for this miracle was wrought not for the confirmation of Moses's faith; for, as Aben Ezra observes, the sign of the burning bush was given to him to confirm his faith, that it was God that appeared to him, and called him to this work; but this was wrought to confirm the faith of the Israelites in his divine mission:

that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee;
See Gill on "Ex 3:6".

Exodus 4:6

Ver. 6. And the Lord said furthermore unto him,.... Continued his discourse, and gave him another sign:

put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom; within his coat, under that part of the garment next to his breast:

and when he took it out, behold, his hand [was] leprous as snow; that is, white as snow, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, through the leprosy that was upon it; it was a leprosy of the white sort, and which is reckoned the worst and most difficult to be cured, see
Le 13:3. It is highly probable that this gave rise to the story told by several Heathen writers, as Manetho {m}, Lysimachus {n}, Trogus {o}, and Tacitus {p}, that Moses and the Israelites were drove out of Egypt by the advice of an oracle, because they had the leprosy, itch, and other impure diseases upon them.

{m} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 26. {n} Apud. ib. c. 34. {o} Justin e Trogo, l. 36. c. 2. {p} Hist. l. 5. c. 3.

Exodus 4:7

Ver. 7. And he said, put thine hand into thy bosom again,.... With the leprosy on it:

and he put his hand into his bosom again, and plucked it out of his bosom; quickly after he had put it in:

and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh; it was cured of the leprosy, and recovered its colour, and was as sound as before, and as any other part of his body. This was a very astonishing miracle, that he should be at once smote with a leprosy; that this should be only in his hand, and not in any other part of his body; and that it should be cured immediately, without the use of any means; and by this miracle Moses, and the Israelites, might be instructed and confirmed in the power of God, that he that could so suddenly inflict such a disease, and so easily cure it, was able to deliver them out of captivity, which was as death; and that however until Moses might be in himself to be a deliverer of the people, signified by his weak and leprous hand, yet being quickened and strengthened by the Lord, would be able to answer to the character; though, after all, the deliverance must be imputed not to his hand and power, but to the mighty hand and power of God.

Exodus 4:8

Ver. 8. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee,.... Will not give credit to the commission he had from God, but question the truth of it:

neither hearken to the voice of the first sign; which miracle wrought, spoke plain enough that he that wrought it, or for whose sake it was wrought, must be one come from God, or such a miracle would never be wrought by him or for him; but should any of the Israelites be still incredulous, it is supposed,

that they will believe the voice of the latter sign; which had a voice in it commanding belief that he was a messenger of God; the first sign respects his rod, the other his hand.

Exodus 4:9

Ver. 9. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs,.... Performed before their eyes; for these were done over again when Moses came into Egypt to the Israelites, and yet some of them might still remain unbelievers to his commission, and so to the voice of these signs, which loudly called for their faith:

neither hearken unto thy voice; affirming he came from God, and was sent to be the deliverer of them:

that thou shalt take of the water of the river; of the river Nile, when he should come into Egypt; wherefore Josephus {q} is mistaken when he intimates that this was done at the same time with the other signs; and was water he took near at hand and poured on the ground: but Philo {r} truly refers this to Egypt, where it was done, as it ought to be:

and pour [it] upon the dry land, and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land; by which it would appear how easily the Lord could destroy the land of Egypt, and make it a barren land, whose fertility was owing to the overflow of the river Nile as a means; and this would be a specimen also of what he would do hereafter, in turning the waters of the river into blood, thereby avenging the blood of innocent babes drowned there by the Egyptians.

{q} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 3. {r} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 614.

Exodus 4:10

Ver. 10. And Moses said unto the Lord,.... Notwithstanding the above miracles, he seems unwilling to go on the Lord's errand to Pharaoh and to the Israelites, and therefore invents a new objection after all his other objections had been sufficiently answered:

I am not eloquent; or "a man of words" {s}, that has words at command, that can speak well readily, and gracefully; such an one, he intimates, was proper to be sent to a king's court, that was an orator, that could make fine speeches, and handsome addresses, for which he was not qualified:

neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken to thy servant; neither in his younger years had he ever been an eloquent man, nor was there any alteration in him in that respect, since God had given him this call:

but I [am] slow of speech, and of a slow tongue; had some impediment in his speech, could not freely and easily bring out his words, or rightly pronounce them; so Lucian {t} the Heathen calls Moses slow tongued, or one slow of speech, and uses the same word the Septuagint does here, which version perhaps he had seen, and from thence took it.

{s} Myrbd vya "vir verborum", Paguinus, Montanus, Piscator, Ainsworth. {t}

In Philopatride.

Exodus 4:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord said unto him, who hath made man's mouth?.... Made that itself, and put in it the power and faculty of speech, even into the mouth of the first man, Adam, as the Targum of Jonathan; and so of every other man, did not the Lord do it? none else could, and therefore he that made it, and made it capable of speaking, could remove any impediments in it, and cause it to speak freely and fluently:

or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I, the Lord? as all the senses, and the perfection of them, are from him, so all the imperfections in them are according to his good pleasure; what he suffers to be, and can remedy when he thinks fit: it is he that gives the seeing eye and hearing ear, can and does make blind and deaf, that gives also the speaking mouth, and makes that dumb, and can open it again as he pleases! and what is it that he cannot do?

Exodus 4:12

Ver. 12. Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth,.... And put words into it, and cause it to speak readily and powerfully; and so it appears that he was mighty in words, as well as in deeds, **Ac 7:22**:

and teach thee what thou shalt say; to Pharaoh, to the Israelites, and to Aaron, that was to speak for him, as is hereafter observed.

Exodus 4:13

Ver. 13. And he said, O my Lord,.... Acknowledging his dominion, his sovereignty, his power to do the above things: or "on me, O Lord" {u}, be the blame for making such objections; or on me let this work be devolved, since it is thy pleasure:

send, I pray thee, by the hand [of him whom] thou wilt send. Many of the ancient Christian fathers understand it of the Messiah that was to be sent, and as if Moses thought this was a fit time for the sending of him: and so Cocceius is of opinion, that nothing better can be understood, than that Moses desired that God would rather send him, whom Israel expected to be sent, even the Angel that should go before them; of whose mission see Ex 23:20, but no particular person is intended, unless himself; and the common interpretation is, that God would send a more fit and proper person than he was; and that he would rather send anyone but him, and entreats to be excused; but I see not why this may not be understood of Moses assenting to his mission, and acquiescing in the will of God; as if he should say, since it must be so, the will of the Lord be done, let him send by whom he will, and since it is his pleasure to send by me, I submit; what may seem to contradict this is, the Lord's anger and resentment expressed in the following words; but that might be notwithstanding, since Moses had been so backward and reluctant, and made so many objections before he consented.

{u} ynda yb "in me", Oleaster.

Exodus 4:14

Ver. 14. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses,.... For the objections, excuses, and delays he made with respect to his mission. In what way this anger was expressed is not easy to say, whether by not removing the impediment of his speech, or not giving him the priesthood, which Jarchi thinks he otherwise would have had, and Aaron been only a Levite, as he is called in the next clause; or whether it was by joining Aaron to him, and so lessening his honour in this embassy, though that seems to be done to encourage him; or by not suffering him to lead the children of Israel into the land of Canaan, which yet is ascribed to another cause. However, though the Lord was angry with Moses, yet without any change of affection to him, he still retained and expressed a great regard to him; did not reject him from his service as he might have done, but employed him, and preferred him to his elder brother. Moses shows himself to be a faithful historian in recording his own weaknesses, and the displeasure of God at them:

and he said, is not Aaron the Levite thy brother; he was, and his elder brother, he was born three years before him, **Ex 7:7** though Justin {w}, an Heathen writer, says he was his son, and calls his name Aruas, and speaks of him as an Egyptian priest, and that he was made king after Moses's death; hence, he says, was the custom with the Jews for the same persons to be kings and priests; in all which he is mistaken. But Artapanus {x}, another Heathen writer, calls him the brother of Moses, and by his right name, Aaron; and says it was by his advice Moses fled into Arabia, and speaks of his meeting him afterwards, when he was sent to the king of Egypt. Aaron is called the Levite, because he was a descendant of Levi, and yet so was Moses; perhaps this is added here, to distinguish him from others of the same name in other families, as Aben Ezra thinks; for as for what Jarchi suggests, as before, is without any foundation; and it is much more likely that Moses added this title to him, in his account of this affair, because he was the first of the tribe of Levi that was employed in the priestly office:

I know that he can speak well; or "in speaking speak" {y}, speak very freely, fluently, in an eloquent manner; in which he was an eminent type of Christ, who is our advocate with the father, and has the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season; and does speak and plead for the conversion of his people, for the comfort of them, for the discoveries of pardoning grace and mercy to them; and for the carrying on the work of grace in them, and their perseverance to the end, and for their eternal glorification. The prayer in Joh 17:1 is a specimen of this:

and also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee; having had an intimation from God of Moses's call to come into Egypt, and deliver his people from their bondage, he immediately set out to meet him, whereby he showed more faith, zeal, and courage, than Moses did; and this is said to animate him, and was a new sign, and would be a fresh confirmation of his faith, when he should see it accomplished, as he did:

and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart: sincerely glad, and not only secretly so, but would express his cordial joy with his lips; not only because of his having a sight of his brother once more, whom he had not seen for forty years past, but because of his coming on such an errand from God, to deliver the people of Israel; and therefore, as he would express such gladness on this occasion, it became Moses to engage in this work with the utmost pleasure and cheerfulness.

{w} E Trogo, l. 36. c. 2. {x} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 433, 434. {y} rbdy rbd "loquendo loquetur", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius.

Exodus 4:15

Ver. 15. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth,.... Or "things" {z}, the matter and substance of what he should say, who being a man of words, an eloquent man, and a good spokesman, would put them into proper language, and express them fluently:

and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do; or speak what Moses should say to Aaron, and what Aaron should say to Pharaoh, and to the people of Israel; so that as Aaron was under Moses, and at his direction, they were both dependent on the Lord, and under his direction; and the one, as well as the other, needed his assistance, even Aaron that could speak well. Moses furnished him with matter, he put it into words, and both were instructed and influenced by the Lord what they should say and do.

{z} Myrbdh ta.

Exodus 4:16

Ver. 16. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people,.... And open to them Moses's commission from God, and the end of his mission into Egypt, and to them, and declare what signs had been, and would be done, in confirmation of it:

and he shall be, [even] he shall be to thee instead of a mouth; or an interpreter, as all the Targums explain it, and so Jarchi; as he was an orator and master of language, he should speak to the people for Moses, and explain his sense and meaning, and put it into plain, proper, easy language, to be understood by the people; and this may be done where a different language is not spoken, but the same in plainer words, in more pertinent expressions, and better pronounced, and this is repeated for the certainty of it:

and thou shall be to him instead of God; Aaron was to stand between Moses and the people, and speak for him; and Moses was to stand between God and Aaron, and in God's stead, and tell him what orders he had received from him, and which he should communicate; and so some Jewish writers {a} interpret it of his being to him instead of a master or teacher, one that received doctrine from the Lord, and instructed him in it, and taught him the mind and will of God: or, as Onkelos paraphrases it; "for a prince", and so Jarchi, a civil magistrate, one that had the power of life and death; the administration of civil affairs belonged to Moses, and Aaron, though the elder brother, was subject to him; and in this sense Moses was a god to him; and so in after times, the judges of Israel, they that sat in Moses's chair, were called gods, Ps 82:1.

{a} Targum Jon. Jerus. & Abendana in loc.

Exodus 4:17

Ver. 17. And thou shall take this rod in thine hand,.... Which he then had in his hand, and was no other than his shepherd's staff:

wherewith thou shall do signs: wondrous things, meaning the ten plagues inflicted on Egypt.

Exodus 4:18

Ver. 18. And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law,.... With his flock of sheep he kept, **Ex 3:1**: and said unto him,

let me go, I pray thee, and return to my brethren which are in Egypt; the Israelites, who were so by nation and religion; as Jethro had been kind and beneficent to him, he did not choose to leave him without his knowledge and consent, and especially to take away his wife and children without it:

and see whether they be yet alive; it seems by this that Moses had heard nothing of them during the forty years he lived in Midian, which may be thought strange, since it was not very far from Egypt; and besides the Midianites traded in Egypt, as we learn from Ge 37:28 but this must be ascribed to the providence of God, that so ordered it, that there should be no intercourse between him and his brethren, that so no step might be taken by them for their deliverance until the set time was come. Moses did not acquaint his father-in-law with the principal reason of his request, nor of his chief end in going into Egypt, which it might not be proper to acquaint him with, he being of another nation, though a good man; and lest he should use any arguments to dissuade Moses from going, who now having got clear of his diffidence and distrust, was determined upon it: though some ascribe this to his modesty in not telling Jethro of the glorious and wonderful appearance of God to him, and of the honour he had conferred on him to be the deliverer and governor of the people of Israel:

and Jethro said to Moses, go in peace; he judged his request reasonable, and gave his full consent to it, and wished him health and prosperity in his journey.

Exodus 4:19

Ver. 19. And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian,.... After he had obtained leave of his father-in-law to quit Midian, but before he left it;

go, return into Egypt: that is, directly, immediately; before he had only given him a commission at large to go thither, but had not fixed the time when he should go; but now he orders him to set forward at once:

for all the men are dead which sought thy life; to take it away, the king of Egypt, and his ministers, and the friends of the Egyptian Moses had slain; and this is said to encourage him to go; and though Moses had never expressed his fear on this account, or made it an objection, yet it might lie secretly in his heart, and be one reason of his backwardness to go into Egypt, and which was now removed.

Exodus 4:20

Ver. 20. And Moses took his wife, and his sons,.... Gershom and Eliezer; by which it appears that he intended to stay in Egypt, and that he believed that God would work deliverance by him:

and set them upon an ass: which though with us a mean creature, yet in those times and countries were rode upon by great personages; and these, as Aben Ezra says, were reckoned in Egypt more honourable than mules. It may be the singular is put for the plural, and that each of them was set upon an ass, with servants to take care of them:

and he returned to the land of Egypt; that is, he set forward to go thither; for before he got thither, various things are related which befell him:

and Moses took the rod of God in his hand: his shepherd's staff, so called, because God ordered him to take it; and besides, he had wrought signs and wonders by it already, and would do many more.

Exodus 4:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... At the same time he appeared to him in Midian, and ordered him to go into Egypt, even before his departure thither:

when thou goest to return into Egypt; and when got thither; for before the thing directed to in the next clause could not be done:

see that thou do all these wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thine hand; not the three signs or wonders, related in the preceding part of the chapter, for they were to be done not before Pharaoh, but before the children of Israel; but these are the wonders he was to do in the sight of Pharaoh, by inflicting the various plagues on him and his people, for refusing to let Israel go, and which God had put in the power of Moses to perform, and that by means of the rod in his hand he ordered him to take with him, **Ex 4:17**:

but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go; that is, not directly, not for some time, not until all the wonders are wrought, and plagues inflicted to bring him to it: he first hardening his own heart against God, and all remonstrances made unto him, it was but a righteous thing in God to give him up to the hardness of his heart, to deny him his grace, which only could soften it, and to leave him to the corruptions of his nature, and the temptations of Satan; and by leaving him to strong delusions, to believe the lying miracles of his magicians: this the Lord thought fit to acquaint Moses with, lest he should be discouraged by his refusal to dismiss Israel.

Exodus 4:22

Ver. 22. And thou shall say unto Pharaoh,.... When arrived in Egypt, and in his presence:

thus saith the Lord; he was to declare to him that he came in his name, and by his orders, and, as an ambassador of his, required the dismission of the children of Israel out of Egypt:

Israel [is] my son, [even] my firstborn; as dear to him as a man's firstborn is, or as his only son: adoption is one of the privileges peculiar to Israel after the flesh, even national adoption, with all the external privileges appertaining to it, **Ro 9:4**.

Exodus 4:23

Ver. 23. And I say unto thee, let my son go, that he may serve me,.... Worship God according to his will in the place he had designed for him, and where he might be safe and free; and which service was due from him as a son, and to be performed not in a servile way, but in a filial manner, and therefore as a servant he could demand his dismission, and much more as his son; and this is required in an authoritative way, for saying is here commanding, insisting on it as a point of right to be done:

and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn; meaning, not only in a strict and literal sense Pharaoh's firstborn son, and heir to his crown, but the firstborn of all his subjects, which in a civil sense were his. This was not to be said to Pharaoh at the first opening of his commission to him, but after all methods had been tried, and the several other plagues designed were inflicted on him to no purpose, he was to be told this, which was the last plague, and succeeded; but this is told to Moses before hand, that when other messages he should be sent with to him, and all that should be done by him would prove ineffectual, this, when sent with and performed, would have the desired effect.

Exodus 4:24

Ver. 24. And it came to pass by the way, in the inn,.... As Moses and his family were travelling in their way to Egypt, at an inn where they stopped for the refreshment of themselves and cattle, or in order to lodge all night: so it was, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him; not the uncircumcised son of Moses, as some think, but Moses himself, who had neglected the circumcision of his son; that from the context, and the fact of Zipporah, after related, seems to be the reason of the divine displeasure, and not his bringing his family with him, supposed to be an hinderance of him in his work, nor of his staying too long at the inn, and not hastening his journey, which are the reasons given by some: and Moses's neglect of circumcision was not owing to the disuse of it among the Midianites, who being the descendants of Abraham, it is highly probable they retained this rite, and that it was used in Jethro's family, since Zipporah well understood the nature of it, and how to perform it; and it looks as if her eldest son had been circumcised before, seeing only one was now circumcised by her; but the Midianites perhaps followed the same practice as the Ishmaelites did, who were their neighbours, and the descendants of Abraham also, who deferred it till their children were thirteen years of age; or if this child was a very young one, it might have been put off, because of the journey they were just about to take, and purposing to do it when come into Egypt; but this was resented by the Lord in Moses, who had such knowledge of the law of God; and this displeasure of Jehovah might be signified either by inflicting some disease upon him, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi think, which threatened him with death, or by appearing in a terrible manner, as the angel of the Lord did to Balaam, with a drawn sword in his hand.

Exodus 4:25

Ver. 25. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son,.... Perceiving that it was the neglect of circumcising her son was the cause of the divine displeasure against her husband; and he being either so ill through the disease upon him, or so terrified with the appearance of the Lord to him, in the manner it was, that he could not perform this rite himself, she undertook it; and, according to the Jewish canons {b}, a woman may circumcise; and having with her no instrument more proper to do it with, took a sharp stone, very probably a flint, of which there was great plenty in Arabia Petraea, where she was, and did it; and so the Jewish writers say {c}, they circumcise with a flint stone, with glass, or anything that will cut; and such like actions have been performed with sharp stones among the Heathens {d}: and cast it at his feet; not at the feet of the infant Eliezer, as R. Samuel in Aben Ezra; the blood of the circumcision running down to his feet, as Lyra interprets it; and so touched his feet {e}, as some render the words; not cast at the feet of the destroying angel, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, in order to pacify him; but at the feet of Moses, as the Jerusalem Talmud {f}; and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra:

and said, surely a bloody husband art thou to me; those who think it was at the feet of the child the foreskin was cast, take these words to be spoken of that, and observe that it is usual for women, at the circumcision of a child, to call it a bridegroom or husband, because it is then espoused unto, and reckoned among the people of God; but this is not well supported; it is a custom of too late a date to give any countenance to such a sense of the words, which seem plain enough to be spoken to and of Moses; but not in an angry upbraiding way, as if he was a bloody cruel man to oblige her to do such an action, but rather in a congratulatory way, as being thankful and rejoicing, that by this means, through the blood of the circumcision, she had saved her husband's life; and as it were in that way had bought him, and afresh espoused him to herself as her husband; or otherwise it would have been all over with him, but now to her great joy he was delivered from the threatened destruction, and restored to her; and so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase the next verse,

"then Zipporah gave praise, and said, how amiable is the blood of circumcision, which hath delivered my husband from the hand of the destroying angel."

{b} Maimon. Hilchot Milah, c. 2. sect. 1. Shulchan Aruch, par. 2. Yore Dea, Hilchot Milah, c. 264. sect. 1. {c} Maimon. ib. Shulchan ib. sect. 2. {d} "Mollia qui rupta secuit genitalia testa." Juvenal Satyr 6. "Devolvit ipse acuto sibi pondera silice." Catullus. {e} wylgrl egtw "tetigitque pedes ejus", V. L. {f} T. Hieros. Nedarim, fol. 38. 2.

Exodus 4:26

Ver. 26. So he let him go,.... That is, the Lord let Moses go; suffered him to go on his journey without any further interruption; as the Targums, "it", the angel, ceased from him, or left him; or the disease and trembling departed from him, as Aben Ezra, and he was quite well and easy; though Grotius, after Lyra, understands it of Zipporah, she departed from him, that is, from Moses, and returned to Midian again, as it seems she did; but this the grammatical construction of the words will not bear, being masculine, though sometimes the masculine is used of women, as in **Ex 1:21**:

then she said, a bloody husband thou art because of the circumcision; this is repeated, partly to give the reason of her calling him a bloody husband, because of the circumcision, and partly because of her great joy on occasion of her husband's restoration to her by this means.

Exodus 4:27

Ver. 27. And the Lord said unto Aaron,.... He appeared to him in a dream or vision, and to this reference is had in **1Sa 2:27**

go into the wilderness to meet Moses; in the wilderness of Arabia, through which Moses was to pass into Egypt, and who was now set out on his journey thitherward:

and he went; immediately, being obedient to the heavenly vision: and met him in the mount of God; in Horeb, where the Lord had appeared to Moses, and therefore called the mount of God, and where afterwards the law was given, and the covenant made with the people of Israel; and so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"in the mount on which the glory of God was revealed:"

and kissed him: as relations and intimate friends used to do at meeting or parting, to testify affection and respect; and Aaron must on all accounts be glad to meet Moses, both as he was his brother, whom he had not seen for many years, and as he was come to be a deliverer of the people of Israel. And it is observed, that it was but two days' journey from the land of Midian, where Jethro lived, from whence Moses set out; and that a common traveller cannot conveniently make the journey from Ramesses, or Grand Cairo (from whence it may be supposed Aaron set out), to Mount Horeb, in less than a fortnight, though he be carried on the back of a camel {g}; and yet Aaron reached this place by the time that Moses did, which shows that either he delayed setting out on his journey, or was detained long at the inn on the road, on account of what happened there.

{g} Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p 221.

Exodus 4:28

Ver. 28. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord, who had sent him,.... He declared his mission and commission from God, and gave him the particulars of what was to be said both to the people of Israel and to the king of Egypt; and this he did, because Aaron was to be his spokesman unto them:

and all the signs which he had commanded him; to do, first before the children of Israel, and then before Pharaoh; before the one to obtain credit of them, as being sent of God, and before the other to get leave of him for the departure of Israel out of Egypt.

Exodus 4:29

Ver. 29. And Moses and Aaron went,.... Set forward for Egypt: and being come thither, gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel; the heads of tribes and families, as many as they could conveniently get together in one place; probably in the metropolis of the kingdom, where Pharaoh's palace was, since we quickly hear of their going in to him.

Exodus 4:30

Ver. 30. And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses,.... As Moses had related to him, being his mouth and spokesman:

and did the signs in the sight of the people; not Aaron, but Moses, and these were the turning of his rod into a serpent, and the serpent into a rod again; putting his hand into and out of his bosom, when it was leprous, and then doing the same when it was well again; and taking water out of the river, and changing it into blood, which he did for the confirmation of his mission.

Exodus 4:31

Ver. 31. And the people believed,.... That Moses was sent of God, and would be the deliverer of them:

and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel; in a way of grace and mercy, by raising such a redeemer and deliverer in the midst of them:

and that he had looked upon their affliction; with an eye of pity and compassion:

then they bowed their heads, and worshipped; adoring the goodness of God, and expressing their thankfulness for the notice he took of them, and signifying their readiness to obey all instructions and directions that should be given them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 5

Moses and Aaron go in to Pharaoh, and desire leave for the children of Israel to go into the wilderness three days' journey, to sacrifice to the Lord, and are answered in a very churlish and atheistical manner, and are charged with making the people idle, the consequence of which was, the taskmasters had orders, to make their work more heavy and toilsome, **Ex 5:1** which orders were executed with severity by them, **Ex 5:10**, upon which the officers of the children of Israel complained to Pharaoh, but to no purpose, **Ex 5:14**, and meeting with Moses and Aaron, lay the blame upon them, **Ex 5:20**, which sends Moses to the Lord to expostulate with him about it, **Ex 5:22**.

Ver. 1. And afterwards Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh,.... Whose name, some say, was Cenchres, others Amenophis, according to Manetho and Chaeremon {h}; See Gill on "Ex 3:10" went into Pharaoh's palace, and being introduced by the proper officer at court for that purpose, addressed him in the following manner:

thus saith the Lord God of Israel: as ambassadors of him, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords; and so Artapanus {i}, the Heathen, says that the Egyptian king, hearing that Moses was come, sent for him to know wherefore he was come, who told him, that the Lord of the world commanded him to let the Jews go, as it follows here:

let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness; in the wilderness of Sinai or Arabia, at Horeb there, where they might keep it more freely and safely, without being disturbed by the Egyptians, and without giving any offence to them; and the demand is just; they were the people of God, and therefore he claims them, and service from them was due to him; and Pharaoh had no right to detain them, and what is required was but their reasonable service they owed to their God. This feast was to be held, not for themselves, but to God, which chiefly consisted in offering sacrifice, as is after explained; the entire dismission of them is not at once demanded, only to go a little while into the wilderness, and keep a feast there to the Lord; though it was not intended they should return, but it was put in this form to try Pharaoh, and that he might be the more inexcusable in refusing to grant what was so reasonable.

{h} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 26. 32. {i} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 434.

Exodus 5:2

Ver. 2. And Pharaoh said, who is the Lord,.... Jehovah, they made mention of, which, whether he took it for the name of a deity, or of a king, whose ambassadors they declared themselves to be, was a name he had never heard of before; and this being expressed and pronounced, shows that this name is not ineffable, or unlawful to be pronounced, as say the Jews:

that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? he knew of no superior monarch to him, whose orders he was obliged to obey in any respect, and particularly in this, the dismission of the people of Israel out of his land, though it was but for a short time:

I know not the Lord; who this Jehovah is, that made this demand, and required Israel's dismission. The Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"I have not found the name of Jehovah written in the book of angels, I am not afraid of him."

An Egyptian book, in which, the paraphrast supposes, were written the names of gods and of angels; and no such name being there, he was the more bold and insolent:

neither will I let Israel go; determining he would pay no regard to such an unknown Deity, or King, be he who he would.

Exodus 5:3

Ver. 3. And they said, the God of the Hebrews hath met with us,.... Perceiving that the name Jehovah was unknown to him, and treated by him in a scornful manner, they leave it out, and only say, "the God of the Hebrews": a people that dwelt in his country, he well knew by this name, and could not be ignorant that their God was different from his; and it was he that had met Moses and Aaron; they did not seek to him to be sent on this errand, but he appeared to them as he did to Moses at Horeb, and to Aaron in Egypt. Some render it, "the God of the Hebrews is called upon us" {f}; his name was called upon them, or they were called by his name; they were his servants and worshippers, and therefore under obligation to attend to what he enjoined them:

let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert: a request which was made in a very humble and modest manner, and not at all extravagant, nor anything dangerous and disadvantageous to him; for now they speak as of themselves, and therefore humbly entreat him; they do not ask to be wholly and for ever set free, only to go for three days; they do not propose to meet and have their rendezvous in any part of his country, much less in his metropolis, where he night fear they would rise in a body, and seize upon his person and treasure, only to go into the wilderness, to Mount Sinai there. And hence it appears, that the distance between Egypt and Mount Sinai was three days' journey, to go the straightest way, as Aben Ezra observes:

and sacrifice unto the Lord our God: which is what was meant by keeping a feast; some sacrifices the people, as well as the priests, feasted on; this was not a civil, but a religious concern:

lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword: this they urge as a reason to have their request granted, taken from the danger they should be exposed unto, should they not be allowed to go and offer sacrifice to God; though by this they might suggest both loss and danger to Pharaoh, in order to stir him up the more to listen to their request; for should they be smitten with pestilence, or the sword, he would lose the benefit of their bond service, which would be a considerable decline in his revenues; and besides, if God would be so displeased with the Israelites for not going, and not sacrificing, when they were detained, how much more displeased would he be with Pharaoh and the Egyptians for hindering them?

{f} wnyle arqn "est invocatus super nos", Montanus. So some in Vatablus, Drusius.

Exodus 5:4

Ver. 4. And the king of Egypt said to them,.... For he was not struck dumb, as Artapanus {g}, afore cited writer, says:

wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? as they did when they gathered them together, and wrought signs before them; which Pharaoh it seems had heard of, and had got their names very readily:

get you unto your burdens; meaning not Moses and Aaron, ordering them to go about their private and family business, but the people they represented, and on whose account they came; and it is highly probable the elders of the people, at least some of them, were with them, to whom these words might be more particularly directed. See **Ex 3:18**.

{g} Ut supra. (Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 434.)

Exodus 5:5

Ver. 5. And Pharaoh said, behold, the people of the land now are many,.... So that if some were taken off, as suggested, there were enough of them to do business and so he cared not; but if allowed to go, they might mutiny and rebel, and give a great deal of trouble to quell them; or it may be, the sense is, they were very numerous, and too numerous already, and if they were took off of their work, and allowed to go a feasting, they would be more so, which agrees with the next clause:

and you make them rest from their burdens; which was the way to make them more numerous still, and to frustrate the design of laying burdens upon them, which was originally intended to hinder the multiplication of them, **Ex 1:9**.

Exodus 5:6

Ver. 6. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people,.... Who were Egyptians, and whom Pharaoh sent for the same day, to give them orders to oppress them yet more and more, so far was he from complying with their request:

[and] their officers; who were Israelites, and were under the taskmasters, and accountable to them for each man's work that they had the inspection and care of:

saying, as follows.

Exodus 5:7

Ver. 7. Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick,.... Whether this was given and used to mix with the clay, as is done in some places {h}, that the bricks made thereof might be firmer and stronger, or to burn them with in the furnaces, or to cover them from the heat of the sun, that they might not dry too soon and crack, is not easy to determine; though it is said that the unburnt bricks of Egypt formerly were, and still are made of clay mixed with straw. The Egyptian pyramid of unburnt brick, Dr. Pococke {i} observes, seems to be made of the earth brought by the Nile, being of a sandy black earth, with some pebbles and shells in it; it is mixed up with chopped straw, in order to bind the clay together, as they now make unburnt bricks in Egypt, and many other eastern parts, which they use very much in their buildings. He says he found some of these bricks (of the pyramid) thirteen inches and a half long, six inches and a half broad, and four inches thick; and others fifteen inches long, seven broad, and four inches three quarters thick. But be the straw for what use it will, it had been dealt out to them by proper persons to be used in one way or another; but now it was forbidden to be given them,

as heretofore it had been done:

let them go and gather straw for themselves; out of the fields where it lay, after the corn had been reaped and gathered in, or in barns, where it had been threshed; to do which must take up a good deal of their time, and especially if the straw lay at any distance, or was hard to be come at.

{h} Vide Vitruvium de Architectura, l. 2. c. 3. p. 46. & Philander in ib. {i} Observations on Egypt, p. 53.

Exodus 5:8

Ver. 8. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, you shall lay upon them,.... Oblige them to make and bring in the same number of bricks they used to do, when straw was brought to them and given them; by which it appears, that their daily task was such a number of bricks:

you shall not diminish ought thereof; not make any abatement of the number of bricks, in consideration of their loss of time and their labour in going to fetch straw from other places:

for they be idle; and want to be indulged in a lazy disposition, which ought by no means to be connived at:

therefore they cry, let us go and sacrifice to our God; suggesting, that this request and cry of theirs did not proceed from a religious principle, or the great veneration they had for their God, but from the sloth and idleness they were addicted to.

Exodus 5:9

Ver. 9. Let there more work be laid upon the men,.... Instead of lessening it, let it be increased, or "be heavy" {k} upon them, that it may oppress and afflict them and keep them down, and weaken their strength and their spirits, and diminish them:

that they may labour therein; and have no leisure time to spend in idleness and sloth:

and let them not regard vain words; or "words of falsehood" {l} and lies, such as were spoken by Moses and Aaron, promising them liberty and deliverance from their bondage, which he was determined never to grant, and so eventually make such words to appear to be vain and empty, falsehood and lies.

{k} dbkt "aggravetur", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {l} yrbdb "in verbis mendacii", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus. "Verbis falsis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Exodus 5:10

Ver. 10. And the taskmasters of the people went out,.... From the presence of Pharaoh, out of his court, to the respective places where they were set to see that the Israelites did their work:

and their officers; the officers of the Israelites, who were under the taskmasters, and answerable to them for the work of the people, and their tale of bricks:

and they spake to the people, saying, thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw; that is, any longer, as he had used to do.

Exodus 5:11

Ver. 11. Go ye, get ye straw, where you can find it,.... Before it was provided by the king, and brought to the brickkilns, but now they are bid to go and fetch it themselves, and get it where they could, whether in fields or barns; and if they were obliged to pay for it out of their labour; it was a greater oppression still:

yet not ought of your work shall be diminished; they were to do the same work, and make the same number of bricks, as when straw was brought and given them; and no allowance made for waste of time in seeking, or expenses in procuring straw, which was very hard upon them.

Exodus 5:12

Ver. 12. So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt,.... That part of it where they dwelt:

to gather stubble instead of straw; straw not being easy to come at, they were obliged to gather stubble that was left in the fields, after the corn was gathered in. Ben Melech observes, that the word signifies small straw, or small sticks of wood, and Kimchi {m}, and if so, this must be to burn the bricks with in the furnaces.

{m} Sepher Shorash, rad. vvq.

Exodus 5:13

Ver. 13. And the taskmasters hasted them, Kept them tight and close to their work, and were urgent on them to make quick dispatch of it:

saying, fulfil your works, [your] daily tasks, as when there was straw; they insisted upon it, that they did the same business at the brickkilns, made the same number of bricks every day, as they used to do when they had straw at hand. See Ex 5:11.

Exodus 5:14

Ver. 14. And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them,.... This makes it clear, not only that the taskmasters and officers were different persons, but that the one were Egyptians appointed by Pharaoh, and the other were Israelites, of the better sort of them, who were set over the poorer sort by the taskmasters, to look after them, and take an account of their work, and the tale of their bricks, and give it in to the taskmasters; now these

were beaten by the taskmasters, either with a cane, stick, or cudgel, or with whips and scourges, because there was a deficiency in their accounts, and the full tale of bricks was not given in:

[and] demanded, wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick, both yesterday and today, as heretofore? the first day they were deficient they took no notice of it, did not call them to an account for it, but this being the case the second day, they not only expostulated with them about it, but beat them for it, which was hard usage. They had no need to ask them the reason of it, which they knew very well, and must be sensible that the men could not do the same work, and be obliged to spend part of their time in going about for straw or stubble; or the same number of men make the same tale of bricks, when some of them were employed to get straw for the rest, and to beat those officers for a deficiency through such means was cruel.

Exodus 5:15

Ver. 15. Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh,.... Made their complaints to him, perhaps with tears in their eyes, being used so very ill. They little thought it was by Pharaoh's orders; they supposed he knew nothing of it, and therefore hoped to have their grievances redressed by him, but were mistaken:

saying, wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? so they call themselves, they living in his country, and being under his jurisdiction, though not properly his subjects; however, he had made them his slaves, and so indeed even bondservants.

Exodus 5:16

Ver. 16. There is no straw given unto thy servants,.... As used to be, which they supposed Pharaoh knew nothing of, and by which it appears that the order given by Pharaoh, **Ex 5:6** was not given in the hearing of the officers, only to the taskmasters, and by them to be made known to the officers, though indeed both are there mentioned, and both represent this to the people, **Ex 5:10** and they say to us, make brick, though they had no straw to make or burn it with:

and, behold, thy servants are beaten; because the same number of bricks is not made as heretofore, but the fault is in thine own people; the taskmasters, who sent the people abroad to get straw or stubble themselves, and therefore could not make the same bricks as before; or "thy people sin" {n}, the guilt is theirs: or by thy people are meant the Israelites, whom they call Pharaoh's people to gain favour with him; and then the sense is, either "sin" is imputed "to thy people" {o}, the blame is laid upon them, or punishment is inflicted on them without cause, sin being often put for punishment; they are wrongfully charged with a fault, and wrongfully punished.

{n} Kme tajxw "et peccat populus tuns", Montanus, Drusius, Cartwright. {o} So Vatablus, Piscator, and some in Munster, Pagninus.

Exodus 5:17

Ver. 17. But he said, ye are idle, ye are idle,.... Instead of expressing indignation at the taskmasters, and relieving the officers and the people, he insults them in a flouting sarcastic way, charging them with sloth and idleness; and which, for the certainty of it, or, however, to show how strongly persuaded and fully assured he was of the truth of it, repeats it, and gives the following as a proof of it,

therefore ye say, let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord; suggesting that it was not so much the service and honour of God they regarded, as that they might have a leisure day from work and labour.

Exodus 5:18

Ver. 18. Go therefore now, and work,.... Go about your business, attend to your work, even you officers, as well as your people; work yourselves, as well as see that your people do theirs, and do not trouble me with such impertinent applications:

for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks; the usual number of bricks, as the Vulgate Latin version has it; though in **Ex 5:8**, it is rendered in that version the measure of bricks, and so another word is translated by them, Ex 5:14, and perhaps both may be intended, both number and measure; that is, that it was expected and insisted on that they delivered the full number of bricks they used to make, and these of full measure; for bricks were made of different measures, as Vitruvius {p} observes; some among the bricks were of two hands' breadth, others of four, and a third sort of five. See Gill on "Ex 5:7".

{p} Ut supra. (Vide Vitruvium de Architectura, l. 2. c. 3. p. 46)

Exodus 5:19

Ver. 19. And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case,.... In a bad condition and circumstances, and that there was no likelihood of their getting out of them, since Pharaoh treated them after this manner; they saw not only that the common people were in a bad condition, in great bondage, misery, and distress, to be obliged to get straw to make brick, and carry in their full tale as before; but that they themselves were in a bad situation, since for the deficiency in their people they were like to be beaten for it from time to time:

after it was said, ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task; after this had been said and confirmed by Pharaoh, they had no hope of things being better with them, but looked upon their unhappy lot as irretrievable.

Exodus 5:20

Ver. 20. And they met Moses and Aaron,.... The officers of the children of Israel, who had been with their complaints to Pharaoh:

who stood in the way as they came forth from Pharaoh; they, had placed themselves in a proper situation, that they might meet them when they came out, and know what success they had, and which they were extremely desirous of hearing; by which they might judge in what temper Pharaoh was, and what they might for the future expect from him in consequence of their embassy.

Exodus 5:21

Ver. 21. And they said unto them, the Lord look upon you and judge,.... Or, "will look upon you and judge" {q}; and so it is either a prediction of what would be done to them, or an imprecation on them that God would take notice of their conduct, and punish them, or at least chastise them for acting the part they had, if not wickedly, yet imprudently:

because you have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh; or to "stink" {r}; they were become vile, abominable, and hateful to him, he could not bear the sight of them, and treated them as the filth and offscouring of all things; they had lost their good name, credit, and reputation with him; for leave being asked for them to go three days' journey into the wilderness, to offer sacrifice, and keep a feast, they were looked upon as a parcel of idle slothful fellows:

and in the eyes of his servants; not the taskmasters only, but his nobles, counsellors, and courtiers:

to put a sword in their hands to slay us; a proverbial expression, signifying that they by their conduct had exposed them to the utmost danger, and had given their enemies an occasion against them, and an opportunity of destroying their whole nation, under a pretence of disobedience and disloyalty.

{q} jwpvyw-ary "videbit" "et judicabit", Rivet. {r} Mtvabh "fecisti foetere", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Drusius.

Exodus 5:22

Ver. 22. And Moses returned unto the Lord,.... Bishop Patrick thinks, that this not only intimates that the Lord had appeared to Moses since he came into Egypt, but that there was some settled place where he appeared, and where he might resort to him on all occasions, and therefore is said to return to him; though it may signify no more, than that, instead of staying to give an answer to the officers, which he might be at a loss to do, he went to God, to the throne of grace, by prayer, as he was wont to do in cases of difficulty:

and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? or afflicted them, and suffered them to be thus afflicted; which to ascribe to God was right, whatever were the means or instruments; for all afflictions are of him, and who has always wise reasons for what he does, as he now had; to try the faith and patience of his people; to make the Egyptians more odious to them, and so take them off from following their manners, customs, rites, and superstitions, and make them more desirous of departing from thence to the land of Canaan, nor seek a return to Egypt again; and that his vengeance on the Egyptians for such cruelty and inhumanity might appear the more just, and his power might be seen in the plagues he inflicted on them, and in the deliverance of his people when reduced to the utmost extremity:

why is it that thou hast sent me? he seems to wish he had never been sent, and could be glad to be recalled, something of the same disposition still remaining in him as when first called; since no end was answered by his mission, no deliverance wrought, yea, the people were more afflicted and oppressed than before; and therefore he was at a loss how to account for it that he should be sent at all, seeing nothing came of it to the good of the people.

Exodus 5:23

Ver. 23. For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name,.... Had he come in his own name, it needed not be wondered at if he should not succeed, but coming in the name of God, it might have been expected he would, and that Pharaoh would have been prevailed upon, or obliged to use the people well, and let them go; but instead of that,

he hath done evil to this people; afflicted and oppressed them more than ever: see **Ex 5:7**, &c.

neither hast thou delivered thy people at all; there was not the least thing done towards their deliverance, their affliction was not at all mitigated, but increased: Moses expected that God would have made a beginning as soon as he had delivered his message to Pharaoh; that his mind would have been disposed in favour of the people, and he would have made their bondage lighter and easier, if he did not dismiss them at once; but, instead of that, more work was laid upon them, and their burdens were heavier: now this was a stumbling and a temptation to Moses, to wish he had never been sent; but if he had called to mind, which he seems to have forgotten, that Pharaoh would not let the people go at first, until all the wonders were wrought he had given him power to do, **Ex 4:2** it would have relieved him, and removed his objections, and put a stop to his expostulation with God, who gives an answer to them in the following chapter, without expressing any displeasure at them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 6

The Lord encourages Moses to hope for success from his name Jehovah, and the covenant he had made with the fathers of his people, **Ex 6:1**, orders him to assure the children of Israel that he would deliver them from their bondage and burdens, and bring them into the land of Canaan; but through their distress and anguish they hearkened not to him, **Ex 6:6** but Moses is sent again to Pharaoh to demand the dismission of Israel, to which he seems unwilling, and both he and Aaron are charged both to go to the children of Israel, and to Pharaoh, **Ex 6:10**, next follows a genealogy of the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, which seems to be given for the sake of Moses and Aaron, and to show their descent, **Ex 6:14**, who were the persons appointed of God to be the instruments of bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, **Ex 6:26**.

Ver. 1. Then the Lord said unto Moses,.... In answer to the questions put to him, and the expostulations made with him:

now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: in inflicting punishments on him: for with a strong hand shall he let them go; being forced to it by the mighty hand of God upon him; and it is by some rendered, "because of a strong hand" {s}; so Jarchi; for this is not to be understood of the hand of Pharaoh, but of the hand of God:

and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land: not only be willing that they should go, but be urgent upon them to be gone,
Ex 12:33.

{s} hqzx dyb "propter manum validam"; so some in Drusius.

Exodus 6:2

Ver. 2. And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord. Or Jehovah, the self-existent Being, the Being of beings, the everlasting I am, the unchangeable Jehovah, true, firm, and constant to his promises, ever to be believed, and always to be depended on.

Exodus 6:3

Ver. 3. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by [the name] of God Almighty,.... Able to fulfil all his purposes, promises, and covenant, with whom nothing is impossible; or Elshaddai, God all-sufficient, who has a sufficiency of happiness in himself, and everything to supply the wants of his creatures in things temporal and spiritual, see Ge 17:1:

but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them; which he had in the preceding verse called himself by. This is not to be understood absolutely; for it is certain that he had made himself known by this name, and this name was known unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
Ge 15:6, and but comparatively, as some think; that is, he was not so much made known to them by the one name as the other; though it may be questioned whether the one was more used in speaking to them than the other; wherefore others think, as Saadiah Gaon, that the word only is to be supplied, as in Ge 32:28 and the sense to be, that by his name Jehovah he was not only made known to them, but by his name Elshaddai, and others also; and others reconcile the difficulty thus, that though the name Jehovah itself was known to the patriarchs, by which they were assured that God is eternal, immutable, and faithful to his promises; yet he was not known as to the efficacy of this name, or with respect to the actual performance of his promise, as he now would be by delivering the children of Israel out of Egypt, and bringing them into the land of Canaan; though perhaps, by reading the words with an interrogation, the clause will appear more plain, "and by my name Jehovah was I not known to them?" {t} verily I was. Josephus {u} says, this name was not before made known to men, and that it was not lawful for a man to speak it; and this is the common notion of the Jews, that it is ineffable, and not lawful to be pronounced, and therefore they put Adonai and Elohim in the room of it, and the vowel points of these words to it, which is a false and superstitious notion: this name was known among the Heathens; it is the same with iaw in the oracle of Apollo {w}; and Diodorus Siculus {x} says, that with the Jews Moses is said to give laws from a God called "IAO", and is the same which in Philo Byblius {y} is called Jevo; and both are no other than a corruption of Jah or Jehovah; and perhaps the tetraktuv of the Pythagoreans {z}, by which they swore, is the same with the tetragrammaton, or this word of four letters, with the Jews.

{t} Vid. Noldium, No. 788. {u} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 4. {w} Cornelius Labeo de oraculo Apoll. Clarii apud Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 18. {x} Bibliothoc. l. 1. p. 84. {y} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. c. 9. p. 31. {z} Carmin. Aurea Pythagor. l. 47. & Hierocles in ib. p. 225, 277. Porphyr. de Vita

Pythagor. p. 189.

Exodus 6:4

Ver. 4. And I have also established my covenant with them,.... With Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and with their posterity, so that it is sure and firm, and shall never be made null and void:

to give them the land of Canaan; or to their children, which were as themselves:

the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers; not being in actual possession of any part of it, but lived as pilgrims and strangers in it, as their posterity now did in another land not theirs; see Heb 11:9.

Exodus 6:5

Ver. 5. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel,.... For the Lord is not only the eternal and immutable Being in his purposes and promises, and a covenant keeping God; but he is compassionate and merciful, and sympathizes with his people in all their afflictions; he takes notice of their sighs and groans, as he now did those of his people in Egypt:

whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and which was the reason of their groaning; their bondage being so hard and rigorous, in which they were detained by Pharaoh, who refused to let them go, though Moses in the name of the Lord had required him to do it:

and I have remembered my covenant; concerning bringing them out of Egypt into the land of Canaan, which he would quickly do, and thereby make it appear he was mindful of his covenant, which is indeed never forgotten by him, though it may seem to be.

Exodus 6:6

Ver. 6. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord,.... Eternal in his being, immutable in his counsels, faithful to his covenant, and able to fulfil it;

and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians; which lay heavy on them, and made them sigh and groan:

and I will rid you out of their bondage; in which they were kept, and by which their lives were made bitter:

and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm; with an arm stretched out from heaven to earth, as Aben Ezra expresses it; even by the exertion of his almighty power, openly and manifestly displayed in the lighting down of his arm upon the enemies of his people, and in delivering them out of their hands:

and with great judgments; upon the Egyptians, by many and sore plagues and punishments inflicted on them.

Exodus 6:7

Ver. 7. And I will take you to me for a people,.... Out of the hands of the Egyptians, and out of their country, to be in a political sense his kingdom and subjects; and in a religious sense a holy people to himself, to fear, serve, worship, and glorify him, by walking according to laws and rules given them by him; and this he did by setting up and establishing a civil and ecclesiastical polity among them:

and I will be to you a God; their King and their God to rule over them, protect and defend them, they being a theocracy; and their covenant God and Father, giving them various spiritual privileges, the adoption, the glory, the covenant, the law, service, and promises:

and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God; by the promises fulfilled, the favours granted, and the deliverances wrought for them:

which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians; see the preceding verse **Ex 6:6**.

Exodus 6:8

Ver. 8. And I will bring you in unto the land,.... The land of Canaan:

concerning the which I did swear; or lift up my hand {a}, which was a gesture used in swearing, Ge 14:22

to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; see **Ex 6:4**:

and I will give it you for an heritage; to be possessed as an inheritance by them, so long as they were obedient to his will, or until the Messiah came:

I am the Lord; whose counsels of old are faithfulness and truth; whose promises are yea and amen; whose gifts and calling are without repentance; and who is able also to perform whatever he has said he will do.

{a} ydy ta ytavn "levavi manum meam", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster.

Exodus 6:9

Ver. 9. And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel,.... After this manner, and in the above words, declaring all that the Lord made known to him, and promised to do for them; which one would have thought would have revived their spirits, and refreshed and comforted their hearts under their troubles, and encouraged a lively exercise of faith and hope of deliverance:

but they hearkened not unto Moses; being disappointed of deliverance by him, and their afflictions being increased, and lying heavy upon them, they were heartless and hopeless;

for anguish of spirit; trouble of mind and grief of heart, with which they were swallowed up; or "for shortness of breath" {b}, being so pressed that they could hardly breathe, and so were incapable of attending to what was spoken to them:

and for cruel bondage; under which they laboured, and from which they had scarce any respite, and saw no way of deliverance from it.

{b} xwr ruqm "ob brevem anhelitum", Munster.

Exodus 6:10

Ver. 10. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... At another time, and renewed his orders to him to go again to Pharaoh, and require their dismission:

saying; as follows:

Exodus 6:11

Ver. 11. Go in,.... Into Pharaoh's palace, and into his presence, to whom access seems not to be very difficult; and perhaps access to princes was not attended with so much ceremony then as it now is:

speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; though a king, and a king of so large a country as Egypt, yet do not be afraid to speak to him; speak to him plainly and boldly, not in a supplicatory, but in an authoritative way, in the name of the King of kings:

that he let the children of Israel go out of his land; this demand had been made before, but was rejected with an haughty air, and now it is repeated, before the Lord proceeds to punish him for his disobedience, that his judgments upon him might appear more manifestly to be just and right.

Exodus 6:12

Ver. 12. And Moses spake before the Lord,.... Who appeared in a visible form, and had spoke to him with an articulate voice, and before whom Moses stood, and made the following reply:

saying, behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; even though he brought a comfortable message to them from the Lord, and delivered many gracious promises of his to them, assuring them of deliverance out of Egypt, and of their possession of the land of Canaan:

how then shall Pharaoh hear me? making a demand upon him to part with a people, from whose labour he receives so much advantage, and has such an addition to his revenues, and who is a mighty king, and haughty monarch. And this is further enforced from his own weakness and unfitness to speak to Pharaoh:

who [am] of uncircumcised lips? had an impediment in his speech, could not speak freely and readily, but with difficulty; perhaps stammered, and so uttered superfluous syllables, repeated them before he could fully pronounce what he aimed at; or in other words, he was not eloquent, which was his old objection, and had been fully answered before: and by this it appears that there was no alteration in the speech of Moses since God spoke with him at Mount Horeb. Some think Moses expected to have had this impediment removed, and tacitly hints at it here, not being so well satisfied with Aaron's being joined with him as his mouth and spokesman, which seemed to carry in it some reflection upon him.

Exodus 6:13

Ver. 13. And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron,.... No notice is taken of the objection of Moses, having been sufficiently answered before, and Aaron is joined with him in the following charge:

and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; that is, to go to the children of Israel and comfort them, and direct them what they should do, and how they should behave under their present circumstances; assuring them of deliverance, and to go to Pharaoh, and to make a fresh demand upon him to let Israel go; and in this work they had a solemn charge from God to continue, and not to desist from it, until they had finished it:

to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; which they were to be the instruments of: and that it might be known clearly from whom they descended, who had such a charge given them, and such honour put upon them, the following genealogy is recorded.

Exodus 6:14

Ver. 14. These be the heads of their father's houses,.... Not of the families of Moses and Aaron, but of the children of Israel, though only the heads of three tribes are mentioned; and some think that these three are taken notice of, to show that they were not rejected of God, though they seem to be rather cursed than blessed by Jacob; and that though they were guilty of very great crimes, as Reuben of incest, and Simeon and Levi of murder, yet they truly repented, and obtained mercy of God, and were honoured in their offspring, of whom an account is here given; but the two first seem to be taken notice of for the sake of the third, and that order might be observed, and that it might plainly appear that the deliverers of Israel were Israelites:

the sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi; whose names, and the order in which they are put, are the same as in Ge 46:9 these be the families of Reuben; the heads of them, or from whence they sprung.

Exodus 6:15

Ver. 15. And the sons of Simeon, Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman,....
See Gill on "Ge 46:10"

these are the families of Simeon; who gave rise and name to the several families of that tribe now in Egypt.

Exodus 6:16

Ver. 16. And these are the names of the sons of Levi, according to their generations,.... Whose sons, according to the order of their birth, were as follow:

Gershom, and Kohath, and Merari; see Ge 46:11:

and the years of the life of Levi were one hundred and thirty seven years; and exactly the same number of years is assigned him by Polyhistor from Demetrius {c}, an Heathen writer. Jarchi says, that the reason why, the years of the life of Levi are reckoned is to show how long the bondage lasted; for there was no servitude as long as any of the tribes (or of the sons of Jacob) remained, according to **Ex 1:6** and the Jewish chronologers {d} affirm that Levi was the last of the patriarchs that died; and that he died in the year of the world 3332, and lived in Egypt ninety four years; and from his time, to the going out of Egypt, were only one hundred and sixteen years; and they further say the bondage could not last longer than one hundred and sixteen years, nor shorter than eighty seven. Bishop Usher {e} places his death in A. M. 2385, and before Christ 1619: according to the Targum of Jonathan, he lived to see Moses and Aaron the deliverers of Israel; but that is false, since Joseph and all his brethren died before Moses was born, **Ex 1:6**.

{c} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 21. p. 425. {d} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 1. Tzemach David, par. 1, fol. 6. 2. & 7. 1. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 3. p. 9. {e} Annales Vet. Test. p. 17.

Exodus 6:17

Ver. 17. And the sons of Gershom, Libni, and Shimi, according to their families. He had only two sons, from whom came the families of the Libnites and Shimites; see **Nu 3:21**.

Exodus 6:18

Ver. 18. And the sons of Kohath, Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel,.... So they are reckoned in **1Ch 6:18** though only the family of the Hebronites are mentioned in Nu 26:58

and the years of the life of Kohath were one hundred and thirty three years. A Jewish chronologer says {f} he died one hundred years before the going out of Egypt: just the same number of years is ascribed to him by Polyhistor from Demetrius, an Heathen historian {g}.

{f} Shalshalet Hakabalaut, ut supra. (fol. 5. 1.) {g} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 21. p. 425.)

Exodus 6:19

Ver. 19. And the sons of Merari, Mahali, and Mushi,.... From whence sprung the families of the Mahalites, and Mushites, **Nu 3:33**:

these are the families of Levi, according to their generations: the families that descended from him and his sons, according to the order of their birth.

Exodus 6:20

Ver. 20. And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife,.... This Amram was the first son of Kohath, and the father of Moses, as after related, and so must be the same with the man of the house of Levi, and his wife the daughter of Levi, as in **Ex 2:1** and though such a marriage was afterwards prohibited, Moses does not conceal it, though it may seem to reflect some dishonour on him and his family; he writing not for his own glory, but for the sake of truth, and the good of mankind, and especially the church and people of God. Indeed the Vulgate Latin version, and the Septuagint, Samaritan, and Syriac versions, make her to be his first cousin, the daughter of his father's brother, his uncle's daughter: and so does Polyhistor from Demetrius {h}; but in Nu 26:59, she is expressly said to be a daughter of Levi, born to him in Egypt, and therefore must be his father's sister:

and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and Miriam also, though not mentioned, it being for the sake of these two that the genealogy is made:

and the years of the life of Amram were one hundred and thirty seven years: just the age of his grandfather Levi, **Ex 6:16**. A Jewish chronologer {i} says he died in the thirtieth year of Moses: but the Arabic writers {k} say in the fifty sixth or fifty seventh, and at the end of A. M. 3810. Polyhistor {l} from Demetrius makes his age to be one hundred and thirty six, and him to be the father of Moses and Aaron, and Aaron to be three years older than Moses, exactly according to the Scripture account.

{h} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 21. p. 425.) {i} Shalshalet Hakabala, ut supra. (fol. 5. 1.) {k} Patricides, p. 26. Elmacinus, p. 46. apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 392. {l} Apud Euseb. ut supra.

Exodus 6:21

Ver. 21. And the sons of Izhar, Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri. These seem to be mentioned for the sake of Korah, concerning whom is a remarkable history in the following book; for the other two are nowhere else spoken of.

Exodus 6:22

Ver. 22. And the sons of Uzziel, Mishael, and Elzaphan, and Zichri. The two first of these were the men that were ordered by Moses to carry out of the camp the two sons of Aaron, who were killed by lightning for offering strange fire, Le 10:4.

Exodus 6:23

Ver. 23. And Aaron took him Elisheba,.... The same name we pronounce Elizabeth; and of this name was the wife of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, **Lu 1:5**, this woman Aaron took was

the daughter of Amminadab, the sister of Naashon; a prince of the tribe of Judah, **Nu 7:12**, her he took to wife; or married; for though intermarriages with the several tribes were not allowed, nor used in after times, that they might be kept distinct, and the inheritances also, yet the tribe of Levi often took wives of other tribes, because they had no inheritance, and were to have none in the land of Canaan, so that confusion in tribes and inheritance was not made hereby; and it is observable, that these marriages were frequently with the tribe of Judah, as signifying the union of the kingly and priestly offices in Christ, who sprung from the tribe of Judah:

and she bare him Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar; the two first of these died by fire from heaven in their father's lifetime, for offering strange fire to the Lord, Le 10:1. Eleazar succeeded his father in the priesthood, Nu 20:26 and of the sons of Ithamar executing the priest's office, see 1Ch 24:2.

Exodus 6:24

Ver. 24. And the sons of Korah,.... The eldest son of Izhar, who, though he proved a bad man, yet many of his posterity were good men, and are often mentioned in general in the titles of some of the psalms of David: the immediate sons of Korah were

Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph. Aben Ezra says, that Samuel the prophet was of the sons of Korah; perhaps what might lead him to it was, because his father's name was Elkanah, the name of one of these sons of Korah, but cannot be this Elkanah:

these are the families of the Korhites; the heads of them, or from whom they descended.

Exodus 6:25

Ver. 25. And Eleazar Aaron's son took him one of the daughters of Putiel to

wife,.... This was Aaron's eldest son. The person, whose daughter he married, Dr. Lightfoot {m} conjectures was an Egyptian convert, perhaps of the posterity of Potipherah, among whom Joseph had sowed the seeds of true religion, and supposes that the Egyptians used the name of Puti or Poti, either in memorial of their uncle Put,
Ge 10:6 or in reverence of some deity of that name; but the Targum of Jonathan makes Putiel to be the same with Jethro; and so does Jarchi; but Aben Ezra seems to be most right, who takes him to be of the children of Israel, though the reason of his name is not known, and the daughter of such an one it is most likely a son of Aaron would marry:

and she bore him Phinehas; of whom see Nu 25:11:

these are the heads of the Levites, according to their families; from whence the Levites sprung, and their several families. It may be observed, that Moses says nothing of his own offspring, only of his brother Aaron's, partly out of modesty and humility, and partly because the priesthood was successive in the family of Aaron, but not the civil government in the family of Moses; and that he proceeds no further to give the genealogy of the remaining tribes, his chief view being to show the descent of Aaron and himself, that it might be with certainty known in after times who they were that were instruments of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, which would be matter of inquiry, and very desirable to be known.

{m} Works, vol. 1. p. 704, 705.

Exodus 6:26

Ver. 26. These are that Aaron and Moses,.... Aaron is set before Moses, because he was the eldest, and because he prophesied in Egypt before Moses, as Aben Ezra observes; though Moses was greater in dignity than he, and therefore the true reason may be the modesty of Moses; though in a following verse Moses is set before Aaron, to show that they were equal, as Jarchi thinks; and perhaps the thing was quite an indifference to the historian, and done without any care and intention, however these words are emphatically expressed, on purpose to point out the persons to future ages:

to whom the Lord said, bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt: which is the charge he gave them both, **Ex 6:13**, and the account of which is returned to again, after an interruption by the genealogy before recorded: Israel were to be brought out,

according to their armies; denoting their numbers, and the order in which they were to march out of Egypt, as they did, not by flight, nor in confusion, but in a formidable manner, and in great composure and order, with these two men, Moses and Aaron, as their generals at the head of them.

Exodus 6:27

Ver. 27. These are they which spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt,.... In the name of the Lord of hosts; and demanded the dismission of Israel, in order

to bring the children of Israel from Egypt; nor did they desist making application to him, until they had prevailed upon him to let them go:

these are that Moses and Aaron; which is repeated, that it may be observed who were the deliverers of Israel, what their names, of what tribe they were, and from whom they descended, and who sprung from them, at least from Aaron.

Exodus 6:28

Ver. 28. And it came to pass on the day when the Lord spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt. This verse depends upon the following for the sense of it, which shows what it was the Lord said to Moses in the day he spake to him in Egypt, when he was come thither, which is as follows:

Exodus 6:29

Ver. 29. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, I am the Lord,.... See **Ex 6:2**:

speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee; that he let Israel go; and that in case of refusal, that he would punish him and his people with this and the other plague, one after another, and at last slay him and their firstborn.

Exodus 6:30

Ver. 30. And Moses said before the Lord, behold, I am of uncircumcised lips,.... As he had done, **Ex 6:13**, and this is only a repetition of what is there said, in order to lead on to what is related in the following chapter:

how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me? so mean a person, and so poor a speaker, and he a mighty king, surrounded with wise counsellors and eloquent orators.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 7

Moses and Aaron are ordered to go to Pharaoh, and require the dismission of the people of Israel, but they are told before hand that Pharaoh's heart would be hardened, and would refuse to let them go, until the hand of the Lord was stretched out, and great judgments were brought down upon, Egypt, and then they should come forth, **Ex 7:1**, which orders Moses and Aaron obeyed, and their age is observed, when this was done, **Ex 7:6** and they are bid to work a miracle, when Pharaoh should demand one, by turning a rod into a serpent, which they did; but Pharaoh's magicians doing the same in appearance, his heart was hardened, **Ex 7:8** and then they are directed to meet him at the river, and require the same as before; and if he refused, to smite the waters of the river with the rod, and turn them into blood, which they did, **Ex 7:15**, but Pharaoh's magicians doing the same by enchantments, he did not regard it, though the plague lasted seven days, **Ex 7:22**.

Ver. 1. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... In answer to his objection, taken from his own meanness, and the majesty of Pharaoh, and from his want of readiness and freedom of expression:

see; take notice of, observe what I am about to say:

I have made thee a god to Pharaoh; not a god by nature, but made so; he was so by commission and office, clothed with power and authority from God to act under him in all things he should direct; not for ever, as angels are gods, but for a time; not in an ordinary way, as magistrates are gods, but in an extraordinary manner; and not to any other but to Pharaoh, being an ambassador of God to him, and as in his room and stead to, rule over him, though so great a monarch; to command him what he should do, and control him when he did wrong, and punish him for his disobedience, and inflict such plagues upon him, and do such miracles before him, as no mere man of himself, and none but God can do; and even exercise the power of life and death, as in the slaying of the firstborn, that Pharaoh should stand in as much fear of him, as if he was a deity, and apply to him to remove the plagues upon him, as if he was one:

and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet; to declare the will of God revealed to him by Moses from the Lord; so that this seems to be more than to be the mouth and spokesman of Moses and interpreter and explainer of his words, or to be acting the part of an orator for him; for Moses in this affair being God's viceregent, and furnished with a knowledge of the mind and will of God respecting it, as well as with power to work miracles, and inflict plagues, was made a god to both Pharaoh and Aaron; see **Ex 4:6** to Pharaoh in the sense before explained, and to Aaron, he being his prophet, to whom he communicated the secrets of God, and his will and pleasure, in order to make the same known to Pharaoh. Thus highly honoured was Moses to be a god to a sovereign prince, and to have Aaron to be his prophet.

Exodus 7:2

Ver. 2. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee,.... That is, to Aaron his prophet, whatever the Lord made known to him in a private manner as his will to be done:

and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh; whatsoever should be told him by Moses, as from the Lord:

that he send the children of Israel out of his land; this was the principal thing to be insisted upon; and all that was said or done to him was to bring about this end, the dismission of the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Exodus 7:3

Ver. 3. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart,....
See Gill on "Ex 4:21"

and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt; work one miracle and wonderful sign after another, until they are all wrought intended to be wrought; and which he had given Moses power to do, and until the end should be answered and obtained, the letting go of the children of Israel.

Exodus 7:4

Ver. 4. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you,.... Regard not what they said, nor answer the demand they made, or obey the command of God delivered by them to him: this the Lord apprised them of, that they might not be discouraged, and conclude their labour would be in vain, their attempts fruitless, and they should never gain their point, but spend their time, and expose themselves to danger to no purpose:

that I may lay mine hand upon Egypt; the inhabitants of Egypt, smiting them with one plague after another, and particularly with the last, slaying their firstborn; every plague was a stroke of his hand, and an effect of his mighty power and vengeance, and more especially that:

and bring forth mine armies; the children of Israel consisting of 600,000 men, besides women and children, Ex 12:37 which, divided into twelve tribes, made twelve fine armies, 50,000 men in a tribe or army upon an average:

and my people the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; the word "and" need not be supplied; if any supplement is necessary, the word "even" would be better, since this clause is added by way of explanation, showing who are meant by the armies of the Lord, his people to be brought out:

by great judgments; inflicted upon the Egyptians.

Exodus 7:5

Ver. 5. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord,.... Jehovah, the one only true and living God; this they should know by the judgments executed upon them, and be obliged to acknowledge it:

when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt: especially the last time, to destroy the firstborn:

and bring out the children of Israel from among them; by which it would appear that he was mightier than they, and obtained the end for which the plagues were inflicted on them.

Exodus 7:6

Ver. 6. And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them,.... After this they never showed any reluctance, or made any objection to any message they were sent with, or any work they were ordered to do, but went about it at once, and performed it with all readiness and cheerfulness:

so did they; which is not a superfluous and redundant expression, but very emphatic, showing with what care and diligence they did every thing, and how exactly they conformed in all things to the divine will.

Exodus 7:7

Ver. 7. And Moses was eighty years old,.... At this time, which is observed partly to show how long Israel had been afflicted in Egypt; for their great troubles and miseries began about the time of the birth of Moses, or a little before, as appears from the above history; and partly to show the patience and forbearance of God with the Egyptians, and how just and righteous were his judgments on them; with this perfectly agrees Stephen's account of the age of Moses, **Ac 7:23** and Aaron eighty three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh; so that they were men that had had a large experience of things, and had been long training up for the service designed to be done by them; they were men of wisdom and prudence, of sedate and composed countenances, and fit to appear before a king, whose age and venerable aspect might command attention to them. Aben Ezra observes, that

"in all the Scripture there is no mention of any prophets that prophesied in their old age but these, because their excellency was greater than all the prophets."

By this it appears that Aaron was three years older than Moses. A Jewish chronologer says {n}, that it is affirmed in an exposition of theirs, that Aaron prophesied to the Israelites in Egypt eighty years, which is making him to be a very young prophet when he first entered into the office. The Arabic writers {o} say, Miriam was at this time eighty seven, so was seven years older than Moses, and four years older than Aaron; see **Ex 2:4**.

{n} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 1. {o} Patricides, p. 26. apud Hottinger. p. 415.

Exodus 7:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron,.... After he had given them their commission, and instructions to go to Pharaoh, and a little before they went in to him:

saying, as follows.

Exodus 7:9

Ver. 9. When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, show a miracle for you,.... To prove that they came from God, the Jehovah they said they did, and that they were his ambassadors, and came in his name, and made the demand for him; which when he seriously reflected on things, he would be ready to require, hoping they would not be able to show any, and then he should have somewhat against them, and treat them as impostors:

then thou shalt say unto Aaron, take thy rod; the same that Moses had in his hand at Horeb, and brought with him to Egypt; this he had delivered into the hand of Aaron, who was to be his agent, and with this rod do signs and wonders as he did, and on account of them it is sometimes called the rod of God:

and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent; as it became one before at Horeb, when Moses by the order of God cast it on the ground, and afterwards became a rod again, as it now was, **Ex 4:2** Hence Mercury, the messenger of the gods with the Heathens, is represented as having a "caduceus", a rod or wand twisted about with snakes {p}.

{p} Vid. Chartar. de Imag. Deorum, p. 136. imag. 48.

Exodus 7:10

Ver. 10. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh,.... Into the palace of Pharaoh boldly, and with intrepidity, clothed with such power and authority, and assured of success;

and they did as the Lord had commanded; they demanded in his name the dismission of the children of Israel, and upon his requiring a miracle to confirm their mission, wrought one as follows:

and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and it became a serpent: or a "dragon", as the Septuagint version; this word is sometimes used of great whales, **Ge 1:21** and of the crocodile, Eze 29:3 and it is very likely the crocodile is meant here, as Dr. Lightfoot {q} thinks; since this was frequent in the Nile, the river of Egypt, where the Hebrew infants had been cast, and into whose devouring jaws they fell, and which also was an Egyptian deity {r}. Though no mention is made of Pharaoh's demanding a miracle, yet no doubt he did, as the Lord had intimated he would, and without which it can hardly be thought it would be done; and Artapanus {s}, an Heathen writer, expressly asserts it; for he says,

"when the king required of Moses to do some sign or wonder, the rod which he had he cast down, and it became a serpent, to the amazement of all, and then took it by its tail and it be came a rod again;"

which is a testimony from an Heathen of the truth of this miracle.

{q} Works, vol. 1. p. 702. {r} Crocodylen adorat, Juvenal, Sat. 15. {s} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 435.

Exodus 7:11

Ver. 11. Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers,.... The cunning men and wizards, a sort of jugglers and deceivers, who pretended to great knowledge of things, to discover secrets, tell fortunes, and predict things to come, and by legerdemain tricks, and casting a mist before people's eyes, pretended to do very wonderful and amazing things; and therefore Pharaoh sent for these, to exercise their art and cunning, and see if they could not vie with Moses and Aaron:

now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments; or by their secret wiles and juggles, making things seem to appear to the sight when they did not really, but by dazzling the eyes of men by their wicked and diabolical art, they fancied they saw things which they did

not; for the word has the signification of flames of fire, or of a flaming sword, or lance, which being brandished to and fro dazzles the sight. The Targum of Jonathan gives the names of two of these magicians, whom he calls Jannes and Jambres, as does the apostle,
See Gill on "2Ti 3:8". Josephus {t} calls these magicians of Egypt priests, and Artapanus {u} says, they were priests that lived about Memphis. According to the Arabs {w}, the name of the place where they lived was Ausana, a city very ancient and pleasant, called the city of the magicians, which lay to the east of the Nile: their name in the Hebrew language is either from a word which signifies a style, or greying tool, as Fuller {x} thinks, because in their enchantments they used superstitious characters and figures; or, as Saadiah Gaon {y}, from two words, the one signifying a "hole", and the other "stopped"; because they bored a hole in a tree to put witchcrafts into it, and stopped it up, and then declared what should be, or they had to say.

{t} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 13. sect. 3. {u} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 435.) {w} Arab. Geograph. Climat. 2. par. 4. lin. 21. {x} Miscell. Sacr. l. 5. c. 11. {y} Comment. in Dan. i. 20.

Exodus 7:12

Ver. 12. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents,.... That is, they seemed to be so, as Josephus {z} expresses it, but not really, in which he is followed by many; though some think that the devil assisted in this affair, and in an instant, as soon as the rods were cast down, removed them and put real serpents in their room:

but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods; that is, the serpent that Aaron's rod was turned into, swallowed up the rods of the magicians, which never were otherwise than rods only in appearance; or if real serpents were put in the room of them, these were devoured by his serpent called his rod, because it was before turned into a serpent, as Aben Ezra observes; though the Targums of Jonathan, Jarchi, and R. Jeshua, suppose this was done after the serpent became a rod again; which makes the miracle the greater and more wonderful, that a rod should devour other rods; and supposing them real serpents, this was what the magicians could not make their rods do, and in which they were outdone by Aaron.

{z} Antiqu. ut supra. (l. 2. c. 13 sect. 3.)

Exodus 7:13

Ver. 13. And he hardened Pharaoh's heart,.... Or, "notwithstanding the heart of Pharaoh was hardened" {a}; though he saw the rods of his magicians devoured by rod; or "therefore" {b} his heart was hardened, because he saw that the rods of his magicians became serpents as well as Aaron's; in which there was a deception of sight, and which was suffered for the hardening of his heart, there being other wonders and miracles to be wrought, for showing forth the divine power, before Israel must be let go:

that he hearkened not unto them; to Moses and Aaron, and comply with their demand, to dismiss the people of Israel:

as the Lord had said; or foretold he would not.

{a} qzxyw "attamen obfirmatum est", Junius & Tremellius. {b} "Itaque", Piscator.

Exodus 7:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hardened,.... Or "heavy" {c}, dull and stupid, stiff and inflexible, cannot lift up his heart, or find in his heart to obey the will of God:

he refuseth to let the people go; which was an instance and proof of the hardness and heaviness of his heart, on which the above miracle had made no impression, to regard what God by his ambassadors had required of him.

{c} dbk "grave", Montanus, Drusius. So Ainsworth.

Exodus 7:15

Ver. 15. Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning,.... The next morning, a time in which the mind is most composed and sedate, and fit to attend to what may be suggested:

lo, he goeth out unto the water; the river Nile, either to take his morning's walk, and to refresh himself at the waterside, as the Jerusalem Targum; or to observe divinations upon the water, as a magician, as the Targum of Jonathan. So in the Talmud {d} it is said, that the Pharaoh in the days of Moses was a magician. Or rather, as Aben Ezra thinks, which he says is a custom of the kings of Egypt to this day, to go out in the months of Tammuz and Ab, i.e. June, and July, when the river increases, to observe how many degrees it has ascended, by which the fruitfulness of the ensuing season was judged of. See Gill on "Amos 8:8" Or else he went to worship the rising sun, or the Nile, to pay his morning devotions to it: for not only Jarchi, and other Jewish writers, say it was their chief god, but Plutarch {e} also affirms, that nothing was so much honoured with the Egyptians as the Nile; and both Theodoret on this place, and Athanasius {f} elsewhere says, that they reckoned it a god, and worshipped it as such; and it has been usual with other nations to worship rivers, as Aelianus {g} reports:

and thou shall stand by the river's brink against he come; over against the brink of the river Nile, in order to meet him:

and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand; as a terror to Pharaoh, on sight of which he might be put in mind of what had been done, and by means of which he might fear other wonders would be wrought; by this it appears, that after the rod had been turned into a serpent, it became a rod again, as it did at Horeb, **Ex 4:4**. Moses having previous notice of all this, shows the prescience of God, and his certain knowledge of future contingent events.

{d} T. Bab. Moed. Katon, fol. 18. 1. {e} De lside & Osir. Vide Philo de Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 617. {f} Contr. Gentil p. 20. & de Incarnatione, p. 73. {g} Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 33.

Exodus 7:16

Ver. 16. And thou shalt say unto him,.... Upon meeting him:

the Lord God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee; still appearing in the character of the ambassador of Jehovah, the God of the children of Israel:

saying, let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness; the demand is once more renewed, before any punishment is inflicted for refusal, that the patience and forbearance of God might be the more visible, and his judgments appear the more righteous when inflicted, as well as Pharaoh be left more inexcusable. The reason of the demand is observed,

that they may serve me; keep a feast, and sacrifice to him, as is before expressed, and the place where is pointed at:

in the wilderness; at Sinai, in Arabia, where were the mountains of Sinai and Horeb; but the time of their service is not here expressed, as elsewhere, namely, three days:

and, behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear; and obey the voice of the Lord, upbraiding him with his disobedience, and the hardness of his heart; but signifying it was not now too late, though it was advisable to be quick, or the blow would be given, and the plagues inflicted.

Exodus 7:17

Ver. 17. Thus saith the Lord, in this thou shalt know that I am the Lord,.... By the following instance of his power and vengeance:

behold, I will smite with the rod that is in my hand; which though in the hand of Moses, **Ex 7:18** yet he being his ambassador, and representing him, is said to be in the hand of the Lord; and with this he threatens to smite

upon the waters which are in the river; the river Nile, and the canals thereof:

and they shall be turned to blood; and if this river was their god, it would abundantly appear that the God of the Hebrews was Jehovah, and above all gods, and particularly above theirs.

Exodus 7:18

Ver. 18. And the fish that is in the river shall die,.... Their element being changed, and they not able to live in any other but water:

and the river shall stink; with the blood, into which it should be congealed, and with the putrefied bodies of fishes floating in it:

and the Egyptians shall loath to drink of the water of the river; the very colour of it, looking like blood, would set them against it, and create a nausea in them; or "shall be weary" {h}, tired of drinking it in a little time, through the loathsomeness of it; or be weary in digging about it, **Ex 7:24** to get some clear water to drink of; or in seeking to find out ways and methods to cure the waters, that so they might be fit to drink of, as Jarchi interprets it.

{h} waln "delassabuntur", Tigurine version, Vatablus. "Defatigabuntur", Cartwright.

Exodus 7:19

Ver. 19. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Pharaoh still being obstinate, and refusing to let the people go:

say unto Aaron, take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt; upon all of them in general, what were in the river Nile, or derived from it, as follows:

upon their streams; the seven streams of the river Nile,
See Gill on "Isa 11:15".

upon their rivers; the canals that were cut out of the river Nile, for the watering of their fields and gardens, for they had no other river:

and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of waters; which were dug near the river, or to which pipes were laid to convey the water thither:

that they may become blood; and so not fit to drink:

and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt,
both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone; in which water were kept in private houses, fetched from the river for the use of families; all which were to be turned into blood everywhere, in all parts of the land, and in all places mentioned, immediately upon Aaron's taking his rod, and smiting the waters with it in that part of the river that was before him.

Exodus 7:20

Ver. 20. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded,.... Moses delivered the rod to Aaron, who took it and went to the water side:

and he lift up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river; or "in that river" {i}, the river Nile, on the brink of which Pharaoh then stood:

in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; his nobles and courtiers who tended him in his walk to the water; for this was done before he returned to his palace:

and all the waters that were in the river were turned into blood; not only the face of the waters looked like blood, but they were really turned into it; and not only the surface of the water, but all the water that was in the river, wherever it flowed, and as far as it flowed in the land of Egypt.

{i} rayb en tw potamw Sept. "in eo rivo", Junius and Tremellius, Piscator.

Exodus 7:21

Ver. 21. And the fish that was in the river died,.... Which was a full proof that the conversion of it into blood was real; for had it been only in appearance, or the water of the river had only the colour of blood, and looked like it, but was not really so, it would not have affected the fishes, they would have lived as well as before; and this plague was the greater affliction to the Egyptians, not as it affected their drink but their food, fish Nu 11:5 being what the common people chiefly lived upon, See Gill on "Isa 19:8" and the river stunk; the blood into which it was turned being corrupted through the heat of the sun, and the dead fishes swimming upon it being putrefied;

and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and they had no other water to drink of {k}; for rain seldom fell in Egypt, though sometimes it did in some places, See Gill on "Zec 14:18". The water of the river Nile was not only their common drink, but it was exceeding pleasant, and therefore the loss of it was the greater; it was so remarkable for the sweetness and delicacy of its taste, that in the time of Pescennius Niger, when his soldiers murmured for want of wine, he is reported to have answered them,

"what! crave you wine, and have the water of the Nile to drink?"

which Mr. Maillett, who lived sixteen years consul for the French nation at Grand Cairo, confirms, and says, that it is grown to be a common proverb, that whoever has once tasted it will ever after pine for it {l}; with this compare **Jer**

2:18:

and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt; in the river, wherever it flowed, in all its streams and channels, and wherever any water was collected out of it, or fetched from it, let it be in what reservoir it would. This is the first plague executed on the Egyptians, and a very righteous one by the law of retaliation for shedding the blood of innocent babes, through casting them into this river; and this will be the second and third vials of God's wrath, which will be poured on antichrist, or mystical Egypt, who will have blood given to drink because worthy, see Re 16:3. Artapanus {m}, an Heathen writer, bears testimony to this miracle, though he does not so fully and clearly express it as it was; he says,

"a little after, that is, after the former miracle of the rod turned into a serpent, the Nile, that river whose swelling waves overflow all Egypt, was smitten with the rod; and the water being gathered and stagnated, boiled up, and not only the fishes were destroyed, but the people perished through thirst."

{k} Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 29. {l} See the Bishop of Clogher's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 287. {m} Apud Euseb Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 435.

Exodus 7:22

Ver. 22. And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments,.... Who were either in company with Pharaoh and his nobles, or were immediately sent for to try their art, and confront Moses and Aaron with it; and who very probably got a little water in a vessel, and by some juggling trick imposing upon, and deceiving the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, made it look like blood; and the devil might help them to a sufficient quantity of blood, and discolour the water with it, and make it appear as if it was blood, and which was a poor business; had they turned the bloody river into water again, they would have equalled the miracle of Moses and Aaron, and done some service to their country; but to deceive the sight of people, or to spoil a small quantity of water that was good, by mixing it with blood, was but a mean and unworthy action. Should it be asked from whence they had this water, when all was turned into blood? it may be answered, either from Goshen, as the Targum of Jonathan, the waters of the Hebrews not being affected with this plague: though Aben Ezra thinks they were; or from the sea, as Theodoret; but both these places were too far distant to fetch water from, in the time that Pharaoh stayed here before his return home: rather therefore this water was had from some habitation of the Israelites in the city near at hand, where Pharaoh lived, or was dug for immediately by the magicians, as in **Ex 7:24** or it may be that all the waters were not immediately turned into blood, but successively and gradually, first the river, and then its streams, &c. so that there might be near at hand a pool of water, not yet turned into blood, and a vessel of water might be fetched from it, on which they exercised their juggling art:

and Pharaoh's heart was hardened: by seeing his magicians do what was similar to what Moses and Aaron had done; and therefore concluded that it was not by the hand of God, but owing to a magic art they were masters of, as his magicians were:

neither did he hearken unto them; to Moses and Aaron, and what they said to him, to let the people go:

as the Lord had said; had before told he would not hearken to them, **Ex 7:4**.

Exodus 7:23

Ver. 23. And Pharaoh turned, and went into his house,.... Turned away from Moses and Aaron, and turned back from the river to which he came, and went to his palace in the city; it being perhaps now about dinner time, when all before related had passed:

neither did he set his heart to this also: had no regard to this miracle of turning the waters into blood, as well as he had none to the rod being turned into a serpent, and devouring the rods of the magicians; he neither considered the one nor the other, or seriously and closely thought of this, any more than of the other.

Exodus 7:24

Ver. 24. And all the Egyptians digged round about the river,.... On each side of it, in order to get clear water; and Aben Ezra thinks the Hebrews also, who were affected with this, and the two following plagues, the frogs and lice: but it is much more reasonable to conclude that they were free from them all. This they did for water to drink: for there was none in the river, streams, ponds and pools, or in vessels, in which they used to reserve it, and therefore could come at none but by digging; and whether they obtained any in that way is not said:

for they could not drink of the waters of the river; it being turned into blood, and stunk so exceedingly; and though they might strain it, and make it in some measure, drinkable, and might make use of the juice of herbs, and other things, to extinguish their thirst, and the better sort might have a stock of wine, yet multitudes must be greatly distressed, and many perish, as Philo {n} the Jew says they did.

{n} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 617.

Exodus 7:25

Ver. 25. And seven days were fulfilled,.... Or there were full seven days, a whole week:

after that the Lord had smitten the river, and turned it into blood; here the miracle is ascribed to him; Moses and Aaron, and the rod they used, were only instruments, nothing short of almighty power could do such a miracle; it seems this lasted seven days at least. It began, as Bishop Usher {o} computes it, on the eighteen day of the sixth month, or Adar, part of February and part of March, and ended the twenty fifth of the same. It is not said that Pharaoh requested to have it removed, though Philo {p} says he did; his stubborn heart not being humbled enough as yet to ask such a favour, and therefore perhaps it was taken off without asking for it, to make way for another.

{o} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 20. {p} Ut supra. (De Vita. Mosis, l. 1. p. 617.)

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 8

In this chapter Pharaoh is threatened with the plague of frogs, in case he refused to let Israel go, which accordingly was brought upon him, Ex 8:1 and though the magicians did something similar to it, yet these were so troublesome to Pharaoh, that he promised to let the people go, and sacrifice to

God, if they removed; and a time being fixed for the removal of them, it was accordingly done at the entreaty of Moses and Aaron, **Ex 8:7** but there being a respite, Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and the plague of lice is ordered, and which was executed; and though this the magicians essayed to do, and could not, but owned it to be the finger of God, yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened, **Ex 8:15** wherefore he is threatened with a swarm of flies, which should not infest Goshen, only the places where the Egyptians dwelt, and it was so, **Ex 8:20** upon which Pharaoh called for Moses, and declared himself willing the people would sacrifice in the land; but this not being satisfactory, he agreed they should go into the wilderness, but not so far; and on the account of the entreaty of Moses, the plague was removed; but still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not let the people go, **Ex 8:25**.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Either whilst the plague upon the waters continued, or immediately upon the removal of it:

go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, thus saith the Lord, let my people go, that they may serve me; mentioning neither time nor place, where, when, and how long they should serve him, for which their dismission was required, but insist on it in general.

Exodus 8:2

Ver. 2. And if thou refuse to let them go,.... Will not obey the orders:

I will smite all thy borders with frogs; he gives him warning of the blow before he strikes, which shows his clemency and goodness, his patience and longsuffering; and this he did, not only that he might have time and space for repentance, and thereby avoid the blow; but that when it came, he might be sensible it was not by chance, or owing to second causes, but was from the Lord himself.

I will smite all thy borders with frogs: fill the whole land of Egypt with them, to the utmost borders thereof on every side. Some {q} say the word signifies a large Egyptian fish, which in the Arabic tongue is called Altamsach, that is, a crocodile, with which the Nile abounded; but such a creature could not invade and attack them in the manner as is after related.

{q} R. Chananeel apud Abendana, and some in Aben Ezra in loc.

Exodus 8:3

Ver. 3. And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly,.... The river Nile; and though water, and watery places, naturally produce these creatures, yet not in such vast quantities as to cover a whole country, and so large an one as Egypt, and this done at once, immediately; for they were all produced instantaneously, and in one day were spread all over the nation, and removed the next: and besides what follows is equally miraculous,

which shall go up and come into thine house; which though they may come up out of rivers, and be upon the banks and the meadows adjacent, yet are never known to come into houses, and especially into bedchambers and other places after mentioned, being not a bold but timorous creature, and shuns the sight and company of men; but these came even into the royal palace, nor could his guards keep them out:

and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed; and by their leaping upon him, and croaking in his ears, disturb his rest:

and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people both nobles and common people, and not only get into their houses, but upon their persons, on their hands when about their business, on their laps, and into their bosoms, as they sat; which must be very offensive and troublesome to them, what with their ugly shape, croaking noise and filthy smell, and the disagreeable touch of them, leaping on them, and even upon their food, and all vessels used for the same, which must make it very nauseous and distasteful to them:

and into thy ovens; where they baked their bread, and would be now hindered from the use of them:

and into thy kneadingtroughs; where they kneaded their dough, and made it into loaves, and prepared it for the oven; or the "dough" {r} itself, which they leaped upon and licked, and made it loathsome for use.

{r} Kytwravmb "in tuas pastas", Pagninus; "in farinam tuam aquis conspersam", Tigurine version; "in reliquiis ciborum tuorum", V. L.

Exodus 8:4

Ver. 4. And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy servants. No doubt by the interposition of divine power and providence, and it may be by the ministry of angels; so that let them use what care, caution, and diligence they would, there was no keeping them out; but they came upon all the people of the land, high and low, rich and poor, and upon the king's ministers, courtiers, and nobles, and the king himself not excepted; though by this particular enumeration of him, his people, and servants, the children of Israel may be thought to be exempted from this plague, as R. Japhez observes; though Aben Ezra dislikes his remark, but it seems to be just.

Exodus 8:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... By a secret impulse upon his mind, for he was now in the presence of Pharaoh, who had refused to let Israel go:

say unto Aaron, stretch forth thy hand with thy rod; for Aaron carried the rod, and he was the minister of Moses, who was appointed a god to him; and be was to speak and to do whatever he ordered him from the Lord:

over the streams, over the rivers and over the ponds; the seven streams of the river of Nile, and over the canals cut out of it, and over all places where there was a collection of water for any use for man or beast:

and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt; out of the streams, rivers, and ponds, immediately.

Exodus 8:6

Ver. 6. And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt,.... That is, towards the waters of the Nile, and towards all places where any water was; for it was not possible he could stretch out his hand over all the waters that were in every place:

and the frogs came and covered the land of Egypt: they came up at once, and in such multitudes everywhere, that the whole land was full of them; this was done on the twenty fifth of Adar, or February, the same day the former plague ceased; so Artapanus {s}, the Heathen historian says, that Moses by his rod produced frogs, locusts, and lice. And the story which Heraclides Lembus {t} tells seems to be hammered out of this account of Moses, that in Paeonia and Dardania such a number of frogs fell from heaven, as filled the public roads and private houses; at first the inhabitants killed them, and keeping their houses shut, bore it patiently some time; but when it signified nothing, and their household goods were covered with them, and they found them boiled and roasted with their food, and lay in such heaps that they could not tread for them, and were so distressed with the smell of the dead ones, they forsook their country.

{s} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 425.) {t} Apud Athenaei Deipnosophist. l. 8. c. 2.

Exodus 8:7

Ver. 7. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, &c] By their secret wiles and juggling tricks:

and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt, that is, some few, as a proof of their art and skill, and to show that Moses and Aaron did but what they could do; but what they did either were only in appearance, deceiving the sight of Pharaoh and his people, or real frogs were brought to them by the help of devils, but not in such numbers: and besides, this was adding to the plague, and not diminishing it; had they done anything to the purpose, they should have removed it at once, or destroyed the frogs; but that they could not do, of which Pharaoh being sensible, he therefore entreated for the removal of them by Moses and Aaron. To this plague there seems to be some reference at the pouring out of the sixth vial, Re 16:13.

Exodus 8:8

Ver. 8. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron,.... He sent for them:

and said, entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me and from my people; he begins now to know the Lord, whom he knew not before, by the judgments he executed on him, to acknowledge his hand in those judgments, and tacitly to own that none else could remove them; and his proud heart was so far humbled, as to beg the favour of Moses and Aaron to intercede with the Lord to cause this plague to cease, which was intolerable: and it may be observed from other instances in history, somewhat similar to this, that whole cities and countries have been deserted by their inhabitants on a like occasion, as those of Paeonia and Dardania, in the account above given; and Justin reports {u} of the Abderites, a people of Thrace, that because of the multitude of frogs and mice, were obliged to leave their native country, and seek new habitations; and Diodorus Siculus {w} and Aelianus {x} relate much the same of a people called Autariatae; and Varro {y} affirms, that in a city in France, the inhabitants of it were drove away by frogs; which instances, as they show how very distressing such a calamity is, so they serve to illustrate and confirm the truth of the divine history, cavilled at by infidels, when anything is related in it exceeding the common and ordinary course of things:

and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord; as had been frequently required of him, **Ex 5:1**.

{u} E Trogo, l. 15. c. 2. {w} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 164. {x} De Animal. l. 17. c. 41. {y} Apud Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 29.

Exodus 8:9

Ver. 9. And Moses said unto Pharaoh, glory over me,.... If thou canst; take every advantage against me of lessening my glory, and increasing thine own; or vaunt or boast thyself against me, as the phrase is rendered, **Jud 7:2** or take this honour and glory to thyself over me, by commanding me, and fixing a time to pray for thee, and I will obey thy orders; which agrees with the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions, and the paraphrase of Onkelos, "appoint", or "order for me"; that is, when I shall pray for thee; or do me this honour, to believe me in the sight of the people, to declare before them that thou dost believe that upon my prayer for thee this plague shall be removed:

when shall I entreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee and thy houses, that they may remain in this river only? Moses agreed to entreat the Lord for him as he desired, but leaves it with him to fix the time for doing it; and this he did, that it might appear that the removal of the frogs, as well as the bringing of them, would not be owing to chance or to any natural cause, but to the Lord himself; and though Moses had no direction from the Lord for this, that is recorded, yet he might presume upon it, since he was made a god to Pharaoh, and had power to do as he pleased; and also he knew the mind and will of God, and might have now a secret impulse upon his spirit, signifying it to him: and besides, he had the faith of miracles, and strongly believed that God would work this by him, and at whatsoever time should be fixed.

Exodus 8:10

Ver. 10. And he said, tomorrow,.... Which according to Bishop Usher was the twenty sixth day of Adar, or February. It may seem strange that Pharaoh, and his people, being so greatly distressed with this plague, should not desire that the Lord would be entreated to do it immediately, and not put it off to another day: two reasons are usually given; one is, he might hope that it would by that time go off of itself, and then he should not be beholden to the Lord, nor to Moses; and the other is, that he thought an affair of this kind could not be done immediately, but that it required time for making the intercession, and performing rites and ceremonies, which he supposed might be used, as were by his magicians; and it might be now the evening of the day, and therefore deferred it till tomorrow:

and he said, be it according to thy word, as if he had said, it shall be done as thou hast desired, and at the time fixed:

that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the Lord our God; that can send plagues, and remove them at his pleasure, which the deities he worshipped, and the magicians he employed, could not do.

Exodus 8:11

Ver. 11. And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people,.... Signifying there should be a full and clear riddance of them:

they shall remain in the river only; the river Nile.

Exodus 8:12

Ver. 12. And Moses and Aaron went from Pharaoh,.... To the place where they used to pray to the Lord, and meet with him, and receive messages from him; this they did the same day the plague was inflicted, the day before the morrow came when the frogs were to be removed:

and Moses cried unto the Lord: prayed unto him with great fervency, and with a loud voice, most fervently entreating that the frogs might be removed on the morrow, as he had promised, that so he might not be covered with shame and confusion before Pharaoh; his faith of the miracle being wrought did not hinder the use of prayer to God for it:

because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh; as an army: or "put upon" {z} him, as a judgment on him; or rather the sense is, as it may be rendered, "because of the business of the frogs, which he had proposed or promised to Pharaoh" {a}; that is, for the taking of them away, he had proposed to Pharaoh to fix the time when he should entreat the Lord for the removal of them; and he having fixed on the morrow, Moses promised it should be done according to his word; and now he is importunate with the Lord, that it may be done as he had promised.

{z} herpl Mv "posuit", Parhoni, Pagninus, Montanus; "imposuerat", Junius & Tremellius. {a} "Super causa vel negotio ranarum quod proposuerat Pharaoni", Fagius.

Exodus 8:13

Ver. 13. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses,.... He heard his prayers, and fulfilled what he had promised Pharaoh:

and the frogs died out of the houses, and out of the villages, and out of the fields; the word for "villages" signifies "courts" {b}, and may be so rendered here; and the sense is, that they not only died out of their dwelling houses, but out of their courtyards, and even out of their gardens, orchards, and fields, so that there were none near them to give any manner of trouble and offence. And their dying, and remaining dead upon the spot, were clear proofs that they were real frogs that were produced, and not in appearance only, as the frogs of the magicians might be; God could have caused them to return to the river from whence they came, or have annihilated them, or removed them out of sight in an instant; but the killing of them, and letting them lie dead, proved the truth of the miracle, and gave apparent evidence of it both ways, both in the bringing and removing them.

{b} truxh Nm "ex atriis", Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator.

Exodus 8:14

Ver. 14. And they gathered them together upon heaps,.... Swept them up, and laid them in heaps out of the way:

and the land stank; with the stench of the dead frogs, which was another proof and evidence of the reality of the miracle; and that dead frogs will cause such an ill smell appears from the above account of what befell the inhabitants of Paeonia and Dardania, unless that should be the same with this, only the names of places and some circumstances altered; See Gill on "Ex 8:16".

Exodus 8:15

Ver. 15. But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite,.... From his affliction, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; the plague was removed, and he found himself and his people at ease: or there was a "breathing" {c}; before he and his people were so oppressed, that they could scarce breathe, but now being delivered from the judgment on them with which they were straitened, were enlarged and at liberty, and in easy circumstances: he hardened his heart; See Gill on "Ex 7:14".

and hearkened not unto them; to Moses and Aaron, to let the children of Israel go, as they had required, and he had promised:

as the Lord had said; had foretold that he would not hearken to them, nor let Israel go as yet.

{c} hxwrh "respiratio", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius and Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius.

Exodus 8:16

Ver. 16. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... On the twenty seventh day of the month, according to Bishop Usher, the same day the flogs were removed; no warning is given him of the next plague, at least there is no account of any:

say unto Aaron, stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land; in some one part of the land, that place nearest to him where there was a quantity of dust; for it cannot be imagined that he should smite all the dust of the land in every part of it, but smiting one part served for the whole:

that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt: not gnats, as some, nor flies, as others, but lice, though perhaps not of the common and ordinary sort, but new and extraordinary, and it may be of different sorts, suitable to different creatures.

Exodus 8:17

Ver. 17. And they did so,.... As follows:

for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod; as directed and ordered:

and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man and in beast; which shows it was a miraculous operation, since lice do not usually spring from dust, but thrive in the sweat of bodies, and the nastiness of them, through sloth and idleness; and moreover, this was like the creation of man at first, which was out of the dust of the earth, and alike the effect of almighty power:

all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt; that is, the greatest part of it, not that every atom of dust became lice, nor was the land of Goshen, in which the Israelites dwelt, infected with this plague, unless where any of the Egyptians were; though Dr. Lightfoot {d} thinks, that lice were in Goshen as in other parts of Egypt, there being no severing between Goshen and Egypt mentioned until the next plague; and since Israel had partook of many of the sins of Egypt, they must partake of some of her punishments; and he thinks this is the reason that the plague of lice is not reckoned among the plagues of Egypt in Ps 78:44 because it was common to Israel, and to the Egyptians, and which is the sense of Aben Ezra on **Ex 7:24**. The account that Artapanus {e}, the Heathen historian, gives of this plague, is this;

"Moses smote the earth with a rod, and produced a certain flying animal, which greatly distressed the Egyptians, and raised ulcers in their bodies, which no physicians could cure."

And so Origen {f} describes this creature as

"having wings and flying in the air, but so subtile and minute as to escape the eye, unless very sharp sighted; but when it lights upon a body, it stings most bitterly, so that what a man cannot see flying, he feels stinging."

Both seem to design the gnat, but this sort of vermin do not stick in and abide with men or beasts, as these here are said to do, but buzz about and bite, and then are gone.

{d} Works, vol. 1. p. 705, 706. {e} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 435.) {f} In Exod. Homil. 4. fol. 35. col. 2.

Exodus 8:18

Ver. 18. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, to bring forth lice,.... They made use of their magical art, and juggling tricks they were masters of, to produce the like sort of creatures, or at least to make such appear, or seem to appear, to the eyes of men:

but they could not; God would not suffer them to do it, to impose upon Pharaoh, and deceive him and the Egyptians any longer; and a stop is put to them, when such small and despicable creatures were produced, the more to put them to shame and confusion, and to show that what they did before was not real, and that what they did in appearance was only by divine permission;

so there were lice upon man and upon beast; these lay in great numbers on both, biting and distressing them in a most terrible manner; for as the magicians could not produce such creatures, it was not in their power to remove them.

Exodus 8:19

Ver. 19. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, this is the finger of God,.... This is to be ascribed to a power superior to human, to a divine power; so long as they could do something similar, or impose upon the senses of men, and make them believe they did the like, they would not acknowledge divine omnipotence; but when they no longer could deceive the sight of Pharaoh and the Egyptian, then they own the effects of a superior power: and this they did partly to detract from the power of Moses and Aaron, because they would not have them pass for more skilful persons in the magic art than themselves; and therefore suggest, that this was done not by virtue of any human skill and art, but by the power of the Supreme Being; and partly to detract from the honour of the God of Israel; for they do not say this is the finger of Jehovah, whom they accounted, as Dr. Lightfoot {g} observes, as a petty trivial god, but this is the finger of Elohim, the Supreme Deity. It is conjectured by some {h}, that in memory of this plague the Egyptian priests scrape their whole bodies, lest there should be a louse or any unclean thing on them when they worship their gods, as Herodotus {i} relates:

and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; either not unto the magicians owning the hand of God, and his divine power in the plague inflicted; or to Moses and Aaron demanding the dismission of the people of Israel, which latter seems to be confirmed by the usual phrase, as follows,

as the Lord had said; see **Ex 7:4**.

{g} Ut supra. (Works, vol. 1. p. 705, 706.) {h} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physica Sacra, vol. 1. p. 132. {i} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 37.

Exodus 8:20

Ver. 20. And the Lord said unto Moses, rise up early in the morning,.... Of the day following, the twenty eight of Adar, or February, according to Bishop Usher; this was the fittest time to meet with Pharaoh, and the most likely to make impressions on him:

and stand before Pharaoh: meet him as he comes along, and stop him, and stand before him as having something to say to him; this was using great boldness and freedom with a king; but as Moses was ordered to do it by the King of kings, it became him to obey him:

lo, he cometh forth to the water; See Gill on "Ex 7:15"

and say unto him, thus saith the Lord, let my people go, that they may serve me; which had often been required before, but to no purpose, and in case of refusal he is threatened as follows.

Exodus 8:21

Ver. 21. Else, if thou wilt not let my people go,.... But remainest obstinate and inflexible:

behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee; the word used is generally thought to signify a "mixture", and is interpreted by many a mixture of various creatures; the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it a mixture of wild beasts, and so Josephus {k} understands it of all sorts of beasts, of many forms, and such as were never seen before; according to Jarchi, all sorts of evil beasts are meant, as serpents and scorpions, mixed together; and so Aben Ezra says it signifies evil beasts mixed together, as lions, wolves, bears, and leopards; but it is not likely the houses should be filled with these, or the ground covered with them, as after related: and besides, they would soon have destroyed, all the inhabitants of the land, since as it follows they are said to be upon them; rather a mixture of insects is intended; the Septuagint; version renders it the "dog fly", and so Philo the Jew {l}; which, as Pliny {m} says, is very troublesome, to dogs especially, about their ears, and this version Bochart {n} approves of:

and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses; they should be sent unto and settle first on his own person, and also on his ministers and courtiers, and upon all his subjects in general, and get into their houses, and be very troublesome guests there:

and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of the swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are; their number would be so very great.

{k} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 14. sect. 3. {l} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 622. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 34. {n} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 15. col. 555.

Exodus 8:22

Ver. 22. And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell,.... Distinguish it from other parts of the land of Egypt:

that no swarms of flies shall be there; which was a very wonderful thing, and so the word may be rendered. "I will marvellously sever or separate" {o}, and so the Targum of Jonathan, "I will do wonders or miracles in that day": as they were to make such a difference in one part of the country from another, and so near as Goshen was to the place where Pharaoh lived, and to bound and limit such sort of creatures as flies, which move swiftly from place to place, and particularly to keep the land of Goshen clear of them; when, as Bishop Patrick observes, it was a country that abounded with cattle, whose dung is apt to breed flies:

to the end thou mayest know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth; he is God over all the earth, and rules as a King in the midst of it, and does whatsoever he pleases in it; see Ps 74:12 and in the midst of the land of Goshen where his people dwelt, and over whom he was King in a peculiar manner, and took a peculiar care of them, to protect and defend them; and which must the more vex and distress the Egyptians, when they saw the Israelites clear of those plagues they were afflicted with.

{o} ytylphw "faciamque mirabilem", V. L. "miraculose agam", Fagius; "marvellously sever", Ainsworth.

Exodus 8:23

Ver. 23. And I will put a division between my people and thy people,.... Or, a "redemption" {p}; for by distinguishing them in his providence from the Egyptians, he might be said to redeem or deliver them; thus God makes a difference between his chosen people and the rest of the world, through his Son's redemption of them by his blood, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation:

tomorrow shall this sign be: which, according to Bishop Usher, must be the twenty nineth day of Adar or February.

{p} twdp "redemptionem", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Exodus 8:24

Ver. 24. And the Lord did so,.... And this he did immediately of himself without any means; not by the rod of Aaron, to let the Egyptians see that there was nothing in that rod, that it had no magic virtue in it, and what was done by it was from the Lord himself, who could as well inflict plagues without it as with it; see Ps 105:31 and there came a grievous swarm of flies; or a "heavy" {q} one, which was both very numerous, and very troublesome and distressing:

into the house of Pharaoh, and into the houses of his servants, and into all the land of Egypt: into the palace of Pharaoh, and into the palaces of his nobles, ministers, and courtiers, and into the dwelling places of all his subjects, throughout the whole land, excepting the land of Goshen:

the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies; Josephus {r} says, the land lay neglected and uncultivated by the husbandmen; it may be, the air was infected by the flies, which produced a pestilence that took off many of the inhabitants; so among the Eleans, as Pliny {s} reports, a multitude of flies produced a pestilence; however, it is certain many of the inhabitants of Egypt perished by them; they might sting them to death, suck their blood, and poison them with their envenomed stings; see Ps 78:45.

{q} dbk "gravis", Montanus, "gravissime", V. L. {r} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 2. c. 14. sect. 3.) {s} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 28.

Exodus 8:25

Ver. 25 And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron,.... He and his people not being able to endure this plague of flies any longer; and we read in profane history of such creatures being so troublesome, that people have been obliged to quit their habitations, and seek for new ones; so Pausanias {t} relates of the inhabitants of Myus, that such a number of flies rose out of the lake, that the men were obliged to leave the city, and go to Miletus; so Aelian {u} reports, that the inhabitants of Megara were driven from thence by a multitude of flies, as were the inhabitants of Phaselis by wasps, which creatures also might be in this mixture of insects:

and said, go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land; that is, in the land of Goshen, in the place where they were; he was willing to allow them the liberty of sacrificing to their God, which it seems they had before; but then he would not consent they should go out of the land to do it.

{t} Achaica, sive l. 7. p. 400. {u} De Animal. l. 11. c. 28.

Exodus 8:26

Ver. 26. And Moses said, it is not meet so to do,.... It being the command and will of God that they should go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice there; and besides it was dangerous, the Egyptians might be provoked by their sacrifices to fall upon them, and kill them;

for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God; by which Moses is not to be understood as calling the idols of Egypt an abomination, as being so to God and to all good men, that were not idolaters; for though they were, Moses would scarcely call them so before Pharaoh, when he could have made use of another word as well; but his meaning is, that the Israelites would sacrifice that which would be an abomination, and very detestable to the Egyptians for them to do. And so the Targum of Jonathan;

"for the sheep, which are the idols of the Egyptians, we shall take and offer before the Lord our God."

Herodotus {w} says, it was not accounted with the Egyptians lawful to sacrifice any creature but swine, and male oxen, and calves, such as were clean; but nevertheless, as after these times the Egyptians did offer such creatures as oxen, sheep, and goats, at least some of them did, Bishop Patrick thinks this may only refer to the rites and ceremonies of sacrificing, and to the qualities and condition of the beasts that were offered, about which the Egyptians in later ages were very curious; however, be it which it will, something might be done which would displease the Egyptians, and therefore it was best to sacrifice out of their land:

lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? rise up in a body in great wrath, and fall upon us and slay us, by taking up stones and casting at us, or by some means or another dispatch us while offering; just as Pilate mingled the blood of the Galilaeans with their sacrifices, Lu 13:1 and the Egyptians were a people that greatly resented any indignity done to their deities, and would prosecute it with great wrath and fury; as appears from an instance which Diodorus Siculus {x} reports he was an eyewitness of, as that a certain Roman having killed a cat, (which is an Egyptian deity,) the mob rose about his house, so that neither the princes sent by the king of Egypt to entreat them, nor the common dread of the Roman name, could deliver the man from punishment, though he did it imprudently, and not on purpose.

{w} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 41, 42, 45. {x} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 75.

Exodus 8:27

Ver. 27. We will go three days' journey into the wilderness,.... As was first insisted on, and from which demand they should not depart:

and sacrifice unto the Lord our God, as he shall command us; both what sacrifices shall be offered, and the manner in which they shall be done, both which seemed for the present in a good measure undetermined and unknown; and therefore it was possible, and very probable, that in one or the other they should give offence to the Egyptians, should they sacrifice among them, being at all events resolved to do as the Lord should command them.

Exodus 8:28

Ver. 28. And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness,.... He does not say three days, though as he allowed them to go into the wilderness and sacrifice, they could not go and come again in less time; nor would Moses have accepted of the grant, as it seems by what follows he had, if he had obliged them to less time:

only you shall not go very far away; his meaning is, as Aben Ezra observes, that they should go no further than three days' journey; he was jealous that this was only an excuse to get entirely out of his dominions, and never return more. He might have heard of their claim to the land of Canaan, and of their talk, and hope, and expectation, of going and settling there; and so understood this motion of theirs, to have leave to go into the wilderness for three days, to sacrifice to the Lord, was only a pretence; that their real intention was to proceed on in their journey to Canaan; however, being in this great distress, he made as if he was willing to grant what they desired, and very importunately urged they would pray he might be delivered from this plague:

entreat for me; the words seem to be spoken in haste, and with great eagerness and vehemence.

Exodus 8:29

Ver. 29. And Moses said, behold, I go out from thee,.... Directly, immediately, to the place where he was wont to meet the Lord, and receive orders and instructions from him:

and I will entreat the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh; for as he sent them, he only could remove them, and he could do the one as easily as he did the other:

from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow; that there might be a thorough and clear riddance of them from him and all his subjects, and out of every part of his kingdom; which should be done, and was done on the morrow, that is, on the thirtieth day of Adar, answering to part of our February, and part of our March, so that this must be about the middle of March:

but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more, in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord; as in the plague of frogs, refusing to let them go when it was past; which Moses calls an illusion, a mocking of them, and dealing deceitfully, to which he here refers; see **Ex 8:15**.

Exodus 8:30

Ver. 30. And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the Lord. He did as he promised he would, and prayed to the Lord to remove the flies from Pharaoh and his people.

Exodus 8:31

Ver. 31. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses,.... Did as he entreated him to do, as follows:

and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; by what means is not said, whether by destroying them at once, as the frogs, or by driving them away with a wind, as the locusts afterwards:

there remained not one; the meaning is not, not one swarm of flies, but not one fly, there was not one left; which looks as if it was in the latter way that they were removed, since, if in the former, they would have remained, though dead, as the frogs did, for a little while.

Exodus 8:32

Ver. 32. And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also,.... As he did before, when he found the plague was removed, and the flies were gone:

neither would he let the people go; through pride and covetousness, being loath to have the number of those under his dominion so much diminished, and to lose so large a branch of his revenues arising from the labour of these people.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 9

This chapter relates the plague of murrain upon the cattle, and which yet was not upon the cattle of the Israelites, **Ex 9:1** and the plague of boils and blains on man and beast, **Ex 9:8** and Pharaoh's heart being hardened, Moses is sent to him with a message from the Lord, threatening him that all his plagues should come upon him, and particularly the pestilence, if he would not let Israel go; and signifying, that to show his power in him, and declare his name throughout the earth, had he raised him up, and a kind of amazement is expressed at his obstinacy and pride, **Ex 9:12**, and he is told that a terrible storm of hail should fall upon the land, and destroy all in the field; wherefore those that regarded the word of the Lord got their cattle within doors, but those that did not took no care of them, **Ex 9:18** and upon Moses's stretching out his hand, when ordered by the Lord, the storm began, and destroyed every thing in the field throughout the land, excepting the land of Goshen, **Ex 9:22** upon which Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, acknowledged his sin, and the justice of God, begged they would entreat for him, which Moses did; but when the storm was over, Pharaoh's heart was still more hardened, and he refused to let the people go, **Ex 9:27**.

Ver. 1. Then the Lord said unto Moses,.... The same day the plague of the flies was removed:

go in unto Pharaoh boldly, without any fear of him or his court:

and tell him, thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews: speak in the name of Jehovah, the God whom the Hebrews worship, and who owns them for his people, and has a special love for them, and takes a special care of them, and is not ashamed to be called their God, as poor and as oppressed as they be:

let my people go, that they may serve me; this demand had been often made, and, though so reasonable, was refused.

Exodus 9:2

Ver. 2. For if thou refuse to let them go,.... Continue to refuse, as he had done:

and wilt hold them still; in the land, and under his dominion and oppression.

Exodus 9:3

Ver. 3. Behold, the hand of the Lord,.... Which was stronger than his, with which he held the Israelites:

is upon thy cattle which is in the field: this takes in all in general, of which the particulars follow, though limited to such as were in the field, and so did not take in what were at home in their out houses and stables:

upon the horses: of which there was great plenty in Egypt, as appears from various places of Scripture:

upon the asses; used for carrying burdens from place to place:

and upon the camels; used the like purposes, and to ride upon, and particularly to travel with through desert places for commerce, being able to proceed on without water for a considerable time:

upon the oxen, and upon the sheep; oxen were for labour to plough with, and sheep for their wool, and all of them to trade with: there shall be

a very grievous murrain: or "pestilence" {y}, a very noisome one, and which would carry off great numbers; the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render it a "death", as the Jews commonly call a pestilence, whether on man or beast, because it generally sweeps away large numbers.

{y} rbd "pestis", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator; "pestilentia", Drusius; so Tigurine version.

Exodus 9:4

Ver. 4. And the Lord shall sever between the cattle of Israel and the cattle of Egypt,.... Make such a difference and distinction between them, that the murrain should not be on the one, when it was on the other, and which was a very marvellous thing; and especially in the land of Goshen, where the Egyptians had much cattle, and Pharaoh himself, see Ge 47:6 and yet, though the cattle of Israel breathed in the same air, drank of the same water, and fed in the same pastures, they had not the murrain as the cattle of Egypt had; and the word here used signifies a marvellous separation, as has been observed on **Ex 7:22**:

and there shall nothing die of all that is the children's of Israel; not an horse, nor an ass, nor an ox, nor a sheep.

Exodus 9:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord appointed a set time,.... For the coming of this plague, that it might plainly appear it came from him, and was not owing to any natural cause:

saying, tomorrow the Lord shall do this thing in the land; thus giving him time and space, as he had often done before, to consider the matter well, repent of his obstinacy, and dismiss the people of Israel, and so prevent the plague coming upon the cattle, as threatened.

Exodus 9:6

Ver. 6. And the Lord did that thing on the morrow,.... Brought a murrain, or a pestilential disease on the cattle. This, according to Bishop Usher, was on the second day of the seventh month, which afterwards became the first month, the month Abib, which answers to part of March and part of April, and seems to be about the seventeenth of March:

and all the cattle of Egypt died; not all absolutely, for we read of some afterwards, **Ex 9:9** but all that were in the field, **Ex 9:3** and it may be not strictly all of them, but the greatest part of them, as Aben Ezra interprets it; some, and a great many of all sorts, in which limited sense the word "all" is frequently used in Scripture:

but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one; at least of the murrain, or by the hand of God, and perhaps not otherwise, which was very wonderful, since such a disorder is usually catching and spreading.

Exodus 9:7

Ver. 7. And Pharaoh sent,.... Messengers to the land of Goshen, to see whether the murrain was upon the cattle of Israel or not, and whether any of them died or not. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"he sent to Pelusium to see"

and inquire about this matter; that is, to Raamses, for so that paraphrase calls Raamses in **Ex 1:11** a city built by the Israelites, and where many of them might dwell. This Pharaoh did, not merely out of curiosity, but to know whether the divine prediction was accomplished, and that he might have wherewith to confront it, could he find the murrain was upon any of the cattle of Israel, or any died of it; and if they did not, his view might be to convert them to his own use, and make up his loss, and the loss of his people, in a good measure in this way, and perhaps this may be the reason why he so little regarded this plague:

and, behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead; which was very wonderful, and therefore a "behold", a note of admiration, is prefixed to it, yet it made no impression on Pharaoh:

and the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go; though this plague was so heavy upon him and his people, and the loss they sustained so great: in the other plagues of the water, the frogs, lice, and flies, though very troublesome and terrible, yet the loss was not very great; but here much damage was done to their property, yet this did not make his heart relent, or cause him to yield to let Israel go.

Exodus 9:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron,.... This very probably was the day following, on the third day of the month Abib, about the eighteenth of March, that orders were given to bring on the following plague:

take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace; either in which the bricks were burnt, or rather in which food was boiled, since it can scarcely he thought there should be brickkiln furnaces so near Pharaoh's court; though perhaps some reference may be had to them, and to the labour of the children Israel at them, and as a just retaliation for their oppression of them in that way. These ashes were such as were blown off the coals, and though fresh, yet not so hot but that they could take and hold them in their hands:

and let Moses sprinkle it towards the heaven, in the sight of Pharaoh; this was to be done before Pharaoh, that he might be an eyewitness of the miracle, he himself seeing with his own eyes that nothing else were cast up into the air but a few light ashes; and this was to be done towards heaven, to show that the plague or judgment came down from heaven, from the God of heaven, whose wrath was now revealed from thence; and Moses he was to do this; he alone, as Philo {z} thinks, or rather both he and Aaron, since they were both spoken to, and both filled their hands with ashes; it is most likely that both cast them up into the air, though Moses, being the principal person, is only mentioned.

{z} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 622.

Exodus 9:9

Ver. 9. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt,.... Which ashes, thrown up into the air, should be so multiplied and spread as to be over all the land of Egypt, and come down like showers of snow or sleet everywhere, only of a hot and scalding nature; or these handfuls of ashes were to be cast up into the air, and come down in the above manner, about Pharaoh's court, as a sign and token of what would be the case all over the kingdom:

and shall be a boil breaking forth [with] blains; that is, these ashes becoming a small dust, and falling down like the dew, snow, or sleet, yet hot and burning, should produce sore boils, burning ulcers, hot carbuncles, rising up in pustules, blisters, and buboes, which last word is pretty near in sound with the Hebrew word here used:

upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt; so that, as the last plague affected their property, substance, and riches, which in those times greatly lay in cattle, this, besides that, would affect their persons, and give them exceeding great pain, though it might not issue in death.

Exodus 9:10

Ver. 10. And they took ashes of the furnace,.... Which was near at hand, perhaps in Pharaoh's kitchen:

and stood before Pharaoh; not in his palace, or in any covered room, but in some place open to the heaven, a courtyard or garden adjoining to the palace: and Moses sprinkled it up towards heaven; cast it up in the air; this being again ascribed to Moses, seems to confirm the notion of those who think he only did it; but, for the reasons before given, both may be thought to be concerned:

and it became a boil breaking forth with blains, upon man, and upon beast; these failing down in the manner before described, on whomsoever they lighted, whether man or beast, produced sore boils and inflammations, and raised blisters and blotches; and hence arose those lying scandalous stories of the Israelites being a scabby people, and of their being driven out of Egypt on that account, affirmed by Manetho, Lysimachus, Diodorus Siculus, Tacitus, Justin, and others;
See Gill on "Ex 4:6" with this plague the first vial poured forth on mystical Egypt, or antichrist, has some agreement, Re 16:2.

Exodus 9:11

Ver. 11. And the magicians could not stand before Moses, because of the boils,.... Which were on them as on others, and which with all their art and skill they could not keep off; and which were so sore upon them, and painful to them, that they were obliged to withdraw, and could not stand their ground, confronting Moses, contesting and litigating with him; for it seems, though they had not acted, nor attempted to act in imitation of Moses and Aaron, since the plague of the lice, yet they still continued about Pharaoh, lessening as much as in them lay the miracles wrought by them, and suggesting that they had done the most and the worst they could, and so contributing to harden the heart of Pharaoh against the people of Israel; wherefore they were righteously punished with boils for so doing, and for their contempt of the messengers and miracles of God, and for their imposition upon men, and their deception of them:

for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians; but not upon Moses and Aaron, nor upon any of the Israelites, and was afterwards called peculiarly the botch of Egypt, De 28:27.

Exodus 9:12

Ver. 12. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh,.... He having often, and so long hardened his own heart, God gave him up to judicial hardness of heart, to his own corruptions, the temptations of Satan, and the lying magicians about him, to make an ill use of everything that offered to him, and put a wrong construction on all that befell him, so that whatever was said to him, or inflicted on him, made no impression to any purpose:

and he hearkened not unto them; to Moses and Aaron, and to the Lord by them:

as the Lord had spoken to Moses; both that he would harden his heart, and he should not hearken to them; all this was no other than what the Lord had said should be, **Ex 4:21**.

Exodus 9:13

Ver. 13. And the Lord said unto Moses, rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh,.... Who it seems used to rise early in the morning, and so was a fit time to meet with him, and converse with him; it might be one of the mornings in which he used to go to the water early, though not mentioned, unless that was every morning:

and say unto him, thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, let my people go, that they may serve me; thus had he line upon line, and precept upon precept, so that he was the more inexcusable, see **Ex 9:1**.

Exodus 9:14

Ver. 14. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart,.... Not meaning particularly the plague of the hail, which next follows, so called, because it consisted of various things, as hail, rain, lightning, and thunder, as Aben Ezra, and who observes, that Pharaoh was more terrified with this plague than with any other; but rather all the plagues yet to come, for by them are not meant all the plagues that were in the power of God to inflict, which how many and great they are none can say, but all that he had determined in his mind to bring upon him; and these should not so much affect and afflict his body, as the boils and ulcers had the magicians, but should reach his heart, and fill him with horror and terror:

and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; even all that he intended to bring not only upon himself, but upon his subjects, both high and low:

that thou mayest know, that there is none like unto me in all the earth; for the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands, particularly his providential dealings with the sons of men, and especially with him.

Exodus 9:15

Ver. 15. For now will I stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence,.... Which yet we never find was done; for though this by many is referred to the slaying of the firstborn, yet it is not certain that this was done by the pestilence: besides, Pharaoh was not then smitten, nor his people, only their firstborn; wherefore these words are to be rendered, not in the future, but in the imperfect or preterpluperfect tense, thus; "for when now I stretched out my hand, or if now I had stretched out my hand to smite thee and thy people with pestilence" {a}; that is, at the time when he smote the cattle with the murrain or pestilence, when he could as well have smote him and his people with it; there was no want of power in God to do it, and had he done it, it would have been all over with him and them:

and thou shall be cut off from the earth; or "thou hadst been, or wouldest have been cut off from the earth" {b} must have perished out of it, and been no more in the land of the living.

{a} ytxlv hte yk "modo enim cum extendi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, "vel si extendissem", Fagius, Cocceius; so Jarchi, Gersom, Targ. Onk. & Jon. {b} dxktw "sic fuisses excisus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Cocceius.

Exodus 9:16

Ver. 16. And in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up,.... Or but truly or verily {c}; instead of smiting thee with the pestilence, and cutting thee off out of the land of the living, "I have raised thee up"; made thee to stand {d}, to continue in being; I have preserved thine from perishing by the former plagues, and have reserved thee for greater judgments and sorer punishments. It may take in all that God did to him; the constitution and appointment of him to all this in his eternal mind; his bringing him into being, and raising him up to kingly dignity; preserving him from perishing by the pestilence, boils and blains, and keeping him for future evils, and all upon this account for the following reasons:

for to shew in thee my power; in working miracles, inflicting judgments one after another, and especially in destroying him and his host in the Red sea:

and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth; as it has been more by that last action than by all the rest of the plagues; though, in all, his sovereignty, wisdom, power, patience, longsuffering, and justice, are most visibly displayed and glorified.

{c} Mlwaw "veruntamen", Junius & Tremellius, Psicator, Drusius, Fagius; so Ainsworth. {d} Kytdmeh "stare fecite", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

Exodus 9:17

Ver. 17. As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?] And so against God himself, disobeying his commands, despising his messengers, and slighting his miracles, and hardening his heart against him, and refusing to let Israel go, after all; thereby showing the most intolerable pride and insolence not only against the Lord's poor people, but against himself, for what is done to them he takes as done to himself; or "dost thou still tread upon my people?" {e} trample them under foot, and make an highway or causeway of them.

{e} ymeb llwtom Kdwe "adhuc tu calcas populum meum?" some in Drusius; so Jarchi.

Exodus 9:18

Ver. 18. Behold, tomorrow about this time,.... It was now the fourth day of the month Abib, and the fifth when the following was inflicted:

I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail; which should fall very thick, and the hailstones be very numerous and heavy, and the storm last long:

such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof, even until now; not since the earth or land itself was founded, for that was founded when the rest of the world was, and the sense then would be the same as since the foundation of the world; and so the Targum of Jonathan seems to understand it, paraphrasing the words,

"from the day that men were made, even until now."

And a like expression is used of a storm of hail, thunder, and lightning, and earthquakes yet to come, which will be such as has not been since men were upon the earth, with which this plague may be compared, Re 16:19, but here is meant since Egypt was inhabited, or rather formed into a kingdom, and founded as such, which had been many hundreds of years before this time; there was a king of Egypt in Abraham's time; the first founder of this empire, and king of it, was Mizraim, the son of Ham, from whom it had its name, by which it is usually called in Scripture. This supposes that it did sometimes rain in Egypt, contrary to a vulgar notion, or otherwise there would have been no room for the comparison; though it must be owned that rain is rare in Egypt, especially in some parts of it; See Gill on "Zec 14:18".

Exodus 9:19

Ver. 19. Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field,.... The servants that were at work there: this is said to denote both the certainty of the plague, and the terribleness of it, that all, both men and beast, would perish by it, if care was not taken to get them home; and also to show the wonderful clemency and mercy of God to such rebellious, hardened, and undeserving creatures, as Pharaoh and his people were; in the midst of wrath and judgment God remembers mercy:

for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home; and there sheltered in houses, barns, and stables:

the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die; the hailstones that would fall would be so large and so heavy as to kill both men and beasts, like those which fell from heaven upon the Canaanites in the days of Joshua, which killed more than the sword did, Jos 10:11.

Exodus 9:20

Ver. 20. He that feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh,.... Who, if they had not the true fear of God, and were not sincere proselytes, yet had a servile fear of him, and dreaded his word, his threatening, his denunciations of judgments and predictions of future punishments; of which they had had many instances wherein they were fulfilled, and therefore had reason to fear that this also would, even the word that had been just now spoken:

made his servants and cattle flee into the houses; called home his servants, and drove his cattle in great haste out of the fields, and brought them home as fast as he could, and housed them; in which he acted the wise and prudent part, and showed a concern for his servants and his cattle, as well as believed the word of the Lord.

Exodus 9:21

Ver. 21. And he that regarded not the word of the Lord,.... Or "set not his heart" {f} "unto it", took no notice of it, but treated it with the utmost contempt; and of this sort it may be thought there were the far greatest number: everyone of this cast

left his servants and cattle in the field; let them remain there, and took no care of them, nor thought about them, and so took no methods to preserve them; in which he acted a foolish part, to his own detriment and loss.

{f} wbl Mv al "non posuit cor suum", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Fagius.

Exodus 9:22

Ver. 22. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... When the morrow was come, the fifth day of the month Abib:

stretch forth thine hand toward heaven; with his rod in it, as appears from the next verse, to show that the following plague would come from the heaven, that is, the air, and from God, who dwells in the heaven of heavens:

that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt; not only in that spot, and near it, where Moses stood, and from that part of the heaven towards which he stretched forth his hand, but from the whole heaven all over the land of Egypt; which shows it to be an unusual and extraordinary hail, for a hail storm seldom reaches far, a mile it may be, or some such space; but never was such an one heard of as to reach through a whole country, and so large an one as Egypt:

upon man and upon beast; such as belonged to those who would take no warning, nor attend to the word of the Lord to fetch home their servants and cattle:

and upon every herb of the field throughout the land of Egypt; it should fall so thick, that scarce an herb would escape it.

Exodus 9:23

Ver. 23. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven,.... The same which Aaron had made use of before, but was now in the hand of Moses, and whose rod it properly was:

and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground, hot thunderbolts, which struck their flocks, Ps 78:48 and hail which fell so thick and weighty as to destroy both men and cattle, and break trees in pieces, and spoil the corn, the grass, and the tender herb; and fire, that is lightning, which descended so low, and in such quantities, as ran along the ground, and consumed all it met with. Artapanus {g}, an Heathen writer, who speaks of this storm of hail, says, that Moses, besides the hail, caused earthquakes by night, so that those that escaped the earthquakes were taken away by the hail, and those that escaped the hail perished by the earthquakes, which he says overthrew all the houses, and most of the temples:

and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt; upon Egypt, where rain was not common, and on all the land of Egypt, when in some parts of it it was scarce known, and hail as thick as rain; ice, snow, and hail, are most rarely if ever seen there, the air not being cold enough for the production of them {h}. This was the Lord's immediate doing, when there was no likelihood of it, nor any appearance of second causes concurring to produce it, and came at the exact time he had foretold it should; all which were very extraordinary.

{g} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 435, 436. {h} Vid.

Scheuchzer. Physica Sacra, vol. 1. p. 139.

Exodus 9:24

Ver. 24. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail,.... Which was a miracle within a miracle, as Aben Ezra observes; and very wonderful indeed it was, that the hail did not quench the fire, nor the fire melt the hail, as Philo the Jew {i} remarks:

very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation; See Gill on "Ex 9:18".

{i} De Vita. Mosis, l. 1. p. 620.

Exodus 9:25

Ver. 25. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt,.... It was in all the land, and it smote and did mischief in all parts of it, only in Goshen, after excepted:

all that was in the field, both man and beast; which they that neglected the word of the Lord took no care to fetch home, these were all smitten and destroyed by the hail: and the hail smote every herb of the field; that is, the greatest part of them, for some were left, which the locusts afterwards ate, Ex 10:15, and brake every tree of the field; and the vines and fig trees, Ps 78:47.

Exodus 9:26

Ver. 26. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel [were], was there no hail. So that such Egyptians as might dwell among them, they, their servants, their cattle, and their fruits, escaped this plague; and oftentimes do wicked men fare the better for the people of God that are among them.

Exodus 9:27

Ver. 27. And Pharaoh sent,.... Not persons to observe whether there was any hail fell in the land of Goshen, though there are some {k} that so supply the words; but it cannot be thought that Pharaoh would send, or that any would go thither amidst such a storm of thunder and hail; but he sent messengers,

and called Moses and Aaron; who might be in his palace, at least not very far off:

and said unto them, I have sinned this time; not but that he had sinned before, and must be conscious of it, particularly in breaking his promise so often; but now he acknowledged his sin, which he had never done before: and this confession of sin did not arise from a true sense of it, from hatred of it, and sorrow for it as committed against God; but from the fright he was in, the horror of his mind, the dread of the present plague being continued; and the terror of death that seized him, the rebounding noise of the thunder in his ears, the flashes of lightning in his face, and the hailstones beating upon the top of his house, and against the windows and sides of it, frightened him exceedingly, and forced this confession from him:

the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked; which was well spoken, had it been serious and from his heart; for God is righteous in his nature, and in all his works, and in all those judgments he had inflicted upon him; and he and his people were wicked in using the Israelites in such a cruel manner, and in detaining them when it had been promised them again and again that they should have leave to go, and especially in rebelling against God, and disobeying his commands.

{k} "Misisset qui observarent", Junius & Tremellius.

Exodus 9:28

Ver. 28. Entreat the Lord, for it is enough,.... Hail, thunder, and lightning enough; or pray that this may be enough, and thought sufficient, and that there may be no more; or "entreat the Lord, and much" {l}; pray, and pray much, pray earnestly and without intermission until the plague ceases:

that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; or "voices of God" {m}; for thunder is the voice of God, and these thunderings or voices were very loud, the claps were very terrible to hear, and the hail was very grievous and heavy, and the whole was very amazing and frightful, and the more to Pharaoh, who perhaps had never heard the voice of thunder, or seen an hail storm before, even a common one, these being rare in the land of Egypt:

and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer; go the three days' journey into the wilderness, directly and immediately; he would not put it off, on any account, and much less refuse to let them go at all, as he had often done.

{l} brw-yryteh "orate multam", Rivet. {m} Myhla tlq "voces Dei", Montanus, Drusius.

Exodus 9:29

Ver. 29. And Moses said unto him, as soon as I am gone out of the city,.... Zoan or Tanis, for it was in the field of Zoan where these wonders were wrought, Ps 78:12, the reason why he went out of the city to pray, Jarchi says, was because it was full of idols; but the truer reason was, that he might be private and alone while he was praying to God; and perhaps he went out also to show that he was not frightened at the storm, or afraid of being destroyed by it, and was confident of preservation in the midst of it, in the open field, by the power of God, whom he served:

I will spread abroad my hands unto the Lord; which was a prayer gesture directed to by the light of nature, and was used very anciently, and by the Heathens, as well as others; of which the learned Rivet has given many instances in his comment on this text:

and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; this he had faith in, and full assurance of before he prayed for it; he knew the mind and will of God, and not only he knew what he could do, but what he would do, and which he tells Pharaoh of before hand; which was a full proof that he was a god to Pharaoh, as the Lord said he had made him, **Ex 7:1**

that thou mayest know how that the earth is the Lord's; that the whole earth is his, and therefore he can do, and does in it whatever he pleases; as the heavens also are his, and therefore can cause thunder, lightning, hail, and rain, and stop them when he thinks fit; or that the land of Egypt particularly was his, and not Pharaoh's, and therefore could destroy, or save it at his pleasure; and particularly it being his, Pharaoh had no right to detain his people in it against his will, who was Lord of it.

Exodus 9:30

Ver. 30. But as for thee, and thy servants,.... Notwithstanding the confession of sin he had made, and his earnest request that the Lord might be entreated to remove this plague, and though he had been assured it would be removed:

I know that ye will not yet fear the Lord God: they had not feared him yet; the confession of sin made did not arise from the true fear of God, but from a dread of punishment, and when delivered from this plague, the goodness of God would have no such effect as to cause him and his servants to fear the Lord; or "I know, that before ye were afraid of the face of the Lord God" {n}, which Kimchi {o} and Ben Melech interpret thus,

"I know that thou and thy servants, before I pray for you, are afraid of the face of the Lord God, but after I have prayed, and the thunders and rain are ceased, ye will sin again;"

and so they did.

{n} Nwaryt Mrj "priusquam timeretis", Tigurine version. {o} Sepher Shorash, rad. Mrj.

Exodus 9:31

Ver. 31. And the flax and the barley was smitten,.... With the hail, thunder, and lightning, and were beat down, bruised, broken, and blasted, and destroyed; of the former there were great quantities produced in Egypt, which was famous for linen, much was made there, and there were many that wrought in fine flax, see Isa 19:9 and the latter were used not only to feed their cattle, but to make a drink of, as we do, ale and strong beer; and so the Egyptians use it to this day, as Dr. Shaw {p} says, both to feed their cattle, and after it is dried and parched, to make a fermented, intoxicating liquor, called "bonzah"; probably the same with the barley wine of the ancients, and a species of the "sicar", or strong drink of the Scriptures:

for the barley [was] in the ear, and the flax [was] bolled; or in the stalk, quite grown up, and so the ears of the one were beat off, and the stalks of the other battered with the hail, and broken and destroyed.

{p} Travels, tom. 2. c. 2. sect. 5. p. 407. Ed. 2.

[Exodus 9:32]

Ver. 32. But the wheat and the rye were not smitten,.... Bruised, broken, beat down, and destroyed by hail: the word by us rendered "rye", and by other "fitches" or "spelt", is thought by Dr. Shaw {q} to be "rice", of which there were and still are plantations in Egypt; whereas rye is little, if at all known in those countries, and besides is of the quickest growth; and he observes that rice was the "olyra" of the ancient Egyptians, by which word the Septuagint render the Hebrew word here; and from Pliny {r} we learn, that "olyra", and "oryza", or rice, are the same, and which with the Greeks is "zea", by which some translate the word here:

for they were not grown up; and so their leaves, as the same traveller observes, were at that time of so soft and yielding a nature, that the hail by meeting with no resistance, as from the flax and barley, did them no harm; and so the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it: "they were late"; and so the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret it: for the wheat harvest with the Jews, and so with the Egyptians, was later than the barley harvest, there being about a month's difference between them: some render the word "dark or hidden" {s} because, as Aben Ezra says, they were now under ground; and if this was the case, indeed the reason is clear why they were not smitten; but this was not the case, for, according to Pliny {t}, there was but one month's difference in Egypt between the barley and the wheat; but rather they are said to be so, because the ear was as yet hid, and was not come forth; it just began to spindle, or, as the above traveller explains it, they were of a dark green colour, as young corn generally is, as contradistinction to its being of a bright yellow or golden colour, when it is ripe; for, adds he, the context supposes the wheat and the rice not only to have been sown, but to have been likewise in some forwardness, as they well might be in the month of Abib, answering to our March.

{q} Travels, tom. 2. c. 2. sect. 5. p. 407. Ed. 2. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 7. 9. {s} tlypa "caliginosa", Montanus, Vatablus; "latuerant", Tigurine version; "latentia", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius. {t} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 7. 9.)

[Exodus 9:33]

Ver. 33. And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh,.... Into the field, where, being retired from company, he could freely, and without being disturbed, pray unto God:

and spread abroad his hands unto the Lord; denoting the spreading of cases before God, and expectation, hope, and readiness to receive favours from him:

and the thunder and hail ceased; immediately upon the entreaty of Moses; see the power and prevalence of prayer: a like instance we have in Elijah, **Jas 5:17** and the rain was not poured upon the earth; so that there was rain as well as hail, which was restrained and entirely ceased.

Exodus 9:34

Ver. 34. And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunders were ceased,.... And there was a clear sky and a fine serene heaven, the black clouds were dispersed and gone, and he heard no more the clattering of the hailstones, and the terrible claps of thunder, and saw no more the flashes of lightning, but all was calm and composed:

he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants; instead of giving glory to God, who had heard the prayers of Moses and Aaron for them, and had delivered them from their frights and fears, and the terror and horror they were in, and of letting the people of Israel go, see Re 16:21.

Exodus 9:35

Ver. 35. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened,.... Instead of being softened, as it seemed to be when under the plague, it became harder and harder when delivered from it:

neither would he let the children of Israel go; though he had so absolutely promised it, and assured them that he would not keep them, and that they should not stay any longer:

as the Lord had spoken by Moses; that so his heart would be hardened until the signs and wonders were multiplied upon him, God designed to perform, **Ex 4:21**.

Exodus 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 10

This chapter is introduced with giving the reasons why the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, Ex 10:1. Moses and Aaron go in to him, and once more demanded in the name of the Lord the dismission of the people of Israel, and in case of refusal, threatened him with locusts being sent into his country, which should make terrible havoc in all his coasts, Ex 10:3, the servants of Pharaoh entreat him to let them go, upon which Moses and Aaron are brought in again, and treated with about the terms of their departure; but they, insisting upon taking all with them, men, women, and children, and flocks and herds, and Pharaoh not willing that any but men should go, they are drove from his presence in wrath, Ex 10:7 wherefore the locusts were brought on all the land, which made sad devastation in it, Ex 10:12, and this wrought on Pharaoh so far as to acknowledge his sin, pray for forgiveness, and to desire Moses and Aaron to entreat the Lord to remove the plague, which they did, and it was removed accordingly, but still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, Ex 10:16 then followed the plague of thick darkness over all the land for three days, which brought Pharaoh to yield that all should go with them excepting their flocks and herds; but Moses not only insisted that not a hoof should be left behind, but that Pharaoh should give them sacrifices and burnt offerings, Ex 10:21. Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he refused to comply, and Moses was bid to be gone, and take care never to see his face any more, and which Moses agreed to, Ex 10:27.

Ver. 1. And the Lord said unto Moses, go in unto Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart,.... Or, as some render it, "though I have hardened his heart" {u}; or otherwise it would seem rather to be a reason he should not go, than why he should; at least it would be discouraging, and he might object to what purpose should he go, it would be in vain, no end would be answered by it; though there was an end God had in view, and which was answered by hardening his heart,

and the heart of his servants; whose hearts also were hardened until now; until the plague of the locusts was threatened, and then they relent; which end was as follows:

that I might shew these my signs before him; which had been shown already, and others that were to be done, see **Ex 7:3** or in the midst of him {w}, in the midst of his land, or in his heart, see **Ex 9:14**.

{u} yk "quamvis", Piscator; so Ainsworth. {w} wbrqb "in medio ejus", Pagninus, Drusius; "in interioribus ejus", Montanus.

Exodus 10:2

Ver. 2. And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son,.... Not of his sons and grandsons only; for Moses here, as Aben Ezra observes, was in the stead of Israel; and the sense is, that it should be told to their posterity in all succeeding ages:

what things I have wrought in Egypt; the plagues that he inflicted on the Egyptians:

and my signs which I have done amongst them; meaning the same things which were signs:

that ye may know how that I am the Lord; that their God is the true Jehovah, and the one only living and true God; the Lord God omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, infinite, and eternal.

Exodus 10:3

Ver. 3. And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh,.... As the Lord commanded them, for what is before said to Moses was designed for Aaron also, his prophet and spokesman:

and said unto him, thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews; as the ambassadors of the God of Israel, and in his name said:

how long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? to acknowledge his offence, lie low before God, and be subject to his will; he had humbled himself for a moment, but then this did not continue; what God expected of him, and complains of the want of, was such a continued humiliation before him, and such a subjection to him, as would issue in complying with what he had so often demanded of him, and is as follows:

let my people go, that they may serve me; see **Ex 9:1**.

Exodus 10:4

Ver. 4. Else, if thou refuse to let my people go,.... He threatens him with the following plague, the plague of the locusts, which Pliny {x} calls "denrum irae pestis":

behold, tomorrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast; according to Bishop Usher {y} this was about the seventh day of the month Abib, that this plague was threatened, and on the morrow, which was the eighth day, it was brought; but Aben Ezra relates it as an opinion of Japhet an Hebrew writer, that there were many days between the plague of the hail, and the plague of the locusts, that there might be time for the grass and plants to spring out of the field; but this seems not necessary, for these locusts only ate of what were left of the hail, as in the following verse.

{x} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29. {y} Annales Vet. Test. p. 21.

Exodus 10:5

Ver. 5. And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth,.... Or, "cover the eye of the earth" {z}; either the appearance and colour of the earth, so as they could not be discerned for the multitude of the locusts on it; so the word is used in Nu 11:7 or the eye of man looking upon the earth, which would not be able to see it, because the locusts would be between his eye and the earth. The Targum of Onkelos is,

"and shall cover the eye of the sun of the earth,"

so that its rays shall not reach the earth; and so Abarbinel interprets it of the sun, which is the light of the earth, when it casts forth its rays, as the eye upon the object that is seen; and the meaning is, that the locusts should be so thick between the heavens and the earth, that the eye of the earth, which is the sun, could not see or cast its rays upon it, as in Ex 10:15, and so Pliny says {a}, that locusts came sometimes in such multitudes as to darken the sun:

and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail; particularly the wheat and the rye, or rice, which was not grown, **Ex 9:32** and the herb or grass of the land, Ex 10:12

and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field; such fruit trees as escaped the hail, and such boughs and branches of them which were not broken off by it, Ex 10:15 and locusts will indeed eat trees themselves, the bark of them, and gnaw everything, even the doors of houses, as Pliny {b} relates.

{z} Urah Nye "oculum terrae", Montanus, Piscator; so Ainsworth. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29. {b} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.

Exodus 10:6

Ver. 6. They shall fill thy houses,.... The king's palace and all the offices of it:

and the houses of thy servants; the palaces of his nobles and courtiers:

and the houses of all the Egyptians; of all the common people, not only in the metropolis, but in all the cities and towns in the kingdom; and so Dr. Shaw {c} says, the locusts he saw in Barbary, in the years 1724 and 1725, climbed as they advanced over every tree or wall that was in their way; nay, they entered into our very houses and bedchambers, he says, like so many thieves:

which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers, have seen since the day they were upon the earth unto this day; for size, for numbers, and for the mischief they should do; for though they have sometimes appeared in great numbers, and have covered a large spot of ground where they have settled, and devoured all green things, yet never as to cover a whole country at once, and so large an one as Egypt, and destroy all green things in it; at least, never such a thing had been seen or known in Egypt before since it was a nation, though it was a country sometimes visited by locusts; for Pliny {d} says, that in the country of Cyreniaca, which was near Egypt, see **Ac 2:10** there was a law made for the diminishing of them, and keeping them under, to be observed three times a year, first by breaking their eggs, then destroying their young, and when they were grown up:

and he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh; as soon as Moses had delivered his message, perceiving anger in Pharaoh's countenance, and concluding from hence and some gestures of his that he should not succeed, and perhaps might be bid to go away, though it is not recorded; or "he looked and went out from him" {e}, in honour to the king, as R. Jeshuah observes, he went backward with his face to the king; he did not turn his back upon him, but went out with his face to him; and which as it was and is the manner in the eastern countries, so it is with us at this day, to go from the presence of the king, not with the back, but with the face turned toward him, so long as he is to be seen.

{c} Travels, p. 187, Edit. 2. {d} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. 11. c. 29.) {e} Npyw "et respexit", Pagninus, "et respiciens exivit", &c. Tigurine version.

Exodus 10:7

Ver. 7. And Pharaoh's servants said to him,.... His courtiers and counsellors, such of them as were not so hardened as others, or however now began to relent, and dreaded what would be the consequence of things, even the ruin of the whole country, the good of which they seem to have had at heart:

how long shall this man be a snare unto us? an occasion of ruin and destruction, as birds by a snare; they speak in a contemptuous manner of Moses, calling him "this man", the rather to ingratiate themselves into the good will of Pharaoh, and that their advice might be the better and the easier taken:

let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God: that is, Moses and his people, grant them their request, that the land may be preserved from ruin; for if things go on long at this rate, utter destruction must ensue:

knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed? as good as ruined, by the plagues that already were come upon it, especially by the last, by the murrain and boils upon the cattle, which destroyed great quantities, and by the hail which had smitten their flax and their barley; or, "must thou first know that Egypt is destroyed?" before thou wilt let the people go; or dost thou first wish, or is it thy pleasure, that it should be first declared to thee that Egypt is destroyed, as Aben Ezra interprets it, before thou wilt grant the dismission of this people? The Targum of Jonathan is,

"dost thou not yet know, that by his hands the land of Egypt must perish?"

See Gill on "Ex 1:15".
See Gill on "Ex 2:15".

Exodus 10:8

Ver. 8. And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh,.... Upon this motion of his ministers, messengers were sent to bring them in again:

and he said, go, serve the Lord your God; as you have often desired:

but who are they that shall go? or, "who and who" {f}? for Pharaoh was unwilling that they should all go, but would have some retained as pledges of their return; for he was jealous of a design to get out of his country, and never return again, which he could not bear the thoughts of, even of losing such a large number of men he had under his power, and from whom he received so much profit and advantage by their labour.

{f} ymw ym "qui et qui?" Pagninus, Montanus; "quis & quis?" Vatablus.

Exodus 10:9

Ver. 9. Moses said, we will go with our young and with our old,.... The latter were necessary to guide, direct, and instruct in the business of sacrifice, and to perform it as heads of their respective families; and the former were to be present, that they might be trained up and inured to such religious services:

with our sons and with our daughters; as with persons of every age, so of every sex, who had all a concern herein, especially as it was a solemn feast, which all were to partake of:

with our flocks and with our herds will we go; which were requisite for the sacrifices, not knowing which they were to sacrifice, and with which to serve God, till they came to the place where they were to sacrifice; see Ex 10:26,

for we [must hold] a feast unto the Lord; which required the presence of old and young, men, women, and children, to join in it, and their flocks and their herds, out of which it was to be made.

Exodus 10:10

Ver. 10. And he said unto them, let the Lord be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones,.... Either as mocking them, let the Lord you talk of be with you if he will, and let him deliver you if he can, as I shall let you go with your children, which I never will; or as wishing them ill, that the Lord their God may be with them, as he should dismiss them on their proposal, that is, not at all; he wishes they might never have the presence of the Lord, or receive any from him, till he should dismiss them, which he was determined never to do in the manner they desired; and therefore the sum of his wish or imprecation is, that they might never enjoy any benefits from the Lord; the first sense seems to be best:

look to it, for evil is before you; which is either a charge of sin upon them, that they had an evil design upon him, and intended to raise a mutiny, make an insurrection, and form a rebellion against him; or a threatening to inflict the evil of punishment upon them, if they would not comply with his terms; and it is as if he should say, be it at your peril if you offer to go away in any other manner than it is my pleasure.

Exodus 10:11

Ver. 11. Not so,.... You shall not go with your children as you propose:

go now ye [that are] men, and serve the Lord, for that you did desire; suggesting that that was all they first required, that their men should, go three days into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto the Lord; whereas the demand was, let my people go, **Ex 5:1** which were not the men only, but the women and children also, and all were concerned in the service of God, and in keeping a feast to him:

and they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence; by some of his officers, according to his orders.

Exodus 10:12

Ver. 12. And the Lord said unto Moses, stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt,.... First one way, and then another, towards every quarter, and every part of the land, to signify that the following plague would come upon the whole land:

for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt; the stretching out of his hand was to be the signal to them to come up and spread themselves over the land, which was brought about by the mighty power of God; for otherwise there was no such virtue in the hand or rod of Moses, to have produced so strange an event:

and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left; the wheat and the rye, or rice, the grass, herbs, and plants, it had beat down, but not utterly destroyed, as well as some boughs and branches of trees which were left unbroken by it.

Exodus 10:13

Ver. 13. And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt,.... His hand, with his rod in it:

and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land, all that day and all that night; all that day after he had been driven from Pharaoh, and after he had stretched out his hand with his rod in it over Egypt, which was the seventh of the month Abib, and all the night following. This Jehovah did, who holds the winds in his fist, and brings them out of his treasures, whose will they obey, and whose word they fulfil:

and when it was morning; the morrow was come, Ex 10:4 the eighth day of the month Abib:

the east wind brought the locusts; it was usual for these creatures to be taken up and carried with the wind, and brought into countries, as Pliny {g} and other writers attest. In the year 1527, a strong wind brought vast troops of locusts out of Turkey into Poland, which did much mischief; and in the year 1536 a wind from the Euxine Pontus brought such vast numbers of them into Podolia, as that for twenty miles round they devoured everything {h}. The word here used commonly signifies the east wind, and so the Jewish writers unanimously interpret it; and if those locusts were brought from the Red sea, into which they were carried, it must be by an east wind, since the Red sea was east of Egypt; but the Septuagint version renders it the "south wind", and which is approved of by De Dieu on the place, and by Bochart {i}; and the latter supposes these locusts were brought by a south wind out of Ethiopia, which lay to the south of Egypt, and where in the spring of the year, as it now was, were usually great numbers of locusts, and where were a people that lived upon them, as Diodorus Siculus {k} and Strabo {l} relate; who both say that at the vernal equinox, or in the spring, the west and southwest winds blowing strongly brought locusts into those parts; and the south wind being warm might contribute to the production, cherishing, and increasing of these creatures, and which are sometimes brought by a south wind. Dr. Shaw says {m}, the locusts he saw in Barbary, An. 1724 and 1725, were much bigger than our common grasshoppers, and had brown spotted wings, with legs and bodies of a bright yellow; their first appearance was toward the latter end of March, the wind having been for some time from the south.

{g} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29. {h} Frantzii Hist. Animal. Sacr. par. 5. c. 4. p. 794. {i} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 15. col. 101, 102, & l. 4. c. 3. col. 463. Vid. Jablonski de Terra Goshen, Dissertat. 5. sect. 5. {k} Bibliothec, l. 3. p. 162. {l} Geograph. l. 16. p. 531. {m} Travels, p. 187. Edit. 2.

Exodus 10:14

Ver. 14. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt,.... Being raised up by the wind in the places where they were generated, they flew and spread themselves all over the land, being in a wonderful manner produced and multiplied by the power of God:

and rested in all the coasts of Egypt; in every part of it where the Egyptians dwelt, and where there were meadows, pastures, fields, gardens, orchards; here they lighted and fed, excepting the land of Goshen, where Israel dwelt, which must be thought to be exempted from this plague, as from the rest.

Very grievous were they; because of the mischief that they did, and because of their multitude, for they were innumerable, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, and as it is, Ps 105:34,

there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such; there were none before, and there would be none afterwards like them, which Moses knew by a spirit of prophecy. If this is to be understood of their size, they must be very large; in the year 1556, there were locusts at Milain that were a span long, and had six feet, and these like the feet of rats, and there was one four times bigger than the rest, which was taken and kept by a citizen, and would hiss like a serpent when it saw that no food was set before it {n}; yea, Pliny {o} speaks of locusts in India three feet long; and what Moses here says is not contradicted in **Joe 2:2** because his words may be understood of the Chaldean army, of which the locusts were an emblem; and besides, each may be restrained to the country in which they were, as that none ever before or since were seen in Egypt as these, though they might be in other countries; and so those in Joel's time were such as never before or since were seen in the land of Judea, though they might be in other places.

{n} Frantzii Hist. Animal. Sacr. par. 5. c. 4. p. 800. {o} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.)

Exodus 10:15

Ver. 15. For they covered the face of the whole earth,.... Of the whole land of Egypt; and this seems to be the instance in which these locusts differed from all others, that had been or would be, even in their numbers; for though there might have been before, and have been since, such vast numbers of them together as to darken the air and the sun, and by lighting first on one spot, and then on another, have destroyed whole countries; yet never was such an instance known as this, as that they should come in so large a body, and at once to light, and spread, and settle themselves over the whole country. Leo Africanus {p} indeed speaks of a swarm of locusts, which he himself saw at Tagtessa in Africa, A. D. 1510, which covered the whole surface of the ground; but then that was but in one place, but this was a whole country. It is in the original, "they covered the eye of the whole earth"; of which See Gill on "Ex 10:5".

so that the land was darkened; the proper colour of the earth, and the green grass on it, could not be seen for them, they lay so thick upon it; and being perhaps of a brown colour, as they often are, the land seemed dark with them:

and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees, which the hail had left; for though every herb of the field is said to be smitten, and every tree of the field to be broke with it, **Ex 9:25**, yet this, as has been observed, is to be understood either hyperbolically, or of the greater part thereof, but not of the whole:

and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt; the like is said to befall the province of Carpitania, in the nineth year of Childibert, king of France; which was so wasted by locusts, that not a tree, nor a vineyard, nor a forest, nor any sort of fruit, nor any other green thing remained {q}. So Dr. Shaw {r} says of the locusts he saw as above related, that they let nothing escape them, eating up everything that was green and juicy, not only the lesser kinds of vegetables, but the vine likewise, the fig tree, the pomegranate, the palm, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field. But then such devastations are usually made gradually, by these creatures moving from place to place, whereas this destruction in Egypt was done in one day. Indeed we are told in history, that in one country one hundred and forty acres of land were destroyed in one day {s}; but what is this to all the land of Egypt? with this plague may be compared that of the locusts upon the sounding of the fifth trumpet, **Re 9:1**.

{p} Descriptio Africae, l. 2. p. 117. {q} Frantzii Hist. Animal. Sacr. par. 5. c. 4. p. 802. {r} Ut supra. (Travels, p. 187. Edit. 2.) {s} Frantz. ib. p. 800.

Exodus 10:16

Ver. 16. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste,.... Or, "hastened to call them" {t}; sent messengers in all haste to fetch them, and desire them to come as soon as possible to him. Thus he who a few hours ago drove them from his presence, in a hurry, sends for them to come to him with all speed, which the present circumstances he was in required:

and he said to Moses and Aaron: when they were brought into his presence:

I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you; against the Lord by disobeying his command, in refusing to let Israel go, when he had so often required it of him; and against Moses and Aaron his ambassadors, whom he had treated with contempt, and had drove them from his presence with disgrace; and against the people of Israel, whom they personated, by retaining them, and using them so ill as he had. This confession did not arise from a true sense of sin, as committed against God, nor indeed does he in it own Jehovah to be his God, only the God of Moses and Aaron, or of the Israelites; but from the fright he was in, and fear of punishment continued upon him, to the utter ruin of him and his people.

{t} arql-rhmyw "et festinavit ad vocandum", Montanus; "festinavit accersere", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Exodus 10:17

Ver. 17. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin, only this once,.... Pretending that he would never offend any more, and if he did, he did not desire it should be forgiven him, but that due punishment should be inflicted on him. These words are directed to Moses, he being the principal person that came to him with a commission from the Lord, and who was made a god to Pharaoh; and therefore he does not ask forgiveness of the Lord, but of Moses:

and entreat the Lord your God, that he may take away from me this death only; this deadly plague of the locusts, which devouring all the fruits of the earth, must in course produce a famine, and that the death of men. Moreover, the author of the book of Wisdom says, that the bites of the locusts killed men,

"For them the bitings of grasshoppers and flies killed, neither was there found any remedy for their life: for they were worthy to be punished by such." (Wisdom 16:9)

Pharaoh was sensible that this plague came from God, and that he only could remove it; and therefore begs the prayers of Moses and Aaron to him for the removal of it, and suggests that he would never desire such another favour; but that if he offended again, and another plague was inflicted on him, he could not desire it to be taken away; by which he would be understood, that he determined to offend no more, or give them any occasion for any other judgment to come upon him, was he once clear of this.

Exodus 10:18

Ver. 18. And he went out from Pharaoh,.... Without the city, as he had been wont to do: and entreated the Lord; prayed to him that he would remove the plague of the locusts from the land.

Exodus 10:19

Ver. 19. And the Lord turned a mighty strong west wind,.... He turned the wind the contrary way it before blew; it was an east wind that brought the locusts, but now it was changed into a west wind, or "a wind of the sea" {u}, of the Mediterranean sea; a wind which blew from thence, which lay to the west of Egypt, as the Red sea did to the east of it, to which the locusts were carried by the wind as follows: which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea; and as it is usual for locusts to be brought by winds, so to be carried away with them, and to be let fall into seas, lakes, and pools, and there perish. So Pliny says {w} of locusts, that being taken up and carried with the wind in flocks or swarms, they fell into seas and lakes; and Jerom observes {x} in his time, that they had seen swarms of locusts cover the land of Judea, which upon the wind rising have been driven into the first and last seas; that is, into the Dead sea, and into the Mediterranean sea; see **Joe 2:20**. This sea here called the Red sea is the same which is now called the Arabian gulf; in the original text it is the sea of Suph; that is, the sea of flags or rushes; as the word is rendered, **Ex 2:3** from the great numbers of these growing on the banks of it, which are full of them, as Thevenot {y} says; or the "sea of weeds" {z}, from the multitude of them in the bottom of it, or floating on it. So Columbus found in the Spanish West Indies, on the coast of Paria, a sea full of herbs, or weeds {a}, which grew so thick, that they sometimes in a manner stopped the ships. Some render Yam Suph, the sea of bushes; and some late travellers {b} observe, that though, in the dreadful wilds along this lake, one sees neither tree, shrub, nor vegetable, except a kind of bramble, yet it is remarkable that they are found in the sea growing on its bottom, where we behold with astonishment whole groves of trees blossoming and bearing fruit, as if nature by these marine vegetables meant to compensate for the extreme sterility reigning in all the deserts of Arabia; and with this agrees the account that Pliny {c} gives of the Red sea, that in it olives and green fruit trees grow; yea, he says that that and all the Eastern ocean is full of woods; and adds, it is wonderful that in the Red sea woods live, especially the laurel, and the olive bearing berries. Hillerus {d} thinks this sea here has the name of the sea of Suph from a city of the same name near unto it. It is often called the Red sea in profane authors as here, not from the coral that grew in it, or the red sand at the bottom of it, or red mountains near it; though Thevenot {e} says, there are some mountains all over red on the sides of it; nor from the shade of those mountains upon it; nor from the appearance of it through the rays of the sun upon it; and much less from the natural colour of it; which, as Curtius {f} observes, does not differ from others; though a late traveller says {g}, that

"on several parts of this sea (the Red sea) we observed abundance of reddish spots made by a weed resembling "cargaco" (or Sargosso) rooted in the bottom, and floating in some places: upon strict examination, it proved to be that which we found the Ethiopians call Sufo (as here Suph), used up and down for dying their stuffs and clothes of a red colour,"

but the Greeks called it so from Erythras or Erythrus, a king that reigned in those parts {h}, whose name signifies red; and it is highly probable the same with Esau, who is called Edom, that is, red, from the red pottage he sold his birthright for to Jacob; and this sea washing his country, Idumea or Edom, was called the Red sea from thence; and here the locusts were cast by the wind, or "fixed" {i}, as a tent is fixed, as the word signifies, and there continued, and never appeared more:

there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt; so that the removal of them was as great a miracle as the bringing them at first: this was done about the nineth day of the month Abib.

{u} My xwr "venture maris", Montanus, Drusius. {w} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29. {x} Comment. in Joel, ii. 20. {y} Travels into the Levant, B. 2. ch. 33. p. 175. {z} Pwo hmy "in mare algosum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "in mare carectosum", Tigurine version. {a} P. Martyr. de Angleria, Decad. 1. l. 6. Vide Decad. 3. 5. {b} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 2. p. 158. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 103. l. 13. c. 25. {d} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 128. {e} Ut supra. (Travels into the Levant, B. 2. ch. 33. p. 175.) {f} Hist. l. 8. sect. 9. {g} Hieronymo Lobo's Observations, &c. in Ray's Travels, vol. 2. p. 489. {h} Curtius ut supra. (Hist. l. 8. sect. 9.). Mela de Situ Orbis, l. 3. c. 8. Strabo, l. 16. p. 535, 536. {i} wheqtyw "et fixit eam", Montanus; so Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Ainsworth.

Exodus 10:20

Ver. 20. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart,.... For as yet he had not brought all his judgments on him he designed to bring:

so that he would not let the children of Israel go: though he had promised to do it, and that he would never offend more in this way.

Exodus 10:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... About the eleventh day of the month Abib:

stretch out thine hand toward heaven; where the luminaries are, and from whence light comes:

that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt; that is, what caused it, the gross vapours and thick fogs; for otherwise darkness itself, being a privation of light, cannot be felt: Onkelos paraphrases it,

"after that the darkness of the night is removed;"

so Jonathan; that it might appear to be different from that, and be much grosser.

Exodus 10:22

Ver. 22. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven, and there was a thick darkness over all the land of Egypt three days. The eleventh, twelveth, and thirteenth days of the month Abib; with this compare the fifth vial, Re 16:10.

Exodus 10:23

Ver. 23. They saw not one another,.... Not only the luminaries of heaven were covered and beclouded with the darkness, so that they were of no use to them; but the fogs and vapours which occasioned it were so damp and clammy that they put out their fires, lamps, and candles, so that they could receive no benefit from them:

neither rose up any from his place for three days; from the place of his habitation, not being able to find the way to the door, or however not able to do any business abroad; and besides were quite amazed and confounded, supposing the course of nature was changed and all things going to a dissolution, their consciences filled with horror and terror and black despair, strange and terrible phantoms and apparitions presented to their minds, as the author of the book of Wisdom suggests,

"No power of the fire might give them light: neither could the bright flames of the stars endure to lighten that horrible night." (Wisdom 17:5)

and which is countenanced by what the psalmist says, who instead of this plague of darkness, takes notice of evil angels being sent among them, Ps 78:49 that is, devils in horrible shapes represented to their minds, which dreadfully distressed and terrified them, so that they durst not stir and move from the place where they were:

but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings; not only in the land of Goshen, but in all places where they were mixed with the Egyptians, as it is plain they were, from Ex 10:23 so that they could go about their business, and perform it as at other times, and had now a fine opportunity of packing up their goods, and getting every thing ready for their departure, without being observed by the Egyptians. Doctor Lightfoot {k} thinks, that now they attended to the ordinance of circumcision, which had been generally neglected, and was necessary to their partaking of the passover, which in a few days was to be observed, and of which no uncircumcised person might eat, Ex 12:48 and which he grounds upon Ps 105:28, and this time was wisely taken for it, when the Egyptians could have no opportunity or advantage against them, because of their soreness by it; it may indeed be wondered at, that they did not take the advantage of the darkness the Egyptians were in, of getting out of the land, and going their three days' journey into the wilderness; but it was the will of God that they should not steal away privately, or go by flight as fugitives, but openly, and with the mighty hand and outstretched arm of God; besides, the Lord had not as yet wrought all the judgments he intended. In the fabulous expedition of Bacchus against the Indians, a story is told which seems to be taken from hence, that the Indians were covered with darkness, while those with Bacchus were in light all around them {l}.

{k} Works, vol. 1. p. 707. {l} Vid. Huet. Quaest. Alnetan. l. 2. c. 13. sect. 12. p. 204.

Exodus 10:24

Ver. 24. And Pharaoh called unto Moses,.... After the three days, as the Targum of Jonathan, when the darkness was over, or at least much diminished, fearing that still worse evils would befall him:

and said, go ye, serve the Lord, only let your flocks and your herds be stayed; stopped or remained behind, as a pledge and security of their return; and these the rather he was desirous of retaining, because of the great loss of cattle he had sustained by the murrain and boils upon them, and by the hail: let your little ones also go with you; this he had refused before, but now consents to it, which he thought was doing them a great favour, and that upon such terms they might be content to go.

Exodus 10:25

Ver. 25. And Moses said, thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings,.... Sheep, rams, and goats for sacrifices, and oxen for burnt offerings; and that of his own, as Jarchi interprets it; but rather the meaning is, that besides having their little ones with them, they must be allowed also to take their cattle for sacrifices and burnt offerings:

that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God; might have wherewith to offer up in sacrifice to him as he shall require.

Exodus 10:26

Ver. 26. Our cattle also shall go with us,.... Of every kind, of the flocks and of the herds:

there shall not an hoof be left behind; not a single creature that has an hoof: it is a proverbial expression, signifying that they should carry all that belonged to them with them:

for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; something of every kind and sort, all they had being devoted to his service, and to be yielded to him upon demand:

and we know not with what we must serve the Lord, until we come thither; into the wilderness; they knew not exactly and precisely what kind of creatures or how many of them, as Aben Ezra observes, they were to offer at a time; for though before this there was a known distinction between clean and unclean creatures, and the various offerings and sacrifices of the patriarchs might in a good measure direct them in the use of them; yet the special and peculiar laws about sacrifices were not given until after their deliverance, and they were got into the wilderness; so that this was not a bare pretence to get their cattle along with them, but was the true case and real matter of fact.

Exodus 10:27

Ver. 27. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart,.... Yet more and more:

and he would not let them go; his heart was set against it, his will was resolute, and he was determined never to let them go.

Exodus 10:28

Ver. 28. And Pharaoh said unto him,.... To Moses:

get thee from me; be gone from my presence, I have nothing more to say to thee, or do with thee:

take heed to thyself; lest mischief befall thee from me, or those about me:

see my face no more; neither here nor elsewhere:

for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die; this was a foolish as well as a wicked speech, when he lay at the mercy of Moses, rather than Moses at his; he being made a god unto him, and had such power to inflict plagues upon him, of which he had had repeated instances.

Exodus 10:29

Ver. 29. And Moses said, thou hast spoken well,.... Not that which was good, in a moral sense, for it was very wicked, but what would eventually prove true:

I will see thy face again no more; which may be understood either conditionally, except he was sent for, and he desired to see him, he would not come of himself; or absolutely knowing by a spirit of prophecy that he should be no more sent unto him, and that Pharaoh should in a little time be drowned in the Red sea, when he would be seen no more by him nor any other; for as for what is said in the following chapter, it is thought by many to have been said at this time, as it might even before he went out of the presence of Pharaoh, which in Ex 11:8 he is said to do in anger: and as for Pharaoh's calling for him at midnight, and bidding him rise and begone, Ex 12:31 it might be delivered by messengers, and so he be not seen by Moses and Aaron. By this speech of Moses, it appears he was not afraid of Pharaoh and his menaces, but rather taunts at him, and it is to this fearless disposition of Moses at this time that the apostle refers in
Heb 11:27.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 11

Moses having an intimation from the Lord that one plague more would be brought on Pharaoh, and then he would let Israel go, when they should borrow of their neighbours jewels of gold and silver, the people being in great favour with the Egyptians, Ex 11:1, he declares to Pharaoh, before he went out of his presence, the slaying of all the firstborn in Egypt, which would issue in the dismission of Israel, and then he went out from him in great anger, Ex 11:4, but still Pharaoh would not hearken, and his heart was hardened, and he refused again to let Israel go, Ex 10:9.

Ver. 1. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... While in the presence of Pharaoh, by a secret impulse upon his mind; or he had said {m}, which some refer as far back as to his appearance to him in Midian, **Ex 4:23**, which is too remote; rather it refers to the last time he went to Pharaoh, being sent for by him; and the words may be rendered, "for the Lord had said" {n}; and so are a reason why Moses was so bold, and expressed himself with so much confidence and assurance to Pharaoh, that he would see his face no more:

yet will I bring one plague [more] upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; upon him and all his subjects, for the following one would affect all the families of Egypt, in which there was a son:

afterwards he will let you go hence; out of Egypt readily, at once, and not attempt to stop or retard your going:

when he shall let you go; declare his will, give leave and orders for it:

he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether; absolutely, entirely, without any exception or limitation, them, their wives, their children, their flocks and herds, and whatsoever belonged to them, without any restraint upon them in any respect, and without any condition of return, or fixing any time for it, but the dismission should be general, unlimited, and unconditional; or, "in thrusting he shall thrust you out" {o}, with force and vehemence, with urgency and in great haste.

{m} rmayw "dixerat", some in Vatablus, Ainsworth, Cartwright; so Aben

Ezra. {n} "Dixerat enim", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Rivet. {o} vrgy vrg "expellendo expellet", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; so Fagius, Vatablus, Cartwright.

Exodus 11:2

Ver. 2. Speak now in the ears of the people,.... This cannot be understood of the whole body of the people being gathered together, but of some of the principal ones, who should communicate it to others, and so from one to another, until all the heads and masters of families became acquainted with it:

and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold; to ornament themselves with at the feast they were going to keep: the Samaritan and Septuagint versions add, and clothing or raiment, and such it is certain they did borrow, Ex 12:35 or vessels {p} of different forms, made of gold and silver, such as were fit and proper to be used at sacrifices and feasts, and which will account for the vessels given by princes, **Nu 7:1** for the doing of which the divine authority was sufficient; though there seems to be a reason for it in justice, that they might be paid for their hard service they had been made to serve for so many years, without having a proper reward for it: the word may be rendered, "let every man ask", &c.

{p} ylk skeuh Sept. "vasa", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator, Drusius; "instrumenta", Junius & Tremellius.

Exodus 11:3

Ver. 3. And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians,.... So that they freely and willingly lent them the things they asked of them; which seems to be said by way of anticipation, for this was not done until the following plague was inflicted, see
Ex 12:35,

moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt; his name was famous throughout the whole land, because of the signs and wonders, and miracles wrought by him; they took him to be a very extraordinary person, as he was, and had him in great esteem, because at his entreaty the plagues were removed from them, when they had been wrought on them; and this made them the more willing to lend the above things to the people of Israel when they asked them of them, because of their great respect to Moses, and whom, if they did not cordially love, yet they feared, and might imagine that if they did not comply with the request of his people, he might resent it, and employ his power against them; and thus he stood, either beloved or feared, or both,

in the sight of Pharaoh's servants; his ministers, courtiers, and counsellors: and in the sight of the people; the common people, the inhabitants of the land of Egypt.

Exodus 11:4

Ver. 4. And Moses said,.... To Pharaoh before he left him, when he had told him he should see his face no more; for the three preceding verses are to be read in a parenthesis, being placed here by the historian, as giving some light to this last discourse and transaction between Moses and Pharaoh:

thus saith the Lord, about midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt; perhaps to the capital and metropolis of it, which might stand in the midst of it, as usually does the royal city; or it may only signify that he would go into the very heart of it, and steer his course all around in every part and quarter of it, slaying the firstborn everywhere in all towns and cities throughout the kingdom, as follows; in order to which he is said to go out, either from the place where Moses used to go and pray to him, and where he met him and gave him his orders and instructions, or out of the land of Goshen, where he dwelt among the Israelites; or rather it only signifies the manifestation of himself in some work and action of his, the exertion of his power in inflicting punishment for sin: thus God is sometimes said to go forth out of his place when he is about to exercise judgment in the earth; for this must be understood consistent with his omnipresence, see Isa 26:21 and this was to be done about midnight, the middle of the night following the present day, which was the fourteenth of the month of Abib or Nisan; it was in the morning of that day Moses had this discourse with Pharaoh, and in the evening of it the passover was kept, and about the middle of the night the firstborn were slain, as follows.

Exodus 11:5

Ver. 5. And all the firstborn in the land of Eygpt shall die,.... By the destroying angel inflicting a disease upon them, as Josephus says {q}, very probably the pestilence; however, it was sudden and immediate death, and which was universal, reaching to all the firstborn that were in the families of the Egyptians in all parts of the kingdom:

from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne: this periphrasis, "that sitteth upon his throne", either belongs to Pharaoh, and is a description of him who now sat upon the throne of Egypt; and the Septuagint version leaves out the pronoun "his"; and so it is the same as if it had been said the firstborn of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; or else, to the firstborn, and describes him who either already sat upon the throne with his father, as was sometimes the case, that the firstborn was taken a partner in the throne, in the lifetime of his father; or who was the presumptive heir of the crown, and should succeed him, and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"who shall or is to sit upon the throne of his kingdom:"

even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; or "behind the two mills" {r}, or "two millstones"; for it was the custom then, as with the Arabs now, as Doctor Shaw relates {s}, to grind their corn with hand mills, which were two stones laid on one another, and in the uppermost was a handle, with which it was turned about by women, between whom the two stones were placed, and so they might be said to be behind them; though the phrase used does not necessarily suppose that they sat behind the mill, for it may as well be rendered "by" or "near the mill" {t}: this is not to be understood of the firstborn, as behind the mill, or at it, and grinding, as Aben Ezra interpret's it, but of the maidservant; it being the business of such in early times to turn these mills, and grind corn, as it is now in Arabia, as the above traveller relates; and so it was in Judea, in the times of Christ, Mt 24:41 and Homer {u}, in his times, speaks of women grinding at the mill, See Gill on "Mt 24:41", the design of these expressions is to show that none would escape this calamity threatened, neither the king nor his nobles, nor any of his subjects, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free: and all the firstborn of beasts: such as had escaped the plagues of the murrain and boils: this is added, not because they were such as were worshipped as gods, as Jarchi observes, but to increase their misery and aggravate their punishment, these being their property and substance, and became scarce and valuable, through the preceding plagues of the murrain, boils, and hail, which destroyed many of their cattle.

{q} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 14. sect. 6. {r} Myxrh rxa "post molas", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "after the mill stones", Ainsworth. {s} Travels, p. 231. Ed. 2. {t} para to mulon, Sept. "ad molam", V.

L. "apud molas", Noldius, p. 11. No. 75. {u} men aleteuousi mulhv, &c. Homer. Odyss. 7. l. 109.

Exodus 11:6

Ver. 6. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt,.... Of parents for the loss of their firstborn sons, their heirs, the support and glory of their families; children for the loss of their elder brethren; and servants for the loss of the prime and principal in their masters' houses; and all in a dreadful fright, expecting instantly death themselves:

such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more; for though the later destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea might be a greater loss, yet not occasion greater mourning; since that was only a loss of military persons, and did not affect at least so many families as this; and though their king was lost also, it might not give them so much concern, since through his ill conduct, his hardness and obstinacy, he had been the means of so many plagues inflicted on them.

Exodus 11:7

Ver. 7. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast,.... That is, as no hurt should be done to man or beast among them, to the firstborn of either of them, so there would be no noise or cry in their dwellings, but the profoundest silence, stillness, and quietness among them; though this is generally understood of what would be their case when on their march departing out of Egypt, which was immediately upon the slaying of the firstborn; and, if literally understood, it was a very extraordinary thing that a dog, which barks at the least noise that is made, especially in the night, yet not one should move his tongue or bark, or rather "sharpen" {u} his tongue, snarl and grin, when 600,000 men, besides women and children, with their flocks and herds, set out on their journey, and must doubtless march through many places where dogs were, before they came to the Red sea; though it may also be interpreted figuratively, that not an Egyptian, though ever so spiteful and malicious, and ill disposed to the children of Israel, should offer to do any hurt either to the Israelites or their cattle, or exclaim against them on account of the slaughter of their firstborn, or say one word against their departure, or attempt to stop them, but on the contrary would hasten their going, and be urgent for it:

that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel; by preserving them and theirs, when the firstborn of Egypt were destroyed, and by causing stillness and quietness among them when there was an hideous outcry and doleful lamentation among the Egyptians; and by bringing Israel quietly out from among them, none offering to give the least molestation.

{u} Urxy al non acuet, Noldius, p. 517. No. 1471. so Jarchi.

Exodus 11:8

Ver. 8. And all these thy servants,.... Pharaoh's nobles, ministers, courtiers and counsellors, who were then in his presence, and stood about him, to whom Moses pointed:

shall come down unto me; from Pharaoh's palace, which might be built on an eminence, to the place where Moses had dwelt during the time he had been in Egypt, which might lie lower; or these should come from Zoan, or from Memphis, whichever of them was now the royal city, to the land of Goshen, which lay lower than the other part of Egypt; or it may only denote the submission of Pharaoh's, servants, that they should in the time of their distress be so humble and condescending as to come themselves to Moses, and as it follows:

and bow down themselves unto me; in the most obsequious manner, humbly entreating, and earnestly begging him:

saying, get thee out, and all the people that follow thee; or "are at thy feet" {w}, that were at his beck and command, and under his power, as Aben Ezra; or that followed his counsel and advice, as Jarchi, that did as he directed them, and went after him as their leader and commander, even everyone of them; they that brought up the rear, he, and all of them, would be desired to depart, and not a man remain behind: this was fulfilled, Ex 12:31:

and after that I will go out; out of the land of Egypt, Moses, and all the children of Israel:

and he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger; as soon as he had said the above words, because he had bid him be gone from him, and had threatened him with his life, if ever he saw his face more; and because he was so rebellious against God, whose zeal inspired the heart of Moses with indignation against him, though the meekest man on earth, and for whose glory he was concerned; though some understand this of Moses going out from Pharaoh, when he and not Moses was in great anger, because of what Moses had now threatened him with, and told him what would be the issue of things, the submission of him and his nobles, and the dismission of Israel; but this sense is not favoured by the accents.

{w} Kylgrb "in pedibus tuis", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "sub pedibus tuis", Munster, Vatablus; "qui est ad pedes tuos", Cartwright.

Exodus 11:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... Not at this time when he went out from Pharaoh, but some time before this, for the words may be rendered, "the Lord had said" {x}, for so he had, as is related, **Ex 7:3**, but the historian makes mention of it here, to show that Moses was not ignorant of the event of things; he knew that Pharaoh's heart would be hardened from time to time, and that one plague after another must be inflicted, before he would let the people go; and therefore when he prayed for the removal of any, it was not in expectation that he would abide by his promise, but to do the will of God, and the duty of his calling:

Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; to Moses and Aaron, and let the people of Israel go as required of him:

that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt; which Jarchi interprets of the smiting of the firstborn, dividing the waters of the Red sea, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in it; but since these words were said before any of the plagues, were inflicted, it may refer to them all.

{x} rmayw "dixerat autem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Rivet.

Exodus 11:10

Ver. 10. And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, &c,] Which are related in the preceding chapters:

and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart: one time after another, and yet more and more:

so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land; until the last plague, the slaying of the firstborn, was brought upon him and his people, related in the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 12

This chapter begins with observing, that the month in which the above wonders were wrought in Egypt, and the following ordinance appointed to the Israelites, should hereafter be reckoned the first month in the year, Ex 12:1 on the tenth day of which a lamb here described was to be taken and kept till the fourteenth, and then slain, and its blood sprinkled on the posts of the houses of the Israelites, Ex 12:3, the manner of dressing and eating it is shown, Ex 12:8 and the reason of the institution of this ordinance being given, Ex 12:12, and an order to eat unleavened bread during seven days, in which the feast was to be kept, Ex 12:15, directions are also given for the immediate observance of it, and particularly about the sprinkling of the blood of the lamb, and the use of it, Ex 12:21, and this ordinance, which they were to instruct their children in, was to be kept by them in succeeding ages for ever, Ex 12:24 about the middle of the night it was first observed, all the firstborn in Egypt were slain, which made the Egyptians urgent upon the Israelites to depart in haste, Ex 12:28 and which they did with their unleavened dough, and with great riches they had borrowed of the Egyptians, Ex 12:34, the number of the children of Israel at the time of their departure, the mixed multitude and cattle that went with them, their baking their unleavened cakes, the time of their sojourning in Egypt, and of their coming out of it that night, which made it a remarkable one, are all particularly taken notice of, Ex 12:37, laws and rules are given concerning the persons that should partake of the passover, Ex 12:43 and the chapter is concluded with observing, that it was kept according to the command of God, and that it was on the same day it was first instituted and kept that Israel were brought out of Egypt, Ex 12:50.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt,.... Before they and the children of Israel came out of it, before the slaying of the firstborn, yea, before Moses came from the presence of Pharaoh, and had given him notice of it; and it is very probable even before the three days darkness, seeing it seems necessary it should be four days before the passover, since on the tenth day the lamb was to be taken, and on the fourteenth slain, Ex 12:3 and by what follows it looks as if it was at the beginning or first day of the month, and so the words may be rendered, "the Lord had spoke" {y}; and the following account is deferred to this place, that there might be no interruption of the history of the plagues, and that the passover, with all its rites and ceremonies, both at the first institution and observance of it, and in later times, might be laid together.

{y} rmayw "alloquutus antem fuerat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "dixerat autem"; so some in Drusius, and Ainsworth.

Exodus 12:2

Ver. 2. This month shall be unto you the beginning of months,.... Not only the first, as after expressed, but the chief and principal of them, now famous for their coming out of Egypt in it, and would be more so for the sufferings and death of the Messiah, and redemption by him from sin, Satan, and the world, law, hell, and death, for he suffered at the time of the passover. This month was called Abib, Ex 13:4, which signifies an ear of corn, and at this time we find that the barley was in ear, **Ex 9:31** which clearly shows in what month the above things were transacted; afterwards it was called Nisan, which seems to be the Chaldean name for it, **Ne 2:1**: it shall be the first month of the year to you; which before was the seventh; while the Israelites were in Egypt they observed the same beginning of the year and course of months as the Egyptians, as Josephus {z} intimates; and with the Egyptians, the month Thot was the first month, which answered to Tisri with the Jews, and both to our September, or a part of it, so that the beginning of the year was then in the autumnal equinox, at which season it is thought the world was created; but now to the Israelites it was changed unto the vernal equinox, for this month of Abib or Nisan answers to part of our March and part of April; though indeed both beginnings of the year were observed by them, the one on ecclesiastic, the other on civil accounts; or, as Josephus {a} expresses it, the month of Nisan was the beginning with respect to things divine, but in buying and selling, and such like things, the ancient order was observed; and so the Targum of Jonathan here paraphrases it,

"from hence ye shall begin to reckon the feasts, the times, and the revolutions."

Indeed the Jews had four beginnings of the year according to their Misnah {b}; the first of Nisan (or March) was the beginning of the year for kings and for festivals; the first of Elul (or August) for the tithing of cattle; the first of Tisri (or September) for the sabbatical years, jubilees, and planting of trees and herbs; and the first of Shebet (or January) for the tithing the fruit of trees.

{z} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 3. {a} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 3. {b} Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 1.

Exodus 12:3

Ver. 3. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel,.... That is, to the elders of the people, and heads of families; unless we can suppose that they had been gradually gathered, and were now gathered together in a body by the direction of Moses, by whom they were assured that their departure was at hand; and the rather it may be thought that so it was, since the following order concerned the whole and every individual:

saying, in the tenth [day] of this month; the month Abib or Nisan, which shows that this direction must be given before that day, and so very probably on the first of the month, as before observed:

they shall take to them every man a lamb; not every individual person, but every master of a family, or head of an house, as follows:

according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house; if large enough to eat up a whole lamb, otherwise they were to do as next directed: the Targum of Jonathan suggests, that this direction of taking a lamb to them on the tenth day of the month was only for this time, and not for following ages; and so the Jewish doctors {c} commonly understand it as being peculiar to the passover in Egypt, and not in later times; for they {d} say,

"what difference is there between the passover in Egypt, and the passover in later ages? the passover in Egypt was taken within the tenth day, and was obliged to sprinkling with a bunch of hyssop upon the lintel, and upon the two side posts, and was eaten with haste in one night, but the passover in later ages was kept all the seven days."

The ground and reason of this special direction for taking up a lamb on the tenth day was, that they might have a lamb ready; and that through the multiplicity of business, and the hurry they would be in at their departure, they might not forget it, and neglect it; and that they might have time enough to examine whether it had all the prerequisites and qualifications that were necessary; and that while they had it in view, they might be led to meditate upon, and talk of, expect and firmly believe their deliverance; yea, that their faith might be directed to a far greater deliverance by the Messiah, which this was only typical of, Heb 11:28 but some of these reasons would hold good in later times, and it seems by some circumstances that this rule was attended to.

{c} Ben Gersom in loc. Maimon. Korban Pesach. c. 10. sect. 15. {d} Misn. Pesach. c. 9. sect. 5.

Exodus 12:4

Ver. 4. And if the household be too little for the lamb,.... That they cannot eat it up at once;

let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; which Josephus {e} says were never fewer than ten, and were often twenty, but no man might feast alone; with which agrees the Jewish canon {f},

"they do not kill the passover lamb for a single person, nor even for a society consisting of one hundred, that cannot eat the quantity of an olive:"

every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb: that is, a man must reckon up how many he has in his own house to eat of the lamb, and what their appetites be, by which he will he able to judge whether he can dispense with a lamb himself, or whether he must take in some of his neighbours, and how many, so as to eat up the whole lamb, for, for such persons the lamb was to be slain. The rule is,

"if a man slays it for those that do not eat of it, or for those that are not counted, for the uncircumcised, and the unclean, it was wrong, and not allowed of {g}."

The taking in his neighbours may respect the call of the Gentiles to partake of Christ with the Jews, see **Eph 3:5**.

{e} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 3. {f} Misn. Pesach. c. 8. sect. 7. {g} Ibid. c. 5. sect. 3.

Exodus 12:5

Ver. 5. Your lamb shall be without blemish,.... Without any spot or defect in it. Maimonides {h} reckons no less than fifty blemishes in a creature, anyone of which makes it unfit for sacrifice, see
Le 21:21. This lamb was a type of Christ, who is therefore said to be our passover sacrificed for us, **1Co 5:7** comparable to a lamb for his innocence and harmlessness, for his meekness, humility, and patience, for usefulness both for food and raiment, as well as for being fit for sacrifice; and who is a lamb without spot and blemish, either of original sin, or actual transgression, holy in his nature, harmless in his life:

a male of the first year; anyone within that time, but not beyond it; denoting the strength and vigour of Christ, in the flower of his age, his short continuance among men, and his being tender and savoury food for the faith of his people:

ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats; it might be either a lamb, or a kid of the goats; for the most part, or generally, it was a lamb that was taken; so the Jewish canon runs {i},

"he that says to his servant, go and slay for me the passover, if he slays a kid he may eat it; if he slays a lamb he may eat of it; if he slays a kid and a lamb, he may eat of the first."

The goat being of an ill smell may denote Christ being made sin, and a sin offering for his people; and the taking of a lamb from these may signify the choice of Christ from among the people in the council and covenant of God; the preordination of him to be the lamb slain from the foundation of the world; the preservation of him from the infection of sin in his incarnation, and the separation of him from sinners in his conversation.

{h} Hilchot Biath Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 1. {i} Misn. Pesach. c. 8. sect. 2.

Exodus 12:6

Ver. 6. And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month,.... In their houses; this may denote the preservation of Christ in his infancy, and to the appointed time of his sufferings and death; and it is remarkable, that on this very day, the tenth of Nisan, four days before the passover, and so as many days before his sufferings and death, he made his entry into Jerusalem, near to which he was to be offered up, Joh 12:1:

and the whole assembly of the congregation shall kill it in the evening; that is, of the fourteenth of Nisan; not between the two suns, as the Targum of Jonathan, between the sun setting and the sun rising; nor between the setting of the sun, and the entire disappearance of its rays of light reflecting in the air and clouds after it, as Aben Ezra; so it is said in the Talmud {k}, after the sun is set, all the time that the face of the east is red; others say as long as a man can walk half a mile after sun setting; and others, the twinkling of an eye; but "between the two evening's" {l}, as it may be rendered; which respects that space of time after the sun begins to decline, and the entire setting of it; when the sun begins to decline, as it does after noon, that is the first evening, and when it is set, that is the second; and the middle space between the one and the other is about the nineth hour of the day, according to the Jewish computation, and, with us, about three o'clock in the afternoon, about which time the passover used to be killed; for they say {m},

"the daily sacrifice was slain at eight and a half, and offered at the nineth; but on the evening of the passover it was slain at seven and a half, and offered at eight and a half, whether on a common day, or on a sabbath; and if the evening of the passover happened to be on the evening of the sabbath, it was slain at six and a half, and offered up at seven and a half, and after that the passover;"

which was done, that there might be time before the last evening for the slaying of the passover lamb. Josephus {n} says, at the passover they slew the sacrifice from the nineth hour to the eleventh;
See Gill on "Mt 26:17", and it being at the nineth hour that our Lord was crucified, the agreement between him and the paschal lamb in this circumstance very manifestly appears, Mt 27:46 though it may also in general denote Christ's appearing in the last days, in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself: the slaying of the paschal lamb is ascribed to the "whole assembly of the congregation", because it was to be slain by their order, and in their name, for their use, and they present; and thus the crucifixion of Christ, his sufferings and death, are attributed to the men of Israel, and all the house of Israel, **Ac 2:22**.

{k} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 34. 2. {l} Mybreh Nyb "inter duas vesperas", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Ainsworth. {m} Misn. Pesach. c. 5. sect. 1. {n} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 3.

Exodus 12:7

Ver. 7. And they shall take of the blood,.... Of the lamb, being received into a basin, Ex 12:22:

and strike it on the two side posts; with a bunch of hyssop dipped into it:

and on the upper doorpost of the houses, wherein they shall eat it; but not on the posts of those houses, the inhabitants of which joined with their neighbours in eating it; though Levi Ben Gersom thinks they were sprinkled as the rest; but to what purpose, when there were no Israelites, and no firstborn in them? the two side posts were the posts of a folding door, on which the two folds were hung, and the upper doorpost is what is afterwards called the lintel, Ex 12:23 and has its name in Hebrew from looking out; for, as Aben Ezra says, there was a window over the door, as is the custom throughout the whole country of the Ishmaelites or Arabians; and so Schindler says {o}, which perhaps he took from him, that the word signifies either a lintel, or a little window over the door, through which it might be seen who called or knocked at the door; and adds, in Egypt, as now in Arabia, there were windows over the doors of houses. The sprinkling the blood of the paschal lamb was typical of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon the hearts and consciences of his people, and of their peace, safety, and security by it from the wrath of God, and the vengeance of divine justice; of the further use of this rite, see Ex 12:22, Aben Ezra mentions it as the opinion of some, that the sprinkling of the blood on those places was to show that they slew the abomination of the Egyptians openly; but he himself gives a much better reason for this rite, namely, that it was to be a propitiation for everyone that ate in the house, and was a sign to the destroyer, that he might look upon it in like manner, as it is said **Eze 9:4**, "set a mark, &c." this seems to be peculiar to the passover in Egypt, and was not used in later times.

{o} Lex. Pentaglott. col. 1938.

Exodus 12:8

Ver. 8. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire,.... The night of the fourteenth of Nisan; and as the Jews reckoned their days from the evening preceding, this must be the beginning of the fifteenth day, which being observed, will serve to reconcile some passages relating to this ordinance. The lamb was to be roasted, not only because its flesh thereby would be more palatable and savoury, but because soonest dressed that way, their present circumstances requiring haste; but chiefly to denote the sufferings of Christ, the antitype of it, when he endured the wrath of God, poured out as fire upon him; and also to show, that he is to be fed upon by faith, which works by love, or to be received with hearts inflamed with love to him:

and unleavened bread; this also was to be eaten at the same time, and for seven days running, even to the twenty first day of the month,
Ex 12:15, where see more concerning this: the reason of this also was, because they were then in haste, and could not stay to leaven the dough that was in their troughs; and was significative of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, with which the true passover lamb is to be eaten, in opposition to the leaven of error, hypocrisy, and malice, **1Co 5:7**:

and with bitter herbs they shall eat it; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "with wild lettuces", which are very bitter; and the worst sort of which, for bitterness, Pliny says {p}, is what they call "picris", which has its name from the bitterness of it, and is the same by which the Septuagint render the word here: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"with horehound and endive they shall eat it;"

and so the Targum on **So 2:9**. Wild endive; of which Pliny says {q}, there is a wild endive, which in Egypt they call cichory, and bids fair to be one of these herbs; according to the Misnah {r} and Maimonides {s}, there were five sorts of them, and anyone, or all of them, might be eaten; their names with both are these, Chazoreth, Ulshin, Thamcah, Charcabinah, and Maror; the four first of which may be the wild lettuce, endive, horehound, or perhaps "tansie"; and cichory the last. Maror has its name from bitterness, and is by the Misnic commentators {t} said to be a sort of the most bitter coriander; it seems to be the same with "picris": but whatever they were, for it is uncertain what they were, they were expressive of the bitter afflictions of the children of Israel in Egypt, with which their lives were made bitter; and of those bitter afflictions and persecutions in the world, which they that will live godly in Christ Jesus must expect to endure; as well as they may signify that as a crucified Christ must be looked upon, and lived upon by faith, so with mourning and

humiliation for sin, and with true repentance for it as an evil and bitter thing, see
Zec 12:10.

{p} Nat. Hist. l. 19. c. 8. & 21. 17. & 32. 22. {q} Ibid. {r} Misn. Pesach. c. 2. sect. 6. {s} Hilchot, Chametz Umetzah, c. 7. sect. 13. {t} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Pesach. ut supra. (c. 2. sect. 6.)

Exodus 12:9

Ver. 9. Eat not of it raw,.... Not roasted enough; and so Jarchi says, that what is not sufficiently roasted, or is not thoroughly and down roasted, is in the Arabic language called an {u}, the word here used; and so Maimonides {w} says it signifies flesh, on which the fire begins to operate, and is roasted a little, but not enough for eating. And indeed there seems to be no necessity of a prohibition of eating the flesh quite raw: some {x} derive the word from a root which signifies to break, and suppose that this rule forbids the breaking or cutting it in pieces; that as it was to be roasted whole, and not a bone of it to be broken, so it was to be brought to table whole, and the whole to be eaten; but then it could not be eaten without being cut to pieces. Abarbinel {y} takes the word in the usual signification of it, "now", as if the sense was, ye shall not eat of it now, not before the evening of the fourteenth day; but whereas Moses had told them,
Ex 12:6, that the lamb was to be kept up until the fourteenth day, it was needless to tell them that they should not eat it now or immediately; the first sense is best, and this shows that Christ, the antitype of this lamb, is not to be eaten in a carnal but spiritual manner, of which our Lord treats in **Joh 6:31**, nor sodden at all with water; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"neither boiled in wine, nor in oil, nor in other liquor, nor boiled in water."

This, with respect to the antitype, shows, that Christ is not to be received in a cold lukewarm manner, and with indifference; and that nothing is to be mixed, added, and joined unto him, but he alone is to be regarded in the business of our acceptance, justification, and salvation:

but roast with fire; for the reasons before given: the manner of roasting it, according to the Jewish canons {z}, was this, they bring a spit made of the wood of pomegranate, and thrust it into its mouth quite through it, and put the thighs and entrails within it; they do not roast the passover lamb on an iron spit, nor on an iron grate. Maimonides {a} is a little more particular and exact in his account; to the question, how do they roast it? he replies,

"they transfix it through the middle of the mouth to its posteriors, with a wooden spit, and they hang it in the midst of a furnace, and the fire below:"

so that it was not turned upon a spit, according to our manner of roasting, but was suspended on a hook, and roasted by the fire underneath, and so was a more exact figure of Christ suspended on the cross, and enduring the fire of divine wrath. And Justin Martyr {b} is still more particular, who was by birth a Samaritan, and was well versed in Jewish affairs; he, even in conversing with Trypho the Jew, who could have contradicted him had he said what was wrong, says, the lamb was roasted in the form of a cross; one spit, he says, went through from the lower parts to the head, and again another across the shoulders, to which the hands (or rather the legs) of the lamb were fastened and hung; and so was a very lively emblem of Christ crucified:

his head, with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof; or with its inwards {c}, these were all to be roasted together, the whole lamb with all that belonged to it, with which the above canon of the Jews agrees.

{u} "cruda fuit caro", Golius, col. 2476. Semicocta, "cruda fuit caro", Castell. Lex. col. 2296. Vid. Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. p. 169, 170. {w} Hilchot Korban Pesach. c. 8. sect. 6. {x} Oleaster apud Rivet in loc. Gusset. Comment. Ebr. p. 487, 488; so some in Aben Ezra. {y} So Marinus Brixianus in Arca Noe. {z} Misn. Pesach. c. 7. sect. 1, 2. {a} Hilchot Korban Pesach. c. 8. sect. 10. {b} Dialog. cum Trypho Jud. p. 259. {c} wbrq lew "et cum interioribus ejus", Pagninus, Tigurine version, so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Exodus 12:10

Ver. 10. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning,.... It was to be all ate up; a whole Christ is to be received and fed upon by faith; Christ in both his natures, divine and human, united in his person, in all his offices of prophet, priest, and King, and with all the benefits and blessings of his grace, and which come by his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice:

and that which remaineth of it until the morning, ye shall burn with fire: what of the flesh which remaineth not ate, and what of it that could not be eaten, as the bones, which were not broken, and the nerves and sinews, which might not be eaten; and so runs the Jewish canon {d},

"the bones, and the sinews, and what remains, they shall burn on the sixteenth day; and if the sixteenth happens on the sabbath, they shall burn on the seventeenth."

The reason of this law was, that what was left might not be converted to common or superstitious uses, as also that the Israelites might not be burdened with it in their journey, nor the Egyptians have an opportunity of treating it with contempt.

{d} Misn. ut supra, (Persch. c. 7.) sect. 10.

Exodus 12:11

Ver. 11. And thus shall ye eat it,.... After the following manner, in the habit and posture described: the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"at this time, and not in ages following;"

for these rites were peculiar to the passover in Egypt, and not to be observed in later times:

with your loins girded; that is, with their garments girt about their loins, for the better convenience in travelling; for in those countries they wore long loose garments, which reached to their feet, and unless girt up, were a great hinderance in walking; and may denote the saints being girt with the girdle of truth, and their readiness and fitness to perform every good work:

your shoes on your feet; which used to be put off at feasts, in order to have their feet washed, which was frequently done at such times, as we learn from many instances in Scripture, which could not be done unless the shoes were off, Ge 18:4, besides, it is highly probable that the Israelites in Egypt did not wear shoes in common, it being a hot country, and they in a state of poverty and bondage; but now being about to depart the land, and to take a journey, they are ordered to have their shoes on, to be ready for it: and was a token of their deliverance and freedom, and joy on that occasion; and may, in an evangelic sense, denote the feet of the saints being shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, **Eph 6:15**, and your staff in your hand; such as travellers make use of to support and assist, protect and defend them, in their journey, and may be expressive of faith in the word and promises of God, which are the support of his people in their passage through this world, Ps 23:4

and ye shall eat it in haste; because upon slaying the firstborn the Egyptians would be urgent upon them to depart immediately. Aquila renders it, "with fear", and so the Targum of Jonathan; but the other sense suits best with the circumstances of the Israelites:

it [is] the Lord's passover; which he has commanded, and is a sign and token of his passing over the houses of the Israelites, when he destroyed the firstborn in all the houses of the Egyptians, and which is explained in the following verse, and the reason of its name given; the act of passing was his, the ordinance was appointed by him, and it was typical of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true passover, **1Co 5:7**.

Exodus 12:12

Ver. 12. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night,..... Which must be understood consistent with his omnipresence, and of the manifestation of his powerful presence, or of the exertion of his mighty power in the following event: and will smite all the

firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; as had been declared to Pharaoh, Ex 11:5

and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; meaning either figuratively, the nobles, princes, judges and civil magistrates, who are sometimes called Elohim, gods; but since the firstborn of these, as of others, and so the judgment on them, are comprehended in the preceding clause, this is, rather to be understood literally of the idols of the Egyptians, their images of gold and silver, or of whatever they were made of: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"on all the idols of the Egyptians I will exercise four judgments; the molten idols shall be melted, the idols of stone shall be cut asunder, the idols of earth shall be broke to pieces, and the idols of wood shall become ashes;"

see Nu 33:4 and there are some traces of this in Heathen writers; Artapanus {e} says, that by an earthquake most of the temples in Egypt fell; and Justin {f} reports, that Moses, being the leader of the exile Israelites, stole away the sacred things of the Egyptians, i.e. their gods, which they endeavoured to regain by force of arms:

I am the Lord; God Almighty, faithful and true, and therefore what was threatened should certainly be performed, and thereby the Egyptians and all others might know that he was Jehovah alone, and that there is no God beside him.

{e} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 436. {f} E Trogo, l. 36. c. 2.

Exodus 12:13

Ver. 13. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are,.... The blood of the passover lamb being sprinkled on the two sideposts and upper doorposts of the houses inhabited by the Israelites, or where they were eating the passover; this should be a sign or token to them of the Lord's making good his promises, to them, and so of their safety, and to the destroying angel not to enter therein, but pass by and save them:

and when I see the blood, I will pass over you; for which reason this ordinance now instituted was called the passover, because the Lord, on sight of the blood sprinkled, passed over the houses of the Israelites to those of the Egyptians; or "leaped", as Jarchi says, the word signifies, skipped from one Egyptian house to another, passing by that of the Israelites:

and the plague shall not be upon you, to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt, the pestilence with which the firstborn should be destroyed.

Exodus 12:14

Ver. 14. And this shall be unto you for a memorial,.... To be remembered, and that very deservedly, for the destruction of the firstborn of the Egyptians, and for the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and as memorable a day it is, and much more so, for the redemption of the spiritual Israel by the Messiah; for it was on this selfsame day that he suffered for the redemption and salvation of his people: the Jews not only having a saying, "that in the month Nisan they were redeemed, and in the month Nisan they will be redeemed {g}"

but they expressly say,

"on the same day, the fifteenth of Nisan, Israel is to be redeemed, in the days of the Messiah, as they were redeemed on that day, as it is said, according to the days, &c. **Mic 7:15** {h}:"

and you shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; as the fifteenth day was properly the Chagigah; or festival day, when they made a feast both of the flock and of the herd, of both sheep and oxen, De 16:2

you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever; unto the end of the Jewish economy and church state, until the Messiah come, the true passover, and be sacrificed for us.

{g} Roshhashanah, fol. 11. 1. 2. {h} Cabalistae apud Fagium in loc.

Exodus 12:15

Ver. 15. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread,.... From the evening of the fourteenth day to the evening of the twenty first; and this was a distinct festival from what was properly called the feast of the passover, and does not respect the first passover in Egypt; for though the passover lamb was eaten with unleavened bread, and the Israelites ate no other, not only for seven days, but for thirty days following; yet this was not only by the divine command, but through necessity, they having no other bread to eat; but in later times they were commanded to keep a feast for seven days, in which they were not to eat leavened bread, in commemoration of their hasty departure out of Egypt, not having time to leaven the dough in their troughs, and of their distress and want of savoury bread:

even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses; out of their dwelling houses, which were to be diligently searched for that purpose, and every hole and crevice in them; and not only their lower rooms, their dining rooms and parlours, but their upper rooms and bedchambers; because it was possible a man might sometimes go into them with a piece of bread in his hand, and drop or leave some of it behind him: yea, synagogues and schools were to be searched, since children might carry thither leavened breads {i}:

and this search was to be made by the light of a lamp or candle, not by the light of the moon, if in the night; nor by the light of the sun, if in the day, but by the light of a lamp or candle, and not by the light of a torch, or of a lump of fat, or grease, or oil, but by a lamp or candle of wax {k}: and this search was to be made at the beginning of the night of the fourteenth of Nisan; yea, it is said that leavened bread was forbidden from the seventh hour of the day, that is, one o'clock in the afternoon and upwards, which is the middle of the day {l}: the account of the Misnic doctors is {m},

"R. Meir says, that they may eat leaven the whole fifth hour, i.e. eleven o'clock in the morning, and burn it the beginning of the sixth, or twelve o'clock; R. Judah says, they may eat it all the fourth hour, or tenth o'clock, and suspend it the whole fifth hour, and burn it the beginning of the sixth:"

for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day; from the first of the seven days to the last of them, beginning at the night at the fourteenth, and ending at the night of the twenty first:

that soul shall be cut off from Israel; either from the commonwealth of Israel, and be disfranchised, and not accounted as an Israelite; or from the Israelitish church state, and have no communion in it, or partake of the ordinances at it; or if it is to be understood of cutting off by death, it is either by the hand of the civil magistrate, or by the immediate hand of God; and is sometimes by the Jews interpreted of a man dying either without children, or before he is fifty years of age, and some even understand it of destruction of soul and body, or of eternal damnation.

{i} Lebush, par. 1. No. 433. sect. 1. 3. 10. Schulcan Aruch, par. 1. No. 433. sect. 3. 10. {k} Lebush & Schulcan ib. sect. 1. {l} Lebush & Schulcan No. 431. sect. 1. {m} Misn. Pesach c. 1. sect. 4.

Exodus 12:16

Ver. 16. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation,.... An holy day, in which the people be called to holy exercises, and wholly abstain from worldly business, done on other days:

and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation unto you; observed in a festival way, and in the like religious manner the first day was, the day of their going out of Egypt; and the seventh was the day in which Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the Red sea, as Aben Ezra observes; for which reason those days are distinguished from the rest, and appointed to be holy convocations, and which appear from the journeying of the children of Israel, as computed by Junius: they came to Succoth on the fifteenth, to Etham the seventeenth, to Pihahiroth the eighteenth, where they were ordered to stay, and wait the coming of their enemies, on the twentieth the army of Pharaoh came up to them, and the night following the Israelites passed through the sea and the Egyptians were drowned:

no manner of work shall be done in them; as used to be done on other days, and as were on the other five days of this festival: the Jewish canons are,

"it is forbidden to do any work on the evening of the passover, from the middle of the day and onward, and whoever does work from the middle of the day and onward, they excommunicate him; even though, he does it for nothing, it is forbidden {n}: R. Meir says, whatever work anyone begins before the fourteenth (of Nisan) he may finish it on the fourteenth, but he may not begin it on the beginning of the fourteenth, though he could finish it: the wise men say, three workmen may work on the evening of the passover unto the middle of the day, and they are these, tailors, barbers, and fullers: R. Jose bar Judah says, also shoemakers {o},"

but in the text no exception is made but the following:

save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you; so that kindling fire and preparing food might be done on those days, which might not be done on sabbath days; and the prohibition of work was not so strict on those days as on that.

{n} Lebush, par. 1. No. 468. sect. 1. Schulcan Aruch, par. 1. No. 468. sect. 1.
{o} Misn. Pesach. c. 4. sect. 6.

Exodus 12:17

Ver. 17. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread,.... Which was a distinct feast from the passover feast; for though at that unleavened bread was eaten, it was kept but one night, this seven days; and it is repeated that it might be taken notice of, and the rather, as it was to be observed in all ages as long as the Jewish economy lasted; the reason of which follows:

for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt; which, though not already done, was just on doing, and was certain; and besides, it respects the day when it should come about another year: by their "armies" are meant the tribes of Israel, not so much for their military force, for as yet they were an unarmed people, but for their numbers, which were sufficient to make several considerable armies, and for their order and ease, and their being without any fear of the enemy, in which they marched out of Egypt:

therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever; according to the rules given, with the same exactness, strictness, and constancy, as the first of the passover, and as long as that continued; See Gill on "Ex 12:14".

Exodus 12:18

Ver. 18. In the first month,.... As it was now ordered to be reckoned, the month Abib or Nisan:

the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread; that is, at the evening following, the fourteenth of Nisan, and which was the beginning of the fifteenth day, the Jews beginning their day from the evening: hence the Targum of Jonathan is,

"on the fourteenth of Nisan ye shall slay the passover, in the evening of the fifteenth ye shall eat unleavened bread:"

unto the twentieth day of the month at even; which would make just seven days; the above Targum adds,

"on the evening of the twenty second ye shall eat leavened bread,"

which was the evening following the twenty first day. This long abstinence from leaven denotes, that the whole lives of those who are Israelites indeed should be without guile, hypocrisy, and malice, and should be spent in sincerity and truth.

Exodus 12:19

Ver. 19. Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses,..... Wherefore, on the fourteenth day the most diligent search was made, and whatever was found was burnt, or cast into the sea, or dispersed with the wind; about which the traditionary writers of the Jews, give many rules and canons, See Gill on "Ex 12:15",

for whoso eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel; which is repeated to deter them from the breach of this ordinance; See Gill on "Ex 12:15", and it is added for further explanation, of whom it concerns:

whether he be a stranger, or born in the land; by a "stranger" is meant, not a mere Heathen, who was not bound by this law, but a proselyte; and not a proselyte of the gate, one that was only a sojourner among them, and observed the commandments of the sons of Noah; but a proselyte of righteousness, who professed the Jewish religion, and proposed to conform to it in all respects, and therefore was obliged to observe this as other precepts: and by one "born in the land", is intended a native of the land of Canaan, whither they were now going in order to possess it, or a real Israelite, such as were born of Israelitish parents, and proper inhabitants of Canaan, which they would be put into the possession of.

Exodus 12:20

Ver. 20. Ye shall eat nothing leavened,.... Bread or anything else that had any leaven in it:

in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread, that is, if they eat any bread at all, it must be such; otherwise they might eat cakes of almonds or of eggs mixed with sugar, provided there was no leaven used, and this the Jews call the rich unleavened bread {p}: this is repeated over and over, that they might be the more careful of observing this precept; but as this was limited for a certain time, it plainly appears to be a mistake of Tacitus {q} the Roman historian, who represents unleavened bread as the bread the Jews eat of in common.

{p} See Leo Modena's History of the Rites, &c. of the Jews, par. 3. c. 3. sect. 5. {q} Hist. l. 5. c. 4.

Exodus 12:21

Ver. 21. Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel,.... Not in age but in office, who were either heads of families, or at least principal men in the tribes; which explains in what manner he was to speak to the congregation of Israel, and convey to them the will of God concerning the observation of these feasts, Ex 12:3,

and said unto them, draw out; a lamb or a kid, out of the flocks on the tenth day of the month, and keep it up until the fourteenth, as in
Ex 12:3

and take you a lamb, according to your families; or "take ye of the flock" {r}, whether a lamb or a kid; a lamb for every family, if there was a sufficient number in it to eat it up; if not, two or more families were to join and keep the feast together:

and kill the passover; the lamb for the passover, which was to be done on the fourteenth day of the month; and before the priesthood was established in the family of Aaron, and before the Israelites were possessed of the land of Canaan, and the temple was built at Jerusalem, the passover was killed by the heads of families, and in their own houses, but afterwards it was killed only by the priests, and at Jerusalem and in the temple there, see De 16:5.

{r} zau "de filiis gregis", Onk. & Jon.

Exodus 12:22

Ver. 22. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop,.... Which some take to be "mint", others "origanum" or "marjoram", as Kimchi {s}, others "rosemary", as Piscator, Rivet, and many more; and indeed this seems to be fitter to strike or sprinkle with than hyssop; but it is more generally understood of hyssop, because the Hebrew word "ezob" is so near in sound to it; though whether it means the same herb we call hyssop is uncertain: Jarchi says, three stalks of it are called a bunch, and so the Misnic canon runs {t},

"the command concerning hyssop is three stalks (which Maimonides on the place interprets roots), and in them three branches;"

which some have allegorically applied to the Trinity, by whom the hearts of

God's people are sprinkled with the blood of the true paschal Lamb, and are purged from dead works: the Heathens in their sacrifices used sometimes branches of laurel, and sometimes branches of the olive, to sprinkle with {u}:

and dip it in the blood that is in the basin: which, according to the Targum of Jonathan, was an earthen vessel, into which the blood of the lamb was received when slain, and into this the bunch of hyssop was dipped; so it was usual with the Heathens to receive the blood of the sacrifice in cups or basins {x}: the blood being received into a basin, and not spilled on the ground and trampled on, may denote the preciousness of the blood of Christ, the true passover lamb, which is for its worth and excellent efficacy to be highly prized and esteemed, and not to be counted as a common or unholy thing; and the dipping the bunch of hyssop into the blood of the lamb may signify the exercise of faith on the blood of Christ, which is a low and humble grace, excludes boasting in the creature, deals alone with the blood of Jesus for peace, pardon, and cleansing, and by which the heart is purified, as it deals with that blood:

and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that [is] in the basin: an emblem of the sprinkling of the hearts and consciences of believers with the blood of Christ, and cleansing them from all sin by it:

and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning; that they might not be in the way of the destroyer; and though the destroying angel knew an Israelite from an Egyptian, yet this was to be the ordinance of protection to them, abiding in their houses, marked with the blood of the passover lamb; signifying that their safety was in their being under that blood, as the safety of believers lies in their being justified by the blood of Christ; for to that it is owing that they are saved from wrath to come: this is the purple covering under which they pass safely through this world to the heavenly glory, **Ro 5:9**, this circumstance was peculiar to the passover in Egypt; in later times there was not the like danger.

{s} Sepher Shorash, rad. bza. {t} Misn. Parah, c. 11. sect. 9. {u} Vid. Kipping. Rom. Antiqu. p. 241. Virgil Aeneid. 6. Ovid. Fast. l. 5. {x} "------------ tepidumque cruorem Succipiunt pateris----------" Virgil. Aeneid. 6.

Exodus 12:23

Ver. 23. For the Lord will pass though to smite the Egyptians,.... All the firstborn in the several families, in all the towns and cities in Egypt:

and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and upon the two side posts; which must be understood of his taking notice of it with a special view to the good of those within the house; otherwise every thing is seen by his all seeing eye: and thus Christ, the Lamb of God, is in the midst of the throne, as though he had been slain, and is always in the view of God and his divine justice; and his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, are always looked unto by him with pleasure, delight, and satisfaction, to the advantage of his people, as applied unto them, who are hereby accepted with him, justified in his sight, and secure from condemnation and wrath:

the Lord will pass over the door; and the house where this blood is sprinkled, and go to the next, or where Egyptians dwell; and thus justice passes over, and passes by, acquits and discharges them who are interested in the blood and sacrifice of Christ:

and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you; the destroying angel, as the Targum of Jonathan; for he seems to be distinct from the Lord, who is said to pass through and pass over, being an attendant and minister of his, to execute vengeance upon the Egyptians; and whether a good or a bad angel, it matters not, since God can make use of either to inflict judgments on men; but it may be more probably the former, even such an one as was employed in destroying the whole host of the Assyrians in one night, 2Ki 19:35 and answers better in the antitype or emblem to the justice of God taking vengeance on ungodly sinners, when it is not suffered to do the saints any harm.

Exodus 12:24

Ver. 24. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and thy sons for ever. Not this last thing of sprinkling the blood, which was peculiar to the passover in Egypt; but the whole before observed relating to the feast of the passover, and the feast of unleavened bread, and all the rites appertaining to them, which were to be observed until the coming of Christ.

Exodus 12:25

Ver. 25. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land,.... To the land of Canaan, towards which they were just about to set forward on their journey, and in a few years would be in the possession of:

which the Lord will give you according as he hath promised; to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to them:

that ye shall keep this service; enjoined them, respecting the passover lamb, and leavened bread, with all the rites and ceremonies relative thereunto, excepting such as were peculiar to the first passover in Egypt.

Exodus 12:26

Ver. 26. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, what mean ye by this service?] Of killing and roasting a lamb, and eating it with bitter herbs, and of abstaining from leavened bread.

Exodus 12:27

Ver. 27. That ye shall say, it is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover,.... This lamb is a sacrifice, both eucharistical, or by way of thanksgiving for their safety, when the firstborn of the Egyptians were slain, and for their deliverance out of Egypt; and also propitiatory, the blood of this lamb being a propitiation or atonement for all within the house where it was sprinkled, as before observed from Aben Ezra; and typical of the atoning sacrifice of Christ our passover, **1Co 5:7** and this was commanded by the Lord, and approved of and accepted by him, and therefore called his sacrifice as well as passover, for the following reason:

who passed over the houses of the children of Israel, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses; their families, not suffering the destroying angel to enter into them, which was a very distinguishing mercy, and worthy of remembrance. Now in this they were to instruct their children in successive generations, that the memory of it might be kept up, and a sense of the goodness of God continued, and his name glorified. Maimonides {y} says,

"it is a command to make this known to children, even though they do not ask it, as it is said, "and thou shall show thy son", Ex 13:8. According to the son's knowledge, his father teaches him; how if he is a little one or foolish? he says to him, my son, all of us were servants, as this handmaid, or this servant, in Egypt; and on this night the holy blessed God redeemed us, and brought us into liberty: and if the son is grown up, and a wise man, he makes known to him what happened to us in Egypt, and the wonders which were done for us by the hand of Moses our master, all according to the capacity of his son; and it is necessary to make a repetition on this night, that the children may see, and ask, and say, how different is this night from all other nights! until he replies and says to them, so and so it happened, and thus and thus it was:"

and the people bowed the head and worshipped; signifying the deep sense they had of the mercy shown them, their thankfulness for it, and their readiness to observe the ordinance now instituted.

{y} Hilchot Chametz Umetzah, c. 7. sect. 2, 3.

Exodus 12:28

Ver. 28. And the children of Israel went away,.... The elders of the people, Ex 12:21 they departed to their several tribes and families at Goshen and elsewhere:

and did as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they; they took a lamb on the tenth day, and kept it till the fourteenth, on which day they slew it, and roasted it with fire, and ate it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

Exodus 12:29

Ver. 29. And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt,.... The midnight of the fifteenth of Nisan, as the Targum of Jonathan, when fast asleep, and thoughtless of any danger; and it being at such a time must strike with a greater horror and terror, when sensible of the blow, which might be attended with a great noise, that might awaken the rest:

from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne; the heir to his crown, who was to have sat upon his throne, or already did, being taken a partner with him in it:

unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; or prison, that was grinding at the mill there, Ex 11:5 which was the work and business the prisoners were often put to, as appears from the case of Samson, Jud 16:21, and all the firstborn of cattle; which were left of the other plagues, which had consumed great numbers of them.

Exodus 12:30

Ver. 30. And Pharaoh rose up in the night,.... Being awakened by the uncommon noise he heard:

he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; he and his nobles, and ministers of state, courtiers, and counsellors, and his subjects in common, perhaps everywhere in his kingdom, but particularly in the metropolis:

and there was a great cry in Egypt; throughout the whole land, the firstborn being everywhere slain, which caused a most dreadful lamentation of parents for their eldest son, of brethren and sisters for their elder brother, and of servants and maidens for the principal and heir of the family; a cry so loud and general as perhaps was never heard before or since, and under which distress they could have no relief, or any to be their comforter, since all were in the same circumstances: for there was not a house wherein there was not one dead; for if there was no firstborn in it, as it can hardly be thought there should be in every house, though some have been of opinion that it was so ordered in Providence that there should; yet the principal or most considerable person in the family, that is next to the master, might be called the firstborn, as Jarchi notes from Ps 89:27. Though this may be taken as an hyperbolical expression, or, as Aben Ezra observes, it being usual with the Scripture to say that of all, which is true of the greatest part.

Exodus 12:31

Ver. 31. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night,.... Not that Pharaoh went in person, but he sent his servants to call them; for they never saw his face more after he had drove them from his presence; but now was fulfilled what Moses told him, that his servants should come to him in a very suppliant manner, and entreat him and his people to get away in all haste, Ex 10:28. Where Moses and Aaron now were is not certain, probably in the city, or suburbs of it, where Pharaoh's palace was, for it is not likely that they were gone to Goshen:

and said, rise up; from their beds in which they now were, being midnight:

and get ye forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; even all of them, without any exception of women or children as before; and without limiting them to place or time, where they should go, and how long they should stay, and without obliging them to promise to return:

and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said; as they had entreated they might, and as they had demanded in the name of the Lord that they should; to which now he gave his consent, though he afterwards repented of it.

Exodus 12:32

Ver. 32. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said,.... Which they had insisted upon should go with them, but he had refused, but now he is willing they should go with them:

and be gone; out of his city and country in all haste:

and bless me also; or pray for me, as the Targum of Onkelos; pray the Lord to bestow a blessing upon me also, as I have done well by you in suffering you to depart with your whole families, flocks, and herds. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"I desire nothing else of you, only pray for me, that I die not;"

and so Jarchi. As he found his firstborn, and the heir to his crown and kingdom, was dead, he might justly fear it would be his case next, and perhaps very soon; and therefore desires their prayers for him, that his life might be spared.

Exodus 12:33

Ver. 33. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people,.... The people of Israel; not using force, but strong entreaties, the most powerful arguments, and importunate language they were masters of:

that they might send them out of the land in haste: this looks as if it was the people about Pharaoh, his ministers and courtiers, they were pressing upon to dismiss the Israelites at once, and to hasten their departure; or else Moses and Aaron, and the elders of the people, to stir them up to a quick dispatch of their affairs, that they might be soon rid of them; unless the sense is, that they were very solicitous and earnest with the people, that they would get away out of the land as fast as they could:

for they said, we [be] all dead [men]; for their firstborn being all slain, they expected that they themselves, and the rest of their families, would be struck with death next; and this they feared would be the case in a very little time, if they did not depart;

for they had sufficient reason to convince them, that it was purely on their account, and because they had not leave to go out of the land, that all the above judgments, and particularly the last, were inflicted on them.

Exodus 12:34

Ver. 34. And the people took their dough before it was leavened,.... They had that evening mixed their flour with water, and made it into dough, but had put no leaven into it; and the Egyptians being so very earnest to have them gone, they stayed not to put any leaven into it:

[but] their kneadingtroughs, or rather "their dough",

being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders; for it is not likely that their troughs should be wrapped up in the skirts of their garments; but their dough might, if their clothes were like the hykes of the Arabs now, as Dr. Shaw {z} thinks they were, and which are pretty much like the plaids of the Scotch, and which are large enough for such a purpose; as even the veil which Ruth wore held six measures of barley, **Ru 3:15** and so these clothes of theirs, like the Arabs' hykes, and the Scotch plaids, might be so made, that large lumps of dough being bound up in them might be thrown over their shoulders, and so carried by them when they journeyed.

{z} Travels, p. 224, 225. Edit. 2.

Exodus 12:35

Ver. 35. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses,.... **Ex 3:22**

and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment; or "they asked" {a} them of the Egyptians to give them them, which they readily did to get rid of them; for upon their being urgent with the Israelites to be gone in haste, they might reply, that they were not provided with things suitable for a journey, and therefore requested such things of them, which they at once freely consented to; See Gill on "Ex 3:22",
See Gill on "Ex 11:2",
See Gill on "Ex 11:3".

{a} wlavyw "et postulaverunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "petierunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Exodus 12:36

Ver. 36. And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians,.... Their minds were disposed towards them, and their hearts were inclined to grant their request, and did grant it:

so they lent unto them: such things as they required; or "they gave unto them" {b}; made presents of them freely to them; and so Josephus says {c}, that they honoured them with gifts:

and they spoiled the Egyptians; stripped them of their substance and riches, of their most valuable things; in doing which they were in no wise criminal, since they did it by the direction and authority of God, who has a right to dispose of all the things in the world; and to take of them from one, and give to another, as he pleases; nor was any injustice done to the Egyptians, who owed all this, and perhaps abundantly more, to the Israelites, for the labour and service they had served them in for many years; besides, they were the avowed enemies of Israel, and the Lord had now put himself at the head of the armies of Israel, and was contending with them, and they with him, who should overcome; and this was doing no other than what, acceding to the law of nations, is lawful to be done in time of war; to spoil, plunder, and distress an enemy, in whatsoever way it can be done. And thus the promise made to Abraham, that his posterity should come out with great substance, was fulfilled, Ge 15:14. This circumstance is taken notice of by some Heathen writers, as Artapanus {d}; who says they borrowed many cups of the Egyptians, and not a little raiment, besides a great quantity of other treasure and riches; and so Ezekiel the tragedian {e} speaks of a vast deal of gold and silver, raiment, and other things, the Israelitish women had of the Egyptians at their departure, and who relates the history of Moses and the above plagues very agreeably to the sacred writings.

{b} Mwlavyw "ut petita darent", Tigurine version, "ut dederint", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Ainsworth, Cartwright. {c} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 14. sect. 6. {d} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 436. {e} Apud Euseb. ib. c. 29. p. 443.

Exodus 12:37

Ver. 37. And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth,.... Rameses was a place in Goshen, or rather the land of Goshen, from whence the country was so called; See Gill on "Ge 47:11". The Targum of Jonathan takes it to be Pelusium, or Sin, now called Tinah, formerly the strength of Egypt, and which lay at the entrance of it, and says it was one hundred and thirty miles to Succoth; and Jarchi says one hundred and twenty. But the distance between these two places was not so great; for Succoth from Rameses it is computed was eight miles {f} only. The latter place is so called by anticipation; for it was now a desert, as Josephus {g} says, which he calls Latopolis, but had its name Succoth from the children of Israel pitching their tents there; for the word signifies tents or tabernacles. The number of the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt

were about six hundred thousand on foot, that were men, besides children; and which is confirmed by the account that Chaeremon {h} the Heathen gives, who makes the number of those drove out of Egypt, as he calls them, 250,000; and says that when they came to Pelusium, they found there 380,000 left there by Amenophis; which makes in all 630,000. And so Philo the Jew says {i}, they were above 600,000, besides old men, children, and women, that could not easily be numbered; and the word "about" will admit of it, since it may be used not to diminish, but to increase the number; and it is certain that in the second year after they were come out of Egypt, their number was 600,550 without the Levites, who were not numbered; and they that were numbered were such as were twenty years old and upward, and able to go forth to war, **Nu 1:9** and such were those here, as Jarchi observes; so that if there were 600,000 men of twenty years old and upwards, able to bear arms, besides women, children, and old men, it may well be thought that in all there were no less than near two millions and a half; for, according to the ordinary proportion allowed in other nations of four to one between the number of the whole people in a nation, and those men fit to bear arms, that the number of the

Israelites alone, of all ages and sexes which went out of Egypt along with Moses, will amount to 2,400,000 souls {j}; which was a prodigious increase of seventy persons in little more than two hundred years, and a most marvellous thing it was, that in so large a number of persons there was not one feeble among them, Ps 105:37.

{f} See Bunting's Travels, p. 81. {g} Ut supra, (antiqu. l. 2.) c. 15. sect. 1. {h} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion, l. 1. sect. 32. {i} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 625. {j} Bp. of Clogher's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 271. See Judah Leon's Relation of Memorable Things, &c. p. 2.

Exodus 12:38

Ver. 38. And a mixed multitude went up also with them,.... Some of these were Egyptians, and some of other nations that had resided in Egypt, and who, on various accounts, might choose to go along with the children of Israel; some through intermarriages with them, being loath to part with their relations, see Le 20:10, others on account of religion, being proselytes of righteousness, and others through worldly interest, the land of Egypt being by the plagues a most desolate place; and such wonders being wrought for the children of Israel, they saw they were a people that were the favourites of heaven, and judged it safest and best and most for their interest to keep with them; the Targum of Jonathan computes the number of those to be two hundred and forty myriads:

and flocks and herds, [even] very much cattle; the greatest part of which must be supposed to belong to the children of Israel, whose cattle were not destroyed when those of the Egyptians were; and the rest might be the cattle of such who feared and regarded the word of God, and took their cattle into their houses at the time of the plague of hail, whereby they were preserved; and which might be an inducement to them to take their herds and their flocks, and go along with the children of Israel, see **Ex 9:20**.

Exodus 12:39

Ver. 39. And they baked unleavened cakes,.... While they were at Succoth; but since that was a desert place, where could they get ovens to bake them in? they might lay them upon coals, and by frequent turning them bake them, or under hot ashes, under a pan covered with hot embers and coals, on an hearth, in which way cakes and other things are now baked with us in many places: of the quick way of dressing cakes in the eastern countries, See Gill on "Ge 18:6" and some render the word, "cakes under ashes" {k} which were made

of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt; for it was not leavened; of the manner of their bringing it,
See Gill on "Ex 12:34", and the reason why it was not leavened follows:

because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry: to leaven their dough, in such haste did they go out from thence. When they are said to be "thrust out", it is not to be understood of force and compulsion used, or of any indecent and ill behaviour towards them; but of earnest entreaties and urgent persuasions to depart; though this no doubt gave rise to the stories told by Justin {l}, Tacitus {m}, and others, that they were drove and cast out of Egypt by force, because they were a filthy diseased people, infected with the scab, itch, and leprosy; whereas there was not a sick, unsound, infirm, and feeble person among them, as before observed:

neither had they prepared for themselves any victual; they had their flocks and their herds, out of which they could take for their use, and they had dough, though unleavened and unbaked; but they had nothing ready dressed; what remained of the passover lamb they were obliged to burn; they had nothing which was got by hunting or fishing, as the word {n} used signifies; neither venison nor fish, of the latter of which there was great plenty in Egypt.

{k} tge "subcineritios panes", V. L. "subcineritia", Samar, egkrufiav, Sept. so Munster. {l} E Trogo, l. 36. c. 2. {m} Hist. l. 5. c. 3. Manetho apud Joseph. contr. Apion, l. 1. c. 15. & Chaeremon apud ib. c. 32. & Lysimachus apud ib. c. 34. {n} tdu "vox autem proprie significat aliquid venando captum", Piscator.

Exodus 12:40

Ver. 40. Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt,.... The Septuagint version adds, "and in the land of Canaan"; and the Samaritan version is,

"the sojourning of the children of Israel, and of their fathers, in the land of Canaan, and in the land of Egypt."

Agreeably to which are both the Talmuds: in one {o} of them the words are, "in Egypt and in all lands,"

and in the other {p},

"in Egypt, and in the rest of the lands;"

and in the same way Aben Ezra interprets the words. And certain it is, that Israel did not dwell in Egypt four hundred and thirty years, and even not much more than two hundred years; but then they and their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, dwelt so long in Mesopotamia, in Canaan, and in Egypt, in foreign countries, in a land not theirs, as the phrase is, Ge 15:13 where the place of their sojourning, and the time of it, are given by way of prophecy. The Jews reckon from the vision of God to Abraham between the pieces to the birth of Isaac thirty years, so the Targum of Jonathan; but that cannot be, though from his coming out of his own native place, Ur of the Chaldeans, to the birth of Isaac, might be so many years, since he was seventy five years of age when he came out of Haran, Ge 12:4 and if he stayed at Haran five years, as probably he did, then there were just thirty from his coming out of Ur of the Chaldees to Isaac's birth, since he was born when he was one hundred years old; and from the birth of Isaac to the birth of Jacob was sixty years, Ge 25:26 and from thence to his going down to Egypt was one hundred and thirty, Ge 47:9 and from thence to the coming of Israel out of Egypt were two hundred and ten years, as is generally computed, which make the exact sum of four hundred and thirty years; of these See Gill on "Ac 7:6",
See Gill on "Ga 3:17".

{o} T. Hieros. Magillah, fol. 71. 4. {p} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 9. 1.

Exodus 12:41

Ver. 41. And it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years,.... As soon as completed:

even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt; which was the fifteenth of Nisan; and Jarchi says it was on the fifteenth of Nisan that the decree was made known to Abraham between the pieces, concerning the affliction of his posterity four hundred years in a land not theirs; but this is not to be depended on; yet it looks as if at the close of the four hundred and thirty years, from the date of them, exactly to a day, the children of Israel, the armies of the Lord, came out of Egypt in great order: however, it seems certain by this that they all came out the same day, which was very wonderful that such a large number should be collected together, and that they should march out of the land on one and the same day; and it is pretty plain it was in the daytime, and very likely in the midst of the day; for they were not to stir out of their houses till morning, and then they had what remained of the passover to burn, as well as many other things to do, it is very probable, and some which they could not do; so that they did not go by night, or by stealth, but openly at noon day; and the words will bear to be rendered, "in the strength or body of the day" {r}, when it is at its height, as it is at noon; and so the Jews represent the Lord speaking after this manner {s},

"If I bring out Israel by night, the Egyptians will say, now he does his work after the manner of thieves; but behold, I will bring them out in the midst of the day, in the strength of the sun, as is said, "and it was in the selfsame day", &c."

{r} hzh Mzyh Mueb "in corpore diei hujus", Pagninus, Montanus; "in the body" or "strength of that day", Ainsworth. {s} Pirke Eliezer, c. 48. fol. 58. 2.

Exodus 12:42

Ver. 42. It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord,.... Or "a night of observations" {t}, in which many things are to be observed to the honour and glory of God, as done by him, wherein his power, wisdom, goodness, truth and faithfulness, are displayed; partly by the destruction of the Egyptian firstborn, and particularly

for bringing them, the children of Israel,

out from the land of Egypt: with the leave, and even pressing importunity of the Egyptians, and with so much wealth and riches, having found great favour in their sight, which was from the Lord:

this is that night of the Lord to be much observed of all the children of Israel in their generations in successive ages unto the coming of the Messiah, for the reasons before given; and the selfsame night is worthy the remembrance of all the spiritual Israel of God, of all true believers in Christ; for that very night after Christ had ate the passover with his disciples, he was betrayed by one of them; and to perpetuate the memory of this, and of his sufferings and death, an ordinance is appointed to be observed until his second coming, see 1Co 11:23, and the ancient Jews themselves have had some notion of the appearance of the Messiah at this time; for they not only expect his coming at the time of the passover, and speak of their redemption by him in the month of Nisan, as before observed on Ex 12:14, but of this very night, among the four observable things in it, the fourth they say is, Moses shall go out of the midst of the wilderness, and the King Messiah out of Rome; so it is said in the Jerusalem Targum on the place.

{t} Myrmv lyl "nox observantiarum", Munster, Fagius, Vatablus, so Drusius, Piscator, Cartwright, Ainsworth.

Exodus 12:43

Ver. 43. And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron,.... At the same time he acquainted them with the above things:

this is the ordinance of the passover; as before delivered, and these the laws and rules, according to which it is to be observed, as now related, both with respect to the lamb, and to the unleavened bread; and the following is an account of the persons that were to partake of it:

there shall no stranger eat thereof, one that is of another country, an entire Heathen, and unacquainted with, and does not profess the Jewish religion, which was the religion of God.

Exodus 12:44

Ver. 44. But every man's servant that is bought for money,.... And so his own property:

when thou hast circumcised him; as such an one ought to be, according to the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham, Ge 17:13, though one should think not without his consent; wherefore care was to be taken to purchase such servants as would be willing to conform to that rite, and pains were to be taken with them to instruct them in it, and persuade them to it; to which, when they had submitted, they had a right to eat the passover, but if they did not, it was not allowed:

then shall he eat thereof; but not otherwise.

Exodus 12:45

Ver. 45. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. One of another nation, and one that was only hired by the day, week, or year; as they were not obliged to circumcision, so without it they had no right to eat of the passover, none but such as became proselytes of righteousness.

Exodus 12:46

Ver. 46. In one house shall it be eaten,.... For though there might be more lambs than one eaten in a house, where there were a sufficient number to eat them; and there might be more societies than one in a house, provided they kept themselves distinct, and were large enough each of them to eat up a lamb; yet one lamb might not be eaten in different houses, a part of it in one house, and a part of it in another; which may denote the unity of the general assembly and church of the firstborn, and the distinct separate congregations of the saints, and the right that each have to a whole Christ, who is not to be divided from his ministers, word, and ordinances;
See Gill on "Mt 26:18":

thou shall not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house: into another house; for where there was not a sufficient number in one house to eat a lamb, their neighbours in the next house were to join with them; but then they were not to part it, and one portion of it to be eaten in one house, and the other in another, but they were to meet together in one of their houses, and there partake of it; thus, though Christ may be fed upon by faith any where by particular believers, yet in an ordinance way only in the church of God:

neither shall ye break a bone thereof; any of its tender bones to get out the marrow; and so the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"that ye may eat that which is in the midst of it:"

this was remarkably fulfilled in Christ the antitype, Joh 19:32.

Exodus 12:47

Ver. 47. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. The passover, and the feast of unleavened bread only; for a Gentile was first to be circumcised, and be joined to the congregation, and then partake of it, and not before.

Exodus 12:48

Ver. 48. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, &e.] Who by so doing became a proselyte of the gate, he observing the commands of the sons of Noah:

and will keep the passover of the Lord; is desirous of being admitted to that ordinance:

let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near, and keep it: first himself, and then all his male children and male servants, and then, and not till then, he might approach to this ordinance, and observe it; for by this means he would become a proselyte of righteousness, and in all respects as an Israelite, or son of Abraham, as it follows:

and he shall be as one that is born in the land; a native and proper inhabitant of Canaan, enjoying all the privileges and immunities of such:

for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof; these laws and rules concerning those persons that were to eat of the passover are such as were to be observed in all successive generations, to the coming of Christ; and were the rather necessary to be given now, because of the mixed multitude who now came up with the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Exodus 12:49

Ver. 49. One law shall be to him that is homeborn,.... A proper Israelite, one that is so by descent:

and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you; that becomes a proselyte to the true religion; these were both bound by the same law, and obliged to observe the same rites and ceremonies, and partook of the same ordinances, benefits, and privileges; this was a dawn of grace to the poor Gentiles, and presignified what would be in Gospel times, when they should be fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, be fellow heirs of the same body, and partakers of the promises of Christ by the Gospel, **Eph 2:19**.

Exodus 12:50

Ver. 50. Thus did all the children of Israel,.... They slew a lamb, and roasted and ate it, with unleavened bread, and bitter herbs, and took a bunch of hyssop, and dipped it in the blood, and struck the lintel and the side posts of the doors of their houses: this they did on the night of their deliverance out of Egypt:

as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they; being instructed by them; which is an instance of their ready and cheerful obedience to the divine will, which they were under great obligation to perform, from a grateful sense of the wonderful mercy and favour they now were made partakers of.

Exodus 12:51

Ver. 51. And it came to pass the selfsame day,.... That the above ordinance was instituted and celebrated in the night:

that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, by their armies; by their several tribes, which were like so many armies, marching in large numbers, and with great order and regularity, See Gill on "Ex 7:4".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 13

This chapter begins with an order to sanctify or set apart the firstborn of man and beast to the Lord, Ex 13:1 and the people of Israel are charged to keep the feast of unleavened bread in its season, from year to year, when they came into the land of Canaan, the reason of which they were to acquaint their children with,
Ex 13:3 and they are also directed, when come into the land of Canaan, to set apart every firstling of a beast unto the Lord, and particularly the firstling of an ass was to be redeemed with a lamb, or its neck to be broke, and all the firstborn of men were to be redeemed also, Ex 13:11, and when their children

inquired the reason of it, they were to be told it was on account of the Lord's slaying the firstborn of men and beast among the Egyptians, when Pharaoh would not let Israel go, and of saving the firstborn of his people, Ex 13:14, and it is observed, that when the children of Israel went out of Egypt, they were not led by the nearest way, the way of the land of the Philistines, but a round about way, the way of the wilderness of the Red sea, when they took the bones of Joseph with them, as he had adjured them to do, Ex 13:17, and the chapter is concluded with an account of their journeying from Succoth to Etham, the Lord going before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night, Ex 13:20.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... When he and the Israelites were at Succoth:

saying; as follows.

Exodus 13:2

Ver. 2. Sanctify unto me all the firstborn,.... That is, of males, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, for those, and not females, were only either sacrificed or redeemed, see Ex 13:12, and this sanctification of them to the Lord signifies the separation or devoting of them to the service of God; if the firstborn of clean creatures they were to be sacrificed, if unclean to be redeemed with a price, and so the firstborn of men, because it was not lawful to sacrifice them; and the money for the redemption of them was given to the priests, the ministers of the Lord, and so to him; who these first, born were is further explained:

whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast; that is, if a male; for, if a female, though it openeth the womb, was not reckoned a firstborn, because not to be offered; nor even a male after the birth of a female, because that openeth not the womb; and so if a man married a widow, and she had had children by her former husband, though she should bring him a son, which was his firstborn, yet not being her's, and not opening the womb, was not subject to this law; but if a man married several wives one after another, or together, who had never been married before, or had had no children; if each of them brought him a son at first birth, they were all of them firstborn, and to be sanctified to the Lord; but the Jews say {u}, if a woman at her first birth brought forth a male and a female, the father was free from this law of the redemption of the firstborn, because the female might come forth first: this phrase, "among the children of Israel", shows that this law only belonged to them, and not to the Gentiles; wherefore the Jewish doctors say {w}, if a man buys cattle of an Heathen, and sells to him, or is in partnership with him, and gives and takes of him, he is free from the law of the firstborn; for it is said "among the Israelites", and not among others:

it is mine: all creatures, man and beast, are the Lord's by creation; but these firstborn were his in a peculiar manner, and which he reserved to himself, to his own use and service; and the people of Israel were under great obligation to devote them to him, since he had spared all their firstborn, when all the firstborn of the Egyptians, both man and beast, were destroyed: this may denote the special and peculiar interest the Lord has in the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, through the special, particular, and eternal choice of them in Christ, and the redemption of them to him by the price of his blood; and who, on account both of their election of God, and redemption by Christ, are laid under obligation to give up themselves to God, a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice, which is but their reasonable service.

{u} Misn. Becorot, c. 8. sect. 4, 5. & Bartenora in ib. {w} Ibid. c. 2. sect. 1.

Exodus 13:3

Ver. 3. And Moses said unto the people,.... After the Lord had spoken to him, and said the above things:

remember this day in which ye came out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; or "of servants" {x} where they had been servants to the Egyptians, by whom they had been made to serve with rigour, and their lives made bitter with hard bondage; that country had been like a prison house unto them, where they had been detained captives, and treated in a very cruel manner; but now they were come out of this place and state of servitude, even that very day, the fifteenth of Nisan; and which therefore it became them to remember, they and theirs, in all succeeding generations, as the Lord had directed, and which is afterwards repeated to impress it the more upon their, minds and memories:

for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out of this place; it was not by their own might and strength that they were redeemed from their state of bondage, but by the mighty hand of the Lord who wrought such signs and wonders before Pharaoh and his servants, and inflicted such plagues upon them, which none but an omnipotent hand could do, which obliged them at last to let them go: and if the Israelites were under obligation, on account of this redemption, to remember the day when it was in this wonderful manner wrought out, much, more reason have we to remember the redemption by Christ the mighty Redeemer, whose own arm wrought salvation for us, and delivered us out of the hands of our spiritual enemies, that were stronger than we, by frequently attending the ordinance of the Lord's supper, which is instituted to bring this amazing affair to our remembrance, and which is to be continued for that purpose unto the second coming of Christ:

there shall no leavened bread be eaten; as they then on this very day had no other but unleavened bread to eat, so they should eat no other on this day and the six days following, in successive ages unto the coming of the Messiah.

{x} Mydbe tybm "e domo servorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus, & Drusius.

Exodus 13:4

Ver. 4. This day came ye out,.... Out of Egypt, on the fifteenth of Nisan, as the Targum of Jonathan:

in the month Abib; which signifies an ear of corn, because in this month barley was in the ear, see **Ex 9:31**, the Syriac version renders it, "in the month of flowers"; when the flowers were rising up out of the earth, being spring time, and a very fit time to travel in; and this is observed, not only because they might not know what month it was, in such a state of ignorance, as well as servitude, were they kept in Egypt; but as Jarchi also intimates, to point out to them the mercy and goodness of God to them, in bringing them out at such a seasonable time to travel in, when there were neither heat, nor cold, nor rain. This month answers to part of our March, and part of April.

Exodus 13:5

Ver. 5. And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites,.... Though the whole land was called the land of Canaan, yet there was one tribe or nation of them particularly so called as here, distinct from those that follow:

and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites; there were seven nations in all, but two are here omitted, the Girgashites and Perizzites, but they are added in the Septuagint version, see **De 7:1**

which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee; to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; so that they might be assured they would be brought into it, since they had both the word and oath of God for it; and which is the rather mentioned now for their encouragement, since they were at this time set forward in their journey thitherwards:

a land flowing with milk and honey; See Gill on "Ex 3:8",

that thou shalt keep this service in this month; the month of Abib; that is, the following service concerning unleavened bread; it is concluded from hence by some, that those laws concerning the passover, and eating unleavened bread, and sanctifying the firstborn, did not oblige the Israelites, while in the wilderness, only when they came into the land of Canaan; and it seems pretty clear that this was the case with respect to the two latter, but not the former, since it is certain they did keep the passover in the wilderness, and were obliged to it, **Nu 9:1** but then it may be observed, that there is no mention there of their keeping the feast of unleavened bread, only of the passover, as here no mention is made of the feast of the passover, which, though they followed one another, were, two distinct feasts.

Exodus 13:6

Ver. 6. Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread,.... The Jews {y} gather from this place, and from De 16:8, that the obligation to eat unleavened bread lasted no longer than the first night of the seven days, but on the rest it was enough if they abstained from leavened bread, and it was lawful for them to eat of other food as they pleased, See Gill on "Ex 12:15", but the words are very express in both places, and so in the following verse, for eating unleavened bread, as well as abstaining from leavened; and, indeed, otherwise it would not be so clear and plain a commemoration of their case and circumstances, in which they were when they came out of Egypt; this bread of affliction, as it is called, De 16:3 being what would put them in mind thereof:

and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord; an holy convocation, in which no work was to be done, except what was necessary for preparing food to eat, see Ex 12:16.

{y} In Siphre apud Manasseh Ben lsrael. Conciliat. in loc.

Exodus 13:7

Ver. 7. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days,.... From the evening of the fourteenth day, to the evening of the twenty first, Ex 12:18, this is very express as before, that not only they were to abstain from leaven, but that they were obliged to eat unleavened bread; and as for the cakes of eggs and sugar the Jews now use, these, as Leo Modeua says {z}, are for those that are dainty and of tender stomachs and such as are sick, who eat unleavened bread also;

and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters:
See Gill on "Ex 12:15" and the above mentioned writer says {a},

"they begin before the passover, with all the diligence and care they can, to put away all leaven, or anything that hath had leaven in it, out of their houses, and out of their power; searching all their cupboards and bins, and cleansing the whole house and whiting it all over; and they provide themselves also of new utensils for their kitchen and table; or else they new make the old again, and scour them well; or else they have a select number of vessels set apart for the use of the passover only, that so they may be certainly assured that they use not anything during those eight days, that hath had leaven in it:"

and Aben Ezra upon the place says, that the sense of it is, that the Israelites ought not to suffer any to sojourn in any place subject to them, but on this condition, that they abstain from leavened bread at the time of the passover, and this he takes to be the meaning of the phrase, "in all thy quarters or borders".

{z} History of the Rites, &c. of the Jews, par. 3. c. 3. sect. 5. {a} Ib. sect. 4.

Exodus 13:8

Ver. 8. And thou shall show thy son in that day,.... On the first of the days of the feast of unleavened bread, the reason of eating it; and this is to be shown not to a son or single child only, but by parents to all their children, sons and daughters, and even unasked, as Maimonides {b} interprets it; and so Jarchi's note is, to a son that knows not how to ask or what to ask about, See Gill on "Ex 12:26" see Gill on "Ex 12:27":

saying, this is done because of that which the Lord did unto me, when I came forth out of Egypt: that is, this unleavened bread is eaten because of the quick and speedy deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, so that they had not time to leaven their dough.

{b} Hilchot Chametz Umetzah, c. 7. sect. 2, 3.

Exodus 13:9

Ver. 9. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes,.... These are not the words of God or of Moses to the children of Israel, but of an lsraelitish parent to his son, telling him that this feast of unleavened bread would serve the same purpose to refresh his memory with what God did for his people of old, as the tying of a thing on the hand, or placing it before the eye, is to a person to bring anything to his remembrance, to which the allusion is; the like figurative phrases may be observed in **Pr 1:9**, the Jews understand this literally, and hence the use of phylacteries among them, which they bind upon their left hand, and place upon their foreheads between their eyes, of which
See Gill on "Mt 23:5", but such a practice could be of no use to answer the end next mentioned:

that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth; for surely this cannot be taken literally, but the sense is, that being instructed by the observance of the above feast, and being taught the meaning of it, they might be able to speak of it to their children, and so transmit it from age to age to their latest posterity:

for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt;
See Gill on "Ex 13:3".

Exodus 13:10

Ver. 10. Thou shall therefore keep the ordinance in his season,.... Not the ordinance of the phylacteries, as the Targum of Jonathan, but the ordinance of unleavened bread:

from year to year; every year successively, so long as in force, even unto the coming of the Messiah. It is in the Hebrew text, "from days to days" {c}; that is, either year after year, as we understand it; or else the sense is, that the feast of unleavened bread, when the season was come for keeping it, was to be observed every day for seven days running.

{c} hmymy Mymym "a diebus in dies", V. L. Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Drusius.

Exodus 13:11

Ver. 11. And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites,.... Put for all the rest of the nations:

as he sware unto thee, and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee; to them as they were in their loins, and from thence might certainly conclude it would be given them.

Exodus 13:12

Ver. 12. That thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that openeth the matrix,.... Or "the womb", as in Ex 13:2, and this phrase, "set apart", explains the word "sanctify" there, and shows that it signifies the separating of such to the use and service of God, causing it to "pass", as the word {d} here used signifies, from a man's own power and use, to be the Lord's only:

and every firstling that cometh from a beast which thou hast; or "even every firstling" {e}, explaining what is meant by what opens the matrix or womb, even every firstborn of a beast; though Jarchi interprets it of an abortion, what comes before its time, that this also should be set apart to the Lord; this must be understood of the firstlings of clean creatures, fit for food and sacrifice, such as the firstlings of cows, sheep, and goats, Nu 18:17 as distinguished from unclean ones in the following verse:

the males [shall be] the Lord's; which explains what sort of firstborn of man and beast were to be set apart for his use, not females, though the first that opened the womb; but males.

{d} trbehw "et transire facies", Pagninus, Montanus, Fagius, Vatablus, Drusius, Cartwright; so Ainsworth. {e} rjp lkw "etiam quicunque vel quicquid aperuerit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Ainsworth.

Exodus 13:13

Ver. 13. And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb,.... Which was given to the priest for it; and according to the Jewish canon {f}, it might be redeemed with that only;

"not with a calf, nor with an animal (a goat or a ram, as Bartenora interprets it), nor with a lamb slain, or torn to pieces."

Jarchi thinks the ass only was to be redeemed, and not the firstling of any other unclean creature, but his reasons are insufficient; all unclean creatures, as horses, camels, dogs, swine, &c. are included in it, as should seem from Nu 18:15 and this is the rather particularly mentioned, because there was a greater plenty of them than of horses and camels, and because they were very useful creatures; and if these were to be redeemed, then much more those of less value, and less useful. Hence might arise the story and calumny, as some have thought, of the Jews worshipping an ass's head:

and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shall break its neck; cut off its head on the back of the neck with a knife or cleaver, such as butchers use, as the Misnah {g}, and its commentators, interpret it, so that the owner should have no profit by it:

and all the firstborn of man amongst thy children shall thou redeem; with the price of five shekels of the sanctuary, and within thirty days of the birth of it, Nu 18:16 and these being to be redeemed as the unclean beasts were, shows that men are by nature unclean, and even the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, the elect of God, and need redemption by the blood of the Lamb.

{f} Misn. Becorot, sect. 1. sect. 5. {g} Ibid. sect. 7. Maimon & Bartenora in ib.

Exodus 13:14

Ver. 14. And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come,.... Or "on the morrow" {h}, the day following such a separation of the firstborn of clean creatures, or such a redemption of the firstborn of unclean ones, and of man, or in any later time:

saying, what is this? what is the meaning of this? for what reason are such things done?

that thou shall say unto him, by strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt from the house of bondage: by laying his mighty hand upon the firstborn of Egypt, and destroying them, which made the king of Egypt, and his people, willing to let Israel go; See Gill on "Ex 13:3".

{h} rxm "eras", Pagninus, Montanus, Tiguriue version.

Exodus 13:15

Ver. 15. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go,.... Showed great reluctance to it, and with difficulty was prevailed upon to dismiss them:

that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of men, and the firstborn of beast: which he did in one night, making use of a destroying angel or angels for that purpose:

therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth thee matrix, being males; that is, the firstborn of all clean creatures, as oxen, sheep, and goats:

but all the firstborn of my children I redeem; by paying five shekels apiece to the priest for them, as before observed; and this law continues to be observed with the Jews; the manner of which, as related by Leo Modena {i}, is as follows,

"Thirty days being expired after the birth of the child, they call a priest to them; that is to say, one that is descended of the stock of Aaron, whom the father of the child pleaseth; and so, many people being gathered together at the time appointed, the father of the child bringeth before the priest, in a bowl or basin, a good quantity of gold and silver, and then they give him the child into his arms; the priest then calling the mother of it before him, saith unto her, mistress, is this your son? she answereth, yes; then, replies he, have you never had any child before, either male or female, or have miscarried anyone? she saith unto him, no; then doth the priest say, this child is mine, as being the firstborn; then turning himself toward the father, he asketh him, whether he will redeem it or not? who answereth him, saying, see, here is gold and silver, take your own price; then saith the priest unto him, you will redeem it then? the father answereth, I will redeem it; it shall be so then, saith the priest, this child is mine as being the firstborn, as it is written, Nu 18:16. I therefore take this in exchange, &c. and so he takes the sum of two French crowns, or thereabout, as he thinks good, and then delivers the child to his father and mother, and this day they make a feasting day."

This custom was used in Christ's time, and was observed with respect to him, **Lu 2:27**.

{i} History of the Jews, par. 4. c. 9. sect. 2.

Exodus 13:16

Ver. 16. And it shall be for a token upon thine head, and for frontlets between thine eyes,.... These laws observed concerning the setting apart the firstlings of their beasts, the redemption of the firstborn of unclean ones, and of the firstborn of men, will bring the reason of it, the destruction of the firstborn of Egypt, and the preservation of the firstborn of Israel, as fresh to remembrance as any token upon the hand, put there to bring things to mind; and it will be as easily and as clearly discerned as anything upon a man's forehead may be seen by another:

for by strength of hand the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt: which is often mentioned, that it might be observed; it being the signs and wonders which the omnipotent hand of God wrought, especially the last, which worked upon Pharaoh, to let the people of Israel go; and their posterity, in all succeeding ages, would speak of this affair as if personally concerned in it, they being then in the loins of their ancestors, and represented by them, as well as they reaped and enjoyed all the benefits of that wonderful deliverance, the possession of the land of Canaan, and the blessings of it, as well as many other privileges both of a civil and religious kind. And so Maimonides {k} says,

"in every age a man is obliged to consider himself as if he in himself now went out of the bondage of Egypt, as it is said, "and he brought us forth from thence", &c."

{k} Hilchot Chametz Umetzah, c. 7. sect. 6.

Exodus 13:17

Ver. 17. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go,.... Gave them leave to depart out of Egypt, and even urged them to be gone in haste upon the death of his firstborn:

that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; the land of the Philistines was the Pentapolis, or five cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath, which lay between Egypt and Canaan; and their way through it to Canaan, out of Egypt, was the nearest they could go; and was, as Aben Ezra says, about ten days' journey; but Philo the Jew says {1} it was but three days' journey; and it seems, by the sons of Jacob going to and fro for corn, that it was no very long journey:

for God said: within himself, or he declared the following reason of so doing to Moses:

lest peradventure the people repent: which is said not as ignorant or doubtful, but, as Aben Ezra says, after the manner of men:

when they see war: the Philistines coming out against them to hinder their passage through their country; they being a warlike people, bold and courageous, and the Israelites, through their long servitude, of a mean, timorous, and cowardly disposition; and indeed as yet unarmed, and so very unfit to engage in war, and therefore would at once be intimidated:

and they return to Egypt; judging it more eligible to continue in their former bondage, than to fall a prey into the hands of such fierce and cruel enemies. This is the only reason mentioned for not leading them this way; but there were other secret reasons for it, which afterwards opened in Providence, as the doing that wonderful work for them, leading them through the Red sea as on dry land, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in it; and by being brought into a wilderness, a solitude, they would be in the fittest place to receive and attend to the body of laws given them, and where they were formed into a commonwealth and church state, previous to their entrance into, and possession of, the land of Canaan; and here also they were humbled, tried and proved, and had such instances of the power and goodness of God to them, as were sufficient to attach them to his service, and lay them under the greatest obligation to him, as well as would be of use to strengthen their faith and hope in him in future times of difficulty and distress.

{l} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 627.

Exodus 13:18

Ver. 18. But God led the people about,.... Instead of their going to the west, or northwest, towards Gaza, &c. and the Mediterranean sea, the Lord going before them in a pillar of cloud and fire, as after related, directed them to turn off to the right, between the east and south, to the southeast:

through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: the wilderness of Etham, by the Red sea:

and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt or "girt" {m} about the loins under the fifth rib; not with armour, as some {n} understand it, for it is not likely that they could, or that Pharaoh would suffer them to be furnished with armour, but their garments were girt about them, and so fit for travelling; or they went up "by fives" {o}, as it may be rendered, either by five in a rank, or rather in five bodies or squadrons, and so marched out, not in a disorderly and confused way, but in great order and regularity. The latter is much more reasonable to suppose, for five in a rank is too small a number for an army of 600,000 men to march in; since allowing the ranks to be but three feet asunder, and a mile to consist of about two thousand yards, the front and rear of the army would be sixty miles distant from each other {p}.

{m} Myvmx "accincti", Fagninus, Vatablus, Cartwright; so Onkelos, Aben Ezra. {n} Kimchi & Pen Melech. {o} "Quintati", Montanus: "quini", Piscater, Rivet. {p} See the Bishop of Clogher's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 272.

Exodus 13:19

Ver. 19. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him,.... And his remains might well be called bones, since at such a distance from his death the flesh must be gone, and nothing but bones left; of the place where Joseph's coffin was laid, See Gill on "Ge 50:26". The Jews pretend, that Moses was informed where Joseph was buried by Sarah, the daughter of Asher, who they say was living at this time {q}; and many other fables they relate concerning the manner of finding him, which are not worthy of any notice. Jarchi thinks, that the bones of all the tribes, or of the sons of Jacob, were carried with them, but that does not appear from the text; though it seems, according to Stephen's account, that they were carried over to Canaan; but then, whether immediately after their death, or at this time, and also by whom, is not certain, see **Ac 7:15**:

for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel; his brethren; or "in swearing had caused them to swear" {r}, had given them a very strict oath, and which they had related to their children, and so from one generation to another, and thus it became known, and Moses looked upon himself and the people of Israel as bound to observe it:

saying, God will surely visit you; in a way of mercy and goodness, and bring you out of Egypt, and put you it possession of the land of Canaan:

and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you;
See Gill on "Ge 50:25".

{q} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 13. 1. {r} eybvh ebvh "adjurando adjuraverat", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius.

Exodus 13:20

Ver. 20. And they took their journey from Succoth,.... On the second day, as Jarchi observes, from their coming out of Egypt, which was the sixteenth of Nisan:

and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness which had its name from it, and was called the wilderness of Etham, Nu 33:8. Etham is said to be eight miles from Succoth {s}. Josephus {t} calls Succoth Latopolis, which had its name from the fish Latus, formerly worshipped them, where, he says, Babylon was built when Cambyses destroyed Egypt, and is thought by many {u} to be the same with Troglodytis, by the Red sea; and Etham is supposed to be the Buto of Herodotus {w}, where were the temple of Apollo and Diana, and the oracle of Latona.

{s} Bunting's Travels, p. 81. {t} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 15. sect. 1. {u} See the Universal History, vol. 3. p. 387. {w} Enterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 59, 63, 83, 155.

Exodus 13:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord went before them,.... Who is called the Angel of the Lord, Ex 14:19, not a created but the uncreated Angel, the Angel of Jehovah's presence, in whom his name, nature, and perfections were, even the Word and Son of God, the Lord Christ, see 1Co 10:9 who went before the armies of Israel, as their King, Leader, and Commander:

by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; through the Red sea, and the wilderness, at the edge of which they now were, which was untrodden, and trackless, and the way through it very difficult to find; and being a sandy desert, as soon as a path was made, it was immediately covered with sand, and to be seen no more: this cloud was not an ordinary one, but extraordinary, supernatural, and miraculous; in the superior part of it, it was in the form of a pillar, rising upwards towards heaven; in the lower part of it, it was more spread, and covered the camp of Israel; for, besides the use of it to show the way through a trackless wilderness, it was a shelter and protection from the scorching heat of the sun in a sandy desert, where there was scarce anything to screen them from it, to which the allusion is in **Isa 4:5** this cloud was an emblem of Christ, who has sometimes appeared clothed with a cloud, Re 10:1 of the obscurity of his human nature, of the fulness of grace in him, and being in the form of a pillar, of his uprightness, firmness, stability, and visibility in it; and of the use and benefit he is to his people, partly to show them the way in which they should go, by his Spirit and word, and lead them in it by his own example, whom it becomes them to follow, he being a wise, safe, and constant guide; and partly to shelter and protect them from the heat of a fiery law, from the flaming sword of justice, from the wrath of God, from the fiery darts of Satan, and from the furious persecution of wicked men, sometimes compared to the violent heat of the sun, **So 1:6**

and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; whenever they travelled by night, as they sometimes did, and in those hot countries it was very agreeable; and this pillar of fire gave them light when the moon shone not, and was a direction to them which way to go: sometimes it is night with the people of God, a night of darkness and desertion, of drowsiness, sleepiness, and carnal security, or of affliction and distress: Christ is the light and comfort of his people, and by his Spirit and word illuminates, guides, and directs them what to do, and where and how to walk:

to go by day or night; to direct them in their journey, whether by night or day:

this was but one pillar, though Aben Ezra thinks they were two; but it may be observed they are mentioned as one, and that the pillar of cloud in the night was a cloud of darkness to the Egyptians, and gave light to the Israelites, Ex 14:19, see also **Nu 9:21** and it is easy to observe that what appears as a cloud or smoke in the daytime, looks like fire in the night: so when Alexander's army was on the march, as a signal,

"fire was observed in the night, and smoke by day,"

as says the historian {x}: nor can, this account of Moses seem incredible to the Heathens themselves, as Clemens of Alexandria observes {y}, since they relate a story somewhat similar to this, which they profess to believe; as, that when Thrasybulus brought the exile Grecians from Phyle, and willing to do it secretly, a pillar was his guide, and as he passed in the night through untrodden paths, when the moon shone not, and it was a dark winter night, a light was seen going before him, which brought them safe to Mynichia, and then left them: indeed this was not so extraordinary and miraculous, if true, as this pillar, as Bishop Patrick observes, because it was but for a night, whereas this continued all the forty years in the wilderness, until the Israelites came to Canaan's land, as follows: the Arabic geographer {z} speaks of exhalations arising out of caves at the sides of mountains, which in the daytime looked like smoke, and in the night time like fire.

{x} Curtius, l. 5. c. 2. {y} Strom. l. 1. p. 348. {z} Climat. 3. par. 8.

Exodus 13:22

Ver. 22. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day,.... It always appeared in the daytime, and was a guide and shelter:

nor the pillar of fire by night, [from] before the people; this continued till they came through the wilderness to the borders of the land of Canaan, when they needed it no longer, and then it left them; for when they passed over Jordan the ark went before them, **Jos 3:6**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 14

This chapter begins with directions of God to Moses, to be given to the children of Israel about the course they were to steer in their journey, with the reason thereof, Ex 14:1, which they observing, a report was brought to Pharaoh that they were fled, and this determined him and his servants to get ready and pursue after them, as they did with a great army, Ex 14:5, which when the Israelites saw, it put them in great fear, and set them to murmuring and complaining against Moses for bringing them out of Egypt, Ex 14:10, who desired them to be still and quiet, and they should see the salvation of the Lord, Ex 14:13, and he is bid to order the people to go on in their journey, and to take his rod and stretch it over the sea and divide it, that Israel might pass through it on dry ground, and the Egyptians follow them, whereby God would be honoured and glorified, Ex 14:15, upon which the Angel of the Lord in a pillar of cloud removed from before there, and went behind them for their protection, Ex 14:19, and Moses stretching out his hand over the sea, and a strong east wind blowing upon it, the waters divided and the Israelites went into it, and the Egyptians followed them, but their host being troubled by the Lord, and their chariot wheels taken off, they found themselves in great danger, and were thrown into a panic, Ex 14:20 and upon Moses's stretching out his hand again over the sea, the waters returned, and Pharaoh and his host were drowned, but the Israelites passed through safely, as on dry land, Ex 14:26, which great work of the Lord being observed by them, influenced their fear of him, their faith in him and his servant Moses, Ex 14:30.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Out of the pillar of the cloud in which he went before them; either while they were at Etham, or when journeying from thence, and a little before they turned off to the right, as they were now directed:

saying; as follows:

Exodus 14:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn,.... Not return to Egypt, or to the place, or towards the place from whence they came, but turn off, out of the road in which they were; for, as a late traveller says {a},

"there were two roads, through which the Israelites might have been conducted from Cairo (which he supposes may be Rameses) to Pihahiroth. One of them lies through the valleys, as they are now called, of Jendily, Rumaleah, and Baideah, bounded on each side by the mountains of the lower Thebais; the other lies higher, having the northern range of these mountains (the mountains of Mocattee) running parallel with it on the right hand, and the desert of the Egyptian Arabia, which lies all the way open to the land of the Philistines, on the left, (see Ex 13:17) about the middle of this range we may turn short on our right hand into the valley of Baideah, through a remarkable breach or discontinuation, in which we afterwards continued to the very banks of the Red sea; this road then, through the valley of Baideah, which is some hours longer than the other open road, which leads directly from Cairo to Suez, was in all probability the very road which the Israelites took to Pihahiroth, on the banks of the Red sea."

And again he says {b}, this valley ends at the sea in a small bay, made by the eastern extremities of the mountains, and is called "Tiah beni Israel", i.e. the road of the Israelites, from a tradition of the Arabs, of their having passed through it; as it is also called Baideah from the new and unheard of miracle that was wrought near it, by dividing the Red sea, and destroying therein Pharaoh, his chariots and horsemen:

and encamp before Pihahiroth: which was sixteen miles from Etham {c}, and by some {d} thought to be the same with the city of Heroes (or Heroopolis), on the extreme part of the Arabic gulf, or the Phagroriopolis, placed by Strabo {e} near the same place: according to the above traveller {f}, Pihahiroth was the mouth, or the most advanced part of the valley of Baideah to the eastward toward the Red sea; with which Jarchi in some measure agrees, who says Pihahiroth is Pithom, now so called, because the Israelites became free: they (Hahiroth) are two rocks, and the valley between them is called (Pi) the mouth of the rocks: so Dr. Shaw observes {g}; the word may be deduced from rx, "a hole" or "gullet", and by a latitude common in those cases, be rendered a narrow "defile", road or passage, such as the valley of Baideah has been described: but as the Israelites were properly delivered at this place from their captivity and fear of the Egyptians, Ex 14:13 we may rather suppose that Hhiroth denotes the place where they were restored to their liberty; as Hhorar and Hhiroth are words of the like sort in the Chaldee: but another very learned man {h} says, that in the Egyptian language Pihahiroth signifies a place where grew great plenty of grass and herbs, and was contiguous to the Red sea, and was like that on the other shore of the sea, the Arabian, which Diodorus Siculus {i} speaks of as a pleasant green field:

between Migdol and the sea; which signifies a tower, and might be one: there was a city of this name in Egypt, and in those parts, but whether the same with this is not certain, Jer 44:1

over against Baalzephon; which the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem take to be an "idol": and so does Jarchi, and say it was the only one left of the idols of Egypt; see Ex 12:12 and so some Christian as well as Jewish writers suppose it to be; and that it was as a watch, or guard, or amulet, to keep fugitives from going out of the land: but by Ezekiel the tragedian {k} it is called a city; and so by Josephus {l}, who says they came to Baalzephon the third day, a place situated by the Red sea; which is most likely, and it is highly probable that this and Migdol were two fortified places, which guarded the mouth of the valley, or the straits which led to the Red sea: Artapanus {m} the Heathen historian agrees with Josephus in saying it was the third day when they came to the Red sea:

before it shall ye encamp by the sea; and there wait till Pharaoh came up to them.

{a} Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 307. Ed. 2. {b} lb. p. 309. {c} Bunting's Travels, p. 82. {d} See the Universal History, vol. 3. p. 387. {e} Geograph. l. 17. p. 553. {f} Shaw, ib. p. 310. {g} Ut supra. ({a}) {h} Jablonski de Terra Goshen, Dissert. 5. sect. 9. {i} Bibliothec. c. 3. p. 175. {k} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 29. p. 444. {l} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 15. sect. 1. {m} Apud Euseb. ib. c. 27. p. 436.

Exodus 14:3

Ver. 3. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel,.... The Septuagint version adds, "to his people", his ministers and courtiers, when he hears where they are:

they are entangled in the land; have lost their way, and got into places they cannot easily get out of, and are perplexed in their minds, and do not know what way to take or course to steer:

the wilderness hath shut them in; or, "shut up the way to them" {n}; the wilderness between the mountains the above mentioned traveller speaks of {o} the mountains of Gewoubee; these would stop their flight or progress to the southward, as those of the Attackah would do the same towards the land of the Philistines; the Red sea likewise lay before them to the east, while Pharaoh (could) close up the valley behind them, with his chariots and his horsemen; and which, no doubt, appeared very advantageous and encouraging to him, as it must be very distressing to the Israelites.

{n} Mhyle rgo "clausit viam illis", Pagninus, "praeclusit sese illis", Vatablus.
{o} Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 309. Ed. 2.

Exodus 14:4

Ver. 4. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart,.... Once more, as he had often done:

that he shall follow after them: to Pihahiroth, and even into the sea after them:

and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; in his wisdom, faithfulness, power, and justice, by the destruction of them:

that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord; the only Jehovah, the Lord God omnipotent; even those that feel the weight of his hand while troubling their host, and bringing the waters upon them; especially those that shall remain in the land, and will not be involved in the catastrophe:

and they did so: the Israelites turned to the right to Pihahiroth, instead of going by Bishbesh and Tinah (Bubastis and Pelusium), and so along the sea coast towards Gaza and Ascalon, and encamped there between Migdol and the sea over against Baalzephon, as they were ordered and directed.

Exodus 14:5

Ver. 5. And it was told the king of Egypt,.... By some of the Egyptians, or mixed multitude that went out with Israel, but returned upon their encampment at the Red sea, or by some spies Pharaoh sent with them to observe their motions: the Targums of Jonathan and Jarchi make use of a word which Buxtorf translates military officers: and the latter says, they went out with them the three days' journey, but the Israelites not returning to Egypt (as expected), they tell Pharaoh of it the fourth day; and on the fifth and sixth he pursued them, and in the night of the seventh went into the sea after them, and on the morning they (the Israelites) sung the song, which was the seventh of the passover: these reported to Pharaoh:

that the people fled; that under a pretence of going three days' journey into the wilderness, to serve and sacrifice to the Lord, they were about to make their escape out of the land:

and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants were turned against the people; who had so much favour in their sight, not only to give them leave to go, and to hasten their departure, but to lend and give them things of great value; but now their hearts were filled with hatred of them, and with malice and revenge:

and they said, why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? not Pharaoh only, but his servants said so, even those who had entreated him to let them go, Ex 10:7 yet now repent of it, and cannot think what reason they had to do it, when at that time they saw reason, and gave a very sufficient one, namely, the destruction of Egypt; but now the judgments and plagues of God being no more upon them, they recollect the great service of the Israelites to them and the benefits and advantages they had reaped by it, and the loss they had sustained by parting with them, and therefore reflect upon themselves for such a piece of conduct.

Exodus 14:6

Ver. 6. And he made ready his chariot,.... Which he usually rode in when he went forth to war; for this seems to be a military chariot, and not for show or grandeur; and this was got ready not by himself, as Jarchi, but rather by his orders, as Aben Ezra:

and took his people with him; the Greek version reads, "all his people"; not all his subjects, but his soldiers; at least a great number, and especially his cavalry.

Exodus 14:7

Ver. 7. And he took six hundred chosen chariots,.... The chief and best he had, war chariots, chariots of iron; perhaps such as had iron scythes to them, to cut down men as they drove along; these were taken partly for quickness of dispatch, that they might be able the sooner to overtake the Israelites, who had got several days' marches before them; and partly for their strength and the annoyance of their enemies with them:

and all the chariots of Egypt: as many as could in so short a time be got together: for the words are not to be taken in the utmost latitude, but to signify a great number, and all that could be conveniently come at: the Greek version is, "all the horse", the cavalry, which better distinguishes them from the former:

and captains over everyone of them: over everyone of the chariots, so that they must each of them have many in them, to have captains over them: and perhaps the infantry, or foot soldiers, for, quickness of expedition, were put into them; for, besides these, there were horsemen: Josephus {p} makes the whole number of his army to be 50,000 horse, and 200,000 foot, and the same number is given by a Jewish chronologer {q}: but Patricides, an Arabic writer, says {r} it consisted of 600,000, and Ezekiel {s}, the tragic poet, has made it amount to a million of horse and foot: should it be asked where horses could be had to draw the chariots, and horses for the horsemen after mentioned, when all were destroyed by the hail, **Ex 9:25** it may be replied, that only those in the field were killed, not such as were in stables, where chariot horses and horses for war may be supposed to be: besides, as the Targum of Jonathan intimates, these might belong to these servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord, and took their cattle home, **Ex 9:20**.

{p} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 15. sect. 3. {q} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 77. 4. {r} Apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 464. {s} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praepar. Evangel. c. 27. p. 436.)

Exodus 14:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt,.... As he said he would, Ex 14:4,

and he pursued after the children of Israel; took their rout in pursuit of them:

and the children of Israel went out with an high hand: not once dreaming they should be pursued by Pharaoh as an enemy, when they went out with his full consent, and with such pressing solicitations to be gone, and with so much favour shown them by the Egyptians; wherefore they set out, and went on with great boldness, courage, and intrepidity; "with an uncovered head", as the Targum of Onkelos, without any fear, and with great alacrity and cheerfulness; they carried both their heads and their hands high, were fearless and thoughtless of any danger when this mighty preparation was making against them.

Exodus 14:9

Ver. 9. But the Egyptians pursued after them,.... When they thought nothing of it, and had no fears about it:

all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army; by the latter Aben Ezra understands the foot, as distinguished from the cavalry, the horses and horsemen; and perhaps these, as before observed, might be carried in the chariots for quicker dispatch:

and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon; where they had pitched their camp by divine appointment, Ex 14:2.

Exodus 14:10

Ver. 10. And when Pharaoh drew nigh,.... Or "caused to draw nigh" {t}; that is, his army, brought it very near to the camp of the Israelites:

the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; in great numbers, with full speed, threatening them with utter destruction:

and they were sore afraid; being an unarmed people, though numerous, and so unable to defend themselves against armed and disciplined troops; and besides, through their long time of slavery their spirits were broken, and were a mean, abject, dispirited people; and especially were so on the sight of the Egyptians, whom they had so many years looked upon and served as their lords and masters:

and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord: had they prayed unto him in this their distress for help and assistance, protection and preservation, with an holy and humble confidence in him for it, they had acted a right and laudable part; but their crying out to him seems to be only an outcry of the troubles they were in, and rather the effect of despair than of faith and hope; and was by way of complaint and lamentation of their miserable condition and circumstances, as appears by what follows, which shows what temper of mind they were in.

{t} byrqh "fecit accedere", Pagninus, Montanus; "admovit castra", Junius & Tremellius.

Exodus 14:11

Ver. 11. And they said unto Moses,.... The Targum of Jonathan is,

"the ungodly of that generation said unto Moses;"

but it seems rather to be understood of the body of the people in general, and is not to be limited to some particular persons of the worse characters among them:

because there were no graves in Egypt; as if there had been none, when there were so many; the Egyptians being more solicitous about their graves than their houses, as Diodorus Siculus reports {u}; thus upbraiding Moses in a sarcastic way for what he had done:

hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? that so there might be room and graves enough to bury them in, for nothing but death was before their eyes:

wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? which was very ungrateful and disingenuous.

{u} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 47.

Exodus 14:12

Ver. 12. Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt,.... The thing they suggested to him, and talked with him about while they were in the land of Egypt, before they came out of it, particularly after their service and bondage were made more severe and cruel upon Moses and Aaron's demanding their dismission, see Ex 5:21:

saying, let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? peaceably and quietly, as we have been used to do, since there is no likelihood of being freed, and since we are more evilly treated than before:

for it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness: of such mean spirits were they, and had so poor a notion of, and taste for liberty, and so ungrateful were they to their deliverer.

Exodus 14:13

Ver. 13. And Moses said unto the people,.... Not in wrath and anger, but very coolly and sedately, agreeably to his character of the meekest man on earth; though what they had said to him was very insulting and provoking:

fear ye not; Pharaoh and his numerous host, do not be dismayed at them or possess yourselves with a dread of them, and of destruction by them:

stand still; do not stir from the place where you are, do not offer to run away, or to make your escape by flight (and which indeed seemed impossible), keep your place and station, and put yourselves in such a situation as to wait and observe the issue of things:

and see the salvation of the Lord which he will shew to you today; which is expressive of great faith in Moses in the midst of this extremity, who firmly believed that God would save them from this numerous and enraged army, and that very quickly, even that day; at least within twenty four hours, within the compass of a day; for it was the night following that salvation was wrought for them, and their eyes beheld it: and it may be called the salvation of the Lord, for it was his own hand that only effected it, the Israelites not contributing anything in the least unto it, and was typical of the great salvation which Christ with his own arm, and without the help of his people, has wrought out for them:

for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever; that is, in such a posture or manner, no more armed, nor alive, and the objects of their fear and dread; for otherwise they did see them again, but then they were on the sea shore dead; for it should be rendered, not "whom", but "how", or "in what manner" {w}.

{w} rva on tropon, Sept. "quemadmodum", Piscator; "quomod o", Noldius, p. 107. No. 544.

Exodus 14:14

Ver. 14. The Lord shall fight for you,.... By commanding the wind of the heavens, and the waves of the sea, and employing them against their enemies, and on their behalf; they being unarmed, and so not in a condition to fight for themselves, as well as they had no heart or spirit for it:

and ye shall hold your peace; be still, and quiet, and easy in your minds, and forbear saying or doing anything; "be silent"; and neither express the fear and distress of their minds, by any mournful sounds, nor their joy of faith by shouts and huzzas; as they could not draw a sword, they were not so much as to blow a trumpet, and break a pitcher, and cry the sword of the Lord, and of Israel as they after did on another occasion, at least their posterity.

Exodus 14:15

Ver. 15. And the Lord said unto Moses, wherefore criest thou unto me?.... The Targum of Jonathan is,

"why standest thou and prayest before me?"

and no doubt this crying is to be understood of prayer, of mental prayer, of secret ejaculations put up by Moses to the Lord without a voice, for no mention is made of any: this shows, that though Moses most firmly believed that God would work salvation for them, yet he did not neglect the use of means, prayer to God for it; nor was the Lord displeased with him on that account, only he had other work for him to do, and he had no need to pray any longer, God had heard him, and would save him and his people:

speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward; a little further, as Aben Ezra observes, until they were come to the sea shore, near to which they now were; and thither they were to move in an orderly composed manner, as unconcerned and fearless of their enemies.

Exodus 14:16

Ver. 16. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it,.... Even the same rod with which so many wonders had been done in Egypt; and Artapanus, the Heathen, says {x}, that Moses being bid by a divine voice to smite the sea with his rod, he hearkened to it, and touched the water with it, and so it divided, as it is said it did, Ex 14:21

and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea; and so they did, Ex 14:22.

{x} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 436.

Exodus 14:17

Ver. 17. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians,.... That they shall have no sense of danger, and be fearless of it, incautious and thoughtless, hurried on with wrath and fury, malice and revenge:

and they shall follow them; the Israelites into the sea, supposing it to be as safe for the one as the other:

and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen: by the utter destruction of them, in just retaliation for the many innocent infants that had been drowned by them in the river Nile.

Exodus 14:18

Ver. 18. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord,.... Acknowledge him to be Jehovah, the self-existent, eternal, and immutable Being, the one only living and true God, who is wise and powerful, faithful, just, and true; that is, those Egyptians that were left behind in Egypt, hearing what was done at the Red sea; for as for those that came with Pharaoh, they all perished to a man:

when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen; by casting them into the sea, and drowning them there, thereby showing himself to be mightier than he.

Exodus 14:19

Ver. 19. And the Angel of God which went before the camp of Israel,.... The

Jews say {y} this was Michael, the great prince, who became a wall of fire between Israel and the Egyptians; and if they understood by him the uncreated angel, the eternal Word, the Son of God, who is always in Scripture meant by Michael, they are right: for certainly this Angel of the Lord is the same with Jehovah, who is said to go before them in a pillar of cloud and fire, Ex 13:21:

removed, and went behind them; but because removing from place to place, and going forwards or backwards, cannot be properly said of a divine Person, who is omnipresent, and fills every place and space; this is to be understood of the emblem of him, the pillar of cloud, as the next clause explains it:

and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"because of the Egyptians, who cast arrows and stones, and the cloud received them;"

and so Jarchi; whereby the Israelites were protected and preserved from receiving any hurt by them: so Christ is the protection of his people from all their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, that sin cannot damn them, nor Satan destroy them, nor the world overcome them; for his salvation is as walls and bulwarks to them, and he is indeed a wall of fire about them.

{y} Pirke Eliezer, c. 42.

Exodus 14:20

Ver. 20. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel,.... That is, the pillar of cloud, and the Angel of God, or Jehovah, in it, whereby the camp of Israel was secured from being annoyed by the camp of the Egyptians; and was an emblem of the gracious interposition of Christ between his spiritual Israel, whom he has redeemed by his blood, and their spiritual enemies, the Egyptians, the men of the world that hate them, from whose rage and malice Christ is their protection and safeguard:

and it was a cloud and darkness [to them]; to the Egyptians; it cast a shade upon them, and made the darkness of the night still greater to them, so that they could not see their way, and knew not where they were:

but it gave light by night to these; to the Israelites, so that they could see their way, and walk on in the midst of the sea, as on dry land; and such a light and guide they needed; for it was now the twenty first day of the month, seven days after the full of the moon, when the passover began, and therefore could have no benefit from the moon. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem say, that half the cloud was light, and half darkness; and it seems plain from the account, that that side of it which was towards the Egyptians was dark, and that which was towards the Israelites was light, and so an hinderance to the one and a benefit to the other: thus Christ is set for the rising of some, and the fall of others; and his Gospel is to some the savour of death unto death, and to others the savour of life unto life; to the one it is a hidden Gospel, and lies in darkness and obscurity, and to others a great and glorious light:

so that one came not near the other all the night; an emblem of that division and separation which the grace of God, the blood of Christ, and the light of the Gospel, make between the true Israel of God, and the men of the world; and which will continue throughout time, and to all eternity, so that they will never come near to each other; see
Lu 16:26.

Exodus 14:21

Ver. 21. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea,.... With his rod in it, as he was directed to, Ex 14:16. What the poet says {z} of Bacchus is more true of Moses, whose rod had been lift up upon the rivers Egypt, and now upon the Red sea:

and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night; and the direction of the Red sea being nearly, if not altogether, north and south, it was in a proper situation to be wrought upon and divided by an easterly wind; though the Septuagint version renders it a strong south wind. No wind of itself, without the exertion and continuance of almighty power, in a miraculous way, could have so thrown the waves of the sea on heaps, and retained them so long, that such a vast number of people should pass through it as on dry land; though this was an instrument Jehovah made use of, and that both to divide the waters of the sea, and to dry and harden the bottom of it, and make it fit for travelling, as follows:

and made the sea dry land; or made the bottom of it dry, so that it could be trod and walked upon with ease, without sinking in, sticking fast, or slipping about, which was very extraordinary:

and the waters were divided; or "after the waters were divided" {a}; for they were first divided before the sea could be made dry. The Targum of Jonathan says, the waters were divided into twelve parts, answerable to the twelve tribes of Israel, and the same is observed by other Jewish writers {b}, grounded upon a passage in Ps 136:13 and suppose that each tribe took its particular path.

{z} "Tu flectis amnes, tu mare barbarum--" Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode 19. {a} weqbyw "quum diffidisset se aqua illius", Piscator; so w seems to be used in ch. xvi. 20. {b} Pirke Eliezer, c. 42. Targum Jon. & Hieros. in Deut. i. 1. Jarchi, Kimchi, and Arama in Psal. cxxxvi. 13.

Exodus 14:22

Ver. 22. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground,.... Some Jewish writers say {c}, that the tribe of Judah went in first, and then the other tribes followed; but it is most likely, what Josephus says {d}, that Moses first entered in, and then the Israelites, encouraged by his example, went in after him; and a very adventurous action it was, and nothing but strong faith in the almighty power and promise of God could have engaged them in it, to which the apostle ascribes it, Heb 11:29. It is the opinion of Aben Ezra, and some other Jewish writers, that the Israelites did not pass through the Red sea to the opposite shore, only went some way into it, and took a compass in a semicircle, and came out on the same shore again, and which has been espoused by some Christian writers; and chiefly because they were in the wilderness of Etham before, and from whence they went into it, and when they came out of it, it was still the wilderness of Etham they came into, and went three days' journey into it seeking water; see Ex 13:20. Though it is possible the wilderness on the opposite shore might bear the same name, because of its likeness to it; and if it was the same wilderness that went round the Arabic gulf, or Red sea, and reached on to the other side of it, and so the wilderness of Etham lay on both sides, the difficulty is removed; for it seems most agreeable to the expressions of Scripture, that the Israelites passed through it from shore to shore. Others, in order to lessen the miracle, would have it that Moses, well knowing the country, and observing the tide, took the advantage of low water, and led the Israelites through it; and this story is told by the Egyptian priests of Memphis, as Artapanus {e} relates; but were the Egyptians less knowing of their country, and of the tide of the Red sea? and could Moses be sure of the exact time when they would come up to him, and the tide would serve him? Besides, the Egyptian priests at Heliopolis own the miracle, and relate it much as Moses has done; which must proceed from a conviction of the truth of it. And the above historian reports that the king (of Egypt) with a great army, and consecrated animals, pursued the Jews because of the substance they had borrowed of the Egyptians, which they took with them; but Moses being bid by a divine voice (or the voice of God, of Jehovah) to smite the sea with a rod, and hearkening to it, he touched the water with the rod, and so it divided, and his forces passed through a dry path, and the Egyptians attempting the same and pursuing, fire or lightning flashed out against them; and the sea shutting up the path again, partly by fire, and partly by the flow of the water, they all perished: and that this affair was miraculous, and could not be owing to any advantage taken from the tide, the following things have been observed; it is owned that the Red sea ebbs and flows like other seas that have a communication with the ocean, that is, the waters rise towards the shore during six hours, and having continued about a quarter of an hour at high water, ebb down again during another six hours; and it is observed by those who have examined it, that the greatest distance it falls from the place of high water is about three hundred yards; and that during the time of low water, one may safely travel it, as some have actually done; so that those three hundred paces, which the sea leaves uncovered during the time of low water, can continue so but for the space of half an hour at most; for during the first six hours, the sea retires only by degrees, and in less than half an hour it begins again to flow towards the shore. The most therefore that can be allowed, both of time and space of passable ground, in a moderate computation, is about two hundred paces, during six hours, or one hundred and fifty paces, during eight hours. Now it is further observed, that it is plain that a multitude consisting of upwards of two millions and a half of men, women, children, and slaves, encumbered besides with great quantities of cattle, household stuff, and the spoils of the Egyptians, could never perform such a march within so short a time; we may say within even double that space, though we should allow them also double the breadth of ground to do it on. This argument, it is added, will hold good against those who suppose they only coasted along some part of the sea, and those who maintain that they crossed the small arm or point of it which is toward the further end, near the isthmus of Suez; seeing that six or eight hours could not have sufficed for the passage of so immense a multitude, allow them what breadth of room you will; much less for Pharaoh to have entered it with his whole host {f}: and for the confirmation of the Mosaic account of this affair, and as miraculous, may be observed the testimony of Diodorus Siculus, who reports {g} that it is a tradition among the Ichthyophagi, who inhabit near the Red sea, or Arabic gulf, which they have received from the report of their ancestors, and is still preserved with them, that upon a great recess of the sea, every place of the gulf became dry, the sea falling to the opposite parts, the bottom appeared green, and returning back with a mighty force, was restored to its place again; which can have reference to nothing else but to this transaction in the time of Moses. And Strabo {h} relates a very wonderful thing, and such as rarely happens, that on the shore between Tyre and Ptolemais, when they of Ptolemais had a battle with the Emperor Sarpedon at that place, and there being put to flight, a flow of the sea like an inundation covered those that fled, and some were carried into the sea and perished, and others were left dead in hollow places; after a reflux followed, and discovered and showed the bodies of those that lay among the dead fishes. Now learned men have observed {i}, that what is here said of the sea of Tyre is to be understood of the Red sea, and that Sarpedon is not a proper name, but the same with Nwdp rv, "Sarphadon", the prince of deliverance, or of the delivered, as Moses was:

and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left; some of the Jewish Rabbins from Ex 15:8 have supposed that the waters were frozen as they were drove back by the east wind, and so stood up firm while the Israelites passed through, and then another wind thawed them, which brought them upon the Egyptians; but no doubt this was done by the wonderful interposition of divine power, and perhaps the ministry of angels was made use of, to detain and continue them in this position, until the end was answered. Adrichomius says {k}, the breadth of the sea was six miles at the passage of the Israelites; but a late traveller {l} tells us, that the channel between Sdur (or Shur, on the opposite side) and Gibbel Gewoubee, and Attackah (which he supposes was the place of their passage), was nine or ten miles over. Thevenot says {m}, that during the space of five days he kept along the coast of the Red sea, in going to Mount Sinai, he could not observe it to be anywhere above eight or nine miles over. A later traveller {n} tells us, that from the fountains of Moses may be plainly seen a wonderful aperture (Pihahiroth; see Ex 14:2) in the mountains on the other side of the Red sea, through and from which the children of Israel entered into it, when Pharaoh and his host were drowned; which aperture is situated west-southwest from these fountains of Moses, and the breadth of the sea hereabouts, where the children of Israel passed it, is about four or five hours' journey. The Arabic geographer {o} calls the place Jethren, where Pharaoh and his host were drowned; and represents it as a dangerous place to sail in, and where many ships are lost, and that this rough place is about the space of six miles. A countryman {p} of ours, who had been in these parts, guesses that the breadth of the place (called by the Mahometans, Kilt el Pharown, the well or pit of Pharaoh) where the Israelites are said to pass through is about six or seven leagues; the difference between these writers may be accounted for by the different places where they suppose this passage was.

{c} Pirke Elizer, c. 42. {d} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 2. {e} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 436. {f} Universal History, vol. 3. p. 392, 393. marg. {g} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 174. {h} Geograph. l. 16. p. 521, 522. {i} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 1. p. 167. {k} Theatrum Terrae, p. 123, 124. {l} Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 314. Edit. 2. {m} Travels into the Levant, B. 2. ch. 33. p. 175. {n} A Journal from Grand Cairo, &c. in 1722. p. 13. Edit. 2. {o} Climat. 3. par. 3. {p} Pitts's Account of the Mahometans, p. 77.

Exodus 14:23

Ver. 23. And the Egyptians pursued,.... The Israelites going forwards towards the sea as they were ordered, and going into it:

and went in after them into the midst of the sea; which if fearful of, they might conclude it was as safe for them to go in as for the Israelites; but perhaps through the darkness of the night, and the eagerness of their pursuit, they might not perceive where they were, nor the danger they were exposed unto:

even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen: which is observed to show, that as all that did go in perished, not one was saved, as after related, so all he brought with him, the whole of his army, went in, so that all that went out of Egypt were destroyed.

Exodus 14:24

Ver. 24. And it came to pass, that in the morning watch,.... The Romans divided the night into four watches, so the Hebrews; though some say into three only. The first began at six o'clock, and lasted till nine, the second was from thence to twelve, the third from thence to three in the morning, and the last from three to six, which is here called the morning watch; so that this was some time between three and six o'clock in the morning:

the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire and of the cloud; the Angel of the Lord, and who was Jehovah himself, who was in it, he looked to the army of the Egyptians; not to know whereabout they were, he being the omniscient God; nor in a friendly manner, but as an enemy, with indignation and wrath. The Targum of Jonathan is, "he looked through the pillar of fire, to cast upon them coals of fire, and through the pillar of cloud, to cast upon them hailstones."

The Jerusalem Targum is,

"pitch, fire, and hailstones;"

and Josephus {q} speaks of storms and tempests, of thunder and lightning, and of thunderbolts out of the clouds; and Artapanus {r} of fire or lightning flashing out against them, by which many perished. Perhaps the psalmist may have reference to this in Ps 106:10

and troubled the host of the Egyptians; the thunder and lightning no doubt frightened the horses, so that they broke their ranks, and horsemen and chariots might run foul on one another, and the hailstones scatter and destroy many; however, the whole must be terrible and distressing to them, especially it being in the night season.

{q} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 2.) {r} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 436.)

Exodus 14:25

Ver. 25. And took off their chariot wheels,.... The Targum of Jonathan renders it "cut" or "sawed them off"; perhaps they might be broken off by the hailstones. Milton {s} seems to have a notion of Pharaoh's chariot wheels being broken, when he says, "and craze" (i.e. break) "their chariot wheels"; or, as Jarchi suggests, he burnt them, through the force of the fire or lightning:

that they drave them heavily; the wheels being off, the chariots must be dragged along by the horses by mere force, which must be heavy work; or, "and made them to go, or led them heavily", or "with heaviness" {t}; and so to be ascribed to the Lord, who looked at the Egyptians, took off the wheels of their chariots, and stopped them in the fury of their career, that they could not pursue with the swiftness they had:

so that the Egyptians said, let us flee from the face of Israel; for by this battery and flashes of fire on them, they concluded that Israel, who they thought were fleeing before them, had turned and were facing them, and the Lord at the head of them; and therefore it was high time for them to flee, as follows:

for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians; for they rightly took the thunder and lightning, the fire and hailstones, to be the artillery of heaven turned against them, and in favour of the Israelites. Jarchi interprets it, the Lord fights for them in Egypt, even in Egypt itself; but so he had done many a time before, of which they were not insensible.

{s} Paradise Lost, B. 12. ver. 210. {t} tdbkb Mghnyw "et deduxit eos graviter", Vatablus; "et duxit eos cum gravitate", Drusius; so Ainsworth.

Exodus 14:26

Ver. 26. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... Out of the pillar of fire and of the cloud, when the Egyptians were in all the confusion before described, and about to make the best of their way back again:

Stretch out thine hand over the sea; with his rod in it, by which all the wonders were wrought, and particularly by which the sea had been divided, and now it must be used to a different purpose:

that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen; the waters which stood upright as a wall, on the right and left, might be no longer kept in such a position, but fall down upon the Egyptians, their chariots and horsemen, being higher than they.

Exodus 14:27

Ver. 27. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea,.... Or towards it, as he was ordered, the rod being in his hand, as before observed:

and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; being no longer detained by a superior power, contrary to the nature of it, to stand still as an heap, and firm as a wall, its waves came down and rolled with their usual force and strength, or it returned to its usual course:

at the appearance of the morning in its strength; when the morning looked forth in its first light and brightness, when it was broad day:

and the Egyptians fled against it; against the waves that came rolling down upon them: or "at meeting it" {u}, for as they turned their backs on the Israelites and fled, the waters of the sea met them, as well as fell on each side of them, or rather over them, and followed after them, and closed and shut them up on all sides; so that it was in vain for them to flee, for let them go which way they would, the sea was against them:

and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea; or shook them "off" or "out" {w}; out of their chariots, blew them out with the wind; for as there was a wind made use of to divide the waters of the sea, and make the bottom of it dry, there was another to cause the waters to return to their former place; see Ex 15:10 or the waves of the sea dashed them out of their chariots, or through the force of them they were overturned in it.

{u} wtarql "in occursum ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "obviam mare", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {w} renyw exetinaxe Sept. "et excussit", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "sic excussit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Exodus 14:28

Ver. 28. And the waters returned,.... To their place, and so in the above tradition related by Diodorus Siculus, it is said that the sea returning with a mighty force was restored to its place again;
See Gill on "Ex 14:22".

and covered the chariots and the horsemen; the wall they made being much higher than a man on horseback, when they fell down, covered even those who had the advantage of horses and chariots; and much more must the infantry be covered by them, who may be meant in the next clause:

and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; the foot, that went into the sea after the chariots and horsemen, or the whole army, including the cavalry and infantry, which went into the sea after the children of Israel. Who this Pharaoh was is not agreed; according to Berosus {x} his name was Cenchres, or Chenchres, whom Acherres succeeded; according to Bishop Usher {y} it was Amenophis; but our English poet {z} calls him Busiris; though Strabo {a} says there was no king or governor of that name. Diodorus Siculus {b} indeed speaks of two so called; yet he elsewhere {c} says, not that there was any king of the name, only the sepulchre of Osiris was so called:

there remained not so much as one of them; wherefore it must be a falsehood which is related by some, that Pharaoh himself was preserved, and afterwards reigned in Nineveh {d}, since not one was saved; see Ps 106:11 and so Artapanus {e} the Heathen says, they all perished, and among these are said {f} to be Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of Egypt mentioned in **2Ti 3:8** but this is contradicted by those {g} who ascribe the making of the golden calf to them.

{x} Antiqu. l. 5. fol. 88. 2. & 90. 2. {y} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 19. {z} "------- whose waves o'erthrew Busiris, and his Memphian chivalry." Milton's Paradise Lost, B. 1. v. 306, 307. {a} Geograph. l. 17. p. 552. {b} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 42. {c} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 79. {d} Dibre Hayamim, fol. 13. 2. {e} Ut supra. (Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 436.) {f} Midrash in Exod. xv. 10. & Arab. MS. apud Gregory's Notes & Observ. p. 6. {g} Shalshalet, fol. 7. 1.

Exodus 14:29

Ver. 29. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea,.... The bottom of it becoming so through the strong east wind, which blew all night until they came to the opposite shore, where they landed on "terra firma"; and so Noldius renders the phrase "through the sea"; that is, from shore to shore:

and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left; See Gill on "Ex 14:22".

Exodus 14:30

Ver. 30. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians,.... For though it was now six or seven days since they had leave to go out of Egypt, and actually did depart, yet they could not be said properly to be saved, or to be in safety, till this day, when all the Egyptians their enemies were destroyed, that pursued after them; and this was the twenty first day of the month, and the seventh and last day of the passover, and was an holy convocation to the Lord;
See Gill on "Ex 12:16"

and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the sea shore; all along, as a late traveller {h} observes, as we may presume, from Sdur (or Shur) to Corondel, and at Corondel especially, from the assistance and termination of the current there.

The word for "dead" {i} is in the singular number, and joined with a plural may denote that they saw everyone of the Egyptians dead, since they were all destroyed, and not one remained of them, as in Ex 14:28. Aben Ezra thinks the sense of the words is, not that the Egyptians were seen dead upon the sea shore, but that the Israelites standing upon the sea shore saw the dead bodies of the Egyptians, that is, floating on the waters of the sea; but rather the meaning is, that their dead bodies were by the force of the waters cast upon the shore, and there beheld and plundered by the Israelites. Josephus {k} observes, that the day following (that night the Egyptians were drowned) the arms of the Egyptians being cast on the shore where the Hebrews encamped, through the force of the sea and wind, Moses gathered them up and armed the Hebrews with them; and this will account for it how they came to have arms, since it is highly probable they came out of Egypt unarmed; and how they could fight battles as they did in the wilderness, and when they came into the land of Canaan.

{h} Shaw's Travels, p. 314. Ed. 2. {i} tm Mortuum, Montanus, Drusius. {k} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 6.

Exodus 14:31

Ver. 31. And Israel saw the great work,.... Or "hand" {l}; the hand of the Lord, the mighty power of God, and took notice of it, and seriously considered the greatness of it:

which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; which mighty hand he laid upon them, and which great power he exercised on them, and which great work, the effect thereof, he wrought in destroying them in such a manner, by causing the waters, which divided for them and their safety, to return upon the Egyptians to their utter destruction:

and the people feared the Lord; had an awe of his power and greatness upon their minds, and a sense of his goodness to them upon their hearts, which influenced their fear of him, and caused them to fear him with a filial and godly fear:

and believed the Lord and his servant Moses; they believed the Lord to be the only Jehovah, the supreme Being, the one only living and true God, faithful to his word, able to do all things, and wise to do them in the fittest season, for his own glory and his people's good; and they believed his promises, and the fulfilment of them; and that as he had now saved them out of the hands of the Egyptians, he would bring them to the land of Canaan, which he had promised their fathers to give unto them; and they believed Moses was sent of God to be their deliverer out of Egypt, and to be their leader to the promised land; see Ps 106:12 and who were now by the apostle said to be baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 1Co 10:1 and of their passage through the Red sea under the direction of Moses being an emblem of baptism, See Gill on "1Co 10:1".

{l} dyh thn ceira Sept. Manum, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 15

This chapter contains the song of Moses, and of the children of Israel, on the banks of the Red sea; in which they celebrate their passage through it, the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in it, and the glory of the divine perfections displayed therein, interspersed with prophetic hints of things future, Ex 15:1 which same song was sung by the women, with Miriam at the head of them, attended with timbrels and dances, Ex 15:20, an account is given of the march of the children of Israel from the Red sea to the wilderness of Shur, and of the bitter waters found at Marah, which occasioned a murmuring, and of their being made sweet by casting a tree into them, Ex 15:22 when they were told by the Lord, that if they would yield obedience to his commandments, they should be free from the diseases the Egyptians had been afflicted with, Ex 15:26, and the chapter is concluded with their coming to Elim, where they found twelve wells of water, and seventy palm trees, and there encamped, Ex 15:27.

Ver. 1. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord,.... Which is the first song recorded in Scripture, though no doubt before this time songs of praise were sung to the Lord; the people of God having occasion in all ages more or less to sing his praises. The Jews {n} speak of ten songs, the first of which was sung by Adam, when his sins were forgiven him, and this song of Moses is the second; though sometimes they say {o}, from the creation of the world to the standing of Israel by the Red sea, we do not find that ever any man sung a song but Israel; God created the first man, but he sang no song: however, this is the first on record, and is a typical one; Moses the composer of it, and who bore a principal part in it, and was the deliverer of the

people of Israel, was a type of Christ, the Redeemer of his church: and Israel that joined with him in it, and were the persons delivered, were typical of the spiritual Israel of God redeemed by Christ; and the deliverance here celebrated bore a great resemblance to the redemption wrought out by him; and Christ, the Angel of the Lord, that went before the Israelites through the Red sea, and fought for them, is the principal person concerned in it, and who is meant by the Lord throughout the whole of it, and to whom it is sung; and a song upon a similar occasion to this will be sung in the latter day, upon the destruction of spiritual Egypt, or antichrist, and is called the song of Moses and the Lamb in allusion to it, Re 15:3 The Jews {p} say, this shall be sung at the time, when the wicked shall perish out of the world, and observe that it is not written rv, "then sung", but
ryvy, "then shall sing", &c. Moses had reason to sing, since God had heard his prayer, and had done him honour before the people, and he was both an instrument of and a sharer in the salvation wrought; and the children of Israel had reason to sing, inasmuch as they were a people chosen of God, and distinguished by him; were redeemed from bondage, called out of Egypt, and now saved out of the hands of their enemies, who were all destroyed, and they brought safely through the Red sea, and landed on firm ground. And the time when they sung this song was then, when they had passed through the sea on dry land; and when they had seen the Egyptians their enemies dead on the sea shore; and when they were in a proper frame of spirit to sing, when they had taken notice of and considered what great and wonderful things the Lord had done for them, and their minds were suitably impressed with a sense of them; when they were in the exercise of the graces of the fear of God, and faith in him, and which is necessary to the performance of all religious duties, and particularly this of singing the praises of God:

and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord: that went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire; who had led them safely through the Red sea, and troubled and destroyed the host of the Egyptians; even the same Jehovah, who has undertook the salvation of his people, is become the author of it, and to whom the song of redeeming grace is due:

for he hath triumphed gloriously; over Pharaoh and all the Egyptians, the enemies of Israel, as Christ has over sin, in the destruction of it by his sacrifice, and over Satan, and his principalities and powers, when he spoiled them on the cross, and over death the last enemy, and all others; over whom he has made his people more than conquerors, through himself: or, "in excelling he excels" {q}; all the angels of heaven, in his name, and nature, relation, and office; and all the sons of men, even the greatest among them, being King of kings, and Lord of lords; in the wonderful things done by him, no such achievements having ever been wrought by any of them: or, "in magnifying, he is magnified" {r}; appears to be what he is, great in his nature, perfections, and works; and to be magnified, or declared to be great, and extolled as such by all that know and fear him;

the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea; the horses and horsemen of Pharaoh; and which is not amiss allegorically applied, by Tertullian {s}, to the world and the devil; the world is the horse, and the rider the devil; that being under his power and direction, he being the god of it, and working effectually in it; spurring and exciting the men of it to every sinful lust and pleasure; and may be put for all the spiritual enemies of God's people, especially their sins; which are cast by the Lord into the midst of the sea, never to be seen and remembered any more, and which is to them matter of a song of praise and thanksgiving.

{n} Targum in Cant. i. 1. {o} Shemot Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 107. 3. {p} Tikkune Zohar, correct. 10. fol. 20. 2. {q} hag hag "excellendo excelluit", Piscator. {r} "Magnificando magnificatus est", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus. {s} Contr. Marcion, l. 4. c. 20.

Exodus 15:2

Ver. 2. The Lord is my strength and song,..... The strength of Moses and the children of Israel against the fears of the Egyptians, and of entrance into the Red sea; who inspired them with courage, and strengthened their faith, neither to fear being destroyed by the one, or drowned in the other; and so in the glory of his nature, and of his divine perfections, of his justice, holiness, faithfulness, truth, and goodness, he was the subject matter of their song. As Christ is the strength of his spiritual Israel, the author and giver of strength unto them, the strength of their lives, their hearts, and graces; and who strengthens them to do his will and work, to exercise every grace, withstand corruptions, resist temptations, bear afflictions, and overcome every enemy; and who on the account of the glory of his person, the beauty, fitness, and fulness of it, and because of his offices of Mediator, Saviour, prophet, priest, and King, as well as by reason of what he has done for them, the righteousness he has brought in, and the salvation he has wrought out, is the sum and substance of their song of praise:

and he is become my salvation; the salvation of Israel in a temporal sense, having saved them out of the hands of the Egyptians their enemies; and the salvation or Saviour of his spiritual Israel, who are saved by him with an everlasting salvation; he is not only their Saviour, but salvation itself; being not only the author of it, and that being in him for them, but made that itself unto them, even their all in all; their righteousness, atonement, peace, light, life, food, health, comfort, and joy; all their grace being in him, and from him, as well as their eternal glory and happiness: and this he is to them now, he is their salvation by impetration having obtained it by his obedience, sufferings, and death; and by application, they being convinced of their need of salvation by him, and the suitableness of it to them, seek to him for it, desire that and no other, which is brought nigh unto them by the Spirit of God, and witnessed to by him as theirs; so that they are already saved by grace, through faith and hope in Christ; and of their particular interest in it, they have knowledge by the same Spirit, which fills them with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This and the preceding clause are words so very expressive, and contain such fulness of matter, and such interesting things, that both the psalmist David, and the church, in the times of the evangelic prophet Isaiah, have borrowed them to express their sense of the great things the Lord was to them, and had done for them, Ps 118:14

he [is] my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; Christ is God, truly God, as appears from the names given him, particularly Jehovah; from the perfections ascribed to him, from the works done by him, and from the worship of him both by angels and men; and he is his people's God, their Immanuel, God in their nature, the God in whom they believe, and in whom they have an interest; he is the God of their salvation, the Lord their righteousness; their Lord, head, and King; their husband, beloved, Father, brother, friend; their God and guide, even unto death; their portion and exceeding great reward, now and hereafter: wherefore Moses, or the people of Israel, or both, determine to "prepare" him an "habitation", being concerned that he had no better dwelling place among them than he had; and seem to have some respect unto, and knowledge of an habitation hereafter to be built, the tabernacle and temple; which were typical of the human nature of Christ, and of his church; but then they were both of God's preparing, and not men's; wherefore an habitation in the hearts of, his people may be chiefly designed; the preparation of which, though it is principally and efficaciously of the Spirit of God, yet in some sense may be said to be prepared by the saints, when they show a concern for grace to be in exercise; to have duty regularly and constantly performed in a manner acceptable to him, and that no disturbance be given to occasion his departure from them. The Septuagint version is, "I will glorify him"; with soul and body, which are both his; and so much to the same purpose other versions, "I will decorate or beautify" {t} him; declare his beauty and glory, and speak in praise of it: "my father's God, and I will exalt him"; Christ was not only the God of Amram, the father of Moses, who was a good man; but the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as he declared himself to be, **Ex 3:6**, the ancestors not only of Moses, but of all the children of Israel. This shows the antiquity of Christ, that he was their fathers' God, and that he is to be trusted and depended on, as he was by their fathers, and to be regarded, and highly valued and esteemed, having been their fathers' friend, and is a reason why he should be exalted by them; for though he cannot be raised higher than he is, being the Son of the Highest, God over all, blessed for ever, whose kingdom ruleth over all, and is now as man ascended on high, and is highly exalted by his Father, and at his right hand, and glorified by him with himself; yet he may be said to be exalted and lifted up by us, when we celebrate and set forth the height of his glory and excellency, by asserting his proper deity, ascribing the same perfections, worlds, and worship to him, as to his Father, by attributing distinct divine personality to him, confessing his eternal sonship, owning him in all his offices, and giving him the glory due unto him on account of them, and for salvation wrought out by him; the whole honour and praise of it belong to him: he may and should be exalted in the hearts of his people, in their thoughts and affections, and with their lips in songs of praise; and in the house of God, and the ordinances of it, where everyone should speak of his glory; the reasons are, because he is above all in his person and perfections, is the only Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer, and to exalt him is the way to be exalted, **Pr 4:8**.

{t} whwnaw doxazw auton Sept. "glorificabo eum", V. L. "laudabo eume", Syr. Samar. "hunc decorabo", Tigurine version; "condecorabo eum", Piscator.

Exodus 15:3

Ver. 3. The Lord is a man of war,.... A "man", which has respect to the future incarnation of Christ, for as yet he was not really man; though it was purposed, covenanted, agreed to, and prophesied of, that he should, as he after was; not a mere man, as appears by the following clause: "a man of war"; or a warrior; being engaged in war, and inured to it; having to do with very powerful enemies, Satan and his principalities and powers, the world, and the great men of it, antichrist, and all the antichristian states. A warrior well versed in all the arts of war, and abundantly qualified for it, having consummate wisdom, strength, and courage, and thoroughly furnished and accoutred for it; having on the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the garment of vengeance, and cloak of zeal, and a vesture dipped in blood; and with a sword girt on his thigh, or drawn, or coming out of his mouth; and with a bow and arrows, going forth conquering, and to conquer; for he is a victorious one, who has conquered sin, Satan, and the world, and will subdue all others, and make his people more than conquerors, through him. He is not a common man of war or warrior; he is the Captain of the Lord's host, the Leader and Commander of the people, the Generalissimo of the armies in heaven and earth, and is a Prince and King at the head of them:

the Lord is his name; or Jehovah, which proves him to be more than a man; and being so, it is no wonder that he is so mighty, powerful, and victorious.

Exodus 15:4

Ver. 4. Pharaoh's chariots and his hosts hath he cast into the sea,.... Which was done by the Angel of the Lord, who was Jehovah himself, our Immanuel, and man of war, as appears from Ex 14:17, an emblem of the destruction of antichrist, and all the antichristian states, of which Pharaoh and his host were types:

his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea: who were appointed over his chosen chariots, which all perished in the sea together. In the carnage that will be made by Christ, the warrior and conqueror, among the followers of antichrist, the man of "sin", the antitypical Pharaoh, the flesh of captains is mentioned for the fowls of heaven to feed upon, Re 19:18.

Exodus 15:5

Ver. 5. The depths have covered them,.... The depths of the sea covered Pharaoh and his host, so as to be seen no more; and in like manner will mystical Babylon, or antichrist, be destroyed, and be no more found and seen; as likewise the sins of God's people, being cast into the depths of the sea, and covered with the blood of Christ, will be seen no more; when they are sought for, they shall not be found:

they sunk into the bottom as a stone; into the bottom of the sea, as a stone thrown into anybody of water sinks and rises not up again; this circumstance is observed by **Ne 9:11** their persecutors thou threwest into the deep, as a stone into the mighty waters; and thus a stone like a millstone being taken by an angel and cast into the sea, is made an emblem of the irrecoverable ruin and destruction of Babylon, or antichrist, Re 18:21.

Exodus 15:6

Ver. 6. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power,.... In bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, and through the Red sea, and in the destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptians; and so the right hand of Christ, expressive of his power, he has in and of himself, and is the same with his Father's, and is mighty, yea, almighty, is become glorious, famous, and illustrious, in the redemption and salvation of his people, by bearing their sins, and working out a righteousness for them; and in the destruction of their enemies, sin, Satan, the world, and death, as is more fully expressed in the next clause:

thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy; in a literal sense, Pharaoh and his host, the avowed enemies of Israel; and, in a spiritual sense, those before named, together with all the antichristian party, those enemies of Christ, and his people, whom he wilt break to shivers as a potter's vessel, **Re 2:27**.

Exodus 15:7

Ver. 7. And in the greatness of thine excellency,.... Christ has an excellency in him, a greatness of excellency, a superlative one; he has a more excellent name and nature than the angels, being a divine Person; and a more excellent ministry, as man and Mediator, than any of the sons of men, as prophet, priest, and King; and is superlatively excellent in his operations, has wrought out a most excellent righteousness, offered up a more excellent sacrifice than ever was offered, and obtained a great, glorious, and excellent salvation for his people; in consequence of which is what is next asserted:

thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee; against his person and his people, who are in such strict union with him as to be reckoned as himself; and those that rise up against them, he reckons as rising up against him, or as his enemies; and both the one and the other are overthrown by him, as were those that rose up against him in person when on earth, as Herod, Pontius Pilate, the people of the Jews, with the Gentiles, and as will be antichrist and his followers, and all the spiritual enemies of the people of God:

thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble; the wrath of the Lord God Almighty is like fire, and wicked men are as chaff and stubble; and as those cannot stand before fire, but are suddenly and quickly consumed with it; so neither can the wicked, the enemies of Christ and his people, stand before the wrath of the Lamb, when the great day of it is come, but must be presently destroyed by it; see
Isa 51:20.

Exodus 15:8

Ver. 8. And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together,.... From the bottom of the sea, and divided and laid on heaps; and this by a strong east wind, called the blast of the nostrils of the Lord, because as easily brought by him as a man's breath or wind is drawn through his nostrils; and thus Christ with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming, will destroy antichrist, **2Th 2:8**

the floods stood upright as an heap; though a fluid body, yet by the power of Christ were raised up and continued upright, firm and consistent; as things dry and solid may be laid and heaped up on one another, and remain firm and stable; and so did the waters of the sea, they stood like a wall, and were as firm as a rock; while the Israelites passed between them, they stood upright, and lift up their hands, as if they blessed them; or blessed God for the deliverance of them, or in admiration of it; see Ex 14:22,

Exodus 15:9

Ver. 9. The enemy said,.... That is, Pharaoh, who repented that he had let Israel go; an emblem of Satan, who when the people of God are taken out of his hands is uneasy at it, and seeks to recover them again into his possession; or of antichrist breathing out threatening and slaughter to the saints, the reformers departed from him, and delivered out of his captivity:

I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; which words being expressed without the copulative "and", show the passion he was in, the hastiness of his expressions, and the eagerness of his mind; and being delivered in such an absolute manner, "I will", "I will", &c. denote not only the fixed resolution and determination he had made to pursue, but the assurance he had of carrying his point; he thought as surely, as he pursued he should overtake, and overtaking should conquer, and get into his hands all the riches the people of Israel went out of Egypt with:

my lust shall be satified upon them; both his lust of covetousness to possess himself of the wealth the people had of their own, and which they had spoiled the Egyptians of, by borrowing of them; and also his lust of revenge and cruelty upon them; as appears from what follows:

I will draw my sword; out of its scabbard, and sheathe it in them:

my hand shall destroy them; which he made no doubt of, they being an unarmed people; and therefore, though numerous, were unable to engage with him, and defend themselves; see **Re 6:14** and with it compare Isa 10:11.

Exodus 15:10

Ver. 10. Thou didst blow with thy wind,.... A strong east wind, Ex 14:22 which is the Lord Christ's, who has it in his treasury, holds it in his fists, sends it out as he pleases, and it fulfils his word and will:

the sea covered them; which stood up in an heap as a wall to let Israel pass through, and fell down with all its waves and billows with great force upon the Egyptians, and covered and drowned them:

they sunk as lead in the mighty waters; which is a very heavy metal, and, being cast into the water, sinks to the bottom at once, as did the Egyptians in the Red sea, and as Babylon the great will, and never rise more, Re 18:21.

Exodus 15:11

Ver. 11. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?.... For the perfections of his nature, for the blessings of his goodness, and for the works of his hands; and especially for the greatness and excellency of his power, seen in the salvation of his people, and the ruin of their enemies: there is none like him "among the mighty ones", as it may be rendered; among the mighty angels, who excel in strength, and are sometimes called gods; or among the mighty ones on earth; or the sons of the mighty, kings, princes, judges, and civil magistrates of every rank and order; especially for the following things:

who is like thee, glorious in holiness? some understand this of the holy place, either heaven, where Christ is glorious above all created beings; or the church, where he shows himself glorious to his people: others, of holy persons, either holy angels, among whom he was at Sinai, and when he ascended on high, and will be when he comes again, in his own and his Father's glory; or the saints, when he will bring them with him, and be glorified in them; but rather it is to be understood of the attribute of his holiness, which is eminently and perfectly in him; in his person, with respect to both his natures, divine and human; the glory of which is displayed in all the works he has wrought, especially in the great work of redemption, which was undertook both for the honour of the holiness and righteousness of God, and to redeem his people from sin, and make them righteous and holy: it appears in the holy doctrines he taught, and in the holy commandments and ordinances he enjoined his people, and in his judgments on his enemies; in all which it is plainly seen that he loves righteousness and hates iniquity, and there is none like him for it; there is none holy as the Lord among angels or men, **1Sa 2:2**

fearful in praises; or, in the things for which he is to be praised; as the glories and excellencies of his person, the blessings received from him, and through him, both temporal and spiritual; grace, and all the blessings of it here, now communicated, and glory and happiness promised and expected: and many things, for which he is to be praised, he is "fearful", awful, and tremendous in them; there are some things his right hand teaches him, and it does, deserving of praise, which yet are terrible, and such were they which are here literally, referred to; the plagues upon the Egyptians, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his host, called the wondrous works done in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea, Ps 106:22 and yet these were matter of praise to Israel, and gave occasion for this song; and such are they, in a spiritual sense, which he has done to his and our enemies: when the year of his redeemed was come, it was a day of vengeance in his heart, and he exercised it; he made an end of sin, abolished death, destroyed him which had the power of it, and spoiled principalities and powers; and a dreadful slaughter will be made of antichrist and his followers, when the song of Moses and the Lamb will be sung on account of it; and such dispensations of Providence, and judgments on men, as on Pharaoh and antichrist, as they are terrible to wicked men, they strike an awe on the people of God, at the same time they furnish out a song of praise to them: moreover, this may respect not only the matter of praise, but the reverend manner in which it is performed by good men; who, as they have a concern that they cannot sufficiently praise the Lord, and fear they shall not perform it aright, and sensible of their weakness and imperfection, like the seraphim, cover their faces while they applaud his perfections, particularly that of his holiness, and declare the earth is full of his glory; so they desire to perform this, as all their other services, with a holy fear and trembling, with reverence and godly fear since holy and reverend is his name: it follows,

doing wonders; and for which there is none like him; wonders Christ did before his incarnate state, both in eternity, in the goings forth of his heart, in acts of love to his people, in asking for them, and betrothing them, in becoming the surety of them, in proposing to be a sacrifice in their stead, in entering into a covenant with his Father on their account, in taking the care and charge of their persons, and in being the treasury of all grace and glory for them; and likewise in time, being concerned in the wondrous works of creation, which are a wonderful display of divine wisdom, power, and goodness, and in all the affairs of Providence; for there was not any remarkable occurrence, from the beginning of the world to the time of his coming in the flesh, but he was concerned therein; as the drowning of the old world, to whom previously he preached by his Spirit in Noah; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, the plagues of Egypt, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his host, the deliverance of the children of Israel, both out of Egypt and Babylon, and many others: and when he became incarnate, how many wonders were wrought by him? the incarnation itself was a wonderful instance of his grace and condescension, to take upon him the nature of man, be made flesh, and dwell among them; and during his incarnate state on earth many wonders were done by him; the doctrines he taught, the miracles he wrought, and especially the great work of our redemption and salvation, which will be for ever the wonder of men and angels; his raising himself from the dead, his ascension to heaven, and his appearance there for his people, as well as his second coming to judgment, are all marvellous things; and on account of all this, and more, he may well be called "wonderful"; for working wonders there is none like him.

Exodus 15:12

Ver. 12. Thou stretchedst out thy right hand,.... That is, exerted his power, and gave a display and proof of it; of which the right hand is an emblem:

the earth swallowed them; meaning Pharaoh and his host; for though they were drowned in the sea, that being a part of the terraqueous globe, they may be said to be swallowed in the earth; as Jonah, when in the depth of the sea, the earth and its bars are said to be about him, **Jon 2:6** and besides, many of Pharaoh's army might be swallowed up in the mud at the bottom of the sea: nor is it improbable that those that were cast upon the banks and sand, whom the Israelites stripped, might be afterwards swallowed up therein.

Exodus 15:13

Ver. 13. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed,.... From their servitude and bondage in Egypt; and so they were the Lord's people, peculiar to him, and distinct from all others: those he led forth, as out of Egypt, so through the Red sea onward towards Canaan's land; which was owing to his mercy, pity, and compassion to them in their affliction and distress: thus the spiritual Israel are a people redeemed by Christ from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law, and are his property, special and peculiar to him, and distinguished from all others: those he leads forth out of the state of nature in which they are, which is a very uncomfortable one, dark, bewildered, and forlorn, and out of their own ways, both of sin and self-righteousness; he leads them in himself the true way to eternal life, and in the paths of faith, truth, and holiness; and he leads to himself, his blood, righteousness, and fulness, and into his Father's presence, into his house and ordinances, and at last to heaven, the city of their habitation: and though it is sometimes in a rough way he leads them thither, yet always in a right one; and this must be ascribed to his grace and mercy, and not to the merits of his people: it was owing to his mercy he engaged for them as a surety, and came into this world to be their Saviour, in his love and pity he redeemed them; and it is according to abundant mercy they are regenerated, and called, and saved:

thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation; or rather, "art guiding them" {w}; for as yet they were not brought to their rest, the land of Canaan, where God had chosen a place for his people and himself to dwell in; nor was the tabernacle as yet made, much less the temple, where Jehovah took up his residence; but as he had brought out his people Israel from Egypt with a strong hand, and mighty arm, he was guiding and directing them onward in their journey, in the same greatness of his strength, which he would and did continue, until he brought them to the place he had chosen for his habitation; which was typical, both tabernacle and temple, of the human nature of Christ, in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells, and which is holy, being perfectly free from sin, and to which the people of God are guided as the new and living way to the Father, and whereby they have communion with him: likewise they were an emblem of the church of God, where Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, dwell, and which consists of holy persons, and where holy services are performed; and hither the Lord guides and directs his people, and where he gives them a nature and a place better than that of sons and daughters; and also of heaven, where the Lord dwells, and which is the habitation of his holiness, where are holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and into which none shall enter but those that are holy; and hither the Lord guides all his people, with his counsel, and by his Spirit and word, and by his almighty power brings them thither;

{w} tlhn "commode ducis", Junius & Tremellius.

Exodus 15:14

Ver. 14. And the people shall hear, and be afraid,.... What follows from hence to the end of the song is plainly prophetic, a prediction of future events; and this clause respects the case of all the nations of the earth, who should hear the report of the plagues, brought upon the Egyptians for the sake of Israel, and of their being brought out of Egypt, and of their being led through the Red sea as on dry land, and of the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in it, which report would strike a panic in all that heard it, throughout the whole world; as well as of what the Lord would after this do for them in the wilderness, see **De 2:25**

sorrow shall take hold of the inhabitants of Palestina; which was adjoining to the land of Canaan, and through which in the common way their road lay to it.

Exodus 15:15

Ver. 15. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed, &c,] Of which there were many, see Ge 36:15 the land being first governed by dukes, as perhaps it was at this time, though in some few years after it had a king, Nu 20:14 now these, when they heard of the wonderful things that were done for Israel in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, were astonished and surprised, and filled with fear and dread, see **De 2:4**,

the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them: as did on Balak the king of Moab, and his people, Nu 22:2, where may be observed a literal accomplishment of this prophecy:

all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away; as their hearts did, through fear, when they heard what God did for Israel against the Egyptians and the Amorites, and understood that they were upon the march to their land to invade it and dispossess them of it: see the fulfilment of this prediction in **Jos 2:9** thus when Babylon shall be destroyed, as Pharaoh and his host were, and the people of God saved out of the midst of her, as Israel was, the kings of the earth will stand afar off for fear of her torment, and bewail and lament for her, Re 18:9.

Exodus 15:16

Ver. 16. Fear and dread shall fall upon them.... On the several nations and people before mentioned, especially the Canaanites, which the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem interpret of the fear of death, lest the Israelites should fall upon them and destroy them, or God should fight for them, against them, and bring ruin and destruction on them:

by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; awed by the power of God, visible in what he had done for the Israelites, and upon their enemies; they should be like stocks and stones, immovable, have no power to act, nor stir a foot in their own defence, and against Israel, come to invade and possess their land; nor in the least molest them, or stop them in their passage over Jordan, or dispute it with them, but stand like persons thunderstruck, and as stupid as stones, not having any spirit or courage left in them:

till thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased; pass over the brook of Arnon, and the ford of Jabbok, according to the Targum of Jonathan; or the ford of Jabbok, and the ford of Jordan, according to the Jerusalem Targum; the river of Jordan is doubtless literally meant, at least chiefly; and the accomplishment of this prediction may be seen in **Jos 3:15** which was an emblem of the quiet passage of Christ's purchased people, through the ford or river of death, to the Canaan of everlasting rest and happiness: Christ's people are purchased by him, who is able to make the purchase, and had a right to do it, and has actually made it, by giving his flesh, shedding his blood, laying down his life, and giving himself a ransom price for them: these do, and must pass over Jordan, or go through the cold stream of death; it is the way of all the earth, of good men as well as others; it is a passage from one world to another; and there is no getting to the heavenly Canaan without going this way, or through this ford; and all the Lord's purchased people, like Israel, clean pass over through it, not one are left in it; their bodies are raised again, their souls are reunited to them, and both come safe to heaven and happiness: and, for the most part, they have a quiet and easy passage, the enemy is not suffered to disturb them, neither the sins and corruptions of their nature, nor an evil heart of unbelief, nor Satan with his temptations; and the terrors of death are taken away from them; so that they can sit and sing on the shores of eternity, in the view of death and another world, saying, death, where is thy sting? grave, where is thy victory? &c. and this is to be ascribed to the greatness of Jehovah's arm, to his almighty power, on which they lean, and go on comfortably in the wilderness; and by this they are carried safely through death to glory, and it is owing to this that the enemy and the avenger are stilled.

Exodus 15:17

Ver. 17. Thou shalt bring them in,.... Into the land of Canaan, which is often ascribed to the Lord, as well as his bringing them out of the land of Egypt, see **De 8:8**,

and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance; in the country which he chose for the inheritance of his people and himself; one part of which was very mountainous, called the hill country of Judea, and especially Jerusalem, round about which mountains were; and particular respect may be had to Mount Moriah and Zion, on which the temple afterwards stood, and which was called the mountain of the Lord's house, and seems to be pointed at in the following account: here Israel is compared to a vine as elsewhere, which the Lord took out of Egypt and planted in the land of Canaan, where it took root and was settled, see Ps 80:8

in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; that is, which he had appointed for his habitation; for as yet neither the tabernacle nor temple were built, in which he afterwards dwelt: in this sense the word "made" is used in Pr 16:4

in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established; that is, which he intended to establish, and would, and did establish; meaning, more especially, the temple, and the holy of holies in it, which he directed Solomon to build, and was a settled dwelling place for him, **1Ki 8:13**, now all this may be considered as typical of the church of Christ, and of his bringing and planting his people there, which is a "mountain", and often signified by Mount Zion; is visible and immovable, the true members of it being interested in the love of God, on the sure foundation of electing grace, secured in the everlasting covenant, and built on the rock Christ Jesus; and is the Lord's "inheritance", chosen by him to be so, given to Christ, and possessed by him as such, and as dear to him, and more so, than a man's inheritance is to him: this is a "place" he has appointed, prepared, and made for himself to dwell in, and is the habitation of Father, Son, and Spirit; and is a "sanctuary" or holy place, consisting of holy persons established in Christ, as particular believers are, and the church in general is; and though now sometimes in an unsettled state as to outward things, yet ere long will be established on the top of the mountains: and hither the Lord brings his purchased people, as sheep into his fold, as children to his house, fitted up for them, as guests to partake of his entertainments; and this is an act of his powerful grace upon them, and of his distinguished goodness to them: and here he also plants them, for the church is a plantation, a garden, an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; and such as are planted here are transplanted out of the world, and are first planted in Christ, and receive the ingrafted word; and though ministers may be instruments in planting, the Lord is the efficient; and those that are planted by him are choice pleasant plants, fruitful ones, and shall never be plucked up: but as this follows the passage of the Lord's people over Jordan into Canaan land, it may rather be considered as an emblem of the heavenly state, and of the Lord's bringing and planting his people there; which, like a mountain, is an immovable and unalterable state, an inheritance incorruptible and eternal, the dwellingplace of Jehovah, a sanctuary or holy place, which his hand prepared from the foundation of the world; and which he has established as everlasting habitations for his people, where he brings their souls at death, and both souls and bodies in the resurrection morn to dwell with him for ever; and which is a paradise, an Eden of pleasure, where he plants them as trees of righteousness, next to Christ the tree of life, and where they are always green, fruitful, flourishing, and shall never be hurt by any scorching heat or blasting wind, or be trodden under foot or plucked up.

Exodus 15:18

Ver. 18. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. Even that same Lord that is spoken of throughout this song, and to whom everything in it is ascribed, and who is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ; his reign began in eternity, when he was set up and anointed as King over God's holy hill of Zion, his church, the elect, who were a kingdom put under his care and charge, and which he will deliver up again one day, complete and perfect: he reigned throughout the whole Old Testament dispensation, and was acknowledged as well as prophesied of as a King; in his state of humiliation he had a kingdom, though not of this world, and upon his ascension to heaven he was made and declared Lord and Christ; and thenceforward his kingdom became very visible in the Gentile world, through the ministration of his word, accompanied by his almighty power; and ever since, more or less, he has ruled by his Spirit and grace in the hearts of many of the children of men, and, ere long, will take upon him his great power, and reign, in a more visible, spiritual, and glorious manner, in the midst of his churches, in the present state of things; and then he will reign with all his saints raised from the dead, for the space of a thousand years on earth, and after that will reign with them for ever in heaven, in the ultimate state of glory and happiness: the reigns of all others are but short, or, however, but for a time, but the reign of Christ is for ever and ever; the reigns of sin, and of Satan, and of death, have an end, but of the government of Christ, and the peace thereof, there will be no end; the reigns of the greatest potentates, emperors, and kings, of cruel and tyrannical princes, such as Pharaoh, are limited to a certain time, as is the reign of antichrist, which when ended, and the saints will have got the victory over him, the song of Moses and the Lamb will be sung; but Christ's kingdom is an everlasting kingdoms, and his dominion is evermore: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"let us set a crown on the head of our Redeemer, whose is the royal crown, and he is King of kings in this world, and whose is the kingdom in the world to come, and whose it is and will be for ever and ever;"

and to the same purpose is the Jerusalem Targum.

Exodus 15:19

Ver. 19. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea,.... Meaning not that particular and single horse on which Pharaoh was carried, but all the horses of his that drew in his chariots, and all on which his cavalry was mounted; these all went into the Red sea, following the Israelites thither: these words are either the concluding part of the song, recapitulating and reducing into a compendium the subject matter of it; or are a reason why Moses and the children of Israel sung it; or else they are to be connected more strictly with the preceding verse, and give a reason why the Lord reigns over his people for ever; because he has destroyed their enemies, and delivered them out of their hands:

and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them; after he had divided them, for the Israelites to pass through them, he caused them to close again, and to fall upon the Egyptians and cover and drown them:

but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea; which was a very wonderful thing, and was a just and sufficient reason for singing the above song to the Lord, see Ex 14:29.

Exodus 15:20

Ver. 20. And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron,.... The same, it is highly probable, that is called the sister of Moses, **Ex 2:3**, her name Miriam is the same as Mary with us, and signifies bitterness; and, as the Hebrews {x} observe, had it from the bitterness of the times, and the afflictions the Israelites endured and groaned under when she was born; which is a much more probable signification and reason of her name than what is given by others, that it is the same with Marjam, which signifies a drop of the sea; from whence, they fancy, came the story of Venus, and her name of Aphrodite, the froth of the sea: Miriam was a prophetess, and so called, not from this action of singing, here recorded of her, for so all the women that sung with her might be called prophetesses, though sometimes in Scripture prophesying intends singing; but rather from her having a gift of teaching and instructing, and even of foretelling things to come; for the Lord spoke by her as well as by Moses and Aaron, and she, with them, were the leaders of the people of Israel, sent to them of the Lord, see
Nu 12:2, she is particularly called the sister of Aaron, though she was likewise the sister of Moses; the reason is, that being older than Moses, she was Aaron's sister before his, and having lived all her days with Aaron almost, and very little with Moses, was best known by being the sister of Aaron; and it is possible she might be his own sister by father and mother's side, when Moses was by another woman; however, it is said of her, she

took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances; timbrels were a sort of drums or tabrets, which being beat upon gave a musical sound, somewhat perhaps like our kettledrums; and though dances were sometimes used in religious exercises, yet the word may signify another kind of musical instruments, as "pipes" or "flutes" {y}, as it is by some rendered; and by the Syriac and Arabic versions, "sistrums"; which were musical instruments much used by the Egyptians, and from whom the Israelitish women had these; and as they were going to keep a feast in the wilderness, they lent them to them, it is very probable, on that account; otherwise it is not easy to conceive what use the Israelites could have for them,

and put them to during their hard bondage and sore affliction in Egypt: now with these they went out of the camp or tents into the open fields, or to the shore of the Red sea, and sung as Moses and the men of Israel did: to this the psalmist seems to refer in
Ps 68:25.

{x} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 3. p. 9. Dibre Hayamim, fol. 2. 2. {y} tlxmb "cum fistulis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "cum tibiis", Drusius; so Ainsworth.

Exodus 15:21

Ver. 21. And Miriam answered them,.... The men, for the word is masculine; that is, repeated, and sung the same song word for word after them, as they had done, of which a specimen is given by reciting the first clause of the song:

sing ye to the Lord; which is by way of exhortation to the women to sing with her, as Moses begins the song thus: "I will sing unto the Lord",

for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea; See Gill on "Ex 15:1", the manner of their singing, according to the Jews {z}, was, Moses first said, "I will sing", and they said it after him.

{z} T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 20. 3. T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 30. 2.

Exodus 15:22

Ver. 22. So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea,.... Or "caused them to journey" {a}, which some think was done with difficulty, they being so eager and intent upon the spoil and plunder of the Egyptians cast upon the sea shore, the harness of their horses being, as Jarchi observes, ornamented with gold and silver, and precious stones; or as others, they had some inclination to return to Egypt, and take possession of the country for themselves; the inhabitants of it, at least its military force, being destroyed, and their armour in their possession; but the truer meaning of the word is, that Moses, as their general, gave them the word of command to march, and till they had it they stayed at the Red sea refreshing themselves, taking the spoils of the enemy, and singing the praises of God; but when Moses gave them orders to set forward, they proceeded on their journey:

and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; the same with the wilderness of Etham, as appears from Nu 33:8 there might be, as Aben Ezra conjectures, two cities in or near this wilderness, of those two names, from whence it might be called: for, as Doctor Shaw says {b}, Shur was a particular district of the wilderness of Etham, fronting the valley (of Baideah), from which, he supposes, the children of Israel departed: and Doctor Pocock says {c} that the wilderness of Shur might be the fourth part of the wilderness of Etham, for about six hours from the springs of Moses (where, according to the tradition of the country, the children of Israel landed, being directly over against Clysma or Pihahiroth) is a winter torrent, called Sedur (or Sdur), and there is a hill higher than the rest, called Kala Sedur (the fortress of Sedur), and from which this wilderness might have its name: and by another traveller {d} this wilderness is called the wilderness of Sedur: and now it was the wilderness of Etham they were in before they went into the Red sea, which has induced some to believe that they came out on the same shore again; for the solution of which difficulty
See Gill on "Ex 14:22",

and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water; which must be very distressing to such a vast number of people and cattle, in a hot, sandy, desert: this doubtless gave occasion to the stories told by Heathen authors, as Tacitus {e}, and others, that the people of the Jews, under the conduct of Moses, were near perishing for want of water, when, following a flock of wild asses, which led them to a rock covered with a grove of trees, they found large fountains of water: the three days they travelled here were the twenty second, third and fourth, of Nisan, in the beginning of April.

{a} eoyw "et fecit proficisci", Pagninus & Montanus, Drusius; "jussit proficisci", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {b} Travels. p. 312. {c} Travels, p. 156. {d} Journal from Cairo, &c. p. 13. {e} Hist. l. 5. c. 3.

Exodus 15:23

Ver. 23. And when they came to Marah,.... A place in the wilderness, afterwards so called from the quality of the waters found here; wherefore this name is by anticipation:

they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; and they must be very bitter for people in such circumstances, having been without water for three days, not to be able to drink of them: some have thought these to be the bitter fountains Pliny {f} speaks of, somewhere between the Nile and the Red sea, but these were in the desert of Arabia; more probably they were near, and of the same kind with those that Diodorus Siculus {g} makes mention of, who, speaking of the Troglodytes that inhabited near the Red sea, and in the wilderness, observes, that from the city Arsinoe, as you go along the shores of the continent on the right hand, there are several rivers that gush out of the rocks into the sea, of a bitter taste: and so Strabo {h} speaks of a foss or ditch, which runs out into the Red sea and Arabian gulf, and by the city Arsinoe, and flows through those lakes which are called bitter; and that those which were of old time bitter, being made a foss and mixed with the river, are changed, and now produce good fish, and abound with water fowl: but what some late travellers have discovered seems to be nearer the truth: Doctor Shaw {i} thinks these waters may be properly fixed at Corondel, where there is a small rill, which, unless it be diluted by the dews and rain, still continues to be brackish: another traveller {k} tells us that, at the foot of the mountain of Hamam-El-Faron, a small but most delightful valley, a place called Garondu, in the bottom of the vale, is a rivulet that comes from the afore mentioned mountain, the water of which is tolerably good, and in sufficient plenty, but is however not free from being somewhat bitter, though it is very clear: Doctor Pocock says there is a mountain known to this day by the name of Le-Marah; and toward the sea is a salt well called Bithammer, which is probably the same here called Marah: this Le-Marah, he says, is sixteen hours south of the springs of Moses; that is, forty miles from the landing place of the children of Israel; from whence to the end of the wilderness were six hours' travelling, or about fifteen miles; which were their three days' travel in the wilderness, and from thence two hours' travel, which were five miles, to a winter torrent called Ouarden; where, it may be supposed, Moses encamped and refreshed his people, and from thence went on to Marsh, about the distance of eight hours, or twenty miles southward from the torrent of Ouarden:

therefore the name of it is called Marah; from the bitterness of the waters, which the word Marah signifies; see **Ru 1:20**.

{f} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 29. {g} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 172. {h} Geograph. l. 17. p. 553. {i} Travels, p. 314. {k} A Journal from Grand Cairo to Mount Sinai, A. D. 1722, p. 14, 15.

Exodus 15:24

Ver. 24. And the people murmured against Moses,.... For bringing them into a wilderness where they could find no water fit to drink; saying:

what shall we drink? what shall we do for drink? where can we drink? this water is not drinkable, and, unless we have something to drink, we, and our wives, and children, and servants, and cattle, must all perish.

Exodus 15:25

Ver. 25. And he cried unto the Lord,.... Or prayed, as all the Targums, that God would appear for them, and relieve them in their distress, or, humanly speaking, they must all perish: happy it is to have a God to go to in time of trouble, whose hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy that he cannot hear! Moses knew the power of God, and trusted in his faithfulness to make good the promises to him, and the people, that he would bring them to the land he had swore to give them:

and the Lord shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet; what this tree was is not known; if it was in its own nature sweet, as the author of Ecclesiasticus seems to intimate, when he says, in chapter 38:5 "was not the water made sweet with the wood, that its virtue might be known?" Yet a single tree could never of itself sweeten a flow of water, and such a quantity as was sufficient for so large a number of men and cattle; and therefore, be it what it will, it must be owing to a miraculous operation that the waters were made sweet by it: but the Hebrew writers say the tree was bitter itself, and therefore the miracle was the greater: Gorionides {l} says it was wormwood; and both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call it the bitter tree, Ardiphne, which Cohen de Lara {m} makes to be the same which botanists call Rhododaphne or rose laurel, and which, he says, bears flowers like lilies, which are exceeding bitter, and are poison to cattle; and so says Baal Aruch {n}; and much the same has Elias Levita {o}: and this agrees well enough with the mystical and spiritual application that may be made of this; whether these bitter waters are considered as an emblem of the bitter curses of the law, for that bitter thing sin, which makes work for bitter repentance; and for which the law writes bitter things against the sinner, which, if not prevented, would issue in the bitterness of death; so that a sensible sinner can have nothing to do with it, nor can it yield him any peace or comfort: but Christ, the tree of life, being made under the law, and immersed in sufferings, the penalty of it, and made a curse, the law is fulfilled, the curse and wrath of God removed, the sinner can look upon it with pleasure and obey it with delight: or whether these may be thought to represent the afflictions of God's people, comparable to water for their multitude, and for their overflowing and overwhelming nature, and to bitter ones, being grievous to the flesh; especially when God hides his face and they are thought to be in wrath: but these are sweetened through the presence of Christ, the shedding abroad of his love in the heart, the gracious promises he makes and applies, and especially through his bitter sufferings and death, and the fruits and effects thereof, which support, refresh, and cheer, see Heb 12:2,

there he made a statute and an ordinance: not that he gave them at this time any particular law or precept, whether moral or ceremonial, such as the laws of keeping the sabbath and honouring of parents, which the Targum of Jonathan mentions {p}; and to which Jarchi adds that concerning the red heifer: but he gave them a general instruction and order concerning their future behaviour; that if they hearkened to his commandments, and yielded obedience to them, it would be well with them, if not they must expect to be chastised and afflicted by him, as is observed in the following verse, to which this refers:

and there he proved them; the people of Israel; by these waters being first bitter and then sweetened, whereby he gave them a proof and specimen how it would be with them hereafter; that if they behaved ill they must expect the bitter waters of affliction, but, if otherwise, pleasant and good things: or, "there he proved him" {q}; Moses, his obedience and faith, by ordering him to cast in the tree he showed him; but the former sense seems best to agree with what follows.

{l} Heb. Hist l. 6. c. 38. p. 742. {m} Ir. David, p. 21. {n} Fol. 51. 3. {o} In Methurgeman, fol. 9. 2. {p} So T. Bab. Sanhedrin. fol. 56. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 5. p. 17. {q} whon "tentavit eum", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, V. L. Tigurine version; "prebavit eum", Vatablus; "tentavit ipsum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Exodus 15:26

Ver. 26. And said, if thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God,.... By this and the following words, they are prepared to expect a body of laws to be given unto them, as the rule of their future conduct; and though they were delivered from the rigorous laws, bondage, and oppression of the Egyptians, yet they were not to be without law to God, their King, Lord, and Governor, whose voice they were to hearken to in all things he should direct them in:

and wilt do that which is right in his sight; which he shall see and order as fit to be done, and which was not to be disputed and contradicted by them:

and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes; whether moral, ceremonial, or judicial, even all that either had been made known to them, or should be hereafter enjoined them; and this at Mount Sinai, where they received a body of laws, they promised to do; namely, both to hear and to obey, Ex 24:3.

I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; in any of the plagues inflicted on them, which they were witnesses of; from these they should be preserved, if obedient, but if not they must expect them, or what was similar to them, see De 28:27,

for I am the Lord that healeth thee; both in body and soul; in body, by preserving from diseases, and by curing them when afflicted with them; and in soul, by pardoning their iniquities, which, in Scripture, is sometimes signified by healing, see Ps 103:3.

Exodus 15:27

Ver. 27. And they came to Elim,.... On the twenty fifth of Nisan; for, according to Aben Ezra, they stayed but one day at Marah. Elim, as a late traveller {r} says, was upon the northern skirts of the desert of Sin, two leagues from Tor, and near thirty from Corondel; according to Bunting {s} it was eight miles from Marah:

where were twelve wells of water, and seventy palm trees; and so a very convenient, commodious, and comfortable place to abide at for a time, since here was plenty of water for themselves and cattle, and shady trees to sit under by turns; for as for the fruit of them, that was not ripe at this time of the year, as Aben Ezra observes. Thevenot {t} seems to confound the waters here with the waters of Marah; for he says, the garden of the monks of Tor is the place which in holy Scripture is called Elim, where were sventy palm trees and twelve wells of bitter water; these wells, adds he, are still in being, being near one another, and most of them within the precinct of the garden, the rest are pretty near; they are all hot, and are returned again to their first bitterness; for I tasted says he, of one of them, where people bathe themselves, which by the Arabs is called Hammam Mouse, i.e. the "bath of Moses"; it is in a little dark cave: there is nothing in that garden but abundance of palm trees, which yield some rent to the monks, but the seventy old palm trees are not there now. This does not agree with an observation of the afore mentioned Jewish writer, that palm trees will not flourish in the ground where the waters are bitter; though they delight in watery places, as Pliny {u} says; and yet Leo Africanus {w} asserts, that in Numidia the dates (the fruit of palm trees) are best in a time of drought. A later traveller {x} tells us, he saw no more than nine of the twelve wells that are mentioned by Moses, the other three being filled up by those drifts of sand which are common in Arabia; yet this loss is amply made up by the great increase in the palm trees, the seventy having propagated themselves into more than 2000; under the shade of these trees is the Hammam Mouse, or "bath of Moses", particularly so called, which the inhabitants of Tor have in great veneration, acquainting us that it was here where the household of Moses was encamped. Dr. Pocock takes Elim to be the same with Corondel; about four hours or ten miles south of Marah, he says, is the winter torrent of Corondel in a very narrow valley, full of tamarisk trees, where there is tolerable water about half a mile west of the road; beyond this, he says, about half an hour, or little more than a mile, is a winter torrent called Dieh-Salmeh; and about an hour or two further, i.e. about three or four miles, is the valley or torrent of Wousset, where there are several springs of water that are a little salt; and he thinks that one of them, but rather Corondel, is Elim, because it is said afterwards,

they removed from Elim, and encamped at the Red sea; and the way to Corondel, to go to the valley of Baharum, is part of it near the sea, where he was informed there was good water, and so probably the Israelites encamped there; and Dr. Clayton {y} is of the same mind, induced by the argument he uses: a certain traveller {z}, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, tells us, that indeed the wells remain unto this day, but that there is not one palm tree, only some few low shrubs; but he could never have been at the right place, or must say a falsehood, since later travellers, who are to be depended upon, say the reverse, as the above quotations show. As to the mystical application of this passage, the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem make the twelve fountains answerable to the twelve tribes of Israel, and seventy palm trees to the seventy elders of the sanhedrim; and so Jarchi: and more evangelically the twelve fountains of water may denote the abundance of grace in Christ, in whom are the wells of salvation, and the sufficiency of it for all his people; and which the doctrine of the Gospel, delivered by his twelve apostles, discovers and reveals, and leads and directs souls unto; and the seventy palm trees may lead us to think of the seventy disciples sent out by Christ, and all other ministers of the word, who for their uprightness, fruitfulness, and usefulness, may be compared to palm trees, as good men in Scripture are, see Ps 92:12,

and they encamped there by the waters; where they stayed, as Aben Ezra thinks, twenty days, since, in the first verse of the following chapter, they are said to come to the wilderness of Sin on the fifteenth day of the second month; here being everything agreeable to them for the refreshment of themselves and cattle, they pitched their tents and abode a while; as it is right in a spiritual sense for the people of God to abide by his word and ordinances.

{r} Shaw, ut supra. (Travels, p. 314.) {s} Travels, p. 82. {t} Travels into the Levant, B. 2. ch. 26. p. 166. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 4. {w} Descriptio Africae, l. 1. p. 82. {x} Dr. Shaw, ut supra. ({r}) {y} Chronolgy of the Hebrew Bible, p. 296, 297. {z} Baumgarten. Peregrinatio, l. 1. c. 21. p. 44.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 16

This chapter begins with an account of the journeying of the children of Israel from Elim to the wilderness of Sin, where they murmured for want of bread, Ex 16:1, when the Lord told Moses that he would rain bread from heaven for them, which Moses informed them of; and withal, that the Lord took notice of their murmurings, Ex 16:4 which promise the Lord fulfilled; and a description of the bread, and the name of it, are given, Ex 16:13, and some instructions are delivered out concerning the quantity of it to be gathered, Ex 16:16, the time of gathering and keeping it, Ex 16:19, the gathering a double quantity on the sixth day for that and the seventh day, with the reason of it, Ex 16:22 and a further description of it, Ex 16:31, and an order to preserve an omer of it in a pot, to be kept for generations to come, that it might be seen by them, Ex 16:32, and the chapter is concluded with observing, that this bread was ate by the Israelites forty years, even till they came to the borders of the land of Canaan, and the quantity they ate every day is observed what it was, Ex 16:35.

Ver. 1. And they took their journey from Elim,.... And came again to the Red sea, as appears from Nu 33:10 perhaps to some bay or creek of it, which ran up from it, and lay in their way, and where for a short time they encamped to look at it, and recollect what had been done for them in bringing them through it; but as their stay here was short, and nothing of any importance or consequence happened, it is here omitted, and their next station is only observed:

and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which still bears the same name, as a late traveller {a} informs us, who passed through it, and says, we traversed these plains in nine hours, being all the way diverted with the sight of a variety of lizards and vipers, that are here in great numbers; and elsewhere {b} he says, that vipers, especially in the wilderness of Sin which might very properly be called "the inheritance of dragons", were very dangerous and troublesome, not only our camels, but the Arabs who attended them, running every moment the risk of being bitten. The Red sea, or the bay of it, they came to from Elim, according to Bunting {c} was six miles, and from thence to the wilderness of Sin, sixteen more. This is a different wilderness from that of Zin, which is written with a different letter, Nu 20:1 and was on the other side of Mount Sinai, as this was the way to it, as follows:

which is between Elim and Sinai according to the above writer {d}, it was twenty miles from Elim the Israelites travelled, and forty more ere they came to Sinai. Dr. Shaw {e} says, after traversing the plains in nine hours, we were near twelve hours in passing the many windings and difficult ways which lie beteen those deserts and these of Sinai; the latter consists of a beautiful plain more than a league in breadth, and nearly three in length:

on the fifteenth day of the second month, after their departing out of the land of Egypt; the month Ijar, as the Targum of Jonathan, which answers to part of April and part of May, and has its name from the beauty of the flowers, which appear at this time of the year: the Israelites were now come from thence a month or thirty days; for they came out the fifteenth of Abib or Nisan, and now it was the fifteenth of Ijar; and as the first day of this month, as Jarchi says, was on the first day of the week, this day must be so likewise; and yet sometimes the Jews say {f} this was a sabbath day.

{a} Shaw, p. 314. {b} lb p. 444. {c} Travels, p. 82. {d} Ib. {e} Travels, p. 314. {f} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 87. 2.

Exodus 16:2

Ver. 2. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured,.... For want of bread; for the Targum of Jonathan says, that day the dough ceased they brought of Egypt, on which, and the unleavened cakes they had lived thirty days; and for a longer space of time it was not sufficient, as Josephus {g} and other Jewish writers {h} observe; and now it was all spent, and they were in the utmost distress for bread, and fall a murmuring as they were used to do, when in any distress, even the whole congregation of them, at least the far greater part; some few might be excepted, as Caleb and Joshua, and some others: and they

murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness; in the wilderness of Sin, where they were, and where no corn was to be had to make bread of; and their murmuring was not only against Moses, as before when they wanted water, but against Aaron also, who were jointly concerned in bringing them out of Egypt. It is a common case, when things do not go so well as to be wished for in church or state, for people to murmur against their governors, ecclesiastic or civil, and lay all the blame to them.

{g} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 15. sect. 1. {h} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 5. p. 17.

Exodus 16:3

Ver. 3. And the children of Israel said unto them,.... They not only inwardly murmured, and privately complained among themselves, but they spoke out their complaints, and that in a very extravagant manner:

would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt; by one of the plagues, or some such like plague as were inflicted on the Egyptians, which killed many of them, and particularly the hailstorm and plague on the firstborn; suggesting that death, even by the hand of the Lord, whether in an ordinary or extraordinary way, was more eligible than their present circumstances: when we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full; which is an exaggeration of their former circumstances, and the happiness of them, in order to aggravate the misery of their present ones; for it can hardly be thought strictly true, that while they were in hard bondage in Egypt, they had often flesh in their pots, and leisure time to sit and attend them, either the boiling of it in them, or the eating of it when served up in dishes at the table; which they seem to boast of, as if they had several dishes of meat at table, and sat in great splendour, and took a great deal of time to regale themselves, and when they indulged themselves to satiety, having fulness of bread and all provisions:

for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger: but there was no danger of that at present, since they had so many flocks and herds with them; though indeed so large a number would soon have ate them up, and which could not so comfortably be fed upon without bread; and, besides, these they did not choose to slay, unless under great necessity, which they reserved for sacrifice, and for an increase.

Exodus 16:4

Ver. 4. Then said the Lord unto Moses,.... Who no doubt had been praying to him, as was his usual manner, when the people were in distress and complained, and was heard and answered by him: behold,

I will rain bread from heaven for you; though they were a murmuring, rebellious, and ungrateful people, the Lord dealt kindly and bountifully with them; he did not rain fire and brimstone upon them, as on Sodom and Gomorrah, nor snares and an horrible tempest, as on the wicked; but what was desirable by them, and suitable to their present circumstances, even bread, which was what they wanted, and this ready prepared; for though they did dress it in different ways, yet it might be eaten without any preparation at all; and this it was promised should be rained down upon them, there should be great plenty of it; it should come as thick and as fast as a shower of rain, and lie around their camp ready at hand to take up; and this should not spring out of the earth as bread corn does, but come down from heaven; and being such a wonderful thing, a "behold" is prefixed unto it, denoting the marvellousness of it, as well as exciting attention to what was said: our Lord may seem to contradict this, when he says, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, **Joh 6:32**, but the reconciliation is easy; for not to observe that it was God, and not Moses, that gave this bread, so though it came from the airy heavens, and along with the dew of it, where it was prepared perhaps by the ministry of angels, and therefore called the corn of heaven, and angels' bread, Ps 78:24, yet it came not from the heaven of heavens, the third heaven, from whence the true bread, the antitype of this, came, even our Lord Jesus Christ himself:

and the people shall go out, and gather a certain rate of it every day; or "the thing of the day in its day" {i}, the bread day by day; to which our Lord may be thought to allude, when he directs his disciples to pray, give us this day our daily bread; as this would be rained every morning, the people were to go out of the camp, and gather it up for their daily use, and which was to be done every day:

that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or no; by this single instance of their obedience to his will in going out every morning to gather their bread, that should be rained for them, he proposed to try and prove their obedience to his law in all other respects; what regard would be had to it when it should be given, and what might be expected from them, and likewise whether they would depend upon his providence in this case also.

{i} wmwyb Mwy rbd "rem diei in die suo", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Fagius, Drusius.

Exodus 16:5

Ver. 5. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day,.... Of the week, and from the raining of the bread, which was on the first day of the week:

they shall prepare that which they bring in; the Targum of Jonathan adds, to eat on the sabbath day; what they did not consume on the sixth day was to be prepared and reserved for the seventh day; that is, it was to be baked or boiled as they thought fit to have it, or eat it as it was, which they pleased, see Ex 16:23 only one part of it was to be kept till the next day:

and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily: on that day should be rained double what fell on other days, and so twice as much should be gathered up; the reason for which is not here mentioned, but afterwards given; though Moses no doubt was now made acquainted with it, or otherwise he could not have informed the princes and people of it, as he afterwards did, Ex 16:23.

Exodus 16:6

Ver. 6. And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel,.... That is, Aaron spoke in the name of Moses to them, he being his spokesman, appointed of God to speak for him, and both spoke to them as from the Lord:

at even, then ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: that they were brought out they knew, but they make this to be an act and deed of Moses and Aaron, Ex 16:3 whereas it was the work of the Lord; and at evening they should have a fresh proof of it, and that they were not brought forth to be killed with hunger, as they complained, by the quails coming up and covering their camp, whereby they would have flesh to eat, Ex

16:12.

Exodus 16:7

Ver. 7. And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord,.... Either as displayed in this wonderful affair, raining bread about their tents, which was in the morning, or else as it appeared in the cloud, Ex 16:7 the latter sense seems to be confirmed by what follows: for that he; the glory of the Lord, the glorious Shechinah of Jehovah, the Angel that went before them in the cloud, the eternal Word and Son of God: heareth your murmurings against the Lord; against Jehovah his Father; see Ge 19:24

and what are we, that ye murmur against us? either signifying that there was no reason for it, and no occasion of it, since not they, but the Lord, brought them out of Egypt, and into those circumstances; what they did was only by his command, and with a view for their good, and therefore it was both unreasonable and ungrateful in them to murmur against them; or as observing, that seeing they murmured against the Lord, it was no strange thing to them they should murmur against them, and therefore took it the more quietly and patiently.

Exodus 16:8

Ver. 8. And Moses said, this shall be,.... Which supplement may be left out:

when the Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat; cause the quails to come up, and fall about their tents:

and in the morning bread to the full; by raining it from heaven all around them:

for that, or rather "then" {k},

the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him; it will then appear that he has heard them, and taken notice of them, by giving them bread and flesh, they complained of the want of; and yet did not resent in a way of wrath and displeasure their murmurings, but kindly, bountifully, and in a most marvellous manner provided for them, which was acting like himself, a God gracious and merciful:

and what [are] we? that we should be the objects of your resentment, and be murmured at, and complained of, who had done nothing to deserve such treatment:

your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord; not only against them, but against the Lord also; or not so much against them as against the Lord, whose messengers and ministers they were, and whom they represented, obeyed, and served; thus whatever is done to the ministers of Christ, he reckons as done to the Father, and to himself,
Lu 10:16.

{k} emvb "testabitur se audisse", Tigurine version.

Exodus 16:9

Ver. 9. And Moses spake unto Aaron,.... Who was his prophet and spokesman to the people:

say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel; to the heads of them, to as many as could conveniently hear him, and were to report what he said to the rest:

come near before the Lord; who was in the pillar of cloud, which from the first appearance of it never removed from them, nor the Lord from that; though some have thought, that before the tabernacle was built, there was some small tent or little tabernacle where the Shechinah was; but for this there is no foundation, there is for the other suggested:

for he hath heard your murmurings; which is repeated again and again, to observe to them the evil of it, and what notice the Lord took of it, though he indulged them in so gracious a manner he did.

Exodus 16:10

Ver. 10. And it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel,.... Before he had well done speaking:

that they looked toward the wilderness; they were already in the wilderness of Sin, and they looked straight forward toward that part of it which was yet before them, or to the wilderness of Sinai, which was right onward, and whither they were travelling:

and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud; which went before them; there was a more than common brightness in it, an effulgence and beam of light and glory shining in it. Christ, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, appeared in it, in some visible displays of his majesty, which made it very observable to them.

Exodus 16:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Out of the bright and glorious cloud:

saying; as follows:

Exodus 16:12

Ver. 12. I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel,.... This Moses and Aaron had often affirmed, and now the Lord confirms what they had said, and lets them know that he took notice of their murmurings, and disapproved of them, and was displeased with them; though he did not think fit to resent them in an angry way, but dealt kindly and graciously with them; and since he had brought them into a wilderness, which was his own act, he would take care of them, and provide for them; which they might reasonably conclude he would, since he had done so many great and good things for them, in bringing them out of Egypt, and through the Red sea, and had slain all their enemies, and had given them water when in distress, and therefore need not have murmured nor have doubted but that he would give them bread also:

speak unto them, saying, at even ye shall eat flesh; meaning that very evening, when the quails came up, as the following verse shows:

and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; the next morning, when the manna fell around their camp, so that they had bread, and fulness of it:

and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God; good and gracious, kind and merciful, ever mindful of his covenant and promises, able to supply their wants, and provide them with everything necessary and sufficient for them.

Exodus 16:13

Ver. 13. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up,.... From the coasts of Egypt, from the Red sea, over which they flew; and being evening, and weary with flying so long, lighted and settled where the Israelites encamped. Josephus {l} says, about the Arabian gulf there are more of this sort of birds than any other, which flying over the sea, and being weary, and coming nearer the ground than other birds, and lighting among the Hebrews, they took them with their hands as food prepared for them of God. The Targum of Jonathan calls them pheasants; some think they were locusts; but of this
See Gill on "Nu 11:31". These here seem to have come up one evening only, whereas, in the place referred to, they had them a whole month together:

and covered the camp: their numbers were so many, as indeed such a prodigious company of people as those were required a great number to satisfy them with. These quails, which were sent in the evening, at the close of the day, were an emblem of worldly things, which are not the portion of the saints and people of God, what they are to live upon, and take up their satisfaction in; nor are they abiding, but transitory things, which come and go, make themselves wings and fly away toward heaven:

and in the morning the dew lay round about the host; the camp of Israel; or a lay of dew {m}, an emblem of the grace of God, and the blessings of it, see Ho 14:6.

{l} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 1. sect. 5. {m} ljh tbkv "cubatio roris", Montanus, Piscator, Cartwright; "accubitus roris", Drusius; "situs [vel] stramentum roris", Munster.

Exodus 16:14

Ver. 14. And when the dew that lay was gone up,.... Exhaled by the sun upon the rising of it:

behold, upon the face of the wilderness; upon the surface of it, all around the camp of Israel:

there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground; which is what is in the next verse called "manna". Before the sun rose there was nothing but a dew to be seen; when that was gone off through the force of the sun, then the manna appeared; which was but a "small thing", and very unpromising for food, and especially for such a vast number of people; and a "round" thing, for which it is after compared to a coriander seed, as is thought; though the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan do not interpret the word of the round form, but rather refer to its smallness; and which is expressed in the Vulgate Latin version,

"small, and as if beat with a pestle;"

and for its white colour, as well as its smallness, it looked like hoar frost on the ground. Jarchi says there were two dews, within which it lay as something covered in a box, and he seems to be right; for it is certain from Nu 11:9, that there was a dew which fell first, and then the manna fell upon it; and from hence it is plain also, that there was a dew over the manna, which went up from it when the sun rose: and the design of this seems to be to keep this heavenly bread pure and clean for the Israelites, that it might neither partake of the dust nor sand of the wilderness where it fell, and that nothing might light upon it until the time of gathering it came. The Jews, in memory of this, will sometimes put bread upon the table between two table cloths {n}; and it is highly probable, that to this the allusion is of the "hidden manna" in **Re 2:17**, by which is meant our Lord Jesus Christ, the antitype of this manna, as will be observed as we pass on, in all the circumstances of it; the manna came with the dew, and was covered with it, and hid in it; Christ is the gift of God's free grace to the sons of men, and is exhibited in the word of grace, where he lies hid to men in the glory of his person and the fulness of his grace, until revealed and made known. The figure of the manna being "round", which is a perfect figure, may denote the perfection of Christ in his person, natures, and office; he being perfectly God and perfectly man, having all the essential perfections both of the divine and human natures in him, as well as all fulness of grace; and being made perfect through sufferings, is become a complete Saviour, and by his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, has perfected for ever his sanctified ones: and the manna being "small", may signify the meanness of Christ in the eyes of men in his state of humiliation, and the unpromising appearance he made of being the Saviour and King of Israel; the white colour of it may direct to the purity of Christ, to the holiness of his natures, and the beauty of his person, being white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousands.

{n} Vid. Fagium in loc.

Exodus 16:15

Ver. 15. And when the children of Israel saw it,.... As they could not but observe it, it being spread over the face of the wilderness; and besides, as they were told, that in the morning they should have bread to the full, they were up early to look after it:

they said one to another, it [is] manna; not such as is known by that name now, which is only used in medicine; nor anything that was then known by any such name; but so they called it, because it was, as Jarchi says, a preparation of food, or food ready prepared for them, from hnm, "manah", which signifies to appoint, prepare, and distribute, see **Da 1:5**, so Christ is appointed of God, and prepared in his purposes and decrees, and delivered out, by his grace as proper food for his people, who have everyone their portion in due season: for Kimchi and Ben Melech give the sense of the word, a gift and portion from God; and such is Christ, the gift of his grace, and an unspeakable one. Some think these words were spoken by the Israelites on first sight of the manna, by way of question, "Man hu, what is it?" and so Josephus {o} says it signifies in their language; but it does not appear that the word is so used in the Hebrew tongue, though it might in the Syriac or Chaldee, which was more in use in the times of Josephus. But it can hardly be thought that the Israelites could speak in either of these dialects at this time; it is much more probable what others say, that it so signifies in the Egyptian tongue; and it is not at all to be wondered at that Israel, just come out of Egypt, should use an Egyptian word: and this best agrees with the reason that follows, "for they wist not what it was"; which contradicts our version; for if they knew not what it was, how came they to call it manna? but taking the above words as an interrogation, asking one another what it was, those come in very pertinently, and assign a reason of the question, because they were ignorant of it, having never seen any such thing before; and this sense is confirmed by what Moses says in the next clause, telling them what it was: and thus Christ is unknown to his own people, until he is revealed unto them; not by flesh and blood, by carnal reason or carnal men, but by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; and he remains always unknown to natural men, though ever so wise and prudent:

and Moses said unto them, this is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat; which he had promised them the day before, and which he had now rained in plenty about them; and which they had as a free gift of his, without any merit and desert of theirs, and without their labour, diligence, and industry, and which they had now power from him to eat of freely and plentifully.

{o} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 1. sect. 6.

Exodus 16:16

Ver. 16. This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded,.... Respecting the gathering of it, the rule or rules he would have observed concerning that, as follows:

gather of it every man according to his eating; according to his appetite, and according to the appetites of those that were in his family, as much as they can all eat; and that they may have enough, the particular quantity is fixed for each of them. This act of gathering, in the mystical sense, may respect the exercise of faith on Christ, laying hold of him as he is held forth in the word, receiving him, and feeding upon him with a spiritual appetite, and that freely, largely, plentifully, and encouraging others to do the same:

an omer for every man; or head, or by poll {p}; they were to take the poll of their families, the number of them, and reckon to every head, or assign to every man, such a measure of the manna, and which was sufficient for a man of the keenest appetite; what this measure was,
See Gill on "Ex 16:36" This must be understood not of sucking infants, and such that were sick and infirm, and of poor appetites, that could not feed upon and digest such sort of food, only of those that could:

[according] to the number of your persons, take ye every man for them which are in his tent: this was to be done after it was gathered and brought in, either by certain overseers of this affair, or heads of families, who, according to the number of those that were in their tents, who were eaters of such sort of food, was to take an omer of it for everyone of them.

{p} tl gl gl "ad caput", Montanus; "pro capite", Fagius, Drusius, Cartwright; so Ainsworth.

Exodus 16:17

Ver. 17. And the children of Israel did so,.... They went out of the camp in the morning when it was fallen, and gathered it; which is expressive of believers going out of the camp, leaving the world, and all behind them for Christ; and of their going out of themselves to him, and of their going in and out, and finding pasture and food for their souls in him to live upon: and gathered some more, some less; some that were more robust and strong, that were more active and diligent, gathered in more than others; which may denote the different degree and exercise of faith in God's people; some are strong in it, and others weak; some attain to a greater degree of knowledge of Christ, and receive more grace from him, and have more spiritual peace, joy, and comfort in believing, and others less; see Ro 15:1.

Exodus 16:18

Ver. 18. And when they did mete it with an omer,.... What was gathered in; and everyone had his measure, his omer dealt out to him by those that meted or measured it:

he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; when their gatherings were put together in one heap, and each had his omer measured out to him; he that had gathered more than an omer had no more allotted to him, and he that gathered not so much as an omer, yet had a full one measured out to him: or he, that is, Moses, "did not cause him to abound" {q}, that gathered much, he had no more for his share than another; nor "suffer" him "to want" {r} that gathered little, so that they all had alike; which shows, that though there may be different exercises of grace, yet it is the same grace in all; all have alike precious faith, and an equal interest in Christ, the object of it; all are equally redeemed by his precious blood, and justified by his righteousness, and have their sins forgiven on the foot of his atonement; all have the same Christ, and the same blessings of grace, and are entitled to the same eternal glory and happiness. The apostle quotes this passage, and applies it to that equality there should be among Christians in acts of beneficence and charity, that what is wanting in the one through poverty, may be made up by the riches of others, **2Co 8:14**:

they gathered every man according to his eating; according to the number of persons he had to eat of it; there always was, upon an average, some gathering more and others less, an omer gathered and distributed to every person. Jarchi takes this to be a miracle, that nothing should ever be wanting of an omer to a man; and so Aben Ezra observes, that the ancients say this is a miracle.

{q} Pydeh "et non abundare fecit", Montanus. {r} ryoxh al "non minoravit", Montanus; "non defuit", Tigurine version.

Exodus 16:19

Ver. 19. And Moses said unto them,.... At the same time he gave the direction to them about gathering it, and measuring out to every man an omer:

let no man leave of it until the morning; not that every man was bound to eat up the quantity distributed to him; he might give what he could not eat to those that could eat more, if there were any such; or he might give it to his cattle, or cast it away, but he was not to reserve it until the next day for his use; which was to teach him that God would bestow this benefit and blessing on him daily, and he might expect it, whose mercies are new every morning; and to instruct him to live every day upon the providence of God for his daily food; as indeed every man ought to do so, let his circumstances be ever so affluent; and, in a more spiritual and evangelic sense, it teaches believers to live continually every day by faith on Christ, and to say day by day, Lord, evermore give us this bread, **Joh 6:34**.

Exodus 16:20

Ver. 20. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses,.... That is, not all of them, some of them did, and perhaps the far greater part of them:

but some of them left it until the morning; out of distrust, for fear they should have none the next day; being men of little faith, that could not trust God for a supply for the morrow; the Targum of Jonathan says, these were Dathan and Abiram; and so Jarchi:

and it bred worms, and stank; or by an "hysteron proteron", and transposition of the words, the sense may be, that it stank, corrupted, and putrefied, and so produced worms, in which order the words lie, Ex 16:24, and this was not from the nature of the manna to breed worms so soon, but God so ordering and disposing it, that it should do so; for otherwise it would keep to another day, as what was gathered on the sixth day kept to the seventh, and there was a part of it kept for many ages, see Ex 16:24, and since the manna was of the meal kind, perhaps those worms it bred might be of the weevil sort, as Scheuchzer conjectures {s}:

and Moses was wroth with them; for breaking the commandment of God.

{s} Physica Sacra, vol. 2. p. 179.

Exodus 16:21

Ver. 21. And they gathered it every morning,.... From the time the morning began, during four hours, or to the fourth hour, as the Targum of Jonathan; that is, till ten o'clock in the morning: this was a very wonderful thing that bread should be provided and rained every morning about the camp of Israel, in such plenty as to be sufficient to feed such a vast body of people; and that for forty years together:

every man according to his eating; according to the number of persons he had in his family to eat of it, and as much as everyone could eat; there never was any lack or scarcity of it, but every morning there it was for them, and they gathered it, an omer for everyone:

and when the sun waxed hot, it melted; and so what was left ungathered, being exhaled by the sun and laid up in the clouds, generated and increased, and became a provision to be let down the next morning; it being the will of God that it should not be trampled upon or exposed; and that the Israelites might be diligent, and not neglect the time of gathering it: and the Targum of Jonathan says, from the fourth hour, or ten o'clock and onward, the sun was hot upon it and melted it, which is the time of day when the sun is hottest: and some things, we may observe, are hardened by the sun, and others are softened, as the manna was, even to a liquefaction; though otherwise it was of so hard a nature as to be beaten in a mortar and ground in a mill, Nu 11:8.

Exodus 16:22

Ver. 22. And it came to pass, that on the sixth day,.... Of the week, or from the first raining of the manna, which was the same:

they gathered twice as much bread; as they had used to do on other days, a greater quantity falling, and which was more easily taken up:

two omers for one man; or, "instead of one" {t} of one omer; so it turned out when they came to measure what they had gathered; otherwise they had no intention in gathering it, but lying in a great quantity, they gathered as much as they could, or could well carry, and upon measuring it so it proved; for it does not appear that Moses had as yet acquainted them what was to be, or would be gathered on this day; nor had he any orders so to do from the Lord, only he was told by him that so it would be, and accordingly it came to pass, see Ex 16:5

and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses; what had happened, that the people that day had gathered as much more as they had used to do on other days: these seem to be the overseers of this affair, before whom what was gathered was brought, and in whose presence it was measured, and who took care that everyone should have his omer and no more: this makes it plain that the people acted without design, and knew not that they were to gather on this day double to other days; since the rulers knew nothing of it, nor of the reason of it, and it can hardly be imagined that the people should know and the rulers be ignorant.

{t} dxal "pro uno", Tigurine version.

Exodus 16:23

Ver. 23. And he said unto them, this is that which the Lord hath said,.... Which he had said to Moses privately, for as yet he had said it to none else:

tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord; according to Jarchi, the rulers asked Moses what this day was, different from other days, that double the quantity should be gathered? from whence, he says, we learn, that Moses had not as yet declared the sabbath to them; and this is indeed the first time we read of one; and though, as there was divine worship before, there must be times for it; but as there was as yet no certain place for worship, so no certain time for it, but as it was appointed by the heads of families, or as more families might agree unto and unite in; at least no day before this appears to be a day of rest from servile labour, as well as for holy use and service:

bake that which ye will bake [today], and seethe that ye will seethe; the phrase "today" is not in the text, and not necessarily supplied; the sense being plainly this, that they might take and boil what they would, and dress as much of the manna as they pleased, and eat what they would, but not that they were to bake and boil for the next day; for it is clear, by what follows, that the manna of the next day was not dressed either way, for then it would be no wonder that it did not stink; and as yet the law for not kindling a fire on the sabbath day was not given; and therefore, for aught to the contrary, they might roast or seethe on that day, or eat it as it was, as they themselves thought fit:

and that which remaineth over; what they did not bake, nor seethe, nor eat;

lay up for you to be kept until the morning whereas on other days they were to leave nothing of it till the morning, but destroy it or cast it away, whatever was left uneaten.

Exodus 16:24

Ver. 24. And they laid it up until the morning, as Moses bade,.... What was left of two omers a man, what they had neither baked nor boiled:

and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein, which was the case, when it was left or laid up on other days; and it showed that there was an interposition of divine Providence in the keeping of it to this day, and clearly confirmed it to be the will of God that this day should henceforward be to them the rest of the holy sabbath.

Exodus 16:25

Ver. 25. And Moses said, eat that today,.... That is, he said this on the seventh day in the morning, and bid them eat of it whether baked or seethed, or as it was, or just as they pleased; however, they had liberty to eat of it, and indeed they had no other, because none fell on this day:

for today is a sabbath unto the Lord; a time of rest from labour, and to be employed in the service of the Lord:

today ye shall not find it in the field: should they seek for it, which they had no occasion to do, since there was a sufficiency provided the day before; and this he said to prevent their going out to seek for it, which, if out of curiosity or for any other reason any of them should do, it would be in vain and fruitless.

Exodus 16:26

Ver. 26. Six days ye shall gather it,.... Day after day, every morning, as they had done the six days past, so they should during their stay in the wilderness:

but on the seventh day, [which] is the sabbath; which is repeated, being a new thing, to impress it on their minds: in it there shall be none: no manna; none shall fall, and so none can be gathered, and therefore it would be to no purpose to go out and seek for it; as also there would be no need of it, since they would always have a double portion on the sixth day.

Exodus 16:27

Ver. 27. And it came to pass,.... Perhaps the next seventh day following:

[that] there went out [some] of the people for to gather; to gather manna, as on other days; which they did not through want of provision or a greedy appetite, for they had bread every day, and on that day to the full, but to gratify their curiosity, or to see whether the words of Moses stood, as Aben Ezra expresses it, that is, whether what he said was true, or came to pass, that there should be none, and they should not be able to find any on that day, and so it was:

and they found none; no manna; in the places where they used to find it in plenty on other days.

Exodus 16:28

Ver. 28. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... Who had seen and taken notice of what those men had done, who went out into the field to seek for manna on the seventh day, and was displeased with it, and therefore spoke to Moses out of the cloud:

how long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? this is not said merely with respect to their breach of the commandment of the sabbath, as if they had long refused to observe and keep that; whereas that was but one command, and but just given; but upon their breach of that, he takes occasion to upbraid them with their former transgressions of other laws of his, and which they had continued in, or at least were frequently committing; and which was a proof of their perverseness and rebellion against him, though he was so kind and bountiful to them.

Exodus 16:29

Ver. 29. See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath,.... These are either the words of Jehovah, the Angel of the Lord, out of the cloud continued; or the words of Moses to the children of Israel, upon what the Lord had said to him, and would have them observe and take notice, that whereas the Lord had given them a sabbath, or enjoined them a day of rest:

therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; wherefore they had no occasion to go out in search of manna, as well as it was a vain thing to do it; and especially as it was against a command of God, and being ungrateful in them, as there was such a provision made for them:

abide ye every man in his place; in his tent for that day, giving himself up to religious exercises, to pray and praise, instruct his family, and in all things serve the Lord he was directed to:

let no man go out of his place on the seventh day; not beyond two thousand cubits, as the Targum of Jonathan, which is the space the Jews generally fix upon for a man to walk on a sabbath day, so far he might go and no further; and which perhaps is the same space as is called a sabbath day's journey, See Gill on "Ac 1:12".

Exodus 16:30

Ver. 30. So the people rested on the seventh day. Did not attempt to go out of their tents in quest of manna, as on other days, and observed it as a day of rest from labour, and so they continued to do in successive generations.

Exodus 16:31

Ver. 31. And the house of Israel called the name thereof manna,.... For till now they had given it no name; which shows that the words are not to be read as we render them in Ex 16:15 it is manna, unless this is to be considered as a confirmation of that name; but rather as an interrogation, "what is it?" though, from thence, "man" being the first word they made use of on sight of it, might so call it; or as others, from its being now an appointed, prepared, portion and gift, which they every day enjoyed, See Gill on "Ex 16:15", and it was like coriander seed, white that the colour of the manna was white is not only here asserted, but is plain from other passages, it being like the hoar frost, which is white, Ex 16:14 and its colour is the colour of bdellium, Nu 11:7 or pearl, which is of a white bright colour, as the word is interpreted by the Jews; and who say {u}, that the manna was round as a coriander seed, and white as a pearl; but then if it is here compared to the coriander seed on that account, some other seed than what we call coriander seed must be meant, since that is off darkish colour; though it is thought by most that the comparison with it is not on account of the colour, but its form being round, as a coriander seed is, and as the manna is said to be, Ex 16:14. Josephus {w} thinks it is compared to the coriander seed for its being about the size of that seed; though I must confess it seems to me to be compared to the coriander seed for its colour, and therefore "Gad", the word used, must signify something else than what we call coriander seed; but what that is, is not easy to say: Ben Gersom is of the same mind, and thinks it refers to colour, and fancies the "Gad" had his name from his whiteness, Ge 20:11. Artapanus {x}, the Heathen, makes mention of this food of the Jews in the wilderness, where, he says, they were thirty years; during which time God rained upon them meal like to panic (a sort of grain like millet), in colour almost as white as snow: and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey; or cakes that had honey mixed in them: though in Nu 11:8 the taste of it is said to be as the taste of fresh oil, which Saadiah Gaon, Aben Ezra, and others, account for thus; that if a man ate of it as it came down, it was as cakes of honey, but, when dressed, it was as the taste of fresh oil; however, it was very palatable and agreeable to the taste; honey that drops from palm trees is said to be not much different in taste from oil: the Jews {y} have a notion that there were all kinds of tastes in the manna, suited to the ages and appetites of persons, and that as they would have it, so it tasted; which notion the author of the book of Wisdom seems to give into,

"Instead whereof thou feddest thine own people with angels' food, and didst send them from heaven bread prepared without their labour, able to content every man's delight, and agreeing to every taste. For thy sustenance declared thy sweetness unto thy children, and serving to the appetite of the eater, tempered itself to every man's liking." (Wisdom 16:20-21)

Leo Africanus {z} speaks of a sort of manna found in great plenty in the deserts in Libya, which the inhabitants gather in vessels every morning to carry to market, and which being mixed with water is drank for delight, and being put into broth has a very refreshing virtue: of the round form and white colour of manna, as applicable to Christ, notice has been taken on Ex 16:14

and the sweetness of its taste well agrees with him the antitype: his person is so to them who have tasted that the Lord is gracious; his word or Gospel is sweeter than the honey or the honeycomb; his mouth is most sweet, the doctrines that proceed from it, and the exceeding great and precious promises of it; his fruits and the blessings of his grace, peace, pardon, righteousness, &c. are sweet to those that sit under his shadow, where faith often feeds sweetly and with delight upon him,

{u} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 75. 1. {w} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 1. sect. 6. {x} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. p. 436. {y} Shemot Rabba, sect 25. fol. 108. 4. & Bemidar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 188. {z} Descriptio Africae, l. 7. p. 631.

Exodus 16:32

Ver. 32. And Moses said,.... At another time, though it is here inserted to give the account of the mamma all together:

this is the thing which the Lord commandeth; namely, what follows:

fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; which was the quantity allowed a man every day; this measure was to be laid up, and reserved for posterity in future generations, not to eat, nor so much as taste of, for then it would soon have been gone, but to look at, as follows:

that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt; that they might see what sort of food was provided for them, and what quantity each man had of it every day; and so have an ocular proof of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, in providing for their support in a wilderness, where no supplies were to be had; and when they were just come out of an enemy's country: thus Christ is the food of his people, while they are in the wilderness of this world; and is never so until they are brought out of the state of nature's darkness and bondage, like that of the Egyptians; and who, being the food of the saints in ages past, is presented to the eye of faith, for its encouragement to look to him and believe in him, receive, embrace, and feed upon him.

Exodus 16:33

Ver. 33. And Moses said unto Aaron, take a pot,.... The Targum of Jonathan calls it an earthen pot; and so Jarchi; which, if it could be supported, might be considered as an emblem of the ministers of the word, in whom, as in earthen vessels, the Gospel of Christ is put: Aben Ezra says, it was a vessel either of earth or brass, which latter is more likely for duration; since an earthen vessel can hardly be supposed to continue so long as this did, and much less a glass pot, as others take it to be: but the Septuagint version renders it a golden pot; and so it is said to be by Philo the Jew {a}, and which is confirmed by the apostle, **Heb 9:4** and which puts the thing out of question; and this may denote the word and ordinances which retain and hold forth Christ as the bread of life, and are a memorial of him, as evidently set forth, crucified, and slain, to future ages, comparable to gold; both for the preciousness of them, being more to be desired than gold, yea, than fine gold, and for the duration of them, they being to continue until the second coming of Christ:

and put an omer full of manna therein; the manna, and the full measure of it, according to a man's eating, was to be put into it, denoting that a full Christ, or Christ in all the fulness of his person and grace, is to be held forth in the word and ordinances to the eye of faith:

and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations; in a place where the Lord would hereafter fix the symbol of his presence, the ark, cherubim, and mercy seat; and may signify the presence of Christ with his Father, the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, his mediation and intercession; for he is not only held forth in the word, for faith to look at, but he is before the throne as though he had been slain, **Re 5:6**.

{a} De Cong. Quaer. Erud. Gratia, p. 438.

Exodus 16:34

Ver. 34. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the testimony, to be kept. That is, before the ark of the testimony; when that was made, as it was in a little time after this, called the testimony, because it contained in it the law, which was a testimony or testification of the mind and will of God unto Israel, see
Ex 25:16 the apostle says, the pot of manna was in the ark, **Heb 9:4** that is, on one side of it,
See Gill on "Heb 9:4".

Exodus 16:35

Ver. 35. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years,.... Wanting thirty days, as Jarchi observes; reckoning from their coming out of Egypt, and the passover they kept there, to their coming to the borders of the land of Canaan to Gilgal, and keeping the passover there, when the manna ceased, were just forty years; but then they had been out of Egypt a month before the manna fell; but the round number is given, as is common: it was on the sixteenth of Ijar, the second month, the manna fell; and it was in the month of Nisan, about the sixteenth or seventeenth of the month, that it ceased, see **Jos 5:10**

until they came to a land inhabited: where the ground was cultivated, and corn was produced to make bread of, which could not be had in a wilderness; and therefore God graciously provided for them every day, and fed them with manna till they came to such a place:

they did eat manna until they came to the borders of the land of Canaan; that is, Gilgal: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"they ate manna forty years in the life of Moses, until they came unto the land of habitation; they ate manna forty days after his death, until they passed over Jordan, and entered the extremities of the land of Canaan:"

some have thought this verse was not written by Moses, but Joshua, or some other hand after his death since he did not live quite to the cessation of the manna; which need not be much disputed or objected to; though it may be considered that Moses led Israel to the borders of the land of Canaan, though he did not go with them so far as Gilgal, and died before the manna ceased; yet, as he was assured of it, he could write this in certain faith of it, and especially by a spirit of prophecy: this signifies that the children of God are to live by faith upon Christ, while they are in the wilderness of this world; nor will this spiritual food be wanting to them while in it; but when they are come to Canaan's land, to the heavenly glory, they will no more walk and live by faith, but by sight: the word and ordinances will then cease; Christ will be no more held forth to them in that way, but they shall see him as he is, and behold his glory,

Exodus 16:36

Ver. 36. Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah. Frequent mention being made of this measure in the above relation, as containing the quantity of each man's share of the manna daily, during the forty years' stay in the wilderness; an account is given by the historian how much it contained, by which it may appear what a sufficient provision was made: an ephah, according to Jarchi, contained three seahs (or pecks); a scab, six kabs; a kab, four logs; a log, six egg shells; and the tenth part of an ephah was forty three egg shells, and the fifth part of one: but Dr. Cumberland {b} has reduced this to our measure, and has given it more clearly and distinctly; an ephah, according to him, contained, in wine measure, seven gallons, two quarts, and about half a pint; in corn measure, six gallons, three pints, and three solid inches; and an omer three quarts; which being made into bread, must be more than any ordinary man could well eat; for, as Ainsworth observes, an omer was twice as much as the choenix, (a measure mentioned in **Re 6:6**.) which was wont to be a man's allowance of bread corn for a day; and what a vast quantity must fall every day to supply so large a number of people with such a measure; some have reckoned it at 94,466 bushels every day, and that there must be consumed in forty years 1,379,203,600 bushels {c}.

{b} Of Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 3. p. 64, 86, 87. ch. 4. p. 137. {c} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Saer. vol. 2. p. 177, 178.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 17

The children of Israel coming to Rephidim, want water, and chide with Moses about it, who, crying to the Lord, is bid to smite the rock, from whence came water for them, and he named the place from their contention with him, Ex 17:1 at this place Amalek came and fought with Israel, who, through the prayer of Moses, signified by the holding up of his hands, and by the sword of Joshua, was vanquished, Ex 17:8, for the remembrance of which it was ordered to be recorded in a book, and an altar was built with this inscription on it, "Jehovahnissi": it being the will of God that Amalek should be fought with in every generation until utterly destroyed, Ex 17:14.

Ver. 1. And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin,.... Where they had stayed some time, at least a week, as it should seem, from the gathering the manna there six days, and resting on the seventh:

after their journeys: first from the wilderness of Sin to Dophkah, and from Dophkah to Alusb, and from Alush to Rephidim, as appears from Nu 33:12 their two stations at Dophkah and Alush are here omitted, nothing very remarkable or of any moment happening at either place:

according to the commandment; or "mouth of the Lord" {d}, who, either with an articulate voice out of the cloud, ordered when they should march, and where they should encamp; or else this was signified by the motion or rest of the pillar of cloud or fire, which always went before them, in which the Lord was:

and pitched in Rephidim; which was a place on the western side of Mount Sinai: according to Bunting {e}, Dophkah was twelve miles from the wilderness of Sin, and Alush twelve miles from Dophkah, and Rephidim eight miles from Alush: and Jerom says {f}, according to the propriety of the Syriac language, it signifies a remission of hands: and to which the Targum of Jonathan seems to have respect, adding,

"the place where their hands ceased from the precepts of the law, wherefore the fountains were dried up;"

and it follows:

and there was no water for the people to drink; being a sandy desert place.

{d} yp le "super ore", Montanus, "ad os", Vatablus. {e} Travels, p. 82. {f} Epist. ad Fabiolam de 42 mansion. tom. 3. fol. 15. B.

Exodus 17:2

Ver. 2. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses,.... Contended with him by words, expostulating with him in a very angry and indecent manner for bringing them thither; loading him with reproaches and calumnies, wrangling and quarrelling with him, and using him very ill, giving hard words and bad language:

and said, give us water, that we may drink; directing their speech both to Moses and Aaron, as the word "give" {g} being in the plural number shows; which was requiring that of them which only God could do and signifying as if they were under obligation to do it for them, since they had brought them out of Egypt, and had the care of them; and having seen so many miracles wrought by them, might conclude it was in their power to get them water when they pleased: had they desired them to pray to God for them, to give them water, and exercised faith on him, that he would provide for them, they had done well; which they might reasonably conclude he would, who had brought them out of Egypt, led them through the Red sea, had sweetened the waters at Marah for them, conducted them to fountains of water at Elim, and had rained flesh and bread about their tents in the wilderness of Sin, and still continued the manna with them:

and Moses said unto them, why chide ye with me? as if it was I that brought you hither, whereas it is the Lord that goes before you in the pillar of cloud and fire, and as if I kept water from you, or could give it you at pleasure; how unreasonable, as well as how ungenerous is it in you to chide with me on this account

wherefore do you tempt the Lord? the Lord Christ, as appears from 1Co 10:9 who with the Father and Spirit is the one Jehovah; him they tempted or tried; they tried whether he was present with them or not, Ex 17:7, they tried his power, whether he could give them water in a dry and desert land; and they tried his patience by chiding with his servants, and showing so much distrust of his power and providence, of his goodness and faithfulness; and by their wretched ingratitude and rebellion they tempted him to work a miracle for them.

{g} wnt "Date", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Exodus 17:3

Ver. 3. And the people thirsted there for water,.... They saw there was no water when they first came thither, and therefore chid Moses for bringing them to such a place, where they could not subsist; and having stayed some little time here, and all the water they brought with them from Alush being spent, and having none to drink, began to be very thirsty:

and the people murmured against Moses; became more impatient and enraged, and threw out their invectives against him with much acrimony and severity:

wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt? where it would have been much better for us to have continued:

to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst: which is intolerable to any, and especially to children and cattle, which require frequent drinking: they could not suppose that Moses had such a murderous view in bringing them out of Egypt, or that this was his intention in it, but that this would be the issue and event of it.

Exodus 17:4

Ver. 4. And Moses cried unto the Lord..... Or prayed unto him, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; which shows the distress he was thrown into, the vehemence of his prayer, and perhaps the loud and lamentable tone in which he expressed it: this was the method he always took, and the refuge he fled unto in all his times of trouble; in which he did well, and set a good example of piety and devotion to God, of faith and trust in him: saying,

what shall I do unto this people? or, "for this people" {h}; to relieve them in their present exigency; suggesting his own inability to do any thing for them: yet not despairing of relief, but rather expressing faith in the power and goodness of God to keep them, by his application to him; desiring that he would open a way for their help, and direct him what he must do in this case for them: something, he intimates, must be done speedily for the glory of God, for his own safety, and to prevent the people sinning yet more and more, and so bring destruction upon them; for, adds he,

they be almost ready to stone me or, "yet a little, and they will stone me" {i}; if the time of help is protracted, if relief is not in a short time given, he had reason to believe from the menaces they had given out, the impatience they had showed, the rage they were in, they would certainly take up stones and stone him, being in a stony and rocky place; and this they would do, not as a formal punishment of him as a false prophet, telling them they should be brought to Canaan, when they were brought into the wilderness and perishing there; which law respecting such an one was not yet in being; but this he supposed as what an enraged multitude was wont to do, and which was more ready at hand for them to do than anything else, see Ex 8:26.

{h} hzh Mel "populo haic", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {i} jem dwe "adhuc paululum et lapidabit me." V. L. "parum abest", Tigurine version; "adhuc modicum", Pagninus, Montanus; "adhuc paulisper", Junius &

Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Exodus 17:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... Out of the pillar of cloud:

go on before the people, lead them on nearer to Mount Sinai or Horeb, within sight of which they now were. Jarchi adds, by way of explanation, "and see if they will stone thee"; fear not, go on boldly, no harm shall come to thee:

and take with thee of the elders of Israel; some of them for a witness, as the above writer observes, that they may see that by thine hand water comes out of the rock, and may not say there were fountains there from the days of old. These were taken, because they were the principal men among the people, who, as they were men of years, so of prudence and probity, and whose veracity might be depended upon; and since so great a multitude could not all of them see the miracle, the rock being smote, and the water only flowing in one part of it, and perhaps the road to it but narrow, it was proper some persons should be singled out as witnesses of it, and who so proper as the elders of the people?

and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand and go; wherewith the river Nile was smitten, and the water became blood, when Moses and Aaron first went to Pharaoh; and which, though smitten by Aaron, yet being with the rod of Moses, and by his order, is attributed to him; or else with which the Red sea was smitten by Moses, and divided; which being but a narrow channel, or an arm of the sea, might be called a river: and this circumstance is observed, as the afore mentioned writer thinks, to let the Israelites know, that the rod was not, as they thought, only designed for inflicting punishment, as on Pharaoh and the Egyptians, but also for bringing good unto them; and when they saw this in his hand, by which so many miracles had been wrought, they might be encouraged to hope that something was going to be done in their favour, and that water would be produced for them to drink.

Exodus 17:6

Ver. 6. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb,.... Or "upon that rock" {k}, a particular rock which was pointed unto, where the

Lord in the pillar of cloud would stand; not as a mere spectator of this affair, but as a director of Moses where to smite the rock; and to exert his power in producing water from it, and by his presence to encourage Moses to do it, and to expect and believe the issue of it:

and thou shalt smite the rock: or "on the rock", or "in it" {l}; which made Jarchi fancy that the rod of Moses was something very hard, that it was a sapphire by which the rock was cleft:

and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink, they, their children, and their cattle, ready to die for thirst. Thus God showed himself gracious and merciful to a murmuring and ungrateful people:

and Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel; he smote the rock with his rod, and the waters gushed out in great abundance, like streams and rivers, for the refreshment of the people, and their flocks, Ps 78:20. The Heathens have preserved some footsteps of this miracle in their writings, though disguised. Pausanias {m} speaks of a fountain of cold water springing out of a rock, and reports how Atalantes, coming from hunting thirsty, smote a rock with his spear, and water flowed out. This rock at Rephidim, and the apertures through which the waters flowed, are to be seen to this day, as travellers of veracity relate. Monsieur Thevenot {n} says the rock at Rephidim is only a stone of a prodigious height and thickness, rising out of the ground: on the two sides of that stone we saw several holes, by which the water hath run, as may be easily known by the prints of the water, which hath much hollowed it, but at present no water issues out of them. A later traveller {o} gives us a more distinct account of it: after we had descended the western side of this Mount (Sinai), says he, we came into the plain or wilderness of Rephidim, where we saw that extraordinary antiquity, the rock of Meribah, which was continued to this day, without the least injury from time or accidents. This is rightly called, from its hardness, **De 8:15**, vymlxh rwu, "a rock of flint", though, from the purple or reddish colour of it, it may be rather rendered the rock of Mlx or hmlxa, amethyst, or the amethystine, or granite rock. It is about six yards square, lying tottering as it were, and loose, near the middle of the valley, and seems to have been formerly a cliff of Mount Sinai, which hangs in a variety of precipices all over this plain; the water which gushed out, and the stream which flowed withal, Ps 78:20 have hollowed across one corner of this rock, a channel about two inches deep, and twenty wide, all over incrusted like the inside of a tea kettle that has been long used. Besides several mossy productions that are still preserved by the dew, we see all over this channel a great number of holes, some of them four or five inches deep, and one or two in diameter, the lively and demonstrative tokens of their having been formerly so many fountains. Neither could art nor chance be concerned in the contrivance, inasmuch as every circumstance points out to us a miracle; and, in the same manner with the rent in the rock of Mount Calvary at Jerusalem, never fails to produce the greatest seriousness and devotion in all who see it. The Arabs, who were our guards, were ready to stone me in attempting to break off a corner of it: and another late traveller {p} informs us, that the stone called the stone of the fountains, or the solitary rock, is about twelve feet high, and about eight or ten feet broad, though it is not all of one equal breadth. It is a granite marble, of a kind of brick colour, composed of red and white spots, which are both dusky in their kind; and it stands by itself in the fore mentioned valley (the valley of Rephidim) as if it had grown out of the earth, on the right hand of the road toward the northeast: there remains on it to this day the lively impression of the miracle then wrought; for there are still to be seen the places where the water gushed out, six openings towards the southwest, and six towards the northeast; and in those places where the water flowed the clefts are still to be seen in the rock, as it were with lips. The account Dr. Pocock {q} gives of it is this,

"it is on the foot of Mount Seriah, and is a red granite stone, fifteen feet long, ten wide, and about twelve high: on both sides of it toward the south end, and at the top of it for about the breadth of eight inches, it is discoloured as by the running of water; and all down this part, and both sides, and at top, are a sort of openings and mouths, some of which resemble the lion's mouth that is sometimes cut in stone spouts, but appear not to be the work of a tool. There are about twelve on each side, and within everyone is an horizontal crack, and in some also a crack down perpendicularly. There is also a crack from one of the mouths next to the hill, that extends two or three feet to the north, and all round to the south. The Arabs call this the stone of Moses; and other late travellers {r} say, that about a mile and a half, in the vale of Rephidim, is this rock; this, say they, is a vast stone, of a very compact and hard granite, and as it were projecting out of the ground; on both sides are twelve fissures, which the monk our guide applied to the twelve apostles, and possibly not amiss, had he joined the twelve tribes of Israel with them: as we were observing these fissures, out of which the water gushed, one would be tempted to think, added he, it is no longer ago than yesterday the water flowed out; and indeed there is such an appearance, that at a distance one would think it to be a small waterfall lately dried up: and one {s} that travelled hither in the beginning of the sixteenth century says, that to this day out of one of the marks or holes there sweats a sort of moisture, which we saw and licked."

We are taught by the Apostle Paul the mystical and spiritual meaning of this rock, which he says was Christ, that is, a type of him,
1Co 10:4 as it was for his external unpromising appearance among men at his birth, in his life and death; for his height, being higher than the kings of the earth, than the angels of heaven, and than the heavens themselves, and for strength, firmness, and solidity. The water that flowed from this rock was typical of the grace of Christ, and the blessings of it, which flow from him in great abundance to the refreshment and comfort of his people, and to be had freely; and of the blood of Christ, which flowed from him when stricken and smitten. And the rock being smitten with the rod of Moses, typified Christ being smitten by the rod of the law in the hand of justice, for the transgressions of his people; and how that through his having being made sin, and a curse for them, whereby the law and justice of God are satisfied, the blessings of grace flow freely to them, and follow them all the days of their lives, as the waters of the rock followed the Israelites through the wilderness.

{k} rwuh le "super illam petram", Junius & Tremellius; "super illa petra", Piscator. {l} rwub "in petram", Pagninus, Montanus, "in petra seu rupe"; so Jarchi, and the Targums. {m} Laconic sive, l. 3. p. 209. {n} Travels into the Levant, par. 1. B. 2. ch. 26. p. 167. {o} Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 317. Ed. 2. {p} Journal from Cairo to Mount Sinai, A. D. 1722, 35, 36, 37. Ed. 2. {q} Travels, p. 148. {r} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 2. p. 174, 175. {s} Baumgarten. Peregrinatio, l. 1. c. 24. p. 62.

Exodus 17:7

Ver. 7. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah,.... The former signifies "temptation", and the latter "contention": the reason of which names being given by Moses, or whoever was the name of the place, follows: "because of the chiding of the children of Israel"; that was the reason why it was called by the last name, Meribah, because here, the Israelites chid and contended with Moses, and used him opprobriously:

and because they tempted the Lord; therefore it had the former name of Massah:

saying, is the Lord among us or not? as if they should say, if we perish through thirst, the Lord is not among us, nor takes any care of us; nor was it he that brought us out of Egypt, but Moses; nor is he in the pillar of cloud and fire, as is said; but if he works a miracle, and gives us water, for us, our children, and cattle, then it will appear he is among us; and thus they tempted the Lord, though without this they had full proof, by many instances, that he was among them, and even in a very extraordinary manner.

Exodus 17:8

Ver. 8. Then came Amalek,.... The Amalekites, who were not the posterity of Amalek, a son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, by Timna the concubine of Eliphaz, Ge 36:12 who dwelt in the desert, to the south of Judea, beyond the city Petra, as you go to Aila, as Jerom says {t}; and so the Targum of Jonathan describes them as coming from the south; and Aben Ezra interprets them a nation that inhabited the southern country. Josephus {u} calls them the inhabitants of Gobolitis and Petra; but they were the descendants of Cush, and the same with those who were in Abraham's time long before Amalek, the descendant of Esau, was in being, Ge 14:7 and who bordered eastward on the wilderness of Shur:

and fought with Israel in Rephidim; so that this was before they came from hence to Sinai, very probably as they were on the march thither, and before the rock was smitten, and they had been refreshed with water, and so while they were in distress for want of that, and therefore this must be a great trial and exercise to them. What should move the Amalekites to come and fight with them, is not easy to say; it is by many thought to be the old grudge of the children of Esau against the children of Israel, because of the affair of the birthright and blessing which Jacob got from Esau, who were now on their march for the land of Canaan, which came to him thereby: but it is hardly probable that these people should know anything of those matters at this distance, and besides were not of the race of Esau; and if anything of this kind was in remembrance, and still subsisted, it is most likely that the Edomites would have been concerned to stop them, rather than these: it is more probable, that these had heard of their coming out, of Egypt with great riches, the spoils of the Egyptians; and being an unarmed, undisciplined people, though numerous, thought to have taken this advantage against them of their distress and contentious, and plundered them of their wealth; unless we can suppose them to be an ally of the Canaanites, and so bound by treaty to obstruct their passage to the land of Canaan: but be it as it may; they came out against them, and fought with them without any provocation, the Israelites not attempting to enter their country, but rather going from it; for these seem to follow them, to come upon the back of them, and fall upon their rear, as appears from De 25:17.

{t} De locis Hebr. fol. 87. M. {u} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 2. sect. 1.

Exodus 17:9

Ver. 9. And Moses said unto Joshua,.... The son of Nun, who was his minister, and was a man of war from his youth, trained up in the art of war, and afterwards succeeded Moses, and was captain of the armies of Israel, and fought at the head of them, and subdued the Canaanites. Moses knew he was a fit person for the present purpose, and therefore gave him the following orders:

choose us out men; the stoutest and most courageous, best able to bear arms, and engage in war; for the multitude in common was not qualified for such service, nor was there any necessity of engaging them all in it:

and go out; out of the camp, and meet them at some distance, that the women and children might not be terrified with the enemy:

fight with Amalek; for their cause was just, Amalek was the aggressor, Israel was on the defensive part; and should it be asked where they had arms to fight with, it may be remembered that the Egyptian army that was drowned in the Red sea, and whose bodies were cast upon the shore, might furnish them with a large quantity of armour, which they stripped them of, and arrayed themselves with:

tomorrow I will stand upon the top of the hill, with the rod of God in my hand: on the top of Mount Horeb or Sinai, where he might be seen by the army of Israel with that rod in his hand, lifted up as a banner, by which God had done so many wonderful things; and by which they might be encouraged to hope that victory would go on their side, and this he promised to do "tomorrow", the day following; for sooner a select body of men could not be taken out from the people, and accoutred for war, and go forth to meet the enemy.

Exodus 17:10

Ver. 10. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him,.... He singled out some proper persons for the battle, and arrayed them with armour, and led them forth out of the camp, and went forth at the head of them:

and fought with Amalek; upon both armies meeting, a battle ensued:

and Moses, Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill; to the top of Mount Sinai or Horeb, not so much to see the battle fought, as to be seen by Joshua and the people of Israel, especially Moses with the rod in his hand lifted up, that they might behold it, and be encouraged through it to hope for and expect victory; and the other two went up with him to assist him in holding up his hands with the rod, as appears by what follows. Aaron, it is well known, was his brother, but who Hur was is not so clear, though no doubt a very eminent and principal man. There was an Hur, the son of Caleb, who descended from Judah in the line of Phares and Hezron, and which Hur was the grandfather of Bezaleel **1Ch 2:5**, but whether the same with this cannot be said with certainty; it is most likely that he was the husband of Miriam, as Josephus says {w}, and so the brother-in-law of Moses and Aaron; though some Jewish writers say {x} that he was their sister's son, the son of Miriam.

{w} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 2. sect. 4. {x} Pirke Eliezer, c. 45. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 1.

Exodus 17:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed,.... With his rod in it as a banner displayed, as some think, which inspired the Israelites with courage to fight, and they had the better of it; though Aben Ezra rejects that notion, observing, that if that had been the case, Aaron or Hur would have lifted it up, or fixed it in a high place on the mount, that it might have been seen standing; and therefore he thinks the sense of the ancients the most correct, that it was a prayer gesture. And among the Heathens, Moses was famous for the efficacy of his prayers; Numenius, the Pythagoric philosopher {y}, says of him, that he was a man very powerful in prayer with God: and so all the Targums interpret it, and particularly the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase the words,

"when Moses lift up his hands in prayer, the house of Israel prevailed, but when he restrained his hands from prayer, the house of Amalek prevailed,"

as it follows:

when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed; so that victory seemed to go sometimes on one side, and sometimes on the other, according as the hand of

Moses, with the rod in it, was held up or let down; when it was held up, and Israel saw it, they fought valiantly, but when it was let down, and they could not see it, their hearts failed them, and they feared it portended ill to them, which caused them to give way to the enemy. The spiritual Israel of God are engaged in a warfare with spiritual enemies, some within, and some without; and sometimes they prevail over their enemies, and sometimes their enemies prevail over them for a while; and things go on very much as a man either keeps up or leaves off praying, which is signified by the lifting up of holy hands without wrath and doubting, **1Ti 2:8** and which when rightly performed, under the influence of the divine Spirit in faith, in sincerity, and with fervency and constancy, has great power with God and Christ, and against Satan and every spiritual enemy.

{y} Apud Euseb. Praepar, Evangel. l. 9. c. 8. p. 411.

Exodus 17:12

Ver. 12. But Moses's hands were heavy,.... And hung down through weariness, holding up the rod first in one hand, and then in another, for so long a time; and thus sometimes, through infirmity, the best of men grow remiss in prayer, their hands are weak and hang flown through the corruptions of their hearts, the power of unbelief, the temptations of Satan, and want of immediate answers of prayer, or through long delays of it, and then the enemy gets an advantage over them:

and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; so that it seems not only that his hands were heavy, but he could not well stand on his feet any longer, being a corpulent man as well as in years, as Ben Gersom suggests; and therefore Aaron and Hur took a stone that lay on the mount for him to sit upon, where he might be raised as high, and be as well seen, as standing: this stone may be an emblem of Christ the stone of Israel, the foundation of his people, their prop and support, which sustains and upholds them, their Ebenezer, or stone of help in all their times of difficulty and distress:

and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; the one was on his right, and the other on his left; and when the rod was in his right hand, he that was on that side held up that; and when it was in his left hand, he that was on the left side supported that: these may be an emblem of Christ, and of the Spirit of Christ, from whom the saints have their supports and assistance in prayer: Aaron the priest may represent Christ, from whose blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and from whose advocacy, mediation, and intercession, the people of God receive much encouragement and strength in their addresses at the throne of grace: and Hur, who has his name from a word which signifies freedom and liberty, may be an emblem of the Holy Spirit of God; who helps the saints in prayer under all their infirmities, and makes intercession for them, by filling their hearts and mouths with arguments, and is a free spirit to them; by whom they are upheld, and where he is there is liberty, and a soul can come forth in prayer to God, and in the exercise of grace with freedom:

and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun; when the victory was decided in favour of Israel; this may denote steadiness of faith in prayer, the constant performance of it, and continuance in it as long as a man lives.

Exodus 17:13

Ver. 13. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. Amalek being distinguished from "his people", has led some to think that Amalek was the name of the king, or general of the army, and that it was a common name to the kings of that nation, as Pharaoh was to the kings of Egypt; but for this there is no foundation in the Scriptures: as Amelek signifies the Amalekites, his people may design the confederates and auxiliaries, the other people, as Ben Gersom expresses it, they brought with them to fight against Israel. And so Jerom {z} says, by him another Canaanite dwelt, who also fought against Israel in the wilderness, of whom it is so written, and Amalek and the Canaanite dwelt in the valley, Nu 14:25 and who were all, the one as the other, at least the greatest part of them, cut to pieces by the edge of the sword of Joshua and the Israelites, who obtained a complete victory over them; as the spiritual Israel of God will at last over all their spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, the world, and death.

{z} Ut supra. (De Locis Hebr. fol. 87. M.)

Exodus 17:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... After the battle was over, and the Israelites had got the victory:

write this for a memorial in a book: not in loose papers, but in a book, that it might continue; meaning that the account of this battle with Amelek should be put down in the annals or journal of Moses, in the book of the law he was writing, or was about to write, and would write, as he did, see **Jos 1:7** that so it might be kept in memory, and transmitted to the latest posterity; it being on the one hand an instance of great impiety, inhumanity, and rashness, in Amalek, and on the other a display of the goodness, kindness, and power of God on the behalf of his people: and

rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; who was a principal person concerned in this battle, and therefore, when the account was written and rehearsed, could bear witness to the truth of it, as well as he was to be the chief person that should be concerned in introducing the Israelites into the land of Canaan, and subduing the Canaanites; and therefore this, and what follows, was to be rehearsed to him, as the rule of his conduct toward them, and particularly Amalek:

for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amelek from under heaven; so that they shall be no more a nation, and their name never mentioned, unless with disgrace and contempt. This was fulfilled partly by Saul, 1Sa 15:8 and more completely by David, 1Sa 30:17, and the finishing stroke the Jews give to Mordecai and Esther, as the Targum of Jerusalem on Ex 17:6.

Exodus 17:15

Ver. 15. And Moses built an altar,.... On Horeb, as Aben Ezra; on the top of the hill, as Ben Gersom, where sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered up for the victory obtained, or however a monument erected in memory of it:

and he called the name of it Jehovahnissi; which signifies either "the Lord is my miracle" who wrought a miracle for them in giving them the victory over Amalek, as well as, through smiting the rock with the rod, brought out water from thence for the refreshment of the people, their children and cattle; or "the Lord is my banner": alluding to the hands of Moses being lifted up with the rod therein, as a banner displayed, under which Joshua and Israel fought, and got the victory. This may fitly be applied to Christ, who is both altar, sacrifice, and priest, and who is the true Jehovah, and after so called; and who is lifted up as a banner, standard, or ensign in the everlasting Gospel, in order to gather souls unto him, and enlist them under him, and to prepare them for war, and encourage them in it against their spiritual enemies; and as a token of their victory over them, and a direction to them where they shall stand, when to march, and whom they shall follow; and to distinguish them from all other bands and companies, and for the protection of them from all their enemies, see Isa 11:10. These words were inscribed upon the altar, or the altar was called the altar of Jehovahnissi, in memory of what was here done; from hence it has been thought {a}, that Baachus, among the Heathens, had his name of Dionysius, as if it was Jehovahnyssaeus.

{a} Vid. Bochart. Canaan, l. 1. c. 18. col. 440.

Exodus 17:16

Ver. 16. For he said, because the Lord hath sworn,.... So some Jewish writers {b} take it for an oath, as we do; or "because the hand is on the throne of the Lord" {c}; which the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra, interpret of the hand of the Lord being lifted up, of his swearing by the throne of his glory; but, as Drusius observes, it is not credible that God should swear by that which is prohibited by Christ, **Mt 5:24** rather the words are to be rendered, "because the hand", that is, the hand of Amalek, "is against the throne of the Lord" {d}; against his people, among whom his throne was, and over whom he ruled, so against himself, and the glory of his majesty; because he was the first that made war upon Israel, when the Lord brought them out of Egypt, and unprovoked fell upon their rear, and smote the hindmost, faint and weary among them: therefore

the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation; until they are utterly destroyed; and so in fact he had, and thus it was. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"he by his word will make war against those that are of the house of Amalek, and destroy them to three generations, from the generation of this world, from the generation of the Messiah, and from the generation of the world to come;"

and Baal Hatturim on the place observes, that this phrase, "from generation to generation", by gematry, signifies the days of the Messiah. Amalek may be considered as a type of antichrist, whose hand is against the throne of God, his tabernacle, and his saints; who, with all the antichristian states which make war with the Lamb, will be overcome and destroyed by him.

{b} R. Sol. Urbin. fol. 95. 1. {c} hy-ok le dy yk "quia manus super thronum Domini", Pagninus, Montanus; "sublata manu super solium Dei (juro)", Tigurine version. {d} "Quia manus (Hamaleki) fuit contra solium Jah", Junius

& Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 18

This chapter gives an account of Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, with Zipporah his daughter, the wife of Moses, and her two sons, meeting him in the wilderness, who was kindly received by him, Ex 18:1 and on Moses' relating the great things God had done for Israel, Jethro expressed his joy on that account, gave praise to God, offered sacrifice, and kept a feast with the elders of Israel, Ex 18:8, and observing the constant and fatiguing business Moses had on his hands from morning to evening in judging the people, Ex 18:13, he gave him advice to appoint persons under him to receive laws and ordinances from him, he should have from God, and, according to them, judge and govern the people under them, some being rulers of thousands, others of hundreds, others of fifties, and some of tens, Ex 18:19, which counsel was acceptable to Moses, and he took it, Ex 18:24 and the chapter is concluded with their friendly parting, Ex 18:27.

Ver. 1. When Jethro the priest of Midian, Moses's father-in-law,.... The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call him the prince of Midian, and so the word {e} is rendered in some versions; whose daughter Moses had married, and so was his father-in-law, of which see more in **Ex 2:16**.

heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people; the miracles he had wrought for them in Egypt, the dividing of the Red sea to make a way for them, the destruction of the Egyptians, providing them with bread and water in such a miraculous manner in the wilderness, and giving them victory over Amalek, and appearing always at the head of them in a pillar of cloud and fire:

[and] that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt: which was the greatest blessing of all, and for the sake of which so many wonderful things had been done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians. And now Midian being near to Egypt, it is not to be wondered at that Jethro should hear of these things, the fame of which went through all the countries round about, see Ex 15:14, though it is not improbable that Moses might send messengers to Midian to acquaint his father-in-law, his wife, and sons, of what the Lord had done for him, and by

him.

{e} zhk "praeses", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Exodus 18:2

Ver. 2. Then Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses's wife,.... When he had heard of the above things, he determined to pay Moses a visit, and congratulate him on that account; and he took his daughter, the wife of Moses, along with him, to deliver her to her husband, to share with him in his cares and troubles; as to partake with him of his honours and dignity, so to bear part with him in his burdens, so far as she was capable of:

after he had sent her back: upon his call and mission to Egypt, he took his wife and children with him; but upon an affair which occurred in the inn by the way, he sent them back again to his father-in-law, where they had remained ever since, see **Ex 4:24**. Jarchi says this was done at meeting with Aaron his brother, **Ex 4:27**, and relates a conversation between them upon it. As that Aaron should say to him, who are these? to which he replied, this is my wife, I married her in Midian, and these are my sons: he further said to him, and where art thou carrying them? he replied, to Egypt; says he, by reason of those who are before there, we are in straits, and thou wilt add unto them; upon which he said to his wife, go back to thy father's house, and she took her sons and went thither. Kimchi {f} observes, that some render the words "after her gifts"; whose sense, according to Aben Ezra, is, after she had sent gifts to her husband; but others more probably interpret it of gifts sent by him to her to engage his father-in-law to let her come to him, as well as to prevail upon her to come; perhaps it may be better rendered, "after her messenger"; that is, either after the messenger sent to her by Moses, to acquaint her and her father of what had been done for him, or after the messenger she sent to him, to let him know that she intended shortly to be with him; though perhaps, after all, nearer to our version and others, it may be rendered, "after her dismissions" {g}; the dismission or sending away of her and her sons, as before related; for this is by no means to be interpreted of a divorce of her; after which she was brought again to her husband; for there is no reason to believe that ever anything of that kind had passed, as some have thought {h}: the plain case seems to be this, that Moses finding his family would be exposed to danger, or would be too great an incumbrance upon him in the discharge of his great work he had to do in Egypt, sent them back to his father-in-law until a fit opportunity should offer of their coming to him, as now did.

{f} Sepher Shorash. rad. xlv "post dona vel donationes ejus"; so some in Vatablus and Drusius. {g} hyxwlv rha "post dimissiones ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius. {h} Vid. Selden. Uxor. Hebr. p. 629.

Exodus 18:3

Ver. 3. And her two sons,.... Those also Jethro took along with him and his daughter:

of which the name of the one was Gershom; which seems to be his firstborn, Ex 2:22, his name signifies a desolate stranger, as some, or, "there I was a stranger": the reason of which name follows agreeably thereunto:

for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land; meaning, not the land of Egypt, where he was born, and had lived forty years; but in the land of Midian, where he was when this son of his was born; and which name was given him partly to keep up the memory of his flight to Midian, and partly to instruct his son, that Midian, though his native place, was not his proper country where he was to dwell, but another, even the land of Canaan.

Exodus 18:4

Ver. 4. And the name of the other was Eliezer,.... Who seems to be his second son, and was that which was circumcised by Zipporah at the inn, and about which there was such a stir, Ex 4:24, and signifies "my God [is] help", or, his helper:

for the God of my father, [said he], was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh; who, on hearing that Moses had killed an Egyptian, was wroth with him, and sought to slay him; and perhaps drew his sword for that purpose, but was prevented: however, this, in all human probability, would have been the case, that he would have fallen by his sword either in a private or public manner, had it not been for the interposition of divine Providence, and therefore he gave this name to his child, to be a standing memorial of it.

Exodus 18:5

Ver. 5. And Jethro, Moses's father in law,.... This is the third time he is so called in the chapter already, and many more times besides after in it; the reason of which seems to be, either to distinguish him from another of the same name, or to do him honour, that he should be in such a relation to so great and distinguished a man as Moses now was:

came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness; not with his own sons and wife, but with the sons and wife of Moses; Zipporah and her sons, as before related; with those he came into the wilderness of Arabia, where Moses now was, and which was not at a great distance from Midian, since about the same spot Moses, when he dwelt there, had, and fed the flock of his father-in-law, **Ex 3:1**, that part of the land of Midian where Jethro lived lay somewhere eastward of Mount Sinai, and was probably situated where Sharme now stands; which, according to Dr. Pocock {i}, is about a day and a half's journey from Mount Sinai, from whence the monks of Mount Sinai are chiefly supplied with fish {k}: it follows: where he encamped at the mount of God: at Horeb, where the Lord had appeared to Moses; and so the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"where the glory of the Lord was revealed to Moses at the beginning;"

and where, afterwards, the Lord, appeared again, and gave the law, and therefore is called the Mount of God; the one as well as the other being past when Moses wrote this book, and called the mountain by this name: it is matter of question at what time Jethro came hither, whether before or after the giving of the law: it seems, by the order in which this story is here placed, as if it was immediately after the battle with Amalek; and Saadiah Gaon is of opinion it was before the giving of the law; and one would think it most reasonable and natural that Jethro would take the first opportunity of visiting Moses, and that Moses would not long defer sending for his wife and children: but Aben Ezra thinks he did not come till the second year after the tabernacle was set up, since, in the context, mention is made of burnt offerings and sacrifices, and no account is given of a new altar built by Moses; and besides, he says, "I do make them know the statutes of God and his laws", Ex 18:16, and it is certain from hence, that the children of Israel were removed from Rephidim, and were now encamped at the mount of God, at Horeb; but whether they had got to the other side of the mount of Sinai as yet is not so clear; though it looks as if what Moses did, by the advice of Jethro, was after the law was given on Sinai, see **De 1:6** so that, upon the whole, it seems as if this account, according to the order of time, should be placed after Nu 10:28, or, as Dr. Lightfoot {l} thinks, between the tenth and eleventh verses of that chapter, and is put here to show that though Midian was near Amalek, as he observes, yet Jethro was exempt from the curse and destruction threatened to that, see 1Sa 15:6.

{i} Travels, p. 137. {k} See the Bishop of Clogher's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 214. {l} Works, vol. 1. p. 710, 711.

Exodus 18:6

Ver. 6. And he said unto Moses,.... By a messenger, as Jarchi: or by a written letter, as Aben Ezra: or, as the Septuagint version, "it was told to Moses, thy father", &c. for as yet he was not come to him, as appears by Moses going forth to meet him:

I thy father in law Jethro am come to thee: or, "am coming" {m}; for, as yet, he was not in his presence, and they were not personally present face to face: the Targum of Jonathan adds, "to become a proselyte"; but it seems that before, as well as now, he had been a worshipper of the true God, and always speaks like one that had had the fear of God before him continually:

and thy wife, and her sons with her; this he thought fit to acquaint him of by messenger or letter, that he might be in expectation of them, and not be surprised at once with their appearance: besides, as some observe, and not amiss, after the late attack of the Amalekites upon their rear, guards or sentinels might be placed in the outer parts of the camp for its safety, and who would not easily, without order, let strangers pass into it, and therefore previous notice was necessary to get admission.

{m} ab "veniens", Montanus.

Exodus 18:7

Ver. 7. And Moses went out to meet his father in law,.... Out of the camp, at least out of his tent: the Targum of Jonathan says, from under the cloud of glory; how far he went is not certain, nor material to know: this was an instance of his great humility and modesty, and was doing Jethro a great deal of honour; that one who was in such great dignity, at the head of such a vast body of people, and superior to him both in natural and spiritual abilities, yet condescended to go forth in person to meet him, when he might have sent a guard of his men to escort him to his camp, which would have been honour sufficient; and it is not said he went out to meet his wife and children; for Aben Ezra says it was not usual for honourable men so to do:

and did obeisance: to Jethro, bowed unto him and worshipped him in a civil way, after the manner of the eastern nations, who used to make very low bows to whom they paid civil respect:

and kissed him; not to make him a proselyte, as the above Targum, nor in token of subjection, but of affection and friendship; it being usual for relations and friends to kiss each other at meeting or parting:

and they asked each other of their welfare; or "peace" {n}; of their prosperity and happiness, temporal and spiritual, of their peace, inward and outward, and of the bodily health of them and their families:

and they came into the tent; the Targum of Jonathan says,

"into the tabernacle of the house of doctrine,"

or school room; which is not likely, since Jethro was a man well instructed in divine things, and needed not to be put to school; and if he did, it can hardly be thought that as soon as Moses met him he should set about the instruction of him; but into his tent where he dwelt; that, as Aben Ezra says, which was the known tent of Moses, though it is not expressly said his tent.

{n} Mwlvl "ad pacem", Montanus; "de pace", Munster, Fagius, Drusius, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Exodus 18:8

Ver. 8. And Moses told his father in law all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh,.... After the proper civilities had passed, and Jethro had been refreshed with food and drink, as is highly probable, they entered into a conversation about what had lately passed, which Jethro had had a general report of, and which had brought him hither, and therefore it would be very entertaining to him to have the particulars of it; and Moses begins with what the Lord had done to Pharaoh, how he had inflicted his plagues upon him one after another, and at last slew his firstborn, and destroyed him and his host in the Red sea:

and to the Egyptians, for Israel's sake; the several plagues affecting them, especially the last, the slaughter of their firstborn; and who also were spoiled of their riches by the Israelites, and a numerous army of them drowned in the Red sea, and all because of the people of Israel; because they had made their lives bitter in hard bondage, had refused to let them go out of the land, and when they were departed pursued after them to fetch them back or cut them off:

and all the travail that had come upon them by the way; to the Red sea, and at Marah, and Rephidim, and how Amalek fought with them, as the Targum of Jonathan observes; what a fright they were put into, when pursued by Pharaoh and his host behind them, the rocks on each side of them, and the sea before them; their want of water in the wilderness, not being able to drink of the waters at Marah because bitter; their hunger, having no bread nor flesh in the wilderness of Sin, and their violent thirst, and no water to allay it, in the plains of Rephidim, and where also they were attacked by an army of the Amalekites:

and how the Lord delivered them; out of all this travail and trouble, and out of the hands of all their enemies, Egyptians and Amalekites.

Exodus 18:9

Ver. 9. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel,.... In giving them the manna and the well, as the above Targum, bread to eat when hungry, and water to drink when thirsty; to which Jarchi adds, and the law, for he supposes the meeting of Jethro and Moses was after the law was given on Mount Sinai, though here recorded; but this goodness may be extended to other things, as the saving of their firstborn at the time of the Lord's passover, giving them favour in the sight of the Egyptians, of whom they borrowed or asked things of value, of gold, silver, and jewels, bringing them out of Egypt with an high hand, going before them in a pillar of cloud and fire by day and night, dividing the waters of the sea for them to pass through as on dry land, and doing for them the above things related, and giving them victory over Amalek; and it may be observed that the joy of Jethro was not merely on account of the goodness of God done to Moses, a relation of his, having married his daughter; but because of the great and good things God had done for Israel, his special and peculiar people, the worshippers of the true and living God, for whom Jethro had an affection, because they were so, and therefore rejoiced in their prosperity: whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians; whom he had wrought upon to give them leave to depart from them, and destroyed them when they pursued after them, first delivered them from their bondage, and then from their rage and wrath.

Exodus 18:10

Ver. 10. And Jethro said,.... Like a truly good man, as one that knew the Lord and feared him, and was desirous of giving him the praise and glory of all the wonderful things he had done:

blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians: and out of the hand of Pharaoh; meaning particularly Moses and Aaron, the messengers of God, as Aben Ezra observes, who went to Pharaoh in the peril of their lives, and whom he sometimes threatened with death; but the Lord delivered them both out of his hands, and out of the hands of his ministers and people, who, doubtless, must be at times enraged at them for the plagues they brought upon them; for the persons here pointed at are manifestly distinguished from the body of the people of Israel next mentioned:

who hath delivered the people from the hand of the Egyptians: the people of Israel, from the hard bondage and cruel slavery they were held under by the Egyptians; which, as it was the Lord's doing, Jethro gives him the glory of it, and blesses him for it, or ascribes to him, on account of it, blessing, honour, glory, and praise.

Exodus 18:11

Ver. 11. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods,.... He knew the Lord before, and that he was the only true God, and greater than all that were so called; but now he had a fresh instance of it, a clear proof and demonstration of it, and so more plainly and fully knew it, and was assured of it, that he was greater than all the idols of the Gentiles, and particularly than the gods of the Egyptians; since he had saved his people Israel out of their hands, and when they could not protect and defend the Egyptians neither from plagues nor from destruction; nay, could not secure themselves, being all destroyed by the mighty Jehovah, see Ex 12:12, as also that he is greater than all that are called gods, kings, princes, and civil magistrates, than Pharaoh and all his nobles, generals, and captains, who were destroyed by him: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them; the idol gods, the gods

of the Egyptians, the evil demons, Satan and his principalities, who influenced them, presuming and boasting by their magicians what they could do; but in those things Jehovah in the wonders he wrought appeared to be above them; they were overcome by him, and obliged to acknowledge the finger of God; and this sense stands best connected with the preceding clause: or else in those things, in which the Egyptians dealt proudly with the Israelites, pursuing after them in the pride and vanity of their minds, and giving out that they should overtake them and divide the spoil, and satisfy their lust upon them, when God blew with his wind upon them, the sea covered them, and they sunk as lead in the mighty waters, see
Ex 15:9, and to the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red sea, the Jews commonly apply this: thus the Targum of Jonathan,

"wherein the Egyptians dealt wickedly in judging Israel, by the waters, judgment returned upon them that they might be judged by the waters;"

and to the same sense Jarchi: they suppose here was a just retaliation, that as the Egyptians drowned the Hebrew infants in the waters of the Nile, they were in righteous judgment drowned in the Red sea; this is the very thing, or is the same way they in their pride and malice dealt with the people of Israel; God dealt with them, and showed himself to be both "against them" {o}, as it may be rendered, and above them.

{o} Mhyle "contra eos", Pagninus, Montanus; "contra illos", V. L. Tigurine version; so Reinbech "de accent". Heb. p. 314.

Exodus 18:12

Ver. 12. And Jethro, Moses's father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God,.... The burnt offering, which was either of the flock or of the herd, was wholly consumed by fire, from whence it had its name; the peace offering for thanksgiving, which seemed to be meant by the sacrifices here, the flesh of them were to be eaten, **Le 7:15** and now a feast was kept, as the latter part of the verse shows: whether Jethro brought cattle along with him for such a purpose, and so "gave" {p} or "offered" them for a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; as the word for took may be rendered, one and the same word signifying both to give and take, see Ps 68:18, compared with **Eph 4:8** or whether, with the leave of Moses and the children of Israel, he took them out of their flocks and herds, it matters not, since this is only observed to show Jethro's devotion to God, and the grateful sense he had of the divine goodness to Israel; and since he was a priest of Midian, as he is generally said to be, and a priest of the most high God, as Melchizedek was, he might offer sacrifices; for it does not appear that he delivered them to others to be offered, or that these were slain by Aaron; for, though he is after mentioned, yet not as a sacrificer, but as a guest; and perhaps this might be before he and his sons were separated to the priest's office, or, at least, before they had entered upon it; nor is this mention of a burnt offering and sacrifices any proof of Jethro's meeting Moses after the giving of the law, since, before that, sacrifices were in use, and Jethro being a grandchild of Abraham, might have learnt the use of them from him:

and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses's father in law, before God; the tents of Moses being on the east side of the tabernacle, as Aben Ezra says, in which was the mercy seat and cherubim, between which the divine Majesty was; but there is no need to suppose that the tabernacle was now built, for this tent of Moses might be placed before or near the pillar of cloud in which Jehovah was; or the sense may only be, that they ate their food in the presence of God, in the fear of the Lord, with gladness and singleness of heart, as good men do; and especially as this was an eucharistic sacrifice unto God they partook of, Aaron and the elders came out of a civil respect to Jethro, to take a meal with him, as well as to join with him in a religious action: the bread they ate was, no doubt, the manna, which Jethro, though a Midianite, yet a descendant of Abraham, and a good man, partook of, and is put for the whole repast, the flesh of the sacrifices and what else were eaten: no mention is made of Moses, nor was there any need of it, as Aben Ezra observes, it being his tent in which they were: the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"Moses stood and ministered before them;"

and so says Jarchi; which is not very probable, it being not agreeable to the dignity of his station and office.

{p} xqyw "acceptumque obtulit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Fagius, Drusius.

Exodus 18:13

Ver. 13. And it came to pass on the morrow,.... The above Targum paraphrases it, "on the day after the day of atonement:"

and so Jarchi observes the same, out of a book of theirs called Siphri; but rather this was either the day after the entertainment of Jethro with Aaron and the elders in the tent of Moses, or the day after Jethro's coming, as Aben Ezra:

that Moses sat to judge the people; though his father-in-law was come to visit him, yet he did not neglect the care of his people, and the business that lay upon his hands for their good, civil and religious; but, the very day following his coming, closely applied himself to hear and judge causes; and such a vast body of people must find him work enough; and especially if we consider their quarrelsome disposition, for if they were so to one another, as they were to Moses and Aaron, they must be very litigious; however Moses bore with them, and attended to their causes, to do justice and judgment among them, being now made a prince and a judge over them by divine authority, and whom they acknowledged as such:

and the people stood by Moses, from the morning unto the evening; not that a single cause was so long a trying, but there being so many of them in one day, that they lasted from the morning tonight; so that when one cause was dispatched and the parties dismissed, another succeeded, and so continued all the day long: Moses he sat as judge, with great majesty, gravity, and sedateness, hearkening with all attention to what was said on both sides, and the people they "stood", both plaintiff and defendant, as became them.

Exodus 18:14

Ver. 14. And when Moses's father in law saw all that he did to the people,.... Or for them {q}; for their information and instruction in the laws of God, and for the decision of cases brought before him, according to them; and what a deal of business was on his hands, and he went through for the good of the people:

he said, what is this thing that thou doest to the people? this question he put, not as being ignorant what he did, he saw what he did, and understood it full well, but this he said to lead on to some conversation upon this head:

why sittest thou thyself alone? no other judge upon the bench with him to assist him, to take it by turns, and to relieve and ease him:

and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? not being able to get their causes heard and tried, there being so many of them; and therefore some were obliged to wait all day long, before they could have their business done, which was both fatiguing to him and them.

{q} Mel "propter populum" Vatablus.

Exodus 18:15

Ver. 15. And Moses said unto his father in law,.... In answer to his question; and there were two things, as Aben Ezra observes, he did to the people, and for which they came to him; the one is observed in this verse, and the other in the next:

because the people come unto me to inquire of God; of his mind and will in certain cases, and of his statutes and laws, as the following verse shows; what they should observe, and according to which they should conduct themselves: they came to inquire what God would have them to do; and, in doubtful cases, what was his will and pleasure, and to desire Moses to inform them; and if the things were of such a nature that he could not easily and readily do it, then to inquire of God for them, which in later times was done by Urim and Thummim.

Exodus 18:16

Ver. 16. When they have a matter, they come unto me,.... This is the other thing he did for them, as the above writer observes; which being last mentioned, he speaks of first, as follows, meaning that when there was a matter in difference between two persons or more, and they could not agree upon it among themselves, then they brought it to him to be heard and decided:

and I judge between one and another; hear what they have to say on both sides, and then judge which is in the right and which is in the wrong, and determine what is to be done, according to the laws of God or according to the rules of justice and equity:

and I do make them know the statutes of God and his laws; this relates to the first thing, their coming to him to inquire of God, what is his mind and will, or what he would have them do; and in order to this, and in answer to their request, he instructed them in the laws of God, both civil and religious: this is made use of by some, to prove that Jethro's coming to Moses was after the law was given: but this does not necessarily follow, because Moses, by a divine impulse, might be directed immediately to make known to the people what was the will and mind of God, with respect to any particular case they inquired about; and rather this seems to furnish out an argument to the contrary, since, if the laws and statutes of God had yet been given on Mount Sinai, the people could not have been ignorant of them, and so needed not such daily information and instruction from Moses.

Exodus 18:17

Ver. 17. And Moses's father in law said unto him,.... Having observed what he did, and heard his answer to the question he put to him:

the thing that thou doest is not good; not meaning that it was not morally good, or that it was morally evil; for it was certainly a good thing to inquire of the mind and will of God for the people, and to hear and decide matters in controversy between them, and do justice to both parties; but it was not good for the health of Moses; it was not commodious and convenient for him; it was not for his bodily welfare; it was too much for him, as he explains himself in the next verse.

Exodus 18:18

Ver. 18. Thou wilt surely wear away,.... His natural strength and animal spirits, and so his flesh; he feared his constant application and attendance to business would impair his health, break his constitution, and bring him into a consumption. Moses was naturally of a strong and vigorous constitution; for, forty years after this, even to the time of his death, his natural force was not abated; or "fading thou wilt fade", or, "falling thou wilt fall" {r}; in allusion to the leaves of trees in autumn, which fade, and wither, and fall:

both thou and this people that is with thee; it was tiresome to the people, as well as fatiguing to Moses, who, because of the multitude of cases, were obliged to wait a long time, some of them from morning to night, and yet could not get their suit to come and so were obliged to attend next day, and perhaps day after day. The Targum of Jonathan is, "even thou also, Aaron and his sons, and the elders that are with them;"

and so Jarchi; but these do not seem to have been assisting to him at all, as appears by what follows:

for this thing is too heavy for thee: it was too great a burden upon his shoulders, what his strength was not equal to; for though his internal abilities were exceeding great, and he had a good will to the work, to serve God and his people, yet it was more, humanly speaking, than his bodily strength would admit of, or any mortal man could go through:

thou art not able to perform it thyself alone; and this Moses was sensible of himself afterwards, and says the same thing, **De 1:9**.

{r} lbt lbn "marcescendo marcesses", Montanus; so Ainsworth; "cadendo cades", Pagninus.

Exodus 18:19

Ver. 19. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel,.... Jethro being the elder man, and of some character and figure, being either a priest or prince of Midian, or both, might, without incurring a censure, take upon him to give advice to Moses, a younger man, and his son-in-law, though he was superior to him in office and in parts; and especially since his advice proceeded from a sincere and cordial regard for his health and welfare:

and God shall be with thee: and succeed the advice he gave, which he persuaded himself would be agreeable to the will of God, and attending to it he would prosper, and find that the method taken would be blessed of God, and issue in his own good and the good of the people; or it may be taken prayerwise, as by some, "may God be with thee" {s}; to direct thee to what thou shouldest do, either to take the advice, or reject it; and be it as it will, he wished him well, and that he might have his health, and that as his day was, his strength might be:

be thou for the people to God-ward; or on the part of God, as Aben Ezra interprets it; that part of his work he advised him to retain by all means, which lay more immediately between God and the people; to be a mediator between them; to transact affairs for them with God; to inquire his mind and will in matters difficult and doubtful; to be, as Jarchi expresses it, a messenger and interpreter between them, and an inquirer of judgments of him, or what statutes and judgments he would have observed by them: that thou mayest bring the causes unto God; concerning which, as yet, he had given no directions as a rule to go by.

{s} Kme Myhla yhyw see Poole in loc.

Exodus 18:20

Ver. 20. And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws,.... Both with respect to things civil and religious, which he should receive from God:

and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk; the path of faith and duty, the way of truth, holiness, and righteousness:

and the work that they must do; both with respect to God, and one another, the various duties and exercises of religion, everything relating to their moral, religious, and civil conduct.

Exodus 18:21

Ver. 21. Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people,.... Or look out {t} from among them; see **Ac 6:3**,

able men; or "men of power" {u}; meaning not so much men of strong and robust constitutions, who, as Aben Ezra says, are able to bear labour; but men that have strength of heart, as Ben Gersom expresses it, men of spirit and courage, and are not afraid to do justice, to repress vice, and countenance virtue; or, as Maimonides says {w}, have a strong heart, or courage and boldness to deliver the oppressed from the hands of the oppressor. Jarchi interprets it of rich men, of men of substance, who have no need to flatter, or play the hypocrite, and to know the faces of men:

such as fear God; who have the fear of God before their eyes, and on their hearts, in all they do, and therefore cannot do those things that others do, who are destitute of it; cannot give a cause the wrong way wilfully, or pervert judgment, and are the reverse of the character of the unjust judge, that neither feared God nor regarded man, Lu 18:2:

men of truth; true men, sincere, upright, and faithful men, that love truth and hate lies and falsehood, and will take some pains to get at the truth of a cause, to inquire where it lies, and pursue and encourage it where it is found, and discourage to the uttermost falsehood, lies, and perjury: hating covetousness; in themselves and others, filthy lucre, dishonest gain, mammon of unrighteousness, and so not to be bribed and corrupted, and execute wrong judgment for the sake of money:

and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens; meaning not courts of judicature, consisting of such a number of judges, for such a court was never known to have a thousand judges upon the bench at once; the highest court of judicature that ever was among the Jews, which was long after this time, consisted but of seventy or seventy one: but the sense is, that each of these should have such a number of persons, or rather families, under their care, who, when they applied unto them for justice, should faithfully administer it to them;
See Gill on "Ex 18:25".

{t} hzxt "videbis", Montanus; "tu prospice", Tigurine version; "tu videto", Drusius. {u} lyx yvna "viros virtutis", Montanus, Vatablus; "viros fortitudinis", Cartwright.

{w} Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 7.

Exodus 18:22

Ver. 22. And let them judge the people at all times,.... In their several districts, whenever a matter of difference between man and man arises, and the case is brought before them, let them judge impartially between them, and determine what is right and wrong, and execute judgment and justice truly; which would take off a great deal of business from the hands of Moses:

and it shall be that every great matter they shall bring to thee; any affair of great importance, and difficult of determination, and about which the judges may have some doubt in their minds, and they are not clear as to the decision of it; this, they the judges, not the people, were to bring to Moses:

but every small matter; which is of no great importance, or is easy of decision, where the right and the wrong clearly appear, and there is no difficulty in the determination of it:

so shall it be easier for thyself; to go through the business that would be necessarily devolved upon him, as the chief ruler and governor, supreme judge, lawgiver, leader, and commander:

and they shall bear the burden with thee; of ruling and judging the people; they taking a share of it, it would sit the lighter and easier upon him; and the whole seems to be wise and prudent counsel.

Exodus 18:23

Ver. 23. If thou shall do this thing,.... Hearken to the advice given, and put it in execution, by choosing out of the people, and placing over them, judges qualified, as directed: and God command thee so; for he did not desire him to follow his advice any further than it appeared to be according to the will of God, which he doubted not he would inquire about; and if he found it was agreeable to it, and should pursue it:

then thou shall be able to endure; to continue in his office and post, and hold on for years to come, God granting him life and health; whereas otherwise, in all human probability, he must waste and wear away apace:

and all this people shall also go to their place in peace; having had their cases heard and tried, and their differences adjusted to satisfaction; and quick dispatch being made, they would return to their tents or places of abode in much peace of mind, and sit down contented with the determination made, and pleased that the lawsuit was not protracted to any unreasonable length of time. Jarchi interprets all this people, of Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the seventy elders that came with him, as if they by this means would be eased, and so pleased with it.

Exodus 18:24

Ver. 24. So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law,.... Considered what he said, weighed it well in his mind, and judged it good advice, and determined to follow it:

and did all that he had said; by choosing such men as he directed to, and committing the judgment of the people to them, as follows:

Exodus 18:25

Ver. 25. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel,.... He looked among them, and selected the best of them, such as most answered to the qualifications it was requisite they should have; and though only one of them is here mentioned, which is the first Jethro gave, yet no doubt they were all attended to, though not expressed:

and made them heads over the people; rulers, governors, judges, and officers; this is a general word, comprehending their several particular offices they sustained; which seem to be chiefly distinguished by the different numbers of people, or families, under them, otherwise their work and office were much the same:

rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens; just as Jethro advised, Ex 18:21. According to the Targum of Jonathan, the rulers of thousands were six hundred, rulers of hundreds 6000, rulers of fifties 12,000, and the rulers of tens 60,000; and so Jarchi; and the like account is given in both the Talmuds {x}, where the whole is summed up, amounting to 78,600; which account Aben Ezra disapproves of, and thinks not credible: it is built upon the number of Israel at this time, when they came out of Egypt, being 600,000 men; and so if there was a ruler to every thousand men, there must be six hundred of them, and so on; but these thousands may intend not individual persons, but families, that these were appointed over, as the families of Israel and Judah are called their thousands, **Mic 5:2** and this will serve greatly to reduce the number of these judges and officers.

{x} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 3. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 1.

Exodus 18:26

Ver. 26. And they judged the people at all seasons,.... Any day in the week, or any time in the day, whenever there was any occasion for them, and cases were brought before them:

the hard cases they brought unto Moses; that is, the judges brought them to Moses when such came before them which were too hard for them, it was difficult to them to determine rightly about them, then they brought them to be heard and decided by him; for the judges, and not the people, best knew when a case was hard or easy to determine:

but every small matter they judged themselves; and gave it as they saw was most agreeable to justice and equity, and did not trouble Moses with it; by which means he was eased of a great deal of business and fatigue, which was Jethro's view in giving the advice he did.

Exodus 18:27

Ver. 27. And Moses let his father in law depart,.... After he had been with him some time, and desired leave to go into his own country, which was granted; or he "dismissed" {y} him in an honourable way: and as he went out to meet him when he came, if he did not attend him, when he went, some way in person, yet sent a guard along with him, both for honour and for safety:

and he went his way into his own land; the land of Midian: the Targum of Jonathan,

"he went to proselyte all the children of his own country;"

or, as Jarchi expresses it, the children of his family; and it is plain that the Kenites and Rechabites descended from him, who in later times lived among the Jews, and were proselytes to their religion, **Jud 1:16**.

{y} xlvyw "et dimisit", V. L. Tigurine version, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Piscator.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 19

In this chapter we have an account of the coming of the children of Israel to Mount Sinai, Ex 19:1, of the covenant made with them there, the proposal on the part of God, and their acceptance of it,
Ex 19:3, the previous notice God gave three days before of his appearance on the mount, the orders for their preparation to meet him, and the execution of

them, Ex 19:9, the awful and tremendous appearance of God upon the mount, Ex 19:6 and the strict charge given, that neither people nor priests should come near and gaze, only Moses and Aaron with him were to come up, bounds being set to prevent the rest, Ex 19:21, and the chapter is closed with observing, that Moses went down from the mount, and delivered to the people what the Lord spoke to and by him, Ex 19:25.

Ver. 1. In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt,.... Which was the month Sivan, and answers to part of May and part of June:

the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai; which had its name from the mountain situated in it, and that from the bushes which grew upon it. Justin {z} calls it Synan, which he says Moses occupied, and Strabo {a}, Sinnan. Hither they came either on the same day they came from Rephidim; which, according to Bunting {b}, were eight miles from it, or on the same day of the month, as to number, that is, on the third day of the third month; and so Jerom {c} and others say it was on the forty seventh day after their coming out of Egypt, three days after which they received the law on Mount Sinai, it being a generally received notion that the law was given fifty days after the passover; hence the feast of weeks is called from thence the feast of pentecost, or fifty days: or rather this was the first day of the month, as Jarchi and R. Moses; with which agrees the Targum of Jonathan; and so was the forty fifth of their coming out of Egypt, five days after which they received the law; it being a tradition with the Jews, as Aben Ezra observes, that that was given on the sixth of Sivan, and may be accounted for thus; on the first day they came to Sinai, and encamped there, on the day following Moses went up to God, Ex 19:3, on the third day Moses gathered the elders together, Ex 19:7, and declared to them the words of God, and on the third day after that, which was the sixth, the law was delivered to them.

{z} E Trogo, l. 36. c. 2. {a} Geograph. l. 16. p. 520. {b} Travels, p. 82. {c} Epist. Fabiolae de 42 mansion. fol. 15. c. 1. tom. 3.

Exodus 19:2

Ver. 2. For they were departed from Rephidim,.... After they had fought with Amalek, and came to the western part of the mount to Horeb, where the rock was smitten for them; and they were come from that now, and encamped at Sinai, after Jethro had paid a visit to Moses:

and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in this wilderness; that is, of Sinai, as in the preceding verse:

and there Israel encamped before the mount; Mount Sinai, from whence the desert or wilderness was called. This, as Jarchi says, was on the east side of the mount; Horeb and Sinai were but one and the same mountain, which had two tops. Horeb was on the western side, near to which lay the plain of Rephidim; and Sinai was on the eastern side, on which the wilderness of that name bordered: so that the children of Israel, when they came from Rephidim, came from the western side, and took a circuit about and came to the eastern; which, according to a fore mentioned writer, was eight miles, and was the twelfth station or mansion of the children of Israel. This number twelve is taken notice of by some, as having something singular and peculiar in it; there were the twelve tribes of Israel, and at their twelfth mansion the law was given them; Christ had twelve apostles, and there are twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem, and 12,000 were sealed out of every tribe of Israel.

Exodus 19:3

Ver. 3. And Moses went up unto God,.... Who was in the pillar of cloud upon the top of the mount; this was on the second day, according to the Targum of Jonathan: "the Lord called unto him out of the mountain"; or had called unto him, as Aben Ezra, since without his leave he could not have gone up. He called to him out of the cloud upon the top of the mountain to come up, and being come near him, he called to him, and spoke with an articulate voice, as follows:

saying, thus shalt thou say, to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; which are the same, and are described as descending from the same person, who was called by both names; the one was his name in the former and lower state of his life, the other in the latter and more prosperous one; and his posterity are called by these two names, as Bishop Patrick observes, to put them in mind, that they who had lately been as low as Jacob, when he went to Padanaram, were now grown as great as God made him when he came from thence, and was called Israel.

Exodus 19:4

Ver. 4. Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians,.... The plagues he brought upon them in Egypt, and the destruction of them at the Red sea; these things they were eyewitnesses of, and needed no other proof or evidence to convince and assure them of them, and therefore must be under obligation to attend to what he was about to recommend unto them, for which reason this is observed:

and [how] I bare you on eagles' wings; that is, as on eagles' wings, the note of similitude being wanting, but to be supplied; for it cannot be thought that they were literally bore on eagles' wings; but as that creature is reported to be very affectionate to its young, and careful of it, and, as is said, only to one; for, having more, it will cast away all but one, and reserve that, which it carefully nourishes; and being swift of flight, and strong of wing, it will in a remarkable manner take its young upon it, and safely and swiftly convey it where it pleases; of which See Gill on "De 32:11". The eagle excels other birds both in its strength and in the size of its body; and especially its pectoral muscles, by which its wings are supported; are very strong, so that it can carry its young, and other things, on its back and wings; and some such thing nature itself seems to have required, as naturalists observe {d}; and there are some histories, which, if true, greatly confirm and illustrate this. Aelianus {e} reports of Tilgamus, a Babylonian, and who afterwards was king of Babylon, and who seems to be the Tilgath Pilneser of the Scriptures, king of Assyria, that when a lad, being thrown down from the top of a tower, an eagle, which is a very quick sighted bird, saw him, and, before he came to the ground, flew under him, took him upon its back, and carried him into a garden, and gently let him down. So it is related of Aristomenes {f}, that as he was casting headlong into a deep ditch by the Lacedemonians, where they used to throw condemned malefactors, an eagle flew under him, and bore him on its wings, and carried him to the bottom, without any hurt to any part of his body. Jarchi observes, that whereas other birds carry their young between their feet, for fear of those that fly above them, the eagle flying above all others, and so in no fear of them, carries its young upon its wings, judging it better that a dart should pierce that than its young. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase the words,

"and I bore you on clouds, as on eagles' wings;"

which covered, and protected, and sustained them, as the eagles' wings do its young; the former adds, from Pelusium, a city in Egypt, supposed by the Targumist to be the same with Rameses; where Jarchi observes the people of Israel were very swiftly gathered together as the place of their rendezvous, and were as safely brought from thence to the place where they now were. Thus the Lord showed an affectionate concern for Israel, took them under his care and protection, stood between them and the Egyptians in a pillar of cloud, and secured them from their arrows, and swiftly and safely removed them from the land of Egypt to the place where they now were, distinguishing them from all other nations, having chosen them to be a special people to himself:

and brought you unto myself: to the mountain of God, where he had appeared to Moses, and given this as a sign and token of the truth of his mission, that he and Israel, when brought out of Egypt by him, should serve him on this mount; and now they were brought thither, where he was about not only to grant his presence in a very singular manner, but to deliver his law unto them, and enter into a covenant with them, and establish and settle them as his people; so that they were a people near unto the Lord, taken into covenant, and indulged with communion with him, and made partakers of various distinguished blessings of his: both the above Targums are, "I brought you to the doctrine of my law", to receive it at this mount.

{d} Scheuchzer. Physica Sacra, vol. 2. p. 186. {e} Hist. Animal. l. 12. c. 21. {f} Pausaniae Messenica, sive, l. 4. p. 250, 251.

Exodus 19:5

Ver. 5. Now therefore,.... Since they had received such marks of his favour, and were laid under great obligations to him:

if ye will obey my voice indeed; truly, sincerely, and heartily; or "in hearkening hearken", or "in obeying obey" {g}; that is, closely and attentively hearken to what he should say to them, and thoroughly and constantly yield a cheerful obedience to his commands:

and keep my covenant; now about to be made with them, which would consist of promises of good things to be done to them on his part, and of duties to be performed by them on their part, and so would constitute a formal covenant by stipulation and restipulation:

then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; be as highly valued by him, and as carefully preserved as the richest treasure among men; even as the treasure of princes, consisting of gold and silver, precious stones, pearls and jewels, and everything that is valuable; and of this he would give such proof and demonstration, as would make it appear that they were esteemed by him above all people upon the face of the earth; being chosen for his peculiar treasure, and redeemed out of the house of bondage and slavery to be his peculiar people, and distinguished from all others by particular favours and blessings:

for all the earth is mine; as it is, and the inhabitants of it, by creation, sustentation, preservation, and dominion, all being made, upheld, preserved, and governed by him; and therefore, as he had a right to all, could choose what part he pleased for his special use and service; or "though all the earth is mine" {h}, as Marinus in Aben Ezra, which yet the latter does not seem to approve of; and then the sense is, though the whole world was his, and all that is in it, yet such was his special affection, and peculiar regard to Israel, as to choose them, and esteem them as his portion and inheritance, his jewel, and peculiar treasure.

{g} wemvt ewmv "obediendo obedieritis", Pagninus, Montanus; "audiendo audiveritis", Drusius; "auscultando auscultabitis", Piscator; so Ainsworth. {h} yk "tametsi", Vatablus; "quamvis", Piscator, Drusius.

Exodus 19:6

Ver. 6. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests,.... Instead of being in a state of servitude and bondage, as they had been in Egypt, they should be erected into a kingdom, become a body politic, a free state, a commonwealth governed by its own laws, and those laws of God's making; yea, they should be a kingdom to him, and he be more immediately the king of them, as he was not of others, the government of Israel being a Theocracy; and this kingdom should consist of men that were priests, who had access to God, served him, and offered sacrifice to him; or of men greatly esteemed and honoured, as priests were in those times. Jarchi interprets it, a kingdom of princes, as the word sometimes signifies: the subjects of this kingdom were princes, men of a princely spirit, and these princes, like those of the king of Babylon, who boasted they were altogether kings; and like the Roman senators, of whom the ambassador of Pyrrhus said, that he saw at Rome as many kings as he saw senators. And so here all the Targums render it, "kings and priests": to which reference seems to be had not only in **1Pe 2:9** but in **Re 1:6**, they were kings when they got the victory, as in the times of Joshua, over the several kings of Canaan, and had their kingdoms divided among them; and before the priesthood was settled in the family of Aaron, every head of a family in Israel was a priest; and they were all priests at the passover, as Philo {i} observes:

and so the spiritual Israel of God are kings and priests; they are kings, having the power and riches of kings; having got through Christ the victory over sin, Satan, and the world; and being possessed of the kingdom of grace, and heirs of the kingdom of glory; and priests, being allowed to draw nigh to God, to present themselves, souls and bodies, a holy and living sacrifice, to offer to him the sacrifices of prayer and praise through Christ, by whom they become acceptable to him: "and an holy nation"; being separated from all others, and devoted to the worship and service of God, having holy laws, and holy ordinances, and a holy service, and a holy place to perform it in, and holy persons to attend unto it, as they afterwards had. In allusion to this, the spiritual Israel, or people of God, are also called so, **1Pe 2:9** being chosen unto holiness, redeemed from all iniquity, called with an holy calling, sanctified by the blood of Christ, and made holy by the Spirit of God, and under the influence of his grace live holy lives and conversations:

these are the words thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel: what he would have them do, and they were bound to do in a way of duty to him, and what he in a way of grace would do for them, and they should be unto him,

{i} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 686.

Exodus 19:7

Ver. 7. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people,.... After he had heard the above words from the mouth of God, he came down from the mount into the camp of Israel, and sent for the elders or principal men of the tribes and families of Israel to come to him:

and, being gathered together,

laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him; expressed them in the plainest manner, set them in the clearest light to their minds and consciences; so that they thoroughly understood them, were fully convinced of the propriety of these things God required of them, and their obligation to observe them, and saw plainly the greatness and importance of what he promised unto them.

Exodus 19:8

Ver. 8. And all the people answered together,.... By their heads and representatives, the elders, summoned before Moses, to whom he declared the whole will of God; or this being communicated by them to their respective tribes and families, they were all of one mind; there was not a contradicting voice among them, they all gave the same answer, or all united in returning for answer what follows:

all that the Lord hath spoken we will do; obey his voice in all things he directs unto, or commands to be done, and keep the covenant he should make with them, and observe whatever was required on their parts; which was well spoken, if with the heart, and if, under a consciousness of their own weakness, they had expressed their desire of dependence upon the grace of God to enable them to perform, see **De 5:28**. The Septuagint version adds, "and we will hear", or be obedient, as in Ex 24:7:

and Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord; not for his information, who knew very well what they had said, but for the discharge of his office as a mediator and messenger between God and them: this, according to Jarchi, was on the third day of the month.

Exodus 19:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... As the Targum of Jonathan, on the third day; though Jarchi says the fourth; which seems not so well to agree with his words on the preceding verse, since it seems to be at the same time that Moses returned the words of the people to the Lord, that he said what follows to him:

lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud; which was different from the pillar of cloud in which he went before the people, and now stood in it on the top of the mount; for he speaks not now of his present appearance to Moses, but of his appearance on the mount three days after; wherefore the Septuagint version wrongly renders it, "in a pillar of cloud": there were appearances of the divine Majesty in a cloud frequently afterwards, both in the Old and New Testament, see
Ex 40:34 and so Christ, the mighty Angel, is said to be clothed with a cloud, Re 10:1. And from such appearances as these, the Heathens have represented their deities, as Apollo {k}, Venus {l}, Juno {m}, and others, coming in a cloud, or clothed with one:

that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever; they had believed Moses already, particularly at the Red sea, when they saw what was done there, but afterwards, as it seems, returned to their unbelief again; but now, as they would be eyewitnesses of the cloud in which the Lord would appear to Moses, so they would be ear witnesses of what he said to him; for though the cloud was a thick one in which he came, so that they could not see any similitude, any likeness at all, not so much as a brightness, a shining glory, as they had seen in the pillar of cloud, see Ex 16:7, yet, the voice of God out of it was so loud, when he spoke with Moses, that this vast body of people being placed around, at the lower part of the mount, heard plainly and distinctly all that was said; so that they were sure they were not imposed upon by Moses, but that the law he delivered to them was from God, since they heard it with their own ears; and therefore they and their posterity believed it for ever, and never entertained the least distrust of the divinity and authority of it. This case was widely different from that of Numa or Mahomet, the one pretending to receive instructions from the goddess Egeria, and the other from the angel Gabriel; but all depended upon their own word, none were, nor did they pretend that any were eye or ear witnesses of what they declared; but such was the case here:

and Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord; the same which he is said to return to him in the preceding verse, and here repeated for the confirmation of it, and to lead on to what the Lord had to say further concerning them.

{k} "Nnbe et candentes humeros amictus Augur Apollo. -----" Horat. Carmin. l. 1. ode 2. {l} "Et Venus aethereos inter dea candida nimbos Dona ferens aderat ----". Virgil. Aeneid, l. 8. "prope finem". "Hoc Venus obscuro faciem circumdata nimbo Detulit. ----" Virgil. Aeneid, l. 12. {m} "Agens hyemem nimbo succincta, per auras ----". Ib. Aeneid. 10.

Exodus 19:10

Ver. 10. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... On the fourth day, according to the Targum of Jonathan;

go unto the people; go down from the mountain, from the top of it, where he now was, to the camp of Israel, which was pitched before it:

and sanctify them today and tomorrow; the fourth and fifth days of the month;

that is, he was, to instruct them how they were to sanctify themselves in an external way, by washing themselves, as after mentioned, their bodies and clothes, and by abstaining from all sensual pleasures, lawful or unlawful:

and let them wash their clothes; which the Jews understood not of their garments, but of their bodies also; teaching them by these outward things the necessity of internal purity and holiness, to appear before God: these outward rites were in use before the law of Moses, as appears from Ge 35:2 and the Heathens themselves have similar notions of the cleanness of bodies and garments, as well as the purity of mind, being acceptable to their deities {n}.

{n} "Casta placent superis, pura cum veste venito". Tibullus.

Exodus 19:11

Ver. 11. And be ready against the third day,.... Not the third day of the month, but the third day from hence, this being the fourth, and the morrow the fifth, and the third day, the day following that, the sixth, on which day it is generally agreed by the Jews that the law was given,
See Gill on "Ex 19:16"

for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai; which must be understood, consistent with his omnipresence, and is only expressive of some visible display of his power, and of some sensible token of his presence to the people; he was now upon it in the pillar of cloud, but then he would appear in another manner, and descend in a thick cloud and fire, which all the people would see, though they could not see the similitude of anything in it.

Exodus 19:12

Ver. 12. And thou shall set bounds to the people round about,.... That is, round about the mountain, by drawing a line, throwing up a foss or ditch, or else by laying up heaps of stones or sand, which might be come at easily, or bushes and branches of trees, which grew thick on the mount, from whence it had its name; but be it what will that were used, these were to signify, that so far the people might go, but no further, which their curiosity might prompt them to:

saying, take heed unto yourselves that ye go not up into the mount; so far were they from being allowed to go up to the top of it, that they were not allowed to ascend it at all, or to go any further than where the ascent or rise began; it was at their peril to ascend, and this was what they were to take heed unto, lest they incurred danger:

or touch the border of it; it being the mountain of God, and relatively holy through his presence on it:

whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death; which severe law was made to deter them from any attempt to go up the mountain, since it was death even to touch it, see Heb 12:18.

Exodus 19:13

Ver. 13. There shall not a hand touch it,.... The mountain or the border of it, which is repeated that it might be taken notice of; and to show that it would be resented if they were to stretch out their hand and only lightly touch it, much more should they set their feet upon it and attempt to ascend it: or rather, "shall not touch him" {o}; that is, the man that shall touch the mountain; he shall be so detestable and abominable, whoever touches it or breaks through the bounds of it, and attempts to ascend it, that no man shall follow him to lay hold on him, in order to bring him back to justice, but shall dispatch him at once in one or other of the ways directed to:

but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; if near at hand, all about him shall rise upon him, and take up stones and stone him; but if he is got at a distance, then they were to shoot arrows at him; and in this way Aben Ezra interprets it; the words, says he, refer to the man that toucheth the mount, who is not to be followed and apprehended, but those that see him, and are near, abiding in the place where they are, are to stone him immediately, and if afar off they are to throw darts at him: though the Targum of Jonathan seems to understand it, as if punishment would be immediately inflicted upon such a person, not by the hands of men, but by the hand of God; for it says, such an one shall be stoned with hailstones, and fiery darts shall be spread upon him; or, as the Jerusalem Targum, shall be shot at him:

whether it be beast, or man, it shall not live; that touches the mountain, and so it is explained, Heb 12:20, the word beast comprehends all kinds of beasts, wild and tame, and all sorts of cattle, of the herd or flock; as the word "man" takes in women as well as men, as Ben Gersom observes; Aben Ezra thinks fowls are not mentioned, because they cannot be taken, but fly away immediately; but then they might be shot:

when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount; this, according to Jarchi, was a trumpet of a ram's horn; the word used in the Arabic language signifying a ram; but it is a mere fancy and fable of his, that this was of the ram of Isaac which was sacrificed in his stead; it is much more likely that there was indeed no real trumpet, only a sound was formed like the sound of one; and, it is highly probable, was formed by the ministering angels; Aben Ezra observes, that the sound of a trumpet was never heard until the day of the decalogue, until the day that was given; and that there was not a greater wonder on Mount Sinai than this: the design and use of it was to gather, this vast body of people together, to come and hear what God had to say unto them; and when its sound was protracted to a great length, or was in one continued tone, and somewhat lower, as is usual when a trumpet is about to cease blowing, then the people were to take it as a token that they should approach the mountain; not to ascend it, but come to the lower and nether part of it, where bounds were set to direct them how far they might go, and no further: so the Septuagint version is,

"when the voices (or thunders) and the trumpets and the cloud departed from the mountain, they went up to the mountain:"

a certain Jewish writer {p} interprets this, not of the people in general, but of Aaron and his sons, and of the seventy elders, see
Ex 19:24.

{o} vb egt al "non tanget eum", Vatablus, Drusius, "non feriet eum", Tigurine version. {p} R. Samuel Ben Hophni, apud Aben Ezram, in loc.

Exodus 19:14

Ver. 14. And Moses went down from the mount unto the people,.... The same day that he went up, the fourth day of the month:

and sanctified the people; instructed them and ordered them what they should do for their sanctification, in order to their hearing the law from the mouth of the Lord:

and they washed their clothes; as the Lord had directed Moses to enjoin them, and as he had commanded them, See Gill on "Ex 19:10".

Exodus 19:15

Ver. 15. And he said unto the people, be ready against the third day,.... The third day from thence, the sixth of the month Sivan, against which day they were to prepare themselves, by washing their garments, and all other outward acts of sanctification and purity they were directed to, that they might be ready for the service of that day, to hear and receive the law from God himself: Aben Ezra has this note on the passage,

"perhaps not a man slept that night, that he might hear the voice of the Lord in the morning, as was the way or custom of the high priest on the day of atonement;"

that is, not to sleep the night before:

come not at your wives; or, "do not draw nigh to a woman" {q}, to lie with her; meaning not with a strange woman, or one that was not his wife, for that was not lawful at any time; nor with a menstruous woman who was unclean, and so forbidden, but with a man's own wife: what was lawful must now be abstained from, for the greater sanctification and solemnity of the service of this day, see **1Co 7:5**, so Chaeremoh {r} the stoic says of the Egyptian priests, that when the time is at hand that they are to perform some very sacred and solemn service, they spend several days in preparing for it; sometimes two and forty, sometimes more, sometimes less, but never under seven; when they abstain from all animals, and from all kind of herbs and pulse, and especially from venereal conversation with women; and to this latter Juvenal {s} the poet has respect.

{q} hva la wvgt mh proselyhte gunaiki Sept. "to a woman", Ainsworth. {r} Apud Porphyr, de Abstinentia, l. 4. sect. 7. Vid Clement. Alexand Stromat. l. 1. p. 306. {s} "Ille petit veniam quoties non abstinet uxor, "Concubitu, sacris observandisque diebus". Juvenal, Satyr 6.

Exodus 19:16

Ver. 16. And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, &c:] The sixth of the month, according to the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi; on which day, as the Jews generally say {t}, the law was given, and which, they also observe, was a sabbath day: yea, they are sometimes so very particular as to fix the hour of the day, and say {u}, it was the sixth hour of the day, or twelve o'clock at noon, that Israel received the decalogue, and at the ninth hour, at three o'clock in the afternoon, returned to their stations:

there were thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount; which were to awaken the attention of the people to what they were to hear and receive, and to strike their minds with an awe of the divine Being; and to add to the solemnity of the day, and the service of it; and to signify the obscurity and terror of the legal dispensation, and the wrath and curse that the transgressors the law might expect, even an horrible tempest of divine vengeance, see Heb 12:18

and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; or, "exceeding strong" {w}; being blown by the mighty angels, and by ten thousand them, with whom the Lord now descended:

so that all the people that was in the camp trembled, at the sound of it, it was so loud and terrible, and it so pierced their ears and their hearts: a different effect the Gospel trumpet the jubilee trumpet, the joyful sound of love, grace, and mercy, has upon sensible sinners, and on true believers: the law with its curses terrifies, the Gospel with its blessings comforts.

{t} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 86. 2. & Yoma, fol. 4. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 5. p. 18. {u} Pirke Eliezer, c. 46. {w} dam qzx "fortis valde", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so Ainsworth.

Exodus 19:17

Ver. 17. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp,.... Which was before the mountain and near it, when the above tokens were given of the divine Presence on it; as they were thrown into a panic upon the sound of the trumpet, it was, perhaps, with some difficulty that they were brought out of the camp, or persuaded to quit it; and nothing short of the presence of Moses at the head of them, to go before them, and lead them to the foot of the mountain, could have prevailed upon them to have done it:

to meet with God; who came forth in such an awful and solemn manner, as their King and lawgiver, to deliver a body of laws to them, to be the rule of their future conduct:

and they stood at the nether part of the mount; at the bottom of it, where bounds were set, and a fence made, that they should proceed no further, and yet near enough to hear what God said to Moses and to them.

Exodus 19:18

Ver. 18. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke,.... Not from nature, as volcanos, but for a reason after given; it seemed to be one large body of smoke, nothing else to be seen but smoke; an emblem of the darkness of the legal dispensation, which was full of obscure types and figures, of dark shadows and smoky sacrifices, to which the clear day, of the Gospel dispensation is opposed, see **2Co 3:12**

because the Lord descended upon it in fire; in flaming fire, as the Targums, which set the mountain on fire, and caused this prodigious smoke; for if he, who is a consuming fire, but toucheth the hills and mountains, they smoke, Ps 104:32

and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace such an one as that which Abraham in vision saw, Ge 15:17

and the whole mount quaked greatly; to which circumstance Deborah refers in her song, when she speaks of mountains melting and flowing from before the presence of the God of Israel, and particularly of Sinai, **Jud 5:4**, and the psalmist, who makes mention of the earth shaking, and the heavens dropping, and of Sinai being moved at his presence, Ps 68:8, it is probable there was an earthquake at this time, which sometimes attends thunders and lightnings, see Re 16:18.

Exodus 19:19

Ver. 19. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long,.... Not in one continued tone, as before, Ex 19:13, where a different word is used, and when it decreased, and was about to cease, which was to summon the people to attend; but now they were come to the foot of the mount, and this sounding was a preparation to the giving of the law unto them, and was not one continued even tone: but waxed louder and louder; or, "going, and exceeding strong"; or, "strengthening itself exceedingly" {x}; it went on to an high pitch, until it was exceeding vehement and strong, and so sonorous as scarce to be bore:

Moses spake; what he said is not here recorded; it is highly probable, as has been observed by some, that he uttered those words related of him in Heb 12:21 "I exceedingly fear and quake": such an impression did this loud and strong voice of the trumpet make upon him:

and God answered him by a voice; a still and gentle one, in order to encourage and comfort him; and so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"with a pleasant and audible voice, and with delightful words."

{x} dam qzxw Klwh probainousai iscuroterai sfodra, Sept. "iens et fortificans se valde", Montanus; "roborans se", Vatablus; "quum pergeret et invalesceret valde", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Exodus 19:20

Ver. 20. And the Lord came down on Mount Sinai,.... In the above visible tokens of his presence and power; otherwise he is the incomprehensible Jehovah, that immense and omnipotent Being, who fills heaven and earth, and cannot be contained and circumscribed in either:

on the top of the mount; where the fire he descended in rested, and where the smoke and thick cloud were, as a token of his presence:

and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; who either was at the bottom of it with the people, or in a higher ascent of it between God and them:

and Moses went up; to the top of it, where the Lord was, as he ordered him: a certain traveller {y} tells us that the top of this mount was scarce thirty feet in circumference.

{y} Baumgarten Peregrinatio, l. 1. c. 24. p. 61.

Exodus 19:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord said unto Moses, go down,.... As soon as he was got to the top of the mount he was bid to go down again to the bottom, with a message to the people:

charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze; to see if they could observe any similitude or likeness of God, that they might have an idea of it in their minds, or make an image like unto it; to prevent which, the Lord, knowing the vanity and curiosity of their minds, ordered Moses to give them a strict charge not to transgress the bounds set them, or to break down or break through the fence of stones and sand, or hedge of bushes, brambles, and branches of trees, or whatever was placed for bounds:

and many of them perish; or "fall" {z}; by the hand of God; either fall by death, or into some grievous calamity, as the men of Bethshemesh perished through looking into the ark, **1Sa 6:19**.

{z} lpn peswsin Sept. "et corruant", Pagninus, Tigurine version; "et cadat", Montanus; "cadant", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius; so Ainsworth.

Exodus 19:22

Ver. 22. And let the priests also, which come near unto the Lord,.... Either the firstborn, as the Jews generally interpret it, so Jarchi and Aben Ezra; who were sanctified to the Lord, and in whose stead afterwards the Levites were taken; or the sons of Aaron, who should be, and were potentially, though not actually priests, as Ben Gersom expresses it, from an ancient book of theirs called Mechilta; or rather some principal persons, as heads of families and the like, who, before the priesthood was settled in the family of Aaron, officiated as priests, and drew nigh to God, and offered up sacrifices for themselves and others, and were distinguished from others by this character, and therefore do not intend princes, as some interpret the word; for the description of them will not agree to them, but plainly points to a sort of men, to whom it was peculiar to perform that office. These Moses is bid to charge that they

sanctify themselves; in the same manner as the people in general were before ordered, and keep themselves within the same bounds; not daring to transgress them, because they were persons that used to draw nigh to God in the performance of religious actions:

lest the Lord break forth upon them; and smite them, that they die, in like manner as he made a breach on Uzzah afterwards for touching the ark of the Lord, 2Sa 6:6.

Exodus 19:23

Ver. 23. And Moses said unto the Lord,.... Upon his giving such strict orders both with respect to the people and the priests:

the people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; suggesting as if there was no need for him to go down on that account, to give them a charge not to break through and gaze; since, as he thought, there was no probability that they ever would attempt it, seeing such a solemn charge had been given, nor any possibility of it, since such a fence was made:

for thou chargedst us, saying, set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it; and accordingly bounds have been set, that the people may not go up it, and the place has been declared sacred, that so none will presume to do it, according to the solemn charge that has been given: some {a} read the preceding clause by way of interrogation, "may not the people come up to Mount Sinai?" may not any of them? or, if any of them, who may? and there was the greater reason for asking such a question, since the priests that drew near to God might not, and so the next words are conceived to be an answer to it.

{a} So some in Vatablus.

Exodus 19:24

Ver. 24. And the Lord said unto him, away, get thee down,.... And prevent the people and priests from breaking through the bounds and gazing, to which their curiosity would tempt them; as the Lord knew better than Moses, and it was high time for him to be gone, the matter required haste, the people were under great temptations of indulging their curiosity, to the peril of their lives:

and thou shall come up, thou, and Aaron with thee; which is thought to be an answer to the question, who might come up? only himself and Aaron, who was his prophet and spokesman, and concerned with him in his miracles, and in conducting the people of Israel; and who was to be chief priest as Moses was to be, and was the leader and governor of the people:

but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the Lord, lest he break forth upon them; it required the immediate presence of Moses below, and immediate care was to be taken by him, lest the priests and people, led by a vain curiosity, should attempt to ascend the mount, and come where God was, to see if they could observe any likeness of him; which would so provoke him, that in just retaliation, as they had broke through the bounds set, he would break forth on them by inflicting sudden death upon them.

Exodus 19:25

Ver. 25. So Moses went down to the people,.... As the Lord commanded him:

and spake unto them: charging them to keep their distance, and not presume to pass the line he had drawn, or the foss or fence he had made: in the Jerusalem Targum it is added,

"come and receive the ten words;"

the decalogue or ten commands; and the Targum of Jonathan,

"come and receive the law with the ten words;"

the ten commandments of the law, which are delivered in the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 20

In this chapter we have an account of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; the preface to it, Ex 20:1, the ten commandments it consists of, Ex 20:8, the circumstances attending it, which caused the people to remove at some distance, Ex 20:18, when they desired of Moses, that he would speak to them and not God, who bid them not fear, since this was for the trial of them; but still they kept at a distance, while Moses drew nigh to God, Ex 20:19 who ordered him to caution the children of Israel against idolatry, and directed what sort of an altar he would have made whereon to offer their sacrifices, promising that where his name was recorded he would grant his presence and blessing, Ex 20:22.

Ver. 1. And God spake all these words,.... Which follow, commonly called the decalogue, or ten commands; a system or body of laws, selected and adapted to the case and circumstances of the people of Israel; striking at such sins as they were most addicted to, and they were under the greatest temptation of falling into the commission of; to prevent which, the observation of these laws was enjoined them; not but that whatsoever of them is of a moral nature, as for the most part they are, are binding on all mankind, and to be observed both by Jew and Gentile; and are the best and shortest compendium of morality that ever was delivered out, except the abridgment of them by our Lord, Mt 22:36, the ancient Jews had a notion, and which Jarchi delivers as his own, that these words were spoken by God in one word; which is not to be understood grammatically; but that those laws are so closely compacted and united together as if they were but one word, and are not to be detached and separated from each other; hence, as the Apostle James says, whosoever offends in one point is guilty of all, **Jas 2:10**, and if this notion was as early as the first times of the Gospel, one would be tempted to think the Apostle Paul had reference to it, Ro 13:9 though indeed he seems to have respect only to the second table of the law; these words were spoke in an authoritative way as commands, requiring not only attention but obedience to them; and they were spoken by God himself in the hearing of all the people of Israel; and were not, as Aben Ezra observes, spoken by a mediator or middle person, for as yet they had not desired one; nor by an angel or angels, as the following words show, though the law is said to be spoken by angels, to be ordained by them, in the hands of a mediator, and given by the disposition of them, which perhaps was afterwards done, see **Ac 7:53**.
See Gill on "Ac 7:53".
See Gill on "Ga 3:19".
See Gill on "Heb 2:2".

saying; as follows.

Exodus 20:2

Ver. 2. I am the Lord thy God,.... This verse does not contain the first of these commands, but is a preface to them, showing that God had a right to enact and enjoin the people of Israel laws; and that they were under obligation to attend unto them with reverence, and cheerfully obey them, since he was the Lord, the eternal and immutable Jehovah, the Being of beings, who gives being to all creatures, and gave them theirs, and therefore had a right to give them what laws he pleased; and he was their God, their covenant God, in a special and peculiar manner, their King and their God, they being a Theocracy, and so more immediately under his government, and therefore had laws given them preferable to what any other people had:

which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt: where they had been afflicted many years, and reduced to great distress, but were brought forth with an high hand, and with great riches, and in a very wonderful and miraculous manner; so that they were under great obligations to yield a ready and cheerful obedience to the will of God:

out of the house of bondage: or "servants" {b}; that is, where they had been servants and slaves, but now were made free, and were become a body politic, a kingdom of themselves, under their Lord, King, Lawgiver, and Saviour, Jehovah himself, and therefore to be governed by laws of his enacting; and this shows that this body of laws was delivered out to the people of Israel, and primarily belong to them; for of no other can the above things be said.

{b} Mydbe "servorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Exodus 20:3

Ver. 3. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. This is the first command, and is opposed to the polytheism of the Gentiles, the Egyptians, from whom Israel was just come, and whose gods some of them might have had a favourable opinion of and liking to, and had committed idolatry with; and the Canaanites, into whose land they were going; and to prevent their joining with them in the worship of other gods, this law was given, as well as to be of standing us to them in all generations; for there is but one only living and true God, the former and maker of all things, who only is to be had, owned, acknowledged, served, and worshipped as such; all others have only the name, and are not by nature gods; they are other gods than the true God is; they are not real, but fictitious deities; they are other or strange gods to the worshippers of them, that cry unto them, for they do not answer them, as Jarchi observes: and now for Israel, who knew the true God, who had appeared unto them, and made himself known to them by his name Jehovah, both by his word and works, whom he had espoused to himself as a choice virgin, to commit idolatry, which is spiritual adultery with other gods, with strange gods, that are no gods, and this before God, in the presence of him, who had took them by the hand when he brought them out of Egypt, and had been a husband to them, must be shocking impiety, monstrous ingratitude, and extremely displeasing to God, and resented by him; and is, as many observe, as if a woman should commit adultery in the presence of her husband, and so the phrase may denote the audaciousness of the action, as well as the wickedness of it; though, as Ben Melech from others observes, if it was done in secret it would be before the Lord, who is the omniscient God, and nothing can be hid from him: several Jewish commentators, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Aben Ezra, interpret the phrase "before me", all the time I endure, while I have a being, as long as I live, or am the living God, no others are to be had; that is, they are never to be had; since the true God will always exist: the Septuagint version is, "besides me", no other were to be worshipped with him; God will have no rivals and competitors; though he was worshipped, yet if others were worshipped with him, if others were set before him and worshipped along with him, or it was pretended he was worshipped in them, and even he with a superior and they with an inferior kind of worship; yet this was what he could by no means admit of: the phrase may be rendered "against me" {c}; other gods opposition to him, against his will, contrary to obedience due to him and his precepts: this law, though it supposes and strongly inculcates the unity of the divine Being, the only object of religious adoration, yet does not oppose the doctrine of the trinity of persons in the Godhead; nor is that any contradiction to it, since though the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, there are not three Gods, but three Persons, and these three are one God, **1Jo 5:7**.

{c} ynp le "contra me", Noldius, No. 1801. p. 731.

Exodus 20:4

Ver. 4. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,.... An image of anything graven by art or man's device, cut out of wood of stone, and so anything that was molten, or cast into a mould or form, engraved by men, and this in order to be worshipped; for otherwise images of things might be made for other uses and purposes, as the cherubim over the mercy seat, and the brazen serpent, and images and impressions on coin, which we do not find the Jews themselves scrupled to make use of in Christ's time on that account; though they vehemently opposed the setting up any images of the Caesars or emperors in their temple, because they seemed to be placed there as deities, and had a show of religious worship: however, any image of God was not to be made at all, since no similitude was ever seen of him, or any likeness could be conceived; and it must be a gross piece of ignorance, madness, and impudence, to pretend to make one, and great impiety to make it in order to be the object of religious worship; on which account, not any image or the image of anything whatever was to be made:

or any likeness [of anything] that is in heaven above; any form, figure, portrait, or picture of anything or creature whatever, whether in the supreme, starry, or airy heaven; as of angels, which some have gone into the worship of; and of the sun, moon, and stars, the host of heaven; and of any of the birds of the air, as the hawk by the Egyptians, and the dove by the Assyrians:

or that is in the earth beneath; as oxen, sheep, goats, cats, dogs, &c. such as were the gods of Egypt:

or that is in the water under the earth: as of fishes, such as were the crocodile of Egypt, the Dagon of the Philistines, and the Derceto of the Syrians: this is the second command, as the Targum of Jonathan expressly calls it; that is, the first part of it, which forbids the making of graven images for worship; the other part follows, which is the worship of them itself: Clemens of Alexandria {d} observes, that Numa, king of the Romans, took this from Moses, and forbid the Romans to make any image of God, like to man or beast.

{d} Stromat. l. 1. p. 304.

Exodus 20:5

Ver. 5. Thou shall not bow down thyself to them,.... Perform any worship to them, show any reverence of them by any gesture of the body; one being mentioned, bowing the body, and put for all others, as prostration of it to the earth, bending the knee, kissing the hand, lifting up of hands or eyes to them, or by any outward action expressing a religious esteem of them, as if there was divinity in them:

nor serve them; in a religious manner, internally or externally, by offering sacrifice and burning incense to them; by praying to, or praising of them; by expressing love to them, faith and trust in them, hope and expectation of good things from them, and the like. The reason of this second command, relating to the making and worshipping of images, next follows:

for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God; jealous of his own honour and glory, and will not give it to another; even to graven images, nor suffer it to be given to them without resenting it; and jealousy is fierce and cruel, and breaks forth into great wrath, and issues in dreadful scenes oftentimes among men; as a man that has reason to be jealous of his wife, and especially if he takes her and the adulterer in the fact, it often costs them both their lives, being so enraged at such an insult upon him, and such a violation of the marriage bed; and thus the great Jehovah, the God of Israel, their head and husband, is represented, in order to deter from idolatry, or spiritual adultery, than which nothing could be more provoking to him:

visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children; meaning chiefly, if not solely, the iniquity of idolatry; which being such an insult on his honour, "crimen laesae majestatis", is treated by him as high treason is among men; not only he punishes the authors and perpetrators of it in their own persons, which is meant by "visiting", but upon their children also, which are parts of themselves; and whatsoever is inflicted on them is the same as on themselves, and is an addition to, and a sensible aggravation of their punishment; and especially these are visited in such a manner, when they tread in their father's steps, and fill up the measure of their iniquity. So the Targum of Jonathan,

"visiting the iniquity of ungodly fathers on rebellious children:"

unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; as all idolaters must be thought to do, whatsoever love and affection they may pretend to God, by worshipping idols before him, besides him, along with him, or him in them: "the third and fourth generation" are mentioned, because sometimes parents lived to see these, and so with their eyes beheld the punishment inflicted upon their posterity for their sins, which must be distressing to them; or, however, these being but small removes from them, might impress their minds and affect them, to think what their sins would bring upon their descendants, who would quickly come after them, and share in the sad effects of their iniquities, and so be a means to deter them from them.

Exodus 20:6

Ver. 6. And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me,.... And show their love by worshipping God, and him only, by serving him acceptably with reverence and godly fear, by a cheerful obedience to all his commands, by all religious exercises, both internal and external, as follows:

and keep my commandments; not only this, but all others; for keeping these from right principles, and with right views, is an instance and evidence of love to God, see Joh 14:15 and to such persons he shows mercy and kindness, performs acts of grace, and bestows on them blessings of goodness; and indeed it is owing to his own grace, mercy, and kindness to them, that they do love him, and from a principle of love observe his precepts; and this is shown to thousands, to multitudes, who are blessed with such grace as to love the Lord, and keep his commandments: though rather this is to be understood of a thousand generations, and not persons, and should have been supplied, as in the preceding verse, "unto a thousand generations", God being more abundant in showing mercy, and exercising grace and goodness, than he is rigorous in inflicting punishment.

Exodus 20:7

Ver. 7. Thou shall not take the name of the Lord God in vain,.... Make use of the name Lord or God, or any other name and epithet of the divine Being, in a light and trifling way, without any show of reverence of him, and affection to him; whereas the name of God ought never to be mentioned but in a grave and serious manner, and with an awe of the greatness of his majesty upon the mind. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan restrain this to swearing by the name of the Lord; and so the Jewish writers generally interpret it either of swearing lightly, rashly, or falsely; and to this it may very well be extended, though not limited; and so forbids, as all profane oaths; imprecations, and curses by the name of God, which the mouths of wicked men are full of, so swearing by it in matters trivial, and of no importance; for swearing even by the name of the Lord ought not to be used but in matters of moment and consequence, for the confirmation of a thing, and putting an end to strife, and where a matter cannot be determined and decided without an appeal to God. And great care should be taken that a man swears to that which is true, and not false; for false swearing, or perjury, is a very grievous sin, and as it is strictly forbidden, it is severely punished by the Lord, as follows; see Le 19:12, this is the third command, and the reason enforcing it follows:

for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name is vain; will not look upon him as an innocent person, and treat him as such; will not acquit and discharge him as just and righteous; but on the contrary will consider him as a guilty person, a profaner of his name, and a transgressor of his law, and will condemn and punish him, if not in this world, yet in the world to come; and so the Targum of Jonathan, by way of explanation, adds, "in the day of the great judgment;"

see **Mal 3:5**.

Exodus 20:8

Ver. 8. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. By abstaining from all servile work and business, and from all pleasures and recreations lawful on other days, and by spending it in religious exercises, both internal and external. This the Israelites are bid to "remember", by observing it in such a manner, because this command had been given them before at the first time the manna was rained about their tents,
Ex 16:23 and because it was a command of positive institution, and not a part of the law of nature, and therefore more liable to be forgotten and neglected; for, as a Jewish writer {e} observes, all the laws of the decalogue are according to the dictates of nature, the law and light of reason, and knowledge of men, excepting this: wherefore no other has this word "remember" prefixed to it; there being somewhat in the light of every man's reason and conscience to direct and engage him in some measure to the observation of them. In what day of the week this sabbath was to be kept next follows; for all to the end of the eleventh verse belongs to this command, which is the fourth.

{e} Aben Ezra.

Exodus 20:9

Ver. 9. Six days shalt thou labour,.... This is not to be taken for a precept, but a permission; not as a command enjoining men to work and labour with their hands, to provide for themselves and families things useful and necessary, and honest in the sight of God; but as a grant and allowance of so many days to employ themselves in, for their own profit and advantage, and that of their families; the Lord only reserving one day out of seven for his service, which ought to be looked upon as a singular favour, that he required no more of their time for his use, and the rest they might spend as they pleased, so that they did not indulge themselves in sin. It is required indeed of all men to labour in some sort and way or another, with their heads or with their hands; though all are not obliged to labour in the same way, or to the same degree, for he that will not work ought not to eat; but this law is not an injunction of that kind, only a toleration of labour on the six days of the week, if proper and necessary, when it is forbidden on the seventh:

and do all thy work, which is incumbent on a man, he is called unto, and is necessary to be done for the good of him and his family; particularly care should be taken, that all should be done on the six days that could possibly be done, and nothing left to be done on the seventh.

Exodus 20:10

Ver. 10. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God,.... Not which he rested on, and ceased from the works of creation in, though he did rest on the seventh day of the creation, and so on every other day since, as well as that; nor does it appear, nor can it be proved, that this day appointed to the Jews as a sabbath was the seventh day of the week from the creation of the world; but was either the seventh day of the week from their coming out of Egypt, or from the raining of the manna: but this is called the Lord's sabbath, or rest, because enjoined by him to the people of Israel, and not to them until they were separated from other people, and were a distinct body of men under a certain meridian; for it is impossible that one and the same day, be it the seventh, or any other, should be kept to exactness of time by all the inhabitants of the earth; it being night with one part, when it is day with another, and not the same day to them all:

in it thou shall not do any work; of a servile nature, exercise any trade or any hand labour, or any kind of work for pleasure or profit, only works of mercy and necessity. No labour or handicraft was to be exercised, according to the Jewish canons {f}, until the going out of it, or the appearance of the stars:

thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter; neither a man nor his children, male and female, such as were under age, and under the tuition, direction, and care of their parents, who were to instruct them in this kind, and not suffer them to work on this day, and much less oblige them to it; for as for those that were grown up, and no longer under the inspection of parents, and were heads of families themselves, they are included in the word "thou", and are in the first place charged in this command;

thy manservant, nor thy maidservant; this is to be understood, according to the Jews, not of hired servants, concerning whose rest from labour a man was not bound {g}, but of such as were born in their house, and bought with their money; and of such menservants as were circumcised, and in all things professed to be proselytes to the Jewish religion, and to conform to it; for as for one that only received the commands of the sons of Noah, and was not circumcised, he might do work for himself on the sabbath day, but not for his master; and no Israelite might bid him work on the sabbath day for the necessity of an Israelite, though he was not his master {h}. If a servant does work without the knowledge of his master, and it is known to all that he does it without his knowledge, there is no need to separate him from it, or take him off of it {i}: so maidservants, when they did things without the knowledge of their masters and mistresses, and without being bid to do it, they were free to do it: thus, for instance, they say {k},

"a cheese which maids make of themselves, of milk that belongs to an Israelite, is lawful when he does not bid them make it:"

nor thy cattle, of any sort whatever that is used to labour, because if the cattle did not rest, servants could not, who are concerned in the care and use of them: in **De 5:14**, the ox and the ass are particularly mentioned, because laborious creatures; the one were used in ploughing, and treading out the corn, and the other to ride upon, and carry burdens; and concerning the latter the Jews have this canon {l},

"he who is going in the way, (or on a journey,) and has sanctified for himself the day, and has money with him, and has an ass; and though he has with him an idolater, he may not put his bag upon his ass; because he is commanded concerning its rest; but he may give his bag to the idolater to throw it upon it; and at the going out of the sabbath he may receive it from him, and even may not give him a reward for it;"

but not only those, but all sorts of cattle were exempt from labour on this day, as horses, camels, mules, &c. which, according to the Jewish canons, as they were not to be employed in work by the Jews, so they were not to be let or lent out to an idolater {m}: nor the stranger that is within thy gates: who was a proselyte of the gate, and not of righteousness; as for the proselyte of righteousness that was circumcised, and professed the Jewish religion, about him there could be no doubt concerning his rest on this day; but the proselyte of the gate, his case was not so clear, and therefore is particularly expressed; and by which description it should seem that he was not obliged by this law, had he not been within their gates, or a sojourner in anyone of their cities; since it was contrary to the laws and usages among whom they dwelt, and might be an offence to some, and a snare to others, and, as Grotius thinks, might be to their detriment, get their work and their gain from them, they are forbid to work; and yet, according to the Jewish writers {n}, they might work for themselves, though not for an Israelite, as before observed.

{f} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. Orach Chayim Hilchot Sabbat, c. 293. sect. 2, 3. {g} Lebush, par. 1. c. 304. sect. 1. {h} Schulchan Aruch, ib. c. 304, sect. 1. {i} Lebush, ib. {k} Schulchan, ib. c. 305. sect. 21. {l} lb. c. 266. sect. 1. {m} Ib. c. 246. sect. 3. {n} Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 20. sect. 14.

Exodus 20:11

Ver. 11. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, &c] And of which six days, and of the several things made in each of them, see the notes on the first chapter of Genesis:

and resteth the seventh day: which does not suppose labour, attended with weariness and fatigue; for the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary, Isa 40:28 nor ease and refreshment from it, but only a cessation from the works of creation, they being finished and completed, though not from the works of Providence, in which he is continually concerned: now this circumstance, before recorded in the history of the creation, is wisely improved to engage an attention to this command, and to the observation of it; there being an analogy between the one and the other, that as God worked six days, and, having done his work completely, ceased from it and rested, so it was fit and proper, that as the Israelites had six days allowed them to labour in, and do all their work, they should rest on the seventh, they and all that belonged to them, or had any connection with them:

wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath, and hallowed it: he separated it from all other days of the week, and set it apart for holy use and service, by obliging his people to cease from all work on it, and to give up themselves to the exercises of religion, as hearing, reading the word, prayer, praise, &c. and he blessed it with his presence, and with the communications of his grace, as he still continues to do, whatsoever day his people make use of for his worship and service. The note of Jarchi is,

"he blessed it with manna, by giving double bread on the sixth, and sanctified it by manna, that it might not descend on it;"

so that there was a provision made for it, which was blessing it; and it was distinguished from all other days, no manna falling on it, which was the sanctification of it; and all showed it to be a day the Lord had a particular regard to, and that it was to be a day of rest, and exemption from labour.

(This verse shows that the days in the first chapter of Genesis were real twenty four hour days. For you compare like things to like. Just as God worked six days and rested on the seventh, so the Israelites were to do also. The comparison would make no sense if the days were "seven ages" or were "seven ages" that overlapped each other (Day Age Theory) or if there was a huge gap between the days (Gap Theory). These are modern compromises to accomodate the alleged geological ages with the Biblical account of creation.

Further this verse allows one to determine the age of the universe. Using the biblical geneologies Bishop Ussher determined the date of creation to be 4004 B.C. Although this may be off by one or two percent, it is a very accurate estimate based on biblical revelation not man's speculation. Editor.)

Exodus 20:12

Ver. 12. Honour thy father and thy mother, &c] Which is the fifth commandment of the decalogue, but is the first commandment with promise, as the apostle says, **Eph 6:2** and is the first of the second table: this, though it may be extended to all ancestors in the ascending line, as father's father and mother, mother's father and mother, &c. and to all such who are in the room of parents, as step-fathers and step-mothers, guardians, nurses, &c. and to all superiors in dignity and office, to kings and governors, to masters, ministers, and magistrates; yet chiefly respects immediate parents, both father and mother, by showing filial affection for them, and reverence and esteem of them, and by yielding obedience to them, and giving them relief and assistance in all things in which they need it; and if honour, esteem, affection, obedience, and reverence, are to be given to earthly parents, then much more to our Father which is in heaven, **Mal 1:6**

that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee; that is, the land of Canaan, which he had given by promise to their fathers, and was now about to put them, their posterity, into the possession of: this further confirms the observation made, that this body of laws belonged peculiarly to the people of Israel: long life in any place or land is a blessing in itself, not always enjoyed by obedient children, thou obedience to parents often brings the judgments of God on persons; so that they sometimes die an untimely or an uncommon death, as in the case of the rebellious son, for whom a law was provided in Israel, and Absalom and others, see Le 20:9 Aben Ezra takes the word to be transitive, and so the words may be read, "that they may prolong thy days"; or, "cause thy days to be prolonged"; meaning either that the commandments, and keeping of them, may be the means of prolonging the days of obedient children, according to the divine promise; or that they, their father and mother, whom they harbour and obey, might, by their prayers for them, be the means of obtaining long life for them; or else that they, Father, Son, and Spirit, may do it, though man's days, strictly speaking, cannot be shortened or lengthened beyond the purpose of God, see Job 14:5 the Septuagint version inserts before this clause another, "that it may be well with thee", as in **De 5:16** and which the apostle also has, **Eph 6:3** and where, instead of this, the words are, "and thou mayest live long on the earth"; accommodating them the better to the Gentiles, to whom he writes.

Exodus 20:13

Ver. 13. Thou shalt not kill. Not meaning any sort of creatures, for there are some to be killed for the food and nourishment of men, and others for their safety and preservation; but rational creatures, men, women, and children, any of the human species, of every age, sex, condition, or nation; no man has a right to take away his own life, or the life of another; by this law is forbidden suicide, or self-murder, parricide or murder of parents, homicide or the murder of man; yet killing of men in lawful war, or in defence of a man's self, when his own life is in danger, or the execution of malefactors by the hands or order of the civil magistrate, and killing a man at unawares, without any design, are not to be reckoned breaches of this law; but taking away the life of another through private malice and revenge, and even stabbing of a man's character, and so all things tending to or designed for the taking away of life, and all plots, conspiracies, and contrivances for that purpose, even all sinful anger, undue wrath and envy, rancour of all mind, all malice in thought, word, or deed, are contrary to this precept, see **Mt 5:21** and which, on the other hand, requires that men should do all they can for the ease, peace, and preservation of the lives of men: this is the sixth command, but, in the Septuagint, the strict order in which this and the two following precepts lie is not observed, rehearsing them thus, "thou shall not commit adultery, thou shall not steal, thou shall not kill"; and so in
Mr 10:19 the order is inverted.

Exodus 20:14

Ver. 14. Thou shall not commit adultery,] Which, strictly speaking, is only that sin which is committed with another man's wife, as Jarchi observes; but Aben Ezra thinks the word here used signifies the same as another more commonly used for whoredom and fornication; and no doubt but fornication is here included, which, though it was not reckoned a crime among some Heathens, is within the reach of this law, and forbidden by it, it being an impure action, and against a man's body, as the apostle says, **1Co 6:18** as well as sins of a more enormous kind, as unnatural lusts and copulations, such as incest, sodomy, bestiality, &c. and even all unchaste thoughts, desires, and affections, obscene words, and impure motions and gestures of the body, and whatever is in itself unclean or tends to uncleanness; as it also requires that we should, as much as in us lies, do all we can to preserve our chastity, and the chastity of others, pure and inviolate, see **Mt 5:28**, this is the seventh commandment.

Exodus 20:15

Ver. 15. Thou shall not steal. Which is to take away another man's property by force or fraud, without the knowledge, and against the will of the owner thereof. Thefts are of various kinds; there is private theft, picking of pockets, shoplifting, burglary, or breaking into houses in the night, and carrying off goods; public theft, or robbing upon the highways; domestic theft, as when wives take away their husbands' money or goods, and conceal them, or dispose of them without their knowledge and will, children rob their parents, and servants purloin their masters' effects; ecclesiastical theft or sacrilege, and personal theft, as stealing of men and making slaves of them, selling them against their wills; and Jarchi thinks that this is what the Scripture speaks of when it uses this phrase; but though this may be included, it may not be restrained to this particular, since, besides what have been observed, there are many other things that may be reduced to it and are breaches of it; as all overreaching and circumventing in trade and commerce, unjust contracts, not making good and performing payments, detention of servants' wages, unlawful usury, unfaithfulness with respect to anything deposited in a man's hands, advising and encouraging thieves, and receiving from them: the case of the Israelites borrowing of the Egyptians and spoiling them is not to be objected to this law, since that was by the command of God, and was only taking what was due to them for service; however, by this command God let the Israelites know that that was a peculiar case, and not to be drawn into an example, and that they were in other cases not to take away another man's property; and so the case of an hungry man's stealing to satisfy nature is not observed as lawful and laudable, but as what is connived at and indulged, **Pr 6:30**, this law obliges to preserve and secure every man's property to himself, as much as in men lies: this is the eighth commandment.

Exodus 20:16

Ver. 16. Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Neither publicly in a court of judicature, by laying things to his charge that are false, and swearing to them, to his hurt and damage; nor privately, by whispering, tale bearing, backbiting, slandering, by telling lies of him, traducing his character by innuendos, sly insinuations, and evil suggestions, whereby he may suffer in his character, credit, and reputation, and in his trade and business; Aben Ezra thinks the words describe the character of the person that is not to bear witness in any court, and to be read thus, "thou shall not answer who art a false witness": or, "O thou false witness": meaning that such an one should not be admitted an evidence in court, who had been convicted already of being a false witness; his word and oath are not to be taken, nor should any questions be put to him, or he suffered to answer to any; his depositions should have no weight with those before whom they were made, nay, even they should not be taken, nor such a person be allowed to make any; but this is to put this precept in a quite different form from all the rest, and without any necessity, since the word may as well be taken for a testimony bore, as for the person that bears it: this is the ninth commandment.

Exodus 20:17

Ver. 17. Thou shall not covet thy neighbour's house,.... This is the tenth and last commandment, and is an explanation of several of the past; showing that the law of God not only forbids external acts of sin, but the inward and first motions of the mind to it, which are not known, and would not be thought to be sinful, were it not for this law; nor are they known by this law until the Spirit of God by it convinces men of them, in whose light they see them to be sinful; even not only the schemes and contrivances of sin in the mind, the imaginations of it, thoughts dwelling upon it with pleasure, but even the first risings of sin in the heart; and such motions of it which are not assented unto, and unawares spring up from the corruption of nature, and are sudden craving desires after unlawful things, even these are forbidden by this law; which shows the spirituality of the law of God, and the impossibility of its being perfectly kept by fallen men. The apostle has reference to it, **Ro 7:7**. Several particulars are here mentioned not to be coveted, as instances and examples instead of others. Thus, for instance, "a neighbour's house" is not to be coveted; "nor his field", as the Septuagint version here adds, agreeably to **De 5:21**, a man is not secretly to wish and desire that such a man's house or land were his, since this arises from a discontent of mind with respect to his own habitation and possessions; and a man should be content with such things as he has, and not covet another's, which is not without sin:

thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife: and wish she was thine, and lust after her; this is a breach of the seventh command, and serves to explain and illustrate that. This clause stands first in the Septuagint version, as it does in **De 5:21**,

nor his manservant, nor maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbours'; which, with the first clause, serve to explain the eighth command, showing that we are not only forbid to take away what is another man's property, any of the goods here mentioned, or any other, but we are not secretly to desire them, and wish they were in our possession; since it discovers uneasiness and dissatisfaction with our own lot and portion, and is coveting another man's property, which is coveting an evil covetousness.

Exodus 20:18

Ver. 18. And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings,.... That is, they heard the one, and saw the other; they heard the dreadful volleys of thunder, and saw the amazing flashes of lightning, which were like lamps and torches, as the word used signifies; by a communication of senses, one sense is put for another, and the sense of sight being the principal, as Ben Melech observes, it is put for the rest, and so in the following. It is an observation of Austin's {o} that to "see" is used of all of the five senses, seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling:

and the noise the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: they the sound of the trumpet, which made them tremble and saw the mountain all in a smoke, which made it look very terrible. Though the words may be rendered, as they are by some, "they perceived the thunders", &c. {p}; had a sensible perception of them with their eyes ears, which greatly affected them, and made strong impressions upon their minds, and filled them with fear and dread:

and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off; their minds were not only terrified and distressed, and their bodies shook with fear; but they could not stand their ground, but were obliged to retreat, who but just before were curious to draw near, and gaze and see what they could, to prevent which bounds were set; but now these were needless, what they saw and heard were sufficient to keep them at a distance, nay, obliged them to quit their places; they were at the lower part of the mount before, and now they removed a good way from it, even to their camp, and to their tents in it, see **De 5:30**. The Targum of Jonathan says, they removed twelve miles; and so Jarchi, who observes, that this was according to the length of their camp.

{o} Confess. l. 10. c. 35. {p} Myar "percipiebant", Junius & Tremellius, "intelligebant"; so some in Drusius.

Exodus 20:19

Ver. 19. And they said unto Moses,.... Who was now come down from the mountain, and to whom the heads of the tribes and elders of the people came from the camp, and out of their tents, by whom the people said to him, as follows, see **De 5:23**,

speak thou with us, and we will hear; their request is, that whatsoever it was the will and pleasure of God to declare to them, that he would communicate it to Moses, and he deliver it to them, promising that they would hearken to it, and obey it, as if they had heard it from the mouth of God himself:

but let not God speak with us, lest we die; pray to him, that he would not speak immediately, but by a mediator, which they now saw the need of; that there was no drawing nigh to God, nor hearing nor receiving anything from him without one; that his law, as it came from him to them sinful creatures, was a killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death, and injected such terror into their minds, that if it was continued they must die under it: thus, as the apostle observes, when "they heard the voice of words, entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more, for they could not endure that which was commanded", Heb 12:19.

Exodus 20:20

Ver. 20. And Moses said unto the people,.... By representatives and messengers, the heads of the tribes and elders:

fear not; be not afraid of God with a slavish fear; be not afraid of the thunders and lightnings, as if they were like one of the plagues of Egypt, which terrified Pharaoh and his people; be not afraid of being consumed by them, they will do you no hurt; be not afraid of dying by the hand of God, at his presence, and through the voice of his words spoken to you; be of good courage, for the design of God is not to destroy you, but to instruct you, and do you good:

for God is come to prove you; whether, being now freed by him from Egyptian bondage, they would take and own him for their King, and be subject to his laws and government; whether they would abide by what they had said, all that the Lord hath spoken will we do, Ex 19:8, whether they thought they had purity and righteousness enough to answer to the divine law, and whether they imagined they had strength enough to fulfil it, and whether they needed a mediator between God and them or not: some Jewish writers {q} give a different sense of this clause, as if the coming of God to them in this grand and majestic manner was to exalt them, and make them great and honourable among the nations of the world; taking the word used to be derived from a root, which signifies to lift up, as a banner or ensign is lifted up on high: but the former sense is best;

and that his fear may be before your faces; not a slavish fear of death, of wrath, and damnation, before dehorted from; but a reverence of the divine Majesty, an awe of his greatness and glory, a serious regard to his commands, delivered in so grand a manner, and a carefulness to offend him by disobeying them:

that ye sin not: by breaking the law, and transgressing the precepts of it, which they might be deterred from, as it might be reasonably thought, when they reflected with what solemnity, and in what an awful manner it was delivered to them.

{q} Jarchi in loc. Medrash apud Kimchi in Sepher Shorash. rad. hog & Ben Melech in loc.

Exodus 20:21

Ver. 21. And the people stood afar off,.... Still kept their distance in their camp and tents; or the heads and elders of the people having had this conversation with Moses, returned to their tents as they were bid, **De 5:30** and to the people in the camp, and there they continued while Moses went up to God with their request:

and Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was; the thick cloud, Ex 19:9 as Jarchi interprets it, and who observes from their doctors that there were three enclosures about the divine Majesty, darkness, a cloud, and thick darkness; and so Moses passed through the darkness, and the cloud, to the thick darkness where Jehovah was, and where he is said to dwell when the temple was built, **1Ki 8:8** and they have an observation that the word rendered "drew near" is transitive, and should be translated, "he was brought near" or, "made to draw nigh"; Michael and Gabriel being sent to him, took hold of his hands and brought him against his will unto the thick darkness {r}; but if the word will admit of such a version, the sense is either that he was caused to draw near through the importunity of the people; or rather through the call of God to him, or an impulse of his upon his mind, which obliged him to it.

{r} Pirke Eliezer, c. 41.

Exodus 20:22

Ver. 22. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... When Moses was come near the thick darkness where God was:

thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel; at his return unto them, and which he was to deliver in the name of God, and as his words:

ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven; descending from heaven on Mount Sinai in a cloud and fire, he talked with them out of the cloud and fire, and delivered to them with an audible voice the above ten commands; the cloud and fire they saw with their eyes, and the words expressed from thence they heard with their ears; or heaven may mean the air on the top of Sinai, from whence Jehovah spoke.

Exodus 20:23

Ver. 23. Ye shall not make with me,.... This is a proposition of itself, as appears by the accent Athnach placed at the end of it, which divides it from the following, and therefore "gods of silver" belong to the next clause or proposition; something seems to be wanting to complete the sense, which the

Talmudists {s} and Jarchi after them supply thus,

"ye shall not make with me as the likeness of my ministers which minister before me on high;"

as the seraphim, ministering angels, &c. as the sun, moon, and stars; and so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases the words,

"ye shall not make, to worship, the likeness of the sun, and of the moon, and of the stars, and of the planets, and of the angels that minister before me:"

or rather, "ye shall not make any likeness with me", or any likeness of me; and so the words stand connected with the preceding verse, that since they only saw the cloud and fire, and perceived the voice of God from thence, but saw no likeness or similitude of him, therefore they were not to make any under a pretence of worshipping him with it, or in it, or by it; and so Ben Melech adds, by way of explanation, although your intention is to my service: "gods of silver and gods of gold ye shall not make unto you"; for so this clause is to be read: that is, images made of gold and silver, images of angels, or of the host of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, or of great men on earth, as kings or heroes, or of any creature in heaven, earth, or sea; these they were not to make unto them, in order to serve and worship them, or to worship God in them, or by them, or with them: the first images for idolatrous worship were made of gold and silver, because, being rich and glittering, they more affected the minds of the people, as the golden calf a little after made, and perhaps the gods of Egypt were such, at least some of them; wherefore this law against idolatry is repeated, because the people of Israel were prone unto it, and many of them had been ensnared with it in Egypt, upon every occasion were ready to relapse into it: or images made of meaner materials, as brass, wood, and stone, though not mentioned, are equally forbidden; for if those of richer materials were not to be made and worshipped, much less those of baser ones.

{s} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 24. 1. 2. Avoda Zara, fol, 43. 1. 2.

Exodus 20:24

Ver. 24. An altar of earth thou shall make unto me,.... This was a temporary precept, and only in force until the tabernacle was built, and respects occasional altars, erected while on their travels, and were to be made of turfs of earth, and so easily and quickly thrown up, as their case and circumstances required, and as easily thrown down, as it was proper they should, after they had no more use for them, lest they should be abused to superstitious uses; for afterwards the altar for burnt offerings was made of Shittim wood covered with brass, and that in the temple was wholly a brazen one, Ex 27:1 this precept seems to suggest the plainness and simplicity in which God would be worshipped, in opposition to the pomp and gaudy show of idolaters intimated in the preceding verse; though Tertullian {t} relates of the Romans in the times of Numa Pomptitus, that they had neither images, nor temples, nor capitols, only altars made of turfs of earth hastily thrown up; and this altar of earth might be, as Ainsworth observes, a figure of the earthly or human nature of Christ, who is the altar, whereof believers in him have a right to eat, Heb 13:10

and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen; which were the creatures offered in the said sacrifices, as also in the sin offerings and trespass offerings, which, though not mentioned, are included:

in all places where I record my name; or, "cause it to be mentioned", or "remembered" {u}; where he manifested himself, displayed the glory of his nature and perfection; or, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, caused his Shechinah or divine Majesty to dwell, or gave any intimations of his presence, as at the altar now erected to him, and at the sacrifices offered up thereon, and afterwards in the tabernacle, between the cherubim over the mercy seat, and ark of the testimony; which was removed to various places before the temple was built at Jerusalem, where he took up his residence, and his name was called upon, made mention of, and recorded for many generations: but that being destroyed and worship there at an end, men may now worship God in any place, so be it they do it in spirit and in truth; and wherever the name of God is truly called upon, and the glory of his divine perfection, as displayed in the salvation of sinners by Christ, is set forth, and Christ and him crucified is preached; and mention is made of his name as the only one in which salvation is; of his glorious person and offices, of his righteousness, blood, and sacrifice, for justification, remission of sins, and atonement; and his ordinances are administered, which are memorials of his love and grace; there Jehovah grants his presence:

I will come unto thee: not locally or by change of place, nor by his omnipresence merely, so he is everywhere; nor in any visible way, but in a spiritual manner, by the communications of his grace and favour, see Joh 14:21, and I will bless thee; with his presence, than which nothing is more desirable and delightful; with the supplies of his grace, with peace and pardon, with a justifying righteousness, with a right and title to eternal life, with enlarged views of these blessings and of interest in them.

{t} Apologet. c. 25. {u} ymv ta rykza "memorare faciam nomen meum", Pagninus, Montanus; "ubi recordari faciam nomen meum, seu ubi faciam ut recordemini nominis mei", Piscator.

Exodus 20:25

Ver. 25. And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone,.... If they chose instead of an earthen one to make one of stone, as they might in rocky places, where they came, and in such an one where they now were, Mount Sinai, under which hill an altar was built, Ex 24:4,

thou shall not build it of hewn stone; which would require time and occasion expense, to hew and polish them in an artificial way; but it was to be built of rude and unpolished stones, just as they were taken out of the quarry, or found lying by the way, and which were laid up in an heap one upon another, and was done with little trouble, and without any ornament, and easily separated and thrown down, when become useless: the reason of this law, as given by Maimonides {w}, is this,

"because the idolaters of that time built their altars of hewn stones, therefore God forbad it, lest we should be like them, and that we might shun it in all things, he commanded the altar to be made of earth, as it is said, an altar of earth shalt thou make unto me; and if it could not be made without stones, that the stones should remain in their own natural form, and be neither hewn nor polished; as he after forbad a painted stone, and a plantation of trees by an altar; for in each of these there is one and the same intention and design, namely, that we might not worship him in the same manner in which idolaters used to worship their fictitious deities:"

for if thou lift up thy tool upon it; or, thy sword {x}; it signifies any tool or instrument made of iron as a sword is, and here such an one as is used in hewing of stone; which, if lifted up on the altar, or on any of the stones of which it is built, to strike and hew them with,

thou hast polluted it; and so made it unfit for use: how this should be done hereby is not easy to say, no good reason seems to be assignable for it but the will and pleasure of God; who so appointed it, and reckoned that a pollution, and would have it so thought by others, which with men is accounted ornamental; his thoughts and judgment are not as man's: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"for if thou liftest up iron, of which a sword is made, upon a stone, thou wilt profane it;"

the reason which the Misnic doctors {y} give, and Jarchi from them, is,

"because iron was created to shorten the days of men, but the other was made to prolong the days of men: and therefore it cannot be just that that which shortens should be lifted up and agitated over that which prolongs:"

but Maimonides gives a better reason of it, as Abarbinel understands him, which was to prevent persons making images in stones {z}, which image making is the thing guarded against and forbidden in the context; but still better is that of Isaac Arama {a}, that the hands of the artificer were to abstain from the stones of the altar, lest that good which men obtain of God at the altar should be attributed to any work of theirs: though, after all, it is right what Aben Ezra, says, that it does not belong to us to search after the reasons of the commands, at least not in too curious and bold a manner, and where God is silent and has not thought fit to give any.

{w} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 45. {x} Kbrx "gladium tuum", Montanus, Piscator, Cartwright. {y} Misnah Middot, c. 3. sect. 4. {z} Apud L'Empereur in Middot, ib. {a} Apud Rivet in loc.

Exodus 20:26

Ver. 26. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar,.... That is, you priests, the sons of Aaron, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase the words; the altar of burnt offering built when the tabernacle was seemed not to require any, being but three cubits high, Ex 27:1 but that in Solomon's temple did, being ten cubits high, **2Ch 4:1** and therefore some method must be used to ascend it, and do the business that was to be done on it: now the Jews say {b}, there was what they call "Kibbesh", a sort of a causeway made of earth thrown up, which rose gradually and led to the top of the altar, and was about thirty two cubits long and sixteen broad: and so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases the words, "thou shalt not go up by steps to mine altar, but by bridges;"

express mention is made of stairs to the altar in Ezekiel's vision, Eze 43:17

that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon; that part of the body which is not to be named, and ought not to be seen, and which would be exposed if there were many steps, and these at a distance from each other; which would oblige them to take large strides, and so be in danger of discovering those parts which would make them the object of contempt and ridicule with the people; since as yet breeches were not used, and the garments were long loose ones, which were easily turned aside, or the parts under them seen by those below; to prevent which, afterwards linen breeches were ordered to be made for the priests, and to be used by them in their service: Maimonides {c} thinks the reason of this was, because formerly the idolatrous worship of Peor was performed by uncovering of their nakedness before it; and so by this is expressed God's detestation of such an impure and abominable practice; but this is uncertain; however, this we may be sure of, that this is the will of God, that all immodesty and indecency, and whatever tends to create impure thoughts and stir up unclean lusts, should be carefully avoided in his worship.

{b} Middot, c. 3. sect. 3. {c} Ut supra. (Apud L'Empereur in Middot, ib.)

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 21

In this, and the two following chapters, are delivered various laws and precepts, partly of a moral, and partly of a religious, but chiefly of a civil nature, respecting the commonwealth of Israel, and its political good. This chapter treats of servants, and laws relating to them; to menservants, how long they shall serve, and what is to be done to those who are desirous of staying with their masters after their time is up, Ex 21:1, to maidservants, and especially betrothed ones, either to a father or a son, Ex 21:7, likewise it contains laws concerning the slaughter of men, whether with design or unawares, Ex 21:12, and concerning the ill usage of parents, Ex 21:15, and man stealing, Ex 21:16 and of mischief that comes by men's quarrelling and fighting, Ex 21:18 and by smiting a man or maidservant, Ex 21:20, to a woman with child, that is, by means of men's striving and contending with each other, Ex 21:22 and of damages that come by oxen, or to them, Ex 21:28.

Ver. 1. Now these are the judgments,.... The judicial laws respecting the civil state of the people of Israel, so called because they are founded on justice and equity, and are according to the judgment of God, whose judgment is according to truth; and because they are such by which the commonwealth of Israel was to be judged or governed, and were to be the rule of their conduct to one another, and a rule of judgment to their judges in the execution of judgment and justice among them:

which thou shall set before them; besides the ten commands before delivered. They were spoken by God himself in the hearing of the people; these were delivered to Moses after he went up to the mount again, at the request of the people, to be their mediator, to be by him set before them as the rule of their behaviour, and to enjoin them the observance of them; in order to which he was not only to rehearse them, but to write them out, and set them in a plain and easy light before them: and though they did not hear these with their own ears from God himself, as the ten commands; yet, as they had the utmost reason to believe they came from him, and it was at their own request that he, and not God, might speak unto them what was further to be said, with a promise they would obey it, as if they had immediately heard it from him; it became them to receive these laws as of God, and yield a cheerful obedience to them; nor do we find they ever questioned the authority of them; and as their government was a Theocracy, and God was more immediately their King than he was of any other people, it was but right, and what might be expected, that they should have their civil laws from him, and which was their privilege, and gave them the preference to all other nations, **De 4:5**.

Exodus 21:2

Ver. 2. If thou buy an Hebrew servant,.... Who sells himself either through poverty, or rather is sold because of his theft, see Ex 22:3 and so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"when ye shall buy for his theft, a servant, a son of an Israelite;"

agreeably to which Aben Ezra observes, this servant is a servant that is sold for his theft; and he says, it is a tradition with them, that a male is sold for his theft, but not a female; and the persons who had the selling of such were the civil magistrates, the Sanhedrim, or court of judicature; so Jarchi, on the text, says, "if thou buy", &c. that is, of the hand of the sanhedrim who sells him for his theft:

six years he shall serve; and no longer; and the Jewish doctors say {d}, if his master dies within the six years he must serve his son, but not his daughter, nor his brother, nor any other heirs:

and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing; without paying any money for his freedom, as it is explained Ex 21:11, nay, on the other hand, his master was not to send him away empty, but furnish him liberally out of his flock, floor, and wine press, since his six years' servitude was worth double that of an hired servant, De 15:13, and his freedom was to take place as soon as the six years were ended, and the seventh began, in which the Jewish writers agree: the Targum of Jonathan is, at the entrance of the seventh; and Aben Ezra's explanation is, at the beginning of the seventh year of his being sold; and Maimonides {e} observes the same. Now as this servant, in the state of servitude, was an emblem of that state of bondage to sin, Satan, and the law, which man is brought into by his theft, his robbing God of his glory by the transgression of his precepts; so likewise, in his being made free, he was an emblem of that liberty wherewith Christ, the Son of God, makes his people free from the said bondage, and who are free indeed, and made so freely without money, and without price, of pure free grace, without any merit or desert of theirs; and which freedom is attended with many bountiful and liberal blessings of grace.

{d} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 2. {e} Hilchot Abadim, c. 2. sect. 2.

Exodus 21:3

Ver. 3. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself,.... That is, if he came into his servitude "alone", as the Septuagint version has it, he should go out of it in like manner; the word for "by himself", some interpret with "his garment" {f}, or the skirt of one; and then the sense seems to be, that as he was clothed when he was sold, so he should be when made free: but rather the phrase literally is "with his body" {g}; not his naked body, or as destitute of raiment, and the necessaries of life; for, as before observed, his master was to furnish him liberally with good things: but the plain meaning is, that if he was a single or unmarried man when he entered his master's service, he should go out, so; or as a Jewish writer {h} expresses it, as if he should say, with his body, without another body with him, who is his wife, as appears by what follows; unless his master should give him a wife while in his service, which is supposed in the next verse, and even then he was to go out alone, if he chose to go out at all; though Jarchi says, if he was not married at first, his master might not give him a Canaanitish woman to beget slaves of her:

if he were married, then his wife shall go with him; that is, if he had a wife, a daughter of Israel, as the Targum of Jonathan; or an Israelitish woman, as Jarchi, and had her at his coming; for otherwise, if it was one his master after gave him, she might not go out, as appears by the following verse; but being his wife before his servitude, and an Israelitish woman, was not the master's bondmaid, nor bought with his money, and therefore might go out free with her husband.

{f} wpgb "cum quali veste", V. L. "cum veste sua"; some in Vatablus & Drusius. {g} "Cum corpore suo", Munster, Pagninus, Vatablus, Drusius; "solus corpore suo", Junius & Tremellius; "cum solo corpore suo", Piscator. {h} R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 15. 1.

Exodus 21:4

Ver. 4. If his master have given him a wife,.... One of his slaves, a Canaanitish woman, on purpose to beget slaves on her, since all born in his house were his own; this is supposed to be after he was come into his house, and into his service:

and she have born him sons or daughters; as she might have born him several of the one sort, or the other, if she was given to him quickly after his servitude began:

the wife and her children shall be her master's: she being his slave, and bought with his money, he had a right unto her, and to the children belonging to her, the birth following the belly; and being born in his house, they were also his. Jarchi here observes, that the Scripture speaks of a Canaanitish woman, for an Hebrew woman went out at the sixth year, and even before the sixth, if she produced the signs, that is, of puberty:

and he shall go out by himself; without his wife and children: if it be objected to this law, that it is contrary to the law of marriage, which is indissoluble, but by this dissolved; it may be replied, that the servant was not obliged by it to leave his wife, unless he chose it; on complying with certain conditions after mentioned, he might continue with her; besides, she was, according to Jarchi, but his secondary wife, and not only so, the marriage was not lawful, being with a Canaanitish woman, and not agreeable to the Lord; and being also her master's slave, to whom he had a right, he could retain her if he pleased, having only given her to his servant to beget slaves on for him.

Exodus 21:5

Ver. 5. And if the servant shall plainly say,.... Or, "in saying shall say" {i} shall express himself in plain and full terms, and repeat his words, and abide by them, signifying it as his last will and determined resolution:

I love my master, my wife, and my children, and I will not go out free; but continue in his servitude, having a great affection for his master, and that he might enjoy his wife and children he dearly loved; and being animated with such a principle, his servitude was a pleasure to him: and when our obedience to God springs from love to him, and to his cause and interest, which should be as dear to us as our families, it is then acceptable to God and delightful to ourselves; in De 15:16,

it is, because he loveth thee, and thine house, because he is well with thee; hence the Jewish writers say {k}, understanding by "house" a family, if a servant has a wife and children and his master not, his ear is not to be bored; and if his master has a wife and children and he has not, his ear is not to be bored; if he loves his master and his master do not love him, or his master loves him and he do not love his master, or if he is sick, &c. his ear is not to be bored.

{i} rmay rma {k} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 22. 1. Maimon. in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 2.

Exodus 21:6

Ver. 6. Then his master shall bring him unto the judges,.... To Elohim, to God, to the judgment seat of God, according to the Septuagint; to some person or persons to inquire of God what is to be done in such a case; but this seems needless, since it is here declared: no doubt civil magistrates or judges are meant by Elohim, or the gods, as in Ps 82:1, and so Jarchi interprets it of the house of judgment, or sanhedrim, the court that had convicted the servant of theft, and had sold him to him, it was proper he should acquaint them with it, have their opinion about it; and especially it was proper to have him to them, that he might before them, even in open court, declare his willingness to abide in his master's service; and from whom, as the Targum of Jonathan, he was to receive power and authority to retain him in his service:

he shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost; either of the gate of the city, where the judges were sitting, before whom what follows was to be done, as Aben Ezra suggests; or rather the door of his master, or any other man's, as Maimonides {l}:

and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; or with a needle, as the Targum of Jonathan, which also says it was the right ear; and so Jarchi; and the upper part of it, as says Maimonides, who likewise observes, that that with which it is bored must be of metal; and moreover, that it is the master himself that must do it, and not his son, nor his messenger, nor a messenger of the sanhedrim {m}: the ear is an hieroglyphic of obedience, and the boring of it through to the doorpost denotes the strict and close obedience of such a servant to his master, and how he is, and ought to be, addicted to his service, and be constantly employed in it, and never stir from it, nor so much as go over the threshold of his master's house. This custom of boring a servant's ear continued in Syria till the times of Juvenal, as appears by some lines of his: {n}

and he shall serve him for ever; as long as he lives {o}; however, until the year of jubilee, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi; if there was one before his death, for nothing else could free him; denoting freedom by Christ in his acceptable year, and day of salvation.

{l} Hilchot Abadim, c. 3. sect. 9. {m} Ibid. {n} "----Molles quod in aure fenestrae Arguerint, licet ipse negem?" Satyr. 1. {o} "Serviet in aeternum, qui parvo nesciet uti". Horat.

Exodus 21:7

Ver. 7. And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant,.... That is, if an Israelite, as the Targum of Jonathan, sells his little daughter, as the same Targum, and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra, one that is under age, that is not arrived to the age of twelve years and a day, and this through poverty; he not being able to support himself and his family, puts his daughter out to service, or rather sells her to be a servant:

she shall not go out as the menservants do; that are sold, before described; or rather, according to the Targum,

"as the Canaanitish servants go out, who are made free, because of a tooth, or an eye, (the loss of them,
Ex 21:26) but in the years of release, and with the signs (of puberty), and in the jubilee, and at the death of their masters, with redemption of silver,"

so Jarchi.

Exodus 21:8

Ver. 8. If she please not her master,.... "Be evil in the eyes of her master" {p}; and he has no liking of her, and love to her, not being agreeable in her person, temper, or conduct, so that he does not choose to make her his wife:

who hath betrothed her to him; but not completed the marriage, as he promised, when he bought her, or at least gave reason to expect that he would; for, according to the Jewish canons, a Hebrew handmaid might not be sold but to one who laid himself under obligation to espouse her to himself, or his son, when she was fit to be betrothed {q}; and so Jarchi says, he ought to espouse her, and take her to be his wife, for the money of her purchase is the money of her espousals. There is a double reading of this passage, the Keri, or marginal reading we follow; the Cetib, or written text, is, "who hath not betrothed her", both may be taken in, "who hath not betrothed her to him", as he said he would, or as it was expected he should; for, had she been really betrothed, what follows could not have been done:

then shall he let her be redeemed; she being at age, and fit for marriage, and her master not caring to marry her, her father shall redeem her, as the Targum of Jonathan; it was incumbent on him to do that, as it was on her master to let her be redeemed, to admit of the redemption of her; or whether, as Aben Ezra says, she redeemed herself, or her father, or one of her relations, if she was near the six years (the end of them), they reckoned how many years she had served, and how many were yet to the seventh, or to the time that she is in her own power, and according to the computation was the redemption: thus, for instance, as it is by others {r} put, if she was bought for six pounds, then one pound is the service of every year; and if she redeemed herself, her master took off of the money for the years she had served; or thus {s}, if she was bought for sixty pence, and had served two years, he must pay her forty pence, and so free her:

to sell her unto a strange nation, he shall have no power; that is, to another man, as both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, even to an Israelite that was of another family, to whom the right of redemption did not belong; for to sell an Israelite, man or woman, to a Gentile, or one of another nation, was not allowed of in any case, as Josephus {t} observes; but the meaning is, he had no power to sell her to another, though of the same nation, to be his handmaid; this power neither her master nor her father had, as Jarchi asserts, she being redeemed, and in her own power:

seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her; in not fulfilling his promise made to her father when he sold her to him, or not answering the expectation he had raised in her; and especially he dealt thus with her, if he had corrupted her, and yet refused to betroth and marry her.

{p} ynyeb her "mala in oculis", Montanus; "mala videbitur in oculis", Junius & Tremellius; "mala fuerit in oculis", Drusius. {q} Maimon. Hilchot Abadim, c. 4. sect. 11. & in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 2. {r} Bartenora in Kiddush. ib. {s} Maimon. in ib. {t} Antiqu. l. 16. c. 1. sect. 1.

Exodus 21:9

Ver. 9. And if he have betrothed her unto his son,.... Not caring to betroth and marry her himself, as being more suitable in age for his son than for himself;

he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters; as if she was his daughter, and give her a dowry: or the son shall treat her after the manner the daughters of Israel are treated when married, by giving her food, raiment, and the duty of marriage, so Jarchi: or after the manner of the daughters of Israel that are virgins, and who are not sold, as Aben Ezra.

Exodus 21:10

Ver. 10. If he take him another wife,.... The father takes another wife for his son, or the son takes another wife to himself after he has betrothed and married his father's maidservant:

her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish; neither deny it her in whole, nor lessen it in part, but give her her full due of each. What is meant by the two former words is easy, and admits of no difficulty, the latter is differently interpreted. Some take it to signify no other than an "habitation" {u}, that as he was to provide food and raiment for her, so an house to dwell, in; but the generality of interpreters, Jewish and Christian, understand it as we do, of the conjugal duty, the use of the marriage bed, or what the apostle calls due benevolence, **1Co 7:3**. The word is thought to have the signification of a fixed time for it; and the Misnic doctors {w} are very particular in assigning the set times of it for different persons; and in those countries where there were, and where there still are, plurality of wives, each had, and have their turns, see
Ge 30:15.

{u} htne "habitationem ejus", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; so some in Aben Ezra. Vid. Pfeiffer. "dubia vexata", cent. 1. loc. 97. {w} Misn. Cetubot, c. 5. sect. 6.

Exodus 21:11

Ver. 11. And if he do not these three unto her,.... Not the three things last mentioned; though this sense, Aben Ezra says, many of their interpreters give, which is rejected by him, so do some Christian expositors; but these three things are, espousing her to himself, or to his son, or redeeming her by the hand of her father; that is, letting her be redeemed by him, as the Targum of Jonathan; and so Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Ben Melech: the meaning is, if one or other of these things are not done,

then shall she go out free without money; be dismissed from her servitude, and not obliged to pay anything for her freedom; the Targum of Jonathan adds, he shall give her a bill of divorce; that is, the son to whom she had been betrothed, and another wife taken by him, and she denied the above things; which favours the first sense.

Exodus 21:12

Ver. 12. He that smiteth a man, so that he die,.... The Targum of Jonathan is, that smites a man or daughter of Israel with the sword; but there is no need to restrain the words either to persons of any certain nation, nor to any instrument with which a person may be smitten as to die: but any human person, man, woman, or child, of whatsoever nation, and they smitten with anything whatever, that issues in their death:

shall surely be put to death; by the order of the civil magistrate, and by the hand of such as shall be appointed by him; for this is the original law of God, **Ge 9:6**.

Exodus 21:13

Ver. 13. And if a man lie not in wait,.... For the life of another to take it away; or does not do it willingly, as the Septuagint version, does not seek after it, nor design it:

but God delivers him into his hand; it being suffered and ordered by the providence of God, without whose knowledge and will nothing comes to pass, even what may seem to be a contingent thing, or matter of chance, to us; or it is so brought about in providence, that one man falls into the hands of another, and his life is taken away by him, though not purposely and maliciously; because, as Aben Ezra expresses it, for another sin which he has committed, and for which he must die in this way, though not intended by the person the more immediate cause of his death:

then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee; and there be safe both from the avenger of blood, and the civil magistrate; which place, while Israel were in the wilderness, was the camp of the Levites, according to Jarchi, or the altar, as follows; but when they were come to Canaan's land, there were cities of refuge appointed for such persons, that killed a man unawares, to flee to, and where they were safe from private vengeance, and falling a sacrifice to public justice.

Exodus 21:14

Ver. 14. But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile,.... That comes with malice in his heart, with wrath in his countenance, in a bold, daring, hostile manner, using all the art, cunning, and contrivance he can, to take away the life of his neighbour; no asylum, no refuge, not anything to screen him from justice is to be allowed him: hence, a messenger of the sanhedrim, or an executioner, one that inflicts the forty stripes, save one, or a physician, or one that chastises his son or scholar, under whose hands persons may die, do not come under this law; for though what they do they may do wilfully, yet not with guile, as Jarchi and others observe, not with an ill design, but for good:

thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die: that being the place which in early times criminals had recourse unto, Joab and others, as well as in later times, to secure them from vengeance; but a man guilty of wilful murder was not to be protected in this way; and the Targum of Jonathan is,

"though he is a priest, (the Jerusalem Targum has it, an high priest,) and ministers at mine altar, thou shalt take him from thence, and slay him with the sword,"

so Jarchi; but the law refers not to a person ministering in his office at the altar of the Lord, but to one that should flee there for safety, which yet he should not have.

Exodus 21:15

Ver. 15. And he that smiteth his father or his mother,.... With his fist, or with a stick, or cane, or such thing, though they died not with the blow, yet it occasioned any wound, or caused a bruise, or the part smitten black and blue, or left any print of the blow; for, as Jarchi says, the party was not guilty, less by smiting there was a bruise, or weal, made, or any mark or scar: but if so it was, then he

shall be surely put to death; the Targum of Jonathan adds, with the suffocation of a napkin; and so Jarchi says with strangling; the manner of which was this, the person was sunk into a dunghill up to his knees, and two persons girt his neck with a napkin or towel until he expired. This crime was made capital, to show the heinousness of it, how detestable it was to God, and in order to deter from it.

Exodus 21:16

Ver. 16. And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him,.... One of the children of

Israel, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and so the Septuagint version: but though this law was given to the Israelites primarily, yet was made for men stealers in general, as the apostle observes, who plainly has reference to it, **1Ti 1:9**:

or if he be found in his hand; before the selling of him, as Jarchi notes, since he stole him in order to sell him, he was guilty of death, as follows:

he shall surely be put to death; with strangling, as the same Jewish writer remarks, as on the preceding verse; and Jarchi sets it down as a rule, that all death in the law, simply expressed, is strangling.

Exodus 21:17

Ver. 17. And he that curseth his father, or his mother,.... Though he does not smite them with his hand, or with any instrument in it, yet if he smites them with his tongue, reviles and reproaches them, speaks evil of them, wishes dreadful imprecations upon them, curses them by the name explained, as the Targum of Jonathan calls it, by the name Jehovah, wishing the Lord would curse them, or that his curse might light upon them, see Pr 20:20,

shall surely be put to death; or be killed with casting stones on him, as the Targum of Jonathan, or with stoning; so Jarchi, who observes, that wherever it is said, "his blood be upon him", it is meant of stoning, as it is of the man that curses his father or his mother,
Le 20:9 which was after this manner, the place of stoning was two cubits high, to which the malefactor with his hands bound was brought; from whence one of the witnesses against him cast him down headlong, of which, if he did not die, then they took up stones and cast on him, and if he died not through them, then all Israel came and stoned him; that is, the multitude upon the spot: this verse in the Septuagint version follows Ex 21:15, with which it agrees, both respecting the same persons.

Exodus 21:18

Ver. 18. And if men strive together,.... Quarrel and fight, and wrestle with and box one another:

and one smite another with a stone; which lying near him he might take up, and in his passion throw it at his antagonist:

or with his fist; with his double fist, as we express it, with his hand closed, that it might come with the greater force, and give the greater blow:

and he die not, but keepeth his bed; does not die with the blow of the stone or fist, yet receives so much damage by it that he is obliged to take to his bed; or, as the Targum of Jerusalem paraphrases it, is cast on the bed sick; or, as the Targum of Jonathan, falls into a disease, as a fever, or the like, through the force of the blow, so that he is confined to his room and to his bed.

Exodus 21:19

Ver. 19. If he rise again,.... From his bed, or from his disease, as the last mentioned Targum, recovers again, at least so far as to be able to do what follows:

and walk abroad upon his staff; if he is able to get out of his bed, and especially out of his house, and can be seen walking about in the street or in the field, though he is obliged to make use of a staff, and lean upon it, being yet weak and sickly;

then shall he that smote him be quit; from the judgment of slaying, as the Targum, he shall not be charged with manslaughter, or be found guilty of a capital crime, but discharged from that:

only shall he pay for the loss of his time; as much as he could have got in that time by his labour, from which he was obliged to cease: the Jewish writers add other things also he was to pay for, as the Targum of Jonathan, particularly; as for his pain, and for his loss of any member, and for his shame and disgrace, as well as the physician's fee, which is supposed to be included in the next clause:

and cause [him] to be thoroughly healed; take care that he has a physician or surgeon, and that the proper medicines be applied, and those continued until he is quite well; all which must be at the expense of the smiter.

Exodus 21:20

Ver. 20. And if a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod,.... A

Canaanitish servant or maid, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi; and that only with a rod for the correction of them, and not with a sword or any such destroying weapon, which would seem as though he intended to kill, yet nevertheless:

and he die under his hand; immediately, while he is smiting or beating him or her, on the same day, as the above Targum interprets it:

he shall be surely punished; or condemned to the punishment of being slain with the sword, as the said Targum and Jarchi explain it: this law was made to deter masters from using severity and cruelty towards their servants.

Exodus 21:21

Ver. 21. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two,.... And does not die immediately, or the same day, but lives twenty four hours, as the Jewish writers interpret it; so Abendana {x} explains the phrase, "a day or two";

"a day which is as two days, and they are twenty four hours from time to time,"

that is, from the time he was smitten to the time of his continuance; and so it is elsewhere explained {y} by a day we understand a day, which is like two days, that is, from time to time, the meaning of which is, from a certain time in one day to the same in another:

he shall not be punished; that is, with death;

for he [is] his money; is bought with his money, and is good as money, and therefore it is a loss sufficient to him to lose him; and it may be reasonably thought he did not smite his servant with an intention to kill him, since he himself is the loser by it.

{x} Not. in Miclol Yophi in loc. {y} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Zabim, c. 2. sect. 3.

Exodus 21:22

Ver. 22. If men strive,.... Quarrel and fight with one another, which is to be understood of Hebrews, as Aben Ezra observes:

and hurt a woman with child; who being the wife of one of them, and also an Israelitish woman, interposes to part them, or help her husband; but the other, instead of striking his antagonist as he intended, gives her a blow:

so that her fruit depart from her; or, "her children go forth" {z}, out of her womb, as she may have more than one; through the fright of the quarrel, and fear of her husband being hurt, and the blow she received by interposing, might miscarry, or, falling into labour, come before her time, and bring forth her offspring sooner than expected:

and yet no mischief follow: to her, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra restrain it to the woman; and which mischief they interpret of death, as does also the Targum of Onkelos; but it may refer both to the woman and her offspring, and not only to the death of them, but to any hurt or damage to either of them: now though there was none of any sort,

he shall surely be punished; that is, be fined or mulcted for striking the woman, and hastening the childbirth:

according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine; the husband might propose what fine should be paid, and might ask it in court; and if the smiter agreed to it, well and good, but if he judged it an exorbitant demand, he might appeal to the judges; for the husband might not lay what fine he pleased: this, if disputed, was to be decided by the judges, and as they determined it, it was paid; of which Maimonides {a} gives this account:

"he that strikes a woman, and her fruit depart, though he did not intend it, is obliged to pay the price of the birth to the husband, and for hurt and pain to the woman; how do they estimate the price of the birth? they consider the woman how well she was before she brought forth, and how well she is after she has brought forth, and they give it to the husband; if the husband be dead, they give it to the heirs; if she is stricken after the death of her husband, they give the price of the birth to the woman."

{z} hydly wauyw "et egressi fuerint nati ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius. {a} Hilchot Chobel Umazzik, c. 4. sect. 1. 2.

Exodus 21:23

Ver. 23. And if any mischief follow,.... According as that is, so shall it be done to the smiter: if death follows,

then thou shalt give life for life; if death to the woman, so Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it; to which agrees the Targum of Jonathan,

"but if there is death in her, then ye shall judge or condemn the life of the murderer for the life of the woman;"

about which, Jarchi says, there is a difference among their doctors; some say life properly, absolutely the person himself; others say money, but not life properly; for he that intends to kill one and kills another is acquitted from death, but must pay to the heirs the price (of the person killed) as that person might be sold for in the market: and indeed it seems hard that a person that kills another at unawares should die for it; it is more reasonable that the punishment should in such a case be commuted for something less than life; and that though no satisfaction was to be taken for a wilful murderer, Nu 35:31, yet it seems to imply that it might be taken for one that was so without design; as by another law cities of refuge are appointed for the manslayer at unawares: the canons of the Jews, according to Maimonides {b}, run thus;

"he that strikes a woman, and she miscarries and dies, although it is done ignorantly; lo, such an one is free from payment, and he does not pay anything, as it is said, "if there is no mischief, &c." the Scripture does not distinguish between what is done ignorantly and presumptuously, in a thing in which there is not death by the sanhedrim, to free him from payment; in what things? when he intends the woman; but if he intends his neighbour and strikes the woman, though she dies, since her death is, without intention, lo, this is a thing in which there is not death by the sanhedrim, and he pays the price of the birth:"

the Septuagint version interprets this, not of the woman that miscarries and dies, but of the child that becomes an abortive; if that was not formed and shaped, then only a fine was to be laid, but if it was come to its proper form and shape, and so was animated or quickened, then life was to go for life: and so, according to the Salic laws, he that killed an infant in its mother's womb was to pay 8000 pence, which made two hundred shillings; but if he was the cause of a woman's miscarriage, by blows or otherwise, if the birth was animated, according to the civil law, he was to be punished with death {c}: but one would think, where this is only accidental and not intended, such a punishment is too rigid and severe: however, neither this nor what follows were left to the will of a private person to inflict at his pleasure, but to the civil magistrate; and therefore no ways encourages private revenge, in favour of which it was applied by the Pharisees in Christ's time, whose gloss he refutes, **Mt 5:38** nor are the words directed to the offender in this and the following cases, but to Moses, and so to all judges under him and in succession, who were to see these laws put in execution.

{b} Chobel Umazzik, c. 4. sect. 5. 6. {c} Vid L'Empereur in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 3. sect. 2.

Exodus 21:24

Ver. 24. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. This is "lex talionis", the law of retaliation, and from whence the Heathens had theirs; but whether this is to be taken strictly and literally, or only for pecuniary mulcts, is a question; Josephus {d} understands it in the former sense, the Jewish writers generally in the latter; and so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it;

"the price of an eye for an eye, &c."

Jarchi on the place observes, that,

"he that puts out his neighbour's eye must pay him the price of his eye, according to the price of a servant sold in the market, and so of all the rest; for not taking away of members strictly is meant, as our doctors here interpret it;"

in a place he refers to, and to which Aben Ezra agrees; and of the difference and dispute between the Jews concerning this matter,
See Gill on "Mt 5:38" and indeed, though these laws of retaliation should, according to the letter of them, be attended to as far as they can; yet, in some cases, it seems necessary that they should not be strictly attended to, but some recompence made in another way, and nothing seems more agreeable than a pecuniary one: thus, for instance, this law cannot be literally executed, when one that has never an eye puts out the eye of another, as it is possible that a blind man may; or one that has no teeth may strike out the tooth of another; in such cases eye cannot be given for eye, nor tooth for tooth; and, as Saadiah Gaon {e} observes, if a man should smite the eye of his neighbour, and the third part of the sight of his eye should depart, how will he order it to strike such a stroke as that, without adding or lessening? and if a man that has but one eye, or one hand, or one foot, should damage another man in those parts,

and must lose his other eye, or hand, or foot, he would be in a worse case and condition than the man he injured; since he would still have one eye, or hand, or foot; wherefore a like law of Charondas among the Thurians is complained of, since it might be the case, that a man with one eye might have that struck out, and so be utterly deprived of sight; whereas the man that struck it out, though he loses one for it, yet has another, and so not deprived of sight utterly, and therefore thought not to be sufficiently punished; and that it was most correct that he should have both his eyes put out for it: and hence Diodorus Siculus {f} reports of a one-eyed man who lost his eye, that he complained of this law to the people, and advised to have it altered: this "lex talionis" was among the Roman laws of the "twelve tables" {g}.

{d} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 33. 35. {e} Apud Aben Ezram in loc. {f} Bibliothec. l. 12. par. 2. p. 82, 83. {g} A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 20. c. 1.

Exodus 21:25

Ver. 25. Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. This is to be understood of burning a man's flesh with fire; of wounds made by any means, so that the blood is let out; and of blows, and the prints and marks of them; of stripes and weals where the blood is settled, and the part is turned black and blue: the Targum of Jonathan is, the price of the pain of burning for burning, &c. and indeed, in everyone of these cases, the law could not be well literally executed; for it would be very difficult to burn and wound and mangle a man exactly as he had done another: and as Favorinus {h} objects against the law of the twelve tables of the Romans concerning retaliation, how can a man make a wound in another exactly as long, and as broad, and as deep as that he has given? nor would he suffer a larger to be made, as it was not just it should; and to which may be added, that all constitutions are not alike, and burning and wounding and striping, especially in some parts, might prove mortal, and the person might die thereby; to them the law of retaliation would not be observed, the punishment would be exceeded; and it is much more agreeable to justice and equity that it should be lessened rather than increased; and it may be observed, the law of the twelve tables with the Romans, concerning maiming of members, only took place when the parties could not come to an agreement; and with respect to the Jewish law, Josephus {i} himself says, that the man that has his eye put out may receive money for it, if he is willing, which the law allows of.

{h} A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 20. c. 1. {i} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 4. c. 33, 35.)

Exodus 21:26

Ver. 26. If a man smite the eye of his servant,.... Give him a blow on the eye in a passion, as a correction for some fault he has committed:

or the eye of his maid, that it perish; strike her on that part in like manner, so that the eye is beaten or drops out, or however loses its sight, and "[is] blinded", as the Septuagint version; or "corrupts" it {k}, it turns black and blue, and gathers corrupt matter, and becomes a sore eye; yet if the sight is not lost, or corrupts so as to perish, this law does not take place; the Targum of Jonathan, and to Jarchi restrain this to a Canaanitish servant or maid:

he shall let him go free for his eye's sake; or "them", as the Septuagint; his right to them as a servant was hereby forfeited, and he was obliged to give them their freedom, let the time of servitude, that was to come, be what it would. This law was made to deter masters from using their servants with cruelty, since though humanity and goodness would not restrain them from ill usage of them, their own profit and advantage by them might.

{k} htxv "et corruperit eum", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; so Ainsworth.

Exodus 21:27

Ver. 27. And if he smite out his manservant's tooth, or his maidservant's tooth,.... Give them such a slap on the face, or a blow on the mouth, as to strike out one of their teeth; this also the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi restrain to a Canaanitish servant or maid;

he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake; both him and her, the servant and the maid; this, though of lesser consequence than the loss of an eye, was punished in the same manner with the loss of the servant man or maid, to make masters careful how they abused their servants in any degree. And though only these parts are expressed, yet Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe, that all other principal members of the body, which they reckon to be twenty four, are included, as the fingers, toes, &c.

Exodus 21:28

Ver. 28. If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die,.... That are Israelites, of whom only Aben Ezra interprets it; but though they may be principally designed, yet not solely; for no doubt if one of another nation was gored to death by the ox of an Israelite, the same penalty would be inflicted, as follows:

then the ox shall be surely stoned; which is but an exemplification of the original law given to Noah and his sons, **Ge 9:5**: "at the hand of every beast will I require it"; i.e. the blood of the lives of men; which shows the care God takes of them, that even a beast must die that is the means of shedding man's blood:

and his flesh shall not be eaten; it being as an impure beast according to this sentence, as Maimonides {l} observes; and even though it might have been killed in a regular manner before it was stoned, it was not to be eaten; no, not even by Heathens, nor by dogs might it be eaten, as a dead carcass might by a proselyte of the gate, or a stranger; this might not be given nor sold to him; for, as Aben Ezra observes, all profit of them is here forbidden:

but the owner of the ox [shall be] quit; from punishment, as the last mentioned writer observes, from suffering death; he shall only suffer the loss of his ox: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"he shall be quit from the judgment of slaughter (or condemnation of murder), and also from the price of a servant or maid,"

which was thirty shekels, Ex 21:32.

{l} Hilchot Maacolot Asurot, c. 4. sect. 22.

Exodus 21:29

Ver. 29. But if the ox were wont to push with his horns in time past,.... Or "from or before yesterday, to the third" {m} that is, three days before, and had made three pushes, as Jarchi explains it:

and it hath been testified to his owner; by sufficient witnesses, who saw him push at people for three days past: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"and it hath been testified to the face of his owner three days."

Concerning this testimony Maimonides {n} thus writes,

"this is a testification, all that testify of it three days; but if he pushes, or bites, or kicks, or strikes even an hundred times on one day, this is no testification (not a sufficient one): three companies of witnesses testify of it in one day, lo, this is a doubt, whether it is a (proper) testimony or not; there is no testification but before the owner, and before the sanhedrim:"

and he hath not kept him in; in some enclosed place, house or field, not frequented by people, and where there was no danger of doing any hurt, if this care was not taken, after a proper testimony had been given of his vicious disposition. By the Roman laws {o} oxen that pushed with their horns were to have hay bound about them, that those that met them might beware of them; hence that of Horace {p}: but that he hath killed a man or a woman; by pushing and goring them with his horns, or any other way, as biting or kicking:

the ox shall be stoned; as is provided for the preceding law:

and his owner shall be put to death; since he was accessory to the death of the person killed, not keeping in his beast, when he had sufficient notice of his vicious temper: the Targum of Jonathan, and so other Jewish writers, interpret this of death sent upon him from heaven, or death by the immediate hand of God, as sudden death, or death by some disease inflicted, or before a man is fifty years of age; but there is no doubt to be made but this intends death by the civil magistrate, according to the original law, **Ge 9:6**.

{m} Mvlv lmtm "ab heri et nudiustertius", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator, Drusius. {n} Hilchot Niske Mammon, c. 6. sect. 1, 2. {o} Plutarch. in Crasso. {p} "Foenum habet in cornu, longe fuge". Horat. Sermon. l. 1. Satyr. 4.

Exodus 21:30

Ver. 30. If there be laid on him a sum of money,.... By the decree of the judges, as Aben Ezra, or which the sanhedrim of Israel have laid upon him; if his sentence of death is commuted for a fine, with the consent of the relations of the deceased, who in such a case are willing to show mercy, and take a fine instead of the person's death; supposing it was through carelessness and negligence, and not with any ill design that he did not keep up his ox from doing damage, after he had notice:

then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatever, is laid upon him; whatever mulct or fine he is amerced with by the court, instead of the sentence of death first pronounced. Of this ransom Maimonides {q} thus writes:

"the ransom is according as the judges consider what is the price (or value) of him that is slain; (i.e. according to his rank, whether a noble or common man, a free man or a servant) all is according to the estimation of him that is slain.--To whom do they give the ransom? to the heirs of the slain; and if a woman is killed, the ransom is given to the heirs of her father's (family), and not to her husband."

{q} Hilchot Niske Mammon, c. 11. sect. 1, 2.

Exodus 21:31

Ver. 31. Whether he have gored a son, or have gored a daughter,.... A little son or daughter, and both Israelites, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; this is observed, because only a man or woman are made mention of in Ex 21:29 persons grown up; and lest it should be thought that only adult persons were intended, this is added, to show that the same regard is had to little ones as to grown persons, should they suffer by an ox in like manner as men and women may. The Targum of Jonathan restrains this to a son or daughter of an Israelite; but the life of everyone, of whatsoever nation, is equally provided for, and guarded against by the original law of God:

according to this judgment shall it be done unto him; to the owner of the ox that has gored a child, male or female; that is, he shall be put to death, if he has been warned of the practice of his ox for three days past, and has took no care to keep him in; or he shall pay the ransom of his life, as it has been laid by the court, with the consent of the relations of the children.

Exodus 21:32

Ver. 32. If the ox shall push a manservant, or a maidservant,.... Which the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret of a Canaanitish servant, man or maid; but no doubt the same provision was made for an Hebrew servant, man or maid, as for a Gentile one:

he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver; that is, the owner of the ox shall pay so much to the masters of the servants for the loss they have sustained by his ox goring them; and Maimonides {r} observes, that

"the ransom of servants, whether great or small, whether male or female, is fixed in the law, thirty shekels of good silver, whether the servant is worth a hundred pounds, or whether he is worth but a penny."

This was the price our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was sold at,
See Gill on "Mt 26:15".

{r} Hilchot Niske Maimon, c. 11. sect. 1.

Exodus 21:33

Ver. 33. If a man shall open a pit,.... That has been dug in time past, and filled up again, or take the covering from it, and leave it uncovered: "or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it": a new one, in the street, as the Targum of Jonathan; or in a public place, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; otherwise a man might dig one for water, in his own fields, in enclosed places, where there was no danger of cattle coming thither, and falling therein:

and an ox or an ass fall therein; or any other beast, as Jarchi observes; for these are mentioned only as instances, and are put for all others. Maimonides {s} says,

"if a man digs a pit in a public place, and an ox or ass fall into it and die, though the pit is full of shorn wool, and the like, the owner of the pit is bound to pay the whole damage; and this pit (he says) must be ten hands deep; if it is less than that, and an ox, or any other beast or fowl fall into it and die, he is free,"

{s} Hilchot Niske Maimon. c. 12. sect, 1, 10. so Bartenora in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 1. sect. 1.

Exodus 21:34

Ver. 34. The owner of the pit shall make it good,.... Repair the loss of the ox or ass:

and give the money unto the owner of them: the price of them, what they are worth: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"the owner of the pit shall pay the silver, he shall return to its owner the price of the ox or ass:"

and the dead beast shall be his; either the owner of the pit; who pays the full value for the ox or ass killed, which seems but reasonable; or

"the injured person as Jarchi, for he says, they reckon or estimate the carcass, and he takes it for the price;"

that is, for part of the price it is valued at.

Exodus 21:35

Ver. 35. And if one man's ox hurt another's, that he die,.... By pushing with his horns, or his body, or by biting with his teeth, as Jarchi, or by any way whatever:

then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money; the Scripture speaks, as the same writer observes, of one of equal value, otherwise the man that had his ox killed might be greatly a gainer by it; for if his ox was a poor one, and of little value, and the ox that killed his a good one, of value greatly superior, which according to this law was to be sold, and the money divided between the two owners, the man that lost his ox might have double the worth of it, or more, which was not equitable. On the other hand, according to the Jewish canons {t}, the case stood thus,

"when an ox of the value of one pound strikes an ox of the value of twenty, and kills him, and, lo, the carcass is of the value of four pounds, the owner of the ox is bound to pay him eight pounds, which is the half of the damage, (added to the half part of the price of the carcass,) but he is not bound to pay, but of the body of the ox which hurts, because it is said, "they shall sell the live ox"; wherefore if an ox of the value of twenty pieces of money should kill one of two hundred, and the carcass is valued at a pound, the master of the carcass cannot say to the master of the live ox, give me fifty pieces of money; but it will be said to him, lo, the ox which did the hurt is before thee, take him, and go thy way, although he is worth no more than a penny:"

and the dead ox also they shall divide; the money the carcass is worth; or it is sold for.

{t} Maimon. Hilchot Niske Mammon, c. 1. sect. 1.

Exodus 21:36

Ver. 36. Or if it be known that the ox hath used to push in time past,.... If it is a plain case, and a thing well known in the neighbourhood, and there are witnesses enough to testify it, that it has yesterday, and for two or three days running, pushed with his horns men and cattle, as they have come in his way, See Gill on "Ex 21:29"

and his owner hath not kept him in; took no care to prevent his doing mischief by putting him into a barn or out house, or into an enclosure, where he could do no damage to any:

he shall surely pay ox for ox; that is, he shall give as good an ox to him, whose ox has been killed by his, as that was, or pay him the full worth and value of it: and the dead shall be his own; shall not be divided as in the preceding case, but shall be the proprietor's wholly, that is, the sufferer's; because the owner of the vicious ox took no care of him, though it was well known he was mischievous, for which negligence he was punished this way.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 22

This chapter contains various laws concerning theft, Ex 22:1, concerning damage done to fields and vineyards by beasts, and to corn in stacks or standing, by fire, Ex 22:5, concerning anything or creature deposited in the hands of a neighbour, and they be stolen or lost by one means or another, Ex 22:7, concerning anything borrowed, and it comes to any damage, Ex 22:14, concerning fornication,
Ex 22:16 concerning witchcraft, bestiality, and idolatry,
Ex 22:18 concerning oppression, and affliction of the stranger, fatherless, and

widow, Ex 22:21 concerning taking usury and pledges, Ex 22:25, concerning irreverence to magistrates,
Ex 22:28, concerning the offering of firstfruits to God,
Ex 22:29 and the chapter is concluded with a prohibition of eating anything torn by beasts, Ex 22:31.

Ver. 1. If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep,.... In which the substance of men chiefly lay in those times, and particularly the people of Israel, who were now come out of Egypt, with their flocks and herds, and these lying near together, were the more liable to be stolen; and hence also the laws in the preceding chapter concerning oxen and damages done by them, and oxen and sheep are only mentioned; perhaps chiefly because used in sacrifice, as well as serviceable for other things; not but that stealing other cattle and other things were criminal and forbidden, and to be punished in proportion:

and kill it, or sell it; either of which cases would plainly show that he took it away with an intention to deprive the owner of it, and to convert it to his own use:

he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep; the reason of this difference, five being obliged to be given for the one, and but four for the other, is, because the one was more valuable than the other, as well as more useful, and also more easily stolen, and therefore the greater mulct or fine was laid upon the theft of it, to deter from it: the Targum of Jonathan expresses the reason of the law thus; five for oxen, because the theft of them hindered from ploughing, or made to cease from it; and for sheep but four, because there was trouble in the theft of them, and there was no tillage or agriculture by them: and Saadiah Gaon observes, that the damage that comes to the owner of the ox is more than that by a lamb, because with it, the ox, he ploughs, which is a creature that was used in those countries to be employed in that service, as well as in treading out the corn: Maimonides {u} accounts for it thus,

"the restitution of the theft of oxen is increased by one, because the theft of them is easy; sheep are fed in flocks, and are easily kept and watched, and can scarcely be taken away by theft but in the night; but oxen are fed scattered here and there, and therefore cannot be so easily kept by the herdsmen; hence also their theft used to be more common:"

four fold restitution was in use with the ancient Persians, with whom it was a rule, "whoever took any substance of another, in retaliation they took fourfold from him, and if he restored it, he gave fourfold of the same {w}."

{u} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 41. {w} Lib. Shed-dar, apud Hyde Relig. Vet. Pers. p. 472.

Exodus 22:2

Ver. 2. If a thief be found breaking up,.... An house, in order to steal money, jewels, household goods, &c. or breaking through any fence, hedge, or wall of any enclosure, where oxen, or sheep, or any other creatures are, in order to take them away: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"if in the hole of a wall (or window of it) a thief be found;"

that is, in the night, as appears from the following verse, "if the sun", &c. to which this is opposed, as Aben Ezra observes; some render it, with a digging instrument {x}; and it is a Jewish canon {y}, that

"if anyone enter with a digging instrument: he is condemned on account of his end;"

his design, which is apparent by the instrument found upon him; for, as Maimonides {z} observes,

"it is well known, that if anyone enters with a digging instrument, that he intends, if the master of the house opposes him to deliver his goods out of his power, that he will kill him, and therefore it is lawful to kill him; but it does not signify whether he enters with a digging instrument, either by the way of the court, or roof;"

and be smitten that he die be knocked down with a club, by the master of the house, or any of his servants, or be run through with a sword, or be struck with any other weapon, to hinder him from entrance and carrying off any of the goods of the house, and the blow be mortal: there shall no blood be shed for him: as for a man that is murdered; for to kill a man when breaking into a house, and, by all appearance, with an intention to commit murder, if resisted, in defence of a man's self, his life and property, was not to be reckoned murder, and so not punishable with death: or, "no blood" shall be "unto him" {a}; shall be imputed to him, the man that kills the thief shall not be chargeable with his blood, or suffer for shedding it; because his own life was risked, and it being at such a time, could call none to his assistance, nor easily discern the person, nor could know well where and whom he struck.

{x} trtxmb "cum perfossorio", Pagninus; "cum instrumento perfosserio", Tigurine version. {y} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 8. sect. 6. {z} Comment. in ib. {a} Mymd wl Nya "non ei sanguines", Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius.

Exodus 22:3

Ver. 3. If the sun be risen upon him,.... Either upon the thief, or upon the master of the house, or the person that finds the thief and smites him that he dies; it matters not which it is interpreted, it is true of both, for when it is risen on the one, it is on the other:

[there shall be] blood [shed] for him; the person that kills him shall die for it: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"if it is as clear as the sun (and so Jarchi), that not to kill any he entered, and he should kill him, there is guilt of shedding innocent blood:"

because coming at broad daylight, and when the sun was up, it was a plain case he came not with a design to murder, but only to steal; besides, being at such a time, the master of the house could call for help and assistance, and take him; which is what is suggested he should do, and not take away his life, but oblige him, if he had got any of his goods, to restore them, as follows:

for he should makes full restitution; by returning them and as much more, as the following verse shows:

if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft, by the sanhedrim, or court, of judicature: as the Targum of Jonathan, before whom he should be brought, and the theft proved upon him, and unto the year of the remission or release, as the same Targum; nor were such to be sold to strangers, or to serve forever, for they were to be dismissed after six years, as Josephus {b} observes: and it is a canon with the Jews {c}, that,

"an Hebrew servant whom the sanhedrim sell, they do not sell him but to an Israelite, or to a proselyte of righteousness;"

according to the Targum of Jonathan, it seems as if he was to be sold to the person from whom he stole, since it is,

"he shall he sold to him;"

but if not, however, the price he was sold at was to be given to him for a recompence of his loss; so says Maimonides {d},

"if he have not goods, neither movable nor immovable the sanhedrim sell him, and give the price to him that is injured, as it is said: "if he have nothing", &c. and adds, a man is sold for his theft but not a woman {e}:"

from hence it appears that theft was not a capital crime by the law of Moses: Draco is said to be the first who made it so; but his law being thought by the Athenians to be too severe, was annulled by them {f}: the law of the twelve tables, with the Romans greatly agrees with the Mosaic laws about theft; these permitted to kill a thief who should be taken in open theft, if either when he committed the theft it was night or if in the daytime, and he defended himself with weapons when about to be taken {g} or, as elsewhere expressed {h}, an open thief was delivered to servitude to him who was robbed, but nocturnal thief it was lawful to kill by the law of the twelve tables.

{b} Antiqu. l. 16. c. 1. sect. 1. {c} Maimon. Abadim. c. 1. sect. 3. {d} Hilchot Genubah, c. 3. sect. 11. {e} So Misn. Sotah, c. 3. sect, 8. {f} A. Gell Noct. Attic. l. 11. c. 18. {g} Ib. {h} Ib. l. 20. c. 1.

Exodus 22:4

Ver. 4. If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive,.... Or, "in finding be found" {i}, be plainly and evidently found upon him, before witnesses, as the Targum of Jonathan; so that there is no doubt of the theft; and it is a clear case that he had neither as yet killed nor sold the creature he had stolen, and to could be had again directly, and without any damage well as it would appear by this that he was not an old expert thief, and used to such practices, since he would soon have made away with this theft in some way or another:

whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, or any other creature; and even, as Jarchi thinks, anything else, as raiment, goods, &c.

he shall restore double; two oxen for an ox, two asses for an ass, and two sheep for a sheep: and, as the same commentator observes, two living ones, and not dead ones, or the price of two living ones: so Solon made theft, by his law, punishable with death, but with a double restitution {k}; and the reason why here only a double restitution and not fourfold is insisted on, as in Ex 22:1 is, because there the theft is persisted in, here not; but either the thief being convicted in his own conscience of his evil, makes confession, or, however, the creatures are found with alive, and so more useful being restored, and, being had again sooner, the loss is not quite so great.

{i} aumt aumh "inveniendo inventum fuerit", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.
{k} A. Gell, l. 11. c. 18.

Exodus 22:5

Ver. 5. If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten,.... Which is not his own, by putting cattle into it to feed upon it, as it is explained in the next clause:

and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field; do damage in one or both those two ways, either by his feet treading down the grass and fruits of the earth, which the Rabbins, as Jarchi says, think, is meant by putting in his beast; or with his beast eating up the same, which is intended by the latter phrase:

of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution for what damage is done by his beast in his neighbour's field or vineyard; and this held good of any garden or orchard injured in like manner; and it is a general rule with the Jews, that when any damage is sustained, he that does the damage is obliged to pay with the best the earth produces {l}, even though better than was the man's that suffered the loss, that for the future he might be more careful of doing injury to another {m}.

{l} Misc. Bava Kama, c. 1. sect. 1. {m} Bartenora in Misn. Gittin, c. 5. sect. 1.

Exodus 22:6

Ver. 6. If fire break out,.... Even though of itself, as Jarchi interprets it:

and catch in thorns a thorn hedge or fence, with which cornfields might be en closed:

so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed [therewith]; whether it be corn cut down, bound up in sheaves, and laid up in heaps or stacks, or whether it be yet growing, and not fully ripe, at least not cut down, or any other fruits of the field; if the fire that takes the thorns which are near them should reach to those, and kindle upon them and destroy them:

he that kindleth the fire, shall surely make restitution: that is, though he kindles the fire upon his own ground, yet being careless of it, it breaks out without his intention and design, and catches hold on a thorn hedge between him and his neighbour's field, and so spreads itself to the corn there, whether standing or in stacks, or to other fruits either lying or growing there; now, though he did not kindle the fire in the corn, and among the stacks or heaps of fruit in his neighbours field, yet, for his carelessness in not looking after the fire he had kindled in his own field, he was to make good all the damages his neighbour sustained hereby: the Jewish canons relating to this affair are these;

"if a man kindles a fire by the hands of a deaf man, or a fool, or a child, he is free by human judgment, but he is bound by the judgment of heaven (that is, to make restitution); if he kindles it by the hand of a knowing and understanding man, he is bound; one brings fire and another "afterwards" brings wood, he that brings the wood is bound; one brings wood and another "afterwards" brings fire, he that brings the fire is bound; "after that", another comes and blows the flame (or fire), he is bound; "but if" the wind blows it they are all free; he that kindles fire and it consumes wood or stones, or dust, he is bound, as it is said,
Ex 22:6 "if fire break out", &c. if the fire passes over a fence four cubits high, or a public road, or a river, he is free {n};"

those two things last mentioned, feeding on another man's field and fire, with the ox and the pit, observed in the preceding chapter, are with the Misnic doctors {o}, the four fathers' fountains, or sources of damages.

{n} Bartenora in Misn. Gittin, c. 5. sect. 4. {o} Ib. c. 1. sect. 1.

Exodus 22:7

Ver. 7. If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stock to keep,.... Without any reward for keeping it, as the Targum of Jonathan; and so other

Jewish writers {p} understand this passage of such as keep a deposit freely, having nothing for it; whether it be money or goods, gold, silver, jewels, raiment, household stuff or any kind of vessels or instruments used in the house, or in trade; and also cattle, as appears from Ex 22:9

and if it be stolen out of the man's house; into whose custody it was delivered:

if the thief be found, let him pay double: the worth of what is stolen, agreeably to the law in Ex 22:4 that is, if it was found in his hands; but if he had disposed of it, then he was to pay five fold or four fold, as in Ex 22:1, and so runs the Jewish canon {q},

"if anyone delivers to his neighbour a beast or vessels, and they are stolen or lost, he shall make restitution; but if he will not swear, for they say, one that keeps for nothing, may swear and be free; then if the thief should be found he shall pay double; if he has killed or sold, he shall pay four fold or five fold: to whom shall he pay? to him with whom the depositum is: if he swears, and will not pay, and the thief is found, he shall pay double; if he has killed or sold he shall pay four fold and five fold: to whom shall he pay? to the owner of the depositum."

{p} Jarchi in ver. 10. Bartenora in Misn. Shebuot, c. 6. sect. 5. {q} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 3. sect. 1.

Exodus 22:8

Ver. 8. If the thief be not found,.... And so no account can be given of the goods deposited, what is become of them, and it becomes a doubtful case whether they have been stolen or embezzled, and there is suspicion of the latter:

then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges: here called Elohim, gods, because they were God's vicegerents, and represented him, and acted under his power and authority; and who at this present were Moses, and those that judged the people under him, and afterwards the seventy elders, and all such who in succeeding times were judges in Israel, and bore the office of civil magistrates; before these the master of the house, or the person who had any goods committed to his care, and they were lost, was to be brought and put to his oath, and upon it examined, in order to find out what was become of the goods committed to him: to see whether he has put his hand to his neighbour's goods: took them to himself, made use of them, or disposed of them to his own advantage, and which was no other than a kind of theft.

Exodus 22:9

Ver. 9. For all manner of trespass,.... With respect to what is committed to a man's trust, and it is lost to the owner of it, there must be somewhere or other a trespass committed, either by the person into whose hands it was put, or by a thief that has stolen it from him:

whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing by which it appears that either of these, or any other cattle not named, as well as money and vessels, or household goods, or goods in trade, were sometimes, or might be lodged in the hands of another as a depositum for safety or convenience; and for which, or any other so deposited, and lost,

which another challengeth to be his, or affirms that he put into the hands of his neighbour, to be kept by him for him; "or who shall say this is he", or "he is" the person into whose hands I put it, or this is "it" {r}; such and such were the thing or things I delivered to him:

the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; who were to hear what each party had to say, and to examine the witnesses each of them brought, and consider the nature of the evidence given, and to judge and determine:

and whom the judges shall condemn; or "pronounce wicked" {s}, as having done a wicked thing; either the one as having brought a false accusation against his neighbour, charging him with a depositum he never had, or the other as having converted it to his own use:

he shall pay double unto his neighbour; either the depositor, who pretended to be so and was not, but brought a false charge against his neighbour, or a false witness, as Jarchi, such as one was to pay double to the person charged wrongfully; or, on the other hand, the person with whom the depositum was put, if it appeared that he had acted a fraudulent part, and abused his trust, then he was to pay double to the depositor.

{r} hz awh yk rmay rva "qui dixerit quod illud hoc", Montanus; "quum dixerit illud ipsum esse", Junius & Tremellius; "de qua dixerit aliquis illum ipsum esse", Piscator; so Ainsworth. {s} Neyvry Vid. Ainsworth.

Exodus 22:10

Ver. 10. If a man deliver to his neighbour an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast to keep,.... And he keeps it without a reward, as the Targum of Jonathan; but Jarchi and Aben Ezra more rightly interpret this of one that keeps for hire, as herdsmen, shepherds, &c. The Jews say {t} there are

"four sorts of keepers; he that keeps for nought (or freely), he that borrows, he that takes hire, and he that hires; he that keeps for nought swears in all cases (and is free), he that borrows pays for all (that is lost or stolen, &c.) he that takes hire, and he that hires, swear on account of that which is torn, or carried away, or dies, and they pay for that which is lost or stolen,"

which are the cases after supposed:

and it die; either of the above, or any other under the care of another; that is, dies of itself, not being killed by any, and its death sudden, and not easily accounted for:

or be hurt; receive any damage in any part, though it die not; or "be broken" {u}; have any of its limbs or bones broken; or be torn by a wild beast, as the Targum of Jonathan adds:

or driven away; from the flock or herd by thieves or robbers, or rather carried captive by an enemy in an hostile way, see Ex 22:12:

no man seeing it; die, or be hurt, or carried off; and so, as the above Targum paraphrases it, there is no witness that sees and can bear witness, that is, to any of the said things which have happened to it.

{t} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 7. sect. 8. {u} rbvn "confractum", Pagninus, Montanus; "fractum", Junius & Tremelius, Piscator, Drusius; so Ainsworth.

Exodus 22:11

Ver. 11. Then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both,.... Either by the one, the keeper, for the satisfaction of the owner, or by them both; by the owner, that he delivered such and such cattle to the keeper; and by the keeper, that he was no ways concerned in the death, hurt, or carrying off of the same: and this is called "the oath of the Lord", not only because in this law required by him, but because sworn by him, or in his name, and made before him, in his presence, who is hereby appealed unto; and who is called upon to take vengeance on the person that takes the oath of perjury; and such an oath only is a lawful one, men are to swear only by the Lord. But this oath was not tendered to anyone:

"if a man was suspected of an oath (i.e. of perjury) they might not give him his oath, neither the oath of the law, nor the oath from their words (the scribes), nor the oath of imposition (imposed by the wise wen); and even though he that brought the action would have it, they might not hearken unto him: if a man has swore falsely a rash oath, or an oath of testimony, or an oath concerning anything deposited, or a vain oath, lo, he is suspected of an oath, and so everyone that is rejected for witness on account of any transgression {w}."

The oath to be taken by the keeper, and who indeed seems to be the only person that was to take one, was, "that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods"; so as either to kill or maim, or drive away, or suffer to be driven away, any of the cattle committed to his care, or that he had not disposed of them to his own use and profit:

and the owner of it shall accept thereof; of the oath, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi, and so be satisfied, and give no further trouble, such an oath being for the confirmation of the thing, and to put an end to strife; or he shall take the ass, ox, or sheep, as it was, and be content; but then, though he might take the dead or maimed one, he could not take that which was driven or carried away, wherefore the first sense, is best:

and he shall not make [it] good; or pay for it to the owner what it was worth.

{w} Maimon. Hilchot Toan Venitan, c. 2. sect. 1, 2.

Exodus 22:12

Ver. 12. And if it be stolen from him,.... Or "but if" {x} it was taken away by theft; and that "from with him" {y}, as it may be literally rendered, from among his own cattle, and they not taken; and he being present, pretending to have an eye upon them and keep them, but was careless and negligent, at least, if he did not connive at the theft:

he shall make restitution to the owner thereof; for in such a case there was ground for suspicion of fraud; however, there was apparent carelessness, and it was but just he should make restitution, since he had hire or wages for keeping it; which is the reason Aben Ezra gives for it, and is suggested by the Targum of Jonathan; which adds to the former clause, by way of explanation,

"that which was with him to be kept for a reward."

{x} Ma yk "si autem", Drusius. {y} wmem "e cum eo", Montanus.

Exodus 22:13

Ver. 13. If it be torn in pieces,.... By some wild beast, at least as pretended:

[then] let him bring it for witness; part of that which is torn, that it may be witness for him that it was torn, as in **Am 3:12** as Aben Ezra observes; and so the Jerusalem Targurn,

"let him bring of the members of it a witness,"

which would make it a clear case that it had been so used; but it is possible that the whole carcass might be carried off, and nothing remain to be brought as a proof of it; wherefore the Targum of Jonathan is,

"let him bring witnesses;"

and so some versions render it {z}; and to this agrees Jarchi, whose note is,

"let him bring witnesses of its being torn by violence, and he is free,"

such who saw it done; but it is before supposed, that such cattle may be hurt, broken, or maimed, no man seeing it, Ex 22:10 and therefore in such a case no witnesses could be brought, wherefore the first sense seems best:

[and] he shall not make good that which was torn; or shall not pay for it, pay the price of it, as much as it is worth. Here Jarchi distinguishes,

"there is that which is torn, for which a man pays, and there is that which is torn, for which he does not pay; that which is torn by a cat, or a fox, or a marten (a kind of weasel), he pays for, but that which is torn by a wolf, a lion, or a bear, he does not pay for:"

the reason of which is, because it is thought the keeper might have preserved and delivered from the former, and therefore was culpable, when it was not in his power to save from the latter; and the Misnic doctors observe, that one wolf is not violence, but two are; so that what is torn by one, the keeper is bound to pay for, but not what is torn by more. But two dogs are not violence, unless they come from two different quarters, and then they are: a single thief is violence, and so is a lion, a bear, a leopard, a basilisk, and a serpent, and this only when they come willingly, and of themselves; but if they (the cattle) are brought to places where there are troops of wild beasts, and thieves, it is no violence {a}, and in such a case the keepers are liable to pay; and so unless he makes use of staves, and calls in other shepherds to his assistance, as Maimonides {b} observes, when it is in his power to do it; and so at least might make an attempt to save or rescue the cattle.

{z} de whaby "adducet eum testem", Pagninus, Montanus; "adducat ille testem", Munster, Fagius. {a} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 7. sect. 9. {b} Hilchot Shecirat, c. 3. sect. 6.

Exodus 22:14

Ver. 14. And if a man borrow [ought] of his neighbour,.... Any beast, as it should seem, as an ox to plough with, an ass, horse, or camel to ride on, though the Jewish writers carry it also to any kind of household stuff:

and if he be hurt or die; if any damage comes to it, or it dies while it is in the borrower's hands, and when employed in that work for which he borrowed it; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"and the vessel should be broke, or the beast die:"

and the owner thereof being not with it; at the time of its being hurt, or of its death, and so could not be so well satisfied whether used well or not, nor how the damage and death came to it:

he shall surely make it good; pay the full price for it it is worth; which, though it may seem hard, was necessary, in order to make men careful of things they borrowed, and that lenders may not be losers for their kindness.

Exodus 22:15

Ver. 15. But if the owner thereof be with it,.... When it is hurt or dies; for in some cases the owner might go along with his beast, being borrowed or hired to do work with it; or, however, being upon the spot, must be satisfied that it was not ill used; and it may be reasonably presumed he would do all he could to preserve it: and this being the case,

he shall not make it good; that is, the borrower, but the loss would lie upon the lender; seeing this might have been the case if it had been at home, and not borrowed or lent. The Jewish writers understand all this in a different manner, that if the owner is not with it in the time of borrowing, though he is with it in the time of its being hurt, or of its death, the borrower must pay; but if he was with it in the time of borrowing, though not in the time of its receiving damage, or of its death, the borrower was free {c}; for, as Jarchi says, whether it be in that work (for which he was borrowed), or in another work (it matters not), if he was with it at the time of borrowing, there was no necessity of his being with it at the time of its hurt or death. The reason of which, I must confess, I do not understand; unless the meaning is, that it was necessary that the owner, and the beast, should be both borrowed or hired together; and which indeed seems to be the sense of the Misnah, or tradition {d}, which runs thus,

"if a man borrows a cow, and borrows or hires its owner with it; or if he hires or borrows the owner, and after that borrows the cow, and it dies, he is free, as it is said,
Ex 22:15 but if he borrows the cow, and afterwards borrows or hires the owner, and it dies, he is bound to pay, as it is said, Ex 22:13 if his owner is not with it, &c."

If it be an hired thing, it came for its hire; that is, if the beast which was come to some damage, or was dead, was hired, and not borrowed, then, whether the owner was with it or not at that time, he could demand no more than hire, and the person that hired it was obliged to pay that and no more; or if the owner himself was hired along with his beast, and so was present when it received its damage, or its death, nothing more could come to him than what he agreed for.

{c} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 8. sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {d} Ibid.

Exodus 22:16

Ver. 16. And if a man entice a maid, that is not betrothed,.... For one might be betrothed according to the custom of those times, and not be married, or the nuptials consummated, and so be yet a maid or virgin; but being betrothed, it made the case different, because such an one was as a wife to a man: but the case here supposed is of a maid not betrothed, and also not forced, but yielding to the solicitations of a man, as is implied by her being enticed; which signifies his gaining upon her affections, and obtaining her consent by expressing strong affection for her, and making large promises to her, and so both by words and gestures prevailing with her to yield to his desire:

and lie with her; in a way of carnal copulation; and such an action between two single persons, by consent, is what is called simple fornication: if this was done in a field, the maid was supposed to be forced, since there she might cry out, and not be heard; but if in a city, she is supposed to be enticed, and consent, since if she cried out she might be heard; this the Jewish writers gather from
De 22:23, though the law there respects a betrothed damsel:

he shall surely endow her to be his wife; give her a dowry in order to be his wife, or, however, such an one as he would or must give if she became his wife, even one suitable to her rank and dignity, whether he married her or not; for he was not obliged to it whether he would or not, and in some cases could not if he would, as follows.

Exodus 22:17

Ver. 17. If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him,.... For wife, either because of his character, family, or circumstances; or, however, being disagreeable to him on one account or another, and therefore will by no means agree to marry his daughter to him, and not only give him an absolute denial, but resolutely persist in it: the Targum of Jonathan has it,

"if it seems not good to him;"

if he do not like nor choose to marry her; and some add also, if she herself do not approve of marrying him:

he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins; as virgins on marriage have usually given them, according to their rank and dignity: here is no sum fixed, but the Targum of Jonathan is,

"he shall be mulcted in fifty shekels of silver,"

which is taken from De 22:29 though that seems to be not altogether a like case with this; for though it respects a virgin not betrothed, as here, yet one that has been forced, and therefore the man was obliged to marry her, and never put her away; and the mulct or fine was to be paid to the damsel's father and not to her: the Septuagint version here says, it was to be paid to the father.

Exodus 22:18

Ver. 18. Thou shall not suffer a witch to live. Such that had familiar spirits, and conversed with them, and by means thereof got knowledge of many things relating to persons, at least pretending they did; and who did or seemed to do many strange and surprising feats, as even to raise the spirits of departed persons, to converse with them and gain knowledge by them, though in reality they did not, and could not do such things, but used some juggling tricks to deceive the people, and in which they might be assisted by evil spirits; as appears from the case of the witch of Endor, who was surprised at the appearance of Samuel, it being out of the ordinary course of her art and practice really to bring up the spirit of a man deceased, whatever pretensions might be made to it; however, such being deceivers of the people, and leading them into unwarrantable practices, and off of a dependence on God and his providence, and from seeking to him, and asking counsel of him, they are by this law condemned to death, such an one was not to be suffered to live; not that it was lawful for anybody to kill her, or that any private person might or must do it that knew her, or took her to be a witch; but she was to be had before a court of judicature and tried there, and, if found guilty, to be put to death by the civil magistrate: so Jarchi's note is,

"but she shall die by the house of judgment;"

or the sanhedrim; for these words are spoken to Moses the chief judge, and to those that were under him, and succeeded him and them; though the Targum of Jonathan prefaces them thus:

"and my people, the children of Israel, thou shalt not, &c."

and though only a witch is mentioned, or this is only expressed in the feminine gender, because a multitude of this sort of people were found among women, as Ben Melech observes, and so Aben Ezra; yet wizards, or men that dealt with familiar spirits, are included; and it may be reasonably concluded from hence, that if women, who generally have more mercy and compassion shown them, yet were not suffered to live when found criminal in this way, then much less men: and this law is thought by some to follow upon the other, concerning enticing and lying with a virgin not betrothed; because such sort of persons were made use of to entice and decoy maids to gratify the lusts of men.

Exodus 22:19

Ver. 19 Whosoever lieth with a beast,.... In like manner as a man and woman, by carnal copulation; this is a crime so detestable and abominable, so shocking and dishonourable to human nature, that one would think it could never be committed by any of the human species, and that there was no occasion for making a law against it; but, such is the depravity and corruption of mankind, that divine wisdom saw it necessary, and, to deter from it, made it death, as follows; such an one

shall surely be put to death; no mercy shown him, no pardon or respite given him by the civil magistrate: according to the Targum of Jonathan, the death of such a person was by stoning, for it paraphrases the words,

"he shall be killed with the casting of stones."

Exodus 22:20

Ver. 20. He that sacrificeth unto [any] god,.... To Elohim, to strange gods, to the idols of the people, as the Targum of Jonathan; to the Egyptian deities, to the gods of the Moabites, Amorites, Edomites, Canaanites, Philistines, or any other: Aben Ezra says the word Elohim comprehends angels; and by the exceptive clause it is plain it takes in all that had been, were, or ever would be the objects of idolatrous worship, especially the sun, moon, and stars, the principal objects of worship in those days:

save unto the Lord only; the true and living God; Jehovah, the self-existent, immutable, and eternal Being; the Creator of all things, the possessor of heaven and earth, the most high God, and the only one: sacrificing takes in all the acts of service performed to an idol as to the true God, as offering incense, pouring out a libation, as well as slaying and burning an animal as Jarchi observes: he shall be utterly destroyed; be accursed, anathematized, devoted to destruction, as the word used signifies: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"he shall be killed with the sword, and his goods consumed,"

not only lose his life but his substance, and so be destroyed in body and estate.

Exodus 22:21

Ver. 21. Thou shall not vex a stranger,.... One that is not born in the same country, but comes into another country to sojourn, as Jarchi; not a native of the place, but of another kingdom or country; a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, that is only in it for a time on trade and business, or through one providence or another; or else a proselyte is meant, not a proselyte of righteousness, who has embraced the true religion; but a proselyte of the gate, that takes upon him the commands of the sons of Noah; or, as Aben Ezra here expresses it, who takes upon him not to serve idols; such were allowed to dwell among the Israelites, and they were to carry it friendly and kindly to them, and "not vex" them, nor irritate them with words, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi; by calling them names, Gentiles, uncircumcised persons, and the like; upbraiding them with their country, ignorance, and manner of life; they were not to say to a proselyte, as Ben Melech observes, remember thy former works; or, if the son of a proselyte, remember thy father's works:

nor oppress him; by taking his goods, as the above Targum, and so Jarchi; by refusing to assist him with advice or otherwise, to trade with him, or to give him lodging, and furnish him with the necessaries of life:

for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: out of which they were but just come, and therefore such a reason must be very striking and moving upon them: the Targum of Jonathan prefaces it,

"and my people, the house of Israel, remember that ye were strangers, &c."

this they could not have forgot in so short a time, and the remembrance of this should move their compassion to strangers hereafter, when they came to settle in their own land; and therefore, as they would that men should have done to them when in such circumstances, the same they should do to others; and besides, the remembrance of this would serve to abate their pride and vanity, and their overbearing disposition.

Exodus 22:22

Ver. 22. Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. Who have no friends, husband, or father to be on their side and protect them, and are weak and helpless to defend themselves, and therefore it must be barbarous to do them any injury, either to their persons or property; no one ought to be afflicted and distressed by another, either in body or mind, or substance, and especially such as have no helper, not any to assist them and sympathize with them; for this is a law for every man, as Jarchi observes, is binding upon all; only the Scripture speaks of these, because of their weakness, and because they are more frequently afflicted than others, cruel and unmerciful men taking the advantage of their inability to defend themselves.

Exodus 22:23

Ver. 23. If thou afflict them in any wise,..... In any way, or by any means whatever; their minds, by reproaches, censures, insults, and their bodies by stripes, false imprisonment, &c. and in their substance, by withholding from them what belongs to them, taking what they have, or cheating and defrauding them in any respect; or, "in afflicting afflict them" {e}; afflict them much, and continue to do so:

and they cry at all unto me; in prayer, as the Targum of Jonathan; or, "in crying cry" {f}; cry vehemently, or importunately, and with constancy, or rather, cry ever so little:

I will surely hear their cry; the voice of their prayer, as the same Targum; or, "in hearing I will hear" {g}; will certainly take notice of their cries, and return an answer to them, by appearing on their side, and avenging their injuries; for God is the Father of the fatherless, and the husband of the widow, and the Judge of them both: the manner of speaking or form of expression is the same in all these clauses, the words being doubled.

{e} hnet hne "affligendo afflixeris", Pagninus, Piscator, Ainsworth, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius. {f} qeuy qeu "clamando clamaverit", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Ainsworth. {g} emva emv "audiendo audiam", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Ainsworth.

Exodus 22:24

Ver. 24. And my wrath shall wax hot,.... Against those that afflict them, being so devoid of humanity, compassion, and tenderness, and so guilty of oppression and injustice, which are aggravated by the circumstances of the persons they ill treat, and therefore the more provoking to God:

and I will kill you with the sword; with the sword of death, says the Targum of Jonathan; it designs one of God's sore judgments, the sword of an enemy; the meaning is, that when such evils should become frequent among them, God would suffer a neighbouring nation to break in upon them in an hostile way, and put them to the sword; hence it follows:

and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless; be in the same circumstances with those they have injured, and therefore should consider not only the destruction that would come upon themselves, being cutoff by the sword, but the case of their families; and how, could they be sensible of it, they would like to have their wives and children used as they have used the widows and fatherless.

Exodus 22:25

Ver. 25. If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, &c,] Such only need to borrow money, and to whom it should be freely lent, when it may be to the good of the borrower, and not any injury to the lender: this law, according to the Jewish writers, only respects Israelites, and not Gentiles; agreeably to which is Jarchi's note,

"if thou lend, that is, not to a Gentile; and to which of my people? the poor, and to which of the poor? that is with thee:"

thou shalt not be to him as an usurer; that will not lend without usury, nor without an exorbitant interest, and deals very hardly with the borrower if he is not punctual in the payment of it; the Israelites were not only not to be usurers, but they were not to be like them; they were not to require anything for lending a poor man a little money; as not any settled interest, so neither were they to take any previous gift or reward later, see **Lu 6:34**

neither shalt thou lay upon him usury; or oblige him to give interest for money borrowed: it is in the plural, number, "neither shall ye lay"; and Aben Ezra observes, that the lender, scribe, and witness, all transgress this law; that is, when a man lends money on interest, and a bond is made by the scribe for it, and this signed by witnesses, all are guilty of the breach of it: yea, some Jewish writers {h} say, not only those, but whoever is a surety or bondsman for the payment, and even the borrower himself, See Gill on "Ps 15:5".

{h} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 5. sect. 11. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Exodus 22:26

Ver. 26. If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge,.... So that it seems that the lender, though he might not impose usury on the borrower, or oblige him to pay interest for what he lent him, yet for the security of his money he might take his clothes, either his bed clothes or wearing apparel, or any instruments or goods of his; but when he did, he was bound to what follows:

thou shalt deliver it to him by that the sun goeth down; the reason of which appears in the next verse, with respect to his bed clothes, should that be the pledge: but Jarchi interprets it, not of his nocturnal clothes, but of his apparel in the daytime, and paraphrases it thus,

"all the day thou shalt restore it to him until the setting of the sun; and when the sun is set, thou shalt return and take it until the morning of the morrow comes; the Scripture speaks of the covering of the day, of which there is no need at night;"

but rather night clothes are meant by what follows.

Exodus 22:27

Ver. 27. For that is his covering only,.... All that he has to cover him, the only covering he has when he lies down to sleep; and therefore should be restored to him by the time of sunset, at which time he returns from his labour; and after some refreshment retires to his bed for rest, when his covering will be necessary:

it is his raiment for his skin; which is next to his skin, and covers his naked body, as it is when he lies down to sleep; and therefore if not returned, he must lie naked without any covering, which to deprive him of would be cruel: Jarchi interprets this covering of his shirt, but it rather means his bed clothes: the Septuagint version calls it the clothes of his shame, what cover and hide the shame of nakedness:

wherein shall he sleep? what shall he have to sleep in if this is detained from him? nothing at all; or it may be read without an interrogation, wherein he should sleep, or was used to sleep:

and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me; and complains of ill usage, that he has nothing to cover him in the night season, when he lies down to sleep, which is very uncomfortable, as well as unhealthful and dangerous:

that I will hear; his cry and complaint, take notice of it, and resent the usage of him:

for I am gracious; or merciful; and therefore everything cruel and uncompassionate is disagreeable, and even abominable to him, and he will take care in his providence that the injured person shall be redressed and the injurer punished.

Exodus 22:28

Ver. 28. Thou shalt not revile the gods,.... Meaning not the idols of the Gentiles, which they reckon gods, and worship as such; which is the sense of Philo, and some others, particularly Josephus {i}, who, to curry favour with the Roman emperors given to idolatry, has from hence inserted the following among the laws given to Moses;

"let no man blaspheme the gods, which other cities think are such, nor rob strange sacred places, nor receive a gift dedicated to any deity;"

but this cannot be the sense of the text, being contrary to De 12:2 nor can it be thought that care should be taken, lest the honour of the Heathen deities should be detracted from; but civil magistrates, the judges of the land, and the like, are meant, who are powers ordained of God, are in his stead, and represent him, and therefore respect should be shown them; nor should they be treated with any degree of slight and contempt, which may discourage and intimidate them, and deter them from the execution of their office: the Targum of Jonathan interprets them of judges very rightly, agreeably to Ps 82:1 and so Aben Ezra says,

"they are the judges and the priests, the sons of Levi, with whom the law is:"

nor curse the ruler of thy people whether civil or ecclesiastic; the last mentioned Jewish writer intend of the king, who is the supreme ruler in things civil, and ought to be honoured and loved, served and obeyed, and not hated and cursed, no, not secretly, not in the bedchamber, nor in the thought of the heart, since not only the thing is criminal but dangerous; it is much if it is not discovered, and then ruin follows upon it, Ec 10:20. The Apostle Paul applies it to the high priest among the Jews, who was the ruler in sacred things, Ac 23:5 and may be applicable to the prince of the sanhedrim, or chief in the grand court of judicature; and even to all dignified persons, who ought not to be spoken ill of, and to be abused in the execution of their office, and especially when they perform well.

{i} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 10. Contr. Apion. 1. 2. c. 33.

Exodus 22:29

Ver. 29. Thou shall not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits,.... Which, according to Maimonides {k}, were of seven kinds only; for he says,

"they do not bring the firstfruits, but of the seven kinds, said in the praise of the land, (the land of Canaan), **De 8:8** and they are wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates;"

and how much of these were to be offered is not fixed by the law, but were left to the generosity of the people: the above mentioned writer asks {l},

"what measure do the wise men set? a good eye (or a bountiful man) brings one of forty (or the fortieth part of his fruits); a middling one (one that is neither liberal nor niggardly) brings one of fifty (or the fiftieth part); and an evil one (a covetous man) one of sixty (or the sixtieth part), but never less than that."

Now this was not to be delayed, but to be brought as soon and as early as could be: the Jewish writers seem to understand this of postponing things, or inverting the order of them, bringing that first which should be last, and that last which should be first; so Jarchi interprets it,

"thou shall not change the order of their separation, to postpone that which should be first, and to put before that which should be last; for the first oblation should not be brought before the firstfruits, and the tithes before the first oblation."

And thus runs one of their canons or traditions {m},

"if anyone brings the first oblation before the firstfruits, the first tithe before the first oblation, the second tithe before the first, it is as if he transgressed a negative precept: "thou shalt not delay or postpone", &c. Ex 22:29'

And of thy liquors: and these, according to Maimonides {n}, were only the firstfruits of liquors of olives and grapes:

the firstborn of thy sons thou shall give unto me; which is a repetition of the law. See Gill on "Ex 13:2".

{k} Hilchot Biccurim, c. 2. sect. 2. {l} Hilchot Trumot, c. 3. sect. 2. {m} Misn. Trumot, c. 3. sect. 6. {n} Biccurim, ut supra. ({k})

Exodus 22:30

Ver. 30. Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep,.... That is, with the firstborn, which were to be set apart to the Lord; and so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"the firstborn of thine oxen, and of thy sheep;"

for having spoken of the firstborn of men, the Scripture proceeds to speak of the firstborn of cattle, great and small, the separation of which was enjoined in one and the same precept, Ex 13:2,

seven days it shall be with his dam; whether it be a calf or a lamb; before it was seven days old it was not to be taken from it, and given to the Lord:

on the eighth day thou shall give it me; that is, they might do it then, but not before; yet they were not obliged to bring it exactly on that day, but they might do it any time within the month, and at a month's end they were obliged to redeem it, that is, give the priest the sum of five shekels for it, Nu 18:16. The Jewish canon runs thus {n};

"how long are Israelites bound for the bringing of the firstborn, i.e. before they offer it to the priest? in small cattle thirty days, in large cattle fifty days."

{n} Misn. Becorot, c. 4. sect. 1.

Exodus 22:31

Ver. 31. And ye shall be holy men unto me,.... They were so by God's act of election, not special and particular, but general and national; choosing and separating them to be an holy people to him, above all the people on the face of the earth, and in a ceremonial sense they observing laws and appointments of God of this kind; which is the sense here intended, as appears by what follows: all men, and so these Israelites, ought to be holy in a moral sense, and some are holy in a spiritual and evangelical sense, being made holy by the Spirit of God; of these the Apostle Peter speaks, in allusion to this, and such like passages, **1Pe 2:9**

neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; or in the house, as Jarchi notes; but the Scripture, as he observes, speaks of the place where it is more usual for beasts to tear, and so Aben Ezra; otherwise what is torn elsewhere, or by whatsoever accident it is bruised and maimed, was not to be eaten: ye shall cast it to the dogs: for even a stranger was not to eat of it, or if he did he was unclean, and was obliged to wash his clothes, and bathe himself, Le 17:15 and yet Jarchi interprets this figuratively of such as are like dogs, meaning the Gentiles, whom the Jews used to call so, see Mt 15:26. An Heathen poet gives instructions perfectly agreeable to this law;

"do not (says he) eat flesh fed upon by beasts, but leave the remains to the swift dogs {o}."

{o} mhde ti yhroboron &c. Phocylides, ver. 136, 137.

Exodus 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 23

This chapter contains several laws, chiefly judicial, relating to the civil polity of Israel, as concerning witness borne and judgment made of cases in courts of judicature, without any respect to poor or rich, and without the influence of a bribe, Ex 23:1, concerning doing good to an enemy in case any of his cattle go astray, or fall under their burden, Ex 23:4, and of the oppression of a stranger, Ex 23:9, and then follow others concerning the sabbath of the seventh year, and of the seventh day, with a caution against the use of the names of idols, Ex 23:10, next are laws concerning the appearance of all their males at the three feasts, Ex 23:14, and concerning the slaying of the sacrifice of the passover, and bringing the first of the firstfruits of the land, Ex 23:18 and then a promise is made of sending an angel to them to bring them into the land of Canaan, where they should carefully avoid all idolatry, and show a just indignation against it, and serve the Lord, and then it would be well with them, Ex 23:20, and particularly it is promised, that the Lord would send his fear, and his hornets, before them, to destroy the inhabitants of the land, and drive out the rest by little and little, until they should possess the utmost borders of it, which are fixed, Ex 23:27, and the chapter is concluded with a direction not to make a covenant with these people, or their gods, nor suffer them to dwell among them, lest they should be a snare unto them,
Ex 23:32.

Ver. 1. Thou shalt not raise a false report,.... Of a neighbour, or of any man whatever, either secretly by private slanders, whispers, backbiting and tale bearing, by innuendos, detracting from his good name and credit, suggesting things false and wicked concerning him; or publicly in a court of judicature, bringing a false accusation, laying a false charge, and bearing a false testimony against him: or "thou shall not receive a false report" {p}; if there were not so many, that say, Report, and we will report it, that are ready to receive every ill thing of their neighbours, there would not be so many that would raise such ill things of them; everything of this kind should be discountenanced, and especially by judges in courts of judicature, who are chiefly spoken to and of in the context; these should not easily admit every charge and accusation brought; nor bear, or endure a false report, as the word also signifies, but discourage, and even punish it:

put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness; which is not a gesture used in swearing, such as with us, of putting the hand upon a book, which did not obtain so early; nor is there any instance of this kind in Scripture; the gesture used in swearing was either putting the hand under the thigh, which yet is questionable, or lifting of it up to heaven; but here it is expressive of confederacy, of joining hand in hand to carry on a prosecution in an unrighteous way, by bearing false testimony against another; and such were to be guarded against, and not admitted to give evidence in a cause, even a man that is known to be a wicked man, or to have been an unrighteous witness before; on the one hand, a man should be careful of joining with him in a testimony that is unrighteous; and, on the other hand, judges should take care not to suffer such to be witnesses. The Jews say {q}, that everyone that is condemned to be scourged, or has been scourged for some crime committed, is reckoned a wicked man, and he is not to be admitted a witness, nor his testimony taken.

{p} avt al "non suscipies", V. L. Pegninus, Vatablus, Drusius, Fagius. {q} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect. 3.

Exodus 23:2

Ver. 2. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil,.... The Targums of Jerusalem and Jonathan add, but to do good. As in private life, the examples of the many, who are generally the most wicked, are not to be followed, though they too often are; examples, and especially of the multitude, having great influence, and therefore to be guarded against; so in public courts of judicature, where there are many judges upon the bench, if one of them is sensible that the greater part go wrong in their judgment of a case, he ought not to follow them, or be influenced by them, but go according to the dictates of his own conscience, and the evidence of things as they appear to him, and neither agree to justify the wicked, nor condemn the righteous:

neither shall thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment; or "thou shalt not answer" {r}; either in pleading in a cause, and taking the side of it the majority is on, and for that reason, though it is a manifest perversion of justice; or by giving a vote on that side, and on that account, whereby a wrong judgment passes; and this vote given either according to the number of witnesses, which ought not always to be the rule of judgment; for it is not the number of witnesses, but the nature, evidence, and circumstances of their testimony, that are to be regarded: Jarchi says, in judgments of life and death, they go after the mouth of one witness to absolve, and after the mouth of two to condemn: or according to the number of judges on the bench, and their superiority in years and knowledge; and so some render the word, "after the great ones" {s}; for a judge is not to be influenced by names or numbers in giving his vote, but to judge according to the truth of things, as they appear to him: hence the Jews say, that the younger or puisne judges used to be asked their judgment first, that they might not be influenced by others superior to them; and a like method is taken with us in the trial of a peer, the younger lords always giving their opinion first: as to the number of votes by which a cause was carried in court, it is said {t}, not as the decline to good, is the decline to evil; the decline to good, i.e. to absolution, is by the sentence of one (a majority of one); the decline to evil, i.e. to condemnation, is by the mouth or sentence of two, a majority of two.

{r} hnet alw "neque respondeas", Tigurine version; "non respondebis", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius. {s} Mybr yrxa "post potentiores", Junius & Tremellius; "post magnos", Lyra, Cartwright. {t} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 6.

Exodus 23:3

Ver. 3. Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause. Because he is a poor man, and for that reason endeavour to carry his cause for him, right or wrong, from a foolish pity to him as a poor man, and from an affectation of gaining the applause of people on that account; or "thou shalt not honour" or "adorn" a poor man {u}, by a set speech in favour of his cause, though wrong, dressed up in the best manner, and set off with all the colourings of art, to make it appear in the most plausible manner; the law is against respect of persons, as not the person of the rich, so neither is the person of the poor to be accepted, but the justice of their cause is to be regarded; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"the poor that is guilty in his judgment or cause, his face (or person) thou shalt not accept to have pity on him, for no person is to be accepted in judgment."

{u} rdht al "non honorabis", Pagninus, Vatablus, Drusius, Cartwright; "non decorabis", Montanus; "ne ornes", Tigurine version; "ne honorato", Junius & Tremellius; "ne ornato", Piscator.

Exodus 23:4

Ver. 4. If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray,.... Or any other beast, as the Samaritan version adds; for these are only mentioned for instances, as being more common, and creatures subject to go astray; now when such as these are met going astray, so as to be in danger of being lost to the owner, though he is an enemy; or as the Targum of Jonathan,

"whom thou hatest because of a sin, which thou alone knowest in him;"

yet this was not so far to prejudice the finder of his beasts against him, as to be careless about them, to suffer them to go on without acquainting him with them, or returning them to him, as follows:

thou shalt surely bring it back to him again; whether it be an ox, or an ass, or any other beast, the law is very strong and binding upon the finder to return it to his neighbour, though an enemy, and bring it either to his field or to his farm.

Exodus 23:5

Ver. 5. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden,.... Fallen down, and such a burden upon him that he cannot rise up again, but lies under it, and the owner of it is not able of himself to raise it up again:

and wouldst forbear to help him; show an inclination to pass on without giving him any assistance to get up his beast again; or "wouldst thou forbear to help him?" {w} as Jarchi, and others, read with an interrogation, could it be in thine heart to forbear helping him? couldest thou go on, and take no notice of him and his case, and not join him in endeavouring to get up his beast again, that he may proceed its his journey? canst thou be so cruel and hardhearted, though he is thine enemy? but if thou art, know this,

thou shalt surely help with him; to get up his ass again: hence the Jewish canon runs thus {x},

"if an ass is unloaded and loaded four or five times, a man is bound, i.e. to help, as it is said, "in helping thou shalt help"; if he (the owner) goes away, and sets himself down, seeing the command is upon thee, if it is thy will and pleasure to unload, unload, he is free; for it is said, with him; if he is an old man, or sick, he is bound, the command of the law is to unload, but not to load."

The words may be rendered, "in leaving thou shalt leave with him" {y}; either leave or forsake thine enmity to help him, as Onkelos; or leave thy business, thou art about, to lend him an hand to raise up his beast again.

{w} bzem tldxw "num desines sublevare eum?" some in Vatablus; "cessabis auxitiari ei?" Drusius; "desines auxiliari ei?" Pagninus. {x} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 2. sect. 10. {y} "Deserendo deseres cum eo", Montanus; so Ainsworth.

Exodus 23:6

Ver. 6. Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. As the poor man was not to be favoured when his cause was bad through an affected pity for him as a poor man, so his judgment was not to be wrested or perverted, when his cause was good, because of his poverty; which is too often the case, through the power of rich men, and the prevalence of their gifts and bribes, and to curry favour with them: the phrase, "thy poor", is very emphatic, and intended to engage judges to regard them, as being of the same flesh and blood with them, of the same nation and religion; and who were particularly committed to their care and protection under God, who is the Judge and protector of the poor, of the widow and the fatherless.

Exodus 23:7

Ver. 7. Keep thee far from a false matter,.... Or "word" {z}; from receiving a false testimony, or taking the false or wrong side of a cause, or engaging in a bad one; keep aloof off from it, as much at a distance from it as possible:

and the innocent and the righteous slay thou not; that is, do not condemn them to death, nor join with the majority in their condemnation, if they appear to be innocent and righteous; nor give orders, or join in giving orders to the executioner to put such to death. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"he that goes righteous out of the house of thy judgment (out of the sanhedrim, to which he belonged), and they find out his sin (afterwards), and he that goes out guilty, and they (afterwards) find out his righteousness, do not slay:"

for I will not justify the wicked: the wicked judge in pronouncing an unjust sentence on innocent and righteous men, or if they absolve wicked men, at the same time they put to death the innocent and righteous, God will not justify those wicked men cleared by them, but will, in his own time and way, sooner or later, inflict the deserved punishment on them: this is not contrary to **Ro 4:5** for though God justifies the ungodly, he does not justify ungodliness in them, or them in ungodliness, but from it, and that by the imputation of the righteousness of his Son.

{z} rqv rbdm "a verbo mendacii", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Tigurine version, Fagius.

Exodus 23:8

Ver. 8. And thou shalt take no gift,.... Of the persons whose cause is to be tried in a court of judicature before judges; neither of those on the one side nor on the other, neither before the trial nor after, neither by words, by a promise, nor by facts, by actually receiving money; and not even to judge truly, as Jarchi observes, neither to clear the innocent nor to condemn the guilty: a gift was not to be taken on any consideration whatever:

for the gift blindeth the wise; or the "seeing" {a}; the open ones, who used to have both their eyes and their ears open, and attentive to the cause before them; and yet a gift so blinds them, by casting such a mist before them, that they are inattentive to the true merits of the cause, and their affections and judgments are to be carried away in favour of those that have bribed them, as to pass a wrong sentence:

and perverteth the words of the righteous; either the sentences of righteous judges, as they ought to be, but a gift perverts their judgment, and they give a wrong decree; or the causes of the righteous that are brought before those are perverted by giving the cause to their adversaries, who are wicked men.

{a} Myxqp "videntes", Pagninus, Vatablus, Cartwright; "apertos", Montanus, Drusius.

Exodus 23:9

Ver. 9. Also thou shall not oppress a stranger,.... As these were not to be vexed and oppressed in a private manner and by private men, see Ex 22:21 so neither in a public manner, and in a public court of judicature, or by judges on the bench when their cause was before them, by not doing them justice, showing a partiality to those of their own nation against a stranger; whereas a stranger ought to have equal justice done him as a native, and the utmost care should be taken that he has no injury done him, and the rather because he is a stranger:

for ye know the heart of a stranger; the fears he is possessed of, the inward distress of his soul, the anxiety of his mind, the tenderness of his heart, the workings of his passions, his grief and sorrow, and dejection of spirit: the Targum of Jonathan is,

""the groaning of the soul of a stranger": this the Israelitish judges knew, having had a very late experience of it:"

seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt; where they had been vexed and oppressed, brought into hard bondage, and groaned under it; and therefore it might be reasonably thought and expected that they would have a heart sympathizing with strangers, and use them well, and especially see that justice was done them, and no injury or oppression of any kind.

Exodus 23:10

Ver. 10. And six years thou shall sow thy land, The land of Canaan, given to their ancestors and to them, and which they were now going to inherit; and when they came into it they were to plant it with vines and olives; or rather, these being ready planted, they were to prune and dress them; and they were to till their land, and plough it, and sow it with various sorts of grain, for six years running, from the time of their possession of it:

and shall gather in the fruits thereof; corn and wine, and oil, into their own garners, treasuries, and cellars, as their own property, to dispose of as they pleased for their own use and profit.

Exodus 23:11

Ver. 11. But the seventh year thou shall let it rest, and lie still,.... From tillage, and make its fruits common, as the Targum of Jonathan; the note of Jarchi is, "let it rest", from perfect tillage, as ploughing and sowing; "and lie still", from dunging and harrowing, or weeding: this law was intended to show that God was the original proprietor and owner of this land, and that the Israelites held it under him; and to teach them to depend upon and trust in his providence; as well as that there might be both rest for the land, and so it became more fruitful afterwards, having by this rest renewed its vigour, and also for servants and cattle; and that the poor might have an equal share in the fruits of the earth, and appear to be joint lords of it with others under God, as it follows:

that the poor of thy people may eat: that which grows up of itself, of which there were great quantities; for the sixth year bringing forth for three years, a great deal of seed fell, which grew up again; and especially, as through plenty they were not so careful to gather it all up; and besides this, there were the fruits of trees, of vines, olives, &c. which brought forth their fruit in course as usual, and which were all this year common to poor and rich; so that the former had an equal propriety and share with the latter:

and what they leave, the beasts of the field shall eat; signifying that there should be such plenty that there would be enough for all, and to spare; that there would be much left, and which should be the portion of the beasts of the field, and who would also be sufficiently provided for by the produce the earth brought forth of itself, as herbage, &c. and the fruits the poor left:

in like manner thou shall deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard; that is, these were not to be pruned, nor the grapes and olives gathered, but were to be in common with all: a larger account is given of this law in Le 25:2.

Exodus 23:12

Ver. 12. Six days thou shalt do thy work,.... That is, they might do what work they would on the six days of the week:

and on the seventh day thou shall rest; from all the work and labour done on other days, and give up themselves to religious exercises:

that thine ox and thine ass may rest; and so every other beast, as horses, camels, &c.

and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed; the former, the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi, interprets, of one uncircumcised, and the latter, of a proselyte of the gate: this law is here repeated, partly to show that it is of the same kind with the former, namely, ceremonial and temporary; and partly, as Jarchi observes, lest it should be said, since all, the year is called the sabbath, there was no need to observe the weekly sabbath.

Exodus 23:13

Ver. 13. And in all [things] that I have said unto you, be circumspect,.... Or observe them, be careful to keep them punctually and constantly, even all that are delivered in this and the preceding chapters:

and make no mention of the name of other gods; neither call upon them, nor swear by them, nor make vows to them; and, as little as possible, ever utter their names, and never with pleasure and delight, and showing any honour of them, and reverence to them, but with the utmost detestation and abhorrence:

neither let it be heard out of thy mouth; not any of their names; the same thing in different words, the more to inculcate and impress the thing upon the mind, and to show with what vehemence and earnestness this is pressed.

Exodus 23:14

Ver. 14. Three times thou shall keep a feast unto me in the year. The feast of the passover, on the fourteenth of the month Nisan or March; and the feast of weeks or pentecost fifty days after that; and the feast of tabernacles on the fifteenth day of Tisri or September.

Exodus 23:15

Ver. 15. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread,.... Which began on the fourteenth of the month Abib or Nisan, and lasted seven days, during which time no leavened bread was to be eaten by the Israelites, or to be in their houses, of which see the notes on:

See Gill on "Ex 12:15" See Gill on "Ex 12:18" See Gill on "Ex 12:19" See Gill on "Ex 12:10" See Gill on "Ex 13:6" See Gill on "Ex 13:7" thou shall eat unleavened bread, seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; from the fourteenth of the month to the twenty first:

for in it thou camest out of Egypt; in such haste that there was no time to leaven the dough in the troughs; in commemoration of which this law was given, and this feast was kept:

and none shall appear before me empty; at this feast and the two following ones; for, besides the offerings and sacrifices appointed, at the feast of passover was brought a sheaf of the first fruits of the barley harvest; and at the feast of pentecost the two wave loaves or cakes of the first fruits of the wheat harvest; and at the feast of tabernacles they appeared with palm tree branches, and boughs of goodly trees, and poured out water fetched from Siloam, before the Lord: but to this appearance the Jewish doctors {b} say,

"there was no measure fixed; for everyone, if he would, might go up and appear, and go away: according to another interpretation, for the burnt offering of appearance, and the peace offerings of the Chagigah, which a man is bound to bring, as it is written, "ye shall not appear empty"; there is no measure from the law, as it is written, "a man according to the gift of his hand", De 16:17, but the wise men fix a measure; to the burnt offering a meah of silver, to the Chagigah two pieces of silver:"

some understand this, not of their bringing anything with them to appear before the Lord with, but of what they should be blessed with there; even with the presence of God, and communion with him, and with the blessings of his grace and goodness; so that however they came, they should not remain, nor go away empty, and so have no cause to repent their appearance before him; but the former sense seems best.

{b} Bartenora in Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1.

Exodus 23:16

Ver. 16. And the feast of harvest,.... This is the second feast, the feast of wheat harvest, between which and barley harvest were fifty days; or between the firstfruits of the one and the first fruits of the other were seven weeks, as Aben Ezra observes, and was sometimes called the feast of weeks; at which feast were to be brought, the first fruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field; the two wave loaves or cakes, made of the first new wheat, which was the effect of their labour in tilling the field, and sowing it with wheat, and reaping it:

and the feast of ingathering, [which is] in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field; this is the third feast in the year to be kept, and was kept at the close of the year, at the revolution of it, when a new year began that is, according to the old account, which made Tisri the month in which this feast was kept, the first month of the year; whereas, according to the new count, it was the seventh month from the month Abib, now made the first of the months upon the Israelites coming out of Egypt in that month: this is the same feast with the feast of tabernacles, but here called the feast of ingathering, because at this time of the year all the fruits of the earth were gathered in; the corn, and wine, and oil, and all other fruits, on account of which there was great rejoicing, as there ought to be.

Exodus 23:17

Ver. 17. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord thy God. In the city of Jerusalem, when they were come into the land of Canaan, and the temple was there built: here they were to show themselves before the Lord as being his, and devoted to his service; concerning which the Misnic doctors have the following canon {c},

"all are bound to appear except a man deaf and dumb, a fool, a little one, one of neither sex, or of both sexes, women, servants not free, the lame, the blind, the sick, an old man, and he that cannot go on his feet."

{c} Misn. Chagigah, c. 1. sect. 1.

Exodus 23:18

Ver. 18. Thou shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread,.... This belongs to the feast of the passover; for, as all the Jewish writers agree, this sacrifice is the sacrifice of the passover, as it is sometimes called, see Ex 12:27 now when the paschal lamb was killed, and its blood shed, and its flesh eaten, there was to be no leaven along with it; it was to be eaten with unleavened bread, and there was to be no leaven in their houses at this time;

nay, it was not to be slain until all was removed: this was the first thing the Jews did, as soon as the fourteenth day was come, to search for leaven, remove and burn it; and this sense of the law is confirmed by the Targum of Jonathan, which is,

"not a man shall slay, while there is leaven in your houses, the sacrifice of my passover;"

and to the same purpose is the note of Jarchi:

neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning; and indeed no part of the passover lamb was to remain until the morning, what did was to be burnt with fire, Ex 12:10 the Targum of Jonathan is,

"neither shall there remain without the altar the fat of the sacrifice of my passover until the morning, nor of the flesh which ye ate in the evening;"

and so Jarchi interprets it of its not remaining without the altar.

Exodus 23:19

Ver. 19. The first of the first fruits of thy land,.... Both of the barley and wheat harvest, and of the wine and oil; yea, Jarchi says, the seventh year was obliged to first fruits; and Josephus {d} relates, that the Jews were so tenacious of this law, that even in the famine in the time of Claudius Caesar, the first fruits were brought to the temple, and were not meddled with:

thou shall bring into the house of the Lord thy God; to the tabernacle, during the standing of that, and the temple when that was built; which were the perquisites of the priests who officiated in the house and service of God: so Pliny says {e} of the ancient Romans, that they tasted not of the new fruits or wines before the first fruits were offered to the priests, which seems to have been borrowed from hence:

thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk: and so a calf, or a lamb {f}, as Jarchi interprets it; which some understand of slaying a young kid and its dam together, and so is a law against cruelty, like that law of not taking the dam with the young, on finding a bird's nest, De 22:6 others, of killing, dressing, and eating a kid, while it sucks the milk of its mother, before it is eight days old, and so a law against luxury; but the Jews generally understand it of boiling, or eating the flesh of any creature and milk together {g}: so the Targum of Onkelos paraphrases it,

"ye shall not eat flesh with milk;"

and the Targum of Jonathan is,

"ye shall neither boil nor eat the flesh and the milk mixed together:"

hence, according to the rules they give, the flesh of any beast, or of a fowl, is not to be set upon a table on which cheese is (being made of milk), lest they should be eaten together; nor may cheese be eaten after flesh until some considerable time, and then, if there is any flesh sticks between a man's teeth, he must remove it, and wash and cleanse his mouth; nor may cheese be eaten on a table cloth on which meat is, nor be cut with a knife that flesh is cut with {h}: so careful are they of breaking this law, as they understand it: but the words are, doubtless, to be taken literally, of not boiling a kid in its mother's milk; and is thought by many to refer to some custom of this kind, either among the Israelites, which they had somewhere learnt, or among the idolatrous Heathens, and therefore cautioned against; Maimonides and Abarbinel both suppose it was an idolatrous rite, but are not able to produce an instance of it out of any writer of theirs or others: but Dr. Cudworth has produced a passage out of a Karaite author {i}, who affirms,

"it was a custom of the Heathens at the ingathering of their fruits to take a kid and seethe it in the milk of the dam, and then, in a magical way, go about and besprinkle all their trees, fields, gardens, and orchards, thinking by this means they should make them fructify, and bring forth fruit again more abundantly the next year:"

and the Targum of Jonathan on Ex 34:26 seems to have respect to this, where, having paraphrased the words as here quoted above, adds,

"lest I should destroy the fruit of your trees with the unripe grape, the shoots and leaves together:"

and if this may be depended upon, the law comes in here very aptly, after the feast of ingathering, and the bringing in the first fruits of the land into the Lord's house.

{d} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 15. sect. 3. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 2. {f} Vid. T. Bab.

Cholin. fol. 114. 1. {g} Tikkune Zohar, Correct. 14. fol. 26. 1. {h} Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. Yore Deah, Hilchot Bashar Bechaleb, c. 88. sect. 1. & 89. sect. 1. 4. {i} Apud Gregory's Notes & Observ. c. 19. p. 97, 98.

Exodus 23:20

Ver. 20. Behold, I send an angel before thee,.... Not a created angel, but the uncreated one, the Angel of God's presence, that was with the Israelites at Sinai, and in the wilderness; who saved, redeemed, bore, and carried them all the days of old, whom they rebelled against and tempted in the wilderness; as appears by all the characters after given of him, which by no means agree with a created angel: Aben Ezra observes, that some say this is the book of the law, because it is said, "my name is in him", or "in the midst of it"; others say, the ark of the covenant; but he says this angel is Michael; and if indeed by Michael is intended the uncreated angel, as he always is in Scripture, he is right: Jarchi remarks, that their Rabbins say, this is Metatron, whose name is as the name of his master; Metatron, by gematry, is Shaddai, which signifies almighty or all-sufficient, and is an epithet of the divine Being; and Metatron seems to be a corruption of the word "mediator": some of the ancient Jewish writers say {k}, this is the Angel that is the Redeemer of the world, and the keeper of the children of men: and Philo the Jew {l} applies the word unto the divine Logos, and says,

"he (God) uses the divine Word as the guide of the way; for the oracle is, "behold, I send my Angel", &c."

which agrees with what follows:

to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared; to preserve the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness, from all their enemies that should set upon them, and to bring them safe at last to the land of Canaan, which he had appointed for them, and promised to them, and had prepared both in his purpose and gift for them, and would make way for their settlement in it by driving out the nations before them.

{k} In Zohar in Gen. fol. 124. 4. {l} "De migratione" Abraham, p. 415.

Exodus 23:21

Ver. 21. Beware of him,.... Of his face or countenance; observe his looks towards you in a providential way, whether frowning or smiling; observe his directions and instructions, laws and commands:

and obey his voice; hearken to what he says, and cheerfully, readily, and punctually do as he orders:

provoke him not; by unbelief, by murmurings and complaints, by unbecoming words and actions, by transgressing his commands, and acting contrary to his will;

for he will not pardon your transgressions: or suffer them to pass unchastised and uncorrected, but will, as he did, take vengeance on their inventions, and on them because of them, though he forgave their iniquities; for that he was such an Angel as could forgive sin, which none but God can do, is evident; because it would be absurd to say he will not pardon, if he could not pardon their transgressions, see **Mt 9:6**,

for my name is in him; the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father; the nature and perfections of God are in the Word and Son of God, and so his name Jehovah, which is peculiar to him; Christ is Jehovah our righteousness: or "though my name is in him" {m}; as Abendana and others, his name the Lord God, gracious and merciful, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin, as afterwards proclaimed in him; and yet, notwithstanding this, he would not clear the guilty, or suffer the Israelites to go unpunished, if they offended him: the Targum of Onkelos is,

"or in my name is his word,"

he is my ambassador and speaks in my name.

{m} ymv yk "quamvis nomen menum", Drusius.

Exodus 23:22

Ver. 22. But, if thou shall indeed obey his voice,.... Or "hearkening hearken", {n} to it attentively, listen to it, and diligently and constantly observe and obey in whatever he shall direct and order:

and do all that I speak; by him; or whatsoever he had spoke, or was about to speak; for as yet all the laws and statutes were not delivered, especially those of the ceremonial kind:

then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries; which they should either meet with in their passage through the wilderness, or when they came into the land of Canaan; signifying hereby that he would protect them from them, subdue them under them, and give them victory over them, as that they should be utterly destroyed, and so way made for their possession of their land, as in the following words.

{n} emvt ewmv "audiendo audieris", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Piscator.

Exodus 23:23

Ver. 23. For mine Angel shall go before thee,.... The same as before described:

and bring thee in unto the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Canaanite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite; six nations are only mentioned, though there were seven; the Girgashites are omitted, though added in the Septuagint version; and this omission of them might be, either because they were swallowed up by one or other of the other nations, particularly the Amorites, who were the most powerful; or rather, having mentioned the most and chiefest, the Lord was not careful, as Aben Ezra observes, to take notice of the least:

and I will cut them off; from being a nation, either of them; for though there were some of them left, and dwelt about in the land, yet not as a kingdom and nation of themselves, as they had been, but became tributary to the Israelites.

Exodus 23:24

Ver. 24. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods,.... In a way of honour to them, doing them reverence, expressing thereby an high esteem of them, trust in them, and expectation of good things from them;

nor serve them: in any kind of service in which they usually are served by their votaries; as by offering sacrifice, incense, libations, &c. or by praying to them or praising of them, or in whatsoever way they are served by idolaters:

nor do after their works; the works of the worshippers of idols; all those wicked works in general done by them, which should not be imitated; and those particularly relating to the service and worship of their deities:

but thou shalt overthrow them; the heathen gods; utterly destroy them, and break them to pieces, or demolish their temples, the idolatrous houses built for them, and their altars; for the word has the signification, of demolishing buildings, and razing up the very foundations of them:

and quite break down their images; or, "in breaking break down" {o}; utterly and entirely break them down, break them to shivers, all their statues of gold or silver, brass, wood, or stone, or of whatsoever materials they were made; none were to be spared, nor any remains of them to be seen, that they might not prove a snare to any to worship them; and hereby they were to express their detestation of idolatry, and their strict and close adherence to the true God, and the worship of him as follows.

{o} rbvt rbv "confringendo confringes", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, "perfringendo perfringito", Piscator.

Exodus 23:25

Ver. 25. And ye shall serve the Lord your God,.... And him only, who had brought them out of Egypt, and done so many great and good things for them at the Red sea, and now in the wilderness; by which he appeared to be the true Jehovah, the one and only living God, and to be their God in covenant, who had promised them much, and had performed it; and therefore was in a special and peculiar manner their God, and they were under the highest obligations to serve and worship him in the way and manner he directed them to:

and he shall bless thy bread and thy water; and make them nourishing and refreshing to them, and preserve them thereby in health, as well as prosper and succeed them, and increase their worldly substance:

and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee; the stroke of bitterness, or the bitter stroke, as the Targum of Jonathan, any grievous disease, which is bitter and distressing; signifying that there should be none among them, but that they should be healthful, and free from distempers and diseases.

Exodus 23:26

Ver. 26. There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren in the land,.... There shall be no abortions or miscarriages, nor sterility or barrenness, either among the Israelites, or their cattle of every kind, so that there should be a great increase, both of men and beasts:

the number of thy days I will fulfil; which was fixed for each of them, in his eternal purposes and decrees; or what, according to the temperament of their bodies and the course of nature, which, humanly speaking, it might be supposed they would arrive unto; or generally the common term of human life, which, in the days of Moses, was threescore years and ten, or fourscore, see Job 14:5, it may be considered whether any respect is had to the time of their continuance in the land of Canaan, the term of which was fixed in the divine mind, or the fulness of time in which the Messiah was to come.

Exodus 23:27

Ver. 27. And I will send my fear before thee,.... What should cause fear among the nations of the land of Canaan; either the hornets mentioned in the next verse as the explanative of this; or the fame of his mighty works, which he had done for Israel in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; which struck the inhabitants of Canaan with such a panic, that they were ready to faint and melt away, and lost all courage, **Jos 2:9**

and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come; that is, the greatest part of them:

and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee; flee away, not being able to face them and stand a battle, or, however, not stand it long, but run and make their escape: "or I will give thee the neck of them" {p}; cause them to submit, to lay down their necks and be trampled upon; an expression denoting their subjection, and an entire conquest of them, see Ps 18:39.

{p} Pre-yttn "et dabo-cervicem", Pagninus, Montanus; "exponam tibi cervicem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ponam ad te cervicem", Drusius.

Exodus 23:28

Ver. 28. And I will send hornets before thee,.... Which may be interpreted either figuratively, and so may signify the same as fear before which should fall on the Canaanites upon hearing the Israelites were coming; the stings of their consciences for their sins, terrors of mind, dreading the wrath of the God of Israel, of whom they had heard, and terrible apprehensions of ruin and destruction from the Israelites: Aben Ezra interprets it of some disease of the body, which weakens it, as the leprosy, from the signification of the word, which has some affinity with that used for the leprosy; and so the Arabic version understands it of a disease: or rather, the words are to be taken literally, for hornets, which are a sort of wasps, whose stings are very penetrating and venomous; nor is it any strange or unheard of thing for people to be drove out of their countries by small animals, as mice, flies, bees, &c. and particularly Aelianus {q} relates, that the Phaselites were drove out of their country by wasps: and Bochart {r} has shown that those people were of a Phoenician original, and inhabited the mountains of Solymi; and that this happened to them about the times of Joshua, and so may probably be the very Canaanites here mentioned, as follow: the wasps, in Aristophanes's comedy which bears that name, are introduced speaking of themselves, and say, no creature when provoked is more angry and troublesome than we are {s}:

which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee; which three are mentioned instead of the rest, or because they were more especially infested and distressed with the hornets, and drove out of their land by means of them.

{q} Hist. Animal. l. 11. c. 28. {r} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 13. col. 541. {s} Aristoph. Vespae, p. 510.

Exodus 23:29

Ver. 29. I will not drive them out from before thee in one year,.... This is observed before hand, lest the Israelites should be discouraged, and fear they should never be rid of them; and it was so ordered in Providence for the following reason:

lest the land become desolate; there being not a sufficient number of Israelites to replace in their stead, to repeople the land, and to cultivate it; and yet their number was very large, being, when they came out of Egypt, as is generally computed, about two millions and a half, besides the mixed multitude of Egyptians and others, and during their forty years in the wilderness must be greatly increased:

and the beast of the field multiply against thee; there being so much waste ground for them to prowl about in, they would so increase as to make head against them, and be too many for them; or, however, it would be difficult to keep them under control: the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"when they shall come to eat their carcasses (the carcasses of the Canaanites slain in war), and may hurt thee."

Exodus 23:30

Ver. 30. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee,.... Not the beasts of the field, but the inhabitants of Canaan, who were left partly to keep up the cities and towns, that they might not fall to ruin, and to till the land, that it might not be desolate; and partly to be trials and exercises to the people of Israel, and to prove whether they would serve the Lord or not. Just as the corruptions of human nature remain with the people of God when converted, for the trial and exercise of their graces, and that they may have their dependence not on themselves, but on the grace of God to keep them in his ways, and to preserve them safe to eternal glory; and by completing the work of grace, which is gradually done, they might be made meet for it:

until thou be increased, and inherit the land; for as their enemies were driven out gradually, by little and little, so they multiplied gradually, until at length they became a sufficient number to fill all the cities and towns in all the nations of Canaan, and take an entire possession of it, as their inheritance given unto them by God.

Exodus 23:31

Ver. 31. And I will set thy bounds,.... The bounds of the land of Canaan, which in process of time it should reach unto, though not at once, not until the times of David and Solomon, **2Sa 8:1** which bounds were as follow:

from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines: the Red sea was the boundary eastward, as the sea of the Philistines, or the Mediterranean sea, was the boundary westward:

and from the desert unto the river; the desert of Shur or Arabia, towards Egypt, was the boundary southward, as the river Euphrates was the boundary northward, and is the river here meant, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it; and so Jarchi interprets it, and generally others:

for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; the greater part upon their entrance into it, and settlement in it, and the rest afterwards:

and thou shalt drive them out before thee; not all at once, but by degrees, as before observed.

Exodus 23:32

Ver. 32. Thou shalt make no covenant with them,.... A covenant of peace, a league, a confederacy, so as to take them to be their allies and friends; but they were always to consider them as their enemies, until they had made an utter end of them; though the Gibeonites by craft and guile obtained a league of them; but the methods they took to get it show they had some knowledge of this law, that the Israelites might not, or at least would not, make any league or covenant with the inhabitants of the land of Canaan. This may be also extended to marriage covenants, which they were forbid to make with them; which yet they did, and proved a snare to them, for this brought them to makes a covenant with their gods, and serve them, which is here also forbidden:

nor with their gods; making vows unto them, promising to serve them, if they would do such and such things for them.

Exodus 23:33

Ver. 33. They shall not dwell in thy land,.... The land of Canaan, given by God for an inheritance, and now would be in the possession of the Israelites; and therefore were not to suffer the old inhabitants to dwell with them in it, at least no longer than they could help it; they were to do all they could to root them out:

lest they make thee sin against me; by their ill examples and persuasions, drawing them into idolatry, than which there is no greater sin against God, it being not only contrary to his law, his mind, and will, but directly against his nature, being, perfections, and glory:

for if thou serve their gods, or "for thou wilt serve" {t}; this would be the consequence of their dwelling in the land, they would draw the Israelites into the worship of their idols, to which they were naturally prone; and should they commit idolatry,

it will surely be a snare unto thee: idolatry would be the cause of their ruin and destruction, they would be snared by it, as fishes in a net, or birds and beasts by traps and gins; or "for it will be a snare" {u}, that is, the Canaanites dwelling among them would be a snare to draw them into their idolatry, and go into ruin.

{t} dbet yk "quia servies", Malvenda. {u} hyhy yk "quia erit", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 24

In this chapter we have an account that Moses was ordered to come up to the Lord alone, Ex 24:1, but that before he did go up, he related to the people all the above laws delivered to him, which they promised obedience to, and so a covenant was made between God and the people by sacrifice, and by the sprinkling of blood, Ex 24:3, upon which he and Aaron, and his two sons and seventy elders of Israel, went up part of the mountain, and had a vision of God, Ex 24:9, when Moses with Joshua was called, and went up higher, until at length he entered into the cloud where the Lord was, and continued forty days and forty nights, Ex 24:12.

Ver. 1. And he said unto Moses,.... Who said? no doubt a divine Person, and yet what this Person said is,

come up unto the Lord; meaning either to himself, or one divine Person called to Moses to come up to another: according to the Targum of Jonathan, it was Michael, the prince of wisdom; not a created angel, but the eternal Word, Wisdom, and Son of God; who said this on the seventh day of the month, which was the day after the giving of the law, or ten commands; though Jarchi says this paragraph was before the ten commands, and was said on the fourth of Sivan; but the Targumist seems most correct:

come up unto the Lord, thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; Nadab and Abihu were the two eldest sons of Aaron, **Ex 6:23** and the seventy elders were not all the elders of Israel, but were so many of them selected out of them, the chief and principal; who were heads of tribes and families, and were no doubt many, if not all of them, of those who by the advice of Jethro were chosen to be rulers of thousands, hundreds, and fifties; these were called to come up to the Lord on the mountain, but not to the top of it, only Moses went thither:

and worship ye afar off: from the people, and even at a distance from Moses; for he only was admitted near to God, as the following verse shows.

Exodus 24:2

Ver. 2. And Moses alone shall come near the Lord,.... Into the cloud where he was, and talk with him face to face, as a man talketh with his friend; which was great nearness indeed, and a peculiar favour and high honour was this:

but they shall not come nigh; Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel:

neither shall the people go up with him; not any of them, much less the whole body. It seems, by this account, that Moses had been down from the mount after he had received the laws recorded in the two preceding chapters; though as yet he had not related them to the people, but did before he went up again by the above order, as appears from what follows.

Exodus 24:3

Ver. 3. And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments,.... Which according to Jarchi were the seven commands given to the sons of Noah, the laws concerning the sabbath, and honouring parents, the red heifer, and the judgments at Marah; but all these they were acquainted with before, excepting that of the red heifer, and the law, for that was not yet delivered to Moses, nor were these the ten commands, for they had heard them from the Lord themselves; but they doubtless were the judgments, or judicial laws, which he was ordered to set before the people, contained in the two preceding chapters, which were chiefly of the judicial kind, and related to the civil polity of the people of Israel:

and all the people answered with one voice; one speaking for, and in the name of the rest, or they all lift up their voice together, and being unanimous in their sentiments, expressed them in the same words:

and said, all the words which the Lord hath said will we do; that is, they would be careful to observe all the laws, statutes, judgments, and commands which the Lord had enjoined them; and less than this they could not say, for they had promised Moses, that if he would draw nigh to God, and hear what he should say, and deliver it to them, they would hearken to it, and obey it, as if they had heard God himself speak it; only they entreated the Lord would speak no more to them, as he did the ten commands, it being so terrible to them.

Exodus 24:4

Ver. 4. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord,.... Jarchi says, all from the creation, to the giving of the law, and the commands at Marah; but though these were written by him, yet not at this time; but as Aben Ezra more truly observes, what are mentioned in this "parashah", or section, or what is contained in the two preceding chapters, he not only related to them from his memory, but he wrote them in a book, which is after mentioned, that they might be seen and read hereafter; for these were not the ten commands, they were written as well as spoken by the Lord himself, but the judicial laws before mentioned:

and rose up early in the morning: not on the fifth of Sivan, as Jarchi, the day before the giving of the law, but on the eighth of that month, two days after it:

and built an altar under the hill: under Mount Sinai, about the place where the bounds were set, beyond which the people were not to go:

and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel: to answer to them, and which were to represent them, as seems by the following account; these probably were made of marble stone, of which Mount Sinai consisted, and of which there was plenty thereabout.

Exodus 24:5

Ver. 5. And he sent young men of the children Israel,.... To the altar under the hill he had these young men, according to Jarchi, were the firstborn of the children of Israel; and so the Targums Onkelos and Jonathan; and the latter adds,

"for unto this hour the worship was among the firstborn, as yet the tabernacle of the covenant was not made, and as yet the priesthood was not given to Aaron."

But though this is a notion that has obtained among learned men, both Jews and Christians, it has been called in question by some, who have such reasons against it, as are not easily refuted. And very probably, as the seventy elders were such as were selected from the senior and graver part of the people, so these were choice young men, that were separated from others for this service, without any regard to birthright:

which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord; by way of thankfulness; and such were used at making covenants, when the parties ate and drank together. The Vulgate Latin version has it, "twelve calves", without any authority for it.

Exodus 24:6

Ver. 6. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins,.... Half of the blood of the above sacrifices, this he put into basins, and set by, in order to sprinkle on the people:

and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar; the Targum of Onkelos adds, to atone for the people. But the altar here seems to represent the Lord, who was one of the parties covenanting, and therefore is sprinkled with blood as a ratification of the covenant on his part, and the promises of it.

Exodus 24:7

Ver. 7. And he took the book of the covenant,.... Which contained the words of the Lord he is said to write, Ex 24:4, and consisted both of laws and judgments required of the people, and to which they had given their assent, and promised obedience to; and of promises made by the Lord of sending his angel before them to guide them in the way, and bring them to Canaan, and to drive the Canaanites from thence, and put the Israelites into the possession of it; so that here were promises on both sides, a restipulation of parties, which made a formal covenant:

and read in the audience of the people; he had rehearsed what was contained in it from his memory, by word of mouth, to which they had assented, Ex 24:3 and having written the same in a book, he read it to them distinctly, that they might the better take notice of the contents of it:

and they said, all that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient; which is a repetition and confirmation of what they had before said, and is expressed in stronger terms; so that this was not done suddenly and inconsiderately, and yet they seem not to be so well apprised of their own inability to keep the laws of God, and of the treachery of their own hearts as to their regard to them; see **De 5:28**.

Exodus 24:8

Ver. 8. And Moses took the blood,.... The other half of the blood which was in the basins:

and sprinkled it on the people; not on the whole body of the people, who could not be brought nigh enough, and were too numerous to be all sprinkled with it; though the apostle so expresses it, a part being put for the whole, **Heb 9:19** either this was sprinkled on the young men that offered the sacrifices in the name of all the people; or on the seventy elders, as the heads of them, so Aben Ezra; or upon the twelve pillars, which answered to the twelve tribes, and represented them as the altar did the Lord:

and said, behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words; being a ratification of the covenant on both sides, having been sprinkled both upon the altar, and upon the people. In allusion to which, the blood of Christ is sometimes called the blood of sprinkling, and which, sprinkled upon the mercy seat, calls for pardon for men; and sprinkled on their consciences, speaks peace and pardon to them, and cleanses from all sin; and sometimes the blood of the everlasting covenant, the covenant of grace made with him, by which it is ratified and confirmed; and our Lord may have regard to this rite and mode of expression in Mt 26:28.

Exodus 24:9

Ver. 9. Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu,.... After the above things were done, the words of the Lord were told the people, and the book of the covenant read unto them, to which they agreed, sacrifices were offered, and the blood of them sprinkled on the altar, and on the people. The Samaritan version adds to these, Eleazar and Ithamar, the two younger sons of Aaron:

and seventy of the elders of Israel, who were called up to the mountain to the Lord, Ex 24:1.

Exodus 24:10

Ver. 10. And they saw the God of Israel,.... The Targum of Jonathan restrains this to Nadab and Abihu whereas it is doubtless true of Moses and Aaron, and the seventy elders, who all saw him, and who were witnesses to the people that it was a divine Person that spoke to Moses, and delivered the laws unto him, to be observed by them; which seems to be the reason of their being called up, and favoured with this sight which must not be understood as of anything criminal in them, as if they curiously looked and pried to see something they should not, for which they deserved some sort of punishment, as the Targum intimates; but of a privilege, and a very high one they were favoured with: and this sight they had was not by a vision of prophecy, or with the eyes of their understanding, but corporeally; they saw the Son of God, the God of Israel, in an human form, as a pledge and presage of his future incarnation, who is the Angel that spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, as Stephen says, and the Lord that was among the angels there, who afterwards became incarnate, and having done his work on earth, ascended on high, **Ac 7:38**

and [there was] under his feet; which shows that there was a visible form, and that human; nor is this contrary to what is said, "ye saw no similitude"; **De 4:12**, since what is here related does not respect the same time, nor the same persons; this was after the giving of the ten commands, that at the time of it; this is said of the seventy elders, with Moses, Aaron, and his two sons, that of all the people:

as it were paved work of a sapphire stone: like a pavement pitched with sapphire. The Septuagint version is, "and they saw the place where the God of Israel stood, and what were under his feet, as the work of a sapphire brick."

The sapphire stones, of which the pavement was, were as broad as bricks, and being like a brick, was a memorial, as the Targum of Jonathan says, of the servitude the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with in clay and bricks; but being a sapphire, bright and glorious, may denote the liberty they now enjoyed in exchange for their bondage. And the Targum of Jonathan understands it of the colour, and not of the form of the sapphire, and renders it, the white sapphire; and so do some Jewish writers {w}; though the colour of the sapphire is azure, or sky coloured, with which agrees what follows:

and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness; and Ruaeus {x} says, the sapphire is sky coloured, and some of them shine and sparkle with golden points or spots, and are reckoned the best sapphires; so that this represents the heaven as quite clear and serene, bespangled with stars; and as the heavens, covered with clouds, may denote the displeasure of God, so a serene heaven his favour and good will, and in such an amiable light was he now beheld.

{w} Saadiah Gaon in Aben Ezra, & R. Jonah in Ben Melech in loc. {x} De Gemmis, c. 2.

Exodus 24:11

Ver. 11. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand,.... Which some interpret of his hand of prophecy, and of the measure of the Spirit, such an one as Moses had, and by virtue of which he lived forty days and nights without eating and drinking; but these not having such a measure of the Spirit, were obliged to eat and drink to support nature, as in the next clause: but it is rather to be understood of the hand of God; he did not inflict any disease or death upon them on their sight of him, it being a notion that no man could see God and live; but these men did live, not only Moses, and Aaron and his two sons, but the seventy elders, who were the principal choicest persons among the children of Israel; wherefore the Targum of Jonathan wrongly restrains this to Nadab and Abihu:

also they saw God, and did eat and drink: though they saw God, they continued alive and well, and in good health, of which their eating and drinking were a sign and evidence; or they ate, as Abendana, the sacrifices of the peace offerings, which were usually eaten by the priests and the people;

and as a feast was common at covenant making, here was a feast kept by the elders, the representatives of the people, when they covenanted with God. Onkelos favours this sense,

"and they rejoiced in their sacrifices, which were accepted with good will, as if they had ate and drank."

Exodus 24:12

Ver. 12. And the Lord said unto Moses, come up to me into the mount,.... For as yet Moses was not got up to the top of the mount, only up some part of it with the elders, though at some distance from the people: but now he is bid to come up higher:

and be there; continue there, as he did six days after this:

and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that is, the law of the ten commandments, which were written on tables of stone by the Lord himself; he had already spoken them in the hearing of the people, but now he had wrote them, and that in tables of stone; partly for the duration of them, and partly to represent the hardness of the hearts of the Israelites, the stubbornness of their wills to comply with his law, their contumacy and obstinate persistence in disobedience to it:

that thou mayest teach them; these being in hand and sight, would have an opportunity of explaining them to them and inculcating them on their minds, and pressing them to yield an obedience to them.

Exodus 24:13

Ver. 13. And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua,.... In order to go up higher on the mount. Joshua, and he only, was to go up higher with him, though not to the top of the mount, at least not into the cloud upon it, as Moses did. Joshua was his minister or servant, and waited upon him wherever he went, and was to be his successor; and therefore for his encouragement, and to qualify him the better for it, he was indulged with a sight and knowledge of things others were not; for by his not knowing anything of the idolatry of the golden calf,
Ex 32:17 it appears that he was on some part of the mount all the forty days

and forty nights; and if it should be asked whether he fasted all that time, or, if he did not, how he was provided with food and drink? it may be replied, that there is no necessity to suppose that he fasted all that time; and it is easy to imagine how he was supplied, for the manna fell round about the mountain, of which he might gather and eat day by day, as Aben Ezra observes; and there was a brook which descended out of the mount, from whence he might have water, **De 9:21**

and Moses went up into the mount of God; Mount Sinai, where he had formerly appeared to him in a bush, and now had descended on it to give the law, and was still upon it, where his glory was seen; and therefore might, with great propriety, be called the mount of God; to the top of which Moses was preparing to go, but before he went gave the following instructions.

Exodus 24:14

Ver. 14. And he said unto the elders,.... The seventy elders which were selected out of the several tribes of Israel, and now about to return to the camp:

tarry ye here for us; meaning himself and Joshua, who was going with him:

until we come again unto you; perhaps Moses might not know how long his stay would be at the top of the mount, but supposed it would be some time by the provision he makes for hearing and adjusting cases in his absence:

and behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; Hur is not mentioned before, as being with Moses and the rest; but doubtless he was, at least it is highly probable he was one of the seventy elders of him,
See Gill on "Ex 17:10".

if any man have any matters to do: any cases to be considered, any cause to be tried in difference between him and another man, and which cannot be determined by the inferior judges, is too difficult for them to take in hand:

let him come unto them; bring his case before them, and have their advice and opinion, and be determined by them.

Exodus 24:15

Ver. 15. And Moses went up into the mount,.... To the top of it, and as it seems alone, leaving Joshua behind in a lower part of the mountain:

and a cloud covered the mount; in which cloud Jehovah was.

Exodus 24:16

Ver. 16. And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai,.... The divine Shechinah or Majesty, some visible token of it, an exceeding great brightness and splendour:

and the cloud covered it six days; either the glory of the Lord, so that it could not be seen it had been; or the mount, as Jarchi; but that is observed before, unless repeated for the sake of the time it covered it, six days; or him, Moses, as some in Jarchi, who for six days together was covered with a thick cloud, so that he was not seen by any while on the mountain; and thus he remained, until he was admitted into the immediate presence of God, for which he was now preparing: what he did, or was made known to him during this time, is not said; it is probable his thoughts were employed about the glory and greatness of the divine Being; and as he was abstracted from earthly men and things, he was more at leisure to contemplate on divine and heavenly things, and so was more fitted for an intercourse with God, and had more courage and presence of mind to enter into it:

and on the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud; in which the glory of God was, and which seems to favour the first sense of the preceding clause, that it was the glory of God the cloud covered.

Exodus 24:17

Ver. 17. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount,.... For when God spoke out of the cloud, the glory of the Lord flashed out like devouring fire; it was not devouring fire, but it was like it; it was like a great blaze of fire, which consumes all that is in its ways; it was such a large body of light, and so clear and bright, that it looked like devouring flames of fire; and being upon the top of the mount was very visible, and seen at a great distance in the eyes of the children of Israel throughout, their camp.

Exodus 24:18

Ver. 18. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud,.... Where the glory of God was, and he must at this time be endowed with more than ordinary courage to enter into it, when the glory of the Lord flashed out of it like flames of fire; yet being called of God he was not intimidated, but with great serenity and composure of mind, as may be thought, he went into the presence chamber of the most High, to hear what he had to say unto him:

and gat him up into the mount; that is, he went into the cloud, after he had ascended the summit of the mount; for it cannot be supposed that he first went into the cloud, and then got himself up to the mount, which yet our version, if not carefully guarded against, may lead unto:

and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights; without eating or drinking; and just such a term of time Christ fasted in the wilderness; it is probable that the six days before mentioned are to be reckoned part of those forty days, since it is not said that he was in the cloud forty days and forty nights, but in the mount. The Targum of Jonathan adds,

"learning the words of the law from the mouth of the Holy One, whose name is to be praised."

Living without food so long must be ascribed to a miracle; for Hippocrates {y} that great physician, says, that

"those who remain without food seven days, thenceforward, if they would, cannot receive any support from food, because then the belly will not admit of any;"

and gives this reason for it, because the fasting intestine coheres, or is wrinkled.

{y} Lib. de Carn. in fine, apud Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 196.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 25:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 25

In this chapter an order is given for a freewill offering towards various things for the worship and service of God, and the materials to be offered, which would be useful and acceptable, are mentioned particularly, Ex 25:1, as also another order to build a sanctuary for God, after a model that he would give, Ex 25:8, and, an ark to put in the law on tables of stone, the fashion of which, and the various things belonging to it, are described, Ex 25:10, and a mercy seat with cherubim on it to be set over the ark, where the Lord promises to meet Moses and commune with him, Ex 25:17 and a table with various appurtenances to it to place the shewbread on,
Ex 25:23 and a candlestick of gold, whose parts are described, and all the instruments relative to it, Ex 25:31.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... When on the mount, and in the midst of the cloud with him:

saying; as follows.

Exodus 25:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel,.... That is, when he should go down from the mountain to the camp:

that they bring me an offering; the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call it a "separation": something separated from their substance, and devoted to the service of God, and for the use of the sanctuary afterwards to be built:

of every man that giveth it willingly, with his heart, ye shall take my offering; or take what was offered to him, be it more or less, and of whatsoever person, high and low, rich and poor, so be it it is freely given from the heart; not grudgingly or through force, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; and in such manner did David and his people many hundreds of years after this offer towards building of the temple, and the vessels belonging to that, see 1Ch 29:6 according to the Jewish writers, none but the children of Israel were to offer to this service, and only such who knew what they did; for thus they criticize on the words,

"speak unto the children of "Israel": this exempts an Heathen and an idolater; "of every man"; this excludes a little one; "that giveth it willingly with his heart"; this exempts a deaf and dumb man, and a fool, because they have no knowledge to offer freely {z}" however, this we may learn from hence, that whatever we do for the worship and service of God, we should do it freely, cheerfully, and cordially; for God loves a cheerful giver; and if this was required under the legal dispensation, it is much more necessary and obligatory under the Gospel dispensation, and more suitable to it where all things are done and given freely of God, and such large blessings of grace are liberally bestowed by him on persons undeserving.

{z} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Trumot, c. 1. sect. 1.

Exodus 25:3

Ver. 3. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them,.... That is, some one or other of the following things were to be taken of each of them that had a heart, and it was in the power of their hands to give; it was not expected that something of each of these should be had of everyone, but every man was to give, and it was to be received of him, what of these would suit him best to bestow, some one thing, some another, as they were possessed of, and had a heart to give; and for which service many of them were abundantly supplied with what they had brought out of Egypt; and as it was the Lord that gave them favour in the eyes of the Egyptians to lend or give them the riches they had, they were under the greater obligation to part with somewhat of it freely for his service; and especially as it would be to the spiritual profit and advantage both of them and theirs:

gold and silver, and brass; "gold", for those things that were to he made of gold; as the mercy seat and cherubim, the candlestick, &c. or were covered with it, as the ark, the shewbread table, and other things; and silver, for those that were made of that, as the silver sockets to the boards of the tabernacle, the silver trumpets, &c. and "brass" for the altar of burnt offering, its pans, shovels, basins, rings, and staves, and other things: Aben Ezra rightly observes, that no mention is made of iron, there being no use of that for anything in the tabernacle to be made of it; as also there was not in the temple of Solomon, and where there was not so much as a tool of iron heard in it while it was building, **1Ki 6:7** it may be, because instruments of war, slaughtering weapons, were made of iron; and to show that God is the God of peace in his sanctuary, and so in all the churches: gold and silver vessels the Israelites borrowed or begged of the Egyptians, and brought them with them when they came out of Egypt, Ex 11:2.

Exodus 25:4

Ver. 4. And blue, and purple, and scarlet,.... The Jewish doctors are much divided about the sense of the words so rendered by us; some will have one colour, and some another meant; but, according to those learned men, who have taken much pains in searching into the meaning of them, as Bochart and Braunius, it appears that our version of them is most correct: and by these we are not to understand the colours themselves, which could not be brought, nor even the materials for dying them are intended; but wool, or clothes, either silken or linen of those colours: of the former the apostle has taught us to expound them, **Heb 9:19** and so Jarchi interprets them of wool thus died, and Josephus {a} also; which was made up into yarn, and wove, and was much used in the garments of the priests, in the curtains of the tabernacle, and in the vail between the holy and the most holy place:

and fine linen; the best of which was made in Egypt only, as Aben Ezra says, and much wore there, especially by the priests; and they had such an abundance of it that they traded to other nations with it, see Isa 19:9 and of which the Israelites might bring a considerable quantity with them out of Egypt; and

goats' [hair]; though the word hair is not in the text, it is rightly supplied, as it is by the Septuagint version, and others, for not goats themselves, but their hair must be meant; of this the curtains for the covering of the tabernacle were made; Jarchi interprets it the down of goats, the short, small, fine hair that grows under the other.

{a} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 1.

Exodus 25:5

Ver. 5. And rams' skins died red,.... Of these were made a covering for the tent or tabernacle:

and badgers' skins, which were for the same use: the Septuagint version calls them hyacinth or blue skins; according to which, they seem to be the rams' skins died blue; and so Josephus {b} seems to have understood it; and it is much questionable whether the same creature is meant we call the badger, since that with the Israelites was an unclean creature; nor is its skin made use of for shoes, or well could be, as the skin of this creature is said to be, Eze 16:10. Jarchi says it was a kind of beast only at that time; and Aben Ezra says, it was known in those days but not now: and

shittim wood; supposed by the Jewish writers, as Kimchi {c}, and Ben Melech from him, to be the best and most excellent kind of cedar: Aben Ezra conjectures, and he delivers it but as a conjecture, that there might be near Mount Sinai a forest of "shittim" trees; and while the Israelites were there they cut them down for booths, which they might carry with them when they removed from thence; for, he says, Moses did not speak of the tabernacle till after the day of atonement: and since Acacia is by much the largest and the most common tree of the deserts of Arabia, as Dr. Shaw {d} observes, he thinks there some reason to conjecture, that the "shittim wood", whereof the several utensils of the tabernacle, &c. were made, was the wood of Acacia: and long ago it was the opinion of Cordus {e} that the "shittim wood" was the Acacia of Dioscorides; and it is the same with the Senton or Santon of the Arabians, which is the Egyptian thorn that grows in the wilderness, of which Herodotus {f} says, they cut wood of two cubits out of and make ships of burden of it: this is said to grow in the parts of Egypt at a distance from the sea; in the mountains of Sinai, at the Red sea, about Suez, in the barren wilderness; which circumstances seem to determine it to be the "shittim wood" {g}: some places where it might grow in plenty seem to have had their names from it, see
Nu 25:1.

{b} Ut supra. (Antiq. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 1.) {c} Sepher Shorash. rad. jwv {d} Travels, p. 144. Ed. 2. {e} Apud Drus. Heb. Adag. Decur. 3. Adag. 4. {f} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 96. {g} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 204.

Exodus 25:6

Ver. 6. Oil for the light,.... For the light of the lamps in the candlestick: this was oil olive, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi, see Ex 27:20,

spices for anointing oil; for the anointing of Aaron and his sons, and the tabernacle and its vessels, such as pure myrrh, sweet cinnamon, sweet calamus, and cassia:

and for sweet incense; as stacte, onycha, and galbanum; from whence they had this oil and these spices, it is not easy to say, unless they brought them out of

Egypt with them; which is likely, since the deserts of Arabia could not furnish them with them.

Exodus 25:7

Ver. 7. Onyx stones,.... So called from their likeness to the nail of a man's finger: the Targum of Onkelos calls them stones of beryl; and the Targum of Jonathan gems of beryl; and the Septuagint version, stones of sardius; and some take them to be the sardonyx stones, which have a likeness both to the onyx and to the sardius:

and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate; two onyx stones were set in the ephod, one of the garments of the high priest, and an onyx stone, with eleven other precious stones, were set in the breastplate of the high priest: these stones were doubtless among the jewels set in gold and silver the Israelites had of the Egyptians, and brought with them out of Egypt.

Exodus 25:8

Ver. 8. And let them make me a sanctuary,.... An holy place to dwell in, and so called from his dwelling in it, as follows:

that I may dwell amongst them; in the midst of them, where the tabernacle was always placed; and there he dwelt as their King and their God, to whom they might have recourse on all occasions, and whom they should serve and worship; this sanctuary was to be made of many of the materials before mentioned by the Israelites, whom Moses should employ, and to whom he should give directions for the making it, according to the pattern showed him: and so the Jewish writers interpret "make me", or "to me", i.e. of mine, of mine holy things, things sanctified and separated to his use; and they bring this passage to prove that the workmen in the temple were to be paid only out of the holy things, or money given for the repair of it {h}: this was a type of the human nature of Christ, the true sanctuary and tabernacle which God pitched and not man, and in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily; and of the church of God, the temple of the living God, among whom he walks, and with whom he dwells, **Heb 8:2**.

{h} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Temurah, c. 7. sect. 1.

Exodus 25:9

Ver. 9. According to all that I show thee,.... That is, the sanctuary was to be made in all respects exactly according to the view of it that Moses now had upon the mount from God, and which he was to communicate to the workmen for their instruction and direction;

after the pattern of the tabernacle, and of the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it: and by the "pattern" is not meant an idea of it, impressed on the mind of Moses, or a picture of it which was shown him, but a little edifice representing it in all its parts, a perfect model of it: and so Maimonides {i} says, "Tabnith", the word here used, signifies the structure and disposition of anything, i.e. the form of it in a four square, in roundness, in a triangle, or in any of the like figures, see **Heb 8:5** and so David had, by the Spirit, a pattern of the temple, and which he gave to his son Solomon, to build according to it, 1Ch 28:11.

{i} Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 3.

Exodus 25:10

Ver. 10. And they shall make an ark of shittim wood,.... A chest or coffer to put things into, and into this were to be put the two tables of stone on which the law was written, and it was to be made of the wood before mentioned, Ex 25:5 this was a very eminent type of Christ, with whom the name of an ark, chest, or coffer where treasure lies, agrees; for the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and the riches of grace, even all the fulness of it, lie in him; and all the epithets of this ark are suitable to him, as when it is called the ark of God, the ark of his strength, the glory of God, the face of God, Jehovah, and God himself, the holy ark, and ark of the covenant: and its being made of "shittim wood", which is an incorruptible wood, a wood that rots not, by which the Septuagint version here, and in Ex 25:5 and elsewhere render it, may denote the duration of Christ in his person, and the natures united in it; in his divine nature, from everlasting to everlasting, he is God; in his human nature he saw no corruption, and though he died he lived again, and lives for evermore; in his offices, as Mediator, Redeemer, Saviour, prophet, priest, and King, he abideth for ever; and in his grace and the fulness of it, which, like himself, is the same today, yesterday, and forever:

two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof; if this cubit was a common cubit, consisting of a foot and a half or eighteen inches, then the length of this ark was forty five inches, and its breadth and height twenty seven each; according to Dr. Cumberland {k}, the Egyptian and Jewish cubit was above twenty one inches, and then the ark must be fifty three inches long or more, and thirty two and three quarters broad and high, or more: and Josephus {l} says, the length of it was five spans, and the breadth and height of it three spans each.

{k} Of Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 2. p. 34, 56. {l} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 5.

Exodus 25:11

Ver. 11. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold,.... Not gild it, but put a plate of pure gold over it:

within and without shalt thou overlay it; so that nothing of the wood could be seen: this may denote the glory of Christ in both his natures, divine and human, the riches of his person and office, which are unsearchable and durable, and his preciousness to them that believe, **So 5:10**,

and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about: or a cornish of pure gold upon it, every way, which was a square on which the mercy seat was set; which may point at the honour and glory of Christ, especially in his kingly office, who has indeed on his head many crowns; one a crown of pure gold, his divine Father has set upon him; another which the church has crowned him with, and indeed both angels and saints cast their crowns at his feet, and set the crown on his head, or give him the glory of all they have and are.

Exodus 25:12

Ver. 12. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it,.... For which a mould was to be made, and the gold being melted was poured into it, and so the rings were fashioned:

and put them in the corners thereof; or, "in its feet", as Aben Ezra, though Jarchi says it had no feet; but as the word used so signifies always, it is more probable it had feet; and the rather, that it might not stand upon the ground, but on feet, as chests and coffers usually do:

and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it; Jarchi says, at the upper corners, near the mercy seat were they placed, two on one side and two on the other, at the breadth of the ark; but it is more likely they were fixed in the lower part of it, as Ramban, at the feet of it; and in the length of the ark, as Josephus writes {m}.

{m} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 5

Exodus 25:13

Ver. 13. And thou shall make staves of shittim wood,.... Of the same, wood the ark was made of, see Ex 25:5 and overlay them with gold; cover them with plates of gold, so that they appeared to be all of gold, the wood being not to be seen.

Exodus 25:14

Ver. 14. And thou shall put the staves into the rings by the sides of the ark,.... This shows for what use the rings were; namely, to put the staves into them and the use of the staves thus put was,

that the ark might be borne with them; which staves overlaid with gold, and put into golden rings, figured the ministers of Christ, enriched with the gifts and graces of his Spirit, and possessed of the truths of the Gospel, more precious than gold and silver; who bear the name of Christ, and carry his Gospel into the several parts of the world.

Exodus 25:15

Ver. 15. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark,.... Not only be put into them, but remain in them, yea, always:

they shall not be taken from it; or, as the Septuagint version is, be immovable; so that those gold rings in the ark may signify the churches of Christ, which are instrumental to bear his name, and spread his truth in the world, comparable to rings for their circular form, being the purest and most perfect bodies of men on earth, and to gold rings for their worth and value, preciousness, excellency, and duration; and with whom the ministers of the Gospel, comparable to golden staves, are always to be, and never depart from them: or else they may signify the perfect and precious doctrines of Christ, in which his ministers are always to be; either in meditation on them, or in preaching of them, and by which they are always to abide, see **1Ti 4:15**.

Exodus 25:16

Ver. 16. And thou shall put into the ark the testimony that I shall give thee. Which was the principal use of it: by the "testimony" is meant the law, written on two tables of stone; so called, because it was a testification of the mind and will of God, what he would have done or omitted; and as the Israelites had declared their approbation of it, and assent unto it, and had promised obedience to it, therefore, should they transgress it, it would be a testimony against them: now this was put into the ark, and preserved there, see De 10:1, which may signify that the law was in the heart of Christ, and which he undertook to fulfil, and with pleasure did it; that he is become the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness to them that believe in him; and that it remains with him as a rule of walk and conversation to his people, so far as it is of a moral, holy, and spiritual nature.

Exodus 25:17

Ver. 17. And thou shall make a mercy seat of pure gold,.... Or "covering" {n}; so Jarchi and Aben Ezra; for so the word properly signifies; and what is meant was no more than a cover of the ark, which was open at the top, and this was the lid of it, and exactly answered to it, as appears by the dimensions afterwards given of it; and because the root of this word in one form signifies to propitiate or make atonement, some render it the "propitiatory" or "propitiation" {o}; which is favoured by the apostle in **Heb 9:5** and to which he seems to refer, **Ro 3:25** and the rather since God is represented sitting on this, as showing himself propitious and well pleased with men, by his communing with them from hence; the Septuagint version takes in both senses, rendering it the "propitiatory covering" {p}: this being called by what name it will, was typical of Christ; he is the seat of mercy, or, as it is in the New Testament expressed, the throne of grace; whereon, or in whom God shows himself to be gracious and merciful to the children of men; all the stores of mercy are in him, and all the vessels of mercy are put into his hands; the mercy of God is displayed in the mission of him as a Saviour, and is glorified by him in a way consistent with his justice and holiness; through him only special mercy is communicated to sinful men, to whom God is only merciful in Christ: and Christ himself is all mercy to his people; his ways of old were mercy and truth, and all his works, especially

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 26:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 26

In this chapter a description is given of the tabernacle itself, and first of its inward curtains, of their number, matter, length, and breadth, and the manner of coupling them together, Ex 26:1, and then of the outward curtains of it, their number, matter, length, and breadth, and coupling, and how disposed of, Ex 26:7, and next of the two coverings of the tabernacle, of rams' skins and badgers' skins, Ex 22:14, the boards for the tabernacle are also described, with their tenons and sockets, Ex 26:15 and the bars and rings for it, by which it was kept firm together,
Ex 26:26, an account is given of the vail between the holy and the most holy place, Ex 26:31, and of the hanging for the door of the tabernacle, Ex 26:36.

Ver. 1. Moreover, thou shalt make the tabernacle,.... Which he was ordered to make before, the pattern of which was shown him in the mount: this was an habitation for God to dwell in, as the word properly signifies, and into which the furniture before described was to be put; this tabernacle was a type both of the human nature of Christ, which is the true tabernacle which God pitched, and not man, the greater and more perfect one, **Heb 8:2** in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, where the glory of God is seen, in whom he grants his gracious presence to his people, and accepts of them and their sacrifices of prayer and praise; and also of the church of God,
Ps 43:3. Here Jehovah dwells, grants his presence to his people, and comes and blesses them; here he is worshipped, and spiritual sacrifices are offered up to him with acceptance: the tabernacle of Moses was made

[with] ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet; the ground of these curtains was fine linen, twined or doubled: and the Jewish writers, as Maimonides, Ben Gersom, and others, say it was six times doubled, the word "Shesh", here used, signifying six; and this was interwoven with

threads of yarn dyed blue, purple, and scarlet; according to Jarchi, the threads of which this tapestry was made were twenty four times doubled: he observes,

"there were four sorts in every thread, one thread of fine linen, and three of wool, and every thread was doubled six times; lo, the four sorts, when they were twined together, there were twenty four double to a thread;"

which if so, must make a stuff of a very great consistence and stiffness. This, as applied to the human nature of Christ, the fine linen may denote the purity of it; the various colours the different graces of the Spirit, with which it is adorned; or else the wounds, bruises, bloodshed, sufferings and death he endured in it: as applied to the church, may signify the clothing of the saints with the righteousness of Christ, that fine linen clean and white, and their being washed in his precious blood, and beautified with the graces of his Spirit:

with cherubim of cunning work shall thou make them; that is, with figures like those of the cherubim on the mercy seat, so disposed by the curious art and contrivance of the weaver, as to appear on both sides of this tapestry; for this was not wrought by a needle, which only shows the figure on one side, but by weaving, as Jarchi observes; and who says, that there was one figure on one side, and another on another; as, for instance, a lion on one side, and an eagle on the other; or, which is more likely, the same figure was seen on both sides, as Maimonides affirms, who says {e}, the work called Chosheb (which is what is here spoken of) is that whose figures appear on both sides, before and behind: this in the mystical sense may point either to the ministration of angels to Christ in his human nature, and to his people the heirs of salvation; or else to the service of Gospel ministers, done for the honour and glory of Christ, and the good of his church and people: Josephus {f} thinks these curtains had a mystical meaning in them, and represent the nature of the elements, and so Philo {g}.

{e} Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 15. {f} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 7. {g} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 667.

Exodus 26:2

Ver. 2. The length of one curtain shall be twenty eight cubits,.... Or fourteen yards:

and the breadth of one curtain four cubits; or two yards; according to the common notion of a cubit being half a yard; but if, as Dr. Cumberland says, the Jewish and Egyptian cubit was three inches longer, this will make a considerable difference in the length and breadth of those curtains, especially in the former:

and everyone of the curtains shall have one measure; be of equal length and breadth.

Exodus 26:3

Ver. 3. The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another,.... Five of the ten curtains were to be sewed together, and make as it were one curtain:

and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another: the other five were to be joined together in like manner, and so made two large pieces of tapestry of fourteen yards long and ten broad, according to the common account of a cubit, but were much longer and broader.

Exodus 26:4

Ver. 4. And thou shall make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain,.... The first large curtain, consisting of five sewed together, at the edge of that:

from the selvedge in the coupling; where it was to be coupled with the other great curtain; "loops" or "eyelet holes" {h}, were to be made: these were not wove with the curtains, for they were not to be upon all of them, only at the two outermost of the largest ones, and therefore were made afterwards, probably with the needle:

and likewise shall thou make in the uppermost edge of [another] curtain, in the coupling of the second; loops also were to be made on the outermost edge of another curtain belonging to the second great curtain, where it was to be coupled with the first.

{h} tall "ocellos", Vatablus.

Exodus 26:5

Ver. 5. Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain,.... In the first great curtain, or in the outermost of the five that were sewed together:

and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is in the coupling of the second; as many also were to be made in the outermost of the second great curtain where it was to be coupled with the first:

that the loops may take hold one of another; or rather that they might answer to one another in both curtains; for the loops could not take hold of one another, only were made to meet together by the taches, hooks, or clasps put into them, next mentioned.

Exodus 26:6

Ver. 6. And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold,.... Which some render "buttons" {i}, others "hooks" {k} they seem to be "clasps"; the use of them follows:

and couple the curtains together with the taches; the two great curtains were made out of the ten, which had in them fifty

{i} yorq "fibulas", Tigurine version, Vatablus {k} "Uncinos", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan.

Exodus 26:7

Ver. 7. And thou shalt make curtains of goats' hair,.... Jarchi calls it the flower or down of goats, the softer and finer part of their hair, which was spun by women, as appears from Ex 35:26, and was made up into a stuff somewhat like our camelot; these curtains were coarser than the former, and were made to be put over them, to preserve them from the weather, as it follows:

to be a covering upon the tabernacle: which, by the curtains of linen coupled together, became one tabernacle, as in the preceding verse: and these curtains were to be a tent or covering over them: they were somewhat like, being made of the same matter, with the coverings with which the ancient Arabs covered their tents, which were made of goats' hair, as were the tents of Kedar alluded to in **So 1:5**, these curtains of goats' hair denote the outward appearance of

Christ in human nature, who, attended with all human infirmities, excepting sin, was in the form of a servant, in great meanness and poverty, covered with reproach, and had in the greatest contempt, and especially at the time of his sufferings and death; though all rich and glorious within, full of grace, and of all the blessings of grace, of righteousness and life, of light, joy, peace, and comfort for his people; and may also denote the mean appearance of the church and people of God outwardly; being, generally speaking, a poor and an afflicted people, subject to the scorn, reproach, and persecutions of men, but all glorious within, enriched with the grace of God and righteousness of Christ; and so, in one respect, like these curtains of goats' hair, and, in another respect, like the curtains of fine linen:

eleven curtains shalt thou make; one more than the other; the reason of which was, that there might be one at the entrance of the tabernacle, there being no linen curtain there, see Ex 26:9.

Exodus 26:8

Ver. 8. The length of one curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits,.... The breadth of them is the same with the linen curtains, but the length of them two cubits more; the reason of which was, that they might hang down lower on either side, and the better preserve them from any injury:

and the eleven curtains shall be all of one measure; as to length and breadth.

Exodus 26:9

Ver. 9. And thou shall couple five curtains by themselves,.... And make one large curtain of them, as was ordered with respect to the linen curtains:

and six curtains by themselves; as there were eleven of them, such a division was made of five into one large curtain, and six into another; and as that which had six in it would reach further than the other, provision is made for the disposal and use of that as follows:

and shall double the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tabernacle; at the entrance of it, in the east end of it; the sixth curtain reaching to that, and hanging down, was turned up, and so doubled, opposite the door or entrance;

and was, as Jarchi says, like a modest bride that covers her face with a vail, which before this had no covering; for thus it was, as Dr. Lightfoot {m} describes it, the holy place was ten yards long, and the five curtains sewed together were just so broad, and so they covered only the top and the sides, but hung not down at the end, which was eastward--but the six (goat hair curtains) that lay east reached to the end, covered the pillars whereon that vail hung, and they hung half a curtain's breadth or a yard over the entrance.

{m} Works, vol. 1. p. 718.

Exodus 26:10

Ver. 10. And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain, that is outmost in the coupling,.... Just in like manner, and in the same place where they were ordered to be put on the linen curtains, only these are not said to be of blue, but perhaps were wrought with goats hair: and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second; these loops were set on each of the curtains where the two large pieces were to be coupled together.

Exodus 26:11

Ver. 11. And thou shalt make fifty taches of brass,.... As these curtains were coarser, and also the loops, so the taches, hooks, or clasps, were made of meaner metal, but answered the purpose of joining and coupling together full as well: and put the taches into the loops; one end of the hook or clasp into the loop on one of the curtains, and the other end of the hook or clasp into the loop on the other curtain answering to it: and couple the tent together, that it may be one; that the tent or covering over the tabernacle might be one, as the tabernacle by the like means was, Ex 26:6.

Exodus 26:12

Ver. 12. And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent,.... Of the goat hair curtains, which were one more than the linen curtains:

the half curtain that remaineth; for the other half extended to the east end of it, at the entrance of the tabernacle, and hung down and was doubled there, and the other that remained is here disposed of:

shall hang over the backside of the tabernacle; the west end of it, where was the holy of holies; or rather, as Dr. Lightfoot {n} describes it, thus, it was when those curtains (of goats' hair) were laid upon the other over the tabernacle; they were not laid as these brazen loops (clasps it should be) did light just upon the golden ones over the vail, but three quarters of a yard more westward, so that the five curtains that went west did reach to the ground and half a curtain to spare, Ex 26:12 the other six that lay east reached to the end, covered the pillars whereon that vail hung, and they hung half a curtain's breadth or a yard over the entrance.

{n} Works, vol. 1. p. 719.

Exodus 26:13

Ver. 13. And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side o that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent,.... The curtains of the tent, or the goat hair curtains, were two cubits longer than the other, and these are the two cubits, one on one side and the other on the other, which remained, and by which they were longer than the linen curtains:

it shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle; the north and south sides: on this side,

and on that side, to cover it; and as the above learned doctor observes {o}, their length of fifteen yards reached half a yard lower on either side than the other curtains did, and yet they came not to the ground by a quarter of a yard; so that the silver foundations (of which afterwards) were always plain to be seen everywhere but at the west end.

{o} Works, vol. 1. p. 719.

Exodus 26:14

Ver. 14. And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red,.... This was a covering that was put over the curtains of goats' skin; but whether it went all over them, or only upon the roof of the tabernacle they covered, to keep out the rains from soaking through, is not certain, nor very evident; Jarchi thinks the roof was only covered with this covering of rams' skins; but others think it more reasonable that the whole was covered with them to preserve from dust and rain:

and a covering above of badgers' skins; of these skins
See Gill on "Ex 25:5", this was a fourth covering of the tabernacle; the first was of linen curtains, the second of goats' hair, the third of rams' skins, and the fourth of badgers' skins, which seems to have been thicker and courser, since shoes were made of them, Eze 16:10, R. Judah, as quoted by Jarchi, thinks the two last were but one covering, half of it consisting of rams' skins and half of it of badgers' skins; but the text is express that the latter was a covering above and over the former: these several coverings of the tabernacle show the care that God takes of his church and people, and how sufficiently they are provided for, that they may be in safety from all their enemies, being clothed with Christ's righteousness, and under the purple covering of his blood, and surrounded by his almighty power, see **Isa 4:5**.

Exodus 26:15

Ver. 15. And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle,.... Which were the pillars and supports, and properly the walls of it, which gave it its firmness and security, or otherwise the curtains would have been blown about by every wind: they were to be made

of shittim wood standing up; just as they grew, as a Jewish writer observes {p}; these planks or boards were not to be laid along the lengthways of them, but to be set upright; and may denote such who are pillars in the house of God, and are to be upright both in heart and conversation, both ministers and private members; and indeed the church itself is the pillar and ground of truth, **Ga 2:9**.

{p} Bartenora in Misn. Succa, c. 3. sect. 14.

Exodus 26:16

Ver. 16. Ten cubits shall be the length of a board,.... Or five yards, according to the common cubit:

and a cubit and a half shall be the breadth of one board; or three quarters of a yard; and from hence we may learn what were the height and the length of the tabernacle; according to the common computation of a cubit, it was but five yards high and fifteen long, since there were but twenty boards on each side, Ex 26:18, but if three inches are added to each cubit, it will make its measures considerably larger: Josephus {q} says the boards were four fingers thick: according to Bishop Cumberland the boards of the tabernacle, containing fifteen Jewish square cubits, were very near fifty English square feet in their length and breadth.

{q} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 3.

Exodus 26:17

Ver. 17. Two tenons shall there be on one board,.... Every board was to be so cut and shaped at the lower end of it, as to have, as it were, "two hands" {r}, as in the original, to enter into, lay hold on, and fasten in mortises:

set in order one against another; at a proper distance from each other, as the rounds of a ladder:

thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle; everyone was to have two tenons.

{r} twdy ytv "duae manus", Montanus.

Exodus 26:18

Ver. 18. And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle,.... As in the manner before described, so in number as follows:

twenty boards on the south side southward; which being a cubit and a half broad, made the length of the tabernacle fifteen yards according to the common account; but if these were cubits of twenty one inches, then its length was much greater.

Exodus 26:19

Ver. 19. And thou shall make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards,.... Or bases {s}, and which were properly the foundation of the tabernacle, on which it was settled and established; these sockets were the mortises for the two tenons of each board or plank to be placed in, and were as broad as the plank, and, joining each other, made one entire basis for the whole structure; each socket contained a talent of silver, and was made of the silver given at the numbering of the people, Ex 38:25, and a talent of silver, according to Bishop Cumberland, amounted to three hundred and fifty three pounds, eleven shillings and some odd pence of our money: by which may be judged the whole value of this silver foundation, which, with the four sockets of the vail, consisted of one hundred of them, which answer to the one hundred talents of silver collected at the above offering:

two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons; and so in all the twenty boards, which took up the whole forty on the south side.

{s} ynda "bases", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator, Drusius.

Exodus 26:20

Ver. 20. And for the second side of the tabernacle the north side,.... The direction of the tabernacle was east and west; at the east end was the entrance into the holy place, and at the west end the holy of holies; and the two sides were north and south; and as on the south side, so on the north

[there shall be] twenty boards: just the same number as the laws of building required.

Exodus 26:21

Ver. 21. And their forty sockets of silver,.... answerable to the twenty boards, for their two tenons to be placed in as in mortises: two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board; and so under all the boards on the north side as on the south.

Exodus 26:22

Ver. 22. And for the sides of the tabernacle,.... Or the ends of it, the east and west, and the account begins with the west:

westward thou shalt make six boards; so that the breadth of the tabernacle was but nine cubits, or four yards and a half, according to a common cubit; but two boards more placed at the two corners of the sides, next observed, added to the breadth of it.

Exodus 26:23

Ver. 23. And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. For the northwest and southwest corners, in the north and south sides; concerning which Dr. Lightfoot thus writes {t}: and the west end had six planks entire, besides a plank at either corner, joining end and sides together; these corner planks were of the same breadth that all the others were, and, thus set, the middle of the breadth of the one plank was laid close to the end of the south side, or to that plank that was furthest west; so that a quarter of a yard of the breadth of the corner plank was inward, to make up the tabernacle breadth, a quarter was taken up with the thickness of the side plank to which it joined, and a quarter lay outward: thus at the southwest, just so was it at the northwest corner: then count; the two corner planks were inward a quarter of a yard apiece, and the six planks that stood between them of three quarters apiece, behold five yards, just the breadth of the house between wall and wall: these corners knit end and side together, and were the strength of the building; as, adds he,

"Christ is of his church, making Jews and Gentiles one spiritual temple."

{t} Ut supra. (Works, vol 1. p. 719.)

Exodus 26:24

Ver. 24. And they shall be coupled together beneath,.... At the bottom of the boards or planks:

and they shall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring at the top of the boards there was a ring, to which they were coupled and fastened, and so at the bottom of them, though not expressed: some understand this of all the planks, both at the two sides and at the west end; but it seems rather to respect only the corner planks, since it follows:

thus shall it be for them both, they shall be for the two corners; which were coupled and joined alike at each corner as if they were twins, as the word used signifies; or the meaning is, that these were double boards, and so like twins, which were so closely put together that they seemed but one board; which was done that the corners might be thicker and stronger, and so for the greater firmness of the building.

Exodus 26:25

Ver. 25. And they shall be eight boards,.... Six at the west end and one at each corner, northwest and southwest:

and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets the same as those for the boards on both sides north and south: they were of the same metal, silver; and they were two under one board, to receive its two tenons as follows:

two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board; and so under all eight, and which sockets joining with those of the two sides, and in all made ninety six, were the basis and foundation of the tabernacle, and was a figure of Christ, the only foundation of his church and people; and the several tenons of the boards joined into those sockets of silver may denote the union of the members of Christ and ministers of his word to him, and their dependence on him.

Exodus 26:26

Ver. 26. And thou shalt make bars of shittim wood, &e.] Which being put into rings or staples of gold, kept the boards tight, close, and firm together:

five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle: for instance, the south side; four of these were placed, two at the upper end of the boards, and two at the lower end, and the fifth in the middle, particularly taken notice of, Ex 26:28, how long these bars were it is not said, but it is reasonable to conclude that they reached the length of the tabernacle, which was thirty cubits; and as it was not easy to get bars of such a length, the notion of Josephus {u} perhaps, may be right, that each two consisted of divers parts which joined one another, the head of one entering into the hollow of the other and as he supposes they were five cubits long, a row of them must have six parts, which went along the sides, north and south, and the west end two, which was but ten cubits.

{u} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 3.)

Exodus 26:27

Ver. 27. And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle,.... Suppose the north, these bars were disposed of in the same manner as those on the south side:

and five bars for the boards of that side of the tabernacle; or the end of it, the west end, as follows:

for the two sides westward; that is, the two corners at the west end, the southwest and the northwest corners; and these five bars reached from the one to the other, two at the upper part of the boards, and two at the lower part, and one in the middle.

Exodus 26:28

Ver. 28. And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end. From east to west, as Jarchi interprets it; but this can only be said of the middle bar on the north and south sides of the tabernacle, for the middle bar at the west end was north to south: about this bar there is some difficulty, as that it is said to be "from end to end", as if that only was; whereas it is reasonable to suppose that the rest were so likewise; it may be, they might come somewhat short of reaching the end, whereas this did entirely; or rather the truer reason is, because the rest of the bars consisted of various parts; whereas this was a long bar of one entire piece, reaching from one end of the tabernacle to the other: likewise it is said to be "in the midst of the boards"; and the Jewish writers are generally of opinion, that it did not run along in rings as the other bars did, but the boards and planks being bored, this went through the thickness of the wood throughout; and in this they are followed by Arias Moatanus, Vatablus, Dr. Lightfoot, and others: but to this it may be objected, that the boards must be very thick indeed, even incredibly so, to admit of such a bore as to let in a bar of this kind, and is not so consistent with its being a portable house; and besides, when it was at any time taken down, in order to be removed, such a bar must give a great deal of trouble, and be in danger of being broke to pieces; besides, if it was thus covered in the boards, as it must be, what need was there that it should be overlaid with gold, as in the next verse? it is more probable, therefore, that it went not through the midst of the thickness of the wood, but in the middle of the length of the planks, and so expresses its different situation from the rest of the bars, which were at or towards the top and bottom of the planks, and this in the middle of them. It is not said of these bars, whether they were within or on the outside of the tabernacle; it is most likely they were on the outside, as Josephus {w} says they were; since they would not have made a good appearance within side, where they would have been always seen by the priests within, whereas being without they were covered with the curtains.

{w} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 3.)

Exodus 26:29

Ver. 29. And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold,.... Not merely gild them, but cover them with thin plates of gold; and which, because it would take up a great quantity of gold, and make the boards very heavy, unless the plates were very thin, when they were taken down and carried from place to place, some have thought they were only glided:

and make their rings of gold, [for] places for the bars; these were made of solid gold, and were as staples to let the bars into: and, according to Jarchi, there were two rings to every board:

and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold: cover them with plates of gold; and these bars and staples of gold show how compact and firm the church of God is, through his almighty power, as well as how glorious and splendid it is by his grace.

Exodus 26:30

Ver. 30. And thou shall rear up the tabernacle,.... When thus finished, and all the furniture belonging to it completed:

according to the fashion thereof, which was showed thee in the mount; this is the third time that this is observed to Moses in the account of the tabernacle; which shows how punctually God would have the pattern observed he had given him, and that all things might be particularly and exactly done according to it, see **Heb 8:5**.

Exodus 26:31

Ver. 31. And thou shalt make a vail,.... The use of this, as follows, was to divide the holy place from the most holy place in the tabernacle; it has its name from hardness, it being very stiff and strong, for it was made of thread six times doubled, and was four fingers thick, as the Jewish writers say: this vail may represent the sin of man, which separates between God and man, was removed by the death of Christ when the vail was rent, and so the way to heaven opened; or the obscurity of the legal dispensation, the Gospel being veiled under the shadows of the law, and the way into the holiest of all then not so manifest, and particularly the ceremonial law, which separated between Jew and Gentile, and is now abolished by the death of Christ; or rather it was typical of the human nature of Christ, his flesh, called in allusion to it the vail of his flesh, Heb 10:20. This vail was made of

blue, and purple, and scarlet, of fine twined linen of cunning work; it seems to have been made of the same materials, and in the same curious manner of workmanship with the curtains of the tabernacle, Ex 26:1, and was itself no other than a curtain, and so it is interpreted by some Jewish writers {x}. It being made of "fine linen" denotes the purity of Christ, of his nature, life, and righteousness; of "twined linen", his strength, courage and steadiness; "of blue, purple, and scarlet", the several graces of the Spirit, with which his human nature was adorned, his flaming zeal for his Father's glory and the good of his people, his bloody wounds, sufferings, and death, the preciousness of his blood, the dignity of his person, and his glorious exaltation, purple and scarlet being the colours wore by kings:

with cherubim shall it be made; signifying either the ministration of angels to him in his incarnate state, or the mission of Gospel ministers by him, see Ps 139:15.

{x} Vid. R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 37. 2.

Exodus 26:32

Ver. 32. And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood, overlaid with gold,.... For it was ten cubits long, and as many broad; and being of such a stiffness and thickness as it was, required so many pillars to support it: these pillars may signify the deity of Christ, which is the support of his human nature, and in which it has its personal subsistence, and gives all its actions and sufferings virtue and efficacy; and being of "shittim wood", which is incorruptible, may denote his eternity, and being covered with gold, his glory:

their hooks shall be of gold; which were upon the tops of the pillars on which the vail was hung: and the pillars were

upon the four sockets of silver; which were properly the pedestals or feet of the pillars; and these sockets, into which the pillars were let and placed, and the hooks the vail hung by, may hint to the union of the two natures in Christ, who is God and man in one person, God manifest in the flesh; see **So 5:15**.

Exodus 26:33

Ver. 33. And thou shall hang up the vail under the taches,.... Or clasps, which coupled the two grand curtains, or pieces of tapestry, each consisting of five curtains, of which the tabernacle was made,
Ex 26:6, and by this it seems that the place where they met, and were clasped, was where the vail was hung between the holy and the most holy place: for, as Dr. Lightfoot {y} observes, according to the division of the house was the division of the curtains, the vail that parted the holy from the most holy was hung just under the golden clasps that knit the five curtains together; so that five curtains lay over the holy place, and the other five over the most holy; but with this difference, the holy place was ten yards long, and the five curtains sewed together were just so broad, and so they covered only the top and sides, but hung not down at the end which was eastward; but the most holy was but five yards long, and the five curtains over that did not only cover the top, but also hung down at the west end to the silver bases; and of what he says of the goat hair curtains, and their brazen clasps or taches, and where they met, and what they covered, See Gill on "Ex 26:12",

that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony; the ark in which the testimony or law of God, testifying his will, was put; of which see Ex 25:10, &c. this was to be set in the most holy place, as being holy, spiritual, just, and good; and as being fulfilled by Christ, signified by the ark in which it was, through whose righteousness alone there is admission into the holy of holies, by which this law is fulfilled, magnified, and made honourable:

and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy;

which was so thick, that there was no seeing through it; and none might enter by it into the holiest of all but the high priest, and he only on the day of atonement; and into the holy place might none come but the priests, to do the service of the sanctuary. The holy place was typical of the church on earth, where all the saints, who are priests to God, worship, and the most holy of heaven, the perfect state of bliss and happiness.

{y} Works, vol, 1. p. 718.

Exodus 26:34

Ver. 34. And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon ark of the testimony,.... With the cherubim of glory overshadowing it; all which were a representation of the way of man's salvation flowing from the mercy and grace of God, through the propitiation by Christ, and his perfect righteousness, by which the law is fulfilled; and all this is published in the Gospel by the ministers of it, signified by the cherubim: and these are all the things that were "in the most holy place"; and they were placed at the west end of it.

Exodus 26:35

Ver. 35. And thou shalt set the table without the vail,.... The table of shewbread, of which see Ex 25:23, this was not to be within the vail, but without it, in the holy place: and the candlestick opposite the table, of which see Ex 25:31, &c. signifying, that in the church of God, in the present state of things, which the holy place was an emblem of, there are both food and light: the candlestick was placed

on the side of the tabernacle, toward the south; according to Jarchi, two cubits and a half from the side of it:

and thou shalt put the table on the north side; of the tabernacle, directly opposite the candlestick, two cubits and a half from the south side, as the same writer says;

Exodus 26:36

Ver. 36. And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent,.... At the east end of the tabernacle, which lay open and exposed, and for which as yet there was no provision; the west end of it, where stood the holy of holies, was enclosed with six boards, and two corner ones, Ex 26:22 and the linen curtains hung down there to the silver bases, and so did the curtains of goats' hair, even to the ground, and half a curtain to spare, see Ex 26:12 but for the east end, or entrance into the tabernacle, there was nothing till now ordered, only the sixth curtain of the goats' hair curtains was there turned up double, Ex 26:9, but now here an "hanging" is ordered, or rather a "covering" {z}, as the word signifies; Jarchi calls it a vail; and this was instead of a door to the tabernacle, and divided the holy place, into which only the priests might enter, from the place where the people stood and worshipped: and this also was made

of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; as was the vail between the holy and the holy of holies; only with this difference, this was

wrought with needle work, and that was of "cunning work": the difference between these two, "Rokem" and "Chosheb", was, as Ben Melech from the Misnah relates, that "Rokem" is the work of a needle, and therefore but one face or figure is seen, that is, it is only seen on one side; but "Chosheb" is the work of a weaver, and therefore two faces or figures are seen, that is, they are seen on both sides; and with this account Maimonides agrees, See Gill on "Ex 26:1", besides this hanging, Josephus {a} tells us there was another of linen, of the same size with this, and which covered it, and preserved it from the weather, and which on festival days was turned back, that the people might have a prospect of the other; just as there were curtains of goats' hair to preserve the linen ones.

{z} Kom "operimentum", Montanus; "tegumentum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "velum", Tigurine version, Drusius. {a} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 4.

Exodus 26:37

Ver. 37. And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of shittim wood,.... One at each corner of the entrance into the tabernacle, and the other three at a proper distance from each other, so as to make four ways for the priests to enter in at; as there might very well be, since there was a breadth of ten cubits, or five yards or more:

and overlay them with gold; with plates of gold, for a gild would soon wear off by continual use in passing and repassing. This is to be understood not of the whole pillars, but of the chapiters, heads, tops, or knobs of them, and of their fillets or girdles; in some parts of them the wood appearing, as is plain from Ex 36:38:

and their hooks shall be of gold; on which the hanging, covering, or vail was hung:

and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them; for the pillars to stand upon them, and were of a meaner metal than those on which the pillars for the vail before mentioned; that being the entrance into the holy of holies, where the divine Majesty dwelt, this into the holy place where the priests did their service.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 27:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 27

This chapter treats of the altar of burnt offering, and of all things relative to it, Ex 27:1, of the court of the tabernacle, its hangings on each side, with pillars, sockets, and hooks for them,
Ex 27:9 and it is concluded with an order to the Israelites to bring oil olive for the lamp of the sanctuary, Ex 27:20.

Ver. 1. And thou shall make an altar of shittim wood,.... This is a different altar from that made of earth before the tabernacle was built,
Ex 20:24 and from the altar of incense, Ex 30:1 this was to offer burnt offerings on, and was placed at the door of the tabernacle, in the court of the people, where they brought their sacrifices to the priests to offer for them: it stood in the open air, as it was proper it should, that the smoke or the sacrifices might ascend up and scatter. This altar was not typical of the altar of the heart; though indeed all the saints are priests, and every sacrifice of theirs should come from the heart, and particularly love, which is more than all burnt offerings; but the heart is not this altar of brass to bear the fire of divine wrath, which none can endure; nor does it sanctify the gift, it being itself impure: nor of the Lord's table, or the table on which the Lord's supper is set; that is a table, and not an altar, a feast, and not a sacrifice; is not greater than the gift, nor does it sanctify: nor of the cross or Christ, on which he died, bore the sins or his people, and sanctified them by his blood; but of Christ himself, who by his office as a priest, his human nature is the sacrifice, and his divine nature the

altar; and he is that altar believers in him have a right to eat of, Heb 13:10 his divine nature is greater than the human, is the support of it, which sanctifies and gives it virtue as a sacrifice, and which makes the sacrifices of all his people acceptable to God. This altar of burnt offering is said to be made of "shittim wood", a wood incorruptible and durable; Christ, as God, is from everlasting to everlasting; as man, though he once died, he now lives for evermore, and never did or will see corruption; his priesthood is an unchangeable priesthood, and passes not from one to another, and particularly his sacrifice is of a continual virtue and efficacy:

five cubits long, and five cubits broad: the altar shall be square: as to the length and breadth of it, which were alike, two yards and a half each, according to the common notion of a cubit. The altars of the Heathens were made in imitation of this, they were square as this was. Pausanias makes mention of an altar of Diana, that was tetragwnov "square", sensibly rising up on high. And this figure may denote the perfection of Christ's sacrifice, and the permanency of it; though the altars in Solomon's temple, and in the visions of Ezekiel, are much larger, and which also were square, **2Ch 4:1**. Christ's sacrifice is large and extensive, making satisfaction for all his people, and for all their sins; and he is an altar large enough for all their sacrifices to be offered up to God with acceptance:

and the height thereof shall be three cubits; a proper height for a man to minister at; for as Aben Ezra observes, the height of a man is but four cubits ordinarily; so that a man serving at the altar would be a cubit, or half a yard more above it, and would have command of doing on it what he had to do.

Exodus 27:2

Ver. 2 And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof,.... Which were either for ornament, or for keeping what was laid upon the altar from falling off, or for the fastening of the sacrifice to them, and were what criminals fled to for refuge, and laid hold on; and may denote the power of Christ, who is the horn of salvation to preserve his people from a final falling away, and from ruin and destruction, and his protection of those that fly to him for refuge; and these horns being at the corners of the altar may respect the four parts of the world, from whence souls come to Christ for everlasting salvation:

his horns shall be of the same; that is, made of the same wood as the altar itself and so may lead to observe the like things: or "upwards out of it" {b}, the altar; prominent from it, as the Arabic version, and so the sacrifices could be bound to them, Ps 118:27:

and thou shalt overlay it with brass; with plates of brass, that it may endure the fire, and preserve the wood from being burnt with it; this may denote not only the brightness, lustre, and glory of Christ, like the shining brass, but his great strength in bearing the sins of his people, and all the punishment due unto them, even the fire of divine wrath, without being consumed by it. Jarchi observes, that it was overlaid with brass, because it was to make atonement for the impudence of the forehead, which is as brass, Isa 48:4.

{b} wnmm "sursum exeo", Noldius, p. 615.

Exodus 27:3

Ver. 3. And thou shall make his pans to receive his ashes,.... Not to receive them in as they fell, but to gather them up in, and carry them away; and this was done every morning about cockcrowing, not much sooner nor later {c}:

and his shovels; to throw up the ashes together to be put into the pans; Jarchi describes this vessel to be like the cover of a brass pot, with a handle to it; the same we call a fire shovel:

and his basins: to receive the blood of the sacrifice, and out of which it was sprinkled, as the word signifies, and may be rendered sprinkling basins:

and his flesh hooks; not such as were used to take flesh out of the pot, **1Sa 2:13** for there could be no use for such at the altar of burnt offering; but were, as Jarchi says, like hooks recurved, with which they struck into the flesh, and turned it upon the coals to hasten the burning of it; and with which very probably they kept the fire and the parts of the sacrifices in good order, until they were consumed:

and his fire pans; which were a kind of censers in which coals of fire were taken off from the altar of burnt offering, and carried to the altar of incense, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom observe, see Le 16:12 but as censers did not belong to the altar of burnt offering, but to the altar of incense, Fortunatus Scacchus {d} is of opinion, that these were a larger sort of vessels, wherein the fire which came down from heaven was kept burning while the altar and grate were cleansed from the coals and ashes, and when the altar was had from place to place:

all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass; as being fittest for the use of this altar.

{c} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 8. & Maimon, in ib. {d} Sacr. Elaeochrism. Myrothec. l. 2. c. 73. p. 676, 677.

Exodus 27:4

Ver. 4. And thou shalt, make for it a grate of network of brass,.... Or "sieve", as in **Am 9:9**, it was a plate of brass with holes in it, to let through either the blood that drained from the parts of the sacrifice, or the ashes of it; for this was the focus or hearth, on which the sacrifice and the wood were laid and burnt: this, according to the Targum of Jonathan on Ex 38:4 was to receive the coals and bones which fell from the altar: and so may denote the purity of Christ's sacrifice, which was offered up without spot to God, and the use of him as the altar to sanctify our gifts, and take away the sins of our holy things:

and upon the net shalt thou make four brazen rings in the four corners thereof; by which, with chains put into them, the grate was fastened to the four horns of the altar, and the use of them was to let it down and hang in the middle of the altar, and to take it up when there was occasion for it; though some think these rings were not "in" the grate, but "by" it, as the particle may be rendered, a little lower than that, on the sides of the altar; into which the staves after mentioned were put, and with which the altar was carried when removed from place to place.

Exodus 27:5

Ver. 5. And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath,.... That is, the grate was to be put within the square compass of the altar, in the hollow part of it, for the wood and sacrifice to be laid upon it:

that the net may be even to the midst of the altar; and as the altar was three cubits high, this net or grate was let down by chains to its rings a cubit and a half, and being of such a depth was capable of containing a great deal.

Exodus 27:6

Ver. 6. And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim wood,.... Like those that were made for the ark, and for the same purpose:

and overlay them with brass; with plates of brass, whereas those for the ark were overlaid with gold.

Exodus 27:7

Ver. 7. And the staves shall be put into the rings,.... Not into the rings of the grate, as Jarchi and others: though Dr. Lightfoot {f} thinks these came out of each corner through the altar frame, and hung out of the frame, and in these the staves being put, made the frame and the grate sure together, and so they were also carried together; but it seems rather, that as the grate had rings peculiar to that, to let it down and take it up, and with which it was carried, with a purple cloth covered over it, **Nu 4:13** so the altar had rings peculiar to that on the sides of it, into which these staves were put:

and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it; and which shows that the rings into which these were put were not the rings of the grate, for they were at the four corners of it, which hung upon the four horns of it; whereas the staves were on the two sides of it, in order to bear it from place to place, which was done by the Levites; and was typical of the ministers of the Gospel bearing the name of Christ, and spreading the doctrine of his sacrifice and satisfaction, in the world, which is the main and fundamental doctrine of the Gospel.

{f} Works, vol. 1. p. 722.

Exodus 27:8

Ver. 8. Hollow with boards shalt thou make it,.... The frame of it being made of boards of shittim wood, there was nothing within side but the grate, which was put within the square, down into the middle of it, and so was light of carriage; though the Targum of Jonathan, and other Jewish writers, represent this hollow as filled up with dust and earth, to answer to the altar of earth Moses was before bid to make; but this seems quite contrary to the present direction: the hollowness of the altar may denote the emptiness of Christ when he became a sacrifice: he emptied himself, as it were, when he became incarnate, of all his greatness, glory, and riches, and became mean and poor for the sake of his people, that they through his poverty might be made rich, **Php 2:7**

as it was showed thee in the mount, so shall they make it; or, "as he showed thee" {g}, that is, God. Moses had a model of this altar showed him, and he was to be careful to instruct the workmen, and see to it, that they built it exactly according to the model.

{g} harh "fecit videre", Pagninus, Montanus; "ostendit Dominus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius; so Ainsworth.

Exodus 27:9

Ver. 9. And thou shall make the court of the tabernacle: for the south side southward,.... This was a large court yard to the house of God, or tabernacle, which stood in it at the upper end of it; it was enclosed, but open to the air; and in it, between the entrance into it and the holy place, stood the altar of burnt offering before described, and on one side of that the laver for the priests to wash in; into this the people of Israel were admitted, and where they brought their sacrifices and worshipped: it was typical of the visible church of God on earth, which, though an enclosure, and is separated from the world, yet consists of professors, good and bad, of real saints and hypocrites; as into this court Israelites of every character, sex, and state entered. In David's time it was divided into various courts, and what answered to it when the temple was built were the several apartments called the courts of the priests, where they sacrificed, and the court of Israel, where the men Israelites worshipped, and the court of the women, where they were by themselves; and in later times there was another court separate from these, called the court of the Gentiles, into which they might enter; and the description of this court begins with that side of it which lay full south: there shall be

hangings for the court of fine twined linen of one hundred cubits long for one side; for the south side; and these hangings, with the rest all around, made the court, and were the walls of it; and from hence we learn, that it was one hundred cubits or fifty yards long, according to the common computation of a cubit; though it was three hundred inches more, this cubit being three inches more than is commonly supposed. These hangings, vails, or curtains, for so in the versions they are differently called, were the enclosure of the court; they were made of fine linen, six times twisted, but not of various colours, and curiously wrought with cunning work, as the curtains of the tabernacle were; and according to the signification of the word, they were wrought full of holes, like eyelet holes, or in the manner of network; so that though they kept persons from entering in, they might be seen through, and through them might be seen what was doing in the court: and all this may signify that the visible church of God on earth is separated from the world, and should consist of men called out of it, and of such who are clothed with that fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints, and which is the righteousness of Christ, and who have both inward and outward holiness; and though none but those who are admitted members of it may partake of its ordinances, yet others may be spectators of what is done in it.

Exodus 27:10

Ver. 10. And the twenty pillars thereof and their twenty sockets [shall be of brass],.... On these pillars the hangings, rails, or curtains were set, and they were for one side, the south side, in number twenty; and so must stand five cubits, or two yards and a half or more, distant from each other, since the length of the hangings were one hundred cubits: these, according to Philo the Jew {h}, were made of cedar, but if of wood, most probably of "shittim wood", as they are by most thought to be; though one would think, according to the plain and express words of the text, they as well as their sockets were of brass: and Josephus {i} expressly says they were of brass, and which seems fittest for the purpose: now though the church of God itself is a pillar, and so is every true member of it, **1Ti 3:15** yet ministers of the Gospel may be more especially designed, **Pr 9:1** who are the principal support of the churches of God, and of the interest of religion; and are set for the defence of the Gospel, and are steadfast in the ministration of it:

the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver; the hooks on the pillars might be somewhat like our tenter hooks, and so Jarchi describes them, as having one end crooked upwards, and the other end fixed in the pillar; and as for the fillets, he says, they were silver threads round about the pillars; but whether they were upon the face or of them all, or on the top, or in the middle of them, he confesses his ignorance; only this he knew, that the word has the signification of girding or binding; and these fillets might not only be for ornament, but for the binding of the hangings to the pillars: and so Ben Gersom says, that they were silver threads, with which the curtains were bound to the pillars, that the wind might not separate them from them; and both the silver hooks and fillets may signify the word and ordinances as administered by the preachers of the Gospel, in which there is an union, conjunction, and communion between them and the churches.

{h} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 667. {i} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 2.

Exodus 27:11

Ver. 11. And likewise for the north side in length there shall be hangings of one hundred cubits long,.... The north and south sides of this court being equal, the same length of hangings were for the one as the other;

and his twenty pillars, and their twenty sockets of brass; there went on this side the same number of pillars and sockets, and of the same metal:

the hooks of the pillars and their fillets of silver; just as they were on the south side.

Exodus 27:12

Ver. 12. And for the breadth of the court, on the west side,.... On the west end, the upper end of the court, near to which reached the holy of holies:

shall be hangings of fifty cubits: or twenty five yards and more, so that the court was but half as broad as it was long:

their pillars ten, and their sockets ten; which was a number proportionate to the hangings, and stood at an equal distance from each other, as the pillars for the sides, at five cubits, or two yards and a half, as commonly computed.

Exodus 27:13

Ver. 13. And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward,.... Which was the entrance into it:

shall be fifty cubits; the east end and west end were of the same measure.

Exodus 27:14

Ver. 14. The hangings of one side of the gate,.... Or entrance into the court:

shall be fifteen cubits; or seven yards and a half:

their pillars three, and their sockets three; and so stood at the same distance from one another as the rest of the pillars did, the distance of five cubits.

Exodus 27:15

Ver. 15. And on the other side [shall be] hangings fifteen cubits,.... On the other side of the gate, or entrance into the court, on the northeast side, as the other may be supposed to be the southeast side, there was the same length of hangings:

their pillars three, and their sockets three; the same as on the other side of the gate.

Exodus 27:16

Ver. 16. And for the gate of the court shall be an hanging of twenty cubits,.... Which, with the fifteen on each side, make the fifty cubits, the breadth of the court eastward, Ex 27:13, this hanging was better than the rest, much finer and richer;

for it was of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needle work: and was of the same as the hangings for the door of the holy place, Ex 26:36 this was a figure of Christ, and of the graces of the Spirit in him, and of his bloodshed, sufferings, and death; who is the door into the church, and to the ordinances of it, and leads on to the holy place, and even to the holy of holies, see
Joh 10:9

their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four: so that the pillars of this court at both sides and each end were sixty, twenty on each side, south and north, and ten at each end, west and east.

Exodus 27:17

Ver. 17. All the pillars round about the court shall be filleted with silver,.... This is observed, because only mention is made before of the pillars that were on the south and north sides of the court, as filleted with silver; but inasmuch as those at both ends, east and west, were to be so likewise, this is added:

their hooks [shall be of] silver, and their sockets of brass; no notice having been taken of the hooks to the pillars at both ends, though they were as necessary there as elsewhere, and must be supposed, and though the sockets are mentioned, yet not their metal, and therefore are in general included here.

Exodus 27:18

Ver. 18. The length of the court shall be one hundred cubits,.... And as may be concluded from the length of the hangings on each side:

and the breadth fifty everywhere; at both ends, and was the breadth of the hangings there, and which all around made the court:

and the height five cubits; or two yards and a half, and somewhat more; it was but half the height of the tabernacle, and hence that might be seen above it every way; so that, according to Bishop Cumberland, it contained one rood, twenty one perches, and twenty seven square feet, and was half an Egyptian aroura, which is the square of one hundred Jewish or Egyptian cubits: "of fine twined linen"; of which the hangings were made, and here called the court, as they properly were, for they made it:

and their sockets of brass; the bases on which all the pillars stood, upon which the hangings of fine twined linen were, were of brass; which seems to be repeated, that the foundation of this court might be observed to be different from that of the tabernacle; the foundation of that, or the sockets, into which the boards of it were put, being of silver.

Exodus 27:19

Ver. 19. All the vessels of the tabernacle in all the service thereof,.... Which either refers to the vessels belonging to the altar of burnt offering, and so is a repetition of what is said, Ex 27:3 or rather to instruments that were used at the setting up and taking down of the tabernacle; such as hammers and the like, to drive the staves into the rings, and knock out the pillars from their sockets, &c., as Jarchi and Ben Gersom observe; for otherwise the vessels used in the sanctuary were of gold or silver, or covered therewith, and not of brass, as these are afterwards said to be:

and all the pins thereof; what these were is not easy to say; for there was nothing made of brass in the holy or most holy place, but the taches or clasps, with which the curtains of goats' hair were coupled together, and the sockets on which the five pillars were set at the entrance of the door of the tabernacle, Ex 26:11 and it is possible that those pillars might be fastened in their sockets with brass pins; for the clasps or taches can hardly be called pins:

and all the pins of the court shall be of brass; these were brass pins, or stakes fastened in the ground all round the court, to which cords were tied, and these fastened to the hangings; whereby they were kept tight and close, that the wind could not move them to and fro, as Jarchi and Ben Melech observe, and so Josephus {k}; see Isa 33:20.

{k} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 2.

Exodus 27:20

Ver. 20. And thou shall command the children of Israel,.... Here begins a new section of the law; an account being given of the tabernacle, and its parts, and the furniture thereof, next the several parts of service done in it are observed; and the account begins with that of the candlestick in the holy place, in order to which Moses is directed to command the people of Israel, whose business it was to provide for it:

that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light; for the light of the candlestick, to light up the several lamps in the several branches of it; and the oil to be brought and used there was not any sort of oil, as what is got out of fishes, as train oil, or out of nuts, as oil of almonds, but what comes from the olive tree; and this must be pure and free from lees and dregs, and must be beaten with a pestle in a mortar, and not ground in a mill, that so it might be quite clear; for being bruised and beaten, only the pulp or flesh of the olive was broken, but being ground in a mill, the stones were broken and ground, and so the oil not so pure.

Jarchi and Ben Melech, from their Rabbins, observe, that after the first drop was pressed out, they put them into mills and grind them; but then, though the oil was fit for offerings, it was not fit for the light of the candlestick. Ben Gersom says, they put the olives bruised into a basket, and the oil dropped from them without pressing at all; and this was the choicest and most excellent for the light. The quantity to be brought is not fixed; but the measure fixed by the wise men of Israel, as Jarchi says, was half a log, that is, for every lamp; and this was the measure for the longest nights, the nights of the month Tebet, and so the same for all other nights:

to cause the lamp to burn always night and day, continually, as it was proper it should, that the house of God might not be at any time in darkness; as it would otherwise be, since there were no windows in it; and his servants minister in it in the dark, even in the daytime, at the altar of incense, and at the shewbread table, which is not reasonable to suppose; and though there are some passages of Scripture which seem to intimate as though the lamps only burnt till the morning, and then went out, and were lighted every evening; this difficulty may be solved, and the matter reconciled by what Josephus {l} relates, who must be an eyewitness of it, that three of the lamps burned before the Lord in the daytime, and the rest were lighted at the evening; and Hecataeus {m}, an Heathen writer, speaking of the golden candlestick, says, its light was unextinguished day and night, particularly the lamp which was in the middle; also the candlestick is by the ancient Jews, and by Nachmanides, said to have been never extinct.

{l} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 3. {m} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 4. p. 408.

Exodus 27:21

Ver. 21. In the tabernacle of the congregation,.... The reasons usually given for this name of the tabernacle are, either because the children of Israel gathered and met together here at certain times, or because here the Lord met with Moses, and his successors, as he had promised, Ex 25:22, but neither of them will hold good; not the first, because the place where the candlestick was, and which Aaron and his sons are here said to order, was in the holy place, into which only the priests entered, and therefore could not be called the tabernacle of the congregation, from the people of Israel being gathered and assembling there; not the latter, because it was in the most holy place, where the Lord

promised to meet with Moses, and commune with him, even from between the cherubim over the mercy seat there: indeed, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation the children of Israel assembled, and there the Lord met them, and so the whole might be called from thence, and there seems to be no other reason for it,
Ex 29:42 and this place was

without the vail, which is before the testimony; that is, without the vail which divided between the holy and the most holy place, and which vail was before the ark, where the law or the testimony was put; for the candlestick was in that part of the tabernacle which was without the vail, or in the holy place: and here

Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the Lord; that is, they were to take care that the lamps which went out might be lighted; and that they be kept clear and burning, they were to trim and snuff them, for which they had proper instruments provided for them, Ex 25:37. This points at the word of God, which shines as a light in a dark place, and is a lamp to the feet, and a light to the path, and to the constant application of Gospel ministers in preaching it, in order to enlighten men in all ages unto the end of the world:

it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations, on the behalf of the children of Israel; on whom it was incumbent to provide oil for the lamps, as long as the tabernacle and temple service lasted; and figured out either the maintenance of Gospel ministers by the churches, or the grace and gifts of the Spirit, with which they are furnished by the head of the church, often signified by oil in Scripture.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 28:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 28

This chapter informs us of the servants God would have to minister to him in the house, or tabernacle, he had ordered to be made, even Aaron and his sons, Ex 28:1 of the garments they were to wear in their service, Ex 28:2 and first of the garments of the high priest, and particularly of the ephod, with the girdle, on the shoulder pieces of which were to be two onyx stones, with the names of the children of Israel engraved on them, Ex 28:6, and that of the breastplate of judgment, with the Urim and Thummum in it,
Ex 28:15 and of the robe of the ephod, Ex 28:31, and of the mitre, Ex 28:36

and then of the garments of the common priests, Ex 28:40.

Ver. 1. And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him,.... Moses is bid to fetch or send for Aaron and his sons to him: or "cause" them to "draw near" {n} to him, and stand before him, that he might in the name of the Lord, and by his authority, distinguish and separate them

from among the children of Israel: and before them all invest them with the office of priesthood, as it follows:

that they may minister unto me in the priest's office, before this time every master of a family was a priest, and might and did offer sacrifice, and all the Israelites were a kingdom of priests; and Moses, as Aben Ezra calls him, was "a priest of priests"; but now it being enough for him to be the political ruler of the people, and the prophet of the Lord, the priestly office is bestowed on Aaron and his sons; nor might any afterwards officiate in it but such as were of his family; and a great honour this was that was conferred on him, and to which he was called of God, as in **Heb 5:4** and it is greatly in the favour of Moses, and which shows him to be an upright and undesigning man, that sought not to aggrandize himself and his family; that though he had so much honour and power himself, he sought not to entail any upon his posterity. It is hinted in the latter part of the preceding chapter, that Aaron and his sons should minister in the sanctuary, and look after the candlestick, and its lamps; and here the design of God concerning them is more fully opened, which was, that they should be his peculiar ministers and servants in his house, to do all the business appertaining to it:

even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons: who were all the sons that Aaron had that we read of; though Aben Ezra thinks it probable that he might have other sons, and therefore the names of those are particularly mentioned, who were to be taken into the priest's office with him; the two first of these died very quickly after this, in a very awful manner, as the sacred story relates; and from the other two sprung all the priests that were in all successive generations.

{n} brqh "appropinquare fac", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

Exodus 28:2

Ver. 2. And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother,.... Called so, because in these he was to minister in the holy place, and perform holy service; and because typical of the holy human nature of Christ our great High Priest, and of his spotless righteousness, and of the garments of sanctification, both outward and inward, that all believers in him, who are made priests unto God, are arrayed with: Aaron and his sons being appointed priests, their garments are first described before their work and even before their consecration to their office; and there were some peculiar to Aaron, or the high priest, and different from those of his sons, or the common priests; and which are first treated of, as the breastplate, the robe of ephod, and the plate of gold; besides these, there were four more, common to all the priests, as the coat, the breeches, the girdle, and bonnet. Now whereas some of the Heathen priests performed their office, and offered their sacrifices, naked, which was very shameful and abominable, as Braunius {o} from various authors has shown, though this was not done by them all: in opposition to such a filthy practice, and to show his detestation of it, the Lord orders his priests to be clothed, and that in a very splendid manner, with garments

for glory and beauty; that is, with glorious and beautiful ones, and which would make his priests look so: and this was done, partly to point out the dignity of their office to themselves, that they might take care to behave suitable to it, and keep up the honour and credit of it; and partly to make them respectable unto men, and be honoured by them, none being clothed as they were, as Aben Ezra observes; but chiefly because they were typical of the glory and beauty of Christ's human nature, which was as a garment put on, and put off, and on again, and in which he officiated as a priest, and still does; and which is now very glorious, and in which he is fairer than any of the children of men; and of the garments of salvation, and robe of righteousness, in which all his people, his priests, appear exceeding glorious and beautiful, even in a perfection of beauty.

{o} De Vestitu Sacerdot. Heb. l. 1. c. 1. sect. 5. p. 11.

Exodus 28:3

Ver. 3. And thou shall speak unto all that are wise hearted,.... That have knowledge and understanding in mechanic arts, particularly in making garments; and it required men of more than ordinary skill to be employed in making these, because they were uncommon ones, and required a good deal of thought and judgment, and care and application, to make them exactly as they should be:

whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom; for besides a common understanding of things, these required a peculiar gift from God, which some men, as Bezaleel and Aholiab had:

that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him to put upon him at the time of his consecration; and indeed this was one way, by which, as well as by sacrifices, that he was consecrated, see Ex 29:1,

that he may minister unto me in the priest's office for the priests, without having these garments on, might not minister in their office; for when these garments were off, as they were when they were out of their service, they were as other men, as laymen,
See Gill on "Eze 42:14".

Exodus 28:4

Ver. 4. And these are the garments which they shall make,.... Some for Aaron and some for his sons, some peculiar to the high priest, and others in common to him and other priests:

a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle; of each of which, with others, there is a more particular account in this chapter, and will be observed in their order:

and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons: as those before mentioned, with some others not mentioned; some for Aaron only, and others that were to be worn by his sons also:

that he may minister unto me in the priest's office; these were absolutely necessary to the execution of the priestly office, and an essential qualification for it, and without which it was not lawful to serve in it.

Exodus 28:5

Ver. 5. And they shall take,.... The Targum of Jonathan adds, out of their substance; that is, those that were wise hearted, and had knowledge and skill in making such garments; these were to take, not out of their own personal substance, but they were to take or receive from Moses what the people freely offered for such service, Ex 36:3,

gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen; pieces of gold, which they beat into thin plates, and drew into wires, and which they worked into stuffs, woollen or linen, or both, of the colours here mentioned; all which were made use of in the ephod, girdle, breastplate, &c. see Ex 39:3 and had a mystical significance in them.

Exodus 28:6

Ver. 6. And they shall make the ephod,.... This was the outermost garment of, all, and was put over the robe; it was a short garment, reaching to the loins, as Kimchi {p}; or to the buttocks, as Abarbinel {q}; and not to the heels or feet, as Jarchi {r}, and Maimonides {s}; for Josephus {t} says it was but a cubit long, which was little more than half a yard; he means that part of it which was distinct from the shoulder pieces, and came down from thence: the hinder part of it covered the back, and reached to the middle of the buttocks; and the forepart covered the breast and belly, and with shoulder pieces under the arm holes was buttoned with onyx stones upon the top of the shoulders, and was girt about the breast with a curious girdle: it had no sleeves, though Josephus {u} says it had, as appears from the make of it; it was different from the linen ephod worn by the common priests and others, and was a symbol of the human nature of Christ, our great High Priest: it was made of

gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work; the stuff of which it was made was interwoven with threads of gold, and threads of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and threads of linen, wrought with divers figures in a curious manner, which looked very beautiful; and was a fit emblem of the glory, excellency, and purity of Christ's human nature; of the various graces of the Spirit in it; of his heavenly original; of his blood, sufferings, and death, and glorious exaltation; and of its being a curious piece of workmanship wrought by the Lord himself, Heb 10:5.

{p} Comment. in 1 Chron. 15. 27. {q} Comment. in loc. {r} Comment. in loc. {s} Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 9. sect. 9. {t} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 5. {u} Ib.

Exodus 28:7

Ver. 7. It shall have the two shoulder pieces thereof,.... Which were two pieces that joined to the ephod, reaching from the arm holes to the shoulders both on the right and left, coming from before and behind; and meeting on the shoulders, were buttoned with two onyx stones, and covering the shoulders are called by this name:

joined at the two edges thereof; the two edges of the ephod; not sewed thereunto with a needle, as Maimonides {w} and other Jewish writers think, but were woven along with it, and in the weaving was of the same with it:

and so it shall be joined together; that is, the hinder and fore parts of the ephod in the shoulder pieces of it, shall be joined together by the two onyx stones upon them, hereafter mentioned, with which they were buttoned.

{w} Ut supra. (Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 9. sect. 9.)

Exodus 28:8

Ver. 8. And the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it,.... Which was worn along with it, and went out from it like two thongs, as Jarchi says, which girt the ephod close to the back and breast:

shall be of the same; of the same matter as the ephod, and woven in the same manner, and together with it:

according to the work thereof; wrought with the same coloured, curious, and cunning work:

even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; and from the gold in it, it was called a golden girdle, to distinguish it from others, and with it the priest was girt under the arm holes about the paps, to which the allusion is, **Re 1:13** and is an emblem of the close union of the human nature of Christ to his divine which is the effect of his love to his people; which, as it is seen in his incarnation, so more especially in his sufferings and death; and it may denote his strength to do his work as a priest, his readiness to perform it, and his faithfulness and integrity in it; righteousness being the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

Exodus 28:9

Ver. 9. And thou shall take two onyx stones,.... called from the colour of a man's nail, which they to resemble: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call them stones of beryl, and so the Syriac version; the Septuagint, stones of emerald, and the Arabic version, crystal stones: but, according to Josephus {x}, they were sardonyx stones, and in which Brannius {y} thinks he was right:

and grave on them the names of the children of Israel; the names of the twelve sons of Jacob, six on one stone and six on the other, as often mentioned, for which onyx stones are very fit; and they must be very large to have so many letters graved upon them; for there is no reason to believe the initial letters of their names only were engraved, but their whole names at length. In the Museum at Dresden is an oriental onyx which cost 48,000 dollars; it is of an oval figure, and its longest diameter is almost six inches, and in such an one might easily be engraved so many names: and Wagenseil makes mention of one in the possession of the bishop of Bamberg, in which were represented Christ sitting, and teaching his twelve apostles standing round him, of which he has given the figure {z}: the onyx stone being of the colour observed, was a fit emblem of Christ in his human nature, and if the sardonyx, of him in both his natures; and as the twelve tribes of Israel were a figure of the church, their names being on two stones may denote both the Jewish and Gentile churches; these being precious stones on which they were engraven, may signify how valuable the church and its members are to Christ; and being alike there, their being equally loved of God, chosen in Christ, redeemed by his blood, interested in all the blessings of his grace, and shall enjoy the same glory; and their names being there, the distinct knowledge had of them by name, and being in ouches of gold, their dignity and safety, as afterwards declared.

{x} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 5.) {y} De Vestitu Sacerd. Heb. l. 2. c. 18. sect. 4. p. 730. {z} Not. in Misn. Sotah, c. 9. p. 996.

Exodus 28:10

Ver. 10. Six of their names on one stone,.... The names of the six eldest on the stone upon the right shoulder:

and the other six names of the rest on the other stone: the names of the six youngest on the stone upon the left shoulder; for these stones, as afterwards said, were put on the shoulders of the priests, according to their birth; the order of it; so that upon the first stone were engraven the names of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, and Naphtali; and on the second stone the names of Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin; and so they are disposed by Jarchi, with whom Josephus agrees {a}; though some Jewish writers, and particularly Maimonides {b}, place them otherwise; but this seems most agreeable to the letter and sense of the text.

{a} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 5.) {b} Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, ut supra. (c. 9. sect. 9.)

Exodus 28:11

Ver. 11. With the work of an engraver in stone,.... Not in common but precious stones: Moses was not to do this himself, as it could not be supposed he should, but he was to employ an engraver, whose business it was, and one that was capable of doing it in a professional manner:

[like] the engravings of a signet shall thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: as in signets or seals, by which impressions are made on wax, the letters or figures are cut deep, that they might on the wax stand out; so it seems the letters of the names of the children of Israel were cut in these stones: this shows that engraving on precious stones is very old, and the ancients indeed are said to excel in this art:

thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold; in beazils or sockets, such as precious stones in rings are set in; these with the stones in them served as buttons to fasten together the hinder and fore part of the ephod on the shoulder pieces of it.

Exodus 28:12

Ver. 12. And thou shall put the stones upon the shoulders of the ephod,.... That is, the shoulder pieces of it; these stones were put there, the names of the twelve sons of Israel being engraven on them, and they, set in rims or sockets of gold, and serving for buttons to the shoulder pieces: but chiefly the design of them was

for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: not to put the Israelites in mind of the merits of their ancestors, as the Targum of Jonathan; for none of their works were meritorious, and some were not good, and not worthy of remembrance; but rather to put Aaron or the high priest in mind to pray and make intercession for the twelve tribes, whose names were on the stones; or rather to put God himself in remembrance of his promises made unto them, and that they were his dear, special, and peculiar people; just as the rainbow was to be a memorial to the Lord of the covenant he made with all flesh, and which is to be understood after the manner of men:

and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial; signifying his presentation of them to the Lord when he appeared before him on the mercy seat; his intercession for them, and his patient bearing all their infirmities and weaknesses; in which he was a type of Christ, who presents all his people to his divine Father, makes intercession for them, and bears all their burdens, the care and government of them being upon his shoulders, **Isa 9:6**.

Exodus 28:13

Ver. 13. And thou shalt make ouches of gold. Or sockets of gold, to put the two onyx stones in, Ex 28:11 for of other ouches we read not, excepting the enclosings, in which the twelve stones of the breastplate were set, Ex 28:20 and these are again mentioned because of the chains to be fastened to them, of which in the following verse.

Exodus 28:14

Ver. 14. And two chains of pure gold at the ends,.... The use of which was to hang the breast plate on, after described; one end of them was fastened to rings on the ouches in the shoulder pieces, and the other end to rings on the breastplate, and thus it hung:

of wreathen work shall thou make them; these chains were not made after the manner of circles or ringlets coupled together, as chains usually are, but of golden wires twisted together as a rope is twisted

and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches; to the ouches on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, in which the onyx stones were set, very probably to rings that were in these ouches.

Exodus 28:15

Ver. 15. And thou shall make the breastplate of judgment,.... Called a "breastplate", because worn upon the breast of the high priest; and a breastplate "of judgment", because it was to put him in mind that he should do justice and judgment in the execution of his office, and that he should have at heart the judgment of the people of Israel; and in difficult cases should ask it of God, and faithfully declare it to them: it was, with the twelve stones in it, an emblem of the church and people of God, borne upon the heart of Christ our great High Priest, who are made righteous by him, yea, the righteousness of God in him, and are called by his name, the Lord our righteousness; the judgment or government of whom is committed to him, and which he exercises, by appointing laws and ordinances for them, by constituting and qualifying persons to act under him, to explain those laws, and see them put in execution, by vindicating and protecting them, and by the open justification of them at the last day:

with cunning work, after the work of the ephod thou shall make it; wrought with divers figures in a very curious manner:

of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it; a piece of stuff interwoven with threads of gold, or golden wires, and with threads of yarn, of blue, purple, and scarlet colours, and with threads of fine twined linen six times doubled; all which may signify the beautiful array of the saints, with the several graces of the Spirit; and especially their being clothed with fine linen, called the righteousness of the saints; that raiment of needlework, and clothing of wrought gold, the righteousness of Christ, consisting of his obedience, sufferings, and death, fitly expressed by these various colours.

Exodus 28:16

Ver. 16. Four square it shall be, [being] doubled,.... That is, when it was doubled; for the length of it, according to Maimonides {c}, was a cubit, which is two spans, and so, when it was doubled, was but one, and its length and breadth being alike, as follows:

a span [shall be] the length thereof, and a span [shall be] the breadth thereof; a square, which is the measure, the form of the new Jerusalem, the church of

Christ, Re 21:16 and may denote the perfection, firmness, and immovableness of it, Ps 125:1. Some have thought that this breastplate was doubled, in order to have something enclosed in it: some imagine, that within this fold were put the Urim and Thummim, which they suppose to be two words engraved on a stone, and different from the twelve stones in it; others, that the name of Jehovah was written and put there, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi on Ex 28:30 and other Jewish writers, and others, fancy some little images were put within these folds, the name with the teraphim, and supposed to be the Urim and Thummim; but if these were hid in the folds, they could not be seen when consulted; it is most probable there is nothing put within the double, which was not done for any such use; but most likely that it might be strong to bear the weight of the precious stones, put in ouches of gold upon it.

{c} Cele Hamikdash, c. 9. sect. 6.

Exodus 28:17

Ver. 17. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones,.... Or "fill in it fillings of stones" {d}; which shows that there were in it ouches, or sockets of gold, the hollows of which were to be filled up with precious stones:

even four rows of stones; making a four square, and so filling up the measure of the breastplate:

the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle; about these stones, and those that follow, there is a great variety of interpretations of them, both among Jews and Christians; and they seem to be little known: our translators upon the whole seem to be as right as any in giving the names of them; the first of these, the "sardius", is a red stone of a blood colour, as the "cornelian" or "ruby", and which some have thought is here meant, and has its name either from the place where it has been found, Sardis or Sardinia; or rather from its red colour; for "sered" signifies red in Eze 28:13 as Braunius {e} has observed from Kimchi; and so Odem, which is the word here used, signifies, and undoubtedly intends a stone of such a colour; and it is highly probable that this is the Demium of Pliny {f}, which is one of the three kinds of sardius in India; and the red is so called from its redness, as the same Braunius observes. The second stone, the "topaz", had its name, according to Pliny {g}, from an island in Arabia, in the Red sea, called Topazos; and the best topaz is the topaz of Cush or Arabia, as in Job 28:19. The topaz of the ancients was of a green colour; and so the three Targums call this stone Jarken or Jarketha, which signifies green; hence some have taken this to be the emerald, which is of a fine green colour: the third stone is the "carbuncle", as we render it; whatever stone is meant, it must be a bright and glittering one, like lightning, as the word signifies; wherefore some have taken it to be the emerald, so the Septuagint and Braunius {h}; it being a very radiant and glittering stone, of a grass green, and very refreshing to the sight; but Danaeus {i} says, that the carbuncle is that species of the ruby, which of all is most beautiful and excellent, and darts out light like lightning to those that look at it at a distance, and shines in the middle of the night and darkness, so that it enlightens places near it, as if it were a sun:

[this shall be] the first row; now upon these three stones were engraven the names of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem agree.

{d} Nba talm wb talmw "et implebis in eo plenitudinem lapidis", Montanus; "vel eum impletione lapidis", Pagninus; "implebis in eo impletione lapidis", Drusius. {e} De Vestitu Sacerd. Heb. l. 2. c. 8. sect. 10. p. 639. {f} Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 7. {g} Ibid. l. 6. c. 29. {h} Ut supra, (De Vestitu Sacerd. Heb. l. 2.) c. 10. sect. 4. p. 653. {i} Apud De Dieu in loc.

Exodus 28:18

Ver. 18. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. The first of these stones is by both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan rendered an "emerald", as by us; and which is described by Pliny {k} as of a green colour, exceeding delightful and pleasant, and to which he gives the third place among precious stones; though by many the stone here called Nophec is thought to be the carbuncle, and is so rendered by the Septuagint; the carbuncle of the ancients is no other than what we call the, "ruby"; and which Braunius {l} thinks is here meant, and so Abarbinel, which is just making an exchange of the last stone of the first row for this; and De Dieu observes, that if any chooses to render the preceding stone an emerald, as Braunius does, he must render this a carbuncle or ruby; and if he renders that a carbuncle, then he must this for an emerald. The next stone is "the sapphire", of which one would think there could be no doubt, it is the very Hebrew word itself that is here used; which Ruaeus {m} says is of a sky colour, and sparkles with golden spots or specks, with which agrees Job 28:6. The third stone of this row is the "diamond" or adamant; and that this stone is meant seems clear from its name Jahalom, which comes from a word which signifies to break;

and from hence a hammer has its name, because this stone pierces, cuts, and breaks other stones, but cannot be broken itself. On these three stones were engraved, according to the Jerusalem Targum, the names of the three tribes of Judah, Issachar and Zebulun; but more truly, according to the Targum of Jonathan, the names of the tribes of Judah, Dan and Naphtali, and so Jarchi; for the names here, as on the onyx stones, were according to the order of their birth.

{k} Ut supra, (Nat. Hist. l. 37.) c. 5. {l} Ut supra, (De Vestitu Sacerd. Heb. l. 2.) c. 11. sect. 2, 7. p. 661, 667. {m} De Gemmis, l. 2. c. 2.

Exodus 28:19

Ver. 19. And the third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. The first of these stones, the ligure or lyncurius, is said to be so called from the congealed urine of the lynx {n}, but rather from the spots of that creature; for, according to Danaeus {o}, it is the same stone with that called "stellina", from having many specks like stars spread about in it. Braunius {p} takes the "jacinth" stone to be here meant, and so does Ainsworth; see Re 21:20, the second stone, the agate, is well known; and though now of little account, was formerly in great esteem, as Pliny {q} asserts, and therefore may well be thought to have a place among these stones. Pyrrhus king of Epirus had a very famous one, in which, not by art, but by nature, were seen the nine Muses, and Apollo holding an harp; the word for it here is "shebo", which comes from a word which signifies to captivate; because, as De Dieu observes, this stone is easily captivated under the hand of the artificer; there being no stone which so easily admits of engravings as this. The last of this row is the "amethyst"; which stone has its name either from its being of the colour of wine; or, as others, from its being a preservative from drunkenness: the Hebrew word "achlamah" seems to come from a word which signifies to dream; and this stone is supposed to cause persons to dream, as Aben Ezra, from one of their wise men, relates. On these three stones, according to the Jerusalem Targum, were written the names of the tribes of Dan, Naphtali, and Gad; but, according to the Targum of Jonathan, Gad, Asher, and Issachar, which is much better, for a reason before given.

{n} Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 3. {o} Apud De Dieu in loc. {p} Ut supra, (De Vestitu Sacerd. Heb. l. 2.) c. 14. sect. 9. p. 699. {q} Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 10.

Exodus 28:20

Ver. 20. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper,.... Whatever stone is meant by the first in this row, it must be of a sea green colour; for "tarshish", the word used, signifies the sea; and so the beryl, as Pliny {r} says, imitates the greenness of the pure sea. Braunius {s} takes it to be the chrysolite that is meant; and so does Ainsworth; and it is so rendered by the Septuagint; and this, according to Ruaeus {t}, is of a colour like the greenness of the sea: the "onyx" has its name from its being of the colour of a man's nail, as observed before; but here "shoham" is thought by Braunius {u} to be the "sardonyx", following Josephus, Jerom, and the Vulgate Latin version, which is a compound of the sardian and onyx stones: the last is undoubtedly rightly rendered the jasper, for the Hebrew word is "jaspeh": this stone is sometimes variegated with spots like a panther, and therefore is called by Onkelos "pantere"; the most valuable is the green spotted with red or purple:

they shall be set in gold in their enclosings; or be set and enclosed in ouches or sockets of gold, as the two onyx stones upon the shoulder pieces of the ephod: there were twelve of these ouches or sockets, which might be made out of one piece of gold, into which the twelve above stones were put. These stones were, no doubt, brought out of Egypt by the children of Israel, and were the gifts of their princes.

{r} Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 5. {s} Ut supra, (De Vestitu Sacerd Heb. l. 2.) c. 17. sect. 7. p. 720. {t} De Gemmis, l. 2. c. 7. {u} Ut supra, (De Vestitu Sacerd Heb. l. 2.) c. 18. sect. 4. p. 730.

Exodus 28:21

Ver. 21. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names,.... And just so many are reckoned up in the preceding verses, each of which had one or other of the names of the children of Israel engraved on them, according to the order of their names in their birth. Some have thought that Levi's name was omitted, but their reason for it seems not sufficient; for why might not he bear the name of his own tribe, and represent that as well as the rest, since the whole Israel of God is represented by his antitype?

[like] the engravings of a net, everyone with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes; not like the impression of a seal on wax, then the letters

indeed would have been protuberant, as some have thought; but these were like the engravings of a seal, in which the letters or figures are cut within it: these twelve stones, with the names on them, represent the twelve tribes of Israel, and they the whole spiritual Israel of God; and being precious stones, show the excellency of the people of God, of what value, and in what esteem they are with God and Christ, being their jewels and peculiar treasure; and their names being in them, denote the special and particular knowledge God has of them, their names being written in heaven in the book of life; and they are called by name by the Lord; and being engraved as a signet, is an emblem of their being set as a seal on the arm and heart of Christ, and of their being as dear and precious to him as a signet on a man's right hand; and being set in ouches and enclosures of gold, express both the dignity and excellency, and the careful preservation of them: these were set in rows, as members of churches are, everyone in his order, rank, and station, 1Co 12:18.

Exodus 28:22

Ver. 22. And thou shall make upon the breastplate chains at the ends,.... One end of them to be put to the breastplate, and the other end to the ouches on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, by which the breastplate hung from thence: the Targum of Jonathan renders it, chains of a certain determined size, of length and thickness exactly alike; or terminable ones, as it may be rendered, not circular like a locket, or chain of gold worn about the neck, but that had ends to it: some interpret it chains, made like ropes, in the same manner as cables are, twisted together; and such it is certain they were, by what follows:

of wreathen work of pure gold; not of circles and ringlets of gold coupled together, but of golden wires twisted together, as ropes are.

Exodus 28:23

Ver. 23. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold,.... On the upper part of it, above, toward the two shoulder pieces of the ephod; these were to put one end of the chains into before mentioned:

and shall put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate; the two upper ends or corners of it, the right and left.

Exodus 28:24

Ver. 24. And thou shalt put two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings,.... This expresses both how many chains were to be made, which is not before said, and the use of them, or where they were to be put, as well as the use of the rings:

[which are] on the ends of the breastplate; the two uppermost ends or corners of it.

Exodus 28:25

Ver. 25. And the other two ends of the two wreathen chains thou shalt fasten in the two ouches,.... In which the two onyx stones were set on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, and were as buttons to them; probably there were rings to those ouches, into which these ends of the wreathen chains of gold, reaching from the breastplate, were put; or however, by some means or other they were fastened to these ouches or sockets;

and put them in the shoulder pieces of the ephod before it; that is, on the ouches upon them, as before observed: into that part or side of the ouches which was to be the fore part of the ephod; so that the breastplate hung by these chains from the shoulder pieces of the ephod, on the fore part of it, upon the breast of the high priest.

Exodus 28:26

Ver. 26. And thou shall make two rings of gold,....] Two other rings besides those before mentioned:

and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate; on the other two ends or corners of it:

in the border thereof which is in the side of the ephod inward: these were at the two lower ends of the breastplate, towards the ephod on the inside.

Exodus 28:27

Ver. 27. And two other rings of gold thou shalt make,.... This is the third pair of rings ordered to be made, the two other pair were for the four ends or corners of the breastplate, but this pair was for the ephod:

and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod; one on the right and the other on the left:

underneath, towards the fore part thereof; underneath the ephod, yet towards the fore part of it; or rather on the fore part of it, though so as the rings could not be seen:

over against the other coupling thereof; either so as to answer to the other coupling of the breastplate to the shoulder pieces of the ephod above; or to the rings at the ends of the breastplate below, with which these were to be coupled with a lace of blue; and so the word "other" here supplied may be left out:

above the curious girdle of the ephod; just above that these rings in the ephod were, to answer to the rings in the lower ends of the breastplate.

Exodus 28:28

Ver. 28. And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof,.... By the rings at the lower ends of it, as it was by the rings at the upper ends of it to the shoulder pieces of the ephod; or "lift it up", so some interpret it {w} as if it was said, they shall lift up the breastplate to join it with the ephod that is above it:

unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue; this blue lace was put both into the rings of the breastplate and into the rings of the ephod, and so being tied in a knot, fastened them together, as the shoulder pieces of the ephod and the breastplate were coupled above, with wreathen chains of gold put into rings: now this was done,

that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod: that the breastplate might be above it, or else the lace of blue:

and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod: but be kept tight and close to it by the wreathen chains above, and by the knots of blue lace below; which may denote the conjunction of the prophetic and priestly offices in Christ; the former being signified by the breastplate of judgment, in which the

Urim and Thummim were, and the latter by the ephod; or else the union of the saints to Christ, the bond of which is everlasting love, from which there can be no separation; this union can never be dissolved, his people can never be loosed from him, they are members of his body, and one spirit with him.

{w} R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 89. 2.

Exodus 28:29

Ver. 29. And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart,.... Their names being engraven on the stones, and the stones put into the breastplate of judgment, and this breastplate hanging down upon the breast and heart of Aaron, he was a representative of the twelve tribes of Israel, as Christ his antitype is the representative of the whole Israel of God; and who lie near the heart of Christ, are set as a seal upon it, are engraven on the palms of his hands, and carried in his bosom, and whom he always presents to his divine Father, and are accepted in him: he represented them in eternity, and in time; in his sufferings and death, in his burial and resurrection from the dead, when they were crucified, buried, and raised with him; and he represents them now in heaven, where they sit together in heavenly places in him, as it here follows in the type:

when he goeth in unto the holy place; to trim the lamps and offer incense, and especially when he went into the most holy place once a year:

for a memorial before the Lord continually; for a memorial to himself, to pray for them when he appeared before the Lord, to put the Lord in remembrance of his covenant with them, and promises to them,
See Gill on "Ex 28:12" see Gill on "Isa 43:26", the Targum of Jonathan is, "for a good memorial": not a memorial for evil, but for good.

Exodus 28:30

Ver. 30. And thou shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim,.... What these interpreters are at a loss about, both Jewish and Christian; some have confessed their ignorance of them, have conjectured they were only these two words and put in the duplicature of the breastplate; that the name of Jehovah, with other divine were put there and so called; and some have that they were little images, the same with the teraphim, the high priest

carried in the folds of breastplate, by which consultation was made; others have thought them to be a work purely divine, of Jehovah's putting there; for my own part I am to follow Josephus {x}, who takes them to be the same with the twelve stones; and it is observable that where the stones are mentioned nothing is said of the Urim and Thummim, and where the Urim and Thummim are observed, no notice is taken of the stones, see Ex 39:10 the use of these was to have the names of the children of Israel engraven upon them, and so be borne on the heart of Aaron when he went into the holy place, as is here said of the Urim and Thummim; and that consultation might be made by them in matters of moment and difficulty, as appears from various other passages of the Scripture,
Nu 27:21 and but in what manner this was done, and in what way the answer was given and understood, are not easily accounted for: some say, by the brightness or protuberance of the letters on the stones; others, by the shining and splendour of the stones, which is more probable; others, by an inward impression on the mind of the priest; and others, by an articulate voice, which seems best of all: the Septuagint render these two words "manifestation and truth"; and Aelianus {y} reports, that the chief and oldest among the Egyptian priests and judges wore an image of a sapphire stone about his neck, which they called "truth": and, according to Diodorus Siculus {z}, this image was of more precious stones than one; for he says, the president in the Egyptian courts of judicature had on his neck, hanging on a golden chain, an image of precious stones, which they called truth: but there is no reason to believe that this custom was as ancient as the times of the Israelites in Egypt, or that they borrowed this from them; but rather, that the Egyptians did this in imitation of what the high priest among the Jews wore, which they might learn from the Jews in Solomon's time, or in later ages; the words Urim and Thummim signify "lights and perfections", agreeably to which is the paraphrase of Jonathan;

"Urim, which enlighten their words, and manifest the hidden things of the house of Israel, and Thummim, which perfect their works, by the high priest, who seeks instruction from the Lord by them:"

they were typical of Christ, in whom all lights and perfections are; all light is in him; the light of nature and reason is from him, as the Creator, and is given to every man that comes into the world; the light of grace is with him, and communicated to all his people at conversion, and in all the after degrees and supplies of it; all light and knowledge in divine things is from him, the knowledge of God, of himself, and of the Gospel, and the truths of it; and the light of glory will be from him: all the perfections of deity, the whole fulness of the Godhead, all human perfections, which make him as man in all things like unto us, but far exceeding us; as Mediator, all the blessings and promises of the covenant are in him; all the gifts of the Spirit, and a fulness of all grace; there are in him perfect righteousness, perfect holiness, all light, life, strength, wisdom, joy, and comfort {a}: and these stones, or Urim and Thummim, may be an emblem also of the saints, being made light and perfect righteousness in Christ, from whom they have both:

and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord; either into the holy or into the most holy place, just as the names of the children of Israel on the stones are said to be,
See Gill on "Ex 28:29",

and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually; not only bear their names and remember their cases, make intercession for them, and represent their persons, in all which he was a type of Christ, but bear their judgment, have that at heart, and administer it unto them; and in all doubtful and difficult cases inquire of God what was fit and right to do for them, or for them to do: so Christ has the government of his people both at heart and in his hands; all judgment is committed to him, and he is the righteousness of his people now, and will be their Judge hereafter.

{x} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 5. {y} Var. Hist. l. 14. c. 34. {z} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 68. {a} See a Discourse of mine, called Levi's Urim and Thummim, found with Christ, &c. published in 1725.

Exodus 28:31

Ver. 31. And thou shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. This was a different garment from the ephod, was longer than that, and was under it, and of different materials: that was made of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen; this only of linen, and wholly of a blue colour, without any curious figures upon it, as were on that: in
Ex 39:22, it is said to be of woven work; it was woven from top to bottom, and had no seam in it: so Josephus says {b},

"the coat did not consist of two parts, nor was it sewed upon the shoulder, nor on the side, but was one long piece of woven work;"

and such was the seamless coat our Lord Jesus Christ wore, literally understood, Joh 19:23 and both were an emblem of his perfect righteousness, which has nothing of the works of men joined to it, to justify them before God, and make them acceptable to him: for this robe signifies the robe of Christ's righteousness, the best robe; it has its name from a word which signifies prevarication or sin, because it covers the sins of God's people; the matter of it was linen, and so fitly points at the fine linen, that is the righteousness of the saints, and being blue or sky coloured may denote heaven and happiness, which that entitles to, see **Mt 5:20**, the Septuagint version calls it a garment down to the feet, using the same word as in **Re 1:13** and fitly agrees with that righteousness with which all Christ's members are covered and justified, Isa 45:24.

{b} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 4.

Exodus 28:32

Ver. 32. And there shall be a hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof,.... At the neck of it, for the high priest to put his head through when he put it on:

it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it; a large hem or selvage, perhaps of the same kind of woven stuff the robe itself was made of, and this was done to strengthen it:

as it were the hole of an habergeon; a corslet or coat of mail;

that it be not rent; when the high priest put it on; or through the weight of the ephod and the ouches of gold on the shoulder pieces of it, and the breastplate hanging down from thence; this may denote the strength and duration of Christ's righteousness, which is an everlasting one.

Exodus 28:33

Ver. 33. And beneath upon the hem of it,.... Or the skirts of it, at the bottom of the robe:

thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; these were figures made of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, in the form of pomegranates: Jarchi says they were round and hollow, and made like hens' eggs, about the size of them, and of an oval form:

and bells of gold between them round about; according to some, the bells were put into the pomegranates, which is supposed to be the meaning of the phrase "between them", or, "in the midst of them"; and so Aben Ezra observes, that some say the bells did not appear, they were only in the midst of the pomegranates, and there they caused their sound to be heard: but according to our version and others, the bells were placed between the pomegranates, between every pomegranate and pomegranate there was a golden bell; and this seems to be plainly the sense of the following verse.

Exodus 28:34

Ver. 34. A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate,.... First a golden bell and then a pomegranate, then a bell and then a pomegranate again, and so on:

upon the hem of the robe round about; all round the hem or skirts of the robe were they placed in this manner: the Targum of Jonathan says, the sum or number of them were seventy one; but Maimonides {c} says there were seventy two, thirty six in each skirt; and so says R. Levi Ben Gersom; but Clemens of Alexandria {d} has increased the number to three hundred and sixty six, according to the days of the year, and thinks they signified the acceptable year of the Lord proclaiming and resounding the great appearance of the Saviour: "golden bells" may denote either the intercession of Christ in heaven, which if not vocal, as on earth, has a speech or sound in it, which is understood: his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, call aloud for peace and pardon, and it is a sound that is always heard with delight; the matter of them being gold may denote the preciousness and excellency of Christ's intercession, and the duration of it; and being on the hem of the robe shows that Christ's righteousness is that on which his intercession depends, and from whence it has its efficacy: or else these bells may be an emblem of the Gospel, as preached by Christ himself, and by his apostles and ministers, compared to "bells" for sound; the sound of the Gospel being a sound of love, grace, mercy, peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation; a joyful sound, like that of the jubilee, an even and certain one, different from that of the law, and exceeding musical and delightful; and to "golden" bells for the preciousness of it, and its truths, and for its duration; and being on the hem of the robe may signify that in the Gospel the righteousness of Christ is revealed and pointed at, and that faith in this righteousness comes hereby; "the pomegranates" on Aaron might be an emblem of his priesthood, and of the ceremonial law, and of the good things they were shadows and types of; and of Christ himself, and of the virtue, odour, and fragrancy of his sufferings, sacrifice, and intercession; and also of the church, called an orchard of pomegranates, **So 4:13** consisting of various members, as the pomegranate of various grains; the juice of which the blood of Christ may resemble, in which those members swim and are washed; and who are of a grateful odour to God, and are surrounded by his power and love; and their hanging upon the hem of the robe may signify the acceptableness of them through the righteousness, sacrifice, and mediation of Christ, and the fruits of good works, which both the righteousness of Christ and the Gospel produce; and particularly the bells and pomegranates may signify that sound doctrine and a savoury life and conversation should go together in the priests of the Lord, in the ministers of his word.

{c} Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 9. sect. 4. {d} Stromat. l. 5. p. 564.

Exodus 28:35

Ver. 35. And it shall be upon Aaron to minister,.... That is, the robe before described shall be put upon him, that he might minister in the priest's office, for without this, as well as the other garments, he might not:

and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out; by means of which the priests would have notice that they might depart, and he be alone in his ministrations; or rather, that the people might know his going out and coming in, and so give themselves up to prayer, while he was offering incense, see **Lu 1:9** though the instance of Zacharias is not of an high priest, but of a common priest:

that he die not the Targum of Jonathan adds, with flaming fire. This is added, to make him, and all succeeding priests, careful that this robe, nor any other of the priestly garments, were wanting, when they ministered before the Lord; should any be wanting, it would be highly resented by the Lord: and such an one would be in danger of being cut off by death from the immediate hand of God, as Nadab and Abihu were for offering strange fire to the Lord; for, according to the Jewish writers {e}, a priest not rightly attired, either with more or fewer garments than he should have, his service was illegal, and he was as a stranger, and his service strange service, unacceptable to God, yea, provoking to him; and so Jarchi on the text says, if he wanted one of these garments, he was guilty of death by the hand of heaven, the immediate hand of God.

{e} Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 10. sect. 4, 5.

Exodus 28:36

Ver. 36. And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold,.... It was, as Jarchi says, two fingers broad, and reached from ear to ear, and so Maimonides {f}; it is sometimes called the holy crown, and the plate of the holy crown, Ex 29:6, this was a priestly crown, for priests were very honourable and dignified persons, especially the high priest among the Jews; and even among the Gentiles it was common for their kings to be priests: and though this crown may denote the kingly power of Christ, yet as residing in him who is a priest, for he is a priest on his throne, **Zec 6:13**, and so may signify the conjunction of the kingly and priestly offices in Christ, who has a crown of pure gold given him by his Father, and put upon him, and by his people, Ps 21:4 and being of pure gold, holy, and on the forehead, as this plate was, may signify the purity and holiness of Christ's kingdom and office, the glory, visibility, and perpetuity of it:

and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD; which words were written either in two lines, or in one. If in two, Maimonides {g} says, the word "holiness" was above, and to "the Lord" below: but it might be written in one line, and that seems most likely: he also says the letters were protuberant, or stood out; but then they would not be graved like the engravings of a signet, in which the letters or figures are engraved within, but like the impressions of a signet made on wax, or other things: in this the high priest was a type of Christ, who is holy in himself, in his person, in both his natures, divine and human, in his offices of prophet, priest, and King; and he is holiness itself, the most holy, essentially, infinitely, and perfectly so, as angels and men are not, and the source and spring of holiness to others: and he is holiness to the Lord for his people; he is so representatively; as their covenant head he has all grace in his hands for them, and they have it in him; this is sanctification in Christ, and is by virtue of union to him, and is complete and perfect, and the cause of holiness in his people; and he is so by imputation. The holiness of his human nature was not a mere qualification for his office, or only exemplary to us, but is with his obedience and sufferings imputed to us for justification. Moreover, Christ has by his blood sanctified his people, or made atonement for them, and procured the cleansing of them from their sins, or the expiation of them; and he is also the efficient cause of their internal holiness by his Spirit, without which there is no seeing God, **1Co 6:11**.

{f} Cele Hamikdash, c. 9. sect. 1. Vid. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 63. 2. & Succah, fol. 5. 1. {g} Cele Hamikdash, c. 9. sect. 1. Vid. T. Bab, Sabbat, fol. 63. 2. & Succah, fol. 5. 1.

Exodus 28:37

Ver. 37. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace,.... The plate of gold:

that it may be upon the mitre; either the plate or the lace; the lace is the nearest antecedent, but it seems by what follows it should be the plate:

upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be; the plate of gold; the mitre was of linen, a wrap of linen about the head, and was like a turban on it, in the top of it; it did not come down low upon the forehead, but left that bare for this plate of gold to be put upon it. Jarchi seems to understand all this of the lace, by comparing it with the following verse, and Ex 39:31 as if the plate was represented as in the lace, and the lace upon the plate and upon the mitre above; all which he thinks is to be reconciled by observing, that the plate had three holes, and in every hole was a blue lace, and each lace was divided into two parts, so that there were six in all, two laces at each end of the plate, and two in the middle, by which they were fastened upon the top of the mitre, by which it was kept from falling off; and of this middle lace, he thinks, the text is to be understood. The Targum of Jonathan observes, that this plate was put on a blue lace, to make atonement for the impudent.

Exodus 28:38

Ver. 38. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead,.... That is, the plate of gold, with the inscription on it, holiness to the Lord, and so was very visible and legible. The Targum of Jonathan adds, from temple to temple, that is, from the furthermost end of the one, to the furthermost end of the other, the same as from ear to ear, See Gill on "Ex 28:36" the use of it follows:

that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; this supposes that the sacrifices of the children of Israel, which they brought to the priests to offer for them, or the gifts they devoted to sacred use, might be attended with sin and blame, either in the matter of their offerings and gifts, or in the manner in which they brought them; and which through the high priest having this plate of gold, with the above inscription on it, were expiated; they were bore away from them, and were not placed to their account, but they were cleared and discharged of them: and so it is that there is sin in the best performances of the saints; there is not a just man that does good, but he sins in doing that good; the best righteousness of men is imperfect, and attended with sin; and this cannot be borne, or taken away by themselves; if God should mark such sins as these, they could not stand before him; now Christ, their High Priest, bears and takes away these, along with all others, which are laid upon him, and borne by him:

and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord; not that he had always this plate of gold on his forehead, only in time of service; but then it was continually for the acceptance of them, though it was not upon his forehead, as Jarchi observes; at Maimonides {h} says, there was great necessity that the high priest should be always in the sanctuary, as it is said, "it shall be always upon his forehead", and therefore must be always there, for he might not wear it outside of it. This with respect to the antitype may signify, that the persons and services of the people of God are accepted with him through the holiness and righteousness of Christ, who is always in the presence of the Lord, ever appears in heaven for them, and is the Lamb of God, to whose person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, they are directed to look for the removal of their sins of every sort.

{h} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 47.

Exodus 28:39

Ver. 39. And thou shall embroider the coat of fine linen,.... Which was a distinct garment from the ephod, and from the robe of the ephod, and was the innermost of all; it was made of fine linen, curiously wrought in the weaving of it: according to some, it was full of a sort of eyelet holes; but as the word is that, from whence comes that for ouches, Ex 28:6. Jarchi thinks it was full of holes, like those ouches or sockets, in which the stones were set; and so this coat was decked and adorned with gems and precious stones stuck in those holes or ouches: but rather it was figured with such little cornered holes as are in the stomach of animals that chew the cud, called the "reticulum"; being in the form of network, as Maimonides {i} observes, and which is approved by Braunius {k}: this was an emblem of the righteousness of Christ, comparable to fine linen richly embroidered, decked and adorned with jewels, and

curiously wrought, see
Re 19:8:

and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen: which was a wrap of linen sixteen cubits long, as Maimonides {l} says, both for the high priest, and for common priests, which only differed in the manner of wrapping them; that for the high priest was wrapped fold upon fold, as a roller for a plaster, and so the mitre was flat upon the head, and was like a turban, and did not rise up into a point; but those of the common priests were so wrapped, as that they arose up like a night cap, or a high crowned hat. The mitre, hat, or cap, though a token of honour, yet also of servitude; and may denote, that the people of the Jews were in a state of servitude, and point at the obscurity and darkness of that dispensation; they not clearly discerning divine mysteries, and wanting boldness and freedom to look up to God; or it may denote that the priests under the law were servants, and that Christ, our great High Priest, should appear in the form of one; and may also point at the intenseness of the mind in them and him on business, being deaf to everything else. The Targum of Jonathan says, the coat of fine linen was to atone for the shedding of innocent blood, and the mitre to atone for those who have elated thoughts, are puffed up with pride and vain conceit:

and thou shall make the girdle of needlework; to gird about the embroidered coat, which Josephus {m} says was four fingers broad; but, according to Maimonides {n}, it was about three fingers broad, and thirty two cubits long, which they wound about and about; and though we translate it "needlework", it should rather be the "work of the embroiderer", as Ainsworth renders it: and this was not wrought by the needle, but in weaving; for, as Maimonides {o} observes,

"they did not make any of the priests' garments with needlework, but the work of the weaver, according to
Ex 39:27."

This girdle may denote the strength, readiness, faithfulness, and integrity of Christ in the performance of his priestly office; see
Isa 11:5.

{i} Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 16. {k} De Vestitu Sacerdot. Heb. l. 1. c. 17. p. 379, 380. {l} Ut supra, (Cele Hamikdash) c. 8. sect. 19. {m} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 2. {n} Ut supra. (Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 19.) {o} Ibid.

Exodus 28:40

Ver. 40. And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats,.... Of fine linen, of woven work, as in Ex 39:27, these were different from the broidered coat of the high priest, and the blue robe of the ephod:

and thou shall make for them girdles; linen ones, to gird up their linen coats, which were long, that they might the more expeditiously perform their service; and which is an instruction to all the priests of the Lord, true believers in Christ, to be ready, forward, and diligent in the work of the Lord; and especially to ministers of the word, who, as their doctrines and lives ought to be pure, signified by the priest's linen garment, so they should be girt about with the girdle of truth, and ready upon all occasions to publish and defend it, and to do their work with cheerfulness and faithfulness:

and bonnets shall thou make for them: these were coverings for the head, and of the same kind with the mitre of the high priest, and of the same length, but differed from that in the manner of wrapping the linen, of which they were made, See Gill on "Ex 28:39": and all these were to be made

for glory and beauty: to beautify and adorn them, to make them look like persons of some note and figure, and that they might be respectable among men, and typical, as they all were, of our great and glorious High Priest, the Son of God.

Exodus 28:41

Ver. 41. And thou shall put them on Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him,.... And this putting on of their garments by Moses, under the authority of God, was a solemn investiture of them with the priestly office also; for from henceforward they had a right to exercise it, having those garments on, without which they were never to officiate:

and shall anoint them; with the anointing oil, of which afterwards a particular account is given, and how to be made, and for what use, Ex 30:22, typical of the holy graces of the Spirit of God:

and consecrate them; the consecration of them was by investing them with their garments, and by anointing them with oil; for this phrase does not intend the whole of their consecration, only another branch of it, and may be literally rendered, "fill their hand" {p}; that is, with sacrifices to be offered up by them, see Ex 29:1

and sanctify them; by all this, set them apart, and devote them to the sacred office of priesthood:

that they may minister unto me in the priest's office; by offering sacrifices for the people, burning incense, and doing other things relative to the office.

{p} Mdy ta talmw "et implebis manum eorum", Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Fagius, Piscator.

Exodus 28:42

Ver. 42. And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness,.... Or "the flesh of nakedness" {q}, that part of the body which ought not to be naked and exposed to view, and which, when it is, causes shame and ridicule; what part is designed is easily gathered from the next clause; great care was taken, in the service of God's house, to preserve decency, prevent immodesty, and to guard against laughter and levity, and the like care should be always taken,
See Gill on "Ex 28:2",

from the loins even unto the thigh they shall reach; they were to reach above the navel near the heart, and to the end of the thigh, which is the knee, as Maimonides says {r}; who also observes, that they had strings, but had no opening before or behind, but were drawn up round like a purse; they were a sort of drawers, and somewhat like our sailors' trousers.

{q} hwre rvb "carnem nuditatis", Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius; "carnem nudam", Junius & Tremellius; "carnem verendorum", Tigurine version; "carnem pudendorum", Piscator. {r} Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 18.

Exodus 28:43

Ver. 43. And they shall be upon Aaron and upon his sons,.... Not the linen breeches only, but all the other garments:

when they come into the tabernacle of the congregation; even into that part of it where the people assembled, the court of the tabernacle, and where stood the altar of burnt offering, on which they offered the sacrifices of the people, but never without the priestly garments on:

or when they came near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; at the altar of incense which stood there; or when they came to trim the lamps of the candlestick, and set the shewbread on the table, and take away the old, which candlestick and shewbread table were both in the holy place,

that they bear not iniquity and die; be guilty of sin in not having their priestly garments on in time of service, and so bear the punishment of it and die for it; the Targum of Jonathan adds, with flaming fire, with fire from heaven, such as Nadab and Abihu were afterwards consumed with; an high priest that had not the eight garments on, or a common priest that had not his four garments, his service was illegal and rejected, and he was guilty of death by the hand of heaven, as Maimonides {s} says; that is, he was deserving of immediate death from the hand of God, and might expect it:

it shall be a statute for ever unto him, and his seed after him; as long as the Aaronic priesthood continued, until Christ should arise, made an high priest, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek, and should put an end to the priesthood of the former, by answering and fulfilling all the types and shadows of it; this respects all that is said in this chapter concerning the vestments of the priests, one and another.

{s} Cele Hamikdash, c. 10. sect. 4, 5.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 29:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 29

This chapter gives an account of the form and order of the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priestly office; preparatory to which Moses is ordered to take a young bullock, two rams, bread, cakes, and wafers unleavened, and bring them and Aaron and his sons to the door of the congregation, where the ceremony was to be publicly performed, and which began with washing them, Ex 29:1 and then proceeded by putting on the priestly garments directed to be made in the preceding chapter, first on Aaron, who also was anointed, Ex 29:5 and then upon his sons, Ex 29:8 after which the bullock and the two rams were to be slain, and orders are given what was to be done with their blood, and the several parts of them, as well as with the cakes and wafers, Ex 29:10 and directions are given to make these wave and heave offerings, Ex 29:24 and that the garments of Aaron's should be his son's that succeeded him, Ex 29:29, and that the flesh of the ram of consecration with the bread should be eaten by Aaron and his sons and no other, Ex 29:31, the altar also where they were to officiate was to be cleansed, sanctified, and an atonement made for it, Ex 29:36 after which two lambs every day, morning and evening, were to be offered on it in all succeeding generations, Ex 29:38, and the chapter is closed with a promise that the Lord would meet with the children of Israel at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and would sanctify the tabernacle, and dwell among them, and be their God, Ex 29:43.

Ver. 1. And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them,.... To Aaron and his sons: to "hallow" them; to sanctify them, set them apart, and consecrate them:

to minister unto me in the priest's office; for which the Lord had appointed them, to which he had chose, called, and separated them:

take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish; a young bullock was an heifer of three years old, according to Kimchi {t}, and such an one was used in sacrifice in former times, see
Ge 15:9 though Maimonides {u} says it was one of two years, and so Abendana {w}, whose words are,

"a bullock is a son of two years, and a ram is after he has entered into the second year thirty one days;"

and so Ben Gersom; the bullock was an emblem of the strength, laboriousness, and patience of Christ, and both of them being without blemish, were typical of his purity and perfection in his nature and life, and especially in his sacrifice.

{t} Comment. in Psal. lxix. 32. {u} Hilchot Zebachim, c. 1. sect. 14. {w} Not. in Miclol Yophi in loc.

Exodus 29:2

Ver. 2. And unleavened bread,.... Such as used to be eaten at the time of the passover, and this being distinguished from cakes and wafers, after mentioned, shows that this was bread of a larger size, a loaf or loaves of bread, see Ex 29:3

and cakes unleavened, tempered with oil; these were made of flour mixed with oil, but without leaven, and were a lesser and thinner sort of bread than the former:

and wafers unleavened, anointed with oil; with oil olive, the best of oil, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Aben Ezra; these were a thinner sort of bread still, somewhat like our pancakes; and they were anointed with oil after the baking of them, and in the form of the Greek c, "chi", as Jarchi says, or of a St. Andrew's or Burgundian cross:

of wheaten flour shall thou make them; of the finest of the wheat, for these were to be the food of Aaron and his sons, who were now to be invested with an high and honourable office, and were to live according to the dignity of it; and these being all unleavened, may denote that sincerity, simplicity, and integrity that ought to be found in them, in the discharge of their office, and which were in Christ in full perfection; as well as soundness in doctrine, life, and manners, being free from all leaven of false doctrine, hypocrisy, and malice; and likewise what is expected of the same kind in all the saints, who, under the Gospel dispensation, are all of them priests unto God, and whose food is the finest of the wheat, Christ the bread of life.

Exodus 29:3

Ver. 3. And thou shalt put them into one basket,.... The unleavened bread, cakes and wafers; this basket may be an emblem of the Gospel and the ministration of it, in which Christ the bread of life is carried, and ministered to his people:

and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams; not that the bullock and the rams were to be brought in the basket along with the bread, cakes, and wafers; but at the same time that they were brought to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, these were to be brought, led, or drove to the altar, in order to be slain and sacrificed.

Exodus 29:4

Ver. 4. And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,.... That is, order and direct them to come thither; for it cannot be thought he was to carry them in his arms or on his shoulders, or have them thither by force, whether they would or not; but he was to declare to them that it was the will of the Lord they should appear there:

and shalt wash them with water; out of the laver after mentioned, which stood between the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar: the Targum of Jonathan says, this washing was performed in forty seahs of living or spring water, which was sufficient for the immersion of the whole body, which it is highly probable was the case; and so Jarchi interprets it of the dipping of the whole body, and which seems to have been necessary, upon their entrance on their office, to denote their complete purity and holiness, though afterwards, when they entered on service, they only washed their hands and feet, see
Ex 30:18 to which our Lord seems to allude, Joh 13:10 this washing shows what purity and holiness were necessary to the priests of the Lord, and that they ought to be clean that bear the vessels of his house, or minister in his sanctuary, and which were in Christ in their full perfection; and such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled, and so could offer himself without spot, and was a fit person to take away sin by sacrifice, and to be an advocate for his people: this may also point at his baptism, which he submitted to before he entered on his office in a public manner, and which was performed by immersion; and in this way ought all his priests, his saints, to be washed, as well as with the washing of regeneration, and with the blood of Christ; and which is necessary to their officiating as priests, or drawing nigh to God, and requisite to their communion with God and Christ.

Exodus 29:5

Ver. 5. And thou shall take the garments,.... The priestly garments before ordered to be made, and when made:

and put upon Aaron the coat: the broidered coat, the coat of fine linen, which was put on first and was next to his flesh, for all these garments were put on in the order in which they are here placed:

and the robe of the ephod: which was all of blue, and had pomegranates and golden bells at the hem of it; this was put over the broidered coat:

and the ephod; which was made of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen: this was a short garment put over the robe of the ephod:

and the breastplate; with the Urim and Thummim in it, or the twelve precious stones on which were engraven the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, which hung down over the breast by wreathen chains of gold, from the shoulder pieces of the ephod:

and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod; which was made of the same material and after the same manner as the ephod itself, and which girt all his garments tight and close to him; the significance of these has been observed already; and unless thus clothed he could not minister in his office, and these he had only on while ministering in it: no mention is made of the breeches, because these were doubtless to be put on by the high priest himself in a private manner before he came there; whereas all these garments were put on him publicly at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where it would not have been so seemly and decent to put on the other.

Exodus 29:6

Ver. 6. And thou shall put the mitre upon his head,.... Which was made of linen, and was a wrap of linen about his head in the form of a turban:

and put the holy crown upon the mitre; the holy crown was a plate of gold which had these words, "holiness to the Lord", engraven on it; and so says the Targum of Jonathan,

"on which the holy name was engraven;"

the mitre was upon the top of his head, this in the forefront of that; it was upon Aaron's forehead, and reached from ear to ear, and was fastened behind with a blue lace; this was like a crown or a diadem, and denotes the honour and dignity of the priestly office: Christ is a priest on his throne, and his saints are a royal priesthood, even kings as well as priests unto God.

Exodus 29:7

Ver. 7. Then thou shall take the anointing oil, After ordered to be made of principal spices, myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, cassia, and oil olive, Ex 30:23

and pour it upon his head, and anoint him; this was done, according to Jarchi, in the form of the letter "chi" as before; the oil was put upon his head and between his eyebrows, and he joined them with his finger: Aben Ezra thinks this was done before the mitre was put upon his head, for upon the head was the oil only poured; but Nachmanides was of opinion that the mitre was so folded about the head that the middle of the head was open, and upon that the oil was poured; and so the Talmudists say {x} that his (the high priest's) hair was seen between the plate of gold and the mitre; but however this was, it seems plain from the text that this anointing was after the mitre was put on, and the priest habited with all his garments; and it is also as clear a case, that the ointment was poured on his head, which ran down to his beard, Ps 133:2, and I see no difficulty in supposing that the mitre and crown might be taken off again while the ceremony of anointing was performed. This unction denotes the investiture of Christ with his office in eternity, who is said to be anointed so early, **Pr 8:22**, and the donation of the Spirit to him in time, without measure; with which he is said to be anointed, both at his incarnation and at his baptism, and also at his ascension to heaven, and hence comes the name of the Messiah, which signifies anointed; and so his people, his priests, are anointed of God, with an unction from him, with the oil of grace, with the graces of the Spirit, which is necessary for their instruction, for the presentation of themselves to as an holy sacrifice, and to make them meet for the heavenly glory.

{x} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 19. 1.

Exodus 29:8

Ver. 8. And thou shalt bring his sons,.... Order the sons of Aaron to come to the same place where he was:

and put coats upon them: such as were ordered to be made for them, Ex 28:40.

Exodus 29:9

Ver. 9. And thou shalt gird them with girdles (Aaron and his sons),.... Aaron with the girdle of the ephod, and with the girdle of needlework, and his sons with common girdles made for them; all which showed what strength, diligence, and expedition were necessary for the discharge of their office:

and put the bonnets on them; upon their heads, which differed only from the high priest's mitre in the manner of rolling or wrapping, as has been observed on Ex 28:39:

and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute; that is, shall descend from father to son in Aaron's family throughout all generations, until the Messiah should come; who would be a priest of another order, and put an end to the Aaronic priesthood, by fulfilling what that was a type of, and so abolishing it:

and thou shall consecrate Aaron and his sons; or "fill the hand of them"; that is, with sacrifices to offer for themselves and others,
See Gill on "Ex 28:41". The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are,

"shall offer the offering of Aaron, and the offering of his sons,"

of which there is an after account, and was one part of their consecration.

Exodus 29:10

Ver. 10. And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation,.... The same, or of the same kind he was ordered to take, Ex 29:1, and here the place is expressed where it was to be taken, and what was to be done with it:

and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock; not Aaron first alone, and then his sons, as some have thought, Aben Ezra makes mention of; but, as he says, both together, not one before another; declaring it to be their sacrifice, a vicarious one, one in their room and stead, signifying that they deserved to die as that creature would; and by this act putting, as it were, their sins and transgressions upon it, see Le 16:21 and which was an emblem of the imputation of sin to Christ, and laying upon him the iniquities of us all.

Exodus 29:11

Ver. 11. And thou shalt kill the bullock before the Lord,.... That is, Moses is ordered to do it, who now officiated as a priest, "pro tempore", Aaron and his sons not being yet completely invested with that office, or thoroughly consecrated to it; of which consecration this sacrifice was a part, and therefore could not with propriety be concerned in killing their own sacrifice; for that purpose, Moses therefore did it, and he did it "before the Lord"; Jehovah the Son gave him those orders to do it before Jehovah the Father, in his presence, as an offering to him, and for his acceptance. And the ark, as Aben Ezra observes, was in the middle westward, and right against it was the altar of incense, and opposite that the altar of burnt offering:

by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; that is, as Jarchi interprets it, in the court of the tabernacle before the door; not by the door by which they entered in to the court of the tabernacle; but in the court before the door that leads in to the holy at some distance from which stood the altar of burnt offering, where this bullock was slain and sacrificed: all this may denote the public manner in which Christ, the antitype, suffered in the presence of the Lord, with his knowledge and will, and before the people of Israel.

Exodus 29:12

Ver. 12. And thou shalt take the blood of the bullock,.... Being slain, and its blood received into a basin:

and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger; not sprinkle it with hyssop, as was done in some cases, but put on with the finger dipped into the blood in the basin; as the horns of the altar were the place where the sacrifice was bound, as some think, or however where persons in distress fled for refuge, and laid hold on, it may figure the blood of Christ, being effectual to the cleansing of their souls, and the remission of their sins, through the application of it to them by the Spirit of God:

and pour all the blood beside at the bottom of the altar; the rest of the blood not put upon the horns of the altar, all that was left of it. Jarchi says, there was a receptacle (for it) that protruded from around the altar, about a cubit from the ground; and here it was that the blood was poured.

Exodus 29:13

Ver. 13. And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards,.... That covered the skin or caul, in which the bowels are contained, called the "omentum", which generally has a pretty deal of fat upon it:

and the caul that is above the liver; which seems to design the diaphragm or midriff; but the Septuagint renders it, "the lobe of the liver"; and Ben Melech says it is to be interpreted with the liver, for he says he took a little of the liver with the caul:

and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar; the Targum of Jonathan is, lay them in order on the altar; it is not easy to say, since fat is taken both in a good and bad sense, what is designed by the burning of it: as fat often designs the best, it being burned on the altar may signify that the best is to be given to the Lord, and we are to honour him with the best things we have, which should be devoted to his service; or as fat renders insensible, and stupefies and makes men heavy, and inclines to a carnal and vicious disposition, and the inward parts and reins being the seat of carnal desires, affections, and lusts; it may denote that the inward part of man is very wickedness, and that the inward corruptions of nature, and the carnal affections and fleshly lusts, are to be mortified and destroyed, at least the power of them to be subdued and restrained.

Exodus 29:14

Ver. 14. But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung,.... The several parts and members of him, head, legs, feet, &c. and the skin taken off of him, and the dung that comes from him. Aben Ezra observes, that the flesh comprehends the head and the pieces, and may be interpreted in a way of conjecture, that he washed it, and afterwards burnt it; all representing a whole Christ under all his painful sufferings, and the shame and reproach he underwent in them:

shalt thou burn with fire without the camp; so Christ, the antitype, suffered without the gates of Jerusalem a most painful and shameful death, despised and reproached by men, and the wrath of God like fire poured out upon him: the apostle seems to refer to this, Heb 13:11,

it is a sin offering; in order to make atonement for the sins of Aaron and his sons; for the law made men priests that had infirmity, and needed offerings and sacrifices for their own sins, which shows the imperfection of the Aaronic priesthood.

Exodus 29:15

Ver. 15. Thou shalt also take one ram,.... One of the two he was bid to take, Ex 29:1;

and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram; confessing their sins, acknowledging their guilt, and by this act transferring the same to the ram, which was to be a burnt offering, and was typical of the imputation of sin to Christ, as before observed.

Exodus 29:16

Ver. 16. And thou shalt slay the ram,.... As he was ordered to slay the bullock, acting in this as a priest, as in that:

and thou shall take his blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar; the blood being received into a basin, it was not to be put upon the altar with the finger, as the blood of the bullock, but was to be sprinkled probably with a bunch of hyssop, round about upon the altar, on the top and sides: as the deity of Christ is the altar which sanctifies every gift, this may signify that his blood has its virtue and efficacy from that, to make atonement for the sins of men, and to cleanse them from them.

Exodus 29:17

Ver. 17. And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces,.... For the better convenience of laying it upon the wood on the altar, that it might be burnt; for it was to be a whole burnt offering:

and wash the inwards of him, and his legs; denoting the purity of the sacrifice of Christ, and that when his people give up themselves to God as a whole burnt offering, in the flames of love and zeal, their affections should be pure and sincere:

and put [them] unto his pieces, and unto his head; lay them together, so that they might be entirely consumed at once; signifying that Christ was both in soul and body an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to God; zeal for the honour of whose house, and the glory of his name, ate him up, as well as the fire of divine wrath; and so our whole souls, bodies and spirits, should be presented to the Lord as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice to him, which is more strongly suggested in the next verse.

Exodus 29:18

Ver. 18. And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar,.... For which reason his head, his pieces, his inwards, and his legs, were to be put together, and laid in order upon the altar:

it is a burnt offering unto the Lord; offered up to him, and accepted by him, as follows:

it is a sweet savour; or "a smell of rest" {y}, in which God acquiesces, and rests, and takes delight and pleasure; it is, as the Septuagint version,

for a smell of sweet savour, or a sweet smelling savour; which phrase the apostle makes use of, and applies to the sacrifice of Christ, **Eph 5:2**:

an offering made by fire unto the Lord; which being consumed by fire ascended upwards to the Lord, and became acceptable to him, as the sacrifice of his own Son, in his fiery sufferings and death, was unto him.

{y} xwxyn xyr "odor quietis", Montanus, Fagius, Vatablus, Cartwright, Piscator.

Exodus 29:19

Ver. 19. And thou shall take the other ram,.... The other of the two that was left, Ex 29:1:

and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram, as they were to do, and did, upon the head of the other;
See Gill on "Ex 29:15".

Exodus 29:20

Ver. 20. Then shall thou kill the ram,.... As the other:

and take of his blood, some part of it being received into a basin:

and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons; according to Jarchi, this is the middle gristle within the ear; but Saadiah more rightly says it is the tender part which joins to the orb of the ear. The blood was put upon this part to sanctify it, and cleanse from sins that come thereby, and to teach the high priest that he ought attentively to listen to what should be said unto him of the Lord, that he might faithfully report it to the people; and as our great High Priest had his ear opened and awakened, to hear as the learned; and happy are his people who have ears to hear the joyful sound, and take pleasure in it, and who are cleansed from their hearing sins, by his precious blood:

and upon the thumb of their right hand; on the middle joint of it, as Jarchi:

and upon the great toe of the right foot; the hands and fingers being the instruments of action, and the feet and toes of walking, show that the life and conversation of the priests of the Lord ought to be pure and holy, and so their antitype perfectly was; and whereas there is imperfection in all the actions, and even in the best righteousness of the saints, and their walk and conversation is not without sin, they have need to have them sprinkled with, and their conversation garments washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb:

and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about; as was done with the blood of the other ram, Ex 29:16.

Exodus 29:21

Ver. 21. And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar,.... Not that which was sprinkled upon it, which could not be gathered up in such quantities as to be sprinkled again; but which was in a basin on it, having been received into it when the ram was slain:

and of the anointing oil; hereafter to be made, and with which Aaron was anointed as soon as he had his garments on; and this is a different anointing from that that was poured on his head; this was sprinkled on his garments, as

follows:

and sprinkle it upon Aaron; both the blood and the oil:

and upon his garments; the note of Aben Ezra is, under the garments of Aaron, and on his garments, as if they were sprinkled within and without:

and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him; at his first unction his sons do not seem to have been anointed at all, but now they and their garments are sprinkled both with blood and oil; denoting both the justification of the priests of the Lord by the blood of Christ, and the sanctification of them by the Spirit, and the need that both their persons and their actions stand in of cleansing by them both:

and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him: all should be holy in a ceremonial sense, and devoted to holy uses and services; see Ps 45:8.

Exodus 29:22

Ver. 22. Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump,.... The fat which was upon it: the sheep in Arabia and about Judea were remarkable for their large tails; according to Rauwolff {z}, they were half a span thick, and one and a half broad, and very fat; and so in Africa and Egypt were rams of large tails often and twenty pounds weight {a}; and Aristotle {b} speaks of sheep in Syria that had tails a cubit broad; and Herodotus {c} makes mention of two sorts in Arabia, one sort have tails three cubits long, which if drawn upon the ground would ulcerate, wherefore the shepherds make little carts to bear them upon {d}, and the other sort have tails a cubit broad; and Vartomanus {e} relates, how in Arabia are fat sheep whose tails weigh eleven, twelve, seventeen, nay, forty four pounds, and of a cubit long:

and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul of the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them:
See Gill on "Ex 29:13"

and the right shoulder; what was to be done with it is afterwards observed as well as with the rest:

for it is a ram of consecration; or "of fillings" {f}; Jarchi says, the Scripture declares these fillings to be peace offerings, for they minister peace to the altar, and to him that does the service, and to the owners; wherefore the breast was necessarily his that did the service for his portion, and this was Moses, for he ministered in the fillings, and the rest Aaron and his sons ate, for they were the owners.

{z} Travels, p. 221. {a} Leo. African. Descript. Africae, l. 9. p. 753. {b} Hist. Animal. l. 8, c. 28. {c} Thalia sive, l. 3. c. 113. {d} The same is observed in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 54. 2. & Gloss. in. ib. {e} Navigat. l. 2. c. 5, 9, 15. {f} Myalm "impletionum", Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator.

Exodus 29:23

Ver. 23. And one loaf of bread,.... Of unleavened bread, as in Ex 29:2 large bread is meant, as Ben Melech observes, for the rest were cakes and wafers, as follows:

and one cake of oiled bread; which was made of flour and oil mixed and tempered together:

and one wafer out of the basket of unleavened bread; which was anointed with oil and crossed, as the Jewish writers say:

that [is] before the Lord; which basket of unleavened bread, cakes, and wafers, was set in the court of the tabernacle, and so said to be before the Lord, being devoted to whatever use he should assign them, being by his orders brought thither.

Exodus 29:24

Ver. 24. And thou shalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the hands of his sons,.... Which accounts for the use of the phrase, filling the hand for consecration, Ex 29:9 for all the above things of the ram, bread, cakes, and wafers, were put into their hands when consecrated, denoting their investiture with their office: all things are in the hands of Christ, relative to the glory of God and the good of his people; their persons are in his hands, and all grace and blessings of it for them; a commission to execute his office as a priest is given to him; and as it was proper that he also should have somewhat to offer, his hands are filled, and he has a sufficiency for that purpose, as Aaron and his sons had, **Heb 8:3**

and shalt wave them for a wave offering before the Lord: which was waved or shook to and fro, from east to west, and from north to south, to or before him, as Jarchi observes, whose are the four winds of the world {g}; and this was done by Moses and Aaron also; for, according to the same writer,

"both were employed in waving, both the owners and the priest, how? the priest put his hand under the hand of the owner and waved, and in this Aaron and his sons were the owners and Moses the priest."

{g} Vid. T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 62. 1.

Exodus 29:25

Ver. 25. And thou shalt receive them of their hands,.... After they had been put into them, and filled with them, and waved by them:

and burn them upon the altar for a burnt offering; not the flesh of the ram, which is after ordered to be boiled and eaten by Aaron and his sons; but the fat of it, before described, with one loaf, one cake, and one wafer of unleavened bread, out of the basket: this was done

for a sweet savour before the Lord; that it might be grateful and acceptable to him, as it was:

it is an offering made by fire unto the Lord;
See Gill on "Ex 29:18".

Exodus 29:26

Ver. 26. And thou shalt take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecrations,.... The ram being slain and cut to pieces, this part is particularly disposed of:

and wave it for a wave offering before the Lord; in the manner before described:

and it shall be thy part: the part of Moses, he officiating now as a priest; and we find accordingly in later times that this part of the sacrifice belonged to the priest, **Le 7:31**.

Exodus 29:27

Ver. 27. And thou shall sanctify the breast of the wave offering,.... Set it apart for the use of the priest in all succeeding ages:

and the shoulder of the heave offering: as the breast was waved from one hand to another, or cast from the hand of one to the hand of another; the shoulder was heaved up, or cast up and caught again: this also was to be sanctified or set apart for the priest's use, **Le 7:32**,

which is waved, and which is heaved up of the ram of the consecration: the breast was waved and the shoulder heaved:

even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons; as these two parts before mentioned in peace offerings were.

Exodus 29:28

Ver. 28. And it shall be Aaron's and his sons by a statute for ever from the children of Israel,.... That is, the shoulder, which seems particularly meant, though the breast also was theirs, which was at this time given to Moses, he being priest; and this was an everlasting statute and ordinance in all generations, as long as the priesthood of Aaron lasted, until the Messiah should come and put an end to it: and this the children of Israel were always to allow the priests; the shoulder, because Aaron bore their names before the Lord upon his shoulders, for a memorial; and the breast for a like reason, because he bore their names in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, and their judgment also before the Lord continually, Ex 28:12,

for it is an heave offering: it is lifted up to the Lord, and therefore is given to his priest:

and it shall be an heave offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace offerings, [even] their heave offering unto the Lord: it being heaved up and given to the priest, it was reckoned an offering to the Lord, and was accepted by him as a peace offering; and it was an emblem of the lifting up of their hearts to God, and of the going up of the affections and desires of their souls to him, and of their serving and worshipping him in spirit and in truth, who is a spirit, and was their Father in heaven, to whom their eyes, hearts, and hands, were to be lifted up.

Exodus 29:29

Ver. 29. And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his son's after him,.... That son that succeeded him in the priesthood; for the priesthood continued in Aaron's family by succession, the eldest son being high priest, until the disposal of this office fell into the hands of Heathen princes, and then it was obtained by interest or money: now, though the coat and breeches might be wore out by Aaron before he died, yet the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and its girdle, and the breastplate, might continue, and go from father to son, and especially the latter, even to succeeding ages; see Nu 20:26,

to be anointed therein, and consecrated in them; this is to be understood only of the high priesthood, and of anointing and consecrating to that; for none but high priests were anointed, and their sons who succeeded them in that office, and who were anointed, and consecrated in like manner as Aaron was, by washing, clothing, anointing, and sacrificing.

Exodus 29:30

Ver. 30. And that son that is priest in his stead,.... The Targum of Jonathan is,

"who shall rise after him of his sons, not of the Levites;"

for the high priest was to be of the family of Aaron, a descendant of his; it was not enough that he was of the tribe of Levi, but he must descend from Aaron, either in the line of Eleazar or of Ithamar:

shall put them on seven days; the next successor was to wear the garments seven days running:

when he cometh into the tabernacle of the congregation to minister in the holy place; to offer sacrifice in the court of the tabernacle, on the altar of burnt offering, and to offer incense on the altar of incense, and to trim the lamps of the candlestick, and to put the shewbread on the table.

Exodus 29:31

Ver. 31. And thou shalt take the ram of the consecration,.... For the other ram was cut in pieces and burnt, even the whole of it:

and seethe his flesh in the holy place; not in that part of the tabernacle which was properly the holy place, as distinguished from the holy of holies, and from the court of the tabernacle; for in that there was no convenience for boiling, but in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation, even at the door of it, as in **Le 8:31**.

Exodus 29:32

Ver. 32. And Aaron and his sons shall eat of the flesh of the ram,.... Typical of the flesh of Christ, whose flesh is meat indeed, and to be eaten by faith, whereby it becomes spiritual food, savoury and nourishing, as it is to all the Lord's priests, or who are made so to God:

and the bread that is in the basket; the unleavened bread, cakes, and wafers, Ex 29:2, what was left of them, one loaf, one cake, and one wafer, having been put into the hands of Aaron and his sons, and received from them and burnt, Ex 29:23 this may figure Christ the bread of life, held forth in the ministry of the word, for believers in him to feed upon; which basket of bread was

by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; the whole court, Jarchi says, was so called, where the people in common assembled, and the Lord met with them; and so may point at the public ordinances, where Christ is set forth as food for souls.

Exodus 29:33

Ver. 33. And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made,.... For the sins of Aaron and his sons, for they were men of infirmity, and needed sacrifice for sin themselves; and herein Christ their antitype excelled them, that he had no sin of his own, and needed not to offer first for them, and then for the sins of others, as Aaron and his sons, the types of him, did; and their eating of the sacrifice for atonement points at the receiving of the atonement of Christ's sacrifice by faith, and the enjoyment of it and the blessings following on it:

to consecrate and to sanctify them; that they might be filled and fitted, and set apart and devoted to the office of the priesthood, and minister in it:

but a stranger shall not eat [thereof], because they are holy; meaning not one of another nation, but of another family, though an Israelite; the Targum of Jonathan renders it, a profane and common person, a layman, one that was not a priest; who, though he was of the seed of Israel, yet not being of the seed of Aaron, as Aben Ezra interprets it, he might not eat of the above things, because they were devoted to holy uses; and therefore none but such who were sanctified or set apart to sacred service might partake of them.

Exodus 29:34

Ver. 34. And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning,.... Being more than the priests could eat:

then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire; that it might not be used in a contemptuous manner, or abused to superstitious uses; the same orders with those respecting what was left of the passover:
Ex 12:10,

it shall not be eaten, because it is holy; which is the reason before given why it should not be eaten by a stranger, and being kept till the next morning it was ordered to be burnt, that it might not then be eaten at all; it was not to be given to a stranger, nor to be cast to dogs, because it had been devoted to sacred uses; and it seems as if it was not to be eaten by the priests themselves the next day, who were to live upon the daily provision made for them.

Exodus 29:35

Ver. 35. And thus shall thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons,.... For their consecration, washing, clothing, anointing them, sprinkling blood upon them and their garments, and offering sacrifice for them:

according to all things which I have commanded thee; no one thing was to be omitted, and we find they were carefully and punctually observed, **Le 8:1** seven days shalt thou consecrate them: so long the rites and ceremonies of the consecration were to be performing, that they might be thoroughly used to the putting on of their garments, and the offering of sacrifices as they saw performed by Moses; and in all respects be fitted for the discharge of their office: the Jewish writers generally say that seven days were appointed, that a sabbath might pass over them.

Exodus 29:36

Ver. 36. And thou shall offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement,.... That is, every day of the seven days of consecration; denoting the full and complete atonement for sin by the sacrifice of Christ, which these sacrifices could not really obtain, and were therefore frequently repeated, in this case seven times; figuratively by that number pointing to the full expiation of sin by the atoning Saviour, who was made not only an offering for sin, but sin itself by imputation, for his people:

and thou shalt cleanse the altar when thou hast made atonement for it; which though not capable of sin, or of any moral guilt, yet, inasmuch as it was to be of sacred use, and to have sin offerings laid upon it, expiation and cleansing, in a ceremonial way, were to be made for it, to purge it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel,
Le 16:18. This altar was typical of Christ, who is that altar believers in him have a right to partake of; and though he had no sin of his own, no guilt of that kind to expiate, nor pollution to be cleansed from, yet as he had the guilt of his people transferred to him, and was clothed with their filthy garments, and had their uncleannesses on him; by the sacrifice of himself he purged away sin from himself and them, and was justified and cleared of all, and they in him:

and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it; anoint it, as it afterwards was, with the holy anointing oil, whereby it was sanctified, or set apart for holy uses; in which it was a figure of Christ anointed with the oil of gladness, the Holy Spirit, above his fellows; and was sanctified and set apart for his priestly office, in which he was both altar, sacrifice, and priest.

Exodus 29:37

Ver. 37. Seven days thou shalt make atonement for the altar, and sanctify it,.... That it might be thoroughly fit to have sacrifices offered on it:

and it shall be an altar most holy; as Christ is, and is called the Most Holy, and said to be anointed, **Da 9:24**. He is holy in his person, nature, and offices, more holy than angels or men; as holy as the Lord God, the God of Israel, his Father, who is glorious in holiness, and none like to him for it:

whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy; that is, whatsoever gift or sacrifice, according to law, was offered on it, whatever appertained unto it, or were suitable for it; for as for other things, they were not made holy by a touch of it, **Hag 2:11**. The Targum of Jonathan refers it to persons, paraphrasing the words, that such should be holy who were

"of the sons of Aaron, but of the rest of the people it was not lawful for them to draw nigh, lest they should be burnt with flaming fire that comes out of the holy things;"

but our Lord applies it to gifts and offerings of the altar, for to this case he seems to have respect, Mt 23:19 for he is the altar that sanctifies not only the persons, but the services of his people, and their sacrifices of prayer and praise come up with acceptance to God from off this altar; though even the best duties and services of theirs need atonement and purification by the sacrifice and blood of Christ.

Exodus 29:38

Ver. 38. Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar,.... An altar being ordered to be built, and this sanctified and expiated, and priests being appointed and consecrated to the service of it; an account is given of the offerings that should be offered up upon it every day, besides those that should be offered occasionally, and at other set times:

two lambs of the first year day by day continually; typical of Christ the Lamb of God, who continually, through the efficacy of his blood, and the virtue of his sacrifice, which are ever the same, takes away day by day the sins of his people. A lamb is a proper emblem of him for innocence and harmlessness, for meekness and humility, for patience, for usefulness for food and clothing, and especially for sacrifice; and these being of the

first year, may denote the tenderness of Christ, who as he grew up as a tender plant, so as a tender lamb, encompassed with infirmities, being in all things like unto his people, excepting sin; and as these were to be

without spot, Nu 28:3 and so here, in the Septuagint version, it may point at the purity of Christ, who is the Lamb of God, without spot and blemish, and who offered himself without spot to God, and was a fit sacrifice to be offered up for the taking away of the sins of men.

Exodus 29:39

Ver. 39. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning,.... And before this no other sacrifice was to be offered, and therefore it was slain and offered very early; and yet it was not lawful to slay it before break of day, wherefore great care was taken that it should not;

"he that was appointed over the service used to say to the priests, go out, and see if the time of slaying is come; if it is come, he that went out to see, said, coruscations or brightnesses; Matthias the son of Samuel said, does it enlighten the face of the whole east as far as Hebron? he said, yes; why was this necessary? because one time the light of the moon ascended, and they thought the east was enlightened (or it was break of day), and they slew the sacrifice {h}:"

and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, or

between the two evenings; of which phrase See Gill on "Ex 12:6" Josephus {i} says, it was about the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon, that the daily sacrifice was offered: the Misnic doctors say {k}, it was slain at eight and a half, or half an hour after two o'clock, and was offered up at nine and a half, or half an hour after three o'clock: they stayed as long as they could before they offered it, because no sacrifice was offered after it but the passover. We are told that the lamb of the morning was slain in the northwest corner of the altar, and that of the evening in the northeast corner {l}: the reason of this was, because in the morning the sun was in the east, and shone over against the west; but the evening daily sacrifice was when the sun was in the west, and shone opposite the east {m}: this was in a good measure literally fulfilled in Christ, namely, as to the time of slaying and offering the daily sacrifice; for he was crucified at the third hour, that is, at nine o'clock in the morning, at the sixth hour, or at twelve o'clock at noon, darkness was upon the earth, which continued till the ninth, and then he gave up the ghost, which was three o'clock in the afternoon, the usual time of slaying and offering the daily evening sacrifice, Mr 15:25 and this may signify the extensiveness of Christ's sacrifice, reaching from the morning of the world to the evening of it. He was slain and offered up in the morning of the world, in the purpose and promise of God, in the typical sacrifices of men, and in the faith of his people, who looked to him as the atoning Saviour, and in the efficacy of his blood, which reached to all the saints from the beginning, for the pardon and atonement of their sins; and it was at the end or evening of the Jewish world and state that Christ was offered up a sacrifice for sin, and the virtue of it will continue to the end of the world. Christ is the Lamb of God that continues to take away the sin of the world, and his blood continues to cleanse from all sin, and he ever lives to make intercession for transgressors. Good men are continually sinning, and they ever stand in need of the application of pardoning grace and mercy; there are sins of the night, and the sins of the day they fall into, and nothing can expiate them but the blood and sacrifice of Christ. The repetition of these sacrifices every day, morning and night, shows that they could not really and perfectly take away sin; the cessation of them was a token of perfect atonement by Christ, which made them needless and useless: and this may teach us, that the sacrifices of prayer and praise should be morning and evening; in the morning we should express our thankfulness for the mercies of the night, and pray for the continuance of them the day following; and at the evening we should offer up the sacrifices of praise for the mercies of the day, and pray for the mercies of the night; and at both seasons should be concerned to have a fresh application of the atoning blood and sacrifice of Christ, for the taking away from us the sins of the night and day.

{h} Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 1, 2. Tamid, c. 3. sect. 2. {i} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 14. c. 4. sect. 3. {k} Misn. Pesachim, c. 5. sect. 1. {l} Misn. Tamid, c. 4. sect. 1. {m} Bartenora in Misn. Tamid, c. 4. sect. 1.

Exodus 29:40

Ver. 40. And with the one lamb a tenth deal,.... That is, the tenth part of an "ephah", as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, which is an "omer", and held as much as a man could eat in one day, or more, see Ex 16:18:

of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; this was a meat, or, rather bread offering, which went along with the daily sacrifice, and typified Christ the food of his people, who is compared to a corn of wheat; is the finest of the wheat, and the bread of God, which came down from heaven, and gives life, food; and nourishment to men; and the "beaten oil" may signify the graces of the Spirit in him, and the exercise of them through the many trials and sufferings he endured, and which make him savoury food to his people, as a crucified Christ is:

and the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering; a "hin", Aben Ezra says, was an Egyptian measure, but what reason he had for it does not appear; according to Ainsworth, the fourth part of it was a pint and a half; but according to Bishop Cumberland {n}, who has with great exactness calculated the Jewish measures, it was a quart and above half a pint; this was poured out upon the altar. Jarchi says there were two silver basins on the top of the altar, and there were bored in them like two small nostrils, and wine was put in the middle of them; and it flowed and went out by the way of the nostrils, and fell upon the top of the altar, and from thence descended to the bottom: this wine poured may either signify the blood of Christ shed, or poured out for the remission of sin; or the love of Christ very plentifully manifested in the offering up of himself for men, and the acceptableness of to God: and, moreover, as sacrifices are called the bread of God, and he makes as it were a feast of them, feeding on them with delight and pleasure, it was necessary there should be wine to complete the banquet; wherefore wine is said to cheer both God and man, **Jud 9:13**, alluding to the libations of wine in sacrifices.

{n} Of Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 3. p. 86.

Exodus 29:41

Ver. 41. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even,....
See Gill on "Ex 29:39",

and shall do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof; a meat and drink offering consisting of the same things, for quality and quantity, and made in the same manner, were to be offered with the daily evening sacrifice, as with the morning one:

for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the Lord: for these lambs were both burnt with fire upon the altar, and therefore are called a burnt offering in the next verse.

Exodus 29:42

Ver. 42. This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations,.... To be offered up morning and evening in every age, as long as the Mosaic economy lasted, till he came, who put an end to it by offering up himself, the antitype of it:

at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord; that is, upon the altar of burnt offering which stood there, see Ex 40:29:

where I will meet you to speak there unto thee; to accept of their sacrifices, give further directions of what was to be done, and answers to inquiries made of him in matters of moment and difficulty. Jarchi observes, that some of their Rabbins conclude from hence, that the holy blessed God spoke with Moses from off the altar of brass, after the tabernacle was set up; but others say from off the mercy seat, as in
Ex 25:22.

Exodus 29:43

Ver. 43. And there will I meet with the children of Israel,.... Not only with Moses or with Aaron, and his successors, but with the people themselves, by granting them his gracious presence in public ordinances, giving them tokens of his goodwill unto them, and of his acceptance of their offerings, hearing their prayers put up by themselves, or by the priest interceding for them, and receiving their thanksgivings for mercies bestowed, and giving them instructions by the mouth of his priests:

and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory; by his Shechinah, or the glory of the divine Majesty, dwelling in it; or it may be supplied, the children of Israel shall be sanctified; set apart and distinguished by his glorious presence among them; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"I will be sanctified in or by their princes, because of my glory."

Exodus 29:44

Ver. 44. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar,.... This seems to intimate that something else in the preceding verse is intended, as what should be sanctified, than the tabernacle, as we supply it; or else here is a repetition of the same thing for the confirmation of it, and both that and the altar were, sanctified, or set apart for holy uses, as well as cleansed and expiated by sacrifices:

I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office; that is, in a ceremonial way, by separating them from the rest of the children of Israel, by washing, clothing, and anointing them, and by accepting sacrifices offered by them; for this is not to be understood of internal sanctifying grace, which, though Aaron had, and many of his sons that succeeded him, yet not all; nor was it necessary to the performance of the priestly office, though it is in all those who are a royal priesthood, and made priests as well as kings unto God; for they are a holy nation, called with an holy calling, and unto himself, and have it both internally and externally.

Exodus 29:45

Ver. 45. And I will dwell among the children of Israel,.... In the tabernacle ordered to be built for him, and which, when built, was placed in the midst of the camp of Israel; and here Jehovah dwelt as a king in his palace, near at hand to help, protect, and defend his subjects, and supply them with all things needful for them; see **De 4:7**

and will be their God; their covenant God, their King and their God, their government being a Theocracy; their God and Father, by national adoption, and from whom they might expect all good things, they continuing in obedience to his commands, by the tenure of which they held their rights and privileges, civil and ecclesiastical.

Exodus 29:46

Ver. 46. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God,.... By his presence with them, by the blessings bestowed upon them, by his care of them, and kindness to them:

that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell amongst them; not only did he bring them from thence, that they might dwell in the land of Canaan, but that he might dwell among them, which was by far the greatest mercy; and not only that they might be delivered from the bondage and affliction with which they were sorely pressed, but that they might be a free people, under the protection of their King and their God, in the midst of them;

all which was a great encouragement to them, and an obligation on them to attend the service of the sanctuary, and to obey the Lord in whatsoever he had enjoined or should command them:

I am the Lord their God; of which he had given full proof and evidence by what he had done for them, and would yet give more; and to have the Lord our God is the greatest happiness that can be enjoyed, see
Ps 33:12.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 30:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 30

This chapter treats of the altar of incense, its form and use,
Ex 30:1 of the ransom of the Israelites, with the half shekel when numbered,
Ex 30:11 of the laver for the priests to wash their hands and feet at before service, Ex 30:17 of the anointing oil, the ingredients of it, and what was to be done with it,
Ex 30:22, and of the perfume, the composition and use of it,
Ex 30:34.

Ver. 1. And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon,.... The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call it incense of spices, properly enough, for it was made of various spices; of which see Ex 30:34 and this was necessary on a natural and civil account, to remove those ill smells from the sanctuary, occasioned by the number of beasts continually slain in it; but chiefly on a religions account, to denote the acceptableness of the service of the sanctuary to God:

of shittim wood shall thou make it: of the same that the altar of burnt offering was made, which was covered with brass, but this with gold, as after related; of this sort of wood, See Gill on "Ex 25:5" as this altar was a type of Christ, the shittim wood may respect his human nature; which wood, though it sprung out of the earth, was not common, but choice and excellent, and very strong durable, and incorruptible; and so Christ, though he was man made of an earthly woman in his human nature, yet was chosen out of the people, is the chiefest among ten thousand, and excellent as the cedars, the man of God's right hand, whom he made strong for himself; and though he died in it, he saw no corruption, he now lives, and will live for evermore; in which nature he acts the part of a Mediator, and intercedes for his people, and offers up their prayers, perfumed with the much incense of his mediation, to which this altar has a special respect.

Exodus 30:2

Ver. 2. A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, four square shall it be,.... It was one Jewish square cubit, which is in surface, according to Bishop Cumberland, three English square feet, and about forty seven square inches; which may denote the solidity, perfection, and extensiveness of Christ's priesthood, it being unchangeable, firm, and lasting; and which passes not from one to another, and the which makes something perfect, which the law and priesthood of Aaron could not, even perfects for ever them that are sanctified; and is very extensive; the virtue of it reaches to all the elect of God, from the beginning of the world to the end of it; not his sacrifice only, but his intercession, which is principally respected; that is made for all the people of God, in all places, and in all ages, and for all things for them, both for this life, and that which is to come:

and two cubits shall be the height thereof; so that it was as high again as it was long and broad: Christ, our interceding high priest, is made higher than the heavens:

the horns thereof shall be of the same; of the same wood the altar itself was made: these were a sort of spires that rose up at the four corners of the altar; and the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases the words,

"and of it its horns shall be erect;"

which were chiefly for decoration and ornament; and may denote the honour and glory of Christ, as well as his power and ability to save, to the uttermost, all that come to God by him, or lay hold upon him, since he ever lives to make intercession.

Exodus 30:3

Ver. 3. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold,.... Hence this altar is sometimes called the golden altar, **Nu 4:11** this may figure the deity of Christ, whose head is as the most fine gold, and is in the divine nature, in the form of

God, and is the brightness of his glory, and possessed of the same perfections; or rather the glorification of his human nature in heaven, where he is highly exalted, and the preciousness of his intercession, which is always powerful and prevalent, and the duration of it:

the top thereof, and the sides thereof, round about, and the horns thereof: all and each of them were covered with gold; this altar had a top, when the altar of burnt offering had none, but its hollow place was filled up with earth at every encampment; so Jarchi observes: this was not a grate, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, for here were neither blood nor ashes to be let through; but it was a flat covering like the roof of a house, as the word signifies, on which was set a golden dish, with live coals and incense burning on them; and which, when burnt, was carried away: and the sides are the four sides of the frame, it being a square, or the two sides and two ends of it; and the horns, the four horns at each corner, all were covered with plates of gold; so that this altar was a richer and more excellent one than that of burnt offering; and may signify the superior excellency of Christ's state of exaltation to that of his humiliation: in the latter, which the altar of burnt offering respected, he was made of no reputation, and became obedient to the death of the cross, yea, was made sin, and a curse for his people; but in the former, which the altar of incense respected, he was raised from the dead, and had glory given him; he was raised for the justification of his people, and was himself justified in the Spirit, ascended on high, was received into glory, sat down at the right hand of God, making continual intercession for his saints:

and thou shall make unto it a crown of gold round about; which was partly to keep from slipping what was put upon it, but chiefly for ornament; and plainly points at the exaltation of Christ in our nature in heaven, as our interceding high priest, where he is a priest upon his throne; and is crowned with glory and honour.

Exodus 30:4

Ver. 4. And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it,.... The crown was on the top of the altar, at the edge of it all around; and just underneath it were two rings of gold, two on each side:

by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shall thou make them; at each corner a ring, and at each side; the use of them follows:

and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal; these rings were for the staves to be put into when the altar was to be carried from place to place, as it was in the wilderness, during the travels of Israel there; and this signifies that Christ never leaves his people; when they are in the wilderness he is with them, interceding for them, providing all things necessary for their food, safety, and protection, Re 12:14.

Exodus 30:5

Ver. 5. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood,.... Of the same wood the altar itself was made:

and overlay them with gold; as that was; these rings and staves may be an emblem of the precious ordinances of Christ, in which he grants his presence; and where he is held forth in different ages and places as the interceding high priest of his people, their advocate with the Father, pleading continually his propitiatory sacrifice in their favour.

Exodus 30:6

Ver. 6. Thou shalt put it before the vail,.... That divides between the holy and the most holy place; not within the vail in the holy of holies, but before it at the holy place, for there the altar of incense stood: Josephus {o} says, between the candlestick and the table, i.e. of shewbread, stood the altar of incense; now the candlestick and shewbread were in the holy place; and with this account the Talmudists {p} agree, who say, that the table was in the north, distant from the wall two cubits and a half, and the candlestick on the south, distant from the wall two cubits and a half, and the altar was in the middle, and stood between them: and Maimonides {q} gives the like account of its situation, which is here further described:

that is by the ark of the testimony; which vail was by it, before which the altar was placed; the ark of the testimony was the chest or coffer in which the law was put, and which was the testimony of the will of God, from whence it had this name; and it stood in the most holy place; and not by it in the same place, but over against it, in the holy place stood the altar of incense:

before the mercy seat, that is over the testimony; the mercy seat that was over the ark, a lid or cover to it, where the testimony was; and towards this, before the face of it, was the altar of incense, where the priest officiating, looked directly towards it; having that in view for the acceptance of the people's prayers to God through Christ, which they were making while he was burning the incense:

where I will meet thee; as he had before promised, Ex 25:22.

{o} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 8. {p} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 33. 2. {q} Hilchot Beth. Habechirah, c. 1. sect. 7.

Exodus 30:7

Ver. 7. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning,.... This in later times was done by a common priest, who obtained this service by lots as we find in the times of Zacharias, **Lu 1:9** the incense was fetched out of the house of Abtines, where it was made, and burning coals were taken off of the altar of burnt offering in a vessel, and the incense was spread upon them and burnt: the Jewish canons about this matter run thus {r}; he that was worthy of, or allotted to, the incense, took a vessel that held three kabs, and a bowl in the midst of it, full and heaped up with incense, and took a silver censer, and went up to the top of the altar, and moved the coals to and fro, and took them and went down and poured them into a golden censer: and again {s}, he that was worthy of, or allotted to, a censer, gathered the coals upon the top of the altar, and spread them with the edges of the censer, and bowing himself went out; and he that was worthy of, or allotted to, the incense, took the bowl out of the midst of the vessel, and gave it to his friend or neighbour: and he that burns the incense may not burn until the president says to him, burn; and if he was an high priest, the president says, lord high priest, burn; the people depart, and he burns the incense, and bows and goes away: the burning of the sweet incense was typical of the mediation and intercession of Christ; the burning coals typified his sufferings, which were painful to his body, and in which he endured the wrath of God in his soul, and both must be very distressing to him: the incense put upon these shows that Christ's mediation and intercession proceeds upon his sufferings and death, his bloodshed, satisfaction, and sacrifice; which mediation of his, like the sweet incense, is frequent, is pure and holy, though made for transgressors, and there is none like unto it; there is but one Mediator between God and man: likewise this was typical of the prayers of the saints; and at the same time that the incense was burnt the people were at prayer, which was set before the Lord as incense, see Ps 141:3, these go upwards to God, and come up with acceptance to him, from off the golden altar, being offered up to him by Christ, with his much incense, through his blood and righteousness, and are pure, holy, fervent, and fragrant, and called odours, **Re 5:8**

when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it; which he did every morning he went into the holy place, where the candlestick with its lamps was; these he trimmed and dressed, snuffed those that were ready to go out, lighted those that were gone out, supplied them with oil and wicks, and cleared the snuff dishes, and the like: now near to the candlestick stood the altar of incense, so that when the priest looked after the one, he did the service of the other; and hence we learn, that our intercessor and lamplighter is one and the same; he that was seen amidst the golden candlesticks dressing the lamps of them, appears at the golden altar with a golden censer, to offer up the prayers of his saints, **Re 1:13** and we learn also, that the light of the word and prayer should go together, as they do in faithful ministers and conscientious Christians, who give themselves up unto and employ themselves therein; the one to and in the ministry of the word and prayer, and the other to and in the reading and hearing of the word and prayer.

{r} Misn. Tamid, c. 5. sect. 4, 5. {s} Ibid. c. 6. sect. 2, 3.

Exodus 30:8

Ver. 8. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it,.... In the evening the priest went into the holy place to light the lamps that were gone out, See Gill on "Ex 27:20" at the same time he burnt incense on the altar; and as the daily sacrifice was offered up morning and evening, so the incense was burnt every morning and evening, and much about the same time: the Jews say {t}, that the incense of the morning was offered between the blood (i.e. the sprinkling of the blood of the daily sacrifice) and the members, or the laying of the pieces on the altar; and the incense of the evening was between the pieces and the drink offering: and with this Philo agrees {u}, who says, twice every day most fragrant odours were offered, at the sun rising and setting, before the morning and after the evening sacrifice:

a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations; thus Christ's mediation and intercession is constant and continual; as his sacrifice continually takes away the sin of the world, in which it was the antitype of the daily sacrifice; so his blood continually speaks for peace and pardon, and every blessing of grace for his people, in which it is the antitype of the morning and evening incense; for he ever lives to make intercession; and so the prayers of the saints are directed to God both morning and evening, and they cease not praying as long as they live.

{t} Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 4. {u} De Victimis, p. 836.

Exodus 30:9

Ver. 9. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon,.... Which had not the same, but was made of other materials, or had more or fewer; whatever was not exactly the same was not to be offered; and so to make use of other mediators than Christ, whether angels or men, or to put up prayer to God for the sake of our own righteousness, pleading the merits of our works, and not the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, is to offer strange incense, unacceptable to God, and which will be of no avail to men:

nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; these were to be offered and burnt upon the altar of burnt offering;

neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon; as upon the other altar; everything in God's worship and service was to be done in the proper place and order; these offerings and sacrifices, though they were by divine appointment, yet must be offered on that altar which was peculiar for them.

Exodus 30:10

Ver. 10. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year,.... On the day of atonement, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra explain it; and the atonement here referred to seems to be an atonement for the altar itself, see Le 16:18 and as the altar of burnt offering was first expiated and then used,
Ex 29:36 so it seems the altar of incense had not only an atonement made on it, but for it: and this was done

with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; by sprinkling the blood of that offering upon the horns of it, as we learn from the afore mentioned place; and this shows that Christ's mediation and intercession is founded upon the virtue of his blood, and the efficacy of his atoning sacrifice, see **1Jo 2:1** once in the year shall he make atonement upon it, throughout your generations; which proves the insufficiency of all legal sacrifices of themselves to take away sin, since every year, as the apostle observes, there was a remembrance of it, Heb 10:3

it is most holy unto the Lord; either the atonement made on the day of atonement, which was a most holy part of service, and pointed at the great atonement made by the most Holy One, the Son of God; or this altar thus expiated, and devoted to sacred use, was reckoned a most sacred one to the Lord, and so was to have nothing offered upon it but what he ordered; with which Jarchi agrees in his note,

"the altar is sanctified to these things only, and not to any other service."

Exodus 30:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Continued his discourse; or, there being some intermission, reassumed it:

saying; as follows.

Exodus 30:12

Ver. 12. When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, after their number,.... An account of them, how many they are; which was sometimes done, and was proper to be done, especially in time of war; though the present case seems to be for the sake of raising money for the tabernacle and the service of it:

then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; which was not done yearly, nor was it perpetual; we have but two instances of it after this until the times of David, **Nu 1:2** yet it seems to have been a yearly tax or tribute, in the times of Christ, See Gill on "Mt 17:24" see Gill on "Mt 21:12"; and in the Misnah is a whole treatise called "Shekalim", in which an account is given of the time and manner of collecting this ransom money, and for what uses, and who were obliged to pay it, and who not; on the first of Adar (or February) they proclaimed concerning the payment of it, on the fifteenth the tables were set for that purpose, and on the twenty fifth the proper persons sat in the sanctuary to receive it {w}: this was typical of the ransom of souls by Christ, who are not all the world, for they are ransomed out of it, but Israelites, the whole mystical Israel of God, and are a numbered people; their names are written in the book of life, they are told into the hands of Christ, are exactly known by God and Christ; and these are many and even numberless to men:

that there be no plague amongst them when thou numberest them; as there was when David numbered them; which some have thought was owing to the non-payment of the ransom money after mentioned; the Septuagint version is, "no fall", the ransom of souls by Christ preserves them from a total and final fall by sin into everlasting ruin and destruction; or, "no death" as the Targum of Onkelos, for redemption by Christ secures from the second death, and even from a corporeal death as a penal evil.

{w} Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 1, 3.

Exodus 30:13

Ver. 13. This they shall give, everyone that passeth among them that are numbered,.... And their number, according to Jarchi, was known by what was paid; for he says the sum was taken not by heads, but everyone gave the half shekel, and by counting them the number was known, as follows:

half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary; that is, after the standard of a shekel kept in the sanctuary as a rule for all; and so Jarchi paraphrases it,

"according to the weight of a shekel, which I have fixed for thee to weigh, the shekel of the sanctuary."

It was about fourteen pence: a shekel is twenty gerahs; a gerah being the twentieth part of a shekel, it was not quite three halfpence of our money:

an half shekel [shall be] the offering of the Lord; which was to be offered to him for the ransom of souls, whose lives were forfeited by sin; and of the redemption of which this was an acknowledgment; and was typical of the ransom price of souls by Christ, which is not silver or gold, but his precious blood, his life, himself, which is given as an offering and sacrifice to God, in the room and stead of his people; and which is given to God, against whom sin is committed, the lawgiver, whose law is broken, the Judge, whose justice must be satisfied, and the creditor, to whom the price must be paid.

Exodus 30:14

Ver. 14. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above,.... Even Levites, Israelites, proselytes, and servants freed, but not women, bond servants, or children {x}:

shall give an offering to the Lord; the half shekel before mentioned.

{x} Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 1, 3.

Exodus 30:15

Ver. 15. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel,.... Which shows that the Israelites were alike in the esteem of God, their worldly circumstances making no difference; their souls being alike, the same ransom price was given for them; and that they were all to have an equal share in the service and sanctuary of God, and the price was set so low, that the poorest man might be able to pay it: and even Maimonides {y} says, if he lived on alms, he was to beg it of others, or sell his clothes from off his back to pay it. This shows the equality of the redeemed and ransomed of the Lord; for though some sins and sinners are greater than others, and some are redeemed from more sins than others, yet all sins being infinite, as committed against an infinite God, but one price is paid for all, and that is the precious blood of Christ, the Son of God, an infinite and divine Person; hence all the ransomed ones have the same faith, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life:

when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make atonement for your souls; which have sinned, are liable to death for it, are the more excellent part of men, and require a great price for the redemption and ransom of them; and hence it is so great a blessing to be ransomed, because it is the ransom of the soul: and such is the efficacy of Christ's ransom, that it is a full atonement for the souls of men, and their sins, and completely delivers from sin, Satan, the law, death, and hell.

{y} Hilchot Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 1.

Exodus 30:16

Ver. 16. And thou shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel,.... The half shekel, the ransom of their souls:

and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; for the building of the tabernacle, for the repairs of it, and for the sacrifices offered in it; particularly we find that this first collection this way was appropriated to the silver sockets of the sanctuary, and the vail, for the silver hooks, and for the pillars, Ex 38:27:

that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls; to put them in mind that they were sinners, that their lives were forfeited, that a ransom price was given and accepted of God, that hereby atonement, in a typical sense, was made for them; and this was before the Lord, as a token of their gratitude to him, and of their acknowledgment of the favour.

Exodus 30:17

Ver. 17. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Again, at another time, and upon another subject:

saying, as follows.

Exodus 30:18

Ver. 18. Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash [withal],.... For Aaron, and his sons, and the priests in succession, to wash at before their entrance on their ministry; and denotes in general the necessity of purity, in order to minister in the priestly office; and which was in its perfection in Christ, who being holy and harmless, was an high priest becoming us, and suitable to us, qualified to offer himself without spot to God, and to take away sin; of which purity his baptism in water might be a symbol, which he submitted to before he entered publicly on the execution of his office as a prophet and priest; and as this may respect the ministers of the Gospel, it shows that they should be pure and holy in their lives and conversations, and be examples in purity of conversation to others: and as this may chiefly respect all the saints who are priests unto God; it may be either typical of the laver of regeneration, in which grace, comparable to water, is given, and in which a clean heart is created; and which has an influence on purity of life and conversation, and secures from death: or rather of the blood of Christ, the laver and fountain to wash in for sin and uncleanness; which is large and capacious for all the priests of the Lord, and stands open and uncovered for all to come unto; and as this was made of brass, and that brass the looking glasses of the women, Ex 38:8 as it may respect the laver of regeneration, may denote the durableness of that grace, which is an immortal seed, a well of living water, springing up to everlasting life, and was a clear evidence of election of God, and redemption by Christ; and as it may be an emblem of the blood of Christ, it signifies the duration and continued virtue of that blood to cleanse from all sin; and that such who are washed in it, and cleansed by it, are not only beheld as clean and pure by the Lord, but in their own sight also, God having caused their iniquities to pass from them, and justified them from them by his blood:

and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar; that is, the altar of burnt offering, which was by the door of the tabernacle; and between that and the tabernacle or tent of the congregation stood the laver for the priests to wash in, just as they entered into the tabernacle, Ex 40:29 it stood inclining to one of the sides, as Aben Ezra says; a little on the south side, as Jarchi observes:

and thou shall put water therein; or order it to be put in for the use next mentioned.

Exodus 30:19

Ver. 19. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat. Not in it, but at it; the laver had mouths or spouts, as Ben Melech says, from whence the water flowed when the priests washed their hands and feet at it; and so Bartenora says {z} they did not wash out of the laver, but from water flowing out of it; it is said "out of it", not in it; it seems at first there were but two of these spouts; for it is said {a} Ben Katin made twelve spouts or cocks, which had but two before; so that twelve priests could wash their hands and feet at one time, and which they could do at once, presently, by putting the right hand on the top of the right foot, and the left hand upon the left foot, as both Jarchi and Ben Melech relate: and now the hands being the instruments of action, and the feet of walking, this shows that the actions of good men, the priests of the Lord, and their walk and conversation, are not without sin, and that these need washing in the laver of Christ's blood, to which there must be daily application, see Zec 13:1. Our Lord seems to have reference to this ceremony, Joh 13:10 the Egyptian priests washed twice every day in cold water, and twice every night {b}.

{z} In Misn. Zebachim, c. 2. sect. 1. {a} Misn. Yoma. c. 3. sect. 10. {b} Herodot. Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 37.

Exodus 30:20

Ver. 20. When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water,.... The laver standing near the door of the tabernacle, they washed at it as soon as they entered; and no man, we are told {c}, entered into the court before he washed, even though he was clean; though he had contracted no filthiness, and even though he had washed his hands and feet at home, he was obliged to do it when he went into the tabernacle, before he attempted to perform any service. This intimates to us the necessity as of pure hearts, so of pure hands, in order to compass the altar of God, to attend public worship, and particularly prayer, in which holy hands should be lifted up, **1Ti 2:8**:

that they die not: sin exposes to death, eternal death; that is the wages of it, and it is only the blood of Christ, and being washed in that, that can secure from it:

or when they come near to the altar to minister; to the altar of burnt offering to minister there, by laying on the wood and the pieces in order, and burning them on it, as follows:

to burn offering made by fire to the Lord; no man was fit for this service, or might be admitted to it, until he was washed; and it was usual among other nations to wash before they entered on religious service {d}; even in the East Indies, the priests do not sacrifice to their idols before they wash in water that is about the temple {e}; which seems to be a satanical imitation of this practice among the Jews.

{c} Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 3. {d} Vid. Outram de Sacrificiis, l. 1. c. 6. sect. 14. {e} Vartoman. Navigat. l. 5. c. 23.

Exodus 30:21

Ver. 21. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not,.... By the immediate hand of God, who would so greatly resent such a neglect of his command; and by how much easier it was to perform it, by so much the more were they inexcusable, and to be treated with greater severity; and this is repeated, that they might carefully observe it, lest they perish:

and it shall be a statute for ever to them, [even] to him and to his seed, throughout their generations; to be observed by Aaron and his descendants in all ages, as long as their priesthood lasted, until the Messiah should come, and wash all his people, his priests, with his own blood, from all their sins, **Re 1:5**.

Exodus 30:22

Ver. 22. Moreover, the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Some little time afterwards, while he was yet with him on the mount:

saying; as follows.

Exodus 30:23

Ver. 23. Take thou also unto thee principal spices,.... To make the anointing oil with, and are as follow:

of pure myrrh five hundred shekels; it is strange that Saadiah, and so Maimonides {f}, should take this for musk, which comes from a beast, and is confuted by Aben Ezra from **So 5:1** from whence it plainly appears to be what comes from a tree; and the word "mor", here used, gives the tree the name of myrrh almost in all languages. And it is justly mentioned first among the chief of spices; since, as Pliny {g} says, none is preferred unto the stacte or liquor that flows from it, that which is pure myrrh, unmixed, unadulterated; or "myrrh of freedom" {h}, which flows freely, either of itself, or, when cut, which is the best; and this was fitly used as a principal ingredient in the anointing oil, since oil was made out of it itself, called oil of myrrh, **Es 2:12** and as a shekel is generally supposed to weigh half an ounce, the quantity of this to be taken was two hundred and fifty ounces:

and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty [shekels]; or one hundred twenty five ounces: it is here called sweet cinnamon, to distinguish it from that which was not sweet; so Jarchi observes,

"there is one sort that has a good smell and taste, another that has not, but is as wood (common wood), therefore it was necessary to say sweet cinnamon."

So Pliny {i} speaks of two sorts of it, one whiter, and another blacker; sometimes the white is preferred, and sometimes the black is commended. The cinnamon tree grows in great plenty in the island of Zeilon in India (Ceylon or called Srilanka today, Editor), as Vartomanus {k} relates, who says it is not much unlike a bay tree, especially the leaves; it beareth berries as does the bay tree, but less and white; it is doubtless no other than the bark of a tree, and gathered in this manner; every third year they cut the branches of the tree--when it is first gathered it is not yet so sweet, but a month after, when it waxeth dry; and with this Pliny {l} agrees, who says it is not odorous while it is green. Pancirollus {m} reckons cinnamon among the things that are lost; and says, that we have no knowledge of the true cinnamon; and reports from Galen, that in his time it was so scarce, that it was rarely found but in the cabinets of emperors. Pliny {n} makes mention of it, as used in ointments:

and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty [shekels]; or one hundred and twenty five ounces; and this is called sweet, because there is a calamus that is not sweet, as Jarchi; this is the same with the sweet cane from a far country, **Jer 6:20** from India, as is generally thought; but rather perhaps from Sheba, or some part of Arabia; it must be nearer at hand than India, from whence the Israelites had these spices; and Moses is bid to take them, as if they were near indeed; and Pliny speaks of myrrh, and of sweet calamus, as growing in many places of Arabia, and of cinnamon in Syria {o}; and Dionysius Periegetes {p} mentions calamus along with frankincense, myrrh, and cassia, and calls it sweet smelling calamus; and so Strabo {q} speaks of cassia and cinnamon as in Arabia Felix; and Diodorus Siculus {r} makes mention of all these in Arabia, and of cassia that follows.

{f} Cele Hamikdash, c. 1. sect. 3. {g} Nat. Hist. l. 12, 15. {h} rwrd rm "myrrhae libertatis", Montanus, Vatablus; "myrrhae sponte fluentis", Tigurine version. {i} Ibid. c. 19. {k} Navigat. l. 6. c. 4. {l} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 12, 15.) {m} Rer. Memorab. sive Deperd. par. 1. tit. 9. p. 28. {n} Ib. l. 15. c. 7. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 15, 22, 28. {p} Orb. Descript. l. 937. {q} Geograph. l. 16. p. 538. {r} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 132.

Exodus 30:24

Ver. 24. And of cassia five hundred [shekels],.... Or two hundred and fifty ounces:

after the shekel of the sanctuary; according to the standard weight kept there. This "cassia" was not the "cassia solutiva", which is of a purgative nature, and now in use in physic, but the "cassia odorata", or the sweet smelling "cassia": which, Pancirollus {s} says, some take to be the nard, out of which a most sweet oil is pressed; and Servius {t} says, that cassia is an herb of a most sweet smell. Pliny {u} speaks of it along with cinnamon; and Galen says, when cinnamon was wanting, it was usual to put in its stead a double quantity of cassia {w}; Leo Africanus speaks of trees in Africa bearing cassia, and which chiefly grew in Egypt {x};

and of oil olive an hin; containing twelve logs: according to Godwin {y}, it was of our measure three quarts; but, as Bishop Cumberland has more exactly calculated it, it held a wine gallon, a quart, and a little more: this was the purest and best of oil, and most fit and proper to be a part of this holy anointing oil.

{s} Ut supra, (Rer. Memorab. sive Deperd. par. 1.) tit. 11. p. 30. {t} In Virgil. Bucol. Eclog. 2. {u} Ut supra, (Nat. Hist. l. 12.) c. 19. {w} Apud Dalechamp in Plin. ib. {x} Descriptio Africae, l. 9. p. 752. {y} Moses & Aaron, l. 6. c. 9.

Exodus 30:25

Ver. 25. And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment,.... All the above spices and oil being put together, an ointment was to be made out of them, not thick, as ointments usually are, but a liquid to be poured, and therefore called an "oil of ointment", and "holy", because devoted only to sacred uses:

an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: or confectioner; the spices bruised, and pounded, and mixed together, and boiled or distilled, and so an oil or ointment extracted from them:

it shall be an holy anointing oil; for the uses next mentioned: it signified the Holy Spirit of God, and his graces, that oil of gladness with which Christ and his people are anointed; and is that anointing which teacheth all things, see Ps 45:7 **1Jo 2:20** comparable to these several spices, and oil olive, for their sweet smell, cheering and reviving nature, and supplying quality, and for their valuableness and preciousness, and of which there was a certain weight and measure; for though Christ received this unction without measure, yet there is a certain measure of grace and gifts bestowed upon his people, and by which they are made holy and fit for their master's use.

Exodus 30:26

Ver. 26. And thou shall anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith,.... It cannot be thought the whole of it should be anointed all over, but only a part of it for the whole; and this was either typical of the human nature of Christ, the true tabernacle God pitched, and not man, and which was anointed with the Holy Ghost; or of the church and people of God, who are an holy tabernacle or temple of the Lord, and who receive the unction from the Holy One:

and the ark of the testimony; the chest where the law was, and stood in the most holy place of the tabernacle; and was a type of the Messiah, the anointed One, in whose heart the law was, and who is the fulfilling end of it for righteousness.

Exodus 30:27

Ver. 27. And the table, and all his vessels,.... The shewbread table, with all things appertaining to it, rings, staves, dishes, spoons, bowls, &c. all were anointed; which had respect to Christ, and the communion of his people with him, feeding on him, that food which endures for ever, whom God the Father has sealed and sanctified:

and the candlestick and his vessels; an emblem of the church, and of the light of the word held forth in it, which being accompanied with the grace of the Spirit of God, is the savour of life unto life:

and the altar of incense; on which the odours, the prayers of the saints, come up before God through the mediation of Christ.

Exodus 30:28

Ver. 28. And the altar of burnt offering, with all its vessels,.... Pans, shovels, basins, &c. and this altar particularly was sprinkled with it seven times, **Le 8:10**:

and the laver, and his foot; the laver of brass for the priests to wash their hands and feet in, and the foot or base of it on which it stood, see Ex 30:18.

Exodus 30:29

Ver. 29. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy,.... By anointing them, and so be set apart for sacred uses only; as by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the people of God, the vessels of mercy, are really sanctified, and made meet for the master's use; and therefore it is called the sanctification of the Spirit, which is true holiness, in opposition to typical or ceremonial holiness, here intended; and if this holy anointing oil made those things most holy that were anointed with it, how much more must the grace of the Spirit those who partake of it; and though it is at present imperfect, it will be perfected, and become complete holiness, without which no man can see the Lord:

whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy; as is said of the most holy altar, See Gill on "Ex 29:37". The Targum of Jonathan interprets it of persons that approach these holy places, and things so anointed and sanctified, paraphrasing the words thus;

"whosoever cometh unto them of the priests shall be holy, but of the rest of the tribes shall be burnt with flaming fire before the Lord."

Exodus 30:30

Ver. 30. And thou shall anoint Aaron and his sons,.... Them alone, and not others, as Aben Ezra, who were typical of Christ anointed with the Spirit of God without measure, to his various offices of prophet, priest and King; and also of all the saints, who are anointed priests to God, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ:

and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office; by anointing them, and by other rites mentioned in the preceding chapter; whereby they were set apart for that office, and were qualified for it, and had authority to exercise it.

Exodus 30:31

Ver. 31. And thou shall speak unto the children of Israel,.... When he was come down from the mount, and gave the instructions about the making and using of this oil:

saying, this shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations; Abarbinel, and other Jewish writers, conclude from hence, that this same oil, which was made by Moses, lasted throughout the generations to the times of Josiah, when it was hid with other things; but this, notion is justly exploded by Aben Ezra; it is not probable, that so small a quantity that was now made, which is supposed by some to be no more than a gallon and a half of wine measure, should suffice so long: it does not seem to be more than what was sufficient for present use; for the anointing of so many persons, and things as were anointed, and much less to be sufficient for the anointing of priests and kings in after times, until that period. This cannot be supposed without a miraculous interposition, to which the Talmudists {z} fly, and observe, that there were many miracles in this affair; but there is no need to have recourse to them, since, for aught that is said, it might be made again in like manner for sacred uses, which is meant by the phrase "unto me"; though it might not be made for any other use, private or profane.

{z} Massachet Cerithot, fol. 5. 2. & Horayot, fol. 11. 2.

Exodus 30:32

Ver. 32. Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured,.... That is, not upon common men, or on men's flesh in common, as was usual at feasts and entertainments in the eastern countries, see Ps 23:5 but this was not to be used on such occasions, otherwise it was poured on the flesh of some men, as Aaron and his sons, on whose head it was poured and ran down to the beard:

neither shall ye make [any other] like it, after the composition of it; for private uses:

it [is] holy, [and] it shall be holy unto you; it was set apart for sacred use by the Lord, and so it was to be reckoned by them, and not to be used in any way, or for any other purpose than he had directed: all which shows, that the grace of the Spirit belongs to the Lord's people, his priests; other men are carnal, and have no lot or part in this matter, and are not to be admitted to holy ordinances, as if they were holy persons; nor is fellowship in holy things to be allowed them; nor is counterfeit grace of any avail, which, though it may bear a likeness to true grace, is not that, nor to be so accounted, nor rested on, as feigned faith, the hypocrite's hope, dissembled love, and pretended humility.

Exodus 30:33

Ver. 33. Whosoever compoundeth any like it,.... For his own use, or for any other than what God appointed it for: or

whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger; meaning not a Gentile, an alien from the commonwealth of israel; though Japhet interprets it of such a stranger who was not of the children of Israel; this Aben Ezra says is not right, but he says it means one that is not of the seed of Aaron; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"upon a profane person (or a common person, a laic) that is not of the sons of Aaron:"

though the kings of Israel seem to be an exception to this, which might be by a special order from the Lord; yet it is a question whether it was with this, or with common oil, that they were anointed: indeed, the oil with which Solomon was anointed was taken out of the tabernacle, **1Ki 1:39**

shall even be cut off from his people; either by death, by the immediate hand of God inflicting some disease upon him, or by excommunication from the congregation of Israel, or by not favouring him with any posterity, to keep up his name in the nation.

Exodus 30:34

Ver. 34. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... In a continued discourse, or some time after the former, though more probably at the same time; since it concerns the incense to be offered on the altar of incense, about which directions are given in the former part of the chapter:

take unto thee sweet spices: which are as follow, "stacte", "onycha", and "galbanum"; the former of these has its name from dropping; and of the same signification is the Hebrew word "Nataph", here used. Pancirollus says {a}, myrrh is a drop or tear distilling from a tree in Arabia Felix; and stacte is a drop of myrrh, which is extracted from it, and yields a most precious liquor:

and so Pliny {b} relates, that myrrh trees sweat out of their own accord, before they are cut, what is called stacte, to which nothing is preferable: though some naturalists, as Theophrastus and Dioscorides {c} speak of this as flowing from it when it is cut; however, all agree it is a liquor that drops from myrrh; though the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem interpret it "balsam" or "rosin"; as does Jarchi on the place, and Maimonides {d}: the second of these, "onycha", has its name from being of the colour of a man's nail, as the onyx stone is, and is the same with the "unguis odorata" or "blatta byzantia". Jarchi says it is the root of a spice, smooth and shining like a man's nail. It is by some

"understood of "laudanum" or "balellium"; but the greatest part of commentators explain it by the "onyx", or the odoriferous shell, which is a shell like to that of the shell fish called "purpura": the onyx is fished for in watery places of the Indies, where grows the "spica nardi", which is the food of this fish, and what makes its shell so aromatic: they go to gather these shells when the heat has dried up the marshes. The best onyx is found in the Red sea, and is white and large, the Babylonian is black and smaller; this is what Dioscorides says of it {e}."

And the best being found in the Red sea, it may be reasonably supposed it was what Moses was bid to take. In all India, it is the principal thing in all perfumes, as the aloe is in pills {f}; the Targum of Jonathan interprets it by "costus"; and the Jerusalem Targum by spike of myrrh, meaning perhaps spikenard. The last of these, "galbanum", what now goes by that name, is of a very ill smell, and therefore cannot be thought to be one of these sweet spices; but another is meant, and which, by its name "Chelbanah", was of a fat and unctuous nature; though Jarchi says, galbanum, whose smell is ill, is put among the spices; and Maimonides {g} and Kimchi {h} describe it like black honey, and of an offensive smell; but it must be something odoriferous, and therefore most likely to be the galbanum Pliny {i} speaks of as growing on Mount Areanus in Syria, which he mentions along with several sorts of balsams, and as a sort of frankincense; and the Vulgate Latin version, to distinguish it, calls it "galbanum" of a "good smell":

[these] sweet spices with pure frankincense; for which Sabaea in Arabia Felix was very famous, and was called the thuriferous country, as Pliny {k} says; who observes that there were in it two times of gathering the frankincense, the one in autumn, that which was white, and the purest, the other in the spring, which was reddish, and not to be compared with the former:

of each shall there be a like weight; just as much of one as of the other: in the

Hebrew text it is, "alone by alone"; and the sense may be, that each spice was beaten alone, and after that mixed, as Aben Ezra, or weighed alone, and then put together.

{a} Rer. Memorab. & Deperd. par. 1. tit. 12. p. 32. {b} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 15. {c} Apud Dalechamp. in Plin. ib. {d} Cele Hamikdash, c. 2. sect. 4. {e} Calmet's Dictionary on the word "Onycha". {f} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 243. {g} Cele Hamikdash, c. 2. sect. 4. {h} Sepher Shorash. Rad. blx. {i} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 15. {k} Ib. c. 14.

Exodus 30:35

Ver. 35. And thou shalt make it a perfume,.... By mixing the above spices together:

a confection after the art of the apothecary; in the manner they beat, compound, and mix several ingredients together:

tempered together; or "salted" {l}, with salt of Sodom, as Aben Ezra interprets it; and Maimonides {m} says, there was a fourth part of a kab of salt of Sodom put into it: and whether this incense or perfume respects the intercession of Christ or the prayers of his people, they are both savoury and acceptable to God, the latter on account of the former; in all sacrifices salt was used, and every spiritual sacrifice of ours should be seasoned with grace:

pure and holy; such should be the prayers of the saints, and such most certainly is the mediation of Christ, which is his much incense.

{l} xlmm "salitum", Montanus, Drusius. Junius & Tremellius, & Piscator. {m} Cele Hamikdash, c. 2. sect. 3.

Exodus 30:36

Ver. 36. And thou shall beat some of it very small,.... Or every one of the spices; for this does not seem to respect any different usage of some part of the incense from the rest; but it was all to be beat very small, that it might mix together the better, and be easier spread upon the coals, and the smoke thereof go up the sooner:

and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation; that is, upon the altar of incense, which was placed there, Ex 30:6 and here it was to be put in order to be burnt, not to be kept, either to be looked at, or smelled to:

where I will meet with thee; See Gill on "Ex 30:6"

it shall be unto you most holy; reckoned by them most sacred, and not to be put to any private or profane uses.

Exodus 30:37

Ver. 37. And [as] for the perfume which thou shalt make,.... As above directed:

ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof; that is, for their own use, for the scenting of their rooms, or to snuff up, or smell to, as in the next verse:

it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord; separated entirely for his service, to be burned upon his altar, and to be no otherwise used.

Exodus 30:38

Ver. 38. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto,.... A man might make a perfume of the same ingredients, and of the same weight, and exactly like it, but not to burn for his own delight and pleasure; but if he made it and sold it to the congregation, as Jarchi observes, he was not guilty; but if it was for his own private use and pleasure, then he

shall even be cut off from his people; See Gill on "Ex 30:33".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 31:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 31

In this chapter an account is given of the persons whom God had chosen, and qualified for the work of building the tabernacle, and all things relating to it, and for the direction and oversight thereof,

Ex 31:1 and an enumeration is made of the several things that were to be wrought, some in one way, some in another, Ex 31:7 the law of the sabbath is repeated, and the violation of it made death,
Ex 31:12 and the chapter is concluded with observing, that at the close of the above orders, two tables of stone, with the law written upon them by the finger of God, were given to Moses,
Ex 31:18.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... After the Lord had given Moses instructions about building a tabernacle, the model of which he had shown him, and what should be the furniture of it, who should minister in it, and what clothes they should wear, he acquaints him that he had provided artificers for this service; which would prevent doubts and objections that might rise up in the mind of Moses, how and by whom all this should be done; since the children of Israel had not been brought up, nor used to any curious work in Egypt, out of which they were but just come:

saying; as follows:

Exodus 31:2

Ver. 2. See, I have called by name Bezaleel,.... Had pitched upon, chosen, and distinguished him particularly from all other men to be the architect or chief master builder of the tabernacle, and to be the director and overseer of the whole work relating to it: the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it,

""I have called with a good name Bezaleel";"

as if respect was to be had to his name Bezaleel, as given him by God, and very expressive and significant; whereas the phrase of calling "by name" does not signify the imposing of a name upon him, but the singular and personal choice of him to an office: indeed, his name Bezaleel is very significant, and may be rendered, "in the shadow of God"; and he was under the shadow, influence, and protection of the Lord, and was called to be concerned in making those things, which were shadows of good things to come; and he may be considered in all as a type of Christ, who is the chief and master builder of his church, has the care and oversight of it, and under whom others work; for except he built the house, they labour in vain that build it; he was called by name, or eminently chosen to this work, he took not this honour to himself, but was called of God, as Bezaleel was, and was hid and abode under the shadow of the Almighty all the while he was concerned in it, see Ps 91:1

the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; Bezaleel's father's name was Uri, which signifies, "my light"; and his grandfather's name Hur, which has the signification of liberty or freedom; the same that Moses left with Aaron to judge the people of Israel during his stay in the mount, and is thought to have been the husband of Miriam; so that his grandfather being living, he may be supposed to be but a young man: the Jews say {n} he was but thirteen years of age when he was employed in this service, but that is not probable; though indeed his antitype, when but twelve years of age, said, "wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" his Father, whom he calls Uri, my light, Ps 27:1 he being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and is the Son of God that makes men free, and they are free indeed; and of whom it is evident that he sprung out of the tribe of Judah, a tribe greatly honoured of God.

{n} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 6. 2.

Exodus 31:3

Ver. 3. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God,.... Not with the special graces of the Spirit, or with spiritual gifts fitting for spiritual service in the knowledge of spiritual things, and the instruction of men in them, though, no doubt, he might have them; but with the gifts of ingenuity and skill in manual arts, and mechanical operations, as follows:

in wisdom, and in understanding, and in all manner of workmanship; these explain what is meant by the Spirit of God he was filled with; namely, with a sufficient measure of natural wisdom, knowledge, and understanding in all sorts of workmanship hereafter mentioned, to qualify him for his office as a director therein; that is, he had such a share of knowledge of what was to be wrought, such wisdom and understanding in the ingenious and curious manner of working them, that though he did not work with his own hands, yet could teach, guide, and direct others how to do them: and this was not an ordinary but an extraordinary gift of knowledge of these things; nor was it owing to a fruitful invention, nor to long study and contrivance; but it was by the immediate inspiration of the Spirit of God, which was necessary at this time, the Israelites being now in a general state of ignorance of all ingenious arts and sciences, having lived so many years in a state of servitude, and scarce knew anything but making of bricks: and it may be observed, that God never calls any to any work or service of his but he qualifies for it: in all this Bezaleel was a type of Christ, who was filled with the Holy Spirit without measure; and on whom rested the spirit of wisdom and of counsel, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and who, as God's righteous and faithful servant as Mediator, dealt wisely and prudently in all his administrations.

Exodus 31:4

Ver. 4. To devise cunning works,.... To invent, contrive, and draw patterns, for the weavers particularly, for the making of the curtains of the tabernacle, the vail of the most holy place, the ephod, and the curious girdle of it, which were made of cunning work, curiously wrought by the weaver; and so Jarchi interprets this of the weaving of the work of Chosheb, or cunning work, of the devising of cunning works, or of the knowledge of witty inventions, by Wisdom or the Messiah, see **Pr 8:12**

to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass; for it is not to be supposed there were either goldsmiths or brasiers among the Israelites; only masons and bricklayers, and brickmakers, and such sort of manufacturers; so that Bezaleel had need of immediate wisdom from the Spirit of God, not only to devise curious works in these several things as in others, but to teach men how to work in them, what tools to work with, and how to use them, how to melt these several metals, and into what forms and shapes to put them, and then to polish them; as there were some things in the temple to be made of gold, as the candlestick, others of silver, as the sockets of the tabernacle, and others of brass, as the altar of burnt offering, and its vessels, with other things.

Exodus 31:5

Ver. 5. And in cutting of stones to set them,.... Not of marble stones, or of any common stones used in building, and the cutting and hewing of them to be laid therein, for of those there was no use in the tabernacle; but of precious stones, and the cutting of them, and setting of them in their ouches or enclosures, as the onyx stones on the shoulders of the high priest, and the twelve precious stones in his breastplate: Bezaleel was taught by the Spirit of God the art of jewelling, and instructed others in it:

and in carving of timber; or rather, "in cutting timber" {o}; for it is the same word as before, for we have no account of any carved work in the tabernacle; and therefore this must design the work of carpenters and joiners in cutting the shittim wood, making planks and boards of it, and of them the sides of the tabernacle, jointed into sockets; the ark of the testimony, the shewbread table, and altar of incense, which were of timber, and the workmanship of such persons:

to work in all manner of workmanship; in all other manufactories; as spinning, weaving, embroidery, dying various colours, compounding ointment, perfume, &c.

{o} Ue tvrhb "in fabrefactione ligni", Montanus; so Tigurine version.

Exodus 31:6

Ver. 6. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan,.... To be a partner with him, and to assist in the direction and oversight of the work of the tabernacle; which was done that there might appear to be a sufficiency in the direction, and that too much honour might not be given to one tribe; and it is observable, that as Solomon of the tribe of Judah was the builder of the temple, one of the tribe of Dan also was a principal artificer in it, **2Ch 2:14** and it is no unusual thing for two persons to be joined together in matters of moment and importance, as Moses and Aaron, who were sent to Pharaoh for Israel's dismission out of the land of Egypt; the apostles of Christ, and seventy disciples, who were sent out two by two; the two witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, the two anointed ones standing before the Lord of the whole earth; and Joshua and Zerubbabel in the rebuilding of the temple: nor is it unusual for both such persons to be types of Christ, as Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Zerubbabel, were; and here Bezaleel, as before, and now Aholiab, whose name signifies "the Father's tent" or "tabernacle"; he being concerned in the oversight of the tabernacle of God and the building of it, and his father's name Ahisamach, according to Hillerus {p}, signifies, "one supports", i.e. God; and may be a figure of Christ, whose human nature is the true tabernacle God pitched, and not man, and who, as Mediator, is Jehovah's servant, whom he upholds:

and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted; men of ingenuity, that had good natural parts and abilities, and minds disposed to curious works, and able to perform them, under the guidance and direction of others:

I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee; in the preceding chapters; these persons were to work under Bezaleel and Aholiab, and to do as they were ordered and directed by them; and having good natural abilities, mechanical heads and hearts, and divine wisdom in a large measure communicated to them, they were greatly qualified for the service of the tabernacle, and making all things appertaining to it: thus Christ, the architect and master builder of his church, has wise builders under him, that work in his house, being qualified with the gifts and graces of his Spirit from him, see **Zec 6:12**.

{p} Onomast. Sacr. p. 735.

Exodus 31:7

Ver. 7. The tabernacle of the congregation,.... That is, they had wisdom given to make that according to the pattern showed to Moses, and under the direction of the two above persons, to whom Moses communicated it; and from henceforward, in this and some following verses, mention is made of the various things wrought by these subordinate workmen; first the house, and then the furniture of it, as follows:

and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle; of that part of it called the holy of holies; the furniture of which was only the ark, the mercy seat over that, and the cherubim overshadowing that, where was the seat of the divine Majesty; this was properly his apartment, see
Ex 25:10.

Exodus 31:8

Ver. 8. And the table and his furniture,.... The shewbread table, with its dishes, spoons, and bowls, Ex 25:23

and the pure candlestick with all his furniture; called "pure", because made of pure gold, and was to be kept pure and clean by the priests, and in which pure oil olive was burnt, and gave a clear light; its furniture were its lamps, tongs, and snuff dishes, Ex 25:31

and the altar of incense: made of shittim wood covered with gold,

Ex 30:1.

Exodus 31:9

Ver. 9. And the altar of burnt offering with all his furniture,.... Which was made of shittim wood covered with brass; its furniture were its pans, shovels, basins, &c. Ex 27:1

and the laver and his foot; for the priests to wash their hands and feet at, Ex 30:18.

Exodus 31:10

Ver. 10. And the clothes of service,.... Either those the priests ministered in in the time of service, and which they never wore but when in it, and so might with propriety be so called, and what they were the following words explain; or else these were clothes of blue, purple, and scarlet, and coverings of badgers' skins, in which the ark, the shewbread table, the candlestick, and the golden altar, and other instruments of the tabernacle were wrapped, as Aben Ezra observes, when the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness, see **Nu 4:5**

and the holy garments for Aaron the priest; the breastplate, ephod, and robe, the broidered coat, mitre, and girdle, Ex 28:4

and the garments of his sons to minister in the priest's office; the bonnets, coats, girdles, and breeches, Ex 28:40.

Exodus 31:11

Ver. 11. And the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy place,.... Of the composition of both which, see Ex 30:23

according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do: not only make all the said things, but make them exactly according to the form and pattern given to Moses, communicated to Bezaleel and Aholiab, whose business it was to see that all things were done by the workmen agreeably to it.

Exodus 31:12

Ver. 12. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... After he had described to him the place of worship, and appointed the priests that should minister in it, and ordered the making of all things appertaining to it, and the workmen that should be concerned therein, he repeats the law of the sabbath, and puts in mind of the time of worship:

saying: as follows.

Exodus 31:13

Ver. 13. Speak thou also unto the children of Israel,.... Notwithstanding all that has been said and ordered concerning making the tabernacle and all things belonging to it; yet this was not to be understood to the violation of the sabbath, or the neglect of that, in which no work was to be done, no, not any relating to the tabernacle and the vessels of it; and though that was to be made, and everything belonging to it, as soon as possible, yet the sabbath was to be observed, and not broken on that account; and this the people of Israel were told of,

saying; verily, or "nevertheless" {q},

my sabbaths ye shall keep not sabbaths of years, as the seventh year and the fiftieth year, but of weeks, expressed by the plural number, because there are many of them in course throughout the year, no less than fifty two; and so the apostle uses the same number, **Col 2:16** and so do Heathen writers {r}:

for it is a sign between me and you, throughout your generations; a token of the covenant between them, of his being their God and they his people in a peculiar sense; seeing they observed the same day as a day of rest now, on which he had rested at the finishing of the works of creation, which other nations of the world did not observe; of his sanctifying and separating them from all other people; for this was not a sign between him and other nations, but between him and the people of Israel only; and was to be observed throughout their ages, as long as their civil and church state lasted, but not through others:

that [ye] may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you; had separated and distinguished them from the rest of the nations of the world; but if this law had been given to all nations, it could not have been a distinguishing sign of them from others; nor could it be known hereby that God had separated them to himself above all people; and this was done that it might be known, not only by them, for the word "ye" is not in the text, but by others, the nations of the world, as Jarchi; that they were a distinct people, having distinct laws from all others, and particularly this.

{q} Ka "veruntamen", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Fagius, Vatablus, Drusius, Cartwright, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {r} "Metuentem sabbata" Juvenal. Satyr. 14.

Exodus 31:14

Ver. 14. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore,.... Strictly observe it, according to the rules given concerning it:

for it is holy unto you; a day that was set apart of God for holy exercises, peculiarly on their account:

everyone that defileth it; by doing any servile work upon it, or not observing it in a religious way;

shall surely be put to death; by the hand of the civil magistrate; if the law of the Jewish sabbath is now in force, the sanction continues, and the violation of it ought to be punished by a judge with death:

for whosoever doeth any work therein; so much as to kindle a fire, and dress any food, by boiling or roasting, or any other way:

that soul shall be cut off from among his people; that is, shall die by the hand of the civil magistrate, it being but another phrase for being put to death; though the Jewish writers, particularly Jarchi, understand the former phrase, "put to death", as to be done by a civil magistrate, when there are witnesses and full proof of the case; but this of "cutting off" by the hand of God, by immediate punishment from heaven, when it was done secretly, and there was no proof to be made of it.

Exodus 31:15

Ver. 15. Six days may work be done;.... Allowed to be done by an Israelite, if he would; for this is not a command to work, but a permission or grant to do it; and therefore, seeing they had so many days granted them for their use, it could not be thought hard and unreasonable that God should claim one day in seven for his own use and service, and oblige them to refrain from work on it:

but in the seventh [is] the sabbath of rest; from worldly labour, and was typical of spiritual rest here, and eternal rest hereafter:

holy to the Lord; separated from other days, and entirely devoted to the worship and service of God, and to be kept holy to the Lord in all holy and religious exercises, as hearing and reading the word, praying, praising, &c.

whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, [he] shall surely be put to death; the Targum of Jonathan adds, by casting stones, and so we find that the first transgressor of this law we read of was stoned to death, Nu 15:35.

Exodus 31:16

Ver. 16. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath,.... On whom the sabbath of the seventh day was only enjoined, as well as that of the seventh and of the fiftieth years, being all ceremonial and shadowy:

to observe the sabbath throughout their generations; so long as the Mosaic dispensation lasted, and their civil polity and church state continued, even until the Messiah came, when all those Jewish shadows, rites, and ceremonies, fled away and disappeared,

for a perpetual covenant; just in the same sense as circumcision was, Ge 17:13.

Exodus 31:17

Ver. 17. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever,.... In like sense as the land of Canaan was given them for an everlasting possession; and the covenant of circumcision, and the ordinance of the passover, and the fast on the day of atonement, were for ever; that is, unto the end of the Jewish world and state, at the coming of Christ, when a new world and state of things began, see
Ge 17:8

for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed; which is to be understood figuratively after the manner of men, who ceasing from toil and labour find rest and refreshment; but not really and properly, for as not labour, and weariness, and fatigue, so neither rest nor refreshment can be properly said of God; but this denotes his cessation from the works of creation, though not of providence, and of the delight and pleasure he takes in a view of them; this is observed, not as the foundation of this law, and the reason of its being made, but as an illustration of it, and as an argument, showing the reasonableness of it, and the similarity of it with what God himself had done, and therefore the enjoining of it could not reasonably be objected to.
See Gill on "Ex 20:11".

Exodus 31:18

Ver. 18. And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him on Mount Sinai,.... After all those laws, orders, and instructions before related, which having done, he ceased to converse with him any longer in that manner he had, and at parting gave him

two tables of testimony; the two tables of the law, which is a testimony of the will of God, and contained the duty of the Israelites both towards God and man, and are reducible to these two, love to God, and love to our neighbour: five of the commands of the decalogue were written on one table, and five on the other; or it may be rather four on one table, the first being the largest, and containing the duty owing to God, and six on the other, which regard the duty of men one to another; so Orpheus the Heathen poet, speaking of the law of Moses, calls it diplaka yesmon {s}. "Tables of stone"; the Targum of Jonathan will have them to be of the sapphire stone, from the throne of glory; the paraphrast seems to have respect to Ex 24:10 and, with as little appearance of truth, says their weight was forty seahs; it is more probable they were of marble stone, of which there were great quantities in Mount Sinai. Dr. Shaw says {t} that part of Mount Sinai, which lies to the westward of the plain of Rephidim, consists of a hard reddish marble like "porphyry", but is distinguished from it by the representations of little trees and bushes, which are dispersed all over it. The naturalists call this sort of marble "embuscatum", or "bushy marble"; some think Sinai had its name from thence {u}. This may denote the firmness, stability, and duration of the law, not as in the hands of Moses, from which these tables were cast and broke, but as in the hands of

Christ, and laid up in him the ark of the covenant, the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness: and it may also figure the hardness of man's heart, which is destitute of spiritual life, obdurate and impenitent, stupid, senseless and ignorant, stubborn and inflexible, and not subject to the law of God, and on which no impressions can be made but by the power and grace of God:

written with the finger of God: by God himself, and not by an angel, or by any creature or instrument: and it is by the finger of God, the Spirit, grace, and power of God, that the laws of God are put into the inward part, and written on the heart, to which the apostle refers, **2Co 3:3**. This account is given by way of transition to what is recorded in the next chapter.

{s} De Deo, "prope finem". {t} Travels, p. 443. {u} See Buxtorf. in voce hno.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 32:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 32

This chapter gives an account of the idolatry of the Israelites making and worshipping a golden calf, Ex 32:1 the information of it God gave to Moses, bidding him at the same time not to make any suit in their favour, that he might consume them, and make a large nation out Moses's family, Ex 32:7 the intercession of Moses for them, in which he succeeded, Ex 32:11 his descent from the mount with the two tables in his hands, accompanied by Joshua, when he was an eyewitness of their idolatry, which raised his indignation, that he cast the two tables out of his hands and broke them, took the calf and burnt it, and ground it to powder, and made the children of Israel drink of it, Ex 32:15 the examination of Aaron about the fact, who excused himself, Ex 32:21 the orders given to the Levites, who joined themselves to Moses, to slay every man his brother, which they did to the number of 3000 men, Ex 32:25 another intercession for them by Moses, which gained a respite of them for a time, for they are threatened to be visited still for their sin, and they were plagued for it, Ex 32:30.

Ver. 1. And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount,.... The time, according to the Targum of Jonathan, being elapsed, which he had fixed for his descent, and through a misreckoning, as Jarchi suggests; they taking the day of his going up to be one of the forty days, at the end of which he was to return, whereas he meant forty complete days; but it is not probable that Moses knew himself how long he should stay, and much less that he acquainted them before hand of it; but he staying longer than they supposed he would, they grew uneasy and impatient, and wanted to set out in their journey to Canaan, and to have some symbol and representation of deity to go before them:

the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron; who with Hur was left to judge them in the absence of Moses: it was very likely that they had had conferences with him before upon this head, but now they got together in a tumultuous manner, and determined to carry their point against all that he should say to the contrary:

and said unto him, up; put us off no longer, make no more delay, but arise at once, and set about what has been once and again advised to and importuned:

make us gods which shall go before us; not that they were so very stupid to think, that anything that could be made with hands was really God, or even could have life and breath, and the power of self-motion, or of walking before them; but that something should be made as a symbol and representation of the divine Being, carried before them; for as for the cloud which had hitherto gone before them, from their coming out of Egypt, that had not moved from its place for forty days or more, and seemed to them to be fixed on the mount, and would not depart from it; and therefore they wanted something in the room of it as a token of the divine Presence with them:

for [as for] this Moses; of whom they speak with great contempt, though he had been the deliverer of them, and had wrought so many miracles in their favour, and had been the instrument of so much good unto them:

the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt; this they own, but do not seem to be very thankful for it:

we wot not what is become of him; they could scarcely believe that he was alive, that it was possible to live so long a time without eating and drinking; or they supposed he was burnt on the mount of flaming fire from before the Lord, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it.

Exodus 32:2

Ver. 2. And Aaron said unto them,.... Perceiving that they were not to be dissuaded from their evil counsel, and diverted from their purpose, but were determined at all events to have an image made to represent God unto them in a visible manner:

break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters; these were some of the jewels in gold they had borrowed of the Egyptians; and it seems that, in those times and countries, men, as well as women, used to wear earrings, and so Pliny {w} says, in the eastern countries men used to wear gold in their ears; and this may be confirmed from the instance of the Ishmaelites and Midianites, **Jud 8:24**. Aaron did not ask the men for theirs, but for those of their wives and children; it may be, because he might suppose they were more fond of them, and would not so easily part with them, hoping by this means to have put them off of their design:

and bring [them] unto me; to make a god of, as they desired, that is, the representation of one.

{w} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 37.

Exodus 32:3

Ver. 3. And all the people brake off the golden earrings, which were in their ears,.... The men took off their earrings, and persuaded their wives and children, or obliged them to part with theirs; though the Targum of Jonathan says the women refused to give their ornaments to their husbands, therefore all the people immediately broke off all the golden ornaments which were in their ears {x}, so intent were they upon idolatry. This is to be understood not of every individual, but of the greatest part of the people; so apostle explains it of some of them, 1Co 10:7. Idolaters spare no cost nor pains to support their worship, and will strip themselves, their wives, and children, of their ornaments, to deck their idols; which may shame the worshippers of the true God, who are oftentimes too backward to contribute towards the maintenance of his worship and service:

and brought [them] unto Aaron: presently, the selfsame day; they soon forgot the commands enjoined them to have no other gods, save one, and to make no graven image to bow down to it, and their own words,
Ex 24:7.

{x} So Pirke Eliezer, c. 45.

Exodus 32:4

Ver. 4. And he received [them] at their hand,.... For the use they delivered them to him:

and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf; that is, after he had melted the gold, and cast it into a mould, which gave it the figure of a calf, and with his tool wrought it into a more agreeable form, he took off the roughness of it, and polished it; or if it was in imitation of the Egyptian Apis or Osiris, he might with his graving tool engrave such marks and figures as were upon that; to cause the greater resemblance, so Selden {y} thinks; see Gill "Jer 46:20" or else the sense may be, that he drew the figure of a calf with his tool, or made it in "a mould" {z}, into which he poured in the melted gold,

and made it a molten calf; the Targum of Jonathan gives another sense of the former clause, "he bound it up in a napkin"; in a linen cloth or bag, i.e. the gold of the ear rings, and then put it into the melting pot, and so cast it into a mould, and made a calf of it. Jarchi takes notice of this sense, and it is espoused by Bochart {a}, who produces two passages of Scripture for the confirmation of it, **Jud 8:24** and illustrates it by Isa 46:6. What inclined Aaron to make it in the form of a calf, is not easy to say; whether in imitation of the cherubim, one of the faces of which was that of an ox, as Moncaeus thought; or whether in imitation of the Osiris of the Egyptians, who was worshipped in a living ox, and sometimes in the image of one, even a golden one. Plutarch is express for it, and says {b}, that the ox was an image of Osiris, and that it was a golden one; and so says Philo the Jew {c}, the Israelites, emulous of Egyptian figments, made a golden ox; or whether he did this to make them ashamed of their idolatry, thinking they would never be guilty of worshipping the form of an ox eating grass, or because an ox was an emblem of power and majesty:

and they said, these be thy gods, O Israel, [which brought] thee up out of the land of Egypt; they own they were, brought up out of that land by the divine Being; and they could not be so stupid as to believe, that this calf, which was only a mass of gold, figured and decorated, was inanimate, had no life nor breath, and was just made, after their coming out of Egypt, was what brought them from hence; but that this was a representation of God, who had done this for them; yet some Jewish writers are so foolish as to suppose, that through art it had the breath of life in it, and came out of the mould a living calf, Satan, or Samael, entering into it, and lowed in it {d}.

{y} De Diis Syris Syntagm. 1. c. 4. p. 138. {z} jrxb wta ruyw "formavit illud modulo", Piscator; so some in Ben Melech, and in Vatablus; and so the Vulgate Latin, "formant opere fusorio"; see Fagius in loc. {a} Hierozoic. p. 1. l. 2. c. 39. col. 334, 335. {b} De Isid. & Osir. {c} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 677. {d} Pirke Eliezer, c. 45.

Exodus 32:5

Ver. 5. And when Aaron saw it,.... In what form it was, and what a figure it made, and how acceptable it was to the Israelites. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it,

"and Aaron saw Hur slain before him;"

for reproving them for their idolatry, as the Midrash {e}, quoted by Jarchi, says: and Aaron fearing they would take away his life if he opposed them,

he built an altar before it; that sacrifice might be offered on it to it:

and Aaron made proclamation, and said, tomorrow [is] a feast to the Lord; that is, he gave orders to have it published throughout the camp, there would be solemn sacrifices offered up to the Lord, as represented by this calf, and a feast thereon, which was a public invitation of them to the solemnity: though some think this was a protracting time, and putting the people off till the morrow, who would have been for offering sacrifice immediately, hoping that Moses would come down from the mount before that time, and prevent their idolatry.

{e} So Pirke Eliezer, c. 45.

Exodus 32:6

Ver. 6. And they rose up early in the morning,.... Being eager of, and intent upon their idol worship:

and offered burnt offerings; upon the altar Aaron had made, where they were wholly consumed:

and brought peace offerings: which were to make a feast to the Lord, and of which they partook:

and the people sat down to eat and to drink; as at a feast:

and rose up to play; to dance and sing, as was wont to be done by the Egyptians in the worship of their Apis or Ox; and Philo the Jew says {f}, of the Israelites, that having made a golden ox, in imitation of the Egyptian Typho, he should have said Osiris, for Typho was hated by the Egyptians, being the enemy of Osiris; they sung and danced: the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem interpret it of idolatry; some understand this of their lewdness and uncleanness, committing fornication as in the worship of Peor, taking the word in the same sense as used by Potiphar's wife, Ge 39:14.

{f} Ut supra, (De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 677.) & de Temulentia, p. 254.

Exodus 32:7

Ver. 7. And the Lord said unto Moses, go, get thee down,.... In **De 9:12** it is added, "quickly", and so the Septuagint version here: this was said after the Lord had finished his discourse with him, and had given him the two tables of stone, and he was about to depart, but the above affair happening he hastens his departure; indeed the idolatry began the day before, and he could have acquainted him with it, if it had been his pleasure, but he suffered the people to go the greatest length before a stop was put to their impiety:

for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves; their works, as the Targum of Jonathan supplies it, their ways and their manners; their minds, the imaginations of their hearts, were first corrupted, and this led on to a corruption of actions, by which they corrupted and defiled themselves yet more and more, and made themselves abominable in the sight of God, as corrupt persons and things must needs be; and what can be a greater corruption and abomination than idolatry? the Lord calls these people not his people, being displeased with them, though they had been, and were, and still continued; for, notwithstanding this idolatry, he did not cast them off from being his people, or write a "Loammi" on them; but he calls them Moses's people, as having broken the law delivered to them by him, they had promised to obey, and so were liable to the condemnation and curse of it; and because they had been committed to his care and charge, and he had been the instrument of their deliverance, and therefore it was great ingratitude to him to act the part they had done, as well as impiety to God; wherefore, though it was the Lord that brought them out of Egypt, it is ascribed to Moses as the instrument, to make the evil appear the greater. Jarchi very wrongly makes these people to be the mixed multitude he supposes Moses had proselyted, and therefore called his people.

Exodus 32:8

Ver. 8. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them,.... The Targum of Jonathan adds, by way of explanation,

"on Sinai, saying, ye shall not make to yourselves an image, or figure, or any similitude."

This was the command God had given to them; this the way he had directed them to walk in; from this they turned aside, by making the golden calf as an image or representation of God; and this they had done very quickly, since it was but about six weeks ago that this command was given; wherefore if Moses had delayed coming down from the mount, they had made haste to commit iniquity; and, perhaps, this observation is made of their quick defection, in opposition to their complaint of Moses's long absence:

they have made them a molten calf; for though it was made by Aaron, or by his direction to the founder or goldsmith, yet it was at their request and earnest solicitation; they would not be easy without it:

and have worshipped it; by bowing the knee to it, kissing it or their hands at the approach of it, see Ho 13:2.

and have sacrificed thereunto burnt offerings and peace offerings:

and said, these be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt; the very words they used, Ex 32:4 and which were taken particular notice of by the Lord with resentment.

Exodus 32:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people,.... He had observed their ways and works, their carriage and behaviour; he had seen them before this time; he knew from all eternity what they would be, that their neck would be as an iron sinew, and their brow brass; but now he saw that in fact which he before saw as future, and they proved to be the people he knew they would be; besides, this is said to give Moses the true character of them, which might be depended upon, since it was founded upon divine knowledge and observation:

and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people; obstinate and self-willed, resolute in their own ways, and will not be reclaimed, inflexible and not subjected to the yoke of the divine law; a metaphor taken from such creatures as will not submit their necks or suffer the yoke or bridle to be put upon them, but draw back and slip away; or, as Aben Ezra thinks, to a man that goes on his way upon a run, and will not turn his neck to him that calls him, so disobedient and irreclaimable were these people.

Exodus 32:10

Ver. 10. Now, therefore, let me alone,.... And not solicit him with prayers and supplications in favour of these people, but leave him to take his own way with them, without troubling him with any suit on their behalf; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and now leave off thy prayer, and do not cry for them before me;"

as the Prophet Jeremiah was often bid not to pray for this people in his time, which was a token of God's great displeasure with them, as well as shows the prevalence of prayer with him; that he knows not how, as it were, humanly speaking, to deny the requests of his children; and even though made not on their own account, but on the account of a sinful and disobedient people:

that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: which suggests that they were deserving of the wrath of God to the uttermost, and to be destroyed from off the face of the earth, and even to be punished with an everlasting destruction:

and I will make of thee a great nation; increase his family to such a degree, as to make them as great a nation or greater than the people of Israel were, see **De 9:14** or the meaning is, he would set him over a great nation, make him king over a people as large or larger than they, which is a sense mentioned by

Fagius and Vatablus; and, indeed, as Bishop Patrick observes, if this people had been destroyed, there would have been no danger of the promise not being made good, which was made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, concerning the multiplication of their seed, urged by Moses, Ex 32:13 seeing that would have stood firm, if a large nation was made out of the family of Moses, who descended from them: this was a very great temptation to Moses, and had he been a selfish man, and sought the advancement of his own family, and careless of, and indifferent to the people of Israel, he would have accepted of it; it is a noble testimony in his favour, and proves him not to be the designing man he is represented by the deists.

Exodus 32:11

Ver. 11. And Moses besought the Lord his God,.... As the Lord was the God of Moses, his covenant God, and he had an interest in him, he made use of it in favour of the people of Israel:

and said, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people? so as to think or speak of consuming them utterly; otherwise he knew there was reason for his being angry and wroth with them; but though they were deserving of his hot wrath and displeasure, and even to be dealt with in the manner proposed, yet he entreats he would consider they were his people; his special people, whom he had chose above all people, and had redeemed them from the house of bondage, had given them laws, and made a covenant with them, and many promises unto them, and therefore hoped he would not consume them in his hot displeasure; God had called them the people of Moses, and Moses retorts it, and calls them the people of God, and makes use of their relation to him as an argument with him in their favour; and which also shows that Moses did not understand that the Lord by calling them his people disowned them as his:

which thou hast brought out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? this the Lord had ascribed to Moses, and observes it is an aggravation of their ingratitude to Moses, and here Moses retorts, and ascribes it to God, and to his mighty power; as for himself he was only a weak feeble instrument, the Lord was the efficient cause of their deliverance, in which he had shown the exceeding greatness of his power; and he argues from hence, that seeing he had exerted his mighty arm in bringing them from thence, that he would not now lift it up against them and destroy them.

Exodus 32:12

Ver. 12. Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say,.... Those that remained, as the Targum of Jonathan, who were not drowned in the Red sea: a good man will be concerned for the honour and glory of God among the enemies of his people, that their mouths may not be opened to blaspheme the Lord and speak ill of his ways, see **Jos 7:9** and this is sometimes an argument with God himself, not to do that to his people they deserve, lest it should give occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully, insult, and triumph, De 32:26

for mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth; that he brought them out of Egypt, not with a good but ill design; not to bring them into the land of Canaan, as they promised themselves, but to destroy them in the mountains; not to erect them into a great kingdom and nation, which should make a considerable figure in the world, but to cut them off from being a people at all: the mountains where they now were, were Sinai and Horeb, and there might be others thereabout, among which they were encamped: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"among the mountains of Tabor, and Hermon, and Sirion, and Sinai:"

turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people; not that there is any turning or shadow of turning with God, or any change of his mind, or any such passions and affections in him as here expressed; but this is said after the manner of men concerning him, when he alters the course of his dealings with men according to his unalterable will, and does not do the evil threatened by him, and which the sins of men deserve.

Exodus 32:13

Ver. 13. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants,.... The covenant he made with them, the promise he had made unto them, with an oath annexed to it:

to whom thou swarest by thine own self; which he did, because he could swear by no greater; and for the confirmation of his covenant and promise, see Ge 22:16

and saidst unto them; for what was said to Abraham was repeated and confirmed to Isaac and Jacob:

I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven; multitudes of which are out of sight, and cannot be seen with the naked eye, nor numbered:

and all this land that I have spoken of; the land of Canaan, then inhabited by several nations:

will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever; as long as they are a people, a body politic, and especially while obedient to the divine will; but should they be now cut off, this promise would become of no effect: this is the great argument Moses makes use of, and the most forcible one.

Exodus 32:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people. He did not do what he threatened to do, and seemed to have in his thoughts and designs, but did what Moses desired he would, Ex 32:12 not that any of God's thoughts or the determinations of his mind are alterable; for the thoughts of his heart are to all generations; but he changes the outward dispensations of his providence, or his methods of acting with men, which he has been taking or threatened to take; and this being similar to what they do when they repent of anything, who alter their course, hence repentance is ascribed to God, though, properly speaking, it does not belong to him, see Jer 18:8. Aben Ezra thinks that the above prayer of Moses, which was so prevalent with God, does not stand in its proper place, but should come after Ex 32:31 for, to what purpose, says he, should Moses say to the Israelites, Ex 32:30 "peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin": if he was appeased by his prayer before?

Exodus 32:15

Ver. 15. And Moses turned, and went down from the mount,.... He turned himself from God, with whom he had been conversing forty days; his back was to the ascent of the mount, and he turned himself in order to go down; or "he looked" {g}, as a man considers what is to be done, as Aben Ezra observes, and he saw that he was obliged to go down in haste:

and the two tables of the testimony [were] in his hand; or hands, as in Ex 32:19

for they were, perhaps, as much as he could carry in both hands, being of stone, as in Ex 31:18 on which was written the law, the "testimony" of the will of God with respect to what was to be done or not done:

the letters were written on both their sides, on the one side and on the other were they written; some think that the engraving of the letters was such, that it went through the stones, and in a miraculous manner the letters and lines were in a regular order, and might be read on the other sides; to which Jarchi seems to incline, saying, the letters might be read, and it was a work of wonders; others think that the letters were written both within and without, like Ezekiel's book of woes; that the same that was within side was written without, that so, when held up, they might be read by those that stood before and those that stood behind; but rather so it was that the whole was written within, some of the commands on the right, and some on the left, and so the tables might be clapped together as a book is folded.

{g} Npyw "et aspexit", Pagninus.

Exodus 32:16

Ver. 16. And the tables were the work of God,.... And not of angels or men; the stones were made and formed by God into the shape they were:

and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables; the letters in which the law was written were of his framing, devising, and engraving; and this was to show that this law was his own, and contained his mind and will; and to give the greater dignity and authority to it, and to deter men from breaking it.

Exodus 32:17

Ver. 17. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people, as they shouted,.... Dancing about the calf: when Moses went up into the mount, Joshua went with him, and tarried in a lower part of the mount all the forty days until he returned, see Ex 24:13 though not so low as the bottom of the mount where the people were, nor so near it as to know what they did there, for of their affairs he seems to be entirely ignorant; nor so high as where Moses was, or, however, not in the cloud where he conversed with God, for of what passed between them he had no knowledge, until declared by Moses:

he said unto Moses, [there is a] noise of war in the camp; such a noise as soldiers make in an onset for battle; he supposed that some enemy was come upon and had attacked the people, and that this noise was the noise of the enemy, or of the Israelites, or both, just beginning the battle; or on the finishing of it on the account of victory on one side or the other; and as he was the general of the army, it must give him a concern that he should be absent at such a time.

Exodus 32:18

Ver. 18. And he said,.... Not Joshua, as Saadiah Gaon thinks, but Moses, in answer to what Joshua had said:

[it is] not the voice of [them that] shout for mastery; that have got the better of it, and have obtained the victory, and shout on that account; or, "not the voice of a cry of strength", or "of a strong cry" {h}; that is, of men who have got the victory, and are in high spirits, and shout with a strong voice; and so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan,

"not the voice of strong men that overcome in battle:"

neither [is it] the voice of [them that] cry for being overcome; which is not a voice of shouting, but of howling; or, "not the voice of the cry of weakness", or "of a weak cry" {i}; who being unable to stand their ground are conquered, and make a bitter outcry on falling into the enemy's hands, or being wounded shriek terribly, and so the above Targums,

"not the voice of the weak who are overcome by the enemy in battle:"

[but] the noise of [them that] sing do I hear; as at a merry entertainment, either on a civil or religious account: Moses, who knew what the children of Israel had done, and what they were about, could better judge of the nature of the sound he heard than Joshua could, who knew nothing of what was transacting,

{h} hrwbg twne lwq "vox eorum qui respondeant fortiter", Tigurine version; "vox clamoris fortis", Drusius. {i} hvwlh twne lwq "vox eorum qui respondeant infirmiter", Tigurine version; "vox clamoris debilis", Drusius.

Exodus 32:19

Ver. 19. And it came to pass, as soon, as he came nigh unto the camp,.... To the bottom of the mountain, and pretty near where the people were encamped:

that he saw the calf, and the dancing; the golden image of the calf, and the people dancing about it, in honour of it, and as glad they had got a symbol and representation of God to go before them; and so the Egyptians did before the golden ox; as Philo says, before observed:

and Moses's anger waxed hot: he fell into a passion of indignation at the sight of such execrable idolatry, though he was so meek a man, and though he had himself expostulated with the Lord why his wrath should wax hot against this people; but, when he saw it with his own eyes he could not contain himself, but his spirit was raised to a very great pitch of anger, and could not forbear showing it in some way or another, and particularly in the following manner:

and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount; of Sinai; at the foot of it: he brought the tables, though he knew what they had done, and no doubt showed them to them, told them what they were, and enlarged on the wonderful condescension and goodness of God in giving them such laws, and writing them with his own hand, engraving them himself on such tables of stone; and then broke them to pieces, to denote that they had broken these laws, and deserved to be broke in pieces and destroyed themselves; and this he did before their eyes, that they might be the more affected with it, and be the more sensible of their loss; and this was not the mere effect of passion, at least a sinful one, but was under the influence and direction of God himself; since we never read he was blamed for this action, though afterwards ordered to make two tables like them: the Jews say {k}, this was done on the seventeenth day of Tammuz, which answers to part of June and part of July, and is observed by them as a fast on account of it.

{k} Misn. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 7.

Exodus 32:20

Ver. 20. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire,.... Melted it down into a mass of gold, whereby it lost its form, and had no more the appearance of a calf:

and ground it to powder; but how this was done is not easy to say, whether by beating the mass of gold into thin plates, and then filing them small; for this art has remained unknown; the chemists have boasted of it as only possessed of it; but it seems Moses, learned in all the learning of the Egyptians, had it: however, it is now certain by various experiments, that gold, though a very thick and heavy body, consists of parts which are separable from one another, and to be divided into infinite subtler parts: the famous Dr. Halley has shown that one grain of gold may be divided into 10,000 parts, and yet visible; and Dr. Keil has demonstrated that a cubic thumb's breadth of gold is divisible into 47,619,047 parts, which do not escape the sight: according to the computation of the said Dr. Halley, leaf gold, with which silver threads are gilded, is not thicker than the 124,500 part of a thumb's breadth; so that a cube of the hundredth part of a thumb's breadth of the said subtle parts may contain 243,000,000 {l}:

and strawed it upon the water; of the brook that descended out of the mount, **De 9:21** now called the fountain of St. Catharine; which Dr. Shaw {m} says, after it has supplied the demands of the convent (now built on this mount) is received without into a large basin, which running over, forms a little rill: and another traveller {n} speaks of a fountain about the middle of Mount Sinai, which, though small, was found in it running water very wholesome and refreshing: but if this was a brook of running water, it seems more likely that water was taken out of it and put into a proper vessel or vessels, on which the powder of the golden calf was strewed; or otherwise it would have been carried away with the stream, and could not have been taken up and given to the people to drink, as is next said; and this shows that it must be reduced to a very small light powder indeed, to float upon the top of the water and not sink to the bottom, as mere filings of gold would necessarily do:

and made the children of Israel drink of it; not the whole body of them, or every individual, but the more principal persons, and such who had been the most active in encouraging the making of the calf, and the worshipping of it: this was done not only that they might entirely lose their gold and have no manner of profit by it, but that the idol, which is nothing in the world, might be brought to nothing indeed, and that there might be no remains of it to be abused to superstitious uses, as well as to show them their folly in worshipping that which could not save itself; and by drinking it, whereby it passed through them and became an excrement, to express the utmost abhorrence and detestation of it; as also to show that they deserved the curse of God to enter into them, as oil into their bowels, as that water did, and be utterly destroyed: the Jewish writers, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, suppose this water, with the powder of the golden calf in it, had the same effect and was for the same use as the water of jealousy, that it made the bellies of those that drank it to swell: and the Targum of Jonathan observes, that whoever gave any golden vessel towards the making of the calf, there was a sign appeared in his countenance: and Aben Ezra suggests the same, but neither of them say what it was: but an ancient Latin poet, quoted by Selden {o}, reports from the Hebrew writers, that whoever were guilty of this idolatry, as soon as they drank of the water their beards became yellow as gold, whereby the Levites knew who were guilty, and slew them; but as this is quite fabulous, so I have not met with it in any Jewish writer, only an author of theirs, of great antiquity and credit with them, says {p}, that whoever kissed the calf with his whole heart, his lips became golden.

{l} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 247. {m} Travels, p. 242. Ed. 2. {n} Baumgarten. peregrinatio, l. 1. c. 24. p. 61, 62. {o} De Diis Syris Syntagma, 1. c. 4. p. 156. {p} Pirke Eliezer, c. 45.

Exodus 32:21

Ver. 21. And Moses said unto Aaron,.... Having destroyed the calf, and thereby expressed his abhorrence of their idolatry, he examines the principal persons concerned, and inquires into the cause and reason of it, how it came about; and begins with Aaron, though his own brother, with whom along with Hur he had committed the government of the people during his absence; and therefore was justly accountable for such a transaction, which could not have been without his knowledge and consent: no mention is made of Hur, whether he was dead or no is not certain; the Jewish writers say he was, and that he was killed for reproving the Israelites for their wickedness; and it looks as if he was dead, since he was not in the examination, and we hear of him no more afterwards:

what did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? as idolatry is, than which no sin can be greater, it being not only a breach of the first table of the law, but directly against God, against the very being of God, and his honour and glory; it is a denial of him, and setting up an idol in his room, and giving to that the glory that is only due to his name; and Aaron being the chief magistrate, whose business it was to see that the laws of God were observed, and to restrain the people from sin, and to have been a terror to evil doers; yet falling in with them, and conniving at them, he is charged with bringing sin upon them, or them into that; and is asked what the people had done to him, that he should do this to them, what offence they had given him, what injury they had done him, that he bore them a grudge for it, and took this method to be revenged? for it is suggested, had they used him ever so ill, he could not have requited it in a stronger manner than by leading them into such a sin, the consequence of which must be ruin and destruction, see Ge 20:9 or else Moses inquires of Aaron what methods the people had made use of to prevail upon him to suffer them to do such a piece of wickedness; whether it was by persuasion and artful insinuations, or by threatening to take away his life if he did not comply, or in what manner they had wrought upon his weak side, to induce him to take such a step.

Exodus 32:22

Ver. 22. And Aaron said, let not the anger of my lord wax hot,.... He addresses him in a very respectful manner, though his younger brother, being in a superior office, the chief ruler of the people, king in Jeshurun; and he perceived a violent emotion rising in him, great indignation in his countenance, and an high resentment of what was done, and therefore he entreats his patience to hear him, in a few words, what he had to say, and he begins with the well known character of the people:

thou knowest the people, that they [are] set on mischief; or are "in wickedness" {q}; wholly in it, and under the power and influence of it, given up to it, and bent upon it; and there was no restraining them from it; and he appeals to the knowledge of Moses himself for the truth of this, of which their several murmurings against him, since they came out of Egypt, were a proof; see **1Jo 5:19**.

{q} erb "in malo", Montanus, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Exodus 32:23

Ver. 23. For they said unto me, make us gods, which shall go before us,.... Which was true, Ex 32:1 but then he should have told them, that gods were not to be made; that what were made with hands were no gods, and could not go before them; that the making of any image, similitude, or representation of God, was forbidden by him, as they had lately heard from his own mouth; he should have dissuaded from such idolatry, by showing them the evil nature of the sin, and the ruin they exposed themselves to by it:

for [as for] this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him; their words he truly recites, and perhaps might choose the rather to mention them, because they carried in them some reflection on Moses for staying so long in the mount; and as if that contributed much to this affair, and which put the people on forming such a scheme, they concluding he must be dead through famine; or, as the Targum of Jonathan, be burnt with flaming fire from the Lord.

Exodus 32:24

Ver. 24. And I said unto them, whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off,.... That is, any ear rings of gold, let them loose or take them off their ears:

so they gave [it] me; of their own accord, as if unasked by him, though he had bid them bring it to him, Ex 32:2:

then I cast it into the fire; to melt it, but says nothing of the mould the melted gold was poured into:

and there came out this calf; he speaks of it as if the gold became in the form of a calf without any design, or without using any methods to put it in this form; but that it was a matter of chance, or rather something preternatural and miraculous; he speaks of it as if it was alive, and came out of itself: and indeed the Jews represent it as done by magic art, and by the operation of Satan, and speak of it as coming out alive, bellowing and dancing; and the Targum of Jonathan is,

"and I cast it into the fire, and Satan entered into the midst of it, and out of it came the likeness of this calf."

Aaron says not a word of his fashioning it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf; but Moses learned this elsewhere, and has recorded it. What Moses thought of this apology is not said; it could not be satisfactory to him: and it is certain the conduct of Aaron in this affair was displeasing to God; and it seemed as if he would have destroyed him, had not Moses prayed for him, **De 9:20**.

Exodus 32:25

Ver. 25. And when Moses saw that the people [were] naked,.... Not in their bodies, being stripped of their ear rings; for parting with them was not sufficient to denominate them naked in a corporeal sense; nor as being without their armour, which was laid aside while they were eating, and drinking, and dancing about the calf, and so might be thought a proper opportunity for the Levites to fall upon them, by the order of Moses, and slay them: but it can hardly be thought that all the people bore arms, and that Moses took the advantage of their being without them: but rather they were naked in their souls, through their sin, and the shame of their nakedness appeared; their sin was made manifest, and they were discovered to be what they were; and they were now deprived of the divine protection; the cloud was departing from them, the symbol of the divine Presence, God being provoked by their sins; unless it is to be understood of their ceasing from work, and keeping holy day in honour of the calf, and so were loitering about, and not attending to the business of their callings, in which sense the word sometimes seems to be used, see **Ex 5:4**

for Aaron had made them naked unto [their] shame amongst their enemies; to part with their ear rings, or lay aside their armour while feasting, could not be so much to their shame among their enemies; but to sin against God, in the manner they did, was to their shame, which Aaron was a means of by not doing all he could to hinder it, and by doing what he did to encourage it; and now he made them naked to their shame by exposing it, saying they were a people set on mischief, and given up to sin and wickedness; and what they had now done served to expose them to shame even among their enemies, both now and hereafter; when they should hear of their shameful revolt from God, after so many great and good things done for them, and of the change of their gods, and of their fickleness about them, which was not usual with the Gentiles: though the last word may be rendered, "among those that rise up from you"; that should spring from them, come up in their room, and succeed them, their posterity, as in Nu 32:14 and so Onkelos renders it, "to your generations", and is so to be understood, as Abendana observes; and then the sense is, that this sin of making and worshipping the golden calf, and keeping a holy day, would be to their shame and disgrace, among their posterity, in all succeeding ages.

(If is quite possible the people were physically naked, having taken off all their clothes to indulge in the idolatrous worship of the calf and sexual immorality that usually is associated with such wicked practices. Editor.)

Exodus 32:26

Ver. 26. Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp,.... In one of the gates of it; for it doubtless had more than one to go in and out of, as is clear from Ex 32:27 it being probably entrenched all around; here Moses set himself, it being the usual place, as in cities, where the people were summoned together on important occasions, and justice and judgment were administered:

and said, who is on the Lord's side? [let him come] unto me; who is for the worship of the true God, and him only, and against the worship of a gold calf, or any other idol, and is zealous for the glory of God, and the honour of his name;

and all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him; that is, all those that had not given in to the idolatry of the calf; all is put for many. Jarchi infers from hence, that this tribe was wholly free from that sin; but the contrary is most evident, for it appears from the context that many of them were slain for it; yea, as, on the one hand, they were only of the tribe of Levi, who joined themselves to Moses, though there was no doubt many in all the tribes that were not in the idolatry; so, on the other hand, there were none slain, or very few, but of the tribe of Levi, as will appear in the exposition of the following verses, the being principally concerned with Aaron in making the calf; and therefore those of the same tribe that joined them not were the more zealous and studious to purge themselves from the imputation of the crime, by going over to Moses at once, and showing themselves to be on the Lord's side.

Exodus 32:27

Ver. 27. And he said unto them, thus saith the Lord God of Israel,.... The following orders are given by Moses, not of himself the chief magistrate, and as the effect of heat and passion, but there were from the Lord, who was Israel's God and King; he had them expressly from him, or by an impulse on his spirit, or in such a way and manner that he knew it was of God, and this was his will:

put every man his sword by his side; girt there, ready to be drawn upon order:

and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp; not into the tents, where good men might be bemoaning the sin committed, but throughout the streets, where many were loitering, it being a holy day with the idolaters:

and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour; who were idolaters; none were to be spared on account of relation, friendship, and acquaintance.

Exodus 32:28

Ver. 28. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses,.... They girded their swords by their sides, went through the camp, and slew their brethren, companions and neighbours, who were keeping holy day in honour of the idol:

and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men; the Vulgate Latin version reads 23,000, very wrongly; now these being chiefly, if not altogether, of the tribe of Levi, the brethren, companions, and neighbours of the Levites, that were the slayers, together with the after plagues that came upon them, Ex 32:35 account for the deficiency of males in this tribe, some few months after, when it was numbered; and the number of them from one month old and upwards amounted but to 22,000, which was but a very small one in proportion to the other tribes, who generally, one with another, numbered 40,000 each, and none so few as 30,000 {r}; of this tribe Aaron was, and therefore used with severity, because of his concern in this sin; and even though it was the tribe of Moses, it was not spared.

{r} See the Bishop of Clogber's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 360, 362.

Exodus 32:29

Ver. 29. For Moses had said,.... To the Levites, when he first gave them their orders:

consecrate yourselves today to the Lord; devote yourselves to his service, by obeying his orders, slaying those, or the heads of them, who have cast so much contempt upon him as to worship the golden calf in his room; and which would be as acceptable to him as the offerings were, by which Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the Lord; and as these Levites were consecrated to his service this day, on this account:

[even] every man upon his son, and upon his brother; not sparing the nearest

relation found in this idolatry, and for which the tribe of Levi is commended and blessed in the blessing of Moses, De 33:8 and as it follows,

that he may bestow a blessing upon you this day; which was their being taken into the service of God to minister to the priests in the sanctuary, to bear the vessels of the Lord, and for their maintenance to have the tithes of the people: this day was, according to the Jewish writers {s}, the seventeenth of Tammuz, or June, on which day the Jews keep a fast upon this account.

{s} Sedar Olam Rabba, c. 6. p. 18. Pirke Eliezer, c. 46.

Exodus 32:30

Ver. 30. And it came to pass on the morrow,.... The eighteenth day of Tammuz it was, the same writers say, that Moses implored the mercy of God for Israel. Jarchi on Ex 32:11 says it was on the seventeenth day the tables were broke, on the eighteenth the calf was burnt, and on the nineteenth that Moses went up to intercede for them:

that Moses said unto the people, ye have sinned a great sin; the sin of idolatry, see Ex 32:21 from whence it appears, that all that were guilty of it were not slain, perhaps only some of one tribe; and there was great reason to fear, that as wrath was gone forth it would not stop here, but others would fall a sacrifice to the divine displeasure; wherefore it is proposed by Moses to make application to the Lord on their behalf, that they might obtain mercy:

and I will go up unto the Lord: on the top of Mount Sinai:

peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin; not by any sacrifice offered, but by his prayers prevail with God to forgive their sin, and not punish any more for it: he had by his first prayer obtained of the Lord not to consume them off of the face of the earth, and utterly destroy them as a nation; but that he did not hinder but that resentment might be shown in a lesser degree, or by parts; as not 3000 men had been cut off, chiefly out of one tribe, if not altogether, the rest of the tribes might expect to be visited, according to the number of their delinquents.

Exodus 32:31

Ver. 31. And Moses returned unto the Lord,.... On the mount where he was in the cloud:

and said, oh, this people have sinned a great sin; which to following words explain; he confesses the same to God he had charged the people with in Ex 32:30:

and have made them gods of gold; the golden calf, which they themselves called "Elohim", gods.

Exodus 32:32

Ver. 32. Yet now, if thou will forgive their sin,.... Of thy free grace, good will, and pleasure; it will redound to thy glory, men will praise thy name on account of it; these people will have great reason to be thankful, and will lie under great obligations to thee, to fear, serve, and glorify thee; and in particular it will be regarded by me as the highest favour that can be asked or granted:

and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written; not the book of the law, as Jarchi, written with the finger of God, the name of Moses was not written there; nor the book of the just, as the Targum of Jonathan, the list and catalogue of good men, that belonged to the visible church, called in after time "the writing of the house of Israel", Eze 13:9 but rather the book of life, either of this temporal life, and then it means no more than that he wished to die, even immediately by the hand of God, which seems to be countenanced by Nu 11:15 or else of eternal life, and is no other than the book of life of the Lamb, or God's predestination or choice of men in Christ to everlasting life, which is particular, personal, sure, and certain; and Moses asks for this, not as a thing either desirable or possible, but to express his great affection for this people, and his great concern for the glory of God; and rather than either should suffer, he chose, if it was possible, to be deprived of that eternal happiness he hoped for, and should enjoy.

Exodus 32:33

Ver. 33. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... In answer to his request:

whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book; not that anyone that is really in the book of life is ever blotted out, or that anyone predestinated or ordained to eternal life ever perish: but some persons may think themselves, and they may seem to be written in that book, or to be among the number of God's elect, but are not, and turn out obstinate impenitent sinners, and live and die in impenitence and unbelief; when it will appear that their names were never written in it, which, is the same thing as to be blotted out of it, see Ps 69:28. Now by this answer the Lord does not absolutely refuse the request of Moses with respect to the people, though he does with regard to himself, and the blotting his name out of his book; and it is plain, by what follows, he meant to show mercy to the people, since he bids Moses go and lead them on towards Canaan, and promises an angel to go before them; though he reserves to himself a liberty to chastise this people for this sin, as he should have opportunity, along with others.

Exodus 32:34

Ver. 34. Therefore now go, lead the people [unto the] place of which I have spoken unto thee,.... That is, to the land of Canaan, which he had promised to their fathers and to them, and had directed Moses to bring them to:

behold, mine angel shall go before thee: and not I, as Jarchi interprets it; not the Angel of the covenant, and of his presence, as in Ex 23:20 but a created angel, which, though a favour, was a lessening of the mercy before promised and granted; and which gave the people a great deal of concern, though Moses by his supplications got the former blessing restored, Ex 33:2:

nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them; that is, when he should visit them in a way of correction for other sins, he would visit them in like manner for this sin, the worship of the golden calf; and so Jarchi well explains it,

"when I visit upon them their iniquities, I will visit upon them a little of this iniquity, with the rest of iniquities; and there is no punishment (adds he) comes upon Israel, in which there is not something of the punishment of the sin of the calf;"

and the Jews have a saying {t}, that

"there is not a generation in which there is not an ounce of the sin of the calf."

{t} T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 68. 3.

Exodus 32:35

Ver. 35. And the Lord plagued the people,.... That is, continued so to do at certain times, with the pestilence, or other calamities; for this seems not to refer, as some think, to the slaughter of the 3000 men: the reason follows,

because they made the calf which Aaron made; that is, they provided him with materials to make it; they urged and solicited him to do it, and would not be easy without it, so that the making of it is ascribed to them; or they served it, as Onkelos; or bowed unto it, as Jonathan; with which agree the Syriac, Arabic, and Samaritan versions, which render it, they served, or worshipped, or sacrificed to the calf which Aaron made.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 33:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 33

This chapter informs us, that the Lord refusing to go with the people, only sending an angel with them, they are filled with concern, and troubled, Ex 33:1. Moses upon this pitched the tabernacle without the camp, where everyone that sought the Lord went; Moses entered into it himself, and the Lord talked to him in a friendly manner in the cloudy pillar that stood at the door of it, and the people worshipped, every man at his own tent door; all which foreboded good, and tended to reconciliation, Ex 33:7. Moses improved the opportunity, and entreats the presence of God to go with them, which was granted, Ex 33:12 and that he might have a sight of the glory of God; and this is promised to pass before him, he being put into the cleft of the rock, Ex 33:18.

Ver. 1. And the Lord said unto Moses, depart, and go up hence,.... Not from the place where Moses was, which was the top of the mount, but where the camp of Israel was, at the bottom of the mount; where they had lain encamped some time, but were now ordered to proceed on their journey:

thou, and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt; though his wrath was in some measure mitigated, and he had so far forgave their sin, that he would not cut them off from being a people; yet still he does not call them his people, or own that he brought them out of Egypt, as he does in the preface to the commands they had now broke, as if they were not under his care and conduct; but speaks of them in a different manner, as a people that Moses had brought out from thence, and whom he orders to go on with:

unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, unto thy seed will I give it: meaning the land of Canaan, which as he had promised with an oath to their fathers to give it to them, he would faithfully observe it, though they were unworthy of such a favour.

Exodus 33:2

Ver. 2. And I will send an angel before thee,.... Not the angel before promised, Ex 23:20 the Angel of his presence, the eternal Word and Son of God, but a created angel; and so Aben Ezra observes, he does not say the Angel that was known, that his name was in him; though even this was to be looked upon as a favour, and showed that he had not utterly cast them off:

and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite; who were now the inhabitants of the land, and these he promises drive out, to make way for their possession of it; and that "by his hand", as the Targum of Jonathan interprets it, by the hand of the angel. Only six nations are mentioned, though there were seven; the Girgashite is omitted, but added in the Septuagint version.

Exodus 33:3

Ver. 3. Unto a land flowing with milk and honey,.... Abounding with all the necessaries and good things of life, a description of the land of Canaan frequently made, see **Ex 3:8**:

for I will not go up in the midst of thee; would not grant them his presence in so near, visible, and respectable a manner as he had before done, though he would not utterly forsake them: the tabernacle was before in the midst of the camp, that is, that which was erected until the large one, ordered to be made, was finished, but now it was removed without the camp, Ex 33:7

for thou art a stiffnecked people; See Gill on "Ex 32:9":

lest I consume them in the way; in the way to the land of Canaan, and so never get there; the meaning is, that the Lord being in the midst of them, their sin would be the more aggravated to be committed in his presence, before his face; and the glory of his majesty would require that immediate notice be taken of it, and just punishment inflicted; so that by this step God both consulted his own honour and their safety.

Exodus 33:4

Ver. 4. And when the people heard these evil tidings,.... That God would withdraw his gracious presence, and go not up with them himself, only send an angel with them; and especially this may respect what is threatened, Ex 33:5 and had been said at this time:

they mourned; were inwardly and heartily grieved for their sin, whereby they had provoked the Lord to depart from them, and gave some outward and open tokens of it:

and no man did put on his ornaments; they used to wear at other times, their rings and jewels, which the princes and the chief among the people especially were wont to wear; and in common the people did not put on their best clothes, or what they usually wore, but clothed themselves in mournful habits, in sackcloth and ashes, or in some such like manner.

Exodus 33:5

Ver. 5. For the Lord had said to Moses,.... At the same time he had told it to the people:

say unto the children of Israel: Menachem, as quoted by Ainsworth, observes, that this is said in a way of mercy; for since their idolatry he had only called them the people of Moses, and the people, but now calls them by their beloved name, the children of Israel; but whether this was any hint of mercy and favour, is not very apparent by what follows:

ye [are] a stiffnecked people; obstinate and untractable,
See Gill on "Ex 32:9":

I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee; before he threatens them that he would not go up in the midst of them, that is, in a way of grace and mercy, to guide, protect, and defend them himself; and now that he would come up in the midst of them, but in a different manner, in a way of wrath, and to take vengeance on them for their sins; and the meaning is, either that should he do so but one moment it would be all over with them, or they would be utterly consumed; or this is threatened on condition, provided they did not repent of their sins, and humble themselves:

therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee; not their armour, as some, nor the clothes they wore at the festival for the golden calf, for this was long after that; but the clothes they usually wore, the best they had, with all their decorations and ornaments, and put on mournful habits as an outward token of their repentance and mourning for their sins, if they had any real concern: this shows that these words must have been said before; since the people on hearing the evil tidings had clothed themselves in a mournful habit, and did not put on their ornaments, Ex 33:4:

that I may know what to do unto thee; which does not suppose ignorance or irresolution in God, but is said after the manner of men, that he should deal with them in proportion to their conduct and behaviour, and as that should outwardly appear.

Exodus 33:6

Ver. 6. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments,.... Such as before described, and this they did,

by the Mount Horeb; before their departure from thence, and where they had been guilty of the idolatry: the words may be literally rendered, "from Mount Horeb" {u}; and Jonathan understands the preceding clause of something they put off which they received from thence; but the meaning is, that they went to some distance from Mount Horeb, and there stripped themselves to show their greater humiliation, and the sense they had of their unworthiness of being near to the Lord, or enjoying his presence.

{u} rhm "a monte", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "procul a monte", Junius & Tremellius, Piscato.

Exodus 33:7

Ver. 7. And Moses took the tabernacle,.... Not that, the pattern of which he had been shown in the mount, for that was not as yet made, rather his own tabernacle or tent, Ex 18:7 or one that was erected for worship before the large one was ordered, and while that was building; for it can hardly be thought they should have no place of worship for a whole year after they were come out of Egypt; though this might be not a place on purpose, or only erected for that use, but might be one of the apartments of Moses; who, besides what he had for the use and convenience of his family, had a special and peculiar one, hath on a religious account, where he and the people sometimes worshipped, and God met with them, and on a civil account, to hear and judge the causes of the people, and resolve their doubts, and remove their difficulties, and make inquiries of God for them:

and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp; 2000 cubits distant from it, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi, which he endeavours to confirm from **Jos 3:4** and was what was afterwards called a sabbath day's journey: this was done partly that he might have the opportunity of conversing with God, and bringing about a thorough reconciliation between him and the people, who declared he would not go up in the midst of them; and partly that this might be a symbol to the people of the Lord's departure from the midst of them; that so they might be brought to a thorough humiliation for their sin, who might fear that he would not only stand at a distance, but entirely remove from them: it might be considered as a token of his displeasure with them, and yet be a door of hope unto them; since he was not wholly gone from them, but might be sought unto by them as follows:

and called it the tabernacle of the congregation; as the great tabernacle was afterwards called, and as this might be before, though now renewed, to give the people some encouragement to resort here; because here he and they met together, both on civil and religious accounts, and God met with them:

and it came to pass, [that] everyone which sought the Lord: about any affair of moment and importance, to know his will, and to have instruction and direction what to do; or that sought to him for peace and reconciliation, for the pardon of their sins, and the acceptance of their persons, repenting of their sins, and confessing the same:

went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which [was] without the camp; these went out of the camp, from their tents there, to this; who were not the body of the people, but either such who had difficult matters to inquire about, or were seriously and heartily concerned for the evil they had committed, and for the removal of the divine Presence from them.

Exodus 33:8

Ver. 8. And it came to pass, when Moses went out of the tabernacle,.... For when he had pitched it he did not continue there; which shows it was not the tent or tabernacle he dwelt in, but whither he went to and fro, both to meet the Lord in it, and transact the affairs of the people, and especially the great affair now depending between God and them:

[that] all the people rose up: in reverence of him as their ruler, and the minister of God, and as their Mediator between God and them, though they had but lately thought and spoke very meanly and contemptibly of him, Ex 32:1 see Job 29:8

and stood every man at his tent door; none offering to go in, nor to sit down until he was gone into the tabernacle, which was an instance of their respect to him:

and looked after Moses until he was gone into the tabernacle; kept their eye on him as long as they could see him, thereby expressing their esteem of him, signifying their desire that he would intercede for them, and wishing him success therein: the Targum of Jonathan interprets all this of the ungodly among them that looked after Moses with an evil eye.

Exodus 33:9

Ver. 9. And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended,.... From the top of the mount in which Jehovah was:

and stood at the door of the tabernacle; where Moses was just entered, and in sight of the people, which was a token of grace and favour both to him and them:

and [the Lord] talked with Moses; not the cloudy pillar, but the Lord in it, as we rightly supply it: what he talked with him about is not said, very probably concerning the children of Israel, their conduct and behaviour, and what was his will further concerning them.

Exodus 33:10

Ver. 10. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door,.... They being every man at his tent door; and this must be a pleasing sight to them, and give them some hope that God would be merciful to them, forgive their sin, and not depart from them:

and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door; not Moses, nor the cloudy pillar, but the Lord in it; it was not a civil bow they made to Moses, and in respect to him, for he was gone into the tabernacle out of sight, but a religious adoration of the Lord in the pillar of cloud.

Exodus 33:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face,.... Not by an angel, but he himself in person; not by a dream or vision, but apparently, in real visible appearance; not in dark speeches, but clearly in plain words, easy to be understood; and not by a voice from heaven at a distance, but mouth to mouth, being very near, as when on the mount, and now at the door of the tabernacle:

as a man speaketh unto his friend; freely, familiarly, plainly, cordially, openly, without any reserve or show of authority, or causing dread and fear; for he also spake to the children of Israel "face to face", but then it was out of the fire in a terrible manner which they could not bear, **De 5:4**

and he turned again into the camp; to acquaint the people, the heads and elders of them, what discourse he had with God, what success he had met with on their behalf, and how the Lord stood affected to them, or what was his will concerning them:

but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle; who is here described by his name, Joshua; by his descent, the son of Nun; by his relation to Moses, a servant of his, who waited on him wherever he went, when upon the mount and now at the tabernacle; and by his age, a young man, as he was in comparison of Moses, and is so called chiefly because he was his servant, it being usual to call servants young men, of whatsoever age; for Joshua, strictly speaking, could not be a young man in years; he was the general of the army at the battle with Amalek; and, according to Aben Ezra, was now fifty six years of age, which he collects from his living to the age of one hundred and ten years; now to fifty six add the forty years in the wilderness, seven years, in which he subdued the land of Canaan, and seven more in dividing it, as say their wise men, the sum is one hundred an ten years: and it not being easy to account for it, that Moses should depart alone, unaccompanied by Joshua, who always attended him, and no sufficient reason is given why he should stay behind in the tabernacle; as for private devotion, which this was not a place for; or for judging the causes of the people in the absence of Moses, which we never find he did or to guard the tabernacle, to be a watchman in it, or even at the head of a watch over it, which, as it seemed unnecessary, so was an employment too mean for him; the words therefore may be rendered as they are by some, and the rather, as there is an accent which makes a considerable stop on the word ren, translated a "young man" {w}, "and he turned again to the camp", and "his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man"; that is, along with him; they both returned to the camp, and then it follows, "he", i.e. the Lord, "departed not out of the tabernacle", but continued there; to whom Moses afterwards returned and had the following discourse: a learned man {x} thinks that the grand tabernacle is here meant, yet unfinished, though not the final erection of it; and that here is a dislocation in the history, and supposes that Moses having been forty days absent, found upon his return a good progress made in the work of the tabernacle, and the ornaments and utensils belonging thereunto: and as soon as the wood work of the tabernacle was finished, he ordered it to be put together; but because the tabernacle had neither a door to it, nor were the hangings of the outer court finished, therefore Joshua the servant of Moses, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle, but remained there to preserve it from being polluted: but it is a mistake of his that the tabernacle had not a door to it, and it is strange he should make it, when it is twice mentioned in the preceding verses; and since the pillar of cloud and the Lord in it were there, no man durst draw near to pollute it, so that there was no need of Joshua's being there to preserve it; and besides, it was after this Moses went up to the mount and stayed another forty days and forty nights, see Ex 34:4.

{w} So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Rivet. {x} Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 343.

Exodus 33:12

Ver. 12. And Moses said unto the Lord,.... Having returned from the camp to the tabernacle again;

see, thou sayest unto me, bring up this people: from hence to the land of Canaan, as in Ex 33:1

and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me; to guide and direct him, help and assist him, protect and defend him, and the people with him; he had signified something of this kind, but by some expressions, and by his present conduct, he was at a loss to know who was to go with him: he had told him that the uncreated Angel, in whom his name and he himself were, should go with them; but now it had been declared that he would not go up in the midst of them himself, but send an angel, a created one, but who that was he knew not; he thought he had reason to expect the pillar of the cloud and fire by day and night; but that had had so many motions that he could not be assured of the continuance of it:

yet thou hast said, I know thee by name; have a particular and special knowledge of thee, and distinguished thee from others, and have a personal affection for thee:

and thou hast also found grace in my sight: had an interest in his special favour and good will, was acceptable unto him, had received an abundance of spiritual grace, and many very extraordinary gifts from him, and had had many benefits bestowed on him, which were proofs of his being grateful and well pleasing to him.

Exodus 33:13

Ver. 13. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight,.... Which he said, not as doubting whether he had or not, but as taking it for granted he had, and so argues from it, and improves his interest in it, in his pleading with God:

shew me now thy way: either the way which he himself would take, the way of his providence in bringing the children of Israel into the land of Canaan; or the way he would have him take, the way of his duty, how he would have him behave in conducting them thither; unless he means the Messiah, Christ, the way to the heavenly Canaan, to whom he seems greatly to have respect in the following part of this chapter:

that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight; by which he might have a further evidence of his being acceptable to God, and having a share in his good will; as well as he would better know in what way grace is communicated, Christ being the way both of access into the grace of God, and of acceptance with him, and of the communication of grace from him:

and consider that this nation [is] thy people; though they had sinned against him in the manner they had done, they were a people he had chosen above all people to be his; he had made a covenant with them, and was their covenant God; he had redeemed them out of Egypt, and had called them from thence, and had wrought a great salvation for them, and had bestowed many peculiar favours upon them; and though for this their gross idolatry and sad apostasy from him they were unworthy of the relation, and he had thought fit not to call them his people, but the people, or the people of Moses, yet they still were his people, and he entreats he would consider the relation they stood in to him, and show mercy to them.

Exodus 33:14

Ver. 14. And he said,.... In answer to his request:

my presence shall go [with thee]; or before thee, both with Moses and before the people; meaning the Angel of his presence he had before promised, the eternal Word and Son of God, who saved them, redeemed them, bore and carried them all the days of old: or "my faces shall go" {y}; all the three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit; there was Jehovah the Father, whose the Angel of his presence was; and there was Jehovah the Son, Christ, whom they tempted in the wilderness; and there was Jehovah the Holy Spirit, whom they vexed, see Isa 63:9

and I will give thee rest; not ease, and peace and tranquillity of mind, or a freedom from the fear of enemies, and all dangers by them, much less rest in the grave, before Israel should be brought into Canaan's land; but rather the promised land itself, which was "the rest" that was promised, and would be given, and was typical of that eternal rest which remains for the people of God in heaven, and is a pure gift; for this promise is not personal and peculiar to Moses, but belonged to all the people, to whom God would give the typical rest, see De 12:9.

{y} wkly ynp "facies meae ibunt", Montanus, Vatablus.

Exodus 33:15

Ver. 15. And he said unto him,.... Moses said unto the Lord:

if thy presence go not [with me]; or with us, as it may be as well supplied, and which agrees with what follows:

carry us not up hence; from the mount to the land of Canaan; though God had promised his presence, which was the thing requested, Moses could not forbear expressing himself after this manner, to show the high esteem he had of this blessing, and how worthless and insignificant everything else was without it; that even Canaan, the land of rest promised, was nothing in comparison of it: it is not much matter where we are, or what we have, if God is not with us; but if he grants his presence, the greatest hardships in a wilderness are made easy, and difficulties are got through with pleasure; though some read the words in the preceding verse by way of interrogation, "should my face" or "presence go", and "should it give thee rest" {z}? as carrying in it a kind of denial, which makes Moses here more urgent for it, and such a version those words seem to require.

{z} "An facies mea iret et quietem daret tibi?" Noldius, p. 243. so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Exodus 33:16

Ver. 16. For wherein shall it be known here,.... At Sinai, among the mountains in the wilderness:

that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight: were acceptable to him, highly esteemed by him, and had received peculiar favours from him; what evidence would there be of this? how would it appear to others? what knowledge could they have of it?

[is it] not in that thou goest with us? in such a grand majestic manner, and so visible as in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night: this is a full proof, and a strong and convincing argument, even to a demonstration, that they were a special and peculiar people, the favourites of God, highly esteemed and honoured by him; but should this be discontinued, as seemed to be threatened, there would be nothing to demonstrate that they had found more

grace and favour than other people; but this being the case,

so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people [that are] upon the face of the earth; distinguished by this favour from them, and that in a very wonderful and marvellous manner, as the word signifies; and so some render it, "marvellously separated" {a}; for the pillar of cloud and fire was a very marvellous thing, and distinguished the people of Israel from all others in a surprising manner, none having been ever favoured in the like manner.

{a} wnylpn "marvellously separated", Ainsworth.

Exodus 33:17

Ver. 17. And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken,.... Or asked for, namely, go with them himself in this amazing and distinguished manner, in the pillar of the cloud and fire; this he would do as well as show him his way and his works, and indeed all this he did by granting that:

for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name; he owns the truth of the thing, on which Moses had formed his plan, and by granting his request gave a fresh proof and evidence of it; and what can be a greater blessing than to partake of the special grace, favour, and good will of God, and to be particularly and personally known to him, with such a knowledge as has connected with it the strongest affection and highest esteem?

Exodus 33:18

Ver. 18. And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. Not any visible lustre, splendour, and brightness, as a symbol of the divine Presence, that he had seen, Ex 16:7 nor the glorious essence of God, as Maimonides {b}, which is invisible and cannot be seen, and of which Moses could not be ignorant; nor the glory of the heavenly state, which also he must know he could not see until he came thither; but he seems to mean some visible glorious representation of God, such as he had never seen, though he had been with him so long on the mount in the cloud, and heard his voice, and saw some appearances of brightness and glory, yet not in any form that he could frame any idea of; perhaps he may mean the Angel of God's presence, called his face, the promised Messiah and glorious Redeemer and Saviour, in whom there is such a bright display of the glory of the divine perfections; yea, is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and this favour was granted him, with some proper limitations and restrictions; for though this request was, no doubt, sincere and upright, it might be attended with frailty and weakness; yet it is not utterly denied, but with some explanation is allowed, and perhaps was the highest favour ever granted to any before the incarnation of our Lord, at least in so full and glorious a manner as this was; Moses having by his suit obtained much, wants more and is emboldened to ask it, and in a good measure had it, as the following words show.

{b} Yesude Hatorah, c. 1. sect. 10.

Exodus 33:19

Ver. 19. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee,.... Which is his glory; the glory of the Lord lies in his goodness, and that appears in the works of his hands, in the methods of his providence, especially in the distribution of his sovereign grace and mercy, and particularly in his pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of Christ; for as it is "the glory" of a man "to pass over a transgression", Pr 19:11 much more it is the glory of God, of which this goodness is afterwards interpreted; and may be understood of Christ himself, who is the goodness of God itself, is not only good, but the Lord's good One, emphatically good; as he is called his holy One, so his good One; because all his goodness is laid up in him, is prevented and filled as Mediator, with the blessings of his goodness; all are proclaimed in him, displayed through him, and communicated by him; and he is that glorious Personage that Moses might be desirous of having a view of, and was favoured with; however, with a view of the divine goodness, as it is conspicuous in him, in what he is, and has done for his people; for God has shown forth the exceeding riches of his grace and goodness in him:

and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee: his name and his nature, his perfections, and the glory of them, as displayed in Christ; or when he is about to pass, or while he is passing by, lest he should pass by unobserved, I will proclaim aloud and give thee notice that he is now passing by thee, whose name is Jehovah, and whose nature, glory, and goodness, are as follow:

and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy: signifying that notwithstanding the children of Israel had sinned against him in such a manner as they had, yet he should show favour, grace, and mercy to them, in pardoning their sins; and it should be distributed, not according to any merits of theirs, but according to his sovereign will and pleasure, and not to all, but to whomsoever he thought fit; and in this would be seen his glory: and so it is with respect to grace and mercy, as displayed in Christ to sinful men; it is not in proportion to their deserts, but according to the purpose and good will of God, and that not unto all, but unto some whom he has appointed, not unto wrath, but unto salvation by Jesus Christ, and which is to the glory of his grace; and the more enlarged view men have of this, the more clearly and fully does the goodness and glory of God pass before them.

Exodus 33:20

Ver. 20. And he said, thou canst not see my face,.... Meaning not his form, his essence, his very nature, and the glory of it, that Moses must know he could never see; but the brightest displays of his grace and goodness in Christ, the fullest discoveries of it, which are too much for man, in the present state of things, to have, who sees in part, and but through a glass darkly, not face to face, or in the most complete and perfect manner; it is but a small part and portion of God, and of his ways and works, as of creation and providence, so more especially of grace, salvation, and redemption by Jesus Christ, that is known of him; the things of the Gospel in their full perfection are what eye has not seen; and particularly were more hidden and unseen under the legal dispensation; this face was covered with types and shadows, and dark representations of things; though, in comparison of that state, we now, with open face, behold the glory of the Lord, yet still it is through a glass darkly, and we have not the clear and full view of things as will be hereafter:

for there shall no man see me and live: if there was to be such a revelation made of the grace and goodness, and glory of God in Christ, as it really is in itself, it would be too much for mortals in the present state to bear; it would break their earthen vessels in pieces; the full discovery therefore is reserved to a future state, when these things will be seen as they are, and men will be in a condition to receive them; otherwise we find that men have, in a sense, seen the face of God in this life, and have lived; though many, and even good men, have been possessed with such a notion, that if a man saw God he must die, see Ge 32:30.

Exodus 33:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord said, behold, [there is] a place by me,.... Near him, not in or by the tabernacle, where it may be the pillar of cloud now was, as it had been, Ex 33:9 but upon the rock, where it had been for many days, and near to which there was a fit place for Moses to be in, and have that view of the goodness and glory of God he would favour him with:

and thou shall stand upon a rock; in Horeb, typical of Christ the rock, the rock of Israel, and the rock of ages, the rock of refuge, salvation, and strength; comparable to one for shelter, solidity, firmness, strength, and duration; and happy are they who stand upon this rock; they are safe and secure, they stand on high, and have noble prospects of the perfections of God, and of the riches of his grace and goodness, see Ps 50:2.

Exodus 33:22

Ver. 22. And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by,.... The displays of his grace and goodness are made:

that I will put thee in a clift of the rock; in one of the clefts, made by smiting it, through which the waters gushed out for the relief of the Israelites, and their flocks: and we are told {c}, that to this day, on the summit of Mount Sinai, by the Arabians called Gibel el Mousa, or the mountain of Moses, is perceived a large chasm in the rock, said to be the cave where Moses hid himself from God, when the glory of the Lord passed before him. Now this cleft may be an emblem of Christ, as crucified, smitten, wounded and slain; who was smitten by the law and justice of God, as this rock was smitten by the rod of Moses: and had gashes and wounds made in him like the clefts of a rock, being pierced with the nails and spear: and in these clefts of the rock saints dwell by faith, **So 2:14**:

and will cover thee with my hand; with his cloud, as Ben Melech, and so may denote the cloudiness, obscurity, and darkness of the legal dispensation: but here it seems to denote imperfection, not being able to bear the full sight of the divine glory, and which angels themselves cannot bear, but cover their faces; and also the danger of being consumed, were it not that saints are in Christ, and covered and secured in him, otherwise God is a consuming fire:

while I pass by thee; or his glory, the glory of all his perfections, wisdom, holiness, justice, power, and faithfulness, and especially of his grace, mercy, and goodness in Christ.

{c} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 2. p. 167. see a Journal from Cairo, &c. p. 28, 29. Ed. 2.

Exodus 33:23

Ver. 23. And I will take away mine hand,.... As being covered with the hand may signify the obscurity of the former dispensation, the taking of it away may denote a more clear revelation of the grace and goodness of God in Christ, and so of the glory of it under the Gospel dispensation; and yet what is seen in this, in comparison of the reality of things as they are, or of the heavenly state, are but as next expressed:

and thou shalt see my back parts; which some understand of the humanity of Christ, and his sufferings in it, sometimes expressed by his heel, and the bruising of it, **Ge 3:15** or else the works of God in creation, by which the invisible things of God are seen, and which give a knowledge of him "a posteriori"; and so Maimonides {d} interprets the phrase, which follow me, flow from my will, i.e. all my creatures: or rather it denotes the imperfect knowledge of God in the present state, even as revealed in Christ, in whom there are the clearest and brightest displays of his glory; yet this, in comparison of the beatific sight of him, is but like seeing a man that is gone by, whose back is only to be seen:

but my face shall not be seen; in the present state, the face of God, that is, his favour, communion with him, and the light of his countenance, are to be sought for, and may be enjoyed; the glory of himself is to be seen in the face or person of Christ, and the glory of that face or person is to be seen in the glass of the Gospel, but at present imperfectly; God in Christ as he is, the fullest and brightest displays of his glory, grace, and goodness, are reserved to another state, see 1Co 13:9 or it may regard the divine nature of Christ, which could not be seen by Moses, but his back parts, or human; Christ as clothed with flesh might, and would be seen by him, as he was seen by him on the mount, Mt 17:3.

{d} Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 38.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 34:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 34

In this chapter Moses has orders to hew two tables of stone, that God might write on them the ten commands, and bring them up with him to the mount, Ex 34:1 where the Lord proclaimed his name, and caused his glory and his goodness to pass before him, Ex 34:5 when Moses took this favourable opportunity that offered to pray for the people, that God would forgive their sin, and go along with them,
Ex 34:8 upon which he made a covenant with them, which on his part was to do wonders for them, and drive out the inhabitants of Canaan before them; and on their part, that they should have no confederacy and communion with these nations, and shun their idolatry, and everything that might lead unto it, Ex 34:10 and he repeated several laws before given, and urged the observance of them, which Moses was to acquaint the people with, Ex 34:18 and after a stay of forty days and forty nights on the mount, he came down with the two tables of the law; and the skin of his face shone so bright, that the people of Israel were afraid to come nigh him, and therefore he put a vail over his face while he conversed with them,
Ex 34:28.

Ver. 1. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... Out of the cloudy pillar, at the door of the tabernacle, where he had been conversing with him in the most friendly manner, as related in the preceding chapter:

hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first; of the same form, and of the same dimensions, and it may be of the same sort of stone, which perhaps was marble, there being great plenty of that kind on Mount Sinai. Now Moses being ordered to hew these tables, whereas the former were the work of God himself, as well as the writing, shows that the law was to be the ministration of Moses, and be ordained in the hand of him as a mediator, who had been praying and interceding for the people; and as a token of the reconciliation made, the tables were to be renewed, yet with some difference, that there might be some remembrance of their crime, and of their loss by it, not having the law on tables of stone, which were the work of God, but which were the work of man:

and I will write upon [these] tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest; the writing of these was by the Lord himself, as the former, shows that the law itself was of God, though the tables were hewn by Moses, and that he would have it known and observed as such; and the same being written on these tables, as on the former, shows the unchangeableness of the law of God, as given to the people of Israel, that he would have nothing added to it, or taken from it; and the writing of it over again may have respect to the reinscribing it on the hearts of his people in regeneration, according to the tenor of the new covenant: the phrase, "which thou brakest", is not used as expressing any displeasure at Moses for that act of his, but to describe the former tables; and the breaking of them might not be the effect of passion, at least of any criminal passion, but of zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his law, which was broken by the Israelites, and therefore unworthy of it; and might be according to the counsel of the divine will, and the secret direction of his providence.

Exodus 34:2

Ver. 2. And be ready in the morning,.... This was, according to the Jewish chronology {e}, on the twenty eighth day of the month Ab or July:

and come up in the morning unto Mount Sinai; the same mount where he had been before:

and present thyself there to me on the top of the mount; where the pillar of cloud removed and stood, and near it Moses was to stand and wait to hear what would be said unto him, and to see what would be made to pass before him.

{e} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 6. p. 19.

Exodus 34:3

Ver. 3. And no man shall come up with thee,.... Before, Aaron and his two sons, and the seventy elders of Israel, went up with Moses, though they did not go so near the Lord as he did; but now having sinned in the matter of the golden calf, though a reconciliation was made, they were not allowed to go with him, nor even Joshua his servant, though he had no concern in the sin; Moses must be alone, that the ministration of the law might be by him only, and in order to receive a peculiar favour in answer to his request:

neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; in any part of it, as Joshua was before in some part of it, even all the while that Moses was there;

but now not a single person must be seen anywhere, not only because of the giving of the law to Moses, but because of the display of the divine glory, which was to be made particularly to him:

neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount; or over against it, or rather "near" it {f}; which was ordered, not so much on the account of the flocks themselves, who were not capable of any moral guilt; nor that they might not come to any hurt, since they were to be stoned or thrust through with a dart if they touched it, which order it is highly probable was in force as before; but on the account of their keepers, that there might be none of them on the spot, or near, to observe what passed; and chiefly this was said to command fear and reverence in the minds of the people, while this solemn affair was transacting between God and Moses, and to check all curiosity in them.

{f} awhh rhh lwm la plhsion tou orouv, Sept. "prope montem illum", Noldius, p. 80.

Exodus 34:4

Ver. 4. And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first,.... Which may be an emblem of the ministry of men, which God makes use of in hewing of his people, and bringing them to a sense of their sins, the breach of his law, and repentance for them, **Ho 6:5**:

and Moses rose up early in the morning: which, according to the Jews {g}, was the twenty ninth of Ab or July, which showed his ready and cheerful obedience to the divine will, and the quick dispatch he had made in hewing the tables; which whether he did with his own hands only, or made use of others whom he directed, is not very material; though the phrase "hew thee", or "hew unto thee", seems as if he were to do it himself, and not another:

and went up unto Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him; which was the third time of his going there, and every time he continued forty days and forty nights, as Aben Ezra observes, see **De 9:18**:

and took in his hand the two tables of stone; which could not be very thick and heavy to carry in one hand up a mountain, but must be a sort of marble slab or slate: at this same time an ark was ordered to be made, and was made, to put the tables into, which was a type of Christ, the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness, De 10:1.

{g} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 6. p. 19.

Exodus 34:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord descended in the cloud,.... The same with the cloudy pillar, which was now gone up from the door of the tabernacle, and was on high in the air over the mount, and on which the Lord now descended in it, as he had before, Ex 19:9:

and stood with him there; not Moses stood with the Lord, as the Vulgate Latin version; but the Lord, or the cloud in which the Lord was, stood near to Moses:

and proclaimed the name of the Lord: Jehovah declared with a loud voice out of the cloud, that the Lord was there; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"and Moses called on or in the name of the Word of the Lord;"

and so the Vulgate Latin version refers it to Moses, and renders the words, "calling on the name of the Lord"; but the following verse clearly shows that it must be understood of the Lord, and not of Moses.

Exodus 34:6

Ver. 6. And the Lord passed by before him,.... Or caused his Shechinah, his divine Majesty, and the glory of it, to pass before him, as the Targums; his glory and goodness, which he had promised should pass before him, Ex 33:19 and it is but a transient passing view the greatest of men, God's peculiar favourites, have of him in this life:

and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God; the Jerusalem Targum wrongly paraphrases the words as a prayer of Moses thus, "and Moses prayed, and said, O Lord, Lord"; and so the Vulgate Latin version; but it is quite clear, and beyond all doubt, from Nu 14:17 that what follow are the words of God, and not of Moses: the sense is, that the Lord, as he passed by Moses, to raise and fix his attention, declared it was Jehovah that passed by; which is repeated the more to excite his attention, and is the name by which he had made himself known to Moses, even when he sent him into Egypt; for "I am that I am" is an explanation of this name, see **Ex 3:14** and the word "El", translated "God", signifies mighty and powerful, and is true of all the three divine Persons, to whom respect may be had in the use of these three words. What is proclaimed or declared concerning God is, that he is

merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; first "merciful", and he is so in the most tender and affectionate manner; he is rich and plenteous in mercy, freely giving it, delights in bestowing it, constantly shows it to his people; it is manifested and displayed in Christ, the mercy seat; and it lays a foundation for faith and hope, and is the spring of all good things in time, and to eternity: and he is also "gracious", good and kind to men, without any merit or desert of theirs, but bestows good things on them freely, of his own free grace, favour, and good will, as appears by various acts of his; in the eternal choice of them to everlasting happiness; in providing a Saviour for them, and giving all grace and spiritual blessings to them in him; by giving Christ to them, and for them, justifying them freely by his righteousness, pardoning their sins according to the riches of his grace, regenerating, calling, preserving, and saving them by it: likewise "longsuffering"; both towards wicked men, the vessels of wrath, by whom his patience and longsuffering are abused and despised; and towards his elect, on whom he waits to be gracious, not willing that any of them should perish, but all be brought to repentance; and his longsuffering is their salvation: and it follows, "abundant in goodness and truth"; in providential goodness to all men; in special goodness to his chosen people, which he has laid up, and wrought out for them, and shown them in Christ; in his truth and faithfulness, in fulfilling his promises, both with respect to the mission of his Son into the world, to be the Saviour of it, and with respect to all other things promised, whether relating to this life, or that to come, to grace or glory; he never suffers his truth and faithfulness to fail; his promises are all yea and amen in Christ.

Exodus 34:7

Ver. 7. Keeping mercy for thousands,.... In his own heart, in his purposes and decrees, in his counsels and covenant, in his Son, with whom he keeps it for ever, and for all in him, Ps 89:28 and they are many who are ordained to eternal life, for whom Christ gave his life a ransom, and for whom his blood was shed for the remission of their sins; and whom he justifies by his knowledge, and at last brings to glory as the great Captain of their salvation; these are even a number which no man can number. All the Targums render it to a thousand generations; and Jarchi interprets of two thousand generations.

The first letter in the word, rendered "keeping", is longer than is usual, in the Hebrew text; which, according to the Jews {h}, denotes the largeness of the grace of God, its great extent and long continuance:

forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin; the word used signifies a lifting it up, and taking it away: thus Jehovah has taken it from the sinner, and put it on his Son, who has borne it, and made satisfaction for it; and in so doing has taken it quite away, so as to be seen no more; and, through the application of his blood to the conscience of a sinner, it is taken away from thence, and removed as far as the east is from the west; from whence it appears, that it is in Christ, and for his sake, that God forgives sin, even through his blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction; and this forgiveness is of all sin, of all sorts of sin, original or actual, greater or lesser, public or private, open or secret, of omission or commission, of heart, lip, and life. The Jews sometimes distinguish these three words; "iniquity", they say, signifies sins through pride and presumption; "transgression" intends rebellions against God; and "sin", what is committed through error and mistake {i}; and much to this sense is Jarchi's interpretation of these words; they no doubt include all manner of sin, which God for Christ's sake forgives:

and will by no means clear [the guilty]; without a full and proper satisfaction to justice; which is provided in Christ, whom God has set forth to be the propitiation for sin, to declare his righteousness, that he might appear to be just, while he justifies and pardons those that believe in Jesus; otherwise all the world are guilty before God, and none would be cleared; but those for whom satisfaction is made, and a righteousness wrought out, they are cleared, acquitted, and discharged, and they only: or "though he will by no means let it go unpunished" {k}; that is, sin, expressed by the several words preceding; and so to this purpose is this phrase translated in
Jer 30:11 and the meaning is, that though God pardons sin, all manner of sin, and so displays his grace and mercy, yet he takes care of the honour of his justice, and never suffers any sin to go unpunished, either on the sinner, or on the surety. Pardon of sin always proceeds upon the redemption that is through the blood of Christ, and is a branch of it, see **Ro 3:24**. Some understand these words as relating not to the justice, but to the mercy and goodness of God; and render the words, either "in extirpating he will not extirpate", as Maimonides {l}; and as Jonathan translates the same phrase in Jer 30:11 "in destroying I will not destroy"; and so De Dieu here, "in emptying he will not empty", or destroy; and this sense is thought to be most agreeable to the prayer of Moses, and the promise of God, that his goodness and glory should pass before him, to which the other sense seems contrary; but the justice of God is as much his

glory, and in it lies his goodness, as well as his grace and mercy; besides, the following words cannot be thought to be so expressive of the grace, and mercy, and goodness of God, but of his punitive justice, and so the objection would still remain:

visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the childrens' children, unto the third and to the fourth [generation]; See Gill on "Ex 20:5".

{h} Vid. Buxtorf. Tiberiad. c. 14. p. 38. {i} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 4. sect. 2. {k} hqny al hqnw "et impunita minime dimittens", Tigurine version; "et non exercens impunitatem", Coccei Lexic. in voce hqn. {l} Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 54.

Exodus 34:8

Ver. 8. And Moses made haste,.... Perceiving the voice ceased, and the Lord was passing on, lest he should be gone, and he lose the favourable opportunity he had:

and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped; threw himself prostrate upon it, and in the most humble manner put up his requests to God, which are expressed in the following verse; he gladly laid hold on this opportunity to use his interest with God for the people of Israel, and to improve the proclamation of grace and mercy, in the forgiveness of sins, now made; which encouraged his faith and hope to draw nigh with a holy boldness, and use freedom with him, and yet with an awe of his majesty, with reverence and godly fear.

Exodus 34:9

Ver. 9. And he said, if now I have found grace in thy sight,.... Or "seeing now", for he could have no doubt upon his mind but that he had found grace and favour in the sight of God, since he had caused his goodness and glory to pass before him, and made such a proclamation of his grace and mercy to him; but he takes it for granted, and improves it, and argues upon it, as follows:

O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go amongst us; as the Lord had signified as if he would not go among them, but leave them to the conduct of a created angel; and Moses had before prayed that his presence or face might go with them, Ex 33:3 and now having some fresh tokens of the favour and good will of God towards him, renews his request with great earnestness and importunity, entreating the Lord Jehovah the Father, that Moses's Lord Jehovah the Son, the Angel of God's presence, in whom his name was, might go with them, as he had said he should:

for it is a stiffnecked people; and therefore have need of such an one to be with them, to rule and govern them, to restrain and keep them within due bounds; or "though {m} it is a stiffnecked people"; for this is the reason given by the Lord why he would not go among them,
Ex 33:3 wherefore Moses prays that he would go, notwithstanding this; he owns the character of them was just, yet humbly prays that God would nevertheless vouchsafe his presence:

and pardon our iniquity, and our sin; which he had the greater reason to hope he would, since he had just proclaimed his name, a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; and, the more to gain his suit, makes himself a party concerned, calling the sin committed, "our iniquity, and our sin"; even his among the rest, who had found grace in the sight of God, and therefore entreats others might also, since they were all sinners, and there was forgiveness with him:

and take us for thine inheritance; to possess and enjoy, protect and defend, cultivate and improve, keep and preserve for ever.

{m} Quamvis, Piscator, Patrick; so R. Marinus in Aben Ezra; and some in Abendana.

Exodus 34:10

Ver. 10. And he said, behold, I will make a covenant,.... Or renew the covenant before made the people had broke; which on his part was, that he would, as Moses had entreated, forgive the sin of the people, go along with them, and introduce them into the land of Canaan, and drive out the inhabitants of it before them; and, on their part, that they should avoid idolatry, and everything that led unto it, particularly making covenants, and entering into alliances with the idolatrous nations cast out:

before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; both in their passage through the wilderness, and entrance into Canaan's land, and the conquest of that; such as the earth opening its mouth and swallowing alive Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and was a new thing God created; the smiting of the rock at Kadesh, from whence flowed waters abundantly; the healing of such as were bit by fiery serpents through looking at a serpent of brass; Balaam's ass speaking, and reproving the madness of the prophet; the division of the waters of Jordan; the fall of the walls of Jericho at the sound of rams' horns; the sun and moon standing still, until the Lord had avenged himself of his enemies:

and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord; for it should be visible, as the above things were, and plainly appear to be the Lord's doing, and not man's, being above the power of any created being to perform:

for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee; Aben Ezra restrains this to Moses's person, and interprets this of the wonderful shining of the skin of his face, when he came down from the mount, which made the children of Israel afraid to come nigh him; and of his vigorous constitution at the time of his death, when his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated, contrary to the nature of ancient persons: but it is better to understand it of the ministry of Moses, and of the awful things that God would do by him; or rather of the people of Israel, among whom, and for whose sake, God would do such things as should cause a panic among the nations all around them; particularly what he did for them to Og king of Bashan, and Sihon king of the Amorites, on account of which terror fell, as on the king of Moab, so on the inhabitants of Canaan; see Nu 21:33 **Jos 2:9**.

Exodus 34:11

Ver. 11. Observe thou that which I command thee this day,.... Which words are either said to Moses personally, as Aben Ezra thinks, as a direction to him to observe what had been said to him, and declare them to the children of Israel; or rather to the children of Israel, and respect the commands which are afterwards delivered out to be observed by them in the following verses; and what is expressed in the next clause is such as was not done by the ministry of Moses, nor in his time:

behold, I drive out before thee; not before Moses, but the people of Israel,

the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite; six nations are only mentioned, though there were seven, the Girgashites being omitted, because either they left the land before, as some think, or because they at once submitted; they are added in the Septuagint version.

Exodus 34:12

Ver. 12. Take heed to thyself,.... This is said not to Moses, but to the people of Israel, as a caution to them when they should enter the land of Canaan, and possess it:

lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest: enter into a league and alliance, to live friendly and amicably, and support and assist each other against the common enemy; whereas they were to smite the seven nations and destroy them, and show them no mercy, **De 7:1**

lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee; be the means of drawing them into the same sinful practices with themselves, especially into idolatrous ones, and so of bringing ruin and destruction on them.

Exodus 34:13

Ver. 13. But ye shall destroy their altars,.... On which they had sacrificed to their idols; since, if they were allowed to continue, they might be temptations to offer sacrifice thereon, contrary to the command of God:

break their images: of gold or silver, wood or stone, which they made for themselves, and worshipped as deities; seeing if these continued, the sight of them might lead to the worship of them, and so bring under the divine displeasure, as a breach of the command of God given them:

and cut down their groves; which were clusters of trees, where they had their temples and their idols, and did service to them, and where, besides idolatry, many impurities were committed. Such places were originally used by good men for devotion, being shady and solitary, but when abused to superstitious and idolatrous uses, were forbidden. It is said {n}, the word for "grove" is general, and includes every tree they serve, or plant, for an idol.

{n} R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 72. 1.

Exodus 34:14

Ver. 14. For thou shall worship no other god,.... Than the Lord their God, the one only living and true God, which was the first command given to the people of Israel, and binding upon all men:

for the Lord whose name is Jealous, [is] a jealous God; his name and nature answer to one another; he admits of no rival or competitor in worship; he will not give his glory to another god, or one so called, nor his praise to graven images; and in this he is distinguished from all nominal and fictitious gods, who have many joined with them, and are rivals of them, which gives them no concern, because insensible; but it is otherwise with the Lord, who knows the dishonour done him, and resents it, and is as jealous of any worship being given to another, as the husband is of the honour of his marriage bed; for idolatry is spiritual adultery, as is suggested in the following verse.

Exodus 34:15

Ver. 15. Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land,.... A marriage covenant, taking their daughters in marriage to their sons, and "vice versa", as the following words show; here the caution is to be understood and the words supplied from Ex 34:12 and inserted and connected thus, "take heed to thyself, lest thou make", &c.

and they go a whoring after their gods; that is, the inhabitants of the land, and particularly those with whom the Israelites made a covenant, and entered into a marriage relation with, and perhaps on this condition, that they would abstain from idolatry; and yet, contrary to the obligation they laid themselves under, lust after their idols, and commit spiritual fornication or adultery with them, which is explained by the next clause:

and do sacrifice unto their gods; such as the first institutors of their idolatry enjoined, and their ancestors had observed, and were according to the rites and customs of the country:

and [one] call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; invite to eat of what remained, that was offered to the idol: hence it appears, that having feasts at sacrifices, and eating things offered to idols in a festival way, are very ancient practices; see 1Co 10:27.

Exodus 34:16

Ver. 16. And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons,.... That is, marry them to them, which explains what is meant by making a covenant with them, entering into such a near relation, and joining families, and thus intermixing with one another;

and their daughters go a whoring after their gods; the worship of whom they have been trained up in from their infancy, and therefore hanker after them, and commit whoredom in a spiritual sense with them;

and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods; by the means of tempting and drawing them into idolatrous practices, as the wives of Solomon were a snare to him.

Exodus 34:17

Ver. 17. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods. Made of a melted liquid, whether gold, or silver, or brass, poured into a mould; and though graven images are not mentioned, they are included, a part being put for the whole, as appears not only from the injunction to break images in general, whether graven or molten, Ex 34:13 but from the second command, which expressly forbids the making and worshipping of them; but "molten" ones are particularly mentioned, because it is probable they were chiefly such the Canaanites worshipped, and especially, because the calf the Israelites had lately made and worshipped was a molten one.

Exodus 34:18

Ver. 18. The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep,.... Which was instituted at the time of their coming out of Egypt, and on that account, and then observed, Ex 12:15 and afterwards repeated, and the month expressed in which they were to keep it, and the reason of it, as it here follows, See Gill on "Ex 13:15".

Exodus 34:19

Ver. 19. All that openeth the matrix is mine,.... Or "the womb", and therefore to be sanctified, and set apart for his use: this also was declared, and the law concerning it given, at the time of their coming out of Egypt, and here repeated, See Gill on "Ex 13:2",
See Gill on "Ex 13:12".

Exodus 34:20

Ver. 20. Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem,.... This goes along with the former, See Gill on "Ex 13:13":

and none shall appear before me empty; at the grand festivals, the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, See Gill on "Ex 13:15".

Exodus 34:21

Ver. 21. Six days shalt thou work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest,.... This is the law of the seventh day sabbath, which is after repeated, to fix it in the minds and memories of the people, see Ex 20:10 and here it is added, which has not been mentioned before:

in earing and in harvest thou shall rest; that is, in the time of ploughing, and in the time of reaping and gathering in the harvest, which are both very busy seasons; the rest of the sabbath was not to be violated; such sort of works, though they might require haste and expedition, yet the sabbath was not to be broken on account of them: this is the common sense of the law, as it is understood; but Maimonides {o} gives another sense from their doctors, who say, it is forbidden to plough in the sixth year what cannot be reaped but in the seventh; and so likewise that it is forbidden to reap on the seventh year, that of which profit may be had on the eighth year, and this is founded on what the Scripture says, Ex 34:21 "in earing", &c. and they say, that here ploughing and harvest are not to be understood of the seventh day, because this is included in the general rule, "thou shalt not do any work"--they say, of that which is ploughed, whose reaping or harvest is forbidden, is the ploughing at the evening of the seventh year, and at the going out of the seventh; and know this, that the evening of the seventh is the sixth year, and the going out of the seventh is the eighth year, and so Jarchi on the text observes, that some of their Rabbins say, this is to be understood of the ploughing of the seventh year, the seventh year entering, and the harvest of the seventh year, at the going out of it; so that as there is a seventh day of rest, there is a year in which ploughing and harvest are forbidden; but there are others, he says, who say the text speaks only of the sabbath.

{o} In Misn. Sheviith, c. 14. sect. 1.

Exodus 34:22

Ver. 22. And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks,.... The feast of Pentecost, called the feast of weeks, because seven sabbaths or weeks, or fifty days, were to be reckoned from the day in the passover feast, on which the sheaf of the wave offering was brought,
Le 23:15 and which was also called the feast

of the first fruits of wheat harvest, to distinguish it from the barley harvest, at the time of the passover, when a sheaf of barley was the wave offering to the Lord; but at this two loaves or cakes of fine wheaten flour were brought as the first fruits of the wheat harvest, see Le 23:17

and the feast of ingathering at the year's end; which was the feast of tabernacles, called the feast of ingathering, because at this time all the fruits of the earth, the corn, wine, and oil, and all others were gathered in; and this was at the close of the old year, and at the beginning of the new, according to the ancient account, which made Tisri or September the first month in the year; See Gill on "Ex 23:16".

Exodus 34:23

Ver. 23. Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord God,.... At the three above mentioned feasts,
See Gill on "Ex 23:17" here it is added,

the God of Israel; who had chosen them to be his special people, had redeemed them out of Egypt, and done great things for them since; had made a covenant with them, and had now renewed that covenant with them, and was their covenant God, and they his people, and so were under great obligations to present themselves unto him at the times appointed by him.

Exodus 34:24

Ver. 24. For I will cast out the nations before thee,.... Who are particularly mentioned, Ex 34:11 and therefore they need not be in any fear of them, when they should go up to the appointed place, and appear before the Lord; for to this they were not obliged, until they were come into the land of Canaan, and the inhabitants driven out before them:

and enlarge thy borders; so that as they should have no enemies within them, to hinder and molest them, or discourage and deter them from attendance on the Lord at such set times, so they would be set at a great distance from them, that they should have nothing to fear from them; and should it be objected that at such times, when only women and children were left at home, and their borders were defenceless, it would be a proper opportunity for their enemies to invade them, it is further promised:

neither, shall any man desire thy land; though it is a desirable land; and their neighbours, and especially the old inhabitants of it, envied the happiness of the Israelites, and could not but wish it was in their possession; yet God, who has the hearts of all men in his hands, and can direct their thoughts, and turn the inclinations of their minds, and influence their affections, and engage them with other objects, promises that they should not think of an invasion of them, or have their minds, and the desires and affections of their hearts, in the least turned that way at these seasons, whatever they might have at other times; even

when thou shall go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in a year; at the feasts before mentioned, which was a most wonderful display of the power and providence of God.

Exodus 34:25

Ver. 25. Thou shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven,.... That is, not kill the passover, while there was any leaven in their houses; so the Targum of Jonathan,
See Gill on "Ex 23:18"

neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of passover be left unto the morning; neither any of the flesh, nor of the fat of the passover lamb: if any were left, it was to be burnt, see

Ex 12:10.

Exodus 34:26

Ver. 26. The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring,.... This, and another law in this verse, concerning not seething a kid in his mother's milk, are repeated from Ex 23:19.
See Gill on "Ex 23:19".

Exodus 34:27

Ver. 27. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... Being still with him on the mount:

write thou these words; expressed in the preceding verses, from
Ex 34:11, as he before had written in a book all those laws, contained in Ex 21:1 called the book of the covenant,
Ex 24:4 and which perhaps might be destroyed, as well as the two tables were broken; and therefore upon the renewal of the covenant here, there is a repetition made of the principal laws before given, which are ordered also to be written in a book, which may very well be called by the same name, since it follows:

for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel, with Moses, as their representative and mediator, and with them represented by him: what is above related carries in it the form of a covenant between them, God having declared on his part what he would do for them, and what laws and rules he required to be observed on their part; which Moses assented to in their name, and was ordered to write them down, that he might repeat them to them.

Exodus 34:28

Ver. 28. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights,.... These were other forty days and nights, besides those he had been with the Lord, when he came down and broke the two tables in his hand, on sight of the idolatry of the people; yea, not only the Jewish writers think that he was on the mount three times forty days and forty nights, but also several learned Christian writers, as Dr. Lightfoot {p} and others; and it seems plain that he

went up to the mountain three times, Ex 24:15 and it is not improbable that he was each time so long there; about the first and third times there can be no doubt, see Ex 24:18 and the text before us; and at the second time, when he went up to make reconciliation for the people,
Ex 32:30 he says, that he fell down before the Lord, as at the first forty days and forty nights, **De 9:18** and from the seventh day of the month Sivan, the day after the giving of the law, to the tenth of Tisri, on which day he now descended, are just so many days:

he did neither eat bread nor drink water: and it is very likely slept not, he being supported without either of these by the power of God; and having such nearness of communion with God, and his mind taken up with what he heard and saw, he had no thoughts of, nor desires and cravings after such things, as well as he stood in no need of them; all which must be ascribed to the miraculous interposition of God in the support of him, See Gill on "Ex 24:18"

and he wrote on the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments; not Moses, for these were tables of stone, which he could not write or engrave upon without proper instruments, which it does not appear he had with him on the mount; but it was God that wrote them, who, in Ex 34:1 says he would write them, and from
De 10:2 we are assured he did.

{p} Works, vol. 1. p. 715, 716.

Exodus 34:29

Ver. 29. And it came to pass, when Moses came down Mount Sinai,.... Which was on the day of atonement, according to Jarchi, that is, the tenth of Tisri, or September; and so the Jewish chronologers {q} fix his descent on this day:

with the two tables of testimony in Moses's hand; the two tables he carried up, on which God had wrote the law, called "the testimony", being a testification and declaration of his will to the children of Israel:

when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone, while he talked with him: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"Moses knew not that the splendour of the form of his face was become illustrious, which he had from the brightness of the glory of the Shechinah of the Lord, at the time he talked with him."

And this the apostle calls "the glory of his countenance", **2Co 3:7** the glory of the Lord as it passed before him, when in the cleft of the rock, and that degree of it he was admitted to the sight of, while conversing with God, during his stay on the mount forty days and forty nights, left a shining glory on his countenance; which while he was with God he could not be at all sensible of, the glory of God so infinitely surpassing that; and when he came down the mount, as he could not see his own face without a glass, so though the rays of light and glory that darted from his face were so bright and strong, that they might have been observed by him, yet his mind was so intent on what he had seen and heard, that he took no notice of them. The Vulgate Latin version renders it very wrongly, "that his face was horned", which has given occasion to painters to represent him in a ridiculous manner, as having horns coming out of his forehead; though the word has the signification of an horn, and the meaning of that version, as of others, may only be, that the skin of his face "darted out rays" {r} like horns, such as the rays of the sun appear to be like to the eye, see **Hab 3:4** hence Jupiter Ammon, the same with the sun, is described as having horns {s}; and so Bacchus, who is supposed to be the same with Moses, is represented as having a horned face {t}. Now this glory was left on the countenance of Moses, to show that he had had communion with God, and that the law he brought with him was from him; and to signify the glory of it, and to command awe and reverence, and make men afraid to break it.

{q} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 6. p. 19. {r} Nrq "radios ejacularetur", Tigurine version; "in modum cornu radiaret", Munster, Fagius, "[vel] rediasset", Vatablus; "splendere instar cornu", Drusius; so Karnon * in the Arabic language signifies the rays of the sun. * Golius, col. 1896. Castel. col. 3455. {s} Vid. Diodor. Sicul. l. 3. p. 201. Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 21. {t} Diodor. Sicul. l. 4. p. 212. so Orpheus calls Bacchus,
dikerwta, Hymn. p. 126. and Horace ascribes to him, "cornu decorum", Carmin. l. 2. Ode 19.

Exodus 34:30

Ver. 30. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses,.... Who very probably met him at the bottom of the mount; these Israelites with Aaron were the princes, as Aben Ezra seems rightly to interpret it, and as appears from the following verse; for Moses could not well be seen by the whole body of the people at once, upon his descent from the mount:

behold, the skin of his face shone; darted out rays of light and glory all around it, much perhaps in the same manner as the glory about our Lord, and others, is painted by the Romanists:

and they were afraid to come nigh him; there was something so majestic and striking in it; and perhaps they could not tell whether it foreboded good or evil to them; and this may signify, that as by the light of the law sin is discovered, it fills with a sense of wrath and fear of damnation; and being the ministration of condemnation and death, it is terrifying and killing, though it has a glory in it.

Exodus 34:31

Ver. 31. And Moses called unto them,.... Who, as it appears by what follows, on sight of him were so terrified, that they did not proceed on to meet him, but went back, and therefore he called unto them to return and come forward:

and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him; knowing him by his voice, and encouraged by his call of them, who before might take him to be something more than human, some glorious form, one of the heavenly angels appearing in this manner:

and Moses talked with them; after he had put a vail on his face, of which there is an account in the following verses. He talked with them friendly, and told them all that had happened to him in the mount; what a glorious sight he had been indulged with; what a proclamation of the grace and goodness of God had been made to him; and what laws and ordinances God had enjoined him and them the observance of.

Exodus 34:32

Ver. 32. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh,.... That is, after Aaron and the rulers had had a conversation with Moses, then the whole body of the people by turns were admitted to come before him, and hear the laws of God from him:

and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him on

Mount Sinai; besides the two tables of stone, and the testimony written on them, he gave them all the other commands he was ordered to write in a book, and which are recorded in this chapter; he kept back nothing from them, but enjoined them to keep all the Lord had commanded.

Exodus 34:33

Ver. 33. And [till] Moses had done speaking with them,.... Not when he had done, as the Septuagint version, for then there would have been no occasion for it; but when he first began to speak to Aaron and the "rulers", and continued to speak to the congregation until he had finished what he had to say; even he did what follows, as soon as he perceived there was a glory on his face, which they could not bear to look at:

he put a vail on his face; something that covered it in a good measure, a mask, or linen cloth, or some such thing. The obscurity of the law may be signified by this vail, both of the moral and ceremonial law; the moral law, which though it makes known the mind and will of God, with respect to what is to be done, or not done, yet not with respect to the affair of life and salvation: it makes known the one God as the object of worship, but gives no account of a trinity of persons in the Godhead; no hint of God in Christ, nor revelation of the Son of God; no view of a Saviour, no notion of pardon; nor does it point out the righteousness of Christ unto us; nor do we from it hear anything of the Spirit of God, and his grace, nor of eternal life and glory: the ceremonial law, and its ordinances, did give some light into evangelical things, and did point out Christ, and the blessings of his grace, yet but darkly and obscurely; they were shadows of good things to come, and gave some dark and distant views of them, but were not so much as the image of the things, and did not bring them near, and set them in a clear light: likewise this vail may be an emblem of the darkness of the minds of men, with respect to the law, and the knowledge of divine things; especially of the Jews, who, as the apostle says, "could not steadfastly look at the end of that which is abolished": of the ceremonial law, which is disannulled, the end of which was Christ; he is the end for which it was made, the scope or mark at which it aimed, the term in which it issued, and in whom it had its complete fulfilment; but this they had not a perfect view of, and could not steadfastly behold: the moral law also is in some sense abolished by Christ, as the ministration of Moses, as a covenant of works, and as to the curse and condemnation of it to those that believe; and Christ he is the end of this, the fulfilling end of it, by conformity of nature, and obedience of life unto it, and by suffering the penalty of it; but such was the blindness of the Jews, that they were ignorant of the nature of this law, of the spirituality and perfection of it, of its use to convince men of sin, to condemn for it, but not to justify from it; were ignorant of the righteousness of God which the law required, and of Christ, and of the way of life and righteousness by him; and so of the Spirit of God, and his work, and of the mysteries of the Gospel, and of the books of the Old Testament; see **2Co 3:14**.

Exodus 34:34

Ver. 34. But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him,.... Went into the tabernacle to converse with him, to pray unto him, and inquire about any matter of difficulty respecting the people of Israel he was concerned for, which he often did:

he took the vail off until he came out: and so when men are truly converted, and turn to the Lord, the vail of darkness and unbelief is removed, and the true light shines, in which they see things in another light than they did before; and when they come into his presence, they come with hearts opened and unveiled, all things being naked and open to him with whom they have to do; and particularly saints under the Gospel dispensation, with an open face, as in a glass, behold the glory of the Lord; and when they get to heaven, they will then see face to face, and know as they are known, **2Co 3:16**:

and he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel [that] which he was commanded; this respects not the present time of his coming down from the mount, or out of the tabernacle with the law and commands now given, for these he had already declared; but after times, and all such times when he went in to the Lord to inquire of him his mind and will concerning certain things, in which the people wanted information, when, upon his return, he acquainted them with whatsoever the Lord ordered to be done.

Exodus 34:35

Ver. 35. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses's face shone,.... That is, not only when he came down from the mount, but whenever he came out of the tabernacle, where he had been inquiring of God, and conversing with him:

and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him;

this he did from time to time, when he came out from the Lord he put on his vail, and when he went in again, he put it off. How long this brightness on his countenance remained, cannot be said with any certainty; Saadiah Gaon says, it did not remove from him to the day of his death: hence it is said, "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated", De 34:7 and Aben Ezra seems to approve of it; and it is the opinion of many great and learned men, that it continued as long as he lived.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 35:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 35

This chapter begins with a renewal of the command of the sabbath, Ex 35:1 and contains an order for a freewill offering to be brought for the service of the sanctuary, and specifies the things to be brought, and for what uses, Ex 35:4 to which there was a ready compliance, and men and women, princes and the common people, everyone according to what they had in possession, brought and offered it freely, Ex 35:20 and for their encouragement, that their offering would not be in vain, they were informed there were two persons divinely inspired, to do, and teach to be done, all manner of work for the tabernacle, towards which they had made such a liberal and plentiful contribution, Ex 35:30.

Ver. 1. And Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together,.... According to Jarchi, on the morrow after the day of atonement; that is, the next day after his descent from the mount, being desirous of setting about the building of the tabernacle, and making all things appertaining to it as soon as possible; which had been retarded through the sin of the golden calf, and making reconciliation for that:

and said unto them, these are the words which the Lord hath commanded, that ye should do them; namely, the law of the sabbath, as it had a peculiar relation to the making of the tabernacle, and the freewill offerings to be made on that account; for as for the commands, or other ordinances, whether ceremonial or judicial, the people had been made acquainted with them before.

Exodus 35:2

Ver. 2. Six days shall work be done,.... Or "may be done" {u}; everyone might do what work he pleased, or the business of his calling, on the six days of the weeks; he had liberty granted him of God, and might make use of it for the advantage of himself and his family; unless this can be thought to have a peculiar respect, as this repetition and renewal of this law seems to have, to the building of the tabernacle; and so is an order for working at it closely and constantly all the six days of the week, and in things belonging to it, until the whole was finished:

but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day; or "holiness" {w}; wholly holy, and be separated and devoted to holy service and religious duties, abstaining from all manner of work, even from the work of the tabernacle; for though that was designed for the worship of God, and required dispatch, yet the sabbath was not to be violated on account of it: and, as Jarchi observes, this admonition concerning the sabbath was given previous to the command of building the tabernacle; to show that that did not drive away the sabbath, or that the sabbath was not to give way to it, or to be broken for the sake of it, it being

a sabbath of rest to the Lord; in which the Israelites were to rest from bodily labour, and spend the day in the service of God, and to his honour and glory:

whosoever doeth work therein: even though it might be in anything belonging to the tabernacle:

shall be put to death; the Targum of Jonathan adds, by casting stones, stoning being the punishment of sabbath breakers,
Nu 15:35.

{u} hvet "fiat", Piscator. {w} vdq "sanctitas", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius.

Exodus 35:3

Ver. 3. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day. This law seems to be a temporary one, and not to be continued, nor is it said to be throughout their generations as elsewhere, where the law of the sabbath is given or repeated; it is to be restrained to the building of the tabernacle, and while that was about, to which it is prefaced; and it is designed to prevent all public or private working on the sabbath day, in anything belonging to that; having no fire to heat their tools or melt their metal, or do any thing for which that was necessary; for it can hardly be thought that this is to be taken in the strictest sense, as an entire prohibition of kindling a fire and the use of it on that day, which is so absolutely useful, and needful in various cases, and where acts of mercy and necessity require it; as in cold seasons of the year, for the warming and comforting of persons who otherwise would be unfit for religious exercises, and on the account of infants and aged persons, who could not subsist without it; and in cases of sickness, and various disorders which necessarily require it; and even for the preparation of food, which must be had on that day as on others, the sabbath being not a fast, but rather a festival, as it is with the Jews; and yet this law is interpreted by them in the most rigorous sense: they put kindling a fire among the principal works forbidden on that day {x}, and that not only to bake bread and boil flesh, as Aben Ezra interprets it here, but to warm themselves with; nay, they think it unlawful to touch an hearth, or a coal of fire, or a firebrand, or anything that may give them any warmth in a cold season; and if, for the sake of infants or aged persons, there is need of a fire or heating a stove, they hire a Christian to do it, or so prepare and order matters the day before that it kindle of itself {y}; and so Leo Modena {z} says,

"they do not meddle with any fire, nor touch any wood that is on fire, nor kindle any, nor put it out; nor do they so much as light a candle on the sabbath day: and if the place be cold where they dwell, except they have any stoves, or hot houses, or else have some one that is no Jew to kindle a fire for them; or had so ordered the matter before hand that the fire should kindle of itself at such a time; they must even be content to sit in the cold all that day:"

but here they nicely distinguish and observe, that it is said,

throughout your habitations; their private dwellings, but not the habitation of the Lord, or the house of the sanctuary; and on this score they allow of kindling a fire in Beth Moked {a}, an apartment in the temple, where a fire was constantly kept for the priests that kept watch to warm themselves at.

{x} Misn. Sabbat, c. 7. sect. 2. {y} Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 16. p. 361. {z} History of the Rites, &c. of the Jews, par. 3. c. 1. sect. 3. {a} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 20. 1.

Exodus 35:4

Ver. 4. And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel,.... Continued his speech to them, being convened by him, after by way of preface he had repeated the law of the sabbath, with an additional circumstance to it, "pro tempore":

saying, this is the thing which the Lord commanded; ordered Moses to inform them of as his will, when he was with him upon the mount the first time; but through their idolatry, and time spent in making up matters between God and them, he had not had till now an opportunity of acquainting them with it:

saying; as follows.

Exodus 35:5

Ver. 5-9. Take ye from amongst you an offering unto the Lord,.... That is, they were to take a part of their substance, of what they were possessed of, every man according to his ability, out of what he had in his hand that was suitable, and present it as a freewill offering to the Lord, for the use of the tabernacle to be built, and the service of it:

whosoever is of a willing heart; that is, of a generous and liberal disposition:

let him bring it, an offering of the Lord; or an offering to him, otherwise not; if brought niggardly and grudgingly it would not be acceptable, for God loves a willing and cheerful giver:

gold, silver, and brass: here and in the four following verses, the several things are particularly mentioned, which would be wanted in building the tabernacle, and in the service of it, and therefore would be acceptable; and they being exactly the same, and delivered in the same words and in the same order as in Ex 25:3 the reader is referred to the notes there. See Gill on "Ex 25:3".
See Gill on "Ex 25:4".
See Gill on "Ex 25:5".
See Gill on "Ex 25:6".
See Gill on "Ex 25:7".

Exodus 35:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "Ex 35:5".

Exodus 35:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "Ex 35:5".

Exodus 35:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "Ex 35:5".

Exodus 35:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "Ex 35:5".

Exodus 35:10

Ver. 10. And every wise hearted among you shall come,.... Every ingenious man, that is skilful in any mechanic art and business, who has a peculiar turn of mind, and employs his thoughts to improve, in a curious manner, in whatsoever manufactory he is concerned, every such an one is invited by Moses to come to him:

and make all the Lord hath commanded, the particulars of which follow.

Exodus 35:11

Ver. 11. The tabernacle,.... Which is not a general name for the whole, the court, the holy place, and the holy of holies; but designs the ten fine linen curtains curiously wrought; or the under curtains, as Jarchi expresses it, which were within:

his tent; the curtains of goats' hair, which were a covering over the others, and were made for a roof of the tabernacle, as the same writer observes:

and his covering; the covering for the tent, which was made of rams' skins, and badgers' skins:

his taches; which clasped, coupled the curtains together, both the one and the other; the one sort were of silver, and the other of brass:

and his boards, his bars, his pillars; which were all of shittim wood; the boards were the walls of the tabernacle, the bars which kept them tight together, and the pillars were those on which the hanging of the door of the tent, and on which the vail that divided between the holy of holies, were hung; of all which, see Ex 26:1 &c. to end of chapter:

and his sockets; which were of silver, into which the boards were let and fastened, see Ex 26:19, &c.

Exodus 35:12

Ver. 12. The ark and the staves thereof,.... To carry it with, which were all made of shittim wood:

[with] the mercy seat; made of pure gold; these were set in the most holy place:

and the vail of the covering; which divided between the holy and the holy of holies; of these see Ex 25:10.

Exodus 35:13

Ver. 13. The table and his staves, and all his vessels,.... The table of shewbread, and all things appertaining to it:

and the shewbread; which is mentioned for the sake of the table, and to show what was intended, and the use of it; for otherwise the shewbread was not yet to be made, nor by the artificers here called together; and is to be interpreted of the dishes of the shewbread, in which it was put; and so Junius and Tremellius render it, the instruments or vessels of the shewbread; of these see Ex 25:23.

Exodus 35:14

Ver. 14. The candlestick also for the light, and his furniture,.... The tongs and snuff dishes:

and his lamps, with the oil for the light; the cups, in which were put the oil and the wicks to burn and give light, as Jarchi interprets them; of these see Ex 25:31.

Exodus 35:15

Ver. 15. And the incense altar, and his staves,.... Which were overlaid with gold; hence this altar was called the golden altar, of which see Ex 30:1

and the anointing oil and sweet incense; each of which were made of various spices, see Ex 30:23

and the hanging for the door at the entering in of the tabernacle; at the east end of it, there being there, as Jarchi observes, neither boards nor curtains; see Ex 27:16.

Exodus 35:16

Ver. 16. The altar of burnt offering with his brazen grate, his staves, and all his vessels,.... Of which see Ex 27:1

the laver and his foot; Aben Ezra here observes that it had no staves, and conjectures it was carried in wagons when removed.

Exodus 35:17

Ver. 17. The hangings of the court,.... Of the tabernacle, the outward court, which were of fine twined linen, a hundred cubits long on each side, north and south, and fifty cubits broad, east and west; see Ex 27:9

his pillars, and their sockets; the pillars were they on which the hangings were hung; and the sockets were what the pillars were let into and fastened in:

and the hanging for the door of the court; at the east of it, of which see Ex 27:16.

Exodus 35:18

Ver. 18. The pins of the tabernacle,.... Which were to fix and fasten the ends of the curtains in the ground, that they might not be moved with the wind, as Jarchi observes:

and the pins of the court, and their cords; which were for the same use; see Ex 27:19.

Exodus 35:19

Ver. 19. The cloths of service, to do service in the holy place,.... To wrap up the various vessels of the tabernacle, when removed from place to place; see Ex 31:10 or the priests' vestments, in which they did their service, and therefore it follows, by way of apposition:

the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office; for which there are particular directions in Ex 28:1.

Exodus 35:20

Ver. 20. And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. After they had heard what Moses was ordered to propose unto them, they immediately went to their tents, and fetched what they had with them, or were willing to part with, and brought it directly as a freewill offering to the Lord; as
Ex 35:21 shows: from hence, Aben Ezra observes, we may learn, that the whole congregation of Israel came to the tabernacle, company after company.

Exodus 35:21

Ver. 21. And they came everyone whose heart stirred him up,.... Who felt an impulse upon his mind, a strong inclination in him:

and everyone whom his spirit made willing; or was endowed with a free and liberal spirit, and was heartily willing to bear a part, and cheerfully contribute to this service; otherwise the willing mind, as well as the ability, were given them of God; see 1Ch 29:14:

and they brought the Lord's offering; an offering to him, and such as he directed and disposed them to bring, and which was for his worship and service, and the honour of his name, and was acceptable to him:

to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation; for the making of that, the several parts of it, and all things in it:

and for all his service; either the service of God, or of his tabernacle, which is the same:

and for the holy garments; that is, of Aaron and his sons.

Exodus 35:22

Ver. 22. And they came both men and women, as many as were willing hearted,.... And none else were asked to come; and this supposes, that as there were many of both sexes that were quite cordial, and heartily willing to contribute to the uttermost of what they had for this service, so there were others that were not:

and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets; the first of these, according to our version, seem to be ornaments, not about the neck, but the hands and arms, or wrists, see Ge 24:22 though the word seems to have the signification of an hook, and may mean buckles or clasps, with which some part of their garments were coupled and fastened; so Kimchi says {b}, that in his opinion it was an ornament somewhat like a needle, with which they pierced and joined the two parts of the collar of a shirt under the throat: the next are such ornaments as were worn in the ears, and though many had been given for the making of the golden calf, yet not all; there were many that did not give their earrings for this service, especially the women, perhaps only the men, see Ex 32:2 the "rings" were such as were worn on the finger, as all seem to agree; but what the "tablets" were is hard to say, the word being only used in this place and Nu 31:50: some take them for ornaments worn on the right arm; others for the covering of another part, not to be named; others for girdles or aprons; Aben Ezra gives a different account of most of them; he says the first design ornaments in the ear, or earrings; the second such as were worn in the nose, or nose jewels; and the third indeed such as were put on the finger; and the fourth, that were upon the arm: however, they were all

jewels of gold; or were all such ornaments as were made of gold; and these are first mentioned, as being probably first brought, and were what were asked for in the first place, gold being wanted for several things:

and every man that offered [offered] an offering of gold unto the Lord; that is, everyone of the first company that came, their offering was of gold, or something made of gold.

{b} Sepher Shorash. rad. xx

Exodus 35:23

Ver. 23. And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet,.... Wool or yarn of either of the colours; unless it can be supposed there might be with some of them the ingredients with which colours were made, brought with them out of Egypt:

and fine linen; they had brought out of Egypt, and for which that country was famous:

and goats' [hair]; which in those countries was so long as to be shorn like the wool of sheep:

and red skins of the rams; died red, for it does not mean any that were naturally so, of which none are known:

and badgers' skins; see Ex 25:5 of each of these, such who had them in their possession, and their hearts were willing to part with them:

brought [them]; to Moses, to the tabernacle or tent where he was.

Exodus 35:24

Ver. 24. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the Lord's offering,.... Every one that had any quantity of either of these, whose heart was inclined freely to part therewith, brought it as a freewill offering to the Lord:

and every man with whom was shittim wood; or acacia, a sort of wood which grew pretty plentifully in those parts; and such who had cut it down for some use or another, and were disposed to part with it

for any work of the service; of which many things were to be made, whether they were trees they had felled, or planks and boards they had cut them into:

brought [it]; a sufficient quantity of it, for the various uses it was to be put unto.

Exodus 35:25

Ver. 25. And all the women that were wise hearted,.... That were ingenious, and had a good hand at spinning particularly, these were of the common and lower sort; the more honourable and richer sort of women are before mentioned, as bringing jewels or ornaments of gold of different sorts: but these were such who

did spin [with] their hands; in which way they got their living: some were more dexterous at it than others:

and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen; that is, yarn of these several colours, and flaxen thread, of which fine linen was made, all ready for the weaver, whether in woollen or linen.

Exodus 35:26

Ver. 26. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom,.... To be ingenious in their business, and to study to do it in a curious manner, and to do that which others could not:

spun goats' [hair]; some join the phrase, "in wisdom", in the preceding clause with this, neglecting the accent "Athnach", which divides them, thus, "in wisdom spun goats' hair"; and which, without being separated from the preceding clause, may be understood and repeated in this: for, as Aben Ezra says, to spin goats' hair was an art that required excellent wisdom; and so Jarchi: in the eastern countries there is a sort of goats' hair very bright and fine, and hangs to the ground, and the beauty of it is equal almost to that of silk, and is never sheared, but combed off, and the women of the country spin it; and at this day a great trade is driven with it at Angora and Aleppo {c}.

{c} Calmet in the word "Hair".

Exodus 35:27

Ver. 27. And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set,.... Or "stones of fillings" {d}, to be set in ouches, and fill them up, as stones set in rings do:

for the ephod, and for the breastplate; the onyx stones were for the shoulder pieces of the ephod; and the other stones were for the breastplate of judgment, and both to be borne by the high priest, for a memorial of the children of Israel before the Lord, whose names were engraven on these stones: the rulers are mentioned last, as bringing their offerings: the reason of which may not be, because they were backward to it, for they might offer earlier, though recorded last; or if they offered last, it might be because they brought things that others could not; namely, the precious stones here mentioned, and other things in the next verse, the common people had not; though some of the Jewish writers tax them with dilatoriness, and observe a letter wanting in the word for "rulers", it generally has; omitted to denote, as they think, that they were slow and backward in offering; so Jarchi notes from R. Nathan.

{d} Myalmh ynba "lapides plenitudinum", Pagninus, Montanus; "repletionum", Vatablus; "impletionum", Drusius.

Exodus 35:28

Ver. 28. And spice and oil,.... Such excellent spices and precious oil, pure oil olive, as the common people had not, and which they brought out of Egypt; the one was

for the light: for the light of the candlestick only; the oil, and other spices,

were for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense; the spices for the former were pure myrrh, sweet cinnamon, sweet calamus and cassia; and for the latter, stacte, onycha, galbanum, with pure frankincense.

Exodus 35:29

Ver. 29. The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord,.... What they did, whether more or less, they did it cheerfully and willingly, as to the Lord, for his service and glory:

every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the Lord had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses: See Gill on "Ex 35:21" and as there were work and service of God's appointment to be done in the legal tabernacle, so there are in the Gospel church; such as prayer, praise, preaching, and hearing the word, and the administration of ordinances; and for the support of which contributions are made; and all this is to be done willingly and cordially: the Gospel is to be preached not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre sake, but of a ready mind; the word is to be heard and received with all readiness, and ordinances are to be submitted to cheerfully, and with the whole heart; and the contributions made for the poor, and the support of divine service, are to be generous and bountiful: and those who have such a willing heart and spirit, have it not by nature or of themselves, but from the efficacious grace of God, which makes them a willing people in the day of his power; and from the free Spirit of God, who works in them, both to will and to do of his good pleasure; and from the love of God and Christ constraining them to it: and these act according to their several abilities, some have more grace and greater gifts, and others lesser and meaner; as well as some have more of this world's goods than others, and so capable of doing more service; but all, according to their capacity, of every sex and class, are to contribute all they can freely and willingly, to the carrying on of the cause of God and interest of religion: some bring gold, and some goats' hair, some silver, and some brass, &c. but all being offered willingly, from right principles, and with right views, is acceptable.

Exodus 35:30

Ver. 30. And Moses said unto the children of Israel,.... After they had brought their several freewill offerings:

see; observe, take notice of this, for your encouragement, that your service will not be in vain, for want of proper persons to perform this work, and to guide, direct, and oversee it:

the Lord hath called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; of this man, and of his descent,
See Gill on "Ex 31:2".

Exodus 35:31

Ver. 31-33. And he hath filled him with the Spirit of God,.... This and the two following verses contain the account of the qualifications of Bezaleel, which he had in an extraordinary manner from the Lord, and these are expressed in the same words as in Ex 31:3,
See Gill on "Ex 31:3" See Gill on "Ex 31:4" See Gill on "Ex 31:5".

Exodus 35:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "Ex 35:31"

Exodus 35:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "Ex 35:31"

Exodus 35:34

Ver. 34. And he hath put in his heart that he may teach,.... Instruct others in the things be had knowledge of; the Lord not only gave him gifts of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, to devise and contrive curious works, and how to perform them, but gave him a capacity, and inclined his mind to teach others, how to work these works; for not all that have knowledge have a capacity and a will to teach others also; this is of God:

[both] he, and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; who was joined with him as a companion and assistant in the same service; him the Lord also qualified, both to devise things, and to teach them others; of this man, See Gill on "Ex 31:6".

Exodus 35:35

Ver. 35. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart,.... Or wisdom in their heart, a large measure of it, signified by their being filled with it; and whatever wisdom men have, whether in things natural, civil, moral, or spiritual, it is all of God: this was

to work all manner of work, of the engraver; which the setting of stones in the ephod or breastplate required:

and of the cunning workman; and such an one was necessary for the making the curtains of the tabernacle, the vail between the holy and the holy of holies, and the ephod and breastplate of the high priest:

and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen; in which there were various works of things belonging to the tabernacle, and persons employed in it:

and of the weaver; both in linen and woollen, for the curtains and hangings of the tabernacle, and for the priests' garments:

[even] of those that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work: whether in the above things, or in any sort of curious work, in gold, silver, brass, wood, or stone.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 36:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 36

Bezaleel and Aholiab, with the artificers under them, having a call as well as qualifications for the service of the sanctuary, and having received from Moses the materials for it, set about it, Ex 36:1 but the people bringing more than was necessary, they acquaint Moses with it, who by a proclamation restrained from it, Ex 36:4 and next an account is given of the several things that were wrought by them, as first the curtains for the tabernacle, both of linen and goats' hair, and the coverings of them, Ex 36:8 next the boards for the tabernacle, and the sockets they were set in, and the bars for the boards, Ex 36:20 and then the vail which parted the most holy place from the holy place, and the hanging which divided between the holy place and the court, Ex 36:35.

Ver. 1. Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man,.... Or every ingenious artificer under them: when they began to work is not precisely said, but it is very probable they set about it directly, as soon as they were furnished with materials for it, nor is it said where they wrought; it is very likely there was a particular place, where they were ranged according to their respective manufactories, and where they did their work under the inspection, and by the direction of these two men:

in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding, to know how to work all manner of work, for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded; for as all the wisdom and understanding, which Bezaleel and Aholiab had for the building of the tabernacle, and making everything appertaining to it, and for instructing others to do the same, were from the Lord; so all the wisdom, understanding, and capacity in the artificers to learn of them, and work according to their directions, were also from him; who in a very extraordinary manner enlarged their faculties, and increased their natural abilities, to take in what was suggested to them, and perform their work exactly agreeable thereunto.

Exodus 36:2

Ver. 2. And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man,.... It was not enough that they had qualifications for this work, but they must have a call to it from Moses, to whom the whole affair was committed, to see that it was done according to the pattern shown him in the mount: so all that are concerned in the public work and service of the church of God should have a call unto it both from the Lord and from the church:

in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom, even everyone whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it; who had not only abilities given him of God, but a mind disposed for it, a willingness of heart, a readiness of soul for such service, was even eager upon it, and in haste to be at it.

Exodus 36:3

Ver. 3. And they received of Moses all the offering,.... That is, Bezaleel and Aholiab received it of him, who delivered it to the several workmen, as the nature of their work required, some one thing, and some another: to some gold, to others silver, to others brass, and to some they delivered out fine linen, and blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and to others shittim wood; Moses gave all out faithfully that he received, and kept back nothing for his own use or private advantage, even all the above things of which the offering consisted:

which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it [withal]; and which perhaps they went and fetched the same day they were called together, and acquainted with the mind of God concerning it; or at least they brought it in a very short space of time, and as soon as it possibly could be; it was delivered to the workmen, that the work might be begun, and carried on with the utmost expedition:

and they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning; they continued for a course of time afterwards to bring their freewill offerings of one thing or another to Moses, every morning, which perhaps was the most suitable time for him to receive them; and best expresses their readiness and diligence in bringing them, and which, as they brought, he sent to the workmen, as appears by what follows.

Exodus 36:4

Ver. 4. And all the wise men that wrought all the work of the sanctuary,.... The ingenious artificers who were employed, some in one thing, and some in another, either on the tabernacle itself, or the vessels of it, and things appertaining to it;

came every man from his work which they made; left off their work by mutual consent and agreement, and came in a body to Moses.

Exodus 36:5

Ver. 5. And they spake unto Moses, saying,.... One in the name of the rest:

the people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make; they had taken an estimate of what was to be done, and of what was necessary for the doing of it, and of what the people brought for this service; and they found there was a great deal more brought than would be wanted, and therefore they thought proper to advise Moses of it, that no more might be brought: it is hard to say which is most to be wondered at, the great liberality of the people in contributing so freely and bountifully, and continuing to do so without being urged, or even asked; or the honesty of the workmen, one and all, who might have gone on to have received the gifts of the people by the hands of Moses, and what was superfluous might have converted to their own use; but instead of this, they agree as one man to let Moses know how the state of things was, and prevent the people from making any more contributions.

Exodus 36:6

Ver. 6. And Moses gave commandment,.... Orders to some proper person or persons about him;

and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, or "caused a voice to pass"; a crier or herald, as the Targums, who went through the camp and published in every quarter:

saying, let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary; as the men in cutting shittim wood, and planing it, and the women in spinning blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and goats' hair:

so the people were restrained from bringing; that is, any more: instead of a spur to liberality, which most want, a restraint was laid upon these to check it, and prevent an excess in it, of which there is rarely any danger; so eager, forward, and zealous were they in this good work.

Exodus 36:7

Ver. 7. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it,.... The gold, silver, brass, and precious stones, the wood and yarn, which had been already brought in, were sufficient for everything they were ordered to make:

and too much; a great deal more than would be used; much would remain after all was wrought: what was done with this is not said, whether it was returned to the people, or laid up for the use of the tabernacle and service, as might hereafter be wanted; which latter seems most probable.

Exodus 36:8

Ver. 8-38. And every wise hearted man among them that wrought the work of the tabernacle,.... Did the part assigned him, what he was fittest for, and most skilful in: particularly some

made ten curtains, &c. which were properly the tabernacle, and were made first, and then the several things appertaining to it; and from hence, to the end of the chapter Ex 36:9, is only an account of the making of the tabernacle, its curtains, coverings, boards, sockets, and bars, the vail for the most holy place, and the hangings for the tabernacle, exactly as they are ordered to be made, See Gill on "Ex 26:1" &c. to end of chapter: and it may be observed, that throughout the account of the various articles, it is all along said "he" did this and the other; either referring to Moses, by whose orders they were done, or to Bezaleel, the chief director of the work, or to each and everyone of the artificers severally concerned.

Exodus 36:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 36:38

Ver. 38. See Gill on "Ex 36:8"

Exodus 37:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 37

This chapter continues the account of the making of the tabernacle, and the furniture of it, particularly the ark, mercy seat, and cherubim,
Ex 37:1 the shewbread table, and what appertained to that,
Ex 37:10 the candlestick, and all the vessels of it,
Ex 37:17 and the altar of incense, together with the anointing oil, and pure incense, Ex 37:25.

Ver. 1-29. And Bezaleel made the ark of shittim wood,.... Jarchi says, because he gave his mind to this work more than the rest of the wise men, it is called by his name. It is a notion of some Jewish writers that the ark was made by Bezaleel, without the help of others; but there is no sufficient reason to be given for it; for other things are equally ascribed to him in this and the following chapter, as the mercy seat with the cherubim, the shewbread table, the candlestick of pure gold, the two altars, the laver of brass, with other things, which are only said to be made by him, because they were made by his direction, and he having the oversight of them while making; wherefore Aben Ezra observes, that this is particularly said for the glory of the ark. Of the ark, and all other things mentioned in this chapter,
See Gill on "Ex 25:1" &c. to end of chapter,
See Gill on "Ex 30:1" &c. to end of chapter.

Exodus 37:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

Exodus 37:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "Ex 37:1".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 38:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 38

This chapter is a continuation of the account of the making of the things belonging to the tabernacle, particularly the altar of burnt offering, Ex 38:1 the laver of brass, and the things it was made of, Ex 38:8 the court and its hangings, pillars, sockets, hooks and pins, Ex 38:9 then follows an account of the quantities of gold, silver, and brass, expended in the making of the several things appertaining to the sanctuary, Ex 38:21.

Ver. 1-7. And he made the altar of burnt offering,.... That is, Bezaleel made it, or it was made by his direction, he having the care and oversight of it, wherefore the making of it is ascribed to him, **2Ch 1:5** the account of this, its horns, vessels, rings, and staves, is carried on to Ex 38:2 of which
See Gill on "Ex 27:1" see Gill on "Ex 27:2" see Gill on "Ex 27:3" see Gill on "Ex 27:4" see Gill on "Ex 27:5" see Gill on "Ex 27:6" see Gill on "Ex 27:7" see Gill on "Ex 27:8".

Exodus 38:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "Ex 38:1".

Exodus 38:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "Ex 38:1".

Exodus 38:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "Ex 38:1".

Exodus 38:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "Ex 38:1".

Exodus 38:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "Ex 38:1".

Exodus 38:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "Ex 38:1".

Exodus 38:8

Ver. 8. And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass,.... Not of the brass of the offering, for of that were made the brazen altar, its grate and vessels, the sockets of the court and court gate, and the pins of the tabernacle, Ex 38:29 but no mention is made there of the laver; for that was made, as here said,

of the looking glasses of [the women] assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; though these are called looking glasses, it is not to be supposed that they were made of glass as ours are; for of what use could such be in the making of a brazen laver? Some indeed choose to read the words "with the looking glasses" {d}, and take the sense to be, that there were looking glasses about the laver, affixed to it, that when the priests came to wash, they might see their spots, and the better know how to cleanse themselves from them: but it should be observed, that the priests did not come hither to wash their faces, but their hands and feet,
Ex 30:19 and so stood in no need of looking glasses for that purpose. The particle b is here, as Aben Ezra observes, instead of
m, and denotes the matter of which the laver was made, and therefore these instruments to behold the face in, or those mirrors, were of brass, as both he and Philo the Jew {e} affirm; and, indeed, what else could they be, for a laver of brass to be made of? mirrors in former times were made of various sorts of metal polished, some of gold, some of silver, some of brass, and some of brass and tin {f}; and the Indians to this day have mirrors made of brass, well polished, and exactly represent the complexion {g}. Pliny says {h}, that those of Brundusium, which were made of brass and tin mixed, were with the

ancient Romans reckoned the best. Aristotle {i} speaks of mirrors of brass, and of their receiving and showing the least touch, because the brass is smooth and polished; and so in our times, there are such as are made of polished steel, and even of burnished brass too: De la Hay {k} says that he had one in his study, which was given him, made of brass of Damascus, and was so finely polished that no crystal one could give a truer sight of the face than that; however, it is certain the ancients used such kind of mirrors; see Job 37:18 these the good women of Israel, in their great zeal, brought for the service of the sanctuary, though they were of daily use, and peculiarly serviceable to them in their dressing; for though the word "women" is not in the text, it is rightly supplied, as it is in all the three Targums, the word being feminine, and as may be justified by a parallel passage, **1Sa 2:22** indeed Varenius {l} proposes another, rendering the words thus,

"of the looking glasses in great number gathered together, which they had heaped together at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation;"

but the word used is active and not passive, and is used of persons gathering together, and not of things gathered, as appears from the above quoted place, and others; and these women gathered together, not for devotion and religion, to pray, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase it, or to pray, and hear the words of the law, as Aben Ezra, much less to bear any part in the ministry and service of the sanctuary, which as yet was not built; for this tabernacle of the congregation was no other than the tent of Moses, or, however, some little tabernacle erected while the other was preparing, see Ex 33:7 hither the women crowded with their mirrors of brass for the service of the sanctuary; for the word signifies an assembling in troops like an army; and they came in great numbers and beset the door of the tent where Moses was, that he might take their offerings at their hands; not but that it will be allowed that devout women sometimes did assemble at the tabernacle and temple, to perform acts of religion and devotion; but this seems not to be the case here, nor this a time and place for it; see **1Sa 2:22**.

{d} tarmb "cum speculis", Oleaster. {e} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 673. {f} Vid. Doughtei Analecta Sacr. excurs. 44. p. 124. {g} Agreement of Customs between the East Indians and Jews, art. 15. p. 65. {h} Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 9. & l. 34. c. 17. {i} De Insomniis, c. 2. {k} Apud Habikhorst. de mulier. Zobheoth in Thesaur. Theolog. Philolog. vol. 1. p. 321. {l} Apud ib. p. 318.

Exodus 38:9

Ver. 9-20. And he made the court,.... The open court of the tabernacle, where the people met, of which, its pillars, sockets, hangings, hooks, and pins, an account is given, to Ex 38:10 of which See Gill on "Ex 27:9" see Gill on "Ex 27:10" see Gill on "Ex 27:11" see Gill on "Ex 27:12" see Gill on "Ex 27:13" see Gill on "Ex 27:14" see Gill on "Ex 27:15" see Gill on "Ex 27:16" see Gill on "Ex 27:17" see Gill on "Ex 27:18" see Gill on "Ex 27:19".

Exodus 38:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "Ex 38:9".

Exodus 38:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "Ex 38:9".

Exodus 38:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "Ex 38:9".

Exodus 38:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "Ex 38:9".

Exodus 38:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "Ex 38:9".

Exodus 38:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "Ex 38:9".

Exodus 38:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "Ex 38:9".

Exodus 38:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "Ex 38:9".

Exodus 38:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "Ex 38:9".

Exodus 38:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "Ex 38:9".

Exodus 38:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "Ex 38:9".

Exodus 38:21

Ver. 21. This is the sum of the tabernacle,.... Not of the several parts of the tabernacle, and the several things belonging to it, before enumerated, as made and delivered to the care and custody of the Levites, but of the materials of which they were made, particularly the gold and silver, and the brass; the several sums and weight of which are given in the following verses:

[even] of the tabernacle of the testimony; in which the law, the testimony of the will of God, was put enclosed in the ark:

as it was counted, according to the commandment of Moses; when it was brought in to him by the people, and delivered by him to Bezaleel, Aholiab, and the artificers;

[for] the service of the Levites; or by means of their ministry, who were employed in taking this account:

by the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron the priest; the youngest son of Aaron, who had the direction and oversight of this affair.

Exodus 38:22

Ver. 22. And Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah,.... Of whom and his descent see Ex 31:2

made all that the Lord commanded Moses; gave directions about them, and took care that the tabernacle and all things belonging to it were made, which the Lord commanded Moses, and in the exact manner in which they were ordered to be made.

Exodus 38:23

Ver. 23. And with him was Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan,.... Of him see Ex 31:6

an engraver; of precious stones, as those in the ephod and breastplate:

and a cunning workman; in devising and working curious figured works, either in weaving or with the needle:

and an embroiderer in blue, and purple, and in scarlet, and in fine linen; which were used in the curtains and hangings of the tabernacle, and in the priests' garments.

Exodus 38:24

Ver. 24. All the gold that was occupied for the work, in all the work of the [place],.... That was expended in making the mercy seat and cherubim, and the candlestick, which were all of pure gold; besides other things belonging to the ark and shewbread table; and the plates, with which the ark and many other things were covered or glided:

even the gold of the offering; which the people brought and offered freely; as their bracelets, earrings, and jewels of gold, Ex 35:22

was twenty nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: now as it is clear from
Ex 38:25 that a talent is of the value of 3000 shekels, which, according to Brerewood, amount to three hundred and seventy five pounds of our money; and reckoning as he does the value of gold to be twelve times that of silver, a talent of gold, with him, is, of our money, 4500 pounds; so that twenty nine talents, seven hundred and thirty shekels, are reckoned by him at 131,595 pounds {m}; but according to Dr. Cumberland {n}, who is more exact in his calculation, and who reckons a talent of silver at three hundred and fifty three pounds, eleven shillings, and ten pence halfpenny, and the value of gold to be fourteen times that of silver; so that a talent of gold is, with him, 5067 pounds, three shillings, and ten pence; wherefore this whole sum of gold expended in the tabernacle, according to him, amounted to 148,719 pounds sterling: and, according to Waserus {o}, the amount of the whole is 350,920 Hungarian ducats, which make three tons and a half of gold, and nine hundred and twenty ducats: when one considers the distressed case of the Israelites in Egypt, their late deliverance from thence, and the desert in which they were, it may be wondered how they came by these riches, here and after mentioned; but when it is observed, the riches of their ancestors, particularly what Joseph got in Egypt, which descended to their posterity; the repayment of the labour of the Israelites at their departure, with what they borrowed of the Egyptians, and what they found upon their carcasses when cast up by the Red sea, it will in a good measure be accounted for; to which may be added, that, according to Jerom {p}, there were, eleven miles from Mount Horeb in the wilderness, fruitful mountains of gold; called Catachrysea.

{m} De Ponder. & pretiis. Vet. Num. c. 4, 5. {n} Of Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 4. p. 120, 121. {o} De Antiqu. Numis. l. 2. c. 18. {p} De locis Heb. fol. 90. A.

Exodus 38:25

Ver. 25. And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation,....
This was not the offering of silver,
Ex 35:24 but what was collected in numbering the people, where everyone of twenty years old and upwards paid half a shekel,
Ex 30:12 the sum

[was] an hundred talents, one thousand seven hundred and threescore fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; which, according to Brerewood {q},

make of our money, 37,721 pounds, seventeen shillings, and six pence; according to Waserus {r}, the whole amounted to 150,887 dollars and a half: and so, according to Lundius {s}, the sum is so many imperials, and forty five creutzers or cross pennies.

{q} Ut supra. (De Ponder & pretiis Vet. Num. c. 4, 5.) {r} Ut supra. (De Antiqu. Numis. l. 2. c. 18.) {s} Apud Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 253.

Exodus 38:26

Ver. 26. A bekah for every man, [that is], half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary,.... A half shekel was called a "bekah", from eqb, "bakah", to divide; because it was a shekel divided into two parts:

for everyone that went to be numbered, from twenty years and upwards; in order to give a ransom, and make an atonement for their souls, as was ordered Ex 30:12

for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty [men]; so that from the time of their coming out of Egypt, which was now about six months ago, there was an increase of 3550 of the above age; see Ex 12:37.

Exodus 38:27

Ver. 27. And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail,.... The sockets for the boards of the tabernacle, into which they were put; and the sockets for the vail, which divided between the holy and the most holy place, in which the pillars were set the vail was hung upon, and which was the silver foundation of the whole fabric:

one hundred sockets of the one hundred talents, a talent for a socket; there were ninety six sockets for the sanctuary or tabernacle, and four for the vail; and on each of these a talent of silver was expended; which, according to Dr. Cumberland, was three hundred and fifty three pounds, eleven shillings, and some odd pence; so much every socket cost.

Exodus 38:28

Ver. 28. And of the thousand seven hundred seventy five [shekels],.... Which remained of the sum collected, Ex 38:25 after the silver sockets were cast:

he made hooks for the pillars: on each side of the court of the tabernacle on which the hangings were hung; these hooks, as Kimchi says {t}, were in the form of the letter w, and were made to hang the sacrifices upon, when they took their skins off; and so it is said in the Misnah {u}, that there were iron hooks fixed in the walls and pillars, on which they hung (the passover lambs) and skinned them; this was done in the second temple, when the hooks, it seems, were iron, but those of the tabernacle were silver:

and overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them; that is, overlaid the heads, tops, or knobs of the pillars with silver plates, and filleted, girded, or hooped other parts of them with silver.

{t} Sepher Shorash. Rad. ww. {u} Pesachim, c. 5. sect. 9.

Exodus 38:29

Ver. 29. And the brass of the offering was seventy talents, and two thousand four hundred shekels. Which, according to Paris weight, were 6177 pounds, ten ounces, two drachms, and sixty four grains {w}: this might be had from the neighbouring mountains of Arabia, where it is said {x} the metals of brass and iron were first dug.

{w} Vid. Scheuchzer, ut supra. (Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 253.) {x} Aristeas de 72. interpret. p. 42. Vid. Hieron. de loc. Hebr. fol. 90. A.

Exodus 38:30

Ver. 30. And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,.... Which were five; see Ex 26:37

and the brazen altar, and the brazen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar; which were all made of brass; see Ex 27:2.

Exodus 38:31

Ver. 31. And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court gate,.... These were also of brass, in all sixty:

and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about; the pins for the curtains of the tabernacle, and for the hangings of the court; see Ex 27:19.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 39:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 39

In this chapter is continued the account of making the several things belonging to the sanctuary, particularly the clothes for the service of the tabernacle, and the garments of the priests, as the ephod and its curious girdle, Ex 39:1 the breastplate and the putting of the stones in it, and the fastening of it to the ephod, Ex 39:8 the robe of the ephod, with the bells and pomegranates to it, Ex 39:21 and the coats, mitre, bonnets, breeches, and girdle of fine linen, for Aaron and his sons, Ex 39:27 and the golden plate, Ex 39:30 and all being finished, the tabernacle and everything belonging to it were brought to Moses, and viewed by him; who seeing that all was done exactly according to the commandment of the Lord, blessed the people, and particularly the artificers, Ex 39:38.

Ver. 1. And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made cloths of service,.... Jarchi observes that there is no mention made of linen, because these were not the priestly garments in which there was linen; but these were they with which they covered the vessels of the sanctuary when they journeyed; and so says Aben Ezra; and those were covered with cloths of blue, purple, and scarlet, **Nu 4:5** though some think these were clothes wore by the priests:

to do service in the holy place: and which they only wore when in it, and employed in the service of it; and therefore what follows must be by way of explanation:

and made the holy garments for Aaron, as the Lord commanded Moses; the particulars of which are given in the following verses.

Exodus 39:2

Ver. 2-31. And he made the ephod of gold,.... From hence to the end of verse thirty one we have a very particular account of the making of the priest's garments exactly according to the directions given to Moses, See Gill on "Ex 28:1" &c. to end of chapter twenty eight; only it may be observed, that here in Ex 39:3 an account is given of the manner in which they made the gold fit to be worked along with the blue, purple, and scarlet yarn; they beat the gold into thin plates, and then cut them into wires, and then twisted them together with the yarn: the gold that was used in the weaving of the ephod and the breastplate, spoken of in the law, was wrought after this manner; the workman took one thread of pure gold, and put it with six threads of blue, and twisted the seven threads as one, and so he wrought a thread of gold with six of purple, and another thread with six of scarlet, and another with six of linen or flax, so that there were four threads of gold, and all the threads were twenty eight, as it is said; "they did beat" or spread out "the gold", &c. "to work in the midst of blue", &c. from whence is learnt that the thread of gold was twisted in the midst of them {y}: and it may be further observed, that after the enumeration of the stones in the breastplate, Ex 39:10 no mention is made of the Urim and Thummim, which seems to confirm the opinion of many, and which is my own, that they are the same with the stones: moreover, in Ex 39:28, it may be observed, that what the coats for the common priests were made of is expressed, which is not before, which was linen; expressive of their purity and holiness, and in which they ought always to appear before God and man, and in which apparel they have been imitated among the Heathens: the priests of Hercules are said to be clothed with linen {z}, and the Egyptian priests wore only a linen garment {a}; hence the priests of Isis, with whom she is represented as surrounded by Juvenal {b}, are called by him "grex liniger", and by Martial, "linigeri" {c}.

{y} Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 9. sect. 5. {z} Silius Ital. de Bell. Punic. l. 3. {a} Herodot. Euterpe sive, l. 2. c. 38. {b} Satyr. 6. {c} L. 12. Epigram. 26.

Exodus 39:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "Ex 39:2".

Exodus 39:32

Ver. 32. Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished,.... Both the tabernacle, consisting of the court, the holy place, and the most holy place, and the tent or covering that was over it, with all things appertaining to the service of it, as before described:

and the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did they: both the people in general, and the artificers in particular; the people brought gold, silver, and brass, &c. as was proposed to them; and the artificers wrought these and all other things, according to the directions and instructions they received.

Exodus 39:33

Ver. 33-42. And they brought the tabernacle unto Moses,.... That is, the several parts of it before it was put together, with all its furniture, and everything appertaining to it; which are examined in the order in which they were directed to be made, from hence to the end of Ex 39:42 and this was done, that Moses might inspect the whole, and see whether it was done according to the pattern shown him, and the instructions he had given to the workmen.

Exodus 39:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "Ex 39:33".

Exodus 39:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "Ex 39:33".

Exodus 39:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "Ex 39:33".

Exodus 39:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "Ex 39:33".

Exodus 39:38

Ver. 38. See Gill on "Ex 39:33".

Exodus 39:39

Ver. 39. See Gill on "Ex 39:33".

Exodus 39:40

Ver. 40. See Gill on "Ex 39:33".

Exodus 39:41

Ver. 41. See Gill on "Ex 39:33".

Exodus 39:42

Ver. 42. See Gill on "Ex 39:33".

Exodus 39:43

Ver. 43. And Moses did look upon all the work,.... Made a survey of it, and with great care and accuracy examined every particular thing, and the manner in which it was finished:

and, behold, they had done it as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it; both as to matter and manner in every point, on all accounts, just as they were ordered and directed; they being throughout the whole filled by the Spirit of God with wisdom and understanding, to do everything just as it was the will and pleasure of God it should be done:

and Moses blessed them; commended them for what they had done, and implored the divine blessing upon them; and which may be understood both of the people who had so liberally and plentifully contributed to this good work, and of the artificers who had so carefully and punctually performed it. The form of blessing, as the Targum of Jonathan gives it, is,

"may the Shechinah (or the divine Majesty) of the Lord dwell in the works of your hands;"

or as Jarchi expresses it,

"may it be the pleasure (of God) that the Shechinah may dwell in the works of your hands, and the beauty of the Lord our God may be upon us, &c."

which last words were part of the prayer of Moses, Ps 90:17.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Exodus 40:1

INTRODUCTION OF EXODUS 40

This chapter contains the order for setting up the tabernacle, and placing the furniture of it where it was the will of God it should be put, Ex 40:1 and for the anointing it, and all its vessels, and also Aaron and his sons, Ex 40:9 all which were accordingly done, the tabernacle was reared up, and everything was put in its proper place, Ex 40:16 upon which a cloud covered the tent, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, so that Moses could not enter; which cloud afterwards was a direction in their journeys, by night and by day, Ex 40:34.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... When the tabernacle, and the work of it, were finished, and he had taken a survey of it, and everything belonging to it, which appeared to be done as was ordered:

saying; as follows.

Exodus 40:2

Ver. 2. On the first day of the first month,.... Which was the month Nisan, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it; which was the month the children of Israel came out of Egypt, out of which they had now been a whole year, excepting fourteen days:

shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation; the tabernacle, which had a tent or covering over it, to which the people were gathered at times for religious service.

Exodus 40:3

Ver. 3. And thou shall put therein the ark of the testimony,.... The ark or chest where the law was, a testimony of the divine will, and which was to be put into the most holy place of the tabernacle:

and cover the ark with the vail; not with the propitiatory or mercy seat, as the Targum of Jonathan; for though that was a covering or lid to the ark, yet not a vail; this was the vail that divided between the holy place and the most holy, and so covered or hid the ark from the sight even of the priests that went into the holy place.

Exodus 40:4

Ver. 4. And thou shall bring in the table,.... The table of shewbread, which was to be set in the holy place:

and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it; besides the dishes, spoons, covers, and bowls, there were the twelve loaves of shewbread to be set in two rows:

and thou shall bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof; which was to be brought and set in the same holy place with the shewbread table; and though the lamps were to be lighted by Aaron, the priest of the Lord, he being not yet consecrated, the office was performed by Moses.

Exodus 40:5

Ver. 5. And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony,.... Not in the most holy place where the ark was, but over against it in the holy place:

and put the hanging of the door of the tabernacle; the door of entrance into the holy place, where there were to be no other things set but those now mentioned, the shewbread table, the candlestick, and the altar of incense; and these being brought in, the hanging was to be put up, which hid the sight of the above things, and forbid the entrance of the people there.

Exodus 40:6

Ver. 6. And thou shall set the altar of the burnt offering,.... Where the sacrifices of the people were to be brought, and offered up by the priests; and this was to be set up in the open court, as it was proper it should, both because of the smell and smoke of the sacrifices:

before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation; just a little before the entrance into the holy place.

Exodus 40:7

Ver. 7. And thou shall set the laver,.... As is directed in
Ex 30:18.

Exodus 40:8

Ver. 8. And thou shall set up the court round about,.... Which consisted of various hangings, east, west, north, and south; see
Ex 27:9.

Exodus 40:9

Ver. 9-11. And thou shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle,.... In this, and the two following verses
Ex 40:10, orders are given for the anointing of the tabernacle and its vessels, the altar of burnt offering and its vessels, the laver and its foot, whereby they were consecrated for divine use and service, according to Ex 30:26

Exodus 40:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "Ex 40:9".

Exodus 40:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "Ex 40:9".

Exodus 40:12

Ver. 12-14. And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,.... To wash, anoint, and clothe them, as in the two following verses Ex 40:13, that they might minister in the priest's office, according to Ex 28:41

Exodus 40:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "Ex 40:12".

Exodus 40:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "Ex 40:12".

Exodus 40:15

Ver. 15. And thou shall anoint them as thou didst anoint their father,.... For Aaron was first anointed, and then his sons:

that they may minister unto me in the priest's office; which they might not do before their anointing, though separated for it, and called unto it:

for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations; that is, this ceremony of anointing was to be used in all ages at the investiture of the high priest with his office, until the Messiah should come, who would put an end to the Aaronic priesthood; for not common priests, only the successors of the high priest, were anointed in later times; this present unction serving for all the priests that should follow in successive generations, so long as the priesthood continued.

Exodus 40:16

Ver. 16. Thus did Moses,.... He set up the tabernacle, and every thing in its place, and anointed them, and Aaron and his sons:

according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he; by which he approved himself to be a faithful servant in the house of God.

Exodus 40:17

Ver. 17. And it came to pass in the first month, in the second year,.... Of the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt;

on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up; so that this was in the spring of the year, about the vernal equinox, on a new year's day, that this was done, which was beginning the year well: it was within a fortnight of a year after their coming out of Egypt, and when they had been about five months and a half in building the tabernacle; for such a time it seems they were in doing that, and which, considering the many things to be done, and in the winter season, it shows great dispatch. Where was the place, in which the tabernacle was reared up, is not said: it is {d} observed, that near the southwest corner of that part of Mount Sinai, which is called Mount Episteme, there is a little hill called Araone by the Arabs, and by the Greeks the tabernacle of the testimony, where they say Aaron was consecrated, and first performed the offices of the priesthood: probably, says a learned man {e}, on this hill was placed the tabernacle of the congregation, which Moses was ordered to place without the camp afar off; but he seems to mistake the tent of Moses, or however the little tabernacle erected before the grand one was made, for this tabernacle in Ex 33:7 which he seems to refer to; it is more probable that it was now reared up in the midst of the camp of Israel, see **Nu 2:2**.

{d} Pocock's Travels, p. 147. {e} Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 350.

Exodus 40:18

Ver. 18. And Moses reared up the tabernacle,.... Not of himself, but with the help of others:

and fastened the sockets, and set up the boards thereof; fixed the silver sockets all around, which were the foundation of the building, and placed and established the shittim boards in them:

and put in the bars thereof; to keep the boards close and tight:

and reared up his pillars; the pillars that supported the vail between the holy and holy of holies, and those on which the hanging for the door of the tabernacle was put, as well as the several pillars all around the court of the tabernacle for the hangings of that.

Exodus 40:19

Ver. 19. And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle,.... Which were curtains of goats' hair:

and put the covering of the tent above upon it; which was of rams' skins died red, and over that another covering of badgers' skins:

as the Lord commanded Moses; Ex 26:7.

Exodus 40:20

Ver. 20. And he took and put the testimony into the ark,.... The ten commands, called the "testimony", because they testified and declared what was the will of God with respect to things to be done, or not done. The Targum of Jonathan says, he put the broken pieces of the tables into it; but what became of them, or were done with them, we nowhere read; and it does not appear that any other, but those that Moses hewed by the order of God, were put into the ark; see De 10:1

and set the staves on the ark; that it might be ready to be carried whenever a remove was necessary:

and put the mercy seat above upon the ark; together with the cherubim.

Exodus 40:21

Ver. 21. And he brought the ark into the tabernacle,.... Into that part of it called the holy of holies:

and set up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; the vail which divided between the and most holy place, and so kept out of sight the ark of the testimony within, from being seen by any, even by the priests in the holy place:

as the Lord commanded Moses; Ex 26:33.

Exodus 40:22

Ver. 22. And he put the table in the tent of the congregation,.... In the holy place; for there the shewbread table, which is here meant, was put:

upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the vail; on the north side of the tabernacle, at a little distance from the walls, which were the curtains and boards, even in the holy place on the outside of the vail, which divided from the most holy place.

Exodus 40:23

Ver. 23. And he set the bread in order upon it before the Lord,.... The shewbread, the twelve cakes of it, in two rows, six in a row:

as the Lord had commanded Moses: Ex 25:30.

Exodus 40:24

Ver. 24. And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation,.... In the same place, the holy place: over against the table: the shewbread table:

on the side of the tabernacle southward: directly opposite to the table.

Exodus 40:25

Ver. 25. And he lighted the lamps before the Lord,.... The seven lamps belonging to it: this, though it was the business of the priests of Aaron, and his sons, yet they not being at present invested with their office, was done by Moses, who in this and several other things mentioned in this chapter officiated as a priest:

as the Lord commanded Moses, Ex 25:37.

Exodus 40:26

Ver. 26. And he put the golden altar,.... The altar of incense; so called because it was overlaid with gold, and to distinguish it from the altar of burnt offering, which was covered with brass: to this altar there is an allusion in **Re 8:3**

in the tent of the congregation, before the vail; in the same place, the holy place, where the shewbread table and candlestick were, and these were all the furniture of it; and this was put, not within the vail, but before it, over against the ark, as that stood within it,
Ex 40:5.

Exodus 40:27

Ver. 27. And he burnt sweet incense thereon,.... Which is another branch of the priestly office exercised by Moses, and which he would never have done had he not had a command from God for it, as follows:

as the Lord commanded Moses; he commanded Moses indeed to order and direct Aaron to do this, but he being not yet consecrated, Moses, being the Lord's priest, did it.

Exodus 40:28

Ver. 28. And he set up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle. That is, at the door of the holy place, all being brought into it that were to be placed there.

Exodus 40:29

Ver. 29. And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation,.... Of which see
Ex 40:6

and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; either the burnt offering the meat offering of the daily sacrifice, as Jarchi interprets it, see Ex 28:38 or it may be rather the burnt offering and meat offering of the consecration of Aaron and his sons, Ex 29:1

as the Lord commanded Moses; in the places referred to.

Exodus 40:30

Ver. 30. And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar,.... Of which position, see Ex 30:18

and put water there to wash [withal]; for the priests to wash their hands and feet with; a type of that laver or fountain opened for the house of David and inhabitants of Jerusalem to wash in, Zec 13:1.

Exodus 40:31

Ver. 31. And Moses, and Aaron, and his sons, washed their hands and their feet thereat. This laver was for the priests, and Moses, officiating as a priest, washed in it, with Aaron, and his sons, whom he was now about to consecrate to the priest's office, and invest with it by offering sacrifice for them; Jarchi says this was on the eighth day of the consecration.

Exodus 40:32

Ver. 32. When they went into the tent of the congregation,.... Not only at this time, but at all other times:

and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; to the altar of burnt offering to offer sacrifice; and also to the altar of incense, and burn incense on that; for before whatever service they performed in the tabernacle they washed:

as the Lord commanded Moses; Ex 30:20 this phrase is near twenty times expressed in this and the preceding chapter, to show that everything was done by the workmen, and everything put in its proper place by Moses, exactly according to the will of God; no one pursuing his own fancy and private judgment, but all consulting the mind of God, and acting according to that.

Exodus 40:33

Ver. 33. And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar,.... Which consisted of hangings one hundred cubits long and fifty broad; see Ex 27:9, &c.

and set up the hanging of the court gate; which was at the east end of it; and the hanging was of twenty cubits, hung upon four pillars,
Ex 27:16

so Moses finished the work; of the tabernacle, in making it by workmen, and in rearing it up by the help of others; and as the former was the work of some months, so the latter, it is highly probable, was the work of some days, at least, in doing all that is said to be done in this chapter relative to it; for though it is said to be reared up on the first day of the first month, yet not then fully set up, or everything done requisite to the use and service of it; see **Nu 7:1**.

Exodus 40:34

Ver. 34. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation,.... The outside of it; this cloud was the same with the pillar of cloud that went before the Israelites, as soon almost as they came out of Egypt; and led them through the Red sea, and conducted them to Mount Sinai; only it now appeared in a different form, not erect as a pillar, but more expanded, so as to cover the tabernacle without;

and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle; the inside of it, not the most holy place only, but the holy place also: this was an uncommon brightness, lustre, and splendour, a glorious stream of light, which the eye of man could not well bear to behold; such a glory filled the temple of Solomon at the dedication of that, **1Ki 8:11** and was an emblem of Christ, the brightness of his Father's glory, dwelling in and filling the tabernacle of the human nature, where the Godhead, the Shechinah, the divine Majesty, dwells bodily, **Heb 1:3** **Col 2:9**.

Exodus 40:35

Ver. 35. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation,.... He had been there before, both in the holy, and in the most holy place, to see that the furniture of each were put as the Lord directed, which being done he came out again; and now a cloud being on the outside of it, and the glory of the Lord within, he was so struck with an awe and reverence of the divine Being, of whose presence these were a symbol, that he could not engage his heart, or had not boldness to go into the tabernacle until he was called, **Le 1:1** for so it follows:

because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle; there was something, no doubt, very venerable in the spreading cloud, as well as very striking in the refulgent glory, which commanded distance, even to a person that had been used to converse with God; Moses, that went into the midst of the cloud where the Lord was, now could not or durst not go into the tabernacle it covered; and he who then was not deterred by the sight of the glory of God, which was like devouring fire, Ex 24:16 now could not, or at least thought it not proper and advisable to enter into the holy place erected for the service and worship of God; the chief reason of which may be, because, as yet, he had not a call to enter, as he then had, and as we find was afterwards given him, **Le 1:1** and perhaps another reason may be, because he was now no longer a priest; Aaron and his sons being invested with the priestly office, whose business it was to draw nigh to God; and indeed the call he afterwards had was not to come into the tabernacle, but was a call unto him out of it.

Exodus 40:36

Ver. 36. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle,.... By the Lord himself, or it removed by his order, that is, rose up and stood above the tabernacle, and appeared in the form of a pillar, and went before it:

the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys; the motion of the cloud was a direction to set forward and continue their journey as long as it lasted; but when it rested and abode upon the tabernacle, then they stopped and rested also, as is suggested in the following verse Ex 40:37, see **Nu 9:17** thus the saints are to be followers of God as dear children, and to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes or directs, and walk after the Spirit, the dictates and directions thereof; so the wheels in Ezekiel's vision went and stood, as did the living creatures, and the spirit in them, **Eze 1:19**.

Exodus 40:37

Ver. 37. But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not,.... Even if it continued so two days, or a month, or a year, as very probably it sometimes did; which will in some measure account for the long continuance of the Israelites in the wilderness, see **Nu 9:22**

till the day that it was taken up: or, "of its ascent" {f}, being "lifted up", or going upwards, higher in the air, right over the tabernacle, or perhaps more to the front of it; the word used before in this and the preceding verse has the signification of ascending upwards.

{f} wtleh "sustolli ejus", Montanus.

Exodus 40:38

Ver. 38. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day,.... Or over it {g}, it covered it, when it abode upon it, and rested; and stood on high over it when it moved and the people journeyed:

and fire was on it by night; the same phenomenon which had the appearance of a cloud in the day time shone like fire in the night time: or "fire was in it" {h}; that is, in the cloud; so it appeared in the night, and was, as the Targum of Jonathan here calls it, a pillar of fire; the same with the pillar of cloud and fire, which departed not from the people all the while they were in the wilderness, Ex 13:21 and this was

in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys; whether by night or by day; for in hot countries they travel much by night; and as the cloud was both a shelter from the heat of the sun in the daytime, and a direction of their way; so the fire by night was of the same use for direction, and might be also terrifying to wild beasts in the wilderness, who are afraid of fire, and so be a security to the Israelites from them; all which is an emblem of the guidance and protection, light, joy, and comfort, the church of God has from his gracious presence, while in the wilderness of this world; see **Isa 4:5**.

{g} Nkvmh le "supra tabernaculum", Drusius. {h} wb "in ea"; Fagius, Junius & Tremellius; Drusius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS

This book is commonly called by the Jews Vajikra, from the first word with which it begins, and sometimes Mynhk trwt, "the law of the priests" {a}; and this is its name in the Syriac and Arabic versions: by the Septuagint interpreters it is called leuitikon, and by the Latins, Leviticus, or the Levitical book, because it gives an account of the Levitical priesthood, as the apostle calls it, **Heb 7:11**. It treats of the sacrifices under the Levitical dispensation, and of the priests concerned in them, and of the times and seasons in which they were offered, and of many other rites and ceremonies. That it was wrote by Moses is not only generally believed by the Jews, but is affirmed in the New Testament; see **Mt 8:4** compared with Le 14:2 from whence, as well as from other citations out of it in other places, the authority of it may be concluded. The matter of it was delivered to Moses, and very likely by him then written upon the erection of the tabernacle, which was in the second year of the Israelites coming out of Egypt, in the first month, and the first day of the month, Ex 40:17 and it was on the same day that the Lord spake to Moses out of it, and delivered to him the laws concerning sacrifices, recorded in the first seven chapters; see **Nu 1:1** compared with **Le 1:1** and on the eighth day of the same month, and some following days, the remainder of it was given to him, and written by him, see **Le 8:1** to which agrees the Targum of Jonathan on **Le 1:1**.

"when Moses had made an end of erecting the tabernacle, Moses thought and reasoned in his heart, and said, Mount Sinai, its excellency was the excellency of an hour, and its holiness the holiness of three days, it was not possible for me to ascend unto it, until the time that the Word was speaking with me; but this tabernacle of the congregation, its excellency is an excellency for ever, and its holiness an holiness for ever, it is fit that I should not enter into it, until the time that be speaks with me from before the Lord; and therefore the Word of the Lord called to Moses, and the Word of the Lord spake with him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying;"

and to the same purpose the Jerusalem Targum. It was written in the year from the creation of the world 2514, and about 1490 years before the coming of Christ. The various sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies made mention of in it, were typical of Christ, and shadows of good things to come by him: there are many things in it, which give great light to several passages in the New Testament, and it is worthy of diligent reading and consideration.

{a} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 103. 2.

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 1

This chapter contains certain laws and rules concerning sacrifices, particularly burnt offerings, which were delivered by the Lord to Moses, **Le 1:1** what those offerings should be of, **Le 1:3** what rules should be observed, what actions should be done, first by the persons that brought them, **Le 1:3** and then by the priest that offered them, with respect to the burnt offering of the herd, **Le 1:5** and to the burnt offering of the sheep and goats, **Le 1:11** and to the burnt offering of fowls, **Le 1:15** all which, when offered aright, were of a sweet savour to the Lord, **Le 1:9**.

Ver. 1. And the Lord called unto Moses,.... Or "met him", as the phrase is rendered in Nu 23:4. The word arqyw, translated "called", the last letter of it is written in a very small character, to show, as the Jews {b} say, that he met him accidentally, and unawares to Moses: other mysteries they observe in it, as that it respects the modesty of Moses, who lessened himself, and got out of the way, that he might not have the government laid upon him, and therefore the Lord called him; or to denote the wonderful condescension of the Lord, whose throne is in heaven, and yet vouchsafed to dwell in the tabernacle, out of which he called to Moses, and from Mount Sinai, and out of the cloud {c}. The word "Lord" is not in this clause, but the following, from whence it is supplied by our translators, as it is in the Syriac version, and as the word "God" is in the Arabic version; the two Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it,

"the Word of the Lord called to Moses,"

by an articulate voice, though it may be it was a still small one; and which some think is the reason of the smallness of the letter before mentioned; and Aben Ezra says that Moses heard it, but all Israel did not hear:

and spoke unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation; from off the mercy seat, between the cherubim over the ark, where the glory of the Lord, or the divine Shechinah and Majesty took up its residence, and from whence the Lord promised to commune with Moses, Ex 25:22:

saying; what follows concerning sacrifices; which shows, that these were not human inventions, but of divine institution, and by the appointment of God.

{b} Vid. Buxtorf. Tiberias, c. 15. p. 39. {c} R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 92. 1. 2.

Leviticus 1:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,.... For unto no other was the law of sacrifices given; not to the Gentiles, but to the children of Israel:

if any man; or woman, for the word "man", as Ben Gersom observes, includes the whole species:

of you; of you Israelites; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"and not of the apostates who worship idols."

Jarchi interprets it of yours, of your mammon or substance, what was their own property, and not what was stolen from another {d}, see
Isa 61:8:

bring an offering unto the Lord; called "Korban" of "Karab", to draw nigh, because it was not only brought nigh to God, to the door of the tabernacle where he dwelt, but because by it they drew nigh to God, and presented themselves to him, and that for them; typical of believers under the Gospel dispensation drawing nigh to God through Christ, by whom their spiritual sacrifices are presented and accepted in virtue of his:

ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, [even] of the herd, and of the flock; that is, of oxen, and of sheep or goats. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"of a clean beast, of oxen, and of sheep, but not of wild beasts shall ye bring your offerings."

These were appointed, Ben Gersom says, for these two reasons, partly because the most excellent, and partly because most easy to be found and come at, as wild creatures are not: but the true reason is, because they were very fit to represent the great sacrifice Christ, which all sacrifices were typical of; the ox or bullock was a proper emblem of him for his strength and laboriousness, and the sheep for his harmlessness, innocence, and patience, and the goat, as he was not in himself, but as he was thought to be, a sinner, being sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, and being traduced as such, and having the sins of his people imputed to him.

{d} Vid. T. Bab. Succah, fol. 30. 1. & not. Abendana in Miclol Yophi in loc.

Leviticus 1:3

Ver. 3. If his offering [be] a burnt sacrifice of the herd,.... So called, because consumed by fire, see **Le 6:9** even all of it except the skin, and therefore its name with the Greeks is "a whole burnt offering", as in Mr 12:33 its name in Hebrew is hlwe, which comes from a word which signifies to "ascend" or "go up", because not only it was carried up to the altar by the priest, which was common to other sacrifices, but being burnt upon it, it ascended upwards in smoke and vapour; it was typical of Christ's dolorous sufferings and death, who therein sustained the fire of divine wrath, and his strength was dried up like a potsherd with it. Jarchi on **Le 1:1** says, there were in the burnt offerings mysteries of future things:

let him offer a male; and not a female, pointing at the Messiah's sex, and his strength and excellency, the child that was to be born, and the Son to be given, whose name should be Immanuel:

without blemish; or [perfect], having no part wanting, nor any part superfluous, nor any spot upon it, see Le 22:19 denoting the perfection of Christ as man, being in all things made like unto his brethren, and his having not the least stain or blemish of sin upon him, either original or actual, and so could, as he did, offer up himself without spot to God, **Heb 2:17**:

and he shall offer it of his own voluntary will; not forced or compelled to it, or with any reluctancy, but as a pure freewill offering; so our Lord Jesus Christ laid down his life of himself, and freely gave himself an offering and a sacrifice, and became cheerfully and readily obedient unto death:

at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the Lord; it was to be done openly and publicly, and in the presence of the Lord, to whom it was offered up; showing, that Christ's sacrifice would be offered up to God, against whom we have sinned, by which his law would be fulfilled, his justice satisfied, and wrath appeased, and that his death would be public and notorious; see Lu 24:18.

Leviticus 1:4

Ver. 4. And he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering,.... According to the Targum of Jonathan, it was his right hand; but it is generally thought by the Jewish writers that both hands were laid on; so Ben Gersom and Aben Ezra, with whom Maimonides {e} agrees, who says, he that lays on hands ought to lay on with all his strength, with both his hands upon the head of the beast, as it is said, "upon the head of the burnt offering": not upon the neck, nor upon the sides; and there should be nothing between his hands and the beast: and as the same writer says {f}, it must be his own hand, and not the hand of his wife, nor the hand of his servant, nor his messenger; and who also observes {g}, that at the same time he made confession over the burnt offering both of his sins committed against affirmative and negative precepts: and indeed by this action he owned that he had sinned, and deserved to die as that creature he brought was about to do, and that he expected pardon of his sin through the death of the great sacrifice that was a type of. Moreover, this action signified the transferring of his sins from himself to this sacrifice, which was to be offered up to make atonement for them; so Gersom observes; see Le 16:21. This denotes the translation of our sins from us, and the imputation of them to Christ, who was offered up in our room and stead, to make atonement for them, as follows:

and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him: that is, the burnt offering should be accepted in his room and stead, and hereby an atonement of his sins should be made for him, typical of that true, real, and full atonement made by the sacrifice of Christ, which this led his faith unto.

{e} Hilchot Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 3. sect. 13. {f} Hilchot Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 3. sect. 8. Vid. T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 93. 2. {g} Ib. sect. 14.

Leviticus 1:5

Ver. 5. And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord,.... That is, the man that brings the burnt offering, for no other is yet spoken of; and according to the traditions of the elders {h}, killing of the sacrifice was right when done by strangers, by women, and by servants, and by unclean persons, even in the most holy things so be it that the unclean did not touch the flesh; and it is observed {i}, that the service of the priest begins in the next clause, killing being lawful by him that was not a priest, according to the Targum of Jonathan, the butcher; but Aben Ezra interprets it of the priests, and certain it is, that the burnt offerings of the fowls were killed by the priests, **Le 1:15** and the Septuagint version renders it, "and they shall kill": but be this as it will, the burnt offering was to be killed in the court before the Lord; and this was typical of the death of Christ, who, according to these types, as well as to other prophecies, was to die for the sins of men, and accordingly did; and if this was the proprietor and not the priest that killed the sacrifice, it may denote that the sins of God's people, for whom Christ's sacrifice was offered up, were the cause of his death:

and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood: in vessels or basins, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, into which they received it when slain:

and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; which was the altar of burnt offering, and not the altar of incense, as appears by the situation of it, see Ex 40:5 and the blood was sprinkled all around the altar with two sprinklings: the rule in the Misnah is {k}; the slaying of the burnt offering is in the north, and the reception of its blood into the ministering vessels is in the north, and its blood ought to have two sprinklings, which answer to four; which Maimonides {l} explains thus; because it is said "round about", it must needs be that the sprinklings should comprehend the four sides of the altar; and this is done when the two sprinklings are upon the two horns, which are diametrically opposite; and this is what is meant, "which are four"; the sense is, that those two should include the four sides, and the two opposite horns were the northeast and the southwest, as he and other Jewish writers observe {m}, and which he expresses more clearly elsewhere {n}: when the priest took the blood in the basin, he sprinkled out of it in the basin, two sprinklings upon the two corners of the altar opposite from it; and he ordered it so to sprinkle the blood upon the horn, that the blood might surround the corners in the form of the Greek letter "gamma" {o}; so that the blood of the two sprinklings might be found upon the four sides of the altar; because it is said of the burnt offerings, and of the peace offerings "round about"; and this is the law for the trespass offering, and the rest of the blood was poured out at the bottom southward: now this was always done by a priest, for though the bullock might be killed by a stranger, as Gersom on the place observes, yet its blood must be sprinkled by a priest; and it is the note of Aben Ezra, that this might be done by many, and therefore it is said, the "priests, Aaron's sons", when the slaying of it was only by one. The "altar" on which the blood was sprinkled typified the divinity of Christ, which gave virtue to his blood, whereby it made atonement for sin; and in allusion to this rite Christ's blood is called "the blood of sprinkling", **1Pe 1:2** Heb 12:24 which being sprinkled on the heart by the Spirit of God clears it from an evil conscience, and purges the conscience from dead works, and speaks peace and pardon there, Heb 10:22.

{h} Misn. Zebachim, c. 3. sect. 1. & Maimon. in ib. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 27. 1. & Zebachim, fol. 32. 1. & Menachot, fol. 19. 1. {i} Bartenora in Misn. Zebachim, ib. {k} Misn. Zebachim, c. 5. sect. 4. {l} Perush in ib. {m} Jarchi, Bartenora, & Yom Tob, in ib. {n} Hilchot Korbanot, c. 5. sect. 6. {o} Vid. T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 53. 2.

Leviticus 1:6

Ver. 6. And he shall flay the burnt offering,.... Take off its skin; this was the only part of it that was not burnt, and was the property of the priest, **Lev 7:8** but who this was done by is not so manifest, since it is in the singular number

"he", and seems to be the bringer of the offering; for Aaron's sons, the priests that sprinkled the blood, are spoken of plurally; and agreeably, Gersom observes, that the flaying of the burnt offering and cutting it in pieces were lawful to be done by a stranger; but Aben Ezra interprets "he" of the priest; and the Septuagint and Samaritan versions read in the plural number, "they shall flay", &c. and this was the work of the priests, and who were sometimes helped in it by their brethren, the Levites,
2Ch 29:34 and as this follows upon the sprinkling of the blood, it was never done till that was; the rule is, they do not flay them (the sacrifices) until the blood is sprinkled, except the sin offerings, which are burnt, for they do not flay them at all {p}. The flaying of the burnt offering may denote the very great sufferings of Christ, when he was stripped of his clothes, and his back was given to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and the skin of the sacrifice, which belonged to the priest, may be an emblem of the righteousness of Christ, and which also was signified by the coats of skins the Lord God made for Adam and Eve, **Ge 3:21** that robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, which all that are made kings and priests to God are clothed with:

and cut it into his pieces; which was done while he was flaying it, and after this manner, as Maimonides relates {q}, he flays until he comes to the breast, and then he cuts off the head, then its legs, and finishes the flaying; then he rends the heart, and brings out its blood; then he cuts off the hands, and goes to the right foot, and cuts off that, and after that he cuts down the beast until its bowels are discovered; he takes the knife and separates the lights from the liver, and the caul of the liver from the liver, and does not remove the liver out of its place; and he goes up to the right side, and cuts and descends to the backbone, and he does not go to the backbone until he comes to the two tender ribs; he comes to the neck, and leaves in it two ribs here and two ribs there; he cuts it and comes to the left side, and leaves in it two tender ribs above and two tender ribs below; then he comes to the point of the backbone, he cuts it, and gives it and the tail, and the caul of the liver, and the two kidneys with it; he takes the left foot and gives it to another; and according to this order they flay and cut in pieces the burnt offering of the cattle; and these are the pieces spoken of in the law, **Le 1:6** some apply this to the ministers of the Gospel, rightly dividing the word of God, and to the effect the word has in dividing asunder soul and spirit; but it is best to apply it to Christ, either to the evidence given of him in the Gospel, in which he is clearly set forth in his person, natures, and offices, and in all the parts and branches thereof; where every thing is naked and open to view, as the creature was when thus cut up; or rather to his sufferings, which he endured in every part of his body, from head to foot.

{p} Hilchot Korbanot, c. 5. sect. 18. {q} Ib. c. 6. sect. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. Vid. Misnah Tamid, c. 4. sect. 2, 3.

Leviticus 1:7

Ver. 7. And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar,.... The fire of the altar originally came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice, and which was a token of God's acceptance of it, see **Le 9:24** and this fire was kept burning continually upon the altar, **Le 6:12** and yet the Jewish writers say, it was the command of God, according to this passage, that fire should be brought from another place and put here; Jarchi's note on the text is,

"though fire came down from heaven, it was commanded to bring it from a common or private place:"

and Maimonides {r} says the same thing, and so it is often said in the Talmud {s}; and this, as Gersom observes, was not done by any but a priest in the time of his priesthood, or when clothed with his priestly garments; and so in the Talmud it is said, that the putting fire upon the altar belonged to the priesthood, but not flaying or cutting in pieces {t}: this fire denoted the wrath of God, revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, and which is the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and all the workers of iniquity; and which Christ endured for his people in human nature, when he bore their sins, and became a whole burnt offering for them:

and lay the wood in order upon the fire; the wood for the sacrifice was an offering of the people, brought to the temple at the times appointed, Ne 10:34 where was a place called Myueh tkvl, "the wood room", or "wood chamber", and which was in the northeast part of the court of the women; and here such priests as had blemishes wormed the wood, or searched the wood for worms; for whatsoever wood had a worm found in it, it was not fit to be laid upon the altar; and it was from hence the priests fetched the wood and laid it on the altar {u}; for a private person might not bring it from his own house for his offering {w}, though it was provided by the congregation {x}, and brought thither by private persons; and it might be any sort of wood but that of the vine and olive {y}, which were not used, because they did not burn well, and were soon reduced to ashes; and because such a consumption would be made of such useful trees hereby, that there would be no wine or oil in the land of Israel, so necessary for private and religious uses. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "the pile of wood being laid before": that is, before the fire was put upon the altar; but this is contrary to the text, for the wood was laid upon the fire, and therefore the fire must be first; the case seems to be this, the fire was first kindled, and then the wood laid in order upon it.

{r} Hilchot. Tamidin, c. 2. sect. 1. {s} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 63. 1. Yoma, fol. 21. 2. & 53. 1. {t} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 26. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 18. 1. {u} Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 5. {w} Issure Mizbeach, c. 5. sect. 13. T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 27. 1. {x} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 22. 1. {y} Misn. Tamid, c. 2. sect. 3. & T. Bab. Tamid, fol. 29. 2.

Leviticus 1:8

Ver. 8. And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts,.... That were cut in pieces, Le 1:6 some of which are particularly mentioned:

the head and the fat; the head which was cut off, and the body, the trunk of it; so, Aben Ezra says, the wise men interpret the word rdp "fat", which is only used here and in Le 1:12 and which he thinks is right; though others take it to be the fat caul, or midriff, which parts the entrails; and the Targum of Jonathan renders it, the covering of fat: these are particularly mentioned, but include in general the rest of the pieces, which were laid:

in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar; this disposition of the several parts of the burnt offering upon the altar signifies the laying of Christ upon the cross, and the disposition of his head, his hands, and feet there; according to the usual order of crucifixion: the skin, as before observed, was not burnt, but was the property of the priest, and the sinew that shrunk was taken away, and cast upon the ashes in the middle of the altar {z}.

{z} Ib. Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 6. sect. 4.

Leviticus 1:9

Ver. 9. But the inwards and his legs shall he wash in water,.... This was first done in a room in the court of the temple, called

Nyxdmh tkvl, "the room of the washers", or the washing room, where they washed the inwards of the holy things {a}; and after that they washed them upon the marble tables between the pillars, where they washed them three times at least {b}; and whereas this is said to be done "in water"; Maimonides {c} observes,

"not in wine, nor in a mixture of wine and water, nor in other liquids:"

the washing of the inwards and legs denoted the internal purity of Christ's heart, and the external holiness of his life and conversation, and the saints' purification by him both in heart and life: with Philo the Jew {d} these things had a mystical meaning; by the washing of the inwards was signified that lusts were to be washed away, and such spots removed as were contracted by surfeiting and drunkenness, very harmful to the lives of men; and by the washing of the feet was signified that we should no more walk upon the earth, but mount up to the air, and pass through that, even to heaven:

and the priest shall burn all on the altar; all the other pieces, as well as the inwards and legs, excepting the skin, which denoted the painful sufferings of Christ, and the extent of them to all parts of his body; and indeed his soul felt the fire of divine wrath, and became an offering for sin:

[to be] a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire; that is, all the parts of the bullock were burnt on the altar, that it might appear to be a whole burnt offering consumed by fire:

of a sweet savour unto the Lord: he accepting of it, and smelling a sweet savour of rest in it, as an atonement for sin, typical of the sacrifice of Christ, which is to God for a sweet smelling savour, **Eph 5:2** the Jewish doctors {e} gather from hence, that whether a man offers much or little, it matters not, if his heart is but directed to God; which Maimonides explains thus {f}, he that studies in the law, it is all one as if he offered a burnt offering, or a meat offering, or a sin offering, concerning which this phrase is used.

{a} Misn. Middot, c. 5. sect. 2. Maimon Beth Habechirah, c. 5. sect. 17. {b} Ib. c. 3. sect. 5. & Tamid, c. 4. sect. 2. Piske, Tosaphot Middot, Art. 23. {c} Hilchot Hakorbanot, c. 6. sect. 6. Vid. T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 22. 1. {d} De Victimis, p. 839. {e} Misn. Menachot, c. 13. sect. 11. T. Bab. Shebuot, fol. 15. 1. {f} In Misn. ib.

Leviticus 1:10

Ver. 10. And if his offering be of the flocks,.... As it might be:

[namely], of the sheep, or of the goats for a burnt sacrifice; which were both typical of Christ, See Gill on "Le 1:2"

he shall bring it a male without blemish; See Gill on "Le 1:3".

Leviticus 1:11

Ver. 11. And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the Lord,.... This is a circumstance not mentioned in the killing of the bullock: Maimonides {g} says, there was a square place from the wall of the altar northward, to the wall of the court, and it was sixty cubits, and all that was over against the breadth of this, from the wall of the porch to the eastern wall, and it is seventy six cubits; and this foursquare place is called the "north", for the slaying of the most holy things; so that it seems this being a large place, was fittest for this purpose. Aben Ezra intimates, as if some respect was had to the situation of Mount Zion; his note is, "on the side of the altar northward", i.e. without, and so "the sides of the north", Ps 48:2 for so many mistake who say that the tower of Zion was in the midst of Jerusalem; and with this agrees Mr. Ainsworth's note on **Le 6:25** hereby was figured, that Christ our sin offering should be killed by the priests in Jerusalem, and Mount Sion, which was on "the sides of the north", Ps 48:2 crucified on Mount Calvary, which was on the northwest side of Jerusalem; as by the Jews' tradition, the morning sacrifice was killed at the northwest horn of the altar {h}:

and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar; See Gill on "Le 1:5".

{g} In Misn. Zebachim, c. 5. sect. 1. {h} Misn. Tamid, c. 4. sect. 1.

Leviticus 1:12

Ver. 12. And he shall cut it into his pieces, with his head and his fat,.... Or "his body", as the Targum of Jonathan; this was to be cut in pieces in the same manner as the bullock,
See Gill on "Le 1:6":

and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that [is] on the fire, which is on the altar; See Gill on "Le 1:8".

Leviticus 1:13

Ver. 13. But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water,.... As he did the bullock, Le 1:9:

and the priest shall bring [it] all: all the parts to the ascent of the altar, as the Jews {i} interpret it; all the parts and pieces of it, even the very wool on the sheep's head, and the hair on the goat's beard, their bones, sinews, and horns, and hoofs {k}, all were burnt, as it follows:

and burn [it] on the altar, it [is] a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord;
See Gill on "Le 1:9".

{i} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 65. 2. & Yoma, fol. 27. 1. Chagigah, fol. 11. 1. {k} Misn. Zebachim, c. 9. sect. 5. Maimon. Hilchot Hakorbanot, c. 6. sect. 2.

Leviticus 1:14

Ver. 14. And if the burnt sacrifice for his offering to the Lord be of fowls,.... As it might be for the poorer sort, who could not offer a bullock, nor a sheep, or a lamb, Le 5:7:

then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves, or of young pigeons; the Jewish writers all agree, that the turtles should be old, and not young, as the pigeons young, and not old; so the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, Aben Ezra and Gersom {l}; the latter gives two reasons for it, because then they are the choicest and easiest to be found and taken: no mention is made of their being male or female, either would do, or of their being perfect and unblemished, as in the other burnt offerings; but if any part was wanting, it was not fit for sacrifice, as Maimonides {m} observes. These creatures were proper emblems of Christ, and therefore used in sacrifice, whose voice is compared to the turtle's, and his eyes to the eyes of doves, So 2:12 and who is fitly represented by them for his meekness and humility, for his chaste and strong affection to his church, as the turtledove to its mate, and for those dove like graces of the Spirit which are in

him.

{l} Vid. T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 22. 1, 2. {m} Issure Mizbeach, c. 3. sect. 1, 2. Vid. Misn. Zebachim, c. 7. sect. 5. & Maimon. & Bartenora, in ib.

Leviticus 1:15

Ver. 15. And the priest shall bring it unto the altar,.... The southeast horn of it; near which was the place of the ashes, into which the crop and its feathers were cast {n}:

and wring off his head; by twisting it back as it should seem; the word used is only to be found here, and in **Le 5:8** the Jews say, it signifies to cut with the nail, and that the priest did this, not with a knife or any other instrument, but with his nail; so Jarchi and Gersom on the place observe: some think he only let out the blood this way, but did not separate the head from the body, which seems to be favoured by **Le 5:8** though Maimonides and Bartenora {o} conclude the reverse from the same place; and that the meaning is, that he should cut off the head and divide it asunder at the time he cuts with the nail: the manner of cutting with the nail was this {p}, the priest held both the feet of the bird with his two fingers of his left hand, and the wings between two other fingers, and the bird upon the back of his hand, that it might not be within the palm of it; then he stretches out its neck upon the thumb about two fingers' breadth, and cuts it over against the neck with his nail, and this is one of the hardest services in the sanctuary:

and burn [it] on the altar; that is, the head, after squeezing out the blood, and rubbing it with salt:

and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar: or "the wall" of it: this, though mentioned last, must be done before, and immediately upon the wringing of the head, and between that and the burning it on the altar: this wringing off the head, and wringing out the blood, denote violence, and show that Christ's death, which this was a type of, was a violent one; the Jews laid violent hands upon him, and pursued his life in a violent manner, were very pressing to have it taken away, and his life was taken away in such a manner by men, though not without his Father's secret will, and his own consent.

{n} Misn. Zebachim, c. 6. sect. 5. & Bartenora in ib. {o} In Misn. ib. {p} Maimon. in Misn. ib. sect. 4. & Bartenora. in ib.

Leviticus 1:16

Ver. 16. And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers,.... Or "with its meat", or "dung", as Onkelos renders it, meaning that which was in its crop; and so the Jerusalem Targum interprets it, "with its dung"; and Jonathan's paraphrase is, "with its collection", or what was gathered together in the crop; it includes the entrails, as Gersom observes:

and cast it beside the altar on the east part, by the place of the ashes; where the ashes of the burnt offering were put every day, and every time such an offering was made; and all this answered to the washing of the inwards, and legs of the other burnt offerings, and signified the same thing, the cleanness and purity of Christ, and of his people by him.

Leviticus 1:17

Ver. 17. And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof,.... One wing being on one side, and the other on the other side:

but shall not divide it asunder; the body of the bird, though it was cleaved down in the middle, yet not parted asunder, nor any of its wings separated from it; the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it, "but shall not separate its wings from it"; this denoted, that though, by the death of Christ, his soul and body were separated from each other, yet the human nature was not separated from his divine Person, the personal union between the two natures still continuing; nor was he divided from his divine Father, though he was forsaken by him, yet still in union with him as the Son of God; nor from the divine Spirit, by which he offered up himself to God, and by which he was quickened; nor from his church and people, for whom he suffered, they being united to him as members to their head:

and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire; in like manner as the ox, sheep, or goat were burnt: according to the Misnah, the priest went up the ascent (of the altar) and turned round about the circuit; when he came to the southeast horn, he cut its head (or nipped it) with his nail, over against its neck, and divided it, and squeezed out its blood by the wall of the altar, and turned the part nipped to the altar, and struck it at it, and rubbed it with salt, and cast it upon the fires; then he went to the body and removed the crop and its feathers (or dung) and the entrails that came out along with it, and threw them into the place of ashes; he cleaved but did not divide asunder, but if he divided it was right, then he rubbed it with salt, and cast it upon the fires {q}:

it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord; See Gill on "Le 1:9" so with the Heathens, to the gods of the air they sacrificed fowls for burnt offerings {r}.

{q} Misn. Zebachim, c. 6. sect. 5. {r} Porphyr. apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 4. c. 9. p. 146. Vid. Maoreb. Saturnal. l. 3. c. 8.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 2

This chapter contains the law of the meat offering, and gives an account of what it was made of, fine flour, with oil poured, and frankincense put upon it, **Le 2:1** what was done with it; part of it burnt upon the altar, and the rest was the property of the priests, **Le 2:2** how it was to be when baked in an oven, or in a pan, or fried in a frying pan, **Le 2:4** what was prohibited in it, leaven and honey, **Le 2:11** what was to be used in it, salt, **Le 2:13** and what was to be the oblation and meat offering of the first fruits, and what to be done with it, **Le 2:12**.

Ver. 1. And when any man will offer a meat offering unto the Lord,.... Or, "when a soul", and which Onkelos renders "a man", so called from his more noble part; and, as the Jews say, this word is used because the Minchah, or meat offering here spoken of, was a freewill offering, and was offered up with all the heart and soul; and one that offered in this manner, it was all one as if he offered his soul to the Lord {s}: there were some meat offerings which were appointed and fixed at certain times, and were obliged to be offered, as at the daily sacrifice, the consecration of priests, the waving of the sheaf, &c. Ex 29:40 but this was a freewill offering; wherefore it is said, "when any man will offer"; the Hebrew word
hxnm, "a meat offering", may be derived from hxn, "to bring" or "offer", and so is a name common to offerings of any sort; or from

xynh, to "recreate" and delight, it being of a sweet savour to the Lord, as other offerings were; others derive it from xnm, a root not in use, and in the Chaldee language signifies a gift or present, in which sense this word is used, Ge 32:13

his offering shall be of fine flour; of flour of wheat,
Ex 29:2 for, as the Jews say, there is no fine flour but wheat, and this was for the meat offering, 1Ch 21:23 and this was to be of the finest of the wheat; for all offerings, whether private or public, were to be of the best, and to be brought from those places which were noted for having the best; and the best places for fine flour were Mechmas and Mezonicha, and the next to them were Caphariim, in the valley; and though it might be taken out of any part of the land of Israel and used, yet it chiefly came from hence {t}; and according to the Jewish writers {u}; the least quantity of fine flour used in a meat offering was the tenth part of an ephah, which was about three pints and a half, and a fifth part of half a pint: Christ was prefigured by the meat offering; his sacrifice came in the room of it, and put an end to it, Ps 40:7 whose flesh is meat indeed, the true meat or bread, in distinction from this typical meat offering, **Joh 6:55** the fine flour denotes the choiceness, excellency, and purity of Christ; the dignity of his person, the superiority of him to angels and men, being the chiefest, and chosen out of ten thousand; the purity of his human nature being free from the bran of original corruption, and the spotlessness of his sacrifice: and fine flour of wheat being that of which bread is made, which is the principal part of human sustenance, and what strengthens the heart of man, and nourishes him, and is the means of maintaining and supporting life; it is a fit emblem of Christ, the bread of life, by which the saints are supported in their spiritual life, and strengthened to perform vital acts, and are nourished up unto everlasting life, and who, as the meat offering, is called the bread of God, Le 21:6 **Joh 6:33**

and he shall pour oil upon it; upon all of it, as Jarchi observes, because it was mingled with it, and it was the best oil that was used; and though it might be brought from any part of the land of Israel, which was a land of oil olive, yet the chief place for oil was Tekoah, and the next to it was Ragab beyond Jordan, and from hence it was usually brought {w}; and the common quantity was a log, or half a pint, to a tenth deal of fine flour, as Gersom asserts from the wise men, and to which Maimonides {x} agrees; and Gersom on the place observes, that it is proper that some of the oil should be put in the lower part of the vessel, and after that the fine flour should put in it, and then he should pour some of it upon it and mix it: the oil denotes the grace of the Spirit poured out upon Christ without measure, the oil of gladness, with which he was anointed above his fellows, and from whence he has the name of Messiah or Christ, or

Anointed; and with which he was anointed to be prophet, priest, and King, and which renders him very desirable and delightful to his people, his name being as ointment poured forth, Ps 45:7

and put frankincense thereon; on a part of it, as Jarchi's note is; and according to him, the man that brought the meat offering left an handful of frankincense upon it on one side; and the reason of this was, because it was not to be mixed with it as the oil was, and it was not to be taken in the handful with it {z}; and the quantity of the frankincense, as Gersom says, was one handful: this denoted the sweet odour and acceptableness of Christ, the meat offering, both to God and to his people: it is an observation of the Jewish writers, that the pouring out of the oil on the fine flour, and mixing it with it, and putting on the frankincense, might be done by a stranger, by any man, by the man that brought the meat offering, but what follows after the bringing of it to the priest were done by him {a}.

{s} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, & Baal Hatturim, in loc. {t} Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 1. {u} Jarchi & Gersom in loc. {w} Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 3. {x} Hilchot Maaseh, Hakorbanot, c. 13. sect 5. {z} Vid T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 14. 2. {a} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 9. 1. & 18. 2. & Pesachim, fol. 36. 1. & Jarchi in loc.

Leviticus 2:2

Ver. 2. And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests,.... And this is all that he did with it; he left it with the priest, who carried it to the altar, to the southwest horn of it {b}: the order of bringing it, according to Maimonides {c}, was this,

"a man brings fine flour from his house in baskets of silver or of gold or of other kind of metals, in a vessel fit to be a ministering vessel; and if it is a meat offering of fine flour, he puts it into a ministering vessel, and sanctifies it in a ministering vessel;"

then did what follows:

and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof; as mixed together: the Jews say {d}, this was done with the right hand, which is very likely, that being generally used in this way: the Talmudists thus describe the manner in which the handful was taken; the priest stretched out his three fingers over the palm of his hand, and gathered the handful in the plate or pan, and parted it off with his thumb above, and with his little finger below; and this was the most difficult piece of service in the sanctuary {e}: though Maimonides {f} rejects this notion of difficulty, and says it was done in the common way, in which men take up a handful of anything: but Bartenora says {g}, it was not in the usual way, but much as before described: the priest put the sides of his fingers into the flour, and gathered the flour with the sides of his fingers within his hand, and took of the flour only three fingers' full, upon the palm of his hand, and no more; and that it might not be heaped or go out, he pared it off, above with his thumb, and below with his little finger; and this he affirms, according to the Gemara, and what his masters had taught him, was one of the hardest pieces of service in the sanctuary:

with all the frankincense thereof; this was not taken along with the handful of flour and oil; for if there was ever so small a quantity of frankincense in the handful it was not right {h}; for the frankincense, when brought, was put on one side of the fine flour, and when the handful was taken, then that was taken altogether, and put upon it:

and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar: that is, he was to burn the handful of fine flour and oil with the frankincense, as a "memorial"; either to put the Lord in mind of his lovingkindness to his people, and of his covenant with them, and promises unto them, to which the allusion is, Ps 20:3 or to put the offerer in mind of the great sacrifice of Christ, who was to be offered for his sins, and to be a meat offering to him: this was the part the Lord had in this offering, and which related to his worship, as the word used sometimes signifies, as De Dieu has observed:

[to be] an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord;
See Gill on "Le 1:9".

{b} T. Bab. Sotah, ib. & Meaachot, fol. 8. 2. {c} Hilchot Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 13. sect. 12. {d} Misn. Menachot, c. 1. sect. 2. {e} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 11. 1. {f} In Misn. Menachot, ib. {g} In ib. {h} Misn. ib. & Jarchi in loc.

Leviticus 2:3

Ver. 3. And the remnant of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons',.... Which not only shows the care taken by the Lord for the maintenance of the priests, from whence the apostle argues for the support of ministers of the Gospel, **1Co 9:13** but denotes that such who are made priests unto God by

Christ, have a right to feed upon Christ the meat offering by faith; who is that altar and meat offering, which none but such have a right to eat of:

it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire; some offerings with the Jews were only holy things, or, as they call them, "light" holy things, comparatively speaking; others were heavy holy things, or most holy; or, as it is in the original, "holiness of holiness", the most holy of all.

Leviticus 2:4

Ver. 4. And if thou bring an oblation of a meat offering baken in an oven,.... This is another kind of meat offering, or in another form; the former was only fine flour and oil mixed together, and frankincense put on it, but this was made up into cakes, and baked in an oven, and not in anything else, according to the Jewish tradition {i}; he that says, lo, upon me be a meat offering baked in an oven, he may not bring that baked otherwise; and this meat offering was made into cakes and wafers, and then baked, as follows: and

[it shall be] unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil; which according to the Jews were made after this manner {k}; the priest put the oil into a vessel before the making of it, then put the fine flour to it, and put oil upon it, and mixed it, and kneaded it, and baked it, and cut it in pieces, and put oil upon it, and mixed it, and again put oil upon it, and took the handful, and it was the fourth part of an hin of oil that was divided into the several cakes; the cakes, they say, were obliged to be mixed, and the wafers to be anointed; the cakes were mixed, but not the wafers the wafers were anointed, and not the cakes. The oil denoted the grace of the Spirit of God in Christ, and in his people; and being unleavened, the sincerity and truth with which the meat offering, Christ, is to be upon.

{i} Misn. Menachot, c. 5. sect. 9. Maimon. & Bartenora in. ib. {k} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 75. 1.

Leviticus 2:5

Ver. 5. And if thy meat offering be an oblation [baken] on a pan,.... Which had no edge or covering, and the paste on it hard, that it might not run out:

it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil; signifying the same as before.

Leviticus 2:6

Ver. 6. Thou shalt part it in pieces,.... This answered to the dividing of the pieces of the burnt offering, Le 1:6 and signified the same thing; See Gill on "Le 1:6" see Gill on "Le 1:12" All meat offerings, it is said {l}, that were prepared in a vessel, were obliged to be cut to pieces; the meat offering of an Israelite, one (cake) was doubled into two, and two into four, and then divided, each piece was about the quantity of an olive:

and pour oil thereon; after parted into pieces,
See Gill on "Le 2:4"

[it is] a meat offering; as well as that of fine flour, or that which was baked in an oven.

{l} Misn. Menachot, c. 6. sect. 4. Maimon. Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 13. sect. 10.

Leviticus 2:7

Ver. 7. And if thy oblation [be] a meat offering [baken] in the fryingpan,.... It is asked {m}, what difference there is between the pan, and the fryingpan? the fryingpan has a cover, but the pan has no cover; the fryingpan is deep, and its works (or paste) flow, or are thin, but the pan is extended, and its works (or paste) are hard or stiff; which Maimonides {n} explains thus, the fryingpan is a deep vessel, which has a lip or edge round about it, and the paste which is baked in it is thin and flows; the pan is a vessel which has no lip or edge, and therefore its paste is hard or stiff, that it flow not: now all these acts of mixing the flour, and kneading, and baking, and frying, and cutting in pieces, as well as burning part on the altar, signify the dolorous sufferings of Christ when he was sacrificed for us, to be both an atonement for our sins, and food for our faith:

it shall be made of fine flour with oil: as the other sort of meat offerings before mentioned.

{m} Misn. Menachot. c. 5. sect. 8. {n} Misn. ib. & Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 5.

sect. 7. Vid. Jarchi & Gersom & Ben Melech in loc.

Leviticus 2:8

Ver. 8. And thou shalt bring the meat offering, that is made of these things, unto the Lord,.... Either to the tabernacle, the house of the Lord, or to the Lord's priest, as it follows:

and when it is presented to the priest; by the owner of it:

he shall bring it unto the altar; to the south west horn of the altar {o}.

{o} Jarchi & Gersom in loc. T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 14. 2. Menachot, fol. 8. 2. Zebachim, fol. 63. 1.

Leviticus 2:9

Ver. 9. And the priest shall take from the meat offering a memorial thereof,.... That is, an handful of it; as of the fine flour, **Le 2:2** so of the pieces of that which was baked, whether in the oven, or pan, or fryingpan:

and shall burn it upon the altar; the memorial or handful:

[it is] an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord;
See Gill on "Le 1:9".

Leviticus 2:10

Ver. 10. And that which is left of the meat offering,.... Not burnt with fire:

[shall be] Aaron's and his sons'; the high priest took his part first, and then the common priests:

[it is] a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire; See Gill on "Le 2:3".

Leviticus 2:11

Ver. 11. No meat offering which ye shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven,.... It might be used in peace offerings, and in the wave loaves, **Le 7:13** but not in meat offerings; not only in the handful that was burnt, but in the rest that was eaten by Aaron and his sons; for so is the rule {p},

"all meat offerings are kneaded in hot water, and are kept that they might not be leavened; and if what is left of them be leavened, a negative precept is transgressed, **Le 2:11**."

It denoted in Christ, the antitype of the meat offering, freedom from hypocrisy and all false doctrines, which were the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees, Lu 12:1 and in his people that feed upon him by faith, that they should be clear of malice and wickedness, and of communion with profane and scandalous persons, **1Co 5:6** so the Jews {q} say, the corruption of nature is like to leaven, and therefore forbid:

for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire; as leaven was used in some offerings, so honey was brought with the first fruits, 2Ch 31:5 but neither of them might be used in offerings made by fire; they are forbidden to be burnt: the reason why they were forbidden, some think is, because they were used by the Heathens in their sacrifices, so Maimonides {r}, whose customs were not to be followed; and certain it is that honey was used in Heathen sacrifices: Homer speaks of honey as the sweet food of the gods {s}, and what they desire; and so Pausanias {t} relates of the Eleans, that, according to an ancient custom, they used to offer on the altar frankincense, and wheat mixed with honey: Porphyry {u} observes, that the ancient sacrifices with most were sober, the libations of water; after these, libations of honey, ready prepared by the bees, the first of moist fruits, next libations of oil, and, last of all, libations of wine; the Egyptians used honey in their sacrifices {w}; or the reason is, because it was much of the same fermenting nature with leaven, as Aben Ezra, and when burnt gave an ill smell, which was not proper in offerings made by tire, of a sweet savour to the Lord; or rather because a symbol of sin and sinful pleasures. Baal Hatturim on the place says, the corruption of nature is sweet to a man as honey, and intimates that that is the reason of its prohibition: it denotes unto us that such as would feed by faith on Christ ought to relinquish sinful lusts and pleasures; and that those that will live godly in Christ Jesus must not expect their sweets, but bitters, even afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions, for Christ's sake, in this life.

{p} Misn. Menachot, c. 5. sect. 2. {q} Baal Hatturim in loc. {r} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 46, p. 481. {s} ----- meli clwron, &c. Hymn. in Mercur. prope finem.
crhston melitwma, &c. Batrachomyo. {t} Eliac. 1. sive l. 5. p. 316. {u} De Abstinentia, l. 2. c. 20, 21. {w} Herodot. Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 40.

Leviticus 2:12

Ver. 12. As for the oblation of the firstfruits, ye shall offer them unto the Lord,.... Or "in" or "with the oblation", as some render it; that is, along with the oblation of the firstfruits leaven and honey might be offered: the Arabic version is very express, "but for a sacrifice of firstfruits ye" shall offer both to God; as they might be, as before observed; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"for the leavened bread of the firstfruits shall be offered, and dates in the time of the firstfruits; the fruits with their honey shall be offered, and the priest shall eat them:"

but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour; which they could not make, and besides were to be the portion of the priests.

Leviticus 2:13

Ver. 13. And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt,.... Which makes food savoury, and preserves from putrefaction; denoting the savouriness and acceptableness of Christ as a meat offering to his people, he being savoury food, such as their souls love, as well as to God the Father, who is well pleased with his sacrifice; and also the perpetuity of his sacrifice, which always has the same virtue in it, and of him as a meat offering, who is that meat which endures to everlasting life, **Joh 6:27** and also the grave and gracious conversation of those that by faith feed upon him, **Mr 9:50**

neither shall thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering; this seems to suggest the reason why salt was used in meat offerings, and in all others, because it was a symbol of the perpetuity of the covenant, which from thence is called a covenant of salt, Nu 18:19 namely, the covenant of the priesthood, to which these sacrifices belonged, Nu 25:13 hence the Targum of Jonathan, "because the twenty four gifts of the priests are decreed by the covenant of salt, therefore upon all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt:"

with all thine offerings thou shall offer salt, even those that were not to be eaten, as well as those that were; as the burnt offering of the herd, of the flock, and of fowls, and their several parts; all were obliged to be salted that were offered, excepting wine, blood, wood, and incense {x}; hence there was a room in the temple where salt was laid up for this purpose, called xlm tkvl, "the salt room" {y}; and which was provided by the congregation, and not by a private person {z}; our Lord has reference to this law in **Mr 9:49** the Heathens always made use of salt in their sacrifices {a}.

{x} Maimon. Issure Mizbeach, c. 5. sect. 11. {y} Misn. Middot, c. 5. sect. 2. {z} Maimon. Issure Mizbeach, c. 5. sect. 13. {a} Ante Deos Homini, &c. Ovid. Fastor. l. 1. Vid. Horat. Carmin. l. 3. Ode 23.

Leviticus 2:14

Ver. 14. And if thou offer a meat offering of thy firstfruits unto the Lord,.... This, according to Aben Ezra, was not any of the offerings of the firstfruits, which they were obliged to, as at the passover or pentecost, or feast of tabernacles, but a free will offering; but Jarchi thinks it is to be understood of the meat offering of the Omer, Le 23:13 and so Gersom, which was offered up on the sixteenth of Nisan; and this is the general sense of the Jewish writers {b}:

thou shalt bring for the meat offering of thy firstfruits green ears of corn dried by the fire; these were ears of barley, which began to be ripe in the month Abib, which month had its name from hence, and is the word here used; these were dried by the fire, being green and moist, or otherwise they could not have been ground; for, according to Gersom, these were afterwards ground into fine flour:

[even] corn beaten out of full ears; and so made the finest flour: the firstfruits were a type of Christ, who is so called, 1Co 15:23 the beating of the ears of corn, and drying of them by the fire, and the grinding of them, denoted the sufferings of Christ.

{b} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Menachot, c. 10. sect. 4.

Leviticus 2:15

Ver. 15. And thou shalt put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon,.... Either on the ears of corn dried, or on the fine flour of them when ground; in like manner as the oil and frankincense were put upon the fine flour of wheat, and upon the cakes and wafers baked, **Le 2:1**

it [is] a meat offering; one sort of it, and like the rest.

Leviticus 2:16

Ver. 16. The priest shall burn the memorial of it,.... That which is taken out of it for a memorial, the same with the handful of fine flour and cakes of the meat offering:

part of the beaten corn thereof; or that which was ground in a mill:

and part of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; as was done in the other meat offerings:

it is an offering made by fire unto the Lord, see **Le 2:2**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 3

This chapter contains the law of the peace offerings, and gives an account what they consisted of, and of the various rites and ceremonies used at them, as of the bullock and the rites appertaining to that, **Le 3:1** and of the lamb, and of the rites peculiar to it, **Le 3:6** and of the goat, and of the rites belonging to it, **Le 3:12** and the chapter is concluded with a law forbidding the eating of fat and blood throughout their dwellings for ever, **Le 3:17**.

Ver. 1. And if his oblation [be] a sacrifice of peace offering,.... The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render it, the "sacrifice of holinesses", or "sanctifications"; so called, not because they were more holy than other sacrifices; for they were what the Jews {c} call the lighter holy things, in distinction from the most holy things, such as the meat offerings were, **Le 2:10** but as Ainsworth suggests, either because none but holy persons might eat of them, **Le 7:19** though this also was enjoined in other sacrifices, or because hereby the name of God was sanctified. These offerings were either by way of thanksgiving for favours received, or for free devotion, or as a vow, and in order to obtain for himself that offered and family health and safety, peace and prosperity, see **Le 7:11** all which the word used signifies; and these sacrifices are by the Septuagint called "sacrifices of salvation" or "health", because offered either in gratitude for it, or to enjoy it; or else they were offered to make peace and reconciliation, and therefore are called peace offerings, and that they were for this purpose is certain from Eze 45:15 and Gersom says they had their name from hence, because they bring peace between God and men; they were a kind of a pacific festival between God, the priests, and the owner, and were typical of Christ, who has made peace for us by his blood and sacrifice. There is something very offensive to God in sin, it being a breach of his law, and contrary to his nature and will, provoking to the eyes of his glory, deserving of wrath, and death itself, and so not only sets man at a distance from him, but creates an enmity between them; hence a peace offering became necessary; such an one man could not bring acceptable to God; for neither his repentance nor good works would do; but Christ has offered up himself a sacrifice, and thereby has made reconciliation for sin and sinners, and procured peace with God for them; the consequence of which is spiritual peace here, and eternal peace hereafter; and so is a "sacrifice of peaces", as the Hebrew phrase here may be literally rendered, and is the proper antitype and full completion of this sort of sacrifice:

if he offer [it] of the herd; that is, a bullock:

whether [it be] a male or female; as it might be either; showing, as some think, that in Christ Jesus, and in the Gospel churches, and under the Gospel dispensation, there is no distinction of male and female, with respect to blessings and privileges, **Ga 3:28** or rather as others, denoting both strength and weakness in Christ; strength in his obedience, and weakness in his sufferings; strong he was as the man of God's right hand made so by him, and yet was crucified through weakness:

he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord: signifying the perfection and purity of Christ's sacrifice of peace offering in the sight of God: "before the Lord"; this, according to Gersom, was on the west side of the court.

{c} Misn. Zebachim, c. 5. sect. 7.

Leviticus 3:2

Ver. 2. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering,.... "His right hand with strength", the Targum of Jonathan says; perhaps both his hands were imposed; the Septuagint and Arabic versions read it in the plural number, "hands"; this same rite was used in the sacrifice of burnt offering, See Gill on "Le 1:4"; which might be done in any place in the court where it was slain, only with this difference: according to Maimonides {d}, there was no confession of sin made at laying on of hands upon the peace offerings, but words of praise were spoken:

and kill it at the door of the congregation; it seems as if it was not the priest, but the owner that brought it, and laid his hands on it, that killed it; and so the last mentioned writer says, that slaying the peace offering by a stranger was right; and as he and others {e} say, it might be slain in any part of the court; it was not obliged to be slain in the north part of it, as the burnt offering was, **Le 1:11**

and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about; in like manner as the blood of the burnt offering was, and it was done with two sprinklings, which were as four {f}; See Gill on "Le 1:5" this was typical of the blood of Christ, called "the blood of sprinkling".

{d} Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 3. sect. 15. {e} Misn. Zebachim, c. 5. sect. 7. {f} Misn. ib.

Leviticus 3:3

Ver. 3. And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering,.... That is, the priest, not all of it, but some of it, even what is after mentioned:

an offering made by fire unto the Lord; for what was offered to the Lord was burnt, and is that part of it which is next mentioned in this and the following verse:

the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards; both that which covered them, and that which stuck to them; and the fat being the best, it was the Lord's, and offered to him, and denoted Christ the fatted calf, whose sacrifice is best and most excellent; and which was typified by that which Abel offered up, and which being of the fat of the flock, and offered up by faith in Christ's sacrifice, was more excellent than Cain's, **Ge 4:4**.

Leviticus 3:4

Ver. 4. And the two kidneys, and the fat that [is] on them, which is [by] the flanks,.... Meaning either the two kidneys which were next the flanks, or the fat upon them, which was next to them; these, and the burning of them, may signify the burning zeal and flaming love and affections of Christ for his people, which instructed him, and put him upon offering himself a sacrifice of peace offering for them, see
Ps 16:7

and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away; or the caul, which is a thin membrane or skin, in which the liver is enclosed, with the liver, together with the kidneys, he separated from the rest in order to burn, at least with a part of the liver; so Jarchi and Gersom interpret it, that he should take a little of the liver with the caul; and indeed some think the word rendered "caul" signifies a part of the liver, that which the Greeks call the "table", the broader part of it, like a table; and which word the Talmudists {g} retain, who speak of adbkd hyvprj, "the table of the liver"; and by which Jarchi on Ex 29:13 interprets the caul above the liver, the same as here.

{g} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 46. 1.

Leviticus 3:5

Ver. 5. And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar,.... That is, the fat of the several parts before mentioned; this signified the sufferings of Christ, by which our peace is made, and by whose death we are reconciled to God: this rite of burning the fat of the inwards of sacrifices was used by the Pagans, and is still retained by the idolatrous Indians to this day {h}:

upon the burnt sacrifice; which, as Gersom says, was the burnt offering of the daily sacrifice of the morning, which was offered first of all sacrifices; so Jarchi says,

"we learn that the daily burnt offering preceded every other offering:"

this was an eminent type of Christ's sacrifice:

which is upon the wood that [is] on the fire; that is, which burnt offering was laid upon the wood on the fire, and the fat of the peace offering upon that:

[it is] an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord; as Christ's sacrifice is, **Eph 5:2**
See Gill on "Le 1:9".

{h} See the Abridgment of Mr. Brainerd's Journal, published in 1748, p. 30.

Leviticus 3:6

Ver. 6. And if his offering, for a sacrifice of peace offering unto Lord, be of the flock,.... As it might be: and be either male or female; which he pleased:

he shall offer [it] without blemish; See Gill on "Le 3:1".

Leviticus 3:7

Ver. 7. If he offer a lamb for his offering,.... Which was of the flock, and must be of the first year; this is a rule laid down by Maimonides {i}, that where ever this word is used in the law, it signifies one of the first year:

then shall he offer it before the Lord; bring it into the court, and present it to the priest.

{i} Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 1. sect. 14.

Leviticus 3:8

Ver. 8. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering,.... The Targum of Jonathan adds here, as before,

"his right hand with strength:"

and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation; in the court, in any part of it; for, as Gersom says, all places were right for this; the man that brought it killed it, or the butcher, as the Targum of Jonathan says here also as on **Le 3:2**:

and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle the blood thereof round about upon the altar; upon the four horns of it, See Gill on "Le 3:2".

Leviticus 3:9

Ver. 9. And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering,.... That is, the priest, Aaron, or one of his two sons:

an offering made by fire unto the Lord; that part of it which was to be burnt with fire; and in the peace offering of the lamb there was something more than in the peace offering of the bullock, or of the goat, which follows:

the fat thereof, [and] the whole rump, it shall he take off hard by the backbone; not the rump or tail, but the fat of it; the copulative "and" is not in the text; wherefore Aben Ezra says, that Gaon was mistaken in reading it as we do, "the fat there of", and "the whole rump"; but it should be rendered, "its fat of the whole rump", or "tail": in the eastern countries {k}, some sheep and lambs had very large tails, and very fat ones, the least weighing ten or twelve pounds, the largest above forty, and were put in little carts for ease and safety; see Gill "Ex 29:22" now such as were "whole", entire, perfect, and without blemish, as the word signifies, the fat of them that was next to the backbone was to be taken off of such as were brought for peace offerings:

and the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards; as before; See Gill on "Le 3:3".

{k} Vid. Ludolf. Hist. Ethiop. l. 1. c. 10. sect. 14.

Leviticus 3:10

Ver. 10. And the two kidneys,.... The same direction is given here as about the bullock of the peace offering, See Gill on "Le 3:4".

Leviticus 3:11

Ver. 11. And the priest shall burn it upon the altar,.... The fat of the tail, of the inwards, the two kidneys, and the caul of the liver:

[it is] the food of the offering made by fire unto the Lord; or "bread"; this part of the offering that was burnt belonged to the Lord; it was his food, and what was accepted of by him, and therefore is elsewhere called the bread of God, Le 21:8.

Leviticus 3:12

Ver. 12. And if his offering be a goat,.... As it might be, and which also was of the flock:

then he shall offer it before the Lord; in the same place and manner as the bullock and the lamb, **Le 3:1**

Leviticus 3:13

Ver. 13. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of it,.... His right hand, according to the Targum of Jonathan, as before; the same directions are given for the killing of it, and for the sprinkling of its blood, as in the offerings of the bullock and lamb.

Leviticus 3:14

Ver. 14. And he shall offer thereof his offering,.... The same rules are laid down about taking the fat off of several parts as in the sacrifice of the bullock; but nothing is said of the fat of the rump and tail, as is said of the lamb.

Leviticus 3:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "Le 3:14".

Leviticus 3:16

Ver. 16. And the priest shall burn them upon the altar,.... Which shows that not the fat only, but the inwards and the kidneys, were burnt also; so Maimonides says {l}, that the priest salted the parts, and burned them upon the altar; and the priests might not have the breast and shoulder (which were what belonged to them) until the parts were burnt:

[it is] the food of the offering made by fire; which the Lord ate of, or accepted of:

for a sweet savour; as a type of the sweet smelling sacrifice of Christ, with which he is well pleased;

all the fat is the Lord's; that is, all that was upon the parts mentioned in the several sacrifices of peace offerings, which was to be taken off and burnt: though the Jewish writers understand it of all fat in general, and so interpret the law that follows.

{l} Ut supra, (Maaseh Hakorbanot) c. 9. sect. 11.

Leviticus 3:17

Ver. 17. [It shall be] a perpetual statute for your generations,.... That is, unto the end of the Mosaic dispensation, until the Messiah comes, and his sacrifice is offered up, and his blood is shed, till that time in all generations: and

throughout all your dwellings; wherever their habitations should be, it is a law to be observed:

that ye eat neither fat nor blood; the Jewish writers think, that this is not to be restrained to the fat and blood of sacrifices, because these were not offered in their dwellings, but in the tabernacle and temple, and therefore interpret it of fat and blood in general; but what fat and blood are meant may be seen in Le 7:23 the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"but upon the top of the altar it shall be offered to the name of the Lord,"

which seems to restrain it to the sacrifices.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 4

This chapter contains the law of the sin offering, which was offered for sins committed through ignorance, error, and mistake, **Le 4:1** and gives an account of the matter of them, and the rites belonging thereunto, which were different according to the persons for whom it was made, as for the anointed priest, **Le 4:3** for the whole congregation, **Le 4:13** and for the ruler, **Le 4:22** and for any of the common people, **Le 4:27**.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying. Continued to speak to him, or, after some pause made, proceeded to speak to him, and give things in commandment concerning the sin offering, what it should be, and for whom, as follows.

Leviticus 4:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, [saying],.... For this law concerning the sin offering, as the rest, only belonged to them, and such as were proselyted to them:

if a soul should sin through ignorance; sin is from the soul, though committed by the body; it is the soul that sins, Eze 18:4 it includes, as Aben Ezra observes, both Israelites and proselytes; who sinned through ignorance either of the law, that such things were forbidden, or of having committed them, they being done unobserved, and through inadvertency; or were forgotten that they were done, or were done through error and mistake; these sins are what the apostle calls the errors of the people, their strayings out of the way through ignorance and inadvertency, **Heb 5:2** such sins as a man is overtaken with unawares, and is drawn into at once through temptation and the prevalence of corruption; these are the errors and secret faults which David distinguishes from presumptuous sins,
Ps 19:12:

against any of the commandments of the Lord ([concerning things] which ought not to be done.) The Jewish writers {m} distinguish the commandments of the Lord into affirmative and negative, and make their number to be six hundred and thirteen; two hundred and forty eight are affirmative, according to the number of bones in a man's body, and three hundred sixty five are negative ones, according to the number of the days of the year; and they observe {n}, it is only the transgression of negative precepts that is here meant, and for which a sin offering was to be brought:

and shall do against any of them; it must be something done, and not merely said: hence the Jews {o} say, that as the neglect of circumcision, and of the passover, does not come under this law, because they are affirmative precepts; so neither blasphemy, because there is nothing done, only something said: of these sins of ignorance, they give instances as follows; if any man eats the fat that is about the kidneys, thinking it is the fat that is about the heart; or that lies with a woman forbidden by the law, thinking her to be his wife; or that commits idolatry, by bowing to the idol, thinking that the law forbids sacrifice, incense, and libation, but not bowing; or that profanes the sabbath, thinking it is a common day {p}.

{m} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 23. 2. {n} Maimon. in Misn. Horayot, c. 2. sect. 3. Bartenora in Misn. Ceritot, c. 1. sect. 1. Gersom in loc. {o} Misn. Ceritot, c. 1. sect. 2. & Bartenora in ib. Maimon. Hilchot Shegagot, c. 1. sect. 2. {p} Maimon & Bartenora in Misn. Ceritot, ib.

Leviticus 4:3

Ver. 3. If the priest that is anointed do sin,.... That is, the high priest, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and the Septuagint version, render it; who in after times was only anointed, though at first Aaron's sons were anointed with him; so an high priest is described in Le 21:10 and such an one was liable to sin, and often did; which shows not only that the greatest and best of men are not without sin, but proves what the apostle observes, that the law made men high priests which had infirmity, even sinful infirmities, who needed to offer for themselves as well as for the people; by which it appeared that perfection could not be had by the Levitical priesthood, and that it was proper it should cease, and another priesthood take place, **Heb 7:11**:

according to the sin of the people; committing the like sins of error and ignorance as the common people, to which he was liable as they; or "to make the people guilty"; as the margin reads; to which agrees the Septuagint version, "so that the people sin"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "making the people to sin"; either by his doctrine or example, and both through ignorance, heedlessness, and inadvertency: the Targum of Jonathan is, "when he offers the offering of sin for the people, not according to its manner"

or rite; as if his sin lay in erring while he was offering; but be it in which way it may, whether by any unadvised inadvertent action of his own, or ignorant instruction of the people, so causing them to err, or any ignorance or mistake in offering the sacrifices of the people:

then let him bring for the sin which he has sinned; in either way:

a young bullock; not an ox which was three years old, nor a calf which was but of one year, but a bullock which was of two years; so Maimonides {q} observes, that wherever it is said a calf, that is a young one of the first year, but a bullock it is a young one of the second year: as are men's characters, so are the aggravations of their sins, and sacrifices were proportioned thereunto; the high priest was obliged to bring the same offering as the whole congregation did in a like case; see **Le 4:13**

without blemish; a type of the sacrifice of Christ offered up without spot to God, as it follows;

unto the Lord; against whom sin is committed, and therefore sacrifice both in the type and antitype must be brought and offered up to him, by whom it is accepted, and to whom it is of a sweetsmelling savour, namely, the unblemished sacrifice of Christ:

for a sin offering; or "for sin": the sin offering is called sin itself, and so is Christ the antitype of it, **2Co 5:21** Christ is most holy in himself, had no sin in him, nor knew any, nor were any committed by him; yet he appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, took the place of sinners, and was their substitute, had all their sins laid upon him, and was by imputation made sin itself, and became an offering for it, and so fully answered the type of the sin offering.

{q} Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 1. sect. 14.

Leviticus 4:4

Ver. 4. And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord,.... As the bullock of the burnt offering; See Gill on "Le 1:3":

and shall lay his hand on the bullock's head; the Targum of Jonathan says his right hand; See Gill on "Le 1:4":

and kill the bullock before the Lord; at the door of the tabernacle, that is, in the court, as Gersom observes; according to the above Targum, the butcher killed it, and not the priest:
See Gill on "Le 1:5" all this is typical of the imputation of sin to Christ, and of his death.

Leviticus 4:5

Ver. 5. And the priest that is anointed shall take of the bullock's blood,.... Let out and received into a basin; this he did himself, and not another, for he offered for himself, and the blood was to make atonement for him:

and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation; out of the court where the bullock was slain, into the holy place, where were the vail that divided between the holy of holies, and the altar of sweet incense, after mentioned.

Leviticus 4:6

Ver. 6. And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood,.... The finger of his right hand, as Gersom observes, and so Maimonides {r}; for blood was always taken and sprinkled with the right hand, if done with the left it was wrong, according to the Jewish canons {s} and though it is only said the priest, and not that is anointed, as before, yet it seems to mean him and not another; though if a private priest did this, Gersom says, it would be right, and so Maimonides {t}:

and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the Lord; a figure of the blood of Christ, called, in allusion to this rite, the blood of sprinkling; which being presented before the Lord, calls for pardon from him, and sprinkled on the conscience, speaks peace there, and perfectly cleanses from all sin, which the seven times sprinkling is a symbol of:

before the vail of the sanctuary: the words may be literally rendered, "the face of the vail of the sanctuary": as if the blood was sprinkled on the outside of the vail. Jarchi's note is, "over against the place of its holiness, he directed (it) over against between the staves; the blood shall not touch the vail, but if it touches, it touches it;"

that is, it is no matter. And according to Maimonides {u} the blood of bullocks and goats burnt was sprinkled seven times upon the vail, which divided between the and the holy of holies. This typified the vail of flesh, whose blood gives boldness to enter into the holiest of all,
Heb 10:19.

{r} Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 5. sect. 7. Bartenora in Misn. Menachot, c. 3. sect. 4. {s} Misn. Zebachim, c. 2. sect. 1. & Bartenora in ib. {t} Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 5. sect. 15. {u} Ib. sect. 13.

Leviticus 4:7

Ver. 7. And the priest shall put [some] of the blood,.... With his finger, which he dipped into it:

upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation; this was the golden altar on which incense was offered: it was placed before the vail, on the outside of it, in the holy place, see Ex 30:1 and the priest, when he put the blood on the horns of it, began at the northeast horn, so to the northwest, then to the southwest, and last to the southeast {w}; and the priest dipped his finger at every horn, and when he had finished at one horn, he wiped his finger at the edge of the basin, and after that dipped a second time; for what remained of the blood on his finger was not fit to put upon another horn {x}. This rite shows, that the intercession of Christ, signified by the altar of sweet incense, proceeds upon the foot of his blood and sacrifice, **Re 8:3** **1Jo 2:1**:

and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; this altar stood without the holy place, and the altar of incense within; and after the priest had sprinkled of the blood of the bullock, upon the horns of the altar of incense, what remained he poured at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering; for though it is said "all" the blood, it can mean no more than what was left; wherefore the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "all the remaining blood": and Jarchi's explanatory note is, the rest of the blood. The place where this was poured, according to Maimonides {y}, was the west bottom of the altar; and Gersom on the place observes the same. This denotes the efficacy of Christ's blood to make atonement for sin, and the reverent esteem it ought to be had in, being precious blood.

{w} Misn. Yoma, c. 5. sect. 5. Maimon. ib. (Maasch Hakorbanot c. 5.) sect. 10. 14. {x} Maimon. ib. sect. 8. {y} Ib. sect. 11.

Leviticus 4:8

Ver. 8. And he shall take off from it all the fat of the bullock for the sin offering,.... When the priest had killed the bullock, and sprinkled and poured the blood, as before commanded; he then cut up the bullock, and took out its inwards, and put them in a vessel, and salted them, and strowed them on the fires {z}, and burnt them, and the fat of them, as he did with the sacrifice of the peace offerings; so that what is here said, and in the two next verses **Le 4:9**, is the same with what is ordered concerning them in **Le 3:3**
See Gill on "Le 3:3" see Gill on "Le 3:4" see Gill on "Le 3:5". Jarchi and Gersom both observe that they agree, that as one brings peace into the world, so does the other.

{z} Maimon. ib. (Maasch Hakorbanot) c. 7. sect. 2.

Leviticus 4:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "Le 4:8".

Leviticus 4:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "Le 4:8".

Leviticus 4:11

Ver. 11. And the skin of the bullock,.... Not taken off; for the sin offerings that were burnt were not flayed at all, but were cut in pieces with their skins on them {a}; in other burnt offerings the skin was taken off, and was a perquisite of the priest, **Le 7:8** but this being an offering for the priest, the skin was burnt with the rest:

and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung; the burning of these denoted the sufferings of Christ, and these several parts the extent of them, they reaching to all parts of his body as stretched upon the cross; and the dung particularly the reproach of them, he dying the death of the cross, and was made sin and a curse for his people.

{a} Ib. (Maasch Hakoranot) c. 5. sect. 18. & 7. 2.

Leviticus 4:12

Ver. 12. Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp,.... The Jewish writers interpret it without the three camps {b}, the camp of the tabernacle, the camp of the Levites, and the camp of the Israelites; when the temple was built, such sacrifices were carried and burnt without the city of Jerusalem; there were three places for burning; one was in the midst of the court, where they burnt such sacrifices as were unfit and rejected; the other was in the mountain of the house called Birah, where they burnt such as any accident befell them, after the carrying of them out of the court; and the third place was without Jerusalem, called the place of ashes {c}: this was typical of Christ being had out of the city of Jerusalem, and suffering without the gates of it, Heb 13:11:

unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out; the ashes of the burnt offerings. This, according to Ainsworth, answered to the place where Christ was crucified, being a place of skulls, or dead men's ashes, Joh 19:17:

and burn him on the wood with fire; any wood might be used for the burning of it, even straw or stubble, which in the Hebrew language are called wood, as Gersom on the place observes, and so Maimonides {d}; and it is added, "with fire", as the last writer says {e}, to exclude lime and cinder coals:

where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt; openly without; and seeing it is not said, that the priest shall carry forth the bullock, and shall burn it, it is concluded by Gersom on the place, that both may be done lawfully by a stranger, and so Maimonides {f}.

{b} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 68. 1. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 42. 2. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Zebachim, c. 12. sect. 5. Jarchi in loc. {c} Maimon. Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 7. sect. 3, 4. {d} Maimon. Hilchot Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 7. sect. 5. {e} Ib. Vid. T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 75. 1. {f} Maimon. ib.

Leviticus 4:13

Ver. 13. And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance,.... That is, all Israel, or the greatest part of them, as Gersom interprets it, through the ignorant teaching of the judges, who by their instruction cause the people to err, and commit sins of ignorance, as Baal Hatturim on the place observes, and Maimonides elsewhere {g}; wherefore Jarchi, and some others, by the congregation of Israel understand the sanhedrim, or the bench of judges, consisting of seventy one. Ainsworth remarks on the words, that the church may err:

and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly; congregation or church, so that they do not know that it is a sin which they have committed:

and they have done [somewhat against] any of the commandments of the Lord, [concerning things] which should not be done; transgressed negative precepts:

and are guilty; of sin, though as yet they know it not.

{g} Hilchot Shegagot, c. 12. sect. 1.

Leviticus 4:14

Ver. 14. When the sin which they have sinned against it,.... Any of the commandments of the Lord forbidding such a thing to be done:

is known; is made known to them by the priest, or any other, so that they are convinced that what has been done is wrong, though done through ignorance:

then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation; the same offering with that of the anointed priest, he being, as Aben Ezra on the place observes, equal to all Israel.

Leviticus 4:15

Ver. 15. And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the Lord,.... These must be two at least, some say three, and some say five {h}; the more generally received notion is, that they were three of the sanhedrim {i}; though the Targum of Jonathan makes them to be the twelve rulers of the twelve tribes:

and the bullock shall be killed before the Lord; in the court near the altar of burnt offering, either by a priest, or Levite, or by a butcher, as the above Targum expresses it.

{h} Misn. Sotah, c. 9. sect. 1. {i} Maimon & Bartenora in Misn. Menachot, c. 9. sect. 7. Maimon. Hilchot Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 3. sect. 10.

Leviticus 4:16

Ver. 16-21. And the priest that is anointed shall bring of the bullock's blood,.... That is, the chief priest, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan explain it:

to the tabernacle of the congregation; as he brought the blood of his own bullock, **Le 4:5** from hence to the **Le 4:16** an account is given of the same rites to be observed in the sin offering, for the congregation, as for the anointed priest;
See Gill on "Le 4:6" see Gill on "Le 4:7" see Gill on "Le 4:12".

Leviticus 4:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "Le 4:16".

Leviticus 4:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "Le 4:16".

Leviticus 4:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "Le 4:16".

Leviticus 4:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "Le 4:16".

Leviticus 4:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Le 4:16".

Leviticus 4:22

Ver. 22. When a ruler hath sinned,.... Or "prince", the "nasi", one that is lifted up above others in honour, power, and authority, or that bears the weight of government: the word comes from one which signifies to lift up, or to bear; it may be understood of a governor of a family, or of a tribe, as Aben Ezra observes; and so in the Talmud {k} it is said, it means the prince of a tribe, such as Nachson the son of Amminadab, prince of the tribe of Judah. Maimonides {l} says a king is designed, over whom none has power; and so Gersom on the place, who observes, that David the king is called a prince, Eze 34:24

and done [somewhat] through ignorance [against] any of the commandments of the Lord his God; the phrase, "his God", is here added, and is not used neither of the anointed priest, nor of the congregation, nor of one of the common people; only of the prince, to show, that though he is above others, God is above him, and he is accountable to him; he is his God, of whom he is, and by whom he rules; wherefore if he breaks any of his commandments, though ignorantly, he must bring a sacrifice for it:

[concerning things] which should not be done, and is guilty; of transgressing negative precepts, which are as binding on him as others.

{k} T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 11. 1. {l} Hilchot Shegagot, c. 15. sect. 6.

Leviticus 4:23

Ver. 23. Or if his sin wherein he hath sinned come to his knowledge,.... Or rather, "and if his sin", &c. {m} either by means of others informing him of it, or of himself calling to mind what he has done, and considering it to be a transgression of the law:

he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish; his offering was to be a "kid of the goats", a fat and a large one; because, as Baal Hatturim observes, he ate fat things every day; and to distinguish it from the offering of one of the common people; and "without blemish"; as all sacrifices were, that they might be typical of the offering of Christ without spot.

{m} wa kai Sept. "et postea", V. L. & Noldius, p. 3. No. 23.

Leviticus 4:24

Ver. 24. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat,.... His right hand, as the Targum of Jonathan; See Gill on "Le 1:4"

and kill it; not the prince, but the priest after mentioned, or the butcher, as the same Targum:

in the place where they hill the burnt offering before the Lord; in the court on the north side of the altar, see **Le 1:11**:

it is a sin offering: an offering for his sin of ignorance, or "sin"; so Christ our offering is said to be, **2Co 5:21**.

Leviticus 4:25

Ver. 25. And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger,.... With the finger of his right hand, as the Talmudists {n} observe, and Gersom on the place; the priest first received the blood into a basin or ministering vessel, and then dipped the finger of his right hand into it, that next the thumb:

and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering; the four horns of it; in this there was a difference between the sacrifice of the anointed priest and of the congregation, and this of the ruler; the blood of the former was put upon the horns of the altar of incense, this upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering:

and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering; the

South bottom of it; the order of the priest's proceeding in putting the blood was different from that used in putting it on the horns of the altar of incense; here he first put the blood upon the southeast horn, then upon the northeast, next upon the northwest, and then upon the southwest; and upon the bottom of that horn where he finished, he poured the remainder of the blood, which was the southern bottom {o}.

{n} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 24. 1. {o} Maimon. Hilchot Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 5. sect. 10.

Leviticus 4:26

Ver. 26. And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, &e.] Of burnt offering, that is, the priest shall do it:

as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings; see **Le 3:3**

and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin; in a typical way, directing to the great sacrifice of Christ, which is the only real atonement and propitiation for sin: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render, "the priest shall pray for him": for the pardon of his sin:

and it shall be forgiven him; not for the prayers of the priest, nor for the sacrifice offered up, but for the sake of Christ, the antitype of such sacrifices, and when faith was exercised on him; or the meaning is, he shall not be punished for it.

Leviticus 4:27

Ver. 27. And if anyone of the common people sin through ignorance,.... Or, "if one soul of the people of the earth": that is, a single person, and so is distinguished from the congregation, one of the common sort of people; however is neither an high priest, nor a prince, or king, but either a common priest, or Levite, or Israelite; no man is free from sin; all sorts of persons, of all ranks and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, men in office, civil or ecclesiastical, or in whatsoever state of life, are liable to sin, and do sin continually, either ignorantly or willingly; and Christ is a sacrifice for all sins and for all sorts of sinners:

whilst he doeth somewhat; &c. See Gill on "Le 4:2" see Gill on "Le 4:13" see Gill on "Le 4:22".

Leviticus 4:28

Ver. 28. Or if his sin which he hath sinned come to his knowledge,.... So that he is convinced that he has sinned:

then he shall bring his offering; to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to the priest there:

a kid of the goats: a young goat:

a female without blemish; and so inferior to the offering of the ruler or prince; for the characters of men are aggravations of their sins, and sacrifices were to be in some measure answerable to them, and suitable to their circumstances:

for the sin which he hath sinned; to atone for it in a typical way.

Leviticus 4:29

Ver. 29. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering,.... His right hand, as the Targum of Jonathan; not the priest that shall offer it, but the man that has sinned, that brings it, thereby confessing his sin, and transferring it to the sacrifice:

and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering; that is, on the north side of the altar.

Leviticus 4:30

Ver. 30-31. And the priest shall take of the blood,.... So that all the preceding actions, the bringing the offering, the putting the hand upon the head of it, and slaying it, were done by the man that sinned; of this and what follows here and in the next verse **Le 4:31**,
See Gill on "Le 4:25" see Gill on "Le 4:26".

Leviticus 4:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "Le 4:30".

Leviticus 4:32

Ver. 32. And if he bring a lamb for a sin offering,.... As he might if he would; the Jews observe, that in all places a lamb is put before a goat, as being more excellent in its kind; but here it is mentioned after, which shows, they say, that they are equally alike {p}:

he shall bring it a female without blemish; typical of Christ the Lamb of God, without spot and without blemish, **1Pe 1:19**.

{p} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 57. 2. & Ceritot, fol. 28. 2.

Leviticus 4:33

Ver. 33. He shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering,.... On the head of the lamb, as on the head of the goat, even his right hand, as the above Targum, as before:

and slay it for a sin offering, in the place where they kill the burnt offering: for if it was not slain for a sin offering, but for something else, or on any other account, as for a burnt offering, it was not right {q}.

{q} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 7. 1. & Menachot, fol. 4. 1.

Leviticus 4:34

Ver. 34-35. And the priest shall take of the blood,....
See Gill on "Le 4:25" See Gill on "Le 4:26".

Leviticus 4:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "Le 4:34".

Leviticus 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 5

This chapter treats of the trespass offering, points at the sins for which it was to be made, and the matter of it; it was for secret sins, and sins of ignorance, such as refusing to bear witness in a known case, **Le 5:1** touching unclean things and false swearing, **Le 5:2** the things directed to in such cases are confession, **Le 5:5** sacrifice of a lamb, or kid of the goats, **Le 5:6** and in case of poverty, two turtle doves, or two young pigeons; concerning the offering of which instructions are given, **Le 5:7** and if not able to bring them, then a meat offering of fine flour, about which rules are laid down, **Le 5:11** and for sins committed through ignorance in holy things or sacrileges, the sacrifice of a ram is enjoined, and satisfaction ordered to be made for the injury done in the holy thing, by adding a fifth part to it, **Le 5:14** and for sins committed ignorantly against negative precepts, only a ram is appointed for the trespass offering, **Le 5:17**.

Ver. 1. And if a soul sin,.... The soul is put for the person, and is particularly mentioned, as Ben Melech says, because possessed of will and desire:

and hear the voice of swearing; or cursing, or adjuration; not of profane swearing, and taking the name of God in vain, but either of false swearing, or perjury, as when a man hears another swear to a thing which he knows is false; or else of adjuration, either the voice of a magistrate or of a neighbour adjuring another, calling upon him with an oath to bear testimony in such a case; this is what the Jews {r} call the oath of testimony or witness, and which they say {s} is binding in whatsoever language it is heard:

and is a witness; is able to bear witness to the thing he is adjured about:

whether he hath seen or known of it; what he has seen with his eyes, or knows by any means: of such a case, the Jews observe {t}, that there may be seeing without knowing, or knowing without seeing, and in either case a man ought to bear witness:

if he do not utter it; tell the truth, declare what he has seen or known:

then he shall bear his iniquity; he shall be charged with sin, and be obliged to acknowledge his offence, and bring a trespass offering for it: it is said {u}, that the witnesses are not guilty of the oath of the testimony, but in these ten cases; if they are required; if the testimony is concerning goods; if the goods are movable; if he that requires binds himself to pay for their testimony only, in case they bear witness; if they refuse after required; if they refuse in the sanhedrim; if the adjuration or oath is made there by the name of God, or his titles; if knowledge of the testimony goes before the oath; if he particularizes his witnesses in the time of the oath, or at the time of the requirement; and if the oath is in a language they understood.

{r} Misn. Sotah, c. 7. 1. {s} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 33. 1. {t} T. Bab. Shebuot, fol. 33. 2. & 34. 1. {u} Maimon. Hilchot, Shebuot, c. 9. sect. 3.

Leviticus 5:2

Ver. 2. Or if a soul touch any unclean thing,.... Meaning an Israelite, for only such were bound by this law, which pronounced a person unclean that touched anything that was so in a ceremonial sense; this is the general, including whatsoever by the law was unclean; the particulars follow:

whether [it be] a carcass of an unclean beast, as the camel, the coney, the hare, and the swine, Le 11:2

or a carcass of unclean cattle; as the horse, and the ass, which were unclean for food, and their dead carcasses not to be touched, Le 11:26

or the carcass of unclean creeping things: such as are mentioned in Le 11:29

and if it be hidden from him; that he has touched them; or the uncleanness contracted by touching, he having inadvertently done it; or being ignorant of the law concerning such uncleanness:

he also shall be unclean; in a ceremonial sense, by thus touching them:

and guilty; of a breach of the command which forbids the touching of them: this is by way of prolepsis or anticipation; for as yet the law concerning unclean beasts, and creeping things, and pollution by touching them, was not given: Jarchi and Gersom interpret this guilt, of eating of holy things, and going into the sanctuary when thus defiled: in the Jewish Misnah {w} it is said, the word "hidden" is twice used, to show that he is guilty, for the ignorance of uncleanness, and for the ignorance of the sanctuary.

{w} Misn. Shebuot, c. 2. sect. 5.

Leviticus 5:3

Ver. 3. Or if he touch the uncleanness of man,.... The dead body of a man, or the bone of a dead body, or a grave, or any profluvious or menstruous person:

whatsoever uncleanness [it be] that a man shall be defiled withal: not morally, but ceremonially:

and it be hid from him; he is not sensible that he has touched any thing ceremonially unclean:

when he knoweth [of it], then he shall be guilty: acknowledge his guilt, and offer a sacrifice for it, as after directed.

Leviticus 5:4

Ver. 4. Or if a soul swear,.... A rash or vain oath:

pronouncing with his lips; not in his heart, as Jarchi notes; not saying within himself that he would do this, or that, or the other thing, but expressing his oath plainly and distinctly, with an audible voice:

to do good, or to do evil; which was either impossible or unlawful for him to do; whether the good or evil he swears to do is to himself or to another; whether he swears to do good to himself, and evil to another, or, good to another, and evil to himself, see Ps 15:4. The Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"whatsoever a man expresses, whether of anything present or future;"

as if he swears he has done such and such a thing, whether good or evil; or that he will do it, be it what it will, and it is not in the power of his hands to do it, or, if he did it, it would be doing a wrong thing:

whatsoever [it be] that a man shall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him; he has forgot that he ever swore such an oath:

and when he knoweth [of it], then he shall be guilty in one of these; when he is told of it, and it is made clearly to appear to him, that he did at such a time, and in such a place, deliver out a rash oath concerning this, or the other thing, then he shall be chargeable with guilt in one of these; either in rashly swearing to do good when it was not in his power, or to do evil, which would have been unlawful. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"if he knows that he has falsified, and repents not, he is guilty."

Leviticus 5:5

Ver. 5. And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things,.... Before expressed in the preceding verses; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"in one of the four things,"

which Ben Gersom particularly mentions in the oath of witness, or the pollution of the sanctuary, or the pollution of its holy things, or a vain oath:

that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that [thing]; not make confession of sin in general, but of that particular sin he is guilty of; and this he was to do before he brought his offering, or at least at the time of his bringing it; for without confession his offering would be of no avail; and which he made, as Ben Gersom says, by laying his hand on the head of the offering, thereby signifying and declaring his guilt, and that he deserved to die as the creature would about to be sacrificed for him; or he might make a verbal confession and acknowledgment of his offence. Fagius, from the Jewish writers, has given us the form of it, which was this;

"I beseech thee, O Lord, I have sinned, I have done wickedly, I have transgressed before thee, so and so have I done; and, lo, I repent, and am ashamed of what I have done, and I will never do the same again."

Though perhaps this form may be of too modern a date, yet doubtless somewhat like this was pronounced; and they make confession of sin necessary to all sacrifices, and say {x}, atonement is not made by them without repentance and confession.

{x} Maimon. Hilchot Teshubah, c. 1. sect. 1.

Leviticus 5:6

Ver. 6. And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord, for the sin which he hath sinned,.... To make atonement for it; this was typical of the sacrifice of Christ, whose soul was made an offering for sin, Mva, "Asham" a trespass offering, Isa 53:10 where the same word is used as here:

a female from the flock, a lamb, or kid of the goats, for a sin offering; it is generally thought there was a difference between a trespass offering and a sin offering; but it is not easy to say wherein the difference lies; and what has been observed by learned men is not very satisfactory: and certain it is, that the same offering is here called both a trespass offering and a sin offering; and such as were men of substance, and capable of it, were to bring a female lamb or kid; it being for sins of ignorance, a sacrifice of a less value was admitted; yet it must be a lamb, typical of Christ the Lamb of God; and atonement cannot be made, even for sins of ignorance, but by the blood and sacrifice of Christ:

and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin; that is, by offering his sacrifice for him, which was a type of the atonement made by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot and blemish.

Leviticus 5:7

Ver. 7. And if he be not able to bring a lamb,.... He is not possessed of a lamb, nor able to purchase one:

then he shall bring for his trespass which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the Lord; either the one or the other; these were common, and in great plenty in the land of Israel, as Maimonides {y} observes, which was the reason of their being ordered, since to be had cheap. The turtledoves were larger, as the Targum of Jonathan calls them, being older, and the pigeons lesser, being young; or the one were grown, and not little, and the other little, and not grown, as the Jewish writers {z} observe; and either of them were proper emblems of Christ in his purity, innocence, and meekness, by whom an atonement is made both for the rich and poor:

one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering; one of the turtle doves or pigeons, whichsoever were brought, was offered up as a sin offering, and the other that remained was offered up as a burnt offering; so that the poor man had two sorts of offerings out of what he brought, when the rich had but one; and may denote the completeness of his sacrifice, and the full atonement made by it.

{y} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 46. {z} Maimon & Bartenora in Misn. Cholin, c. 1. sect. 5.

Leviticus 5:8

Ver. 8. And he shall bring them unto the priest,.... Either two turtledoves, or two young pigeons:

who shall offer [that] which [is] for the sin [offering] first; that which is chosen for it, as the Targum of Jonathan; and this choice was made, not by the priest, but by the man that brought the offering, who separated it, and said, lo, this is a sin offering, and after that said, lo, this is a burnt offering {a}; the sin offering was offered first, which was to make atonement for sin, and then the burnt offering, to denote the divine acceptance of it; and so Ben Gersom observes, it was proper to offer the sin offering first, to atone for his sin, that after he (God) was appeased this way, he might receive his gift; for the burnt offering was as a gift. Jarchi compares it to an advocate, who first goes in to appease, and when he has appeased, the gift goes in after him:

and wring off his head from his neck, but shall not divide it asunder: be it a turtledove or a young pigeon, so it was to be served; the head was not to be separated from the body, but was nipped by the nail of the priest "in" the neck, as it might be rendered {b}; over against the neck, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render it; the hinder part, or what is behind the throat, as Jarchi and Ben Molech interpret it; so that the part which was nipped was the neck; and this nip was made so large, as that the blood was let out by it, as appears from the following verse **Le 5:9**, and yet the head was not divided from the body; the head hung by a piece of skin on the back part; of the manner of performing this, and the mystery of it,
See Gill on "Le 1:15".

{a} Ib. (Maimon & Bratenora) in Misn. Zebachim, c. 10. sect. 4. {b} Vid. Noldium, p. 611. No. 1637.

Leviticus 5:9

Ver. 9. And he shall sprinkle of the blood of the sin [offering] upon the side of the altar,.... Or "wall" {c} it is asked {d},

"what is the wall at which the rest of the blood is wrung out? this is the lower wall, namely, the half of the height of the altar below, under the thread (of scarlet that goes round the middle of the altar) that the rest of the blood may be squeezed at the bottom of the altar, and because of this the sin offering of the fowl is below,"

that is, the sprinkling of its blood. And so Ben Gersom observes; from hence we learn, says he, that the sprinkling of the sin offering of the fowl was in the lower part of the altar; and I think this sprinkling, adds he, was not in the length, but in the breadth:

and the rest of the blood shall be wrung out at the bottom of the altar; the blood sprinkled was that which dropped from it when nipped by the priest; this here was squeezed out by him, and was shed at the foot of the altar; so that the altar had all the blood, and nothing but the blood of the fowl, all the rest belonged to the priest {e}: this might be an emblem both of the drops of blood which fell from Christ in the garden, and of the shedding of his blood upon the cross, whereby remission of sin was obtained, and atonement made:

it [is] a sin [offering]; an offering whereby sin was typically expiated and stoned.

{c} ryq le epi ton toicon, Sept. "super parietem", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius; "ad parietem", Tigurine version. {d} Maimon. in Misn. Zebachim, c. 6. sect. 4. {e} Misn. ib.

Leviticus 5:10

Ver. 10. And he shall offer the second for a burnt offering, according to the manner,.... That is, the second turtledove or young pigeon, after the other was made a sin offering; and the manner according to which this was offered was not according to the rite or manner of the bird chosen first for a sin offering, as the Targum of Jonathan, but according to the burnt offering of the fowl in **Le 1:15** so Jarchi and Ben Gersom:

and the priest shall make an atonement for him, for his sin which he had sinned, and it shall be forgiven him; upon the atonement made; and so forgiveness of sin with God proceeds upon the atonement made by the blood of Christ, **Heb 9:22**. God never took one step towards it, without a regard to Christ the propitiation for sin; he promised it with a view to him; there is no instance of pardon under the Old Testament but in this way, and God always has respect to Christ in pardon, it is for his sake; and this way of forgiveness best provides for the glory of the divine perfections; there can be no better way, or infinite wisdom would have used it; there could be no other way, considering the council and covenant of peace; to pardon, without atonement and satisfaction, is not consistent with the purity, justice, and veracity of God; and to observe this great truth, the phrase is afterwards frequently repeated,

Leviticus 5:11

Ver. 11. But if he be not able to bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons,.... Which is supposing a man to be in the poorest circumstances he can well be; and such is the grace and goodness of God, that he has provided for the atonement and forgiveness of the poorest, as well as of the rich:

then he that hath sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; which is an omer, Ex 16:36 and is as much as a man can eat in one day, as Aben Ezra remarks:

he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put [any] frankincense thereon; to distinguish it from the common meat offering, which had both, **Le 3:1** and to make it as easy, and as little chargeable to the poor as possible, both oil and frankincense being things of value; and some think that these were prohibited, to show that atonement and forgiveness, and even the salvation of men, are not owing to grace in them, comparable to oil, or to their prayers, signified by frankincense, and so to any or all of their duties, but to Christ alone, and his atoning sacrifice: or these were forbidden, because emblems of joy and gladness, and therefore not so proper at a confession of sin, and humiliation for it: or rather to show how disagreeable and offensive sin was to the Lord, being contrary to grace, of which oil was an emblem, and far from being acceptable to him, which frankincense might signify; and therefore being prohibited, might denote how unacceptable, yea nauseous, sin is to him; which agrees with the reason given;

for it [is] a sin [offering], and therefore must not be honoured, as Jarchi, or must have everything removed from it that is beautiful and amiable, as Ben Gersom, such as oil and frankincense.

Leviticus 5:12

Ver. 12. Then shall he bring it to the priest,.... The flour just as it was, not kneaded and made into a cake, as appears by what follows:

and the priest shall take his handful of it; as much of the flour as he could hold in one hand:

[even] a memorial thereof; to bring to mind his sin, and the goodness of God in admitting of an offering for it, and forgiving it upon that:

and burn [it] on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the Lord; in the same manner as other burnt offerings were made:

it [is] a sin [offering]; or an expiatory sacrifice for sin.

Leviticus 5:13

Ver. 13. And the priest shall make an atonement for him,.... By burning the handful of flour brought by him, as an emblem of the painful sufferings of Christ, whereby he made atonement for the sins of his people:

as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these; for whatsoever sin he had committed in any of the above cases, **Le 5:1**:

and it shall be forgiven him; upon the foot of the atonement made;
See Gill on "Le 5:10":

and [the remnant] shall be the priest's as a meat offering; the whole tenth part of an ephah of fine flour was the priest's, excepting the handful he took and burnt, just as in the case of a common meat offering, **Le 2:3**.

Leviticus 5:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Out of the tabernacle of the congregation, **Le 1:1** he continued to speak to him:

saying, as follows.

Leviticus 5:15

Ver. 15. If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance in the holy things of the Lord,.... In the payment of tithes, or offering first fruits as he ought, by withholding them, or any part of them, or through eating of sacred things he ought not:

then shall he bring for his trespass unto the Lord; for it being a trespass in holy things, it might be properly called a trespass to or against the Lord; unless this is rather to be understood of the offering brought to the Lord for his trespass as follows:

a ram without blemish out of the flocks; out of the sheep and not the goats, as Ben Gersom observes; and this being for sacrifice, or for a trespass in holy things though ignorantly done, an offering of more value is required than for sins of ignorance in other cases, **Le 5:6** a type of Christ, who for his strength may be compared to a ram, and to one without blemish, for his purity and holiness, and to a choice one, selected out of the flock, for his being chosen out from among the people:

with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering; that is, either an estimation was to be taken of the damage done in the holy things, an account of which was to be brought along with the ram, and the cost paid; or else the ram brought was to be of the value of, or worth shekels of silver; and the least of many being two, as Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom observe, the sense is, that the ram brought for the trespass offering should be at least worth two shekels of silver; so Jarchi and Ben Gersom.

Leviticus 5:16

Ver. 16. And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing,.... This seems to favour the sense of the word "estimation", in the preceding verse, as understood of the estimate of the damage done in the holy things, which belonged to the priests, for which recompense was to be made according as the damage was valued:

and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest; besides paying the whole damage, he was to give a fifth part of the whole to the priest; which was ordered to show the evil nature of the sin of sacrilege, though done ignorantly, and to make men careful and cautious of committing it: the fifth part, according to the Jewish writers {f}, is the fourth part of that of which a man eats, ("viz." of the holy things,) which is the fifth of the whole; thus, if he eats the value of a penny, he pays the penny and the fourth part of one, and so it is in all the fifths mentioned in the law; or, as Ben Gersom on the place expresses it, if he has had profit by the holy things to the value of four shekels, he pays five shekels; for the fifth of the shekels they add the fifth part to the four shekels; in this he observes, all are alike, the priest, the anointed, the prince, and a private person, for the law makes no difference between them in this:

and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering; by offering it up for him:

and it shall be forgiven him; after he has paid the whole damage, and a fifth part besides, and offered the trespass offering for atonement; See Gill on "Le 5:10".

{f} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Trumot, c. 6. 1.

Leviticus 5:17

Ver. 17. And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord,.... Respecting holy things:

though he wist it not; or did not know that he had transgressed a negative command:

yet he is guilty, and shall bear the iniquity; be chargeable with guilt, and is liable to punishment, and must make an atonement and satisfaction for it; see

Lu 12:48.

Leviticus 5:18

Ver. 18. And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock,.... See Gill on "Le 5:15"

with thy estimation for a trespass [offering] to the priest; along with the offering was to be brought an estimate of whatsoever damage had been done through the breach of any of the commands of God, where damage could take place, that so recompense be made as before directed; or else the ram brought was to be valued, and examined whether it was worth two shekels of silver, as before explained,
See Gill on "Le 5:15" but no fifth was required as in the former cases:

and the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred, and wist [it] not, and it shall be forgiven him; See Gill on "Le 5:10" this is what the Jews call "Asham Talui", doubtful trespass offering.

Leviticus 5:19

Ver. 19. It [is] a trespass [offering],.... An offering for a trespass committed:

he hath certainly trespassed against the Lord; though committed ignorantly, and therefore an offering must be brought; for no sin of any kind must be overlooked, passed by, or forgiven, without a sacrifice, or without atonement made by sacrifice: or, "he shall offer a trespass offering to the Lord", or before the Lord, as Onkelos; or before the Word of the Lord, as Jonathan; and Maimonides out of Siphri {g} observes, that whereas it is said, a trespass or trespass offering to the Lord, it was not lawful for the priests to eat of it.

{g} Maimon. in Misn. Temurah, c. 7. sect. 6.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 6

This chapter treats of the trespass offering for sins committed knowingly and wilfully, **Le 6:1** and of the law of the burnt offering, and of cleansing the altar of burnt offering, and keeping the fire burning on it continually, **Le 6:8** and of the meat offering, which is repeated with some additional circumstances, **Le 6:14** and of the offering at the consecration of the high priest, **Le 6:19** and of the sin offering, and where to be killed and eaten, and by whom, **Le 6:24**.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Continuing his speech with him, for the same law of the trespass offering is still discoursed of, only with respect to different persons:

saying: as follows.

Leviticus 6:2

Ver. 2. If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord,.... All sin is against the Lord, contrary to his nature and will, and a transgression of his law; but some sins are more apparently so than others, and against which he expresses greater indignation and abhorrence, being attended also with very aggravating circumstances, as these that follow; which are such as are not only contrary to the will of God, but to the good of society, and tend to the subversion of it, of which he is the founder and supporter, and especially when he is sworn by, and appealed to as a witness, in a case not only injurious but false:

and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep; whether money or goods, or any living creature, sheep, cow, horse, &c. and should deny that ever anything was delivered to him, and take his oath upon it; which is a very grievous crime, and not to go unpunished, as was known by the light of nature, and declared by the Heathen oracle {h}; and yet there was to be a trespass offering to make atonement for such a sin: Jarchi thinks, by his neighbour is meant a third person between them; but if that third person was a witness of the goods being delivered, there would have been no occasion of an oath, as follows: the case supposed seems to be, when anything was delivered to the care and custody of another, without the knowledge of any but the person that delivered it, and he to whom it was delivered; who retaining it for his own use, embezzling the goods, and acting the unfaithful part, affirms to the owner he never had anything of him, and so lies to him, and to that lie adds an oath of perjury:

or in fellowship: in partnership; as, for instance, having received money belonging to them both, denies he ever received any, and so cheats his partner of what was his due, and being put to his oath, takes it: or, "in putting of the hand" {i}, as persons usually do when they enter into fellowship or partnership, they give each other their hand in token of it; or in putting anything into the hand, as money to trade with, and he denies he received any; or by way of purchase for anything bought, and the person of whom the purchase is made affirms the purchaser never put anything into his hand, or paid him anything, but insists upon being paid again; or in a way of lending, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom, because then money is put into the hand of him that receives it, and, in the case supposed, the borrower denies that ever any was put into his hand, or he borrowed any; and being called upon to swear, swears falsely:

or in a thing taken away by violence: without the will and knowledge of the owner; privately and secretly, but being suspected, is challenged with it, and denying it, is made to swear, which he does falsely:

or hath deceived his neighbour; cheated him in trade and commerce, defrauded him in business, extorted money from him; or by calumny and false accusation got anything out of his hands, see Lu 19:8 or by detaining the wages of the hireling; so Jarchi and Ben Gersom.

{h} "Spartano cuidam respondit", &c. Juvenal. Satyr. 13. prope finem. {i} dy tmwvtb "in positione manus", Montanus.

Leviticus 6:3

Ver. 3. Or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it,.... Who having found anything lost, at once concludes it his own, and converts it to his own use, never inquiring after the proprietor of it, or taking any method to get knowledge of him, and restore it to him; but so far from that, being suspected of finding it, and charged with it denies it: Maimonides {k} gives a reason why a lost thing should be restored, not only because so to do is a virtue in itself praiseworthy, but because it has a reciprocal utility; for if you do not restore another's lost things, neither will your own be restored to you:

and sweareth falsely; which is to be understood, not of the last case only, but of all the rest, or of anyone of them, as it follows:

in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein; by unfaithfulness in a trust, cheating, defrauding, lying, and false swearing.

{k} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 40.

Leviticus 6:4

Ver. 4. Then it shall be, because he hath sinned and is guilty,.... Owns his guilt through remorse of conscience, and makes a confession of it; or otherwise, upon conviction, without such confession he was to pay double, see Ex 22:7 whereas, in this case it is only ordered,

that he shall restore that which he took violently away: whether money, goods, or cattle:

or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten; by outwitting him, by extortion, by false accusation, or detention of wages:

or that which was delivered him to keep; in which he was unfaithful to his trust, be it what it will:

or the lost thing which he found; and denied he had it.

Leviticus 6:5

Ver. 5. Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely,.... In all and each of the above cases, in which he had committed a trespass and denied it, and to the denial adds a false oath, and yet after all acknowledges it:

he shall even restore it in the principal; whatsoever he has embezzled, or cheated another of, or detained from the right owner, the whole of that was to be restored:

and shall add the fifth part more thereto; to the principal, see **Le 5:16** but Maimonides {l} says, this was an instruction to add a fifth to a fifth; and Aben Ezra takes the word to be plural, and observes, that the least of many is two, and so two fifths were to be added to the principal, but the first sense seems best:

[and] give it unto him to whom appertaineth; as, to his neighbour, who had deposited anything in his hands; or his partner, he had any ways wronged; or whomsoever he had defrauded in any respect; or the proprietor of lost goods; Ben Gersom observes, it was not to be given to his son, nor to his messenger: in the case of taking anything away by violence, though but the value of a farthing, it is said, that he shall be obliged to bring it after him (from whom he has taken it) even unto Media (should he be there); he shall not give it to his son, nor to his messenger, but he may give it to the messenger of the sanhedrim; and if he dies, he must return it to his heirs {m}:

in the day of his trespass [offering]; when he brings that, but restoration must first be made: the Targum of Jonathan renders it, in the day he repents of his sin: and so Aben Ezra interprets it,

"in the day he returns from his trespass;"

when he owns and confesses it, is sorry for it, and determines to do so no more. Maimonides observes {n}, that one that takes away anything by violence (which is one of the cases supposed) is not fined so much as a thief; he only restores the principal; for the fifth part is for his false oath; the reasons of which are, because robbery is not so frequently, and is more easily committed, and is more open, and against which persons may guard and make resistance, and the robber is more known than a thief who steals secretly; see Ex 22:1.

{l} In Misn. Trumot, c. 6. sect. 1. {m} Misnah Bava Kama, c. 9. sect. 6. {n} Ut supra, ({l}) c. 41.

Leviticus 6:6

Ver. 6. And he shall bring his trespass [offering] unto the Lord,.... That is, to the tabernacle of the Lord, to the altar of the Lord in it, and to his priest ministering therein, as it follows:

a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass [offering] unto the priest; the same offering that was ordered for a trespass through ignorance, **Le 5:16** typical of the sacrifice of Christ offered up both for sins of ignorance and wilful transgressions, for his blood cleanses from all sin,
See Gill on "Le 5:16"; the phrase "with thy estimation", used there also **Le**

5:16, is here interpreted by Ben Gersom of two shekels, the value the ram was to be of, brought for the trespass offering.

Leviticus 6:7

Ver. 7. And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord,.... By offering the ram he brought, by which a typical, but not real atonement was made; for the blood of bulls and goats, of sheep and rams, could not take away sin; but as they were types of Christ, and led to him, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world:

and it shall be forgiven him, for anything of all that he hath done, in trespassing therein; any and everyone of the above sins, with all the aggravations of them, were forgiven, upon the atonement made, though they were so enormous; and, indeed, all manner of sin is forgiven for Christ's sake, except the sin against the Holy Ghost: and L'Empereur {o} rightly observes, against the Socinians, who deny that sacrifices were offered for crimes very grievous, that these were of such a nature; for what more vile than unfaithfulness in a trust, than cheating and defrauding, stealing, lying, and perjury?

{o} In Misn. Bava Kama, c. 9. sect. 5.

Leviticus 6:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... It maybe after some intermission, or pause made; for some here begin a new chapter, and indeed a new section here begins in the Hebrew copies:

saying; as follows:

Leviticus 6:9

Ver. 9. Command Aaron and his sons,.... Who were nominated, selected, and appointed to the office, though not yet consecrated to it and invested with it, see Le 8:1

saying, this [is] the law of the burnt offering; of the daily sacrifice, morning and evening:

it [is] the burnt offering, because of, [or] for the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning; as there was nothing offered on the altar of burnt offering after the evening daily sacrifice, nor anything before the morning daily sacrifice, it was the more difficult to keep the fire of the altar burning in the night; wherefore a slow fire was used in the evening sacrifice, and several things remained to be burnt in the night: so Maimonides {p} says, the remainder of the fat of the members were burnt all night until the pillar of the morning (first rays of the rising sun, Editor.):

and the fire of the altar shall be burning in it; not without it, as Aben Ezra observes, but on it; that is, should be ever burning on it, night and day, as it is after declared.

{p} In Misn. Beracot, c. 1. sect. 1.

Leviticus 6:10

Ver. 10. And the priest shall put on his linen garment,.... "His measure" {q}, as the word signifies, a garment that was just the measure of his body, and exactly fitted it; it was a sort of a shirt, which he wore next his body, and reached down to his feet; and in this he always officiated, and was an emblem of the purity and holiness of Christ our high priest, who was without sin, and so a fit person to take away the sin of others, by offering up himself without spot to God:

and his linen breeches shall he put upon his flesh; to cover his nakedness; that indecency might be prevented, and that he might not be exposed to ridicule; and though these two garments are only mentioned, yet the wise men say the word "put on" includes the bonnet and the girdle; for the removing of the ashes from the altar, which is the thing he was to be thus clothed to do, was done in the four garments, though the Scripture mentions but two {r}:

and take up the ashes which the fire hath consumed, with the burnt offering on the altar; this was the first thing the priests did in a morning, and which in later times they cast lots for, and the first lot was for this service, and which was performed very early {s};

"every day they cleansed or swept the altar, at cockcrowing or near it, whether before or after, and on the day of atonement at midnight, and at the feasts from the time of the first watch:"

and he shall put them beside the altar: without, at the corner of the altar, as Aben Ezra, on the east side of it; so says Jarchi, the priest takes a full censer of the innermost consumptions (that is, of the innermost parts of the sacrifice reduced to ashes), and puts them in the east of the rise of the altar; or, as by another {t} expressed, he takes the ashes in a censer, more or less, and lays them down at the east of the rise of the altar, and there leaves them, and this is the beginning of the morning service: and we are told by another writer {u}, that there was a place called the house of ashes, and it was at the east of the rise of the altar, at a distance from the foot of it ten cubits and three hands' breadth; where the priest, before they began to sacrifice, laid the ashes of the sacrifices, and of the candlestick, and of the altar of incense, and of the offering of the fowl that were cast out.

{q} wdm, "est" dm "proprie vestis commensurata corpori", Munster; so Jarchi. {r} Maimon. in Misn. Tamid, c. 5. sect. 3. {s} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 8. {t} Bartenora in ib. {u} Jacob. Jud. Leo. Tabnitid Hecal, No. 90. apud Wagenseil. Sotah, p. 426.

Leviticus 6:11

Ver. 11. And he shall put off his garments,.... Those before mentioned, he is said to put on:

and put on other garments; not common garments or lay-habits, what the priests wore when they were not on duty; for, as Ben Gersom says, these were priestly garments, though meaner than the first, or those that were put off: and so Jarchi says, they were worse than they were: it seems as if they were such that were spotted and dirty, and threadbare, almost worn out, and only fit for such sort of work as to carry out ashes: and so Maimonides {w} observes, that these other garments are not to be understood of common garments; but of such that are meaner in value and esteem, for both are holy garments; and, indeed, nothing belonging to the priestly office was to be performed but with the priestly garments, and they were only to be worn by the priests while in service:

and carry forth the ashes; when these, gathered on a heap, were become large, as Jarchi says, and there was no room for the pile of wood, they carried them out from thence; and this, he observes, was not obligatory every day, but the taking of them up, as in the preceding verse **Le 6:10**, they were bound to every day: and these they carried

without the camp, unto a clean place; for though they were ashes, yet being ashes of holy things, were not to be laid in an unclean place, or where unclean things were: as the burnt offering was a type of Christ in his sufferings and death, enduring the fire of divine wrath in the room and stead of his people; so the carrying forth the ashes of the burnt offering, and laying them in a clean place, may denote the burial of the body of Christ without the city of Jerusalem, wrapped in a clean linen cloth and laid in a new tomb, wherein no man had been laid, Mt 27:59.

{w} In Misn. Tamid, c. 5. sect. 3.

Leviticus 6:12

Ver. 12. And the fire upon the altar shall be burning in it, it shall not be put out,.... There were three fires, or piles of wood for fire continually; the first was a large one, on which the daily sacrifice was burnt; the second less, and called the pile of the incense, because they took from it fire in a censer to burn the morning and evening incense; and the third was only for preserving the fire that it might not go out: and of this it is written, **Le 6:12** {x}; and Maimonides {y} observes, that some say, the first of these is meant by the burning all night, **Le 6:9** and the second by the fire of the altar burning in it, **Le 6:12** but his own sense is, the third is meant by it; and in the sense of R. Joses, these three fires were all burning upon the altar; the first was towards the east side of the altar, the second towards the southwest, as being nearer to the rise of the altar, where the priests were, and the third was made in any part of the altar as was thought fit {z}; and this is the fire not to be put out, and he that quenched it, though but one coal, was to be beaten, yea, though it be brought down from the altar {a}:

and the priest shall burn wood in it every morning: until the fourth hour of the day, according to the Targum of Jonathan; that is, unto ten o'clock in the morning:

and lay the burnt offering in order upon it; both morning and evening, and as often as any sacrifices of that kind were offered up:

and he shall burn thereon the fat of the peace offerings; that which was upon the inwards and covered them, and upon the kidneys, and flanks, and caul of the liver; see Le 3:3.

{x} Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin, c. 2. sect. 4. Bartenora in Misn. Tamid, c. 2. sect. 4. & in Yoma, c. 4. sect. 6. {y} In ib. sect. 5. & in Yoma, c. 4. sect. 6. {z} Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin, c. 2. sect. 7, 8, 9. {a} Ibid. sect. 6.

Leviticus 6:13

Ver. 13. The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar,.... This was what first fell from heaven, Le 9:24 and which in after ages was maintained by constant fuel put unto it, there being every day burnt offerings upon it; which was an emblem of the love of Christ to his people, which is ever in a flame and burning, and can never be quenched by the many waters of their sins and iniquities; nor by all the sufferings he underwent to atone for them; nor by all the meanness and afflictions they are attended with; his love is fervent towards them, and always the same: and also of their love to him, which is unquenchable by the persecutions of men, by afflictions by the hand of God, by divine desertions, by Satan's temptations, or their own corruptions: it likewise may be an emblem of the graces of the Spirit of God in the hearts of his people, which have both light and heat in them; and though they are sometimes very low as to exercise, yet are in a wonderful manner preserved amidst great oppositions made unto them from within and from without; and may also be a symbol of the word of God, sometimes compared to fire for its light and heat, and may be signified by the fire on the altar for its perpetuity, which continues and abides, notwithstanding the attempts of men and devils to get it out of the world; and though the ministers of it die, that lives, and has been preserved in the worst of times, and will burn most clearly, and shine most brightly in the end of the world. This perpetual fire may also point at the prayers of saints, the fervency of them, and their perseverance in them; or rather to the efficacy and acceptance of the sacrifice of Christ, which always continues; nor may it be amiss applied to the afflictions of God's people, which constantly attend them in this world, and they must expect to have while in it; and even to the wrath of God on wicked men to all eternity, and which is the fire that cannot be quenched:

it shall never go out; as it is highly probable it never did, until the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar; though the author of second Maccabees states that:

"For when our fathers were led into Persia, the priests that were then devout took the fire of the altar privily, and hid it in an hollow place of a pit without water, where they kept it sure, so that the place was unknown to all men." 2 Maccabees 1:19)

pretends that some devout priests, who were carried captives into Persia, hid the fire of the altar privily in the hollow of a pit, where was no water, and in which it was kept sure and unknown to men, and was found and restored in the times of Nehemiah,

"20 Now after many years, when it pleased God, Neemias, being sent from the king of Persia, did send of the posterity of those priests that had hid it to the fire: but when they told us they found no fire, but thick water; 21 Then commanded he them to draw it up, and to bring it; and when the sacrifices were laid on, Neemias commanded the priests to sprinkle the wood and the things laid thereupon with the water. 22 When this was done, and the time came that the sun shone, which afore was hid in the cloud, there was a great fire kindled, so that every man marvelled." (2 Maccabees 1)

but this is contrary to what the Jews always assert {b}, that the fire from heaven was wanting in the second temple; and yet from the account Josephus {c} gives of a festival called "Xylophoria", or the feast of the wood carrying, it seems to have been then in being, and great care was taken to preserve it that it might not go out; for, he says, at that feast it is a custom for all to bring wood to the altar, that so there might never be wanting fuel for the fire, for it always remained unextinguished: as to, what some have observed out of Diodorus Siculus {d}, that Antiochus Epiphanes, when he went into the temple, quenched this fire, it appears to be a mistake; for Diodorus does not say that he put out the fire of the altar, but that he extinguished the immortal lamp, as it was called by them (the Jews), which was always burning in the temple; by which he plainly means the lamp in the candlestick, and perhaps what the Jews call the western lamp, which was always burning, and was the middle lamp bending to the west, and to which the rest bent: the Heathens in many places imitated this perpetual fire: the Brahmans among the Indians speak of fire falling from heaven, kept by them on everlasting hearths, or in fire pans {e}, for that purpose: the Persians had their perpetual fire, having a great opinion of that element: in the march of Darius against Alexander, it is observed by the historian {f}, that the fire which the Persians call sacred and eternal was placed on altars of silver, and he is said to adjure his soldiers by the gods of their country, and by the eternal fire on the altars, &c. to rescue the Persian name and nation from the last degree of reproach {g}: the Grecians have many traces of this continual fire on the altar among them: at Mantinia, as Pausanias {h} relates, was a temple of Ceres and Proserpina, where a fire was kindled, and great care taken that it might not be extinguished; and in the temple of Pan, a fire burned which was never quenched: and the same writer says {i}, with the Eleans was an altar which had fire continually burning on it night and day: and Aelianus {k} makes mention of an altar of Venus at Eryce in Sicily, which burnt night and day; and of which he says many things wonderful and fabulous: and it is well known that the Romans had their goddess Vesta, whom Velleius Paterculus {l} calls the keeper of the perpetual fires; and there were certain virgins, called the "vestal" virgins, whose business it was to take care that the fire never went out; and is by Virgil {m} called the eternal fire: and Vesta itself is thought by some learned men to be the same with hy-va "Esh-jah", the fire of Jehovah: now these were all satanical imitations of the perpetual fire on the altar of God.

{b} T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 65. 1. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21. 2. {c} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 17. sect. 6. {d} Eclog. 1. ex l. 34. p. 902. {e} Ammian. Marcellin. l. 23. {f} Curt. Hist. l. 3. c. 3. {g} Curt. Hist. l. 4. c. 14. {h} Arcadica sive, l. 8. p. 469, 516. {i} Eliac. 1. sive, l. 5. p. 316. {k} Hist. Animal. l. 10. c. 50. {l} Hist. l. 2. in fine. {m} "Vos aeterni igneis", &c. Aeneid. l. 2.

Leviticus 6:14

Ver. 14. And this [is] the law of the meat offering,.... Or the rules to be observed concerning that, for which, though directions are given, **Le 2:1**, &c. yet is here repeated with some additions to it:

the sons of Aaron shall offer it before the Lord; being brought unto them by the children of Israel:

before the altar; or at the face of it, for what was properly offered was burnt upon it, as in the following verse **Le 6:15**: for it should be rather rendered "in", or "on the altar" {n}; the face of it is the top of it, on which every sacrifice was offered, and not before it.

{n} xbzmh ynp la "in altari", Noldius, p. 82. No. 391.

Leviticus 6:15

Ver. 15. And he shall take of it his handful,....
See Gill on "Le 2:2".

Leviticus 6:16

Ver. 16. And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat,.... What quantity of fine flour the meat offering consisted of is not said; very probably it was left to the offerer to bring what he would, since it was a freewill offering:

[with] unleavened [bread] shall it be eaten in the holy place; or rather, "unleavened shall it be eaten"; for it cannot well be thought that bread of any sort should be eaten with this offering, which, properly speaking, was itself a bread offering, and so it should be called, rather than a meat offering; and certain it is, that no meat offering was to be made of leaven, but of fine flour unleavened, and so to be eaten, not by the priests in their own houses, but in the tabernacle; not in that part of it properly called the holy place, in distinction from the holy of holies, but as it follows:

in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they shall eat it; in a room provided in that court for that purpose, as afterwards in the temple.

Leviticus 6:17

Ver. 17. It shall not be baked with leaven,.... Which, as it was a type of Christ, may denote his sincerity both in doctrine, life, and conversation; and as it may respect the offerer, may signify his uprightness and integrity, and his being devoid of hypocrisy and insincerity:

I have given it [unto thee for] their portion of my offerings made by fire; this was part of the provision made for the maintenance of the priests, as it was but just that they that ministered at the altar should live of it; and the rather, as the priests and Levites had no portion and inheritance in the land of Israel, and therefore must be supported in another way, which the Lord took care of:

it [is] most holy, as the sin [offering], and as the trespass [offering]; as they, so this being devoted to sacred uses, what were not consumed upon the altar belonged to the priests, and were their perquisites, nor might they be appropriated to the use of any other.

Leviticus 6:18

Ver. 18. All the males among the children of Aaron shall eat of it,.... And they only, for none but they might eat in the holy place, and therefore these holy things that were to be eaten there, were only eaten by them; what might be eaten by the priests in their own houses, their wives and daughters ate of, but in the holy place only their males, and a male was one that was thirteen years of age:

[it shall be] a statute for ever in your generations, concerning the offerings of the Lord made by fire; a statute to last till the Messiah should come, the true meat or bread offering; and the bread he gave was his flesh, and he that eats of it shall not die, but live for ever, **Joh 6:27**:

everyone that toucheth them shall be holy; signifying, that no one ought to touch them but a holy person, one devoted to holy services, the priests and their sons; or "whatsoever" {o} toucheth them, the dishes they eat those offerings out of, or the knives they cut them with, were not to be used for anything else.

{o} rva lk "quicquid", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius.

Leviticus 6:19

Ver. 19. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... At the same time the above laws were delivered:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 6:20

Ver. 20. This is the offering of Aaron and his sons,.... That is, of such of them as succeeded him in the high priesthood, as appears from **Le 6:22** so Aben Ezra, of him, or of one of his sons in his room; though some think the common priests offered the following oblation at the time of their initiation into their office, though they were not anointed as the high priest was, nor obliged as he to continue the offering daily:

which they shall offer unto the Lord in the day when he is anointed; when he, or any of his sons in his stead, were anointed, for as yet he himself was not; see Le 8:2 some, as Aben Ezra observes, think that b, "in", is instead of m, "from", and that the sense is, that Aaron, or his successor, and every of them, were to offer the following offering perpetually from the time of their being anointed, and put into the office of the high priest, and which certainly was the case, as appears by what follows:

the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a meat offering perpetual; which was an omer, and as much as a man could eat in one day; and this the high priest offered every day, as long as he lived, or was in his office, and that at his own expense, as Josephus says {p}, not altogether, but in the following manner:

half of it in the morning, and half of it at night; so that this constantly returned as the morning and evening sacrifices did, and followed them. Jarchi says of this, that it was the common meat offering at the consecration of a priest, but the high priest offered it every day; and it appears from the Misnic writers {q} that this meat offering consisted of twelve cakes, the same number as those of the shewbread; the same phrase, a "perpetual statute", being used of one as the other; and six of these were offered in the morning, and six at evening; and this as the daily sacrifice had the same mystical meaning, and respected the continual efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ.

{p} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 10. sect. 7. {q} Misn. Menachot, c. 6. sect. 5. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Leviticus 6:21

Ver. 21. In a pan it shall be made with oil,.... With oil olive, as the Targum of Jonathan; the pan in which it was made was a vessel that had no covering, nor hollow in the middle, nor any lip or edge, but was a plane, and extended, and the dough made on it was hard and stiff, that it might not run off {r}. In the temple was a chamber of those that made the cakes {s}, where, as Bartenora {t} observes, was prepared the meat offering, which the high priest offered, one half in the morning, and the other half in the evening:

[and when it is] baked, thou shalt bring it in; not thoroughly baked, but very little, as says Josephus, hastily, so that it swells, and rises up in bubbles. Jarchi says, the flour was first mixed in hot water, and after that it was baked in an oven, and then fried in a pan:

and the baked pieces of the meat offering shalt thou offer [for] a sweet savour unto the Lord; or the meat offering cut in pieces shalt thou offer, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; the twelve cakes were broken each into two, and twelve halves were offered in the morning, and twelve at evening: the manner in which it was done was, the priest divided every cake into two by measure, so that he might offer half in the morning, and half in the evening; and he took the halves and doubled everyone of them into two, and broke them, until he found every broken piece doubled into two, and he offered the halves with half the handful of frankincense in the morning, and in like manner in the evening {u}: this may have respect to the body of Christ being broken for us, whereby he became fit food for faith, and an offering of a sweet smelling savour to God.

{r} Misn. Menachot, c. 5. sect. 8. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. Maimon. Maasch Hakorbanot, c. 13. sect. 7. {s} Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 4. {t} In ib. {u} Maimon. Misn. Middot. sect. 4.

Leviticus 6:22

Ver. 22. And the priest of his sons that is anointed in his stead shall offer it,.... The successor of the high priest:

it is a statute for ever unto the Lord; which he by an everlasting statute appointed to be offered to him by every high priest, until the Messiah should come:

it shall be wholly burnt; of a common meat offering only a handful was burnt, and the rest was the priest's; see **Le 6:15**.

Leviticus 6:23

Ver. 23. For every meat offering for the priest shall be wholly burnt,.... Wherefore the priest that offered this for the high priest got nothing by it: he served him gratis:

it shall not be eaten; neither by himself, nor any other priest. The priests by eating the offerings of the people bore their iniquities, and made atonement for them, Le 10:17 but the priests might not eat their own sacrifices, to show that they could not bear their own sins, and make atonement for them; and this proves the insufficiency of the legal sacrifices, and the need there was for one to arise of another order to take away sin; and it is thought by some to be typical of the active obedience of Christ {w}, every day yielded to the law and will of God, and is perfect, as the word here signifies, and to be distinguished from hlwe, "a burnt offering".

{w} Vid. Michaelis Observ. Sacr. Exercitat. 6. p. 57. & Mede in ib. p. 58.

Leviticus 6:24

Ver. 24. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Continued his discourse with him:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 6:25

Ver. 25. Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons, saying, this [is] the law of the sin [offering],.... Or the rules to be observed concerning that, besides what had been already delivered in **Le 4:1**:

in the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin [offering] be killed before the Lord; and that was on the north side of the altar, see **Le 1:11** and so Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom observe, that the place of slaying every sin offering was the north; and some have observed that Mount Calvary, where our Lord was crucified, lay pretty much to the north of Jerusalem, see Ps 48:2:

it is most holy; sacred to the Lord, offered up to him, and accepted by him, and typical of the most pure and holy sacrifice of Christ, who was made sin, and an offering for sin, in the room and stead of his people.

Leviticus 6:26

Ver. 26. The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it,.... Thereby signifying that he bore the sin of the person that brought the offering, and made atonement for it; as a type of Christ, who bore the sins of his people in his own body on the tree, and made satisfaction for them; see Le 10:17. This is to be understood not of that single individual priest only that was the offerer, but of him and his family; for, as Ben Gersom observes, it was impossible for one man to eat all the flesh of a beast at one meal or two; but it means, as he says, the family of the priest that then officiated, the male part;

in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation; within the hangings, as Ben Gersom's note is, with which the court of the tabernacle was hung and made; in some room in that part of the sanctuary did the priest, with his sons, eat of the holy offerings that were appropriated to them; an emblem of spiritual priests, believers in Christ, feeding in the church upon the provisions of his house, the goodness and fatness of it.

Leviticus 6:27

Ver. 27. Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy,.... None but holy persons, such as were devoted to holy services, even the priests and their sons, might touch and eat of the flesh of the sin offering: all that did so were sacred persons; and even what were used in eating it, dishes and knives, were to be put to no other use, not to any common service, or for anything but holy things; which was done to keep up a veneration for the sacrifices, and especially for the great sacrifice they typified, the sacrifice of Christ, whose flesh is meat indeed; and whoever eats of that by faith dwells in Christ, and Christ dwells in him, **Joh 6:55**:

and when there is sprinkled of the blood thereof upon any garment; the garment of the priest that slays and offers it:

thou shalt wash that whereon it was sprinkled in the holy place; it was not to be carried out of the tabernacle, and washed elsewhere, but in the sanctuary; either at the laver, where the priests washed their hands and feet, or in some room in the court for that purpose. This was done to preserve an esteem and value for the blood of the sacrifice, as typical of the precious blood of Christ.

Leviticus 6:28

Ver. 28. But the earthen vessel wherein it is sodden shall be broken,.... That being porous, the liquor in which the sin offering was boiled might soak into it, and the smell of it be retained, and therefore, as such vessels were not very costly, they were ordered to be broken; but where the broken pieces were carried and laid, the Jewish writers are at a loss about; for, that vessels, which had served for holy uses, should be laid in an open public place and exposed, they thought was indecent; and as there might be in a course of time great quantities broken, it would look very disagreeable and unseemly to have them lie in heaps in the sanctuary; they therefore have framed a miracle, and conceit that they were swallowed up in the ground where they were laid {x}:

and if it be sodden in a brazen it shall be both scoured and rinsed in water; brass, being more valuable, must not be destroyed; and besides the liquor could not soak into that, and whatever scent it retained was easily and soon removed by scouring and rinsing; the former was with hot water, and the latter with cold, as Ben Gersom affirms.

{x} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21. 1.

Leviticus 6:29

Ver. 29. And all the males among the priests shall eat thereof,.... As of the meat offerings, **Le 6:18** and this shows that not the single priest that offered only ate of it, **Le 6:26** but his male children, and not those only, but those of other priests then upon duty, or in the court:

it [is] most holy; See Gill on "Le 6:25".

Leviticus 6:30

Ver. 30. And no sin [offering], whereof [any] of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile [withal] in the holy place, shall be eaten,.... Every offering, and so every sin offering, was killed in the court of the tabernacle, on the north side of the altar; and the blood of some of them, as on the day of atonement, was carried within the vail and sprinkled on the mercy seat for reconciling the holy place, and making atonement for it; now the flesh of such sin offerings might not be eaten by the priests, though all others might:

it shall be burnt in the fire. Ben Gersom says, it was burnt in its place in the court, in a place prepared there to burn things rejected, and sanctified; and I think, adds he, this place was on the east side, i.e. of the court; but it is clear from Le 16:27 where the above case is mentioned, that it was to be carried out without the camp, and burnt there. What use the apostle makes of this, applying it to Christ, see Heb 13:11.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 7

The several things contained in this chapter are the law of the trespass offering, **Le 7:1** the portion the priests had in the burnt offerings and meat offerings, **Le 7:8** the law of the peace offerings, whether by way of thanksgiving, or a vow, or voluntary oblation, **Le 7:11** the prohibition of fat and blood, **Le 7:22** the parts the priests should have in the peace offerings, the breast and right shoulder, **Le 7:28** and the chapter is concluded with a recapitulation of the various things contained in this and the preceding chapters, **Le 7:37**.

Ver. 1. Likewise this [is] the law of the trespass [offering],.... Or the various rites and rules to be observed at the offering of it: the persons for whom it was to be made are described in the two preceding chapters, **Le 5:1** both such that sinned through ignorance, and knowingly, and here the place and parts of the offering, and how to be disposed of, are declared:

it [is] most holy; wholly devoted for sacred use, either to the Lord, or to his priests; there were some things the Jews call light holy things, and others most holy in the highest degree, of this sort was the trespass offering.

Leviticus 7:2

Ver. 2. In the place where they kill the burnt offering shall they kill the trespass [offering,.... See **Le 1:11**:

and the blood thereof shall he sprinkle round about upon the altar; on the upper part of it. There was a scarlet thread that was drawn around the altar in the middle, the blood of some of the sacrifices was sprinkled below it; and some above it, as was the blood of the trespass offering.

Leviticus 7:3

Ver. 3. And he shall offer of it all the fat thereof,.... To the Lord, that being claimed by him, as in the peace offerings of the herd, and of the flock, whether a bullock or cow, a lamb or a goat, **Le 3:3**, &c. and in the sin offering of the bullock, **Le 1:8**:

and the rump, or tail, which of sheep and rams, for the trespass offering, was very large and fat in those countries;
See Gill on "Ex 29:22" see Gill on "Le 3:9":

and the fat that covereth the inwards; called the "omentum".

Leviticus 7:4

Ver. 4. And the two kidneys, and the fat that [is] on them,.... Which are usually covered with fat:

which [is] by the flanks: or rather that which is "upon" them {y}; for this respects not the situation of the kidneys, nor the fat upon them, but the fat which is upon the flanks, as distinct from that, and where there are great collops of it, see Job 15:27:

and the caul [that is] above the liver; the lobe upon the liver, according to the Septuagint:

with the kidneys, it shall he take away; all the fat before mentioned, together with the kidneys, were to be taken away from the ram of the trespass offering, and burnt, as follows.

{y} Mylokh le rva "et qui est superiliis", Tigurine version.

Leviticus 7:5

Ver. 5. And the priest shall burn them upon the altar,.... Fat taken off of the several parts before mentioned, and the kidneys: which were to be

[for] an offering made by fire unto the Lord; and was acceptable to him, being typical of the offering of Christ, which is a sweet smelling savour, bearing the

fire of divine wrath in the room and stead of his people:

it [is] the trespass [offering]; an offering for a trespass committed, to make atonement for it; and this part of it, the burning of the fat, was properly the offering to the Lord, all the rest were the priest's, as follows.

Leviticus 7:6

Ver. 6. Every male among the priests shall eat thereof,.... Of the flesh of it, after the fat was taken off and burnt, the rest belonged to the priests and their sons, and to them only, not to their wives and daughters:

it shall be eaten in the holy place; in the court of the tabernacle, in some apartment in it, for that purpose, as afterwards in the temple; it was not to be carried home to their houses, for all in the family to partake of, only the priests and their sons were to eat of it:

it [is] most holy; and therefore none but such who were devoted to holy services might eat of it; only sanctified persons, true believers, who are made priests unto God, have a right to eat of the altar Christ, or, can eat his flesh in a spiritual sense, and feed upon him by faith, and receive nourishment from him, Heb 13:10.

Leviticus 7:7

Ver. 7. As the sin [offering is], so [is] the trespass [offering, there is] one law for them,.... The same as in **Le 6:27**:

the priest that maketh atonement therewith shall have it; who by offering it made atonement for the trespass of the person that brings it, as typical of the atonement by the sacrifice of Christ; he was to have all but what was burnt, for himself and his sons; though no doubt but other priests then on duty in the court ate with him.

Leviticus 7:8

Ver. 8. And the priest that offereth any man's burnt offering,.... In which the flesh was wholly burnt, and nothing of it remained to requite the priest for his trouble, as in other offerings:

even the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering, which he hath offered; in some cases the skin itself was burnt, and then he could have nothing, see **Le 4:11** but in others the skin was reserved for the priest. There seems to be an emphasis upon the phrase "to himself", and may signify, that though in other things other priests might partake with him, yet not in this; and so Maimonides {z} observes, that the skin was not given to every priest, but to him that offered the sacrifice; and elsewhere {a} he says, the skins of light holy things are the owner's, but the skins of the most holy things are the priest's. And some have thought this law has some respect to the case of Adam, and is agreeable thereunto; who having offered sacrifice according to divine directions given him, had coats made for him and his wife of the skins of the slain beasts; and it was usual with the Heathen priests to have the skins of the sacrifices, and in which they slept in their temples and others also were desirous of the same, in order by dreams or otherwise to get knowledge of things future; See Gill on "Am 2:8".

{z} In Misn. Challah, c. 4. sect. 9. {a} In Misn. Zebachim, c. 12. sect. 3.

Leviticus 7:9

Ver. 9. And all the meat offering that is baked in the oven,.... Or "every meat offering" {b}, whether dressed in one way or another, and which was done in one or other of these three ways, of which this was one, baked in an oven heated for that purpose:

and all that is dressed in the frying pan; such as we call pancakes:

and in the pan; which was different from the frying pan; it seems to be what was set upon an hearth made hot, and soon baked;
See Gill on "Le 6:21" of these three different ways of dressing the meat offering, see **Le 2:4**.

{b} hxnm lk "omne munus", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Leviticus 7:10

Ver. 10. And every meat offering mingled with oil, and dry,.... Rather it should be rendered "or dry" {c}; that is, as Jarchi interprets it, that has no oil in it; the meat offering in common, let it be dressed in what way soever, was mingled with oil; but in the poor man's offering for sin, which was as a meat offering, no oil was to be put upon it, **Le 5:11** but whether the offering was with or without oil, moist or dry, it

shall all the sons of Aaron have, one [as much] as another; it was to be equally divided among them; or a priest offering it at one time, was to have the same as another priest at another time; it was always alike, all that remained, except the handful that was burnt, was the priest's.

{c} hbrxw "vel aridum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Leviticus 7:11

Ver. 11. And this [is] the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which ye shall offer unto the Lord. Some other laws and rules respecting the oblation of them: in **Le 3:1** an account is given of what they should be, both of the herd and flock, and of the burning of the fat of them; and here the several sorts of them are distinctly observed, what should be offered with them, and the part the priest should have of it, and when the flesh of them should be eaten.

Leviticus 7:12

Ver. 12. If he offer it for a thanksgiving,.... Which Jarchi restrains to the wonderful deliverances of seafaring persons, of travellers, and of such as have been confined in prison, or have laboured under violent diseases and disorders of body; and so Aben Ezra seems to understand it only of thanksgivings on account of being delivered out of distress; but it might be for the common mercies of life, or any particular mercy or instance of divine goodness a man was sensible of, and thought proper in this way to make an acknowledgment of it:

then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving; which, if of the herd, was either a bullock or a cow; and if of the flock, was either a lamb or a goat;

unleavened cakes mingled with oil; ten of them, according to the Jewish writers; the measure of flour, of which they were made, were, as Jarchi says, five Jerusalem seahs or pecks, which were six of those used in the wilderness, and made twenty tenths or omers, an omer being the tenth part of an ephah {d}; the oil they were mingled with, as to the quantity of it, was half a log {e}; a fourth part of it was for the cakes, hastily baked, (said in the latter part of this verse to be fried,) an eighth part for those baked, (intended in this clause,) and an eighth part for the wafers next mentioned:

and unleavened wafers anointed with oil; these were a thinner sort of cakes, made without leaven as the others, but the oil was not mixed with the flour in the making of them, but put upon them when made, and therefore said to be anointed with it; there were also ten of these:

and cakes mingled with oil of fine flour fried; these were such as were hastily and not thoroughly baked, **Le 6:21** or, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom, they were mixed and boiled with hot water, as much as was sufficient; or, according to Maimonides {f}, were fried in oil; and there were ten of these, in all thirty,

{d} Vid. Misn. Menachot, c. 7. sect. 1. & Bartenora in ib. {e} Maimon. Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 9. sect. 20. {f} In Misn. Menachot, c. 9. sect. 3.

Leviticus 7:13

Ver. 13. Besides the cakes,.... The unleavened cakes, and the unleavened wafers, and the fried cakes; or with these, as Aben Ezra and Abendana interpret it:

he shall offer for his offering leavened bread, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings; not that this was offered upon the altar, for all leaven was forbidden there, **Le 2:11** but it was given to the priest, that he might have change of bread, and such as was agreeable to him, to eat with the flesh of the peace offerings he had a share of, and to the owners also; and the whole of this consisted of ten cakes likewise, as will appear by what Maimonides {g} says; he (the offerer) takes twenty tenths of fine flour, and makes ten leavened, and ten unleavened; the ten leavened he makes into ten cakes, and the ten unleavened he makes of them eighty cakes alike, ten cakes of every sort, ten cakes baked in an oven, ten cakes wafers, and ten cakes slightly baked.

{g} Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 9. sect. 17, 18, 21.

Leviticus 7:14

Ver. 14. And of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation [for] an heave offering unto the Lord,.... That is, one out of the unleavened cakes, and out of the unleavened wafers, and out of the cakes fried, and out of the cakes leavened; lo, says Aben Ezra, four at least, and the truth is, adds he, there were ten; and so Maimonides {h} says, the priest took out of all the four cakes, one out of every sort, as it is said, "and of it he shall offer one", &c.

and it shall be the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the peace offerings; that is, that part of the cakes and bread, which is offered as an heave offering to the Lord, was the portion of the priests; and so Maimonides {i} says,

"the bread waved (rather heaved) with the thank offering was eaten by the priests, and the rest of the bread by the owners."

{h} Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 9. sect. 17, 18, 21. {i} Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 9. sect. 12.

Leviticus 7:15

Ver. 15. And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving,.... Having given directions about the cakes and bread that went along with the peace offerings, offered in thankfulness for mercies received; instructions are next given about eating the flesh of them; and the order is, that that

shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; partly by him that brought them, and his family, and partly by the poor he was to invite to eat thereof; and also by the priests and Levites, who were to have their share of it; see De 12:11

he shall not leave any of it until the morning; which was ordered to encourage liberality to the priests, Levites, and others, since all must be eaten up before morning: according to the Jewish canons, they might eat it no longer than midnight; by that time it was to be all consumed; and it is said {k}, the wise men made an hedge to the law to keep men from sin.

{k} Misn. Zebachim, c. 5. sect. 3.

Leviticus 7:16

Ver. 16. But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow,.... Be on account of a vow made, as, that if he was favoured with such and such benefits, or delivered out of such and such troubles and distresses, then he would offer such a sacrifice:

or a voluntary offering; without any condition or obligation; what from the mere motion of his mind he freely offered, not being directed to it by any command of God, or under any necessity from a vow of his own, and without any view to; any future good to be enjoyed: Aben Ezra describes both the one and the other thus; a "vow" which he uttered with his lips in his distresses, a "voluntary offering", which his spirit made him willing to bring, a sacrifice to God neither for a vow nor for thanksgiving:

it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice; that is, it shall be begun to be eaten then, and if all is eaten up it is very well, but they were not obliged in either of these cases, as in the preceding, to eat up all, and leave none to the morning, for it follows:

and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten; some of it, if thought fit, and could not be conveniently eaten, might be kept till the day after the sacrifice, but no longer.

Leviticus 7:17

Ver. 17. But the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day,.... What remained of it uneaten on the second day, and was kept till the third:

shall be burnt with fire; that it might neither corrupt, nor be put to superstitious uses, nor be of any profit in any respect; that so niggardliness and distrust of the care of Providence might be discouraged: perhaps some respect may be had in the type to the resurrection of Christ on the third day, having seen no corruption.

Leviticus 7:18

Ver. 18. And if any of the flesh of his peace offerings be eaten at all on the third day,.... Any part of it, even the least:

it shall not be accepted; as a sacrifice well pleasing to God; he will take no delight in it, or express any satisfaction therein; but, on the contrary, reject it with abhorrence:

neither shall it be imputed to him that offereth it; the Targum of Jonathan adds, for merit or righteousness; it shall not be accounted a righteous action, or the offerer receive any benefit by it:

it shall be an abomination; to God, the flesh being kept so long, through a sordid and niggardly disposition:

and the soul that eateth of it shall bear his iniquity; it shall not be forgiven him; he shall bear the punishment of it.

Leviticus 7:19

Ver. 19. And the flesh that toucheth any unclean [thing] shall not be eaten,.... That is, the flesh of the peace offerings; should it be touched by any unclean person, man or woman; that was so in a ceremonial sense, being profluvious or menstruous, or having touched anything unclean, or touched by any unclean creature, as a dog or the like, as it might be while carried from the tabernacle to any of their tents or houses:

it shall be burnt with fire; that no profit might be had of it; and this was to make them careful in carrying it from place to place:

and as for the flesh, all that be clean shall eat thereof; that are clean in a ceremonial sense; as all that are clean in an evangelic sense, through the blood and righteousness of Christ, may, by faith, eat his flesh and drink his blood. Jarchi observes, that whereas it is said, De 12:27 "thou shall eat the flesh"; some might object and say, that none might eat of the peace offerings but the owners of them, therefore it is said here, "all that be clean shall eat"; not the owners only, nor the priests and Levites only, but whoever the offerer should invite to eat thereof, provided he was but clean.

Leviticus 7:20

Ver. 20. But the soul that eateth [of] the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offerings, that [pertain] unto the Lord,.... That are offered up to him, and so are holy, and therefore not to be eaten by unholy persons, or by any

having his uncleanness upon him; a profluvious person that has an issue running out of him, a gonorrhoea; see Le 15:2

even that soul shall be cut off from his people; be disfranchised as an Israelite, be debarred the privileges of the sanctuary, or be cut off by death before the usual time and term of man's life; so those that eat and drink unworthily in the supper of our Lord, where his flesh is eaten and his blood drank, eat and drink damnation to themselves, 1Co 11:29.

Leviticus 7:21

Ver. 21. Moreover, the soul that shall touch any unclean [thing],.... Person or thing, the dead body of a man, or the bone of a dead body, or a grave in which it was laid:

as the uncleanness of man; the issue that runs from a profluvious person:

or [any] unclean beast; that was so by the law ceremonial; see
Le 11:4:

or any abominable unclean thing; which the Targum of Jonathan interprets of every unclean reptile: see Le 11:20

and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which [pertain] unto the Lord, even that soul shall be cut off from his people; See Gill on "Le 7:20".

Leviticus 7:22

Ver. 22. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Continued speaking to him:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 7:23

Ver. 23. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying,.... Putting them in mind, by repeating to them the laws concerning fat and blood, **Le 3:17**

ye shall eat no manner of fat; of any creature fit for food, whose flesh otherwise may be eaten, and particularly

of ox, or of sheep, or of goats: creatures used in sacrifice; though this is not to be restrained to such of them, and the fat of them that were sacrificed, whose fat was claimed by the Lord as his, and was burnt on his altar; but this is to be understood of the fat of these creatures when killed for their common use, for the food of them and their families; the fat even of these was not to be eaten; that which was not separated from the flesh, but mixed with it, might be eaten, but not that which was separated {l}.

{l} Bechai in Lev. 3. 17.

Leviticus 7:24

Ver. 24. And the fat of the beast that dieth of itself,.... Of any disease, and is not regularly killed:

and the fat of that which is torn with beasts; with wild beasts:

may be used in any other use; as in medicine, for plasters, or for making candles, or for greasing of anything to make it smooth and pliable, or the like:

but ye shall in no wise eat of it; such carcasses themselves were not to be eaten of, and one would think their fat in course must be unlawful; but however, to prevent the doing of it, this particular law was given, and those that broke this were doubly guilty, as the Jews observe {m}; once in eating things that died of themselves, or were torn with beasts, and again by eating the fat of them.

{m} Maimon. Hilchot Maacolot Asurot, c. 7. sect. 2.

Leviticus 7:25

Ver. 25. For whosoever eateth the fat of the beast, of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord,.... As oxen, sheep, rams, goats; meaning not only the fat of those that are offered, but the fat of all those of the like kind:

even the soul that eateth it shall be cut off from his people;
See Gill on "Le 7:20" Maimonides {n} observes, that the punishment of cutting off is enjoined for the eating of fat, because men used to count it delicious, for which reason also God would honour his sacrifices with it: and he further observes {o}, that the fat of the intestines too much saturates, hinders concoction, generates gross and frigid blood, hence it is much better it should be burnt than eaten; and that blood and what dies of itself are of difficult digestion, and of bad nourishment, wherefore the latter is forbidden in the **Le 7:24**, and the former in **Le 7:26**: of the punishment for eating fat, the same writer {p} observes, he that eats fat the quantity of an olive, presumptuously, is guilty of cutting off; if ignorantly, he must bring the fixed sin offering: and elsewhere {q} he says, he that eats fat is beaten for it; and he eats it a second time, and is beaten for it; but if he eats it a third time they do not beat him, but put him into a prison, which is a strait place according to his height, where he cannot stand upright, nor can he lie down in it; and they give him bread and water of affliction till his bowels are distressed, and he become sick, and then they feed him with barley till his belly bursts.

{n} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 41. {o} Ibid. c. 48. {p} Hilchot Maacolot Asurot, c. 7. sect. 1. {q} Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 18. sect. 4.

Leviticus 7:26

Ver. 26. Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood,.... Of any of the above creatures, or any other, even of any clean creature, and much less of an unclean one:

[whether it be] of fowl or of beast; of all sorts and kinds. Jarchi thinks, the words being thus expressed, the blood of fishes and locusts is excepted, and so lawful to eat:

in any of your dwellings; this shows that this law is not to be restrained to creatures slain in sacrifice in the tabernacle, and to the blood of them, but to be understood of all such as were slain in their own houses for food, and the blood of them.

Leviticus 7:27

Ver. 27. Whatsoever soul [it be] that eateth any manner of blood,.... The Targum of Jonathan adds, of any living creature, that is, of any while it is alive; for the Jews always interpret the law in **Ge 9:4** of the member of a living creature torn off from it, and its flesh with the blood eaten directly:

even that soul shall be cut off from his people; Maimonides {r} observes, that to some sorts of food cutting off is threatened, particularly to blood, because of the eager desire of men to eat it in those times, and because it precipitated them to a certain species of idolatry; he means that of the Zabians, of which See Gill on "Eze 33:25" of the true reason of the prohibition of eating blood under the law, see Le 17:10, &c.

{r} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 41.

Leviticus 7:28

Ver. 28. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... At the same time the above laws were delivered; for what follows relates to the sacrifice of the peace offerings:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 7:29

Ver. 29. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying,.... Giving them the further instructions concerning their peace offerings:

he that offereth the sacrifice of his peace offerings unto the Lord; whether it he for thanksgiving, or as a vow, or a voluntary oblation, and whether it be of the herd or of the flock, an ox or a cow, a lamb or a goat:

shall bring his oblation unto the Lord of the sacrifice of his peace offerings; that is, the unleavened cakes, wafers, and fried cakes, and unleavened bread, which are called the whole oblation, **Le 7:10**.

Leviticus 7:30

Ver. 30. His own hands shall bring the offerings of the Lord made by fire,.... That is, such parts of the peace offerings as were to be burnt with fire, as the fat on several parts described in **Le 3:3** the owners of the offerings were to bring them in the manner as will be presently observed:

the fat with the breast, it shall he bring; the fat to be burnt, and the breast for the priest and his sons, as in the following verse **Le 7:31**:

that the breast may be waved [for] a wave offering before the Lord; how this waving was performed, See Gill on "Ex 29:24" particularly with respect to these peace offerings it was thus; if a thank offering, the priest takes of the bread brought with it one (cake) out of ten, and lays it with the breast, the shoulder, and the inwards, and waves all upon the hands of the owners; on which he puts the fat, then the breast and the shoulder above (i.e. upon the fat), then the two kidneys, and the caul, and the liver above them; and if there was any bread, he put it over them, and waved all, putting his hand under the hands of the owner {s}.

{s} Maimon. Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 9. sect. 6, 7. so Ben Gersom in loc.

Leviticus 7:31

Ver. 31. And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar,.... Of burnt offering, even the fat upon the inwards, the two kidneys, the flanks, the caul, and liver:

but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons; which being waved before the Lord for a wave offering, was the Lord's, and so was given to his priests to eat of, for the service done by them, it being but reasonable that they that serve at the altar should live of it; and thus, with other things, a maintenance was provided for the priests and their families, as ought also to be for Gospel ministers under the present dispensation.

Leviticus 7:32

Ver. 32. And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest [for] an heave offering,.... Whether of an ox or a cow, a lamb or a goat:

of the sacrifices of your peace offerings; which were of either of these creatures; the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"the right arm from the shoulder to the elbow."

The breast being the seat of wisdom, and the shoulder of strength, some think denote Christ as the wisdom and power of God unto his people, his priests, who have all their knowledge and strength from him, and who bears them on his heart and on his shoulder.

Leviticus 7:33

Ver. 33. He among the sons of Aaron that offereth the blood of the peace offerings, and the fat,.... Who sprinkled the blood of them upon the altar round about, and burnt the fat upon it, which were rites enjoined to be observed, Le 3:2:

shall have the right shoulder for [his] part; his particular part and share, because of his service: Aben Ezra remarks, that the right shoulder was given to him that sprinkled the blood, and the breast to all the priests; and Jarchi observes, that he that was fit for sprinkling the blood, and burning the fat, and went out an unclean person in the time of sprinkling the blood, or burning the fat, had no part in the flesh.

Leviticus 7:34

Ver. 34. For the wave breast and the heave shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel,.... These two parts were particularly pitched upon and selected:

from off the sacrifices of their peace offering; the rest being allowed the owners, besides what were burnt:

and have given them unto Aaron the priest and unto his sons, by a statute for ever from among the children of Israel; as long as the priesthood lasted, even to the coming of the Messiah, in whom all these sacrifices would have their accomplishment and their end.

Leviticus 7:35

Ver. 35. This [is the portion] of the anointing of Aaron,.... Of his being anointed to the priestly office; this is the part allotted and assigned him for the execution of it; this is the reward, as Aben Ezra interprets it, of his faithful performance of it, namely, his having the wave breast and heave shoulder of the peace offerings, and a cake out of everyone of the unleavened cakes, together with the leavened bread, besides other perquisites from other offerings:

and of the anointing of his sons; the successors of him in the priest hood; the Targum of Jonathan adds, above all their brethren the Levites:

out of the offerings of the Lord made by fire; out of such whose fat on the several parts of them was burnt with fire, such as the peace offerings were:

in the day when he presented them to minister unto the Lord in the priest's office; when they were ordered to be taken out from among the children of Israel, and to be consecrated to, and invested with, the priest's office, as they were by Moses, and presented by him unto him as his priests; at that time the above portion was assigned them, as follows.

Leviticus 7:36

Ver. 36. Which the Lord commanded to be given them of the children of Israel,.... Whenever they brought their offerings to be offered up by them, such parts thereof were ordered to be allowed them as theirs;

in the day that he anointed them; or from the day they were anointed of Moses, by the direction of the Lord, from that time they had a right and claim to the above things, out of the sacrifices brought, so Aben Ezra: and this was

by a statute for ever throughout their generations; in all successive generations, unto the coming of the Messiah, which would put an end to their priesthood. Thus the Lord provided for the maintenance of his ministers, till that time came; and since it has been the ordinance of Christ, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel, **1Co 9:13**.

Leviticus 7:37

Ver. 37. This [is] the law of the burnt offering,.... As delivered, **Le 6:9**:

of the meat offering; as in **Le 6:14**:

and of the sin offering; as in **Le 6:25**:

and of the trespass offering; as in **Le 7:1**:

and of the consecrations; of Aaron and his sons to the priest's office, as in **Le 6:20**:

and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings; as in this chapter, **Le 7:11** for this is only a recapitulation of the several laws respecting these things before observed.

Leviticus 7:38

Ver. 38. Which the Lord commanded Moses in Mount Sinai,.... Or "by" or "near" {t} Mount Sinai; for the above laws were not given to Moses when on the mount, but after the tabernacle was erected, and out of it, as appears from **Le 1:1** and to which what follows agrees:

in the day that he commanded the children of Israel to offer their oblations unto the Lord in the wilderness of Sinai; where they were when the above laws were delivered to them, and which wilderness had its name from the mount near to which they now were, and where the tabernacle was pitched, from whence the Lord spoke; and so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"in the tabernacle which they made for him in the wilderness of Sinai;"

there they were ordered to offer their oblations of every sort, as before directed. It should be observed, that this is to be understood of the command given in the wilderness to offer sacrifices, but not of the sacrifices themselves then offered, which were not done while there; see **Jer 7:22**.

{t} rhb "by the mount"; so Patrick in loc.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 8

The order for the consecration of Aaron and his sons is renewed, **Le 8:1** which accordingly was set about and performed by Moses, **Le 8:4** who having first washed and clothed them, first Aaron, and then his sons, with the garments of the priesthood, anointing at the same time the tabernacle of the altar, and what appertained to them and Aaron also, **Le 8:6** and then he slew the bullock for the sin offering, and the ram for the burnt offering, and the ram of consecration; and did with the blood, fat, shoulder, and breast, and the meat offering belonging thereunto, as he had been directed, **Le 8:14** and the chapter is concluded with some instructions about boiling the flesh, and burning the remainder of it, and keeping the charge of the Lord night and day for seven days, **Le 8:31**.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... The following section or paragraph, relating to the consecration of Aaron and his sons, was delivered, according to Jarchi, seven days before the setting up of the tabernacle; but to me it seems to have been delivered after the setting it up, since it was out of the tabernacle that the Lord said all those things recorded in the preceding chapters; and after he had given out the laws concerning sacrifices, then he renewed the order for the consecration of Aaron and his sons, that they might offer them:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 8:2

Ver. 2. Take Aaron, and his sons with him,.... That is, order them to come, or send a message to them, that they appear at such a time at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where the ceremony of consecration was to be performed, and was performed, **Le 8:3** which is observed and recorded by Moses, to show that he had a divine warrant for what he did, and that it was not from favour and affection to his brother, and because of the relation he and his family stood in to him, that he invested him and them with the priestly office, but it was by a command from the Lord; nor did Aaron take this honour to himself, but was called of God to it, **Heb 5:4**:

and the garments; the garments for the priesthood, ordered and described, and now made, see Ex 28:1

and the anointing oil; which also was ordered to be made, and now was made, Ex 30:23

and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened [bread]; which were all to be used at the consecration with the anointing oil Aaron was to be anointed, and also the tabernacle and the altar; and the bullock was to be a sin offering, and one of the rams a burnt offering for Aaron, and his sons, and the other ram was the ram of consecration of them; and out of the basket of unleavened bread one cake of each sort was to be taken, and waved with other things, and burnt, which finished the consecration; but with it was no oath, as in the consecration of the antitypical high priest Christ Jesus, which difference is observed by the apostle, **Heb 7:21** see Ex 29:1.

Leviticus 8:3

Ver. 3. And gather thou all the congregation together,.... That is, the heads of the tribes and the elders of the people, as Aben Ezra interprets it; for the whole body of the people, and every individual of them, could not be got together:

unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; taking this for the whole court itself, as it sometimes is; though no doubt on this occasion as great a number was convened as well could be admitted into the court, or about it, to be spectators and witnesses of the solemn investiture of Aaron and his sons with the priestly office.

Leviticus 8:4

Ver. 4. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him,.... He convened Aaron and his sons, and the heads of the people, at the door of the tabernacle, and came himself, and brought with him the garments, the oil, and sacrifices, even everything necessary for the consecration:

and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and this was, according to the Targum of Jonathan, on the twenty third day of the month Adar or February; but it rather seems to be later, some time in the beginning of Nisan or March, and before the passover began, see **Nu 9:1**.

Leviticus 8:5

Ver. 5. And Moses said unto the congregation,.... Having convened them, he opened to them the reason of their being called together, which was not done of himself, but by divine direction:

this [is] the thing which the Lord commanded to be done; namely, what follows, concerning the consecration of Aaron and his sons to be priests, and the investiture of them with that office, attended with various rites and ceremonies to be performed, of which they were to be witnesses.

Leviticus 8:6

Ver. 6. And Moses brought Aaron and his sons,.... To the laver which was in the court of the tabernacle

and washed them with water; to show that they should be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord, and offer the sacrifices of the people; all that are in public office in the house of God ought to have both clean hands and a pure heart, to hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, and to be of a pure and holy conversation; and indeed all that are made kings and priests to God, as all the saints are, they are washed from their sins in the blood of Jesus, **Re 1:5**.

Leviticus 8:7

Ver. 7. And he put upon him the coat,.... The embroidered coat of fine linen, which was next to his flesh; Ex 28:39 and all the garments were put on just in the order they are here declared; no mention is made indeed of the linen breeches, since it is highly probable these were put on by Aaron himself in some apartment in the tabernacle, or before came thither; it not being so decent to put on, or have these put on, in the sight of the whole congregation:

and girded him with the girdle; the girdle of needlework with which the linen coat was girt to him, and was distinct from the curious girdle of the ephod after mentioned, Ex 28:39

and clothed him with the robe: the robe of the ephod, which had at the hem of it golden bells and pomegranates, Ex 28:31

and put the ephod upon him; made of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, which had two shoulder pieces, and on them two onyx stones, on

which were engraved the names of the twelve tribes,
Ex 28:6

and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound [it] unto him therewith; which was made of the same with the ephod, and by which it was girt close unto him; of the mystical meaning of these garments, See Gill on "Ex 28:39" see Gill on "Ex 28:31" see Gill on "Ex 28:32" see Gill on "Ex 28:33" see Gill on "Ex 28:34" see Gill on "Ex 28:35" see Gill on "Ex 28:6" see Gill on "Ex 28:7" see Gill on "Ex 28:8" see Gill on "Ex 28:9" see Gill on "Ex 28:10" see Gill on "Ex 28:11" see Gill on "Ex 28:12".

Leviticus 8:8

Ver. 8. And he put the breastplate upon him,.... Which was made of the same materials with the ephod, and was put upon it, and fastened to it:

also he put in the breastplate the Urim and Thummim: that is, Moses did it, as all the rest; for there is no reason to be given why this should be appropriated to God as a divine work, distinct from the rest; and these seem to be the twelve precious stones set in the breastplate, whose names are given, Ex 27:17 and if they are not intended, no account is here given of them; but since in Ex 29:8 an account is given of the stones, and of the setting of them in the breastplate, and no mention is made of the Urim and Thummim, and here notice is taken of them, but nothing said of the stones; it seems pretty plain they must be the same; See Gill on "Ex 28:30".

Leviticus 8:9

Ver. 9. And he put the mitre upon his head,.... Which was made of fine linen, and was a wrap of that of a considerable length about his head, Ex 28:39

also upon the mitre, [even] upon his forefront, did he put the golden plate; which was put upon the forehead of the high priest, reaching from ear to ear, and was fastened to the mitre with a blue lace, and had on it this inscription, "holiness to the Lord":
Ex 28:36 and is here therefore called

the holy crown: denoting both the sanctity and the dignity of the high priest, and typical of Christ, who is holiness itself, and to his people, and is now crowned with glory and honour, being a priest upon the throne: hence the Jews {u} speak of the crown of the law, and of the crown of the kingdom, and of the crown of the priesthood: and this, as all the rest, was done

as the Lord commanded Moses; all these were made according to the divine order, and were put on in the manner and form he directed him; of the mystery of the mitre and the crown, See Gill on "Ex 28:39" see Gill on "Ex 28:36" see Gill on "Ex 28:37".

{u} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 13.

Leviticus 8:10

Ver. 10. And Moses took the anointing oil,.... Which Bezaleel had made, according to the directions which Moses had given him, and he had received from the Lord: this Moses brought with him to the door of the tabernacle, as he was ordered, **Le 8:2** and now he took it and made use of it as follows:

and anointed the tabernacle and all that [was] therein; the altar of incense, the candlestick, and table of shewbread:

and sanctified them; separated and devoted them to sacred use and service.

Leviticus 8:11

Ver. 11. And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times,.... The altar of burnt offering; the order for anointing it is given in Ex 30:28 but in that no directions are given for the manner of doing it by sprinkling, nor the number of times it was to be sprinkled: hence Jarchi confesses his ignorance, and says,

"I know not how it was ordered about these sprinklings;"

but no doubt Moses was instructed of God in what manner to anoint it, and how often; and the number seven may denote the perfect unction of it, and made it a fitter type of Christ, who received the unction of the Spirit without measure:

and anointed the altar, and all its vessels; pans, shovels, basins, flesh hooks, and fire pans:

both the laver and his foot; which was for the priests to wash at; and very probably this was done before Moses brought Aaron and his sons thither and washed them, **Le 8:6** since it seems most proper that it should be consecrated before used, as it follows:

to sanctify them; set them apart for sacred use.

Leviticus 8:12

Ver. 12. And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head,.... Which ran down to his beard, and to the collar of his coat, the robe of the ephod, but not to the skirts of his garments, as we wrongly render it, Ps 133:2. Jarchi says it was first poured on his head, and after that he put it between his eyebrows, and drew it with his finger here and there, or from one eyebrow to another: Maimonides {w} gives a like account, with some addition; he says, the oil was poured on his head, and he was anointed between the eyebrows, in the form of the Greek letter c, "chi": a greater profusion of oil was used in the anointing of Aaron than of the tabernacle, altar, and laver, and their vessels, he being so eminent a type of Christ, our high priest, anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows:

and anointed him to sanctify him; to signify that he was set apart and devoted to the sacred office of the priesthood. The Targum of Jonathan observes, that this anointing was after he had clothed him; though some have thought it was done before the mitre and holy crown were put on: but if they were put on to complete the investiture, they might be taken off while the ceremony of anointing was performed.

{w} In Misn. Ceritot, c. 1. sect. 1.

Leviticus 8:13

Ver. 13. And Moses brought Aaron's sons,.... His four sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; he ordered and directed them to come there, or sent proper persons to fetch them, or from one part of the court, where they were, he might accompany them thither:

and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles: which were made of fine linen, Ex 39:27 and the coats being made long to reach down to the ankles, needed girdles, especially when in service, that they might perform it more expeditiously:

and put bonnets on them; which were made of fine linen also, and differed from the mitre of the high priest only in the manner of rolling up the linen:

as the Lord commanded Moses; as all the above things were made, so they were all put on, according to the directions Moses received of the Lord, who was faithful in his house, with respect to everything he enjoined him, **Heb 3:2**.

Leviticus 8:14

Ver. 14. And he brought the bullock for the sin [offering],.... To the tabernacle, into the court of it, to the altar of burnt offering there; that is, he caused it to be brought thither as he was ordered,
Ex 29:10

and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin [offering]; their right hands, according to the Targum of Jonathan, which is not improbable, thereby as it were transferring their sins to it, and confessing them over it; acknowledging their guilt, and that they deserved to die, as that creature would, which was to be a vicarious sacrifice for sin, and whose blood was to purify and sanctify the altar, at which they, sinful men, were to serve.

Leviticus 8:15

Ver. 15. And he slew it,.... Not Aaron, nor any of his sons, who as yet were not fully consecrated and installed into their office, but Moses, as follows:

and Moses took the blood; which was received into a basin when the bullock was slain:

and put [it] upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger; upon the four horns of the altar, which were at the four corners of it, and dipping his finger into the blood, he besmeared the horns with it, and drew it about with his finger here and there; and so is said to be done round about the altar, as these horns were:

and purified the altar; or cleansed it; not from moral guilt and pollution, which it was incapable of, but from all ceremonial pollution it might be supposed to have:

and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar; the rest of the blood he did not use about the horns:

and sanctified it; separated it from common to sacred use:

to make reconciliation upon it; that it might be fit to have sacrifices offered on it to make atonement and reconciliation for sins; for which reason it was necessary it should itself be pure and holy, in such sense it was capable of being so.

Leviticus 8:16

Ver. 16. And he took all the fat that was upon the inwards,.... Called the "omentum":

and the caul [above] the liver; the lobe upon the liver, as the Septuagint; or "the caul" and "the liver", so says Jarchi; the liver separately, for he took a little of the liver with it, the caul:

and the two kidneys, and their fat, and Moses burned [it] upon the altar: the fat of these several parts, which has been often observed was done; and in imitation of which, the same has been done by the Persians and their Magi, as related by Strabo {x} and others {y}; and by the Romans, to which Persius {z} refers; and these several parts are generally covered with fat in fat creatures, and especially sheep, as Aristotle {a} observes.

{x} Geograph. l. 15. p. 504. {y} "Omentum in flamma pingue", &c. Catullus. {z} "Tot tibi cum in flammis", &c. Satyr. 2. {a} Hist. Animal. l. 3. c. 17.

Leviticus 8:17

Ver. 17. But the bullock and his hide, his flesh, and his dung, he burnt with fire without the camp,.... Aben Ezra observes, that some say that he did this himself; and others, that it was done by orders, that is, he ordered others to do it, which seems probable enough:

as the Lord commanded Moses; Ex 29:14.

Leviticus 8:18

Ver. 18. And he brought the ram for the burnt offering,.... One of the two he was ordered to take, **Le 8:2**

and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram; as they had done before on the head of the bullock, see **Le 8:14** their right hands, as the Targum of Jonathan, and that at the same time; not first Aaron and then his sons, as a famous grammarian, Aben Ezra makes mention of, thought; but, as he himself says, they laid them on together.

Leviticus 8:19

Ver. 19. And he killed it,.... That is, Moses killed the ram, as the Septuagint version expresses it:

and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about; as he did the blood of the bullock, **Le 8:15**.

Leviticus 8:20

Ver. 20. And he cut the ram into pieces,.... Cut off its head and quartered it:

and Moses burnt the head, and the pieces, and the fat; even all of it, as the following verse shows.

Leviticus 8:21

Ver. 21. And he washed the inwards and the legs in water,.... The one being taken out, the other cut off:

and Moses burnt the whole ram upon the altar: it [was] a burnt sacrifice for a sweet savour, [and] an offering made by fire unto the Lord; as the Lord commanded Moses; see Ex 29:18.

Leviticus 8:22

Ver. 22-25. And he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration,.... Or "filling" {b}, or "fulnesses"; because, as Jarchi says, these filled and perfected the priests in their priesthood; this was the finishing and consummation of their consecration: what is said in this and the three following verses **Le 8:23** is the same as is ordered, Ex 29:19 and needs no further explanation;
See Gill on "Ex 29:19" see Gill on "Ex 29:20" see Gill on "Ex 29:21" see Gill on "Ex 29:22".

{b} Myalmh "plenitudinum", Montanus; "impletionum, [vel] potius completionum", Drusius; Heb. "impletionum", Piscator.

Leviticus 8:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "Le 8:22".

Leviticus 8:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "Le 8:22".

Leviticus 8:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "Le 8:22".

Leviticus 8:26

Ver. 26. And out of the basket of unleavened bread,.... Moses was ordered to take, **Le 8:2**,

that [was] before the Lord; being brought to the tabernacle, where now the Lord had taken up his residence:

he took one unleavened cake; which had no oil in it or upon it:

and a cake of oiled bread; which was mixed and tempered with oil:

and one wafer; which was anointed with oil:

and put them upon the fat, and upon the right shoulder; of the ram of consecration, which he took from it, and laid the cakes uppermost upon them.

Leviticus 8:27

Ver. 27. And he put all upon Aaron's hands, and upon his son's hands,.... The fat and the right shoulder, with the cakes upon them:

and waved them [for] a wave offering before the Lord;
See Gill on "Ex 29:24".

Leviticus 8:28

Ver. 28. And Moses took them from off their hands,.... After they had been waved before the Lord:

and burnt [them] upon the altar, upon the burnt offering; of the other ram; or after that burnt offering, as Jarchi, who observes, that we do not find that the shoulder of peace offerings was offered in any place but this, it belonged to the priest; but this being at the consecration of the priests, it was offered to the Lord by Moses, to whom it seems to have belonged, as the breast also, but that was not burnt, but eaten: and the same writer affirms, that Moses ministered all the seven days of the consecration in a white shirt, or surplice; and that he might wear a linen coat, as priests did, is not improbable, since he now officiated as one:

they [were] consecrated for a sweet savour; acceptable to the Lord, and so the priests, Aaron and his sons likewise, on whose account they were made:

it [is] an offering made by fire unto the Lord; the fat, the shoulder, and the cakes.

Leviticus 8:29

Ver. 29. And Moses took the breast,.... Of the ram of consecration:

and waved it for a wave offering before the Lord; this Moses seems to have waved with his own hands, and not upon the hands of Aaron and his sons, putting his under them, as in the wave offering of the fat, shoulder, and cakes, and for which the following words seem to give a reason:

[for] of the ram of consecration it was Moses's part; the breast of it was his:

as the Lord commanded Moses; see Ex 29:26.

Leviticus 8:30

Ver. 30. And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar,.... Which was sprinkled upon the altar round about, **Le 8:24** and these two seem to be mixed together, since it follows:

and sprinkled [it] upon Aaron, &c. See Gill on "Ex 29:21".

Leviticus 8:31

Ver. 31. And Moses said unto Aaron, and to his sons,.... After he had offered the bullock, the two rams, and cakes of unleavened bread for the consecration of them:

boil the flesh at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; the remainder of the flesh of the ram of consecration, which was all but the fat, the shoulder, and the breast:

and there eat it with the bread that is in the basket of consecration; what was left of that, there being one cake of a sort taken out of it and burnt:

as I commanded, saying, Aaron and his sons shall eat it; see Ex 29:32.

Leviticus 8:32

Ver. 32. And that which remaineth of the flesh and of the bread,.... Until the next morning, which could not be eaten by Aaron and his sons:

shall ye burn with fire; that it might not be corrupted, nor put to common nor superstitious uses.

Leviticus 8:33

Ver. 33. And ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation [in] seven days,.... Which was the time of their consecration, so long it lasted; and they had provision enough every day from the ram of consecration, whose flesh they were to boil and eat. The Jewish writers {c} are puzzled where they should ease nature, since the place was holy; but the orders are not to be considered as so strict but that they might go in and out, though they were not to stay long, or to attend to any other business; and it was always necessary there should be some upon the spot, keeping the Lord's charge in their turns; and it was always requisite that they should also sleep alternately; for it cannot be thought that they should be all this time without rest, any more than without food:

until the days of your consecration be at an end; which were to continue so long:

for seven days shall he consecrate you; that is, Moses, who here speaks of himself in the third person, as appears from Ex 29:35. Aben Ezra observes, that the word "end" is wanting, and that the sense is, at the end of seven days he shall consecrate you, finish their consecration; all the seven days he was doing it, and at the end of the seventh concluded it.

{c} Aben Ezra, Hiscuni in loc.

Leviticus 8:34

Ver. 34. As he hath done this day, [so] the Lord hath commanded to do,.... The same were to be repeated every day until the seven days were ended; so Jarchi and Aben Ezra; the former of these observes, that their Rabbins explain the phrase "to do", in the preceding clause, of the business of the red heifer, and that which follows, to make an atonement for you, of the business of the day of atonement; and say, that it may be learned from hence that the high priest was obliged to be separate (from his own house and family) seven days before that, and so the priest that burned the red heifer; and the same is observed by other Jewish writers {d}: but this refers to neither of these cases, but to the present consecration of Aaron and his sons, and the making atonement by sacrifice for them, and the sanctification of them to minister in the priest's office.

{d} Maimon, & Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1. & in Parah, c. 3. sect. 1.

Leviticus 8:35

Ver. 35. Therefore shall ye abide at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,.... Or rather "within" it, as Noldius renders it, since they were not to go out of the door of it, Le 8:33 whereas our version seems to leave it undetermined whether they abode without the door or within; where they were to continue,

day and night, seven days; even the seven days of their consecration:

and keep the charge of the Lord, that ye die not; not the charge of the tabernacle, and the service of it committed to them upon their investiture with their office, hereafter to be observed by them; but what was charged upon them to attend unto, during the seven days of their consecration; and the penalty being death in case of failure, was to make them more careful and cautious of transgressing; and which was the more necessary, as they were to be pure and holy at their entrance upon their work: and though this may seem somewhat severe, yet the aggravation of their sin would be the greater, as it was to a sacred and honourable work they were called, and to which they were now consecrating; and as what was required of them was what might easily be complied with: however Moses, to show that this was not of himself, but by divine authority, adds,

for so I am commanded; that is, to declare unto them, that if they did not punctually observe the above orders, they must expect to die.

Leviticus 8:36

Ver. 36. So Aaron and his sons did all things which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses. They submitted to have them done to them, and for them, what was done on the first day of their consecration, all the rest of the days; and they kept within the tabernacle all that time as was enjoined them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 9

Aaron and his sons, being consecrated to and invested with the priest's office, are called upon to the exercise of it, to offer a sin offering and a burnt offering for themselves, and all sorts of offerings, a sin offering, a burnt offering, peace offerings, and a meat offering, for the people; and a promise is made for their encouragement, that the glory of the Lord would appear to them, **Le 9:1** and which were in their course accordingly offered; first, Aaron's sin offering for himself, **Le 9:8** then his burnt offering, **Le 9:12** after that the several offerings of the people before mentioned, **Le 9:15** when Aaron and Moses blessed the people, the one as soon as he had done offering, and both together when they came out of the tabernacle, **Le 9:22** upon which a fire came forth from the Lord, and consumed the burnt offering upon the altar, **Le 9:24**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass on the eighth day,.... When the seven days of consecration were ended, as Ben Gersom, the day following them, so soon was Aaron called to the execution of his office; and so both the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi make it to be the eighth day of the consecration, or the day after the anointing of Aaron and his sons, and which they both say was the beginning, or first day of Nisan, the day the tabernacle was erected by Moses: but that seems to have been set up before the consecration; rather this was, as Aben Ezra says, the eighth day of the month Nisan or March, and was the eighth day of the consecration, which began at the first day, on which day the tabernacle was set up, Ex 40:2:

[that] Moses, called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel; Aaron and his sons to enter upon their office, by offering sacrifices for themselves, and for the people, and the elders to be witnesses thereof.

Leviticus 9:2

Ver. 2. And he said unto Aaron,.... In the presence of the people of Israel:

take thee a young calf for a sin [offering]; one not exceeding a year old, as in **Le 9:3** but this was not for the sin of making the calf only, to which the Jewish writers restrain it, but for all other sins of his, which it was necessary should be expiated before he offered sacrifices for the sins of others:

and a ram for a burnt offering; being a strong and innocent creature, was a proper emblem of Christ, the Lamb of God, that takes away by his sacrifice the sins of men:

without blemish; this character belongs, as Aben Ezra observes, both to the calf and ram, which were both to be without spot, and so proper types of Christ the Lamb without spot and blemish, free both from original and actual sin:

and offer [them] before the Lord; on the altar of burnt offering, which stood in the court of the tabernacle near where Jehovah was, to whom every sacrifice for sin was to be offered, being committed against him, and whose justice must be satisfied for it.

Leviticus 9:3

Ver. 3. And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak,.... That is, Aaron should speak to them, for being now high priest, Moses had no more to do with the sacrifices of the people, but it was incumbent on Aaron to call upon them to bring them to him such as the Lord by this law required of them:

saying, take ye a kid of the goats for a sin [offering]; this creature fitly represented Christ as made sin, and an offering for sin, in the room of his people:

and a calf, and a lamb; both of them, as before observed, were proper emblems of Christ in his strength and innocence, sometimes called the fatted calf, and frequently the Lamb of God, Lu 15:23 **Joh 1:29**:

[both] of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering; denoting the tenderness of Christ, his spotless purity, and painful sufferings.

Leviticus 9:4

Ver. 4. Also a bullock and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the Lord,.... An offering being made for the atonement of sin, and the gift of a whole burnt offering accepted by the Lord upon that, peace offerings were to be sacrificed thereupon; one part of which belonged to the Lord, as the fat and the blood; another part to the priest, as the shoulder and the breast; and the rest to the owners to make a feast with, expressive of the peace and joy which arise from the expiation and atonement of sin, by the great sacrifice of Christ, in commemoration of which a feast is kept by the Lord's people:

and a meat offering mingled with oil; with oil olive; each of these offerings are treated of in the preceding chapters, where an account is given of them, and the mystery of them explained:

for today the Lord will appear unto you; or "and today", as in **Le 9:6** so Noldius {e}; for this is not observed as a reason why the sacrifices were to be offered, but as a promise of the divine appearance, as an encouragement thereunto; and may have special respect to some visible splendour and lustre of the divine glory more than ordinary; and particularly to the fire that should come out from before the Lord, and consume the sacrifice, **Le 9:24** and so Ben Gersom interprets it. And this being on the eighth day of the consecration of the priests, may lead our thoughts to the day when our great High Priest rose from the dead, the day after the seventh, or the Jewish sabbath, even on the eighth day, or first day of the week, on which he made frequent appearances to his disciples; see Mr 16:9.

{e} P. 395, No. 1340.

Leviticus 9:5

Ver. 5. And they brought [that] which Moses commanded before the tabernacle of the congregation,.... That is, Aaron and his sons, and all the children of Israel, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it. All the above sacrifices they brought into the court of the tabernacle to be offered up:

and all the congregation drew near, and stood before the Lord; that is, the elders of Israel, who were called together, **Le 9:1**, the heads of the tribes who represented the people; as many as well could be admitted into the court no doubt were, to be spectators of Aaron and his sons officiating first in their new office, and to see their own sacrifices offered; and they stood over against where was the symbol of the divine Presence; and the Targum of Jonathan says, they stood with a perfect heart; and no doubt but they were heartily sincere and upright in their sacrifices, as they had been in their donations toward the building the tabernacle, and providing things belonging to it; and they stood with all humility, reverence, and devotion.

Leviticus 9:6

Ver. 6. This [is] the thing which the Lord commanded that ye should do,.... Namely, what they had done, bring the creatures and things for sacrifice they had:

and the glory of the Lord shall appear unto you; either Christ, the brightness of his Father's glory, in an human form, as a presage of his future incarnation, as he frequently did; or some more than ordinary refulgence of glory breaking out of the holy of holies, where God had now taken up his dwelling between the cherubim; or, as Aben Ezra explains it, the fire that should go out from him, and consume the sacrifice, which would be a demonstration of his presence with them, and of his acceptance of the sacrifice.

Leviticus 9:7

Ver. 7. And Moses said unto Aaron,.... This is only observed to show, that as Aaron did not take upon him this office of himself, but was called unto it, and invested with it, by the appointment of God, so neither did he enter upon it but through the call of God by Moses, in the sight of the congregation:

go unto the altar, and offer thy sin [offering], and thy burnt offering; the young calf and ram:

and make an atonement for thyself and for the people; first for himself, and then for the people; for, as Aben Ezra says, a man cannot atone for another until he is pure from all sin; which is a character only to be found in Christ, our great High Priest, and so a proper person to atone for and take away the sins of others: hence the priests under the law, with their sacrifices, could never take away sin really, only typically; and this shows the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood, that the priests of that order were obliged to offer first for their own sins; this our high priest, of another order, needed not to do; see **Heb 7:27** and offer the offering of the people, and make atonement for them; typical of the true and full atonement made by Christ, when he offered himself without spot to God:

as the Lord commanded; Aaron to do, and as he commanded Christ, his Son and our surety, the antitype of Aaron, Joh 10:18.

Leviticus 9:8

Ver. 8. Aaron therefore went unto the altar,.... Of burnt offering, freely and cheerfully, at the direction and introduction of Moses, who acted in this affair in the name of the Lord:

and slew the calf of the sin [offering], which [was] for himself; which was to be offered first, as it was proper it should, that, atonement being made for his sins, his after burnt offering might be accepted with God, and he be fit to offer the sacrifices of the people: the calf he slew on the north side of the altar, where all the sin offerings and burnt offerings were slain; see **Le 1:11**.

Leviticus 9:9

Ver. 9. And the sons of Aaron brought the blood unto him,.... The blood of the calf of the sin offering, which they had received in a basin when it was slain:

and he dipped his finger in the blood, and put [it] upon the horns of the altar; the four horns of it, as Moses had done at his consecration, which was an example to him, **Le 8:15**. This was typical of the blood of Christ, to which persons may have recourse from the four quarters of the world for atonement and pardon:

and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar; what remained after he had put what was proper on the horns of it.

Leviticus 9:10

Ver. 10. But the fat, and the kidneys, and the caul [above] the liver of the sin [offering], he burnt upon the altar,.... The Septuagint version is, "he offered them":

as the Lord commanded Moses; see **Le 4:8**.

Leviticus 9:11

Ver. 11. And the flesh and the hide he burnt with fire without the camp. With common fire, for the fire from the Lord came only upon the altar, which perhaps may be the reason of this expression being used when anything was burnt without the camp, and not on the altar, see Ex 29:14. Jarchi observes, that we do not find a sin offering burnt without the camp but this; which is a great mistake; see **Le 4:11**.

Leviticus 9:12

Ver. 12. And he slew the burnt offering,.... The ram, which was for himself also; this he slew at the north side of the altar, **Le 1:11**

and Aaron's sons presented unto him the blood: which they had received into a basin, when it was slain:

which he sprinkled round about upon the altar; as he had seen Moses do before him, **Le 8:19**.

Leviticus 9:13

Ver. 13. And they presented the burnt offering to him,.... After it was cut in pieces, as the ram of the burnt offering was by Moses, **Le 8:20** and so it was done to this, as appears by what follows:

with the pieces thereof, and the head, and he burnt them upon the altar; the Septuagint version is, "he put them on the altar".

Leviticus 9:14

Ver. 14. And he did wash the inwards and the legs,.... As Moses also had done, **Le 8:21** and burnt [them] upon the burnt offering on the altar; upon the pieces, and the head, before mentioned, said to be burnt, or "after" the burnt offering, after they were burnt: the Septuagint version is as before.

Leviticus 9:15

Ver. 15. And he brought the people's offering,.... To the altar, having offered his own first:

and took the goat, which [was] the sin [offering] for the people, and slew it; where he had slain his own:

and offered it for sin, as the first: the first offering he offered for himself, which was of the same sort.

Leviticus 9:16

Ver. 16. And he brought the burnt offering,.... The calf and the lamb, **Le 9:3**

and offered it according to the manner; judgment, ordinance, and appointment of God respecting that sort of offerings; see **Le 1:1**.

Leviticus 9:17

Ver. 17. And he brought the meat offering,.... Made of fine flour, with oil and frankincense put upon it, see **Le 2:1**

and took a handful thereof, and burnt [it] upon the altar; see **Le 2:2**

beside the burnt sacrifice of the morning; the daily morning sacrifice, which was not to be omitted on account of these extraordinary sacrifices, both for the priest and for the people; or "after the burnt sacrifice of the morning"; for no sacrifice was offered up before that: so Jarchi.

Leviticus 9:18

Ver. 18. He slew also the bullock and the ram, a sacrifice of peace offerings, which [was] for the people,.... That they might feast, rejoice, and be glad that atonement was made for their sins, and their gifts and sacrifices accepted of God, see **Rom 5:11**

and Aaron's sons presented unto him the blood; of the peace offerings, the bullock and the ram, which they had received into a vessel as they were killing:

which he sprinkled upon the altar round about; as he did with the blood of his own burnt offering, **Le 9:12**.

Leviticus 9:19

Ver. 19. And the fat of the bullock, and of the ram,.... Which in all offerings was the Lord's, and was burnt, see **Le 3:16**

the rump; or tail of the ram; which in those countries was very large, and had a great deal of fat upon it; See Gill on "Ex 29:22" see Gill on "Le 3:9"

and that which covereth [the inwards]; called the "omentum":

and the kidneys, and the caul [above] the liver; and the fat that was upon each of these: Ben Gersom observes, that the kidneys and liver are mentioned last, to show that they were laid uppermost in waving (after directed to), that the owners might be stirred up, or moved by these things.

Leviticus 9:20

Ver. 20. And they put the fat upon the breasts,.... Both of the bullock and of the ram, while they were waving:

and he burnt the fat upon the altar; after having been waved.

Leviticus 9:21

Ver. 21. And the breasts and the right shoulder,.... The breasts of the bullock and the ram, and the right shoulders of them both:

Aaron waved for a wave offering before the Lord; which was given to him as his part of the peace offerings, after they had been thus waved before the Lord; whereby an acknowledgment was made that he was Lord of all, and had a right to all they had; in token of which these parts were given to his priests towards their maintenance:

as Moses commanded; see Ex 29:27.

Leviticus 9:22

Ver. 22. And Aaron lifted up his hand towards the people, and blessed them,.... After he had offered the above sacrifices both for himself and them: the manner of the priests lifting up their hands when they blessed is thus described; in the provinces the priests lift up their hands to their shoulders, and in the sanctuary above their heads, excepting the high priest, who did not lift up his hands above the plate of gold: but R. Judah says, the high priest lift up his hands above the plate, as it is said **Le 9:22** {f}; the modern Jews describe it thus {g}, they lift up their hands to their shoulders, and they lift up the right hand somewhat higher than the left; then they stretch out their hands, and part their fingers, and frame them so as to make five airs; between two fingers and two fingers one air, and between the forefinger and the thumb, and between the two thumbs; they spread out their hands so, that the middle (or palm) of the hand may be towards the earth, and the back part of it towards heaven: Aaron lift his hands upwards, signifying from whence he implored the blessing, and towards the people on whom he desired it might descend; in this was a type of Christ, who, after he had offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people, when he was risen from the dead and about to ascend to heaven, blessed his disciples, Lu 24:50 in Christ the saints are blessed with all spiritual blessings; by him they are procured for them, through his blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction; and he ever lives to make intercession for the application of them to them, see **Eph 1:3**

and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and peace offerings; from the altar with joy, as the Targum of Jonathan; being glad he had done his service with acceptance; he is said to "come down", there being a rise or ascent to the altar, which, as Aben Ezra observes, was three cubits high, and therefore it is with propriety said he came down; which he did as soon as he had made an end of offering all the sacrifices.

{f} Misn. Sotah, c. 7. sect. 6. {g} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. Orach Chayim, c. 128. sect. 12.

Leviticus 9:23

Ver. 23. And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation,.... They went out of the court where the altar of burnt offering stood, and where Aaron had been offering the sacrifices; and they went into the holy place, where stood the altar of incense, the shewbread table, and the candlestick; and it is probable Moses went in with Aaron thither, to show him how to offer the incense, to order the shewbread on the table, and to light and trim the lamps of the candlestick; and so Jarchi observes, that he went in to teach him concerning the business of the incense; but it may be, it was also to pray for the people, as the Targum, and for the Lord's appearance to them, as was promised and expected, and that fire might descend on the sacrifices as a token of acceptance of them, as Aben Ezra notes:

and came out, and blessed the people; Aaron had blessed them before, but now both Moses and Aaron blessed them, atonement being made by the sacrifice of Christ, and law and justice thereby fully satisfied; Christ and the law agree together in the blessing of the Lord's people; way was hereby made for the communication of blessings to them, consistent with the law of God, and his holiness and justice, **Ga 3:10**:

and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people: some visible signs of his glory, some very great splendour or lustre, or breaking forth of his glory; or Christ, the glory of the Father, appeared in an human form, as a pledge of his future incarnation, when all the above sacrifices, which were types of him, would have their accomplishment; and this being immediately upon the offering of them, may signify that the glory of God greatly appears in the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ, and in the redemption and salvation of his people in that way, Ps 21:4 and the glorious and gracious presence of God is enjoyed by his people, in consequence of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, which was signified by the mercy seat, from whence the Lord communed; and it is through Christ, his blood and sacrifice, saints have access to God, and fellowship with him, **Eph 2:18**.

Leviticus 9:24

Ver. 24. And there came a fire out from before the Lord,.... Either from heaven, or from the holy of holies, where was the symbol of the divine Presence, and Jehovah had now took up his residence:

and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering, and the fat; according to Aben Ezra, the burnt offering of Aaron, and of the people, and of the daily sacrifice, for so it is written, besides the burnt offering of the morning, **Le 9:17** and the fat of the calf and ram of Aaron, and of the goat, ox, and ram of the people, which though they were laid upon the altar at the time of their offering, yet it is thought by some they were not burnt till now: it is a conjecture of Bishop Patrick's, that this burnt offering was the burnt offering of the evening sacrifice, which was consumed by the fire from the Lord; he supposes that the offering of the above sacrifices had taken up the whole day, from the time of the morning sacrifice until the evening; and that all the other sacrifices were burnt with common fire, but this with fire from the Lord; but then, what was the fat that was consumed? however, this was a token of acceptance; in like manner as it descended on the sacrifice of Abel, as is thought, **Ge 4:4** and on the sacrifices offered at the dedication of the temple, **2Ch 7:1** and on the burnt sacrifice of Elijah, 1Ki 18:38 testifying the divine approbation and acceptance of them: for though in the mystery, the fire may design the wrath of God as a consuming fire, which was very distressing to Christ, and brought him to the dust of death; yet, with respect to the persons for whom this sacrifice was offered, it denotes acceptance of it, that it was an offering by fire, and of a sweet smelling savour to God, his law and justice being satisfied, and having honour done them: concerning this fire, and the perpetual burning of it, See Gill on "Le 6:12" see Gill on "Le 6:13". The Heathens, in imitation of this, have pretended to have fire come down also from heaven on their altars, as the Brahmans, among the Indians, taken notice of in the above note. And so Solinus {h} speaks of the Vulcanian hill in Sicily, where they that serve in sacred things lay wood of vines on the altar, but put no fire; and if God is present (and so the sacrifice is approved) the branches, though green, will take fire of themselves, and a flame is kindled by the deity sacrificed to, no one setting them on fire. And Servius says {i}, that with the ancients fires on altars were not kindled, but they procured a divine fire by their prayers, which kindled on the altars; but these were mere pretences, and juggling tricks, in which they were assisted by Satan to vie with this wonderful appearance of God in the acceptation of the sacrifice of his people:

[which] when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces; Aaron blessing them, and the appearance of the glory of God unto them, no doubt, gave them joy and pleasure, as the spiritual blessings by Christ, and the

gracious presence of God do to his people,
Ps 103:1 but what filled them with joy unspeakable was the acceptance of their sacrifices, as typical of the sacrifice of Christ, and atonement by it, which made them shout, and the court to ring with it; and yet fell down on their faces with all reverence and humility, under a sense of the divine Majesty being so near unto them, in this sensible token of his presence.

{h} Polyhistor. c. 11. {i} In Virgil. Aeneid. l. 12. ver. 200.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 10

This chapter begins with the sin and punishment of two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Le 10:1 for whose death Aaron and his sons are commanded not to mourn, nor to depart from the tabernacle,
Le 10:6 and an order is given, prohibiting the priests from drinking wine when they went into it, Le 10:8 the law of eating holy things, both those that were more, and those that were less holy, is enjoined, Le 10:12 and the flesh of the sin offering not being eaten, but burnt, Aaron's sons are blamed for it, for which he makes an apology to the satisfaction of Moses, Le 10:16.

Ver. 1. And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron,.... His two eldest sons, as seems from **Ex 6:23**:

took either of them his censer; a vessel in which coals of fire were put, and incense upon them, and burnt it, and so it follows:

and put fire therein, and put incense thereon; which, as Aben Ezra says, was on the eighth day, that is, of their consecration, the day after their consecration was completely finished, and the same day that Aaron had offered the offerings for himself and for the people, see **Le 9:1**:

and offered strange fire before the Lord; upon the golden altar of incense, which stood in the holy place right against the vail, within which were the ark, mercy seat, and cherubim, the symbol and seat of the divine Majesty: this fire was not that which came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice, as related at the end of the preceding chapter **Le 9:24**, but common fire, and therefore called strange; it was not taken off of the altar of burnt offering, as it ought to have been, but, as the Targum of Jonathan, from under the trivets, skillets, or pots, such as the flesh of peace offerings were boiled in, in the tabernacle;

which he commanded not; yea, forbid, by sending fire from heaven, and ordering coals of fire for the incense to be taken off of the altar of burnt offering; and this, as Aben Ezra observes, they did of their own mind, and not by order. It does not appear that they had any command to offer incense at all at present, this belonged to Aaron, and not to them as yet; but without any instruction and direction they rushed into the holy place with their censers, and offered incense, even both of them, when only one priest was to offer at a time, when it was to be offered, and this they also did with strange fire. This may be an emblem of dissembled love, when a man performs religious duties, prays to God, or praises him without any cordial affection to him, or obeys commands not from love, but selfish views; or of an ignorant, false, and misguided zeal, a zeal not according to knowledge, superstitious and hypocritical; or of false and strange doctrines, such as are not of God, nor agree with the voice of Christ, and are foreign to the Scriptures; or of human ordinances, and the inventions of men, and of everything that man brings of his own, in order to obtain eternal life and salvation.

Leviticus 10:2

Ver. 2. And there went out fire from the Lord,.... They sinned by fire, and they were punished by fire, either from heaven, or from the most holy place, where the Lord dwelt between the cherubim; this was of the nature of lightning, as appears by what follows:

and devoured them; not reduced them to ashes, for neither their bodies nor their clothes were burnt with this fire, as is clear from
Le 10:4 but their lives were destroyed, they were lifeless, their souls were separated from their bodies by it, and they died; which is often the case by the lightning, that the clothes of those who are killed with it are untouched, and scarce any marks of violence on their bodies; and so the Targum of Jonathan says of these, their bodies were not burnt:

and they died before the Lord; upon the spot where they were offering incense, in the holy place, over against the most holy place. This was very awful, like the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and may seem severe: it was for the terror of others in the priesthood, or who should come after, to take care that they performed their office according to the divine precepts, and brought in no innovation into their service. And when it is considered that these were the sons of the high priest, newly invested with an high and honourable office, and just had the laws of the priesthood delivered unto them, and yet deviated from them as soon as in their office, and very probably, from what follows, went drunk into their service, their sin will appear aggravated, and the punishment less severe. This shows there is nothing in carnal descent, these were the sons of Aaron the high priest, that acted this part, and came to this end; the proneness of men to transgress the laws of God as soon as given them; thus the people of Israel fell into idolatry as soon as the moral law was given; and here the priests, as soon as the ceremonial laws, relating to the priesthood, were delivered to them; and also that the law made sinful men priests, and that the Levitical priesthood was imperfect; and that no order of men are free from sin, or exempt from punishment: and the whole of the divine conduct in this affair may lead us to observe how jealous God is in matters of worship; how much he dislikes hypocrites, and formal professors; how severe he will be against such who bring in strange doctrines; what will be the fate of the contemners of Gospel doctrines and ordinances; and how much he resents those who trust in themselves, and their works, and bring in anything of their own in the business of salvation, which is strange fire, sparks of their own kindling, a burning incense to their own drag, and sacrificing to their own net.

Leviticus 10:3

Ver. 3. And Moses said unto Aaron,.... Upon this awful occasion, and in order to quiet and humble him under the mighty hand of God:

this [is it] that the Lord spoke, saying; but when he spoke it, and where it is said and recorded, is not so very clear; it might have been said, and yet not recorded, or the substance of it may be recorded, though not in the express words here delivered; it may refer, as some think, to Ex 19:22 or else to Ex 29:43 which seems to come nearest to what follows, so Jarchi:

I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me; in the priests that drew nigh to him, and offered sacrifice and burnt incense to him; by these he expected to be sanctified, not to be made holy, but to be declared to be so, and obeyed and worshipped as such; as he is, when his commands and ordinances are observed, as he would have them be, in faith and fear, which were not done by these sons of Aaron; and therefore the Lord, by the punishment he inflicted, showed himself to be an holy, righteous, and jealous God:

and before all the people I will be glorified; as he is when he is believed and trusted in; when his worship is carried on in his own house, according to his will; when his ordinances are kept as they were delivered, and when he is reverenced in the assembly of his saints; all which were wanting in this case. And this may also have respect to the glory of divine justice, in the public punishment of the sin of those men, that since he was not glorified by them before the people in the way of their duty, he would glorify himself in their punishment:

and Aaron held his peace: was in a stupor, as the Septuagint, quite amazed, thunderstruck, as we say; he was silent, said not one word against what was done; murmured not at the providence, nor complained of any severity, but was patient under the hand of God, and resigned to his will; and since God was sanctified and glorified, he was contented.

Leviticus 10:4

Ver. 4. And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel, the uncle of Aaron,.... Uzziel was a son of Kohath, a brother of Amram, the father of Aaron, and so Aaron's uncle, as here; he had four sons, two of which are here mentioned as called by Moses; these were first cousins to Aaron, and second to his sons; see **Ex 6:18**:

and said unto them, come near; it is very probable they were in the court of the tabernacle, being Kohathites, of the tribe of Levi; but not being priests, had no right to go into the holy place, where the two sons of Aaron lay dead, without a special order for it, which they here had for this time, and upon this occasion:

carry your brethren from before the sanctuary, out of the camp; the sons of Aaron are called their brethren, though but cousins, it being usual to call any relations brethren, and even if only of the same tribe, yea, of the same nation. Now these were ordered to take the dead bodies of Aaron's sons out of the holy place, and out of the tabernacle, even from before it, which, as Aben Ezra says, was the court over against the camp; and they were to carry them out of the camp into some field, or place adjacent, and there bury them; it not being usual in those times to bury in cities and towns, and much less in places devoted to sacred worship, as the tabernacle was; and therefore they were carried from both the sanctuary and the camp: it is an observation of Aben Ezra, that "some say the incense was before the altar of burnt offering, and the Levites entered there;"

but if by incense is meant the altar of incense, the place where these sons of Aaron offered theirs, that was in the holy place, and not in the court, where stood the altar of burnt offering: but they seem to mean as if their incense was offered in another place, and not on the altar, somewhere in the court, and before you come to the altar of burnt offering; and so the persons Moses called could come in thither, and take up their bodies there fallen: but the same writer observes, that others say, that

"it was upon the altar of incense (i.e. that their incense was offered), and Moses brought them out of the tabernacle of the congregation,"

and then called these men to carry them from thence without the camp.

Leviticus 10:5

Ver. 5. So they went near,.... To the place where the bodies lay, having an order from Moses so to do, let them have been where they will;

and carried them in their coats out of the camp, as Moses had said; or bid them do; they took them up in their clothes as they found them, and carried them in them; not that these men carried them in their own coats, but in the coats of the dead, as Jarchi expresses it; and had them without the camp, and there buried them, probably in their coats in which they had sinned, and in which they died: the Targum of Jonathan says, they carried them on iron hooks in their coats, and buried them without the camp.

Leviticus 10:6

Ver. 6. And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar, and unto Ithamar, his sons,.... His two younger sons, which yet remained; and so the Septuagint version adds, as in Le 10:12

uncover not your heads; that is, do not take off your mitre, as the Septuagint version; or the bonnets which they wore in the time of their ministry; for the Jewish priests always had their mitres and bonnets on when they sacrificed; in imitation of which, the Heathens had their heads covered when they offered their sacrifices {k}: now it was the way, or custom of a mourner, as Ben Melech observes, to remove his mitre, bonnet, or tiara, from his head; but in this case, that no sign of mourning might be shown, Aaron and his sons are forbid to uncover the head: the Targum of Onkelos is,

"do not increase the hair,"

or nourish it, or suffer it to grow, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom interpret it: now in times of distress and mourning they used to let the hair grow, whether on the head or beard, see 2Sa 19:24 and in this the Jews were imitated by the Egyptians, contrary to other nations; the priests of the gods in other places, says Herodotus {l}, took care of their hair (or wore their hair), in Egypt they are shaved; with others the custom is, for the head immediately to be shaved at funerals; but the Egyptians, at death, suffer their hair to grow in the parts before shaved; but this custom with the Jews, though at other times used, is here forbid Aaron and his sons:

neither rend your clothes, which was sometimes done at the report of the death of near relations, as children, in token of mourning,
Ge 37:34 but here it is forbid, that there might be no sign of it: it is a particular word that is here used: Ben Melech says, there is a difference between rending and tearing; tearing is in the body of a garment where there is no seam, but rending (which is what is here meant) where there is a seam: the priests rending their garments was after this manner, according to the Jewish canons {m},

"an high priest rends below and a common priest above;"

that is, as one of their commentators {n} interprets it, the former rends the extreme part of his garment next the feet, and the latter at the breast near the shoulder; but in this case no rent at all was to be made:

lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people; so very provoking to God would be any signs of mourning in Aaron and his sons, on this account:

but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled: though Aaron and his sons might not mourn on this occasion, the whole body of the people might, though not bewail so much the death of the persons, as the cause of it; and be concerned for the awful judgment of God, and for the wrath that was sone forth, lest it should proceed and destroy others also, all being sinners.

{k} "Purpureo velare comas", &c. Virgil. Aeneid. l. 3. Vid. Kipping. Rom. Antiqu. l. 1. c. 12. sect. 17. p. 495. {l} Euterpe sive, l. 2. c. 36. {m} Misn. Horayot, c. 3. sect. 5. {n} Bartenora in ib.

Leviticus 10:7

Ver. 7. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die,.... That is, they were not to relinquish the service of the sanctuary, on the account of the death of these relations of theirs, and through grief for it, but go on in it; not Aaron on account of his children, nor his sons on account of their brethren: from hence, says Ben Gersom, we learn, that whatsoever priest leaves his service, and goes out of the sanctuary, is guilty of death: some think the seven days of consecration were not quite over, during which time Aaron and his sons were obliged to continue there, on pain of death, **Le 8:33** but it is pretty plain those days were over, and that it was the day after the consecration was finished; see **Le 9:1** and See Gill on "Le 10:2" wherefore this respects their continuance in the tabernacle on the day the above affair happened, and they were obliged to continue in and go through the service of the day, notwithstanding that:

for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you; a learned man {o} infers from hence, that this affair happened within the days of consecration, they being every day afresh anointed with oil, at least had it, with the blood of the sacrifices, sprinkled on them, on their garments, taking it in the strict sense, for the oil being still upon them; whereas it seems only to signify, that inasmuch as they were consecrated with oil to the priest's office, they were under obligation to continue and perform their service without being let or hindered by what had happened:

and they did according to the word of Moses; they showed no tokens of mourning on account of the dead, and did not offer to go out of the tabernacle and leave their service.

{o} Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 353.

Leviticus 10:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord spake unto Aaron,.... Because he was a prophet, Aben

Ezra says; but the reason rather seems to be, because be was the high priest, and now invested with his office, and in the execution of it, and therefore the following law respecting the priest's drinking of wine was given: some say, as the same writer observes, that God spake to him by Moses; but it rather seems that he spoke to Aaron immediately: according to Jarchi, this order was delivered to him as a reward for his silence, and to do honour to him on that account: saying; as follows.

Leviticus 10:9

Ver. 9. Do not drink wine or strong drink,.... This law following upon the affair of Nadab and Abihu has caused some to think, and not without some reason, that they were drunk with wine or strong drink, when they offered strange fire; and indeed it is hardly to be accounted for upon any other foot that they should do it; but having feasted that day upon the peace offerings, and drank freely, it being the first day of their entrance on their office, they were, it may be supposed, elated and merry, and drank more than they should; wherefore this law was given, to restrain from such a disorderly and scandalous practice; not only wine, which is inebriating, but strong drink also is forbidden, which, as Aben Ezra says, is made either of a sort of wheat, or honey, or dates: and so Kimchi {p} and Ben Melech on the place after him observe, that this includes whatsoever inebriates, besides wine; and that their doctors say, whosoever drinks milk or honey (they must mean some strong liquor extracted from thence), if he enters into the tabernacle he is guilty:

thou nor thy sons with thee; the Targum of Jonathan adds, as did thy sons, who died by the burning of fire; that is, he and his sons were to avoid drinking wine or strong drink to excess, as his two sons had done, which led them to offer strange fire, for which they suffered death:

when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die; they might drink wine at other times, in a moderate manner; but it seems by this they were not to drink any at all when they were about to go to service, or to enter into the tabernacle in order to do it: indeed, according to the Jewish canons, every priest that is fit for service, if he drinks wine, it is forbidden him to enter in (to the tabernacle, and so) from the altar (of burnt offering) and inward (into the holy place); and if he goes in and does his service it is profane (unlawful and rejected), and he is guilty of death by the hand of heaven; and he that drinks the fourth part (of a log) of wine at one time, of wine forty days old; but if he drinks less than a fourth part of wine, or drinks a fourth part and stops between, and mixes it with water, or drinks wine out of the press within forty days (i.e. not quite so many days old), though more than a fourth part, he is free, and does not profane his service; if he drinks more than a fourth part of wine, though it is mixed, and though he stops and drinks little by little, he is guilty of death, and his service is profane (or rejected); if he is drunk with the rest of liquors that make drunk, he is forbidden to go into the sanctuary; but if he goes in and serves, and he is drunk with the rest of liquors that make drunk, whether of milk or of figs (a strong liquor made of them), he is to be beaten, but his service is right; for they are not guilty of death but on account of wine in the hour of service; and it does not profane service, but being drunken with wine {q}: in imitation of this, Heathen priests were forbid wine, and abstained from it, particularly the Egyptian priests; at whom it is said {r}, some of them never drink any wine, and others taste but a little of it, because it is said to harm the nerves, to fill the head, or make it heavy, to hinder invention and excite to lust:

[it shall be] a statute for ever throughout all your generations: even to the coming of the Messiah; and now under the Gospel dispensation, though wine in moderation is allowed Gospel ministers, yet they are not to be given to it; it is a shame to any Christian man to be drunk with wine, and more especially a minister, and still more so when in his service; see Eze 44:21.

{p} Sepher Shorashim, Rad. rkv. {q} Maimon. Hilchot Biath Hamikdash, c. 1. sect. 1. 2. {r} Chaeremon apud Porphyr. de Abstinentia, l. 4. c. 6.

Leviticus 10:10

Ver. 10. And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy,.... That being sober they might be able to distinguish between the one and the other; which a drunken man, having his mind and senses disturbed, is not capable of; as between holy and unholy persons, and between holy and unholy things; particularly, as Aben Ezra interprets it, between a sacred place and one that is common, and between a holy day and a common week day; the knowledge and memory of which may be lost through intemperance; and so that may be done in a place and on a day which ought not to be done, or that omitted on a day and in a place which ought to be done:

and between unclean and clean; between unclean men and women, beasts and fowls, and clean ones; and between unclean things in a ceremonial sense, and those that are clean, which a man in liquor may be no judge of: hence, as the above writer observes, after this section follow laws concerning fowls clean and unclean, the purification of a woman after childbirth, the leprosy in men, garments and houses, and concerning profluvious and menstruous persons; all which the priests were to be judges of, and therefore ought to be sober.

Leviticus 10:11

Ver. 11. And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes,.... Laws, precepts, ordinances, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which was the business of the priests to do, **Mal 2:7** but one inebriated with liquor would be incapable of giving instructions about any of those things:

which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses: particularly those delivered and recorded in Ex 20:1 and as not the priests, so neither any other Israelite might instruct {s}, nor indeed would be capable of instructing others when in liquor; and therefore excessive drinking, as it should be carefully avoided by all men, so more especially by those who by their office are teachers of others; see Pr 31:4.

{s} Maimon. Hilchot Biath Hamikdash, c. 1. sect. 3.

Leviticus 10:12

Ver. 12. And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar, and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left,.... Of the burning, as the Targum of Jonathan; who survived his other two sons that were burnt, who remained alive, not being concerned with them in their sin, and so shared not in their punishment:

take the meat offering that remaineth of the offerings of the Lord made by fire; for all but the handful that was burnt of that kind of offerings belonged to the priests, see **Le 6:14** this meat offering, according to Jarchi, was the meat offering of the eighth day, that is, of the consecration, or the day after it was finished, on which the above awful case happened, **Le 9:17** and also the meat offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah, who offered his offering first at the dedication of the altar, on the day the tabernacle was set up, which he supposes was on this day, see **Nu 7:1**, now these meat offerings were not as yet eaten, and which may be true of the first of them, wherefore Aaron and his sons, notwithstanding their mourning, are bid to take it:

and eat it without leaven beside the altar: the altar of burnt offering in the court of the tabernacle, as directed
See Gill on "Le 6:16":

for it [is] most holy: and so might be eaten by none but holy persons, such as were devoted to sacred services, and only in the holy place, as follows; within hangings, where the most holy things were eaten, as Jarchi, that is, within the court of the tabernacle, which was made of hangings.

Leviticus 10:13

Ver. 13. And ye shall eat it in the holy place,.... Not in that which was properly so called, but in the court of the tabernacle; at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, as Aben Ezra, in some apartment there; for it was not to be carried out of the sanctuary, and eaten in their own houses or tents, as others might, after mentioned:

because it [is] thy due, and thy sons' due, of the offerings of the Lord made by fire; and not any others; neither his wife nor his daughters, nor any other related to him, or whom he might invite, as in other cases, might eat of it; this none but he and his sons might eat of, and nowhere else but in the sanctuary:

for so I am commanded; to make known and declare this as the will of God.

Leviticus 10:14

Ver. 14. And the wave breast and heave shoulder shall ye eat in a clean place,.... The breast of the peace offerings that was waved, and the shoulder of them that was heaved before the Lord; these were given by him to the priests, towards the maintenance of their families, **Le 7:34** and they might be eaten anywhere, provided the place was clean from all ceremonial pollution, and in which there were no polluted persons, as leprous ones; they were to be eaten within the camp, as Jarchi observes, where lepers came not: for, as he adds, the light holy things, such as these were, might be eaten in every city; and so it it is said in the Misnah {t}, and by the commentators on it:

thou and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee; these were not restrained to him and his sons only, as the meat offerings, and the flesh of the sin offerings were, but were common to the whole family:

for [they be] thy due, and thy sons' due; for their service of the sanctuary, and by the appointment and direction of the Lord:

[which] are given out of the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel: of which see **Le 7:1** these are said to be "given out" of them, for the whole was not given, only the breast and shoulder; and after the fat was burnt, the rest belonged to the owners, with which they kept a feast of joy and thankfulness.

{t} Zebachim: c. 5. sect. 6. & Bartenora in ib.

Leviticus 10:15

Ver. 15. The heave shoulder and wave breast shall they bring,.... Not the priests, but the owners to the priests, **Le 7:29**:

with the offerings made by fire of the fat: upon the inwards, kidneys, and caul of the liver, which was all burnt:

to wave [it] for a wave offering before the Lord, the shoulder was lifted up, and the breast waved to and fro before the Lord of the whole earth, and towards the several parts of it, to show and own his right to all they had, and then they were given to the priests as a token of it:

and it shall be thine, and thy sons with thee; both the shoulder and the breast:

by a statute for ever, to be observed as long as the ceremonial law and Levitical priesthood lasted, even to the end of the Jewish age and economy, and the coming of the Messiah:

as the Lord hath commanded; **Le 7:33**.

Leviticus 10:16

Ver. 16. And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin [offering],.... The Targum of Jonathan says,

"three goats were offered on that day, the goat of the new moon, of the sin offering for the people, and of the sin offering, which Nahshon the son of Amminadab offered at the dedication of the altar; Aaron and his sons, it adds, went and burnt these three, Moses came and sought, &c."

Jarchi also speaks of three goats offered, but says that only one was burnt, the goat of the new moon; and so Ben Gersom, who gives this reason for the diligent search after it, because it was always to be offered up, and was not a temporary affair, as the others were: but it rather seems to be the goat of the sin offering for the people, for it is not certain that the other goats were offered on this day, but this was, see **Le 9:15** now according to the law, the flesh of this goat was not to be burnt, but to be eaten by the priests in the holy place, see **Le 6:25**. Moses now suspecting that Aaron and his sons, through their grief for the death of Nadab and Abihu, had neglected the eating of it, sought diligently after it, and so it proved:

and, behold, it was burnt: as they had no appetite to it themselves, they burnt it, that it might not be eaten by any others, for none but they might eat it, and that it might not corrupt:

and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron, [which were] left alive; when their two elder brothers were killed with lightning for doing what was not commanded, which should have made them more observant of the laws of God, to do that which was commanded them: and though they were spared, and survived their brethren, yet they transgressed, in burning the sin offering of the people, when they should have eaten it. Jarchi observes, that he expressed his anger not to Aaron, but to his sons, which he did for the honour of Aaron, laying the blame not on him, who was overwhelmed with grief, but on his sons:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 10:17

Ver. 17. Wherefore have ye not eaten of the sin [offering] in the holy place, seeing it [is] most holy,.... The sin offering was one of the most holy things, and therefore to be eaten only in the sanctuary; though this was not the fault they are here charged with that they had eat it, but not in the holy place; for they had not eaten it at all, but burnt it, as appears from the preceding verse; this is what they are blamed for particularly, though they are reminded of the whole law concerning it, that it was to he eaten by them, that it was to be eaten in the holy place, the reason of which is given; but they had not eaten it any where:

and [God] hath given it to you, to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord? for by eating the sin offering, or sin itself, as it is in the original text, see **Ho 4:8** they made the sins of the people, for whom the offering was, in some sense their own; and they bore them, and made a typical atonement for them; in which they were types of Christ, who was made sin for his people, took their sins upon him, and by imputation they were made his own, and he bore them in his own body on the tree, and made full satisfaction and atonement for them. Now since the eating of the sin offering of the people was of so great importance and consequence, the neglect of it by the priests was very blameworthy.

Leviticus 10:18

Ver. 18. Behold, the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place,.... When that was the case, indeed, the flesh of the sin offering was not to be eaten, but burnt, see **Le 6:30** but this was not the case now, and therefore its flesh should have been eaten, and not burnt:

ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy [place], as I commanded, **Le 6:26**.

Leviticus 10:19

Ver. 19. And Aaron said unto Moses,.... For what Moses had said was said in his presence, though not addressed to him directly, but to his sons; and he was sensible that he was pointed at, and that if there was any blame in this affair, it lay as much or more on him than on his sons; and therefore he takes it upon him to give an answer, and to excuse the fact as well as he could:

behold, this day they have offered their sin [offering] and their burnt offering before the Lord; that is, the people of Israel had brought a kid of the goats for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb for burnt offering, and he and his sons assisting him, had offered them for them, even on the very day his two eldest sons were removed by death in an awful manner:

and such things have befallen me; at this very time, soon after the above sacrifices were offered, happened the death of his two sons, which occasioned great anguish and distress, grief and sorrow, so that he could not eat of the sin offering; he had no appetite for it, and if he had, he thought in his present circumstances it would not have been right, as follows:

and [if] I had eaten the sin [offering] today, should it have been accepted in the sight of the Lord? he being a mourner. The Jews say {u}, an high priest may offer, being a mourner, but not eat; a common priest may neither offer nor eat; and which they illustrate by this passage, that Aaron offered and did not eat, but his sons did neither.

{u} Misn. Horayot, c. 3. sect. 5. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Leviticus 10:20

Ver. 20. And when Moses heard [that], he was content. He said no more, he did not proceed in blaming him and his sons, but was satisfied with the answer returned; he considered the grief and trouble of mind that attended Aaron, which might not only cause him to disregard food, but even to forget what was commanded to be done in this case; and besides he might observe, that there was some difficulty attending it; in some cases the flesh of the sin offering was to be eaten, and not burnt; in others, to be burnt, and not eaten; and this being the first time of offering one, the mistake might be the more easily made; and fearing one might be made, and especially when Aaron was in such circumstances, might be the reason Moses so diligently sought after the goat of the sin offering: moreover, what Aaron had done appeared to be not out of any wilful neglect of the command of God, but with a good design, as judging it would be unacceptable to him, should he have eaten of it in his circumstances. Moses upon the whole thought him excusable, at least insisted no more upon the blame. The Jewish writers make the mistake to lie on the side of Moses and not Aaron; and which the former acknowledged, according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem: see De 26:12.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 11

This chapter treats of creatures clean and unclean, as fit or not fit to be eaten; and first of beasts, whose signs are given, Le 11:1 then of fishes, which are

likewise described, Le 11:9 after that of fowls, and those that are not to be eaten are particularly named, Le 11:13 next of creeping things, which are distinguished into two sorts, as flying creeping things, of which those that are unclean, their carcasses are not even to be touched, as neither the carcasses of unclean beasts, Le 11:20 and creeping things on the earth, which defile by touching, as well as eating, and make everything unclean, upon which, being dead, they fall,
Le 11:29 and these laws are enforced from the holiness and goodness of God, Le 11:44 and the chapter is concluded with a recapitulation of them, Le 11:46.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron,.... The one being the chief magistrate, and the other the high priest, and both concerned to see the following laws put into execution; according to Jarchi, the Lord spoke to Moses that he might speak to Aaron; but being now in office, and one part of his office being to distinguish between clean and unclean, the following discourse is directed equally to him as to Moses:

saying unto them; as follows.

Leviticus 11:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying,.... For to them only belong the following laws, and not unto the Gentiles, as Jarchi rightly observes; these were parts of the ceremonial law, which was peculiarly given to them, and lay, among other things, in meats and drinks, and now abolished; for it is not what goes into a man that defiles him; nor is anything common or unclean of itself, but every creature of God is good if received with thanksgiving. The sons of Noah had free liberty, without any restraint or limitation, of using for food any living creature that moved upon the face of the earth; in the choice of which they were left to exercise their reason and judgment, and is the case with us now; but as men have not so nice a smell as some animals have, and cannot distinguish by their senses so well as they what food is most wholesome, which makes the exercise of their reason and judgment necessary, and the people of the Jews being a special people, and for whom the Lord had a peculiar regard; for the sake of their health, and to preserve them from diseases they were subject to, such as the leprosy and others, and to direct them to what was most salubrious and healthful, gave them the following laws; and which, though they are not obligatory upon us, yet may be a direction to us, in the use of what may be most suitable and proper food for us, the difference of climates, and of the constitutions of men's bodies, being considered: not that

we are to suppose, that the case of health was the only reason of delivering out these laws to the children of Israel, for other ends, besides that, may be thought to be had in view; as to assert his sovereign right to the creatures, and his disposal of them to them according to his will and pleasure; to lay a restraint on their appetites, to prevent luxury, and to teach them self denial, and compliance with his will; as also to keep them the more from the company and conversation of the Gentiles, by whom they otherwise might be led into idolatry; and to give them an aversion to their idols, to whom the creatures forbidden them to eat, many of them were either now or would be sacred to them; and chiefly to excite to a care for purity, both inward and outward, and create in the man abhorrence of those vices which may be signified by the ill qualities of several of the creatures; and to instruct them in the difference between holy and unholy persons, with whom they should or should not have communion; see
Ac 10:11

these are the beasts that ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth; they are not particularly mentioned here, but they are in De 14:4 and they are these ten; the ox, the sheep, and the goat, the hart, and the roebuck, and the fallow deer, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois; of all which, See Gill on "De 14:4" see Gill on "De 14:5": here only some general things are observed to describe them by, as follow.

Leviticus 11:3

Ver. 3. Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven footed,.... That is, whose hoof is parted and cloven quite through; for there are some creatures that have partitions in their feet, but not quite through, they are parted above, but underneath are joined together by a skin; wherefore both these phrases are used to describe the beasts lawful to be eaten: the Egyptians seem to have borrowed this law from the Jews, for Chaeremon says {x}, that they abstain from such four footed beasts that have only one hoof, or have many partitions, or have no horns: and so the Targum of Jonathan adds here,

"which have horns,"

which, though not in the text, agrees well with the creatures allowed by this law to be eaten, see De 14:4 for such are all horned cattle; nor are there any cattle horned forbid to be eaten:

and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that shall ye eat: who having no upper teeth cannot thoroughly chew their food at once, and therefore bring it up again out of their stomachs into their mouths and chew it over again, that it may be better prepared for digestion in the stomach, and so yield better nourishment; and this makes the flesh of such creatures fitter for food: and these creatures have more stomachs than one; the ventricles for rumination are four; the first is the paunch, which in oxen is so big as to hold food of fifty pound weight, the second the honeycomb, the third the tripe, the fourth the honey tripe, and to which are helpful the pectoral muscle, the abdomen, with the diaphragm {y}: all this might have a moral and spiritual meaning in it, and may be applied either to ministers of the word; who ought rightly to divide the word of truth, and give to everyone their part, and who should walk uprightly according to it, and who should give themselves up wholly to the meditation of it, and thoroughly digest it; and study to show themselves workmen, that need not to be ashamed; or to private Christians, who have a discerning spirit in spiritual things, and can distinguish not only morality from immorality, but spiritual things from carnal, heavenly things from earthly, the voice of Christ from the voice of a stranger, and the doctrines of Christ from the doctrines of men; and who also walk as they should do, by faith on Christ, in the ways of God, and according to the Gospel; these chew the cud, meditate on the word, feed upon it while delivered, recall it, and have it brought to their remembrance by the divine Spirit, and ponder it in their hearts; see **Ps 1:1**.

{x} Apud Porphyr. de Abstinentia, l. 4. sect. 7. {y} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 278, 279.

Leviticus 11:4

Ver. 4. Nevertheless, these shall ye not eat,.... To whom one of these descriptive characters may agree but not the other:

of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: there being some that chewed the cud but did not divide the hoof; others that divided the hoof but did not chew the cud, of which instances are given as follow:

[as] the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he [is] unclean unto you; and not to be eaten, whether male or female; or rather, "though he cheweth the cud"; and this account agrees with what naturalists give of it; so Aristotle {z} says it has not both rows of teeth, but wants its upper teeth, and chews as horned cattle do, and has bellies like theirs; for they

have more bellies than one, as the sheep, and goat, and hart, and others; since the service of the mouth is not sufficient to grind the food for want of teeth, this is supplied by the bellies, which receive the food one after another; in the first it is undigested, in the second somewhat more digested, in the third more fully, in the fourth completely: and so many bellies the camel has, as a very learned searcher {a} into these things observes; the first is the biggest, the second very small, the third much greater than the second, and the fourth equal to the second; in the second belly between the tunics, he says, seem to be the hydrophylacia, in which the water they drink is kept, very commodious for these animals passing through sandy deserts, so that they can long bear thirst: Pliny {b} says four days: Leo Africanus {c} relates a method used by travellers in the deserts of Lybia, who being in extreme want of water kill one of their camels, out of whose intestines they press out water; this they drink, this they carry about till they find a well, or must die with thirst: and the account also which is given of the feet of these creatures agrees; it parts the hoof, but not thoroughly, it is not cleft quite through, and so comes not up to Moses's descriptive character of clean creatures; its hoof is divided in two, but so divided, as Aristotle {d} observes, that it is but little divided on the back part unto the second joint of the toes; the fore part is very little divided, to the first joint of the toes, and there is something between the parts, as in the feet of geese: and so Pliny says {e} it has two hoofs, but the lower part of the foot is but very little divided, so that it is not thoroughly cleft: but though the flesh of these creatures was forbidden the Jews, it was eaten by people of other nations; both Aristotle {f} and Pliny {g} commend the milk of camels; and by the former the flesh of them is said to be exceeding sweet; and Diodorus Siculus relates {h}, that what with their milk and their flesh, which is eaten, as well as on account of their carrying burdens, they are very profitable unto men; and Strabo {i} says, the Nomades eat the flesh and milk of camels; and so the Africans, according to Leo Africanus {k}; and a countryman of ours {l}, who lived some time in Arabia, relates, that when a camel falls they kill it, and the poorer sort of the company eat it; and he says that he himself ate of camel's flesh, and that it was very sweet and nourishing: these creatures, in the mystic sense, may be an emblem of such persons, that carry their heads high, are proud and haughty, that boast of their riches, or trust in their righteousness.

{z} De Part. Animal. l. 3. c. 14. {a} Scheuchzer. ib. p. 280. {b} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 18. {c} Descriptio Africae, l. 1. p. 75. {d} Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 1. {e} L. 11. c. 45. {f} Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 26. {g} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 41. {h} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 137. {i} Geograph. l. 16. p. 535. {k} Descriptio Africae, l. 1. p. 48. l. 6. 617, 620. Arab. Geogr. Clim. 1. par. 1. 3. {l} Pitts's Account of the Mahometans, c. 8. p. 106. Vid. Hieron, adv. Jovinian. l. 2.

Leviticus 11:5

Ver. 5. And the coney,.... Or rabbit:

because he cheweth the cud; or "though he cheweth"; which yet, some observe, the coney or rabbit does not, it having upper teeth, and therefore they think some other creature is meant by Shaphan, the word here used; and Bochart {m} is of opinion, that the Aljarbuo of the Arabians, a sort of mountain mouse, is meant, which chews the cud and divides not the hoof, and resides in rocks, which agrees with the account of the Shaphan in Pr 30:26 but this is rejected by Dr. Shaw {n}, who takes the creature here to be the Daman Israel, or Israel's lamb, an animal of Mount Lebanon, a harmless creature of the same size and quality with the rabbit, and with the like incurvating posture, and disposition or the fore teeth, but is of a browner colour, with smaller eyes, and a head more pointed, like the marmots; the fore feet likewise are short, and the hinder are nearly as long in proportion as those of the jerboa; and though this animal is known to burrow sometimes in the ground, yet its usual residence and refuge is in the holes and clifts of the rocks; but a learned man {o}, and very inquisitive in the things of nature, tells us, that the "cuniculus", coney, or rabbit, this sort of animals do chew half an hour after eating:

but divideth not the hoof; which is well known of this creature:

he [is] unclean unto you; not fit or proper to be eaten of, but to be abstained from as an unclean animal; and may be an emblem of timorous persons, as these creatures by Aristotle {p} are observed to be, and it is well known they are; even of the fearful and unbelieving, reckoned among the impure, who will have their portion in the lake of fire, Re 21:8.

{m} Hierozoic par. 1. l. 3. c. 33. col. 1015, 1016. {n} Travels, p. 177, 348. Ed. 2. {o} Scheuchzer. ut supra, (Physic. Sacr. vol. 2.) p. 281. {p} Hist. Animal. l. 1. c. 1.

Leviticus 11:6

Ver. 6. And the hare, because he cheweth the cud,.... Or, "though he chews" it:

but divideth not the hoof, he [is] unclean to you; and so not to be eaten; so

Plutarch {q} says, that the Jews are said to abstain from the hare, disdaining it as a filthy and unclean animal, and yet was in the greatest esteem with the Romans of any four footed beast, as Martial says {r}: Moses, as Bochart {s} and other learned men observe, is the only writer that speaks of the hare as chewing the cud; though they also observe, that Aristotle {t} makes mention of that in common with those that do chew the cud, namely a "coagulum" or "runnet" in its stomach; his words are,

"all that have many bellies have what is called puetia, a coagulum or runnet, and of them that have but one belly, the hare;"

only that: this creature being prone to lust, may be an emblem of lustful persons, who give up themselves to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness, **Eph 4:19**.

(The "hare" is this verse may be an animal that is now is extinct but was alive at the time of Moses. It is only other mentioned in De 14:7. Editor.)

{q} Sympos. l. 9. c. 5. {r} L. 13. Epigr. 87. {s} Ut supra, (Hierozoic par. 1. l. 3.) c. 31. col. 977. {t} De Part. Animal. l. 3. c. 15. & Hist. Animal. l. 3. c. 21.

Leviticus 11:7

Ver. 7. And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven footed,.... Not only its hoofs are parted, but cloven quite through, and so in this respect answers Moses's first descriptive character of clean creatures; though Aristotle {u} and Pliny {w} speak of some kind of swine in Illyricum, Paeonia, and other places, which have solid hoofs; but perhaps these were not properly swine, though so called:

yet he cheweth not the cud; and a learned physician observes {x}, that such creatures that chew not the cud, so perfect a chyle cannot be elaborated by them as is by those that chew the cud, and therefore their flesh must be less wholesome; and of the swine, he says {y}, they have but one belly, and so there is no rumination or chewing the cud by them; wherefore they are to be placed, and are in a lower degree than the camel, the coney, and the hare; and as they cannot digest the chyle so well as those that chew the cud, and also live upon most sordid and filthy food, the eating of swine's flesh, he observes, must produce many inconveniences to the body, as especially scorbutic, arthritic, scabious, and leprous disorders: so Manetho the Egyptian says {z}, that he that eats swine's milk is liable to be filled with the leprosy; and Maimonides {a} gives it as the principal reason of its being forbid the Jews, because it is such a filthy creature, and eats such filthy things:

he [is] unclean to you: and so it has always been accounted by the Jews, and nothing is more abominable to them, as is even testified by Heathen {b} writers; and in this they have been imitated by many nations, particularly the Egyptians, who, as Herodotus says {c}, reckon swine a very filthy creature; so that if anyone does but touch it passing by, he is obliged to plunge himself into a river with his clothes on; and keepers of them may not go into any of their temples, nor do the rest of the Egyptians intermarry with them, but they marry among themselves; the reason of this their abhorrence of swine, Aelianus says {d}, is because they are so gluttonous that they will not spare their own young, nor abstain from human flesh; and this, says he, is the reason why the Egyptians hate it as an impure and voracious animal: likewise the Arabians entirely abstain from swine's flesh, as Solinus says {e}, who adds, that if any of this sort of creatures is carried into Arabia, it immediately dies; and the same Pliny {f} attests: and so the Phoenicians, the near neighbours of the Jews, would not eat the flesh of them; hence Antoninus is said to abstain from it after the manner of the Phoenicians {g}, unless the historian should mean the Jews; also the Gallo-Grecians or Galatians {h}; nay, even the Indians have such an abhorrence of it, that they would as soon taste of human flesh as taste of that {i}, and it is well known that the Mahometans abstain from it; and they have such an aversion to it, that if any chance to kill a wild pig, for tame they have none, they look on the merit of it to be almost equivalent to the killing a Christian in fight {k}: now these creatures may be an emblem of filthy and impure sinners, especially apostates, who return to their former impurities and wallow in them, **2Pe 2:22**.

{u} Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 1. {w} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 46. {x} Scheuchzer. ut supra, (Physic. Sacr. vol. 2.) p. 282. {y} Ib. p. 284. {z} Apud Aelian. de Animal. l. 10. c. 16. {a} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 48. {b} "Et vetus indulget", &c. Juvenal. Satyr. 6. "nec distare putant", &c. Ib. Satyr. 14. Vid. Porphyr. de Abstinentia, l. 4. sect. 11, 12. {c} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 47. {d} Ut supra. (Apud Aelian. de Animal. l. 10. c. 16.) {e} Polyhistor. c. 46. {f} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 52. {g} Herodian. Hist. l. 5. c. 16. {h} Pausan. Achaica, sive, l. 7. p. 430. {i} Ctesias apud Aelian. de Animal. l. 16. c. 37. {k} Pitts's Account of the Mahometans, p. 163.

Leviticus 11:8

Ver. 8. Of their flesh shall ye not eat,.... Meaning, not of swine only, but of the camel, coney, and hare:

and their carcass shall ye not touch; which must not be understood of touching them in any sense; for then it would have been unlawful for a Jew to have rode upon a camel, or to take out and make use of hog's lard in medicine; but of touching them in order to kill them, and prepare them for food, and eat them; and indeed all unnecessary touching of them is forbidden, lest it should bring them to the eating of them; though perhaps it may chiefly respect the touching of them dead:

they [are] unclean to you: one and all of them; for as this was said of each of them in particular, so now of all of them together; and which holds good of all wild creatures not named, to whom the description above belongs, and which used to be eaten by other nations; some of which were called Pamphagi, from eating all sorts, and others Agriophagi, from eating wild creatures, as lions, panthers, elephants {l}, &c.

{l} Plin. l. 6. c. 30. Solinus, c. 43.

Leviticus 11:9

Ver. 9. These shall ye eat of all that [are] in the waters,.... In the waters of the sea, or in rivers, pools, and ponds; meaning fishes; for though some persons abstain from eating them entirely, as the Egyptian priests, as Herodotus {m} relates; and it was a part of religion and holiness, not with the Egyptians only, but with the Syrians and Greeks, to forbear eating them {n}; and Julian {o} gives two reasons why men should abstain from fishes; the one because what is not sacrificed to the gods ought not to be used for food; and the other is, because these being immersed in the deep waters, look not up to heaven; but God gave the people of Israel liberty of eating them, under certain limitations:

whatsoever hath fins and scales, in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat; some render it disjunctively, "fins or scales" {p}; but as Maimonides {q} observes, whatsoever has scales has fins; and who also says, if a fish has but one fin and one scale, it was lawful to eat: fins to fishes are like wings to birds, and oars to boats, with which they swim and move swiftly from place to place; and scales are a covering and a protection of them; and such fishes being much in motion, and so well covered, are less humid and more solid and substantial, and more wholesome: in a spiritual sense, fins may denote the exercise of grace, in which there is a motion of the soul, Godward, Christward, and heavenward; and scales may signify good works, which adorn believers, and protect them from the reproaches and calumnies of men.

{m} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 37. {n} Plutarch. Sympos. p. 730. {o} Orat. 5. p. 330. {p} So Bootius. {q} Hilchot Maacolot Asurot, l. 1. sect. 24.

Leviticus 11:10

Ver. 10. And all that have not fins nor scales in the seas, and in the rivers,.... Such as eels, lampreys, &c.

of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which [is] in the waters; the former of these are interpreted by Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom of little fishes that have but a small body, and such as are created out of the waters; and the latter, of such as are produced of a male and female; or, as Maimonides {r} explains it, the one signifies the lesser creatures, such as worms and horse leeches; the other greater ones, sea beasts, as sea dogs, &c.

they shall be an abomination to you; not only unclean, and so unfit to eat, but to be had in abhorrence and detestation, as being exceeding disagreeable and unwholesome; and, as a learned man observes {s}, to these prohibited in general belong all those animals in lakes, rivers, or seas, which are of a slow motion, and which, because of the slow motion of their bodies, do not so well digest their food; and for that may be compared with four footed beasts that have but one belly, and so unwholesome as they.

{r} Hilchot Maacolot Asuret, l. 1. c. 2. sect. 12. {s} Scheuchzer. ut supra, (Physic. Sacr. vol. 2.) p. 287.

Leviticus 11:11

Ver. 11. They shall be even an abomination to you,.... This is repeated again and again, to deter from the eating of such fishes, lest there should be any desire after them:

ye shall not eat of their flesh, here mention is made of the flesh of fishes, as is by the apostle, 1Co 15:39. Aben Ezra observes, that their wise men say, this is according to the usage of words in those ages:

but you shall have their carcasses in abomination; not only abstain from eating them and touching them, but to express the utmost aversion to them.

Leviticus 11:12

Ver. 12. Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters,.... Which is repeated that they might take particular notice of this law, and be careful to observe it, this being the only sign given:

that [shall be] an abomination unto you; the Targum of Jonathan says, that not only the flesh of such fish, but the broth, and pickles made of them, were to be an abomination; which contradicts what Pliny {t} relates, that the Jews made a pickle of fishes that lacked scales; so Grotius understands him: this law of the Jews is taken notice of by Porphyry {u}, who says, it is forbidden all the Jews to eat horse flesh, or fishes that lack scales, or any animal that has but one hoof: and Pliny {w}, from an ancient author, Cassius Hemina, makes mention of a law of Numa, forbidding the use of fish that had not scales, in feasts made for the gods.

{t} Nat. Hist. l. 31. c. 8. {u} De Abstinentia, l. 4. c. 14. {w} Nat. Hist. l. 32. c. 2.

Leviticus 11:13

Ver. 13. And these [are they which] ye shall have in abomination among the fowls,.... No description or sign is given of fowls, as of beasts and fishes, only the names of those not to be eaten; which, according to Maimonides, are twenty four; so that all the rest but these are clean fowls, and might be eaten; wherefore the same writer observes {x}, that,

"whoever was expert in these kinds, and in their names, might eat of every fowl which was not of them, and there was no need of an inquiry:"

but what creatures are intended by these is not now easy to know; very different are the sentiments both of the Jews and Christians concerning them; and indeed it does not much concern us Christians to know what are meant by them, but as curiosity may lead us to such an inquiry, not thinking ourselves bound by these laws; but it is of moment with the Jews to know them, who think they are; wherefore, to supply this deficiency, they venture to give some signs by which clean and unclean fowls may be known, and they are three; such are clean who have a superfluous claw, and also a craw, and a crop that is uncovered by the hand {y}; and on the contrary they are unclean, and not to be eaten, as says the Targum of Jonathan, which have no superfluous talon, or no craw, or a crop not uncovered:

they shall not be eaten, they [are] an abomination; and they are those that follow:

the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray; about the first of these there is no difficulty, all agree the eagle is intended; which has its name either from the nature of its sight, or from the casting of its feathers, or from its tearing with its bill: it is a bird of prey, a very rapacious creature, and sometimes called the bird of Jupiter, and sacred to the gods; and these may be the reasons why forbid to be eaten, as well as because its flesh is hard, and not fit for food, and unwholesome; "the ossifrage" or "bone breaker" has its name from its tearing its prey and breaking its bones for the marrow, as the word "peres" here used signifies, **Mic 3:3** it is said to dig up bodies in burying places to eat what it finds in the bones {z}: this is thought to be of the eagle kind, as it is reckoned by Pliny {a}, though Aristotle {b} speaks of it as very different from the eagle, as larger than that, and of an ash colour; and is so kind to the eagle's young, that when they are cast out by that, it takes them and brings them up: the "ospray" is the "halioeetus", or sea eagle, as the Septuagint version and several others render it; which Aristotle {c} describes as having a large and thick neck, crooked wings, and a broad tail, and resides about the sea and shores: Pliny {d} speaks of it as having a very clear sight, and, poising itself on high, having sight of a fish in the sea, will rush down at once and fetch it out of the water; and he also reports that she will take her young before they are fledged, and oblige them to look directly against the rays of the sun, and if any of them wink, or their eyes water, she casts them out of her nest as a spurious brood. Aristotle {e}, who relates the same, says she kills them. The name of this creature, in the Hebrew text, seems to be taken from its strength; wherefore Bochart {f} is of opinion, that the "melanoeetos", or black eagle, which, though the least of eagles as to its size, exceeds all others in strength, as both Aristotle {g} and Pliny {h} say; and therefore, as the latter observes, is called by the Romans "valeria", from its strength. Maimonides {i} says of these two last fowls, which we render the ossifrage and the ospray, that they are not to be found on the continent, but in the desert places of the isles of the sea very far off, even those which are at the end of the habitable world.

{x} Maacolot Asurot, c. 1. sect. 14, 15. {y} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 75. 1. Maimon. ib. sect. 15. {z} Calmet's Dictionary in the word "Ossifraga". {a} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 3. {b} Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 6. l. 8. c. 3. & l. 9. c. 34. {c} Ib. l. 9. c. 32. {d} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 3.) {e} Ib. c. 34. {f} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 6. col. 188. {g} Ut supra, (Hist. Animal. l. 9.) c. 32. {h} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 3.) {i} Maacolot Asurot, c. 1. sect. 17.

Leviticus 11:14

Ver. 14. And the vulture, and the kite after his kind. Perhaps it might be better if the version was inverted, and the words be read, "and the kite, and the vulture, after his kind"; and the last word is by us rendered the vulture in Job 28:7 and very rightly, since the kite is not remarkable for its sight, any other than all rapacious creatures are, whereas the vulture is to a proverb; and besides, of the vulture there are two sorts, as Aristotle says {k}, the one lesser and whiter, the other larger and more of an ash colour; and there are some that are of the eagle kind {l}, whereas there is but one sort of kites; though Ainsworth makes mention of two, the greater of a ruddy colour, common in England, and the lesser of a blacker colour, known in Germany, but produces no authority for it; however, these are both ravenous creatures: of the kite, Aelianus says {m}, it is very rapacious, and will take meat out of the meat market, but not touch any sacrificed to Jupiter; the truth of which may well be questioned; and of vultures he reports {n}, that they will watch a dying man, and follow armies going to battle, expecting prey; See Gill on "Mt 24:28".

{k} Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 3. {l} Aristot. ib. l. 9. c. 32. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 3. Aelian. de Animal. l. 2. c. 46. {m} De Animal. l. 2. c. 42. {n} Ib. c. 46.

Leviticus 11:15

Ver. 15. Every raven after his kind. The red raven, night raven, the water raven, river raven, wood raven, &c. this also includes crows, rooks, pies, jays, and jackdaws, &c. The raven was with the Heathens sacred to Apollo {o}, is a voracious creature, and so reckoned among unclean ones, and unfit for food; nor does the care that God takes of these creatures, or the use he has made of them, contradict this; see
Job 38:41.

{o} Aelian. De Animal. l. 1. c. 48. & l. 7. c. 18.

Leviticus 11:16

Ver. 16. And the owl,.... The great and little owls being after mentioned, it seems best, by the word here used, to understand the "ostrich" with the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, the Oriental versions, and the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan: the account which Pliny {p} gives of the African and Ethiopic ostriches is this; that they are the largest of birds, and almost of the kind of beasts; that they exceed the height of a horseman on horseback, and are swifter than the horses; that their wings are given them to help them in their running, otherwise they are not flying fowls, nor are they lifted up from the earth. Their hoofs are like to those of harts, with which they fight, and are cloven, and serve to gather up stones, which in their flight they throw with their feet against them that follow them; they have a wonderful concoction, digesting whatever is swallowed down; and, according to Galen {q}, all the parts of them, their flesh and their eggs, are hard and difficult of digestion, and excermentitious: Aben Ezra says {r}, their flesh is as dry as a stick, and it is not usual to eat it, for there is no moisture in it; and therefore nothing can be eaten of the whole species, but the daughter or young one, for that being a female and little, there is some moisture in it; but not so the male when little; wherefore as the flesh of this creature is always reckoned by the Jews as unlawful to be eaten, it may the rather be supposed to be intended here, since if not here, it cannot be thought to be any where observed; and yet we find that both the eggs and the flesh of this creature have been eaten by some people: their eggs with the Indians were reckoned delicate eating, as Aelianus {s} reports; and near the Arabians and Ethiopians were a people, as both Diodorus Siculus {t} and Strabo {u} relate, who were called Struthophagi, from their living on ostriches; and they eat them in Peru, where they are common {w}; and in several parts of Africa, as Nubia, Numidia, and Lybia, as Leo Africanus {x} relates:

and the night hawk; which, according to Pliny {y}, is sometimes called "cymindis", and is seldom to be found in woods, sees not so well in the day time, and wages a deadly war with the eagle, and they are often found joined together: Bochart {z} who thinks that the female ostrich is meant by the preceding bird, is of opinion that the male ostrich is meant here, there being no general name in the Hebrew language to comprehend both sexes:

and the cuckoo; a bird well known by its voice at least: some have thought it to be the same with the hawk, changing its figure and voice; but this has been refuted by naturalists {a}: but though it is here forbidden to be eaten, yet its young, when fat, are said to be of a grateful savour by Aristotle: and Pliny {b} says, no bird is to be compared to it for the sweetness of its flesh, though perhaps it may not be here intended: the word is by the Septuagint rendered a "sea gull", and so it is by Ainsworth, and which is approved of by Bochart {c}:

and the hawk after his kind; a well known bird, of which, according to Aristotle {d}, there are not less than ten sorts: Pliny {e} says sixteen; it has its name in Hebrew from flying, it being a bird that flies very swiftly; see Job 39:26 the hawk was a symbol of deity with the Egyptians, and was reverenced and worshipped by them {f}.

{p} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 1. Vid. Aristot. de Part. Animal. l. 4. c. 14. {q} Apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 14. col. 226. {r} Pirush in Exod. xxiii. 19. {s} De Animal. l. 14. c. 13. {t} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 162. {u} Geograph. l. 16. p. 531. {w} Calmet's Dictionary in the word "Ostrich". {x} Descriptio Africae, l. 6. p. 601, 605, 613. l. 9. p. 766. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 8. {z} Ut supra, (Apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2.) c. 15. col. 235. {a} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 7. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 9. {b} Ibid. {c} Ut supra, (Apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 15.) col. 26. {d} Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 36. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 8. {f} Plutarch. de Iside & Osyr. Strabo. Geograph. l. 17. p. 559, 562. Diodor. Sicul. l. 1. p. 78. Clement. Alex. Stromat. l. 5. p. 566.

Leviticus 11:17

Ver. 17. And the little owl, and the cormorant, and the great owl. Ainsworth translates the words just the reverse, and takes the first word to signify the great owl, and the last the little one; the great owl may intend the great horn owl, called sometimes the eagle owl, which is thus described; it is of the size of a goose, and has large wings, capable of extending to a surprising breadth: its head is much of the size and figure of that of a cat, and has clusters of black feathers over the ears, rising to three fingers' height; its eyes are very large, and the feathers of its rump long, and extremely soft; its eyes have yellow irises, and its beak black and crooked: it is all over mottled with white, reddish, and black spots; its legs are very strong, and are hairy down to the very ends of the toes, their covering being of a whitish brown {g}: and as this is called the great horn owl, others, in comparison of it, may be called the little owl. Some reckon several species of owls--there are of three sizes; the large ones are as big as a capon, the middle sized are as big as a wood pigeon, the smaller sort about the

size of an ordinary pigeon--the horned owl is of two kinds, a larger and a smaller--the great owl is also of two sorts, that is, of a larger and a smaller kind {h}; it is a bird sacred to Minerva: but though it is pretty plain that the last of the words used signifies a bird that flies in the twilight of the evening, from whence it seems to have its name, as Aben Ezra, Ben Gersom, and other Jewish writers observe, and fitly agrees with the owl which is not seen in the day, but appears about that time; yet the first is thought by Bochart {i} to be the "onocrotalus" or "pelican", which has under its bill a bag or sack, which will hold a large quantity of anything; and the word here used has the signification of a cup or vessel, see
Ps 102:6. The word we render "cormorant", the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase it, a drawer of fish out of the sea, so Baal Hatturim; and thus it is interpreted in the Talmud {k}; and the gloss upon it says, this is the water raven, which is the same with the cormorant; for the cormorant is no other than "corvus aquaticus", or water raven; See Gill on "Zep 2:14". The Septuagint render it by "catarrhactes", which, according to the description of it {l}, resides by rocks and shores that hang over water; and when it sees fishes swimming in it, it will fly on high, and contract its feathers, and flounce into the water, and fetch out the fish; and so is of the same nature, though not the same creature with the cormorant. Aben Ezra observes, that some say this is a bird which casts its young as soon as born; and this is said of the "catarrhactes", that it lets down its young into the sea, and draws them out again, and hereby inures them to this exercise {m}.

{g} Ray's Ornithol. p. 63. apud Supplement to Chambers's Dictionary in the word "Bubo". {h} Calmet's Dictionary in the word "Owl". {i} Ut supra, (Apud Bochard. Heirozoic. par. 2. l. 2.) c. 20. col. 275. {k} Bab. Cholin, fol. 63. 1. {l} Gesner. apud Bochart. ut supra, ({i}) c. 21. col. 278. {m} Ibid.

Leviticus 11:18

Ver. 18. And the swan,.... This is a bird well known to us, but it is a question whether it is intended by the word here used; for though it is so rendered in the Vulgate Latin, it is differently rendered by many others: the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call it "otia", which seems to be the same with the "otus" of Aristotle {n}, who says it is like an owl, having a tuft of feathers about its ears (from whence it has its name); and some call it "nycticorax", or the owl; and here, by Bochart {o}, and others, the owl called "noctua" is thought to be meant; and with which agrees the account some Jewish writers give of it, as Aben Ezra and Baal Hatturim, who say it is a bird, which every one that sees is astonished at it, as other birds are at the owl, are frightened at the sight of it, and stupefied. But as the same word is used Le 11:30 among the creeping things, for a mole, what Jarchi observes is worthy of consideration, that this is "calve (chauve) souris" (the French word for a bat), and is like unto a mouse, and flies in the night; and that which is spoken of among the creeping things is like unto it, which hath no eyes, and they call it "talpa", a mole. The Septuagint version renders it by "porphyrion", the redshank; and so Ainsworth; and is thought to be called by the Hebrew name in the text, from the blowing of its breath in drinking; for it drinks biting, as Aristotle says {p}:

and the pelican; which has its name in Hebrew from vomiting; being said by Aben Ezra and Baal Hatturim to be a bird that vomits its food; and it is observed by several naturalists {q}, of the pelican, that it swallows down shellfish, and after they have lain some time in its stomach, it vomits them up again; where having been heated, the shells open, and it picks out the meat:

and the gier eagle; or vulture eagle, the "gypoeetos" of Aristotle {r}, and who says it is called also "oripelargos", or the mountain stork; and which Pliny {s} also makes to be an eagle of the vulture kind. Dr. Shaw says {t}, that near Cairo there are several flocks of the "ach bobba" (white father, differing little from the stork but in its colour), the "percnopterus" or "oripelargos", which like the ravens about London feed upon carrion, and nastiness that is thrown without the city; this the Arabs call "rachama", the same with Mxr, Le 11:18 and hmxr in De 14:17 and whatever bird is here meant, it must be one that is tender toward its young, as its name signifies, as Aben Ezra and Baal Hatturim observe; and though both the eagle and the vulture are rapacious birds, yet have a great regard to their young; of the eagle see De 32:11 and the vulture, with the Egyptians, was an "hieroglyphic" of a tender mother, or any merciful person; it being reported of it, that during the one hundred twenty days its young are under its care, it very rarely flies from them, being so solicitous of nourishing them; and that by making incisions in its thigh, it lets out a bloody flow of milk, when it has nothing else to support them {u}. The Talmudists {w} say, that the bird "racham", as it is here called, is the same with "serakrak", and is by the Targum of Jonathan, and in the Syriac version, here rendered "serakraka", so called from qrv, which signifies to "squall"; and, according to Munster {x}, is thought by some to be the "pica", magpie, or rather the jay; and Dr. Shaw {y} observes, that by a small transmutation of letters, that and the "shagarag" of the Arabs are the same; which he says is of the size and shape of a jay, though with a smaller bill, and shorter legs; the back is brownish; the head, neck, and belly, of a light green; and upon the wings and tail there are several spots or ringlets of a deep blue; it makes a "squalling" noise; and, he adds, it has no small affinity both in voice and plumage with the jay. The Septuagint version renders the word by the "swan"; which if not intended by the first word in this text, may by this, being kind to its young, though otherwise reckoned a cruel and unmerciful bird, as Bochart {z} observes; some think the woodpecker is meant, so called from its love to its parents {a}.

{n} Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 12. Vid. Plin. l. 10. c. 23. {o} Ut supra, (Apud Bochard Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2.) c. 23. {p} Ut supra, (Hist. Animal. l. 8.) c. 6. so Plin. l. 10. c. 46. {q} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 10. Aelian. de Animal. l. 3. c. 20, Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 40. {r} Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 32. {s} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 3. {t} Travels, p. 449. Ed. 2. {u} Horns Apollo & Pisidas apud Bochart. ut supra, ({o}) c. 27. col. 388. {w} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 63. 1. {x} Dictionar. Chald. p. 4. 18. {y} Travels, p. 183. {z} Ut supra ({o}), c. 25. col. 300. {a} Plin. l. 10. c. 33.

Leviticus 11:19

Ver. 19. And the stork,..... A bird of passage, Jer 8:7 it has its name from kindness, which it exercises both to its dam, and to its young. Various writers {b} speak of the kindness of these birds to their dams, which when they are old they take care of and feed them, to which the apostle is thought to allude, 1Ti 5:4 and its tenderness to its young is no less manifest: when the city of Delf in Holland was on fire, the storks were seen very busy to save their young from the flames, and which when they could not do, threw themselves into the midst of them, and perished with them, as Drusius from the Dutch historians relates. It is said to feed upon serpents; and hence by Virgil {c} to be "invisa colubris"; and Juvenal {d} says, it nourishes its young with them; and which may be a reason of its being forbid to be eaten, and is the reason given by the Mahometans {e} for the prohibition of it; though on this account it was in great honour in Thessaly, that country being freed from serpents by it, and therefore they made it a capital crime to kill them, as Pliny {f} relates; formerly people would not eat the stork, but at present it is much esteemed for the deliciousness of its flesh {g}

the heron after her kind; this bird has its name in Hebrew from its being soon angry, as Aben Ezra observes; and Jarchi calls it the angry vulture or kite, as it is in the Talmud {h}; and adds, and it appears to me to be what they call the "heron", one sort of which named "asterias", as there is one sort so called by Pliny {i}; it becomes tame in Egypt, and so well understands the voice of a man, as Aelianus {k} reports, that if anyone by way of reproach calls it a servant or slothful, it is immediately exceeding angry. There are three kinds of herons, as both Aristotle {l} and Pliny {m}; and by a learned man of ours {n}, their names are thus given, the criel or dwarf heron, the blue heron, and the bittour; some reckon nineteen:

and the lapwing; the upupa or hoopoe; it has its name in Hebrew, according to Jarchi, from its having a double crest; and so Pliny {o} ascribes to it a double or folded crest, and speaks of it as a filthy bird; and, according to Aristotle {p} and Aelian {q}, its nest is chiefly made of human dung, that by the ill smell of it men may be kept from taking its young; and therefore may well be reckoned among impure fowl. Calmet {r} says, there is no such thing as a lapwing to be seen in any part of England; but there are such as we call so, whether the same bird with this I cannot say:

and the bat; a little bird which flies in the night, Aben Ezra says; Kimchi {s} describes it a mouse with wings, which flies in the night, and we sometimes call it the "flitter mouse"; it is a creature between a fowl and a beast; and, as Aristotle says {t}, it partakes of both, and is of neither; and it is the only fowl, as Pliny {u} observes, that has teeth and teats, that brings forth animals, and nourishes them with milk. It is a creature so very disagreeable, that one would think almost there was no need of a law to forbid the eating of it; and yet it is said by some to be eatable, and to be eaten, as Strabo {w} affirms, yea, to be delicious food. It is asserted {x}, that there is a sort of them in the east, larger than ordinary, and is salted and eaten--that there are bats in China as large as pullets, and are as delicate eating. Of these several fowls before mentioned, some are of the ravenous kind, and are an emblem of persecutors and covetous persons, and such as live by rapine and violence; others are of a lustful nature, and are an emblem of those who serve various lusts and pleasures, and give up themselves to uncleanness; others are night birds, and are a proper emblem of them whose works are works of darkness, and love darkness rather than the light; and others never rise higher than the earth, and so may denote earthly minded persons; and others live on impure things, and so fitly represent such who live an impure life; with all such the people of God are to have no fellowship.

{b} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 13. Aelian. de Animal. l. 3. c. 23. & l. 10. c. 16. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 23. {c} Georgic. l. 2. {d} Satyr. 14. {e} Apud Bochart. ut supra, (Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2.) c. 29. col. 329. {f} Ut supra. (Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 23.) {g} Calmet in the word "Stork". {h} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 63. 1. {i} Ut supra, ({f}) c. 60. so Aristot. l. 9. c. 1. {k} De Animal. l. 5. c.

36. {l} Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 1. {m} Ut supra. (Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 23.) {n} Ainsworth's Dictionary, in voce "Ardea". {o} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 29. {p} Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 15. {q} De Animal. l. 3. c. 26. {r} Dictionary, in the word "Lapwing". {s} Sepher Shorash. in voc. Plje. {t} De Part. Animal. l. 4. c. 13. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 61. l. 11. c. 37. {w} Geograph. l. 16. {x} Calmet's Dictionary in the word "Bat".

Leviticus 11:20

Ver. 20. All fowls that creep,.... Or rather "every creeping thing that flies"; for what are designed are not properly fowls, but, as the Jewish writers interpret them, flies, fleas, bees, wasps, hornets, locusts, &c. so the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and Maimonides {y}:

going upon [all] four; that is, upon their four feet, when they walk or creep:

[these shall be] an abomination to you; not used as food, but detested as such.

{y} Maacolot Asurot, c. 2. l. 5.

Leviticus 11:21

Ver. 21. Yet these may ye eat,.... Which are after described and named:

of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon [all] four; even though it is a creeping thing that flies and goes upon four feet, provided they be such,

which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth; there is a double reading of this clause; the textual reading is, "which have not legs", and is followed by several interpreters and translators; and the marginal reading, which we follow, is, "which have legs"; and both are to be regarded as true, and written by Moses, as Ainsworth observes; for locusts are born without legs, and yet creep low, as Pliny asserts {z}, and they have them afterwards; and it is a canon of the Jews, that what have not legs or wings now, or have not wings to cover the greatest part of them, but shall have after a time when grown up, these are as free (to eat) now, as when grown up {a}. Dr. Shaw thinks {b} the words may bear this construction, "which have knees upon" or "above their [hinder] legs, to leap withal upon the earth"; and applying this to the locust afterwards, and only instanced in, he observes, that this has the two hindermost of its legs and feet much stronger, larger, and longer than any of the foremost. In them the knee, or the articulation of the leg and thigh, is distinguished by a remarkable bending or curvature, whereby it is able, whenever prepared, to jump, to spring, or raise itself up with great force and activity. And these Aristotle {c} calls the leaping parts; and though he attributes to the locust six feet, as does also Pliny {d}, yet he takes the two leaping parts into the account; whereas Moses distinguishes those two from the four feet; and so Austin {e} observes, that Moses does not reckon among the feet the two hinder thighs with which locusts leap, which he calls clean, and thereby distinguishes them from such unclean flying creatures which do not leap with their thighs, such as beetles; and so the Jewish writers always describe a clean locust as having four feet, and two legs, thighs, or knees. Maimonides {f} gives three signs of them, which are these, whatsoever has four feet and four wings, which cover the greatest part of its body in length, and the greatest part of the compass of it, and has two thighs or knees to leap with, they are of the clean kind; and although its head is long, and it hath a tail, if its name is "chagob" (a locust) it is clean.

{z} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29. {a} Maimon. ib. c. 1. sect. 23. {b} Travels, p. 420. {c} De Part. Animal. l. 4. c. 6. {d} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 48. {e} Retract. l. 2. c. 15. {f} Maacolot Asurot, c. 1. sect. 22.

Leviticus 11:22

Ver. 22. [Even] these of them ye may eat, &c] The four following ones, which seem to be no other than four sorts of locusts:

the locust after his kind; this is the common locust, called by the name of Arbeh, from the great multiplication and vast multitudes of them; the phrase, "after his kind", and which also is used in all the following instances, signifies the whole entire species of them, which might be eaten:

and the bald locust after his kind; which in the Hebrew text is Soleam, and has its name, as Aben Ezra suggests, from its ascending rocks: but since locusts do not climb rocks, or have any peculiar regard for them, rather this kind of locust may be so called, from their devouring and consuming all that come in their way {g}, from the Chaldee word Melo, which signifies to swallow, devour, and consume; but why we should call it the bald locust is not so clear, though it seems there were such, since the Jews describe some that have no baldness, which the gloss explains, whose head is not bald {h}, which shows that some are bald; and so, this is described by Kimchi {i}, it has an eminence, a rising, or bunch upon it; some render it baldness, and it hath no tail, and its head is long; and so Ben Melech:

and the beetle after his kind; which is another sort of locust called Chargol, and should not be rendered a beetle, for no sort of beetles are eatable, nor have legs to leap withal, and so come not under the general description given of such flying, creeping things, fit to eat: Kimchi says it is one kind of a locust {k}, and Hiscuni derives its name from dxt and lgr, because it strives to leap with its feet, which answers to the above descriptive character: the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and some others, render it by Ophiomachus, a fighter with serpents, to which the locust is an enemy, and kills them, taking fast hold of their jaws, as Pliny says {l}, and so Aristotle {m}:

and the grasshopper after his kind; this is another, and the fourth kind of the locust that might be eaten; its name is Chagab, from the Arabic word Chaguba, "to vail", locusts vailing the light of the sun: and according to the Jewish doctors, it is a name which every locust fit to eat should have;

"among the locusts (fit for food) are these, who have four feet, and four wings and thighs, and wings covering the greatest part of them, and whose name is Chagab {n};"

and commentators say {o}, it must be called by this name, as well as have those signs: the difference between these several sorts is with them this; the Chagab has a tail, but no bunch; Arbeh neither bunch nor tail; and Soleam has a bunch, but not a tail; and Chargol has both bunch and tail {p}: Maimonides {q} reckons up eight sorts of them fit to eat; and these creatures were not only eaten by the Jews, but by several other nations: with the Parthians they were very agreeable and grateful food, as Pliny {r} relates; who also says {s}, that some part of the Ethiopians live only upon them all the year, hardened in smoke, and with salt: Diodorus Siculus {t} makes mention of the same, and calls them Acridophagi, locust eaters, and gives a particular account of their hunting and taking them, and preserving them for food; and so does Strabo {u}; and the same Solinus {w} relates of those that border on Mauritania; and they are still eaten in Barbary, where they dry them in ovens to preserve them, and then either eat them alone, or pounded and mixed with milk: their taste is said to be like shrimps {x}; and Bochart {y} has shown, from various writers, that they were a delicious food with the Greeks, especially among the common people; and so they are with the Indians {z}.

{g} So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 88. 1. {h} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 65. 2. {i} Sepher Shorash. in voc. Melo. {k} Ib. in voc. lwgrx. {l} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.) {m} Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 6. {n} Misn. Cholin, c. 3. sect. 7. {o} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {p} Vid. T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 65. 2. {q} Maacolot Asurot, c. 1. sect. 21. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29. {s} Ib. l. 6. c. 30. {t} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 162, 163. {u} Geograph. l. 16. p. 531. {w} Polyhistor. c. 43. {x} Sir Hans Sloane's Natural History of Jamaica, vol. 1. p. 29. {y} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 7. col. 490, 491. {z} Agreement of Customs of the East Indians and Jews, art. 12. p. 60.

Leviticus 11:23

Ver. 23. But all [other] flying creeping things,.... Excepting the four sorts before mentioned, wherefore we rightly supply the word "other":

which have four feet; or more; the Vulgate Latin version adds, "only", but wrongly; for those that have more are unclean, and forbidden to be eaten, excepting those in the preceding verse; and most creeping things that fly have six feet, as the locusts themselves, reckoning their leaping legs into the number; though it may be observed, that those creatures that have six feet have but four equal ones, on which they walk or creep; and the two foremost, which are longer, are as hands to them to wipe their eyes with, and protect them from anything that may fall into them and hurt them; they not being able to see clearly because of the hardness of their eyes, as Aristotle {a} observes, and particularly it may be remarked of the fly, as it is by Lucian {b}, that though it has six feet it only goes on four, using the other two foremost as hands; and therefore you may see it walking on four feet, with something eatable in its hands, lifting them up on high, just after the manner of men: now all such creatures that have four feet or more, excepting the above,

[shall be] an abomination unto you; abhorred as food, and abstained from.

{a} Ut supra. (Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 6.) {b} De Musca.

Leviticus 11:24

Ver. 24. And for these ye shalt be unclean,.... That is, for eating them; or should they eat them they would be unclean:

whosoever toucheth the carcass of them shall be unclean until the even; not only he was unclean that ate them, but he that even touched their dead bodies was reckoned unclean; might not go into the tabernacle, nor have conversation with men, nor eat of the holy things, which were forbid men in any uncleanness; and though there is no mention of his washing himself, it may be understood, this being a short or concise way of speaking, as Aben Ezra observes; who adds, that it was necessary that he should wash himself in water; which was typical of washing and cleansing by the grace and blood of Christ, without which a man cannot be cleansed from the least sin, and pollution by it; and may signify that during the legal dispensation there was no proper cleansing from sin, until the evening of the world, when Christ came and shed his blood for the cleansing of it.

Leviticus 11:25

Ver. 25. And whosoever beareth [ought] of the carcass of them,.... That carries them from one place to another, out of the camp, city, village, or house or field where they may lie; and though this is done with a good design, as being offensive or infectious, yet such an one

shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even; from whence both Jarchi and Aben Ezra infer, that the pollution by hearing or carrying is greater than that by touching; since such a man, so defiled, was obliged to wash his clothes as well as his body; so saints, that have contracted pollution by any manner of sin, are to wash their garments and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, Re 7:14.

Leviticus 11:26

Ver. 26. [The carcasses] of every beast which divideth the hoof, and is not cloven footed,.... As the camel:

nor cheweth the cud; though it may divide the hoof, as the swine; and on the other hand, such as may chew the cud, and yet not dividing the hoof, as the coney and hare; for the Scripture here, as Aben Ezra observes again, uses a short and concise way of speaking: these

[are] unclean unto you; to be reckoned by them such, and neither to be eaten nor touched:

everyone that toucheth them shall be unclean; until the evening; and obliged to washing, though not expressed: this is not to be understood of touching them while alive, as some Sadducees or Karaites understand it, according to Aben Ezra; for camels, horses, mules, &c. might be, and were rode upon, and so touched; but of them when dead, or their carcases, as is rightly supplied in the beginning of the verse; and the Jewish writers {c} understand this of the flesh of the carcass only, not of the bones, horns, and hoofs, which, they say, do not defile, only the flesh: this is repeated from Le 11:8.

{c} Misn. Edaiot, c. 6. sect. 3. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Leviticus 11:27

Ver. 27. Whatsoever goeth upon his paws,.... Or "the palms" {d} of his hands; meaning such creatures, whose feet are not divided into two parts, but into many, like the fingers of an hand, as apes, lions, bears, wolves, foxes, dogs, cats, &c.

among all manner of beasts that go on [all] four; this is added, to distinguish them from fowl, such as are clean; who walk but on two feet, though their feet are divided into fingers or talons, and may be called hands on which they walk:

these [are] unclean unto you: and as they might not be eaten, so neither touched, as follows:

whoso toucheth their carcass shall be unclean until the even;
See Gill on "Le 11:24".

{d} wypk le "super volas suas", Pagninus, Montanus, "super manus suas", Munster, Tigurine version, Drusius.

Leviticus 11:28

Ver. 28. And he that beareth the carcass of them,.... Carries it upon any account, from place to place:

shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even; as he that bore the carcasses of any of the flying creeping things, Le 11:25

they are unclean to you; even the carcasses of the one and of the other; and to all the Israelites, men, women, and children, as Aben Ezra observes.

Leviticus 11:29

Ver. 29. These also [shall be] unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth,.... As distinguished from those creeping things that fly, these having no wings as they; and which were equally unclean, neither to be eaten nor touched, neither their blood, their skin, nor their flesh, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it: and the Misnic doctors say {d} that the blood of a creeping thing and its flesh are joined together: and Maimonides {e} observes, that this is a fundamental thing with them, that the blood of a creeping thing is like its flesh; which in Siphre (an ancient book of theirs) is gathered from what is said in Le 11:29 "these shall be unclean", &c. hence the wise men say, the blood of a creeping thing pollutes as its flesh: the creeping things intended are as follow:

the weasel, and the mouse, and the tortoise after his kind; the first of these, "the weasel", a creature well known; there are two sorts of it, as Pliny {f} says, the field weasel, and the house weasel; the former are called by the Jewish writers the weasel of the bushes {g}, and the latter the weasel that dwells in the foundations of houses {h}; and of the former there was a doubt among some of them whether it was a species of the eight reptiles in Le 11:29 or whether it was a species of animals {i}; and which, Maimonides says, is a species of foxes like to weasels: Bochart {k} thinks the mole is intended; but the generality of interpreters understand it of the weasel; and so Jarchi and Kimchi, and Philip Aquinas {l}, interpret it by "mustela", the weasel: however, all agree the second is rightly interpreted "the mouse"; which has its name in Hebrew from its being a waster and destroyer of fields; an instance of which we have in **1Sa 6:5**
See Gill on "1Sa 6:5"; so that this sort may be chiefly intended, though it includes all others, who are distinguished by their colours, the black, the red, and the white, which are all mentioned by Jonathan in his paraphrase of the text: this animal, as a learned physician {m} expresses it, eats almost everything, gnaws whatever it meets with, and, among other things, is a great lover of swine's flesh, which was an abomination to the Jews; nor does it abstain from dung, and therefore it is no wonder it should be reckoned among impure creatures; and yet we find they were eaten by some people, see Isa

66:17 especially the dormouse; for which the old Romans made conveniences to keep them in, and feed them, and breed them for the table {n}: so rats in the West Indies are brought to market and sold for food, as a learned author {o} of undoubted credit assures us, who was an eyewitness of it: the last in this text, "the tortoise", means the land tortoise; it has its name from the shell with which it is covered, this word being sometimes used for a covered wagon, **Nu 7:3** there are various kinds of them, as Pliny {p} and other writers observe, and who, as Strabo {q} and Mela {r} also, speak of a people they call Chelonophagi, or tortoise eaters: a tortoise of the land kind is esteemed a very delicate dish: Dr. Shaw {s}, speaking of the land and water tortoises in Barbary, says, the former, which hides itself during the winter months, is very palatable food, but the latter is very unwholesome: the Septuagint version renders it, the "land crocodile", which, is approved of by Bochart {t}: and Leo Africanus says {u}, that many in Egypt eat the flesh of the crocodile, and affirm it to be of good savour; and so Benzon {w} says, its flesh is white and tender, and tastes like veal; though some among them, as Strabo {x} asserts, have a great antipathy and hatred to them; and others worship them as gods, and neither can be supposed to eat them; the land crocodiles are eaten by the Syrians, as Jerom {y} affirms, for those feeding on the sweetest flowers, as is said, their entrails are highly valued for their agreeable odour: Jarchi says, it is a creature like a frog; he means a toad; so Philip Aquinas and many render the word: Dr. Shaw takes the creature designed to be the sharp-scaled tailed lizard {z}.

{d} Misn. Meilah, c. 4. sect. 3. {e} Pirush. in ib. {f} Nat. Hist. l. 29. c. 4. {g} Misn. Celaim, c. 8. sect. 5. {h} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 20. 2. {i} Maimon. in Misn. ib. {k} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 95. col. 1022. {l} Sepher Shorash. & Aquinas in rad. dlx. {m} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 307. {n} Varro de re Rustic. l. 3. c. 14. apud Sir Hans Sloane's History of Jamaica, vol. 1. Introduct. p. 24. {o} Sir Hans Sloane, ib. p. 25. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 10. & l. 32. c. 4. {q} Geograph. l. 16. p. 532. {r} De Situ Orbis, l. 3. c. 8. {s} Travels, p. 178. {t} Ut supra, (Hierozoic. par. 1.) l. 4. c. 1. {u} Descriptio Africae, l. 9. p. 762. {w} Nov. Orb. Hist. c. 3. {x} Geograph. l. 17. p. 558, 560, 561, 563. {y} Adv. Jovin. l. 2. {z} Ut supra. (Travels, p. 178.)

Leviticus 11:30

Ver. 30. And the ferret,.... Whatever creature is here meant, it has its name in Hebrew from the cry it makes; and so the ferret has but one note in its voice, which is a shrill, but small, whining cry: it is used to drive rabbits out of their holes: the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render the word by "mygale", the weasel mouse, or "mus areneus" of the Latins, the shrew or shrew mouse: it has something of the mouse and weasel, from whence it has its name in Greek, being of the size of the one, and the colour of the other: but Bochart {b} is of opinion, that a sort of lizard called "stellio", an evet or newt, is meant; one sort of which, according to Pliny {c}, makes a bitter noise and screaking:

and [the] chameleon; this is a little creature like a lizard, but with a larger and longer head; it has four feet, and on each foot three claws; its tail is long; with this, as well as with its feet, it fastens itself to the branches of trees; its tail is flat, its nose long, and made in an obtuse point; its back is sharp, its skin plaited and jagged like a saw, from the neck to the last joint of the tail, and upon its head it hath something like a comb; in other respects it is made like a fish; that is to say, it has no neck {d}; what is said of its living on air, and changing colour according to what it is applied, are now reckoned vulgar mistakes: but whatever creature is here meant, it seems to have its name in Hebrew from its strength, wherefore Bochart {e} takes the "guaril" or "alwarlo" of the Arabs to be meant; which is the stoutest and strongest sort of lizard, and is superior in strength to serpents, and the land tortoise, with which it often contends:

and the lizard; so Jarchi interprets the word by a "lizard"; it has a larger letter than usual in it, that this creature might be taken notice of, and guarded against as very pernicious, and yet with some people it is eaten: Calmet says {f}, there are several sorts of lizards, which are well known: there are some in Arabia of a cubit long, but in the Indies there are some, they say, of twenty four feet in length: in America, where they are very good, they eat them: one lizard is enough to satisfy four men: and so in the West Indies, says Sir Hans Sloane {g}, I was somewhat surprised to see serpents, rats, and lizards sold for food, and that to understanding people, and of a very good and nice palate; and elsewhere {h}, he says, all nations inhabiting these parts of the world (the West Indies) do the same: "Guanes" or "lizards" are very common in Jamaica, and eaten there, and were of great use when the English first took this island, being, as I was assured, says he, commonly sold by the first planters for half a crown apiece: Dr. Shaw {i} says, that he was informed that more than 40,000 persons in Cairo, and in the neighbourhood, live upon no other food than lizards and serpents, though he thinks {k}, because the chameleon is called by the Arabs "taitah", which differs little in name from hajl, "letaah", here; that therefore that, which is indeed a species of the lizard, might, with more propriety, be substituted for it:

and the snail; so the word is rendered by Jarchi, on the place, and by Kimchi, and Philip Aquinas, and David de Pomis, in their lexicons; and these creatures, though forbid to the Jews, yet are not only used for medicine, but also for food by many: snails of several kinds, we are told, are eaten with much satisfaction in Italy and France: in Silesia they make places for the breeding of them at this day, where they are fed with turnip tops, &c. and carefully preserved for the market; and the Romans took care of them in the same manner {l}: Bochart {m} thinks a kind of lizard is meant, which lies in sand, called by the Arabs "chulaca", or "luchaca", because the word here used signifies, in the Talmudic {n} language, sandy ground:

and the mole; and so it is interpreted by Onkelos and Jarchi here, and by David de Pomis, and Philip Aquinas, in their lexicons: the same word is used for a certain sort of fowl, which we translate the "swan";
Le 11:18 but here of a creeping thing: whatever is intended by it, it seems to have its name from its breath; either in a contrary signification, if understood of the mole, which either holds its breath, or breathes not while under ground; or from its breathing more freely, wherefore Bochart {o} takes it to be the "chameleon"; which, as Pliny {p} says, is always gaping with its mouth for air; and it has been a vulgar notion, though a wrong one, that it lives upon it: the Targum of Jonathan interprets it by the "salamander"; now whoever ate any of the above eight creeping things, according to the Jewish canons, was to be beaten {q}.

{b} Ut supra, (Hierozoic. par. 1.) l. 4. c. 2. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 29. c. 4. {d} Calmet, in the word "Chameleon". {e} Ut supra, (Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 4.) c. 3. {f} Dictionary, in the word "Lizard", Vid. Hieron. adv. Jovinian. l. 2. {g} Natural History of Jamaica, vol. 1. Introduct. p. 25. {h} Ibid. vol. 2. p. 333. {i} Travels, p. 412. {k} Ibid. p. 178. {l} Sir Hans Sloane's Nat. Hist. ib. p. 23, 24. {m} Ut supra, ({e}) c. 5. {n} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 31. 1. Gloss. in fol. 54. 1. {o} Ut supra, (Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 4.) c. 6. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 33. {q} Maimon. Maacolot Asurot, c. 2. sect. 7.

Leviticus 11:31

Ver. 31. These are unclean to you of all that creep,.... Unfit for food, and not to be touched, at least when dead, as in the next clause, that is, these eight sorts of creeping things before mentioned, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, and these only, as Maimonides says {r}:

whosoever doth touch them when they are dead shall be unclean until the even; for touching them while alive did not defile, only when dead; and this the Jews interpret, while they are in the case in which they died, that is, while they are moist; for, as Ben Gersom says, if they are so dry, as that they cannot return to their moisture, they do not defile; for which reason, neither the bones, nor nails, nor nerves, nor skin of these creeping things, defile; but, they say {s}, while the back bone is whole, and the bones cleave to it, then a creeping thing is reckoned moist, and while it is so it defiles.

{r} Hilchot, Abot Hatumaot, c. 4. sect. 14. {s} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Niddah, c. 7. sect. 1.

Leviticus 11:32

Ver. 32. And upon whatsoever [any] of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it shall be unclean,.... Any of the above eight creeping things, that is, of their flesh, for as for their bones, nails, nerves, and skin, as before observed, being separated from them and dry, they do not defile:

whether [it be] any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack; every wooden vessel, as the Targum of Jonathan; and all sorts of clothes, of woollen, linen, or silk, and all sorts of skins, excepting skins of sea beasts; for these, according to the Jews {t}, received no pollution; and also sacks or sackcloth, made of goats' hair, and the like:

whatsoever vessel [it be], wherein any work is done; any tool or instrument made use of by any artificer in his trade, or any vessel wrought by him:

it must be put into water; dipped into it, even into forty seahs of water, according to the Targum of Jonathan; and which is to be understood, not of any working tool, or finished vessel only, but of any vessel of wood, raiment, skin, or sack, before mentioned:

it shall be unclean until the even; even though put into water and washed:

so it shall be cleansed; in the above manner, by being put or dipped into water; or "afterwards", as the Septuagint, when it has been dipped and the even is come, and not before.

{t} Bartenora in Misn. Celaim, c. 17. sect. 13.

Leviticus 11:33

Ver. 33. And every earthen vessel, whereinto [any] of them falleth,.... Any of the above eight reptiles, should they by chance fall into the midst an earthen vessel:

whatsoever [is] in it shall be unclean; if it only by falling touched the outside of it, it was not unclean; but if it fell into it, then whatever was contained in it was unclean; for, as Jarchi says, an earthen vessel does not pollute or receive pollution, but from the air of it {u}, from its inside:

and ye shall break it; other vessels might be put into water and rinsed, and so be cleansed, but earthen vessels, being of no great value, were to be broken in pieces: an emblem this, as Ainsworth suggests, of the dissolution of our bodies, which are as earthen vessels, and of the destruction of sin thereby, and of the entire removal of it by death.

{u} Vid. Misn. Celaim, c. 2. sect. 1. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Leviticus 11:34

Ver. 34. Of all meat which may be eaten,.... Which otherwise is lawful to eat and fit for food, whether herbs, or whether the flesh of clean creatures:

[that] on which [such] water cometh shall be unclean; that is, such water as is put into an unclean vessel, become so by the fall of any unclean reptile into it; wherefore such water poured out upon any sort of food, clean and fit to eat, or that is put into such water, to be dressed, it becomes unclean and unfit to eat; for the vessel, being unclean, defiles the water, and the water defiles the food: Jarchi interprets this of water in general, which coming upon anything eatable, prepares it for uncleanness;

"we learn (says he) that no food is fit and prepared to receive defilement until water comes upon it once; and after it is come upon it once, it receives defilement for ever, even though it becomes dry;"

but the former seems to be the true sense:

and all drink that may be drank in every such vessel shall be unclean; whatever otherwise might be lawfully drank, yet being put into such a vessel, into which any unclean reptile was fallen, or being in it when it fell into it, became unclean and not fit to be drank; and those liquors which receive uncleanness, and make meats unclean by coming on them, according to the Misnic doctors {w}, are these seven, dew, water, wine, oil, blood, milk, and honey.

{w} Misn. Machshirin, c. 6. sect. 4.

Leviticus 11:35

Ver. 35. And everything whereupon [any part] of their carcass falleth shall be unclean,.... Before the Scripture seems to speak of anyone of the reptiles perfect, that falling upon anything should pollute it; but here of any part of them, though ever so small, which should, through any accident, fall and light upon anything, even that would render it unclean and unfit for use:

[whether it be] oven, [or] ranges of pots; the one to bake bread in, and the other to boil flesh in, as Aben Ezra observes:

they shall be broken down; and no more made use of for baking and boiling:

[for] they are unclean, and shall be unclean to you; were made hereby unfit for use, and should not be used: the Jewish writers {x} explain the phrase, "to you", to your necessity, that which they had need of, but now should not use nor receive advantage from; even "to you"; all men, women, and children, as Hiskuni interprets it: all this was ordered to create in them an abhorrence of these creatures, and to make them cautious of eating and touching them, and careful that they come not nigh, or touched, or fell upon anything, since it would give them so much trouble, as well as occasion loss.

{x} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Edaiot, c. 7. sect. 8.

Leviticus 11:36

Ver. 36. Nevertheless, a fountain or pit, [wherein there is] plenty of water,.... Or, "a fountain or pit, a collection of waters", the copulative being wanting, as some observe, Aben Ezra takes notice of; or it may be by way of apposition, and so may explain what fountain or pit is meant, even such an one where there is a large continence of water, into which, if any carcass of a creeping thing fell, or any part of it, yet it

shall be clean: and fit for use, either because of the abundance of water in it, which could not be affected with the fall of such a creature into it as where there is but a small quantity; or rather this exception was made, because pools of water were of considerable value in these countries, and frequently in use for bathings, &c. and therefore for the good of men, and that they might not suffer so great a loss by such an accident, they are declared notwithstanding to be clean and free for use: hence you may learn, says Jarchi, that he that dips in them is pure from his uncleanness; that a man might lawfully make use of them for a bath on account of any uncleanness, notwithstanding the carcass of a creeping thing had fallen into it; as a mouse, or rat, or any such creature:

but that which toucheth their carcass shall be unclean; not the waters which touch the carcass, as Aben Ezra interprets it, for then the whole would be defiled, and unfit for use; but either the man that touched the carcass, laid hold upon it to pluck it out of the fountain or pit, or that which he made use of to get it out, or both these, were unclean in a ceremonial sense: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"but he that toucheth their carcasses in the midst of these waters shall be unclean."

Leviticus 11:37

Ver. 37. And if [any part] of their carcass fall upon any sowing seed that is to be sown,.... That which is selected from the other seed in order to be sown, and which is laid by and laid up for that purpose; should the carcass, or any part of the carcass of a creeping thing fall upon an heap of it, into a vessel in which it was put, as a dead mouse or the like:

[yet] it shall be clean; be fit for use and sown in the earth; because being cast into the earth, and dying and quickening there, and then springing up again in stalk and ear, it would go through various changes before it became the food of man: the Targum of Jonathan describes it, such as is sown in its dryness, or being dry; for if it was wetted it was unfit for use, as follows.

Leviticus 11:38

Ver. 38. But if [any] water be put upon the seed,.... Either accidentally or on purpose; whether on sowing seed, and with water with which they water the field, as Aben Ezra interprets it; or on seed used for food, by steeping it in water, as sometimes wheat is, and boiled; and whether it is water or the rest of the liquors, and whether they are put on the seed, or the seed falls into them, it matters not, as Jarchi says:

and [any part] of their carcass fall thereon; that is, on the seed, though Aben Ezra observes, some say upon the water: the Targum of Jonathan adds, in its moisture, or while it is wet; and so may be thought to be more susceptible of impurity from the touch of a dead reptile, or any part of it, and which would render it unfit for sowing or eating, until it was dried and cleansed; yea, Jarchi says, if it falls thereon, even after it is dried:

it [shall be] unclean unto you; unfit for use.

Leviticus 11:39

Ver. 39. And if any beast of which ye may eat die,.... Any clean beast, as the ox, sheep, goat, deer, &c. what, if rightly killed, is very lawful to eat of; but if it died of itself through any distemper, or was torn by the wild beasts, so the Targum of Jonathan:

he that toucheth the carcass thereof shall be unclean until the even; not the bones, nerves, horns, hoofs, or skin, as Jarchi observes; these might be handled, because some of them, at least, were wrought up into one instrument or another, by artificers, for use and service, but the flesh of them might not be touched; whoever did touch it was ceremonially unclean, and might not go into the sanctuary, or have conversation with men, until the evening of the day in which this was done.

Leviticus 11:40

Ver. 40. And he that eateth of the carcass of it,.... For though it might be eaten, if rightly killed, yet not if it died of itself, or was strangled, or torn to pieces by wild beasts:

shall wash his clothes; besides his body, which even he that touched it was obliged to:

and be unclean until the even; though he and his clothes were washed, and he might not go into the court of the tabernacle, or have any concern with holy things, or conversation with men:

he also that beareth the carcass of it; removes it from one place to another, carries it to the dunghill, or a ditch, and there lays it, or buries it in the earth:

shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even; from whence, as before observed by the Jewish writers, uncleanness by bearing is greater than uncleanness by touching, since the former obliged to washing of clothes, not so the latter; so Jarchi here; and yet still was unclean until the evening, though he had washed himself in water, as Aben Ezra notes; and so says Jarchi, though he dips himself, he has need of the evening of the sun.

Leviticus 11:41

Ver. 41. And every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth,.... Nothing is called a creeping thing, as Jarchi says, but what is low, has short feet, and is not seen unless it creeps and moves: and "every creeping thing" comprehends, as Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom observe, the eight creeping things before mentioned, Le 11:29 and mention is made of them here, that they might not be eaten, which is not expressed before; and being described as creeping things "on the earth", is, according to Jarchi, an exception of worms in pease, beans, and lentiles; and, as others observe, in figs and dates, and other fruit; for they do not creep upon the earth, but are within the food; but if they go out into the air, and creep, they are forbidden:

[shall be] an abomination; detested and abhorred as food:

it shall not be eaten; it shall not be lawful to eat such a creature. This, as Jarchi, is binding upon him that causes another to eat, as well as he that eats, the one is guilty as the other. And indeed such are not fit to eat, and cannot be wholesome and nourishing; for, as a learned physician observes {y}, insects consist of particles exceeding small, volatile, unfit for nourishment, most of them live on unclean food, and delight in dung, and in the putrid flesh of other animals, and by laying their little eggs or excrements, corrupt honey, syrups, &c. see Ec 10:1 and yet some sorts of them are eaten by some people. Sir Hans

Sloane, after having spoken of serpents, rats, and lizards, sold for food to his great surprise at Jamaica, adds {z}, but what of all things most unusual, and to my great admiration, was the great esteem set on a sort of "cossi" or timber worms, called cotton tree worms by the negroes and the Indians, the one the original inhabitants of Africa, and the other of America; these, he says {a}, are sought after by them, and boiled in their soups, pottages, olios, pepper pots, and are accounted of admirable taste, like to, but much beyond marrow; yea, he observes {b}, that not they only, but the most polite people in the world, the Romans, accounted them so great a dainty, as to feed them with meal, and endeavour breeding them up. He speaks {c} also of ants, so large as to be sold in the markets in New Granada, where they are carefully looked after, and bought up for food; and says, the negroes feed on the abdomen of these creatures: he observes {d}, that field crickets were found in baskets among other provisions of the Indians.

{y} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 302. {z} Nat. Hist. of Jamaica, vol. 1. Introduct. p. 25. {a} Ib. vol. 2. p. 193. {b} Introduct. ut supra. ({a}) Vid. Plin. l. 17. c. 24. & Aelian. de Animal. l. 14. c. 13. {c} Ib. vol. 2. p. 221, 223. {d} Ib. p. 204. Vid. Aristotel. Hist. Animal. l. 5. c. 30.

Leviticus 11:42

Ver. 42. Whatsoever goeth upon the belly,.... Jarchi's paraphrase is, "whatsoever goeth", as worms and beetles, and the like to them, "upon the belly", this is the serpent; and to go upon the belly is the curse denounced upon it, **Ge 3:14** this and every such creature are forbidden to be eaten; as there are others who either have no feet, or what they have so short, that they seem to go upon their belly; and yet, as horrible and detestable as the serpent is, it has been the food of some, and accounted very delicious, as by a people mentioned by the Arabic geographer {e}. Mela {f} speaks of a people, who, from their eating serpents, were called Ophiophagi, serpent eaters; and Pliny {g} says of the Troglodytes, that the flesh of serpents was their food. The Spaniards, when they first found out the West Indies, going ashore on the isle of Cuba, found certain spits of wood lying at the fire, having fish on them, about one hundred pound weight, and two serpents of eight feet long, differing nothing from the crocodiles in Egypt, but not so big; there is nothing, says my author {h}, among the delicate dishes (of the natives of that place), they esteem so much as these serpents, insomuch that it is no more lawful for the common people to eat of them, than of peacocks and pheasants among us; the Spaniards at first durst not venture to taste of them, because of their horrible deformity and loathsomeness; but the brother of Columbus being allured by a sister of one of the kings of the country to taste of them, found them very delicious, on which he and his men fell to, and ate freely of them, affirming them to be of more pleasant taste than either our pheasants or partridges; and that there is no meat to be compared with the eggs of these serpents {i}. Diodorus Siculus {k} speaks of serpents in the island of Taprobane of great size, harmless to men, and whose flesh is eaten, and of a sweet savour:

and whatsoever goeth upon [all] four; that is, whatsoever creeping thing; for otherwise there are beasts that go upon all four that are clean and fit to eat; but this is observed to distinguish this sort of creeping things from those that go upon their belly, and from those that have more feet, as in the next clause; Jarchi particularly instances in the scorpion:

or whatsoever hath mere feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth; such as caterpillars, and particularly the Scolopendra, which the eastern people call Nedal; so Jarchi says, this is Nedal, a reptile which hath feet from its head to its tail, called Centipeda; and the Targum of Jonathan is,

"from the serpent, to the Nedal or Scolopendra, which has many feet."

Some of then, have seventy two, thirty six on a side, and others eighty four; some fewer, but all have many:

them ye shall not eat, for they [are] an abomination; abominable for food, and to be had in the utmost aversion.

{e} Clim. 1. par. 6. {f} De Situ Orbis, l. 3. c. 8. {g} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 8. {h} Peter Martyr de Angleria, Decad. 1. l. 3. {i} Ib. l. 5. {k} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 141.

Leviticus 11:43

Ver. 43. Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth,.... With any creeping thing that flies in the air, excepting the four sorts of locusts, Le 11:22 and with any creeping thing in the waters, Le 11:10 or with anything that creeps on the land, by eating any of them; which being abominable for food, would make the eater of them so to God, he thereby breaking a command of his:

neither shall you make yourselves unclean with them; by touching and bearing them, as with dead beasts, so with dead flies and the like:

that ye should be defiled thereby; in a ceremonial sense.

Leviticus 11:44

Ver. 44. For I [am] the Lord your God,.... Their Lord, and therefore had a right to enjoin them what laws he pleased concerning their food; and their God, their covenant God, and therefore would consult their good, and direct them to what was most proper, convenient, and wholesome for them:

ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I [am] holy; that is, separate themselves from all other people, and be distinct from them, by using a different diet from theirs, as their Lord and God was different from all others, so called; and thus by observing his commands, and living according to his will, and to his glory, they would be holy in a moral sense, as they ought to be, who were under the peculiar care and notice of a holy God, and so highly favoured by him; and particularly by attending to the above laws concerning food, they would be kept from mixing with, and having conversation with the Gentiles, and so be preserved from falling into idolatry, and continue a holy people, serving and worshipping the Lord their God, and him only; and which seems to be a principal view as to religion, in delivering out the above commands:

neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; which is repeated to keep them at the utmost distance from these things, and to fill them with an aversion to them, that they might be careful to avoid them. There is no penalty annexed to these laws, but the breach of them making them unclean, thereby they were debarred the use of the sanctuary, and of holy things, and of the conversation of men, for that day; but, according to the Jewish writers, such transgressions were punishable with stripes. Jarchi observes out of the Talmud {l}, that he that eateth "putitha" (a small water reptile) was to be beaten four times, and if an ant or pismire five times, and if a wasp or hornet six times.

{l} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 28. 1. Pesachim, fol. 24. 1. Maccot, fol. 16. 2.

Leviticus 11:45

Ver. 45. For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt,.... He had brought them out of it, and was now bringing them on in the wilderness towards Canaan's land, in order to settle them there; and this is observed, to show what obligations they lay under to him to observe his commands; for since he had done such great things for them, it became them to be obedient to him in all things: and the more, since his end herein was, as he observes to them,

to be your God; to make it appear that he was their God, and they were his special people, whom he had chosen for himself above all people upon the earth; that he was their King and their God, to protect and defend them, to provide for them, and take care of them, and bestow all good things on them proper for them:

ye shall therefore be holy, for I [am] holy; separate from all others as he was, living holy lives and conversations, agreeably to his will made known to them, in imitation or him who had chosen and called them to be his people; for, since holiness is his nature, it becomes them who are his house and family, his subjects and people.

Leviticus 11:46

Ver. 46. This [is] the law of the beasts,.... Clean and unclean, what were to be eaten, and what not,

and of the fowl; Le 11:2 the unclean ones, which are particularly mentioned that they might be avoided, all others excepting them being allowed, Le 11:13:

and of every living creature that moveth in the waters; all sorts of fish in the sea, rivers, ponds, and pools, such as have fins and scales, these were to be eaten, but, if they had neither, were forbidden, Le 11:9:

and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth; eight of which are mentioned particularly, which, when dead, defiled by touching; and all others are forbidden to be eaten, Le 11:29 together with such creeping things that fly, excepting those that had legs above their feet to leap with, Le 11:20. This is a recapitulation of the several laws respecting them, though not in the exact order in which they are delivered in this chapter.

Leviticus 11:47

Ver. 47. To make a difference between the unclean and the clean,.... Whether of beasts, fish, fowl, and flying creeping things:

and between the beast that may be eaten, and the beast that may not be eaten; the former clause takes in all in general, this instances in a particular sort of creatures; and the first mentioned of which, that might be eaten, are, that part the hoof, are cloven footed, and chew the cud; and that might not, that chew the cud, but divide not the hoof, or divide the hoof, but chew not the cud; and now, by such like descriptions and distinctions of the creatures treated of, the Israelites would be able to make a difference between the one and the other, and know what was to be eaten, and what not.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 12

This chapter treats of the purification of a new mother, the time of whose purification for a man child was forty days, and for a maid child eighty, Le 12:1 at the close of which she was to bring her offerings to the priests, to make atonement for her, Le 12:6.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... The laws in the preceding chapter were delivered both to Moses and Aaron, but what follows in this only to Moses; but inasmuch as the priest had a concern in it, it being his business to offer the sacrifices required by the following law, it was no doubt given to Moses, to be delivered to Aaron, as well as to the people. R. Semlai remarks, that as the creation of man was after that of the beasts, fowls, fishes, &c. so the laws concerning the uncleanness of men are after those relating to beasts, &c, and they begin with the uncleanness of a new mother, because, as Aben Ezra observes, the birth is the beginning of man:

saying: as follows.

Leviticus 12:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel,.... For this law only concerned them, and not other nations of the world:

if a woman have conceived seed; by lying with a man, and so becomes pregnant, and goes on with her pregnancy until she brings forth a child. The Jews from hence gather, that this law respects abortions; that if a woman has conceived and miscarries, eighty one days after the birth of a female, and forty one after a male, she must bring her offering {m}; but the law seems only to regard such as are with child, and proceed to the due time of childbirth, whether then the child is born alive or dead:

and born a man child; which is, generally speaking, not only matter of joy to the mother, but to the whole family, see Joh 16:21: then she shall be unclean seven days; be separate from all company, except those whose presence is necessary to take care of her in her circumstances, and do what is proper for her, and even these became ceremonially unclean thereby; yea, her husband was not permitted to sit near her, nor to eat and drink with her:

according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean; the same number of days, even seven, she was unclean on account of childbirth, as she was for her monthly courses, called here an infirmity or sickness, incident to all females when grown up, at which time they were separate from all persons; and the case was the same with a new mother; see Le 15:14.

{m} Misn. Ceritot, c. 1. sect. 6. Maimon. & Bartenora, in ib.

Leviticus 12:3

Ver. 3. And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. Or the foreskin of his flesh, that is, of the man child born according to the law, Ge 17:12 and this seems to furnish out a reason why a male child was not circumcised before the eighth day, and why it was then, because before that its mother was in her separation and uncleanness, and then was freed from it; and so the Targum of Jonathan. The circumcision of a male child on the eighth day was religiously observed, and even was not omitted on account of the sabbath, when the eighth day happened to be on that,
See Gill on "Joh 7:22" see Gill on "Joh 7:23". It is an observation of Aben Ezra on this place, that the wise men say "in the day", and not in the night, lo, he that is born half an hour before the setting of the sun is circumcised after six

days and a half, for the day of the law is not from time to time.

Leviticus 12:4

Ver. 4. And she shall continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days,.... That is, so many more, in all forty; for though at the end of seven days she was in some respects free from her uncleanness, yet not altogether, but remained in the blood of her purifying, or in the purifying of her blood, which was more and more purified, and completely at the end of forty days: so with the Persians it is said, a new mother must avoid everything for forty days; when that time is passed, she may wash and be purified {n}; and which perhaps Zoroastres, the founder of the Persian religion, at least the reformer of it, being a Jew, as is by some supposed, he might take it from hence:

she shall touch no hallowed thing; as the tithe, the heave offering, the flesh of the peace offerings, as Aben Ezra explains it, if she was a priest's wife:

nor come into the sanctuary; the court of the tabernacle of the congregation, or the court of the temple, as the same writer observes; and so with the Greeks, a pregnant woman might not come into a temple before the fortieth day {o}, that is, of her delivery:

until the days of her purifying be fulfilled; until the setting of the sun of the fortieth day; on the morrow of that she was to bring the atonement of her purification, as Jarchi observes;
See Gill on "Le 12:6".

{n} Lib. Shad-der, port. 86. apud Hyde Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers. p. 478. {o} Censorinus apud Grotium in loc.

Leviticus 12:5

Ver. 5. But if she bear a maid child,.... A daughter, whether born alive or dead, if she goes with it her full time:

then she shall be unclean two weeks; or fourteen days running; and on the fifteenth day be free or loosed, as the Targum of Jonathan, just as long again as for a man child:

as in her separation; on account of her monthly courses; the sense is, that she should be fourteen days, to all intents and purposes, as unclean as when these are upon her:

and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying sixty and six days; which being added to the fourteen make eighty days, just as many more as in the case of a male child; the reason of which, as given by some Jewish writers, is, because of the greater flow of humours, and the corruption of the blood through the birth of a female than of a male: but perhaps the truer reason may be, what a learned man {p} suggests, that a male infant circumcised on the eighth day, by the profusion of its own blood, bears part of the purgation; wherefore the mother, for the birth of a female, must suffer twice the time of separation; the separation is finished within two weeks, but the purgation continues sixty six days; a male child satisfies the law together, and at once, by circumcision; but an adult female bears both the purgation and separation every month. According to Hippocrates {q}, the purgation of a new mother, after the birth of a female, is forty two days, and after the birth of a male thirty days; so that it should seem there is something in nature which requires a longer time for purifying after the one than after the other, and which may in part be regarded by this law; but it chiefly depends upon the sovereign will of the lawgiver. The Jews do not now strictly observe this. Buxtorf {r} says, the custom prevails now with them, that whether a woman bears a male or a female, at the end of forty days she leaves her bed, and returns to her husband; but Leo of Modena relates {s}, that if she bears a male child, her husband may not touch her for the space of seven weeks; and if a female, the space of three months; though he allows, in some places, they continue separated a less while, according as the custom of the place is.

{p} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 314, 315. {q} Apud Grotium in loc. {r} Synagog. Jud. c. 5. p. 120. {s} History of Rites, Customs, &c. of the Jews, par. 4. c. 5. sect. 3.

Leviticus 12:6

Ver. 6. And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter,.... For a son forty days, and for a daughter eighty; but the ancient Jews formerly, that they might not break it, ordered, that the offering enjoined as follows should not be brought until the next day after the time was up: their canon runs thus {t}, "a new mother does not bring her offering on the fortieth day for a male, nor on the eightieth day for a female, but after her sun is set; and she brings her offering on the morrow, which is the forty first for a male, and the eighty first for a female; and this is the day of which it is said, "when the days", &c. Le 12:6."

She shall bring a lamb of the first year; the Septuagint adds, without blemish, as all sacrifices should be, if not expressed; "or the son of his year" {u}; some distinguish between "the son of a year", as the phrase sometimes is, and "the son of his year", as here; the latter denoting a lamb in its first year, though something wanting of it, the former a full year old, neither more nor less:

for a burnt offering; in gratitude, and by way of thanksgiving for the mercies she had received in childbearing:

and a young pigeon, [or] a turtledove, for a sin [offering]; either the one or the other. With the Persians {w}, it is incumbent on a new mother, in Abam (the twelfth month), to bring twelve oblations for the sin which proceedeth from childbirth, that so she might be purified from her sins. It is an observation of the Misnic doctors {x}, that turtles precede pigeons in all places; upon which they ask this question, is it because they are choicer or more excellent than they? observe what is said, Le 12:6 from whence may be learned, that they are both alike, or of equal value. But why a sin offering for childbearing? is it sinful to bear and bring forth children in lawful marriage, where the bed is undefiled? The Jews commonly refer this to some sin or another, that the childbearing woman has been guilty of in relation to childbirth, or while in her labour; and it is not unlikely that she may sometimes be guilty of sin in some way or other, either through an immoderate desire after children, or through impatience and breaking out into rash expressions in the midst of her pains; so Aben Ezra suggests, perhaps some thought rose up in her mind in the hour of childbirth because of pain, or perhaps spoke with her mouth; meaning what was unbecoming, rash, and sinful. Some take the sin to be a rash and false oath: but there seems to be something more than all this, because though one or other of these might be the case of some women, yet not all; whereas this law is general, and reached every new mother, and has respect not so much to any particular sin of her's, as of her first parent Eve, who was first in the transgression; and on account of which transgression pains are endured by every childbearing woman; and who also conceives in sin, and is the instrument of propagating the corruption of nature to her offspring; and therefore was to bring a sin offering typical of the sin offering Christ is made to take away that, and all other sin; whereby she shall be saved, even in childbearing, and that by the birth of a child, the child Jesus, if she continues in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety, **1Ti 2:15** these offerings were to be brought

unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest; to offer them up for her. When the temple was built, these were brought to the eastern gate, the gate Nicanor, where the lepers were cleansed, and new mothers purified {y}.

{t} Maimon. Mechosre Capparah, c. 1. sect. 5. {u} wtnv Nb "filium sui anni", Montanus, Piscator, Drusius. {w} Lib. Shad-der, port. 73. apud Hyde, ut supra, (Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers.) p. 473. {x} Misn. Ceritot. c. 6. sect. 9. {y} Misn. Sotah, c. 1. sect. 5.

Leviticus 12:7

Ver. 7. Who shall offer it before the Lord,.... Upon the altar of burnt offering:

and make an atonement for her; for whatsoever sin in connection with or that attended childbearing; as typical of the atonement by Christ both for sin original and actual:

and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood; in a ceremonial sense, and according to that law be pure and clean:

this [is] the law for her that hath born a male or a female; enjoined her, and to be observed by her; and though now with the rest of the ceremonial law it is abolished, yet it has this instruction in it; that it becomes women in such circumstances to bring the freewill offerings of their lips, their sacrifices of praise, and in a public manner signify their gratitude and thankfulness for the mercy and goodness of God vouchsafed to them, in carrying them through the whole time of childbearing, and saving them in the perilous hour.

Leviticus 12:8

Ver. 8. And if she be not able to bring a lamb,.... As everyone was not in circumstances sufficient to be at the expense of buying a lamb for this purpose, having none of their own:

then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; which was a kind and merciful provision for the poorer sort; since it was necessary that by them the favour received should be acknowledged, as well as the sin attending them in such circumstances should be atoned for. This being the offering brought by the mother of our Lord, shows the state of poverty in which she was; and by this, and the circumcision of her child, and the presentation of it before the Lord at the time of her purification, it appears that they were both under the law, and obedient to it:

the one for a burnt offering, and the other for a sin [offering]; Jarchi observes, that in oblations the sin offering goes before the burnt offering, for sin being atoned for, the gift was accepted; but here the burnt offering went first, the reason is not very apparent:

and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean; equally the same as if she had brought a lamb, instead of young pigeons, or turtledoves.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 13

In this chapter an account is given of the various sorts of leprosy, and the rules by which they were to be judged of, Le 13:1 of the bright spot and scab, Le 13:4 of the rising or swelling,
Le 13:9 of the bile or hot ulcer, Le 13:18 of the hot burning or inflammation,
Le 13:24 of the plague of the scall,
Le 13:29 of bright spots or blisters, Le 13:38 and of shedding the hair, and baldness, Le 13:40 of what the leper was to do, and to be done unto, Le 13:45 of the leprosy in garments made of linen, woollen, or of skin, Le 13:47.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron,.... Aaron is addressed again, though left out in the preceding law, because the laws concerning leprosy chiefly concerned the priests, whose business it was to judge of it, and cleanse from it; and so Ben Gersom observes, mention is made of Aaron here, because to him and his sons belonged the affair of leprosies, to pronounce unclean or clean, to shut up or set free, and, as Aben Ezra says, according to his determination were all the plagues or strokes of a man, who should be declared clean or unclean:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 13:2

Ver. 2. When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh,.... Rules are here given, by which a leprosy might be judged of; which, as a disease, was frequent in Egypt, where the Israelites had dwelt a long time, and from whence they were just come; and is doubtless the reason, as learned men have observed, that several Heathen writers make the cause of their expulsion from Egypt, as they choose to call it, though wrongly, their being infected with this distemper; whereas it was the reverse, not they, but the Egyptians, were incident to it {z}. Moreover, the leprosy here spoken of seems not to be the same with that disease, or what we now call so, though some have thought otherwise; it being rather an uncleanness than a disease, and the business of a priest, and not a physician to attend unto; and did not arise from natural causes, but was from the immediate hand of God, and was inflicted on men for their sins, as the cases of Miriam, Gehazi, and Uzziah show; and who by complying with the rites and ceremonies hereafter enjoined, their sins were pardoned, and they were cleansed; so that as their case was extraordinary and supernatural, their cure and cleansing were as remarkable: besides, this impurity being in garments and houses, shows it to be something out of the ordinary way. And this law concerning it did not extend to all men, only to the Israelites, and such as were in connection with them, such as proselytes. It is said {a}, all are defiled with the plague (of leprosy) except an idolater and a proselyte of the gate; and the commentators say {b}, even servants, and little ones though but a day old; that is, they are polluted with it, and so come under this law. Now the place where this disorder appears is "in the skin of the flesh"; that is, where there is a skin, and that is seen; for there are some places, the Jewish writers {c} say, are not reckoned the skin of the flesh, or where that is not seen, and such places are excepted, and they are these; the inside of the eye, of the ear, and of the nose: wrinkles in the neck, under the pap, and under the arm hole; the sole of the foot, the nail, the head and beard: and this phrase, "in the skin of his flesh", is always particularly mentioned; and when there appeared in it

a rising, scab, or bright spot; the scab that is placed between the rising or swelling, and the bright spot, belongs to them both, and is a kind of an accessory, or second to each of them: hence the Jews distinguish the scab of the swelling, and the scab of the bright spot; so that these make four in all, as they observe {d}. And to this agrees what Ben Gersom on this text remarks;

the bright spot is, whose whiteness is as the snow; the rising or swelling is what is white, as the pure wool of a lamb of a day old; the scab is what is inferior in whiteness to the rising, and is as in the degree of the whiteness of the shell or film of an egg; and this is the order of these appearances, the most white is the bright spot, after that the rising, and after that the scab of the bright spot, and after that the scab of the rising or swelling; and, lo, what is in whiteness below the whiteness of this (the last) is not the plague of leprosy:

and it be in the skin of his flesh [like] the plague of leprosy; either of the above appearances in the skin, having somewhat in them similar to the leprosy, or which may justly raise a suspicion of it, though it is not clear and manifest;

then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests; for, as Jarchi notes, there was no pollution nor purification of the leprosy, but by the mouth or determination of a priest. And a good man that was desirous, and made conscience of observing the laws of God, when he observed anything of the above in him, and had any suspicion of his case, would of himself go, and show himself to the priest; but if a man did not do this, and any of his neighbours observed the appearances on him, brought him to the priest whether he would or not, according to the text,

he shall be brought: that is, as Aben Ezra explains it, whether with or without his will; for he that sees in him one of the signs, shall oblige him to come to the priest; and who observes, that by Aaron the priest is meant, the priest anointed in his room; and by his sons the priests, the common priests, who are found without the sanctuary; such as the priests of Anathoth, but who were not of those that were rejected.

{z} Est elephas morbus-----gignitur Aegypto. Lucret. l. 6. ver. 1112. {a} Misn. Negaim, c. 3. sect. 1. {b} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {c} Misn. Negaim. c. 6. sect. 8. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {d} Misn. ib. c. 1. sect. 1.

Leviticus 13:3

Ver. 3. And the priest shall look on the plague in the skin of the flesh,.... Whether it be a swelling, scab, or a bright spot that appears, and judge of it by the following rules, and none but a priest might do this:

and [when] the hair in the plague is turned white; it arising in a place where hair grows, and which hair is not naturally white, but of another colour, but changed through the force of the plague; and there were to be two hairs at least, which were at first black, but turned white; so Jarchi and Ben Gersom: and these hairs, according to the Misnah {e}, must be white at bottom; if the root (or bottom) is black, and the head (or top) white, he is clean; if the root white, and the head black, he is defiled; for hairs turning white is a sign of a disorder, of weakness, of a decay of nature, as may be observed in ancient persons:

and the plague in sight [be] deeper than the skin of his flesh; appears plainly to view to be more than skin deep, to have corroded and eat into the flesh below the skin:

it [is] a plague of leprosy; when these two signs were observed, hair turned white, and the plague was more than skin deep, then it was a plain case that it was the leprosy of which See Gill on "Mt 8:2" see Gill on "Mt 8:3" see Gill on "Lu 5:12". This was an emblem of sin, and the corruption of nature, which is an uncleanness, and with which every man is defiled, and which renders him infectious, nauseous, and abominable; and of which he is only to be cured and cleansed by Christ, the great High Priest, through his blood, which cleanses from all sin. The above signs and marks of leprosy may be observed in this; the white hair denoting a decay of strength, see **Ho 7:9** may be seen in sinners, as in the leper, who are without moral and spiritual strength to keep the law of God, to do anything that is spiritually good, to regenerate, renew, convert, and sanctify themselves, or to bring themselves out of the state of pollution, bondage, and misery, in which they are; and, like the leprosy, sin lies deep in man; it is in his flesh, in which dwells no good thing, and in which there is no soundness; it does not lie merely in outward actions, but it is in the heart, which is desperately wicked; for the inward part of man is very wicked:

and the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean; and so should be obliged to rend his clothes, make bare his head, put a covering on his upper lip, and cry, unclean, unclean; dwell alone without the camp, and at a proper time bring the offering for his cleansing, and submit to the several rites and ceremonies prescribed,
Le 13:45.

{e} Negaim, c. 4. sect. 4.

Leviticus 13:4

Ver. 4. If the bright spot be white in the skin of his flesh,.... The Targum of Jonathan is, white as chalk in the skin of his flesh; but other Jewish writers make the whiteness of the bright spot to be the greatest of all, like that of snow; See Gill on "Le 13:2":

and in sight [be] not deeper than the skin, and the hair thereof be not turned white; though it be a bright spot, and be very white, yet these two marks not appearing, it cannot be judged a leprosy, at most it is only suspicious: wherefore

then the priest, shall shut up [him that hath] the plague seven days; in whom the bright spot is, and of whom there is a suspicion of the plague of leprosy, but it is not certain; and therefore, in order to take time, and get further knowledge, the person was to be shut up from all company and conversation for the space of seven days; by which time it might be supposed, as Ben Gersom observes, that the case and state of the leprosy (if it was one) would be altered; and Aben Ezra remarks, that most diseases change or alter on the seventh day.

Leviticus 13:5

Ver. 5. And the priest shall look on him the seventh day,.... In the day, and not in the night, as Maimonides, but not on the seventh day, if it happened to be on the sabbath {f}, then it was put off till after it; and, according to the Jewish canons {g}, they do not look upon plagues in the morning, nor in the evening, nor in the middle of a house, nor on a cloudy day, nor at noon, but at the fourth, fifth, eighth, and ninth hours:

and, behold, [if] the plague in his sight be at a stay; it appears to the priest, according to the strictest view he can take of it, that it is in the same state and condition it was, neither better nor worse:

[and] the plague spread not in the skin: is not greater or larger than it was, though not less:

then the priest shall shut him up seven days more; such abundant care was taken, lest after all it should prove a leprosy.

{f} Misn. Negaim, c. 1. sect. 4. {g} Misn. ib. c. 2. sect. 2.

Leviticus 13:6

Ver. 6. And the priest shall look on him again the seventh day,.... On the second seventh day, at the end of a fortnight from his being first presented to him, and shut up:

and, behold, [if] the plague [be] somewhat dark; the spot be not so bright, or so white as it was at first; though Aben Ezra observes, that indeed many wise men say, that hhk is as Kvx, signifying dark, and the testimony or proof they bring is Ge 27:1 but according to my opinion, adds he, the word is the reverse of hvp, to spread; and the sense is, if the plague does not spread itself in another place; and so some translators render it "contracted", or "contracts itself" {h}: and this seems best to agree with what follows:

and the plague spread not in the skin; but is as it was when first viewed, after waiting fourteen days, and making observations on it:

the priest shall pronounce him clean; that is, from leprosy, otherwise there was an impure disorder on him, a scabious one:

it [is] but a scab; which is the name, Jarchi says, of a clean plague or stroke, that is, in comparison of the leprosy, otherwise such cannot be said with any propriety to be clean. Ben Gersom better explains it, it is a white scab, but not of the kind of leprosy, although it is found as the whiteness of the bright spot; but there are not seen in it the signs of leprosy, the hair is not turned white, nor has the plague increased:

and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean; for seeing he was obliged to be shut up, as Jarchi observes, he is called unclean, and stood in need of dipping, that is, his body and his clothes into water; so the people of God, though they are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and are pronounced clean through it, yet since they have their spots and scabs, they have need to have their conversation garments continually washed in the blood of the Lamb.

{h} hhk "contracta est", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "contraxerit sese", some in Vatablus.

Leviticus 13:7

Ver. 7. But if the scab spread much abroad in the skin,.... Or "in spreading spread" {k}; spreads, and proceeds to spread more and more:

after that he hath been seen of the priest for his cleansing: even after he had been viewed upon the first presentation of him to him, and after he had been twice seen by him by the end of two weeks, in which he was shut up, and after he had been pronounced clean, and had washed his clothes for his purification:

he shall be seen of the priest again; either he shall go to him of himself, or be brought to him, to be reviewed and pass under afresh examination.

{k} hvpt hvp "diffundendo diffuderit se", Montanus, Drusius, Piscator.

Leviticus 13:8

Ver. 8. And [if] the priest see that, behold, the scab spreadeth in the skin,.... Is not at a stay, as when he looked at it a second and third time:

then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; a leprous person; to be absolutely so, as Jarchi expresses it; and so obliged to the birds (to bring birds for his cleansing), and to shaving, and to the offering spoken of in this section, as the same writer observes:

it [is] a leprosy: it is a clear and plain case that it was one, and no doubt is to be made of it, it is a spreading leprosy: as sin is; it spreads itself over all the powers and faculties of the soul, and over all the members of the body; and it spreads more and more in every stage of life, unless and until grace puts a stop to it.

Leviticus 13:9

Ver. 9. When the plague of leprosy is in a man,.... He has all the signs of it, and it is pretty manifest both to himself and others that it is upon him;

then he shall be brought unto the priest; by his friends and neighbours, if he is not willing to come of himself: a sinner insensible of the leprosy of sin, and of his unclean and miserable state through it, has no will to come to Christ the great High Priest for cleansing; but one that is sensible of it, and of Christ's ability to help and cleanse him, will come freely and gladly, and importunately seek to him for it; though indeed such an one is brought by powerful and efficacious grace to him, yet not against, but with his full will; see **Joh 5:40**; compare with this **Mt 8:1**.

Leviticus 13:10

Ver. 10. And the priest shall see [him],.... Look at him, and closely and narrowly inspect and examine his case:

and, behold, [if] the rising [be] white in the skin; this is another appearance of the leprosy; the preceding were a bright spot, and the scab of it; but this a rising or white swelling in the skin, as white as pure wool, as the Targum of Jonathan:

and it have turned the hair white; to the whiteness of an egg shell, or the film of it, as the same Targum; that is, hath turned the hair of another colour, into white which was before black;

and [there be] quick raw flesh in the rising, or swelling; or "the quickening" or "quickness of live flesh" {l} either such as we call proud flesh, which looks raw and red; or sound flesh, live flesh being opposed to that which is mortified and putrid; and so Jarchi renders it by "saniment", a French word for "soundness": and the Septuagint version, in this and all other places where the word is used, renders it "sound": this clause may be considered disjunctively, as by Gersom, "or there be quick raw flesh"; for either the hair turning white, or quick raw flesh, one or the other, and one without the other was a sign of leprosy, so Jarchi observes; even this is a sign of uncleanness, the white hair without the quick flesh, and the quick flesh without the white hair: this may seem strange that quick and sound flesh should be a sign of the leprosy and its uncleanness; though it should be observed, it is such as is in the rising or swelling: and in things spiritual, it is a bad sign when men are proud of themselves and have confidence in the flesh; when in their own opinion they are whole and sound, and need no physician; when they trust in themselves that they are righteous, and boast of and have their dependence on their own works; he appears to be in the best state and frame that cried out as David did, that there is "no soundness in his flesh", Ps 38:3.

{l} yx rvb tyhm "vivacitas carnis vivae", Montanus, Vatablus

[Leviticus 13:11]

Ver. 11. It [is] an old leprosy in the skin of his flesh,.... An inveterate one, of long standing and continuance, an obstinate one, not to be cured by medicine; as this sort of leprosy was, and therefore the person was sent not to a physician, but to the priest: the leprosy of sin is an old disease, brought by man into the world with him, and continues with him from his youth upwards, and nothing but the grace of God and blood of Christ can remove it:

and the priest shall pronounce him unclean, and shall not shut him up; there being no doubt at all of it being a leprosy, and of his uncleanness, and therefore no need to shut him up for further examination, but to turn him out of the camp till his purification was over:

for he [is] unclean; in a ceremonial sense, and was obliged to the law for cleansing, such as after given.

[Leviticus 13:12]

Ver. 12. And if a leprosy break out abroad in the skin,.... Or, if flowering it flowers {m}; the man that has it on him looks like a plant or tree covered with white flowers, being spread all over him in white swellings, bright spots or scabs, as it follows:

and the leprosy cover all the skin of [him that hath] the plague, from his head even to his foot; such an one as the leper was that came to Christ for healing, said to be full of leprosy, **Lu 5:12**; and such in a mystical sense is every sinner, whether sensible of it or not, even from the Crown of the head to the sole of the foot, full of the wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores of sin, **Isa 1:6**;

wheresoever the priest looketh; that is, he cannot look any where upon any part of him but he sees the signs of the leprosy on him; and from whence the Jewish writers gather, that a priest that inspects leprous persons ought to have a clear sight, and to have both his eyes, and that the inspection should not be made in a dark house.

{m} xrpt xwrp anyousa exanyhsh, Sept. "florendo floruerit", Montanus; so Drusius & Tigurine version.

Leviticus 13:13

Ver. 13. Then the priest shall consider,.... Look wistly upon it, and well weigh the matter in his own mind, that he may make a true judgment and pronounce a right sentence:

and, behold, [if] the leprosy have covered all his flesh; from head to foot, so that no quick, raw, or sound flesh appear in him:

he shall pronounce [him] clean [that hath] the plague; not clean from a leprosy he is covered with; but that he is free from pollution by it, and under no obligation to bring his offering, or to perform, or have performed on him any of the rites and ceremonies used in cleansing of the leper:

it is all turned white; his skin and flesh with white bright spots, scabs and swellings, and no raw and red flesh appears:

he [is] clean; in a ceremonial sense: this may seem strange, that one that had a bright spot, or a white swelling, or a scab that spreads, a single one of these, or here and there one, should be unclean, and yet, if covered over with them, should be clean; the reason in nature is, because this shows a good healthful inward constitution, which throws out all its ill humours externally, whereby health is preserved; as we see in persons that have the measles or smallpox, or such like distempers, if they stick in the skin, and only here and there one rises up in a tumour, and to an head, it is a bad sign; but if they come out kindly and well, though they cover the whole body, things are very promising: the mystical or spiritual meaning of this is, that when a man sees himself to be a sinful creature, all over covered with sin, and no part free, and disclaims all righteousness of his own to justify him before God, but wholly trusts to, and depends upon the grace of God for salvation, and the righteousness of Christ for his acceptance with God; he becomes clean through the grace of God and the blood and righteousness of Christ.

Leviticus 13:14

Ver. 14. But when raw flesh appeareth in him,.... Between the white spots, scabs, or swellings, or in the midst of them:

he shall be unclean; be pronounced unclean, and be subject to all the prescriptions of the law concerning lepers.

Leviticus 13:15

Ver. 15. And the priest shall see the raw flesh,.... Or when he sees it, the person being brought to him to be viewed:

and pronounce him to be unclean; or shall pronounce him to be unclean:

[for] the raw flesh [is] unclean; made a man so in a ceremonial sense; See Gill on "Le 13:10";

it [is] a leprosy; wherever any quick raw flesh appears in a swelling.

Leviticus 13:16

Ver. 16. Or if the raw flesh turn again,.... Changes its colour, from redness, which is in raw flesh:

and be changed unto white: and does not look ruddy as flesh in common does, nor red and fiery, as raw and proud flesh, but is white, of the same colour with the swelling or scab:

he shall come unto the priest; again, and show himself, even though he was before by him pronounced clean.

Leviticus 13:17

Ver. 17. And the priest shall see him,.... Review him, and examine him thoroughly:

and, behold, [if] the plague be turned into white; the raw flesh in the swelling, which looked red, is become white:

then the priest shall pronounce [him] clean [that hath] the plague; that was supposed to have the plague of leprosy; but upon a review, and on this change of things, has not, he shall declare him free from it,

he [is] clean; and under no obligation to the laws and rites concerning it.

Leviticus 13:18

Ver. 18. The flesh also, in which, [even] in the skin thereof, was a boil,.... Or hot ulcer, by which, says Maimonides {n} you may understand any stroke by a stone, stick, or iron, or any other thing: and in the Misnah {o}, it is asked, what is an ulcer (or boil)? a stroke by wood, stone, pitch, or hot water; all that is from the force of fire is an ulcer:

and is healed; by the use of medicine, and the part, in all appearance, as well and as sound as ever.

{n} In Misn. Negaim, c. 6. sect. 8. {o} Ib. c. 9. sect. 1.

Leviticus 13:19

Ver. 19. And in the place of the boil there be a white rising,.... In the place where the boil was, a white swelling appears:

or a bright spot, white, and somewhat reddish; white and red mixed, as the Targum of Jonathan; and so Aben Ezra interprets the word "reddish", of the bright spot being mixed of two colours, or part of it so; and such a mixed colour of white and red, Gersom observes, is usual in a swelling, and adds, we are taught how to judge of these appearances, according to a tradition from Moses, which is this: take a cup full of milk, and put in it two drops of blood, and the colour of it will be as the colour of the bright spot, white and reddish; and if you put into it four drops, its colour will be as the colour of the rising (or swelling) reddish; and if you put into it eight drops, its colour will be as the colour of the scab of the bright spot, more reddish; and if you put into it sixteen drops, its colour will be as the colour of the scab of the swelling, very red: hence it appears, says he, that the bright spot is whitest with its redness, and after that the swelling, and next the scab of the bright spot, and then the scab of the swelling; but Bochart {p} is of opinion that the word is wrongly rendered "reddish", which, he thinks, contradicts the account of the bright spot being white, and especially as the word for "reddish" has its radicals doubled, which always increase the signification; and therefore if the word bears the sense of redness, it should be rendered "exceeding red", which would be quite contrary to the spot being white at all; wherefore from the use of the word in the Arabic language, which signifies white, bright, and glittering; See Gill on

"La 4:7"; he chooses to read the words, "or a bright spot, white and exceeding glittering": but this word we render reddish and white, being read disjunctively, Le 13:24; seems to contradict this observation of his:

and it be shewed to the priest; to look upon and pass his judgment on it.

{p} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 6. col. 689.

Leviticus 13:20

Ver. 20. And if, when the priest seeth it,.... And has thoroughly viewed it and considered it:

behold, it [be] in sight lower than the skin; having eaten into and taken root in the flesh under the skin:

and the hair thereof be turned white; which are the signs of leprosy before given, Le 13:3;

the priest shall pronounce him unclean; not fit for company and conversation, but obliged to conform to the laws concerning leprosy:

it is a plague of leprosy broken out of the boil; which was there before: this is an emblem of apostates and apostasy, who having been seemingly healed and cleansed, return to their former course of life, and to all the impurity of it, like the dog to its vomit, and the swine to its wallowing in the mire, Pr 26:11; and so their last state is worse than the first, Mt 12:45, as in this case; at first it was a boil, and then thought to be cured, and afterwards arises out of it a plague of leprosy.

Leviticus 13:21

Ver. 21. But if the priest look on it,.... Upon a person in a like case as first described, having had a boil, and that healed, and afterwards a white swelling, or a bright spot in the place of it:

and, behold, [there be] no white hairs therein; not two hairs turned white, as Gersom interprets it:

and [if] it [be] not lower than the skin; the bright spot not lower than the skin; not having got into the flesh, only skin deep: the Targum of Jonathan is, not lower in whiteness than the skin; for the bright spot is described as white, and so the rising or swelling,
Le 13:19;

but [be] somewhat dark; or rather "contracted"; to which spreading is opposed in the next verse; See Gill on "Le 13:6";

then the priest shall shut him up seven days; to wait and see whether it will spread or not: a boil and burning, the Jews say, make a man unclean in one week, and by two signs, the white hair, and the spreading; by the white hair, both at the beginning and at the end of the week after dismission, and by spreading at the end of the week after it {q}.

{q} Misn. Negaim, c. 3. sect. 4.

Leviticus 13:22

Ver. 22. And if it spread much abroad in the skin,.... Upon viewing it on the seventh day, though it is not expressed, the swelling or bright spot; or "in spreading spread"; See Gill on "Le 13:7"; which Ben Gersom interprets, not of the skin of the flesh, but of the ulcer:

then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; even though there are no white hairs in it, nor is it lower than the skin, yet is not at a stand or contracted, but spreading:

it [is] a plague; or stroke; it is one sort of a leprosy, and such an one as makes a man unclean in a ceremonial sense.

Leviticus 13:23

Ver. 23. But if the bright spot stay in his place, [and] spread not,.... Continues as it was when first viewed:

it [is] a burning boil; but not a plague of leprosy:

and the priest shall pronounce him clean; as clear of a leprosy, and so not bound by the law of it, though attended with an inflammation or burning ulcer.

Leviticus 13:24

Ver. 24. Or if there be [any] flesh, in the skin whereof [there is] a hot burning,.... Or "a burning of fire" {r}: it is asked, what is a burning? that which is burnt with a coal or with hot ashes; all that is from the force of fire is burning {s}; that is, whatever sore, pustule, or blister, is occasioned by fire touching the part, or by anything heated by fire:

and the quick [flesh] that burneth have a white bright spot, somewhat reddish, or white; the Targum of Jonathan is, a white spot mixed with red, or only white; and so Aben Ezra interprets the last clause: this seems to set aside Bochart's interpretation of the word "adamdemeth", which we render "somewhat reddish", and be, very white, bright, and glittering since white is here opposed unto it; though it may be, the sense is, that the flesh burnt has a bright white spot in it, exceeding glittering; or however, at least, a white one: by the "quick flesh" that burneth, Gersom says, is meant the weak, the tender flesh which is renewed there, after it is healed from the purulent matter in it.

{r} va twkm "adustio ignis", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Termellius, Piscator. {s} Misn. Negaim, c. 9. sect. 1. & Maimon. in ib. c. 6. sect. 8.

Leviticus 13:25

Ver. 25. Then the priest shall look upon it,.... And examine it, whether it has the marks and signs of a leprosy or not, such as follow:

behold, [if] the hair in the bright spot be turned white; which before was black, or of another colour from white, and is now, turned into the whiteness of chalk, as the Targum of Jonathan:

and it [be in] sight deeper than the skin; the same Targum is,

"and its sight or colour is deeper in being white like snow, more than the skin;"

but this respects not the colour of it, as appearing to the sight, but the depth of the spot, going below the skin into the flesh, which, with the change of hair, are the two signs of leprosy, Le 13:3;

it [is] a leprosy broken out of the burning; which sprung from thence, and what that had issued in:

wherefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean; a leper, and to be treated as such:

it [is] the plague of leprosy; being a plain case, according to the rules by which it was to be judged of.

Leviticus 13:26

Ver. 26. But if the priest look on it,.... On the hot burning and bright spot in it, in another person:

and, behold, [there be] no white hair on the white spot, and it be no lower than the [other] skin; why the word "other" should be supplied I know not, any more than in Le 13:21;

but be somewhat dark; or "contracted", See Gill on "Le 13:21";

then the priest shall shut him up seven days; as in the case of the burning boil or hot ulcer, as in Le 13:21.

Leviticus 13:27

Ver. 27. And the priest shall look upon him the seventh day,.... When that is come, any time on that day; not needing to wait until the end of it, or till, the seven days are precisely up; the same is to be understood in all places in this chapter where the like is used:

[and] if it be spread much abroad in the skin; in the space of seven days:

then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it [is] the plague of leprosy: according to the law; so that it was necessary, in such a case for him to conform to it in order to his cleansing.

Leviticus 13:28

Ver. 28. And if the bright spot stay in his place, [and] spread not in the skin,.... If, after being shut up, seven days, it appears that the spot is no larger than, when it was first viewed, but is as it was, and not at all increased:

but it [be] somewhat dark; either not so bright as it was, or more contracted:

it [is] a rising of the burning; or a swelling of it, a swelling which sprung from it, and nothing else:

the priest shall pronounce him clean; from the leprosy, and so set him at liberty to go where he will, and dwell and converse with men as usual:

for it [is] an inflammation of the burning; or an inflammation or blister occasioned by the burning, and no leprosy.

Leviticus 13:29

Ver. 29. If a man or a woman hath a plague upon the head or the beard. Any breaking out in those parts a swelling, scab, or spot, on a man's beard or on a woman's head; or on the head of either man or woman; or on a woman's beard, if she had any, as some have had though not common.

Leviticus 13:30

Ver. 30. Then the priest shall see the plague,.... The person on whom it is shall come or be brought unto him; and he shall look upon it and examine it:

and, behold, if it [be] in sight deeper than the skin; which is always one sign of leprosy;

[and there be] in it a yellow thin hair; like the appearance of thin gold, as the Targum of Jonathan; for, as Ben Gersom says, its colour is the colour of gold; and it is called thin in this place, because short and soft, and not when it is long and small; and so it is said, scabs make unclean in two weeks, and by two signs, by thin yellow hair, and by spreading, by yellow hair, small, soft, and short {t}: now this is to be understood, not of hair that is naturally of a yellow or gold colour, as is the hair of the head and beard of some persons, but of hair changed into this colour through the force of the disease; and so Jarchi interprets it, black hair turned yellow; in other parts of the body, hair turned white was a sign of leprosy, but here that which was turned yellow or golden coloured: Aben Ezra observes, that the colour expressed by this word is, in the Ishmaelitish or Arabic language, the next to the white colour:

then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; declare him a leper, and unfit for company, and order him to do and have done for him the things after expressed, as required in such a case:

it [is] a dry scall; or "wound", as the Septuagint version; "nethek", which is the word here used, Jarchi says, is the name of a plague that is in the place of hair, or where that grows; it has its name from plucking up; for there the hair is plucked away, as Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom note:

[even] a leprosy upon the head or beard; as the head is the seat of knowledge, and the beard a sign of manhood, and of a man's being arrived to years of discretion; when wisdom and prudence are expected in him; this sort of leprosy may be an emblem of errors in judgment, of false doctrines and heresies imbibed by persons, which eat as doth a canker, and are in themselves damnable, and bring ruin and destruction on teachers and hearers, unless recovered from them by the grace of God.

{t} Negaim, c. 10. sect. 1.

Leviticus 13:31

Ver. 31. And if the priest look on the plague of the scall,.... As it may appear in another person, brought to him for inspection and examination:

and, behold, it [be] not in the sight deeper than the skin; it do not seem to be got into the flesh, or lower than the skin:

and [that there is] no black hair in it; or, "but no black hair in it"; for, as Jarchi says, if there was a black hair in it, he would be clean, and there would be no need of shutting up; for black hair in scalls is a sign of cleanness, as it is said, Le 13:37; it would be a clear case that such a man had no leprosy on him; for black hair is a token of a strong and healthful constitution; and there could remain no doubt about it, and it would require no further trial and examination: Ben Gersom says it means two black hairs; and further observes, that black hair in the midst of a scall is a sign of cleanness; but this being wanting, then the priest shall shut up [him that hath] the plague of the scall seven days; from the time of his viewing the scall; and so Ben Gersom, this is the seventh day from the time of looking upon the scall.

Leviticus 13:32

Ver. 32. And in the seventh day the priest shall look on the plague,.... To see whether it has got any deeper, or spread any further, and has any hair growing in it, and of what colour, that he might be also able to judge whether it was a leprosy or not:

and, behold, [if] the scall spread not; was neither got into the flesh, nor larger in the skin;

and there be in it no yellow hair; that is, a thin yellow hair, for such only, as Ben Gersom observes, was a sign of leprosy in scalls, as in Le 13:30; and the same writer observes, that "and" is here instead of "or", and to be read, "or there be in it no yellow hair"; since a scall was pronounced unclean, either on account of thin yellow hair, or on account of spreading:

and the scall [be] not in sight deeper than the skin; but be just as it was when first looked upon.

Leviticus 13:33

Ver. 33. He shall be shaven,.... His head or beard, where the scall was, as Aben Ezra; and so Ben Gersom, who adds, the law is not solicitous whether this shaving is by a priest or not; so it seems any one might shave him:

but the scall shall he not shave; that is, the hair that is in it, but that was to continue and grow, that the colour of it might be easily discerned at the end of seven other days; according to the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, he was to shave round about it, but not that itself; Jarchi says, he was to leave two hairs near it {u}, that he might know whether it spread; for if it spread it would go over the hairs, and into the part that was shaven; when it would be a clear case it was a spreading leprosy: now, that there might be an opportunity of observing this, whether it would or not, the following method was to be taken:

and the priest shall shut up [him that hath] the scall seven days more; by which time it would be seen whether there was any increase or decrease, or whether at a stand, and of what colour the hair was, by which judgment might be made of the case.

{u} Misn. Negaim, c. 10. sect. 5.

Leviticus 13:34

Ver. 34. And in the seventh day the priest shall look on the scall,.... That is, according to Ben Gersom, on the thirteenth day from the first inspection of him by the priest:

and, behold, [if] the scall be not spread in the skin, nor [be] in sight deeper than the skin; neither appears spread on the surface of the skin, nor to have eaten into the flesh under it; also no thin yellow hair, though it is not expressed, for that made a person unclean, though there was no spreading:

then the priest shall pronounce him clean; free from a leprosy:

and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean; there was no need to say he shall wash them in water, as Aben Ezra observes, that is supposed; and then he was looked upon as a clean person, and might go into the sanctuary, and have conversation with men, both in a civil and religious way, and not defile anything he sat upon.

Leviticus 13:35

Ver. 35. But if the scall spread much in his skin after cleansing. After he has been declared clean by the priest; for it was possible that it might spread after this, though so much precaution had been used, and so much time taken to observe it: with this compare **2Pe 1:9**.

Leviticus 13:36

Ver. 36. Then the priest shall look on him,.... Again, and which is no less than the fourth time; for notwithstanding his being pronounced clean, he was still subject to the inspection of the priest, if any alteration appeared:

and, behold, if the scall be spread in the skin; which was a certain sign of a leprosy:

the priest shall not seek for yellow hair; or be solicitous about that, whether there is any or not, for either one or the other of these signs were sufficient to determine the case:

he [is] unclean; and so to be pronounced.

Leviticus 13:37

Ver. 37. But if the scall be in his sight at a stay,.... If in a few days, or in a short space of time after this, it should appear that the scall is at a full stop, and does not spread any further at all:

and [that] there is black hair grown up therein; which is a sign of health and soundness, and so of purity; yea, if it was green or red, so be it, it was not yellow, according to Jarchi, it was sufficient:

the scall is healed; from whence it appears that it had been a leprous scall, but was now healed, an entire stop being put to the spread of it; and though yellow hairs might have appeared in it, yet, as Gersom observes, two black hairs having grown up in it, it was a clear case that the corruption of the blood had departed, and it had returned to its former state:

he [is] clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean; he was clean before, and is the reason why he pronounces him so; wherefore it is not the sentence of the priest, but the truth of his case that makes him clean; teaching, as Ainsworth observes, that the truth of a man's estate, discerned by the word and law of God, made the man clean or unclean, and not the sentence of the priest, if it swerved from the law.

Leviticus 13:38

Ver. 38. If a man also, or a woman,.... One or the other, for the law concerning leprosy respecteth both:

have in the skin of their flesh bright spots; and them only; not any rising or swelling, nor scab, nor scall, nor boil, nor burning, only bright spots, a sort of freckles or morphew:

[even] white bright spots; these, Ben Gersom observes, are white spots, but not plagues; and which were in whiteness inferior to the four species of the plague of leprosy, the white spot, the white swelling, and the scab of each.

Leviticus 13:39

Ver. 39. Then the priest shall look,.... Upon the man or woman that has these spots, and upon the spots themselves, and examine them of what kind they are:

and, behold, [if] the bright spots in the skin of their flesh [be] darkish white; their whiteness is not strong, as Jarchi observes; but dusky and obscure, or "contracted" {w}; small white spots, not large and spreading:

it [is] a freckled spot [that] grows in the skin; a kind of morphew, which the above writer describes as a sort of whiteness which appears in the flesh of a ruddy man:

he [is] clean; from leprosy; this is observed, lest a person that is freckled and has a morphew should be mistaken for a leprous person; as every man that has some spots, failings, and infirmities, is not to be reckoned a wicked man.

{w} twhk "costractae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Leviticus 13:40

Ver. 40. And the man whose hair is fallen off his head,.... That is, from the back part of his head, from the crown of his head toward his neck behind:

he [is] bald; in that spot of the head where the hair is fallen off; and it denotes such a baldness as is occasioned by that, for it signifies one that had hair, but it is fallen off; whereas the baldness after spoken of is thought by some to be of such who never had any hair; though others will have it, that this intends a person bald all over; but it seems plain from what follows, that it designs one whose hair was fallen off behind, and was bald on that part only; and it may be observed, that this is only said of a man, not of a woman, because, as Aben Ezra remarks, she has much moisture in her, and therefore her head does not become bald; hair being like to grass, which flourishes in moist places:

[yet is] he clean; from the leprosy, or from the scalls, as Jarchi observes, because he is not judged by the signs of the head and beard, which are the place of hair, but by the signs of leprosy in the skin of the flesh, i.e. by the raw flesh and spreading.

Leviticus 13:41

Ver. 41. And he that hath his hair fallen off from the part of his head towards his face,.... That is, from the crown of his head towards his forehead and temples, the fore part of his head; and so the Misnic doctors distinguish baldness, which is from the crown of the head descending behind to the channel of the neck; and that here mentioned, which is from the crown of the head descending to his face and forehead, over against the hair above {x}:

he [is] forehead bald; to distinguish him from him that is bald behind:

[yet is] he clean; as the other: these cases are observed, that it might not be concluded that every man that shed his hair or was bald either before or behind was a leper, because the hair of a leper used to fall off from him; if he had not the other signs of leprosy, and which were the sure and true signs of it before mentioned.

{x} Misn. Negaim, c. 10. sect. 10.

Leviticus 13:42

Ver. 42. And if there be,.... Or, "but if there be", or, "when there shall be" {y}, or shall appear to be:

in the bald head, or in the bald forehead, a white reddish sore; white and red mixed, as the Targum of Jonathan, having something of both colours, neither a clear white nor thorough red; though, according to Bochart, it should be rendered "a white sore exceeding bright";
See Gill on "Le 13:19";

it [is] a leprosy sprung up in his bald head, or in his bald forehead; the signs of which were raw flesh and spreading; so it is said in the Misnah {z}, "those two sorts of baldness defile in two weeks, by two signs, by quick raw flesh and by spreading;"

if there was the bright spot and no quick flesh, then he was to be shut up seven days, and looked upon at the end of them; and if there was either quick flesh or a spreading, he was pronounced unclean, but if neither, he was shut up seven days more; and if either of the above signs appeared he was pronounced unclean, if not he was set free.

{y} ykw "sin autem", V. L. "quum autem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator Drusius. {z} Ut supra. (Misn. Negaim, c. 10. sect. 10.)

Leviticus 13:43

Ver. 43. Then the priest shall look upon it,.... The white reddish sore:

and, behold, [if] the rising of the sore; or the swelling of it:

[be] white reddish in his bald head, or in his bald forehead;
See Gill on "Le 13:42":

as the leprosy appeareth in the skin of the flesh; as in Le 13:2; having the signs of the leprosy there given; anyone of them, excepting the white hair, which in this case could be no sign, there being none: Jarchi's note is, according to the appearance of the leprosy, said in Le 13:2; and what is said in it is, it defiles by four appearances, and is judged in two weeks; but not according to the appearance of the leprosy said of the boil, and burning, which were judged in one week; nor according to the appearance of the scalls, of the place of hair, which do not defile by the four appearances, the rising or swelling, and the scab of it, the bright spot, and the scab of that.

Leviticus 13:44

Ver. 44. He is a leprous man, he [is] unclean,.... And so to be pronounced and accounted; only a leprous man is mentioned, there being no leprous women, having this sort of leprosy, their hair not falling off, or they becoming bald, usually; unless, as Ben Gersom observes, in a manner strange and wonderful:

the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean; as in any other case of leprosy:

his plague [is] in his head; an emblem of such who have imbibed bad notions and erroneous principles, and are therefore, like the leper, to be avoided and rejected from the communion of the saints, **Tit 3:10**; and shows that men are accountable for their principles as well as practices, and liable to be punished for them.

Leviticus 13:45

Ver. 45. And the leper in whom the plague [is],.... Meaning not he only that has the plague of leprosy in his head, but every sort of leper before mentioned in this chapter:

his clothes shall be rent; not that he might the more easily put on his clothes without hurting him, as some have thought; or that the corrupt humours might evaporate more freely, for evaporation would rather be hindered than promoted by being exposed to cold; nor that he might be known and better avoided, for his cry after mentioned was sufficient for that; but as a token of mourning: and so Aben Ezra having mentioned the former reason, that he might be known by going in a different habit, adds, or the sense is, as a token of mourning; for he was to mourn for the wickedness of his actions; for, for his works came this plague of leprosy upon him; and so the Jews in common understand it, not as a disease arising from natural causes, but as a punishment inflicted by God for sin; wherefore this rite of rending the garments was an emblem of contrition of heart, and of sorrow and humiliation for sin, see **Joe 1:13**:

and his head bare; or "free" from cutting or shaving, but shall let his hair grow; and so the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret it; or free from any covering upon it, hat, or cap, or turban: Ben Gersom observes, that the making bare the head, or freeing it, is taken different ways; sometimes it is used of not shaving the head for thirty days, and sometimes for the removal of the vail, or covering of the head it has been used to; but in this place it cannot signify the nourishing of the hair, but that his head ought to be covered: and so Maimonides {a} observes, that a leper should cover his head all the days he is excluded, and this was a token of mourning also; see
2Sa 15:30:

and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip; as a mourner, see Eze 24:17. Jarchi interprets it of both lips, upper and under, which were covered with a linen cloth or vail thrown over the shoulder, and with which the mouth was covered; and this was done, as Aben Ezra says, that the leper might not hurt any with the breath of his mouth;

and shall cry, Unclean, unclean; as he passed along in any public place, that everyone might avoid him, and not be polluted by him: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"a herald shall proclaim and say, Depart, depart from the unclean."

So every sinner sensible of the leprosy of sin in his nature, and which appears in his actions, should freely confess and acknowledge his uncleanness, original and actual, the impurity of his heart and life, and even of his own righteousness in the sight of God, and have recourse to Christ, and to his blood, for the cleansing him from it.

{a} Hilchot Tumaat Tzarat, c. 10. sect. 6.

Leviticus 13:46

Ver. 46. All the days wherein the plague [shall be] in him he shall be defiled,.... Reckoned an unclean person, and avoided as such:

he [is] unclean; in a ceremonial sense, and pronounced as such by the priest, and was to be looked upon as such by others during the time of his exclusion and separation, until he was shown to the priest and cleansed, and his offering offered;

he shall dwell alone; in a separate house or apartment, as Uzziah did, 2Ch 26:21; none were allowed to come near him, nor he to come near to any; yea, according to Jarchi, other unclean persons might not dwell with him:

without the camp [shall] his habitation [be]; without the three camps, as the same Jewish writer interprets it, the camp of God, the camp of the Levites, and the camp of Israel: so Miriam, when she was stricken with leprosy, was shut out of the camp seven days, Nu 12:14. This was observed while in the wilderness, but when the Israelites came to inhabit towns and cities, then lepers were excluded from thence; for they defiled, in a ceremonial sense,

every person and thing in a house they came into, whether touched by them or not. So Bartenora {b} observes, that if a leprous person goes into any house, all that is in the house is defiled, even what he does not touch; and that if he sits under a tree, and a clean person passes by, the clean person is defiled; and if he comes into a synagogue, they make a separate place for him ten hands high, and four cubits broad, and the leper goes in first, and comes out last. The Persians, according to Herodotus {c}, had a custom much like this; he says, that if any of the citizens had a leprosy or a morphew, he might not come into the city, nor be mixed with other Persians (or have any conversation with them), for they say he has them because he has sinned against the sun: and there was with us an ancient writ, called "leproso amovendo" {d}, that lay to remove a leper who thrust himself into the company of his neighbours in any parish, either in the church, or at other public meetings, to their annoyance. This law concerning lepers shows that impure and profane sinners are not to be admitted into the church of God; and that such who are in it, who appear to be so, are to be excluded from it, communion is not to be had with them; and that such, unless they are cleansed by the grace of God, and the blood of Christ, shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven; for into that shall nothing enter that defiles, or makes an abomination, or a lie; see **1Co 5:7**
Re 21:27.

{b} In Misn. Celim, c. 1. sect. 4. so in Misn. Negaim, c. 13. sect. 7, 11, 12. {c} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 138. {d} See the Supplement to Chambers's Dictionary, in the word "Leprosy".

Leviticus 13:47

Ver. 47. The garments also, that the plague of leprosy is in,.... Whether this sort of leprosy proceeded from natural causes, or was extraordinary and miraculous, and came immediately from the hand of God, and was peculiar to the Jews, and unknown to other nations, is a matter of question; the latter is generally asserted by the Hebrew writers, as Maimonides {e}, Abraham Seba {f}, and others {g}; but others are of opinion, and Abarbinel among the Jews, that it might be by the contact or touch of a leprous person. Indeed it must be owned, as a learned man {h} observes, that the shirts and clothes of a leper must be equally infectious, and more so than any other communication with him; and the purulent matter which adheres thereunto must needs infect; such who put on their clothes; for it may be observed, that it will get between the threads of garments, and stick like glue, and fill them up, and by the acrimony of it corrode the texture itself; so that experience shows that it is very difficult to wash such a garment without a rupture, and the stains are not easily got out: and it must be allowed that garments may be scented by diseases, and become infectious, and carry a disease from place to place, as the plague oftentimes is carried in wool, cotton, silk, or any bale goods; but whether all this amounts to the case before us is still a question. Some indeed have endeavoured to account for it by observing, that wool ill scoured, stuffs kept too long, and some particular tapestries, are subject to worms and moths which eat them, and from hence think it credible, that the leprosy in clothes, and in skins here mentioned, was caused by this sort of vermin; to which, stuffs and works, wrought in wool in hot countries, and in times when arts and manufactures were not carried to the height of perfection as now, might probably be more exposed {i}; but this seems not to agree with this leprosy of Moses, which lay not in the garment being eaten, but in the colour and spread of it:

[whether it be] a woollen garment or a linen garment: and, according to the Misnic doctors {k}, only wool and linen were defiled by leprosy; Aben Ezra indeed says, that the reason why no mention is made of silk and cotton is because the Scripture speaks of what was found (then in use), as in Ex 23:5; wherefore, according to him, woollen and linen are put for all other garments; though, he adds, or it may be the leprosy does not happen to anything but wool and linen; however, it is allowed, as Ben Gersom observes, that when the greatest part of the cloth is made of wool or linen, it was defiled by it: the Jewish canon is, if the greatest part is of camels hair, it is not defiled; but if the greatest part is of sheep, it is; and if half to half (or equal) it is defiled; and so flax, and hemp mixed together {l}; the same rule is to be observed concerning them.

{e} Hilchot Tumaat Tzarat, c. 16. sect. 10. {f} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 99. 3. {g} Ramban, Bechai, Isaac Arama, & alii, apud Muisium in loc. {h} Scheuchzer. Physica Sacra, vol. 2. p. 326. {i} Calmet's Dictionary, in the word "Leper". {k} Misn. Celaim, c. 9. sect, 1. {l} Ib. Negaim, c. 11. sect. 2.

Leviticus 13:48

Ver. 48. Whether [it be] in the warp, or woof, of linen, or of woollen,.... When these are woven and mixed together, it seems difficult, if not impossible, to judge whether the plague of leprosy was in the one or in the other; one would think it should be unavoidably in both; wherefore Castalio renders the words, whether "in the outer part of it, or in the inner"; in the outside or inside, or what we call the right side or the wrong side of the cloth: but to me it seems that the warp and woof, whether of linen or woollen, are here distinguished not only from garments made of them, but from the cloth itself, of which they are made, and even to be considered before they are wrought together in the loom; and, according to the Jews, when upon the spindle {m}:

whether in a skin, or anything made of skin; that is, whether in unwrought skin, which is not made up in anything, or in anything that is made of skins, as tents, bottles, &c. but skins of fishes, according to the Jewish traditions, are excepted; for so they say {n}, sea skins, i.e. skins of fishes, are not defiled by plagues (of leprosy); for which the commentators {o} give this reason, that as wool and linen are of things which grow out of the earth, so must the skins be; that is, of such animals as live by grass, that springs out of the earth; but if anything was joined unto them, which grew out of the earth, though but a thread, that received uncleanness, it was defiled.

{m} Misn. Negaim, c. 11. sect. 8. {n} Misn. Negaim, c. 11. sect. 1. {o} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Edait, c. 7. sect. 8.

Leviticus 13:49

Ver. 49. And if the plague be greenish or reddish the garment, or in the skin,.... Either of these two colours were signs of leprosy in garments; but it is not agreed whether stronger or weaker colours are designed; the radicals of both these words being doubled, according to some, and particularly Aben Ezra, lessen the sense of them; and so our translators understand it; but, according to Ben Gersom, the signification is increased thereby, and the meaning is, if it be exceeding green or exceeding red; and this is evidently the sense of the Misnah {p}; garments are defiled by green in greens, and by red in reds, that is, by the greenest and reddest; the green, the commentators say {q}, is like that of the wings of peacocks and leaves of palm trees, and the red like crimson or scarlet; and now these garments or skins, in which the green or red spots appeared, must be white, and not coloured or dyed: the canon runs thus {r}; skins and garments dyed are not defiled with plagues (of leprosy); a garment whose warp is dyed, and its woof white, or its woof dyed, and its warp white, all goes according to the sight; that is, according to what colour to the eye most prevails, whether white or dyed:

either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything of the skin; the same held good of these as of a garment, or anything else made of them:

it [is] a plague of leprosy; it has the signs of one, and gives great suspicion that it is one:

and shall be shewed unto the priest; by the person in whose possession it is, that it may be examined and judged of whether it is a leprosy or no.

{p} Misn. Negaim, c. 11. sect. 4. {q} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Edaiot, c. 7. sect. 8. {r} Misn. ut supra, (c.11.) sect. 3, 4.

Leviticus 13:50

Ver. 50. And the priest shall look upon the plague,.... The green or red spot in the garment, &c.

and shut up [it that hath] the plague seven days; the woollen or linen garment, the warp or the woof, or skins, and those things that were made of them.

Leviticus 13:51

Ver. 51. And he shall look on the plague on the seventh day,.... To see whether there is any alteration in it in that space of time:

if the plague be spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in a skin, [or] in any work that is made of skin; the green and red spot be spread more and more in either of them, whether the colour remains the same or not, be changed, the green into red, or the red into green, yet if there was a spreading, it was a sign of leprosy. According to the Jewish canon {s}, if the plague was green and spread red, or red and spread green, it was unclean; that is, as Bartenora {t} explains it, if it was red in the size of a bean, and at the end of the week the red had spread itself to green; or if at the beginning it was green like a bean, and at the end of the week had spread itself to the size of a shekel, and the root or spread of it was become red;

the plague [is] a fretting leprosy; according to Jarchi, a sharp and pricking one, like a thorn; which signification the word has in Eze 28:24. Ben Gersom explains it, which brings a curse, corruption, and oldness into the thing in which it is; an old "irritated, exasperated" leprosy, as Bochart {u}, from the use of the word in the Arabic tongue, translates it:

it [is] unclean; and the garment or thing in which it is.

{s} Misn. Negaim, c. 11. sect. 3, 4. {t} In ib. {u} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 45. col. 493.

Leviticus 13:52

Ver. 52. He shall therefore burn that garment,.... That there may be no more use of it, nor profit from it; and this was done without the city, as Ben Gersom asserts:

whether in warp or woof, in woollen or in linen, or anything of skin, wherein the plague is; all and either of them were to be burnt:

for it [is] a fretting leprosy; See Gill on "Le 13:51":

it shall be burnt in the fire; which may teach both to hate the garment spotted with the flesh, and to put no trust in and have no dependence on a man's own righteousness, which is as filthy rags, and both are such as shall be burnt, and the loss of them suffered, even when a man himself is saved, yet so as by fire, **1Co 3:15**.

Leviticus 13:53

Ver. 53. And if the priest shall look,.... On the seventh day as before, after shutting up:

and, behold, the plague be not spread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in anything of skin; but is at an entire stay, that it may be hoped it is not a fretting leprosy: so when men do not proceed to more ungodliness, as wicked men commonly do, but there is a stop put to their vicious life and conversation, it is an hopeful sign of future good.

Leviticus 13:54

Ver. 54. Then the priest shall command that they wash [the thing] wherein the plague [is],.... The priest did not wash it himself, but ordered others to do it; and this was either the part in which the plague was, or the whole garment or skin in which it was; which may be typical of the washing of the garments of men in the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, **Re 7:14**:

and he shall shut it up seven days more: the garment or skin in which the leprosy was, or suspected to be, to see what alteration would be made by that time through the washing, whether the colour would be altered, or whether it would spread any more or not.

Leviticus 13:55

Ver. 55. And the priest shall look on the plague after it is washed,.... That is, on the second seventh day, or thirteenth day from his first inspection of it:

and, behold, [if] the plague has not changed its colour; and the plague be not spread, it [is] unclean, thou shalt burn it in the fire; if it remains just as it was at first, very green or very red, and has not diminished of its colour at all, nor changed from one colour to another, although it should not have spread itself, yet it is defiled, and to be burnt without the camp, as before; that which spreads itself here and there, it is to be burnt:

it [is] after inward, [whether] it [be] bare within or without; that is, whether it be threadbare on the wrong or right side of the garment, the nap being eaten off by the leprosy; which shows it to be a fretting, eating, and corroding one: in the Hebrew text it is, "in the boldness of the hinder", or "in the baldness of the fore part"; they are the same words which are used of the boldness of the back part and fore part of the head, Le 13:42; the nap being off either of the outer and right side of the cloth, or of the inner and wrong side, made it look like a bald head, whether before or behind.

Leviticus 13:56

Ver. 56. And if the priest look, and, behold, the plague [be] somewhat dark after the washing of it,.... Is become of a weaker colour, either not quite so green, or not quite so red as it was, or is "contracted", and does not spread itself, See Gill on "Le 13:6"; but is rather become less:

then he shall rend it out of the garment, or out of the skin, or out of the warp, or out of the woof; that is, that piece which has the plague in it, and burn it, as Jarchi says; that so the whole may not be lost, which is otherwise pure, and clean, and free from any infection. The manner of expression confirms what I have observed on Le 13:48; that the warp and woof are considered as separate things, and as before they are wove together, or wrought into one garment. This rending out may denote the denying of ungodliness and worldly lusts, the parting with right eye and right hand sins, and having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

Leviticus 13:57

Ver. 57. And if it appear still in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in anything of skin,.... After the piece has been rent out, in another part of the garment, &c. where before it was not seen:

it [is] a spreading [plague]; or leprosy; a flourishing one, as the word signifies, a growing and increasing one:

thou shalt burn that wherein the plague [is] with fire; according to Aben Ezra, only that part in which the plague was; but Jarchi says the whole garment; with whom Ben Gersom seems to agree, who reads the words, thou shall burn it, with that in which the plague is; the whole garment, skin, warp, or woof, along with the part in which the leprosy is.

Leviticus 13:58

Ver. 58. And the garment, either warp or woof, or whatsoever thing of skin [it be], which thou shalt wash,.... After it had been shut up seven days, and viewed by the priest again: if the plague be departed from them: upon a review of them:

then it shall be washed the second time, and shall be clean; and so reckoned even thoroughly clean, and used; this denotes the thorough washing and cleansing of sinners by the blood of Jesus, see Ps 51:2; this washing was by dipping; and so the Targum renders it; and Jarchi observes, that all washings of garments, which are for dipping, they interpret by the same word.

Leviticus 13:59

Ver. 59. This [is] the law of the plague of leprosy,.... The rules by which it was to be judged of; whether or no it was

in a garment of woollen, or linen, either the warp or woof, or any thing of skins; which include everything in which this sort of leprosy was:

to pronounce it clean, or to pronounce it unclean; either to declare it free from the plague of the leprosy, or as infected with it, and so accordingly dispose of it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 14

This chapter treats of the purification of lepers, and the rules to be observed therein; and first what the priest was to do for his cleansing when brought to him, by making use of two birds, with cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop, as directed, Le 14:1; what he was to do for himself, shaving off all his hair, and washing his flesh and clothes in water, Le 14:8; the offerings to be offered up for him, two he lambs and one ewe lamb, and a meat offering, with a particular account of the use of the blood of the trespass offering, and of oil put upon the tip of his right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the great toe of his right foot, Le 14:10; but if poor, only one lamb was required, a meat offering of one tenth deal, and two turtle doves or two young pigeons, and blood and oil used as before, Le 14:21; next follow an account of leprosy in an house, and the signs of it, and the rules to judge of it, Le 14:33; and the manner of cleansing from it, Le 14:49; and the chapter is closed with a recapitulation of the several laws concerning the various sorts of leprosy in this and the preceding chapter, Le 14:54.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... In order to deliver the same to Aaron, who, and the priests his successors, were chiefly to be concerned in the execution of the law given:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 14:2

Ver. 2. This shall be the law of the leper, in the day of his cleansing,.... Or the rules, rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices to be observed therein. Jarchi says, from hence we learn that they were not to purify a leper in the night:

he shall be brought unto the priest: not into the camp, or city, or house, where the priest was, for till he was cleansed he could not be admitted into either; besides, the priest is afterwards said to go forth out of the camp to him; but he was to be brought pretty near the camp or city, where the priest went to meet him. As the leper was an emblem of a polluted sinner, the priest was a type of Christ, to whom leprous sinners must be brought for cleansing; they cannot come of themselves to him, that is, believe in him, except it be given unto them; or they are drawn with the powerful and efficacious grace of God, by which souls are brought to Christ, and enabled to believe in him; not that they are brought against their wills, but being drawn with the cords of love, and through the power of divine grace, sweetly operating upon their hearts, they move towards him with all readiness and willingness, and cast themselves at his feet, saying, as the leper that came to Christ, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean", **Mt 8:2** **Mr 1:40**; and it is grace to allow them to come near him, and amazing goodness in him to receive and cleanse them.

Leviticus 14:3

Ver. 3. And the priest shall go forth out of the camp,.... A little without the camp, as Ben Gersom notes. There have been several goings forth of Christ our High Priest; first in the council and covenant of grace and peace, when he became the surety of his people; then in time by the assumption of human nature, when he came forth from his Father, and came into the world to save them; next, when he went forth out of the city of Jerusalem to suffer for them; and also, when, at the time of conversion, he goes forth in quest of them, and looks them up, and finds them, and brings them home, which may answer to the type here; and all shows the great readiness of Christ to receive sinners:

and the priest shall look, and, behold, [if] the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper; that all the signs of uncleanness are removed, the swelling, the scab, or bright spot, and the white hair in them, and, instead of that, black hair is grown up. The typical priest did not heal, nor could he, the healing was of God; he only looked to see by signs if the plague was healed; but our antitypical priest looks with an eye of pity and compassion on leprous sinners, and they are enabled to look to him by faith, and virtue goes out of him to the healing of their diseases; as he looks upon them in their blood, and says to them, Live, so he looks upon them in their leprosy, and touches them, and says, "I will, be thou clean", **Mt 8:3**, and they are immediately healed; he is the sun of righteousness, which arises upon them with healing in his wings.

Leviticus 14:4

Ver. 4. Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed,.... The command is by the priest, the taking is by any man, as Ben Gersom observes; anyone whom he shall command, the leper himself, or his friends. Aben Ezra interprets it, the priest shall take of his own; but he adds, there are some that explain it, the leper shall give them to him, namely, what follows:

two birds alive, [and] clean; any sort of birds, to whom this description agrees; for not any particular sort are pointed out, as "sparrows" {w}, as some render the word, or any other; because either they must be clean or unclean; if unclean, then not to be used; if clean, then this descriptive character is used in vain. These were to be alive, taken alive with the hand, and not shot dead; and this also excepts such as were torn, as Jarchi, or any ways maimed and unsound, and not likely to live; and they were to be "clean", such as were so according to a law given in a preceding chapter; they were to be none of those unclean birds there mentioned; and, according to the Misnah {x}, they were to be alike in sight and height, and in price and value, and to be taken together; and, by the same tradition, they were to be two birds of liberty, that is, not such as were kept tame in cages, but such as fly abroad in the fields, These birds may be considered as a type of Christ, who compares himself to a hen, Mt 23:37; and "birds" may denote his swiftness and readiness to help his people, his tenderness and compassion towards them in distress, and his weakness and frailty in human nature, and his meanness and despicableness in the eyes of men; and these being "alive", the character well agrees with him, who is the living God, the living. Redeemer, the Mediator that has life in himself, and for his people; and as man, now lives, and will live for evermore, and is the author and giver of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal. And the birds being clean, may denote the purity and holiness of Christ, and so his fitness to be a sacrifice, and his suitableness as food for his people: and the number two may signify either his two natures, divine and human, in both which he lives, and is pure and holy; or his two estates of humiliation and exaltation; or his death by the slain bird, and his resurrection by the living bard, of which more hereafter:

and the cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop; a stick of cedar, as Jarchi; it was proper it should be of such a size, as to be known to be cedar wood, but was not to be too heavy for the priest to sprinkle with it, as Ben Gersom; and the same writer observes, it ought to have a leaf on the top of it, that it might appear to be cedar: according to the Misnah {y}, it was to be a cubit long, and the fourth part of a bed's foot thick: "scarlet" was either wool dyed of that colour, or crimson, so Jarchi; or a scarlet thread or line with which the hyssop was bound and fastened to the cedar wood; and, according to the above tradition {z}, the "hyssop" was to be neither counterfeit nor wild, nor Greek, nor Roman, nor any that had any epithet to it, but common simple hyssop; and, as Gersom says, there was not to be less than an handful of it. The signification of these is variously conjectured; according to Abarbinel, they have respect to the nature of the leprosy, and as opposite to it; that as the two live birds signified restoration to his former state, when he had been like one dead, so the cedar wood, being incorruptible and durable, showed that the putrefaction of humours was cured; the scarlet, that the blood was purged, and hence the true colour of the face returned again, and a ruddy and florid countenance as before; and the hyssop being of a savoury smell, that the disagreeable scent and stench were gone: but others think there is a moral meaning in them, that the cedar being the highest of trees, and the scarlet colour coming from a worm, and the hyssop the lowest of plants, see **1Ki 4:33**; the "cedar wood" may denote the pride and haughtiness of spirit the leprosy is the punishment of, as in Miriam, Gehazi, Uzziah, and the family of Joab: and the worm that gives the scarlet colour, and the hyssop, may signify that humility that becomes a leper that is cleansed, so Jarchi: but they will bear a more evangelical sense, and may have respect either to Christ; the cedar wood may be an emblem of the incorruption of Christ, and of the durable efficacy of his death; the scarlet, of his bloody sufferings, his flaming love to his people, expressed thereby, and the nature of those sins and sinners being of a scarlet die, for whom he suffered; and the hyssop, of the purgative nature of his blood, which cleanses from all sin: or else to the graces of his Spirit; faith may be signified by the cedar wood, which is in some strong, and in all precious and durable; love by scarlet, of a flaming colour, as strong love is like coals of fire, that give a most vehement flame; and hope by hyssop, which is but a lowly, yet lively grace; or faith may be set forth by them all, by the cedar wood for its continuance, by scarlet for its working by love, and by hyssop for its purifying use, as it deals with the blood of Christ.

{w} Myrpu ytv "duos passeres", V. L. {x} Negaim, c. 14. sect. 5. {y} Negaim, c. 14. sect. 6. {z} Ibid.

Leviticus 14:5

Ver. 5. And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed,.... That is, shall command another priest to kill one of them, or an Israelite, as Aben Ezra; and who also observes, that some say the leper, or the butcher, as the Targum of Jonathan; the killing of this bird, not being a sacrifice, might be done without the camp, as it was, and not at the altar, near to which sacrifices were slain, and where they were offered: and this was to be done

in an earthen vessel over running water: this vessel, according to the Jewish traditions {a}, was to be a new one, and a fourth part of a log of running water was to be put into it, and then the bird was to be killed over it, and its blood squeezed into it, and then a hole was dug, and it was buried before the leprous person; and so it should be rendered, "over an earthen vessel", as it is in the Tigurine version, and by Noldius {b}; for how could it be killed in it, especially when water was in it? the killing of this bird may have respect to the sufferings, death, and bloodshed of Christ, which were necessary for the purging and cleansing of leprous sinners, and which were endured in his human nature, comparable to an earthen vessel, as an human body sometimes is; see **2Co 4:7**; for he was crucified through weakness, and was put to death in the flesh, 2Co 13:4; and the running or living water mixed with blood may denote both the sanctification and justification of Christ's people by the water and blood which sprung from his pierced side, and the continual virtue thereof to take away sin, and free from it; or the active and passive obedience of Christ, which both together are the matter of a sinner's justification before God.

{a} Negaim, c. 14. sect. 1. {b} Ebr. Concord. part. p. 64. No. 318.

Leviticus 14:6

Ver. 6. As for the living bird, he shall take it,.... And dispose of it as after directed; for there was an use for that:

and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop; which were all bound up in one bundle, but whether the living bird was joined to them is a question; according to Jarchi they were separate, the bird by itself, and the cedar wood, &c. by themselves; they were neither bound together nor dipped together; and Ben Gersom is very distinct and expressive; we learn from hence, says he, that three were bound up in one bundle, but the living bird was not comprehended in that bundle; but according to the Misnah {c} they were all joined together, for there it is said, he (the priest) takes the cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop, and rolls them up with the rest of the scarlet thread, and joins to them the extreme parts of the wings and of the tail of the second bird and dips them; and this seems best to agree with the text, as follows:

and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird [that was] killed over the running water; that is, into the blood of it as mixed with the running water in the earthen vessel, which together made a sufficient quantity for all these to be dipped into it; whether separately, first the living bird, and then the cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop, or all together: the bird that was kept alive was a type of Christ, who as a divine Person always alive, and ever will; he is the living God, and impassable: the dipping of this living bird in the blood of the slain one denotes the union of the two natures in Christ, divine and human, and which union remained at the death of Christ; and also shows that the virtue of Christ's blood arises from his being the living God: the dipping of the cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop, into the same blood, signifies the exercise of the several graces of the Spirit upon Christ, as crucified and slain, and their dealing with his blood for pardon and cleansing, as faith and hope do, and from whence love receives fresh ardour and rigour.

{c} Ebr. Concord. part. 64. No. 318. & Bartenora in ib.

Leviticus 14:7

Ver. 7. And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times,.... With the hyssop fastened to the cedar stick, with the scarlet wool or thread bound about it, dipped into the blood and water in the earthen vessel; to which the psalmist alludes,
Ps 51:7; the Egyptians had a great notion of "hyssop", as of a purifying nature, and therefore used to eat it with bread, to take off the strength of that {d}: upon what part of the leper this sprinkling was made is not said; the Targum of Jonathan says, upon the house of his face, that is, upon the vail that was over his face: but in the Misnah {e} it is said to be on the back of his hand; and so Gersom, though some say it was on his forehead; and sprinkling was typical of Christ's blood of sprinkling, and of the application of it, and of sharing in all the blessings of it; and this was done seven times, to denote the thorough and perfect cleansing of him, and of every part, every faculty of the soul, and every member of the body, and that from all sin, and the frequent application of it: the last mentioned writer says, at every sprinkling there was a dipping, and that the sense is, that he should sprinkle and dip seven times, as Naaman the Syrian leper did in Jordan; but of the washing of the leper mention is afterwards

made:

and shall pronounce him clean; from his leprosy, and so fit for civil and religious conversation, to come into the camp or city, and into the tabernacle;

and shall let the living bird loose into the open field; as a token of the freedom of the leper, and that he was at liberty to go where he pleased: the Misnic doctors say {f}, when he came to let go the living bird, he did not turn its face neither to the sea, nor to the city, nor to the wilderness, as it is said, "but he shall let go the living bird out of the city into the open field", as in Le 14:53; the Targum of Jonathan here adds, if the man should be prepared to be smitten with the leprosy again, the live bird may return to his house the same day, and be fit to be eaten, but the slain bird he shall bury in the sight of the leper: some say, if the bird returned ever so many times, it was to be let go again: this may be a figure of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and of his justification upon it, as the head and representative of his people, and of their free and full discharge from guilt, condemnation, and death, through him, and of his and their being received up into heaven, and whither their hearts should be directed, in affection and thankfulness for their great deliverance and salvation; see **1Ti 3:16**.

{d} Chaeremon apud Porphyr. de Abstinentia, l. 4. sect. 6. {e} Ut supra. (Misn. Negaim, c. 11. sect. 4.) {f} Ib. sect. 2.

Leviticus 14:8

Ver. 8. And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes,.... That there may be no remains of the infection in them, and that they might not convey an ill scent to others: so the conversation garments of the saints are to be washed in the blood of the Lamb, **Re 7:14**;

and shave off all his hair; what is here expressed in general is more particularly declared in Le 14:9; the hair of his head, beard, and eyebrows; according to Gersom, this was done by the priest, and so Maimonides says {g}, that none but a priest might shave him; and yet the text seems plainly to ascribe this, as well as the washing of his clothes and himself, to the leper that was to be cleansed; and the same writers say, that if two hairs were left it was no shaving; and so says the Misnah {h}: the shaving of the leper's hairs signified the weakening of the strength of sin; the mortification of the deeds of the body, through the Spirit, and the laying aside all superfluity of naughtiness, and the excrescences of the flesh; a parting with every thing that grows out of a man's self, sin or self-righteousness; a laying a man bare and open, that nothing may lie hid and covered, and escape cleansing:

and wash himself in water, that he may be clean: which was to be done by dipping in a collection of water, and not in running water, as Gersom observes, in a quantity of water sufficient to cover the whole body; which, according to the Talmud {i}, was forty seahs, and was a cubit square in breadth, and three cubits deep: this may denote the washing of sinful men with the washing of regeneration, but more especially with the blood of Christ, the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, Zec 13:1;

and after that he shall come into the camp; into the camp of Israel, while in the wilderness, and in after times into the city, where he used to dwell; and may sign try the admittance of such into the church of God again, who appear to be cleansed from sin, to have true repentance towards God for it, and faith in the blood of Christ:

and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days; that is, out of his own tent or house, where his wife and family dwelt: this precaution was taken, lest there should be any remains of his disorder lurking, in him that might endanger his wife and family, especially his wife, with whom he was to have no conjugal conversation as yet; so it is said in the Misnah {k}, that he was to be separated from his house seven days, and forbid the use of the marriage bed; and this prohibition. Jarchi thinks is intended in this clause, and so Maimonides {l}, to which agrees the Targum of Jonathan,

"he shall sit without the tent of the house of his habitation, and shall not come near to the side of his wife seven days."

{g} Hilchot Tumaat Tzarat, c. 11. sect. 3. {h} Negaim, c. 14. sect. 4. {i} T. Bab. Eruvin, fol. 14. 1, 2. {k} Ut supra, (Misn. Negaim, c. 11) sect. 2. {l} Ut supra, (Hilchot Tumaat Tzarat, c. 11.) sect. 1.

Leviticus 14:9

Ver. 9. But it shall be on the seventh day,.... After he was first brought to the priest, and cleansed by the two birds, taken and used for him as directed, and he had been shaved and washed:

that he shall shave all his hair; a second time, whatsoever was grown in those seven days:

all off his head, and his beard, and his eyebrows; even all his hair he shall shave off; not only the hair of the parts mentioned, but all other, the hair of his feet also, as Aben Ezra notes, who observes, that some say, the hair of his arms, and thighs, and breast; and so according to the Misnah {m}, this was a second shaving, for it is said,

"in the seventh day he shaves a second time, according to the first shaving:"

he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean; this was also repeated on the seventh, both the washing of his clothes, and the dipping of him in water; after which he was accounted clean, and was neither defiled nor defiling, and might go into his own tent or house, and into the tabernacle, and offer his offerings, and partake of the privileges of it, at least some of them, even the same day; according to the tradition he may eat of the tithes, and after sunset he may eat of the heave offerings, and when he has brought his atonement he may eat of the holy things {n}.

{m} Ut supra, (Misn. Negaim, c. 11.) sect. 3. {n} Ibid.

Leviticus 14:10

Ver. 10. And on the eighth day,.... From the leper's first appearance before the priest, and the day after the above things were done, in
Le 14:9:

he shall take two he lambs without blemish; the one for a trespass offering, and the other for a burnt offering; and both typical of Christ the Lamb of God, without spot and blemish:

and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish; for a sin offering, a type of Christ also:

and three tenth deals of fine flour, [for] a meat offering, mingled with oil; that is, three tenth parts of an ephah, or three omers; one of which was as much, or more than a man could eat in a day, see
Ex 16:36; there were three of these to answer to and accompany the three lambs for sacrifice, just such a quantity was allotted to the lambs of the daily

sacrifice, Ex 29:40; typical, likewise of Christ, who is the true bread, and whose flesh is meat indeed:

and one log of oil; to be used as after directed: this measure was about half a pint, and is an emblem of the grace and Spirit of God, received by the saints in measure, and is the same with the oil of gladness, poured on Christ without measure, Ps 45:7.

Leviticus 14:11

Ver. 11. And the priest that maketh [him] clean,.... By the above rites and ceremonies, and the after sacrifices offered:

shall present the man that is to be made clean, and those things before the Lord; the two he lambs, and the ewe lamb; and it seems also the meat offerings, and the log of oil; but these Ben Gersom excepts, and when the leper, with these, is said to be set or presented before the Lord, this must not be understood of his being introduced, into the tabernacle, had of his being placed in the court itself; for as yet, as Jarchi says, he was "Mechoser Cippurim", one that needed expiation, and therefore, till that was done, could not be admitted; but he was set

[at] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; at the eastern gate, which afterwards, when the temple was built, was called the gate of Nicanor, and lay between the court of the women and the court of the Israelites: thus everyone that has received favours from the Lord, by restoration of health, or by deliverance from dangers, or be it in whatsoever way it will, should present himself and his sacrifice of praise unto him; and his case should be presented in a public manner before the congregation of the saints by the minister of it, in token of gratitude and thankfulness for mercies received.

Leviticus 14:12

Ver. 12. And the priest shall take one he lamb,.... One of the he lambs brought by the leper for his offering:

and offer him for a trespass offering; for though the leprosy itself was a disorder or disease, and not sinful, yet the cause of it was sin, a trespass against God, and therefore a trespass offering must be offered: which was typical of

Christ, whose soul was made a trespass offering, Isa 53:10; where the same word is used as here:

and the log of oil; See Gill on "Le 14:10";

and wave them [for] a wave offering before the Lord; heaving of them up and down, moving of them to and fro towards the several parts of the world, east, west, north, and south, even both the log of oil, and the he lamb for the trespass offering, and that alive, as Jarchi observes, and so says Maimonides {o}.

{o} Hilchot Mechosre Capharah, c. 4. sect. 2.

Leviticus 14:13

Ver. 13. And he shall slay the lamb,.... The priest, or the butcher, as the Targum of Jonathan, the slaughterer, the priest appointed for that service; at which time both the hands of the leper were laid upon it, as says the Misnah {p}; for though the leper might not go into the court as yet, the sacrifice was brought to the door of the tabernacle for him to put his hands on it: so Maimonides {q} relates; the trespass offering of the leper is brought to the door, and he puts both his hands into the court, and lays them on it, and they immediately slay it:

in the place where he shall kill the sin offering in the holy place; in the court of the tabernacle, on the north side of the altar, as Jarchi observes, see **Le 1:11**;

for as the sin offering [is] the priest's, [so is] the trespass offering; and to be eaten by him and his sons in the holy place, and by none but them, see **Le 6:26**;

it [is] most holy; which is the reason why none else might eat of it, typical of Christ the most Holy, whose flesh is only eaten by true believers in him, made priests unto God by him.

{p} Negaim, c. 14. sect. 8. {q} Ut supra. (Hilchot Mechosre Capharah, c. 4. sect. 2.)

Leviticus 14:14

Ver. 14. And the priest shall take [some] of the blood of the trespass offering,.... According to the Misnah {r}, two priests received the blood of it, one in a vessel and the other in his hand; he that received it in a vessel went and sprinkled it upon the wall (or top, as Maimonides {s}) of the altar; and he that received it in his hand went to the leper, and the leper having dipped himself in the chamber of the lepers, went and stood in the gate of Nicanor:

and the priest shall put [it] upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot; as was done at the consecration of the high priest, See Gill on "Ex 29:20",
See Gill on "Le 8:24": now as the leper stood at the door of the tabernacle without the court, he was obliged to put in his head, his right hand, and his right foot, in order to have the blood put on them by the priest, who was in the court; and these were put in either separately one after another, or together: the tradition runs thus {t}, he (the leper) thrust in his head, and (the priest) put (the blood) upon the tip of his ear; his hand, and he put it upon the thumb of his hand; his foot, and he put it upon the great toe of his foot: and the application of the blood to these parts showed that the leper had now a right to hear the word of God, to partake of all privileges, to touch anything without defiling it, and to go into any house or company where he thought fit, he was now at full liberty; more evangelically these things may signify the sanctification and cleansing of those parts, and of the whole man by the blood of Christ; and particularly may signify, that as the ear is unclean, uncircumcised, and unsanctified in a leprous sinner and even there are hearing sins in the best of men, the ear is sanctified, and hearing sins removed by the blood of Christ; and as the right hand, being the instrument of action, may denote the evil works of men, and even since the most righteous performances of the best of men are attended with sin, the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, had need to be put upon them; and whereas the conversation of then, which the foot may be an emblem of, is sinful and vain, it is by the blood of Christ that they are redeemed from it; and the influence of that blood sprinkled on the conscience will oblige and constrain men to live and walk soberly, righteously, and godly.

{r} Ut supra. (Misn. Negaim, c. 14. sect. 8) {s} Ut supra. (Hilchot Mechosre Capharah, c. 4. sect. 2.) {t} Ut supra, ({r}) sect. 9.

Leviticus 14:15

Ver. 15. And the priest shall take [some] of the log of oil,.... With his right hand, as the Targum of Jonathan adds:

and pour [it] into the palm of his own left hand: but in the original text it is, "pour it into the palm of the priest's left hand": and it is a question, whether he or another priest is meant; according to Aben Ezra, the oil was to be poured into the hand of the priest that was cleansing the leper, and which, he thinks, is plain from what follows; but Gersom thinks it is better to understand it of another priest, since it is not said into his own hand, but into the hand of the priest; and the Misnah {u} is clear for it, he (the priest) takes of the log of oil and pours it into the palm of his fellow (priest), but if he pours it into his own palm it is sufficient.

{u} Ib. sect. 10. so Maimon. Mechosre Capharah, ut supra, (c. 4. sect. 2.) & Bartenora, in Misn. Negaim, ib.

Leviticus 14:16

Ver. 16. And the priest shall dip his right finger,.... The finger of his right hand, the forefinger of it:

in the oil that [is] in his left hand; either that is in his own left hand, or in the left hand of a fellow priest:

and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord; that is, over against the house of the holy of holies, as Jarchi, where Jehovah dwelt; but standing at the same time at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, which was eastward, and so he looked westward to the holy of holies; so says the Misnah {w}, on which one of the commentators {x} observes, that he did not bring the oil into the temple to sprinkle it before the vail: but he stood in the court, and turned his face to the holy of holies, and so sprinkled upon the floor of the court: and the Jewish doctors are very express for it, according to the Misnah {y}, that for every sprinkling there was a dipping; that as often as he sprinkled, so often he must dip his finger in the oil, and not that he might dip his finger once, and of that sprinkle two or three times; for the finger must be dipped seven times: this may denote the thanksgiving of the leper for his cleansing, proceeding from the grace of God, and the Lord's gracious acceptance of it.

{w} Ibid. {x} Bartenora in ib. {y} Ibid.

Leviticus 14:17

Ver. 17. And of the rest of the oil that [is] in his hand,.... That was either in the hand of the priest that was cleansing, or in the hand of his fellow priest; such of it as was left after some of it had been sprinkled seven times before the Lord:

shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot; signifying that these parts in the leprous sinner need to be sanctified by the grace of the Spirit of God, comparable to oil, with which all the Lord's people are anointed, and is that unction they receive from the Holy One, their great High Priest; by this the ear is sanctified so as to hear the word, so as to understand it and mix it with faith; and the thumb of the right hand having oil put on that, may signify that the actions of good men are influenced by the Spirit of God, who works in them both to will and to do, and without whose grace they can do nothing in a spiritual manner; and the great toe of the right foot, the instrument of walking, being anointed with the same, may denote that it is through the grace of God saints have their conversation in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ: the oil was to be put,

upon the blood of the trespass offering; that is, upon the place of the blood of it, as in Le 14:28; which is, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it, the place in which he put at first the blood of the trespass offering: for the Jewish writers observe {z}, that the log of oil depended on the trespass offering; for if the flood of the trespass offering was not first sprinkled, the sprinkling of the oil was of no avail: this shows that the blood of Christ, is the foundation of men's receiving the grace of the Spirit, and that it is owing to that it is bestowed upon them; the application of his grace follows redemption by the blood of Christ, who gave himself to redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and for whomsoever expiation is made by the blood of Christ, they are sanctified by the Spirit of Christ.

{z} Bartenora in Misn. Zebachim, c. 4. sect. 3.

Leviticus 14:18

Ver. 18. And the remnant of the oil that [is] in the priests hand,.... Either in the hand of the priest that makes the leper clean, or in the hand of a fellow priest; what was left of that after some of it had been sprinkled seven times before the Lord, and after other of it had been put upon the several parts of the leper, as directed in
Le 14:17:

he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed; for the plague of leprosy was sometimes in the head, Le 13:44; and this may denote either the blessings of grace on the head of the righteous, or that a man's head should be sanctified; he should have pure principles as well as pure practices; and that his head knowledge should be sanctified knowledge; some have only the form of godliness, but deny the power of it:

and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord; by putting the oil on the several parts, particularly on the head, which was done, as is said in the Misnah {a}, to make atonement; if he puts it, atonement is made, but if he does not put it, there is no atonement made; but one would think rather the atonement refers to all the priest did, both in offering the trespass offering, and in putting both the blood of that and the oil on the several parts that are mentioned: this atonement was made for the sin or sins which were the cause or the man's leprosy: what was done with the rest of the log of oil is not said; it was the portion of the priests, and was for their use: Maimonides says {b}, the rest of the log of oil is not eaten but in the court by the males of the priests, as other the most holy things; and that it is unlawful to eat thereof until the priest had sprinkled of it seven times, and put it on the above parts; and if one eats he is to be beaten.

{a} Ut supra. (Misn. negaim, c. 14. sect. 8.) {b} Ut supra, (Mechosre Capharah, c. 4.) sect. 3.

Leviticus 14:19

Ver. 19. And the priest shall offer the sin offering,.... This was the ewe lamb, according to the rite of every sin offering, as Aben Ezra says; and was typical of Christ, as all such offerings were, who was made sin and a sin offering for his people:

and make an atonement for him that was to be cleansed from his uncleanness; for it seems the atonement was not perfected by the trespass offering and all the preceding rites; but a sin offering was necessary both on account of moral uncleanness, the cause of the leprosy, and of ceremonial uncleanness by it:

and afterward he shall kill the burnt offering; the other he lamb; the burnt offering for the most part following the sin or trespass offering as a gift by way of thankfulness, atonement being made for sin by the other offerings; which also was typical of Christ, as all burnt offerings were.

Leviticus 14:20

Ver. 20. And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meat offering upon the altar,.... The meat offering which belonged to that, and went along with it, even one tenth deal of fine flour mingled with oil; but no mention being made of any meat offering with the other offerings already offered, the trespass offering and the sin offering; some say, as Aben Ezra observes, that the whole meat offering, consisting of three tenth deals of fine flour, was offered with the burnt offering, which must be a saving to the priest, if he only burnt one handful of it, as in other cases, the rest falling to his part:

and the priest shall make an atonement for him; these offerings still furthering of it, and sending to perfect it, and did complete it:

and he shall be clean; in a typical and ceremonial sense.

Leviticus 14:21

Ver. 21. And if he [be] poor, and cannot get so much,.... As three lambs, and three tenth deals of fine flour:

then he shall take one lamb [for] a trespass offering to be waved, to make an atonement for him; one he lamb, and was excused the other he lamb for a burnt offering, and the ewe lamb for a sin offering; but a lamb he must bring, a type of Christ the Lamb of God, for without his blood and sacrifice there is no atonement for rich poor, but for both thereby:

and one tenth deal of flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: instead three tenth deals; this abatement in the several kinds of offerings was a great indulgence to the poor, and an instance of God's goodness to them, that they might not be pressed above measure, and yet share the same benefits and advantages as the rich:

and a log of oil; here was no abatement in this, nor was there need of any; half a pint of oil, in a country which abounded with it, might be bought for a small price: however, the grace of the Spirit, signified by oil, is to be had freely of Christ, and in as large a quantity by a poor man as by a rich man, and is equally necessary to the one as to the other, who are all one in Christ Jesus; see **Ga 3:28**.

Leviticus 14:22

Ver. 22. And two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to get,.... As good as he can get for his money, or his money he is possessed of will purchase; but if he was not able to purchase these of the better sort, the best he could get would be acceptable; so indulgent, kind, and merciful was God to the poor in this case; these were instead of the other two lambs required of those that were able to bring them, and answered all the purposes of them:

and the one shall be a sin offering, and the other a burnt offering: one of the turtledoves or one of the young pigeons should be for the one, and the other for the other; so that the poor man had as many offerings for his atonement and cleansing as the rich, and his expiation and purgation were as complete as theirs.

Leviticus 14:23

Ver. 23. And he shall bring them on the eighth day, for his cleansing,.... Which supposes him to have gone through all the rites and ceremonies of cleansing throughout the seven days, from his first appearance before the priest; such as his being sprinkled with the cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet, dipped in the blood of the slain bird, mixed with running water; the shaving off of his hair, and washing his flesh and clothes in water; all which being done, on the eighth day he was to bring his lamb for a trespass offering, and one tenth deal of fine flour, for a meat offering, and two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering:

unto the priest, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord; where the rich man also and his offerings were presented; See Gill on "Le 14:11"; and the same rites are enjoined for the cleansing of the poor leper as the rich one, in Le 14:23, of which see the notes on Le 14:12, signifying that they are not exempt from duty, or abridged of any privilege on account of poverty; the persons and services of the people of God being equally acceptable to him, whether rich or poor.

Leviticus 14:24

Ver. 24. And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass offering,.... See Gill on "Le 14:12".

Leviticus 14:25

Ver. 25. And he shall kill the lamb of the trespass offering,....
See Gill on "Le 14:13".

and the priest shall take [some] of the blood of the trespass offering, &c. See Gill on "Le 14:14".

Leviticus 14:26

Ver. 26. And the priest shall pour of the oil into the palm of his own left hand. See Gill on "Le 14:15".

Leviticus 14:27

Ver. 27. And the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger [some] of the oil,.... See Gill on "Le 14:16".

Leviticus 14:28

Ver. 28. And the priest shall put of the oil that [is] in his hand,.... See Gill on "Le 14:17".

Leviticus 14:29

Ver. 29. And the rest of the oil that [is] in the priest's hand,....
See Gill on "Le 14:18".

Leviticus 14:30

Ver. 30. And he shall offer the one of the turtledoves,....
See Gill on "Le 14:22".

Leviticus 14:31

Ver. 31. [Even] such as he is able to get, the one [for] a sin offering,.... See Gill on "Le 14:22".

Leviticus 14:32

Ver. 32. This [is] the law [of him] in whom [is] the plague of leprosy,.... The former part of the chapter contains an account of the laws, rites, and ceremonies of a leper who was able to bear the expenses them: this latter part respects such laws, rites, and ceremonies, that belonged to him:

whose hand is not able to get [that which pertaineth] to his cleansing; as the three lambs and three tenth deals of fine flour, and therefore one lamb, and one tenth deal of fine flour, and two turtles or two young pigeons, were admitted of in the room of them, in consideration of his poverty. The Jewish canons respecting the cases of a poor and rich leper are these {c}: if a poor leper offers the sacrifice of a rich man, it is very well; but if a rich leper offers the sacrifice of a poor one, it is not sufficient; if a poor leper offers his sacrifice and he becomes rich, or if when rich, and he afterwards becomes poor, all goes after the sin offering; that is, as they {d} explain it, if a man when he offers his sin offering is poor, and so his offering is of a turtle or pigeon, though he should become rich he must finish the offering of the poor, by bringing for a burnt offering one of the fowls; and so if he was rich, and offered the sin offering out of the lambs, though he should become poor, he must offer the burnt offering of the same; but the trespass offering is generally pitched upon as the rule in which the poor and the rich were equal: and Maimonides {e} says, all goes after the trespass offering; as if at the time of slaying the trespass offering he is rich, he must finish the offering of a rich man, but if poor he must finish the offering of a poor man: it may be observed that a great deal of notice is taken of a leper, and strict inquiry made into the nature of leprosy, and the various signs of it given; and a great deal to do about the cleansing and expiation of him; all which shows what notice God takes of leprous sinners, and what a diligent scrutiny should be made into the evil nature of sin, and what a provision God has made for the cleansing and atonement of sinners by the blood and sacrifice of his Son; which is here typified by all sorts of offerings, the sin offering, the trespass offering, the burnt offering, and the meat offering.

{c} Misn. Negaim, c. 14. sect. 11, 12. {d} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {e} Hilchot Mechosre Capharah, c. 5. sect. 9.

Leviticus 14:33

Ver. 33. And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron,.... At the same time as the above laws were delivered concerning the leper, and the cleansing of him, or however immediately upon that; the affair of the leprosy of houses being what belonged to the priest to examine into and cleanse from:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 14:34

Ver. 34. When ye be come into the land of Canaan,.... Which as yet they were not come to, being in the wilderness, and so the following law concerning the leprosy in houses could not yet take place, they now dwelling in tents, and not in houses:

which I give to you for a possession; the Lord had given it to Abraham, and his seed, long ago, to be their inheritance, and now he was about to put them into the possession of it, which they were to hold as their own under God, their sovereign Lord and King:

and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession; by which it appears that this kind of leprosy was from the immediate hand of God, and was supernatural and miraculous, as the Jewish writers affirm {f}; nor is there anything in common, or at least in our parts of the world, that is answerable unto it; and from hence the same writers {g} conclude, that houses of Gentiles are exempt from it, only the houses of the Israelites in the land of Canaan had it; and they likewise except Jerusalem, and say {h}, that was not defiled with the plague of leprosy, as it is written, "and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession"; for Jerusalem was not divided among the tribes; and they suppose, whenever it was put into any house, it was on account of some sin or sins committed by the owner; and so the Targum of Jonathan, and there be found a man that builds his house with rapine and violence, then I will put the plague, &c. thought they commonly ascribe it to evil speaking, which they gather from the case of Miriam.

{f} Maimonides, Abarbinel, Abraham Seba, and others. {g} Misn. Negaim, c. 12. sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {h} T. Bab. Eruvin, fol. 82. 2. Misn. Negaim, c. 12. sect. 4. Gersom in loc.

Leviticus 14:35

Ver. 35. And he that owneth the house shall come, and tell the priest,.... As soon as he observes any sign of leprosy in it, or which gives him a suspicion of it:

saying, it seemeth unto me [there is] as it were a plague in the house; he must not say expressly there is one, how certain soever he may be of it, because the matter must be determined by a priest: so runs the Jewish canon {i}, he whose the house is comes and declares to the priest, saying, there appears to me as a plague in the house; and though he is a wise man, and knows that there is a plague certainly, he may not determine, and say, there appears to me a plague in the house, but there appears to me as it were a plague in the house; it looks like one, there is some reason to suspect it.

{i} Misn. Negaim, c. 12. sect. 5. Jarchi in loc.

Leviticus 14:36

Ver. 36. Then the priest shall command that they empty the house,.... Clear it of all persons and things; everybody was obliged to go out of it; and all the furniture of it, all the household goods in it, were to be removed from it:

before the priest go [into it] to see the plague, that all that [is] in the house be not made clean; as would be the case should the priest view it, and pronounce it unclean before the removal of them; agreeably to which is the Jewish tradition {k}, before a priest comes to see the plague, not anything in the house is defiled; but after he is come to see it, even bundles of sticks, and of reeds, are defiled, which are not reckoned under the uncleanness to be removed: so that this was a kindness to the owner of the house, that his loss might not be so great as it otherwise would be, if he did not take care to get his goods out previous to the inspection of the priest:

and afterward the priest shall go in to see the house; to examine it, whether the signs of leprosy are in it.

{k} Misn. Nagaim, c. 12. sect. 5.

Leviticus 14:37

Ver. 37. And he shall look on the plague,.... That which is taken or suspected to be one, being pointed unto by the owner of the house:

and, behold, [if] the plague [be] in the walls of the house; for there it chiefly was, if not solely; and from hence Gersom infers that it must be a walled house, and that it must have four walls, neither more nor fewer; and with this agrees the Misnah {l}, according to which it must be four square; the signs of which were, when it appeared,

with hollow strakes, greenish or reddish, which in sight [are] lower than the wall: these signs agree with the other signs before given of leprosy in men and garments; the first, the hollow strakes, which are explained by being lower in appearance than the wall, a sort of corrosion or eating into it, which made cavities in it, answer to the plague being deeper than the skin of the flesh in men; and the colours greenish or reddish, or exceeding green or red, as Gersom, are the same with those of the leprosy in clothes; and some such like appearances are in saltpetre walls, or in walls eaten by saline and nitrous particles; and also by sulphureous, oily, and arsenical ones, as Scheuchzer observes {m}, and are not only tending to ruin, but unhealthful, as if they had rather been eaten by a canker or spreading ulcer; who also speaks of a fossil, called in the German language "steingalla", that is, the gall of stones, by which they are easily eaten into, because of the vitriolic salt of the fire stone, which for the most part goes along with that mineral, which is dissolved by the moist air. Though this leprosy, in the walls of a house, seems not to have risen from any natural causes, but was from the immediate hand of God; and there have been strange diseases, which have produced uncommon effects on houses, and other things: in the times of Narses is said to be a great plague, especially in the province of Liguria, and on a sudden appeared certain marks and prints on houses, doors, vessels, and clothes, which, if they attempted to wash off, appeared more and more {n}.

{l} Misn. Nagaim, c. 12. sect. 1, 2. {m} Physica Sacra, vol. 3. p. 330, 331. {n} Warnefrid de Gest. Longobard. l. 2. apud Scheuchzer. ib.

Leviticus 14:38

Ver. 38. Then the priest shall go out of the house to the door of the house,.... Thereby signifying that it was not fit to be inhabited, and there standing to see it shut up, as follows:

and shut up the house seven days: to observe what alteration would be made in that time, and which would sooner be discovered in a house uninhabited.

Leviticus 14:39

Ver. 39. And the priest shall come again the seventh day, and shall look,.... On the seventh day from his shutting of it up, he shall open it again, go into it, and observe in what condition it is:

and, behold, [if] the plague be spread in the walls of the house: the hollow strakes are become deeper, or the coloured spots are become larger: spreading was always a sign of leprosy, both in the bodies of men, and in garments.

Leviticus 14:40

Ver. 40. Then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague [is],.... In there appeared any cavities, or the above colours, and these spreading: in order to put a stop thereunto, these stones were to be drawn or pulled out, as the word signifies, in such manner as not to endanger the fall of the house, and two stones at least were to be taken out; for, as Gersom says, a house was not shut up unless the plague appeared on two stones:

and they shall cast them into an unclean place without the city; where dead carcasses were laid, and dung, and filth of every sort; and being laid in such a place, it would be known that they were unclean, as Aben Ezra observes, and so would not be made use of for any purpose.

Leviticus 14:41

Ver. 41. And he shall cause the house to be scraped within round about,.... All the walls on each side, and at each end, and every stone in them; which, though they had no appearance on them, yet should there be any infection in them, which as yet was not seen, it might be removed, and a spread prevented:

and they shall pour out the dust that they scrape off without the city, into an unclean place; the scrapings they were to put into some vessel, and carry them thither and pour them out, or into a cart, and there throw them, that they might lie with other rubbish, and not be made use of any more.

Leviticus 14:42

Ver. 42. And they shall take other stones,.... From elsewhere, such as are sound and whole:

and put [them] in the place of these stones; such as will exactly answer them, as to number and size, and so fill up the space vacant by the removal of the other, and support the building:

and he shall take other mortar, and plaster the house; the master of the house was to do this, or take care that it was done; but others by the order of the priest, as they took away the tainted stones, put others in their place.

Leviticus 14:43

Ver. 43. And if the plague come again, and break out in the house,.... In the above signs of it:

after that he hath taken away the stones; which were infected, or ordered them to be taken away:

and after he hath scraped the house; so that there seemed to be no remains of the plague:

and after it is plastered; to prevent if possible any return of it, but in vain.

Leviticus 14:44

Ver. 44. Then the priest shall come and look,.... On the seventh day of the second week; though, according to Maimonides {o}, this was at the end of the third seven day, or on the nineteenth day from his first inspection into it; the seventh day being reckoned for the last of the first week, and the first of the second, and so on:

and, behold, [if] the plague be spread in the house; after all the above precaution is taken;

it [is] a fretting leprosy in the house; like that in the garment,
See Gill on "Le 13:51":

it [is] unclean; and so not to be inhabited.

{o} Hilchot Tumaat Tzarat, c. 15. sect. 1, 2.

Leviticus 14:45

Ver. 45. And he shall break down the house,.... Order it to be pulled down, and demolished entirely, that is, the priest shall give such orders; but Gersom thinks this was to be done by the owner of the house, and that he was to do it himself, and have no associate with him in it:

the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and, according to the Jewish canons, a house was not defiled with the plague of leprosy, unless it had in it stones, and timber, and dust, or earth; a house which had not stones, timber, and dust in it, and the plague appeared in it, even if anyone after that brought in stones; timber, and dust, it was clean {p}:

and he shall carry [them] forth out of the city unto an unclean place: such materials were not to be made use of to rebuild that house, or to be employed in the building of any other. This house may be an emblem of a visible church of God on earth, which is often in Scripture compared to an house, as that signifies both an edifice and a family, and is sometimes called the house of the living God; and into which sometimes the leprosy of immorality and profaneness gets and spreads, or of errors and heresies, which creep in unawares, spread themselves gradually, and sometimes very fast, and eat as do a canker, and are very troublesome and defiling; and which God permits to enter in, that they which are approved might be made manifest: now when this is the case, or there is any appearance of it, the priests, the ministers of the Lord, are to be told of it, who are to examine into it, and rebuke sharply, as the case requires; and care is to be taken that the infection spread not; the tainted stones, immoral or heretical persons, are to be removed from the communion of the church, and others to be put in their room, as may present; such as are dug out of the common quarry of nature, and separated from the rest of the world, and are hewn and squared by the Spirit and grace of God, and are become lively stones; such are to be added to the church for the support and increase of it. Sharp reproofs are to be given to those who are incorrigible, which may be signified by the scraping of the house; and forgiveness, tenderness, and love, that covers a multitude of sins, are to be shown to those who truly repent, of which plastering may be an emblem; but if, after all, the above disorders in principle and practice spread, and they appear to be incurable, then the house is pulled down, the church-state or candlestick is removed out of its place. And this may be illustrated in two instances, first in the Jewish church, which is sometimes called the house of Israel, and in which great corruptions prevailed, especially in the times of Christ and his apostles; and all means of reformation then being ineffectual, it was utterly destroyed, their ecclesiastical state, and all the ordinances of it; the temple, the house of God, was demolished, and not one stone left upon another, Mt 24:2; and next in the church of Rome, once a church of God, a temple of his, where antichrist rose up and sat, and has by him been overspread with the leprosy of immorality, false doctrine, superstitious and idolatrous worship; and at times God has been emptying it, or removing his own people out of it, and will do so again before the utter destruction of it, which is hastening on; when it will be utterly demolished, as Babylon its emblem was, so that a stone of it shall not be taken, either for foundations or for a corner, Jer 51:26. This also may be applied to the earthly houses of our tabernacles, in which the leprosy of sin is so deeply rooted, that, until they are dissolved, it will never be removed, notwithstanding all the means made use of for the mortification of the deeds of the body.

{p} Misn. Negaim, c. 12. sect. 2.

Leviticus 14:46

Ver. 46. Moreover, he that goeth into the house all the while it is shut up,.... The utmost of which were three weeks, as Jarchi observes; during the time a house was shut up, no man might enter it: if he did, he

shall be unclean until the evening; might not have any conversation with men until the evening was come, and he had washed himself; nay, according to the Misnah {q}, if a clean person thrust in his head, or the greatest part of his body, into an unclean house, he was defiled; and whoever entered into a leprous house, and his clothes are on his shoulder, and his sandals (on his feet), and his rings on his hands, he and they are unclean immediately; and if he has his clothes on, and his sandals on his feet, and his rings on his hands, he is immediately defiled, and they are clean.

{q} Misn. Negaim, c. 12. sect. 8, 9.

Leviticus 14:47

Ver. 47. And he that lieth in the house shall wash his clothes,.... Which is more than bare entrance into it, and might be supposed the more to be infected by it, and therefore obliged to the washing of himself, and his garments:

and he that eateth in the house shall wash his clothes; if he stayed no longer than while he ate half a piece of wheaten bread he was clean, but not if he stayed so long as to eat a like quantity of barley bread, and sat down and ate it with food {r}.

{r} Misn. Negaim, c. 13. sect. 8, 9.

Leviticus 14:48

Ver. 48. And if the priest shall come in, and look [upon it],.... That is, on the seventh day of the second week of its being shut up:

and, behold, the plague hath not spread in the house, after the house was plastered; See Gill on "Le 14:42":

then the priest shall pronounce the house clean; fit to be inhabited, and so no more to be shut up, but free for use as before:

because the plague is healed; the infection being wholly removed by taking out the stones, scraping, and plastering the house, and so an entire stop put to the spread of it.

Leviticus 14:49

Ver. 49. And he shall take to cleanse the house,.... The priest, or by his fellow priest, as Aben Ezra, though some interpret it of the master of the house; in Le 14:49, an account is given of the manner of cleansing a leprous house, which is the same with that of cleansing a leprous man, see notes on Le 14:4-7,

Two birds. The birds here indeed are not described as "alive and clean", Le 14:4; but both are plainly implied and the house is said to be cleansed with the blood of the slain bird, as well as with the living bird; and it was the upper door post of the house which was sprinkled seven times with it, but there were no sacrifices offered; in this case, as in the cleansing of the leper, the atonement for it was made by the other rites, which were sufficient to render it habitable again, and free for use, either of the owner or any other person;

and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. See Gill on "Le 14:4".

Leviticus 14:50

Ver. 50. And he shall kill the one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water. See Gill on "Le 14:5".

Leviticus 14:51

Ver. 51. And he shall take the cedar wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet, and the living bird,.... See Gill on "Le 14:6".

and sprinkle the house seven times. See Gill on "Le 14:7".

Leviticus 14:52

Ver. 52. And he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird,.... See Gill on "Le 14:4".

Leviticus 14:53

Ver. 53. But he shall let go the living bird out of the city into the open fields,.... See Gill on "Le 14:7".

Leviticus 14:54

Ver. 54. This [is] the law for all manner of plague of leprosy, and scall. The leprosy in general in the bodies of men, and of that in particular which was on the head and beard, and went by the name of the scall, Le 13:29. In Le 14:54 is a recapitulation of the several laws and rules relating to leprosy of all kinds, delivered in this and the preceding chapter.

Leviticus 14:55

Ver. 55. And for the leprosy of a garment,.... Of which see
Le 13:47;

and of an house; largely treated of in this chapter, Le 14:34.

Leviticus 14:56

Ver. 56. And for a rising, and for a scab, and for a bright spot. Which were three sorts of leprosy in the skin of man's flesh;
See Gill on "Le 13:2".

Leviticus 14:57

Ver. 57. To teach when [it is] unclean, and when it is clean,.... A man, his garment, or his house; for it respects them all, as Aben Ezra observes; which was the business of the priests to teach men, and they by the above laws and rules were instructed how to judge of cases, and by which they were capable of pronouncing persons or things clean or unclean:

this [is] the law of leprosy; respecting every sort of it, and which is very remarkably enlarged upon.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 15

This chapter treats of uncleanness by issues in men and women; in men, a running issue, Le 15:1, which defiles him, and everything he touches, or that touches him or them, Le 15:4; the cleansing from which is directed to, Le 15:13; and seed flowing from him, Le 15:16; in women, their ordinary courses, Le 15:19; or extraordinary ones, Le 15:25; and the law for the cleansing of them, Le 15:28; and a recapitulation of the whole, Le 15:32.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron,.... Aaron is spoken to as well Moses, because some of these purifications, after mentioned, depended on the priest, as the affair of profluvious men and women, as Gersom observes:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 15:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel,.... From whence we learn, says the above mentioned writer, that these uncleannesses were only usual among the children of Israel, not among the Gentiles; that is, the laws respecting them were only binding on the one, and not on the other {s}:

and say unto them, when any man; in the Hebrew text it is, "a man, a man", which the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases, a young man, and an old man:

hath a running issue out of his flesh; what physicians call a "gonorrhoea", and we, as in the margin of our Bibles, "the running of the reins":

[because of] his issue, he [is] unclean; in a ceremonial sense, though it arises from a natural cause; but if not from any criminal one, from a debauch, but from a strain, or some such like thing, the man was not defiled, otherwise he was; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"if he sees it three times he is unclean;"

so the Misnah {t}.

{s} So Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Edaiot, c. 5. sect. 1. {t} Zabim, c. 1. sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Leviticus 15:3

Ver. 3. And this shall be his uncleanness in his issue,.... Or the sign of it, by which it may be judged whether he is unclean by it or no:

whether his flesh run with his issue; or salivates, or emits a flow of matter like a saliva, or in the manner of spittle:

or his flesh be stopped from his issue; with it, or because of it; because it is gross, as Jarchi says, it cannot come forth freely:

it [is] his uncleanness; whether it be one or the other, he is reckoned on account of it an unclean person. This was an emblem of the corruption and vitiosity of nature, and of all evil things that are in or flow out of the evil heart of man, which are defiling to him; see
Mt 15:18.

Leviticus 15:4

Ver. 4. Every bed whereon he lieth that hath the issue is unclean,.... Which he constantly makes use of; so the Targum of Jonathan, which is peculiar to him, and appointed and appropriated for him to lie upon. Jarchi says, every bed that is fit to lie upon, thou is appropriated to another service; but, he adds meaning is, which he shall lie upon (or continue to lie upon); for it is not said, which he hath laid upon, but which he lieth upon, and is used by him continually; according to the Misnah {u}, a man that has an issue defiles a bed five ways, so as to defile a man, and to defile garments; standing, sitting, lying, hanging, and leaning:

and everything whereon he sitteth shall be unclean; which is appropriated to sit upon; and so the Targum, as before, what is his proper peculiar seat, what he is used to sit upon, and is fit for that purpose: and it is observed by some Jewish writers {w} that a vessel that is not fit to sit upon is excluded, as if a man was to turn up a bushel, or any other measure, to sit upon it; see **Tit 1:15**.

{u} Zabim, c. 2. sect. 4. {w} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Niddah, c. 6. sect. 3.

Leviticus 15:5

Ver. 5. And whosoever toucheth his bed,.... Is unclean. According to the Misnah {x}, a bed defiles a man seven ways, so as to defile garments; standing, sitting, lying, hanging, and leaning, and by touching, and by bearing:

shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water; in forty seahs of water, as the Targum of Jonathan:

and be unclean until the even; be unfit for conversation with other men till the even, though both his body and clothes are washed.

{x} Zabim, ut supra. (c. 2. sect. 4.)

Leviticus 15:6

Ver. 6. And he that sitteth on [any] thing whereon he sat that hath the issue,.... Shall be unclean, even though he does not touch it. Jarchi says, though there should be, as he adds, ten things or vessels one upon another, they all defile because of sitting, and so by lying:

shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even; as in the preceding case. See Gill on "Le 15:5".

Leviticus 15:7

Ver. 7. And he that toucheth the flesh of him that hath the issue,.... Shall also be unclean, even any part of his flesh, or member of his body: the Jewish canon is {y}, he that toucheth one that has an issue, or he that has an issue touches him, or anyone moves him that has an issue, or he moves him, defiles food, and drink, and washing vessels by touching, but not by bearing; and particularly touching the issue itself is instanced in, and such a man's spittle, &c. are defiled:

shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even; as before. See Gill on "Le 15:5".

{y} Zabim, c. 5. sect. 1, 7.

Leviticus 15:8

Ver. 8. And if he that hath the issue spit upon him that is clean,.... Not purposely, which is not usual for a man to do, and whenever it is done, nothing is more affronting; but accidentally, when, as Aben Ezra expresses it, he spreads his spittle, and it falls upon a clean person; and under this, as Gersom observes, is comprehended whatever is brought up by coughing, as phlegm, or flows from the nose, or is pressed out of it; and so Maimonides {z}: and this may denote all corrupt communication which proceeds out of the mouth of evil men, whether immoral or heretical, which not only defiles the man himself, but those he converses with; for evil communication corrupts good manners:

then he shall wash his clothes, &c. as in the foregoing instances.
See Gill on "Le 15:5".

{z} Hilchot Metame Mishcab, c. 1. sect. 16.

Leviticus 15:9

Ver. 9. And what saddle soever he sitteth upon that hath the issue,.... When he rides upon any beast, horse, ass, or camel, whatever is put upon the creature, and he sits upon it, the saddle, and whatever appertains to it, the housing and girdle:

shall be unclean; and not fit for another to use, but be defiling to him, as follows.

Leviticus 15:10

Ver. 10. And whosoever toucheth anything that was under him shall be unclean until the even,.... Either when lying along, or sitting, or riding, as in Le 15:4; various are the traditions of the Jews concerning these things; if one that has an issue and a clean person sit together, in a ship, or on a beam, or ride together on a beast, though their garments do not touch, they are unclean, &c. {a}:

and he that beareth [any of] those things; that carries any of the above things from place to place, as his bed, his seat, his saddle, or anything on which he has lain, sat, or rode.

shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even; See Gill on "Le 15:5".

{a} Misn. Zabim, c. 3. sect. 1. & c. 4. sect. 5, 7.

Leviticus 15:11

Ver. 11. And whomsoever he toucheth that hath the issue,.... Not only he that touched him that had the issue, but whomsoever, and indeed whatsoever he touched, as the Targum of Jonathan, the Septuagint, and Arabic versions, were unclean; See Gill on "Le 15:4";

and hath not rinsed his hands in water; which is to be understood, not of the man that is touched, but of him that toucheth; and is interpreted by the Jewish writers, generally, of bathing the whole body; according to Aben Ezra, the simple sense is, every clean person, whom he that hath an issue touches and hath rinsed his hands, he is indeed unclean, but not his garments; and if his hands are not rinsed his garments are unclean, and this is as he that touches all that is under him; wherefore it follows:

he shall wash his clothes, &c. that is, if a man is touched, as the Targum of Jonathan, and not a thing, as directed and prescribed in the above cases instanced in; all which are designed to instruct men to abstain from conservation with impure persons in doctrine and practice.

Leviticus 15:12

Ver. 12. And the vessel of earth that he toucheth which hath an issue shall be broken,.... That it might not be made use of afterwards; which was ordered, that they might be careful what they touched who were in such circumstances: according to Gersom an earthen vessel received no uncleanness but from the middle, though he owns the law does not distinguish between the middle and the outside; wherefore Jarchi is of opinion, that if the back or outside of it was touched, it was unclean, and to be broken:

and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water; and after that be used: what should be the reason why an earthen vessel defiled by touching should be broken, and a wooden vessel defiled in the same way should not, but be rinsed and cleansed, when an earthen vessel might as well be rinsed and fit for use as that, is not easy to say; it depended upon the will of the lawgiver: according to Ainsworth, the one may signify the destruction of reprobate persons, the other the cleansing of penitent sinners.

Leviticus 15:13

Ver. 13. And when he that hath an issue is cleansed of his issue,.... That is, it is ceased from him, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi explain it; for otherwise, according to the ceremonial law, he was not yet cleansed, until he had done everything next prescribed; but when he perceived there was an entire stop put to his disorder:

then he shall number to himself seven days for his cleansing; by which time it would appear whether he was thoroughly rid of it or not; and these seven days, as Jarchi observes, must be seven pure days, quite free from pollution, and continued in a constant course, without interruption; for, as Gersom says, if he saw any impurity in anyone of these days it did not come into the account: nay, according to Maimonides {b}, he must begin to number again from the day of the last appearance:

and wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running water; typical of the fountain opened in Christ to wash in for sin and uncleanness, even the fountain of his blood, which cleanses from all sin; and in which both the persons and garments of the saints are washed and made white:

and shall be clean; in a ceremonial sense; as all that are washed from their sins in the blood of Christ are clean in a spiritual and evangelical sense.

{b} Hilchot Mechosre Capharah, c. 3. sect. 1.

Leviticus 15:14

Ver. 14. And on the eighth day,.... Having on the seventh done as before directed:

he shall take to him two turtledoves, or two young pigeons; of his own, or purchase them; this was the meanest offering that was brought, and of the least expense, and which, in other cases, the poorer sort were allowed to bring, but here it was the offering of poor and rich:

and come before the Lord unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; not into the tabernacle, where he was not admitted till the sacrifice was offered, and atonement made; but he was to stand at the door of the tabernacle, at the eastern gate; and so fronting the west, where stood the holy of holies, the place of the divine Majesty, he is said to come before the Lord, presenting himself to him to be cleansed:

and give them unto the priest; the two doves or pigeons, to be offered for him according to the usual rites.

Leviticus 15:15

Ver. 15. And the priest shall offer them, the one [for] a sin offering, and the other [for] a burnt offering,.... As in the case of a new mother who is poor, and of a poor leper, Le 12:8;

and the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord for his issue; which, though not in itself sinful, yet might be occasioned by sin, for which the atonement was made: or, however, it was a ceremonial uncleanness, and therefore a ceremonial expiation must he made for it, typical of the atonement by the blood and sacrifice of Christ, by which all kinds of sin is expiated and removed.

Leviticus 15:16

Ver. 16. And if any man's seed of copulation go out from him,.... Not in lawful cohabitation, nor voluntarily, but involuntarily, as Aben Ezra observes; not through any disorder, which came by an accident, or in any criminal way, but through a dream, or any lustful imagination; what is commonly called nocturnal pollution {c};

then he shall wash all his flesh in water, and be unclean until the even; and so the Egyptian priests, when it happened that they were defiled by a dream, they immediately purified themselves in a laver {d} so the Jewish priests did when the like happened to them asleep in the temple {e}; see De 23:10.

{c} "----& noctem flumine purgas." Pers. Satyr. 2. {d} Chaeremon. apud Porphyr. de Abstinentia, l. 4. c. 7. {e} Misn. Tamid. c. 1. sect. 1.

Leviticus 15:17

Ver. 17. And every garment, and every skin,.... Or that is made of skin, which a man wears, or lies upon, see Le 13:48;

whereon is the seed of copulation; or on any other, for, as Gersom says, there is the same law concerning the rest of vessels, seeing this is a principal uncleanness, and defiles vessels; and perhaps the law makes mention of these, because it is more apt to be found on them:

shall be washed with water, and be unclean until the even; see **Jude 1:23**.

Leviticus 15:18

Ver. 18. The woman also with whom man shall lie [with] seed of copulation,.... It seems to respect any congress of a man and woman, whether in fornication or adultery, or lawful marriage, and particularly the latter; for though marriage is honourable and holy, and carnal copulation in itself lawful, yet such is the sinfulness of nature, that as no act is performed without pollution, so neither that of generation, and by which the corruption of nature is propagated, and therefore required a ceremonial cleansing:

they shall [both] bathe [themselves] in water, and be unclean until the even; so Herodotus {f} reports, that as often as a Babylonian man lay with his wife, he had used to sit by consecrated incense, and the woman did the same: and in the morning they were both washed, and did not touch any vessel before they had washed themselves; and he says the Arabians did the like: and the same historian relates {g} of the Egyptians, that they never go into their temples from their wives unwashed; see Ex 19:15.

{f} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 198. {g} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 64.

Leviticus 15:19

Ver. 19. And if a woman have an issue,.... Having finished, as Aben Ezra observes, what was to be said of the male, now the Scripture begins with the female, whose issue, of a different sort, is thus described:

[and] her issue in her flesh be blood; or, "blood be her issue in her flesh"; not in any part of her, but in that which by an euphemism is so called, in the same sense as the phrase is used of men, Le 15:2; and so it distinguishes it from any flow of blood elsewhere, as a bleeding at the nose, &c.

she shall be put apart seven days; not out of the camp, nor out of the house, but might not go into the house of God:

whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even; the same as one that had touched a man that had an issue, Le 15:7; the pollution of the one reached to the same things as that of the other; and so, in the Misnah {h}, they are put together, and the same is ascribed to the touch of the one as of the other; it may be understood of everything as well as of every person.

{h} Zabim, c. 5. sect. 6, 7.

Leviticus 15:20

Ver. 20. And everything that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean,.... During her being apart from her husband, with whom she might be, and do all offices for him, but not lie with him; and whatsoever she lay upon during this time, bed or couch, and the clothes upon them, were unclean:

everything also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean; chair, stool, &c. as is the case of a man, Le 15:4.

Leviticus 15:21

Ver. 21. And whosoever toucheth her bed,.... The same thing that is said of a profluvious man, and so in Le 15:22.

Leviticus 15:22

Ver. 22. And whosoever toucheth anything that she sat upon,.... Which was appropriated to her to sit upon, as the Targum of Jonathan, which was her proper and peculiar seat, what she usually sat upon; such were obliged to wash their clothes and bathe, as in all the above cases. See Le 15:5.

Leviticus 15:23

Ver. 23. And if it [be] on [her] bed, or on anything whereon she sitteth,.... That is, if any person or thing should be upon her bed or seat; a vessel on her bed, or a vessel upon a vessel, as Aben Ezra expresses it:

when he toucheth it; that person or thing that should be on her bed or seat, as well as touch her bed or seat:

shall be unclean until the even; in a ceremonial sense; so defiling was a woman in such circumstances, and to whom the Scriptures often compare unclean persons and things: and Pliny {i} speaks of menstrues as very infectious, or worse, to various creatures and things, in a natural way.

{i} Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 15.

Leviticus 15:24

Ver. 24. And if any man lie with her at all,.... Not presumptuously but ignorantly, as Aben Ezra observes; for he was guilty of cutting off, that lay with her wilfully, Le 20:18;

and her flowers be upon her; or, "her separation" {k}, her monthly courses not being ceased:

he shall be unclean seven days; and be excluded from all conversation civil and religious:

and all the bed whereon she lieth shall be unclean; that and every thing upon it; and this uncleanness also lasted seven days, as Aben Ezra notes, and defiled others, though it is not written.

{k} htdn "menstruum ejus", Pagninus, Montanus; "separatio ejus", Drusius.

Leviticus 15:25

Ver. 25. And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation,.... Not an ordinary but an extraordinary one, not within that time, but out of it, and which continued three days at least; so the Targum of Jonathan, and sometimes many years; as the poor woman Christ cured, which she had had twelve years,
See Gill on "Mt 9:20":

or if it run beyond the time of her separation; beyond the seven days of her separation, and so out of the usual way and time of it; whereby it appears to be somewhat extraordinary and unusual:

all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: all the while it was upon her, be it ever so many days or years, she was kept apart from her husband, and in all respects in the same condition and circumstances, as in the seven days of her separation because of her monthly courses:

she [shall be] unclean; as long as it is upon her, and neither be admitted to her husband's bed, nor to the house of God, which made her condition a very deplorable one.

Leviticus 15:26

Ver. 26. Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue shall be unto her as the bed of her separation,.... As defiled and as defiling as that, Le 15:20;

and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation; as such were when she was in that condition, see

Le 15:20.

Leviticus 15:27

Ver. 27. And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean,.... Her bed and seat; the Septuagint version is, "that toucheth her", see
Le 15:19;

and shall wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water, and be unclean until the even; let it be observed, that in all the above passages, where it is said, "he shall bathe [himself] in water", the Targum of Jonathan adds, in forty seahs or pecks of water; for this was done by dipping the body all over.

Leviticus 15:28

Ver. 28. But if she be cleansed of her issue,.... The disease is healed, or a stop is put to it; there are no signs of it remaining:

then she shall number to herself seven days; from the time she observed it to cease:

and after that she shall be clean; having bathed herself according to the usual manner of unclean persons, for their cleansing; when she would be fit to be admitted to her husband, though not as yet into the tabernacle, until she had offered her offering next directed to.

Leviticus 15:29

Ver. 29. And on the eighth day,.... From the cessation of her issue, and the healing of it, at least from the time she began to number for her cleansing:

she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons; the same as the man that had an issue was obliged to bring. Now this is to be understood not of a woman that had an ordinary issue, or her monthly courses; for this would have been both troublesome and expensive to have brought every month, but of a woman that had laboured under an extraordinary one; though some think every menstruous woman was obliged to this offering:

and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; whither the man that had an issue brought his;
See Gill on "Le 15:14".

Leviticus 15:30

Ver. 30. And the priest shall offer the one [for] a sin offering,.... As in the case of a man that had an issue, the offerings of one and the other were the same and for the same purpose; See Gill on "Le 15:15"; there being a legal uncleanness in their case, atonement must be made by sacrifice, typical of the atonement of Christ, who by himself has purged our sins. The design of these several laws concerning uncleanness by issues, was to set forth the filthiness of sin arising from the corruption of human nature; particularly the pollution of fleshly lusts, and the necessity of purification from them by the grace of God, and blood of Christ, and of holiness of heart and life, in order to a near approach to God, particularly in public worship, as the next words suggest.

Leviticus 15:31

Ver. 31. Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness,.... Or because of it, and while they are in it, as from other persons, even their nearest relations, and from the house of God, as the next clause shows; or teach them, by observing the above laws and rules, to separate themselves, and that they be careful and cautions to keep themselves apart while in such impurities; and the children of Israel are only made mention of, because these laws are only binding upon them, with their proselytes and servants, free or not free {l}, but not upon Gentiles; See Gill on "Le 15:2":

that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that [is] among them; from whence it appears, that men and women, in the above circumstances, might not go into the tabernacle; and it was chiefly to prevent their access to it that these laws were given, for the greater reverence and honour of it; and that for such persons to enter there was a pollution of it, and the punishment was cutting off, or death; and for one to die in his impurity, without purification and sacrifice, was a dreadful thing, and to be deprecated, and to be guarded against by an observance of the above laws. But the Jews now say {m}, that forasmuch as the reason of these precepts was, because such persons were forbidden to enter into the temple, that being destroyed, all these precepts of uncleanness are ceased also.

{l} Misn. Zabim, c. 2. sect. 1. {m} Leo Modena's History of Rites, Customs, &c. of the present Jews, par. 1. c. 8.

Leviticus 15:32

Ver. 32. This [is] the law of him that hath an issue,.... In Le 15:32 is a recapitulation of the several laws in this chapter, as of a man that has a "gonorrhoea":

and [of him] whose seed goeth from him, and is defiled therewith; involuntarily, that suffers a nocturnal pollution.

Leviticus 15:33

Ver. 33. And of her that is sick of her flowers,.... Her monthly courses, for these are a sickness, Le 20:18; and make a woman languid and faint, as the word is rendered, **La 1:13**; or to be in pain {n}, as some render it here; and pains are reckoned among the signs of them by the Misnic doctors {o}:

and of him that hath an issue, of the man, and of the woman; of both, whether the one or the other:

and of him that lieth with her that is unclean; though her own husband.

{n} hwdhw "et dolentis", Montanus. {o} Misn. Niddah, c. 9. sect. 8.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 16

This chapter treats of the day of atonement, and of the rites, sacrifices, and services of it, directs when Aaron should come into the holy of holies, Le 16:1; and in what habit he should then appear, and with what offerings both for himself, and for the people,
Le 16:3; and that having slain his own sin offering, and that for the people, he should offer incense before the mercy seat, and sprinkle that with the blood of

both, Le 16:11; and by these offerings make atonement for the holy place, the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, Le 16:16; and having done this, he was to take the live goat, lay his hands on it, confess over it, and put upon it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and then send it away by a fit man into the wilderness, Le 16:20; upon which he was to put off his linen garments, wash his flesh, and put them on again, and offer the burnt offering for himself, and for the people, Le 16:23; also he that let go the goat, and he that carried and burnt the sin offerings without the camp, were to wash themselves and clothes also,
Le 16:26; the observance of this day, once a year, which was on the tenth of the seventh month, as a day of affliction and atonement, was to be a statute for ever to the children of Israel, Le 16:29.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, after the death of the two sons of Aaron,.... That is, either immediately after their death, and so this chapter would have stood in its natural order next to the tenth; or else after the above laws concerning uncleanness on various accounts were delivered out, designed to prevent the people entering into the tabernacle defiled, whereby they would have incurred the penalty of death; wherefore, as Aben Ezra observes, after the Lord had given cautions to the Israelites, that they might not die, he bid Moses to caution Aaron also, that he might not die as his sons died; these were Nadab and Abihu:

when they offered before the Lord, and died; offered strange fire, and died by flaming fire, as the Targum of Jonathan; or fire sent down from heaven, as Gersom, by lightning; see Le 10:1.

Leviticus 16:2

Ver. 2. And the Lord said unto Moses, speak unto Aaron thy brother,.... Who was the high priest; and what is here said to him was binding on all high priests in succession from him:

that he come not at all times into the holy [place]; or "holiness" {p}, which was holiness itself, or the most holy place, as distinguished from that which was sometimes called the holy place, where stood the incense altar, the showbread table, and the candlestick, into which Aaron went every day, morning and evening, to do the service there enjoined him; but into the holy of holies here described, as appears by the after description of it, he might not go at all times, or every day, or when he pleased, only once a year, on the day of atonement; though, according to the Jewish writers, he went in four times on that day, first to offer incense, a second time to sprinkle the blood of the bullock, a third time to sprinkle the blood of the goat, and a fourth time to fetch out the censer; and if he entered a fifth time, he was worthy of death {q}. Some have observed {r}, that this respected Aaron only, and not Moses; that though Aaron might not go in when he pleased, and only at a time fixed, yet Moses might at any time, and consult the Lord upon the mercy seat, see Ex 25:22. Pausanias makes mention of several Heathen temples which were opened but once a year, as the temples of Hades Dindymene, and Eurymone {s}, and particularly the temple of Minerva, into which only a priest entered once a year {t}; which perhaps was in imitation of the Jewish high priest:

within the vail, before the mercy seat, which [is] upon the ark; this is a description of the holy place, into which the high priest might not go at any time, or at pleasure; it was within the vail that divided between the holy place, and the most holy, where stood the mercy seat, which was a lid or covering to the ark, at the two ends of which were the cherubim, the seat of the divine Majesty; which was a type of heaven for its holiness, being the habitation of the holy God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and of holy angels, and holy men, and where only holy services are performed; and for its invisibility, where dwells the invisible God, where Christ in our nature is at present unseen by us, and the glories of which are not as yet to be beheld; only faith, hope, and love, enter within the vail, and have to do with unseen objects there; and also for what are in it, as the ark and mercy seat, types of Christ, through whom mercy is communicated in a way of justice, he being the propitiation and the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness. And this caution was given to Aaron,

that he die not; by appearing in the presence of God without his leave and order:

for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat; this one would think should be a reason why he should not die, when he came into the most holy place, because there was the mercy seat, and Jehovah on it: and besides the cloud of incense on it, he went in with, for so many understand by the cloud, the cloud of incense: thus Aben Ezra says, the sense is, that he should not enter but with incense, which would make a cloud, and so the glory not be seen, lest he should die: and Jarchi observes, that the Midrash, or the more mystical and subtle sense is, he shall not go in but with the cloud of incense on the day of atonement; but the more simple meaning, or plain sense of the words is, as the same writer notes, that whereas he did continually appear there in the pillar of cloud; and because his Shechinah or glorious Majesty is revealed there, he is cautioned not to use himself to go in, i.e. at any time; with which agrees the Targum of Jonathan,

"for in my cloud the glory of my Shechinah, or divine Majesty, shall be revealed upon the mercy seat."

And this being the case, such a glory being there, though wrapped up in a cloud and thick darkness, it was dangerous to enter but by divine order.

{p} vdqh la "ad sanctitatem", Pagninus, Montanus. {q} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Celim, c. 1. sect. 9. {r} Maimon. in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1. So Tikkune Zohar, correct. 18. fol. 28. 1. {s} Eliac 2. sive, l. 6. p. 392. Boeotica, sive, l. 9. p. 578. Arcadica, sive, l. 8. p. 522. {t} Ib. Arcadica, p. 531.

Leviticus 16:3

Ver. 3. Thus shall Aaron come into the holy [place],.... The most holy place; and this was after he had offered the daily sacrifice of the morning, and had performed the rest of the service then done, as Gersom observes; such as burning the incense and trimming the lamps, for no offering preceded the daily sacrifice:

with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering; which were both for himself and his family; and such were the weakness, imperfection, and insufficiency of the Levitical priesthood, and priests, that they were obliged first to offer for their own sins, and then for the sins of the people: the meaning is not, as Aben Ezra says, that he should bring the bullock into the holy place, only that he should first give of his own a bullock for a sin offering, to atone for himself, and for the priests; nor could it be the body of the bullock he brought, only the blood of it into the most holy place, where he entered not without blood, first with the blood of the bullock, and then with the blood of the goat; for the body of the bullock for a sin offering was burnt without the camp, and the body of the ram for the burnt offering was burnt upon the altar of burnt offering; see **Heb 9:7**.

Leviticus 16:4

Ver. 4. He shall put on the holy linen coat,.... Which he wore in common with other priests:

and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh; upon those parts of his body which are more secret, and less honourable flesh, meaning the same, as in Le 15:2:

and shall be girded with a linen girdle and with the linen mitre shall he be attired, as the other priests were; which were an emblem of the purity and holiness of Christ, whereby he became a proper and suitable high priest, to make atonement for sin, he having none in himself; and of his mean estate of humiliation afflictions, and sufferings, whereby he expiated sin, and made reconciliation for iniquity; the high priest on the day of atonement not appearing in his golden garments, as the Jews call others worn by him, because there were some gold in them, as being unsuitable to a day of affliction and humiliation, but in garments of flax, a meaner dress; and which also were an emblem of the righteousness of Christ, and his saints, called fine linen, clean and white; which is wrought out by him, as the author of it, is in him as the subject of it, and worn by him as the Lord our righteousness, and in which, as the instilled head and representative of his people, he entered into heaven to show it to his Father, and plead it with him:

these [are] holy garments; and to be used only in sacred service: there were four more holy garments besides these worn by the high priest, as the breastplate, the ephod, the robe, and the plate of gold, and which also were put on at certain times on this day, as at the offering of the morning and evening sacrifice, and at the slaying and offering of the several creatures on this day {u}, see Le 16:23:

therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and [so] put them on; by dipping, and that in forty seahs of water, as the Targum of Jonathan; and this he did as often as he changed his garments, which were no less than five times on this day. The tradition is {w}, no man goes into the court for service, even though clean, until he has dipped himself: the high priest dips five times, and sanctifies, i.e. washes his hands and feet ten times on that day, and all are done in the holy place, over the house of Parvah, excepting this only, that is, first here: Jarchi on the text observes, on this day, he (the high priest) is bound to dipping at every change, and five times he changes, and to two washings of his hands and feet at the laver: this washing may be either an emblem of Christ's baptism, which he submitted to before he entered on his public ministry, and was, by dipping; or rather of his being cleared, acquitted, and justified from all sin, upon his resurrection from the dead, after he had made atonement for it, and before his entrance into heaven; as he had no sin of his own he needed not the washing of regeneration, or the water of sanctifying grace to be sprinkled on him, to cleanse him from it but inasmuch as he had sin imputed to him, and which he took upon him to make atonement for, it was proper and necessary, when he had made it, that he should be justified in the Spirit, that so he might enter into heaven without sin imputed, as he will appear without it when he comes a second time.

{u} Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 4, 6. {w} Ib. sect. 3.

Leviticus 16:5

Ver. 5. And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel,.... With whom only the high priest had to do on the day of atonement; as Christ our high priest has only with the Israel of God, the elect, given him by the Father, for whom he offered up himself, and for whose sins he made reconciliation:

two kids of the goats for a sin offering; the one of which was killed, and the other let go alive, and both were but one offering, typical of Christ in both his natures, divine and human, united in one person; and who was made sin, and became a sin offering for his people:

and one ram for a burnt offering; a type of Christ, mighty to save, this creature being a strong one; and of his dolorous sufferings, this offering being burnt; and of God's gracious acceptance of his sacrifice, which was of a sweet smelling savour to him; the burnt offering following by way of thanksgiving for atonement made by the sin offering graciously accepted by the Lord.

Leviticus 16:6

Ver. 6. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which [is] for himself,.... That is, bring it into the court, and present it before the Lord in order to its being slain and sacrificed; for as yet it was not killed, and so could not be offered on the altar, see
Le 16:11; the place where the bullock was set was between the porch and the altar, his head in the south, and his face to the west, and the priest stood in the east, and his face to the west, and laid both his hands upon him, and confessed his sins, and his family's {x}: and this is said to be "for himself"; not to atone for him, which is afterwards expressed, but which should come of him or from him, and not from the congregation, as Jarchi explains it; or as the Targum of

Jonathan more clearly, which is of his own money, wholly at his own expense, and not the people's:

and make atonement for himself, and for his house; for himself, for his own personal sins and for his family's sins, those of his wife and children; and it may be extended to all the priests of the house of Aaron; and some say to the Levites also, as Aben Ezra notes, though he disapproves of it: by this it appears, that Christ, the antitype of Aaron, is a more perfect and excellent priest than he, who needed not to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for his people's, for this he did once, when he offered up himself, **Heb 7:27**; and which was for his whole family, and them only, the elect of God, consisting of Jews and Gentiles; part of which is in heaven, and part on earth, and both were reconciled, or atonement made for them, by the blood of Christ; whose house and family men appear to be, when they believe and hope in him, and hold fast their faith and hope; and who are made by him priests as well as kings to God; see **Eph 3:15** **Re 1:6**.

{x} Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 8.

Leviticus 16:7

Ver. 7. And he shall take the two goats,.... The sin offering for the people, a proper emblem of Christ, this creature being clean and fit for food, denoting the purity of Christ, and his being suitable and wholesome food, as his flesh is to the faith of his people; and because comely in its going, as Christ was in his going from everlasting, and in his coming, into this world, travelling in the greatness of his strength; and even by reason of its having something in it unsavoury and offensive, and which made it the fitter emblem of Christ, as a surety of his people; for though he had no sin inherent in him and natural to him, yet he appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, and had sin imputed to him, which rendered him obnoxious to divine justice: the number of these goats was two, typical either of the two natures in Christ; his divine nature, in which he is impassable, and lives for ever, which may be signified by the goat presented alive and let go; and his human nature, in which he suffered and died, and may be fitly represented by the goat that was slain; or else of the two estates of Christ before and after his resurrection, his being put to death in the flesh and quickened in the Spirit; or rather this may signify the twofold consideration of Christ as Mediator, one with respect to his divine Father, to whom he made satisfaction by his death; and the other with respect to Satan, with whom he conflicted in life, and to whose power he was so far delivered up, as not only to be tempted, and harassed by him, but through his instigation to be brought to the dust of death; See Gill on "Le 16:10"; and these two goats, according to the Jewish writers {y}, were to be alike in sight or colour, in stature and in value, and to be taken together: Christ, the antitype of them, is the same dying and rising; the same that died, rose again from the dead; the same that suffered, is glorified; and the same that went up to heaven, will come again in like manner:

and present them before the Lord, [at] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; at the east of the court, and the north of the altar, as the Misnah {z}; so that their faces were towards the west, where the holy of holies, the seat of the divine Majesty, was, and so said to be before the Lord, or over against where he dwelt: this presentation may have respect to the death of Christ, when he presented himself to God as an offering and a sacrifice; and which was done publicly in the sight of great multitudes, and on the behalf of the whole congregation of the Lord's people, and before him against whom sin is committed, and to whom satisfaction is given.

{y} Misn. Yoma, c. 6. sect. 1. {z} Ib. c. 3. sect. 8.

Leviticus 16:8

Ver. 8. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats,.... Which should be slain, and which should be kept alive, and let go: the manner of casting lots, according to the Misnah {a}, was this; the high priest went to the east of the court, to the north of the altar, the Sagan (or deputy priest) at his right hand, and Rosh Beth Ab (or the chief of the house of the fathers) on his left hand, and the two goats were there; and there was a vessel (box or urn, called Calphi), and in it were two lots of box tree: the high priest shook the Calphi (or urn) and took out the two lots; one, on which was written, "for the Lord", and the other, on which was written, "for Azazel"; if that came up on the right hand, the Sagan said to him, my lord high priest, lift up thy right hand on high; and if that on the left hand came up, Rosh Beth Ab said to him, my lord high priest, lift up thy left hand on high: he put them upon the two goats and said, a sin offering for the Lord; and they answered after him, blessed be the Lord, may the glory of his kingdom be for ever and ever: now these lots, as Ben Gersom observes, were alike, not one greater than another; and they were of the same matter, for if one had been of stone and the other of wood, they might, have been known by feeling, and so the lots would not have been legal: and the same is observed by Maimonides {b}, that though they might be of any matter, of wood, or stone, or metal, yet one might not be great, and the other small, and the one of silver, and the other of gold, but both alike, for the reason before given:

one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat: one had written upon it, as in the above account, "for the Lord"; and the other had written upon it, "for Azazel"; directing that the goat on which the lot for the Lord fell was to be slain and offered up for a sin offering to him; and the other, on which the lot for Azazel fell, was to be kept alive and let go: now, however casual and contingent the casting of a lot may seem to men, it is certain to God, the disposal of it is of him, and according to his determination, Pr 16:33; and this, in the mystical sense, here denotes, that the sufferings and death of Christ were according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and so were foretold in the Scriptures, and came to pass according to his appointment, will, and command, as was also his resurrection from the dead, Joh 10:18; see **Ac 1:23**; and likewise his conflict with Satan, Joh 14:30.

{a} Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 9. & c. 4. sect. 1. {b} Hilchot Yom Hacippurim, c. 3. sect. 1.

Leviticus 16:9

Ver. 9. And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Lord's lot fell,.... Alluding to the manner of taking out the lot by the high priest, who, when he took it out, lifted it up with his hand, and then let it down, and put it on the head of the goat; after which he brought it to the altar to be sacrificed:

and offer him [for] a sin offering; an offering for the sins of the people, as a type of Christ, who made his soul an offering for sin for his people; but this was not done by Aaron until he had brought and killed the sin offering for himself; after which we read of killing this sin offering for the people, Le 16:11; wherefore some take this offering here to be no other than a setting apart or devoting the goat for this service.

Leviticus 16:10

Ver. 10. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat,.... Or for Azazel, of which more hereafter in the latter part of the verse:

shall be presented alive before the Lord; this seems to be a second presentation; both the goats were presented before the Lord before the lots were cast, Le 16:7; but this was afterwards, when one of the goats, according to the lot, being presented, was ordered to be killed for a sin offering, and the other according to the lot being presented alive, was ordered to remain so:

to make an atonement with him; to make an atonement for the sins of the people of Israel along with the other, for they both made one sin offering, Le 16:6; and this, though spared alive for a while, yet at length was killed; and how, the Jewish writers relate, as will be after observed:

[and] to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness; or, unto Azazel into the wilderness; which, some understand of a mountain in the wilderness called Azazel, to which the Targum of Jonathan has respect, which paraphrases the word,

"to send him to die in a place strong and hard, which is in the wilderness of Zuck;"

and so Saadiah Gaon, Jarchi, Kimchi, and others; and one in Aben Ezra says, it was near Mount Sinai; but as it is rightly observed by some, was this the name of a mountain, Moses would have called it the mountain Azazel, as he does other mountains by their names: nor is there any account of any such mountain in those parts, by such who have travelled in it, and if near Sinai, it was a long way to send it from Jerusalem; and for which there seems to be no reason, since there were many deserts between those two places: Aben Ezra suggests, there is a secret or mystery in the word Azazel, and says, you may know it and the mystery of his name, for he has companions in Scripture; and I will reveal to you, says he, part of it by a hint, when you are the son of thirty three, you may know its meaning, that is, by reckoning thirty three verses from Le 16:8; where this word is first mentioned, which will fall on Le 17:7; "they shall no more offer unto devils"; and so R. Menachem interprets Azazel of Samael, the angel of death, the devil, the prince that hath power over desolate places: there are several Christian writers of great note, that understand this of the devil, as Origen {b}, among the ancients; and of the moderns, Cocceius {c}, Witsius {d}, and Spencer {e}, who think that by these two goats is signified the twofold respect of Christ our Mediator; one to God, as a Judge, to whom he made satisfaction by his death; the other to the devil, the enemy with whom he conflicted in life; who, according to prophecy, was to be delivered up to Satan, and have his heel bruised by him; and who was to come, and did come into the wilderness of this world, and when Jerusalem was a desert, and became a

Roman province; and who was led by the Spirit into wilderness of Judea, in a literal sense, to be tempted of the devil, and had a sore conflict with him in the garden, when he sweat, as it were, drops of blood; and upon the cross, when he submitted to the death of it; during which time he had the sins of all his people on him, and made an end of them, so as to be seen no more; all which agrees with Le 16:21; of which see more there; and it must be owned, that no other sense seems so well to agree with the type as this; since the living goat had all the sins of the people on him, and was reckoned so impure, that he that led him into the wilderness stood in need of washing and cleansing, Le 16:21; whereas, when Christ was raised from the dead, he was clear of all sin, being justified in the Spirit; and in his resurrection there was no impurity, nor could any be reckoned or supposed to belong to him, as Witsius well observes, no, not as the surety of his people; nor in his resurrection was he a sin offering, as this goat was; nor could his ascension to heaven, with any propriety, be represented by this goat being let go into the wilderness: as for the notion of Barabbas, as Origen {f}, being meant by Azazel, or the rebellious people of the Jews, carried into the wilderness, or into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, and which is the sense of Abarbinel, and in which he is followed by many Christian writers, they need no confutation.

{b} Contr. Cels. 1. 6. p. 305. {c} Comment. in Heb. 9. sect. 25, &c. {d} De Oeconom. Faederum, l. 4. c. 6. sect. 71, 72, 73. {e} De Leg. Heb. l. 3. Dissert. 8. c. 1. sect. 2. and of the same mind was our English poet Milton, that Azazel was a demon:

His mighty standard: that proud honour claim'd Azazel as his right, a cherub tall. --Milton's Paradise Lost, B. 1. l. 533, 534. {f} In Lev. Homil. 10. c. 16. fol. 82.

Leviticus 16:11

Ver. 11. And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering which [is] for himself,.... In the same manner, and is to be understood in the same sense as in Le 16:6;

and shall make atonement for himself and for his house: by a confession of words, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, and which Jarchi calls the second confession; for the same was made, and in the same words as before, See Gill on "Le 16:6";

and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which [is] for himself; which was a type of Christ; the creature itself was, being strong for labour, and patient in bearing the yoke; Christ had a laborious service to perform, the work of man's redemption, and he was strong for it, able to go through it, and did not only readily take upon him the yoke of the law, and became obedient to every command of his divine Father, but even to death itself, the death of the cross; the kind of sacrifice was a sin offering, and such Christ in soul and body was made for his people; in order to which, as this sacrifice, he was put to death, the use of which was, to atone for all the sins of his mystical self, his body, the church; for all his family, his children, the priests of the Lord.

Leviticus 16:12

Ver. 12. And he shall take a censer,.... A fire pan, a sort of chafing dish or perfuming pot; this was a golden one, as appears from **Heb 9:4**; hence Christ, the Angel of God's presence, our interceding High Priest, is said to have such an one, **Re 8:3**; and so Josephus says {g}, it was a golden one the high priest used on the day of atonement; with which agree the Misnic doctors {h}, who say, on other days he took off the coals with a silver one, and poured them into a golden one, but on this day he took them off with a golden one:

full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord; these were bright lively coals, not smoking and half extinct; and they were taken from off the altar of burnt offering, from the western side of it, as Jarchi says, which was towards the holy of holies, where the Lord had his dwelling: these burning coals denoted the sufferings of Christ, which were properly punishments for the sins he bore, flowed from the wrath of God comparable to fire, were the curses of a fiery law, and equal to the sufferings of the wicked, often expressed by fire; they were many, and very painful and excruciating, though no ways inconsistent with the love of God to him as his Son, for they were endured by him as the surety of his people, and by which he expressed his flaming love and affection for them: he himself is altar, sacrifice, and priest, the altar which sanctifies the gift; and the coals as on the altar, denote the sufferings of Christ as upon him, which he was able to bear; and the taking off the coals signifies the cessation of his sufferings; and the altar, coals, and taking of them off, being before the Lord and in his sight, show that Christ, as a divine Person, is, and always was before him; that his sufferings were ever in view, being appointed and foretold by him, and when endured were grateful to him, a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour; and that the cessation of them was in his presence, and according to his will; and Christ now is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, as though he had been slain, where, as such, he is always beheld with pleasure and acceptance by the Lord:

and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small; both his hands, as Aben Ezra, two handfuls of this he took and put into a cup: of this sweet incense and its composition, see Ex 30:34; this was small itself, but on the evening of the day of atonement it was put into the mortar again, as Jarchi says, and beaten very small, and so was, as expressed in the Misnah {i}, "small of small": this may represent the intercession of Christ our high priest for his people; for as the prayers of the saints are set before the Lord as incense, Ps 141:2; so the intercession and mediation of Christ in favour of the acceptance of their prayers is signified by "much incense", **Re 8:3**; and which is always acceptable to God, and may well be expressed by sweet incense: handfuls of it may denote the largeness of his intercession, being for all the elect of God, and for all things for them they stand in need of; and the infinite perfection and virtue of his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, to make his intercession effectual: and being "beaten small" may signify his intercession made for particular persons, and those the meanest, and for particular things of every sort they want; as well as it may point at the fragrance and acceptance of Christ's mediation on such accounts, the incense being more fragrant the smaller it is beaten:

and bring [it] within the vail: not the incense only, but the burning coals of fire also, the one in one hand, and the other in the other hand; so the Misnah {k}; they brought out to him (the high priest) the cup and the censer; he took his handful and put it into the cup, a large one according to its largeness, and a small one according to its smallness, and so was its measure; he took the censer in his right hand, and the cup in his left, and went into the sanctuary, until he came between the two rails which divide between the holy and holy of holies: this was typical of Christ our high priest, who is entered within the vail into the holiest of all, with his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, where he ever lives to make intercession for us; not that Christ is considered in heaven as in a suffering state, for he is in a most exalted one; but the virtue and efficacy of his sufferings and death always continue, and which he ever improves on the behalf of his people, by interceding for them; and their faith and hope enter within the vail, and deal with him as having suffered for them.

{g} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 3. {h} Misn. Yoma, c. 4. sect. 4. {i} Misn. Yoma, c. 4. sect. 4. {k} lb. c. 5. sect. 1.

Leviticus 16:13

Ver. 13. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord,.... Both the incense and burning coals of fire being carried within the vail, the incense was put upon the coals, and so it burned before the Lord, whose seat was between the cherubim; and from whence it appears, that this was done, not without but within the vail: the Sadducees under the second temple would have it, that the incense was put upon the fire without the vail, wherefore the high priest, on the evening of this day, was sworn by the messengers of the sanhedrim not to make any alteration in what they should say to him; and this oath was given him in the house of Abtines, where the incense was made, with a special respect to that, since it being within the vail, they could not see it performed: the manner of his performance of this part of his service is thus related; he went in between the rails, till he came to the north; when he was come to the north, he turned his face to the south; he went on his left hand near the vail, till he came to the ark; he put the censer between the two bars, and heaped the incense upon the top of the coals, and the whole house was filled with the smoke; he then went out backwards, and prayed a short prayer in the outward house (the holy place), and he did not continue long in prayer, lest the people of Israel should be frightened {l}: the prayer he made is given us by the Jews {m}: now the incense being put upon the coals may denote the fervour and ardency of Christ's intercession, and that his sufferings are the foundation of it, on which it proceeds, and are what give it a grateful odour, or make it acceptable to the Lord:

and this was done, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that [is] upon the testimony; where was the Shechinah, or glorious majesty of God, and which was not to be seen, and therefore to be covered after this manner; which shows, that there is no access to God but as upon a seat of mercy and a throne of grace; and even that there is no coming to him upon that, but through the mediation and intercession of Christ:

that he die not; as his sons did, boldly intruding where, and doing what they should not: there is no approaching to God as an absolute God, and live; but through Christ the Mediator, and his intercession, believers may draw nigh and see the face of God in Christ, and live, as Jacob did, Ge 32:30.

{l} Misn. Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1. {m} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Leviticus 16:14

Ver. 14. And he shall take of the blood of the bullock,.... When the high priest slew the bullock, the blood was received in a basin, and given to another priest, that he might keep stirring it on a foursquare bench in the temple, that so it might not thicken and congeal {n}, but by a continual motion might become thin and liquid, and fit for sprinkling; and this was doing, while the high priest was gone into the most holy place to offer the incense; which being done, he came out again and took the basin of blood out of the hand of the priest, and went in a second time, and did with it as follows:

and sprinkle [it] with his finger upon the mercy seat, eastward; with his right finger, or forefinger, as the Targum of Jonathan; and the blood sprinkled with it did not fall upon the mercy seat, as our version seems to intimate, but it was sprinkled over against it, towards the upper part of it. Aben Ezra says, that according to their interpreters, "upon the face of the mercy seat", as the words may be literally rendered, signifies above, between the two bars, and here it was the high priest stood; for, according to the Misnah {o}, he went in to the place where he had gone in, and stood in the place where he had stood, and then sprinkled, that is, in the same place where he had been and offered the incense; See Gill on "Le 16:13"; and here he stood, not with his face to the east, for then his back must have been to the mercy seat, but he stood with his face to the eastern part of the mercy seat, and there sprinkled the blood upwards:

and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times; besides the first sprinkling that was upward, and those downward; so says the Misnah {p}, he sprinkled of it (the blood) once above, and seven times below; the same Jarchi observes; and the tradition adds, and he did not look in sprinkling neither above nor below; that is, he did not look to the mercy seat, nor was there any need of it, since the blood did not reach the mercy seat, but fell upon the ground; it was enough that it was done before it, and over against it, and with a respect unto it; or otherwise, had it, fallen on it, it would have been besmeared with it, and would not have been so comely and decent: the mystery of this was to represent the blood of Christ, and perfect purification and atonement by it, and that mercy and justice are reconciled to each other, and agree together in the forgiveness of sinners; and that there is no mercy but in a way of justice, no remission of sin, no justification of persons, no salvation for any of the sons of men, but through the blood of Christ, and the complete atonement made thereby.

{n} Misn. Yoma, c. 4. sect. 3. {o} Ibid. c. 5. sect. 3. {p} Misn. Yoma, c. 5.

sect. 3.

Leviticus 16:15

Ver. 15. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering that [is] for the people,.... That upon which the lot came for the Lord, Le 16:9; the high priest having sprinkled the blood of the bullock, came out of the most holy place, and went into the court of the tabernacle to the altar of burnt offering, and on the north side of that slew the goat for the sin offering, the place where all such were killed; see **Le 1:11**. This was a type of Christ, of his being slain, and made an offering for the sins of his people:

and bring his blood within the vail: it being received into a basin, as before the blood of the bullock was, he took it, and with it went in a third time into the most holy place:

and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat; it should be rendered "toward the mercy seat" it is by Noldius {q};
See Gill on "Le 16:14".

{q} Concord. Ebr. partic. p. 704. No. 2013.

Leviticus 16:16

Ver. 16. And he shall make an atonement for the holy [place],.... Even the holy of holies, as Aben Ezra interprets it, into which the high priest entered with blood for that purpose; the Targum of Jonathan adds, by a verbal confession, that is, of sin; but atonement was not made in that way, but by the blood of the bullock and goat, which was sprinkled towards the mercy seat, above and below: and this was made

because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins; which heap of words shows how many and heinous the sins of the people of Israel were, being defections from God, rebellions against him, transgressions of his law, and which brought pollution and guilt upon them, which could only be expiated by blood; and though the people of Israel did not enter so much as into the holy place, where the priests at times went, and much less into the holiest of all, yet their sins in some sense entered there, and came before the Lord that dwelt there; as the sins of men do even reach up to heaven itself, and cry for wrath and vengeance: and so made the Israelites unworthy of such a favour as for the Lord to dwell among them in that most holy place, in so solemn a manner; and for their high priest to enter there, and consult the oracle of God for them, and make intercession on their account, to which atonement was necessary; even as men by their sins render themselves unworthy of entering into the heavenly state, nor can they, without the atonement and sacrifice of Christ; and to this purification of the patterns of heavenly things; and of the heavenly things or places themselves, the apostle refers, **Heb 9:23**:

and shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them, in the midst of their uncleanness; that is, the court of the tabernacle where the Israelites were admitted, and where they often came in their uncleanness, either ignorantly or presumptuously, and yet notwithstanding the tabernacle remained among them; but, it was necessary that atonement should be made for the uncleanness in it, and around it, that it might continue, and they might have the privilege of coming into it, and worshipping in it. This shows that there are sins of holy things, and which attend the most solemn service, which are committed in the sanctuary of the Lord, and while waiting upon him in his house and ordinances; which must be expiated and removed. The same rites were observed, in making the atonement for this part of the sanctuary, as for the most holy place, particularly by sprinkling the blood in like manner, only, elsewhere; so says Jarchi, as he sprinkled of them both within, that is, of the blood of the bullock, and of the goat, within the vail, once above, and seven times below; so he sprinkled, by the vail without, of both of them, once above, and seven times below.

Leviticus 16:17

Ver. 17. And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation,.... Not any of the priests, as Aben Ezra, no, not in the holy place where they ministered, nor in the court of the tabernacle, nor in any of the courts, nor indeed any of the people: all places were cleared

when he, the high priest,

goeth in to make an atonement in the holy [place] until he come out; this in the mystery of it was to signify, that atonement for sin is made only by Christ our high priest; he himself, and no other, bore our sins, and he himself purged them away, or by his sacrifice alone expiated them; his own arm wrought salvation, and of the people there were none with him to help and assist him; when he the Shepherd was smitten by the sword of justice, the sheep were scattered, all his disciples forsook him and fled; there were none to appear for him, or stand by him, or in the least to lend an assisting hand in the great work in which he was engaged; he is the only Mediator, between God and man, both of redemption and of intercession; he is the alone Saviour, to him only are sinners to look for salvation, and he is to have all the glory; he had no partner in the work, and he will have no rival in the honour of it:

and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household; his whole family, and all the priests, by the bullock of his sin offering, as Aben Ezra observes, and by carrying in the blood of it within the vail, and sprinkling it there:

and for all the congregation of Israel; by the goat of their sin offering, as the same writer notes, and doing with the blood of that as with the blood of the bullock; all typical of the atonement of Christ for his mystical self the church; for the whole family and household of God; for the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.

Leviticus 16:18

Ver. 18. And he shall go out unto the altar that [is] before the Lord,.... The golden altar, the altar of incense, which stood in the holy place without the vail, over against the most holy place, where Jehovah dwelt, and so is said to be before him; of this altar the Misnah {r} understands it, and so do Jarchi and Ben Gersom; and, according to Ex 30:10; once a year Aaron was to make an atonement on the horns of it, with the blood of the sin offering, which plainly refers to this time, the day of atonement; but Aben Ezra is of opinion, that the altar of burnt offering is meant; and Bishop Patrick is inclined to think so too, because he supposes the high priest's going out signifies his coming from the sanctuary, where the golden altar was, and which had been cleansed, Le 16:16; and because, if the altar of burnt offering is not here meant, no care seems to be taken of its cleansing; but it should be observed, that the holy place, Le 16:16, means the holy of holies, and not the holy place where the altar of incense stood; and that the altar of burnt offering was atoned for and cleansed, when the tabernacle of the congregation was, in which it stood, and from which, this altar is manifestly distinguished,
Le 16:20; wherefore the reason given for the altar of burnt offering holds good

for the altar of incense, since if that is not intended, no care is taken about it; add to this, that the last account of the high priest was, that he was in the most holy place, and not the holy place,
Le 16:17; out of which he now came into the holy place, where the altar of incense was:

and make an atonement for it; where incense was daily offered up, signifying the prayers of the saints, which having many failings and imperfections in them, yea, many sins and transgressions attending them, need atonement by the blood of Christ, of which this was a type:

and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat; mixed, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it; and so Jarchi asks, what is the atonement of it? he takes the blood of the bullock, and the blood of the goat, and mixes them together: the account given of this affair in the Misnah {s} is; he poured the blood of the bullock into the blood of the goat, and then put a full basin into an empty one, that it might be well mixed together: and having so done, he did as follows,

and put [it] upon the horns of the altar round about; upon the four horns which were around it; and it is asked in the Misnah {t}, where did he begin? at the northeast horn, and so to the northwest, and then to the southwest, and (ended) at the southeast; at the place where he began with the sin offering on the outward altar, there he finished on the inward altar, and as he went along he put the blood on each horn, which was the atonement for the altar.

{r} Yoma, c. 5. Sect. 5. {s} lbid. Sect. 4. {t} Ut supra. (Misn. Yoma, c.5. sect, 3.)

Leviticus 16:19

Ver. 19. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times,.... This was done with his right finger, or forefinger, as the Targum of Jonathan, and seven times, to denote the perfect cleansing of the altar with it. Jarchi observes, that after he, the high priest, had put the puttings (of blood) upon the horns of it, he sprinkled of it seven sprinklings on the top of it: the Misnah says {u}, upon the pure place of it, that is, upon a place of it, from whence the coals and ashes were removed, and where the gold appeared:

and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel; by sprinkling the blood upon it; Jarchi's note is, "and cleanse it" from what was past, "and hallow it" for time to come.

{u} Yoma, c. 5. sect. 6.

Leviticus 16:20

Ver. 20. And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy [place],.... That is, the holy of holies, by carrying in the blood of the bullock, and of the goat there, and sprinkling them as before observed:

and the tabernacle of the congregation; the great court where the people met, and where the altar of burnt offering stood:

and the altar; the altar of incense in the holy place; and so all the parts of the tabernacle were reconciled and atoned for, even the holy of holies, the holy place, and the court of the people: all the work the day of atonement, we are told {w}, was done according to the order prescribed, and that if anything was done before another, it was doing nothing: thus, for instance, if the blood of the goat went before (or was sprinkled before) the blood of the bullock, he must return and sprinkle of the blood of the goat after the blood of the bullock; and if before he has finished the puttings (of the blood) within, the blood is poured out, (that is, at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering,) he shall bring other blood, and return and sprinkle anew within, and so in the temple, and at the golden altar, for every atonement is by itself:

he shall bring the live goat; that which remained alive after the other was slain, as it was to do, according to the lot that fell upon it,
Le 16:10; this was brought to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, whither the high priest went, and performed the following rites.

{w} Yoma, c. 5. sect. 7.

Leviticus 16:21

Ver. 21. And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat,.... In this order as the Targum of Jonathan says, his right hand upon his left hand on the head of the live goat; this was done in the name of the people, hereby transferring their sins, and the punishment of them, to it:

and confess him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins; which takes in their sins, greater or lesser, sins of ignorance and presumption, known or not known {x}, even all sorts of and all of them: the form of confession used in after times was this {y}; O Lord, thy people, the house of Israel, have done perversely, have transgressed sinned berate thee, O Lord, expiate now the iniquities, transgressions, and sins, in which thy people, the house of Israel, have done perversely, transgressed, and sinned before thee, as it is written in the law of Moses thy servant (#Le 16:30;) and it is added, and the priests and people that stood in the court, when they heard the name Jehovah go out of the mouth of the high priest, they bowed, and worshipped, and fell upon their faces, and said, blessed be God, let the glory of his kingdom be for ever and ever:

putting them upon the head of the goat; that is, the iniquities, transgressions, and sins of the people of Israel before confessed, and that by confession of them, with imposition of hands; and which was typical of the imputation of the sins of the people of God to Christ, of the Lord laying, or causing to meet on him the iniquities of them all, and of his being made sin by imputation for them:

and shall send [him] away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness; whether the wilderness of Judea, or what other is intended, is not certain. The Targum of Jonathan calls it the wilderness of Zuck; which, according to the Misnah {z}, was three miles from Jerusalem, at the entrance of the wilderness; and whereas in another Misnah {a}, instead of Bethchadudo, Bethhoron is mentioned, which is said also to be three miles from Jerusalem: it is not an improbable conjecture of Dr. Lightfoot {b}, that the goat was sent in the way to Bethhoron, which was the same distance from Jerusalem as the other place was, in the northern coast of Judea, and had very rough hills about it, and a narrow passage to it. The man, by whom he was sent, was one fit for the purpose, that knew the way to the wilderness, and was acquainted with it; a man of years and understanding, and of a disposition suitable for such a service; the Septuagint version renders it one that was "ready"; and the Targums, one that was "prepared" to go, or "appointed", and got ready; Jarchi says, the day before; but the Targum of Jonathan a year ago: perhaps it designs one, that being once appointed, was continued, and so was used to it from time to time, and constantly did it: the phrase properly signifies "a man of time" or "opportunity" {c}; Aben Ezra finds fault with those who render it a wise man, but observes, that some of their Rabbins say it was a priest that led the goat to the wilderness, which he approves of; according to the Misnah {d}, all were fit for this service (formerly common and unclean), but what the high priest did (afterwards) was fixed, and they did not suffer an Israelite to lead him (i.e. a common Israelite, one that was not a priest); according to the Talmud {e}, even a stranger, and an unclean person, was fit for this service. In the mystical sense, by this fit man, or man of opportunity, is not meant, according to Abarbinel, Nebuchadnezzar, who led the children of Israel into the wilderness of the people, into the Babylonish captivity; but rather, if it could be understood of Christ being sent, and carried into the wilderness of the Gentile world, upon his resurrection and ascension to heaven, the Apostle Paul might be thought of; who was a chosen vessel to carry his name there, and was eminently the apostle of the Gentiles: but seeing by Azazel, to whom this goat was let go, Satan seems to be meant; if, as some think {f}, Christ was baptized on the day of atonement, and on that day was led by the Spirit to the wilderness of Judea, there to be tempted of the devil, that might be considered as a very singular accomplishment of the type; and the Jews seem to expect the Messiah on the day of atonement {g}: or rather, as Witsius {h} observes, the hand of the fit man may denote the power that rose up against Christ, namely, the Gentiles and the people of Israel, and particularly Pilate, who took care that Christ, burdened with the cross, an emblem of the curse, should be led without the gate, where he had his last conflict with the devil; See Gill on "Le 16:10". This is applied to Pilate by Origen {i}.

{x} Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Teshnbah, c. 1. sect. 2. {y} Misnah Yoma, c. 6. sect. 2. {z} Misnah Yoma, sect. 8. {a} Misn. Hieros. c. 6. sect. 9. fol. 43. 2. {b} Chorograph. Cent. on Matth. c. liv. Vid. ib. c. 6. xix. {c} yte vya "viri opportuni", Montanus; "viri tempestivi", Tigurine version. {d} Ut supra, ({a}) sect. 3. {e} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 66. 1, 2. {f} Jackson & alii, apud Patrick in loe. {g} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 19. 2. {h} De Oeconomia Foeder. l. 4. c. 6. sect. 72. {i} In Levit. Homil. 10. c. 16. fol. 82.

Leviticus 16:22

Ver. 22. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited,.... Where it would never be seen, and from whence it would never return more; and so was a proper type of Christ, who has borne all the sins of all his people in his own body on the cross, and all the punishment due unto them; and so has made full satisfaction for them, and has removed them from them, as far as the east is from the west, and out of the sight of avenging justice; so that when they are sought they shall not be found, nor shall they ever return unto them, or be brought against them any more; see Isa 53:12:

and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness; that is, the man that was appointed to have him thither; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and the man shall let go the goat into the wilderness of Zuck; and the goat shall go upon the mountains of Beth Chadure (or Chadudo), and a tempestuous wind from the Lord shall drive him down, and he shall die."

The manner of conducting this whole affair was this; they made for him a causeway (i.e. for the man that had the goat committed to his care, to have it out of the court, and out of the city), because of the Babylonians, who would pluck him by the hair, and say, Get out, begone, get out, begone. The nobles of Jerusalem accompanied him to the first booth, for there were ten booths from Jerusalem to Zuck, which were ninety furlongs, seven and a half to every mile; at every (i.e. twelve miles) at every booth they said to him, Lo food, lo water, and they accompanied him from booth to booth, excepting the last of them; for there was not one went with him to Zuck, but stood afar off, and observed what he did: what did he do? he parted a scarlet line, half of it he bound to the rock, and half of it he bound between his horns (the goat's), and pushed him backwards, and he rolled and went down, but before he came half way down the mountain he was dashed to pieces; then he (the man) went and sat under the last booth until it was dark--they said to the high priest, the goat is got to the wilderness; but from whence did they know that the goat was got to the wilderness? they made watchtowers or beacons, and they waved linen cloths, and so knew when the goat was come to the Wilderness {k}. But the Scripture is entirely silent about the death of this goat, though it no doubt died in the wilderness, only says that it was let go, and was at liberty to go where it would; intimating that the people of Israel were free from all their sins, and they should be no more seen nor remembered; typical of the deliverance and freedom of the people of God from all their sins by Christ. This affair was imitated by Satan among the Heathens, particularly the Egyptians, as has been observed by many out of Herodotus {l}; who relates, that they used to imprecate many things upon the head of a beast slain for sacrifice, and then carried it to market, where were Grecian merchants, to whom they sold it; but if there were none, they cast it into the river, execrating the head after this manner, that if any evil was to befall either themselves that sacrificed, or all Egypt, it might be turned upon that head. And on account of this custom, which obtained among all the Egyptians, no one among them would ever taste the head of any animal; which Plutarch {m} also affirms, who says, that having made an execration upon the head of the sacrifice, and cut it off, formerly they cast it into the river, but now they give it to strangers. And a like custom obtained among other nations, as the Massilians and Grecians {n}.

{k} Yoma, c. 6. sect. 4, 5, 6, 8. {l} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 39. {m} De Iside & Osir. {n} Vid. Outram. de Sacrificiis, l. 1. c. 22. sect. 14.

Leviticus 16:23

Ver. 23. And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation,.... Having been into the most holy place a fourth time, as the Jews say, to fetch out the censer and the incense cup; wherefore the Jewish writers observe, that this verse is not in its proper place; so Jarchi from the Rabbins says, the whole section is in its order, excepting this, which was after the sacrifice of his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people; and the burning the inwards of the bullock and the goat, which were done without in the golden garments; and then he dipped himself, and washed his hands and feet, and stripped and put on the white garments, and went in to fetch the incense cup and the censer, with which he offered in the inmost place (the holy of holies):

and shall put off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the holy [place]; the holy of holies, that is, as Jarchi interprets it, after he had brought it (the censer) out, then he clothed himself with the golden garments for the daily evening sacrifice; and this was the order of the services (on the day of atonement); the daily morning sacrifice (was performed) in the golden garments; the service of the bullock and of the goat, and the incense of the censer, in the white garments; and his ram, and the ram of the people, and some of the additions, in the golden garments; and the bringing out of the incense cup and the censer in the white garments; and the rest of the additions, and the daily evening sacrifice, and the incense of the temple, on the inward altar, in golden garments; and the order of the Scripture, according to the services, so it was:

and shall leave them there; in one of the chambers of the tabernacle, as afterwards, in the temple, where they were laid up, never to be used more, as say the Jewish writers, Ben Gersom, and others; hence we learn, says Jarchi, that they were obliged to be laid up, and he, the high priest, might not minister in these four garments on another day of atonement.

Leviticus 16:24

Ver. 24. And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place,.... In the court of the tabernacle of the congregation, where, as Aben Ezra says, they spread fine linen for him; Jarchi says, it was a place on the roof of the house of Parvah, where all the dippings and washings were made, except the first; See Gill on "Le 16:4"; and this washing was no other than the dipping of his whole body in water; and if our Lord was baptized on this day, as some have thought, before observed, whose baptism was by dipping, **Mt 3:16**; there will appear in this a great likeness between the type and the antitype:

and put on his garments and come forth; put on his golden garments, and come out of the place where he had washed himself, to the court, where was the altar of burnt offering: all which may be an emblem of Christ's putting off the pure and spotless garment of the flesh, in which he appeared in a low estate, and made atonement for sin; and of his burial, which the washing of the flesh may point at, being what was used of the dead, and which washing in baptism is a figure of; and of his resurrection from the dead, when God gave him glory, and he appeared in a glorious body, signified by his golden garments put on again:

and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people; his ram, and the people's ram, and the bullock of the people, and their seven lambs, as it is written, Nu 29:8; so Aben Ezra, first his own, and then the people's, which order was before observed in the sin offerings:

and make an atonement for himself, and for the people; which though properly made by the sin offerings, and the carrying the blood of them into the most holy place, yet these were the completing of it, being the last of the services peculiar to the day of atonement: the service performed by the high priest after the sending away the goat into the wilderness was this; he read this "sixteenth" chapter of Leviticus, and
Le 23:27, if he read in linen garments, he washed his hands and his feet, he stripped himself, went down and dipped himself, and came up and wiped himself; then they brought him the golden garments, and he put them on, and washed his hands and his feet, and went out and offered his ram, and the people's ram, and the seven perfect lambs of a year old; then he washed his hands and his feet, and stripped and went down and dipped, and came up and wiped himself; then they brought him the white garments, and he put them on, and washed his hands and his feet, and went into the holy of holies to fetch out the incense cup and the censer; then he washed his hands and his feet, and stripped, and went down and dipped, and came up and wiped himself; then they brought him the golden garments, and he put them on, and he washed his hands and his feet, and went in (to the holy place) to offer the evening incense,

and to him the lamps; and then he washed his hands and his feet, and stripped; and they brought him his own garments (what he usually wore when out of service), and he put them on; and they accompanied him to his house, where he made a feast for his friends, because he was come out of the sanctuary in safety {o}: where, it seems, sometimes some died, and others became sick by getting cold through frequent shifting of their clothes and washing, and wearing thin linen garments.

{o} Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 3, 4.

Leviticus 16:25

Ver. 25. And the fat of the sin offering shall he burn upon the altar. The brazen altar of burnt offering, and so says Jarchi, on the outward altar; for of the inward (i.e. the altar of incense) it is written, ye shall not offer upon it strange incense, nor a burnt offering, nor a meat offering; and this fat he explains to be what was on the inwards of both the bullock and the goat; and so says Aben Ezra, the fat of the bullock for the sin offering, and the fat of the goat for a sin offering, and also the fat of the kid of the goat, which, was a sin offering for the priest, Nu 29:11; this fat was burnt at the same time the burnt offerings were offered in Le 16:24.

Leviticus 16:26

Ver. 26. And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat,.... Or unto Azazel; who or what Azazel is, See Gill on "Le 16:10" and
See Gill on "Le 16:21"; for the goat and Azazel are different, not the same, nor to be confounded as they are in our version:

shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water; in forty seahs of water, according to the Targum of Jonathan; so unclean was this person reckoned by what he had to do with the goat sent away by him; which, in a typical and ceremonial sense, had all the sins of the people of Israel on it: and he and his garments were defiled as soon as he could be said to be letting go; and that was, as Gersom says, as soon as he was out of the city; for as long as he was in the city he was in the place from whence the motion was made, but as soon as he was out of it he was in the way, and then he began to be in that motion, and might be then called, "he that let him go": and from that time the clothes he had on were defiled; according to the Misnah {p}, from the time he was got without the walls of Jerusalem:

and afterwards come into the camp; of Israel, while in the wilderness, and into the city in later times, and so into the sanctuary, and enjoyed all civil and religious privileges as another man: and something like this obtained among the Heathens, as has been observed by many learned men, particularly out of Porphyry {q}; who says, all divines agree in this, that such sacrifices as were offered for averting evils were not to be touched, but such needed purifications; nor might any such an one go into the city; nor into his own house, before he had washed his clothes and his body in a river or in a fountain: all this may be an emblem of those who were concerned in having Christ without the gates of Jerusalem to be crucified, and who afterwards, being sensible of their sin, not only had forgiveness of it and were washed from it in the blood of Christ, but, being baptized in water, were admitted into the church of God, **Ac 2:37**; and in general may show the nature of sin, that such who have anything to do with any who have it on them, though only in a ceremonial way, are defiled by it, and need washing; and also the imperfection of ceremonial rites and sacrifices to take away sin.

{p} Misn. Yoma, c. 6. sect. 6. {q} De Abstinentia, l. 2. c. 44.

Leviticus 16:27

Ver. 27. And the bullock [for] the sin offering, and the goat [for] the sin offering,.... The one for Aaron and his family, the other for the people of Israel, of which see Le 16:5;

whose blood was brought in to make an atonement in the holy [place]; the holy of holies, where it was brought and sprinkled, as directed in Le 16:14;

shall [one] carry forth without the camp; by command, as Aben Ezra observes; by the order of the high priest; and, perhaps, more than one was employed to carry out those carcasses, they being too large for one man, and as it seems from a following clause; and the Targum of Jonathan is,

"they shall be carried out on staves by the hands of the junior priests;"

so Jarchi says {r}, four men carried two staves, two before and two behind, and they went staff by staff, and the bullock and the goat were upon them, and they carried them one upon another: this was done after the high priest had done to them what was necessary; for so it is said, he went to the bullock and to the goat that were to be burnt; he ripped them up and took out their inwards, and put them in a bowl, and offered them on the top of the altar; and cut them with cuttings (made incisions into the flesh of them, but did not part it), and ordered them to be carried out to the place of burning, which was without the camp of Israel, and afterwards without the city of Jerusalem: the mystery of this, and the application of it to Christ, setting forth the nature and place of Christs sufferings, are fully and largely expressed by the apostle in Heb 13:11;

and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung; the priests, as Aben Ezra; for there were more than one concerned, as in carrying them out, so in the burning of them: the high priest was not concerned in it, for while these were burning he was reading, as observed on Le 16:24; so that he that saw, the high priest when he was reading, saw not the bullock and the goat when they were burnt; and he that saw the bullock and the goat burnt, saw not the high priest when he read; not because it was not lawful, but because the way was distant, and the business of both was done together {s}: this was done in a place called the place of ashes {t}, where the ashes of the altar of burnt offering were carried; See Gill on "Le 4:11" and
See Gill on "Le 4:12".

{r} In Misn. Yoma, c. 6. sect. 7. {s} Misn. Yoma, c. 7, sect. 2. {t} Misn. Zebachim, c. 5. sect. 2. & c. 12. sect. 5.

Leviticus 16:28

Ver. 28. And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water,.... In forty seahs of water, as the Targum of Jonathan; that is, everyone of those that burnt them, as Aben Ezra observes; for these being sin offerings, and had a connection with the sins of men, for whom they were offered, the persons concerned in the carrying and burning of them were equally defiled, and needed washing, as the man that led and let go the goat into the wilderness:

and afterwards he shall come into the camp; and have the liberty of conversation with men in civil and religious things, but not till evening; so long he was defiled; and according to the Misnah {u} from the time they got without the walls of the court; and after washing and bathing, and when the evening was come, they were clean; and might go where they pleased.

{u} Misn. Yoma, c. 6. sect. 7.

Leviticus 16:29

Ver. 29. And [this] shall be a statute for ever unto you,.... As long as the Aaronic priesthood was in being, and the Levitical dispensation lasted, until: the true Messiah came and put an end to all these rites and ceremonies; until that time this service was to be performed by the high priest in succession every year:

[that] in the seventh month; the month Tisri, as the Targum of Jonathan explains it, which answers to part of our September, and was the seventh month from the month Abib or Nisan, answering to part of our March; which was appointed the first month, upon the Israelites coming out of Egypt in that month, and for that reason; otherwise this seventh month, or Tisri, was the first month of the year before, and, indeed, continued to be so notwithstanding, with respect to things civil:

on the tenth [day] of the month; on which day, the Jews say {w}, Moses descended from the mount the second time, with the tables of the law, and the tidings of forgiveness of the sin of the calf; wherefore this day is thought to be appointed a day of affliction and humiliation for that and all other sins, and for the atonement of them, and on this day the jubilee trumpet was blown, Le 25:9;

ye shall afflict your souls; not only by humiliation of the heart for sin, and by repentance of it, and by turning from their evil ways, but by corporeal fasting, which is chiefly meant by the affliction of their souls; so the Targum of Jonathan explains it, by abstaining from eating and from drinking, and from the use of baths, and from anointing, and from the use of shoes, and of the marriage bed; and so it is said in the Misnah {x}, on the day of atonement, eating and drinking, and washing, and anointing, and putting on of the shoes, and the use of the bed, are forbidden; whoever eats the quantity of a gross date with its kernels, or drinks a mouthful (as much as he can hold in his jaws), is guilty: they do not afflict children on the day of atonement, but they train them up a year or two before, that they may be inured to the command; hence this day, in Ac 27:9 is called "the fast":

and do no work at all; no bodily work, for it was in that respect a sabbath, as it is afterwards called; the Jewish canon is, he that ate and did any work was guilty of two sins, or was obliged to two sin offerings {y}:

[whether it be] one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you; whether a native of the land of Israel, that was born there, and of parents who were Israelites, or one that was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, a proselyte of righteousness, as Ben Gersom interprets it; this law concerning fasting and abstinence from all servile work on the day of atonement was binding on the one as on the other.

{w} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 6. p. 19. {x} Misn. Yoma, c. 8. sect. 1, 2, 4. {y} Ibid. sect. 3.

Leviticus 16:30

Ver. 30. For on that day shall [the priest] make an atonement for you to cleanse you,.... By offering the sin offering for them; typical of the sacrifice of Christ, whose soul was made an offering for sin whereby atonement is made for it, and whose blood cleanses from all sin. Though the word "priest" is not in the text, it is rightly supplied, as it is by Aben Ezra, for by no other could, a sacrifice be offered, or atonement made; and on the day of atonement only by the high priest, who was a type of Christ our high priest, who has by his sacrifice made reconciliation for sin, and by himself has purged from it:

[that] ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord; which is a general phrase, as Aben Ezra observes, and may be understood of sins of ignorance and presumption; as Christ by his blood and sacrifice has cleansed all his people from all their sins of every sort, so that they stand pure and clean, unblamable and unreproveable, before the throne of God, and in his sight; see **Col 1:22**.

Leviticus 16:31

Ver. 31. It [shall be] a sabbath of rest unto you,.... From all servile work, as before observed; typical of a cessation from the performance of sinful works, at least from a sinful course of life, and from a dependence on works of righteousness, when a man is brought to believe in Christ, and in the atonement which he has made, see **Heb 4:3**:

and ye shall afflict your souls by a statute for ever: as long as the ceremonial law, and its statutes and ordinances lasted, which were to be until the time of reformation; and till that time came, once a year, on the day of atonement, they were to keep a severe fast, here called an afflicting of their souls; and in this respect this day differed from the seventh day sabbath, which was rather a festival than a fast, and is what led some of the Heathen writers {z} into that this take, that the Jews fasted on the sabbath day. The time of Christ's sufferings, and of his being a sacrifice for the sins of his people, was a time of great affliction to his disciples; then it was the children of the bridegroom fasted, he being taken from them; and true humiliation for sin, and repentance of it, are occasioned and influenced by a view of a suffering Saviour, and atonement by him; and this may denote also, that such that believe in Christ, and in his atonement, must expect afflictions and troubles in this world.

{z} Martial. l. 4. Epigram. 4. Justin. e Trogo, l. 36. Suetonius in Vita Octav. Aug. c. 76.

Leviticus 16:32

Ver. 32. And the priest whom he shall anoint,.... Whom God shall anoint, or shall be anointed, that shall succeed in the high priesthood, as Aaron's sons did, the eldest of them, and none but such were anointed:

and whom he shall consecrate; or fill his hands, by putting the sacrifices into them; See Gill on "Ex 28:41" and
See Gill on "Ex 29:9" see Gill on "Ex 29:24"; by which, and by anointing him, and clothing him with the priestly garments, he was consecrated and installed into his office, in order

to minister in the priest's office, in his father's stead: a son of an high priest was always preferred to any other, and to him it of right belonged to succeed his father in his office: and such an one, thus consecrated,

shall make the atonement; on this day of atonement; not a common priest, but the high priest only; so Jarchi observes, this expiation of the day of atonement was not right but by an high priest; for the whole section is said concerning Aaron, and therefore it must needs be said of an high priest that comes after him, that should be as he was:

and shall put on the linen clothes, [even] the holy garments: that is, on the day of atonement; in which clothes all the service peculiar to that day, as it was done by Aaron, so it was to be done by all his successors.

Leviticus 16:33

Ver. 33. And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary,.... The holy of holies, just in the same manner as Aaron had done,
Le 16:16;

and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation; the court of the tabernacle, and the holy place, and all in them, as Aaron did, in the places referred

and for the altar; see Le 16:18:

and he shall make an atonement for the priests; for himself and for his family, and for all the priests, as Aaron did by his bullock of the sin offering, Le 16:6:

and for all the people of the congregation of Israel; the whole body of the Israelites, and with them the Levites, as Aben Ezra observes, for they are not called priests; indeed every priest was a Levite, but not every Levite a priest; wherefore these were included not among the priests, but in the congregation of Israel. These several atonements, according to Ben Gersom, were separate and distinct, and did not hinder one another, or interfere with one another.

Leviticus 16:34

Ver. 34. And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you,.... Which is the third time of its being observed, see Le 16:29, to show that this was a law of considerable moment, and to be taken notice of, and strictly and closely kept by the priests, to whom these words are directed, and on whom the chief service of the day lay:

to make atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year; namely, on the tenth day of the seventh month, or Tisri, as before directed:

and he did as the Lord commanded Moses; that is, Aaron did, as the Targum of Jonathan, Aben Ezra, and Ben Gersom supply it; when the day of atonement came, as Jarchi expresses it, he did according to this order, to fulfil the decree of the king, even the King of kings; whose will it was that such a day should be yearly observed, and such and such rules performed in it; so very significant of Christ, and of the atonement to be made by him, and which has been made.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 17

In this chapter a law is given, ordering all sorts of persons, Israelites and sojourners, to bring their sacrifices to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, on pain of being cut off, Le 17:1; and a special and particular prohibition of sacrificing to devils is delivered out, Le 17:7; and the eating of blood, and of everything that dies of itself, or is torn with beasts, is forbidden under the above penalty, Le 17:10.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... After he had given him the law about the day of atonement, and the rites belonging to it:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 17:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons,.... Who were now constituted priests, the business of whose office it was to offer the sacrifices of the people, ordinary and extraordinary:

and to all the children of Israel; who were all under obligation to sacrifices at certain times; under whom may be comprehended the Levites, who were not priests, and the strangers that sojourned in Israel, for these are concerned in the following law:

and say unto them; which is spoken to Moses, who was to say what follows to Aaron, and by him to his sons, and by his sons to the people of Israel, and by them to the strangers:

this [is] the thing which the Lord hath commanded; ordered to be observed as his will and pleasure by everyone of them:

saying; namely, what follows.

Leviticus 17:3

Ver. 3. What man soever [there be] of the house of Israel,.... Whether high or low, rich or poor:

that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat in the camp; which are particularly mentioned, as Gersom observes, because of these the offerings were; for the law respects the killing of them not for common food, but for sacrifice, as appears from the following verses; for this law was to be a statute for ever, whereas in that sense it was not, and could not be observed, especially when they were come into the land of Canaan; nor would it have been decent or convenient to have brought such vast numbers of cattle every day to be killed at the door of the tabernacle, and must have made the service of the priests extremely laborious to kill them, or even to see that they were killed aright:

or that killeth [it] out of the camp; which furnishes out another reason against the same notion, since it was not usual to kill for common food without the camp, but in their own tents within it; whereas to sacrifice without the camp was commonly done.

Leviticus 17:4

Ver. 4. And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,.... Near to which stood the altar of burnt offering to offer it upon, and the priests ready for such service: now the Lord would have every sacrifice brought thither

to offer an offering to the Lord before the tabernacle of the Lord; that it might be offered publicly, and be known to be offered to the Lord, and not to idols or devils, as in Le 17:7; and so to prevent private idolatry, and private persons from intruding into the priest's office; and this was typical of the acceptance of all spiritual sacrifices in the church of God, through Christ the minister of the tabernacle, which God pitched, and not man; and who is the door into the house of God, where such sacrifices are publicly to be offered up:

blood shall be imputed unto that man, he hath shed blood; which though it was only the blood of a beast, yet being shed as a sacrifice for man, and typical of the blood of Christ to be shed for man, was sacred and precious to God; and therefore he resented the shedding of it to any but himself, or by any person, or in any place but by his appointment; such a man was to be punished as a murderer, idolatry being equally heinous in the sight of God as murder, see Isa 66:3;

and that man shall be cut off from among his people; not merely excommunicated from the church of God, deprived of the privileges of his house, but even put to death; for such a man was guilty of blood, that is, of death, and therefore to be put to death either by the hand of the civil magistrate, if his case was known and came under their cognizance, or by the immediate hand of God by a premature death, which seems to be chiefly intended; also see Le 17:10.

Leviticus 17:5

Ver. 5. To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they offer in the open field,.... Which, before the tabernacle was erected, they were used to offer there, as it was lawful for them to do, and on high places, but now unlawful; though sometimes this was dispensed with by the Lord, and was done by some of his prophets, as Samuel, David, and Elijah, though not by priests:

even that they may bring them unto the Lord, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest; by whom they were to be offered, and by him only, and which is a principal reason why they were ordered to be brought thither:

and offer them [for] peace offerings unto the Lord; which though only mentioned, include all others. These are only taken notice of because most frequent, and because most profitable to the people, having a part of them; wherefore if these were to be brought to the tabernacle, which came the nearest of any to their meals and feasts in their own houses, then much more burnt offerings, and sin offerings, in which the Lord, had so great a concern.

Leviticus 17:6

Ver. 6. And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the Lord,.... The altar of burnt: offering, **Le 1:5**;

[at] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; near to which it stood, see **Le 1:5**;

and burn the fat for a sweet savour to the Lord; the fat that covered the inwards, the kidneys, the flanks and caul of the liver; see **Le 3:3**.

Leviticus 17:7

Ver. 7. And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils,.... As it seems they had done, which was monstrously shocking, and especially by a people that had the knowledge of the true God. Such shocking idolatry has been committed, and still is among the Indians, both East and West: when Columbus discovered Hispaniola, and entered it, he found the inhabitants worshippers of images they called Zemes, which were in the likeness of painted devils, which they took to be the mediators and messengers of the great God, the only one, eternal, omnipotent, and invisible {a}; and so at Calecut and Pego in the East Indies, and in other parts thereof, they sacrifice to the devil {b}: one can hardly think the Israelites would give into such gross idolatry as this; wherefore by "devils" may be meant idols in general; for if men do not worship God and Christ, let them worship what they will, it is only worshipping devils, 1Co 10:20; and so the calves of Jeroboam are called devils, 2Ch 11:15; hence the golden calf also, the Israelites worshipped but lately in the wilderness, might go by the same name; to which sense is the Targum of Jonathan,

"and they shall not offer again their sacrifices to idols, which are like to devils."

The word here used signifies "goats", and these creatures were worshipped by the Egyptians, and so might be by the Israelites, while among them; this is asserted by several writers. Diodorus Siculus says {c}, they deified the goat, as the Grecians did Priapus, and for the same reason; and that the Pans and the Satyrs were had in honour by men on the same account; and Herodotus {d} observes, that the Egyptians paint and engrave Pan as the Greeks do, with the face and thighs of a goat, and therefore do not kill a goat, because the Mendesians reckon Pan among the gods; and of the Mendesians he says, that they worship goats, and the he goats rather than the she goats; wherefore in the Egyptian language both Pan and a goat are called Mendes; and Strabo {e} reports of Mendes, that there Pan and the goat are worshipped: if these sort of creatures were worshipped by the Egyptians in the times of Moses, which is to be questioned, the Israelites might be supposed to have followed them in it; but if that be true, which Maimonides {f} says of the Zabii, a set of idolaters among the Chaldeans, and other people, long before the times of Moses, that some of them worshipped devils, whom they supposed to be in the form of goats, the Israelites might have given in to this idolatry from them, and be the occasion of this prohibition:

after whom they have gone a whoring; idolatry being a spiritual adultery, a forsaking God, who had taken them into a conjugal relation, and been as an husband to them, and cleaving to idols, which were as paramours; see Jer 31:32;

this shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations: not only this of not sacrificing to devils, but all before commanded, particularly that they should bring their sacrifices to the priest, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

{a} P. Martyr. de Angleria, Decad. 1. l. 9. {b} Vartoman. Navigat. l. 5. c. 2. 23. & 1. 6. c. 16. 27. {c} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 58, 79. {d} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 46. {e} Geograph. l. 17. p. 551. {f} Moreh Nevochim, p. 3. c. 46.

Leviticus 17:8

Ver. 8. And thou shalt say unto them,.... To Aaron and his sons, and to the children of Israel, as in Le 17:2;

whatsoever man [there be] of the house of Israel: belonging to that nation, and to any of its tribes and families, of whatever age; as a young man or an old man, as the Targum of Jonathan; or of whatsoever rank, class, and condition in life:

or of the strangers which sojourn among you; that is, of the proselytes among them; not the proselytes of the gate, who were not admitted to offer sacrifice on the altar of the Lord; and if they were, they could not for non-compliance with this law be cut off from the Jewish church and commonwealth, of which they were no part, only suffered to dwell among them, but partook of none of their privileges; but this is to be understood of proselytes of righteousness, such as embraced the Jewish religion, and submitted to all the rituals of it, and had communion with the body of the people, and shared in all the immunities of their civil and church state, and so liable in case of any real practice to be cut off from them:

that offereth a burnt offering or sacrifice; any other sacrifice besides a burnt offering, as a sin offering, or a trespass offering, or a peace offering.

Leviticus 17:9

Ver. 9. And bringeth it not to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the Lord,.... In a public manner, by one of the priests of the Lord; by which it might appear that he did not take upon him to be a priest himself, nor to offer it to an idol:

even that man shall be cut off from his people; from being one of them, and having communion with them, and sharing in their privileges; or by death, either by the hand of the civil magistrate, or rather by the hand of God; so Jarchi, his seed shall be cut off, and his days shall be cut off; that is, he shall die childless, and in the midst of his days, a violent and premature death. Also See Gill on "Le 17:4".

Leviticus 17:10

Ver. 10. And whatsoever man [there be] of the house of Israel,.... That is by birth an Israelite, of every age, sex, or condition, as before:

or of the strangers that sojourn among you; proselytes of righteousness, for the following law was only obligatory on such, and upon Israelites, as appears from its being lawful to give or sell that which dies of itself to a stranger, that is, to a proselyte of the gate, or to an Heathen, De 14:21;

that eateth any manner of blood; that is, as Ben Gersom interprets it, of beasts and birds, concerning which the prohibition only is, according to him; for as for the blood of others there was no obligation, nor were any guilty on account of them; particularly the blood of fishes, and of locusts, or human blood, the blood of a man's teeth, which a man might swallow without being guilty of the breach of this law {g}. Some restrain this to the blood of the sacrifices before treated of; but Jarchi observes, lest any should think, because it is said, it is "the blood that maketh the atonement for the soul": that a man is not guilty only on account of the blood of sanctified things, therefore it is said "any manner of blood":

I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood; signifying how greatly he should be provoked thereby, how much he should resent it, how exceedingly displeasing it would be to him, and what severity might be expected to be exercised towards him for it; for dreadful it is to have the face of God set against a man, see Ps 34:16. Maimonides {h} observes, that this form of speech does not occur in any third precept besides these two, concerning idolatry or sacrificing a son to Moloch,
Le 20:3, and eating blood; because eating of blood gives an occasion to one species of idolatry, worshipping of devils, see Le 19:26;

and will cut him off from among his people; which confirms the above sense of the phrase of cutting off as expressive of death by the hand of God; See Gill on "Le 17:4".

{g} Hilchot Maacolot Asurot, c. 6. sect. 1. {h} Ut supra. (Moreh Nevochim, p. 3. c. 46.)

Leviticus 17:11

Ver. 11. For the life of the flesh [is] in the blood,.... The animal life or soul, the life and soul of every creature, and even the animal life and soul of man; agreeably to which our famous Dr. Harvey, who found out the circulation of the blood, says of it, that it is the principal part which first appears in generation; is the genital part, the fountain of life the first that lives, and the last that dies; the primary seat of the soul or life, from whence motion and pulsation take their rise; in which the innate heat is produced the vital spirit is generated and the life consists {i}; and therefore it is spread all over the body, and according to the condition that it is in, such is the health and such the diseases of the body; yea, the affections of the mind, such as fear, shame, joy, and anger are discovered by it. Hence Antoninus the emperor, more than once, calls the soul a vapour or exhalation arising out of the blood {k}; and the sentiments of various Jewish writers agree herewith: says Aben Ezra, it is a truth, that the soul or life, with which man lives, is in the blood of the heart; so says Jarchi the soul or life depends upon the blood; and Ben Gersom observes, that the blood is the vessel of the soul to carry in it the fundamental heat, and food to the parts of the body; and hence the animal only dies when the blood is removed;

and I have given it unto you to make an atonement for your souls: that being the life of the creature, was given for theirs to preserve them alive, and secure them from death their sins deserved; and so the Targum of Jonathan is, for the sins of the soul; which shows that these sacrifices were vicarious, in the room of men, and for the life of them, and to atone for them; and is the reason given why blood should not be eaten, at least while these typical expiatory sacrifices were used. Ben Gersom seems to intimate, as if it was only the blood of those that was forbidden: his words are, hence we learn says he, that they were not guilty of cutting off, but on account of the blood, which, according to its way was put upon the altar; and this was the blood of the soul as it saith the blood of the bullock, and the blood of the goat; but the blood that was pressed out, and the blood of the members they were not guilty of cutting off, on account of them:

for it [is] the blood [that] maketh an atonement for the soul; so here was life for life, soul for soul as Aben Ezra expresses it; it was a vicarious sacrifice and atonement, typical of the sacrifice and atonement of Christ, in the room and stead of his people, there being no atonement, no remission of sins without shedding of blood; and the reason of the prohibition of eating blood was to direct to that blood as the atonement for sin, and to keep up a reverence of it, and a value and esteem for it; but now seeing that blood has been shed and atonement made by it, the end of the law is answered, and the reason of it ceased, and so the law itself; and as Christ's blood is now to be eaten in a spiritual sense, the eating of blood in a literal sense, properly dressed, is lawful. And indeed, as before observed the law concerning it was never binding upon Gentiles, only on Jews and proselytes.

{i} De Generatione Animal. Exercitat. 51. p. 302, 303, &c. {k} De Seipso, l. 5. sect. 25. & l. 6. sect. 11.

Leviticus 17:12

Ver. 12. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, no soul of you shall eat blood,.... Great or small as Jarchi observes, for the reason above given; which, though not expressed before, was the true reason of this law, which had been given before, and now repeated; see **Le 3:17**;

neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood; any proselyte of righteousness; this is not observed before.

Leviticus 17:13

Ver. 13. And whatsoever man [there be] of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you,.... This form of speaking, which is often used in this chapter, is still observed to point out the persons on whom the law is obligatory, Israelites and proselytes of righteousness:

which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; that is, clean beasts and fowls, such as by a former law are observed; and this excepts unclean ones, as Jarchi, but includes all clean ones, whether wild or tame, that may be taken and killed though not taken in hunting; but such are particularly mentioned, because not only hunting beasts and fowl were common, but because such persons were more rustic and brutish and, being hungry, were in haste for their food, and not so careful about the slaying of the creatures, and of, taking care about their blood:

he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust; that it might not be eaten by men, nor licked up by beasts and that there might be kept up a reverend esteem of blood, being the life of the creature; and this covering of it, as Maimonides {l} tells us, was accompanied with a benediction in this form,

"Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who hath sanctified us by his precepts, and hath given commandment to us concerning covering of the blood:"

and the same writer elsewhere {m} gives us another reason of this law, that the Israelites might not meet and feast about the blood, as the Zabians did, who, when they slew a beast, took its blood and put it into a vessel, or into a hole dug by them, and sat and feasted around it: see Le 19:26.

{l} Hilchot Shechitah, c. 4. sect. 1. {m} Moreh Nevochim, p. 3. c. 46.

Leviticus 17:14

Ver. 14. For [it is] the life of all flesh,.... Of every animal:

the blood of it [is] for the life thereof; for the production, preservation, and continuance of life; that on which life depends, as Jarchi observes:

therefore I said unto the children of Israel, ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh; of beasts or birds, whose flesh was fit for food; but their blood was not to be eaten, for the reasons before given:

for the life of all flesh [is] the blood thereof; which is repeated, that it might be observed and taken notice of, as that in which the force of the reason lay for giving this law:

whosoever eateth it shall be cut off; by death, whether he be an Israelite or a proselyte of righteousness; wherefore if this law was now in force, its penalty also would be continued, whereas it is not, and which shows the abrogation of it. Also See Gill on "Le 17:4".

Leviticus 17:15

Ver. 15. And every soul that eateth that which died [of itself],.... Through any disease upon it, or by means of any other creature seizing upon it and worrying it, or was not lawfully killed; if a man ate ever so little of it, even but the quantity of an olive, it was a breach of this law; which is connected with the preceding, there being a similarity between them, because such creatures must have their blood in them, not being regularly let out, and so eating of them would offend against the above law. It is very probable, as Grotius thinks, that Pythagoras took his notion from hence, and strictly enjoined his followers to abstain from all animals that died of themselves, as Laertius {n} and Aelianus {o} relate, and which Porphyry {p} suggests, was what universally obtained among men:

or that which was torn [with beasts]; though not dead, yet ready to die, and so unfit for food; See Gill on "Ex 22:31";

[whether it be] one of your own country, or a stranger; a native of Israel, or a proselyte of righteousness; for as for any other stranger he might eat of it, De 14:22;

he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe [himself] in water; in forty seahs of water, as the Targum of Jonathan, dip himself all over:

and be unclean until the even; and so have no conversation with men in civil or religious things:

then shall he be clean; when he has washed his garments, and bathed himself, and the evening is come, and then shall be admitted to society as before: this is to be understood of one who ignorantly eats of the above things, not knowing them to be such; otherwise, if he did it presumptuously, he was to be punished.

{n} In Vit. Pythagor. l. 8. p. 588. {o} Var. Hist. l. 4. c. 17. {p} De Abstiuentia, l. 3. sect. 18.

Leviticus 17:16

Ver. 16. But if he wash [them] not,.... Neither wash his clothes: nor bathe his flesh; if he is negligent, and does not take care to make use of these ablutions:

then he shall bear his iniquity; his guilt shall remain on him, and he shall suffer the punishment the law exposes him to, either by the hand of God, or the civil magistrate, which is due to persons that enter into the sanctuary in their uncleanness, or eat of holy things. For not washing his body the punishment was cutting off, and for not washing his garments, beating, as Jarchi says.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 18

In this chapter the Israelites are directed in general not to imitate the customs and practices of the Egyptians and Canaanites, but to keep the ordinances, statutes, and judgments of the Lord, Le 18:1; and they are instructed particularly to avoid incestuous marriages, Le 18:6; carnal copulation with a menstruous woman, Le 18:19; adultery, Le 18:20; letting any of their seed pass through the fire to Molech, Le 18:21; sodomy, Le 18:22; and bestiality, Le 18:23; and they are deterred from these things by observing to them the pollution and destruction which they brought on the inhabitants of Canaan, and would bring the same on them should they commit them, Le 18:24.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... He continued speaking to him, after he had delivered to him the laws respecting the day of atonement, and the bringing of the sacrifices to the door of the tabernacle, and particularly concerning the Israelites not worshipping devils, as they had done in Egypt:

the Lord proceeds to deliver out others, the more effectually to guard against both the immoral and idolatrous practice, of the Egyptians and Canaanites:

saying, as follows.

Leviticus 18:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel,.... To the heads of their tribes, that they might deliver to them the following laws; or Moses is bid to publish them among them, either by word of mouth, or by writing, or both:

and say unto them, I am the Lord your God; with which they were to be introduced; showing the right he had to enact and enjoin such laws, since he was Jehovah, the Being of beings, and from whom they received their beings; their sovereign Lord and King, who had a right to rule over them, and command what he pleased; and also the obligation they lay under to him to regard them, and yield a cheerful obedience to them, since he was their God, not only that had made them, but had redeemed them out of Egypt; and who had made a covenant with them, and had taken special care of them, and had bestowed many wonderful favours on them; and for this purpose is this phrase often used in this chapter, and very frequently in the next. See Le 18:2.

Leviticus 18:3

Ver. 3. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do,.... Where they had dwelt many years, and were just come out from thence, and where they had learned many of their evil practices; not only their idolatrous ones referred to in the preceding chapter, which it is certain they followed, Eze 20:7; but also their immoral practices, particularly respecting incestuous marriages, after insisted on, some of which were established by a law among them; so Diodorus Siculus relates {q}, that it passed into a law with the Egyptians, contrary to the common custom of all others, that men might marry their own sisters; which is one of the incestuous marriages taken notice of in this chapter, and forbid:

and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: which land had been promised to their ancestors and to them long ago, and whither they were now going under divine direction and guidance, to inherit it, and are here particularly warned of the evil practices among them, that they might avoid them: Maimonides {r} says, these are what our Rabbins call "the ways of the Amorites" (the principal people of the nations of the land of Canaan), and which, he adds, are as branches of the magic art; namely, such which do not follow from natural reason, but from magical operation, and depend upon the dispositions and orders of the stars, and so were necessarily led to worship them: hence, they say, in whatsoever is anything of medicine, in it is nothing of the way of the Amorites; by which they mean nothing else than this, that everything is lawful in which there appears a natural reason for it; and on the contrary, all others are unlawful: but here respect is had not to magical operations but to incestuous marriages, which prevailed among that people, and which they might have received from their ancestor Canaan, who learned them from his father Ham, of whom Berosus {s} writes, that even before the flood he corrupted mankind; asserting and putting it in practice, that men might lie with their mothers, sisters, daughters, and with males and brutes, or any other, for which he was cast out by Noah:

neither shall ye walk in their ordinances: which they ordained, appointed, and settled, for they were such a people the Psalmist speaks of, which framed mischief or wickedness by a law, Ps 94:2; so Diodorus Siculus says of the incestuous marriage before referred to, and which the above writer, Berosus, derives from Ham their ancestor, that they are said nomoyethsai, "to pass into a law"; but Aben Ezra puts another sense on these words, let no man use himself to walk in this way until it becomes an ordinance or statute unto him; custom is second nature, and in course of time has the force of a law, wherefore bad customs should be strictly guarded against.

{q} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 23. {r} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 37. {s} Antiqu. l. 3. fol. 25.

Leviticus 18:4

Ver. 4. Ye shall do my judgments,.... Which are just and right, and according to the rules of justice and equity; these are things, as Jarchi observes, which are said in the law with judgment, or are laws framed with the highest reason, even by the judgment of God himself, whose judgment is always according to truth: Aben Ezra thinks, these are the judicial laws in Ex 21:1; but though they may include them, they have more particular respect to the following laws:

and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: which he had ordained and appointed of his own will and pleasure, which Jarchi calls the decree of the king, or which he decreed and determined as a king, having absolute power over his subjects to enact and enjoin what he pleased; wherefore some think these refer to ceremonial laws, which depended upon the will of the lawgiver, and were not founded in any natural sense or reason, wherefore it follows:

I [am] the Lord your God: who had a right to make what laws he pleased, being their Sovereign, and which they in gratitude as well as in justice ought to obey, he being their God, their covenant God, who had done great and good things for them.

Leviticus 18:5

Ver. 5. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments,.... The same as before; these they were to keep in their minds and memories, and to observe them and do them:

which if a man do he shall live in them; live a long life in the land of Canaan, in great happiness and prosperity, see De 30:20; for as for eternal life, that was never intended to be had, nor was it possible it could be had and enjoyed by obedience to the law, which fallen man is unable to keep; but is what was graciously promised and provided the covenant of grace, before the world was, to come through Christ, as a free gift to all that believe in him, see **Ga 3:11**; though some Jewish writers interpret this of eternal life, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Ben Gersom:

I [am] the Lord; that has enjoined these statutes and judgments, and promised life to the doers of them, able and faithful to perform what is promised.

Leviticus 18:6

Ver. 6. None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him,.... Or to all "the rest of his flesh" {t}, which together with his make one flesh, who are of the same flesh and blood with him, and are united together in the bonds of consanguinity; and such, with respect to a man, are his mother, sister, and daughter; his mother, of whom he was born, his sister, who lay in and sprung from the same "venter" he did, and his daughter, who is his own flesh; and with respect to a woman, her father brother, and son, who are in the same degree of relation, and both sexes are included in this prohibition; for though in the original text it is "a man, a man" {u}, yet as it takes in every man, so

every woman: hence, as Jarchi observes, it is expressed in the plural number, "do not ye approach", to caution both male and female; and it is also understood by the Talmudists {w} of Gentiles as well as Israelites, for they ask, what is the meaning of the phrase "a man, a man?" the design of it is, they say, to comprehend the Gentiles, who are equally cautioned against incests as the Israelites; and indeed the inhabitants of the land of Canaan are said to defile the land with the incests and other abominations hereafter mentioned, and for which they were driven out of it: now when man and woman are forbidden to "approach" to those of the same flesh and blood with them, the sense is not that they may not come into each other's company, or make use of any civil or friendly salutations, or have a free and familiar conversation with each other, provided that modesty and chastity be preserved; but they are not so to draw near as to lie with, or have carnal knowledge of one another, in which sense the phrase is used,
Ge 20:4; or to tempt to it or solicit it, and as it follows, which explains the meaning of it,

to uncover [their] nakedness; that is, those parts, which, by a contrary way of speaking, are so called, which should never be naked or exposed to view; but should be always covered, as nature teaches to do, and as our first parents did, when they perceived themselves naked, and were ashamed, **Ge 3:7**: this phrase signifies the same as to lie with another, or have carnal knowledge of them, wherefore the following laws are generally understood of incestuous marriages; for if such an action is not to be done between persons standing in such a relation, as here in general, and afterwards more particularly described, then there ought to be no intermarriages between them; and if such marriages are forbidden, and such actions unlawful in a married state, then much more in an unmarried one; wherefore the several following instances are so many breaches of the seventh command, Ex 20:14, and so many explications and illustrations of it, and consequently of a moral nature, and binding upon all men, Jews and Gentiles:

I [am] the Lord; that gave this caution, and enjoined this prohibition, and would greatly resent and severely revenge the neglect of it: the particulars follow.

{t} wrvb rav lk la "ad omnes reliquias carnis suae", Montanus; "ad quascunque reliquias carnis suae", Tigurine version. {u} vya vya "vir, vir", Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius. {w} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 57. 2. T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 58. 2, 3.

Leviticus 18:7

Ver. 7. The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shall thou not uncover,.... By uncovering a father's nakedness is not meant anything similar to what befell Noah, which Ham beheld with pleasure, and the other two sons of Noah studiously and with reverence to their father covered; nor any sodomitical practice of a son with his father; as Gersom interprets it; but the same is meant by both phrases, and the words are by many interpreters thus rendered, "the nakedness of thy father, that is {x}, the nakedness of thy mother thou shalt not uncover": for what is the mother's is the father's, and uncovering the one is uncovering the other; wherefore the mother only is made mention of in the next clause, where the reason of this prohibition is given:

she [is] thy mother, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness; that is, not lie with her, nor marry her, because she is his mother that bore him, of whom he was born, and therefore ought not to become his wife, or be taken into his bed; such a marriage must be incestuous and shocking; such were the marriages of Oedipus with his mother Jocasta, and of Nero with Agrippina; though the words will bear another sense, that a woman may not marry her father, which may be meant by the first clause, nor a man his mother, intended in the next; and where indeed it is not expressed, females in the same degree of relation are included with the males, and under the same prohibition; and so the Targum of Jonathan explains this, a woman shall not have to do with her father, nor a man with his mother; as Lot's two daughters had with him, and the Persians with their mothers; among whom such incestuous marriages and copulations were frequent, and especially among their Magi {y} who might not perform their office unless they had lain with their mothers, sisters, and daughters {z}, or were begotten in such incest {a}: a man guilty of such incestuous copulations was cursed by the law of Moses,
De 27:20; this is contrary to nature, what the brute creation abhors; a camel will not cover its dam: Aristotle {b} reports of one who was betrayed into it by his keeper, who, after he had discovered it, fixed his teeth in him and slew him; and he also relates of a horse after that he had ignorantly done the same, ran away in great haste and cast himself down from a precipice headlong.

{x} twrew "id est, nuditatem vel pudenda", Vatablus, Fagius, Piscator. {y} Sex. Empir. Pyrrh. l. 3. c. 24. {z} Patricides apud Selden. de jure natur. Gent. l. 5. c. 11. p. 624. {a} "Nam magus ex matre et gnato nascatur oportet." Catull. Epigr. 91. {b} Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 47.

Leviticus 18:8

Ver. 8. The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover,.... That is, who is indeed a man's father's wife, but not his own mother, but a stepmother or mother-in-law; or otherwise this law would coincide with the former; a man lying with such an one is accursed by the law, De 27:23; such an incestuous copulation was that of Reuben with Bilhah, and Absalom with his father's concubines or secondary wives, and such an incestuous marriage was that of the Corinthians, **1Co 5:1**; and of Antiochus Soter, king of Syria, with Stratonice his mother-in-law {c}: and even it was criminal to do this after a father's death, as Jarchi interprets it; and though she was only betrothed, and not married, and the father dead after such betrothing; as Gersom; nay, though she was divorced by the father, yet was not lawful for the son to have, no, not after his death:

it is thy father's nakedness; being espoused to him, and so one flesh with him; and the son and father being one flesh, such a mixture must be unlawful; and since then the nakedness of a mother-in-law is the father's, then surely that of an own mother's must be so likewise, which confirms a sense given of it in Le 18:7: Cicero {d} exclaims against such marriages as incredible and unheard of, as instances of unbridled lust and singular impudence.

{c} Vid. Julian. in Misopogon, p. 72, &c. {d} Orat. 14. pro A. Cluentio Avito.

Leviticus 18:9

Ver. 9. The nakedness of thy sister,.... To lie with one in so near a relation is exceeding criminal, and for which the law curses a man, De 27:22; and to marry her is not lawful; for though it was necessary for the propagation of mankind that a man should marry his sister, for who else could Cain and Abel marry? yet afterwards, when there was an increase of mankind, and there were people enough remote from each other, it became unlawful for persons in such near ties of consanguinity to marry with each other; though the Egyptians did, in imitation of Isis and Osiris {e}, and so the Persians, following the example of Cambyses {f}:

the daughter of thy father, or the daughter of thy mother; whether she is a sister both by father and mother's side, or whether only by the fathers side and not the mother's, as Sarah was to Abraham, Ge 20:12; or only by the mother's side and not the father's:

[whether she be] born at home or born abroad; not whether born and brought up in his and her father's house, or born and brought up in another place and province; though there were some, as Aben Ezra observes, that so interpreted it, according to the sense of the word in Ge 50:23; but rather the sense is, as that writer gives it, whether born according to the law of the house of Israel, after espousals and marriage, or without it; that is, whether begotten in lawful marriage or not, whether a legitimate offspring or spurious, born in adultery and whoredom, whether on the father or mother's side; so the Targum of Jonathan, whom thy father begat of another woman, or of thy mother, or whom thy mother bore or brought forth, of thy father, or of another man; and to the same purpose Onkelos:

[even] their nakedness thou shalt not uncover; neither lie with, or have carnal knowledge of, nor marry one or the other.

{e} Diodor. Sicul. l. 1. p. 23. {f} Herodot. Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 31.

Leviticus 18:10

Ver. 10. The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter,.... A man might not marry his granddaughter, whether a descendant of his son or of his daughter, nor any further off descending from him in a right line, not his great-granddaughter, and so on; and if he might not marry his granddaughter, much less his own daughter, as Jarchi observes, for the relation is still nearer; therefore that being prohibited, this in course must, though not mentioned:

[even] their nakedness thou shalt not uncover; neither debauch nor marry such an one:

for theirs [is] thine own nakedness; which sprung from his, being the descendants either of his son or daughter; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"for they are as thy nakedness,"

his own flesh and blood.

Leviticus 18:11

Ver. 11. The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter,.... Either the daughter of his father by another wife, which seems to be countenanced by what follows:

begotten of thy father, she [is] thy sister; but then this coincides with what is prohibited, Le 18:9, "the daughter of thy father"; that is, by another woman than a man's mother, only with this difference, that there is added, or "daughter of thy mother", that is, by another man than a man's own father; so that there is a prohibition of a sister whether by father or mother's side; here only as by the father's side, and so is only a part of that law; and, as some think, is for the confirmation of it, as Aben Ezra observes; or else the sense, as he thinks, is, that if a man marries a woman, and she has a little daughter by a former husband, that daughter may not be given in marriage to his son; and so the Septuagint version finishes this clause first, before it gives the other, which it considers as distinct from it, thus, "the shame of thy father's, wife's daughter thou shalt not uncover"; and then makes a distinct law of the latter; "she that is begotten of thy father is thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her shame"; but then this last falls in with Le 18:9, the Sadducees, as Aben Ezra also observes, by whom he means the Karaites, interpret it not of a mother's daughter, but of one brought up and educated by a man's father, and so is his adopted daughter, whom his son might not marry; and thus with the Romans it is said {g}, that adoptive kindred hindered marriage between parents and children altogether; and among brethren so far forth as the loss of freedom did not intervene: some understand this law in this light, as De Dieu, that in Le 18:9; the son of a second marriage is forbidden to marry with an half sister of the first marriage, whether she is the father's daughter, that is, which the father had by his deceased wife, or the mother's daughter, that is, which his mother had by a deceased husband; but here the son of a first marriage is forbidden with a half sister of a second marriage, which his mother-in-law has bore to his father, and is therefore called "the daughter of thy father's wife"; that is, of thy stepmother, but so the same may be said to be "begotten of thy father"; and therefore one begotten in a former marriage may not be understood; but then as this forbids the marriage of a brother with a sister, that is, of the same father, though not of the same mother, it falls in within the former law; wherefore some {h} have been of opinion, that this law forbids a man to marry the daughter of a woman whom his father has taken to wife, who was his deceased brother's wife, upon the law in
De 25:5; by which marriage she became the father's daughter, and the son's sister; wherefore they take the phrase, "begotten of thy father", to signify

"being akin" to thy father; which, if it can be established, makes a distinct law: Jarchi observes, on this phrase, "the daughter of thy father's wife",

"this teaches that a man is not guilty concerning his sister that is by an handmaid or stranger; therefore it is said, the daughter of thy father's wife, namely, one that was fit for marriage."

thou shalt not uncover her nakedness; See Gill on "Le 18:9".

{g} Paulus in Mosaic. & Roman. Leg. Collat. tit. 6. a Pithaeo. {h} Bertram. Lucubrat. Franktal. c. 6. Pool in loc.

Leviticus 18:12

Ver. 12. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister,.... His aunt by his father's side, an instance of which we have in Amram, **Ex 6:20**; and Maimonides says {i}, an aunt was forbidden whether she was a father's sister in lawful wedlock or in fornication:

she [is] thy father's near kinswoman; or, the rest of thy father {k}; the residue of his flesh, one of the same flesh and blood with him; wherefore, as he could not marry her himself, so his son likewise was too near akin to enter into such a relation with her.

{i} Hilchot Issure Biah, c. 2. sect. 5. {k} Kyba rav "reliquiarum patris tui", Tigurine version.

Leviticus 18:13

Ver. 13. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister,.... Which is the same relation as before, an aunt by the mother's side; wherefore, if such a marriage was unlawful, this must also, and for the same reason:

for she [is] thy mother's near kinswoman; the same phraseology is used here as in the preceding verse; See Gill on "Le 18:12"; and by the same rule a woman might not marry her uncle, whether by father or mother's side, the relation being the same, and this reaches to great-uncle and great-aunt; instances of women marrying their uncles, and men their aunts, among the Heathens, have been given, as among the Persians and Lacedaemonians by Herodotus {l}, and among the Romans by Tacitus {m}, but were, in his time, new things with the latter.

{l} Erato, sive, l. 6. c. 71. Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 224, 239. {m} Annal. l. 12. c. 5, 6, 7.

Leviticus 18:14

Ver. 14. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother,.... Which Gersom understands of committing sodomy with him, on which account he was doubly guilty, partly because of lying with a male, and partly because of uncovering the nakedness of his father's brother; but it rather seems at first sight as if the sense was, that a woman should not marry her father's brother, that is, her uncle, as a man might not marry his aunt, whether by father or mother's side, as in
Le 18:12; but Jarchi directs to a better sense than either, when he asks, what is his nakedness? in answer to which he recites the following clause as explanative of it:

thou shall not approach to his wife; in the use of the bed, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, that is, to lie with her, her husband being living, or to marry her, he being dead:

she [is] thine aunt: even as a father's or mother's sister, only they are aunts by blood, this by marriage or affinity: in the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan it is, she is the wife of thy father's brother; and as Aben Ezra, she is accounted as thine aunt, and so marriage with her prohibited; and the same holds good of a father's brother's wife, which being not mentioned, the same writer says, we have need of the tradition which expresses that and also of a father's sister's husband; for if marriage with a father's brother's wife is unlawful, then marriage with a father's sister's husband must be so too; for a father's sister's husband stands in the same degree or line of affinity as a father's brother's wife; and it is a sure rule, that in whatsoever degree or line of affinity males are forbid to marry females, in the same females are forbid to marry males.

Leviticus 18:15

Ver. 15. Thou shall not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law,.... Shall not he with her in his son's lifetime, or marry her after his death:

she [is] that son's wife; and so one flesh with him, and who is of the same flesh and blood with his father, and therefore the nearness of the relation forbids such incestuous copulation or marriage:

thou shall not uncover her nakedness; or have carnal knowledge of her, whether in the life or after the death of his son, even then marriage with her is not lawful.

Leviticus 18:16

Ver. 16. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife,.... Neither debauch her nor after the death of the brother marry her, that is, unless he dies without issue; and then, by another law, he was obliged to marry her, De 25:5; hence the Targum of Jonathan adds; by way of explanation.

"in the life of thy brother, or after his death, if he has children,"

but then that law was but an exception from this general rule, and so did not make it void in other respects, but bound it the more strongly; and besides, it was a special and peculiar law to the Jews, until the Messiah came to make it manifest of what tribe and family he came; and the reason of it ceasing, the law itself is ceased, and so neither binding on Jews nor Gentiles: hence John the Baptist boldly told Herod to his face, that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife
Mt 14:3; and even such marriages were condemned by the very Heathens: Dionysius Halicarnassensis {n} relates, that Lucius Tarquinius, Superbus, his brother being removed by poison, took Tullia to wife, whom his brother Aruntus had before married; but the historian calls it anosion gamon, "an unholy marriage", and abominable both among Greeks and Barbarians: Plutarch also reports {o}, that Marcus Crassus married the wife of his deceased brother; but such marriages are condemned by the same writer, as they are by the ancient Christians in their councils and canons {p}; now by this same law, if it is not lawful for a man to have his brother's wife, then it is not lawful for her to have her sister's husband; or, in other words, if it is not lawful for a woman to marry two brothers, then it is not lawful for a man to marry two sisters: the case of Jacob will not countenance such a marriage, since he was imposed upon and deceived; and such marriages have also been disapproved of by the Heathens and Christians: Honorius the emperor married two daughters of Stilico, one after another, but the unhappy exit of both sisters

showed that those marriages were not approved of by God, for they both died premature deaths, leaving no children {q};

it [is] thy brother's nakedness; that is, his wife is, being by marriage one flesh with him, and his brother being so to him, the relation is too near to intermarry, and more especially when there is issue by the first, which connects them strongly.

{n} Hist. l. 4. {o} In Vita M. Crassi. {p} Canon Apostol. can. 19. Concil. Neocaesar. can. 2. {q} Zonaras, l. 3. apud Zanchium de Sponsalibus, l. 4. c. 1. p. 786.

Leviticus 18:17

Ver. 17. Thou shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter,.... That is, if a man marries a woman, and she has a daughter, which is the man's daughter-in-law, after the death of his wife he may not marry this daughter; for this daughter is of the same flesh with her mother, who became one flesh with the man she married, and therefore his relation to her daughter is too near to marry her: Jarchi says, if he does not marry the woman, but only deflower her, it is free for him to marry her daughter; but Aben Ezra says, if he has lain with the mother, the daughter is forbidden; however, if he married either of them, the other was forbidden; he could not marry them both, neither in the lifetime of them both, nor after the death of either of them:

neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; not any of her granddaughters, either in the line of her son or daughter; that is, might not lie with either of them, or marry them, and much less then marry her own daughter, these being a further remove from her:

[for] they [are] her near kinswomen; one or other of them, even every one of them, "the rest" and residue "of her" {r}, of her flesh, who together made one flesh with her; and therefore not to be married to her husband, either in her life, or after her death:

it [is] wickedness: a very great wickedness, abominable in the sight of God, and to be detested by man as vile and impious; it is whoredom, as the Targum of Jonathan renders it.

{r} hnh hrav "reliquiae sunt ipsae", Tigurine version.

Leviticus 18:18

Ver. 18. Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister,.... Both of them together, as Jarchi; two sisters at one and the same time; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"a woman in the life of her sister thou shall not take;"

that is, in marriage, that sister being his wife; for the sense of the Targumist can never be that a man might not take a woman for his wife, she having a sister living, but not to take one sister to another, or marry his first wife's sister, whether, as Maimonides {s} says, she was sister by father or mother's side, in marriage or in fornication:

to vex [her], to uncover her nakedness; two reasons are given, why, though polygamy, or having more wives than one, was connived at, yet it was not allowed that a man should have two sisters; partly, because they would be more apt to quarrel, and be more jealous and impatient of one another, if more favour was shown or thought to be shown to one more than another; and partly, because it was a filthy and unbecoming action to uncover the nakedness of one, or lie with one so nearly related to his wife:

besides her in her life [time]; from whence some have concluded, and so many of the Jewish writers {t}, that a man might marry his wife's sister after her death, but not while she was living; but the phrase, "in her lifetime", is not to be joined to the phrase "thou shall not take a wife"; but to the phrases more near, "to vex her in her lifetime", or as long as she lived, and "to uncover her nakedness by her" {u}, on the side of her, as long as she lived; for that a wife's sister may be married to her husband, even after her death, cannot be lawful, as appears from the general prohibition, Le 18:6; "none of you shall approach to him that is near of kin to him"; and yet it is certain that a wife's sister is near akin to a man; and from the prohibition of marriage with an uncle's wife, with the daughter of a son-in-law, or of a daughter-in-law, Le 18:14; now a wife's sister is nearer of kin than either of these; and from the confusion that must follow in case of issue by both, not only of degrees but appellation of kindred; one and the same man, who as a father of children, and the husband of their mother's sister, stands in the relation both of a father and an uncle to his own children; the woman to the children of the deceased sister stands in the relation both of a stepmother, and of a mother's sister or aunt, and to the children that were born of her, she stands in the relation both of a mother and an uncle's wife; and the two sorts of children are both brethren and own cousins by the mother's side, but of this See Gill on "Le 18:16" for more; some understand this of a prohibition of polygamy, rendering the words, "thou shall not take one wife to another"; but the former sense is best; polygamy being not expressly forbidden by the law of Moses, but supposed in it, and winked at by it; and words of relation being always used in all these laws of marriage, in a proper and not in an improper sense: there is a pretty good deal of agreement between these laws of Moses and the Roman laws; by an edict of Dioclesian and Maximian {w}, it was made unlawful to contract matrimony with a daughter, with a niece, with a niece's daughter, with a grandmother, with a great-grandmother, with an aunt by the father's side, with an aunt by the mother's side, with a sister's daughter, and a niece from her, with a daughter-in-law to a second husband, with a mother-in-law, with a wife or husband's mother, and with a son's wife; and several of these laws are recommended by Phocylydes, an Heathen poet, at least in a poem that hears his name; and the marriage of a wife's sister after her death has been condemned by several Christian councils {x}.

{s} Hilchot Issure Biah, c. 2. sect. 9. {t} Misn. Yebamot, c. 4. sect. 13. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 22. fol. 164. 1. Peaicta, Ben Gersom in loc. {u} hyle "apud vel prope eam"; so le is sometimes used; see Nold. part. Concord. Ebr. p. 691. {w} Apud Mosaic. & Roman. Leg. Collat. ut supra. (tit. 6. a Pithaeo) {x} Concil. Illiber. can. 61. Aurat. can. 17. Auxer. can. 30.

Leviticus 18:19

Ver. 19. Also thou shall not approach unto a woman,.... Not even a man to his own wife, and much less to another woman:

to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness; in her monthly courses; and the time of her separation from her husband on that account was seven days, Le 15:19; if a man lay with a woman when in such circumstances, they were both to be cut off from their people, Le 20:18; and such an action is reckoned among sins, and uncleanness of the worst sort, Eze 22:10.

Leviticus 18:20

Ver. 20. Moreover, thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife,.... Which is adultery, and a breach of the seventh command,
Ex 20:14:

to defile thyself with her; not only adultery is a defiling a man's wife, as it is sometimes called, but the adulterer defiles himself: all sin is of a defiling nature, but especially this, which defiles a man both in soul and body, and brings a blot and stain upon his character, which shall not be wiped off, **Pr 6:32**.

Leviticus 18:21

Ver. 21. And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through [the fire] to Molech,.... The name of an image or idol, according to Aben Ezra, who observes, that their wise men interpret it as a general name for everyone whom they made to reign over them; and it is right, he says, that it is the abomination of the children of Ammon, and so the same with Milcom, 1Ki 11:5; and with Baal, as appears from Jer 32:35; and they are both of much the same signification, the one signifies a king, the other a lord; and perhaps is the same with the Melicarthus of Sanchoniatho {y}, who is also Hercules; to whom Pliny says {z} that the Phoenicians offered human sacrifices every year: of Molech,
See Gill on "Jer 7:31" see Gill on "Am 1:13"; by "seed" is meant children and offspring; and because the word "fire" is not in the original text, some, as Aben Ezra observes, explain the phrase, "let to pass through", of their causing them to pass from the law of God to the religion of Molech, or of devoting them to his service and worship; but the word "fire" is rightly supplied, as it may be from De 18:10; and the same writer says, the phrase to pass through is the same as to burn; but though this they sometimes did, even burn their infants, and sacrificed them to idols, 2Ch 28:3; yet this seems to be something short of that, and to be done in the manner, as Jarchi and other Jewish writers {a} relate; who say, the father delivered his son to the priests (of Molech) and they made two great fires, and caused the son to pass on foot between the two fires, which was a kind of a lustration, and so of a dedication of them to the idol; though it must be owned that both were done; yea, that both the phrases of passing through the fire, and of burning, are used promiscuously of the same, see 2Ki 16:3; compared with 2Ch 28:3 and also Eze 16:20; and they might be both done at different times, or the one previous and in order to the other; and perhaps they might cause the child so often and so long to pass through the fire, as that at last it was burnt and destroyed:

neither shall thou profane the name of thy God; who had given them children, and to whom they ought to have devoted them, and in whose service they should have trained them up to the honour of his name; but instead of that profaned it, by the above idolatrous and cruel usages:

I [am] the Lord; who would avenge such a profanation of his name.

{y} Apud, Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 38. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 5. {a} Ben Melech in loc. Kimchii Sepher Shorash. rad. Klm.

Leviticus 18:22

Ver. 22. Thou shall not lie with mankind as with womankind,.... By carnal knowledge of them, and carnal copulation with them, and mixing bodies in like manner: this is the sin commonly called sodomy, from the inhabitants of Sodom, greatly addicted to it, for which their city was destroyed by fire: those that are guilty of this sin, are, by the apostle, called "abusers of themselves with mankind", **1Co 6:9**;

it [is] abomination; it is so to God, as the above instance of his vengeance shows, and ought to be abominable to men, as being not only contrary to the law of God, but even contrary to nature itself, and what is never to be observed among brute creatures.

Leviticus 18:23

Ver. 23. Neither shall thou lie with any beast, to defile thyself therewith,.... A female one, as Aben Ezra notes, as a mare, cow, or ewe, or any other beast, small or great, as Ben Gersom, or whether tame or wild, as Maimonides {b}; and even fowls are comprehended, as the same writers observe:

neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: that is, stand before a beast, and by a lascivious and obscene behaviour solicit the beast to a congress with her, and then lie down after the manner of four-footed beasts, as the word signifies, that it may have carnal copulation with her: for a man to lie with a beast is most shocking and detestable, but for a woman to solicit such an unnatural mixture is most horrible and astonishing: perhaps reference may be had to a most shocking practice among the Egyptians, from among whom the Israelites were lately come, and whose doings they were not to imitate, Le 18:3; and which may account for this law, as Bishop Patrick observes: at Mendes, in Egypt, a goat was worshipped, as has been remarked Le 18:7; and where the women used to lie with such creatures, as Strabo {c} and Aelianus {d} from Pindar have related; yea, Herodotus {e} reports, of his own knowledge, that a goat had carnal copulation with a woman openly, in the view of all, in his time; and though that creature is a most lascivious and lustful one, yet, as Bochart {f} from Plutarch has observed, when it is provoked by many and beautiful women, is not inclined and ready to come into their embraces, but shows some abhorrence of it: nature in brutes, as that learned man observes, is often more prevalent in them than in mankind:

it [is] confusion; a mixing of the seed of man and beast together, a blending of different kinds of creatures, a perverting the order of nature, and introducing the utmost confusion of beings, from whence monsters in nature may arise.

{b} Hilchot Issure Biah, c. 1. sect. 16. {c} Geograph. l. 17. p. 551. {d} De Animal. l. 7. c. 19. {e} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 46. {f} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 53. col. 642.

Leviticus 18:24

Ver. 24. Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things,.... In incestuous copulations and marriages, in adultery, corporeal and spiritual, and bestiality:

for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you; that is, the seven nations of the land of Canaan, which God was about to eject out of their land to make room for the Israelites, and that on account of the above shocking vices which abounded among them; so that in some sense the land they dwelt upon was defiled by them, and called for vengeance on them, as even loathing its inhabitants, as afterwards suggested.

Leviticus 18:25

Ver. 25. And the land is defiled,.... The inhabitants of it, with the immoralities and idolatries before mentioned:

therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it; or punish the inhabitants that are on it for their sins:

and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants; as a stomach loaded with corrupt and bad food it has taken in, nauseates it, and cannot bear and retain it, but casts it up, and never receives it again; so the land of Canaan is represented as loathing its inhabitants, and as having an aversion to them, and indignation against them, and as not being able to bear them, but entirely willing to be rid of them and throw them out of their places in it, never to be admitted more, being as nauseous and as useless as the cast of a man's stomach; see **Re 3:16**.

Leviticus 18:26

Ver. 26. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments,.... Before observed to them, whether of a ceremonial nature, and enjoined them according to his sovereign will and pleasure; or of a moral nature, and founded in justice and equity, and so worthy of their regard, and obligatory upon them; as well as in their own nature they recommended themselves to their regard, as being the reverse of those loathsome and abominable things before dehorted from:

and shall not commit [any] of these abominations; such as incest, adultery, idolatry, and bestiality, which are in themselves abominable things, execrable to God, and to be detested by men:

[neither] any of your own nation; that belonged to any of their own tribes, or should be born to them in the land of Canaan when they came thither, and were properly natives of it:

nor any stranger that sojourneth among you; any proselyte, and especially a proselyte of righteousness, who conformed to the Jewish religion, and had laid himself under obligation to do everything that was binding upon an Israelite.

Leviticus 18:27

Ver. 27. For all these abominations have the men of the land done,.... The then present inhabitants of Canaan, who dwelt in it before the Israelites came into it; these were guilty of unclean copulations, of incestuous, marriages, of fornication and adultery, and of bestiality and idolatry:

which [were] before you; lived in the land before them, had long dwelt there, but now about to be cast out for their sins; and therefore they who were going to succeed them should take warning by them, lest, committing the same sins, they should be cast out likewise:

and the land is defiled; See Gill on "Le 18:25".

Leviticus 18:28

Ver. 28. That the land spew not you out also, when ye defile it,.... By sinning on it, and so rendering it obnoxious to the curse of God, as the whole earth originally was for the sin of man; and so be cast out of it, as Adam was out of paradise, and as the Israelites might expect to be cast out of Canaan, as the old inhabitants of it had been:

as it spewed out the nations that [were] before you; which for the certainty of it is spoken of as done, though it was as yet future; and what the Lord did is ascribed to the land, the more to aggravate their crying sins and abominations, for which the land mourned, and which it could not bear.

Leviticus 18:29

Ver. 29. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations,.... Before particularly forbid, any of them, be it which it will, they all being very heinous and vile, and especially these last mentioned:

even the souls that commit [them]; whether male or female, as Jarchi observes; for the above things concern them both for the most part, however some one, and some another; and though most, if not all the said crimes are committed by the members of the body, yet since under the influence and direction of the soul, the commission of them is attributed to that, and the punishment threatened respects both:

shall be cut off from among the people; be removed from their church state, and deprived of ecclesiastical privileges, and from their civil state, and reckoned no more of the commonwealth of Israel; and if known and convicted, to be punished by the civil magistrate, and if not, by the immediate hand of God.

Leviticus 18:30

Ver. 30. Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance,.... Whatever the Lord appointed them and commanded, whether contained in this chapter, or elsewhere:

that [ye] commit not [anyone] of these abominable customs; for attending to the ordinances of God, and a close in them, they would be preserved from the commission of such abominable things, and giving in to such detestable customs as before warned against:

which were committed before you; by the inhabitants of Canaan; and by the punishment on them for them they might be deterred from doing the same:

and that ye defile not yourselves therein; for though the land is so often said to be defiled, yet, properly speaking, and chiefly, it was the inhabitants that were defiled by their abominable customs; and so would the Israelites also, should they observe the same, and thereby become abominable in the sight of God, and incur his displeasure, and be liable to his vengeance:

I [am] the Lord your God; who had a sovereign authority over them, and a right to give out what commands he pleased, both negative and affirmative; and to whom they were under obligations to obey, as the God of nature and providence, from whom they had their beings, and were supported in them, and as their covenant God, who had bestowed special and spiritual favours on them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 19

This chapter contains various laws, ceremonial and moral, tending to the sanctification of men, in imitation of the holy God, Le 19:1; as concerning the reverence of parents, and observing the sabbaths, Le 19:3; against idolatry, Le 19:4; about offering and eating of peace offerings, Le 19:5; concerning harvest and gleaning of fields and vineyards, Le 19:9; respecting the breach of several of the commandments of the law, as the eighth, ninth, and third, particularly, Le 19:11; and others relating to the ill usage of the deaf and blind, and having respect to persons rich or poor in

judgment, and acting the part of a tale bearer among people,
Le 19:14; and bearing hatred and ill will to any of their neighbours, Le 19:17; and others forbidding mixtures in the generation of cattle, sowing fields, and wearing apparel, Le 19:19; and concerning the punishment of a man that lay with a bondmaid, and the offering he should bring for his atonement, Le 19:20; then follow certain laws concerning fruit trees, when the fruit of them should be eaten, Le 19:23; and concerning eating with blood, using enchantments, and observing times, and managing the hair of the head and beard, and avoiding to make any marks, prints, and cuttings in the flesh for the dead, Le 19:26; a caution not to prostitute a daughter to whoredom, and to observe the sabbath, and reverence the sanctuary of God, and pay no regard to wizards and familiar spirits,
Le 19:29; to show reverence to ancient persons, and not to vex and distress strangers, Le 19:32; and to do no injustice in weight and measure, Le 19:35; all which instructions are to be carefully observed, and put in execution, Le 19:37.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... About the same, or quickly after he had delivered the above laws to him; and there are many in this chapter, which were before given, and here repeated:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 19:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel,.... They could not be all spoke to together, but tribe after tribe, or family after family; or rather the heads of the tribes, and at most the heads of families were convened, and the following instructions were given, to be communicated to their respective tribes and families. Jarchi says this section was spoken in the congregation, because the greater part of the body of the law, or the more substantial parts of it, depend upon it; and indeed all the ten commandments are included in it, with various other laws, both judicial and ceremonial. Aben Ezra remarks, that all the congregation are spoken to, to include the proselytes, because they had been warned of incests, as the Israelites, in the preceding chapter, See Gill on "Le 18:26";

and say unto them, ye shall be holy: a separate people from all others, abstaining from all the impurity and idolatry they are cautioned against in the foregoing chapter, and observing the holy precepts expressed in this:

for I the Lord your God [am] holy; in his nature, essence, originally, independently, immutably, and perfectly; and the more holy they were, the more like they would be to him; See Gill on "Le 11:44" and See Gill on "Le 11:45"; where the same words are used, after the laws given about creatures clean and unclean to be eaten, as here, after those about impure copulations and incests.

Leviticus 19:3

Ver. 3. Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father,.... This has respect to the fifth command, which is the first with promise, and is here referred to first, because a man has his beginning in the world from his parents, and by them he is trained up in the observance of all the other laws of God, equally to be respected; and the fear of them is not servile, but filial, joined with love and affection to them, and includes an inward esteem and reverence of them, an outward respect unto them, a readiness to obey their commands, and giving due and equal honour unto them; See Gill on "Ex 20:12"; Pythagoras, Phocylides, and other Heathens, next to honouring God, exhort to the honour and reverence of parents:

and keep my sabbaths; this is expressed in the plural number, because there were various sabbaths. The seventh day sabbath, and the seventh year sabbath, and the jubilee, which was once in seven times seven years; the seventh day sabbath is chiefly meant: this follows upon the other, because it lay upon parents to teach their children the observance of the sabbath, and to train them up in it; and indeed the fear of them greatly depends on it, for children that are sabbath breakers have seldom much respect to their parents; and besides this suggests, that though children are to honour, reverence, and obey their parents, yet not in anything that is contrary to the laws of God; and, particularly should they suggest to them that sabbaths were not to be observed, they should not hearken to them:

I [am] the Lord your God; that gave them their being, parents being but instruments, and who had a right to enjoin them what laws he pleased; and among the rest had ordered them to observe the sabbath, and which in gratitude they were obliged unto, as well as in point of duty.

Leviticus 19:4

Ver. 4. Turn ye not unto idols,.... From the one only true and living God to them that are not gods, as the word used signifies, who are nothing; for, as the apostle says, an idol is nothing in the world, **1Co 8:4**, is of no worth and value, of no consequence and importance, of no avail and usefulness to its devotees; wherefore to turn from the true God to such as these is the greatest stupidity, as well as wickedness: or "look not" at them {g} for help or assistance, for they are not able to give it: and to look at them so as to view them attentively, and consider their likeness, the Jews say {h} is forbidden; and even in the heart and mind, as Aben Ezra observes, to have respect unto them was not right; or in the thoughts, as Gersom:

nor make to yourselves molten gods; of gold, silver, or brass, melted and cast into a mould, as the golden calf was, to which respect may be had. These laws have a respect unto the first and second commandments,
Ex 20:3:

I [am] the Lord, your God; who only is to be worshipped, and who has forbid the making and worshipping any image, molten or graven, and who will therefore resent idolatry of every sort, and punish for it.

{g} wnpt la "ne respiciatis", Montanus, Tigurine version, Drusius. {h} Pesichta, Maimonides.

Leviticus 19:5

Ver. 5. And if ye offer a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord,.... Which were of three sorts, a thanksgiving, a vow, and a voluntary offering, **Le 7:11**; the latter seems to be here meant, as appears by what follows:

ye shall offer it at your own will; a voluntary freewill offering, of their own accord, and not by force, as Aben Ezra; and in such offerings they were left to their liberty to offer what they pleased, it might be of the flock, or of the herd, a male or a female, **Le 3:1**. The Targum of Jonathan is

"for your acceptation;"

that is, that should be offered, and in such a manner as to be accepted of you with God; which sense is countenanced by Le 19:7; and becomes acceptable, when what follows about eating them is attended to.

Leviticus 19:6

Ver. 6. It shall be eaten the same day ye offer it, and on the morrow,.... The meaning is, that if it could be, it was best to eat it all up the same day it was offered, but if not, the remainder was to be eaten on the morrow, but by no means to be kept any longer; this shows that that sort of peace offering is intended, which was either a vow or a voluntary offering, **Le 7:16**; and the Jews gather from hence, that sacrifices were to be slain in the day, and not in the night {i};

and if ought remain unto the third, it shall be burnt with fire; as it is ordered, **Le 7:16**; that so the owner might have no profit by it, and therefore be under no temptation to keep it longer than the fixed time.

{i} Bartenora in Misn. Zebachim, c. 13. sect. 7. & Misn. Yoma, c. 8. sect. 1.

Leviticus 19:7

Ver. 7. And if it be eaten at all on the third day,.... Or "in eating be eaten" {k} any of it be eaten, the least bit of it:

it [is] abominable; it is as any common thing, as if it was no sacrifice; yea, as if it was corrupt and putrefied flesh; nay, as what is abominable to God: and therefore it follows,

it shall not be accepted; of the Lord, but rejected, his will not being attended to.

{k} lkay lkah "comedendo, comedetur", Drusius.

Leviticus 19:8

Ver. 8. Therefore [everyone] that eateth it shall bear his iniquity,.... Be chargeable with sin, be pronounced guilty, and endure the punishment, which is cutting off, **Le 7:20**:

because he hath profaned the hallowed thing of the Lord; the flesh of the peace offerings, by keeping it longer than the fixed time for it, when it was liable to corruption and putrefaction; for after the inwards and the fat of them were offered, as Aben Ezra says, the flesh was holy, and to be eaten as an holy thing, and within the time the law required, or otherwise it was profaned and polluted:

and that soul shall be cut off from among his people; be deprived of his civil and religious privileges, or be punished by the hand of the civil magistrate, or else by the immediate hand of God.

Leviticus 19:9

Ver. 9. And when ye reap the harvest of your land,.... Of the land of Canaan, when come into it, which having sown, and it was harvest, either barley harvest or wheat harvest, or both, and especially the latter, to which reaping seems best to agree:

thou shall not wholly reap the corner of the field; but a part was to be left for the poor. This follows upon the peace offerings: and, as Aben Ezra observes, as the fat of them was to be given to God, so somewhat of the harvest was to be given for the glory of God to the poor and stranger. In the Misnah is a whole treatise, called "Peah", which signifies "the corner", in which there are many decisions concerning this affair; and among the rest, whereas it is not fixed in the law how large the corner should be, what quantity should be left, how many ears of corn, or what a proportion of the field, this is there determined by the wise men, who say, they do not leave less than a sixtieth part; for though they say there is no measure (certain) for the corner, yet the whole is according to the largeness of the field, or according to the multitude of the poor, or according to the plenty of the increase {l}, so that, as these were, more or less were left: and though the place to be left is called a corner, it was a matter indifferent in what part of the field it was; for so it follows, they give (or leave) the corner at the beginning of the field, or in the middle {m}; and Ben Gersom observes, that the corner was at the end of the field, where the harvest is finished; and it is plain where the harvest is finished, he says, the corner should be left; for the law does not precisely determine, only that part of the corner should be left to the poor; and it is of no consequence to the poor whether it is in the middle of the field or in the end of it; but Maimonides {n} thinks it was to be left at the end of the field, that the poor might know where to come for it: and in the above treatise the times are also set when the poor should come and gather it, which they might not do at any time; and there were three times on a day they had leave to come, in the morning, in the middle of the day, and at the evening sacrifice {o}, i.e. about three o'clock in the afternoon; the morning was appointed, as the commentators say {p}, for the sake of women that had young children, who were then asleep, the middle of the day for the sake of nurses, and the evening for the sake of ancient persons:

neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest; ears of corn which fall from the hand or sickle of the reaper, or in gathering the reaps to bind up in sheaves. In the above treatise it is asked, what is a gleaning? that which falls in reaping; if the reaper reaps his handful, or plucks up an handful, and a thorn strikes him, and it falls out of his hand to the ground, lo, it is the owner's; but if out of the middle of his hand, or out of the middle of the sickle, it is the poor's; if from the further part of his hand, or of the sickle, it is the owner's; but if from the top of his hand (or tip of his fingers) or the point of the sickle, it is the poor's {q}: and it is further said {r},

"two ears are a gleaning, but three are not,"

and so Jarchi on the text, that is, when three fall together; this is according to the school of Hillel, but according to the school of Shammai, if there were three ears that fell together, they were the poor's, if four they belonged to the owner.

{l} Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 2. {m} Ibid. sect. 3. {n} Hilchot Mattanot Anayim, c. 2. sect. 12. {o} Misn. Peah. c. 4. sect. 5. {p} Maimon & Bartenora in ib. {q} Ib. sect. 10. {r} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Peah, c. 6. sect. 5.

Leviticus 19:10

Ver. 10. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard,.... Or cut off the little clusters which are, as Aben Ezra observes, like an infant, as the word signifies, infant clusters, which were small in comparison of the large ones, as infants are to men; those which had but a grape or two, or very few upon them, were not to be cut off, but left for the poor: and Gersom says, if the whole vine consisted of such clusters, it all belonged to the poor:

neither shall thou gather [every] grape of thy vineyard; every particular single grape; these were such as were left on the vine after the large clusters were gathered, and a man upon viewing it again might not gather such as had only a single grape or two upon them; for the Misnic doctors say {s}, two grapes or berries make a "peret" (the word here rendered "every grape"), but three do not; so that if there were three grapes upon a cluster it was the owner's, and might be gathered, but if fewer, then it belonged to the poor; or this may be understood {t} also of such single grapes that fell to the ground in gathering, which might not be taken up by the owners, but were to be left to the poor; and, as Gersom says the grape gatherers might not put a bushel under the vines in the time of gathering, to catch the single grapes that fell:

thou shall leave them for the poor and stranger: for the poor Israelite, and the stranger that sojourns with you, as Aben Ezra interprets it; the stranger intends a proselyte, not a proselyte of the gate, but a proselyte of righteousness, as Gersom and it is a rule laid down by Maimonides {u}, that every stranger spoken of concerning the gifts of the poor is no other than a proselyte of righteousness, one that has been circumcised upon embracing the Jewish religion, and agreeing to conform to all the laws and rituals of it; though the same writer observes, that they do not restrain the poor of the Gentiles from these gifts, but they are in general included among the poor of Israel; and they come and take them because of the ways of peace; for the sake of peace, to promote peace and harmony among them:

I [am] the Lord your God; that gave them fields and vineyards, and times of harvest, and vintage, and blessed them with fruitful seasons, and therefore had a right to require such things of them; and they were in duty and gratitude bound to observe his commands; and this shows his regard unto, and concern for the poor, and that he is the father and patron of them.

{s} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Peah, c.6. sect. 5. {t} So it is interpreted by R Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 59. 1. {u} Mattanot Anayim, c. 1. sect. 9.

Leviticus 19:11

Ver. 11. Ye shall not steal,.... Which is the eighth command;
See Gill on "Ex 20:15"; though Jarchi thinks something different from that law is here intended; that this is a caution against stealing of money, that in the decalogue against stealing of souls, or men. And it may be observed, that one is expressed in the singular number, the other in the plural, as here, and takes in more; not the actual thief only, but he that sees and is silent, who, as Aben Ezra observes, is even as the thief; and perhaps this follows upon the preceding laws, to suggest, that he that deprives the poor of the corner of the field, and of the gleaning Of the harvest and vintage, is as if he robbed; and the last

mentioned writer seems to make the force of this depend on that: and Maimonides {w} on the above law observes, that he that put a basket under a vine, in the time of gathering grapes, robbed the poor:

neither deal falsely; in any respect defrauding and over reaching in trade and commerce, particularly not being faithful to a trust committed to them; so Aben Ezra restrains it to what is deposited with a man to keep, which he denies he ever had; and he observes, that he that knows it, and does not bear witness of it, is as he that deals falsely; and such an one, according to a former law, having sworn falsely, and, when convicted, was obliged to restore the principal, and add a fifth part, and bring a trespass offering to make atonement for his sin likewise, **Le 6:2**:

neither lie one to another; in common speech and conversation, in trade and business, and particularly by demanding money of a man who never had anything of him, as Aben Ezra; and who owes him nothing, and yet affirms, with a lie, that he is indebted to him, and insists on payment.

{w} Mattanot Anayim, c. 4. sect. 16.

Leviticus 19:12

Ver. 12. And ye shall not swear by my name falsely,.... Or "to a falsehood" {x}, to any of the above cases; as that a man has not the deposit of another's in his hands, when he has; or that such a man owes him so much money, when he does not, or any other false thing. Stealing, dealing falsely, lying, and false swearing, are mentioned together, as following one another, and as tending to lead on, the one to the other, as Jarchi observes;

"if thou stealest, this will lead thee on to deal falsely, and then to lie, and after that to swear;"

and who further remarks, because it may be thought a man is guilty only because of the proper name (of God he may swear by); therefore to comprehend all the surnames (or epithets of God, such as gracious, merciful, &c.) it is said, "ye shall not swear by, my name falsely": every name which is mine, by which he is called; and so Gersom, any epithet or attribute of his, or any word or phrase by which he is described, as he that made the heavens, or that dwelleth in the heavens, or liveth for ever and ever, and the like; and the word being of the plural number, ye shall not swear, takes in, as Aben Ezra thinks, him that causes to swear, as well as him that swears:

neither shall thou profane the name of thy God: through swearing falsely by it, or through any rash or vain oath in common conversation; not only perjury in a court of judicature, but all profane oaths, curses, and imprecations are forbidden, as breaches of the third command, which this refers to; See Gill on "Ex 20:7":

I [am] the Lord; whose name is holy, and who can and will revenge every abuse of it in a profane way, and to the injury of men.

{x} rqvl "ad fallaciam ullam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Leviticus 19:13

Ver. 13. Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob [him],.... Not defraud him secretly, nor rob him openly and by force, as Aben Ezra; not defraud him in buying and selling, in retaining wages due to him, and refusing to return to him what has been committed to trust, or to repay him what has been borrowed of him: the Vulgate Latin is, "thou shalt not calumniate [him]", or get anything from him, by raising a calumny upon him; nor rob him by coming into his house, or entering into his fields, and taking away his goods, or his cattle without his will, and in a forcible manner; or by meeting him on the highway and demanding his money, and taking it from him:

the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning; unless he that is hired agrees to it; for then it may be kept two or three days, or a week, or for whatsoever time may be agreed upon between them: this must be understood of one that is hired by the day, whose wages are due at night, and who may want his money to buy food for his family, and therefore should not without his consent be detained from him; and not of one that is hired by the week, or by the year, whose wages are not due until the end of the week or year for which he is hired; and the Jewish writers {y} observe, that this Scripture speaks of a day hireling, or a day labourer, whose wages became due at night; as another Scripture, De 24:15; speaks of a night hireling, or a night labourer, whose hire is not due until the pillar of the morning arises, or the sun is up, and therefore it must be paid him before it goes down; to detain the wages of such, or defraud them of it, is a very crying sin; see Jer 22:13.

{y} Vid. Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 11. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. Jarchi & Ben Gersom in loc.

Leviticus 19:14

Ver. 14. Thou shalt not curse the deaf,.... Who are naturally so, born deaf, or become so through some accident, and cannot hear what is objected to them, and they are cursed for; and so cannot reply in their own defence, and remove the calumny cast upon them, if it be such which is the cause of their being cursed; and therefore there is something mean and base as well as wicked in cursing such: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render it, "him that heareth not", and respects any absent person who is not within the hearing of the curse, and so equally incapable of answering for himself as a deaf man: Gersom observes, that this is a caution not to curse any Israelite; for if we are cautioned, says he, not to curse a deaf man who hears not, and therefore cannot be moved at it, much less should we curse him that is not deaf, from whence quarrels and fightings arise:

nor put a stumblingblock before the blind: to cause him to fall; and in this negative is implied, that a man should be serviceable and helpful to the blind as much as may be; as to lead, and guide, and direct them in the way, and not put them out of it, as well as not do anything to cause them to stumble in it; Jarchi and Ben Gersom interpret this figuratively, of ignorant persons imposed upon by the bad advice of others: on the other hand, agreeably to this sense, Job says, he was "eyes to the blind", Job 29:15; gave good advice to the ignorant, instructed them what ways and methods to take to do themselves justice, or obtain it, which otherwise they knew not:

but shalt fear thy God: who, as Aben Ezra observes, can punish thee by making thee deaf and blind also; by striking them with deafness and blindness at once; wherefore the awe and fear of God should be on persons, and make them cautious and fearful how they abused those in such circumstances:

I [am] the Lord; the Lord God, omnipresent and omniscient, that hears when the deaf are cursed, though they do not; and sees the stumblingblocks laid before the blind, and knows who laid them, though they do not, and will revenge such abuses and injuries: the apostle seems to have respect to this law in Ro 14:13.

Leviticus 19:15

Ver. 15. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment,.... This is said with respect to judges and witnesses, as Aben Ezra notes; that the one should not bear false witness in a court of judicature to the perversion of justice, and the other should not pronounce an unrighteous sentence, justifying the wicked and condemning the righteous:

thou shalt not respect the person of the poor; that is, in judgment, or in a court of judicature, when a cause of his is brought before it; though privately his person may be respected, and he relieved in his distress as a poor man; but in a court of justice his person and character as a poor man are not to be regarded; the cause is not to be given either for him or against him on that account, without regard to the justice and equity of it; he may be pitied in other respects but in a cause between him and another, even a rich man, not pity, but justice, must take place, See Gill on "Ex 23:3":

nor honour the person of the mighty; not fear to put him to shame and blushing, by giving the cause against him, if he is in the wrong; his riches, his grandeur, his honour, must not came into any account, or have any weight or influence on the court to pervert justice: the Jewish writers, particularly Maimonides {z} suggest that there was to be no difference between a rich man and a poor man while their cause was trying; that they were to be clothed either both in a rich habit, or both in a mean one; and that their posture was to be alike, whether sitting or standing; as well as that no favour should be shown to one more than to another; as that one might have liberty to speak as much and as long as he pleased, and the other bid to be short; or the one be spoken tenderly to, and the other harshly:

[but] in righteousness shall thou judge thy neighbour; be he rich or poor, doing justice to both, and showing no partiality to either; see
Pr 18:5.

{z} Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 21. sect. 1, 2, 3.

Leviticus 19:16

Ver. 16. Thou shall not go up and down [as] a talebearer among thy people,.... The word used signifies a merchant, and particularly one that deals in drugs and spices, and especially a peddler in those things, that goes about from place to place to sell them; and such having an opportunity and making use of it to carry stories of others, and report them to their disadvantage, hence it came to be used for one that carries tales from house to house, in order to curry favour for himself, and to the injury of others; and such a man is a detestable person, and ought not to be encouraged, see **1Ti 5:13**;

neither shall thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour; either by bearing a false testimony, whereby his blood is in danger of being shed when innocent; or by being silent, and not hearing a testimony for him, whereby the shedding of his innocent blood might have been prevented; either way may be interpreted standing against it: the Jewish writers think, that a man by this law, is bound to do all he can to preserve the life of his neighbour, when it is by any means in danger, by drowning, or by thieves and wild beasts, so Jarchi:

I [am] the Lord; the just and righteous One, who will resent and punish for all unjust proceedings in courts of judicature, secret tale bearing, doing any injury to another, or not preventing it when in the power of his hands.

Leviticus 19:17

Ver. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart,.... Although no hatred may be expressed either by words or deeds, yet being in the heart is a breach of the sixth command, see **Mt 5:21**; and of this a man may be guilty, when he does not attempt to save the life of his neighbour, either by bearing a testimony for him, or by delivering from danger, as preserving him from drowning, from wild beasts and thieves, as in Le 19:16; or when he does not reprove him for sin, as in the next clause, but suffers him to go on in it to his ruin, either of which by interpretation is an hatred of him:

thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, for any sin committed by him, though secretly, yet known; which rebuke should be private, and repeated as may be found necessary, and given gently in meekness and tenderness:

and not suffer sin upon him; unconvinced of, unrepented of and persisted in, which may prove of fatal consequence to him; and therefore to let him alone, and go on in it without telling him of it, and reproving him for it, would be so far from acting the kind and friendly part, and showing him love and respect, that it would be an evidence of hating him at heart, at least it might be strongly suspected: or, "and not bear sin for him" {a}; become a partner with him in his sin, and so become liable to bear punishment for it; which is a strong reason for reproving sin, in a proper manner, lest we should be partakers of other men's sins; see **1Ti 5:20**.

{a} ajx wyle avt al "ne feras propter eum peccatum", Tigurine version; so Sept. Syr. Ar. Targum Jonathan, Aben Ezra, Ainsworth.

Leviticus 19:18

Ver. 18. Thou shalt not avenge,.... That is, not avenge ourselves on him that has done us an ill thing, but leave it to him to whom vengeance belongs, see Ro 12:19; which is done when a man does an ill thing for another, or denies to grant a favour which he has been denied by another; Jarchi thus illustrates it, one says to him (his neighbour) lend me thy sickle; he answers, no (I will not); on the morrow (the neighbour comes, who had refused, and) says to him, lend me thy hatchet; he replies, I will not lend thee, even as thou wouldest not lend me; this is vengeance: this was reckoned mean and little, a piece of weakness with the very Heathens {b}:

nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; those of the same place, city, or kingdom; or "not observe" {c} the injury done, take no notice of it, nor lay it up in the mind and memory, but forget it; or "not keep" {d} or retain enmity, as the Targum of Jonathan supplies it; and so do an ill turn, or refuse to do a good one; or if that is done, yet upbraids with the former unkindness; for upbraiding with unkindness shows that a grudge is retained, though the suit is not denied:

but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; sincerely and heartily, as a man loves himself, doing all the good to him as a man does to himself, or would have done to himself, and hindering all the mischief done to him he would have himself preserved from: Jarchi observes, that it was a saying of R. Akiba, that this is

"the great universal in the law,"

and it does indeed comprehend the whole of the second table of the law, and is the summary of it, and is pretty much the same our Lord says of it, that it is the second and great commandment, and like unto the first, on which two all the law and the prophets hang, Mt 22:37; and so the Apostle Paul makes all the laws of the second table to be comprehended in this, Ro 13:9;

I [am] the Lord; the Creator of all men, and who has commanded them to love one another, and to whom alone vengeance belongs, and who expects obedience to the above laws of his.

{b} -----quippe minuti, &c. Juvenal. Satyr. 13. {c} rjt alw "et non observabis", Montanus. {d} "Non servabis", Pagninus, Drusius; "neque iram asservato"; Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Leviticus 19:19

Ver. 19. Ye shall keep my statutes,.... Those which follow, and which are of a different sort from what are last mentioned, of a moral nature, and are planted in the heart, as Aben Ezra says; are agreeably to the law and light of nature, and part of the work of the law written on the heart, as the apostle calls it, **Ro 2:15**; but the following are of positive institution, and depend upon the will of the lawgiver, the reasons of which are not so apparent and manifest; and therefore Jarchi calls them the decree of the king, who gives no reason for it; ordinances and appointments of a ceremonial kind, which, though there is a meaning in them, and a reason for them, yet not clear and plain:

thou shall not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind; or "cause [them] to gender" {e} for cattle do not usually of themselves gender with a diverse kind, unless directed and solicited to it, as a male of one kind with a female of another; for instance, an horse with a she ass, or an he ass with a mare, and even creatures that were like one another, yet of different kinds, were not to mix together; as a wolf and a dog, a hound and a fox, goats and roebucks, goats and sheep, a horse and a mule, a mule and an ass, an ass and a wild ass; for though they are like one another, they are of different kinds {f}: a creature thus gendered was not forbidden to be used, as a mule; and if a clean creature and gendered of clean ones, though of a different kind, it might be eaten, as Maimonides {g} affirms; for not the creature gendered was unlawful for use, but the act of causing to gender is what is forbidden: the design was to preserve the order of beings, and the nature of creatures as they were at the first creation; that there might be no change among them, or anything taken from or added to what God had made; not to separate what God had joined, or join what God had separated, which to do must reflect upon his wisdom; as also, that men and women, as Philo {h} observes, might abstain from unlawful converse, from unnatural lusts and mixtures; and as Ainsworth thinks, this was to lead Israel to the simplicity and sincerity of religion, and of all the parts and doctrines of the law and Gospel in their distinct kinds, as faith and works, to mingle which together in our justification before God is forbidden; or rather to teach the saints not to mix with the men of the world, in evil conversation, or in superstitious worship; to which may be added, to show that spiritual regeneration is not partly of corruptible and partly of incorruptible seed, nor partly of the will of man, and partly of the will of God; nor partly of the power of man, and partly of the power of God, but wholly of the Spirit and grace of God:

thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: or seed of divers sorts, as wheat and barley, and which, according to the Jews {i}, was not mingled unless there be two grains of wheat and one of barley, or one of wheat and two of barley; or wheat, and barley, and rye: they also include herbs and trees in this law, and make an graft of them a forbidden mixture; hence, they say {k}, they do not ingraft one tree in another, nor one herb in another, nor a tree in an herb, nor an herb in a tree, of which they give instances: and there are various sorts of seeds, herbs, roots, and trees, which are and are not of divers kinds, and some that are alike and yet diverse; for they have a whole treatise of such like things, called "Celaim", or divers kinds: as to the mystical sense, the "field" may represent the church of God, which is not an open but an enclosed field, enclosed by the grace of God, and separated from others by it, well manured and cultivated by the Spirit of God, and through the word and ordinances, as means, in which manner of fruit and flowers grow, and is the property of Christ; see **So 4:12**; the seed may signify the word or doctrine of the Gospel, sown by the ministers of it, skilfully and plentifully, which should be pure and unmixed, not contradictory, nor inconsistent, but all of a piece; the doctrines of it, as those of election, justification, peace, pardon, and salvation, are to be represented, not as partly of works and partly of grace, but as entirely of the grace of God through Christ: or good and bad men may be signified by the mingled seed; good men, who are made so by the grace of God, and are the good seed, or the good ground which receives it, which hear the word, understand it, and bring forth fruit; bad men, such as are of bad principles and practices, these are not to be mixed together in a church state; bad men are neither to be received nor retained:

neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee; for, as Josephus {l} says, none but the priests were allowed to wear such a garment, and with which the Misnah {m} agrees; in which it is asserted, that the priests have no other clothing to minister in, in the sanctuary, but of woollen and linen; which seems to be a better reason of this prohibition than what Maimonides {n} gives, that it was on the account of idolatrous priests, who used to go clothed with such a garment, and a metal ring on their fingers: the

Jewish tradition is, nothing is forbidden on account of divers kinds (i.e. in garments) but wool and flax; camels' wool, and sheep's wool, mixed together, if the greater part is camels', it is free, but if the greater part is sheep's wool, it is forbidden, if half and half, it is forbidden; and so flax and hemp mixed together; also that nothing is forbidden on such account but what is spun and wove {o}: the design of this, as of the other, seems to be in general to caution against unnatural lusts and impure mixtures, and all communion of good and bad men, and particularly against joining the righteousness of Christ with the works of men, in the business of justification: Christ's righteousness is often compared to a garment, and sometimes to line linen, clean and white; and men's righteousness to filthy rags, Re 19:8; which are by no means to be put together in the said affair; such who believe in Christ are justified by the obedience of one and not of more, and by faith in that obedience and righteousness, without the works of the law, **Ro 5:19** **Ro 3:28**; to join them together is needless, disagreeable, and dangerous.

{e} eybrt "non facies coire", V. L. Pagninus, Drusius. {f} Misn. Gelaim, c. 1. sect. 6. {g} Hilchot Gelaim, c. 9. sect. 3. {h} De Special. Leg. p. 784. {i} Misn. ut supra, ({f}) sect. 9. {k} Misn. Celaim, c. 1. sect. 7, 8. {l} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 11. {m} Celaim, c. 9. sect. 1. {n} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 37. {o} Misn. ut supra, ({k}) c. 9. sect. 1. 8.

Leviticus 19:20

Ver. 20. And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman,.... Has carnal knowledge of her: a man and woman are expressed, signifying those that are of age, Aben Ezra observes, that according to the mystical exposition of these words, this same carnally lying is as of divers kinds, of a free man with a bondwoman, and so follows upon the above law and in connection with it: the woman is described as one

that [is] a bondmaid; either meaning a Canaanitish maid, as Jarchi, or an Israelitish one, as Aben Ezra, whom her father had sold, Ex 21:7;

betrothed to her husband: to an Hebrew servant, as Jarchi, or who was promised marriage, either by her master or his son, as Aben Ezra, Ex 21:8;

and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her: or redeemed and not redeemed, as Jarchi; or, as the Targum of Jonathan, not yet redeemed with an entire redemption (or wholly redeemed) with silver, nor a writing of her freedom given her, part of the redemption price being paid, but not the whole; so that she was, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom express it, half a bondmaid and half free:

she shall be scourged; and not he, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi remark, though the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "both shall be beaten"; and the original text does not clearly determine it whether one or both should be scourged, since it may be rendered, "there shall be a scourging" {o}; and seeing both were guilty of sin, it is reasonable to suppose that both should be scourged, but this is contrary to the sense of the Jewish writers; so Kimchi {p} observes, the word is hyht in the singular number and feminine gender, and not in the plural; wherefore, according to the simple sense, she is to be beaten, and not he to be beaten; and this was done with the thong of an ox's hide, as is the sense of the word used, according to Gaon, and so some in Aben Ezra; and so it is remarked in the Misnah {q}, all the uncleannesses, whether of a man or woman, are alike as to stripes and sacrifice, but with respect to a bondmaid, he (i.e. God) hath not made the man equal to the woman as to stripes, nor the woman to the man as to sacrifice:

they shall not be put to death, because she was not free; otherwise adultery was punished with death of both parties, when committed with a woman married to an husband, De 22:22; and she a free woman, but this not being so, were not guilty of death, because, as Jarchi says, her espousals were no espousals, whereas they would had she been free, and so have been guilty of death: this difference the law made between a bond and free woman, but in Christ Jesus and under the Gospel dispensation there is no difference, **Ga 3:28**.

{o} hyht trqb "vapulatio erit", Fagius, Vatablus, Ainsworth; "flagellatio adhibetor"; Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {p} Sepher Shorash. rad. rqb. {q} Ceritot, c. 2. sect. 4.

Leviticus 19:21

Ver. 21. He shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord,.... To the priest of the Lord, to offer it for him; he, and not she, as the Targum of Jonathan has it; See Gill on "Le 19:20":

unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; where all offerings were to be brought, Le 17:4;

[even] a ram for a trespass offering; which was the usual creature for such a sacrifice, **Le 5:15**; the woman was not obliged to bring any, she being a bondmaid; and so having nothing of her own, but what was her master's, her circumstances are considered, and scourging was sufficient.

Leviticus 19:22

Ver. 22. And the priest shall make an atonement for him,.... By offering his sacrifice for him, typical of the atoning sacrifice of Christ:

with the ram of his trespass offering before the Lord; presented before him at the door of the tabernacle, and offered up on his altar:

for his sin which he hath done; or "sinned", which is so expressed, according to Jarchi, to take in his sin, whether done ignorantly or presumptuously:

and the sin which he hath done shall be forgiven him; upon the atonement made, as all the sins of God's people are forgiven through Christ, upon the foot of his atoning sacrifice, see **Heb 9:22**.

Leviticus 19:23

Ver. 23. And when ye shall come into the land,.... The land of Canaan, whither they were now going:

and shall have planted all manner of trees for food; such that brought forth fruit that was eatable, as figs, grapes, olives, &c. so that all such trees as did not bear fruit fit for man's food came not under the following law; nor such as grew up of themselves and were not planted; nor such as were planted for any other use than for fruit; nor such as were planted by the Canaanites before the Israelites came into their land; for so say the Jews, what were planted for an hedge or for timber are free from the law; and add, at the time our fathers came into the land, what they found planted was free, what they planted, though they had not subdued it (the land), was bound:

then ye shall count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised; not fit to be eaten, but to be taken off and cast away as the foreskin of the flesh:

three years it shall be as uncircumcised unto you, it shall not be eaten of; which was a provision partly for the benefit of fruit trees newly planted, whose fruit, when they first bear, gardeners frequently take off immediately, and do not suffer them to grow to any perfection, by which means a tree will grow stronger, and will bear more and better fruit another year; and partly for the health of man, which physical reason is given by Aben Ezra, who observes that the fruit that comes unto the third year there is no profit by it, but is hurtful; and chiefly because, as it is proper that the first fruits should be given to the Lord before any is eaten, so it is right that it should be given seasonably, and when it is brought to its perfection: three years were to be reckoned, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom say, from the time the tree was planted.

Leviticus 19:24

Ver. 24. But in the fourth year all the fruit thereof shall be holy,.... Separated and devoted to the service of God, to be given to the priest, or to be bought again of him; wherefore the Targum of Jonathan adds, at the end of the verse, "redeemed from the priest", a redemption price being given to the priest; and, as Jarchi observes, as the tithe was not eaten without the walls of Jerusalem, but by redemption, even so likewise this:

to praise the Lord [withal]; for his abundant goodness in blessing and making the trees fruitful, and bringing their fruit unto perfection; and by devoting the first fruits to God, his name was praised and glorified, as well as by eating them with joy and gladness before the Lord in Jerusalem.

Leviticus 19:25

Ver. 25. And in the fifth year shall ye eat of the fruit thereof,.... And so in all succeeding years as long as the tree lasted and bore:

that it may yield unto you the increase thereof; may be so abundantly blessed, and produce so large an increase as to answer the three years' want of any fruit from it, and the dedication of the fruit of the fourth year to the Lord:

I [am] the Lord your God; who has promised this increase, is both able and faithful to make it good.

Leviticus 19:26

Ver. 26. Ye shall not eat [anything] with the blood,.... Or upon, over, or by the blood {s}, for this law seems different from that in **Ge 9:4**, and from those in **Le 3:17**; and is variously interpreted by the Jewish writers; some of not eating flesh, the blood not being rightly let out of it, as not being thoroughly cleared of it {t}, and so comes under the notion of things strangled; others of not eating of sacrifices until the blood stands in the basin {u}; and others of not eating any flesh whose blood is not sprinkled on the altar, if near the holy place {w}: some think it refers to the custom of murderers who eat over the person slain, that the avengers of the slain may not take vengeance on them, supposing something superstitious in it, because of what follows {x}; though it rather has respect to an idolatrous practice of the Zabians, as Maimonides {y} informs us, who took blood to be the food of devils, and who used to take the blood of a slain beast and put it in a vessel, or in a hole dug in the earth, and eat the flesh sitting round about the blood; fancying by this means they had communion with devils, and contracted friendship and familiarity with them, whereby they might get knowledge of future things; See Gill on "Eze 33:25":

neither shall ye use enchantment; soothsaying or divination by various creatures, as by the weasel, birds, or fishes, as the Talmudists {z}; or rather by serpents, as the word used is thought to have the signification of; or by any odd accidents, as a man's food falling out of his mouth, or his staff out of his hand, or his son calling after him behind, or a crow cawing to him, or a hart passing by him, or a serpent on his right hand and a fox on his left, or one says, do not begin (any work) tomorrow, it is the new moon, or the going out of the sabbath {a}:

nor observe times; saying, such a day is a lucky day to begin any business, or such an hour an unlucky hour to go out in, as Jarchi, taking the word to have the signification of times, days, and hours, as our version and others; but Aben Ezra derives it from a word which signifies a cloud, and it is well known, he says, that soothsayers view and consult the clouds, their likeness and motion; but some of the ancient writers, as Gersom observes, derive it from a word which signifies an eye, and suppose that such persons are intended who hold the eyes of people, cast a mist before them, or use some juggling tricks whereby they deceive their sight.

{s} Mdh le "super sanguine", Montanus, Munster; "super sanguinem", Fagius. {t} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 63. 1. {u} Targum Jon. in loc. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, ib. {w} Aben Ezra in loc. {x} Baal Hatturim in loc. {y} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 46. {z} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 66. 1. Jarchi in loc. {a} Kimchi, Sepher Shorash. rad. vxn.

Leviticus 19:27

Ver. 27. Ye shall not round the corners of your heads,.... The extremities of the hairs of the head, round about, on the forehead, temples, and behind the ears; this is done, as Jarchi says, when any one makes his temples, behind his ears, and his forehead alike, so that the circumference of his head is found to be round all about, as if they had been cut as with a bowl; and so the Arabians cut their hair, as Herodotus {b} reports, See Gill on "Jer 9:26";

neither shall thou mar the corners of thy beard; by shaving them entirely; Jarchi and other Jewish writers say, there are five of them, two on the right, as Gersom reckons them, one on the upper jaw, the other on the nether, and two over against them on the left, and one in the place where the nether jaw joins the right to the left, the chin; the same observes, that it was the manner of idolaters to do the above things; and Maimonides {c} is of opinion that the reason of the prohibition is, because the idolatrous priests used this custom; but this law does not respect priests only, but the people of Israel in general; wherefore rather it was occasioned by the Gentiles in common cutting their hair, in honour of their gods, as the Arabians did, as Herodotus in the above place relates, in imitation of Bacchus, and to the honour of him; and so with others, it was usual for young men to consecrate their hair to idols; but inasmuch as such practices were used on account of the dead, as Aben Ezra observes, it seems probable enough that these things are forbidden to be done on their account, since it follows,

{b} Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 8. {c} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 37. Hilchot Obede Cochabim, c. 12. sect. 1.

Leviticus 19:28

Ver. 28. Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead,.... Either with their nails, tearing their cheeks and other parts, or with any instrument, knife, razor, &c. Jarchi says, it was the custom of the Amorites, when anyone died, to cut their flesh, as it was of the Scythians, as Herodotus {d} relates, even those of the royal family; for a king they cut off a part of the ear, shaved the hair round about, cut the arms about, wounded the forehead and nose, and transfixed the left hand with arrows; and so the Carthaginians, who might receive it from the Phoenicians, being a colony of theirs, used to tear their hair and mouths in mourning, and beat their breasts {e}; and with the Romans the women used to tear their cheeks in such a manner that it was forbid by the law of the twelve tables, which some have thought was taken from hence: and all this was done to appease the infernal deities, and to give them satisfaction for the deceased, and to make them propitious to them, as Varro {f} affirms; and here it is said to be made "for the soul", for the soul of the departed, to the honour of it, and for its good, though the word is often used for a dead body: now, according to the Jewish canons {g}, whosoever made but one cutting for a dead person was guilty, and to be scourged; and he that made one for five dead men, or five cuttings for one dead man, was obliged to scourging for everyone of them:

nor print any marks upon you; Aben Ezra observes, there are some that say this is in connection with the preceding clause, for there were who marked their bodies with a known figure, by burning, for the dead; and he adds, and there are to this day such, who are marked in their youth in their faces, that they may be known; these prints or marks were made with ink or black lead, or, however, the incisions in the flesh were filled up therewith; but this was usually done as an idolatrous practice; so says Ben Gersom, this was the custom of the Gentiles in ancient times, to imprint upon themselves the mark of an idol, to show that they were his servants; and the law cautions from doing this, as he adds, to the exalted name (the name of God): in the Misnah it is said {h}, a man is not guilty unless he writes the name, as it is said, Le 19:28; which the Talmudists {i} and the commentators {k} interpret of the name of an idol, and not of God:

I [am] the Lord; who only is to be acknowledged as such, obeyed and served, and not any strange god, whose mark should be imprinted on them.

{d} Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 71. {e} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 7. {f} Apud Servium in Virgil. Aeneid. 3. {g} Misn. Maccot, c. 3. sect. 5. {h} Ibid. sect. 6. {i} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 21. 1. {k} Jarchi, Maimon. Bartenora, & Ez Chayim in Misn. ut supra. ({g})

Leviticus 19:29

Ver. 29. Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore,.... Not by delaying to marry her, which is the sense the Jews give {l}, but it refers to a

wicked practice among the Phoenicians or Canaanites, Athanasius {m} speaks of, whose women used to prostitute themselves in the temples of their idols; and to such filthy services, in a religious way, the Israelites, in imitation of them, are forbid to expose their daughters: such filthy practices, under a notion of religion, were committed at Babylon, Corinth, and other places;
See Gill on "Mic 1:7";

lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness: of the wickedness of whoredom, both corporeal and spiritual, fornication and idolatry; both of which would be promoted by such abominable practices, and in process of time the land be filled with them.

{l} Targ. Jon. in loc. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 76. 1. {m} Contra Gentes, p. 21.

Leviticus 19:30

Ver. 30. Ye shall keep my sabbaths,.... By attending to the worship and service of God on sabbath days, they and their children would be preserved from the idolatry of the Gentiles, and all the filthy practices attending it:

and reverence my sanctuary; and not defile it by such impurities as were committed in the temples of idols: the sanctuary being an holy place, sacred to him whose name is holy and reverend, and where was the seat of his glorious Majesty, and therefore not to be defiled by fornication or idolatry, or by doing anything in it unseemly and unbecoming, See Gill on "Mr 11:16":

I [am] the Lord; who had appointed the observance of the sabbath day, and dwelt in the sanctuary, and therefore expected that the one would be kept and the other reverenced, and neither of them polluted.

Leviticus 19:31

Ver. 31. Regard not them that have familiar spirits,.... The word used signifies "bottles", and that sort of diviners here intended go by this name, either because what they sat on when they divined was in the form of a bottle, or they divined by one, or they were swelled and inflated as bottles when they delivered out their answers, or spoke as out of a bottle or hollow place; hence they are called masters or mistresses of the bottle: they seem to be the same with the ventriloquists, and so the Septuagint version here calls them; such whose voice seemed to come out of their bellies, and even the lower parts of them; and such was the Pythian prophetess at Delphos, and very probably the maid in the times of the apostles, who had a spirit of divination, or of Python, Ac 16:16; and so the words may be rendered here, "look not to the Python" {n}, or those who have the spirit of Python; so Jarchi from the Misnah {o} interprets the word here used, "Baal Ob" or the master of the bottle, this is Python, one that speaks from under his arm holes:

neither seek after wizards; such as pretend to a great deal of knowledge, as the word signifies; such as are called cunning men, who pretend to know where lost or stolen goods are, and to tell people their fortunes, and what will befall them hereafter:

to be defiled by them; for by seeking to them, and believing what is said by them, and trusting thereunto, and expecting events answerable to their predictions, they would be guilty of a gross sin, and so bring pollution and guilt on them; according to the Jewish canons {p}, such sort of persons as are cautioned against were to be stoned, and they that consulted them to be reproved;

I [am] the Lord your God; who only is to be regarded and sought unto for advice and assistance; see **Isa 8:19**.

{n} tbah la wnpt la "ne respiciatis ad Pythonas", Montanus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {o} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 7. {p} Ibid.

Leviticus 19:32

Ver. 32. Thou shall rise up before the hoary head,.... Or "before old age" {q}, which may be discerned by the hoary or grey hairs upon the head; that is, before a grey-headed man, or an old man, and one was reckoned so when he was of seventy years of age; for so it is said {r}, one of sixty years is arrived to old age, and one of seventy to grey hairs. Fagius relates, that according to the tradition of the Hebrews, a young man was obliged to rise up when an ancient man was at the distance of four cubits from him, and to sit down again as soon as he had passed by him, that it might appear it was done in honour of him. And this was not only observed among the Jews, but anciently among Heathens, who reckoned it abominable wickedness, and a capital crime, if a young man did not rise up to an old man, and a boy to a bearded person {s}. Herodotus {t} reports, that the Egyptians agreed in this with the

Lacedaemonians, and with them only of the Grecians, that the younger, when they met the elder, gave them the way and turned aside, and when coming towards them rose up out of their seat; and this law was enjoined them by Lycurgus, and which Aelianus {u} commends as of all the most humane. And this respect to ancient persons is due to them from younger persons, because of their having been in the world before them, and of their long continuance in it, and because of the favour and honour God has bestowed upon them in granting them long life, as also because of the experience, knowledge, and wisdom, they may be supposed to have attained unto: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan restrain this to such as are expert in the law; so Jarchi says, there is no old man but he that has acquired wisdom; but it seems not to be the intention of this law to limit the respect to such only; though it must be allowed that ancient persons, who are wise and good, are worthy of special regard, see Pr 16:31;

and honour the face of the old man; who for the wrinkles of it, and his withered countenance, might be liable to be despised. The Targum of Jonathan interprets it, the face of a wise man, which agrees with what is observed before; and so Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and other Jewish writers explain it; and the former asks, what is this honour? he may not sit in his place, nor contradict his words. All this may be applied to elders by office, as well as in age, to magistrates, masters, and teachers; and particularly, as Ben Gersom observes, this may admonish us to give honour to God, who is the Ancient of days, who always was, and ever will be:

and fear thy God, I [am] the Lord; who has commanded such reverence of ancient persons, and will punish for any marks of irreverence shown them; and who is himself to be feared and reverenced above all, being, from everlasting to everlasting, God, and whose name is holy and reverend.

{q} hbyv ynpm "ante canitiem", Pagninus; so Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {r} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21. {s} "Improbitas illo fuit", &c. Juvenal. Satyr. 13. v. 53, 54, 55, 56. {t} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 80. {u} Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 61.

Leviticus 19:33

Ver. 33. And if a stranger sojourn with you in your land,.... Ben Gersom, and others, understand this of a proselyte of righteousness, who was circumcised, and in all things conformed to the Jewish religion; but it may be interpreted of a proselyte of the gate, who was not an idolater, since he is described as one sojourning with them, and indeed of any stranger, who for a time was providentially cast among them:

ye shall not vex him: with hard and grievous words, upbraiding him with his former ignorance and idolatry, and saying unto him, as Jarchi observes, yesterday thou wast a worshipper of idols, and now thou comest to learn the law; nor distress him by any means in business, or with law suits; See Gill on "Ex 22:21".

Leviticus 19:34

Ver. 34. [But] a stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you,.... Especially if a proselyte of righteousness; for then he enjoyed the same privileges, civil and religious, the Israelites did, for there was one law for them both, Ex 12:49:

and thou shalt love him as thyself; and show it by doing all the good things for him they would have done for themselves in like circumstances:

for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: and therefore knew what hardships such were exposed unto; and it became them to put on bowels of compassion, and show pity to those in a like condition, and particularly consider, as Jarchi suggests, that they were idolaters there also, and therefore ought not to upbraid strangers with their former idolatry:

I [am] the Lord your God; who showed kindness to them when strangers in Egypt, and had brought them out of that land, and therefore ought to obey his commands, and particularly in this instance.

Leviticus 19:35

Ver. 35. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment,.... This is repeated from Le 19:15; and in order to lead on to some other laws and instructions; though Aben Ezra thinks this is said in connection with the preceding words, and in reference to the stranger, agreeably to **De 1:16**; but Jarchi refers it to what follows concerning weights and measures, and observes, that a measurer is a judge; and if he acts deceitfully, he perverts judgment, and does that which is detestable and abominable, and is the cause of the five following things said of a judge; he defiles the land, and profanes the name of God, and causes the Shechinah or divine Majesty to remove, or causes Israel to fall by the sword, or carries them captive out of their land:

in meteyard, in weight, or in measure; the first of these, according to Jarchi, signifies the measure of land, of fields, &c. and so likewise of anything that is measured, not only by the rod or line, but by the yard or ell, as cloth and other things, whether broad or narrow, that are measured in their length; and the second may respect the weight of all sorts of things that are weighed in scales, as money in former times, as well as various sorts of goods; and the last has respect to the measure of both dry and liquid things, by the bushel, peck, quart, pint, &c.

Leviticus 19:36

Ver. 36. Just balances, just weights,.... Which were for such sort of things as were bought and sold by weight, and these were to be according to the custom and usage which universally obtained among them, or were fixed and settled by them; they were to be neither lighter nor heavier; they were not to have one sort to buy with, and another to sell with, which was not just, and was an abomination to the Lord, Pr 11:1; for "weights", it is in the original text "stones", for those were formerly used in weighing, and were with us: hence it is still in use to say, so much by the stone. And according to Maimonides {w}, the Jews were not to make their weights neither of iron, nor of lead, nor of the rest of metals, lest they should rust and become light, but of polished rock, and the like;

a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have; the first of these was the measure of things dry, as corn, and the like, the latter of things liquid, as oil and wine; the one held three seahs or pecks, or ten omers, Ex 16:36; or, according to a nicer calculation, the ephah held seven gallons, two quarts, and half a pint; and the other, according to some, held three quarts; but, as more exactly calculated, it held a wine gallon, and a little more than a quart, See Gill on "Ex 30:24". Some Jewish writers {x} refer this to words, promises, and compacts, expressed by yea and nay, which they were to abide by; that their yea should be yea, and their nay, nay, **Mt 5:37**; that their affirmation should be just, and so their negation:

I [am] the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt; and therefore were under great obligations to observe his commands, as follows.

{w} Hilchot Genibah, c. 8. sect. 4. {x} Torath Cohanim apud Yalkut in loc. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Sheviith, c. 10. sect. 9.

Leviticus 19:37

Ver. 37. Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments,.... Delivered in this and the preceding chapters, and elsewhere, whether ceremonial or judicial, or moral, as there were of each, which had been delivered to them; and which are all comprehended in these two words, "statutes", or ordinances, which were the determinations of his sovereign will, and of mere positive institution; and "judgments", which were such laws as respected their civil or religious conduct, formed according to the rules of justice and equity: "all" and everyone of which were to be "observed", taken notice of, and regarded, in order to be put in practice, as follows:

and do them; act according to them, in civil, moral, and religious life:

I [am] the Lord; who enjoined all these things, and had a right to do so, and expected obedience to them, which it was right fit that they should give.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 20

In this chapter several laws are, repeated, enforced with a penalty annexed to them, and the breach them made capital, to deter from it, as giving seed to Molech, Le 20:1; going after such that have familiar spirits, or are wizards, Le 20:6; by shunning which, and other sins, a regard would be shown to holiness, Le 20:7; such as cursing parents, Le 20:9; committing adultery, Le 20:10; incestuous copulations, and marriages, and beastly actions, Le 20:11; all which it became the Israelites to avoid, lest, when come into the land of Canaan, they should be cast out of it, as the old inhabitants were for the same things, Le 20:22; and therefore, that they might appear to be a distinct people from others, they were to put a difference between clean and unclean creatures, Le 20:25; and the chapter is closed with a law, making it death for any person to have a familiar spirit, or to be a wizard, Le 19:27.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... After he had delivered the above laws to him in the preceding chapter, he added penalties, to many of them, or declared what punishment should be inflicted on the transgressors of them:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 20:2

Ver. 2. Again thou shalt say to the children of Israel,.... The body of the people by their elders, and the heads of their tribes; for the following laws were binding on them all:

whosoever [he be] of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel; everyone of the people of Israel, of whatsoever age, sex, or condition of life: and not they only, but the strangers and proselytes; and not the proselytes of righteousness only, but the proselytes of the gate, who, as well as the others, were to shun idolatry, and other impieties and immoralities after mentioned:

that giveth [any] of his seed unto Molech; which Aben Ezra interprets of lying with an idolatrous woman, or a worshipper of Molech, the abomination or idol of the Ammonites, 1Ki 11:7; of which see Le 18:21; but more than that is here intended, or even than causing their seed or offspring to pass through the fire to Molech, as in the place referred to; more is meant by it than a lustration of them, or a dedicating them to Molech, by delivering them to his priests to lead them between two fires for that purpose, but even the sacrificing of them to him; and so the Targum of Jonathan seems to understand it, which is,

"that makes (or sacrifices) of his seed Molech to be burnt in the fire:"

for that the Phoenicians or Canaanites, whose customs the Israelites were in danger of imitating, and therefore cautioned against, did sacrifice human creatures, and these the dearest to them, even their beloved and only begotten children, to Saturn, is certain, as Porphyry {y} and Eusebius {z} affirm, or to Hercules, as Pliny {a}, and both the same with Molech, or the sun:

he shall surely be put to death; by the hand of the civil magistrate, which death was to be by stoning, as follows:

the people of the land shall stone him with stones: that is, the people of the house of Israel, as both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; such as lived in that part of the country where the idolater lived, and where he committed the sin, or was condemned for it; of the manner of stoning, See Gill on "Ac 7:58".

{y} De Abstinent. l. 2. c. 56. {z} De laudibus Constantin. c. 13. p. 646. Vid. Suidam in voce
sardaniov. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 5.

Leviticus 20:3

Ver. 3. And I will set my face against that man,.... Express resentment, anger, wrath, and indignation at him, see Ps 34:16:

and will cut him off from among his people: that is, supposing him to have been guilty of the above horrid crime, and there being not sufficient evidence given of it by witnesses, or the magistrates negligent in doing their duty; and the matter being known to God the omniscient, he, according this declaration, would deal with him himself, and cut him off out of the land of the living, from among his relations, friends, and neighbours, by his own immediate hand; otherwise the law before provided a penalty, which is death by stoning, whereby he would be effectually cut off from his people, and deprived of all natural, civil, and religious privileges in this life, and sent into everlasting punishment in another, unless forgiving grace should be vouchsafed:

because he hath given of his seed to Molech; an iniquity to be punished by the judge, and deserving of everlasting wrath and destruction:

to defile my sanctuary; not by doing this horrid action in it, but by coming into it, having done it; or by offering sacrifice in another place than where God had commanded, as well as such a sacrifice as was abominable to him, sacrifice being to be offered nowhere but on the altar of the Lord in the sanctuary. Jarchi interprets this of the congregation of Israel, which was sanctified to the Lord, in the midst of which this wickedness was committed, and with which they were polluted:

and to profane my holy name: by sacrificing to an idol, when sacrifice should be offered to God; and such a sacrifice as would cause the name of God, and his holy laws, and true religion, to be blasphemed and evil, spoken of among the Gentiles, **Ro 2:23**.

Leviticus 20:4

Ver. 4. And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man,.... That is, the people of the house of Israel, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; if the friends, relations, and neighbours of such a man, though they know what he is about to do, or has done, yet they shut their eyes wilfully, or look another way; or, however, wink and connive at his wickedness, and will not discover him, and bear witness against him; or if a court of judicature, before whom he comes, does not take the evidence of his crime, nor condemn for it, or are negligent in punishing him as the law directs, a gift having blinded their eyes, or they careless and remiss in their duty:

when he giveth his seed unto Molech; a crime so heinous and abominable:

and kill him not; do not bring witness against him, so as that he may be put to death, or do not upon the evidence given condemn him to death, or do not take care to have sentence executed, by stoning him to death.

Leviticus 20:5

Ver. 5. Then I will set my face against that man,.... That man that sees him do the fact, and winks at it, or the judge that connives at him, and will not condemn him, as well as the man that has committed the iniquity:

and against his family; either the family of the witness, who could and should have testified against him, or of the judge negligent of his office, or of the man himself, whose family must be privy to so shocking an action, and were abettors of it, and aiders and assisters in it; and so Onkelos renders it, "and his helpers":

and will cut him off: the head of the family, whether judge, witness, or the criminal himself:

and all that go a whoring after him: that commit the like idolatry after his example, and encouraged to it by the connivance of others at it:

to commit whoredom with Molech; that is, idolatry, which is spiritual whoredom, and often so called in Scripture, and with great propriety; for since God had espoused these people to himself, and was their husband, as he was from the time of his bringing them out of Egypt, and making a covenant with them, Jer 31:32; and their sacrificing to and serving other gods being a breach of their matrimonial covenant with him, it was no other than whoredom in a spiritual sense, for which he threatens to cut them off:

from among their people; by an immature death, even all that were guilty of such abominable actions, or made themselves accessory to them, by any ways conniving at them, either as judges or witnesses.

Leviticus 20:6

Ver. 6. The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits,.... The man or woman that has respect unto them, seeks after them, and inquires of them, in order to get knowledge of things:

and after wizards who pretend to tell fortunes, and discover lost and stolen goods, See Gill on "Le 19:31";

to go a whoring after them; for to consult them is to forsake the Lord, and have recourse to Satan and his instruments; to relinquish their trust in God, and put confidence in them, and attribute such things to them as only belong to God, even the knowledge of things future; and this is to commit idolatry, which is spiritual adultery:

I will even set my face against that soul; show like resentment and indignation as at him that gives his seed to Molech:

and will cut him off from among his people; in case his people do not bear witness against him, but hide their eyes, and wink at his crimes, or the civil magistrate does not condemn and punish him; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"I will destroy him by the pestilence."

Leviticus 20:7

Ver. 7. Sanctify yourselves therefore,.... By abstaining from such impious and idolatrous practices, and separating themselves from all that gave into them, as well as by observing the holy commandments of the Lord; otherwise internal sanctification is not the work of man, but of the Lord himself, as in Le 20:8:

and be ye holy; or a separate people from all others in worship and conversation:

for I [am] the Lord your God; who is a holy God, and therefore it became them to be holy, in imitation of him, Le 19:2.

Leviticus 20:8

Ver. 8. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them,.... Not only those respecting the above things, but all others, which would be a means of preserving them from sin, and of promoting holiness in their lives and conversations:

I [am] the Lord which sanctify you: who had separated and distinguished them from all other people on earth, and who had given them holy laws, as the means of holiness; and who only could and did sanctify internally, by his Spirit and grace, such or them as were sanctified in heart, as well as outwardly.

Leviticus 20:9

Ver. 9. For everyone that curseth his father or his mother,.... Here begins the account of the penalties annexed to the several laws in the preceding chapter; and that respecting the fear and honour of parents being the first, Le 19:3, is here begun with:

shall surely be put to death; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"by casting of stones,"

stoning being the punishment of such transgressors:

he hath cursed his father or his mother: to do either is his sin, and a capital crime it is:

his blood [shall be] upon him: he shall be guilty of death, be condemned unto it, and punished with it, namely, by stoning; for, as Jarchi observes, wherever it is, "his blood [shall be] on him", or "their blood shall be on them", it is to be understood of stoning.

Leviticus 20:10

Ver. 10. And the man that committeth adultery with [another] man's wife,.... Which is a breach of the seventh command, Ex 20:14;

[even he] that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife: which is only an explanation of the former clause; though the Jewish writers, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom, say this is so expressed to except the wife of a stranger, or a Gentile; but it means whether a Gentile or an Israelite; and which may be confirmed by the instance of Phinehas slaying a prince of Israel, that lay with a Midianitish woman, Nu 25:6:

the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death; on account of her that is espoused, by strangling, with a hard napkin within a soft one; and on account of her that is married, by casting stones; even both the adulterer and adulteress, as the Targum: and the Jews say {b}, strangling was thus performed; they that were strangled were fixed up to their knees in dung, and then they put a hard napkin within a soft one, and rolled it about his neck, and one drew it to him this way, and another drew it to him that way, until he expired: and there is no unlawful copulation punished with strangling, according to Maimonides {c}, but lying with another man's wife; and who observes, that the death which is spoken of in the law absolutely, that is, without specifying any kind of death, is strangling; but stoning seems rather meant, agreeably to De 22:24.

{b} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 3. {c} Hilchot lssure Biah, c. 1. sect. 6.

Leviticus 20:11

Ver. 11. And the man that lieth with his father's wife,.... Whether she be his mother, or another woman, as the Targum of Jonathan; that is, whether she is his own mother, or a stepmother, or whether he did this in the lifetime of his father, or after his death, or whether she was betrothed or married, it mattered not; according to the Jewish tradition {d}, this is a breach of the law, Le 18:8; and a man guilty of this

hath uncovered his father's nakedness; and which is a foul and shameful piece of wickedness; the penalty follows:

both of them shall be put to death; by casting stones on them, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; for, as before observed, wherever the following phrase,

their blood [shall be] upon them, is used, stoning is meant; and so, according to the Misnah {e}, all those were to be stoned, after mentioned, of whom this phrase is used.

{d} Misn. ut supra, (Sanhedrin, c. 7.) sect. 4. {e} Ibid.

Leviticus 20:12

Ver. 12. If a man lie with his daughter in law,.... His son's wife, whether in the lifetime of his son, or after his death, or whether she was espoused or married, according to the above tradition {f}:

both of them shall surely be put to death; it being a breach of the law in Le 18:15; and this is the penalty annexed to it, even death:

they have wrought confusion: have been guilty of a shocking and shameful mixture, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom, as well as confounded the degrees of relation and affinity:

their blood [shall be] upon them; it being a capital crime, their, blood shall be shed for it; they shall be found guilty of death by stoning, as the Targum of Jonathan.

{f} Misn. ut supra. (Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 4.)

Leviticus 20:13

Ver. 13. If a man lie also with mankind, as he lieth with a woman,.... Is guilty of the sin of sodomy, this is a breach of the law in
Le 18:22;

both of them have committed an abomination; he that lies, and he that is lain with, both consenting to perpetrate the abominable wickedness; which may well be called an abomination, being contrary to nature, and more than brutish, for nothing of that kind is to be found among brutes:

they shall surely be put to death; if he that is lain with is not forced, as Aben Ezra observes:

their blood [shall be] upon them; be slain by stoning, as the above Targum.

Leviticus 20:14

Ver. 14. And if a man take a wife, and her mother,.... Marry both the one and the other, or commit uncleanness with them, they consenting to it:

it [is] wickedness; abominable wickedness, shocking and detestable; there are other things, which also are wicked and not to be done, but this is extremely wicked, wickedness to a high degree:

they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; the man, the mother and her daughter both being married together to him, or both consenting to his lying with them; otherwise, if one of them was first his wife, it was not reasonable that she should be put to death; and therefore some interpret "they", one of them, as Jarchi observes, one or other of them; and so Aben Ezra explains it, this or that; if the mother was his wife, the daughter was to be burnt; and so on the contrary, if the daughter was his wife, the mother was to be burnt; according to the Targum of Jonathan, they were to be burnt by pouring lead into their mouths: and so the manner of burning is described in the Misnah {g}; they that are to be burnt are fixed in dung up to their knees, then they put a hard napkin within a soft one, and roll it about is neck; one draws it one way, and another another way, until he opens his mouth; then they take hot melted lead, and pour it into his mouth, which goes down into his bowels and burns them. But it was rather done with faggots, of which an instance is given:

that there be no wickedness among you; of such kind, continued, countenanced, and pass unpunished. This punishment was to be inflicted, to deter persons from it. The law against it is in Le 18:17.

{g} Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 2.

Leviticus 20:15

Ver. 15. If a man lie with a beast,.... A sin quite unnatural, exceeding shocking and detestable, forbid Le 18:23:

he shall surely be put to death: by stoning, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; and this is the death such are condemned to in the Misnah {h}:

and ye shall slay the beast; with clubs, as says the Targum of Jonathan; the reasons given in the Misnah {i}, why the beast was to be slain, are, because ruin came to the man by means of it, and that it might not be said, as it passed along the streets, that is the beast for which such an one was stoned. Aben Ezra says it was to be slain, that it might not cause others to sin; and he adds, there are that say it was to cover the reproach: no doubt the true reason was to deter the more from this detestable sin, that if a beast, which was only accessory to it, and an instrument of it, was put to death, of how much sorer punishment must the man that committed it be worthy of, even of eternal wrath and destruction, and, unless repented of and forgiven, must be expected by him?

{h} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 4. {i} Ibid.

Leviticus 20:16

Ver. 16. And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto,.... In order that the beast may lie with her, and solicit it to commit such an action with her, see Le 18:23;

thou shall kill the woman and the beast: the woman by stoning, and the beast with clubs, as the Targum of Jonathan; and this for the same reasons as before, as well as to prevent monstrous births:

they shall surely be put to death; both the one and the other, and not spared:

their blood [shall be] upon them; they are guilty of a capital crime, a crime which deserves death; this must be understood of the man that lies with a beast, and of the woman; for as for the beast itself, as it is not capable of sinning, so not of guilt, in a proper sense.

Leviticus 20:17

Ver. 17. And if a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter,.... Take her to be his wife, or commit lewdness with her, whether she be his sister by both father and mother's side, or whether by one only, either way she is his sister, and it is not lawful to marry her, or lie with her, see Le 18:9:

and see her nakedness, and she see his nakedness; which is not to be understood of an immodest view, exposing to each other what should not be seen, and pleasing themselves wills such obscene sights, but of the act of lying together, for so it is afterwards explained by a phrase frequently used to express that action by; and it denotes, as Aben Ezra observes, their mutual consent and agreement in it:

it [is] a wicked thing; and by no means to be done; it is a breach of a former law, it is a scandalous and reproachful thing, and the word is sometimes used for reproach, as in Pr 14:34;

and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people; by death, either by the hand of the civil magistrate, or by the hand of God, by the pestilence, as the Targum of Jonathan; Ben Gersom interprets it, of their dying childless, as in some following cases, Le 20:20;

he hath uncovered his sister's nakedness; or lay with her, which explains a preceding clause:

he shall bear his iniquity; the punishment of it, and he alone, as Aben Ezra observes.

Leviticus 20:18

Ver. 18. And if a man shall lie with a woman having her sickness,.... Her monthly courses, which make her weak and languid, which is forbidden, Le 18:19; this is not to be understood of a man's lying with his wife ignorantly, when in such a condition, for this being the case, he was only unclean seven days, Le 15:24; whereas this made him and her liable to cutting off, as in an after clause; but of his lying with her, knowing this to be the case with her, and of which she could not be ignorant, and therefore both liable to the same punishment; or else of any other man lying with her, or of any man lying with any woman, married or unmarried, being in such circumstances:

and shall uncover her nakedness; that is, have carnal knowledge of her:

he hath discovered her fountain; from whence her issue of blood flows: and she hath uncovered the fountain of her blood; freely and willingly, as Aben Ezra observes; for if she had been forced, he alone would have been cut off; but both these phrases put together show agreement in this matter, that they both had knowledge of her case, and both consented to commit the sin:

and both of them shall be cut off from among their people; by death, either by the hand of the civil magistrate, the case being known and proved, or else by the hand of God being known by mortality or the pestilence, as the Targum of Jonathan, or they should die childless;
See Gill on "Le 20:17".

Leviticus 20:19

Ver. 19. And thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister, nor of thy father's sister,.... An aunt either by mother or father's side, against which the law is, Le 18:13;

for he uncovereth his near kin; as an aunt is to a man, and so an uncle to a woman, and both equally criminal; for it is a rule that holds good in all those cases, though not expressed, that what is binding upon one sex is upon the other, being in the same degree of relation, whether of consanguinity or affinity:

they shall bear their iniquity; "both" of them, as the Vulgate Latin version, the man and his aunt, and so a woman and her uncle;

the guilt of their sin shall be upon them, and the punishment of it be inflicted on them; either they should be cut off from their people, as before, or be childless, as in the following instances.

Leviticus 20:20

Ver. 20. And if a man shall lie with his uncle's wife,.... His uncle being dead, and he marry her, which is forbidden, Le 18:14;

he hath uncovered his uncle's nakedness: his wife's, which was his, and therefore the kindred too near for a man to marry in, and such a copulation must be incestuous:

they shall bear their sin; "both" of them, as the Vulgate Latin, as before, Le 20:19; the punishment of it, as follows:

they shall be childless; which Jarchi and other Jewish writers interpret, if they had any children at this time, that is, by a former marriage, they should die and be buried before them, which was reckoned a great punishment, see Jer 22:30.

Leviticus 20:21

Ver. 21. And if a man shall take his brother's wife,.... To his wife, whether in his life, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, or whether after his death, unless when there is no issue, then he was obliged to it by another law, De 25:5; which is now ceased, and the law in
Le 18:16; here referred to, stands clear of all exceptions:

it [is] an unclean thing; or a "separation" {k} from which a man should remove and keep at a distance, as from menstruous women, of whom this word is used; and so denotes that it is by all means to be avoided, as an abominable and detestable thing; and it is observed that of all copulations it is only used of this: and the Jewish writers, as Aben Ezra and others, observe that this case is somewhat like that of a menstruous woman, who in the time of her separation is unlawful, but when out of it lawful; and so, in this case, a brother's wife might not be taken, he being alive; but after his death she might, if she had no son, according to the law before referred to, but that is now abolished:

he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; his wife's, which was his brother's; which through nearness of kin, he ought not to have done; and the same holds good of a wife's sister, the relation being the same:

they shall be childless; they shall have none by such a marriage or copulation, and die without any; and as this supposes the brother's wife to have children by her first husband, or otherwise while the Jewish law lasted, it would not have been unlawful to marry her husband's brother; the meaning may be, that these should die before them, or rather, as some think, those that might be born of such a marriage should not be reckoned legitimate, and so not inherit.

{k} hdn "separatio", Drusius,

Leviticus 20:22

Ver. 22. Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes,.... All the ordinances, institutions, and appointments of God, whether observed in this chapter or elsewhere, but particularly those concerning incestuous marriages and unlawful copulations:

and all my judgments, and do them; all the laws and commandments of God, founded injustice and judgment, and according to the rules thereof; or else, as Aben Ezra, the judgments of punishment, or the penalties annexed to the above laws, which were carefully to be observed, and put into execution, to deter from the transgression of them:

that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spew you not out; as the stomach does its food when it is loathsome and nauseous to it, and it cannot bear it; see Le 18:25.

Leviticus 20:23

Ver. 23. And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation which I cast out before you,.... Nation seems to be put for nations, for there were seven nations cast out for them; though the Canaanites may be intended, being a general name for the whole: some think the Amorites are meant, who were a principal nation, and notorious for their wickedness: hence we often meet with this phrase in Jewish writings, "the way of the Amorites", as being exceeding bad, and so to be avoided, and by no means to be walked in, Ge 15:16;

for they committed all these things; were guilty of all the idolatries, incests, and uncleannesses before mentioned, and forbid under severe penalties:

and therefore I abhorred them; the sins committed by them, being so abominable and detestable: their persons, though the creatures of God, were had in abhorrence by him, and this he showed by casting them out of the land; and hereby it is suggested, that, should they, the Israelites, be guilty of the like, they also would be rejected and abhorred by him: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are,

"my Word abhorred them,"

Christ, the eternal Word, Ps 45:7.

Leviticus 20:24

Ver. 24. But I have said unto you, ye shall inherit the land,.... Promised it unto them, as he had to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and also to them; or he had said the above things unto them, that they, observing them, might possess the land of Canaan, and continue therein, which is the sense of the Targum of Jonathan: the Jews say, that the right of inheritance belonged to them, from Shem the son of Noah, whose portion it was, and which they gather from Melchizedek being king of Salem, whom they take to be Shem; and they say, the Canaanites only dwelt in it to make it better, till they should come and inherit it:

and I will give it unto you to possess it; in whose gift it was, and who had a right to dispose of it; and could give them a good title to it, and secure them in the possession of it:

a land that floweth with milk and honey; abounding with all good things, with all the comforts of life, with everything both for necessity and delight; see **Ex 3:8**;

I [am] the Lord your God, which have separated you from [other] people; had chosen them above all people, to be a special and peculiar people to him; had distinguished them by his favours, and had given them particular laws and ordinances, to observe and walk according to them, different from all other nations, which it became them carefully to regard.

Leviticus 20:25

Ver. 25. Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean,.... The ten clean ones, as Aben Ezra observes, and all the rest that are unclean, according to the law before given, Le 11:3, by using the one for food, and not the other, and so the Targum of Jonathan, ye shall separate between the beast which is fit for food, and that which is not fit for food:

and between unclean fowls and clean; and which the same Targum interprets, what is unfit to eat and what is fit, even all that are particularly mentioned as unclean, and not fit for food, in
Le 11:13 and all the rest not excepted to as clean and fit for food, which was

one way and means God made use of to separate them from other nations, and so preserve them from their idolatrous and evil works:

and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground; that is, by eating them, contrary to the command of God, which would make them abominable in his sight; see Le 11:43; every sin or transgression of this law being so to him:

which I have separated from you as unclean; which by law he had commanded them to abstain from the use of, as clean, and not fit to be eaten.

Leviticus 20:26

Ver. 26. And ye shall be holy unto me,.... Separated from all unclean persons and things, and devoted to his service, and obedient to all his commands, and so live holy lives and conversations, according to his will, and to his honour and glory:

for I the Lord [am] holy; and therefore they, his people, should be like him, and imitate him, and observe those things which are agreeable to his holy nature and will, and yield a cheerful obedience to his holy precepts:

and have severed you from [other] people, that ye should be mine; which is a very forcible argument, a strong motive, and which laid them under great obligation to obedience and holiness.

Leviticus 20:27

Ver. 27. A man also or a woman that hath a familiar spirit,.... Or the spirit of Python or divination, see Le 19:31; such as the damsel had in Ac 16:16; a woman is here particularly mentioned, though before included in the above law; because, as Aben Ezra says, such sort of practices were more frequently committed by women; to which Maimonides {l} adds another reason, because men have a natural clemency towards the female sex, and are not easily prevailed upon to put them to death; therefore the law says, "thou shall not suffer a witch to live",
Ex 22:18;

or that is a wizard; a knowing one, who pretends to a great deal of knowledge of things; as of lost or stolen goods, and even knowledge of things future, and imposes upon persons, and cheats them of their money they give for information: such

shall surely be put to death: and not spared through favour and affection: the death they are to be put to follows:

they shall stone them with stones; until they are dead; of the manner of stoning, See Gill on "Ac 7:58";

their blood [shall be] upon them: they are worthy of death, and they shall suffer it: this phrase following upon the former, the Jews {m} gather from hence, that, wherever it is used, it is to be understood of stoning; See Gill on "Le 20:9".

{l} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 37. {m} Torat Cohanim in Yalcut in loc.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 21

This chapter respects the priests, the sons of Aaron, and forbids their mourning for the dead, unless in some cases, Le 21:1; or their marriage with an whore or a divorced woman, Le 21:7; and the daughters of any of them to commit fornication, which is made punishable with death, Le 21:9; and it contains particular laws for the high priest to observe, who was not to mourn for any, even for his parents, Le 21:10; nor to go out of the sanctuary, Le 21:12; nor to marry any woman but a virgin, Le 21:13; and it also directs, that none of the priests having any blemish in them should be employed in divine service, though they might eat of the holy things,
Le 21:16.

Ver. 1. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... According to some Jewish writers this was said on the day the tabernacle was set up; no doubt it was delivered at the same time the above laws were given; and as care was taken for the purity and holiness of the Israelites in general, it was necessary that the priests that were concerned in a more especial manner in the service and worship of God should be holy also, and have some instructions given them to take care and keep themselves from all defilements; and particularly the Jewish writers observe, that this paragraph or section concerning the priests follows upon, and is in connection with the law concerning such as have familiar spirits, and wizards, to teach men, that in matters of doubt and difficulty they should not have recourse to such persons, but to the priests of the Lord:

speak unto the priests, the sons of Aaron; the priests, whether elder or younger, whether fit for service, and whether having blemishes, or not; for there are some things which concern them, and these are sons, male children of Aaron, as the Targum of Jonathan, and not daughters, as Jarchi and others observe; for they were not obliged to regard the laws and rules here given:

and say unto them, there shall none be defiled for the dead among his people; by entering into a tent or house where a dead body lay, by touching it, or by hearing it, or attending it to the grave, or by any expressions of mourning for it, see Nu 19:11; that is, for any person in common that were of his people, that were not nearly related to him, as in the cases after excepted; so it was a custom with the Romans, as we are told {n}, that such as were polluted by funerals might not sacrifice, which shows that priests were not allowed to attend funerals, which perhaps might be taken from hence; and so Porphyry says {o}, that sacred persons and inspectors of holy things should abstain from funerals or graves, and from every filthy and mournful sight.

{n} Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. xi. ver. 3. {o} De Abstinentia, l. 2. c. 50.

Leviticus 21:2

Ver. 2. But for his kin that is near unto him,.... For such he might be defiled and mourn, or be where they were, and take care of, and attend their funerals: this clause some take to be general, of which the particulars follow, as Aben Ezra; but others take it to be the first particular excepted, and instanced in, and intends his wife; for it may be rendered, as by some, "for his flesh", or "the rest of him" {p}, the other part of himself, his wife, which is his other self, and one flesh with him; and so Jarchi and others observe, there is no flesh of his, but his wife; and if she is not intended here, she is not expressed elsewhere, though must be supposed, because it is allowed the priest to defile himself for other relations not so near; and it is plain from the case of Ezekiel, that a priest might mourn for his wife,
Eze 24:15; he being forbid it, shows his case to be an extraordinary one, and that ordinarily it was admitted, otherwise there would have been no need of a particular prohibition of him:

[that is], for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and his brother; R. Alphes adds {q}, "and his wife"; these being all near relations, and for whom natural affection would lead and oblige him to mourn, and show a concern for their death, and to take care of their funeral. This is to be understood of common priests; for as for the high priest, he might not mourn, or be concerned for either of these.

{p} wravl "carne sua", Pagninus, Montanus. {q} Sepher Alphes, par. 1. fol. 410. 2.

Leviticus 21:3

Ver. 3. And for his sister a virgin, that is nigh unto him,.... That is, his sister by both father's and mother's side, as Aben Ezra; though, according to Gersom, his sister by his father's side, and not by his mother's side, is meant; but, according to Alphes, by his mother's side: perhaps this may signify not nearness of kin, which is expressed by being his sister, but nearness of place, for, being unmarried, she remained unto her death in her father's house:

which hath had no husband; neither betrothed to one, for then she would have been nigh to her husband, and not her brother, and therefore he might not pollute himself for her, as Gersom observes; nor married to him, for such an one he might not defile himself, even though she might have been rejected or divorced by her husband, as the same writer says:

for her may he be defiled; for a pure virgin that had never been betrothed nor married to a man, and had never departed from her father's house, and so had no husband to mourn for her, and take care of her funeral, and so for all the rest before mentioned; and which Jarchi says is a command, and not a bare sufferance or allowance, but what he ought and was obliged to do; and so it is related of Joseph {r}, a priest, that his wife died in the evening of the sabbath, and he would not defile himself for her, and his brethren the priests obliged him, and made him defile himself against his will.

{r} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 90. 1.

Leviticus 21:4

Ver. 4. [But] he shall not defile himself, [being] a chief man among his people,.... Which is not to be understood of any lord or nobleman or any chief ruler or governor of the people; for the context speaks only of priests, and not of other personages; besides, such might defile themselves, or mourn for their dead, as Abraham did for Sarah; nor of any husband for his wife, for even a priest, as has been observed, might do this for his wife, and much more a private person; nor is there any need to restrain it, as some Jewish writers do, to an adulterous wife, which a husband might not mourn for, though he might for his right and lawful wife; but there is nothing in the text, neither of an husband, nor a wife: the words are to be interpreted of a priest, and either of him as considered as a person of eminence, consequence, and importance, and sons giving a reason why he should not defile himself for the dead, because he was a principal person among his people to officiate for them in sacred things; wherefore if he did not take care that he was not defiled for the dead, which might often happen, he would be frequently hindered from doing his office for the people, which would be attended with ill consequence to them; and therefore the above cases are only excepted, as being such that rarely happened: or rather the words are to be considered as a prohibition of defiling himself "for [any] chief" {s}, or principal man, lord, ruler, or governor, among his people; even for such an one he was not to defile himself, being no relation of his:

to profane himself; make himself unfit for sacred service, or make himself a common person; put himself upon a level with a common private man, and be no more capable of serving at the altar, or doing any part of the work off priest, than such an one.

{s} wymeb leb "in principe populi sui", V. L. so Pesicta & Ben Melech in loc. & Kimchi Sepher Shorash. rad. leb

Leviticus 21:5

Ver. 5. They shall not make baldness upon their head,.... For the dead, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Ben Gersom; not shave their heads, or round the corners of them, or make baldness between their eyes on that account; as those things were forbid the Israelites, so the priests also; this and what follow being superstitious customs used among the Heathens in their mournings for the dead, particularly by the Chaldeans, as Aben Ezra observes; and so by the Grecians; when Hephestion, one of Alexander's captains, died, he shaved his soldiers and himself, imitating Achilles in Homer {t}; so the Egyptians, mourning for the loss of Osiris, annually shaved their heads {u}; and the priests of Isis, mourning for her lost son, are called by Minutius Felix {w} her bald priests; see Le 19:27;

neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard: the five corners of it; See Gill on "Le 19:27". This the Israelites in common might not do, and particularly their priests; though the Egyptian priests shaved both their heads and beards, as Herodotus {x} relates: and so they are represented in the Table of Isis {y}:

nor make any cuttings in their flesh; either with their nails, tearing their cheeks and breasts, or with an instrument cutting their flesh in any part of their bodies, as was the custom of Heathen nations; such were made by the Egyptians in their mournings {z};
See Gill on "Le 19:28".

{t} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 7. c. 8. {u} Julius Firmicus de Error. Proph. p. 2. {w} In Octavio, p. 22. Vid. Lactant. de fals. Relig. l. 1. c. 21. {x} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 36. {y} Vid. Pignorii Mens. Isiac. liter. S. {z} Julius Firmicus, ut supra. ({u})

Leviticus 21:6

Ver. 6. They shall be holy unto their God,.... Sacred to his service, and wholly given up to it, and not interest themselves in things which hindered from it, or made them unfit for it; and such care becomes the ministers of the word, who should give up themselves to it, and not entangle themselves with other affairs; they should be clean, pure, and holy, that bear the vessels of the Lord, and minister in holy things, and should set an example of purity and holiness to others:

and not profane the name of their God; or cause it to be profaned and evil spoken of on their account, or his service to be interrupted, and they who bore his name put upon a level with common persons through their pollutions:

for the offerings of the Lord made by fire; the burnt offerings, which were offered up to the Lord on the altar of burnt offering every day, besides others on divers occasions:

[and] the bread of their God do they offer; the shewbread, which they set every

week before the Lord on the shewbread table, and the meat or bread offering, the "minchah", which they continually offered along with the sacrifices: or the word "and", being a supplement, may be left out; and so this clause is put by way of apposition, and as interpreting the fire offering to be the bread of their God, which being wholly burnt on the altar, and devoted to God, was his meat and food, and accepted by him, see **Le 3:11**;

therefore they shall be holy; separate from all others, and abstain from all impurity both of flesh and spirit, from all uncleanness, moral and ceremonial; it being highly fit and proper that the bread of God should be offered by holy persons.

Leviticus 21:7

Ver. 7. They shall not take a wife [that is] a whore, or profane,.... By the former is meant a common whore, that prostitutes herself to any one through lust or for gain; and by the latter one whose chastity is violated, but either unwillingly, that has been forced and ravished, or else willingly, being enticed, persuaded, and prevailed upon, but did not make a practice of it; this seems to be the true sense of the words: but the Jewish writers understand them differently; by a "whore" they suppose is meant one that is not an Israelitish woman, that is not born of an Israelite, at least of an Israelitish woman, as proselytes or freed persons; for they say there are no whores but such, or one that lies with such persons, she may not marry with; as such as are guilty of cutting off, or any of the Nethinim, or spurious persons, so Jarchi; and by a "profane" person they think is meant such as are born of those that are rejected, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it; that is, that are either born of incestuous marriages, such as are forbidden, Le 18:1; or that are born of those that are rejected in the priesthood, or whom a priest might not marry, as the daughter of a widow, by the high priest, or the daughter of one divorced, by a common priest, which is the sense of Jarchi:

neither shall they take a woman put away by her husband: which was, in these and later times, common for any offence, when the crime of adultery was not pretended; but this always supposed something bad or amiss, and made such a woman suspected of having done an unseemly thing, therefore priests were forbidden marrying such persons: the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"or by her husband's brother;"

and so takes in one that has loosed the shoe, as the Jews call her, who being left without issue, her husband's brother refused to marry her, and therefore she plucked off his shoe, and spit in his face, see De 25:7; such an one a priest might not marry, according to this paraphrast, and other Jewish writers, and if he did was to be beaten {a};

for he [is] holy unto his God; separated from common persons, and devoted to the service of God, and therefore not to be defiled with such sort of women, or to lie under any scandal or reproach through such, marriages.

{a} Misn. Maccot, c. 3. sect. 1.

Leviticus 21:8

Ver. 8. Thou shalt sanctify him therefore,.... In thought and word, as Aben Ezra, by thinking and speaking well of him; should esteem and reckon him a holy person, being in a sacred office, and honour him as such; and do all that can be done to preserve him from unholiness and impurity, and particularly from marrying with improper and unsuitable persons, such as would bring a scandal on him and his sacred office: this seems to be spoken to Moses, and so to the civil magistrate in succession, who were not to suffer such marriages to take place in the priesthood; and were not only to persuade from it, but to exercise their authority, and oblige them to put away such wives, and if they refused, to use severity; so Jarchi,

""thou shalt sanctify him", whether he will or not; if he will not put her away, beat him and chastise him until he does put "her away","

see **Ezr 2:62**;

for he offereth the bread of the Lord; meaning not the shewbread he set in order before the Lord every week, but the various gift and sacrifices which were offered to God by him, and were acceptable to him as his food; and therefore he ought to be holy that drew nigh to God, and was employed in such service, see Le 21:6;

he shall be holy unto thee; in thy account and estimation, and for thy service to offer holy sacrifices, and therefore should be careful of his holiness to preserve it:

for I the Lord, which sanctify you, [am] holy; in his nature, works, and ways, and who had separated them from all other people to be a holy people to him, and therefore they that ministered in holy things for them should be holy likewise.

Leviticus 21:9

Ver. 9. And the daughter of any priest,.... The Targum of Jonathan restrains it to one that is betrothed; but others, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, whether betrothed or married; and all confess, as the former says, that the Scripture does not speak of one that is single or entirely free: but there is no exception in the text; and besides, the daughter of any man that was betrothed to a man, and guilty of the crime here spoken of, was to die, De 22:23; and therefore such a law respecting the priest's daughter would be needless; unless it can be thought that it was made merely for the sake of the different kind of death she was to be put to, and that burning was a more terrible one than stoning:

if she profane herself by playing the whore; which brings scandal and disgrace on any person, and much more on anyone that had the honour of being related to a person in such a sacred office, and the advantage of a more strictly religious education, and had eaten of the holy things in her father's house; all which were aggravations of her crime, and made it the more scandalous and reproachful to her: some render it, "when she begins to play the whore" {b}; as soon as ever it is discovered in her, and she is taken in it; even for the first that she commits, she is not to be spared, but put to death:

she profaneth her father: which is another aggravation of her sin; she brings him under disgrace, disparages his office, and exposes him to censure, reproach, and ridicule, as not having taken care of her education, and taught her better, and kept her under restraints; men will upbraid him with it, saying, this is a priest's daughter that has committed this lewdness; nor will say of him, as Jarchi observes, cursed be he that begat her, and cursed be he that brought her up:

she shall be burnt with fire; not with hot melted lead poured down her mouth, but with faggots set about her; See Gill on "Le 20:14"; no punishment is here fixed for the person that lay with her, but, according to the Jewish canons {c}, she was to be strangled.

{b} twnzl lxt yk "cum coepit fornicari", Pagninus, Montanus; so Tigurine version. {c} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 1. Maimon. Issure Biah, c. 1. sect. 6.

Leviticus 21:10

Ver. 10. And [he that is] the high priest among his brethren,.... Either among his brethren, the priests, being in office above them; or among his brethren the Israelites, among and over whom he is high priest; or, as others render it, "the priest who is greater than his brethren" {d}, in an higher office; the Jews say {e} the high priest was to be greater than his brethren, in beauty, in strength, in wisdom, and in riches; and if he had not money enough, all the priests were to give him of theirs, everyone according to his riches, until he became the richest among them all:

upon whose head the anointing oil was poured; as it was poured upon Aaron at his consecration, and those that succeeded him, Ex 29:7 **Le 8:12**;

and that is consecrated to put on the garments; the eight garments with which the high priest was clothed at the time of his consecration, **Le 8:7**; and in which he and his sons are said to be consecrated,
Ex 29:29; in order to which he was "to fill his hand"; as the phrase here is, that is, with the fat and right shoulder of the ram of consecration, and with the loaf of bread, and cake of oiled bread, and wafer, Ex 29:23; in all which he was a type of Christ, the great High Priest, as he is often called, who is greater than his brethren in all the above things, the high priest exceeded his brethren, except in worldly riches; and yet the earth also is his, and the fulness thereof, well as he is fairer than the children of men, stronger than the strong man armed, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in him; he is anointed also with the oil of gladness above his fellows; and all his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, and is consecrated an high priest for evermore: of the high priest it is said, he

shall not uncover his head: that is, on account of the dead; not take off his mitre, or in any such way express mourning for the dead; or shall not nourish his hair or let it grow, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; and so Jarchi interprets it, he shall not let the hair grow for mourning; and what is nourishing of the hair? when it is let grow more than thirty days:

nor rend his clothes; that is, on the same account, and therefore Jonathan adds, in the hour of distress, or mourning for the dead; otherwise, in case of blasphemy, he might rend his clothes, see

Mt 26:65; and indeed, according to the Jewish canons, he might rend his clothes in mourning, only in a different manner from common priests; for so they say {f},

"he may not rend for the dead, as other priests,"

as it is said: "nor rend his clothes"; and if he rends he is to be beaten, but he may rend below over against (or near) his feet; and so in the Misnah {g}, an high priest rends below, and a common priest above; See Gill on "Le 10:6".

{d} So Pagninus, Ainsworth, and others. {e} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 18. 1. Horayot, fol. 9. 1. Cholin, fol. 134. 2. Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 1. & in Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 3. & Bartenora in ib. {f} Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 6. {g} Horayot, c. 3. sect. 5.

Leviticus 21:11

Ver. 11. Neither shall he go in to any dead body,.... That is, into a tent or house where any dead body lies, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it, for whoever went into such a place was unclean seven days; and so long therefore an high priest, should he enter there, would be prevented doing the duty of his office, see Nu 19:14; this was aped and followed by the Heathens in later times; so among the Romans, the "Flamen Dialis", or high priest of Jupiter, might not go into a place where a dead body was burnt or buried, nor touch any {h}; and it was a custom with them, as Servius {i} tells us, to put a branch of cypress at the door of a house where a dead body was, that an high priest might not enter through ignorance, and be defiled:

nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother; by entering into the tent or house where they lay dead, or by touching them, or attending the funeral of them, or by concerning himself about it; and there was no need to mention his son or his daughter, his brother or his sister; for if he was not to defile himself for any of his parents, much less for any of those which are excepted in the case of a common priest, Le 21:2; the Jews do indeed make one exception in the case of an high priest, and that is, that if he meets with a dead body in the way, he was obliged to defile himself for it and bury it {k}; and so among the Romans, though it was a crime for an high priest to look upon a dead body, yet it was reckoned a greater, if, when he saw it, he left it unburied {l}.

{h} Massurius Sabinus, apud A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 10. c. 15. {i} In Virgil.

Aeneid. l. 3. ver. 64. "atraque cupresso". {k} Maimon. Hilchot Ebel, c. 3. sect. 8. {l} Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 6. ad ver. "praecipue pius Aeneas", &c.

Leviticus 21:12

Ver. 12. Neither shall he go out of the sanctuary,.... In the time of service, upon any occasion whatever; otherwise, when there was a necessity for it, he might go out from thence, though this was rarely done, and only in the night time: Maimonides {m} says he had a house prepared for him in the sanctuary, called the chamber of the high priest; and it was his honour and his glory to remain in the sanctuary all the day, and he did not go out, except to his own house, and that only in the night, or an hour or two in the day; and his house was in Jerusalem, and from thence he never removed: but this law respects him only in the case of his dead; as when any news was brought him of the death of his father, or of his mother, if in his service, he was not to quit it on any account; for we are told {n}, that an high priest might offer when mourning, though he might not eat in such a circumstance, whereas a common priest might neither offer nor eat; nor might an high priest go out of the sanctuary on such an occasion, if he was not in service, as to follow the dead corpse or bier, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it; at least, he was to go no further than the gate of the city; though even this is not allowed by others, who say {o}, if the dead were his, he might not go out after it; he might not go out of the door of his house, nor out of the sanctuary, and all the people were to come and comfort him at his own house:

nor profane the sanctuary of his God; by deserting the service of it, on any account, and particularly on account of the dead, by departing from it to go after them, and by entering into it again before the time, when so defiled:

for the crown of the anointing oil of his God [is] upon him; the anointing oil, which was a crown of glory, and gave him a superior dignity to others, which it became him to be careful not to debase by any of the above things: or "the crown and the anointing oil", so some {p} supply the word "and"; both the golden plate or the holy crown, as it is sometimes called, and the anointing oil were upon him, which showed him to be a very dignified person, a sort of king as well as a priest, and so a type of Christ, who is a priest upon his throne, Zec 6:13;

I [am] the Lord: whose high priest he is, and who command him all these things, and expect to be obeyed in them.

{m} Cele Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 7. {n} Misn. Horayot, c. 3. sect. 5. {o} Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 5, 6. Vid. Misn. Sanhedrim, c. 2. sect. 1. {p} So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Leviticus 21:13

Ver. 13. And he shall take a wife in her virginity. One, and not two, or more, as Ben Gersom observes; and so Maimonides says {q}, an high priest might never take two women together; for it is said, "a wife", or "woman", one, and not two; and so it is explained in the Talmud {r}; for though polygamy was practised by the Israelites, and even by the common priests, yet these writers suppose it was by no means allowed to an high priest: among the Egyptians, though they took as many wives as they pleased, their priests, married but one {s}; and so a minister of the New Testament is to be the husband of one wife, **1Ti 3:2**; and this wife the high priest was to take was to be a "virgin", one that not only had never known a man, but that was never betrothed to any; yea, according to the Talmudists {t}, who was not quite ripe for marriage, or the time of her puberty not fully completed, which was the age of twelve years; within, or somewhat before that time, the high priest was to marry her, that it might be out of all doubt that she was a pure virgin; since it is said, "in her virginity", within the time of her puberty, before it was quite up; this, by many, is thought to be an emblem of Christ and his church; as he was typified by the high priest, so the church by the virgin he married, which is espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin, 2Co 11:2.

{q} Hilchot Issure Biah, c. 17. sect. 13. {r} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 59. 1. {s} Diodor. Sicul. l. 1. p. 72. {t} T. Bab. Yebamot, ibid. Maimon. ut supra. (Cele Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 5, 6.)

Leviticus 21:14

Ver. 14. A widow,.... The high priest might not marry, whether the widow of a priest or of an Israelite, as Aben Ezra, that is, of any Israelite that was not of the priesthood; and this, whether a widow after espousals, or after marriage, as runs the Jewish canon {u}; the meaning is, that if she was betrothed to a man, and that man died before he married her, and so was a virgin; yet being betrothed to him was reckoned as his widow; and such an one the high priest might not marry, any more than one that had been left a widow, having being married: though, according to the same constitutions, if he had betrothed a widow, and after that was appointed an high priest, he might marry her, and an instance of it is given in Joshua the son of Gamla: and in the same it is observed, that an high priest, when his brother dies, must suffer his shoe to be plucked off, and not marry his brother's widow; which, in other cases, when there was no issue, was required:

or a divorced woman; whether by a priest, or a common Israelite; and indeed, if a common priest might not marry such a person, much less an high priest: or profane anyone born of those that were not fit for priests to marry, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi;
See Gill on "Le 21:7";

[or] an harlot; a common prostitute:

those shall he not take any or either of them, to be his wife; which are forbid in order to maintain the dignity of his office, and a reverence of it: there seems to be a gradation in these instances, he might not marry a widow, which was forbidden no other man; and if not such an one, much less a divorced woman, still less a profane person, and least of all an harlot;

but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife; which phrase, "of his own people", did not limit him to his own tribe, and to the fraternity of priests in it, as if he was to marry only in it, or the daughter of a priest; for the priests and Levites being scattered in the several tribes, and having no inheritances in them, were not restrained from marrying into other tribes, as the rest of the tribes were; and so an high priest sometimes married into another tribe, though he took care not to debase himself, by marrying into a mean family: so Jehoiada, the high priest, married Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, 2Ch 22:11; but by this law he was forbid to marry a virgin of another nation, even though a proselytess and one that was made free, as Gersom observes; a captive virgin, and one that was become a Jewess, as Aben Ezra says, he was not allowed to marry.

{u} Misn. Yebamot, c. 6. sect. 4.

Leviticus 21:15

Ver. 15. Neither shall he profane his seed among his people,.... By marrying any such persons, whereby his children, born of them, would lie under disgrace, and be unfit to succeed him in the priesthood, or by marrying among mean persons, or by marrying them to such as were unlawful, and would be a disparagement to them:

for I the Lord do sanctify him; separate him from all others, to the high and sacred office of the high priesthood, and am concerned for his honour and holiness; and therefore it became him to observe these laws and rules, and abstain from such disagreeable marriages.

Leviticus 21:16

Ver. 16. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... After he had spoken to him of the holiness of the priests, that they should not defile themselves, neither with the dead nor with impure marriages, he proceeded to add some things concerning blemishes in their bodies, which rendered them unfit for the service:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 21:17

Ver. 17. Speak unto Aaron, saying,.... Who being the high priest, it was incumbent on him, at least at this time, to see that the laws and rules relating to the priesthood were observed; and particularly to examine carefully who were and who were not to be admitted to serve in it:

whosoever [he be] of thy seed in their generations; or, "a man of thy seed" {w}, for this only respected his male seed, females of his seed had no concern in the following laws; but his sons, in all successive ages and generations, to the coming of the Messiah, had, whether high priests or common priests:

that hath [any] blemish; in any part of his body, particularly such as are after mentioned:

let him not approach to offer the bread of his God; neither go into the holy place, to set the shewbread in order there, nor to offer any sacrifice upon the altar; so Josephus {x} explains this law; that a priest should be perfect, and if he laboured under any defect, should not ascend the altar, nor enter into the temple: this was imitated by the Heathens: Romulus ordered that such as were weak and feeble in any part of the body should not be made priests {y}: the

Jewish priests were types of Christ, who is holy, harmless, without spot and blemish; and through whose blood and righteousness all who are made priests by him are unblamable, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and a Gospel minister, bishop, or pastor, ought to be unblemished in his life and conversation, **Tit 1:6**; and there are some who think that the blemishes of the mind and of the life are rather here meant than those of the body.

{w} Kerzm vya "vir de semine tuo", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {x} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 12. sect. 2. {y} Pompon. Laet. de Sacerdot. c. 6. de Vestalibus.

Leviticus 21:18

Ver. 18. For whatsoever man [he be] that hath a blemish,.... Let him be otherwise ever so well qualified for his office, as with respect to his parentage, against which no objection lies; or, as to his character and abilities, being a man of knowledge and of good manners; and whether these blemishes be, as the Jews {z} call them, fixed, settled ones, which have attended them ever since they were born, and are likely to attend them as long as they live; or are transient ones, only for the present, and perhaps, in a short time, wilt be removed; yet it matters not, while these blemishes are on them,

he shall not approach; to the altar to offer sacrifice, or do any part of the priestly office, for this phrase is expressive of a sacerdotal act: the particular blemishes unfitting a man for such service follow:

a blind man, or a lame; that is blind of one eye, or of both; and is lame of one leg, or of both:

or he that hath a flat nose; which Jarchi explains, whose nose is sunk between his two eyes, whose nose is short, and crooked, or mutilated:

or anything superfluous; more members than usual, as six fingers on an hand, or two gristles in an ear, as Ben Gersom; or whose members are not proportionate, as one eye large and the other small, or one thigh or leg longer than the other, so Jarchi; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"whose thigh (or thigh bone) is out of joint;"

and so a man draws his foot after him, which is the sense of the Rabbins, as observed by Kimchi {a}, and Ben Melech from him; and so such are not fit to be called the priests of the Lord, and much less ministers of his word, who are blind as to the knowledge of divine and spiritual things, and walk not as becomes the Gospel of Christ; or halt between two opinions, or savour not the things of God, and lay not aside all superfluity of naughtiness.

{z} Misn. Zebachim, c. 12. sect 1. & Becorot, c. 7. sect. 1. {a} Sepher Shorash. rad. erv.

Leviticus 21:19

Ver. 19. Or a man that is brokenfooted or brokenhanded. That has any of the bones or joints in his hands and feet broke, or when they are distorted, and he is clubfooted, or his fingers crooked and clustered together; and such a man could not be fit to ascend the altar, and lay the sacrifice in order upon it; and may be an emblem of such as are awkward or disorderly in their walk and conservation, and to every good work and action unfit, and so unfit for their master's use.

Leviticus 21:20

Ver. 20. Or crookbackt,.... That has a protuberance, or bunch upon his back, one that we commonly call "hunchbacked"; the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it,

"whose eyebrows lying cover his eyes;"

and so Jarchi, interprets it, the hair of whose eyebrows is long and lying; and so other Jewish writers understand it of some deformity about the eyes, the hair of the eyebrows being thick and heavy over them, and so hinder the sight, at least it makes the person not so sightly and graceful; it is said {b}, he that hath no eyebrows, or but one eyebrow, is the "Gibben" (the word here used) spoken of in the law,
Le 21:20:

or a dwarf; one of a small stature, as Aben Ezra, as generally hunchbacked persons are, and so unfit to attend the altar, being scarce able to reach up to it, and do the business of it, as well as must make a very mean appearance; but the above Targums understand this also of some blemish about the eyes, paraphrasing it "or he that has no hair on his eyebrows,"

just the reverse of the former; Jarchi seems to understand it of a thin small film upon the eye; though something of that kind seems to be intended in the next clause:

or that hath a blemish in his eye; a mixture, a confusion, or rather a suffusion in it, as the above Targum; in which, as one of them says, the white is mixed with the black, and with which agrees what is said in the Misnah {c}, where it is asked, what is the confusion or suffusion? the white which spreads in the his, and enters into the black of the eye; it seems to be a white speck in the pupil of the eye, and so Jarchi, Kimchi {d}, and others interpret it:

or be scurvy or scabbed; both these were kinds of ulcers, according to the Jewish writers, particularly Jarchi, who says of the first, that it is a dry scab within and without; and of the other, that it is the Egyptian scab, which is moist without and dry with it; and so the Targum of Jonathan:

or hath his stones broken; this is differently interpreted in the Misnah {e}, and by other Jewish writers; some say it signifies one that has no testicles, or only one; so the Septuagint and the Jerusalem Targum: others, whose testicles are broken or bruised, so Jarchi: or are inflated, so Akiba, Aben Ezra, and the Targum of Jonathan; some understand it of an "hernia" or rupture, when a man is burstened: all which may in a moral and mystical sense signify either some defect in the understanding, or vices in the heart or life, which render unfit for public service in the sanctuary.

{b} Becorot, c. 7. sect. 2. {c} Ib. c. 6. sect. 2. {d} Ut supra, (Sepher Shorash.) rad. llb. {e} Becorot, c. 7. sect. 5.

Leviticus 21:21

Ver. 21. No man that hath a blemish, of the seed of Aaron the priest,.... Whether an high priest or a common priest that lies on him anyone of the above blemishes; and which the Jewish writers {f} make to amount to the number of one hundred and forty, and which they reckon, so many in one part of the booty and so many in another, till they make up the said number; and whoever had any might not come nigh to offer up the sacrifices of the Lord made by fire; the burnt offerings on the altar, to which he might not approach, and the meat offerings, and the fat, and the incense:

he hath a blemish; in one part of him or another; and though but one,

he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God: this is repeated for the confirmation of it, and to show how determined the Lord was in this matter; and how much he should resent it in any that should be found guilty of the breach of those rules, and so it is designed to deter from attempting: it.

{f} Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 17.

Leviticus 21:22

Ver. 22. He shall eat the bread of his God,.... That part of the sacrifices which was appropriated by the Lord to the priests, for the maintenance of them and their families; for though their natural infirmities disqualified them for service, yet they did not become hereby impure, either in a moral nor ceremonial sense, and might eat of the sacrifices, which impure persons might not; and so the tradition is, blemished persons, whether their blemishes are fixed or transient, may divide and eat, but not offer {g}; these being priests, and having no inheritance, nor any way of getting their livelihood, provision is made for them that they might not perish through their defects in nature, which were not voluntary and brought upon them by themselves, but by the providence of God; and such were allowed to eat

[both] of the most holy and of the holy; there were things the priests eat of, which were most holy, as what remained of the meat offerings, and of the sin offerings, and of the trespass offerings, which only the males of the priest's family might eat of, and that only in the holy place; and there were others less holy, the lighter holy things, as the Jews call them, as the wave breast, and heave shoulder, and the tithes and firstfruits, which were eaten of by all in their families, their daughters as well as their sons, and in their own houses; now of each of these might the blemished priests eat; see Nu 18:9, &c.

{g} Misn. Zebachim, c. 12. sect. 1.

Leviticus 21:23

Ver. 23. Only he shall not go in unto the vail,.... So far as to the vail, which divided between the holy and the holy of holies; that is, he shall not go into the holy place which was before the vail; not to set the shewbread upon the table there, nor to light and him the lamps in the candlestick, nor to offer incense on the altar of incense, which stood in it: some render it "within the vail" {h}, where only the high priest might enter once a year; but if he had any blemish on him he might not, nor might such an one be an high priest; Aben Ezra seems to have some respect to this in his note,

"to the vail he shall not come, that he may be an high priest:"

nor come nigh unto the altar; as not to the altar of incense in the holy place, so neither to the altar of burnt offering in the court of the tabernacle, that is, so as to officiate there: but though they might not be employed in such sacred service, the Jews in later times have found business for them to employ them in, and that was worming the wood, or searching the wood for worms, which was used in the burning of the sacrifices; for we are told {i}, that at the northeast corner (of the court of the women) was the wood room, where the priests that had blemishes wormed the wood; and whatsoever wood in which a worm was found, was rejected from being laid upon the altar: the reason why he might not go into either place before mentioned is repeated,

because he hath a blemish; either fixed or transient; one of those particularly expressed, or any other; for the Jews suppose there are others implied besides those expressed, which disqualified for service:

that he profane not my sanctuaries; if an high priest, the holy of holies, if a common priest, the holy place, and the court of the tabernacle:

for I the Lord do sanctify them; the vail, to which blemished priests might not go: and the altar, to which they might not come nigh: or rather, the sanctuaries or holy places, where they might not officiate, which God had separated and devoted for sacred uses, and were not to be defiled by any; though Ben Gersom observes, that this has no respect to the sanctuary, for if it had it would have been said, "I am the Lord, that sanctify it"; but since a plural word is used before, I see not but that with great propriety it is expressed, and with reference thereunto, "sanctify them"; which he would have understood of holy things, but what he means is not easy to say, unless the holy things such persons might eat of, Le 21:22, which is fetched.

{h} tkrph la "intra velum", V. L. {i} Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 5.

Leviticus 21:24

Ver. 24. And Moses told [it] to Aaron, and to his sons,.... What God had said to him concerning the priests defiling themselves for the dead, both common priests and high priest, and concerning their marriages and their blemishes; that they might be careful not to transgress the laws and rules given them concerning those things:

and to all the children of Israel; to the heads of the tribes and elders of the people, and by them to the whole, that they might know who were fit, and who not, to put their sacrifice into their hands, to offer for them: Jarchi thinks this was to warn the sanhedrim concerning the priests, whose business it was to examine and judge who were fit for service and who not; for so we are told {k}, that in the chamber Gazith, or of hewn stone, the great sanhedrim of Israel sat and judged the priests, and rejected some and received others.

{k} Misn. Middot, c. 5. sect. 3.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 22

In this chapter several laws are delivered out, forbidding the priests to eat of holy things, when in any uncleanness, or at any time what dies of itself, or is torn of beasts, Le 22:1; also showing who belonging to the priests might or might not eat of the holy things,
Le 22:10; and others requiring that whatever offerings were brought by the children, of Israel, they should be perfect and without blemish, Le 22:17; and also declaring what age a creature should be of when sacrificed, and the time when thank offerings were to be eaten, Le 22:26; concluding with an exhortation to observe the commands of God, and sanctify him, and not profane his name,
Le 22:31.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Immediately after he had spoken concerning blemishes in priests, and in a continued discourse signifying, that though priests that had blemishes might eat of the holy things, yet neither they, nor even such who had not any, if they were under legal impurity, might eat of them:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 22:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto Aaron and to his sons,.... The priests; the children of Israel or the common people are not mentioned, as having no concern in the following laws about eating holy things:

that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel; both from offering their lawful sacrifices, which was the business of their office when pure, and chiefly from eating that part of them which was their due, and was allowed them; neither of these they were to do, particularly the latter, when they were in any uncleanness, as the following words show:

and that, they profane not my holy name [in those things] which they hallow unto me; which the children of Israel set apart and devoted to his service; which they would do, by eating their part of them when unclean, and thereby show little reverence to that holy name to which they were devoted; or which the priests themselves sanctified, by offering them to him; for Jarchi says, this takes in the holiness of the priests themselves; but the former seems best, and is confirmed in
Le 22:3:

I [am] the Lord; who is holy himself, and whose holy things these are, and will be sanctified by those that draw nigh unto him.

Leviticus 22:3

Ver. 3. Say unto them, whosoever [he be] of all your seed among your generations,.... Whether male or female, in all succeeding ages, as long as the ceremonial law lasted; for females as well as males of the families of the priests ate of the holy things, provided they had no uncleanness on them, but if they had, they might not:

that goeth unto the holy things, which the children of Israel hallow unto the

Lord: that approaches to any of the sacrifices which the children of Israel have devoted to the Lord, either to offer them, or even to touch them, and particularly to eat of them; and so Jarchi and Ben Gersom observe, that this going or drawing near is no other than eating; for touching only, a man was not guilty of cutting off:

having his uncleanness upon him; through a leprosy, or running issue, or touching any unclean person or thing, as the following words explain it:

that soul shall be cut off from my presence; excluded from the sanctuary, and the service of it, where the presence of God was; or be removed out of the world by death, either by the civil magistrate, or by the hand of God, by an immediate death, by the pestilence, as the Targum of Jonathan:

I [am] the Lord; that will avenge the breach of such a law, able to inflict such punishment, and faithful to accomplish every word of his, whether in a way of threatening or promise.

Leviticus 22:4

Ver. 4. What man soever of the seed of Aaron [is] a leper,.... A young, or an old man, as the Targum of Jonathan, and indeed man or woman; for the wives and daughters of the priests, if in this, and other circumstances following, might not eat of the holy things until cleansed, who otherwise might, see Le 13:2;

or hath a running issue; a gonorrhoea, whether man or woman, Le 15:2;

he shall not eat of the holy things until he be clean; he might eat of the tithes, but not of the wave breast, or heave shoulder:

and whoso toucheth any [that is] unclean [by] the dead; not only that touched the dead, which made unclean, but that touched any person or thing that was made unclean by it:

or a man whose seed goeth from him; involuntarily when asleep, in a dream, and through a lustful imagination; see Le 15:16.

Leviticus 22:5

Ver. 5. Or whosoever toucheth any creeping thing, whereby he may be made unclean,.... Jarchi thinks this respects the measure or quantity of what is touched, as if but the quantity of a lentil or small pea, see Le 11:31;

or a man of whom he may take uncleanness, whatsoever uncleanness he hath; as of a leper, a profluvious, or a dead man; Jarchi interprets it of the latter, and of the quantity which defiles, which is that of an olive; who also observes, that the phrase, "whatsoever uncleanness", includes touching a profluvious man or woman, a menstruous woman, and a new mother.

Leviticus 22:6

Ver. 6. The soul which hath touched any such shall be unclean until even,.... Which is the time fixed by the several laws for such uncleannesses, see Le 11:31;

and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water; in forty seahs of water, as the Targum of Jonathan; yea, when the evening is come, he may not eat of the heave or wave offerings, until he has dipped himself all over in water; nor should any eat of the Lord's supper under the New Testament, but such as are first baptized in water.

Leviticus 22:7

Ver. 7. And when the sun is down he shall be clean,.... Having washed himself in water, otherwise not, though the sun may be set:

and shall afterwards eat of the holy things; the families of the priests lived upon:

because it [is] his food: his common food, his ordinary diet, that by which he subsists, having nothing else to live upon; this being the ordination of God, that he which ministered about holy things should live on them; and these being his only substance, in compassion to him they were detained from him no longer than the evening; and this was done, to make him careful how he defiled himself, since thereby he was debarred of his ordinary meals.

Leviticus 22:8

Ver. 8. That which dieth of itself, or is torn [with beasts],.... Whether fowls or beasts, and even clean ones, which, had they been killed in a proper manner, were fit to cut, but dying of themselves, or torn to pieces by other birds or beasts of prey, might not, see
Eze 44:31;

he shall not eat, to defile himself therewith; being impure food, at least in a ceremonial sense, and not fit to be eaten; these things were forbid a common Israelite, and much less might a priest eat of them, see Le 17:15;

I [am] the Lord; who enjoin this, and expect to be obeyed.

Leviticus 22:9

Ver. 9. They shall therefore keep mine ordinance,.... The observance of my word, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, of his word of command; either respecting the not eating of such creatures that died of themselves, or were torn by beasts; or else the not eating holy things in uncleanness, so Jarchi and Gersom; but Aben Ezra thinks the sanctuary is referred to, which was to be kept by the priests, and which seems to agree with what follows:

lest they bear sin for it: the sanctuary, by neglecting it, and so be charged with the guilt of sin, and be obliged to bear the punishment of it:

and die therefore if they profane it; by going into it in their uncleanness, and eating of the most holy things there when in such circumstances, and die by the hand of God, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom interpret it, as Nadab and Abihu did, and even in like manner, by fire,
Le 10:1; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"lest they die by flaming fire:"

I the Lord do sanctify them; the priests, who were separated from others, and devoted to his service, and therefore ought to be holy; or the holy things separated for the use of the priests, but not to be eaten in their uncleanness; the Arabic version renders it, "do sanctify that", the sanctuary, and therefore it should not be profaned, but be kept pure and holy.

Leviticus 22:10

Ver. 10. There shall no stranger eat [of] the holy thing,.... Any one of the holy things, as the heave shoulder, wave breast, &c. by a "stranger" is not meant one of another nation; though indeed all such were called strangers, and might not eat of these things, **Eph 2:12**; but one that was not of the family of a priest, though he might be an Israelite, and even a Levite; anyone that was not of the seed of Aaron, as Aben Ezra; any common man or laic, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, excepting those after mentioned:

a sojourner of the priests, or an hired servant, shall not eat [of] the holy thing: by the former is not intended an Heathen, a proselyte of the gate, one that has renounced idolatry, and so permitted to live among the Israelites, of it uncircumcised, who is often understood by one that sojourneth in the gate, but here an Israelitish sojourner; and so the Targum of Jonathan expressly has it,

"a son of an Israelite, who is a sojourner of the priests;"

not that is a guest for a short time, or a boarder with him; for if he may not eat of the holy things, what must he live on while with him? but one that dwells in some part of his house: and by the latter is meant anyone that is hired by the day, or week, or year, and when the time is expired is at his liberty; though the Jewish writers commonly, and particularly Jarchi, interpret the sojourner of the servant that has his ear bored, and is bought with money, until the year of jubilee, and serves for ever; and the hireling of one that is purchased for years, and goes out in the sixth year; but the above objection will lie against these.

Leviticus 22:11

Ver. 11. But if the priest buy [any] soul with his money, he shall eat of it,.... Whether any of his own nation, who sometimes, when become poor, were obliged to sell themselves; or a stranger, as the Targum of Jonathan; one of another nation, a Canaanitish servant, as Jarchi. Now these being his own purchase, and always to abide with him, became part of his family, and so might eat of the provisions of it; and it is from hence the Jews gather, as Jarchi and Gersom, that his wife might eat of the holy things, because bought with his money; but there is a better reason to be given for that, for of whatever family she was before, whether of the priests or not, by marriage she became a part, yea, a principal of his family, being one flesh with him, bearing the same name, and entitled to all the privileges of his house. This is extended by some Jewish writers {l} to cattle, for by any soul they understood also the soul of a beast, which being bought by the priest's money, might eat of the offerings of the tithes:

and he that is born in his house; they shall eat of his meat; whether male or female, as Aben Ezra; these are children of handmaids, as Jarchi, that were bought with his money; and these children being born of them, became his property, and part of his family, and so had a right to the provisions of his house. All this may teach us, that the holy ordinances of the Gospel are not to be administered to strangers, persons destitute of the grace of God, nor to such as are not of the family or church of God, but to such as are bought and redeemed with the blood of Christ, the high priest, and are born again of his Spirit and grace.

{l} Misn. Trumot, c. 11. sect. 9. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. Hilchot Trumot, c. 6. sect. 1.

Leviticus 22:12

Ver. 12. If the priest's daughter also be [married] to a stranger,.... Not to an Heathen, but to any Israelite, that is, a common man, or a layman, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, one that is not a priest; but is married either to a Levite, or an Israelite, as Jarchi:

she may not eat of an offering of the holy things; the heave shoulder or wave breast, &c. being removed into another family by marriage, she is not reckoned of her father's family, and so had no more a right to eat of the holy things.

Leviticus 22:13

Ver. 13. But if the priest's daughter be a widow or divorced,.... If her husband be dead, or if living, and she is put away by him, whether a Levite, or an Israelite:

and have no child: by him, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi add, nor is with child by him:

and is returned to her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat; not of all, or any part, only of some, of the heave offering, but not of the shoulder or breast, which is the tradition of the wise men, as Maimonides {m} relates. There are two cases in this affair excepted by them, which they suppose are implied in this clause; the one is, if she is detained and reserved for her husband's brother, according to the law in De 25:5; she being without children; and so the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"and is not kept or reserved for her husband's brother,"

which is implied by her being returned to her father's house; and the other is, if she is with child; for though she had no children by her husband, yet if she is pregnant, that made her unlawful to eat of the holy things; for then she is not as in her youth {n}. The Jewish canon concerning such a person runs thus {o}; the daughter of a priest, married to an Israelite, may not eat of the heave offering; if he dies, and she has a son by him, she may not eat of the heave offering; if she is married to a Levite, she may eat of the tithes: if he dies, and she has a son by him, she may eat of the tithes: if she is married to a priest, she may eat of the heave offering; if he dies, and she has a son by him, she may eat of the heave offering; if her son by the priest dies, she may not eat of the heave offering; if her son by the Levite dies, she may not eat of the tithes; if her son by an Israelite, she may return to her father's house, as it is said Le 22:13;

but there shall no stranger eat thereof; as not anyone of another nation, so not anyone of another family beside the priest's, no, not the son of a priest's daughter by an Israelite, which some think is principally intended; and so Aben Ezra remarks this is said of a son, if she had any, and upon whose account she herself might not eat.

{m} In Misn. Yebamot, c. 9. sect. 6. {n} Misn Yebamot, c. 7. sect. 4. & Bartenora in ib. {o} Misn. Yebamot, c. 9. sect. 6.

Leviticus 22:14

Ver. 14. And if a man eat [of] the holy thing unwittingly,.... Either not knowing that it is an holy thing, or the heave offering, or any thing of that kind; or else is ignorant of the punishment of such an action, as Gersom observes; and this is to be understood of any man that was not a priest, or was not of the priest's family, even any common Israelite; so the Targum of

Jonathan, a man of Israel, or an Israelite, one of the common people:

then he shall put a fifth part thereof unto it; a fifth part of the value of what he has eaten, to an equivalent for the whole, that is, he shall pay the full value for what he has eaten, and a fifth part besides:

and shall give [it] to the priest with the holy thing; the meaning is, that he shall give the fifth part to the priest, with the equivalent for what he has eaten; for he could not give the holy thing itself, but a compensation for it; according to Gersom, he was to give the principal to the priest, whose the holy thing was he ate of, and the fifth part he might give to what priest he would. The Jewish canon, concerning this matter, runs thus; he that ignorantly eats the heave offering pays the principal, and the fifth part; and the same, either he that eats, or drinks, or anoints; and whether the heave offering be clean or unclean, he pays the fifth, and the fifth of the fifth; and he does not pay the heave offering but of common things, rightly ordered, and they become an heave offering, and the compensation of it; and if the priest would forgive, he may not {p}.

{p} Misn. Trumot, c. 6. sect. 1.

Leviticus 22:15

Ver. 15. And they shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel, which they offer unto the Lord. By causing or suffering strangers to eat of them; so Jarchi, referring the words to the priests, who should be careful that strangers ate not of sacred things; or by the strangers themselves eating them, whereby they were profaned and used as common things.

Leviticus 22:16

Ver. 16. Or suffer them to bear the iniquity of trespass,.... The punishment of sin: either the strangers,

when they eat their holy things; the holy things belonging to the priests, which they permitting them to do, suffer them to be liable to the punishment incurred thereby, or else the priests themselves; so the Septuagint version renders the word "themselves"; and in like manner Jarchi interprets it; and then the sense may be, according to the Targums of Jonathan and Onkelos, that the priests shall bear the punishment of their sins, "when they shall eat the holy things in uncleanness,"

which is what is forbidden them in the former part of the chapter; but this seems to be too remote; rather the former sense is best:

for I the Lord do sanctify them; both the priests, to whom the holy things belong, and the holy things for their use, and the use of their families, and them only.

Leviticus 22:17

Ver. 17. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... At the same time; for having said many things concerning the holiness of priests, whose business it was to offer sacrifices, he adds various things concerning the nature, condition, and circumstances of the sacrifices they were to offer:

saying, as follows.

Leviticus 22:18

Ver. 18. Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons,.... The priests, whose work it was to offer sacrifices, and therefore it behoved them to know what kind and sort were to be offered by them, when brought to them:

and unto all the children of Israel: who were to bring the sacrifices, and for whom they were to be offered, and therefore should be acquainted with the nature and kind of what would be acceptable to God, and what not:

and say unto them, whatsoever [he be] of the house of Israel; this phrase includes women and servants, and even Gentiles, as say the Jewish writers {q}, who may vow vows, and make voluntary gifts, as well as the Israelites:

or of the strangers in Israel: those of other nations that dwelt there, either proselytes of the gate, or proselytes of righteousness, so Ben Gersom; and Aben Ezra observes, that the text speaks of the stranger, because there is some reason in the vows and freewill offerings of an Israelite and stranger, as follows:

that will offer his oblation for all his vows, and for all his freewill offerings, which they will offer unto the Lord for a burnt offering; the wise men, as Aben Ezra observes, distinguish between a vow and a freewill offering; every vow is a freewill offering, but every freewill offering is not a vow; and though these were both of them sorts of peace offerings, yet they were not received from Gentiles under that notion, but as burnt offerings, because they were offered in devotion to God, and not to be eaten by Israelites; so Maimonides {r} says, they do not receive from Gentiles but burnt offerings only, as it is said Le 22:25, "neither from a stranger's hand", &c. even burnt offerings of fowls they receive from a Gentile, though he be an idolater; but they do not receive of them peace offerings, nor meat offerings, nor sin offerings, nor trespass offerings; and so burnt offerings, which do not come by way of a vow, or a freewill offering, they do not receive from Gentiles, as the burnt offering of a new mother and the like unto it; a Gentile that brings peace offerings, they offer them as burnt offerings, because the heart of the Gentile is towards heaven.

{q} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 13. 2. Bartenora in Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 5. {r} Hilchot Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 3. sect. 2, 3.

Leviticus 22:19

Ver. 19. Ye shall offer at your own will,.... For vows and freewill offerings were at their own option, and depended on their own will and pleasure, and when offered should be with a willing mind, and from their whole heart: or "for good will to you"; as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; or for gracious, acceptation, that is, that they might be well pleasing to God, and acceptable in his sight, so Jarchi; in order to which the following direction was strictly to be observed:

a male without blemish, of the beeves, of the sheep, and of the goats; bullocks, sheep, and goats, were the only sorts of beasts, out of which sacrifices were taken, and those that were for burnt offerings were always to be males, and unblemished, see **Le 1:3**; but for other offerings, as peace offerings and sin offerings, females might be used, see **Le 3:1**. Fowls are not mentioned, though burnt offerings were of them, because it was not required in them, only of beasts, that they should be males, and without blemish; for, as Jarchi observes, these were not rejected on account of a blemish, only for want of a member.

Leviticus 22:20

Ver. 20. For whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer,.... Which is the general rule, the particulars of which are after given, and which has been imitated by the Heathens. The Egyptians, as they only sacrificed the males of beeves, so they were very curious in examining them, that they might be entirely pure and perfect {s}; and it was a custom among the Romans, that such sheep should be chosen for sacrifice, in which there was nothing wanting {t}; and so, among the Grecians, Homer {u} speaks of perfect goats offered in sacrifice to appease the gods:

for it shall not be acceptable for you; be grateful to God, and accepted by him on their account, if blemished; see **Mal 1:13**.

{s} Heredot. Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 38. {t} Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 4. {u} Iliad. 1. ver. 66.

Leviticus 22:21

Ver. 21. And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offering unto the Lord,.... This, as Ben Gersom observes, is distinguished from a burnt offering; for though it was to be perfect, and without blemish, yet not obliged to be a male as that, **Le 3:1**. This was either by way of thanksgiving for mercies received, **Le 7:12**, or

to accomplish [his] vow; made in any distress, that if God would deliver him, then he would offer such a sacrifice:

or a freewill offering; either on account of favours received, or in order to obtain them: which sacrifice, whether

in beeves or sheep; whether in bullocks or sheep, under which are comprehended goats, both being of the flock, Le 22:19;

it shall be perfect to be accepted; perfect in all its parts, not only in those that are without and obvious to view, but in those that are within: wherefore the Jewish writers say {w}, if it had but one kidney, or the spleen was consumed, it was unfit for the altar; wherefore, in order to be an acceptable sacrifice to God, it was to be complete in all respects:

there shall be no blemish therein; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and that it might be observed. Such sacrifices were typical of Christ, the immaculate Lamb of God, who offered himself without spot to him, **1Pe 1:19**; and shows that no sacrifice of man's can be so acceptable to God as to atone for him, since none of theirs are perfect, and without blemish.

{w} Maimon. Hilchot Issure Mizbeach, c. 2. sect. 11.

Leviticus 22:22

Ver. 22. Blind, or broken, or maimed,.... Which is "blind" of one eye, or both: and so the Egyptians, as they would not sacrifice any of their oxen that had any blemishes on them, and were of a different colour, or changed in their form, so likewise such that were deprived of either of their eyes {x}. Some, as Aben Ezra observes, restrain that which is "broken" to its being broken in the head; but others interpret it of any fracture of the foot, as well as the head, and even of the tail, side, or rib; though others think, that such fractures as were not open and visible are excepted, as that of the rib; so Gersom; and with the Heathens, as Pliny {y} would have remarked, as they were not used to sacrifice calves, brought on men's shoulders, so neither anything that halted: that which is maimed some understand of that whose foot is broken, as Aben Ezra also remarks; but the word is by the Septuagint rendered, "cut in the tongue"; and the Targum of Jonathan, "whose eyebrows are smitten"; and Jarchi seems to take in both, interpreting it the eyebrow which is cut or broken, and so the lip, which is cut or broken: but it is rather to be understood more generally of its being maimed or mutilated in any part of it; so with the Heathens, as Porphyry {z} affirms, beasts that were mutilated were not to be sacrificed; and in the Comedian {a}, a sacrifice is objected to, because it had no tail; upon which the Scholiast observes, that whatever was mutilated was not offered in sacred services, nor was any thing imperfect or unsound sacrificed to the gods; and particularly Servius {b} remarks, if their tongues were cut or slit; which illustrates the Septuagint version, which is observed by Grotius:

or having a wen: or full of warts, as others; the Targum of Jonathan is, whose eyes are smitten with a mixture of white and black; and so Gersom interprets it of a like defect in the eye, in the white of the eye; for he says, if it was in the black or pupil of the eye, the eye would be blind:

or scurvy or scabbed: the same of those in men;

See Gill on "Le 21:20":

ye shall not offer these unto the Lord; any creatures defective in any of these instances; three times this is said, as Jarchi observes, to make them careful concerning the sanctification of them, and concerning the slaying of them, and concerning the sprinkling of their blood:

nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the Lord; a burnt offering on the altar of burnt offering, or burn the fat of them upon it.

{x} Chaeremon. apud Porphyr. de Abstinentia, l. 4. sect. 7. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 45. {z} De Abstinentia, l. 2. sect. 23. {a} Aristoph. Acharnens. ver. 784. {b} In Virgil. Aeneid. l. 6.

Leviticus 22:23

Ver. 23. Either a bullock, or a lamb that hath anything superfluous, or lacking in its parts,.... That has either more members than it should have, as five feet, or two gristles in an ear, as Gersom says, or has fewer than it should have; or, as Jarchi, that has one member longer or shorter than another, as the leg or thigh; according to the Targum of Jonathan, that is redundant in its testicles, or deficient therein; the Septuagint version is, that hath its ear or its tail cut; and so the Vulgate Latin version:

that mayest thou offer [for] a freewill offering: for the repair of the sanctuary or temple, as Jarchi and Gersom; money, or the value of the sacrifices, might be given to the priests for that use, but according to them might not be offered upon the altar: but it rather seems to be an exception to the above law, and allows of the sacrifice of them for freewill offering, though not for a vow, as it follows

but for a vow it shall not be accepted; because the other was according to a man's will and pleasure, and he might bring what he would on that account; but when he made a vow that he would offer such a sacrifice, it must be of creatures that were perfect, and without blemish.

Leviticus 22:24

Ver. 24. Ye shall not offer unto the Lord that which bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut,.... The Targum of Jonathan is, whose testicles are pressed and bruised, and whose nerves are corrupted and bruised, and so most Jewish writers interpret it:

neither shall you make [any offering thereof] in your land; any offering of any sort, either burnt offering or peace offering, or any other; or ye shall not do, that is, any such thing as here suggested, not bruise, or crush, or break, or cut the testicles of any creature; so the above writers.

Leviticus 22:25

Ver. 25. Neither from a stranger's hand shall ye offer the bread of your God of any of these,.... That is, from a Gentile, a proselyte of the gate, who had renounced idolatry, and was willing to offer sacrifice to the true God; but what had such defects and blemishes in them as before described the priest might not take of his hands, and offer on the altar of God; and this is the rather observed, because on the one hand the Gentile might think such sacrifices would be acceptable, since he might have been used to offer such to idols; and on the other hand, the priest might think such would do well enough for Gentiles, though not for Israelites:

because their corruption [is] in them; or they are corrupt through being bruised, crushed, broken, or cut:

[and] blemishes [be] in them; which seems to be added to explain the former, and may have respect to all the blemishes before named, and whatsoever is included in them; for though there are but here mentioned, the Jews reckon no less than fifty {c}:

they shall not be accepted for you; to make atonement for you; Jarchi says, or "from you", the priests; they shall not be accepted of the Lord from their hands, and so be of no avail to the offerers, nor to those for whom they are offered.

{c} Maimon. Hilchot Biath Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 1, &c.

Leviticus 22:26

Ver. 26. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... At the same time, as before, in a continued discourse, the subject being of the same kind, relating to sacrifices:

saying, as follows.

Leviticus 22:27

Ver. 27. When a bullock, or a sheep, or a goat, is brought forth,.... Those three are only mentioned, because they were only made use of in sacrifice, to which this law refers:

then it shall be seven days under the dam; whether a calf, or a lamb, or a kid of the goats; it was not to be taken from its dam and killed, either for food or sacrifice, before it was seven days old: Fagius says, the Hebrews give two reasons why a creature might not be offered before the eighth day; one is, that a sabbath might pass over it, nothing being perfect and consistent without it, that giving, as they say {d} perfection and consistence to all the things of the world; and the other, as the heavens and the earth being perfected in seven days, a creature which lives so long seems to be, as it were, perfect; but he observes, if we inquire after the mystical sense of it, a better reason is to be given, namely, that Christ, the type of all the sacrifices, was not to be offered, or suffer death in his infancy, which Herod contrived, but at man's estate; and to show that no man is fit to be a propitiatory sacrifice, through weakness and inability, being unable to stand before the justice of God, only Christ, in whom is perfection of strength:

and from the eighth day and thenceforth it shall be accepted for an offering made by fire unto the Lord; become an acceptable burnt offering to God; so Pliny {e} says, that the young of sheep are fit for sacrifice on the eighth day, and of an ox on the thirtieth day; see
Ex 22:30.

{d} Tzerer Hammor, fol. 104. 2. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 51.

Leviticus 22:28

Ver. 28. And [whether it be] cow or ewe,.... Or "an ox or sheep" {f}, for this law, as Aben Ezra says, respects both male and female, and neither the one nor the other with their young might be slain; though Jarchi says, the custom is concerning the female, for it is forbidden to slay the dam and its son, or daughter; but it is not the custom concerning males, wherefore it is lawful to slay the father and the son:

ye shall not kill it and her young both in one day; or, "it and its son" {g}, the young, whether of a cow or ewe, and whether it be male or female; though Gersom observes, that this law takes place only in the dam and its female young, and not in the father and the son; for it is not manifest, in many animals, who is their father, wherefore he is not guilty of stripes, if the father and his son are slain in one day, even though it is known it is its father: the reason of the law seems to be, to encourage mercy and pity, and to discourage cruelty: hence the Targum of Jonathan is,

"and my people, the children of Israel, as our Father is merciful in heaven, so be ye merciful on earth: a cow, or a sheep, &c."

{f} hv wa rwv "bovem vel pecus", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {g} wnb taw wta "ipsum et filium ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Leviticus 22:29

Ver. 29. And when ye will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the Lord,.... Which was a sort of peace offering, distinct from freewill offerings and vows before spoken of:

offer [it] at your own will; just what they pleased, whether a bullock, a sheep, or a goat, and whether a male or female; these were left to their own option, or for acceptation to you, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi; that is, it was right in them, and they ought to be careful to offer it in such manner, that it might be acceptable to God, by observing the rules given concerning it, particularly what follows.

Leviticus 22:30

Ver. 30. On the same day it shall be eaten up,.... Which is the law concerning it; See Gill on "Le 7:15":

ye shall leave none of it till the morning; of another day, as the Vulgate Latin version adds, and much less the fat of them, and the most holy things, as Ben Gersom observes, the one being to be burnt upon the altar, the other to be eaten by the priests

I [am] the Lord; who has made this law, and expect it will be observed.

Leviticus 22:31

Ver. 31. Therefore shall ye keep my commandments, and do them,.... Both priests and people, even all the commandments delivered at this time, as well as all others; these they were to observe and take notice of, and keep them in memory, and put them in practice:

I [am] the Lord; See Gill on "Le 22:30".

Leviticus 22:32

Ver. 32. Neither shall ye profane my holy name,.... By transgressing the laws of God, particularly by offering blemished sacrifices, or before the proper tithe; or by slaying the dam and its young on one day; for, as Aben Ezra observes, this is said to the sons of Aaron:

but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel; by his priests among them, and by themselves, conforming to all the precepts, and particularly the last mentioned, which respects them, and their eating up the peace offerings the same day:

I [am] the Lord which hallowed you; had separated them from all other people, and had given them holy laws to walk by, through the observance of which they would be at least externally holy.

Leviticus 22:33

Ver. 33. That brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God,.... Whereby he showed himself to be their covenant God and Father, who had a kind and gracious regard unto them, and which laid them under obligation to fear, serve, and worship him as their God:

I [am] the Lord; that hath sovereign right unto them, and claim upon them, and therefore they ought to be subject to his will, and observe his laws ordinances.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 23

In this chapter an account is given of the several holy days, times, and seasons, appointed by God, under the general names of feasts and holy convocations; and first of the sabbath, Le 23:1; then of the passover and feast of unleavened bread, Le 23:5; to which is annexed the sheaf of the firstfruits, Le 23:9; after that of the feast of weeks or pentecost, Le 23:15; and of the feast of trumpets, Le 23:23; and of the day of atonement, Le 23:26; and of the feast of tabernacles, Le 23:33.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Much about the same time as before; and having delivered to him various laws concerning the holiness of the people of Israel, who were to serve him, and of the holiness of the priests, that were to minister in holy things to him, and of the purity and perfections of their sacrifices, he here appoints various times and seasons, for the more special worship and service of him:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 23:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,.... Speak to them to gather together, and then say unto them what follows, they all being obliged to keep the feasts, and observe the solemnities hereafter directed to; though it may be the heads of the tribes and the elders of the people were summoned together, and the following things were delivered to them, and by them to the people:

[concerning] the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim [to be] holy convocations, [even] these [are] my feasts; appointed and ordered by God, and to be kept to the honour of his name; these are the general names for the particular holy times and seasons after appointed; they are in general called "feasts", though one of them, the day of atonement, was, strictly speaking, a fast; yet being a cessation from all work, and opposed to working days, days of labour and business, it is comprehended in this general title: nor is it unusual with other nations to call a fast a feast; so Aelianus {h} relates of the Tarentines, that having been besieged by the Romans, and delivered from them, in memory of their sufferings appointed a feast which was called a fast: the word used has the signification of stated, fixed, appointed times and seasons, and of convening or meeting together at such times, and that for the performance of solemn worship and service, which is true of them all; for there are certain times of the week and month fixed for them, and when the people in bodies assembled together, and in a solemn manner worshipped the Lord; and these are called "convocations", because the people were called together at those times by the priests, and that with the sound of a trumpet, Nu 10:2; and "holy", because separated from other days, and set apart for holy services: the words may be rendered, as they are by many {i}: "the solemnities of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim holy convocations, these are my solemnities"; times for holy, religious, and solemn service, of his appointment and for his glory: Aben Ezra seems to understand all this of the sabbath only, which is next mentioned, expressed in the plural number, because, as he observes, there are many sabbaths in a year; and indeed the general title of the rest of the feasts is afterwards given, Le 23:4.

{h} Var. Hist. l. 5. c. 20. {i} Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius.

Leviticus 23:3

Ver. 3. Six days shall work be done,.... Or may be done by men, any sort of lawful work and honest labour, for the sustenance of themselves and families:

but the seventh day [is] the sabbath of rest; from all bodily labour and work of any kind; typical of rest by Christ and in him:

an holy convocation; when the people were called to holy exercises, to pray and praise, and hear the word, and offer sacrifice:

ye shall do no work [therein]; not any at all, see Ex 31:15;

it [is] the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings: other feasts were kept in the sanctuary, in the tabernacle or temple, or where they were; but this was not only observed there and in their synagogues, but in their private houses, or wherever they were, whether, travelling by sea or land; and so the Targum of

Jonathan and Aben Ezra interpret it.

Leviticus 23:4

Ver. 4. These are the feasts of the Lord, [even] holy convocations,.... What follow besides the sabbath mentioned:

which ye shall proclaim in their seasons; the proper times of the year, the day or days, and month in which they are to be observed; these were to be proclaimed by the priests with the sound of trumpet, namely, what follow, for they are put together, which had been before for the most part singly delivered.

Leviticus 23:5

Ver. 5. In the fourteenth [day] of the first month,.... The month Nisan, the same with Abib, the month in which the children of Israel came out of Egypt, for which reason it was made the first month in the year, answering to part of our March and part of April; and for the same reason was the passover kept at this time, as follows:

at even [is] the Lord's passover; that is, that was the time for the keeping the passover, even "between the two evenings", as it may be rendered; from the sixth hour and onward, as Jarchi, trial is, after noon or twelve o'clock the middle of the day, as Gersom, when the sun began to decline; See Gill on "Ex 12:6".

Leviticus 23:6

Ver. 6. And on the fifteenth day of the same month [is] the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord,.... Which was the day the children of Israel went out of Egypt with their dough and leaven, having not time to leaven it; in remembrance of which this feast was appointed:

seven days ye must eat unleavened bread; see Ex 12:15.

Leviticus 23:7

Ver. 7. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation,.... That is, on the first of the seven days of the feast of unleavened bread, even the fifteenth day of the month Nisan; this was separated from the other days of the festival, and more particularly devoted to religions exercises, see Ex 12:16;

ye shall do no servile work therein; such as agriculture, or any manufacture or mechanical business, which they and their servants were at other times employed in; but they might bake bread, and boil or roast their meat, and walk abroad, which they might not do on their sabbaths; and therefore it is so expressed as to distinguish it from the work forbidden on that day.

Leviticus 23:8

Ver. 8. But ye shall offer an offering made by, fire unto the Lord seven days,.... A burnt offering was to be offered unto the Lord on everyone of the seven days, which were two young bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs; besides a meat offering, and a goat for a sin offering, Nu 28:19;

in the seventh day [is] an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work [therein]; as on the first day, that was on account of the Israelites going out of Egypt; and this is said, on account of Pharaoh and his host being drowned on it; See Gill on "Ex 12:16".

Leviticus 23:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... At the same time, for what follow are the other feasts and holy convocations before spoken of:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 23:10

Ver. 10. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,.... What is next observed, it being incumbent on them to do what is enjoined:

when ye be come into the land which I give unto you: the land of Canaan, which God had given by promise to their fathers and to them, and which they were now going to inherit: as yet they were in a wilderness, where there were no sowing nor reaping, nor any harvest; so that the following law, though now given, could not take place till they came into the land of Canaan:

and shall reap the harvest thereof; the barley harvest, which was about this time, the month Nisan, and which had the name Abib, from the barley being then in the ear, see **Ex 9:31**; for the wheat harvest was not till seven weeks after:

then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest; to with it as after directed: this is called an omer in the text, which was the tenth part of an ephah, Ex 16:36; and so Jarchi interprets it here; according to the Jewish writers, when the sheaf was reaped, the corn was beat out and winnowed, and dried by the fire, and then ground in a mill, and an omer, or a tenth part of an ephah of the flour of it was taken, and oil and frankincense put upon it, an handful of which being put upon the altar, the rest was the priest's; and with this pretty much agrees the account Josephus gives, who says, on the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth (day of Nisan), of the fruits they have reaped they take a part; for they do not touch them before, accounting it just to honour God first, from whom they receive the plenty of these things; and bring the firstfruits of the barley after this manner, having dried the handful of ears, and bruised them, and cleansed them from the bran, they bring to the altar a tenth part to God, and casting one handful of it on the altar, they leave the rest for the use of the priests; and from thence forward it is lawful to reap publicly and privately {k}: this has been in some part imitated by the Heathens: the Egyptians, who ascribe the invention of the fruits of the earth, particularly wheat and barley, to Isis and Osiris, in memory of it, and as a testimony of their gratitude for it, at the time of harvest, bring an handful of the first ears of corn, and beating themselves near them, call upon Isis; and in some cities, at the feast of Isis, vessels of wheat and barley were carried about in great pomp, as Diodorus Siculus {l} relates.

{k} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 10. sect. 5. {l} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 13.

Leviticus 23:11

Ver. 11. And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord,.... Or the omer of barley; this was done by the priest in the tabernacle and temple, where was the presence of God, and that before the handful of it was put upon the altar; which agitation or waving was, as Gersom says, towards the cast; it was moved to and fro, backwards and forwards, upwards and downwards, to make an acknowledgment to the Lord of heaven and earth, that the fruits of the earth and the plentiful harvest were of him, and to give him the praise and glory of it:

to be accepted for you; of the Lord, as a thanksgiving to him, for the harvest now ripe, and the appointed time of it, and the plenty thereof; and that the remainder might be sanctified and blessed to them, and they have leave to gather it in, which they had not till this was done:

on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it; not after the seventh day, but after the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, which was a sabbath, in which no servile work was to be done, Le 23:7; and so the Targum of Jonathan calls it the day after the first good day of the passover, which was the sixteenth of Nisan, as Josephus expressly says, in the place above referred to; and so it is generally understood by Jewish writers {m} the account given of this affair is this; the messengers of the sanhedrim went out (from Jerusalem over the brook Kidron to the fields near it) on the evening of the feast, (i.e. at the going out of the fifteenth) and at the beginning of the sixteenth of Nisan, and bound the standing corn in bundles, that so it might be the more easily reaped; and all the neighbouring cities gathered together there, that it might be reaped in great pomp; and when it was dark, one said to them, is the sun set? they said, yes. With this sickle (shall I reap?) they said, yes. In this basket (shall I put it?) they said, yes. If on a sabbath day, he said to them, On this sabbath day (shall I do it?) they said, yes {n}. These questions were put and answered three times; then they reaped it and put it into the baskets, and brought it to the court, where they parched it before the fire, to fulfil the commandment of parched corn; then they put it in mills for grinding beans, and took out of it a tenth part (of an ephah), which was sifted with eighteen sieves; then oil and frankincense were poured upon it, being mixed; and it was waved, and brought, and a handful taken and burnt, and the rest was eaten by the priests; and when they had offered the omer, they went out and found the streets of Jerusalem full of meal and parched corn {o}, there being now full liberty to reap what they would: now this sheaf of the firstfruits was typical of Christ; it being of barley, may denote the mean estate of Christ in his humiliation; and but one sheaf for all the people, may signify that Christ is the one Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer: yet as a sheaf comprehends many stalks and grains, so Christ has a complication of blessings in him; yea, he had all his people representatively in him, when he was offered for the whole body of his mystical Israel, all the children of God scattered abroad; the manner of reaping it, by persons deputed by the sanhedrim on the eve of a festival of the passover, in the sight of much people, without Jerusalem, near Kidron, exactly agrees with the apprehending of Christ in the night near Kidron, by persons sent from the Jewish sanhedrim, and his suffering publicly without the gates of Jerusalem; it being brought to the priests in the court, and threshed, winnowed, dried, and parched by the fire, and ground in mills, may denote the various dolorous sufferings of Christ, by means of the priests and elders of the people; and oil and frankincense being put on it, may denote the acceptableness of his sacrifice to God; and the waving of it, his resurrection from the dead, which was on the very day this sheaf was waved; who is the firstfruits of them that sleep in him, and which sanctifies the whole body of them, and ensures their resurrection unto eternal life; see 1Co 15:20.

{m} Jarchi & Ben Gersom in loc. Jarchi in Misn. Succah, c. 3. sect. 12. {n} Misn. Menachot, c. 10. sect. 3, 4. {o} Ib. sect. 4, 5.

Leviticus 23:12

Ver. 12. And ye shall offer that day, when ye wave the sheaf,.... Besides the daily sacrifice of the morning and evening, and the additional offerings made on everyone of the seven days of the feast of unleavened bread:

an he lamb without blemish of the first year, for a burnt offering unto the Lord; typical of the perfect and immaculate Lamb of God, whose sufferings are fitly signified by a burnt offering; and which were endured at the time he became the firstfruits of his people, and sanctified them.

Leviticus 23:13

Ver. 13. And the meat offering thereof [shall be] two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil,.... The usual measure of flour to a meat offering was one tenth deal, Ex 29:40; but here it is doubled: some Jewish writers say {p} one tenth was on account of the lamb that was offered at this time, and the other as was suitable for a meat offering; but the true reason seems to be, because it was on account of the fruits of the earth and the plenty thereof; and therefore a double measure of fine flour mixed with oil was required as a token of gratitude; for thankfulness ought to be in proportion to mercies:

an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savour; an handful of it was burnt upon the altar, and was received with acceptance by the Lord, and the rest was eaten by the priests, **Le 2:2**;

and the drink offering thereof [shall be] of wine, the fourth [part] of an hin; which was the common quantity for a drink offering,
Ex 29:40; for, as Jarchi observes, though the meat offering was doubled, the drink offering was not; the reason of which seems to be, because these offerings were on account of the harvest and not the vintage: the Targum of Jonathan calls it wine of grapes, to distinguish it from wine that might be made of other things, but not to be used in drink offerings, only the pure juice of the grape.

{p} Chaskuni.

Leviticus 23:14

Ver. 14. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears,.... That is, they were not allowed to make bread of the new corn, as Aben Ezra and Gersom explain it; for they were obliged to eat unleavened bread at this time: but it might not be made of the new corn, until the above offering was made; nay, they were not allowed to parch any of the grains of corn, and eat them; yea, even they might not pluck and eat the green ears, though of ever so small a quantity. The Jews say {q}, if it was the quantity of an olive of either of these, a man was to be beaten for it:

until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God; which includes all the offerings on this account, the offering of the firstfruits, the offering of the he lamb, and the meat offering and the drink offering; until these were offered up, the new corn might not be eaten in any form:

[it shall be] a statute for ever throughout your generations; until the Messiah came, who is the substance of these shadows:

in all your dwellings; not at Jerusalem only, but in the several parts of the land of Canaan; yea, as Ben Gersom says, whether in the land, or without the land; a later writer says, it is forbidden to eat of the new corn at this time, whether bread, parched corn, or green ears, until the beginning of the night of the eighteenth of Nisan, and in the land of Israel, until the beginning of the night of the seventeenth of Nisan {r}.

{q} Maimon. Hilchot Maacolot Asurot, c. 10. sect. 2, 3. {r} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 489. sect. 10. so Lebush, c. 489. sect. 10.

Leviticus 23:15

Ver. 15. And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath,.... Not the seventh day sabbath in the passover week, nor the whole feast of unleavened bread, but the first day of it, which was an holy convocation, a sabbath in which no servile work was to be done,
Le 23:7; and it was from the day after this, even the sixteenth of Nisan, that the following count was to be made; so the Targum of Jonathan, after the first feast day of the passover: and Josephus {s} is very clear in it, that Pentecost, or the feast of weeks, was the fiftieth day from the sixteenth of Nisan, when the above offerings were made:

from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; which plainly points out the express day from whence the count was to begin, even on the day when the sheaf of the firstfruits of the barley harvest was offered:

seven sabbaths shall be complete; or seven weeks, that is, forty nine days; and hence, Jarchi says, we learn that the count began from the evening, or otherwise the weeks would not be complete; and Gersom thinks the day in which the sheaf was offered is included in the days counted; for the count began from the day after the first of the passover, and lo, seven days are seven weeks of days, which make forty nine days.

{s} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 10. sect. 6.

Leviticus 23:16

Ver. 16. Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath,.... Or weeks, forty nine days being counted, the following was the fiftieth day, or Pentecost:

shall ye number fifty days; from whence this feast had the name of Pentecost, **Ac 2:1**; all in Israel were obliged to number those days, except women and servants {t}: the manner of doing it was this {u}; on the night of the second (day of the passover), after the evening prayer, they began to number; but if anyone forgot to number at the beginning of the night, he went and numbered all the night; for the commandment is for everyone to number by himself, and he ought to number standing, and to bless first, and number the days and weeks: How? on the first day he says, This is one day, until he comes to seven days, and then he says, This is the seventh day, which is one week; and on the eighth day he says, This is the eighth day, which is one week and one day, and so till he comes to the fourteenth; then he says, This is the fourteenth day, which make two weeks; and in this way he numbers, and goes on until the forty ninth day: and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord; that is, of new corn, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi explain it, and this was of wheat; for it was the offering for the wheat harvest, which was offered on the fiftieth day from the offering of the sheaf or omer of the barley harvest.

{t} Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin Umusaphim, c. 7. sect. 24. {u} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 489. sect. 1. & Lebush, ut supra, (c. 489.) sect. 1.

Leviticus 23:17

Ver. 17. And ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals,.... Out of their habitations in the land of Canaan; and not out of those without the land, as Jarchi observes; and not out of all of them, as Ben Gersom remarks; though the Vulgate Latin version has it, out of "all" of our habitations, but wrongly; and indeed out of no one particular habitation, because it was at the public expense; but they were brought from some part of the country or another, even the quantity of two tenth parts of an ephah, or two omers of wheat flour made into two loaves, which were to be, and were waved before the Lord, and hence so called; and are the same with the new meat offering, or rather bread offering, made of the new corn, in the preceding verse, so Jarchi:

they shall be of fine flour; of wheat flour, the finest of it, of which all meat or bread offerings were made; and this was particularly on account of the wheat harvest, and therefore it was proper that the finest of the wheat should be used on this occasion;
See Gill on "Le 2:1"; each loaf or cake, according to Maimonides {w}, was seven hands' breadths long, four hands' breadths broad, and four fingers high:

they shall be baked with leaven; the common meat offering was unleavened, part of which was burnt on the altar, where no leaven might be burnt, Le 2:4; and from hence it may be concluded that no part of these loaves was to be burnt, but the whole of them fell to the share of the priests:

[they are] the firstfruits unto the Lord; which he claimed as his, and gave unto his priests; and it was but right and just he should have them, as an acknowledgment of all coming from his hands, and as expressive of gratitude for them, and for the sanctification of the rest; hence this is called the feast of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, Ex 34:22.

{w} Hilchot Tamidin, &c. c. 8. sect. 10.

Leviticus 23:18

Ver. 18. And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish, of the first year,.... That is, with the two wave loaves, the meat or bread offering: and besides these,

and one young bullock, and two rams; in Nu 28:27 it is two young bullocks, and one ram; and Aben Ezra suggests, that this was at the will and option of the priest, whether one bullock and two rams, or two bullocks and one ram; but according to Maimonides {x}, these sacrifices were distinct from them; they are sacrifices of the day, as being a feast day, and these belonged to the loaves; so that according to him, and so he expresses it, there were to be offered on this day, besides the daily sacrifices, three bullocks, three rams, and fourteen lambs, twenty beasts in all, for burnt offerings; and two goats for sin offerings to be eaten, and two lambs for peace offerings to be eaten; and with this account agrees Josephus {y}, they sacrifice for burnt offerings, he says, three bullocks, and two rams, (or, as Dr. Bernard thinks, it should be read three rams,) and fourteen lambs, and two goats for sin offerings:

they shall be for a burnt offering unto the Lord, with their meat offering, and their drink offering; each of the said beasts were offered, unto the Lord on the altar of burnt offering, and burnt thereon; and to every beast they offered, there was a meat offering and a drink offering: the meat offering consisted of three tenth deals, or omers, of fine flour, to a bullock, two to a ram, and one to a lamb; and the drink offering was half an hin of wine to a bullock, the third part of one to a ram, and a fourth part to a lamb, as Jarchi observes, which appears from Nu 28:12;

[even] an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord; an acceptable burnt offering to God.

{x} Ut supra, (Hilchot Tamidin, &c. c. 8.) sect. 1. {y} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 10. sect. 6.

Leviticus 23:19

Ver. 19. Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering,.... Which was for the sin of the whole congregation, typical of Christ, whose soul was made an offering for sin; in virtue of which all other sacrifices become acceptable to God, and believers enjoy the fruits and blessings of divine grace:

and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings; which Gersom says were the most holy things, and were only slain in the north, and only eaten by males, as the rest of the holy things, and are the only peace offerings of the congregation that were offered throughout the whole year.

Leviticus 23:20

Ver. 20. And the priests shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits,.... The two loaves called the two wave loaves,
Le 23:17; with which were waved the two lambs of the peace offerings; and these alive, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom intimate. The Jewish doctors {z} dispute, whether, in waving, the lambs were put above the bread, or the bread above the lambs; which some reconcile by observing, that the bread was put by the side of the lambs:

[for] a wave offering before the Lord; being waved this way and that way, upwards and downwards, and towards the several quarters of the world, showing that the fruits of the earth were owing to the providential goodness of God everywhere:

with the two lambs; not that all the above sacrifices were waved, or any part of them, along with the lambs, but the wave loaves, and they were waved together, as one wave offering to the Lord:

they shall be holy to the Lord for the priests; both the loaves and the lambs, these were separated and devoted wholly to the Lord, and to be eaten by his priests; the peace offerings of a single person were light holy things, as Jarchi says; but the peace offerings of the congregation, as these were, are the most holy things, and so to be eaten only by the priests, and by the males only, in the court of the tabernacle.

{z} In Torat Cohenim, apud Yalkut in loc.

Leviticus 23:21

Ver. 21. And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, [that] it may be an holy convocation unto you,.... This proclamation was made by the priests with the sound of a trumpet, that the people might observe that this fiftieth day, or day of Pentecost, was devoted to sacred service, and that they were called to holy exercises in it:

ye shall do no servile work [therein]; what was not necessary for food, as Ben Gersom observes, but what was necessary on that account, as kindling a fire, &c. might be done, see Le 23:7; for this was to be kept in like manner as the first and seventh days of the feast of unleavened bread; the general design of which was to express thankfulness for the appointed weeks of the harvest, and to honour the Lord with the firstfruits of the increase of the earth: and the Jews say, as Ben Gersom observes, that this fiftieth day, being reckoned from the sixteenth of Nisan, fell upon the sixth of Sivan, on which day, they say, the law was given, which is another reason for the observance of it: and it is remarkable, that on this same day the Word of the Lord went out of Zion, and the law or doctrine of the Lord, even the everlasting Gospel, went out of Jerusalem, published by the apostles of Christ to the people of all nations, **Ac 2:14**; when they were favoured with the firstfruits of the Spirit, after our Lord's ascension to heaven, and receiving gifts for men, which he now in an extraordinary manner bestowed on his disciples, **Ac 2:1**; and which were the firstfruits of all others, after to be given forth in the course of time, and of the effusion of the Spirit in the latter day; and when there was a number of souls converted, as the firstfruits of after conversions among Jews and Gentiles, **Ac 2:41**; and particularly of the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, and of the harvest of souls in the end of the world, Mt 13:30;

[it shall be] a statute for ever all your dwellings throughout your generations; so long as they dwelt in the land of Canaan, and had their harvest in it, even until the Messiah came, in whom all those types and figures had their accomplishment.

Leviticus 23:22

Ver. 22. And when ye reap the harvest of your land,.... This law is repeated from Le 19:9; and as Aben Ezra observes, the feast of weeks being the feast of the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, it is repeated, that they might not forget what God had commanded them to do at that time, namely, to leave somewhat for the poor; and the Jewish writers {a} observe, that this law, being put among the solemn feasts of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, and the beginning of the year, and the day of atonement, teaches, that he that observes it, and leaves the corner of the field and the gleanings to the poor, it is as if he built the sanctuary, and offered his sacrifices in the midst of it; but a much better reason may be given for it, which was, to teach them that when they expressed their thankfulness to God, they should exercise charity and liberality to the poor;

thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest:
See Gill on "Le 19:9";

thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I [am] the Lord your God; See Gill on "Le 19:10".

{a} In Torat Cohenim, apud Yalkut in loc. & Jarchi.

Leviticus 23:23

Ver. 23. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... At the same time, in a continued discourse, concerning some other days, which were to be observed in a sacred manner:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 23:24

Ver. 24. Speak unto the children of Israel,.... For all the people of Israel were concerned in the following precept, and obliged to observe it, even priests, Levites, Israelites, proselytes, and freed servants; though other servants, and women, and children, were not obliged to hear the sound of the trumpets {b}, and which were blown not in Jerusalem only, but in all cities and towns where the sanhedrim was {c}; and it was the hearing of them the people were bound unto, and not less than nine distinct soundings were they obliged to hear {d}; to which perhaps respect is had in Ps 89:15;

in the seventh month; the month Tisri, as the Targum of Jonathan, which was the seventh from the month Nisan or Abib; which was appointed the first month of the year, on account of the Israelites coming out of Egypt in it; otherwise, before, this month Tisri was the first, and so it still continued, for the fixing the years, and settling the sabbatical and jubilee years, and for the planting of trees and herbs {e}:

in the first [day] of the month shall ye have a sabbath; not entirely as the weekly sabbath, in which no manner of work at all was to be done, but in which no servile work was to be done; and was observed in like manner as the first and seventh days of unleavened bread, and the day of pentecost, Le 23:7;

a memorial of blowing of trumpets; which, according to the Jewish writers, was continued from sun rising to sun setting {f}; but what this blowing of trumpets was a memorial of is not easy to say; some think it was in memory of the wars the people of Israel had with their enemies the Amalekites and Canaanites, and the victories they obtained over them, and particularly in remembrance of the walls of Jericho falling down at the sound of rams' horns; but then it must be by anticipation: it is more commonly received with the Jews {g} that it was on the account of the binding of Isaac on this day, being delivered through a ram being sacrificed in his stead; and on this account it is said, that the trumpets blown on this day were made of rams horns, and no other might be used {h}; yea, that ram's head was used to be eaten on this day, in remembrance of the ram of Isaac, and also to intimate that the Jews would be the head and not the tail {i}: the Jews also say, that this day, every year, was a sort of day of judgment, in which God sat and judged men, and also determined all events of the following year {k}; and this was attended with blowing of trumpets, to strike a terror into them, and put them in mind of the judgment of God, and to induce them to repent of their sins {l}: and it may be observed, that the resurrection of the dead, in order to the last general judgment, will be attended with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God, 1Co 15:52; whether this is so represented in reference to this notion, let it be considered: but as this was New Year's Day, as before observed, this ceremony seems to have been appointed to express joy for all the mercies and blessings of the last year; and the rather, at this time of the year all the fruits of the earth were gathered in, not only the barley and the wheat, but the oil and wine, and under such grateful acknowledgment, to expect the divine blessing to attend them the following year; and besides, at this time of the year, it was generally thought by the Jews {m}, and by others, that the world was created, and this blowing of trumpets might be in memory of that, and as an emblem of the shoutings of the sons of God, the angels, the morning stars, who sang for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid, Job 38:6; to which it may be added, this seventh month was very memorable for holy solemnities, as the day of atonement on the tenth, and the feast of tabernacles, which began on the fifteenth, and therefore was ushered in with blowing of trumpets to make it the more significant, and particularly to put the people in mind to prepare for the day of atonement near at hand; and so Gersom observes, that as the sound of a trumpet strikes men with fear, the design of this precept was, to fill the mind with fear, and to excite to repentance and brokenness of heart, and humiliation for sin, and to search their works and actions, and correct what was amiss, and so be ready for the day of atonement: hence Ainsworth thinks, that this was a figure of the ministry of John the Baptist preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; but rather it seems to be an emblem of the Gospel, and the ministry of it, in the acceptable year of the Lord, or the Gospel dispensation, which is sometimes signified by the blowing of the great trumpet, and by the ministers of it lifting up their voice like a trumpet, Isa 27:13; by which sinners are roused and awakened to a sense of their sin and danger, and to hear a joyful sound of love, grace, mercy, peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation through Christ: the Jews say {n}, this blowing of trumpets was to disturb Satan, when he came to accuse the Israelites; it is certain there is nothing gives him more disturbance than the pure and powerful preaching of the Gospel, which he endeavours to obstruct as much as possible, and there is nothing like what that brings to silence his accusations, see **2Co 4:3**,

an holy convocation; on which the people were called together to holy exercises; and so the Jews observe it to this day; for after they return home from attendance to the blowing of the trumpets in their synagogues, they sit down to meat, and spend the rest of the day in hearing sermons, and in other religious exercises {o}.

{b} Maimon. Hilchot Shophar ve Succah, c. 2. sect. 1. {c} Ibid. sect. 8. {d} Ib. ch. 3. sect. 1. Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. No. 590. sect. 1. {e} Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 1. {f} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 588. sect. 1. Lebush, par. 2. c. 588. sect. 1. {g} R. Alphes, par. 1. fol. 346. 2. & Jarchi in loc. {h} Maimon. ut supra, ({b}) c. 1. sect. 1. Schulchan Aruch, ib. c. 526. sect. 1. {i} Schulchan Aruch, ib. c. 583. sect. 2. Lebush, ib. 583. sect. 2. {k} Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 2. T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 16. 2. {l} Leo Modena's History of Rites of the present Jews, par. 3. c. 5. sect. 7. {m} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 10. 2. {n} Targum Jon. in Numb. xxix. 1. R. Alphes, par. 1, fol. 346. 2. T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 16. 2. {o} Leo Modena, ut supra. ({l})

Leviticus 23:25

Ver. 25. Ye shall do no servile work [therein],.... Only such as was necessary for dressing food, but not any manual work, such as servants were employed in on other days, as agriculture or any mechanic business:

but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord; a burnt offering, and what that was may be seen in Nu 29:1.

Leviticus 23:26

Ver. 26. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... This phrase, which is a kind of preface to each precept, seems to be used to distinguish one from another, as the preceding one from the feast of Pentecost; and here, the day of atonement from that of the blowing of the trumpets; and afterwards, the feast of tabernacles from the day of atonement; the reason why it is not used before the feast of Pentecost seems to be, because, as Aben Ezra observes, that depended upon the wave sheaf, and was reckoned from it:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 23:27

Ver. 27. Also on the tenth [day] of this seventh month,.... Tisri, the same as before, answering to part of our September, and part of October:

[there shall be] a day of atonement; for all the sins of the year past; see Le 16:29;

it shall be an holy convocation unto you: when they should be called together for the exercise of holy duties:

and ye shall afflict your souls; their souls, by repentance, contrition, and humiliation for sin, and their bodies by fasting; and, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"by abstaining from eating and drinking, and the advantage of bathing and wiping, and the use of the bed and sandals;"

hence called the fast, Ac 27:9;
See Gill on "Le 16:29";

and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord; a burnt offering, of which see Nu 29:8.

Leviticus 23:28

Ver. 28. Ye shall do no work in that same day,.... No more than on the weekly sabbath:

for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God: See Gill on "Le 16:30"; Aben Ezra's note is,

"for you only,"

that is, for the Israelites, and not the Gentiles; but the atonement of Christ, the antitype of this, was not for the sins of the Jews only, but for the sins of the whole world, of all his people in it, **1Jo 2:2**.

Leviticus 23:29

Ver. 29. For whatsoever soul [it be] that shall not be afflicted in that same day,.... That is, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem explain it, which can fast and does not fast; for a sick person, and a child under nine years of age, were not obliged to fast on this day {p}:

he shall be cut off from among his people; by an untimely death, by the hand of God; the Targum of Jonathan says, by the pestilence.

{p} Maimon. Hilchot Shebitat Ashur, c. 2. sect. 8, 10.

Leviticus 23:30

Ver. 30. And whatsoever soul [it be] that doeth any work in that same day,.... Any sort of work whatever; for, as before observed, it was to be kept as strictly as the weekly sabbath:

the same soul will I destroy from among his people; with the pestilence, as the above Targum; it seems to be but another phrase for cutting them off, and to signify the same thing.

Leviticus 23:31

Ver. 31. Ye shall do no manner of work,.... Which is repeated, that it might be observed, and to show how strictly God required this day should be kept, and how careful men should be of breaking the command in this respect, and how much he should resent it if they did:

[it shall be] a statute for ever, throughout your generations, in all your dwellings; unto the coming of the Messiah, who, by the atoning sacrifice of himself, would answer to this law, and put an end to it.

Leviticus 23:32

Ver. 32. It [shall be] unto you a sabbath of rest,....
See Gill on "Le 16:31"; and this is thought by some {q} to be the sabbath spoken of in Isa 58:13;

and ye shall afflict your souls; in the ninth [day] of the month at even; the fast was to begin at the close of the ninth day, and to continue to the end of the tenth; so Maimonides {r}: he begins to fast and afflict himself at the evening of the ninth next to the tenth; and so at the going out of it he continues in his affliction a little while of the night of the eleventh, next to the tenth, which is confirmed by what follows:

from even unto even shall ye celebrate your sabbath; which some understand of the sabbath in general; but it seems to have a particular respect to the sabbath of the day of atonement, which was to last from the evening of the ninth to the evening of the tenth day.

{q} R. Alphes, par. 1. Yom Hacippurim, c. 1. fol. 357. 2. {r} Ut supra, (Maimon. Hilchot Shebitat Asher) c. 1. sect. 6.

Leviticus 23:33

Ver. 33. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Concerning the feast of tabernacles here repeated and enlarged upon:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 23:34

Ver. 34. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying,.... Giving them directions about keeping a feast, in which the whole body of them had a very special and particular concern:

the fifteenth day of this seventh month; the month Tisri or September:

[shall be] the feast of tabernacles [for] seven days unto the Lord; the design of which was, partly to give thanks for the fruits of the earth, now all gathered in, Le 23:39; but chiefly to commemorate the dwelling of the children of Israel in tents and booths, during their forty years' abode in the wilderness, Le 23:43; whereby their posterity in later times would be led to observe the difference between them and their forefathers, who lived in tents or booths, pitched sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another, in the open fields, in wastes, and deserts; whereas they dwelt in spacious cities, fortified towns, and magnificent houses; and were possessed of various kingdoms and nations, as was the land of Canaan: the reason, the Jews say {s}, why this feast was kept at this time of the year and not at the season when they went out of Egypt and first dwelt in booths, as at Succoth which had its name from thence, Ex 12:37, was this; because then the summer season began when men commonly used to build tabernacles to shelter them from the heat of the sun, wherefore, if the feast had been kept at that time, it would not have been known that it was kept at the command of God, and in remembrance of the above circumstance; but the month Tisri or September being usually a cold and rainy season in those parts, men were wont to leave their tabernacles and go into their houses; and so it was a plain case that the feast was observed not for convenience or through custom, but that it was at the command of God they went out of their houses into tabernacles at this season of the year, in commemoration of the miraculous benefit of dwelling in tents under the clouds of glory: and they also say, that for this reason it was ordered to begin on the fifteenth day, because it was on the fifteenth day of the month (though of another month) they went out of Egypt, and the clouds began to protect and accompany them; and this was enjoined them seven days, to teach them that the miraculous benefits of God are always and every day to be remembered: the Jews have a whole treatise in their Misnah, called "Succah", the "booth" or "tabernacle"; in which they give an account of the form and fabric and measure of their tabernacles, and of their dwelling and dining in them; and of the branches they carry in their hands, and of the manner of carrying and shaking them; and of the pouring out of water at this time, and of their piping and singing and other rites and ceremonies attending this feast; See Gill on "Joh 7:2"; besides, the uses of this feast before mentioned, it was typical of spiritual and evangelical things, and especially of the incarnation of Christ, whose human nature is the true tabernacle, in distinction from those typical ones, and in which he is expressly said to "tabernacle" among us, **Joh 1:14**; and it is highly probable that his incarnation or birth was at the time of this feast; at which time the temple of Solomon, a type of Christ's body, was also dedicated; and this season of the year suits better than that in which it is usually placed; and his baptism and the time of his death show it; see **Lu 1:1**; and as Christ, our passover, was sacrificed for us at the exact time of the passover, and the firstfruits of the Spirit were given on the very day of Pentecost, or feast of firstfruits; so it is most likely, that Christ was born, or first began to tabernacle in human nature at the feast of tabernacles, which we, in Gospel times, are to keep, by believing in the incarnate Saviour, and by attending to the Gospel ordinances he has appointed, to commemorate the benefits of his incarnation, sufferings, and death, Zec 14:16; moreover, the dwelling of the children of Israel in booths in the wilderness, and so at this feast in commemoration of it, may be an emblem of the tabernacles of the saints in their present wilderness state: this world, through which they are passing, is like a wilderness to them; their bodies are called tabernacles, which are pitched for a while; and their state and condition here is that of sojourners, pilgrims, and travellers; yea, these tents and tabernacles may be figures of the several particular churches of Christ, in the present state of things, which are set up for a while for the convenience, comfort, refreshment, and joy of the spiritual Israel of God; see Ps 46:4.

{s} Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 21. p. 447.

Leviticus 23:35

Ver. 35. On the first day [shall be] an holy convocation,.... When they should be called together to holy exercises, to prayer, praising, and reading the law; and at this present time they observe this day, by rising early in the morning

and going to the synagogue, where they sing and pray much; and everyone takes a bundle of branches of palm tree, olive, &c. in the right hand, and a pome citron in the left, and says, blessed be thou, O Lord our God, the Lord of the world, who has sanctified us by thy precepts, and hath commanded us to carry the palm tree bundle; then they shake it, and give a great shout, according to
Ps 96:12; all which they frequently repeat on this day, as well as bring out the book of the law, attended with various ceremonies, and read some passages in it {t}:

ye shall do no servile work [therein]; as on the first and seventh days of unleavened bread, the day of Pentecost, and of the blowing of trumpets; but what was necessary for preparing and dressing food might be done.

{t} Buxtorf. ut supra. (Synagog. Jud. c. 21. p. 447.)

Leviticus 23:36

Ver. 36. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made, by fire unto the Lord,.... A burnt offering; what this was, and how many were offered on each day, see at large in Nu 29:13;

on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; as on the first day; See Gill on "Le 23:35":

and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord; which was different from that on all the other days, being one bullock only, &c.
Nu 29:35;

it [is] a solemn assembly; of all the people, when they were gathered together before the Lord. Some render the word used a "restraint" or "detention", and interpret it of restraining or detaining them from servile work, as in the next clause; so Aben Ezra and Gersom; but this sense seems to make that clause unnecessary and is never used elsewhere where that is:

ye shall do no servile work [therein]; as on the first day;
See Gill on "Le 23:35".

Leviticus 23:37

Ver. 37. These [are] the feasts of the Lord,.... Besides the sabbath, as Gersom observes; even the passover, the seven days of unleavened bread the day of Pentecost, the day of blowing the trumpets, the day of atonement, and the seven days of the feast of tabernacles;

which ye shall proclaim [to be] holy convocations: as they had been directed, Le 23:2;

to offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord; which is explained by

a burnt offering, and a meat offering, which went along with it;

a sacrifice, which the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call the sacrifice of holy things; according to Gersom it was the sacrifice of the peace offerings; but rather it seems to be the sacrifice of the sin offering, which was ordered along with the rest in all those feasts:

and drink offerings; which also accompanied the meat offerings:

everything upon his day; there being different sacrifices on one day than on another, everyone was to be offered peculiar to the day as was ordered; of which see Nu 28:29.

Leviticus 23:38

Ver. 38. Beside the sabbaths of the Lord,.... The seventh day sabbaths, which were of his appointing, and sacred to his service and worship; on which, when any of the feasts fell, it did not hinder the observance of them, or the offering of the several sacrifices on them; nor were those of the sabbath to be omitted on the account of them:

and beside your gifts; either of the whole congregation, or of a private person, which they thought well to give of their own good will on these festivals, over and above the sacrifices enjoined:

and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the Lord; which seem to explain what is meant before by gifts.

Leviticus 23:39

Ver. 39. Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month,.... The month Tisri or September, the same month, and the same day of the month before observed; only another end and use of this feast is remarked, which was to give thanks for the fruits of the earth gathered in, as follows:

when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land; the barley, wheat, oil and wine, and all others, this being now autumn, when the several fruits were ripe and gathered: ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days; not different from that before mentioned, but the same, one design of which is here suggested, to give thanks for the fruits of the earth: hence this feast is sometimes called the feast of ingathering,
Ex 23:16; as another use of it is after mentioned, to commemorate the children of Israel dwelling in booths in the wilderness:

on the first day [shall be] a sabbath, and on the eighth day [shall be] a sabbath; because on both there was a cessation from servile work,
Le 23:35.

Leviticus 23:40

Ver. 40. And ye shall take you the boughs of goodly trees,.... Which the three Targums interpret, of citrons; and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra; and the Jews are so tenacious of observing this, that in those countries where this fruit grows not, they will send for it from Spain, where there is plenty of it: the Targum of Jonathan, paraphrases it, "ye shall take of yours"; suggesting these boughs must be their own, or the bundle of them, with others they call the "lulab", must be their own property, and not another's; though it is said {u}, if it is a gift it will do, even though it is given on condition to be returned again:

branches of palm trees: which were very common in the land of Judea, and especially about Jericho; see Joh 12:13; the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call them "lulabs", which is the name the Jews give to the whole bundle they carried in their hands on this day:

and the boughs of thick trees; which the Targums and Jewish writers in general understand of myrtles, being full of branches and leaves:

and willows of the brook; a sort of trees which delight to grow by brooks and rills of water: these, according to the Jewish writers, were not taken to make their booths of, though that seems to be the use of them, from **Ne 8:15**; but to tie up in bundles, and carry in hands; the citron in their left hand, and a bundle made of the other three sorts of boughs of trees in the right hand, which they called the "lulab":

and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days; because of the blessings of his goodness bestowed upon them in the plentiful harvest and vintage they had been favoured with, and in remembrance of past mercies, showed to their fathers in the wilderness, giving them food and drink, and guiding and protecting them with the pillar of cloud and fire; and at the same time, also, thankful for the different circumstances they were in, having cities, towns, and houses to dwell its, and fields and vineyards to possess, when their fathers lived in a wilderness for forty years together; and especially such of them expressed their joy before the Lord, who had any knowledge of this being a type of the Messiah tabernacling in human nature, they had the promise of, to be their spiritual Redeemer and Saviour: these seven days are kept by the Jews now, chiefly in carnal mirth, and so for ages past, as by carrying the above boughs in their hands, and going round about the altar with them, and, shaking them, and crying Hosanna, and by making use of all sorts of music, vocal and instrumental, piping, dancing, leaping, skipping, and various gestures, even by persons of the highest rank, and of the greatest character for sobriety {w}; and particularly by fetching water from Siloah, when in their own land, and pouring it with wine upon the altar, which was attended with such expressions of joy, that it is said, that he who never saw the rejoicing of drawing of water, never saw any rejoicing in his life {x}: the Jews give this reason of the ceremony, because at this feast was the time of the rains, see Targum of Jonathan on Le 23:36; and therefore the holy blessed God said, pour water before me, that the rains of the year may be blessed unto you {y}; but others have thought there was something more mysterious in it, and that it had respect to the pouring out of the Holy Ghost; for, they say {z}, the place of drawing water was so called, because they drew the Holy Ghost, as it is said, "ye shall draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation",
Isa 12:3; to this our Lord is thought to allude,
See Gill on "Joh 7:37",
See Gill on "Joh 7:38": some of the ceremonies used at this feast have been imitated by the Heathens: Strabo {a} says, the carrying branches of trees, dances, and sacrifices, were common to the gods, and particularly to Bacchus; and there was such a likeness between these and the rites of Bacchus, that Plutarch {b} thought the Jews at this time kept two feasts to the honour of him; whereas, as Bishop Patrick observes, the profane Bacchanalia of the Gentiles

were only a corruption of this festival.

{u} Misn. Succah, c. 3. sect. 13. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. R. Alphes, par. 1. Succah, c. 2. fol. 376. 1. {w} Maimon. Hilchot Lulab. c. 7. sect. 10. c. 13, & c. 8. sect. 12, 13, 14, 15. {x} Misn. Succah, c. 5. sect. 1. 4. {y} R. Alphes, par. 1. Roshhashanah, c. 1. fol. 346. 2. {z} T. Hieros. Succah, fol. 55. 1. {a} Geograph. l. 10. p. 322. {b} Sympos. l. 1. prob. 3.

Leviticus 23:41

Ver. 41. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year,.... Every year it was to be kept for the space of seven days, beginning on the fifteenth and ending on the twenty second of the month Tisri or September;

[it shall be] a statute for ever in your generations; until the Messiah should come and tabernacle among men, the substance of this shadow, on whose coming it was to flee away:

ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and that no mistake might be made.

Leviticus 23:42

Ver. 42. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days,.... So that it seems they were not obliged to dwell in them on the eighth day, which was an holy convocation, a sabbath in which no servile work was to be done as the first, Le 23:36. The eighth day was a day by itself, a sort of an appendage to the feast of tabernacles, when they went into their houses again, and kept it as an holy day; and perhaps principally in giving thanks for the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, to which this seems to be appropriated from Le 23:39. According to the Jewish writers, they did not go out of their booths until they had dined in them on this day; and as they went out used to say,

"may it be the will of God that we may be worthy the next year to dwell in the booth of Leviathan {c};"

that is, to feast with the Messiah in the world to come. And to those days the Jews have added a ninth, which they call "the joy of the law", and which they keep for joy of having finished the reading of the law; which being divided into as many sections or lessons as weeks in the year, were so ordered to be read as to be finished at this time {d}:

all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"all the males in Israel, and even the little ones, that do not need their mothers, sit in the shades blessing their Creator, when they enter there."

And, according to the Misnah {e}, women, servants, and little ones, are free from the booths (i.e. are not obliged to dwelt in one), but a little one, who hath no need of its mother, is obliged to dwell in the booths: and elsewhere it is said, that sick persons, and such as wait upon them, are not obliged, nor messengers upon any business, nor travellers and watchmen in cities, and keepers of gardens and orchards; if such travel, or keep watch in the day, they are obliged to be in them at night, and if in the night, then they are to dwell in them in the day {f}. Jarchi says, that everyone born in Israel comprehends proselytes, who were bound by this law.

{c} Lebush, par. 2. c. 668. sect. 5. {d} Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 27. Leo Moden's History of the Rites of the Jews, par. 3. c. 7. sect. 6. {e} Misn. Succah, c. 2. sect. 6. {f} R. Alphes, par. 1. Succah, c. 2. fol. 374. 2. 375. 1.

Leviticus 23:43

Ver. 43. That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths,.... Which by the providence of God the Israelites were obliged to make for themselves to dwell in:

when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; for the very first place they came to, when they departed from thence, was called Succoth, from the booths they there built:

I [am] the Lord your God; who brought them out of Egypt, made them to dwell in booths in the wilderness, and enjoined them the observance of the feast of tabernacles in memory of it, in which he expected to be obeyed.

Leviticus 23:44

Ver. 44. And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord.

The several feasts before recited, the order of them, the manner of observing them, and the time.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 24

This chapter treats of the oil for the lamps, and the ordering of them, Le 24:1; of the making of the shewbread cakes, and the setting of them on the table, Le 24:5; and an Israelite having blasphemed the name of the Lord, and inquiry being made what should be done to him, he, and so any other person guilty of the same, is ordered to be stoned to death, Le 24:10; on occasion of which several laws are repeated concerning killing a man or a beast, or doing injury to any man, Le 24:17.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... After he had delivered to him the laws concerning the purity of the priests, and the perfection of the sacrifices they were to offer, and concerning the feasts the people were to keep, he spoke to Moses of some other things which concerned both people and priests:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 24:2

Ver. 2. Command the children of Israel,.... Moses was the chief magistrate under God, and being clothed with authority from him, had power to command the children of Israel to do what the Lord required of them:

that they bring unto thee pure oil olive, beaten, for the light; this was to be at the public expense, and it belonged to the community to supply the priests with oil for the light of the candlestick in the temple, Ex 25:6; and this oil was not to be any sort of oil, as train oil, or oil of nuts, almonds, &c. but oil of olives, and not any sort of that, but the purest, which was the first that was taken from them; it seems there were three sorts, the first of which was pure, and this beaten in a mortar, and not ground in a mill; See Gill on "Ex 27:20";

to cause the lamps to burn continually; the lamps in the golden candlestick, which were seven, Ex 25:37; or "the lamp", in the singular number, as it is in the original text; the western lamp, which is said to be always kept lighted, from which the rest were lighted when out; though the oil was undoubtedly for the supply of the lamps, that they might burn always, night and day; or from night tonight, as Jarchi; and both on sabbath days and working days, as the Targum of Jonathan.

Leviticus 24:3

Ver. 3. Without the vail of the testimony,.... That is, on the outside of the vail which divided between the holy and holy of holies, and which was before the ark in which the testimony or law was:

in the tabernacle of the congregation; which the apostle calls the first, namely, the holy place in which the candlestick, with its lamps, stood, **Heb 9:2**;

shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning, before the Lord continually, that is, the lamp or lamps, or candlestick, in which they were, or the light of them; his business was, and so every priest's that succeeded him, to supply the lamps with oil, to dress, him, and snuff them, that they might burn clear, and burn always, and that before the Lord, in the presence of the Lord:

[it shall be] a statute for ever in your generations; until the Messiah should come, the true light, which would put out all such typical ones, and by his Gospel spread light in all his churches throughout the world; See Gill on "Ex 27:20" and
See Gill on "Ex 27:21".

Leviticus 24:4

Ver. 4. He shall order the lamps on the pure candlestick,.... So called, as Jarchi suggests, for these two reasons, partly because it was made of pure gold, and partly because it was to be kept pure and clean, and free from ashes, by the priest; see Ex 25:31;

before the Lord continually; which both respects the situation of the candlestick, and the work about it, which Aaron was to do continually before and in the presence of the Lord. Jarchi thinks this ordering respects the measure of oil for every night, which he says, according to the wise men, was half a log for every lamp, which was about a quarter of a pint of oil.

Leviticus 24:5

Ver. 5. And thou shalt take fine flour,.... Of wheat, and the finest of it:

and bake twelve cakes thereof; answerable to the twelve tribes, as the Targum of Jonathan, which were typical of the spiritual Israel of God;

two tenth deals shall be in one cake; that is, two tenth parts of an ephah, which were two omers, one of which was as much as a man could eat in one day of the manna: so that one of these cakes was as much as two men could eat of bread in one day; each cake was ten hands' breadth long, five broad, and seven fingers its horns, or was so high {g}.

{g} Menachot, c. 11. sect. 4.

Leviticus 24:6

Ver. 6. And thou shalt set them in two rows,.... The twelve cakes:

six on a row; not by the side of each other, but six upon one another:

upon the pure table; the shewbread table, so called because overlaid with pure gold, and kept clean and bright, Ex 25:24;

before the Lord; for this stood in the holy place, in the same place as the candlestick did, which has the same position, Le 24:4; of the mystical and typical sense of these cakes, See Gill on "Ex 25:30".

Leviticus 24:7

Ver. 7. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon [each] row,.... Two cups of frankincense, in each of which was an handful of it, and which were set by each row of the cakes, as Jarchi observes:

that it may be on the bread for a memorial; or "for the bread", instead of it, for a memorial of it; that being to be eaten by the priests, and this to be burned on the altar to the Lord, as follows:

[even] an offering made by fire unto the Lord; not the bread that was after a time taken away, and eaten by the priests, but the frankincense.

Leviticus 24:8

Ver. 8. Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the Lord continually,.... That is, the priest or priests then ministering, who should bring new cakes and place them in the above order, having removed the old ones, which was done in this manner; four priests went in, two had in their hands the two rows (of bread), and two had in their hands two cups (of frankincense); four went before these, two to take away the two rows (of the old bread), and two to take away the two cups (of frankincense); and they that carried in stood in the north, and their faces to the south and they that brought out stood in the south, and their faces to the north; these drew away (the old bread) and they put them (the new), and the hand of the one was over against the hand of the other, as it is said, "before me continually",
Ex 25:30 {h}; that is, at the same time the hands of the one were employed in taking away, the hands of the other were employed in setting on; so that there was always bread upon the table:

[being taken] from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant; God requiring it of them, and they agreeing to give it, as they did, either in meal or in money; for this was at the expense of the community.

{h} Menachot, c. 11. sect. 7.

Leviticus 24:9

Ver. 9. And it shall be Aaron's and his sons',.... The twelve cakes of the old bread, when taken off the shewbread table; these were divided between the courses of the priests that carried in and brought out; and the high priest had half from each course, so that the half was for Aaron or the high priest, and the other half for his sons, or the priests that ministered {i}:

and they shall eat it in the holy place; in the tabernacle or some court of it, and not in their own houses: it is said the shewbread was not eaten sooner than the ninth day, nor after the eleventh; how? it was baked on the evening of the sabbath, and it was eaten on the sabbath, the ninth day; if a feast day happened to be on the eve of the sabbath, it was eaten on the tenth; if the two feast days of the beginning of the year so fell, it was eaten on the eleventh day {k}: the reason why it was only eaten in the holy place is,

for it [is] most holy unto him; it was one of the most holy things, which were only to be eaten by males, and in the sanctuary not as the light holy things, which were eaten in the houses and families of the priests, and by their wives and daughters also:

of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, by a perpetual statute; not that the bread was a burnt offering, but the frankincense upon it, or by it, and so having a connection with it, the whole is said to be an offering by fire: the one was given to the priests of the Lord to eat, and the other was consumed on the altar; and both were an offering to the Lord; and the frankincense being offered by fire unto the Lord, instead of the bread it was reckoned as if that was so offered.

{i} Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin, c. 4. sect. 12, 14. {k} Menachot, c. 11. sect. 9.

Leviticus 24:10

Ver. 10. And the son of an Israelitish woman,.... Whose name, and the name of his mother, are afterwards given;

whose father [was] an Egyptian; Jarchi says, this is the Egyptian whom Moses slew, **Ex 2:12**; and so others in Abendana:

went out among the children of Israel; went out of Egypt with them, according to the Targum of Jonathan, and so was one of the mixed multitude, which came from thence with them, which is not improbable; some say he went out of Moses's court of judicature; but it is more likely that the meaning is, he went out of his tent, so Aben Ezra, into the midst of the camp, to claim his rank and place among the people of Israel; though the Jewish writers, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, take this phrase, "among the children of Israel", to signify that he was a proselyte, and became a Jew, or had embraced the Jewish religion in all respects:

and this son of the Israelitish [woman] and a man of Israel strove together in the camp; which man of Israel, according to the Targum of Jonathan, was of the tribe of Dan, as was the mother of the man he strove with; what they strove about is not easy to say; Aben Ezra suggests, because this stands connected with the above laws, as if this man had said some things in a reviling way about the shewbread, the oil, and the offerings, and so a dispute arose between them, concerning them; but Jarchi says, it was about the business of the camp, and it is more commonly received that this man claimed a place to fix his tent on in the tribe of Dan, in right of his mother; but the other urged, that the order of fixing tents was according to the genealogies, and with the ensigns of their father's house, and therefore he had no right to rank with them, his father being an Egyptian, and perhaps from words they came to blows, see Ex 21:22; though the Jewish writers understand it of their contending, at least of its issuing in a judiciary way, before a court of judicature: so it is said, when Israel dwelt in the wilderness, he (the son of the Egyptian) sought to spread his tent in the midst of the tribe of Dan, and they would not suffer it, because the ranks of the children of Israel were, every man according to his rank, with the ensigns according to the genealogy of their fathers; and they began and contended in the camp, wherefore they went into the court of judicature, the son of the woman of the daughter of Israel, and the man, a son of Israel, who was of the tribe of Dan {l}.

{l} Targum Jon. in loc.

Leviticus 24:11

Ver. 11. And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name [of the Lord], and cursed,.... As they were striving together, or when the trial was over, he being cast, fell into outrageous blasphemies against God, who made such laws for the civil polity of Israel, and cursed the judges that had given sentence against him; so the Targum of Jonathan; and so the Jews generally understand by the "name" blasphemed, the name Jehovah, which he spake out plainly, and which, they say, is ineffable, and ought not to be pronounced but by the high priest in the sanctuary; but this man expressed it in its proper sound, and made use of it to curse the man that strove with him, or the judge that judged him; so it is said in the Misnah {d},

"a blasphemer is not guilty until he expresses the name;"

but it undoubtedly means blaspheming God himself, by whatsoever name:

and they brought him unto Moses; having heard his blasphemy, to charge him with it before him, or in order to have due punishment inflicted on him: as to the matter of contest between him and the Israelite, that had been decided in a lesser court of judicature, such an one as had been set up by the advice of Jethro; but though there was full proof of his blasphemy and cursing, which, perhaps, were expressed in open court; they might not know what punishment to inflict upon him for so horrid a crime, of which, perhaps, they had never had an instance before, and therefore sent him to Moses, to whom the hearing and decision of weighty matters belonged; see Ex 18:22;

and his mother's name [was] Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan; which is observed, as it should seem, to show in what tribe this affair happened, and what the quarrel was first about, even a place and rank in this tribe.

{d} Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 5.

Leviticus 24:12

Ver. 12. And they put him in ward,.... In some prison, a place known in the camp, as Aben Ezra observes:

that the mind of the Lord might be shewed them; for, though this was a breach of the third command, in which God declares he would not hold such an one guiltless, Ex 20:7; yet no particular punishment being expressed, it was not a clear case whether the Lord would punish for it himself, by an immediate stroke of his hand, or whether by the civil magistrate; and if by the latter, in what manner; for though it might be concluded, without any hesitation, that he was worthy of death, since cursing father or mother was death, Ex 21:17; and much more blaspheming God, yet what death to put him to they might be at a loss about; or if that was understood of stoning, they might think this deserved a sorer punishment, and therefore consulted God about it.

Leviticus 24:13

Ver. 13. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... From off the mercy seat in the holy of holies, where he had promised to meet him and commune with him about anything he should inquire of him, as he did at this time:

saying; as follows.

Leviticus 24:14

Ver. 14. Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp,.... To show that he had no part nor lot in Israel, and that he was unworthy to be a member of their civil community, or of their church state; and, besides, the place of stoning, or where malefactors suffered any kind of death, was without the camp, as afterwards without the city, see
Heb 13:12;

let all that heard [him] lay their hands upon his head; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"and the judges;"

so Jarchi remarks, that they that "heard him" are the witnesses, and the word "all" comprehends the judges: Maimonides says {e} the same, and observes that hands were laid on no malefactor but the blasphemer; and this was done to show that the one had bore a faithful testimony, and the other had pronounced a righteous sentence on him; and that he had brought this guilt and punishment upon himself by his sin; wherefore it was usual for them to say, as the same writers observe,

"thy blood be upon thine own head, and we not punished for thy death, which thou hast been the cause of to thyself:"

and let all the congregation stone him; which Aben Ezra interprets of the great men of Israel; nor can it be thought that every individual of the people could cast a stone at him, but it was to be done by some of them, in the presence of them all, or as many as could conveniently get together to behold it; and this was done to show their detestation of the sin, and to deter from the commission of it: it was the same kind of punishment that was ordered to be inflicted on him that cursed his father or mother, Le 20:9; God, the God of mercy, requiring no sorer punishment, though it deterred a greater, for such a sin against himself, than against a common parent.

{e} Hilchot Obede Cochabim, c. 2. sect. 10.

Leviticus 24:15

Ver. 15. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel,.... On this occasion, and gave them some laws and rules concerning the above affair, and other things:

saying, whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin; which some understand of anyone of another nation, that cursed the God he used to serve in his own country; but it can hardly be thought that a law should be made by the one only living and true God, to preserve the honour and credit of false gods, when he is so jealous of his own glory; and those are spoken of in Scripture with the greatest contempt, as dunghill deities, and are actually cursed, Jer 10:11; but they are rather to be interpreted of judges and all civil magistrates, who, as Aben Ezra observes, are sometimes called Elohim or gods, Ps 82:1; and the rather, as it is probable this man had cursed his judges, and so this is a distinct sin from what follows; and not only the manner of expressing it, but the punishment of it, seem to be different; for the phrase, "to bear his sin", is used where the punishment is not expressly declared, and is by Jarchi and others interpreted of cutting off from his people, but in what way is not certain; whereas the punishment of a blasphemer of God is before and after clearly expressed; see Le 20:19.

Leviticus 24:16

Ver. 16. And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord,.... Or, "but he that blasphemeth", &c. from whence the Jews gather, that the name Jehovah must be expressed, or it is no blasphemy; so Jarchi; but it is not bare using or expressing the word Jehovah that is blasphemy, but speaking ill and contemptuously of God, with respect to any of his names, titles, and epithets, or of any of his perfections, ways, and works:

he shall surely be put to death; no mercy shall be shown him, no reprieve or pardon granted him: hence it is said {f}, there is no atonement for it, by repentance, or chastisements, or the day of atonement: so blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not forgiven, neither in this world nor in that which is to come, Mt 12:31;

[and] all the congregation shall certainly stone him; shall have no pity on him, nor spare him, but stone him till he dies:

as well the stranger as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name [of the Lord], shall be put to death; even a proselyte of the gate, a Gentile that sojourned among them, uncircumcised, and did not profess the Jewish religion, as well as a proselyte of righteousness, and an Israelite born; yet, if he blasphemed the God of Israel, was to lose his life without any mercy shown him.

{f} R. Alphes, par. 1. Yoma, c. 1. fol. 261. 1.

Leviticus 24:17

Ver. 17. And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death. With the sword, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; which restrains it to any man of the children of Israel, but wrongly; for the original law respects any man whatever, **Ge 9:6**; and so it does here;
See Gill on "Ex 21:12".

Leviticus 24:18

Ver. 18. And he that killeth a beast shall make it good,.... Pay for it, give the value of it, or another as good as that instead of it, as follows:

beast for beast; or "soul for soul"; life for life, that is, a living one for that the life of which is taken away, and one every way as good as that.

Leviticus 24:19

Ver. 19. And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour,.... Does him any hurt or mischief, causes any mutilation or deformity in him by striking him:

as he hath done, so shall it be done unto him: not that a like damage or hurt should be done to him, but that he should make satisfaction for it in a pecuniary way; pay for the cure of him, and for loss of time, and in consideration of the pain he has endured, and the shame or disgrace brought on him by the deformity or mutilation, or for whatever loss he may sustain thereby; See Gill on "Ex 21:18" and
See Gill on "Ex 21:19".

Leviticus 24:20

Ver. 20. Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth,.... Which is not to be taken strictly or literally, but for the price or value of those, which is to be given in a pecuniary way; See Gill on "Ex 21:24",
See Gill on "Ex 21:25";

as he hath caused a blemish in a man, shall it be done to him; unless he gives satisfaction, and pays a valuable consideration for it.

Leviticus 24:21

Ver. 21. And he that killeth a beast, he shall restore it,.... The same as in Le 24:18, which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and that it might be observed, though Jarchi takes it to be a different law; before, he says, it speaks of him that kills a beast, here of him that makes any wound or bruise in it, which he must make good; and it must be allowed that the manner of expression is different; there it is, he that smites the soul of a beast so that it dies, here only he that smites a beast, though it dies not, yet having some damage done it, satisfaction must be made:

and he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death; or he that smites a man, though he does not kill him, as Jarchi observes, only makes a wound or bruise in him, because it is not said, the soul of a man, as before; but such damages did not require death, but satisfaction in another way, as in Le 24:19.

Leviticus 24:22

Ver. 22. Ye shall have one manner of law,.... Respecting the above things, blaspheming of the name of God, taking away the life of man, or of any beast, and of doing damage to either:

as well for the stranger as for one of your own country; the above laws were binding upon proselytes as well as Israelites, and proselytes of the gate as well as proselytes of righteousness, though the Jews commonly restrain it to the latter:

for I [am] the Lord your God; whose name is holy and reverend, and ought not to be blasphemed; and who is the Maker and preserver of man and beast, and made these laws respecting them, and expected they should be obeyed, especially by the children of Israel, whose covenant God and Father he was, and they under the greatest obligation to serve and obey him.

Leviticus 24:23

Ver. 23. And Moses spake unto the children of Israel,.... As the Lord had commanded him:

that they should bring forth him that had cursed out of the camp, and stone him with stones; which were the instructions God had given to Moses upon inquiring his mind and will about this matter:

and the children of Israel did as the Lord commanded Moses; they took the blasphemer, and led him out of the camp, put their hands on him, and stoned him with stones till he died.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 25:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 25

In this chapter the Israelites are directed, when come into the land of Canaan, to observe every seventh year as a sabbatical year, in which there was to be no tillage of the land, and yet there would be a sufficiency for man and beast, Le 25:1; and every fiftieth year as a year of jubilee, in which also there was to be no tillage of the land, and every man was to return to his possession or estate, which had been sold to another any time before this, Le 25:8; and a promise of safety and plenty in the seventh year is made to encourage the observance of it, Le 25:18; and several laws and rules are delivered out concerning the sale of lands, the redemption of them, and their return to their original owner in the year of jubilee,
Le 25:23; and the sale of houses, and the redemption of them, and the difference between those in walled cities and those in villages, with respect thereunto, Le 25:29; and also concerning the houses of the cities of the Levites, and the fields of the suburbs of them, Le 25:32; to which are added some instructions about relieving decayed, persons, and lending and giving to them, without taking usury of them, Le 25:34; and other laws concerning the release of such Israelites as had sold themselves for servants to the Israelites,

in the year of jubilee, since none but Heathens were to be bondmen and bondmaids for ever, Le 25:39; and of such who were sold to proselytes, Le 25:47.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai,.... Not when Moses was with the Lord on that mount forty days, but after he came down from thence, even after the tabernacle was set up, while the children of Israel where encamped about that mountain, and before they took their journey from thence; for they continued some time in the wilderness of Sinai, and here it was the Lord spoke to Moses; for the words may be rendered "by" or "near Mount Sinai" {g}; and so Josephus {h} says, the following laws were delivered to Moses, when Israel was encamped under Mount Sinai:

saying; as follows.

{g} rhb "apud seu juxta montem", Piscator; so Ainsworth, Patrick, &c. {h} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 12. sect. 3.

Leviticus 25:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,.... What follows, being what the whole body of the people would be under obligation to observe, and therefore must be delivered to them all, at least to the heads and elders of the people, and by them to the rest:

when ye come into the land which I give you; the land of Canaan, and until they came thither, the following law concerning the sabbatical year could not take place; and as Maimonides {i} says, it was only used in the land of Israel, and no where else, according to this text, and that both before and after the temple was built:

then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord; a rest from tillage, as it is afterwards explained; and this being according to the will of God, when observed would be to his honour and glory, and show that he was the proprietor of the land; and that the Israelites held it under him by this tenure, that every seventh year they should let it rest, which would be for the benefit of the land, and preserve it from being impoverished by continual usage and hereby they might learn to depend on the providence of God, and to observe that all increase is from him; and to consider the straits and difficulties the poor live in continually, as they in this seventh year; and by this means they would be at leisure to have an opportunity of reading the law, as they did at this time, De 31:10; and of meditating upon it, and of giving themselves up to religious exercises, as well as by it they might be led to the typical use of to look for and expect that sabbatism or rest, which remains for the people of God. And now this law did not take place as soon as they came into the land, for it was to be sown six years, and then was the year of rest; and indeed not till after Joshua had subdued the whole land, which was seven years a doing; nor till they were quite settled, and it was divided among them, and every man had his field and vineyard apart, which this law supposes; wherefore the Jewish writers {k} say, they were not bound to tithes until the fourteenth year, and from thence they began to reckon the sabbatical year; and the twenty first year they made a sabbatical year, and the sixty fourth a jubilee, which they make to be the first that were kept: and they reckoned this year to commence, not on the first of Nisan or March, which was the beginning of the year for ecclesiastical things, but on the first of Tisri or September, when the harvest and all the fruits of the earth were gathered in; and when on other years they used to proceed to sowing the next month, but were forbid on this; and so it is said in the Misnah {l}, the first of Tisri is the beginning of the year for the sabbatical and jubilee years.

{i} Hilchot Shemitah Vejobel, c. 4. sect. 25. {k} Torat Cohenim apud Yalkut, par. 1. fol. 191. 1. Maimon. ut supra, (Hilchot Tamidin) c. 10. sect. 2. {l} Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 1.

Leviticus 25:3

Ver. 3. Six years thou shalt sow thy field,.... Under which is comprehended everything relating to agriculture, both before and after sowing, as dunging the land, ploughing and harrowing it, treading the corn, reaping and gathering it in; see Ex 23:10;

and six years thou shall prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; which is not to be restrained to vineyards only, but to be extended to oliveyards, orchards and gardens, and to the planting and cultivating of them, and gathering in the fruits of them.

Leviticus 25:4

Ver. 4. But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land,.... From all tillage of it, from planting and cultivating any sort of trees in it; and even from digging pits, ditches; and caves, as say the Jewish writers {m}: and this was typical of that rest which believers enter into under the Gospel dispensation, and of the rest in the new Jerusalem state, and especially in the ultimate glory; not only from the labours of the body, but of the mind, through sin, Satan, doubts and fears, and through conflicts with various enemies, and when even all spiritual labours and services will be at an end but that of praise:

a sabbath for the Lord; for his honour and glory, to ascertain his property in the land, to show the power of his providence, and display his goodness in his care of all creatures, without any means used by them:

thou shalt neither sow thy field nor prune thy vineyard; under which are comprehended all acts of agriculture, which respect the cultivation of vines, olives, figs, and, according to the Misnah {n}, there were some instruments which it was not lawful to sell to an artificer in the seventh year, such as a plough, with all belonging to it, a yoke, a fan, a spade, but he may sell him a scythe, or a sickle, or a cart, and all its instruments; and which the commentators {o} interpret of one that is suspected of working in that year; the house of Shammai say, an heifer that ploughed might not be sold that year.

{m} Torat Cohenim apud Yalkut, ut supra. (par. 1. fol. 191. 1.) {n} Sheviith, c. 5. sect. 6. {o} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Leviticus 25:5

Ver. 5. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap,.... That which sprung up of itself from grains of corn, shed in the harvest of the preceding year, without any ploughing or sowing; he might reap it, but not as at other times, the whole of it, and gather it as his own property, but only somewhat of it in common with others for his, present use:

neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed; which was on this year forbid to be dressed; the grapes of which he might gather in common with others, but not as in other years, all of them, and as peculiarly his own: the words may be rendered, "the grapes of thy separations" {p}; either such as in other years he used to separate for himself, and forbid others gathering them, but now made them common; or which he did not labour in the cultivation of, but abstained from it:

[for] it is a year of rest unto the land; which is repeated, that it may be observed.

{p} Kryzn ybne "uvas tuarum separationum", Pagninus, Montanus; so Drusius & Ainsworth.

Leviticus 25:6

Ver. 6. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you,...., That is, that which grew up of itself but of the land, or on trees, vines, olives, &c. undressed, should be the meat or food on which they should live that year: and this comprehends everything that is fit for food, and also for drink, and for anointing, and even for the lighting of lamps, as in the Misnah {q}:

for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid; the owner of the fields and vineyards, he and his family, wife, children, and servants, might eat of the fruits of them in common with others; for whereas it is elsewhere said, Ex 23:11, "that the poor of thy people may eat", this is observed here, lest anyone should think the rich are forbid eating them, as Jarchi remarks:

and for thy hired servant, and for the stranger that sojourneth with thee: which the same writer interprets of Gentiles; the food of this year was common to masters and servants, to rich and poor, to Israelites and Gentiles; all had an equal right unto, and share therein; which might be an emblem of the first times of the Gospel, in which all things were had in common, **Ac 4:32**, and typical of the communion of saints in things spiritual; in salvation by Jesus Christ, common to Jews and Gentiles, high and low, bond and free; in the free and full forgiveness of sins by his blood; and in justification by his righteousness, which is unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference; in the participation of faith, and other graces, which are alike precious, and in the enjoyment of promises, privileges, and ordinances, and even of eternal life itself.

{q} Sheviith, c. 8. sect. 2.

Leviticus 25:7

Ver. 7. And for thy cattle, and for the beasts that [are] in thy land,.... The former signifies tame cattle, such as were kept at home, or in fields, or were used in service, and the latter the wild beasts of the field:

shall all the increase thereof be meat; for the one, and for the other; Jarchi remarks, that all the time a wild beast eats of the increase of the field, the cattle may be fed at home; but when it ceaseth to the wild beast of the field, then it ceaseth to the cattle at home; nay, the Jews are so strict in this matter, that they say that when there is no food for the beasts in the field, men are obliged to bring out what they have in their houses {r}, see Isa 11:6.

{r} Maimon. Hilchot Shemitah Vejobel, c. 7. sect. 1.

Leviticus 25:8

Ver. 8. And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee,.... Or weeks of years; and there being seven days in a week, and a day being put for a year, seven weeks of years made forty nine years; the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and Jarchi, interpret it seven "shemittas", or sabbatical years; and a sabbatical year being every seventh year, made the same number;

seven times seven years: or forty nine years, as follows;

and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be forty and nine years; just such a space of years there was between each jubilee, which, as afterwards said, was the fiftieth year; so as there were a seventh day sabbath, and a fiftieth day sabbath, the day of Pentecost, so there were a seventh year sabbath, or sabbatical year, and a fiftieth year sabbath.

Leviticus 25:9

Ver. 9. Then shall thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound,.... At the end of forty nine years, or at the beginning of the fiftieth; or "the trumpet of a loud sound"; for here the word "jubilee" is not, which, according to some, was so called from the peculiar sound of the trumpet on this day, different from all others; though others, as Ben Melech, think, and the Jews commonly, that it had its name from the trumpet itself, which they suppose was made of a ram's horn, "jobel", in the Arabic language, signifying a ram; but the former reason is best; though perhaps it is best of all to derive it from lybwh, "to bring back, restore, return", because at this time men were returned to their liberty, estates, and families, as hereafter expressed:

on the tenth [day] of the seventh month; the month Tisri or September, the first day of which was the beginning of the year for "jubilees" {s}; for the computation of the jubilee year was made from the first day of the month, though the trumpet was not blown, and the rights of the year did not begin till the tenth, as Maimonides {t} observes:

in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land; which day of atonement was on the tenth day of the said month, and a very proper time it was to sound the trumpet, that after they had been afflicting themselves, then to have joy and comfort; and when atonement was made for all their sins, then to hear the joyful sound; and when it might be presumed they were in a good disposition to release their servants, and restore the poor to their possessions, when they themselves were favoured with the forgiveness of all their sins. This sounding was made throughout all the land of Israel; throughout all the highways, as Aben Ezra, that all might know the year of jubilee was come; and this was done by the order of the sanhedrim, as Maimonides {u} says, and who, also observes, that from the beginning of the year, to the day of atonement, servants were not released to their own houses, but did not serve their masters, nor were fields returned to their owners; but servants ate, and drank, and rejoiced, and wore garlands on their heads; and when the day of atonement came, the sanhedrim blew the trumpet, and the servants were dismissed to their houses, and fields returned to their owners.

{s} Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 1. {t} In Misn. ib. {u} Hilchot Shemitah Vejobel, c. 10. sect. 10, 14.

Leviticus 25:10

Ver. 10. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year,.... The year following the seven sabbaths of years, or forty nine years; and which they were to sanctify by separating it from all others, and devoting it to the uses it was to be put to, and the services done on it, and by abstaining from the tillage of the land, sowing or reaping, and from the cultivation of vines, olives, &c.

and proclaim liberty throughout [all] the land; to servants, both to those whose ears were bored, and were to serve for ever, even unto the year of jubilee, and then be released; and to those whose six years were not ended, from the time that they were bought; for the jubilee year put an end to their servitude, let the time they had served be what it would; for this year was a general release of servants, excepting bondmen and bondmaids, who were never discharged; hence called the "year of liberty", Eze 46:17; and Josephus {w} says, the word "jobel" or "jubilee" signifies "liberty":

unto all the inhabitants thereof; that were in servitude or poverty, excepting the above mentioned; from hence the Jews gather, than when the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, went into captivity, the jubilees ceased {x}, since all the inhabitants were not then in it; but that is a mistake, for the jubilees were continued unto the coming of the Messiah, and perhaps never omitted but once, in the time of the Babylonish captivity:

it shall be a jubilee unto you; to the Israelites, and to them only, as Aben Ezra observes; it was a time of joy and gladness to them, especially to servants, who were now free, and to the poor, who enjoyed their estates again:

and ye shall return every man unto his possession; which had been sold or mortgaged to another, but now reverted to its original owner:

and ye shall return every man unto his family; who through poverty had sold himself for a servant, and had lived in another family. The general design of this law was to preserve the rights of freeborn Israelites, as to person and property, to prevent perpetual servitude, and perpetual alienation of their estates; to continue families and estates as they were originally, that some might not become too rich, and others too poor; nor be blended, but the tribes and families might be kept distinct until the coming of the Messiah, to whom the jubilee had a particular respect, and in whom it ceased. The liberty proclaimed on this day was typical of that liberty from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law, which Christ is the author of, and is proclaimed by him in the Gospel, **Ga 5:1**; a liberty of grace and glory, or the glorious liberty of the children of God: returning to possessions and inheritances may be an emblem of the enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance by the saints; though man by sin lost an earthly paradise, and came short of the glory of God, yet through Christ his people are restored to a better inheritance, an incorruptible one; to which they are begotten by his Spirit, have a right to it through his righteousness, and a meetness for it by his grace, and of which the Holy Spirit is the earnest and pledge, and into which Christ himself will introduce them. And the returning of them to their families may signify the return of God's elect through Christ to the family that is named of him; these were secretly of the family of God from all eternity, being taken into it in the covenant of grace, as well as predestinated to the adoption of children: but by the fall, and through a state of nature by it, they became children of wrath, even as others; yet through redemption by Christ, and faith in him, they receive the adoption of children, and openly appear to be of the family of God, **2Co 6:18**; and all this is proclaimed by the sound of the Gospel trumpet, which being a sound of liberty, peace, pardon, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life by Christ, is a joyful one, Ps 89:15; where the allusion seems to be to the jubilee trumpet.

{w} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 12. sect. 3. {x} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Eracin, c. 8. sect. 1.

Leviticus 25:11

Ver. 11. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you,.... Which, clearly shows, that not the forty ninth year was the year of jubilee, as many learned men have asserted, chiefly induced by this reason, because two years would come together in which were no sowing reaping; but that God, that could cause the earth to forth fruit for three years, Le 25:21; could make it bring forth enough for four years; and in order to make their sentiment agree with this passage, they are obliged to make the foregoing jubilee one of the fifty, and begin their account from thence; but this could not be done in the first account of the jubilee; of the name, See Gill on "Le 25:9";

ye shall not sow; in the year of jubilee, which shows also that this could not be the forty ninth year, which of course being a sabbatical year, there would be no sowing, reaping, &c. and so this law or instruction would be quite needless:

neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the [grapes] in it of thy vine undressed; as in the sabbatical year,
See Gill on "Le 25:5"; the same with respect to these things being to be observed in the year of jubilee, as in that; and so Jarchi observes that the same that is said of the sabbatical year is said of the jubilee, two holy years being found next to one another, the forty ninth year the sabbatical year, and the fiftieth year the jubilee.

Leviticus 25:12

Ver. 12. For it is the jubilee, it shall be holy,.... Men being restored to their liberty, possessions, and families, it must be matter of joy to them, and therefore this year was to be separated from all others, and devoted to the ends and uses before mentioned; and men were to live upon the spontaneous productions of the earth, without any tillage of land, or cultivation of vines, &c.

ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field; they were not to reap corn, and gather grapes and olives, and bring them into their barns and storehouses, as in other years; but were to go out every day into their fields, and gather for present use, and all were common to all sorts of men, and to cattle, as in the sabbatical year;
See Gill on "Le 25:7".

Leviticus 25:13

Ver. 13. In the year of this jubilee,.... In the beginning of it, as Aben Ezra, though not on the first day of Tisri, but the tenth day, the day of atonement, when the trumpet was blown:

ye shall return every man unto his possession; which is repeated from Le 25:10; the reason of which, the Jews say, is to include gifts, and which, according to them, are like sales, and returned in the year of "jubilee"; that is, if a man gave his estate in possession to another, he returned to it, in the year of jubilee, equally as if he had sold it; and therefore they observe the same phrase is twice used by Moses, to include gifts {y}: but perhaps the truer reason is, because this was a special business done at this time, and of great importance; the word "return" being so often used, may serve to confirm the sense of the word "jubilee", given previously, See Gill on "Le 25:9".

{y} Misn. Becorot, c. 8. sect. 10. & Bartenora in ib.

Leviticus 25:14

Ver. 14. And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour,.... Any estate or possession, house or land, at any time before the year of jubilee:

or buyest [ought] of thy neighbour's hand; of movable goods, as the Targum of Jonathan interprets it; and so other Jewish writers {z} restrain this to goods which are bought by hand, and delivered from hand to hand; and so they think that fields, and servants, which they say are like to fields, are excluded hereby; but it seems to refer to anything saleable, and chiefly to fields and vineyards, as the following verses show; wherefore Diodorus Siculus, as quoted by

Grotius, must be mistaken, when he says, it was not counted lawful by the Jews to sell their inheritance, unless he means for ever, so indeed they could not:

ye shall not oppress one another; the buyer giving too little, or the seller requiring too much; no advantage was to be taken, either of the necessity of the one, or the ignorance of the other, but a fair bargain was to be made, and the full value given, neither too much nor too little. The Jews by "neighbour" understand an Israelite, and not a Gentile {a}; not that there might be no buying and selling at all between Jews and Gentiles, or that the former might oppress and defraud the latter, though not an Israelite; but lands and inheritances might not be sold at all to Gentiles, only to Israelites.

{z} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Bava Metziah, c. 4. sect. 9. {a} Jarchi in loc.

Leviticus 25:15

Ver. 15. According to the number of years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbour,.... That is, reckoning how many years had past since the last jubilee, and how many there were to come to the next, and so give as many years' purchase as were yet to come:

[and] according to the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee; only care was to be taken, that as many years as were sabbatical ones, which were not years of fruit, should be deducted out of the account by the seller; since these were years the buyer could have no profit by the estate, and therefore it was not reasonable that such years should be reckoned into the purchase; and hence the Jewish writers gather, that when a man had sold his field, he could not redeem it in less than two years, because a number of years cannot be less than two, and that if even the buyer agreed to it, it might not be done {b}.

{b} Misn. Eracin, c. 9. sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in. ib.

Leviticus 25:16

Ver. 16. According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof,.... More was to be asked and required, and should be given for an estate, when, for instance, there were thirty years to the year of jubilee, than when there were but twenty;

and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it; if it wanted but five, or six, or ten years unto it, then, in proportion, less was to be insisted upon and given:

for [according] to the number [of the years] of the fruits doth he sell unto thee; which also must be considered, how many years of tillage of land, and cultivation of vineyards, &c. there were in the account, and how many sabbatical years to be deducted; for only according to the number of fruit years was the estate to be valued and sold.

Leviticus 25:17

Ver. 17. Ye shall not therefore oppress one another,.... By over or underrating estates:

but thou shalt fear thy God; and the fear of God being before their eyes, and on their hearts, would preserve both buyer and seller from doing an ill thing, when it was in the power of either, through the necessity of the one, or the ignorance of the other, see **Ne 5:15**:

for I [am] the Lord your God; omniscient, and knows all that is done in the most private and artful manner; and omnipotent and able to punish both, which of them either should oppress or defraud, see **1Th 4:6**.

Leviticus 25:18

Ver. 18. Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them,.... These and all others he enjoined; by which tenure, even obedience to all his commands, moral, ritual, and judicial, they were to hold the land of Canaan, and their possessions in it, which is intended in the next clause:

and ye shall dwell in the land in safety; without any fear of enemies, or of the neighbouring nations about them seizing upon them, and distressing them; and Jarchi observes, that it was for transgressing the sabbatical year that Israel was carried captive, which he thinks is intimated in 2Ch 36:21; and that the seventy years' captivity in Babylon were for the seventy sabbatical years that had been neglected.

Leviticus 25:19

Ver. 19. And the land shall yield her fruit,.... That is, continually, and even in the seventh year, the sabbath of rest; for the land, though not manured, ploughed, and sowed, nor the vines, olives, and fig trees pruned, yet shall yield fruit as in other years, the Israelites observing the statutes and judgments of God:

and ye shall eat your fill; feel no want of provisions, but have fulness of everything as at other times, and never make a scanty meal, having sufficiency and plenty of all things:

and dwell therein in safety; not fearing enemies, nor being disturbed by them, nor carried captive.

Leviticus 25:20

Ver. 20. And ye shall say, what shall ye eat the seventh year?.... Such as are of little faith, disbelieve the promise, and distrust the providence of God, and take thought for tomorrow, and indulge an anxiety of mind how they shall be provided with food in the sabbatical year ordered to be observed, in which there were to be no tillage of land, nor pruning of trees:

behold, we shall not sow; that being forbidden:

nor gather in our increase; neither the barley, nor the wheat, nor the grapes, nor olives, nor figs, into their houses and barns, to lay up for stores, as in other years; though they might go out and gather in for present use in common with others: now if any should put the above question, as it was very likely some would, in such a view of things, the answer to it follows.

Leviticus 25:21

Ver. 21. Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year,.... Upon their fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, and make them exceeding fruitful, more than in other years; all fruitfulness at any time depends upon the blessing of God, and follows upon it, but is more visible and observable when there is an exceeding great plenty:

and it shall bring forth fruit for three years; and thus God blessed the sixth year with such a plentiful increase as was sufficient for time to come, until a new crop was gathered in; as he had blessed the sixth day with a double portion of manna, for the supply of the seventh.

Leviticus 25:22

Ver. 22. And ye shall sow the eighth year,.... Sow the land in the eighth year, and likewise dress their vines, olives, &c.

and eat [yet] of the old fruit; even in the eighth year, of the old fruit of the sixth year, as the Targum of Jonathan adds:

until the ninth year; that is, as Jarchi explains it, until the feast of tabernacles of the ninth, which was the time that the increase of the eighth came into the house; for all summer it was in the field, and in Tisri or September was the time of gathering it into the house; and sometimes it was necessary to provide for four years on the sixth, which was before the sabbatical year, the seventh, for they ceased from tilling the ground two years running, the seventh and the jubilee year; but this Scripture is said concerning all the rest of the sabbatical years: these encouraging promises, one would have thought, would have been placed more naturally after the account of the sabbatical year that followed, Le 25:7; but the reason of their being inserted here seems to be, because in the year of jubilee they were neither to sow nor reap, nor gather in the grapes of the undressed vine, as in the sabbatical year, Le 25:11; wherefore those things are said for encouragement at the one time as at the other; since it might easily be concluded, that he that could provide for them every sixth year for three years to come, could once in fifty years provide for four:

until her fruits come in, ye shall eat [of] the old [store]; some of which came in in March, as barley, others in May, as the wheat, and others in August and September, as the grapes, olives, &c. which was the time of ingathering several fruits of the earth, and of finishing the whole.

Leviticus 25:23

Ver. 23. The land shall not be sold for ever,.... That is, the land of Israel; the meaning is, any part of it, for that the whole might be sold or disposed of at once is not to be supposed, but anyone part of it, which was the property of a single man, or belonged to a family; though it might be sold in case of necessity, yet not for ever, so as never to return to the owner, or his heirs; for if it was sold for ever it returned in the year of the jubilee: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render the word "absolutely", simply, properly; a proper absolute sale was not to be made, but a conditional one, or for so many years, or with a view to its reversion in the year of jubilee, and so the agreement to be made according to the number of years, as before directed: the word, as Aben Ezra observes, signifies "cutting off", and the sense is, that no land should be sold entirely, so as that the proprietor or his heirs should be wholly cut off from it, or that the entail of it upon the family should be cut off:

for the land [is] mine; as indeed the whole earth is, but the land of Canaan was peculiarly his, which he had chosen above all other lands for the inheritance of his people; out of which he drove the old inhabitants of it for their sins, and put in his own people to possess it under him; where he himself had his dwelling place, and where he was served and worshipped, and where the Messiah was to be born, and was born, and therefore called Immanuel's land; and which was a figure of the better country, or the heavenly glory and happiness, which is of God's preparing and giving, and will never be alienated from those whose right it is:

for ye [are] strangers and sojourners with me; as the Gentiles that lived among them were strangers and sojourners with them, so they were with the Lord; he was the original proprietor, they were but tenants at will; though it was both an honour and happiness to be with him, under any character, to board, and lodge, and dwell with him; and they might well be content to be reckoned not proprietors but strangers and sojourners, and especially such as had faith and hope in a better inheritance, of which this was only a figure; however, this being their present case, it was a reason good, why they could not for ever dispose of their lands and possessions, any more than a sojourner or inmate can of a house of which he has only a part.

Leviticus 25:24

Ver. 24. And in all the land of your possession,.... Which they should possess in the land of Canaan, whatever part of it any of them should enjoy:

ye shall grant a redemption for the land; that is, whenever any estate in it was sold through necessity, the buyer was obliged to grant a liberty to the seller to redeem it, when it was in his power to do it, or any or his relations, especially after two years; so Jarchi observes, he that sells his possession may redeem it after two years, either he himself or he that is near akin to him, nor can the buyer hinder it; See Gill on "Le 25:15".

Leviticus 25:25

Ver. 25. If thy brother be waxen poor,.... Is brought very low, greatly reduced, and is in mean circumstances; hence Jarchi says, we learn, that no man may sell his field, unless his distress presses him and forces him to it; for, as Maimonides {c} observes, a man might not sell his estate to put money into his purse, or to trade with, or to purchase goods, servants, and cattle, only food:

and hath sold away [some] of his possession; not all of it, as Jarchi remarks; for the way of the earth or custom of the world teaches, that a man should reserve a field (or a part) for himself:

and if any of his kin come to redeem it; come to the buyer and propose to redeem it, by giving what it was sold for, or in proportion to the time he had enjoyed it:

then shall he redeem that which his brother sold; nor was it in the power of the purchaser to hinder him, or at his option whether he would suffer him to redeem it or not: such an one was an emblem of our "goel", our near kinsman and Redeemer the Lord Jesus Christ, who came in our nature into this world to redeem us, and put us into the possession of the heavenly inheritance; nor was it in the power of any to hinder his performance of it, for he is the mighty God, the Lord of Hosts is his name.

{c} Hilchot Shemittah Vejobel, c. 11. sect. 3.

Leviticus 25:26

Ver. 26. And if the man have none to redeem it,.... That is, none of kin that was able or willing to redeem it; otherwise no doubt there were persons in the land able to do it at any time, but none he was in connection with, or from whom he could expect such a favour:

and himself be able to redeem it; or if his hand has got, and he has found a sufficiency for his redemption, as the Targum of Jonathan; not that he has found anything that was lost, as Chaskuni glosses it, but by one providence or another, by the blessing of God on his trade and business, is become rich, and it is in the power of his hand to redeem the possession he had sold, he might do it; but, as the same writer observes, he might not borrow and redeem, but must do it with what he had got of his own since the time of sale, and which is also the sense of others {d}.

{d} Misn. Eracin, c. 9. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Leviticus 25:27

Ver. 27. Then let him count the years of the sale thereof,.... How many years had passed since it was sold, how many it had been in the hands of the purchaser, and how many were yet to come to the year of the jubilee, by which means the price of redemption might easily be settled; thus, for instance, if the years were alike and there was just half the time gone, then half of the price it was sold at was repaid to the purchaser; and if not alike, then in proportion to what had passed and were to come:

and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it; for the years that were yet to come; if, as Jarchi says, he has eaten of or enjoyed the fruit of the field three or four years, deduct the price of them from the account, and take the rest; this is the meaning, "and restore the overplus", out of the price of the sale, according to what is eaten, and give it to the buyer: Maimonides {e} explains it thus; that if there were ten years to the year of the jubilee, and the field was sold for an hundred pieces, if he that bought it has eaten of it three years, then the seller that redeems it must give him seventy pieces, and he must restore his field; if he has eaten of it six years, he is to give forty pieces, and the other restores him the field: in the Misnah it is put thus; if he sell it (his field) to the first for an hundred pence, and the first sells it to a second for two hundred, he must not reckon but with the first, as it is said, "unto the man to whom he sold it"; if he sold it to the first for two hundred, and the first sells it to a second for an hundred, he shall not count but with the last, as it is said, "to a man", i.e. to the man which is in the midst of it, or is possessed of it; nor may he sell it for a distant time, that he may redeem it near, nor when in a bad condition, that he may redeem it when in a good one; nor may he borrow to redeem it, nor redeem it by halves {f}:

that he may return to his possession; and enjoy it again.

{e} Hilchot Shemittah Vejobel, ut supra, (c. 11.) sect. 5. {f} Misn. Eracin, ut supra. (c. 9. 1.)

Leviticus 25:28

Ver. 28. But if he be not able to restore it to him,.... The overplus, or give him what is in proportion to the time he has had it, and yet to come:

then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that bought it until the year of the jubilee; continue in his possession, and he shall enjoy all the benefit of it till that year comes:

and in the jubilee it shall go out: out of his hands or possession; or "he shall go out" {g}, the purchaser shall go out of what he has bought, and shall have no more possession of it, but it shall come into the hands of the seller, and that without money, as the Targum of Jonathan adds:

and he shall return unto his possession; the seller, and enter upon it and enjoy it as his own property, as before he sold it.

{g} auyw "discedet emptor", Junius & Tremellius.

Leviticus 25:29

Ver. 29. And if a man sell a dwelling house in a walled city,.... Which was so from the days of Joshua the son of Nun, as Jarchi:

then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold: any time within the year he pleased, either he or any near of kin to him; and if they would, on the day it was sold, or any time after within the compass of the year, even on the day in which the year ended; in this such an house differed from fields, which could not be redeemed under two years, See Gill on "Le 25:15";

[within] a full year may he redeem it; from the time it was sold, paying what it was sold for: this is to be understood, Maimonides {h} says, of a solar year, which consists of three hundred sixty five days, and within this space of time

such an house might be redeemed.

{h} In Misn. Eracin, c. 9. sect. 3.

Leviticus 25:30

Ver. 30. And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year,.... Either by the seller or any man of kin to him:

then the house that [is] in the walled city shall be established for ever to him that bought it, throughout his generation; after twelve months were elapsed it was not redeemable by any, but to be held by the purchaser and his heirs for ever:

it shall not go out in the jubilee; from the purchaser or his heirs, to the seller or his heirs; for houses were not like lands, the gift of God, and held under him, but were built by men, and were their absolute property, and therefore they could dispose of them, and they that bought them could hold them after the above mentioned time; nor was there any danger of confounding tribes and families by retaining them: this law was made to encourage persons to settle in walled towns, to make and keep them populous, and to make owners of them careful not to sell them: the Jewish canon is this; when the day of the twelfth month is come, and it (the house) is not redeemed, it is absolutely his, whether he bought it or whether it was given him, as it is said, Le 25:30; and if in the beginning of the day of the twelfth month he (the purchaser) hides himself, that it may be confirmed to him or be his absolutely; Hillel, the elder, ordered that he (the seller) should put his money in the chamber (belonging to the sanhedrim) and break open the door, and go in; and when he would, he (the purchaser) might come, and take his money {i}; but otherwise, if he suffers this time to pass it is irredeemable, nor will the year of jubilee help him: the Jews except the city of Jerusalem from this law, because, they say, that does not belong to any tribe {k}.

{i} Misn. Eracin, c. 9. sect. 4. {k} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 82. 2.

Leviticus 25:31

Ver. 31. But the houses of the villages, which have no walls round about them,.... As there were many in the days of Joshua, the Scripture speaks of: the

Jews suppose that such are meant, even though they were afterwards walled:

shall be counted as the fields of the country; and subject to the same law as they:

they may be redeemed; at any time before the year of jubilee, and if not, then

they shall go out in the jubilee; to the original owners of them, freely, as Jarchi says, without paying anything for them.

Leviticus 25:32

Ver. 32. Notwithstanding, the cities of the Levites,.... The six cities of refuge, and forty two others; these and the houses in them are excepted from the above law, and only they; not such as they might purchase elsewhere; wherefore it follows,

[and] the houses of the cities of their possession; which were in cities possessed by them, and which was their possession, and given them as such:

may the Levites redeem at any time; they were not restrained to a year, as houses in walled towns, but they might redeem them as they pleased or could; and if they did not redeem them within the year, they might redeem them afterwards, even years after, and any time before the year of jubilee; so it is said in the Misnah {l} the priests and the Levites sell always, and they redeem always, as it is said, Le 25:32; on which one of the commentators says {m} "they sell always", not as the Israelites, who cannot sell less than two years before the jubilee; but the Levites can sell near the jubilee: "and they redeem always"; if they sell houses in walled cities, they are not confirmed at the end of the year, as the houses of Israelites; and if they sell fields, it is not necessary they should remain in the hands of the buyer two years, but they may redeem them immediately if they will: this redemption was peculiar to the Levites; for if an Israelite has an inheritance from his father's mother, a Levite, he might not redeem according to the manner Levites did, but according to Israelites; and so a Levite that inherited from his father's mother, an Israelite, was obliged to redeem as an Israelite and not as a Levite {n}; for this perpetual redemption respected only houses that were in the cities of the Levites.

{l} Eracin, c. 9. sect. 8. {m} Bartenora in ib. {n} Misn. Eracin, c. 9. sect. 8.

Leviticus 25:33

Ver. 33. And if a man purchase of the Levites,.... An house or city, as Jarchi, and which the following clause confirms, that is, if a common Israelite made such a purchase, then it was redeemable, but if a Levite purchased of a Levite, then, as the same writer observes, it was absolutely irredeemable:

then the house that was sold, and the city of his possession, shall go out in [the year of] jubilee; to the original owner of it, as fields and houses in villages sold by the Israelites

for the houses of the cities of the Levites [are] their possession among the children of Israel; and their only possession, and therefore if those, when sold, were irredeemable, they would entirely be without any; and hence care is taken they should not; so Jarchi observes, that the Levites had no possession of fields and vineyards, only cities to dwell in, and their suburbs; wherefore cities were to them instead of fields, and their redemption was as that of fields, that so their inheritance might not be broken off from them.

Leviticus 25:34

Ver. 34. But the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold,.... The suburbs to the cities of the Levites reached two thousand cubits on every side of their cities, Nu 35:5; in which they had fields to keep their cattle in, and these belonged to them in common; every Levite had not a particular field to himself as his own property, and which is the reason why it might not be sold, nor might they agree together to sell it, for then they would have nothing to keep their cattle in: the Jewish writers generally understand this of changing their fields, suburbs, and cities: hence they say, in the Misnah, they do not make a field a suburb, nor a suburb a field, nor a suburb a city, nor a city a suburb; upon which Maimonides {o} says, all agree that the Levites may not change a city, or suburb, or field which are theirs, because of what is said, Le 25:34; and the wise men, of blessed memory, say, the meaning of it is, it shall not be changed, for they do not change anything from what it was before:

for it [is] their perpetual possession: and therefore never to be alienated from them, or be sold to another, or changed and put to another use; such care was taken of the ministers of the sanctuary, and of their maintenance and support, under the former dispensation; and suggests that they should continue in their stations without any alteration, as ministers of the Gospel should, who ought to give up themselves to the ministry of the word, and prayer, and not entangle themselves with the affairs of life.

{o} In Misn. Eracin, c. 9. sect. 8.

Leviticus 25:35

Ver. 35. And if thy brother be waxen poor,.... An Israelite, as Aben Ezra, be reduced to a low estate, through afflictions in body, or in family, or through losses in trade, or want of business, or through one providence or another:

and fallen in decay with thee; in his worldly substance: or "his hand wavers", or "fails" {p}; so that he cannot support himself and his family, has not a sufficiency, or it is not in the power of his hands to do it; and it is not owing to sloth and negligence, but to unavoidable want and necessity:

then thou shalt relieve him; not merely by sympathizing with him, but by communicating to him, and distributing to his necessities; holding him up that he may not utterly fall, and strengthening his hands, that he may have a supply for his present wants:

[yea, though he be] a stranger or a sojourner; whether a proselyte of righteousness, who is circumcised, and in all things conforms to the true religion; or a proselyte of the gate, who takes it upon him not to worship idols, and eat things that die of themselves, as Jarchi notes:

that he may live with thee; continue in the land of Canaan, and not be obliged to quit it, and be laid under temptations of apostatizing from the true religion professed by him, and so far as he is come into it, which would bring a worse death than corporeal upon him; or that he may have a livelihood in some tolerable manner at least, and even live comfortably and cheerfully.

{p} wdy hjmw "et nutaverit manus ejus", Montanus, Vatablus, Fagius; "vacillabit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Leviticus 25:36

Ver. 36. Take thou no usury of him, or increase,.... Not only give him somewhat for his present relief, but lend him money to put him in a way of business, to get his living for the future, without requiring any interest for it; See Gill on "Ex 22:25";

but fear thy God; who has given this command, and expects to be obeyed; and who is good, and does good, and should be feared for his goodness' sake; and is omniscient, and knows what is secretly exacted, and will not suffer any exorbitance of this kind to pass unpunished:

that thy brother may live with thee; which it would be still more difficult for him to do, should usury and increase be taken of him.

Leviticus 25:37

Ver. 37. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury,.... Lend him money, expecting and insisting upon a large interest for it; this is to be understood of persons in poor and necessitous circumstances, of which the text only speaks; otherwise, if persons borrow money to gain by it, to carry on a greater trade, or to make purchase with it, it is but reasonable that the lender should have a share of profit arising from thence:

nor lend him thy victuals for increase; by which it should seem that those two words, used in Le 25:36, though in the main they signify the same thing, yet may be distinguished, the one as concerning money, the other food; and which latter is not to be given by way of loan to a person in want of it, but freely; as for instance, if a man gives a poor man a bushel of wheat, on condition he gives him two for it hereafter, this is lending or giving his victuals for increase.

Leviticus 25:38

Ver. 38. I [am] the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt,.... Where they had been strangers and sojourners, and therefore should be kind to such in necessitous circumstances, and relieve them, and especially their brethren; and where God had given them favour in the eyes of the Egyptians, and they had lent them jewels of gold and silver, and raiment, and therefore they should lend freely to persons in distress; and who had brought them out from thence, that they might take upon them his commandments, though they might be grievous, as Jarchi observes; and this, it may be remarked, is the preface to the ten commandments:

to give you the land of Canaan; freely, a land flowing with milk and honey; and therefore, since he had dealt so bountifully with them, and had given them plenty of good things, they need not grudge giving to their poor brethren, and others in necessitous circumstances:

[and] to be your God; their covenant God, to bless and prosper them, protect and defend them.

Leviticus 25:39

Ver. 39. And if thy brother [that dwelleth] by thee be waxen poor,.... The above laws and instructions seem designed to prevent such extreme poverty as obliged to what follows, namely, a brother being sold either to an Israelite or to a stranger, by relieving his wants or lending him money; but when these were insufficient to support him, and keep him from sinking into the lowest state of distress and misery, then he was obliged to be sold, as follows:

and be sold unto thee; either by himself, being ready to starve and perish, or by the sanhedrim, having stolen something, as Aben Ezra observes; in such a case the civil magistrate had a power of selling a man, Ex 22:3;

thou shall not compel him to serve as a bondservant; such as were Heathens, and bought of them, or taken in war and made slaves of; but an Israelite sold was not to serve as they, either with respect to matter or manner, or time of service; such as were bondmen were put to the hardest service, the greatest drudgery, as well as what was mean and reproachful, and were used in the most rigorous and despotic manner, and were obliged to serve for ever, and were never released; but a brother, an Israelite, sold to another through extreme poverty, was not to be put to any low, mean, base, and disgraceful service, by which it would be known that he was a servant, as Jarchi notes; such as to carry his master's vessels or instruments after him to the bath, or to unloose his shoes; but, as the same writer observes, he was to be employed in the business of the farm, or in some handicraft work, and was to be kindly and gently used, rather as a brother than a servant, and to be freed in the year of jubilee.

Leviticus 25:40

Ver. 40. [But] as an hired servant,.... Who is hired by the day, or month, or year; and, when his time is up, receives his wages and goes where he pleases, and while a servant is not under such despotic power and government as a slave is:

[and] as a sojourner; an inmate, one that dwells in part of a man's house, or boards and lodges with him, and whom he treats in a kind and familiar manner, rather like one of his own family than otherwise:

he shall be with thee; as under the above characters, and used as such: this the Jews refer to food and drink, and other things, as they do, De 15:16; and say {q} that a master might not eat fine bread, and his servant bread of bran; nor drink old wine, and his servant new; nor sleep on soft pillows and bedding, and his servant on straw: hence, they say {r}, he that gets himself an Hebrew servant is as if he got himself a master:

[and] shall serve thee unto the year of the jubilee; and no longer; for if the year of jubilee came before the six years were expired for which he sold himself, the jubilee set him free, as Jarchi observes; nay, if be sold himself for ten or twenty years, and that but one year before the jubilee, it set him free, as Maimonides says {s}.

{q} Maimon. in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 2. {r} Ibid. {s} Hilchot Abadim, c. 2. sect. 3.

Leviticus 25:41

Ver. 41. And [then] shall he depart from thee, [both] he and his children with him,.... His sons and daughters, and his wife also, who is included in himself: if a man had a wife and children when he sold himself, or married afterwards, with his master's consent, he was obliged to maintain them {t}; though they were not sold to him, nor properly his servants, and so had a right to go out with him:

and shall return unto his own family; his father's family, and that of his near relations, having been out of it during his time of servitude, and which the year of jubilee restored him to, Le 25:10;

and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return; the estate his father left him by inheritance, and which he was obliged to sell in the time of his poverty, or which fell to him since by the death of his father; to this also he was restored in the year of jubilee, as is expressed in the text referred to.

{t} Maimon. in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 3. sect. 1.

Leviticus 25:42

Ver. 42. For they [are] my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt,.... The Lord redeemed them out of Egypt, made a purchase of them, and had a prior right unto them, and being his servants first, they cannot be the servants of others; his right unto them as such antecedes and prevents any other claim upon them:

they shall not be sold as bondmen; or, "with", or, "according to the sale of a bondman" {u}; in the manner they are sold, or according to the laws of selling of servants; not in such a public manner as they are sold in markets, nor for such purposes to be used as slaves in a rigorous manner, nor so as to be retained for ever in servitude; not to be sold by proclamation, as Jarchi observes, saying, here is a servant to be sold; nor shall they set him upon the stone of sale; for it seems in public places in markets, where slaves were sold, there was a stone on which they were placed, which showed that they were to be sold; but now an Israelite was not to be sold in such a manner, so Maimonides {w} says, but privately, in an honourable way.

{u} dbe trkmm "venditione servi", Drusius. {w} Hilchot Abadim, c. 1. sect. 5.

Leviticus 25:43

Ver. 43. Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour,.... As the Egyptians ruled over the Israelites, and made them to serve, **Ex 1:13**; where the same word is used as here, and seems designed to put them in mind of it, that so they might abstain from such usage of their brethren, which they had met with from their most cruel enemies; it signifies tyranny and oppression, treating them with great severity, laying hard and heavy tasks and burdens upon them they could not bear; enjoining them things they could not perform, and ordering them to do what were unnecessary, and without any limitation with respect to time:

but shalt fear thy God; that has been good to thee, and has brought thee out of hard and rigorous bondage in Egypt; and which should be remembered with thankfulness, and they should fear to offend so good a God by using a brother cruelly.

Leviticus 25:44

Ver. 44. Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have,.... Such it seems were allowed them, if they had need of them; but if they had them, they were to be not of the nation of Israel, but of other nations; this is an anticipation of an objection, as Jarchi observes; if so, who shall I have to minister to me? The answer follows, they

[shall be] of the heathen that are round about thee, of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids; that is, of the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Syrians, as Aben Ezra, that were their neighbours, that lived round about them, of any but the seven nations, which they were ordered utterly to destroy; wherefore Jarchi observes it is said, "that are round about thee"; not in the midst of the border of your land, for them they were not to save alive, De 20:16.

Leviticus 25:45

Ver. 45. Moreover, of the children of the strangers, that do sojourn among you,.... The uncircumcised sojourners as they are called in the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, proselytes of the gate, such of the nations round about who came and sojourned among them, being subject to the precepts given to the sons of Noah respecting idolatry, &c. but were not circumcised, and did not embrace the Jewish religion:

of them shall ye buy; for bondmen and bondmaids:

and of their families that [are] with you, which they begat in your land; but, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, are not of the Canaanites; though the Jewish writers {x} say, that one of the nations that lies with a Canaanitish woman, and begets a son of her, he may be bought for a servant; and so if a Canaanitish man lies with one of the nations, and begets a son of her, he may also be bought for a servant:

and they shall be your possession; as servants, as bondmen and bondmaids, and be so for ever to them and their heirs, as follows.

{x} Torat Cohanim apud Yalkut, par. 1. fol. 195. 1.

Leviticus 25:46

Ver. 46. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you,.... Which they might leave them at their death to inherit, as they did their estates and lands; for such servants are, with the Jews {y}, said to be like immovable goods, as fields, vineyards,

to inherit [them for] a possession; as their property, as anything else that was bequeathed to hem, as negroes now are in our plantations abroad:

thy shall be your bondmen for ever; and not be released at the year jubilee, nor before nor after; unless they obtained their liberty, either by purchase, which they might make themselves, or by the means of others, or else by a writing under their master's hand dismissing them from his service {z}; or in case they were maimed by him, then he was obliged to let them go free, Ex 21:26;

but over your brethren, the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour; which repeated for the confirmation of it, and for the fuller explanation and description of the person not to be ruled over with rigour; and that it might be the more taken notice of, and to make them the more careful in the observance of it and though this peculiarly respects masters' treatment of their servants, yet Jarchi thinks it comprehends a prince over his people, and a king over his ministers, whom he may not rule with rigour.

{y} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 3. {z} Misn. Kiddushin, ib.

Leviticus 25:47

Ver. 47. And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee,.... An uncircumcised one, as the Targums, a proselyte of the gate, who by living among and trading with the Israelites, might grow rich and wealthy in money, at least so as to be able to purchase an Hebrew servant, though not his lands, which he might not buy:

and thy brother [that dwelleth] by him wax poor; comes into low circumstances, and is reduced to great poverty, even extreme poverty; for only in such a case might he sell himself to an Israelite, and much less to a stranger, if this was not the case. Jarchi suggests, as in the phrase, "by thee", points at the cause or occasion of the sojourner or stranger becoming rich, his nearness unto, or cleaving to all Israelite; and so here the phrase, "by him", directs to the cause or occasion of the Israelite's becoming poor, his being near and cleaving to the sojourner or stranger: but they seem rather to be used, to show the reason of the poor Israelite falling into the hands of a rich sojourner; they being near neighbours to one another, and having a familiarity, the following bargain is struck between them:

and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner thee; the uncircumcised sojourner, as the Targum of Jonathan:

or to the stock of a stranger's family; or "root" {a}, one that sprung from a family, originally proselytes; which some understand of one, who though he be descended from such a family, was now rooted among the people of God, and incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel; and yet such an one could not detain an Hebrew servant longer than the year of jubilee: but the Jewish writers generally interpret it of an idolater {b}.

{a} rqel "radici", Vatablus, Piscator. {b} Targum Onk. Jon. Jarchi & Ben Melech, in loc. Kimchi in Sepher Shorash, rad. rqe.

Leviticus 25:48

Ver. 48. After that he is sold he may be redeemed again,.... Though an Heathen, sold to an Israelite, was to be a bondman for ever, and could not be released by the year of jubilee, yet an Israelite sold to an Heathen might be redeemed before, and if not, he was freed then. The Jewish writers understand this of an obligation upon the man, or his friends, or the congregation, to redeem him, and that immediately, as the Targum of Jonathan, and Jarchi, because of the danger he was in by being in the family of an idolater, lest he be polluted {c}, that is, with idolatry; or be swallowed up among the Heathens, as Maimonides {d}; but it is plain from Le 25:54, that there was no obligation for an immediate redemption; nor was the person sold in such danger as suggested, since the sojourner, to whom he is supposed to be sold, was no idolater, whether a proselyte either of righteousness, or of the gate

one of his brethren may redeem him; which may be taken in a strict and proper sense, for any of his brethren who were in circumstances sufficient to redeem him, or for any near akin to him, as the following words seem to explain it. No mention is made of his father: the reason of which Abarbinel {e} says, because it cannot be thought that a father would suffer his son to be sold, if it was in his power to redeem him, since a father is pitiful to his son.

{c} Pesikta apud Drusium in loc. {d} Hilchot Abadim, c. 2. sect. 7. {e} Apud Muis. Varia Sacra, p. 373.

Leviticus 25:49

Ver. 49. Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him,.... it is father's brother or his father's brother's son, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan:

or [any] that is nigh kin unto him of his family may redeem him; from whence it appears, that it must be a near kinsman that has to be the redeemer, as in another case, the redemption of inheritances; hence the same word "goel" signifies both a redeemer and a near kinsman:

or if he be able he may redeem himself; who either has found something lost, or inherits the substance of anyone deceased, of his family, as Aben Ezra observes; that is, since he sold himself, which puts him into a capacity to redeem himself; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"or the land of the congregation;"

for such a redemption was sometimes made at the expense of the public; see **Ne 5:8**. Baal Hatturim observes, that the words "Ben Dodo", translated "his uncle's son", wanting the letter "tau" as usual, as the same letters with Ben David, which is a known name of the Messiah with the Jews, and which that author seems to have in view; and another Jewish writer {f} expressly says,

"this Redeemer is the Messiah, the son of David, of the tribe of Judah:"

and indeed the whole of this case is applicable to the spiritual and eternal redemption of the people of God by Christ: they through the fall, and in a state of nature, are become poor and helpless, and in a spiritual sense have neither bread to eat, nor clothes to wear, nor money to buy either; and are in debt, owe ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay, and so are brought into bondage to sin, Satan, and the law; nor can they redeem themselves from these by power or price; nor can a brother, or the nearest relation redeem them, or give to God a ransom for them; none but Christ could do this for them, who through his incarnation, whereby he became of the same nature, of the same flesh and blood with them, and in all things like unto them, is their "goel", and so their Redeemer, and has obtained eternal redemption for them, not with silver and gold, but by his own precious blood.

{f} R. Bechai apud Patrick in loc.

Leviticus 25:50

Ver. 50. And he shall reckon with him that bought him,.... That is, either the man himself should reckon with him, or whoever undertook to redeem him:

from the year that he was sold to him unto the year of jubilee; and so count how many years he had served, and how many were yet to come; and by this it appears, that one thus sold was not released at the end of six years, or the sabbatical year did not free him:

and the price of his sale shall be according to the number of years; whether more or fewer, as after explained:

according to the time of an hired servant shall it be with him; the time of service he had served his master shall be reckoned, as if he had been hired for so much a year; and according to the number of years he had been with him, so much per annum was to be deducted from the original purchase, and the rest to be made for his redemption to him that bought him.

Leviticus 25:51

Ver. 51. If [there be] yet many years behind,.... To the year of jubilee, and more than he had served:

according unto them he shall give again the price of his redemption, out of the money that he was bought for; suppose, for instance, when a man sold himself, there were twenty years to the year of jubilee, and he sold himself for twenty pieces of money, gold or silver, be the value what it will; and when he comes to treat with his master about his redemption, or a relation for him, and he has served just as many years as there are to the year of jubilee, ten years, then his master must be paid for the price of his redemption ten pieces of money; but if he has served but five years, and there are fifteen to come, he must give him fifteen pieces; and so in proportion, be the years more or fewer, as follows.

Leviticus 25:52

Ver. 52. And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubilee,.... Fewer than what he has served, then the less is given for his redemption: thus, for instance, in the above supposed case, if he has served fifteen years, and there remain but five to the year of jubilee:

then he shall count with him, [and] according unto his years shall he give him again the price of his redemption; as in the fore mentioned case, he shall give him five pieces of money; and thus the law of justice and equity was maintained between the buyer and seller, the purchaser and the redeemer: in a like righteous manner the people of God are redeemed by Christ.

Leviticus 25:53

Ver. 53. [And] as a yearly hired servant shall he be with him,.... Being redeemable every year, and upon his redemption might quit his master's service, as an hireling may; and the price of his redemption to be valued according to the years he served, and as if he had been hired for so much a year; as well as he was to be treated in a kind and gentle manner, not as a bondman, but as if he was an hired servant, as follows:

[and the other] shall not rule with rigour over him in thy sight; the person he is sold unto, his master, a sojourner or stranger, he might not use an Hebrew he had bought with any severity; for if an Hebrew master might not use an Hebrew servant with rigour, it was not by any means to be admitted in the commonwealth of Israel for a proselyte to use one in such a manner, and that openly, in the sight of an Israelite his neighbour; he looking on and not remonstrating against it, or acquainting the civil magistrate with it, who had it in his power to redress such a grievance, and ought to do it.

Leviticus 25:54

Ver. 54. And if he be not redeemed in these [years],.... The Targum of

Jonathan supplies the text as we do, in any of the years from the time of his sale to the year of jubilee; and so Aben Ezra interprets it, in the years that remain to the jubilee; but he observes there are others that say, by the means of those above mentioned, that is, by his nearest of kin, or by himself; for the word "years" is not in the text, which may be supplied, either with "years" or "relations"; and so the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, and Oriental versions read, "by these" means, things or persons:

then he shall go out on the year of jubilee: out of the house and service of him that bought him, he shall go out free and freely, without paying anything for his freedom, having served his full time unto which he was bought:

[both] he and his children with him; and his wife too, if he had any, who, was comprehended in himself, and whom, both wife and children, his master was obliged to maintain during his servitude.

Leviticus 25:55

Ver. 55. For unto me the children of Israel [are] servants,.... And therefore not to be perpetual servants to men, as those who are bought and redeemed by the blood of Christ should not be, **1Co 7:23**; The Targum of Jonathan is, servants to my law; see **Ro 7:25**; those that are redeemed by Christ are also servants to his Gospel, and obey from their heart the form and doctrine delivered to them;

they [are] my servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: where they were in cruel bondage, and made to serve with rigour, but now, being delivered from thence, were laid under obligation to serve the Lord; nor was it his will that others should rule over them with rigour, whether of their own nation or strangers, or that they should be bondmen and bondmaids, or perpetual servants to any:

I [am] the Lord your God; their covenant God, who had been kind to them, particularly in the instance mentioned, and would take care that they should not be ill used by others, and therefore ought to serve him readily and cheerfully.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 26:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 26

In this chapter, after a repetition of some laws against idolatry, and concerning keeping sabbaths, and reverencing the sanctuary of God, Le 26:1; in order to encourage the Israelites to keep the various statutes and commandments in this book, and in the preceding, many promises are made of plenty, and peace, and safety from enemies, and of the presence of God with them, Le 26:3; and on the contrary, to such as should despise and break his commandments, the most grievous things are threatened, as diseases of body, destruction by their enemies, barrenness and unfruitfulness of land, the sore judgments of wild beasts, famine, sword, and pestilence, Le 26:14; and yet after all, when they should confess their sins, and were humbled for them, the Lord promises to remember the covenant he made with their ancestors, and would deal kindly with them, and not cast them away, and utterly destroy them, Le 26:40.

Ver. 1. Ye shall have no idols, or graven image,.... Some of the Jewish writers, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, think this law against idolatry is mentioned on account of the Israelite sold to a stranger, spoken of in the latter part of the preceding chapter, lest he should be drawn into idolatry; See Gill on "Le 25:48"; but this is rather mentioned as being a principal law, respecting the honour and glory of God, and the foundation of all religion and godliness, and the breach of it a capital crime, and which led on to other sins, and exposed to the displeasure and resentment of God, and brought on all the calamities after mentioned in this chapter. "Idols" here signify "things of nought", as an idol is nothing in the world, **1Co 8:4**; and a "graven image", any likeness of man or beast cut out of wood, or stone; and may include any molten image of gold, silver, or brass, and then engraven with a tool, as the golden calf was, Ex 32:4:

neither rear you up a standing image; or pillar {g}; an heap of rude stones, set up pillar, not bearing the likeness of any creature; otherwise graven and molten images were standing ones, but these were statues without any figure; such as the Arabians used to worship; the god Mars, worshipped in Arabia Petraea, was no other than a black stone four square, unformed, four feet high, and two broad, and was placed on a basis of gold {h};

neither shall ye set up [any] image of stone in your land, to bow down unto; any "figured stone", as the Targum and Aben Ezra interpret it, which had figures and representations of creatures cut in it, in order to bow down unto and worship: the word has the signification of covering, as they cover a floor with a pavement of stones:

for I [am] the Lord your God; who is the alone object of religious worship and adoration.

{g} hbum sthlhn Sept. "titulos", V. L. "titulum", Samar. Ar. "pillar", Ainsworth. {h} "Suidas in voce" yeuv arhv Vid. Arnob. adv. Gentes, l. 6. p. 232.

Leviticus 26:2

Ver. 2. Ye shall keep my sabbaths,.... The seventh day sabbaths, and the seventh year sabbaths; especially the former are meant, in which religious worship was given to the one true and living God, and therefore the observance of them is strictly enjoined; and hence this law follows closely upon the former, though Aben Ezra restrains it to the sabbatical years, or seventh year sabbaths, as he applies the sanctuary in the following clause to the jubilee year, which is said to be holy, Le 26:12; supposing that this refers unto and stands in strict connection with the laws of the preceding chapter, concerning the sabbatical, Le 25:1, and jubilee years, Le 25:8:

and reverence my sanctuary; by attending in it, and on the worship in it, with reverence and godly fear, see Le 19:30;

I [am] the Lord; who had a right to such religious worship, and to command such things, in which he ought to be obeyed, his sabbaths kept, and sanctuary reverenced.

Leviticus 26:3

Ver. 3. If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them. Both moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which had been delivered unto them, and now completely recorded in this and the preceding book; for what follow in the two next are chiefly repetitions of what are contained in these.

Leviticus 26:4

Ver. 4. Then I will give you rain in due season,.... The former and latter rain, in the two seasons of the year in which rain usually fell, and the Scriptures frequently speak of; and when the land of Israel, which required rain, not being watered with a river, as Egypt, was blessed with it; the one was at the sowing of their seed, or a little after it, and the other a little before harvest; and when it was had in those times it was had in due season, and hence the word is in the plural number, "your rains" {i}; unless showers of rain are meant: to encourage to keep the commands of God, promises of many outward good things are made; and this is the first, being a principal blessing, and which only God, and not all the vanities of the Gentiles, could give:

and the land shall yield her increase; which is greatly owing to seasonable showers of rain, by which means the earth brings forth bread to the eater and seed to the sower, corn and grass for man and beast:

and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit; vines, olives, pomegranates, figs, &c. are meant, with which the land of Israel abounded, **De 8:8**.

{i} Mkymvg "pluvias vestras", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Leviticus 26:5

Ver. 5. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time,.... Signifying that there should be such plentiful harvests of barley and wheat, the first of which began in March, as would employ them in threshing them out unto the time of vintage, which may be supposed to, be in the month of July; for on the twenty ninth of Sivan, which was about the middle of June, was the time of the first ripe grapes, as appears, See Gill on "Nu 13:20"; and that they should have such quantities of grapes on their vines, as would employ them in gathering and pressing them until seedtime, which was usually in October, see **Am 9:13**;

and ye shall eat your bread to the full; which is put for all provisions; and the meaning is, they should have plenty of food, eat full meals, or however, what they ate, whether little or much, should be satisfying and refreshing to them, having it with a divine blessing:

and dwell in your land safely; would have no need to go out of it into other lands for the sake of food, and would be in no danger from enemies invading them and carrying off their substance; plenty without safety would not be so great a blessing as with it, since, though they had it, they might be deprived of it, wherefore security from enemies is promised.

Leviticus 26:6

Ver. 6. And I will give peace in the land,.... Among yourselves, as Aben Ezra; that as safety from enemies is promised before, here it is assured they should be free from insurrections and from riots, broils, contentions, and civil wars among themselves:

and ye shall lie down, and none shall make [you] afraid; that is, lie down upon their beds, and sleep quietly and comfortably, and not be in any fear of thieves and robbers breaking in upon them, **Ps 3:5**;

and I will rid evil beasts out of the land: out of the land of Israel, as the Targum of Jonathan, not out of the world, such as lions, bears, wolves, &c. which were sometimes troublesome and mischievous in the land:

neither shall the sword go through your land; either the sword of the enemy, which if it entered should not be suffered to proceed, much less to pervade the land and destroy the inhabitants of it: so the Targum of Jonathan,

"they that draw the sword shall not pass through your land,"

or the sword of the Lord, that is, the pestilence, 1Ch 21:12; as Ainsworth suggests; though the Jews {k} commonly understand it of the sword of peace, as they call it, though that is of one that is not an enemy, but passes through one country to destroy another; which yet is distressing to the country he passes through, as in the case of Pharaoh Necho, whom Josiah went out to meet, 2Ch 35:20; though, by what follows, it seems rather to be the first of these.

{k} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 22. 1. 2.

Leviticus 26:7

Ver. 7. And ye shall chase your enemies,.... Who being overcome in battle, and put to the flight, should be pursued:

and they shall fall before you by the sword; not by the sword of one another, as the Midianites did, **Jud 7:21**, so Jarchi; but rather by the sword of the Israelites, for oftentimes multitudes of the enemy are killed in a pursuit.

Leviticus 26:8

Ver. 8. And five of you shall chase an hundred,.... One man chase twenty;

and an hundred of you put ten thousand to flight; which, had it been in proportion to the other number, should have been two thousand, as in De 32:30; where there is a proportion observed; and Abendana observes, there are some that give the sense of it thus, an hundred of you, an hundred times five, that is, five hundred, and so it comes up to a right computation; but here it seems to be a certain number for an uncertain, and only a proverbial expression, signifying that a very few, under the blessing of divine Providence, should get the advantage over a large number, and oblige them to retire, and pursue them closely: instances we have of large bodies of the enemy being defeated by a small number of Israelites, **Jud 7:21**; and even many by a single person or two, 1Sa 14:13;

and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword;
See Gill on "Le 26:7".

Leviticus 26:9

Ver. 9. For I will have respect unto you,.... Look at them with delight and pleasure, and with a careful eye on them, watch over them to do them good, and protect them from all evil; or turn himself to them from all others, having a particular regard for them and special care of them:

and make you fruitful and multiply you; increase their number, as he did in Egypt, even amidst all their afflictions; and much more might they expect this blessing in the land of Canaan, when settled there, which is the original blessing of mankind, see **Ge 1:28**;

and establish my covenant with you; not the new covenant spoken of in Jer 31:31; as Jarchi and other Jewish writers {l} suggest; for that was not to take place but in future time, under the Gospel dispensation; but rather the covenant made with them at Sinai, though perhaps it chiefly respects the covenant made with their ancestors concerning multiplication of their seed as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea, Ge 15:5, since it follows upon the promise of an increase of them.

{l} Torat Cohenim, apud Yalkut, par. 1. fol. 196. 3.

Leviticus 26:10

Ver. 10. And ye shall eat old store,.... What is very old, corn of three years old, as Jarchi and Kimchi {m} interpret it; such plenty should they have that it would be so long consuming:

and bring forth the old because of the new; out of their barns and granaries, to make room for the new, which they should have great quantities of, and scarce know where to bestow them; and therefore should empty their treasures and garners of the old, and fill them with new; or they should bring them forth out of their barns into their houses, to make use of themselves, or into their markets to expose to sale, being under no temptation to withhold against a time of scarcity in order to make more of it, see Pr 11:26; now all these temporal blessings promised may be emblems of spiritual things, and might be so understood by such who were spiritually enlightened; as of the rain of divine grace, and the blessings of it, and of the doctrines of the Gospel, sometimes compared thereunto, De 32:2; and of great fruitfulness in grace and good works, and of internal peace in the minds of good men, and of their safety and security from spiritual enemies; of fulness of spiritual provisions, even of things new and old, and which are laid up for them, **So 7:13**; thus promises of a spiritual nature more manifestly follow.

{m} Sepher Shorash. rad. Nvy.

Leviticus 26:11

Ver. 11. And I will set my tabernacle amongst you,.... Which God had directed them to make, and they had made, and also erected; but here he promises to fix and establish it among them, that so it might continue as a place for the public worship of him, and where he would take up his residence, and grant them his presence; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"I will put the Shechinah of my glory among you:"

and my soul shall not abhor you; though in themselves, and because of their sins, loathsome and abominable; the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are,

"my Word shall not abhor you;"

and the whole may have respect to Christ, the Word made flesh, and tabernacling among them; the tabernacle being a type and emblem of the human nature of Christ, in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and is the true tabernacle which God pitched and not man, **Joh 1:14**.

Leviticus 26:12

Ver. 12. And I will walk among you,.... As they journeyed from place to place, he walked among them, in the tabernacle built for him, see **2Sa 7:6**; it may be expressive of the familiarity and communion which the Lord grants to his people, in and through Christ:

and will be your God; to provide for them, and supply them with all the blessings of his goodness, both in providence and grace; and to protect and defend them against all their enemies, temporal and spiritual:

and ye shall be my people; appear to be a special and peculiar people of his, chosen, redeemed, and sanctified by him, and to whom he bore a special love, and took special care of; see **2Co 6:16**; the Targum of Jonathan of the whole is,

"I will make the glory of my Shechinah dwell among you, and my Word shall be unto you for God the Redeemer, and ye shall be to my name for a people of Holy Ones."

Leviticus 26:13

Ver. 13. I [am] the Lord your Lord, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt,.... Who, having done that, was able to fulfil the above promises; and which may be considered as an earnest and pledge of them, as well as be a motive to the Israelites, and an obligation upon them to obey the commandments of God, and walk in his statutes:

that ye should not be their bondmen; this was the end of their being brought out of Egypt, that they might be no longer in a state of bondage to the Egyptians, nor to any other, but to serve the Lord their God, by whom they were delivered; as those who are redeemed by Christ from worse than Egyptian bondage, from sin, Satan, and the law, are redeemed, that they might not be the servants of any, but be a peculiar people, zealous of good works to serve the Lord Christ:

and I have broken the bands of your yoke; which fastened it on their shoulders, that is, set them at full liberty, from the yoke of all their enemies, particularly the Egyptians, who made their lives bitter in hard bondage, making the yoke of it heavy upon them; as Christ has broken the yoke of spiritual enemies from off the shoulders and necks of his people, Isa 10:27;

and made you go upright; who before stooped under the yoke, as well as were of dejected countenances, but now were made to walk in an erect stature, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra, or in liberty, as Onkelos; see **Ga 5:1**; and with heads lift up and countenances cheerful.

Leviticus 26:14

Ver. 14. But if ye will not hearken unto me,.... To his commandments, as the rule of their duty, and to his promises, as an encouragement to it, or to his prophets and ministers, explaining and enforcing his law, and exhorting to a cheerful obedience to it; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"if ye will not hearken to the doctrine of them that teach my laws;"

which was the sin of the Jews in later times, for which captivity and other calamities befell them, **Jer 7:25**;

and will not do all these commandments; which he had delivered to them by Moses, whether moral, ceremonial, or judicial, recorded in this book and in the preceding; even all of them were to be respected, attended to, and performed, for the law curses everyone that does not do all things it requires, **Ga 3:10**.

Leviticus 26:15

Ver. 15. And if ye shall despise my statutes,.... Which is an aggravated sin; to be negligent hearers of the commands of God is bad, not to be doers of them worse, but to treat them with contempt is worse still:

or if your soul abhor my judgments: which is worst of all, to despise them as if not wisely or righteously made is a dreadful reflection upon the Maker of them; but to abhor them as bad things, not fit to be regarded, but to be had in the utmost detestation, is shocking impiety:

so that ye will not do all my commandments; nor any of them, but are set against them, and determined and resolved on the contrary:

[but] that ye break my covenant; the covenant made with them at Sinai, when they promised, on their part, that they would hearken and be obedient, Ex 24:7.

Leviticus 26:16

Ver. 16. I also will do this unto you,.... Henceforward follow threatenings of dreadful evils to the transgressors and despisers of the commandments of God, which thus begin:

I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart; some, as Aben Ezra observes, take these to design what may affect the seed sown and the increase of it, such as blasting and mildew, because it follows: "ye shall sow in vain"; but no doubt diseases of the body are intended; for what we translate "terror" does not signify terror of mind, but some sudden, hasty, terrible distemper; perhaps the pestilence, as the Targum of Jonathan; some have thought of the falling sickness, as Bishop Patrick, because the word has the signification of haste and precipitance; and the second is a disease well known among us, and so called from its wasting and consuming nature; Jarchi interprets it of a disease which swells the flesh, either fills it with tumours and pustules, the Septuagint calls it the itch; or with wind or water, which has led some to think of the dropsy; and the last of them seems to be rightly rendered a burning ague or fever, though the Septuagint takes it for the jaundice, but that seems not to be so threatening, terrible, and dangerous, as what may be here supposed: now these diseases and all others are by the appointment of God, they come and go by his order, and while they continue have the power over persons, nor can they rid themselves of them at pleasure; and these have such an effect on persons seized by them, as to cause dimness of sight, a hollowness of their eyes, which sink into the head, as well as fill the heart with grief and sorrow; either through present pains and agonies, or in a view of future judgment and wrath to come:

and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it; either eat it up for forage before it is ripe, or, if ripe and gathered in the barn, should come and besiege their cities and plunder their granaries.

Leviticus 26:17

Ver. 17. And I will set my face against you,.... Exert his power, and stir up his wrath and indignation against them, as enemies of his, to cut them off; see Ps 34:16; which is the reverse of having respect to them, Le 26:9;

and ye shall be slain before your enemies; as they were sometimes by the Philistines and others:

and they that hate you shall reign over you; as did the Chaldeans and Babylonians; see Ps 106:41;

and ye shall flee when none pursueth you; of such pusillanimous spirits should they be, and filled with such dread and terror of their enemies, so contrary from what is promised them on their obedience, Le 26:8.

Leviticus 26:18

Ver. 18. And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me,.... If such corrections by diseases of body, and by giving them up into the hands of their enemies, should be ineffectual to reform them, and bring them to obedience to the statutes and commandments of God, but should continue in their disobedience to him, and rebellion against him:

then I will punish you seven times more for your sins; that is, abundantly more, with sorer punishments, and these more frequently repeated.

Leviticus 26:19

Ver. 19. And I will break the pride of your power,.... Which the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret of the sanctuary, which they were proud of, trusted in, and boasted of; but was broke or destroyed, first by

Nebuchadnezzar, then by the Romans: but it may rather signify their country, the glory of all lands for its fruitfulness, which for their sins should become barren, as follows; or the multitude of their forces, and the strength of their mighty men of war, in which they put their confidence; it may take in everything, civil and ecclesiastical, they prided themselves with, and had their dependence on, thinking themselves safe on account of them, but should be broken to shivers, and be of no service to them:

and I will make your heaven as iron; so that neither dew nor rain shall descend from thence to make the earth fruitful; but, on the contrary, an heat should be reflected, which would parch it, and make it barren:

and your earth as brass; that the seed could not be cast into it, nor anything spring out of it, for the service of man and beast, so that a famine must unavoidably follow.

Leviticus 26:20

Ver. 20. And your strength shall be spent in vain,.... In endeavouring to till the ground, to plough, or sow, or to dig about the vines or olives, and prune them;

for your land shall not yield its increase; produce corn, and bring forth grass, the one for the use of men, the other for the use of the cattle, and therefore both must starve:

neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits; such as vines, olives, figs, pomegranates, &c. which were very plentiful in the land of Judea, and on which they much lived, and on which their more comfortable subsistence at least depended, see **Hab 3:17**; all this is the reverse of Le 26:4.

Leviticus 26:21

Ver. 21. And if ye walk contrary unto me,.... To his mind and will, to his laws, commands, and ordinances, showing no regard unto them by a walk and conversation agreeably to them, but neglecting and breaking them continually; or by chance, as the Targum of Jonathan, not with any intention and design to obey the Lord, and to honour and glorify him, but in a careless and indifferent manner, having no regard to the law of God, only now and then, as it happens, act according to it, but having no concern for the honour and glory of God:

and will not hearken unto me; to his voice in his laws and his precepts, or by his prophets, exhorting them to obedience to them:

I will bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins; greater and sorer punishments still, and these more frequently repeated, and in proportion to their transgressions of his righteous laws.

Leviticus 26:22

Ver. 22. I will also send wild beasts among you,.... Either in a literal sense, as lions, bears, wolves, &c. and so is the reverse of what is promised to them on their doing well, Le 26:6; or figuratively, mighty monarchs and cruel oppressors, such as were the kings of Assyria and Babylon, Jer 50:17;

which shall rob you of your children; as the bears, in a literal sense, destroyed the children of them in the times of Elisha, **2Ki 2:24**;

and destroy your cattle; the tame beasts, who often become a prey to the wild ones, as both those of the flock, and of the herd, sheep and oxen, do to lions, wolves, &c.

and make you few in number; or diminish them, their number, by bereaving them of their children, and their wealth and substance, by destroying their cattle:

and your [high] ways shall be desolate; or ways, the word high not being in the text, and may signify both their public and private ones, which would be all forsaken, none caring to venture to walk in them for fear of beasts of prey.

Leviticus 26:23

Ver. 23. And if ye will not be reformed by these things,.... Corrected and amended by these punishments, be prevailed upon to return from their evil ways to the Lord, and walk in his commandments, and keep his judgments, and do them:

but will walk contrary unto me; See Gill on "Le 26:21".

Leviticus 26:24

Ver. 24. Then I will also walk contrary unto you,.... Opposing himself unto them as their enemy, fighting against them in his providence, whetting his sword, bending his bow, and causing the arrows of his wrath and vengeance to fall upon them; or behaving towards them in a careless and indifferent manner, not regarding what befell them, showing no peculiar concern for them, or as exercising any particular providence over them; but as if everything came by chance to them, which was the language of their actions, if not of their lips:

and will punish you yet seven times for your sins; add fresh corrections, and these greater than before, and more numerous in proportion to their aggravated transgressions.

Leviticus 26:25

Ver. 25. And I will bring a sword upon you,.... War upon them by the sword of their enemies; they that use and kill with the sword, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; their neighbours that delighted in war, and bore an implacable, hatred unto them, and gladly embraced every opportunity of shedding their blood, and ravaging their country:

that shall avenge the quarrel of [my] covenant; the covenant made with them at Sinai, which they transgressed, and for which vengeance would be taken on them in this way, God so ordering it in his providence, though the enemy meant it not, Isa 10:5;

and when ye are gathered together within your cities; from the fields and villages, fleeing from the enemy invading and destroying, to their fortified towns and cities for safety:

I will send the pestilence among you; which shall destroy those that escaped the sword, and thought themselves safe in a strong city, and even the very soldiers in the garrisons, who were set for the defence of the city:

and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy; so many being taken off by the pestilence, there would not be a sufficient number to defend the place, and therefore obliged to give it up, by which means those that escaped the pestilence would fall into the hands of the enemy.

Leviticus 26:26

Ver. 26. [And] when I have broken the staff of your bread,.... Brought a famine, at least a scarcity of provisions upon them, deprived them of bread, the staff of life, by which it is supported; or however made it very scarce among them, so that they had hardly a sufficiency to sustain nature, and perhaps the blessing of nourishment withheld from that; see **Isa 3:1**;

ten women shall bake your bread in one oven; for want of wood, according to Jarchi; or rather through scarcity of bread corn, they should have so little to bake every week, that one oven would be sufficient for ten families, which in a time of plenty each made use of one for themselves; and so Aben Ezra says, it was a custom in Israel for every family to bake in an oven by themselves, which they ate the whole week. Ten is a certain number for an uncertain, and denotes many, as in **Zec 8:23**. Making and baking bread was the work of women in the eastern countries, as we find it was particularly among the Persians {n}, and continues to this day among the Moors and Arabs {o}:

and they shall deliver [you] your bread again by weight; there being not enough for everyone to eat what they pleased, but were obliged to a rationed allowance, therefore everyone in the family should have their share delivered to him by weight; see **Eze 4:16**;

and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied; not having enough to eat to satisfaction; or what they did eat, God would withhold a blessing from it for their nourishment, the reverse of Le 26:5.

{n} Herodot. Polymnia, sive. l. 4. c. 187. {o} Shaw's Travels, p. 241. Ed. 2.

Leviticus 26:27

Ver. 27. And if ye for all this will not hearken unto me,.... To his commands, and to his prophets sent unto them time after time, and all his corrections and chastisements being ineffectual to reform them, and make them obedient to him:

but walk contrary unto me; See Gill on "Le 26:21".

Leviticus 26:28

Ver. 28. Then I will walk contrary to you also in fury,.... As in Le 26:24; with this addition, in fury; being greatly provoked, and highly incensed, that no regard was had to him, neither to his commands, nor to his corrections; and therefore would be determined to stir up his wrath, and pour out the fury of his indignation on them, which must be terrible;

and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins; add new and many more chastisements, and that in hot displeasure, for their sins; and the repetition or doubling of the phrase, "I, even I, will do it", denotes the certainty of it, and that he will do it himself, and his hand should be visible in it; and they should feel the weight of it, and be obliged to own that these were punishments inflicted by him for their sins.

Leviticus 26:29

Ver. 29. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons,.... Which was fulfilled at the siege of Samaria, in the times of Joram, **2Ki 6:29**; and at the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, **La 4:10**; and though there is no instance of it at that time in the sacred records, the Jews {p} tells us of one Doeg ben Joseph, who died and left a little one with his mother, who was very fond of him; but at this siege slew him with her own hands, and ate him, with respect to which they suppose Jeremiah makes the lamentation, **La 2:2**; and of this also there was an instance at the last siege of Jerusalem, by Titus, when a woman, named Mary, of a considerable family, boiled her son, and ate part of him, and the rest was found in her house when the seditious party broke in upon her, as Josephus {q} relates:

and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat; of which, though no instances are given, it is as reasonable to suppose it was done as the former. Some of the Jewish writers {r} think, that in this prediction is included, that children should eat their parents, as well as parents their children, as in **Eze 5:10**.

{p} Torat Cohanim in Yalkut, par. 1. fol. 197. 1. {q} De Bello. Jud. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 4. {r} Torat Cohanim, ib.

Leviticus 26:30

Ver. 30. And I will destroy your high places,.... Which Jarchi interprets of towers and palaces; but Aben Ezra of the place of sacrifices; for on high places, hills and mountains, they used to build altars, and there offer sacrifices, in imitation of the Heathens;
See Gill on "Eze 6:13";

and cut down your images; called Chammanim, either from Ham, the son of Noah, the first introducer of idolatrous worship after the flood, as some have thought; or from Jupiter Ammon, worshipped in Egypt, from whence the Jews might have these images; or rather from Chammah, the sun, so called from its heat; so Jarchi says, there were a sort of idols placed on the roofs of houses, and because they were set in the sun, they were called by this name; and Kimchi {s} observes they were made of wood, and made by the worshippers of the sun, see 2Ki 23:11; but Aben Ezra is of opinion that these were temples built for the worship of the sun, which is the most early sort of idolatry that appeared in the world, to which Job may be thought to refer, Job 31:26. Some take these to be the puraiyeia, or "fire hearths", which Strabo {t} described as large enclosures, in the midst of which was an altar, where the (Persian) Magi kept their fire that never went out, which was an emblem of the sun they worshipped; and these, he says, were in the temples of Anaitis and Omanus, and where the statue of the latter was in great pomp; which idol seems to have its name from the word in the text; and these are fitly added to the high places, because on such, as Herodotus {u} says, the Persians used to worship:

and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols; or "dunghill gods" {w}; such as the beetle, the Egyptians worshipped, signifying that they and their idols should be destroyed together:

and my soul shall abhor you; the reverse of Le 26:6; and by comparing it with that, this may signify the removal of the divine Presence from them, as a token of his abhorrence of them; and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it.

{s} Sepher Shorash. rad. Mmx & Nmx. {t} Geograph. l. 15. p. 504. {u} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 131. {w} Mkylwlg "stercoreorum deorum vestrorum", Junius & Trernellius, Piscator, Drusius.

Leviticus 26:31

Ver. 31. I will make your cities waste,.... By suffering the enemy to besiege them, enter into them, and plunder them, and destroy the houses in them, and reduce them to the most desolate condition, as Jerusalem, their metropolis, was more than once:

and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation; the temple, so called from the several apartments in it, the court, the holy place, and the most holy; or rather both sanctuaries or temples are intended, the first built by Solomon, and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar; the second rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and adorned by Herod, and reduced to ashes by Titus Vespasian: the Jews understand this of their synagogues, which were many both in Jerusalem, and in other parts of their country, but cannot be intended, since it follows:

and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours: of their incense offered on the altar of incense; or the savour of their offerings, as the Targum of Jonathan, of their burnt offerings, and the fat of their other offerings burnt on the altar of burnt offering; signifying, that these would not be acceptable to him, or he smell a savour of rest in them; see **Ge 8:21**; now these were only offered in the temple, not in synagogues.

Leviticus 26:32

Ver. 32. And I will bring the land into desolation,.... The whole country of Judea, cities, towns, villages, fields, vineyards, &c. through the ravage and plunder of the enemy; and they being driven out of it, and carried captive from it, and so the land left untilled, and become barren and unfruitful:

and your enemies which dwell therein; having destroyed them, or cast them out, and sent them into other countries, and took possession of theirs in their room;

shall be astonished at it; at the desolation of the land, that such a fruitful country, a land flowing with milk and honey, should be turned into barrenness, for the wickedness of its inhabitants, and shall be amazed at the judgments of God upon them and that.

Leviticus 26:33

Ver. 33. And I will scatter you among the Heathen,.... As with a fan, Jer 15:7; so they were at the time of the Assyrian and Babylonish captivities, some were carried to one place, and some to another, some fled to one place, and some to another, and they are at this day scattered among the several nations of the world;

and will draw out a sword after you; draw it out of its scabbard, and with it pursue after them, when fleeing or going whither they should not; as the remainder of the Jews in Judea sought to go to Egypt, contrary to the will of God, Jer 42:16; see Le 26:25;

and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste; for want of men to till the one, and inhabit the other.

Leviticus 26:34

Ver. 34. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths,.... The sabbatical years, or seventh year sabbaths, when, according to the law in the preceding chapter, it was to rest from tillage, Le 25:2:

as long as it lieth desolate, and ye [be] in your enemies' land; so long it should lie uncultivated, at least in part, there not being a sufficient number left to till it in general, or as it should be; this was the case during the seventy years' captivity in Babylon;

[even] then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths; or complete them, as Aben Ezra, which is a bitter sarcasm upon them for their neglect of observance of the law concerning the sabbatical years; but now the land should have its sabbaths of rest whether they would or not; and it seems as if it was on account of this sin, as well as others, that they were carried captive; and it is remarkable, if what Maimonides {x} says is right, that it was at the going out or end of a sabbatical year, that the first temple was destroyed, and the Jews carried captive, and endured a seventy years' captivity; which some say was because they had neglected seventy sabbatical years; see 2Ch 36:21.

{x} Hilchot Shemitah Vejobel, c. 10. sect. 3.

Leviticus 26:35

Ver. 35. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest,.... From tillage, neither man nor beast working upon it; for which reason such a space of time was called a sabbath:

because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when you dwelt upon it; they manured and tilled it on the seventh years, as on others, neglecting the command which God had given them; and this they did not once or twice, but many times, while they were dwellers in the land; which seems to confirm pretty much the notion of their having omitted so many years, though that cannot be affirmed with certainty; see Jarchi on the place.

Leviticus 26:36

Ver. 36. And upon them that are left [alive] of you,.... In the land of Judea, or rather scattered about among the nations, suggesting that these would be comparatively few:

I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; or "a softness" {y}; so that they should be effeminate, pusillanimous, and cowardly, have nothing of a manly spirit and courage in them; but be mean spirited and faint hearted, as the Jews are noted to be at this day, as Bishop Patrick observes; who also adds,

"it being scarce ever heard, that a Jew listed himself for a soldier, or engaged in the defence of his country where he lives:"

and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; either the sound of a leaf that falls from the tree, as the Targum of Jonathan, or which the wind beats one against another, as Jarchi, which makes some little noise; even this should terrify them, taking it to be the noise of some enemy near at hand, just ready to fall on them; such poor faint hearted creatures should they be;

and they shall flee as fleeing from the sword; as if there were an army of soldiers with their swords drawn pursuing them:

and they shall fall when none pursueth; fall upon the ground, and into a fit, and drop down as if dead, as if they had been really wounded with a sword and slain, see Pr 28:1.

{y} Krm "mollitiem", Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius.

Leviticus 26:37

Ver. 37. And they shall fall one upon another,.... In their hurry and confusion, everyone making all the haste he can to escape the imaginary danger; or "a man upon his brother" {z}; his friend, as Aben Ezra interprets it, having no regard to relation and friendship, every one endeavouring to save himself. There is another sense which some Jewish writers {a} give of this phrase, and is observed by Jarchi, which is, that everyone shall fall for the iniquities of his brother; for all the Israelites say, they are sureties for one another; but the former sense is best:

as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: as if a sword was drawn and brandished at them, just ready to be thrust in them, filling them with the utmost dread and terror, and yet at the same time none in pursuit of them:

and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies; no heart to resist them, no strength nor spirit to oppose them, and defend themselves but be obliged to surrender their cities, themselves, their families and goods, into the hand of the enemy.

{z} wyxab vya "vir in fratrem suum", Vatablus, Drusius, Piscator. {a} Torat Cohanim apud Yalkut, par. 1. fol. 197. 2.

Leviticus 26:38

Ver. 38. And ye shall perish among the Heathen,.... Not utterly, but great numbers of them, through change of air, and different diet, as Aben Ezra, and through the cruel usage of their enemies; for there is a body of them which continues unto this day; unless this is to be understood of the ten tribes, as R. Akiba {b} interprets it, who are supposed to be entirely lost and swallowed up among the nations where they were carried captive:

and the land of your enemies shall eat you up; they should die in it through one disease or another; by the pestilence, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so be buried in it; in which sense it may be said to eat them up, or consume them, for the grave swallows up and consumes all that are put into it; Jarchi says, this is to be understood of those that die in captivity.

{b} In Torat Cohanim, ut supra. (par. 1. fol. 197. 2.)

Leviticus 26:39

Ver. 39. And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands,.... Such as were not taken off by any public calamity, as the sword or pestilence should gradually diminish and melt away like wax before the fire, and die in and for their iniquities in an enemy's country, see Eze 24:23;

and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them; or for the iniquities of their evil fathers, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; they treading in their steps, and doing the same evil deeds, whereby they filled up the measure of their fathers' sins, and brought upon them deserved punishment. Mt 23:32.

Leviticus 26:40

Ver. 40. If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers,.... The Targum of Jonathan adds,

"in the time of their distress;"

which might serve to bring their sins to remembrance, and them to a confession of them, not only of their own sins, but of their fathers' also; acknowledging thereby that they had been guilty of sinning against God for a long course of years past; and that God had been long suffering towards them, and bore much with them before he brought his judgments on them, which were just, and what they righteously deserved; and such a confession Daniel made, **Da 9:4**; and the words may as well be rendered absolute as conditional, or better, and as a prediction of what would be done by them when in captivity and distress, "and they shall confess their iniquity" {c}; with shame and sorrow, with repentance for it, and abhorrence of it; or otherwise, if the confession was only verbal and hypocritical, it would not be acceptable:

with their trespass which they trespassed against me; along with their own iniquities, and those of their fathers, they should confess, their trespass against the Lord would be acknowledged by them; which seems to design some particular and grievous sin committed by them, by which perhaps is meant their idolatry, a capital sin, directly against God, and what those people were prone unto:

and that also they have walked contrary unto me; to his mind and will, to his laws, commands, statutes, and ordinances, disregarding him and them, as if enemies to him; or "by chance"; See Gill on "Le 26:21".

{c} wdwthw "et confitebuntur", Pagninus, Montanus.

Leviticus 26:41

Ver. 41. And [that] I also have walked contrary unto them,.... Showed no regard unto them, as if he took no care of them, or in a providential way concerned himself for them, but let what would befall them; yea, came out in the way of his judgments against them, as if he was an enemy to them, See Gill on "Le 26:24";

and have brought them into the land of their enemies; should acknowledge the hand of God in it, that he himself brought them out of their own country into an enemy's land, as Assyria, Babylon, and other nations: and that this was not the chance of war, or owing to the superior power or skill of their enemies, but to the just judgment of God upon them for their sins, who on that account delivered them up into the hands of their enemies:

if then their uncircumcised heart be humbled; their foolish proud heart, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; it signifies a sinful, wicked, hard, and impenitent heart, brought to a sense of sin, to repentance and humiliation for it. Jarchi interprets it, "or if their uncircumcised heart", &c. as in **Ex 2:23**; and observes another sense of the word, "perhaps their uncircumcised heart", &c. not only would in words confess their sins, but be truly humbled at heart for them:

and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; take it well at the hand of God, bear it patiently without murmuring, or thinking themselves hardly dealt by, but freely owning it is less than their iniquities deserve; or complete and finish the punishment of their sins, as Aben Ezra, which upon their humiliation should be put an end to, and cease. Jarchi takes the word in the sense of atonement and pacification, as if by their chastisement their sins were expiated {d}, and God was pacified toward them: but rather it denotes the free and full pardon of their sins, manifested to them upon their repentance and humiliation for sin.

{d} Siphri apud Yalkut, ut supra. (par. 1. fol. 197. 2.)

Leviticus 26:42

Ver. 42. Then i will also remember my covenant with Jacob,.... Would fulfil and make good all that he had promised in covenant with Jacob, and his posterity: the account begins with him, and rises upwards to Abraham, whereas it usually begins with Abraham, and descends to Jacob; no sufficient reason is given for this alteration, though several are attempted by the Jewish writers {e}:

and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; which chiefly respects the multiplication of their seed, the continuance of them, and the Messiah springing from them; which is the mercy promised to these fathers, and the principal part of the covenant made with them, and which was remembered and performed when God visited and redeemed his people by him, **Lu 1:68**;

and I will remember the land; the land of Judea, and return the Jews to it, and make it fruitful, after he had given it rest from tillage for many years, which was fulfilled at their return from the captivity of Babylon.

{e} Saadiah Gaon apud Aben Ezram in loc. Pesikta & alii.

Leviticus 26:43

Ver. 43. The land also shall be left of them,.... This seems to refer to a second time, when this should be the case of the land of Judea again, as it was when subdued by the Romans, and the Jews were carried captive from it, and so it was left by them, as it has been ever since:

and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while lieth desolate without them; shall be as in the sabbatical years, uncultivated, neither ploughed nor sown, nor reaped; and thus the land of Canaan, though once so very fruitful, is now desolate and barren, being without its former inhabitants, and so it is like to be until it is restored to them again;

and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity; that is, when made sensible of their sins, and particularly of their iniquity of rejecting the Messiah; they will not think it hard that they have been punished in so severe a manner, but own the righteous hand of God in it, and be humble under it; and confessing their sins with true sorrow and repentance for them, looking at him whom they have pierced, and mourn, shall have the free and full remission of their sins applied unto them:

because, even, because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes; despised and abhorred Christ, his doctrines and ordinances, which was the reason of their being carried captive out of their land, when it was forsaken by them, and lay desolate as to this day, especially with respect to any benefit of it enjoyed by them; and which, when they are sensible of, will be a reason of their accepting the punishment of their iniquity so readily, and not murmur at the hand of God upon them, or reflect on his dealings with them, but freely and fully confess their sins, that he may be justified in all that he has done.

Leviticus 26:44

Ver. 44. And yet for all that,.... I will have on them, in or through my Word, as the Targum of Jonathan; notwithstanding their many and great sins and transgressions, and the sad and miserable condition they were brought into by them, the Lord would have mercy on them and be gracious to them, through Christ and for his sake, and convert and save them, see Ro 11:26; the Jews, as Fagius tells us, wonderfully delight themselves with this passage, and read it with the greatest joy and pleasure, and with an elevated voice; concluding from hence that they shall certainly return to their own land; and because the first word in this verse is in sound the same as the Germans use for an "ape", they call this paragraph "the golden ape", and say, when this shall be fulfilled the golden age will take place with them: a very learned man {f} has wrote a dissertation upon it: when

they shall be in the land of their enemies; of the Romans and other nations, among whom they have been disposed ever since the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus:

I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly; for though they have been cast away by the Lord out of their land, and from being his people, and enjoying either the civil or religious privileges they formerly did; and though they have been cast off with abhorrence, and had in great detestation by him, for their sin of rejecting the Messiah, as appears by the punishment inflicted on them; yet not so as to make an utter end of them as a body of people, for, notwithstanding their dispersion everywhere, and their long captivity, they remain a distinct people from all others, which seems to forebode something favourable to them:

and to break my covenant with them; which he will not do, even his promise of the future call and conversion of them, and of their return to their own land:

for I [am] the Lord their God; their covenant God, and a covenant keeping God, Ro 11:27.

{f} Carpzovius de aurea Judaeorum Simia, in Thesaur. Theolog. Philolog. vol. 1. p. 344. vid. Pfeiffer. dubia vexata cent. 2. loc. 17. p. 145.

Leviticus 26:45

Ver. 45. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors,.... Or rather, "remember to them" {g}, to their good and benefit, for their profit and advantage, not for their desert and merit, for any worth or worthiness in them; this covenant respects not the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as in Le 26:42; but with their fathers, either at Sinai, or rather in the plains of Moab,
De 29:1, for it follows:

whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the Heathen, that I might be their God; whom he brought out of great bondage and distress in Egypt, with an high hand and outstretched arm, and in the sight of the Egyptians, who were not able to oppose it, yea, because of their plagues, were urgent for it; and in the sight of all the nations round about, who heard of the wonderful power of God in the deliverance of his people; and this he did that he might appear to be their covenant God, who had taken them into covenant with him, and had taken them under his care and protection, and would be still their King and their God; and who also, in like manner, it may be here suggested, would deliver the people of the Jews out of their present exiled and captive state and condition in the sight of the whole world, and declare himself their covenant God and Father:

I [am] the Lord; whose will is sovereign, whose power is uncontrollable, who is a covenant keeping God, faithful to his promises, and able to perform them.

{g} Mhl ytrkzw "et recordabor eis", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "erga eos", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Leviticus 26:46

Ver. 46. These [are] the statutes, and judgments, and laws,.... Which refer not only to those in this chapter, but in all the preceding chapters in this book, and respect them all, whether ceremonial, moral, or judicial, which may be signified by these three words:

which the Lord made between him and the children of Israel; the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are,

"between his Word and the children of Israel:"

in Mount Sinai; or near it, in the wilderness of it, while the children of Israel lay encamped about it:

by the hand of Moses; they were first delivered to him, and by means of him to the people.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Leviticus 27:1

INTRODUCTION TO LEVEITICUS 27

This chapter contains various laws concerning vows made unto the Lord, whether of persons whose estimation was to be made by the priest, according to their age, sex, and condition, Le 26:1; or of beasts, clean and unclean, good or bad, Le 26:9; or of houses, fields, and lands, the estimation of which was to be according to its seed, and the time of its being set apart, whether from or after the year of jubilee, and the number of years to it, Le 26:14; with this exception to the above laws, that no firstling of the Lord's might be sanctified, and if an unclean beast it might be redeemed, but nothing devoted to the Lord, whether of man, beast, or field, might be sold or redeemed,
Le 26:26; and the chapter is concluded with some laws concerning the

redemption or change of tithes, what might or what might not be redeemed or changed, Le 26:30;

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... After he had delivered the body of laws in the preceding chapter, which by the close of the last seem to have been finished; but here some rules and instructions concerning vows are given, which a man was not obliged to make, but which he did of his own freewill and good pleasure: saying; as follows.

Leviticus 27:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,.... This being an affair which only concerned them; for the Jewish writers say {h}, by this phrase, the children of Israel, Gentiles are excluded:

when a man shall make a singular vow; an unusual, an uncommon one, a very distinguished one, and even what is wonderful, as the word signifies; as when a man, through uncommon zeal for God and his service, devotes himself, or his children, or his cattle, or his houses or fields, to the Lord: the word "man", the Jewish writers say {i}, includes every male, and even a Gentile; yea, it is said all estimate and are estimated, vow and are vowed, priests, and Levites, and Israelites, women and servants {k}: the persons shall be for the Lord by thy estimation: as when a man devoted himself or any that belonged to him to the service of the sanctuary, out of his great zeal for it, as to assist the priests and Levites in the meaner sort of work, as to carry wood and draw water, and sweep the tabernacle, and the like; they were not allowed to do these things, partly because it was not the will of God that any or every Israelite should be employed in such menial service, and partly because there were men appointed for such work, as well as to prevent too great a number of persons in the sanctuary, which would be troublesome, and only stand in one another's way; wherefore, on every devoted person to such service a value or price was set, according to the rules after given, which were to be paid in to the priests for the service of the sanctuary, the repair of the house, &c. see 2Ki 12:4; the word may be rendered, agreeably to the accents, "according to thy estimation of souls (or persons) the vow shall be to the Lord" {l}; that is, the price of the person devoted, according to the estimation of the priest, or as settled by the Lord in some following verses, shall be given to him: the word "souls" being used, the Jewish doctors understand it of estimation or value of that on which the soul or life depends; thus, for instance, if a man says, the value of my hand or of my feet be upon me, he says nothing; but if he says, the value of my head or of my liver be upon me, he gives the whole value, i.e. of himself; if he says, the half of my value be upon me, he gives the half of it; but if he says, the value of half of me, he gives the whole value: this is the general rule, that on which the soul or life depends pays the whole value {m}; for a man cannot live without his head, or without his liver, or when half of himself is taken away.

{h} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Eracin, c. 1. sect. 2. {i} Ibid. {k} Misn. Eracin, sect. 1. {l} hwhyl tvpn Kkreb "pro tua aestimatione animarum, votum erit" Domino, Reinbeck de Accent. Heb. p. 320; {m} Misn. Eracin, c. 5. sect. 2, 3.

Leviticus 27:3

Ver. 3. And thy estimation shall be,.... The estimation of the man himself that vowed, or of the priest for him, was not left to be made by either of them at their pleasure, but was to be made according to the following rules, in proportion to the age a person was of to be estimated:

of the male from twenty years old even unto sixty years old: the account begins with these, because men of an age from the one to the other are fittest for labour, and therefore to be set at the highest price, as they are in the next clause:

even that estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary; a shekel was about half a crown of our money, or somewhat less, so that fifty of these amounted to about six pounds: these shekels were to be of the full weight, according to the standard that was kept in the sanctuary, and were the highest price that was set upon any; and this was paid equally by all of the same age, whether rich or poor: hence it is said,

"in estimations there is nothing less than one shekel, nor more than fifty {n}."

{n} Misn. Eracin, c. 2. sect. 1.

Leviticus 27:4

Ver. 4. And if it [be] a female,.... That is, of the same age, full twenty years of age, and not more than sixty:

then thy estimation shall be thirty shekels; about three pounds ten shillings of our money, the price of a servant, Ex 21:32; the reason of this difference of estimation between a man and a woman is, because the woman is the weaker vessel, and her labour and service of less importance and worth, such as spinning, washing, &c.

Leviticus 27:5

Ver. 5. And if [it be] from five years old, even unto to twenty years old,.... Not that one of five years old is supposed to vow or to make an estimation, but one grown up, that says, the estimation of this little one, who is five years of age, be upon me; and such an one was bound to pay the value of him, which is as follows:

then thy estimation shall be of the male twenty shekels, and for the female ten shekels; which were for the one above two pounds, and for the other more than one pound; these were valued at a less price than the former, partly because, generally speaking, there are more die between the age of five and the age of twenty years than between twenty and sixty; and partly because within that time they are not capable of so much work and service as in the latter; and it may be observed, that the females of this age are not valued in proportion to the females of the other; the estimation of these being just half that of the males, whereas that of the other is more than half; the reason is, that women above twenty years of age, their service bears, a better proportion to that of men, than that of young women to young men under twenty.

Leviticus 27:6

Ver. 6. And if [it be] from a month old even unto five years old,.... That is, if a man devotes his child to the Lord within such an age, and says, the estimation of this my son or my daughter be upon me, then he was to pay the value, as next directed; for one under a month old no estimation was to be made: the Jews say,

"one less than a mouth old may be vowed, but not estimated {o}:"

then thy estimation shall be of the male five shekels of silver; somewhat more than ten shillings:

and for the female thy estimation [shall be] three shekels of silver; about seven shillings, which is the least value put on any; and though the lives of male or female at this age are equally uncertain, and the service of either of little worth when near the full time fixed; yet the preference is given to the male, as being of the more perfect kind, and its life generally most desirable.

{o} Misn. Eracin, c. 1. sect. 1.

Leviticus 27:7

Ver. 7. And if [it be] from sixty years old and above,.... When man is almost past his labour, and it is high time to leave off business;

if [it be] a male, then thy estimation shall between shekels; about one pound fifteen shillings:

and for the female ten shekels; about one pound three shillings; it may be observed that there is not the disproportion between a man and a woman in old age as in youth, with respect to the estimation of them; the reason of which is, because there is but little difference in their labour and service; nay, sometimes the woman is most useful and serviceable; for when a man, through age, is quite worn out and his labour gone, an older woman is capable of managing the affairs of the family, and is of great use and service, either by directing and advising, or by doing: so Jarchi observes, when persons come to old age, a woman is nearly to be reckoned as a man, and quotes a proverb of theirs, an old man in a house is a broken potsherd in the house (some interpret the word, a snare or stumbling block, that is in the way); an old woman in a house is a treasure in a house, a good sign in a house {p}, of great use in the management of the affairs of the family.

{p} T. Bab. Eracin, fol. 19. 1. vid. Yalkut, par. 1. fol. 198. 1.

Leviticus 27:8

Ver. 8. But if he be poorer than thy estimation,.... If he is so poor that he is not able to pay the value that, is set upon him, according to the rules before given:

then he shall present himself before the priest; that has made the estimation, according to the above directions, observing the difference of years, and of male and female; but if a person could not pay the said sums that were appointed, he might apply to the priest, and tell his case:

and the priest shall value him; put a price upon him he is able to pay, as follows:

according to his ability that vowed shall the priest value him; he was to examine into his circumstances, and as they appeared to him he was to put a value on him, which was to be paid, but not less than, a shekel; for if he could not pay that, it was to remain as a debt until he could {q}; and it was the ability of him that made the vow that was to be inquired into, and according to which the estimation was to be made, and not of him that was vowed: so it is said in the Misnah,

"ability is regarded in the vower, and years in the vowed, and estimations in the estimated, and according to the tithe of the estimation: ability in the vower, how? a poor man that estimates a rich man, pays the value of a poor man; and a rich man that estimates a poor man, pays the value of a rich man: if he is poor and afterwards becomes rich, or rich and afterwards poor, he pays the price of a rich man {r};"

but the sense which Jarchi gives is, that a priest in such a case was to judge according to what a man has, and so order him to pay, but was to leave him so as he might live, a bed and bolster, and working tools, and if he had an ass he might leave him that.

{q} Maimon. Hilchot Eracin, c. 3. sect. 4. {r} Misn. Eracin, c. 4. sect. 1, 2.

Leviticus 27:9

Ver. 9. And if [it be] a beast whereof men bring an offering to the Lord,.... That is, it such a creature is devoted, which is of that kind which are used in sacrifice to the Lord, such as bullocks, sheep, goats, rams, and lambs:

all that [any man] giveth of such unto the Lord shall be holy; shall be set apart to sacred uses, and not applied to profane or common uses, but either were for the use of the altar or of the priests; or the price of them for the repair of the sanctuary, according as they were devoted.

Leviticus 27:10

Ver. 10. He shall not alter it nor change it,.... Some think these two words signify the same, but Abarbinel {s} makes them different; according to him, to "alter" is for one of another kind, as one of the herd for one of the flock, or the contrary; and to "change" for one of the same kind:

a good for a bad, or a bad for a good; or, as the Targum of Jonathan,

"that which is perfect for that which has a blemish in it, or what has a blemish in it for that which is perfect;"

a change might not be made neither for the better nor for the worse, but the creature devoted was to be taken as it was; if not fit for sacrifice it was to be sold, and its price put to other uses; for, as Abarbinel {t} observes, whatsoever was devoted to sacred use was never to be put to any profane one; and this was also to teach men not to be hasty and fickle in such things, but to consider well what they did, and abide by it; for if such alterations and changes could be admitted of, a man after he had vowed might through covetousness repent, and bring a bad one instead of a good one, or, under pretence of bringing a good one instead of a bad one, might bring a bad one and say it was good, as Bechai {u} observes; even one worse than he had brought, thinking to impose upon the ignorance of the priest; and indeed if he was sincere in it, and had a mind to bring a better than what he had vowed, it was not allowed of; if he made any change, though it was for the better, he was to be beaten, as Maimonides {w} affirms:

and if he shall at all change beast for beast; whether of the same or of a different kind, or whether for better or worse:

then it and the exchange thereof shall be holy: both of them were to be the Lord's, and appropriated to sacred use, of one sort or another, either for sacrifice or for the priests family, or the price of it for the repairs of the sanctuary.

{s} Apud Muis. in loc. {t} Ibid. {u} Apud Muis. ib. {w} Hilchot Temurah, c. 1. sect. 1.

Leviticus 27:11

Ver. 11. And if [it be] any unclean beast, of which they do not offer a sacrifice unto the Lord,.... Any creature, excepting a dog, the price of which was not to be brought into the house of the Lord; besides oxen, sheep, goats, rams, and lambs; though some understand it even of such that have blemishes on them, and so not fit to be offered unto the Lord; so Jarchi and others {x}:

then he shall present the beast before the priest; to be viewed, examined, and judged of as to its worth, and a value put upon it, that it might be sold or redeemed, as no other but a beast might; so it is observed birds, wood, frankincense, and ministering vessels, have no redemption, for it is only said a beast {y}.

{x} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Menachot, c. 12. sect. 1. {y} Misn. ib.

Leviticus 27:12

Ver. 12. And the priest shall value it, whether it be good or bad,.... Put a price upon it according to its worth, as it shall appear to him:

as thou valuest it, [who art] the priest, so shall it be; that shall be the price at which it shall be sold, not to the owner or devoter of it, for he must give more, as appears from Le 27:13; but, as Jarchi observes, to all other men who come to purchase it.

Leviticus 27:13

Ver. 13. But if he will at all redeem it,.... The owner of it, or he that has devoted it, if he is determined to have it again at any rate:

then he shall add a fifth [part] thereof unto thy estimation; he shall give the full price for it, as rated by the priest, and for which it might be sold to another man, and a fifth part of the value of it besides; this was done that the full price might be paid for it, the priest not knowing, as it might be, the worth of it so well as the owner; and that the value of consecrated things might be kept to, and to make men careful how and what they devoted, since, though redeemable, they were obliged to pay a large price for them.

Leviticus 27:14

Ver. 14. And when a man shall sanctify his house [to be] holy unto the Lord,.... Shall set it apart for sacred service, devote it to holy uses, so that it may be sold, and the money laid out in sacrifices, the repairs of the temple, &c. under this any other goods are comprehended, concerning which the Jews say,

"he that sanctifieth his goods, and his wife's dowry is upon him, or he is a debtor; his wife cannot demand her, dowry out of that which is sanctified, nor a creditor his debt; but if he will redeem he may redeem, on condition that he gives the dowry to the wife, and the debt to the creditor; if he has set apart ninety pounds and his debt is an hundred, he may add a penny more, and with it redeem those goods, on condition he gives the wife her dowry and the creditor his debt: whether he sanctifies or estimates his goods, he has no power over his wife's or children's clothes, nor over coloured things, died on their account, nor on new, shoes he has bought for them {z}, &c."

again it is said {a},

"if anyone sanctified his goods, and there were among them things fit for the altar; wine, oil, and fowls, R. Eliezer says, they might be sold to those that need any of, that kind, and with the price of them burnt offerings might be bought, and the rest of the goods fell to the repair of the temple:"

then the priest shall estimate it whether it be good or bad; shall examine it of what size and in what condition it is, whether a large well built house or not, and whether in good repair or not, and accordingly set a price upon it:

as the priest shall estimate it, so shall it stand; according to the price he shall set upon it, it may be sold; whoever will give it may purchase it, excepting the owner or he that has sanctified it, he must pay a fifth part more, as follows.

{z} Misn. Eracin, c. 6. sect. 2, 5. {a} Misn. Shekalim, c. 4. sect. 8.

Leviticus 27:15

Ver. 15. And if he that sanctifieth it will redeem his house,.... An house set apart for holy uses might be redeemed, either by another paying the price set upon it by the priest, or by the original owner of it paying a fifth part more; and this was the case, whether of houses in walled cities or in villages: so Maimonides says, "he that sanctifies his house, whether it be one of those in walled cities, or of those in villages, it may be always redeemed; he that redeems one out of the hand of holiness (or which has been sanctified), if it is a house in a walled city, and remains in the possession of the redeemer twelve months, it is absolutely his; but if it is a house in the villages, and the jubilee comes, and it is in the possession of the redeemer, it returns to its owner in the jubilee {b}:"

but if the owner of it had a mind to redeem it after he had devoted it,

then he shall add the fifth [part] of the money of thy estimation unto it, and it shall be his; that is, he was to give a fifth part more for the house than it was valued at by the priest, or than another might have it for; the reason of which was, to make men careful how they sanctified or vowed their houses or goods, and that it might be certain that the full value was given for it, the worth of which the priest might not know so well as the owner, and the latter, being willing to give the price set by the former, might give suspicion of it; wherefore, in order to have the full price of it with certainty, and to set an high value on things devoted, the owner was to give a fifth part more than the estimation of it: thus, for instance, if an house thus devoted was valued by the priest at the price of an hundred pounds, the owner was obliged, if he would redeem it, to give an hundred twenty pounds.

{b} Hilchot Eracin, c. 5. sect. 3, 4.

Leviticus 27:16

Ver. 16. And if a man shall sanctify unto the Lord [some part] of a field of his possession,.... That which he enjoyed by inheritance from his father, to distinguish it from a field of his own purchase, as in Le 27:22; and which might be devoted, not all of it, but a part of it; partly that he might have something to live upon, or to improve for a livelihood for himself and family, and partly that estates might not be alienated entirely from their families and tribes in which they were:

then thy estimation shall be according to the seed thereof; not according to the field, the goodness or badness of that, one field being good and another bad, as Jarchi observes, but according to the quantity of seed which it produced, or rather which it required for the sowing of it;

an homer of barley seed [shall be valued] at fifty shekels of silver; which was near six pounds of our money; and here we must carefully distinguish between an "omer", beginning with an "o", and an "homer", beginning with an "h"; not observing this has led some learned men into mistakes in their notes on this place, for an "omer" was the tenth part of an "ephah", Ex 16:36; and an "ephah" is but the tenth part of an "homer", Eze 45:11; which makes a very great difference in this measure of barley, for an homer of it contained ten ephahs or bushels; and even according to this account a bushel of barley is rated very high, for ten bushels at fifty shekels, reckoning a shekel half a crown, or them at six pounds five shillings, are at the rate of twelve shillings and sixpence a bushel, which is too high a price for barley; wherefore as an ephah, the tenth part of an homer, contained three seahs or pecks, and which some call bushels, then an homer consisted of thirty bushels, which brings down the value of it to little more than two shillings a bushel, which is much nearer the true value of barley; but the truth of the matter is, that the value of barley for sowing is not ascertained, as our version leads us to think; for the words should be rendered, if the "seed be an homer of barley", it, the field, shall be valued "at fifty shekels of silver": if the field take so much seed to sow it as the quantity of an homer of barley, then it was to be rated at fifty shekels of silver; and if it took two homers, then it was to be rated at an hundred shekels, and so on.

Leviticus 27:17

Ver. 17. If he sanctify his field from the year of jubilee,.... The very year, as Aben Ezra, while it is current, or when it is past, and he immediately sanctifies it for an holy use, and one comes to redeem it, as Jarchi says, as soon as ever it is devoted, and a priest has valued it, and there is a purchaser of it:

according to thy estimation it shall stand; what price soever the priest set upon it, that it was to go at, and he that had a mind to purchase it might have it for it, unless it was he that devoted it, and then he was to give a fifth part more, as afterwards expressed.

Leviticus 27:18

Ver. 18. But if he sanctify his field after the jubilee,.... Some years after it, more or fewer, or it may be, when half way towards another jubilee, or nearer:

then the priest shall reckon unto him the money according to the years that remain, even unto the year of the jubilee; thus, for instance, if it only required an homer of barley to sow it, and the whole value of it from jubilee to jubilee was but fifty shekels of silver; then supposing it to be sanctified in the middle of the fifty years, or at twenty five years' end, it was to be reckoned at twenty five shekels, and sold for that money, and so in proportion, reckoning a shekel for a year:

and it shall be abated from thy estimation; not the year of jubilee, but a shekel for every year was to be deducted from the original value of fifty shekels, according to the number of years that had passed or were to come.

Leviticus 27:19

Ver. 19. And if he that sanctified the field shall in any wise redeem it,.... Is desirous of it, and determined upon it at any rate, repenting that he had parted with it in this manner:

then he shall add the fifth [part] of the money of thy estimation to it: the Jerusalem Targum is, the fifth part of the shekels of silver: that is, if he has a mind to redeem it, and is resolved on it, as soon as he has sanctified it, then, besides the fifty shekels of silver it is rated at, and might be sold for to another, he must pay a fifth part thereof, that is, ten shekels more, for reasons before given,
Le 27:15;

and it shall be assured to him; remain firm and stable with him, abide by him, and he in the possession of it as his property, ever after, as if he had never sanctified it.

Leviticus 27:20

Ver. 20. And if he will not redeem the field,.... He that sanctified it, does not care to give for it the settled price of the fifth part besides, but chooses it should be disposed of for the uses he devoted it to:

or if he have sold the field to another man; that is, either the original owner having bought it and sold it again, or rather the priest, the treasurer, as Jarchi, who had the disposal of it, for the uses and purposes for which it was devoted, when sold by him:

it shall not be redeemed any more; it was not in the power of him that sanctified it to make a purchase of it again; the buyer of it might not sell it to him again, for otherwise, by that means, he might come at it cheaper than the law directs; besides, there is another reason for it, which is suggested in Le 27:21.

Leviticus 27:21

Ver. 21. But the field, when it goeth out in the jubilee,.... Out of the hand of him that bought it:

shall be holy unto the Lord, as a field devoted; though it went out of the hand of the purchaser, it did not return to him that sanctified or devoted it, but was separated to sacred uses for the service of the Lord; for every devoted thing, whether of man, beast, or field, was most holy to the Lord, Le 27:28;

the possession thereof shall be the priests'; it did not return to the treasurer of the sanctuary, who had sold it to another for the repair of the temple, as Jarchi observes, but as a devoted field it was given to the priests, as it is said, "everything devoted in Israel shall be thine", Nu 18:14; and even this was divided, as he says, between the priests of that ward or course that happened to be on the day of atonement of the jubilee year: but in case it never was redeemed, but remained sanctified in the year of jubilee, the priests did not possess it without paying for it; and so the Jewish canon runs {c},

"the jubilee comes, and the field is not redeemed, the priests enter into it, and pay the price of it;"

on which one of the commentators {d} observes, when anyone has redeemed it, the money becomes sacred for the repairs of the temple; and when the jubilee comes, it goes out (i.e. of the hands of the purchaser) to the priests freely; but if it is not redeemed, the priests must pay the price of fifty shekels, and take it; and if even it was bought by a priest before out of the hands of the treasurer, it went from him to his brethren the priests, in the year of jubilee: the rule is this,

"if any of the priests redeem it, and, lo, it is in his possession, he may not say, seeing it goes out to the priests in the year of jubilee, lo, it is in my possession, lo, it is mine, but it shall go out to all his brethren the priests {e}."

{c} Misn. Eracin, c. 7. sect. 4. {d} Bartenora in ib. {e} Misn. Eracin, c. 7. sect. 3.

Leviticus 27:22

Ver. 22. And if [a man] sanctify unto the Lord a field which he hath bought,.... With his own money, of some person in poverty and distress, who was obliged to sell it, and which, according to a former law, returned to the original proprietor in the year of jubilee:

which [is] not of the fields of his possession; which he has not by inheritance from his fathers. Jarchi observes, there is a difference between a field bought, and a field possessed; for a field bought is not divided to the priests in the year of jubilee, because a man cannot sanctify it but until the year of jubilee; for in the year of jubilee it would go out of his hands, and return to the owner; wherefore if he comes to redeem it, he must redeem it with the price fixed for the field of possession: the Jewish doctors are divided about a field bought of a father by a son, whether it is a field of purchase or of possession {f}.

{f} Misn. Eracin, c. 7. sect. 5.

Leviticus 27:23

Ver. 23. Then the priest shall reckon unto him the worth of thy estimation, [even] unto the year of jubilee,.... The priest was to estimate the field of purchase sanctified, and set a price upon it according to the best of his judgment, and give it to the person that sanctified it, or whoever would redeem it; and this estimate was made, according to the number of years there were to the year of jubilee:

and he shall give thine estimation in that day; the price set upon the field by the priest immediately, either the sanctifier, but without adding the fifth part, as in Le 27:19; so Maimonides {g} observes, or any other purchaser:

[as] a holy thing unto the Lord; to sacred uses, as the repairs of the temple, &c. to which the purchase money was appropriated.

{g} Hilchot Eracin, c. 4. sect. 26.

Leviticus 27:24

Ver. 24. In the year of jubilee, the field shall return unto him of whom it was bought,.... Not to him that sanctified it, whether he redeemed it or not; nor to him that bought it of the treasurer of the temple after it was sanctified; but to the original proprietor and owner of it, of whom he bought it that sanctified it, for so it follows:

[even] to him to whom the possession of the land [did belong]; which was a possession of his he had by inheritance from his fathers, and therefore, according to the law of the year of jubilee, was then to return to him, and could be retained no longer, nor even converted to holy uses; for as it is said in the Misnah {h},

"a field of purchase goes not out to the priests in the year of jubilee; for no man can sanctify a thing which is not his own;"

as what he had purchased was no longer his than to the year of jubilee, and therefore could not devote it to sacred uses for any longer time.

{h} Ut supra. (Hilchot Eracin, c. 4. sect. 26.)

Leviticus 27:25

Ver. 25. And all thy estimation shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary,.... The shekel kept in the sanctuary, which was the standard of all shekels; not that there was a shekel in the sanctuary different from the common one; for every shekel ought to have been as that, of the full weight and worth of it; and the estimation was to be according to such a shekel, and the money paid in such, even in full weight:

twenty gerahs shall be the shekel; which the Targum of Jonathan calls "meahs" or "oboli", one of which was about three halfpence of our money, scarce so much, and weighed near eleven grains, as Bishop Cumberland {i} has calculated: see Eze 45:12.

{i} Of Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 4. p. 111.

Leviticus 27:26

Ver. 26. Only the firstlings of the beasts,.... These are excepted from being sanctified, or set apart for sacred uses, for a very good reason, suggested in the next clause:

which should be the Lord's firstling, no man shall sanctify it; it being what he has a claim upon, and ordered to be sanctified to him by a law previous to this, Ex 13:2; wherefore to sanctify such a creature, would be to sanctify what was his before; not merely in a general sense, in which all creatures are his, but in a special sense, having in a peculiar manner required it as his; and therefore to sanctify, or vow to him, what was his before, must be trifling with him, and mocking of him:

whether [it be] ox, or sheep; the firstlings of either of them:

it [is] the Lord's; which he has claimed as his own special and peculiar property, antecedent to any vow of its owner.

Leviticus 27:27

Ver. 27. And if [it be] of an unclean beast,.... This is to be understood, not of the firstling of unclean creatures in common, which were to be redeemed with a lamb, and not with money, according to the estimation of the priest, and a fifth part added to that; but of such as were sanctified, or vowed, for the reparation of the sanctuary, as Jarchi notes:

then he shall redeem [it] according to thine estimation; the price the priest should set upon it, how much it was worth in his judgment:

and shall add a fifth [part] of it thereto; to the price, set upon a fifth part of that over and above the sum; this the sanctifier, or he that made the vow, was obliged to pay, if he thought fit to redeem it:

or if it be not redeemed; by him, he does not choose to give the price, and the fifth part:

then it shall be sold according to thy estimation; to another man, without the fifth part, that chooses to purchase it, and then the purchase money was laid out for sacred uses.

Leviticus 27:28

Ver. 28. Notwithstanding, no devoted thing that a man shall devote unto the Lord,.... This is a different vow from the former, expressed by "sanctifying"; for though "sanctifying" and "devoting" were both vows, yet the latter had an execration or curse added to it, by which a man imprecated a curse upon himself, if that itself, which he devoted, was put to any other use than that for which he devoted it; wherefore this sort of vow was absolute and irrevocable, and what was vowed was unalienable, and therefore not to be sold or redeemed as afterwards expressed, whereas things sanctified might:

of all that he hath, [both] of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; but must be put to the use for which it was devoted. This must be understood of such as were his own, and he had a right to dispose of; which were in his own power, as Aben Ezra interprets the phrase, "of all that he hath": if of men, they must be such as were his slaves, which he had a despotic power over; such as he could sell, or give to another, or leave to his children for a perpetual inheritance, Le 25:46; and could dispose of as he pleased, and so devote to the service of the priests: thus Jarchi interprets it of menservants and maidservants, Canaanitish ones; and if of beasts, such as were his own property, and not another's; and if of fields, such as were his possession by inheritance. Some Jewish writers, as Abendana, from the phrase, "of all that he hath", gather, that a man might devote only a part of what he had, and not the whole; and so it is said in the Misnah,

"a man may devote of his flock and of his herd, of his servants and maidens Canaanites, and of the field of his possession; but if he devote all of them, they are not devoted {k},"

the vow is null and void; and so one of the commentators {l} upon it says, he may devote some movable things, but not all; some of his Canaanitish servants and maidens, but not all; some part of the field of his possession, but not the whole: but a man's children, and Hebrew servants, and purchased fields, according to the Jewish canon, might not be devoted;

"if anyone devotes his son or his daughter, his servant or his handmaid, that are Hebrews, or the field of his purchase, they are not devoted (or to be reckoned so), for no man devotes (or ought to devote) what is not his own {m}."

A commentator {n} excepts his daughter, and says, he may devote his daughter, because he may sell her while a minor, but not an adult virgin; see Ex 21:7;

every devoted thing [is] most holy unto the Lord; and therefore not to be appropriated to any use but his, nor to be meddled with, not even touched or handled by any but the priests, as the most holy things that were eatable were only to be eaten by them.

{k} Eracin, c. 8. sect. 4. {l} Bartenora in ib. {m} lb. sect. 5. {n} Bartenora in Misn. Eracin, c. 8. sect. 5.

Leviticus 27:29

Ver. 29. None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed,.... This is said, not of such men as are devoted to the Lord, as in the preceding verse; for it is not said here as there, "none devoted unto the Lord", but of such as are devoted to ruin and destruction, for whom there was no redemption, but they must die; nor is it said, "which is devoted by men, but of men", or from among men; whether they be devoted by God himself, as all idolaters, and particularly the seven nations of the land of Canaan, and especially the Amalekites, who therefore were not to be spared on any account, but to be put to death, Ex 22:20. So in the Talmud {o}, this is interpreted of Canaanitish servants and handmaids; or whether devoted by men to destruction, either by the people of Israel, as their avowed enemies they should take in war, whom, and their cities, they vowed to the Lord they would utterly destroy, Nu 21:2; and of such Aben Ezra interprets the words of the text; or such as were doomed by the civil magistrates to die for capital crimes, by stoning, burning, strangling, and slaying with the sword. And this sense is given into by many; because the judges kill with many kinds of death, therefore, says Chaskuni, it is said "every devoted thing", as if he should say, with whatsoever of the four kinds of death the judges pass sentence of destruction on a man, he must die that death; so Jarchi and Ben Melech interpret it of such as go out to be slain, i.e. by the decree of the judges; and if one says, his estimation, or the price of him be upon me, he says nothing, it is of no avail:

[but] shall surely be put to death; as the same writer observes, lo, he goes forth

to die, he shall not be redeemed, neither by price nor estimation. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"he shall not he redeemed with silver, but with burnt offerings, and holy sacrifices, and petitions of mercy, because he is condemned by a sentence to be slain."

And of either, or of all of these, may the words be understood, and not as they are by some, as if Jewish parents and masters had such a power over their children and servants to devote them to death, or in such a manner devote them, that they were obliged to put them to death; for though they had power in some cases to sell, yet had no power over their lives to take them away, or to devote them to death, which would be a breach of the sixth command, and punishable with death; even a master that accidentally killed his servant did not escape punishment; nay, if he did him any injury, by smiting out an eye, or a tooth, he was obliged to give him his freedom, and much less had he power to take away his life, or devote him to destruction. Some have thought, that it was through a mistaken sense of this law, that Jephthah having made a rash vow sacrificed his daughter, Jud 11:30; but it is a question whether he did or not.

{o} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 38. 2.

Leviticus 27:30

Ver. 30. And all the tithe of the land,.... Of which there were various sorts, the first tithe, the tithe out of the tithe, the second tithe, and the poor's tithe, which are generally reduced to three,

"The first tenth part of all increase I gave to the sons of Aaron, who ministered at Jerusalem: another tenth part I sold away, and went, and spent it every year at Jerusalem:" (Tobit 1:7)

so Maimonides {p} says,

"after they had separated the first tithe every year, they separate the second tithe, as it is said De 14:22; and in the third year, and in the sixth, they separate the poor's tithe, instead of the second tithe:"

so that, properly speaking, there were but two tithes, though commonly reckoned three; the tithes of all eatables were given to the Levites every year, and a tenth part of that given by the Levites to the priests, and the second tithe was eaten by the owners; instead of which, according to the above writer, in the third and sixth years it was given to the poor, and called theirs; of this second tithe, Jarchi interprets this law, and so does Maimonides {q}:

[whether] of the seed of the land, [or] of the fruit of the tree, [is] the Lord's: is to be given to him as an acknowledgment of his being the proprietor of the land, and that all the increase of it is owing to his blessing, and therefore is given in way of gratitude to him: the former of these takes in all sorts of corn that is man's food, as wheat and barley; and the latter wine and oil, and all sorts of fruits that are eatable; for it is said to be a general rule, that whatever is for food, and is preserved (having an owner, and not being common), and grows up out of the earth, is bound to tithes {r}:

[it is] holy unto the Lord; the first tithe was eaten by the priests and Levites only, and the other before the Lord in Jerusalem only, and that by clean persons. Something of this kind obtained among the Heathens, it may be in imitation of this, particularly among the Grecians; Pisistratus {s} tells Solon, that everyone of the Athenians gave a tenth part of his inheritance, not to me, says he, who was their governor, but for public sacrifices, and the common good, and when engaged in war, to defray the charge of it; and so, by the oracle of Apollo, the Corcyraenans were directed to send to Olympia and Delphos the tenth part of the produce of their fields {t}; and by the same oracle, the island of the Syphnians, in which was a golden mine, were ordered to bring the tenth of it to the same place {u}. So the Pelasgi {w} in a time of scarcity vowed the tithes of all their increase to the gods, and having obtained their wish, devoted the tenth of all their fruits and cattle to them.

{p} Hilchot Maaser Sheni, c. 1. sect. 1. {q} Hilchot Maaser, c. 1. sect. 2. {r} Misn. Masserot, c. 1. sect. 1. {s} In Laert. Vit. Solon. p. 36. {t} Pausan. Phocica, sive, l. 10. p. 624. {u} Ibid. p. 628. {w} Dionys. Halicarnass. apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 4. p. 159.

Leviticus 27:31

Ver. 31. And if a man, will redeem [ought] of his tithes,.... Of his own, and not his neighbour's, as Jarchi observes; for if he redeemed the tithes of his neighbour, but did not add a fifth part, which he was obliged to do if he redeemed his own, as follows:

he shall add thereunto the fifth [part] thereof; besides giving the value for what part of his tithes he redeemed, he gave a fifth part of that sum over and above; as, supposing the tithe was worth fifty shillings, then he gave that, and ten shillings more, and so in proportion. The use of this redemption, as Jarchi suggests, was, that he might have liberty of eating it in any place: for he understands it of the second tithe, as before observed, and which was to be eaten at Jerusalem.

Leviticus 27:32

Ver. 32. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock,.... Of oxen and sheep, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; for this law only concerns such, as Maimonides {x} observes, for none but clean beasts were tithed, though the firstlings of unclean beasts were to be redeemed:

[even] of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord: which being slain, the blood and fat were to be offered the altar, and the flesh eaten by the owners, as Jarchi observes; who adds, this is not reckoned with the rest of the gifts of the priesthood; and we do not find it was given to the priests: the "rod", under which these are said to pass, is either the shepherd's rod, as Aben Ezra under, which they passed morning and evening, when led out or brought in, as in Jer 33:13; or the rod of the tither: the manner of tithing, as described by Maimonides, was this;

"he gathers all the lambs and all the calves into a field, and makes a little door to it, so that two cannot go out at once; and he places their dams without, and they bleat, so that the lambs hear their voice, and go out of the fold to meet them, as it is said, "whatsoever passeth under the rod"; for it must pass of itself, and not be brought out by his hand; and when they go out of the fold, after another, he begins and counts them with the rod, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and the tenth that goes out, whether male or female, whether perfect or blemished, he marks with a red mark, and says, this is the tithe {y}:"

the time of tithing the cattle was on the first of Elul or August; for so it is said {z},

"the first of Elul is the beginning of the year for the tithing of beasts;"

when they tithed all that were born the preceding year: but we are elsewhere told {a}, there were three times for tithing beasts; fifteen days before the passover, (which was the last of Adar or February,) and fifteen days before the Pentecost, and fifteen days before the feast of tabernacles, which was the last of Elul or August; and these tithings were made for the sake of those that went up to these feasts, that it might be certain the cattle sold and eaten were tithed.

{x} Hilchot Becorot, c. 6. sect. 1. {y} Ibid. c. 7. sect. 1. {z} Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 1. {a} Misn. Becorot, c. 9. sect. 1.

Leviticus 27:33

Ver. 33. He shall not search whether it be good or bad,.... In a good or bad state of health, fat or lean, perfect or blemished, but take it as it is, be it what it will:

neither shall he change it; neither for the better nor the worse, no alteration was to be made, but the beast was to be taken as it came:

and if he change it at all, then both it and the change shall be holy; be sacred to the Lord, and for his use and service; this was done to restrain men from making any alteration, since if they did, both the one and the other were taken from them; yea, were to be beaten with forty stripes, save one {b}; whether this change was of the herd with the flock, or of the flock with the herd; or of lambs with goats, or goats with lambs; or of males with females, or of females with males; or of perfect with blemished ones, or of blemished ones with perfect ones:

it shall not be redeemed; from whence the Jews {c} gather, that a tithe beast was not to be bought and sold, whether blemished or unblemished.

{b} Misnah Temurah, c. 1. sect. 1, 2. {c} Maimon. Hilchot Becorot, c. 6. sect. 5, 6.

Leviticus 27:34

Ver. 34. These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses,.... Meaning either what are contained in this chapter, or rather in the whole book, which he delivered to Moses:

for the children of Israel; to be observed by them, priests and people: and these were given to him

in Mount Sinai; either when upon it, or rather when near it, in the wilderness of it, after the tabernacle was set up, and the Lord spake to him out of that; see **Le 1:1**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS

This book has its name from the account it gives of the "numbers" of the children of Israel, twice taken particularly; which name it has with this Greeks and Latins, and so with the Syriac and Arabic versions; but with the Jews it is called sometimes "Vajedabber", from the first word of it, "and the Lord spake"; and sometimes "Bemidbar", from the fifth word of the first verse, "in the wilderness", and sometimes "Sepher Pikkudim"; or, as with Origen {a}, "Ammesph,kodim", the book of musters or surveys. That it was written by Moses is not to be doubted; and is indeed suggested by our Lord himself, **Joh 5:46** compared with **Nu 3:14**, and the references to it, in the New Testament, fully ascertain to us Christians the authenticity of it, as that of our Lord hinted at, and those of the apostle in 1Co 10:4. It contains an history of the affairs of the Israelites, and of their travel in the wilderness for the space of thirty eight years; though the principal facts it relates were done in the second year of their coming out of Egypt, and in the last of their being in the wilderness; and it is not merely historical, but gives a particular account of several laws, ceremonial and judicial, to be observed by the people of Israel, as well as has many things in it very instructive, both of a moral and evangelical nature.

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 1

In this chapter orders are given to Moses to take the number of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upwards, **Nu 1:1**; and the men that were to assist in this work, one of each tribe are mentioned by name, **Nu 1:4**; all which was accordingly done, **Nu 1:17**; and the particular numbers of each tribe are recorded, as they were taken, **Nu 1:20**; and the sum total is given, **Nu 1:45**; the Levites being excepted, who were employed about the tabernacle, and so not to be employed in military service, **Nu 1:47**; they encamped about that, while the Israelites pitched their tents every man by his own camp and standard, **Nu 1:52**.

{a} Apud Euseb. Hist. Ecclesiast. l. 6. c. 25.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai,.... Which is different from the wilderness of Sin, Ex 16:1; and had its name from the mountain so called, on which God gave the law of the decalogue, and where the Israelites had been encamped eleven months,
Ex 19:1;

in the tabernacle of the congregation; which had now been set up a whole month, and out of which the Lord had delivered to Moses the several laws recorded in the preceding book in that space of time,
Ex 40:17;

on the first [day] of the second month; the month Ijar, as the Targum of Jonathan, which answers to part of our April, and part of May, and was the second month of the ecclesiastical year, which began with Abib or Nisan:

in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt; that is, the children of Israel, who had now been a year and half a month out of it:

saying, as follows.

Numbers 1:2

Ver. 2. Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel,.... Excepting the Levites; nor were any account taken of the mixed multitude that came out of Egypt with the children of Israel, only of them; and this account was taken, partly to observe the fulfilment of the divine promise to Abraham concerning the multiplication of his seed, and partly that it might be observed, that at the end of thirty eight years from hence, when they were numbered again, there were but three left of this large number, their carcasses falling in the wilderness because of their sins; and chiefly, as Aben Ezra observes, this sum was now taken to fix their standards, and for their better and more orderly journeying and encampment; for on the twentieth of this month they set forward on their journey from hence,
Nu 10:11; the word for the order is in the plural number, take ye, being given both to Moses and Aaron, who were to take the number, and did, **Nu 1:3**;

after their families; into which their tribes were divided:

by the house of their fathers; for if the mother was of one tribe, and the father of another, the family was according to the tribe of the father, as Jarchi notes, a mother's family being never called a family, as Aben Ezra observes:

with the number of [their] names; of every particular person, whose name was inserted in a list or register:

every male by their poll; or head {b}; for none but males were numbered: the Lord's spiritual Israel are a numbered people, written in the book of life, placed into the hand of Christ, and exactly known by him, even by name; yea, all that belong to him are numbered, and the very airs of their heads,

{b} Mtlglgl "per capita sua", Pagninus, &c,

Numbers 1:3

Ver. 3. From twenty years old and upwards,.... All that had entered into their twentieth year, or, as it should rather seem, who were full twenty years of age, and all that were above it without any limitation; though some limit it to fifty, and others to sixty years, when men may be reasonably excused going to war; for to know who were fit for it seems to be a principal design of this order, as follows:

all that are able to go forth to war in Israel; who being about to journey, might expect to meet with enemies, with whom they would be obliged to engage in battle; and therefore it was proper to know their strength, and whom to call out upon occasion: Aben Ezra observes, that the phrase "in Israel" excepts the mixed multitude; those were not of Israel, and so not numbered, and perhaps not to be trusted or depended upon in war; nor were they mustered and marshalled by the standards of the several tribes; in a mystical sense, those numbered may signify the valiant of Israel, the same as the young men in **1Jo 2:14**; see **So 3:7**;

thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies; each tribe making a considerable army, See Gill on "Ex 7:4"; these people were now typical of the church of God in its militant state in the wilderness, for which they are provided, and prepared, and accoutred.

Numbers 1:4

Ver. 4. And with you there shall be a man of every tribe,.... Excepting Levi, of which Moses and Aaron were, to assist in taking the account, and to see that it was an exact and perfect one:

everyone head of the house of his fathers; and prince of the tribe he belonged to, as appears from **Nu 1:16** and **Nu 7:2**, where an account is given of the same persons as princes of the tribes that offered at the dedication of the altar, who here assisted in the taking this account; the Targum of Jonathan calls them each a prince, as Prince Elizur, &c.

Numbers 1:5

Ver. 5. And these [are] the names of the men that shall stand with you,.... Be present with Moses and Aaron when numbering the people; not merely as spectators of the affair, and inspectors of the accounts, but as assistants in the work; each man in his tribe, being best acquainted with the families and houses in it; and these men were not pitched upon by Moses and Aaron, nor chosen by their respective tribes, but were appointed and named by the Lord himself, which was doing them great honour:

of [the tribe] of Reuben: or "for Reuben" {c}, for the taking the number of men in this tribe; and so of all the rest, see **Nu 1:44**;

Elizur the son of Shedeur; from **Nu 1:5** the names of those several men are given, which were very proper for Moses and Aaron to know, though of little importance to us; nor the signification of their several names, given by Ainsworth and others; only, as Bishop Patrick observes, most of them show how much God was in the thoughts of those who, imposed these names on their children, several of them having in them "El" or "Eli", "God" or "my God", and "Shaddai", "Almighty" or "all-sufficient": to which may be added, that in some of them they seem to respect the Messiah, as Elizur, signifying "my God the rock"; and Shelumiel may be rendered, "God my peace"; and Zurishaddai, "my rock the Almighty", or "all-sufficient"; and Pedazhur, "the rock redeemeth": nor is there anything of any moment to be remarked, unless the order in which the several tribes are placed; and first the children of Leah, beginning with Reuben, the firstborn; and the rest, Simeon and Judah, are ranked according to their birth; Levi being omitted, because that tribe was not now numbered, and besides, Moses and Aaron were of it; and then Issachar and Zebulun; after those the children of Rachel, because of her honour and glory above the handmaids, as Aben Ezra remarks; who further observes, that it begins with Ephraim, following Jacob our father, that is, because of the blessing of Jacob, who preferred Ephraim the younger to Manasseh the elder; and here Ephraim and Manasseh are set before Benjamin, because they were in the place of Joseph; and after that the account goes on with Dan, because, he was the firstborn of the handmaids; and after him Asher, though the second son of Zilpah, is placed before Gad, the first son, because, says the same Aben Ezra, the Lord knew that he would be the head of those that encamped by the standard of Dan, and so is placed next to him; and after him Gad, who was the firstborn of Leah's handmaid; and Naphtali last of all, the second son of Bilhah: this order seems to be designed to suit with their encampments, and the form of them.

{c} Nbwarl "pro Ruben", Samar. vers. "ipsi Reuben", Montanus.

Numbers 1:6

Ver. 6. Of Simeon; Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.
See Gill on "Nu 1:5".

Numbers 1:7

Ver. 7. Of Judah; Nahshon the son of Amminadab.
See Gill on "Nu 1:5".

Numbers 1:8

Ver. 8. Of Issachar; Nethaneel the son of Zuar.
See Gill on "Nu 1:5".

Numbers 1:9

Ver. 9. Of Zebulun; Eliab the son of Helon. See Gill on "Nu 1:5".

Numbers 1:10

Ver. 10. Of the children of Joseph: of Ephraim; Elishama the son of Ammihud: of Manasseh; Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.
See Gill on "Nu 1:5".

Numbers 1:11

Ver. 11. Of Benjamin; Abidan the son of Gideoni.
See Gill on "Nu 1:5".

Numbers 1:12

Ver. 12. Of Dan; Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.
See Gill on "Nu 1:5".

Numbers 1:13

Ver. 13. Of Asher; Pagiel the son of Ocran. See Gill on "Nu 1:5".

Numbers 1:14

Ver. 14. Of Gad; Eliasaph the son of Deuel. See Gill on "Nu 1:5".

Numbers 1:15

Ver. 15. Of Naphtali; Ahira the son of Enan. See Gill on "Nu 1:5".

Numbers 1:16

Ver. 16. These [were] the renowned of the congregation,.... The most famous and eminent among the people, for their birth and pedigree, or for their excellent qualities of wisdom, courage, and the like; or "the called of the congregation" {d}, whom God had called by name and selected from the rest of the congregation to the above service, whereby great honour was done them: Aben Ezra says, the sense is, that the congregation did nothing until they had called them; with which agrees the note of Jarchi,

"who were called to every business of importance in the congregation:"

princes of the tribes of their fathers; as Elizur was prince of the children of Reuben, **Nu 7:30**; the same is there said of the rest in their respective tribes:

heads of thousands in Israel; the congregation of Israel being divided into thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, by the advice of Jethro, Ex 18:21; each of these divisions had a ruler over them, and thousands being the highest number, these princes were chiliarchs, rulers or heads of thousands.

{d} hdeh yayrq "convocati coetus", Montanus, Drusius; "convocati e coetu", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Numbers 1:17

Ver. 17. And Moses and Aaron took these men,.... They doubtless sent for them, and acquainted them with the nomination of them, by the Lord himself, for such a service; and they took them with them to the place where the number of the people was to be taken:

which are expressed by [their] names: in **Nu 1:16**, and that as declared by the mouth of God himself.

Numbers 1:18

Ver. 18. And they assembled all the congregation together on the first [day] of the second month,.... The month Ijar, as the Targum of Jonathan, answering to part of April and May: this was done on the selfsame day the Lord spake unto Moses about this affair, **Nu 1:1**; so expeditious were he and Aaron in doing the will of God:

and they declared their pedigrees; either Moses and Aaron, according to Aben Ezra, who inquired when they were born, because of the computation of twenty years; and then their birth was wrote down, as he says; or rather the people declared their pedigrees, of what tribe, family, and house they were, who their parents, when born, and so, of course, how old they were; Jarchi interprets it, they brought the books of their genealogies, and witnesses to confirm the birth of everyone of them, to show their genealogy according to their tribe; nor is it at all unlikely that every family and house, or master thereof, kept a register of those born to him in it, whereby their age could be ascertained as well as pedigree:

after their famines, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of their names, from twenty years old and upwards, by their poll: that is, every tribe gave an account of the families in it, every family what houses were in it, and every house what number of males were in it, and of what age; and such were numbered who were twenty years old and upward.

Numbers 1:19

Ver. 19. As the Lord commanded Moses,.... In this Moses and David differed in numbering the people of Israel; the one did it by an express command from God, and in obedience to it; the other without one, and against his will, 1Ch 21:17;

so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai; where they now were when this order was given, **Nu 1:1**; and from whence they removed the twentieth day of this month, Nu 10:11; so that in less than three weeks time, perhaps much sooner, this affair was finished; and it may be, that the place of numbering them at this time is expressly observed, to distinguish it from another numbering of them, recorded in this book, which was done in the plains of Moab, Nu 26:2.

Numbers 1:20

Ver. 20. And the children of Reuben, Israel's eldest son,.... Were numbered first, and next to them those of Simeon and Gad, for they were numbered according to the order in which they were to be encamped; for under Reuben's standard were Simeon and Gad, and under Judah's Issachar and Zebulun, and under Ephraim's Manasseh and Benjamin, and under Dan's Asher and Naphtali; and according to their order were the tribes numbered:

by their generations: or "their generations", the birth, descent, and pedigree of them:

after their families, by the house of their fathers: according to the families and houses to which they belonged;

according to the number of the names by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward; their names were taken down, the number of them counted by their heads, even all the males that were above twenty years of age:

all that were able to go forth to war; which phrase, as it suggests that before this age they were not reckoned able bodied men for war, in common, though some might; so it seems to except all infirm persons, by reason of age and otherwise: now in all the other account of the numbering of the rest of the tribes, the same forms of expression are used as here, only the tribe of Simeon, which is the next, these words are left out, "by their polls, every male", which being twice observed, need not be repeated, since by these instances it might be sufficiently known that the number was taken by a poll, and only of males; so that in **Nu 1:23**, there is nothing material to observe, or anything different from what is in this verse, but the particular sums of each tribe numbered, which stand thus: of the tribe of Reuben 46,500; of the tribe of Simeon, 59,300; of the tribe of Gad, 45,650; of the tribe of Judah, 74,600; of the tribe of Issachar, 54,400; of the tribe of Zebulun, 57,400; of the tribe of Ephraim, 40,500; of the tribe of Manasseh, 32,200; of the tribe of Benjamin 35,400; of the tribe of Dan, 62,700; of the tribe of Asher 41,500; of the tribe of Naphtali, 53,400; in which may be observed the various increase of the tribes, agreeably to divine predictions, and according to the sovereign will and infinite wisdom of God: Reuben, the firstborn, did not excel in number, six of the tribes having more in number than he: Judah had by far the greatest increase of them all, from whom the chief ruler was to come, and even the King Messiah; and in process of time was to become a kingdom of itself; Ephraim, the younger son of Joseph, was much more fruitful than Manasseh, his elder, more than eight thousand being numbered of the former than of the latter, all which agree with Jacob's prophecies,
Ge 49:4; nor had they always the greatest number who had the most sons at their going down into Egypt; for though Simeon, who had then more sons than Reuben, had at this time a larger posterity; yet Gad, who had more than Simeon, had now fewer descendants; and Dan, who had but one son at that time, had now almost double the number of Benjamin, who then had ten sons: and it may be observed of other tribes, that their increase was not in proportion to the number of the sons of the patriarchs then; see Ge 46:8.

Numbers 1:21

Ver. 21. Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Reuben, [were] forty and six thousand and five hundred. 46,500 men.
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:22

Ver. 22. Of the children of Simeon, by their generations,....
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:23

Ver. 23. Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Simeon, [were] fifty and nine thousand and three hundred. 59,300 men.
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:24

Ver. 24. Of the children of Gad, by their generations,....
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:25

Ver. 25. Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Gad, [were] forty and five thousand six hundred and fifty. 45,650 men.
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:26

Ver. 26. Of the children of Judah, by their generations,....
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:27

Ver. 27. Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Judah, [were] threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred. 74,600 men. See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:28

Ver. 28. Of the children of Issachar, by their generations,....
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:29

Ver. 29. Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Issachar, [were] fifty and four thousand and four hundred. 54,400 men.
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:30

Ver. 30. Of the children of Zebulun, by their generations,....
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:31

Ver. 31. Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Zebulun, [were] fifty and seven thousand and four hundred. 57,400 men.
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:32

Ver. 32. Of the children of Joseph, [namely], of the children of Ephraim, by their generations,.... See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:33

Ver. 33. Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Ephraim, [were] forty thousand and five hundred. 40,500 men.

See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:34

Ver. 34. Of the children of Manasseh, by their generations,....
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:35

Ver. 35. Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Manasseh, [were] thirty and two thousand and two hundred. 32,200 men.
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:36

Ver. 36. Of the children of Benjamin, by their generations,....
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:37

Ver. 37. Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Benjamin, [were] thirty and five thousand and four hundred. 35,400 men. See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:38

Ver. 38. Of the children of Dan, by their generations,....
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:39

Ver. 39. Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Dan, [were] threescore and two thousand and seven hundred. 62,700 men.
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:40

Ver. 40. Of the children of Asher, by their generations,....
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:41

Ver. 41. Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Asher, [were] forty and one thousand and five hundred. 41,500 men.
See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:42

Ver. 42. Of the children of Naphtali, throughout their generations,.... See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:43

Ver. 43. Those that were numbered of them, [even] of the tribe of Naphtali, [were] fifty and three thousand and four hundred. 53,400 men. See Gill on "Nu 1:20".

Numbers 1:44

Ver. 44. These [are] those that were numbered,.... Or, as the Targum of Jonathan, these are the sums of the numbers; namely, those before given of the several respective tribes:

which Moses and Aaron numbered, and the princes of Israel, [being] twelve men; for though the tribe of Levi was not numbered, yet Joseph having a double portion, his two sons are reckoned as distinct tribes; so that one out of each tribe made up the number twelve:

each one for the house of his fathers; for the tribe he belonged to, with which it might reasonably be supposed he was best acquainted, and could more readily take the number of them.

Numbers 1:45

Ver. 45. So were all those that were numbered of the children of Israel,.... Of all the tribes, excepting Levi, that is, all the sums of the number of the children of Israel; all put together made the sum total given in the next verse:

by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel; all in every tribe, family, and house, that were above twenty years of age, healthful and strong, and fit for war.

Numbers 1:46

Ver. 46. Even all they that were numbered,.... Of whom an account was taken, and their names set down in a book or register: were 603,550; which was exactly the number of them, when taken about seven months before this, when they were assessed for defraying the expenses of the tabernacle, Ex 38:26; so that it should seem not one person had died during that time; for though there were three that died a violent death in that compass of time, yet two of them were of the tribe of Levi, not now numbered; and the other was not an Israelite by the father's side; see Le 10:1; but it is not very probable, among such a vast number of people, that not one above twenty years of age should die in that time: some therefore are of opinion, that the tribe of Levi was numbered before, though not now; and that there was such an increase in that time among the other tribes as to equal the number of males of twenty years and upwards, in that tribe taken into the service of God, by which they were no losers.

Numbers 1:47

Ver. 47. But the Levites,.... The tribe of Levi were excepted from this muster, they being employed in a kind of warfare, and therefore not to be engaged in another:

after the tribe of their fathers, were not numbered among them: the rest of the tribes; the reason follows.

Numbers 1:48

Ver. 48. For the Lord had spoken unto Moses,.... Not to number the Levites, when he gave him the orders to number the rest of the tribes: this is observed, lest it should be thought that this was what Moses did of himself, out of affection to the tribe he was of, and to spare it, that it might not be obliged to go forth to war when others did; not that they were forbid to engage in war, or that it was unlawful for them so to do, for when necessity required, and they were of themselves willing to engage in it, they might, as appears in the case of the Maccabees, but they might not be forced into it; they were, as Josephus {e} says, exempted from it; and so all concerned in religious service, both among Heathens and Christians, have always been excused bearing arms:

saying; as follows.

{e} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 12. sect. 4.

Numbers 1:49

Ver. 49. Only thou shall not number the tribe of Levi,.... That is, along with the other tribes, for it might be numbered by itself, as it afterwards was, **Nu 3:43**;

neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel; which confirms what is before observed: now this being the declared will of God clears Moses from all partiality to his own tribe, he doing nothing but what he had a command of God for it.

Numbers 1:50

Ver. 50. But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony,.... So called from the ark in it, in which was the law of God, which was a testimony of the will of God to his people:

and over all the vessels thereof; the candlestick, table: and altars, as Aben Ezra notes:

and over all things that [belong] to it; the vessels of vessels, as the same writer calls them; for the candlestick, shewbread table, and the two altars of incense and burnt offering had vessels appertaining to them:

they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof; carry them from place to place when needful:

and they shall minister unto it; by taking care of the instruments of it and the vessels in it, but not by doing any part of the priestly office in it, as offering sacrifice, burning incense, and the like:

and shall encamp round about the tabernacle; they were a sort of camp or army of themselves, and their station was around the tabernacle, which was a kind of royal palace to God the King of kings; so that as they were the king's legion, and to be numbered alone, as Jarchi observes, in **Nu 1:49**, so they were a guard about his palace, and were placed between that and the camp of Israel.

Numbers 1:51

Ver. 51. And when the tabernacle setteth forward,.... Or was about to set forward; that is, the congregation were about to journey, and take the tabernacle with them, as they always did, when and wherever they journeyed:

the Levites shall take it down; unpin it, take the boards and pillars out of their sockets, and the bars out of their places, and the whole into pieces, in order to be put into wagons prepared to carry them, of which mention is made in a following chapter;

and when the tabernacle is pitched, the Levites shall set it up; at whatsoever place the congregation encamped and took up their abode for any time: the tabernacle was pitched in the manner as tents are, when the Levites put the several parts together, laid the sockets, put in the boards and the bars, and also the pillars of the court and elsewhere, and hung the hangings upon them; and set the candlestick, tables, altars, ark, and all the vessels of the sanctuary in their proper places:

and the stranger that cometh nigh; to meddle with or touch the above things, to assist in taking down or setting up the tabernacle, or bearing any of the vessels of it: by a stranger is meant, not one of another nation, nor a proselyte, whether of the gate or of righteousness; but, as Aben Ezra interprets it, one that is a stranger from the sons of Levi, who is not of that tribe, even though an Israelite:

shall be put to death; either the sanhedrim or court of judicature shall condemn and put him to death, as the same writer observes; or he shall die by the hand of heaven, as Jarchi; that is, by the immediate hand of God, or with flaming fire from before the Lord, as the Targum of Jonathan; as Uzzah was smote, and died by the ark of God for touching it, **2Sa 5:6**.

Numbers 1:52

Ver. 52. And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp,.... There were four, unless every tribe was a camp, and so then there were twelve camps, besides the camp of the Levites: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"by the house of his troop,"

the regiment to which he belonged, every tribe or camp having various troops or regiments in it:

and every man by his own standard throughout their hosts; there were four standards, and three tribes to each standard, which were placed east, west, north, and south of the tabernacle, as is at large described in the following chapter.

Numbers 1:53

Ver. 53. But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony,.... Between the tabernacle and the camps of Israel, to guard the tabernacle and preserve the things in it, and to keep persons from going into it that should not, to pollute or plunder it: these were placed in like manner as the four living creatures round the throne, **Re 4:6**; where the allusion seems to be to this situation of the Levites:

that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel; that is, from the Lord, should any of them approach too near, or meddle with and touch what they had nothing to do with, or go where they should not; such wrath as came upon Uzzah for his error and transgression before observed:

and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony; the several things in it committed to their charge; see **Nu 3:8**.

Numbers 1:54

Ver. 54. And the children of Israel did according to all the Lord commanded Moses,.... Pitched their tents by their own camps and standards; did not come near the tabernacle but kept at a proper distance from it, and did not meddle with things they had no concern, with, and which were peculiar to the Levites:

so they did; which is repeated to show how readily, punctually, and perfectly they observed the command of God with respect to this affair.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 2

This chapter contains the order of the encampment and march of the tribes of Israel in their proper places about the tabernacle; the general direction for the same is in **Nu 1:1**; the particulars follow; on the cast of the tabernacle the camp of Judah was to pitch, and under his standard the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun, **Nu 1:3**; on the south side of it the camp of Reuben, and under his standard the tribes of Simeon and Gad, **Nu 1:10**; then the tabernacle, with the camp of the Levites round it, were next, to stand or set forward, **Nu 1:17**; and on the west side the camp of Ephraim, and under his standard the tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin, **Nu 1:18**; and on the north side the camp of Dan, and under his standard the tribes of Asher and Naphtali, **Nu 1:25**; the sum total of the numbers of which camps are given, exclusive of the camp of Levi, **Nu 1:32**; and the chapter is concluded with observing, that all was done according to the commandment of God, **Nu 1:34**.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron,.... Very probably after the number of the children of Israel was taken, of which in the preceding chapter, and when the congregation of Israel with the tabernacle were about to set forward on their journey; and therefore directions are here given for their orderly and regular proceeding in it, in what form and manner they should both encamp and march;

saying: as follows.

Numbers 2:2

Ver. 2. Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard,.... Or banner, of which there were four, as appears from the following account, under each of which were placed three tribes; and so every man of each tribe was to pitch his tent in the tribe he belonged to, and by the standard under which his tribe was marshalled, and in the rank that he was placed:

with the ensigns of their father's house; which were either lesser standards or banners, somewhat different from the great standard or banner, which belonged to the camp consisting of three tribes, and which were peculiar to their several families and houses, and distinguished one from another, like flags in different regiments; or these were signs {f}, as the word may be rendered, or marks in the standards or banners, which, distinguished one from another; so the Targum of Jonathan, the signs which were marked in their standards: but what they were is not easy to say; Aben Ezra observes, and Abendana from him, that their ancients were used to say, that there was in the standard of Reuben the form of a man, on account of the mandrakes, Ge 30:14; and in the standard of Judah the form of a lion, because Jacob compared him to one, Ge 49:9; and in the standard of Ephraim the form of an ox, from the sense of those words, the firstling of his bullock, De 33:17; and in the standard of Dan the form of an eagle, so that they might be like the cherubim the prophet Ezekiel saw, **Eze 1:10**, which is not very likely, such images and representations not being very agreeable, yea, even detestable to the people of the Jews in later times, and can hardly be thought to be in use with their early ancestors: others, as Jarchi, fancy that those standards were distinguished by their colours, as our flags or ensigns are; which, if they stopped here, would not be much amiss, but they go on and say, that each was according to the colour of his stone fixed in the breastplate, so that there were three colours in every flag or standard; thus, for instance, in the standard of Judah, which is the first, were the colours of the three precious stones, on which were the names of Judah, Issachar, and Reuben, namely, the emerald, sapphire, and diamond; and so in the rest of the standards; but others say, the letters of the names of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, differently disposed of, were on those standards; but rather, one would think, the names of the three tribes under every standard were embroidered on them, which would sufficiently distinguish one from another, and direct where tribe was to pitch; but of those things there is no certainty:

far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch: a mile from it, according to Jarchi, or two thousand cubits, which is supposed to be a sabbath day's journey, **Ac 1:12**; and this distance is gathered from **Jos 3:4**, and is not improbable.

{f} ttab "in signis", Pagninus, Montanus; "sub signis", Tigurine version; "cum signis", Junius & Tremellius, Drusius; "apud signa", Piscator.

Numbers 2:3

Ver. 3. And on the east side, towards the rising of the sun,.... Which rises in the east; or of all; for, as Jarchi observes, that which is "before" is called "Kedem", the east, as the west is called "behind":

shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch, throughout their armies; the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, formed one camp, which had its name from the principal tribe Judah; and this was divided into various regiments and companies, called armies, who severally pitched under one and the same standard. It is said {g} Judah's stone was the "nophech" (which we render an emerald), and his flag was coloured in the likeness of the colour of the heavens, and there was formed upon it a lion. Issachar's was the sapphire, and his flag was coloured black, like to black lead, and there were framed upon it the sun and moon, on account of what is said, 1Ch 12:32. Zebulun's was a diamond, and his flag was coloured white, and there was formed upon it a ship, because of what is said, Ge 49:13;

and Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, [shall be] captain of the children of Judah; who had been assisting in numbering the people, and who afterwards offered to the dedication of the altar, **Nu 1:2**.

{g} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 178. 2.

Numbers 2:4

Ver. 4. And his host, and those that were numbered of them,.... As they had been before; and, supposing these words to be the words of God, there is no necessity of rendering them in the future, as some have observed; though they seem rather to be the words of Moses, who under every tribe repeats the number, which is exactly the same as when taken; and though it was not till twenty days after that they set forward according to their order of encampment, not one of them died, which Aben Ezra observes as a very wonderful thing;

[were] threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred; the number of the tribe of Judah were 74,600; see **Nu 1:27**.

Numbers 2:5

Ver. 5. And those that do pitch next unto him [shall be] the tribe of Issachar,.... Who with Zebulun, after mentioned, as placed with him under the same standard, were the brethren of Judah, by the same mother Leah, and so fitly put together, as most likely to continue in harmony and love; and being the youngest sons of Leah, and brethren of Judah, would, without any reluctance or murmuring, pitch under their elder brother's standard:

and Nethaneel, the son of Zuar, [shall be] captain of the children of Issachar; see **Nu 1:8**.

Numbers 2:6

Ver. 6. And his host,.... The host of Issachar;

and those that were numbered thereof, [were] fifty and four thousand and four hundred. 54,400 men. Which had been numbered, for it does not appear that there was a fresh account taken; see **Nu 1:29**.

Numbers 2:7

Ver. 7. [Then] the tribe of Zebulun,.... He pitched next; though the order of their encampment was not, as it may seem, first Judah, after him Issachar, and below him Zebulun; for Judah lay between these two, the one before him, and the other behind him; and it was Issachar that was behind, and Zebulun before, as Aben Ezra observes; they were pitched on each side of the standard of Judah, one on one side, and the other on the other side:

and Eliab, the son of Helon, [shall be], captain of the children of Zebulun; see **Nu 1:9**; each tribe had its own captain; nor does it appear that there was a general over those captains, that had the command of the camp, consisting of three tribes, but Moses was the generalissimo of all the camps.

Numbers 2:8

Ver. 8. And his host,.... That is, the host of Zebulun;

and those that were numbered thereof, [were] fifty and seven thousand and four hundred. 57,400 men; see **Nu 1:31**.

Numbers 2:9

Ver. 9. All that were numbered in the camp of Judah [were] an hundred thousand and fourscore thousand and six thousand and four hundred, throughout their armies,.... 186,400 men. The sum total of the three tribes, which formed that camp: this was the largest camp of them all, being near 30,000 more than Dan's, **Nu 2:31**, which was the next in number unto it, and therefore placed foremost, and as the vanguard to the tabernacle:

these shall first set forth; in a march, when about to journey; when they saw the cloud remove, the priests blew with the trumpets, and then the camp of Judah moved first, as Jarchi observes, and when they went out to fight, Judah went up first, **Jud 1:1**.

Numbers 2:10

Ver. 10. On the south side [shall be] the standard of the camp of Reuben, according to their armies,.... This camp consisted of the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad, which was divided into lesser bodies, regiments, or companies, called armies; and this was placed to the south of the tabernacle, or to the right hand, as Aben Ezra interprets it; this was the right wing of the whole army. Reuben's stone, according to the Jewish writers {h}, was the "sardius", and his flag was coloured red, and there were figured upon it mandrakes. Simeon's stone was the topaz, and his flag was coloured green, and on it was figured "shechem". Gad's stone was the agate, and his flag was coloured neither black nor white, but mixed, and there was figured upon it a camp or host, on account of what is said, Ge 49:19;

and the captain of the children of Reuben [shall be] Elizur the son of Shedeur; see **Nu 1:5**.

{h} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 178. 2.

Numbers 2:11

Ver. 11. And his host,.... That is, the host of Reuben, as distinct from his camp, of which it was only a part, and of which Elizur was captain;

and those that were numbered thereof, [were] forty and six thousand and five hundred. 46,500 men; see **Nu 1:21**.

Numbers 2:12

Ver. 12. And those which pitch by him [shall be] the tribe of Simeon,.... Under his standard, and on one side of it; Reuben and Simeon being brothers by the mother as well as the father's side, might well be thought to agree together; and Reuben being the eldest brother, and the eldest of all Jacob's sons, Simeon would not grudge to pitch under him:

and the captain of the children of Simeon [shall be] Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; of whom see **Nu 1:6**.

Numbers 2:13

Ver. 13. And his host,.... That is, the host of Simeon:

and those that were numbered of them, [were] fifty and nine thousand and three hundred. 59,300 men; the same as in **Nu 1:23**.

Numbers 2:14

Ver. 14. Then the tribe of Gad,.... Who was placed on the other side of Reuben's standard, and according to the former direction he must be before, and Simeon behind; and Gad being the eldest son of Leah's handmaid Zilpah, is fitly placed under Leah's firstborn, and being the son of an handmaid, could not object to his situation:

and the captain of the sons of Gad [shall be] Eliasaph the son of Reuel: who is called Deuel, **Nu 1:14**. The letters r, "resh", and d, "daleth", being similar, are sometimes put one for the other, of which there are other instances, as in Ge 10:3, compared with **1Ch 1:6**.

Numbers 2:15

Ver. 15. And his host,.... That is, the host of Gad, as distinct from those of Reuben and Simeon, which together formed the camp;

and those that were numbered of them, [were] forty and five thousand and six hundred and fifty. 45,650 men; see **Nu 1:25**.

Numbers 2:16

Ver. 16. And all that were numbered in the camp of Reuben [were] an hundred thousand and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies,.... 151,450 men. Putting Reuben's host, and the hosts of Simeon and Gad together, **Nu 2:13**, which was much lesser than the preceding camp, being 34,500 fewer in number:

and they shall set forth in the second rank: they in journeying moving next to the camp of Judah, and before the tabernacle; for though, while encamped, the camp of Reuben lay on the south, or right side of it, yet, when marching, went before it.

Numbers 2:17

Ver. 17. Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites,.... Which reached four miles, according to the Targum of Jonathan, as did Judah's. Levi's stone, as the Jews say {i}, was the carbuncle, and his flag was coloured, a third part white, and a third part black, and a third part red, and on it were formed Urim and Thummim:

in the midst of the camp; or "camps" {k}; between the camps of Judah and Reuben, before mentioned, and those of Ephraim and Dan, which are after spoken of: the order in which they moved was this, as Aben Ezra observes; the Gershonites and Merarites marched between the standard of Judah and the standard of Reuben; and the Kohathites marched, and with them Aaron and his sons, between the standard of Reuben and the standard of Ephraim:

as they encamp, so shall they set forward; this is to be understood, according to Aben Ezra, not of the camp of Levi, since the standard of Judah was to the east, and the Gershonites, which were to the west of the sanctuary, and the Merarites in the north, set forward together; but of the camps of Israel, which set forward, not as they were encamped about the tabernacle, for those that were encamped on the side of it, in marching went before and behind, but as they were encamped with respect to themselves; first marched the standard of Judah, then that of Reuben, which went before, and then those of Ephraim and Dan, which followed; and besides, as each camp was pitched, so it moved; as the camp of Judah, his host marched between those of Issachar and Zebulun, and the same order the rest observed:

every man in his place by their standards, as every individual person in the several tribes were ranked under their respective banners, so they marched.

{i} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 178. 2. {k} hnxmh Kwtb "in medio castrorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version; so Ainsworth; "in medio reliquorum castrorum", Junius & Tremellius.

Numbers 2:18

Ver. 18. On the west side [shall be] the standard of the camp of Ephraim, according to their armies,.... It was in the rear or behind, consisting of his tribe, and of the tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin, divided into several companies, and extended four miles, as the above Targum. The Jewish writers say {l}, that Joseph's stone is the onyx or sardonyx, and his flag was coloured very black, and on it were figured for the two princes, Ephraim and Manasseh, Egypt, because they were born in Egypt; and upon the flag of Ephraim was figured an ox, because of what is said in De 33:17; and on the flag of the tribe of Manasseh was figured an unicorn, because of what is said in the same place. Benjamin's stone was the jasper, and his flag was coloured like to twelve colours, and on it was figured a wolf, because of what is said
Ge 49:27;

and the captain of the sons of Ephraim [shall be] Elishama the son of Ammihud; of whom see **Nu 1:10**.

{l} Bemidbar Rabba, ut supra. (sect. 2. fol. 178. 2.)

Numbers 2:19

Ver. 19. And his host,.... That is, the host of Ephraim;

and those that were numbered of them, [were] forty thousand and five hundred. 40,500 men. Not his camp, but his host, or the army, which consisted only of his own tribe see **Nu 1:33**.

Numbers 2:20

Ver. 20. And by him [shall be] the tribe of Manasseh,.... Who though the elder brother to Ephraim, yet Ephraim was preferred to him, and had a standard given him, and his elder brother was directed to pitch by it; and this being agreeably to the prophecy of Jacob, could not well be objected to; and Benjamin, the younger brother of Joseph, being placed under the standard of a son of his, that stood in his father's room, could not be offended; and these all being the descendants of Rachel, might well be thought to agree together, and be very well pleased with their situation:

and the captain of the children of Manasseh shall be Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur; the same as in **Nu 1:10**.

Numbers 2:21

Ver. 21. And his host,.... That is, the host of Manasseh;

and those that were numbered of them, [were] thirty and two thousand and two hundred. 32,200 men; see **Nu 1:35**.

Numbers 2:22

Ver. 22. Then the tribe of Benjamin,.... He was to pitch under the same standard of Ephraim, and the other side of it from that of Manasseh; the one being before, and the other behind, and the standard in the middle; See Gill on "Nu 2:7";

and the captains of the sons of Benjamin [shall be] Abidan the son of Gideoni; of whom see **Nu 1:11**.

Numbers 2:23

Ver. 23. And his host, &c. That is, the host of Benjamin;

and those that were numbered of them, [were] thirty and five thousand and four hundred. 35,400 men. The least number of all the tribes, excepting the tribe of Manasseh, **Nu 2:21**; see **Nu 1:37**.

Numbers 2:24

Ver. 24. All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim [were] an hundred thousand and eight thousand and an hundred, throughout their armies,.... 108,100 men. Which was the smallest of all the camps, and near eighty thousand fewer than the camp of Judah, **Nu 2:9**:

and they shall go forward in the third rank; and which was the first following the tabernacle.

Numbers 2:25

Ver. 25. The standard of the camp of Dan [shall be] on the north side by their armies,.... To the left of the tabernacle as encamped, and so was the left wing of the grand army; it consisted of the tribes of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali, in which were several divisions and companies, whose camp also the Targum of Jonathan says reached four miles. According to the Jewish writers {m}, Dan's stone was the "ligure", and his flag was coloured like to a sapphire, and there was figured upon it a serpent, on account of what is said Ge 49:17; Asher's stone was the "tarshish" or beryl, and his flag was coloured like to a precious stone, with which women adorn themselves, and on it was figured an olive tree, on account of what is said Ge 49:20. Naphtali's stone was the amethyst, and his flag was coloured like to clear wine, whose redness is not strong, and on it was figured an hind, on account of what is said of him Ge 49:21:

and the captain of the children of Dan [shall be] Ahiezer the son of

Ammishaddai; who made mention of in **Nu 1:10**.

{m} Bemidbar Rabba, ut supra. (sect. 2. fol. 178. 2.)

Numbers 2:26

Ver. 26. And his host,.... That is, the host of Dan;

and those that were numbered of them, [were] threescore and two thousand and seven hundred. 62,700 men, which agrees with the account of this tribe in **Nu 1:39**.

Numbers 2:27

Ver. 27. And those that encamp by him [shall be] the tribe of Asher,.... Dan had a standard given him, though the son of an handmaid, being the firstborn of the sons of the handmaids, and his tribe being a warlike tribe, and very numerous; and Asher and Naphtali are placed by him, being the sons of handmaids also, and could not but contentedly pitch by him, who was the eldest of the sons of the handmaids Naphtali being his younger brother by mother's as well as father's side, and Asher the second son of Zilpah, Leah's maid:

and the captain of the children of Asher [shall be] Pagiel the son of Ocran; the same as in **Nu 1:13**.

Numbers 2:28

Ver. 28. And his host,.... That is, the host of Asher;

and those that were numbered of them, [were] forty and one thousand and five hundred. 41,500 men; as they were numbered **Nu 1:41**.

Numbers 2:29

Ver. 29. Then the tribe of Naphtali,.... That was to pitch by the same standard of Dan, on the other side of it:

and the captain of the children of Naphtali [shall be] Ahira the son of Enan; who is mentioned **Nu 1:15**.

Numbers 2:30

Ver. 30. And his host,.... That is, the host of Naphtali;

and those that were numbered of them; not that some part of the tribe of Naphtali was numbered, which made up the host Ahira was captain of, but the whole of it, who were all numbered that were of twenty years of age and upwards; and the same is to be observed in all the above places, where this phrase is used;

[were] fifty and three thousand and four hundred. 53,400 men; see **Nu 1:43**.

Numbers 2:31

Ver. 31. All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan [were] an hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred,.... 157,600 men. Consisting of his own tribe, and those of Asher and Naphtali, which make the largest camp next to Judah:

they shall go hindmost with their standards; for though, while encamped, they lay to the north, or the left side of the tabernacle, yet, when marching, they brought up the rear, and were the rear guard to the tabernacle; so that it had in its van and rear the two largest camps, which were wisely ordered for its safety: "standards" is put for "standard", the plural for the singular; for there was but one standard to a camp, unless this takes in their ensigns, of which they had many.

Numbers 2:32

Ver. 32. These [are] those that were numbered of the children of Israel by the house of their fathers,.... As the number was taken by Moses and Aaron, assisted by twelve princes of the tribe, who were now constituted captains over them, as so many hosts or armies:

all those that were numbered of the camp throughout their hosts: of the four camps, of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan, throughout the respective tribes or hosts that belonged to each of them,

[were] six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty; 603,550 men, which is exactly the sum total of them, as taken **Nu 1:46**. It is a large number, considering in how short a time, and that great part of it a state of bondage, from seventy persons, they rose unto it; but the spiritual Israel of God, consisting of his people of all nations, is a number which no man can number, **Re 7:9**; besides, the number of the sealed ones, of every tribe, **Nu 2:4**; Now this encampment of the people of Israel was an emblem of the form and order of the spiritual Israel or church of God, under the Gospel dispensation. Christ in human nature is the tabernacle, who is in the midst of his people by his gracious presence; as the heart and life of the congregation of his saints, in whom they all centre and terminate, and where he sits enthroned as King of saints; and as the Levites encamped in four squadrons next unto the tabernacle, all around it, to these answer the living creatures in **Eze 1:5**; which design the ministers of the word, who are in the highest place in the church, between Christ and the congregation, and are near to him, to be supplied by him; then encamped the whole body of the people of Israel by their standards, with their ensigns, to whom answer the wheels in **Eze 1:15**; and the twenty four elders in **Re 4:4**; all which show the church to be militant, and that there is an order in Gospel churches, which makes them both comely and terrible, **So 6:4**; and may teach every member to abide by his standard, and follow his ensign and ensign bearer, Isa 11:10.

Numbers 2:33

Ver. 33. But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel,.... At this time, not among the Israelites, but by themselves, they being a camp of themselves:

as the Lord commanded Moses; **Nu 1:48**.

Numbers 2:34

Ver. 34. And the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses,.... Formed themselves into camps, so many tribes to a camp, and over each tribe or host appointed a captain, and erected a standard to each camp, by which they pitched as directed, which is next particularly observed:

so they pitched by their standards; every tribe, and every person in the tribe, as they were ranked, pitched by the standard to which they belonged:

and so they set forward, after their families according to the house of their fathers; the camps, and the tribes in them the families in those tribes, and the houses or lesser families under them, when they marched, proceeded in this regular order, as they did on the twentieth of this month; see Nu 10:11.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 3

In this chapter an account is given of the genealogy of the priests and Levites, and of the gift of the Levites to the priests, of the numbering of them, and the service they were to perform; and first of the priests, the sons of Aaron, **Nu 3:1**; and then of the Levites, as given unto them, to wait upon them, and assist them, **Nu 3:5**; and these were taken instead of the firstborn, **Nu 3:11**; and ordered to be numbered, which was done accordingly by their families, **Nu 3:14**; and the sum of each is given, and the particular work assigned to them; of the Gershonites, **Nu 3:21**; of the Kohathites, **Nu 3:27**; of the Merarites, **Nu 3:33**; the sum total of them is given, **Nu 3:39**; then the firstborn of the children of Israel, from a month old are ordered to be numbered, and were, **Nu 3:40**; and these appearing to be more in number than the Levites, by two hundred seventy three a direction is given that the two hundred seventy three should be redeemed at the rate of five, shekels apiece, and the money paid to Aaron and his sons, **Nu 3:44**; which was accordingly done, **Nu 3:49**.

Ver. 1. These also [are] the generations of Aaron and Moses,.... The descendants of them, those of the former, who is named first, because the eldest, were priests, and those of the latter Levites, and who are not very plainly pointed at, but are included among the Amramites, **Nu 3:27**; the posterity of Moses being very obscure, only Levites, and these not particularly named but swallowed up among the Kohathites: find the following account was as it stood,

in the day [that] the Lord spoke with Moses in mount Sinai; and not, altogether as it then, was when he spoke to him in the wilderness, of Sinai, for then Aaron had four sons, but now two of them were dead as is after observed; and it seems to be for the sake of this circumstance chiefly that this clause is so put.

Numbers 3:2

Ver. 2. And these [are] the names of the sons of Aaron,.... The Targum of Jonathan adds, disciples of Moses, the master of the Israelites; none of the posterity of Moses being expressly, named; Jarchi observes, that the sons of Aaron are called the generations of Moses, because he taught them the law; for whoever, he says, teaches his neighbour's son, the law, the Scripture accounts of him as if he begat him, see **1Co 4:15**;

Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar; as in **Ex 6:23**.

Numbers 3:3

Ver. 3. These [are] the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests that were anointed,.... With the holy, anointing oil, with which they were anointed when, Aaron was and they only, see Ex 30:30;

whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office; that is, whom Moses consecrated, by anointing them, putting the priest's garments on them, offering sacrifice for them, and filling their hands with sacrifices which is the phrase here used for consecration: see
Ex 29:15.

Numbers 3:4

Ver. 4. And Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord,...., By flaming fire, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, see Le 10:2; and so were not alive at this time when the account of the priests and Levites was taken:

when they offered strange fire before the Lord in the wilderness of Sinai; after the tabernacle was set up, and the service of it begun, and quickly after their unction and consecration: of this strange fire,
See Gill on "Nu 10:1";

and they had no children; which is observed, partly to show the punishment of them, and the reproach upon their names, that they died childless, and had none to succeed them in the priesthood; for as the Jewish writers {n} observe if they had left any behind them, those would have come into the office before Eleazar and Ithamar; and partly to show that all the priests in succeeding ages sprung from those next mentioned:

and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office, in the sight of Aaron their father; in his presence, under his inspection, and by his direction, he seeing and observing that they did everything according to the laws delivered by Moses, relating to, the office of the priesthood; or while he was yet alive, as Aben Ezra, they were concerned with him, and acted under him in the priestly office; and so the Septuagint version renders it, "with Aaron their father" {o}; but a Jewish writer {p} interprets it in a different manner, "in the room of Aaron their father"; as if it respected not any conjunction with him in the then present exercise of their office in his lifetime, but their succession in it after his death; but the former seems most correct.

{n} Torat Cohanim apud Ceseph Misnah in Maimon. Melachim, c. 1. sect. 7. Chaskuniin in loc. {o} Which is approved by Noldius, p. 731. {p} Chaskuni.

Numbers 3:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... After he had given him the order for the numbering the children of Israel, and for the manner of their encampment and journeying:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 3:6

Ver. 6. Bring the tribe of Levi near,.... Separate them from the rest, set them apart for special service about, the sanctuary, let them have a place nearer to it than the other tribes, or offer them, that is, to the Lord, as in **Nu 8:11**; as well as bring them near to Aaron; so it follows:

and present them before Aaron the priest; that he may receive them as a gift unto him, as servants to wait upon him; and! that he may appoint and declare unto them their work, and set them about it:

that they may minister unto him; in guarding the tabernacle taking care of the vessels of it, taking it down, carrying it, from place to place, and setting it up as there was occasion for it.

Numbers 3:7

Ver. 7. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation,.... The charge of Aaron and of all the people of Israel, which was to secure the sanctuary from being polluted or plundered: this the Levites were to be employed about, and thereby ease the high priest and the other priests, and the people, of what otherwise would have been incumbent on them:

before the tabernacle of the congregation; not within it, neither in the holy place, nor in the most holy place, where they might not enter, to do any service peculiar thereunto, but at the door of the tabernacle, and in the court of it, and in the rooms and chambers in it: and do the service of the tabernacle; not to offer sacrifices on the altar of the burnt offering, which stood in the court, and much less to burn incense on the altar of incense, and to him the lamps, and set on the shewbread in the holy place; and still less to enter into the most holy place, and do there what was to be done on the day of atonement; but to do all that is before observed, and to bring the people's offerings to the priest, and to assist in slaying them; and to keep all profane and polluted persons out of it, the tabernacle, as we find in later times; they were porters at it, and some of them were singers in it, and had the care of various things belonging to it: see **1Ch 9:14**.

Numbers 3:8

Ver. 8. And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation,.... Take care of them that none be lost or come to any damage, especially while it was moving, and carried from place to place; then the several parts of it, as well as the vessels in it, were committed to their care and charge, the particulars of which see in **Nu 3:25**;

and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle; See Gill on "Nu 3:7".

Numbers 3:9

Ver. 9. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons,.... To be their ministers and servants:

they [are] wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel: even all of them entirely, none excepted; the whole tribe which were not in the priestly office; those were separated from the rest of the tribes of Israel, and appointed for the service of the priests: or they were "given, given" {q}; which is repeated not only to show that they were wholly given, as we render it, but to denote the certainty of it, that they were really given; and especially to declare the freeness of the gift; the priests had them as free gifts, nor did they pay them any thing for, their service; they were maintained another way, namely, by the tithes of the people; and indeed the priests received a tithe out of the tithe of the Levites; so far were they from contributing any thing to their support, or in consideration of the service they did them.

{q} Mynwtn Mynwtn "dati, dati", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius.

Numbers 3:10

Ver. 10. And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons,.... To the priestly office; this was done before, but is renewed for the confirmation of it, and repeated to put them in mind of it, that they be careful to execute it, as follows:

and they shall wait on their priest's office, to do what was peculiar to it, both in the holy and in the most holy place, at the altar, and within, the vail, where the Levites had nothing to do; and this is observed that the priests might take notice, that by the gift of the Levites to them, they were not excused from doing any part of service which was proper to them as priests; for they were given them that they might more readily attend their office, and be wholly employed in it; just as, under the Gospel dispensation, deacons were appointed to take care of the secular affairs of the church, that the apostles might give up themselves to the word of God and prayer, **Ac 6:2**;

and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death; that comes nigh to perform any part of the priest's office peculiar to him as to offer sacrifice, burn incense, &c. whether he be a common Israelite, or even a Levite, as Korah was; any that was not a priest was reckoned a stranger, and so to be put to death for intruding into the office, as the above mentioned person was: so Aben Ezra interprets it of anyone that came nigh to a priest, to be with him or join with him in the execution of his office, whether an Israelite or a Levite, he shall die: the Targum of Jonathan adds, by flaming fire before the Lord.

Numbers 3:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Continued to speak unto him, and give him the reason of his appointing the Levites to minister to the priests and serve the tabernacle:

saying: as follows.

Numbers 3:12

Ver. 12. And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel,.... Separated them from others, and set them apart for the service of the sanctuary; this was his own act and deed, and which he did of his own will and pleasure, who is a sovereign Being, and might and would do whatsoever he pleased, nor should any object unto him, or contradict him: and this he did,

instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel; he made an exchange of those for the Levites; upon the destruction of the firstborn of Egypt, and saving the firstborn of Israel, he claimed the latter as his own in a special sense, and now he gave up his right to them, and instead thereof took the Levites; nor could the people of Israel reasonably object to this, nor be uneasy at it, but rather be pleased with it; since hereby they were not only freed from the charge of redeeming their firstborn, but since they were the Lord's, he might have appointed them to be servants to the priests; and every Israelite would choose rather, no doubt, to part with a tribe for this service than to have their firstborn sons employed in it; and there were none so fit as the tribe of Levi, not only because it was a small tribe, but because the priests were of this tribe, to whom they were to minister; and therefore as there was a connection between them, the Levites would readily serve them: it is a notion that has obtained both among Jews and Christians, that the firstborn before this time were priests in the family, but now the Levites were taken in their room; and Jarchi particularly observes, that when the firstborn sinned in the business of the calf, they were rejected, and the Levites, who did not commit idolatry, were chosen in their room; but it does not appear, before the fixing the priesthood in Aaron's family, that the firstborn in a family were priests, and officiated as such, but rather the father and head of the family for the whole, or everyone for himself, as in Adam's family, he and his two sons; and moreover, it was a recent thing, and only among the Hebrews, that the firstborn were in a peculiar manner the Lord's, not as priests, only to be redeemed, and now the Levites were redeemed in their room; it was not to be priests, but the servants of the priests {r}:

therefore the Levites shall be mine; whom he gave to the priests to assist them in their work, which was for him and his glory.

{r} Vid. Outram. de Sacrificiis, l. 1. c. 4. sect. 1, 2, 3.

Numbers 3:13

Ver. 13. Because all the firstborn [are] mine,.... Not merely in a general way, as all creatures are his, but in a special manner as his own, and that for the following reason:

[for] on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast; that is, sanctified or set them apart as his own special property, or ordered the people of Israel so to do, Ex 13:2; for as when he destroyed the firstborn of the Egyptians, he saved the firstborn of Israel, he had a special claim upon them as his; and though it was in the night when he destroyed the firstborn of Egypt, yet it was the night which preceded that day, and was a part of that day, even the fifteenth of Nisan, when the instructions were given to sanctify all the firstborn; though, as Aben Ezra observes, "day" signifies "time", so that it was at or about the same time that the one and the other were done:

mine they shall be; this was declared when they were ordered to be sanctified to him, but now they were to be exchanged for the Levites:

I [am] the Lord; who have sovereign power to do as he would in claiming the firstborn, and then in exchanging them for the Levites, and appointing the Levites to minister to the priests, and serve in the tabernacle.

Numbers 3:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai,.... At the same time he gave the order, and made the declaration before mentioned, and in the place where now the children of Israel were, and from whence they shortly removed:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 3:15

Ver. 15. Number the children of Levi,.... Who were left out of the general muster of the children of Israel, but now were to be numbered alone, and in a different manner, and for, a different purpose, the Lord having a special regard auto, them, and special service for them:

after the house of their fathers, by their families; into which the tribe was divided; house seems to be put for "houses", which were principal ones; and these were divided into families, which branched from them, and according to these, denominated from their fathers, and not their, mothers, were they to be numbered; for as the Jewish writers often say, a mother's family is no family; wherefore, if a Levite woman married into any other tribe, as she might, her, descendants were not taken into this accounts only such whose fathers were Levites, see **Nu 1:2**;

every male from a month old and upwards shalt thou number them; the reason of this was, because the firstborn, for whom they were to be exchanged, were at a month old claimed by the Lord as his, and to be redeemed; and as this numbering was on, another account than, that of the children of Israel, who were numbered from twenty years of age and upwards, that they might on occasion be called out to war, from which the Levites were exempted, and the numbering of them was for the service of the sanctuary; so from their youth they were to be brought up and trained for this, that they might be fit for it, and enter upon it at a proper age.

Numbers 3:16

Ver. 16. And Moses numbered them according to the word of the Lord,.... Took the account of all of a month old in the several houses and families of the tribe of Levi; though Moses is only here mentioned, yet it seems from **Nu**

3:39; that Aaron was concerned with him in it; yea, in an after numbering of the Levites who were fit for business from thirty to fifty years of age, the chief of the children of Israel were assisting to him and Aaron, **Nu 4:46**;

as he commanded; he was obedient to the divine will in all things, and so in this, though it was his own tribe and his own posterity, which in all successive ages were to be no other than ministering servants to the priests, and to have no inheritance in the land of Israel.

Numbers 3:17

Ver. 17. And these were the sons of Levi, by their names,.... The immediate offspring and descendants of that patriarch:

Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari; these went down with him into Egypt, Ge 46:11.

Numbers 3:18

Ver. 18. And these [are] the names of the sons of Gershon, by their families,.... Or to Gershon belonged two families, called after the names of his sons, who were now numbered, namely,

Libni and Shimei; and who are elsewhere mentioned as his sons, **Ex 6:17**; and from hence were the families of the Libnites and Shimites, as in **Nu 3:21**.

Numbers 3:19

Ver. 19. And the sons of Kohath, by their families,.... Who was the second son of Levi:

Amram, and Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel; so in **Ex 6:18**; and from whom were named the family of the Amramites, to which Moses and Aaron belonged; and the families of the Izeharites, Hebronites, and Uzzielites, as they are called, **Nu 3:27**.

Numbers 3:20

Ver. 20. And the sons, of Merari, by their families,.... The third son of Levi;

Mahli and Mushi; the same as in **Ex 6:19**; from whom were denominated the families of the Mahlites and Mushites, who, as the preceding families, were numbered at this time: these

[are] the families of the Levites, according to the house of their fathers; in all eight families.

Numbers 3:21

Ver. 21. Of Gershon [was] the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites,.... The first son of Levi:

these [are] the family of the Gershonites; that were now, numbered.

Numbers 3:22

Ver. 22. Those that were numbered of them,.... Of the two families that sprung from Gershon:

according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upwards: in the said families;

[even] those that were numbered of them, [were] seven thousand and five hundred; 7,500 men, which was neither the least nor the largest number of the sons of Levi.

Numbers 3:23

Ver. 23. The families of the Gershonites,.... The two before mentioned, the Libnites and Shimites:

shall pitch behind the tabernacle westward; this was their situation when encamped; they were placed in the rear of the camp of the Levites, between the tabernacle and the camp of Ephraim, which was westward also, **Nu 1:18**.

Numbers 3:24

Ver. 24. And the chief of the house of the fathers of the Gershonites,.... Who had the chief authority over them, and the chief direction of them in what they were to do:

[shall be] Eliasaph the son of Lael; but who he was, or of which family of the Gershonites, whether of the Libnites or Shimites, is not said here or elsewhere; nor do the Jewish writers, who affect to know every thing, pretend to tell us.

Numbers 3:25

Ver. 25. And the charge of the sons of Gershom,.... The Libnites and Shimites:

in the tabernacle of the congregation; or with respect to the things of it, when it was taken down and committed to them; for otherwise they had no place in it, nor might they enter into it, or do any service therein:

[shall be] the tabernacle and the tent; the former intends not the boards of it, which were the charge of the Merarites, **Nu 3:36**; but the curtains, as Aben Ezra, or the under curtains, as Jarchi calls them, which were made of fine twined linen, Ex 26:1; and the latter is to be understood of the eleven curtains, as Aben Ezra, the curtains of goats hair, which were made for the roof of the tabernacle, as Jarchi observes, see Ex 26:7;

the covering thereof: made of rams' skins, and badgers' skins, which were thrown over the tent, Ex 26:14;

and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; the vail, as Jarchi calls it; not what divided the holy and most holy places, for that fell to the charge of the Kohathites, **Nu 3:31**; but the vail or hanging which was at the door of the tent, or which led into the holy place, Ex 26:36.

Numbers 3:26

Ver. 26. And the hangings of the court,.... Which formed the great open court that encompassed the tabernacle, and was an hundred cubits long and fifty broad; Ex 27:9;

and the curtain for the door of the court: which was an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, Ex 27:16;

which [is] by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about: this refers to the court, the hangings, and curtains of the door of it, which are spoken of; and this court surrounded the tabernacle, and the altar which was without the tabernacle, as Aben Ezra observes, and which was the altar of burnt offering that stood within this court; for the particle le sometimes signifies "about" {s}, and the word bybo, "around", being joined with it, requires this sense:

and the cords of it; which seem to be the cords of the court, which fastened the hangings and curtains to brass pins, or stakes fixed in the ground to keep them tight, that the wind might not move them to and fro; but Jarchi says, these were the cords of the tabernacle and tent, and not of the court; and indeed the tabernacle had its cords as well as the court, Ex 38:18; the cords of the court were in the charge of the Merarites, **Nu 3:37**;

for all the service thereof: for that part of the tabernacle and court which the Gershonites had in their care and custody.

{s} Vid. Nold. Partic. Ebr. Concord. p. 992.

Numbers 3:27

Ver. 27. And of Kohath [was] the family of the Amramites,.... So called from Amram, the first son of Kohath, and father of Aaron and Moses; so that Moses and Aaron, and their children, are included in this family:

and the family of Izeharites; of which family was Korah, Nu 16:1;

and the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites; which four families had their names from Kohath's four sons, **Nu 3:19**;

these are the families of the Kohathites; which were as many as both the other sons of Levi.

Numbers 3:28

Ver. 28. In the number of all the males, from a month old and upwards, [were] eight thousand and six hundred,.... 8,600 men, which was the largest number of any of the houses of the Levites; but considering it had double the number of families in it, the increase was not so large in proportion, at least to Gershon, whose two families wanted but 1,100 of these four:

keeping the charge of the sanctuary; of the holy and most holy places, and the vessels and instruments belonging thereunto; not that the males of a month old were keeping them, but when they were grown up and were capable of it, they had the charge thereof, in which they were instructed and trained up from their youth.

Numbers 3:29

Ver. 29. The families of the sons of Kohath shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle southward. Or to the right, which was the more honourable place, excepting the east or front, which was reserved for Moses and Aaron, and his sons, and who were one of these families; and is the reason why this honour was conferred upon them, as well as they had the more honourable charge, having the holy places and holy things committed to their care; and one from among them was appointed over all the Levites, and the chief of them, as they had also, when they came into the land of Canaan, almost as many cities of refuge as both their other brethren had: their situation about the tabernacle was between that and the camp of Reuben, and this accounts for it, how Korah who was of one of the families of the Kohathites, became so intimately acquainted with, and joined in a conspiracy with Dathan and Abiram, who were of the tribe of Reuben, Nu 16:1.

Numbers 3:30

Ver. 30. And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites [shall be] Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. The same man, who, with his brother Mishael, carried Nadab and Abihu out of the camp, and buried them, Le 10:4; he descended from the last and youngest of the families of the Kohathites; and some think this was one reason at least of Korah's dissatisfaction, and of his entering into a conspiracy against Moses and Aaron, because one of a younger family of his house was preferred to this dignity before him.

Numbers 3:31

Ver. 31. And their charge [shall be] the ark,.... That is, when the tabernacle was taken down, and carried from place to place, this, and the following things, were committed to their care and custody, the ark with the mercy seat, and all appertaining thereunto, which were in the holy of holies:

and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars; the table of shewbread, and the candlestick of pure gold, with its lamps, and the altar of incense, all which stood in the holy place, and the altar of burnt offering, which was in the court, for both altars were their charge:

and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister; all the vessels which belonged to the above things; for the table, candlestick, and altars, all had vessels appertaining to them:

and the hanging; that is, the vail, as Jarchi interprets it, which divided between the, holy and the most holy place; all the other hangings for the court, and the door of it, and for the door of the tabernacle, were the charge of the Gershonites, **Nu 3:25**:

and all the service thereof; what belonged to the things in this part of the tabernacle.

Numbers 3:32

Ver. 32. And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest,.... Who was of the first of these families, the Amramites:

[shall be] chief over the chief of the Levites; over the three chiefs of the three houses of the Levites, who were Eliasaph the son of Lael, the chief of the Gershonites; and Elizaphan the son of Uzziel, the chief of the Kohathites; and Zuriel the son of Abihail, the chief of the Merarites:

[and have] the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary; the Kohathites, who had the care of the things belonging to the holy and most holy places; and these were particularly under the inspection of Eleazar, because they were things the priests had a, special concern in; see **Nu 4:32**.

Numbers 3:33

Ver. 33. Of Merari [were] the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Mushites,.... So called from his two sons Mahli and Mushi, **Nu 3:20**;

these [are] the families of Merari; the youngest son of Levi, **Nu 3:17**.

Numbers 3:34

Ver. 34. And those that were numbered of them,.... Of the above two families:

according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, [were] six thousand and two hundred; 6,200 men; the least number of them all.

Numbers 3:35

Ver. 35. And the chief of the house of the father of the families of Merari,.... I think it should rather be rendered, "and the chief of the house", that is, of the Merarites, "the father to the families of Merari"; the common father to them all, having the chief authority and power over them, and so in **Nu 3:24**;

[shall be] Zuriel the son of Abihail; of whom we read nowhere else, nor is it certain of which family he was, whether of the Mahlites or Mushites:

[these] shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle northward; to the left of it, between that and the camp of Dan.

Numbers 3:36

Ver. 36. And [under] the custody and charge of the sons of Merari [shall be] the boards of the tabernacle,.... Both of the holy and the most holy place, which were the walls of the tabernacle, and which were covered with curtains; these when taken down for journeying were committed to the care of the Merarites; and because these, with what, follow, were a heavy carriage, they were allowed wagons to carry them; and who on this account had more wagons given them than to the Gershonites, for the Kohathites had none, **Nu 7:6**;

and the bars thereof; which kept the boards tight and close, see Ex 26:26;

and the pillars thereof; the pillars on which the vail was hung, that divided between the holy and most holy place, and, on which the hanging was put for the door of the vail, Ex 26:32;

and the sockets thereof; in which both the boards and pillars were put, Ex 26:19.

Numbers 3:37

Ver. 37. And the pillars of the court round about,.... Of the great court which went round the tabernacle, on which pillars the hangings were hung:

and their sockets; into which the, pillars were put; of both which see Ex 27:9;

and their pins, and their cords, the pins were fixed in the ground, and the cords fastened the hangings of the court to them, whereby they were kept tight and unmoved by the winds; see Ex 27:19.

Numbers 3:38

Ver. 38. And those that encamp before the tabernacle toward the east,.... At which was the entrance into the tabernacle:

[even] before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward; that is, before the court of the tabernacle, where the people assembled together:

[shall be] Moses, Aaron, and his sons; Moses the chief ruler, and Aaron the high priest, and his sons priests under him; these had the most honourable place of all, beings at the front of the tabernacle, between that and the camp of Judah. There is an extraordinary prick on the word Aaron, to show, as Jarchi says, that he was not in the number of Levites, though of the tribe of Levi, being high priest:

keeping the charge of the sanctuary, for the charge of the children of Israel; either in their room and stead, which otherwise they must have kept; or rather for their safety and security, keeping out all persons from entering into the sanctuary, who had no business there, that they died not, as it follows:

and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death; that is, whoever came nigh to enter into the holy place, and did, who was no priest, though an Israelite, and even a Levite, or into the most holy place, excepting the high priest, it was death unto him, either by the civil magistrate, or by the hand of heaven; so the Targum of Jonathan.

Numbers 3:39

Ver. 39. All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moses and Aaron, numbered at the commandment of the Lord, throughout their families,.... Whence it appears, that Moses was not alone, but Aaron with him, in numbering the Levites, and that by the appointment of the Lord. The word "Aaron", in the Hebrew text, has a dot on every letter, for what reason it is not certain; the word itself is left out in the Samaritan and Syriac versions:

all the males, from a month old and upward, [were] twenty and two thousand; 22,000 men; but by putting the sums together they amount to three hundred more; for of the Gershonites there were 7,500, and of the Kohathites 8,600, and of the Merarites 6,200, in all 22,300; which difficulty some endeavour to remove by saying, as Aben Ezra observes, that the Scripture takes a short way, mentioning the thousands, and leaving out the hundreds but this, he says, is not right, nor is it the way of the Scripture in this chapter: and in an after account of the firstborn of the Israelites, not only the hundreds are mentioned, but the broken number of seventy three. Others think there is a corruption crept into the text somewhere in the particular numbers, through the inadvertency of some copyist; and suppose it to be in the number of the Kohathites, where they fancy vv, six, is put instead of vlv, three: but there is no occasion to suppose either of these, for which there is no foundation, since the reason why three hundred are left out in the sum total may be, because there were so many firstborn among the Levites, and these could not be exchanged for the firstborn of the other tribes; they, as such, being the Lord's, and one firstborn could not redeem another; and so it is said in the Talmud {t}, these three hundred were firstborn, and there is no firstborn redeems a firstborn, or frees from the redemption price of five shekels.

{t} T. Bab. Becoroth, fol. 5. 1.

Numbers 3:40

Ver. 40. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... After he had taken the number of the Levites:

number all the firstborn of the children of Israel, from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names; that they might be compared with the number of the Levites, and the difference between them observed.

Numbers 3:41

Ver. 41. And thou shall take the Levites for me,.... For his service, to minister to his priests, and serve in his tabernacle:

I [am] the Lord; who has a right to all, and can claim who he pleases for himself in a special manner, and therefore could and did take the Levites to himself:

instead of the firstborn among the children of Israel; these he had taken to him before, and ordered to be sanctified unto him, and for whom a redemption price was paid to his priests for the support of them, and the tabernacle service, and now it was his will to make an exchange of these for the Levites:

and the cattle of the Levites, instead of all the firstling among the cattle of the children of Israel: every firstling of clean cattle was the Lord's, and given to his priests, and the firstlings of unclean cattle were redeemed with a lamb, and which were given to the same; and now instead of these he requires the cattle of the Levites; not that they should be deprived of their use of them, or that they should be taken and sacrificed, but that they should be with them devoted to him, and they should possess them in his right.

Numbers 3:42

Ver. 42. And Moses numbered, as the Lord commanded him,.... No doubt assisted by others, though not mentioned:

all the firstborn among the children of Israel; which some think were only those that were born since they came out of Egypt, as Bonfrerius, Bishop Patrick, and others.

Numbers 3:43

Ver. 43. And all the firstborn males,.... For such only were ordered to be numbered, and not firstborn females:

by the number of names; which were particularly taken:

from a month old and upward; for before that time they were not sanctified to the Lord, nor subject to the redemption price:

of those that were numbered of them [were] twenty and two thousand two hundred and threescore and thirteen; 22,273 men; so that there were two hundred seventy three more than the Levites, **Nu 3:39**.

Numbers 3:44

Ver. 44. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... After the number was taken, and gave him directions what to do upon it:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 3:45

Ver. 45. Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel,.... The Lord had declared before that he had taken them, and now he bids Moses take them, who had numbered them, and give them to Aaron, instead of the firstborn, whose numbers were also taken for this purpose:

and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; but not to be given to Aaron and his sons, or to the priests for their use, but to remain with the Levites for their use, who were now separated from the other tribes, and taken into the service of God; and as they were dedicated to God, so their cattle likewise for their support as his ministers:

and the Levites shall be mine; in a special manner his, being devoted to his service:

I [am] the Lord; who had a right to do this, and expected to be obeyed in it.

Numbers 3:46

Ver. 46. And for those that are to be redeemed, &c. With money, there being not Levites enough to answer to them, and exchange for them:

of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the firstborn of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites; for the sum total of the Levites, as given, was but 22,000, **Nu 3:39**, whereas the sum total of the firstborn of Israel were 22,273, **Nu 3:43**, so that there were, two hundred seventy three more of the latter than of the former; and what was to be done with these next follows.

Numbers 3:47

Ver. 47. Thou shall even take five shekels apiece the poll,.... Or head; every firstborn, or his parent for him, was bound to pay five shekels, which were about eleven or twelve shillings of our money, and which was afterwards settled as the price of such a redemption,
Nu 18:16;

after the shekel of the sanctuary shall thou take [them]; being full weight according to the standard there kept:

the shekel [is] twenty gerahs; See Gill on "Le 27:25".

Numbers 3:48

Ver. 48. And thou shalt give the money, wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed,.... Or the superfluous number, the number of them that exceeded the Levites, namely, two hundred seventy three; the price of their redemption is ordered to be given

unto Aaron, and to his sons; since the Levites were taken in lieu of the firstborn, whose redemption money belonged to the priests; and seeing the Levites were given to Aaron and his sons on that consideration, and there being a deficiency of them to answer to the firstborn, it was but right and just that the redemption price of the superfluous number should be paid to them.

Numbers 3:49

Ver. 49. And Moses took the redemption money,.... Of five shekels per head:

of them that were over and above redeemed by the Levites; or were more than those redeemed by them. A Levite redeemed a firstborn, or freed him from the redemption price, being taken in lieu of him: 22,000 Levites were answerable to 22,000 firstborn of Israel; but as there were no more Levites than the above number, there remained two hundred seventy three firstborn to be redeemed by money, and it was the redemption money of these Moses took.

Numbers 3:50

Ver. 50. Of the firstborn of the children of Israel took he the money,.... Or "for the firstborn", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, and so the Hebrew particle tam is sometimes used {u}; for children of a month old or little more could not pay the money, but their parents for them, which was paid by them, and Moses received it for the superfluous number of two hundred seventy three; but it is a matter of doubt of whom this was exacted, and by whom paid, and who could be reckoned as this superfluous number, unless they were the last two hundred seventy three that were numbered: some have thought this was paid out of the public stock, which was a ready way of doing it, but whether reasonable is not so manifest, since these firstborn were the properties of particular persons; the more commonly received method of doing it with the Jewish writers was, according to Jarchi and Abarbinel, and so in the Talmud {w} by lot; the former of which describes the manner of doing it thus, 22,000 pieces (of paper or parchment) were brought, and on them written, "a son of Levi", or "a Levite", and two hundred seventy three other pieces, and on them were written, "five shekels"; these were mixed together and put into an urn or box, and then they were bid to come and take out the pieces, and according as the lot was, they were allowed as redeemed by the Levites, or paid the redemption money: and as this was a method much in use with the Hebrews, it is not improbable:

a thousand three hundred and threescore and five [shekels], after the shekel of the sanctuary; 1,365 shekels, which is exactly the number of shekels that two hundred seventy three should pay, reckoning five shekels per head; which Jarchi counts thus, for two hundred firstborn, a thousand shekels; for seventy firstborn, three hundred fifty; and for three firstborn fifteen, shekels, which in all amounted to about an hundred seventy pounds of our money.

{u} Vid. Nold. Partic. Ebr. Concord. p. 579. {w} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 17. 1.

Numbers 3:51

Ver. 51. And Moses gave the money of them that were redeemed,.... That were redeemed this way, and not by Levites, as in **Nu 3:49**, but by money, paying five shekels a head:

unto Aaron and his sons; to whom the Levites were given; and this money, as a recompence for the deficiency of the number of them, to answer to the firstborn exchanged for them:

according to the word of the Lord; **Nu 3:48**;

as the Lord commanded Moses; so did he, being a faithful servant in all things in the house of God; he did not convert it to his own use, or to any other use than to what God had appointed it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 4

This chapter relates an order to number the Levites fit for business, and gives an account of the time and age when they should enter into service, and how long they should continue therein, **Nu 4:1**; what their particular service should be; and first of the Kohathites, **Nu 4:4**; next of the Gershonites, **Nu 4:21**; and then of the Merarites, **Nu 4:29**; after which Moses and Aaron, with the chief of the congregation, numbered each of them, even as many as were at the age fit for service, as the Kohathites, **Nu 4:34**; the Gershonites, **Nu 4:38**; the Merarites, **Nu 4:42**; the sum total of which is given, **Nu 4:46**.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron,.... After they had taken the number of the Levites, and made an exchange of the firstborn of Israel for them; and now they are ordered to number them a second time, and take out from them such as were fit for service:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 4:2

Ver. 2. Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi,.... They were to begin with them first, and number them:

after their families, by the house of their fathers; as many as were of the age after mentioned; and the reason why they began with Kohath, and not Gershon, the eldest son, as in the former numbering, was; not as Aben Ezra suggests, because of Moses and Aaron, who sprung from him, for that, if it had any strength in it, would have held good before; but rather, as Chaskuni and others, because the Kohathites carried the ark and other holy things; though the true reason seems to be, because of the order observed in taking down the tabernacle, and removing the parts of it, and the things in it; and it was most proper and reasonable, when they were about to take it down, first to take out the ark, table, &c. which was the business of the Kohathites to carry; next to take down the curtains, coverings, and hangings for the tabernacle and court, and the doors thereof, which were the charge of the Merarites; wherefore, in this order the sum out of each of them fit for business were ordered to be numbered.

Numbers 4:3

Ver. 3. From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old,.... This is the full time of the Levites service, and the prime season of man's life for business; at thirty years of age he is at his full strength, and when fifty it begins to decline: it is said in the Misnah {x},

"a son of thirty years for strength,"

upon which one of the commentators {y} makes this remark, that the Levites set up the tabernacle and took it down, and loaded the wagons, and carried on their shoulders from thirty years and upwards: thus both John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and Christ himself, entered into their ministry at this age:

all that enter into the host; army or warfare; for though the Levites were exempted from going forth to war, yet their service was a sort of warfare; they were a camp of themselves about the tabernacle, and part of their work was to watch and guard it, that it was neither defiled nor robbed; in allusion to this, the ministry of the word is called a warfare, and ministers of the Gospel good soldiers of Christ, and their doctrines weapons of warfare, **1Ti 1:18**; some interpret this of the troop, company, or congregation of the Levites, which a man of thirty years of age was admitted into for business:

to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation; not in the sanctuary, either in the holy place or in the most holy place, where they were never allowed to enter, or do any business in, such as sacrificing, burning incense, &c. but in that part of it which was called "the tabernacle of the congregation", or where the people assembled on occasion, and that was the court, which was so called, as Jarchi observes on Ex 29:32.

{x} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21. {y} Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21.

Numbers 4:4

Ver. 4. This [shall be] the service of the sons of Kohath, in the tabernacle of the congregation,.... What follows, **Nu 4:4**;

[about] the most holy things; which Aben Ezra interprets only of the ark, which was indeed a most holy thing, and stood in the most holy place; but there were other holy things, in the care of which the service of the Kohathites lay; as the shewbread table, the candlestick, and the altars of incense and burnt offering, and the vail, and the ministering: vessels, which Jarchi reckons with it, as more holy than all other things.

Numbers 4:5

Ver. 5. And when the camp setteth forward,.... Upon the cloud's removing and the trumpets blowing:

Aaron shall come, and his sons; into the holy place:

and they shall take down the covering vail: the vail that divided between the holy and the most holy place, which covered all in the holy of holies out of sight:

and cover the ark of testimony with it; together with the mercy seat and cherubim on it, that they might not be seen nor touched by the Levites when they carried them. Now though the high priest himself might not go into the most holy place but once a year, on the day of atonement, yet on this occasion, when the tabernacle was to be taken down, and the things in it to be removed, both he and his sons might enter without danger; since, as Bishop Patrick observes, the divine Majesty was gone from thence in the cloud which gave the signal for the motion of the camp, and the taking down of the tabernacle.

Numbers 4:6

Ver. 6. And shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins,.... Not that which covered the tabernacle, for that was committed to the Gershonites, **Nu 4:25**; but a covering made of these on purpose for the present use, to preserve the ark from rain and dust; and this covering was put not immediately upon the ark, but upon the other coverings that were over the ark, and so preserved the vail as well as the ark:

and shall spread over [it] a cloth wholly of blue; it is a matter of question, whether this was over the covering of badgers' skins also; if over the latter, as one would think it should be, by the order of the text, how could that be a shelter from the rain and dust, which seems to be the use of it, and therefore should be the outermost, as one of the same kind was the outermost covering of the tabernacle? Aben Ezra observes, there were some that say it was over the covering of badger's skin, but it is right in mine eyes, says he, that it was spread over the covering vail; if indeed it was for the sake of honour and dignity, the first is right, but the badger's skin was on account of rain and dust:

and shall put in the staves thereof: having been removed while the ark was covering, as Aben Ezra observes, or otherwise they always remained in their rings, and were never taken out, Ex 25:14; but on this occasion they might, and then be put in again for the carrying of the ark, which was the use of them; though he also remarks, that there are some that say the sense is, they put the staves on the shoulders of them that carried it, which is not a despicable sense; unless rather it is to be understood of putting the staves through holes made in the coverings of the ark, and disposing and fitting them in them, for the better carriage of it.

Numbers 4:7

Ver. 7. And upon the table of shewbread they shall spread a cloth of blue,.... That that also might not be seen nor touched by the Levites:

and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and the covers to cover withal: all which belonged to the shewbread table; the use of which, See Gill on "Ex 25:29"; these seem to be put not immediately upon the table, but upon the blue cloth spread over the table:

and the continual bread shall be thereon: the shewbread is called "continual", because it was always on the table; for while the one was removing by a set of priests, which had stood a week, new loaves were placed by another set of priests: this bread seems at this time to be placed also upon the table, spread with the blue cloth; and from hence it appears, that the Israelites had the shewbread in the wilderness; for the making of which they might be supplied with corn from the neighbouring countries, though they themselves needed not any, being daily fed with manna.

Numbers 4:8

Ver. 8. And they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet,.... Upon the dishes and other vessels belonging to the shewbread table, and on the shewbread itself:

and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins; this was clearly the outward covering, and seems to confirm the observation made in **Nu 4:6**; that the same sort of covering was the outermost covering of the ark:

and shall put in the staves thereof; which belonged to the table, and were made to carry it with on occasion, from place to place; see Ex 25:27; and the same phrase being used as here of the staves of the ark in **Nu 4:6**; seems to confirm the sense of them there, that they were taken out and put in upon this occasion, though otherwise fixed.

Numbers 4:9

Ver. 9. And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps,.... Which had lamps in it, and were continually lighted, and gave light in the holy place:

and his tongs, and his snuff dishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it; by supplying the lamps with oil, and snuffing and trimming them.

Numbers 4:10

Ver. 10. And they shall put it, and all the vessels thereof, within a covering of badgers' skins,.... Which here also was the outermost covering; the ark and the shewbread table had three coverings, but the candlestick only two, they being more sacred than that, especially the ark:

and shall put [it] upon a bar; the word "mot" perhaps signifies a kind of mat or mattress, on which the candlestick and its vessels, bundled together in the covering of the badgers' skins, were laid and carried between men on staves; and so the Septuagint render the word "staves"; as does the Targum of Onkelos.

Numbers 4:11

Ver. 11. And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue,.... The altar of incense, which was overlaid with gold, and therefore called a golden one, to which the allusion is in **Re 8:3**;

and cover it with a covering of badgers' skins; after the cloth of blue was spread upon it:

and shall put to the staves thereof; into the rings, both made to bear and carry it, upon occasion, from place to place.

Numbers 4:12

Ver. 12. And they shall take all the instruments of ministry, wherewith they minister in the sanctuary,.... The garments in which the priests, ministered in the sanctuary, which were laid up in proper places, and which they only wore when in service:

and put [them] in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers' skins; all wrapped up in one bundle:

and shall put [them] on a bar; the same sort of carriage on which the candlestick and its vessels were borne, See Gill on "Nu 4:10".

Numbers 4:13

Ver. 13. And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon. Having cleared the holy of holies, and the holy place, they were to come forth from thence into the court of the tabernacle, where stood the altar of burnt offering, which is here meant, and on which sacrifices being daily burnt, there were always ashes to be removed; and which at this time was highly necessary to be done, when the tabernacle was taken down, and all belonging to it to be carried away; and though no mention is made of the fire, which was always burning on it, it was doubtless preserved, and care was taken for the carrying it along with the altar, or in a separate vessel from it. Bishop Patrick supposes it might be carried upon the grate.

Numbers 4:14

Ver. 14. And they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof,.... Upon the altar covered with a blue cloth; on that were to be put everything belonging to the altar:

wherewith they minister about it; the priests, when they offered sacrifice on it:

[even] the censers, the fleshhooks, and the shovels, and the basins,
all the vessels of the altar; of which see Ex 27:3;

and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers' skins: to prevent the rains falling upon them, which being all of brass, would be apt to tarnish:

and put to the staves of it; which were made to bear and carry it on such an occasion as this, Ex 27:6. No mention is made of the laver, though there is both in the Septuagint and Samaritan versions, which add, "and they shall take a purple cloth and cover the layer, and its base, and shall put it into a covering of skin of a blue colour, and put it upon bearers:"

but perhaps the reason why this is not mentioned is, because it was carried uncovered; the mystery of which, Ainsworth conjectures, was this, that it might be a lively representation of the grace of God in Christ, continuing and opened as an ever springing fountain, where always God's elect, having faith in him, may wash and purge themselves in the blood of Christ unto forgiveness of sin sanctification of the Spirit, and salvation; see Zec 13:1.

Numbers 4:15

Ver. 15. And when Aaron and his sons had made an end of covering the sanctuary,.... Not the holy place, nor the most holy place, for these were not covered by them; but "the holy things" in them, as the Septuagint version, the ark, shewbread table, &c. and all "the vessels of the sanctuary"; all appertaining to those holy things, which are before mentioned. Jarchi interprets the "sanctuary", or the "holiness", of the ark and altar,

and all the vessels of the sanctuary; of the candlestick and the instruments of ministry:

as the camp is to set forward; which made the covering of them necessary, in order to their being carried as that moved:

after that the sons of Kohath shall come to bear [it]; or rather them, all the holy things, and their vessels, and that upon their shoulders:

but they shall not touch [any] holy thing; even in bearing them, neither the ark nor any other, only the staves and bar, on which they were carried: lest they die; by the immediate hand of God:

these [things are] the burden of the sons of Kohath, in the tabernacle of the congregation; the above things, the ark, &c. which they were to bear on their shoulders, and not make use of wagons to carry them.

Numbers 4:16

Ver. 16. And to the office of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, [pertaineth] the oil for the light,.... The following things, to bear them, according to some Jewish writers; but rather it was to give the oil for the light, that is, the vessels, and so the vessels of the oil to the sons of the Kohathites; agreeably to which are the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, who paraphrase the words,

"and that which was delivered to Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, the oil for the light, &c."

And indeed the words, as they are in the Hebrew text, may be rendered,

"and the oversight of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, shall be, or "let it be", the oil for the light, &c. {z};"

the same word being so rendered in a latter clause of this same text: he had the inspection of these, and on him lay to see to it, that these were carried by the Kohathites, the oil for the light of the lamps in the candlestick; of which see Ex 27:20;

and the sweet incense: to burn on the altar of incense, Ex 30:34;

and the daily meat offering; offered with the lambs morning and evening, Ex 29:40;

and the anointing oil; with which Aaron and his sons were anointed, the tabernacle and all its vessels, Ex 30:23;

[and] the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein is, in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof: the former, the oil for the light, &c. were his immediate oversight and care; but the oversight of these by his brother Ithamar, according to the Jewish writers.

{z} So Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator.

Numbers 4:17

Ver. 17. And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron,.... And gave them a very solemn and awful charge about this affair of the Kohathites, it being a very hazardous one they were employed in:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 4:18

Ver. 18. Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites. Or give no occasion, as the Targum of Jonathan; or be not the cause of their cutting off, as Jarchi, through negligence or inadvertency of theirs, in packing up the above things, and delivering them to them.

Numbers 4:19

Ver. 19. But thus do unto them,.... As after directed:

that they may live and not die; live long, and not die a sudden and violent death:

when they approach unto the most holy things; the ark, the shewbread table, &c. to take them up and carry them:

Aaron and his sons shall go in; into the holy and most holy places:

and appoint them in everyone to his service, and to his burden; what everyone shall do, and how they shall take them up, and bear them.

Numbers 4:20

Ver. 20. But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered,.... They were not to be present while they were packing up, test they should see any of them with their eyes; they were not to go in until they were quite covered out of sight; which may signify the hiding of the mysteries of grace in those things under the former dispensation, when even the Levites themselves were not admitted to a sight of them; see **Eph 3:4**;

lest they die; by the immediate hand of God.

Numbers 4:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Though Aaron is not mentioned here, he was concerned in taking the sum of the Gershonites, as well as of the Kohathites, as appears from **Nu 4:41**;

saying; as follows.

Numbers 4:22

Ver. 22. Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon,.... As well as of the sons of Kohath; for though Gershon was Levi's eldest son, yet his posterity were not excused from the service of the tabernacle, and bearing things of it in journeying:

throughout the houses of their fathers, by their families; all in their several houses, and in the several families in those houses, that were of the age next mentioned, were to be numbered.

Numbers 4:23

Ver. 23. From thirty years old and upward, until fifty years old, shalt thou number them,.... Take an account how many there are of that age, and so fit for service {a}; See Gill on "Nu 4:3";

to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation; as the rest of the Levites; see **Nu 4:3**;

{a} abu abul "ad militandum militiam", Montanus, Drusius.

Numbers 4:24

Ver. 24. This [is] the service of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens. The former of these phrases Aben Ezra interprets of setting up the tabernacle, making the bread (the shewbread), slaying (the sacrifices), and keeping, that is, watching and guarding, the tabernacle; and the latter of what they did when journeying, bearing and carrying the things assigned to them, afterwards mentioned.

Numbers 4:25

Ver. 25. And they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle,.... The ten curtains of fine linen, Ex 26:1;

and the tabernacle of the congregation; the curtains of goats' hair made for a tent over it, as Jarchi, see Ex 26:7;

his covering the covering of rams skins dyed red, Ex 26:14;

and the covering of the badgers' skins that [is] above upon it; over all the rest:

and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; the eastern vail, as Jarchi calls it, which was for the door of the tent that led into the tabernacle, the holy place, Ex 26:36.

Numbers 4:26

Ver. 26. And the hangings of the court,.... Which made the great court that surrounded the tabernacle, Ex 27:9;

and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court; the eastern gate that led into the court, an hanging of twenty cubits, Ex 27:16;

which [is] by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about; that is, which hangings that formed the court, and were round about the tabernacle, and the altar of burnt offering; See Gill on "Ex 26:36";

and their cords; which fastened the hangings to pins or stakes fixed in the ground to keep them tight, that they might not be moved to and fro with the wind:

and all the instruments of their service; in the court, as the tables on which the sacrifices were laid, and the hooks, and cords, and pins, on which they were hung and fastened, as Aben Ezra; see Eze 40:39;

and all that is made for them; for the vessels of service, or for the tabernacle, or the altar, as the same writer intimates:

so shall they serve; by bearing them and carrying them.

Numbers 4:27

Ver. 27. At the appointment of Aaron and his sons,.... As they shall order and direct:

shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites; everyone of them was to take their share, as Aaron and his sons should appoint them:

in all their burdens, and in all their service; what each of them should carry, and in what they should perform duty:

and ye shall appoint to them in charge all their burdens; charge them carefully to keep all that were committed to them to bear, that none be lost, not a pin nor a cord.

Numbers 4:28

Ver. 28. This [is] the service of the families of the sons of Gershon,.... Which they should execute when the camp and tabernacle were in motion:

in the tabernacle of the congregation in the court; where they should take up their burdens, or which lie in things respecting the tabernacle; this was the part they were to be employed in, namely, in taking care of the hangings of the tabernacle, &c.

and their charge [shall be] under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest; the things committed to their care were delivered by him to them, and they were under his inspection and direction.

Numbers 4:29

Ver. 29. As for the sons of Merari,.... The third and youngest son of Levi:

thou shalt number them after their families, by the house of their fathers; which is the form of expression used of them all;

See Gill on "Nu 4:2".

Numbers 4:30

Ver. 30. From thirty years old and upward,.... The Septuagint version here, and in **Nu 4:3**, renders it, from twenty five years old and upward, agreeable to **Nu 8:24**, at the which age the Levites went into the tabernacle, to wait and to learn their business, but they did not enter upon it till thirty;

even unto fifty years old shalt thou number them; at which age they were discharged from business:

everyone that entereth into the service, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation; See Gill on "Nu 4:3".

Numbers 4:31

Ver. 31. And this [is] the charge of their burden,.... What should be committed to their care and charge, and they should bear and carry:

according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation; which was assigned to them as their part, and which was very heavy and cumbersome, and therefore they had wagons allowed them, **Nu 7:8**;

the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and sockets thereof; all these belonged to the holy and to the most holy place; see Ex 26:15.

Numbers 4:32

Ver. 32. And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets,
and their pins, and their cords,.... These belonged to the court of the tabernacle; the pillars were what the hangings were hung upon, and the sockets, into which the pillars were set, and the and cords, with which the hangings were fastened; see Ex 27:9;

with all their instruments, and with all their service; whatever else were used in, and served for the support of this part of the tabernacle:

and by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge of their burden; everything, even the least that were committed to their charge, and they were to bear and carry, either they themselves, or in wagons, were to be mentioned by name; and not only every board, pillar, and socket, were to be told out to them, and particularly named, how many they were, to what they belonged, from whence they were taken, and where to be replaced; but every pin, and cord, and the use of them, that so when they came to set up the tabernacle again, there might be nothing wanting in its place to secure it, and make it as firm as at first: such particular notice and care does God take of all his people, and Christ of all committed to him, and so should ministers of the word of all that are their charge, who must one day give an account to God, Heb 13:17.

Numbers 4:33

Ver. 33. This [is] the service of the families of the sons of Merari,.... The Mahlites and Mushites, namely, the service before observed, the particulars of which are given:

according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation; agreeably to what was allotted to them in that part of the tabernacle they were concerned in:

under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest; who had the oversight of these as well as of the Gershonites, as Eleazar had of the Kohathites; though as Eleazar was the chief of the tribe of Levi, it is thought that Ithamar acted under him, **Nu 3:32**.

Numbers 4:34

Ver. 34. And Moses and Aaron, and the chief of the congregation, numbered the sons of the Kohathites,.... Perhaps these chiefs were the same with those who were concerned with Moses and Aaron in numbering all the tribes whose names were given, **Nu 1:5**; the Kohathites are begun with, according to the divine direction, and then the Gershonites and Merarites in their order; and in **Nu 4:34** is only an account of the numbering of each of them, as ordered by the Lord, and this account is expressed in the same terms in them all; there remains nothing to be observed but the particular sums of each of them, the number of the Kohathites from thirty years old even to fifty, men able and fit for business, were 2750, **Nu 4:36**; whereas their number from a month old were 8600, **Nu 3:28**; so that not a third part of them were at an age for service: the number of the Gershonites were 2630, **Nu 4:40**; whose number of males in all were 7500, **Nu 3:22**; so that they were rather more than a third part who were able-bodied then and fit for business; and the number of the Merarites were 3200, **Nu 4:44**; and as the number of males of a month old and upwards were 6200, **Nu 3:34**; there were more than half of them able and fit men for service; in which, as Ainsworth observes, may be seen the wisdom of divine Providence, that whereas the service of the Kohathites and Gershonites were the lightest, and what was committed to them the easiest of carriage, they had the fewer hands of able men to be employed, though their numbers of individuals were the greatest; and the Merarites, who had the smallest number of males, yet having the heaviest work to do in carrying burdens, loading and unloading wagons, were superior to the rest in their number of able bodied men; and thus God makes good his promise, that as the day of his people is, their strength shall be; whatever work and service God calls men to, he will fit them for it: the sum total of the Levites, in the several divisions of them, who were between: thirty and fifty years of age, in which they performed their office, was 8580, **Nu 4:48**; a small number, as the above writer observes, of such as warred the spiritual warfare in the sanctuary of God, when the tribe of Judah afforded 74,600 for the outward warfare.

after their families, and after the house of their fathers;
See Gill on "Nu 4:2".

Numbers 4:35

Ver. 35. From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old,.... See Gill on "Nu 4:34".

Numbers 4:36

Ver. 36. And those that were numbered of them by their families,....
See Gill on "Nu 4:34".

Numbers 4:37

Ver. 37. These [were] they that were numbered of the families of the

Kohathites,.... See Gill on "Nu 4:34".

Numbers 4:38

Ver. 38. And those that were numbered of the sons of Gershon,....
See Gill on "Nu 4:34".

Numbers 4:39

Ver. 39. From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old,.... See Gill on "Nu 4:34".

Numbers 4:40

Ver. 40. Even those that were numbered of them,....
See Gill on "Nu 4:34";

Numbers 4:41

Ver. 41. These [are] they that were numbered of the families,....
See Gill on "Nu 4:34";

Numbers 4:42

Ver. 42. And those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari,....
See Gill on "Nu 4:34";

Numbers 4:43

Ver. 43. From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old,.... See Gill on "Nu 4:34".

Numbers 4:44

Ver. 44. Even those that were numbered of them after their families,.... See Gill on "Nu 4:34".

Numbers 4:45

Ver. 45. These [be] those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari,.... See Gill on "Nu 4:34";

Numbers 4:46

Ver. 46. All those that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the chief of Israel numbered,.... See Gill on "Nu 3:34".

Numbers 4:47

Ver. 47. From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old,.... See Gill on "Nu 4:34".

Numbers 4:48

Ver. 48. Even those that were numbered of them,....
See Gill on "Nu 4:34".

Numbers 4:49

Ver. 49. According to the commandment of the Lord, they were numbered by the hand of Moses,.... Aaron and the chief of the congregation of Israel assisting it:

everyone according to his service; called in **Nu 4:47** "the service of the ministry", or "service of service", which Jarchi interprets of that part of the service of the Levites, which lay in singing the song with cymbals and harps; which, he says, was a service to another service; though it seems to be better explained, by Chaskuni, of their taking down and setting up of the tabernacle, which was a service incumbent on all the Levites:

and according to his burden: called "the service of the burden", **Nu 4:47**; which the last mentioned writer restrains to the ark, table, candlestick, and altars, which the Kohathites carried on their shoulders; but may be extended to what each of them bore and carried when journeying:

thus were they numbered of him, as the Lord commanded Moses; from thirty years old to fifty, as Jarchi observes; for that was the order given to Moses by the Lord, which he punctually attended to, as a faithful servant in the house of God.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 5

This chapter contains a repetition of some former laws, concerning putting unclean persons out of the camp, **Nu 5:1**; making restitution in case of trespass against another, **Nu 5:5**; and of giving the offering of all holy things and all hallowed things to the priests, **Nu 5:9**; and a new law concerning jealousy, in a man, of his wife, **Nu 5:11**; when she was to be brought to the priest, and various rites and ceremonies to be used, **Nu 5:15**; who was to give her bitter water as a trial of her chastity, which, if guilty, would have a strange effect upon her, and make her accursed, but if not, would not affect her, and she would be free and happy, **Nu 5:24**.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Jarchi says, what follows was said on the day the tabernacle was erected, but it seems rather to have been delivered after the several camps were formed, and the people numbered, when those that were unclean were ordered to be cast out of them:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 5:2

Ver. 2. Command the children of Israel,.... Not as from himself, but from the Lord; deliver out the following as a command of his, to which obedience was required of all the children of Israel:

that they put out of the camp every leper; there were three camps, Jarchi says, in the time of their encampment; between the curtains was the camp of the Shechinah, or the divine Majesty; the encampment of the Levites round about; and from thence to the end was the camp of the standards, to the four winds, which was the camp of Israel; and the leper was to be put out of them all; so Ben Gersom; see Le 13:46;

and everyone that hath an issue; a gonorrhoea, man or woman, see Le 15:2; according Jarchi, such an one might be in the camp of Israel, but was to be put out of the other two camps:

and whosoever is defiled by the dead; by attending the funerals of the dead, or touching them, see Le 21:1; such an one might go into the camp of the Levites, according to Jarchi and Ben Gersom; and was to be put of none but the camp of the Shechinah, or the tabernacle; but the camp of Israel seems to be meant of them all, out of which they were to be put, as an emblem of the rejection of all impure persons out of the church of God.

Numbers 5:3

Ver. 3. Both male and female shall ye put out,.... Whether leprous, or profluvious, or defiled by touching a dead carcass: by this law, Miriam, when leprous, was put out of the camp, Nu 12:14;

without the camp shall ye put them; which is repeated that it might be taken notice of, and punctually observed:

that they defile not their camps; of which there were four, the camps of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan:

in the midst whereof I dwell; for the tabernacle, which was the dwelling place of the Lord, was in the midst of the camps of Israel; they were pitched on the four quarters of it; and this is a reason why impure persons were not suffered to be in the camp of Israel, because of the presence of God in the tabernacle so near them, to whom all, impurity is loathsome, and not to be permitted in his sight; and though this was ceremonial, it was typical of the uncleanness of sin, which is abominable to him, and renders persons unfit for communion with him, and with his people.

Numbers 5:4

Ver. 4. And the children of Israel did so, and put them without the camp,.... Aben Ezra observes, that this was done immediately before they journeyed, and that those that were defiled journeyed between the standard of Ephraim and the standard of Dan; but this, he says, was by way of conjecture, since it is not expressed:

as the Lord spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel; they were obedient in this particular.

Numbers 5:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Or continued to speak to him at the same time:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 5:6

Ver. 6. Speak unto the children of Israel,.... Put them in mind of the following law, that they observe it; and which is here repeated, because of two new things in it, as Jarchi observes, the one relates to confession, teaching that there is no fifth part nor trespass offering by witnesses, till a man confesses the thing; and the other is, concerning taking anything away by violence from a proselyte, which is to be given to the priests; see the original law in **Le 6:1**;

when a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit; or, "any of the sins of men" {e}, which are commonly done by men, and men are subject to through the infirmity of the flesh, and the temptations of Satan; or "any sin against man" {f}, so some, as this referred to is expressly said to be, **Nu 5:7**;

to do a trespass against the Lord; for every sin against man is also against the Lord, being a breach of his command; as David's sin against Uriah was a sin against the Lord, Ps 51:4; though the Jews understand it particularly of lying and swearing falsely, appealing to God, and calling him to be a witness to a falsehood; and so the Targum of Onkelos seems to interpret it:

and the person be guilty; and knows he is so, and even knew it when he took an oath to the contrary; see **Le 6:3**.

{e} Mdah tajx lkm "ex omnibus peccatis hominis", Montanus. {f} "Ex omnibus peccatis contra hominem", Tigurine version; so Patrick.

Numbers 5:7

Ver. 7. Then they shall confess their sin which they have done,.... The form of which confession, according to Fagius, was, O Lord, I am guilty of death, I have deserved to be stoned for this sin, or to be strangled for this trespass, or to be burnt for this crime, &c.

and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth [part] thereof; paying the whole of whatsoever he had in any manner defrauded his neighbour of, to which he was to add a fifth part of that; that is, as Aben Ezra interprets it, it he confesses of himself, but if there are witnesses of it he must add two fifths, and some say a fifth of a fifth:

and give [it] unto [him] against whom he hath trespassed; as a satisfaction for the injury done him.

Numbers 5:8

Ver. 8. But if a man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass to,.... This supposes that if a man should die, against whom the trespass is, before the restitution is made, then it shall be made to his heirs; and if he has none, then it was to be given to the priest, as after directed: the Jews {g} generally understand this of a proselyte, that has no heirs, for they say, there is no Israelite but has kinsmen, a brother or a son, or some one or other near of kin to him, of his father's family, even up to Jacob:

let the trespass be recompensed unto the Lord, [even] to the priest; that is, let the principal, with the fifth part, which is the recompence for the trespass committed, be given to the priest of the Lord, which is the same as if it was given to him, he being his minister:

beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him; which, in this case, was ordered to be offered for the expiation, of the trespass, see **Le 6:6**; the Jewish canon is, "he that takes away anything by force from a proselyte, and swears to him, and he (the proselyte) dies, lo, he shall pay the principal and the fifth to the priests, and the trespass offering to the altar, as it is said, "if a man has no kinsman", &c. when he brings the money and the trespass offering, and he is dead, the money shall be given to his sons, but the trespass offering (the ram) shall feed until it contracts some blemish, and then it shall be sold, and the price of it shall fall to the freewill offerings {h}."

{g} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 9. sect. 11. Jarchi in loc.
{h} Misn. Bava Kama, ib.

Numbers 5:9

Ver. 9. And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel,.... Of the holy sacrifices brought by them to be offered up; that part of them which is elevated, heaved, or waved, as the heave shoulder and wave breast:

which they bring unto the priest, shall be his; what they bring to him to offer for them shall be his who performs the service, even that part of them which is his due.

Numbers 5:10

Ver. 10. And every man's hallowed things shall be his,.... Which he, by a vow or freewill offering, separates to holy uses; these are at his own dispose, to give to what priest he will, or they are the priest's; for what a man devotes to the Lord is to be given to them, or such things as God has hallowed, sanctified, and set apart for sacred uses, as the firstfruits and tithes, they were the priests'; the Jewish writers {i} restrain it to tithes:

whatsoever any man giveth the priest, it shall be his; his personally, who officiates, or to whom the gift is given, and is not to be divided among the other priests in the course.

{i} Targ. Jon. Siphri & Midrash in Jarchi in loc.

Numbers 5:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... At the same time, and delivered to him a new law:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 5:12

Ver. 12. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,.... It being an affair which concerned them:

if any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him; the sin of adultery, which is a going aside out of the way of virtue and chastity, and a trespass against an husband, a breach of the marriage covenant with him, a defiling his bed, doing an injury and dishonour to him, bringing confusion into his family, and a spurious offspring to possess his substance: though this is to be understood, not of certain adultery, of which there is plain and full proof, for then there would be no occasion of such a trial, as is afterwards directed to; besides, her husband, in such a case, might put her away, and even, according to the law, she was to be put to death, Le 20:10; but of her having committed it in the opinion of her husband, he having some ground of suspicion, though he could not be certain of it; and therefore, by this law, was allowed to make trial, that he might find it out, it at present only a suspected case, and a doubtful one; and the Jews {k} say,

"they never gave the waters drink but in a doubtful case:"

and so this may interpreted of her declining and departing from her husband's house, not keeping at home to mind the affairs of her family, but gadding abroad, and keeping company with another man, or other men; and that after she had been warned and charged by her husband to the contrary, and so had disobeyed him, and acted contrary to his will; and in that sense had committed a trespass, and so had given him suspicion of her unchastity, for which he might have some reason; if, as it is said in the Misnah {l}, he gave her an admonition before two witnesses, saying, have no talk with such a man, and yet she talks with him; or, as the commentators add {m}, be not secretly or in private with such an one, and yet goes into a private place with him, and stays so long with him that she may be defiled; this with them rendered her suspected.

{k} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 195. 2. {l} Sotah, c. 1. sect. 1, 2. {m}

Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 9. sect. 11.

Numbers 5:13

Ver. 13. And a man lie with her carnally,.... That is, is suspected that he has so done, not that it is a clear case, for it follows;

and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close; so that it is not known by her husband, nor by any other; "she hath hid herself", so Ainsworth, being in a private place with another man, though warned to the contrary by her husband:

and she be defiled, and [there be] no witness against her; of her being defiled, though there may be of her being in private with such a man:

neither she be taken [with the manner]; or in the act of uncleanness.

Numbers 5:14

Ver. 14. And the spirit of jealousy come upon him,.... A thought rises up in his mind, a strong suspicion works in him, which he cannot resist and throw off, but it remains with him, and makes him very uneasy, that his wife has defiled his bed, as it follows:

and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled; that his wife is defiled by a man; and which is the real case, as it afterwards appears, though at present he is not certain, only has a suspicion of it:

or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled; it is mere jealousy and suspicion, without any foundation for it; and his wife proved a chaste and virtuous woman; yet be it which it would, he being jealous, the following law was to take place, and the following rules to be observed.

Numbers 5:15

Ver. 15. Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest,.... Not to the high priest but to a common priest, anyone then officiating in his course; for there was a jealousy offering to be offered up before the Lord upon the altar, which none but a priest might do; and besides, the whole process in this affair was to be carried, on by him: according to the Misnah {n}, the man brought his wife first to the sanhedrim, or court of judicature in the place where he lived; before whom, as Maimonides {o} says, he proved by witnesses that he had warned his wife of being in private with such a man, and yet she had done it again; and whereas she insisted on her chastity, he desired that the bitter waters might be given her, that the truth might appear; and then they sent him with two disciples of the wise men, to the great sanhedrim at Jerusalem, where the trial was made; who, in order to bring her too confession, endeavoured to terrify her, as they do persons in capital cases, and finding this wilt not do, then they used smooth words, saying, my daughter, perhaps much wine was the occasion of it, or much laughter, &c.

and he shall bring her offering for her: not the priest, but her husband, and that whether he is willing or not, as Aben Ezra; who also observes, that it may be interpreted, with her, or for her sake, not to make any expiation for any fault of his, that when he first observed her immodesty, did not reprove her; for the offering, though brought by him, was not his, but his wife's, and not to expiate her sin, but to bring it to remembrance, as is after expressed:

the tenth [part] of an ephah of barley meal; which was an omer, Ex 16:36, the quantity of manna for one man every day, Ex 16:16, and the quantity of flour in the daily meat offering, Ex 29:40; only that was of fine wheaten flour; this of barley, the food of beasts, as the Targum of Jonathan remarks; and R. Gamaliel in the Misnah {p} says, that as her deed was the deed of a beast, so her offering was the food of a beast; and this is observed by Jarchi and Aben Ezra on the text, as the reason of barley being used in this offering: some say it was a symbol of her impudence, others of her being little at home, as the barley is not long under ground {q}; the true reason, it may be, was for her humiliation, being vile, and mean, hence it follows:

he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; as used to be oft meat offerings, denoting their acceptableness to God, **Le 2:1**; the reason seems to be, because these were tokens of joy and gladness, whereas this was a mournful affair to the husband, that he should have any cause of suspicion and jealousy, to the wife that she should be suspected, and to the whole family on that account:

for it [is] an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance; if guilty of it, and therefore oil and frankincense were forbidden in this kind of offering as in a sin offering, **Le 5:11**.

{n} Ut supra, (Misn. Bava Kama, c. 9.) sect. 3, 4. {o} Hilchot Sotah, c. 3. sect. 1. {p} Sotah, c. 2. sect. 1. {q} Apud Muis. in loc.

Numbers 5:16

Ver. 16. And the priest shall bring her near,.... Or "offer it", as the Vulgate Latin version, that is, the offering of jealousy:

and set her before the Lord; or "it", the offering; for which the Tigurine version is more express,

"let the priest offer that sacrifice, and set that before the Lord,"

for the setting of the woman before the Lord is spoken of in **Nu 5:18**.

Numbers 5:17

Ver. 17. And the priest shall take holy water,.... Out of the laver, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra:

in an earthen vessel; which held half a log, and that was but a quarter of a pint, or three egg shells; for no more was assigned, to a suspected woman, according to the Misnah {r}. Some say only a fourth part: an earthen vessel was made use of, as everything vile and mean was in this affair:

and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put [it] into the water; first the water was put in, and then the dust, as Ben Gersom observes: there was a place a cubit square, where was a marble table, and a ring fixed in it, and when he lifted it up he took dust from under it, and put it so as it might be upon the top of the water {s}; which was used, either, as the Targum of Jonathan suggests, because the end of all flesh is to come to dust, and so to put her in mind of her original and her end; and in like manner the earthen vessel might signify, that she would be broke to pieces as that vessel; as also it might direct her thoughts to the tempter, by the influence of whose temptation she had been drawn into this sin, dust being the serpent's food; and this being taken off the floor of the tabernacle, might add to the veneration of it, and make it more solemn and awful to drink of it.

{r} Sotah, c. 2. sect. 2. Menachot, c. 9. sect. 3. {s} Sotah, c. 2. sect. 2.

Numbers 5:18

Ver. 18. And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord,.... In the east of the tabernacle, with her face to the west, where was the holy of holies, so Ben Gersom; but not immediately for they had her from place to place, as Jarchi says, till she was weary, and her mind disturbed, that she might confess; and if she said, I am defiled, she rent the writing of her dowry, and went out; but if she said, I am pure, they brought her to the eastern gate, the gate of Nicanor, for there they made women suspected of adultery to drink the waters {t}:

and uncover the woman's head; as a token of her immodesty and non-subjection to her husband, and that she might be seen by all, to cause shame in her: according to the Misnah {u}, the priest took off her clothes, and loosed her hair--if she was clothed with white garments, he clothed her with black; if she had on her ornaments of gold, chains, earrings, or rings, he took them away from her, that she might be unseemly, and whoever would might come and look at her:

and put the offering of memorial into her hands, which [is] the jealousy offering; to weary her, as Jarchi says, that if perhaps her mind was disturbed she would confess; and so in the Misnah {w} it is said, that her husband put this offering into her hands to weary her; but the true reason here seems to be, that it might appear to be her own offering:

and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse; not that the water was bitter of itself, for it was the water out of the laver, and had nothing in it but the dust of the floor of the tabernacle; though some think some bitter thing was put into it, so Ben Gersom, as wormwood; but it is so called from the effects of it on those that were guilty; it produced sad effects in them, bitter and distressing, and made them appear to be accursed ones, for it was not bitter till it entered, **Nu 5:24**; whereas it was not so to the innocent, nor attended with any such consequence to them; so that there was nothing in the water itself, but its efficacy was divine and supernatural.

{t} Sotah, c. 1. sect. 5. {u} Sotah, c. 1. sect. 5, 6. {w} Sotah, c. 2. sect. 1.

Numbers 5:19

Ver. 19. And the priest shall charge her by an oath,.... Or give her her oath:

and say unto the woman, if no man hath lain with thee: besides her husband:

and thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness [with another] instead of thy husband; which is but another phrase expressive of the same thing, the sin of adultery:

be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse; if this is the case, it shall produce no bitter effects, or bring any curse upon thee.

Numbers 5:20

Ver. 20. But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband,.... Gone aside from the paths of modesty and chastity, and betook herself to another man's bed instead of her husband's:

and if thou be defiled, by committing adultery:

and some man hath lain with thee beside thy husband; these phrases are all synonymous, and a heap of words are made use of to express the sin, and that there might be no evasion of it, and that it might be clear what was intended, this being said on oath.

Numbers 5:21

Ver. 21. Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing,.... An oath which has a curse annexed to it, if taken falsely, which was to be pronounced upon the woman if guilty:

and the priest shall say unto the woman; pronouncing the imprecation or curse upon her, she having taken the oath, should she be guilty of the crime suspected of, and she had swore concerning:

the Lord make thee a curse, and an oath among the people; accursed according to the oath taken; or let this be the form of an oath and imprecation used by the people, saying, if I have done so and so, let me be accursed as such a woman, or let not that happen to me, as did to such a woman, so Jarchi:

when the Lord doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell; upon drinking the bitter waters; but though these things followed upon that, yet not as the natural cause of them, for they are ascribed to the Lord, and to a supernatural and miraculous power of his, which went along with the drinking of them.

Numbers 5:22

Ver. 22. And this water that causeth the curse,.... Upon the drinking of which the curse follows, if guilty:

shall go into thy bowels; and there operate and produce the above effects, which are repeated again to inject terror:

to make [thy] belly to swell, and [thy] thigh to rot; here ends the form of the oath, which begins **Nu 5:19**;

and the woman shall say, amen, amen; so be it; let it be as pronounced, if I am guilty; which, as Aben Ezra observes, is repeated for the sake of confirmation; though the Jewish writers commonly understand it as respecting various things, the oath and the curse, the thing charged with, and the persons suspected of {x}.

{x} Misn. ib. sect. 5. Targum Jon. & Jerus. & Jarchi in loc.

Numbers 5:23

Ver. 23. And the priest shall write these curses in a book,.... The above curses imprecated on herself by an oath; the words and the letters of them were written at length, in a scroll of parchment; and, as some say also, her name, but not her double amen to them {y}:

and he shall blot [them] out with the bitter water: wash them out with it, and into it, or scrape them off of the parchment into it.

{y} Misnah, ut supra, (Sotah, c. 2) sect. 3.

Numbers 5:24

Ver. 24. And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse,..... Having the curse imprecated upon herself, if guilty, scraped into it; and this she was obliged to drink, whether she would or not; so it is said, if the roll is blotted out, and she says I am defiled, the water is poured out, and her offering is scattered in the place of ashes; if the roll is blotted out, and she says I will not drink, then force her, and make her drink whether she will or no {z}:

and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, [and become] bitter; produce the sad and bitter effects mentioned.

{z} Misnah, ut supra, (Sotah) c. 3. sect. 3.

Numbers 5:25

Ver. 25. Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand,.... Which she was obliged to hold in her hand while the above rites and ceremonies were performed; which was very heavy, being an omer of barley flour, a measure about three quarts, which was put into an Egyptian basket made of small palm tree twigs: and this was put into her hands to weary her, as before observed, that, having her mind distressed, she might the sooner confess her crime:

and shall wave the offering before the Lord: backwards and forwards, upwards and downwards, as Jarchi; who also observes, that the woman waved with him, for her hand was above the hand of the priest so the tradition is,

"he (her husband) took her offering out of the Egyptian basket, and put it into a ministering vessel, and gave it into her hand, and the priest put his hand under hers, and waved it {a}:"

and offer it upon the altar: this was the bringing of it to the southwest corner of the altar, as Jarchi says, before he took a handful out of it, as in other meat offerings.

{a} Misnah, ut supra, (Sotah) c. 3. sect. 1.

Numbers 5:26

Ver. 26. And the priest shall take an handful of the offering, [even] the memorial thereof,.... For good or evil, according as her works were, as Aben Ezra observes; a memorial for good, if innocent, and a memorial for evil, if guilty:

and burn [it] upon the altar; as the handful of other meat offerings used to be, Le 1:2;

and afterwards shall cause the woman to drink the water; oblige her to it; having proceeded thus far, and no confession made, namely, an oath taken, the curses of it written in a scroll and scraped into the waters, and the jealousy offering waved and offered.

Numbers 5:27

Ver. 27. And when he hath made her to drink the water,.... For, as before observed, and here by Jarchi again, if she says I will not drink it, after the roll is blotted out, they oblige her, and make her drink it whether she will or not, unless she says I am defiled:

then it shall come to pass, [that] if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband; or has committed adultery:

that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, [and become] bitter; the water drank by her, and having the curses scraped into it, shall enter into her, and operate and produce bitter and dreadful effects:

and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot; not through any natural virtue in the water, or what is put into it, either the dust of the floor of the tabernacle, or the scrapings of the parchment roll, these could have no physical influence to produce such effects; but they must be ascribed to a supernatural cause, the power and curse of God attending this draught. A certain Jewish writer {b} says, though very falsely, that the priest put poison into the water, which produced such effects; but then, how could an innocent woman escape the effects of it? that must be allowed to be miraculous and supernatural, was it so; but there is no manner of reason to believe that anything of this kind was put into it, The Jews say {c}, as soon, or before she had made an end of drinking:

the water, the effects appeared; her face turned pale immediately, her eyes bolted out, and she was filled with veins, her body swelled, and they called out, Cast her out, cast her out, that she may not defile the court. And the text seems to intimate, as if the operation was immediate; yea, moreover, they say {d}, that as the waters searched her, so they searched him (the adulterer), because it is said twice, "shall enter, shall enter"; and that the same effects appeared in him as in her, but in neither, unless the husband was innocent; for if he was not pure from the same sin himself, the waters would not search his wife {e} hence they say {f}, when adulterers increased (under the second temple) the bitter waters ceased, according to **Ho 4:14**; see Mt 12:39. This practice has been imitated by the Heathens; the river Rhine, according to Julian the emperor {g}, tried the legitimacy of children; and so lakes have been used for the trial of perjury and unchastity, as the Stygian lake for perjury, and another of the same name near Ephesus for unchastity; into which, if persons suspected of adultery descended, having the form of an oath hanging about their necks, if they were pure, the waters stood unmoved, but if corrupt, they swelled up to their necks, and covered the tablet on which the oath was written {h}. The priestesses of a certain deity being obliged to live a single life, were tried by drinking bullocks' blood, upon which, if false to their oath and corrupt, they immediately died, as Pausanias {i} relates; and Macrobius {k} speaks of some lakes in Sicily, the inhabitants called the Cups, to which recourse was had when persons were suspected of any ill, and where an oath was taken of them; if the person swore truly, he departed unhurt, but if falsely, he immediately lost his life in the lake. Philostratus {l} relates of a water near Tyana, a city in Cappadocia, sacred to Jupiter, which the inhabitants call Asbamaea, which to those that kept their oaths was placid and sweet, but to perjured persons the reverse; it affected their eyes, hands, and feet, and seized them with dropsies and consumptions; nor could they depart from the water, but remained by it, mourning their sad case, and confessing their perjury: but what comes nearest to this usage of the Jews is a custom at marriages among the savages at Cape Breton {m}: at a marriage feast, two dishes of meat are brought to the bridegroom and bride in two "ouragans" (basins made of the bark of a tree), and the president of the feast addresses himself to the bride thus,

"and thou that art upon the point of entering into a respectable state, know, that the nourishment thou art going to take forebodes the greatest calamities to thee, if thy heart is capable of harbouring any ill design against thy husband, or against thy nation: shouldest thou ever be led astray by the caresses of a stranger; or shouldest thou betray thy husband, and thy country, the victuals contained in this "ouragan" will have the effects of a slow poison, with which thou wilt be tainted from this very instant; but if, on the other hand, thou remainest faithful to thy husband, and to thy country, if thou wilt never insult the one for his defect, nor give a description of the other to the enemy, thou wilt find this nourishment both agreeable and wholesome."

Now if these relations can be credited, then much more this of the bitter waters, for though there was something wonderful and supernatural in them, yet nothing incredible:

and the woman shall be a curse among her people: the time she lives; but then all this while she was looked upon as an accursed person, and despised and shunned by all.

{b} R. Samuel Tzartzah, Mekor Chayim, fol. 91. 3. {c} Misn. Sotah, c. 3. sect. 4. {d} Ibid. c. 5. sect. 1. {e} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 28. 1. Gersom in loc. {f} Misn. Sotah, c. 2. sect. 9. {g} Orat. 2. p. 151. Ep. 16. p. 131. {h} Vid. Salden. Otia, l. 1. Exercitat. 6. sect. 24. {i} Achaica, sive, l. 7. p. 450. {k} Saturnal. l. 5. c. 19. {l} Vita Apollonii, l. 1. c. 4. {m} Genuine Letters and Memoirs relating to the Isle of Cape Breton, &c.

Numbers 5:28

Ver. 28. And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean,.... If she is not guilty of adultery, but pure from that sin:

then she shall be free; from the effects of the bitter water; they shall have no such influence upon her, but she shall be as soured and healthful as ever; nay, the Jewish writers say more so, that if she had any sickness or disease upon her she would now be freed from it {n}; the Targum of Jonathan has it, her splendour shall shine, the brightness and beauty of her countenance:

and shall conceive seed; a man child, as the same Targum; and the Jewish writers say, if she was barren before, now she would be fruitful; but no more is meant by it than that her husband should receive her gladly, and she should live comfortably with him hereafter, and the blessing of God would be upon her, which would still be a confirmation of her chastity.

{n} Maimon. Hilchot Sotah, c. 3. sect. 22.

Numbers 5:29

Ver. 29. This [is] the law of jealousies,.... Which was appointed by God to deter wives from adultery, and preserve the people of Israel, the worshippers of him, from having a spurious brood among them; and to keep husbands from being cruel to their wives they might be jealous of, and to protect virtue and innocence, and to detect lewdness committed in the most secret manner; whereby God gave proof of his omniscience, that he had knowledge of the most private acts of uncleanness, and was the avenger of all such. The reasons why such a law was not made equally in favour of women, as of men, are supposed to be these: because of the greater authority of the man over the woman, which would seem to be lessened, if such a power was granted her; because marriage was not so much hurt, or so much damage came to families by the adultery of men, as of women; because women are more apt to be suspicious than men, and in those times more prone to adultery, through their eager desire of children, that they might not lie under reproach {o}:

when a wife goeth aside [to another] instead of her husband, and is defiled; is suspected of going aside to another man, and is supposed to be defiled by him.

{o} Vid. Salden. ut supra, (Otia, l. 1. Exercitat. 6.) sect. 19.

Numbers 5:30

Ver. 30. Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife,.... See Gill on "Nu 5:14";

and shall set the woman before the Lord; has carried the matter so far as to bring his wife to the priest or civil magistrate, and declare his suspicion, and the ground of it:

and the priest shall execute upon her all this law; he shall proceed according to the law, and perform every rite and ceremony required; nor could any stop be put to it, unless the woman owned she was defiled.

Numbers 5:31

Ver. 31. Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity,.... Which otherwise he would not, by conniving at her loose way of living, and not reproving her for it, and bringing her either to repentance or punishment; and retaining and encouraging jealousy in his mind, without declaring it, and his reasons for it: the sense of the passage seems to be, that when a man had any ground for his suspicion and jealousy, and he proceeded according as this law directs, whether his wife was guilty or not guilty, no sin was chargeable on him, or blame to be laid to him, or punishment inflicted on him:

and the woman shall bear her iniquity; the punishment of it, through the effects of the bitter waters upon her, if guilty; nor was her husband chargeable with her death, she justly brought it on herself: or if not guilty, yet as she had by some unbecoming behaviour raised such a suspicion in him, nor would she be reclaimed, though warned to the contrary, she for it justly bore the infamy of such a process; which was such, as Maimonides says {p}, that innocent women would give all that they had to escape it, and reckoned death itself more agreeable than that, as to be served as such a woman was; See Gill on "Nu 5:18".

{p} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 49. p. 499.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 6

In this chapter is given the law concerning Nazarites, **Nu 6:1**; which directs what they were to abstain from, from drinking wine, or any strong liquors, from shaving their heads, and defiling themselves with the dead, **Nu 6:3**; and in case of a defilement, directions are given what offerings a Nazarite should bring to be offered for him, **Nu 6:9**; and when the time of his Nazariteship was up, an account is given of what rites and ceremonies should then be performed, **Nu 6:13**; and the chapter is concluded with the form of blessing the children of Israel, to be used by Aaron and his sons, **Nu 6:22**.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... At the same time, or immediately after the law concerning the woman suspected of adultery was given; with which the following law concerning Nazarites may be thought to have a close connection, as some Jewish writers observe, women being concerned in it as well as men; and as wine leads to adultery, as Jarchi observes, abstinence from it, which the Nazarite's vow obliged to, and forbearance of trimming and dressing the hair, and a being more strictly and closely devoted to the service of God, were very likely means of preserving from unchastity, and any suspicion of it:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 6:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,.... Whom the following law only concerned, and not Gentiles; so runs the Jewish canon,

"the Gentiles have no Nazariteship, though they may bring their vows and freewill offerings as an Israelite, yet if they vow the vow of a Nazarite, the law of the Nazarite is not obliging on them, or they bound by it; but it is free for them to drink wine, and defile themselves for the dead; for it is written, "speak unto the children of Israel" {q}:"

when either man or woman shall separate [themselves] to vow a vow of a Nazarite; or "do a wonderful thing" {r}; something unusual and uncommon, and what is out of the way of the men of the world, who give themselves up to pleasure, and have little regard to the worship and service of God; wherefore for a person, a man or woman, to vow abstinence from wine and dress, and from the company of others, and to oblige themselves to strict and close devotion to God, was something singular and surprising. This is to be understood of such persons who were at their own disposal; for such that were in their minority, and under the power of parents, or were married women, if they vowed, their vows did not stand, and their parents or husbands could disannul them, unless they had consented to them by their silence, when they heard them made, Nu 30:3. There were various sorts of Nazarites; some were appointed by God, as Samson; some were devoted by their parents, as Samuel; and some by themselves, concerning whom is this law more especially; some were perpetual Nazarites, a Nazarite for life, as the two persons just mentioned; though the Jews distinguish between a Samsonian Nazarite, and a perpetual one {s}; and some were only for a certain time, according as they vowed:

to separate [themselves] unto the Lord; the Targum of Jonathan is, "to the name of the Lord"; to the honour of his name. Such persons devoted themselves, and set apart their time to serve the Lord in a stricter and purer manner than others, and therefore were had in great account, **La 4:7**; they were types of Christ, who, though he was not strictly a Nazarite, but a Nazarene, yet answered to the Nazarites in his being set apart in divine predestination by his Father to the office of Mediator; in the sanctification of himself, and devoting himself, his time and service, to his Father's glory; and in his being holy and harmless in his life and conversation, and separate from sinners: and they were also emblems of the special people of God, who are a separate people in election, redemption, and calling, and in the intercession of Christ; and as they will be at the last judgment, and to all eternity, and should be now separate from others in their lives and conversations.

{q} Misn. Nazir, c. 9. sect. 1. Maimon & Bartenora in ib. {r} alpy "mirificaverit", Montanus; "si mirandum aliquid fecerit", Munster; and some in Fagius and Vatablus; so Aben Ezra. {s} Misn. Nazir, c. 1. sect. 2.

Numbers 6:3

Ver. 3. He shall separate [himself] from wine,.... Old or new, as Ben Gersom; from drinking it, any of it: not only from an immoderate and excessive drinking of it, which every man should abstain from, but from drinking of it at all, that he might be more free and fit for the service of God; for prayer, meditation, reading the Scriptures, and attendance on the worship of God in all its branches, and be less liable to temptations to sin; for, as Aben Ezra observes, many transgressions are occasioned by wine, which, if drank immoderately, intoxicates the mind, and unfits for religious duties, excites lust, and leads on to many vices:

and strong drink; any other intoxicating and inebriating liquor besides wine, or any other sort of wines besides such that is made of the fruit of the vine, as wines of pomegranates, dates, &c. or such as are made of barley, as our ale, or of apples and pears, called cider and perry, respectively:

and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink; all the three Targums paraphrase it, vinegar of new wine, and vinegar of old wine, these operating in like manner as wine and strong drink themselves:

neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes; any liquor in which grapes are macerated, as the Targum of Jonathan; or water into which they are squeezed, or which is made of the lees of wine, or is a second sort of wine made of the grapes after they have been pressed, which we call "tiff":

nor eat moist grapes or dried; which have somewhat of the nature and taste of wine, and produce some of the like effects, and may lead to a desire after drinking it; wherefore this, as other things mentioned, are, as Aben Ezra says, a kind of an hedge, to keep at a distance from drinking wine.

Numbers 6:4

Ver. 4. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree,.... Of its leaves, branches, and fruit, especially the latter, put into any sort of food, or infused into any liquor, or mixed with any sauce for food: the days or time of separation were according as the vow was made, for a shorter or longer time; though the Jews {t} say, where the vow is, absolutely expressed, it is always to be understood of thirty days, during which time the Nazarite was not to eat or drink of any composition that had anything the vine in it:

from the kernels even to the husk; the Jews {u} are divided about the two words here used, which of them signifies the outermost part of the grape, and which the innermost; Ben Gersom agrees with us, but it matters not much who are in the right, since both are forbidden: by this part of the law, the people of God, who are spiritual Nazarites, are taught to live temperately and soberly, and to abstain from all appearance of sin: it is pretty remarkable what the Jews {w} say, that when the son of David comes, it will be free for a Nazarite to drink wine on sabbath days and festivals, though not on week days; from whence it appears, they seem to be conscious of a change of the ceremonial law in his days.

{t} Misn. Nazir, c. 1. sect. 3. & c. 6. sect. 3. {u} Misn. Nazir, c. 6. sect. 2. Aben Ezra in loc. {w} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 43. 1.

Numbers 6:5

Ver. 5. All the days of the vow of his separation,.... Be the time he has vowed to be a Nazarite a week, a, month, or more, even a thousand days, but not less than thirty, as Ben Gersom observes:

there shall no razor come upon his head; he might not shave his beard, nor cut off his locks, and shave his head, nor cut short his locks with a pair of scissors, nor any with anything by which the hair may be removed, as Ben Gersom; nor pluck off his hair with his hands, as Maimonides says {x}; but let it grow as long as it would during the time of his separation, which is expressed in the latter part of the verse:

until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth [himself] unto the Lord; to his service, to which he wholly addicted himself as long as his vow continued:

he shall be holy; separate from other men, and their practices and customs, and spend his time in holy exercises, in a religious way, and abstain from what might be a temptation to sin, or in the least hinder him in his acts of devotion:

[and] shall let the locks of his hair grow; two reasons Fagius gives of this part of the law, the one is, because of the mystery of it; letting the hair grow signified an increase of virtue or grace, as Samson's strength was increased and became very great while his hair was not cut; and so spiritual Nazarites, while they are in the way of their duty, grow in grace, and in knowledge of God and Christ, and all divine things, and grow stronger and stronger in the Lord, and in the power of his might; and Ainsworth hints at the same thing, and also supposes it might be an emblem of the subjection of the saints to Christ, as the letting the hair grow was a sign of the woman's subjection to man: the other is, that it was appointed to take the Israelites off of the errors and superstitious they had imbibed in Egypt, by ordering them to perform those rites and ceremonies to the honour of the true God, which they had used in the service of demons; and for this he cites a passage out of Cyrill; but it does not appear, by any good authority, that such a custom obtained among the Egyptians, or any other Gentiles so early; and what were used among them in later times took their rise from hence, and were imitations of this law; though there seems to be no great likeness between this law of Nazariteship and the customs of the Heathens, who used to consecrate their hair to their deities, Apollo, Hercules, Bacchus, Minerva, and Diana: what seems best to agree is what Lucian says {y}, who observes, that young men consecrate their beards, and let their hair grow, consecrated from their birth, which they afterwards cut and lay up in vessels in the temple, some of gold, others of silver.

{x} Hilchot Nezirut, c. 5. sect. 11. {y} De Dea Syria.

Numbers 6:6

Ver. 6. All the days that he separateth [himself] unto the Lord,.... This phrase is repeated at every new article and branch of the law of the Nazarites, of which what follows is the third; showing that each part of it, during that time, was strictly to be observed:

he shall come at no dead body: not near to any, not even to be in the same place where a dead body lay, nor to touch one, nor to attend the funeral of any, nor be concerned at all about burying the dead; now, as such so defiled were unclean seven days, and during that time might not go into the tabernacle, the Nazarites were strictly cautioned against such pollution, that they might not be detained from the service of God they had devoted themselves unto; see Nu 19:11.

Numbers 6:7

Ver. 7. He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die,.... Aben Ezra adds also, for his wife, and for his daughter, and for others; what even the priests of the Lord, the common priests might do, a Nazarite might not, not come near any of his relations when dead, as to touch them, to close their eyes, or wash their bodies, and provide for their funeral, and attend that, or to be where they were; in this respect they were upon a level with the high priest, who was forbid the same, which shows how sacred these persons were; see Le 21:1; this may instruct spiritual Nazarites to abstain from the company and conversation of sinners, dead in trespasses and sins, and from all dead works and sinful actions, which, as they are deserving of death, are defiling:

because the consecration of his God [is] upon his head; or that which shows him to be consecrated to God, and separated to his service, is upon his head, namely, his long hair: the Targum of Jonathan renders it, "the crown of his God"; so Aben Ezra observes, that some say that the word "Nazarite" is derived from "Nezer", a crown, in proof of which this passage is produced; and in this respect the Nazarites were not only types of Christ our King and high priest, who is a priest on his throne, and has on his head many crowns, but of the saints who are freed from the power and dominion of sin, and are made kings and priests unto God.

Numbers 6:8

Ver. 8. All the days of his separation he [is] holy unto the Lord. Set apart for his service, separate from all others, especially the dead, and under obligation to abstain from the above things; from drinking wine, from shaving his hair, and from defiling himself for the dead, and to be employed in holy and religious exercises during the time his vow is upon him.

Numbers 6:9

Ver. 9. And if any man die very suddenly by him,.... In the place where he is, whether house or field, a public or private place, in the tent where he is, as Jarchi; there are two words we render, "very suddenly", which many take to be synonymous; and that being of the same signification, two being used increase the sense, but others think they have a different meaning: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render them,

"suddenly through ignorance,"

understanding it of a chance matter, as when one man is killed by another, not wilfully and through malice, but without intention and design: Jarchi interprets the first of them by violence, and the latter through error or mistake, and so may include both cases; as when a man dies at once, through the force of a disease seizing him, or he is killed by the violent hands of a man, who stabs him in the presence of a Nazarite; or else when this is done ignorantly and through mistake; be it which way it will, if a Nazarite was present:

and he both defiled the head of his consecration: or the consecration of his head, his Nazariteship, that is, his hair, he being polluted by the dead, through being where it was:

then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing; which was the seventh day from his defilement, as follows:

on the seventh day he shall shave it; for so many days was a person unclean that had touched a body, of had been where one was, and on the seventh day he was to be cleansed, Nu 19:11; and this was one way of cleansing the Nazarite, cutting off his locks of hair, which were to grow long, and made him to be a Nazarite; and shave his head for his pollution by the dead, put an end to his Nazariteship; and he was obliged to begin again, and his hair being polluted, must be shaved, and new hair grow to make him a Nazarite again: thus by one single breach of the law of God a man becomes guilty of all, and liable to its curse, and his legal righteousness becomes insufficient to justify him before God, and therefore his own righteousness must be renounced by him in the business of justification; and which, Ainsworth suggests, is the mystery of the Nazarite's head being shaved when polluted.

Numbers 6:10

Ver. 10. And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles or two young pigeons to the priest,.... Not a turtledove and a young pigeon, as Ben Gersom observes, but two of one of the sorts, which was the offering of the poorer sort of childbearing women at their purification, and of profluvious persons, men or women, Le 12:8; and this case of the Nazarite's being an uncleanness, could not be purged away but by sacrifice; which was typical of the sacrifice of Christ, by which that unclean thing sin is put away for ever; even the sins of holy things can be moved in no other way; these were to be brought to the priest to be offered by him:

to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; for being defiled, the Nazarite might not go into the tabernacle, and therefore was to bring his offering to the door of it, where the priest received it of him.

Numbers 6:11

Ver. 11. And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering,.... That is, one of the turtles or young pigeons for the one kind of sacrifice, and one for the other sort; both being necessary; the one to expiate sin, and the other as a gift to God by way of thankfulness for acceptance of the former:

and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead; by being where the dead body was, which, though not sinful, in a moral sense, was, in a ceremonial one, and therefore required a sacrifice to atone for it; and which atonement was made by the sin offering typical of Christ, who was made an offering for sin:

and shall hallow his head the same day; consecrate himself to God afresh, particularly the hair of his head, let that grow again and begin his Nazariteship anew; so Jarchi interprets it, to return and begin the account of his Nazariteship.

Numbers 6:12

Ver. 12. And he shall consecrate unto the Lord the days of his separation,.... He was to begin his account again, from the time of his shaving his head, and devote as many days to the service of the Lord as what he had vowed before:

and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering; we see how much trouble and expense were brought by a single act of pollution, and that involuntary too; how much more need is there of an atoning sacrifice for the sins of men, even for all of them, and for which only the sacrifice of Christ is sufficient?

but the days that were before shall be lost; which were before the pollution, how near soever the time of Nazariteship being at an end was, whether his vow was for thirty days, or a hundred, or a whole year; be it what it will, and the pollution happened on the last of those days, all were lost; he was obliged to begin again, and go through the whole time he at first vowed; and this was the case if he drank the least quantity of wine, or shaved ever so little of the hair of his head, or was any ways polluted by the dead; and this severity, as it may seem, was used to make him cautious that he broke not his vow by any means:

because his separation was defiled; in the case instanced in, by the dead, but it was the same if he broke the law of Nazariteship in any of the other articles of it.

Numbers 6:13

Ver. 13. And this [is] the law of the Nazarite,.... This has respect either to what goes before; those are the things he is obliged to that vows the vow of a Nazarite; what he is to abstain from during the time of his vow, and what he is to do in case of any defilement; or to what follows after, what is binding upon him, what offerings he is to bring, and what rites and ceremonies are to be observed by him when he has finished his vow:

when the days of his separation, or Nazariteship,

are fulfilled; whether more or fewer; when the time is quite up, and he has gone through his vow without any breach of it:

he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; it is not said by whom he should be brought, whether by himself or by the priest; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"he shall bring himself;"

that is, present himself; and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra; which latter adds, or the priest shall bring him by command, whether he will or not, to offer his offering.

Numbers 6:14

Ver. 14. And he shall offer his offering unto the Lord,.... The Nazarite was to present his offering at the door of the tabernacle, to the priest, in order to be offered for him to the Lord:

one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering; according to the law, manner, and custom of a burnt offering, as Aben Ezra observes, which, whether of the herd or of the flock, was to be a male and unblemished, and not more than a year old, **Le 1:3**;

and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering; as was the manner and custom of a sin offering, to be a female, as is remarked by the same writer, see **Le 4:32**;

and one ram without blemish for peace offerings; all sorts of offerings were offered on this occasion; a "sin offering", though the vow was performed, and not any mistake made, or anything omitted that was known; yet, lest there should be any secret and unknown breach of the law of Nazariteship committed, a sin offering was required: this teaches us that there may be secret and unknown sins committed by the best of men, in their most sacred and solemn services; and that there is no justification before God by the best works of men, find that the purest and most perfect stand in need of the atoning sacrifice of Christ: a "burnt offering" was to be offered, which usually followed the sin offering, as it did here, though mentioned first, see **Nu 6:16**; and which was done by way of thanksgiving to God for his acceptance of the sin offering: and "peace offerings" were, as Aben Ezra observes, for joy that he had performed his vow: the burnt offering was wholly the Lord's, the sin offering the priest had his part of, and the peace offerings the Nazarite and his friends ate of, and so everyone had their share in these oblations.

Numbers 6:15

Ver. 15. And a basket of unleavened bread,.... As at the consecration of Aaron and his sons, Ex 29:2; though for peace offerings for thanksgiving leavened bread was offered, **Le 7:13**;

cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil; ten of each sort, as Jarchi says, ten cakes and ten wafers, see Ex 29:9;

and their meat offering and their drink offering; which always used to attend every sacrifice.

Numbers 6:16

Ver. 16. And the priest shall bring [them] before the Lord,.... All the above offerings to the altar of burnt offering, and there present them to the Lord in the name of the Nazarite:

and shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering: here they stand in the proper order in which they were offered.

Numbers 6:17

Ver. 17. And he shall offer the ram [for] a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord,.... After he had offered the other two:

with the basket of unleavened bread; which went along with that:

the priest shall also offer his meat offering, and his drink offering: of which he had his part, and were the usual appendages of other sacrifices; see Nu 28:1.

Numbers 6:18

Ver. 18. And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation, [at] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,.... The Targum of Jonathan is,

"and the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation without,"

without the tabernacle, the door of it, where the people assembled together; so that this was to be done publicly, that it might be known of all, and no offence taken at the Nazarite's drinking wine, and concerning himself for the dead, and attending funerals, for by this action it was known that his Nazariteship was at an end; and whereas the hair of the Nazarite was consecrated to the Lord by his vow, and this vow being punctually fulfilled, it was sacred, and to be presented to the Lord, and to be of no use and service to himself or others, and therefore to be all clean shaven off; for, as Maimonides {z} says, if two hairs only were left, nothing was done, and the command of shaving not kept:

and shall take the hair of the head of his separation; being cut off and shaved;

and put [it] in the fire which [is] under the sacrifice of the peace offerings; under the pot or cauldron, as the Targum of Jonathan, in which the ram for the peace offerings was boiled: this was done in the court of the women in later times, at the southeast of which was a chamber called the chamber of the Nazarites, where they bailed their peace offerings, and shaved their hair and cast it under the pot {a}; and this might not be put, as before observed, to any other use; if any of it was made use of in a sack that was made of hair cloth, we are told {b} that sack was to be burnt.

{z} Hilchot Nezirut, c. 8. sect. 6. {a} Misn. Middoth, c. 2. sect. 5. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 16. 1. {b} Misn. Orlah, c. 3. sect. 3.

Numbers 6:19

Ver. 19. And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram,.... The left shoulder, for the right shoulder, which is the heave shoulder of every peace offering, belonged to the priest by another law; and by this law of the Nazarite, he had also the other shoulder, and so had both, which was peculiar to this case; the vow of the Nazarite being a very sacred thing and he being enabled to perform it, a greater expression of gratitude for it was expected and required of him: this shoulder was taken out of the pot in which it was boiled:

and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer; one of the ten cakes, and one of the ten wafers, both are mentioned; and which appear by this to be together in the basket of unleavened bread, from whence they were now to be taken, the rest having been offered with the other sacrifices:

and shall put [them] upon the hands of the Nazarite; the boiled shoulder, and the cake and wafer upon it:

after [the hair of] his separation is shaven; and cast into the fire; for the waving of these seems to be the last and finishing part of this whole affair.

Numbers 6:20

Ver. 20. And the priest shall wave them [for] a wave offering before the Lord,.... Putting his hands under the Nazarite's, as in other cases where this ceremony was used; and so moving them to and fro, backwards and forwards, upwards and downwards, testifying hereby the goodness of God unto him, his sovereign dominion over him, that all he had depended on him, and was received from him; and that all he did, particularly in keeping his vow of Nazariteship, was through his assistance, and for which he made this grateful acknowledgment by delivering the above, together with what follows, to his priest:

this [is] holy for the priest, with the wave breast and heave shoulder; besides these which were given him by another law, the wave shoulder of the Nazarite's ram was given him to eat; it was holy, and set apart for his use, and his only, and it belonged not in common to the course of the priests then on duty, but to him only that officiated in this peculiar service; and so it is observed by the Jewish writers {c}, that the Nazarite's ram and some other things were not given to every priest, but to him that offered the sacrifice, as it is said, "he shall wave this is holy to the priest"; upon which it is observed, that it follows from hence, that the priest that waves is he that eats the sacrifice:

and after that the Nazarite may drink wine; and cut his hair, and shave his head, and be defiled for the dead as other persons, the vow of his Nazariteship being fulfilled.

{c} Maimon. in Misn. Challah, c. 4. sect. 9.

Numbers 6:21

Ver. 21. This [is] the law of the Nazarite, who hath vowed,.... The vow of a Nazarite; what he is obliged to do when his Nazariteship is up:

[and of] his offering unto the Lord for his separation; of the several offerings required of him, to offer to the Lord, for and upon his going through his Nazariteship, his burnt offering, sin offering, sacrifice of peace offerings, his meat offering and drink offering; together with the basket of unleavened bread, cakes and wafers:

besides [that] that his hands shall get; the above offerings were what he was obliged unto by the law of God, even though a poor man; but, besides these, it was expected of a man of substance, that he would voluntarily of himself offer more, according to his ability and the length of the time of his Nazariteship:

according to the vow which he hath vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation; there were some things he was obliged to do by his vow, and as he had vowed, there was a necessity upon him to fulfil it; as to abstain from the things he vowed so to do, and that as long a time as he fixed by his vow, and when finished to offer the sacrifices required of him.

Numbers 6:22

Ver. 22. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... At the same time perhaps that the above law was given concerning the Nazarites; though why this should follow upon that, and what connection there is between the one and the other, it is not easy to say; the Nazarites were holy persons, and so were the priests; and therefore, according to Aben Ezra and others, the law of the one is joined to the law of the other:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 6:23

Ver. 23. Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons,.... Aaron and his sons that succeeded him in all after generations, being the persons that were in a public manner to bless the people of Israel, they are particularly addressed, see De 10:8;

saying, on this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel; in such manner and with such words as after expressed; standing upon an eminence, lifting up their hands on high, spreading out their fingers, and raising their voices, and pronouncing the blessing in the Hebrew language, in the name of Jehovah, with their face towards the people; all which, according to the Jewish writers {d}, were to be strictly observed;

saying unto them; as follows.

{d} Maimon. Hilchot Neshiut Cappim. c. 14. sect. 11. Gersom in loc.

Numbers 6:24

Ver. 24. The Lord bless thee,.... Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; the word "Jehovah" being three times used, and a different accent put to each word, denoting three distinct persons and one Jehovah, according to **De 6:4**; who are each of them concerned in the blessing of the Lord's people, the spiritual Israel of God; Jehovah the Father blesses with all spiritual blessings, with electing, adopting, justifying, and pardoning grace, with regenerating and calling, and persevering grace, and with eternal life: Jehovah the Son blesses particularly with redeeming grace, and has a concern in all the other blessings; the saints are blessed with them in him, they are all in his hands, they are procured by him, come through him, and are the gifts of his grace: and Jehovah the Spirit blesses as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, as the spirit of faith, as a comforter, as the spirit of adoption, and as the earnest and sealer of the saints unto the day of redemption:

and keep thee; from, the evil of the world, from the evil one Satan, from the evil of sin, and the power, prevalence, and dominion of it, and from falling totally and finally by it, and keep in a state of grace unto everlasting salvation.

Numbers 6:25

Ver. 25. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee,.... Cause himself, the sun of righteousness, to arise and shine upon them, and give both spiritual light and heat unto them; grant his gracious presence, the manifestations of himself, communion with him, clearer discoveries of his love, of interest in him, and an increase of spiritual light and knowledge of his Gospel, and the truths of it, and of his mind and will:

and be gracious unto thee; by granting larger measures of grace out of his fulness, by leading more abundantly into it, and making fresh and frequent applications of it; grace is often wished for from Christ as well as from the

Father.

Numbers 6:26

Ver. 26. And the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee,.... Show his face and favour, look cheerfully on his people, declare himself well pleased with them in Christ, and appear as smiling upon them through him, indulging them with visits of love, restoring to them the joys of his salvation, and upholding them with his free Spirit; and so causing them to walk pleasantly and comfortably in the ways of God, expecting eternal life and happiness, as God's free gift through Christ:

and give thee peace; all outward needful prosperity, internal peace of mind, through the blood and righteousness of Christ, the peacemaker, and peace giver, and eternal peace in the world to come.

Numbers 6:27

Ver. 27. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel,.... Call them by his name, the people of the Lord; call upon the name of the Lord to bless them, and pronounce the blessing on them in the name of the Lord, in or by the name Jehovah, as Jarchi, three times used in this form of blessing:

and I will bless them; really and truly bless them bless them with blessings indeed; with all sorts of blessings temporal and spiritual; with solid and substantial ones; and such are blessed, and will remain so, their blessings are irrevocable and irreversible; and unless the Lord blesses, in vain do the priests bless, or any of his ministers pronounce a blessing; theirs lies in words and wishes, his in real facts; they can only pray and wish for the blessing, it is he only that can give it, and can ratify and confirm what they declare and pronounce, according to his revealed word. Some refer the relative "them" to the priests, as if the sense was, I will bless the priests that bless Israel, for God will bless them that bless his people; but Aben Ezra thinks it belongs both to Israel, and to the priests, that God would confirm and establish the blessing of the priests pronounced on Israel, and bless the priests also, who needed the divine blessing as well as the people, and being found in the way of their duty, might expect it: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"I will bless them in my Word;"

his essential Word, Christ, in whom his chosen ones are blessed with all spiritual blessings, and who is the promised seed, in whom all nations of the earth shall be blessed.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 7

This chapter gives an account of the presents brought, by the princes of the twelve tribes at the setting up of the tabernacle, for the use of it, **Nu 7:1**; and at the dedication of the altar, and the service of that, **Nu 7:10**; first of the prince of the tribe of Judah, **Nu 7:12**; then of the prince of Issachar, **Nu 7:18**; of the prince of Zebulun, **Nu 7:24**; of the prince of Reuben, **Nu 7:30**; of the prince of Simeon, **Nu 7:36**; of the prince of Gad, **Nu 7:42**; of the prince of Ephraim, **Nu 7:48**; of the prince of Manasseh, **Nu 7:54**; of the prince of Benjamin, **Nu 7:60**; of the prince of Dan, **Nu 7:66**; of the prince of Asher, **Nu 7:72**; of the prince of Naphtali, **Nu 7:78**; the sum of all which follows, **Nu 7:84**; and the chapter is concluded with a token of God's approbation and acceptance of the whole, **Nu 7:89**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle,.... Not on the very exact day on which it was first reared up, for that was on the first day of the first month of the second year from the coming up of Israel out of Egypt, Ex 40:17; whereas the following offerings of the princes were not offered, and many other things previous to them, recorded in the preceding chapters, were not done, until after the first day of the second month of that year, **Nu 1:1**; though the Jews say {e} the first of Nisan, or of the first month, was the first for various things, and the first on which the princes offered; but no one particular day can be intended, because the princes were twelve days successively offering their offerings; wherefore "the day" here only denotes the time about which it was when this service was performed; when the tabernacle was not only set up, but "fully" set up, when everything relating to it was in its proper place and order; when not only it was put together, and all the vessels and instruments of it in their due place, but also when the people of Israel, for whose sake it was erected, that the Lord God might dwell among them, were numbered, and their camps formed and pitched around the tabernacle; and the Levites were taken and numbered also, who were to serve at it, and their place and service were appointed unto them about it; for then, and not till then, was the service of it completed, and its proper place and situation fixed and settled:

and had anointed it; with the holy oil Moses was directed to make and anoint it with, Ex 30:23;

and sanctified it: set it apart for holy use and service, to be an habitation for God, and the place of his worship:

and all the instruments thereof; the ark, table, candlestick, &c.

both the altars, and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them,
and sanctified them; the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering, and all appertaining: thereunto; according to Ben Gersom, this finishing of the whole was at the end of the seven days of consecration of Aaron and his sons, Ex 29:35.

{e} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 7. p. 21. Baal Hatturim in loc.

Numbers 7:2

Ver. 2. That the princes of Israel,.... The princes of the twelve tribes of Israel:

heads of the house of their fathers; of the each of the houses and families the tribes were divided into, and took their name from each of their ancestors, as is next explained:

who were princes of the tribes; the twelve tribes, as before observed, **Nu 1:4**;

and were over them that were numbered; over the children of Israel that were numbered, **Nu 1:19**; by which it that these princes are the very same persons that are mentioned by name there, as they are here afterwards; and were with Moses and Aaron, and assisting to them when they took the number of them; but according to the Targum of Jonathan, and Jarchi, these were appointed over them in Egypt; but the former is right: these now

offered not sacrifices but gifts; they brought their presents to the Lord for the service of his sanctuary, and set them before him, as follows.

Numbers 7:3

Ver. 3. And they brought their offering before the Lord,.... Before the tabernacle, as it is afterwards explained, where he had now taken up his habitation:

six covered wagons, and twelve oxen; according to the number of the twelve tribes, of which they were princes, two oxen for each wagon, which were to carry the tabernacle, and its vessels, from place to place; and which wagons were covered, not only to hide the things to be put into them from the sight of the people, being sacred, but to preserve them from the rain and dust, and the like; and no doubt, but as they were made of the best materials, So they were covered with rich coverings for the honour of the vessels put into them, being the presents of princes, and in which they joined, and could not be ordinary carriages. The word is rendered "litters" in Isa 66:20; and by some, "coaches"; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"six wagons yoked,"

or drawn with a yoke of oxen; and Aben Ezra says, it signifies a kind of oxen which drew wagons; but the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, and Ben Gersom interpret it "covered", as we do:

a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox; two princes joined in the present of one wagon, which shows it could not be a common wagon, but rich carriage, and ornamented, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; and each prince presented an ox, so that there was a yoke of them for each wagon:

and they brought them before the tabernacle; the Targum of Jonathan says, Moses would not receive them, and therefore they brought them before the tabernacle; and so, says Jarchi, Moses received them not at their hands, until it was declared to him by the mouth of the Lord what he should do, as follows.

Numbers 7:4

Ver. 4. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Out of the tabernacle, before which the wagons and oxen were brought:

saying: as follows.

Numbers 7:5

Ver. 5. Take [it] of them,.... The present of the wagons and oxen, by which it appears that this freewill offering of the princes was according to his mind and will, and what they were influenced and guided to by his Spirit, and was well pleasing in his sight, and acceptable to him:

that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; be made use of, and employed in carrying the tabernacle, and the things of it, from place to place, when the Israelites journeyed:

and thou shalt give them to the Levites; to ease them, whose business it was to bear and carry the several parts of the tabernacle, and the vessels of it:

to every man according to his service; whether lighter or heavier, for such difference there was in the three divisions of the Levites; and according as their work was, they had more or fewer wagons and oxen given them, as it follows, **Nu 7:7**.

Numbers 7:6

Ver. 6. And Moses took the wagons and the oxen,.... Of the princes, as he was directed:

and gave them unto the Levites; the Gershonites and Merarites; for, as for the Kohathites, they had no part of them, for a reason after given, **Nu 7:9**.

Numbers 7:7

Ver. 7. Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon,.... The eldest son of Levi:

according to their service; which was to bear and take care of the curtains, coverings, hangings and rails of the tabernacle; and which, when carrying from place to place, it was proper they should be covered from being exposed to rain and dust; and being so many as they were, must be heavy, burdensome, and cumbersome, and therefore two wagons, with two yoke of oxen, were given them, to ease them.

Numbers 7:8

Ver. 8. And four wagons and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari,.... All the remaining wagons and oxen, which were double the number given to the Gershonites:

according unto their service; being much heavier than theirs, having all the boards, pillars, sockets, pins; cords, &c. to bear and carry: thus Moses was directed of God wisely to dispose of those carriages, in proportion to the services each was employed in; and in a spiritual way, as the day, duty, and service of the people of God be, he proportions grace and strength to them to answer thereunto:

under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest; under whose care, inspection, and direction, were both the Gershonites and Merarites, **Nu 4:28**; and by whom were delivered, according to the instruction of Moses, the several wagons and oxen, to them.

Numbers 7:9

Ver. 9. But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none,.... Being all disposed of to the sons of Gershon and Merari: the reason of which follows,

because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them [was that] they should bear upon their shoulders; as the ark with the mercy seat, and cherubim, the shewbread table, the candlestick, and the two altars; though in later times we find the ark was sometimes not only carried by the priests, but upon a cart, **Jos 3:17**.

Numbers 7:10

Ver. 10. And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar,.... For setting it apart to sacred use and service, even the altar of burnt offering; or rather after it had bean sanctified and set apart, when it began to be made use of for sacrifice:

in the day that it was anointed; with the anointing oil, whereby it was devoted to sacred service;

even the princes offered their offering before the altar; the altar of burnt offering; they brought their vessels for the service of it, and the creatures for sacrifice, and set them before it; signifying what they meant, thereby, that the silver and golden vessels were for the use of it, and the beasts for sacrifice to be offered up on it: and here Jarchi also observes, that Moses would not receive their offering until he knew the mind of God about it, and it was declared to him from himself.

Numbers 7:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... For before this was said to him, even what follows, Moses knew not, as the same writer observes, how they should offer, in what order, whether according to their birth, or whether according to the journeying of their camps, or whether they should offer together, or one after another, one day after another {g}; this affair is set in a clear light:

they shall offer their offering each prince on his day; one on one day, and the other on the next, and so on successively for twelve days running; and this was ordered for the greater solemnity of the service, and that it might be taken notice of, and each have the honour and credit of it; and this was done, not according to the order of their birth, but as their standards were fixed, first Judah, and those under him, and so the rest in course:

for the dedicating of the altar; see **Nu 7:10**.

{g} Vid. Siphri apud Yalkut in loc.

Numbers 7:12

Ver. 12. And he that offered his offering on the first day,.... Was he whose standard was pitched first, at the east, to the rising sun: and this

was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah; who was the prince and captain of that tribe, though the title is not here given him, as to the rest of the princes, this being left to be concluded from his offering first; for if they that offered after him were princes, he must needs be one; or it may be this title is omitted, because the chief prince, of the prince of the tribe of Judah, most peculiarly belongs to a greater Personage, even the Messiah, who was to spring, and did spring from that tribe, **1Ch 5:2**; and, as Baal Hatturim says, from Nahshon; and who also observes, that Ben Nahshon is the Messiah.

Numbers 7:13

Ver. 13. And his offering [was] one silver charger,.... Or dish, like one of those used in the shewbread table to hold the bread in, only they were of gold, this of silver, and belonged to the altar of burnt offering; the use of which might be to hold the meat offering in, as it may seem from the latter part of the verse, or the wave breast or heave shoulder, which belonged to the priest:

the weight thereof [was] an hundred and thirty [shekels]; which were sixty one ounces, four drachms, one scruple, and seventeen grains {h}, worth about sixteen pounds and five shillings of our money;

one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; the standard that was kept in the sanctuary; this was a lesser vessel, and was either for holding the drink offering, or receiving the blood of the sacrifices; its weight was thirty three ounces, five drachms, and three grains, and was worth about eight pounds and fifteen shillings of our money:

both of them [were] full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering; which always attended other sacrifices after mentioned, part of which was burnt on the altar of burnt offering, and the rest were the perquisites of the priests.

{h} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 366.

Numbers 7:14

Ver. 14. One spoon of ten [shekels] of gold, &c. Its weight was according to the shekels, its matter of gold; it weighed four ounces, one drachm, and nine grains, and was worth about seven pounds and ten shillings of our money:

full of incense; this looks as if this spoon was designed for the golden altar of incense, which might be at this time also dedicated; but Jarchi understands it as for the altar of burnt offering, and observes, we never find incense belonging to a private person, nor to the outward altar (the altar of burnt offering), but this only, and which was temporary.

Numbers 7:15

Ver. 15. One young bullock,.... Of three years old, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem:

one ram; of two years old, as the same Targums:

one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering; of which see **Le 1:3**.

Numbers 7:16

Ver. 16. One kid of the goats for a sin offering. Though these offerings of the princes were by way of thanksgiving, and to express their joy and gladness at the erection of the tabernacle, its altars, and the service thereof; yet as this might not be without sin, which attends the best and purest performances of men, a sin offering was required, teaching us to look to Christ, who was made an offering for sin, for the taking away the sins of our holy things.

Numbers 7:17

Ver. 17. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,.... So that here were all sorts of offerings on this occasion, meat and drink offerings, burnt offerings, sin offerings, and peace offerings: and for the latter were brought

two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year; the reason why so many were brought and used for this sort of sacrifice was, because with these a feast was made, of which not only the priests partook, but the princes, and as many of their friends and acquaintance as they thought fit to invite:

this [was] the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab: which he offered out of his own substance, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it; though some have thought, that the presents and offerings were so large, and the princes not so very rich, or so much above the common people, as may be thought, that therefore they were assisted by the several tribes they were princes of: and as was this prince's offering, so were all the

rest that follow in the order, according to their encampment under the several standards where they were fixed; and which were offered successively every day, the sabbath day or days not excepted, these being religious services, until the whole twelve were finished; and their presents and their offerings were exactly the same, and the account of them is given in the same words; they either agreeing together to make the same presents and offerings, or else they were directed to do so by the Spirit of God; whereby might be signified the common and equal right that they, and the tribes they represented, had in the altars, and the benefits arising from thence; as those that believe in Christ have an altar which is himself, they have a joint right to partake of, and have an equal share in the benefits of righteousness, peace, pardon, and atonement by him; see
Heb 13:10; wherefore there is nothing more particularly to be observed in **Nu 7:17**; only that in the several accounts of the presents and offerings of each prince, the vowel points in the Hebrew text are omitted, excepting in the names of persons that offer; which does not at all militate against the antiquity of the points, or their being coeval with the consonants, since, both in manuscripts and printed copies, these may be left out for brevity's sake, and quicker dispatch, and without any detriment, since they may be easily supplied from the first instance given; and they may be omitted on purpose, that these accounts might be the more taken notice of as a very wonderful thing, that their presents and offerings should be exactly alike; since the vowels being wanting, the naked letters may the more strike the eye, and lead the mind to notice them; and whereas the accents are all along continued, the reason of which may be, because the vowels once put, and read, might be more easily known, especially by one skilful in the Hebrew language, than the stops, distinctions, and divisions of the text, as a learned man has observed {i}.

{i} Vid. Pfeiffer. Dubia vexata, cent. 2. loc. 19. p. 147.

Numbers 7:18

Ver. 18. On the second day Nethaneel the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, did offer. See **Nu 1:8**.

Numbers 7:19

Ver. 19. He offered [for] his offering one silver charger,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:13".

Numbers 7:20

Ver. 20. One spoon of gold of ten [shekels], full of incense.
See Gill on "Nu 7:14".

Numbers 7:21

Ver. 21. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering. See Gill on "Nu 7:15".

Numbers 7:22

Ver. 22. One kid of the goats for a sin offering.
See Gill on "Nu 7:16".

Numbers 7:23

Ver. 23. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:17".

Nethaneel the son of Zuar; see **Nu 1:8**.

Numbers 7:24

Ver. 24. On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, prince of the children of Zebulun, [did offer]. See **Nu 1:9**.

Numbers 7:25

Ver. 25. His offering [was] one silver charger,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:13".

Numbers 7:26

Ver. 26. One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.
See Gill on "Nu 7:14".

Numbers 7:27

Ver. 27. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering. See Gill on "Nu 7:15".

Numbers 7:28

Ver. 28. One kid of the goats for a sin offering.
See Gill on "Nu 7:16".

Numbers 7:29

Ver. 29. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:17".

Eliab the son of Helon; see **Nu 1:9**.

Numbers 7:30

Ver. 30. On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben, [did offer]. See **Nu 1:5**.

Numbers 7:31

Ver. 31. His offering [was] one silver charger,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:13".

Numbers 7:32

Ver. 32. One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.
See Gill on "Nu 7:14".

Numbers 7:33

Ver. 33. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering. See Gill on "Nu 7:15".

Numbers 7:34

Ver. 34. One kid of the goats for a sin offering.
See Gill on "Nu 7:16".

Numbers 7:35

Ver. 35. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:17".

Elizur the son of Shedeur; see **Nu 1:5**.

Numbers 7:36

Ver. 36. On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the children of Simeon, [did offer]. See **Nu 1:6**.

Numbers 7:37

Ver. 37. His offering [was] one silver charger,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:13".

Numbers 7:38

Ver. 38. One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.
See Gill on "Nu 7:14".

Numbers 7:39

Ver. 39. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering. See Gill on "Nu 7:15".

Numbers 7:40

Ver. 40. One kid of the goats for a sin offering.
See Gill on "Nu 7:16".

Numbers 7:41

Ver. 41. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:17".

Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; see **Nu 1:6**.

Numbers 7:42

Ver. 42. On the sixth day Eliasaph the son of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad, [offered]. See **Nu 1:14**.

Numbers 7:43

Ver. 43. His offering [was] one silver charger,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:13".

Numbers 7:44

Ver. 44. One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.
See Gill on "Nu 7:14".

Numbers 7:45

Ver. 45. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering. See Gill on "Nu 7:15".

Numbers 7:46

Ver. 46. One kid of the goats for a sin offering.
See Gill on "Nu 7:16".

Numbers 7:47

Ver. 47. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:17".

Eliasaph the son of Deuel; see **Nu 1:14**.

Numbers 7:48

Ver. 48. On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, prince of the children of Ephraim, [offered]. See **Nu 1:10**.

Numbers 7:49

Ver. 49. His offering [was] one silver charger,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:13".

Numbers 7:50

Ver. 50. One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.
See Gill on "Nu 7:14".

Numbers 7:51

Ver. 51. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering. See Gill on "Nu 7:15".

Numbers 7:52

Ver. 52. One kid of the goats for a sin offering.
See Gill on "Nu 7:16".

Numbers 7:53

Ver. 53. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:17".

Elishama the son of Ammihud; see **Nu 1:10**.

Numbers 7:54

Ver. 54. On the eighth day [offered] Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, prince of the children of Manasseh. See **Nu 1:10**.

Numbers 7:55

Ver. 55. His offering [was] one silver charger,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:13".

Numbers 7:56

Ver. 56. One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.
See Gill on "Nu 7:14".

Numbers 7:57

Ver. 57. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering. See Gill on "Nu 7:15".

Numbers 7:58

Ver. 58. One kid of the goats for a sin offering.
See Gill on "Nu 7:16".

Numbers 7:59

Ver. 59. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:17".

Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur; see **Nu 1:10**.

Numbers 7:60

Ver. 60. On the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideoni, prince of the children of Benjamin, [offered]. See **Nu 1:11**.

Numbers 7:61

Ver. 61. His offering [was] one silver charger,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:13".

Numbers 7:62

Ver. 62. One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.
See Gill on "Nu 7:14".

Numbers 7:63

Ver. 63. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering. See Gill on "Nu 7:15".

Numbers 7:64

Ver. 64. One kid of the goats for a sin offering.
See Gill on "Nu 7:16".

Numbers 7:65

Ver. 65. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:17".

Abidan the son of Gideoni; see **Nu 1:11**.

Numbers 7:66

Ver. 66. On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, prince of the children of Dan, [offered]. See **Nu 1:12**.

Numbers 7:67

Ver. 67. His offering [was] one silver charger,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:13".

Numbers 7:68

Ver. 68. One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.
See Gill on "Nu 7:14".

Numbers 7:69

Ver. 69. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering. See Gill on "Nu 7:15".

Numbers 7:70

Ver. 70. One kid of the goats for a sin offering.
See Gill on "Nu 7:16".

Numbers 7:71

Ver. 71. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:17".

Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai; see **Nu 1:12**.

Numbers 7:72

Ver. 72. On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, prince of the children of Asher, [offered]. See **Nu 1:13**.

Numbers 7:73

Ver. 73. His offering [was] one silver charger,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:13".

Numbers 7:74

Ver. 74. One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.
See Gill on "Nu 7:14".

Numbers 7:75

Ver. 75. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering. See Gill on "Nu 7:15".

Numbers 7:76

Ver. 76. One kid of the goats for a sin offering.
See Gill on "Nu 7:16".

Numbers 7:77

Ver. 77. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:17".

Pagiel the son of Ocran; see **Nu 1:13**.

Numbers 7:78

Ver. 78. On the twelfth day Ahira the son of Enan, prince of the children of Naphtali, [offered]. See **Nu 1:15**.

Numbers 7:79

Ver. 79. His offering [was] one silver charger,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:13".

Numbers 7:80

Ver. 80. One golden spoon of ten [shekels], full of incense.
See Gill on "Nu 7:14".

Numbers 7:81

Ver. 81. One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering. See Gill on "Nu 7:15".

Numbers 7:82

Ver. 82. One kid of the goats for a sin offering.
See Gill on "Nu 7:16".

Numbers 7:83

Ver. 83. And for a sacrifice of peace offerings,....
See Gill on "Nu 7:17".

Ahira the son of Enan; see **Nu 1:15**.

Numbers 7:84

Ver. 84. This [was] the dedication of the altar by the princes,.... These the presents they made, and the offerings they offered when the altar first began to be made use of, after it had been anointed and sanctified for sacred service:

in the day when it was anointed: this shows that it was not the precise and exact day of the setting up of the tabernacle, and the anointing of the altar, that the above presents and offerings were brought, since they were twelve successive days in bringing; but that the sense is, that about that time, or quickly after it was anointed, the princes dedicated it in the manner before described:

twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold; according to the number of the princes, and the tribes they were princes of; a noble instance both of devotion and piety, and of liberality and generosity; and is a standing example on record to all princes and great personages in all successive ages, to promote religion and godliness, by their own personal conduct and behaviour, and to encourage and support it by their generous benefactions and donations: the sum total of what they contributed is in this and the following verses given.

Numbers 7:85

Ver. 85. Each charger of silver [weighing] an hundred and thirty [shekels], each bowl seventy,.... See Gill on "Nu 7:13";

all the silver vessels [weighed] two thousand and four hundred [shekels], after the shekel of the sanctuary; which amounted to 1,139 ounces and four drachms {k}, which were worth about three hundred pounds of our money.

{k} Vid. Scheuchzer. ut supra. (Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 366.)

Numbers 7:86

Ver. 86. The golden spoons [were] twelve, full of incense,.... Which points at the use those spoons or cups were of, namely, to carry incense in them, such as were used on the day of atonement {l}:

[weighing] ten [shekels] apiece, after the shekel of the sanctuary;
See Gill on "Nu 7:14";

all the gold of the spoons [was] twenty [shekels]; which amounted to forty nine ounces, five drachms, scruples, and eight gains, worth about seventy five pounds of our money.

{l} Misn. Yoma, c. 4, 4. & 5, 1.

Numbers 7:87

Ver. 87. All the oxen for the burnt offering [were] twelve bullocks,.... According to the number of the princes and their tribes, and so,

the rams twelve, the lambs of the first year twelve; which were also for the burnt offering:

with their meat offering; which always went along with the burnt offering:

and the kids of the goats, for a sin offering, twelve; thus the twelve princes, and by them the twelve tribes, expressed their faith in Christ, the antitype of those sacrifices, and their hope of his coming into the world to be a sacrifice for sin, and of their atonement, reconciliation, peace, pardon, and salvation by him; see Ac 26:6.

Numbers 7:88

Ver. 88. And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace offerings [were] twenty and four bullocks,.... Each prince bringing two:

the rams sixty, the he goats sixty, the lambs of the first year sixty; five of each being brought by every prince; so that the whole number of beasts for peace offerings only, which were to feast with, were two hundred four;

this [was] the dedication of the altar after that it was anointed; this clearly shows, that it was not the precise day the altar was anointed the dedication was made, but some little time after; even that the first prince brought his presents and offerings for the dedication of it.

Numbers 7:89

Ver. 89. And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation, to speak with him,.... With God, to consult him on some affair or another, or to learn whether he had anything else to communicate to him, to be delivered to the children of Israel; or whether he had any directions and instructions to give him about the presents and gifts of the princes, since this seems to be immediately after their offerings:

then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him; the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it, the voice of the Spirit; but rather the voice of the Shechinah, or Word of God, the eternal "Logos", is what was heard; who in the fulness of time was to be made flesh, and dwell among men, and be heard, and seen, and handled by them; for as for the voice of the Father, the was not heard at any time, **Joh 5:37**;

from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim; upon the ark in which the law was, called the testimony, was the mercy seat; over that were placed two cherubim shadowing it, and between these was the seat of the divine Majesty, which he had now taken, and from hence the voice of him speaking, was heard; which, as it follows upon the presents and offerings of the princes, may be interpreted, of the divine approbation and acceptance of them, since it was promised by the Lord to Moses, that upon their building a tabernacle for him he would dwell in it; and upon the making a mercy seat with the cherubim over the ark, he would there meet with Moses, and commune with him; all which being done to his mind he fulfils his promise: though it seems that at this time Moses did not go into the most holy place, only into the tabernacle of the congregation, the outward sanctuary, the court of the tabernacle; and there he heard the voice, as Jarchi observes, coming out of the most holy place, and from the mercy seat there, which was so loud, clear, and distinct, as to be well heard and understood by him; he supposes the voice went out from heaven to between the two cherubim, and from thence to the tabernacle of the congregation: and he spake unto him; what he spoke is not said, unless it is what follows in the next chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 8

In this chapter orders are given for the lighting the seven lamps of the candlestick, **Nu 8:1**; and for the consecration of the Levites to their office, by a purification of them, **Nu 8:5**; by a separation of them from the children of Israel, and the imposition of their hands on them, and of the hands of the Levites on the offerings offered for them, **Nu 8:9**; and being thus given to the Lord, and claimed as his, instead of the firstborn of Israel, they are given to Aaron and his sons to do service in the tabernacle, **Nu 8:16**; and their age at which they were to enter into service and cease from it is fixed, **Nu 8:23**.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Whether immediately after the offerings of the princes, or at another time, is not certain; Aben Ezra thinks it was in the night God spake unto him, because then the lamps were lighted and burning:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 8:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him,.... It being his work to light the lamps, though, as Ben Gersom observes, it was not incumbent on an high priest alone to do this, for it also belonged to the sons of Aaron, who were common priests, Ex 27:21; though it is probable that as this was the first time of lighting them, it might be done by Aaron himself, his sons attending and assisting him; in which he was an eminent type of Christ, the great High Priest, who lights the lamps in all his golden candlesticks, the churches, **Re 1:20**, and from whom they have all their light and all the supplies of it:

when thou lightest the lamps; which was done at evening, Ex 30:8; pointing at the great light set up by Christ, the light of the world, in the evening of it, in the last days:

the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"at the same time of thy lighting the lamps over against the candlestick, there shall be seven lamps giving light: three on the west side and three on the east side, and the seventh in the middle:"

and in the like order Jarchi places them, who observes, that the three eastward looked over against the middlemost, the wicks that were in them; and so the three westward, the tops of the wicks were over against the middlemost: and he also observes, that the middlemost lamp was no other than the body of the candlestick, and so all the rest of the lamps were over against and looked to that; and this is the sense of Maimonides {m}, and other Jewish writers; but the truer meaning of the phrase is, that the seven lamps gave light, as they were to do, to that part of the holy place that was opposite to the candlestick, the north part of it, where stood the shewbread table, the candlestick being in the south, Ex 40:22; that the table of the Lord might have light, as it was proper it should; and the priests might see to set on and take off the bread, which otherwise they could not, there being no window in the place; See Gill on "Ex 25:37".

{m} Hilchot Beth Hacbehirah, c. 3. sect. 8.

Numbers 8:3

Ver. 3. And Aaron did so, he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick,.... As God had taken up his residence in the most holy place, as appears by the voice speaking from off the mercy seat, **Nu 7:89**; and sacrifices were begun to be offered in the outward court on the altar of burnt offering, it was proper that the service of God in the holy place should also be set on foot; as placing of the shewbread on the shewbread table, and burning incense on the golden altar of incense; which could not well be done until the lamps were lighted, and therefore orders were given for the lighting them, which was accordingly done by Aaron:

as the Lord commanded Moses; Ex 25:37.

Numbers 8:4

Ver. 4. And this work of the candlestick [was] of beaten gold,.... As it is also said to be; See Gill on "Ex 25:31"; and
See Gill on "Ex 25:36":

unto the shalt thereof, unto the flowers thereof, [was] beaten work; of which, see Ex 25:31;

according unto the pattern which the Lord had showed Moses; when on Mount Sinai with him:

so he made the candlestick; that is, ordered it to be made, and took care that it was made exactly to the pattern he had of it; otherwise Bezaleel was the artificer; and so the Targum of Jonathan here expresses him by name.

Numbers 8:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... the same time the order about lighting the lamps was given; and this section is joined to the former, Aben Ezra thinks, to show that Aaron employed himself in lighting the lamps, but in the rest of the services the Levites helped him, and stood before him to do what he commanded them: they were ordered to be taken and given to Aaron before; and they were numbered, and their services appointed to each division of them; and now they are ordered to be ordained and consecrated to their office:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 8:6

Ver. 6. Take the Levites from among the children of Israel,.... Among whom they were mixed, as were all the tribes mixed together as Aben Ezra says, before they took their journey from Mount Sinai; however, from hence forward, they were distinguished from Israelites, as they are both in Scripture and in Jewish writings; see **1Ch 9:2**; though this seems to design no other but their appointment and separation to their work and service, as ministers to the priests of the Lord; and so as Aaron did not assume the honour of priesthood to himself but was called of God, the Levites did not take the honour of their office to themselves but had it by the appointment and call of God:

and cleanse them; with water, by sprinkling the water of purification on them, and by washing their bodies and clothes with water; which outward washing was a sign of moral purity, which was necessary to their employment in the service of the sanctuary; for though there was no particular uncleanness on them, either ceremonial or moral, but what was common to men; yet it was proper, by such outward rites, to put them and others in mind, that they which are employed about holy things should be eminently pure and holy; and as their business was to carry holy things, to bear the sacred vessels of the sanctuary from place to place when needful, they ought of all men to be clean, Isa 52:11: and in this they were emblems of the ministers of the word, who ought to be pure, as in heart, so in life and conversation, and be examples of purity to others, **2Co 6:6**.

Numbers 8:7

Ver. 7. And thus shall thou do unto them, to cleanse them,.... Or order Aaron to do unto them; the cleansing of the Levites was the work of Aaron, either by himself or by his order; in which he was a type of Christ, who is the refiner and purifier of the sons of Levi, **Mal 3:3**;

sprinkle water of purifying upon them; or "water of sin" {n}; water which purifies from sin, in a ceremonial sense; and this was water mixed with the ashes of the red heifer, which was the purification of persons deified by the dead, as Jarchi observes; and though the law concerning the red heifer, and of making the water of purification, is not made mention of till afterwards, Nu 19:1: yet it was very probably given before; and the Jews say {o}, it was on the second of Nisan, or the first month, which was the day after the tabernacle was erected, that Eleazar the priest burnt the red heifer and sprinkled all Israel; this only "sanctified to the purifying of the flesh", **Heb 9:13**, in a ceremonial sense, but was typical of the blood of Christ, which "purges the conscience from dead works"; that so men may be fitted and qualified, as the Levites were, "to serve the living God", **Heb 9:14**;

and let them shave all their flesh; the hair of their bodies, in all parts thereof; even the beard, as Aben Ezra notes, some say; yet not the corners of it; but the whole hair of the body, everywhere, was to be shaved off; to denote the most perfect purity, and a removal of all superfluity of haughtiness and excrescences of the flesh from them: so the Egyptian priests used to shave their whole body every third day, lest there should be anything filthy in those that served the gods {p}: this cleansing of the Levites was after the same manner as lepers were cleansed: and Jarchi observes, from one of their writers, that because the Levites gave an atonement for the firstborn, who committed idolatry, which is called the sacrifices of the dead, and the leper is called a dead man, they were obliged to shaving as the lepers; but Ben Gersom gives a better reason for the shaving of them; that it was to put them in mind that they should forsake material (or corporeal) things, and employ themselves in the service of God; see **Ac 6:2** **2Ti 2:4**;

and let them wash their clothes; and much more their bodies, as Chaskuni, after the manner of those who were polluted by touching a dead body; typical of the saints having their bodies washed with pure water, and their garments washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, Heb 10:22;

and [so] make themselves clean; the Targum of Jonathan adds, in forty seahs of water; and according to the sense of that paraphrase, both the bodies and clothes of the Levites were dipped in water.

{n} tajx ym "aquas peccati", Montanus; "aquam peccati", Piscator, Drusius; "the sin water", Ainsworth. {o} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 7. p. 22. {p} Herodot. Enterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 37.

Numbers 8:8

Ver. 8. Then let them take a young bullock,.... Of two years old, as the Jewish writers gather from the other in the next clause, being called the second; though the wise men say one of three years old is fit for such a sacrifice; nay, others say, if four or five years old; but the decision is according to the wise men {q}

with his meat offering, [even] fine flour mingled with oil: which always went along with a burnt offering, and consisted of three tenth deals of line flour, and half an hin of oil, Nu 28:12;

and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin offering; which was the offering for the sin of the whole congregation of Israel, through ignorance; and this being for all the Levites, and they being instead of the firstborn of Israel, such an offering was required; and though there was no particular sin charged upon them, but it became necessary for their perfect cleansing and expiation.

{q} Misn. Parah, c. 1. sect. 2. & Bartenora in ib.

Numbers 8:9

Ver. 9. And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation,.... Not without it, but within it, in the court of the tabernacle, at least at the door of it, where stood the altar of burnt offering, on which sacrifices for them were now to be offered:

and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together; the heads of the tribes, and elders of the people, as Aben Ezra interprets this phrase in **Le 8:3**; where the whole congregation is said to be assembled at the consecration of the priests, as here at the consecration of the Levites, having a concern therein, as well as to be spectators and witnesses of this solemn affair; and no doubt as many of them as could conveniently assemble at the door of the tabernacle did, though every individual of that large body of people could not possibly do it.

Numbers 8:10

Ver. 10. And thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord,.... From the door of the tabernacle, to the altar of burnt offering, where the Lord was in some sense present to accept the sacrifices offered to him:

and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites; as were used to be put upon sacrifices, for the Levites were themselves offered for an offering of the children of Israel, as is expressed in **Nu 8:11**; by which rite they signified that they voluntarily parted with them, and gave them up to the Lord, and transferred their service to them, in which they were to serve in their room and stead; these, according to some Jewish writers, were the firstborn of Israel that laid their hands on the Levites, a type of the general assembly and church of the firstborn; or rather the princes and heads of the tribes, who represented the whole body. Some think by this rite is signified the consent of the people in the designation and appointment of the ministers of the word to their work and office; but what in the New Testament seems to answer to this is, the laying of the hands of the presbytery on ministers of the word, **1Ti 4:14**.

Numbers 8:11

Ver. 11. And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord,.... Or "wave" {r} them, as a wave offering, which was moved to and fro, backwards and forwards; not that they were actually so waved and moved to and fro by Aaron, which could not be done by him; though it is possible he might make such a motion himself, and they might do the like after him, thereby signifying that they belonged unto the Lord of the whole earth; and some think this testified their readiness to serve the Lord; to which may be added their constant employment in his service, being always in motion, doing one piece of service or another continually; as the people of God, and especially the ministers of the word, should be always abounding: in the work of the Lord. Ainsworth supposes that the troubles and afflictions of the ministers of God are figured hereby:

[for] an offering of the children of Israel; to the Lord, hereby devoting them to his service:

that they may execute the service of the Lord; for them, in their room and stead, do what otherwise they must have done; see **Nu 3:7**; with this compare Isa 66:20.

{r} Pynhw "et motabit", Tigurine version; "et faciet elevare", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "et agitabit", Drusius; "et agitato", Piscator.

Numbers 8:12

Ver. 12. And the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the bullocks,.... Or "on the head" {s}; on the head of everyone of them, as Aben Ezra, thereby, as it were, transferring their sins to them, for these were to make atonement for them, as the latter part of the verse shows; and this was a figure of the imputation of sin to Christ, and taught that doctrine, and led the faith of the offerers to the sin bearing and sin atoning Saviour:

and thou shall offer the one [for] a sin offering, and the other [for] a burnt offering, unto the Lord; that is, shall order to be offered; for not Moses, but Aaron, offered these offerings, as Aben Ezra observes, of which this is a proof, that Aaron is said to make the atonement for them, **Nu 8:21**, for which purpose these sacrifices were offered, particularly the first; and the latter by way of thanksgiving for atonement made by the former: so it follows,

to make an atonement for the Levites; who could not be admitted to service until their sins were expiated; as no man is worthy to be employed in the work of God, but such for whom reconciliation for their sins is made by the blood and sacrifice of Christ, by which they are purged from dead works to serve the living God.

{s} var le "super caput", Tigurine version. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.

Numbers 8:13

Ver. 13. And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons,.... After atonement was made for them, as Aben Ezra observes; then they were presented to Aaron and his sons, to whom they were given to he their ministers, and assistants to them:

and offer them [for] an offering unto the Lord: or, and "waved them", &c. as before, that is, order them to be waved; for not Moses, but Aaron, did this, and indeed was done already; and therefore should rather be rendered, as by Bishop Patrick, after thou hast offered, or waved them.

Numbers 8:14

Ver. 14. Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel,.... By sprinkling the water of purification upon them; by offering sacrifices for them; by presenting them before the Lord, with the hands of the people of Israel put upon them; by offering and waving them before the Lord, and by setting them before Aaron and his sons, as their ministers:

and the Levites shall be mine: in a special and peculiar manner devoted to his service, and by him given to his priests for that purpose; so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan,

"and the Levites shall minister before me."

Numbers 8:15

Ver. 15. And after that shall the Levites go in,.... Not into the sanctuary, where only the priests entered, much less into the most holy place, where only the high priest went, and that but once a year, in neither of which places the Levites had anything to do, but into the court of the tabernacle:

to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: to watch there, and to assist the priests at the altar of burnt offering, to take down the tabernacle and bear the vessels of it, and set it up, as occasion required:

and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them [for] an offering; cleanse them by sprinkling the water of purifying on them, and offer them by waving them as before; and indeed this is no new thing which is here observed, but what was already done, and therefore should be rendered, "when thou shalt have cleansed them", or "after thou hast cleansed them", &c. and so the particle "vau" is sometimes used {t}.

{t} See Noldius, p. 289, 290, 299.

Numbers 8:16

Ver. 16. For they [are] wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel,.... All of them, entirely, and most certainly; or, "given, given" {u}, which is repeated for the confirmation of it; or because of their being twice given, first to the Lord by the children of Israel, and then by the Lord to Aaron and his sons, as Chaskuni; though Jarchi interprets it of the different parts of their service they were devoted to, given for bearing and carrying the vessels of the sanctuary, and given for the song, or to be singers in the temple:

instead of such as open, every womb, [even instead of] the firstborn of all the children of Israel have I taken them unto me;
See Gill on "Nu 3:12", and
See Gill on "Nu 3:13".

{u} Myntn Myntn "dati, dati", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so Drusius and Ainsworth.

Numbers 8:17

Ver. 17. For all the firstborn of the children of Israel [are] mine,
[both] men and beasts,.... Not only in common with other of his creatures, but in a special respect on account of his signal deliverance of them; they were his, as Jarchi expresses it, by the line of judgment, or rule of justice and equity, because he protected them among the firstborn of the Egyptians, saved them when he slew theirs, as follows:

in the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt; both of men and beasts:

I sanctified them for myself; claimed them as his own, and set them apart for his own use, or ordered them to be set apart: see Ex 13:2.

Numbers 8:18

Ver. 18. And I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children of Israel. Gave up his right in the firstborn, and instead of them took the Levites for his use and service: see **Nu 3:12**.

Numbers 8:19

Ver. 19. And I have given the Levites [as] a gift to Aaron and his sons, from among the children of Israel,.... Or I have given the Levites that were given; that is, the Lord gave to Aaron and his sons the Levites, that were first given to him; as they were, when brought before him, and the children of Israel laid hands on them, and they were offered before the Lord, **Nu 8:10**;

to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation; to do what otherwise they must have done, watch and guard the tabernacle, carry the sacrifices to the priests, assist them at the altar, take down and set up the tabernacle, and carry it, and the vessels of it, from place to place:

and to make an atonement for the children of Israel; not by offering sacrifices for them, which was the work of the priests, but by being now offered themselves, **Nu 8:10**; that they themselves might be the atonement of their souls as Aben Ezra expresses it, as well as they were by their service hereafter a means of preserving the Israelites from death; which may be interpreted of making an atonement, which Phinehas is said to do by his deed, though no sacrifice was offered,
Nu 25:7; which sense seems to be confirmed by what follows:

that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh to the sanctuary; by approaching nearer than they should, touching what they ought not, intruding themselves into service they were not called to, or doing it amiss, not being instructed in it, or inured to it as the Levites were. The phrase, "the children of Israel", is five times used in this verse, to denote the love of God to them, as Jarchi observes.

Numbers 8:20

Ver. 20. And Moses and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel,.... The several parties concerned in the consecration of the Levites: these

did to the Levites according unto all that the Lord commanded Moses,
so did the children of Israel unto them: which, as Jarchi notes, is said to the praise of them that did it, and of what was done by them; everything was done that was ordered, and in the manner in which it was prescribed; Moses sprinkled, or ordered to be sprinkled, the water of purification on them, and set them before the tabernacle, and before the Lord; the children of Israel laid their hands on them, and Aaron waved them, offered the sacrifices for them.

Numbers 8:21

Ver. 21. And the Levites were purified,.... From sin, by the sprinkling of the sin water, or water of purification on them, **Nu 8:7**;

and they washed their clothes; that they might have no defilement about them, neither in their bodies, nor in their garments:

and Aaron offered them [as] an offering before the Lord; a wave offering, as in **Nu 8:11**;

and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them; by offering the sacrifices for them, **Nu 8:12**.

Numbers 8:22

Ver. 22. And after that went the Levites in,.... Into the court of the tabernacle, being at the door of it when the above rites and ceremonies of their consecration were performed:

to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation, before Aaron and his sons; in their presence, and by their order, as they should direct them:

as the Lord had commanded Moses, so did they unto them; Aaron and his sons did to the then present Levites according to the command of God by Moses; they exactly observed every punctilio of it, and complied with it; and this the sons of Aaron did continually to the sons of the Levites, as Aben Ezra remarks, in all succeeding ages; when the Levites were consecrated to their service, the same things were done unto them that are here ordered.

Numbers 8:23

Ver. 23. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... At the same time he gave the instructions about the consecration of the Levites, the time of their entrance on their service, and of leaving it, was fixed:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 8:24

Ver. 24. This [is it] that [belongeth] unto the Levites,.... The fixed and settled time for their service, as is after related:

from twenty and five years old and upward, they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; in **Nu 4:3**; the time for the Levites entering on the work of the tabernacle is fixed to thirty years and upward, which Jarchi reconciles thus; at twenty five years old the Levite goes in to learn the rites of service, and he learns five years, and when thirty years of age he services; the same is observed by others {w}; but what Aben Ezra proposes seems much better; at thirty years of age a Levite entered into the service of bearing and carrying burdens; and at twenty five years of age he entered into the service of the tent or tabernacle, where he was employed in lighter service, such as opening and shutting the doors of the sanctuary, keeping out strangers and unclean persons, and singing the songs of the sanctuary; but was not concerned till thirty years of age in carrying the vessels of the sanctuary on the shoulders, as the Kohathites; or in taking down and setting up the tabernacle, loading and unloading the wagons, as the Gershonites and Merarites; which is the business assigned unto them, and spoken of in **Nu 4:22**, where the age of thirty years, and upward, is mentioned, as the time of their entrance on it, **Nu 4:23**.

{w} Ben Gersom in loc. Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21.

Numbers 8:25

Ver. 25. And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service [thereof],.... The heavy service of it:

and shall serve no more; by bearing and carrying the vessels of the sanctuary upon their shoulders, as Jarchi interprets it; this, according to the Jewish writers, was only in force while the tabernacle was in the wilderness, and was moved from place to place: but when it had a fixed habitation, and that laborious service of bearing and carrying the vessels of it ceased, years made no difference in the Levites, or disqualified them for service; for it is said {x}, that the Levites were not bound by this law, but in the time of the tabernacle; but when it was at Shiloh, and at Jerusalem, where there was no bearing and carrying upon the shoulder, the Levites were not rejected on account of years, only for their voice, when they had lost that, and could not sing.

{x} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Cholin, c. 1. sect. 6.

Numbers 8:26

Ver. 26. But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation,.... By giving advice, instructing younger Levites, and doing lighter service. Jarchi says, they shall return to shutting of doors, singing and loading wagons; but the last especially seems too burdensome: the ministry of such is explained by the next clause,

to keep the charge; of the tabernacle, to watch and observe that no stranger or unclean person enter into it; and this they were capable of when at the age of fifty, and upwards:

and shall do no service; heavy and laborious:

thus thou shall do unto the Levites touching their charge; dismiss them from service when at such an age, or however make their service easier; for this respects ancient men, as Aben Ezra notes; though it may include both their entrance on their work, and their cessation from it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 9

In this chapter the command for keeping the passover is repeated, and it was accordingly kept, **Nu 9:1**; but some persons being defiled and disqualified for observing it, Moses inquires of the Lord, on their solicitation, what should be done in such a case, **Nu 9:6**; when it was ordered to be kept by such, and those on journeys, on the fourteenth day of the second month, but not by others, who were to observe it according to its first appointment, **Nu 9:9**; and an account is given of the appearance of the cloud by day, and fire by night, upon the tabernacle, which directed the children of Israel when to journey, and when to pitch their tents, **Nu 9:15**.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai,.... While the people of Israel were encamped there, before they took their journey from thence:

in the first month of the second year, after they were come out of the land of Egypt: the following order was given some time in the first month of the second year of Israel's departure out of Egypt; the precise day is not mentioned, it must be in the beginning of the month before the fourteenth day of it, in which the passover is ordered to be kept, according to the first institution of it; very probably immediately after the setting up of the tabernacle, and the consecration of Aaron and his sons; and it must be before the numbering of the people the fixing of their standards, the appointment of the Levites, and the dedication of them; since the order for the numbering of the people was on the first day of the second month, **Nu 1:1**, but the account of them was postponed to this time, in order to give a relation of an affair which was not finished until the second month, and therefore the whole is laid together here:

saying, as follows.

Numbers 9:2

Ver. 2. Let the children of Israel also keep the passover,.... Though this ordinance was enjoined the people of Israel, and observed by them at the time of their coming out of Egypt, and had been since repeated, Le 23:5; yet without a fresh precept, or an explanation of the former, they seemed not to be obliged, or might not be sensible that they were obliged to keep it, until they came into the land of Canaan, Ex 12:25; and therefore a new order is given them to observe it:

at his appointed season; and what that season is is next declared.

Numbers 9:3

Ver. 3. In the fourteenth day of this month,.... The first month, the month Nisan or Abib, answering to part of our March:

at even ye shall keep it, in his appointed season: between the two evenings, Ex 12:6; and even if it fall on the sabbath day, as Jarchi; and this was a sabbath day, according to the Jewish writers {y}:

according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof shall ye keep it; the former of these, according to Jarchi, respects the lamb, and the requisites of it, that it should be without blemish, a male, and of the first year; and the latter, according to him and others, the removal of the leaven, and the seven days of unleavened bread, and the eating of the lamb with bitter herbs: they take in no doubt all that were prescribed by the original law, except the sprinkling of the blood on the doorposts, and also eating the passover in haste, with their loins girt, and shoes on their feet, and staves in their hands; though some think these latter might be observed at this time, when they were unsettled.

{y} Seder Olam Rabba. c. 7.

Numbers 9:4

Ver. 4. And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover. The time now drawing nigh for the observation of it, it being now almost a year since their coming out of Egypt.

Numbers 9:5

Ver. 5. And they kept the passover on the fourteenth, day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai,.... No mention is made of keeping the feast of unleavened bread seven days, only of the passover, which indeed was only enjoined at this time, though the feast of unleavened bread used to follow it, and did in later times; but perhaps it would not have been an easy matter to have got the flour to make it of, sufficient for so large a body of people, for seven days together in the wilderness; though they might be able to furnish themselves with what was enough for one meal from the neighbouring countries, and especially from Midian, where Jethro, Moses's father, lived, and which was not very far from Sinai, where the Israelites now were:

according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel; which is observed to their honour; though Jarchi gives this as a reason why this book does not begin with this account, as the order of things seems to require, because it was to the reproach of the Israelites, that all the forty years they were in the wilderness they kept but this passover only; the reason of which was, because of the omission of circumcision during that time, through the inconveniences of travelling, and the danger of circumcision in it, without which their children could not eat of the passover, Ex 12:48.

Numbers 9:6

Ver. 6. And there were certain men who were defiled by the dead body of a man,.... The Targum of Jonathan adds,

"who died by them suddenly,"

whereby pollution was contracted, see **Nu 6:9**; though perhaps this was a whole house or family, one of which was dead, and so all were defiled, being in the place where the dead body was, or had touched it, or been concerned however in the burying of it, and on account of which were unclean seven days, and so might not eat of any holy things, as the passover; and though at the first institution there was no such law, yet since that time there was, which obliged them, see **Le 7:20**; and it is said {z}, that the section concerning the red heifer, and so of defilement by a dead body, was delivered on the day the tabernacle was erected, even on the first day of the first month; and though recorded in Nu 19:1; yet was given out before this; and indeed otherwise it is not easy to conceive how these men should know that the dead body of a man was defiling:

that they could not keep the passover on that day; as others did, the fourteenth of Nisan, it being, according to the Targum of Jonathan, the seventh day of their defilement:

and they came before Moses, and before Aaron, on that day; on the selfsame day the passover was kept, and they were sensible of their pollution, which disqualified for it; and therefore it should rather seem to be the first day of their pollution than their last; since otherwise they would doubtless have inquired about this matter before the passover came; unless the time of their pollution was so near out, that they thought they might eat it safely, on which they desired advice.

{z} Chaskuni in loc.

Numbers 9:7

Ver. 7. And those men said unto him,.... To Moses, who was the chief magistrate, though Aaron was the high priest. Jarchi says, they were both sitting together when the men came, and put the question to them, but it was not proper to speak to one after another; for if Moses knew not, how should Aaron know? says he; the more difficult matters were brought to Moses, and he gave answers to them:

we [are] defiled by the dead body of a man; they had touched it, or had been where it was, or at the funeral of it, and so were defiled: this they knew was their case by a law before mentioned, and which they speak of, not as a sin purposely committed by them, but as what had unhappily befallen them, and they could not avoid; and express their concern, that upon this account they should be deprived of the ordinance of the passover and as this confession shows an ingenuous disposition, so what follows, a pious, religious, and devotional frame of mind:

wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the Lord in his appointed season among the children of Israel? they speak very honourably of the ordinance of the passover, they call it "an offering of the Lord", the passover lamb being a slain sacrifice; and this offered to the Lord, by way of thanksgiving, for, and in commemoration of, their wonderful deliverance out of Egypt, and done in faith of Christ the passover, to be sacrificed for them; and it gave them much uneasiness that they were debarred by this occasional and unavoidable uncleanness, that was upon them, from keeping it; and what added to it was, that they could not observe it on the day which the Lord had appointed, and when the whole body of the children of Israel were employed in it; for it is no small pleasure to a good man to observe every ordinance of God in the manner and at the time he directs to, and his people in general are attending to the same; and the rather they were urgent in their expostulations, because it is said {a}, this was the seventh and last day of their pollution, when they should be clean at evening, and the passover was not to be eaten until the evening, and therefore so earnestly expostulate why they should be kept back from it.

{a} Maimon. in Misn. Pesachim, c. 7. sect. 6.

Numbers 9:8

Ver. 8. And Moses said unto them, stand still,.... Where they were; Aben Ezra says, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you; as it was a singular case, of which there had been no instance before, Moses would not determine anything about it himself, but would inquire of the Lord his mind and will concerning it; and for that purpose, very probably, went into the most holy place, where the Lord had promised to meet him and commune with him, from off the mercy seat, about any matter of difficulty he should inquire about, Ex 25:22.

Numbers 9:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... From between the cherubim, after he had laid the case before him, and he gave him an answer:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 9:10

Ver. 10. Speak unto the children of Israel, saying,.... Not to the men only that came to Moses for advice, but to the body of the people; for the answer of the Lord concerned them all, and carried in it a rule to be observed in the like case, and others mentioned, in all succeeding ages, as long as the passover was an ordinance of God:

if any man of you; or "a man, a man", or any private man; for, according to the Jewish writers, this law only respects private persons, as those were who were the occasion of its being made:

or of your posterity; or "in your generations" {b}, or "ages"; which shows that this law respected future times, and not the present case only:

shall be unclean by reason of a dead body; see **Nu 9:6**; Maimonides {c} says, this only respects uncleanness by a dead body, and not uncleanness by any creeping thing; for such as were unclean by them might sacrifice, though a private person, and eat the passover at evening with purity, when he had been cleansed: yet he says elsewhere {d}, that such that had issues, and menstruous women, and those that lay with them, and women in childbed, were unclean, and were put off to the second passover; and so the Targum of Jonathan here adds,

"or that has an issue, or a leprous person:"

or [be] in a journey afar off; which, according to Ben Gersom, was fifteen miles; so in the Misnah {e}, and the commentators on it:

yet he shall keep the passover of the Lord; not the first, but second, according to the directions given in **Nu 9:11**.

{b} Mkytrdl "generationibus vestris", Pagninus, Montanus; "in aetatibus vestris", Drusius. {c} In Misn. ut supra, (c. 7. sect. 6.) T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 93. 2. {d} Hilchot Corban Pesach, c. 6. sect. 1. {e} Pesachim, c. 9. sect. 2. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Numbers 9:11

Ver. 11. The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it,.... The mouth Ijar, as the Targum of Jonathan, which answers to part of our April and part of May; so that there was a month allowed for those that were defiled to cleanse themselves; and for those on a journey to return home and prepare for the passover, which was not to be totally omitted, nor deferred any longer; and it was to be kept on the same day of the month, and at the same time of the day the first passover was observed; still the more to keep in mind the saving of their firstborn; and their deliverance out of Egypt at that time: an instance of keeping such a passover we have in 2Ch 30:1, &c.

[and] eat it with unleavened bread and bitter [herbs]; in the same manner as the first passover was eaten, Ex 12:8; only no mention is made of keeping the feast

of unleavened bread seven days, which some think those were not obliged unto at this time, only to keep the feast of the passover.

Numbers 9:12

Ver. 12. They shall leave none of it unto the morning,.... None of the flesh of the passover lamb, what was left was to be burnt with fire,
Ex 12:10;

nor break any bone of it; the same was enjoined,
See Gill on "Ex 12:46";

according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it: as when observed in its time, excepting the feast of unleavened bread, which followed the first passover, and those rites which were peculiar to the passover, as kept at their first coming out of Egypt; as the sprinkling the blood of the lamb on the doorposts, eating it in haste, &c.

Numbers 9:13

Ver. 13. But the man that [is] clean,.... Free from any pollution by a dead body, or the like:

and is not in a journey; in a distant country; for if he was on a journey in his own nation, he ought to return and attend the passover, which all the males from the several parts of the land were obliged unto; wherefore the Vulgate Latin version of **Nu 9:10**; is a wrong one; "or in a way afar off in your nation"; for at whatsoever distance they were in their own nation, they were bound to appear:

and forbeareth to keep the passover; the first passover in the first month, the month Nisan, wilfully, through negligence, or not caring to be at the expense and trouble of it, or on any pretence whatsoever: Ben Gersom interprets it of one that will not keep neither the first nor the second passover:

even the same soul shall be cut off from his people; either be excommunicated from them, or cut off by death by the immediate hand of God:

because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season: this is the ground and reason of the resentment; it was a breach of the divine command, which required this offering; ingratitude to God, being a thank offering for a singular deliverance; and this aggravated by its not being brought at the appointed time, which was the fit time for it:

that man shall bear his sin; be chargeable with the guilt of it, and bear the punishment of it; he on himself, as Aben Ezra notes, he, and he only; not his wife and family, for he being the head and master of the family, it lay upon him to provide the passover lamb for himself and his house.

Numbers 9:14

Ver. 14. And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the Lord,.... Then he must become a proselyte of righteousness, and be circumcised, or otherwise be might not eat of the passover, Ex 12:48; Ben Gersom interprets this of the second passover, and of a proselyte that was not obliged to the first, he not being then a proselyte, but became one between the first and the second; and so Aben Ezra understands it of a second passover, though he observes, that some say the first is meant:

according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do; according to the several rites and ceremonies, whether of the first or second passover, that an Israelite was obliged to observe, the same a proselyte was to observe, and what they were has been already taken notice of:

ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger and for him that was born in the land: for a proselyte, and a native of Israel; see
Ex 12:49.

Numbers 9:15

Ver. 15. And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up,.... Which was the first day of the first month in the second year of the people of Israel's coming out of Egypt, Ex 40:1;

the cloud covered the tabernacle, [namely], the tent of the testimony; that part of the tabernacle in which the testimony was, that is, where the ark was, in which the law was put, called the testimony; and this was the most holy place;

and over the tent or covering of that was this cloud, which settled upon it, as Ben Gersom thinks, after the seven days of the consecration of Aaron and his sons; on the eighth day, when it was said unto the people of Israel, "today will the Lord appear unto you", **Le 9:1**; "and the glory of the Lord shall appear unto you", **Le 9:6**; and here the Targum of Jonathan calls this cloud the cloud of glory, because of the glory of God in it; of which see
Ex 40:34;

and at even there was upon the tabernacle, as it were, the appearance of fire until the morning; the same phenomenon, which looked like a cloud in the daytime, appeared like fire in the same place in the nighttime, throughout the whole of it until morning light, when it was seen as a cloud again: this was a token of the presence of God with the people of Israel, of his protection of them, and being a guide unto them by night and day, while in the wilderness; and was a figure of his being the same to his church and people, in the present state of things; see **Isa 4:5**.

Numbers 9:16

Ver. 16. So it was alway,.... Night and day, as long as the people of Israel were in the wilderness, see Ex 13:21;

the cloud covered it [by day]: the phrase, "by day", is not in the text, but is easily and necessarily supplied from Ex 40:38; and as it is in the Targum of Jonathan, and in the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and which the following clause requires:

and the appearance of fire by night; when as a cloud it could not be because of the darkness of the night; as in the daytime it could not be discerned as a body of fire or light, because of the light of the sun; but being seen under these different forms, was serviceable both by day and night, for the following purposes.

Numbers 9:17

Ver. 17. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle,.... Or went up from it, higher than it was before, yet not out of sight, but hung as it were hovering in the air over the tabernacle, but at some distance from it; this was done by the Lord himself:

then after that the children of Israel journeyed; as soon as they saw the cloud moving upwards, the Levites took down the tabernacle, and each took their post assigned them in the carriage of it, and the priests blew their trumpets mentioned in Nu 10:2, and the whole camp moved and marched on in their journey:

and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents; when it stopped and remained without any motion, it was a signal to the children of Israel to stop also, and to set up the tabernacle, and pitch their tents about it by their standards, and according to the order of encampment which had been given them.

Numbers 9:18

Ver. 18. At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed,.... Or "mouth of the Lord"; not that there was any command in form given, or any audible voice heard, directing when to march; but the removal of the cloud was interpretatively the order and command of God for them to move also:

and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched; their tents; when the cloud stopped, they understood that as a signal to them, as a token of the will of God that they should stop likewise; it was to them as an authoritative command, which they obeyed:

as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle, they rested in their tents; whether a longer or a shorter time, as is after expressed.

Numbers 9:19

Ver. 19. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days,.... Or years, for days are sometimes put for years, and in some places the cloud tarried several years; or however, if it stayed but a month or a year in any place, as in **Nu 9:22**;

then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not; they not only kept watching when it would move, or set sentinels for that purpose to observe it, but they kept the charge, order, or commandment, which the tarrying of the cloud was a token of, and did not attempt to proceed in their journey until they had an intimation so to do by its motion; and all this while, likewise, the tabernacle being up, they observed all the precepts and ordinances of the Lord in the service of it.

Numbers 9:20

Ver. 20. And [so] it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle,.... Or "days of number", which were so few that they might be easily numbered: the Targum of Jonathan interprets them of the seven days of the week, as if the sense was, when the cloud rested a week on the tabernacle:

according to the commandment of the Lord they abode in their tents; during these few days, be they a week, or more, or less:

and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed; when it removed from the tabernacle.

Numbers 9:21

Ver. 21. And [so] it was when the cloud abode from even unto the morning,.... The whole night, during which time they rested in their beds:

and [that] the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed; whether [it was] by day or night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed; whether at morning or midnight; for sometimes, as Aben Ezra observes, they travelled in the night; whensoever their sentinels gave notice that the cloud was taken up, even though at midnight, they arose and prepared for their journey; and by this it is evident, that the appearance by day and night was the same body called the cloud, though beheld in a different view, in the daytime as a cloud, in the nighttime as fire.

Numbers 9:22

Ver. 22. Or [whether it were] two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle,.... Sometimes it tarried but half a day, sometimes a whole day, sometimes two days, at other times a whole month, and even a year; a full year, as the Targum of Jonathan and Aben Ezra; or a longer time, as the Vulgate Latin version, for in one place it tarried eighteen years, as

Maimonides says {g}; some say {h} nineteen years, as in Kadeshbarnea:

remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not; so that, as the same writer observes, it was not because the children of Israel lost their way in the wilderness and wandered about, not knowing where they were, or which way they should go; hence the Arabians call the wilderness, the wilderness of wandering, nor that they were so long wandering in it as forty years, but because it was the will of God that should stay so long at one place, and so long at another, whereby their stay in it was protracted to such a length of time, according to his sovereign will:

but when it was taken up they journeyed; though they had continued ever so long, and their situation ever so agreeable.

{g} Moreh Nevoch. par. 2. c. 50. p. 512. {h} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 8. p. 24.

Numbers 9:23

Ver. 23. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in their tents,.... Though ever so disagreeable:

and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed; though the circumstances might be such, that they could have liked a continuance; but whether agreeable or disagreeable, they were obedient to the divine will: this, or what is equivalent to it, is frequently observed in this paragraph, to show that the Israelites, though they were an obstinate and perverse people, and must in general be desirous of getting as soon as they could into the land of promise, yet in this case, in all their stations and journeys, were submissive and obedient to the divine will, as all good men should be with respect to happiness; and happy are they who have God to be their guide through it, even unto death:

they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses; observed the rest or motion of the cloud, the order and command of God signified thereby, as it was made known unto them by the ministry and means of Moses.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 10

This chapter gives an account of the directions given for making two silver trumpets, and of the use of them, the ends and purposes for which they were to be made, Nu 10:1; and of the time of taking up of the cloud from the tabernacle, and of the removal of the camp of Israel from the wilderness of Sinai, and of the order of their march,
Nu 10:11; when Moses most earnestly passed Hobab, his brother in law, to continue with him, Nu 10:29; and the chapter is closed with the prayer of Moses at the setting forward of the ark, and the resting of it, Nu 10:33.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... When the following directions concerning the trumpets were given is not certain; it may he at the time when the order of the camps of Israel was fixed, and is here recorded before the journeying of them, which was one use they were to be put unto, Nu 10:2;

saying; as follows.

Numbers 10:2

Ver. 2. Make thee two trumpets of silver,.... A metal very valuable and precious, durable, and fit for sound; only two are ordered, Aaron having but two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, who were to blow with them,
Nu 10:8; for though Moses's order is, "make thee", or for thee, yet not for his own use, but for the priests to use when he should order them: the Targum of Jonathan adds, of what is thine own, as if they were to be made at his own expense; but others say, and which is more probable, that they were to be made at the public expense: Josephus {i} gives a description of them, and says, that they were little less than a cubit long, the pipe of them narrow, but broader about the mouth to receive the breath, and ended like a bell; they seem to be much of the shape of our trumpets: these trumpets were an emblem of the ministry of the Gospel, called the great trumpet, and in the ministration of which, the preachers of it are to lift up their voice like a trumpet, to show men their perishing condition through sin, and to encourage them, as such who are ready to perish, to come to Christ for salvation,
Isa 27:13; the Gospel is comparable to silver, being fetched out of the mines of the sacred Scriptures, pure and free from the dross of errors and human inventions, will bear to be tried by the standard of the word, and is lasting and

durable, yea, the everlasting Gospel; as well as valuable and precious, containing the unsearchable riches of Christ, &c. treasures of divine truths, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; yea, it is more valuable and precious than silver, not to be obtained by that, more profitable and useful, more satisfying and lasting: the number two may be applicable to the two dispensations, under which the Gospel has been ministered, directing to the same Saviour, and to the same way of salvation, by his grace, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and to the two Testaments, which agree in the same truths respecting his person, offices, obedience, sufferings, and death; and to the prophets and apostles of both dispensations and testaments, who have united in laying Christ as the foundation; and also to the two witnesses that are still to prophecy in sackcloth, that is, preach the Gospel and blow the trumpet of it: Re 11:3

of an whole piece shall thou make them; of one solid mass of silver, beaten with an hammer, as Jarchi, such a piece as the candlestick was made of in Ex 25:31, where the same word is used as here, and rendered "beaten work": this may denote the pure and unmixed Gospel of Christ, having no dross, nor bad nor base metal of human corruptions in it; no jar, discord, or contradiction in it, but all in perfect harmony and agreement; and the whole of it, no part of it dropped or concealed; and the ministry of it, laboured by those employed in it, who study to show themselves workmen that need not be ashamed:

that thou mayest use them for the calling the assembly; the body of the people of Israel, either on civil or sacred accounts, see **Joe 1:15**; the ministry of the Gospel is for the calling and gathering of souls to Christ, and to his churches; even the remnant of Israel, all that are given to Christ and redeemed by his blood, whether Jews or Gentiles; these are gathered out of the world, which is an act of distinguishing grace; it is by means of the Gospel trumpet that they are awakened, and quickened, and directed to Christ:

and for the journeying of the camps: both of the four camps of the Israelites, and the camp of the Levites, to direct them when they should set forward on a journey: and of like use is the ministry of the Gospel; saints are pilgrims and travellers here; they are passing through a wilderness, their way is attended with many difficulties; Canaan is the place they are travelling to, and the Gospel is of singular use to them by the way, both to refresh them with its joyful sound, and to direct them in the path in which they should go.

{i} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 12. sect. 6.

Numbers 10:3

Ver. 3. And when they shall blow with them,.... With both the trumpets, in an even and continued sound, that is, the sons of Aaron:

all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; to hear what was to be said unto them: blowing both the trumpets together was a token that the whole congregation was called to meet together at the tabernacle, the door of which was the usual place of assembling, especially on religious counts, for there also the Lord met them, Ex 29:42.

Numbers 10:4

Ver. 4. And if they blow [but] with one [trumpet],.... With only one of them, or but once, with one sounding, and that an even one as before:

then the princes, [which are] the heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee: and they only or alone, as Aben Ezra: by this token, or by this difference of blowing both trumpets, or only one, it was, easily known when the whole congregation or when the princes only were to meet Moses at the same place, the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and all are to attend divine service, and the ministry of the word, even the whole church of God, and all the members of it, high and low, rich and poor, princes and people.

Numbers 10:5

Ver. 5. When ye blow an alarm,.... Making a broken, uneven, and quavering sound, which is called a "tara-tan-tara":

then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward; the camps of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, which lay to the east of the tabernacle, at the front of it; see **Nu 1:3**; this was to be the token for their march, which was first of all; Nu 10:14.

Numbers 10:6

Ver. 6. When ye blow an alarm the second time,.... Another "tara-tan-tara":

then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey; the camps of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad, which were encamped on the south side of the tabernacle, **Nu 2:10**; and, as Josephus {k} says, at the third sounding of the alarm, that part of the camp which lay to the west moved, which were the camps of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, **Nu 2:18**; and at the fourth sounding, as he says, those which were at the north, the camps of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali, **Nu 2:25**; which, though not expressed in the Hebrew text, are added in the Septuagint version, as they are to be understood:

they shall blow an alarm for their journeys; for the journeys of the said camps, as a signal or token when they should begin to march.

{k} Ut supra. (Antiq. l. 3. c. 12. sect. 6.)

Numbers 10:7

Ver. 7. But when the congregation is to be gathered together,.... At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and not to move in separate camps or bodies one after another:

you shall blow, but you shall not sound an alarm; blow with an even and uninterrupted sound, and not with a broken and quavering one; by which the congregation and camps were distinguished from one another, the same certain sound being given to each constantly, whereby they knew which were called to motion: see 1Co 14:8; according to Ben Gersom blowing was a voice drawn out, and joined or continued; an alarm, a voice not joined, but broken.

Numbers 10:8

Ver. 8. And the sons of Aaron the priests shall blow with the trumpets,.... Eleazar and Ithamar, the one with the one and the other with the other, there being at first but two, as there were but two priests; but in Solomon's time there were an hundred twenty priests, and as many trumpets, **2Ch 5:12**; hence Maimonides says {l}, there were never fewer than two trumpets, nor more than an hundred twenty;

and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations: for they were not only for present use, for the journeying of the camps in the wilderness, but for calling together the assembly in later times, as well as for other uses next mentioned; which would obtain in future ages till the coming of Christ, and even under the Gospel dispensation the mystical use of them continues, the preaching of the everlasting Gospel.

{l} Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 3. sect. 4.

Numbers 10:9

Ver. 9. And when ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you,.... That enters in to invade it, to besiege cities, and distress the inhabitants of it:

then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets: a "tara-tan-tara" with both of them, to call the several tribes together to join against the enemy; or to call them to fasting and humiliation, to repentance and prayer, to seek the Lord in the exercise of these, and cry for help and assistance, for victory and salvation; for, as Ben Gersom observes, by this alarm their hearts would be broken and become contrite, and they would return to the Lord, and he would have mercy on them when they pray unto him; for such a sound makes a man's heart shake and tremble, according to **Am 3:6**; see **Jer 4:19**; this is a third use of the trumpets, and in a mystical sense it may be observed, that saints are in a militant state, and have many enemies that come in to them to oppress them, sin, Satan, and the world; and the Gospel calls and encourages them to fight, furnishes them with armour, and assures them of victory, and directs them where to fight and with whom, and bids them endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ:

and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God; for a book of remembrance is written for them that fear God, humble themselves before him, and pray unto him:

and ye shall be saved from your enemies; as Israel from their temporal, so the people of God from their spiritual enemies, being made more than conquerors through him that loved them.

Numbers 10:10

Ver. 10. Also in the day of your gladness,.... When they should return from the enemy's country conquerors, or have vanquished the enemy that came against them into their own land, and so would fix a day of rejoicing, like the days of Purim, and the seven days when Hezekiah rejoiced, as Aben Ezra observes; and so any time of rejoicing on account of any extraordinary deliverance and salvation:

and in your solemn days; or festivals, as the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, which were proclaimed by sound of trumpet, Le 23:2;

and in the beginnings of your months; their new moons, especially on the first day of the seventh month, which was a feast of blowing of trumpets, Le 23:24;

ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over your peace offerings; expressing joy for the acceptance of them, and especially when they had, by faith, a view of the great sacrifice of Christ typified by them: this is a fourth use of the trumpets, and may denote the spiritual joy had by believers, through the ministration of the Gospel, and ordinances of it on the Lord's day, and other seasons, and particularly at the feast of the Lord's supper, in the view of peace and reconciliation, and atonement made by the sacrifice of Christ:

that they may be to you for a memorial before your God; as it were, to put him in mind of the promises he has made, and the blessings he has laid up as a covenant God for his people:

I [am] the Lord your God; who had a right to appoint such things to be observed by them, and by whom, as their covenant God, they were laid under obligation to regard them.

Numbers 10:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass, on the twentieth [day] of the second month, in the second year,.... Which was the twentieth of the month Ijar, in the second year of the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt; who, as it appears from hence, compared with Ex 19:1; had been in the wilderness of Sinai twelve months wanting ten days; so Jarchi and other Jewish writers {m}, with whom Aben Ezra agrees, who says it was near a year:

that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony; that part of the tabernacle where the ark of the testimony stood, even the most holy place, over which the cloud was, the token of the divine Presence, and which it covered; but now was taken up from it, and went up higher above it, and was a signal for the motion of the camps of Israel to set forward in their journey towards Canaan's land.

{m} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 8. p. 23. Abarbinel, &c.

Numbers 10:12

Ver. 12. And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai,.... Each of their camps removed from thence, and so everyone took their journey;

and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran; which was a signal for the camps to rest and pitch their tents; this was after they had gone three days journey, and were come to Taberah, which, it is probable, was in the wilderness of Paran; otherwise we read of their pitching in the wilderness of Paran, after they had been a month at Kibrothhattaavah, Nu 11:34, and seven days at Hazeroth,
Nu 12:16; so they went from one wilderness to another; of this wilderness, See Gill on "Ge 21:21".

Numbers 10:13

Ver. 13. And they first took their journey, according to the commandment of the Lord,.... Which was virtually contained in and signified by the taking up of the cloud, see **Nu 9:18**;

by the hand of Moses; by his means and ministry, who had informed them, that it was the will of God, that when they saw the cloud taken up to set forward in their journey, and they were obedient thereunto.

Numbers 10:14

Ver. 14. In the first [place] went the standard of the camp of the children of Judah,.... Which tribe had the honour to go foremost and lead the van, the chief ruler, the Messiah being to come of it, as he did; who is King of Israel, and has gone forth at the head of them, fighting their battles for them:

according to their armies: having, besides the army of the tribe of Judah, the armies of the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun under his standard:

and over his host [was] Nahshon the son of Amminadab; he was captain general of the army of the tribe of Judah, as Nethaneel was over the host of the tribe of Issachar, Nu 10:15; and Eliab over the host of the tribe of Zebulun, Nu 10:16; the same commanders as were fixed at the time of settling the order of their encampment, **Nu 2:3**.

Numbers 10:15

Ver. 15. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Issachar [was] Nethaneel the son of Zuar. See Gill on "Nu 10:14".

Numbers 10:16

Ver. 16. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Zebulun [was] Eliab the son of Helon. See Gill on "Nu 10:14".

Numbers 10:17

Ver. 17. And the tabernacle was taken down,.... By the Levites, as Aben Ezra, and which appears to be their work, from **Nu 1:51**; this began to be done by them as soon as the cloud was perceived to move upwards, and the camp of Judah was preparing to march; and after Aaron and his sons had taken the holy vessels out of the holy and most holy place, and had packed up and covered them as directed, **Nu 4:5**; this was an emblem of the taking down of the Jewish church state, the abolition of the service of the sanctuary, as well as of the changeable condition of the Gospel church in the wilderness, which is not always in one and the same place, but is moved from place to place, and that by the ministers of the word, signified by the Levites, who are sent and carry the Gospel here and there:

and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set forward, bearing the tabernacle; the former, the hangings and vail, and the latter the boards, pillars, sockets, &c. each of them having wagons for their assistance: these followed immediately after the camp of Judah.

Numbers 10:18

Ver. 18. And the standard of the camp of Reuben set forward according to their armies,.... Next proceeded the standard of Reuben, having under it the tribes of Simeon and Gad, Nu 10:19; as "Reuben" signifies, "behold the son", and he had the tabernacle borne before him and the holy things behind him, which way soever this camp looked, it had in view what was a type of Christ the Son of God, the object of faith, the ark.

and over his host [was] Elizur the son of Shedeur; over which respective armies were the same captains as in **Nu 2:10**;

Numbers 10:19

Ver. 19. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Simeon [was] Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. See Gill on "Nu 10:18".

Numbers 10:20

Ver. 20. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Gad [was] Eliasaph the son of Deuel. See Gill on "Nu 10:18".

Numbers 10:21

Ver. 21. And the Kohathites set forward,.... After the standard of the camps of Reuben, and between that and the standard of the camp of Ephraim, to, which there is an allusion in Ps 80:2;

bearing the sanctuary, or the holy things, as Jarchi; the ark, as Aben Ezra; though not that only, which indeed might be eminently called so, it standing in the most holy place, over which were the mercy seat and cherubim, the residence of the divine Majesty; but all the holy things in the holy place, the candlestick, shewbread table, and the two altars, the altar of incense in the holy place, and the altar of burnt offerings in the court these they bore on their shoulders, and had no wagons allowed for their assistance:

and [the other] did set up the tabernacle against they came; that is, the sons of Gershon and Merari, who went before between the standard of Judah and the standard of Reuben, carrying the heavier and more cumbersome parts of the tabernacle; which, when Judah pitched their tents, at the signal of the cloud, they immediately put together, and erected, and got it ready, by such time as the Kohathites came up to them, that so the ark and other holy things might be at once put into it, and set in their proper places.

Numbers 10:22

Ver. 22. And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set forward according to their armies,.... Next followed the standard of the camp of Ephraim, under which were Manasseh and Benjamin,
Nu 10:23;

and over his host [was] Elishama the son of Ammihud; over whom were the same captains, as in **Nu 2:18**.

Numbers 10:23

Ver. 23. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Manasseh [was] Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. See Gill on "Nu 10:22".

Numbers 10:24

Ver. 24. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Benjamin [was] Abidan the son of Gideoni. See Gill on "Nu 10:22".

Numbers 10:25

Ver. 25. And the standard of the camp of the children of Dan set forward,.... Next after that of Ephraim, the last of all: which was the rearward of all the camps throughout their host; which brought up the rear, and was fittest for that purpose, being the most numerous, next to that of Judah, which led the van; or, the gatherer up of all the camps {n}, under which were collected and brought on all that belonged to the other tribes; as all under twenty years of age, which were not taken into the camps, and the women and children, and weak and sickly persons, the mixed multitude, and all stragglers: these were all under the care and charge of this camp, and under the standard of which were Asher and Naphtali, Nu 10:26; over whom were the same captains as in **Nu 2:25**.

{n} tnxmh lkl Poam "colligens omnia castra", Montanus, Drusius; "[vel] collector omnium castrorum", Fagius, Vatablus; "colligens omnia agmina", Tigurine version, Munster.

Numbers 10:26

Ver. 26. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Asher [was] Pagiel the son of Ocran. See Gill on "Nu 10:25".

Numbers 10:27

Ver. 27. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Naphtali [was] Ahira the son of Enan. See Gill on "Nu 10:25".

Numbers 10:28

Ver. 28. Thus [were] the journeyings of the children of Israel,.... Or this was the order of them, as Jarchi; in this form and manner they marched, and a most wise, beautiful, and regular order it was; first the standard of Judah, a camp consisting of 186,400 able men fit for war, then followed the Gershonites and Merarites with six wagons carrying the heavier parts of the tabernacle; next to them the standard of the camp of Reuben, having in it 151,450 warlike men; next to them were the Kohathites, bearing the holy things of the sanctuary on their shoulders, who were followed by the standard of the camp of Ephraim, which was formed of 108,100 men fit for military service; and last of all the standard of the camp of Dan, which consisted of 157,600 men, able to bear arms, and which had under their care all that were not able which belonged to the other tribes; an emblem of the church of God in its militant state, walking according to the order of the Gospel, and in all the ordinances of it, which is a lovely sight to behold, **So 6:4**; thus they marched

according to their armies; ranged under their several standards:

when they set forward; in their journey through the wilderness; as now, so at all other times, this order was carefully observed by them.

Numbers 10:29

Ver. 29. And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses's father in law,.... Some think this Hobab was the same with Jethro, whose father's name was Raguel or Reuel; so Jarchi and Ben Gersom; but rather Raguel or Reuel, and Jethro, seem to be the same, and was Moses's father-in-law, and this Hobab was the son of him, and brother of Zipporah, Moses's wife; and the same relation is designed whether the word is rendered his "father-in-law" or his "wife's brother", so Aben Ezra; as it may be either; if the former, then it may be joined to Raguel, if the latter, then to Hobab: Jethro or Raguel, Moses's father-in-law, came to see him as soon as he came to Horeb, and after some short stay with him returned to Midian, and left this his son Hobab, who remained with Moses unto this time; but now, as Israel was about to remove from the wilderness of Sinai, he showed a disposition to return to his own country, when Moses addressed him in order to persuade him to continue with them:

we are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you; that is, the land of Canaan, which God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to their posterity: Moses puts himself among the children of Israel as journeying towards Canaan, with an expectation to possess it; for as yet the decree, as Jarchi observes, was not made, or made manifest, that he should not enter it; or he said this, as others think, because he would not discourage the Israelites nor Hobab, who might argue from thence, that if he, by whom God had brought Israel out of Egypt, and had done such wonders by him, should not enter into the good! and, how should they? but as yet Moses himself knew not that he should not enter into it; however, he speaks of it as a certain thing, that God had promised to give it to Israel, and it might be depended upon; and now they were just going to set forward in their journey, in order to take possession of it, he entreats that Hobab would go with them:

come thou with us, and we will do thee good; by giving him a part of the spoils of their enemies, and a settlement in the land:

for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel; and he is faithful, who has promised and will perform.

Numbers 10:30

Ver. 30. And he said unto him, I will not go,.... Which was a very peremptory answer, he seemed determined, and at a point about it for the present, though it is, probable he afterwards changed his mind, like the young man in the parable, Mt 21:29;

but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred; which were prevailing motives with him, his native country, his relations, and father's house; to this resolution he came, both because of his substance, and because of his family, as Jarchi.

Numbers 10:31

Ver. 31. And he said,.... That is, Moses, he replied to Hobab, unwilling to take him at his word and go without him:

leave us not, I pray thee; or "not now"; as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; at this present time, under our present difficulties, while we are in the wilderness; though Jarchi says the particle an signifies beseeching or supplication:

forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness; that this will be our case, that we shall be obliged, before we get to the promised land, to pitch our tents in the wilderness, in our passage through it; and thou knowest which are the best and most convenient places for that purpose, and therefore must entreat thee to go with us:

and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes; not to show the way, as Aben Ezra notes, or guide and direct them in the road through the wilderness; for the cloud by day and the fire by night were of that use to them, as well as when it rested, it directed them when and where to pitch their tents; rather to assist with his advice in difficult matters, when they should be in pressing circumstances: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"thou hast been dear unto us, as the apple of our eyes, and therefore we cannot part with thee."

Numbers 10:32

Ver. 32. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be,.... This repetition is for the confirmation of it, more strongly assuring him of what follows:

that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee; signifying that whatsoever they enjoyed in the land of Canaan he should have his share with them: the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"in the division of the land;"

Jarchi says, when the land was divided, the fatness of Jericho was given to the sons of Jethro, to Jonadab, the son of Rechab, see **Jud 1:16**; from whence, however, as well as from other places, **Jud 4:11**; it appears that the posterity of this man had a settlement in the land of Canaan, and from his silence it may be thought that he was prevailed upon to go along with Moses; or if he departed into his own country, as he said he would, he returned again; at least some of his children did.

Numbers 10:33

Ver. 33. And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey,...., From Mount Sinai, so called, because the Lord descended upon it, and gave the law from it; so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan,

"from the mount on which the glory of the Lord (or of his Shechinah or divine Majesty) was revealed."

This they left, after they had been nearly twelve months about it, and travelled three days' journey from it before the cloud rested, so as to abide, otherwise is stopped no doubt to give them time to eat their food, and take sleep and rest. The Targum of Jonathan expressly says, they went thirty six miles on that day; but, according to Bunting {o}, Taberah or Kibrothhattaavah, to which the children of Israel first came, and where they abode a month, was but eight miles from Sinai; wherefore the three days' journey were not successively one after another, but the first day's journey was to Taberah, where they continued a month; the second day's journey was to Hazeroth, where they stayed seven days; and the third day's journey was to the wilderness of Paran, and there the cloud rested, Nu 10:12; and there was their resting place, for there they continued long, from whence the spies were sent to the good land, and whither

they returned after forty days,
Nu 13:1;

and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them; the ark being carried by the Kohathites, must proceed in the middle of the camps, after the camps of Judah and Reuben, and before the camps of Ephraim and Dan, according to the order of the marches of the children of Israel, Nu 10:21; wherefore Aben Ezra thinks, that this three days' journey was different from all their other journeys; and that in this the ark went before them, which in other journeys was carried in the midst of them; yet others think it may be said to go before, though in the middle; just as a general of an army may be said to go before, and lead his army, though he is not directly in the front of it; so the cloud being always over the ark, directing the march, it may be said to go before and point out a convenient place to rest in; for searching cannot be properly ascribed to the ark, nor even to the Lord himself, and can only signify pointing out or discovering a proper place to take up their abode in: this ark of the covenant, so called because the covenant or law was laid up in it, was a type of Christ the end of the law for righteousness, and who is the forerunner of his people, is gone before them to prepare a place for them; and the three days' journey may have respect to his resurrection from the dead on the third day for their justification, which is the foundation of their rest, peace, and joy.

{o} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 82.

Numbers 10:34

Ver. 34. And the cloud of the Lord [was] upon them by day,.... Not only upon the tabernacle, and upon the ark particularly, but it spread itself in journeying over the whole body of the people, and therefore said to be a covering to them from the heat of the sun, Ps 105:39; as well as it was a guide unto them, and a token of the divine Presence with them, see **Isa 4:5**;

when they went out of the camp; or out of the place of their encampment, when they removed from Sinai; and appears from, hence that it was in the daytime.

Numbers 10:35

Ver. 35. And it came to pass, when the ark set forward,.... Carried by the Kohathites, Nu 10:21;

that Moses said; in prayer, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem express it; and it was a prayer of faith, and prophetic of what would be done, and might serve greatly to encourage and animate the children of Israel in their journeys; for the following prayer was put up not only at this time, but at all times when the ark set forward; and so Ben Gersom says, it was the custom of Moses, at whatsoever time the ark was moved, to pray as follows:

rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; the Jerusalem Targum is,

"rise up now, O Word of the Lord;"

and the Targum of Jonathan,

"be revealed now, O Word of the Lord;"

the essential Word of God, the Messiah, to whom these words may be applied; either to his incarnation and manifestation in the flesh, his end in, which was to destroy all his and his people's enemies, particularly the devil and his works, **Heb 2:14**; or to his resurrection from the dead, these words standing at the head of a prophecy of his ascension to heaven, which supposes his resurrection from the dead, Ps 68:1; at the death of Christ all the spiritual enemies of his people were defeated, scattered, confounded, and conquered; Satan and his principalities were spoiled, sin was made an end of, death was abolished, and the world overcome; at his resurrection the keepers of the sepulchre fled; and after his ascension wrath came upon the Jewish nation, those enemies of his, that would not have him to rule over them, and they were scattered about on the face of the whole earth, as they are to this day:

and let them that hate thee flee before thee; the same petition expressed in different words, but to the same sense; enemies, and those that hate the Lord, are the same, as their defeat, conclusion, and destruction, are signified by their flight and dispersion; and it may be observed, that those who were the enemies and haters of Israel were reckoned the enemies and haters of God himself; as the enemies of Christ's people, and those that hate them, are accounted Christ's enemies, and such that hate him. Perhaps Moses may have a special respect to the Canaanites, whose land was promised unto Israel, and they were going to dispossess them of it, in order to inherit it, and Moses might expect it would be quickly done, at the end of these three days; which brought them to the wilderness of Paran, so near the good land that they sent from thence spies into it, and in all probability they would have then entered the possession of it, had it not been for their complaints and murmurs, and the ill report brought on the good land, on which account they were stopped thirty eight years in the wilderness.

Numbers 10:36

Ver. 36. And when it passed,.... The ark, and the cloud over it:

he said; Moses stood and prayed, as before, according to the above Targums, in the following manner:

return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel; who were six hundred thousand footmen, besides women and children, Nu 11:21; the import of this petition is, that upon the resting of the ark God would take up his abode with them, grant them his presence, and manifest his love, grace, mercy, and goodness unto them; or, as it may be rendered, that he would "return the many thousands of Israel"; that is, to the land which he had sworn to their fathers, as Ben Gersom interprets it; and who observes that the word "return" is used, because of the holy fathers who dwelt in the land of Israel; or else, as the same writer further observes, the sense of the petition is, that it might be the will of God to turn the thousands of Israel into myriads, or increase and multiply them ten times more than they were; and so the Targum of Jerusalem is,

"bless the myriads, and multiply the thousands of the children of Israel."

Perhaps Moses, under a spirit of prophecy, might have a further view, even to the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, when they shall return and seek the true Messiah, and be turned to him, and when all Israel shall be saved.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 11

This chapter informs us of the complaints of the people of Israel, which brought the fire of the Lord upon them, and consumed many of them; and which, at the intercession of Moses, was quenched, and the place from thence

called Taberah, Nu 11:1; and of the lusting of the mixed multitude after flesh, to increase which, they called to mind their food in Egypt; and to show their folly and ingratitude in so doing, the manna is described, Nu 11:4; and of the uneasiness of Moses, and his complaints of the heavy burden of the people upon him,
Nu 11:10; and to make him easy, it is promised, that seventy of the elders of Israel should partake of his spirit, and assist in bearing the burden, Nu 11:16; and that the people should have flesh to serve them a whole month, Nu 11:18; at which last Moses expressed some degree of unbelief, Nu 11:21; however God fulfilled his promise with respect to both. Some of the spirit of Moses was taken and given to seventy elders, who prophesied, and two men are particularly taken notice of, who did so, Nu 11:24; quails in great numbers were brought by a wind to the people; but while they were eating them wrath came upon them, and they were smitten with a plague, whence the place was called Kibrothhattaavah, Nu 11:31; and from thence they removed to Hazeroth, Nu 11:35.

Ver. 1. And [when] the people complained,.... Or "were as complainers" {p}; not merely like to such, but were truly and really complainers, the k, "caph", here being not a note of similitude, but of truth and reality, as in **Ho 5:10**. This Hebraism is frequent in the New Testament, Mt 14:5. What they complained of is not said, it being that for which there was no foundation; it is generally supposed to be of their journey; but if they were come but eight miles, as observed on Nu 10:33; they could not be very weary; and especially as they were marching towards the land of Canaan, it might be thought they would be fond and eager of their journey. Some think it was for want of flesh, being weary of manna, and that this was only the beginning of their complaints on that head, which opened more afterwards; but if that is the case, one would think that the fire, which consumed many of them, would have put a stop to that. Jarchi says, the word signifies taking an occasion, and that the sense is, that these men sought an occasion how to separate from the Lord; they wanted to return to Egypt again, that was what they were meditating and contriving; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and the ungodly of the people were in distress, and intended and meditated evil before the Lord:"

it displeased the Lord: a murmuring complaining spirit is always displeasing to him, when a thankful heart for mercies received is an acceptable sacrifice; murmurers and complainers God will judge at the great day, **Jude 1:14**;

and the Lord heard [it]: though it was an inward secret complaint, or an evil scheme formed in their minds; at most but a muttering, and what Moses had not heard, or had any knowledge of; but God, that knows the secrets of all hearts, and every word in the tongue before it is well formed or pronounced, he heard what they complained of, and what they whispered and muttered to one another about:

and his anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burnt among them; from the pillar of fire, or from heaven, such as destroyed Nadab and Abihu, Le 10:1; the two hundred fifty men that had censers in Korah's company, Nu 16:35; and the captains of fifties that came to take Elijah, **2Ki 1:14**; and might be lightning from heaven, or a burning wind sent by the Lord, such as is frequent in the eastern countries. Thevenot {q} speaks of one in 1658, which destroyed at once twenty thousand men:

and consumed [them that were] in the uttermost parts of the camp; who very likely were the principal aggressors; or it began to arouse and terrify the body of the people, and bring them to repentance, who might fear it would proceed and go through the whole camp, the hinder part or rearward of which was the camp of Dan; and so the Targum of Jonathan.

{p} Mynnatmk "ut conquerentes injuste", Montanus, Fagius, Vatablus; "ut qui vaba moliuntur", Drusius. {q} Travels, par. 1. l. 2. c. 34.

Numbers 11:2

Ver. 2. And the people cried unto Moses,.... And entreated him to pray for them, being frightened at the fire which consumed many of them, lest it should spread and become general among them:

and when Moses prayed unto the Lord; as he did, in which he was a type of Christ, the mediator between God and man, the advocate of his people, an intercessor for transgressors:

the fire was quenched; it stopped and proceeded no further; as through Christ's mediation God is pacified with his people for all that they have done, and his wrath, and all the effects of it, are turned away from them, and entirely cease with respect to them; or it "sunk down" {r} into its place, as the Targum of Jonathan, as if it rose out of the earth. This may serve to confirm the notion of its being a burning wind, to which the idea of sinking down and subsiding well agrees.

{r} eqvt "sunk down", so Ainsworth; "compressus est", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius; "resedit", Tigurine version.

Numbers 11:3

Ver. 3. And he called the name of the place Taberah,.... That is, "burning": Moses called it so; or it may be rendered impersonally, it was called {s} so in later times by the people:

because the fire of the Lord burnt among them; to perpetuate the, memory of this kind of punishment for their sins, that it might be a terror and warning to others; and this history is indeed recorded for our caution in these last days, that we murmur not as these Israelites did, and were destroyed of the destroyer, 1Co 10:10.

{s} arqyw "et vocatum est", Tigurine version, Fagius, Piscator.

Numbers 11:4

Ver. 4. And the mixed multitude that [was] among them fell a lusting,.... These came out of Egypt with them, Ex 12:38; having either contracted affinity with them, or such intimacy of conversation, that they could not part, or being proselyted to the Jewish religion, at least in pretence; these were not only Egyptians, but a mixture of divers people, who having heard or seen the wonderful things done for Israel, joined them in hopes of sharing the blessings of divine goodness with them; so the Targum of Jonathan calls them proselytes, that were gathered among them: these "lusted a lusting" {t}, as the words may be rendered; not after women, as some Jewish writers {u} think, even after such that were near akin to them, with whom they were forbidden to marry, and therefore desired to have those laws dissolved; but they lusted after eating flesh taken in a proper sense, as the latter part of the verse and the whole context show:

and the children of Israel also wept again; they lusted after flesh likewise, following the example of the mixed multitude; thus evil communication corrupts good manners, 1Co 15:33; and a little leaven leavens the whole lamp, **1Co 5:6**; wicked men prove great snares to, and do much mischief among good men, when they get into their societies, **Jer 5:26**: and because the Israelites could not have what they would to gratify their lusts, they wept as children do, when they cannot have what they are desirous of; and they wept "again", for it seems they had wept before, either when they complained, Nu 11:1; or at Rephidim, where they wanted water, Ex 17:1, as here flesh, or before that when they wanted bread, Ex 16:3;

and said, who shall give us flesh to eat? shall Moses, or even the Lord himself? from lusting they fell to unbelief and distrust of the power and providence of God; for so the Psalmist interprets this saying of theirs, Ps 78:19.

{t} xwat wwath "concupiverunt concupiscentiam", Pagninus: Montanus, Drusius. {u} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 219. 1.

Numbers 11:5

Ver. 5. We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely,.... Fish was food the Egyptians much lived upon; for though Herodotus says the priests might not taste of fish, the common people ate much; yea, he himself says that some lived upon nothing else but fish gutted and dried in the sun; and he observes, that the kings of Egypt had a great revenue from hence {w}; the river Nile, as Diodorus Siculus {x} says, abounded with all kind of fish, and with an incredible number, so that there was a plenty of them, and to be bought cheap; and so Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom interpret the word freely, of a small price, as if they had them for nothing almost; but surely they forgot how dear they paid for their fish, by their hard toil, labour, and service. Now this, with what follows, they call to mind, to increase their lust, and aggravate their present condition and circumstances:

the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic; in the Hebrew language, the word for "cucumbers" has the signification of hardness, because they are hard of digestion In the Talmud {y} they are so called, because they are as harmful to the body as swords; though it is said in the same, that Antoninus always had them at his table; and Suetonius {z} and Pliny {a} say, that they were in great esteem with the emperors Augustus and Tiberias; though some think what they call cucumbers were melons. We are told {b}, that the Egyptian cucumbers are very different from our European ones, which in the eastern countries serve only to feed hogs with, and not men; but the Egyptian cucumber, called "chate", differs from the common one in size, colour, and softness; and not only its leaves, but its fruit, are different from ours, being sweeter to the taste, and of more easy digestion, and reckoned to be very wholesome to the bodies of men: and so their "melons" are different from ours, which they call "abdellavi", to distinguish them from others called "chajar", which are of little use for food, and not pleasant, and more insipid, and of a softer pulp {c}: as for the "leeks, onions, and garlic", that these were commonly and in great plenty eaten of by the Egyptians appears from the vast sums of money spent upon the men that worked in building one of the pyramids, in radishes, onions, and garlic only, which Herodotus {d}, Diodorus Siculus {e}, and Pliny {f} make mention of. Indeed, in later times these were worshipped as gods, and not suffered to be eaten, as Pliny {g} and Juvenal {h} inform us; but there is little reason to believe that this kind of idolatry obtained so early as the time of Israel's being in Egypt; though some have thought that these were cheaper because of that, and so the Israelites could more easily come at them; but if that had been the case, it is more reasonable to believe that the Egyptians would not have allowed them to have eat of them at all: however, these are still in great plenty, and much used in Egypt to this day, as Vansleb {i} relates, who says, for desserts they have fruits, as onions, dried dates, rotten olives, melons, or cucumbers, or pompions, or such like fruits as are in season: thus carnal men prefer their sensual lusts and pleasures, and self-righteous men their righteousness, to Christ, the heavenly manna, his grace and righteousness.

{w} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 37, 92, 149. {x} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 32. {y} T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 11. 1. {z} In Vit. August. c. 77. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 19. c. 5. {b} Alpinus de Plant. Aegypt. l. 1. p. 114. apud Scheuchzer. Physic. Saer. vol. 3. p. 369. {c} Alpinus ib. {d} Ut supra, (Euterpe, sive, l. 2.) c. 125. {e} Ut supra. (Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 58.) {f} Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 12. {g} lb. l. 19. c. 6. {h} "Porrum et coepe nefas violare", &c. Satyr. 15. {i} Relation of a Voyage to Egypt, p. 186.

Numbers 11:6

Ver. 6. But now our soul is dried away,.... Meaning their bodies, which, for want of flesh food, they pretended had no moisture in them, or they were half starved, and in wasting and consuming circumstances:

[there is] nothing at all besides this manna [before] our eyes; which in itself was a truth and matter of fact; they had nothing to look to, and live upon but the manna, and that was enough, and with which, no doubt, many of them were contented, and satisfied and thankful for it, though the greater part were

not; and therefore this, though a truth, was foolishly and wickedly spoken, being said in disdain and contempt of the manna: so Christ, the heavenly manna, the antitype of this, of which See Gill on "Ex 16:14";
See Gill on "Ex 16:15";
See Gill on "Ex 16:16";
See Gill on "Ex 16:17";
See Gill on "Ex 16:18"; is indeed the only food that is set before us in the Gospel to feed and live upon; nor is there anything at all besides him, nor do true believers in him desire any other, but pray that evermore this bread may be given them; but carnal men and carnal professors slight the Gospel feast, of which Christ is the sum and substance; and at least would have something besides him, something along with him, something of their own in justification for him, or to give them a right unto him, or to trust in along with him; they cannot bear to have nothing at all but Christ; or that he, and he alone, should be exalted, and be all in all, as he is justification and salvation, and in the Gospel provision, in which nothing is set before us but him.

Numbers 11:7

Ver. 7. And the manna [was] as coriander seed,.... Not in colour, for that is black or darkish, whereas the manna was white, as is generally observed; of which See Gill on "Ex 16:31"; however it might be like the coriander, because of its form and figure, being round, and because of its quantity, being small, Ex 16:14; Some think the mustard seed is meant, as Aben Ezra observes, which is the least of all seeds; it seems that the manna fell in small round grains, like to such seed. This, with what follows, is observed, to expose the folly and ingratitude of the Israelites, that having such bread from heaven, angels food, that they should slight it, and hanker after other food:

and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium; not an aromatic gum, which Pliny {k} speaks of, which is clear as wax, for that is black or blackish, and not white as the manna; besides, this should be read, not "bdellium", but "bdeloah", and is a precious stone, and, according to Bochart, the pearl; so Ben Melech observes, that it is a precious stone; some say the diamond, and others a round white stone, which they bore and join stones together, and make a chain of, he doubtless means a pearl necklace; though Jarchi says it is the crystal, and so the Jewish writers commonly; See Gill on "Ge 2:12"; hence it appears the manna was very pleasant to look at, being of a round form, and of a pearl or crystal colour.

{k} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 9.

Numbers 11:8

Ver. 8. [And] the people went about and gathered [it],.... Went about the camp on all sides, where it fell in plenty; this they did every morning, and this was all the trouble they were at; they had it for gathering, without any expense to them:

and ground [it] in mills: in hand mills, as Aben Ezra; for though it melted through the heat of the sun, and became a liquid, yet, when gathered in the morning, it was hard like grains of corn, or other seeds, and required to be ground in mills:

or beat [it] in a mortar; with a pestle, as spices are beaten and bruised:

and baked [it] in pans; or rather boiled it in a pot, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, since it follows:

and made cakes of it; which were baked on the hearth; all which may denote the sufferings of Christ, who was beaten, and bruised, and broken, that he might become fit food for faith, Isa 53:4;

and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil; which is very grateful and pleasant, as well as very fattening and nourishing; so that the Israelites had no reason to complain of their being dried away by continual eating of it; See Gill on "Ex 16:31".

Numbers 11:9

Ver. 9. And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night,.... As it usually, and even constantly did:

the manna fell upon it; as constantly, and had thereby a clean place to fall on; and then another dew fell upon that, which kept it the cleaner still, and from any vermin creeping upon it; see Ex 16:14; so careful was the Lord of this their provision, and so constantly every morning were they supplied with it: and which fell in the night when they were asleep, and at rest, and without any labour of theirs; and was ready to their hands when they arose, and had nothing to do but gather it; and yet were so ungrateful as to make light of it, and despise it.

Numbers 11:10

Ver. 10. Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families,.... So general was their lusting after flesh, and their discontent for want of it; and so great their distress and uneasiness about it, that they wept and cried for it, and so loud and clamorous, that Moses heard the noise and outcry they made:

every man in the door of his tent: openly and publicly, were not ashamed of their evil and unbecoming behaviour, and in order to excite and encourage the like temper and disposition in others; though it may have respect, as some have observed, to the door of the tent of Moses, about which they gathered and mutinied; and which better accounts for his hearing the general cry they made; and so in an ancient writing of the Jews it is said {l}, they were waiting for Moses until he came out at the door of the school; and they were sitting and murmuring:

and the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly; because of their ingratitude to him, their contempt of the manna he had provided for them, and their hankering after their poor fare in Egypt, and for which they had endured so much hardship and ill usage, and for the noise and clamour they now made:

Moses also was displeased; with the people on the same account, and with the Lord also for laying and continuing so great a burden upon him, as the care of this people, which appears by what follows.

{l} Siphri apud Yalkut in loc.

Numbers 11:11

Ver. 11. And Moses said unto the Lord, wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant?.... Or "done evil" {m} to him, that which was distressing to him, and gave him trouble; namely, setting him at the head of the people of Israel, and laying the government of them on his shoulders; which surely was doing him honour, though that is not to be expected without care and trouble; Moses does not seem to be in a good frame of spirit throughout the whole of this discourse with the Lord: the best of men are not always alike in their frames, and sometimes act contrary to that for which they are the most eminent, as Moses was for his, meekness and humility:

and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight; he had found much favour in the sight of God, to have so many wonderful things done by him in Egypt, to be the instrument of the deliverance of Israel from thence, to be the leader of them through the Red sea, to be taken up to the mount with God, and receive the law from him to give to that people; but the favour he complains of that was denied him, is, his not being excused, when he desired it, from taking on him the office he was called unto, of being the deliverer and ruler of the people, **Ex 4:10**;

that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? with respect to matters heavier and more difficult; for as to lighter and lesser things, be was assisted and relieved by the officers placed over the various divisions of the people at the advice of Jethro, Ex 18:21; government is a burdensome thing, and especially when a people are prone to mutiny and rebellion, as the people of Israel were.

{m} terh "malefecisti", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius.

Numbers 11:12

Ver. 12. Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them?.... Conceived them as a mother, or begotten them as a father? am I a parent of either sort to them, in a literal sense, that I should have the like care of them as parents of their children? but though this was not the case, yet, in a civil and political sense, he was their parent, as every king and governor of a country is, or should be, the father of it, and should have a paternal affection for his subjects, and a tender care of them, and a hearty concern for their good and welfare: this, in a spiritual sense, may denote the weakness of the law of Moses, as Ainsworth observes, which has no concern in the regeneration of the spiritual Israel of God; who are born not of blood, nor of the will of men, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God; he only does and can regenerate men by his Spirit and grace; and though ministers of the word are instruments, yet it is not through the law, but through the Gospel that they beget souls to Christ, even by the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation, by that word which lives and abides for ever; it is not through the doctrine of the law, but through the doctrine of faith, that the Spirit, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, is received; faith, hope, and love, and every other grace, come the same way; see **1Co 4:15**;

that thou shouldest say unto me; as in Ex 32:34; "go, lead the people unto the place", &c. which words, Jarchi thinks, are here referred to:

carry them in thy bosom as a nursing father beareth the sucking child,
unto the land which thou swarest to their fathers? the land of Canaan: kings should be nursing fathers; civil governors should rule with gentleness and mildness; such are most beloved, and most cheerfully obeyed by their people: the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem interpret the word for "nursing father", by "pedagogue", which is the same word the apostle uses of the law, **Ga 3:24**; that indeed was a severe schoolmaster, that menaced, whipped, and scourged for every fault, and not a tender nursing father; there is not one kind tender word in the law; it accuses of sin, pronounces guilty of it, curses and condemns for it; but the Gospel ministry, and ministers of it, use men gently; the apostles of Christ were gentle, as a nurse cherisheth her children, **1Th 2:7**; fed men as they were able to bear it; and when they delivered out their charges, it was in a kind manner, and even their reproofs were in love; and especially Christ himself was so, by whose meekness and gentleness the Apostle Paul beseeches men, 1Co 10:1; who gathers the lambs in his arms, carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young; and supplies them with food, and brings them all safely to Canaan's land, the heavenly glory, where the law and the deeds of it will never bring men, Isa 40:11.

Numbers 11:13

Ver. 13. Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people?.... This seems to countenance the Israelites in their lusting after flesh, as if it was no evil in them, and as if it was but right they should have what they desired, though it was out of his power to give it them:

for they weep unto me, saying, give us flesh, that we may eat; he seems to pity them, whereas he ought to have reproved them for their murmurings and ingratitude, and put them in mind of the manna which was provided for them every day, and with which they ought to have been content.

Numbers 11:14

Ver. 14. I am not able to bear all this people alone,.... The burden of government of them, to take care of them and provide sustenance for them; but he was not alone, for, not to take notice of the rulers and officers in the several divisions of the people that assisted and eased him in lighter matters, advised to by Jethro, Ex 18:21, the Lord himself was with him in all matters of moment and difficulty; to whom he could apply at any time for advice, and who had promised to supply and did supply the people with suitable and proper provisions every day:

because [it is] too heavy for me; to answer the requests, redress the grievances, and supply the necessities of this people.

Numbers 11:15

Ver. 15. And if thou deal thus with me,.... Let the whole weight of government lie upon me, and leave the alone to bear it:

kill me, I pray thee, out of hand; take me out of the world at once, or "kill me now, in killing" {n}; dispatch me immediately, and make a thorough end of me directly:

if I have found favour in thy sight; if thou hast any love for me, or art willing to show me a kindness, to remove me by death, I shall take as one:

and let me not see my wretchedness; or live to be the unhappy man I shall be; pressed with such a weight of government, affected and afflicted with the wants of a people I cannot relieve, or seeing them bore down with judgments and punishments inflicted on them for their sins and transgressions I am not able to prevail upon them to abstain from: so the Targum of Jerusalem,

"that I may not see their evil, who are thy people;"

so Abendana, and in the margin of some Hebrew copies, it is read,

"this is one of the eighteen words, the correction of the scribes;"

who, instead of "my wretchedness" or evil, corrected it, "their wretchedness" or evil; but Aben Ezra says there is no need of this correction.

{n} grh an yngrh "occide me nunc occidendo", Drusius; "occide me jam, occide", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Numbers 11:16

Ver. 16. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... Without making any reflection upon him, or upbraiding him with his unbecoming speeches to him, but in a kind and tender manner directs for his assistance and case:

gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel; out from among them, such as were not only men in years, but men of gravity, prudence, and wisdom; elders there were among the people in Egypt, **Ex 3:16**; and it was from among such as those the seventy men were to be taken; we read of seventy elders before this time, that went up to the mount with Moses, Ex 24:1; but they are supposed only to be selected for that purpose at that time, and did not continue as a separate body, or in any office: according to this number seventy, the great sanhedrim, or court of judicature the sat at Jerusalem in later times, consisted of seventy persons, with a prince or president at the head of them, as Moses was at the head of those: and so our Lord, besides his twelve apostles, sent out seventy disciples to be assisting in his work and service, Lu 10:1;

whom thou knowest to be elders of the people; either in age, or in some sort of office and authority among them, or, however, to be good and just men, and had a considerable share of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom:

and officers over them; such as Jethro advised to constitute, Ex 18:21; and it is not improbable that these seventy were chosen out of them:

and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee; and be seen by all the people what honour was done them, what authority was conferred upon them, and what gifts were bestowed on them, qualifying them for their office, in which they were to be treated with respect by them.

Numbers 11:17

Ver. 17. And I will come down and talk with thee there,.... Descend from heaven, by some visible token of his power and presence, and in a friendly manner converse with him face to face; which was an instance of great condescension and grace, and especially when Moses had showed a very froward peevish spirit; yet all is overlooked, and the Lord vouchsafes the most intimate communion with him, and does him honour before the people:

and I will take of the spirit which [is] upon thee; the spirit of government, and the spirit of prophecy, the gifts of the spirit qualifying for these things, of which Moses had a large measure:

and will put [it] upon them; that is, gifts of the same kind with his; not that his gifts were diminished, or that properly speaking anything was taken from Moses and given to the seventy elders; but from the same fountain and fulness of the spirit Moses partook of, they were furnished with like gifts and qualifications, he having not at all the less for what was communicated to them; see 1Co 12:4; several of the Jewish writers, and particularly Jarchi, illustrate it by the lamp in the golden candlestick in the sanctuary, which was always burning, and at which all the rest were lighted, without any diminution of its light at all:

and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear [it] not thyself alone: assist in the government of them, take part in all weighty and difficult matters, hear the complaints of the people, and bear a share of the blame and reproach they at any time should cast upon their rulers.

Numbers 11:18

Ver. 18. And say thou unto the people,.... For what follows respects them, as what goes before regarded himself:

sanctify yourselves against tomorrow; or prepare yourselves, as the Targums of Onkelos, and Jonathan, either to receive mercies, or to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments; so Jarchi interprets it,

"prepare for punishments,"

for what is said should be, and what they had, was not as a blessing, but in a way of punishment:

and ye shall eat flesh; which they lusted after, wept for, and could not be easy without:

for ye have wept in the ears of the Lord; complaining of him, and which he has taken notice of:

saying, who shall give us flesh to eat? for though they so earnestly desired it, they despaired of it, and even called in question the power of God to give it:

for [it was] well with us in Egypt; where they had their fleshpots, as well as their cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic, Ex 16:3; but they forgot how ill it went with them by reason of their hard bondage, when their lives were made bitter by it, notwithstanding their fleshpots, and of which there is not much reason to believe any great share came to them: like to them were their posterity in later times,
Jer 44:17;

therefore the Lord will give you flesh; to show his power:

and ye shall eat; to your shame and confusion, not for pleasure or profit.

Numbers 11:19

Ver. 19. Ye shall not eat one day,.... Only, as in Ex 16:12;

nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; but even thirty days, a whole month, as in Nu 11:20.

Numbers 11:20

Ver. 20. [But] even a whole month,.... So long the Israelites continued at Taberah or Kibrothhattaavah, as the Jews {o} conclude from this clause:

until it come out at your nostrils; being vomited up, through a nausea of it, the stomach being overfilled and glutted with it; in which case, it will make its way through the nostrils, as well as out of the mouth:

and it be loathsome unto you; being surfeited with it; or it shall be for "dispersion" {p}, scattered about from the mouth and nostrils:

because that ye have despised the Lord which [is] among you; who dwelt in the tabernacle that was in the midst of them, whom they despised by treating the manna with contempt he so plentifully spread about their camp, and by distrusting his power to give them flesh, and by murmuring and complaining against him on the account of their having none: the Targums of Onkelos and

Jonathan are,

"because ye have loathed the Word of the Lord, whose Shechinah (or the glory of whose Shechinah, as Jonathan) dwelleth among you;"

the essential Word, and who was figured by the manna they tasted and despised:

and have wept before him; complaining of him, and murmuring against him:

saying, why came we forth out of Egypt? suggesting it would have been better for them if they had stayed there; thus reflecting on the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, displayed in the deliverance of them, and for which they had the utmost reason to be thankful.

{o} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 8. p. 24. {p} arzl "in dispersionem", Munster, Fagius, Montanus: so R. Joseph Kimchi, apud Kimchi Sepher Shorash rad. hrz "et Aben dana".

Numbers 11:21

Ver. 21. And Moses said,.... By way of objection to what God had promised, distrusting his power to perform:

the people amongst whom I [am]; among whom he dwelt, of whom he was a part, and over whom he was a ruler:

[are] six hundred thousand footmen; that were able to travel on foot, and were fit for war: this was the number of them when they came out of Egypt, Ex 12:37; they amounted in their last numbering to 3,550 more, which lesser number is here omitted, as Aben Ezra and Jarchi observe, and only the round number given: some say that all above the six hundred thousand were destroyed by the fire at Taberah, Nu 11:1;

and thou hast said, one will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month; this Moses could not tell how to credit.

Numbers 11:22

Ver. 22. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them?.... Suggesting that if all their cattle, their sheep, and oxen were killed, which they and the mixed multitude brought out of Egypt, they would not be sufficient for them to live upon a whole month; and intimating also, that it would be an unwise thing, and very improper, to slay them all, were they sufficient, since then they would have none for sacrifice, or to breed when they came into the land of Canaan; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"shall the sheep that are in Arabia and the oxen that are in Nabatea be slain for them, and be sufficient for them?"

or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them? of the great sea, as Jonathan; which, to gather together, is, humanly speaking, impossible; indeed, if it could be done, they would not suffice such a number of people a month together: Moses takes notice only of the flesh of beasts and of fishes, and seems not to have thought of the flesh of fowls with which, and not the other, the Lord afterwards fed them a whole month.

Numbers 11:23

Ver. 23. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... In answer to his objection, without upbraiding him with his sin of unbelief:

is the Lord's hand waxed short? or his power diminished since the creation, when he formed all things out of nothing, and what is it then he is not able to do? or since he wrought the wonders in Egypt, divided the Red sea, rained down manna from heaven, and smote the rock at Horeb, from whence waters flowed sufficient for all this people, and their flocks and herds; and he that did all this could give them flesh that would suffice them a whole month, see Isa 59:1;

thou shall see now whether my words shall come to pass unto thee or no; whether I am able to make good my promise; a short time will decide it, it shall be seen presently whether I am and will do what I have said.

Numbers 11:24

Ver. 24. And Moses went out,.... Either out of his own tent, about which the people assembled, complaining and weeping, Nu 11:10; or rather, as Aben

Ezra, out of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the sanctuary where he had been conversing with God, about the affairs complained of both by the people and by himself; so the Targum of Jonathan says, he went out of the tabernacle, the house of the Shechinah or divine Majesty:

and told the people of the words of the Lord; what he had ordered him to do for his ease in the government of them, and how he had promised to give them flesh on the morrow:

and gathered the seventy men of the elders of Israel; sent for them by name, and ordered them to assemble at such a time and place; and though two of them came not, after mentioned, Nu 11:26, yet the full number of seventy is given:

and set them round about the tabernacle; they seem to be set not promiscuously in a body together, but distinctly, one by another, in a circular form; that they might be seen, observed, and taken notice of by the people that came about the tabernacle, who they were, what were done to them, and what befell them.

Numbers 11:25

Ver. 25. And the Lord came down in a cloud,.... In a cloud of glory, or a glorious one, as the Targums; either in the same that went before the people in the wilderness, or in one distinct from it, and only used on this occasion, as a visible token of the presence of God:

and spake unto him; to Moses, talked with him, as he said he would, Nu 11:17;

and took of the Spirit which [was] upon him, and gave [it] unto the seventy elders; See Gill on "Nu 11:17";

and it came to pass [that] when the Spirit rested upon them they prophesied; either they sung the praises of God, which is sometimes the sense of prophesying, 1Ch 25:1; blessing God for the honour done them, and the gift bestowed on them; or they opened and explained the laws of God, in virtue of the gifts they had received, according to which they were to assist Moses in the government of the people, or they foretold things come: the Jews say they prophesied of the quails, but that is not very likely:

and did not cease; from prophesying; the spirit of prophecy continued with them, which, in some cases, might be necessary: or, they ceased not to prophesy all that day, though they afterwards did: and in the Hebrew text it is, "they added not" {q}, that is, to prophesy, and Jarchi says they only prophesied that day, as it is interpreted in an ancient book of theirs, called Siphre: wherefore this spirit of prophecy is thought only to be given them as a temporary thing, for the confirmation of their having received the spirit of government, or gifts qualifying them for that, and to make them respectable among the people, and to show that they were appointed it by divine authority, and that this was not a device of Moses to ease himself.

{q} wpoy "et non addiderunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "et non am lin", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Numbers 11:26

Ver. 26. But there remained two [of the] men in the camp,.... Of the seventy who were summoned, that came not out of the camp of Israel to the tabernacle when the rest did:

the name of the one [was] Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: who, according to the Targum of Jonathan, were brethren of Moses by his mother's side; for it says, they were the sons of Elizaphan the son of Parnac, whom Jochebed the daughter of Levi brought forth at the time that Amram her husband dismissed her, and she was married to him before she brought forth Moses; but it is elsewhere said {r}, that Elizaphan married her after the death of Amram; and Eldad and Medad were born unto them:

and the Spirit rested upon them; as it did upon the rest of the seventy that came to the tabernacle; these two had the same gifts of the Spirit bestowed upon them as they had:

and they [were] of them that were written; among the seventy whose names were put down in the summons Moses gave them to attend the tabernacle; for as for the notion of the Jews about schedules and pieces of paper put into an urn to draw lots with, there is no foundation in the text:

but went not out unto the tabernacle; out of the camp to it, when they were summoned to come together; which they declined, as is commonly said, out of modesty, thinking themselves unfit for such an high office; and therefore, as Saul hid himself among the stuff when he was about to be chosen king, so did they, or something like it: the Targum of Jonathan is express for it, which adds, because they hid themselves to flee from government; but the Spirit of God found them out, and filled them with his gifts, and constrained them to prophesy, whereby they were discovered:

and they prophesied in the camp; perhaps in a private manner, it may be in their own houses; which, how it came to be known is after related: what they prophesied of cannot be said; according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, and other Jewish writers {s}, they prophesied of the quails, and of the death of Moses, and the succession of Joshua, of Gog and Magog, and their armies, and of their destruction by the Messiah, and of the resurrection of the dead; but these are things not to be depended on.

{r} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 1. {s} Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 17. 1. Abendana in Miclol Yophi in loc.

Numbers 11:27

Ver. 27. And there ran a young man,.... From the camp to the tabernacle, who had heard Eldad and Medad prophesy; which he thought was not right, being done without the knowledge and approbation of Moses, and in a private tent in the tabernacle, not among the elders, but the common people: who this young than was is not material to know; some of the Rabbins, as Jarchi says, affirm he was Gershon the son of Moses; whoever he was, no doubt, it was with a good design, consulting the glory of God and the honour of Moses, and therefore in great haste ran to him with the information:

and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp; who seem by this, to be persons well known, and of some note and figure; since not only the young man could call them by their names, but there needed no other description of them to Moses and those with him.

Numbers 11:28

Ver. 28. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses,.... That waited upon him, and ministered to him, and executed his orders, especially in civil things, and was to be his successor:

[one] of his young men; not that Joshua was a young man in age, for he must be now between fifty and sixty years of age,
See Gill on "Ex 33:11"; nor does the word necessarily suppose that those men were young among whom Joshua was; but choice excellent persons, the principal servants of Moses, at the head of whom Joshua was being his prime minister: the Targum of Onkelos and the Syriac version render it, "from his youth", joining it with the word servant, as if he was the servant of Moses from his youth, or ever since he was a young man; but Moses had not been out of Midian but about two years, where he had kept his father's sheep; however, he

answered and said, my lord Moses, forbid them; prophesying, restrain them from it, suffer them not to go on in it; he would have him exert his authority as the chief magistrate, which he thought was affected by their prophesying without his knowledge and consent; and because a word from the root here used signifies a prison, some here interpret it,

"put them in prison,"

which is a sense Jarchi mentions; but it can hardly be thought that Joshua meant that such rigorous measures should be taken, only that they should be rebuked for what they had done, and be charged for the future to be silent.

Numbers 11:29

Ver. 29. Moses said unto him, enviest thou for my sake?.... Lest his authority should be weakened, and his honour lessened, because they began not to prophesy in his presence, and at the tabernacle, and among the rest of the elders, and so seemed not to have received of the Spirit that was upon him, and to be independent of him:

would God that all the Lord's people were prophets; this is not to he understood in the most absolute sense, as if Moses wished that every individual person among the people of Israel were prophets, as the word may signify a set and order of men, and an office in the church or state, as ministers of the word extraordinary or ordinary; for then there would be none to prophesy to, or to teach and instruct; and so likewise not rulers, or helps and assistants in government, for then there would be none to be governed; but it is to be taken comparatively, and is designed to show how far Moses was from an envious spirit at the gifts of others, that he could wish, if it was the will of

God, and consistent with the order of things, that every man had as great or greater gifts than he had, qualifying them for public service and usefulness; such was the modesty and meekness of Moses: there is a sense indeed, in which all the Lord's people, all good men, are and should be prophets, and for which by the grace of the Spirit of God they are qualified; and should act as such, by praying and singing praises, which are sometimes meant by prophesying, and by spiritual conferences in private with one another, building up each other on their most holy faith, and by teaching and instructing all under their care in their families:

[and] that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them; the gifts of it, which are necessary to fit men for public service in church or state, or for private usefulness, 1Co 12:7.

Numbers 11:30

Ver. 30. And Moses got him into the camp,.... From the door of the tabernacle, where he had been settling the elders in their office, and now betook himself to the camp of Israel, perhaps to look more particularly into the affair of Eldad and Medad, and settle that, and put them among the elders; for they were of them that were written, whose names were put down for elders in the paper Moses had written for that purpose, and in the summons that were given; or more generally to do public business, to exercise rule and government, with this new assistance granted him, as follows:

he and the elders of Israel; he went in company with them, to impart to them the honour and glory they were to share with him in the government, as Aben Ezra observes; or they went together, to observe what would be done for the people, according to the promise of the Lord, to give them flesh; who had made good his word to Moses, by taking of his Spirit and putting it on seventy men for his assistance; the other remained to be done, and was done as follows.

Numbers 11:31

Ver. 31. And there went forth a wind from the Lord,.... Both an east wind and a south wind, according to Ps 78:26; either first one wind, and then another; one to bring the quails, or whatever are meant, to a certain point, and then the other to bring them to the camp of Israel; or a southeast wind, as the Jewish writers interpret it: however, it was not a common wind, but what was immediately raised by the Lord for the following purpose:

and brought quails from the sea; the Red sea, from the coasts of it, not out of it. Josephus {t} says, there were great numbers of this sort of fowl about the gulf of Arabia; and Diodorus Siculus {u} says, near Rhinocalura, a place not far from those parts, quails in flocks were brought from the sea, which the people caught and lived upon. After Job Ludolphus, who has wrote a learned dissertation on locusts, many are of opinion with him, that locusts are intended here, and think that what is hereafter related best agrees with them; it is pretty difficult to determine which is most correct; there are learned advocates, and much to be said, for both {w}:

and let [them] fall by the camp: the camp of Israel, and round about it on all sides, as follows; which agrees well enough with locusts, which are usually brought by a wind, as the locusts of Egypt were by an east wind, which fall, rest, and settle on the earth, and sometimes in heaps, one upon another; and these, whatever they were, fell as thick as rain, and were as dust, and as the sand of the sea. The Jewish writers, who understand them of quails, interpret this not of their falling to the ground, but of their flying low, two cubits from the earth, about the breast of a man, so that they had no trouble in taking them; so the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and Abendana; but this seems to be without any foundation:

as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp; on the north side, and on the south side, as the Targum of Jonathan explains it; but it doubtless means on all sides, since they fell round about the camp; and from thence they lay thick upon the ground, a day's journey every way; which some compute at sixteen, others at twenty miles on which space there must be a prodigious number of quails or locusts; and it is certain the latter do come in great numbers, so as to darken the air, and to cover a country, as they did Egypt; and the quails also, in some countries, have been taken in great numbers; in Italy, on the coast of Antium, within a month, in the space of five miles, 100,000 quails were taken every day {x}:

and as it were two cubits [high] upon the face of the earth; as they fell they lay one upon another, the height of two cubits; which it is thought better agrees with locusts than with quails, since the quails, by lying one upon another such a depth, must be suffocated; whereas the locusts, through the length of their feet, and the thinness of their wings, would not.

{t} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 1. sect. 5. {u} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 55. {w} Vid. Calmet's Dictionary in the word "Quails", & Scheuchzer. Physica Sacr. in loc. Bishop of Clogher's Chronology, p. 375, 376. Shaw's Travels, p. 189. {x} Blond. Ital. Illustrat. p. 314. apud Huet. Alnetan. Quaest. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 17.

Numbers 11:32

Ver. 32. And the people stood up all that day,.... The day on which they fell in the morning:

and all [that] night; the night following:

and all the next day; after that, even the space of thirty six hours:

and they gathered the quails; not took them flying, as the Jewish writers suggest, before observed, but from the earth where they fell, in order to lay them up as a provision for time to come; or otherwise, had they taken them only for present use, they would not have been so long in gathering them; but they seemed greedy of them, and therefore took up all they could, or knew what to do with:

he that gathered least gathered ten homers; or so many ass loads, as some interpret it; the words for an ass and an homer being near the same: an homer in measure is the same with the "cor", and held ten ephahs; and, according to Bishop Cumberland {y}, contained seventy five wine gallons, seven pints, and somewhat more, which must hold a vast quantity of quails; though not the measure, but the number of fowls, is commonly given. Some render the word "heaps", as in **Ex 8:14**; and is supposed better to agree with locusts; but then it will be difficult to assign a reason why the number of them should be given, since heaps might be greater or lesser:

and they spread [them] all abroad for themselves round about the camp; according to some, they were taken alive, and put into cages, which were hung round the camp, so that all places were full of them, in which they were kept, and used as they wanted them; but they seem rather, be they what they will, to be dead, and to be spread about to be dried in the sun, being salted; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders the word, "and they dried them" {z}; and agrees both with quails, which, according to some writers {a}, used to be salted for food for time to come; and with locusts, on which the inhabitants of some parts of Ethiopia always lived, as Pliny {b} says, being hardened in smoke, and with salt, and was their food for the year round. And this custom was used in Arabia; for Leo Africanus {c} relates, that the people of Arabia Deserta, and of Lybia, reckon the coming of the locusts an happy omen; for either boiled, or dried with the sun, they beat them into meal (or powder) and eat them: and of the Nasamones, a people in Africa, it is said {d}, that they hunt locusts, and dry them in the sun, and grind them, and then, sprinkling milk upon them, sup them up.

{y} Of Scripture Weights, &c. p. 86. {z} So the word is used in Misn. Sabbat, c. 22. sect. 4. for spreading things in the sun to dry them. {a} Athenaeus, Hipparchus, & Hesychius apud Bochart, Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 15. col. 107. {b} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 30. {c} Descriptio Africae, l. 9. p. 769. {d} Herodot. Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 172.

Numbers 11:33

Ver. 33. And while the flesh [was] yet between their teeth,.... When they had just got it into their mouths, and were about to bite it:

ere it was chewed; or "cut off"; or cut into pieces by the "incisores", or fore teeth, and then ground by the "molares", or grinders, and so became fit to be swallowed. Both quails and locusts were eaten as food; the former is a fat and delicious fowl, and the latter, some sorts of them, at least, were allowed clean food for the Jews, and were fed on by many people:

the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people; for their lusting after flesh, and despising the manna:

and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague; the pestilence, as Aben Ezra; or with fire, as Bochart {e}, who gives the following reasons why the people were so severely punished now, and not before, when they murmured on a like account; because their sin's were greater, and more aggravated, they falling again into the same sin which had been forgiven them; and besides, they were before pressed with famine, now they had a plenty of manna every day; and also were better instructed, having received the law, which was not yet given when they were just come out of Egypt. Sulpitius {f} the historian says, 23,000 perished at this time.

{e} Ut supra, (Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 15.) col. 109.

Numbers 11:34

Ver. 34. And he called the name of that place Kibrothhattaavah,.... That is, Moses called it so, or it was called by the children of Israel, and by others in later times, by this name, which signifies "the graves of lust"; dug by lust, or which lust was the cause and occasion of, and where those that indulged it were buried, as follows:

because there they buried the people that lusted; not all that lusted, for the lusting was pretty general; but all that died through their gluttony and intemperance, and the judgment of God on them; or who were the most inordinate in their lust, and encouraged others in it, and were the ringleaders in the murmur and mutiny.

Numbers 11:35

Ver. 35. [And] the people journeyed from Kibrothhattaavah unto Hazeroth,.... After having stayed there a month or more, as is gathered from Nu 11:20;

and abode at Hazeroth; at least seven days, as appears from Nu 12:15; which, according to Bunting {g}, was eight miles from Kibrothhattaavah, or Taberah, which were the same place.

{g} Travels, p. 82.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBER 12

In this chapter we have an account of Aaron and Miriam speaking against Moses, and for what reason, whose amiable character is given, Nu 12:1; and of the Lord's calling them to him, and rebuking them for it, giving an excellent testimony to Moses, and then departing in anger, Nu 12:4; and of Miriam's being smitten with leprosy, and Aaron's entreating Moses on his and her account, who prayed to the Lord to heal her, Nu 12:10; and of her being ordered to be shut out of the camp seven days, during which time the

Israelites stayed at Hazeroth, and then removed to the wilderness of Paran, Nu 12:14.

Ver. 1. And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses,.... Miriam is first mentioned, because she was first in the transgression, and so was only punished; Aaron was drawn into the sin by her, and he acknowledged his fault, and was forgiven: it must be a great trial to Moses, not only to be spoken against by the people, as he often was, but by his near relations, and these gracious persons, and concerned with him in leading and guiding the people through the wilderness, **Mic 6:4**;

because of the Ethiopian woman, whom he had married, for he had married an Ethiopian woman; not a queen of Ethiopia, as the Targum of Jonathan; nor Tharbis, a daughter of a king of Ethiopia, whom Josephus {h} says he married, when he was sent upon an expedition against the Ethiopians, while he was in Pharaoh's court; nor the widow of an Ethiopian king whom he married after his death, when he fled from Pharaoh into Ethiopia, and was made a king there, as say some Jewish writers {i}: for there is no reason to believe he was married before he went to Midian; nor was this some Ethiopian woman he had married since, and but lately, Zipporah being dead or divorced, as some have fancied; but it was Zipporah herself, as Aben Ezra, Ben Melech, and so the Jerusalem Targum, which represents her not as truly an Ethiopian, but so called, because she was like to one; indeed she was really one; not a native of Ethiopia, the country of the Abyssines, but she was a Cushite, a native of Arabia Chusea, in which country Midian was, from whence she came; hence the tents, of Cushan, and the curtains of Midian, are spoken of together, **Hab 3:7**. Now it was not on account of Moses's marriage with her that they spoke against him, for that was an affair transacted in Midian some years ago, which at first sight may seem to be the case; nor because he now had divorced her, as Jarchi, which perhaps would have given them no uneasiness; and for the same reason, not because he abstained from conversation with her, that he might give up himself to the service of God in his house, and perform it in a more holy and faithful manner, which is the common sentiment of the Jewish writers: but rather, as it is thought by others, because of a suspicion they had entertained, that she had interested herself in the affair of the choice of the seventy elders, and had prevailed upon Moses to put in such and such persons into the list she had a mind to serve; at least this seems to be the case, for the displeasure was against Moses himself; they were angry with him, because he transacted that affair without them, and chose whom he pleased, without consulting them; and therefore, though they cared not to ascribe it entirely to him, and his neglect of them, they imputed it to his wife, as if she had over persuaded him, or her brother through her means, to take such a step as he did.

{h} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 10. sect. 2. {i} Dibre Hayamim, fol. 7. 2. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 2. so some in Aben Ezra in loc.

Numbers 12:2

Ver. 2. And they said, hath the Lord, indeed spoken only by Moses?.... They own he had spoken by him; this was so notorious that it could not be denied:

hath he not spoken also by us? are we not prophets as well as he? the Lord spake to Aaron while he was in Egypt, and had made him a good spokesman in his name, and bore this testimony of him, that he could speak well, and Miriam is expressly called a prophetess, **Ex 4:14**
Ex 15:20; and this being the case, they stomached it that they should have no concern in the choice and appointment of the seventy elders:

and the Lord heard [it]; for perhaps this was said secretly between themselves; but God, that sees, and hears, and knows all things, took notice of what was spoken by them, and resented it; for it was ultimately against himself, who had ordered Moses to do what he did.

Numbers 12:3

Ver. 3. Now the man Moses [was] very meek,.... So that they might say anything against him, and he not be affronted, nor resent any injury; and this therefore is introduced as a reason why the Lord undertook the cause, and vindicated him, resenting the obloquies of Miriam and Aaron against him; because he knew he was so exceeding meek, that he himself would pass it by without taking notice of it, though he might hear it: hence the Targum of Jonathan

"and he cared not for their words;"

they gave him no concern or uneasiness, so meek, mild, and gentle was he: and this is to be considered; not as a self-commendation of Moses, but as a testimony of his character by God himself, by whom he was inspired in writing it; though it is possible this might be added by another hand, Joshua or Ezra, under the same direction and inspiration of the Spirit of God; who chose that

such a character of Moses should stand here, in opposition to the calumnies cast upon him, and as giving a reason why not he himself, but the Lord, appeared in his vindication, he being so meek and lowly, as is said of his antitype, and by himself,
Mt 11:29;

above all the men which [were] upon the face of the earth; being seldom angry, and when he was, it was generally, if not always, when the honour of God was concerned, and not on account of his own person and character; though it must not be said of him that he was perfect in this respect, or free from passion, or from blame at any time on account of it, but, when compared with others, he was the meekest man that ever lived; whereby he became the fittest person to have to do with such a peevish, perverse, and rebellious people as the Israelites were, whom no other man could well have bore with.

Numbers 12:4

Ver. 4. And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam,.... As one greatly provoked, and highly displeased, and which was shown at once; and in order to prevent the complaint getting among the people, and spreading, which might have been of bad consequence, as they were pretty much disposed to murmur and mutiny; as also to show that it was not through any solicitation of Moses that the Lord took this matter in hand, time not being allowed to him to make any application to him; for, as soon as ever Miriam and Aaron had uttered their speech against him, the Lord spake to them:

come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation; everyone out of his tent, as Aben Ezra; though it is not improbable that they were all together in the tent of Moses, whither Aaron and Miriam were come to contend with him; the words seem to be spoken quick, and in haste, as being angry:

and they three came out: of the place where they were, to the tabernacle of the congregation, that so the people might not hear what was said unto them, and what was the occasion of it.

Numbers 12:5

Ver. 5. The Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud,.... Which was over the most holy place of the tabernacle, and which was a symbol of the presence of the Lord; and who is said to come down, because that was above the tabernacle; whereas he came, as is next expressed,

and stood [in] the door of the tabernacle; where he set up his tribunal, and called them to his bar, courts of judicature being usually held in the gate; not suffering them to go into the tabernacle as they were wont to do, being delinquents:

and called Aaron and Miriam; to come nearer to him, and hear what he had to say to them; Moses keeping at a greater distance, it not being so proper that he should be within hearing of those commendations which were about to be given of him;

and they both came forth; Aaron and Miriam, and stood before the Lord.

Numbers 12:6

Ver. 6. And he said, hear now my words,.... The Targum of Jonathan reads, "I beseech you"; and Jarchi says, this particle always so signifies; but it is not so agreeable to the language of the divine Being:

if there be a prophet among you; not as making a doubt of it, but rather allowing that there was, and that there were others besides Moses, as even they themselves, Aaron and Miriam, and the seventy elders, and perhaps others; or at least there had been, and would be again, as there were in later times:

[I] the Lord will make myself known to him; that is, declare my mind and will concerning things present, or things to come:

in a vision; when awake, either by day or by night, representing objects to the bodily sight; as the almond tree rod, and the boiling pot, to Jeremiah, **Jer 1:11**; the visions of the chariots,
Eze 23:24, and dry bones, Eze 37:1, to Ezekiel, and such as were shown to Amos, **Am 7:1**: or to the mind by night, as if really discerned by the senses; as the visions of the man riding on a red horse, **Zec 1:8**, and of the four horns, **Zec 1:18**, and four carpenters, **Zec 1:20**, with several others shown to Zechariah:

[and] will speak unto him in a dream; as he had done to Jacob,
Ge 31:11, and as he did afterwards to Daniel, **Da 7:1**, and many others.

Numbers 12:7

Ver. 7. My servant Moses [is] not so,.... Or such a prophet; he is not so used; it was not in such a manner the Lord spake to him; not in visions and dreams, as he had to Abraham and Jacob, and did to others in later times:

who [is] faithful in all mine house; in the house of Israel, or among that people which were the Lord's family, where Moses was a servant and steward, and did all things according to the will of the Lord, the master of the family; he faithfully delivered to them all the laws, statutes, and ordinances, which he appointed to be observed by them: unless this is to be understood of the tabernacle, which was the house of God, in which he dwelt, and which was made, and all things in it, exactly according to the pattern given by the Lord to Moses: see **Heb 3:2**.

Numbers 12:8

Ver. 8. With him will I speak mouth to mouth,.... And face to face, as he had done, Ex 33:11; in a free, friendly, and familiar manner, as one friend speaks to another, without injecting any fear or dread, and consternation of mind, which was sometimes the case of the prophets; or without a middle person, a mediator, as Aben Ezra, not by means of an angel, as in some cases, but the Lord himself spake to him:

even apparently, and not in dark speeches; the word "apparently", or "vision", being opposed to "dark speeches", shows that this is not to be understood of the appearance or vision of an object presented to the sight, or to the mind, which is denied of Moses, though usual with other prophets; but of the vision, or plain sense and meaning of words, which are so plainly expressed, that the sense is easily seen and understood; it was not under figures and allegories, and parables and dark representations of things, that the law of the decalogue, and other laws, statutes, and ordinances, and the proclamation the Lord made of himself, as the Lord gracious, merciful, &c. were delivered unto Moses, but in plain words and clear expressions; not in such enigmatical, parabolical, and allegorical terms as many of the visions and prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, and Zechariah, were exhibited to them; See Gill on "Nu 12:6":

and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: as he had at the burning bush, and at Mount Sinai, with the elders of Israel, and when the Lord proclaimed his name before him; at which several times it is highly probable he beheld the Lord, even the Lord Christ, in an human form, as a presage of his future incarnation, and as he might also after this: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"the similitude which is after my Shechinah (or divine Majesty) he saw;"

that is, his back parts, as Jarchi, and other Jewish writers, interpret it; but Bishop Patrick thinks the word not should be repeated from the preceding clause, and that the sense is, that he did not behold him in similitudes, nor did the Lord speak to him by them, as to other prophets, see Ho 12:10;

wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? or against my servant, against Moses; against any servant of mine, but especially against Moses, so faithful in my house, so much approved of and honoured by me, and so superior to all other prophets.

Numbers 12:9

Ver. 9. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them,.... Which might be visible by some outward token, as by lightning from the cloud, or, however, what follows was sufficient to show it:

and he departed; from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where he had stood in the pillar of cloud for some time; but as soon as he had given his testimony of Moses, and expressed his displeasure at Aaron and Miriam, he went away directly from them; not staying to hear what they had to say for themselves, which was a plain indication of his anger against them.

Numbers 12:10

Ver. 10. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle,.... Not from off the door of the tabernacle, as Aben Ezra, for that is implied in the last clause of Nu 12:9, but from off that part of the tabernacle, the most holy place, where it had used to abide; but now it went up higher in the air, or removed at some distance from thence, which was a further indication of the sore displeasure of God; that as he would not stay with Aaron and Miriam at the door of the tabernacle, so neither would he suffer the cloud to continue over it, as it was wont to do, so long as they were there:

and, behold, Miriam [became] leprous, [white] as snow; was smote immediately with a leprosy by the Lord, as the hand of Moses was in a miraculous way, **Ex 4:6**; and as Gehazi was, who was smitten of God in like manner, **2Ki 5:27**; in an ordinary and gradual leprosy, when it was all white, the man was clean, Le 13:13; but in an extraordinary one, and which was immediately from God, and at once, in this case it was a sign it was incurable. Miriam only, and not Aaron, was smitten with a leprosy; though Chaskuni says, that some of their Rabbins were of opinion, that Aaron was; but this does not appear, nor is it likely that he should be thus defiled and dishonoured, being the priest of the Lord, and since he was not so deep in the transgression as Miriam, and was drawn into it by her, and also repented of it:

and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, [she was] leprous; he not only cast his eye upon her, as it were accidentally, and saw what was her case; but, as the priest of the Lord, looked upon her, as it was the business of his office to do, and perceived she was leprous, and was obliged to pronounce her so; and perhaps she was the first, after the law of the leprosy, that he was called to look upon, and pronounced her unclean, which must be a great mortification to him.

Numbers 12:11

Ver. 11. And Aaron said unto Moses, alas, my lord!.... The word for "alas" is generally interpreted by the Jewish writers as a note of beseeching and entreating, as it is here by the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan,

"I beseech thee, my lord,"

or "upon me, my lord" {k}, be all the blame; such was his tenderness to his sister, and the compassion he had on her; and such reverence and respect did he show to Moses his brother, though younger than he, because of his superior dignity as a prophet, and chief magistrate, and prime minister, and servant of the Lord, calling him "my lord":

I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us; the punishment of it, bear not hard upon us, or suffer us to be punished in a rigorous manner, without interceding to the Lord for us, for the abatement of removal of it; such a powerful and prevailing interest he knew he had with God, that by his prayers their punishment would be mitigated, or not laid, or, if laid, removed:

wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned; he owns they had sinned, but suggests, and so he would have it understood, that it was not through malice, and purposely and presumptuously, but through and ignorance, inadvertency and weakness, and hoped it would be forgiven.

{k} yb "in me", Montanus

Numbers 12:12

Ver. 12. Let her not be as one dead,.... As she was in a ceremonial sense, being to be shut up and excluded from the society of people, and as defiling by touching as a dead carcase; and, in a natural sense, her flesh, by the disease upon her, was become as dead flesh, putrid and rotten, and unless miraculously cured it would issue in her death:

of whom the flesh is half consumed, when he cometh out of his mother's womb; like an abortive, or one stillborn, that has been dead some time in its mother's womb; and therefore when brought forth its flesh is almost wasted away, or at least half consumed: and in such a plight and condition was Miriam already, or quickly would be, through the force of her disease.

Numbers 12:13

Ver. 13. And Moses cried unto the Lord,.... With a loud voice, and with great earnestness and importunity, being heartily affected with the miserable condition Miriam was in:

saying, heal her now, O God, I beseech thee; in the original text it is, "O God now, heal her now"; for the same particle is used at the close as at the beginning of the petition; and the repetition of it shows his earnestness and importunity that she might be healed directly, immediately, without any delay; and Moses uses the word "El", which signifies the strong and mighty God, as expressive of his faith in the power of God, that he was able to heal her; and at the same time suggests that none but he could do it; and so Aben Ezra interprets it,

"thou that hast power in thine hand, now heal her;"

this prayer is a proof of his being of a meek, humble, and forgiving spirit.

Numbers 12:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... By a voice out of the cloud, though at a distance; unless it was by a secret impulse upon his spirit, darting such words into his mind as if he heard an audible voice:

if her father had but spit in her face; or, "in spitting spitted" {l}; spit much, and continued spitting till he had covered her face with spittle; which, as it would have been a token of anger and displeasure in him, an earthly father, who is meant, and of shame and disgrace to her; so there is some likeness in spittle to leprosy, both being white, and in such a case to the abundance of it, her thee being covered with leprosy; and which came as it were from the mouth of the Lord, by his order and appointment, immediately, as spittle from a man, and like that, in a way of detestation and contempt, and to make abhorred and despised:

should she not be ashamed seven days? hide herself, and never appear in the family, and especially in her father's presence, because of the shame she was put unto, for the space of seven days; how much more ashamed then should she be, now her heavenly Father did spit in her face, and covered it with a white leprosy and for as long a time at least, or indeed longer? fourteen days, say the Targum of Jonathan, and Jarchi, but no more than seven are required, when more might have justly been, for her separation and shutting up from company and conversation:

let her be shut out from the camp seven days; for so long the leper was to be shut up at the trial of his leprosy, and so long he was to be out of his tent at the cleansing of him, Le 13:5;

and after that let her be received [again]; into the camp and into society with her relations and friends.

{l} qry qry "spuendo spuisset", Pagninus, Montanus, Fagius, Drusius.

Numbers 12:15

Ver. 15. And Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days,.... And so in later times lepers dwelt alone, and in a separate house, as long as the leprosy was upon them, see 2Ch 26:21; Miriam no doubt was healed at once, but, as a punishment for her sin, she was obliged to keep out of the camp of Israel for such a space of time:

and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in [again]; partly out of respect unto her, she being a prophetess, and one that went before them, and led them with Moses and Aaron, **Mic 6:4**; and partly for want of the cloud to direct them, which had departed at a distance from them.

Numbers 12:16

Ver. 16. And afterwards the people removed from Hazeroth,.... After seven days, where they had been so long at least; the cloud being returned to the tabernacle, and having been taken up, which was the signal for motion, the camps of Israel, in their order, removed and marched forward:

and pitched in the wilderness of Paran; at a place in it called Rithmah, Nu 33:18; which, according to Bunting {m}, was eight miles from Hazeroth, near to which was another place called Kadesh, or else this was another name of Rithmah, see Nu 13:3; and now the Israelites were very near the land of promise, and from hence they sent spies to make their observations on it, and bring a report of it; and had it not been for their ill conduct in that affair, in all probability would have been quickly in it, but on that account were kept out thirty eight years longer: it was on the twenty eighth or twenty ninth of the month Sivan the Israelites came to this place, according to the Jewish writers {n}, which month answers part of our May and part of June.

{m} Travels, &c. p. 82. {n} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 8. p. 24. & Meyer. Annotat. in ib. p. 338.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 13

In this chapter an order is given by the Lord, to send twelve men into the land of Canaan, to search and spy it, and which was accordingly executed, Nu 13:1; and the names of the twelve persons are given, Nu 13:4; the instructions they received from Moses, what part of the land they should enter into first, and what observations they should make on it, Nu 13:17; which they attended to, and on their return brought some of the fruit of the land with them, Nu 13:21; and gave an account of it, that it was a very fruitful land, but the inhabitants mighty, and their cities walled, Nu 13:27; which threw the people into confusion, but that they were stilled by Caleb, one of the spies, who encouraged them, Nu 13:30; but all the rest, excepting Joshua, brought an ill report of it, as not to be subdued and conquered by them, Nu 13:31.

Ver. 1. And the Lord Spake unto Moses,.... When in the wilderness of Paran, either at Rithmah or Kadesh; this was on the twenty ninth day of the month Sivan, on which day, the Jews say {o}, the spies were sent to search the land, which was a scheme of the Israelites' own devising, and which they first proposed to Moses, who approved of it as prudential and political, at least he gave his assent unto it to please the people, and carried the affair to the Lord, and consulted him about it; who, rather permitting than approving, gave the following order; for the motion carried in it a good deal of unbelief, calling in question whether the land was so good as had been represented unto them, fearing it was not accessible, and that it would be difficult to get into it, and were desirous of knowing the best way of getting into it before they proceeded any further; all which were unnecessary, if they would have fully trusted in the Lord, in his word, promise, power, providence, and guidance; who had told them it was a land flowing with milk and honey; that he would show them the way to it, by going before them in a pillar of cloud and fire; that he would assuredly bring them into it, having espied it for them, and promised it unto them; so that there was no need on any account for them to send spies before them; however, to gratify them in this point, he assented to it:

saying; as follows.

{o} Ib. ut supra, (Seder Olam Rabba, c. 8. p. 24. & Meyer. Annotat. in ib. p. 338.) Pesikta, Chaskuni.

Numbers 13:2

Ver. 2. Send thou men,.... Which is rather a permission than a command; so Jarchi interprets it,

"send men according to thy mind, I do not command thee, but if thou pleasest send;"

this he observed was agreeable to Moses, and to the Israelites, and therefore granted it, or allowed them to take their own way, and which issued badly, as it always does, when men are left to their own counsel:

that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel; called the land of Canaan, though it consisted of seven nations, from the principal of them; this God had given in promise to the children of Israel, and had now brought them to the borders of it; nay, had given them orders to go up and possess it; but they were for searching it first, to know what sort of a land it was, and which was the best way of entering into it, which is here permitted them, see **De 1:21**;

of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man; excepting the tribe of Levi; the reason of which was because they were to have no inheritance in the land, De 10:9; but then, to make up the number twelve, the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, are reckoned as two tribes:

everyone a ruler among them; a prince in his tribe; so were men of honour and credit, of power and authority, of prudence and probity, and who might be trusted with such an affair, and their report believed: they were not indeed princes of the highest rank, not the same that assisted in taking the numbers of the people, who were captains over their several tribes, as in **Nu 1:4**, &c. but were inferior princes and rulers, perhaps rulers of thousands.

Numbers 13:3

Ver. 3. And Moses, by the commandment of the Lord,.... By his power, permission, and leave, as Jarchi, that there might be no delay through his means:

sent them from the wilderness of Paran; from Rithmah or Kadeshbarnea, which seem to be one and the same place in that wilderness: this, as before observed, was on the twenty ninth day of Sivan:
See Gill on "Nu 13:1";

all those [were] heads of the children of Israel; were not mean and vulgar men, but persons of rule, who bore some office of magistracy ant government among the people in their respective tribes.

Numbers 13:4

Ver. 4. And these [were] their names, of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur. From Nu 13:4, there is nothing but the names of the said persons, whose sons they were, and of what tribe; and the several tribes are mentioned, not according to the order of the birth of the patriarchs, nor according to the dignity of their mothers that bore them, but, very likely, according to the order in which they were sent, two by two, to search the land; for had they gone all twelve in a body, they would have been liable to suspicion: the signification of their names is of no importance to know, and will give us no light into their characters or the reason of their choice, nor are their parents elsewhere taken notice of, nor any of them but Joshua and Caleb, of whom we shall hear more hereafter.

Numbers 13:5

Ver. 5. Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori.
See Gill on "Nu 13:4".

Numbers 13:6

Ver. 6. Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh.
See Gill on "Nu 13:4".

Numbers 13:7

Ver. 7. Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph.
See Gill on "Nu 13:4".

Numbers 13:8

Ver. 8. Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun.
See Gill on "Nu 13:4".

Numbers 13:9

Ver. 9. Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu.
See Gill on "Nu 13:4".

Numbers 13:10

Ver. 10. Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi.
See Gill on "Nu 13:4".

Numbers 13:11

Ver. 11. Of the tribe of Joseph, [namely], of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi. See Gill on "Nu 13:4".

Numbers 13:12

Ver. 12. Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli.
See Gill on "Nu 13:4".

Numbers 13:13

Ver. 13. Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael.
See Gill on "Nu 13:4".

Numbers 13:14

Ver. 14. Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi.
See Gill on "Nu 13:4".

Numbers 13:15

Ver. 15. Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.
See Gill on "Nu 13:4".

Numbers 13:16

Ver. 16. These [are] the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land,.... Which is observed after the catalogue is given of them, Nu 13:4; and this is repeated that their names may be taken notice of, which stand on record to the disgrace of the greater number of them, and to the honour of two only, Joshua and Caleb; and on the former the following remark is made;

and Moses called Oshea the son of Nun, Jehoshua; whether it was at this time that Moses gave him this name is not certain; if it was, then he is called so before by anticipation, for he is several times called so before this, and even the first time we hear of him, Ex 17:9; wherefore Chaskuni reads it, Moses had called; but Jarchi thinks it was now given him, and that Moses prayed for him Keyvwy hy, "Jah" or "Jehovah" save thee from the counsel of the spies: the name is the same with Jesus, as appears from **Heb 4:8**; and a type he was of Christ the Saviour, whose name is so called, because he saves his people from their sins, **Mt 1:21**; and brings them to heaven, as Joshua was the instrument of saving the Israelites and bringing them into the land of Canaan.

Numbers 13:17

Ver. 17. And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan,.... He sent them from Kadeshbarnea, as Caleb affirms, Jos 14:7;

and said unto them, go ye up this [way] southward; pointing as it were with his finger which way they should go, even up such a hill southward; and which, as Aben Ezra observes, was not the south of the camp, but the south of the land of Canaan; and who further observes, that it is well known that Egypt, from whence the Israelites now came, was to the south of the land of Israel, of which this is a demonstration; the latitude of Egypt is less than thirty degrees, and the latitude of Jerusalem is thirty three, and the wilderness of Paran was in the south of the land of Egypt: it should be rendered by "the south", as in Nu 13:22; or from the "south" {p}, since the Israelites must go northward, as a learned man {q} observes, to enter into the land of Canaan: now this south part of Canaan afterwards belonged to the tribe of Judah, and lying southward, and mountainous, was dry and barren, Jos 15:1; and was, as Jarchi says, the dregs of the land of Israel; and here, as he observes, the same method was taken as merchants do, who, when they show their goods, show the worst first, and then the best:

and go up into the mountain; which was inhabited by the Amorites, **De 1:44**; and was afterwards called the mountainous or hill country of Judea, **Lu 1:39**.

{p} bgnb "per meridianam plagam", V. L. "hac meridiana plaga", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {q} Bishop Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 392.

Numbers 13:18

Ver. 18. And see the land what it [is], and the people that dwelleth therein,.... The situation and condition of the country, and the nature, temper, disposition, and constitution of the inhabitants, by which it might be judged whether it was a desirable thing to possess it, and whether it was practicable to subdue and take it;

whether they [be] strong or weak, few or many; whether able-bodied men fit for war, and of spirit, strength, and courage, or feeble and pusillanimous, weak and timorous; and whether their number was small or great, by which they would be capable of judging whether they were in a state and condition to defend themselves or not, and whether a conquest of them was easy or not; the last of the two things in the preceding clause is first particularly explained and enlarged upon, as is usual in the Hebrew language.

Numbers 13:19

Ver. 19. And what the land [is] that they dwell in, whether it [be] good or bad,.... Whether the air is good, the climate temperate, and the earth well watered, and has good convenience of springs, fountains, and rivers, and so wholesome or healthful; or otherwise, which is the first thing they were directed to observe, though here put in the second place:

and what cities [they be] they dwell in, whether in tents or strong holds; whether in tents, as the Israelites now lived, and as the Kedarenes, as Aben Ezra notes, and other Arabians, who encamped in tents, or who dwelt in villages, and unwalled towns, unfortified cities, according to the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; or whether in fortified cities, towns, and garrisons; by which it would appear whether it would be easy to come at them, and fall upon them, or difficult to subdue and conquer them; for if their cities were fortified, it would not be so easy to take them, and would require time. Jarchi thinks, that by this it might be known whether they were men of strength and courage, or whether weak and fearful persons; seeing if they dwelt in villages they were strong men, and depended on their own strength, but if they dwelt in fortified cities, they were weak.

Numbers 13:20

Ver. 20. And what the land [is], whether it be fat or lean,.... That is, what the soil of it is, whether it be rich and fertile, or whether it be poor and barren, which would be seen by the fruits it produced, this being now the fruitful season of the year; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and what is the praise of the land, whether its fruits are fat or lean;"

plump and full, rich and juicy, or otherwise, as their grapes, olives, &c. whether it was a land flowing with milk and honey, Ex 33:3, abounding with all good things, and those of the best sort, or not:

whether there be wood thereon or not; timber for building, and other manual operations, or wood for fuel, which are great conveniences in a country; though the Targum of Jonathan interprets it of fruit-bearing trees, which bear fruits fit for eating, or not, as apples, pears, figs, pomegranates, &c.

and be ye of good courage; and not be afraid of being taken up for spies, suggesting, that the power and providence of God would protect and preserve them, in which they should put their trust, and be of good heart:

and bring of the fruit of the land; as a sample and specimen of what it brought forth, which would serve to encourage and animate the people in general, to go up and possess it:

now the time [was] the time of the first ripe grapes; when they and the other summer fruits were coming to their perfection; and which was a proper season to see them in, and bring a sample of them; though Chaskuni suggests, that it was a more dangerous time to bring off fruit, because the keepers of the vineyards were then there; and hence they needed strengthening, and are bid to be of good courage; the Targum of Jonathan is, "the day on which they went was the twenty ninth of the month Sivan, the time of the first ripe grapes;"

and as this month answers to part of our May and part of June, and it being at the latter end of that month, it must be about the middle of June; by which we may observe the forwardness of grapes in the land of Canaan, the time of vintage now drawing nigh.

Numbers 13:21

Ver. 21. So they went up and searched the land,.... Went up the mountains as they were directed, and passed through the whole land; diligently inquired into everything material belonging to it, according to their instructions, and made their observations on it, and on the inhabitants, and their habitations:

from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath; this wilderness, from whence they went, seems to be the same with the wilderness of Paran, called Zin; perhaps from the multitude of thorns in it; but different from the wilderness of Sin, Ex 16:1, which was nearer Egypt; but this was on the south quarter of the land of Canaan, along by the coast of Edom, Nu 34:3; Rehob, they are said to come to first from thence, was in the tribe of Asher in later times,
Jos 19:28; and lay to the north or northwest of the land of Canaan. Jerom says {r}, that in his times there was a village called Rooba, four miles from Scythopolis. Hamath was the northern boundary of the land of Israel, and was in the tribe of Naphtali, when it came into the hands of the Israelites, and lay to the northeast, as the former place to the northwest, Nu 34:7; so that their direction, as they went, was south and north, and west and east: their journey is described by Jarchi thus; they went on the borders of it, length and breadth, in the form of the capital of the letter g, "gamma"; they went on the south border from the east corner to the west corner, as Moses commanded them: "get you up this [way] southward", Nu 13:17; the way of the southeast border unto the sea, which is the western border; and from thence they returned, and went on all the western border by the sea shore, until they came to Hamath, which is by Mount Hor, at the northwest corner; but Hamath was on the northeast; nor did they go thither, it was too far off for them, but they went as far as Rehob, which was "as men go to Hamath", as it should be rendered, that is, it lay in the way to Hamath.

{r} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. A.

Numbers 13:22

Ver. 22. And they ascended by the south,.... When they returned, after they had searched the land, then they came into the south country again, which was in their way to Kadesh, where the camp of Israel remained; they are said to ascend, because of the hill country they again came to; for their coming to Hebron, and carrying a cluster of grapes from that place, not far from thence, was upon their return:

and came unto Hebron; which was in the hill country of Judea, in the tribe of Judah afterwards, which before was called Kirjatharba; in the original text it is, "he came" {s}, Caleb, and he only, according to Jarchi and the Rabbins in Abendana; and certain it is that he was there, and he had this place on which his feet trod given him for an inheritance, Jos 14:9; and it is very probable that the spies did not go together, but perhaps singly, and at most but two together, which seems to be the case here by what follows:

where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, [were]; where Anak, and these his three sons, dwelt, who were giants; and perhaps from thence Hebron before this was called Kirjatharbah, "the city of the four"; or from Arba, the father of Anak:

now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt; or Tanais, as the Targum of Jonathan, whence one of the nomes of Egypt was called the Tanitic nome: it was the metropolis of that country, and may be observed, to abate the pride and vanity of that kingdom, which boasted of its antiquity. Josephus says {t}, that the inhabitants of Hebron not only reckoned it more ancient than any of the cities of the land, but than Memphis in Egypt, accounting it (then in his time) 2300 years old; but who it was built by is not certain; Jarchi thinks it is possible that Ham built Hebron for Canaan his younger son, before he built Zoan for Mizraim his eldest son; which does not seem likely.

{s} abyw "et venit", Montanus, Tigurine version, Drusius, so Onkelos; "et venit Caleb", Junius & Tremellius. {t} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 7.

Numbers 13:23

Ver. 23. And they came unto the brook of Eshcol,.... Or "valley of Eshcol" {u}, which is here so called by anticipation from the following circumstance; and perhaps had not this name given it, until the children of Israel were possessed of the land, and then they called it so, in memory of what was done here at this time; it was not far from Hebron, as may be concluded from thence; and so Jerom, relating the travels of Paula in those parts, says {w}, she came from Betzur to Eshcol, where having seen the little cells of Sarah, the cradle of Isaac, and the traces of the oak of Abraham, under which he saw the day of Christ, and was glad, rising up from thence, she went up to Hebron; which shows this Eshcol to be near Hebron, and to lie low, and was a valley; see **De 1:24**;

and cut down from thence a branch, with one cluster of grapes; in this valley was a vineyard, or at least a vine tree, on which they observed one cluster, which perhaps was of an uncommon size, as it seems by what follows, and they cut down the branch, and that with it:

and they bare it between two upon a staff; it was so big; and which was not done only for the ease of carrying it, but that it might not have any of its grapes squeezed, bruised, and broken off, but that they might carry it entire and whole for the Israelites to behold: these two men were probably Caleb and Joshua; though Jarchi says they carried nothing, which is more than he could say with certainty. Some historians report very surprising things of the size of vines, and the largeness of their clusters, which, when observed, this account will not at all seem incredible. Strabo says {x}, it is reported, that in Hyrcania, a vine produced a firkin of wine, and, the trunk of a vine was so large, that it was as much as two men could grasp with both arms, and bore clusters of two cubits long {y}; the same he says {z} of the size of vines in Mauritania, and of their clusters being a cubit long; and of others in Carmania being two cubits long, as before {a}: it is reported of the Indian fig tree, that it sometimes has an hundred figs more or less on a branch, and all in a cluster like grapes; and some of the clusters are sometimes so large as to be carried by two men on a staff {b}, as here; and some have thought, that it is the fruit here meant; but this is expressly called a cluster of grapes. About half a mile from Eshcol, as Adrichomius {c} says, was the brook or valley of Sorek, which was famous for vines; and it is affirmed by many writers and travellers, that to this day there are vines in that place, which produce clusters of twenty five pounds weight and more; and that in Lebanon, and other parts of Syria, the kernels of grapes are as big as a man's thumb {d}. Leo Africanus speaks {e} of grapes in some parts of Africa somewhat red, which, from their size, are called hens' eggs: and the Talmudists {f} are extravagant, and beyond all belief, in the account they give of the vines in the land of Canaan, and of the clusters of them, and the quantity of wine they had from them; and of this cluster they suppose {g}, that the "two" spoken of are not to be understood of men, but of bars or staves; and that this cluster was carried by eight, four at the four ends of the two staves, and that there were, besides, two staves or bars that went across, at the ends of which were four more men, who carried the cluster hanging in the middle; a figure of which Wagenseil {h} has given us: but Philo the Jew {i} has given a better account of it, and more agreeable to the Scripture, as that it was put upon a staff, and hung at the middle of it, the ends of which were laid on the shoulders of two young men, who carried it; though he adds, that such was the weight of it, that these were relieved by others in succession:

and [they brought] of the pomegranates, and of the figs; that is, others of them did; which seems to favour the notion that they were in a body, and that there were more than two together at this place; but even these two might be able to bring some of this sort of fruit along with them, as well as bear the cluster of grapes; besides, the text does not oblige us to understand it of the same persons in the same place.

{u} lxn "vallem", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius. {w} Epitaph. Paulae, fol. 59. G. H. {x} Geograph. l. 2. p. 50. {y} Ibid. {z} lbid. l. 17. p. 568. {a} Ibid. l. 15. p. 500. {b} Salmuth. in Pancirol. rer. memorab. par. 2. p. 55. {c} Theatrum Terrae Sacr. p. 24. {d} Huet. Alnetan. Quaest. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 22. {e} Descript. Africae, l. 2. p. 204. {f} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 111. 2. {g} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 34. 1. {h} Sotah, p. 707, 708. {i} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 638.

Numbers 13:24

Ver. 24. The place was called the brook of Eshcol,.... That is, in later times:

because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence; the word "Eschol" signifying a "cluster"; and this cluster was typical of Christ, who may be compared to this, as he is to a cluster of camphire, **So 1:14**; there being in him a "cluster" of all perfections, of all the perfections of deity, the whole fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in him; and of all human perfections, he being in all things like unto his people, excepting sin; and there being also a cluster of all the graces and gifts of the Spirit without measure in him, as man; and of all the blessings of grace for his people, as Mediator; and of all the exceeding great and precious promises of the covenant of grace. The "staff", on which this was carried, may denote the ministration of the Gospel, which may seem mean and despicable in itself, but is the means of carrying the name of Christ, and the things of Christ, about in the world; see **Ac 9:15**; and the "two" men which bore it, may signify the prophets of the Old Testament, and the ministers of the New, who both agree and join together in setting forth the person, offices, and grace of Christ. Moreover, this cluster may be an emblem of the Spirit of God, and his grace, and of the rich experience the people of God have of it in this present lift, while travellers in the wilderness, as a taste and earnest of the future glory and happiness in the heavenly Canaan.

Numbers 13:25

Ver. 25. And they returned from searching the land after forty days. The Targum of Jonathan adds, on the eighth day of the month Ab, which answers to part of July and part of August; so that this must be towards the latter end of July: some Jewish writers {k} say it was the ninth of Ab; hence the tradition, that it was decreed on the ninth of Ab concerning their fathers, that they should not enter into the land {l}.

{k} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 8. p. 24. {l} Misn. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 7.

Numbers 13:26

Ver. 26. And they went, and came to Moses, and to Aaron,.... They proceeded on their journey from Eshcol, till they came to the camp of Israel; and as soon as they came there, went directly to Moses and to Aaron, before they went into their own tents, as Aben Ezra observes:

and to all the congregation of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran,
to Kadesh; that is, Kadeshbarnea, as appears from Jos 14:7; called for brevity's sake Kadesh; but is by some thought to be different from the Kadesh in Nu 20:1; to which the Israelites came not until thirty eight years after this time: this Kadesh was in the wilderness of Paran, and the same with Rithmah, or was near it, where the Israelites were now encamped, and had remained all the time the spies were gone: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call this place Rekem, as they do in Ge 16:14;

and brought back word unto them, and to all the congregation: to Moses and

Aaron, and the principal heads of the body of the people assembled together: to these they related an account of their tour through the land of Canaan, what they had met with, and what observations they had made, agreeably to the instructions that had been given them when they set out:

and showed them the fruit of the land; which they had brought with them, the bunch of grapes, pomegranates, and figs.

Numbers 13:27

Ver. 27. And they told him,.... Moses, who was the chief ruler whom they addressed, and to whom they directed their speech:

and said, we came unto the land whither thou sentest us; the land of Canaan, which they were sent by Moses to spy; this was said by ten of them or by one of them as their mouth; for Caleb and Joshua did not join with them in the following account, as appears from Nu 13:30;

and surely it floweth with milk and honey; they own that the land answered to the description which the Lord had given of it when it was promised them by him, **Ex 3:8**;

and this [is] the fruit of it; pointing to the bunch of grapes, the pomegranates and figs; not that these were a proof of its flowing with milk and honey, at least in a literal sense, but of the goodness and fruitfulness of the land: though the luxury of Bacchus, the god of wine, is by the poet {m} described, not only by a fountain of wine, but by rivers of milk and flows of honey.

{m} "Vinique fontem", &c. Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode 19.

Numbers 13:28

Ver. 28. Nevertheless the people [be] strong that dwell in the land,.... Though so plentiful and fruitful and desirable to enjoy, yet this objection lay against all hopes and even attempts to possess it, as they thought; the strength of the people, its present inhabitants, both in body and mind, being persons of a large, and some of a prodigious stature, and to all appearance men of valour and courage;

and the cities [are] walled and very great; and so inaccessible, and able to hold out a long siege, and repel what force may be brought against them; so that to attack them would be to little purpose:

and moreover we saw the children of Anak there: whom they had heard of before, and so had the congregation of Israel, and many terrible and frightful stories were told of them, and these they now saw with their eyes, and very formidable they appeared to them; this seems to prove that others beside Caleb and Joshua were at Hebron, where the sons of Anak lived, Nu 13:22; and so they might, and yet not be together with them.

Numbers 13:29

Ver. 29. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south,.... On the southern side of the land of Canaan: not in it, for they were not Canaanites, but neighbours to them, and lay nearest to the camp of Israel, and at the entrance into the land of Canaan; and as they were enemies of Israel, as appears from an attack upon them quickly after they came from the Red sea, in Rephidim, Ex 17:8; and friends to the Canaanites, they would no doubt oppose their passage into their land, as they did, Nu 14:43; this is one difficulty in the way of possessing the land hinted at, others follow:

and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains; and guard the passes there; so that should they escape the Amalekites, or get the better of them, they would not be able to pass the mountains, being so well inhabited and defended; the Hittites seem to dwell about Mount Lebanon, **Jos 1:4**; the Jebusites inhabited the mountains about Jerusalem, and that itself, which was called by them Jebus, and from which they were not dispossessed until the times of David, 1Ch 11:4; and the Amorites were possessed of the mountain which was on the borders of the land, next to the place where Israel now were, **De 1:20**;

and the Canaanites dwell by the sea; these dwelt both on the east and on the west of the land, Jos 11:3; so that the western Canaanites dwelt on the shore of the Mediterranean sea, which is often put for the west in Scripture; and the eastern Canaanites dwelt by the Dead sea, or by the sea of Tiberias, called sometimes the lake of Gennesaret, and seems the rather to be meant here by what follows:

and by the coast of Jordan; so that this river was not passable by them; for by all this they would suggest that all avenues and passes were stopped up, so that it was a vain thing to attempt entrance into the land, or to expect ever to possess it.

Numbers 13:30

Ver. 30. And Caleb stilled the people before Moses,.... In his presence, they standing before him; or "unto Moses" {n}, as they were coming to him with open mouth against him; for upon the above report of the spies they began to murmur and mutiny, and to speak against Moses for bringing them out of Egypt into a wilderness, feeding them with vain hopes of a country which they were never likely to enjoy; and in their wrath they might be making up to him, threatening to pull him to pieces, but were restrained by Caleb, who signified he had something to say to them, to which they attended, he being one of the spies, and for their principal tribe, the tribe of Judah, that went foremost; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"Caleb silenced the people, and they attended to Moses;"

or hearkened to him, to what he said, which though not here related, is in **De 1:29**; which yet they did not give credit to, though they heard what he had to say:

and said, let us go up at once and possess it; without any delay, there is nothing more to be done than to enter and take possession; this he said, trusting to the promise of God, who is faithful, and to his power who is able to perform:

for we are well able to overcome it; especially having God on their side, who had promised to bring them into it, and put them in the possession of it; and indeed, humanly speaking, they seemed quite sufficient for such an undertaking, being upwards of six hundred thousand men fit for war, **Nu 1:46**, marshalled under their proper standards, with captains over each tribe, and having such brave, wise, and courageous commanders and generals, Moses and Joshua, who had given signal instances of their prudence and bravery already. What is it such an army, under proper directions, might not undertake? One would think, in all human probability, they were able to conquer a much greater country than the land of Canaan.

{n} hvm la "ad Moseh", Montanus; "venientem ad Mosem", Junius & Tremellius, Drusius.

Numbers 13:31

Ver. 31. But the men that went up with him,.... With Caleb, all but Joshua: the other ten

said, we be not able to go up against the people; this they had not said before, though they plainly suggested it, and, to make the people believe this, had represented the inhabitants of the land of Canaan in the light they did; but now, in direct opposition to Caleb, fully expressed it, giving this reason for it:

for they [are] stronger than we; being both of a larger size and more numerous.

Numbers 13:32

Ver. 32. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel,.... Before, they gave a good report of the land itself, as a very fruitful one, answering to their expectations and wishes; but now they change their language, and give a different account of it; which shows their want of integrity, and to what length an opposition carried them, to say things contrary to their real sentiments, and to what they themselves had said before:

saying, the land through which we have gone to search it, [is] a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; the meaning seems to be, that it was so barren and unfruitful that it did not produce food sufficient for the inhabitants of it, who were ready to starve, and many did starve through want, and so was the reverse of what they had before said; for which reason, Gussetius {o} thinks the sense is, that the land was the food and nourishment of its inhabitants, and that there was such plenty in it that it wanted not any foreign assistance in any respect whatever. Some think that it was continually embroiled in civil wars, in which they destroyed one another; but then this was no argument against, but for their going up against them, since through the divisions among themselves they might reasonably hope the better to succeed; or it ate them up with diseases, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, and so they would represent it, though a fruitful land, yet a very unhealthful one, in which the natives could not live, and much less strangers; and so Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom interpret it of the badness of the air of the country, as being very unwholesome and pernicious. Jarchi represents them as saying, that wherever they came they saw them burying their dead, as if there was a plague among them; and be it so that there was, which is not unlikely, since the Lord promised to send hornets before them, which some interpret of diseases sent, Ex 23:28; and which was in their favour, since hereby the number of their enemies would be lessened, and they would be weakened, and in a bad condition to oppose them:

and all the people that we saw in it [are] men of a great stature; or men of measures {p}, of a large measure, above the common measure of men; but it may be justly questioned whether they spoke truth; for though they might see some that exceeded in height men in common, yet it is not credible that all they saw were of such a size; since they were not only at Hebron and saw the giants there who were such, but they went through the land, as in the preceding clause, and all they met with cannot be supposed to be of such a measure.

{o} Ebr. Comment. p. 40. {p} twdm yvna "viri mensurarum", Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius.

Numbers 13:33

Ver. 33. And there we saw the giants,.... Not throughout the land, and yet it is so expressed, and in such connection with what goes before, that it might be so understood, and as they might choose it should; that as there were men everywhere of an uncommon size, and were generally so, there were some larger than they in all places, of a prodigious size, of a gigantic stature; and yet this was only in Hebron where they saw them;

the sons of Anak; whose names are given, Nu 13:22; and there were but three of them:

[which came] of the giants; they, were of the race of giants; for not only Anak their father, but Arba their grandfather was one; Jos 14:15;

and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers; little diminutive creatures in comparison of them; an hyperbolical exaggeration of the greatness of the giants, and of their own littleness:

and so we were in their sight; but this they could not be so certain of, and could only make conjectures by their neglect or supercilious treatment of them. Jarchi makes them to speak of them more diminutively still, as that they heard those giants saying one to another, "there are ants in the vineyards like men."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 14

This chapter treats or the murmurings of the children of Israel upon the evil report of the spies, which greatly distressed Moses and Aaron, Nu 14:1; and of the endeavours of Joshua and Caleb to quiet the minds of the people with a good account of the land, and of the easy conquest of it, but to no purpose, Nu 14:6; and of the Lord's threatening to destroy the people with the pestilence, Nu 14:11; and of the intercession of Moses for them, which so far succeeded as to prevent their immediate destruction, Nu 14:13; nevertheless they are assured again and again, in the strongest terms, that none of them but Joshua and Caleb should enter into the land, but their carcasses should fall in the wilderness, even all the murmurers of twenty years old and upwards, Nu 14:21; and the ten men that brought the evil report of the good land died of a plague immediately, but the other two lived, Nu 14:36; and the body of the people that attempted to go up the mountain and enter the land were smitten and discomfited by their enemies, after they had with concern heard what the Lord threatened them with, Nu 14:39.

Ver. 1. And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried,.... This is not to be understood of every individual in the congregation of Israel, but of the princes, heads, and elders of the people that were with Moses and Aaron when the report of the spies was made; though indeed the report might quickly spread throughout the body of the people, and occasion a general outcry, which was very loud and clamorous, and attended with all the signs of distress imaginable, in shrieks and tears and lamentations:

and the people wept that night: perhaps throughout the night; could get no sleep nor rest all the night, but spent it in weeping and crying, at the thought of their condition and circumstances, and the disappointments they had met with, as they conceived, of entering into and possessing the land.

Numbers 14:2

Ver. 2. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron,.... They being the instruments of bringing them out of Egypt, and conducting them hither:

and the whole congregation said unto them; some of them, the rest assenting to it by their cries and tears and gestures;

would God we had died in the land of Egypt; and then what they left behind they thought might have come into the hands of their children or relations; but now they concluded it would become a prey to the Canaanites:

or would God we had died in this wilderness; the wilderness of Paran, at Taberah, where many of them had been destroyed by fire, Nu 11:1, and now they wish they had perished with them.

Numbers 14:3

Ver. 3. Wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land,.... Unto the borders of it: their murmuring did not cease at Moses and Aaron, the instruments, but proceeded against God himself, who had done such wonderful things for them, not only in bringing them out of Egypt, but since they had been in the wilderness; and yet so ungrateful to complain of him and argue with him about favours bestowed on them, as if they were injuries done to them; and particularly as if God had no other intention in bringing them out of Egypt to the place where they were, but

to fall by the sword: the sword of the Canaanites, as the Targum of Jonathan adds:

that our wives and our children shall be a prey? to the same people; they supposed they should be killed, their wives abused, and their children made slaves of:

were it not better for us to return into Egypt? and so escape the hands of the inhabitants of Canaan, of whom they had terrible apprehensions from the report made of them.

Numbers 14:4

Ver. 4. And they said one to another, let us make a captain,.... An head over them instead of Moses, who they knew would never take the government and care of them, should they resolve to return to Egypt as they proposed, and besides were now so disaffected to him, that they might not care he should. Captains they had over their several tribes, but they chose to have one chief commander and general over them all; Nehemiah says they did appoint one; which they either actually did, or this proposal was interpreted as if really put in execution, they being so desirous of it, and bent upon it; wherefore their will is taken for the deed, and so understood; see **Ne 9:17**;

and let us return into Egypt: which was downright madness, as some interpreters have justly observed; they must not only expect to be deserted by Moses, through whose means so many miracles had been wrought for them, and who was so wise and faithful a governor of them; and by Aaron their priest, who offered their sacrifices, and prayed for them, and blessed them; and by such a valiant general as Joshua, who had fought for them against their enemies; but by the Lord himself, so that they could not expect the manna to be continued as food for them, nor the pillar of cloud and fire as a guide unto them, nor to be protected from their enemies, on the borders of whose countries they must pass; so that their destruction in the wilderness seemed inevitable; and if they could have surmounted these and other difficulties, what manner of reception could they expect to find in Egypt, on whose account all the firstborn of man and beast among them were slain, whom they had spoiled of their riches, and whose king and his army, and in it perhaps the, flower of the nation, were drowned in the Red sea, for their sakes? What therefore could they think of, if they had any sober thought at all, but utter ruin, should they return there again?

Numbers 14:5

Ver. 5. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces,.... Through shame and confusion of face for them, at hearing so shocking a proposal made, and such wretched ingratitude expressed; they blushed at it, and were in the utmost distress on account of it, and therefore threw themselves into this posture; or it may be this was done either to beg of them that they would lay aside all thoughts of this kind, or to supplicate the divine Majesty that he would convince them of their sin and folly, and give them repentance for it and forgiveness of it; and this they did

before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel; to affect them the more with a sense of their sin and danger.

Numbers 14:6

Ver. 6. And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh,.... Rose up and interposed in this affair, looking upon themselves under a special obligation so to do, as they were capable of confronting the other spies, and contradicting what they had said:

[which were] of them that searched the land; they were two of that number, and were the more concerned to hear such a false account given, and distressed to observe the mutiny of the people, and therefore judged themselves in duty bound to do all they could to stop it:

rent their clothes; in token of sorrow for the sins of the people; and at their blasphemy and ingratitude against God, and in dread of his wrath and fury breaking forth upon them.

Numbers 14:7

Ver. 7. And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel,.... To as many as could hear them, to the heads of them:

saying, the land which we passed through to search it, [is] an exceeding good land; they observe that they were of the number of the spies that were appointed and sent to search the land of Canaan, and they had searched it, and therefore could give an account of it from their own knowledge; and they had not only entered into it, or just looked at a part of it, but they had gone through it, and taken a general survey of it; and they could not but in truth and justice say of it, that it was a good land, delightful, healthful, and fruitful; yea, "very, very good" {q}, exceeding, exceeding good, superlatively good, good beyond expression; they were not able with words to set forth the goodness of it; this they reported, in opposition to the ill report the other spies had given of it.

{q} dam dam Urah hbwj "bona terra, valde valde", Montanus, Vatablus.

Numbers 14:8

Ver. 8. If the Lord delight in us,.... Continue to delight in them as he had, and as appears by what he had done for, them in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; see De 10:15;

then he will bring us into this land, and give it us, as he has promised,

a land which floweth with milk and honey; as the Lord himself hath described it, and as the unbelieving spies themselves had owned it;
Nu 13:27.

Numbers 14:9

Ver. 9. Only rebel not ye against the Lord,.... Nothing, it is suggested, could hinder them from the, possession of it but their rebellion against the Lord; which might provoke him to cut them off by his immediate hand, or to deliver them into the hands of their enemies; for rebellion is a dreadful sin, and highly provoking, 1Sa 15:23;

neither fear ye the people the land; on account of their number, strength, the walled cities they dwell in; they had nothing to fear from them, so be it they feared the Lord, and were not disobedient to him:

for they [are] bread for us; as easy to be cut to pieces, and to be devoured, consumed, and destroyed as thoroughly, as bread is when eaten; and their fields, vineyards, all they have without and within, even all their substance, will be a prey to us, and furnish out sufficient provision for us, on which we may pleasantly and plentifully live, as on bread: see Ps 14:4;

their defence is departed from them; they had no heart nor spirit left in them; no courage to defend themselves, and therefore the strength of their bodies and their walled towns would be of no avail unto them; see **Jos 2:9**; or "their shadow" {r}, which covered and protected them, the providence of God which was over them, and continued them in the land, and quiet possession of it, until the measure of their iniquity was filled up, and the time come for his people Israel to inhabit it; but now it was departed:

and the Lord [is] with us; as was evident by the cloud upon the tabernacle, and by the manna being spread around their camp every morning: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are, "the Word of the Lord is for our help:"

fear them not; the Canaanites, notwithstanding the strength of their bodies, or of their cities, the Lord is mightier than they.

{r} Mlu "umbra eorum", Montanus, Tigurine version, Fagius, Vatablus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Numbers 14:10

Ver. 10. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones,.... Namely, Joshua and Caleb, who had made such a faithful report of the good land, and had delivered such an animating and encouraging speech to the people. This is not to be understood of the body of the people, and of all the individuals thereof, for who then should they bid to stone Joshua and Caleb? unless the sense is, that they stirred up and animated one another to it; but rather it means the princes and heads of the congregation, who commanded the common people to rise up and stone them; for notwithstanding the affecting behaviour of Moses and Aaron, and the arguments of Joshua and Caleb, they still persisted in their mutiny and rebellion, until the Lord himself appeared as he did:

and the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation, before all the children of Israel; the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, which dwelt between the cherubim in the most holy place, came into the court of the tabernacle; for neither in the holy nor in the most holy place could the people see it, or the token of it: in De 31:15 it is said, "the pillar of cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle"; and Noldius {s} renders it here, "and the glory of the Lord appeared above the tabernacle of the congregation"; with which agree the Targum of Jonathan and the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions; and so Jarchi says, the cloud descended there, and from thence very probably some coruscations, or flashes of lightning came forth, which plainly showed the Lord was there; and this was done to terrify the people, and restrain them from their evil, purposes; and to encourage the servants of the Lord, who hereby might expect the divine protection.

{s} Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 164. No. 737.

Numbers 14:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... Out of the cloud upon the tabernacle:

how long will this people provoke me? which suggests that they had often provoked him, and had done it long ago, and still continued to do so; and he had long bore their provocations; but it was not reasonable, nor could it be expected by Moses or any other, that he would bear them much longer,

and how long will it be ere they believe me; unbelief was a sin they had often and long been guilty of, and which greatly prevailed among them, and was the root of all their murmurings, mutiny, and rebellion; and what was highly provoking to the Lord, since they ought to have believed him, and that he was able to make good, and would make good his promises to them:

for all the signs which I have showed among them; the wonders and miracles he had wrought in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, and in their sight; on account of which they should have given credit to his word, and which were strong aggravations of their unbelief; and is the true reason why they entered not into the good land, **Heb 3:18**.

Numbers 14:12

Ver. 12. I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them,.... Deprive them of inhabiting the land; so as many as died of the pestilence were even all the spies who brought an evil report of the good land, Nu 14:37; with respect to the body of the people, this is to be considered not as a peremptory decree or a determined point; but is delivered partly by way of proposal to Moses, to draw out from him what he would say to it; and partly by way of threatening to the people, to bring them to a sense of their sin and repentance for it:

and will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they: this anticipates an objection that might be made, should the people of Israel be cut off by the plague, and so disinherited of the land of Canaan, what will become of the oath of God made to their fathers? to which the answer is, it would be fulfilled in making the posterity of Moses as great or a greater and more powerful nation than Israel now was, and by introducing them into the land of Canaan, who would be of the seed of the fathers of Israel, as Jarchi observes, as those people were; and this was said to prove Moses, and try his affection to the people of Israel; and give him an opportunity of showing his public and disinterested spirit.

Numbers 14:13

Ver. 13. And Moses said unto the Lord,.... In an abrupt manner, as the following words show, his mind being greatly disturbed and distressed by the above threatening,

then the Egyptians shall hear [it]; that the Lord had smitten the Israelites with the pestilence; the Targum of Jonathan interprets it of the children of the Egyptians who were suffocated in the sea:

for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them; they were once sojourners among them, and slaves unto them, and they were delivered from them by the mighty hand of the Lord upon the Egyptians, destroying their firstborn; and therefore when they shall hear that the Israelites were all destroyed at once by a pestilence in the wilderness, it will be a pleasure to them, as follows.

Numbers 14:14

Ver. 14. And they will tell [it] to the inhabitants of this land,.... The land of Canaan, between which and Egypt there was an intercourse, though not by the way of the wilderness, being neighbours, and their original ancestors brethren, as Mizraim and Canaan were; or "they will say" {t}, and that with joy, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; but what they would say does not appear so plain; either it was that the Israelites were killed in the wilderness, a tale they would tell with pleasure; but that the Canaanites would hear of doubtless before them, and not need their information, since the Israelites were upon their borders; or that the Lord had brought them out of Egypt indeed, but could carry them no further, could not introduce them into the land he had promised them; or rather they would say to them what follows, for the preposition "for" is not in the text, and may be omitted; and so the sense is, they will tell them,

they have heard that thou Lord [art] among this people; in the tabernacle that was in the midst of them, in the most holy place of it:

that thou Lord art seen face to face: as he was by Moses, who was at the head of them:

and [that] thy cloud standeth over them; and sheltered and protected them from the heat of the sun in the daytime, when it rested upon them in their encampment:

and [that] thou goest before them, by daytime in a pillar of a cloud,
and in a pillar of fire by night; in their journeys; they will tell of those favours thou hast shown Israel; and yet, after all, will observe that thou hast destroyed them, which will not redound to thine honour and glory.

{t} wrmay "et dicent", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, &c.

Numbers 14:15

Ver. 15. Now [if] thou shall kill [all] this people, as one man,.... Suddenly, and at once, as might be done by a pestilence; and as 185,000 were smitten at once, and as thought by the same disease, by the Angel of the Lord in the camp of the Assyrians, in later times,
2Ki 19:35;

then the nations which have heard the fame of thee; the Egyptians, Canaanites, and others, as Aben Ezra observes; who had heard the report of the wonderful things done by him for Israel, and of the great favours he had bestowed upon them, and so of his power, and goodness, and other perfections displayed therein, which made him appear to be preferable to all the gods of the Gentiles:

will speak, saying; as follows.

Numbers 14:16

Ver. 16. Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them,.... That though he brought them out of Egypt, he was not able to bring them through the wilderness into Canaan; and that though he had wrought many signs and wonders for them, he could work no more, his power failed him, he had exhausted all his might, and could not perform the promise and oath he had made:

therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness; because he could not fulfil his word, and so made short work of it, destroying them all together, which Moses suggests would greatly reflect dishonour on him; and in this he shows, that he was more concerned for the glory of God than for his own.

Numbers 14:17

Ver. 17. And now, I beseech thee, let the power of Lord be great,.... That is, appear to be great; the power of God is great, not only mighty, but almighty; it knows no bounds, nothing is impossible with him, he can do whatever he pleases, Ps 147:5; his power, and the greatness of it, had been seen in bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, and through the Red sea, and in providing for them, protecting and defending them in the wilderness; and the request of Moses is, that it might appear greater and greater in bringing them into the land of promise; or else he means an exceeding great display of the grace and mercy of God in the forgiveness of the sins of the people; for as the power of God is seen in his forbearance and longsuffering with the wicked, **Ro 9:22**; much more in the forgiveness of the sins of men, there being more power and virtue in grace to pardon, than there is in sin to damn; and as it is an indication of strength in men, and of their power over themselves, when they can rule their own spirits, keep under their passions, and restrain their wrath, and show a forgiving temper, Pr 16:32; so it is an instance of the power of God to overcome his wrath and anger stirred up by the sins of men; and, notwithstanding their provocations, freely to forgive: pardon of sin is an act of power, as well as of grace and mercy, see **Mt 9:6**; and this sense agrees with what follows. The first letter in the word for "great" is larger than usual, that it might be taken notice of; and to signify the exceeding greatness of the power of God, Moses desired might be displayed in this case: and the letter numerically signifies ten, and has been thought to respect the ten times that Israel tempted the Lord, Nu 14:22; and to suggest, that though they had so done, yet the grace and mercy of God should ten times exceed the ingratitude of the people {u}:

according as thou hast spoken, saying; as in Ex 34:6; and is as follows.

{u} Baal Hatturim in loc. & Buxtorf. Tiberias, c. 14. p. 38.

Numbers 14:18

Ver. 18. The Lord [is] longsuffering,.... Towards all men, and especially towards his own people:

and of great mercy, being abundant in goodness, and keeping mercy for thousands:

forgiving iniquity and transgression, all sorts of sin:

and by no means clearing [the guilty], visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth [generation]; which may seem to make against the plea of Moses for mercy and forgiveness; but the reason of these words being expressed seems to be, because they go along with the others in the passage referred to, and are no contradiction to the forgiving mercy of God in a way of justice; nor did Moses request to have the guilty cleared from punishment altogether, but that God would show mercy, at least to such a degree as not to cut off the whole nation, and leave no posterity to inherit the land; which is supposed in visiting the sin of the fathers to the third or fourth generation.

Numbers 14:19

Ver. 19. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy,.... Intimating, that though the sin of this people was great, the mercy of God to pardon was greater; and therefore he entreats that God would deal with them, not according to the greatness of their sins, and the strictness of justice, but according to the greatness of his mercy, who would, and does, abundantly pardon;

and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now; which shows both that these people had been continually sinning against the Lord, ever since they came out of Egypt, notwithstanding the great goodness of God unto them, and that he had as constantly pardoned; and therefore it was hoped and entreated that he would still continue to pardon them, he being the same he ever was, and whose mercy and goodness endure for ever: he had pardoned already sins of the like kind since their coming out of Egypt, as their murmurings for bread in the wilderness of Sin, Ex 16:1, and for water at Rephidim,
Ex 17:1, and even a greater sin than these, idolatry, or the worship of the calf, Ex 32:1.

Numbers 14:20

Ver. 20. And the Lord said, I have pardoned, according to thy word. So as not to kill them utterly as one man: which is an instance of his being plenteous in mercy, and ready to forgive; and of the virtue and efficacy of the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man, and of the great regard the Lord has to the prayers of a good man for others. The Jerusalem Targum is,

"and the Word of the Lord said, lo, I have remitted and forgiven according to thy word;"

which must be understood of Christ, the essential Word, and shows, according to the sense of the Targumist, that he has a power to forgive sin, and must be a divine Person, for none can forgive sin but God; see **Mr 2:7**.

Numbers 14:21

Ver. 21. But [as truly as] I live,.... Which is the form of an oath, as the Targum; the Lord swears by his life, or by himself, because he could swear by no greater:

all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord; this is not the thing sworn unto or confirmed, but that by which the oath is made and confirmed; and the sense is, that as sure as the earth "had been" filled with the glory of the Lord, as it may be rendered, as it had been with the fame of what he had done in Egypt, and at the Red sea; or as it "should be" filled with it in later times, especially in the kingdom of the Messiah in the latter day; see **Isa 6:3**; so sure the men that had provoked him should not see the land of Canaan.

Numbers 14:22

Ver. 22. Because all those men which have seen my glory,.... His glorious Majesty, or the emblem of it in the cloud, on the tabernacle, which had often appeared to them, and the glorious things done by him; the glory of his power, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness, and truth, displayed in bringing them out of Egypt, through the Red sea, and thus far in the wilderness, even to the borders of the land of Canaan; it should be rendered, not "because", but "that", for this is the thing sworn to, or the matter of the oath:

and my miracles which I did in Egypt; by the hand of Moses, both before them, when he was sent to them, as a proof of his divine mission, and before Pharaoh and all his court, **Ex 7:10**, inflicting plagues upon him and his people, **Ex 7:20**:

and in the wilderness; in raining manna from heaven about their tents, Ex 16:14; sending them quails, Ex 16:13; and giving them water out of the rock, Ex 17:6:

and have tempted me now these ten times; which the Jews understand precisely and exactly of such a number, and which they reckon thus {w}; twice at the sea, Ex 14:11; twice concerning water, Ex 15:23; twice about manna, Ex 16:2; twice about quails, Ex 16:12; once by the calf, Ex 32:1; and once in the wilderness of Paran, Nu 14:1, which last and tenth was the present temptation: these are reckoned a little otherwise elsewhere {x}; but perhaps it may be better, with Aben Ezra, to interpret it of many times, a certain number being put for an uncertain, they having frequently tempted the Lord:

and have not hearkened to my voice; neither to his word of promise, nor to his word of command, and particularly his late order to go up and possess the land, **De 1:21**.

{w} T. Bab. Eracin, fol. 15. 1. Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 4. Jarchi in loc. {x} Maimon. in Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 4.

Numbers 14:23

Ver. 23. Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers,.... Not possess and enjoy the land of Canaan, which the Lord by an oath had promised their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give it to their seed; and now he swears that these men, who had so often tempted him, and been disobedient to him, should not inherit it; so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem take it for an oath; see **Heb 3:11**;

neither shall any of them that provoked me see it; that provoked him by the ill report they had brought of the land, by their unbelief, by their murmurings, and mutiny.

Numbers 14:24

Ver. 24. But my servant Caleb,.... Who was one of the spies, and brought a good and true report of the land; and so in that, as well as in other things, approved himself to be a faithful servant of the Lord, and who had stilled the people at the beginning of their murmur, and with Joshua had attempted to quiet them afterwards; and though Joshua is not here mentioned, because, as some say, he had no children, and therefore it could not be said of him that his seed should possess the land, as is said of Caleb; or rather, because he was to be the general and commander of the people, who was to introduce them into the land of Canaan, and therefore there was no necessity of expressing him by name, yet he is afterwards mentioned, Nu 14:30;

because he had another spirit with him; different from that of the rest of the spies, excepting Joshua; a spirit of faith, and of the fear of the Lord, of might and courage, of truth and faithfulness; believing in the promise of God, which the spies distrusted, being persuaded the land might easily be conquered, which they feared; and bringing a true report of the land, the reverse of the ill and false one they brought. For this is to be understood not of the Holy Spirit of God, nor of his work upon the hearts of good men, which is different from the spirit of the world, though Caleb was possessed of that also:

and hath followed me fully; with full purpose of heart whithersoever he led him, or directed him, in every path of duty, and in the exercise of every grace; or "hath fulfilled after me" {y}; obeyed his word of command, fulfilled his mind and will, by going after him, and acting according to the rules and directions he gave him:

him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; the land of Canaan he went into to spy and search:

and his seed shall possess it; not the whole land, but Hebron, and the parts about it, where he particularly went, and which he and his posterity afterwards enjoyed, see Nu 13:22. The Targum of Onkelos is, "shall expel it"; the inhabitants of it; for the word signifies both to inherit and disinherit; and so Jarchi interprets it, shall disinherit the Anakim, and the people that are in it, that is, drive them out of it, as Caleb did, Jos 15:13.

{y} yrxa almyw "et implevit post me", Montanus, Tigurine version, Fagius, Drusius.

Numbers 14:25

Ver. 25. And now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley,.... By the Canaanites are meant the Amorites, as Aben Ezra, which were a principal people of the land of Canaan, and which may be confirmed by **De 1:19**; this may seem contrary to what is said
Nu 13:29; where they are said to dwell in the mountain; but it may be reconciled by observing, that indeed their proper settled habitation was in the mountain; but now they went down from thence, and "sat" {z} in the valley, as it may be rendered, in ambush, there lying in wait for the children of Israel, as in Ps 10:8; and so Aben Ezra interprets it of their sitting there, to lie in wait for them: and now, though these people had so sadly provoked the Lord, yet such was his goodness to them, as to warn them of the design of their enemies, and of the danger by them, to provide for their safety, by giving them the following instruction:

tomorrow turn you; do not go forward, lest ye fall into their ambushment, but turn about, and go the contrary way; return in the way, or towards the parts from whence ye came: this they are bid to do tomorrow, but did not till some time after; for, contrary to the command of God, they went up the mount, where they were defeated by the Amalekites and Canaanites, after which they stayed in Kadesh some days, **De 1:44**;

and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea; or in the way towards it; and so they would be in the way to Egypt, where the people were desirous of returning again; but as they were always a rebellious and disobedient people, and acted contrary to God, so in this case; for when he bid them go back towards the Red sea again, then they were for going forward, and entering into the land of Canaan,
Nu 14:40; though when he bid them go up, and possess it, then they were for returning to Egypt, Nu 14:4.

{z} bvwy "sedet", Drusius, Piscator.

Numbers 14:26

Ver. 26. And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron,.... Before he had been only speaking to Moses, who had interceded with him to pardon the people, which he had granted; but at the same time assured him they should not enter into and possess the land of Canaan, and the same he repeats to him and Aaron together:

saying: as follows.

Numbers 14:27

Ver. 27. How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me?.... Bear with their murmurings, spare them, and not cut them off? how long must sparing mercy be extended to them? the Lord speaks as one weary of forbearing, so frequent and aggravated were their murmurings. The Jews understand this not of the whole congregation of Israel, but of the ten spies, from whence they gather, that ten make a congregation; and they interpret the phrase, "which murmur against me", transitively, "which cause to murmur against me"; made the children of Israel murmur against him, so Jarchi; but rather all the people are meant, as appears from Nu 14:28, and from the following clause:

I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me; for their murmurings were not only against Moses and Aaron, but against the Lord himself, Nu 14:2.

Numbers 14:28

Ver. 28. Say unto them, [as truly as] I live, saith the Lord,.... The form of an oath, as in Nu 14:21;

as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you; what they had wished for, and expressed in the hearing of the Lord, he threatens them should be their case.

Numbers 14:29

Ver. 29. Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness,.... They had wished they had died in it, Nu 14:2, and the Lord here declares they should, which is signified by the falling of their carcasses in it, or their bodies, which when dead fall to the ground, having no strength to support themselves:

and all that were numbered of you: but a few months before this time, when their number was 603,550, **Nu 1:46**;

according to your number from twenty years old and upward; which is observed, as Jarchi thinks, to except the Levites, for they were not numbered with the other tribes; and when they were numbered by themselves, their number was taken from a month old and upwards; wherefore it need not be wondered at, if we find that there were of them who did not fall in the wilderness, but entered into the land of Canaan, as it is certain Eleazar the priest, the son of Aaron, did,
Nu 34:17;

which have murmured against me; which shows, that not the spies only, who caused the people to murmur, but the people themselves who murmured, and had been numbered, from twenty years old and upward, are the evil congregation the Lord thus threatened with death.

Numbers 14:30

Ver. 30. Doubtless ye shall not come into the land,.... The land of Canaan; or "if ye shall come" {a}; that is, I swear ye shall not, so the Targum of Jonathan:

[concerning] which I sware to make you dwell therein; not them personally, but the people and nation of which they were, and to which they belonged, the seed and posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the oath was made:

save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun; who brought a good report of the land. Caleb is mentioned first, as Aben Ezra thinks, because he first appeased and quieted the people; but in
Nu 14:38 Joshua stands first, so that nothing is to be inferred from hence; these were the only two of the spies that went into the land of Canaan, Nu 13:4; and the only two of the Israelites that were numbered, from twenty years old and upwards, Nu 14:29; those of the tribe of Levi, not being in that account, must be remembered to be excepted also.

{a} wabt Mta Ma "si vos ingressi fueritis", Pagninus, Montanus.

Numbers 14:31

Ver. 31. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey,.... To the Canaanites, Nu 14:3;

them will I bring in; into the land of Canaan, and so fulfil the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for the unbelief of this congregation did not make the faith, or faithfulness of God, of none effect:

and they shall know the land which ye have despised; shall know what a good land it is by experience, and shall possess and enjoy it with approbation, delight, and pleasure, which they, believing the spies, rejected with, loathing and disdain.

Numbers 14:32

Ver. 32. But [as for] you, your carcasses,.... Which way of speaking seems to be used to distinguish them from their children;

they shall fall in this wilderness: which is repeated for the confirmation and certainty it, and an emphasis is laid on the words, this which are pronounced with an accent, to put them in mind of their wish, Nu 14:2.

Numbers 14:33

Ver. 33. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years,.... Or "feed" {b}, as shepherds, who go from place to place, and seek fresh pasture for their sheep; it being the custom of a shepherd, as Aben Ezra observes, not to stand or rest in a place; and so like sheep grazing in a wilderness, where they have short commons, and wander about in search, of better. These forty years are to be reckoned from their coming out of Egypt, from whence they had now been come about a year and a half:

and bear your whoredoms; the punishment of their idolatries, which are frequently signified by this phrase, and particularly of the idolatry of the calf, which God threatened to punish whenever he visited for sin, Ex 32:34; and of other sins, as their murmurings, &c. for it was on account of them their children wandered so long in the wilderness, and were kept out of the possession of the land of Canaan:

until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness; everyone of them be consumed by death, save those before excepted, Nu 14:30.

{b} Myer wyhy "erunt pascentes", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius; "pascent", Tigurine version, Piscator.

Numbers 14:34

Ver. 34. After the number of days in which ye searched the land, [even] forty days,.... For so long they were searching it, Nu 13:25;

each day for a year; reckoning each day for a year, forty days for forty years, as in **Eze 4:6**;

shall ye bear your iniquities, [even] forty years: which number is given, being a round one, otherwise it was but thirty eight years and a half ere they were all cut off, and their children entered the land:

and ye shall know my breach of promise; God never makes any breach of promise; his covenant he will not break, nor alter what is gone out of his lips; men break their promises, and transgress the covenant they have made with him, but he never breaks his, Ps 89:34; this should rather be rendered only, "ye shall know my breach"; experience a breach made upon them by him, upon their persons and families by consuming them in the wilderness: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"and ye shall know what ye have murmured against me;"

this same word is used in the plural in Job 33:10, and is by the Targum rendered "murmurings" or "complaints"; and so the sense is, ye shall know by sad experience the evil of complaining and murmuring against me. The Vulgate Latin version is,

"ye shall know my vengeance;"

and so the Septuagint,

"ye shall know the fury of my anger"

which give the sense, though not a literal version of the words.

Numbers 14:35

Ver. 35. I the Lord have said,.... Determined, resolved on doing what I have declared, and again repeat it; the decree is absolute and peremptory, and will never be revoked:

I will surely do it to all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me; against his ministers, Moses the chief magistrate, and Aaron the high priest; and this is interpreted gathering, conspiring, and rebelling against the Lord himself, on account of which they might be truly called an evil congregation, and therefore it was a determined point with him to destroy them:

in this wilderness they shall be consumed; by wasting diseases:

and there they shall die; as they wished they might, Nu 14:22; with respect to which this was so often repeated, Ex 16:3; and which the Jews interpret not only of a corporeal death, but of an eternal one; for they say {c}

"the generation of the wilderness (of those that died there) have no part in the world to come, nor shall stand in judgment, as it is said, "in this wilderness", &c. Nu 14:35."

{c} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 3.

Numbers 14:36

Ver. 36. And the men which Moses sent to search the land,.... Ten of them,

who returned; as they all did, who were sent to search it:

and made all the congregation to murmur against him; against, Moses that sent them; they murmured themselves, and made others murmur:

by bringing up a slander upon the land; that it ate up its inhabitants, and that the inhabitants of it were of such a stature, and so gigantic and strong, and dwelt in such walled cities, Nu 13:28, that there was no probability of subduing them, Nu 13:31.

Numbers 14:37

Ver. 37. Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land,.... They, and they only at this time:

died by the plague before the Lord; either by the pestilence immediately sent upon them by the Lord, or by a flash of lightning from him, or in some other way; however, by the immediate hand of God, and in his presence, being in the tabernacle of the congregation,
Nu 14:10; though the Jews differently relate the manner of their death; some say worms came out of their navels, and up to their jaws, and ate them and their tongues; and others that they came out of their tongues, and entered their navels, which they take to be a just retaliation for sinning with their tongues: and the time of their death they differ about; some say, as the Targum of Jonathan, that it was upon the seventh, and others that it was on the seventeenth of Elul or August they died {d}.

{d} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2.

Numbers 14:38

Ver. 38. But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh,.... Here Joshua is set first, as Caleb is in Nu 14:30; which shows that they were equal in dignity, and therefore are indifferently put, sometimes the one first, and sometimes the other:

[which were] of the men that went to search the land; were two of the spies, and were for the tribes of Judah and Ephraim, Nu 13:6,

lived [still]; were not stricken with death, when the other spies were; though perhaps upon the very spot, and in the same place, and among them, when they were struck dead; but these remained alive, and continued many years after, and entered the good land, and possessed it.

Numbers 14:39

Ver. 39. And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel,.... That all that had murmured, who were of twenty years old and upwards, should die in the wilderness, and never see nor enter into the land of Canaan, on the borders of which they now were:

and the people mourned greatly; because of their unhappy case, that they should be cut off by death in the wilderness, and be deprived of the enjoyment of the good land; their sorrow seems to have been not a godly sorrow, or true repentance for sin committed, but a worldly sorrow that works death; it was not on account of the evil of sin, the pardon of which they did not seem to seek after, but on account of the evil that was likely to come to them by it.

Numbers 14:40

Ver. 40. And they rose up early in the morning,.... The next morning after they had heard the bad news of their consumption in the wilderness; not being able, perhaps, to sleep that night with the thoughts of it, and being now in a great haste to go up and possess the land of Canaan, as they were before to return to Egypt:

and gat them up into the top of the mountain; which was the way the spies went into the land of Canaan, Nu 13:17; this they did not actually ascend, as appears from Nu 14:44; but they determined upon it, and got themselves ready for it:

saying, lo, we [be here]; this they said either to one another, animating each other to engage in the enterprise; or to Moses and Joshua, signifying that they were ready to go up and possess the land, if they would put themselves at the head of them, and take the command and direction of them;

and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised: the land of Canaan:

for we have sinned; in not going up to possess it, when they were bid to go, and in listening to the spies that brought an ill report of it, and by murmuring against Moses and Aaron, and the Lord himself, and proposing to make them a captain and return to Egypt, Nu 14:2: but this acknowledgment and repentance were not very sincere, by what follows.

Numbers 14:41

Ver. 41. And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord?.... Which was to turn back into the wilderness, and go the way that leads to the Red sea, Nu 14:25; instead of which now they were for going forward into the land of Canaan, though averse to it just before:

but it shall not prosper; their attempt to enter into it.

Numbers 14:42

Ver. 42. Go not up, for the Lord [is] not among you,.... And therefore could not expect success, for victory is of the Lord; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"the ark, and the tabernacle, and the cloud of glory move not,"

which were a plain indication that the Lord would not go with them, and therefore could not hope to prevail over their enemies and enter the land, but on the contrary might expect to be defeated by them, as follows:

that ye be not smitten before your enemies; of which they would be in great danger should they attempt to go up the hill, and the Lord not with them.

Numbers 14:43

Ver. 43. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites [are] there before you,.... Having removed from the valley, Nu 14:25; or else had detached a party to defend the pass on the top of the mountain, and where perhaps they designed to feign a retreat if they found it proper, and draw them into a combat in the valley:

and ye shall fall by the sword: by the sword of the Amalekites and Canaanites:

because ye are turned away from the Lord: from the word of the Lord, from hearkening to and obeying his command:

therefore the Lord will not be with you; the consequence of which must be bad for them.

Numbers 14:44

Ver. 44. But they presumed to go up unto the hill top,.... In a bold, audacious, and presumptuous manner; they attempted to go up to the top of the hill, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Moses against it, and the danger they would be exposed unto; but withdrawing themselves from God and his ministers, and lifted up in themselves, and confident of their own strength, ventured on this rash enterprise: the Vulgate Latin version is, "being darkened they went up": either having their understandings darkened, and being given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart; or else they went up in the morning while it was dark, before daylight; which latter sense is favoured by the Targum of Jonathan,

"and they girded (or armed) themselves in the dark, before the morning light;"

and the former by an ancient exposition, called Tanchuma, mentioned by Jarchi,

"they went obscure (as it were in the dark) because without leave:"

nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp; the cloud not being taken up, but abiding on the tabernacle, which was the signal for resting, both for the ark, and for the camp, the Kohathites did not move with the ark: the Jews {e} have a notion, that there were two arks which went with Israel in the wilderness, one in which the law was put, and another in which the broken pieces of the tables were left; that in which the law was, was placed in the tabernacle of the congregation, and of this it is written, "the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not", &c. but that in which the broken pieces of the tables were, went in and out with them: but this does not clearly appear; and it is highly probable no ark went with them at this time; nor did Moses, the leader and commander of the people, stir from the camp of the Levites; wherefore it was a bold and hazardous undertaking the other camps engaged in without God going with them, and their general before them, or Joshua his minister; for if one did not go, the same may be concluded of the other.

{e} T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 22. 2.

Numbers 14:45

Ver. 45. Then the Amalekites came down,.... The hill; met the Israelites as they ascended: and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill; the same with the Amorites, one of the seven nations of Canaan,
Nu 13:29;

and smote them; with the sword, having the advantage of them in coming down the hill upon them:

and discomfited them even unto Hormah; the name of a place, so called from what happened there; as Jarchi says; either from this destruction of the Israelites at this time by these their enemies, or from the destruction of the Canaanites by Israel, Nu 21:4; and so here has its name by anticipation; or it may be from both these events, and seems to be confirmed by a third of the like kind, having been in former times called Zephath, **Jud 1:17**; see Jos 15:30; though some take it to be an appellative here, and not the proper name of a place, and render it even unto destruction, as the Targum of Jonathan, denoting the very great destruction and havoc that were made among them: how many were destroyed is not certain; the judgment threatened them of God soon began to take place, that their carcasses should fall in that wilderness.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 15

In this chapter the children of Israel are instructed about the meat offerings and drink offerings, and the quantities of them, which were always to go along with their burnt offerings and peace offerings they should offer when they came into the land of Canaan, Nu 15:1; and they are told that the same laws and ordinances would be binding equally on them that were of the country, and on the strangers in it,
Nu 15:13; and an order is given them to offer a cake of the first dough for an heave offering, Nu 15:17; and they are directed what sacrifices to offer for sins of ignorance, both of the congregation and particular persons, Nu 14:22; but as for presumptuous sinners, they were to be cut off, Nu 14:30; and an instance is recorded of stoning a sabbath breaker, Nu 14:32; and the chapter is concluded with a law for wearing fringes on the borders of their garments, the use of which is expressed, Nu 14:35.

Ver. 1. The Lord spake unto Moses,.... After the murmurings of the Israelites

by reason of the spies, Nu 14:2; and their being threatened with a consumption of them in the wilderness on that account,
Nu 14:12; and their defeat at Hormah, Nu 14:45: and lest their posterity should be discouraged, and despair of ever enjoying the good land:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 15:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,.... The younger sort of them, such as were under twenty years of age; for those of that age and upwards, who had murmured against the Lord, had been assured by him with an oath that they should die in the wilderness, and not see the land of Canaan, Nu 14:29; whereas those Moses is here bid to speak to were such that should possess it:

when ye come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto,
you; the land of Canaan, the grant of which is here renewed to them, and an assurance given of their coming into it and settlement in it; and that they should have dwelling places there for their several tribes and families.

Numbers 15:3

Ver. 3. And will make an offering by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering,.... The first of these respects such offerings by fire, which were not wholly burnt, but part of them were eaten by the priests, De 18:1; and the latter such as were wholly burnt, unless the latter can be thought to be only an explanation of the former:

or a sacrifice in performing a vow, or in a freewill offering; these were peace offerings, some of which were for thanksgiving, and others were either a vow or a freewill offering, as here: see **Le 7:11**;

or in your solemn feasts; as the passover, pentecost, &c. of which, and the offerings in them, see Le 23:4;

to make a sweet savour unto the Lord; for acceptance with him:

of the herd or of the flock; a bullock of the one, a lamb or kid of the goats of the other; fowls are not mentioned, because burnt offerings of them required no drink offerings {f}.

{f} Maimon. Maaseh Hakorbanot, c. 2. sect. 2.

Numbers 15:4

Ver. 4. Then shall he that offereth his offering unto the Lord,.... Be it of either kind before mentioned:

bring a meat offering of a tenth deal of flour, mingled with the fourth [part] of an hin of oil; this was made of the tenth part of an ephah, or of an omer of fine wheaten flour, which was the quantity of about three quarts; and which was mixed and macerated with the fourth part of an hin, or with a quart and more than half a pint of oil: see
Ex 29:40; rather this should be called a bread offering.

Numbers 15:5

Ver. 5. And the fourth [part] of an hin of wine,.... The same measure with the oil, and this was wine of the grapes, as the Targum of Jonathan; other sorts of wine might not be used for the purpose mentioned:

for a drink offering shalt thou prepare; with the meat offering, to go along with every burnt offering and peace offering; which, as they were the food of God and the provision of his house, it was proper there should be of every kind fit for an entertainment, as flesh, bread, and wine. These were to go

with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb; if there were more than one, then a greater quantity in proportion was required.

Numbers 15:6

Ver. 6. Or for a ram,.... Whether for a burnt offering or a peace offering; or rather and for a ram {g}, as many versions:

thou shalt prepare [for] a meat offering two tenth deals of flour mingled with the third [part] of an hin of oil: which was the quantity of six quarts of fine flour, and about three pints and a quarter of a pint of oil.

{g} Vid. Nold. Concord. Ebr. part. p. 4. No. 24. so R. Jonah in Ben Melech in loc.

Numbers 15:7

Ver. 7. And for a drink offering thou shalt offer a third [part] of an hin of wine,.... The same quantity of wine was to be used in the drink offering as of oil in the meat offering, Nu 15:4:

[for] a sweet savour unto the Lord, that it might be acceptable to him.

Numbers 15:8

Ver. 8. And when thou preparest a bullock [for] a burnt offering,.... Which was a larger offering, and required a larger meat offering and drink offering, as Nu 15:9 show:

or [for] a sacrifice in performing a vow or peace offerings unto the Lord; by which latter are meant freewill offerings; for though both sorts here mentioned were peace offerings, yet these were more particularly called so.

Numbers 15:9

Ver. 9. Then shall he bring with a bullock a meat offering,.... Much larger than either for a lamb or ram, even one consisting

of three tenth deals of flour; or nine quarts of it:

mingled with half an hin of oil; two quarts and a pint, and somewhat more.

Numbers 15:10

Ver. 10. And thou shalt bring for a drink offering half an hin of wine,.... The same quantity as of oil, and a little more:

[for] an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord: this, according to Jarchi, refers only to the meat offering and the oil: for the wine was not a fire offering, not being put upon the fire.

Numbers 15:11

Ver. 11. Thus shall it be done for one bullock,.... Such a quantity of flour and oil for the meat offering, and such a quantity of wine for the drink offering as before expressed; making no difference between one young or old:

or for a ram: which, Jarchi says, was thirteen months and one day old:

or for a lamb, or a kid; for a young one of the flock, whether of the sheep or goat, whether a lamb or a kid of the goats; which, according to Jarchi, were within a year, not a year old.

Numbers 15:12

Ver. 12. According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to everyone, according to their number. That is, in proportion to the number of the cattle, be they of which sort they would, should be the quantity of the meat and drink offerings.

Numbers 15:13

Ver. 13. All that are born of the country shall do these things after this manner,.... Meaning that all Israelites should with their sacrifices bring their meat and drink offerings of the quantity directed to as above:

in offering an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord; when they offered any burnt offerings or peace offerings: the Jews say, that all sacrifices, whether of the congregation or of a private person, require drink offerings, excepting the firstborn, the tithes, the passover, the sin offering, and the trespass offering; but the sin offering of the leper, and his trespass offering, require them {h}: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"all that are born in Israel, and not among the people, shall make these drink offerings thus;"

for though an uncircumcised Gentile might bring burnt offerings and peace offerings, yet not meat offerings and drink offerings with them;
See Gill on "Le 22:18"; only such as were proselytes of righteousness, as in Nu 15:14.

{h} Misn. Menachot, c. 9. 6.

Numbers 15:14

Ver. 14. And if a stranger sojourn with you,.... A stranger, or proselyte, not of the gate, but of righteousness, as Ben Gersom and the Jewish, writers in general interpret it;

or whatsoever [be] among you in your generations; whether such a proselyte settled and continued among them, or only stayed with them awhile:

and will offer an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord; is desirous of offering a burnt offering or a peace offering to the Lord in an acceptable manner:

as ye do, so shall he do; bring the same meat offering and drink offering, according to the nature and number of the cattle he brings for sacrifice.

Numbers 15:15

Ver. 15. One ordinance [shall be both] for you of the congregation,.... Or "O congregation" {i}, as Ben Melech, and so the Targum of Jonathan, "O whole congregation"; though Aben Ezra denies it to be vocative:

and also for the stranger that sojourneth [with you]; the same ordinance, statute, or appointment, respecting the above things, were equally binding on one side as on the other, an homeborn Israelite and a proselyte of righteousness:

an ordinance for ever in your generations; to be observed by them, one and the other, in all ages, until the Messiah came and abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances:

as ye [are] so shall the stranger be before the Lord; not in things civil, but religious, and particularly with respect to the above sacrifices and offerings: Ben Gersom and Aben Ezra say this respects the burnt offering only, which was before the Lord.

{i} lhqh "O Congregatio", Noldius, p. 237. No. 1077.

Numbers 15:16

Ver. 16. One law, and one manner,.... One law respecting these sacrifices, and one manner of offering them; one and the same precept to be observed, and one and the same judgment or punishment inflicted in case of non-observance:

shall be for you, and the stranger that sojourneth with you; for Israelites and proselytes; which is said to invite and encourage the latter, and may have a distant view to the calling of the Gentiles in Gospel times, when there should be no difference between Jews and Gentiles called by grace in matters of religion, but would be one in Christ, **Ga 3:28**.

Numbers 15:17

Ver. 17. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Or continued to speak to him; for the following law was given at the same time as those before:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 15:18

Ver. 18. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,.... Who only were bound to observe the following law concerning the cake of the first dough, Nu 15:20, and not Gentiles; so the Jews say {k}, the dough of a Gentile is free from the cake, though an Israelite kneads it:

when ye come into the land whither I bring you; the land of Canaan: this is another assurance of their possession of the land of Canaan, notwithstanding what had been threatened; in Nu 15:2; it is only said, "which I give unto you", but here, "whither I bring you"; assuring them, that as he had given it unto them, he would certainly introduce them into it. The Jews from hence gather, that they are not bound to observe this precept concerning the cake by the law, but in the land of Israel only, and when all Israel are there; wherefore at this time, and even in the days of Ezra, it is separated only by the words of the Scribes; and the reason of it is, that this law might not be forgotten by the Israelites {l}: there were three countries that were bound to bring the cake, according to the Misnah {m}.

{k} Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. c. 330. sect. 1. {l} Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. c. 322. sect. 2, 3. {m} Misn. Challah, c. 4. sect. 8. 10.

Numbers 15:19

Ver. 19. Then it shall be, that when ye eat of the bread of the land,.... Of the land of Canaan; when they were about to eat of it, before they actually did; when they were preparing for it, had ground their corn into flour, and had mixed it with water and kneaded it into dough, in order to bake it and make it fit for food; by bread is meant bread corn, such as was the old corn of the land the Israelites first ate of when they entered into it, **Jos 5:11**; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"not of rice, or millet, or pulse,"

but what was made of corn used for bread; and the Jews say {n}, there were five things only they were obliged to make the cake of, wheat, barley, "cusmin" or rye, fox ear (barley), and oats; and this is to be understood only of dough made for men's bread, and not for dogs or any other beast {o}:

ye shall offer up an heave offering unto the Lord; and what that is, is expressed in Nu 15:20.

{n} Misn. Challah, c. 1. sect. 1. {o} Schulchan Aruch, ut supra, (par. 2.) c. 330. sect. 8, 9.

Numbers 15:20

Ver. 20. Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough [for] an heave offering,.... Of the first dough made of the first corn that was threshed, winnowed and ground, they were to make a cake, and offer it an heave offering unto the Lord; the quantity of it is not expressed, but was left to the people's generosity; no stinted measure was fixed by the law; but according to the Scribes, or the traditions of the elders, the quantity of the cake was the twenty fourth part of the first dough that was kneaded; not the forty fourth, as Buxtorf {p} through mistake says; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"of the first of your dough, one out of twenty four (i.e. the twenty fourth part of it), ye shall separate a separation for the priests,"

with which agrees the Misnah {q}, though according to that, if made to sell publicly it was the forty eighth part of it. Some, because Nu 15:21 begins and ends with m, "mem", which numerically signifies "forty", think this is an instruction to a bountiful person to give the fortieth part {r}:

as [ye do] the heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall ye heave it; as the two wave loaves and firstfruits of their harvest, Le 23:16.

{p} Synagog. Jud. c. 34. p. 602. {q} Challah, c. 2. sect. 7. so Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. c. 322. so Jarchi & Ben Gersom in loc. {r} Baal Hatturim in loc.

Numbers 15:21

Ver. 21. Of the first of your dough shall ye give unto the Lord,.... As an acknowledgment of his being the sovereign Lord and possessor of heaven and earth, and of his being the owner and proprietor of the land of Canaan; and by way of thankfulness to him for the plenty of bread corn he had given them; and wherefore this cake was to he heaved or lifted up towards him in heaven, as follows:

an heave offering in your generations: for this respected not only the first time of their entrance into the land of Canaan, but was to be observed every year when they made their first dough, and was to continue as long as the ceremonial law lasted: this cake was anciently given to the priest, which is meant by giving it to the Lord, but now the Jews take it and cast it into the fire and burn it {s} the apostle seems to allude to this cake of the first dough in Ro 11:16.

{s} Buxtorf. ut supra, (Synagog. Jud. c. 34. p. 602.) & Leo Modena, History of the present Jews, par. 2. c. 9.

Numbers 15:22

Ver. 22. And if ye have erred,.... Gone astray from the law of God, and any of its precepts; every sin is an error, a missing of the mark, a wandering from the way of God's commandments. Jarchi, and the Jews in general, interpret this of idolatry, but it rather respects any deviation from the law, moral or ceremonial, especially the latter:

and not observed all these commandments which the Lord hath spoken unto Moses; in this chapter, more particularly concerning the meat offerings and drink offerings, and the quantity of them, to be brought along with their burnt offerings and peace offerings, and concerning the cake of the first dough to be heaved before the Lord and given to the priest.

Numbers 15:23

Ver. 23. [Even] all that the Lord hath commanded you by the hand of Moses,.... Recorded in this book and the two preceding, whether of a moral, ceremonial, or judicial kind; the whole body of laws given to the people of Israel from the Lord by Moses:

from the day that the Lord commanded [Moses], and henceforward among your generations; all that he had commanded, or should hereafter command.

Numbers 15:24

Ver. 24. Then it shall be, if [ought] be committed by ignorance,.... Of the law of God, not clearly understanding the meaning of it, or not knowing of the several precepts of it, and the circumstances of each, and the manner of performing obedience thereunto:

without the knowledge of the congregation; or they being ignorant of the true intent of the law and form of obeying it; for this is to be understood not of the sin of a private person through ignorance, but of the body of the people; or of a congregation of them in some particular place, ignorantly and unawares falling into idolatry, or rather into a breach of any of the laws of God, moral or ceremonial:

that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour unto the Lord; as an acceptable sacrifice to him; by which it appears that this law is different from that in **Le 4:13**; since the bullock there was for a sin offering, this for a burnt offering; and besides another creature was to be for a sin offering, as after expressed:

with his meat offering and his drink offering, according to the manner; a meat offering, consisting of such a quantity of flour and oil, and a drink offering of such a quantity of wine as directed to,
Nu 15:9;

and one kid of the goats for a sin offering; which though mentioned last was offered first, as an expiatory sacrifice for sin, typical of Christ, who was made an offering for sin, and then the burnt offering by way of thankfulness for the acceptance of the other.

Numbers 15:25

Ver. 25. And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel;.... By offering a sin offering for them, a type of Christ, the propitiation not only for the sins of the people among the Jews, but throughout the whole world, **1Jo 2:2**;

and it shall be forgiven them; as the sins of the Lord's people are forgiven them through the blood of Christ, and on account of his stoning sacrifice and satisfaction made for them:

for it [is] ignorance; a sin of ignorance, for which reason Christ pleads for pardon on the foot of his sacrifice, and his people receive it, Lu 23:34; for that this sin was forgiven on the score of a sacrifice appears by what follows:

and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord; the bullock for the burnt offering:

and their sin offering before the Lord, for their ignorance; a kid of the goats.

Numbers 15:26

Ver. 26. And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of

Israel,.... Which is repeated for the certainty of it, and for the sake of what follows:

and the stranger that sojourneth among them; the proselyte of righteousness; so the blessing of pardon, through the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, comes upon believing Gentiles as well as Jews, **Ro 4:9**;

seeing all the people [were] in ignorance; both the congregation of Israel and the stranger; See Gill on "Nu 15:25".

Numbers 15:27

Ver. 27. And if any soul sin through ignorance,.... Any private or particular person, by breaking any of the above commands, or any other, not rightly understanding them, or not adverting: to the circumstances required in the manner of performing them:

then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering; which differed in this from the sin offering of a congregation that sinned through ignorance; that was a kid of the goats, whether male or female, but this was to be a female goat and of a year old.

Numbers 15:28

Ver. 28. And the priest shall make atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly,.... By offering his sin offering for him:

when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord; to whom it is known to be such, before whom all things are naked, open, and well known:

to make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him; upon that atonement made by sacrifice; so the forgiveness of the sins of all the Lord's people proceeds upon an atonement made by the blood and sacrifice of Christ: full atonement of sin and free forgiveness are not contrary to each other.

Numbers 15:29

Ver. 29. You shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance,....

Which enjoins a she goat for a sin offering for such:

[both] for him that is born amongst the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them; both sinning through ignorance, the same sacrifice was offered for them, by which atonement was made, and through which their sin was forgiven; by whom are meant homeborn Israelites and proselytes of righteousness, who were under the same laws, and enjoyed the same privileges, as do now believing Jews and Gentiles.

Numbers 15:30

Ver. 30. But the soul that doeth [ought] presumptuously,.... Or with "an high hand" {t}, or through pride, as the Targum of Jonathan; in an haughty, insolent, bold and daring manner; in an obstinate, stubborn, self-willed way, with purpose and design, openly and publicly, neither fearing God nor regarding man:

[whether he be] born in the land, or a stranger; here a stranger as well signifies a proselyte of the gate as a proselyte of righteousness; seeing this presumptuous sinning may respect idolatry and blasphemy, which sins were punishable in proselytes of the gate by the magistrates of Israel as well as by the immediate hand of God:

the same reproacheth the Lord; by denying him to be the true Jehovah, by worshipping other gods, and by speaking in a blaspheming manner of him the true God; and indeed every presumptuous sin, which is committed in a bold and audacious manner, in contempt of God and defiance of his law, is a reproaching him the lawgiver, and a trampling upon his legislative power and authority:

and that soul shall be cut off from among his people, either by the hand of the civil magistrate, upon conviction of him, or by the immediate hand of God; no sacrifice was to be offered for such, no atonement to be made or forgiveness to be had; see Mt 12:31.

{t} hmr dyb "in manu excelsa", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

Numbers 15:31

Ver. 31. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment,.... That is, has broken it through contempt of it, despising it as a command of God, paying no regard to it as a law of his; otherwise such who sin ignorantly break the commandment of God:

that soul shall be utterly cut off; or "in cutting off shall be cut off" {u}; most certainly cut off and entirely ruined and destroyed in this world and in that to come, as the Targum of Jonathan; and Maimonides {w} understands it of such a cutting off, that the soul itself perishes and is no more; but such annihilation the Scripture nowhere gives us any reason to believe:

his iniquity [shall be] upon him; the punishment of it, no atonement being made for it by sacrifice; it shall be upon him and him only, or be "in him" {x}, not repented of and not forgiven.

{u} trkt trkh "excidendo excidetur", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius. {w} In Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1. {x} hb "in ea", Montanus, Junins & Tremellius, Drusius; "in ipso", Piscator.

Numbers 15:32

Ver. 32. And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness,.... According to Aben Ezra, in the wilderness of Sinai; for it is a common notion of the Jews, that though this fact is recorded here, yet was committed the first year the Israelites came out of Egypt, quickly after the giving the law of the sabbath: hence Jarchi remarks, that the Scripture speaks of this to the reproach of the Israelites, that they kept only the first sabbath, and on the second this man came and profaned it; but it seems rather to be in the wilderness of Paran where this fact was committed, after the business of the spies and the discomfiture of Israel, and the above laws were given; and stands here in its proper place as an instance of a presumptuous sinner, cut off from his people, according to the above law, which it immediately follows:

they found a man that gathered sticks on the sabbath day; plucking them up by the roots, as the Targum of Jonathan, as stubble and the like; for the word signifies gathering straw or stubble, or such like light things, as Ben Melech observes, and binding them in bundles for fuel; and this was done on the sabbath day, by which it appears that that was to be kept in the wilderness, though the laws before mentioned concerning sacrifices, and the cake of the first dough, were not to be put in execution until Israel came into the land of

Canaan; and according to the Targum of Jonathan this man was of the house of Joseph, and in the Talmud {y} it is expressly said that he was Zelophehad, who was a descendant of Joseph.

{y} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 96. 2.

Numbers 15:33

Ver. 33. And they that found him gathering sticks,.... Admonished him, as say the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi, but he would not desist; wherefore they

brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation; to Moses and Aaron, and to the seventy elders, who might be at this time met together, to hear, try, and judge causes; for it cannot be thought that the whole body of the people are meant; and it is most likely that it was not on the sabbath day, but the day following, that they brought the man to them, who were then sitting in the court; though Aben Ezra observes, that some say they brought him to them the first night.

Numbers 15:34

Ver. 34. And they put him in ward,.... In a certain prison in the camp; perhaps the same in which the blasphemer was put, Le 24:12; and for much the same reason:

because it was not declared what should be done to him: that is, what kind of death he should die, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; it had been before declared that the sabbath breaker should die, but not what death he should die, Ex 31:15; though some think it was a matter of doubt whether gathering of sticks was a breach of the sabbath, or at least such a breach of it as required death; and the answer of the Lord seems to confirm this sense, as follows.

Numbers 15:35

Ver. 35. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... Who consulted the Lord upon this affair, in the tabernacle, even at the most holy place, from above the mercy seat, where he promised to meet him, and commune with him about whatsoever he should consult him, Ex 25:22;

the man shall surely be put to death; for as no fire was to be made throughout their habitations on a sabbath day, gathering sticks for such a purpose was a work that was a violation of the sabbath, punishable with death, Ex 35:2; and the kind of death follows:

all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp; as afterwards without the city: of the place and manner of stoning,
See Gill on "Ac 7:58".

Numbers 15:36

Ver. 36. And all the congregation brought him without the camp,.... What was done by the order of Moses and the seventy elders is said to be done by the whole congregation, though it was by a few persons only the man was actually brought out, who were the proper officers to do such business:

and stoned him with stones, and he died: stoned him to death:

as the Lord commanded Moses: at the time he consulted him in the sanctuary, which he acquainted the court with, and they immediately ordered the execution, which was accordingly done.

Numbers 15:37

Ver. 37. And the Lord spoke unto Moses,.... After the giving of the above laws, and the order for stoning the sabbath breaker; and the rather what follows is connected with them, because it was to put them in mind of these and all other commands; and of so much importance is the precept directed to, that the Jews say, and Jarchi particularly, that it is equivalent to all the commands, and which he makes to be the reason of its being placed here:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 15:38

Ver. 38. Speak unto the children of Israel,.... Whom it only concerned, and all of them, except women and children; for priests, Levites, Israelites, proselytes, and freed servants, were bound to wear the fringes, but not Gentiles; nor might the Gentiles make them, what were made by them were not to be used {z}, since it follows:

and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments, throughout their generations: the garments on which these fringes were put were such that were made either of linen or of woollen; no other were obliged to them by the law; but according to the Rabbins other garments were also, yet only square garments, which they call the Talith; and if that had not four skirts to it, it was free from them {a}: on this square garment, and the four corners or skirts of it, were the fringes put; which were a sort of pendants or tassels, which hung down from it, which consisted of eight white woollen threads, sometimes four, sometimes eight or twelve fingers broad {b}; there were four of them, one at each skirt or corner of the garment: they were, as another writer says {c}, made of eight threads broad, each of them being knit to the middle with five knots, and of wool spun on purpose for this use; and these were to be wore by them throughout their generations until the Messiah came, and they seem to have been worn by him, **Mt 9:20** however, it is certain they were worn by the Pharisees in his time, Mt 23:5; at present this four cornered garment is not any where in common use among the Jews, instead of which they wear, under their other garments, a kind of square frock, with the fringes or tassels fastened to it, and this they call Arbah Canfot; and in their schools, and at certain times of prayer, they put on a certain square woollen vestment, with the said pendants fastened at each corner, and this they call Talith {d}:

and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a riband of blue; or a blue lace, a piece of blue tape, which bound and kept the fringe tight and close, and being of a different colour, the fringe being white, made it the more conspicuous: the reason why this colour was used, the Jews say {e}, was, because it was like the sea, and the like the sky, and the sky like the throne of glory: this blue, hyacinth, or purple colour, as the Jews generally take it to be, was of a peculiar dye; the manner of making which is now unknown to them, and therefore they use only the white {f}.

{z} Sepher Alphes, par. 1. fol. 439. 2. & 442. 1. Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 14. sect. 1. {a} Schulchan ib. c. 9. sect. 1. & c. 10. sect. 1. & c. 24. 1. {b} Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 9. p. 160. {c} Leo Modena, History of the present Jews, par. 1. c. 5. sect. 7. {d} lb. sect. 9. {e} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 17. 1. {f} Maimon. in Misn. Menachot, c. 4. sect. 1.

Numbers 15:39

Ver. 39. And it shall be unto you for a fringe,.... The blue ribbon or lace shall be in or upon the fringe to fasten it:

that ye may look upon it; the blue lace making the whole the more conspicuous: from hence the Jews gather, that the night is not the time for wearing fringe, which lessens the sight, and it is not so easily seen; and that night garments are not obliged to have the fringe on them; and yet, they say, a blind man is bound to wear it, because, though he cannot see it, others can {g}:

and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them: this is the general use, end, and design of the fringes, that upon sight of them they might be put in mind of the commandments and put upon the practice of them; these being at the four corners of their vestments, let them look which way they would downwards, before or behind, or on either side, they could not but see them: and the many threads in them might put them in mind of the many precepts they were to observe; and the white colour, the purity and holiness of them; and the blue or sky-coloured lace might lead them to observe the heavenly original of them; or being of a purple colour rather, might direct them to the blood of Christ, for the remission of the transgressions of them: the Jews have many fanciful things about the use and virtue of these fringes, not worthy of notice; and they say, that such who are careful to observe this law of the fringe, are worthy to see the face of the divine Majesty, and will be preserved from evil spirits {h}:

and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes; to have and enjoy, and do those things, in matters of worship, which were of their own devising, and pleasing in their sight, as well as in moral things, what were agreeable to their carnal hearts, and make for the gratification of their senses:

after which ye use to go a whoring; which seems to restrain the sense pretty much to idolatry, to false and superstitious worship, which are often in Scripture expressed by fornication and whoredom; though other sins and lusts also are sometimes signified by the same words.

{g} Maimon. in Misn. Ediot, c. 4. sect. 10. & Hilchot Tzitzith, c. 3. sect. 7. Schulchan Aruch, p. 1. c. 17. 1. & 18. 1. {h} Baal Hatturim in loc. Schulchan Aruch, p. 1. c. 24. sect. 1, 6.

Numbers 15:40

Ver. 40. That ye may remember and do all my commandments,.... Which is repeated, that the end and use of these fringes might be particularly taken notice of, and attended to; that so they might not satisfy themselves with and rest in this ceremony of wearing the fringes, but be found in the observance of every moral precept, and of every religious ordinance and duty:

and be holy unto your God: as in his presence, according to his will, and for his honour and glory, by keeping his holy commands, and living an holy life and conversation, well pleasing in his sight.

Numbers 15:41

Ver. 41. I [am] the Lord your God,.... Their Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, their Lord and Sovereign, their covenant God and Father:

which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; to make it appear that he was their God in a special relation, and that he took the special care and government of them; and which was manifest by the system of laws he gave them to observe, as well as by his provision for them on all accounts, and by his protection of them:

I [am] the Lord your God; who had a right to enact laws, and enjoin the observance of them, as he was the Lord Jehovah; and they were under obligation to regard them, as he was not only their Creator but their covenant God and Father, who had bestowed his favours liberally on them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 16

This chapter gives an account of a sedition of Korah and others against Moses and Aaron, Nu 16:1, with whom Moses expostulates, and shows the unreasonableness of their clamour against Aaron, Nu 16:5; sends for Dathan and Abiram, who were in the confederacy, but refused to come, which greatly angered Moses, Nu 16:12; orders Korah and his company to appear before the Lord the next day, with Aaron, to have the controversy decided, Nu 16:16;

when all the congregation gathered together would have been, consumed had it not been for the intercession of Moses and Aaron, Nu 16:19; and who, being separated from the rebels by the command of the Lord, some of the rebels were swallowed up in the earth, and others destroyed by fire from heaven, Nu 16:23; and their censers were made a covering for the altar, as a memorial of their sin, Nu 16:36; on which there was a new insurrection of the people, which brought a plague upon them, and destroyed 14,700 persons, and which was stopped at the intercession of Aaron, Nu 16:41.

Ver. 1. Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi,.... A great grandson of Levi's, and own cousin to Moses and Aaron, being brothers children; for Amram the father of Moses and Aaron, and Izhar the father of Korah, were own brothers, both of them the sons of Kohath, and Amram the eldest, and Izhar the next, **Ex 6:16**; this man is mentioned first, being the contriver, and plotter, and ringleader of the following sedition, and which is called "the gainsaying of Core", **Jude 1:11**; when this was made is not certain; Aben Ezra thinks this affair happened in the wilderness of Sinai, when the firstborn were exchanged, and the Levites were separated for holy service, **Nu 3:1**; but, according to the Targum of Jonathan, it was after the law concerning the fringes was given, which it here follows, and was on that account; for it says, that Korah took his coat, which was all blue, and that the men with him rose up, and in the face of Moses taught the rite concerning the blue ribbon; when Moses declared he had it from God, that the fringe should be of white, and one thread of blue should be in it; but Korah and his company made their coats and fringes all of blue, which the Lord commanded not: but what Korah is said to take is either himself, or men, or both, and not clothes, as follows:

and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took [men]; which men are described in Nu 16:2, even princes of the assembly, &c. or he, Korah, took himself, as Ben Melech, or divided himself, as Onkelos, separated himself from the congregation, and set himself at the head of a party he gathered together; and the "vau" or "and" before "Dathan" may be additional or superfluous, as Chaskuni observes, and so Abendana; and then the sense is, that Korah took Dathan, Abiram and On, apart by themselves, and entered into a consultation and confederacy with them against Moses and Aaron, with whom he was offended on account of the priesthood being bestowed on the latter by the former; and these men he associated to him, being the sons of Reuben, who would the rather listen to him, and join with him, because the right of the firstborn was taken from them, and the camp of Judah was placed before them; and with these men he could more easily commune, because the camp of Reuben and the Kohathites lay on the same side of the tabernacle, **Nu 2:10**; Eliab, the father of Dathan and Abiram, was the son of Pallu, the second son of Reuben, Nu 26:5; but as for On, no mention is made of him elsewhere, nor any more in this place; it is thought he separated from his company after he had heard what Moses said to them; and the Rabbins say, his wife delivered him out of their hands, as Abendana observes.

Numbers 16:2

Ver. 2. And they rose up before Moses,.... To his face, openly and publicly, in a bold and audacious manner; with impudence, as the Targum of Jonathan:

with certain of the children of Israel; some out of the several tribes, but perhaps chiefly of the tribe of Reuben, as Jarchi:

two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly; or "congregation" {i}, who were princes in the several tribes to which they belonged, heads of houses and families of their fathers, rulers of thousands, hundreds, &c.

famous in the congregation; or "called" {k} to the tabernacle of the congregation; who, when the great men among the people were gathered together to consult about any affair, were called, as Ben Melech observes:

men of renown, or "of name" {l}; in high esteem among the people for their birth and rank, their wealth and riches, wisdom and prudence; and were so before they came out of Egypt, as Aben Ezra remarks; so that the persons concerned in this rebellion were not the mob and dregs of the people, but men of the greatest figure and fame, and therefore was likely to be of bad consequence.

{i} hde "congregationis", Pagninus. {k} yarq "vocati", Montanus, Drusius. {l} Mv yvna "viri nominis", Montanus, Drusius.

Numbers 16:3

Ver. 3. And they gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron,.... They met together by appointment, and went up in a body to Moses and Aaron:

and said unto them, [ye take] too much upon you; the one to be king, and the other to be priest; for they imagined that Moses took the civil government into his hands, and Aaron the priesthood, of themselves, without any call of God to either; but the contrary is most certain, **Heb 3:2**; the Israelites, those of the other tribes besides Levi and Reuben, thought that Moses took too much upon him of his own head, to take the Levites instead of the firstborn, and confer a dignity on his own brethren, the sons of Kohath, who were near akin to him, and on all the sons of Levi, as Aben Ezra observes; and the Levites they conspired against him, because they were given to Aaron and his sons; and Dathan and Abiram entered into a conspiracy, as the same writer thinks, because he had removed the birthright from Reuben their father, and had given it to Joseph; for it is probable they suspected him, because of Joshua his minister; and Jarchi conjectures that Korah was angry because Moses had conferred the government of the Kohathites on Elizaphan, the son of Uzziel, the youngest son of Kohath, when he himself, Korah, was the eldest son of an elder son of Kohath: or "it is", or "let it be enough for you" {m}; or more than enough, as Jarchi; it is sufficient that you have had the government, both in things civil and religious, so long as you have; it is time to give it up to others, who are as well qualified as yourselves. The time past may suffice for the exercise of your despotic and arbitrary power; though it seems to be chiefly levelled against Aaron, and his priesthood, which they thought Moses had conferred on his brother of himself, any instruction from God:

seeing all the congregation [are] holy, everyone of them; having all heard the words of the Lord on Sinai, as Jarchi notes; and were all fit to be priests, and to offer sacrifice in and for their families, as they had used to do, before the separation of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood:

and the Lord [is] among them; in the tabernacle, to whom they could approach and offer their offerings without a priest to do it for them:

wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord? since they were all upon a level, everyone holy to the Lord, and might draw nigh unto him, and officiate as priests; wherefore they represent it as great pride and vanity in them; in Moses to take upon him to dispose of the priesthood at his pleasure, and make Aaron the high priest of the people; and in Aaron to take this office upon him, and to be an high priest, and not all the sons of Levi, but over all the children of Israel.

{m} br "sat est vel satis sit", Pagninus, Vatablus, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Aben Ezra.

Numbers 16:4

Ver. 4. And when Moses heard [it],.... What they said, their complaint against him, for setting up Aaron for an high priest, and against Aaron for taking this honour to himself:

he fell upon his face; through shame, as the Targum of Jonathan, blushing at their sin, in opposing the ordinance of God; and through fear of the divine displeasure, and of the wrath of God coming upon them for such wickedness; and in order to pray to God for them to make them sensible of their sin, and give them repentance for it, and pardon of it, and avert his judgments from them such a conduct called aloud for.

Numbers 16:5

Ver. 5. And he spake unto Korah, and unto all his company,.... The two hundred fifty princes that were with him; what follows was said to them apart from Dathan and Abiram, who seem not to be present at this time; and this was after Moses had finished his prayer to God, and had received instructions from him, by an impulse on his mind, what he should say unto them, and was now risen up from the earth he fell upon:

saying, even tomorrow the Lord will show who [are] his; his priests, whom he had chosen, and put into that office; this he would make known so clearly and plainly, that there would be no room left to doubt of it, and which was revealed to Moses while upon his face in prayer to God:

and [who is] holy; or whom he has separated to such an holy office and service:

and will cause [him] to come near unto him; and do his work as a priest, without fear of danger, and without any hurt, which is suggested would befall others; and they may expect it, who intrude themselves into such an office, and engage their hearts in a bold audacious manner, to draw nigh to God in it:

even [him] whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him: meaning Aaron with his sons, whom the Lord would make to appear that he had chosen, and put into the office of priesthood, and that it was not what

Moses did of himself.

Numbers 16:6

Ver. 6. This do, take you censers,.... Vessels to put incense in to offer, which was the business of the priests:

Korah, and all his company; the two hundred fifty princes that were with him, for so many we read took censers, and offered incense,
Nu 16:18.

Numbers 16:7

Ver. 7. And put fire therein,.... Into the censers:

and put incense in them; on the coals of fire in the censers:

before the Lord; not at the altar of incense in the holy place, into which none but Aaron and his sons might come, but at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where the glory of the Lord appeared,
Nu 16:18; and this they were to do

tomorrow; the day following that on which the insurrection was made, and in the morning of that day, which was the usual time of judgment; this was delayed until the morrow, that they might have opportunity to reflect upon what they had done, and repent of their sin, and consider what they were to do, and the danger which might attend it; as in the case of Nadab and Abihu, who, though sons of the high priest, yet offering strange fire, were consumed by fire, Nu 10:1; and so might they for assuming the priesthood, and officiating in any part of it, which did not belong to them:

and it shall be, [that] the man whom the Lord doth choose, he [shall be] holy: meaning Aaron, with his sons; for though the Lord had already chosen him, and ordered him and his family to be separated from the rest of the Israelites, to exercise the priestly office, and he was actually invested with it, and had entered upon it; yet he would at this time, in a visible way and manner, make it manifest that he had done it, and therefore should be as it were afresh set apart for holy service, and be continued in it:

[ye take] too much upon you, ye sons of Levi: of which tribe Korah was; and it looks as if those with him were chiefly of that tribe; however, these here addressed certainly were, and Moses retorts their own language upon them; they had said, that he and Aaron had taken too much upon them, though no more than what God had called them to; and now he says that they had taken too much upon them, to resist the ordinance of God, and to endeavour to remove from their office whom God had put into it, in order to substitute themselves: or "it is enough for you", or "let it suffice you"; be content with the honour put upon you, the dignity you are raised to, to be next to the priests, and assistants to them; be not ambitious of more; let what you have satisfy you.

Numbers 16:8

Ver. 8. And Moses said unto Korah,.... Continued his discourse to him, as the head of the conspiracy, and the ringleader of it:

hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi; to whom also he had been before speaking; though Aben Ezra thinks the first speech was made to Korah and his company, and what follows to the Levites.

Numbers 16:9

Ver. 9. [Seemeth it but] a small thing unto you,.... It should not; for it was a great thing which the Lord had done for them, and with which they should have been satisfied, and for it thankful:

that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel: this was a special favour, and ought to have been esteemed such, that God, who was the God of the whole people of Israel in common, should separate the tribe of Levi from all the rest of the tribes of Israel:

to bring you near to himself; next to the priests their brethren of the same tribe, to be joined to them, and assist them in their service, and officiate in the court of the tabernacle, where the divine Majesty dwelt:

to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord; to watch it, and guard it, and keep out persons until to enter into it; to take it down and set it up, as occasion required, and bear and carry the holy things in it, and take care of them:

and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? which Jarchi interprets of their singing in the desk songs of praise before them; but Aben Ezra, better, of the service they did for them, when they brought their offerings and sacrifices, which they took of them, and carried to the priests to offer for them.

Numbers 16:10

Ver. 10. And he hath brought thee near [to him],.... To be in his courts, to watch in his house, and wait on his priests, for which an ample provision was made by tithes. Korah is there personally addressed:

and all thy brethren, the sons of Levi, with thee; the whole tribe of them, excepting Aaron and his family, who were advanced to be priests:

and seek ye the priesthood also? the high priesthood, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; this opens the true cause of their discontent and rebellion; they could not be satisfied with being the ministers of the priests, but wanted to be priests themselves, and Korah perhaps to be high priest.

Numbers 16:11

Ver. 11. For which cause, both [thou] and all thy company [are] gathered together against the Lord,.... For gathering together against his ministers, whom he had put into office to act under him, and endeavouring to overturn a constitution of his erecting, and resisting and not submitting to an ordinance of his, is interpreted gathering against him, and acting in opposition to him; see Ro 13:1;

and what [is] Aaron, that ye murmur against him? what is his transgression? what has he done? as Aben Ezra paraphrases it; he is not chargeable with any fault, he did not take upon him the office of high priest of himself, God called him to it, and put him in it; he is only his minister, and by no means to be blamed, and therefore it is unreasonable to envy him, or murmur against him; and, indeed, murmuring against him is murmuring against the Lord.

Numbers 16:12

Ver. 12. And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab,.... He sent messengers to call them to the house of judgment, as the Targum of Jonathan, to the court of judicature, where the Jews suppose Moses, with the seventy elders, were now sitting: it seems these two men departed either before. Moses rose up from prayer, or however before he had finished his speech to Korah and the Levites; which being particularly directed to them, these men might think they had no concern in it, and went away to their own tents:

which said, we will not come up; this answer they returned to the messengers, and by them to Moses, declaring that they denied his power, despised his authority, and would not obey his orders, and therefore refused to come up to the tabernacle, or to the tent of Moses, or to the court of judicature, wherever it was; perhaps the first is best. Aben Ezra thinks, that as the tabernacle was in the midst of the camp, it was on an eminence, wherefore those that came to it might be said to come up to it.

Numbers 16:13

Ver. 13. [Is it] a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey?.... Meaning Egypt, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it; which, though a plentiful country, never had, nor deserved to have this epithet given it, which is peculiar to the land of Canaan, and is here given, in opposition to the description of that land, which the Lord himself had so described; and argues great impudence and want of reverence of the divine Being, as well as great ingratitude to Moses, the instrument of their being brought out of Egypt, where they laboured under bondage and servitude intolerable; and yet here represent it as an injury done to them, and as if the intent and design of it was purely to destroy them: for they add,

to kill us in the wilderness; with want of food, of which they had plenty in Egypt, they suggest; referring, it may be, to what the Lord by Moses had said to them, that their carcasses should fall in the wilderness; but that would not be for want of provisions, but because of their sins. It was bad enough, they intimate, to be brought out of such a plentiful country, into a barren wilderness; but what was still worse, the despotic and tyrannical government of Moses, as they represent it, they were brought under:

except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? ruling in an arbitrary way, making laws, and setting up offices and officers at pleasure, so that it is more eligible to be in bondage in Egypt than under thy government. Aben Ezra takes their meaning to be, as if the end of bringing them out of Egypt was to assume and exercise such rule and authority over them. His words are,

"hast thou brought us up out of Egypt, that thou mayest exercise dominion over us as a prince, yea, many dominions, thou and thy brother?"

and who also observes, that Egypt lay to the south of the land of Israel, so that one that came from Egypt to the land of Canaan may be truly said to come up, that part of Canaan lying higher than Egypt.

Numbers 16:14

Ver. 14. Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey,.... Meaning the land of Canaan; but this was no fault of Moses, he had brought them to the borders of it, he had bid them go up and possess it; but they refused, and chose to have spies first sent into it, who brought an ill report of it, which they listened to, and had so provoked the Lord thereby, that he ordered them to turn back, and threatened them with a consumption of them in the wilderness; or "certainly" {n}, verily thou hast not brought us, &c. though the Septuagint version renders it affirmatively, "thou hast brought us"; and the Vulgate Latin version, indeed thou hast brought, directly contrary to the text; unless it is to be understood ironically, as it is by some:

or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards; that is, in the land of Canaan, as were promised them; they suggest, had this been the case, they could have been content that he should have been their prince, and they would have submitted to his government; but having received no advantage from him, but a great deal of hurt and damage, they could not but consider him not only as a tyrant, but as an impostor and deceiver:

wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? or "dig" them out {o}; either in a literal sense, wilt thou be so cruel and merciless as to put out the eyes of these men, Korah and his company, and us for our opposition to thy government? or though thou shouldest do so,

we will not come up; we are determined not to obey thee, but to shake off the yoke, let our punishment be what it will; or figuratively, dost thou take us for blind persons, whose eyes thou hast put out, and think to lead us at thy pleasure? or dost thou cast a mist before the eyes of this whole congregation, that they are not able to see through thy designs? are the people so bewitched by them, as not to see thy deceits and impostures? pretending to bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey, which thou art not able to do, and now sayest that thou hast a message from God to return again towards the Red sea, and talkest of our posterity inheriting the land forty years hence; who is it that cannot see through all this? Aben Ezra thinks, by "these men" are meant the elders that were with Moses, whom he led as he pleased, and so blinded them with his delusions, as these pretended, that they could not see through them.

{n} la "certe", Noldius, p. 97. No. 468. so Onkelos. {o} rqnt "effodies", Pagninus, Piscator; "vis effodere", Fagius; "fodies", Junius & Tremellius, Drusius.

Numbers 16:15

Ver. 15. And Moses was very wroth,.... Or "it heated Moses exceedingly" {p}; made him very angry, caused him to burn with wrath against them; even the speech they made, the words they uttered, not so much on account of their ill usage of him, as for the dishonour cast upon the Lord:

and said unto the Lord, respect not thou their offering; their "Minchah", the word is commonly used for the meat or bread offering. Aben Ezra observes, that Dathan and Abiram were great men, and had offered such kind of offerings before this fact; and therefore Moses desires that the Lord would have no respect to any they had offered, but have respect to him, who had never injured any of them. Jarchi gives it as the sense of some, that whereas these men had a part in the daily sacrifices of the congregation (with which a meat offering always went), the request is, that it might not be received with acceptance by the Lord; but he himself thinks it is to be understood of the offering of incense they were to offer on the morrow; and Moses desires that God would show his disapprobation of it, and which is the common interpretation. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem render it, "their gift":

I have not taken one ass from them; either by force, or as a bribe, or by way of gratuity for any service done them; the sense is, that he had not taken from them the least thing in the world, anything of the meanest worth and value, on any consideration. Aben Ezra interprets the word "take", of taking and laying any burden upon an ass of theirs; so far was he from laying any burdens on them, and using them in a cruel and tyrannical manner, as they suggested, that he never laid the least burden on any ass of theirs, and much less on them:

neither have I hurt any of them; never did any injury to the person or property of anyone of them, but, on the contrary, had done them many good offices.

{p} dam hvml rxyw "et excanduit Mosi valde", Drusius.

Numbers 16:16

Ver. 16. And Moses said unto Korah,.... Who was still with him, when the messenger returned from Dathan and Abiram, and who heard what Moses said in his own defence;

be thou and all thy company before the Lord; at the tabernacle, at the door of it; the Targum of Jonathan is, at the house of judgment, the court of judicature, where this affair was to be tried, and that was at the tabernacle, as appears by what follows:

thou, and they, and Aaron, tomorrow; the day after Moses had sent to Dathan and Abiram, on the morning of the next day; which as it was the time of sitting in judgment, so of offering incense; meaning Korah and his company, the two hundred fifty men with him, and not Dathan and Abiram; and Aaron also, he was ordered to appear, whom they opposed, and with whom the trial was to be made.

Numbers 16:17

Ver. 17. And take every man his censer, and put incense therein,.... Which they were to bring with them the next day from their own tents; and these might be censers which they had in their several families, and which they had used in them before the order of priesthood was set up in Aaron's family, and limited to that; or they might be a sort of chafing dishes, or vessels like censers, and would serve the present purpose; they were ordered to put fire into them, that was to be taken from the altar of burnt offering; for strange fire might not be used;

and bring ye before the Lord every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers: according to the number of the men that were gathered with Korah:

thou also, and Aaron, each [of you] his censer; Korah and Aaron were to bring each their censers, between whom lay the contest concerning the high priesthood; which was to be determined by their offering incense before the Lord, and by his approbation or disapprobation of it.

Numbers 16:18

Ver. 18. And they took every man his censer, and that fire in them,.... That is, they came the next morning, according to order, prepared with their censers and incense; and they took fire from off the altar of burnt offering, which stood in the court of the tabernacle:

and laid incense thereon: upon the fire in their censers, and so burned it:

and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; not in the holy place, where the altar of incense was, for that would not hold them; nor indeed in the court of the tabernacle, but at the door of it, or the outside of it, that so they might be seen by all the people who came to be spectators and witnesses of this affair: and they stood

with Moses and Aaron; in a bold and presumptuous manner, as if they were their equals, disputing their authority, and putting themselves upon their trial before the Lord about it: the Targum of Jonathan says, these men stood on one side (of the door of the tabernacle), and Moses and Aaron stood on the other side of it.

Numbers 16:19

Ver. 19. And Korah gathered all the congregation against them,.... Not his own company only, but as many of the whole congregation of Israel as he could get together, and especially the principal men; so that it seems there was a, general prevailing inclination in the people to take part with him against Moses and Aaron, who wished him success in his undertaking, and readily came together to animate and encourage him in it, and to see the issue of it. Jarchi suggests, that all night he was going to the several tribes, persuading them that it was not for his own private interest, but for the public good, that he acted against two men, who had taken to themselves, the one the kingdom, and the other the priesthood, and by this means got a great multitude together:

unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; that is, before it, where Korah and his company stood, whose part they took, and had like to have suffered severely for it, had it not been for the interposition of Moses and Aaron:

and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation; the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, which dwelt between the cherubim in the most holy place, removed and came to the door of the tabernacle, where the people were assembled, in the sight of them, showing some visible token of his presence, though no similitude of himself was seen; or, however, he appeared in the cloud that was over the tabernacle, in which was seen a glory, a brightness and splendour, or such coruscations and flashes of lightning as were very unusual and amazing, and plainly showed the Lord was there; so Jarchi says, that he came in the pillar of cloud.

Numbers 16:20

Ver. 20. And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron,.... Out of the cloud:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 16:21

Ver. 21. Separate yourselves, from among this congregation,.... Not only from Korah's company, but from the congregation of the children of Israel, whom Korah had got together, besides the two hundred fifty men that were at first with him; who by their words and behaviour, and particularly by their association and standing along with him, showed them to be on his side, which greatly provoked the Lord:

that I may consume them in a moment; by fire from him, as the two hundred fifty men were afterwards consumed, Nu 16:35.

Numbers 16:22

Ver. 22. And they fell upon their faces,.... That is, Moses and Aaron, in order to deprecate the wrath of God, and beseech him to avert the threatened judgment; and so the Targum of Jonathan has it,

"they bowed themselves in prayer upon their faces;"

and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh; the Maker of all men, as of their bodies, which are flesh, so of their souls or spirits, which are immaterial and immortal; hence he is called "the Father of spirits", Heb 12:9, who, as the Targum, puts the spirit in the bodies of men; or, as others, who knows the spirits of men; their thoughts, as Jarchi, the inward frames and dispositions of their minds; who knows who have sinned, and who not; and whether their sins proceed from weakness, and being misled, or whether from a malevolent disposition, presumption, and self-will:

shall one man sin: meaning Korah, who was the ringleader:

and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? who, through ignorance and weakness, and by artifice and imposition, are drawn in to join with him; the plea is much the same with that of Abraham,
Ge 18:25.

Numbers 16:23

Ver. 23. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... When on his face in prayer, and bid him rise up, and told him he had granted his request, and then spoke to him:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 16:24

Ver. 24. Speak unto the congregation,.... Not to Korah's company, but to the people of Israel, of the several tribes that were assembled together:

saying, get ye up from about the tabernacle of Korah, and Dathan, and Abiram; which was either the same with their tents, as in
Nu 16:26; though, as they were of different tribes, Korah of the tribe of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram of the tribe of Reuben, their tents must be in distinct and different places, though both encamped on the same side of the tabernacle, and pretty near to each other; the camp of Levi was nearest the tabernacle, and

the camp of Reuben next to it. It may be, there was a single tabernacle erected on this occasion, for all these men to meet at when they judged it necessary. Aben Ezra is of opinion, Korah had a tent for his men and substance, at a distance from the camp of the Levites, and to his tent joined the tents of Dathan and Abiram.

Numbers 16:25

Ver. 25. And Moses rose up,.... Either from the ground, upon which he fell on his face, or from the seat on which he sat at the door of the tabernacle; though he seems to have stood there; it may be, it only signifies that he obeyed the divine order, and went about it directly, as often in Scripture persons are said to arise, when they go about any thing they are directed, or choose to do:

and went unto Dathan and Abiram; to endeavour to convince them of their evil, and bring them to repentance for it, and to reclaim them from their folly:

and the elders of Israel followed him; either some principal persons of the tribes, called elders, both from their age and prudence; or the seventy elders lately chosen to assist Moses in the affairs of government, as Aben Ezra thinks these followed him to show their respect unto him, and their approbation of his conduct, and for vindication of his character, which had been aspersed by those men, and to give the more weight to what should be said unto them, for their conviction and reformation.

Numbers 16:26

Ver. 26. And he spake unto the congregation,.... To the people of Israel assembled together on this occasion: some, out of ill will to Moses and Aaron, inclining to the side of Korah and his accomplices, and some out of curiosity to see the issue of this affair

saying, depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men; these turbulent, seditious, and ill-designing men, disturbers of the commonwealth and church of Israel, enemies to the peace of its civil and ecclesiastic state: and when Moses desires the people to depart from their tents, he means not only that they would remove in person, and stand at a distance, but such who had their tents, and families, and substance near them, would take care to remove, lest they should be destroyed with them:

and touch nothing of theirs; not carry off anything belonging to them along with their own, being all devoted to destruction:

lest ye be consumed in all their sins; lest partaking of their sins they should of their plagues, and die in their sins, as they would, or for them.

Numbers 16:27

Ver. 27. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side,.... The place where they met together and made their general rendezvous; this it seems was encompassed on all sides by people out of the several tribes, who either wished them well in their undertaking, or were curious to know how it would issue;

and Dathan and Abiram came out; out of the tabernacle of Korah, and went to their own tents; and came out of them,

and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children; in an audacious manner, as not fearing God nor man; they carried their heads high, and were not in the least daunted at what they were threatened with; and by their looks and gestures bid defiance to Moses and the elders with him.

Numbers 16:28

Ver. 28. And Moses said, hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works,.... To bring the people of Israel out of Egypt, to exchange the firstborn for the Levites, to make Aaron and his sons priests, to give the Levites to them, and to set Elizaphan over the Kohathites, things which these men found fault with, and questioned his authority for doing them:

for [I have] not [done them] of my own mind; or "not out of my heart" {q}; he had not devised them himself, and done them of his own head, and in any arbitrary way, without the will of God or any authority from him, as these men suggested.

{q} yblm al yk "quod non de corde meo", Pagninus, Montanus.

Numbers 16:29

Ver. 29. If these men die the common death of all men,.... Or "as every man dies" {r}, or the generality of men, who for the most part die of one disease or another, as a fever, and the like, or through old age:

or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; with such visitations as men in all ages for their sins are visited with, meaning public calamities, such as pestilence, famine, and sword:

[then] the Lord hath not sent me; it may be concluded that I had no mission nor commission from the Lord to do what I have done, but may be reckoned a deceiver and an impostor; and I am content to be accounted so, should either of the above things be the case of these men.

{r} Mdah lk twmk "ut moriuntur omnes homines", Pagninus; "reliqui homines", Junius & Tremellius; "alii homines", Piscator.

Numbers 16:30

Ver. 30. But if the Lord make a new thing,.... Or "create a creation", or "creature" {s}, what never was before, or put those persons to a death that none ever in the world died of yet; what that is he means is next expressed:

and the earth open her mouth and swallow them up, with all that [appertain] unto them; their persons, their wives, children and substance:

and they go down quick into the pit; alive into the grave the opening earth makes for them; this is the new thing created; though the Rabbins say {t}, the mouth of the earth, or the opening of the earth, was created from the days of the creation, that is, it was determined or decreed so early that it should be:

then ye shall understated that these men have provoked the Lord; by rising up against Moses and Aaron, and so against the Lord; by falsely accusing his servants, and endeavouring to set the people against them, and so alter the constitution of things in church and state.

{s} arby hayrb "creationem, creaverit", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Fagius; "creaturam", Vatablus, Drusius. {t} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 6. Pirke Eliezer, c.

Numbers 16:31

Ver. 31. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these things,.... As soon as he had finished his discourse, which was addressed to the congregation, and, according to Josephus {u}, after a long prayer to God, which that writer gives at large; immediately so it was,

that the ground clave asunder that [was] under them; on which they stood, not from any natural cause, as by subterranean volcano, forcibly making their way and bursting the earth, and so getting vent, which has been thought to be the cause of earthquakes; but this was by the immediate hand and almighty power of God, and came to pass just as Moses suggested it would, and as soon as he had uttered his words, which made it the more observable.

{u} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 3. Sect. 2.

Numbers 16:32

Ver. 32. And the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up,.... Dathan and Abiram, their wives, sons, and little ones, that stood at the door of their tents with them, and all their goods, as follows: the earth, as if it was a living creature or a beast of prey, opened its mouth and swallowed them up, as such a creature does its prey:

and their houses; which may be meant both of their families or households, and of the tents they dwelt in, which were their houses; see **De 1:6**;

and all the men that [appertained] unto Korah: not Korah himself, for he was with the two hundred fifty men that had censers, and with Aaron at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation offering incense, and thereby making trial to whom the priesthood belonged; and who, it is highly probable, perished by fire with the two hundred fifty men, as Josephus, Aben Ezra, and others are of opinion; but the family of Korah, and not all of them, for his sons died not at that time,
Nu 26:11; and there were of his posterity in the times of David, to whom several of the psalms are inscribed, Ps 42:1; these were either out of the way upon business, the providence of God so ordering it for their safety; or they

disliked the proceedings of their father, and joined not with him; or if they did at first, repented of it and forsook him, as it is probable on of the tribe of Reuben also did, since no mention is made of him in the destruction:

and all [their] goods: their household goods, their substance and riches, their gold, silver, cattle, and whatever they were possessed of: a very extraordinary case this and which perhaps gave rise to some fabulous things among the Heathens; however, if they can be credited, this ought not to be thought incredible; as Amphiaraus, who with his chariot and its rider are said to be swallowed up in the earth, struck by a thunderbolt from Jupiter, and were never seen more {w}; and other stories are told of persons praying to their deities for secrecy and shelter, and the earth has opened and hid them; as Althemenes, when he had slain his father {x}; and the nymph Thalia pregnant by Jupiter, who, for fear of Juno, wished the earth might open and take her in, and it accordingly did, as is reported {y}.

{w} Apollodorus de Deorum Origine, l. 3. p. 157. {x} lb. p. 134. {y} Macrob. Saturnal. l. 5. c. 19.

Numbers 16:33

Ver. 33. They, and all that [appertained] unto them, went down alive into the pit,.... The grave which the opening earth made for them, they and their families:

and the earth closed upon them; and covered them over; this it did of itself, as Aben Ezra remarks: this was a wonderful instance of almighty power, that it should open in such large fissures as to swallow up such a number of men, with their tents, goods, and cattle, and then close again so firmly, as not to have the least appearance upon it of what had happened, as Josephus observes {z},

and they perished from among the congregation; and had a name and a place no more with them.

{z} Antiqu. ut supra, (l. 4. c. 3.) sect. 3.

Numbers 16:34

Ver. 34. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them,.... Or because of it, as Aben Ezra; their cry was so loud, their shrieks so dreadful and piercing, that the Israelites about them fled to get out of the sound of them, as well as for their own safety. The Targum of Jonathan not only represents their cry as terrible, but gives the words they expressed at it;

"and all Israel that were round about them fled, because of the terror of their voice, when they cried and said, the Lord is righteous and his judgments truth, and truth are the words of Moses his servant, but we are wicked who have rebelled against him:"

for they said, lest the earth swallow us up [also]; which they might fear, since they had provoked the Lord, by associating with these men, and countenancing them by their presence, as they had done; who would have consumed them in a moment at first, had it not been for the intercession of Moses and Aaron.

Numbers 16:35

Ver. 35. And there came out a fire from the Lord,.... Flashes of lightning from the cloud in which he was:

and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense; not that it reduced them to ashes, but took away their lives, struck them dead at once, in like manner as Nadab and Abihu were, who though said to be devoured by the fire, yet their bodies remained, Le 10:2; and is often the case of persons killed by lightning; though Josephus {a} thinks they were so consumed as that their bodies were no more seen, and who is express for it that Korah perished with them in this manner; which is not improbable, since he took his censer and offered incense with them, and was the ringleader of them, and the person that contended with Aaron for the priesthood, which was to be determined in this way; and though he is not mentioned it may be concluded, as Aben Ezra observes, by an argument from the lesser to the greater, that if the men he drew in perished, much more he himself; and the same writer observes, that in the song of the Red sea, no mention is made of the drowning of Pharaoh in it, only of his chariots and his host, and yet he himself was certainly drowned: now these men burning incense which belonged only to the priests of the Lord, were by just retaliation consumed by fire, and which made it plainly appear they were not the priests of the Lord; and the judgment on them was the more remarkable, that Moses and Aaron, who stood by them, remained unhurt. This was an emblem of the vengeance of eternal fire, of everlasting burnings, **Jude**

1:11.

{a} Antiq. l. 4. c. 3. sect. 4.

Numbers 16:36

Ver. 36. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Immediately after these men were consumed by fire from him; out of the same cloud from whence that proceeded, he spoke:

saying: as follows.

Numbers 16:37

Ver. 37. Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest,.... His eldest son, that was to succeed him as high priest, and who perhaps was upon the spot to see the issue of things; and who, rather than Aaron, is bid to do what follows, partly because Aaron was now officiating, burning incense, and that he might not be defiled with the dead bodies; and partly because it was more proper and decent for the son to do it than the father; and it may be also because it was for the further confirmation of the priesthood in the posterity of Aaron:

that he take up the censers out of the burning; either out from among the dead bodies burnt with fire from the Lord, or out of the burning of the incense in them; these were the censers of Korah and the two hundred fifty men with him:

and scatter thou the fire yonder; the fire that was in the censers; the incense burning in them was to be cast out and scattered here and there, or carried to some unclean place at a distance, as a token of the rejection of the services of these men: and thus the Lord answered the prayer of Moses, that he would not have respect to their offering,
Nu 16:15; if incense is intended there; though that seems to refer only to Dathan and Abiram, and not to these two hundred fifty men:

for they are hallowed, incense being offered in them before the Lord, and therefore were not to be made use of in common service.

Numbers 16:38

Ver. 38. The censers of these sinners against their own souls,.... Who by burning incense in them sinned, and by sinning hurt and ruined their souls:

let them make them broad plates [for] a covering of the altar; the altar of burnt offering, which, though it had a covering of brass, another made of these were to be over it, for the further security of it, being of from the fire continually burning on it; these censers were to be beaten into broad plates, by the workmen who understood how to do it:

for they offered them before the Lord, therefore they are hallowed; they offered them in his presence, they burned incense in them, and to him, though it was not their business, but the business of the priests; yet these being done, and by his orders, for an open trial who were his priests and who not, they were not to be put to common use:

and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel; a memorial sign, a sign bringing this affair to remembrance, as it is explained in Nu 16:40; this was a sign to the priests, that they only were to offer every kind of offerings, and to the Levites, who attended the priests at the altar continually, and so had every day a sight of it and of those plates upon it, which would remind them of this fact, and teach them not to usurp the priest's office; and to all the children of Israel, to learn from hence that none were to burn incense but the priests of the Lord, for doing which Uzziah, though a king, was punished, 2Ch 26:18.

Numbers 16:39

Ver. 39. And Eleazar the priest took the brazen censers,.... The metal of which these censers were made is particularly observed, to show that they were fit for the use they were ordered to be put unto, namely, for a covering of the altar of burnt offering, which was covered with brass, that being very suitable, since fire was continually burning on it; and by this it appears that these censers were different from those of Aaron and his sons, for theirs were silver ones; the high priest on the day of atonement indeed made use of golden one, but at all other times he used a silver one {b}; and so did the common priests every day, morning and night, when they offered incense {c},

wherewith they that were burnt had offered; the two hundred fifty men burnt with fire from the Lord, having offered incense to him with the brazen censers:

and they were made broad [plates for] a covering of the altar; not by Eleazar, but by workmen skilled in the art of drawing or beating any kind of metal into thin plates, by the direction and order of Eleazar.

{b} Misn. Yoma, c. 4. sect. 4. {c} Misn. Tamid, c. 5. sect. 5.

Numbers 16:40

Ver. 40. [To be] a memorial unto the children of Israel,.... The whole body of them; this explains what is meant by sign, Nu 16:38; that it was to put or keep in mind what follows:

that no stranger which [is] not of the seed of Aaron come near to offer incense before the Lord; not only any Gentile but any Israelite, and not any Israelite only, but any Levite; none but those of the family of Aaron might offer incense before the Lord;

that he be not as Korah and as his company; this makes it clear that Korah perished at this time, though it is nowhere expressed; and it seems pretty plain from hence that he perished by fire, as his company, the two hundred fifty men with censers, did:

as the Lord said unto him by the hand of Moses; either to Korah, who is the immediate antecedent, and who perished as the Lord had told him by Moses he should; so some understand it, mentioned by Aben Ezra and Jarchi; or else to Aaron, as they interpret it; and then the sense is, that none but those of Aaron's seed should offer incense, as the Lord had declared to him by Moses; see **Nu 3:10**; or it may be rather to Eleazar, as Abendana, who did as the Lord spake to him by Moses, took up the censers of the men that were burnt, and got them beaten into broad plates, and covered the altar of burnt offering with them.

Numbers 16:41

Ver. 41. But on the morrow,.... The day following the dreadful catastrophe, the earth swallowing up Dathan and Abiram, and all that belonged to them, the burning of Korah and the two hundred fifty men of his company:

all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron; not the princes and heads of the people only, but the whole body of them; though the above persons that murmured against them had but the day before been made such dreadful examples of divine vengeance. This is a most surprising instance of the corruption and depravity of human nature, of the blindness, hardness, and stupidity of the hearts of men, which nothing but the grace of God can remove; the images of the awful sights many of them had seen must be strong in their minds; the shrieks of the wretched creatures perishing must be as yet as it were in their ears; the smell of the fire was scarce out of their nostrils; and yet, notwithstanding this shocking scene of things, they fell into the same evil, and murmur against the men, whose authority, being called in question, had been confirmed by the above awful instances:

saying, ye have killed the people of the Lord; so they called the rebels, and hereby justified them in all the wickedness they had been guilty of; and though their death was so manifestly by the immediate hand of God, yet they lay it to the charge of Moses and Aaron, because it was in vindication of them that it was done, and because they did not intercede by prayer for them; though it is certain they did all they could to reclaim them from their sin, and prevent their ruin; yet the people insist on it that they were the cause or occasion of their death, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan express it.

Numbers 16:42

Ver. 42. And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron,.... To kill them, as the Targum of Jonathan adds; who, perhaps, upon uttering their murmurs, made up to them, and by their gestures showed an intention to murder them:

that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation; either the people did, to see whether they could observe any appearance of the displeasure of God against them; or rather Moses and Aaron looked that way for help and deliverance in this extreme danger, knowing there was no salvation for them but of the Lord, **Jer 3:23**;

and, behold, the cloud covered it; as when it was first erected, and which was a token of the divine Presence, **Nu 9:15**; perhaps it had dispersed immediately upon the death of the rebels, and now returned again in favour of the servants of the Lord:

and the glory of the Lord appeared; in the cloud, as in Nu 16:19; to encourage Moses and Aaron, and to deliver them out of the hands of the people, and to the terror of them.

Numbers 16:43

Ver. 43. And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. Whose tent was not far from it, about which the people of Israel were gathered; and from whence they came to the tabernacle, both for shelter and safety, and for advice and instruction how to behave in this crisis; they did not go into it, but stood before it; the Lord being in the cloud over it, they stood in the door of it,
Nu 16:50; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and Moses and Aaron came from the congregation to the door of the tabernacle."

Numbers 16:44

Ver. 44. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Out of the cloud:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 16:45

Ver. 45. Get you up from among this congregation,.... That is, withdraw from them, and be separate, that they might not be involved in the same destruction with them, as well as that they might have no concern for them, or plead with the Lord in prayer on their account, but let him alone to destroy them, as follows:

that I may consume them in a moment; as he was able to do, and had proposed to do it before, but they entreated him that he would not,
Nu 16:21; as they again do:

and they fell upon their faces; in prayer, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; and so Aben Ezra observes, it was to pray to deprecate the wrath of God, and to implore his pardoning mercy for this sinful people; which shows what an excellent temper and disposition these men were of, to pray for them that had so despitefully used them as to charge them with murder, and were about to commit it on them; see **Mt 5:44**.

Numbers 16:46

Ver. 46. And Moses said unto Aaron, take a censer,.... Which lay in the tabernacle:

and put fire therein from off the altar; the altar of burnt offering, from whence fire only was to be taken for burning incense; and lest Aaron in his hurry should forget to take it from thence, but elsewhere, and offer strange fire as his sons had done, Moses expresses the place from whence he should take it:

and put on incense: upon the fire, in the censer, which he was to do when he came into the camp, and not as soon as he took the fire from the altar: the censer with fire in it he carried in one hand, and the incense in the other; and when he was in the midst of the congregation, he put the incense on the fire, and burnt it, as appears from
Nu 16:47: this was an emblem of prayer, and a figure of the intercession and mediation of Christ, Ps 141:2;

and go quickly unto the congregation; the case required haste:

and make an atonement for them; which was usually done by the sacrifice of a sin or trespass offering, but now there was no time for that, and therefore incense, which was of quicker dispatch, was used for that purpose instead of it:

for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; some token of it, some disease was inflicted, which Moses had information of from the Lord, and therefore expressly says,

the plague is begun; a pestilence was sent among the people.

Numbers 16:47

Ver. 47. And Aaron took as Moses commanded,.... A censer with fire in it from the altar, and also incense:

and ran into the midst of the congregation: though a man in years and in so high an office, and had been so ill used by the people; yet was not only so ready to obey the divine command, but so eager to serve this ungrateful people, and save them from utter destruction, that he ran from the tabernacle into the midst of them:

and, behold, the plague was begun among the people; he saw them fall down dead instantly in great numbers:

and he put on incense; upon the fire in the censer, which though it was not in common lawful to burn but in the holy place on the altar of incense, yet, upon this extraordinary occasion, it was dispensed with by the Lord, as it had been the day before when he offered it at the door of the tabernacle with the two hundred fifty men of Korah's company; and perhaps the reason of it now was, that the people might see Aaron perform this kind office for them, and give them a fresh convincing proof of his being invested with the office of priesthood from the Lord, or otherwise he could have done this in its proper place, the sanctuary:

and made an atonement for the people; by offering incense, which God smelt a sweet savour in, and accepted of, and his wrath was appeased and the plague stayed: in this Aaron was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his mediation, atonement, and intercession; wrath is gone forth from God for the sins of men, which is revealed in the law; and death, the effect of it, has taken place on many in every sense of it, corporeal, spiritual, and eternal: Christ, as Mediator, in pursuance of his suretyship engagements, has made atonement for the sins of his people by the sacrifice of himself; and now ever lives to make intercession for them, which is founded upon his sacrifice and satisfaction, his sufferings and death, signified by the fire in which the incense was put.

Numbers 16:48

Ver. 48. And he stood between the dead and the living,.... The plague beginning at one end of the camp, and so proceeded on, Aaron placed himself between that part of it wherein it had made havoc, and that wherein yet it was not come; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"he stood in prayer in the middle, and made a partition, with his censer, between the dead and living;"

in this he was a type of Christ, the Mediator between God and man, the living God and dead sinners; for though his atonement and intercession are not made for the dead in a corporeal sense, nor for those who have sinned, and sin unto death, the unpardonable sin, nor for men appointed unto death, but for the living in Jerusalem, or for those who are written in the Lamb's book of life; yet for those who are dead in sin, and as deserving of eternal death as others, whereby they are saved from everlasting ruin:

and the plague was stayed; it proceeded no further than where Aaron stood and offered his incense, and made atonement: so the consequence of the atonement and intercession of Christ is, that the wrath of God sin deserves comes not upon those that have a share therein, the second death shall not seize upon them, nor they be hurt with it; for, being justified by the blood of Christ, and atonement for their sins being made by his sacrifice, they are saved from wrath to come.

Numbers 16:49

Ver. 49. Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred,.... 14,700. Thus what they were threatened with, that their carcasses should fall in the wilderness, Nu 14:29, was more and more fulfilled:

beside them that died about the matter of Korah; these are not taken into the number here, even the two hundred fifty men of Korah's company, and the families of Dathan and Abiram, Nu 16:32; how many they were is not certain, but they were but few in comparison of these.

Numbers 16:50

Ver. 50. And Aaron returned unto Moses,.... After he had by his atonement and intercession put a stop to the wrath of God broken forth upon the people:

unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; where Moses was waiting for his return, and to know the issue of this affair:

and the plague was stayed: even before Aaron left the camp, and is here repeated for the certainty of it, and to intimate that it continued to cease, and broke not out again.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 17

In this chapter the priesthood of Aaron is further confirmed and established by the budding and blossom of his rod, as it lay among the princes of the several tribes, when theirs did not, Nu 17:1; which rod of Aaron was ordered to be laid up before the ark, as a token against the rebels, and to put an end to all murmurings against Aaron for the future; which was accordingly done, Nu 17:10; upon which the people expressed their fear of perishing because of their sins,
Nu 17:12.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... After the plague ceased, for the further confirmation of the priesthood in Aaron's family, another method is directed to by the Lord:

saying: as follows.

Numbers 17:2

Ver. 2. Speak unto the children of Israel,.... The principal men among them of the several tribes:

and take of everyone of them; not of every individual of the people of Israel, but of their princes, as afterwards explained:

a rod, according to the house of [their] fathers; or "father", of whom their house or tribe was called, as Reuben, Simeon, &c. this rod was either a common walking staff, as some think, or rather the ensign of their princely office and dignity, peculiar to each tribe; though some think it was now freshly cut off from an almond tree, and that all the rods were of one and the same tree; but supposing they were all of the almond kind, as Josephus {d} thinks, yet being dry rods, and of long use, served to make the miracle appear the greater:

of all their princes, according to the house of their fathers, twelve rods; this explains who they were to be taken of, the princes of the several tribes, whose names are given, **Nu 1:5**; and the number of them twelve, according to the number of the twelve tribes:

write thou every man's name upon his rod; the name of each prince, or head of a tribe, either by cutting it into the rod, or fastening a writing to it, after the manner of those times; as, for instance, the name of Elizur for the tribe of Reuben; by which it was to be made and was made to appear, that to none of these tribes belonged the priesthood, but to the tribe of Levi, and to none of that tribe but the family of Aaron; whereby it should seem that some of all the tribes made pretensions to it, as being all holy, and especially the chief firstborn of every tribe, as such their princes were.

{d} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 4. sect. 2.

Numbers 17:3

Ver. 3. And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi,.... Or upon the rod that was for the tribe of Levi; the name of "Aaron" was to be written, not the word "Levi", or a "Levite", as Josephus {e}; for that would not have decided the controversy about the priesthood, which chiefly lay between the Levites and the family of Aaron, who were of the same tribe:

for one rod [shall be] for the head of the house of their fathers; one rod for the head or prince of every tribe, every prince representing his own tribe he was the head of, and the rod the prince; and though the tribe of Levi was divided into two families, the family of the priests, and the family of the Levites; yet, as Jarchi observes, they were but one tribe, and so one rod for them, as for the other tribes.

{e} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 4. sect. 2.

Numbers 17:4

Ver. 4. And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation,.... In the most holy place:

before the testimony; that is, the ark in which the testimony or the law was; here they were laid as in the presence of God, who was in a miraculous way to decide the controversy by them, and put an end to it; for upon the ark was the mercy seat, over which were the cherubim, the seat of the divine Majesty, and where none could come at them, and where no fraud could be supposed to be committed:

where I will meet with you; not with the people in person, who might not go at any time into the most holy place; nor with Aaron, who only might go into it on the day of atonement; but with Moses, the chief ruler and representative of the whole body of the people, and who might go in there at any time, to consult with God about matters of moment and difficulty, and where the Lord had said he would meet him,
Ex 25:22; and now would, in a miraculous way, clearly show him, and the people of Israel by him, who was the priest he had chosen of all the tribes.

Numbers 17:5

Ver. 5. And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod whom I shall choose,.... Or make it manifest that he had chosen him, and so confirm the choice he had made of him and his family, for the priesthood to be and continue in:

shall blossom; bud and blossom, and yield fruit, as it afterwards did, which is here declared beforehand, that the miracle might appear the greater, exactly answering to a prediction delivered out before of it:

and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you; against Moses for setting up his brother as an high priest, and establishing the priesthood in his family; and against Aaron for accepting of it, and officiating in it; but by this method now taken, God would for ever silence their murmurings, so that they should never be able, with any face, to object any more to the authority of the Aaronic priesthood, which should appear by the predicted miracle beyond all dispute and contradiction.

Numbers 17:6

Ver. 6. And Moses spake unto the children of Israel,.... What the Lord had bid him say unto them concerning the rods, which they hearkened unto and observed:

and everyone of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one; every prince of the several tribes, and so a rod for every tribe, as well as for each prince:

according to their father's houses, [even] twelve rods; there being twelve tribes named after their fathers, or the patriarchs, the twelve sons of Jacob; and Joseph having two tribes which sprung from him, called after his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, there were twelve rods besides that of Aaron; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders the words with the next clause,

"and there were twelve rods besides the rod of Aaron;"

in all thirteen; though the Jews say there were but twelve with it, allowing but one rod for Joseph, under whom were comprehended Ephraim and Manasseh, and reckoning the tribe of Levi one of the twelve so Aben Ezra observes, that the rod of Levi was among the twelve and Joseph had but one rod:

and the rod of Aaron [was] among their rods: in the middle of them, and was so placed, as Jarchi thinks, that it might not be said, because it was put on the side of the Shechinah or divine Majesty, therefore it budded; but being in the middle of them there could be no difference in that respect.

Numbers 17:7

Ver. 7. And Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness. In that part of the tabernacle where the testimony or witness was, that is, the law, which was in the ark, over which was the mercy seat, with the cherubim between which Jehovah dwelt, and this was the most holy place; and the rods being laid here, might be said to be laid before the Lord, who, by making a difference in one of those rods from the rest, would decide the controversy about the priesthood, which was the end of their being laid before him.

Numbers 17:8

Ver. 8. And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness,.... Where none but he could go at any time; this was the day after the rods had been placed there:

and, behold, the rod of Aaron, for the house of Levi; the rod that had Aaron's name upon it, which was to represent the tribe of Levi, of which he was:

was budded, and brought forth buds; knobs of blossom, such that are seen on trees before they open; for the almond tree puts forth its blossoms before its leaves; though the Targum of Jonathan renders it "branches", as do some versions; and some think this is to be understood of its putting out its leaves first, contrary to the nature of the almond tree, and so makes the miracle the greater; thus Ben Melech:

and blossomed blossoms; open flowers or blossoms, such as appear on the almond tree in the spring, and look very beautiful:

and yielded almonds; ripe almonds, in their full perfection, as the Targums of Jerusalem and Jonathan; the latter of which is,

"in the same night it perfected and brought forth almonds:"

the word used has the signification of weaning, and alludes to children grown up to some ripeness and maturity, Ge 21:8; the case seems to be this, that in one part of the rod were buds, swelling and just putting out, in another part open flowers quite blown, and in others full ripe fruit: now this clearly showed it to be supernatural, since the almond tree, though quick and early in its production of buds and flowers, yet never has those and ripe fruit on it at the same time; to which may be added, that this was not the time of year the almond tree blossoms; not the spring, but rather autumn, as it should seem, since it was after the affair of the spies and the murmurs of the people on their report; now it was the time of the first ripe grapes, when they went into the land, and they were forty days searching it, and it was after their return the insurrections before recorded were: the design of this was to confirm the priesthood in Aaron's family, and show that it would continue there, in a flourishing condition, and that there would be a succession of priests from him to the time of the Messiah, as there were; and the almond tree having its name in Hebrew from watchfulness and haste, see **Jer 1:11**; may denote the vigilance of the priests in their office, and the haste punishment makes to come upon such that should oppose them, or usurp the priesthood, as in the case of Uzziah; so Jarchi remarks: this rod of Aaron's may be an emblem of the Gospel ministry of that rod that should come out of Zion, Ps 110:2; which in the eyes of men is mean and despicable, like a dry stick, but becomes a fruitful one through the power of divine grace; and an almond tree rod may denote the vigilance and watchfulness of Gospel ministers over themselves and others, and their doctrine; and oftentimes whom God puts into the ministry he early

calls them by his grace, and frequently makes the first part of their ministry most useful, and fruit is brought forth which remains: moreover, this rod may be considered as a type of Christ; it being a dry rod or stick, may denote the meanness of his descent and appearance in the world, and the unpromising aspect of his being the King, Messiah, and Saviour of men; and being an almond tree rod, may signify his speedy incarnation in the fulness of time, which the Lord hastened; his being the firstborn, and his right to the priesthood, and his vigilance in it; its lying among other rods, and budding, and blossoming, and bringing forth fruit, may point at Christ's assuming the common nature or man, his being cut off by death, his resurrection from the dead, and the fruits arising from thence, justification, peace, pardon, and eternal life; and as Aaron's priesthood was confirmed by the budding, &c. of this rod, so the deity and Messiahship of Christ are, by his resurrection from the dead;
See Gill on "Heb 9:4".

Numbers 17:9

Ver. 9. And Moses brought out all the rods from before the Lord, unto all the children of Israel,.... He brought them out of the holy place, and showed them to the princes of the several tribes:

and they looked, and took every man his rod; which they knew by their names upon them; by their own handwriting, as Aben Ezra; for though Moses is bid to write their names on them, Nu 17:2; yet no more may be meant by that than that he should order them to be written, and take care that they were.

Numbers 17:10

Ver. 10. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... After the rods had been viewed, and every prince took his rod, and full satisfaction was given that the priesthood belonged to Aaron, by the budding and blossoming of his rod, when the rest remained as they were:

bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony; before the ark, in which the testimony or law was; here it was placed and continued, but how long cannot be said with certainty; no doubt for many ages; which increases the wonder, that it should, as it probably did, continue with its buds, blossoms, and fruit on it: the apostle speaks of it, as in the holy of holies, with the ark, the pot of manna, and the tables of the covenant, **Heb 9:4**; the Jews say {f}, that when Josiah the king ordered the ark to be laid up in that place which Solomon had built, that it might not be carried with the captives into captivity, as it is said, 2Ch 35:3, "put the holy ark", &c. they hid with the ark the rod of Aaron, and the pot of manna, and the anointing oil, and which were not in the second temple; and they say {g}, particularly of Aaron's rod, that at the time it was laid up by Josiah it had its buds and almonds: now this was ordered to be put in the most holy place before the ark:

to be kept for a token against the rebels; to be a token of their sin and wickedness in rebelling against God, his ordinance and ministers; which occasioned this miracle to be wrought, for the confirmation of the priesthood in Aaron's family, which they opposed, and to be a caution to others not to attempt anything against it for the future; so Christ and the Gospel ministry will be swift witnesses against the opposers of him and that; see **Mal 3:5**;

and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not; quite silence all the murmurings of the people with respect to the priesthood being so fully convinced by this miracle of the divine authority Aaron and his family had to exercise the priestly office, and they only, and so such destruction of the people be prevented as had been lately made.

{f} Kimchi in 2 Chron. xxxv. 3. Maimon. Hilchot. Beth Habechirah, c. 4. sect. 1. {g} T. Hieros. Shekalim, c. 6. fol. 49. 3.

Numbers 17:11

Ver. 11. And Moses did so; as the Lord commanded him, even so did he. Took Aaron's rod, and laid it up before the ark for the purpose mentioned, being a faithful servant to God in all his house.

Numbers 17:12

Ver. 12. And the children of Israel spake unto Moses,.... The princes of the tribes, who had seen the miracle of the rod, and knew that it was laid up in the most holy place, and for what purpose, which gave them a sensible concern: these, and as many as were acquainted with it, addressed Moses upon it, as follows:

saying, behold, we die, we perish, we all perish; which being expressed without the copulative, and in different words, show that they were spoken quick and in haste, and discover the passion of mind and distress they were in, and the sense they had of their sin and danger, fearing they should all die and perish, as many had already; it has respect, as some think, to punishments past and future, so the Targum of Jonathan,

"some of us have been consumed by flaming fire, and others of us have been swallowed up in the earth and are lost, and, lo, we are accounted as if all of us would perish."

Numbers 17:13

Ver. 13. Whosoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of the Lord shall die,.... They who before were so bold and daring as to think the priesthood was common to them with Aaron, or they had as good a right to it, and might go into the sanctuary of the Lord where he did, are now so frightened at the rod being laid up as a token against them, that they thought they must not come near the tabernacle at all, and, if they did, would be in the utmost danger of death:

shall we be consumed with dying? such violent deaths, until there are none left of us? but the Syriac and Arabic versions render the words affirmatively; we are near or about to be consumed; and so the Targum of Onkelos, lo, we are to be consumed; which agrees best with the preceding clause, for they would scarcely make a question of what they had affirmed.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 18

This chapter gives an account of the distinct work and service of the priests and Levites, Nu 18:1; and of several things given to the priests for their maintenance, Nu 18:8; and of the tithes the Levites should have to live upon, since they were to have no inheritance in the land of Israel, Nu 18:20; and of the tenth out of those tithes they were to give to the high priest, Nu 18:25.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Aaron,.... As the things spoken were such as concerned Aaron, he might be only and immediately spoken unto: thou,

and thy sons, and thy father's house with thee; meaning both priests and Levites, the priests by him and his sons, and the Levites by his father's house:

shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary; the blame of any evil committed there, the punishment of it; the priests, Aaron and his sons, if they did not perform the duty of their office aright, he in the most holy place, and they in the holy place, and at the altar of burnt offering in the court; and the Levites, if they did not take care to watch in the tabernacle, and keep out strangers and polluted persons:

and thou, and thy sons with thee, shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood; be answerable for my sins, errors, and mistakes that should be committed by them in the discharge of their office, through their own remissness, or not taking care that the Levites did their duty; this shows that the office of priesthood, though honourable, was burdensome, and not to be envied; and that the people needed not to be under such terrible apprehensions as they were, lest they should come too near the sanctuary, as to be in danger of death, since it lay upon the priests and Levites especially to take care thereof, and who, if negligent, would suffer.

Numbers 18:2

Ver. 2. And to thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father,.... For his father Amram was of that tribe, and so the Levites were his brethren, as he is directed to consider them; which might serve to conciliate their minds, and make them easy with respect to his enjoyment of the priesthood:

bring them with thee; into the court of the tabernacle, for further they might not go:

that they maybe joined unto thee: as their name of Levites signifies, persons joined and united to others, as they were to the priests: see reason of their patriarch's name Levi in Ge 29:34;

and minister unto thee: be assisting to the priests in killing the sacrifices, receiving the blood, and flaying the beasts, and in other things about the sanctuary, **Nu 3:6**;

but thou, and thy sons with thee, [shall minister] before the tabernacle of witness; which was the most holy place, where were the ark of the testimony or witness, and the tables of the covenant; and they might be said to minister before that, when they ministered in the holy place, which was before it, when they burned incense upon the altar of incense, ordered the shewbread, and trimmed the lamps of the candlestick, which none but the priests the sons of Aaron might do.

Numbers 18:3

Ver. 3. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle,.... That is, the Levites, whatever Aaron and his sons, the priests, should charge them to do, or commit to their care and charge, that they should observe; as to watch and keep out all unfit persons, to take down and set up the tabernacle when needful, &c.

only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary; as the ark and mercy seat in the holy of holies, the shewbread table, and candlestick in the holy place; wherefore when these were removed from place to place in journeying, they were covered, that they might not touch them as they carried them:

and the altar; both of incense and burnt offering, on neither of which might they offer:

that neither they nor you also die: the priests for suffering them to meddle with things that did not belong to them, and the Levites for intruding themselves.

Numbers 18:4

Ver. 4. And they shall be joined unto thee,.... As assistants in the sacred service:

and keep the charge of tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle; See Gill on "Nu 3:7" and
See Gill on "Nu 3:8";

and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you; not any of the other tribes, only such as were of the tribe of Levi; they only were to be brought with them, and joined unto them, and assist them, and minister to them, as in Nu 18:2; though the Jews {h} understand by a stranger anyone that was not a priest.

{h} Maimon. in Misn. Zebachim, c. 2. sect. 1.

Numbers 18:5

Ver. 5. And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary,.... That is, the priests, Aaron and his sons; the high priest was to keep the charge of the most holy place particularly, and do what was to be done in that on the day of atonement; and the common priests to keep the charge of the holy place, and do everything relating to the altar of incense, the shewbread table, and candlestick:

and the charge of the altar; of burnt offering, which stood in the court of the tabernacle:

that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel: as had been upon Korah and his company, Nu 16:32, and as afterwards came on Uzziah, 2Ch 26:19.

Numbers 18:6

Ver. 6. And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites, from among the children of Israel,.... See Gill on "Nu 3:12"; where the same is said, only they, are here called the brethren of the priests for the reason given, Nu 18:2;

to you [they are] given [as] a gift for the Lord, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; See Gill on "Nu 3:7",
See Gill on "Nu 3:8", and
See Gill on "Nu 3:9".

Numbers 18:7

Ver. 7. Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office,.... Observe all the duties of it, and keep out others from intruding into it:

for everything of the altar: both of incense and of burnt offering with respect to burning incense on the one, and offering sacrifices on the other; both were to be done by priests, and by no other:

and within the vail; in the most holy place, where the high priest entered but once a year, and he only with incense, and the blood of sacrifices, see **Heb 9:7**;

and ye shall serve; do all the business that is to be done at either altar, whether in the court, or in the holy place, and whatsoever is to be done in the most holy place within the vail:

I have given your priest's office [unto you] as a service of gift; it was not what they had taken to themselves of their own will, or had thrust themselves into, but what the Lord had called them to, and had freely invested them with, see **Heb 5:4**;

and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death; any common person, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; any Israelite, one that is a stranger from the priests, though a Levite, as Aben Ezra; such an one might not come either to the altar of burnt offering to offer any sacrifice upon it, or the altar of incense, to burn incense on that, or trim the lamps, or put the shewbread in order, or to do anything peculiar to the priest's office.

Numbers 18:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord spake unto Aaron,.... Having pointed out to him the duty of his office, he now informs him of the perquisites of it; or having told him what was his work, now what his wages, or what was his service, and now his maintenance:

behold, I also have given thee the charge of my heave offerings, of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; such as the heave shoulder and wave breast, and firstfruits, and all other holy things in general, such as were the most holy things; as in Nu 18:9; and the lighter holy things, as the Jews call them, Nu 18:11; the charge of these was given to keep for themselves, and for their families:

unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing: because of his office as a priest, to which he was consecrated by anointing:

and to thy sons by an ordinance for ever; see **Le 7:34**.

Numbers 18:9

Ver. 9. This shall be thine of the most holy things,.... For, as observed, there were some lighter and lesser holy things or sacrifices, and others superlatively so: and those are begun with, such as were

[reserved] from the fire; those parts of sacrifices which were not burnt with fire on the altar of burnt offerings:

every oblation of theirs; which is a general word, including various offerings, the particulars follow;

every meat offering of theirs: or bread offering, for they were made of fine flour and oil, and burnt on the altar, the remainder of which was eaten by Aaron and his sons, **Le 6:14**;

every sin offering of theirs; which was offered to make atonement for sin, which also belonged to the priests and their sons, excepting such whose blood was carried into the most holy place, **Le 6:25**;

and every trespass offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me; which was offered for a trespass committed; what remained of this also, when burnt on the altar, was eaten by the priest and his sons, **Le 7:5**; and this sacrifice was a ram, when a trespass was committed, either in the holy things of the Lord, or in wrongs done to men, **Le 5:15**; Jarchi interprets it of an offering for a trespass committed by rapine or violence to a stranger: these, all of them, it is added,

[shall be] most holy for thee and for thy sons; for their use, and for theirs only.

Numbers 18:10

Ver. 10. In the most holy [place] shalt thou eat it,.... Not in the holy of holies, eminently so called, nor in the holy place, for they were neither of them places to eat in; but in the tent of the congregation, as Aben Ezra, or court, as Jarchi; called most holy, in distinction from and in comparison of the camp of Israel, and their tents, as afterwards of Jerusalem, and their houses there, where they might not eat the most holy things:

every male shall eat it; the sons of priests, and they only, not their wives, nor their daughters, and therefore not to be eaten at home, or in their own houses:

it shall be holy unto thee; separated only for the use of him and his sons.

Numbers 18:11

Ver. 11. And this [is] thine,.... What follow, which appertained to the priests, are the less or lighter holy things:

the heave offering of their gift: the right shoulder, given to the priest for an heave offering of the sacrifices of peace offerings, **Le 7:32**; according to Jarchi, it was what was lifted up or heaved from the thank offering, the peace offerings, and the ram of the Nazarites, see **Le 7:14**;

with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel; which were waved to and fro before the Lord, as the breast of the peace offerings, called therefore the wave breast, **Le 7:30**;

I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever; for these were to be eaten in their own houses, and by their families, wives, children, and servants bought with their money, or born in their houses; but not hired servants, nor sojourners, nor strangers; nor their daughters married to strangers though, if widows, or divorced, and without children, and returned to their father's house, they might eat of them, Le 22:10; thus a provision was made for the maintenance of the priests of the Lord and their families, until the Messiah should come; who has also appointed that they that preach the Gospel should live of it, **1Co 9:13**;

everyone that is clean in thy house shall eat of it: that was clean in a ceremonial sense; had not touched a dead body, &c. Jarchi says, this is said to comprehend his wife; but that might be concluded from what is said before, for if his children, much more might his wife eat of it.

Numbers 18:12

Ver. 12. All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat,.... Or the "fat" {i} of them; the fat of anything being the best, see De 32:14;

the firstfruits of them: the oil, and wine, and wheat:

which they shall offer unto the Lord, them have I given thee; this Jarchi calls the great heave offering, the firstfruits of their harvest and vintage, which being offered to the Lord, was given to the priests: the quantity is not fixed, but left to the generosity of the people, and was a free gift; liberal men would give a fortieth part, those of a meaner spirit a fiftieth, and niggardly ones a sixtieth, and less than that was not given See Gill on "Ex 22:29"; compare with this
Eze 45:13.

{i} blx "pinguedinem", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Numbers 18:13

Ver. 13. [And] whatsoever is first ripe in the land,.... Of any other sort of fruit, figs, pomegranates, apples, plums, pears, &c. besides olives and vines;

which they shall bring unto the Lord, shall be thine; which they shall bring in a basket to the tabernacle, where it was, or to the temple, when built: this the priests were to have, see De 26:2;

everyone that is clean in thine house shall eat of it;
See Gill on "Nu 18:11".

Numbers 18:14

Ver. 14. Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine. Fields, houses, cattle, &c. if absolutely devoted to the Lord, they were the priest's; but if devoted to certain uses, they were appropriated to those uses, as the repairs of the temple, &c. see Le 27:1.

Numbers 18:15

Ver. 15. Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh,.... The firstborn of every creature:

which they bring unto the Lord; as they were obliged, he claiming it as his own, Ex 13:2;

[whether it be] of men or beasts, shall be thine; every firstborn of either, being the Lord's, became the priest's by his gift:

nevertheless, the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem; that is, take the redemption price for it, which was five shekels, as in
Nu 18:16; for the original proprietor was, strictly speaking, the redeemer, and paid the money, and the priest was the receiver, to whom it was paid; see Ex 13:13;

and the firstlings of unclean beasts shall thou redeem; with lambs, as an ass, which is put for unclean beasts, is ordered to be redeemed with a lamb, or its neck to be broken, Ex 13:13; the Africans, the shepherds among them, as Herodotus relates {k}, of their firstlings they cut off the ear of the beast and throw it over a house, and then turn its neck back, for they worship only the sun and moon; which seems to be an imitation of this law.

{k} Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 188.

Numbers 18:16

Ver. 16. And those that are to be redeemed,.... Which is to be understood not of unclean beasts last mentioned, for they were redeemed with lambs and not with money; and after they were eight days and not a month old, as follows, Ex 13:13; but of the firstborn of men:

from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation: that is, take the redemption money next mentioned; and though both time and price are fixed, yet said to be according to the estimation of the priest; see Le 27:5;

for the money of five shekels; which was about eleven or twelve shillings of our money, and is the price given for the redemption of the firstborn, when the Levites were taken in their stead, **Nu 3:47**;

after the shekel of the sanctuary, which [is] twenty gerahs,
See Gill on "Nu 3:47"; of the manner of redeeming the firstborn,
See Gill on "Ex 13:15".

Numbers 18:17

Ver. 17. But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem,.... That is, shalt not take the redemption price for them, but the creatures themselves; which they, the priests, were to take for their own use:

they [are] holy; separated to the Lord, and therefore not to be used in common by men, but were sacred to the Lord, or became the property of his priests; see De 15:19; how they were to be made use of follows:

thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar; for they were to be sacrificed, and their blood used as in other sacrifices:

and shalt burn their fat [for] an offering made by fire; for a sweet savour unto the Lord; as the fat of other sacrifices was, and particularly of the peace offerings, which were wholly eaten otherwise, **Le 7:31**.

Numbers 18:18

Ver. 18. And the flesh of them shall be thine,.... For him and his family to eat of, whether blemished or perfect the Jews say {l}:

as the wave breast and as the right shoulder are thine: which were his part of the peace offerings, for him and his sons to eat of, **Le 7:34**; and the Jews observe {m}, that as the wave breast and heave shoulder of the peace offerings might be eaten in two days and one night, so might those of the firstlings.

{l} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Becorot, c. 4. sect. 2. & 5. 2. {m} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Zebachim, c. 5. sect. 8.

Numbers 18:19

Ver. 19. All the heave offerings of the holy things,.... All before mentioned, and whatsoever comes under that name:

which the children of Israel offer unto the Lord; either by his commandment, or of their own freewill;

have I given thee, and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: so providing for their maintenance by an irrepealable law as long as their priesthood lasted, even until the Messiah should come:

it [is] a covenant of salt for ever before the Lord unto thee, and thy seed with thee: an incorruptible, inviolable, durable covenant, which should last for ever, even until the Gospel dispensation or world to come should take place; and it would remain ever before the Lord in his sight, who would take care it should never be made void, but stand fast with Aaron and his posterity as long as his priesthood endured.

Numbers 18:20

Ver. 20. And the Lord spake unto Aaron,.... What is said, being what concerned the tribe of Levi, at the head of which Aaron was, even concerning the maintenance of the Levites:

thou shalt have no inheritance in their land; in the land of Israel when they come to possess it, as the rest of the tribes had:

neither shalt thou have any part among them; any part of the land when it is divided by lot, as it was in the times of Joshua, when taken from the Canaanites; no tract of land was peculiarly assigned to them as were to the other tribes, as fields, nor vineyards; they had cities appointed them, and they had houses and fields devoted to the Lord which fell to them, and others they had by gift or legacy, or by purchase, as had Jeremiah the priest and Barnabas the Levite, Jer 32:9 **Ac 4:36**; but they had no share in the distribution of the land of Canaan at the time of the division of it among the tribes; no, not even in the spoil of the cities of the land of Canaan, when they were conquered; this Maimonides {n} says they were warned not to take; and a son of Levi that took any part of the spoil was to be beaten; but the spoil of other lands, subdued by the kings of Israel, they might take, as other Israelites did: the reason of all this was, because they had a sufficient provision made for them in another way, and that they might not be entangled in worldly affairs, or spend their time in the culture of fields and vineyards, but wholly give themselves to the service of God in his house:

I [am] thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel; in things temporal, the offerings, tithes, firstfruits, &c. which were given to the Lord, being bestowed upon them; and in things spiritual, they being employed in the work and service of God, and having a peculiar nearness to him, and communion with him: so all that are made priests unto God, as all believers in Christ are, **1Pe 2:5**, have God for their portion and inheritance; God, in his persons and in all his perfections, and under every character, as the God of nature, providence, and grace, is the portion of his people; and a rich, large, and satisfying portion he is, and which is inexhaustible, and will endure for ever; he is their portion in life and at death, in time and to all eternity; see Ps 73:26.

{n} Hilchot Shemittah Veyobel, c. 13. sect. 10, 11.

Numbers 18:21

Ver. 21. And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance,.... The tenth part of the produce of the land; of the wheat, barley, oil, and wine; the tenth part of their harvest and vintage; so that though they were the least of the tribes, they had the greatest share of the increase of the land, and that without any labour or expense; the other having but nine parts among them all, and at the charge and labour of manuring, cultivating, &c. and this they were to have

for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; see Nu 18:3.

Numbers 18:22

Ver. 22. Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation,.... To do any part of the priest's office, as to burn incense, as Korah and his company had done; or to do any part of the work of the Levites, by watching in the tabernacle, by taking it down and setting it up, and bearing the vessels of it; otherwise they might come to it, to bring their sacrifices, to pay their vows, and for their purification when necessary, and such like things:

lest they bear sin and die; lest sin be charged upon them, and punishment be inflicted, even the punishment of death; for it was death to intrude into the priest's office.

Numbers 18:23

Ver. 23. But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation,.... In guarding the tabernacle, that no unclean persons enter into it, or any others take anything out of it, and in assisting the priests in their service, and carrying the vessels of the sanctuary when required:

and they shall bear their iniquity: that is, when they fail in the duty of their office, are not careful in their service and work, and business appointed them; if either they did not do their business themselves, or suffered others to do it, or such to come to the tabernacle who should not, they would be blameworthy and suffer for it:

[it shall be] a statute for ever throughout your generations, that the children of Israel they have no inheritance; having such a plentiful provision made for them, by a statute as durable as this.

Numbers 18:24

Ver. 24. But the tithe of the children of Israel,.... The tenth of the produce of their land, as before:

which they offer [as] an heave offering unto the Lord: by way of gratitude to him for giving them the land, and for making it so fruitful to them, and as an acknowledgment of his being the sovereign Lord and proprietor of it:

I have given to the Levites to inherit; so that the Levites had the tithe not immediately from the Israelites, nor were they dependent on them for them; but they were first given to the Lord, and then by him to the Levites, who held them of him, and not of the Israelites; and were a portion and an inheritance, settled upon them by the Lord himself, which they had as good a right and title unto as the rest of the tribes had to their several inheritances:

therefore have I said unto them, among the children, of Israel they shall have no inheritance; as in Nu 18:23.

Numbers 18:25

Ver. 25. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... And not unto Aaron, because a tithe out of the tithe was to be given to Aaron, as Aben Ezra observes, and it was not so proper that he should have this order to deliver to the Levites, in which he and his sons were so much concerned, and therefore it was given to Moses to acquaint them of it:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 18:26

Ver. 26. Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them,.... Aaron was to tell them what a provision would be made for them on account of their service, but Moses was to inform them what part Aaron was to have out of it:

when ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance; which was done at the time of their harvest, and of the ingathering of the fruits of the earth:

then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord; in token of gratitude for the liberal provision he had made for the maintenance of them:

[even] a tenth [part] of the tithe; a tenth part out of the tenth of the produce of the land of Israel.

Numbers 18:27

Ver. 27. And [this] your heave offering,.... The tithe of the tithe, which though not properly heaved or lifted up, as the heave offerings, strictly so called, were, any more than the tithe itself, Nu 18:24; yet is so called, because separated to the use and service of the Lord, as they were:

shall be reckoned unto you, as though [it were] the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fulness of the winepress; that is, it should be as acceptable to God as if they had fields and vineyards, threshing floors, and wine presses of their own, from whence corn and wine were taken, as the Israelites when they received their tithes from them; and what remained they had as good a right unto, and might make use of as their own, as well as they; see Nu 18:30.

Numbers 18:28

Ver. 28. Thus you also shall offer an heave offering unto the Lord,.... As the Israelites did when they paid tithes to them, Nu 18:24;

of all your tithes which ye receive of the children of Israel; which heave offering was a tenth part of them:

and ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave offering to Aaron the priest; that is, the said tenth part of the tithe was to be given not to Aaron only, as the high priest, as some have thought, and so to his successors in the high priesthood; but to him and his sons, even to all the priests in common, the high priest having his share of it; and Josephus {o} is clear for it, that the tithe of the annual fruits was paid to the Levites, and to the priests. Hecataeus, an Heathen writer, who lived in the times of Alexander the great, says {p}, that all the priests of the Jews received the tenth of whatsoever was produced, and ministered things in common, and were 1500 in number.

{o} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 4. sect. 3. {p} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. sect. 22.

Numbers 18:29

Ver. 29. Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the Lord,.... Not only out of their tithes, but out of whatsoever gifts were given by the Israelites to them, and out of the produce of the fields which belonged to their cities, Nu 35:4; the Levites were to take a tenth, and bring it to the Lord as an heave offering; that is, they were to give it to the priests, to testify their gratitude for everything they had, and to sanctify the rest unto them, and confirm their right and title to it, and give them the free use of it:

of all the best thereof, [even] the hallowed part thereof, out of it; which was the tenth part, for that Was holy, as Aben Ezra says, and that was to be the best of it, which was always to be given to the Lord.

Numbers 18:30

Ver. 30. Therefore thou shalt say unto them,.... The Targum of Jonathan is,

"thou shalt say to them the priests;"

but the words seem manifestly spoken to the Levites:

when ye have heaved the best thereof from it; taken out the tenth part of it, and that the best:

then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshing floor, and as the increase of the wine press; then what remains shall be reckoned as much their own, and may be as lawfully enjoyed, as the corn of the threshing floor, and the wine of the wine fat, of any Israelite whatever.

Numbers 18:31

Ver. 31. And ye shall eat it in every place,.... In any of their tents or dwelling houses, not being obliged to eat it in the tabernacle, where the priests, were obliged to eat many of their holy things, and second tithes were only to be eaten at Jerusalem, De 14:22; but the Levites might eat theirs any where, in any place, clean or unclean, according to Jarchi; for, he says, it might be eaten even in a graveyard; but Aben Ezra much better, in a clean place, be that where it would:

ye, and your households; they and their wives, their sons and daughters, their servants, whether bought or hired; and they might sell it to strangers, to purchase other necessaries with. The Targum of Jonathan interprets this of the priests; but the Levites only are plainly spoken of:

for it [is] your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation; which is said to encourage them in their work, and animate them to it, as well as to clear their right to such a maintenance against all objections; for the labourer is worthy of his reward, as those that labour in the word and doctrine are of theirs, **1Ti 5:17**.

Numbers 18:32

Ver. 32. And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it,.... Shall have no blame laid upon them, or guilt imputed to them, or punishment inflicted on them, on account of their having and enjoying their tithes and gifts:

when ye have heaved from it the best of it; took out the tenth, and that the best, and given it to the priests; or otherwise they would be blameworthy, guilty, and liable to punishment:

neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel; the gifts they have given for holy uses, and so are holy; which would be the case if they ate of them, or enjoyed them, without giving the priests the tenth part of them:

lest ye die; for it seems such a neglect was punishable with death.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 19

This chapter contains a law for making a water for purification for sin, the ingredients of which are the ashes of a red heifer burnt, about which many things are observed, Nu 19:1; the use of the water made of them, to purify such as were unclean by the touch of a dead body, Nu 19:11; some rules are given, by which it might be known who were unclean on account of a dead body, Nu 19:14; the manner of purifying such persons, Nu 19:17; and the punishment of those that should neglect purification, Nu 19:20.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron,.... Not at this time, after the business of the spies, and the affair of Korah, but before the children of Israel departed from Sinai; and so Aben Ezra observes, that this was spoken in the wilderness of Sinai, when the Lord commanded to put unclean persons out of the camp, and when some were defiled with a dead body, and unfit for the passover, **Nu 5:2**; and mention is made of the "water of purifying", **Nu 8:7**;

saying; as follows.

Numbers 19:2

Ver. 2. This [is] the ordinance of the law which the Lord hath commanded,.... By which it appears, that this law was not of the moral, but of the ceremonial kind, being called an ordinance, a statute, a decree of God, the King of kings; and which was founded not on any clear plain reason in the thing itself, but in the will of God, who intended it as a type and shadow of the blood and sacrifice of Christ, and of the efficacy of that to cleanse from sin; and it also appears by this, that it was not a new law now made, but which had been made already: "which the Lord hath commanded": as is plain from what has been observed, See Gill on "Nu 19:1"; and the Jews {q} say, that the red heifer was slain by Eleazar the day after the tabernacle was erected, even on the second day of the first month of Israel's coming out of Egypt; and it was now repeated both on account of the priests and people, because of the priest to whom it belonged, as Aben Ezra observes, Aaron being now established in the priesthood; and because of the people, who were afraid they should die if they came near the tabernacle; now hereby they are put in mind of a provision made for the purification of them, when under any uncleanness, which made them unfit for coming to it:

saying, speak unto the children of Israel; whom this law concerned, and for whose purification it was designed; and it was at the expense not of a private person, but of the whole congregation, that the water of purifying was made; and that, as the Jews say {r}, that the priests might have no personal profit from it:

that they bring thee a red heifer; or "young cow", for so the word properly signifies; one of two years old, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so says the Misnah {s}; though some of the Rabbins say one of three years, or of four years, or even one of five years old, would do. This instance, with others, where females are ordered to be slain, see **Le 3:1**; confutes the notion of such, who think the laws of Moses were made in conformity to the customs of the Egyptians, this being directly contrary to them; if they were the same in the times of Moses, they were in the times of Herodotus, who expressly says {t}, male oxen the Egyptians sacrifice; but it is not lawful for them to sacrifice females, for they are sacred to Isis. Indeed, according to Plutarch {u} and Diodorus Siculus {w}, the Egyptians in their times sacrificed red bullocks to Typhon, who they supposed was of the same colour, and to whom they had an aversion, accounting him the god of evil; and because red oxen were odious to them, they offered them to him; as red-haired men also were slain by them for the same reason, at the tomb of Osiris, who they say was murdered by the red-haired Typhon; but these were superstitions that obtained among them after the times of Moses, and could not be retorted to by him; a better reason is to be given why this heifer or cow was to be of a red colour:

without spot, wherein [is] no blemish; the first of these, without spot, the Jews understand of colour, that it should have no spots in it of any other colour, black or white, nor indeed so much as an hair, at least not two of another colour; and so the Targum of Jonathan, in which there is no spot or mark of a white hair; and Jarchi more particularly,

"which is perfect in redness; for if there were in it (he says) two black hairs, it was unfit;"

and so Ben Gersom, with which agrees the Misnah {x}; if there were in it two hairs, black or white, in one part, it was rejected; if there was one in the head, and another in the tail, it was rejected; if there were two hairs in it, the root or bottom of which were black, and the head or top red, and so on the contrary; all depended on the sight: and it must be owned, the same exactness was observed in the red oxen sacrificed by the Egyptians, as Plutarch relates {y}; for if the ox had but one hair black or white, they reckoned it was not fit to be sacrificed; in which perhaps they imitated the Jews: it being without blemish was what was common to all sacrifices, such as are described in Le 22:22;

[and] upon which never came yoke; and so among the Heathens in later times, very probably in imitation of this, they used to offer to their deities oxen that never had bore any yoke; as appears from Homer, Horace, Virgil, Ovid, and Seneca, out of whom instances are produced by Bochart {z}. Now, though this red cow was not properly a sacrifice for sin, yet it was analogous to one, and was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom all these characters meet, and are significant. It being a female may denote the infirmities of Christ's human nature, to which it was subject, though sinless ones; he was encompassed with, and took on him, our infirmities; and may have some respect to the woman, by whom the transgression came, which brought impurity on all human nature, which made a purification for sin necessary; and the red colour of it may point at the flesh and blood of Christ he partook of, and the sins of his people, which were laid upon him, and were as crimson and as scarlet, and the bloody sufferings he endured to make satisfaction for them; and its being without spot and blemish may denote the perfection of Christ in his person, obedience, and sufferings, and the purity and holiness of his nature; and having never had any yoke upon it may signify, that though he was made under the law, and had commands enjoined him by his father as man, yet was free from the yoke of human traditions, and from the servitude of sin, and most willingly engaged, and not by force and compulsion, in the business of our redemption and salvation.

{q} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 7. p. 22. {r} Misn. Shekalim, c. 7. sect. 7. & Maimon, in ib. {s} Misn. Parah, c. 1. sect. 1. {t} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 41. {u} De lside. {w} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 79. {x} Parah, c. 2. sect. 5. {y} Ut supra.

(Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 79.) {z} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 33. vol. 322.

Numbers 19:3

Ver. 3. And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest,.... The son of Aaron; the Sagan of the priests, as the Targum of Jonathan calls him, the second or deputy priest; it was not to be given to Aaron, that he might not be defiled, though but for a small time, that so he might not be hindered in his office at all; but to Eleazar, to inure him to his office, and to confirm him in it:

that he may bring her forth without the camp; without the camp of Israel; Jarchi says, without the three camps, as afterwards without Jerusalem; it used in later times to be burnt on the mount of Olives; it was brought forth as impure, and was a type of Christ, having the sins of his people on him, and who in conformity to this type suffered without the gates of Jerusalem, see Heb 13:11;

and [one] shall slay her before his face; the Targum of Jonathan says, another priest; but it was not necessary that it should be slain by a priest, any man might do it. Jarchi says, a stranger slew, and Eleazar looked on; though it was not slain by him, yet it was slain before him, that it might look like a sacrifice, though not offered on the altar; and slaying of it denotes the putting of Christ to death, which was done in the presence, and with the approbation, of the priests and elders of the people.

Numbers 19:4

Ver. 4. And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger,.... He took the blood in his left hand, and sprinkled it with the finger of his right hand, as Maimonides says {a}; and so the Targum of Jonathan, which says, he did not receive it into a vessel, but into the palm of his hand, and from thence sprinkled it with his finger {b}: which Ainsworth thinks signified the Spirit of Christ, our high priest, called "the finger of God", Lu 11:20; who takes the blood of Christ, and sprinkles it on the hearts of his people, whereby they are freed from an evil conscience:

and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times; or "towards the tabernacle", so Noldius {c}; as sprinkling of the blood was the principal action in sacrifices, this was to be done directly before the tabernacle, from whence its purifying virtue was expected, though it was not shed in it, that it might have all the appearance of a sacrifice it could have; and being done seven times, denotes the perfection of it: the priest, when he sprinkled, stood on the east side, with his face to the west. When the temple was built at Jerusalem, this affair was transacted on the mount of Olives, which was east of Jerusalem. Jarchi says, the priest stood in the east of Jerusalem, and placed himself so that he might see the door of the temple at the time of sprinkling the blood. Now it appears, as Maimonides says {d}, that the floor of the temple was higher than the floor of the eastern gate of the mountain of the house twenty two cubits, and the height of the gate of the mountain of the house was twenty cubits; wherefore one that stood over against the eastern gate could not see the door of the temple, therefore they made the wall, which was over the top of this gate (the battlement of it), low, so that he (the priest), that stood on the mount of Olives, might see the door of the temple, at the time he sprinkled the blood of the cow over against the temple; otherwise he could only have seen the eighth step of the porch of the temple, as the same writer observes {e}, with which agrees the Misnah {f}, that all the walls there (about the mountain of the house) were high, except the eastern wall, that so the priest that burnt the cow might stand on the top of the mount of Olives, and look and behold the door of the temple, when he sprinkled the blood.

{a} Hilchot Parah Adumah, c. 3. sect. 2. {b} Vid. Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 7. {c} P. 81. No. 379. {d} Hilchot Beth Habechirah, c. 6. sect. 2. {e} In Misn, Middot, c. 2. sect. 4. {f} Misn. ib.

Numbers 19:5

Ver. 5. And [one] shall burn the heifer in his sight,.... Another priest, as the Targum of Jonathan, Eleazar looking on, as that expresses it; the Jews say {g}, that when the priest came to the mount of Olives, accompanied by the elders of Israel, before he burnt the cow, he dipped himself in a dipping place there; and the wood being laid there in order, wood of cedar, ash, fir, and fig trees, made in the form of a tower, with holes opened in it (to put in the fire, and that it might burn the quicker), and its aspect being to the west, he bound the cow, and laid her upon the pile, with her head to the south, and her face to the west; and then having slain it, and sprinkled its blood, as before related, he set fire to it by the help of some small wood: the burning of it may signify the dolorous sufferings of Christ, when the wrath of God was poured forth like fire upon him; the same was signified by roasting the passover lamb:

her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn; which may denote the extent of Christ's sufferings, reaching to all parts of his body, skin, flesh, and blood, and the shame and reproach that attended them, signified by dung; as well as how impure and accursed he was accounted when he was made sin for his people, bore their sins and suffered for them, even not in body only, but in his soul also; for his soul as well as his body were made an offering for sin.

{g} Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 7, 8, 9.

Numbers 19:6

Ver. 6. And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet,.... Another priest, according to the Targum of Jonathan; but it seems to design Eleazar the priest, and so, in later times, the same priest that burnt the cow took these things; the Jews say {h}, when he took them he said, is this cedar wood? is this hyssop? is this scarlet? so he said three times for everyone of them, and he was answered, yes, three times to each of them: these were the same that were used at the cleansing of the leper, Le 14:4;

and cast [it] into the midst of the burning of the heifer; these were rolled or bound up together, as the Jews say {i}, and made one bundle of, that they might the more easily be cast into the fire; the hyssop was wrapped about the cedar wood with the scarlet wool: the true reason of the use of these, Maimonides says {k}, was never clear to him; but the cedar wood, being durable, may denote the continued efficacy of Christ's sufferings; the hyssop, being purgative and of a good smell, the purging nature of Christ's sacrifice, who by himself purged away our sins, and the sweet odour thereof ascended to the Lord; and the scarlet, the sins of his people destroyed thereby.

{h} Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 10. {i} Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 11. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {k} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 47.

Numbers 19:7

Ver. 7. Then the priest shall wash his clothes,.... The Targum of Jonathan has it, "he that slew the cow,"

and Aben Ezra, the priest that burnt it; but it seems to mean Eleazar, the priest that sprinkled the blood, and by touching that was defiled and needed washing; and so the Jews {l} say, all that were employed about it, from the beginning to the end, were defiled in their garments; not only he that slew it, and burnt it, and sprinkled its blood, but he that took and cast in the cedar wood, &c. as we find also he that gathered the ashes of it as well as burnt it: this creature was reckoned so impure, though its ashes were for purifying, that whoever had anything to do with it was unclean, as the scapegoat, which had the sins of all Israel on it; and this as that was typical of Christ, made sin for his people, that he might cleanse them from sin: it may point at the sin of the priests and people of Israel, in putting Christ to death, and yet there was cleansing from that sin, in the precious blood of Christ, as well as from all others:

and he shall bathe his flesh in water; in forty seahs of water, as the Targum of Jonathan; not his clothes only, but his body was to be dipped in water:

and afterward he shall come into the camp: when his clothes and flesh are washed, but not before:

and the priest shall be unclean until the even; though washed, and therefore, though he is said to go into the camp upon washing, this is to be understood, after the evening is come: so Jarchi directs to interpret the passage, transpose it, says he, and so explain it; and he shall be unclean until the evening, and after that he may come into the camp, not only the camp of Israel, but the camp of the Shechinah, as the same writer.

{l} Misn. Parah, c. 4. sect. 4.

Numbers 19:8

Ver. 8. And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water,.... In forty seahs of water, as the Targum of Jonathan: this shows that one different from this is designed in Nu 19:7; and that this is one distinct from him that sprinkled the blood, Nu 19:4;

and bathe his flesh in water: in a like quantity, as the above Targum:

and shall be unclean until the even: and, though washed, might not go into the camp until that time: this may signify, as before, that though the crucifixion of Christ was a very great sin, and done by wicked hands, yet was pardonable through the very blood that was shed by them, **Ac 2:23**.

Numbers 19:9

Ver. 9. And a man [that is] clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer,.... A man, a clean priest, as the Targum of Jonathan; in later times great care was taken that the priest concerned in the burning of the red cow should be pure; he was separated from his own house seven days before the time, and every day he was sprinkled with the blood of all sin offerings then offered, that it might be sure he was free from any pollution by a grave, or a dead body; and for the same reason they made a causeway on double arches from the temple to the mount of Olives, over the valley of Kidron, lest any unseen grave should be in the way; and when he came thither he was obliged to wash or dip himself, as before observed {m}; and so he that gathered up the ashes was to be clean from all ceremonial pollution: the Jews say {n}, that they pounded the ashes; if there were any black coal in them or bone, they did not leave it in them, but sifted them in stone sieves; and not the ashes of the heifer only they took, but the ashes of the cedar wood, &c. mixed with them; and these they put, as the Targum of Jonathan says, into an earthen vessel enclosed in a covering of clay:

and lay [them] up without the camp in a clean place; they were divided into three parts, according to the Targum of Jonathan, one part was put in the Chel (or the enclosure of the court of the tabernacle), another in the mount of Olives, and the third part was divided among all the wards of the Levites, with which the Misnah {o} agrees; Jarchi makes mention of the same division, and of the use of each; that the wards had was without the court, that the citizens might take of it, and all that needed to be purified; that in the mount of Olives was for the priests, to sanctify other heifers with it; and that in the Chel was for a reserve:

and it shall be kept [for a reserve] for the congregation of Israel; as ashes may be kept a long time, if well taken care of, because they are not subject to any corruption or putrefaction; and so was, as Bishop Patrick observes from Dr. Jackson, a figure of the everlasting efficacy of Christ's blood: and, according to the Jews, these ashes of the first heifer must last more than a thousand years; for they say {p} the second that was burnt was in the time of Ezra, though they reckon seven more afterwards before the destruction of the second temple, in all nine; and the tenth they expect in the days of the Messiah, which are past;

he, being come, has put an end to this type by fulfilling it in himself: and the use of them was

for a water of separation; being put into water, and mixed with it, was for the cleansing of such as were separated from others for their uncleanness, and was a purification of them for it, as follows:

it [is] a purification for sin: or "it [is] sin" {q}, not an offering for sin, properly speaking; the heifer, whose ashes they were, not being sacrificed in the tabernacle, nor on the altar, and wanted other rites; yet it answered the purposes of a sin offering, and its ashes in water were typical of the blood of Christ, which purges the conscience from dead works, when this only purified to the sanctifying of the flesh, **Heb 9:13**; and is the fountain set open for sin and uncleanness, Zec 13:1; where both the words are used which are here, and in the preceding clause: ashes are known to be of a cleansing nature, and so a fit emblem of spiritual purification by Christ; and the duration of them of the perpetuity of it.

{m} Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 1. 6. 7. {n} Ib. sect. 11. {o} Ibid. {p} Ib. sect. 5. {q} ayh tajx "peccatum ipsa", Montanus; "peccatum enim est", Tigurine version.

Numbers 19:10

Ver. 10. And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes,.... Whom the Targum of Jonathan calls a priest, though it does not seem necessary he should be one:

and be unclean until the even; See Gill on "Nu 19:7";

and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever; until the Messiah came, whose sufferings and death are for the expiation of, and purification for the sins of Jews and Gentiles, of all the people of God throughout the world, signified by the burning of this heifer; see **1Jo 2:2**.

Numbers 19:11

Ver. 11. He that toucheth the dead body of any man,.... A man and not a beast, as Aben Ezra observes; for he that touched the dead body of a beast was unclean only until evening, Le 11:24; any man, Jew or Gentile, as the same writer notes: this is instanced in, as being the principal pollution, though not the only one, yet so some think, for which the water of purification made of the ashes of the burnt heifer was appointed:

shall be unclean seven days; the reason of which is, because death is the fruit of sin, which is of a defiling nature, and to show that all that are dead in sins are defiled and defiling, and are not to be touched, or to have communion and fellowship held with them but to be abstained from.

Numbers 19:12

Ver. 12. He shall purify himself with it,.... That is, with the ashes of the water of purification made of them: and this was to be done first

on the third day; from the time of his touching the dead body. Aben Ezra intimates, that there is a secret or mystery in this and the following number seven; it may respect the third day of Christ's resurrection, who, as he shed his blood for the expiation and purification of sinners, so he rose again the third day for the justification of them:

and on the seventh day he shall be clean; which may denote the perfect state, or sabbath of rest, which remains for the people of God, when all Christ's purified and justified ones shall be clear of all sin, and be the spirits of just men made perfect:

but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean; whoever is not cleansed from his sins by the blood of Christ, shed for the remission of them, and is not justified from them by him that rose from the dead the third day, will never be cleansed in the world to come, or in the eternal sabbath; but it will then be said, "let him that is filthy be filthy still", Re 22:11.

Numbers 19:13

Ver. 13. Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself,.... With the ashes of the heifer, or water of purification, and so neglects the means which God has appointed for his cleansing:

defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; that is, if he goes into it in his uncleanness, which it was not lawful for him to do: from the Jews the Assyrians seem to have borrowed some customs of theirs, as related by Lucian {r}, who upon burying a dead cock reckoned seven days, see
Nu 19:11; and then went into the temple, for before they might not go in, nor perform holy service; such laws they use, that if anyone sees a dead carcass, he may not go that day into the temple; but he goes in the day following, after he has purified himself:

and that soul shall be cut off from Israel; either be excommunicated from the church, or die by the hand of the civil magistrate, or by the immediate hand of God; that is, if he knew he had touched a dead body, and wilfully neglected the means of his purification, and so sinned presumptuously; otherwise, if all this was done ignorantly, an atonement was made for it, **Le 5:3**

because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; as all are who are not sprinkled with the blood of Christ:

his uncleanness is yet upon him; and will remain, nothing can remove it; as nothing can remove the stain and blot of sin but the blood of Christ; and where that is not applied it will remain marked before God, and will lie upon the sinner to his utter condemnation and ruin; see **Jer 2:22**.

{r} De Dea Syria.

Numbers 19:14

Ver. 14. This is the law when a man dieth in a tent,.... A tent is only mentioned, because the Israelites now dwelt in tents, as Aben Ezra remarks; otherwise the law holds equally good of an house as of a tent:

all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days; the meaning of which is, that all persons that come into a tent or house where a dead body is are equally unclean as those that were in it when it died; and the same is to be supposed of all vessels brought into it, as well as those that are in it, that is, open ones, as appears by what follows.

Numbers 19:15

Ver. 15. And every open vessel,.... An earthen one, as the Targum of Jonathan; and so Jarchi interprets it; and Maimonides {r} observes, that this is only to be understood of an earthen vessel:

which hath no covering bound upon it; a linen or a woollen cloth wrapped and tied about it:

[is] unclean; the air of the house getting into it by its being uncovered.

{r} In Misn. Cholin, c. 1. sect. 6.

Numbers 19:16

Ver. 16. And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields,.... That is killed by another, that dies a violent death, either by the sword or other means; one that touched such an one was unclean, or that touched the sword with which he was slain, as the Targum of Jonathan adds: "or a dead body": that dies a natural death, or suddenly, or in any way:

or a bone off a man; dug out of a grave, and lying by itself:

or a grave; the Targum adds, either the covering or side of a grave:

shall be unclean seven days; all which has respect to the defiling nature of sin, which is the cause of death and the grave.

Numbers 19:17

Ver. 17. And for an unclean person,.... Defiled by any of the above means:

they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin; from the place where they were laid up for this use;
See Gill on "Nu 19:9" and some have thought that they were laid up in various cities and places in the country, as well as at Jerusalem, that they might be come at easily upon occasion; otherwise they could not be had without great trouble and expense, and in some places not so soon as the law required for their purification, namely, on the third day after their defilement:

and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel; the Targum Jonathan is,

"fountain water in the midst of earthen vessel;"

for no water but fountain, spring, or river water, was made use of; and it should seem by what is said that ashes were first put into the vessel, and then the running water was put to them; and yet the Jewish writers say {s}, that if the ashes were put in first, and then the water, it was not right; and the meaning of what is said here is, that the water and ashes should be mixed together; for it is urged from the words: "running water in a vessel", that it is plain, that the water is put in the vessel and not to the ashes; and therefore that which is said, "shall be put thereto", is to caution the person, that after he has put the ashes upon the water, that he mixes them well with his finger, and cause the water below to rise above {t}.

{s} Maimon. Milchot, Parah Adumah, c. 9. sect. 1. {t} Bartenora in Misn. Temurah, c. 1. sect. 5.

Numbers 19:18

Ver. 18. And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water,.... Three stalks of hyssop bound together, as the Targum of Jonathan, and this man was to be a clean priest, according to the same; but it does not seem necessary that he should be a priest, but that anyone free from ceremonial pollution might do it:

and sprinkle it upon the tent; where there was a dead body: but this, we are told, is to be understood not of a tent made of wood, or stone, or clay, but made of anything woven, as linen: or of skins {u}:

and upon all the vessels; in such a tent, that is, open ones, as before observed:

and upon the persons that were there: when the man died in it, or came into it since, and while the dead body was in it;

and upon him that touched a bone; of a dead man, or, as the Targum of Jonathan, the bone of a living man that is separated from him:

or one slain, or one dead; slain with a sword, or dead of the pestilence, as the same Targum, or of any other disease, or in any other way:

or a grave; or the covering or side of one, as the same Targum adds.

{u} Maimon. in Misn. Sabbat, c. 2. sect. 3.

Numbers 19:19

Ver. 19. And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean,.... The clean priest shall sprinkle upon the unclean man, as the Targum of Jonathan; that is, he shall sprinkle the water of purification upon him that is unclean in any of the above ways:

on the third day, and on the seventh day; See Gill on "Nu 19:12",

and on the seventh day he shall purify himself; either the unclean person, who shall perfect his purification, as Jarchi interprets it, that is, by doing what follows; or else the clean person, who becomes in some measure unclean, by sprinkling and touching the water of separation, as appears from Nu 19:21 as the priest that sprinkled the blood of the heifer, and the man that burnt it and gathered its ashes,
Nu 19:7

and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even; in like manner as the man that let go the goat into the wilderness, Le 16:26.

Numbers 19:20

Ver. 20. But the man that shall be unclean,.... By touching any dead body, bone, or grave:

and shall not purify himself; with the water of purification:

that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation:
See Gill on "Nu 19:13".

because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord: by going into it in his uncleanness:

the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him, he is unclean; and will remain so, for nothing else could purify him, see Nu 19:13.

Numbers 19:21

Ver. 21. And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them,.... To the children of Israel, throughout their generations, unto the coming of the Messiah, when the ceremonial law, which stood in divers washings and purifications, was abolished:

that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes; the priest that sprinkled, according to the Targum of Jonathan, or any other person that did it; so that the same purifying water, which made an unclean person clean, defiled a clean one; for though it was purifying, it had uncleanness in it; having the ashes not only of the cow itself, but of its skin, blood, and dung; and so a lye made of ashes is impure in itself, and yet serves to scour cloth: Ainsworth thinks this signifies the imperfection and insufficiency of legal rites, which, in their greatest virtue, only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, and left the purifier himself in uncleanness he had not before; by consideration of which, the people might be led to Christ, and his Spirit, for cleansing, **Heb 9:13** but it rather signifies, that the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, and answers to this purifying water, that its cleansing virtue is owing to Christ being made sin for his people; and that some may be instruments of directing souls to the blood of Christ for cleansing, and yet be defiled themselves: it does not appear that this man, thus unclean, was to have the water of purification sprinkled on him, but was only to wash his clothes; see **Re 7:14**

and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even: but was not clean until he had washed, as Aben Ezra observes, though not expressed; for if one that only sprinkled it had need to be washed, much more one that touched it, and which was unavoidable, if, when he mixed the water and ashes together, he stirred them with his finger, See Gill on "Nu 19:17", though Maimonides {t} understands this of sprinkling and touching the water when there was no necessity for it, when a person was not employed in doing the duty of this law.

{t} Hilchot Parah Adumah, c. 15. sect. 1.

Numbers 19:22

Ver. 22. And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean,.... Not the person unclean by sprinkling, or touching the water of purification, but the unclean person spoken of throughout the chapter, that was unclean by touching a dead body, bone, or grave; whatever that man touched, any vessel or thing, that was unclean also; or "whomsoever", any person, man or woman, for it respects both persons and things:

and the soul that toucheth it; that which the unclean person hath touched; or "him", the unclean person, whether the unclean person touched him, or he the unclean person, or touched anything he had touched, he was unclean; denoting the spreading and infectious nature of sin, and how much sin and sinners are to be avoided; see
Le 15:4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 20

In this chapter is an account of the children of Israel coming to the wilderness of Zin, where Miriam died, and where wanting water they murmured, Nu 20:1, upon which Moses and Aaron applied to the Lord, who ordered Moses to speak to a rock, which should give forth water, and which being smitten by him, accordingly did, Nu 20:6, but Moses and Aaron, in their conduct of this affair, displeased the Lord, Nu 20:12, after this, Moses sent to the king of Edom to desire a passage through his country, which request was refused, Nu 20:14, upon Israel's coming to Mount Hor, Aaron, by order, went up to the mount, and, when stripped of his clothes, which were put on his son Eleazar, he died, lamented by all the people, Nu 20:22.

Ver. 1. Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation,.... Not immediately after the transaction of the above things, recorded in the preceding chapters; as the sending of the spies into the land of Canaan, and their report of it; the business of Korah, and the giving of several laws respecting the priesthood, and the purification of the people; but thirty eight years after: nor was this the congregation that came out of Egypt; their carcasses, by this time, had fallen in the wilderness, as had been threatened, excepting some few, so that this was a new generation: what passed during this time we have very little account of, excepting their journeyings from place to place, in Nu 33:1, by which it appears, there were eighteen stations between the place they encamped at when the spies were sent, and this they now came to; and that the place from whence they came hither was Ezion Geber; from hence they journeyed,

and came unto the desert of Zin; which is different from the wilderness of Sin, Ex 16:1 as appears by their names, which are different, and by the stations of the Israelites, Nu 33:11, hither they came

in the first month; the month of Nisan, on the tenth day of it, according to the Targum of Jonathan, which was the first month of the fortieth year of their coming out of Egypt, so Aben Ezra; with which agrees the Jewish chronologer {u}, which says, this was the fortieth year, and the beginning of the month Nisan:

and the people abode in Kadesh: which is by some thought to be different from Kadeshbarnea, from whence the spies were sent, and lay to the south of the land of Canaan, whereas this was upon the borders of Edom; but Doctor Lightfoot {w} shows them to be the same: it is supposed to be eight hours north or northnorth-west of Mount Sinai, which may be computed to be about twenty miles {x}; here the Israelites abode about four months, see Nu 33:38 the above Jewish chronologer says three months, wrongly:

and Miriam died there, and was buried there; the Jews say {y} she died there the tenth day of the month Nisan, which was ten days after the Israelites came to this place; though, according to the Targum of Jonathan, it was the same day they came thither: Patricides, an Arabian writer, says {z} she died on the seventh day of Nisan, aged one hundred and twenty seven; no mention is made of the people mourning for her as for Aaron, Nu 20:29 and for Moses, De 34:8 perhaps because of their distress for want of water, as follows.

{u} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 9. p. 25. {w} Chorograph. Cent. in Matt. c. 7. p. 8, 9. {x} Pococke's Travels, p. 157. {y} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2. Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2. {z} Apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 457.

Numbers 20:2

Ver. 2. And there was no water for the congregation,.... Which was so ordered, for the trial of this new generation, to see whether they would behave any better than their fathers had done in a like circumstance, the first year they came out of Egypt, Ex 17:1

and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron; just as their fathers had done before them, being of the like temper and disposition.

Numbers 20:3

Ver. 3. And the people chode with Moses,.... Contended with him in a wrangling and litigious manner, showing no reverence nor respect unto his person on account of the dignity of his office, and the many favours they had received from him; and this at a time, when, instead of quarrelling with him, they should have condoled him on the loss of his sister, and bewailed their own loss also of one who had been a prophetess to them, and a leader of them, **Mic 6:4**

and spake, saying, would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord; either at Taberah by fire, or as Korah and his company in like manner, or as the fourteen thousand and seven hundred by a pestilence, Nu 11:1 which they thought a much easier death, either of them, than to die of thirst: they might well call them brethren, not only because of the same nation, and nearly related to them, but because they were of the same temper and disposition, and indeed brethren in iniquity; and they seem to use this appellation, as being of the same sentiments with them, and in vindication of them, and adopt almost their very language; see Nu 14:2.

Numbers 20:4

Ver. 4. And why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness,.... The wilderness of Zin, whither by various marches and journeys, and through different stations, they were at length come:

that we and our cattle should die there? with thirst; they seem to represent it, as if this was the end, design, and intention of Moses and Aaron in bringing them thither; their language is much the same with their fathers on a like occasion; which shows the bad influence of example, and how careful parents should be of their words and actions, that their posterity be not harmed by them; see Ex 17:3.

Numbers 20:5

Ver. 5. And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt,.... They represent that affair in such a light, as if they were forced out of Egypt by Moses and Aaron against their wills; or at least were overpersuaded by them to do what they had no inclination to, namely, to come out of Egypt; though they were in the utmost bondage and slavery, and their lives were made bitter by it, and they cried by reason of their oppression, and the hardships they endured; but this was all forgot. Aben Ezra says, it is a strange word which is here used, which shows the confusion they were in:

to bring us unto this evil place; dry and barren, where there were neither food nor drink, as follows:

it is no place of seed; or fit for sowing, as the Targum of Jonathan, any sort of seed, as wheat, barley, rye, rice, &c.

or of figs, or vines, or pomegranates; it is not a soil fit to plant such trees in, nor would they grow were they planted:

neither is there any water to drink; for them and their cattle, and therefore must be a miserable place for so large a body of people to subsist in.

Numbers 20:6

Ver. 6. And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly,.... Like fugitives, as Aben Ezra; they fled from them through fear, lest they should rise and fall upon them, and stone them, as their fathers were ready to do in a like case, Ex 17:4. It is very likely this assembly gathered about the tents of Moses and Aaron, who went from thence unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; where the Lord had promised to meet Moses, and speak unto him, Ex 29:42

and they fell upon their faces; to pray, as Aben Ezra, that God would forgive the sin, of the people, and not break forth in his wrath against them, as he sometimes had done, and as their sin deserved, and that he would grant them what was needful for them. In the Vulgate Latin version the following words are added as their prayer, "and they cried unto the Lord, and said, Lord God, hear the cry of this people, and open to them thy treasure, the fountain of living water, that they being satiated, their murmuring may cease."

But they are not neither in the Hebrew text, nor in the Greek version, nor the Chaldee paraphrases:

and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them; either to Moses and Aaron, to encourage them to expect their prayers would be answered; or to the people, to terrify them, and silence their murmurings; see
Nu 16:19.

Numbers 20:7

Ver. 7. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Out of what was the token of his glory, which perhaps was the cloud, with an uncommon lustre and brightness in it: saying; as follows.

Numbers 20:8

Ver. 8. Take thy rod,.... The rod of miracles, as the Targum of Jonathan; not the rod of Aaron, miraculous for its blossom and fruit, as some Jewish writers think; but the rod of Moses, with which he had done many wonders in Egypt, and at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, and particularly by smiting the rock at Horeb, when the Israelites wanted water, as they did now:

and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother; not only the heads of the people, but the body of them, as many as could be got together to see the miracle, and to receive the benefit of it:

and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; which was near, but a little way off, within sight, and might be pointed to: it was not the same rock that was smote before; that was in Horeb, this in the extremity of the land of Edom, as Aben Ezra observes; this was to be spoken to, and by a word speaking it would give out water; which was a trial of the faith of Moses and Aaron, as well as of the people, before whom, in a public manner, the rock was to be addressed, as if it was intelligent and all-sufficient:

and it shall give forth his water; not as though there was a fountain of water in it, but that water should flow from it, or God by it give water:

and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock; by speaking to it: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink; sufficient for them both.

Numbers 20:9

Ver. 9. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord..... Which was laid up somewhere in the sanctuary, as well as the rod of Aaron,
Nu 17:7:

as he commanded him; being always faithful and obedient to him that appointed him.

Numbers 20:10

Ver. 10. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock,.... To which they were directed, and were to speak unto; before this they gathered not only the elders of the people, but as many of the congregation as could be well assembled together:

and he said unto them; Moses, who was bid to take the rod, and was the principal person concerned in this affair:

hear now, ye rebels; such their fathers had been, and such they now were, a rebellious generation ever since they were known by him; not only rebellious against him their chief magistrate, but against the Lord himself, murmuring against him, being discontented and disobedient, see **De 9:23**:

must we fetch you water out of this rock? not only signifying their unworthiness of having such a miracle wrought for them, and as showing some degree of reluctance to attempt it, but as expressing diffidence about it; not of the power of God to bring water out of the rock, but of his will to do it for such a rebellious people; or else their unreasonableness to expect any such thing should be done for them: when they were so wicked, how could they think that such a miracle should be wrought for them? so the Targum of Jonathan, "out of this rock is it possible for us to fetch out water for you?"

so Aben Ezra, have we power to bring out water to you from it? This was said in a passion, as the manner of speaking shows; see Ps 106:32 many of the congregation as could be well assembled together:

Numbers 20:11

Ver. 11. And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice,.... At first it only brought out some drops, as Jarchi conjectures, and therefore Moses smote again, when it brought forth water plentifully: the Targum of Jonathan says,

"at the first time it dropped blood, at the second time came out much water."

Could this be credited, it would make the agreement between this rock and Christ appear very manifest, from whom, when his side was pierced with a spear, there came out blood and water, Joh 19:34 for justification and sanctification. In what respect this rock was a type of Christ, as the other at Horeb, and the smiting of it an emblem of Christ being smitten with the rod of justice, according to the law of God, and of the abundance of water flowing from it, as typical of the abundance of grace, and the blessings of it, as coming through a smitten wounded Saviour, See Gill on "Ex 17:6", where the same things are said of another rock as of this, and both types of Christ;

and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also; there was enough for them and their cattle; for it came out in great quantities, in large streams, so that it ran down like a river, and which gave them drink as out of the great depths,
Ps 78:15, where the Psalmist makes mention of rocks in the plural number, for there were two that were smitten in two different places, and at two different times; the one was at Rephidim, the other, as here, in Kadesh; the one was in the first year of Israel's coming out of Egypt, this in the fortieth year of it; that was struck but once, this twice; of this second stone no mention is made by any traveller but one {a}, who coming from Mount Sinai, says,

"we passed by a large rock on our left hand, in which, as in the other rock which Moses struck with his rod, appear, from the bottom to the top, openings where water hath gushed out."

{a} See a Journal from Cairo to Mount Sinai, 1722. p. 42, 43. Ed. 2.

Numbers 20:12

Ver. 12. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron,.... Out of the cloud, where his glory appeared, and still continued:

because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel; that Moses and Aaron committed an evil which was displeasing to the Lord is certain, but what that was is variously represented. Some say their sin was, that the order was to speak to the rock, whereas it was smitten, and not spoken to; but why then was Moses bid to take the rod with him, if it was not to smite with it, as he had done before at Horeb? and besides, this would only have been the sin of Moses, and not of Aaron; others think, that what provoked the Lord was, that the Israelites were called "rebels"; but this is a name the Lord himself gave them, Nu 17:10, and was what they justly deserved; and what after this Moses says of them, which, had this been the case, he would have been careful to have abstained from, **De 9:24**. Others are of opinion, that what was displeasing to the Lord was, that the bringing the water out of the rock was ascribed to themselves, and not to him; "must we fetch you water", &c. Others suppose the sin was in smiting the rock twice, and in anger; but this could only be the fault of Moses at most. Dr. Lightfoot {b} thinks the particular fault was this, that Moses expressed his displeasure and resentment to the Israelites, that on their murmuring a new rock was opening, which portended a new and long stay in the wilderness, as the opening of the first rock at Horeb did when he and Aaron were in expectation of being soon out of the wilderness, and now they feared they were beginning anew their abode in it; but it is certain from the text that unbelief was their sin; they were diffident about the will of God to bring water out of the rock for such a rebellious people, and they did not put them in mind of the miracles God had wrought in former time, to encourage their faith; and so the Lord was not sanctified by them before the people, as he ought to have been:

therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them; the land of Canaan, a grant of which was made to their fathers, and particularly to this generation, and into which they would certainly be brought; but not by Moses and Aaron, who were excluded because of their unbelief, and accordingly both died before the entrance of the people into the land. This, according to the Targum of Jonathan, and Jarchi, was said with an oath; see **Heb 3:18**.

{b} See his Works, vol. 1. p. 36.

Numbers 20:13

Ver. 13. This is the water of Meribah,.... Or "strife": this is the name by which the water had in this place, and from this rock, was called; and which is the same name given to the place at Horeb, where a rock had been smitten, and water had flowed, as now, the first year they came out of Egypt; and to distinguish this from that, this is sometimes called Meribah-Kadesh, De 32:51, this being at Kadesh, as that was at Rephidim:

because the children of Israel strove with the Lord: for their chiding and striving with Moses was interpretatively striving with the Lord himself, whose ministers and servants they were:

and he was sanctified in them; that is, the glory of his divine perfections was displayed in them; either in the waters fetched out of the rock, which was a proof of the almighty power of God, and of his truth and faithfulness to his promises; or in the children of Israel, in whose sight, and for whose sake this miracle was wrought: the Targum of Jonathan expressly says, in Moses and Aaron, in not sparing these his saints, but expressing severity towards them for their sin; so Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it.

Numbers 20:14

Ver. 14. And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom,.... This country was sometimes governed by kings, and sometimes by "dukes", see Ge 36:14. At the time of the passage of the Israelites through the Red sea, we read of the dukes of Edom, Ex 15:15, and here, thirty nine years after, of a king of Edom, but who he was is not certain. Bishop Usher takes him to be the same with Hadar, the last of the race of kings mentioned in Ge 36:39, to him Moses sent messengers with a request, which follows after a preamble to it; who were the messengers is not said; the place from whence they were sent is Kadesh, a city on the borders of the land of Edom; but not Kadeshbarnea, Aben Ezra says, though some are of opinion it is the same, see Nu 20:1:

thus saith thy brother Israel; the Israelites and Edomites springing from two men, Jacob and Esau, who were twin brothers, and is observed to ingratiate themselves to the Edomites, and gain their request, pleading relation to them:

thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us; what an uncomfortable condition they had been in for many years, which was well known to Edom, a neighbouring country, as is reasonable to suppose; since the fame of the children of Israel coming out of Egypt, passing through the Red sea, and being so long in the wilderness, was spread everywhere; this was said to move their pity.

Numbers 20:15

Ver. 15. How our fathers went down into Egypt,.... Jacob and his twelve sons, with their children:

and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; even the space of four hundred and thirty years, Ex 12:40

and the Egyptians vexed us and our fathers; used them ill, brought them into bondage, and made their lives bitter, laid heavy tasks and burdens upon them, as well as slew their male children, see **Ex 1:7**.

Numbers 20:16

Ver. 16. And when we cried unto the Lord,.... By reason of their bondage, and to be delivered from it, **Ex 2:24**:

he heard our voice; their prayer to him, as the Targum of Jonathan, for help and deliverance, **Ex 2:24**:

and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt; one of the ministering angels, as the same Targum, and so Aben Ezra; though he observes that some interpret it of Moses, as do Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and Ben Melech, which is not likely; since Moses is the person that sent this message to the king of Edom, who would not easily understand it of him, if so he meant; nor would the mention of it be of any consequence and avail with him; whereas to understand it of some divine and heavenly agent, sent by the Lord on so important an affair, might make it the more remarkable, and to be regarded by him: and indeed no other is meant than the Angel of God's presence, who appeared to Moses in the bush, and sent him to Pharaoh to demand the dismission of the children of Israel; and who, by him, wrought the wonders in Egypt, and brought Israel from thence, and went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire:

and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border; not that they were properly in the city, but near it, for they dwelt in tents in the wilderness; nor would that, or anyone city, hold so large a number as they consisted of.

Numbers 20:17

Ver. 17. Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country,.... That being the nearest and shortest way to the land of Canaan, from the place where they now were:

we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards; to harm them, and injure any man in his private property, by gathering the fruit of them, if the season of the year for it, or by trampling them down:

neither will we drink of the water of the wells; which private persons had dug, for the watering of their fields and vineyards, and for other uses, at least without paying for it; or only of the waters of the rivers, common to all passengers; from hence it appears, that the country of Edom was not then such a barren country as in later times, and as travellers {c} now report it is; See Gill on "Mal 1:3"

we will go by the king's highway; not the way in which the king used to walk, or which he should order them to walk in, as Aben Ezra; but the public roads, common to all his subjects, and travellers to walk in by his allowance; and such roads are now called by us the king's highway:

we will not turn to the right hand, or to the left; to do any injury to any person's property, but go straight forward:

until we have passed thy borders; from one to another, and got quite through the country.

{c} See Shaw's Travels, 4. 438. Ed. 2.

Numbers 20:18

Ver. 18. And Edom said unto him,.... The king of Edom replied to Israel, represented by the messengers sent in their name:

thou shall not pass by me; through my country:

lest I come out against thee with the sword; or with those that use the sword, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; that is, with an army of soldiers with their drawn swords in their hands, to slay them as enemies.

Numbers 20:19

Ver. 19. And the children of Israel said unto him,.... The messengers sent by the children of Israel made answer to the king of Edom:

we will go by the highway; we desire no other favour but that of the public road; we propose not to go through any part of the country that is enclosed and cultivated, to do any damage to it:

if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it; as it was usual, and still is, to buy water in those countries near the Red sea, where it is scarce. We are told {d}, that at Suess, a city on the extremity of the Red sea, there is no water nearer than six or seven hours journey towards the north east, which is brought from thence on camels; and a small vessel of it is sold for three or four medinas, and a larger vessel for eight or ten, according to the demand for it; a medina is an Egyptian piece of money, worth about three halfpence of our English money:

I will only (without doing anything else) go through on my feet; as fast as I can, without saying anything to the inhabitants to terrify and distress them, and without doing them any injury. Some render it, I will only go "with my footmen" {e}; foot soldiers, an army on foot, as Israel were.

{d} See a Journal from Cairo to Mount Sinai, p. 10, 11. Ed. 2. {e} ylgrb "cum meo exercitu pedestri"; so some in Fagius & Vatablus.

Numbers 20:20

Ver. 20. And he said, thou shall not go through,.... Which is an absolute and peremptory denial:

and Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand; the king raised the militia of his country, and came at the head of a powerful army to hinder their passing into it; being fearful and jealous, lest such a large body as they were should seize on his country, or spoil it, not relying on their promises; and this might arise also from the old grudge of Esau against Jacob, and which continued in his posterity, and might now be revived upon their going to Canaan to possess the earthly blessing conferred on Jacob and his seed: however, it seems, though the Edomites would not let Israel pass through their country, yet they furnished them with food and drink for their money, **De 2:28**.

Numbers 20:21

Ver. 21 Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his country,.... Notwithstanding their near relation to each other, and the fair promises Israel made:

wherefore Israel turned away from him: patiently bearing the refusal, and not resenting it; being ordered, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, by the Word of heaven, not to make war with them, because the time was not yet come to take vengeance on Edom by their hands; and to the same purpose the Targum of Jerusalem.

Numbers 20:22

Ver. 22. And the children of Israel, [even] the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh,.... Not directly, but after they had continued there some time, and had furnished themselves with provisions for their journey, which they bought of the Edomites, see Jud 11:17, "the whole congregation" is observed to Journey from hence, not one of them being lost by the king of Edom's coming out against them; these went out complete and perfect, safe and sound:

and came unto Mount Hor; which, according to Bunting {f}, was forty eight miles from Kadesh; this had not its name from the Horim or Horites, nor they from that, their name being written with a different letter, but from Harar, a mountain, for the word itself signifies a mountain; wherefore it may be rendered, "a mountain of the mountain", which Jarchi interprets a mountain on the top of a mountain. Josephus {g} says, that here stood a city, formerly called Arce, since Petra, surrounded with an high mountain, where Aaron went and died; and Pliny says {h} of Petra, that it is encompassed with inaccessible mountains.

{f} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 83. {g} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 4. sect. 7. {h} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28.

Numbers 20:23

Ver. 23. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor,.... When they were at the foot of that mountain, in the valley adjoining to it:

by the coast of the land of Edom; which they were still upon the borders of, and were going round it, not being permitted to go through it:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 20:24

Ver. 24. Aaron shall be gathered unto his people,.... That is, shall die, for this phrase is a periphrasis of death, and is used in common both of good and bad men, and designs death in general, without regard to persons and places men go to at death:

for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel; the land of Canaan; and Aaron the priest, and so Moses the lawgiver, not being suffered to enter into that land, show the weakness and imperfection of the law, and of the Levitical priesthood, and the insufficiency of them, and of obedience to them to bring men to, and give them an entrance into the heavenly glory; that is done by another person, the antitype of Joshua, even Jesus:

because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah; that is, you Moses and Aaron; their unbelief is called a rebelling against the word of the Lord, for which it was threatened them, that they should not bring the people of Israel into the land of Canaan, and now the threatening begins to take place, see Nu 20:12.

Numbers 20:25

Ver. 25. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son,.... His eldest son, who was to succeed him in the priesthood, and did:

and bring them up unto Mount Hor; to the top of it, they being now at the foot of it, where the people of Israel lay encamped.

Numbers 20:26

Ver. 26. And strip Aaron of his garments,.... His priestly garments, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi:

and put them upon Eleazar his son; thereby declaring him to be high priest in his father's stead:

and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there; the phrase of gathering to his people is here explained of his dying.

Numbers 20:27

Ver. 27. And Moses did as the Lord commanded,.... Though it must be very cutting, distressing, and afflicting to him, to part with a brother so dear to him, and who had been so many years a companion of him, and a partner with him in the care and government of the people of Israel; but it being the Lord's will, he submits unto it, and faithfully and readily obeyed his orders, as he always did:

and they went up into Mount Hor, in the sight of all the congregation; that is, Moses, Aaron, and Eleazar, and perhaps there might be some others that went with them as servants, to attend them and assist them in some things to be done, particularly in the burial of Aaron; they all saw Aaron go up, but he came down no more, and so it was ordered in this public manner, that they might be witnesses of the translation of the priesthood from Aaron to Eleazar, who, after this affair was over, came down with Moses.

Numbers 20:28

Ver. 28. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments,.... His priestly garments, which, very probably, were put on at the foot of the mountain, on purpose for the transaction of this affair, since they were not in common worn, but only when in service; the same hands that clothed Aaron with them at first, stripped him of them, and both were done at the command of God; as the stripping of those garments was a divesting Aaron of his office, so it was a figure of the disannulling of his priesthood, when the Messiah should come, a priest after another order:

and put them upon Eleazar his son; which was an investing him with the office of high priest in his father's room; and which, as it must give Aaron pleasure and satisfaction to see his son put into his office before he died, so it signified the continuance of it in succession in his posterity, and was a confirmation of it; and it must be pleasing to Moses and the people of Israel to observe the care and faithfulness of God in providing for the succession of the priesthood:

and Aaron died there in the top of the mount; quietly, comfortably, and contentedly, without the least murmuring or repining: this was on the first day of the fifth month, as appears from Nu 33:38, that is, of the month Ab, as the Targum of Jonathan here says; and in this the Jewish writers {k} agree in general, which month answers to part of July and part of August; and in this same place where he died he was buried, as is evident from De 10:6, wherefore no credit is to be given to the Arabs, who show a stone not far from Mount Sinai, about two feet high from the ground, on which are seen some unknown characters, which, they say, were engraven by Jeremiah the prophet, in honour of Moses and Aaron, who were buried there {l}:

and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount; after Aaron was dead and buried.

{k} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 10. p. 29. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2. Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2. {l} Journal from Cairo to Mount Sinai, p. 40. Ed. 2.

Numbers 20:29

Ver. 29. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead,.... Not that they saw his dead body, but they perceived by the relation of Moses, and by various circumstances, as not seeing Aaron come down, whom they saw go up, and seeing Eleazar with Aaron's garments on him, and perhaps by tokens of mourning in Moses and Eleazar; so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem say, they saw them come down from the top of the mountain, with their garments rent, and ashes on their heads, weeping and lamenting:

they mourned for Aaron thirty days; the whole month out; so long public mourning with the Jews lasted, as Josephus {m} relates:

[even] all the house of Israel; men and women, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi: no doubt it was for the amiable virtues and abundant grace that were in him, and the many services he had done for them, both before and since he was invested with the priestly office; and oftentimes the memory of such things is revived after the death of a good man, which are not so much taken notice of in his life, nor he be thanked for them, or have honour and respect shown him on account of them; but when dead, he, and what he has done, are spoken well of, and his loss lamented.

{m} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 5.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 21

This chapter gives an account of the defeat of King Arad, the Canaanite, Nu 21:1 of the murmurings of the children of Israel, because of difficulties in travelling round, the land of Edom, for which they were punished with fiery serpents,
Nu 21:4 and how that upon their repentance a brazen serpent was ordered to be made, and to be erected on a pole, that whoever looked to it might live, Nu 21:7 and of the several journeys and stations of the children of Israel, until they came to the land of the Amorites, Nu 21:10, when they sent a message to Sihon their king, to desire him to grant them a passage through his country; but he refusing, they fought with him, smote him, and possessed his land, concerning which many proverbial sayings were used, Nu 21:21 and the chapter is concluded with the defeat of Og, king of Bashan, Nu 21:33.

Ver. 1. And [when] King Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south,.... Arad seems rather to be the name of a place, city, or country, of which the Canaanite was king, than the name of a man, since we read of the king of

Arad, Jos 12:14 see also **Jud 1:16** and so the Targums of Onkelos and Jerusalem here render it, the king of Arad; and the Targum of Jonathan says, he changed his seat and reigned in Arad, which might have its name from Arvad, a son of Canaan, Ge 10:18 and Jerom says {n}, that Arath, the same with Arad, is a city of the Amorites, near the wilderness of Kadesh, and that to this day it is shown, a village four miles from Malatis and twenty from Hebron, in the tribe of Judah; and so Aben Ezra observes, that the ancients say, this is Sihon (the king of the Amorites), and he is called a Canaanite, because all the Amorites are Canaanites; but, according to Jarchi, the Amalekites are meant, as it is said, "the Amalekites dwell in the land of the south": Nu 13:29 and so the Targum of Jonathan here,

"and when Amalek heard, that dwelt in the land of the south;"

what he heard is particularly expressed in the following clause:

heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies: either after the manner of spies, or rather by the way in which the spies went thirty eight years ago, which was the way of the south, where this Canaanitish king dwelt, see Nu 13:17, the Septuagint version leaves the word untranslated, taking it for the name of a place, and reads, "by the way of Atharim", so the Samaritan Pentateuch and Arabic version; and did such a place appear to have been hereabout, it would be the most likely sense of the passage; for as the spies were never discovered by the Canaanites, the way they went could not be known by them; nor is it very probable that, if it had been known, it should be so called, since nothing of any consequence to them as yet followed upon it:

then he fought against Israel; raised his forces and marched out against them, to oppose their passage, and engaged in a battle with them:

and took some of them prisoners; according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, great numbers of them; but Jarchi says, only one single maidservant.

{n} De locis Heb. fol. 87. K.

Numbers 21:2

Ver. 2. And Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord,.... The Israelites made supplication to the Lord for help against their enemies, and that he would give them victory over them, and made promises to him:

and said, if thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand; certainly and entirely deliver them, so as that a complete victory shall be obtained over them:

then will I utterly destroy their cities; or "anathematize", or devote them to utter destruction {o}; slay man and beast, burn their houses and take their goods, not for a spoil, for their own private use, but reserve them for the service of God; all which is implied in the vow made, as was done to Jericho, **Jos 6:21** and so it is a vow, as Abendana observes, of what they would do when they came to the land of Canaan.

{o} ytmrxhw "et anathematisabo", Montanus; "devovebo", Tigurine version.

Numbers 21:3

Ver. 3. And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel,.... In their prayers and vows; with acceptance heard, and answered them according to their wish:

and delivered up the Canaanites: into their hands, gave them victory over them:

and they utterly destroyed them and their cities; that is, "anathematized" them, and devoted them to destruction; for as yet they did not actually destroy them, since we read of Arad afterwards,
Jos 12:14, but this they did in Joshua's time, when the whole land of Canaan came into their hands; for had they entered the land now, and took and destroyed the cities belonging to Arad, they would doubtless have proceeded, and pursued their conquests, and not have returned into the wilderness again to go round about Edom, in order to enter another way; many think, as Aben Ezra observes on Nu 21:1 that this section was written by Joshua, after the land was subdued:

and he called the name of the place Hormah; which before was called Zephath, and it seems to have its name from various disasters which happened at this place; as the defeat of the Israelites by the Amalekites, Nu 14:45, and here of the Canaanites by the Israelites, and afterwards of the inhabitants of this place by Judah and Simeon, **Jud 1:17** it had its name from "Cherem", the anathema or destruction it was devoted to.

Numbers 21:4

Ver. 4. And they journeyed from Mount Hor,.... After the battle with the king of Arad, and the defeat of him:

by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom; which lay by it, and from whence it had the name of the Red sea, Edom signifying red; and by the way of that the Israelites must needs go, to go round that country:

and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way; because it was going back instead of going forward to Canaan's land, and because of the length of the way; it was a round about way they were going; when, could they have been admitted to have passed through the country of Edom, the way would have been short; or had they pursued their victory over the Canaanite, they would have gone directly into the land; and this perhaps was what fretted, vexed, and discouraged them, that they were obliged to go back, and take such a circuit, when they had such an opportunity of entering; and they might be distressed also with the badness and the roughness of the way, the borders of Edom being rocky and craggy: it is in the original text, "their soul or breath was short" {p}; they fetched their breath short, being weary and faint with travelling, or through anger, as angry persons do, when in a great passion: so the people of God travelling through the wilderness of this world are often discouraged, because of the difficulties, trials, and troubles they meet with in the way, from sin, Satan, and the world, and are fretful and impatient; but though they are led about and walk in a round about way, and in a rough way, yet in a right way to the city of their habitation, Ps 107:7.

{p} vpn ruqtw "et abbreviata est anima", Montanus, Munster, Fagius, Vatablus; "decurtata", Piscator.

Numbers 21:5

Ver. 5. And the people spake against God,.... Who went before them in the pillar of cloud and fire, for leading them in such a way; that is, against Christ, as the apostle has taught us to interpret it,
1Co 10:9, and is no inconsiderable proof of the deity of Christ; and so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"and the people thought in their heart, and spake against the Word of the Lord,"

the essential Word and Son of God:

and against Moses; his servant, for obeying the orders of the Lord, and leading and guiding the people as he directed him:

wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? ascribing this equally to God and to Moses; using a strange word, as Aben Ezra calls it, being in a great passion, and not considering well what they said; showing great ingratitude for such a mercy, and representing it in a wrong light, as if the intent of bringing them from thence was to slay them in the wilderness:

for [there] is no bread; no bread corn, nothing in the wilderness to make bread of; nothing that they called and accounted bread, otherwise they had manna, as is presently owned:

neither [is there] any water; any fresh water fit to drink, otherwise they were near the sea; what they had from the rock, lately, perhaps was now spent, and it did not follow them as the other rock had:

and our soul loatheth this light bread; the manna; this very light, this exceeding light bread, the radicals of the word {q} used being doubled, which increases the signification: if to be understood of light and easy digestion, it was the more to be valued; but perhaps they meant, it had but little substance and virtue in it, and was not filling and satisfying; or rather that it was exceeding vile, mean, and despicable; so they called the bread of heaven, angel's food, this wonderful gift of Providence; in like manner is Christ, the hidden manna, treated, and his Gospel, and the precious truths of it, by unregenerate men and carnal professors, **1Co 1:23**.

{q} lqlqh "levissime", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Fagius, Vatablus; "vilissimi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Numbers 21:6

Ver. 6. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people,.... Of which there were great numbers in the deserts of Arabia, and about the Red sea; but hitherto the Israelites were protected from them by the cloud about them, but sinning, the Lord suffered them to come among them, to punish them; these are called fiery, either from their colour, for in Arabia, as there were serpents of a golden colour, as Aelianus {r} relates, to which the brazen serpent, after made, bore some likeness, so there were others in the same parts of Arabia of a red or scarlet colour, as Diodorus Siculus says {s}, of a span long, and their bite entirely incurable; or else they are so called from the effect of them, exciting heat and thirst in those they bit; so Jarchi says, they are so called because they burn with the poison of their teeth: these, very probably, were flying ones, as may seem from Isa 14:29 and being sent of God, might come flying among the people and bite them; and such there were in the fenny and marshy parts of Arabia, of which many writers speak {t}, as flying from those parts into Egypt, where they used to be met by a bird called Ibis, which killed them, and for that reason was had in great veneration by the Egyptians; and Herodotus {u} says they are nowhere but in Arabia, and also {w} that they of that kind of serpents, which are called Hydri, their wings are not feathered, but like the wings of bats, and this Bochart {x} takes to be here meant:

and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died; for, as before related from Diodorus Siculus, their bites were altogether incurable; and Solinus {y} says, of the same Arabian flying serpents, that their poison is so quick, that death follows before the pain can be felt; and of that kind of serpent, the Hydrus, it is said by Leo Africanus {z}, that their poison is most pernicious, and that there is no other remedy against the bite of them, but to cut off that part of the member bitten, before the poison can penetrate into the other parts of the body: the Dipsas, another kind of serpent, which others are of opinion is designed, by biting, brings immediately a thirst on persons, intolerable and almost not extinguishable, and a deadly one, unless help is most speedily had; and if this was the case here it was very bad indeed, since there was no water: Solinus {a} says, this kind of serpent kills with thirst; Aristotle {b} speaks of a serpent some call the sacred one, and that whatsoever it bites putrefies immediately all around it: these serpents, and their bites, may be emblems of the old serpent the devil, and of his fiery darts, and of sin brought in by him, and which he tempts unto, the effects of which are terrible and deadly, unless prevented by the grace of God.

{r} De Animal. l. 10. c. 13. {s} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 180. {t} Herodot. Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 15. Aelian. de Animal. l. 2. c. 38. Mela, l. 3. c. 9. Solin. Polyhistor, c. 45. & alii. {u} Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 109. {w} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 76. {x} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 3. c. 13. col. 423. {y} Polyhist. c. 45. {z} Apud Scheuchzer, Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 386. {a} Polyhist. c. 40. {b} Hist. Animal.

l. 8. c. 29.

Numbers 21:7

Ver. 7. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, we have sinned,.... Being bitten with serpents, and some having died, the rest were frightened, and came and made an humble acknowledgment of their sins to Moses:

for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; murmuring at their being brought out of Egypt, and because they had no better provision in the wilderness; concluding they should die there for want, and never enter into the land of Canaan, of which evils they were now sensible, and confessed them:

pray unto the Lord that he take away the serpents from us; or "the serpent" {c}, in the singular, which is put for the plural, as it often is; or the plague of the serpent, as the Targum of Jonathan, that it might cease, and they be no more distressed by them: they were sensible they came from God, and that none could remove them but him; and knowing that Moses was powerful in prayer, and had interest with God, they entreat him to be their intercessor, though they had spoken against him and used him ill:

and Moses prayed for the people; which proves him to be of a meek and forgiving spirit; who, though he had been so sadly reflected on, yet readily undertakes to pray to God for them.

{c} vxn ta "serpentem", Montanus; "hunc serpentem", Piscator,

Numbers 21:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... Out of the cloud; or, it may be, Moses went into the sanctuary, and there prayed, and the Lord answered him from between the cherubim:

make them a fiery serpent; not a real one, but the likeness of one, one that should very much resemble the fiery serpents Israel had been bitten with:

and set it upon a pole; a standard, banner, or ensign, as the word signifies; perhaps meaning one of the poles on which their ensigns were carried: the Targum of Jonathan renders it, on an high place, that so it might be seen by all in the camp:

and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live; which is very wonderful, that by looking to the figure of a serpent, men should be cured of the bites of real ones, and which bites were deadly; the virtue of healing could not come from the figure, but from God, who appointed it to be made, the Targum of Jonathan adds, that one bitten should live,

"if he directed his heart to the Word of the Lord,"

even to that divine Logos or Word of God, whose lifting up was figured hereby; see **Joh 3:14**.

Numbers 21:9

Ver. 9. And Moses made a serpent of brass,.... Which was the most proper metal to make it of, that it might resemble the fiery serpents, whether of a golden or scarlet colour: and Diodorus Siculus {d} speaks of some of the colour of brass, whose bite was immediately followed with death, and by which, if anyone was struck, he was seized with terrible pains, and a bloody sweat flowed all over him; and this was chosen also, because being burnished and bright, could be seen at a great distance, and with this metal Moses might be furnished from Punon, the next station to this, where they now were, Zalmonah, as appears from Nu 33:42 a place famous for brass mines, and which Jerom {e} says, in his time, was a little village, from whence brass metal was dug, by such that were condemned to the mines:

and put it upon a pole; as he was directed:

and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived: which was very marvellous, and the more so, if what physicians say is true, as Kimchi relates {f}, that if a man bitten by a serpent looks upon a piece of brass he dies immediately: the lifting up of this serpent on a pole for such a purpose was a figure of the lifting up of Christ, either upon the cross, or in the ministry of the word, that whosoever looks unto him by faith may have healing, See Gill on "Joh 3:14",where this type or figure is largely explained: the station the Israelites were now at, when this image was made, is called Zalmonah, which signifies an image, shadow, or resemblance, as the brazen serpent was; from Mount Hor, where they were last, to this place, according to Bunting {g}, were twenty eight miles: this serpent did not remain in the place where it was set, but was taken with them, and continued until the days of Hezekiah, 2Ki 18:4.

{d} Bibliothec. l. 17. p. 560. {e} De locis Heb. fol. 91. G. {f} Sepher Sherash. rad. vxn {g} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. 83.

Numbers 21:10

Ver. 10. And the children of Israel set forward,.... From Zalmonah, and came to Punon, which, according to the above writer, was twenty miles from it; though here indeed, some think, the brazen serpent was set up, here being, as before observed, brass mines to furnish with that metal:

and pitched in Oboth; which was twenty four miles from Punon, as says the same writer: the word signifies bottles; perhaps here the Israelites got water and filled their bottles, or, as others think, they filled them with the wine of Moab, and called the name of the place from thence; it is perhaps the same with the Eboda of Ptolemy {h}, which he places in Arabia Petraea; and of which Pliny {i} also makes mention.

{h} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17. {i} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28.

Numbers 21:11

Ver. 11. And they journeyed from Oboth,.... How long they stayed there is not certain:

and pitched at Ijeabarim; which, according to Bunting {k}, was sixteen miles from Oboth; Jarchi says it was the way that passengers pass by Mount Nebo to the land of Canaan, and which divides between the land of Moab and the land of the Amorites:

in the wilderness which is before Moab; called the wilderness of Moab, **De 2:8**

towards the sunrising; the east side of the land of Moab,
Jud 11:18.

{k} Ut supra. (Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. 83.)

Numbers 21:12

Ver. 12. From thence they removed, and pitched in the valley of Zered. Or the brook Zered, as in De 13:14 that is near it: this seems to be the same station with Dibongad, Nu 33:45, and which, according to the above writer, was sixteen miles from Ijeabarim.

Numbers 21:13

Ver. 13. From thence they removed, and pitched on the other side of Arnon,.... A river on the borders of Moab:

which is in the wilderness that cometh out of the coasts of the Amorites; according to Jarchi, they went round the land of Moab, all to the south and east, and came not into the border of Moab, as Jephthah said, Jud 11:18 but before they came hither they had a station at Almondiblathaim, Nu 33:46

for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites; a river which divided these two countries, and bounded them; and Moses is the more particular in this account, to show that the Israelites took nothing from the Moabites, but what the Amorites had taken from them, they being charged not to distress the Moabites and Ammonites, **De 2:9**, see Jephthah's defence, Jud 11:15.

Numbers 21:14

Ver. 14. Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord,.... A history of wars in former times, which the Lord had suffered to be in the world; and which, as Aben Ezra thinks, reached from the times of Abraham and so might begin with the battle of the kings in his time, and take in others in later times, and particularly those of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and his conquests of some parts of Moab; and to this book, which might be written by some one of those nations, Moses refers in proof of what he here says:

what he did in the Red sea; that is, what Sihon king of the Amorites did, or the Lord by him, "at Vaheb in Suphah", as the words may be rendered; either against a king, or rather city, of Moab, whose name was Vaheb, in the borders of the land of Moab, or how he destroyed that city Vaheb with a storm or terrible assault {l}:

and in the brooks of Arnon: some places situated on the streams of that river, which were taken by the Amorites from the Moabites, as the book quoted plainly testified.

{l} Vid. L'Empereur. Not. in Mosis Kimchi odoiporia p. 195.

Numbers 21:15

Ver. 15. And at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar,.... All that part of the country which lay upon the stream, as far as the city of Ar, the metropolis of Moab, called Ar of Moab, Isa 15:1,

and lieth upon the border of Moab; as that city did; so far goes the quotation out of the aforesaid book, as a proof of what was taken by the Amorites from the Moabites, and were not in their possession when Israel were upon their borders; and therefore, in taking them from the Amorites, did no wrong to Moab.

Numbers 21:16

Ver. 16. And from thence they went to Beer,.... A place so called from a well which sprung up here, of which the following account is given:

that is, the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses; promising him to give it to the children of Israel, without asking for it; which was a very singular favour, and for which they were thankful: saying to him,

gather the people together, and I will give them water; for as they were now gone from the river Arnon, and the streams and brooks of it, they might be in want of water, though they did not murmur as they had been used to do; and without their petition for it, the Lord promises to give it to them; and that they might be witness of the miracle that would be wrought for them, they are ordered to be gathered together.

Numbers 21:17

Ver. 17. Then Israel sang this song,.... Being affected with the free favour and good will of God towards them:

spring up, O well; for the springing up of which they prayed in faith, believing in the promise of God, that it would spring up; and so encouraged one another not only to believe it, but even to sing on account of it before it actually did:

sing ye unto it; or on account of it praise the Lord for it; or "answer to it" {m}, it being their manner to sing their songs by responses, or alternately.

{m} hl wne "respondete ei", Montanus; "alternis canite ei", Tigurine version, Piscator.

Numbers 21:18

Ver. 18. The princes digged the well,.... The princes and heads of the several tribes:

the nobles of the people digged it; the seventy elders, according to the Targum of Jonathan:

by the direction of the lawgiver; either the Lord himself, the lawgiver of his people, who pointed out the spot, and directed the princes where to dig, that is, be did this by Moses; and who, as Jarchi thinks, is the lawgiver, and not amiss: the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem render the word by Scribes, in the plural number, and interpret them of Moses and Aaron: and this the princes and nobles "dug with their staves"; either their walking sticks, or their rods, the ensigns of their authority; with these they smote the ground, or stuck them in a soft and sandy place, upon which the waters bubbled up and flowed out. Dr. Shaw {n} chooses to render the words, "with their united applause", or "clapping of hands", as the word Nev in Chaldee signifies; or it may be expressed, as by Dr. Hunt, quoted by him, "by describing" or "marking out" the figure or fashion of the well "with staves". Mr. Ainsworth thinks that this well signified Christ, the fountain of gardens, and well of living waters; and the waters of it the Spirit and his graces, which are a well of living water springing up unto everlasting life; the means of which are the labours of the governors of the church, the ministers of Christ,

by preaching the word, and opening the Scriptures; and such grace is worthy of a song, and to be had with joy out of the wells of salvation,

Isa 12:3:

and from the wilderness they went to Mattanah; from the wilderness near Arnon, which came out of the coasts of the Amorites, Nu 21:13 to a place which signifies a gift. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem render it,

"and from the wilderness it was given to them for a gift"

that is, the well; and so the people of God, that are called out of the wilderness of this world, and come up from it, are called to partake of the gifts and blessings of grace, which are freely given unto them of God.

{n} Travels, p. 67. Ed. 2.

Numbers 21:19

Ver. 19. And from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth. All the Targums interpret this, and the following verse, not of the journeying of the children of Israel, but of the motion of the well, that that, from the place from whence it was given them, descended with them into the valleys, and from thence to the high places, as these words signify: and indeed those places are not mentioned in the journeys of the children of Israel, Nu 33:1 and were not stations where they pitched, but places they passed through before they came to Abarim, and the wilderness of Kedemoth.

Numbers 21:20

Ver. 20. And from Bamoth, [in] the valley,.... Or rather "to the valley", as the Targum of Onkelos, since Bamoth signifies high places; though, according to the Jerusalem Talmud {o}, Bamoth, Baal, which seems to be the same place, was in a plain:

that is in the country of Moab; the valley belonged to Moab, into which Israel came:

to the top of Pisgah; not that the valley reached to the top, nor did the children of Israel go to the top of it, only Moses, but rather to the bottom, which indeed is meant; for it intends the beginning of it, where Pisgah, which was an high mountain near the plains of Moab, began, and which was properly the foot of it:

which looketh towards Jeshimon; that is, Pisgah, as Jarchi rightly interprets it, which looked over a place called Jeshimon; and which signifies a wilderness, and is no other indeed than the wilderness of Kedemoth, **De 2:26** for from thence the following messengers were sent.

{o} Sheviith, fol. 38. 4.

Numbers 21:21

Ver. 21. And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites,.... Who were one of the nations of the Canaanites, and a principal and powerful one, and who were devoted to destruction, and their land designed for the people of Israel; see Ge 15:16, at this time Sihon was their king, to whom Moses, in the name of Israel, sent a very peaceable message from the wilderness of Kedemoth, which lay near his country, **De 2:26**:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 21:22

Ver. 22. Let me pass through thy land,.... Through some part of it, which would have been a shorter way to the river Jordan, over which Israel was to pass into the land of Canaan; the terms proposed, or things to be observed in their passage, which they would bind themselves strictly to, are the same that were made to the king of Edom. See Gill on "Nu 20:17".

Numbers 21:23

Ver. 23. And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border,.... Because he could not trust them, and confide in the promises they made, and thought it not safe to let such a body of people into any part of his dominions, Jud 11:20 and chiefly because his heart was hardened by the Lord, that he might be delivered into the hands of Israel, as was determined, **De 2:30**:

but Sihon gathered all his people together; all that were able to bear arms out of his cities, and which made no doubt a very numerous and powerful army;

but then these being defeated, as they were, it became more easy to the Israelites to take their cities, where there were none left but women and children:

and went out against Israel into the wilderness; the wilderness of Kedemoth; not content to reject a peaceable message, he went out in an hostile manner against Israel, even out of his own dominions; so that he was the aggressor and unprovoked, which made his ruin appear the more just, and the children of Israel to have a better claim to his country conquered by them:

and he came to Jahaz; a frontier town in the land of Moab, see Isa 15:4 and which, according to Bunting {p}, was sixteen miles from Abarim:

and fought against Israel; at the above place, where they had a pitched battle.

{p} Travels of the Patriarchs, p. 83.

Numbers 21:24

Ver. 24. And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword,.... Slew him and his army, entirely routed them, and got a complete victory over them; God giving them up into their hands, who otherwise were a very strong, powerful, and warlike people; see **Am 2:9**

and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok; two rivers, the one to the south, the other to the north of his country; the one was the boundary of his country between him and the Moabites, the other the boundary of his country between him and the Ammonites, as it follows:

even unto the children of Ammon; for the border of the children of Ammon was strong; which is given as a reason why the Israelites proceeded no further in their conquest; there was another reason for that, which was the order of the Lord not to distress the Ammonites, nor meddle with them; though Jarchi makes this prohibition to be their strength, **De 2:19**, but this is given as a reason why Sihon could not extend his conquests further, because it was so well fortified, either by nature or art, or both, by the river Jabbok, by mountains and frontier towns, and particularly by Rabbah, as the Targum of Jonathan suggests, which was their royal city in later times, and a very strong place; see 2Sa 12:26.

Numbers 21:25

Ver. 25. And Israel took all these cities,.... Which lay between the rivers Arnon and Jabbok; their particular names may be seen in
Nu 32:3,

and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites; being given to the Reubenites and Gadites, who inhabited them, as their possession and inheritance, Nu 32:2:

in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof; or "daughters thereof" {q}. Heshbon was the metropolis or mother city, and all the towns and villages adjacent were as daughters to it; of which city more is said in the following verses, See Gill on "Isa 15:4".

{q} hytnb "filiabus ejus", Montanus, Munster, Fagius, Grotius.

Numbers 21:26

Ver. 26. For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites,.... His royal city, where he kept his palace, where he had resided for some time, and perhaps some of his predecessors; and therefore being now in his possession when taken by the Israelites, they had a good right and title to keep it, and dwell in it: and indeed this is here given as a reason of it,

who had fought against the former king of Moab; either the king that reigned before Balak, or some king of Moab, that reigned formerly, against whom one of the name of Sihon, which might be a common name to the kings of the Amorites, as Pharaoh to the Egyptians, had engaged in war:

and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon; and had been in the hands of the Amorites some years; and therefore the Moabites had no reason to object to the Israelites dwelling in it, and possessing it, which they had not taken from them, but from the Amorites in a lawful war. And for proof of this, reference is had to the bards and poets of those times, who were the persons that transmitted in verse the history of famous actions to posterity.

Numbers 21:27

Ver. 27. Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say,.... The historical writers of those times, among the Amorites, who were usually poets, and wrote the history of the wars between the Moabites and Amorites in verse; as Homer among the Greeks wrote the wars of Troy; and the compositions of those ancient bards were short and compendious, and wrapped up in proverbial sayings, and enigmatical and figurative expressions, that they might be the better retained in memory, and therefore were called proverbialists. Jarchi says, they were Balaam and Beor that took up their parables, and said,

come into Heshbon; which words are the beginning of the song, and in which the Amorites are represented as inviting Sihon, and his nobles, to enter Heshbon, which he had taken, and make it his royal seat; or as encouraging one another to go into it and repair it, having suffered much at the taking of it, which seems to be confirmed by what follows:

let the city of Sihon be built and prepared; that is, let us set about rebuilding of the city, and let us fit it up for Sihon our king, and let it be called his city, and made the place of his residence, his palace, and where his court may be kept.

Numbers 21:28

Ver. 28. For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon,.... Not before, but after Sihon had subdued it, as Jarchi observes; and is to be understood of his soldiers going out from thence, and making desolations in the adjacent parts, like a strong fire, and the fierce flames of it there is no resisting; and so the Jerusalem Targum,

"for a people mighty, and burning like fire, are gone out of Heshbon:"

see **Am 1:4**: a flame from the city of Sihon: which is the same thing in other words, the city of Sihon being Heshbon, and a flame the same with fire; warriors, as both the Targums of Oakelos and Jerusalem interpret it; this seems to be what those composers undertook in their poetical way to foretell would be the case in future times; concluding, from the conquests already made, that they would be extended much further, and that no opposition could hinder:

it hath consumed Ar of Moab; the metropolis of the country of Moab, that is, they were as sure of it, and endeavoured to make the people by these their compositions as confident of it, that this city would fall into the hands of their armies, and be destroyed, as if it was already done; otherwise it does not appear that it ever was taken out of the hands of the Moabites, until taken by the Assyrians or Chaldeans; of this city See Gill on "Isa 15:1"

and the lords of the high places of Arnon; who had the government of the high, strong, and fortified places all along the river Arnon; these it is suggested would be conquered by the Amorites; all the three Targums interpret it of the priests and worshippers in the temples, and at the altars of the idols in Arnon; and it may be rendered, "the Baals of the high places of Arnon", as if the gods of those places should fall into the victors' hands; and which seems to have some confirmation from what follows; and it may be observed, that in these parts there were some places called Bamoth Baal, or the high places of Baal, see
Nu 22:41, and Beth Baal Meon, which has its name from its being the temple and habitation of Baal, Jos 13:17.

Numbers 21:29

Ver. 29. Woe to thee, Moab! thou art undone,.... The whole country ruined, or likely to be so:

O people of Chemosh; which was the name of their idol, who is called the abomination of the Moabites, 1Ki 11:7:

he hath given his sons that escaped; that is, the idol Chemosh had given his sons, the men of the country that worshipped him, who escaped the sword of the Amorites, these,

and his daughters, into captivity unto Sihon king of the Amorites; who took captive what he slew not, or would do so, Chemosh their god not being able to preserve them, but obliged to deliver them up: thus the composers of this song insult the god of the Moabites, as it was usual for conquerors so to do; see Isa 10:10, though some think these are the words of the Israelites, making their observations upon the above song, which ends at verse twenty eight, and scoffing at the idol of the Moabites.

Numbers 21:30

Ver. 30. We have shot at them,.... Either the Amorites at the Moabites, or else the Israelites at the Amorites; for, according to Aben Ezra, these are the words of Moses, though they, with Nu 21:29, seem rather to be a continuation of the song of the old Amorite bards, describing the ruin of the country of Moab by them; and this clause may be rendered with the next, "their light, or lamp, is perished from Heshbon" {r}; or their yoke, as Jarchi, and so the Vulgate Latin version; that is, their kingdom, and the glory of it, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan interpret it, and so Jarchi:

even unto Dibon; which was another city in the land of Moab; see Isa 15:2:

and we have laid them waste even unto Nophah, which [reached] unto Medeba; Nophah perhaps is the same with Nebo, mentioned along with Medeba, Isa 15:2, however, they were both places in Moab, and are mentioned to show how far the desolation had or would spread; and the whole is observed to prove, that this part of the country of Moab, now possessed by the Israelites, was taken from them, not by them, but by the Amorites, a people Israel now conquered, and so had a right to what they found them in the possession of.

{r} Nwbvx dba Mryn "lucerna eorum, Heshbon (seilicet) periit", Tigurine version; "regnum eorum periit a Chesbon", Pagninus, Vatablus; "imperium eorum", Munster.

Numbers 21:31

Ver. 31. Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites. Not the land of the Moabites; and by those means before mentioned; by conquering Sihon their king, they came into the possession of it, and took up their dwelling in it; this was the beginning of the conquest of the Canaanites, and an earnest and pledge of inheriting their land promised unto them; the Israelites that dwelt here were the tribes of Reuben and Gad.

Numbers 21:32

Ver. 32. And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer,.... Or Jazer, as it is called in Isa 16:9, another city that belonged to the Amorites, and which they had taken from the Moabites; and which came into the hands of the latter again, after the captivity of the ten tribes, as appears from the above places; according to Jerom {s}, it was fifteen miles distant from Heshbon:

and they took the villages thereof; not the spies, as Jarchi, but the Israelites under Moses; who upon the return of the spies, and the report they made, marched towards it, and took it, and all the towns and villages round about it; for it seems to have been a principal city:

and drove out the Amorites that were there; that dwelt there, and were in possession of it; otherwise they would not have attacked it, had it, and its villages, been in the hands of the Moabites.

{s} De locis Heb. fol. 92. G.

Numbers 21:33

Ver. 33. And they turned,.... From Jaazer, after they had taken it, and came back a little way:

and went up by the way of Bashan; which was a nearer way to Canaan, a fine country abounding with oxen and sheep, having rich pastures, and very famous for its oaks; it had its name from the mountain of Bashan in it, and has been since called Batanea; it was at this time in the hands of the Amorites, and from them it was taken by Israel, as follows: who marched this way for that purpose, or at least were so directed by the providence of God for that end:

and Og king of Bashan went out against them; who was of the race of the giants, and he himself of a gigantic stature, and was a king of the Amorites, as well as Sihon, **De 3:8**, he came out in an hostile manner against Israel, to stop them going any further:

he, and all his people: out of his many cities, a numerous army no doubt:

to the battle at Edrei; where it was fought between him and Israel. Jerom says {t} it was in his time called Adara, a famous city of Arabia, twenty four or twenty five miles from Bozra, and six from Ashtaroth Karnaim, the ancient seat of the Rephaim, or giants from whom Og sprung, Ge 14:5, and was the seat of Og now, from whence he came to Edrei or Adara, to meet and fight Israel there; see **De 1:4**.

{t} De locis Heb. fol. 87. I. & 92. M.

Numbers 21:34

Ver. 34. And the Lord said unto Moses, fear him not,.... Og being of a gigantic stature, and his forces numerous, might cause some fear in Moses, and in the people, and therefore the Lord encouraged them not to be afraid of him and his army:

for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; that is, he had determined to do it, and now promised it, and it might be depended on and looked upon as if actually done:

and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon; slay him and his people, and take possession of his country.

Numbers 21:35

Ver. 35. So they smote him and his sons, and all his people,.... They engaged in battle with him, slew him and his sons that came with him, and all his armies; and which consisted, as is probable, of all able to bear arms in all his cities; which the more easily came into the hands of the Israelites after this battle, in which such a carnage was made:

until there was none left him alive; so universal was the slaughter at the battle, and in the cities that fell into their hands; they utterly destroyed men, women, and children, **De 3:3**:

and they possessed his land; in which were sixty cities fenced with high walls, gates, and bars, besides a great many unwalled towns; these were possessed by the half tribe of Manasseh, **De 3:4**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 22

The children of Israel being come into the plains of Moab, put the king of Moab into a panic, who expressed his fears to the elders of Midian, Nu 22:1 and sent for Balaam the soothsayer to curse the people of Israel, but he, upon consulting the Lord refused to come, Nu 22:5, on which the king of Moab sent to him a second time, making large promises of preferment to him, and who at this time got leave from the Lord to go with the messengers, Nu 22:15, but was met with in the way by an angel of the Lord, who would have slain him had it not been for his ass, of which a very wonderful revelation is given, Nu 22:22, and the chapter is closed with the interview between Balak king of Moab and Balaam, and an account of what passed between them, and what was done by them, Nu 22:36.

Ver. 1. And the children of Israel set forward,.... From the country of Bashan, where we read of them last, after they had conquered Og the king of it, and also Sihon king of the Amorites, and settled some of their tribes in both kingdoms; the particular place from whence they came hither, according to the account of their journeys, were the mountains of Abarim, Nu 33:48:

and pitched in the plains of Moab the part of them they encamped in reached from Bethjesimoth to Abelshittim, Nu 33:49,

on this side Jordan by Jericho; or Jordan of Jericho, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; a river that flowed near to Jericho, running between the plains of Moab and the plains of Jericho; according to Josephus {u} it was sixty furlongs, or seven miles and a half from Jericho; but, according to Jerome {w}, it was but five miles: or rather, as some versions render it, "over against Jericho" {x}; for Jericho was on the other side of the river Jordan, and the plains of Moab, or that part of them where Israel now pitched, were right against that city; and so Josephus says {y}.

{u} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 4. {w} De locis Heb. fol. 87. G. {x} kata iericw Sept. "ex opposito Heiricho", Tigurine version. {y} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 6. sect. 1.

Numbers 22:2

Ver. 2. And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. The word "Amorites" being particularly pointed, shows, as Aben Ezra observes, that Sihon and Og are both meant, and that there were not among the kings of the land of Canaan any so great as they; wherefore when Balak, who was the present king of Moab, saw what Israel had done to them, that they had conquered them, and seized upon their kingdoms: he reasoned within himself, and said, as Jarchi represents him, that if they could not stand before Israel, much less could he and his people; and the rather, since those kings Israel had subdued were too powerful for the king of Moab, and had taken part of his country from him, and yet Israel was too strong for them.

Numbers 22:3

Ver. 3. And Moab was sore afraid of the people,.... Lest they should enter into their country and do to them as they had done to Sihon and Og, and their countries; on this account the king of Moab, his nobles, and the people of the land, were in an exceeding great panic, which was a fulfilling of the prophecy of Moses in Ex 15:15:

because they were many the number of them taken a little after in this place, where they now were, in the plains of Moab, even after 24,000 had died of the plague, was 601,730, Nu 25:9:

and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel; though they had no reason for it, had they considered their relation to them, being the descendants of Abraham, the uncle of Lot, whose posterity they were; and that the Israelites had done them service in delivering them from such bad neighbours, who had taken much of their country from them, and were doubtless making continual encroachments on them; and especially had they known the orders the Israelites had from the Lord not to distress them, nor contend with them in battle, **De 2:9**, but this they were ignorant of, and being of a different religion from the Israelites, had them in abhorrence, or loathed them, as the word signifies; though the meaning rather seems to be, that they had a nausea, a loathing in their stomachs, and could not eat their food, because of the dread of the Israelites that was upon them; or they were weary of their lives, as Jarchi interprets it, and as the word is used,
Ge 27:46.

Numbers 22:4

Ver. 4. And Moab said unto the elders of Midian,.... Whom the king of Moab sent for to consult with what to do in the present case, for the good and safety of both people; for, according to the Targum of Jonathan, they were one people and one kingdom unto this time, at least had been confederates, by what is said Ge 36:35 though Jarchi thinks there was always a mutual hatred of each other, and that Midian now came against Moab to war, but for fear of Israel a peace was made between them, just as it was with Herod and Pontius Pilate in another case, Lu 23:12, however, they were friends as well as neighbours now; and by which it appears, that this Midian was not that where Jethro lived, which was on the Red sea, near Mount Sinai, in Arabia Felix; this was near the river Arnon, and the Moabites in Arabia Petraea; and though both the one and the other descended from Midian, the son of Abraham by Keturah, yet they had spread themselves, or the one was a colony from the other, and might be distinguished into southern and northern Midianites; the latter were those near Moab; and these elders of Midian, addressed by the king of Moab, being now at his court, whether sent for or not, are the same with the five kings or princes of Midian, as they are called, Nu 31:8 as Aben Ezra observes:

now shall this company lick up all [that are] round about us; consume us, and all our people, and all adjoining to us, and depending on us:

as the ox licketh up the grass of the field; as easily, and as soon, and as completely and entirely; nor are we any more able to oppose them than the grass of the field is to resist and hinder the ox from devouring it:

and Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time; according to the Targum of Jonathan, Midianites and Moabites reigned by turns so long a time; and that Balak was a Midianite, and so says Jarchi, and unfit for the kingdom, and was set over them through necessity for a time: but it seems rather that he was king in succession after his father Zippor; and the design of the expression is only to show, that he who was before mentioned, Nu 22:2 was the then reigning prince when this affair happened.

Numbers 22:5

Ver. 5. He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor,.... In consequence of the consultation held by the king of Moab with the elders of Midian; and very probably through a motion of theirs, and by advice they gave, Balak dispatched messengers of both people to the person here described by his name and parentage; but who he was is not easy to say: the Jews sometimes make him to be a magician in Pharaoh's court, at the time when Moses was born {z}, which is not probable; and it is still more improbable that he should be Laban the Syrian, as the Targum of Jonathan here, and the Targum on **1Ch 1:44** though others say {a} he was the son of Beor, the son of Laban, and so was the grandson of Laban; and with as little probability is he said to be Elihu, that answered Job according to a tradition of the Jews, mentioned by Jerom {b}; nor is there any reason to believe that he was ever a good man, and a true prophet of the Lord; he is expressly said to be a diviner or a soothsayer, Jos 13:22, a sort of men abhorred of God, and not to be suffered to be among his people, De 18:10 but were of great credit and esteem among the Heathens, for their pretensions to foretell things to come, or to discover lost goods, and the like; and by their enchantments to drive away evils, or bring on curses, for which Balaam was famous: and therefore, by the advice of the Midianites, Balak sent for him

to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people; the land of his people, of his birth or habitation, was Aram or Syria, Nu 23:7 that is, Aram Naharaim, which lay between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates, or what is sometimes called Mesopotamia, as is clear from De 23:4, and the river of that land, which was eminently so called, is the river Euphrates, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it here, and by that river was Pethor, where Balaam now lived; and is by some thought to be the same with the Pacoria of Ptolemy {c}, which was by that river: the messengers were sent

to call him: to invite him to Balak's court:

saying, behold, there is a people come out from Egypt; Balak speaks of them, as if he knew not who they were, only that they were come from Egypt, and were seeking a new habitation to settle in, and so were in danger from them, lest they should invade his country, and settle there:

behold, they cover the face of the earth; not the face of the whole earth, unless an hyperbolical expression is supposed, to set forth the greatness of their numbers; but a large part of the earth, all within sight almost, even the plains of Moab:

and they abide over against me; were very near him, lay encamped before his country, and his metropolis, and so he thought himself in great danger, and threatened with an invasion, as the pitching of their tents so near made him surmise.

{z} Dibre Hayamim Shekmoaseh, fol. 3. 2. {a} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2. {b} Quaest. "see Traditiones" in Gen. fol. 69. D. {c} Geograph. l. 5. c. 18.

Numbers 22:6

Ver. 6. Come now, therefore, I pray thee,.... To my country, city, and court:

curse me this people; by imprecations on them; and which being attended with various rites and ceremonies, brought calamities on persons, which men of Balaam's character were supposed to have power to do:

for they are too mighty for me; to oppose and subdue by force of arms; and therefore was obliged to have recourse to such arts and methods he was master of; suggesting, that he was able to do more by his divinations than could be effected by an army of men:

peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land; there is hope, by taking such measures, that they may be prevailed over and conquered; and that, together with your curses, and my army, we may be able to smite them, and destroy them; you with your tongue, and I and my people with the sword, and so drive them quite out of the land, and get a clear riddance of them:

for I wot that he whom thou blessest [is] blessed, and he whom thou cursest [is] cursed; so high an opinion had the king of Moab of this soothsayer and diviner, from the report he had had of the mighty feats done by him; as, that those for whom he asked for blessings from heaven had them, and those on whom he imprecated evils, they came upon them; and this was a prevailing custom among the Heathens in later times, and particularly the Romans; not only to endeavour to get the gods of the people from them they were at war with, and whose cities they besieged, praying that they would leave such places, cities, and their temples; but also wished evils to cities and armies, and prayed the gods to fill them with flight, fear, and terror, and that such evils might come upon them, which had on others {d}.

{d} Vid. Macrob. Saturnal. l. 3. c. 9.

Numbers 22:7

Ver. 7. And the elders of Moab, and the elders of Midian, departed,.... By which it appears that they were princes and nobles; for such the elders were, that were sent on this errand to Balaam; and that they were some of both people, Midian and Moab, that went upon it, see Nu 22:14 which shows, that if they were not one people, under one king, which yet seems likely, nevertheless they made a common cause of it, and joined in this expedient to save their country:

with the rewards of divination in their hands; not that diviners were sent along with them to Balsam, as Aben Ezra interprets it, that he might not deceive them, and put them off, by saying it was not a fit and proper day or hour to go out and curse, which these men would be able to refute; but if they were skilled in the art of divination as well as he, what need was there to send to him, when they had such at hand? nor instruments of divination, as Jarchi, which so famous a soothsayer could not be thought to be without; but, as we rightly render it, the rewards of divination, which were either fixed or left to the generosity of those that had recourse to such persons, and were presents which they brought them, in order to engage them to use the utmost of their art for them; and this sense is confirmed by the Apostles Peter and Jude, see **2Pe 2:15**:

and they came unto Balaam; at Pethor:

and spake unto him the words of Balak: told him the errand they were sent on to him by the king of Moab.

Numbers 22:8

Ver. 8. And he said unto them, lodge here this night,.... Which shows that he was at once inclined to do their business for them, and would readily engage in it if he could be permitted; and it looks as if it was in the night season that he got knowledge of things, either in dreams, or by familiar spirits, or by consulting the stars, or other methods used by him at such seasons; or it may be, this was only said to get time before he gave them a peremptory answer, that he might, if he could, get leave to do what they desired, to which he showed a good inclination:

and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me; by which it appears he had some knowledge of the true God, and pretended great familiarity with him, thereby to make himself the more respectable; and indeed he was surprisingly favoured with some degree of intimacy with him, which, for the sake of Israel, he was now admitted to; whether at any other time, or on any other occasion, is not certain; however, he promised the princes he would let them know the next morning what was said to him, and so accordingly what he should or could do:

and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam; that is, that night, and so very probably the princes of Midian likewise; though some of the Jewish writers think {e} they departed as soon as they heard Balaam say he would consult the Lord about this matter; from whence they concluded there was no room to hope for success, since he would never consent to destroy a nation so dear unto him, and for whose sake he had wrought so many miracles; but if this was the case, how came the princes of Moab to stay, with whom the same objection would have place? but the reason why they only are named may be what Aben Ezra gives an hint of, that these were the principal persons in the embassy, in whom the rest were included, as Balak their king was the principal person that sent them.

{e} Jarchi, Ramban, & Isaac Arama, apud Muis in loc.

Numbers 22:9

Ver. 9. And God came unto Balaam,.... In a dream very probably, as he did to Abimelech and Laban, Ge 20:3:

and said, what men are these with thee? who lodged with him that night. This he said, not as ignorant who they were, or from whence they came, or what they came about; but in order to lead on to a discourse with Balaam, and to have from him the account of the men, and their business, and to try his fidelity in relating the affair.

Numbers 22:10

Ver. 10. And Balaam said unto God,.... In answer to the question he put to him:

Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me; these men, and a message by them:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 22:11

Ver. 11. Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt,.... In this, and the following part of the verse, he faithfully and punctually relates the words of Balak to him by his messengers, as well knowing he could not deceive the

omniscient God, or hide anything from him, though he could deceive men; and conceal the truth from them, to serve a purpose;
See Gill on "Nu 22:5" see Gill on "Nu 22:6".

Numbers 22:12

Ver. 12. And God said unto Balaam, thou shalt not go with them,.... Which is a denial of the first thing Balak requested, "come now, therefore", &c. Nu 22:6

thou shall not curse the people; which was the principal thing desired, and in order to which he was solicited to go with the messengers; but this is absolutely forbidden:

for they are blessed; by the Lord himself, with an irrevocable blessing, and therefore it would be vain and fruitless, as well as dangerous for him to attempt to curse them, Ge 12:3 this may have a special respect to the blessing of Jacob by Isaac, which could not be reversed by the solicitations of Esau, and which descended to Jacob's posterity, the Israelites, Ge 27:33.

Numbers 22:13

Ver. 13. And Balaam rose up in the morning,.... With the impression of the dream upon his mind, and of what had passed between God and him in it:

and said unto the princes of Balak; which shows what the elders were that were sent, of what honour and dignity, and may include both those of Moab and of Midian:

get you into your land; as soon as you can; set forward on your journey, it is to no purpose to stay here:

for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you; he only relates one part of the answer he had from the Lord, respecting his going with them, but says not a word of his being forbid to curse Israel, and of the reason given why he should not; had he reported this, in all probability it would have prevented any further application to him, and so any attempt to get this done, which Balaam seemed aware of; and therefore, by concealing this, hoped for fresh solicitations and entreaties, and that in time the Lord might be prevailed on to let him go and curse them; he having a covetous desire of riches, honour, and preferment, in Balak's court.

Numbers 22:14

Ver. 14. And the princes of Moab rose up,.... And the princes of Midian also, immediately, without entering into a parley with him, to persuade him to go with them; perceiving by his answer that it would be to no purpose, and that he was determined to do as the Lord directed him:

and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us; as Balaam told them less than what God had said to him, so they related less to Balak than what Balaam had said to them; saying nothing of the Lord's refusing to let him go with them, but represent it as a piece of pride and obstinacy in Balaam, and which Balak was left to understand; and it seems as if he did understand it as a piece of policy in Balaam, to get a larger offer of money or honour, or both, from him, and which the following account seems to confirm.

Numbers 22:15

Ver. 15. And Balak sent yet again princes more, and more honourable than they. More in number, and greater in quality, princes of the first rank in his court; supposing that Balaam thought he was not treated with respect enough, they being princes of the meaner sort, and but few, that were sent unto him before, which he imagined was the reason, at least one reason, why he refused to come with them; persons of Balaam's character in those days being highly revered.

Numbers 22:16

Ver. 16. And they came to Balaam,.... Though men of such rank and dignity, they did not decline the embassy, being sent by their king; nor did they think it below them to wait upon this soothsayer:

and said unto him, thus saith Balak the son of Zippor; representing their master, and addressing the diviner in his name, as his ambassadors; at the same time doing honour to Balak that sent them, of whom they speak respectfully, and to Balaam, to whom they were sent:

let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me; no business, though ever so important, that might be upon his hands; nor any want of respect to him he might imagine; nor if the rewards offered were not thought sufficient; nor any persuasions of men to the contrary; and if it could be thought he knew anything of the prohibition of God, that may be included; so urgent was he upon his coming to him.

Numbers 22:17

Ver. 17. For I will promote thee unto very great honour,.... In his court, by making him some great officer there, perhaps his prime minister; so that as before he laid a bait for his covetousness, sending him large presents, and rewards of divination; here, for his pride and ambition, promising him court preferment; though Aben Ezra interprets it of mammon or riches, of which he could give him an immense sum: "in honouring I will exceedingly honour thee" {f}; or load thee with wealth and riches; and so Balaam seems to understand it, since in his answer he says, "if Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold"; both civil honour and worldly wealth may be taken into the account, since they are both heavy and weighty things, and very desirable and ensnaring:

and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me; give him what money he should ask of him, put him into whatsoever place and office he should desire; and though he was a sovereign prince, would be at his beck and command, and do whatever he should direct him to do in his kingdom, as well as in what concerned the affair of cursing Israel; as we find he afterwards did, with respect to sacrifices and rites relative thereunto:

come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; renewing the request made in the first embassy with great importunity, Nu 22:6 but using here a different word for "cursing"; there, as Munster observes, the word signifies to curse lightly; here, to blaspheme and utterly devote to ruin; to which may be added, to curse expressly and by name, to pierce through and through, to deprive of all benefits, and to destroy utterly.

{f} dam Kdbka dbk "honorando honorabo te valde", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.

Numbers 22:18

Ver. 18. And Balaam answered, and said unto the servant's of Balak,.... Who were not only princes of the land, but officers of state in the court of Balak:

if Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more; which is well spoken, had it been from his heart: he speaks very respectfully of God, calling him by his great and incommunicable name Jehovah, the Being of beings; representing him as the object of his worship and adoration, as he might be along with other gods, which was the practice of the Heathens in those times, particularly the Syrians, among whom Balaam lived; so did Laban and others before him: likewise he makes a profession of him, and claims an interest in him, which he might the rather do, to make himself look greater, as being the servant of the most high God; for the Gentiles in those times, and indeed in later times, had a notion of one supreme God, superior to all the rest; and this Jehovah Balaam claimed as his God: he speaks very well of the word of God, to which he pretended so strict a regard, that he would not transgress it in the least, for all that Balak could give him or more, no, not for all the money in the world; and yet his heart at the same time went after his covetousness, and he was eagerly desirous and greedy of getting the advantages into his hands that were offered him; for he hoped that God would change his mind, and alter his word, and give him leave to go and get the money, as appears by what follows.

Numbers 22:19

Ver. 19. Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night,.... As the former messengers had; this shows his strong inclination to go along with them, and do what was desired of him, could he be permitted; otherwise he might and ought to have told the messengers at once that Balak needed not to have given himself and them so much trouble, since it was not in his power to do for him what he requested; nor would he attempt it, as being contrary to the will of God, and therefore it would be their best way to return as soon as they could; but instead of that, he desires them to stay that night, which must give them some hope of succeeding in their embassy:

that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more; he hoped he would change his mind, and say something to him different from, and contrary to what he had before declared unto him, which to suppose of God is great vileness and wickedness; to such a pitch did his greedy desire after riches and honour work him up into; he ought to have been satisfied with the answer already given him, and not to have inquired more.

Numbers 22:20

Ver. 20. And the Lord came unto Balaam at night,.... As before, Nu 22:9 it may be in a dream; the Targum of Jonathan is as there,

"a word came from the Lord:"

and said unto him, if the men come and call thee, rise up, and go with them; this was said, as some think, not seriously, but sarcastically, or rather in an angry manner, bidding him go, if he would; so giving him up to his own heart's lusts, or, at most; only permitting him to go with them, but not to curse Israel; and this permission to go seems to be on this condition, if the princes first called him, and were urgent on him to go with them: this was a trial of Balaam, whether he would be eager and forward to go, or patiently wait until he should be called; or the words may be rendered, "seeing", or because {g},

they are come to call thee: but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shall thou do; whether he would or not, he should be forced to do it, as Jarchi; and therefore go not with any intention to curse Israel, which shall never be done; wherefore to go would be vain and fruitless, since he would never be able to answer the design of Balak: but still Balaam hoped, it not being so fully and clearly expressed as before, that he should not curse Israel; that God would say something else unto him, though he had no reason at all for it, but all the reverse; so blinded was he with a greedy desire of riches and honour.

{g} Ma "quandoquidem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Noldius, p. 88. & Ainsworth.

Numbers 22:21

Ver. 21. And Balaam rose up in the morning,.... Early, not waiting for the call of the princes, which showed how eager he was to be gone, and how intent upon the journey:

and saddled his ass; which, if he did himself, as Jarchi suggests, this is a further proof of the haste he was in; though, as he had two servants with him, it is more likely that they did it by his order: the same is said of Abraham, Ge 22:3, it was usual for persons of note and figure, in those times and countries, to ride on asses, **Jud 5:10** and went with the princes of Moab; in company with them, and with as good a will as they, his heart and theirs being alike, as Jarchi notes; though it seems by what follows that by some means or another they soon parted company; for when the affair of the ass happened, Balaam was alone, only attended by his two servants.

Numbers 22:22

Ver. 22. And God's anger was kindled because he went,.... Though he had given him leave to go; but then it was upon condition that the princes called him to go with them, whereas he went without their call, and did not wait for it; and besides, he did not acquaint them, as he did not the messengers before, of what God had said, that he should not curse Israel, nor say anything contrary to this his will, which, had he told them, they would not have taken him with them; moreover, he went with an intention, with a good will to curse Israel, which must be displeasing to God, who knew his heart; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and the anger of the Lord was strong, because he went to curse them;"

likewise, though he had a permission to go, it was in an angry manner, and was not agreeable to the Lord he should go, and therefore should not have gone notwithstanding; or, at least, he might expect some marks of the divine displeasure; so Jarchi observes, he saw that the thing was evil in the eyes of the Lord, or displeasing to him, and yet he desired it; just as the people of Israel, when the Lord bid them go up and possess the land, which case Aben Ezra instances in; they desired persons might be sent before hand to spy out the land, which, though permitted, they smarted for it: for not whatsoever God permits is well pleasing to him; besides, the words may be rendered {h}, "when he went", or, "as he was going"; and so not a reason of the Lord's anger, but expresses when it was kindled or broke forth:

and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him; that this was not a created angel, one of the ministering spirits, but the eternal one, the angel of Jehovah's presence, appears from
Nu 22:35 that went before the people of Israel in the wilderness, not only to guide but to guard and protect them; and who was an adversary to their adversaries, and at all times stood up for their help and assistance against all

those that hated and opposed them: Jarchi calls him an angel of mercy, who would have restrained Balaam from sinning, that he might not sin and perish, and so was rather a friend than an adversary, had he attended to him:

now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him; who, the Targum of Jonathan says, were Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of Egypt, of whom see **2Ti 3:8** these only were with him, the princes of Midian on some account or another being separated from him.

{h} Klwh yk "quum iret", Noldius, p. 403.

Numbers 22:23

Ver. 23. And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way,.... Which Balaam did not; his eyes being held from seeing him by the power and providence of God, that he might be reproved and rebuked by his ass, to whom God gave power to see, more than to him, as Jarchi notes, so that he had little reason to boast of his visions and revelations, and that he was the man whose eyes were open: the angel stood in the very pathway on which the ass was carrying Balaam: and his sword drawn in his hand; as threatening to destroy him, and as if he was just about to push at him, and signifying hereby not only that he deserved to die, but what death he should die of, namely, by the sword, as he did, Nu 31:8

and the ass turned aside out of the way; out of the common road, to save its master and itself, from a natural principle of self-preservation: and went into the field; adjoining to, and that lay along the road side:

and Balaam smote the ass to turn her into the way; with his staff, as in Nu 22:27 to bring her into the common road again.

Numbers 22:24

Ver. 24. But the angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyard,..... Which were in the field into which the ass went, and before Balaam could turn her back she got into a narrow path, between the vineyards, as the Targum of Jonathan; a footpath which lay between them, or a footpath where foxes ran and had their holes, who used to lie near vineyards and among them, see **So 1:14** however, it was a very narrow path, and here the angel placed himself, so that there was no passage for Balaam and his ass, at least not without great difficulty and danger;

a wall [being] on this side, and a wall on that side; and therefore there was no going out into the field, as before, to avoid the difficulty and danger; this being, as Jarchi observes, a stone wall that was on each side.

Numbers 22:25

Ver. 25. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord,.... In the same position as before, with a drown sword in his hand, and being frightened again, and in a narrow path, and no way to turn aside:

she thrust herself unto the wall; to one of the walls, as close as she could, in order to get by the angel:

and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; running up so very closely to it:

and he smote her again; having done it once before, Nu 22:23 the times of smiting are observed, for the sake of what the ass after said, and for the confirmation of it.

Numbers 22:26

Ver. 26. And the angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place,.... More narrow than the other, at a further distance:

where was no way to turn, either to the right hand or to the left; it was so strait and close a place that the angel filled the whole breadth of it, that there was no passing him; so that there was no getting forward nor backward; not forward, because the angel filled up the way, and there was no slipping by him; nor backward, because it could not turn itself to the right or left.

Numbers 22:27

Ver. 27. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord,.... The third time; for it seems that he was not always in sight, but disappeared as he removed from place to place, and at every new place where he stood the ass saw him, though her master did not:

she fell down under Balaam; upon her knees on the ground, not being able to go backwards nor forwards, nor to turn out of the way to the right or left:

and Balaam's anger was kindled; he was displeased and out of humour before, when it turned into the field, and when it squeezed his foot against the wall, and therefore he smote it; but now falling down with him, he was in a fume and fury, quite enraged:

and he smote the ass with a staff; which he rode with, perhaps his divining staff, see **Ho 4:12**, it is not said what he smote it with before but probably with the same: Aben Ezra says, at the first and second time he smote it with a small stick, or with a thong.

Numbers 22:28

Ver. 28. And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam,.... This was a very extraordinary and miraculous affair, and effected by a supernatural power, that a dumb creature, which had not organs endued with speech, should speak so plainly and distinctly, as is after expressed; and yet it should not be thought incredible, for what is it that Omnipotence cannot do? wherefore there is no need to say, as some Jewish writers {i}, that this was all done in a visionary way, and not really and literally performed; nor can Heathens well object to the verity of it, if they believe what they themselves report concerning one of the asses which carried Bacchus over a river, to which, for reward, he gave the power of speaking with an human voice {k}; though it is very probable the fable was framed from this story, and frequently do their writers speak of other brute creatures endued with speech; so Homer {l} represents Xanthus, the horse of Achilles, having the faculty of speech given it by Juno: Pliny says {m}, it is commonly reported among the wonderful things of the ancients, that an ox spoke; and Livy {n} frequently makes mention of an ox spoke speaking in divers places, and of one particularly that said,

"Rome, take heed to thyself;"

not to take notice of a lamb in Egypt in the times of Bocchoris that spoke, related by Aelianus {o} and others; nor of the ram of Phrixus, or the dog at Ariminum, and the elephant of Porus in India, with others Bochart {p} has collected together: the words spoken by the ass were as follow:

what have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? and just so many times she had been smitten by him,
Nu 22:23.

{i} Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 42. Ben Gersom in loc. {k} Hygin. Poet. Astronomic. l. 2. c. 23. "Lactant, de falsa Relig". l. 1. c. 21. {l} Iliad. 19. "prope finem". {m} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 45. {n} Hist. l. 24. c. 10. l. 27. c. 11. l. 28. c. 11. and l. 35. c. 21. {o} De Animal. l. 12. c. 3. {p} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 14. col. 197, 198.

Numbers 22:29

Ver. 29. And Balaam said unto the ass, because thou hast mocked me,.... Or rather "defiled me", as the word is rendered in Job 16:15 by running with him against a wall, and by lying down with him in the dust and dirt, and so the Arabic version renders it,

"because thou hast rolled me in the dirt;"

the sense of mocking is not easy to be understood, unless it be that it exposed him to be mocked and laughed at by others, by turning aside, and lying down, and being so unruly; but then there were only his servants with him, to whom only he could be exposed in such a manner, which one would think would not have given him so much concern, and put him into such a passion: the word sometimes is used for seeking occasion, and such a sense it may have here, as that it sought an opportunity or occasion to throw him, and so to kill him, or at least to do him harm, see **Da 6:4**

I would there were a sword in my hand, for now would I kill thee: so enraged was he, and his passion was so great, that he was not at all frightened and amazed to hear the ass speak, though Josephus {q} represents him as disturbed and astonished at it; but some think, he being used to converse with spirits in the shapes of various creatures, it was no surprise to him to hear it speak.

{q} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 6. sect. 3.

Numbers 22:30

Ver. 30. And the ass said unto Balaam,.... Made a reply to him, as if it understood what he said, and had the faculty of reasoning and discoursing, as well as of speaking, which is very amazing:

am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? or rather, "ever since thou wast"; not ever since he was in being, but ever since he could ride, so Aben Ezra; according to which, it seems that this was the first he rode upon, and which he had always been used to; hence the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it,

"upon which thou hast rode from thy youth unto this day;"

and be it that Balaam was a man pretty well advanced in years, an ass is a creature that lives a long time: Pliny says {r} it lives thirty years; and an Arabic writer {s} makes mention of an ass that the owner of it rode on forty years:

was I ever wont to do so unto thee? to start out of the way, or lie down with him, could anyone instance be given of it? suggesting that she was a sure footed creature, and had always carefully and safely carried him, for which it appeals to him:

and he said, nay; she had never been used to serve him in such a manner as she had now, and therefore he might have concluded that something more than ordinary was the matter; and it is much his conscience had not accused him that he was wrong in coming with the princes, taking the alarm from these circumstances, had he not been an hardened creature, or, at least, had he not been so eagerly bent on riches and honour.

{r} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 43. {s} Algiahid in Damir. apud Bochart, ut supra, (Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 14.) col. 195.

Numbers 22:31

Ver. 31. Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam,.... Who either was struck with blindness, as the men of Sodom were, so some think, or rather his eyes were held, that he could not see the angel; he could see other objects, as his ass, but he could not see that; as Elisha's servant could see the host that compassed the city, but not the chariots and horses of fire about Elisha, till his eyes were opened, **2Ki 6:15** and so it was with Balaam until the Lord uncovered his eyes, or rolled away the vail over them, or took that off which by his power and providence hindered his sight:

and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand; in the same position as in Nu 22:23

and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face; from off his ass upon the ground, in reverence of the illustrious object before him, and through fear of being slain by his sword in his hand.

Numbers 22:32

Ver. 32. And the angel of the Lord said unto him,.... When risen up, and standing before him:

wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? the brute creatures are not to be beaten without cause, nor to be misused and abused by men, even their owners:

behold, I went out to withstand thee; the ass was not to be blamed, nor to be beaten for turning aside, or lying down, it was I that stood in the way, and hindered its going forward, and this was done by me on purpose to oppose and stop thee:

because thy way is perverse before me; the journey he took was not with his good liking and approbation, and especially seeing he went with an intention, if possible, to serve Balak, and curse Israel; the way of his heart was bad, which the Lord knew; it was not directed according to his will, but swerved from it; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"it is manifest before me that thou seekest to go and curse the people, and the thing is not agreeable to me."

Numbers 22:33

Ver. 33. And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times,.... The ass saw the angel when Balaam did not, and that was the reason of its turning aside; and it was well for him it did, and therefore he should not have smote it:

unless she had turned from me; if she had pushed on, endeavouring to make her way:

surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive; had certainly and only slain him, and not the ass; and from hence the Jewish writers {t} gather, that the ass was now slain, lest it should be said, this is the ass that spoke, and so be made an idol of.

{t} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 227. 4. Aben Ezra in loc.

Numbers 22:34

Ver. 34. And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned,.... That is, in beating the ass; not that he was sensible of his sin of covetousness, and of the evil disposition of his mind, and of his wicked intention in going along with the princes to curse Israel, if possible, and get Balak's presents and preferments:

for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me; signifying, that if he had known it, he should not have smitten the ass, but submitted himself to the will of the angel:

now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again; which he spoke very coldly and faintly, not caring heartily to go back, unless forced to it; for seeing a drawn sword in his hand, he might be afraid of his life should he persist in his journey, and therefore feigns a readiness to go back, quitting it on condition that his going forwards was displeasing; whereas he knew it was, especially his going with an evil mind to hurt Israel if possible.

Numbers 22:35

Ver. 35. And the angel of the Lord said unto Balaam, go with the men,.... Which was not a command, but a concession, or rather a permission, leaving him to go if he would, suffering him to follow his own heart's lusts, and giving him up to them to his own destruction; and besides, it was not his going barely that was displeasing to God, but his going with such a bad intention:

but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak; which expresses not only what he ought to do, but what he should be obliged to do, even to bless the people against his will, when his mind was to curse them, it being for his worldly interest; and therefore it is suggested he had better not go at all, since he never would be able to carry his point, yea, would be brought to shame and confusion before Balak and his nobles: the angel speaking in the same language as God did before to Balaam, Nu 22:20 shows that not a created angel, but a divine Person, is here meant:

so Balaam went with the princes of Balak; whom after this he quickly overtook, or they him, or they met together at some appointed place, and proceeded on in their journey.

Numbers 22:36

Ver. 36. And when Balak heard that Balaam was come,.... Messengers being sent to acquaint him with it, either by Balaam, or by the princes:

he went out to meet him; overjoyed at the news that his princes had succeeded, and to show him respect, and do him honour, and all to encourage him to do his utmost for him:

unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast; by the situation of it, being on the border of the river Arnon, which river was in the extreme parts of Moab, and divided between the Moabites and Amorites, it is generally thought to be the city Ar, called "Ar of Moab", see Nu 21:13, and the king coming to meet Balaam so far as the uttermost border of his dominions showed the greater respect to him.

Numbers 22:37

Ver. 37. And Balak said unto Balaam,.... Upon their meeting together:

did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? or "in sending send" {u}; the first messengers in a very pressing manner, with great importunity, to give thee an invitation to come to me, and those men of rank and quality, with rewards of divination in their hands, and yet the invitation was rejected; and after them other messengers, more in number and greater in dignity, with larger offers and promises; and now indeed thou art come, but with much ado, what is the meaning of all this?

wherefore camest thou not unto me? at first, without showing so much indifference and reluctance, and which obliged me to send another message to thee:

am I not able to promote thee to honour? to give thee wealth and riches, and put thee into high places of honour and profit? hadst thou any doubt in thy mind about it, either concerning my ability or will to do it?

{u} ytxlv xlv "mittendo misi", Pagninus, Montanus.

Numbers 22:38

Ver. 38. And Balaam said unto Balak, lo, I am come unto thee,.... And therefore let nothing more be said of what is past: and as for future things,

have I now any power at all to say anything? that would be agreeable to the king, and answer his purpose in sending for him, namely, to curse the people of Israel; he suggests that he had not, he was under the powerful restraint of God; he could not say what he himself was inclined to say, and what the king would have him say, and he expected he should; he could not say as some in Ps 12:4: the word

that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak; whether agreeable to Balak's will and design or not, and whether for or against Israel: however, it being expressed in such indefinite terms might leave room for Balak to hope it might answer his expectations and wishes.

Numbers 22:39

Ver. 39. And Balaam went with Balak,.... From Ar of Moab, or, however, from the place where they met, to the royal city where Balak had his palace, and seems to be the place following:

and they came to Kirjathhuzoth; which Jarchi interprets a city full of streets, a populous place, having a multitude of men, women, and children in the streets of it; and the same writer suggests as if Balak's view in this was to move the pity of Balaam, that such a number of people might not be rooted out and destroyed.

Numbers 22:40

Ver. 40. And Balak offered oxen and sheep,.... Or "slew" {w} them, either for sacrifice; and if so Balak was the sacrificer, as it was common for kings to be priests; and then Balaam, who was sent for, was the prophet, that was to observe and explain any omen at the time of sacrificing, as Calchas did, when the chiefs of Greece sacrificed {x}: or rather for a feast, as the following words seem to show; though it might be for both, it being usual, when sacrifices were offered to idols, to eat part of them in a festival way, in imitation of the peace offerings of the Jews, see Nu 25:2:

and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him; either part of it to them, or he sent for them to come, and partake of the feast, he and the princes of Moab and Midian, that had been to fetch him, and still attended him; and this the king did in a way of rejoicing, being glad that Balaam was come, and as expressing his well pleasedness with the conduct of the princes, and their success, as well as to keep Balaam in high spirits, hoping to have his end answered by him.

{w} xbzyw "cuinque occidisset", V. L. {x} Homer. Iliad. 1.

Numbers 22:41

Ver. 41. And it came to pass on the morrow,.... The day after the arrival of Balaam at Balak's royal seat, and after the entertainment given him, and the princes, "on the morning" {y} of that day, as the word signifies; and perhaps early in the morning, the king eager to be about business, and get the people of Israel cursed if possible as soon as could be:

that Balak took Balaam and brought him up into the high places of Baal; where groves were planted, and altars erected to that "idol" and which the Targum of Jonathan calls the idol Peor, the same with Baalpeor,
Nu 25:3 which might be their god Chemosh, the same with Bacchus or Priapus:

that thence he might see the utmost part of the people; the whole host of Israel, even to the extreme part of it; the camp of Dan, as the Targum of Jonathan, which brought up the rear; he had him to those high places, both that he might have a better view of the whole body of the people, and know how they lay, and to direct his curses at them, and that success might attend the undertaking, these being places of religious worship. Josephus says {z} those high places were sixty furlongs or seven and one half miles from the camp of Israel.

{y} rqbb in matutino, Montanus; mane, V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
{z} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 6. sect. 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS 23

This chapter gives an account of the sacrifices offered by Balak and Balaam, and how God met Balsam, and put a word into his mouth, which he delivered in the presence of the king of Moab and his princes,
Nu 23:1, the substance of which are, the separate state and condition of Israel from other nations, their number, and the happiness of the righteous at death,
Nu 23:8, which made Balak uneasy, since instead of cursing he blessed Israel, and therefore he had him to another place to take a view of the people,
Nu 23:11 where having offered sacrifices, another word was put into the mouth of Balaam, and which he also delivered before the king and his nobles,
Nu 23:14, in which were expressed the unchangeableness of God, the irreversibleness of the blessing of Israel, the strength, safety, happiness, and glory of that people, Nu 23:19 which made Balak more uneasy still; but willing to try him a third time, he carried him to another place, and there built altars, and offered sacrifices, the consequence of which is related in the next chapter, Nu 23:25.

Ver. 1. And Balaam said unto Balak,.... When upon one of the high places of Baal, and after having taken a view of the people of Israel as they lay encamped:

build me here seven altars; this was purely Heathenish; for not only the Israelites after the law of Moses had but one altar, but the patriarchs before that never built but one altar at a time. Some have thought regard is had to the seven planets worshipped by Heathens; though no doubt Balaam pretended to sacrifice to Jehovah the true God, in order to gain him over to him to agree to it to curse Israel, and persuaded Balak, though an idolater, to join with him; and, the more easily to bring him to it, mixes Heathen rites and customs in sacrifice to him:

and prepare me here seven oxen, and seven rams; which were creatures offered in sacrifice according to the law of Moses, and before that was given, and by persons who were not under it; and even by seven of each sort, and that by the express command of God, Job 42:8. It may be observed, that both in this, and the preceding clause, the word here is carefully expressed, namely, in one of the high places; there the altars were erected, and thither the oxen were brought to be sacrificed; so that both the place, and the number of the altars, savoured of Heathenish worship, in which he complied to induce the king to sacrifice to Jehovah.

Numbers 23:2

Ver. 2. And Balak did as Balaam had spoken,.... Ordered seven altars to be built, and prepared seven bullocks and rams for sacrifice:

and Balak and Balsam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram; both seem to be concerned in offering the sacrifices; Balak, though a king, it being usual for kings to be priests also, as Melchizedek was, and Balaam as a prophet; and these sacrifices were offered to the true God, as seems clear from Nu 23:4 and to which Balak, at the direction of Balaam, agreed, in order to gain the Lord on his side, that he might prevail over the people of Israel.

Numbers 23:3

Ver. 3. And Balaam said unto Balak, stand by thy burnt offering,.... By which it appears that the sacrifices offered were of this sort, and there might be one, which was more peculiarly the burnt offering of Balak; though he might be more or less with Balaam concerned in them all; at which he was directed to stand while it was burning, presenting that and himself to the Lord, that he would have respect to both:

and I will go; depart from thence, at some little distance, unto some private place:

peradventure the Lord will come to meet me; upon the offering of these sacrifices to him, though he could not be certain of it, he having lately shown some displeasure and resentment unto him; and this was also in the daytime, when it was in the night he usually came unto him:

and whatsoever he showeth me I will tell thee; the whole of it, truly as it is, whether agreeable or not:

and he went to an high place; but he was in one already, and therefore if this is the sense of the word, he must go to another, into a grove in one of the high places, where he might be retired, and so fit for a divine converse; and the Targum of Onkelos renders it alone: but rather the sense is, that he went into a plain, as De Dieu has shown from the use of the word in the Syriac language; he was upon a high place, and he went down from thence into the plain, perhaps into a cave at the bottom of the hill, a retired place, where he hoped the Lord would meet him, as he did.

Numbers 23:4

Ver. 4. And God met Balaam,.... Not in a kind and gracious manner; not out of any respect to him and his offerings; not to indulge him with any spiritual communion with him; nor to communicate his mind and will to him as a friend of his; not to gratify his desires, and grant the request of the king of Moab, or to smile upon and succeed the scheme that they had concerted; but for the sake of his people Israel, to counterwork the designs of their enemies; to blast and confound them, and turn their curses into blessings; and particularly to oblige Balaam to bless the people he was so desirous of cursing for the sake of gain:

and he said unto him; in a bragging boasting way, in order to gain his favour, and carry his point:

I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram: that is, to him the Lord; for had they been offered to Baal, he could never have had the nerve to have spoken of them to God; and which he could never have proposed as a reason why he should be regarded by him, or expect on account of them any favour from him: and indeed these altars and sacrifices were not at his expense, though they were prepared and offered at a motion of his; nor were they offered in a right manner, nor with a right end, nor from a right principle, and were far from being acceptable unto God, yea, were abominable unto him; see Pr 21:27.

Numbers 23:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth.... Not grace into his heart, nor the fear of God within him, but suggested to him what to say; impressed it strongly on him, that he could not forget it, and with such power and weight, that he was obliged to deliver it:

and said, return unto Balak, and thus shalt thou speak; that is, unto him, and what is expressed in Nu 22:7.

Numbers 23:6

Ver. 6. And he returned unto him,.... Immediately, as soon as he was told what to say:

and, lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice; continued in his devotions, hoping for success, and waiting for Balaam's return:

he and all the princes of Moab; not only those that were sent to Balaam, but perhaps all the princes of the kingdom who were got together on this occasion, and by reason of the imminent danger they apprehended the nation was in on account of Israel.

Numbers 23:7

Ver. 7. And he took up his parable, and said,.... Pronounced the word, the prophetic word, which God had put into his mouth; so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call it, the parable of his prophecy; so called, because, in prophecies, often figurative and enigmatical expressions are used, and also sententious and weighty ones, either of which are sometimes called parables; see Ps 78:2,

Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram; or Syria, that is, from Mesopotamia, as the Septuagint translate it; and so the Targum of Jonathan, from Aram or Syria, which is by Euphrates:

out of the mountains of the east: it being the mountainous part of Mesopotamia or Chaldea, where Balaam dwelt, which lay to the east of the land of Moab:

saying, come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel; he owns that this was

Balak's view in sending for him; nor does he deny that be himself came with such an intention, could he be able to execute it; even curse the people of Israel, with the utmost abhorrence and detestation of them, and in the most furious and wrathful manner, as the last word used signifies.

Numbers 23:8

Ver. 8. How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?.... The sense is, that it was impossible for him to curse those that God did not curse himself, or would not have cursed by others; not but that he had a good will to it, to get Balak's money and honour, but he knew not how to accomplish it; yea, he saw it was in vain to attempt it, it was a thing that could not possibly be done: God does not, nor will he curse his spiritual Israel; they are blessed by him in Christ, and they shall be blessed; nor is it in the power of their enemies to curse them, or do them any harm: the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, instead of God and the Lord in this and the following clause, use the phase,

"the Word of the Lord;"

the essential Word, the Son of God, who is so far from cursing his people, that he has delivered them from the curses of the law, being made a curse for them, that the blessings of the everlasting covenant of grace might come upon them; and they are blessed of God in him, and for his sake, with all spiritual blessings:

or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? which is the same thing in other words, only this last word is expressive of more contempt and indignation.

Numbers 23:9

Ver. 9. For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him,.... That is, Israel in their camps; Balaam being at this time on the top of a rock, or on an high hill, from whence he had a view of Israel, encamped in the plains of Moab below him:

lo, the people shall dwell alone; this certainly respects their dwelling in the land of Canaan, where they dwelt a separate people from all others, distinguished by their language, religion, laws, customs, and manner of living, being different both in their clothing, and in their food, from other people; nor had they dealings, nor did they company with those of other nations; see **Es 3:8** "or shall dwell safely" {z}, or securely, not so much because of the situation of their country, but because of the protection of the Almighty; see De 33:28

and shall not be reckoned among the nations; as belonging to them, shall not be made of any account by them, but be despised and reproached for their religion chiefly; nor reckon themselves of them, nor mix with them; so the Targum of Jerusalem,

"they shall not be mixed;"

or, as Jonathan,

"they shall not be led in the laws of the people;"

and though they are now scattered among the people and nations of the world, yet they are not mixed with them, nor reckoned to be a part of them; nor do they reckon themselves to be of them, but are a separate distinct people from them. Thus Israel, or the people of God in a spiritual sense, dwell alone; not solitarily, or without company, in every sense, for they have the company of Father, Son, and Spirit, of angels and saints; but they dwell in God, in Christ, in the house of God, and with one another, separately and distinctly from the world: they are a separate people in the love of God; in the choice of them in Christ; in the covenant of grace made with them in him; in redemption by him; in his intercession for them; in effectual calling; as they will be in the resurrection morn, and in heaven to all eternity: and they shall dwell safely, God being around them; Christ the rock and fortress of them; the Spirit in them being greater than he that is in the world; angels their guardians, and they in a strong city, whose walls and bulwarks are salvation: nor are they reckoned among the nations; they are chosen, redeemed, and called out of them, and are not accounted of by them any other than the refuse and offscouring of all things; nor do they reckon themselves to be of the world, but as pilgrims and strangers in it. Baal Hatturim refers this prophecy to the days of the Messiah; see Jer 23:5.

{z} rdbl "confidenter", Pagninus; "securus", Vatablus.

Numbers 23:10

Ver. 10. Who can count, the dust of Jacob,.... The people of Israel, their posterity so called, not because of their original, the dust of the earth, but because of their numbers, being as numerous as the dust of the earth, or sand of the sea, as it was promised they should be,
Ge 28:14 and which is here confirmed by the prophecy of Balaam:

and the number of the fourth part of Israel; one of the four camps of Israel, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; for this people was divided into four camps, under so many standards, which were those of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan, see **Nu 2:1**, and one of them is represented by Balaam as so numerous, as not to be counted, or should be so, see **Ho 1:10**. The spiritual Israel of God, though comparatively few, are in themselves, and will be when all together, a great number, which no man can number, **Re 7:9**:

let me die the death of the righteous; which are among them, as Jarchi, among the Israelites; for they were not all righteous, nor are any, of themselves, or by their own works, but by the righteousness of Christ: or the death of the upright ones {a}; such as are upright in heart and life, who have right spirits renewed in them, and walk uprightly according to the rule of the divine word; such as are Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile; the word used is pretty near, in sound and signification, to Jeshurun, one of the names of Israel,
De 32:15, the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem render it,

"the death of the true ones,"

who are truly righteous and upright, truly gracious persons; who have the truth of grace, and the root of the matter in them: these die as well as others, yet their death is different from others, not in the thing itself, but in the concomitants and consequences of it; they die in the Lord, in union to him, in faith of him, in hope of eternal life by him, and their death is precious to him; and in consequence of this they are carried by angels to glory at death are immediately in heaven with Christ, and it will be well with them to all eternity. Balaam had some notion of this; and though he did not care to live the life of such, he wished to die their death, or that he might be as happy at death as they; by which he bears a testimony to the immortality of the soul, to a future state after death, and to an eternal life and happiness to be enjoyed by good men:

and let my last end be like his; which is a phrase expressive of much the same thing as before: death is the end of a man in this world; and the end of a righteous man in it is peace, rest, salvation, and eternal life, or is what follows upon it, and he then enters into: some render it, "my reward" {b}, which comes to much the same sense, the above being the righteous man's reward, not in a way of debt, but grace; others render the word, "my posterity" {c}; but it is not certain Balaam had any, and if he had, his concern seems to be more for himself than for them.

{a} Myrvy rectorum, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator. {b} ytyrxa see Prov. xxiv. 20. {c} to sperma mou Sept.

Numbers 23:11

Ver. 11. And Balak said unto Balaam, what hast thou done unto me?.... Or "for me" {f}; nothing at all, to answer his purpose, or his end in sending for him;

I took thee to curse mine enemies: so he calls the Israelites, though they had never done him any wrong; nor committed any acts of hostility against him, nor showed any intention to commit any; nay, were forbidden by the Lord their God to contend in battle with him and his people;

and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether; or, "in blessing blessed" {g}, done nothing but bless them, and that with many blessings, or pronounced them blessed, and prophesied of their blessedness, for their number, their safety, and of their happiness, not only in life, but at and after death.

{f} yl "pro me". {g} Krb tkrb "benedixisti benedicendo", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.

Numbers 23:12

Ver. 12. And he answered and said,.... By reply to Balak:

must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth? pretending a great regard to the word of God, and to great carefulness to speak it, exactly and punctually as he received it, whereas he was forced to it, and could not do otherwise.

Numbers 23:13

Ver. 13. And Balak said unto him,.... Seemingly satisfied with his answer, however, he could not help himself, and was willing to make the best of him he could, and try what he could do with him another time and elsewhere:

come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them; for he had a mighty notion that both the sight of the people, and the place from whence they were seen, would greatly contribute to answer the end he had in view, cursing the people:

thou shall see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all; for he thought, either that he was so charmed with so glorious a sight as the regular encampment of such a body of people was, that he could not find in his heart to curse them; or that he was so terrified at the sight of such a vast number of people, that he dared not attempt it; and therefore Balak proposed to have him to a place where he could only see a part of them and not the whole:

and curse me them from thence: that part, hoping that when he had cursed them he would gradually go on till he had cursed them all: but there is this objection to our version, and the sense it directs to, that Balaam had been brought to a place already, where he had seen the utmost part of the people, Nu 22:41 wherefore some read {h} the middle clause in a parenthesis, and in the past tense "(for thou hast seen but the utmost part of them, and hast not seen them all)"; and therefore would have him come to a place where he might see them all, and curse them from thence.

{h} So Vatablus.

Numbers 23:14

Ver. 14. And he brought him into the field of Zophim,.... Or Sede Tzophim, as Hillerus {i} reads it, so called from the watch tower, and watchmen in it: Jarchi says, it was a high place, where a watchman stood to observe if an army came against a city, and so a very proper place to take a view of the armies of Israel from:

to the top of Pisgah; a high hill in this place, where perhaps the watch tower was, or, however, the watchman stood: this looked towards Jeshimon or Bethjesimoth, in the plain of Moab, where Israel lay encamped, see Nu 21:20: and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar: as he had done before, Nu 23:2.

{i} Onomastic Sacr. p. 935.

Numbers 23:15

Ver. 15. And he said unto Balak, stand here by thy burnt offering,.... As he had before directed him, Nu 23:3

while I meet the Lord yonder; pointing to some place at a little distance, where he expected to meet the Lord, and have some instructions from him, which he seemed confident of, having met with him once already.

Numbers 23:16

Ver. 16. And the Lord met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth,.... As he did before, Nu 23:5.

and said, go again unto Balak, and say thus; the words which are expressed in Nu 23:18.

Numbers 23:17

Ver. 17. And when he came to him, behold, he stood by his burnt offering,.... As before; Nu 23:6 and the princes of Moab with him; Jarchi observes, that before it is said, all the princes of Moab, but not so here; for when they saw there was no hope of succeeding, some of them went away, and only some were left:

and Balak said unto him, what hath the Lord spoken? being in haste to know what it was, whether agreeable or not.

Numbers 23:18

Ver. 18. And he took up his parable,.... Pronounced the word put into his mouth, and said, rise up Balak, and hear; not from his seat, as Eglon a successor of his did, **Jud 3:20** for he was now standing by his burnt offering; but the sense is, that he would raise his attention, and stir up himself with all diligence to hear what he was about to say:

hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor; or to his word, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, which follow.

Numbers 23:19

Ver. 19. God is not a man, that he should lie,.... Man is a creature consisting of a body of flesh and blood, and of a soul, a created and finite spirit; but God, though he has the parts of an human body ascribed to him in a figurative sense, yet is not to be conceived of in a corporeal manner; and though he is a Spirit, yet eternal, immense, and infinite; and much less is as a sinful man, who goes astray from the womb speaking lies; no, let God be true, and every man a liar: he is God, that cannot lie; his counsels of old are faithfulness and truth; his promises yea and amen in Christ; the Scriptures inspired by him are true, and the prophecies of them are punctually accomplished, particularly what he foretold of the people of Israel, and promised unto them; that they should be happy, and inherit the land of Canaan; that be would be true and faithful to them, and there could be no hope, by any means whatever, to make him false and unfaithful to his word: neither the son of man, that he should repent; repentance is found in men, who repent for what they have done, or change their minds, as to what they intended to do or set about; perceiving it to be wrong to do it, or that they are able to do it, some unforeseen thing turning up they were not aware of: but nothing of this kind belongs to God, or can befall him; he never changes his mind, alters his counsels, purposes, and decrees, and never varies in his affections to his people, nor makes void his choice of them, or covenant with them; and his calling of them by his grace, and his gifts of grace bestowed upon them, are without repentance: and particularly with respect to the people of Israel, there was no reason to hope or believe that God would change his purposes or promises respecting their outward happiness, and enjoyment of the land of Canaan; or that ever he would be prevailed upon to curse them, or admit them to be cursed, when he was determined, and had so peremptorily promised that he would bless them:

hath he said, and shall he not do it? or "hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" whether it be with regard to things temporal, spiritual, or eternal; for there is no variableness nor shadow of turning in his mind; he never forgets his word, he foresees all events, he is able to perform, and is true and faithful; and therefore whatever is gone out of his lips will never be altered, but will be most certainly fulfilled, Ps 89:34 Isa 14:24.

Numbers 23:20

Ver. 20. Behold, I have received [commandment] to bless,.... The people of Israel, to pronounce a blessing upon them, to declare them a happy people:

and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it; God has blessed them, has determined to bless them, has promised to bless them, has blessed them in the victories he has given them, and will complete the blessing of them, by bringing them into the land he has given them: so the blessings which God has designed for his spiritual Israel, and bestows upon them, are irreversible; they are blessings indeed, spiritual ones, and are for ever; he blesses them with himself, as their covenant; God, their portion here and hereafter, with Christ his Son, and all things with him, with righteousness, peace, and pardon, with his Spirit and the grace thereof, with sonship, heirship, and eternal life.

Numbers 23:21

Ver. 21. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel,.... Not that there was no sin in them, nor any observed by the Lord; yet not so as to mark it in strict justice, and punish for it; but he forgave it, hid his face from it, and did not impute it to them; all the three Targums restrain it to idolatry, that there were none among them that worshipped idols, which was the reason why the Lord could not be prevailed upon to curse them: and Aben Ezra observes, that from hence Balak learnt to send women to the Israelites, to entice them to lewdness, and so to idolatry, that he might be able to carry his point: this is true of the spiritual Israel of God; for though there is sin in them, and which is continually done by them, yet their sins are removed from them, and have been laid on Christ, and he has bore them, and made reconciliation for them, and made an end of them, and has redeemed and saved them from them; and God, by imputing his righteousness to them, has justified them from all their sins, has forgiven all their iniquities, and blotted out all their transgressions, and has cast them behind his back, and into the depths of the sea, and has removed them as far from them as the east is from the west: and when God is said not to see or behold iniquity in his people, it is to be understood, not of his eye of

Omniscience, with which he sees not only the sins of all men, but those of his own people also, and takes notice of them in a providential way, and chastises them for them; but of his eye of avenging justice, and purity regards the article of justification, which is a full discharge from all sin, and a perfect covering of it from the justice of God, see Jer 50:20,

the Lord his God is with him and which is his protection and defence, and in vain it is for any to be against him, or seek to hurt him; nothing is a greater happiness, or can be a greater safety, than to have the presence of God; it is this makes ordinances pleasant and delightful; by this saints are assisted in duty, and supported under trials; it is an instance of distinguishing and amazing goodness, and is what will make heaven be the happy place and state it is: all the three Targums interpret it of the Word of the Lord that is with them, and for their help; who is the Angel of God's presence, Immanuel, God with us; and who has promised to be with his churches and ministers to the end of the world, and will be with them through life, at death, and to all eternity:

and the shout of a king is among them; of God their King, the Shechinah of their King, as the Targum of Onkelos; his glorious Majesty, to whom they make their joyful acclamations, upon his appearing among them, and on the account of the victories he gives them over their enemies: or of the King Messiah, as the Targum of Jonathan, the King of kings, the Lord of lords; and so, in an ancient writing of the Jews {k}, this passage is referred to the days of the Messiah: and this shout may respect the joyful sound of the Gospel, one part of which is, that Zion's King reigns, and which proclaims him to be King, and speaks of the things concerning his kingdom, both the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory; some respect may be had to the sounding of the silver trumpets by the priests on various occasions in Israel; see Nu 10:1.

{k} Pesikta in Ketoreth Hassamim in Numb. fol. 25. 4.

Numbers 23:22

Ver. 22. God brought them out of Egypt,.... With a mighty hand and stretched out arm, and he will conduct them through the wilderness, and bring them safe to Canaan's land; he that brought them from thence will not suffer them to perish by any means; it is in vain to attempt to curse a people that is in such hands, and for whom he has done such great things: Jarchi thinks this stands opposed to what Balak had said, Nu 22:5, thou sayest, "lo, a people is come out of Egypt";

"they did not come out of themselves, but God brought them:"

he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn; that is, not God, but the people he brought out of Egypt, being a mighty people, able to push their enemies and subdue them, being numerous and strong, especially as strengthened by the mighty God of Jacob; and therefore their strength is expressed by the strength of this creature; for be it what it will, whether the rhinoceros or the wild ox, or one kind of goats, as Bochart {l} thinks; whatever is meant by the term here must be a strong creature, see De 33:17 and great is the strength of the spiritual Israel of God, which they have from him to exercise grace, perform duty, withstand and overcome all their spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world.

{l} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 27. col. 965.

Numbers 23:23

Ver. 23. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel,.... Balaam here owns, that all his enchantments and divinations signified nothing, and would never prevail to bring a curse upon Israel; it was a vain thing for him to use them, and as vain for Balak to expect anything from them; neither he nor any other enchanter and soothsayer, using all the arts they are masters of, could ever do any hurt to such a people, who were the peculiar care of God, and were his church, against which the gates of hell could not prevail: or "in Jacob" and "in Israel" {m}; and this is the sense of all the Targums, that there are no enchantments nor enchanters, no divinations nor diviners in Israel; these were not agreeable to them, nor suffered among them, and therefore they were acceptable and well pleasing in the sight of God and indeed this sense agrees both with the literal version of the words, and is the sense Jarchi gives of them; that these people were fit for the blessing, because there were no enchanters and diviners among them; though he mentions another, and that is, that Israel had no need of enchanters and diviners, and of their enchantments and divinations, because they had the prophets to inform them, and the Urim and Thummim to declare things unto them:

according to this time it shall be said of Jacob, and of Israel, what hath God wrought! as with respect to this time as well as to time past, and with respect to time to come, even with respect to all times; it shall be said with wonder and amazement, what great things has God done for this people! as bringing them out of the land of Egypt, leading them through the Red sea, feeding and supplying them in the wilderness, protecting them from their enemies there, expelling the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, and setting them there in their stead; and wonderful things has God done for his spiritual Israel, in the redemption of them by Christ, in the beginning and carrying on the work of grace upon their hearts, by his Spirit; and at last he will bring them all to the heavenly Canaan of rest and happiness, and where this will be matter of admiration with them to all eternity, what has God done for us!

{m} larvyb bqeyb "in Jahacob, in Israel", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Numbers 23:24

Ver. 24. Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion,.... Or rather, "as the lioness" {n}, which, as Aelianus says {o}, is the strongest and most warlike beast, the most fierce and furious, as is believed both by Greeks and Barbarians; and he mentions the heroism of Perdiccas the Macedonian, and Semiramis the Assyrian, in engaging with and killing, not the lion or leopard, but lioness:

and shall lift up himself as a young lion; both phrases denoting the courage and strength of the people of Israel, in attacking their enemies and engaging them:

he shall not lie down; being once roused up and engaged in war:

until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain; as the lion does when it has seized on a creature, tears it to pieces, eats its flesh and drinks its blood: this may refer to the slaughter of the Midianites that would be quickly made, and among the slain of whom Balaam himself was, Nu 31:7, and to the slaughter and conquest of the Canaanites under Joshua, and taking their spoils.

{n} ayblk "ut leaena", V. L. Tigurine version. {o} Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 39. Vid. Herodot. Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 108.

Numbers 23:25

Ver. 25. And Balak said unto Balaam, neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all. Signifying that it would be as well or better to do nothing at all, than to do what he did; but the sense is not, that he would not have him curse them, that he could never say, since he had pressed it both before and after this; wherefore the words should be rendered, as they are by some {p}, "if in cursing thou dost not curse", or will not curse, "neither in blessing bless", or, however, do not bless: if he could not or would not curse Israel, he would not have him bless them on any account; if he could do him and his people no good in ridding them of their enemies, yet he desires him by no means to do them any harm by discouraging them and encouraging Israel.

{p} So Fagius, Vatablus; with which agree the Arabic version, and Noldius, p. 221. No. 1024.

Numbers 23:26

Ver. 26. But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, told not I thee,.... He appeals to him for his honesty and faithfulness, for honest and faithful he would be thought to be, both to God and man; that when he first met him, he plainly told him what he must expect: from him:

saying, all that the Lord speaketh, that I must do; which was very true, he was obliged to do as he had bid him, and speak what he had said unto him, though it was sore against his will; he would fain both have spoken and done otherwise, if he might have been permitted.

Numbers 23:27

Ver. 27. And Balak said unto Balaam, come, I pray thee,.... Come along with me: I will bring thee unto another place: if not better for the view of the people, yet a more religious place, on which account the king hoped for success:

peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence; it may be God will give thee leave to curse the people from that place, being devoted to sacred service: this is the first time that Balak makes mention of the name of God; and he now seems to be satisfied that it was not Balaam's fault that he did not curse Israel, but that he was hindered by God, who would not suffer him to do it.

Numbers 23:28

Ver. 28. And Balak brought Balaam to the top of Peor,.... The name of an high mountain in Moab, so called from a gap or opening in it; here the idol Baal was worshipped, and from hence had the name of Baalpeor, Nu 25:3 and here, very probably, was a temple built to the honour of him, called Bethpeor, the house or temple of Baalpeor, De 34:6,

that looketh towards Jeshimon; as Pisgah also did, and very likely it was not far from it, since from thence they came hither, Nu 23:14. Jeshimon is the same with Bethjesimoth, and so the Targum of Jonathan here calls it, a part of the plains of Moab, where Israel lay encamped, Nu 33:49 so that from hence Balaam could have a full view of them.

Numbers 23:29

Ver. 29. And Balaam said unto Balak,.... Being willing to try again what could be done, and to gratify the king, and especially to get the wages of unrighteousness, if possible, which he dearly loved, as the apostle says, **2Pe 2:15**

build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams; which had been done in two places before, Nu 23:1 the same sort of creatures, and the same number here as there, and these only clean creatures, such as were used in sacrifice by the true worshippers of God, and which, no doubt, Balaam had knowledge of, and therefore judged that those would be most acceptable to the Lord.

Numbers 23:30

Ver. 30. And Balak did as Balaam had said,.... Though the sacrifices were expensive, he did not grudge them; he spared no cost to gain his point, though he now could have but little hope of it: and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar; as he had done before, Nu 23:2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 24

In this chapter we are told, that Balaam leaving his enchantments, the Spirit of God came on him, and he spake of the happiness of Israel, and prophesied of their future greatness and glory, Nu 24:1 which so exasperated Balak, that he ordered him at once to depart from him,
Nu 24:10. Balaam justified himself in what he said and did, and suggested that before they parted, he had something to say in a prophetic manner, concerning what Israel should do to Moab in "future" times, Nu 24:12 and then prophesies concerning the Messiah, and the destruction of Moab, and of some neighbouring nations, and even of some at a greater distance, as the Assyrians and Romans,
Nu 24:15.

Ver. 1. And when Balsam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel,.... That it was good in his sight, what he approved of, and was well-pleasing to him, and that it was his determined mind that Israel should be blessed, and not cursed, from which there was no turning him, by offering sacrifices to him, and much less by his sorceries and divinations:

he went not as at other times; or, "as at a time in a time" {q}, at two times, of which see Nu 23:3, he abode in the place where the sacrifices were offered, and did not depart to another at some distance, as he had twice before done:

to seek for enchantments; which it seems he used before, for he not only offered sacrifices to the true God, which yet were attended with superstitious rites, but he made use of his divining art also; and not only went to meet with God, and hear what he would say to him, but consulted the devil also, being willing to have two strings to his bow, and that, if possible, he might carry his point, and get what his covetous and ambitious mind was desirous of: the words may be literally rendered, "to meet enchantments" {r}; but what should be meant by the phrase is not easy to say; I should rather choose to render them, "to meet serpents", and make use of them in his divinations, make observations on them, and predictions from them: one sort of divination is called "ophiomancy", or divining by serpents; so Calchas, on seeing a serpent devour eight sparrows with their dam, foretold the duration of the siege of Troy {s}:

but he set his face towards the wilderness: where the people of Israel lay encamped, not with an intention to bless them, though he saw it pleased the Lord, but to take an opportunity, if he could, without his leave, to curse them;

and therefore he did not go out as he did before, to know his will, but stood by the sacrifice, with his face to the wilderness, where the people were, to take any advantage that offered.

{q} Mepb Mepk "sicut vice in vice", Montanus, Vatablus. {r} Myvxn tarql "in occursum auguriorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus. {s} Homer. Iliad. 2. see more instances in Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 1. c. 3. col. 21, 22.

Numbers 24:2

Ver. 2. And Balaam lifted up his eyes,.... Being on Mount Peor:

and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; in that exact order in which they were directed to encamp under four standards, and so many tribes under each standard, **Nu 2:1**

and the Spirit of God came upon him; not in his grace but in his gifts; not as a spirit of sanctification, but as a spirit of prophecy, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase it; and so sometimes the Spirit of God in this sense has come upon wicked men, as on Caiaphas and others, Joh 11:51.

Numbers 24:3

Ver. 3. And he took up his parable,.... His parable of prophecy, as the Targums, his prophetic speech, which, with a loud voice, he expressed in the hearing of Balak and his nobles:

and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said; the preface to his prophecy is pompous, and seems to be full of pride and vanity, and so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem represent him;

"the man who is more excellent than his father hath said, to whom hidden secrets, even what was hidden from the prophets is revealed to him;"

and the Jews have a saying {t} that he that has an evil eye, a haughty spirit, and a large soul, or is covetous, is one of the disciples of Balaam the wicked:

and the man whose eyes are open hath said; or, as some {u} render it, whose eyes were shut, but now open; either the eyes of his body, which were shut when the angel met him, and the ass saw him and not he, but afterwards were open, and he saw him also; or the eyes of his understanding blinded with ambition and covetousness, but were open to see his mistake, at least so far as to be sensible that he could never prevail upon God to allow him to curse Israel; or rather open, by the spirit of prophecy coming on him, whereby he saw and foretold things to come.

{t} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 19. {u} So V. L. Montanus, Tigurine version, &c.

Numbers 24:4

Ver. 4. He hath said, which heard the words of God,.... God speaking to him, which he did several times, and with which he was greatly elated, see Nu 22:9:

which saw the vision of the Almighty; not that he had a sight of any similitude of God, though the angel that appeared to him, which was Christ the uncreated angel, might appear in an human form, for some visible form was seen both by the ass and him; but rather this respects the visions of God to him in the night; it may be in a dream, as has been already observed, and which the following words seem to confirm:

falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: or falling into a deep sleep, and yet the eyes of his body open, which sometimes is the case with persons asleep; or the eyes of his mind open, to receive the instructions given him in a dream or vision of the night; unless this is to be understood of his falling on his face, when he had his vision, as sometimes the prophets did, see **Eze 1:28**, so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it; and the latter says, he prophesied of himself, that he should fall by the sword; which is better than to interpret it of his falling when his ass lay down with him, as some do: so men may have a great deal of light and knowledge in their heads, and yet not have true grace in their hearts; great gifts, which puff up with pride and vanity, but not sanctifying grace, which is of an humbling nature, **1Co 8:1**, what he said under a spirit of prophecy follows.

Numbers 24:5

Ver. 5. How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob,.... Not that the matter of which they were made was so rich, or their structure so admirable, but the order in which they were placed was so beautiful and agreeable:

and thy tabernacles, O Israel; which is the same thing in other words, and which may be applied figuratively to the church of God, which often goes by the names of Jacob and Israel; and agrees with particular congregations and assemblies of saints, where they dwell as in tents in a movable state, like pilgrims and sojourners; and which are the dwelling places of Father, Son, and Spirit, and of the people of God with one another; and are goodly, pleasant, and delightful, because of the presence of God with them, and on account of the provisions there made for them, and the company they there enjoy; see Ps 84:1.

Numbers 24:6

Ver. 6. As the valleys are they spread forth,.... Long and broad, lying between several mountains, and reaching from hill to hill; so the armies of Israel lay encamped in the plains and villages of Moab, making a very considerable length and breadth; the camp of Israel is said to be twelve miles long, and twelve miles broad; so the Targum on **Nu 2:3** and this may denote the lowness of the saints and people of God in their own eyes, and their largeness in themselves; and especially when the place of their tents shall be enlarged, and the curtains of their habitations be stretched forth in the latter day; and also their fruitfulness, meads, and valleys abounding with herbs and flowers, as the churches of God do with the fruits of the Spirit, grace, and righteousness, and with plants of the Lord's right hand planting. Some render it as brooks and torrents of water, so the Targum of Jonathan; which diffuse and spread themselves, and on the banks of which stand beautiful trees in goodly order:

as gardens by the river's side: laid out in a delightful manner, full of flowers, plants, and trees, and well watered; like to these, in several spots, were the people of Israel formed into several camps; and to these may the churches of God be compared, who are distinguished and enclosed by sovereign grace, full of trees of righteousness of the Lord's planting, watered by the river of divine love, and from Christ the fountain of gardens; see **So 4:12**:

as the trees of lign aloes, which the Lord hath planted: which are not planted and raised by the art and industry of man, but grow up without culture, as the mere produce of nature, under a divine providence; these are called lign wood or tree aloes, to distinguish them from another sort of aloes, which are no other than plants; but these are what the Indians call Calambra or Calembac, and, physicians Xyloaloes and Agallochium, and are of a very aromatic and fragrant scent. This tree is said to be about eight or ten feet high; at the head of it is a large bunch of leaves, which are thick and indented, broad at bottom, but growing narrower towards the point, and about four feet in length; the blossom of it is red, intermixed with yellow, and double like a pink; from this blossom comes fruit, round like a large pea, white and red; the juice of these leaves is drawn out by cutting them with a knife, and received into bottles; the smell of the wood is exquisite {w}. P. Martyr {x} speaks of a trunk of lign aloes, which being cut, a sweet savour proceeds from it. It may be observed what Isidore {y} remarks, that it grows in Arabia, as well as in India, and so might be well known to Balaam. And to these the Israel of God may be compared for their fragrancy, being clothed with the righteousness of Christ, all whose garments smell of or like these aloes, Ps 45:8 and having the graces of the Spirit of God in them, the smell of which is preferable to all spices, and they themselves are signified by the same, **So 4:10**:

and as cedar trees beside the waters; which are tall and high, large and spreading, durable lasting, to which the righteous are compared,
See Gill on "Ps 92:12".

{w} See Calmet's Dictionary, and the Supplement to Chamber's Dictionary, in the word "Aloes". {x} Decad. 1. l. 2. {y} Origin. l. 17. c. 8.

Numbers 24:7

Ver. 7. He shall pour the water out of his buckets,.... That is, God shall plentifully send down rain out of the clouds upon these valleys, gardens, and trees, and make them fruitful; and this may be a figure of the grace of God, with which his churches are watered, and become fruitful by means of the word and ordinances, which is conveyed through them out of the fulness which is in Christ:

and his seed [shall be] in many waters; the seed and offspring of Israel shall be in a place of many waters, in a land of brooks and waters, shall dwell in a well watered land, the land of Canaan, **De 8:7** or shall be like seed sown near water, or in well watered places, which springs up and brings forth much fruit, see Isa 32:20 or shall become, or be over many waters, to which people, kingdoms, and nations, are sometimes compared; and so may denote the multitude of Israel, and the large extent of their dominions, see Re 17:1:

and his king shall be higher than Agag; who might be the then present king of

Amalek, reckoned one of the greatest kings on earth; and this name, some think, was common to all the kings of Amalek, as Pharaoh to the kings of Egypt; and according to Jarchi and Aben Ezra, this is a prophecy of the first king of Israel, Saul, and of his conquering Agag king of Amalek, for there was one of this name in his time, 1Sa 15:7:

and his kingdom shall be exalted; that is, the kingdom of the people of Israel, as it was more especially in the days of David and Solomon; and will be abundantly more in the days of the Messiah, when his kingdom shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, and the kingdoms of this world shall become his, and he shall reign over all the earth; and so the Jerusalem Targum,

"and the kingdom of the King Messiah shall become very great;"

and so other Jewish writers {z} refer this prophecy to the days of the Messiah.

{z} Pesikta in Ketoreth Hassamim, fol. 27. 2. Vid. Philo. de Praemiis, p. 925. Sept. vers. & Targum Jon. in loc.

Numbers 24:8

Ver. 8. God brought him forth out of Egypt, he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn,.... Here he repeats what he had said in a former prophecy, See Gill on "Nu 23:22": he shall eat up the nations his enemies: the seven nations of Canaan, which should be subdued by Israel, and that with as much ease as a lion devours its prey; nor would the Canaanites be able to make any more resistance to them than a creature in the paws of a lion; and the phrase denotes the utter destruction of them:

and shall break their bones; as the lion breaks the bones of such creatures that fall a prey to him; signifying that all their strength should be taken from them, their mighty men slain, and their fortified cities taken:

and pierce [them] through with his arrows: slay them utterly.

Numbers 24:9

Ver. 9. He couched,.... Which may respect the posture of the armies of Israel in the plains of Moab:

he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion; as he would do, and did in the land of Canaan, when conquered by Israel; they took up their residence on it quietly, and dwelt in it securely, and in no more fear of their enemies than a lion, which lays itself down and sleeps without concern anywhere:

who shall stir him up? who dare do it? as it would be a very rash, bold, daring, and dangerous thing to rouse up a lion lying down; so it is suggested it would be alike to provoke Israel to war at some certain times, in the days of David more especially:

blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee; which are the very words in which Isaac blessed Jacob, the ancestor of these people, Ge 27:29 and which blessing is confirmed by Balaam against his will, and whereby he cursed himself instead of Israel; for though he could not curse him with words, he had cursed him in his heart, and would have done it verbally if he could {a}.

{a} "Qui, quia non licuit, non facit, ille facit". Ovid.

Numbers 24:10

Ver. 10. And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam,.... He had bore much and long, but he could bear no longer, he was quite impatient, his last words more especially must exceedingly nettle him:

and he smote his hands together; as expressive of his indignation, vexation, and disappointment:

and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse my enemies; he had sent princes to him, one set of them after another, to invite him into his country, and to his court, with great promises of reward to curse Israel, whom he reckoned his enemies, and not to bless them:

and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times; done nothing else but bless them with blessing upon blessing, time after time; even everyone of the three times he opened his mouth, as Balak expected, to have cursed them.

Numbers 24:11

Ver. 11. Therefore now flee thou to thy place,.... His own country, from whence Balak had sent for him, and he came; begone directly, make all haste away; he speaks as one so provoked, that he could not bear him in his presence, and as threatening him if he did not at once get out of his sight:

I thought to promote thee unto great honour; to bestow much wealth and riches upon him, and to prefer him in his court to high offices of honour and dignity; he had promised that he would, and he thought as he said, he was determined upon it, had he performed as he expected:

but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour; the Lord thou hast so much talked of, and at whose beck and command thou hast been, and by whom thou hast been checked and controlled, he has hindered thee from riches and honour; see what thou hast got, or rather lost, by hearkening to him, and how he will pay thee for it.

Numbers 24:12

Ver. 12. And Balaam said unto Balak,.... In order to mitigate his wrath, and bring him into a better temper:

spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me: those that came to him a second time; for to the first he said nothing of what is after related, but to the last he did much the same as he had afterwards said to Balak himself: saying,

Numbers 24:13

Ver. 13. If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold,.... Which are the very words he said to the princes of Moab, Nu 22:18,

I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad; for though here it is the "commandment", and there the "word" of the Lord, yet it is the same word in both places in the original text: indeed, here he omits the relation to the Lord he there claims, saying "my God"; and instead of "little or great", here it is "good or bad", but the sense is the same: and he adds, for explanation sake,

of mine own mind: or out of my heart, which was disposed well enough to serve Balak, but was laid under a restraint by the Lord:

but what the Lord said, that will I speak; and he had not only said this to the messengers, but to the king himself, and therefore he thought, that as he had openly and honestly told him this at first, he had no reason to be so angry with him; see Nu 22:38.

Numbers 24:14

Ver. 14. And now, behold, I go unto my people,.... According to thine order, I shall not stay to make thee uneasy with my company, only I crave thy patience to hear me a little before we part:

come therefore, and I will advertise thee; about some things that shall come to pass in future time, respecting this people, and thine, and other nations, both near and remote; and he hoped by this to bring him into a better temper, and part good friends: or "I will counsel thee"; what thou shall do, as the Targum of Onkelos, and so makes a sentence of this of itself, independent of, and distinct from what follows, beginning the next clause thus,

and I will show them what this people, &c. referring the former to the counsel Balaam gave to Balak, how to seduce the people into idolatry; and the Targum of Jonathan expresses it at large;

"come, I will counsel thee, go and prepare victualling houses, and place lewd women there to sell food and drink at a low price, and bring this people to eat, and drink, and be drunken; and let them lie with them, and deny their God, and they will be delivered into thine hands in a little time, and many of them will fall;"

which advice was followed, Nu 25:1 and is referred to, Nu 31:16 but though Balaam did give him such advice before he left him, which is highly probable, yet it is not what is intended here, since what follows is closely connected with the above clause, and contains the thing he advertised or advised him of:

what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days; not what the

Moabites should do to the Israelites now, as the Vulgate Latin version, quite contrary to the original text, but what the Israelites should do to the Moabites in future times; not only in the times of David, by whom they were subdued, **2Sa 8:2** but in much later times, even in the times of Alexander, or King Jannaeus, who overcame them, as Josephus {b} relates. Now this might be said to Balak to make him easy, that it would not be until the latter days, many hundreds of years hence, ere the people of Israel would fight with Moab, and subdue it; and therefore he need be under no concern about them, since he would meet with no trouble from them in his time, nor his people for years to come.

{b} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 13. sect. 5.

Numbers 24:15

Ver. 15. And he took up his parable, and said,.... In this and the following verse; the same preface, in the same words, is made to his prophecy as before, See Gill on "Nu 24:3" see Gill on "Nu 24:4"; only one clause is added, "and knew the knowledge of the Most High"; that Balaam had some knowledge of God is certain from the names by which he calls him, being such that he made himself known by to the patriarchs, and by which he is frequently called in the sacred writings; but then this knowledge of his was merely notional and speculative, and not spiritual and supernatural, and was such as men may have who are destitute of the grace of God: he was one that professed to know him in words, but in works denied him, see 1Co 13:2 and he also was admitted to much nearness to God, and converse with him, of which he boasted; but then this was not for his own sake, or as a mark of friendship to him, but for the sake of the people of Israel, and to prevent his doing them mischief. His prophecy follows.

Numbers 24:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "Nu 24:15"

Numbers 24:17

Ver. 17. I shall see him, but not now,.... Meaning not Israel, for he now saw him encamped, and at no great distance; but one that should descend from him, a famous and excellent person, and who is no other than the Messiah, as appears by what follows; him he should see, not spiritually with an eye of faith, nor corporeally with his bodily eyes in his state of incarnation, but at the day of judgment; and now, indeed, he saw him by a spirit of prophecy:

I shall behold him, but not nigh; signifying, that the coming of this illustrious Person, who should smite the borders of Moab, was not near, and therefore Balak had no reason to indulge any present fears; and that when he was come either into the world to save men, or to judgment, Balaam would have no nearness to him, nor interest in him; he would see him at the last day, but not for himself, as Job says he should, Job 19:25

there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel; which Aben Ezra interprets of David, though he says many interpret it of the Messiah; and there are some writers, both Jewish and Christian, that understand it partly of David, and partly of Christ, and chiefly of him, and of David as a type of him; the fulfilment of which was only in part in David, but principally and completely in Christ. Maimonides {c} parts the prophecy between them: the whole undoubtedly agrees with Christ, and belongs unto him: the "star" and "sceptre" may be considered as names and titles of the Messiah; he is called the "morning star", Re 22:16 for his glory, brightness, and splendour, and for the light that comes by him, and the influence of his grace, and the blessings of it on the sons of men; and hence a false Messiah took the name of Bar Cochab, the son of a star, to answer to this prophecy; and he may be called a "sceptre", that is, a sceptre bearer, because of his royalty; he not only has the name of a king, but has a kingdom, both of nature, providence, and grace, and rules with a sceptre of grace, mercy, and righteousness; and as he was to spring from Jacob or Israel, so he did, being a son of Abraham, a descendant of Jacob, of the tribe of Judah, and family of David, **Mt 1:1**, but I rather think that the star is to be considered as a sign and circumstance of his coming, and that the words may be rendered, "when a star steers its course from Jacob", or "unto Jacob, then a sceptre", or "sceptre bearer",

shall rise out of Israel, or "rise up unto Israel"; for the particle m sometimes signifies "unto" {d}; and that the appearance of a star in Israel was a sign of the Messiah's coming is certain from **Mt 2:1** of which the Magi were informed by Zoroastres {e} their founder, who, being of Jewish extract, had got it from this prophecy of Balaam; and it is as evident that the Jews expected the appearance of an extraordinary star at the time of the Messiah's coming; for so they say more than once, in an ancient book of theirs {f}, that when the

"Messiah shall be revealed, a bright and shining star shall arise in the east;"

which expectation must be founded on this prophecy:

and shall smite the corners of Moab; not only the corners of their houses and cities, but the extreme parts and borders of the land, even all the sides, and the whole of it; or the princes and great men of the land, sometimes called "corners", see Zec 10:4 and so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan,

and shall kill the princes of Moab or the mighty ones of Moab, as the Jerusalem Targum; this was literally fulfilled in David, **2Sa 8:2** Ps 60:1 and figuratively and mystically in Christ, by subduing his enemies, signified by Moabites, as being the enemies of Israel; either by reducing them through the power of his grace to obedience to him, or by smiting and breaking them in pieces with a rod of iron; and which will be more plainly and fully accomplished when he shall destroy those Moabites, the antichristian nations, Re 19:15

and destroy all the children of Sheth; some take Sheth to be the name of some famous king among the Moabites, as Grotius; others, the name of some city of Moab, which David utterly destroyed, as R. Nathan {g}; others suppose some particular nations are meant, as either the Edomites, so called because they put confidence in their foundations, and fortified places, so Vitringa {h}; or the Egyptians, from Seth or Sethos, one of their kings, who was known by the name Egyptus, as a late learned writer {i} of ours conjectures; but rather by the children of Seth are meant all nations, as Jarchi observes, for all come from Seth, the son of the first man; and so the words may be rendered, as they are by Onkelos,

"he shall rule over all the children of men;"

which will be fulfilled in Christ, when he shall have put down all rule and authority, and all will be subject to him, and his kingdom be from sea to sea, and his dominion from the river to the ends of the earth; unless rather by the children of Seth are meant the special people of God, in distinction from others, and in allusion to the distinction between the Sethites and Cainites, the one being the people of God, the other not; and so it may be interpreted of Christ's gathering them to him, by clucking as it were for them, as a hen gathers her chickens; so the word is used in Jewish writings, and of God himself; for it is said {k} the holy blessed God rqrqm, clucks over them, as hens do, which is the simile our Lord himself uses, Mt 23:37 the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan interpret this prophecy of the Messiah by name; and so do many other Jewish writers, both ancient {l} and modern {m}.

{c} Hilchot Melachim, c. 11. sect. 1. {d} Vid. Nold. Concord. Ebr. part. p. 545. {e} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 54. {f} Zohar in Exod. fol. 3. 3, 4. & in Numb fol. 85. 4. & 86. 1. {g} Apud Lyram in loc. {h} Comment. in Isa. xxii. 5. {i} Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, &c. p. 445. {k} T. Bab. Taanith, c. 4. in En Jacob, par. 1. fol. 143. 4. {l} Debarim Rabba, fol. 234. 4. Pesikta in Kettoreth Hassammim in Numb. fol. 27. 3. & 28. 1. {m} Abarbinel. Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 4. 2, 3. Abendana in loc. R. Isaac Chizzuk Emunah, p. 71, 72.

Numbers 24:18

Ver. 18. And Edom shall be a possession,.... Of the children of Israel, which was fulfilled in part when the Edomites became the servants of David, **2Sa 8:14** and when they were smitten and spoiled by Judas Maccabeus,

them a great overthrow, and abated their courage, and took their spoils." (1 Maccabees 5:3)

and still more so when all the Edomites or the Idumaeans were subdued by Hyrcanus, and they became one people with the Jews, and conformed to their religious rites; which is not only related by Josephus {n}, but by Strabo {o}, an Heathen historian, who says, that they joined themselves to the Jews, and embraced their laws: but in a spiritual sense this has had a greater accomplishment in the calling of the Gentiles, and introducing them into the church of God; see **Am 9:12** compared with Ac 15:14.

Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; which was a mount in the land of Edom where Esau formerly dwelt, and so signifies the same as before: and also that the most strong and fortified places of the land should fall into the hands of their enemies; See Gill on "Ob 1:17" See Gill on "Ob 1:18" See Gill on "Ob 1:19"

Israel shall do valiantly; in fighting with and conquering the Edomites, or shall get much wealth and riches by the spoil of them, see
Ps 60:9. This, and the following verse, are in some ancient writings of the Jews

{p} interpreted of the times of the Messiah.

{n} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 9. sect. 1. {o} Geograph. l. 16. p. 523. {p} Zohar in Numb. fol. 85. 4. & 86. 1.

Numbers 24:19

Ver. 19. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion,.... Meaning either David, or rather the Messiah; and so Jarchi interprets this of another ruler out of Jacob, even of the Messiah, of whom it is said, he shall have dominion from sea to sea; Ps 72:8,

and shall destroy him, that remaineth of the city; chief city of Edom, or of any of the cities of it, signifying that there should be none left, see **Ob 1:18**, this is also applied to the days of the Messiah, in the ancient writings of the Jews {q}.

{q} Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 179. 3.

Numbers 24:20

Ver. 20. And when he looked on Amalek,.... The country of Amalek, which lay to the south of the land of Canaan, Nu 13:29 and which Balaam had a view of from the mountain of Peor, where he now was:

and he took up his parable, and said; the parable of his prophecy, as the Targum of Jonathan, and pronounced it aloud:

Amalek was the first of the nations; not the first nation in the world, nor the chief and principal for numbers, riches, or strength, but the first that made war with Israel, as all the three Targums paraphrase it, as they did, see Ex 17:8,

but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever; this was threatened to them by the Lord upon that battle, and is confirmed by this prophecy of Balaam: and after this, orders were given to Israel to blot out their remembrance, De 25:19, and which, in a good measure, though not completely, was done in the times of Saul, 1Sa 15:8 and after that they were distressed by David, 1Sa 27:9 and the rest of them were smitten by the sons of Simeon, in the days of Hezekiah, **1Ch 4:41**, after which we hear of them no more: Amalek may be considered as a type of antichrist, the son of perdition, who shall go into it, shall come to his end, and there shall be none to help him; which will be true of all the antichristian party, the enemies of Christ, who will be destroyed by him, and perish eternally; see Da 11:45.

Numbers 24:21

Ver. 21. And he looked on the Kenites,.... Not the family and posterity of Jethro, as Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Abendana; for they were not a people by themselves, but were now encamped with Israel, and went with them into the land of Canaan, and were not carried captive with the ten tribes, though some might that dwelt in Naphtali, **Jud 9:4**, for they after that remained with Judah under the name of Rechabites, Jer 35:2 and returned with the two tribes, being carried captive with them, **1Ch 2:55** but they were a people, though of the same original and family Jethro descended from, which dwelt near, and afterwards among the Amalekites, and therefore were seen by Balaam, and taken notice of at the same time they were; see 1Sa 15:6. Abarbinel takes them to be the same with those in Ge 15:19

and took up his parable; or prophecy concerning them, and delivered it:

and said, strong is thy dwelling place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock, they dwelling in craggy rocky places, where they thought themselves secure and out of danger; and this their habitation he calls "Ken", a nest, in allusion to their name Kenites.

Numbers 24:22

Ver. 22. Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted,.... Though they were so strongly fortified, and closely immured and surrounded with rocks and mountains, yet they should gradually waste away, as they were but few in Saul's time, 1Sa 15:6

until Ashur shall carry thee away captive; Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria, when he carried captive the people of Syria, took these with them, 2Ki 16:9, though Jarchi thinks they were carried captives with the ten tribes, that is, by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria; and the Targum of Jonathan, by Sennacherib, king of Assyria; and others think by Nebuchadnezzar, who was sometimes reckoned a king of Assyria; taking them to be the same with the Amalekites, who were carried captives and returned with the two tribes.

Numbers 24:23

Ver. 23. And he took up his parable, and said,.... Or delivered another prophecy, having made some little pause:

alas, who shall live when God doeth this? referring not to what goes before, but to what follows; though Jarchi and Aben Ezra think it refers to the Assyria conquering and carrying captive, not only the Kenites, but all the nations of the world, so that there was no living comfortably in it on his account; but this is said after Balaam had taken up his parable again, and so respects what follows, as the destruction of the Persian empire by Alexander, in which Ashur or the Assyrians were included; and the destruction of the Jews by the Romans more especially; which was such as had not been the like from the beginning of the world, Mt 24:21, and perhaps may have a further respect to the affliction of the witnesses and church of Christ by antichrist; see Da 12:1.

Numbers 24:24

Ver. 24. And ships [shall come] from the coast of Chittim,.... Kittim was the son of Javan, Ge 10:4 and so designs some part of Greece: Josephus {r} says that Kittim possessed the island now called Cyprus, in which was a city now called Citium, after his name; Macedonia, a considerable part of Greece, is called the land of Cittim,

"And it happened, after that Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came out of the land of Chettiim, had smitten Darius king of the Persians and Medes, that he reigned in his stead, the first over Greece," (1 Maccabees 1:1)

"Beside this, how they had discomfited in battle Philip, and Perseus, king of the Citims, with others that lifted up themselves against them, and had overcome them:" (1 Maccabees 8:5)

but the Targum of Jonathan interprets it, of the country of Italy; the Jerusalem Targum, of the Roman legions; and perhaps both Greeks and Romans are intended, and so ships from Cittim, in Da 11:30, design Romans in Grecian ships; for in such were the Roman ambassadors carried, who distressed Antiochus, king of Syria,
See Gill on "Da 11:30"; and both may be intended here: it is affirmed {s} that

Noah with his son Japheth, came into the country now called Italy, and built a city, and gave it the name of Cethim, since called Volterra, and was the metropolis of Etruria, and gave name to all Italy; and that in the year two hundred and twenty from the building of that city, Cethim the son of Javan, and grandson of Noah, took two colonies with him, and sailed to an island which he called after his own name Cethim, now Cyprus:

and shall afflict Ashur; which being a part of the Persian empire, was afflicted, conquered, and subdued by Alexander the Macedonian, who is said to come out of the land of Cittim,

"And it happened, after that Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came out of the land of Chettiim, had smitten Darius king of the Persians and Medes, that he reigned in his stead, the first over Greece," (1 Maccabees 1:1)

and shall afflict Eber; or the Hebrews, as the Septuagint version; not that the Grecians or Macedonians should do this, for they under Alexander did not afflict the Jews; unless this is to be understood of the Seleucidae, the kings of Syria, the successors of Alexander, who did distress the Jews; but rather this respects the Romans under Pompey, and especially under Titus Vespasian, who destroyed their city, and carried them captive, and who ever since have been dispersed among the nations:

and he also shall perish for ever: not Eber, but those that afflicted him, even the Romans; and indeed both monarchies, Grecian and Roman, are prophesied of as what should be destroyed, and that by a son of Eber, the Messiah; the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, said to break in pieces all these kingdoms, **Da 2:44** and not Rome Pagan only, but Rome Papal also, antichrist and all the antichristian powers, **2Th 2:8**. and so the Targum of Jonathan says, that the end both of the one and the other, that is, that shall afflict Eber, shall be, to fall by the hand of the King Messiah, and they shall perish for ever.

{r} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1. {s} Inghiram. Etrusc. Antiqu. apud Dickinson. Delph. Phaenic. Append. p. 153. Vid. p. 77.

Numbers 24:25

Ver. 25. And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place,.... The country from whence he came, that is, he went from Balak, according to his command, in order to return to his own land; for he seems not to have reached

it, but stayed by the way among the Moabites and Midianites, and was slain in a battle between Israel and them,
Nu 31:8, or if he did reach Mesopotamia, he returned again, as Chaskuni says; and either before he left Balak, or in his journey homewards, or when he returned, he gave that advice, to seduce the Israelites first to whoredom, and by that to idolatry, the effects of which are observed in the following chapter, see Gill "Nu 24:14" and Balak also went his way; to his royal city, court, and family, attended, very probably, by the princes of Moab, who had been with him all this while; though how long these things were transacting is not certain.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 25:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 25

The contents of this chapter are, the sin of the people of Israel, their whoredom and idolatry, Nu 25:1, their punishment for it, multitudes being slain, Nu 25:4, whose number is given,
Nu 25:9, the zeal of Phinehas in slaying two notorious offenders,
Nu 25:6, whose names are observed, Nu 25:14 for which he is commended, and the covenant of priesthood was given and confirmed unto him, Nu 25:10, and the chapter is concluded with an order to vex the Midianites, for vexing Israel with their wiles, Nu 25:16.

Ver. 1. And Israel abode in Shittim,.... A place in the plains of Moab, so called from the shittim wood, which grew here in great abundance, so often mentioned in the building of the tabernacle; which was a sort of white thorn, or rather the acacia tree, since there was scarcely any thing else grew in the deserts of Arabia, See Gill on "Ex 25:5" its full name was Abelshittim, Nu 33:49, here the Israelites abode even to the death of Moses, for this was their last station in the wilderness; they were now on the borders of the land of Canaan, and just ready to enter into it, which is an aggravation of the sins they here fell into, and are next observed:

and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab; and of Midian also, as appears from Nu 25:6 by the advice of Balaam, the Moabites and Midianites found ways and means to become familiar with the Israelites, and to introduce their daughters into their company and conversation, and being ensnared and enamoured with them, they were drawn to commit lewdness with them, and hereby were led on to commit other abominations, which brought the divine displeasure upon them; so that what they dared not attempt by war, and could not effect by sorceries and divinations, they accomplished by those iniquitous arts, namely, bringing the wrath, the curse, and plague of God upon them.

Numbers 25:2

Ver. 2. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods,.... That is, the daughters of Moab and Midian, with whom the children of Israel carried on an unlawful correspondence, invited them, their gallants, to come and partake of the feasts which attended the sacrifices of their idols; for part of what was offered to idols a feast was kept with, to which great numbers were invited, and which was observed with all the circumstances of joy and pleasure imaginable, and which was very ensnaring, especially to young people; and the children of Israel being so much enamoured with the beauty of the Moabitish women, and so strong were their lusts and passions, that they could not refuse the invitation:

and the people did eat: of the things sacrificed to idols, and so became guilty of idolatry, even by so doing, and then when they had eaten and drank, and were merry, they were led on to other acts of idolatry:

and bowed down to their gods: which was a plain and open act of idolatry, whereby they testified their faith in their divinity, their reverence of them, and their homage and obedience to them: Jarchi says, when the evil concupiscence or lust was strong in them, and they solicited the daughters of Moab to hearken to them, and comply with them, they used to take the image of Peor out of their bosom, and said, worship this, signifying that on that condition they would gratify them; and thus whoredom led them on to idolatry, and they committed the one for the sake of being indulged in the other.

Numbers 25:3

Ver. 3. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor,.... The name of an idol; one of the Baals, Baal being a general name for an idol; and, to distinguish this from other Baals or idols, it was called Peor, either from its opening its mouth in prophecy, as Ainsworth; or from some obscene posture and action used in the worship of it, being, as it is by many thought to be, the same with Priapus; or

rather from the mountain Peor, where it was worshipped, as Jupiter is called Jupiter Olympius, Capitolinus, &c. from the mountains where he had a temple, or was worshipped; or from the name of some great personage, called Lord Peor, who was deified after his death; hence these Israelites are said to "eat the sacrifices of the dead", Ps 106:28. Mr. Bedford {t} takes him to be Mizraim the son of Ham, the Osiris of the Egyptians, and the Priapus of other Heathens: and Father Calmet {u} is of opinion that he is the same with Orus, Osiris, and Adonis; and that Pe is only a prepositive article, and that Or is the name, and no other than Orus; but such a criticism the word will not bear: this idol, the chief god of the Moabites, was, in all probability, the same with Chemosh, who is expressly called the abomination of Moab, 1Ki 11:7 of whom
See Gill on "Jer 48:7" so Chemosh and Peor are thought to be the same by our English poet {w}: to him the Israelites joined themselves, forsook the true God in a great measure, and were initiated into the rites of this deity, and constantly attended the worship of it, and cleaved unto it with their hearts and directions, and joined with their harlots in all parts of service performed unto it; See Gill on "Ho 9:10",

and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel; for no sin is more provoking to God than idolatry, that being so directly opposite to his nature, honour, and glory, as well as to his will and worship; and hereby the end of Balaam and Balak was, in a great measure, answered, and Balaam obtained that by his evil counsel which he could not by all his conjuring; this was seen by the plague sent among them;
See Gill on "Nu 24:14".

{t} Scripture Chronology, p. 267. {u} Dictionary, on word "Baal". {w} "Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons, Peor his other name, -----" Milton, B. 1. l. 406, 412.

Numbers 25:4

Ver. 4. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... Being provoked with the sins of the people, he called to him out of the tabernacle, or out of the cloud:

take all the heads of the people, the princes of the tribes, not to hang them, but to judge those that worshipped Peor, as Jarchi interprets it; though some think that these having sinned, were ordered to be taken and hanged, and made public examples of; but it can hardly be thought, though there were some that might be guilty of the above sins, as Zimri, yet not all of them:

hang them up before the Lord against the sun; that is, those that were guilty of idolatry: the meaning is, and which all the Targums give into, that these heads of the people were to assemble at some proper place, the court of judicature, and order the delinquents to be brought before them, and try, judge, and condemn those they found guilty, and cause them to be hanged somewhere near the tabernacle, and before it, having neglected the worship of God there, and served an idol; and this was to be done openly in the daytime, that all might see and fear; and if it was the sun that was worshipped in this idol, as some think, they were hanged against the sun, to show that the idol they worshipped was not able to deliver them; but, in the face of it, and as it were in defiance of it, they were ordered to be hanged up; and this, according to the Targum of Jonathan, was in the morning against the rising sun, and where they hung all day, and were taken down at sun setting:

that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel; when justice had taken place, and proper punishment was inflicted upon the criminals, whereby a just resentment was made against sin, and God glorified.

Numbers 25:5

Ver. 5. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel,.... Either the same with the heads of the people, or the rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, according to the distribution by the advice of Jethro:

slay ye everyone his men, that were joined unto Baalpeor; all that were under their several districts and jurisdictions, that were found guilty of that crime; these they are ordered to slay, either with their own hands, or rather cause to be slain by proper persons they should appoint to be executioners.

Numbers 25:6

Ver. 6. And, behold, one of the children of Israel came,.... From one of the cities of Moab or Midian, the latter rather, by what follows; where he had been, very probably, to an idolatrous feast, and had eaten of the sacrifices, and worshipped idols, and committed fornication with the daughters of the land; and not content with indulging himself with those impurities at a distance and where he was less known:

brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman; into his father's family, into a tent where his brethren dwelt:

in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel; in the most open and undisguised manner, into the midst of the camp, passing by Moses, and a great number of the people, who were gathered together on this solemn occasion, to seek the Lord, and humble themselves before him:

who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; the place where the people used to assemble together for religious exercises; here they were weeping and mourning for the sins and abominations that were committed among them, and on account of the punishment inflicted on many of them, by the hand of the civil magistrate, and because of the plague that was broke out upon them, from an angry God; by which it appears, that though there were many who had fallen into those foul sins, yet there were a great number which were not defiled with them, and sighed and cried for the abominations in the midst of them: and because the fact here recorded was such an amazing piece of impudence, the word "behold" is prefixed to the account of it, it being done in such a public, bold, and audacious manner, and at such a time, when so many had been hanged up for it, and the plague of God was broke out among the people on account of it, and good men were bewailing the sin, and the punishment of it; and if this was on a sabbath day, as the Samaritan Chronicle {x} relates, it was a further aggravation of it.

{x} Apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 448.

Numbers 25:7

Ver. 7. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it,.... Saw the man pass by in this impudent manner, and his whore with him; his spirit was stirred up, he was filled and fired with zeal for the glory of God, and with an holy indignation against the sin and sinner, and with a just concern for the honour of the righteous law of God; and, to prevent others from falling into the same sin, led by the public example of so great a personage, as it appears afterwards this man was:

he rose up from among the congregation; who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle, or from the midst of the court of judicature, set for trying and judging such persons who were charged with idolatry; for he was not only the son of the high priest and his successor, but a ruler over the Korahites, and had, besides his priestly office, a civil authority, 1Ch 9:20

and took a javelin in his hand; a spear or pike; the Jews say {y} he snatched it out of the hand of Moses; and, according to Josephus {z}, it was a sword; but the word rather signifies an hand pike; this being ready at hand, he took it up and pursued the criminal.

{y} Pirke Eliezer, c. 47. fol. 56. 1. {z} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 6. sect. 12.

Numbers 25:8

Ver. 8. And he went after the man of Israel into the tent,.... Into which he went with his harlot; the word here used is different from what is commonly used for a tent: Aben Ezra observes that in the Kedarene or Arabic language there is a word near to it, which Bochart, putting the article "al" to it, says {a}, is "alkobba", from whence is the word "alcove" with us; and Aben Ezra says, there was some little difference between the form of a tent and this, as well as others observe {b} there was in the matter of it, this being of skins and leather, and the other of hair, boughs of trees, &c. the author of Aruch {c} says, it was short, or narrow above and broad below, and interprets it a place in which whores were put; and so it is used in the Talmud {d} for a brothel house, and is so translated here by some interpreters {e}:

and thrust both of them through; with his javelin, spear, or pike;

the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly; by which, it seems, they were killed in the very act of uncleanness; this was an extraordinary action, done by a person of public authority, and under a more than common emotion of spirit, and not to be drawn into an example by persons of a private character:

so the plague was stayed from the children of Israel; which had broke out among them and carried off many; even a disease, the pestilence, according to Josephus {f}; it ceasing upon this fact of Phinehas, shows that that was approved of by the Lord.

{a} "conclave est camerati operis, quo lectus circumdatur", Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 4. c. 8. col. 1092. Vid. Schultens Animadv. Philolog. in Job. p. 183. {b} Castel. Lex. Heptaglot. col. 3261. {c} Baal Aruch, fol. 133. 4. {d} T. Bab.

Avoda Zara, fol. 17. 2. {e} hbqh la "in lupanar", V. L. "ad lupanar", Montanus; "in lupanar ipsum", Junius & Tremellius; "in fornicem", Tigurine version. {f} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 4. c. 6. sect. 12.)

Numbers 25:9

Ver. 9. And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand. The apostle says 23,000 1Co 10:8. Moses includes those that were hanged against the sun, in the time of the plague, as well as those that were taken off by it, even all that died on this account; the apostle only those that "fell", which cannot with propriety be said of those that were hanged, who might be 1000 and so their numbers agree; but of this and other ways of removing this difficulty
See Gill on "1Co 10:8".

Numbers 25:10

Ver. 10. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... Out of the cloud, or out of the tabernacle, at the door of which Moses now was, Nu 25:6, this was after so many had died of the plague, and after the fact of Phinehas, by which it was stopped: saying; as follows.

Numbers 25:11

Ver. 11. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest,.... His descent and genealogy is observed as before, partly to show that he was not a private person, but a man of public authority that did the above fact; perhaps one of the judges that Moses ordered to slay every man his man, and therefore what he did by the order of the supreme magistrate; and partly to show that he was heir apparent to the office of high priest, who in course was to succeed in it; nor should this action of his hinder it, but rather serve to secure and confirm it to him:

hath turned away my wrath from the children of Israel; caused the effects of it to cease, by slaying the two persons, as before related:

while he was zealous for my sake among you; for the glory of God, the honour of his law, the credit of religion, and the good of his people, which is a good cause to be zealously affected in, **Ga 4:18** in which he was a type of Christ, whose zeal for the house of God, for the doctrine, discipline, and worship of it, for the salvation of his people, and the glory of God thereby, ate him up, Ps 69:9 as well as in his turning away wrath from Israel; sin is the cause of wrath, and for it is revealed from heaven; the people of God are deserving of it as others; but Christ has bore it for them, and so has delivered them from it and all the effects of it, and they are secure from its coming upon them:

that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy; by the plague sent among them, being so highly provoked with their shocking abominations.

Numbers 25:12

Ver. 12. Wherefore say,.... Moses is bid to tell what follows to Phinehas himself, for his comfort and encouragement, and to the people of Israel, that they might take notice of it, and give him honour and respect, as one highly esteemed by the Lord:

behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace; not only hereby assuring him that he had nothing to fear from the brethren and relations of the person he had slain, as Aben Ezra; but that he should enjoy all peace and happiness, external, internal, and eternal: Baal Hatfurira on the place says, that "Shalom", peace, is by geometry, or numerically, the Messiah; who is the peace, the peace maker, and peace giver, and in whom all the blessings of grace and peace are: and if this covenant is the same with the covenant of the priesthood in the next verse, it may be so called, because the priests had a peculiar nearness to God, and enjoyed his friendship, favour, and peace with him, and because the right administration of their office was the means of peace between God and his people; in this also Phinehas was a type of Christ; the covenant of grace made with him is called the covenant of peace,
Isa 54:10 for in this covenant the scheme of peace and reconciliation was formed, agreed to, and settled; Christ was appointed the peace maker, which he agreed to be; and in consequence of it was sent and obtained peace by the blood of his cross, which is published in the everlasting Gospel, called therefore the Gospel of peace.

Numbers 25:13

Ver. 13. And he shall have it, and his seed after him,.... The covenant, and all the blessings of it; so the covenant stands fast with Christ, and all his spiritual seed, Ps 89:28:

even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; or this may be read in connection with the preceding words, and the sense be, and he and his shall have the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, beside the covenant of peace before promised to him: the Aaronic priesthood is called everlasting, because it was to continue, and did continue, throughout the whole Jewish dispensation, unto the coming of the Messiah, in whom it had its fulfilling end. Now though Phinehas in course was to have the priesthood at his father's death, yet it is here promised him on account of his zeal, both to assure him that he should survive his father, and that nothing should befall him that should render him incapable of the priesthood; and moreover, that he should have a seed in whom it should be continued; there was indeed an interruption of it in his line for a little while, on some account or other, it being translated into the family of Eli, a son of Ithamar; but then it was restored again in the time of Solomon to the family of Phinehas, where it continued unto the captivity, and even to the times of Herod, and so of the Messiah: in this also Phinehas was a type of Christ, the covenant made with him not only being from everlasting and to everlasting, a covenant that cannot be broken, and will never be removed; but the priesthood founded on it is so too, being established by the oath of God, who swore to him, "thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek": Christ's priesthood is an unchangeable one, and does not pass from one to another; his sacrifice has a perpetual virtue and efficacy in it to take away sin, and he ever lives to make intercession for his people, **Heb 7:21**:

because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel; by executing judgment upon the delinquents, as Christ has made atonement for the sins of his people by satisfying law and justice: and, besides what has been observed, it may be remarked, that there is an agreement between Phinehas and Christ in his very name; Phinehas signifies either "the face of him that spares", that is, of God, that spares; Christ is the face of God, the express image of his person, even of him, who, though he spared not Christ himself, yet he spares his people for Christ's sake; or else "he shall look that spares", or "and spare" {g}; that is, God, who looks upon the person, righteousness, blood, and sacrifice of his Son, and spares his people.

{g} Vid. Hiller. Onomastic. Sacr. p. 476.

Numbers 25:14

Ver. 14. Now the name of the Israelite that was slain,.... By Phinehas, as before related:

[even] that was slain with the Midianitish woman; who was slain also, both together with one thrust:

was Zimri, the son of Sela, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites; or a prince of his father's house, or family; there were five families of the Simeonites, and this man was a prince of one of them, see Nu 26:12 though Josephus {h}, and so the Samaritan Chronicle {i}, make him to be a prince of the tribe of Simeon. His name is mentioned partly to the reproach of him, and partly for the honour of Phinehas, whose zeal and courage were such, that he feared not to take away the life of a person of such figure, authority, and interest among the people.

{h} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 6. sect. 10. {i} Apud Hottinger, Smegma Oriental, l. 1. c. 8. p. 448.

Numbers 25:15

Ver. 15. And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur,.... One of the five kings of Midian, Nu 31:8 and so the Samaritan Chronicle says {k}, it was the daughter of a king that came to a prince of the tribe of Simeon, and enticed him to eat of her food, and worship her idols. The Targum of Jonathan says she was called Selonae, the daughter of Balak, chief of the nation of Moab, whose habitation was in Midian:

he was head over a people, and of a chief house in Midian; that is, Zur, the father of Cozbi, was; there were five sons of Midian, whose names are given, Ge 25:4 from whence Jarchi concludes, that there were five principal families in Midian, and that this man was the head or chief of one of them, which is not improbable; and that also makes for the honour of Phinehas, that he spared not any for their rank and quality, of whatsoever nation they were.

{k} Apud Hottinger, ut supra. (Smergma Oriental, l. 1. c. 8. p. 448.)

Numbers 25:16

Ver. 16. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... This was some time after the above affair happened; how long it was is not certain; and a little time before the death of Moses, see Nu 31:1:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 25:17

Ver. 17. Vex the Midianites, and smite them. Go to war with them, and smite them with the sword; not the Moabites, but the Midianites, though they were both confederates against Israel; but God had given a charge not to contend in battle with Moab, **De 2:9**, they were spared for the sake of Lot, from whom they sprang; and, as Jarchi says, for the sake of Ruth, who was to come from them; and so in the Talmud {l}; though they did not entirely escape the divine resentment, as appears from De 23:3 but the Midianites were the first that advised to send for Balaam, and with them he stayed and was entertained, after he had been dismissed by Balak; and it seems as if it was to them he gave the wicked counsel, to draw Israel into fornication, and so into idolatry, and thereby bring the curse of God upon them; which advice they communicated to the Moabites, and both were concerned in putting it into execution; see Nu 22:4.

{l} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 38. 2.

Numbers 25:18

Ver. 18. For they vex you with their wiles,.... Not with wars, but with wiles, with cunning stratagems, and artful methods to draw them into sin, that thereby they might be exposed to the wrath of God:

wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor; the idol Peor, that is, Baalpeor; which seems to countenance the notion that Peor was the name of a man, some great personage, who was deified after his death; now the Midianites beguiled the Israelites, by sending their daughters among them, with whom they committed fornication, and by whom they were inveigled to worship the idol Peor:

and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister;

their countrywoman, as it was common with eastern people to call those of the same country with them their brethren and sisters: now the Midianites beguiled the Israelites, by prostituting a person of such quality to a prince of theirs, which was setting an example to other daughters of Midian to follow her, and so hereby many of the children of Israel were ensnared into whoredom, and into idolatry:

which was slain in the day of the plague, for Peor's sake: or for the business of Peor, as the Targum of Jonathan, because of the worship of that idol; not that Cozbi was slain upon that account, but the plague came upon Israel by reason of their worshipping of it, and it was on the day that the plague was that she was slain; by which it seems that the plague lasted but one day.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 26:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 26

In this chapter an order is given to number the people of Israel a second time, Nu 26:1 and the account begins with Reuben, the firstborn, and the families that sprung from him, and the number of them, Nu 26:5 and Dathan and Abiram being of this tribe, the affair of them and Korah is afresh related, Nu 26:8, then the tribe of Simeon, its families and number, Nu 26:12, next the tribe of Gad, and their families and number, Nu 26:15, after that the tribe of Judah, its families and number, Nu 26:19 then follows the tribe of Issachar, its families and number, Nu 26:23, next to that the tribe of Zebulun, its families and number, Nu 26:26 then the sons of Joseph, and first Manasseh, his families and number,
Nu 26:28 and then the tribe of Ephraim, its families and number, Nu 26:35, after that the tribe of Benjamin, its families and number, Nu 26:38 next the tribe of Dan, its families and number, Nu 26:42 and which is followed by the tribe of Asher, its families and number, Nu 26:44, and the muster is closed with the tribe of Naphtali, its families and number,
Nu 26:48, and the sum total of all the numbers is given,
Nu 26:51 and then follows another order to divide the land of Canaan by lot, when conquered, to the several tribes, according to their names and number,
Nu 26:52 and an account is given of the number of the Levites and their families, their number being taken not with the other tribes, but by themselves, and which is summed up, Nu 26:57 and the chapter is concluded with observing, that it appeared upon this numbering of the people, that there were

but two persons living of those that were first numbered among the children of Israel,
Nu 26:63.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass after the plague,.... Related in the preceding chapter; how long after is not certain, perhaps before the war with Midian, exhorted to in the latter part of the foregoing chapter, and of which an account is given, Nu 31:1:

that the Lord spake unto Moses; out of the tabernacle, or out of the cloud:

and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest; the Lord had been used to speak to Moses and to Aaron; but now Aaron being dead, and Eleazar his son succeeding him in the priesthood, is joined with Moses, and the order here given is directed to them both:

saying: as follows.

Numbers 26:2

Ver. 2. Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel,.... Excepting the Levites, who were to be numbered by themselves, and at a different age; this sum was to be taken, that it might appear that all of the old generation that came out of Egypt, of the age at which this sum was taken, were now dead, excepting two, as the Lord had threatened; and partly that as they were now about to enter the land of Canaan, it might be divided to them according to their number; as well as to show the faithfulness of God to his word and promise, that he would multiply and make them fruitful, notwithstanding all their provoking sins and transgressions:

from twenty years old and upwards, throughout their father's house; all of that age in every tribe, house, and family:

all that are able to go to war in Israel; for which they must prepare, being about to enter the land of Canaan, and dispossess and drive out the inhabitants of it.

Numbers 26:3

Ver. 3. And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them,.... With the children of Israel, with the heads of them, their chief and principal, to assist in taking the number of the people; as when they were numbered thirty years ago, when a prince out of each tribe was taken to be with Aaron and Moses in doing that business; but those princes were now all dead, and another race succeeded, who were now employed in this service; so the Targum of Jonathan says, they spoke with the rulers, and ordered them to number them:

in the plains of Moab, by Jordan, [near] Jericho: or of Jericho, as the same Targum, on the other side of Jordan to that on which Jericho stood; for as yet the children of Israel had not passed that river, nor entered into the land of Canaan, in which Jericho was, but they were now opposite it; See Gill on "Nu 22:1":

saying; as follows.

Numbers 26:4

Ver. 4. [Take the sum of the people], from twenty years old and upward,.... At the same age at which the sum was taken before, **Nu 1:3** so that there could not be one that was more than sixty years of age, of all those that went into the land of Canaan, except Joshua and Caleb, and besides some few in the tribe of Levi, which did not come into either of these musters:

and the Lord commanded Moses, and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt; as Moses had a command to number the people before, so he had now. The sin of David was, that he numbered the people when he had no command for it; Moses, when he brought the people out of Egypt, had them committed to him by number; and now being about to die, he delivers them up as it were by number again, as Jarchi observes.

Numbers 26:5

Ver. 5. Reuben, the eldest son of Israel,.... the number of his tribe is taken first on that account; there were four families that descended from him, the Hanochite, Palluite, Hesronite, and Carmite, and the number of men from twenty years old and upwards, fit for war, were 43,730; so that, since the last numbering, this tribe was decreased 2770; which may in part be accounted for by the families of Dathan and Abiram being cut off for their rebellion, who were this tribe, and whose affair is briefly related in the following verses, and it may be to point out this unto us.

Numbers 26:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "Nu 26:5"

Numbers 26:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "Nu 26:5"

Numbers 26:8

Ver. 8. And the sons of Pallu,.... Or son, the plural for the singular, Pallu having but one son, whose name was Eliab, the father of Dathan and Abiram; Nu 26:9.

Numbers 26:9

Ver. 9. And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram,.... Of Nemuel we nowhere else read either he died without children, or he and his family perished with his brethren, being concerned with them in the conspiracy; or the family of the Palluite was in his line; one of the same name may be observed in the tribe of Simeon:

this is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the congregation; either before their rebellion, for their power and authority, being heads of their fathers' houses; or for their parts and abilities, being men of great wisdom and sense; or for their zeal, activity, and usefulness; or after it, and became famous, or rather infamous, on account of it, see Nu 16:2

who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the Lord; who joined with Korah and his company, and quarrelled with Moses and Aaron about the priesthood; with Moses for putting Aaron into it, and with Aaron for accepting it, and officiating in it; and so with the Lord himself, by whose orders he was invested with it.

Numbers 26:10

Ver. 10. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up,.... Not only Dathan and Abiram, but their wives and children, their houses and tents, and all their goods, see Nu 16:32 together with Korah; the words being thus rendered, and standing in such close connection with the preceding, some have concluded from hence that Korah was swallowed up with them in the earth; whereas he seems rather to have been at that time with the two hundred and fifty men that had censers at the door of the tabernacle, and was consumed by fire with them, see
Nu 16:16 and, indeed, it is suggested here, for the phrase may be rendered, "and the things of Korah" {m}; what appertained unto him, his men, tents, goods, and substance, which agrees with Nu 16:32 or, "and as for Korah" {n}; with respect to him: "when that company died": he was at the head of, he died also, the same death they died, by fire, as follows:

what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men; which was the number his company consisted of, who took censers, and offered incense, and were consumed by fire, Nu 16:2, and with whom, in all probability, he perished:

and they became a sign, were made an example of, to deter others from the like practices, and particularly usurping any part of the priest's office: some connect the words with the following, and take the sense to be, that this was the sign or miracle, that when they perished, Korah's sons died not, but were preserved; which sense is countenanced by the Vulgate Latin, but the other sense is best.

{m} xrq taw "et quae erant, Korachi", Junius & Tremellius. {n} So Pool, Patrick; "deinde et Corah (qui periit) in morte congregationis", Tigurine version.

Numbers 26:11

Ver. 11. Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not. Neither of the pestilence, nor by fire, nor by the swallowing up of the earth; they not being in the counsel of their father, but followed the doctrine of Moses the prophet, as the Targum of Jonathan; they either disliked their father's scheme, or, if they engaged with him in it, they repented and departed from him, and were not present when the judgments of God came upon him and his company; there were several of his posterity who were singers in the times of David, and to whom many of the psalms were sent to be sung.

Numbers 26:12

Ver. 12-14. The sons of Simeon, after their families,.... This tribe was next numbered, not only because Simeon was next to Reuben by birth, but because his tribe was under the standard of Reuben; two of his sons are a little differently named here than they are in
Ge 46:10, there the eldest is called Jemuel, here Nemuel; there the youngest but one is named Zohar, here Zerah; and one of them is here omitted, namely Ohad, perhaps because he died without children, and so no family sprang from him; wherefore the families of Simeon were but five, and the number of them were 22,200; by which it appears there was a very great decrease in this tribe since the last muster, even 37,100 which in some measure is to be accounted for by the great number of this tribe supposed to have died of the plague, on account of fornication and idolatry, made mention of in the preceding chapter; a prince in this tribe having set a bad example, it is probable he was followed in it by many of it, for which great numbers were cut off. Jarchi, from Tanchuma, says, that all the 24,000 that died of the plague was of the tribe of Simeon; and so says the Samaritan Chronicle {o}; but that is not likely.

{o} Apud Hottinger. ut supra. (Smegma Oriental, l. 1. c. 8. p. 448.)

Numbers 26:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "Nu 26:12"

Numbers 26:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "Nu 26:12"

Numbers 26:15

Ver. 15-18. The children of Gad, after their families tribe was numbered next to Simeon,.... because it lay encamped with that under the standard of Reuben. There is a little variation in the names of two or three of his sons, from those by which they are called Ge 46:16, instead of Ziphion, here Zephon; and for

Haggai, here Haggi; and what is much wider, for Ezbon, here Ozni. Seven families sprang from Gad, whose number now was 40,500; they were diminished since their last numbering 5150; it is probable this tribe, being a warlike tribe, suffered very much in their attempt to enter the land of Canaan contrary to the will of God, and were repulsed and defeated by the Amalekites, Nu 16:40.

Numbers 26:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "Nu 26:15"

Numbers 26:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "Nu 26:15"

Numbers 26:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "Nu 26:15"

Numbers 26:19

Ver. 19-22. And the sons of Judah were Er and Onan,.... And besides these he had Shelah, Pharez, and Zerah, from whom families sprang, but none from the two first: for

Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan; where they were born; and that because of their sins, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, see Ge 38:7-10 so that there were but three families sprang from Judah, the Shelanites, Pharzites, and Zarhites; only the family of the Pharzites was divided into two families, the Hesronites and the Hamulites, so called from two sons of Pharez; the number of these families amounted to 76,500, so that there was an increase of 1900 since the last muster, which answers to Jacob's blessing, that he should be a praise among his brethren, Ge 49:8.

Numbers 26:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "Nu 26:19"

Numbers 26:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Nu 26:19"

Numbers 26:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "Nu 26:19"

Numbers 26:23

Ver. 23-25. Of the sons of Issachar, after their families,.... This tribe was numbered next to Judah, because it was under his standard. Two of his sons are a little differently named than they are Ge 46:13 instead of Phuvah one is called Pua, and instead of Job another is called here Jashub; this tribe consisted of four families, and the number of warlike men in it was 64,300; their increase since the last numbering of them is 9900.

Numbers 26:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "Nu 26:23"

Numbers 26:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "Nu 26:23"

Numbers 26:26

Ver. 26,27. Of he sons of Zebulun, after their families,.... This is numbered next to Issachar, because it was encamped under the standard of Judah; it consisted of three families, whose numbers were 60,500, so that this tribe was increased 3100.

Numbers 26:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "Nu 26:26"

Numbers 26:28

Ver. 28-34. The sons of Joseph, after their families, were Manasseh and Ephraim. Manasseh is here mentioned first, though Ephraim was preferred to him by Jacob, and the standard belonged to him; not because he was the firstborn, but because he had now the greater increase, though he had but one son, Machir, of whom was the family of the Machirites, and a grandson, whose name was Gilead, from whom was the family of the Gileadites, and who had six sons; of whom were the families of the Jeezerite, Halekite, Asrielite, Shechemite, Shemidaite, and Hepherite. Hepher, of whom was the last, had a son named Zelophehad, but he had no son, only five daughters, whose names are given; the number of men in this tribe, of twenty years old and upwards, fit for war, was 52,700, so that the increase was 20,500, a large increase indeed!

Numbers 26:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "Nu 26:28"

Numbers 26:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "Nu 26:28"

Numbers 26:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "Nu 26:28"

Numbers 26:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "Nu 26:28"

Numbers 26:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "Nu 26:28"

Numbers 26:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "Nu 26:28"

Numbers 26:35

Ver. 35-37. These are the sons of Ephrain, after their families,.... Which were but three, the Shuthalhite, the Bachrite, and the Tahanite, only from the former sprung another family, called the Eranite; the number of the whole was 32,500; there was a decrease in this tribe of 8000.

Numbers 26:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "Nu 26:35"

Numbers 26:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "Nu 26:35"

Numbers 26:38

Ver. 38-41. The sons of Benjamin, after their families,.... This tribe was numbered next to Ephraim, being under his standard. Five of the sons of Benjamin are omitted, perhaps because they died without issue, and so no families sprang from them; the names of the five sons mentioned vary a little from the names of them in Ge 46:21 instead of Ehi, it is here Ahiram; and instead of Huppim and Muppim, it is here Shupham and Hupham; from these last five were the families of the Belaite, Ashbelite, Ahiramite, Shuphamite, and Huphamite; and from the eldest of them sprang two other families, the Ardite and Naamite, from Ard and Naaman, two sons of Bela; the number of men in these families was 45,600, so that here was an increase of 10,200.

Numbers 26:39

Ver. 39. See Gill on "Nu 26:38"

Numbers 26:40

Ver. 40. See Gill on "Nu 26:38"

Numbers 26:41

Ver. 41. See Gill on "Nu 26:38"

Numbers 26:42

Ver. 42,43. These are the sons of Dan, after their families,.... Though he had but one son, the plural being put for the singular; or by sons are meant his posterity; his son's name was Shuham, and by transposition Hushim, in Ge 46:23 from him was the family of the Shulamite; and yet, though but one, consisted of 64,400 men; there was an increase of 1700 in this tribe.

Numbers 26:43

Ver. 43. See Gill on "Nu 26:42"

Numbers 26:44

Ver. 44-47. Of the children of Asher, after their families,.... This tribe was numbered next to Dan, because it was under his standard; one of his sons is omitted, very probably dying childless, and so had no family; from the rest sprang the families of the Iimnite, Jesuite, and Benite; and, from the latter, two others, the Heberite and Malchielite; and it is remarked that Asher had a daughter named Serah, and who also is particularly mentioned as a sister of Asher's sons in
Ge 46:17 no doubt but she was a remarkable woman, either for religion, or for wisdom and prudence, or some amiable virtue or grace or another, that she is

so particularly taken notice of: according to Maimonides {p} she was an heiress; for though Asher had many sons, this was his wife's daughter by another man, who had no sons, and the inheritance was his daughter's, and therefore is so particularly mentioned; she inheriting as the daughters of Zelophehad did: the number of persons in this tribe was 53,400, the increase was 11,900.

{p} Apud Abendana in loc.

Numbers 26:45

Ver. 45. See Gill on "Nu 26:44"

Numbers 26:46

Ver. 46. See Gill on "Nu 26:44"

Numbers 26:47

Ver. 47. See Gill on "Nu 26:44"

Numbers 26:48

Ver. 48-50. Of the sons of Naphtali, after their families,.... This tribe, which is the last of them, was numbered next to Asher, because it was with that under the standard of Dan; it had four families in it, the Jahzeelite, Gunite, Jezerite, and Shillemite, and its number was 45,400, being less by 8000 than it was when first numbered.

Numbers 26:49

Ver. 49. See Gill on "Nu 26:48"

Numbers 26:50

Ver. 50. See Gill on "Nu 26:48"

Numbers 26:51

Ver. 51. These were the numbered of the children of Israel,.... The twelve tribes, consisting of so many families, as above named; and the sum total of persons in them of twenty years old and upwards, and fit for war, was

six hundred and one thousand and seven hundred and thirty; so that though all those that were numbered thirty years ago were now dead, excepting Joshua and Caleb, yet there wanted but 1820 of that number; so mindful was the Lord of his promise, and so faithful to keep it, notwithstanding the provocations of these people, to increase and multiply them, that they had pretty near the number to go into the land of Canaan which they had when they came out of Egypt.

Numbers 26:52

Ver. 52. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... After the sum of the people of Israel had been taken:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 26:53

Ver. 53. Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance,.... That were numbered, and to none else:

according to the number of their names; and for this end was the number of them now taken, that the land might be equally divided among them; women and minors, or such as were under twenty years of age, had no share in it; and even only those who were at that age at this time; so Jarchi says, it was not divided to any that were less than twenty years of age, even though they came to be full twenty before the division of the land; for they were seven years subduing it, and seven years dividing it, yet none took any part of it but these 601,730: nay, he says, if a man had six children they took but their father's part only.

Numbers 26:54

Ver. 54. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance,.... To a tribe more numerous, and consisting of more and larger families, a greater part of the land was to be given to them to possess; and to a smaller tribe, and of the fewer families and persons in them, a lesser share of it: this direction is given to Moses, but is not designed for him personally, for he never entered the land, but died before Israel went into it; but for the chief ruler that would be then in being, namely, Joshua, his successor:

to everyone shall his inheritance be given, according to those that were numbered of him; that is, to every tribe, and so to every family in it, according to the number of men in it, that were of the above age when the sum of them was taken: because it is in the original text, "to a man according to those numbered of him", &c. {q}; hence the Jewish writers {r} gather, that the land was distributed not to women, but to men only.

{q} vya "viro", Montanus. {r} Vid. T. Bab. Bava. Bathra, fol. 122. 1.

Numbers 26:55

Ver. 55. Notwithstanding, the land shall be divided by lot,.... That the division might appear to be according to the determination and will of God, and not left to the judgment and discretion of the chief magistrate, though bound by the above rule:

according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit; that is, according as to whatsoever name of a tribe such a part or portion of the land comes up by lot, that shall their inheritance be: Jarchi says, the names of the twelve tribes were written on twelve scrolls of parchment, and twelve borders or limits of land on twelve others, and they were mixed together in an urn, and the prince put his hand into it and took two scrolls; a scroll came up with the name of a tribe, and a scroll with a border or limit expressed on it; and the lot, he says, was by the Holy Ghost, for Eleazar, at the same time, was clothed with Urim and Thummim {s}; so that the people were certain that the disposition and division of the land was of God; but there were but nine tribes and a half, among whom the land of Canaan was divided, two tribes and a half settled on the other side Jordan, namely, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

{s} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Biccurim, c. 1. sect. 5.

Numbers 26:56

Ver. 56. According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided,.... It was by the determination of the lot that the land was divided by inheritance, and that was by the Lord, according to Pr 16:33

between many and few; it was so ordered of the Lord by the lot, that the many should have a larger share, and the few a lesser.

Numbers 26:57

Ver. 57-62. And these are they that were numbered of the Levites, after their families,.... And they were numbered not with the rest of the tribes of Israel, but by themselves, as they were at the first numbering of the tribes; the three principal families of which were, the Gershonite, the Kohathite, and Merarite, so called from the three sons of Levi; but all their sons are not mentioned, of the sons of Gershon only Libni, from whom was the family of the Libnites; not Shimei, because, as Aben Ezra conjectures, either he had no sons, or, if he had, they died without any, and so there was no family from them; and of the sons of Kohath no mention is made of Uzziel, nor of Izhar, but in the Korhites, only of the Hebronite family from Hebron; and of Amram, whose wife Jochebed is spoken of as a daughter of Levi, whom Levi's wife, as Jarchi rightly supplies it, bore to him in Egypt, and which Jochebed was the mother of Aaron, Moses, and Miriam; and it is observed that Aaron had four sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar, the two first of which died for offering strange fire to the Lord, and the two last were now living: from Merari, another son of Levi, sprang two families, the Mahlite, and the Mushite; and the whole number of the Levites at this time taken was 23,000 males of a month old and upward; so that here was an increase of 1,000 males since the former numbering of them: the reason why they were not numbered with the other tribes was, because they had no part of the land of Israel divided to them, and had no inheritance in it.

Numbers 26:58

Ver. 58. See Gill on "Nu 26:57"

Numbers 26:59

Ver. 59. See Gill on "Nu 26:57"

Numbers 26:60

Ver. 60. See Gill on "Nu 26:57"

Numbers 26:61

Ver. 61. See Gill on "Nu 26:57"

Numbers 26:62

Ver. 62. See Gill on "Nu 26:57"

Numbers 26:63

Ver. 63. These are they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest,.... That is, these were the Levites, their families, and the number of males in them, which was taken by Moses and Eleazar, who might be only concerned in numbering the Levites, of which tribe they were: and

who also numbered the children of Israel; all the tribes of them, with the assistance of their princes:

in the plains of Moab, by Jordan, near Jericho; as they were commanded by the Lord.

Numbers 26:64

Ver. 64. But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered..... About thirty eight years before this time: this, as

Aben Ezra observes, respects the numbering of the Israelites, not of the Levites; for there were some of the tribe of Levi numbered then who were living, as Eleazar, and very probably Ithamar, and perhaps some few more, though it may be Eleazar, being now a numberer, was not reckoned among the numbered:

when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai; see **Nu 1:1** for as there were none of the tribe of Levi among the spies, there might be but few of them among the murmurers.

Numbers 26:65

Ver. 65. For the Lord had said of them, they shall surely die in the wilderness,.... This was threatened them, Nu 14:32 and now it was fulfilled:

and there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun; the only two of the spies that brought a good report of the land of Canaan; all the rest of them, and those that murmured on the ill report of theirs, were now dead.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 27:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 27

This chapter relates, that, upon a petition of the daughters of Zelophehad, the affair of inheritances was settled; and it is directed that, in case of want of male issue, inheritances should pass to females, and in failure of them to the next of kin, whether father's brethren or any near kinsman, Nu 27:1, also an order to Moses to go up to the Mount Abarim, and take a view of the good land, and die; with the reason of it, Nu 27:12, upon which Moses desires a successor of him might be appointed, Nu 27:15, in answer to which Joshua is nominated, and being presented before the high priest and the people, was invested with his office, by imposition of hands, and had his charge given him, Nu 27:18.

Ver. 1. Then came the daughters of Zelophehad,.... Who are mentioned among the families of Manasseh, under that of the Hepherites, Nu 26:33, their father being dead, and they having no brethren, when they heard the land was to be divided among those that were numbered, and who were only males of twenty years old and upwards, were concerned, lest they should have no share in the division of the land; and therefore came, according to the Targum of Jonathan, to the house of judgment, or court of judicature, where Moses, the princes, &c. were now sitting: the genealogy of Zelophehad is given;

he was the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, the son of Joseph; by which it appears he was of the tribe of Manasseh, and of the fourth generation from him:

and these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, Noah, ann Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah; in the same order their names are given in Nu 26:33, but in Nu 36:11, it is a little altered, Noah and Tirzah change places, which Jarchi says shows they were upon an equality one with another.

Numbers 27:2

Ver. 2. And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes, and all the congregation,.... Who were now sitting in court, to hear and try causes brought before them; here were Moses the chief magistrate, Eleazar the high priest, the princes of the several tribes, and the representatives of the whole congregation, or it may be the seventy elders; a very grand and august assembly, before whom these ladies appeared, and from whom they might expect to have justice done them:

by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; near to which this court was held, both for the convenience of the people, to apply to in case of need, when they came thither to worship, and of Moses, to seek the Lord in case of any difficulty that might arise, as now did:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 27:3

Ver. 3. Our father died in the wilderness,.... As all the generation of the children of Israel did, that came out of Egypt, who were twenty years old and upwards, excepting Joshua and Caleb:

and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah; which is observed, not so much to obtain the favour and good will of Moses as to clear the memory of their father from any reproach upon it, he dying in the wilderness; and chiefly to show that the claim of his posterity to a share in the land was not forfeited, he not being in that rebellion, nor in any other; so that he and his were never under any attainder:

but died in his own sin; which though common to all men, every man has his own peculiar way of sinning, and is himself only answerable for it, Isa 53:6 he sinned alone, had no partner or confederate, whom he had drawn into any notorious and public sin, as mutiny, &c. to the prejudice of the state, and the rulers in it; so the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"and he did not cause others to sin,"

so Jarchi; some take him to be the sabbath breaker, Nu 15:32, others that he was one of those that went up the hill, Nu 14:44, most likely his sin was that of unbelief, disbelieving the spies that brought the good report of the land, and giving credit to those that brought an ill report of it; and so with the rest of the people murmured, for which his carcass, with others, fell in the wilderness, and entered not into the good land, through unbelief: a sin not punished in their children:

and had no sons. which was the reason of this application.

Numbers 27:4

Ver. 4. Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son.... Or be withdrawn, and his family lose their part and share on that account; this they thought was unreasonable: according to the Targum of Jonathan, to prevent the name of their father being lost, and his part in the land, their motion was, that their mother might marry their father's brother, according to the law in De 25:5, with which Jarchi agrees; but it does not appear that that law was as yet in being; though how otherwise the name of their father would be preserved, than by raising up seed in that way, is not easy to say; except, as some think, it was done by a son of one of those heiresses, or by the first son of everyone of them, being called after the name of their grandfather Zelophehad, or their mother's grandfather Hepher; though the Jews {t} commonly by the "name" understand no other than the "inheritance", which seems to be confirmed by what follows:

give us therefore a possession among the brethren of our fathers; a part with their uncles, or their children; by which they express their faith that the children of Israel would inherit the land, though as yet it was not conquered, nor even entered into; and might signify, as some think, their concern to have a part and portion in the heavenly inheritance the land of Canaan was typical of; and if so, as Ainsworth observes, they may be considered as five wise virgins indeed.

{t} Pesikta, T. Bab. Jebamot, fol. 49. 1. Moses Cotzensis Praecept. Affirm. 51. Apud Selden. de Succession. ad leg. Ebra. c. 14. p. 97, 98.

Numbers 27:5

Ver. 5. And Moses brought their cause before the Lord. For it seems it was too difficult for this court to decide; and it devolving upon Moses, as the president of it, and who only could have recourse to God at all times, he carried it to him and consulted with him about it: this, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem say, was one of the four causes that came before Moses the prophet, that he solved according to the mind of the Lord, which he consulted; one was concerning the blasphemer, Le 24:11, the other concerning those defiled by the dead, **Nu 9:8**, the third concerning the sabbath breaker, Nu 15:34 and the fourth was this; See Gill on "Le 24:12".

Numbers 27:6

Ver. 6. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... From off the mercy seat, where he consulted him, and from whence he promised to commune with him about any difficult matter that came before him, Ex 25:22,

saying; as follows.

Numbers 27:7

Ver. 7. The daughters of Zelophehad speak right,.... What is just and reasonable:

thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; their uncles, or rather the children of them; for it is reasonable to suppose their father's brethren, or their uncles, were dead also: or "in giving thou shall give" {u}; which, according to Jarchi, denotes two parts or portions they should receive; the part of their father, who was of them that came out of Egypt, and his part with his brethren in the goods of Hepher: in the Misnah {w}, from whence he seems to have taken it, it is;

"the daughters of Zelophehad took three parts for inheritance; the part of their father, who was with them that came out of Egypt, and his part with his brethren in the goods of Hepher, and because he was the firstborn he was to take two parts:"

and though this strict command was given to Moses, yet it does not respect him personally, who lived not to enter into the land to see it divided; but him who should be his successor, and chief magistrate at the time of the division of it, which was Joshua, and of whom these ladies claimed their part, and had it, Jos 17:3,

and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them; that is, that part which would have fallen to him by lot, had he been living, these were to take, they standing in his place; and so the portion of the land he would have had was to be divided between these live daughters of his.

{u} Ntt Ntn "dando dabis", Pagninus, Montanus. {w} Bava Bathra, c. 8. sect. 3.

Numbers 27:8

Ver. 8. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel,.... The above affair occasioned a law to be made, in which all the people would have a concern, among whom such cases should happen, as after related:

saying, if a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter; as in the above case of the daughters of Zelophehad; what was determined as to their particular case was made into a general law.

Numbers 27:9

Ver. 9. And if he have no daughter,.... Dies without any issue:

then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren; and the children descending from them; that is, if his father was dead; otherwise, if he was living, he was to be preferred to them, according to the Jewish writers; though, according to our law, no estate in fee simple ascends lineally, or goes from a son, who has made a purchase of it, to a father: in the Misnah it is said {x}, the order of inheritances is thus,

"if a man dies and has no son, then they cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter; a son is before a daughter, and all that descend from the son are before the daughter; the daughter is before the brethren (of her father), and those that descend from the daughter are before the brethren; the brethren (of a man) are before his father's brethren (or his uncles); and they that descend from his brethren are before his father's brethren: this is the general rule, everyone that is before in the inheritance, those that descend from him are before others, and a father is before all that descend from him."

{x} Ut supra, (Bava Bathra, c. 8.) sect. 2.

Numbers 27:10

Ver. 10. And if he have no brethren,.... Nor any descendants from them:

then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren; that is, to his uncles, and to their children.

Numbers 27:11

Ver. 11. And if his father have no brethren,.... Nor any descending from them:

then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family: that is nearest of kin to him, though ever so remote; that is, of his father's family, not his mother's, which was no family:

and he shall possess it: here the Jews have a saying, that an Israelite is never without heirs {y}:

and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment; a judicial law, that should ever remain firm, and sure, and unalterable:

as the Lord commanded Moses; and therefore no man could dispose of his estate or inheritance by will, otherwise than is set forth by this command.

{y} Maimon. Hilchot Nechalot, c. 1. sect. 3.

Numbers 27:12

Ver. 12. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... After the covenant made with Israel in the plains of Moab, and the song delivered to them,
De 29:1

get thee up to this Mount Abarim; which was a range of mountains, so called from the passages by them over Jordan into the land of Canaan; one part of which was Nebo, and the top of that Pisgah, from whence Moses had the view of the good land here directed to; see
Nu 33:47.

and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel; for though he was now one hundred and twenty years old, his eyes were not dim, he could see at a great distance; and the height of this hill gave him an advantage of taking a prospect of the land, a great way into it; and very probably his sight might be greatly strengthened and increased at this time by the Lord, for the purpose; this may be an emblem of that sight by faith, which believers have at times of the heavenly Canaan, and sometimes are favoured with an enlarged one of it before their death.

Numbers 27:13

Ver. 13. And when thou hast seen it,.... Which was all he was admitted to; for to go into it and see it was not allowed him, though he importuned it, **De 3:25**,

thou shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered; die as he did, in the same sudden, easy, quiet, and cheerful manner; see Nu 20:26.

Numbers 27:14

Ver. 14. For ye rebelled against my commandment the desert of Zin,.... Both

Moses and Aaron, which was the reason why they were not suffered to go into the land of Canaan, but died a little before the children of Israel came into it: what their sin was, called here a rebelling against the commandment of the Lord; See Gill on "Nu 20:12", and is next suggested:

in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me before their eyes; when the congregation of Israel strove against the Lord for want of water, they did not sanctify the Lord by believing in him; but expressed some degree of diffidence before the congregation about fetching water out of the rock, or questioning whether the Lord would give it to such a rebellious people, though they had his order for it:

that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; so called to distinguish it from another Meribah, or water of strife, at Rephidim, Ex 17:7.

Numbers 27:15

Ver. 15. And Moses spake unto the Lord,.... Having requested to go into the land and see it, which was denied him; and perceiving he must quickly die, and being a man of a public spirit, and concerned for the welfare of the people of Israel, prays that a successor might be nominated and appointed:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 27:16

Ver. 16. Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh,.... The Maker of the souls of men, called the spirits of all flesh, or of corporeal beings, to distinguish them from the angels, who, though spirits, are incorporeal; and who knows the different qualities of the souls of men, their powers, and capacities, and fitness for service, what gifts and talents they have for business; and who can bestow such upon them, which will quality them for it:

set a man over the congregation: meaning in his room and stead.

Numbers 27:17

Ver. 17. Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in,.... Which may lead them out, and go before them in war, and command them in battle and bring them in peace, having conquered their enemies; or these phrases only mean the administration of civil government among them, and diligence and assiduity in it, see **2Ch 1:10**, unless it has any peculiar respect to the leading the people of Israel out of the wilderness, and introducing them into the land of Canaan:

that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd; and so wander about, having none to guide them into proper pastures, or to protect them from beasts of prey; which is to be in a most forlorn and distressed condition; see **Mt 9:36**.

Numbers 27:18

Ver. 18. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... In answer to his request:

take thou Joshua the son of Nun, who had been a servant of his near forty years, and of whose humility, diligence, faithfulness and integrity he had sufficient proof, as well as of his skill and courage in military affairs, particularly at the battle with Amalek,
Ex 17:9:

a man in whom is the Spirit: not only in whom is a spirit or soul, which is in every man; but the Spirit of God, and that not only as a spirit of grace and sanctification, which is in every good man; but as a spirit of prophecy, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; or rather it respects the more than ordinary gifts of the Spirit qualifying him for government, as courage and conduct, wisdom, prudence, and greatness of mind:

and lay thine hand upon him; thereby transferring the government to him, pointing him out to the people as his successor; to show to the children of Israel that he was in his place, as Aben Ezra notes; upon which followed a larger measure of the gifts of the Spirit of God; see
De 34:9.

Numbers 27:19

Ver. 19. And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation,.... Declaring before them all that he was his successor, and that they might be witnesses of what was said and done unto him, and receive and acknowledge him as such, and as having power and authority over them, which it became them to submit unto:

and give him a charge in their sight: to take care of the people committed to him; to rule them in the fear of God, and according to his laws; and to be of good courage, and go before the people and introduce them into the land of Canaan; assuring him of the divine Presence and help, so that he need not fear any enemy whatever; of this charge, and as confirmed by the Lord himself, see De 31:7.

Numbers 27:20

Ver. 20. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him,.... Meaning not the Spirit that was on Moses, and the gifts of the Spirit; for to do this was the work of the Lord, and not Moses, see Nu 11:17, but of the honour of civil government; suggesting that he should give him a share in it, and use him not as a minister and servant, as he had been, but as his colleague and partner; and let him have some of the ensigns of power and authority, and some exercise of it; not only to inure him to government, but to make him respectable among the people:

that all the congregation of Israel may be obedient; to him as their ruler and governor, hearken to his words, and obey his commands.

Numbers 27:21

Ver. 21. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest,.... This was for the honour of God, whose priest Eleazar was, and whose oracle was consulted by him; for it is said {z}, the high priest did not come into the presence of the king but when he pleased; and he did not stand before him, but the king stood before the high priest, as it is said, "and before Eleazar the priest shall he stand"; though it is commanded the high priest to honour the king, and to rise up and stand when he comes unto him; and the king does not stand before him, but when he consults for him by the judgment of Urim; and his posture seems to be different from other persons that consulted; for the same writer {a} observes, in answer to a question, "how do they consult? the priest stands, and his face is before the ark, and he that consults is behind him, and his face to the back of the priest;"

whereas here Joshua stood before the priest, and so any king or supreme governor:

who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord: of the Urim and Thummim which were in the breastplate of judgment, and of consultation by them, See Gill on "Ex 28:30" and from this place the Jews {b} infer that consultation was not made by them for a private person, but for a king, or for one the congregation stood in need of:

at his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in; go out to war, and return from it, or do any service enjoined them; that is, either at the word of the Lord, or rather at the word of Eleazar the priest, declaring the will of God, which comes to much the same sense; or at the word of Joshua, directed by the high priest, according to the oracle of God; and he being under such direction, the people could never do amiss in obeying him, or be in any fear or danger of being led wrong by him; but he is mentioned in the next clause, as included in those that went out, and came in:

[both] he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation; which Maimonides {c} interprets thus, "he", this is the king; "and all the children of Israel", this is the anointed for war, or he whom the congregation hath need of; "and all the congregation", these are the great sanhedrim, or seventy elders.

{z} Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 2. sect. 5. {a} Maimon. Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 10. sect. 11. {b} Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 5. Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 10. sect. 12. {c} Ibid.

Numbers 27:22

Ver. 22. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him,.... Being faithful and obedient to him in all things, though ever so contrary to his own private interest and to that of his family:

and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; as his successor, whom God had named and appointed as such.

Numbers 27:23

Ver. 23. And he laid his hands upon him,.... Jarchi observes, that he did this cheerfully, and did more than he was commanded; for the Lord said to him, "lay thine hand", but he laid both his hands:

and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded Moses; Nu 27:19, this is a clear proof that Moses was no imposter, since he sought not to aggrandize his family, or serve the interest of that; nor did he in the least repine or murmur that the priesthood was given to his brother Aaron and sons, and now the civil government to his servant of the tribe of Ephraim; and as for his own posterity, they were only common Levites that waited upon the priests.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 28:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 28

In this chapter is a repetition of several laws concerning sacrifices, as the law of the daily sacrifice morning and evening,
Nu 28:1 of those that were offered every week on the sabbath day, Nu 28:9 and every month on the first day of the month, Nu 28:11 and on the seven days of unleavened bread,
Nu 28:16, and at the feast of weeks, Nu 28:26.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... The number of the children of Israel being taken, and orders given to divide the land unto them, according to their numbers; it was thought proper by the Lord to renew, or to put in mind of, the laws concerning sacrifices which had been made, and which they were to observe when they came into the land of Canaan; and the rather this was necessary, as it was now thirty eight years ago since these laws were first made, and during that time were much in disuse, at least some of them: and besides, this was a new generation of men that were sprung up, those that were at Mount Sinai at the giving of the law being all dead, except a very few; and now Moses also was about to die, and would be no more with them to remind them of these laws, and see that they were observed; and a successor of him being appointed and constituted, it may be likewise on his account, as well as the people's, that these laws were repeated:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 28:2

Ver. 2. Command the children of Israel, and say unto them,.... For what follows concerned them all; namely, the offering of their daily, weekly, monthly, and anniversary sacrifices, which were not for private persons, but for the whole congregation; and these might be considered by them not merely as commands and duties to be observed, but as tokens of the divine favour to them, that notwithstanding all their rebellions and provocations in the wilderness, sacrifices for sin were ordered, continued, and accepted of by the Lord; and his acceptance of them, and well pleasedness in them, may easily be observed in the expressions used concerning them:

my offering, and my bread; by "offering" may be meant in general all sacrifices which were offered to the Lord, and by his command; and more especially the burnt offering, which was wholly and peculiarly his, and is after explained by sacrifices made by fire, and it is chiefly of burnt offerings this chapter treats; and by "bread" may be meant either the shewbread, which was set upon a table before the Lord continually, as his bread; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"my oblation, the bread of the order of my table, shall the priests eat, but what ye offer on the altar no man has power to eat;"

or else the meat offering, or rather, as it may be called, the bread offering, which always went along with burnt offerings; though the copulative "and", which is not in the text, may be omitted, and both may signify the same, "my offering", that is, "my bread"; for the sacrifices were the food of God, the provisions of his house, of which there were all sorts in the sacrifices, flesh, bread, and wine; particularly the daily sacrifice was his food every day, and the fat of sacrifices burnt is called the food of the offering made by fire, **Le 3:16**, so Jarchi interprets it, "my offering", this is the blood; "my bread", the "amurim", or fat that covereth the inward parts, which were burnt on the altar:

for my sacrifices made by fire for a sweet savour unto me; which respects burnt offerings, wholly consumed by fire, and were entirely the Lord's, and which he smelled a sweet savour in, or were acceptable to him: these the children of Israel were to observe to offer unto him in their due season; the daily sacrifice, morning and evening; not before morning, nor after evening, as Aben Ezra observes; and so all the rest at the proper time fixed, whether weekly, monthly, or yearly. The Jews, from this phrase, "observe to offer unto me", conclude the necessity of fixing stations, or stationary men, as Jarchi notes; so the tradition is,

"these are the stations, as it is said, "command the children of Israel, &c." but how can the offering of a man be offered, and he not stand by it? wherefore the former prophets appointed twenty four courses, and to every course there was a station at Jerusalem of priests, Levites, and Israelites; and when the time of each course came to go up, the priests and Levites went up to Jerusalem, and the Israelites who belonged to that course went into their cities, and read the history of the creation {d}:"

now these stations, or stationary men, were substitutes for, or representatives of all Israel, and stood by the sacrifices when they were offered, in which all Israel were concerned, as particularly in the daily sacrifice, which is here first taken notice of.

{d} Taanith, c. 4. sect. 2.

Numbers 28:3

Ver. 3. And thou shalt say unto them,.... Having directed Moses to command the people of Israel to observe to offer all the sacrifices of God in general, the Lord proceeds to order him to speak of them to them particularly and distinctly; this, according to Jarchi, is an admonition to the sanhedrim:

this is the offering made by fire, which ye shall offer unto the Lord; the daily burnt offering, which was wholly consumed by fire:

two lambs of the first year without spot, day by day for a continual burnt offering; this law was made before, and is directed to in Ex 29:38 where the same things are said as here, only, as a further descriptive character of the lambs, they are here said to be "without spot"; so all sacrifices were to be without blemish, whether expressed or not; and in this, as in other things, these lambs were typical of Christ, the Lamb of God, without spot and blemish; and are said to be a "continual" burnt offering, because they were offered every day in the week, without any intermission, on any account whatever, which is frequently observed in this chapter: and this was to continue, and did continue until the Messiah came, who put an end to it by the sacrifice of himself, as to any real use of it; and was in fact made to cease a few years after, by the utter destruction of Jerusalem, and was before that a little while interrupted in the times of Antiochus, **Da 8:11**.

Numbers 28:4

Ver. 4. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning,.... Every morning, to make atonement for the sins of the night, as the Targum of Jonathan:

and the other lamb shall thou offer at even; or "between the two evenings", to make atonement for the sins of the day, as the same Targum; in which they prefigured Christ, the Lamb of God, who continually, every day, morning and night, and every moment, takes away the sins of his people, through the virtue and efficacy of his sacrifice, **Joh 1:29**,
See Gill on "Ex 29:39".

Numbers 28:5

Ver. 5. And the tenth part of an ephah of flour for a meat offering,.... Which always went along with the burnt offering:

mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil: which in those times and countries was used instead of butter; and fine flour and this mingled together made a "minchah", or bread offering, as it should rather be called; of the measures used, See Gill on "Ex 29:40".

Numbers 28:6

Ver. 6. It is a continual burnt offering,.... For the meat offering was burnt as well as the lambs, at least part of it:

which was ordained in Mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord; that is, this law concerning the daily burnt offering was made on Mount Sinai, so long ago as the children of Israel were there; and it was then ordered that they should continually offer such a sacrifice by fire, which would be grateful and acceptable unto God, especially when done in faith of the sacrifice of his Son it was a type of; or which sacrifice was "made" {e} or offered at Mount Sinai, when the law of it was first given there: hence Aben Ezra observes, that this is a sign that they did not offer burnt offerings in the wilderness after they journeyed from Sinai; but then, though sacrifices were not so frequently offered by them as afterwards, yet one would think that the daily sacrifice would not be omitted, which seemed to be always necessary; nor would there be any, or but little use of the altar, and the fire continually burning on it, if this was the case; see **Am 5:25**.

{e} hyveh "quod obtulistis", V. L. "quod factum est", Pagninus; "quod sacrificatum fucrat", Piscator.

Numbers 28:7

Ver. 7. And the drink offering thereof [shall be] the fourth [part] of an hin for the one lamb,.... For the lamb offered in the morning, along with the meat offering of which went a drink offering, which was of wine, and strong wine too, as the next clause expresses it; the quantity of which was the fourth part of an hin, which was about a quart and half a pint of our measure:

in the holy [place] shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord [for] a drink offering; that is, in the court of the tabernacle upon the altar of burnt offering, which stood there: the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem interpret it of old choice wine, old wine being reckoned best, see **Lu 5:39**, and though this wine was poured out on the altar, and not properly drank by any, yet it was to be the strongest, best, and choicest that could be got, as it was reasonable it should; since it was poured out as a libation or drink offering to the Lord, which was his way of drinking it, as the burning of the sacrifice was his way of eating that; all which was typical of the sufferings, sacrifice, and bloodshed of Christ, which are well pleasing and acceptable to the Lord; see Isa 53:10.

Numbers 28:8

Ver. 8. And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even,.... As before directed, Nu 28:4:

as the meat offering of the morning, and as the drink offering thereof, shalt thou offer it; some think that "caph", "as", is put for "beth", "with", the letters being similar, and so render the words, "with the meat offering of the morning, and with the drink offering thereof"; but there is no need of such a version, nor is it with propriety; and the meaning is, that a meat offering and a drink offering were to go with the lamb offered at evening, of the same sort, and in like manner, as were offered with the lamb of the morning:

a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord; this is repeated, to encourage the people to offer it, and to show how very acceptable it was to the Lord, especially the antitype of it.

Numbers 28:9

Ver. 9. And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot,.... Just such as were appointed for the daily sacrifice:

and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil; that is, two tenth parts of an ephah of flour mixed with two fourth parts of an hin of oil; of oil olive, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, which is always meant, wherever oil is mentioned; which made one meat offering to them doubled for both lambs, or two meat offerings of the same quantity with those of the daily sacrifice, one for one lamb, and the other for the other:

and the drink offering thereof: which was of a like quantity of wine doubled, in proportion to the meat offering; when these lambs, with the meat and drink offerings, were offered up, is not said, whether the one in the morning after, and the other in the evening before the daily sacrifice, which is not improbable, or both together.

Numbers 28:10

Ver. 10. This is the burnt offering of every sabbath,.... Or, "of the sabbath in its sabbath" {f}, that is, as Jarchi observes, the burnt offering of one sabbath was not to be offered on another, but only on its own; so that if the sabbath was past, and the offering not offered, it ceased; it was not to be renewed the following sabbath; every sacrifice was to be offered in its own season, Nu 28:2,

beside the continual burnt offering, and its drink offering; and meat offering also, over and above the two lambs of the daily sacrifice; with the offerings that were appendages to them, two other lambs, with proportionate meat and drink offerings, were offered also; the other were not to be omitted on account of these, showing that more religions service was to be performed on sabbath days than on others: it may be rendered "after" or "upon", to which sense Aben Ezra interprets it, after the daily sacrifice; because, says he, he puts upon it the burnt offering of the sabbath; which seems to confirm what has been suggested on the preceding verse, that these lambs were offered morning and evening after the daily sacrifice, and indeed there was nothing offered before that.

{f} wtbvb tbv "sabbathi in sabbatho ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Fagius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Numbers 28:11

Ver. 11. And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord,.... On the first day of every month, when the new moon appeared; that this was religiously observed appears from the blowing of the trumpets over the sacrifices on this day, from attendance on the word of the Lord, by his prophets, on this day, and from abstinence from worldly business on it, Nu 10:10

two young bullocks, and one ram, seven rams of the first year without spot; this was the burnt offering, and a very large and costly one it was: more creatures were offered on this day than on a sabbath day; not that this was a more holy day than that, but this was but once a month, and therefore the expense might be the more easily bore, whereas that was every week.

Numbers 28:12

Ver. 12-14. And three tenth deals of fine flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock,.... The quantities of flour in the meat offering, for each bullock, and for the ram, and for each lamb, are the same as in Nu 15:4 only the quantity of oil for each is not here expressed, which for a bullock was half an hin of oil, for a ram the third part of an hin, and for a lamb the fourth part; and likewise the quantity of wine in the drink offerings for each of them is the same here as there; which, according to the Targum of Jonathan, was to be wine of grapes, and not any other:

this is the burnt offering of every month throughout the year; or, "of the month in its month" {g}; it was to be offered at its appointed time every month, and not to be deferred to another: Jarchi has the same remark here as on verse ten. See Gill on "Nu 28:10".

{g} wvdxb vdx "mensis in mense ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

Numbers 28:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "Nu 28:12"

Numbers 28:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "Nu 28:12"

Numbers 28:15

Ver. 15. And one kid of the goats, for a sin offering unto the Lord, shall be offered,.... This was an offering of a different sort, not a burnt offering, but a sin offering, typical of Christ, who was made an offering for sin; and it was of that sort of sin offerings which were to be eaten, as the Jews say {h}; for there were some that were not, even such whose blood was brought into the sanctuary, **Le 6:30**. Maimonides {i} observes, that this phrase, "unto the Lord", is very particular and expressive, and that the design of it is, to observe that it was offered to the Lord, and not to the moon, as the Egyptians did:

besides the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering; though the burnt offering of this day was so very large, consisting of so many creatures; and besides that a goat for a sin offering; yet the daily sacrifice was not to be omitted, and what belonged to that.

{h} Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin, c. 7. sect. 2. {i} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 46. p. 488.

Numbers 28:16

Ver. 16. And in the fourteenth day of the first month,.... The month Nisan, as the Targum of Jonathan or Abib, which, upon the Israelites coming out of Egypt, and on that account, was made the first month; otherwise Tisri or

September was the first month, see Ex 12:2,

[is] the passover of the Lord; a feast in which a lamb was killed and eaten, in memory of the Lord's passing over the houses of the Israelites, when he slew the firstborn in Egypt; see Ex 12:6.

Numbers 28:17

Ver. 17. And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast,.... Not of the passover, that was the day before, but of unleavened bread, which began on this day, and lasted seven days, Le 23:6 which is what the Jews call the Chagigah:

seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten; see Ex 12:15.

Numbers 28:18

Ver. 18. In the first day shall be an holy convocation,.... The first of the seven days, which was kept in a very religious manner:

ye shall do no manner of servile work therein; except by preparing food to eat; see Ex 12:16.

Numbers 28:19

Ver. 19. But ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire for a burnt offering unto the Lord,.... Which was to be of the creatures next mentioned:

two young bullocks, &c. the same with the burnt offering on the first day of the month, Nu 28:11.

Numbers 28:20

Ver. 20,21. And their meat offering,.... The quantity of flour for which is the same for a bullock, a ram, and a lamb, as in
Nu 28:12.

Numbers 28:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Nu 28:20".

Numbers 28:22

Ver. 22. And one goat [for] a sin offering, to make atonement for you. For notwithstanding all their services and sacrifices, and though this day was an holy convocation, yet there was need of a sin offering to expiate their guilt, typical of Christ, who takes away the sins of our holy things as well as all other sins: this sin offering also was of that sort which were eaten; for Maimonides says {k}, the goat of the sin offering was eaten on the second day of the passover, which was the sixteenth of Nisan.

{k} Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin, c. 7. sect. 3.

Numbers 28:23

Ver. 23. Ye shall offer these beside the burnt offering in the morning,.... The daily morning sacrifice, and also besides the daily evening sacrifices, though it is not expressed:

which is for a continual burnt offering; and not to be intermitted on any account, let the sacrifices of the day be ever so numerous; great care is taken to observe this.

Numbers 28:24

Ver. 24. After this manner ye shall offer daily throughout the seven days,.... That is, two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs, for a burnt offering, on everyone of the seven days; but then they were not all holy convocations, only the first and last:

the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord; it seems by this that only the burnt offering was offered up every day, but not a goat of the sin offering, that was peculiar to the first day:

it shall be offered beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering; which is again repeated, that it might be diligently observed.

Numbers 28:25

Ver. 25. And on the seventh day ye shall have an holy convocation,.... As on the first:

ye shall do no servile work; unless in dressing food.

Numbers 28:26

Ver. 26. Also in the day of the firstfruits,.... When the firstfruits of the wheat harvest were brought unto the Lord, which was the day of Pentecost, fifty days from the sheaf of the wave offering being brought:

when ye bring a new meat offering unto the Lord; that is, a meat offering made of the new corn, which were two wave loaves of two tenth deals of fine flour, baked with leaven, Le 23:15

after your weeks be out; the seven weeks from the passover to Pentecost, even seven complete sabbaths or weeks, Le 23:15

ye shall have an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work; see Le 23:21.

Numbers 28:27

Ver. 27-30. But ye shall offer the burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the Lord,.... Which was of the same kind, and was of the same number of creatures as on the first day of the month, and on the seven days of unleavened bread, Nu 28:11, and the meat offering which went along with this was of the same quantity of flour to each creature as in the above mentioned sacrifices; and on this day also was offered a kid of the goats for a sin offering; and there were also peace offerings which are not mentioned here, nor is there any mention of any in the whole chapter; see Le 23:19.

Numbers 28:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "Nu 28:27".

Numbers 28:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "Nu 28:27".

Numbers 28:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "Nu 28:27".

Numbers 28:31

Ver. 31. And ye shall offer them besides the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering,.... The daily sacrifice of the morning and evening, so often mentioned in this chapter, and so frequently inculcated as not to be omitted, either in the weekly, monthly, or anniversary festivals; it being so necessary a sacrifice, and so eminent a type of the great sacrifice of the Messiah:

they shall be unto you without blemish, and their drink offerings; the flour, of which the meat offerings were made, was to be pure and clean, and free from vermin; and the wine for the drink offering was not to be palled, and dead, and dreggy: of the former, it is said in the Misnah {l},

"the treasurer puts his hand into it (the flour); if there comes any dust with it,"

it is rejected; if it produces worms, it is rejected: this, the commentators say {m}, is to be understood, if the greatest part of it is such; and with respect to the latter, Jarchi says, our Rabbins learn from hence (this passage of Scripture) that wine in which flour rises (or a dregginess like flour) it is unfit for drink offerings, for they should be perfect: this denotes the purity of Christ, the bread of life, and his spotless and perfect sacrifice, when his soul was poured out unto death.

{l} Menachot, c. 8. sect. 2. {m} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 29:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 29

In this chapter an account is given of the various offerings on the several remarkable days in the seventh month of the year; at the feast of blowing the trumpets on the first day of the month, Nu 29:1, at the great fast or day of atonement, which was the tenth of the month, Nu 29:7, and at the feast of tabernacles, which began on the fifteenth day of the same month, and continued eight days, and the sacrifices of every day are particularly mentioned; of the first day, Nu 29:12, of the second day, Nu 29:17, of the third day, Nu 29:20, of the fourth day, Nu 29:23, of the fifth day, Nu 29:26, of the sixth day, Nu 29:29, of the seventh day, Nu 29:32, and of the eighth day, Nu 29:35, which sacrifices were to be offered, besides their vows and freewill offerings, of which Moses gave a faithful account, according to the command of God, Nu 29:39.

Ver. 1. And in the seventh month,.... The month Tisri, as the Targum of Jonathan, which answers to part of our September and October; a month famous for days to be religiously observed, having more of them in it than any other month in the year:

on the first day of the month, ye shall have a holy convocation; see Le 23:24,

ye shall do no servile work; therefore, in the place referred to, is called a sabbath:

it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you; of which,
See Gill on "Le 23:24".

Numbers 29:2

Ver. 2. And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the Lord,.... Which was as follows:

one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish, which was the same, only one bullock less, with the offerings on the first day of the month, the seven days of unleavened bread, and the day of the firstfruits, #Nu 28:11,19,27.

Numbers 29:3

Ver. 3-5. And their meat offering,.... Which went along with the creatures offered for a burnt offering; the quantity of flour and oil used in it was the same, for a bullock, a ram, and each lamb, as in the offerings at the new moons, feast of unleavened bread and the day of firstfruits, Nu 28:10 and a kid of the goats was also offered for a sin offering at this time, as in those seasons, and for the same purpose, to make atonement for the sins of their holy things.

Numbers 29:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "Nu 29:3".

Numbers 29:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "Nu 29:3".

Numbers 29:6

Ver. 6. Beside the burnt offering of the month, and his meat offering,.... The bullock, ram, and seven lambs, were offered on this day, besides the two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs, which were offered on it, on account of its being the first day of the month and besides the meat offering that went along with them; these were not omitted on account of those additional sacrifices:

and the daily burnt offering; the two lambs of the daily sacrifice; these also were offered as usual, so that there were offered on this day three bullocks, two rams, and sixteen lambs:

and his meat offering, and their drink offerings, according to their manner; these also were offered with the daily sacrifice, according to the law and rule prescribed for the making of them, and all were for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord; for they were burnt sacrifices, and very acceptable to the Lord, as they were types of the better sacrifice, with which he is infinitely well pleased; and it is with respect to that that such a number of sacrifices were appointed.

Numbers 29:7

Ver. 7. And ye shall have on the tenth day of the seventh month an holy convocation,.... The month Tisri, as before; so the Targum of Jonathan:

and ye shall afflict your souls; or persons; their bodies by fasting, and their souls by repentance and humiliation; for this was a grand fast, as it is called Ac 27:9,

ye shall not do any work [therein]; see Le 23:28.

Numbers 29:8

Ver. 8. But ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord,.... Which is the same as ordered to be offered on the first day, Nu 29:2. Aben Ezra is of opinion that the ram here is different from those in Le 16:3.

Numbers 29:9

Ver. 9,10. And their meat offering,.... Which was of the same quantity of flour and oil, for a bullock, a ram, and a lamb, as for the meat offering on the first day of the month.

Numbers 29:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "Nu 29:9".

Numbers 29:11

Ver. 11. One kid of the goats for a sin offering,.... This also, as it was different from that which was offered for the service of the day, so it was offered after it; as is observed by the Jewish writers, that the goat, which was offered without, though of the Musaphim, or additions, could not go before the service of the day for it is said as follows,

beside the sin offering of atonement; hence, say they, we learn, that the goat within, which was of the service of the day, went before it {n}; after that the ram of Aaron, and the ram of the people, and after that the fat of the sin offering:

and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings; which were never omitted on account of the service of any day, though ever so solemn, as this was: hence it appears that there were offered on this day of atonement two bullocks, three rams, three goats, and two lambs.

{n} Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 3.

Numbers 29:12

Ver. 12. And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation,.... Of the same month Tisri, which was the seventh from Nisan or Abib, though it was formerly the first month of the year:

ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days; the feast of tabernacles, which began on the fifteenth day of this month.

Numbers 29:13

Ver. 13-34. And ye shall offer a burnt offering,.... That is, on the first of the seven days, which was as follows:

thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year, they shall be without blemish; a very large sacrifice indeed, for these were offered besides one kid of the goats, for a sin offering, and the two lambs of the daily sacrifice, which were not omitted on account of this extraordinary offering; so that there were no less than thirty two animals sacrificed on this day: the meat and drink offerings for each, according to the kind of them, were as usual, and as before frequently observed; and the same sacrifices, meat offerings, and drink offerings, were offered on the six following days of the feast, only with this difference, that there was one bullock less every day; which it is thought may denote the decrease of sin in the people, and so an increase of holiness, or rather the gradual waxing old and vanishing away of the ceremonial law, and the sacrifices of it; and these bullocks ending in the number seven, which is a number may lead us to think of the great sacrifice these all typified, whereby Christ has perfected them that are sanctified.

Numbers 29:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "Nu 29:13".

Numbers 29:35

Ver. 35. On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly,.... The day after the seven days of the feast of tabernacles were ended; for this was not properly a part of that feast, but was a sort of appendage to it;

ye shall do no servile work therein;
See Gill on "Le 23:36".

Numbers 29:36

Ver. 36-38. But ye shall offer a burnt offering,.... Which was the same that was offered on the first and tenth days of this month,
Nu 29:2 and the meat and drink offerings for each of the creatures were the same, as often expressed; and on this day a goat for a sin offering was also offered, besides the daily sacrifice, and what went along with that.

Numbers 29:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "Nu 29:36".

Numbers 29:38

Ver. 38. See Gill on "Nu 29:36".

Numbers 29:39

Ver. 39. These things ye shall do to the Lord, in your set feasts,.... Or rather in the times set and appointed to you, as the Jewish writers {o} interpret it; and so Jarchi interprets it of a fixed time, which seems better; since these were not all feast days, on which the above sacrifices were to be offered, for one of them was a fast, even the day of atonement:

besides your vows, and your freewill offerings: which might be offered up at any time, notwithstanding the above sacrifices, which were necessary and obligatory; but these were at their own option:

for your burnt offerings, and for your meat offerings, and your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings; of which see **Le 7:11**.

{o} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Pesach, c. 7. sect. 4.

Numbers 29:40

Ver. 40. And Moses told the children of Israel,.... All these things; repeated the several laws unto them concerning the above sacrifices, with the additions unto them, and explanations of them:

according to all that the Lord commanded Moses; being a faithful servant to the Lord in all his house, and in all things appertaining to it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 30:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 30

Mention being made, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, of vows to be performed to the Lord, besides the sacrifices directed to; here some account is given of them, and men are charged to fulfil, and not break them, Nu 30:1 but as to women, if a maid, being in her father's house, made a vow in his hearing, and he silent at it, her vow stood; but if he disapproved of it, it was null and void, Nu 30:3 and so a wife, when she vowed a vow in the hearing of her husband, and he said not ought against it, it was valid; but if he objected to it, it stood for nothing, Nu 30:6, likewise a widow, or one divorced, that made a vow in her husband's house, before he died, or she was put away from him, and he did not contradict it, it remained in force and to be fulfilled; but if he made it void, it stood not, and she was forgiven, Nu 30:9 it being in an husband's power to confirm or make null a vow or oath, made by his wife to afflict her soul; but if he made any void after he heard them, and had been silent, he himself was to bear her iniquity, Nu 30:13.

Ver. 1. And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes,.... Or the princes of them, who could more easily be convened, and who used to meet on certain occasions, and on whom it lay to see various laws put in execution:

concerning the children of Israel; how they ought to conduct and behave in the following case, it being an affair which concerned them all:

saying, this is the thing which the Lord hath commanded; relating to vows. Aben Ezra is of opinion that this was delivered after the battle with Midian, of which there is an account in the following chapter, and is occasioned by what was said, to the tribes of Gad and Reuben, Nu 32:24

do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth; to which they replied, thy servants will do as my lord commandeth; upon which the nature of a vow, and the manner of keeping it, are observed; but the occasion of it rather seems to be what is said towards the close of the foregoing chapter, Nu 29:39, that the various sacrifices there directed were to be offered in their season, besides the vows and freewill offerings; and when these were ratified and confirmed, and when null and void, and to be fulfilled or neglected, is the principal business of this chapter.

Numbers 30:2

Ver. 2. If a man vow a vow unto the Lord,.... Which must be in a thing that is lawful to be done, which is not contrary to the revealed will and mind of God, and which may tend to the glory of God, the honour of religion, the service of the sanctuary, the good of a man's self or of his neighbour; or in things purely indifferent, which may, or may not be done, without offence to God or man; as that he will not eat such a thing for such a time, or he will do this or the other thing, as Jarchi observes; who moreover says, that he may forbid himself what is forbidden, and forbid what is free and lawful; but he may not make free or lawful what is forbidden, that is, he may not vow to do a thing which is contrary to the law of God, such a vow will not stand: and he was to be of such an age before he could make a vow that would be valid; according to the Targum of Jonathan, he must be thirteen years of age; it is said in the Misnah {p},

"a son of twelve years and one day, his vows are examined; a son of thirteen years and one day, his vows are firm, and they examine the whole thirteenth year before that time; although they say we know to whose name (or on whose account) we vow or consecrate, their vow is no vow, nor their consecration no consecration; but after that time, though they say we know not to whose name (or, on whose account) we vow or consecrate, their vow is a vow, and their consecration a consecration:"

or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; to his vow adds an oath for the greater confirmation of it, and to lay himself under the greater obligation to perform it:

he shall not break his word; or profane it {q} but punctually perform it; men should be careful how they vow, and not rashly do it; but when they have vowed, they ought to perform; see **Ec 5:4**:

he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth; it is not in his power to revoke his vow or make it null: the Misnic doctors {r} say, a man can loose all vows, excepting his own. R. Judah says, not the vows of his wife, nor those which are between her and others; that is, as one of the commentators {s} explains it, such vows which are not made to afflict, or respect not fasting; but according to the Targum of Jonathan, though a man cannot loose his vows, or free himself from them, yet the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, can, or a wise man that is authenticated thereby, as Jarchi says, or three private persons; but these are such traditions; which make void the commandment of God, as our Lord complains, Mt 15:1

{p} Niddah, c. 5. sect. 6. {q} lxy al {r} Negaim, c. 5. sect. 5. {s} Bartenora in Misn. Negaim, c. 5. sect. 5.

Numbers 30:3

Ver. 3. If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord,.... Who has not passed thirteen years, as the Targum of Jonathan:

[and] bind [herself] by a bond; lay herself under obligation to perform her vow by an oath: being in her father's house; unto the twelfth year, as the same Targum; that is, that is under his care, tuition, and jurisdiction, whether she literally, or properly speaking, is in the house or no at the time she vows; so Jarchi interprets it of her being in the power of her father, though not in his house, she being not at age to be at her own disposal, but at his: wherefore it is added,

in her youth; which, as the same writer explains it, signifies that she is

"neither a little one, nor at age; for a little one's vow is no vow, and one at age is not in the power of her father to make void her vow: who is a little one? our Rabbins say, one of eleven years of age and one day, her vows are examined, whether she knows on whose account she vows and consecrates, or devotes anything; one vows a vow that is twelve years and one day old, there is no need to examine them."

He seems to refer to a passage in the Misnah {t},

"a daughter of eleven years and one day, her vows are examined; a daughter of twelve years and one day, her vows are firm, but they are to be examined through the whole twelfth year."

{t} Niddah, c. 5. sect. 6.

Numbers 30:4

Ver. 4. And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul,.... Her vow, which is binding upon her, or her vow and an oath annexed to it; which makes it still more strongly binding; and this he hears himself, or it is reported to him by others: and her father shall hold his peace at her; shall not reprove her for it, nor contradict her in it: then all her vows shall stand; be they what, or as many as they may:

and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand; his silence being to be interpreted as approving of them, and consenting to them.

Numbers 30:5

Ver. 5. But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth,.... Disapproves of her vow, and expresses his dislike of it, and declares it null and void; which, if done at all, is to be done on the same day he hears it, and not on another day, as Aben Ezra observes; not the day following, and much less on a third or fourth day, &c. and it might be done on a sabbath day {u}:

not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she bound her soul, shall stand; but become null and void, she being at the control of her father, and having nothing in her own power, and at her own disposal, to vow or consecrate, but wholly in the power and at the disposal of her father:

and the Lord shall forgive her; the breach of her vow, it shall not be imputed to her as a sin:

because her father disallowed her; so that it was no fault of hers that it was not fulfilled; though she might be blameworthy to make one, without previously obtaining his consent, and making it rashly without his previous knowledge, she not being at her own hands; and in this respect may be said to be forgiven by the Lord, which supposes some fault committed.

{u} Misn. Sabbat, c. 24. sect. 5.

Numbers 30:6

Ver. 6. And if she had at all an husband with whom she vowed,.... Or "when her vows were upon her" {w}, was either betrothed or married to a man:

or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul; uttered anything, either with or without premeditation, either with thought and deliberation, or rashly and imprudently, as the word signifies, yet in such a manner that it was binding upon her.

{w} hyle hyrdnw

Numbers 30:7

Ver. 7. And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it,.... The vow she made, and by his silence consented to it:

then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand; or she be under obligation to perform them.

Numbers 30:8

Ver. 8. But if her husband disallow her on the day that he heard it,.... Expresses his dislike of it; and this he does as soon as he hears it, at least that same day; according to the Jews {x}, within the space of twenty four hours:

then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect; by contradicting it, and forbidding the performance of it; or however by declaring to her, or to others, that it is not agreeable to his mind and will that it should be fulfilled:

and the Lord shall forgive her; excuse her performance of the vow, and not impute sin to her on that account, nor punish for the breach of it, she being under the cover of her husband, and obliged to submit to his will. According to Jarchi, the Scripture speaks of a woman that vows to be a Nazarite; her husband hears and makes it void; but she does not know it, and transgresses her vow, and drinks wine, and is defiled with the dead, so that she has need of forgiveness, though it is made void; and if vows made void, he adds, have need of pardon, much more those that are not.

{x} Leo Modena's History of Rites, &c. par. 2. c. 4.

Numbers 30:9

Ver. 9. But every vow of a widow,.... The Scripture speaks, as Jarchi says, of a widow from marriage, or that has been married, but a widow from espousals (or that has been only espoused), the husband dead, the power is transmitted, and returns to the father; and with respect to such a case, it is said in the Misnah {y}

"if the father (of such a betrothed person) dies, the power is not transmitted to the husband; but if the husband dies, the power is transmitted to the father; in this case, greater is the power of a father than of an husband; in others, greater is the power of an husband than of a father, because an husband makes void (the vow of) one at age, but a father does not make void (the vow of) such an one:"

and of her that is divorced: from her husband on some account or another; now in each of these cases, the one being loosed from the law of her husband by death, and the other by a bill of divorce, if they vowed,

the vows wherewith they have bound their souls shall stand against her; against either of them, they having none over them to disapprove of, contradict, and make void their vows.

{y} Nedarim, c. 10. sect. 2.

Numbers 30:10

Ver. 10. And if she vowed in her husband's house,.... Before his death, in his lifetime, or before divorced: the Targum of Jonathan adds, by way of explanation, "and not at age for marriage", understanding it of a betrothed, and not a married person; but Jarchi says, the Scripture speaks of a married one, which seems most likely:

or bound her soul by a bond with an oath; to fulfil her vow, to abstain from this, or to do that or the other thing.

Numbers 30:11

Ver. 11. And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not,.... Heard her make her vow, and bind it with an oath, and was silent at it, which was consenting to it, and did not contradict her, nor show any displeasure or resentment at her on account of it; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"and died before she was at age;"

but what follows held good equally of one that was at age for marriage, and actually married to him:

then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand; be ratified and confirmed, and she be under obligation to make them good.

Numbers 30:12

Ver. 12. But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard them,.... Declaring they were contrary to his mind and will, he disapproved of them, and forbid the carrying them into execution:

then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand; though her husband be dead, or she be divorced from him:

her husband hath made them void, and the Lord shall forgive her: she will neither incur his displeasure for not fulfilling her vow, nor have any punishment inflicted on her: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"if her husband makes them void, and she knows it not and transgresses, it shall be forgiven her by the Lord."

Numbers 30:13

Ver. 13. Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul,.... By fasting, as Aben Ezra observes; as when a vow was made, or a person bound herself by an oath to abstain from such and such food, or to fast on such a day; to keep a fast which was not appointed, to set apart a day for fasting, besides the grand and general fast on the day of atonement: Jarchi from hence gathers, that a man only makes vows of afflicting the soul, or vows of fasting; but this is not said by way of limitation and restriction, but by way of amplification and illustration, giving a particular instance, by which others may be judged of:

her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void, just as he pleased; and this power an husband had, to prevent confusion in the family, and trouble in the affairs of it, by vowing abstinence from such and such food, or from such and such liquor, and the like; and to prevent running into expenses he was not able to answer, by vowing and dedicating, this and the other to holy uses, for sacrifices, and repairs of the temple, and the like.

Numbers 30:14

Ver. 14. But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day today,.... Said not one word to her day after day, neither on the day he heard her vow, nor the day following:

then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which are upon her; by his silence:

he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her, in the day that he heard them; for not to contradict them was to confirm them.

Numbers 30:15

Ver. 15. But if he shall any ways make them void, after that he hath heard them,.... Some way or other expressing his dislike of them; not at the time he heard them, but some time afterwards; one day after, as the Targum of Jonathan:

then he shall bear his iniquity: be accountable for the breach of the vow, the sin shall be reckoned to him, and he shall bear the punishment of it, because he ought to have declared is disapprobation of it sooner; and it may be, his doing it when he did was only in a spirit of contradiction, or through covetousness;

and it would have been more advisable to have let the vow stand, and therefore acted a criminal part, and so was answerable for it; the Targum of Jonathan explains it,

"her husband or her father shall bear her iniquity,"

supposing her not to be at age: Aben Ezra gives the reason of it, because she is in his power.

Numbers 30:16

Ver. 16. These are the statutes which the Lord commanded Moses between a man and his wife,.... Relating to vows made by the wife, and confirmed or disannulled by the husband: Aben Ezra adds, if she is at age or in puberty, understanding it of a married and not a betrothed wife:

between the father and his daughter; if she is not at age, as the same writer observes; for if she is at age he has nothing to do with her vows:

[being yet] in her youth; not at age, being not twelve years and one day old:

in her father's house; in his power and jurisdiction, and at his disposal, and so could make her vows void or firm, as he pleased: this power of ratifying or disannulling vows an husband had over his wife, and a father over his daughter, to prevent imprudent and extravagant vows, and the too frequent use of them, the consequences of which might be bad in families.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 31:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 31

This chapter contains an order to make war upon Midian, which was accordingly done, Nu 31:1, but Moses was wroth, because they saved the women alive, who, through the counsel of Balaam, had been the cause of sin, and of the plague for it in Israel, and therefore orders them, and the male children, to be slain, Nu 31:13, and then directs to the purification of the soldiers, their captives and spoil, Nu 31:19, and by the command of God an account is taken of the prey, and a

division of it made between the soldiers and the congregation, and out of each part a tribute is levied for the Lord,
Nu 31:25 and the sum of the whole booty is given,
Nu 31:32 and of the part which belonged to the soldiers, and of the tribute given to the Lord, Nu 31:36 and of the part which belonged to the children of Israel, Nu 31:42 and besides the above tribute to the Lord, the officers made a voluntary oblation out of their spoil, both by way of gratitude for sparing their lives, and to make atonement for their souls, Nu 31:48.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... After the plague upon Israel for their fornication and idolatry, into which they were drawn by the daughters of Moab and Midian, and after the sum of the people was taken in the plains of Moab, and various laws given or repeated, and a little before the death of Moses:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 31:2

Ver. 2. Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites,.... For the injury they had done them, by sending their daughters among them, who enticed them to commit uncleanness with them, and then drew them into the worship of their idols, which brought the wrath of God upon them, and for which 24,000 persons were slain. Now, though the Moabites had a concern in this affair as well as the Midianites, yet they were spared; which some think was for the sake of Lot, from whom they descended; but why not the Midianites for the sake of Abraham, whose offspring they were by Keturah? Jarchi says, they were spared because of Ruth, who was to spring from them; and so she might, and yet vengeance be taken on great numbers of them: but the truer reason seems to be, either because the sin of the Moabites was not yet full, and they were reserved for a later punishment; or rather because they were not the principal actors in the above affair; but the Midianites, who seem to have advised Balak at first to send for Balaam to curse Israel, and who harboured that soothsayer after he had been dismissed by Balak, and to whom he gave his wicked counsel, and which they readily followed, and industriously pursued:

afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people; or die, see
Nu 27:13, it being some satisfaction to him to see the good land, as he did from Abarim, and the Israelites avenged on their enemies before his death.

Numbers 31:3

Ver. 3. And Moses spake unto the people, saying,.... In obedience to the divine command; this must be supposed to be spoken to the heads or princes of the tribes:

arm some of yourselves unto the war: not the whole body of the militia, 600,000 men and upwards, only some of them, and these choice and select men; and, according to the Jewish writers, good men, who, detesting the sins of lewdness and idolatry, would more strictly and severely avenge themselves on the Midianites for drawing their brethren into those sins, whereby they fell; and so Jarchi calls them righteous men:

[and] let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the Lord of Midian: what the Lord calls the vengeance of the Israelites, Moses calls the vengeance of the Lord, because they were the Lord's people, and his cause and theirs the same: and because the sins they were drawn into by the Midianites were not only against themselves, and to their prejudice, but against the Lord and to the dishonour of his name.

Numbers 31:4

Ver. 4. Of every tribe a thousand,.... So that the whole number of those that were armed were 12,000 as after given:

throughout all the tribes of Israel; this is observed, as Jarchi thinks, to comprehend the tribe of Levi, which in some cases was left out of the account:

shall ye send to the war; to fight with Midian.

Numbers 31:5

Ver. 5. So they were delivered out of the thousands of Israel,....] Several thousands very probably offered themselves voluntarily to go to the war, or however were summoned together on this account, and out of them the following number was delivered of picked and chosen men:

a thousand [of every] tribe, twelve thousand armed for war; which was but a small number to go against so considerable a nation and people; but this was done to show that the war was of the Lord, he would fight the battle, and give them victory, it being the same to him to do it with few as with many; and to encourage the people of Israel to believe the Lord would give them success against their many and powerful enemies in the land of Canaan, on the borders of which they now were.

Numbers 31:6

Ver. 6. And Moses sent them to the war,.... Being mustered and armed:

a thousand of [every] tribe, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the war; which looks as if Phinehas was the general of this army; for Moses went not to the war, and no mention is made of Joshua, nor might it be proper for him, he being the successor of Moses, who was quickly to die; but it seems rather that there was no one person that had the command of the whole, but every captain commanded his own company; since, when Moses met them, and was angry with them for sparing the women, he does not address anyone as the chief commander, but all the officers, Nu 31:14, however, it was very proper and prudent to send Phinehas with them, both on account of his office as a priest, to encourage the people, and because of his extraordinary zeal against the Midianites for what they had done, as appears by his slaying a prince of Simeon and a Midianitish princess in their uncleanness:

[and he went] with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand; by "the holy instruments", Aben Ezra understands the ark with what appertained to it, which in later times used to be carried out when the Israelites went to war, **Jos 6:4**, and Jarchi interprets them of the ark and plate of gold {z} which was upon the forehead of the high priest; but what had Phinehas to do with this, who was but a common priest? though the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"with the Urim and Thummim of holiness, to inquire by them;"

and it appears, that sometimes a son of an high priest was intrusted with the ephod, to which the breastplate was fastened, which had the Urim and Thummim on it, and made use thereof to inquire by, as in the times of David, 1Sa 23:6, but it is the opinion of some learned men, and they may be in the right, that these instruments are no other than the trumpets, and who suppose the "vau" is not copulative, but explanative, so Ben Gersom, and read the words thus, "with the holy instruments, even", or, "that is, the trumpets" {a}, the silver trumpets ordered to be made, Nu 10:2 one of which was far the journey of the camps, and also to blow an alarm for war, and which was done by the priests; and so the Targum of Jonathan adds here,

"to cause the camp of Israel to rest, and to cause it to go;"

that is, to direct it when it should stop, and when it should move.

{z} So the Rabbins in Abendana in Miclol Yophi in loc. {a} twruuxw "erantque tubae", Tigurine version; "id est tubae", Vatablus; "nempe tubae", Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Numbers 31:7

Ver. 7. And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses,.... Whether the Midianites came out against them with an army, and there was a pitched battle between them, is not certain; however the Israelites committed acts of hostility upon them, by entering their cities, plundering their houses, and slaying the inhabitants of them; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"they warred against Midian, and surrounded it in the three corners of it, as the Lord commanded Moses;"

for, as Maimonides {b} observes from tradition,

"when they besiege a city to take it, they do not surround it in the four corners of it, but in the three corners of it, and leave a place to flee out, that everyone that would might escape for his life, as it is said, "and they warred against Midian, as the Lord commanded Moses"; by report, or from tradition, it is learnt that so he commanded him;"

that is, in such a manner to besiege a city; but for this there is only tradition, for it is not mentioned among the rules after directed to in such a case, De 20:10,

and they slew all the males; which fell into their hands; for, no doubt, there were multitudes that made their escape, since in later times we read of the Midianites, as a very powerful people, and very distressing to Israel, **Jud 6:1** these, as Aben Ezra observes, they slew, were such as were grown up, for as for their little ones, them they spared and carried captive, Nu 31:9.

{b} Hilchot Melacim, c. 6. sect. 7.

Numbers 31:8

Ver. 8. And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain,.... Besides the males of the common people, they slew their kings, who were petty kings or princes, perhaps under the king of Moab, or had reassumed their titles and government after the death of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who, in his time, were called dukes of Sihon, Jos 13:21, namely,

Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian; the Targum of Jonathan says of Zur, this is Balak, which is not probable; it is more likely, what Aben Ezra observes, that he was the father of Cosbi, whom Phinehas slew, Nu 25:15.

Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword; so that he died not a natural death, but a violent one, not such an one as he desired, the death of the righteous, but of bloody and deceitful men, who do not live out half their days; for if the Jewish writers {c} are to be credited, he was but thirty four years of age when he was slain, which is not quite half the age of man, that being seventy, Ps 90:10, it appears by this that he was among the Midianites at the time of this war; either he stayed here till this time, when he went from Balak with an intention to go into his own country; or he had returned hither, being either sent for, by the princes of Midian, on this occasion; or, as some say, as Aben Ezra observes, that he came to Midian after he returned to his place, on hearing the plague that came upon Israel through his counsel, to receive the money of the elders of Midian for it; and so Chaskuni.

{c} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2.

Numbers 31:9

Ver. 9. And the children of Israel took [all] the women of Midian captives,.... The word "all" is not in the original text, nor should it be supplied; for if all had been taken, and carried captive, and put to death, as those were afterwards, how could there have been such an increase of the Midianites as there was in some time after this? see **Jud 6:1** but the meaning is, that as many as fell into their hands they took and carried captive:

and their little ones; both male and female:

and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks; their oxen and their sheep, and also their asses, as appears by the following account:

and all their goods: in their houses, their wealth and substance, gold, silver, &c.

Numbers 31:10

Ver. 10. And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, &c. } So far as they went into the country, which, perhaps, might not be the whole land of Midian:

and all their goodly castles with fire; which were either the palaces of their princes and nobles, or such like great personages; or they were fortified places, for the security of their cities and country: the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan interpret them of their houses of worship, their temples, and their altars.

Numbers 31:11

Ver. 11. And they took all the spoil,.... In their cities and castles; and all the prey, both of men and of beasts; all sorts of cattle, oxen, sheep, and asses.

Numbers 31:12

Ver. 12 And they brought the captives, the prey, and the spoil,.... The women and children, who were the captives, and the beasts which were the prey, and the gold, silver, &c. which were the spoil:

unto Moses and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel; that is, they were bringing the above persons things unto them, returning from the war with Midian:

unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan [near] Jericho: see Nu 22:1, but they were stopped, and were not admitted into the camp until seven days after.

Numbers 31:13

Ver. 13. And Moses and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation,.... Attended, no doubt, with a proper retinue:

went forth to meet them without the camp; partly to do honour to them, and to congratulate them on their victory, and partly to hinder them going into the camp directly, until they were purified; see Ge 14:17.

Numbers 31:14

Ver. 14. And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host,.... The general officers who had the command of the army, for there does not appear to be anyone that was one general over the whole, otherwise the displeasure would have fallen upon him:

[with] the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle; rather "with" should be left out, not being in the text; and these captains only explain who the officers were, and these were one hundred and thirty two, as Aben Ezra observes; twelve who were captains over thousands, and were more properly the general officers; and one hundred and twenty over so many hundreds, into which the whole were subdivided.

Numbers 31:15

Ver. 15. And Moses said unto them, have ye saved all the women alive?] Which either had been reported to him, or he concluded, by seeing so many with them; and this question is put, not for information, but by way of reproof, and as chiding them for what they had done; for they might have received orders from him to put them to death, when he sent them out; and if so, there was the more reason to be angry with them; or he might conclude they would have done this of themselves, knowing what instruments of mischief these women had been to Israel.

Numbers 31:16

Ver. 16. Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam,.... Who advised the Midianites to send their women into the camp of Israel, and allure them to uncleanness, and so draw them into idolatry, which counsel they followed and it succeeded; for, by this means, they were brought

to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor; by worshipping Baalpeor, the god of the Moabites and Midianites; whereby they transgressed the commandment of God, which forbid them having and worshipping any other gods besides him, and is a sin highly offensive to him, being greatly derogatory to his honour and glory:

and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord; for that sin; and in that plague died 24,000 persons, Nu 25:9.

Numbers 31:17

Ver. 17. Now therefore kill every male among the little ones,.... Which they had taken and brought captives, Nu 31:9

and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him; who might be such, at least many of them, who had lain with Israelitish men; and as the adulterers had been put to death, so now the adulteresses; or they were ordered to, be slain, even all of them, lest they should entice the children of Israel to uncleanness, and so to idolatry again: now these were known to be such, either by conjecture at their age, or rather, through the examination of matrons, unless it can be thought, as it is by some, that it was by divine revelation.

Numbers 31:18

Ver. 18. But all the women children,.... The females among the little ones:

that have not known a man by lying with him; which might be pretty clear, and easily concluded, from their age:

keep for yourselves; either to be handmaids to them, or to be married among them when grown up, and become proselytes, and initiated into their religion.

Numbers 31:19

Ver. 19. And do ye abide without the camp seven days..... Which was the time that anyone that touched a dead body remained unclean,
Nu 19:11,

whosoever hath killed any person; as most of them if not all must have done; all the males of Midian that fell into their hands being slain by them, that were men grown:

and whosoever hath touched any slain; as they must to strip them of their garments, and take their spoil from them:

purify both yourselves and your captives, on the third and on the seventh day; which were the days appointed for the purification of such that were polluted by touching dead bodies, Nu 19:11 and their captives, which were the female little ones; (for as for the women, and males among the little ones, they were ordered to be slain;) though they were Heathens, yet inasmuch as they were to be for the service of the Israelites, and to be brought up in their religion, they were to be purified also; to which purpose is the note of Jarchi;

"not that the Gentiles receive uncleanness and need sprinkling, but as ye are the children of the covenant, so your captives, when they come into the covenant, and are defiled, need sprinkling."

Numbers 31:20

Ver. 20. And purify all your raiment,.... By washing them; and this may intend not so much their own wearing apparel, as the raiment they took off of the dead bodies of the Midianites, since the person that touched a dead body was not obliged to wash his clothes, but the clean person that sprinkled the water of purification on him, Nu 19:19, some render the words, "purify yourselves" {d}, "together with the raiment", &c. which seems to be the best version of them:

and all that is made of skins; of any sort of creatures, as the covering of tents, shoes, bottles, &c. see Le 11:32

and all work of goats' hair; such as the covering of tents was also made of: and this, according to Jarchi and other Jewish writers {e} includes vessels made of the horns, hoofs, and bones of these creatures: and all things made of wood; as beds, cups, dishes, &c. all which might be purified by washing; see Le 15:12.

{d} wajxtt "purgatote vos", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; Vid. L'Empereur, Not. ad Kimchii odoiporia, p. 130. {e} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Celim, c. 2. sect. 1.

Numbers 31:21

Ver. 21. And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war, which went to the battle,.... To all the soldiers, officers, and common men:

this is the ordinance of the law, which the Lord commanded Moses; concerning the purification of unclean persons and things, hereby confirming what Moses had said.

Numbers 31:22

Ver. 22. Only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead. These are excepted, and, though unclean, are not to be purified by washing, but in another way, by fire, as follows; all these metals were well known in those early times, and were made use of for instruments and vessels of various sorts.

Numbers 31:23

Ver. 23. Every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire,.... Either through the smoke of the fire, and so be purified by suffumigation; or be put into the fire itself, where though they might be melted as the above things, yet not consumed as raiment, and vessels of skins, goats' hair, and wood, would be:

and it shall be clean; accounted so:

nevertheless, it shall be purified with the water of separation; with the water mixed with the ashes of the red heifer burnt, and sprinkled on it; see Nu 19:9

and all that abideth not the fire; without being consumed, as whatsoever is of wood, &c.

ye shall make go through the water; dip them in it, and rinse them there with a quantity sufficient; which the Targum of Jonathan says is forty seahs of water.

Numbers 31:24

Ver. 24. And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day,.... As the leper did, Le 14:9:

and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp; into the camp of Israel, into the camp of the Levites, and into the camp of God, the tabernacle.

Numbers 31:25

Ver. 25. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... After the purification of the soldiers, their captives, and spoil:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 31:26

Ver. 26. Take the sum of the prey that was taken, both of man and beast,.... The number of the females that were taken captive and spared, and of the cattle, the sheep, oxen, and asses:

thou, and Eleazar the priest, and the chief fathers of the congregation; who were all men of authority and character, and fit to be employed in such service, and of whose capacity and fidelity there could be no doubt.

Numbers 31:27

Ver. 27. And divide the prey into two parts,.... Into two equal parts, both the number of the people and of the cattle, when taken:

between them that took the war upon them, and went out to battle; the soldiers; and by this it appears that they went voluntarily and cheerfully:

and between all the congregation; so that the part of them that went to battle, and of those that stayed in the camp, were alike, and which in process of time became a statute and ordinance, 1Sa 30:24.

Numbers 31:28

Ver. 28. And levy a tribute unto the Lord of the men of war, which went out to battle,.... That is, out of the part of the prey which was divided to them:

one soul of five hundred, both "of the persons"; or one woman of five hundred, as the Targum of Jonathan:

and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep; that is, one out of five hundred, of each of them also.

Numbers 31:29

Ver. 29. And take it of their half,.... Of the half part of the prey divided to the soldiers:

and give it unto Eleazar the priest for an heave offering of the Lord; by way of thanksgiving for the success and victory, God had given them, by means of which so much booty had fallen into their hands.

Numbers 31:30

Ver. 30. And of the children of Israel's half, thou shall take one portion of fifty,.... Which was abundantly more than what was taken out of the part of the soldiers; and the reason of it is plain and easy to be discerned; the soldiers had taken much pains, and gone through much fatigue, as well as had hazarded their lives, and therefore less was to be taken from them; and besides the tribute levied out of their half was to be given to the priests, who were not so numerous as the Levites, among whom the part out of the half of the congregation was to be distributed:

of the persons; of the women, as the Targums of Jonathan, one of fifty out of them was to be given to the Levites to be their handmaids, or to be taken in marriage by them, or their sons, when fit for it:

of the beeves, of the asses, and of the sheep, of all manner of beasts; of oxen, asses, sheep, and goats, one out of fifty of each of these sorts were to be taken. Aben Ezra observes, no mention is made of camels, being but few, and no part taken:

and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the Lord; for these being employed in the service of the tabernacle, came in for their share of the tribute levied unto the Lord.

Numbers 31:31

Ver. 31. And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the Lord commanded Moses. Took an account of the booty, divided it equally between the soldiers and the congregation of Israel, and levied a part out of each as a tribute for the Lord, which was given to the priests and Levites.

Numbers 31:32

Ver. 32-47. And the booty, being the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught,.... The remainder of it, besides what they had eaten in their return from the war, and during their seven days' stay without the camp: from hence to the end of Nu 31:47 is only an account of the prey or booty taken, which in general were 675,000 sheep, 72,000 beeves or oxen, 61,000 asses, and 32,000 females who had never known man; the half out of these, which fell to the share of the soldiers, were 337,500 sheep, 36,000 beeves or oxen, 30,500 asses, and 16,000 females, out of which were given as an heave offering to the Lord six hundred and seventy five sheep, seventy two beeves or oxen, sixty one asses, and thirty two women: the half divided unto the children of Israel consisted of 337,500 sheep, 36,000 beeves or oxen, 30,500 asses, and 16,000 women, out of which one in fifty, both of women and cattle, were given to the Levites; what that amounted to is not expressed, but may be easily reckoned.

Numbers 31:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:38

Ver. 38. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:39

Ver. 39. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:40

Ver. 40. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:41

Ver. 41. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:42

Ver. 42. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:43

Ver. 43. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:44

Ver. 44. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:45

Ver. 45. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:46

Ver. 46. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:47

Ver. 47. See Gill on "Nu 31:32".

Numbers 31:48

Ver. 48. And the officers which were over thousands of the host,.... Over the twelve thousand, of which the host or army consisted: namely, the captains of thousands, and the captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses; of their own accord, without being sent, or required to do what they did.

Numbers 31:49

Ver. 49. And they said unto Moses,.... Gave the following relation to him, which is a very surprising one:

thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which are under our charge; since the war with Midian was over, they had mustered the several companies under their command, such as had thousands, and those that had hundreds:

and there lacketh not one man of us; which is a most amazing and unheard of thing, that in waging war with a whole nation, slaying all their males, sacking and burning so many cities, plundering the inhabitants of their substance, taking and carrying off such a vast number of captives, yet not one should fall by the sword of the enemy, or by any disease or accident whatever, but all to a man should return to the camp of Israel again; this is not to be paralleled in any history.

Numbers 31:50

Ver. 50. We have therefore brought an oblation to the Lord,.... A freewill offering, out of the spoil, over and above the tribute levied out of the half that came unto them;

what every man hath gotten: or "found" {f}, in the houses, and upon the bodies of the slain, or of such that were taken captives:

of jewels of gold either such as were set in gold; or rather, as the words may be rendered,

vessels of gold {g}, as dishes, cups, spoons, and the like:

chains; which were wore about the neck, or upon the arm, as Aben Ezra:

and bracelets; for the hand, as the same writer, see Ge 24:22,

rings; for the finger:

ear rings; for the ear, as we render it, the word signifies something round:

and tablets; which, according to the Targum of Jonathan, were ornaments that hung down between the breasts:

to make an atonement for our souls before the Lord; not only this offering was brought as a token of gratitude and thankfulness, for sparing of everyone of their lives, and giving them such success and victory, and so large a spoil of the enemy; but also to expiate any sins they had been guilty of in going out, and coming in, and particularly for sparing the women they should have put to death, for which Moses was wroth with them, Nu 31:14.

{f} aum "invenit", Pagninus, Montanus. {g} bhz ylk "vas auri", Montanus; "vasa aurea", Vatablus.

Numbers 31:51

Ver. 51. And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them,.... For it seems the several things before mentioned were all of gold:

even all wrought jewels; or "vessels of work" {h} or wrought vessels, or instruments, "chains, bracelets", &c. which were all of gold, and curiously wrought.

{h} hvem ylk "vas operis", Montanus.

Numbers 31:52

Ver. 52. And all the gold of the offering that they offered up to the Lord,.... The whole amount, weight, and value of it put together:

even of the captains of thousands, and the captains of hundreds, and perhaps of every common soldier, who might contribute his part, though it is not mentioned, but included in the oblation of the officers:

was 16,750 shekels; which, according to the calculation of a very learned man {i}, were 7,780 ounces, four drachms, two scruples, and thirty five grains.

{i} Scheuchzer. Physica Sacr. vol. 2. p. 399.

Numbers 31:53

Ver. 53. For the men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself. And which he kept for himself, and did not deliver in with the prey or booty, which was brought to Moses and Eleazar, the sum of which was taken by them; and this seems to confirm what has been hinted, that, as each soldier had taken spoil for himself, so everyone contributed his quota towards this freewill offering to the Lord.

Numbers 31:54

Ver. 54. And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds,.... Which they so freely and generously offered:

and brought it into the tabernacle of the congregation; and laid it up in some chamber there:

for a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord: in remembrance of the signal victory these men obtained, and of the singular care of divine Providence in protecting them, that not one was lost in the expedition; and of their sense of gratitude and thankfulness for the favours granted them, and to put the children of Israel in mind for their imitation, when favoured with mercies from the Lord.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 32:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 32

This chapter relates, how that the tribes of Gad and Reuben requested a settlement in the country of Jazer and Gilead, being fit for the pasturage of their cattle, Nu 32:1 at which Moses at first was very much displeased, as being unreasonable, and tending to discourage the rest of the people; and as acting a part like that their fathers had done before them, which brought the wrath of God upon them, so that they all but two perished in the wilderness; and this he suggests would be the case again, if such measures were taken, Nu 32:6 upon which they explain themselves, and declare they had no intention of forsaking their brethren, but were willing to leave their children and cattle to the care of divine Providence, and go armed before Israel, until they were brought into, and settled in the land of Canaan; nor did they desire any part or inheritance in it, Nu 32:16, this satisfied Moses, and he agreed to it, that the land they requested should be their possession, provided the conditions were fulfilled by them, which they proposed, Nu 20:20, and which they again agreed unto, and promised to perform, Nu 32:25, wherefore Moses gave orders to Eleazar, Joshua, and the chief

fathers of the tribes, to put them in possession of the land of Gilead on those conditions, Nu 32:28 and which were again promised that they would observe,
Nu 32:31, and at the same time Moses made a grant of the kingdoms of Sihon and of Og to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, Nu 32:33 and the chapter is closed with an account of the cities built or repaired by the children of Gad and Reuben,
Nu 32:34 and of the cities in Gilead taken and possessed by the children of Machir, and by Jair, who were of the tribe of Manasseh,
Nu 32:39.

Ver. 1. Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle,.... By which it seems that they had more in proportion than any of the other tribes; by what means it is not easy to say; very probably they were more addicted to the pastoral life, and took more delight in breeding cattle, and were more diligent in taking care of them: however, the reason for this observation presently follows:

and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead; Jazer was in the kingdom of Sihon, and Gilead in the kingdom of Og, which had been both conquered by the Israelites:

that, behold, the place was a place for cattle; where much cattle was fed, there being a great deal of good pasturage for them: Jazer appears to be a well watered country, Jer 48:32, and Gilead and Bashan which joined and belonged to the same country of Og, who was king of Bashan, were famous for good feeding of cattle: hence we read of the bulls of Bashan, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats on Mount Gilead that looked plump and sleek; see **Mic 7:14**.

Numbers 32:2

Ver. 2. The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses,.... The children of Gad are mentioned first, though Reuben was the firstborn, and had a standard under which Gad pitched: it may be, as Aben Ezra thinks, the Gadites were the first authors of this counsel, the contrivers of this scheme; who first moved it to the Reubenites, which they had an opportunity of doing, lying encamped by them; or however, they might be the most busy and active in this affair, or the best spokesmen; for it could be only some, in the name of the whole, that addressed Moses on this account, and spoke to him about it:

and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation; who perhaps were the seventy elders, and with Moses the chief ruler, and Eleazar the high priest, made up the grand sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, and were undoubtedly the most proper persons to apply unto:

saying: as follows.

Numbers 32:3

Ver. 3. Ataroth, Dibon, and Jazer,.... These were places which belonged to the Amorites, and were taken from Sihon, their king: of Ataroth we read nowhere else but in this chapter; of Dibon see Isa 15:2, Jazer was a city, from whence the land about it had its name; it is the same with Jaazer, Nu 21:32 and stood about fifteen miles from Heshbon {k}, the capital city of the kingdom of Sihon:

and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon; these were all places in the same country; of Heshbon see Nu 21:25, Nimrah is the same with Bethnimrah, Nu 32:36 and sometimes called Nimrim, famous for its water, Isa 15:6. Jerom says {l} the name of it in his time was Benamerium, and lay to the north of Zoar; Elealeh, according to the same writer {m} was but a mile from Heshbon, of which see Isa 15:4. Shebam is the same with Shibmah, Nu 32:36, and seems to be a place famous for vines, Isa 16:8; it is thought to be the same with the Seba of Ptolemy {n}, and according to Jerom {o}, there were scarce five hundred paces between this place and Heshbon; Nebo, the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call the grave of Moses, because on a mountain of this name Moses died, and where it is supposed he was buried; but it is certain he was buried not on a mountain, but in a valley, De 34:6, this perhaps had its name from the mountain near which it was, and of which see Isa 15:2. Beon is the same that is called Baalmeon, Nu 32:38 and Bethbaalmeon, Jos 13:17, where was very probably a temple of Baal; it was about nine miles from Heshbon {p}.

{k} Jerom. de loc. Heb. fol. 92. G. {l} Ibid. K. {m} Ibid. fol. 91. A. {n} Geograph. l. 5. c. 19. {o} Comment. in Esaiam, c. 16. 8. {p} Eusebius apud Reland: Palest. Illustr. par. 2. l. 3. p. 611.

Numbers 32:4

Ver. 4. Even the county which the Lord smote before the congregation of Israel,.... In which the above cities were, and perhaps some others not named: this was now in the hands of the people of Israel, being subdued by them, the conquest of which is ascribed unto the Lord, for the victory was of him; it was he that smote their enemies; and delivered their country into their hands; and now Moses, Eleazar, and the princes of the congregation, being the representatives of the people, had a right to dispose of it, and, which these two tribes request might be given to them, because, say they:

it is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle; to stock it, with and great numbers of them; see Nu 32:1

Numbers 32:5

Ver. 5. Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight,.... Directing their speech to Moses, the ruler of the congregation, in a very modest, decent, and respectable manner:

let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession; as their own portion and inheritance, to be enjoyed by them, and their children after them:

and bring us not over Jordan; into the land of Canaan, where as they after explain themselves, they did not desire to have any part with their brethren, but should be content with their possession here, should it be granted them.

Numbers 32:6

Ver. 6. And Moses said unto the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben,.... Being displeased with their motion, as his following discourse shows, it having at first sight an appearance of covetousness and cowardice:

shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? it is not reasonable that your brethren should be left by you and engage in a war with your common enemies, to dispossess them of their land before they can settle in it and you remain here easy and quiet in the possession of a fruitful country.

Numbers 32:7

Ver. 7. Wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel.... Which he suggests it would, should they settle on that side Jordan, since they would lose the assistance of two of their tribes, even two thirds of one of their standards in fighting with their enemies and subduing their land; and besides it might be thought that this request of theirs not only proceeded from selfish views and a love of ease, which might set a bad example to others, but carried in it a distrust of ever being able to enter into, at least to conquer and possess, the land of Canaan, and so might have a tendency to discourage their brethren:

from going over into the land, which the Lord hath given them? despairing of ever enjoying it, and so laying aside all thoughts of it, and not caring to make any attempt to get possession of it.

Numbers 32:8

Ver. 8. Thus did your fathers,.... Meaning not particularly and only the fathers of these two tribes he was speaking to, but of them and the other tribes also, who acted much such a part; did not choose to go into the good land to possess it, when they were bid to do it, but were for sending spies first, which brought an ill report of it, and discouraged the people from going into it; the history of which Moses here gives:

when I sent them from Kadeshbarnea to see the land; called only Kadesh, Nu 13:26 the reason of the name
See Gill on "Nu 32:13".

Numbers 32:9

Ver. 9. For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol,.... That is, when they went up the hill, for they were bid to go up into the mountain, and proceeded on into the country, until they came to the valley or brook, of Eshcol, so called from the cluster of grapes they there cut down, and brought along with them, Nu 13:17

and saw the land; searching it for the space of forty days:

they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel; by telling them that there were giants in the land, and that the people in common were strong, and their cities walled, and that they were not able to go up against them and overcome them; and by this means they disheartened the people:

that they should not go, into the land which the Lord had given them; and this Moses feared, and suggests would be the consequence of the request the two tribes now made.

Numbers 32:10

Ver. 10. And the Lord's anger was kindled, the same time,.... Against the spies that brought the ill report, and against all the people that were disheartened and murmured upon it, and which, above all things, was to be dreaded now:

and he sware, saying; as follows.

Numbers 32:11

Ver. 11. Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upwards,.... See Nu 14:28.

shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; the land of Canaan, which at various times he sware to give to them, and to their posterity:

because they have not wholly followed me; the laws which he prescribed them, the directions he gave them, and particularly the orders they had to go up and possess the land at once, **De 1:21**.

Numbers 32:12

Ver. 12. Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun,.... See Nu 14:30, whether Caleb or Jephunneh is called the Kenezite is not so easy to determine; the latter rather seems to be most correct, for that Caleb should be called so from Kenaz the father of Othniel, who is said to be Caleb's brother seems not to be agreeable; since it is not likely that they were his own brothers, or Caleb would not have given his daughter to him; besides Jephunneh and not Kenaz is always said to be the father of Caleb, unless his father can be thought to have two names; it is most likely that Jephunneh, and so Caleb, might be called the Kenezite, from an ancestor of theirs of that name: Jarchi says, Caleb was the son-in-law of Kenaz, and Caleb's mother bore unto him Othniel:

for they have wholly followed the Lord; here what was said of Caleb,
Nu 14:24 is said both of him and Joshua;
See Gill on "Nu 14:24".

Numbers 32:13

Ver. 13. And the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel,.... For murmuring against the report of the spies:

and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years; for though it was but about thirty eight years from that time that they were in the wilderness, the round number of forty is given; and besides it includes the time of their first coming into it, which being reckoned, makes the complete number, within a few months: Kadesh, from whence the spies were sent, and whither they returned, and where the people murmured, and had this sentence pronounced on them, that they should not see the land of Canaan, but wander and fall in the wilderness, seems to have had the addition of Barnea made unto it on that account, which signifies the son of him that wandereth:

until all the generation which had done evil in the sight of the Lord was consumed; as they all were at this time when Moses spake these words.

Numbers 32:14

Ver. 14. And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead,.... Succeeded them in their families, of which they were now the heads; and in their substance, their flocks, and herds; and he suggests also, in their manners amid evil dispositions:

an increase of sinful men; this new generation was greatly increased, for when the number was taken, as it was but a little before this time, they were pretty near the same number as of those that came out of Egypt; but then they were not only an increase of men, but of sinful men, like fathers like sons:

to augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord toward Israel; to make it greater and fiercer towards that nation than even their fathers had by their many sins and transgressions.

Numbers 32:15

Ver. 15. For if ye turn away from after him,.... From following him in the way of his commandments, from attending his word, worship, and ordinances, and from walking after him, who went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire, as it is suggested they would, should they stop short here and not go over Jordan into the land of Canaan:

he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; as he did at the time of the affair of the spies, when they were ordered to turn and get into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, and where they had been ever since unto this time, Nu 14:25,

and ye shall destroy all this people; be the cause of their destruction, if the Lord should in such a manner resent this step of theirs, as to order them back into the wilderness again, though they were now as they were before, on the border of the land of Canaan.

Numbers 32:16

Ver. 16. And they came near unto him,.... The heads of the tribes of Gad and Reuben came a little nearer to Moses, having something more to say unto him, in order to explain their meaning, and in doing which they used some degree of freedom and boldness with him, see Ge 44:18

and said, we will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones not build new ones, but repair the old ones; for there were cities enough in the country, as before named, and no doubt sheepfolds too, as the land was a place of cattle, but those were through the war broken down and demolished, and needed repairing; and this they proposed to do, and leave their children and their cattle to the care of their servants, under the protection of the divine Providence, and did not mean for the present to take up their abode here.

Numbers 32:17

Ver. 17. But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel,.... This they said to free themselves from the charge of cowardice, and that they did not mean to sit still while their brethren went to war; they were willing to put on their armour, and be ready to meet the enemy upon the borders of the land, and engage with them, and to expose their lives in favour of their brethren:

until we have brought them unto their place; to the land of Canaan, the place designed for them, and given unto them, to the possession of it, and a settlement in it:

and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities, because of the inhabitants of the land; where they might be safe from them, which they proposed to repair and refortify for the security of them, while they went with their brethren into the land of Canaan, to put them into possession of that, of which they made not the least doubt; and so served to clear them of suspicion of any distrust they had of entering into and possessing the land, which might tend to discourage the people.

Numbers 32:18

Ver. 18. We will not return unto our houses,.... In the cities built or repaired by them, or to their families, and their substance, their flocks and their herds; all which they should leave behind them, and never think of returning to them:

until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance; until all the tribes were settled in their respective places, and every family and everyone in them had their portion assigned them; and accordingly they did not return until the land was wholly subdued, nor even until every lot came up, and the land was divided by it, and the inheritance of the several tribes fixed, and even the cities of the Levites assigned to them out of the several tribes; see Jos 22:1.

Numbers 32:19

Ver. 19. For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward,.... This they said, not as being determined whether Moses and the princes were willing or not to stay where they were, and not pass over Jordan to inherit any part there, and much less as despising the good land, but as giving up all pretensions to it, should they be settled where they desired; they were not of that selfish and covetous disposition as to desire any part on the other side Jordan, if it was but granted them to continue on this side, and possess the land they requested:

because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward; they seem to speak as if they were assured of it, and that it was so ordered by divine Providence, and wanted nothing but the consent of Moses, and the princes of the congregation.

Numbers 32:20

Ver. 20. And Moses said unto them,.... Being better disposed towards them, and more satisfied with the reasonableness of their request, it being explained unto him:

if ye will do this thing; which they had promised:

if ye will go armed before the Lord to war; they had said they would go ready armed before the children of Israel, but Moses expresses it "before the Lord"; which is more agreeable to their encampment and order in marching, for not the standard of Reuben but that of Judah went foremost, yet the standard of Reuben marched directly before the sanctuary bore by the Kohathites, Nu 10:18, and so might be properly said to go before the Lord, who dwelt there.

Numbers 32:21

Ver. 21. And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the Lord,.... Moses tries them thoroughly, and is very express in his words, requiring them not only to go armed, or march from the place where they were, towards the land of Canaan, but to go over Jordan, and not some of them only, but all, and that before the Lord; though indeed, when the tribes came to the river Jordan, the ark, which was the symbol of the divine Presence, went before all the tribes into it, and there stayed till they passed over, and then these two tribes and the half tribe of Manasseh passed before the children of Israel, and before the Lord, unto battle, **Jos 3:11**

until he hath driven out his enemies before him: the Canaanites, who were the enemies of the Lord, as well as of his people; and because of their sins, in which they showed their enmity to God, the land spewed them out, and he drove them out to make way for his people Israel, and till this was done the tribes of Reuben and Gad were to continue with them.

Numbers 32:22

Ver. 22. And the land be subdued before the Lord,.... For the inhabitants fleeing before his people, and being conquered by them, might be said to be subdued before the Lord, this being done in his presence, by his power, and for his people:

then afterward ye shall return: to this side of Jordan, the land of Jazer and Gilead, to their cities, and families there;

and be guiltless before the Lord, and before Israel: having fulfilled all that they promised:

and this land shall be your possession before the Lord; be established and settled in it as their inheritance, the Lord seeing and approving of it, and protecting them in the enjoyment of it.

Numbers 32:23

Ver. 23. But if ye will not do so,.... As they promised they would, and Moses insisted on it that they should:

behold, ye have sinned against the Lord making such a request, and not fulfilling the conditions on which it was granted:

and be sure your sin will find you out; fly in their faces, accuse them in their consciences, charge and load them with guilt, and bring deserved punishment upon them: sin may be put, as it often is, for the punishment of sin, which sooner or later will find out and come upon the impenitent and unpardoned sinner.

Numbers 32:24

Ver. 24. Build ye cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep,.... For their safety and security, as they proposed to do:

and do that which proceedeth out of your mouth; all that they had promised.

Numbers 32:25

Ver. 25. And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying,.... In answer to his speech:

thy servants will do as my lord commandeth; both with respect to their march before the Lord to battle, and with respect to their provision for their children and flocks.

Numbers 32:26

Ver. 26. Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle,.... Their families, and their substance:

shall be there in the cities of Gilead; such as are before mentioned,
Nu 32:3 and which they proposed to repair and fortify, to preserve their families and possessions from the Amorites about them.

Numbers 32:27

Ver. 27. But thy servants will pass over,.... The river Jordan, and go into the land of

Canaan:

every man armed for war; Moses had required that all should go over, and they consent to it, and promise that everyone should, though this was not insisted on when they came to it, for only about 40,000 went over, **Jos 4:13**, whereas the two tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh, numbered more than 110,000; see Nu 26:7:

before the Lord to battle, as my lord saith; for now, instead of saying, "before the children of Israel", a phrase they first used, they say, "before the Lord", as Moses had expressed it.

Numbers 32:28

Ver. 28. So concerning them Moses commanded,.... That they should have a grant of the land they requested: this looks as if Moses determined the case himself, though perhaps it was by the vote, and with the consent of the whole court; only Moses strictly enjoined them to observe it, namely,

Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel; and the rather he did this, because he knew that he should die, and not see either the thing itself or the conditions of it performed.

Numbers 32:29

Ver. 29. And Moses said unto them,.... To Eleazar, Joshua, and the princes of the congregation:

if the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle before the Lord; as they have promised they will:

and the land shall be subdued before you; which must be done before their return:

then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession; which, no doubt, included that of Jazer too, since Jaazer, which is the same, is after mentioned as one of the cities built by the children of Gad,
Nu 32:35.

Numbers 32:30

Ver. 30. But if they will not pass over with you armed,.... Shall change their minds, and break their promise, and refuse to go over the river Jordan with the other tribes, and armed ready to engage in battle with the enemy:

they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan; take their lot there, but have no inheritance or possessions on this side Jordan.

Numbers 32:31

Ver. 31. And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered,...., The word is in the singular number, and shows their unanimity, that they agreed to what Moses said, and replied all of them as one man, as Jarchi expresses it; and it may be there was one that was the mouth of them all, and answered for them:

saying, as the Lord hath said unto thy servants, so will we do; here they make use of the word Jehovah, taking what Moses had said unto them as from the Lord, and therefore should strictly and punctually observe it, as if they heard the Lord himself speak it.

Numbers 32:32

Ver. 32. We will pass over armed before the Lord into the land of Canaan,.... This is repeated again and again, for the confirmation of it, assuring that it should be strictly performed according to the true intent of it:

that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan may be ours; that is, that the possession and inheritance they desired, and which had been granted them, on conditions to be performed by them, might be ratified and confirmed unto them on their fulfilment of them.

Numbers 32:33

Ver. 33. And Moses gave unto them,.... By word of mouth, in the presence of the court, or rather by some instrument drawn up and signed by him and the sanhedrim, or witnessed by them:

[even] to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph; no mention is made of this half tribe joining with the other two tribes in the request to settle on this side Jordan, and therefore it is generally thought that they were encouraged, by the success of the two tribes, to make a like motion; or else Moses and the princes, observing that there was too much land for the said tribes, joined this half tribe with them, the land being suitable for them:

the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land, with the cities thereof in the coasts, even the cities of the country round about; of which kingdoms, and the conquest of them, see Nu 21:24, and several of the cities in them are after mentioned.

Numbers 32:34

Ver. 34. And the children of Gad built,.... Or rather repaired the walls and fortifications, and rebuilt houses which had been demolished in the wars with Sihon and Og; when the following places were taken by the Israelites:

Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer; the two first are mentioned in Nu 32:3. Aroer was a city situated on the river Arnon, and was after this in the hands of the Moabites: Jerom says {q}, it was showed in his day on the top of the mountain, upon the bank of the river Arnon, which flows into the Dead sea, Jer 48:19.

{q} De loc. Heb. fol. 87. I.

Numbers 32:35

Ver. 35. And Atroth, Shophan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah. Of these no mention is made elsewhere, except Jaazer, which is the same with Jazer, Nu 32:3.

Numbers 32:36

Ver. 36. And Bethnimrah, and Bethharan, fenced cities,.... The first of these is the same with Nimrah, Nu 32:3, and the other is the same with Betharam, Jos 13:27, it is called in the Jerusalem Talmud {r}, Bethramtha, and so by the Syrians, Bethramphta; and to the same place Herod gave the name of Livias or Julias {s}: these cities the children of Gad built or repaired for their families:

and folds for sheep; they also built for their cattle, as they promised to do, and Moses enjoined them, Nu 32:16.

{r} Sheviith, fol. 38. 4. {s} Vid. Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. par. 2. p. 643.

Numbers 32:37

Ver. 37. And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kirjathaim. Heshbon was the royal city of Sihon king of the Amorites, and Elealeh was within a mile of it, see Nu 32:3, this shows that those cities were not built anew properly, only repaired, for they were cities in being long before; besides, they had not time to build new cities, for in a few months after this they passed over Jordan; though indeed they left men enough behind to rebuild cities, whom they might set to work about them when they departed: Kirjathaim is, by the Targum of Jonathan, called the city of two streets paved with marble, and it adds, this is Beresha: Jerom {t} says, it is now called Coraiatha, which is pretty near its ancient name, and that it is ten miles from Medeba, a city of Arabia, mentioned as one of the cities in the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, Nu 21:30.

{t} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. M.

Numbers 32:38

Ver. 38. And Nebo, and Baalmeon, (their names being changed,).... For Nebo was the name of an idol, after which perhaps the city was called: Baalmeon signifies "Baal's habitation", and where it is highly probable was a temple of his; and the children of Reuben, not liking to retain such idolatrous names, gave them others, but what they were it is not said; and certain it is, that when these places came into the hands of the Moabites, their ancient names were restored to them, as appears from Isa 15:2

and Shibmah; the same with Shebam, Nu 32:3, and gave other names unto the cities which they built; but they are neither known, nor did they always continue, as has been observed.

Numbers 32:39

Ver. 39. And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it,.... That part of it which Moses gave unto the half tribe of Manasseh, which till now was in the hand of the Amorites; for half Mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, were given to the Reubenites and Gadites, which is the land of Gilead they desired, and which was already conquered; for they call it the country which the Lord smote before Israel, Nu 32:1:

and dispossessed the Amorite which was in it; for though they were driven out of one part of Gilead, yet not out of the whole.

Numbers 32:40

Ver. 40. And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh,.... That is, to the children of Machir, who went and took it; though some say, as Aben Ezra observes, that Machir himself was now alive, and that it was given to him, but that is not probable; for, supposing him to be living when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, all that came from thence, who were twenty years old and upwards, died in the wilderness, excepting two, see Nu 32:11,

and he dwelt therein; that is, the family of the Macharite; see
Nu 26:29.

Numbers 32:41

Ver. 41. And Jair the son of Manasseh,.... By his mother's side, otherwise he was of the family of Judah; for Hezron, of the family of Judah, married a daughter of Machir, the son of Manasseh, by whom he had a son called Segub, who was the father of Jair, **1Ch 2:21**, the same

went and took the small towns thereof; of that part of Gilead given to Machir:

and called them Havothjair; after his own name: in **De 3:14**, they are called Bashanhavothjair.

Numbers 32:42

Ver. 42. And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof,.... Who this Nobah was is not certain, very probably a descendant of Manasseh; it is said {u} he was among those that were born in Egypt, and died after the death of Moses, and was buried beyond Jordan, as it is said, also did Machir and Jair, so that there were none left but Caleb, and Joshua:

and called it Nobah, after his name; but it seems that in later times its ancient name was restored to it; for Jerom {w}, says there was a village in Arabia, called Cannatha, which is supposed to be this place; though he also tells us {x}, that eight miles from Heshbon; to the south, is shown a desert place called Naba. Pliny {y} places Cannatha in the Decapolis.

{u} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 9. p. 27. {w} Ut supra. (De loc. Heb. fol. 89. M.) {x} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. H. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 18.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**
Numbers 33:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 33

This chapter gives an account of the journeys of the people of Israel, from their first coming out of Egypt, to their arrival in the plains of Moab by Jordan, and the names of the various stations where they rested are given, Nu 33:1 and they are ordered, when they passed over Jordan, to drive out the Canaanites, destroy their idols, and divide the land among their families in their several tribes, Nu 33:50 or otherwise it is threatened the Canaanites should be troublesome and vexatious to them, even those that remained; and it might be expected God would do to the Israelites as he thought to do to those nations, Nu 33:55.

Ver. 1. These are the journeys of the children of Israel,.... Which are related in this chapter following:

which went forth out of the land of Egypt: whither their fathers went and stayed, and were kept in hard bondage, but in due time were delivered from it, and came out from thence:

with their armies; in great numbers, and in an orderly manner, in rank and file, and like so many squadrons, see **Ex 7:4**, under the hand of Moses and Aaron: who were sent to the king of Egypt to require their dismission, and who were the instruments under God of their deliverance, and were the leaders of them; as of them out of Egypt, so through the wilderness, in their, several journeys here recorded.

Numbers 33:2

Ver. 2. And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys, by the commandment of the Lord,.... Which may be understood, either that their journeys were by the commandment of the Lord; so Aben Ezra takes the connection to be, and which is undoubtedly true, and which is expressed plainly elsewhere; for so it was, that when the cloud abode on the tabernacle they rested, and had their stations, and continued as long as the cloud tarried on it, and when that was taken up, then they marched; and thus at the commandment of the Lord they rested, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed, see **Nu 9:17** or that Moses wrote the account of their journeys, and several stations, at the commandment of the Lord, that it might be on record, and be read in future ages, and appear to be a fact, that they were led about in a wilderness, in places which were unknown to others, and had no names but what they gave them:

and these are their journeys according to their goings out; from place to place; some of the ancients, as Jerom {z} particularly, and some modern writers, have allegorized these journeys of the children of Israel, and have fancied that there is something in the signification of the names of the places they came to, and abode in, suitable to the cases and circumstances of the people of God in their passage through this world; but though the travels of the children of Israel in the wilderness may in general be an emblem of the case and condition of the people of God in this world, and there are many things in them, and which they met with, and befell them, that may be accommodated to them; yet the particulars will never hold good of individual saints, since they are not all led exactly in the same path of difficulties and troubles, but each have something peculiar to themselves; and it will be difficult to apply these things to the church of God in general, in the several stages and periods of time, and which I do not know that any have attempted; and yet, if there is anything pointed out by the travels, one would think it should be that.

{z} "De 42 mansionibus", Fabiolae, "inter opera ejus", T. 3. fol. 13.

Numbers 33:3

Ver. 3. And they departed from Rameses,.... A city in Egypt, where the children of Israel, a little before their departure, seem to have been gathered together in a body, in order to march out all together, as they did. This place the Targum of Jonathan calls Pelusium. Dr. Shaw {a} thinks it might be Cairo, from whence they set forward; see Ex 12:37 and it was

in the first month; in the month Nisan, as the same Targum, or Abib, which was appointed the first month on this account, and answers to part of our March and April:

on the fifteenth of the first month, on the morrow after the passover; that was kept on the fourteenth, when the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites, and slew all the firstborn in Egypt, which made way for their departure the next morning; the Egyptians being urgent upon them to be gone:

the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians; openly and publicly, with great courage and boldness, without any fear of their enemies; who seeing them march out, had no power to stop them, or to move their lips at them, nay, were willing to be rid of them; see Ex 11:7.

{a} Travels, p. 307. Ed. 2.

Numbers 33:4

Ver. 4. For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the Lord had smitten among them,.... Which contributed much to the more easy and safe deliverance of the children of Israel; for their hearts were heavy with sorrow, and their hands were full, and they had other work to do, namely, to bury their dead, than to molest Israel; and besides, they knew it was for detaining them this stroke came upon them:

upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments; they were moved at the presence, and by the power of God, and fell and were dashed to pieces, as the idols of the same land were in later times, see Isa 19:1 and this still the more intimidated and frightened the Egyptians, that they dared not attempt to hinder the departure of the Israelites from them. The Targum of Jonathan says, the Word of the Lord did this; and adds, their molten idols became soft, their strong idols were mutilated, their earthen idols were diminished, their wooden idols became ashes, and those of beasts died.

Numbers 33:5

Ver. 5. And the children of Israel removed from Rameses,.... Or Pelusium, as the same Targum again:

and pitched in Succoth: where, as the same paraphrase says, they were covered with the clouds of glory, suggesting that to be the reason of its name; but that was rather because of the booths or tents the Israelites erected, pitched, and dwelt in, during their abode there: this, according to Bunting {b}, was eight miles from Rameses; according to whose computation, for want of a better guide, the distances of the several stations from each other will be given.

{b} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 81.

Numbers 33:6

Ver. 6. And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham,.... Which was eight miles from Succoth:

which is in the edge of the wilderness; of the name, see Ex 13:20 but Dr. Shaw {c} makes this particular portion of the wilderness to be fifty miles from Cairo or Rameses.

{c} Travels, p. 308.

Numbers 33:7

Ver. 7. And they removed from Etham, and turned again to Pihahiroth,.... Which was sixteen miles from Etham. This turning, Aben Ezra says, respects the cloud, or Israel; and indeed it may respect both, for, as the cloud turned, Israel turned, being directed by it; and this does not mean that they had been at Pihahiroth before, and now returned to it again; but that they by direction turned out of the straight way in which they were to go to Pihahiroth; for the word "again" may as well, or better, be left out, See Gill on "Ex 14:2":

which is before Baalzephon; the name of an idol, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, supposed to be placed here, to watch and guard the passage, as Zephon signifies:

and they pitched before Migdol: which was either the name of a city, the same with Migdol, Jer 44:1 or it was a tower, as the word signifies, placed here on the borders of the land, for the defence of it.

Numbers 33:8

Ver. 8. And they departed from before Pihahiroth,.... Being forced by Pharaoh's army pressing upon them:

and passed through the midst of the sea; from shore to shore, as on dry laud:

into the wilderness: that part of it which lay on the other side, for still it was the wilderness of Etham they went into, as follows:

and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah; so called from the bitterness of the waters there, and which is computed to be forty miles from Pihahiroth.

Numbers 33:9

Ver. 9. And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim,.... Which was eight miles from Marah:

and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and three score and ten palm trees, and they pitched there; being a convenient place of water for them,

Numbers 33:10

Ver. 10. And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea. This encampment, is omitted in the book of Exodus, see Ex 16:1 this part or arm of the Red sea, whither they came, was six miles from Elim.

Numbers 33:11

Ver. 11. And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin. Sixteen miles from the Red sea, where they were last; see Ex 16:1.

Numbers 33:12

Ver. 12. And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin,.... According to the account in Exodus, this was after they had the manna given them, see Ex 17:1

and encamped at Dophkah; twelve miles from the wilderness of Sin; and of this, and the next encampment, no mention is made in Exodus.

Numbers 33:13

Ver. 13. And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush. The strong fort, as the Targum of Jonathan calls it; this was twelve miles from Dophkah: according to the Jewish chronology {d}, this Alush is the wilderness of Sin, where the Israelites came on the fifteenth day of the seventh month from their going out of Egypt; and they say, that in Alush the sabbath was given them, and that there they kept the first sabbath, as it is said,

and the people rested on the seventh day, Ex 16:30.

{d} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 5. p. 17.

Numbers 33:14

Ver. 14. And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim,.... Eight miles from Alush:

where was no water for the people to drink; and they murmured, and a rock here was smitten by Moses at the command of God, and waters gushed out sufficient for them and their flocks, Ex 17:1.

Numbers 33:15

Ver. 15. And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai. Eight miles from Rephidim; and from a mount of this name here were given the decalogue, with all other statutes and ordinances, judicial and ceremonial, and orders and directions for building the tabernacle, and making all the vessels appertaining to it, and which were all made during their stay here.

Numbers 33:16

Ver. 16. And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at

Kibrothhattaavah. Eight miles from the desert of Sinai; here the people lusted after flesh, and murmured, which, though given them, a pestilence came and destroyed many of them, and here they were buried, whence the place was so called, which signifies the "graves of lust", i.e. of those that lusted: no mention is made of Taberah, either because it was the same with Kibroth, or near it; or, as Aben Ezra on **De 9:22** says, they encamped there but one day, and so is not mentioned in the journeys, though it was one of the three they journeyed from Mount Sinai to Kibrothhattaavah, see Nu 11:1.

Numbers 33:17

Ver. 17. And they departed from Kibrothhattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth. Eight miles from Kibrothhattaavah, where Miriam was smote with leprosy, Nu 12:1.

Numbers 33:18

Ver. 18. And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched at Rithmah. Eight miles from Hazeroth: Rethem, from whence this place seems to have had its name, is generally rendered by "juniper", 1Ki 19:4 and the Targum of Jonathan here adds, where the juniper trees grew; and, perhaps, it is the same with the valley of Retheme, of which some travellers {e} thus write, "this valley", called in the Hebrew Retheme, and commonly Ritma, derives its name from a yellow flower, with which the valley is covered; we found here, on the left hand, two cisterns of excellent water; and water being to be had here, might be the reason of the Israelites pitching in this place. Some learned men {f} think it is the same with Kadeshbarnea, from whence the spies were sent, that being the next remove from Hazeroth, as this was; see Nu 12:16, with which agrees the remark of Jarchi, that this place was so called, because of the evil tongue of the spies, as it is said, Ps 120:3 "what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper"; alluding to the signification of Rithmah; perhaps this is the same place, which by Josephus {g} is called Dathema, and so in the Apocrypha:

"Then the heathen that were at Galaad assembled themselves together against the Israelites that were in their quarters, to destroy them; but they fled to the fortress of Dathema." (1 Maccabees 5:9)

{e} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 2. p. 154. {f} Dr. Lightfoot, vol. 1. p. 35. Dr. Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 382, 383. {g} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 8. sect. 4.

Numbers 33:19

Ver. 19-29. And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmonparez. Six miles from Rithmah, and then from Rimmon to Libnah, which was six miles also; and from thence to Rissah, which was six miles more; and from Rissah to, Kehelathah, which was the same number of miles; and from thence to Shapher, which was six miles also; and then they came to Haradah, which was four miles from thence; the next remove was to Makheloth, which was four miles and a half from the last place; then they went to Tahath, which was four miles more; and from thence to Tarah, which also was four miles; the next place they came to was Mithcah, four miles from Tarah; and then to Hashmonah, which was eight miles more.

Numbers 33:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "Nu 33:19".

Numbers 33:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Nu 33:19".

Numbers 33:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "Nu 33:19".

Numbers 33:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "Nu 33:19".

Numbers 33:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "Nu 33:19".

Numbers 33:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "Nu 33:19".

Numbers 33:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "Nu 33:19".

Numbers 33:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "Nu 33:19".

Numbers 33:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "Nu 33:19".

Numbers 33:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "Nu 33:19".

Numbers 33:30

Ver. 30-31. And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth. Thirty two miles from Hashmonah. In De 10:6 it is called Mosera; and according to the account there, they came hither from the following place, Benejaakan; probably they went first thither from Hashmonah, and then from Mosera or Moserot, and so to Benejaakan again, going backwards and forwards, so Jarchi; the distance of the two places was twenty four miles; for the further reconciliation this, See Gill on "De 10:6" and the Samaritan version there.

Numbers 33:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "Nu 33:30".

Numbers 33:32

Ver. 32-37. And they removed from Benejaakan, and encamped at Horhagidgad. In the Targum Jonathan called Gudgod, as it is Gudgodah in De 10:7, where the remove to this place is said to be from Mosera; it was twenty miles from Benejaaken; from thence they went to Jotbathah, twenty four miles from Horhagidgad; and from thence to Ebronah, twenty miles more; and so to Eziongeber, of which see **1Ki 9:26** which was twenty eight miles from Ebrorah; and their next remove was to the wilderness of Zin, which was Kadesh, forty eight miles from Eziongeber; and from Kadesh they went to Mount Hor, forty eight miles more: which was

in the edge of the land of Edom; as Kadesh also was; see Nu 20:16.

Numbers 33:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "Nu 33:32".

Numbers 33:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "Nu 33:32".

Numbers 33:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "Nu 33:32".

Numbers 33:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "Nu 33:32".

Numbers 33:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "Nu 33:32".

Numbers 33:38

Ver. 38. And Aaron the priest went up into Mount Hor, at the commandment of the Lord,.... Delivered to Moses:

and died there in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of Egypt; not being suffered to go with them into the land of Canaan, because of his sin of unbelief at Kadesh, the last place from whence they came: in Mount Hor he died,

on the first day of the fifth month; the month Ab, answering to part of July and part of August; so that he lived but four months after his sister Miriam; see Nu 20:1.

Numbers 33:39

Ver. 39. And Aaron was one hundred and twenty three years old when he died in Mount Hor. He was eighty three when he stood before Pharaoh, **Ex 7:7**, and forty years he had been with Israel since, which make this number; he was three years older than Moses.

Numbers 33:40

Ver. 40-44. And King Arad the Canaanite,.... Or the king of Arad the Canaanite:

which dwelt in the land of Canaan, he heard of the coming of the children of Israel; towards the land of Canaan, in order to possess it, and he came out and fought with them, and was vanquished; see

Nu 21:1, this was when Israel was at Mount Hor; from whence they departed to Zalmonah, twenty eight miles from the mount; and from thence to Punon, which was twenty more; and so to Oboth, which was twenty four miles from Punon: and thence

to Ijeabarim, in the border of Moab, which was sixteen miles, see Nu 21:9.

Numbers 33:41

Ver. 41. See Gill on "Nu 33:40".

Numbers 33:42

Ver. 42. See Gill on "Nu 33:40".

Numbers 33:43

Ver. 43. See Gill on "Nu 33:40".

Numbers 33:44

Ver. 44. See Gill on "Nu 33:40".

Numbers 33:45

Ver. 45. And they departed from Ijim, and pitched in Dibongad. Sixteen miles from Ijim; the remove from whence is said to be to the valley of Zared, Nu 21:12 in which Dibongad was, so called perhaps because rebuilt by Gad afterwards.

Numbers 33:46

Ver. 46. And they removed from Dibongad, and encamped in Almondiblathaim. Sixteen miles from Dibon, perhaps the same with

Diblath, **Eze 6:14**, according to the account in Nu 21:16, &c. they went from hence to Beer, a place where they found a well, which gave it this name; and several other removes are mentioned there, which are not here, and which, perhaps, were small removes, and not properly stations.

Numbers 33:47

Ver. 47. And they removed from Almondiblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim,.... Sixteen miles from Almondiblathaim; these were so called from passages near them over the river Jordan: and this station was pitched

before Nebo; one of those mountains, whither Moses went up and died.

Numbers 33:48

Ver. 48. And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab,.... Sixteen miles from Abarim, where all those things were transacted, which make the history of Balak and Balaam, Nu 22:1 and where the Israelites now were by Jordan near Jericho; not on that side Jordan where Jericho stood, but on the other; Jericho, according to Eusebius, was ten miles from Bethjesimoth, where Israel now were, as follows.

Numbers 33:49

Ver. 49. And they pitched by Jordan from Bethjesimoth, [even] unto Abelshittim, in the plains of Moab. Their camp reached twelve miles, as the Jews commonly say, which we may suppose was the distance of these two places, which were both in the plains of Moab; and the Jerusalem Targum is express for it, for mentioning Israel's encampment from Bethjesimoth to Abelshittim, it asks, how far is that? twelve miles: the latter is sometimes called Shittim, from the shittim wood which grew there, Nu 25:1 and here it has the addition of Abel to it, to signify mourning, from the mourning of the children of Israel on account of the plague, in which 24,000 persons died, Nu 25:1.

Numbers 33:50

Ver. 50. And the Lord spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan, near Jericho,....
See Gill on "Nu 33:48",
See Gill on "Nu 22:1",

saying; as follows.

Numbers 33:51

Ver. 51. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,.... What was to be said, being what concerned the whole body of the people:

when ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan; near to which they now were, and Moses was about to leave them; and therefore it was the more necessary to give them some instructions and directions what they should do, when they were come into it.

Numbers 33:52

Ver. 52. Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you,.... Not at once, but gradually; and the sense is, that they should use their utmost endeavours wholly to extirpate them:

and destroy all their pictures; their idolatrous ones; the pictures of their gods, or the statues and figured stones of them: the Targum of Jonathan interprets it,

"all the temples of their worship;"

and the Jerusalem Targum,

"all their idols;"

so called, as Jarchi notes, because they covered the floor with a pavement of marble stones, to worship upon them by the stretching out of their hands and feet, according to Le 26:1,

and destroy all their molten images; of gold, silver, &c.

and quite pluck down all their high places; their temples, groves, and altars built upon them.

Numbers 33:53

Ver. 53. And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein,.... Turn them out of their cities, towns, and houses, and inhabit them:

for I have given you the land to possess it; who had a right to dispose of it, and a better title they needed not desire than the Lord could and did make them.

Numbers 33:54

Ver. 54. And ye shall divide the land by lot,.... What is said in this verse is the same with Nu 26:53, where it has been explained; See Gill on "Nu 26:53", See Gill on "Nu 26:54", See Gill on "Nu 26:55", See Gill on "Nu 26:56".

Numbers 33:55

Ver. 55. But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land before you,.... Should be remiss and careless about it, and indifferent to it, and not make use of the proper means to get rid of them, but, on the contrary, make covenants with them, and intermarry among them; or, however, become friendly to them, and suffer them to dwell among them:

then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them; sparing their lives, and permitting them to dwell among them:

shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides; which figurative expressions show that they should be very troublesome and distressing to them, even in their most tender and nearest concerns, and dearest relations, and which are explained and more properly expressed as follows:

and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell; among other things by their wicked conversation, and by drawing them into sin through their ill examples, and so bring the displeasure of God upon them, and punishment for their evil doings.

Numbers 33:56

Ver. 56. Moreover, it shall come to pass,.... This being the case, they suffering the Canaanites to dwell among them, and they mingling with them, learning their works, and serving their gods: that

I shall do unto you as I thought I should do unto them; deliver them up into the hands of their enemies, who should carry them captive into other lands.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Numbers 34:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 34

In this chapter the bounds and borders of the land Canaan are described, according to the direction of the Lord to Moses, Nu 34:1, the south border, Nu 34:3, the western border, Nu 34:6, the north border, Nu 34:7, the east border, Nu 34:10, which is ordered to be divided by lot to the nine tribes and a half, two tribes and a half having received their inheritance on the other side Jordan, Nu 34:13, and the persons are nominated to divide the land, Eleazar and Joshua, with one prince out of every tribe, and who are mentioned by name, Nu 34:16.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... At the same time that he ordered him to direct the children of Israel, when they had passed over Jordan, to drive out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, and divide their land among them, he proceeded to give the limits and boundaries of the land:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 34:2

Ver. 2. Command the children of Israel, and say unto them,.... Not to fix the borders, and settle the boundaries of the land, for that is done by the Lord himself, who has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of men's habitations, and particularly of Israel, see De 32:8, but to observe and take notice of the limits he had fixed, that they might know how far they were to go on every side, whom they were to drive out, and what they were to divide and inherit, and see what was their right, and preserve it from the encroachments of their neighbours, as well as observe the goodness of God unto them, in thus providing for them:

when ye come into the land of Canaan; to take possession of it by virtue of a grant of it to them:

this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance; it is said to "fall", because it was divided by lot, each tribe having such a part of it assigned to them, according to the lot that came up unto them: even

the land of Canaan, with the coasts thereof; or according to its borders, which are as follow.

Numbers 34:3

Ver. 3. Then your south quarter,.... Or border of the land; which, as Jarchi observes, was from east to west:

shall be from the wilderness of Zin; which is Kadesh, where Miriam died, Nu 20:1, and if this Kadesh was Kadeshbarnea, as Dr. Lightfoot seems to have proved {h}, from whence the spies were sent, that was clearly on the south of the land of Canaan, for they were bid to go up their way southward, Nu 13:17, and so Kadeshbarnea is hereafter mentioned, as being in the southern border: the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"from the wilderness of the palm trees of the mountain of iron;"

there is a smaller palm tree, which by Jewish writers is called Zin, of which there were great quantities on a mountain famous for iron mines, in this wilderness, from whence it is thought it had its name; hence we read {i} of palm trees of the mountain of iron, as fit to make the bunch of branches of trees, called the "lulab", carried in the hand on the feast of tabernacles:

along by the coast of Edom; the land of Canaan, to the south, bordered on three countries, Egypt, Edom, and Moab; according to Jarchi, some part of Egypt, the whole land of Edom, and the whole land of Moab; the part of the land of Egypt was in the south west corner of it; the land of Edom by it to the east; and the land of Moab by the land of Edom, at the end of the south to the east:

and your south border shall be the outmost coast of the salt sea eastward; the same that is sometimes called the Dead sea, the sea of Sodom, or the lake Asphaltites, as Heathen writers generally call it.

{h} Works, vol. 2. p. 8, 9. {i} Misn. Succah. c. 3. sect. 1.

Numbers 34:4

Ver. 4. And your border,.... That is, the south border, which is still describing:

shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim; or Maalehacrabbim, as in Jos 15:3 so called from the multitude of serpents and scorpions in it, see **De 8:15**, so Kimchi says {k}, a place of serpents and scorpions was this ascent: Dr. Shaw {l} says Akrabbim may probably be the same with the mountains of Accaba, according to the present name, which hang over Eloth, where there is a "high steep road", well known to the Mahometan pilgrims for its ruggedness: and he thinks {m} it very probable, that Mount Hor was the same chain of mountains that are now called Accaba by the Arabs, and were the easternmost range, as we may take them to be, of Ptolemy's black mountains: Josephus {n} speaks of Acrabatene as belonging to the Edomites, which seems to be this same place:

and pass on to Zin; that is, which ascent goes on to it; the Targum of Jonathan is, "and shall pass on to the palm trees of the mountain of iron;"

by which is meant the same with the wilderness of Zin: perhaps Zinnah is rather the name of a city; the Septuagint call it Ennac: the Vulgate Latin, Senna: Jerom {o} makes mention of a place called Senna, seven miles from Jericho:

and the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadeshbarnea; from whence the spies were sent southward to search the land, Nu 13:17

and shall go on to Hazaraddar; called Adar, Jos 15:3 and where it seems to be divided into two places, Hezron and Adar, which very probably were near each other, and therefore here put together, as if but one place:

and pass on to Azmon; which the Targums call Kesam.

{k} Sepher Shorash. "in voce" brqe. {l} Travels, tom. 2. ch. 1. p. 279. {m} Travels, tom. 2. ch. 1. p. 323. {n} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 8. sect. 1. see 1 Maccab. 5. 3. {o} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. H.

Numbers 34:5

Ver. 5. And the border shall fetch a compass,.... Not go on in a straight line, but turn about:

from Azmon unto the river of Egypt; the river Nile, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; but Aben Ezra seems to deny that that river is meant: and some think that Rhinocolura, which flows into the Mediterranean sea, is meant; or the "valley of Egypt", Casiotis, which divided Judea from Egypt, as follows:

and the goings out of it; not of the river, but of the border:

shall be at the sea; the above sea, called in the next verse the great sea; all the Targums render it to the west.

Numbers 34:6

Ver. 6. And as for the western border,.... Of the land of Canaan:

you shall even have the great sea for a border; and no other, meaning the Mediterranean sea, which lies west of the land of Judea; Aben Ezra calls it the Spanish sea: it has the name of "great", in comparison of some in the land of Canaan, as the salt sea, and the sea of Tiberias:

this shall be your west border; namely, the Mediterranean sea.

Numbers 34:7

Ver. 7. And this shall be your northern border,.... What follows:

from the great sea ye shall point out for you Mount Hor; not that Mount Hor on which Aaron died, for that was on the southern border of the land; but rather Mount Herman, which is said to be unto the entering into Hamath, Jos 13:5 as this Mount Hor is in the following verse; or some part of Mount Lebanon might be so called, which was the northern border of the land: the Targum of Jonathan calls it Umanus; and the Jerusalem Targum, Manus or Taurus Umanus, the Mountain Umanus, which divided Syria and Cilicia; it is joined with Lebanon by Josephus {p}, and with that and Carmel by Aelianus {q}.

{p} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 2. {q} De Animal. l. 5. c. 56.

Numbers 34:8

Ver. 8. From Mount Hor ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath,.... Antiochia, as Jarchi; or rather Epiphania, as Jerom {r}; the former being described by Hemath the great, **Am 6:2**, this entrance was a narrow pass leading from the land of Canaan to Syria, through the valley which lies between Lebanon and Antilibanus:

and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad; the same boundary as here is given in Eze 47:15.

{r} Comment. in Ezek. 47. 16.

Numbers 34:9

Ver. 9. And the border shall go on to Ziphron,.... Which in the Jerusalem Targum is called Zapherin; and Jerom {s} says, that in his time this city was called Zephyrium, a town in Cilicia; but this seems to be at too great a distance:

and the goings out of it shall be at Hazarenan; which was the utmost of the northern border, and so it is in Eze 47:17 and there called the border of Damascus: Reland {t} takes it to be the same with Enhazor, a city in the tribe of Naphtali, Jos 19:37, the words only inverted:

this shall be your northern border: from the Mediterranean sea to Hazarenan in Naphtali.

{s} Comment. in ver. 15. {t} Palestin. lllustrat. par. 1. l. 1. p. 123.

Numbers 34:10

Ver. 10. And ye shall point out your east border from Hazarenan to Shepham. From the place where the northern border ended, which Jerom says {u} the Hebrews call Apamia, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem do here. Shepham was a city between Hazarenan and Riblah in the tribe of Naphtali, where Adrichomius {w} places it.

{u} Comment. ut supra. (cf. ver. 15.) {w} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 114.

Numbers 34:11

Ver. 11. And the coast shall go down from Shepham to Riblah,.... Said to be in the land of Hemath, Jer 52:9, which, according to Jerom {x}, was Antioch of Syria; and both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem understand by it Daphne, which was in the suburbs of Antioch; but this seems to be carrying the limits of the land too far: Jarchi remarks, that when the border goes from the north towards the south, it is said to go down:

on the east side of Ain; a city in the tribe of Judah; according to Jerom {y} now a village that goes by the name of Bethennim, two miles from the turpentine tree, that is, from the tent of Abraham or oak of Mamre, and four from Hebron:

and the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward; the same with the sea of Tiberius, and the sea of Gennesaret, frequently made mention of in the New Testament, and in Eze 47:18, called the east sea.

{x} Comment. ut supra. (cf. ver. 15.) {y} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. F.

Numbers 34:12

Ver. 12. And the border shall go down to Jordan,.... A well known river to the east of the land of Canaan:

and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea; the sea of Sodom; and though all sea water is generally salt, this was remarkably so, through the great quantity of bitumen and nitre in it; hence it was called Asphaltites; thus as the description of the borders of the land began with the salt sea, Nu 34:3, it ends with it:

this shall be your land, with the coasts thereof round about: which, according to the Targum of Jonathan, was thus bounded, Rekamgea (or Kadeshbarnea) on the south, Taurus Urnanus (by which he interprets Mount Hor) on the north, the great sea on the west (i.e. the Mediterranean sea), and the salt sea on the east.

Numbers 34:13

Ver. 13. And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying,.... Strictly enjoining them to observe what he was about to say to them:

this is the land which ye shall inherit by lot; as above described and bounded:

which the Lord commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe; to the tribes of Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, Dan, Ephraim, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali, and the half tribe of Manasseh; though this command is not before expressed, it is very probable it was delivered to Moses at the same time he had the mind of God concerning the settlement of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the other half tribe of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan; see Nu 32:31.

Numbers 34:14

Ver. 14. For the tribe of the children of Reuben, according to the house of their fathers,.... That tribe, and all the families belonging to it:

have received their inheritance, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance; that is, it was agreed they should have it on condition of their going along with the other tribes over Jordan into the land of Canaan, and assist them in the conquest of it, Nu 32:1.

Numbers 34:15

Ver. 15. The two tribes and the half tribe,.... The tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh:

have received their inheritance on this side Jordan near Jericho, eastward, toward the sun rising; that is, they received the grant of it there, even in the plains of Moab, opposite Jericho, which lay to the east of the land of Canaan.

Numbers 34:16

Ver. 16. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... At the same time that he gave him the bounds of the land of Canaan, which was to be divided between the nine tribes and a half; and that this might be done in the most impartial manner, and to the satisfaction of them all, he gave orders to Moses:

saying; as follows.

Numbers 34:17

Ver. 17. These are the names of the men which shall divide the land unto you,.... Or "inherit the land for you" {z}; that is, as Jarchi interprets it, they were to take possession of it in their name and stead, as their representatives, and then distribute it unto them, or divide it to be inherited by them; but whatever may be said for the princes of the tribes, as acting for their respective tribes, and representing them, the same cannot be said of the two first named, as follow:

Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun; the one the principal person in ecclesiastical affairs, and the other in civil ones; to divide the land being partly a sacred work, as it was a type of the heavenly Canaan, and a civil one, as it concerned the present welfare of the people of Israel; and both were types of Christ, the priest upon his throne, who is both priest and King; who, as the one, gives a right unto it, and, as the other, introduces into it.

{z} Mkl wlxny "haereditabunt vobis", Montanus; "qui haereditario jure accipient pro vobis", Tigurine not.

Numbers 34:18

Ver. 18. And ye shall take one prince out of every tribe,.... That is, out of the nine tribes and the half, which are ten in all; of the tribes of Reuben and Gad none were taken, because they had had their inheritance granted them elsewhere; nor of the tribe of Levi, because they were to have no inheritance in the land: to divide the land by inheritance; who being men of honour, understanding, and probity, and naturally concerned for the good of the tribes to which they belonged, would take care that justice be done to each, and that no fraudulent methods were used in drawing the lot; and then take possession according to the lot, and impartially divide the portion assigned among the respective families in the tribes, according to their rank and numbers.

Numbers 34:19

Ver. 19-28. And the names of the men are these,.... Which were not left to the tribes to choose, but were nominated by the Lord himself, who best knew their capacities and qualifications for this service:

of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh: who was one of the two spies that brought a good report of the land, and Joshua is the other; and these were the only two of the spies living, and who are the first that were appointed to this service, of overseeing the division of the land; the rest were all of the new generation, that were sprung up, whose fathers fell in the wilderness, and we know no more of them than their names; and therefore from hence, to the end of Nu 34:28, no further remarks are necessary, only that the tribes and the princes are reckoned in a different order than they were at any time before, either at the first numbering of them, **Nu 1:1** or at the offerings for the dedication of the altar, **Nu 7:1** or at the taking the sum of them, Nu 26:1 even according to the order of their situation in the land of Canaan by their lots, and which Moses did not live to see; and which therefore shows the prescience and predisposing providence of God, and that Moses, as Bishop Patrick observes, was guided by a divine Spirit in all his writings.

Numbers 34:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "Nu 34:19".

Numbers 34:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Nu 34:19".

Numbers 34:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "Nu 34:19".

Numbers 34:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "Nu 34:19".

Numbers 34:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "Nu 34:19".

Numbers 34:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "Nu 34:19".

Numbers 34:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "Nu 34:19".

Numbers 34:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "Nu 34:19".

Numbers 34:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "Nu 34:19".

Numbers 34:29

Ver. 29. These are they whom the Lord commanded,.... Not only named and appointed them, but laid his commands upon them, and obliged them:

to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel; even this order was made before the land was conquered by them, so sure and certain was it unto them; and accordingly they did divide it, and that in Shiloh, before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, as in the presence of God, doing it in the most impartial and solemn manner; see Jos 19:51.

Numbers **35:1**

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 35

Though the tribe of Levi had no part in the division of the land, yet cities out of the several tribes are here ordered to be given them to dwell in, to the number of forty eight, Nu 35:1, six of which were to be cities of refuge, Nu 35:9, but not for wilful murderers, in whatsoever way they might kill a man, Nu 35:16, but for such who had killed a man unawares, Nu 35:22, and several rules are given relating to such persons, Nu 35:25, but no satisfaction was to be taken in case of murder, nor to excuse a person's return to his own house before the death of the high priest, who had fled to a city of refuge, that so the land might not be defiled, Nu 35:30.

Ver. 1. And the Lord spake to Moses,.... After he had described the borders of the land, and given instructions about the division of it among the several tribes, and named the persons that should be concerned in parting and putting it into the possession of the Israelites, he makes a provision for the Levites; for though they had no inheritance in the land as a tribe, yet it was proper they should have cities and houses to dwell in; for it would not be suitable that they should be always about the tabernacle, as they were in the wilderness; and it is concerning this the Lord is said to speak to Moses,

in the plains of Moab by Jordan, near Jericho: where the Israelites now were, and had been for some time:

saying; as follows.

Numbers **35:2**

Ver. 2. Command the children of Israel,.... All the tribes of them; it is not a bare instruction that is given them, much less a mere request that is made to them, or something proposed, and left to their option whether they would agree to it or not; but it is strictly enjoined them by the Lord, who had given them freely all they should possess, and who had a right to all they had, and to whom they were in duty and gratitude bound to do his will and pleasure: the order is,

that they give unto the Levites, of the inheritance of their possession, cities to dwell in; which was but reasonable and requisite, that the ministers of God, and the assistants of the priests, and who did the service of the congregation, that they should have, habitations for them and their families, as well as food and raiment was provided for them in another way:

and ye shall give also unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them; which were partly for ornament to their cities, and partly for their health, that they might have air, and not be too closely confined within the walls of their cities; and also for convenience, that they have room for their cattle, and places to lay up the increase of their fields, as after suggested. Jarchi says, that a suburb was a space and place parted without the city, round about, for the beauty of it; but they were not allowed to build there an house (i.e. to dwell in), nor to plant a vineyard, nor to sow seed; other ground is after provided for such uses.

Numbers 35:3

Ver. 3. And cities shall they have to dwell in,.... For them and their families, and indeed for nothing else, they having no trades nor worldly business to carry on in them:

and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle; for stables and stalls to put them up in, and for barns and storehouses to lay in provender for them:

and for their goods; where to bestow them, as the increase of their fields, oliveyards, and vineyards, see Lu 12:18

and for all their beasts; or living creatures; or "for their whole life" {z}; or livelihood, whatsoever was for the support of it; the Targum of Jonathan adds, by way of explanation, for all their necessities; and so Jarchi.

{z} Mtyh lkl "ad vitam ipsorum". Vid. Drusium.

Numbers 35:4

Ver. 4. And the suburbs of the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites,.... The dimensions and bounds of them were not left to the Israelites, to give what ground they pleased for this purpose, but were fixed to what length they should be: these

[shall reach] from the walls of the city, and outward, a thousand cubits round about; which was half a sabbath day's journey, and pretty near half a mile, which all around a city must contain a considerable quantity of ground, if the city was of any size, as it is certain that some of them given them at least were.

Numbers 35:5

Ver. 5. And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits,.... Before only 1000 cubits were ordered to be

measured, and now 2000, even 2000 more, which were to be added to the other, and to begin where they ended. The first 1000 were for their cattle and goods, these 2000 for their gardens, orchards, fields, and vineyards; and so the Jewish writers understand it. Jarchi observes, that 1000 cubits are ordered, and after that 2000; and asks, how is this? or how is it to be reconciled? to which he answers, 2000 are put to them round about, and of them the 1000 innermost are for suburbs, and the outermost (i.e. the 2000) are for fields and vineyards; and with this agrees the Misnah {a}, from whence he seems to have taken it; and the same was to be on every other side of the city, south, west, and north, as follows:

and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; which, added to the other 1000 all around, must make a large circumference of land:

and the city shall be in the midst; in the midst of the circuit of three thousand cubits all around, so that it must stand very pleasant and convenient:

this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities; such a quantity of ground, consisting of so many cubits, shall be assigned to every city; the suburbs or glebe land to a Levite's city, on the four sides were four squares, and each square consisted of seventy six acres, one rood, twenty perches, and eighty square feet; all the four squares amounting to three hundred and five acres, two roods, one perch, besides fifty seven feet square, according to Bishop Cumberland.

{a} Sotah, c. 5. sect. 3. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Numbers **35:6**

Ver. 6. And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites,.... The number of which is not yet expressed, but is afterwards: there shall be

six cities for refuge; a sort of asylums, of which there were many among the Heathens, perhaps in imitation of these, for persons to have recourse to for safety, when in danger of life: the Septuagint render the words, "cities of flight" {b}; or to flee unto, which certainly was the use of them: to this the apostle alludes when he speaks of some that fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them, **Heb 6:18**, the word {c} used for refuge signifies "gathering or receiving", for here persons in distress gathered or betook themselves; and here they were received, retained, protected, and sheltered: what and where these six cities were to be, and were, is after shown:

which ye shall appoint for the manslayer; not for any and everyone, not for one that killed a man presumptuously and purposely, through enmity and malice, but for one that did it ignorantly, unawares, and without design:

that he may flee thither; with all haste, after the commission of the fact; and, to facilitate his flight, and that he might have no interruption in it, the sanhedrim were obliged to prepare the ways to the cities of refuge, and to make them fit and large; and they removed everything that might cause him to stumble; and they did not leave in the way neither an hillock, nor a dale, nor a river but they made a bridge over it, that nothing might retard him that fled thither, as it is said;

thou shalt prepare thee a way; De 19:3 and the breadth of the way to the cities of refuge was not less than thirty two cubits; and at the parting of ways (on posts erected) were written, "refuge, refuge", so that the slayer might know (the way) and turn there (as this directed him): and on the fifteenth of Adar or February, they met every year, to take care of this business {d}; and they also appointed two disciples of the wise men, or two studious and understanding persons, to accompany him, not so much for the direction of the way, as lest the avenger of blood should meet with him, and slay him in the way; and who were to talk to him, and persuade him not to do it, suggesting to him that it was not done designedly, but unawares, and that it would be a bad thing to kill a man for what he did not intend to do, and which was done without any malice or enmity to the person killed, and with such like words to cool and appease the avenger {e}:

and to them ye shall add forty two cities; according to the Jewish writers these also were cities of refuge; for so they say {f},

"all the cities of the Levites receive or are refuges, every one of them is a city of refuge, as it is said, "and to them ye shall add", &c. the Scripture makes them all alike for refuge: what difference is there between cities of refuge, which are separated for refuge, and the rest of the cities of the Levites? the gates of the cities of refuge receive, whether according to knowledge or not, (which Mr. Selden {g} interprets, whether the inhabitants will or not; but the sense of Maimonides elsewhere {h}, and of other writers, is plainly this, whether according to the knowledge and intention of the manslayer or not, whether he knows it to be a city of refuge or :not, and whether he purposely came thither for safety or not,) and he that enters into them is safe; but the rest of the cities of the Levites do not receive, but according to knowledge (when the manslayer knowingly and designedly came thither for shelter); and a manslayer that dwells in a city of refuge gives no more for his house, but he that dwells in the other cities of the Levites gives more (or pays for it) to the owner of the house;"

but though this is their unanimous opinion, it rather seems, according to the letter of the Scripture, that only six were cities of refuge, and the rest were for the Levites to dwell in by themselves.

{b} jlqmh yre poleiv twn fugadeuthriwn, Sept. {c} jlqm "receptus", Junius & Tremellius; "collectionis", Piscator; R. Sol. Ohel Moed, fol. 82. 1. "proprie significat collectionem vel retentionem", Munster. {d} Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 5. {e} Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 5. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {f} Maimon. ut supra, ({d}) sect. 11. {g} De Jure Natarae & Gentium, l. 4. c. 2. p. 489. {h} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Maccot, l. 2. sect. 4.

Numbers 35:7

Ver. 7. So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites shall be forty eight cities,.... Of these forty eight cities, their names, and what tribes they were in, and which of them were particularly cities of refuge, an account is given in Jos 21:10:

them shall ye give, with their suburbs; according to the dimensions before prescribed.

Numbers 35:8

Ver. 8. And the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel,.... What shall fall by lot for their inheritance, and they shall be possessed of; and though they are, shall not refuse, nor grudge to give them, according to the direction of God, whose the land is, they holding it under him:

from [them that have] many ye shall give many, but from [them that have] few ye shall give few; which rule was observed; for out of Judah, whose lot was large, and out of Simeon, whose inheritance was within that of Judah, because it was so large, nine cities were given, whereas out of the other tribes only four cities out of each were given, and out of one of them but three, see Jos 21:1,

everyone shall give of his cities unto the Levites, according to his inheritance which he inheriteth; and the Levites, being thus dispersed among the several tribes, were of great advantage to them, to instruct them in the knowledge of divine things; so that though hereby Jacob's curse on this tribe had its fulfilment, that it should be divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel, yet that became a blessing to the rest of the tribes; see Ge 49:7.

Numbers 35:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord spake unto Moses,.... At the same time, or he continued his speech unto him:

saying: as follows.

Numbers 35:10

Ver. 10. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,.... Now, directly:

when ye come over Jordan into the land of Canaan; as they quickly would, being now very near it, and of which there was the utmost certainty, since the Lord had promised to bring them over that river, and put them in possession of that land.

Numbers 35:11

Ver. 11. Then ye shall appoint your cities to be cities of refuge for you,.... And, according to the Jewish writers {i}, these were neither to be made large nor little, but middling; and they appointed them where there were markets and fairs, at which goods were to be sold; and where there was plenty of water, and a multitude of people; and where there were but few, they fetched others from other places; and they neither made nets for hunting, nor twisted ropes in them, nor sold any warlike instruments, lest the avenger of blood should use himself to come thither, under pretence of buying such things, and kill the manslayer:

that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares; or through error {k}, or mistake, not on purpose, with design, or through malice and enmity, as is afterwards more largely explained.

{i} Maimon. Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 8. Vid. T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 10. 1. {k} hggvb "per errorem", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "per imprudentiam", Tigurine version: Vatablus; "in ignorantia", Montanus.

Numbers 35:12

Ver. 12. And they shall be unto you cities of refuge from the avenger,.... Or near kinsman; for as the right of redemption of an estate that was mortgaged belonged to such an one, so of revenging the blood of any one that was killed:

that the manslayer die not; by the hand of the avenger, who in the heat of his passion would, could he come at him, fall upon him, and slay him, to avenge the death of his relation on him:

until he stand before the congregation in judgment; before the court of judicature, to be examined, tried, and judged, whether the murder was committed knowingly and willingly, or whether through mistake and at unawares: this was done either before the court of judicature in the city of refuge, who took cognizance of such cases directly, that they might know whom to harbour and protect, and whom not; or before the court in the place where the act was committed: interpreters are divided about this; and Calmet {l} is of opinion that he was examined in both courts, first more strictly in the city of refuge, and then more slightly in the place where it was done, which is not improbable; however, this seems manifest from Nu 35:25, that the court where it was committed had power to fetch him from the city of refuge, and set him before them, and examine into the case; and, if an innocent person, restored him to the city of refuge, whither he had fled.

{l} Dictionary, on the word "Refuge".

Numbers 35:13

Ver. 13. And of these cities which ye shall give,.... Of the forty eight cities they were to give to the Levites, Nu 35:7,

six cities shall ye have for refuge; which, I think, makes it clear, that not all the forty eight cities were for refuge, only six of them.

Numbers 35:14

Ver. 14. Ye shall give three cites on this side Jordan,.... Which were Bezer in the wilderness, out of the tribe of Reuben; and Ramoth in Gilead, out of the tribe of Gad; and Golan in Bashan, out of the tribe of Manasseh, Jos 20:8,

and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan: which were Kadesh in Galilee, in Mount Naphtali; Shechem in Mount Ephraim; and Kirjatharba, or Hebron, in the mountain of Judah, Jos 20:7

[which] shall be cities of refuge; the three on the other side Jordan, the Jews

say, were separated by Moses, and the three in the land of Canaan by Joshua, but not one of them was a refuge until they were all separated {m}: it may seem strange that there should be as many in the two tribes and a half on the other side Jordan, as in the nine tribes and a half in the land of Canaan; let it be observed, what the Jewish writers, say {n}, Moses separated three cities beyond Jordan, and opposite them Joshua separated three in the land of Canaan; and they were like two rows in a vineyard, Hebron in Judea was opposite Bezer in the wilderness; Shechem in Mount Ephraim was opposite Ramoth in Gilead; Kadesh in Mount Naphtali was opposite Golan in Bashan; and the three were so disposed, that there was as much space from the south (of the land of Israel) to Hebron as from Hebron to Shechem; and as much from Hebron to Shechem as from Shechem to Kadesh; and as much from Shechem to Kadesh as from Kadesh to the north beyond Jordan; and it should be known that the land of the tribes beyond Jordan extended in length as far as the land of Canaan, and was equal to it, running along it; so that those in the land of Canaan could soon and easily get over Jordan to the cities of refuge there, if there was occasion; besides, there is a direction given, that if their coast should be enlarged, they were to add three cities more in the land of Canaan, De 19:8, hence the Jews have a notion, that in the days of the Messiah those three cities will be added {o}; but the Messiah is come already, and is the antitype of them all.

{m} Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 4. Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 2. 3. & in Pirke, c. 4. sect. 2. & Jarchi in loc. {n} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 9. 2. {o} Maimon. Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 4.

Numbers 35:15

Ver. 15. These six cities shall be a refuge both for the children of Israel and for the stranger,.... For an Israelite, and a proselyte of righteousness, one that embraced the Jewish religion, and in all things conformed to it, and to whom there was but one law in things civil and religious:

and for the sojourner among you; the proselyte of the gate, who renounced idolatry, and observed the commands of the sons of Noah, but in other things did not comply with the Jewish ceremonies, yet had the benefit of the cities of refuge equally with the other; though the Jews say {p}, such a proselyte or sojourner had only this privilege, who slew a proselyte, but not if he slew an Israelite; but for this distinction there is no foundation in the text:

that everyone that killeth any person unawares may flee thither; whether an Israelite, or a proselyte of righteousness or of the gate.

{p} Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 3.

Numbers 35:16

Ver. 16. And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die,.... As with an hatchet, hammer, sword, knife, &c.

he is a murderer; the instrument used by him, and with which he smote, shows that he had a bad design, and intended to kill, or he would never have smitten a man with such an instrument:

the murderer shall surely be put to death; be condemned to death, and be executed, by the order of the civil magistrate, according to the law in **Ge 9:6** and not be allowed the benefit of a city of refuge.

Numbers 35:17

Ver. 17. And if he smite him with throwing a stone,.... "Or with a stone of the hand" {q}, which the Jews interpret of a stone so big as to fill a man's hand, and so

wherewith he may die; at whom it is thrown; is sufficient to cause his death, if struck with it; so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it of a

"stone of fulness of hands, which is sufficient that a man may die with it,"

or be killed by it:

and he die; by the blow he receives from it, either immediately or in a short time after:

he is a murderer, and the murderer shall surely be put to death; as in the above case.

{q} dy Nbab.

Numbers 35:18

Ver. 18. Or if he smote him with an hand weapon of wood,.... A stick, or staff, or club:

wherewith he may die, and he die; which is sufficient to kill a man, as the same Targum explains it; and a man dies with the blow that is given him by it:

he is a murderer, and the murderer shall surely be put to death; no pardon given him, or the benefit of the city of refuge allowed him.

Numbers 35:19

Ver. 19. The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer,.... Not only shall have power to do it, but, as it seems, should be obliged to do it; be the executioner of the murderer; but not before his case has been heard, examined, tried, and judged; wherefore the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"in judgment,"

that is, as Onkelos explains it,

"when he is condemned by judgment,"

the court of judicature:

when he meeteth him he shall slay him; the first opportunity he has, even though, as Jarchi says, if he meets him in the midst of one of the cities of refuge, and no judgment is passed on him.

Numbers 35:20

Ver. 20. But if he thrust him of hatred,.... Or, "and if" {r}, since the

Scripture is still speaking of such that shall die for murder, though in another instance, without having the privilege of a city of refuge; if he thrusts him with a sword or knife, or rather, since, if anything of that kind is included in the first instance of smiting with an instrument of iron, push him down from an high place, as Aben Ezra; so the men of Nazareth intended to have dispatched Christ in that way, **Lu 4:29**

or hurl at him by lying in wait, that he die; as a bowing wall, as the same writer instances in, push down that upon him as he passes along, lying in wait for him; or throws anything at him, with an intention to kill him, and does; or casts down anything upon him, a large stone, or anything else, by which he dies.

{r} Maw "et si", Pagninus, Montanus.

Numbers 35:21

Ver. 21. Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die,.... Give him a blow with his fist, on some part of his body where life is most in danger, and which issues in death:

he that smote him shall surely be put to death, for he is a murderer; and therefore, according to the original law, ought to die, without reprieve or pardon; and notwithstanding this law made for cities of refuge, which were to be denied him:

the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer when he meeteth him: that is, when he is condemned, as both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan interpret it, after a hearing and trial of his case.

Numbers 35:22

Ver. 22. But if he thrust him suddenly, without enmity,.... Push him from a precipice, before he is aware, without any malicious design against his life, but merely through accident:

or have cast upon him anything; from the top of a house, or from a building he is pulling down, or pushes a bowing wall upon him, not knowing that he is passing by it:

and without lying of wait: or having contrived to do it, just as he goes along, or in any other similar way.

Numbers 35:23

Ver. 23. Or with any stone wherewith a man may die,.... Which is sufficient to kill a man, if thrown at him:

seeing him not; and so without intention: the Jews {s} from hence gather, that a blind man is to be acquitted and dismissed, and not banished and so stands in no need of a city of refuge; though others say he is to be banished, and needs it, and ought to have the privilege of it:

and cast it upon him that he die; casting, it upon another account, and with another view, but yet falling upon a man, it kills him;

and was not his enemy, neither sought him harm; it was never known that they were at variance, or that the slayer had ever by any overt act discovered any malice and enmity against the deceased, by word or deed, or ever sought to do him any injury, either to his person or property.

{s} Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 3.

Numbers 35:24

Ver. 24. Then the congregation,.... That is, the court of judicature, assembled together to hear and try this cause:

shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood; shall hear what both have to say, and pass sentence:

according to these judgments; these judicial laws and rules of judgment before delivered, exemplified in various cases.

Numbers 35:25

Ver. 25. And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the avenger of blood,.... Put him under the care of proper persons, to conduct him to one of the cities of refuge, or put him in the way to it; and restrain the avenger of blood from pursuing him, until such time that it may be judged he is safe arrived there:

and the congregation shall restore him to the city of refuge, whither he was fled; so that it seems by this, when one had been guilty of manslaughter, and fled to one of the cities of refuge, he might be taken from thence and had before a court of justice, and there take his trial; and if it appeared that the fact was committed by him, ignorantly, unawares, and without design, then he was returned to his city of refuge; but, if otherwise, he was put to death, notwithstanding he had fled thither; and so it is said in the Misnah {t}, that

"at first, or formerly, one that killed another ignorantly or presumptuously, they sent him before to one of the cities of refuge, and the sanhedrim sent and fetched him from thence: he who was condemned to death by the court, they slew him; he that was not condemned was dismissed; he that was condemned to banishment they returned him to his place, according to Nu 35:25."

and he shall abide in it, unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil: and then he was to be set at liberty, and return to his house and family and have his former possessions and honours, if he had any, restored unto him, the commission or warrant for his detainer there ceasing, being made void by the death of the high priest; who was the prince of the priests and Levites, to whom those cities belonged, and so under his jurisdiction: or so it was ordered, because such was the general mourning for such a public loss as an high priest, that all private revenges would subside, and the cause of them be buried, in grief and forgetfulness; though, no doubt, this had a respect to something which will be hereafter taken notice of: the Jews say {u}, that the mothers of the priests used to supply with a sufficient quantity of food and raiment such who fled to the cities of refuge, that they might not pray for the death of their sons; and according to them, a man's case was very bad when there was no high priest; for so they write {w}

"he whose cause is finished (or his case determined in a court of judicature), and there is no high priest; and he that slays an high priest, or an high priest slays another, he never goes out, no not so much as to bear testimony in any cause, and even in what the congregation has need of him, but there are his dwelling, his death, and his burial."

{t} Misn. Maccot. c. 2. sect. 6. {u} Misn. Maccot. c. 2. sect. 3. {w} Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 7.

Numbers 35:26

Ver. 26. But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge,.... Which seems to be the three thousand cubits assigned to every city of the Levites, and so to the cities of refuge; and which, according to the Jewish writers, were a refuge, as the city itself; and it is said {x},

"he, that kills a man there, is killed for him, but though the border is a refuge, the slayer does not dwell in it, as it is said. Nu 35:25, "he shall abide in it", but not in its borders:"

whither he was fled; on account of manslaughter.

{x} Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 11. Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 7.

Numbers 35:27

Ver. 27. And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge,.... Without the suburbs, fields, and vineyards belonging to it:

and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; being exasperated against him, and to avenge the blood of his relation on him:

he shall not be guilty of blood; or be reckoned murderer, or die for it.

Numbers 35:28

Ver. 28. Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest,.... Nothing could give him his liberty but his death; so that though this was a merciful provision made in such cases for such persons, and was a considerable benefit and privilege, yet it carried in it some appearance of a punishment; since such a person was confined within the boundaries of one of the cities of refuge as long as the high priest lived; and this was done to make persons cautious how they were any way accessory to the death of another, though without design:

but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession; to that part of the land, and to that tribe to which he belonged, to his house and family, and to his possessions and inheritances, whatever he had, and to all the honours and privileges he before enjoyed, and under no danger from the avenger of blood henceforward: a custom somewhat like this has prevailed in some parts of Africa, as Leo Africanus {y} relates, that if a man happened to kill another, all the friends of the deceased conspired to kill him, but if they could not effect it, then the guilty person was proclaimed an exile from the city, for the whole space of seven years; and at the expiration of the whole seven years, when he returned from his exile, the chief men of the city invited him to a feast, and so he was restored to his liberty: temples, groves, altars, and statues, were common among other nations for asylums or refuges, but whole cities very rarely with the ancients; it seems there were some {z}.

{y} Descriptio Africae, l. 2. p. 135, 136. {z} Vid. Marmor. Oxon. & Not. in ib. p. 25. & Rittershusium de Jure Asylorum, c. 2.

Numbers 35:29

Ver. 29. So these things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you,.... A judicial law, according to which they were to proceed in all the above cases:

throughout your generations in all your dwellings; throughout all ages, as long as they dwelt in the land of Canaan, even unto the times of the Messiah, in whom the things figured hereby had their accomplishment: the cities of refuge were types of Christ: hence a divine person, even the Messiah, is often spoken of as the refuge of his people, **Ps 9:9** with which compare **Heb 6:18** these were places to flee to, as the word is rendered by the Greek version; to Christ sensible sinners flee for shelter and safety, which supposes danger in themselves from the law and justice of God; a sense of that danger which makes them flee from wrath to come; a view of Christ, as a place of refuge, and that no other but he will serve their purpose, and therefore make all the haste and speed they can unto him. The word properly signifies cities of gathering, or of reception. There was a gathering of the elect of God to Christ at his death; and there is another at effectual calling, which is an act of God's grace, and a distinguishing one, when souls gather to Christ as their Saviour for righteousness, peace, pardon, rest, and everlasting life; and when Christ receives them, though sinners, into his arms, and into his heart, and into open fellowship with him, so as to dwell in him, where they dwell pleasantly and safely; he receives them into his house here, and into heaven hereafter; and by, and in Christ, those that flee to him, and are received by him, are retained and preserved from Satan, law, hell and death. The cities of refuge were of God's appointing; so Christ, as a Saviour, and rock of refuge to his people, is appointed and foreordained of God; they were well known for refuges, as the Lord is in the places of Zion; they were open for all, at all times, as Christ is for all sinners, even the chief of sinners, Jews or Gentiles; they are all one in Christ, the Israelite, and the stranger and sojourner; all impediments were removed out of the way of them, and plain directions to them given, as are in the Gospel, and by the ministers of it; and there is always room in Christ for such that flee to him, as there was in those cities; and being in him, they are safe from the curse and condemnation of the law, from wrath to come, and from the second death; and their redemption and atonement, peace and reconciliation, liberty, life and salvation, are owing to the death of Christ, their high priest. Abendana {a} observes, that the death of the high priest atoned for the offence (of manslaughter), which was the reason the manslayer continued in the city of refuge till his death, and then was released: however, certain it is, that the death of Christ, our high priest, atones for every sin of those that flee to him, and by which they are reconciled to God. In some things there is a difference between these cities of refuge and Christ; they were six, he but one; they were for such only who shed blood ignorantly, he for such that were enemies to him, and lived in malice towards others, and guilty of the most enormous crimes: to be in these cities of refuge was a kind of exile and imprisonment, but they that are in Christ are freemen; it was possible that such might die that were in them, and at most were only delivered from temporal death, but they that flee to Christ for refuge are saved with an everlasting salvation.

{a} Not. in Miclol Yophi in ver. 25.

Numbers 35:30

Ver. 30. Whoso killeth any person,.... Willingly, and through enmity and malice:

the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of two witnesses; which is repeated partly to show, that this law concerning the cities of refuge was not designed to screen a murderer, who was guilty through malice prepense; and partly for the sake of what is added to it, that two witnesses are required in such a case, where a man's life is at stake, to prove the fact against him; which shows how careful the Lord is, and men should be, of the lives of his creatures, that no man suffer wrongfully; which is repeated again and again, that it might be observed, see De 17:6 but one witness shall not testify against any person, to cause him to die; which looks as if in other cases, in pecuniary matters, and the like, where life is not concerned, one witness may be sufficient; though it is always best and safest to have more if they can be had, that at the mouth of two or three witnesses everything may be established, De 19:15.

Numbers 35:31

Ver. 31. Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer,.... Though he would give all his wealth and substance, all his estates and possessions, and whatever he is worth in the world; for all that a man has he will give for his life; but these are not to be taken, nor anything, and everything his friends may offer for him; all is to be rejected, the life of such a man is not to be saved on any consideration:

which is guilty of death; as he is who kills a man willingly and purposely; but one may be guilty of killing another, and yet not be deserving of death, when it is done ignorantly and accidentally with respect to him, for which reason this clause is added: but he shall be surely put to death; by the order of the civil magistrate; and if this is not done either through want of evidence, or the fault of the judge, or the criminal clemency of the chief governor, God sooner or later will take vengeance on such a person.

Numbers 35:32

Ver. 32. Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge,.... Though for killing a man unawares:

that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest; the high priest; such a man's liberty was not to be purchased with money, nor even his life to be bought off, should he be taken without his city; a great ransom could not deliver him from the avenger, because he was guilty of this law, which so wisely and mercifully provided for him; and consequently guilty also of great ingratitude to God, as well as of a breach of his law, and of disrespect to his high priest, under whom he was protected.

Numbers 35:33

Ver. 33. So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are,.... The land of Canaan, as it had been by the old inhabitants of it, by idolatry, adultery, and murder:

for blood it defileth the land: the shedding of innocent blood defiles a nation, and the inhabitants of it, brings guilt thereon, and subjects to punishment:

and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it; or "there can be no expiation" {b}, or "atonement made" for it in any other way; the blood of the murderer is required at his hands, and nothing short of it will satisfy law and justice, see **Ge 9:6**.

{b} rpky al "non posset expiatio", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; to the same sense Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.

Numbers 35:34

Ver. 34. Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inherit,.... By the commission of such atrocious crimes, or suffering them to go unpunished, or by taking a compensation for the life of the guilty person:

wherein I dwell; which is added to strengthen the exhortation, and as giving a reason why care should be taken not to pollute it, because the Holy God dwells there; as he did in the tabernacle erected for him, and in such a peculiar manner as he did not in other lands:

for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel; he now dwelt among them as their God, and their King; his tent or tabernacle being pitched in the midst of the camps of Israel; and so he would continue to dwell among them when they were come to the land of Canaan, so long as they observed his laws, statutes, and ordinances; and therefore it behoved them to be careful that they did not pollute themselves and their land, and cause him to depart from them.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Numbers 36:1

INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 36

This chapter gives an account of an application made by the heads of the tribe of Manasseh, concerning the inheritances of the daughters of Zelophehad, which, should they marry into other tribes, would be removed thither, and so be a loss to theirs, Nu 36:1, which case was judged worthy of regard; and to remedy this inconvenience, they were ordered to marry into the family of their father's tribe, and this was to be a law to all heiresses for the future in other tribes, Nu 36:5 and accordingly the daughters of Zelophehad married their father's brothers' sons, Nu 36:10.

Ver. 1. And the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead,.... The princes, as Aben Ezra; so the Septuagint version, which was the tribe of Manasseh, whose grandson Gilead was, as follows:

the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near; to the house of judgment, as the Targum of Jonathan, the sanhedrim or court of judicature, consisting of the following persons:

and spoke before Moses; the Septuagint version adds, "and before Eleazar the priest", as in Nu 27:2

and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel: the princes of the several tribes; or it may be rather the seventy elders.

Numbers 36:2

Ver. 2. And they said,.... One in the name of the rest:

the Lord commanded my lord; that is, Moses, whom they address in a very respectable manner, being the chief governor of the nation under God:

to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel; which command may be seen, in Nu 26:53:

and my lord was commanded by the Lord to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother; or kinsman, being of the same tribe:

unto his daughters; who sued for it, and upon Moses's consulting the Lord about it, it was ordered they should have it, Nu 27:1 and which these princes observed was likely to be attended with the following inconvenience.

Numbers 36:3

Ver. 3. And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel,.... Which was not an unreasonable supposition, and perhaps was judged very probable and likely, if some method was not taken to prevent it; which they might conclude from the application of some young men of the other tribes unto them:

then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received; for the inheritance given unto them would of course, the above being the case, descend to their sons, and whose fathers being of other tribes, it would be fixed there:

so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance; which gave them some concern; for though this was no personal injury to them, nor any detriment to their families and estates, yet, as it was a lessening of their tribe, they were uneasy at it; and the rather they might be, since half their tribe was to settle on that side Jordan, where they now were: and now all this, the suit of the daughters of Zelophehad for their father's inheritance, which was granted them, the address of young men to them as heiresses, the concern of the heads of the tribe of Manasseh on this account; all this, I say, being before they entered into the land, or it was conquered by them, or divided to them by inheritance, show their strong faith and assurance that they should possess it.

Numbers 36:4

Ver. 4. And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be,.... At which time inheritances were to be restored to the original proprietors of them; yet this would be of no service in the present case, but rather the contrary, since it would fix the inheritances of these daughters in another tribe or in other tribes into which they should marry; and so Aben Ezra and Jarchi interpret it, "though" there shall be a jubilee, that will be of no advantage; it will not remedy this inconvenience: for

then shall their inheritance be put unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received; it being one principal part of the business of the jubilee year to settle the inheritances of every tribe; and these daughters being married into another tribe, of consequence their inheritance would be placed there; or should it be sold by their husbands, or their sons, at the year of jubilee it would be restored to them as of such a tribe:

so shall their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers; and thereby be a lessening of it; and every tribe being ambitious of preserving and increasing its grandeur, this affair sensibly affected the heads of this tribe.

Numbers 36:5

Ver. 5. And Moses commanded the children of Israel,.... Even all the tribes of Israel, whom the following law concerned, as well as the tribe of Manasseh:

according to the word of the Lord; whom no doubt he consulted on this occasion, as he did when the daughters of Zelophehad applied unto him about the inheritance of their father:

saying, the tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well; in showing such a concern for the welfare of their tribe; the consideration of which would be of service to them all, and therefore was worthy of notice. Aben Ezra observes, that the heads of the fathers spoke for the sake of every tribe, what was for the good of them all, and therefore was well spoken.

Numbers 36:6

Ver. 6. This is the thing which the Lord doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad,.... Concerning this affair relative to them; the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases the words,

"not for the generations that rise up after the division of the land, but for the daughters of Zelophehad;"

as if this order only respected them, or what might happen before the land was divided, but not after; and this is the general opinion of the Jewish writers; but it seems, that as the following law not only concerns them, but all heiresses, so all such after as well as before the division of the land, since the reason of it holds good after as before:

saying, let them marry to whom they think best; whom they like best, who are most acceptable to them; as it was reasonable they should, and not have such forced upon them, whose persons were disagreeable to them:

only into the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry; they were to marry not only such as were of the tribe of Manasseh, but of their father's family in that tribe; they could only marry into the family of the Hepherites; see Nu 26:32.

Numbers 36:7

Ver. 7. So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe,.... Which shows that this concerns all the tribes of Israel, though yet not fully expressed, as it is afterwards:

for everyone of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers; or cleave {a} to a wife in that tribe for marriage; this word is used in the original institution of it, **Ge 2:24** though they were not strictly obliged to marry in their own tribe; and frequently they did intermarry with other tribes, which, had it been unlawful, would not have been done, as it was by kings, and priests, and others; nor was there any danger of an inheritance going into another tribe by a man's marrying into it; wherefore this signifies only, that they were to be careful to keep their inheritances in their tribe; and therefore if any of them had no sons, only daughters, he was to marry them in his own tribe and family, that the inheritance might not remove, as follows

{a} wqbdy "adhaerebunt", Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius.

Numbers 36:8

Ver. 8. And every daughter that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe if the children of Israel,.... For the same law which gave the daughters of Zelophehad right to their father's inheritance, gave every other daughter in Israel a right to inherit where there were no sons, Nu 27:8 and every such daughter, according to this law,

shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father; marry into her father's tribe and family; by which it appears that such who were not heiresses might marry persons of another family, and even of another tribe:

that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers; of his father's brethren, or of those that are near akin to him.

Numbers 36:9

Ver. 9. Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another,.... Which was one end of the year of jubilee, but that did not sufficiently secure it without this law, as this case shows:

but everyone of the tribes of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance; the chief view of which was, that it might clearly appear of what tribe and family the Messiah sprang when he came.

Numbers 36:10

Ver. 10. Even as the Lord commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad. They married into, the family of their father's tribe, according to the following account.

Numbers 36:11

Ver. 11. For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah,.... The names of the daughters of Zelophehad, and the same as in Nu 26:33, only the order a little varied, Tirzah and Noah here changing places; there they are according to their birth, here they are according to their marriage, as Aben Ezra thinks; though Jarchi is of opinion, that being thus differently placed shows that they were equal to one another, and one was not preferred to the other:

these were married unto their father's brothers' sons; so that they were first cousins.

Numbers 36:12

Ver. 12. And they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh, the son of Joseph,.... The family of the Hepherites, of which they were. Aben Ezra observes, that their being married into families, and not a family, is a sign that their uncles' sons were not all of them brethren, or the sons of one man, but of more, though all sons of one or other of their father's, brethren:

and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father; by means of these marriages, even both in their father's tribe and family.

Numbers 36:13

Ver. 13. These are the commandments and the judgments,.... The judicial laws concerning the division of the land of Canaan, the case of inheritances in it, and the cities of refuge:

which the Lord commanded by, the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel, in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho; where the Israelites had been ever since they were first observed by Balak king of Moab, and where the various things had been done recorded in the preceding chapters from that time.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Deuteronomy 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY

This book is sometimes called "Elleh hadebarim", from the words with which it begins; and sometimes by the Jews "Mishneh Torah", the repetition of the law; and so in the Syriac version, with which agrees the Arabic title of it; and when the Greeks, and we after them, call it "Deuteronomy", it is not to be understood of a second, a new, or another law, but of the law formerly delivered, but now repeated, and also more largely explained; to which are likewise added several particular laws, instructions, and directions; all which were necessary, on account of the people of Israel, who were now a new generation, that either were not born, or not at an age to hear and understand the law when given on Mount Sinai; the men that heard it there being all dead, excepting a very few; and these people were also now about to enter into the land of Canaan, which they were to enjoy as long as they kept the law of God, and no longer, and therefore it was proper they should be reminded of it; and besides, Moses was now about to leave them, and having an hearty desire after their welfare, spends the little time he had to be with them, by inculcating into them and impressing on them the laws of God, and in opening and explaining them to them, and enforcing them on them, which were to be the rule of their obedience, and on which their civil happiness depended. And sometimes the Jews call this book "the book of reproofs", because there are in it several sharp reproofs of the people of Israel for their rebellion and disobedience; and so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem begin it by calling it the words of reproof which Moses spake, &c. That this book was written by Moses there can be no doubt, from **De 1:1**, only the eight last verses, which give an account of his death, and of his character, were wrote by another hand, equally inspired by God, as either Eleazar the priest, as some, or Samuel the prophet, as others;

or, as it is the more commonly received opinion of the Jews, Ezra; though it is highly probable they were wrote by Joshua his successor. This book was written and delivered by Moses, at certain times in the last month of his life, and towards the close of the fortieth year of the children of Israel's coming out of Egypt. And that it is of divine authority need not be questioned, when the several quotations out of it are observed, as made by the apostles of Christ, in **Ac 3:22** Heb 10:30 out of De 18:15 and by our Lord himself, Mt 18:16 from De 19:15. Yea, it is remarkable, that all the passages of Scripture produced by Christ, to repel the temptations of Satan, are all taken out of this book, **Mt 4:7** compared with **De 8:3**, and the voice from heaven, directing the apostles to hearken to him, refers to a prophecy of him in De 18:15.

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 1

The time and place when the subject matter of this book was delivered to the Israelites are observed by way of preface, **De 1:1**, and it begins with reminding them of an order to them to depart from Mount Horeb, and pass on to the land of Canaan, which the Lord had given them, **De 1:6**, and with observing the very great increase of their number, which made it necessary for Moses to appoint persons under him to be rulers over them, whom he instructed in the duty of their office, **De 1:9**, and he goes on to observe, that when they were come to the mountain of the Amorites, they were bid to go up and possess the land; but, instead of that, they desired men might be sent to search the land first, which was granted, **De 1:19**, and though these men upon their return brought of the fruits of the land, and a good report of it, particularly two of them; yet being discouraged by the report of the rest, they murmured, distrusted, and were afraid to enter, though encouraged by Moses, **De 1:24**, which caused the Lord to be angry with them, and upon it threatened them that they should die in the wilderness, and only two of them should ever see and enjoy the land, and therefore were bid to turn and take their journey in the wilderness, **De 1:34**, but being convinced of their evil, they proposed to go up the hill, and enter the land, which they attempted against the commandment of the Lord, but being repulsed by the Amorites, they fled with great loss, to their great grief, and abode in Kadesh many days, **De 1:41**.

Ver. 1. These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel,.... Not what are related in the latter part of the preceding book, but what follow in this; and which were spoken by him, not to the whole body of the people gathered together to hear him, which they could not do without a miracle; but to the heads of the people, the representatives of them, who were convened to hear what he had to say, in order to communicate it to the people; unless we can suppose that Moses at different times to several parties of them delivered the same things, until they had all heard them:

on this side Jordan; before the passage of the Israelites over it to the land of Canaan; for Moses never went in thither, and therefore it must be the tract which the Greeks call Persea, and which with respect to the Israelites when in the land of Canaan is called "beyond Jordan", for here now Moses was; and the children of Israel had been here with him a considerable time in the wilderness, the vast wilderness of Arabia, which reached hither:

in the plain; the plains of Moab, between Bethjeshimoth and. Abelshittim, where the Israelites had lain encamped for some time, and had not as yet removed; see Nu 33:49

over against the Red [sea]: the word "sea" is not in the text, nor is there anything in it which answers to "Red"; it should be rendered "opposite Suph", which seems to be the name of a place in Moab, not far from the plains of it, and perhaps is the same with Suphah in Nu 21:14 for from the Red sea they were at a considerable distance:

between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab; these are names of places which were the boundaries and limits of the plains of Moab, or lay very near them; for Paran cannot be understood of the Wilderness of Paran, which was too remote, but a city or town of that name. Tophel and Laban we read of nowhere else; a learned man {a} conjectures Tophel is the name of the station where the Israelites loathed the manna as light bread, because of the insipidness of it, which he observes this word signifies; but that station was either Zalmonah, or Punon, or this station must be omitted in the account of their journeys, and besides was too remote. Jarchi helps this conjecture a little, who puts Tophel and Laban together, and thinks they signify their murmuring because of the manna, which was white, as Laban signifies; but the above writer takes Laban to be a distinct station, the same with Libnah, Nu 33:20, and Hazeroth to be the station between Mount Sinai and Kadesh, Nu 12:16. But both seem to be too remote from the plains of Moab; and Dizahab he would have to be the same with Eziongaber, Nu 33:35, which he says the Arabs now call Dsahab, or Meenah el Dsahab, that is, "the port of gold"; and certain it is that

Dizahab has the signification of gold, and, is by Hillerus {b} rendered "sufficiency of gold", there being large quantities of it here; perhaps either through the riches of the port by trade, or by reason of a mine of gold at it, or near it; so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "where there is much gold", and the Septuagint version "golden mines", Catachrysea; and Jerom {c} makes mention of a place of this name, and says they are mountains abounding with gold in the wilderness, eleven miles from Horeb, where Moses is said to write Deuteronomy; elsewhere {d} he calls it Dysmemoab, i.e. the west of Moab, near Jordan, opposite Jericho.

{a} Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 471, &c. {b} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 67, 300. {c} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. A. {d} Travels, p. 319.

Deuteronomy 1:2

Ver. 2. There are eleven days' journey from Horeb, by the way of Mount Seir, to Kadeshbarnea. Not that the Israelites came thither in eleven days from Horeb, for they stayed by the way at Kibrothhattaavah, a whole month at least, and seven days at Hazeroth; but the sense is, that this was the computed distance between the two places; it was what was reckoned a man might walk in eleven days; and if we reckon a day's journey twenty miles, of which See Gill on "Jon 3:3", the distance must be two hundred and twenty miles. But Dr. Shaw {e} allows but ten miles for a day's journey, and then it was no more than one hundred and ten, and indeed a camp cannot be thought to move faster; but not the day's journey of a camp, but of a man, seems to be intended, who may very well walk twenty miles a day for eleven days running; but it seems more strange that another learned traveller {f} should place Kadeshbarnea at eight hours, or ninety miles distance only from Mount Sinai. Moses computes not the time that elapsed between those two places, including their stations, but only the time of travelling; and yet Jarchi says, though it was eleven days' journey according to common computation, the Israelites performed it in three days; for he observes that they set out from Horeb on the twentieth of Ijar, and on the twenty ninth of Sivan the spies were sent out from Kadeshbarnea; and if you take from hence the whole month they were at one place, and the seven days at another, there will be but three days left for them to travel in. And he adds, that the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, pushed them forward, to hasten their going into the land; but they corrupting themselves, he turned them about Mount Seir forty years. It is not easy to say for what reason these words are expressed, unless it be to show in how short a time the Israelites might have been in the land of Canaan, in a few days' journey from Horeb, had it not been for their murmurings and unbelief, for which they were turned into the wilderness again, and travelled about for the space of thirty eight years afterwards. Aben Ezra is of opinion, that the eleven days, for the word "journey" is not in the text, are to be connected with the preceding words; and that the sense is, that Moses spake these words in the above places, in the eleven days they went from Horeb to Kadesh.

{e} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. I. {f} Pococke's Description of the East, vol. 1. p. 157.

Deuteronomy 1:3

Ver. 3. And it came to pass in the fortieth year,.... That is, of the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt:

in the eleventh month; the month Shebet, as the Targum of Jonathan, which answers to part of January and part of February:

in the first day of the month, that Moses spoke unto the children of Israel according to all that the Lord had given him in commandment unto them; repeated to them the several commandments, which the Lord had delivered to him at different times.

Deuteronomy 1:4

Ver. 4. After he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon,.... Either Moses, speaking of himself in the third person, or rather the Lord, to whom Moses ascribes the victory; of this king, and his palace, and the slaughter of him, see Nu 21:24,

and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Ashtaroth in Edrei; or near Edrei; for Edrei was not the name of a country, in which Ashtaroth was, but of a city at some distance from it, about six miles, as Jerom says {g}; hither Og came from Ashtaroth his palace to fight with Israel, and where he was slain, see Nu 21:33. Ashtaroth was an ancient city formerly called Ashtaroth Karnaim, and was the seat of the Rephaim, or giants, from whom Og sprung, See Gill on "Ge 14:5", see also **De 3:11**. Jerom says {h} in his time there were two castles in Batanea (or Bashan) called by this name, nine miles distant from one another, between Adara (the same with Edrei) and Abila; and in another place he says {i} Carnaim Ashtaroth is now a large village in a corner of Batanea, and is called Carnea, beyond the plains of Jordan; and it is a tradition that there was the house of Job.

{g} De loc. Heb. fol. 87. I. {h} lbid. E. {i} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. M.

Deuteronomy 1:5

Ver. 5. On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab,.... On that side of Jordan in which the land of Moab was, and which with respect to the land of Canaan was beyond Jordan; this the Vulgate Latin version joins to the preceding verse:

began Moses to declare this law: to explain it, make it clear and manifest; namely, the whole system and body of laws, which had been before given him, which he "willed" {k}, as some render the word, or willingly took upon him to repeat and explain unto them, which their fathers had heard, and had been delivered unto them; but before he entered upon this, he gave them a short history of events which had befallen them, from the time of their departure from Horeb unto the present time, which is contained in this and the two next chapters:

saying; as follows.

{k} lyawh "voluit", Montanus; "placuit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "statuit", Tigurine version.

Deuteronomy 1:6

Ver. 6. The Lord our God spoke unto us in Horeb,.... The same with Sinai, as Aben Ezra observes; while the Israelites lay encamped near this mountain, the Lord spoke unto them:

saying, ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: or near it; for hither they came on the first day of the third month from their departure out of Egypt, and they did not remove from thence until the twentieth day of the second month in the second year, Ex 19:1 so that they were here a year wanting ten days; in which space of time the law was given them, the tabernacle and all things appertaining to it were made by them, rulers both ecclesiastical and civil were appointed over them, and they were numbered and marshalled in order under four standards, and so ready to march; and all this being done, they must stay no longer, but set forward for the land of Canaan. It is well for persons that they are not to stay long under the law, and the terrors of it, but are directed to Mount Zion; Heb 12:18.

Deuteronomy 1:7

Ver. 7. Turn you and take your journey,.... That is, remove from Horeb, where they were, and proceed on in their journey, in which they had been stopped almost a year:

and go to the mount of the Amorites; where they and the Amalekites dwelt, in the south part of the land of Canaan, and which was the way the spies were sent, Nu 13:17,

and unto all the places nigh thereunto; nigh to the mountain. The Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret them of Moab, Ammon, Gebal, or Mount Seir: "in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale"; such was the country near this mountain, consisting of champaign land, hills, and valleys:

and in the south; the southern border of the land of Canaan, as what follows describes the other borders of it:

and by the sea side: the Mediterranean sea, the western border of the land, which Jarchi out of Siphri explains of Ashkelon, Gaza, and Caesarea, and so the Targum of Jonathan:

into the land of the Canaanites; which was then possessed by them, the boundaries of which to the south and west are before given, and next follow those to the north and east:

and unto Lebanon; which was on the north of the land of Canaan:

unto the great river, the river Euphrates; which was the utmost extent of the land eastward, and was either promised, as it was to Abraham, Ge 15:18 or enjoyed, as it was by Solomon, **1Ki 4:21**.

Deuteronomy 1:8

Ver. 8. Behold, I have set the land before you,.... Described it to them, and set its bounds, as well as had given them a grant of it:

go in and possess the land, which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and their seed after them: and which being thus made sure unto them, they had nothing more to do than to go and take possession of it.

Deuteronomy 1:9

Ver. 9. And I spake unto you at that time,.... About that time; for it was after the rock in Horeb was smitten, and before they encamped at Mount Sinai, that Jethro gave the advice which Moses took, and proceeded on it, as here related; see Ex 18:1

saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone; to rule and govern them, judge and determine matters between them. Jethro suggested this to Moses, and he took the hint, and was conscious to himself that it was too much for him, and so declared it to the people, though it is not before recorded; see Ex 18:18.

Deuteronomy 1:10

Ver. 10. The Lord your God hath multiplied you,.... Which was the reason why he could not bear them, or the government of them was too heavy for him, because they were so numerous, and the cases brought before him to decide were so many:

and, behold, you are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude; whereby it appeared that the promise to Abraham was fulfilled, Ge 15:5, they were now 600,000 men fit for war, besides women and children, and those under age, which must make the number of them very large.

Deuteronomy 1:11

Ver. 11. The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are,.... This prayer he made, or this blessing he pronounced on them, to show that he did not envy their increase, nor was any ways uneasy at it, but rejoiced in it, though he gave it as a reason of his not being able to govern them alone:

and bless you, as he hath promised you: with all kind of blessings, as he had often promised their fathers.

Deuteronomy 1:12

Ver. 12. How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife?] His meaning is, that he could not hear and try all their causes, and determine all their law suits, and decide the strifes and controversies which arose between them; it was too heavy for him, and brought too much trouble and incumbrance upon him.

Deuteronomy 1:13

Ver. 13. Take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes,.... Not only whose persons were well known, but their characters and qualifications, for their probity and integrity, for their wisdom and prudence in the management of affairs, for their skill and knowledge in things divine and human, civil and religious, and for their capacity in judging and determining matters in difference; see Ex 18:21

and I will make them rulers over you; the people were allowed to choose their own officers, whom they were to bring to Moses, and present before him, to be invested with their office. A like method was taken in the choice and constitution of deacons in the Christian church, when the secular affairs of it lay too heavy upon the apostles, **Ac 6:3**.

Deuteronomy 1:14

Ver. 14. And ye answered me and said,.... As the speech of Moses to the people is not expressed before, so neither this answer of theirs to him:

the thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do; to look out for and present persons to him as before described; this they saw was for their own good and profit, as well as for the ease of Moses, and therefore readily agreed to it.

Deuteronomy 1:15

Ver. 15. So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known,.... The principal persons among them, that were remarkable and well known for their wisdom and understanding, whom the people presented to him:

and made them heads over you; rulers of them, as follows:

captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens; see Ex 18:21

and officers among your tribes; which Jarchi interprets of such that bind malefactors and scourge them, according to the decree of the judges, even the executioners of justice; and so the Jews commonly understand them to be, though some have thought they were judges also.

Deuteronomy 1:16

Ver. 16. And I charged your judges at that time,.... When they were appointed and constituted, even the heads and rulers before spoken of; this charge is also new, and not recorded before:

saying, hear the causes between your brethren; hear both sides, and all that each of them have to say; not suffer one to say all he has to say, and oblige the other to cut his words short, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it; but give them leave and time to tell their case, and give the best evidence they can of it:

and judge righteously; impartially, just as the case really appears to be, and according to the evidence given:

between every man and his brother; between an Israelite and an Israelite:

and the stranger that is with him; between an Israelite and proselyte, whether a proselyte of the gate, or of righteousness; the same justice was to be done to them as to an Israelite.

Deuteronomy 1:17

Ver. 17. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment,.... Or pass judgment, and give sentence according to the outward appearances, circumstances, and relations of men; as whether they be friends or foes, rich or poor, old or young, men or women, learned or unlearned; truth and justice should always take place, without any regard to what persons are:

but you shall hear the small as well as the great; persons in low, life, and in mean circumstances, as well as great and noble personages; or little causes and of no great moment, as well as those of the utmost importance; all must be attended to, a cause about a "prutah" or a farthing, as well as one about a hundred pounds, in which Jarchi instances, and if that came first it was not to be postponed:

ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; of the frowns and threatenings of rich men, and of such as are in power and authority; not be awed or intimidated by them from doing justice; see Job 31:34,

for the judgment [is] God's; judges stand in the place of God, are put into their office by him, and act under him, and for him, and are accountable to him; and therefore should be careful what judgment they make, or sentence they pass, lest they bring discredit to him, and destruction on themselves:

and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it; which is said for their encouragement, as well as was an instruction to them not to undertake a cause too difficult for them; see Ex 18:22.

Deuteronomy 1:18

Ver. 18. And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do. Delivered to them all the laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which were then given him at Mount Sinai.

Deuteronomy 1:19

Ver. 19. And when we departed from Horeb,.... As the Lord commanded them to do, when they were obedient:

we went through all the great and terrible wilderness; the wilderness of Paran, called "great", it reaching from Mount Sinai to Kadeshbarnea, eleven days' journey, as Adrichomius {l} relates; and "terrible", being so hard and dry as not to be ploughed nor sown, and presented to the sight something terrible and horrible, even the very image of death; to which may be added the fiery serpents and scorpions it abounded with, **De 8:15**,

which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites; that is, in the way that led to the mountain:

as the Lord our God commanded us; to depart from Horeb, and take a tour through the wilderness towards the said mountain:

and we came to Kadeshbarnea; having stayed a month by the way at Kibrothhattaavah, where they lusted after flesh, and seven days at Hazeroth, where Miriam was shut out of the camp for leprosy during that time.

{l} Theatrum Terrae, p. 116.

Deuteronomy 1:20

Ver. 20. And I said unto you, you are come unto the mountain of the Amorites,.... Which was inhabited by them, and was one of the seven nations the Israelites were to destroy, and possess their land, and which lay on the southern part of the land of Canaan:

which the Lord our God doth give unto us; not the mountain only, but the whole country of that people, and even all the land of Canaan.

Deuteronomy 1:21

Ver. 21. Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee,.... The land of Canaan, on the borders of which they then were; See Gill on "De 1:8",

go up; the mountain, by that way of it which was the way the spies went, and up to which some of the Israelites presumed to go when forbidden, they not complying with the call of God:

and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; as in **De 1:8**,

fear not, neither be discouraged; though the people of the land were numerous and strong, and their cities large and walled.

Deuteronomy 1:22

Ver. 22. And ye came near unto me everyone of you,.... Not every individual of them, but the heads of their tribes, that represented them; this is not to be understood of the present generation personally, but of their fathers, who all died in the wilderness, save a very few of them; but they being the same people and nation, it is so expressed:

and said, we will send men before us; that is, they thought it was proper and prudent so to do, and came to Moses to consult him about it; for we are not to suppose that they had determined upon it, whether he approved of it or not:

and they shall search us out the land: that they might know what sort of land it was, whether good or bad, fruitful or not, and whether woody or not: see Nu 13:19

and bring us word again by what way we must go up; or, "concerning the way {m} in which we must go"; which is the best way of entering it, most easy and accessible, where the passes are most open and least dangerous:

and into what cities we shall come; which it would be the most proper to attack and subdue first.

{m} Krdh ta, "de via", Noldius, p. 117. No. 594. so the Arabic version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Deuteronomy 1:23

Ver. 23. And the saying pleased me well,.... Taking it to be a rational and prudent scheme, not imagining it was the effect of fear and distrust:

and I took twelve men of you out of a tribe; whose names are given in Nu 13:4.

Deuteronomy 1:24

Ver. 24. And they turned and went up into the mountain,.... As they were ordered and directed by Moses, Nu 13:17

and came unto the valley of Eshcol; so called from the cluster of grapes they cut down there, as they returned:

and searched it out; the whole land, and so were capable of giving a particular account of it.

Deuteronomy 1:25

Ver. 25. And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands,.... Besides the cluster of grapes, which was carried between two men on a staff; even pomegranates and figs, Nu 13:23,

and brought it down unto us; who lay encamped at the bottom of the mountain:

and brought us word again; what sort of a land it was:

and said, it is a good land which the Lord our God doth give us; that is, Caleb and Joshua, two of the spies, said this, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, and so Jarchi; yea, all of them agreed in this, and said at first that it was a land flowing with milk and honey, Nu 13:27.

Deuteronomy 1:26

Ver. 26. Notwithstanding, ye would not go up,.... And possess it, as the Lord had bid them, and Moses encouraged them to do, as well as Joshua and Caleb, who were two of the spies sent into it:

but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God; disregarded the word of the Lord, and disobeyed his command, and thereby bitterly provoked him, which rebellion against him, their King and God, might well do.

Deuteronomy 1:27

Ver. 27. And ye murmured in your tents,.... Not in a private manner; for though the murmurs began there, they having wept all night after the report of the spies; yet it became general and public, and they gathered together in a body, and openly expressed their murmurs against Moses and Aaron, Nu 14:1,

and said, because the Lord hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt; a strange expression indeed! when it was such a plain amazing instance of his love to them, as could not but be seen by them; being done in such a remarkable and extraordinary manner, by inflicting judgments on their enemies in a miraculous way, giving them favour in their eyes, to lend them their clothes and jewels, and bringing them out with such an high hand, openly and publicly in the sight of them, where they had been in the most wretched slavery for many years; yet this is interpreted an hatred of them, and as done with an ill design upon them, as follows:

to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us; which now, under the power of their fears and unbelief, they thought would be quickly their case; see **De 4:37**.

Deuteronomy 1:28

Ver. 28. Whither shall we go up?.... What way can we go up into the land? where is there any access for us? the mountain we are come to, and directed to go up, is possessed by the Amorites, a strong and mighty people, who keep and guard the passes, that there is no entrance:

our brethren have discouraged our hearts; ten of the spies; for Joshua and Caleb encouraged them with very powerful arguments, which had they listened to, it would have been well for them:

saying, the people is greater and taller than we; more in number, larger in bulk of body, and higher in stature:

the cities are great, and walled up to heaven; an hyperbolical expression; their fears exaggerated the account of the spies; they told them they were great, large, and populous, walled, and strongly fortified; which appeared in their frightened imaginations as if their walls were so high as to reach up to heaven, so that it was impossible to scale them, or get possession of them:

and, moreover, we have seen the sons of the Anakims there; the giants so called from Anak, the son of Arba, the father of them; their names are given, Nu 13:22.

Deuteronomy 1:29

Ver. 29. Then I said unto you, dread not, neither be afraid of them. With such like words he had exhorted and encouraged them before the spies were sent, and he still uses the same, or stronger terms, notwithstanding the report that had been made of the gigantic stature and walled cities of the Canaanites. This speech of Moses, which is continued in the two following verses, is not recorded in Nu 14:5, it is only there said, that Moses and Aaron fell on their faces, but no account is given of what was said by either of them.

Deuteronomy 1:30

Ver. 30. The Lord your God, which goeth before you,.... In a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night:

he shall fight for you; wherefore, though their enemies were greater and taller than they, yet their God was higher than the highest; and cities walled up to heaven would signify nothing to him, whose throne is in the heavens:

according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes: which is observed to encourage their faith in God; for he that wrought such wonders in Egypt for them, which their eyes, at least some of them, and their fathers, however, had seen, what is it he cannot do?

Deuteronomy 1:31

Ver. 31. And in the wilderness,.... Where he had fed them with manna, brought water out of rocks for them, protected them from every hurtful creature, had fought their battles for them, and given them victory over Amalek, Sihon, and Og:

where thou hast seen how the Lord thy God bare thee as a man doth bear his son; in his arms, in his bosom, with great care and tenderness:

in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place; supplying their wants, supporting their persons, subduing their enemies, and preserving them from everything hurtful to them; and therefore having God on their side, as appeared by so many instances, of his favour to them, they had nothing to dread or fear from the Canaanites, though ever so mighty.

Deuteronomy 1:32

Ver. 32. Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God. That they might go up and possess the land at once, and that he would fight for them, and subdue their enemies under them; or notwithstanding the favours bestowed upon them, and because of them, they did not believe in the Lord their God, and which was a great aggravation of their unbelief, and was the cause of their not entering into the good land, **Heb 3:19**.

Deuteronomy 1:33

Ver. 33. Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in,.... For when the cloud was taken up they journeyed, and when that rested, there they pitched their tents; and hereby they were directed to places the most convenient for water for them and their flocks, or for safety from those that might annoy them:

in fire by night, to show you by what way ye should go; which otherwise they could not have found in dark nights, in which they sometimes travelled, and in, a wilderness where there were no tracks, no beaten path, no common way:

and in a cloud by day; to shelter them from the scorching sun, where there were no trees nor hedges to shade them, only rocky crags and hills.

Deuteronomy 1:34

Ver. 34. And the Lord heard the voice of your words,.... Of their murmurings against Moses and Aaron, and of their threatenings to them, Joshua and Caleb, and of their impious charge of hatred of them to God for bringing them out of Egypt, and of their rash wishes that they had died there or in the wilderness, and of their wicked scheme and proposal to make them a captain, and return to Egypt again:

and was wroth, and sware; by his life, himself; see Nu 14:28,

saying; as follows.

Deuteronomy 1:35

Ver. 35. Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see the good land,.... The land of Canaan; not only not one of the spies that brought the ill report of that land, but of that body of people that gave credit to it, and murmured upon it:

which I sware to give unto your fathers; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; see **De 1:8**.

Deuteronomy 1:36

Ver. 36. Save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, he shall see it,.... Enter into it, and enjoy it:

and Joshua also; who was the other spy with him, that brought a good report of the land; see **De 1:38**,

and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children: not the whole land of Canaan, but that part of it which he particularly came to and searched; and where the giants were, and he saw them, and notwithstanding was not intimidated by them, but encouraged the people to go up and possess it; and the part he came to particularly, and trod on, was Hebron, Nu 13:22 and which the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra, interpret of that; and this was what was given to him and his at the division of the land, Jos 14:13,

because he hath wholly followed the Lord; see Nu 14:24.

Deuteronomy 1:37

Ver. 37. Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes,.... Not at the same time, though, as some think, at the same place, near thirty eight years afterwards, they provoking him to speak unadvisedly with his lips; see Nu 20:10,

saying, thou shalt not go in thither: into the land of Canaan; and though he greatly importuned it, he could not prevail; see **De 3:25**.

Deuteronomy 1:38

Ver. 38. [But] Joshua, the son of Nun, which standeth before thee,.... His servant and minister, which this phrase is expressive of:

he shall go in thither: into the good land, instead of Moses, and as his successor, and who was to go before the children of Israel, and introduce them into it, as a type of Christ, who brings many sons to glory:

encourage him; with the promise of the divine Presence with him, and of success in subduing the Canaanites, and settling the people of Israel in their land; and so we read that Moses did encourage him, De 31:7

for he shall cause Israel to inherit it; go before them as their captain, and lead them into it; fight their battles for them, conquer their enemies, and divide the land by lot for an inheritance unto them; so the heavenly inheritance is not by the law of Moses, and the works of it, but by Joshua, or Jesus, the Saviour, by his achievements, victories, and conquests.

Deuteronomy 1:39

Ver. 39. Moreover, your little ones, which ye said should be a prey,.... To the Amorites, into whose hands they expected to be delivered, **De 1:27** see Nu 14:3

and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil; not being at years of understanding, and which is a common description of children; it is particularly expressed "in that day", for now they were the very persons Moses was directing his speech unto, and relating this history, it being thirty eight years ago when this affair was, so that now they were grown up to years of discretion:

they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it: the relation of which now might serve greatly to encourage their faith, as well as it would be a fulfilment of the promise of the land made unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which was not made of none effect through the unbelief of the Israelites, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, since their posterity was to enjoy it, and did.

Deuteronomy 1:40

Ver. 40. But as for you, turn ye,.... From the mountain of the Amorites, the border of the land of Canaan:

and take your journey into the wilderness, by the way of the Red sea: see Nu 14:25. Jarchi says this wilderness was by the side of the Red sea, to the south of Mount Seir, and divided between the Red sea and the mount; so that now they drew to the side of the sea, and compassed Mount Seir, all the south of it, from west to east.

Deuteronomy 1:41

Ver. 41. Then ye answered, and said unto me,.... Not being willing to go into the wilderness again, though they wished they had died in it; nor to go the way of the Red sea, which was their way back again to Egypt, though they had been for appointing a captain, and returning thither; but now they repented of what they had said and done:

we have sinned against the Lord; by murmuring against his servants, and disobeying his commands:

we will go up and fight according to all that the Lord our God hath commanded us; which is more than they were bid to do; they were only ordered to go up and possess the land, and it was promised them the Lord would fight for them:

and when ye had girded on every man his weapon; his sword upon his thigh; a large number of them, for all of them were not so disposed, though many were:

ye were ready to go unto the hill; though before backward enough, when they were bid to do it. De Dieu, from the use of the word {n} in the Arabic language, renders it, "ye reckoned it easy to go up unto the hill"; before it was accounted very difficult, by reason the passes were kept and guarded by the Amorites; but now there was no difficulty, when they were bid to go another way, but were ready at once to go up, which comes to the same sense; he further observes, that the word, in another conjugation in the same language, signifies to make light of, or despise {o}; and so may be rendered, "and ye despised"; that is, rejected and despised the order given them to go into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea in the preceding verse, by their attempting to go up the hill; though the word so taken will bear another sense, agreeable to the first, that they now made a light matter of it, as if it was nothing, and there was no difficulty in it to go up the hill, which before was too hard and heavy for them.

{n} "levis et facilis fuit res", Golius, col. 2593. {o} "Contempsit", ib.

Deuteronomy 1:42

Ver. 42. And the Lord said unto me,.... When the people had armed themselves, and were in motion, or ready to set forward to ascend the hill:

say unto them, go not up, neither fight; neither go up the hill, and if they did, contrary to this order, and should meet with enemies, not fight them, but retreat:

for I am not among you: the ark of the covenant, the symbol of his presence, was then among them, but it did not go with them, it continued in the camp, Nu 14:44 nor did the Lord exert his power, or show himself present with them, or to be on their side, but left them to themselves, and to their enemies:

lest ye be smitten before your enemies; God not being with them to fight for them, protect and defend them, and give them victory.

Deuteronomy 1:43

Ver. 43. So I spake unto you,.... The words, the orders he had received from the Lord to deliver to them:

and ye would not hear; so as to obey them, and act according to them:

but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord: as before, by not going up when he would have had them gone, and now by attempting it when he forbid them:

and went presumptuously up into the hill; that is, of themselves, in their own strength, disregarding the commandment of God, and what they were threatened with; this they endeavoured to do, for they were not able to effect it; the Amorites, perceiving them to make up the hill, came pouring down upon them in great numbers, and stopped them, and obliged them to retreat; see Nu 14:45.

Deuteronomy 1:44

Ver. 44. And the Amorites which dwelt in the mountain,.... Elsewhere called Canaanites, being one, and a principal one of the seven nations of Canaan, and who were joined and assisted in the attack by the Amalekites, Nu 14:45

came out against you, and chased you, as bees do; which being disturbed in their hives come out in great numbers, and with great fury and ardour (for, though a small creature, it has a great deal of spirit); and pursue the aggressor, and leave him not till they have stung him, though thereby they lose their stings, and quickly their lives, at least their usefulness; so these Amorites, being irritated at the approach of the Israelites on their borders, came out in great numbers and with great wrath, and fell upon them and smote them, and pursued them a long way, as is after expressed, though these in the issue were destroyed themselves. The Syriac version renders it, "as bees that are smoked": or irritated by smoke; which is a method that has been used, and was anciently: to dispossess them of their hives, and get their honey, as Bochart {p} from various writers has shown, as from Virgil {q}, Ovid {r}, and others; and when they are too much smoked become exceeding angry as Aristotle {s} and Pliny {t} observe; and which same writers take notice of the strength and force of their stings, as that they will kill with them the largest animals, even horses have been killed by them; and, though such small feeble creatures, are not afraid to attack men and beasts; yea, sometimes people have been obliged to leave their habitations, and have been driven out of their country by them, of which Aelianus {u} gives an instance; all which shows the aptness and propriety of this simile; see Ps 118:12 and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah; pursued them as far as Mount Seir, even to another place on the borders of Edom, which was called Hormah, either from the destruction now or afterwards made here; See Gill on "Nu 14:45", though some take it not to be the proper name of a place, but an appellative, and render it, "even unto destruction"; so the Jerusalem Targum; that is, destroyed them with an utter destruction.

{p} Hierozoic, par. 2. l. 4. c. 10. col. 507. {q} "-----Fumosque manu", &c. Virgil. Georgic. l. 4. v. 230. {r} "Quid, cum suppositos", &c. Ovid. de Remed. Amor. l. 1. v. 185. {s} Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 40. {t} Nat Hist. l. 11. c. 16, 18. {u} De Animal. l. 17. c. 35.

Deuteronomy 1:45

Ver. 45. And ye returned and wept before the Lord,.... Those that remained when the Amorites left pursuing them, returned to the camp at Kadesh, where Moses and the Levites were, and the rest of the people; and here they wept at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and hence said to be "before the Lord"; they wept because of the slaughter that had been made among them, and because of their sin in going contrary to the will of God, and because they were ordered into the wilderness; and very probably they cried and prayed unto the Lord, that they might not be turned back, but that he would go with them, and bring them now into the promised land:

but the Lord would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you; was inexorable, and would not repeal the order to go into the wilderness again, where he had sworn in his wrath their carcasses should fall; the sentence was irrevocable.

Deuteronomy 1:46

Ver. 46. So ye abode in Kadesh many days,.... Yea, some years, as some think:

according to the days that ye abode there; that is, according to Jarchi, as they did in the rest of the journeys or stations; so that as they were thirty eight years in all at several places, they were nineteen years in Kadesh; the same is affirmed in the Jewish chronology {w}. Maimonides says {x} they were eighteen years in one place, and it is very probable he means this; but Aben Ezra interprets it otherwise, and takes the sense to be, that they abode as many days here after their return as they did while the land was searching, which were forty days, Nu 13:25, but without fixing any determinate time, the meaning may only be, that as they had been many days here before this disaster, so they continued many days after in the same place before they marched onward into the wilderness again.

{w} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 8. p. 24. {x} Moreh Nevochim. par. 3. c. 50.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 2

In this chapter Moses goes on with his account of the affairs of the people of Israel, and what befell them, how they turned into the wilderness again; but passes over in silence their travels there, till they came to Mount Self, where having been some time they were bid to depart, **De 2:1**, and were directed not to meddle with the Edomites, or take anything from them, but pay them for what they should have of them, since they lacked not, **De 2:4**, nor to distress the Moabites, of whose country, as formerly inhabited, and also of Edom, some account is given, **De 2:9**, when they were bid to go over the brook Zered, to which from their coming from Kadeshbarnea was the space of thirty eight years, in which time the former generation was consumed, **De 2:13** and now passing along the borders of Moab, they were ordered not to meddle with nor distress the children of Ammon, of whose land also, and the former inhabitants of it, an account is given, **De 2:17**, then passing over the river Arnon, they are bid to fight with Sihon king of the Amorites, and possess his land, **De 2:24** to whom they sent messengers, desiring leave to pass through his land, and to furnish them with provisions for their money, as the Edomites and Moabites had done, **De 2:26** but he refusing, this gave them an opportunity to attack him, in which they succeeded, slew him and his people, and took possession of his country, **De 2:30**.

Ver. 1. Then we turned,.... From Kadesh, where they had been many days, and so also their backs on the land of Canaan, on the borders of which they had been:

and took our journey into the wilderness, by the way of the Red sea, as the Lord spake unto me; **De 1:40**

and we compassed Mount Seir many days; many think by Mount Seir is meant the whole mountainous country of Edom, about which they travelled to and fro in the wilderness that lay near it for the space of thirty eight years, which they suppose are meant by many days; but I rather think they came to this mount towards the close of the thirty eight years, before they came to Kadesh, from whence they sent messengers to Edom, which they went round about for several days,

Deuteronomy 2:2

Ver. 2. And the Lord spake unto me,.... While about Mount Seir:

saying; as follows.

Deuteronomy 2:3

Ver. 3. Ye have compassed this mountain long enough,.... It was time to be gone from thence, as from Horeb, **De 1:6**, turn you northward; from the southern border of Edom towards the land of Canaan, which lay north. It was from Eziongeber in the land of Edom, from whence the Israelites came to Kadesh, where they sent messengers to the king of Edom, to desire a passage through his land; see Nu 33:36.

Deuteronomy 2:4

Ver. 4. And command thou the people,.... Give them a strict charge:

saying, ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children or Esau: not through the midst of their country, for that the king of Edom would not admit of, but by or on the border of it:

and they shall be afraid of you; lest such a numerous body of people as Israel were should seize upon their country, and dispossess them of it, they having been so long, wanderers in a wilderness near them:

take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore; that they did not take any advantage of their fears, and fall upon them, and do them mischief, or that they did not provoke them to battle and overcome them.

Deuteronomy 2:5

Ver. 5 Meddle not with them,.... Contend not with them in battle, nor provoke them to it:

for I will not give you of their land, no not so much as a foot breadth; or as the sole of a man's foot can tread on, signifying that they should not have the least part of it, not any at all. Jarchi makes mention of an exposition of theirs, that he would give them nothing of it until should come the day of the treading of the sole of the foot in the mount of Olives, Zec 14:4, meaning not till the days of the Messiah, when Edom should be a possession of Israel; see Nu 24:18, **Ob 1:19**

because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession; and therefore not to be taken away from them; they have a right of inheritance of it; see Ge 36:8.

Deuteronomy 2:6

Ver. 6 Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat,.... That is, if they would, as Aben Ezra observes; for though they had manna daily, yet if they would they might buy other food when they had an opportunity, as they would now have of Edom; but then they were not to take it by force or stealth, but pay for it, which they were able to do. The same writer observes, that some read the words with an interrogation, "shall ye buy meat?" no, there is no need of it; for the Lord had blessed them with a sufficiency of it:

and ye shall also buy water of them for money; that ye may drink; which was usual in those hot countries; See Gill on "Nu 20:19" or dig water {y} that is, pay for digging of wells for water, or buy water out of wells dug in the land of Edom. Jarchi says in maritime places they express buying by this word, and so it is used in the Arabic language;
See Gill on "Ho 3:2".

{y} wrkt "fodietis", Montanus.

Deuteronomy 2:7

Ver. 7. For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thine hands,.... Had increased their cattle and substance, even though in a wilderness:

he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness; every step they took, and he owned them and prospered them in all things in which they were concerned:

these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee: not only to protect and defend them, but to provide all things necessary for them. This number of years was not fully completed, but the round number is given instead of the broken one:

thou hast lacked nothing: and since they had wherewith to pay for their food and drink, they are directed to do it, and not take anything from the Edomites in an unjust way; nor make themselves look poor when they were rich, as Jarchi says.

Deuteronomy 2:8

Ver. 8. And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, which dwelt in Self,.... Along their coasts, by the borders of their country:

through the way of the plain; the wilderness of Zin, where Kadesh was:

from Elath and Eziongeber; the two ports on the shore of the Red sea in the land of Edom; it was from the latter they came to Kadesh; see Nu 33:35. Elath was ten miles from Petra, the metropolis of Edom, to the east of it, as Jerom says {z}; it is by Josephus {a} called Aelana, and by the Septuagint here Ailon; from whence the Elanitic bay has its name; he speaks of it as not far from Eziongeber, which he says was then called Berenice:

we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab; the wilderness which is before Moab, towards the sun rising or the east, Nu 21:11.

{z} De loc. Heb. fol. 91. E. {a} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 4.

Deuteronomy 2:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord said unto me,.... When upon the borders of Moab:

distress not the Moabites, neither contend with than in battle; besiege not any of their cities, nor draw them into a battle, or provoke them to fight:

for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; at least not as yet, the measure of their sins not being fully up, and the time of their punishment not come; otherwise in David's time they were subdued, and became tributaries to him, and the Edomites also, **2Sa 8:2**,

because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession; so the Moabites were, they sprung from Moab, a son of Lot by his firstborn daughter, Ge 19:37. Ar was the metropolis of Moab, called Ar of Moab, Isa 15:1 and is here put for the whole country of Moab; so Aben Ezra interprets it of Moab. Jarchi says it is the name of the province; in the Septuagint version it called Aroer.

Deuteronomy 2:10

Ver. 10. The Emims dwelt there in time past,.... We read of them as early as the times of Chedorlaomer, Ge 14:5 when their dwelling was in Kirjathaim, a city which Sihon king of the Amorites took from the Moabites, and which being taken from him, was with others given to the tribe of Reuben, Nu 32:37. These are by some thought to be the same with the Yemim which Anah found and met with in the wilderness, and defeated, which we render "mules", Ge 36:24. They had their name from the fear and terror they put men into because of their gigantic stature and great strength, as follows: it is probable they were the descendants of Ham:

a people great and many, and tall as the Anakims; who were very numerous, of a very bulky size of body, and of high stature, like the giants the spies had seen at Hebron, the sons of Anak, a noted giant there, Nu 13:22.

Deuteronomy 2:11

Ver. 11. Which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims,.... Because of their bulky size and tall stature; or,

"the Rephaim were they accounted, even they as the Anakims;"

they were reckoned Rephaim, a name for giants in early times, even as the Anakims were; see Ge 14:5

but the Moabites called them Emims; to distinguish them from the Rephaim; so that it seems this name of Emims was not originally their name, but they are called so by a prolepsis, or anticipation, in Ge 14:5 since they had it from the Moabites, a people of a later date.

Deuteronomy 2:12

Ver. 12. The Horims also dwelt in Seir before time,.... Which is the name of a mount, and so of the country, from it; so called from Seir the Horite, who dwelt in it before it was possessed by Esau and his sons; but who the Horim or Horites were, from whence they had their name, is difficult to say; they were as early as the times of Chedorlaomer, Ge 14:6. They seem to be so called from their dwelling in holes and caves in rocks, which the southern part of Edom or Idumea was full of, and to be the same the Greeks call Troglodytae:

but the children of Esau succeeded them; Esau and his sons marrying among them, made way for getting the country into their possession, as appears from Ge 36:2 and in which they afterwards settled themselves by the dint of sword, since it follows:

when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; even in Seir where they had dwelt, afterwards called Edom, from one of the names of Esau, Ge 36:8

as Israel did in the land of his possession, which the Lord gave unto them; because this is said before the Canaanites were drove out of their land, and it was possessed by the Israelites, some think this was written by Ezra, or some other hand; but there is no need to suppose that; Moses, by a spirit of prophecy, and in faith of the promises and prophecies of God relating to this affair, which were just now about to be fulfilled, might write this; besides, it may refer to what was already done to the kingdoms of Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites; which had been taken from them, and given to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; and the above instances as well as this may be observed, to encourage the people of Israel that they should succeed in dispossessing the Canaanites, and settling in their land, in like manner as dispossessions of this kind had already been made.

Deuteronomy 2:13

Ver. 13. Now rise up, said I, and get you over the brook Zered,.... It is called the valley of Zered, Nu 21:12, the word used signifying both a valley and a brook; and it is very probable there were both a valley and a brook of the same name; it must be near Dibongad, since in one place it is said the Israelites came from Ijim and pitched in Zered; and in another place that they came from thence, and pitched in Dibongad, Nu 21:11 and Nu 33:45

and we went over the brook Zered; which was fordable, or perhaps at this time dried up.

Deuteronomy 2:14

Ver. 14. And the space in which we came from Kadeshbarnea,.... The space of time; or, "the days" {b}; the number of them:

until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years; that is, from the time that the spies were sent and searched the land, and brought a report of it; for they were sent from Kadeshbarnea, Nu 32:8 unto the passage of the Israelites over Zered, were thirty eight years; so long they had been travelling in the wilderness, after they were come to the borders of the land:

until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host; all that were twenty years old and upwards, and fit to go out to war upon occasion, when the people were first numbered after they came out of Egypt; all that generation was now consumed within the above space of time, excepting two, Caleb and Joshua;

as the Lord sware unto them; Nu 14:21.

{b} Mymyhw "et dies", Montanus; "dies autem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Deuteronomy 2:15

Ver. 15. For indeed the hand of the Lord was against them,.... His power was exerted in a way of wrath and vengeance on them, for their murmurings at the report of the spies; and therefore, it is no wonder they were consumed, for strong is his hand, and high is his right hand; and when lifted up it falls heavy, and there is no standing up under it, or against it: it smote them with one disease or another, or brought one judgment or another upon them: as the sword of Amalek, by which many were cut off, and the plague at Shittim in the plains of Moab, in which died 24,000; besides the destruction of Korah and his company, which was quickly after the affair of the spies, and the plague at that time, of which died 14,700; and thus, by one stroke after another, he went on to

destroy them from among the host until they were consumed, even all of them but two, as follows.

Deuteronomy 2:16

Ver. 16. So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed,.... By wasting diseases and judgments of one kind or another:

and dead from among the people; the rising and surviving generation.

Deuteronomy 2:17

Ver. 17. That the Lord spoke unto me,.... At the brook Zered, having passed that, or at Dibongad, which was their next station:

saying; as follows.

Deuteronomy 2:18

Ver. 18. Thou art to pass over through Ar,.... That is, over the river Arnon, by the city Ar of Moab, which was situated by it; see **De 2:9** and so Moses and the people of Israel were to pass along by that,

and by the coast of Moab; for they were not admitted to enter the land and pass through it; only to travel on the borders of it, and that they were to begin to do this day; the day the Lord spake to Moses.

Deuteronomy 2:19

Ver. 19. And when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon,.... Who dwelt near the Moabites, and were brethren, both descending from Lot, Ge 19:37

distress them not, nor meddle with them: lay no siege to any of their cities, nor provoke them to war, nor engage in battle with them:

for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession; that is, any part of it which was now in their hands; otherwise half their land was given to the tribe of Gad; but then that was what Sihon king of the Amorites had taken from them, and which Israel retook from him, and so possessed it not as the land of the Ammonites, but of the Amorites, one of the seven nations, whose land they were to inherit; see Jos 13:25,

because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession; the Ammonites were the children of Lot by his second daughter, Ge 19:38.

Deuteronomy 2:20

Ver. 20. That also was accounted a land of giants,.... Ammon was so reckoned as well as Moab, **De 2:10**

giants dwelt therein in old time; the Rephaim dwelt there, as they did also in Ashteroth Karnaim, Ge 14:5

and the Ammonites call them Zamzummims; they are thought to be the same with the Zuzims in Ge 14:5 who had their name, as Hillerus {c} thinks, from Mezuzah, a door post, from their tall stature, being as high as one; and for a like reason Saph the giant might have his name, 2Sa 21:18. The word Zamzummims, according to him {d}, signifies contrivers of evil and terrible things; they were inventors of wickedness, crafty and subtle in forming wicked and mischievous designs, which struck terror into people, and made them formidable to them.

{c} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 158, 288, 289. {d} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 161, 310, 428.

Deuteronomy 2:21

Ver. 21. A people great and many, and tall as the Anakims,.... As the Emims were, **De 2:10** but the Lord destroyed them before them; destroyed the Zamzummims before the children of Amman; or otherwise they would have been an too much for them, being so numerous, and of such a gigantic stature:

and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead; and in this way, and by these means, he gave them their land for a possession, **De 2:19**.

Deuteronomy 2:22

Ver. 22. As he did to the children of Esau which dwelt in Seir,.... He did the like things for them as he did for the Ammonites:

when he destroyed the Horims from before them: which is repeated from **De 2:12**, other instances of the like kind being here recited:

and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead, even unto this day;
See Gill on "De 2:12".

Deuteronomy 2:23

Ver. 23. And the Avim, which dwelt in Hazerim, even unto Azzah,.... The same with the Avites, who appear to have inhabited some part of the land of the Philistines, in which Azzah or Gaza was, which was one of the five lordships of the Philistines, Jos 13:3. The word Hazerim signifies courts, and a learned man {e} interprets it of tents or huts placed in a square or circular form, so as to have an area in the middle; and in such the Avim may be supposed to dwell, while in Palestine, as far as Gaza:

the Caphtorim, which came from out of Caphtor, destroyed them; according to the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, these were Cappadocians, that came out of Cappadocia; but it seems manifest that they were originally of Egypt, see Ge 10:14 and Bochart {f} thinks they went from thence into that part of Cappadocia that was near Colchis; but things not answering their expectations, they returned, and drove out the Avim from their country:

and dwelt in their stead; See Gill on "Jer 47:4" see Gill on "Am 9:7". Though it seems as if they were not utterly destroyed, but some escaped into Assyria, and settled there, where was a place called Ava from them; and from whence they were sent by the king of Assyria to repeople the cities of Samaria, after the captivity of the ten tribes; see 2Ki 17:24. Now these several instances are observed to encourage the children of Israel to hope and believe that they should be able to dispossess the Canaanites, and inherit their land; such dispossessions having been very frequent, when it was the will of God they should take place.

{e} Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 65. {f} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 32. col. 291, 292.

Deuteronomy 2:24

Ver. 24. Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon,.... Which was on the border of Moab, and divided between Moab and the Amorites, Nu 21:13

behold, I have given into thy hand Sihon, the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land; that is, he had determined to give it to the Israelites, for as yet it was not actually given; of this king, and the place he was king of, See Gill on "Nu 21:21 see Gill on "Nu 21:26" begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle; provoke him to war, fight with him, take his land from him, and enter upon the possession of it, hereby assuring of victory.

Deuteronomy 2:25

Ver. 25. This day will I begin to put the dread of thee,.... And so fulfil the prophecies delivered by Moses in Ex 15:14

and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven; not only the neighbouring nations, the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and Canaanites, but nations more remote even throughout the whole world:

who shall report of thee; of what was done for Israel in Egypt, and at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; and particularly of the delivery of Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, and of their kingdoms into their hands:

and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee; lest they should proceed on, and make conquests of their lands also; see **Jos 2:9**.

Deuteronomy 2:26

Ver. 26. And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth,.... A city in the tribe of Reuben, and given by them to the Levites in later times, having been taken from the Amorites with others; near this lay a wilderness, which took its name from it, and seems to be the same with Jeshimon, Nu 21:20. Aben Ezra takes it to be the wilderness of Matthanah, which according to Jerom {g} was situated on Arnon, twelve miles to the east of Medeba; see Nu 21:18 from hence messengers were sent by Moses,

unto Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace; in a peaceable and respectful manner, desiring to be at peace and in friendship with him, and a continuance of it, which was done to leave him inexcusable; as afterwards a like method was ordered to be taken, when they came to any city, to proclaim peace, and if an answer of peace was given, no hostilities were to be committed, De 20:10,

saying; as follows.

{g} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. C.

Deuteronomy 2:27

Ver. 27. Let me pass through thy land,.... See Gill on "Nu 21:22",

I will go along by the highway; the king's highway, as in the place referred to, the public road:

I will neither turn to the right hand nor to the left; to go into his fields and vineyards, and gather the fruit, or tread down the corn and vines, or do any manner of mischief to them; see the above place.

Deuteronomy 2:28

Ver. 28. Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat,.... If they thought fit to have provision of them, they desired no other but to pay for it:

and give me water for money, that I may drink; see **De 2:6**,

only I will pass through on my feet; for they were all footmen, Nu 11:21, of the phrase,
See Gill on "Nu 20:19".

Deuteronomy 2:29

Ver. 29. As the children of Esau which dwell in Seir, and the Moabites which dwell in Ar, did unto me,.... Which respects, as Jarchi observes, not the affair of passing through their land requested, for neither of them granted that, but buying food and drink; for though the Edomites at first seem not to have granted that, yet afterwards they did. The mountain of Seir, and the city Ar, are put for the whole countries of Edom and Moab:

until I shall pass over Jordan into the land which the Lord our God giveth us;

this is observed to remove any suspicion or jealousy of their seizing his country, and taking possession of it, and dwelling in it; since they only proposed to pass through it on their journey to the land of Canaan, which lay on the other side Jordan, over which they must pass in order to possess it, which they had a right unto by the gift of God.

Deuteronomy 2:30

Ver. 30. But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him,.... Or through his country, as was desired:

for the Lord had hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate; as he did Pharaoh's, for whom he will he hardens; so that he would not listen to the proposals made to him, nor grant the requests asked of him, but with pride and haughtiness of spirit despised and disdained Israel:

that he might deliver him into thine hand; that so an opportunity might offer of fighting with him, and taking his country from him; whereas, had he been peaceable and flexible, he had continued in the enjoyment of his land, and Israel would not have had that advantage against him; but God, who has the hearts of kings and of all men in his hands, so wrought upon him that he should take the steps he did, which made way for the delivery of him and his country into the hands of the Israelites:

as appeareth this day: for when Moses made this speech, the kingdom of Sihon was possessed by the Israelites, Nu 21:24.

Deuteronomy 2:31

Ver. 31. And the Lord said unto me,.... After or about the time when the messengers were sent to Sihon, perhaps when they had returned and had brought his answer:

behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee; by hardening his heart, which was a sure token of his ruin, and a leading step to the delivery of him into the hands of Israel:

begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land; move towards it and enter into it, not fearing any opposition made by him.

Deuteronomy 2:32

Ver. 32. Then Sihon came out against us,.... Perceiving they were upon their march towards his land or into it, he gathered all his people and went out of Heshbon their capital city, where he resided:

he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz; a city which he had taken from the king of Moab, and which in later times, after the captivity of the ten tribes, came into their hands again, Isa 15:4,
See Gill on "Nu 21:21".

Deuteronomy 2:33

Ver. 33. And the Lord our God delivered him before us,.... With their lands:

and we smote him and his sons, and all his people; with the edge of the sword; slew them all: the Cetib or textual reading is "his son", though the Keri or margin is "his sons", which we follow. So Jarchi observes, it is written "his son", because he had a son mighty as himself, he says.

Deuteronomy 2:34

Ver. 34. And we took all his cities at that time,.... As Heshbon, and others mentioned in Nu 21:25,

and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones of every city, we left none to remain; for the Amorites were one of the seven nations who were devoted to destruction, the measure of whose iniquity was now full, and therefore vengeance was taken.

Deuteronomy 2:35

Ver. 35. Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves,.... These they did not destroy, but preserved alive for their own use and profit, and took them as their own property:

and the spoil of the cities which we took; as household goods, gold, silver, and whatever valuable was found by them; this they took as plunder, and shared it among themselves.

Deuteronomy 2:36

Ver. 36. From Aroer, which is by the brink of the river Arnon.... Upon the border of Moab, and the principal city of it; see Jer 48:19

and from the city that is by the river; or even the city that is in the midst of the river, the city Aroer, which seems to be meant; see
Jos 12:2. This river is afterwards called the river of Gad, 2Sa 24:5 in the midst of it Aroer was, perhaps because it was possessed by the tribe of Gad:

even unto Gilead; Mount Gilead and the country adjacent to it, which belonged to Og king of Bashan:

there was not one city too strong for us; that could hold out against them, when attacked and besieged by them, but presently surrendered:

the Lord our God delivered all unto us; Moses ascribes all the victories and success they had unto the Lord, not to their own might and power, but to the power of God with them, and his blessing on them.

Deuteronomy 2:37

Ver. 37. Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not,.... Which was then in their possession; otherwise what Sihon had took away from them, that the children of Israel came into and enjoyed, as before observed, **De 2:19**

nor unto any place of the river Jabbok; any town or city situated on this river, which was the border of the children of Ammon, **De 3:16**,
See Gill on "Ge 32:22",

nor unto the cities in the mountains; much less did they penetrate into the innermost parts of their country, the mountainous part thereof, and the cities there:

nor unto whatsoever the Lord our God forbad us: whether in Edom, Moab, or Ammon, particularly the latter, of which he is more especially and peculiarly speaking.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 3

In this chapter the account is carried on of the conquest of the Amorites by Israel, of Og king of Bashan, and his kingdom, **De 3:1**, and of the distribution of their country to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, **De 1:12** and then the command to the said tribes is observed, to go out armed before their brethren, and assist them in the conquest of the land of Canaan, and then return to their possessions, **De 3:18** and also that to Joshua not to fear, but to do to the Canaanitish kings and kingdoms what he had seen done to the two kings of the Amorites, **De 3:21**. After which Moses relates the request he made, to go over Jordan and see the good land, which was denied him, only he is bidden to look from the top of an hill to see it, **De 3:23**. And the chapter is closed with the charge he was to give Joshua, **De 3:28** which was received in the valley where they abode, **De 3:29**.

Ver. 1. Then we turned and went up the way to Bashan,.... Which seems to have been higher than the kingdom of Sihon: this was a fine country for pasturage, for the breeding of cattle, larger and lesser, and was famous for its oaks: it is the same country which in Josephus and others goes by the name of Batanea:

and Og the king of Bashan came out against us; got his forces together, and came out from Ashteroth, the royal city where he dwelt:

he and all his people, to battle at Edrei; another city in his kingdom, about six miles from the former; see **De 1:4**.

Deuteronomy 3:2

Ver. 2. And the Lord said unto me,.... When Og was marching with all his forces against Israel:

fear him not, &c; See Gill on "Nu 21:34".

Deuteronomy 3:3

Ver. 3. So the Lord our God delivered into our hands Og also the king of Bashan, and all his people,.... As well as Sihon king of Heshbon:

and we smote him, till none was left to him remaining; or left alive, all were slain with the sword; See Gill on "Nu 21:35".

Deuteronomy 3:4

Ver. 4. And we took all his cities at that time,.... Not only Edrei where the battle was fought, and Ashteroth his capital city, but all the rest in his kingdom:

there was not a city which we took not from them; not one stood out, but all surrendered on summons; the number of which follows:

three score cities; which was a large number for so small a country, and shows it to be well inhabited:

all the region of Argob; which was a small province of

the kingdom of Og in Bashan: Aben Ezra and Jarchi observe, that it was called after a man, i.e. whose name was Argob; the Targum of Onkelos names it Tracona, and the Targum of Jonathan Targona, the same with Trachonitis in Josephus and other authors; see **Lu 3:1**, Jerom relates {h} that in his time, about Gerasa, a city of Arabia, fifteen miles from it to the west, there was a village which was called Arga, which seems to carry in it some remains of the ancient name of this country; and the Samaritan version, in all places where Argob is, calls it Rigobaah; and in the Misnah {i} mention is made of a place called Ragab, beyond Jordan, famous for its being the second place for the best oil.

{h} De loc. Heb. fol. 87. M. {i} Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 3:5

Ver. 5. All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars,.... That is, all the cities in the kingdom of Bashan; and though they were, it hindered not their falling into the hands of the Israelites; and this might serve to encourage them against those fears they were possessed of by the spies, with respect to the cities in the land of Canaan; see Nu 13:28

besides unwalled towns a great many; small towns and villages adjacent to the several cities, as is common.

Deuteronomy 3:6

Ver. 6. And we utterly destroyed them,.... Not the cities, but the inhabitants of them:

as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon; they did not destroy his cities, for they took them and dwelt in them; but the people that lived there, as follows here:

utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city; see **De 2:34**.

Deuteronomy 3:7

Ver. 7. But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities,.... The oxen and sheep, camels and asses; their gold and silver, and the furniture of their houses; their stores of corn, and of other fruits of the earth, even all their substance of whatsoever kind:

we took for a prey to ourselves; made them their own property, and used them for their own profit and service, whereby they became greatly enriched.

Deuteronomy 3:8

Ver. 8. And we took at that time out of the hands of the two kings of the Amorites,.... Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan;

the land that [was] on this side Jordan; where Moses then was, being in the plains of Moab, and was the country beyond Jordan, with respect to the land of Canaan, and when in that:

from the river of Arnon unto Mount Hermon; Arnon was a river which divided Moab and the Amorites, Nu 22:13 and Hermon was a mountain of Gilead, which ended where Lebanon began, and was the northerly border of this country. It was remarkable for the dew that fell on it;
See Gill on "Ps 133:3".

Deuteronomy 3:9

Ver. 9. Which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion,.... Which name it has in Ps 29:6 a name the inhabitants of Sidon gave it, but for what reason it is not easy to say; however, that it was well known to Tyre and Sidon, appears from snow in summer time being brought to the former, as will be hereafter observed:

and the Amorites call it Shenir; in whose possession it was last. Bochart {k} thinks it had its name from the multitude of wild cats in it, Shunar in the Chaldee tongue being the name of that creature; but Jarchi says Shenir in the Canaanitish language signifies "snow"; so, in the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, it is called the mountain of snow; and the Hebrew who read to Jerom, and taught him, affirmed to him that this mountain hung over Paneas, from whence snow in summer time was brought to Tyre for pleasure {l}, and the same is confirmed by Abulfeda {m}. There is said to be upon the top of it a famous temple, which is used for worship by the Heathens, over against Paneas and Lebanon {n}; and it is highly probable there was one even at this time, when it was possessed by the Amorites, since it is called Mount Baalhermon, **Jud 3:3**, from the worship of Baal, or some other idol upon it, as it should seem. Besides these, it had another name, Mount Sion, **De 4:48** but to be distinguished from Mount Zion near Jerusalem. The names of it in this place are very differently interpreted by Hillerus {o}; though he thinks it had them all on account of the snow on it, which was as a net all over it; for Hermon, he observes, signifies a net, a dragnet, and Shenir an apron, and Sirion a coat of mail, all from the covering of this mount with snow.

{k} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 14. col. 865. {l} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. B, C. {m} Apud Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. par. 2. p. 920. {n} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. B, C. {o} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 561, 562, 786, 929.

Deuteronomy 3:10

Ver. 10. All the cities of the plain,.... There was a plain by Medeba, and Heshbon and her cities were in a plain, with some others given to the tribe of Reuben, Jos 13:16

and all Gilead; Mount Gilead, and the cities belonging to it, a very fruitful country, half of which fell to the share of the Reubenites, and the rest to the half tribe of Manasseh:

and all Bashan; of which Og was king, called Batanea, a very fertile country, as before observed:

unto Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan; which seem to be frontier cities of the latter: see **De 1:4**. The former, Adrichomius {p} says, was situated by the city Geshur and Mount Hermon, and was the boundary of the country of Bashan to the north; and according to Benjamin of Tudela {q}, it was half a day's journey from Gilead: as Edrei seems to be its boundary to the south.

{p} Thestrum Terrae Sanct. p. 94. {q} Itinerar. p. 57.

Deuteronomy 3:11

Ver. 11. For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants,.... The meaning seems to be, either that he was the only one that was left of the race of the giants the Ammonites found when they took possession of this country, **De 2:20** or that was left when the Amorites took it from the Ammonites; and who having by some means or other ingratiated himself into their affections, because of his stature, strength, and courage, and other qualifications they might discern in him, made him their king:

behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron: his body being so large and bulky, he might think it most proper and safest for him to have a bedstead made of iron to lie upon, or to prevent noxious insects harbouring in it; nor was it unusual to have bedsteads made of other materials than wood, as of gold, silver, and ivory;
See Gill on "Am 6:4". Some learned men {r} have been of opinion, that the beds of Typho in Syria, made mention of by Homer {s}, refer to this bedstead of Og:

is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? which was the royal city of the

Ammonites, in the times of David, 2Sa 12:26, now called Philadelphia, as Jerom says {t}. This bedstead might be either sent thither by Og, before the battle at Edrei, for safety, or rather might be sold by the Israelites to the inhabitants of Rabbath, who kept it, as a great curiosity:

nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man; a common cubit, so that it was four yards and a half long, and two yards broad. Onkelos renders it, after the king's cubit; and the king's cubit at Babylon, according to Herodotus {u}, was larger by three fingers than the common one; such as the cubit in
Eze 40:5, which was a cubit and an hand's breadth; and this makes the dimensions of the bedstead yet larger. And by this judgment may be made of the tallness of Og's stature, though this is not always a sure rule to go by; for Alexander, when in India, ordered his soldiers to make beds of five cubits long, to be left behind them, that they might be thought to be larger men than they were, as Diodorus Siculus {w} and Curtius {x} relate; but there is little reason to believe that Og's bedstead was made with such a view. Maimonides observes {y}, that a bed in common is a third part larger than a man; so that Og, according to this way of reckoning, was six cubits high, and his stature doubly larger than a common man's; but less than a third part may well be allowed to a bed, which will make him taller still; the height of Og is reckoned by Wolfius {z} to be about thirteen feet eleven inches of Paris measure.

{r} Vid. Dickinson. Delph. Phaenieizant. c. 2. p. 12. {s} Iliad. z. {t} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. C. {u} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 175. {w} Bibliothec. l. 17. p. 563. {x} Hist. l. 9. c. 3. {y} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 47. p. 325. {z} Apud Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 401.

Deuteronomy 3:12

Ver. 12. And this land, which we possessed at that time,.... Or took possession of, having conquered it; for it still remained in their possession:

from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon: on the borders of Moab, from thence as far as Gilead was the land which was taken from Sihon king of Heshbon, **De 2:36**

and half Mount Gilead, and the cities thereof: which were taken from Og king of Bashan, **De 3:10** gave I unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites; at their request, on certain conditions to be performed by them, afterwards repeated.

Deuteronomy 3:13

Ver. 13. And the rest of Gilead,.... The other half of the mount, with the cities belonging to it:

and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half tribe of Manasseh; see Nu 32:33

all the region of Argob, with all Bashan; the region of Trachonitis, in Bashan; see **De 3:4**,

which was called the land of giants; or of Rephaim; this Jarchi says is the country of the Rephaim given to Abraham, Ge 15:20.

Deuteronomy 3:14

Ver. 14. Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob,.... Or Trachonitis; the small towns belonging to Gilead, as in Nu 32:41

unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi; these were little kingdoms in Syria, on which the country of Argob bordered, and had kings over them in the time of David, and came not into the possession of the Israelites; see Jos 13:13

and called them after his own name, Bashanhavothjair, unto this day; see Nu 32:41.

Deuteronomy 3:15

Ver. 15. And I gave Gilead unto Machir. The son of Manasseh; not to him personally, who cannot be thought to have been living at this time, but to his posterity, to the Machirites; see Nu 32:40.

Deuteronomy 3:16

Ver. 16. And unto the Reubenites, and unto the Gadites,.... The tribes of Reuben and Gad:

I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon: see **De 3:12**

half the valley and the border; or rather half the river, the river Arnon; and so it is rendered "the middle of the river", in Jos 12:2 and so here the middle of the torrent by the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions, and by Onkelos:

even unto the river Jabbok, which is the border of the children of Ammon; beyond which the land given to the tribes of Reuben and Gad reached not; see **De 2:37**.

Deuteronomy 3:17

Ver. 17. The plain also, and Jordan,.... The plain by Jordan, the plains of Moab on the side of it, together with the river:

and the coast thereof; the country adjoining to it:

from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain, [even] the salt sea; that is, from Gennesaret, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, called the land of Gennesaret, Mt 14:34, from thence to the sea of Sodom, the sea of the plain, where the cities of the plain stood, Sodom, Gomorrah, &c. and the salt sea, so called from the salt and nitrous waters of it, the lake Asphaltites:

under Ashdothpisgah eastward; mentioned among the cities given to the tribe of Reuben, Jos 13:20 rendered "the springs of Pisgah", **De 4:49**, the word having the signification of effusions, pourings out; so the Targums.

Deuteronomy 3:18

Ver. 18. And I commanded you at that time,.... Not all Israel, but the tribes of Reuben and God, and the half tribe of Manasseh; for what follows only concerns them:

saying, the Lord your God hath given you this land to possess it; the land before described, lately in the hands of Sihon and Og; this at their request Moses gave them, by the direction of the Lord, on the following condition:

you shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all [that] are meet for the war; that is, they should pass over Jordan with the rest of the tribes, being armed to assist them in the conquest of Canaan: for this phrase, which we render "before your brethren", does not signify that they went in the forefront of them, only that they were present with them, and joined them in their war against their enemies; see Nu 32:29 and therefore should be rendered "with your brethren" {a}; even as many of them as were able to bear arms, at least as many as Joshua would choose to take of them; for he did not take them all by a great many; see **Jos 4:13**.

{a} Mkyxa ynpl "cum fratribus vestris", Noldius, p. 531, No. 1492.

Deuteronomy 3:19

Ver. 19. But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle,.... These were to be left behind: for

I know that ye have much cattle; which made the countries of Gilead and Bashan, so famous for pasturage, agreeable to them; see Nu 32:1 these, under the care of servants, and also their wives and children,

shall abide in your cities which I have given you; and which they rebuilt and repaired, Nu 32:34.

Deuteronomy 3:20

Ver. 20. Until the Lord have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you,.... Rest from their enemies, and habitations to dwell quietly in; so the land of Canaan is called a rest, De 12:9 typical of the rest which remains for the people of God:

and until they also possess the land which the Lord your God hath given them beyond Jordan; for so Canaan was with respect to Moses and the people with him, who were then in the plains of Moab; otherwise the country in which he was with respect to Canaan is usually called beyond Jordan; this the Lord had given in promise to Israel, and they were just now ready to enter into and possess it, by virtue of his gift, and which made it sure unto them:

and then shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you; as accordingly they did, Jos 22:1.

Deuteronomy 3:21

Ver. 21. And I commanded Joshua at that time,.... After the conquest of the two kings, and the assignment of their countries to the above tribes; and after Moses had it made known to him that he should quickly die, and Joshua should be his successor; then, by the direction of God, he gave him the following charge:

saying, thine eyes have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto these two kings; Sihon and Og; how their kingdoms were taken from them, and given to Israel, and they slain with the sword; this Joshua was an eyewitness of, and was, no doubt, greatly concerned in the battles with them, being the general in the Israelitish armies; at least this was sometimes his post, and he cannot be thought to have been unemployed in these wars:

so shall the Lord do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest; all the kingdoms in the land of Canaan, where there were many, thirty one at least; these would be all conquered and put into the hands of the Israelites, and their kings slain.

Deuteronomy 3:22

Ver. 22. Ye shall not fear them,.... On account of the numbers, strength, courage, and gigantic stature of the inhabitants, at least some of them; nor on account of their walled towns, and fortified cities:

for the Lord your God he shall fight for you; as he did, particularly at Jericho, the walls of which city fell at the sound of rams' horns; and at Gibeon, when he cast down hailstones on their enemies, and more were slain by them than with the sword; and in all their battles it was he that gave them success and victory.

Deuteronomy 3:23

Ver. 23. And I besought the Lord at that time,.... When he was told he should die, and Joshua should succeed him; or when the two kings were slain, and their kingdoms conquered; this being the beginning, pledge, and earnest of what God had promised to do for the people of Israel; Moses was very desirous of living to see the work completed, and therefore sought the Lord by prayer and supplication:

saying; as follows.

Deuteronomy 3:24

Ver. 24. O Lord God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand,.... To give a specimen of the greatness of his power in subduing the two kings and their kingdoms, and delivering them up into the hands of the Israelites. Moses had seen instances of the mighty power of God in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; but this was the beginning of his power, in vanquishing the Canaanites, and putting their land into the possession of the Israelites, as he had promised; of which the Amorites were a part, and a principal nation of them: and thus God, when he begins a work of grace upon the soul of man, begins to show the exceeding greatness of his power, and which is further exerted in carrying it on, and bringing it to perfection:

for what God is there in heaven or in earth that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? here Moses speaks according to the notion of Heathens, who supposed there were other gods in heaven and in earth besides the true God; and upon this supposition observes, let there be as many as they will, or can be imagined, there is none of them like the Lord God of Israel for power and might; or are able to do such works as he has done, in nature, in the creation of all things out of nothing, in providence, in supporting what he has made, and in governing the world; and in those amazing instances of his power, in bringing down judgments upon wicked men, kings, and kingdoms; and in the deliverance of his own people from them, and putting them and their kingdoms into the possession of them; which were the wondrous works of might Moses had in view, and a sense of which was impressed on his mind at this time.

Deuteronomy 3:25

Ver. 25. I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan,.... The land of Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey; a land which he describes as a most excellent one, **De 8:7**. To see this land, he was very desirous of going over the river Jordan, beyond which it lay with respect to the place where he now was:

that goodly mountain, and Lebanon; or, "that goodly mountain, even Lebanon"; which lay to the north of the land of Canaan, and was famous for cedar and odoriferous trees. But if two distinct mountains are meant, the goodly mountain may design Mount Moriah, on which the temple was afterwards built, and of which Moses might have a foresight; and some by Lebanon think that is meant, which was built of the cedars of Lebanon, and therefore goes by that name, Zec 11:1 and a foreview of this made the mountain so precious to Moses, and desirable to be seen by him. So the Targum of Jonathan;

"that goodly mountain in which is built the city of Jerusalem, and Mount Lebanon, in which the Shechinah shall dwell"

to which agrees the note of Aben Ezra, who interprets the goodly mountain of Jerusalem, and Lebanon of the house of the sanctuary. In the Septuagint it is called Antilibanus. Mount Libanus had its name not from frankincense growing upon it, as some have thought; for it does not appear that any did grow upon it, for that came from Seba in Arabia Felix; but from the whiteness of it, through the continual snows that were on it, just as the Alps have their name for the same reason; and so Jerom says {b} of Lebanon, that the snow never leaves from the tops of it, or is ever so overcome by the heat of the sun as wholly to melt; to the same purpose also Tacitus {c} says, and Mr. Maundrell {d}, who was there in May, speaks of deep snow on it, and represents the cedars as standing in snow.

{b} In Hieremiam, c. 18. 14. {c} Hist. l. 5. c. 6. {d} Journey from Aleppo, p. 139, 140.

Deuteronomy 3:26

Ver. 26. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes,.... Not at this time, and for this prayer of his, but on account of he and Aaron not sanctifying him at the waters of Meribah; or of some expressions of unbelief, and unadvised words, which dropped from his lips through their provocation of him; see Nu 20:12

and would not hear me; now, and grant the above request, having before declared that he and Aaron should not bring the people of Israel into the land he had given them; and Moses with all his entreaties could not prevail upon him to repeal the sentence:

and the Lord said unto me, let it suffice; that he had seen the conquest of the two kings, and the delivery of their kingdoms into the hands of Israel; and that he had brought the people through the wilderness to the borders of the land of Canaan, and that he should have a distant sight of the land, as after directed:

speak no more unto me of this matter; intimating it would be in vain, and to no purpose, to solicit such a favour, since it would never be granted; it was a determined point, and he would never recede from it.

Deuteronomy 3:27

Ver. 27. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah,.... Which was the highest eminence of Mount Nebo, and so a very proper place to take a prospect from; see De 32:49

and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward; to all the four points of the heaven, and to all the four quarters and borders of the land of Canaan:

and behold it with thine eyes; even the land of Canaan, and particularly Lebanon, though it lay to the north of it, that mountain he had such a desire to see. Moses, though old, his natural sight was very strong, and not in the least dim; and it is not improbable that it might be more than ordinarily increased and assisted at this time:

for thou shall not go over this Jordan; into the land of Canaan; this affair, of not being suffered to enter there, Moses frequently takes notice of, no less than four or five times, it being what lay near his heart.

Deuteronomy 3:28

Ver. 28. But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him,.... Charge him to take the care of the children of Israel, to introduce them into the good land, and put them into the possession of it; encourage him against all fear of his and their enemies, and strengthen him with promises of the presence of God, and of his gracious help and assistance:

for he shall go over before this people; over the river Jordan, at the head of them, as their leader and commander; a type of Christ, the leader and commander of his people, who as their King goes forth at the head of them, and will introduce them all into his Father's kingdom and glory:

and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see; and no more; not enter into, but Joshua should; and having conquered it, should divide it by lot for an inheritance to them, and their children after them; a type of Christ, in whom and by whom the saints obtain an inheritance by lot, **Eph 1:11**.

Deuteronomy 3:29

Ver. 29. So we abode in the valley over against Bethpeor. In the plains of Moab, over against a temple built for Baalpeor upon a mountain, so called from that idol, or that idol from the mountain; this is the valley where Moses was buried, De 34:6.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 4

This chapter contains an exhortation to Israel to keep the commands, statutes, and judgments of God, urged from the superior excellency of them to those of all other nations, **De 4:1**, from the manner in which they were delivered, out of the midst of fire, by a voice of words, but no similitude seen, **De 4:9**, and particularly the Israelites are cautioned against idolatry, from the consideration of the goodness of God to them, in bringing them out of Egypt, **De 4:16**, and the rather Moses is urgent upon them to be diligent in their obedience to the laws of God, because he should quickly be removed from them, **De 4:21**, and should they be disobedient to them, it would provoke the Lord to destroy them, or to carry them captive into other lands, **De 4:25** though even then, if they repented and sought the Lord, and became obedient, he would be merciful to them, and not forsake them, **De 4:29** and they are put in mind again of the amazing things God had done for them, in speaking to them out of fire, and they alive; in bringing them out of another nation, and driving out other nations to make room for them; all which he improves, as so many arguments to move them to obedience to the divine commands, **De 4:32** and then notice is taken of the three cities of refuge, separated on this side Jordan, **De 4:41**, and the chapter is concluded with observing, that this is the law, and these the testimonies, Moses declared and repeated to the children of Israel in the country of Sihon and Og, who were delivered into their hands, and their lands possessed by them, which laid them under fresh obligations to yield obedience to God, **De 4:44**.

Ver. 1. Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments,.... The laws of God, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which they are exhorted to attend to and obey, in consideration of the great and good things the Lord had done for them, ever since they came from Horeb, where they were given them; such as providing for them, and feeding them in the wilderness, preserving them from every hurtful thing, and delivering their enemies into their hands, the two kings of the Amorites, which they are put in mind of in the preceding chapters; hence this begins with "therefore hearken"; for nothing is a greater incentive to obedience than the kindness and goodness of God:

which I teach you for to do that ye may live; the law was taught by Moses, but the Gospel of grace and truth by Jesus Christ; and it was taught by him, as well as it was to be hearkened to by them, in order to yield obedience to it; for not bare hearing, but doing the law, is the principal thing of any avail; and which was to be done, that they might live; not a spiritual and eternal life, which are not by the works of the law, but are had only from Christ, through his grace and righteousness; but a corporeal life, and a comfortable enjoyment of the blessings of it, and particularly that that might be continued to them:

and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you; the land of Canaan, which the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had promised to give to their posterity, and which they were to hold by their obedience to his laws.

Deuteronomy 4:2

Ver. 2. Ye shall not add to the word which I command you, nether shall you diminish ought from it,.... Neither make new laws of their own, and join them to the law of God, and set them upon a level with it, or prefer them before it; as the Scribes and Pharisees did in Christ's time, who by their traditions made the word of God of none effect, as do the Papists also by their unwritten traditions; nor abrogate nor detract from the law of God, nor make void any part of it: or else the sense is, neither do that which is forbidden, nor neglect that which is commanded; neither be guilty of sins of omission nor commission, nor in any way break the law of God, and teach men so to do by word or by example; not a jot or tittle is either to be put to it, or taken from it, Pr 30:5

that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you; in his name; or which he delivered unto them as his commandments, and which were to be kept just as they were delivered, without adding to them, or taking from them.

Deuteronomy 4:3

Ver. 3. Your eyes have seen what the Lord did because of Baalpeor,.... Because of the idolatry the people of Israel fell into by worshipping that idol, being drawn into it by the daughters of Moab and Midian, through the counsel of Balaam, with whom they committed fornication; which led them to the other sin, and both highly provoking to God. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are,

"what the Word of the Lord has done to the worshippers of the idol Peor;"

for all the men that followed Baalpeor, the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you; 24,000 persons died on that account; which being a recent thing, fresh in memory, and what they were eyewitnesses of, was a caution to them to avoid the same sins, as it is to us on whom the ends of the world are come, Nu 23:9.

Deuteronomy 4:4

Ver. 4. But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God,.... To the worship of the Lord your God, as the Targum of Jonathan; attended the service of the sanctuary, were observant of the laws of God, and walked in his statutes and judgments; did not apostatize from him by idolatry or otherwise, but kept close unto him, and followed him fully:

are alive everyone of you this day; which is very remarkable, that in such a vast number of people not one should die in such a space of time, it being several months since that affair happened; and besides, in that time there was a war with the Midianites, and yet not one person died in that war, nor as it seems by this account by any disease or disaster whatever; see Nu 31:49.

Deuteronomy 4:5

Ver. 5. Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me,.... He had faithfully delivered them, without adding them, or diminishing from them, and had diligently instructed the Israelites in them, had taken pains to lead them into a thorough knowledge and understanding them:

that ye should do so in the land whither ye go possess it; do in like manner as the commandments the Lord direct to; or that which is right {e}; proper and fitting to be done, by doing which they continue in the land they were about to possess, therefore when in it were to be careful to them; some of them could not be done till they came into it, and all were to be done in it.

{e} Nk "rectum".

Deuteronomy 4:6

Ver. 6. Keep therefore and do them,..... Observe them, take notice of what is expressed by them, and perform them, both as to matter and manner, as they require:

for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations; that is, their wisdom and understanding would appear to other nations by their observance of the commands of God:

which hear all these statutes; which they had a report, got knowledge of by some of the philosophers who travelled into those parts, and by the translation of the Bible into the Greek language:

and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people; that had such a body of laws, in which they were instructed, and according to which they were governed, and in which they walked; that were so agreeable to reason, truth, justice, and equity; insomuch that so far as they became known they were admired and copied after, both by Greeks and Romans; and hence it was that the oracle {f} declared, that only the Chaldeans and Hebrews were a wise people; the Hebrews came from Chaldea, as Abraham the father of them.

{f} Apud Porphyr. in Euseb Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 10. p. 413.

Deuteronomy 4:7

Ver. 7 For what nation is there so great,.... Not so much for their number, for they were the fewest of all people; nor for the largeness of their territories, for the land they were going to possess was but a small country; nor for their wealth and riches, and warlike exploits, though they were not contemptible in either; but for their happy constitution in church and state, being directed and governed in both by laws which came immediately from God himself; for their knowledge of divine things, and for spiritual blessings and privileges they were favoured with, of which a special instance is given:

who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is, in all things that we call upon him for? God was nigh unto them in respect of relation, being their covenant God and Father, and they his sons and daughters, to whom the adoption belonged; and with respect to place and presence, his tabernacle being in the midst of them, the seat of his Shechinah, or divine Majesty, being in the most holy place, between the cherubim over the mercy seat; and he going before them in the pillar of cloud by day, and in the pillar of fire by night, and who might be applied unto at all times for whatsoever they stood in need of; and who was always near unto them, to give them advice and counsel, help and assistance; to hear their prayers, and communicate unto them things temporal and spiritual they stood in need of: and so the Lord is nigh to all that call upon him in faith, with fervency, and in sincerity and truth; and herein the glory and greatness of a people, as of Israel, lies, in being nearly related to God, a people near unto him, both as to union and communion; and in having a communication of good things from him. God is both a God at hand and afar off, Jer 23:23.

Deuteronomy 4:8

Ver. 8. And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous,.... Founded in justice and equity, and so agreeable to right reason, and so well calculated and adapted to lead persons in the ways of righteousness and truth, and keep them from doing any injury to each other's persons and properties, and to maintain good order, peace, and concord among them:

as all this law which I set before you this day? which he then repeated, afresh declared, explained and instructed them in; for otherwise it had been delivered to them near forty years ago. Now there was not any nation then in being, nor any since, to be compared with the nation of the Jews, for the wise and wholesome laws given unto them; no, not the more cultivated and civilized nations, as the Grecians and Romans, who had the advantage of such wise lawgivers as they were accounted, as Solon, Lycurgus, Numa, and others; and indeed the best laws that they had seem to be borrowed from the Jews.

Deuteronomy 4:9

Ver. 9. Only take heed to thyself,.... To walk according to this law, and not swerve from it:

and keep thy soul diligently; from the transgressions and breaches of it:

lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen; either the statutes and judgments set before them, and the circumstances of the delivery of them; or the punishment inflicted on the breakers of them; or the favours bestowed on those that observed them:

and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; out of thy mind and memory, and have no place in thy affections, through a neglect and disuse of them:

but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; their children and grandchildren, that they may be trained up in them in their youth, and so not depart from them when grown up, and in years; see **De 6:7**.

Deuteronomy 4:10

Ver. 10. Specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord in Horeb,.... Above all things Moses would have them take care not to forget the day the law was given from Mount Sinai, which was so awful and solemn, when they saw the fire, the smoke, the lightning, and heard the thunder and the sound of the trumpet; all which were very shocking and terrifying: and though the men of this generation were but young then, being under twenty years of age, yet many of them were old enough to observe these things, and which one would think should never wear out of their minds:

when the Lord said unto me, gather me the people together; not the elders of the people only, but the whole body of the people, as he did, and brought them to the foot of Mount Sinai, Ex 19:17,

and I will make them hear my words; the ten commands which were spoken by the Lord himself aloud, with an articulate voice, in the hearing of all the people; and was such a terrible voice of words, that they that heard it entreated it might be spoken to them no more, Heb 12:19

that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth; to reverence him the lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; to fear to offend him by breaking his laws, so holy, just, and good, and delivered in such an awful and solemn manner:

and that they may teach their children; the words they had heard, teach them obedience to them, and to be careful not to act contrary to them; since that would bring down judgments upon them, and deprive them of the favour they enjoyed, of which they had seen instances.

Deuteronomy 4:11

Ver. 11. And ye came near and stood under the mountain,.... At the foot of it, in the lower part of the mountain, as the Targum of Jonathan, and agrees with Ex 19:17

and the mountain burnt with fire unto the midst of heaven; the flame and smoke went up into the middle of the air: with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness; which thick darkness was occasioned partly by the smoke, which went up like the smoke of a furnace, and partly by the thick clouds, which were on the mount, and covered the face of the heavens, which were black and tempestuous with them; the Septuagint renders it a "tempest", Ex 19:18, which denotes the obscurity of the law, and the terrors it works in the minds of men.

Deuteronomy 4:12

Ver. 12. And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire,.... For the Lord descended on Mount Sinai in a cloud, in fire, and was in the thick darkness, from whence he delivered out the ten commands:

ye heard the voice of the words; distinctly and plainly, not only the sound of them, but the words themselves, and so as to understand what was meant by them;

but saw no similitude; not any likeness of the person speaking, by which they could form any idea of him in their minds, which was purposely done to prevent idolatry:

only ye heard a voice; that was all.

Deuteronomy 4:13

Ver. 13. And he declared unto you his covenant,.... So the law was called, because it contained, on the part of God, things which he would have done or avoided, to which were annexed promises of long life and happiness in the land he gave them; and they, on their part, agreed to hearken to it, and obey it, Ex 24:3,

which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; which see at large in Ex 20:1, and in this book afterwards repeated, **De 5:6**,

and he wrote them upon two tables of stone; to denote the durableness of them; the Targum of Jonathan says on tables of sapphire; but it is most likely that they were written on tables of marble, since there were great quantities of it in Mount Sinai; See Gill on "Ex 31:18".

Deuteronomy 4:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord commanded me at that time,.... When the ten commandments were delivered on Mount Sinai, and Moses was ordered to come up to God in the mount:

to teach you statutes and judgments; laws ceremonial and judicial, besides the ten commands given them:

that ye may do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it; the land of Canaan, which was on the other side of Jordan, and over which they must go in order to possess it; and when they came there, they were to hold the possession of it by attending to those laws which forbad the sins for which the old inhabitants of it were expelled out of it; and besides these, there were also several laws, both ceremonial and judicial, which were to be peculiarly observed in the land, as well as others they were obliged to do while without it.

Deuteronomy 4:15

Ver. 15. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves,.... As to keep all the laws given them, so particularly to avoid idolatry:

for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire; and therefore, as they had nothing that directed and led them, so they had nothing that could be a temptation to them, to make any form or likeness, and worship it.

Deuteronomy 4:16

Ver. 16. Lest ye corrupt yourselves,.... And not themselves only, but the word and worship of God, by idolatry, than which nothing is more corrupting and defiling, nor more abominable to God:

and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure; a graven image, in the likeness of any figure, an idea of which they had formed in their minds;

the likeness of male or female; of a man or a woman; so some of the Heathen deities were in the likeness of men, as Jupiter, Mars, Hercules, Apollo, &c. and others in the likeness of women, as Juno, Diana, Venus, &c. Some think Osiris and Isis, Egyptian deities, the one male, the other female, are respected; but it is not certain that these were worshipped by them so early.

Deuteronomy 4:17

Ver. 17. The likeness of any beast that is on the earth,.... As there are scarce any but the likeness of them has been made and worshipped, or the creatures themselves, as the ox by the Egyptians, the sheep by the Thebans, the goat by the Mendesians, and others by different people:

the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air; as the hawk, and the bird called Ibis, and another by the name of Cneph by the Egyptians, and the eagle by others.

Deuteronomy 4:18

Ver. 18. The likeness of anything that creepeth on the ground,.... As serpents by many; and indeed that creature is introduced into almost all the idolatries of the Heathens, which seems to take its rise from the serpent Satan made use of to deceive our first parents:

the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth; as the crocodile and hippopotamus, or river horse, by the Egyptians; and Dagon and Derceto, supposed to be figures in the form of a fish, among the Phoenicians.

Deuteronomy 4:19

Ver. 19. And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven,.... The starry heaven, which to do in itself is not sinful; and may be lawfully and commendably done, to raise admiration at the wonderful works of God in them, and lead to adore the author of them: but if not guarded against may be ensnaring:

and when thou seest the sun and the moon, and the stars, [even] all the host of heaven; those bright luminaries, so glorious to behold, and so useful and beneficial to the earth, and the inhabitants of it:

shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them; should have an impulse on their minds and their hearts, be inclined and drawn to the worship of them, partly by considering their splendour, glory, and usefulness, and partly by the example of others; for the worshipping of these seems to be and is the first kind of idolatry men gave into, at least it was very ancient; see Job 31:26,

which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven; the sun and the moon by their constant revolutions visit all the parts of the world, and stars are fixed in both hemispheres, so that all nations of the earth receive the benefit and advantage of all these heavenly bodies; but were never designed to be the objects of their worship, as might be learnt from their being divided to them, sometimes one part of the earth enjoying them, and then another, and not present with them all at one and the same time, which, if deities, would have been necessary; see Ps 19:6.

Deuteronomy 4:20

Ver. 20. But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace,.... The allusion is to the trying and melting of metals, and fleeing them from dross, by putting them into furnaces strongly heated, some of which are of earth, others of iron; the word, as the Jewish writers {g} observe, signifies such an one in which gold and silver and other things are melted; see Ps 12:6 even "out of Egypt"; which is here compared to an iron furnace, because of the cruelty with which the Israelites were used in it, the hardships they were put under, and the misery and bondage they were kept in; but out of all the Lord brought them, as he does all his people sooner or later out of their afflictions, sometimes called the furnace of affliction, Isa 48:10 where their graces are tried, and they are purged, purified, and refined from their dross and tin. This the Lord did to Israel, he brought them out of their distressed state and condition:

to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day: to be the Lord's inheritance, as they now were, De 32:9 as well as they were quickly to inherit the land of Canaan, for which they were brought out of the land of Egypt; and indeed they were already, even that day, entered on their inheritance, the kingdom of the Amorites being delivered into their hands.

{g} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Celim. c. 8. sect. 9. & Jarchi in loc.

Deuteronomy 4:21

Ver. 21. Furthermore the Lord was angry with me for your sakes,.... See **De 3:26**:

and sware that I should not go over Jordan; this circumstance of swearing is nowhere else expressed:

and that I should not go in unto that good land; the land of Canaan; he might see it, as he did from Pisgah, but not enter into it:

which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance; to them and to their children after them.

Deuteronomy 4:22

Ver. 22. But I must die in this land,.... The land of Moab, in a mountain in it he died, and in a valley there he was buried, De 32:50,

I must not go over Jordan; this he repeats, as lying near his heart; he had earnestly solicited to go over, but was denied it:

but ye shall go over, and possess that good land; this he firmly believed and assures them of, relying on the promise and faithfulness of God.

Deuteronomy 4:23

Ver. 23. Take heed unto yourselves,.... Since he should not be long with them, to advise, instruct, and caution them:

lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you; what that required of them, and what was promised unto them on the performance of it, and what they must expect should they break it, and particularly be so forgetful of it, and the first articles in it, as follows:

and make you a graven image, or the likeness of anything which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee; a graven image in the likeness of men or women, of any beast on the earth, or fowl in heaven, or fish in the sea.

Deuteronomy 4:24

Ver. 24. For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire,.... To his enemies; his wrath is like fire to burn up and destroy all that oppose him and break his commands, and especially idolaters; whose sin of all others is the most provoking to him, since it strikes at his being, his honour and glory; wherefore it follows,

even a jealous God; who is jealous of his honour in matters of worship, and will not suffer his glory to be given to another, nor his praise to graven images, without resenting it or punishing for it.

Deuteronomy 4:25

Ver. 25. When thou shall beget children, and children's children,.... Children and grandchildren, and several ages and generations have passed:

and shalt have remained long in the land; many years and even ages, or have grown old {h} in it: now they were in their infancy, and as such they were about to enter into it; during the times of the judges, they were in their childhood, or youth; in the times of David and Solomon, they were in their manhood; after that, in their decline; and in the times of Jeconiah and his brethren in their old age, when for their sins they were carried captive:

and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of anything; See Gill on "De 25:16".

and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to anger; that sin of idolatry, that God provoking sin, is chiefly intended.

{h} Mtnvwn "inveteraveritis", Montanus: "veteres facti fueritis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "senueritis", Vatablus.

Deuteronomy 4:26

Ver. 26. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day,.... Should they be guilty of such a sin, since they were so strongly and publicly cautioned against it; and even the heaven and the earth were called upon as witnesses of the law being set before them, which so expressly forbids it, De 30:19

that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto you go over Jordan to possess it; though they were now about to go over Jordan and inherit the land of Canaan, yet they would not enjoy it long, but be taken and carried captive out of it; as the ten tribes were by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, and the two tribes by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and both for their idolatry and other crimes.

Deuteronomy 4:27

Ver. 27. And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations,.... As they were by both captivities; the ten tribes were dispersed among the cities of the Medes, and the two tribes throughout the empire of Babylon:

and ye shall be left few in number among the Heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you; or be "men of number" {i}, so few that they might be easily numbered; which intimates that it should be other wise with them than when in Egypt; there they were multiplied and increased the more they were afflicted, but in these captivities they should be greatly diminished.

{i} rpom ytm "viri numeri", Montanus, Drusius.

Deuteronomy 4:28

Ver. 28. And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone,.... Idols made by men, cut out of wood and stone; these they should be enticed into the service of, or compelled to serve; which was still more brutish and stupid than to worship the sun, moon, and stars, which were not the works of men's hand, but the glorious works of the eternal God. But since in their captivities they were not subject to idolatry, but were cured of it thereby, another sense of the words is given by some, as by Onkelos and Jonathan, who paraphrase the words of serving the people, that serve idols; but what follows confirms the first sense:

which neither see, nor hear, nor taste, nor smell; senseless things, which have none of the senses of seeing, hearing, and smelling, nor the faculty of eating, which they need not to support life, of which they are destitute; and therefore it must be monstrous stupidity to worship such lifeless, senseless, objects; see Ps 115:4.

Deuteronomy 4:29

Ver. 29. But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God,.... By prayer and supplication, acknowledging and confessing sin, and desiring that God would be gracious and forgive it, and bring them out of their miserable condition; even if out of those depths of affliction and distress, and though scattered about in the world, and in the uttermost parts of it:

thou shalt find him; to be a God hearing and answering prayer, gracious and merciful, ready to help and deliver:

if they seek him with all their heart and with all their soul; sincerely and affectionately.

Deuteronomy 4:30

Ver. 30. When thou art in tribulation,.... In a strange land, in the power of a foreign enemy, and used ill:

and all these things are come upon thee; captivity, thraldom, hard labour, and want of the necessaries of life:

[even] in the latter days: in their present captivity for the rejection of the Messiah:

if thou turn to the Lord thy God; as the Jews will when they are converted and brought to a sense of their sin, and of their need of Christ, and seek to him as their Saviour, as they will do in the latter day, **Ho 3:5**

and shall be obedient unto his voice; not of the law only, but of the Gospel also, proclaiming peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him whom they have pierced.

Deuteronomy 4:31

Ver. 31. For the Lord thy God is a merciful God,.... In Christ, in whom he has proclaimed his name as such, of which Moses had a comfortable view, Ex 34:6 and therefore could attest it from his own knowledge and experience:

he will not forsake thee; though in a strange country, but bring them from thence into their own land again, and favour them with his gracious presence in his house and ordinances:

neither destroy thee; from being a people; and in a very wonderful manner are they preserved among the nations of the earth to this day:

nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he sware unto them; that a

Saviour should come and turn away ungodliness from them, and take away their sins; see Ro 11:26.

Deuteronomy 4:32

Ver. 32. For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee,.... Inquire into and consult the annals of former times, of ages past:

since the day that God created man upon the earth; trace them quite up to the creation of the world, and men in it:

and [ask] from the one side of heaven to the other; traverse the whole globe, and examine the records of every nation in it in both hemispheres:

whether there hath been any such [thing] as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? whether they can give any account of anything seen, heard, or done like what follows; suggesting that they cannot furnish out an instance to be mentioned with it.

Deuteronomy 4:33

Ver. 33. Did [ever] people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of fire,.... None ever heard the voice of God as they did, much less speaking such words as they heard, and still less out of the midst of fire, which was their case, **De 4:12**

as thou hast heard, and live? which was stranger still, when they might have expected they should, and doubtless feared they would be, as it was wonderful they were not, consumed by it.

Deuteronomy 4:34

Ver. 34. Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation,.... As he now had done, namely, the nation of Israel out of the nation of the Egyptians; this he not only had assayed to do, but had actually done it; whereas no such instance like it could be produced, and especially as done in the manner this was:

by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war; the word "temptations" may be considered as a general word, as Aben Ezra thinks, and may signify the temptations by signs, &c. or the various essays and trials, ways, means, and methods taken by the Lord to bring about the event; by "signs" may be meant those which were required of Moses, and done by him before the people of Israel, and before Pharaoh, as proofs of his mission from the Lord, **Ex 4:1** and by "wonders", the ten plagues of Egypt, which were done by a supernatural and miraculous operation, and were amazing things; see Ps 78:11; and by "war", either the slaying of the firstborn, with the destruction of the judges and gods of Egypt, as Aben Ezra; or the Lord's fighting for Israel at the Red sea, as Jarchi; he saved them and destroyed the Egyptians, and showed himself to be a man of war, Ex 14:14

and by a mighty hand and stretched out arm; phrases frequently used when this affair is spoken of, and are expressive of the mighty power of God in the above instances, and in the issue of them, bringing Israel out of Egypt; though Aben Ezra interprets it of the pillar of fire and cloud in which the Lord went before them:

and by great terrors; which the same writer interprets of the drowning of Pharaoh and his host in the sea, and dividing it for Israel; but may be understood not only of the terrors which possessed him and his people then, but at other times, especially at the time of the thunder and lightning, and when they sat in thick darkness, and particularly when all their firstborn were slain; see De 26:8,

according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes; among the men of Egypt, as the above writer, Pharaoh and his courtiers: the above things were done as before them for their terror, so before Israel for their encouragement.

Deuteronomy 4:35

Ver. 35. Unto thee it was showed,.... What the Lord did in Egypt:

that thou mightest know that the Lord he [is] God, [there is] none else besides him; that he is the one only living and true God, and there is no other: this phrase is often used by the Prophet Isaiah, to express the same great article of faith.

Deuteronomy 4:36

Ver. 36. Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee,.... Thunder is the voice of God, and by which he instructs men in the greatness of his power, Job 26:14, &c. unless his voice in giving the law, which was for the instruction of Israel, is meant; for that was heard on earth, on Mount Sinai, to which the following refers:

and upon earth he showed thee his great fire; on Mount Sinai, which burned with it:

and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire; the ten commands, and therefore may well be called, a fiery law; see **De 4:12**.

Deuteronomy 4:37

Ver. 37. And because he loved thy fathers,.... Not their immediate fathers, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, and entered not into the good land because of their unbelief, but their more remote fathers or ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had some singular testimonies of the love of God to them, Abraham is called their friend of God, and Isaac was the son of promise in whom the seed was called; and Jacob is particularly said to be loved by God, when Esau was hated:

therefore he chose their seed after them; not to eternal life and salvation, but to the enjoyment of external blessings and privileges, to be called by his name, and to set up his name and worship among them, and to be a special people to him above all people on the earth, as to outward favours, both civil and ecclesiastical:

and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; which was done not only in the sight of the Egyptians openly, they not daring to hinder them, as the wonders wrought to oblige them to let them go out, done in the sight of the Israelites as before observed, but in the sight of God, he going before them in the pillar of cloud and fire, smiling upon them the Israelites, and looking with a frown upon the host of the Egyptians, and conducting the people by the angel of his presence.

Deuteronomy 4:38

Ver. 38. To drive out nations from before thee, greater and mightier than thou art,.... The seven nations of the land of Canaan, which were more in number and mightier in power and strength than they, and particularly the Amorites, who were already driven out and dispossessed of their country, even the kingdoms and nations of Sihon and Og:

to bring thee in to give thee their land for an inheritance, as [it is] this day; referring, as Aben Ezra observes, to the inheritance of the land of the two kings of the Amorites, which the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, were put into the possession of already.

Deuteronomy 4:39

Ver. 39. Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart,.... Own and acknowledge it now with thy mouth, and lay it up and consider it in thine heart hereafter, as a truth of the greatest importance to be professed and held fast, and to be thought of and meditated upon continually, and never to be forgotten:

that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; that he has made both, and is the possessor and Lord of them, and does what he pleases with them; that the one is his throne, his dwelling place, and the other his footstool; and that the inhabitants of both are his creatures, and under his authority and command, and he can dispose of them as he pleases:

[there is] none else; no God in heaven or in earth beside him.

Deuteronomy 4:40

Ver. 40. Thou shall keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments,.... All his laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, partly being under obligation to him for all the great and good things done by him for them before enumerated, and partly and chiefly because he is the Lord God in heaven and in earth, and has a right to command and ought to be obeyed:

which I command thee this day; in the name of the Lord, and which he repeated, opened, and explained, and charged them afresh to observe;

otherwise they were such that had been given long ago:

that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee; that they and theirs might enjoy temporal mercies, and continue in the land of Canaan, and partake of all the blessings in it, as follows, and of the sanctuary of the Lord, and the privileges of it:

and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for ever; that is, that they and theirs might live long in the land of Canaan, which the Lord gave for an inheritance for ever, provided they kept his law, and were obedient to his commands; see **De 6:25**, and though they have had several interruptions by their captivities, and especially by their present very long one, yet when they shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, they shall have their land restored to them again, and shall never more be dispossessed of it.

Deuteronomy 4:41

Ver. 41. Then Moses severed three cities,.... To be cities of refuge, according to the command of God, Nu 35:14 this he did when he had conquered the two kingdoms of the Amorites, that God had given them for an inheritance to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, **De 4:38** though Jarchi says, and so other Jewish writers, that persons were not received into them until the three cities appointed in the land of Canaan were separated for the like use;
See Gill on "Nu 35:14" and these were,

on this side Jordan, toward the rising sun; on that side of the river on which the plains of Moab lay, and the kingdoms of the Amorites, and to the east of Jordan: so Jarchi remarks,

"on that side which is on the east of Jordan;"

see Jos 20:8.

Deuteronomy 4:42

Ver. 42. That the slayer might flee thither,.... For refuge; the slayer of a man, but not any slayer, but which should kill his neighbour unawares; by accident to him, without any design and intention to kill him; ignorantly, as the Septuagint version; and so Onkelos:

and hated him not in times past; it having never appeared that there had been a quarrel between them, and that the slayer had shown any enmity to the man slain any time before the fact, or bore a grudge against him, or spite unto him:

and that, fleeing unto one of these cities, he might live; in peace and safety unto his own death, or unto the death of the high priest, when he was released from his confinement to the city of his refuge, and might return to his tribe, house, family, and possessions.

Deuteronomy 4:43

Ver. 43. [Namely], Bezer in the wilderness,.... In Jos 20:8, it is added "upon the plain"; this perhaps was the wilderness of Moab, in the plains of it, the same with Bozrah, see Jer 48:24 and in the Apocrypha:

"Hereupon Judas and his host turned suddenly by the way of the wilderness unto Bosora; and when he had won the city, he slew all the males with the edge of the sword, and took all their spoils, and burned the city with fire," (1 Maccabees 5:28)

it was in the

plain country of the Reubenites, or lay in that part of the country which was allotted to them, and which they gave to the Levites, **1Ch 6:78**,

and Ramoth in Gilead of the Gadites; it lay in that part of Mount Gilead, and among the cities of it, which fell to the share of the tribe of Gad, and was by them given to the Levites, **1Ch 6:80**, this city is frequently in Scripture called Ramothgilead; see **1Ki 4:13**

and Golan in Bashan, of the Manassites, or "Gaulon", as the Septuagint, and from hence the country round about was called Gaulanitis; all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, was given to the half tribe of Manasseh, and out of it this city was given by them to the Levites, **1Ch 6:71**, and appointed a city of refuge: now as these cities were typical of Christ, there may be something observed in the names of them as agreeing with him. "Bezer" signifies "a fortified place"; Christ is the fortress, mountain, and place of defence for his people, and strong hold to which the prisoners of hope turn, the strong tower whither the righteous run and are safe. "Ramoth" signifies "exaltations"; which may point both at the exaltation of Christ in human nature at the right hand of God, and the exaltation of his people by him, who are raised by him from a low estate to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory, and by whom he is exalted in his person, office, and grace. "Golan" signifies "revealed" or" manifested": so Christ has been manifest in the flesh, and is revealed to sinners, when they are called by his grace; to whom they flee for refuge, and lay hold on him, the hope set before them.

Deuteronomy 4:44

Ver. 44. And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel. Not the law concerning the cities of refuge, but the law of the ten commands repeated in the following chapter; so Jarchi remarks,

"this which he should set in order after this section;"

as he does in the next chapter, where he repeats in order the ten precepts, and makes observations on the manner of the delivery of them, and urges obedience to them.

Deuteronomy 4:45

Ver. 45. These are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments,.... The laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, delivered in the following chapters; which are renewed, repeated, and explained: which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt; in the third month after they came from thence these laws were delivered to him at Mount Sinai, and he declared them to them; and now afresh, near forty years after, repeated them to them in the plains of Moab.

Deuteronomy 4:46

Ver. 46. On this side Jordan, in the valley, over against Bethpeor,.... Where the Israelites abode some time; see **De 3:29**, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon; which was now conquered, and in the hands of the Israelites:

whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, after they came out of Egypt; not as soon as, or quickly after they came from thence; for it was but a few months ago since this conquest was made, whereas it was near forty years since they came out of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 4:47

Ver. 47. And they possessed his land, and the land of Og king of Bashan,.... Seized upon them, and took them as their own, and divided them for an inheritance among two of their tribes and half another:

two kings of the Amorites; which is more than once observed, that it might be taken notice of that these were of the nations of the Canaanites Israel were to root out, and possess their land:

which were on this side Jordan, toward the sun rising; which lands and kingdoms lay to the east of Jordan, on that side of it on which were the plains of Moab, where Moses and Israel now were.

Deuteronomy 4:48

Ver. 48. From Aroer, which is by the bank of the river Arnon,.... A city of Moab, which was situated on the bank of the river Arnon, that was on the border of Moab, **De 2:36**,

even unto Mount Sion, which [is] Hermon; the meaning is, that the lands of these two kings conquered by Israel reached from the city Aroer on the river Arnon to Mount Hermon, the one being the southern, the other the northern boundary of them. Here Hermon has another name Sion, and is to be carefully distinguished from Mount Zion near Jerusalem; it lying in a different country, and being written with a different letter in the Hebrew language. In the Septuagint version it is called Seon, and by the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem the mount of snow;
See Gill on "De 3:9".

Deuteronomy 4:49

Ver. 49. And all the plain on this side Jordan eastward,.... The plains of Moab, on that side of Jordan to the east:

even unto the sea of the plain; the sea of Sodom, the salt sea:

under the springs of Pisgah; that rose from Mount Pisgah, the same with Ashdothpisgah, De 3:17.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 5

In this chapter Moses, after a short preface, De 5:1, repeats the law of the decalogue, or ten commands, with some little variation, De 5:6, and then reminds the Israelites of the terrible manner in which it was delivered to them, De 5:22 which put them upon making a request that Moses might be a mediator between God and them, and hear what the Lord had to say, and report it to them; to which they promised obedience, De 5:24 and which being agreeable to the Lord was granted, De 5:28, and this laid them under a greater obligation to observe the commands of God, and keep them, De 5:32.

Ver. 1. And Moses called all Israel,.... The heads of the various tribes, and elders of the people, as he had on occasion been used to do; unless it can be thought that at different times he repeated the following laws to separate parties and bodies of them, until they had all heard them:

and said unto them, hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day; the laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which he was about to repeat, and afresh declare unto them, being what they had all a concern in, and under obligation to regard.

Deuteronomy 5:2

Ver. 2. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Which is Sinai, as Aben Ezra observes; it being the same mountain, only it had two tops, which bore these different names; for certain it is that the decalogue after repeated was given at Sinai, and had the nature and form of a covenant; see Ex 24:7.

Deuteronomy 5:3

Ver. 3. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers,.... That is, not with them only, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Abendana remark; for certain it is that this covenant was made, or law was given, to the immediate fathers of this present generation of Israelites, whose carcasses had fallen in the wilderness; unless this is to be understood of their more remote ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with whom the covenant of grace was made, or afresh made manifest, especially with the former; when the law, the covenant here spoken of, was not delivered until four hundred and thirty years after, **Ga 3:16**,

but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day; many of them were then present at the giving of the law, and though under twenty years of age, could remember it, and the circumstances of it; and besides, they were the same people to whom it was given, though not consisting wholly of the same individuals.

Deuteronomy 5:4

Ver. 4. The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount,.... Meaning, not in that free, friendly, and familiar manner, in which he sometimes talked with Moses, of whom this phrase is used, Ex 33:11, but publicly, audibly, clearly, and distinctly, or without the interposition of another; he did not speak to them by Moses, but to them themselves; he talked to them without a middle person between them, as Aben Ezra expresses it: without making use of one to relate to them what he said; but he talked to them directly, personally:

out of the midst of the fire; in which he descended, and with which the mountain was burning all the time he was speaking; which made it very awful and terrible, and pointed at the terrors of the legal dispensation.

Deuteronomy 5:5

Ver. 5. I stood between the Lord and you at that time,.... Between the Word of the Lord and you, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; that is, about that time, not at the exact precise time the ten commandments were delivered, for these were spoken immediately to the people; but when the ceremonial law was given, which was ordained by angels, in the hand of a mediator, **Ga 3:19**, and which was at the request of the people as follows, terrified by the appearance of the fire out of which the moral law was delivered:

to show you the word of the Lord; not the decalogue, that they heard with their own ears, but the other laws which were afterwards given, that were of the ceremonial and judicial kind:

for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount; lest they should be consumed by it: and indeed bounds were set about the mount, and they were charged not to break through:

saying; this word is in connection with the preceding verse, the Lord's talking out of the midst of the fire, when he said what follows.

Deuteronomy 5:6

Ver. 6-11. I am the Lord thy God,.... This is the preface to the ten commandments, and is the same with that in Ex 20:2,
See Gill on "Ex 20:2", and those commands are here delivered in the same order, and pretty near in the same words, with a little variation, and a few additions; which I shall only observe, and refer to
Ex 20:1 for the sense of the various laws.

Deuteronomy 5:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "De 5:6".

Deuteronomy 5:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "De 5:6".

Deuteronomy 5:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "De 5:6".

Deuteronomy 5:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "De 5:6".

Deuteronomy 5:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "De 5:6".

Deuteronomy 5:12

Ver. 12,13. Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it,.... Or observe it, by setting it apart as a time of natural rest, and for the performance of holy and religious exercises; see Ex 20:8, where the phrase is a little varied, "remember the sabbath day to keep it holy"; it having been instituted before:

as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; not at Sinai only, for the same might then have been observed of all the rest of the commands, but before the giving of the law, at the first of the manna; see Ex 16:23.

Deuteronomy 5:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "De 5:12".

Deuteronomy 5:14

Ver. 14. Nor thine ox, nor thine ass,.... In Ex 20:10, it is only in general said,

nor thy cattle: here by way of illustration and explanation the ox and the ass are particularly mentioned; the one being used in ploughing ground, and treading out the corn, and the other in carrying burdens; and it is added,

nor any of thy cattle; as their camels, or whatever else they were wont to use in any kind of service; they were none of them to do any kind of work on the sabbath day. The following clause also is not used before, which expresses the end of this institution:

that thy manservant and thy maidservant may have rest as well as thee; which if the cattle had not rest, they could not have, being obliged to attend them at the plough or elsewhere; and this respects not only hired, but bond servants and maidens.

Deuteronomy 5:15

Ver. 15. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt,.... Even a bondservant; for Egypt was an house of bondage, and there the Israelites were made to serve in hard bondage; of which they are reminded, that their hearts might be touched with it, and inclined to show pity to persons in somewhat similar circumstances; calling to mind how sweet a little rest would have been unto them when in Egypt:

and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm; signifying that their deliverance from their state of bondage was not owing to themselves, nor to any creature, but to the mercy and kindness of God, and to his almighty power; and therefore they were under the greatest obligations to observe any command and institution of his he should think fit to make; and particularly this of the sabbath, which was made on that account, as follows:

wherefore the Lord thy God commandeth thee to keep the sabbath day; in commemoration of their rest from Egyptian bondage.

Deuteronomy 5:16

Ver. 16. Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee,.... And is the first commandment with promise, as the apostle observes, **Eph 6:2** with a promise of long life and happiness in the land of Canaan, as follows:

that thy days may be prolonged; see Ex 20:12 here it is added,

and that it may go well with thee; and which the apostle also has in the place referred to:

in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee; the land of Canaan; which the same apostle explains to a greater latitude,

that thou mayest live long on the earth; applying it to Christians under the Gospel dispensation, whether Jews or Gentiles.

Deuteronomy 5:17

Ver. 17-20. Thou shalt not kill,.... The following commands begin with the copulative "and", different from the manner in which they are expressed, Ex 20:17 which joins these together, and them with the preceding ones; hence the law is by some said to be one copulative, and may serve to illustrate a passage in **Jas 2:10**.

Deuteronomy 5:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "De 5:17".

Deuteronomy 5:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "De 5:17".

Deuteronomy 5:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "De 5:17".

Deuteronomy 5:21

Ver. 21. Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife,.... Here a neighbour's wife is put before his house, different from Ex 20:17 and "his field" is added, which with what follows take in everything that is a man's property; and which is not to be desired or coveted in an unlawful manner by another, and much less should any means be made use of to deprive him of it; but "lust" is the thing intended and prohibited, be it after what it may, which is another man's: see **Mt 5:28**, of a man's field, see **Isa 5:8**.

Deuteronomy 5:22

Ver. 22. These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount,.... The above ten words or commands, which were spoken so audibly and loudly by the Lord himself on Mount Sinai, that the whole congregation of the people of Israel heard them:

out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness; in which the Lord was; see **De 4:11**,

with a great voice, and he added no more; ceased speaking; after he had delivered the ten commands, he said no more at that time. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"with a great voice which ceased not."

It ceased not until all were delivered, and then it did; it was a continued voice, yet clear and distinct:

and he wrote them in

two tables of stone; marble stone, as the Targum of Jonathan; which is much more likely than what the paraphrase has on **De 4:13**, this is an emblem of the duration of the law:

and delivered them unto me; to Moses, and by him to be delivered to the people, who though they had heard them would be apt to forget them; and therefore they were written, that they might read them, and meditate on them, and be careful to keep them.

Deuteronomy 5:23

Ver. 23. And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness,.... The thick darkness, where God was, and with which the mountain was covered, Ex 20:21

for the mountain did burn with fire; which is a reason both why the Lord spoke out of the midst of the fire, the mountain on which he descended burning with it and also for his speaking out of the midst of darkness, because not only a thick cloud covered the mountain, but it was altogether on a smoke, which ascended as the smoke of a furnace, Ex 19:16

that ye come near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes and your elders; or wise men, as the Targum of Jonathan; by which it appears, that not only the common people were frightened at what they heard and saw on Mount Sinai, but those of the first rank and eminence among them, who were the most famous for their authority and wisdom.

Deuteronomy 5:24

Ver. 24. And ye said, behold, the Lord our God hath showed us his glory and his greatness,.... In descending on Mount Sinai in the manner he did, and giving the law from thence with such solemnity; for there was a glory in the ministration of it, as the apostle argues **2Co 3:7**, it being delivered with so much majesty, and such a glorious apparatus attending it; see De 33:2. Aben Ezra interprets this of the appearance of fire in which the Lord was, "and his greatness", of the thunders and lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet:

and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire; the ten words, as the same interpreter rightly notes, which were vocally and audibly expressed out of the fire:

we have seen this day, that God doth talk with man, and he liveth; they had proof of it in themselves; God had been talking with them out of the fire, and yet it did not reach and consume them, but they were still alive.

Deuteronomy 5:25

Ver. 25. Now therefore why should we die?.... Since we are now alive, and have so wonderfully escaped the danger we were exposed unto, let us be careful that we are not liable to it again:

for this great fire will consume us: if it continues, and we are exposed to it; perhaps some of them might remember the fire that burnt in the uttermost parts of the camp at Taberah, and the destruction of Korah and the two hundred and fifty men with him by fire, Nu 11:1,

if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die; for it was such a voice of words they could not endure as to the matter of them, and therefore entreated the word might not be spoken to them any more; it being the killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death; and the manner in which it was delivered was so terrible, that they concluded they could not live, but must die if they heard it again; and imagined that if the fire continued, the flames of it would spread and reach them, and they would not be able to escape them.

Deuteronomy 5:26

Ver. 26. For who [is there] of all flesh,.... What man was there in any age, that was ever heard of or can be named:

that hath heard the voice of the living God; who lives in and of himself, and is the author and giver of life to all his creatures, whereby he is distinguished from and is opposed unto the lifeless deities of the Gentiles; and which makes him and his voice heard the more awful and tremendous, and especially as

speaking out of the midst of the fire: which was the present case:

as we [have], and lived? of this there never was the like instance; for though some had seen God and lived, as Jacob did, and therefore called the name of the place where he saw him Penuel, Ge 32:30, and Moses had heard the voice of the angel of the Lord out of a bush, which seemed to be burning, and was not consumed, **Ex 3:2**, yet none ever heard the voice of the Lord out of real fire, and particularly expressing such words as he did, but the Israelites. Zoroastres, the founder of the Magi among the Persians, and of their religion, seems to have had respect to this, and to have applied falsely this to himself, which belonged to Moses and the people of Israel; for it is said {k},

"one reason the Persians have fire in so much veneration is, because they say that Zoroastres, being caught up to heaven, did not see God, but heard him speaking with him out of the midst of fire."

{k} Hyde Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers. c. 8. p. 160.

Deuteronomy 5:27

Ver. 27. Go thou near,.... To the mount, and to God on it:

and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; for they supposed, by the continuance of the Lord on the mount, and the fire burning on it, that he had more to say, which they were not averse to hear; but desired it might be not immediately delivered to them, but by the means of Moses; the sound of the words, and the sight of the fire, being so terrible to them:

and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee: they did not doubt, knowing the faithfulness of Moses, his declaring all unto them that should be told him by the Lord; and they were desirous that he should, they did not want to have anything withheld from them, only they could not bear to see and hear things immediately from the Lord:

and we will hear it and do it; hearken to it, and receive it, as the word of God, and not man, and yield a ready and cheerful obedience, even to everything that should be required; see Ex 20:19.

Deuteronomy 5:28

Ver. 28. And the Lord heard the voice of your word, when ye spake unto me,.... Not only in a general way, as he hears and knows all that is spoken by men; for there is not a word on the tongue, formed upon it, and uttered by it, but what is altogether known to him; but in a special and particular manner observed, took notice of, approved, and was well pleased with what these people said:

and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken unto thee; not only heard the sound of them, but took notice of the sense and meaning of them, and listened to them with pleasure and delight:

they have well said all that they have spoken; expressing such an awe and reverence of the divine Majesty, desiring to have a mediator between God and them, and purposing and promising to hearken to and obey whatsoever he should command by him.

Deuteronomy 5:29

Ver. 29. O that there were such an heart in them,.... Not that there is properly speaking such volitions and wishes in God; but, as Aben Ezra observes, the Scripture speaks after the language of the children of men; and may be considered as upbraiding them with want of such an heart, and with weakness to do what they had promised; and, at most, as approving of those things they spoke of as grateful to him, and profitable to them: the words may be rendered, "who will give {l} that they had such an heart"; not to me, but to them, as Aben Ezra notes; they cannot give it to themselves, nor can any creature give it to them; none but God can, and therefore they ought to have prayed to him to give them an heart to hearken and do; agreeably to which is the Arabic version,

"it is to be wished by them, that such an heart would continue with them;"

which they by their language signified was in them: that they would fear me; which is not naturally in the heart of man, is a gift of God, a part of the covenant of grace, is implanted in regeneration, and is no inconsiderable branch of it; it is opposed to pride, and is consistent with faith and joy, and is increased by views of the grace and goodness of God, and is a distinguishing character of a good man:

and keep all my commandments always; not only one, but all, and not only at some certain times, but continually; and which are to be kept in faith from a principle of love, with a view to the glory of God, and in the strength of Christ; and to this the fear of God is necessary, for where there is no fear of God, there is no regard to his commandments; but where there is a reverential fear of God, there are faith, hope, love, and every other grace; yea, the Spirit, the author of all, who is in the saints, to enable them to walk in the statutes of the Lord, and to keep his judgments and do them; and such keep the commandments of God, not from a slavish fear, but from a sense of divine goodness:

that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever; for the fear of God, and the keeping of his commandments, issue in the good of men, in their own good, their inward peace, and spiritual welfare; in the good of others, their neighbours, servants, and children, by way of example and instruction; and even in the public peace and prosperity of a nation in which they dwell: not that these things are meritorious of eternal life, but are what are approved of by the Lord, and are grateful to him; which is the chief view in the expression of the text.

{l} Nty ym "quis det", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius; "quis dabit", Piscator.

Deuteronomy 5:30

Ver. 30. Go say to them, get you into your tents again. Which they had left, being brought by Moses, at the direction of God, to the foot of Mount Sinai, to receive the law from his mouth; this being done, they are ordered to return to their tents again, to their families, wives, and children.

Deuteronomy 5:31

Ver. 31. But as for thee, stand thou here by me,.... On the mount by him whither he was called up; Moses was not permitted to go to his tent when the children of Israel were, but was ordered to wait upon the Lord to receive instructions from him, which he was to communicate to the people, being a kind of a mediator between God and them, as they requested, and which was granted them:

and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments: all laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which belong to them as men, as in a church state, and members of a body politic:

which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them; for all doctrine is in order to practice, without which all instructions, and theoretical notions, signify little: and these they were more especially to do, and some of them peculiarly,

in the land which I give them to possess it: the land of Canaan, and which laid on them no small obligation to do the commandments of God; since of his free favour and good will, and as a pure gift of his, he had bestowed upon them a land flowing with milk and honey, into which he was just now about to bring them; as nothing can more strongly engage souls to a cheerful obedience to the service of God, whether in private or in public, than the consideration of the great and good things which God of his rich grace bestows upon them, and has promised to them, and prepared for them, and will quickly put them into the possession of; and upon such an account Moses presses the observance of the commands of God in the following verses.

Deuteronomy 5:32

Ver. 32. Ye shall observe to do therefore as the Lord your God doth command you,.... Observe every precept, as to matter and manner, which the Lord has commanded, and that under a sense of the great obligations laid on them by him, in giving them freely so good a land to possess:

you shall not turn to the right hand or to the left; but walk in the way of the commandments of God, and not depart from them at all, but follow the Lord in his own ways fully. The phrase is expressive of a strict and close attention to the word of God, without deviating from it in the least; for every sin, which is a transgression of some command of God or another, is a going out of the way that directs unto; see Isa 30:21.

Deuteronomy 5:33

Ver. 33. Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you,.... None are to be avoided or departed from on any consideration whatever; see Ps 119:6 an instance of this we have in Zacharias and Elizabeth, **Lu 1:6** that ye may live; corporeally, comfortably, in all the outward enjoyments of life needful for them, particularly in the possession of the land of Canaan, and the benefits of it; for these promises of life upon obedience seem to reach no further, unless as types and emblems of what is enjoyed through the obedience and righteousness of Christ, as the following phrases show:

and [that] it [may] be well with you, and [that] ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess; the land of Canaan; though the Jewish writers {m} carry it further, even to heaven and eternal happiness; and so may we in the sense before given.

{m} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 27. p. 418.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 6

In this chapter Moses proceeds on in his exhortations to the people of Israel, to attend to the commandments of God, that it might be well with them, **De 6:1**, and begins with a principal and fundamental article of religion, which deserved their first and chief regard, the unity of God, and the love of him, **De 6:4**, which they were carefully to instinct their children in, and ever to be mindful of themselves, **De 6:6**, and when they were come into the land of Canaan, and into a plentiful enjoyment of all good things in it, they are exhorted to be careful not to forget the Lord, their kind benefactor; but to fear him, serve him, and not go after other gods, since he is jealous of his honour and worship, **De 6:10** and not to tempt him, as they had done, but diligently keep, his commandments, that it might be well with them in that land, **De 6:16**, and when their children inquired the reason and meaning of such testimonies, statutes, and judgments, that were enjoined them, they were to give them the history of their case in Egypt, their deliverance from thence, the wonders that were wrought for them, and the introduction of them into the good land of Canaan; and to let them know that these commands were some of them in commemoration of these blessings; and by these they were laid under obligation to regard them all, and the rather, since they were not only for the glory of God, but for their own good, **De 6:20**.

Ver. 1. Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments,.... Not the ten commandments repeated in the preceding chapter, but all others, whether moral, ceremonial, or judicial, afterwards declared; for what Moses now did was only to give a repetition and fresh declaration of such laws as he had before received, and delivered to the people; and so the Targum of Jonathan thus paraphrases this clause,

"this is a declaration of the commandments, statutes, and judgments:"

which the Lord your God commanded to teach you; that is, which he commanded him, Moses, to teach them, though not fully expressed, as may be learned from **De 4:1**

that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it; this is often observed, to imprint upon their minds a sense of their duty, even of obedience to the laws of God, which they were carefully and diligently to perform in the land of Canaan they were going into, and by which they were to hold their possession of it.

Deuteronomy 6:2

Ver. 2. That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God,.... Being taught to know the greatness of his being, and the nature of his mind and will, and the manner of his worship; and not with a slavish fear, but with a filial one, a reverential affection for God; being instructed in their duty, as of children, to their God and Father; see **De 5:29**

to keep all his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee; not in his own name, but in the name, and by the authority of God, whose minister and messenger he was; and all, having the stamp of divine authority on them, were to be observed and kept, and not one to be neglected or departed from:

thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; a man and his children, and grandchildren; he was to take care that they kept all the commandments of the Lord as long as he lived, and had any concern with them:

and that thy days may be prolonged; long life being reckoned a very great outward mercy; a long enjoyment of, and continuance in the land of Canaan, is chiefly designed, which is usually expressed when this is observed; see **De 4:26**.

Deuteronomy 6:3

Ver. 3. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it,.... Or them, the commandments given them:

that it may be well with thee; in body and estate:

and that ye may increase mightily; not only in wealth and riches, but chiefly in numbers:

as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee; a promise of increase of numbers was frequently made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; as that their seed should be as the stars of heaven, and as the dust of the earth, and the sand on the sea shore, innumerable; see
Ge 15:5 and this especially

in the land that floweth with milk and honey; a very common periphrasis of the land of Canaan, because of the plenty of good things in it; see **Ex 3:8**.

Deuteronomy 6:4

Ver. 4. Hear, O Israel,.... These are the words of Moses, stirring up the people to an attention to what he was about to say of this great and momentous article, the unity of God, to prevent their going into polytheism and idolatry. From one of the words here used, the Jews call this section Kiriathshema, which they oblige themselves to read twice a day, morning and evening {n}; the last letter of the first word in this verse, "Shema", meaning "hear", and the last letter of the last word in it, "Echad", meaning "one", are greater than ordinary; which seems designed to excite the attention to what is contained in this passage:

the Lord our God is one Lord; the doctrine of which is, that the Lord, who was the covenant God and Father of his people Israel, is but one Jehovah; he is Jehovah, the Being of beings, a self-existent Being, eternal and immutable; and he is but one in nature and essence; this appears from the perfection of his nature, his eternity, omnipotence, omnipresence, infinity, goodness, self-sufficiency, and perfection; for there can be but one eternal, one omnipotent, one omnipresent, one infinite, one that is originally and of himself good; one self, and all sufficient, and perfect Being; and which also may be concluded from his being the first cause of all things, which can be but one; and from his relations to his creatures, as their King, ruler, governor, and lawgiver. And for this purpose these words are cited in Mr 12:29 but then they no ways contradict the doctrine of a trinity of persons in the unity of the divine essence, the Father, Word, and Holy Spirit, which three are one; the one God, the one Jehovah, as here expressed; see **1Jo 5:7** and so the ancient Jews understood this passage. In an ancient book of theirs it is said {o} Jehovah, Elohenu, Jehovah (i.e. Jehovah, our God, Jehovah); these are the three degrees with respect to this sublime mystery; "in the beginning God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth"; and again {p}, Jehovah, Elohenu, Jehovah, they are one; the three forms (modes or things) which are one; and elsewhere {q} it is observed, there are two, and one is joined to them, and they are three; and when the three are one, he says to (or of) them, these are the two names which Israel heard, Jehovah, Jehovah, and Elohenu (our God) is joined unto them; and it is the seal of the ring of truth, and when they are joined they are one in one unity; which is illustrated by the three names the soul of man is called by, the soul, spirit, and breath; and elsewhere they say {r} the holy blessed God, and his Shechinah, are called one; see Joh 10:30.

{n} Mist. Beracot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2. {o} Zohar in Gen. fol. 1, 3. {p} Ib. in Exod. fol. 18. 3, 4. {q} Ib. in Numb. fol. 67. 3. {r} Tikkune Zohar, Correct. 47. fol. 86. 2.

Deuteronomy 6:5

Ver. 5. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God,.... Which is the first and chief commandment in the law, the sum and substance of the first table of it; and includes in it, or at least has connected with it, knowledge of God, esteem of him, delight in him, faith and trust in him, fear and worship of him, and obedience to him, which when right springs from it. God is to be loved because of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hand, of nature, providence, and grace; and because of the relations he stands in to men, and especially to his own people; and because of his peculiar love to them; and, indeed, he is to be loved by all men for his care of them, and blessings of goodness bestowed on them; the manner in which this is to be done follows:

with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might; with a superlative love, above all creatures whatever; with the whole of the affections of the heart, with great fervency and ardour of spirit, in the sincerity of the soul, and with all the strength of grace a man has, with such love that is as strong as death. Jarchi interprets loving God with all the heart, that is, with thy heart not divided about God, a heart not divided between God and the creature; "all thy might" he interprets of mammon or substance; and, indeed, that is one way in which men may show their love to God, by laying out their substance in his service, and for the support of his cause and interest in the world. Aben Ezra by "the heart" understands knowledge, and by the "soul" the spirit of man that is in his body, and by might perfect love in the heart.

Deuteronomy 6:6

Ver. 6. And these words, which I command thee this day,.... To hearken to, observe, and take notice of, that God is one, and is to be loved in the strongest manner that possibly can be:

shall be in thine heart; on the table of the heart, as the Targum of Jonathan; see **2Co 3:3**, be cordially received, have a place in the affections of the heart, and be retained in mind and memory.

Deuteronomy 6:7

Ver. 7. And thou shall teach them diligently unto thy children,.... Care and diligence are to be used, and pains taken, to instruct children, as soon as they are capable, in the knowledge of God, and of his commandments; that they are to love him, fear him, serve, and worship him; this is to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, **Eph 6:4**, it may be rendered "thou shalt whet or sharpen them" {s}, the words or commandments; it is expressive of diligence and industry in teaching, by frequent repetition of things, by inculcating them continually into their minds, endeavouring to imprint them there, that they may be sharp, ready, and expert in them:

and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house; at the time of meals, or at leisure hours, or even when employed in any business in the house which will admit of it; every opportunity should be taken to instil the knowledge of divine things into their tender minds:
and when thou walkest by the way; in a journey, and any of his children with him; or for diversion, in the garden, field, or vineyard; occasion may be taken on sight of any of the works of creation to lead into a discourse concerning God, his nature, perfections, and works, and the obligations his creatures lie under to love, fear, and serve him: and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; at the time of going to bed, and rising from it; which, as they are seasons of prayer to God, may be improved in instruction of children.

{s} Mtnnvw "et acues ea", Vatablus, Piscator.

Deuteronomy 6:8

Ver. 8. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand,.... As a man ties anything to his hand for a token, that he may remember somewhat he is desirous of; though the Jews understand this literally, of binding a scroll of parchment, with this section and others written in it, upon their left hand, as the Targum of Jonathan here interprets the hand:

and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes; and which the same Targum interprets of the Tephilim, or phylacteries, which the Jews wear upon their foreheads, and on their arms, and so Jarchi; of which
See Gill on "Mt 23:5".

Deuteronomy 6:9

Ver. 9. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy gates. To put them in mind of them when they went out and came in, that they might be careful to observe them; this the Jews take literally also, and write in a scroll of parchment this section with some passages; and, as the Targum of Jonathan here, fix them in three places, over against the bed chamber, upon the posts of the house, and on the gate at the right hand of it; and this is what they call the Mezuzah; and the account given of it is this. In a parchment prepared for the purpose, they write the words in **De 6:4** and then roll up the parchment, and write on it "Shaddai"; and put it either into a cane (or reed), or else into a like hollow piece of wood, and so fasten it to the wall on the posts of the door at the right hand of entrance; and thus, as often as they go in and out, they make it a part of their devotion to touch this parchment, and kiss it {t}.

{t} Buxtorf. Synag. Jud. c. 31. p. 582, &c. Leo Modena's History of the Rites and Customs of the Jews, par. 1. c. 2. p. 5, 6.

Deuteronomy 6:10

Ver. 10. And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land,.... The land of Canaan, on the borders of which they now were, and were just going into:

which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee; of his own free favour and good will, without any merit and desert of theirs, and in which would be found

great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not; large and capacious, delightfully situated, well built, and strongly fortified, without any pains or expense of theirs; all ready for them to take possession of, and dwell in; and so should no longer reside in tents or booths, as they had for forty years past, but in spacious and noble cities.

Deuteronomy 6:11

Ver. 11. And houses full of all good things which thou filledst not,.... Not only full of good, convenient, and rich household furniture, but of the fruits of the earth, of corn, and wine, and oil, and also, perhaps, of gold and silver:

and wells digged which thou diggedst not; which in those hot and dry countries were in much esteem, and of great worth; see Ge 26:18,

vineyards and olive trees which thou plantedst not; which Canaan abounded with much more than Egypt, where there were but few vines and olive trees, though of both these there were more where the Israelites lived than elsewhere; See Gill on "Ge 47:11" and these therefore might be such as they had seen in Egypt, in that part of it in which they dwelt, Goshen, which was in the Heracleotic nome, and that Strabo {u} says only produced perfect olives, and fruit bearing trees, but the rest of Egypt wanted oil; and this home is the same which the Arabs now call the province of Fium, of which Leo Africanus {w} says, it produces a large quantity of olives; so that this might be observed for the encouragement of the Israelites:

when thou shalt have eaten and be full; having such plenty of good things the land would furnish them with.

{u} Geograph. l. 17. p. 556. {w} Descriptio Africae, l. 8. p. 722.

Deuteronomy 6:12

Ver. 12. Then beware lest thou forget the Lord,.... To love, fear, and worship him, and keep his commands; creature enjoyments being apt to get possession of the heart, and the affections of it; Pr 30:9

which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; into a land abounding with all the above good things, and therefore under the highest obligations to remember the Lord and his kindnesses, and to serve and glorify him: Ex 20:2.

Deuteronomy 6:13

Ver. 13. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him,.... Serve him through fear; not through slavish fear, a fear of hell and damnation; but through filial fear, a reverential affection for that God that had brought them out of a state of bondage into great and glorious liberty, out of Egypt into Canaan's land, out of a place of misery into a land of plenty; and therefore should fear the Lord and his goodness, and from such a fear of him serve him, in every part of worship, public and private, enjoined; this passage Christ refers to **Mt 4:10** and shalt swear by his name; when they made a covenant with any, or were called to bear a testimony for the decision of any controversy which could not be otherwise finished; or whenever they took an oath on any account, which should never be taken rashly or on any trivial account, and much less falsely; it should be taken not in the name of any idol, or of any other but the true and living God; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"in the name of the Word of the Lord, in truth ye shall swear."

Deuteronomy 6:14

Ver. 14. Ye shall not go after other gods,.... To serve and worship them, and swear by them; and which indeed are no gods, only nominal and fictitious ones; idols which are nothing in the world, and ought to have no veneration and adoration given them; to go after them is to worship them, and this is to depart from the true God, and go a whoring after false deities:

of the gods of the people which are round about you; the gods of the Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, Philistines, and Egyptians; all of which had their peculiar deities.

Deuteronomy 6:15

Ver. 15. For the Lord thy God is a jealous God among you,.... He was near to them, in the midst of them, his tabernacle being placed between their camps; and was a God jealous of his honour and glory in matters of worship, and would resent any affront given him in that way:

lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee; there being nothing more apt to stir up his wrath than idolatry:

and destroy thee from off the face of the earth; suffer them to be carried captive out of their own land, and to be scattered among the nations of the world, and be utterly destroyed.

Deuteronomy 6:16

Ver. 16. Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God,.... By striving with him or against him, by murmuring at or complaining of his providential dealings with them, or by requiring a sign of him, or miracles to be done by him; this is another passage used by Christ to repel the temptations of Satan, **Mt 4:7**,

as tempted him in Massah; a place so called from the Israelites tempting the Lord there, Ex 17:7, the Targum of Jonathan adds, with ten temptations; see Nu 14:21.

Deuteronomy 6:17

Ver. 17. You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God,.... Not only the ten commands, but all others:

and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee; those of a judicial and ceremonial kind.

Deuteronomy 6:18

Ver. 18. And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord,.... And what is such appears from the declaration of his mind and will in the commandments he has given, and obeying which is therefore doing what is right and good; for his commandment is holy, just, and good, being agreeable both to his nature and will, **Ro 7:12** that it may be well with thee; as it is with those that fear God, and keep his commandments:

and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers; to give to them and to their posterity, even the land of Canaan; but if they did not what was right and good in the sight of God, they might expect to be kept out of it, as their immediate parents were, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 6:19

Ver. 19. To cast out all thine enemies from before thee,.... This the Lord promised, and as it seems with an oath, that he would do for them; drive out their enemies, and make way for the settlement of them in their country:

as the Lord hath spoken; see Ge 15:18.

Deuteronomy 6:20

Ver. 20. And when thy son asketh thee in time to come,.... Or "tomorrow" {x}; that is, in later times, as Jarchi interprets it; any time after this, and particularly after they were come into the land of Canaan, when the several laws, statutes, and ordinances appointed, would take place and be obeyed:

what [mean] the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you? what is the reason of the various rites, customs, and usages, the observance of which is directed to, such as the feasts of passover, pentecost, tabernacles, sacrifices, and other duties of religion?

{x} rxm "cras", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Deuteronomy 6:21

Ver. 21 Then shall thou say unto thy son,.... In order to lead him into the spring and original of them, and to acquaint him with the goodness of God, which laid them under obligation to observe them:

we were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; were brought into bondage and slavery to Pharaoh king of Egypt, into whose country their ancestors came, and where they resided many years, and at length were reduced to the utmost servitude and misery:

and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; by the exertion of his mighty power, which the Egyptians and their king could not withstand, as a token of his care and kindness to us; by the ties of which we are bound in gratitude to observe his commands. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"the Word of the Lord brought us, &c."

and it was Christ the Son of God that was from first to last concerned in that affair, even from the appearance to Moses in the bush to Israel's coming out of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 6:22

Ver. 22. And the Lord showed signs and wonders, great and sore,.... Meaning the ten plagues, which were signs of the power of God, marvellous works, great, above the power of nature, and very sore or "evil" {y}; very distressing to the Egyptians; for they came and lay heavy

upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes; upon the king, his courtiers, and the whole land, and which were done publicly in the sight of the people of Israel, as well as the Egyptians; and there were some then living, though at that time when wrought under twenty years, who saw with their own eyes what were done to them, and could never forget them. Here also the Targum of Jonathan has it,

"and the Word of the Lord sent signs, &c"

{y} Myerw "et pessima", V. L. Junius & Tremellius; "et noxia", Tigurine version; "et mala", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.

Deuteronomy 6:23

Ver. 23. And he brought us out from thence,.... By means of those miraculous plagues, even out of a state of bondage and misery: and in order

that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers; to bring them into the land of Canaan, give it to them, and put them in the possession of it; and so fulfil his promise and his oath made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Deuteronomy 6:24

Ver. 24. And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes,.... Some of which were designed on purpose to commemorate the wonderful deliverance out of Egypt, as particularly the passover; and all of them they were obliged in gratitude to obey, in consideration of such great favours bestowed upon them:

to fear the Lord our God, for our good always: as it is always for the good of men, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, to fear the Lord; for there is no want to them that fear him, nor will the Lord withhold good things from them; see Ps

34:9,

that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day; in bodily health and strength, and in the enjoyment of the good land, and all the blessings and benefits of it.

Deuteronomy 6:25

Ver. 25. And it shall be our righteousness,.... Or a mercy, benefit, and blessing to us; or this shall be reckoned our righteousness, and that by which we shall be justified:

if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us; in order to have such a justifying righteousness, a man must keep all the commandments of God, not one excepted; and that perfectly, without the least breach of them in thought, word, or deed; and that before the Lord, in his sight, not as it may appear to a man himself, or to others, but as it appears to God, who sees the heart, and weighs all actions; and a man must keep them in the manner the Lord has commanded, even with all his heart, soul, and strength, as in **De 6:5** and this is not possible for a sinful man to do; and therefore righteousness cannot be by the law. Only Christ could thus keep all the commandments of God, and his obedience is our righteousness; and he only is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes, and to him we must seek for it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 7

In this chapter the Israelites are exhorted to destroy the seven nations of the land of Canaan, when they entered into it, and to make no alliances with them of any kind, nor suffer any remains of idolatry to continue, **De 7:1** to observe which, and other commands of God, they are urged from the consideration of their being freely chosen of God above all other people, and of their being redeemed out of the house of bondage, and of the Lord's being a covenant keeping God to them, **De 7:6** and it is promised them, for their further encouragement to keep the commands of God, that they should have an increase of all temporal good things, and no evils and calamities should come upon them, **De 6:12**, and, lest they should be disheartened at the numbers and might of their enemies, they are put in mind of what God had done for them in Egypt, and of what he had promised to do for them now, **De 7:17** and they are assured that the nations should be cast out before them by little and little, until they were utterly destroyed, **De 7:21** and the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to destroy their images, and not admit anything of that sort to be brought into their houses, **De 7:25**.

Ver. 1. When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it,.... The land of Canaan they were just now going into to take possession of; their introduction into which is here, as in many other places, ascribed not to themselves, or their leaders, but to the Lord as their covenant God:

and hath cast out many nations before thee; even all that were in it, the seven following:

the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites; the Canaanites were a particular nation in the land of Canaan, which had their name from Canaan himself; the rest were called from different sons of his; see Ge 10:15, the country of the Gergesenes, the same with the Girgashites, continued its name unto the times of Christ, **Mt 8:28**,

seven nations greater and mightier than thou; more in number, and more robust in body, some being of a gigantic stature; there were ten of these nations in Abraham's time, three of them were since sunk or swallowed up among the rest, the Kenites, and Kenizires, and the Rephaim; for instead of the Kadmonites the Hivites are here put, which seem to be the same.

Deuteronomy 7:2

Ver. 2. And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee,.... Into their hands:

thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; men, women, and children; which was ordered not merely to make way and room for the people of Israel to inherit their land, but as a punishment for capital crimes they had been guilty of, such as idolatry, incest, murder, &c. wherefore though they were reprieved for a while for Israel's sake, till their time was come to possess the land, they were at length righteously punished; which observed, abates the seeming severity exercised upon them:

thou shalt make no covenant with them; to dwell in their cities and houses, and enjoy their lands and estates, on any condition whatever; and though they did make a league with the Gibeonites, that was obtained by fraud, they pretending not to be of the land of Canaan, but to come from a very distant country:

nor show mercy unto them; by sparing their lives, bestowing any favours upon them, or giving them any help and assistance when in distress: the Jews extend this to all other Heathen nations besides these seven; wherefore, if an Israelite, as Maimonides {z} says, should see a Gentile perishing, or plunged into a river, he may not take him out, nor administer medicine to a sick person. Hence Juvenal {a} the poet upbraids them with their unkindness and incivility; and says that Moses delivered it as a Jewish law, in a secret volume of his, perhaps referring to this book of Deuteronomy, that the Jews might not direct a poor traveller in his way unless he was one of their religion, nor one athirst to a fountain of water; and which led Tacitus {b}, the Heathen historian, to make this remark upon them, that they entertained an hostile hatred against all other people.

{z} Hilchot Abodath Cochabim, c. 10. sect. 1, 2. {a} "Non monstrare vias", &c. Satyr 14. {b} Hist l. 5. c. 5.

Deuteronomy 7:3

Ver. 3. Neither shalt thou make marriages with them,.... Unless they became proselytes, as Rahab, who was married by Salmon, and so those of other nations, as Ruth the Moabitess, and so any captive taken in war; otherwise it was not lawful, bad consequences have followed upon it, which it is the design of this law to prevent; that is, being snared and drawn aside into idolatry, which was the case of Solomon:

thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son; for, according to the Targum of Jonathan, whosoever marries with them, it is as if he married with their idols: and this law, according to the Jewish writers {c}, is binding with respect to other nations besides the seven; and whosoever marries any Heathen, of whatsoever nation, is to be beaten.

{c} Maimon. Hilchot lssure Biah, c. 12. sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 7:4

Ver. 4. For they will turn away thy son from following me,.... From the pure worship of God, his word, statutes, and ordinances:

that they may serve other gods; worship their idols; that is, the daughters of Heathens, married to the sons of Israelites, would entice them from the worship of the true God to idolatry; so the Targum of Jonathan; as Solomon's wives drew him aside: or "he will turn away thy son" {d}; meaning, as Jarchi observes, that the son of an Heathen, that marries the daughter of an Israelite, will turn away the son born of her to idolatry, called here the grandfather's son; though Aben Ezra says this respects the son mentioned in the preceding verse, that is, the son married to an Heathen woman, and not to a son born in such marriage:

so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly; by some immediate judgment striking dead at once; there being nothing more provoking to God than idolatry, that being directly contrary to his being, nature, perfections, honour, and glory, of which he is jealous.

{d} ryoy "faciet recedere": Pagninus, Montanus; so Junius and Tremellius, Piscator, Tigurine version, Vatablus, V. L. all in the singular number.

Deuteronomy 7:5

Ver. 5. But thus shall ye deal with them,.... The inhabitants of the land of Canaan:

ye shall destroy their altars; on which they sacrificed to their idols:

and break down their images; of their gods, and the statues and pillars erected to the honour of them:

and cut down their groves; sacred to idols, which were usually planted on hills, and about Heathen temples, and under which idols were placed to be worshipped. The Targum of Jonathan calls them trees of their adoration, under which they worshipped; though there was a worship paid to them, not indeed directly to them, or for their sakes, but for the sake of the idols they were sacred to, or were placed under them; so Maimonides {e} says, a tree which at first was planted to be worshipped is forbidden of any use (or profit); and this is the hrva, or "grove", spoken of in the law, a tree planted and lopped, of which a graven image is made for an idol; and so the tree that has been worshipped, though the body of it is, not forbidden, all the shoots and leaves, and the branches, and the fruits it produces all the time it is worshipped, are forbidden to be used: though the word here used sometimes seems to signify, not a grove of trees, but some image itself, since we read of it in the temple, 2Ki 21:7,

and burn their graven images with fire; distinguished from their molten images, which may be meant in a preceding clause, and which are particularly mentioned as to be destroyed as well as these, Nu 33:52.

{e} Hilchot Obede Cochabim, c. 8. sect. 3, 4. Vid. Misn. Avodah Zarah, c. 3. sect. 7.

Deuteronomy 7:6

Ver. 6. For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God,.... Not sanctified in a spiritual sense, or having principles of grace and holiness in them, from whence holy actions sprang, at least not all of them; but they were separated from all other people in the world to the pure worship and service of God in an external manner, and therefore were to avoid all idolatry, and every appearance of it:

the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth; for special service and worship, and to enjoy special privileges and benefits, civil and religious; though they were not chosen to special grace here, and eternal glory hereafter; at least not all of them, only a remnant, according to the election of grace; yet they were typical of the chosen people of God in a special sense; who are chosen out of the world to be a peculiar people, to be holy here and happy hereafter; to enjoy communion with God in this life and that to come, as well as to serve and glorify him now and for evermore.

Deuteronomy 7:7

Ver. 7. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you,.... He had done both, and the one as the effect and evidence of the other; he loved them, and therefore he chose them; but neither of them,

because ye were more in number than any people; not for the quantity of them, nor even for the quality of them:

for ye were the fewest of all people; fewer than the Egyptians, from whence they came, and than the Canaanites they were going to drive out and inherit their land, **De 7:1**. Those whom God has loved with an everlasting love, and as a fruit of it has chosen them in Christ before the world began to grace and glory, holiness and happiness, are but a small number, a little flock; though many are called, few are chosen; nor are they better than others, being by nature children of wrath even as others, and as to their outward circumstances the poor of this world.

Deuteronomy 7:8

Ver. 8. But because the Lord loved you,.... With an unmerited love; he loved them, because he loved them; that is, because he would love them; his love was not owing to any goodness in them, or done by them, or any love in them to him, but to his own good will and pleasure:

and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers; the promise he had made, confirmed by an oath:

hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand; out of the land of Egypt:

and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen; where they were bondmen to the Egyptians:

from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; who detained them, and refused to let them go.

Deuteronomy 7:9

Ver. 9 Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God,.... The only true and living God, and not the idols of the Gentiles, who are false and lifeless ones, and therefore not the proper objects of adoration:

the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy; as appeared by fulfilling the promise made to their fathers, in bringing them out of Egypt, and now them to the borders of the land of Canaan given them for an inheritance:

with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations; see Ex 20:6 which are not the causes or conditions of his covenant and mercy, nor of his keeping them, but descriptive of the persons that enjoy the benefit thereof.

Deuteronomy 7:10

Ver. 10. And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them,.... Openly, publicly, and at once, they not being able to make any resistance. Onkelos interprets it in their lifetime, and so Jarchi which agrees with the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem: "or to his face"; {f} the face of God; that is, he will punish them that hate him to his face, who are audacious, bold, impudent sinners; sinners before the Lord, as the men of Sodom were, Ge 13:13,

he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face; not defer the execution of his judgment and vengeance, which may seem to slumber and linger, but will quickly and openly bring it upon the sinner; this also the Chaldee paraphrases explain as before.

{f} wynp la "in faciem ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus, Fagius; so Ainsworth.

Deuteronomy 7:11

Ver. 11. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments,.... The laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, urged thereunto both by promises and threatenings, in hopes of reward, and through fear of punishment:

which I command thee this day, to do them; in the name of the Lord, and by his authority; by virtue of which he made a new declaration of them to put them in mind of them in order to observe them.

Deuteronomy 7:12

Ver. 12. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them,.... Attentively listen to the declaration made of them, and be careful to observe them:

that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers; to bring them into the land of Canaan, and continue them in it; yea, to send the Messiah to them, and bring him the salvation of Israel out of Zion; see **Lu 1:68**.

Deuteronomy 7:13

Ver. 13. And he will love thee,.... As he has done, and rest in his love, and give further instances and proofs of it:

and bless thee, and multiply thee; that is bless thee with a multiplication of offspring, which was what was often promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that their seed should be as the stars of heaven, the dust of the earth, and the sand of the sea:

he will also bless the fruit of thy womb; not only give strength to conceive, but carry on the pregnancy, preserve the foetus, and prevent miscarrying:

and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil; which were the principal produce of it:

the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep: their larger and lesser cattle, oxen and sheep: in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee; the land of Canaan, given in promise, and that established by an oath.

Deuteronomy 7:14

Ver. 14. Thou shalt be blessed above all people,.... Even with temporal blessings, besides those of a religious kind; they having the oracles of God, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises, **Ro 3:1**,

there shall not be male or female barren among you; which to be was reckoned a reproach, and the contrary a blessing, **Lu 1:25**

Ps 128:3

or among your cattle; the Targum of Jonathan is, nor thy beasts barren of wool, and milk, and lambs.

Deuteronomy 7:15

Ver. 15. And will take away from thee all sickness,.... Bodily sickness and diseases, prevent the coming of them, or remove them when come:

and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt which thou knowest upon thee; meaning either the plagues that were inflicted upon them to oblige them to let the Israelites go, of which they had perfect knowledge; or else some noxious and nauseous diseases, which were common among, and peculiar to, the Egyptians, particularly what is called the botch of Egypt; see Ex 15:26, likewise the leprosy;
See Gill on "Le 13:2",
See Gill on "De 28:27".

but will lay them upon all them that hate thee; with which God sometimes punishes his and his people's enemies; see **Jud 5:9**.

Deuteronomy 7:16

Ver. 16. And thou shall consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee,.... All the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, which the Lord should deliver into their hands; them they were not to spare, but utterly destroy men, women, and children:

thine eye shall have no pity upon them; See Gill on "De 7:2",

neither shall thou serve their gods, for that will be a snare unto thee; which will bring into utter ruin and destruction; see
Ex 23:33.

Deuteronomy 7:17

Ver. 17. If thou shall say in thine heart,.... Should have secret thoughts arise in the heart, misgivings of heart, fears and doubts there, which, though not outwardly expressed, might be inwardly retained:

these nations are more than I; seven to one, and perhaps anyone of them as powerful as Israel:

how can I dispossess them? of the land they inherit, and take possession of it.

Deuteronomy 7:18

Ver. 18. Thou shalt not be afraid of them,.... Neither on account of their number, nor their strength:

but shall well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt; a people more numerous and potent than the Canaanites, among whom the Lord wrought such wonderful things by his power, which obliged them to let Israel go; and his power was now the same, he could do as great things to the Canaanites as he had to the Egyptians; and as he had delivered them out of the hands of the Egyptians, he could as easily deliver the Canaanites into their hands, and put them into the possession of their country.

Deuteronomy 7:19

Ver. 19. The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders,.... The miracles wrought in Egypt; see **De 4:34**

and the mighty hand, and stretched out arm, whereby the Lord thy God brought thee out; that is, out of Egypt, which was an instance and proof of his almighty power:

so shall the Lord thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid; not perform the same miraculous operations among them, but exert the same power in the destruction of them, and in dispossessing them of their land, as in destroying the Egyptians, and delivering Israel from among them.

Deuteronomy 7:20

Ver. 20. Moreover, the Lord thy God will send the hornet among them,.... Not a single one, but several of them, and which may be understood of creatures so called, which resemble wasps, only twice as large, an insect very bold and venomous; see Ex 23:28. Aben Ezra interprets it of the leprosy:

until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed; such of the Canaanites who escaped the sword of the Israelites, and hid themselves in holes and caverns of the earth; these the hornets would find out and sting them to death, until they were all destroyed. Thus God can make use of small creatures, even insects, to destroy nations the most populous and mighty.

Deuteronomy 7:21

Ver. 21. Thou shall not be affrighted at them,.... At their numbers, nor at their gigantic stature:

for the Lord thy God is among you: in the tabernacle, in the holy of holies, which was in the midst of them, and besides would give proof of his powerful presence among them, in protecting them, and destroying their enemies;

a mighty God and terrible; mighty to save his people, and terrible to others.

Deuteronomy 7:22

Ver. 22. And the Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little,.... Which is observed for their encouragement, who seeing that all were not destroyed at once, might fear the work would never be thoroughly accomplished; see Ex 23:30,

thou mayest not consume them at once; though it was in the power of their hands to do it, there being some wise reasons for sparing them awhile, at least for not cutting them off all at once, and one follows:

lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee; through so many places being waste without inhabitants, and there being none to destroy these creatures; and who therefore in course would become more numerous, and so more troublesome and distressing to the Israelites. The Targum of Jonathan adds, by way of explanation,

"when they shall come to devour their carcasses," the carcasses of the slain Canaanites; who, if destroyed at once, would be so many, that they would lie unburied, which would invite the beasts of the field to come out of their lurking places to feed upon them, and which might lead them on to mischief among the Israelites.

Deuteronomy 7:23

Ver. 23. But the Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee,.... Gradually, by little and little, until at length they should all come into their hands: and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction until they be destroyed; even all of them.

Deuteronomy 7:24

Ver. 24. And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand,.... Who were very numerous, for though there were but seven nations, there were more kings, even one and thirty, Jos 12:9,

thou shall destroy their name from under heaven; not only destroy the name of the reigning kings, so as that they should not be remembered and made mention of any more, but put an end to the name and race of kings among them, so that they should never have any more, as they never had:

there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them; the nations and their kings.

Deuteronomy 7:25

Ver. 25. The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire,.... Which is repeated from **De 7:5**, that it might be the more observed and strictly performed, and which unless done, they could not expect the utter destruction of their enemies, who were left in the land to try and prove them with respect to this very thing:

thou shall not desire the silver or gold that is on them: the raiment of gold or silver with which they were bedecked, or the plates of gold and silver with which they were covered, or any ornament about them, as chains and the like,

that were of either of these metals; see
Eze 16:16,

nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein; nor take it into their possession, or bring it into their houses, as in the next verse, lest they should be under a temptation to worship it, or keep it as a superstitious relic:

for it is an abomination to the Lord thy God; not only the idol itself, being put in the place of God, and so derogatory to his honour and glory, but the gold and silver on it, being devoted to a superstitious and idolatrous use; and even the taking of it, and appropriating it to a man's own use, was an abomination, and resented by the Lord as such.

Deuteronomy 7:26

Ver. 26. Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thy house,.... An idol, so the Targum of Jonathan, the abominations of idols and their utensils, or what is ministered to them, with anything that appertains to them, or is used in the service of them, as well as the gold and silver upon them; this care was taken as much as possible to prevent idolatry, and all appearance of it, and to show what might lead on and be a temptation to it:

lest thou be a cursed thing like it; as an idol is, and so is everyone that worships it; for what more exposes to the curse of God than idolatry, a breach of the first table of the law? and therefore subjects a man to the curse of it; nay, the bringing of an idol into a man's house brings a curse into it, and makes him liable thereunto; for if the curse enters into the house of the thief or perjurer, much more into the house of a man guilty of idolatry in any degree of it; see **Zec 5:3** but thou shalt utterly detest it; the Targum of Jonathan adds, as the pollution of an abominable thing:

and thou shalt utterly abhor it, for it is a cursed thing; devoted to destruction; and to have anything to do with it is the way to entail a curse, and bring to everlasting ruin and destruction; see Re 21:8.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 8

In this chapter Moses repeats the exhortation to observe the commands of God, and urges the Israelites to it, from the consideration of the great and good things God had done for them in the wilderness, and even in those instances which were chastisements, and were of an humbling nature, **De 8:1**, and on the consideration of the blessings of the good land they were going to possess, **De 8:7** for which blessings they are exhorted to be thankful, and are cautioned against pride of heart through them, and forgetfulness of God, and of his goodness to them while in the wilderness, and when brought into the land of Canaan, which they were to ascribe to his power and goodness, and not their own, **De 8:10**, and the chapter is concluded with a warning against idolatry, lest they perish through it as the nations before them, **De 8:19**.

Ver. 1. All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do,.... It is repeated over and over again, to impress it on their minds, and to show the importance and necessity of it, how greatly it was expected from them, and how much it was incumbent on them:

that ye may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers; for their temporal life, and the mercies and comforts of it, the multiplication of their offspring, and of their substance, their entrance into the land of Canaan, possession of it, and continuance in it, all depended on their obedience to the commands of God; see De 19:20.

Deuteronomy 8:2

Ver. 2. And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness,.... For this was now the fortieth year of their coming out of Egypt into the wilderness, into which they quickly came after their departure from thence, and had been in one wilderness or another ever since, in which God went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire, and directed their way; and now they are called upon to remember all the occurrences in the way, what favours and mercies had been bestowed upon them, what provisions had been made for them, what enemies they had been delivered from or overcome, as well as what afflictions and chastisements had attended them: and so the people of God should call to mind how they were brought to see their wilderness state and condition by nature; how they were brought out of it, and stopped in their career of sin, and turned from their evil ways, and led to Christ; what gracious promises have been made to them; what light has been afforded them; what communion they have had with God; what pleasure in his ordinances; what food they have been fed with; what temptations have befallen them, and how delivered out of them; and what afflictions have been laid upon them, and how supported under them, and freed from them:

to humble thee; under the mighty hand of God, to bring down the pride of their hearts and hide it from them; to lay them low in their own eyes, and clothe them with humility, that the Lord alone might be exalted: and

to prove thee; whether they would be obedient to his laws, or how they would behave towards him both in prosperity and adversity, and to try their graces, their faith and patience, fear and love:

to know what was in thine heart; that is, to make it known to themselves and others; for God knew all that was in it, the wickedness of it, the unbelief, rebellion, and frowardness of it, and needed not any ways and means to get into the knowledge of it; see 2Ch 32:31,

whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no; which they had in such a solemn manner promised to do; **De 5:27**.

Deuteronomy 8:3

Ver. 3. And he humbled thee,.... Or afflicted thee with want of bread:

and suffered thee to hunger; that there might be an opportunity of showing his mercy, and exerting his power:

and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; a sort of food they had never seen before, and when they saw it, knew not what it was, but asked, what is it? Ex 16:15. Thus the Lord humbles his people by his Spirit and grace, and brings them to see themselves to be in want, and creates in them desires after spiritual food, and feeds them with Christ the hidden manna, whose person, office, and grace, they were before ignorant of:

that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only; which is the stay and staff of life, and which strengthens man's heart, and is the main support of it, being the ordinary and usual food man lives upon, and is put for all the rest:

but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live: not so much by the food he eats as by the blessing of God upon it, and who can make one sort of food as effectual for such a purpose as another; for every creature of God is good being received with thankfulness, and sanctified by the word and prayer; and particularly he could and did make such light food as manna was to answer all the purposes of solid bread for the space of forty years in the wilderness; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"but by all which is created by the Word of the Lord is the life of man;"

which seems to agree with 1Ti 4:3,4 for the meaning is not that the Israelites in the wilderness, and when come into the land of Canaan, should not live by corporeal food only, but by obedience to the commands of God, by means of which they should continue under his protection, which was indeed their case; nor that man does not live in his body only by bread, but in his soul also by the word of God, and the doctrines of it, which is certainly true; spiritual men live a spiritual life on Christ, the Word of God, and bread of life, and on the Gospel and the truths of it, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus, and are nourished up with the words of faith and sound doctrine, by means of which their spiritual life is supported and maintained; but this is not what is here intended.

Deuteronomy 8:4

Ver. 4. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, &c] They wanted not clothes all the forty years they were in the wilderness; which some account for by the rising generation being supplied with the clothes of those that died in the wilderness, and with the spoils they took from Amalek, Ex 17:1 and others, as Aben Ezra observes, remark that they brought much clothes with them out of Egypt, which no doubt they did; see Ex 12:35 and he adds, as worthy of notice, that the manna they lived upon did not produce sweat, which is prejudicial to clothes; but be it so, that they were sufficiently provided with clothes, it must be miraculous that these clothes they wore should not wax old. This, in a spiritual sense, may denote the righteousness of Christ, which is often compared to raiment, the property of which is, that it never waxes old, wears out, or decays; it is an everlasting righteousness, and will never be abolished, but will answer for the saints in a time to come; see Isa 51:6 neither did thy foot swell these forty years; or puff up like paste, as Jarchi explains it, which is often the case in long journeys; the Septuagint version is, "did not become callous"; a callousness or hardness is frequently produced by travelling; in

De 29:5 it is explained of the shoes on their feet not waxing old; so Ben Melech, and the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and the Syriac and Arabic versions here, "thy feet were not naked", were not without shoes; these were no more wore out by travel than their clothes upon their backs, and this was equally as miraculous: the Gibeonites, pretending to come from a far country, and to have travelled much and long, put on old garments and old shoes, to make it probable and plausible, **Jos 9:5**. This may be an emblem of the perseverance of the saints in faith and holiness: shoes upon the feet denote a Gospel conversation, which is very beautiful, **So 7:1** the feet of saints being shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; which, as shoes to the feet, guides and directs the Christian walk, strengthens and makes fit for walking, keeps tight and preserves from slipping and falling, and protects from what is harmful, accompanied by the power and grace of God.

Deuteronomy 8:5

Ver. 5. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart,.... Frequently think of, and meditate upon, revolve in their thoughts, well weigh in their minds, and take into thorough and deliberate consideration in their hearts; it being a matter of great moment and importance to them for their peace and comfort and the glory of God, namely, what follows:

that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee; that they stood in the same relation to God as a son to a father, and therefore happy and honourable; that all their afflictions came from God, were appointed, sent, directed, and overruled by him for his own glory and their good; that these were the chastenings and corrections of a father, and were not done in wrath, but in love, and therefore should be patiently endured; and it became them to consider well from what hand they came, and in what manner, and for what ends and purposes, how they ought to behave under them, and what they should do, as follows.

Deuteronomy 8:6

Ver. 6. Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God,.... Not only because they are the commands of God, and of a covenant God and Father, which are reasons sufficient for the observance of them; but because the Lord had dealt so bountifully with them, in providing food and raiment for them in the wilderness, which always continued with them; and because, when he afflicted them, it was a fatherly chastisement, with great tenderness and compassion, and for their good; all which laid them under obligations to keep the commands of God, whatsoever he had enjoined them, whether of the moral, ceremonial, or judicial kind:

to walk in his ways, and to fear him; to walk in the ways he directed, to be under an awe of his majesty, a fear of offending him, and a reverential affection for him, such as children have to a father.

Deuteronomy 8:7

Ver. 7. For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land,.... The land of Canaan, abounding with good things after enumerated, a land flowing with milk and honey, having in it plenty of everything both for convenience and delight; which is another reason why they were under obligations to serve the Lord, to walk in his ways and keep his commandments:

a land of brooks of water; rivers and torrents, such as Jordan, Jabbok, Kishon, Kidron, Cherith, and others:

of fountains; as Siloam, Gihon, Etam, the baths of Tiberias, and others:

and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; deep waters, caverns, wells, and lakes, which had their rise from such places, of which there were many. With this agrees the account of it by our countrymen, Mr. Sandys {g}, as it was in the beginning of the last century; that it was adorned with beautiful mountains and luxurious valleys, the rocks producing excellent waters, and no part empty of delight or profit.

{g} Travels, l. 3. p. 110.

Deuteronomy 8:8

Ver. 8. A land of wheat and barley,.... There were two harvests in it, one a barley harvest, which began at the passover, and the other a wheat harvest, which began at Pentecost: instances of the great plenty of these might be observed in the vast quantities consumed in the times of Solomon, in his household, and in the yearly distribution he made to Hiram, **1Ki 4:22**, yea, there was such plenty of wheat in this land, that it not only supplied the inhabitants of it, but even furnished other countries with it; with this the merchants of Israel and Judah traded at the market of Tyre, Eze 27:17. According to the Jewish writers, the best fine wheat flour was at Mechumas and Mezonichah, and the next to them was Chephraim, or Ephraim, in the valley {h}:

and vines; with which this land abounded everywhere; the places most noted were Lebanon, Eshcol, Engedi, Ashkelon, Gaza, and Sarepta; according to the above writers {i}, Cerotim and Hatolim were the first for wine, and the second to them were Beth Rimah and Beth Laban in the mountain, and Caphat Sigmah in the valley; the wine of Sharon is also highly commended by them {k}

and fig trees and pomegranates: according to Josephus {l}, the country of Gennesaret furnished with the best grapes and figs for ten months without intermission, and the rest of fruits throughout the whole year. Figs and pomegranates, the spies brought with them when they returned from searching the land, as well as grapes, are a specimen of the fruits of it, Nu 13:23

a land of oil olive; the mount of Olives was famous for olive trees, and had its name from thence; the whole land abounded with them, and though oil was so much in common use with the Jews, they supplied their neighbours with it: see **1Ki 5:11**. It was usual also, as we are told, for the ten tribes to send oil into Egypt {m}; according to the Jewish doctors, Tekoah was the first place for oil, and the second, Ragab, beyond Jordan {n}; very probably the same with Argob, **De 3:4**.

and honey; besides the great quantities of honey produced by bees in this country, there was much of another sort that dropped from trees, called wild honey, the food of John the Baptist in the wilderness, **Mt 3:4**. Pliny {o} speaks of a sort of honey which he calls "eloeomeli", or oil honey, which is said to flow from the olive trees in Syria; but this honey here is generally thought by the Jewish writers to be an honey which was made of the fruit of palm trees, frequent in this country, and especially about Jericho; of which Josephus {p} says, that the palm trees about Jericho, the fatter of them (i.e. of the fruit of them) being pressed, emit a large quantity of honey, scarce exceeded by any; and Maimonides {q} says, that the honey spoken of in the law, particularly in this place, is honey of palm trees, so Ben Melech; and it was not unusual for people of other nations to make honey of the fruit of them. Herodotus {r} reports, that the Babylonians made honey out of palm trees; so the Arabs call honey of palm trees "dibs, dibis, dipso" {s}, the same with the word here used; agreeably to which both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase the words,

"out of whose palm trees honey is made."

{h} Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 1. {i} Ibid. sect. 6. {k} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 77. 1. {l} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 9. sect. 8. {m} Echa Rabbati, fol. 59. 3. {n} Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 3. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 23. c. 4. Tikkune Zohar, correct. 16. fol. 27. 1. {p} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 3. {q} In Misn. Menachot, c. 5. sect. 1. so Bartenora in Misn. Biccurim, c. 1. sect. 3. {r} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 193. {s} See Shaw's Travels, p. 143.

Deuteronomy 8:9

Ver. 9. A land wherein thou shall eat bread without scarceness,.... That is, should have plenty of all sorts of provisions, which bread is often put for:

thou shall not lack anything in it; for necessity and convenience, and for delight and pleasure:

a land whose stones are iron; in which were iron mines:

and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass; both which are taken out of the earth and the stones of it, Job 28:2 and were to be found in the land of Canaan, and particularly in the tribe of Asher, as seems from De 33:25 and more particularly at Sidon and Sarepta, which were in that tribe; the latter of which seems to have its name from the melting of metals there, and the former is said in Homer {t} to abound with brass.

{t} ek men sidwnov polucalkou. Homer. Odyss. 15. l. 424.

Deuteronomy 8:10

Ver. 10. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God,.... For as the Lord would furnish them with plenty of food, they might eat of it liberally, provided they did not indulge to intemperance, as everyone may whom God has blessed with a fulness of good things; and this shows that we are to return thanks to God for a plentiful meal, as well as to ask a blessing on it:

for the good land which he hath given thee; which supplied them with such plenty, that they enjoyed full meals every day.

Deuteronomy 8:11

Ver. 11. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God,.... The Father of mercies and fountain of goodness, the author and donor of every good and perfect gift. Plenty is apt to induce a forgetfulness of God, when on the contrary one would think it should keep him in continual remembrance, and engage to daily thankfulness to him:

in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day; gave a repetition of, and in the name of God afresh enjoined them, even laws moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which, when not observed, God is forgotten.

Deuteronomy 8:12

Ver. 12. Lest when thou hast eaten and art full,.... Not only once and again, but continually, day after day, being indulged with great plenty:

and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt [therein]; who for forty years had only dwelt in tents, moving from place to place in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 8:13

Ver. 13. And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply,.... Having good pasture for them in so fruitful a land:

and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied; by trading with other nations:

and all that thou hast is multiplied; children, servants, and substance.

Deuteronomy 8:14

Ver. 14. Then thine heart be lifted up,.... As the heart is apt to be when riches increase; hence the advice in **1Ti 6:17** and thou forget the Lord thy God; from whom all good things come, and who can take them away when he pleases, and therefore should be ever kept in mind, for ever looked to and trusted in for the continuance of them; yet such is the evil heart of man, and such the stupefying nature of riches, that they bring on forgetfulness of the author of them, lead off from dependence on him and obedience to him; in order to prevent which, an enumeration is given of wonderful instances of divine goodness to Israel, as follows:

which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; into a land abounding with all the above good things, and therefore it must be the highest ingratitude to forget such a God, and disobey his commands.

Deuteronomy 8:15

Ver. 15. Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness,.... The wilderness of Paran, which was great and large, reaching from Sinai to Kadesh, eleven days' journey, and terrible to the sight, nothing being to be seen but dry rocks and barren mountains; see **De 1:19**, and especially for what follows: wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions; fiery serpents, such as bit the Israelites, of which see Nu 21:6 and scorpions, a kind of serpents, venomous and mischievous, which have stings in their tails they are continually thrusting out and striking with, as Pliny says {u}; and have their name from their great sting; for Aristotle {w} says, this alone of insects has a large sting:

and drought where there was no water; a dry and barren place where no water was to be had; see Ps 63:1 or it may be rather another kind of serpents may be meant, which is called "dipsas"; and so the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, and Samaritan versions render it; the biting of which produces such a thirst as proves mortal, and which must be intolerable in a wilderness where no water is; and from whence it has its name, which signifies thirsty, as does the Hebrew word here used:

who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; which was done both at Horeb and Kadesh, Ex 17:6 and was very extraordinary; by striking flint, fire is ordinarily produced, and not water. Dr. Shaw observes {x}, that it may be more properly named, with other sorts of graphite marble here to be met with, "the rock of amethyst", from their reddish or purple colour and complexion.

{u} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 25. {w} Hist. Animal. l. 4. c. 7. {x} Travels, p. 317, 442.

Deuteronomy 8:16

Ver. 16. Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna,.... Even all the forty years they were in it, Ex 16:35 which thy fathers knew not; when they first saw it, Ex 16:15

that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee; they were kept humble, being dependent on God for their daily bread, having nothing in the wilderness to support themselves with; and this tried them, whether they would trust in God for their daily supply, and be thankful for it, or not:

to do thee good at thy latter end; that by living on such light bread, and this only and continually, his goodness might appear the greater, and be the sweeter to them, when they came into a land abounding with all good things; which is not to be understood of the latter end and last days of their commonwealth, as our version, with the Septuagint, Samaritan, Arabic versions, and others, and the Targum of Onkelos; but of time following nearer, and the phrase should be rendered "hereafter" {y}; which better agrees with the promise of a divine blessing; though, come when it would, it was the more acceptable for the trial; as heaven will be the sweeter to the saints, through the afflictions, hardships, straits, and difficulties, which attend them here.

{y} Ktyrxab "tandem", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Piscator; "posthac", Noldius, p. 180. No. 807.

Deuteronomy 8:17

Ver. 17. And thou say in thine heart,.... These words are in connection with the former part of the **De 8:14**:

and thou forget the Lord thy God; the author and giver of all the good things enjoyed, and think within themselves, though they might not express it in words at length:

my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth; so ascribing that to themselves, their labour, and diligence, which ought to be ascribed to the bounty and blessing of God; see Ho 12:8.

Deuteronomy 8:18

Ver. 18. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God,.... That he was the author of their beings, the God of their lives and mercies; what great and good things he had done for them in Egypt, and in the wilderness; and particularly in putting them into the possession of such a fruitful country, abounding with all that heart could wish for:

for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth; for though men may have seeming opportunities for getting wealth, may have capacities for the management of business for the acquisition of it, and may not be wanting in diligence and industry, yet may not attain it; it is the blessing of God that makes rich, and to that it should be imputed whenever it is enjoyed; see Ps 127:2

that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers,
as [it is] this day; that he would give the land of Canaan to their seed, and make them a rich and flourishing people, as they would be and were when possessed of the land, which is supposed throughout this discourse.

Deuteronomy 8:19

Ver. 19. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God,.... Either the mercies they received from him, not acknowledging they came from him, but ascribing them to themselves; or their duty to him, to whom they were so greatly obliged: and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them; which would be to forget him indeed, forsaking his worship, and giving homage and adoration to idols, which is what is intended by these expressions:

I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish; by one judgment and calamity or another, as the sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity; there being nothing more provoking to God than idolatry, which so much detracts from his honour and glory: and which besides, in such a people, so highly favoured of God, it argued the basest ingratitude.

Deuteronomy 8:20

Ver. 20. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish,.... Be cut off by the sword, or cast out as they were, the same sins, particularly idolatry, being committed by them. This is to be understood of the seven nations of the land of Canaan, which the Lord would be gradually destroying when Israel came into the possession of their land; and they might righteously expect the same treatment, should they be guilty of the same sins:

because ye would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord your God; expressed in his law, especially in the two first precepts of it, which require the worship of one God, and forbid the worshipping of idols; or to the Word of the Lord, as the Targum of Jonathan, Christ, the essential Word, in whom the name of the Lord was, and whose voice Israel was to obey, Ex 23:20.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 9

In this chapter the Israelites are assured of the ejection of the Canaanites, though so great and mighty, to make room for them, **De 9:1**, and they are cautioned not to attribute this to their own righteousness, but to the wickedness of the nations which deserved to be so treated, and to the faithfulness of God in performing his promise made to their fathers, **De 9:4**, and that it might appear that it could not be owing to their righteousness, it is affirmed and proved that they had been a rebellious and provoking people from their coming out of Egypt to that time, as was evident from their idolatry at Horeb; a particular account of which is given, and of the displeasure of the Lord at it, **De 9:7**, and of their murmurings, with which they provoked the Lord at other places, **De 9:22**, and the chapter is closed with an account of the prayer of Moses for them at Horeb, to avert the wrath of God from them for their making and worshipping the golden calf, **De 9:25**.

Ver. 1. Hear, O Israel,.... A pause being made after the delivery of the preceding discourse; or perhaps what follows might be delivered at another time, at some little distance; and which being of moment and importance to the glory of God, and that Israel might have a true notion of their duty, they are called upon to listen with attention to what was now about to be said:

thou art to pass over Jordan this day; not precisely that very day, but in a short time after this; for it was on the first day of the eleventh month that Moses began the repetition of the laws he was now going on with, **De 1:3**, and it was not until the tenth day of the first month of the next year that the people passed over Jordan, **Jos 4:19** which was about two months after this:

to go in and possess nations greater and mightier than thyself; the seven nations named **De 7:1** where the same characters are given of them:

cities great and fenced up to heaven; as they were said to be by the spies, **De 1:28**, and were no doubt both large and strongly fortified, and not to be easily taken by the Israelites, had not the Lord been with them, **De 9:3**.

Deuteronomy 9:2

Ver. 2. A people great and tall,.... Of a large bulky size, and of an high stature, so that the spies seemed to be as grasshoppers to them, Nu 13:33,

the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest; by report, having had an account of them by the spies, who described them as very large bodied men, and of a gigantic stature, the descendants of one Anak, a giant; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"a people strong and high like the giants;"

from these Bene Anak, children of Anak, or Phene Anak, as the words might be pronounced, the initial letter of the first word being of the same sound, Bochart {z} thinks the country had its name of Phoenicia:

and of whom thou hast heard say, who can stand before the children, of Anak? or the children of the giants, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; which they had heard either from the spies who had suggested the same, Nu 13:31 or as a common proverb in the mouths of most people in those days.

{z} Canaan, l. 1. c. 1. col. 346.

Deuteronomy 9:3

Ver. 3. Understand therefore this day,.... Or be it known to you for your encouragement, and believe it:

that the Lord thy God [is] he which goeth over before thee as a consuming fire: did not only go before them over the river Jordan, in a pillar of cloud and fire, to guide and direct them, and was a wall of fire around them to protect and defend them, but as a consuming fire, before which there is no standing, to destroy their enemies; see **De 4:24**,

he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face; be they as great and as mighty, as large and as tall as they may, they will not be able to stand before the Lord, but will soon be made low, and be easily brought down to the earth by him, and to utter destruction; which would be done in a public and visible manner, so as that the hand of the Lord would be seen in it by the Israelites:

so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the Lord hath said unto thee; that is, the far greater part of them, and so many as to make room for the Israelites, and which was quickly done. The Jews commonly say {a}, that they were seven years in subduing the land; otherwise they were not to be driven out and destroyed at once, but by little and little: see **De 7:22**.

{a} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31, 32.

Deuteronomy 9:4

Ver. 4. Speak not thou in thine heart,.... Never once think within thyself, or give way to such a vain imagination, and please thyself with it:

after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee; to make way for the Israelites, and put them into the possession of their land; which is to be ascribed not to them, but to the Lord:

saying, for my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land; such a thought as this was not to be secretly cherished in their hearts, and much less expressed with their lips; nothing being more foreign from truth than this, and yet a notion they were prone to entertain. They were always a people, more or less, from first to last, tainted with a conceit of their own righteousness, and goodness, which they laboured to establish, and were ready to attribute all the good things to it they enjoyed, and nothing is more natural to men, than to fancy they shall be brought to the heavenly Canaan by and for their own righteousness; which is contrary to the perfections of God, his purity, holiness, and justice, which can never admit of an imperfect righteousness in the room of a perfect one; to justify anyone thereby, is contrary to the Gospel scheme of salvation; which is not by works of righteousness men have done, but by the grace and mercy of God through Christ; it would make useless, null, and void, the righteousness of Christ, which only can justify men in the sight of God, give a title to heaven and happiness, and an abundant entrance into it; and would occasion boasting, not only in the present state, but even in heaven itself; whereas the scheme of salvation is so framed and fixed, that there may be no room for boasting, here or hereafter, see **Ro 3:27**,

but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee; namely, their idolatry, incest, and other notorious crimes; see Le 18:3, which sufficiently justifies God in all his dealings with these nations.

Deuteronomy 9:5

Ver. 5. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart,.... Neither for their external righteousness before men, or their outward conformity to the law, nor for the inward sincerity of their hearts, and their upright intentions in doing good, in which they were defective:

dost thou go to possess their land; this is repeated, and enlarged on, and explained, that this notion might be entirely removed from them, and not entertained by them; similar to which is that of men, who fancy that their sincere obedience, though imperfect, will be accepted of God instead of a perfect one, on account of which they shall be justified and saved; but by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified in the sight of God, nor by any works of righteousness done by the best of men, and in the best manner they are capable of, will any be saved;

but for the wickedness of those nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee; which is repeated, that it might be taken notice of as the true reason of the Lord's dealing with them in such severity; and which because it would be now doing, when the Israelites passed over Jordan, and went in to possess the land, it is expressed in the present tense, "doth drive", the work being not yet finished; sin was the cause of their ejection out of their land, and another thing was the reason of the Israelites possessing it, and not their righteousness next expressed:

and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; it was to fulfil his covenant, and make good his word of promise to their fathers, and not on account of any righteousness of theirs; and the salvation of the Lord's people in a spiritual sense, and their enjoyment of the heavenly Canaan, are owing to the gracious purposes and promises of God, and to his covenant engagements, as well as to the undertakings, obedience, and righteousness of his Son, and not to any righteousness of theirs.

Deuteronomy 9:6

Ver. 6. Understand therefore that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness,.... This is again repeated to impress it upon their minds, that it was not for any goodness of theirs, but as a gift of divine goodness to them, that they were put into the possession of the good land, which greatly exceeded any merits of theirs, and was entirely owing to the kindness of God to them, and not to any righteousness of theirs; and this he frequently inculcates, that they might have a thorough understanding of it. And so the doctrines of justification by the righteousness of Christ, and not man's, and of salvation by the grace of God, and not the works of men, are points of knowledge and understanding; and to lead men into an acquaintance with them is the general design of the Gospel; and he cannot be reckoned an understanding man, but ignorant of God and his righteousness, of the law and the spirituality of it, of Christ and the way of salvation by him, of the Spirit and of spiritual things, of the Gospel and its doctrines, nor can he be wise unto salvation, who expects to get to heaven by his own works of righteousness; and it might be added, that he is ignorant of himself, of his state and condition, of his sinfulness and vileness, and of the nature of his best works; as the Israelites in a good measure seemed to be, whose conviction is laboured in the following part of this chapter:

for thou art a stiffnecked people; refractory and unruly, like an heifer unaccustomed to the yoke, that draws back from it, and wriggles its neck out of it; so untoward and perverse were this people, and disobedient to the commands of God; wherefore there was no show of reason that they were put into the possession of Canaan for their righteousness; and to make it appear that they were such a people as here described, several instances are given.

Deuteronomy 9:7

Ver. 7. Remember, and forget not how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness,.... Aben Ezra remarks that this was after they journeyed from Horeb; but before they came thither, even as soon as, they were in the wilderness, they provoked the Lord, as by their murmuring for water at Marah, when they had been but three days in the wilderness; and for bread in the wilderness of Sin, and for water again at Rephidim; all which were before they came to Horeb or Sinai, and which agrees with what follows:

from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; though they had such a series of mercies, yet their life was a continued course of rebellion against the Lord: which is a sad character of them indeed, and given by one that thoroughly knew them, was an eyewitness of facts, and had a hearty respect for them too, and cannot be thought to exaggerate things; so that they were far from being righteous persons in themselves, nor was there any reason to conclude it was for their righteousness the land of Canaan was given them.

Deuteronomy 9:8

Ver. 8. Also in Horeb ye provoked the Lord to wrath,.... The word "also" shows that they had provoked him before, but this instance is given as a very notorious one; here they made the golden calf and worshipped it, while Moses was on the mount with God, receiving instructions from him for their good. Near to this place a rock had been smitten for them, from whence flowed water for the refreshment of them and their cattle; here the Lord appeared in the glory of his majesty to them, and from hence, for it is the same mount with Sinai, the law was given to them in such an awful and terrible manner; and yet none of these things were sufficient to restrain them from provoking the Lord to wrath by their sins:

so that the Lord was angry with you, to have destroyed you; so very angry with them, and so justly, that he proposed to Moses to destroy them, and make of him a great nation in their stead, Ex 32:10.

Deuteronomy 9:9

Ver. 9. When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone,.... The tables of the law, the same law which forbid idolatry, and which they had lately heard from the mouth of God himself: even

the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with you; which they had agreed unto, and solemnly promised they would observe and do, Ex 24:7,

then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights; and this long stay was one reason of their falling into idolatry, not knowing what was become of him, Ex 24:18.

I neither did eat bread nor drink water; all those forty days and nights, Ex 34:28.

Deuteronomy 9:10

Ver. 10. And the Lord delivered unto me two tables of stone, written with the finger of God,.... The letters were of his devising and forming, the writing was his, the engraving them on the stones was his own doing; and which was done to show its original, to stamp a divine authority on it, and to denote its duration; see Ex 31:18

and on them was written according to all the words which the Lord spake with you in the mount; the ten commands, exactly in the same order, and in the same words, without any variation, as they were delivered to them with an articulate voice in their hearing; but now were written in this manner, that they might be read by them, and remain with them, see
Ex 34:28

out the midst of the fire; in which the Lord was, and whence he spake:

in the day of the assembly; when all the people of Israel were gathered together at the foot of the mount; see Ex 19:17.

Deuteronomy 9:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights,.... The time of Moses's stay in the mount, when it was just up, and not before: that

the Lord gave me the two tables of stone, [even] the tables of the covenant, as in **De 9:9**. Aben Ezra observes, that this shows that the day the tables were given to Moses the calf was made.

Deuteronomy 9:12

Ver. 12. And the Lord said unto me,.... The omniscient God, who knew what was doing in the camp of Israel, though Moses did not, of which he informs him:

arise, get thee down quickly from hence; from the mount where he was; and the word "arise" does not suppose him to be sitting or lying along, neither of which postures would have been suitable, considering in whose presence he was; but is only expressive of urgency and haste of his departure; it is not used in Ex 32:7

for thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt, have corrupted themselves; their way, as the Targum of Jonathan; that is, by idolatry, than which nothing is more corrupting and defiling; the Lord calls them not his people, but the people of Moses, being highly displeased with them; and ascribes their coming out of Egypt to Moses the instrument, and not to himself, as if he repented of bringing them from thence:

they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them: it being but about six weeks ago, that the command forbidding idolatry, the sin they had fallen into, had been given them:

and they have made them a molten image; the image of a calf made of melted gold.

Deuteronomy 9:13

Ver. 13. Furthermore the Lord spake unto me, saying,.... After he had given him the two tables, and before his departure from the mount:

I have seen this people; took notice of them, their ways, and their works:

and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people; unwilling to submit to, and bear the yoke of my commandments; see Ex 32:9.

Deuteronomy 9:14

Ver. 14. Let me alone, that I may destroy them,.... Do not say one word to me on their behalf, or entreat me to spare them, and not destroy them:

and blot out their name from under heaven; that no such nation may be heard of, or known by the name of Israel:

and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they; of his family, whereby the Lord's promise to Abraham would not have been made void, but equally firm and sure, since this mightier and greater nation would have been of his seed; See Gill on "Ex 32:10".

Deuteronomy 9:15

Ver. 15. So I turned and came down from the mount,.... As the Lord commanded:

and the mount burned with fire; as it had for six weeks past, ever since the Lord's descent upon it; and so it continued, for the words may be rendered, "and the mount was burning" {b}; and yet this did not deter the Israelites from idolatry:

and the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands: one table in one hand, and the other in the other hand.

{b} reb "de monte ardente", V. L. Heb. "burning", Ainsworth.

Deuteronomy 9:16

Ver. 16. And I looked,.... When he was come down from the mount, and was nigh the camp:

and, behold, ye had sinned against the Lord your God; that plainly appeared by what they had done, and at which he was amazed; and therefore a behold is prefixed to it, it being such a gross sin, having so much impiety and ingratitude, and stupidity in it:

and made you a molten calf; that he saw with his eyes, and them dancing about it; see Ex 32:19

ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the Lord had commanded you; see **De 9:7**.

Deuteronomy 9:17

Ver. 17. And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands,.... In wrath and indignation at the sin they were guilty of:

and brake them before your eyes; as an emblem of their breach of them by transgressing them.

Deuteronomy 9:18

Ver. 18. And I fell down before the Lord,.... In prayer for Israel who had sinned; but this he did not immediately after he had broken the tables, but when he had first ground the calf to powder, strewed it on the water, and made the children of Israel drink it; and when he had chided Aaron, and ordered the sons of Levi to slay every man his brother:

as at the first forty days and forty mights; which is to be connected, I think, not with what goes before; for we read not that he fell down before the Lord, at the first time he was with him so long in the mount; but with what follows: "I did neither eat bread nor drink water"; as he neither ate nor drank the first forty days, so neither did he these second forty; see **De 9:9**

because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger; for they were guilty of more sins than one; besides idolatry, they were guilty of unbelief, ingratitude, &c. which were notorious and flagrant, were done openly and publicly, in sight of his glory and majesty on the mount; all which must be very provoking to him, and on account of these Moses prayed and fasted.

Deuteronomy 9:19

Ver. 19. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure wherewith the Lord was wroth against you,.... Which was exceeding vehement, as appeared by his words to Moses, forbidding to intercede for them, that he might consume them, and make of him a greater nation; wherefore he dreaded the issue of it, lest it should be

to destroy you; that that should be his full resolution and determination; however, he made use of means, and betook himself to fasting and prayer; so heartily affected was he to this people when his temptations lay another way:

but the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also; as he had at other times, when this people had sinned, and he entreated for them; in which he was a type of Christ, the Mediator and Advocate, whom the Father always hears.

Deuteronomy 9:20

Ver. 20. And the Lord was very angry with Aaron, to have destroyed him,.... For complying with the request of the people in making a calf for them, and for that miserable shift he made to excuse himself; which so provoked the Lord, that he threatened to destroy him, and he was in danger of being cut off, had it not been for the intercession of Moses:

and I prayed for Aaron also the same time: who either was included in the general prayer for the people, Ex 32:31 or a particular prayer was made for him, though not recorded, and which also succeeded.

Deuteronomy 9:21

Ver. 21. And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made,.... Which was the object of their sin, which lay in making and worshipping it; see Isa 31:7

and burnt it with fire, and stamped it; with his feet after it was burnt, to bring it into small pieces:

and ground it very small; or, as the Targum of Jonathan,

"ground it in a mortar well;"

the burnt and broken pieces:

even until it was as small as dust; being ground to powder, as in

Ex 32:20

and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount; and made the children of Israel to drink of it, as in the previously mentioned place; See Gill on "Ex 32:2"; all this was done before the prayer for Aaron and the people.

Deuteronomy 9:22

Ver. 22. And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibrothhattaavah, ye provoked the Lord to wrath. These places are not mentioned in the strict order in which the provocations were made at them; for they provoked the Lord at Massah by murmuring for water, before they provoked him at Taberah, by complaining as it should seem of their journeying; for Massah was before they came to Sinai, and Taberah after they departed from thence; though some, as Aben Ezra observes, say that Taberah is Massah; but it could not be the Massah in Rephidim, for that was on one side of Mount Sinai, and Taberah on another; though different places might be so called from their tempting the Lord at them; rather Taberah and Kibrothhattaavah seem to be the same; where the people died with the flesh in their mouths they lusted after, and were buried; since no mention is made of their removal at that time from the one place to the other, nor of Taberah in the account of their journeys, only Kibrothhattaavah; see Ex 17:7.

Deuteronomy 9:23

Ver. 23. Likewise when the Lord sent you from Kadeshbarnea,.... From whence the spies were sent to search the land, though previous to it they had the following order to go up and possess it; see
Nu 32:8

saying, go up and possess the land which I have given you; this they were bid to do, before they desired the spies might be sent to search it first; and after they had returned and made their report, they were encouraged to go up and take possession of it:

then ye rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God; refusing to go up into it: and ye believed him not; that he would cast out and destroy the inhabitants of it, and put them into the possession of it; which they distrusted by reason of the gigantic stature of some that dwelt in it, and their fortified cities:

nor hearkened to his voice; whether commanding or encouraging.

Deuteronomy 9:24

Ver. 24. You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you. Either from the time he first had and took knowledge of them and visited them, before his departure from Egypt to the land of Midian; (see **Ex 2:11** compared with **Ac 7:25**); or from the time that he was sent to them to deliver them out of Egypt; see **Ex 5:20** and especially from the time he brought them into the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 9:25

Ver. 25. Thus I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first,.... Which Jarchi says are the selfsame said above, **De 9:18**, but doubled or repeated, because of the order of his prayer. The words "at the first" are not in the text; and, as before observed, we do not read that Moses fell down at the first forty days he was in the mount, unless it can be thought he did, Ex 32:11, wherefore this falling down seems to be as he fell down at the second forty days; and so this was a third forty days, according to the Jewish writers, and of which opinion were Dr. Lightfoot and others; See Gill on "Ex 34:28",

because the Lord had said he would destroy you; threatened them with destruction, and seemed as if it was his intention to destroy them; nay, even after Moses's first prayer, though he bid him go and lead the people on, yet he declared that he would visit their sin upon them, Ex 32:34.

Deuteronomy 9:26

Ver. 26. And I prayed therefore unto the Lord,.... What follows is a different prayer from that in Ex 32:31 and agrees better with that in **De 9:11**, delivered before he came down from the mount, yet could not be the same, because delivered at another forty days and nights:

and said, O Lord God, destroy not thy people, and thine inheritance: because they were his inheritance, a people whom he had chosen for his peculiar treasure; this is the first argument used, another follows:

which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness; redeemed out of the house of bondage, the land of Egypt, by his great power, as next explained:

which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand: inflicting plagues on the Egyptians, particularly destroying their firstborn, which made them the Israelites urge to depart.

Deuteronomy 9:27

Ver. 27. Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,.... The covenant he had made with them, the promises he had made to them of the multiplication of their seed, and of giving the land of Canaan to them; which is a third argument used with the Lord not to destroy them:

look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin; nor to the natural temper and disposition of the people, which was to be stubborn, obstinate, stiffnecked, and self-willed; nor to their wickedness, which appears in various instances; nor to that particular sin of idolatry they had now been guilty, of; tacitly owning that if God looked to these things, there was sufficient reason to destroy them.

Deuteronomy 9:28

Ver. 28. Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say,.... The land of Egypt, the inhabitants of it;

because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them; the land of Canaan, the inhabitants of it being so mighty, and their cities so strongly fortified. Here Moses expresses his concern for the glory of God, and the honour of his perfections, and makes that a fourth argument why he should not destroy them:

and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness; out of Egypt, a plentiful country, into a wilderness where nothing was to be had; but his choice of them for his inheritance, his redemption of them out of bondage and misery, the care he took of them, and the provision he had made for them in the wilderness, clearly showed that they were not the objects of his hatred, but of his love.

Deuteronomy 9:29

Ver. 29. Yet they are thy people,.... Though they had sinned against him:

and thine inheritance; which he would not forsake and cast off; at least Moses hoped on this account he would not, and makes use thereof as an argument with him why he should not, and which he repeats, adding in effect what he had said before:

which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and stretched out arm; even out of the land of Egypt; the doing of which was plainly the effect of his almighty power, and an evidence of it, considering the weakness of Israel and the strength of Egypt, and the manner in which the Lord brought about this surprising event.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 10

In this chapter an account is given of an order to Moses to hew two tables of stone, on which the Lord would write the words that were on the first, and to make an ark and put them into it, all which was accordingly done, De 10:1 and of some of the journeys of the children of Israel, De 10:6 and of the separation of the tribe of Levi to the service of the sanctuary, De 10:8 and of Moses's stay in the mount forty days and nights, and his success there, and the direction he had to lead on the people of Israel towards Canaan's land, De 10:10 and who by various arguments are exhorted to fear the Lord, and serve him, and keep his commands, De 10:12.

Ver. 1. At that time the Lord said unto me,.... On the fortieth day, mentioned in the preceding chapter, as Aben Ezra, or at the end of forty days, as Jarchi; not of the first forty, for then were given him the first two tables of stone, with the law written on them, which he broke when he came down; but at the end of the second forty days, as some think, when he had fallen before the Lord, and entreated him for the people, and, as a token of his reconciliation to them, gave the following order:

hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, &c. Of the same sort of stone, of the same size and form with those God gave him in the mount the first time he was there, and which he broke in his descent from thence; they were the work of God, but these were to be hewed by Moses: the order seems to be given between the request Moses made to see the glory of the Lord, and the proclamation made of it, see
Ex 34:1, and come up unto me into the mount; Mount Sinai; this was certainly the third time of his going up there, and where he continued forty days and nights; but whether he continued there so long the second time may be a matter of question, though he certainly did the third time; see Ex 32:30

and make thee an ark of wood; Jarchi thinks this was not the ark Bezaleel made, but made after, and is that which went out to battle; and some take it to be a temporary ark, made for the present purpose till that was finished; but Aben Ezra is of opinion it is the same that Bezaleel made: and it may be said to be made by Moses, because he was not only ordered to make it, but it was by his orders and the direction he gave to Bezaleel that it was made; and this seems the more probable, because there the tables remained, De 10:5.

Deuteronomy 10:2

Ver. 2. And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest,.... {a} Though they were hewn by Moses, the writing on them was the Lord's; and the very same laws, in the same words, without any alteration or variation, were written by him on these as on the former; partly to show the authenticity of them, that they were of God and not Moses, of a divine original and not human; and partly to show the invariableness of them, that no change had been made in them, though they had been broken by the people; of which Moses's breaking the tables was a representation;

and thou shall put them in the ark; which being a type of Christ may signify the fulfilment of the law by him, who is the end, the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness to every believer; and that as this was in his heart to fulfil it, so it is in his hand as a rule of faith and conversation to his people.

{a} See a Sermon of mine on this text, called, "The Law in the Hand of Christ."

Deuteronomy 10:3

Ver. 3. And I made an ark of shittim wood,.... That is, ordered it to be made, and it was made by Bezaleel, and that of shittim wood: so the ark that was put into the holy of holies was made of this wood; see
See Gill on "Ex 25:10",
See Gill on "Ex 37:1",

and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; two marble ones, as the Targum of Jonathan; that is, he ordered them to be hewed, and took care that they should be exactly made as the former were, of which he had perfect knowledge, having received them of the Lord, and brought them with him down the mount:

and went up into the mount, having the two tables in my hand; in order to have the words of the law, the ten commands, written on them, these being only hewn stones, without anything on them: they were very probably marble, of which great quantities were near at hand.

Deuteronomy 10:4

Ver. 4. And he wrote on the tables according to the first writing,.... The same laws, in the same letters:

the ten commandments which the Lord spake unto you in the mount; in Mount Sinai, on which he descended, and from whence he delivered the decalogue by word of mouth in an audible manner, that all the people could hear it:

out of the midst of the fire; in which he descended, and where he continued, and from whence he spake, so that it was indeed a fiery law;

in the day of the assembly; when all the people of Israel were assembled together at the bottom of the mount to hear it:

and the Lord gave them unto me; the two tables, when he had wrote upon them the ten commands.

Deuteronomy 10:5

Ver. 5. And I turned myself,.... From the Lord, out of whose hands he had received the tables:

and came down from the mount; with the two tables in his hand as before, one in one hand, and the other in the other hand:

and put the tables in the ark which I had made; or ordered to be made:

and there they be, as the Lord commanded me; there they were when Moses rehearsed what is contained in this book, on the plains of Moab, about thirty eight years after the putting them, into it; and there they continued to be when the ark was brought into Solomon's temple, **1Ki 8:9** and there they were as long as the ark was in being; which may denote the continuance of the law in the hands of Christ under the Gospel dispensation as a rule of walk and conversation to his people.

Deuteronomy 10:6

Ver. 6. And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan,.... Not when or soon after they removed from Sinai; for if this place is the same with Benejaakan, as is generally supposed, they had a great many journeys, mansions, and stations before they came to it; see Nu 33:31 and besides, since Aaron, according to this account, died at their next station from hence, that was thirty eight years after their departure from Mount Sinai; and it is hard to say what should be the reason of making mention of these two or three journeys here; and whereas they are here said to journey front the place here mentioned

to Mosera; on the contrary in Nu 33:31 they are said to depart from Mosera, and pitch in Benejaakan; which is accounted for by their going backwards and forwards, and so both may be true. Aben Ezra is of opinion, that Beeroth Benejaakan, or the wells of the children of Jaakan, is not the same with Bene Jaakan, nor Mosera the same with Moseroth; but Beeroth is Kadesh, and Mosera is the name of the desert of Mount Hor; and it is certain that Moseroth was the twenty seventh station, and Mosera, or the desert of Mount Hor, where Aaron died, was the thirty fourth, and therefore must be distant; see Nu 33:30, which seems to agree with what follows:

there Aaron died, and there he was buried; it is certain that Aaron died on Mount Hor, Nu 20:23, or there died and was buried when in the desert of Mosera:

and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead; so that though the high priest died, the office continued, and the law of it remained in force, and the tribe of Levi was separated for the service of the sanctuary, as afterwards expressed.

Deuteronomy 10:7

Ver. 7. From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah,.... Which Jarchi takes to be the same with Horhagidgad, and so do most; see Nu 33:32, but Aben Ezra says it is not, but is a general name, including Zalmonah, Punon, and Oboth, places the Israelites came to after they removed from Mount Hor, where Aaron died; see Nu 33:41

and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters; which the above writer takes to be the same with Beer, the well, Nu 21:16 and by this description of it, it was a place where there was much water.

Deuteronomy 10:8

Ver. 8. At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi,.... Not at the time that Moses came down from the mount with the tables of the law, but some considerable time after, even after the tabernacle was erected; nor at the time that Aaron died, and Eleazar succeeded him, but many years before that; unless there was a fresh separation of them, or a renewal of it when Eleazar became high priest in his father's stead; and so that being mentioned is the reason of its being repeated here;

to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord; even that into which the law, sometimes called the covenant, was put, and therefore here called the ark of the covenant: when this was carried from place to place, as it was especially in the wilderness, it was the business of the Levites to bear it, particularly the Kohathites; **Nu 3:31**,

to stand before the Lord to minister unto him; that is, to his priests, in the tabernacle, and to keep and guard that:

and to bless in his name unto this day; not to bless the people, which was the work of the priest, but to sing praise in the name of the Lord, to give thanks unto him, and bless and praise him.

Deuteronomy 10:9

Ver. 9. Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren,.... In the division of the land of Canaan, because being separated to the service of the sanctuary, he had no leisure to plough and sow, as Jarchi observes:

the Lord is his inheritance, as the Lord thy God promised him; not in a spiritual sense, for so the Lord was an inheritance and portion of other Israelites; though these being taken off of worldly employments, and devoted to sanctuary service, might have more communion with God than others; but in a temporal sense, provision being made particularly by tithes, which were the Lord's, for their maintenance; and so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase the words;

"gifts which the Lord gave him are his inheritance;"

see Nu 18:20.

Deuteronomy 10:10

Ver. 10. And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights,.... Which is to be connected with De 10:6 and relates what passed before he came down from the mount with the two tables; as that he stayed there as long as he did when he received the first tables, and fasted also as long as he did then; see Ex 34:28

and the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also; to his prayer on the behalf of the people:

and the Lord would not destroy thee; though he had threatened it, and their sin had deserved it.

Deuteronomy 10:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord said unto me, arise, take thy journey before the people,.... Here Moses goes on with his relation of things at Mount Sinai, how that upon his supplication for the people, on account of the destruction they were threatened with for their idolatry, the Lord was graciously pleased not only to hear him and forgive the people, but ordered him to go before them, and lead them on towards the land of Canaan he had promised them, Ex 32:34,

that they may go in and possess the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give unto them; and which had it not been for their later murmurings and rebellions, they had been in the possession of it in a little time, especially after their departure from Sinai.

Deuteronomy 10:12

Ver. 12. And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee,.... For all these favours bestowed upon them, the forgiveness of their sins, and a fresh intimation of their possession of the land of Canaan, and the renewal of the promise of it made to their fathers:

but to fear the Lord thy God; to fear him with a filial fear, to fear him and his goodness, and him for his goodness sake, and particularly for his pardoning grace and mercy vouchsafed to them; see Ps 130:4,

to walk in all his ways; prescribed and directed to by him, every path of duty, whether moral, ceremonial, or judicial:

and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; for that is the best service which springs from love, and love constrains unto, and which is hearty and sincere, as that is, and is performed in the best manner such are capable of.

Deuteronomy 10:13

Ver. 13. To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes,.... Both the ten commands and all others:

which I command thee this day for thy good; promises of temporal good things, introduction into the land of Canaan, possession of it, and continuance in it, being made to obedience to them.

Deuteronomy 10:14

Ver. 14. Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, are the Lord's thy God,.... Made and possessed by him; the airy and starry heaven, the third heaven, which is the heaven of heavens, the seat of the divine Majesty, the habitation of angels and glorified saints:

the earth [also], with all that therein is; that is his property, and at his disposal, being made by him, and all that is upon it, or contained in it, even whatsoever is on or in the whole terraqueous globe; see Ps 115:15.

Deuteronomy 10:15

Ver. 15. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them,.... Though the heavens and the earth, and all the inhabitants of them are the Lord's by creation, yet he had a special regard unto, and a peculiar complacency in, the fathers of the Israelites, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; from whence arose some particular expressions of love to them, signified by various acts of kindness done them, and promises made unto them:

and he chose their seed after them, even you above all the people, as [it is] this day; to be a special people to him, to enjoy civil and religious privileges greater than any other; and particularly to have his law given to them, his tabernacle and worship set up among them, which were at this time, and which gave them the preference to all other nations; see **De 4:7**.

Deuteronomy 10:16

Ver. 16. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart,.... Content not yourselves with, nor put your confidence in outward circumcision of the flesh, but be concerned for the circumcision of the heart; for removing from that whatever is disagreeable to the Lord, even all carnality, sensuality, hypocrisy, and superfluity of naughtiness, and for having that put there which is well pleasing in his sight; and which though it is the work of God, and he only can do it and has promised it, yet such an exhortation is made to bring men to a sense of their need of it, and of the importance of it, and to show how agreeable it is to the Lord, and so to stir them up to seek unto him for it; see De 30:6

and be no more stiffnecked; froward, obstinate, and disobedient, as they had been hitherto; **De 9:6**.

Deuteronomy 10:17

Ver. 17. For the Lord your God is God of gods,.... Of angels and civil magistrates, who are sometimes so called: these are his creatures, act for him and under him, and are accountable to him:

the Lord of lords; of the kings and princes of the earth, who have their crowns, sceptres, and kingdoms from him, and hold them of him, by and under whom they reign and decree judgment, and who are subject to his authority and control:

a great God; as the perfections of his nature, the works of his hands, the blessings of his providence and grace, and the extensiveness of his dominion in heaven, earth, and hell, show him to be:

a mighty and a terrible; mighty and powerful to help, protect, and defend his people; terrible to his and their enemies, even to the kings of the earth:

which regardeth not persons; but bestows his favours, whether in a way of providence or grace, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, without regard to the works and merits of men, their characters or circumstances:

nor taketh reward; or bribes, to avert threatened and deserved judgments; see Job 36:18.

Deuteronomy 10:18

Ver. 18. He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow,.... Who have none to help them, and whose patron and defender he is, and will do them justice himself, and take care that it is done them by others, or avenge their injuries, for he is a Father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow, in his holy habitation; Ps 68:5

and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment; one that is in a foreign country, at a distance from his native land, and destitute of friends; such God in his providence takes care of, and expresses his love and kindness to, by giving them the necessaries of life, food, and raiment.

Deuteronomy 10:19

Ver. 19. Love ye therefore the stranger,.... Because the Lord loves him; and another reason follows, particularly binding on the Israelites:

for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt; and therefore should sympathize with such, and show them compassion, relieve them in distress, and afford them whatever they want, and is in the power of their hands to communicate to them; remembering their own condition in Egypt, and how welcome such a treatment would have been to them then, as well as the kind and careful providence of God towards them at that time.

Deuteronomy 10:20

Ver. 20. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God,.... Which includes the whole worship of him, external and internal:

him shalt thou serve; heartily and sincerely, according to his revealed will, and him only:

and to him shall thou cleave; and not turn aside to follow other gods, and worship them:

and swear by his name; and his only, whenever it is necessary to take an oath, which should not be done rashly or on trivial accounts; and never by any creature, but by the living God; see **De 6:13**.

Deuteronomy 10:21

Ver. 21. He is thy praise,.... The object and matter of it, who deserves the praises of all his creatures, because of his perfections, works, and blessings of goodness; for all mercies temporal and spiritual come from him, and therefore he is greatly to be praised for them: praise is his due, and it is comely in his people to give it to him; see Jer 17:14

and he is thy God which hath done for thee these great and terrible things which thine eyes have seen; which were done upon the Egyptians for their sakes, both in the land of Egypt and at the Red sea; and also what he had done for them in the wilderness, to Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, Ps 106:22.

Deuteronomy 10:22

Ver. 22. Thy fathers went down into Egypt with seventy persons,.... That is, in all; for there were not seventy besides Jacob and the patriarchs his sons, but with them; see Ge 46:26 and now the Lord thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude; as he promised they should be, Ge 15:5.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 11

In this chapter, the exhortation to love the Lord, and keep his commands, is repeated and urged again and again from various considerations; as not only from the chastisement of Pharaoh and the wicked Egyptians, but of such Israelites who offended the Lord, and transgressed his law, De 12:1, from the goodness and excellency of the land they were going to inherit, De 11:8, from the blessing of rain that would come upon it, and be productive of all good things for man and beast, in case of obedience, and a restraint of it in case of disobedience, De 11:12, from the continuance of them and their offspring in the land, should they be careful to observe the commands themselves, and teach them their children, De 11:18, and from the extensiveness of their conquests and dominions, De 11:22 and from the different issue and effects of their conduct and behaviour, a blessing upon them if obedient, but a curse if disobedient, De 11:26 and the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to pronounce the blessing on Mount Gerizim, and the curse on Mount Ebal; the situation of which places is described when they should come into the land of Canaan, of which they are assured, De 11:29.

Ver. 1. Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God,.... Because he is so great and glorious in himself, and because he had done such great and good things for them, the Israelites, particularly in the multiplication of them, the last thing mentioned:

and keep his charge; whatsoever the Lord had charged them to observe, even what follow:

and his statutes and his judgments, and his commandments, alway; all his laws, ceremonial, judicial, and moral; and that constantly and continually, all the days of their lives.

Deuteronomy 11:2

Ver. 2. And know you this day,.... Take notice of, and diligently attend unto, what is now about to be delivered:

for I speak not unto your children which have not known, and which have not seen, the chastisement of the Lord your God; who have no knowledge and experience of the chastisement of the Lord on themselves, or on their foes or friends; and with whom the argument drawn from it could not come with that force, and make that impression, as it might be thought it would, being used with them who had perfect knowledge of it. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render it doctrine, which, being children, they were not instructed so perfectly in as they were who were adult persons, to whom Moses directs his discourse:

his greatness, his mighty hand, and stretched out arm: the exceeding greatness of his power, displayed in the following instances.

Deuteronomy 11:3

Ver. 3. And his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt,.... The miraculous works done there, the ten plagues inflicted on the Egyptians for refusing to let Israel go:

unto Pharaoh king, of Egypt, and unto all his land; for those plagues not only affected him and his court, and his metropolis, but all parts of the land, the inhabitants of it everywhere.

Deuteronomy 11:4

Ver. 4. And what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots,.... At the Red sea, when they pursued Israel in order to bring them back or destroy them, after they had let them go, which army was very numerous; see Ex 14:7

how he made the water of the Red sea to overflow them; "or to flow over their faces" {b},

as they pursued after you; so that they could not see their way, nor steer their course after them; and not only so, but were covered with the waters of the sea, drowned in them, and sunk to the bottom of them: and how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day; either continued to destroy them yet more and more by one means or another; or else the destruction made by the several plagues upon them, and particularly that of their army at the Red sea, which was the strength and glory of the nation, was so general and extensive, that they never recovered it to that day; and so were in no capacity of coming out against them, and attacking them, and doing them any hurt, all the forty years they had been in the wilderness; of which no doubt they had knowledge, and of their condition and circumstances there.

{b} Mhynp le-Pyuh "fecit inundare super facics eorum", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Deuteronomy 11:5

Ver. 5. And what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came unto this place. Meaning not so much the good things he did for them in divers places, as the chastisements and corrections he had exercised them with for their murmurings, rebellions, idolatry, and uncleanness, as at Taberah, Kibrothhattaavah, on the coast of Edom, and plains of Moab; by fire, by sword, by plagues, and fiery serpents; the instances both before and after being of this sort.

Deuteronomy 11:6

Ver. 6. And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben,.... When they with Korah and his company quarrelled with Moses and

Aaron about the priesthood, Nu 16:1, how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up; the history of which see in
Nu 16:30

and their households and their tents; not their houses and their tents, as the Septuagint and some other versions; for though the word signifies houses, and is often used for them, yet here it must signify families, their wives, and children; since they had no houses, but dwelt in tents, all which were swallowed up with them:

and all the substance that was in their possession; gold, silver, cattle, household goods, and whatever they were possessed of:

or was at their feet {c}; or which followed them, their living creatures; or was for them, as Aben Ezra interprets it; for, their use, service, and necessity: and this was done

in the midst of all Israel; openly and publicly, they beholding it, as follows; and therefore should be rendered, "before all Israel" {d}; and, besides, the tents of Dathan and Abiram, Reubenites, were not in the midst of Israel.

{c} Mhylgrb rva "quae erat in pedibus eorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.
{d} brqb "coram omni Israele", Noldius, p. 212. No. 975.

Deuteronomy 11:7

Ver. 7. But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which he did;] Even all before related, with many others; and therefore the instruction they should learn from thence should be as follows.

Deuteronomy 11:8

Ver. 8. Therefore shall you keep all the commandments which I command you this day,.... For the reasons before suggested, as well as for what follow:

that ye may be strong; healthful in body, and courageous in mind, for sin tends to weaken both; whereas observance of the commands of God contributes to the health and strength of the body, and the rigour of the mind; both which were necessary to the present expedition they were going upon:

and go in and possess the land whither ye go to possess it; the land of Canaan, they were marching towards in order to possess it; and nothing would more inspire them with courage, and cause them to enter it manfully without fear of their enemies, than obedience to the commands of God; whose presence being promised them on that account, they might expect it, and so had nothing to fear from the inhabitants of the land.

Deuteronomy 11:9

Ver. 9. And that ye may prolong your days in the land,.... Not only enter it, and take possession of it, but continue in it long, which depended upon their obedience to the laws of God:

which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed; had promised with an oath, so that they might be assured of the enjoyment of it, though they could not be of their continuance in it, unless they obeyed the divine commands:

a land that floweth with milk and honey; abounds with all good things, whose fruits are fat as milk, and sweet as honey; so the Targum of Jonathan.

Deuteronomy 11:10

Ver. 10. For the land whither thou goest in to possess it,.... The land of Canaan they were about to take possession of:

[is] not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out; either the whole land of Egypt, or that part of it, Rameses, in which Israel dwelt, and which was the best of it, as Jarchi observes, and yet Canaan exceeded that; though the design of this passage is not so much to set forth the superior excellency and fertility of the land of Canaan to that of Egypt, which was certainly a very fruitful country; see
Ge 13:10 but to observe some things in which they differed, whereby they both became fruitful, and in which Canaan had the advantage:

where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; as a gardener when he has sowed his seed, or planted his plants, waters them that they may grow, by carrying his water pot from bed to bed, which requires much labour and toil. In Egypt rain seldom fell, especially in some places it was very rare, though that there was none at all is a vulgar mistake; See Gill on "Zec 14:18" {e}. To supply the want of it the river Nile overflowed once a year, which not only moistened the earth, but left mud or slime upon it, which made it fruitful; but this was not sufficient, for what through the river not overflowing enough sometimes, and so as to reach some places, and through the heat of the sun hardening the earth again, it was found necessary to cut canals from it, and by water from thence to water it, as a gardener waters his seed and plants; and it is to this watering that respect is here had, not to the overflowing of the Nile, for that was before the seed was sown; but to the watering of it out of the canals, which was done after it was sown; the former was without any trouble of theirs, the latter with much labour; the manner in which it is done is expressed by the phrase "with thy foot", which the Targum explains "by thyself", by their own labour and industry. Jarchi is more particular; "the land of Egypt had need to "have water brought from the Nile with thy foot; he seems to have understood the phrase to signify carrying water on foot from the Nile to the place where it was wanted; but the custom still in use in Egypt, when they water their fields, plantations, or gardens, will give us a clear understanding of this phrase; as a late traveller informs us {f}, the water is drawn out of the river (Nile) by instruments, and lodged in capacious cisterns; when plants require to be refreshed, they strike out the plugs that are fixed in the bottoms of the cisterns, and then the water gushing out, is conducted from one rill to another by the gardener, who is always ready as occasion requires to stop and divert the torrent by turning the earth against it "with his foot", and opening at the same time with his mattock a new trench to receive it: and to the same purpose another learned person {g} has observed, that at other times (than the flowing of the Nile) they are obliged to have recourse to art, and to raise the water out of the river and some deep pits by the help of machines, which water is afterwards directed in its course by channels cut in the ground, which convey the water to those places where it is wanted; and when one part of the ground is sufficiently watered, they then stop that channel, by thrusting some earth into the entrance of it "with their foot", and then also "with their foot" open a passage into the next channel, and so on: and Philo the Jew {h} speaks of a machine with which they used to water fields, and was worked with the feet by going up the several steps within, which gave motion to it.

{e} See also Vansleb's Relation of a Voyage to Egypt, p. 213. who speaks of large rains in Egypt. {f} Shaw's Travels, p. 408. {g} Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 478. {h} De Confusione Ling p. 325.

Deuteronomy 11:11

Ver. 11. But the land whither ye go to possess it is a land of hills and valleys,.... And so could not be watered by the overflow of a river, and by canals cut out of it, and in the manner Egypt was; which was for the most part a plain and flat country, but not so Canaan, in which were many hills and mountains, as those about Jerusalem, Carmel, Tabor, Lebanon, and others; and plains and valleys, as the valley of Jezreel, &c. and which made it more delightful and pleasant for prospects; see **De 8:7** and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; by which it was watered, refreshed, and made fruitful; not by means of men, but by the Lord himself, and so with much more ease to men, and without the toil and labour they were obliged to in Egypt, as well as it was both more healthful and pleasant; for the damps that arose from the overflow of the Nile were sometimes prejudicial to health; and during the season of its overflow, which was in the summer, they were obliged to keep in their houses, and could not walk abroad for weeks together; to which inconveniences the land of Canaan was not subject; but then, as its fertility depended on rain from heaven, the Israelites would be under the greater obligation to observe the commands of God, who could give and withhold it at his pleasure, and as they conducted themselves; which seems to be the general drift of this passage.

Deuteronomy 11:12

Ver. 12. A land which the Lord thy God careth for,.... In a very particular and special manner; otherwise he has a general care of the whole world, and all the parts of it; for as the earth is his, and the fulness thereof, his providential care reaches everywhere; but as this spot was what he had chosen for his own residence, and the place of his worship, and for an habitation for his peculiar people; he exercised a more peculiar care over it, to make it fruitful, commodious, and pleasant; or which "he seeketh" {i}; that is, the good of it, and to make it convenient, useful, and delightful to his people; yea, which he sought for and desired for his own habitation, Ps 132:13,

the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year; his eyes of providence, to give the former and the latter rain, and that there be seedtime and harvest in their seasons, and that the fruits of it be produced at their proper time; some at the beginning, others at the end of the year, and others in the intervening months, and all wisely suited to the good of the inhabitants of it.

{i} vrd "quaerit", Pagninus; "quaerens", Montanus.

Deuteronomy 11:13

Ver. 13. And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day,.... In the name, and by the authority of the Lord, the only lawgiver:

to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul; see De 10:12. Jarchi interprets this of prayer; but it is not to be restrained to that only, but includes the whole service of God, in all the parts of it, performed from a principle of love to him, and in sincerity and truth.

Deuteronomy 11:14

Ver. 14. That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season,.... Such a quantity of it as the land required, a sufficiency of it to make it fruitful, and that in proper time:

the first rain and the latter rain; the former rain in Marchesvan, the latter rain in Nisan, as the Targum of Jonathan; the first fell about our October, which was at or quickly after seedtime, to water the seed that it might take root, and grow and spring up; and the latter fell about March, a little before harvest, to ripen the corn, and swell and plump the ears of it, and make them yield more and better;
See Gill on "Joe 2:23",

that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil; which were the principal things the land afforded for the sustenance of men; bread corn, the stay and staff of human life, and which strengthens man's heart, and makes him fit for labour; wine, which is his drink, and makes the heart of man glad and cheerful; and oil, which in these countries was used instead of butter, and was fattening, and made the face to shine, Ps 104:15. The ingathering of these fruits were at different times; the barley harvest first, the wheat harvest next, and after that the vintage, and the gathering of the olives; and by means of rain in due season they were favoured with each of these.

Deuteronomy 11:15

Ver. 15. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle,.... By giving plentiful showers of rain at proper times, to cause it to spring up and grow, that so there might be food for the cattle of every sort, greater or lesser; see Ps 104:13,

that thou mayest eat and be full; which refers to the preceding verse as well as to this; and the sense is, that the Israelites might eat of and enjoy the fruits of the earth to satiety; namely, their corn, wine, and oil; and that their cattle might have grass enough to supply them with.

Deuteronomy 11:16

Ver. 16. Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived,.... By observing the influence of the heavens upon the fruitfulness of the earth, and so be drawn to the worship of the host of them, the sun, moon, and stars; or by the examples of nations round about them; and by the plausible arguments they may make use of, taken from the traditions of ancestors, from antiquity, and the consent of nations, and the great numbers of worshippers, and the like:

and ye turn aside; from the true God, and the worship of him; or from the law, as Jarchi, which directs to the worship of one God, and forbids idolatry, or the worshipping of images:

and serve other gods, and worship them; other gods than the one only living and true God; gods that made not the heavens and the earth, and which cannot give rain, nor any blessing and mercy of life, nor help and deliver their worshippers when in distress.

Deuteronomy 11:17

Ver. 17. And then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you,.... For their idolatry, nothing being more provoking to him than that, it being contrary to his nature and being, as well as to his will, and to his honour and glory:

and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain; the treasures and storehouses of it there, or the windows of it, the clouds, which when opened let it down, but when shut withhold it; the key of rain is one of the keys which the Jews say {k} the Lord keeps in his own hand, and with it he opens and no man

shuts, and shuts and no man opens; see
De 28:12

and that the land yield not her fruit; which is unavoidably the case when rain is withheld:

and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you; for if the land does not yield its fruits sufficient to support the inhabitants of it, they must in course perish.

{k} Targum Jon. in Deut. xxviii. 12.

Deuteronomy 11:18

Ver. 18-20. Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart, and in your soul,.... Treasure up the laws of God delivered to them in their minds, retain them in their memories, and cherish a cordial affection for them; which would be an antidote against apostasy, idolatry, and other sins, Ps 119:11

and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes; of this and the two following verses,
See Gill on "De 6:7",
See Gill on "De 6:8",
See Gill on "De 6:9".

Deuteronomy 11:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "De 11:18".

Deuteronomy 11:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "De 11:18".

Deuteronomy 11:21

Ver. 21. That your days may be multiplied,.... Long life being a very desirable blessing, and which is promised to those that obey and keep the law; see De

30:19

and the days of your children; which are dear to parents, and the continuance of whose lives, next to their own, is most desirable, yea, as desirable as their own; and especially it is desirable that they might have a posterity descending from them, to enjoy for ever their estates and possessions; as it was to the people of Israel, that they might have a seed always to dwell

in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them; the land of Canaan, so often spoken of as the promise, oath, and gift of God:

as the days of heaven upon the earth; that is, as long as the heavens and the earth shall be, and the one shall be over the other, as they will be to the end of time.

Deuteronomy 11:22

Ver. 22. For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you to do them,.... Observe and take notice of them, even all of them, and so as not merely to have a theory or notional knowledge of them, but to put them in practice:

to love the Lord your God; and show it by obeying his commands, and which is the end of the commandment, and the principle from which all obedience should flow:

to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; see De 10:12.

Deuteronomy 11:23

Ver. 23. Then will the Lord drive out all those nations from before you,.... By little and little, even all the seven nations which then inhabited the land of Canaan; and this he would do to make room for them, that they might inherit the land; see **De 7:1**

and ye shall possess greater nations, and mightier than yourselves; countries whose inhabitants were more in number, and greater in strength, than they; and therefore the conquest of them was not to be ascribed to themselves, but to the Lord; this is often observed; see **De 7:1**.

Deuteronomy 11:24

Ver. 24. Every place wherein the soles of your feet shall tread,.... Meaning in the land of Canaan; though the Jews vainly apply this to every land, and country, and place therein, where any of them come; pleasing themselves with this foolish fancy, that all shall be theirs that the foot of any of them have trod upon, or they have dwelt in; but that it respects only the land of Canaan appears by the following description of it and its boundaries:

from the wilderness; the wilderness of Paran, which lay to the south of it, where Kadesh was, from whence the spies were sent, and was the southern border of it:

and Lebanon; which was a range of mountains to the north of it; and was the northern border of the land:

from the river, the river Euphrates; which was the eastern border of it, when it was carried to its utmost extent, as in the days of Solomon, **1Ki 4:21**

even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be: the Mediterranean sea, which was the western border of the land of Canaan, or "the hinder sea", and so it is called Zec 14:8, it lay at the back of them; for if a man stands with his face to the east, the south will be on his right hand, and the north on his left, and the west will be behind him, or at the back of him.

Deuteronomy 11:25

Ver. 25. There shall be no man able to stand before you,.... Meaning not a single man, such an one as Og, or any of the sons of Anak, the giants; because it could never be thought, imagined, or feared, that one man only should be able to stand against 600,000 fighting men, but any people or nation, though greater and mightier than they:

for the Lord your God shall lay the fear of you, and the dread of you, upon all the land that ye shall tread upon: that is, upon all the land of Canaan, and the inhabitants of it; who should hear what wonderful things had been done for them in Egypt, and at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; and what they had done to Sihon and Og, and to their countries, and which accordingly was fulfilled, **Jos 2:9**

as he hath said unto you; had promised them, **De 2:25** and which was prophesied of in the prophetic song at the Red sea; see Ex 15:14.

Deuteronomy 11:26

Ver. 26. Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse,.... Meaning the law of God, and the statutes, judgments, and commandments of it; which, if obeyed, blessings would be bestowed upon them; but if disobeyed, they would be liable to the curses of it, as the following words explain it; see De 30:15 everyone of the Israelites were called upon to see and consider this matter, it being an interesting one to them all.

Deuteronomy 11:27

Ver. 27. A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God,.... That is, a blessing should come upon them, even all temporal blessings they stood in need of; they should be blessed in body and estate, in their families, and in their flocks, in town and country; see De 28:1,

which I command you this day; afresh repeated to them, and enjoined them the observation of it in the name of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 11:28

Ver. 28. And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God,.... Accursed in body and estate, in basket and store; in their families, flocks, and herds; within doors and without; in city, and country; going out, or coming in; in this world, and that to come, if divine goodness prevent not; see De 28:15

but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day; which the law he gave them, and repeated to them, directed them to walk in:

to go after other gods, which ye have not known; to serve and worship the gods of other nations, strange gods, which neither they nor their fathers knew anything of, or ever received any good thing from; and which indeed are no gods, and nothing in the world, as an idol is.

Deuteronomy 11:29

Ver. 29. And it shall come to pass, when the Lord thy God hath bought thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it,.... Which is often observed, as being near at hand; and when and where many things were to be done, which could not be done in the place and circumstances they now were, particularly what follows:

that thou shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim, and the curse upon Mount Ebal; that is, pronounce the one on one mountain, and the other on the other mountain, or at least towards them, or over against them. The Targum of Jonathan is

"ye shall set six tribes on Mount Gerizim, and six tribes on Mount Ebal; (#De 27:12,13) blessing they shall turn their faces against Mount Gerizim, and cursing they shall turn their faces against Mount Ebal;"

with which agrees the account given in the Misnah;

"six tribes went to the top of Mount Gerizim, and six to the top of Mount Ebal; and the priests and the Levites, and the ark, stood below in the middle; the priests surrounded the ark, and the Levites the priests, and all Israel were on this and on that side of the ark, as in **Jos 8:33** then they turned their faces against Gerizim, they opened with the blessing, blessed is he that maketh not any graven or molten image, and both answered "Amen"; then they turned their faces against Mount Ebal, and opened with the curse, De 27:15 and both answered Amen {s};"

see the performance of this command in **Jos 8:33**.

{s} Sotah, c. 7. sect. 5.

Deuteronomy 11:30

Ver. 30. Are they not on the other side Jordan,.... Opposite to that where Moses now was in the plains of Moab, even in Samaria; so in the Misnah {t} it is said, "as soon as Israel passed over Jordan, they came to Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, which are in Samaria;"

but those mountains were not near Jordan nor Jericho, to which the people of Israel came first, but sixty miles from thence; though they were, as Moses says, on the other side from the place they now were:

by the way wherewith the sun goeth down; or, as the Targum of Jonathan,

"after the way of the sun setting;"

following that, or taking their direction from thence, signifying that they lay to the west of Jordan:

in the land of the Canaanites; of that particular tribe or nation which were eminently called Canaanites, for these dwelt by the sea by the coast of Jordan, Nu 13:29 or as further described,

that dwell in the champaign over against Gilgal; in the plain open champaign country opposite to Gilgal; not that Gilgal Joshua encamped at before he came to Jericho, which in Moses's time was not known by that name, but another, as Dr. Lightfoot {u} observes, and he thinks Galilee is meant:

beside the plains of Moreh; near to Shechem, Ge 12:6 and that Gerizim, one of these mountains, was not far from Shechem, is evident from **Jud 9:6** and so in the Misnah {w} it is said, that these mountains were on the side of Shechem, which is in the plains of Moreh, as in De 11:30 as the plains of Moreh here denote Shechem, so there: Benjamin of Tudela says {x} there is a valley between them, in which lies Shechem; and in his time there were on Mount Gerizim fountains and orchards, but Mount Ebal was dry like stones and rocks. The Targum of Jonathan here, instead of Moreh, reads Mamre; see Ge 13:18.

{t} Sotah, c. 7. sect. 5. {u} Chorograph. Cent. c. 48. {w} Sotah, c. 7. sect. 5. {x} Itinerarium, p. 38, 40.

Deuteronomy 11:31

Ver. 31. For ye shall pass over Jordan, to go in to possess the land Which the

Lord your God giveth you,.... They were now near it, and by this they are assured they should pass over it, in order to take possession of the land God had given them, and which gift of his was a sufficient title to it:

and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein: should not only take possession of it, but make their abode in it; they are assured hereby of continuance in it, on condition they obeyed the laws of God, as follows.

Deuteronomy 11:32

Ver. 32. And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments,.... Take notice of them, and heed unto them, so as to practise them:

which I set before you this day; repeated in order to them, on the observance of which depended their continuance in the land of Canaan; and therefore this is so often repeated and urged.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 12

In this chapter orders are given to destroy all altars, pillars, groves, and images, made for the worship of idols in the land of Canaan, De 12:1 and to bring all sacrifices and holy things unto the place which the Lord should choose for his habitation, and not do as they then did, not being come to their rest, De 12:4, flesh for their common food might be killed and eaten in their own houses, provided they did not eat the blood, but poured it out upon the earth, De 12:15, tithes, vows, and freewill offerings, were to be eaten in the holy place, De 12:17 and burnt offerings to be offered on the altar of the Lord and the blood of them to be poured out upon the altar, De 12:26, all which they were carefully to observe, De 12:29, and they are cautioned against idolatry, and inquiring after the manner of it, as practised by the old inhabitants of the land, and introducing their customs into the service of God, De 12:30.

Ver. 1. These are the statutes and judgments which ye shall observe to do,.... Which are recorded in this and the following chapters; here a new discourse begins, and which perhaps was delivered at another time, and respects things that were to be observed:

in the land which the Lord God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it; the land of Canaan, often described by this circumlocution, to put them in mind that it was promised to their fathers by their covenant God, was his gift to them, and which they would quickly be in the possession of; and therefore when in it should be careful to observe the statutes and judgments of God constantly:

[even] all the days that ye live upon the earth; or land, the land of Canaan; for though there were some laws binding upon them, live where they would, there were others peculiar to the land of Canaan, which they were to observe as long as they and their posterity lived there; see **1Ki 8:40**.

Deuteronomy 12:2

Ver. 2. Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods,.... The temples erected for the worship of them by the Canaanites, of which there were many, as appears by the various names of places given them from the temples in them, as Bethshemesh, Bethbaalmeon, Bethpeor, and others:

upon the high mountains and upon the hills: which they chose to worship on, being nearer the heavens, and which they thought most acceptable to their gods; and some of them had their names from hence, as Baalpeor, in like manner as Jupiter Olympius was called by the Greeks; see **Jer 2:20**,

and under every green tree; which being shady and solitary, and pleasant to the sight, they fancied their gods delighted in, and this notion prevailed among other nations; and there is scarcely any deity but what had some tree or another devoted to it; as the oak to Jupiter, the laurel to Apollo, the ivy to Bacchus, the olive to Minerva, the myrtle to Venus, &c. see **Jer 2:20**.

Deuteronomy 12:3

Ver. 3. And you shall overthrow their altars,.... Which were of stone, as Jarchi observes; whereas the altar ordered to be made by the Lord, before the altar of burnt offering in the tabernacle was made, was of earth, Ex 20:24 these were to be demolished, lest the Israelites should be tempted to make use of them; and besides, the Lord would not have any remains of idolatry in the land where his tabernacle and worship were, as being abominable to him:

and break down their pillars; or statues erected to the honour of their idols; according to Jarchi it was a single stone hewed out at first for the basis of a statue {y}; perhaps such as were called Baetulia, in imitation of the stone Jacob set up for a pillar at Bethel, Ge 28:18

and burn their groves with fire; which were planted about their temples, and under which also their idols were placed, and where they privately committed the most abominable lewdness under the notion of religion. The Targum of Jonathan renders the word "abominations", meaning idols; and so Jarchi interprets it by a tree that is worshipped; See Gill on "De 7:5"

and you shall hew down the graven images of their gods; which were made of wood:

and destroy the names of them out of the place; by never making any mention of them in common discourse, and by changing the names of places called from them; and especially by destroying all the relics of them, and whatever appertained to them, which might lead to the mention of them; see **Ho 2:17**.

{y} Misn. Avodah Zarah, c. 3. sect. 7.

Deuteronomy 12:4

Ver. 4. Ye shall not do so unto the Lord your God. Not sacrifice to him on hills and mountains, and under green trees; though the Jews commonly refer this to the destruction of the names of God, and of any thing appertaining to the temple; that though the temples and the altars of the Heathens were to be overthrown, yet not a stone was to be taken from the house of God, or that belonged to it, nor any of his names to be blotted out; so the Targum of Jonathan and Maimonides {z}, who also observes {a}, that whoever removes a stone by way of destruction from the altar, or from the temple, or from the court, is to be beaten; so he that burns the holy wood.

{z} Yesode Hattorah, c. 6. sect. 7, 9. {a} Ibid. sect. 8.

Deuteronomy 12:5

Ver. 5. But unto the place which the Lord your God,.... The Targum of

Jonathan is, that the Word of the Lord your God:

shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there; to place his tabernacle, set up his worship, take up his residence, and cause the Shechinah, or his divine Majesty, to dwell there, as the next clause explains it; out of what tribe it should be chosen, and where it should be, is not said. Maimomides {b} gives three reasons for it; he says there are three great mysteries why the place is not clearly, but obscurely mentioned;

1) lest the Gentiles should seize upon it, and make war for the sake of it, supposing this place to be the end of the law; 2) lest they in whose hands the place then was should by all means waste and destroy it; 3) which is the chief, lest every tribe should desire to have it in its own lot and jurisdiction; and so strifes might arise among them on account of it, as happened to the priesthood:

[even] unto his habitation shall ye seek; the temple at Jerusalem is meant, where the Lord took up his dwelling, and whither men were to come and seek unto him by prayer and supplication for whatsoever they needed, and to inquire of him in matters doubtful, and they wanted counsel in:

and thither thou shall come: with sacrifices of every sort, where they were to be slain and offered to the Lord, and become acceptable to him, as is more largely declared in the following part of this chapter.

{b} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 45. p. 475.

Deuteronomy 12:6

Ver. 6. And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings,.... For the daily sacrifice, and upon any other account whatsoever; this was before ordered to be brought to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and now to the place where that should be fixed, Le 17:8

and your sacrifices: all other distinct from burnt offerings, as sin offerings, trespass offerings, and peace offerings, especially the latter. Jarchi interprets them of peace offerings of debt, such as a man was obliged to bring; but as the distance of some persons from Jerusalem was very great, and it was troublesome and expensive, they might, according to the Jewish writers, bring them the next grand festival, when all the males were obliged to appear there; so says Maimonides {c}, all offerings of a man, whether by obligation (such as he was bound to bring) or freewill offerings, he must bring at the first feast that comes; and another of their writers observes {d}, that if only one feast has passed, and he has not brought his vow, he transgresses an affirmative precept, De 12:6 the first feast on which thou comest thither, thou must needs bring it; and if three have passed, he transgresses a negative precept, De 23:21

and your tithes; tithes of beasts, and the second tithes, according to Jarchi:

and heave offerings of your hand; these according to the same writer were the firstfruits, and so it is rendered in the Septuagint version; and thus Maimonides {e} says, the firstfruits are called Trumot, or heave offerings; see Ex 22:29

and your vows and your freewill offerings; which were a type of peace offerings, **Le 7:16**

and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks; which were sanctified and devoted to the Lord, Ex 13:2.

{c} Praefat. ad Yad Chazakah. {d} Bartenora in Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 1. & in Misn. Ediot, c. 7. sect. 6. {e} In Misn. Meilah, c. 4. sect. 2.

Deuteronomy 12:7

Ver. 7. And there ye shall eat before the Lord your God,.... The priests and the Levites, what was their portion, so Aben Ezra; but the people also are included, and by what follows seem chiefly designed, who were to eat their part of the sacrifices, particularly of the tithes and peace offerings, in the holy place that should be chosen and appointed; see De 14:22

and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto; in all the labours of their hands, and what they got thereby, which they were cheerfully to enjoy, and express their thankfulness for it in this way; see **Ec 5:18**

ye and your households; their wives, sons, daughters, men and maid servants; yea, with them Levites, strangers, fatherless, and widows, were to partake of some of their freewill offerings, De 16:10

wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee; and these offerings were eucharistical, and by way of thanksgiving for the blessing of God upon their labours, for it is that which maketh rich, Pr 10:22.

Deuteronomy 12:8

Ver. 8. Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here,.... In the wilderness, where they had no abiding, but were continually removing from place to place, and could not always observe punctually and precisely the exact order and time of their sacrifices and other things, nor offer them at any certain place, and many were doubtless neglected by them; see **Am 5:25**

every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes; that did he, brought the above things when and where he pleased; not that there was no regard had to the laws and rules given, as if there was no priest in Israel; but they were not so exactly in all circumstances conformed to as they would be obliged to when they came into the land of Canaan, and had a certain place to bring their offerings to; so some in Aben Ezra observe, that one would give the firstling, another not, because it depended on the land, or was what they were obliged to only when they came into the land of Canaan; see Ex 13:11 but he thinks the sense is, that they did not all fear God, and so did not do their duty.

Deuteronomy 12:9

Ver. 9. For ye are not yet come to the rest,.... The land of Canaan, which was typical of the rest which remains for the people of God in heaven; for though they now enter into a spiritual rest in Christ, they are not yet come to their eternal rest; they are in a world of trouble, through sin, Satan, and wicked men; but they shall come to it, as Israel did to Canaan; for God has promised and prepared it, and it remains for them; Christ prayed for it, is also gone to prepare it, and the Spirit is the seal and earnest of it, and works up the saints, and makes them meet for it:

and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you; and the land of Canaan being an inheritance, and the gift of God, was also a type of the heavenly inheritance; which saints are now born unto, and have both a right unto, and meetness for, through the righteousness of Christ, and grace of God; but as yet are not entered on it, but that is reserved for them in heaven, and they are preserved and kept for that; and ere long shall inherit it, as the free gift of God their Father to them, and which is peculiar to them as children. Jarchi and Ben Melech by the "rest" understand Shiloh, and by the inheritance Jerusalem; so in the Misnah {f}; see 1Ch 23:25 the Targum of Jonathan is, "ye are not come to the house of the sanctuary, which is the house of rest, and to the inheritance of the land."

{f} Zebachim, c. 14. sect. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. & Bartenora in ib.

Deuteronomy 12:10

Ver. 10. But when ye go over Jordan,.... Which lay between the place where they now were, and the land of Canaan, and which they would quickly go over:

and dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit; the land of Canaan, and which shows that that is meant by the inheritance: and when

he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about: which was done when the land was subdued, and divided among the tribes of Israel, Jos 22:4 and which confirms the sense of Canaan being the rest; though this was more completely fulfilled in the days of David, when he and Israel had rest from all their enemies round about, **2Sa 7:1** and who brought the ark of the Lord to Jerusalem; and into whose heart the Lord put it to prepare to build a temple at Jerusalem for him, and which was erected and finished in the days of his son Solomon:

so that ye dwell in safety; from their enemies, as they more especially did in the reigns of David and Solomon; which seems plainly to describe the time when the place not named should appear to be chosen by the Lord to put his name in, as follows.

Deuteronomy 12:11

Ver. 11. Then there shall be a place,.... Fixed and settled, and will be known to be the place:

which the Lord your God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there: where he himself would dwell, and where his name would be called, and he would be worshipped:

thither shall ye bring all that I command you, your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offerings of your hands; of which See Gill on "De 12:6"

and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord; or, "the choice of your vows" {g}; which, as Jarchi observes, was brought of their choicest things, as they ought to be; see **Mal 1:14**.

{g} Mkyrdn rxbm eklekton twn dwrwn umwn, Sept. "optima votorum vestrorum", Fagius.

Deuteronomy 12:12

Ver. 12. And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God,.... In the place chosen and fixed, where a temple would be built for him, and he would take up his residence; eating with joy and gladness that part of the offerings which belonged to them, keeping as it were a feast before the Lord, in token of gratitude for what they had received from him:

ye and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants; which explains what is meant by their household, De 12:7 wives are not mentioned, because it could not be thought they would eat and rejoice, or keep such a feast, without them, and therefore needless to name them:

and the Levite that is within your gates; such also were to partake of this entertainment, who were useful in instructing their families in the knowledge of divine things, and serviceable to them on many accounts in the worship of God:

forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you; in the division of the land, and so having nothing to manure and cultivate, was destitute of the fruits of the earth, and could make no improvement and increase of his substance, as they could.

Deuteronomy 12:13

Ver. 13. Take heed to thyself, that thou offer not thy burnt offerings,.... And so any other, this is put for all the rest:

in every place that thou seest; which might take with their fancy, seem pleasant, and so a proper and suitable place to sacrifice in, as on high places, and under green trees; but they were not to indulge their own fancies and imaginations, or follow the customs of others, but keep to the rules prescribed them by the Lord, and to the place fixed by him for his worship.

Deuteronomy 12:14

Ver. 14. But in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of thy tribes,.... Which tribe is not named, nor what place in that tribe;
See Gill on "De 12:5",

there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings; on the altar of burnt offering there placed:

and there shalt thou do all that I command thee; respecting sanctuary service, and particularly those things observed in De 12:6.

Deuteronomy 12:15

Ver. 15. Notwithstanding, thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates,.... They might kill such cattle that were allowed for food, and eat the flesh of them in theie own cities and houses in which they dwelt; they were not obliged to bring these to the place God should choose, and kill them there, as they had been wont to bring them to the tabernacle while in the wilderness:

whatsoever thy soul lusteth after; whatever they had a mind to, or their appetite craved, and were desirous of, provided it was not any thing forbidden, but was allowed to be eaten:

according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee; which it was in the power of their hands to procure for themselves; they might live according to their abilities, and keep a table answerable to what God had blessed them with; from which they were so far from being restrained, that it was rather commendable in them so to do, provided they did not indulge to luxury and intemperance:

the clean and the unclean may eat thereof; that is, such in their families who laboured under any ceremonial uncleanness by the touch of a dead body, or by reason of issues and menstrues; these, as well as those who were free from anything of this kind, might eat of common food in their houses, though they might not eat of the holy things; see **Le 7:20**

as of the roebuck, and as of the hart; that is, as those were clean creatures, and allowed for food, De 14:5 so they might eat of oxen or sheep, or lambs or rams, and goats, though they were creatures used in sacrifice.

Deuteronomy 12:16

Ver. 16. Only ye shall not eat the blood,.... All manner of blood being forbidden, of fowl or of beasts, whether slain for sacrifice or for common food:

ye shall pour it out upon the earth as water; which cannot be gathered up again for use, but is swallowed up in the earth.

Deuteronomy 12:17

Ver. 17. Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil,.... This cannot be understood of the tithe given to the Levites, or of that which the Levites out of theirs gave to the priests, for that was only eaten by them; but of the tithe which every three years they were to lay up within their gates, and which they were to eat with their families and others; but the other two years they were to carry it to the place the Lord chose, or turn it into money, and when they came thither purchase with it what they pleased, and eat it, they and their household, and others with them, before the Lord; see De 14:22,

the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flocks; these also the firstborn males belonged to the Lord, and so to the priests, and could not be eaten by the people any where; and must be understood either of the next firstlings, which were the people's, or of the female firstlings, which they might devote to the Lord, and so not allowed to eat at home, but in the chosen place:

nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings; which were species of peace offerings, and so to be eaten not in their own cities, but in the place appointed:

or heave offerings of thine hand; the firstfruits; see De 26:1 these were such they were not bound to bring, but brought them freely.

Deuteronomy 12:18

Ver. 18. But thou must eat them before the Lord thy God, in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose,.... Which may be said to be eaten before him, being eaten in the place where his sanctuary stood, in which he dwelt:

thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates; who were all to come with him to this place; See Gill on "De 12:12"

and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God in all that thou puttest thine hand unto; cheerfully make and keep this feast in the manner directed to, rejoicing with his family and his friends, with the Levites and with the poor, expressing his thankfulness to God for his blessing on his labour.

Deuteronomy 12:19

Ver. 19. Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite,.... By withholding from him the tithes appointed for his maintenance; or rather by neglecting to take him with him in order to partake of the feast or entertainment before spoken of:

as long as thou livest upon the earth; so that it was not one time only, but always; whenever he ate these holy things before the Lord, as long as he lived, he was to be careful he had the Levite with him, for a reason given, De 12:12.

Deuteronomy 12:20

Ver. 20. When the Lord thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee,.... Brought them into the land of Canaan, where they should have large and good pastures for the feeding of their cattle, which they had not in the wilderness, and so a greater increase of them:

and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh; which they were shorts of, or ate but little of in the wilderness, lest their herds and their flocks should be consumed; but now having room to feed them, and an increase of them, they would give themselves a greater liberty of eating flesh:

because thy soul longeth to eat flesh; would have a craving appetite unto it, having so long ate none, or very little:

thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after; of any sort that is clean, and allowed to be eaten, and as much of it as is craved, only intemperance must be guarded against.

Deuteronomy 12:21

Ver. 21. If the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to put his name be too far from thee,.... Or rather "for" {h}, or "seeing" the place will be too far from thee; for it is allowed before that they might kill and eat flesh for common food in their gates, De 12:15

then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock; of thy oxen and of thy sheep, creatures used in sacrifice; but this was no bar to the use of them for common food also:

which the Lord hath given thee, as I have commanded thee; De 12:15

and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after; flesh of any sort, lawful to be eaten.

{h} yk "cum", Pagninus, Montanus.

Deuteronomy 12:22

Ver. 22. Even as the roebuck and the hart is eaten,.... Which were not only clean creatures, as before observed, but were commonly and frequently eaten, there being plenty of them in those parts:

so thou shalt eat them; their oxen and calves, their sheep and lambs, their goats and their kids:

the unclean and the clean shall eat of them alike; no difference being to be made on that account, with respect to common food;
See Gill on "De 12:15" which all alike might partake of, notwithstanding any ceremonial uncleanness that any might be attended with.

Deuteronomy 12:23

Ver. 23. Only be sure that thou eat not the blood,.... This is repeated again, that they might be careful to observe the law concerning that:

for the blood is the life: which is the reason given for the prohibition of it, See Gill on "Le 17:11",

and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh: by which it seems that the meaning of the law was, that the blood might not be eaten in or with the flesh, but to be let out of it, or the fish not to be eaten raw, but dressed; for there were various laws about eating of blood, which are differently expressed.

Deuteronomy 12:24

Ver. 24. Thou shalt not eat it,.... Neither with the flesh, nor separately:

thou shall pour it upon the earth as water; as the blood of sacrifices was poured upon the altar, the blood of common flesh was to be poured upon the earth, signifying it was not to be used, and no account to be made of it; See Gill on "De 12:16"

Deuteronomy 12:25

Ver. 25. Thou shall not eat it, that it may be well with thee, and with thy children after thee,.... That they and their posterity might be spared, and continue long, and enjoy much prosperity; for those that eat blood, contrary to this command of God, it is threatened that he would set his face against them, and they should be cut off, **Le 7:27**,

when thou shall do that which is right in the sight of the Lord; not only observe this command, but all others.

Deuteronomy 12:26

Ver. 26. Only thy holy things which thou hast,.... Which the Targums of

Onkelos and Jonathan interpret of the tithe of their holy things, and Aben Ezra of their burnt offerings and peace offerings; they seem to include all in De 12:17

and thy vows thou shalt take, and go unto the place which the Lord shall choose; so often referred to, but not named; see De 12:5.

Deuteronomy 12:27

Ver. 27. And thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the Lord thy God,.... And on that only, even the altar of burnt offering:

and the blood of thy sacrifices; one as well as another, not only of the burnt offerings, but of the sin offerings, trespass offerings, and peace offerings:

shall be poured out upon the altar of the Lord thy God: either sprinkled on it, or poured out at the bottom of it; see **Le 1:1**,

and thou shalt eat the flesh; that is, of the peace offerings, for of them only might the people eat, and that only before the Lord.

Deuteronomy 12:28

Ver. 28. Observe and hear all these words which I command thee,.... Respecting the demolition of all monuments of idolatry, and bringing all holy things to the place the Lord should choose to dwell in; and eating common flesh in their own houses, only to be careful not to eat blood:

that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever; for, as has been often observed, their continuance in the land of Canaan, and enjoyment of all good things in it, depended upon their obedience to the commands of God; see **Isa 1:19**

when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the Lord thy God; which is to do all his commandments; for these are what are good and right in his sight, and it is for the good of men to do them.

Deuteronomy 12:29

Ver. 29. When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee,.... The seven nations of the land of Canaan, **De 7:1**,

whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; or to inherit them, and thou dost inherit them, by dwelling in their land.

Deuteronomy 12:30

Ver. 30. Take heed to thyself, that thou be not snared by following them,.... Their examples and customs, and so be drawn into the same idolatrous practices; see Ps 106:35, after that they be destroyed from before thee; for their idolatries and other sins:

and that thou inquire not after their gods; what they were, their names, forms, and figures:

saying, how did these nations serve their gods? what was the manner of worship they gave them? what rites, customs, and ceremonies did they use in their adoration of them?

even so will I do likewise; or however, if this was not determined on when the inquiries were made, there was danger that this would be the result of them, and therefore the caution is given.

Deuteronomy 12:31

Ver. 31. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God,.... Not serve and worship him after the manner of the Gentiles, nor introduce their rites and customs into his service, used by them in the worship of their gods:

for every abomination which he hateth have they done unto their gods; as murder, adultery, &c. which God has expressed his aversion to, and indignation at; one instance of the former sort is given here:

for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods; not only men have they sacrificed to them, but such near relations; and not only caused them to pass through the fire, but burnt them in it; so the Carthaginians are said to do, who learned this inhuman practice from the Phoenicians; they were a colony of the inhabitants of this land of Canaan. Of the Phoenicians Porphyry says {i}, that in great calamities, as war or pestilence, they sacrificed to Saturn some one of those that were dearest to them, appointed by suffrage. The Phoenician history, adds he, is full of such sacrifices, which Sanchoniatho wrote in the Phoenician language; and Curtius says {k}, this custom of sacrificing a fine boy to Saturn was received by the Carthaginians from their founders (the Tyrians and Phoenicians), and which they continued even to the destruction of their city.

{i} De Abstinentia, l. 2. sect. 56. {k} Hist. l. 4. c. 3.

Deuteronomy 12:32

Ver. 32. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it,.... In the manner it is commanded and directed to; the laws of God, both as to matter and manner, were to be obeyed just as they were delivered: thou shall not add thereto, nor diminish from it; neither add any customs and rites of the Heathens to them, nor neglect anything enjoined on them, see Pr 30:6.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 13

In this chapter the Israelites are taught how to discern a false prophet, shun and punish him, De 13:1, what to do with enticers to idolatry, not only not to consent to them, but, without favour and affection to them, endeavour to bring them to just punishment, and be the first that should inflict it on them, De 13:6 and how to behave towards a city drawn into idolatry, as to inquire the truth of it; then make war against it; destroy all in it, men, women, children, and cattle; and burn the spoil of it, and suffer not anything at all belonging to it to cleave unto them, De 13:12.

Ver. 1. If there arise among you a prophet,.... A false prophet, a lying prophet, as the Targum of Jonathan; one that pretends to be a true prophet, and to be sent of God, and to come from him with a message from him, a new revelation or doctrine, or in his name, to foretell things to come; the former is chiefly meant. Such prophets did arise in Israel before the time of Christ, and have since arose under the Christian name; see **2Pe 2:1**,

or a dreamer of dreams; the same with the prophet, only to be distinguished by the different manner of their having the mind and will of God revealed to them, pretended to; either by vision or by dream, which were the two usual ways in which the Lord spake to the true prophets, Nu 12:6 so that the prophet is one who pretended he had a vision from the Lord, and the dreamer one that had a dream from him, or something revealed to him in a dream; and dreams are sometimes used for false doctrines, vain, deceitful, and illusory; see Jer 23:25. The Targum of Jonathan calls him

"a dreamer of a dream of pride:"

such persons are generally prompted by the pride of their own hearts to take such a method to make themselves famous and respected among men; and usually bring such doctrines with them which are agreeable to the pride and vanity of human nature:

and giving thee a sign or a wonder; for the confirmation of his mission and doctrine; such as Moses wrought before the children of Israel and before Pharaoh. Signs are expressions or representations of things to come to pass; wonders, such as either do, or seem to exceed the common course of nature, or be contrary to it.

Deuteronomy 13:2

Ver. 2. And the sign and wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee,.... The sign he promised to give, or the miracle he proposed to do, to show the reality of his mission, and the truth of his doctrine, which is performed, or seemingly performed, by legerdemain, by magic art, or by the help of the devil; which the Lord sometimes suffered for the trial of the faith and obedience of his people, and for the hardening of others in their unbelief, and which issues in their destruction; see **2Th 2:9**,

saying, let us go after other gods (which thou hast not known), and let us serve them; other gods besides the one living and true God, the Creator of all things; strange gods, the idols of the people, as the Targum of Jonathan; such as they had never heard of, nor had any knowledge of, nor any benefit from, as they had of the Lord their God. Now the doctrines of these, and of their worship, are what the false prophet or dreamer is supposed to come with, and inculcate into the minds of the people; and for the confirmation of which, and in order to draw them into the reception of them, and act according to them, he proposed to give a sign or wonder.

Deuteronomy 13:3

Ver. 3. Thou shall not hearken to the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams,.... Even though he does give the sign, and work the wonder; for it might be reasonably concluded there must be fallacy in him, and that neither he nor his miraculous sign could come from God, who would never send a person to enable him to do signs and wonders, to persuade men to believe and act contrary to a former declaration of his mind and will; to break a plain law of his, as in **De 5:7**, this would be to contradict and deny himself; whatever therefore is contrary to a known law or established doctrine, either of law or Gospel, let it come from whom it will, or pretend to be confirmed by miracles, is not to be received; see **Ga 1:8**,

for the Lord your God proveth you, whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul; for should they be prevailed upon by such a prophet to hearken to his doctrine, and embrace it, and act according to it, it would be a plain case that they did not cordially love the Lord, since they could so easily, and by such pretences, be drawn aside from the true worship of him, and serve other gods; on the other hand, it would be a proof of their sincere affection for God, and of their close and strict attachment to him, that notwithstanding such specious pretences made, and such miracles wrought, yet abode by him and his worship, and could not be wrought upon to forsake him and follow other gods and serve them; see 1Co 11:19.

Deuteronomy 13:4

Ver. 4. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God,.... As he has directed, according to the laws and rules which he has given, both with respect to their moral and civil conduct, and their religious worship of him; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"ye shall walk after the worship of the Lord your God:"

and fear him, and keep his commandments; fear to offend him, and so keep his commandments; or keep his commandments from or through fear; not a servile but a filial one, a reverential affection for him; this is the whole duty of man, Ec 12:13,

and obey his voice; in his word, or by his prophets and ministers: it may very well be understood of the voice of Christ, the Angel that went before them, whose voice they were continually to hearken to and obey, Ex 23:21

and you shall serve him, and cleave unto him; it may respect all religious worship, both private and public; the Targum of Jonathan restrains it to prayer, but it not only includes that, but all other acts of piety and devotion, and which are to be constantly performed and not departed from; for so to do is to cleave to the Lord as a man to his wife, or a woman to her husband, in which conjugal relation God and his people Israel were, he was an husband unto them, and to do otherwise is to go a whoring from him after other gods.

Deuteronomy 13:5

Ver. 5. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death,.... Which death, according to the Targum of Jonathan, was to be killed with the sword:

because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God; or "spoken revolt against the Lord" {l}, high treason against him, delivering out doctrine that tends to cause his subjects to rebel against him, and revolt from him; and therefore he is justly deserving of death, to draw off a people from him he had been so good and kind unto; so that to apostasy would be added the sin of ingratitude:

which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage; and so was not only their Lord by creation whom they ought to serve, but by redemption, which laid them under double obligation to serve him:

to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in; not by external force, but by the power of persuasion, by enticing words and arguments:

so shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee; the evil man, by putting him to death, and the evil of idolatry, by not listening to the words of the false prophet.

{l} hro "apostasiam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "defectionem", Tigurine version.

Deuteronomy 13:6

Ver. 6. If thy brother, the son of thy mother,.... A brother by mother's side, which is generally supposed to be the nearest relation, at least most out of question, so more liable to be regarded as being beloved:

or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom; most dearly beloved by him, as indeed each of these relations are by a man, there being none nearer or dearer to him:

or thy friend, which [is] as thine own soul; as dear to him as himself, and so strictly united in friendship, as if one soul dwelt in two bodies; such close friends were Jonathan and David, 1Sa 18:1. Some Jewish writers think the father is not mentioned, because of the reverence of him, with which all later dealings with him obliged to would seem inconsistent; but the reverence of God is to be preferred to the reverence of parents; and besides, if such near relations that are here mentioned, than which there are none nearer, are not to be spared if guilty of the sin after warned against, then not a father, who is in the same transgression:

entice thee secretly; when alone with him, which might be judged the most proper time to work upon him, there being none to oppose the enticer, or to assist the enticed; so Satan took the opportunity of Eve being alone when he attacked her with his temptation, and the same method is taken by his children:

saying, let me go and serve other gods which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers; not even their immediate ancestors, and so the calf was not of these gods; nor their more remote ancestors, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were no idolaters; nor even Terah, though he was one, yet the gods of the Canaanites and of the neighbouring nations, which seem to be here meant, at least principally, were such that he knew not. This circumstance may seem to carry in it an argument rather why they should not than why they should serve such gods; wherefore the words of the enticer seem to be only these,

let us go and serve other gods, and what follows are the words of the Lord, descriptive of those gods, and so a dissuasive from serving them.

Deuteronomy 13:7

Ver. 7. Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you,.... As of the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Phoenicians:

nigh unto thee; as the above were, being on the borders of their land: the Targum of Jonathan interprets this of the idols of the seven nations, that is, of the land of Canaan: or

far off from thee; as the Babylonians, Persians, and others:

from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; which includes all the idols in the world, worshipped by whatsoever nation, and which were forbidden; and which shows the universality of idolatry in those times, and that that is an insufficient argument in its favour. Jarchi interprets this of the sun and moon, and the host of heaven, who go from one end of the world to the other; and this seems to have been the first and most common idolatry of the Gentile world, and which were worshipped in the several deities they set up.

Deuteronomy 13:8

Ver. 8. Thou shall not consent unto him,.... To commit the idolatry enticed unto, or join with him in it:

nor hearken to him; not so much as patiently to hear him, but at once express an abhorrence of and indignation at what he recommends:

neither shall thine eye pity him; pitied he might be for his ignorance, stupidity, and wickedness, and on account of the miserable estate and condition he was in, and of those dreadful consequences which would follow upon it, if not converted from it; but no mercy was to be shown him on account of nearness of relation:

neither shall thou spare; to reprove him sharply and to expose him to public vengeance:

neither shall thou conceal him; neither him nor his sin, but make both public, acquaint others with it, and endeavour to bring him before the civil magistrate to be examined, tried, and judged; so far should they be from hiding his offence from others, or excusing and extenuating it, or from harbouring his person privately when sought for upon information.

Deuteronomy 13:9

Ver. 9. But thou shalt surely kill him,.... Not privately and secretly, when and where he entices, nor the enticed himself by his own authority, but after being examined, judged, and condemned by the civil magistrate; and none might judge a false prophet but the sanhedrim at Jerusalem, the sanhedrim of seventy one {m}; see Lu 13:33, but the difficulty is how such an one could be convicted, since the affair was transacted secretly, De 13:6 and there were none present to be witnesses, none but the enticer and the enticed; so that either the enticer must be brought to a confession of his guilt, or the testimony of the enticed alone must be taken. The Jewish doctors say {n}, that they laid in wait for the enticer, which they never did for any other person, and the method they took was this; the enticed brought two persons, and put them behind a hedge, so that they might see the enticer, and hear his words, and he not see them; and he said to the enticer, say what thou hast said to me privately; which said, the enticed answered to him, how shall we leave our God which is in heaven, and go and serve wood and stone? if he returned (from his evil) hereby, or was silent, he was free; but if he said unto him, so we are obliged, and thus it is comely for us; they that stood afar off, behind the hedge (or in a dark room), brought him to the sanhedrim, and stoned him, that is, after examination, trial, judgment, and condemnation:

thine hand shall be first upon him, to put him to death; he was to throw the first stone at him, partly to show his indignation against the sin he had enticed him to, and that it had not at all affected him so as to incline him unto it; and partly to show that he had bore a true testimony, of which a suspicion might have been created in the minds of some, had he been backward to the execution of him:

and afterwards the hand of all the people; who then could proceed with more certainty and satisfaction: this shows that the person enticed had not a right to kill the enticer, without a judicial process, and the order of the civil magistrate.

{m} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 7. {n} Ibid. c. 7. sect. 10. Maimon. Obede

Cochabim, c. 5. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 13:10

Ver. 10. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die,.... It was not sufficient to answer the end of the law to cast a few stones at him, but he was to be stoned to death:

because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God; to compel by force of argument, or the dint of persuasion, to relinquish the profession of the true God, faith in him, and the worship of him:

which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; which aggravated the sin of the enticer, and would have made the sin of the enticed the more heinous had he fallen into it.

Deuteronomy 13:11

Ver. 11. And all Israel shall hear, and fear,.... Shall hear of the death the enticer was put unto, and shall fear to act such a part he did, and be upon their guard against any such person, and be cautious that they are not drawn into sin by him:

and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you; either to entice unto idolatry or commit it; which is a piece of wickedness against the first table of the law, and a very heinous one, and exceeding offensive and provoking to God, being so directly against his being, perfections, and glory.

Deuteronomy 13:12

Ver. 12. If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities,.... A report concerning them, anyone of them:

which the Lord thy God had given thee to dwell there; which he had not only given them, but had put them into the possession of, and it was become their dwelling place, or was inhabited by Israelites; otherwise they were already given unto them, but did not inherit and inhabit them, and it might be possible that there might be some city or cities, at least for a time, which, though given them, were not inhabited by them, but by the Canaanites, and such cities this law did not concern: saying; as follows.

Deuteronomy 13:13

Ver. 13. Certain men, the children of Belial,.... Which signify either persons without a yoke, who have thrown off the yoke of God's law, and will not submit to it, or unprofitable ones, as wicked men be, both to God, themselves, and others:

are gone out from among you; not locally, but with respect to their religious sentiments and practices, having separated themselves from the people of God, and from the service of the sanctuary, the true worship of God, and a profession of it, and given into the worship of idols:

and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city; withdrawn them by the force of persuasion from the worship of the true God, and drawn them into idolatry:

saying, let us go and serve other gods; unite as one man in the worship of the gods of the Gentiles:

which ye have not known; this was not said by the children of Belial, but is added by the Lord by way of explanation, showing what gods they were that these men advised them to serve, and confirms the observation made on De 13:6.

Deuteronomy 13:14

Ver. 14. Then shalt thou inquire, make search, and ask diligently,.... That is, of the witnesses, as the Targum of Jonathan; and this is a case that is only taken into consideration and judged of by the great sanhedrim, or that of seventy one, at Jerusalem {o}; and the method they took was this, when it fell under their cognizance: the great sanhedrim send and inquire and search till they know clearly that the whole city, or the greater part of it, are thrust away, and are turned to idolatry; after that they send two disciples of the wise men to admonish them and bring them back; if they return and repent, it is well, but if they continue in their folly, the sanhedrim order all Israel to go up against them to war, and they besiege them, and set themselves in battle array against them, until the city be broken up; and when it is broken up, immediately they set up many courts of judicature, and they judge them; and against whomsoever two witnesses come that he served idols, after they have admonished him they separate him; if all the worshippers be the fewest, they stone them, and the rest of the city are delivered; if they are found the greater number, they bring them to the great sanhedrim, and finish their judgment there, and they slay all those that have served with the sword:

and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain; that such wicked men have risen and have prevailed upon the inhabitants of the city where they live, to leave the worship of the true God, and go into idolatry, when there is full proof of this, and it is past all question that

such abomination is wrought among you; as idolatry is, which is an abomination to God, and ought to be so to all mankind, and especially to a people that profess his name.

{o} Maimon. Obede Cochabim, c. 4. sect. 3. 6.

Deuteronomy 13:15

Ver. 15. Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword,.... This could not be the work of a single person, nor of the whole sanhedrim, but was what the whole nation was to join in, according to the above note:

destroying it utterly; pulling down the houses, and demolishing its walls and fortifications, or burning it, as afterwards explained:

and all that is therein; men, women, and children:

and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword; this severity was used to show the Lord's indignation against the sin of idolatry, and to deter persons from it, both individuals and bodies of men.

Deuteronomy 13:16

Ver. 16. And thou shall gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof,.... All the wealth and substance of the inhabitants, their household goods, shop goods, merchandise, utensils in trade and business, and everything that can be named. The Jews say {p}, if there is no street, they make one (or a marketplace); if that is without it, they bring them into the midst of it:

and shall burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit; be it what it may, or let it be whose property it will; and all this shall be done for the Lord thy God; as by his appointment and command, and in obedience to him, so for his honour and glory, and the vindication of his righteous law;

and it shall be an heap for ever, it shall not be built again; but lie a waste as Jericho, though not an entire waste; for according to the Jewish writers, though it might not be built as it was before, it might be made into gardens and orchards {q}.

{p} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 6. {q} Ibid. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Deuteronomy 13:17

Ver. 17. And there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand,.... That is, they might not take anything whatever to their own use; for all being devoted to destruction, was cursed, and brought a curse upon the man that should make it his own property, as Achan did, when Jericho was destroyed:

that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of his anger; stirred up by the idolatry of the city:

and show thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee; who, seeing wrath gone forth, might dread the consequences, lest it should spread itself further:

and multiply thee, as he hath sworn to thy fathers; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; this is observed to encourage them to execute his orders punctually in the destruction of the idolatrous city; since God could and would multiply them, as he had promised their fathers, with an oath, so that they should not be the fewer by such an instance of his severity.

Deuteronomy 13:18

Ver. 18. When thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God,.... Not only in this case, but in all others:

to keep all his commandments which I command thee this day: the repetition of which he made unto them, and enjoined the observance of them in the name of the Lord:

to do that which is right in the eyes of the Lord thy God; which they would do, if they kept the commandments of the Lord, which are holy, just, and good, and must be right in his sight because commanded by him.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 14

In this chapter some cautions are given against the use of some rites and ceremonies in mourning for the dead, with the reason thereof, De 14:1 and instructions about what are lawful to be eaten, and what not, whether of beasts, fishes, or fowl, De 14:3, and concerning eating one sort of tithes both at the place God should choose, and within their own gates, De 14:22.

Ver. 1. Ye are the children of the Lord your God,.... Some of them were so by the special grace of adoption, and all of them by national adoption; which was the peculiar privilege of the people of Israel, and laid them under great obligation to honour and obey the Lord their God, who stood in the relation of a father to them, and they of children to him, **Mal 1:6**. The Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it "beloved children"; so the apostle calls the saints; the "dear children of God", who therefore ought to be followers of him, **Eph 5:1** and for a like reason this relation is observed here, namely, to quicken a regard to the exhortations of the Lord, his cautions, commands, laws, and ordinances, particularly to what follows:

ye shall not cut yourselves; for the dead, as appears from the next clause, as the Heathens did, who not only tore their garments, but their flesh in several parts of their bodies, in their mouths, cheeks, breasts, &c. {r}; and used other extravagant signs of mourning, which the apostle cautions against, **1Th 4:13** and were condemned by the Heathens themselves {s}. Though some think this refers to incisions the Heathens made in their flesh to the honour of their gods, cutting the names of them therein to whom they devoted themselves; or lashing their bodies at the worship of them, as the worshippers of Baal did when they called upon him, 1Ki 18:28 and so the Jerusalem Targum, "make not marks, marks,"

that is, here and there, in many places, or bruises black and blue by striping and beating themselves, for strange worship, or at it, in honour of their gods; but the former sense seems best to agree with what follows; see Le 19:28,

nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead; by shaving the forepart of their head or their eyebrows, or both, which used to be done in lamentations for the dead; see Jer 16:6 if this could be thought to have any respect to rites and ceremonies used in the worship of dead and lifeless idols, the customs of the Egyptians might be referred to, who are said to shave their heads and their eyebrows in their sacred rites to Isis {t}.

{r} Vid. Virgil. Aeneid. 12. ver. 870, 871. and Servium in Aeneid. 1. ver. 78. and in l. 12. {s} Vid. Cicero de Leg. l. 2. c. 23. and Tusculan. Quaest. l. 3. c. 27. {t} Ambros. Epist. l. 4. c. 30. p. 259.

Deuteronomy 14:2

Ver. 2. For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God,.... Set apart by him from all other people, and devoted to his worship and service, and many of them were sanctified and made holy in a special and spiritual sense; and therefore should not conform to the customs of Gentiles, whether in their extravagant mourning for the dead, or in their religious services; see **De 7:6**,

and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people, above all the nations that [are] upon the earth; to be his peculiar treasure, to be his peculiar servants and worshippers, to enjoy peculiar blessings and privileges, and behave in a peculiar manner different from all other people; and have no connection with them, especially in things sacred; and, in order to keep them a distinct peculiar people from all others, a peculiar diet was appointed them, that so being prohibited to eat such things as others did, they might be kept out of their company and conversation, and so from being drawn into their idolatrous practices; the rules concerning which follow; see **De 7:6**.

Deuteronomy 14:3

Ver. 3. Thou shall not eat any abominable thing. That is so either in its own nature, or because forbidden by the Lord; what are such are declared in the following verses.

Deuteronomy 14:4

Ver. 4. These are the beasts which they shall eat,.... That is, which they might lawfully eat of, which were allowed for their food; for they were not obliged to eat of them if they did not choose it:

the ox, the sheep, and the goat; which were creatures used in sacrifice, and the only ones, yet nevertheless they might be used for food if chosen.

Deuteronomy 14:5

Ver. 5. The hart, the roebuck, and the fallow deer,.... All of the deer kind, and very agreeable food; harts were very common in the land of Canaan and parts adjacent; Aelianus says {u} harts are bred in the great mountains in Syria, Amanus, Lebanon, and Carmel: the roebuck, or "dorcas", from whence a good woman had her name, Ac 9:36 is spoken of by Martial {w} as very delicious food, and so are fallow deer; the word "jachmur", here used, having the signification of redness in it, may be used for that sort which are called red deer: it is observed that in the Arabic language it is used for an animal with two horns, living in the woods, not unlike an hart, but swifter than that; and it is asked, is it not the "aloe" or "elch" {x}?

and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois; the wild goat is reckoned by Pliny {y} among the half wild creatures in Africa; according to the philosopher {z} there are none but in Syria, on which Canaan bordered, and were very remarkable ones, having ears a span and nine inches long, and some reached to the ground. The Hebrew name for this creature is "akko"; and there is a fourfooted wild beast, by the Tartarians called "akkyk", and by the Turks "akoim", and which with the Scythians and Sarmatians are to be met with in flocks; it is between a hart and a ram, its body whitish, and the flesh exceeding sweet {a}; it seems to be the same with the "tragelaphus", of which there were in Arabia, as Diodorus Siculus {b} says; the next is the "pygarg", which we so render from the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, or white buttocks, so called from the hinder part of it being white; a species of the eagle with a white tail is called a "pygarg", but here a four footed animal is meant; and which is mentioned as such, along with hinds, does, and goats, by Herodotus {c}, Aelian {d}, and Pliny {e}: it has its name "dishon", in Hebrew, from its ash colour, and the "tragelaphus", or goat deer, has part of its back ash coloured, and has ash coloured spots or streaks on its sides {f}: some take it to be the "strepsiceros", a kind of buck or goat with writhed horns, which the Africans, as Pliny says {g}, call "addaca", which is thought by some to be a corruption of "al-dashen", so Junius; the Targum of Jonathan takes it for the "unicorn" or "rhinoceros"; and the Talmudists say {h} that the unicorn, though it has but one horn, is free, i.e. lawful to be eaten: the "wild ox" was common in Arabia; Strabo {i} speaks of multitudes of wild oxen in some parts of Arabia, on the flesh of which and other animals the Arabians live; in the Septuagint version it is called the "oryx", which is a creature that has but one horn, and divides the hoof {k}, and so might be eaten; See Gill on "Isa 51:20", the last, the "chamois", has a French name, and is a creature of the goat kind, from whose skin the chamois leather is made; in the figure of its body it seems to approach very much to the stag kind {l}; perhaps it is the same with the "cemas" of Aelian {m}, mentioned by him along with roebucks. Some take it to be the "tarandus", of which Pliny says {n} it is of the size of an ox, has a head bigger than a hart, and not unlike it; its horns are branched, hoofs cloven, and is hairy like a bear. In the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan this is the "pygarg"; these several sorts of beasts were allowed to be eaten; the three first there is no difficulty about them, but the other seven it is hard to determine what they are, at least some of them. Dr. Shaw {o} thinks that the deer, the antelope, the wild bear, the goat deer, the white buttocks, the buffalo, and jeraffa, may lay in the best claim to the "ailee", "tzebi", "yachmur", "akkub", "dishon", "thau", and "zomer", here.

{u} Hist. Animal. l. 5. c. 56. {w} "Delicium parvo", &c. Epigram. l. 13. 93. {x} Castel. Lex. Polyglott. Col. 1. 294. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 53. {z} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 28. {a} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 415. {b} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 134. Vid. Plin. l. 8. c. 33. {c} Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 192. {d} Hist. Animal l. 7. c. 19. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 53. {f} Calmet's Dictionary on the word "Pygarg". {g} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 39. {h} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 59. 2. {i} Geograph. l. 16. p. 530. {k} Aristot. Hist. Animal, l. 2. c. 1. {l} Supplement to Chambers's Dictionary on the word "Rupricapra". {m} Hist. Animal. l. 14. c. 14. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 34. 34. {o} Travels, p. 418.

Deuteronomy 14:6

Ver. 6-8. And every beast that parted the hoof,.... In this and the two following verses two general rules are given, by which it might be known what beasts were fit for food and what not; one is if they parted the hoof, and the other if

they chewed the cud, such might be eaten; but such that only chewed the cud, but did not divide the hoof, as the camel, hare, and coney, might not be eaten; and so if they divided the hoof, and did not chew the cud, as the swine, they were alike unlawful; See Gill on "Le 11:3",
See Gill on "Le 11:4",
See Gill on "Le 11:5",
See Gill on "Le 11:6",
See Gill on "Le 11:7",
See Gill on "Le 11:8".

Deuteronomy 14:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "De 14:6"

(The "hare" is this verse may be an animal that is now is extinct but was alive at the time of Moses. It is only other mentioned in Le 11:6,
See Gill on "Le 11:6:". Editor.)

Deuteronomy 14:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "De 14:6"

Deuteronomy 14:9

Ver. 9,10. These ye shall eat of, all that are in the waters,.... The fishes there, even such as have fins and scales, but they that have not were not to be eaten: See Gill on "Le 11:9" See Gill on "Le 11:10" See Gill on "Le 11:11" See Gill on "Le 11:12".

Deuteronomy 14:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "De 14:9"

Deuteronomy 14:11

Ver. 11. Of all clean birds ye shall eat. Which the Targum of Jonathan describes, everyone that has a craw, and whose crop is naked, and has a superfluous talon, and is not rapacious; but such as are unclean are expressed by name in the following verses, so that all except them might be reckoned clean and fit for food. Maimonides {p} observes, that only the number of the unclean are reckoned, so that all the rest are free.

{p} Hilchot. Maacolot Asurot, c. 1. sect. 14.

Deuteronomy 14:12

Ver. 12-18. But these are they of which they shall not eat,.... Jarchi observes, that the unclean birds are particularly mentioned, to teach that the clean sort are more than the unclean, and therefore the particulars of the fewest are given: these are all the same names as in Le 11:13, excepting one, "the glede", De 14:13 which is a kind of kite or puttock; the Jerusalem Targum renders it the vulture, and the Targum of Jonathan the white "dayetha" or vulture; and Aristotle says {q} there are two sorts of vultures, the one small and whiter, the other larger and of many forms or colours; in Hebrew its name here is "raah", and is thought to be the same with "daah" in Le 11:14 there translated the "vulture", which has its name there from flying, and here from seeing, for which it is remarkable; see Job 28:7 and the letters d and r are pretty much alike, and are sometimes changed, but there is another here, in De 14:13 mentioned, the "dayah", which is not mentioned in Le 11:1, though some think it the same with the "ayah", rendered both here and there the "kite"; perhaps it means another sort of vulture, the black vulture, as the Targum of Jonathan.

{q} Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 3.

Deuteronomy 14:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "De 14:12"

Deuteronomy 14:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "De 14:12"

Deuteronomy 14:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "De 14:12"

Deuteronomy 14:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "De 14:12"

Deuteronomy 14:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "De 14:12"

Deuteronomy 14:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "De 14:12"

Deuteronomy 14:19

Ver. 19. And every creeping thing that flieth is unclean,.... Which the Targum of Jonathan thus paraphrases;

"all flies and wasps (or hornets), and worms of lentiles and of beans, which are separated from food, and fly as birds, they are unclean;"

See Gill on "Le 11:20",
See Gill on "Le 11:21".

Deuteronomy 14:20

Ver. 20. But of all clean fowls ye may eat. Even of all fowls, but those before excepted; Aben Ezra instances in the locust, as being a clean fowl, that might be eaten; and so the Targum of Jonathan is

"every clean locust ye may eat;"

see Le 11:22.

Deuteronomy 14:21

Ver. 21. Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself,.... This law is repeated from Le 17:15,
See Gill on "Le 17:15":

thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; not to the proselyte of righteousness, for he might not eat of it any more than an Israelite, and if he did, he was obliged to wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and was unclean until the evening, as in Le 17:15 but to a proselyte of the gate, who took upon him, as Jarchi observes, not to serve idols, one that has renounced idolatry, but has not embraced the Jewish religion; such an one might eat of things that died of themselves, or were not killed in a proper manner. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call him an uncircumcised stranger or proselyte, who had not submitted to circumcision, as the proselyte of righteousness did:

or thou mayest sell it unto an alien; an idolater, one that was neither a proselyte of righteousness nor of the gate, an entire alien from the commonwealth of Israel; one that was occasionally in the land of Canaan, or was travelling in it or through it, to such an one it might be sold:

for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; separated from all others, and devoted to his service, and therefore must live on clean, food and good meat, and not eat what others might:

thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk; this is the third time this law is mentioned; refer to the notes, See Gill on "Ex 23:19",
See Gill on "Ex 34:26"; the reason of which repetition, the Jewish writers say {s}, is, that it is once said to forbid the eating it, a second time to forbid any use of it or profit by it, and a third time to forbid the boiling of it.

{s} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 2. sect. 9.

Deuteronomy 14:22

Ver. 22. Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed,.... This was a different tithe from that which was made and given to the Levites, and out of which a tithe was taken and given to the priests, and which they only ate of; but this, as appears by the following verse, was what the owners themselves ate of, and so the tithing was left to be made by them themselves, and which they were to be sure to make, and to make it truly and faithfully:

that the field bringeth forth year by year; being ploughed and sowed yearly, the produce of it was to be tithed yearly; the Jewish writers {t} observe on this, that it must be what the earth produces, and is fit for food: and it must be thy seed, which is especially thine, and is not common, but has an owner, and this excludes mushrooms, &c. which thou sowest not, and therefore cannot be called thy seed.

{t} Ib. in Misn. Maaserot, c. 1. sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 14:23

Ver. 23. And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there,.... See De 12:5 there the tithe of all the fruits of the earth was to be eaten; this is the second tithe, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi, and which is more particularly described as follows:

the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil: see De 12:7:

and the firstlings of thine herds, and of thy flocks; of which see the note on the above place:

that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always; which such a constant practice would inure unto; see De 10:12.

Deuteronomy 14:24

Ver. 24. And if the way be too long for thee,.... The way from the place where any Israelite might live:

to carry it; the tithe and the firstlings, it would be too expensive or too troublesome in any way that could be devised:

or if the place shall be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there; which by the event appeared to be the city of Jerusalem, and this from some parts of the land of Canaan was very distant:

when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee; with a large increase of the fruits of the earth, and of flocks and herds.

Deuteronomy 14:25

Ver. 25. Thou shalt then turn it into money,.... The tithe, which would be lighter and easier carriage:

and bind up the money in thine hand; put it into a bag or purse, and tie it up and carry it in the hand; which some think was ordered, that it might not be mixed with other money; but it seems only to have respect to journeying, and making it fit for that. The Jewish writers {u}, some of them, give a different sense of the word we render "bind up", and interpret it of marking the silver, or impressing a form, figure, or image on it with the hand; they mean that it must be coined money; so Maimonides {w}, they may not profane the sacred tithe with money not coined, nor with money not current, nor with money which is not in a man's power; for it is said,

in thine hand; which the man is possessed of and is his own property:

and shalt go unto the place which the Lord that God shall choose; carrying the money along with him, for which he sold the tithe.

{u} Bartenora in Misn. Beracot, c. 7. sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 11. sect. 2. & in Misn. Sabbat, c. 18. sect. 1. {w} In Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 11. sect. 2.

Deuteronomy 14:26

Ver. 26. And thou shall bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after,.... He might buy what provision he would with it, what he best liked, and was most agreeable to his appetite:

for oxen, or for sheep; he might purchase beef or mutton, or any other sort of meat that could be got, and was lawful to be eaten, as before directed:

or for wine, or for strong drink; to drink with his food, whether wine or any other liquor; the Targum of Jonathan is, wine new or old, which he chose; but the latter, strong drink, Aben Ezra says, was a liquor made of honey and of dates, of wheat and of barley:

or for whatsoever thy soul desireth; whether eatable or drinkable:

and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God; he having put his name in that place; and dwelling there, as the Lord did in the temple of Jerusalem:

and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thy household; eat their food with cheerfulness and gladness, making a feast of it and keeping it as such, he and his whole family, his wife and children, or as many as were with him; and all males were obliged to appear at the three grand yearly festivals, and it was at one of these this was to be done.

Deuteronomy 14:27

Ver. 27. And the Levite that is within thy gates, thou shalt not forsake him,.... As not from giving him the first tithe, as Jarchi remarks, so he was not to forget him in this; he was not to leave him behind, but take him with him to partake of this entertainment:

for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee in the land: see De 12:12.

Deuteronomy 14:28

Ver. 28. At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year,.... This, according to Aben Ezra, was a third tithe, and did not excuse the second tithe; so says:

"I gave the third tithe to the repair of the temple," (Tobit 1:7)

as in one copy, but, according to another, to the stranger, fatherless, and widow, which better agrees with what follows; but the Jewish writers generally understand this as the same with the second tithe, which on the two first years from the sabbatical year was carried to Jerusalem, or money in lieu of it, with which provisions were bought and eaten there, but on the third year were eaten in their own cities with the poor, and in the stead of the other; so says Maimonides {x}, on the third and sixth years from the sabbatical year, after they have separated the first tithe they separate from what remains another tithe, and give it to the poor, and it is called the poor's tithe, and not on those two years is the second tithe, but the poor's tithe, as it is said, "at the end of three years", &c. and still more expressly elsewhere {y}; after they have separated the first tithe every year, they separate the second tithe, De 14:22 and on the third and sixth years they separate the poor's tithe instead of the second; and this was done, not at the latter end of the third year, but, as Aben Ezra interprets it, at the beginning; for the word used signifies an extremity, and the beginning of the year is one extremity of it as well as the latter end of it:

and lay it up within thy gates; not to be hoarded up, or to be sold at a proper time, but to be disposed and made use of as follows.

{x} Hilchot Mattanot. Anayim, c. 6. sect. 4. {y} In Maaser Sheni, c. 1. sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 14:29

Ver. 29. And the Levite, because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,.... Shall come and take the first tithe, according to Jarchi; but though this he was to do, yet is not what is intended here, but he was to partake of the second tithe, or what was in the room of it, the poor's tithe, with whom he is here joined:

and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come; and take the second tithe, as the above writer rightly interprets it, and which he says is the poor's of this year; see De 12:12,

and shall eat and be satisfied; make a plentiful meal, eat freely as at a feast; and, as the same writer observes, they were not obliged to eat it at Jerusalem, according to the way they were bound to eat the second tithe of the two years, that is, the two preceding this:

that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest; as might be expected, when his commands, and particularly those respecting the tithes and firstlings, were obeyed.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 15

This chapter treats of a release of debts every seventh year, to which a blessing is promised if attended to, De 15:1, which seventh year of release should not hinder lending to a poor man in distress, even though it was nigh at hand, De 15:7 and of letting servants go free, whether manservant or maidservant, at the end of six years' servitude, De 15:12 but if unwilling to go, and desirous of staying, must have his ear bored through with an awl, and serve to the year of jubilee, De 15:16 and of sanctifying and eating the firstlings of the herd and flock where the Lord directs, De 15:19.

Ver. 1. At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. Not of servants, for they were not to be dismissed from their service until they had served six years, as is directed to in a following law; for if they were to be set free whenever a sabbatical year came, they might be discharged when they had not served more than a year, or than half a year, or than a month or two. Indeed when the year of jubilee intervened, they were released be it at what time it would; but not in a sabbatical year, which was a year of release of debts, as the following verses show, as well as there was, then a rest of the land from tillage, Le 25:2. Now this was done at the end or extremity of every seventh year; not at the latter end or extremity of it, for if the debt of a poor man might be exacted of him in the year, and until the end of it, it would not in this respect have been a sabbatical year, or a year of rest and quiet; but this was done at the first extremity of it, at the beginning of it, as Aben Ezra and Ben Melech observe; though Maimonides {b} asserts it to be after the seven years were ended; for he says,

"the seventh year releaseth not monies but at the end of it,"

according to De 15:1 that as in De 31:10 after seven years is meant, so the release of monies is after seven years.

{b} Hilchot Shemittah & Yobel, c. 9. sect. 4.

Deuteronomy 15:2

Ver. 2. And this is the manner of the release,.... Or the rules to be observed in making it:

every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; that is, forgive the debt, or free the debtor from any obligation to payment. Some think this was only a release of debts for this year, in which there was no ploughing nor sowing, and so a poor man could not be in any circumstances to pay his debts, but might be exacted afterwards; but it rather seems to be a full release, so as the payment of them might not be demanded, neither this year nor afterwards; indeed, if a person afterwards should be in a capacity to pay his debts, he would be obliged, in conscience, duty, and honour, to pay them, though no reserve was made in this law, which nowhere appears:

he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother: he might receive it, if payment was offered, but he might not demand it, or sue for it; or give his neighbour or brother, whether in a natural or religious sense, any trouble about it: the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"his brother, an Israelite;"

one of the same nation and religion with him, though he might not be related in the bonds of consanguinity:

because it is called the Lord's release; appointed and commanded by him, and was for his honour and glory, as a God gracious and merciful to the poor, and beneficent to those creditors; and which was proclaimed in his name, by the civil magistrate, according to his order; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"because the house of judgment, or the sanhedrim, proclaimed it a release before the Lord."

Now this was typical of a release of debts, or of forgiveness of sins, which is an act of God's grace through Christ, and for his sake. Sins are called debts, not what men owe to God, for then it would be right to commit them, and they might be committed with impunity, yea, with praise, since it would be doing what is fit and right, and well pleasing to God; but men are debtors to fulfil the law, and in case of failure, or a breach of it, are bound to the debt of punishment; and these debts are very numerous, and men are incapable of paying them: and by a release of these is meant not a liberty of sinning, nor a freedom from the being or bondage of sin, but from the guilt of it, and from obligation to punishment for it; and is properly the forgiveness of sin, which is expressed by various phrases, as a non-imputation, a non-remembrance, a covering, blotting out, and removing of sin, and here typically a release of debts; see **Mt 6:12**, and God only can make it; he is the creditor, sin is committed against him, and he only can forgive it, which he does freely, fully, and at once, see **Lu 7:41**.

Deuteronomy 15:3

Ver. 3. Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again,.... Either on the seventh year, or after it:

but that which is thine with thy brother, thine hand shall release; a debt that lies between them, where the one is the creditor, and the other debtor, the creditor shall freely and fully forgive the debtor. So those only are released or forgiven by the Lord who are his own, whom he has reserved for himself, or chosen to everlasting life; who are interested in the covenant of his grace, one article in which is the forgiveness of sins; and who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, a branch of which redemption is remission of sin; and who are called by grace, and believe in Christ, to whom pardon of sins is promised; but those who are foreigners and strangers, and are not the Lord's chosen, redeemed, and called people, have no share in this blessing of grace; nor such who are rich in their own esteem, and need nothing; but those who are poor and unable to pay their debts, and are sensible of their spiritual poverty, and apply to the Lord for the forgiveness of their sins.

Deuteronomy 15:4

Ver. 4. Save when there shall be no poor among you,.... Then such a law could not take place, there would be no debts to be released; for this was never designed to screen rich persons from the payment of their just debts, or whoever were in a capacity of so doing, only such as were really poor, and unable to pay; and it supposes that this might sometimes be the case, that there were none poor in Israel, or needed the benefit of such a law; and, according to the Targum of Jonathan, it is suggested there would be none, if they were observant of the commands of God: and some take it for a promise, rendering the words "nevertheless" {c}, notwithstanding such a law,

there shall be no poor among you; but then it must be understood conditionally: others interpret this as the end to be answered by this law, "to the end {d} there may be no poor among you"; by observing this law, all debts being released once in seven years, it would prevent persons falling into distress and poverty, to such a degree as to be in want, and become beggars; and Julian the emperor observes, that none of the Jews begged {e}, which he attributes to the care that was taken of their poor:

for the Lord shall greatly bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it; which is either a reason why there would be no poor, should they observe the commandments of the Lord; or a reason why they should release the debts of the poor because they were so greatly blessed with a fruitful land, which brought them such an increase, as enabled them to free their poor debtors, when in circumstances unable to pay them.

{c} yk opa "veruntamen", Munster. {d} "To the end that there be not", Ainsworth; so the margin of the Bible. {e} Opera, par. 2. Ep. 49. p. 204.

Deuteronomy 15:5

Ver. 5 Only if thou carefully hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God,.... In his word, and by his prophets; this being the case, there would be no more poor among them, or however they would be so blessed of God, that they would be capable of releasing the debts of the poor, without hurting themselves and their families:

to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day; a phrase often used to put them in mind of the commands of God, and the necessity of keeping them, their temporal happiness depending thereon.

Deuteronomy 15:6

Ver. 6. For the Lord thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee,.... He is faithful that has promised, and he always gives the blessing he promises according to the nature of the promise; if absolute, and without conditions, he gives it without respect to any; but if conditional, as the promises of temporal good things to Israel were, he gives according as the condition is performed:

and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shall not borrow; signifying they should be so rich and increased in goods, and worldly substance, that they should be able to lend to their neighbouring nations round about, but should stand in no need of borrowing of any of them. This is sometimes said of the language of these people, the Hebrew language, that it lends to all, but borrows of none, being an original primitive language; see De 28:12

and thou shalt reign over many nations: which was fulfilled in the times of David and Solomon:

but they shall not reign over thee; that is, as long as they observed the commands of God; otherwise, when they did not, they were carried captive into other countries, and other people reigned over them, as at this day.

Deuteronomy 15:7

Ver. 7. If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren,.... As there would be, according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, if they did not keep the commandments of the law, and continue therein:

within any of thy gates, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee; a native of the land was to be preferred to a foreigner, and a brother, whether in relation or religion, to a proselyte of the gate; and the poor of a city to which a man belonged, to the poor of another city, as Jarchi observes; which he gathers from this phrase,

within any of thy gates: thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy brother; so as not to pity his distressed case, and have no bowels of compassion for him, and feel for his want, and so as not to distribute to his necessities, and relieve him.

Deuteronomy 15:8

Ver. 8. But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him,.... And give him bountifully and liberally; in order to which the heart must be first opened, the affections moved, and a willing mind disposed to give generously:

and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he wanteth: enough to answer his present exigencies, but not to cause him to abound, or to supply him with things needless and superfluous.

Deuteronomy 15:9

Ver. 9. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart,.... "Or, thy heart of Belial" {f}; thy worthless heart, and which is without a yoke not subjected to the law of God, as every carnal heart is; and in which Belial, Satan, the prince of this world, works effectually, and inclines to evil thoughts, afflictions, and desires, which are to be guarded against:

saying, the seventh year, the year of release, is at hand: perhaps next year, or within a few months:

and thine eye be evil against thy brother, and thou give him nought; being of an uncompassionate and covetous disposition, shall refuse to give or lend him anything on this consideration, because the year of release will quickly come, when, if poor and unable to pay him, he would be obliged to release his debt:

and he cry unto the Lord against thee; go to the throne of grace, and in prayer bring a charge, and lodge a complaint of unkindness and uncharitableness: and it be a sin unto thee; the Lord shall reckon it as a sin, a very heinous one, and call to an account for it.

{f} leylb Kbbl "corde tuo Belial", Montanus.

Deuteronomy 15:10

Ver. 10. Thou shall surely give him,.... Or lend to him; though lending in such a case and circumstances, that person being extremely poor, and the year of release at hand, is the same as giving. Jarchi remarks that money must be given him, even a hundred times if he asks it; but the limitation is to what he wants, and what is sufficient for his present wants, De 15:8

and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him; grieved at parting with his money he has little or no hope of seeing again, grudging it to him to whom it is given; when, on the other hand, it should he given freely and cheerfully, for God loves a cheerful giver:

because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all thou puttest thine hand unto; that is, for lending or giving largely, liberally, and cheerfully, to persons in distress; see Pr 11:24.

Deuteronomy 15:11

Ver. 11. For the poor shall never cease out of the land,.... There would be always such objects to exercise their charity and beneficence towards, Joh 12:8, which is no contradiction to De 15:4 for had they been obedient to the laws of God, they would have been so blessed that there would have been none; so the Targums; but he foresaw that they would not keep his commands, and so this would be the case, and which he foretells that they might expect it, and do their duty to them, as here directed:

therefore I command thee, saying, thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother; not give sparingly, but largely, in proportion to the necessities of the poor, and according to the abilities of the lender or giver; and this must be done to a brother, one that is near in the bonds of consanguinity, and to him a man must give or lend first, as Aben Ezra observes, and then "to thy poor"; the poor of thy family, as the same writer:

and to thy needy in the land; that are in very distressed circumstances, though not related, and particularly such as are in the same place where a man dwells; for, as the same writer remarks, the poor of thy land are to be preferred to the poor of another place,

Deuteronomy 15:12

Ver. 12. And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee,.... By others, as by the sanhedrim for theft, for which a man might be sold, but not a woman, as Jarchi observes; but then a father might sell his daughter for an handmaid, if little and under age; and to such cases this law is supposed to refer; see
Ex 21:2 though a man on account of poverty might sell himself:

and serve thee six years; as he was bound to do, if his master lived so long; if he died before the six years were out, he was obliged to serve his son, but not his daughter, nor his brother, nor his heirs, as the Jewish writers affirm {g}: then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee; that is, at the end of the sixth, and beginning of the seventh year; see Ex 21:2.

{g} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin. c. 1. sect. 2.

Deuteronomy 15:13

Ver. 13. And when thou sendest him out free from thee,.... When he discharged him from his servitude, and made him a free man:

thou shall not let him go away empty; without anything to support himself, or to put himself in a way of business; he having in the time of his servitude worked entirely for his master, and so could not have got and saved anything for himself.

Deuteronomy 15:14

Ver. 14. Thou shalt furnish him liberally,.... Not only to supply his present wants, but for his future use, and to set him up in the world: "loading thou shall load him" {h}, so some render the words; give him as much as he can carry, and well stand up under; the word used has the signification of chains wore about the neck for honour or ornament, and so may signify he should be very honourably dismissed, with plain marks of honour and respect; and the order is, to supply him

out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress; with sheep or lambs out of the flock, with corn out of the floor, wheat, or barley, or both, and wine out of the winepress; which take in all the necessaries and comforts of life: of that

wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shall give unto him; be it what it will, and in proportion to it, as of money as well as goods; it is asked, how much shall be given to him? not less than the value of thirty shekels, whether of one kind or whether of many kinds, according to the thirty shekels for the price of a servant, Ex 21:32 {i}. All this may be an emblem both of the servitude the people of God are in to sin, Satan, and the law, while in a state of nature; and of their freedom from it by Christ, and of the sufficiency and fulness of food and raiment, and large measures of divine grace; even all things richly to enjoy, all things pertaining to life and godliness, which are given to them when brought out of that state; who otherwise come out of it destitute of all good things, having neither food nor clothes, nor money to buy either, but have all from Christ freely and fully.

{h} qynet qyneh "onerando oneratis", Munster, Pagninus, Vatablus. {i} Maimon. Hilchot Obedim, c. 3. sect. 14.

Deuteronomy 15:15

Ver. 15. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt,.... Where they were used hardly, and their lives were made bitter in hard bondage; and therefore should show the greater compassion to servants, whose case they could not but sympathize with, and have a fellow feeling of

and the Lord thy God redeemed thee; from the house of bondage and state of slavery, after they had been in it many years:

therefore I command thee this thing today, to release their servants at the end of six years, and not send them away empty, but generously contribute to them at their release; since when he redeemed them he gave them the spoil of Egypt, and of the sea, as Jarchi remarks; they came out of their bondage state with jewels, and gold, and silver, and raiment, even with great substance; and at the Red sea their spoil was increased which they took from Pharaoh and his host when drowned there; now as they came out of their servitude not empty but full, being sufficiently paid for their hard service, so they should remember to give to their servants liberally, when they made them free.

Deuteronomy 15:16

Ver. 16. And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee,.... Out of his house, nor quit his service:

because he loveth thee and thine house; his master and his family, and so loath to leave them, but chooses rather to stay with them than have his liberty; hence the Jews say {k}, if his master has not a wife and children, his ear is not to be bored:

because he is well with thee; lives well with him, is well used by him, wants for nothing, and enjoys peace and quietness, and has everything to make him happy as such a state will admit of, and with the which he is well contented, and highly pleased. This is an emblem of the cheerful and constant obedience of the people of Christ to him their master, flowing from love to him; whom they love above all persons and things, with all their heart and soul, and his house also, the place of his worship, his ordinances, truths, ministers and children; and therefore choose to be where they are, finding that they are there well used, fare well, having bread enough and to spare, spiritual provisions in plenty; are well clothed with the righteousness of Christ, have the good company of the saints and excellent in the earth, in whom is all their delight; and, above all, the presence of their Lord and master, and the smiles of his countenance.

{k} Maimon. in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 2.

Deuteronomy 15:17

Ver. 17. Then thou shall take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door,.... Not of his master's house, but of the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, according to the Targum of Jonathan, before whom he was to be brought, and declare his desire to continue with his master; See Gill on "Ex 21:6",

and he shall be thy servant for ever; that is, unto the jubilee, as the same Targum; for then all servants were released, and so Jarchi calls it the ever of jubilee:

and also unto thy maidservant thou shall do likewise; not bore her ear, for, as both Jarchi and Aben Ezra, and others say, she was not to be bored; though some are of opinion that a maidservant who was willing to continue with her master was to be bored as a manservant; but this respects the manner of dismissing her, or letting her go free, when she was not to go empty, but to be liberally furnished and supplied, as a manservant was.

Deuteronomy 15:18

Ver. 18. It shall not seem hard to thee when thou sendest him away free from thee,.... He should not grudge him his liberty, nor what he gives to him when he dismisses him:

for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee in serving thee six years; since a hired servant a man is obliged to pay him wages for his work, besides his food, whereas a bondservant received no wages. Aben Ezra remarks, that this proves that a man might not hire himself for more than three years; or however, whereas a hired servant was sometimes hired for so many years, and this is the longest time of any we read of, a servant serving his master six years, his service must be worth double the service of an hired servant, which at most was but three years:

and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thou doest; thus well using thy servants, whether menservants or maidservants.

Deuteronomy 15:19

Ver. 19. All the firstling males that come of thy herd, or of thy flock, thou shalt sanctify unto the Lord thy God,.... According to the law in Ex 13:2.
See Gill on "Ex 13:2";
See Gill on "Ex 13:12";
See Gill on "Ex 13:13";

thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock: as to plough or tread out the corn with it, which were done with other heifers:

nor shear the firstling of thy sheep; nor was the wool shorn of it to be made use of; one of the Jewish canons runs thus,

"if any man weave an hand's breadth of the wool of a firstling into cloth, the cloth is to be burnt {l}."

{l} Misn. Orlah, c. 3. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 15:20

Ver. 20. Thou shalt eat it before the Lord thy God, year by year,.... Which, if understood of male firstlings, as in connection with the preceding verse, only priests might eat of them, being devoted to the Lord; so Jarchi says, to the priest he speaks; but if this respects the Israelites in common, then they must be understood either of female firstlings or second firstlings, which the people voluntarily separated, and which they were not to eat in their own houses,

but in the place which the Lord shall choose, which was the city of Jerusalem; see De 12:5,

thou and thy household; the household of the priest, as Aben Ezra interprets it; but if it designs the same as in De 12:17, then the Israelites and their families are meant.

Deuteronomy 15:21

Ver. 21. And if there be any blemish therein,.... In the firstling, as if it be "lame or blind", or have

any ill blemish: thou shall not sacrifice it unto the Lord thy God; blemishes in any beast made it unfit for sacrifices which were required; and so all peace offerings, vows, and freewill offerings, were to be free from any, Le 22:19, such were not fit for an holy sacrifice or an holy feast.

Deuteronomy 15:22

Ver. 22. Thou shalt eat it within thy gates,.... Though it might not be sacrificed, nor eaten as an eucharistic feast at Jerusalem, it might be eaten as common food in their own houses:

the unclean and the clean person shall eat it alike; such as were ceremonially unclean, by the touch of a dead body or the like, might partake of it with those that were clean, no difference was to be made:

as the roebuck and as the hart; which were clean creatures, and used for food, though not for sacrifice; see De 12:15.

Deuteronomy 15:23

Ver. 23. Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof,.... Of the firstling:

thou shalt pour it upon the ground as water;
See Gill on "De 12:16",
See Gill on "De 12:23",
See Gill on "De 12:24".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 16

This chapter treats of the three grand yearly festivals, of the feast of passover, when, where, and what was to be sacrificed, how to be dressed, and in what manner to be eaten, De 16:1, of the feast of pentecost, when to begin it, where and how it was to be observed, De 16:9, and of the feast of tabernacles, when, where, and how long it was to be kept, De 16:13, which three times in the year all the males were to appear before the Lord, and not empty, De 16:16, an order is given for the appointment of judges in the land, to execute judgment, De 16:18, and the chapter is closed with a caution against planting groves, and setting up images, De 16:21.

Ver. 1. Observe the month of Abib,.... Sometimes called Nisan; it answered to part, of our March, and part of April; it was an observable month, to be taken notice of; it was called Abib, from the corn then appearing in ear, and beginning to ripen, and all things being in their verdure; the Septuagint calls it the month of new fruit; it was appointed the first of the months for ecclesiastic things, and was the month in which the Israelites went out of Egypt, and the first passover was kept in it, and therefore deserving of regard; see Ex 12:2

for in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night; for though they did not set out until morning, when it was day light, and are said to come out in the day, yet it was in the night the Lord did wonders for them, as Onkelos paraphrases this clause; that he smote all the firstborn in Egypt, and passed over the houses of the Israelites, the door posts being sprinkled with the blood of the passover lamb slain that night, and therefore was a night much to be observed; and it was in the night Pharaoh arose and gave them leave to go; and from that time they were no more under his power, and from thence may be reckoned their coming out of bondage; see Ex 12:12.

Deuteronomy 16:2

Ver. 2. Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God,.... In the month Abib, and in the night of that month they came out of Egypt, even on the fourteenth day of it at night, between the two evenings, as the Targum of Jonathan; which was a lamb, and typical of Christ, the passover sacrificed for us, **1Co 5:7**

of the flock and the herd; that is, you shall sacrifice also the offerings which were offered throughout the seven days of unleavened bread, and these were both sheep and oxen, Nu 28:19 and are expressly called passover offerings and peace offerings, 2Ch 30:21, for what was strictly and properly the passover was only of the flock, a lamb, and not of the herd, or a bullock; though Aben Ezra says there were some that thought that in Egypt it was only a lamb or a kid, but now it might be a bullock; which he observes is not right. It may be indeed that the word "passover" here is a general term, comprehending the whole passover solemnity, and all the sacrifices of the seven days: the Jews commonly understand this clause of the Chagigah, or feast of the fifteenth day, the first day of unleavened bread, and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and the sheep and the oxen on the morrow;"

some distinguish them thus, the flock for the duty of the passover, the herd for the peace offerings, so Aben Ezra; or as Jarchi interprets it, the flock of the lambs and kids, and the herd for the Chagigah or festival; in the Talmud {m}; the flock, this is the passover; the herd, this is the Chagigah, so Abendana: there was a Chagigah of the fourteenth day, which was brought with the lamb and eaten first, when the company was too large for the lamb, that their might eat with satiety {n}; but this was not reckoned obligatory upon them {o}, but they were bound to bring their Chagigah on the fifteenth day:

in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there; that is, at Jerusalem, as the event has shown; hence we read of the parents of our Lord going up to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover, **Lu 2:41**.

{m} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 70. 2. {n} Jarchi in loc. Maimon. Hilchot Corban Pesach, c. 8. l. 3. {o} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 71. 1, 2. Maimon. ut supra, ({n}) c. 10. sect. 13. Aruch in voc. gx, fol. 58. 1.

Deuteronomy 16:3

Ver. 3. Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it,.... With the passover, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it; that is, with the passover lamb, nor indeed with any of the passover, or peace offerings, as follows; see Ex 12:8

seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread therewith; with the passover; this plainly shows, that by the passover in the preceding verse is not meant strictly the passover lamb, for that was eaten at once on the night of the fourteenth of the month, and not seven days running, and therefore must be put for the whole solemnity of the feast, and all the sacrifices of it, both the lamb of the fourteenth, and the Chagigah of the fifteenth, and every of the peace offerings of the rest of the days were to be eaten with unleavened bread:

[even] the bread of affliction; so called either from the nature of its being heavy and lumpish, not grateful to the taste nor easy of digestion, and was mortifying and afflicting to be obliged to eat of it seven days together; or rather from the use of it, which was, as Jarchi observes, to bring to remembrance the affliction they were afflicted with in Egypt:

for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste; and had not time to leaven their dough; so that at first they were obliged through necessity to eat unleavened bread, and afterwards by the command of God in remembrance of it; see Ex 12:33,

that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life; how it was with them then, how they were hurried out with their unleavened dough; and that this might be imprinted on their minds, the master of the family used {p}, at the time of the passover, to break a cake of unleavened bread, and say, this is the bread of affliction, &c. or bread of poverty; as it is the way of poor men to have broken bread, so here is broken bread.

{p} Haggadah Shel Pesach, in Seder Tephillot, fol. 242. Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 6.

Deuteronomy 16:4

Ver. 4. And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coasts seven days,.... For before the passover they were to search diligently every room in the house, and every hole and crevice, that none might remain any where; see Ex 12:15,

neither shall there be anything of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning; which may be understood both of the flesh of the passover lamb, as Aben Ezra, according to Ex 12:10 and of the flesh of flocks and herds, or of the Chagigah; according to Jarchi this Scripture speaks of the Chagigah of the fourteenth, which was not to remain on the first day of the feast (the fifteenth) until the morning of the second day (the sixteenth).

Deuteronomy 16:5

Ver. 5. Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates,.... Or cities, as the Targum of Jonathan, so called because they usually had gates to them, in which public affairs were transacted; but in none of these, only in the city of Jerusalem, the place the Lord chose, might they kill the passover and eat it, and other passover offerings:

which the Lord thy God giveth thee; in the land of Canaan, and which land was given them of God.

Deuteronomy 16:6

Ver. 6. But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in,.... To place the ark and the mercy seat with the cherubim over them, where he caused his Shechinah, or divine Majesty, to dwell; and this was at Jerusalem, where the temple was built by Solomon:

there thou shalt sacrifice the passover; kill and eat the paschal lamb:

at even, at the going down of the sun; between the two evenings it was killed, before the sun was set, and afterwards at night it was eaten; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"and at evening, at the setting of the sun, ye shall eat it until the middle of the night:"

at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt; or as the same Targum,

"the time of the beginning of your redemption out of Egypt;"

which was when Pharaoh rose at midnight, and gave them leave to go; from thence their redemption commenced, though they did not actually set out until the morning.

Deuteronomy 16:7

Ver. 7. And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose,.... The word for "roast" signifies to "boil", and is justly so used, and so Onkelos here renders it, and the Septuagint version both roast and boil; but it is certain that the passover lamb was not to be boiled, it is expressly forbidden, Ex 12:8 wherefore some think the Chagigah is here meant, and the other offerings that were offered at this feast; and so in the times of Josiah they roasted the passover with fire, according to the ordinance of God; but the other holy offerings sod or boiled they in pots, cauldrons and pans, and divided them speedily among the people, 2Ch 35:13, but the passover lamb seems plainly to be meant here by the connection of this verse with the preceding verses; wherefore Jarchi observes, that this is to be understood of roasting with fire, though expressed by this word:

and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents; not in the morning of the fifteenth, after the passover had been killed and eaten on the fourteenth, but in the morning, after the feast of unleavened bread, which lasted seven days, was over; though some think that they might if they would depart home after the passover had been observed, and were not obliged to stay and keep the feast of unleavened bread at Jerusalem, but march to their own cities; and so Aben Ezra observes, that some say a man may go on a feast day to his house and country, but, says he, we do not agree to it; and it appears from the observation of other feasts, which lasted as long as these, that the people did not depart to their tents till the whole was over; see **1Ki 8:66** and with this agrees the Targum of Jonathan,

"and thou shall turn in the morning of the going out of the feast, and go to thy cities."

Jarchi indeed interprets it afterwards of the second day.

Deuteronomy 16:8

Ver. 8. Six days shalt thou eat unleavened bread,.... In other places it is ordered to be eaten seven days, Ex 12:15 and here it is not said six only; it was to be eaten on the seventh as on the other, though that is here distinguished from the six, because of special and peculiar service assigned to it, but not because of an exemption from eating unleavened bread on it. The Jews seem to understand this of different corn of which the bread was made, and not of different sort of bread; the Targum of Jonathan is, on the first day ye shall offer the sheaf (the firstfruits of the barley harvest), and on the six days which remain ye shall begin to eat the unleavened bread of the new fruits, and so Jarchi:

and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord thy God; a holy convocation, devoted to religious exercises, and the people were restrained, according to the sense of the word, from all servile work, as follows:

thou shalt do no work therein; that is, the business of their callings, their trades and manufactories; they were obliged to abstain from all kind of work excepting what was necessary for the dressing of food, and in this it differed from a sabbath; see Ex 12:16.

Deuteronomy 16:9

Ver. 9. Seven weeks then shalt thou number unto thee,.... And then another feast was to take place, called from hence the feast of weeks, and sometimes Pentecost, from its being the fiftieth day:

begin to number the seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn; for the sheaf of the wave offering, as the first fruits of barley harvest, which was done on the morrow after the sabbath in the passover week, and from thence seven weeks or fifty days were reckoned, and the fiftieth day was the feast here ordered to be kept; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"after the reaping of the sheaf ye shall begin to number seven weeks;"

see Le 23:15.

Deuteronomy 16:10

Ver. 10. And thou shall keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God,.... The feast of Pentecost, at which time the Spirit was poured down upon the apostles, **Ac 2:1**

with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand; there were two wave loaves which were ordered to be brought and seven lambs, one young bullock and two rams for a burnt offering, together with the meat and drink offerings belonging thereunto, and a kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs for a peace offering, Le 23:17, and besides all this, there was to be a voluntary contribution brought in their hands; for this was one of those feasts at which all the males were to appear before the Lord, and none of them empty:

which thou shalt give unto the Lord thy God,

according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee; no certain rate was fixed, it was to be a free gift, and in proportion to a man's abilities, or what the Lord had blessed him with.

Deuteronomy 16:11

Ver. 11. And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God,.... Make a liberal feast, and keep it cheerfully, in the presence of God, in the place where he resides, thankfully acknowledging all his mercies and favours:

thou, and thy son, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates; that dwelt in the same city, who were all to come with him to Jerusalem at this feast, and to partake of it with him:

and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to place his name there; who should be at Jerusalem at this time.

Deuteronomy 16:12

Ver. 12. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt,.... And now delivered from that bondage; the consideration of which should make them liberal in their freewill offering, and generous in the feast they provided, and compassionate to the stranger, widow, and fatherless:

and thou shalt observe and do these statutes; concerning the passover, the feast of unleavened bread, and of Pentecost, and the peace offerings and the freewill offerings belonging to them: and nothing could more strongly oblige them to observe them than their redemption from their bondage in Egypt; as nothing more engages to the performance of good works than the consideration of our spiritual and eternal redemption by Christ, **1Co 6:19**.

Deuteronomy 16:13

Ver. 13. Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days,.... Which began on the fifteenth day of Tisri, or September; see Le 23:34, &c.

after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine; and therefore sometimes called the feast of ingathering, Ex 23:16, barley harvest began at the passover, and wheat harvest at Pentecost; and before the feast of tabernacles began, the vintage and the gathering of the olives were over, as well as all other summer fruits were got in.

Deuteronomy 16:14

Ver. 14. And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast,.... At this feast of tabernacles and ingathering of the fruits of the earth, in token of gratitude and thankfulness for the goodness of God bestowed on them; the Targum of Jonathan adds, with the flute and the pipe, making use of instrumental music to increase the joy on this occasion:

thou and thy son, &c. See Gill on "De 16:11"

Deuteronomy 16:15

Ver. 15. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God,.... The feast of tabernacles still spoken of:

in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose: the city of Jerusalem:

because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy increase, and in all the works of thine hands; both in the increase of their fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, and also in their several handicraft trades and occupations they were employed in; so Aben Ezra interprets all the works of their hands of merchandise and manufactories:

therefore thou shalt surely rejoice; extremely, heartily, and sincerely, and not fail to express joy on this occasion, and manifest it by a generous freewill offering to the Lord, and a bountiful entertainment for himself, his family, friends, and others.

Deuteronomy 16:16

Ver. 16. Three times a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy

God,.... This has been observed before, Ex 23:17, and is repeated here for the sake of mentioning the place where they were to appear, which before now was not observed, and indeed it is chiefly for that the other festivals are here recited:

in the place which he shall choose; which though not expressed is now easily understood; and the three times at which they were to appear there were, in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; or passover, Pentecost, and tabernacles; and of numbers of people going up from the country to each of these feasts, we have instances in the New Testament; to the passover, **Lu 2:42**, to Pentecost, **Ac 2:5**, to tabernacles, **Joh 7:2**,

and they shall not appear before the Lord empty; Aben Ezra observes, the meaning is, not empty of the tribute of the freewill offering of their hand, and which Jarchi more fully explains of the burnt offerings of appearance, and of the peace offerings of the Chagigah, or money answerable to them; which, according to the Misnah {q} was a meah of silver for a burnt offering, and two pieces of silver for the Chagigah, which weighed thirty two barley corns {r}

{q} Chagigah, c. 1. sect. 2. {r} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Deuteronomy 16:17

Ver. 17. Every man shall give as he is able,.... The quantity to be given is not fixed in the law, but the wise men appointed it, as observed on De 16:16 but it is left by the Lord to the generosity of the people, only giving this general rule, that they should do according to their ability, and as the Lord had prospered them; see
1Co 16:2 so Jarchi,

"every man that hath many eatables and much goods shall bring many burnt offerings and many peace offerings."

Deuteronomy 16:18

Ver. 18. Judges and officers shall thou make thee,.... Judges were fixed in the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, and those that have lawsuits come before them; officers are masters of the staff and whip, and they stand before the judges, and go into markets, streets, and shops, to order the weights and measures, and to smite all that do wrong; and all they do is by order of the judges; so Maimonides {s}: the qualifications of judges to be chosen and constituted by the people are thus described by him. In the sanhedrim, greater or lesser, they place only men wise and understanding, expert in the wisdom of the law, and masters of great knowledge, and that know some of the other sciences, as medicine, arithmetic, astronomy, and astrology, the ways of soothsayers, diviners, and wizards, and the vanities of idolatry, that they may know how to judge them; and they set in the sanhedrim only priests, Levites, and Israelites, who are genealogized; nor do they set an old man there, nor an eunuch, nor a king, but an high priest, if he is qualified with wisdom; and they must be free from blemishes, and of a good stature and appearance, and understand many languages, and not hear by an interpreter; and though all this was not precisely required of the sanhedrim of three judges, yet these same things ought to be in everyone of them, wisdom, and meekness, and fear, and hatred of money, and love of truth, and love of men, and to be of a good report {t} and these were to be placed in

all thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee throughout thy tribes; that is, in every city, as Onkelos, and so Jarchi; and usually the courts of judicature were held in the gates of cities, and it was only in the land of Israel, not without it, that they were obliged to set up courts of judicature, as Maimonides {u} observes; who also asks, how many courts were fixed in Israel, and what the number they consisted of? to which he answers, they fixed at first the great court in the sanctuary, and it was called the great sanhedrim, and its number were seventy one; and again, they set up two courts of twenty three, one at the door of the court, and the other at the door of the mountain of the house (and so in the Misnah) {w}; and they set up in every city in Israel, in which were one hundred and twenty (men or families) or more, a lesser sanhedrim, which sat in the gate, and their number were twenty three judges; in a city in which there were not one hundred and twenty, they placed three judges, for there is no court less than three {x}:

and they shall judge the people with just judgment; give a right and just sentence in all cases that come before them, according to the laws of God, and the rules of justice and equity.

{s} Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 1. {t} Ib. c. 2. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. {u} Ib. c. 1. sect. 2. {w} Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 2. {x} Ib. sect. 3, 4.

Deuteronomy 16:19

Ver. 19. Thou shall not wrest judgment,.... Or pervert it, pass a wrong sentence, or act contrary to justice; this is said to the judges as a direction to them, and so what follows:

thou shalt not respect persons; so as to give the cause on account of outward circumstances and relations; as in favour of a rich man against a poor man merely for that reason, or of a near relation or intimate friend and acquaintance against a stranger, but justice should be administered without favour or affection to any; as Jarchi puts it, he was to make no difference in his address and behaviour to contending parties before him; he was not to be tender and soft to one and hard to the other, or let one stand and another sit:

neither take a gift: as a bribe to give the cause wrong: at Thebes, in Egypt, as Diodorus Siculus {y} relates, in a court on a wall, were images of judges to the number of thirty; in the midst of them was the chief judge; having Truth hanging down from his neck (which seems to be in imitation of the Urim of the high priest of the Jews), his eyes shut, and many books by him; by which image was shown, that judges should receive nothing, and that the chief judge should look to truth only:

for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous; see Ex 23:8 the Jews have a saying, that a judge that takes a bribe, and perverts judgment, does not die of old age, or till his eyes become dim {z}.

{y} Bibliothec. l. 1. c. 45. {z} Misn. Peah, c. 8. sect. 9.

Deuteronomy 16:20

Ver. 20. That which is altogether just shalt thou follow,.... Or "justice", "justice" {a}, strict justice, and nothing else:

that thou mayest live and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee; that is, continue in the possession of it.

{a} qdu qdu

Deuteronomy 16:21

Ver. 21. Thou shall not plant thee a grove of any trees,.... Of any sort of trees, as oaks or any other; not but that it was lawful to plant trees and groves of them, but not for a religious or idolatrous use: particularly

near unto the altar of the Lord thy God, which thou shalt make thee; as the Heathens did near their altars, lest it should be thought to be done for a like superstitious and idolatrous use; which evil the Jews sometimes fell into in the times of wicked reigns, and which their good and pious kings removed and destroyed; see 2Ki 18:4 and Hecataeus {b}, an Heathen historian, relates of the city of Jerusalem, that there were there no image, nor plantation, nor grove, nor any such thing.

{b} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 4. p. 408.

Deuteronomy 16:22

Ver. 22. Neither shalt thou set up any image,.... Graven or molten, of man, beast, fish, or fowl; the word signifies a "statue or pillar" {c} which was set up for idolatry; for, as Aben Ezra observes, what was not set up for idolatry was not forbidden, as when erected in memory of any action or remarkable event; see Jos 22:10, &c.

which the Lord thy God hateth; as he does every species, of idolatry, or that has any tendency to it; it being so opposite to his being, perfections, and glory; and therefore nothing should be done like it, because it is so hateful to him.

{c} hbum sthlhn, Sept. "statuam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tig. vers. Fagius, Drusius, Grotius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 17

This chapter begins with a caution not to sacrifice anything to the Lord that is blemished or ill favoured, De 17:1, an order is given to put to death men or women guilty of idolatry, where it is clearly proved upon them, De 17:2 and it is directed that when cases are too hard for inferior judges to determine, they should be brought to Jerusalem to the priests, Levites, and judges, which formed the great consistory there, whose sentence was to be adhered unto on pain of death, De 17:8, and rules are given about the choice of a king, and he is informed what he must not do, and what he should do, De 17:14.

Ver. 1. Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the Lord thy God any bullock or sheep wherein is blemish,.... No sacrifice of any sort, whether burnt offering, sin offering, or peace offering, was to have any blemish in it; typical of the unblemished and immaculate Lamb of God, who, being without sin, offered himself without spot to God, and so could take away the sins of others by the sacrifice of himself; see Le 22:18,

[or] any evilfavouredness; any sickness or disease upon it of any sort, which made it ill favoured to the sight, or disagreeable to the smell, or however unacceptable for sacrifice:

for that is an abomination to the Lord thy God; every such blemished and ill favoured sacrifice; see **Mal 1:8**.

Deuteronomy 17:2

Ver. 2. If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee,.... In any of their cities in the land of Canaan:

man or woman that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord thy God: as all that is wrought is in the sight of the omniscient God; here it means not any kind of wickedness, for there is none lives without committing sin of one sort or another, all which is known to God the searcher of hearts, but such wickedness as is after described:

in transgressing his covenant; that is, his law, and particularly the first table of it, which respects divine worship, and which is in the nature of a marriage contract or covenant; which, as that is transgressed by adultery committed by either party, so the covenant between God and Israel was transgressed by idolatry, which is spiritual adultery, and going a whoring after other gods, as it follows:

Deuteronomy 17:3

Ver. 3. And hath gone,.... The Targum of Jonathan adds, after the evil imagination or concupiscence, lusting after other lovers, and forsaking the true God, and departing from his worship:

and served other gods; strange gods, the idols of the people, other gods besides the true God; the creature besides the Creator:

and worshipped them; by bowing down before them, praying to them, or ascribing their mercies and blessings to them, and giving them the glory of them:

either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven: the two great luminaries, and the planets, constellations, and stars, any of them; which kind of idolatry very early obtained, and was in use at this time among the Heathens, and was an iniquity to be punished by the judge, Job 31:26, which sin, though so strictly forbidden, the people of Israel sometimes fell into, 2Ki 21:3

which I have not commanded: and which is a sufficient reason, in matters of worship, to avoid and abstain from anything, that God has not commanded it; for in things of that nature nothing should be done but what he has ordered, who is a jealous God, and will not suffer any to take upon them to direct what should be done as a religious service and duty; and if any are so presumptuous, they must expect it will be resented; see **Isa 1:12** and especially with respect to the object of worship, as here, and which relate to things if not forbid expressly, yet tacitly, to do which was an abomination to the Lord.

Deuteronomy 17:4

Ver. 4. And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and inquired diligently,.... A report of this kind was not to be neglected; though it was not to be concluded upon as certain by hearsay, it was to be looked into, and the persons that brought it thoroughly examined; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and inquired the witnesses well,"

what proof and evidence they could give of the fact, who the persons were, when and where, and in what manner the sin was committed:

and, behold, [it be] true, [and] the thing certain; upon examining the witnesses the case is plain and out of all question:

that such abomination is wrought in Israel; to do it in any country was abominable, but much more so in the land of Israel, among the professing people of God, who had the knowledge of the true God, and had had so many proofs of his deity, his power and providence, as well as received so many favours and blessings from him, and had such laws and statutes given them as no other people had.

Deuteronomy 17:5

Ver. 5. Thou shall bring forth that man or that woman which have committed the wicked thing,.... Idolatry in any of the above instances: this must be supposed to be done after he or she have been had before a court of judicature, and have been tried and found guilty, and sentence passed on them, then they were to be brought forth to execution:

unto thy gates; the Targum of Jonathan says, unto the gates of your sanhedrim, or court of judicature; but Jarchi observes, that this is a mistake of the paraphrase, for he says, we are taught by tradition that "thy gate" is the gate in which he has served or committed idolatry; and so says Maimonides {d}, they do not stone a man but at the gate where he served or worshipped; but if the greatest part of the city are Heathens, they stone him at the door of the sanhedrim; and this is received from tradition, that "to thy gates" is the gate at which he served, and not where his judgment is finished:

[even] that man or that woman; this is repeated, and the woman as well as the man is expressed, to show that no compassion is to be had on her as is usual, nor to be spared on account of the weakness and tenderness of her sex, but she as well as the man must be brought forth and executed according to her sentence, without any mercy shown; and this is observed to show the resentment of the divine Majesty, and his indignation at this sin:

and shalt stone them with stones until they die; of the manner of stoning men and women, See Gill on "Ac 7:58".

{d} Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 15. sect. 2.

Deuteronomy 17:6

Ver. 6. At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death,.... The idolater found guilty was to be stoned; two witnesses were sufficient to prove a fact, if three the better, but, on the testimony of one, sentence might not be pronounced. Aben Ezra observes, that some say, if two witnesses contradict two other, a third turns the scale and determines the matter; and others say, that two who are wise men will do, and three of others; and because it is said "at the mouth" of these witnesses, it is concluded, that a testimony should be verbal and not written; should not be recorded, neither in pecuniary cases nor in capital ones, but from the mouth of the witnesses, as it is said "at the mouth", &c. at their mouth, and not from their handwriting {e}:

[but] at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death; so careful is the Lord of the lives of men, that none should be taken away but upon full and sufficient evidence, even in cases in which his own glory and honour is so much concerned.

{e} Maimon. Hilchot Eduth, c. 3. sect. 4.

Deuteronomy 17:7

Ver. 7. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death,.... Of everyone of them, as Aben Ezra; they were to cast the first stone at him, which would be a further trial and confirmation of their testimony; for if they readily and without reluctance first began the stoning of the idolater, it would not only show their zeal for the honour of the divine Being, but an unconsciousness of guilt in their testimony, and be an encouragement to others to proceed with safety:

and afterwards the hands of all the people; should be employed in taking up stones, and casting at him until he was dead:

so thou shall put the evil away from among you; both the evil man and the evil committed by him, which by this means would be prevented from spreading, seeing by his death others would be deterred from following his example; as well as the evil of punishment, which otherwise would have come upon the nation, had they connived at so gross an iniquity.

Deuteronomy 17:8

Ver. 8. If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment,.... This is spoken to inferior judges in cities in the country, who sometimes might have cases too wonderful and mysterious, as the word signifies, or secret and hidden, such as were out of their reach and beyond their capacity, and so be very difficult for them to determine what should be done:

between blood and blood; that is, whether a man is guilty of shedding innocent blood or not; when such a case is depending between a person charged with it and the relatives of the deceased, or between a man slayer and the avenger of blood, and the question is, whether he may have the benefit of a city of refuge or not, and there are some circumstances attending it which make it difficult how to determine:

between plea and plea; of the plaintiff on one side and of the defendant on the other, and both have so much to say in their own cause, that it is hard to decide which is in the right and which is in the wrong, whether in capital or pecuniary cases; it chiefly if not solely respects civil things in controversy:

and between stroke and stroke; blow or wound which one man received from another, and for which he commences a suit of law upon it, Ex 21:18 or for assault and battery; and so Aben Ezra interprets it of blows and bruises; but the Jewish writers generally interpret it of the plague, or stroke of leprosy; so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; but the examination of such a case did not belong to the civil magistrate, but to a priest; nor was such a person had up to Jerusalem to be searched, but was shut up in a house until further evidence could be got; and, besides, the signs of the leprosy are so distinctly given, that at waiting a proper time, there was seldom or ever any difficulty about determining it:

[being] matter of controversy within thy gates; or what are matters of controversy about anything else; for the phrase is general, as Aben Ezra observes, and takes in everything in which anything difficult might occur; so Jarchi interprets it of things which the wise men of a city are divided about; one pronounces a person or thing unclean, another clean, one condemning and another justifying, and so far rightly; for this respects not controversies between men, that may be brought into courts of judicature, but controversies or divisions arising in these courts upon them, between the judges themselves, they not agreeing in their opinions:

then shalt thou arise and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose; to Jerusalem, to the great sanhedrim or court of judicature, to which the inferior judges were to apply themselves, in matters of moment and difficulty, for instruction, information, and direction; it being supposed that in such a court such like cases may have been brought before them, and they were expert and understanding in them.

Deuteronomy 17:9

Ver. 9. Thou shalt come unto the priests, the Levites,.... The priests that are of the tribe of Levi, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi; for Aben Ezra says there are priests that are not of the genealogy of Levi; such there were indeed in Jeroboam's time, 1Ki 12:31. Maimonides {f} observes, that it is ordered that there should be in the great sanhedrim priests and Levites, as it is said: "and thou shalt come unto the priests, and the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire"; judge is here put for judges, of which the great court consisted, being priests, Levites, and Israelites;
See Gill on "De 16:18", though others think that only a single person is meant, such as Othniel, Ehud, Gideon, Samson, &c. but then as there was not always such an one in being, I should rather think that the judge here, if a single person, is the president or prince of the great sanhedrim, who succeeded Moses, and sat in his place; and of him and his court, the priests, and Levites and Israelites that composed it, inquiry was to be made:

and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment; give their judgment in the difficult case proposed, and declare what is right to be done, and what sentence is to be pronounced.

{f} Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 2.

Deuteronomy 17:10

Ver. 10. And thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall show thee,.... The judges of the inferior courts were to return and proceed on the difficult case according to the judgment of the great court at Jerusalem, and follow the directions and instructions they should give them:

and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee; not only observe and take notice of what they say, but put it in practice, and not in some things and some circumstances only, but in all and everything they should give them information about relating to the case in question.

Deuteronomy 17:11

Ver. 11. According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee,.... For they were not to make any new law, but to teach the law of God, and so far as their sense and opinion of things agreed with that law they were to be regarded:

and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do; what were law and justice, what were fit and right to be done, according to the will of God, which they should declare unto them, that was carefully to be done by them:

thou shalt not decline from the sentence they shall show thee, to the right hand nor to the left; by setting up after, all their own judgments against theirs to whom they had applied for information and direction, which to have done would have been very insolent and affronting; they were not to depart from the determination they made of the case, on pretence of knowing better, nor even in any minute circumstance to deviate from it, but strictly and closely to keep unto it; though not to follow them so implicitly as to receive from them and embrace things the most absurd and unreasonable, as Jarchi suggests; who says, that their sense was to be abided by, even if they should say that the right hand is the left, and the left hand the right.

Deuteronomy 17:12

Ver. 12 And the man that will do presumptuously,.... The judge of the country court that makes his application to that at Jerusalem for information and direction; if, after all, he is conceited in his own opinion, and rejects theirs, and is obstinate, and will not be guided and directed, but will take his own way, and pursue his own sense of things, and act according to that:

and will not hearken to the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God; the priests of the tribe of Levi, of whom the court generally consisted, De 17:9, priest for priests; though some think the high priest is meant, to whom the character very well agrees; but he was not always at the head of the sanhedrim, nor indeed a member of it, unless he had the proper qualifications; see De 18:18

or unto the judge; or judges; See Gill on "De 17:9". L'Empereur {g} thinks, that the supreme senate, or grand sanhedrim, was twofold, according to the diversity of ecclesiastic and political matters; since where it treats of the supreme senators, or chief persons in the court, the priest is manifestly distinguished from the judge (i.e. priests or judges); now the man that has asked advice of them, and will not be directed by it, but takes his own way, this being so great a contempt of, and insult upon, the great senate of the nation:

even that man shall die; and this was by strangling, for so the rebellious older, as such an one is called, was to die according to the Misnah {h}; and it is said {i}, that the death spoken of in the law absolutely (without specifying what kind of death) is strangling:

and thou shall put away the evil from Israel; the evil man that is rebellious against the supreme legislature of the nation, and the evil of contumacy he is guilty of, deterring others from it by his death.

{g} In Misn. Middoth, c. 5. sect. 3. {h} Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 2. {i} Maimon. Issure Biah, c. 1. sect. 6.

Deuteronomy 17:13

Ver. 13. And all the people shall hear, and fear,.... All the people of Israel in their own cities, and particularly the judges in those cities; they shall hear of what is done to the obstinate and disobedient elder, and shall be afraid to commit the like offence, lest they should come into the same punishment:

and do no more presumptuously; after his example; hence, Jarchi says, they wait till the feast comes, and then put him to death; and so it is said {k}, they bring him up to the great sanhedrim which is at Jerusalem, and there keep him until the feast (the next feast), and put him to death at the feast, as it is said,

all the people shall hear, and fear.

{k} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 4.

Deuteronomy 17:14

Ver. 14. When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,.... The land of Canaan:

and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein; be entirely in the possession of it, and settled in it; it seems to denote some time of continuance in it, as it was, before they thought of setting a king over them, about which are the following instructions:

and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are round about me; which was what would and did lead them to such a thought and resolution; observing that the neighbouring nations had kings over them, they were desirous of being like them as to the form of their civil government, and have a king as they had.

Deuteronomy 17:15

Ver. 15. Thou shalt in any wise set [him] king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose,.... The Jews take this to be a command to set a king over them: whereas it is only a permission in case they should desire and determine on having one, as God foresaw they would; and this with a limitation and restriction to appoint none but whom God should choose, and which was their duty and interest to attend unto; for none could choose better for them, and was what he had a right unto, and it became them to submit to it, since he was their King in a civil and special sense, and another was only his viceregent; accordingly we find, when they expressed their desire to have a king in the time of Samuel, and it was granted, though not without some resentment, the Lord chose their first king for them, Saul, and, after him, David, and even Solomon, David's son; and though, in later times, they appointed kings without consulting him, it is complained of, **Ho 8:4** hence this clause is prefaced in the Targum of Jonathan,

"ye shall seek instruction from the Lord, and after set him king, &c."

which was to be done by the mouth of a prophet, or by Urim, as Aben Ezra observes:

one from among thy brethren shall thou set king over thee: that is, one of their own nation, an Israelite, a brother both by nation and religion:

thou mayest not set a stranger over thee that is not thy brother; one of another nation, that is not of the family of Israel, as Aben Ezra notes, even not an Edomite, though called sometimes their brother; and Herod, who was an Idumean, was set up, not by them, but by the Romans; now in this their king was a type of the King Messiah, of whom it is said, "their nobles shall be of themselves", Jer 30:21.

Deuteronomy 17:16

Ver. 16. But he shall not multiply horses to himself,.... That he might not put his trust and confidence in outward things, as some are apt to trust in horses and chariots; and that he might not tyrannise over and distress his subjects by keeping a number of horses and chariots as a standing army, and chiefly for a reason that follows; he was to have no more than for his own chariot, so Jarchi, and so the Misnah {g} and Maimonides {h}; the Targum of Jonathan restrains it to two:

nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses; which was a country that abounded with them, and therefore he was not to encourage, and much less oblige his subjects to travel thither or trade with that people for the sake of increasing his stock of horses, Isa 31:1

forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, ye shall henceforth return no more that way; not that going into Egypt on any account whatsoever was forbidden, as for trade and merchandise in other things, or for shelter and safety, for which some good men fled thither; but for outward help and assistance against enemies, and for horses on that account, and particularly in order to dwell there, from which the Jews in the times of Jeremiah were dissuaded by him, and threatened by the Lord with destruction, in case they should, Jer 42:15. When the Lord said this is not certain; it may be when they proposed to make a captain, and return unto Egypt; or he said this in his providence, this was the language of it ever since they came out of it, or however this he now said; see De 28:68.

{g} Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 4. {h} Hilchot Melachim, c. 3. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 17:17

Ver. 17. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away,.... From attending to the duty of his office, the care and government of his people, and from serious religion; and particularly from the worship of the true God, as the heart of Solomon was turned away from it by his numerous idolatrous wives, 1Ki 11:3, it is a common notion of the Jews that a king might have eighteen wives, and no more {k}: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold; he might increase his wealth, but not greatly, lest his heart should be lifted up with pride by it, and lest his subjects should be oppressed and burdened with taxes for that purpose; or he, being possessed of so much, should make use of it to enslave them, and especially should be so elated with it as to deny God, and despise his providence, and disobey his laws; see Pr 30:9. The Jews generally say {l}, that he ought not to multiply more than what will pay the stipends or wages of his servants, and only for the treasury of the house of the Lord, and for the necessity of the congregation (or commonwealth), and for their wars; but not for himself, and his own treasury.

{k} Maimon. Issure Biah, c. 1. sect. 2. Misn. ut supra. (Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 4.). T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 1. Targum Jon. & Jarchi in loc. {l} Maimon. ib. sect. 4. Misn. ut supra. ({k})

Deuteronomy 17:18

Ver. 18. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom,.... When he is settled on it, and is even amidst all the pomp and glory of it: that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book; which copy the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions interpret of this book of Deuteronomy, which is a summary abstract and repetition of the various laws of God to the people of Israel; though the Jewish writers commonly understand it of the whole Pentateuch, the five books of Moses; which perhaps may be enlarging it too much, as it would be reducing it to too little to restrain it to this law concerning kings, as the Targum of Jonathan. The word "Mishneh", rendered "copy", signifies "double"; hence some take it to mean a double exemplar or copy of the law he was obliged to write out, whereby it would be the more imprinted on his mind, and he would be furnished with it for his use at home and abroad, as the Jewish writers observe; so Jarchi by the copy understands two books of the law, one to be left in his treasury, the other to go out and in with him. The same is said in the Talmud {m}, and with which Maimonides {n} agrees, whose words are,

"at the time a king sits on the throne of his kingdom, he writes for himself a book of the law, besides what his fathers left him; and he copies it out of the book of the court by the order of the sanhedrim of seventy one; if his fathers have left him none, or it is lost, he writes two books of the law, one he leaves in the house of his treasures, which he is commanded, as everyone of Israel is, and the second never departs from him;"

but one may seem sufficient on all occasions, and for all purposes; and this was to be wrote out of that which is before the priests and Levites; the original copy of it, which was deposited in the side of the ark; see De 31:26.

{m} T. Bab. Sanhedrn, fol. 21. 2. {n} Ut supra (Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 2.), sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 17:19

Ver. 19. And it shall be with him,.... Always, when at home or abroad, sitting on his throne or lying down, or wherever he went, unless in such places where it was not proper to read it, as the Jews observe {o}: and he shall read therein all the days of his life; every day of his life; meditate on it night and day, as a good man does, that he might be well versed in it, and know how to govern his people according to it:

that he may learn to, fear the Lord his God; to serve and worship him both internally and externally, he having the fear of God always before his eyes, and on his heart, which the holy law of God directs to and instructs in:

to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes, to do them; not only such as concerned him as a king, but all others that concerned him as a man, a creature subject to the Lord, and as an Israelite belonging to the church and commonwealth of Israel, and so includes all laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

{o} Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 3. sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 17:20

Ver. 20. That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren,.... On account of his office, the dignity of it, considering that he was subject to the law of God, and accountable to the Lord for all his actions:

and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand or to the left; not in the least deviate from the law of God in the whole of his conduct, and particularly in the exercise of his kingly office:

to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom; ruling well according to the laws of God being the way to rule long:

he and his children in the midst of Israel; this shows, as Jarchi observes, that if his son was fit for the kingdom, he was to be preferred to any other man; for though it was elective, yet to be continued in the same family, provided they walked in the ways of the Lord, and observed his laws.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 18

This chapter gives an account of the provision made for the priests and Levites, with the reason of it, De 18:1, of allowance of a country Levite to minister at Jerusalem, and take his portion with the rest, De 18:6, and of several persons of bad practices not to be suffered among the people of Israel, De 18:9, and of an extraordinary prophet that should be raised up among them, to whom they should hearken, or it would be the worse for them, De 18:15, but a false prophet was to be put to death, of whom a sign is given by which he might be known, De 18:20.

Ver. 1. The priests, the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel,.... That is, in the land of Canaan, in the division of it among the tribes:

they shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and his inheritance; the meat offerings, see **Le 2:2**, and whatsoever of the sin offerings and peace offerings which were the Lord's; so Ben Melech says, the flesh of the offerings which belonged to the priests was called fire offerings, after part of it was consumed by fire. All these, with other things, Nu 18:8, were given, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, for their inheritance, in lieu of their having none in the land of Canaan.

Deuteronomy 18:2

Ver. 2. Therefore shall they have none inheritance among their brethren,.... Neither of the field, nor of the vineyard, as the above Targum, because provision was made for them otherwise, and especially because

the Lord is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them,
See Gill on "Nu 18:20", which as it may be understood in a spiritual sense of their interest in God, as their covenant God, and of their enjoyment of him, and communion with him; so chiefly in a temporal sense of all those things in the sacrifices which the Lord claimed to himself, and these he gave unto them; so the same Targum interprets this of the twenty four gifts of the priesthood, enumerated
Nu 18:1.

Deuteronomy 18:3

Ver. 3. And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer sacrifice,.... Not from the priests, as Jarchi observes, but from those that bring the sacrifices to the priests, particularly the peace offerings:

whether it be ox or sheep; the one of the herd, the other of the flock, creatures used in sacrifice, and takes in goats and the kids of them, rams and lambs:

and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw; the first of these designs the upper part of the arm that joins to the neck and back, and the next the two cheeks with the tongue, as both Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe, and indeed the whole head is meant; the maw, which the Septuagint interpreters call enustron, and other writers hnustron, is, according to the philosopher {p}, the fourth and last ventricle or stomach, and which he thus describes;

"after the echinus or rough tripe is that which is called
hnustron, the maw, which is in size larger than the echinus, and in form longer, and has many large and smooth folds;"

and hnustron boov, the maw of an ox, and the belly of a swine, are reckoned by the poet {q} as delicious food.

{p} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 17. {q} Aristophan. Equites, Act. 1. Sc. 3. p.

307. & Act. 4. Sc. 1. p. 355.

Deuteronomy 18:4

Ver. 4. The firstfruit also of thy corn, and of thy wine, and of thy oil,.... This is the "terumah", or heave offering, the offering of the firstfruits; what the measure or quantity was is not declared, but is fixed by the Jews; See Gill on "Ex 22:29",

and the first of the fleece of thy sheep shall thou give him: concerning which in the Misnah {r} it is said, the first of the fleece is used in the land and without the land, of which they give the weight of five shekels in Judea, which are ten shekels in Galilee; and they give white wool, and not defiled, enough to make of it a little garment. He that buys a fleece of the sheep of a Gentile, he is free from the first of the fleece; but if he buys it of his neighbour, if he leaves any of it, the seller is bound, if none the buyer is bound; if there are two sorts, russet and white, and he sells the russet but not the white, the males but not the females, everyone gives for himself. It may be observed in this account, that as much wool was to be given as would make a small garment; enough, says one of the commentators {s}, to make a little garment to minister in; and the least garment fit for a priest to minister in is a girdle. Jarchi's paraphrase of it is,

"when thou shearest thy flock every year, give the first of it to the priest; it does not determine the quantity, but our Rabbins fix it to the sixtieth part;"

with which agrees the observation of another writer {t}, that there is no quantity fixed for the first of the fleece from the law, but from the words of the Scribes it must not be less than the sixtieth part. There is no obligation to the first of the fleece until five sheep are shorn, and the fleece of everyone of the five must not be less than twelve shekels' weight; but if there is one fleece of them less than twelve shekels, though the five fleeces are more than sixty shekels, lo, this is free; so that, as Maimonides {u} says, the first of the fleece is not less than the weight of a shekel.

{r} Cholin, c. 11. sect. 1, 2. {s} Bartenora in ib. {t} Ibid. {u} In Misn. ib.

Deuteronomy 18:5

Ver. 5. For the Lord thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes,.... That is, has chosen the tribe of Levi out of all the other tribes of Israel:

to stand to minister in the name of the Lord; the priests to minister to the Lord by offering sacrifices, and the Levites to minister to the priests in assisting them in their service; and both their ministry were in the name of the Lord, and for his glory, and done standing; for there was no sitting in the sanctuary {w}; the priestly ministry was only performed standing {x}, whatever was done sitting was rejected {y}; see Heb 10:11,

him and his sons for ever; Levi and his posterity, or the posterity of the tribe of Levi, were chosen by the Lord to this service, to be employed in it as long as the ceremonial law continued, on which stood the Levitical priesthood; but both are now abolished by Christ, having their accomplishment in him, **Heb 7:11**.

{w} Maimon. in Misn. Zebachim, c. 2. sect. 1. {x} Bartenora in ib. {y} Misn. ib.

Deuteronomy 18:6

Ver. 6. And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of Israel, where he sojourned,.... In any of the cities through the land, for they were dispersed all over the country, and employed in instructing and teaching the people; and, excepting the cities which were given them to dwell in out of the various tribes, they were but sojourners:

and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the Lord shall choose; the city of Jerusalem, where the temple would be built, and sacrifices offered, at which the Levites were assisting to the priests, and in various parts of the service of the sanctuary; and to which they are supposed to come with an hearty good will, with great eagerness of soul, and a vehement desire of being employed in the work of the Lord. Though Jarchi interprets it of a priest, that comes and offers his freewill offerings, or what he is obliged to, and even in a ward not his own; or, as otherwise expressed, of the priests that come to the feast, who offer in the ward, and serve in the offerings that come by virtue of the feast, as the additions of the feast, though it is not in their own ward; and indeed every priest was a Levite, though every Levite was not a priest; and the description of him after given, as standing ministering in the name of the Lord, best agrees with a priest.

Deuteronomy 18:7

Ver. 7. And he shall minister in the name of the Lord his God,.... The Targum of Jonathan is,

"he shall minister in the name of the Word of the Lord his God;"

in the name of Christ, as a type of him, as every priest and every sacrifice were: he was to be allowed to officiate, though it was not his course or turn:

as all his brethren the Levites do, which stand there before the Lord; daily offering the same sacrifices, and whatsoever are brought unto them; who might be said to stand before the Lord, because they stood at the altar of the Lord, and offered the sacrifices of the people to him; and a country Levite or priest was to be admitted to do the same thing at Jerusalem, and in the temple there, as they did; and this shows that a priest is meant by the Levite.

Deuteronomy 18:8

Ver. 8. They shall have like portions to eat,.... Equal parts of the sacrifices with the priests that usually ministered there; hence we learn, says Jarchi, that they divided the skins and flesh of the sin offerings; perhaps even such as did not come by virtue of the feast, as the daily sacrifices, and the additions of the sabbath, and the vows, and the freewill offerings:

beside that which cometh by the sale of his patrimony: for though the priests and Levites had no inheritance divided to them in the land, yet they might buy houses and fields, and leave them to their children, and this may be called their patrimony; now it was not reasonable that they should wholly live upon this, or spend what their fathers left them; but, besides the income of that, were to have their part and portion with their brethren in the sacrifices of the sanctuary. But some interpret these words in a different way, as if they had respect to the gifts and oblations in the several wards in which the priests ministered, as they were ordered by their fathers, Eleazar, Ithamar, Samuel, David, and Solomon; so the Targums of Onkelos, Jonathan, and Jarchi. In the times of Eleazar and Ithamar, there were only eight wards or courses, which ministered in their turns, but in the days of David they were divided into twenty four; See Gill on "Lu 1:8"; now the ordering and fixing these in their turns is called a vendition or sale; and these country priests might partake of all sacrifices at the feast, excepting those which belonged to him whose course it was that week.

Deuteronomy 18:9

Ver. 9. When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,.... The land of Canaan, often thus described, to express the goodness of God in bestowing it on them, as a mere favour of his, without any desert of theirs; and so typical of the heavenly Canaan, or eternal life, which is the free gift of God through Christ:

thou shall not learn to do after the abominations of these nations; the seven nations which before inhabited it; they might learn, as Jarchi observes, to know how corrupt their works were, and to show to their children, that they might not do so; but they were not to learn them so as to practise them, but to have them in the utmost abhorrence, as being abominable to God, and which should be so to them; some of which are as follow.

Deuteronomy 18:10

Ver. 10. There shall not be found among you anyone that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire,.... To Moloch, which was a sort of lustration by fire, two fires being made, and the child led by a priest between them, and which was an initiation of him into the religion of that deity, and devoting him to it; so Jarchi says, this is the service of Moloch, making piles of fire here and there (on this side and on that), and causing (the children) to pass between them both. Besides this they used to burn them with fire to this deity, perhaps after the performance of this ceremony; see De 12:31: or that useth divination: according to Aben Ezra this is a general name, and so Ben Melech, the particulars of which are what follow,

an observer of times, &c. Cicero says {z}, there are two sorts of divination, one is of art, the other of nature. What nation or what city is not moved by prediction, either by the entrails of beasts, or of those that interpret strange things and lightnings, or of soothsayers, or astrologers, or of lots (for these are mostly of art); or of dreams or prophecies, for these two are thought to be natural? Again he says {a}, the Phrygians, Pisidians, and Cilicians, pay a great respect to the signs of birds--from the beginning of the world it was that certain signs were forerunners of certain things; some in the entrails of beasts, some in birds, others in lightnings, others in marvellous things, others in the stars; some in visions and dreams, and others in the words of frantic persons. So the comedian remarks {b}, that if a strange black dog comes into a house, or a snake falls from the tiles through rain, or a hen crows, these, are observed as ominous, by the diviner or soothsayer. Porphyry says {c}, that soothsayers divine by the noise of crows and ravens; and it is said {d} the Arabians, from birds as from oracles, divine what shall come to pass; and that they attain to, as they say, by eating the heart and liver of dragons. Jarchi on this place asks, who is the diviner? one that lays hold on his staff, and says, shall I go? or shall I not go? that is, to such a place; and according as it fell, so judgment was made; see **Ho 4:12**. Now such sort of diviners and divinations are cautioned against, as not to be admitted among the people of Israel, and regarded by them:

or an observer of times: and such things the Egyptians were very inquisitive about, what month or day belonged to the gods, what day any one was born on, what shall befall him, how he will die, and what he shall be, as Herodotus {e} relates; and such are they who are here meant, according to R. Akiba {f} that count times and hours, and say such a time is beautiful (or seasonable) to go out in and trade; but the wise men say, as Jarchi observes, these are they that hold the eyes, cast a mist over people's eyes, that they cannot perceive their juggling tricks. Some think the word has the signification of clouds, and so designs such that observed them and their motions, and made their conclusions according to them; see Le 19:26,

or an enchanter; according to Jarchi, one that remarks things as ominous; as when a morsel falls out of a man's mouth, a roe stops him in the way, or his staff falls out of his hands: the word has the signification of a serpent in it, and so may signify one that enchants them; see Ps 58:4 or makes observations by them, as portending this and that, and the other, as before observed of the snake falling from the tiles; and Horace {g} speaks of a serpent lying in the way, and frightening horses, as taken notice of by soothsayers:

or a witch; of whom see Ex 22:18.

{z} De Divinatione, l. 1. c. 8. {a} Ibid. {b} Terent Phormio, Act. 4. Sc. 4. "introit in aedes", &c. {c} De Abstinentia, l. 3. c. 4. {d} Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 1. c. 14. {e} Enterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 82. {f} Apud R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 24. 1. {g} "Rumpat et serpens iter institutum", &c. Horat. Carmin. l. 3. Ode 27.

Deuteronomy 18:11

Ver. 11. Or a charmer,.... That pretends to cure diseases by charms, or a charmer of serpents; according to Jarchi, one that gathers together serpents and scorpions, and other animals, into one place; with which agree the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem,

"which bind serpents and scorpions, and all kind of creeping things;"

but, according to Aben Ezra, one that says certain words to gather demons together:

or a consulter with familiar spirits; or the inquirer of "Ob", or the bottle, which the Jews interpret of Python, or one that has the spirit of Python; see Ac 16:16, a ventriloquist, one that spoke or seemed to speak out of his belly, or from under his armpits; so it is said in the Misnah {h} of Ob, this is Python, one that speaks out of his arm holes; agreeably to which, Jarchi says, this is that sort of witchcraft which is called Python, and he speaks from his arm holes, and brings up the dead thither: of Baal Ob, or the master of the bottle, say some Jewish writers, one way he uses is, he takes the skull of a dead man, the flesh of which is consumed from it, and he hides it and burns incense to it, and mutters words by it, and hears from it, as if from a dead man {k}: or a wizard: a knowing one, as the word signifies, such an one as we call a cunning man; See Gill on "Le 19:31"

or a necromancer that inquiries of the dead, or seeks instruction from them, as the Targum of Jerusalem. Aben Ezra describes him as one that goes to burying grounds, and takes the bone of a dead man, and because of his wild imagination there appears to him the likeness of forms; or as Maimonides {l}, better still, he is one that fasts and sleeps in graveyards, and utters words; and, according to his imagination, sees future things in dreams.

{h} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 7. {k} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {l} In ib.

Deuteronomy 18:12

Ver. 12. For all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord,.... Not that do all these things, but whoever does any of them, as Jarchi notes; all such persons that use such unlawful methods, or any of them, to gain knowledge; and likewise all those that consult them, and make use of them; and especially it must be very abominable in the people of Israel to encourage such persons and practices, who had the knowledge of the true God, and him to consult on all occasions; had his law and testimony to attend unto as the rule of their conduct, and his prophets to advise with in matters of difficulty; see **Isa 8:20**

and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee; as well as other sins mentioned in
Le 18:24 and, as before observed from Cicero, all nations have been addicted to the arts of divination here condemned.

Deuteronomy 18:13

Ver. 13. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. Sincerely serve and worship him, faithfully adhere to his word, laws, statutes, and ordinances, and walk uprightly before him.

Deuteronomy 18:14

Ver. 14. For those nations which thou shall possess hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners,.... Such as are before mentioned, and did as they directed them:

but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do; or, "but thou not so" {m} thou shouldest not do so, not hearken to such persons, but to the Lord thy God, and to his law and testimony; nor art thou left to the deception of such persons:

the Lord thy God hath given thee: his word and statutes, as a rule to go by, which he has not given to other nations: the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"the priests shall ask by Urim and Thummim, and a true prophet shall the Lord your God give unto you;"

so that they had no need to hearken to such impostors and deceivers: or, "as for thee, not so are they whom the Lord thy God giveth thee" {n}; that is, the prophets whom the Lord would give unto them would not be like the diviners of the Heathens, who imposed on the people and deceived them; but would be men sent and inspired by God, and true and faithful in the discharge of their office; and to hearken to these they are encouraged by the promise of a very eminent one, like to Moses, in the next verse.

{m} Nk al htaw "et tu non sic", Montanus. {n} "De teau tem non ita sunt quos dat tibi Jehova Deus tuus", Junius & Tremellius.

Deuteronomy 18:15

Ver. 15. The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet,.... Not Joshua, as Aben Ezra, not Jeremiah, as Baal Haturim, nor David {o}, as others; nor a succession of prophets, as Jarchi; for a single person is only spoken of; and there is a dissimilitude between Moses and anyone of the prophets, and all of them in succession, De 34:10, but the Messiah, with whom the whole agrees; and upon this the expectation of a prophet among the Jews was raised, **Joh 6:14** and is applied to him, and referred to as belonging to him in **Ac 3:22**, who was a prophet mighty in word and deed, and not only foretold future events, as his own sufferings and death, and resurrection from the dead, the destruction of Jerusalem, and other things; but taught and instructed men in the knowledge of divine things, spake as never man did, preached the Gospel fully and faithfully, so that as the law came by Moses, the doctrine of grace and truth came by him; and he was raised up of God, called, sent, commissioned and qualified by him for the office of a prophet, as well as was raised from the dead as a confirmation of his being that extraordinary person:

from the midst of thee; he was of Israel, according to the flesh, of the tribe of Judah, and of the house of David, born of a virgin in Bethlehem, preached only in Judea, and was raised from the dead in the midst of them, and of which they were witnesses:

of thy brethren; the Israelites, of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, and to whom he was sent as a prophet, and among whom he only preached:

like unto me; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"in the Holy Spirit;"

which he received without measure, and in respect of which was superior to Moses, or any of the prophets: he was like to Moses in the faithful discharge of his office, in his familiar converse with God, in the miracles which he wrought; as well as in his being a Mediator, and the Redeemer of his people, as Moses was a mediator between God and the people of Israel, and the deliverer of them out of Egypt; and it is a saying of the Jews {p} themselves,

"as was the first redeemer, so is the second:"

unto him ye shall hearken; externally attend on his ministry, internally receive his doctrine, embrace and profess it; do what is heard from him, hear him, and not another, always and in all things; see Mt 17:5.

{o} Herbanus in Disputat. cum Gregent. p. 13. col. 2. {p} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 63. 2.

Deuteronomy 18:16

Ver. 16. According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God at Horeb,.... This was promised them, in answer to their request at Horeb or Mount Sinai, when the law was delivered to them in the terrible manner it was: in the day of the assembly; in which the tribes were gathered together to receive the law, when they were assembled at the foot of the mount for that purpose:

saying, let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God; which was such a voice of words, attended with so much terror, that they that heard entreated the word might not be spoken to them any more, as the apostle says in Heb 12:19,

neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not; out of which the Lord spoke; the congregation of Israel is here represented speaking as if a single person.

Deuteronomy 18:17

Ver. 17. And the Lord said unto me,.... Unto Moses, who carried the above request to the Lord:

they have well spoken that which they have spoken; see **De 5:28**.

Deuteronomy 18:18

Ver. 18. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee,.... So that it seems this promise or prophecy was first made at Mount

Sinai, but now renewed and repeated, and which is nowhere else recorded; see De 18:15 when they were not only made easy for the present by appointing Moses to receive from the Lord all further notices of his mind and will, but were assured that when it was his pleasure to make a new revelation, or a further discovery of his mind and will, in future times, he would not do it in that terrible way he had delivered the law to them; but would raise up a person of their own flesh and blood, by whom it should be delivered, which was sufficient to prevent their fears for the future:

and will put my word in his mouth; the doctrines of the Gospel, which come from God, and are the words of truth, faith, righteousness, peace, pardon, life, and salvation; and which Christ says were not his own, as man and Mediator, but his Father's, which he gave unto him, and put into his mouth, as what he should say, teach, and deliver to others; see **Joh 7:16**

and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him; nor did he keep back, but faithfully declared the whole counsel of God; and as he gave him a commandment what he should say, and what he should speak, he was entirely obedient to it; see Joh 12:49.

Deuteronomy 18:19

Ver. 19. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words,.... To the doctrines of the Gospel, but slight and despise them:

which he shall speak in my name; in whose name he came, and whose words or doctrines he declared them to be; not as his own, but his Father's, **Joh 5:43**.

I will require it of him; or, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan,

"my Word shall require it of him, or take vengeance on him;"

as Christ the Word of God did in the destruction of the Jewish nation, city, and temple; see Lu 19:27.

Deuteronomy 18:20

Ver. 20. But the prophet which shall presume to speak in my name,.... Pretending a mission and commission from God, and yet was never sent by him, like the prophets in Jer 23:21,

which I have not commanded him to speak; which though true was not to be spoken in a public manner, by assuming a public office, without a divine authority or a commission from God, and much less what was false, and never commanded to be spoken at all by any:

or, that shall speak in the name of other gods; the idols of the people, as the Targum; as if any should affirm they were sent by Jove, or inspired by Apollo, as some are said to prophesy by Baal, as if they had received their orders and instructions from him, and were inspired by him, **Jer 2:8**

even that prophet shall die; the Targum of Jonathan is, be killed by the sword, but the Jews {q} generally interpret it of strangling.

{q} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 1. Bartenora in ib sect. 5. and Jarchi in loc.

Deuteronomy 18:21

Ver. 21. And if thou say in thine heart, &c] Such a thought arises in the mind, and it appears to be a difficulty, and a query is made upon it,

how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? What marks, signs, and criterions are those by which it may be known that it is not a word that comes from the Lord?

Deuteronomy 18:22

Ver. 22. When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord,.... Says he comes from God, is sent by him, and has a commission from him to say so:

if the thing follow not, nor come to pass; as the prophecy of Hananiah, Jer 28:3 that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken; or otherwise it would have come to pass, unless when a condition is either expressed or implied, as the repentance or disobedience of a people; see Jer 18:7

but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; in a bold and daring manner, with great impiety and impudence, out of his own head and heart, being a mere device and imagination of his own, which, not having the fear of God, he delivered as coming from the Lord:

thou shall not be afraid of him; not only to reprove him for his wickedness, but also to punish him for it; showing no regard to the high character he assumes, nor to the great pretensions he makes to sanctity, knowledge, and familiarity with God.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 19

This chapter contains an order to separate three cities of refuge in the land of Canaan, for such that killed a man unawares to flee to, of which those who were guilty of murder purposely were to have no benefit, De 19:1, a law is given against removing landmarks, De 19:14, and others concerning witnesses, that they should be more than one; be two, or three, De 19:15, and that a false witness, on conviction, should be punished, De 19:16.

Ver. 1. When the Lord thy God hath cut off the nations whose land the Lord thy God giveth thee,.... The seven nations of the land of Canaan, whose destruction was of the Lord for their sins, and whose land was a gift of him that had a right to dispose of it to the children of Israel; see De 12:29

and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their cities, and in their houses; should possess their land in their stead, by virtue of the gift of it to them by the Lord, and inhabit their cities and houses built by them.

Deuteronomy 19:2

Ver. 2. Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land,.... From the cities they took possession of and dwelt in; and indeed from the cities of the Levites, which were given to them to inhabit; three were before ordered to be separated from those inhabited by the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, **De 4:41** but these were to be in the midst of the land of Canaan; see Jos 20:7,

which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it: which as it is often mentioned when this land is spoken of, so it carries in it a reason here why this order of the Lord's should be readily complied with, the whole land and all the cities of it being the gift of his to them.

Deuteronomy 19:3

Ver. 3. Thou shalt prepare thee a way,.... A road, an highway to those cities: on the first of Adar, or February, the magistrates used to meet, and proclaimed, or ordered to be proclaimed, that the ways be repaired {r}, particularly those leading to the cities of refuge; which was done by making them smooth and plain, so that there was not an hill or dale to be seen; and by building bridges over rivers and brooks, that he might escape who had killed anyone through mistake, and not be hindered, lest the avenger of blood should overtake him and kill him {s}; and therefore every obstruction was removed out of the way, that there might be a clear course for him; and at the parting of ways, or where two or more ways met, that he might not be at a loss one moment which way to take, "refuge" was written, as Jarchi and other writers observe, upon posts or pillars erected for that purpose: See Gill on "Nu 35:6",

and divide the coasts of thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee to inherit, in three parts; in each of which was to be a city of refuge, and those at an equal distance: so Jarchi observes, that this was done that there might be from the beginning of the border (of the land) unto the first city of the cities of refuge, according to the measure of a journey, that there is from that to the second, and so from the second to the third, and so from the third to the other border of the land of Israel: of the situation of these cities, so as to answer to those on the other side Jordan, See Gill on "Nu 35:14",

that every slayer may flee thither; to that which is nearest and most convenient for him, that is, who had slain a man unawares, as follows.

{r} Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 1. {s} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Deuteronomy 19:4

Ver. 4. And this is the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live,.... It was not any slayer that might have protection in these cities, but such who were thus and thus circumstanced, or whose case was as follows:

whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly; without intention, as the Targum of

Jonathan, did not design it, but was done by him unawares:

whom he hated not in time past; had never shown by words or deeds that he had any hatred of him or enmity to him three days ago; so that if there were no marks of hatred, or proofs of it three days before this happened, it was reckoned an accidental thing, and not done on purpose, as this phrase is usually interpreted; see Ex 21:29.

Deuteronomy 19:5

Ver. 5. As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood,.... A wood is a place common to men, and cutting down wood a business which any man might do; whereas a private place, where a man had no right to be, and doing what he had no business with, rendered a case suspicious, and such a man was liable to be taken up when any affair happened of the kind here spoken of; so the Jewish writers observe {t},

"a wood is a public place for him that hurts and him that is hurt to enter there;"

both had a right to go thither, the one as well as the other, he to whom the accident came, and he by whom it came; but they say, a court that belongs to a master of a house (a private court) is excepted, where there is no power or liberty for him that hurts or for him that is hurt to enter. Abba Saul says, What is hewing wood? It is what a man has a right to do, or is in his power; it is what is public and common, and not peculiar to any:

and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree; lifts up the axe and is about to strike with it, in order to cut down the tree pitched upon by him or by his neighbour, or both:

and the head slippeth from the halve; the head of the axe from the handle of it,

or the iron from the wood {u}; the iron part of the axe, which is properly the head, from the wooden part, which is laid hold on by the hand; and this not being well fastened, slips and falls off as the blow is fetching, or the stroke just ready to be given:

and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; hits him in some part as he stands by him, which proves fatal:

he shall flee unto one of these cities, and live; be safe and secure from the avenger of blood; such an one might have the benefit of one of these cities, for, for such they were designed: the rule with the Jews is, what is done by way of descent (i.e. which comes down and lights upon a man, and is not levelled against him, or thrown up at him) he is to be exiled (or to have the benefit of a city of refuge), but what is not by way of descent, he is not to have it. Some think this is spoken of the wood which is cleaved, and not of the wood in which the iron is fixed; but the wise men say it is to be so understood {x}; in which they are right.

{t} Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 2. {u} Ueh Nm lzrbh "ferrum e ligno", Pagninus, Montanus. {x} Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Deuteronomy 19:6

Ver. 6. Lest the avenger of blood pursue the slayer,.... These words are to be connected with De 19:3, where it is ordered to prepare the way to the cities of refuge, and to divide the land into three parts, for the convenience of the slayer to flee thither, lest he that was next of kin, and incensed against the slayer, and determined to avenge what was done, should pursue after him:

while his heart is hot; by reason of the loss of his relation, upon which his passions being raised, his heart becomes inflamed with wrath and anger; which pushes him upon an eager and hasty pursuit of the slayer, before he sits down and coolly considers and deliberates on the affair:

and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; wherefore it was proper that everything should be done to make the way to these cities as easy and as short as it could be:

whereas he was not worthy of death; had not committed an action deserving of it, it being done ignorantly and without notice, as follows:

inasmuch as he hated him not in time past;
See Gill on "De 19:4".

Deuteronomy 19:7

Ver. 7. Wherefore I command thee, saying, thou shalt separate three cities for thee. This was to be done immediately, as soon as they were settled in the land of Canaan, and established in the possession of it, the inhabitants being cut off, or driven out, or however subdued.

Deuteronomy 19:8

Ver. 8. And if the Lord thy God enlarge thy coast,.... Extend it further than it was upon their first settlement, even carry it as far as the river Euphrates, as in the times of Solomon, **1Ki 4:21**. Jarchi interprets it of such an enlargement as to give them the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites and Kadmonites:

(as he hath sworn unto thy fathers), and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy, fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; see
Ge 15:19.

Deuteronomy 19:9

Ver. 9. If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day,.... A phrase often met with before, and signifies the putting in practice the several laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which Moses was now making a repetition of, and enjoining the observance of them by a divine authority:

to love the Lord thy God; which is the source and spring of genuine obedience to the commands of God:

and to walk ever in his ways; noting constancy and perseverance in them; now all this is mentioned as the condition of the enlargement of their coast, which would be the case if a due and constant regard was had to the laws of God:

and then shall thou add three cities more besides these three; three more in the land of Canaan, besides the three now ordered to be separated in it, and besides the three on the other side of Jordan; so that there would have been nine in all, if these had been ever added; but that time never came: the Jews expect the addition of these three cities in the days of the Messiah {y} but the Messiah is already come, and all those cities, as they were typical of him, have had their accomplishment in him the antitype of them, of which
See Gill on "Nu 35:29".

{y} Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 4.

Deuteronomy 19:10

Ver. 10. That innocent blood be not shed,.... As it would be if such a slayer as before described was killed by the avenger of blood, before he could get to one of these cities of refuge, or supposing that they had not bean appointed, or a sufficient number of them:

which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance; to be enjoyed by them and their children after them, provided they did not defile it by their sins, but observed the commands of the Lord to obey them and

so blood be upon thee; the guilt of innocent blood crying for vengeance, as would be the case if such a man's blood was shed as before described; it seems as if the guilt would rather affect the whole land, for not having a proper provision of "asylums" for such persons, than the avenger of blood.

Deuteronomy 19:11

Ver. 11. But if any man hate his neighbour,.... Has conceived enmity in his heart against him, bears him a mortal hatred, and has formed a scheme in his mind to take away his life:

and lie in wait for him knowing and expecting he will come by in such a way at such a time:

and rise up against him; out of the place where he lay in wait, just at the time he is passing by:

and smite him mortally that he die; or smite him

in soul or life {z}; in such a part where life is in danger, and the consequence of it is that he dies:

and fleeth into one of these cities; for shelter from the avenger of blood.

{z} vpn, "anima", Montanus, Vatablus.

Deuteronomy 19:12

Ver. 12. Then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence,.... The Targum of Jonathan is,

"the wise men of his city,"

the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, or at least the civil magistrates of that city, to which such a murderer belonged, had a power to send to the city of refuge whither he was fled, and demand the delivering of him up to them, that his case might be tried before them, and it might appear whether he was a proper person to receive the benefit of the city of refuge or not, and if not, to pass sentence of death upon him, and see it executed as follows:

and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die; that is, after the examination and trial of him, and when he is found guilty, and sentence is passed upon him, then he was to be delivered into the hands of the avenger of blood, to be the executioner of that sentence.

Deuteronomy 19:13

Ver. 13. Thine eye shall not pity him,.... This is not said to the avenger of blood, who is not to be supposed to have any pity or compassion on such a person, but to the elders, judges, and civil magistrates of the city to which he belonged, who took cognizance of his case; these were to show him no favour on account of his being a citizen, a neighbour, a relation or friend, or a rich man, or on any account whatever; but without favour or affection were to judge him and put him to death as a murderer; see Nu 35:21,

but thou shall put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel; by which they would be defiled, and be liable to punishment for it; see Nu 35:33, the Targum of Jonathan is,

"shall put away those that shed innocent blood out of Israel;"

put them away by death:

that it may go well with thee; with the whole land and its inhabitants, and with the city particularly, and the magistrates, and men of it, to which the murderer condemned to death belonged, being continued in the enjoyment of all temporal blessings and mercies.

Deuteronomy 19:14

Ver. 14. Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark,.... By which one man's land is distinguished from another; for so to do is to injure a man's property, and alienate his lands to the use of another, which must be a very great evil, and render those that do it obnoxious to a curse, De 27:17

which they of old have set in thine inheritance, which thou shall inherit in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it; the land of Canaan: this is thought to refer to the bounds and limits set in the land by Eleazar and Joshua, and those concerned with them at the division of it; when not only the tribes were bounded; and distinguished by certain marks, but every man's estate, and the possession of every family in every tribe which though not as yet done when this law was made, yet, as it respects future times, might be said to be done of old, whenever there was any transgression of it, which it cannot be supposed would be very quickly done; and it is a law not only binding on the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, but all others, it being agreeably to the light and law of nature, and which was regarded among the Heathens, Pr 22:28.

Deuteronomy 19:15

Ver. 15. One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth,.... Whether capital sins, or pecuniary debts; or whatsoever sins a man may be guilty of whether sins against the first or second table of the law, whether greater or lesser sins, whether in moral or civil things; the Jews except only in the case of a woman suspected of adultery and of beheading the heifer:

at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established; either for acquittance or condemnation; and the witnesses may not, as Jarchi says, write their testimony in a letter, and send it to the sanhedrim, nor may an interpreter stand between the witnesses and the judges;
See Gill on "De 17:6".

Deuteronomy 19:16

Ver. 16. If a false witness rise up against any man,.... In a court of judicature:

to testify against him: that which is not true of him, let it be in what case it will; Aben Ezra instances in idolatry, but it holds good of any other.

Deuteronomy 19:17

Ver. 17. Then both the men between whom the controversy is,.... The man that bears the false witness, and the man against whom it is borne:

shall stand before the Lord; as in the presence of him, the omniscient God, and as represented by judges and civil magistrates, whose vicegerents they are; so it seems to be explained in the next words, which are exegetical of these:

before the priests and the judges which shall be in those days; which shall compose the sanhedrim, or court of judicature; and this seems to confirm it, that by priest and judge, in De 17:9 are meant priests and judges; Jarchi says, this Scripture speaks of witnesses, that is, of the false witness that testifies wrong against a man, and another that contradicts his testimony, and teaches that there is no witness by women; and so it is elsewhere said {a}, an oath of witness is made by men, and not by women; on which it is observed {b} that a woman is not fit to bear witness, as it is written,

then both the men,.... men and not women; and the above writer remarks further, that it teaches that they ought to bear testimony standing.

{a} Misn. Shebuot, c. 4. sect. 1. {b} Bartenora in ib.

Deuteronomy 19:18

Ver. 18. And the judges shall make diligent inquisition,.... Into the case before them, into the nature of the evidence and proof that each witness brings for or against; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"the judges shall interrogate the witness, by whom these things are said, well;"

shall thoroughly examine the testimony given, and look carefully into it:

and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; it appears plainly by full evidence that he has testified a falsehood of him.

Deuteronomy 19:19

Ver. 19. Then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother,.... Inflict the same fine or punishment on him he thought to have brought his brother under by his false testimony of him; whether any pecuniary fine, or whipping and scourging, or the loss of a member, or the value of it, or death itself; whether stoning, strangling, burning, or killing with the sword: though, in the case of accusing a priest's daughter of adultery, as Jarchi observes, such were not to be burnt, as would have been her case if proved, but strangled:

so shalt thou put the evil away from among you; the evil man that bears a false testimony of his brother, or the guilt of sin which would be incurred by conniving at him.

Deuteronomy 19:20

Ver. 20. And those which remain shall hear, and fear,.... Those which survive the false witness shall hear of the punishment inflicted on him, and fear to commit the like sin, lest they should be punished in like manner.

Deuteronomy 19:21

Ver. 21. And thine eye shall not pity,.... The false witness when convicted; this is directed to the judges, who should not spare such an one through favour or affection, but pronounce a righteous sentence on him, and see it executed, in proportion to the crime, and that according to the law of retaliation:

but life shall go for life; in such a case where the life of a person must have gone, if the falsehood of the testimony had not been discovered, the false witness must suffer death; in other cases, where a member would have been lost, or the price of it paid for, the same penalty was to be inflicted:

eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot; that is, the price of an eye an eye, &c. see Ex 21:23.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 20

In this chapter rules are given to be observed in times of war. When a battle was near, a priest was to address the soldiers, and encourage them to fight, De 20:1, then the officers were to declare who might return home, De 20:5 when an enemy's city was approached, peace was to be proclaimed on certain conditions, which, if accepted of, the inhabitants were to be tributaries and servants, but if not, when taken, all were to be put to the sword, excepting women, children, and cattle, De 20:10, but those of the seven nations were to be utterly destroyed, De 20:16, and, during a siege, no trees bearing fruit fit for food were to be cut down, De 20:19.

Ver. 1. When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies,.... There were two sorts of war the Israelites were engaged in, one commanded and another permitted, as Maimonides {c} distinguishes; one was by the order and appointment of God, as against the seven nations of Canaan; the other was voluntary and arbitrary, which was left to their own discretion and will, as they saw fit, when they were provoked or distressed, or were invaded by their enemies, or they saw reason to go out against them, and either act the offensive or defensive part, or both; and of each of these some things are said in this chapter:

and seest horses and chariots, and a people more than thou; the Israelites had no horses, and so no chariots, their armies were all infantry; but their neighbouring nations that made war with them had a large cavalry, and multitudes of chariots, which made them very formidable; thus Shishak, king of Egypt, in the times of Rehoboam, came against Jerusalem with 1200 chariots and 60,000, horsemen, and people without number; and Zerah the Ethiopian, in the times of Asa, came against him with an host of 100,000 men, and three hundred chariots, 2Ch 12:2

be not afraid of them; because of the strength of their cavalry, the terrible approaches of their chariots, and the number of their men:

for the Lord thy God is with thee; hence, as Hezekiah says, more would be with them than with their enemies, with whom was an arm of flesh, but with them the Lord their God, 2Ch 32:7 and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"for all of them shall be reckoned as one horse and one chariot before the Lord your God;"

with whom numbers are nothing; and which adds,

"for his Word shall be your help;"

the eternal Logos, or Word of God; so Onkelos; and if God and his Word, his only begotten Son, are on the side of his people, they have nothing to fear from enemies, though ever so many and mighty:

which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; which is observed for the encouragement of their faith and confidence in him; for he that did that for them, what is it he cannot or will not do?

{c} Hilchot Melachim, c. 7. sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 20:2

Ver. 2 And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle,.... When all things are preparing for it, and it seems unavoidable:

that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people; not any priest, but one appointed for this service; who is called

the anointed of war, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe, and concerning whom Maimonides {d} is more particular; he says,

"they appoint a priest to speak to the people at the time of war, and they anoint him with the anointing oil, and he is called the anointed of war; twice the anointed of war speaks unto the people, once in a book at the time they go forth, before they set in battle array, he says to the people, "what man is there", &c. and when he has caused his words to be heard, he returns; at another time, when they are set in array, he says, "fear not", &c."

this man seems to be an emblem of Gospel ministers, who are anointed with the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, and whose business it is to encourage the people of God to fight the Lord's battles against sin, Satan, and the world, and not to be afraid of their spiritual enemies; directing them to take to them the whole armour of God, and to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ, to follow him the captain of their salvation, assuring them of victory through him who makes them more than conquerors, and that their warfare is or shortly will be accomplished.

{d} Hilchot Melachim, c. 7. sect. 1, 2.

Deuteronomy 20:3

Ver. 3. And shall say unto them, hear, O Israel,.... Exciting their attention to what he was about to say, and which, as Jarchi observes, was spoken in the holy tongue, or in the Hebrew language:

you approach this day unto battle against your enemies; were marching or ready to march, preparing to engage with them, and a battle seemed near at hand:

let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; many words are made use of to animate them against those fears which the strength, number, and appearance of their enemies, would be apt to cause in them. Jarchi observes, that here are four exhortations, answerable to four things which the kings of the nations do (in order to inject terror into their enemies); they shake their shields, to clash them one against another, that hearing their noise they may be afraid of them and flee; they prance their horses, and make them neigh, to cause the noise of the hoofs of their horses to be heard; they shout with their voices, and blow with their trumpets: and accordingly these several clauses are so interpreted in the Misnah {e}

""and let not your hearts faint"; at the neighing of the horses, and the brightness of swords: "fear not"; at the clashing of shields: "and do not tremble"; at the sound of trumpets: "neither be ye terrified" at the voice of shouting;"

and no doubt but it takes in everything that has a tendency to cause fear, faintness, and dismay, which they are cautioned against.

{e} Misn. Sotah, c. 8. sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 20:4

Ver. 4. For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you,.... To battle, and therefore they had no reason to fear and be dismayed, to be fainthearted, terrified, and tremble:

fear not, I am with thee,.... Isa 41:10, this, according to the Misnah {f}, respects the ark, and so Jarchi, which was a symbol of the divine Presence, and went with them to battle; see **Jos 6:4**

to fight for you against your enemies, to save you; to annoy and destroy the one, and to protect and save the other; thus far the anointed priest addressed the people in an oration to this purpose: the account Maimonides gives of it is, that

"when they have set their ranks, and are near to a battle, the anointed of war stands on an high place, and all the ranks before him, and says to them in the holy tongue, "hear, O Israel", &c. unto to save you; and then another priest under him causes it to be heard by all the people with an high voice {g};"

he repeated what the anointed of war had said, and expressed it with a loud voice, that all might hear.

{f} Ut supra. (Misn. Sotab, c. 8. sect. 1.) {g} Hilchot Melachim, c. 7. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 20:5

Ver. 5. And the officers shall speak unto the people,.... What these officers were is not easy to say; they seem not to be officers of the army, for they are distinguished from captains of the armies, De 20:9, unless they can be thought to be general officers; but the word for them is the same that is used of such that attended the judges and were ministers to them, De 16:18, and perhaps they were a sort of heralds that published and proclaimed what the anointed of war had said; and so the above writer {h} affirms, that what here follows was first spoken by him, and after that (what is said, De 20:3) the anointed of war speaks, saying, what man is there,.... (to the end of De 20:7) thus far the anointed of war speaks, and then an officer causes all the people to hear it with an high voice, saying,

what man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? or perfected it, as the Targum of Jonathan, not quite finished it, has not, as that paraphrast says, fixed in it the door posts, or rather perhaps he means the Mezuzah, or writing, which the Jews thought themselves obliged to fasten to the door posts of their houses; see De 11:20 until this was done, an house was not thought to be completed; though Jarchi interprets this of inhabitation; of a man's having built a house, but has not yet dwelt in it; see De 28:30, so Josephus {i} explains it, of its not having been used and enjoyed by a man a full year; but there seems to be something more than all this in dedication; for though it does not signify a consecration or dedication of it to holy uses, as the dedication of the tabernacle and temple, yet there was something done, some ceremony used at entrance into a new house; a good man entered into it, no doubt, with prayer and praise, as the thirtieth psalm was composed by David at the dedication of his house; see Ne 12:27 and perhaps it was usual to have their friends together, and make a cheerful entertainment on the occasion. Ben Melech on the place, assures us it was a custom to make a feast and merriment at eating the first meal in a new house:

let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it; or perfect it, as the above Targum, or dwell in it, as well as have the pleasure of entertaining his friends in it at the first opening of it; this was either a command, enjoining a man, in such a circumstance, to return, and so the rest that follow, or a permission to him, allowing him to do it if he thought fit.

{h} Hilchot Melachim, c. 7. sect. 3. {i} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 41.

Deuteronomy 20:6

Ver. 6. And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it?.... Which he has a right to do, and it is hard for him to be deprived of it, **1Co 9:7** or "hath not made it common" {k}; according to the law in Le 19:23. Three years the fruit of trees, and so of vines, might not be eaten; in the fourth, they were devoted to the Lord, and might be redeemed from the priest, and so made common; and on the fifth year were eaten in course; so the Targums of

Jerusalem, Jonathan, and Jarchi, interpret it: "let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it"; or make it common, according to the above law: Aben Ezra seems to have another sense of this passage, deriving the word from another, which signifies piping and dancing, and observes, that it was a custom to sing, pipe, and dance in vineyards; and the Septuagint version is, "hath not been made merry of it"; though that may signify not having drank of the wine of it, to be made merry with it.

{k} wllx al "necdum fecit eam esse communem", V. L. "et non fecit eam communem", Vatablus, Fagius.

Deuteronomy 20:7

Ver. 7. And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her?.... Home to his house and bedded with her; has only betrothed her, but is not properly married to her, the nuptials are not completed; this the Jews understand of anyone betrothed to him, whether a virgin or a widow, or the wife of a deceased brother (yea, they say, if his brother is dead in war, he returns and comes home), but not of a former wife divorced and received again {m}:

let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in battle, and another man take her; or marry her.

{m} Misn. Sotah, ib. sect. 2.

Deuteronomy 20:8

Ver. 8. And the officers shall speak further unto the people,.... According to Maimonides {n}, the priest the anointed of war spoke to the end of De 20:7 and which the officers repeated after him to the people aloud, as before observed; and then after that an officer speaks of himself, or in his own words, and not in those of the priest, as follows;

what man that is fearful, &c. and then another officer causes all the people to hear it:

and they shall say, what man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? that has not courage to face his enemies, to whom the terrors of war, and especially of death, are dreadful; the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"because of his sin;"

whose sins stare him in the face, and lie heavy on his conscience; so that he is afraid he shall die in battle, and in his sins, and suffer divine vengeance; both these senses are observed in the Misnah {y}. According to R. Akiba, a fearful and fainthearted man is one

"that cannot stand in battle array, or behold a drawn sword; but R. Jose the Galilean says, he is one that is afraid of the transgressions he has committed; and therefore the law joins to this all those things for which a man may return;"

as having built a new house, planted a vineyard, and betrothed a wife; that so it might be thought it was on account of one or other of these that he returned, and not through faintheartedness, either because of the terrors of war, or of his own conscience for his sins:

let him go and return to his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart; lest, by his pale looks and trembling joints, his fainting fits and swoons, he discourage the rest in the same company with him, and by his example make them unfit for war also.

{n} Ut supra. (Hilchot Melachim, c. 7. sect. 3.) {y} Misn. Sotah, c. 8. sect. 5.

Deuteronomy 20:9

Ver. 9. And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people,.... By reciting what the anointed of war said unto them, and by speeches of their own framing, to encourage to the battle; and all were dismissed that had leave to depart, and chose to take it:

that they shall make captains of armies to lead on the people; on to battle; that is, either the officers should do this, which may seem to confirm what has been hinted, that they might be generals of the army, who constituted captains under them, to lead the people on to battle: unless this is to be understood of the princes of Israel, or of the king when they had one, and his ministers; for it does not appear in any instance that the people chose their own officers over them, to go out before them, and lead them on to battle; or "to be at the head of them" {z}; which the Jewish writers understand in a very different sense; not to head them, or be at the head of them, to direct and command them, but to keep them from deserting: their sense is, that the officers having dismissed persons in the circumstances before described, and set stout men before them, and others behind them (i.e. the army of the people), with iron hatchets in their hands, and every one that sought to return, they had power to cut off his legs; since flight is the beginning of falling before their enemies {a}.

{z} Meh varb "in capite populi", Pagninus, Montanus. {a} Misn. ut supra (Sotah, c. 8.), sect. 6.

Deuteronomy 20:10

Ver. 10. When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it,.... This is to be understood of an arbitrary war, as Jarchi observes; which they engaged in of themselves, or were provoked to by their enemies; which was their own choice, and according to their own will and pleasure; and their conduct towards their enemies in it was different from that in a war with the seven nations, commanded by the Lord, and distinguished from it, De 20:15.

then proclaim peace unto it; that is, offer them terms of peace; which were, that the inhabitants of it should renounce idolatry, and become their tributaries and servants.

Deuteronomy 20:11

Ver. 11. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace,.... Comply with the terms of peace offered:

and open unto thee; the gates of the city and its garrisons, and deliver all into their hands:

then it shall be that all the people that is found therein; some having made their escape before the surrender of the city:

shall be tributaries unto thee: pay a yearly tax imposed upon them, as the Moabites sometimes did, and which was paid in lambs and rams with the wool, **2Ki 3:4** and they shall serve thee; not as slaves, or be in continual bondage and servitude; but upon occasion be called out to any public service, as joining them against their enemies, rebuilding palaces and cities, or repairing walls of cities, and the like; and in general acknowledge their dominion over them, and their own subjection to them, by paying an annual tribute, or sending gifts unto them; thus the Moabites, Syrians, and Edomites, became the servants of David, **2Sa 8:2**.

Deuteronomy 20:12

Ver. 12. And if it will make no peace with thee,.... Will not accept of terms of peace offered:

but will make war against thee; come out and fight, or prepare to defend themselves: then thou shall besiege it; surround and block it up on all sides with their forces; the Jews say only on three sides, leaving one for any to flee and make their escape if they thought fit;
See Gill on "Nu 31:7".

Deuteronomy 20:13

Ver. 13. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands,.... When, what with pressures without, and calamities within, the city is obliged to surrender: this is not to be imputed to the methods and arts of war used in besieging, or to the courage and skill of the besiegers; but to the power and providence of God succeeding means used, and sending famine or pestilence among the besieged, and inclining their hearts to deliver up their city:

thou shall smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword; the men in it, grown persons, as distinguished from little ones in the next verse; because it was owing to these it was not surrendered at once, when terms of peace were offered.

Deuteronomy 20:14

Ver. 14. But the women, the little ones, and the cattle,.... These were to be spared; women, because of the weakness of their sex, and subjection to their husbands; and little ones, which take in males as well as females, as Jarchi observes, because of their tender age; and cattle because of their insensibility; all these having had no concern in holding out the siege:

and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shall thou take unto thyself; gold, silver, merchandise, household goods, utensils in trade, and whatever was of any worth and value to be found in their houses:

and thou shall eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee; that is, enjoy all their wealth and riches, estates and possessions; for this is not to be restrained to things eatable only.

Deuteronomy 20:15

Ver. 15. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee,.... As all such were reckoned that were without the land of Israel, even all in their neighbouring nations, the Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, Syrians, &c. for the children of Israel never went to war with any very distant nations, unless they came unto them and invaded them; nor did they seek to carry their conquests to any great distance, when the most powerful and victorious, as in the days of David and Solomon:

which are not of the cities of these nations; of these seven nations, as the Targum of Jonathan, the seven nations of the land of Canaan; all that were not of them were accounted foreign cities, and at a distance.

Deuteronomy 20:16

Ver. 16. But of the cities of those people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance,.... The cities of the seven nations, six of which are mentioned by name in the next verse:

thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth; the reason of this severity was because of their wickedness, the capital crimes and gross abominations they were guilty of, and for which they deserved to die; and on account whereof they were reserved to this destruction, when the measure of their iniquities was full, such as idolatry, incest, witchcraft, soothsaying, necromancy, &c. see Le 18:3.

Deuteronomy 20:17

Ver. 17. But thou shalt utterly destroy them,.... Men, women, and children: some think this is to be understood only of such cities which did not accept of terms of peace; for they are of opinion that Joshua made proclamation of peace to all the cities of Canaan; which being not complied with, he destroyed them as they fell into his hands; and they suppose that the Gibeonites had not heard of such a proclamation, and therefore were spared; and it is certain that there were many who were suffered to live among them, who it may be thought were allowed on their becoming proselytes, which was one of the terms of peace, as Rahab and her household did, and which is the sense of some of the Jewish writers. Jarchi on the following verse observes, that if they repented, and became proselytes, they might be received: namely,

the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; one of the seven nations is here omitted, the Girgashites, as they are also in Ex 23:23. It is said {b}, that

"Joshua sent three letters into the land of Israel before they went into it; in the first, whoever would turn (and flee) might; in the second, whoever would make peace might; in the third, whoever would make war might: the Girgashites, believing God, went to Africa, according to Isa 36:17, the land there is Africa; the Gibeonites made peace and dwelt in the land; thirty one kings made war, and fell:"

as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; **De 7:1**.

{b} T. Hieros. Shebiith, fol. 37. 3. Debarim Rabba, sect. 5. fol. 241. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 6. sect. 5. & Migdol Oz in ib.

Deuteronomy 20:18

Ver. 18. That they teach you not to do after all their abominations,.... This is another reason why they were to be utterly destroyed, not only because of the abominations which they committed, but to prevent the Israelites being taught by them to do the same; wherefore, as before observed from Jarchi, such as became proselytes were suffered to live among them, because there was no danger of idolatry from them, which even proselytes of the gate renounced; and though all other abominations are included, yet this is particularly respected, as appears from the following clause:

which they have done unto their gods; to the honour of whom not only many superstitious rites and ceremonies were performed, and idolatrous actions committed, but acts of lewdness, and even unnatural uncleanness:

so should ye sin against the Lord your God; a sin the most provoking to him, as the sin of idolatry was; and cause his anger to rise to such a degree, as to suffer them to be carried captive from the land he gave them to inherit; and which afterwards, was the case, and that through learning the manners and customs of these people; see Ps 106:34.

Deuteronomy 20:19

Ver. 19. When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it,.... Before it will surrender; it holding out the siege a considerable time: the Hebrew text says, "many days" {c}; which the Targum of Jonathan interprets of all the seven days, to make war against it, in order to subdue it on the sabbath day. Jarchi observes, that "days" signify two, and "many" three; hence it is said, they do not besiege cities of the Gentiles less than three days before the sabbath; and he also says it teaches that peace is opened or proclaimed two or three days first:

thou shall not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them; that is, not cut them down with an axe, such trees as were without the city, and in the power of the besiegers: what sort of trees are meant appears by what follows:

for thou mayest eat of them; the fruit of them, which shows them to be fruit trees, and gives a reason for not cutting them down, since they would be useful in supplying them with what was agreeable to eat:

and thou shalt not cut them down to employ them in the siege; in building bulwarks and batteries, and making of machines to cast out stones, and the like, to the annoyance of the besieged; which might as well or better be made of other trees, as in the next verse:

for the tree of the field is man's life; by the fruit of which, among other things, his life is supported and maintained: but some give a different version and sense of this clause, for the tree of the field is man {d}, or is man's; it is his property; but this is not a sufficient reason why it should not be cut down, whether the property of the besieger, in whose hand it is, or of the besieged, to whom it belonged: or, "for, is the tree of the field a man" {e}? that has given any reason of being thus used? no; it is no cause of the war, nor of the holding out of the siege; and had it a voice, as Josephus {f} observes, it would complain of injury done it, and apologize for itself. Some supply the negative, "for the tree of the field is not a man"; so the Targum of Onkelos, as well as makes it a comparative form of speech;

"for not as a man is the tree of the field, to come out against thee in a siege;"

the Targum of Jonathan is,

"for not as a man is the tree of the field, to be hid from you in a siege;"

or, as some in Aben Ezra express it,

"it is not as a man, that it should flee from before thee;"

it can neither annoy thee, nor get out of thy way; and therefore to lift up an axe against it, to cut it down, as if it was a man, and an enemy that stood in the way, is ridiculous and weak; though the sense of the said writer himself is the same with that of our version; but what seems best is to read the words, "for, O man, of the trees of the field" (there is enough of them) to bring "before thee for a bulwark" {g}; to make use of, without cutting down fruit trees: though some understand it metaphorically, that as the tree of the field is, so is man, or should be, bring forth fruit, that he may not be cut down; see **Mt 3:10**. Plutarch {h} relates, that it was forbidden the worshippers of Osiris to destroy garden trees.

{c} Mybr Mymy "diebus multis", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c. {d} hdvh Ue Mdah yk "quia homo lignum agri", Montanus; "quoniam homo est arbor agri", Drusius. {e} "An putas lignum agri esse hominem?" Munster; "num enim homo est arbor?" Fagius. {f} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 42. {g} Vid. Reinbeck de Accent. Heb. p. 326. {h} De lside, p. 365.

Deuteronomy 20:20

Ver. 20. Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat,.... Which might be known not only by their not having fruit upon them, but by other tokens, and even at a time of year when there was no fruit on any, which might be sometimes the season of a siege:

thou shalt destroy and cut them down; if so to do was of any disservice to the enemy, or of any service to them, as follows; they had a liberty to destroy them if they would:

and thou shall build bulwarks against the city that maketh war, until it be subdued; build bulwarks of the trees cut down, and raise batteries with them, or make machines and engines of the wood of them, to cast stones into the city to annoy the inhabitants of it, in order to make them surrender, and until they do it. All this may be an emblem of the axe being to be laid to fruitless trees in a moral and spiritual sense; and of trees of righteousness, laden with the fruits of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, being preserved and never to be cut down or rooted up; see **Mt 3:10**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 21

This chapter treats of the beheading of the heifer, for the expiation of unknown murder, and the rules to be observed in it, De 21:1 of a beautiful captive woman an Israelite is desirous of having for his wife, and what methods he must take to accomplish it, De 21:10, of giving the double portion to the firstborn, which he must not be deprived of in favour of the son of a beloved wife, De 21:15 and of the stubborn and rebellious son, who remaining so must be put to death, De 21:18 and of burying a person hanged on a tree the same day he is executed, De 21:22.

Ver. 1. If one be found slain,.... After public war with an enemy, Moses proceeds to speak of a private quarrel and fight of one man with another, in which one is slain, as Aben Ezra observes:

in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it; where murders might be committed more secretly, and remain undiscovered, when they came to live in separate cities, towns, and villages, with fields adjacent to them, than now encamped together:

lying in the field; where the quarrel begun, and where the fight was fought: or, however, where the murderer met with his enemy, and slew him, and left him; it being common for duels to be fought, and murders committed in a field; the first murder in the world was committed in such a place, **Ge 4:8**. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"not hidden under an heap, not hanging on a tree, nor swimming on the face of the waters;"

which same things are observed in the Misnah {i}, and gathered from some words in the text:

in the land, and so not under a heap;

lying, and so not hanging;

in the field, and so not swimming on the water:

and it be not known who hath slain him; the parties being alone, and no witnesses of the fact, at least that appear; for, if it was known, the heifer was not beheaded, later mentioned {k}; and one witness in this case was sufficient, and even one that was not otherwise admitted.

{i} Sotah, c. 9. sect. 2. {k} Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 9. sect. 11, 12.

Deuteronomy 21:2

Ver. 2. Then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth,.... From the city or cities near to which the murder was committed, to make inquiry about it, and expiation for it; so Aben Ezra interprets it of the elders of the cities near, but others understand it of the elders of the great sanhedrim at Jerusalem; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"then shall go out from the great sanhedrim two of thy wise men, and three of thy judges;"

and more expressly the Misnah {l},

"three go out from the great sanhedrim in Jerusalem;"

R. Judah says five,

"it is said "thy elders" two, and "thy judges" two," and there is no sanhedrim or court of judicature equal (or even), therefore they add to them one more:

and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain; that is, from the place where the slain lies, as Jarchi rightly interprets it; on all sides of it, from the four corner's, as the Targum of Jonathan, the cities round about the slain. Maimonides {m} says, they do not behead the heifer for, nor measure, but to a city in which there is a sanhedrim: if it is found between two cities (that is, at an equal distance), both bring two heifers (Maimonides {n} says they bring one between them, which is most reasonable); but the city of Jerusalem does not bring an heifer to be beheaded: the reason is, because it was not divided to the tribes {o}. This measuring, one would think, should be only necessary when it was not certain which was the nearest city; and yet Maimonides {p} says, even when it was found on the side of a city, which was certainly known to be nearest, they measured; the command, he observes, is to measure.

{l} Sotah, c. 9. sect. 1. {m} Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 9. sect. 4. {n} Ib. sect. 8. {o} Maimon Hilchot Rotzeachs, c. 9. sect. 8. {p} lb. c. 9. sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 21:3

Ver. 3. And it shall be, that the city which is next unto the slain man,.... And so suspected, as the Targum of Jonathan, of the murder; or the murderer is in it, or however belonged to it:

even the elders of the city shall take an heifer; of a year old, as the same Targum, and so Jarchi; and in this the Jewish writers agree, that it must be a year old, but not two; though heifers of three years old were sometimes used in sacrifice, Ge 15:9 a type of Christ, in his strength, laboriousness, and patience; see Nu 19:2

which hath not been wrought with; in ploughing land, or treading out corn:

and which hath not drawn in the yoke, which never had any yoke put upon it; or however, if attempted to be put upon it, it would not come under it, and draw with it: no mention is made, as usual, that it should be without blemish: because though in some sense expiatory, yet was not properly a sacrifice, it not being slain and offered where sacrifices were; hence it is said in the Misnah {q}, that a blemish in it did not make it rejected, or unlawful for use: nevertheless, this heifer may be a type of Christ, whose sufferings, bloodshed, and death, atone for secret and unknown sins, as well as for open and manifest ones, even for all sin; and its being free from labour, and without a yoke, may signify the freedom of Christ from the yoke of sin, and the service of it, and from human traditions; that he was not obliged to any toil and labour he had been concerned in, or to bear the yoke of the law, had he not voluntarily undertaken it of himself; and that he expiated the sins of such who were sons of Belial, children without a yoke; and for the same reason, this heifer not being required to be without blemish, might be because Christ, though he had no sin of his own, was made sin for his people, and reckoned as if he had been a sinner; though indeed, had this been the design of the type, all the sacrifices which typified Christ would not have required such a qualification, to be without blemish, as they did.

{q} Ut supra, (Sotah, c. 9.) sect. 5.

Deuteronomy 21:4

Ver. 4. The elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley,.... Cities being generally built on hills, and so had adjacent valleys, to which there was a descent; but here a rough valley, or the rougher part of it, was selected for this purpose. As a valley is low, and this a rough one, it may be an emblem of Christ's being brought into this lower world, from heaven to earth, to do the will of his Father, which was to work out the salvation of his people; and of his coming into the lower parts of the earth, the womb of the virgin, at his incarnation, and to the grave at his death, Ps 139:15, and of the low estate he came into by the assumption of human nature; through appearing in the form of a servant, being in indigent circumstances, and ministered to by others, and needing the assistance of angels in the wilderness and garden, by which it appeared he was made lower than they; by his being despised of men, and forsaken by his Father; all which are proofs of the low estate he was brought into, fitly signified by a valley, and which was a rough valley to him; in which he was roughly treated, his life being sought after in his infancy by Herod, which obliged the flight of his parents with him into Egypt; and being not received, but rejected by his own, as the King Messiah, whom they would not have to reign over them, and loaded with opprobrious names by them; and who often sought and attempted by various ways to take away his life; and when apprehended and examined before the high priest, and in Pilate's hall, was used in the rudest manner, being spit upon, buffeted, and scourged; and when led out to be crucified, was treated in the most barbarous and scornful manner, and was put to death in the most painful and shameful way; and, above all, was severely handled by the justice of God, being numbered among the transgressors, when the sword of justice was awaked against him, and he was not in the least spared, but wrath came upon him to the uttermost for the sins of his people; so that this world he was brought into proved a rough valley indeed to him. This some take to be an emblem of the hard heart of the murderer who had committed such a barbarous and cruel action as to kill a man; or of the hard heart of a sinner, into which Christ is brought through the ministry of the word; or of the infamous place, Calvary, where Christ was brought to suffer death; but the former is best. Some interpret it, a "strong stream" {q}, or "rapid torrent"; so Maimonides {r} and others; and indeed in valleys there are generally streams or brooks of water, but this seems not so well to agree with what follows:

which is neither cared nor sown; that is, neither ploughed nor sown, but quite an uncultivated place; and this the Jews understand not of what it had been, or then was, but what it should be hereafter; that from henceforward it should never be manured, but lie barren and useless; so it is said in the Misnah {s}, the place is forbid sowing or tilling, but is free to dress flax in, or to dig stones out of it: so R. Joseph Kimchi {t} interprets this of a fat and fruitful valley, which was not to be tilled nor sown from thenceforward for time to come; the reason of which he thinks was, that they might be the more careful of their countries and borders, and how they encouraged bloody minded men to dwell among them; that no slain person might be found there, and so they lose a choice part of their possessions; and to the same purpose Maimonities {u}: and this became true of the fruitful land of Judea and Jerusalem, after the sufferings and death of Christ there, Lu 21:24

and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley; with an axe, on the back part of it, in the midst of the valley, as the Targum of Jonathan, and the same is said in the Misnah {w}: in this it was a type of Christ, who was put to death at the instigation of the elders of the Jewish nation, Mt 27:1 and without the gates of Jerusalem at Golgotha; see Heb 13:11.

{q} Ntya lxn la "ad torrentem fortem", Montanus. {r} Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 9. sect. 2, so Abarbinel in Muis. & Ben Melech. {s} Ut supra. (Sotah, c. 9. sect. 5.) {t} Apud D. Kimchi, Sepher Shorash, rad. xya {u} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 40. {w} Ut supra. (Sotah, c. 9. sect. 5.)

Deuteronomy 21:5

Ver. 5. And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near,.... Who were clearly of the tribe of Levi, as Aben Ezra notes; about whom there could be no dispute; for it seems there sometimes were persons in that office, of whom there was some doubt at least whether they were of that tribe; these seem to be such that belonged to the court of judicature at Jerusalem; see De 17:9, who were to be present at this solemnity, to direct in the performance of it, and to judge and determine in any matter of difficulty that might arise:

for them the Lord thy God hath chosen to minister unto him; in the service of the sanctuary, by offering sacrifices, &c.

and to bless in the name of the Lord; the people; see **Nu 6:23**

and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried; every controversy between man and man respecting civil things, and every stroke or blow which one man may give another; and whatsoever came before them was tried by them, according to the respective laws given concerning the things in question, and were not determined by them in an arbitrary way, according to their own will and pleasure; see
De 17:8.

Deuteronomy 21:6

Ver. 6. And all the elders of that city that are next unto the slain man,.... The whole court of judicature belonging to it, all the magistracy of it; even though there were an hundred of them, Maimonides {x} says:

shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley: in token of their innocence, and this they did not only for themselves, but for the whole city, being the representatives of it; see
Ps 26:6. Some think that this is a confirmation of the sense embraced by some, that it was a strong stream to which the heifer was brought; and there might be a stream of water here, and a valley also; though it would be no great difficulty to get from the city, which was near, a sufficient quantity of water to wash the hands of the elders with. This may denote the purification of sin by the blood of Christ, when it is confessed over him; and shows that priests and elders, ministers of the word, as well as others, stand in need of it; and that even those concerned in the death of Christ shared in the benefits of it.

{x} Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 9. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 21:7

Ver. 7. And they shall answer and say,.... The elders of the city, at the time of the washing of their hands:

our hands have not shed this blood; have been no ways concerned in it, nor accessory to it: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"it is manifest before the Lord that he did not come into our hands, nor did we dismiss him, that has shed this blood;"

which is more fully explained in the Misnah {y}; for had they been aware of him, or had any suspicion of him or his design, they would have detained him, or at least would not have suffered him to have departed alone:

neither have our eyes seen; it, or him; so the Targum of Jerusalem,

"our eyes have not seen him that hath shed this blood;"

by which expression is meant, that they had no manner of knowledge of the murderer, nor of any circumstance that could lead them to suspect or conclude who he was.

{y} Ut supra, (Sotah. c. 9.) sect. 6.

Deuteronomy 21:8

Ver. 8. Be merciful, O Lord, to thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed,.... Out of Egyptian bondage, and claimed as his own; and therefore it is requested he would be favourable to them, and show them mercy, and not punish them for a sin they were entirely ignorant of, though done by some one among them, whom as yet they could not discover. The words seem to be the words of the elders continued, who having made a declaration of their innocence, humbly request mercy of God, not only for themselves, but for all the people of Israel; yet, both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan take them to be the words of the priests, and so does Jarchi, and the same is affirmed in the Misnah {z}:

and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge; impute not the guilt of innocent blood to a people in general, when only a single person, and he unknown, is chargeable with it: or put it not "in the midst" of thy people; let it not be placed to the whole, because it cannot be found out whose it is, though it is certain it is one in the midst of them:

and the blood shall be forgiven them; that is, God will not impute it, and place it to their account, or lay it to their charge; but will graciously consider the beheading of the heifer as an expiation of it: it is said in the Misnah {a},

"if the murderer is found before the heifer is beheaded, it goes forth and feeds among the herd; but if after it is beheaded, it is buried in the same place; and again, if the heifer is beheaded, and after that the murderer is found, he shall be slain;"

so the Targums, and Jarchi on the next verse.

{z} Ut supra. (Sotah. c. 9. sect. 5.) {a} Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 9. sect. 7.

Deuteronomy 21:9

Ver. 9. So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you,.... Which otherwise, the person not being found out, and brought to just punishment for it, would devolve upon the whole. Aben Ezra interprets it the punishment of innocent blood, which, by the above method being taken, would not be inflicted on them:

when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the Lord; as it was to observe this law concerning the beheading of the heifer, with all the rites and ceremonies belonging to it here enjoined; as well as every other command, statute, and ordinance of the Lord, which are all right to be done, Ps 19:8.

Deuteronomy 21:10

Ver. 10. When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies,.... This refers to an arbitrary war, as Jarchi remarks, which they entered into of themselves, of choice, or through being provoked to it by their enemies; and not a war commanded by the Lord, as that against the seven nations of Canaan, and against Amalek; since there were to be no captives in that war, but all were to be destroyed:

and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands; given them the victory over their enemies, so that they were obliged to surrender themselves to them prisoners of war:

and thou hast taken them captive, or "led his or their captivity {b} captive"; led them captive who used to lead others, denoting their conquest of victorious nations; see a like phrase in Ps 68:18.

{b} wybv tybvw "et captivam duxerit captivitatem ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

Deuteronomy 21:11

Ver. 11. And seest among the captives a beautiful woman,.... Whether a virgin, wife, or widow, according to the Jewish writers, even though another man's wife; so Jarchi {c}, and Maimonides {d}; the marriages of Gentiles being reckoned by the Jews no marriages:

and hast a desire unto her; being captivated with her beauty; some understand this of the strength and rage of lust, but it rather signifies a passionate desire of enjoying her in a lawful way, as follows:

that thou wouldest have her to thy wife; to be married to her in a legal manner; for though it was not allowed the Israelites to marry any of the seven nations of Canaan, nor indeed with any of other nations continuing in their idolatry; yet they might marry such as became their captives and servants, and were wholly in their own power; and especially if proselytes to their religion, and which this fair captive was to become before marriage, as is by some gathered from the following things to be done by her; though after all, this was only a permission, because of the hardness of their hearts, as is said of divorce; and that such marriages were not very grateful to God appears, as some have observed, from the ceremonies used before marriage, to render her contemptible; and the easy dismission of her afterwards, according to the sense of some interpreters.

{c} Vid. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 21. 2. {d} Hilchot Melachim, c. 8. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 21:12

Ver. 12. Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house,.... In order to make her his wife, after some things were done here directed to; for this is not to be understood of his taking her home with a view to defile her, as Maimonides {e} interprets it; who observes, that when a man's lust so rages that he cannot subdue it, yet he ought not publicly to satisfy his lust, but to have the woman into a private and secret place, as it is said,

thou shalt bring her into the midst of thine house; nor was he permitted to lie with her in the camp, nor was it lawful for him to defile her a second time, until her mourning was at an end; though elsewhere {f} he gives a different sense of this passage, and supposes the man to have lain with the captive woman, before the introduction of her into his house; for it is a notion that prevails with the Jewish writers, that an Israelitish soldier might lie once with an Heathen woman taken captive, to gratify his lust, but might not repeat it; so it is said in the Talmud {g}; yet it must be observed, that there are some, though but few, who are of opinion that the first congress was unlawful, and that he might not touch her until certain conditions were fulfilled, and they were married, as R. Jochanan {h}; and which is embraced, supported, and defended by Abarbinel on the place, and in which he is undoubtedly right; and so it is understood by Josephus {i} and Philo {k}; for this law gives no liberty nor countenance to the violation of the beautiful captive. The plain meaning is, that when a Jewish soldier was passionately in love with a captive, and was desirous of making her his wife, he was to take her home to his house, where she was to remain, to see whether his passion of love would subside, or the woman become a proselyte, or however till certain rites were observed, and then he was permitted to marry her:

and she shall shave her head; either that she might be the less engaging, her flowing locks, or plaited hair, or modish headdress, being removed from her, which had served to excite a passion for her; or as a token of mourning for her present afflicted state and condition; and in afflicted circumstances it was usual to shave the head; see **Job 1:20**; and though it was forbidden the Israelites, yet not Gentiles; De 14:1

and pare her nails; this and the former some think were ordered to make her fit to be his wife, and were a sort of purification of her, and an emblem of her having renounced Heathenism, and having departed from it, and laid aside all superfluity of former naughtiness; but this phrase is interpreted in the Targum of Onkelos, "let her nails grow"; and so the Arabic version: and this the Jewish writers say was ordered to be done, that she might appear ugly and disagreeable to him, and be abhorred by him; so Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Ben Melech; the same is observed by Maimonides {l}, and is the sense of R. Akiba {m}. Another of their writers {n} think it refers to a custom in some nations to dye their nails.

"The daughters of the Heathens (he says) used to adorn the nails of their hands and feet, and dye them with various colours, according to the custom of the Ishmaelites (or Turks); that there might be a variety in their hands, and men might look at them, take them and handle them until the fire of hell, and an evil concupiscence, burned; wherefore this is ordered that they might let them grow, without any preparation or die."

But perhaps this neglect of their nails, and suffering them to grow, was in token of mourning as well as shaving the head, as also sometimes even paring the nails was done on the same account.

{e} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 41. {f} Hilchot Melachim, c. 8. sect. 2. {g} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 21. 2. {h} Apud Abarbinel in loc. & R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 14. 1. {i} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 23. {k} De Charitate, p. 706. {l} Ut supra. (Hilchot Melachim, c. 8.) sect. 5. {m} In T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 48. 2. {n} R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 146. 2.

Deuteronomy 21:13

Ver. 13. And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her,.... Her beautiful garments, and gay apparel, in which she was taken captive; and which tended to stir up the stronger affection for her, and greater desire after her; and therefore, as some think, were ordered to be removed, to abate the ardour of love to her. Jarchi observes, that the daughters of the Gentiles used to adorn themselves in war, that they might cause others to commit fornication with them; and another writer before referred to says {o}, the daughters of Heathens used to adorn themselves in raiment of silk, and purple, and fine linen, and needlework, to allure and entice men with them; and therefore the law obliges to put off her beautiful garments, and clothe her with old worn out ones, that she might be less agreeable to him; though the putting off her fine clothes, and being clad with sordid ones, might be only as a token of mourning; as it was customary at such times to lay aside richer clothing, and put on sackcloth, **Jon 3:6** and shall remain in thine house: shut up there, and never stir out, as the same writer interprets it. Maimonides {p} says, that she was to be with him in the house, that going in and out he might see her, and she become abominable to him; though perhaps it was only that he might have an opportunity of observing her manners, and of conversing with her, in order to make a proselyte of her; so the Targum of Jonathan interprets it of dipping herself, and becoming a proselytess in his house; or else, as the rest, her abiding in the house, and not going out, might be on account of mourning, as follows:

and bewail her father and her mother a full month; who were either dead in the battle, or however she had no hope of seeing them any more, being a captive, and likely to be settled in another man's house in a foreign country, and so take her farewell of her father's house in this mournful manner. The Jews are divided about the sense of these words; some take them simply to signify her parents, others her idols, according to **Jer 2:17**. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"and weep for the idols of the house of her father and her mother;"

meaning not for the loss of them, but for the idolatry of her father's house she was now convinced of, being become a proselytess, according to the paraphrast; but the last seems only to have respect to the loss of her father and mother, which she was to bewail a whole month, or "a moon of days" {q}; as many days as the moon is going its course, which it finishes in twenty seven days, seven hours, and forty three minutes, and this is called the periodical month; but is longer in passing from one conjunction of it with the sun to another, called the synodical month, and its quantity is twenty nine days, twelve hours, and forty four minutes. Maimonides {r} says, she was to stay in his house three months, one month of mourning, and two after that, and then he was to marry her. The reason of this the Targum of Jonathan explains, by paraphrasing the words thus,

"and shall stay three months, that it may be known whether she is with child;"

that is, by his lying with her before when taken with her beauty, that so he might distinguish this child begotten on her in Heathenism, from what he might have by her after marriage, which is supposed to be the case of Tamar and Absalom; but as there is no foundation in the text for a permission to lie with her before marriage, so neither for these additional months; only one month was required, which was the usual time for mourning for deceased relations; see Nu 20:29

and after that thou shalt go in unto her; and not before:

and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife he continuing to love her, and she having become a proselytess.

{o} R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror. Hammor, fol. 146. 2. {p} Ut supra. (Hilchot Melachim, c. 8. sect. 2.) {q} Mymy xry "luna dierum", Montanus, Piscator, Grotius. {r} Ut supra (Hilchot Melachim, c. 8.), sect. 6.

Deuteronomy 21:14

Ver. 14. And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her;.... Either some time after marriage:

then thou shalt let her go whither she will; by a bill of divorce, as the Targum of Jonathan, who understands it in this sense, and as the connection of the words seems to require; or else before marriage, at the month's end, or any time before, that if his affections cooled towards her, and all the above methods tended to abate his love of her, then he was obliged to dismiss her, or to grant her her freedom, and let her go wherever she pleased; she was no longer his captive, nor his servant:

but thou shalt not sell her at all for money; as he might have done if he had not made such a proposal to her, and obliged her to the observance of such rites and ceremonies as he did, in order to make her his wife:

thou shalt not make merchandise of her; which seems to express the same thing, and therefore something else is rather intended; as that he should neither make any gain of her by selling her to another, nor retain her in his own service, nor make use of her as a slave; so Jarchi says, that in the Persian language they call service by this word, and which also he says he learnt from an eminent writer of theirs, R. Moses Hadarsan; with which Maimonides {s} agrees, who explains it, shall make no use of her service, or serve himself by her; he should have no profit by her, either by sale, or servitude:

because thou hast humbled her; which phrase it must be owned is often, used of unlawful commerce with a woman, of defiling her, or violating her chastity; and so may seem to confirm the notion of those who think that he lay with her before he took her to his house, and therefore, upon a refusal to marry her afterwards, was obliged to this loss; though the word signifies any kind of affliction, as this was a very great one, a great mortification to her, to be taken into his house, to have her head shaved, and her nails pared, or suffered to grow, and her fine clothes changed for sordid ones; and all this with a profession of a design to marry her, and yet after all is deceived and disappointed by him; wherefore for such a conduct toward her he was obliged to give her her freedom.

{s} Ut supra. (Hilchot Melachim, c. 8. sect. 2.)

Deuteronomy 21:15

Ver. 15. If a man have two wives,.... Which is supposed, but not approved of, though permitted because of the hardness of men's hearts; for it was not so from the beginning, when only one man and one woman were created, and joined together in marriage; but as it was connived at, and become customary, a law is made to prevent confusion, and preserve order in families:

one beloved and another hated; or less loved, yet continued his wife, and not divorced. Aben Ezra observes, this follows upon the former, because it is there said, that though first he had a desire to her (the captive beautiful woman), yet afterwards had no delight in her:

and they have borne him children both, the beloved and the hated; as Rachel and Leah did to Jacob, who were, the one very much beloved by him, and the other less:

and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated; or not so much beloved as the other, as was the case in the above instance.

Deuteronomy 21:16

Ver. 16. Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath,.... By a will in writing, or byword of mouth, or by a deed of gift, actually bestowing his goods upon them, and dividing among them what he is for the present possessed of; see Lu 15:12,

that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, [which is] indeed the firstborn; that is, when such is the case, that the son of his wife he has the least value for is really his firstborn, he may not, through favour and affection to the wife he loves better, prefer her son, and declare him to be the firstborn, by devising to him or bestowing on him the double portion of his goods; for so to do would not be right, or agreeably to the will and law of God; for though previous to this law the birthright was given to Joseph, the eldest son of Rachel, the most beloved wife of Jacob, before Reuben who was the son of Leah, less beloved by him, and was in fact his firstborn; yet this was owing to the sin of Reuben, and by the appointment of God; see Ge 49:3.

Deuteronomy 21:17

Ver. 17. But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn,.... Own him and declare him to be so, both by his will and the division of goods by him; or he shall "separate" him, as Onkelos; distinguish him from all his other sons, and make known to all, as the Targum of Jonathan, that he is his firstborn:

by giving him a double portion of all that he hath; or, "that is found with him" {t}; which he was in the possession of when he made his will, or divided his goods; and so refers not to what might come into his hands afterwards, or should be his in reversion afterwards; in this the firstborn had not his double portion, only in what his father was for the present possessed of; so that if a man had two sons, his goods were divided into three parts, and the firstborn took two parts, and the other the third; if three sons, they were divided into four parts, of which the firstborn had two parts, and the others each of them one; if four sons, they were divided into five parts, and the firstborn took two, and the other three one apiece, and so in proportion; the division was made according to their number:

for he is the beginning of his strength; as Jacob said, of Reuben,
See Gill on "Ge 49:3" the right of the firstborn is his; before this law was given, there was a birthright, or a privilege belonging to the firstborn, which gave him the preeminence in the family to his brethren; but whether he was entitled to a double portion of goods, previous to this law, is not certain; however, by this it was his right, and might not be alienated from him; for, according to the Jewish canons {u},

"if a man say, such an one my son, the firstborn, shall not take the double portion, and my son such an one shall not inherit with his brethren, he says nothing, cause he disposes contrary to what is written in the law."

This law of the firstborn in the mystery of it may respect our Lord Jesus Christ, the firstborn of God, and the firstborn of Mary; and who had a double portion of the gifts and grace of the Spirit, or rather the Spirit without measure, the oil of gladness he was anointed with above his fellows, and is the firstborn among many brethren, among whom in all things he has the preeminence; and also the elect of God, the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, who have a double portion, both temporal and spiritual things, the promise of this life and that to come, grace here and glory hereafter; and the ultimate glory is but one inheritance, they all share alike in, being equally children, and all firstborn; and it may have regard also to the Jewish and Gentile churches, the former was the beloved wife, the latter some time not beloved, and yet the children of the Gentile church have a larger measure of the Spirit than those of the jewish church had; see **Ro 9:25**.

{t} wl aumy rva "quod inventum fuerit ei", Pagninus, Montanus., {u} Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 8. sect. 5.

Deuteronomy 21:18

Ver. 18. If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son,.... It is observed {w} that this law quickly follows, and is subjoined to that which relates to the marriage of a woman taken captive, because often from such marriages wicked and refractory children have sprung, and which they exemplify in the case of Absalom, whose mother they say David took in war and married: the character of such a son follows, and by which it may be known that he is stubborn and rebellious; stubborn in his nature, and rebellious in his actions; behaves contrary to the laws of God, and the instructions of his parents; what he should do, that he does not; and what he should not do, that he does; will not do what is commanded him, and will do what is forbidden him, notwithstanding all counsels, admonitions, and corrections given him;

which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother; is disobedient to the commands of either of them; see Pr 30:17 and, when they have chastened him, will not hearken to them; when they have reproved him by words, and corrected him with blows; the Jews understand this of scourging or beating by the order of the sanhedrim, after admonition given; it is said {x}, "they admonish him before three (a court of judicature consisting of three judges), and they beat him; but it seems rather to respect private corrections of their own by words and stripes, which having no effect, they were to proceed as follows."

{w} Moses Kotensis Mitzvot Torah, pr. affirm. 122. Kimchi in 2 Sam. 3. 3.
{x} Misn. Sandedrin, c. 8. sect. 4.

Deuteronomy 21:19

Ver. 19. Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him,.... With their own hands, or cause him to be apprehended by others, in which they were to agree, and which the Jews gather from hence;

"if (say they {y}) the father is willing (to bring him to justice), and the mother not willing, if his father is not willing and the mother is willing, he is not reckoned a stubborn or rebellious son, until they both agree:"

and bring him out unto the elders of his city; according to the Misnah {z}, the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, consisting of twenty three; for they say, that after he has been admonished and scourged by order of the bench of three, if he returns to his corrupt and wicked ways again, he is judged by the court of twenty three:

and unto the gate of his place; or city, where the court sat; so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, to the gate of the sanhedrim of his place.

{y} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 8. sect. 4. {z} Ibid.

Deuteronomy 21:20

Ver. 20. And they shall say unto the elders of his city,.... In open court, what follows, at the same time, according to the Targum of Jonathan, acknowledging their own sins, for which such a calamity had befallen them, saying,

"we have transgressed the decree of the word of the Lord, because is born unto us a son that is stubborn, &c."

see **Joh 9:2**

this our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; one of an obstinate disposition, will have his own will and way, is perverse and refractory; honours not, but despises his parents, and is disobedient to their commands, unruly and ungovernable: the Jews gather {a} many things from hence, for which there is little foundation, as that they must be neither dumb, nor blind, nor deaf; though what they further observe is not much amiss, concerning this rebellious child, that the law respects a son and not a daughter, because a daughter generally is more tractable; and less capable of doing mischief than a son; and a son and not a man, for if at man's estate, and for himself, he is not under the power of his parents; and yet not a child or a little one, for that is not comprehended in the commands; he must be according to them thirteen years of age and one day, and he must be a son and not a father {b}:

[he is] a glutton and a drunkard; which, according to the Misnah {c}, is one that eats half a pound of flesh, and drinks half a log of Italian wine; R. Jose says, a pound of flesh and a log of wine; but the decision was not according to him; the first rule stood: now half a pound of flesh, and half a log of wine, which was about three egg shells, or a quarter of a pint, would be at this day reckoned very little by our grandsons of Bacchus, as Schickard observes {d}; but in an age of severer discipline, as he says, in the tender candidates of temperance, it was reckoned too much, and was a presage of a future glutton: and it must be further observed to denominate him a rebellious son, what he ate and drank was to be what he stole from his parents, and did not eat and drink it at home, but abroad, and in bad company; so Jarchi remarks on the text, he is not guilty until he steals, and eats half a pound of flesh, and drinks half a log of wine; in which he seems to have respect to the Jewish canon {e},

"if he steals from his father and eats it in a place in his father's power, or from others and eats it in a place in their power, or from others and eats it in a place in his father's power; he is not reckoned a stubborn and rebellious son, unless he steals from his father, and eats it in a place in the power of others,"

see Pr 23:20, the Jews seem to refer to this when they charged Christ with being a glutton and a winebibber, Mt 11:19 being desirous of having him thought as such an one.

{a} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 8. sect. 4. {b} Ut supra, (Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 8.) sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {c} Ib. sect. 2. {d} Jus Regium Heb. c. 5.

Theor. 17. p. 364. {e} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 8. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 21:21

Ver. 21. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die,.... The populace; that is, after his trial is finished, and he is condemned to die; and he was not stoned until the three first judges were there (by whom he was admonished, and ordered to be beaten), as it it said, "this is our son", this is he that was beaten before you {f}; and according to the Targum of Jonathan,

"if he feared (God, and showed any token of repentance) and received instruction, and they (his parents) desired to preserve him alive, they preserved him; but if he refused and was rebellious, then they stoned him;"

but the Jews say this law, and that of retaliation, were never put into execution:

so shalt thou put away evil from among you; put a stop to, and prevent such an evil for the future, and remove the guilt of it; or, as the Targum of Jonathan, him that doeth that evil:

and all Israel shall hear, and fear; it being to be publicly notified throughout the land, that such an one suffered death for such a crime, which would be a means of deterring others from the same; so Jarchi remarks,

"here (says he) a proclamation was necessary to be made by the sanhedrim, as that such an one was stoned because he was stubborn and rebellious;"

for the mystical sense of this see **Eph 2:2**.

{f} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect. 4.

Deuteronomy 21:22

Ver. 22. And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death,.... This before mentioned, or any other that deserves death, any kind of death, as strangling, killing with the sword, burning and stoning, to which the Jews restrain it here:

and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him, on a tree; is condemned to stoning, and after that they hang him, as the Targum of Jonathan; and according to the Jewish Rabbins, as Jarchi observes, all that were stoned were to be hanged, and only men, not women {g}; for it is remarked that it is said "him" and not "her" {h}: about this there is a dispute in the Misnah {i};

"all that are stoned are hanged, they are the words of R. Eliezer; but the wise men say none are to be hanged but the blasphemer and idolater; a man is to be hanged with his face to the people, a woman with her face to the tree, they are the words of R. Eliezer; but the wise men say, a man is to be hanged, but no woman, to whom R. Eliezer replied, did not Simeon Ben Shetach hang women in Ashkelon? they answered him, he hung eighty women (at once), but they do not judge or condemn two in one day;"

so that this was a particular case at a particular time, and not be drawn into an example: in the same place it is asked,

"how they hang one? they fix a beam in the earth, and a piece of wood goes out of it (near the top of it, as one of the commentator {k} remarks), and join his two hands together and hang him;"

that is, by his hand, not by his neck, as with us, but rather in the crucifixion; only in that the hands are spread, and one hand is fastened to one part of the cross beam, and the other to the other end.

{g} Misn. Sotah, c. 3. sect. 8. {h} Maimon. & Bartenora in. ib. {i} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4. {k} Bartenora in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4.

Deuteronomy 21:23

Ver. 23. His body shall not remain all night upon the tree,.... Which is to be understood of any and everyone that was hanged, and not of the rebellious son only; of whom Josephus {l} says, that he was to be stoned by the multitude without the city, and having remained a whole day for a spectacle unto all, was to be buried at night; and indeed such a person was not to remain hanging on the tree any part of the night, but to be taken down at sun setting; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"ye shall bury him at sun setting;"

so says Maimonides {m}, they hang a man near the setting of the sun and loose him immediately, and if he continues they transgress a negative precept, "his body shall not remain", &c. yea, according to him and to the Misnah {n}, and which agrees with the practice of the Jews to this day, not only those that were put to death by the sanhedrim, but whoever suffered his dead to remain unburied a night transgressed a negative command, unless he kept him for his honour, to get for him a coffin and shroud:

but thou shalt in any wise bury him in that day: by all means, if possible; malefactors were not buried in the sepulchre of their fathers, but there were two burying places provided by the sanhedrim, one for those that were stoned and burnt, and another for those that were killed with the sword and strangled {o}; and even the instruments of their death were to be buried also, as Maimonides {p} relates, the tree on which he is hanged is buried with him, that there may be no remembrance of the evil, and they say, this is the tree on which such an one was hanged; and so the stone with which he is stoned, and the sword with which he is killed, and the napkin with which he is strangled, all are buried in the place where he is put to death, but not in the grave itself:

for he that is hanged is accursed of God: plainly appears to be so, having committed some foul sin which has brought the curse of God upon him, and which being hanged on a tree was a plain proof and declaration of; and therefore having hereby suffered the rigour of the law, the curse of it, his body was ordered to be taken down; for the words are not a reason of his being hanged, but a reason why being hanged, and so openly accursed, he should not remain hanging, but be taken down and buried: the meaning is not, as Onkelos gives it, that

"because he sinned before the Lord he is hanged,"

and particularly was guilty of blasphemy; which is given as the reason of his being hanged, and as the sense of this passage; on the mention of which it is said {q},

"it is as if he should say, wherefore is he hanged? because he cursed God, and the name of God was found profaned:"

but though this, or any other capital crime, may be allowed to be the reason of the man's being hanged, and so apparently accursed; yet this is not the reason of his being loosed from thence, but his having bore the curse and satisfied the law: and hence this is applied to Christ by the apostle, in **Ga 3:13** showing, that his hanging on the tree was an indication and proof of his being made sin and a curse for his people, or that he bore the curse of the law for their sins, and that the taking of him down from the tree, and burying him, signified the removing the curse from him and his people for whom he suffered; or that thereby he redeemed them from the curse of the law, as the apostle expresses it:

that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance: which is another reason for taking down the body from the tree and burying it, lest the land of Canaan, which the Lord had given them for an inheritance, and which was typical of the undefiled inheritance, **1Pe 1:4** should be polluted, both in a natural sense, through the putrefaction and corruption, and the disagreeable smell of a dead body, and in a ceremonial sense, as every carcass was defiling, if a person but entered where it was; and therefore a dead body was not to be left hanging openly in the air, and rotting there.

{l} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 24. {m} Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 15. sect. 7. {n} Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 5. {o} Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 5. {p} Ut supra, (Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 15.) sect. 9. {q} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 22

In this chapter are various laws, concerning care of a neighbour's cattle gone astray or in distress, and of anything lost by him, De 22:1, forbidding one sex to wear the apparel, of another, De 22:5 and the taking away of the dam with the young found in a bird's nest, De 22:6, ordering battlements to be made in a new house, De 22:8, prohibiting mixtures in sowing, ploughing, and in garments, De 22:9, requiring fringes on the four quarters of a garment, De 22:12, fining a man that slanders his wife, upon producing the tokens of her virginity, De 22:13 but if these cannot be produced, then orders are given that she be put to death, De 22:20, then follow other laws, punishing with death the adulterer and adulteress, and one that hath ravished a betrothed damsel, De 22:22, amercing a person that lies with a virgin not betrothed and she consenting, and obliging him to marry her, and not suffering him to divorce her, De 22:28 and another against a man's lying with his father's wife, De 22:30.

Ver. 1. Thou shall not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray,.... Or "driven away" {r}; frightened and starved away from the herd or from the flock by a wolf or dog; and the ox and sheep are put for every other creature a man has, as camels, asses, &c. which last sort is after mentioned; and a brother means not one in the natural relation of kindred only, for it is supposed, in the next verse, that he might not only be at a distance, but unknown; nor by religion only, or one of the commonwealth or church of the Jews, for what is enjoined is a piece of humanity the law of nature requires and directs unto, and is even to be done to enemies, Ex 23:4 and hide thyself from them; make as if he did not see them, and so be entirely negligent of them, and takes no care and show no concern about them, but let them go on wandering from the herd and flock from whence they were driven, and to which they cannot find the way of themselves:

thou shalt in any case bring them again to thy brother: to his herd or flock, or to his house, and deliver them into his own hands, or to the care of his servants.

{r} Myxdn "expulsos", Montanus; "impulsos", Munster; "depulsos", Piscator.

Deuteronomy 22:2

Ver. 2. And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee,.... Does not live in the same neighbourhood, but at some considerable distance; so that he cannot soon and easily be informed of his cattle, or they be sent to him:

or if thou know him not; the owner of them, what is his name, or where he lives:

then thou shall bring it into thine house; not into his dwelling house, but some out house, barn, or stable:

and it shall be with thee; remain in his custody, and be taken care of by him; and, as the Targum of Jonathan says, "be fed and nourished by him"; for, according to the Jewish canon {s}, whatsoever could work and eat, that should work and eat, and whatsoever did not work and eat was to be sold; for which there was a set time, as the commentators say {t}, for large cattle, as oxen, twelve months; for lesser cattle, as sheep, goats, &c. three months, here it is fixed,

until thy brother seek after it; though in the mean while the finder was to make use of means, whereby the owner might be informed of it; for whatsoever was lost, in which were marks and signs by which inquiries might be made, were to be proclaimed {u}; (and it is asked) how long a man was obliged to proclaim? until it was known to his neighbours; same say (he must proclaim it) at three feasts, and seven days after the last feast, so that he may go home three days, and return three days, and proclaim one day; if (the owner) tells what is lost, but does not tell the marks or signs, he may not give it him; and a deceiver, though he tells the signs, he may not give it him, as it is said, "until thy brother seek after it"; until thou inquirest of thy brother whether he is a deceiver or not: and elsewhere it is said {w}, formerly if a man lost anything, and gave the signs or marks of it, he took it; but after deceivers increased, it was ordered to be said to him, bring witnesses that thou art not a deceiver, and take it; and in the same place it is observed, that there was at Jerusalem a stone, called Eben Toim, "the stone of strays", and whoever had lost or found anything repaired thither, and gave the signs and marks of it, and took it:

and thou shalt restore it to him again; he having made it fully to appear to be his, and having defrayed all expenses in advertising and keeping it; but if no owner appear to claim it, or not to satisfaction, the finder was to keep it as his own; but otherwise he was by all means to restore it, or, as in De 23:1 "in restoring thou shalt restore them" {x}, that is, certainly restore them; and continually wherever it so happens: the Jewish canon is {y},

"if he restores it, and afterwards it strays away, and he restores it again and it strays away, even though four or five times, he is bound to restore it; as it is said, "in restoring thou shalt restore them"; Maimonides says {z}, that even an hundred times he is bound to restore them."

{s} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 2. sect. 7. {t} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {u} Misn. ib. sect. 5, 6, 7. {w} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 28. 2. {x} Mbyvt bvh "reducendo reduces eos", Pagninus, Montanus. {y} Misn. ut supra, ({s}) sect. 9. {z} Hilchot Gazelah ve abadah, c. 11. sect. 14.

Deuteronomy 22:3

Ver. 3. In like manner shall thou do with his ass,.... As with his ox or sheep when astray, and found, keep it until it is owned, and then restore it; this is expressly mentioned in Ex 23:4

and so shalt thou do with his raiment; if that is lost and found, it must be restored to the owner, he describing it; a garment is particularly mentioned, it is said {a}, because in every garment there is a mark or sign by which the owners can inquire about it; for it is made by the hands of men, and does not come from anything common:

and with all lost things of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: this comprehends everything that is lost, that is properly so; it is asked {b};

"what is a lost thing? if a man finds an ox or a cow feeding in the way, this is not a lost thing; an ass whose instruments are inverted, and a cow running among the vineyards, this is a lost thing:"

thou mayest not hide thyself: from seeing it and taking care of it, in order to restore it to the right owner; or dissemble a sight of it, and pretend he never saw it, and so entirely neglect it. In some instances the Jews allow they were not obliged to take any notice or care of it, as,

"if a man find a cow in a cow house (which is not shut), he is not obliged (to take care of it); if in a public place, he is obliged; if it is in a burying ground he may not defile himself for it {c}."

{a} Bartenora in Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 2. sect. 5. {b} Misn. ib. sect. 9. {c} Ib. sect. 10.

Deuteronomy 22:4

Ver. 4. Thou shall not see thy brother's ox or his ass fall down by the way,.... And lie under his burden, not being able to rise with it of himself, nor with all the assistance about it, without further help:

and hide thyself from them; cover thine eyes, or turn them another way, and make as if thou didst not see them in distress:

thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again; that is, help the brother and owner of it, the ox and ass; assist him in getting them up again, and lay on their burden, and fasten them aright, which either were rolled off by the fall, or were obliged to be taken off in order to raise them up; and if this was to be done for an enemy, then much more for a brother, as is required, See Gill on "Ex 23:5", or "lifting up, thou shall lift them up with him" {d}; that is, most certainly do it, and lift with all his strength, and as often as there is occasion; if they fell down again after raised up, help is still to be continued, even, as Maimonides {e} says, though it was an hundred times.

{d} Myqt Mqh "erigendo eriges", Pagninus, Montanus. {e} Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 13. sect. 5.

Deuteronomy 22:5

Ver. 5. The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man,.... It being very unseemly and impudent, and contrary to the modesty of her sex; or there shall not be upon her any "instrument of a man" {f}, any utensil of his which he makes use of in his trade and business; as if she was employed in it, when her business was not to do the work of men, but to take care of her house and family; and so this law may be opposed to the customs of the Egyptians, as is thought, from whom the Israelites were lately come; whose women, as Herodotus {g} relates, used to trade and merchandise abroad, while the men kept at home; and the word also signifies armour {h}, as Onkelos renders it; and so here forbids women putting on a military habit and going with men to war, as was usual with the eastern women; and so Maimonides {i} illustrates it, by putting a mitre or an helmet on her head, and clothing herself with a coat of mail; and in like manner Josephus {k} explains it,

"take heed, especially in war, that a woman do not make use of the habit of a man, or a man that of a woman;"

nor is he to be found fault with so much as he is by a learned writer {l}, since he does not restrain it wholly to war, though he thinks it may have a special regard to that; for no doubt the law respects the times of peace as well as war, in neither of which such a practice should obtain: but the Targum of Jonathan very wrongly limits it to the wearing fringed garments, and to phylacteries, which belonged to men:

neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; which would betray effeminacy and softness unbecoming men, and would lead the way to many impurities, by giving an opportunity of mixing with women, and so to commit fornication and adultery with them; to prevent which and to preserve chastity this law seems to be made; and since in nature a difference of sexes is made, it is proper and necessary that this should be known by difference of dress, or otherwise many evils might follow; and this precept is agreeably to the law and light of nature: it is observed by an Heathen writer {m}, that there is a twofold distribution of the law, the one written, the other not written; what we use in civil things is written, what is from nature and use is unwritten, as to walk naked in the market, or to put on a woman's garment: and change of the clothes of sexes was used among the Heathens by way of punishment, as of the soldiers that deserted, and of adulteresses {n}; so abominable was it accounted: indeed it may be lawful in some cases, where life is in danger, to escape that, and provided chastity is preserved:

for all that do so are an abomination to the Lord thy God; which is a reason sufficient why such a practice should not be used. Some from this clause have been led to conclude, that respect is had to some customs of this kind used in idolatrous worship, which are always abominable to the Lord. So Maimonides {o} observes, that in a book of the Zabians, called "Tomtom", it is commanded, that a man should wear a woman's garment coloured when he stood before the star of Venus, and likewise that a woman should put on a coat of mail and warlike armour when she stood before the star of Mars; which he takes to be one reason of this law, though besides that he gives another, because hereby concupiscence would be excited, and an occasion for whoredom given: that there was some such customs among the Heathens may be confirmed from Macrobius {p}, and Servius {q} as has been observed by Grotius; the former of which relates, that Philochorus affirmed that Venus is the moon, and that men sacrificed to her in women's garments, and women in men's; and for this reason, because she was thought to be both male and female; and the latter says, there was an image of Venus in Cyprus with a woman's body and garment, and with the sceptre and distinction of a man, to whom the men sacrificed in women's garments, and women in men's garments; and, as the above learned commentator observes, there were many colonies of the Phoenicians in Cyprus, from whom this custom might come; and to prevent it obtaining among the Israelites in any degree, who were now coming into their country, it is thought this law was made; for the priests of the Assyrian Venus made use of women's apparel {r}, and in the feasts of Bacchus men disguised themselves like women {s}.

{f} rbg ylk "instrumentum virile", Pagninus, Junius et Tremellius; "instrumentum viri", Vatablus. {g} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 35. {h} "Arma viri", Munster. {i} Hilchot Obede Cochabim, c. 12. sect. 10. {k} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 43. {l} Cunaeus de Repub. Heb. l. 2. c. 22. {m} Laert. Vit. Platonis, l. 3. p. 238. {n} Cunaeus ut supra. ({l}) {o} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 37. {p} Saturnal. l. 3. c. 8. {q} In Virgil. Aeneid. l. 2. {r} Jul. Firmic. de Relig. Prophan. p. 6. {s} Lucian.

Deuteronomy 22:6

Ver. 6. If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in any tree, or on the ground,.... Which are the usual places in which birds build their nests; and this, as Jarchi observes, excepts such nests that are prepared, that is, that are purposely made for fowls kept at home; and with which agrees the Jewish canon, which says {t}

"the letting go (the dam out of) the nest is not used but of a fowl, and it is not used but of what is not prepared; what is that which is not prepared? such as geese and hens, whose nest is in an orchard; but if their nest is in the house, and so doves kept at home, a man is free from letting (the dam) go;"

that is, he is not obliged to let it go; and this is to be understood of clean birds only; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"the nests of clean birds;"

agreeably to the same canons and the explanation of them {u},

"an unclean bird is free from letting go; so an unclean bird, that sits upon the eggs of a clean bird, also a clean bird that sits upon the eggs of an unclean bird, are free from letting go,"

or persons are not obliged to let such go:

whether they be young ones or eggs; that are in the nest; and the Jewish canon is {w},

"if there is but one young one, or one egg, a man is obliged to let go the dam, as it is said a nest: a nest is a word of a large sense:"

and the dam sitting upon the young or upon eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young; according to the above canon,

"if she is flying at the time her wings reach the nest, a man is bound to let her go; but if her wings touch not the nest, he is free from letting her go--if the young ones are capable of flying, or the eggs rotten, he is free from letting her go, as it is said, and the dam sitting, &c. as the young are alive, so the eggs must be firm and sound, rotten ones are excepted; and as eggs have need of their dam, so the young have need of their dam; those (therefore) that can fly are excepted:"

the dam is not to be taken with her young upon any account; yea, it is said {x}, not even to cleanse a leper; and whoever does take her is to be beaten: this law was made partly to preserve the species of birds, and prevent the decrease of them; for a dam let go might breed again, and to this purpose are the verses ascribed to Phocylides {y}, which contain the substance of this law, and this reason of it: and partly, as Maimonides observes {z}, that the dam might not be afflicted at the sight of the spoil of her young; for this law does not prohibit the taking of her in any other place but in her nest, nor after her young are taken, but not together; and, as the same writer remarks, if the law would have such care taken of beasts and birds, that they might be freed from sorrow and distress, how much more of man? Wherefore the intention of this law is to teach humanity, compassion, and pity in men to one another, and to forbid cruelty, covetousness, and such like vices; as also to instruct in the doctrine of Providence, which has a respect to birds; and our Lord may be thought to have this law in view, Lu 12:6.

{t} Misn. Cholin, c. 12. sect. 1. {u} Ib. sect. 2. {w} Ib. sect. 3. {x} Misn. Cholin, c. 12. sect. 5. {y} mhde tiv orniyav, &c. Poem. admon. l. 80, 81. {z} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 48.

Deuteronomy 22:7

Ver. 7. But thou shall in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee,.... Or "in letting go, let go", or "in sending, send away" {a}; that is, willingly, certainly, entirely, frequently, always; so the Jewish canons {b},

"if anyone lets her go, and she returns, even four or five times, he is obliged to let her go, as it is said, "in letting go, let go";"

nay, Maimonides says {c}, even a thousand times; the canon proceeds,

"if anyone says, lo, I take the dam and let go the young, he is obliged to let her go; if he takes the young, and returns them again to the nest, and after that returns the dam to them, he is free from letting her go;"

that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days; the Targum of Jonathan is, "that it may be well with thee in this world, and thou mayest prolong thy days in the world to come:"

the same blessing that is promised to observers of the fifth command, which is one of the weightier matters of the law, is made to this; which the Jews say {d} is but as the value of a farthing, or of little account in comparison of others; wherefore, as Fagius rightly observes {e}, God, in bestowing such rewards, has regard not to the works of men, but to his own grace and kindness; for what merit can there be in letting go or preserving the life of a little bird?

{a} xlvt xlv "dimittendo dimittes", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so Ainsworth. {b} Misn. Cholin, c. 12. sect. 3. {c} In Misn. ib. {d} Misn. ib. sect. 5. {e} In loc.

Deuteronomy 22:8

Ver. 8. When thou buildest a new house,.... Which is to be understood of a house to dwell in, not of a granary, barn, or stable, or such like, and every house that is not four cubits square, as Maimonides observes {f}:

then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof; in the Talmud {g} it is asked, what is the meaning of, or why is it said, "thy roof?" to except synagogues and schools; the gloss upon which is, synagogues, &c. do not belong to any single person, and besides are no dwelling place. A battlement, as Jarrift describes it, was a fence round the roof; or, as more fully described by Kimchi {h}, it was an edifice made for a roof round about it, ten hands high, or more, that a person might not fall from it; so Ben Melech from him. The reason of this law was, because the roofs of houses in those countries were flat, on which they used to walk for diversion and recreation, or retire for devotion, meditation, prayer, and social conversation; such they were in the times of the Canaanites, **Jos 2:6** and in the times of Saul and David, **1Sa 9:25** and in the times of the New Testament;
See Gill on "Mt 10:27",
See Gill on "Mt 24:17",
See Gill on "Mr 2:4",
See Gill on "Ac 10:9", and so in later times, and to this day. Rauwolff {i}, traveller in those parts, relates, that at Tripoli in Phoenicia,

"they have low houses, ill built, and flat at the top, as they are generally in the east; for they cover their houses with a flat roof or floor, so that you may walk about as far as the houses go, and the neighbours walk over the tops of their houses to visit one another; and sometimes in the summer they sleep on the top of them."

Now to prevent falling from thence, and mischief thereby, such a battlement as before described was ordered:

that thou bring not blood upon thy house; be not the occasion of blood being shed, or contract guilt of blood through negligence of such a provision the law directs to, the guilt of manslaughter, or of shedding innocent blood in thy house, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; hence the Talmudists {k} extend this to other things, and by this law also they suppose men are bound to guard against all dangers in any other way; as if a man had a well or pit of water in his courtyard, he ought either to put a cover over it, or to make a fence round it as high as this battlement {l}:

if any man fall from thence; that is, if a man walking on the roof of an house should make a slip or a false step, and stumble and reel, and so be falling, and fall from thence; which might have been prevented, even his falling from thence or to the ground, if such a battlement had been made.

{f} Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 11. sect. 1. {g} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 136. 1. So Maimonides, ib. sect. 2. {h} Sepher Shorash. rad. hqe. {i} Travels, par. 1. c. 2. p. 17. Ed. Ray. {k} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 15. 2. {l} Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 11. sect. 4.

Deuteronomy 22:9

Ver. 9. Thou shall not sow thy vineyards with divers seeds,.... As wheat and barley between the rows of the vines; and this is to be understood only of divers sorts of corn, and of divers sorts of herbs, but not of trees; hence we read of a fig tree in a vineyard, Lu 13:6, and this only respects what is sown with design, and not what is casual, as the Jews interpret it {e};

"if a man passes through a vineyard, and seeds fall from him, or they are carried out along with dung, or with water; or when a man is sowing, and a storm of wind carries it behind him (i.e. to a vineyard behind him), it is lawful;"

that is, it may be let grow, and the fruit of it enjoyed; the same here is said of the vineyard as of the field in See Gill on "Le 19:19";

lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard; be defiled; that is, lest not only the increase of these divers seeds sown, but also the increase of the vines among which they are sown, become unlawful, and unfit for use, and so a loss of all be sustained: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"lest it be condemned to burning;"

or thou art obliged to burn it; for, according to the Jewish canons {f}, the mixtures of a vineyard, or the divers seeds of it, and the increase thereof, were to be burnt; and the commentators of the Misnah {g} frequently explain this phrase by "lest it be burnt".

{e} Misn. Celaim, c. 5. sect. 7. {f} Misn. Temurah, c. 7. sect. 5. {g} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Terumot, c. 10. sect. 6. Orla, c. 3. sect. 7. Kiddushin, c. 2. sect. 9.

Deuteronomy 22:10

Ver. 10. Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together,.... They might be used separately, but not together; nor was it uncommon in some countries for asses to be employed in ploughing as well as oxen. Pliny {h} makes mention of some fruitful land in Africa, which when it was dry weather could not be ploughed by oxen, but after showers of rain might be ploughed by a mean little ass; so Leo Africanus {i} says, the Africans only use horses and asses in ploughing. The reason why they were not to be put together was either (as some think) lest the law should be broken which forbids the gendering of cattle with a divers kind, Le 19:19 but Aben Ezra thinks the reason is, because the strength of an ass is not equal to the strength of an ox; and therefore he supposes this law is made from the mercy and commiseration of God extended to all his creatures; though perhaps the better reason is, because the one was a clean creature, and the other an unclean, and this instance is put for all others; and with which agree the Jewish canons, which run thus,

"cattle with cattle, wild beasts with wild beasts, unclean with unclean, clean with clean (i.e. these may be put together); but unclean with clean, and clean with unclean, are forbidden to plough with, to draw with, or to be led together {k}."

The mystery of this is, that godly and ungodly persons are not to be yoked together in religious fellowship: see **2Co 6:14**.

{h} Nat. Hist. l. 17. c. 5. {i} Descriptio Africae, l. 2. p. 104. {k} Misn. Celaim, c. 8. sect. 2.

Deuteronomy 22:11

Ver. 11. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts,.... The Jews say nothing is forbidden under the name of sorts but what is spun and wove, as it is said, "thou shalt not wear sheatnez", a thing that is carded, spun, and wove {l}; which Ainsworth translates "linsie woolsie", and is explained by what follows: as "of woollen and linen together"; of which See Gill on "Le 19:19", whereas Josephus {m} observes, this was granted to the priests only to wear such garments. Bochart {n} affirms it to be false; but that great man is mistaken; the blue, purple, and scarlet, in the priests' garments, were no other than dyed wool; and it is a sentiment in general received by the Jews, that the priests wore no other but woollen and linen in their service; see the note on the above place; otherwise this law is so strictly observed, as not, to sew a woollen garment with linen thread, and so on the contrary {o}.

{l} Misn. Celaim. c. 9. sect. 8. {m} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 11. {n} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 45. col. 491. {o} Leo Modena's History of Rites, &c. l. 1. c. 5.

Deuteronomy 22:12

Ver. 12. Thou shalt make thee fringes,.... Though a different word is here used from that in Nu 15:38, yet the same things are intended, and Onkelos translates both by one and the same word, and which is no other than a corruption of the Greek word used in Mt 23:5. Though there have been some, whom Aben Ezra takes notice of, who supposed that this is a law by itself, and to be observed in the night, as that in Nu 15:38 was in the day; but these he warmly opposes, and calls them liars:

upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thyself; upon the four skirts of the uppermost vesture, called Talith;
See Gill on "Nu 15:38".

Deuteronomy 22:13

Ver. 13. If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her. That is, marries a wife, and cohabits with her as man and wife, and after some time dislikes her, and is desirous of parting with her, and therefore takes the following wicked method to obtain it: this is to be understood of a virgin taken to wife, as the Targum of Jonathan explains it; and what follows confirms it.

Deuteronomy 22:14

Ver. 14. And give occasions of speech against her,.... Among her neighbours, who by his behaviour towards her, and by what he says of her, will be led in all company and conversation to traduce her character, and speak of her as a very bad woman:

and bring up an evil name upon her; take away her good name, and give her a bad one; defame her, and make her appear scandalous and reproachful to all that know her: though the Jews understand this not of private slander, but of bringing an action against her in a public court of judicature, the substance of which follows: "and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid"; the sense is, that he had married her, and when he came to cohabit with her as man and wife, it appeared to him that she was vitiated, and not a pure virgin. This is the charge in court against her, the action laid by him; so Jarchi observes, a man might not say this but before a magistrate, in a court of judicature, which is thus represented by Maimonides {p};

"a man comes to the sanhedrim, and says, this young woman I married, and I did not find her virginities; and when I inquired into the matter, it appeared to me that she had played the whore under me, after I had betrothed her; and these are my witnesses that she played the whore before them."

{p} Hilchot Naarah Betulah, c. 3. sect. 6.

Deuteronomy 22:15

Ver. 15. Then shall the father and the mother of the damsel take,.... Power from the court, according to the Targum of Jonathan; having leave and licence granted them to do what follows, these were to, and would, concern themselves in such an affair, partly for the credit and reputation of their child, and partly for their own honour, who were in danger, as Jarchi observes, of coming into contempt for their ill education of her:

and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity; the sheet she lay in when she first bedded with her husband, in her parents' possession, and kept by them as a witness of her purity, should there ever be any occasion for it: and which were to be brought

unto the elders of the city in the gate; which sat in the gate of the city to try causes: the Targum of Jonathan calls it the gate of the sanhedrim, or court of judicature; and, according to Maimonides {q}, this court was the court of twenty three judges; for this was a capital crime accused of, a cause relating to life and death, which could not be heard and tried in a lesser court.

{q} Hilchot Naarah Betulah, c. 3. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 22:16

Ver. 16. And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders,.... Not her mother; hence we learn, says Jarchi, that a woman has not power (or is not allowed) to speak before men; that is, in public see 1Co 14:34 and it was most proper for a father to appear in court for her, and defend her; and if she had no parents living then, those that brought her up, her guardians, that had the education of her, and placing her out in marriage, were to undertake her cause; or, as Josephus {r} says, those that were next akin to her; or, as, Aben Ezra, one appointed by the court:

I gave my daughter unto this man to wife; and, by the Jewish canons {s}, a man might give his daughter in marriage, but a woman might not:

and he hateth her; has taken a dislike to her, and wants to be rid of her, and therefore has brought this infamous action against her.

{r} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 23. {s} Misn. Sotah, c. 3. sect. 8.

Deuteronomy 22:17

Ver. 17. And, lo, he hath given occasion of speech against her,.... In the neighbourhood where they dwell; has been the cause of persons speaking reproachfully of her, as one of ill fame:

saying, l found not thy daughter a maid; so that it seems he said this not only to his neighbours, and before a court of judicature, but to the parents of the damsel:

and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity; which were brought with him, and produced in open court:

and they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city; that they might have ocular proof and evidence of the truth of what he said, by having spread before them the sheet stained with the blood of her virginity upon her husband's first congress with her. It seems that the mother, as well as the father, were present and concerned in this action: for it is said, "they shall spread"; and though the mother might not speak, she was the proper person to bring this cloth and spread it; and indeed it was particularly in her care and keeping; for we are told {t}, that two persons, called Mynybvwv, "the friends" of the bride and bridegroom, went first into their bedchamber, and thoroughly examined the bed, whether there was anything relating to the sign of virginity, by which one might impose upon another; and they stood all night keeping watch with great joy and cheerfulness, as if they had been the guards of a king and queen; (to which is thought the allusion is in **Joh 3:29**) their business was, when the bridegroom and bride came out, to rush in immediately, and examine all things again; and knowing and owning the former linen sheets in which they had lain, took them and delivered them to the mother. Nor need spreading such a cloth before the court be thought unlikely because of the indecency of it, when it is observed that persons and things much more filthy came under the cognizance and examination of the priests, as leprous, menstruous, and profluvious persons, and their respective disorders; nor is it at all improbable that there should be such evident tokens as are said to be given, when it is observed, especially of the Jewish women, at what a tender age they were marriageable, and were frequently married, namely, when twelve years and one day old. And the Africans, as we are told {u}, have a custom with them similar to this at a wedding;

"a feast is prepared, and a certain woman waits without, until the bride is lain with; and then a linen cloth, stained with blood, is reached out to her, which she carries in her hands, and shows to the guests, crying out with a loud voice that this was a virgin hitherto not corrupt; then she, with other women, are splendidly received, first by the parents of the bridegroom, and then of the bride; but if she does not appear to be a virgin, she is returned to her parents under the disgrace of all, and the marriage made null and void."

Indeed there are some Jewish writers, that interpret this cloth in a parabolical and allegorical sense, and understand by it witnesses that; would make the case as clear and plain as the spreading out a cloth or garment. They suppose that before the damsel was lain with she was examined by several matrons, who declaring her to be a virgin, gave it under their hands in writing to her parents, which they were capable of producing in court when there was occasion for it; so Jarchi says, this is a parable; the meaning is, they made things as clear and as plain as a new cloth; with which agrees the Talmud {w} he seems to have taken it from, where on these words, and they shall spread the cloth, this remark is made; but the literal sense seems best.

{t} Nachman. apud Fagium in loc. Schindler. Lex: Pentaglott. col. 260, 261. {u} Joan. Leon. Descript. Africae, l. 3. p. 325. {w} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 46. 1.

Deuteronomy 22:18

Ver. 18. And the elders of that city shall take the man, and chastise him. Not with words, but blows. Jarchi interprets it of beating, and so does the Talmud {x}; and both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render it,

"shall beat him;"

that is, with the beating or scourging of forty stripes, save one.

{x} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 46. 1.

Deuteronomy 22:19

Ver. 19. And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver,.... Which was about twelve pounds of our money; this was double the dowry he would have been obliged to have given her, if he had put her away; which he might have done with less trouble, and with a greater certainty of being rid of her; but being willing to save that expense, took this wicked method to accuse her falsely; and therefore is fined double that sum:

and give them unto the father of the damsel; as a sort of satisfaction or reparation for the scandal brought upon him and his family; if the damsel was fatherless, Maimonides {y} says, she was to have them herself:

because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin in Israel: defamed her among her neighbours and acquaintance, or brought a false accusation against her in court; alleging she was not a virgin when he married her, when she was one, which was a very great injury to her character:

and she shall be his wife, he may not put her away all his days: and so he was disappointed in his view of getting rid of her, and obliged to retain her as his wife, though hated, and was not suffered to divorce her as long as he lived; which was permitted and connived at in other men, and which he might have done before, without bringing such a charge against her; all which must be very mortifying to him, as to be whipped, to pay a fine, keep his wife, and not allowed ever to divorce her.

{y} Hilchot Naarah Betulah, c. 3. sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 22:20

Ver. 20. But if this thing be true,.... Which the husband of the damsel laid to her charge, that she was no virgin when married to him, and she had committed whoredom, of which there was plain proof:

and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel; by her parents, or those who had the care of her; or no sufficient reason could be assigned for the want of them, through any family defect, or any disorder of her own; which, as Maimonides {z} says, the judges were to inquire into.

{z} Hilchot Ishot, c. 11. sect. 12.

Deuteronomy 22:21

Ver. 21. Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house,.... For his greater disgrace, and as a sort of punishment for his neglect of her education, not taking care to instruct her, and bring her up in a better manner:

and the men of her city shall stone her with stones, that she die; which was the death this sort of adulteresses were put to; others was by strangling, and the daughter of a priest was to be burnt; see Le 20:10, which shows that this sin was committed by her after her espousals, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra note; or otherwise it would have been only simple fornication, which was not punishable with death:

because she hath wrought folly in Israel: a sin, as all sin is folly, and especially any notorious one, as this was; and which is aggravated by its being done in Israel, among a people professing the true religion, and whom God had chosen and separated from all others to be a holy people to himself:

to play the whore in her father's house; where she continued after her espousals, until she was taken to the house of her husband, to consummate the: marriage; and between the one and the other was this sin committed, and which is another reason for her execution at the door of her father's house:

so shalt thou put evil away from among you; deter others from it by such an example, and remove the guilt of it from them, which otherwise would lie upon them, if punishment was not inflicted; the Targum of Jonathan interprets it of the putting away of her that did the evil.

Deuteronomy 22:22

Ver. 22. If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband,..... This law respects adultery, and is the same with that in Le 20:10

then they shall both of them die; with the strangling of a napkin, as the Targum of Jonathan, which is the death such persons were put to; and is always meant when death is simply spoken of, and it is not specified what death; See Gill on "Le 20:10":

both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman; they were both to die, and to die the same death:

so shalt thou put away evil from Israel; such that do it, as the above Targum; See Gill on "De 22:21".

Deuteronomy 22:23

Ver. 23. If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband,.... But not married, not as yet brought home to her husband's house, and the marriage consummated; for the Jews distinguish between being betrothed or espoused, and married; and generally there was some time between the one and the other. And a wife was obtained in this way by three things; by money, which was the most usual; and by writing, which was to be done before witnesses, and with her consent; and by copulation, which, though valid, was not so much approved of {a}. There is a whole treatise in the Misnah, called Kiddushin, or Espousals, which largely treats of this matter:

and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; with her consent, as might be presumed by her not crying out, when, had she, she might have been heard, being in a city; and her being there also makes against her, since, being betrothed to a man, she ought to have abode in her father's house till her husband fetched her home, and not to have gadded abroad in the city, where she was exposed to temptation.

{a} Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 22:24

Ver. 24. Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of the city,.... Where the fact was committed; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"to the gate of the court of judicature, which is in that city:"

and ye shall stone them with stones, that they die; a man that lay with a married woman, he and she were to be strangled; but this sort of adulterers and adulteresses were to be stoned, and it is thought that of this sort was the woman spoken of in **Joh 8:3**,

the damsel because she cried not, being in the city, and the man because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife; as she was by espousal, by contract, by promise, and so was guilty of adultery, which was punishable with death:

so thou shall put away evil from among you; see De 22:21.

Deuteronomy 22:25

Ver. 25. But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field,.... Alone, and where she might cry out, and none hear, nor were any to help her:

and a man force her, and lie with her; or "take fast and strong hold on her" {b}; so that she is not able to get out of his hands, and make her escape, he being stronger than she, and so commits a rape upon her:

then the man only that lay with her shall die; he being guilty of adultery, in lying with a woman espoused to another man, but not she, because she consented not to it.

{b} hb qyzxhw "et apprehenderit (in) eam", Pagninus, Montanus; "et apprehendens eam", Piscator.

Deuteronomy 22:26

Ver. 26. But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing,.... Neither fine her, nor beat her, and much less punish her with death:

there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death; because what was done to her was done without her will and consent, and was what she was forced to submit unto; but the Targum of Jonathan adds, that the man to whom she was betrothed might dismiss her from himself by a bill of divorce:

for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter; as when a man comes unawares upon another, and lays hold on him, and kills him, being stronger than he, and none to help; so is the case of a woman laid hold on by a man in a field, and ravished by him, where no help could be had; and depriving a woman of her chastity is like taking away a man's life; from this passage Maimonides {c} concludes, that impurities, incests, and adulteries, are equal to murder, to capital cases relating to life and death.

{c} Hilchot Yesode Hattorah, c. 5. sect. 10.

Deuteronomy 22:27

Ver. 27. For he found her in the field,.... Which is a circumstance in her favour, from which it might he presumed that she was forced, and did not consent; for had the sin been committed by agreement, they would doubtless have betook themselves to another place: and the betrothed damsel cried as it might be concluded from the above circumstance she did, and as she herself declared, and which he could not gainsay, or however disprove:

and there was none to save her; to help her against him, and deliver her out of his hands.

Deuteronomy 22:28

Ver. 28. If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed,.... That is, meets with one in a field, which is not espoused to a man; and the man is supposed to be an unmarried man, as appears by what follows:

and lay hold on her, and lie with her, she yielding to it, and so is not expressive of a rape, as De 22:25 where a different word from this is there used; which signifies taking strong hold of her, and ravishing her by force; yet this, though owing to his first violent seizure of her, and so different from what was obtained by enticing words, professions of love, and promises of marriage, and the like, as in
Ex 22:16 but not without her consent:

and they be found; in the field together, and in the fact; or however there are witnesses of it, or they themselves have confessed, it, and perhaps betrayed by her pregnancy.

Deuteronomy 22:29

Ver. 29. Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, &.] For the abuse of his daughter; and besides this was obliged to give her her dowry also, as Philo {d} says, which is commonly said to be fifty more:

and she shall be his wife; if her father and she agreed to it; and in such a case the man was not at his liberty to refuse, be she what she would, agreeable or not, handsome or ugly; he must, as the Jews express it, drink out of his pot, or marry her, if she is lame, or blind, or full of ulcers {e}:

because he hath humbled her he may not put her away all his days: to all the other parts of his punishment, paying a fine of fifty shekels to the damsel's father, a dowry of the same sum to her, obligation to marry her whether he likes her or not, this is added, that he is not allowed to divorce her as long as he lives; which was permitted to other men, and this was wisely ordered to preserve chastity.

{d} De Special. Leg. p. 787. {e} Misn. Cetubot, c. 3. sect. 5.

Deuteronomy 22:30

Ver. 30. A man shall not take his father's wife,.... Not marry her, whether his own mother, or a stepmother; or even, as Aben Ezra thinks, anyone that was deflowered by his father. Jarchi interprets it of his father's brother's wife, which he was obliged to marry by virtue of the law in De 25:5

nor discover his father's skirt; or lie with her his father had thrown his skirt over, or married; and which being the first, is mentioned here as a sample to all the rest forbidden Le 18:7 or, as Bishop Patrick expresses it, is a "short memorandum", to make them careful to observe all the other laws respecting incestuous marriages and copulations there delivered.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 23

Orders are here given to restrain certain persons from entering into the congregation of the Lord, De 23:1, and to take care that there be no unclean person in the camp, or any indecent thing done in it, De 23:9, to protect fugitive servants, and not deliver them up to their masters, De 23:15 not to suffer a filthy person to be among them, or any filthy thing to be brought into the house of God for a vow, De 23:17, then follow some laws against usury, and for the payment of vows, De 23:19, and the chapter is concluded with some directions how to behave in a neighbour's vineyard, or standing corn, De 23:24.

Ver. 1. He that is wounded in the stones,.... In any of them, not accidentally, but purposely; which are crushed and bruised by the hands of men, with a design to make him unfit for generation, or to make an eunuch of him:

or that hath his privy member cut by himself or another, and is a thorough eunuch by the hands of men; for of such eunuchs that are made by men, and not born so, the law speaks; so Maimonides interprets it {f}; See Gill on "Mt 19:12"

shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; which is to be understood not of the sanctuary of the Lord, or of being refused admittance into the church of God, and to join in religious rites, and partake of sacred ordinances, which all Israelites, and strangers that were proselytes, had a right unto; such might bring their offerings, keep the passover, &c. Ex 12:48 nor of the commonwealth of Israel, as if unfit to be members of civil society; it cannot be thought that such defects should abridge them of their civil rights and privileges: but by the congregation is to be understood the elders, judges, and representatives of the people, that met together in some one place to execute judgment; see
Nu 35:12, into which such persons were not to be admitted; either because disgraceful and dishonourable, or because of the influence such defects have on their minds, they thereby becoming effeminate, irresolute, and wanting courage, as well as in opposition to the customs and usages of the Heathens, with whom it was common to admit such persons to civil offices; hence the word eunuch is sometimes used for an officer, Ge 37:36 and elsewhere; the Jews {g} restrain this law to marriage, but unnecessarily.

{f} Hilchot lssure Biah, c. 16. sect. 8. {g} Targum Jon. in loc. Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 2, 4, 5, 6. Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 49.

Deuteronomy 23:2

Ver. 2. A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord,.... That is born of whoredom, as the Targum of Jonathan; and for the sake of avoiding whoredom and deterring from it was this law made, according to Maimonides {h}, that adulterers might see, as he observes, that they affect their whole family with an irreparable stain, should they commit such an infamous action; though the Jews commonly interpret it of one that is born of any of those incestuous copulations forbidden in Le 18:1 which they gather from this following upon, and being near unto one of those incests mentioned in the last verse of the preceding chapter {i}; and it is a rule with them {k}, that persons born of such copulations were reckoned bastards; now such an one, according to Jarchi, might not marry an Israelitish woman, or rather might not be admitted into the assembly of elders, or bear any public office. Jephthah may seem to be an objection to this, who was the son of an harlot, Jud 11:1 which might be owing to the badness of the times, the laws of God being neglected, or to the providence of God so ordering it, who is not bound by his own laws, though men are; nor was he the son of a common harlot, nor of an incestuous person, but of his father's concubine; besides some think such only are intended who were born of strangers and not Israelites:

even unto his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord; which seems as if he might at the eleventh; but it is generally interpreted never, as is gathered from the following verse, and from the tenth number being an absolute and perfect one; yet according to the Jewish writers there were ways and means by which their posterity became legitimate; so they say, bastards may be purified (or legitimated), how? if one marries a servant maid, the child is a servant, who if he becomes free, (his) son is a free man {l}.

{h} Targum Jon. in loc. Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 2, 4, 5, 6. Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 49. {i} Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 3. sect. 12. {k} Misn. Kiddushin, c. 3. sect. 12. & Misn. Yebamot, c. 4. sect. 13. Jarchi & Aben Ezra in loc. {l} Misn. Kiddushin, c. 3. sect. 13.

Deuteronomy 23:3

Ver. 3. An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord,.... Or marry an Israelitish woman, as Jarchi, and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"the male Ammonites and Moabites are not fit to take a wife of the congregation of the Lord;"

for the Jews restrain this to men, because it is, as Aben Ezra observes, an Ammonite, not an Ammonitess, a Moabite, not a Moabitess; they allow that females of those nations might be married to Israelites, that is, provided they were proselytesses, as Ruth was {m}:

even to their tenth generation, shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever; that is, not only to the tenth generation, but for ever; and this law was understood as in force in Nehemiah's time, which was more than ten generations from the making of it; though now, as these nations are no more a distinct people, they suppose it is no longer binding {n}.

{m} Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 3. {n} Misn. Yadaim, c. 4. sect. 4.

Deuteronomy 23:4

Ver. 4. Because they met you not with bread and with water,.... To supply them therewith, either as a gift, which was a piece of humanity to strangers and travellers, or rather to sell unto them, for on no other terms did the Israelites desire their bread and their water:

in the way when ye came forth out of Egypt; not as soon as they came forth from thence, for it was near forty years after; but it was while they were in the way from thence, as they were journeying to the land of Canaan, and so were travellers, and should have had kindness shown them as such; for though they needed not bread and water, God providing both for them, yet this does not excuse the inhumanity of these people: the words are to be understood by way of distribution; this charge here only belongs to the Ammonites, for it appears that the Moabites did give them bread and water for money, **De 2:28** as what follows belongs peculiarly to the Moabites and not the Ammonites:

and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee; this the Moabites did in conjunction with the Midianites, but the Ammonites had no concern in it; see Nu 22:7, it was not therefore because the Moabites and Ammonites were born in incest that they were forbidden entrance into the congregation of the Lord; which might have been thought to have been the reason of it, these instances following upon the former, had not these reasons been assigned.

Deuteronomy 23:5

Ver. 5. Nevertheless, the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam,.... To his solicitations, and the methods he took to prevail on the Lord to suffer him to curse Israel, which he gladly would have done for the sake of Balak's reward:

but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee; in the very mouth of Balaam, as the Targum of Jonathan; for when he opened his mouth and Balak expected he would have cursed Israel, and he intended it, could he have been permitted, the Lord overruled his tongue, and put such words into his mouth, that instead of cursing Israel, he blessed him; see Nu 23:11,

because the Lord thy God loved thee; and therefore would not suffer them to be cursed; for whom the Lord loves they are blessed, and shall be so in time and to eternity.

Deuteronomy 23:6

Ver. 6. Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever. Not that they were to retain malice towards them, or indulge a spirit of revenge, or not do them any good offices in a private way, which is contrary to the law of love; nor does this contradict any offices of kindness and friendship that might be performed in a personal way: so we find that David had a kindness for Hanun the Ammonite, and showed it, though ill rewarded for it, yet is not blamed for doing it; 2Sa 10:2 for these words respect not persons in a private capacity, but the people of Israel as a body politic, who, as such, were not to carry on trade and commerce with those people, nor intermarry with them, nor make leagues and enter into alliances with them; the reason of which was, because being very near neighbours to them, had there not been such a law, as a wall of partition between them, they might have become very familiar, and so have learnt their evil ways and customs, which this was designed to prevent: the Jews restrain {o} this to overtures and proclamations of peace, which they were not to make with these nations, as they were directed to do when they went out to war with others, De 20:10.

{o} Hilchot Melachim, c. 6. sect. 6.

Deuteronomy 23:7

Ver. 7. Thou shall not abhor an Edomite,.... Or an Idumean, the descendants of Esau, whose name was Edom, Ge 25:30 the Targum of Jonathan adds, "that comes to be made a proselyte"; he was not to be rejected with abhorrence, because of the old grudge between Jacob and Esau, and which was become national in their posterity:

for he is thy brother; the Israelites and the Edomites were nearest akin to each other of all the nations; for Jacob and Esau were own brothers by father's and mother's side, yea, were twin brothers; the relation was very near:

thou shall not abhor an Egyptian; that comes to be made a proselyte also, as the same Targum; though the Israelites were so ill used by them, their lives made bitter with hard bondage, and their male infants slain by them, and they for a long time refused their liberty to depart:

because thou wast a stranger in his land: and at first received many favours and kindnesses from them, being supported and supplied with provisions during a long famine; and had one of the richest and most fruitful parts of the country assigned them to dwell in; and old favours were not to be forgotten, though they had been followed with great unkindness and cruelty.

Deuteronomy 23:8

Ver. 8. The children that are begotten of them, Of such as became proselytes:

shall enter into the congregation of the Lord in their third generation; not in the third generation from the time that this law was made, but from the time that any of them should embrace the true religion; their sons were the second generation, and their grandchildren the third; and such might be admitted into the congregation, and be reckoned as of them, both in their civil and church state, and be capable of serving even offices among them, and of marriage with them, as the Targum of Jonathan; which some of the Jews interpret of males only, for females, according to them, might be married immediately as soon as made proselytes, in which way they account for the lawfulness of Solomon's marriage of Pharaoh's daughter {p}.

{p} Vid. Kimchi in 1 Reg. 3. 1. or 1 Ki. 3. 1. & Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 23:9

Ver. 9. When the host goeth forth against thine enemies,.... An army of soldiers march in order to meet the enemy and fight him:

then keep thee from every wicked thing; the Targum of Jonathan adds, by way of explanation,

"from strange worship, uncovering of nakedness, and from shedding innocent blood;"

that is, from idolatry, uncleanness of every sort, and murder; and all other wickednesses ought to be abstained from at all times by all persons, but especially by soldiers in such a circumstance, just going to battle; since sin committed weakens natural courage, as it loads the conscience with guilt; and since victory and success, which depend upon the blessing of God on arms, cannot be reasonably expected, where vices of all sorts are indulged and abound; and especially seeing such are about to expose their lives to the utmost danger, and know not but that in a few hours they must exchange this life for another, and appear before God, the Judge of all, against whom they sin; and yet how little are these things thought of by such in common! it was the wisdom of the Jewish legislature, which was of God, to inculcate such things into the minds of their soldiers.

Deuteronomy 23:10

Ver. 10. If there be among you any man that is not clean,.... Any unclean person in the army, that was even ceremonially unclean in any of the instances the law makes so, one of which put for the rest is mentioned:

by reason of uncleanness that chanceth him by night; through pollution by a nocturnal flux, as the Septuagint version, or a gonorrhoea, an involuntary one, occasioned by impure thoughts and imaginations in dreams; the same case as in Le 15:16

then shall he go abroad out of the camp; out of the army, lest others should be defiled by such; they not having houses to retire to, and chambers to keep themselves in separate from others, as when at home:

he shall not come within the camp; that is, not till he has done what is prescribed him in the next verse. Jarchi says, he might not come into the camp of the Levites, and much less into the camp of God.

Deuteronomy 23:11

Ver. 11. But it shall be, when evening cometh on,.... When the day declines, and it is near sun setting:

he shall wash himself with water; dip himself all over in water, not only wash his garments but his flesh:

and when the sun is down he shall come into the camp again; and take his place and rank in the army. Now if all this was necessary on account of ceremonial uncleanness, which as much as possible was to be avoided, how much more careful were they to be of moral uncleanness, as fornication, adultery, and all sorts of debauchery and lewdness? and yet nothing more frequent among those that are of the military order; it would be well if there was no occasion for the reproach Maimonides {q} casts upon the camps of the Heathens, among whom, no doubt, he means Christians, if not principally; when he observes that these orders were given, that this might be deeply fixed in the mind of every one, that their camp ought to be holy as the sanctuary of God, and not like the camps of the Gentiles, in which abound corruptions of all kinds, transgressions, rapines, thefts, and other sins.

{q} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 41.

Deuteronomy 23:12

Ver. 12. Thou shalt have also a place without the camp,.... A place prepared, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, provided on purpose for the use hereafter suggested; so Ben Melech:

whither thou shalt go forth abroad; to do the necessities of nature, which they were to do without the camp, not in any place they thought fit and most convenient, but what was appointed for that purpose.

Deuteronomy 23:13

Ver. 13. And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon,.... A nail or spike, some kind of instrument to make a hole in the ground with, which was fastened to the sword upon their loins; which was to be instead of a spade or mattock to dig with:

and it shall be, when thou shall ease thyself abroad; without the camp, in the place appointed for that use, whenever nature required such an action to be performed;

thou shall dig therewith; with, the paddle, an hole in the earth: the Essenes used, according to Josephus, to make it a foot deep with a spade or mattock, and to everyone that was newly admitted among them, a little pickaxe was given for that purpose {r}:

and shalt turn back; having eased nature:

and cover that which cometh from thee; their dung, with the earth they dug out of the hole they made. This law was made to preserve modesty and decency becoming men, and not act like brute beasts, as well as cleanliness in the camp, and, the health of themselves and their fellow soldiers; and that, they might not be offensive to the smell, as well as pernicious to the health of one another; and especially for a reason that follows in De 23:14; so Maimonides {s} says, the intention of this law is especially cleanliness, and to avoid nastiness, filthiness, and impurities of every kind, that men might not be like the brute animals.

{r} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 8. sect. 9. {s} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 41.

Deuteronomy 23:14

Ver. 14. For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp,.... In the tabernacle, which moved when the host marched after the camps of Judah and Reuben, and before those of Ephraim and Dan, in the midst of them: this was the position of it while in the wilderness, and afterwards when they came into the land of Canaan, and went to war with their enemies, the ark sometimes went with them, the symbol of the divine Presence; and here it is made a reason why they should avoid all uncleanness, since the holy God, or that token of his, presence, was in the midst of them:

to deliver thee, and give up thine enemies before thee: to save them from falling into the hands of their enemies, and to deliver their enemies into their hands, which depended not upon their numbers, strength, and skill, but on the Presence, providence, and power of God with them; wherefore, as the above writer {t} observes, by these actions (of purity and cleanliness) God meant to confirm the faith of those that engaged in war, that the divine Majesty dwelt among them; for which reason such orders were strictly to be observed by them:

therefore shall thy camp be holy; both in a moral and ceremonial sense:

that he see no unclean thing in thee; whether natural, moral, or ceremonial; the word here used signifies such nakedness as is forbidden to be uncovered, Le 18:6. Hence Maimonides {u} applies it to whoredom; for he says,

"by this phrase God meant to deter and dehort from whoredom, which is too usual and common among soldiers, as long as they are absent from their own houses; that therefore we may be delivered and abstain from those impure works, God has commanded such things to be done, which may bring to our remembrance that his glory dwells in the midst of us:"

and turn away from thee; and so they fall into the hands of their enemies, and become an easy prey to them, their God having forsaken them; and that this might not be their case, care should be taken not to offend him, and cause him to depart from them.

{t} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 41. {u} Ibid.

Deuteronomy 23:15

Ver. 15. Thou shall not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee. That is, one that has been used ill by a cruel and tyrannical master, and was in danger of his life with him, or of being lamed by him, and therefore obliged to make his escape from him on that account; such an one, when he fell into the hands of an Israelite, was not to be taken and bound, and sent back to his master again, but was to be retained till his master's anger subsided; or however until inquiry could be made into the cause of the difference between him and his master, and matters be made up between them to mutual satisfaction; or if it appeared that the flight of the servant was just, and it was not safe for him to return to his master, then he was to be used as hereafter directed; for it cannot be thought that this law was made to encourage and protect every idle, disobedient, and fugitive servant, which would be very sinful and unjust: the Jewish writers generally understand it of the servants of idolaters fleeing for the sake of religion; Onkelos renders it,

"a servant of the people,"

of Heathen people; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"thou shalt not deliver a stranger (i.e. a proselyte of righteousness, as Maimonides {w} calls this servant) into the hands of those that worship idols, but he shall be delivered by you, that he may be under the shadow of my Shechinah, because that he fled from the worship of his idol."

Jarchi makes mention of another sense; that it may be understood of

"a Canaanitish servant of an Israelite that flees (from his master) without the land, where he was not obliged to go with him, and serve him against his will; but I suppose a proselyte is meant;"

and much more then will this hold good of an Hebrew servant in such circumstances. Aben Ezra interprets this of a servant not an Israelite, who, in time of war, flees from his master, not an Israelite also, unto the camp of Israel, and that for the glory of the divine name which is called upon Israel; such an one, though a servant, might not be delivered to his master.

{w} Hilchot Abadim, c. 8. sect. 11.

Deuteronomy 23:16

Ver. 16. He shall dwell in thee, [even] among you,.... This seems to confirm the sense of it, being a stranger, a: proselyte servant that is here spoken of, since the law provides for his dwelling among the Israelites:

in that place he shall choose, in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: he was not to be detained by the person that took him up in his own house, or be obliged to dwell in any certain place under, a restraint, but he might take up his abode in any of the cities of Israel, which would be most for his good, profit, and advantage:

thou shalt not oppress him; by words, as the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"calling him a fugitive servant, or by any opprobrious name."

Deuteronomy 23:17

Ver. 17. There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel,.... The word for "whore" is "kedeshah", which properly signifies an "holy" one; and here, by an antiphrasis, an unholy, an impure person, one that is defiled by man; See Gill on "Ge 38:18". Jarchi interprets the word, one that makes herself common, that is sanctified, or set apart; that is, one that separates herself for such service, and prostitutes herself to everyone that passes by: but some understand this not of common harlots in the streets, but of sacred whores, or such as were consecrated to Heathen deities, as such there were to Venus. Strabo {x} tells us that the temple of Venus at Corinth was so rich, that more than a thousand of those sacred harlots were kept, whom men and women had devoted to that goddess; and so a multitude of the same sort were at Comana, which he calls little Corinth {y}; now these of all harlots being the most abominable are forbidden to be among the daughters of Israel:

nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel: by the same rule that "kedeshah" is rendered "a whore" in the preceding clause, "kadesh" should be rendered "an whoremonger" here, as in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; though Aben Ezra interprets it passively, one that is lain with, and Jarchi one that is prepared to lie with a male, that prostitutes his body in this unnatural way; and it looks as if there were such sort of persons sacred to idols, since we read of the houses of the sodomites, which were by, or rather in the house of the Lord, 2Ki 23:7.

{x} Geograph. l. 8. p. 261. {y} lb. l. 12. p. 385.

Deuteronomy 23:18

Ver. 18. Thou shall not bring the hire of a whore,.... Which was given to her as a reward for the use of her body:

or the price of a dog; not of the firstborn of a dog, the price for the redemption of it, as some; nor for the loan of a hunting dog, or a shepherd's dog for breed, as Josephus {z} interprets this law. Abarbinel understands it figuratively of a sodomite, comparable to a dog, for his uncleanness and impudence; see Re 22:15; and the price of such an one the gain he got by the prostitution of his body to unnatural lusts; and so as the hire of a whore answers to one in De 23:17, the price of a dog to a sodomite here; and in this he is followed by some, nor is it a sense to be despised; though the Jews {a} understand it literally of a dog, and of the exchange of another creature with that; so Onkelos renders it,

"the exchange of a dog:"

now neither of these might a man bring

into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow; that is, when a man vowed to offer any sacrifice to the Lord, it was not to be anything that was given to a whore as her hire; as, for instance, as Jarchi, if he gave her for her hire a lamb, it was not fit to be offered; which agrees with the Jewish {b} canons,

"what is the hire of a whore? if one says to a whore, take this lamb for thy hire, though an hundred, they are all forbidden; and so if one says to his neighbour, lo, this lamb is thine, that thine handmaid may lie with my a servant, Rabbi says it is not the hire of a whore, but the wise men say it is.--If he gives her money, lo, this is free; wines, oils, and fine flour, and the like, that are offered on the altar, are forbidden; (but the commentators say {c}, wheat, olives, and grapes, out of which fine flour, oil, and wine are made, are free;) if he gives her consecrated things, lo, these are free, birds, they are forbidden."

Now this law seems to be made in opposition to the customs and practices of the Phoenicians and Canaanites, whose land the Israelites were going to inhabit; whose women, as we are told {d}, used to prostitute themselves in the temples of their idols, and dedicate there the hire of their bodies to their gods, thinking thereby to appease their deities and obtain good things for themselves; and the like did the. Babylonians and Assyrians; See Gill on "Mic 1:7"; so it is asked {e},

"what is the price of a dog? if a man says to his neighbour, take this lamb for that dog; so if two partners divide, one takes ten (lambs), and the other nine and a dog; what is in lieu of the dog is forbidden, but those that are taken with him are free:"

a whore and a dog are fitly put together, because both are libidinous, impure, and impudent; perhaps the vileness and baseness of the creature is chiefly regarded in this law, to keep up the credit and veneration of sacrifices as sacred things; and it may be in reference to the worship of this creature, as by the Egyptians, who are said to worship a dog, their god Anubis {f}, the image of which had a dog's head on it; or to its being offered in sacrifice to idols, as it was by others; the Colophonians sacrificed the whelps of dogs to their goddess Enodius, as others did to Enyalius or Mars {g}:

for even both these [are] an abomination to the Lord thy God; both the hire of the whore and the price of the dog, when brought as a sacrifice to him; the one being a breach of the moral law, and the other tending to bring into contempt the sacrifices of the ceremonial law, if not a favouring idolatry, than which nothing is more abominable to God, who cannot endure anything evil, base, and impure.

{z} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 9. {a} In R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 28. 2. {b} Misn. Temurah, c. 6. sect. 2, 4. {c} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {d} Athanasius contra Gentes, p. 21. {e} Misn. ut supra, ({b}) sect. 3. {f} "Oppida tota canem venerantur", Juvenal. Satyr. 15. l. 8. "latrator Anubis", Virgil Aeneid. l. 8. prope finem. {g} Pausanias in Laconic. sive, l. 3. p. 188.

Deuteronomy 23:19

Ver. 19. Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother,.... One of the same nation and religion, and who is in poor and necessitous circumstances, and wants either food for himself and family, or money to carry on his husbandry, till such times as the fruits of his ground will bring him in a sufficiency for his support, and the payment of what he borrows, and which is to be lent him without any interest: as the Jews were chiefly employed in husbandry, and not merchandise, they had but little occasion to borrow, and when they did could not afford to pay interest, as persons concerned in merchandise, whose gains are great, are able to do; and it is but reasonable that such persons should; but that the Israelites, when poor and in distress, might not be bowed down under their burdens, this law is made for their relief:

usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent upon usury; this takes in all sorts of usury, whether what is lent be money or food, or anything else, no interest was to be taken for it;
See Gill on "Le 25:36";
See Gill on "Le 25:37".

Deuteronomy 23:20

Ver. 20. Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury,.... To any Gentile, though some Jewish writers except the Edomites and Ishmaelites, as being brethren, and restrain it to the seven nations of Canaan; but it seems to design one that was not an Israelite, or a proselyte of righteousness, and especially to regard such that traded and merchandised, as the Gentiles very much did, and especially their neighbours the Phoenicians; and of such it was lawful to take interest, as it was but reasonable, when they gained much by the money they lent them, and as it is but reasonable should be the case among Christians in such circumstances; this is to be regarded not as a precept, but as a permission:

but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury; which is repeated, that it might be taken notice of, and carefully observed:

that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand unto, in the land whither thou goest to possess it; for their charity, humanity, and the kind usage of their poor brethren in distress, would not pass unnoticed by the Lord; but he would make the land they tilled fruitful, and their vineyards and oliveyards to produce abundance, and their flocks and their herds to increase greatly, which would be sufficient and more than a recompence for all that they had freely lent unto their brethren, without taking any usury of them.

Deuteronomy 23:21

Ver. 21. When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God,.... Which must be of things in a man's power to perform, and of what are lawful to be done, and according to the mind and will of God revealed in his word, and agreeably to the manner of worship prescribed by him; as that he will offer such a sacrifice, a freewill offering to him, and the like, besides what he was bound to do, or give such and such things for the repair of the sanctuary, or for the relief of the poor;
See Gill on "Nu 30:2". This law is thought by Aben Ezra to be repeated on the mention of the hire of a whore, &c. being forbidden to be brought for a vow, De 23:18;

thou shall not slack to pay it; or delay the payment of it, but do it immediately; since zeal and affection might abate, and there might not be hereafter an ability to perform, or death might come and prevent it; the Targum of Jonathan adds, at the three feasts, that is, of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; and the Jewish writers {h} say, that no man transgresses this precept respecting the delay of paying a vow, until the three feasts have passed:

for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; exact the payment of it, and expect it, insist upon the performance of it, and punish for neglect:

and it would be sin in thee; guilt of sin would be contracted, and punishment inflicted; Aben Ezra interprets it of the latter.

{h} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 1. & in Ediot, c.

7. sect. 4.

Deuteronomy 23:22

Ver. 22. But if thou shalt forbear to vow,.... That a man might do, though there was ability; it was expected indeed that men should vow and bring freewill offerings in proportion to their ability; whether they were of the greater sort, of the herd and flock, or of fowls, or even of fine flour, these were acceptable to the Lord: but if they were not vowed and brought,

it shall be no sin in thee; no charge of guilt be brought or punishment laid; it should not be reckoned a crime, nor be punishable in any respect, and especially where there was a willing mind and no ability; otherwise negligence, niggardliness, and ingratitude, are not well pleasing in the sight of God.

Deuteronomy 23:23

Ver. 23. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform,.... Which were in their power to perform and lawful to do; and this is observed to make them watchful and cautious, and not be rash in making vows, since, when once they were made, an exact and rigid performance of them was expected; see **Ec 5:4**;

[even] a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the Lord thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth; be it what it will, as to the matter of it, it was to be paid, and in the manner as it was vowed and promised. Aben Ezra observes, that every vow is a freewill offering, but not every freewill offering a vow; the Targum of Jonathan enumerates the several things to be performed, sin offerings, trespass offerings, burnt offerings, and oblations of holy things, and drink offerings, and gifts of the house of the sanctuary, and alms to the poor.

Deuteronomy 23:24

Ver. 24. When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard,.... To take a walk in it for recreation, and to see how the vines flourish, and what sort of fruit and what quantity of it they bear; being invited thither by the owner, or occasionally passing that way stepped in, and even it may be on purpose to taste the fruits of the vine and quench thirst and satisfy appetite:

then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill, at thine own pleasure; as many as they would, till nature was satisfied:

but thou shall not put [any] in thy vessel; to carry away, to be eaten by them or theirs at another time and place; they were to put none into their pockets or into their baskets, as the Targum of Jonathan, or whatsoever vessel they might have with them in the vineyard. Jarchi says, the Scripture speaks of a workman, and only at the time of gathering the grapes, when he was putting into his master's vessels, and might not put any into his own, and carry away; so the Jewish writers {i} generally interpret it of a workman only, and of his eating those things in which he works, and not of such as pass by the way; so the Targums: and there are many traditions in the Misnah {k} concerning this affair; as that by this law a workman might eat while in his work, as the ox may while it is treading out the corn, and when his work is perfect; and that he may eat of what he is employed about; only if he is at work upon figs, he may not eat of grapes, and if on grapes, he may not eat of figs; nor might he eat more than his hire came to; and that he might make a covenant for his son and daughter, servant and handmaid, adult (that they shall take money and not eat), and for his wife, because they are endowed with knowledge; but not for his son and daughter, servant and maidservant, minors, because they are not: but Josephus {l}, their countryman, better interprets this law, who says, that travellers, of those that passed by the way, were not forbidden tasting ripe fruits, and even were permitted to fill themselves with them as if their own, whether they were of the country or strangers.

{i} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Maaserot, c. 2. sect. 7. {k} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 7. sect. 2, 4, 5, 6. {l} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 21.

Deuteronomy 23:25

Ver. 25. When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour,.... Passest through it to go to some other place, the road lying through it, as it often does through standing corn; so Christ and his disciples are said to go through the corn, Mt 12:1; but Jarchi says this Scripture speaks of a workman also, and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"when thou goest in to take thine hire according to work in thy neighbour's standing corn;"

but the other sense is best, and is confirmed and illustrated by the instance given, as well as best agrees with what follows:

then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; the ears of wheat, and rub them, to separate the grain from the husk or beard, and eat it, as did the disciples of Christ; **Lu 6:1**; to satisfy hunger: but thou shall not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn to cut it down and carry any of it off; which would have been an unjust thing.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 24

This chapter contains various laws concerning divorces, De 24:1; the discharge of a newly married man from war and business, De 24:5; about taking pledges, De 24:6; man stealing, De 24:7; the plague of leprosy, De 24:8; and giving servants their hire in due time, De 24:14; concerning doing justice in capital cases, and towards the stranger, fatherless, and widow, De 24:16; and of charity to the poor, in allowing them the forgotten sheaf, and the gleanings of their oliveyards and vineyards, De 24:19.

Ver. 1. When a man hath taken a wife and married her,.... That is, when a man has made choice of a woman for his wife, and has obtained her consent, and the consent of her parents; and has not only betrothed her, but taken her home, and consummated the marriage:

and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes; is not agreeable to him, he takes no delight in her person, nor pleasure in her company and conversation; but, on the contrary, his affections are alienated from her, and he cannot bear the sight of her;

because he hath found some uncleanness in her; something that he disliked, and was disagreeable to him, and which made their continuance together in the marriage state very uncomfortable; which led him on to be very ill-natured, severe, and cruel to her; so that her life was exposed to danger, or at least become very uneasy; in which case a divorce was permitted, both for the badness of the man's heart, and in favour of the woman, that she might be freed from such rigorous usage. This word "uncleanness" does not signify adultery, or any of the uncleannesses forbidden in Le 18:6; because that was punishable with death, when it could be proved; and where there was only a suspicion of it, the husband might make use of the bitter water: though the house of Shammai seem to take it in this sense; for they say a man might not divorce his wife unless he found her in some unclean thing, something dishonest and wicked, and which they ground upon these words; but the house of Hillell say, if she burnt his food, or spoiled it by over salting, or over roasting it; and Akiba says, even if he found another woman more beautiful than her or more agreeable to him. But neither his sense, nor that of the house of Shammai, are approved of by the Jews in general, but that of the house of Hillell {m}; and they suppose a man might divorce his wife for any ill qualities of mind in her, or for any ill or impudent behaviour of hers; as if her husband saw her go abroad with her head uncovered, and spinning in the streets, and so showing her naked arms to men; or having her garments slit on both sides; or washing in a bath with men, or where men use to wash, and talking with every man, and joking with young men; or her voice is sonorous and noisy; or any disease of body, as the leprosy, and the like; or any blemishes, as warts, are upon her; or any disagreeable smell that might arise from any parts of the body, from sweat, or a stinking breath {n}:

then let him write her a bill of divorcement; Jarchi says, this is a command upon him to divorce her, because she finds not favour in his eyes; and so the Jews {o} generally understand it, and so they did in the time of Christ, Mt 19:7; whereas it was no more than a permission, for reasons before given. A man might not dismiss his wife by word of mouth, which might be done hastily, in a passion, of which he might soon repent; but by writing, which was to be drawn up in form; and, as the Targum of Jonathan, before the sanhedrim, in a court of judicature, which required time, during which he might think more of it, and either recede from his purpose before the case was finished, or do it upon mature deliberation; and a firm resolution. The Jews say {p} many things of the witnesses before whom it was to be written and sealed, and at what time, and upon what, and with what it was to be written, and who were proper persons to write it or not, in a treatise of theirs, called Gittin, or divorces. In the Hebrew text this bill is called "a bill of cutting off" {q}; because the marriage was rescinded, and man and wife were cut off and separated from one another for ever; of the form of such a bill, See Gill on "Mt 5:31";

and give [it] in her hand; which was to be done before witnesses, and which is one of the ten things requisite to a divorce {r}; though it made no difference whether it was delivered by himself, or by a messenger; or whether to her, or to her deputy, appointed by her before witnesses; or whether it was put into her hand, or in her bosom, so be it that she was but possessed of it; with which agrees the Jewish canon,

"if he casts a bill to his wife, and she is within the house, or within the court, she is divorced; if he casts it into her bosom, or into her work basket, she is divorced {s}:"

and send her out of his house; which was a visible token and public declaration of her divorce; besides, were she to be continued in his house afterwards, it would give suspicion of cohabitation, which after a divorce was not lawful.

{m} Misn. Gittin, c. 9. sect. 10. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {n} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 90. 1. 2. Misn. Cetubot, c. 7. sect. 6, 7. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {o} T. Bab. Gittin, ut supra. ({n}) {p} Misn. Gittin, c. 2. sect. 2, 3, 4, 5. {q} ttyrk rpo "libellum excidii", Montanus, Fagius; "succisionis", Munster; "abscissionis", Tigurine version. {r} See Ainsworth in loc. {s} Misn. Gittin, c. 8. sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 24:2

Ver. 2. And when she is departed out of his house,.... With her bill of divorce, by which departure out of his house it is notified to all:

she may go and be other man's [wife]; it was permitted her to marry another man, she being by her divorce freed from the law of her former husband; and who indeed, in express words contained in the divorce, gave her leave so to do; which ran thus,

"thou art in thine own hand, and hast power over thyself to go and marry any other man whom thou pleasest; and let no man hinder thee in my name, from this day forward and for ever; and, lo, thou art free to any man;"

See Gill on "Mt 5:31".

Deuteronomy 24:3

Ver. 3. And [if] the latter husband hate her,.... Or less loves her than another woman, and she is disliked by him as she was by her former husband;

and write her a bill off divorcement, and giveth [it] into her hand,
and sendeth her out of his house: as he had by this law a permission, in like manner as her former husband had; See Gill on "De 24:1";

or if her latter husband die, which took her [to be] his wife; and she survives him; as she is then by death loosed from the law of an husband, she may lawfully marry another man, but not her former husband, as follows.

Deuteronomy 24:4

Ver. 4. Her former husband which sent her away may not take her again to be his wife,.... Though ever so desirous of it, and having heartily repented that he had put her away: this is the punishment of his fickleness and inconstancy, and was ordered to make men cautious how they put away their wives; since when they had so done, and they had been married to another, they could not enjoy them again even on the death of the second husband; yea, though she was only espoused to him, and he had never lain with her, as Ben Melech observes, it was forbidden the former husband to marry her; though if she had only played the whore, according to the same writer, and others {a}, she might return to him:

after that she is defiled; not by whoredom, for in that case she was not forbidden, as it is interpreted, but by her being married to another man; when she was defiled, not by him, or with respect to him, nor with regard to any other man, whom she might lawfully marry after the decease of her latter husband; but with respect to her first husband, being by her divorce from him, and by her marriage to another, entirely alienated and separated from him, and so prohibited to him; and thus R. Joseph Kimchi interprets this defilement of prohibition, things prohibited being reckoned unclean, or not lawful to be used:

for that [is] abomination before the Lord; for a man to take his wife again, after she had been divorced by him, and married to another man; and yet, such is the grace and goodness of God to his backsliding people, that he receives them when they return unto him their first husband, and forsake other lovers, **Jer 3:1**;

and thou shalt not cause the land to sin which the Lord thy God giveth thee

[for] an inheritance; since if this was allowed, that men might put away their wives, and take them again at pleasure, and change them as often as they thought fit, no order could be observed, and the utmost confusion in families introduced, and lewdness encouraged, and which would subject the land and the inhabitants of it to many evils and calamities, as the just punishment thereof.

{a} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Sotah, c. 2. sect. 6.

Deuteronomy 24:5

Ver. 5. When a man hath taken a new wife,.... A wife he has lately married, new to him, though a widow, as Jarchi observes; but the Targum of Jonathan says a virgin; however this is opposed to his old wife, and divorced; for this, as Jarchi and Ben Melech say, excepts the return of a divorced wife, who cannot be said to be a new one:

he shall not go out to war; this is to be understood of a man that had not only betrothed, but married a wife; a man that had betrothed a wife, and not married her, who went out to war, might return if he would, De 20:7; but one that had married a wife was not to go out to war:

neither shall be charged with any business; as betrothed ones were; they, though they had a liberty of returning, yet they were to provide food and drink for the army, and to prepare or mend the highways, as Jarchi observes; but these were not obliged to such things, nor even to keep watch on the walls of the city, or to pay taxes, as Maimonides {b} writes:

[but] he shall be free at home one year; not only from all tributes and taxes, and everything relative to the affairs of war, but from public offices and employments, which might occasion absence from home. Jarchi remarks, that his house or home comprehends his vineyard; and so he thinks that this respects his house and his vineyard, that if he had built a house and dedicated it, or planted a vineyard and made it common, yet was not to remove from his house because of the necessities of war:

and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken; or rejoice with his wife which he hath taken, and solace themselves with love; and thereby not only endear himself to her, but settle his affections on her, and be so confirmed in conjugal love, that hereafter no jealousies may arise, or any cause of divorce, which this law seems to be made to guard against. So it is said {c}, that Alexander after the battle of Granicus sent home to Macedonia his newly married soldiers, to winter with their wives, and return at spring; which his master Aristotle had taught him, and as he was taught by a Jew.

{b} Hilchot Melachim, c. 7. sect. 10, 11. {c} Arrian. Expedit Alex. l. 1.

Deuteronomy 24:6

Ver. 6. No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge,.... The first word being of the dual number takes in both stones, wherefore Vatablus renders the words,

"ye shall not take for a pledge both the millstones, nor indeed the uppermost;"

which is the least; so far should they be from taking both, that they were not allowed to take the uppermost, which was the shortest, meanest, and lightest; and indeed if anyone of them was taken, the other became useless, so that neither was to be taken:

for he taketh [a man's] life to pledge; or with which his life is supported, and the life of his family; for if he has corn to supply them with, yet if his mill or millstones are pawned, he cannot grind his corn, and so he and his family must starve: and in those times and countries they did, as the Arabs do to this day, as Dr. Shaw {d} relates,

"most families grind their wheat and barley at home, having two portable millstones for that purpose; the uppermost whereof is turned round by a small handle of wood or iron, that is placed in the rim;"

and these millstones being portable, might be the more easily taken for pledges, which is here forbidden, for the above reason; and this takes in any other thing whatever, on which a man's living depends, or by which he gets his bread {e}.

{d} Travels, p. 231. Edit. 2. {e} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 13.

Deuteronomy 24:7

Ver. 7. If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel,.... Whether grown up or little, male or female, an Israelite or a proselyte, or a freed servant; all, as Maimonides {f} says, are included in this general word "brethren"; though Aben Ezra observes, that it is added, "of the children of Israel", for explanation, since an Edomite is called a "brother". Now, a man must be "found" committing this fact; that is, it must plainly appear, there must be full proof of it by witnesses, as Jarchi explains this word:

and maketh merchandise of him; or rather uses him as a servant, and employs him in any service to the least profit and advantage by him, even to the value of a farthing; yea, if he does but lean upon him, and he supports him, though he is an old man that is stolen; this is serving a man's self by him, as Maimonides {g}, which is what is forbidden as distinct from selling him, as follows:

or selleth him: to others; and both these, according to the above writer {h}, using him for service, and selling him, are necessary to make him guilty of death; not the one without the other; but reading them disjunctively, as we do, gives the better sense of the words:

then that thief shall die; by strangling with a napkin, as the Targum of Jonathan; and so Maimonides {i} says, his death is by strangling:

and thou shall put evil away from among you; both him that does evil, as the Targum of Jonathan, and the guilt of it by inflicting due punishment for it; and so deter from such practices, and prevent evil coming upon the body of the people, should such a sin be connived at; see Ex 21:16.

{f} Hichot Genibah, c. 9. sect. 6. {g} Ib. sect. 2. {h} Ib. sect. 3. {i} Hilchot Genibah, c. 9. sect. 1. So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 67. 1. interprets it of service.

Deuteronomy 24:8

Ver. 8. Take heed, in the plague of leprosy,.... Whether in the bodies of men, or in houses, or in garments, not to hide and conceal it; or, as Jarchi, weaken the signs of it, or cut out the bright spot; so the Targum of Jonathan:

that thou observe diligently, and do according to all the priests the Levites shall teach you: according to the laws and rules given in such cases, whether they order to shut up persons, houses, or clothes, or pronounce unclean or clean; in all things they were to do as they directed, which appeared to be agreeably to the said rules; for the judgment, management, and ordering of these things, belonged to the priests: of which see Le 13:1;

as I commanded them, [so] shall ye observe to do: which shows the they were not to comply with their orders, and conform to them, any further than they agreed with the commands of God, and the instructions he had given them in the places referred to.

Deuteronomy 24:9

Ver. 9. Remember what the Lord thy God did unto Miriam,.... Who was stricken with leprosy for speaking against Moses, and was shut up seven days; and they are reminded of this instance, partly to warn them against entertaining evil suspicions, and surmises of persons in power and authority, and speaking evil of them; and partly to expect that punishment would certainly be inflicted on them, should they be guilty of the same crime; nor should they think it hard, either to be smitten with leprosy, or to be shut up for it; since Miriam, a prophetess, and the sister of Moses, was so used; and that when

by the way, after that ye were come out of Egypt: when upon their journey, and were retarded in it, and obliged to stay at least seven days before they could proceed on in it; see Nu 12:14.

Deuteronomy 24:10

Ver. 10. When thou dost lend thy brother anything,.... Any sum of money he stands in need of, or demanded a debt of him, as Jarchi; money he is indebted to thee, which is the sense of the Septuagint version; and he is not able to pay it, but offers something: in pawn till he can pay it:

thou shall not go into his house to fetch his pledge; which would be an exercise of too much power and authority, to go into a neighbour's house, and take what was liked; and besides, as no doubt he would take the best, so he might take that which the poor man could not spare: and indeed, according to the Jewish canons {k}, he could not take any pledge at all, but with the knowledge, and by the leave, of the sanhedrim, or court of judicature.

{k} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 13.

Deuteronomy 24:11

Ver. 11. Thou shall stand abroad,.... Without doors, in the street, as the Targum of Jonathan, while the borrower or debtor looks out, and brings forth what he can best spare as a pledge:

and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee; now as, on the one hand, if the lender or creditor had been allowed to go in and take what he pleased for a pledge, he would choose the best; so, on the other hand, the borrower or debtor would be apt to bring the worst, what was of the least value and use; wherefore the Jews made it a rule that it should be of a middling sort, between both, lest it should be a discouragement and hinderance to lend upon pledges {l}.

{l} Misn. Gittin, c. 5. sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Deuteronomy 24:12

Ver. 12. And if the man [be] poor,.... Which may be thought to be the case of everyone that gives pledges for a debt he owes, or a sum of money he borrows; yet there might be a difference: some might be so very destitute of goods and raiment in their houses, that whatever they parted with was distressing to them, and they could not well do without it:

thou shalt not sleep with his pledge; nor keep it a night; but deliver it to him, before he went to bed, and laid himself down to sleep.

Deuteronomy 24:13

Ver. 13. In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again, when the sun goeth down,.... If it was a night covering, as Jarchi remarks; but if it was his day clothes, he was to return it in the morning, when the sun arose; and this was to be done every day, which resist occasion a great deal of trouble, and the pledge of little use; so that it seems as though they might as well be without it as have it, and lend freely; but the Jews say, that there was an advantage by it; for it is said in answer to such a question, "of what profit is the pledge? by this means the debt is not released on the seventh year, (when all other debts were released, De 15:1) nor could the borrower dispose of his goods to his children, but payment was made from the pledge after his death {m}:"

now this delivery of the pledge at sun setting was ordered,

that he may sleep in his own raiment; have his night covering to sleep in, his pillow, and bolster, and bedding to lie on, and bed clothes to cover him; and indeed the clothes they wore were made in such form, as would serve for covering to sleep in at night, as well as to wear in the day; and such is the clothing of the Arabs now, which they call "hykes".

"The usual size of them (Dr. Shaw says {n}), is six yards long, and five or six feet broad, serving the Arab for a complete dress in the day; and as they "sleep in their raiment", it serves likewise for his bed and covering by night:"

and bless thee: for using him so mercifully and kindly, as to return him his pledge, which is so necessary to his comfortable repose in the night; and not only will he praise him, and speak well of him for it, and give him thanks; but will pray to God to bless him in soul, body, and estate, for such kindness shown him:

and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the Lord thy God; not his justifying righteousness before God, for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified in his sight; but it shall be owned and approved of as a good and righteous action, and answerable to the intention of this law, which is, that mercy should be shown to persons in distress; in which sense the word "righteousness" is sometimes used, even for a merciful action, Ps 112:9; so alms is called
dikaiosunh, "righteousness", **Mt 6:1**, in some copies.

{m} Maimon Hilchot Milvah Velovah, c. 3. sect. 5. {n} Travels, p. 224. Ed. 2.

Deuteronomy 24:14

Ver. 14. Thou shall not oppress an hired servant,.... That is hired by the day, as appears by De 24:15; though the law may include such as are hired by the week, or month, or year; neither of whom are to be oppressed by any means, and chiefly by detaining their wages; so the Jerusalem Targum explains the phrase,

"ye shall not detain by force the hire of the hired servant;"

nor by fraud, as in **Jas 5:4**;

[that is] poor and needy; and so cannot bear the lest oppression of this kind, nor to have his wages detained from him any time, and much less wholly to be defrauded of them:

[whether he be] of thy brethren; an Israelite, and so a brother both by nation and religion:

or of thy strangers that [are] in thy land, within thy gates; Jarchi interprets this, both of proselytes of righteousness, and of proselytes of the gate; which latter are plainly described by this clause, and the former must be included; for, if proselytes of the gate are not to be oppressed, much less proselytes of righteousness, who were in all respects as Israelites, the same law was to them both. Jarchi says, the phrase "in thy land" is intended to comprehend the hire of beasts, and of vessels; and these in the Misnah {o} are said to be comprehended in this precept, as well as the hire of man.

{o} Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 12.

Deuteronomy 24:15

Ver. 15. At his day thou shalt give [him] his hire,.... At the close of the day, when his work is done, the hire agreed for must be paid him; and, by the same rule, all such that were hired by the week, month, or year, were to have their wages paid them at the day their time was up:

neither shall the sun go down upon it; it was to be paid before sun setting, or at it; see Le 19:13;

for he [is] poor, and setteth his heart upon it; being poor, he cannot wait any longer for the payment of it; his personal and family wants are such as require immediate payment; and besides, he has been eagerly expecting it, and earnestly desiring it, that he may satisfy the craving necessities of himself and family; and therefore it would be a great balk and disappointment to him to have his wages detained:

lest he cry against thee to the Lord; having none to apply unto but him, who is the patron of the poor and needy, not being able to help himself, nor having interest in any to interpose on his behalf; and his cry, and the cry of his hire too, enter into the ears of the Lord of hosts, and is regarded by him, **Jas 5:4**;

and it be sin unto thee: be imputed to him, the guilt charged on him, and punishment inflicted for it.

Deuteronomy 24:16

Ver. 16. The fathers shall not be put to death for the children,.... By the civil magistrates, for sins committed by them of a capital nature, and which are worthy of death:

neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; for sins committed by them that deserve it:

every man shall be put to death for his own sin: which is but just and reasonable; see Eze 18:4; which is no contradiction to Ex 20:5; that respects what God himself would do, this what Israel, or the civil magistrates in it, should do; this is a command on Israel, as Aben Ezra observes; that the declaration of the sovereign Being, who is not bound by any law. Jarchi interprets these words differently, as that the one should not be put to death by the testimony of the other; and it is a rule with the Jews,

"that an oath of witness is taken of men, and not of women; of those that are not akin, and not of those that are nearly related {p}:"

on which one of the commentators observes {q} that such that are near akin are not fit to bear testimony, because it is written, "the father shall not be put to death for the children"; that is, for the testimony of the children. Jarchi indeed mentions the other sense, for the sins of the children, which has been given, and is undoubtedly the true sense of the text. The Targum of Jonathan gives both;

"fathers should not be put to death, neither by the testimony, nor for the sins of the children; and children shall not be put to death, neither by the testimony, nor for the sins of fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin by proper witnesses."

{p} Misn. Shebuot, c. 4. sect. 1. {q} Bartenora in ib.

Deuteronomy 24:17

Ver. 17. Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, [nor] of the fatherless,.... Who are unable to defend themselves, and have but few, if any, to take their part; and therefore particular care should be taken by judges and civil magistrates to do them justice, or God will require it of them:

nor take a widow's raiment to pledge; nor anything else, as her ox or cow, Job 24:3; according to the Jewish canons {r}, of a widow, whether she is poor or rich, a pledge is not taken; the reason given for which is, that it would raise an ill suspicion, and cause an evil report of her among her neighbours {s}; and which is suggested by the Targum of Jonathan

"neither shall any of you take for a pledge the raiment of a widow, lest wicked neighbours should arise, and bring an evil report upon her, when ye return the pledge unto her."

But no doubt a poor widow is meant, and the design of the law is mercy to her, and that she might not be distressed by taking that from her she needed.

{r} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 13. {s} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 13.

Deuteronomy 24:18

Ver. 18. But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt,.... The remembrance of which may cause sympathy with persons in distress; particularly the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow:

and the Lord thy God redeemed thee thence; the Targum of Jonathan,

"the Word of the Lord thy God;"

which, as it was an act of great kindness and mercy in God to them, taught them, and laid them under obligation to show favour to their fellow creatures in distress:

therefore I command thee to do this thing: not to pervert the judgment of the stranger and fatherless, nor take a widow's raiment for a pledge; and it may be carried further into the context, and respect the laws about the pledge of the poor man, and giving the hired servant his wages in due time.

Deuteronomy 24:19

Ver. 19. When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field,.... Whether barley harvest or wheat harvest, when either of them are ripe for cutting, mowing, or reaping, and are cutting down:

and hast forgot a sheaf in the field; Jarchi says the phrase "in the field" is to include standing corn, some of which is forgotten in cutting down, and so is subject to this law as well as a sheaf; and a sheaf claimed by this name is one that is forgotten both by the workman and the owner; if by the one and not by the other, it could not be so called. The canon runs thus {t},

"a sheaf which the workmen forget, and not the owner, or the owner forgets, and not the workman, before which the poor stand, or is covered with straw or stubble, is not a forgotten sheaf."

And about this they have various other rules;

"a sheaf that is near the gate (of a field), or to an heap (of sheaves), or to oxen, or to instruments, and left, the house of Shammai say it is not to be reckoned a forgotten sheaf; but the house of Hillell say it is;--two sheaves are reckoned forgotten, three are not; a sheaf in which there are two seahs (about a peck and a half), and they leave it, it is not reckoned forgotten {u}:"

thou shall not go again to fetch it; which supposes a remembrance of it, or some intelligence about it when at home, and after the field has been cleared, and all carried in but this sheaf; then the owner might not go nor send to fetch it: the beginnings of the rows, they say, show when a sheaf is forgotten, or not; particularly the adverse sheaf, or that over against it, shows it {w}; so Jarchi:

it shall be for the stranger; or proselyte; the proselyte of righteousness; of this there is no doubt, but it seems to be for the proselyte of the gate also:

for the fatherless and for the widow; which of them soever should first find it:

that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands; in the culture of their ground the next year, and give them large and fruitful crops; they either purposely leaving the sheaf for the poor, or however suffer them to take it unmolested when found by them. The Targum of Jonathan is, "that the word of the Lord thy God may bless thee", &c.

{t} Misn. Peah, c. 5. sect. 7. {u} Misn. Peah, c. 6. sect. 2, 5, 6. {w} Ib. sect. 3, 4.

Deuteronomy 24:20

Ver. 20. When thou beatest thine olive tree,.... With sticks and staves, to get off the olives when ripe:

thou shall not go over the boughs again; to beat off some few that may remain; they were not nicely to examine the boughs over again, whether there were any left or not:

it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow; who might come into their oliveyards after the trees had been beaten, and gather what were left.

Deuteronomy 24:21

Ver. 21. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard,.... Which was done much about the same time that the olives were gathered, and both after wheat harvest, about the latter end of June, or beginning of July; for they were more forward in those hot countries:

thou shall not glean [it] afterwards; go over the vines a second time, to pick off every berry or bunch that escaped them at first gathering:

it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow; as the forgotten sheaf, and the olive berries left; these are all supposed to be poor persons, otherwise no doubt there were strangers, and fatherless persons, and widows, in good circumstances; who, as they needed not, so neither would give themselves the trouble, but think it beneath them to go into fields, oliveyards, and vineyards, to gather what was left by the owners. These laws were made in favour of the poor, that mercy and kindness might be showed to them, and that they might have a taste of all the fruits of the earth.

Deuteronomy 24:22

Ver. 22. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt,.... When they would have been glad to have enjoyed the like favours, as small as they might seem to be, even to glean in their fields, vineyards, and oliveyards;

therefore I command thee to do this thing; to suffer the poor to take the forgotten sheaf, and to come into their oliveyards and vineyards, and gather what olives and grapes remained after the first beating of the one, and the ingathering of the other.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 25:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 25

Several laws are contained in this chapter, as concerning beating such whose crimes required it, De 25:1; of not muzzling the ox in treading out the corn, De 25:4; of marrying a deceased brother's wife, when there was no issue, and of the disgrace of such that refused it, De 25:5; of the punishment of an immodest woman, De 25:11; and against bad weights and measures, De 25:13; and for the utter destruction of Amalek, De 25:17.

Ver. 1. If there be a controversy between men,.... Between two or more:

and they come unto judgment; into a court of judicature, bring their cause thither:

that [the judges] may judge them; who were never less than three; the great sanhedrim at Jerusalem consisted of seventy one, the lesser court was of twenty three, and the least of all three only:

then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked: acquit the one, whose cause is good, and condemn the other to punishment, who is guilty of a crime, and as that deserves; which is to do righteous judgment; the contrary to this is an abomination to the Lord, Pr 17:15.

Deuteronomy 25:2

Ver. 2. And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten,.... There were four kinds of death criminals were put to by the Jews, stoning, strangling, burning, and slaying with the sword; and such crimes not as severe as these were punished with beating or scourging; and who they were that were worthy to be beaten is at large set forth in the Misnic treatise called Maccoth {x}, or "stripes", which are too many to be transcribed. Maimonides says {y}, that all negative precepts in the law, for the breach of which men are guilty of cutting off, but not of death by the sanhedrim, are to be beaten. They are in all twenty one, and so all deserving of death by the hand of heaven; and they are eighteen, and all negative precepts of the law broken, for which there is neither cutting off nor death by a court of judicature, for these men are to be beaten, and they are one hundred and sixty eight; and all that are to be beaten are found to be two hundred and seven;

that the judge shall cause him to lie down; which seems to be on the floor of the court, since it was to be done immediately, and in the presence of the judge; and the Jews gather {z} from hence, that he was to be beaten neither standing, nor sitting, but bowed; that is, ye shall command or order him to lie down, or to fall upon the ground with his face towards it:

and to be beaten before his face; in the presence of the judge, that the sentence might be properly executed, neither exceeded not diminished; and indeed all the judges were to be present, especially the bench of three; while he was beating, the chief of the judges read the passage in De 28:58; and he that was next to him counted the strokes, and the third at every blow said Smite {a}: of the manner of beating or scourging, See Gill on "Mt 10:17";

according to his fault, by a certain number; as his crime and wickedness was more or less heinous, more or fewer stripes were to be laid on him; as ten or twenty, fewer or more, according to the nature of his offence, as Aben Ezra observes, only he might not add above forty; though he says there are some who say that according to his fault the stripes are larger or lesser, but all of them in number forty.

{x} Ib. c. 3. sect. 1. 2, 3, &c. {y} Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 19. sect. 1. {z} Misn.

Maccot, c. 3. sect. 13. {a} Maimon & Bartenora in ib. sect. 14.

Deuteronomy 25:3

Ver. 3. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed,.... And that this number might not be exceeded, it is ordered by the Jewish canons that only thirty nine should be given; for it is asked {b},

"with how many stripes do they beat him? with forty, save one, as it is said, in number "forty" that is, in the number which is next to forty;"

this they make out by joining the last word of De 25:2 with the first of this; and that this was an ancient sense of the law, and custom upon it, appears by the execution of it on the Apostle Paul; who was not indulged, but suffered the extremity of it as it was then understood,
See Gill on "2Co 11:24"; moreover, that they might not exceed this number, they used to make a scourge of three lashes, so that every strike they fetched with it was reckoned for three stripes, and thirteen of them made thirty nine; wherefore if they added another stroke, it would have exceeded the number of stripes by two:

lest [if] he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes; they might diminish them, if a man was weak, and not able to bear them; but they might not exceed them, if a man was as strong as Samson, as Maimonides {c} says:

then thy brother should seem vile unto thee; as if he was a beast, and not a man, and much less a brother. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"lest he be in danger, and thy brother be vile;"

lest he be in danger of his life, and become vile, as a dead carcass; so the apostle calls dead bodies "vile bodies", **Php 3:21**; or in danger of being maimed, and becoming lame or deformed, and so be contemptible: and this punishment of beating with the Jews was not reckoned, according to their writers, reproachful, and as fixing a brand of infamy upon a person; but they were still reckoned brethren, and restored to their former dignities, whatsoever they possessed; so Maimonides {d} says,

"whoever commits a crime, and is beaten, he returns to his dignity, as it is said, "lest thy brother be vile in thine eyes"; when he is beaten, lo, he is thy brother; an high priest, that commits a crime, is beaten by three (i.e. a bench of three judges, by their order), as the rest of all the people, and he returns to his grandeur; but the head of the session (or court of judicature), that commits a crime, they beat him, but he does not return to his principality, nor even return to be as one of the rest of the sanhedrim; for they ascend in holiness, but do not descend."

And yet Josephus represents it as a most infamous and scandalous punishment, as one would think indeed it should be; his words are {e}, speaking of the laws concerning travellers being allowed to gather grapes, and pluck ears of corn as they passed;

"he that does contrary to these laws receives forty stripes, save one, with a public scourge; a free man undergoes this most filthy (or disgraceful) punishment, because for the sake of gain he reproaches his dignity."

{b} Misn. Maccot, c. 3. sect. 10. Vid. Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 25. p. 522, 523. {c} Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 17. sect. 1. {d} Ibid. sect. 7, 8, 9. {e} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 21.

Deuteronomy 25:4

Ver. 4. Thou shall not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out [the corn]. As oxen are used in ploughing, so likewise in treading or beating out the corn; of the manner of which, See Gill on "1Co 9:9"; now while it was thus employed, it might not be restrained by any means from eating the corn as it had an opportunity, either by a muzzle put over its mouth, or other ways. The Gentiles had several ways of restraining their cattle from eating, while they thus made use of them, to which this law is opposed. Maimonides {f} has collected several or them together, as prohibited by it; as putting a thorn into its mouth, causing a lion to lie down by it, or causing its calf to lie down without, or spreading a skin on the top of the corn, that so it may not eat. Aelianus {g} relates a very particular way of hindering oxen from eating at such times, used some countries, which was this; that oxen might not eat of the ears of corn, in a floor where they were trod out, they used to besmear their nostrils with cows' dung, which was so disagreeable to the creature, that it would not taste anything though pressed with famine. This law is not to be limited to the ox only, or to this peculiar work assigned it; but, as Jarchi says, respects any sort of cattle, and whatsoever work that has food in it, none of them being to be

restrained from eating while at work: and this law was not made for the creatures only, but for men also; and especially for the sake of ministers of the word; who for their strength, labour, and industry, are compared to oxen, and ought to be comfortably supported and maintained on account of their work; for the illustration and confirmation of which this passage is twice produced,
See Gill on "1Co 9:9";
See Gill on "1Co 9:10";
See Gill on "1Ti 5:17";
See Gill on "1Ti 5:18".

{f} Hilchot Shecirut, c. 13. sect. 2, 3. {g} Hist. Animal. l. 4. c. 25.

Deuteronomy 25:5

Ver. 5. If brethren dwell together,.... Not only in the same country, province, town, or city, but in the same house; such who had been from their youth brought up together in their father's house, and now one of them being married, as the case put supposes, they that were unmarried might live with him, and especially if the father was dead; and so may except such as were abroad, and in foreign countries, or at such a distance that this law coals not well be observed by them; though the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi, interpret it of their being united in an inheritance, all by virtue of relation having a claim to their father's inheritance; so that it mattered not where they dwelt, it is the relation that is regarded, and their right of inheritance; and the above Targum describes them as brethren on the father's side, and so Jarchi says excepts his brother on the mother's side; for brethren by the mother's side, in case of inheritance, and the marrying of a brother's wife, were not reckoned brethren, as Maimonides {h} observes; who adds, that there is no brotherhood but on the father's side. Some think that when there were no brethren in a strict and proper sense, the near kinsmen, sometimes called brethren, were to do the office here enjoined, and which they conclude from the case of Boaz and Ruth; but Aben Ezra contradicts this, and says that instance is no proof of it, it respecting another affair, not marriage, but redemption; and says that brethren, absolutely and strictly speaking are here meant; which is agreeably to their tradition {i}:

and one of them die, and have no child: son, or daughter, son's son, or daughter's son, or daughter's daughter, as Jarchi notes; if there were either of these, children or grandchildren, of either sex, there was no obligation to marry a brother's wife; so, in the case put to Christ, there was no issue, the person was childless, Mt 22:24;

the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger; by whom is meant not a Gentile, or a proselyte of the gate, or of righteousness, but any Israelite whatever, that was not of her husband's family; she might not marry out of the family; that is, she was refused by all, the design of the law being to secure inheritances, and continue them in families to which they belonged:

her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife; that is, supposing him to be unmarried, and this is indeed supposed in the first clause of the text, by dwelling with his brother; for had he been married, he would have dwelt with his wife and family apart; besides, if this law obliged a married man to marry his brother's wife, polygamy would be required and established by a law of God, which was never otherwise than permitted. This is to be understood of the eldest brother, as Jarchi, who is in an unmarried state; so it is said in the Misnah {k},

"the command is upon the eldest to marry his brother's wife; if he will not, they go to all the brethren; if they will not, they return to the eldest; and say to him, upon thee is the commandment, either allow the shoe to be plucked off, or marry;"

and such a course we find was taken among the Jews in our Lord's time, Mt 22:25;

and perform the duty of an husband's brother to her; cohabit together as man and wife, in order to raise up seed to his brother, and perform all the offices and duties of an husband to a wife; but the marriage solemnity was not to take place when it was agreed to, until three months or ninety days had passed from the death of the brother, that it might be known whether she was with child or no by her husband, and in such a case this law had no force; so runs the Jewish canon {l}

"a brother's wife may not pluck off the shoe, nor be married, until three months;"

that is, after her husband's death.

{h} Hilchot Yebum Vechalitzah, c, 1, sect, 7. {i} Misn. Yebamot, c. 4. sect. 5. {k} Yebamot, c. 4. sect. 5. {l} Ib. sect. 10.

Deuteronomy 25:6

Ver. 6. And it shall be [that] the firstborn that she beareth,.... To her husband's brother, now married to her:

shall succeed in the name of his brother [which is] dead; the meaning is, as the Targum of Jonathan,

"he shall rise up in the inheritance in the name of his brother;"

or, as Jarchi expresses it,

"he shall take the inheritance of the deceased in the goods of his father;"

that is, he shall have his part and share in the inheritance that the deceased brother would have had if he had lived, which would come to him by his father:

that his name be not put out of Israel; that the family be not lost in Israel, and the inheritance belonging to it pass to another. This law was designed to keep families distinct, and inheritances in them, until the Messiah came, and that it might appear from what family he came; as he did from one in whom, as it is generally thought, this law took place: and it might have still a more special respect to him, as Ainsworth suggests; for Christ in the mystical sense may be signified by the deceased brother; he stands in the relation of a brother to his people, and has all the love, friendship, compassion, and condescension of one; he and they are of one and the same father, of the same family, and of the same nature, and have the same inheritance they being co-heirs with him; nor is he ashamed to own the relation. This brother of theirs is deceased; his death was according to the will of God, what he himself agreed to, and was foretold by the prophets; for which purpose he came into the world, and did die as to the flesh, and that for the sins of his people. Now the Jewish church was his wife, by whom he had no children through the law; that church was espoused to him, he stood in the relation of an husband to her, and she in the relation of a wife to him. Very few children were brought forth by her to him, see, Isa 54:1; and none by the law, by which there is no regeneration, but by the Gospel; it is through that, and not the law, the Spirit and his graces come; or souls are born again to Christ, renewed and sanctified. The apostles that survived Christ, and the ministers of the Gospel, are his brethren, Joh 20:17; and who are instruments in begetting souls to Christ; and these are a seed raised up unto him, and are called not after the name of the apostles and ministers of the word, through whose ministry they are begotten, **1Co 1:12**; but after Christ; and have the name of Christians, or anointed ones, from him, and by which means his name is, and will be continued as long as the sun endures, Ac 11:26.

Deuteronomy 25:7

Ver. 7. And the man like not to take his brother's wife,.... The provision here made by this law, when this was the case, is such as did not take place before it became a law; for then Onan would have taken the advantage of it, and refused marrying his brother's wife, which it is plain was not agreeable to him, Ge 38:9; as many do now on one account or another. Leo of Modena {l} says,

"it was anciently accounted the more laudable thing to take her, than to release her; but now the corruption of the times, and the hardness of men's hearts, are such, as that they only look after worldly ends, either of riches, or of the beauty of the woman; so that there are very few that in this case will marry a brother's widow, especially among the Dutch and Italian Jews, but they always release her:"

then let his brother's wife go up to the gate; to the gate of the city, where the judges sit for public affairs; to the gate of the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, as the Targum of Jonathan; and this affair was cognizable by the bench of three judges, and might be dispatched by them; for so it is said {m},

"the plucking off the shoe, and the refusal of marriage, are by three:"

i.e. three judges, which was the lowest court of judicature with the Jews:

unto the elders, and say; which according to the above Targum were to be five wise men, of which three were to be judges, and two witnesses; and she was to say in the Hebrew language, in which, according to the Misnah {n}, she was to pronounce what follows:

my husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother; that is, in a few words, he will not marry her.

{l} Ut supra, sect. 3. (Leo Modena's History of Rites, &c. l. 1 sect. 3.) {m}

Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 3. {n} Sotah, c. 7. sect. 2.

Deuteronomy 25:8

Ver. 8. Then the elders of his city shall call him,.... Require him to come, before them, and declare his resolution, and the reasons for it; recite this law to him, and explain the nature of it, and exhort him to comply with it, or show reason why he does not, at least to have his final resolution upon it:

and speak unto him; talk with him upon this subject, and give him their best advice; and what that was Maimonides {o} more particularly informs us; if it is good and advisable to marry, they advise him to marry; but if it is better advice to pluck off the shoe, they give it; as when she is young and he is old, or she is old and he young, they advise him to allow the shoe to be plucked off:

and [if] he stand [to it]: and say, I like not to take her; if, after all the conversation, debate, and counsel between them, he is resolute, and abides by his first determination, that he will not marry her, then the following method was to be taken.

{o} Yebum Vechalitzab, c. 4. sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 25:9

Ver. 9. Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders,.... The time and place being appointed the evening before by three Rabbins, and two witnesses, as Leo of Modena says {p}; of which she was apprized, and ordered to come tasting:

and loose his shoe from off his foot; his right foot, which was thus done;

"they bring him a leather shoe, which has a heel, but not sewed with linen (linen thread), and he puts it on the right foot, and binds the latchet on his foot, and stands, he and she, in the court; he fixes his foot on the ground, and she sits and stretches out her hand in the court, and looses the latchet of his shoe from off his foot, and pulls off his shoe, and casts it to the ground {q}:"

this he suffered to be done to show that he gave up his right to her; and he was so used by way of reproach, to signify that he deserved not to be reckoned among freemen, but among servants and slaves, that went barefooted, having no shoes on: and in the mystical sense of it, as Ainsworth observes, it spiritually signified, that such as would not beget children unto Christ (or preach his Gospel for that purpose), it should be declared of them that their feet are not shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Christ, **Eph 6:15**;

and spit in his face; in a way of contempt, as a token of shame and disgrace; but the Jewish writers generally interpret this in a softer manner, as if it was not in his face, but in his presence, upon the floor, and seen by the judges {r}:

and shall answer and say, so shall it be done unto the man that will not build up his brother's house; that is, in this contemptuous and shameful manner shall he be used.

{p} Ut supra, sect. 4. (Leo Modena's Hostory of Rites, &c. l. 1. sect. 4.) {q} Maimon. ut supra, (Yebum Vechalitzab, c. 4.) sect. 6. {r} Ibid. sect. 7. Targum & Jarchi in loc.

Deuteronomy 25:10

Ver. 10. And his name shall be called in Israel,.... Not his particular and personal name, but his family; for it seems that not only a mark of infamy was set upon him for refusing to marry his brother's widow, but upon his family also;

the house of him that hath his shoe loosed; which, as Leo of Modena says {s}, was repeated by her three times; and at every time the people with a loud voice answer and call him, one that had his shoe loosed; and then the Rabbin tells the man that he is at liberty now to marry whom he pleases; and if he desires a certificate from them of this setting free his kinswoman, they presently give him one; and she also had a writing given to her by the judges, certifying the same, that she was free also to marry another; of which the following is a short form or copy {t}.

"In such or such a session (or court), such an one, the daughter of such an one, plucked off the shoe of such an one, the son of such an one, before us; she brought him before us, and she loosed the shoe of his right foot, and spit before him spittle, which was seen by us upon the ground; and said, so shall it be done to the man that would not build up his brother's house."

A larger form may be seen in Maimonides {u}, as well as a type and copy of the matrimonial contract. From this law an high priest was free, Le 21:14; and so a king, according to the Jewish canon {w}.

{s} History, ut supra, sect. 5. (Leo Modena's History of Rites, &c. l. 1. sect. 5.) {t} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 1. {u} Hilchot Yebum Vechalitzah, c. 4. sect. 29. {w} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 2.

Deuteronomy 25:11

Ver. 11. When men strive together, one with another,.... Quarrel with one another, and come to blows, and strive for mastery, which shall beat, and be the best man:

and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him; perceiving that his antagonist has more skill or strength, or both, for fighting, and is an more than a match for her husband, who is like to be much bruised and hurt; wherefore, to save him out of the hands of the smiter, she goes up to them to part them, or take her husband's side:

and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets; or privy parts; in Hebrew his "shameful" parts {x}, which through shame are hidden, and modesty forbids to express in proper terms; and such is the purity of the Hebrew language, that no obscene words are used in it; for which reason, among others, it is called the holy tongue. This immodest action was done partly out of affection to her husband, to oblige his antagonist to let go his hold of him; and partly out of malice and revenge to him, to spoil him, and make him unfit for generation, and therefore was to be severely punished, as follows.

{x} wyvbmb "verenda ejus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version; "pudenda ejus", Piscator.

Deuteronomy 25:12

Ver. 12. Then thou shall cut off her hand,.... Which was to be done not by the man that strove with her husband, or by any bystander, but by the civil magistrate or his order. This severity was used to deter women from such an immodest as well as injurious action, who on such an occasion are very passionate and inconsiderate. Our Lord is thought to refer to this law, **Mt 5:30**; though the Jewish writers interpret this not of actual cutting off the hand, but of paying a valuable consideration, a price put upon it; so Jarchi; and Aben Ezra compares it with the law of retaliation, "eye for eye", Ex 21:24; which they commonly understand of paying a price for the both, &c. lost; and who adds, if she does not redeem her hand (i.e. by a price) it must be cut off:

thine eye shall not pity [her]; on account of the tenderness of her sex, or because of the plausible excuse that might be made for her action, being done hastily and in a passion, and out of affection to her husband; but these considerations were to have no place with the magistrate, who was to order the punishment inflicted, either in the strict literal sense, or by paying a sum of money.

Deuteronomy 25:13

Ver. 13. Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights,.... Or, "a stone and a stone" {y}; it being usual, in those times and countries, to have their weights of stone, as it was formerly with us here; we still say, that such a commodity is worth so much per stone, a stone being of such a weight; now these were not to be different:

a great and a small; great weights, to buy with them, and small weights, to sell with them, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it.

{y} Nbaw Nba "lapis et lapis", Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator.

Deuteronomy 25:14

Ver. 14. Thou shall not have in thine house divers, measures,.... Or, "an ephah and an ephah"; which was one sort of measure in use with the Jews, and held above a bushel; and is put for all others, which should be alike, and not

a great and a small; one to buy with, and another to sell by, as before observed; which would be to cheat both seller and buyer in their turns; see **Am 8:5**.

Deuteronomy 25:15

Ver. 15. [But] thou shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shall thou have,.... That is, full weights, and full measures; and such as are alike, and everywhere used, according to the standard of the country; See Gill on "Le 19:36";

that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee; long life was always reckoned a blessing, and is frequently promised to, obedience, and particularly long life in the land of Canaan; which was a most delightful and fruitful land, and which a man might wish to live long in; deceitful men, are threatened with not living half their days, and such may they be said to be that use false weights and measures, Ps 55:23.

Deuteronomy 25:16

Ver. 16. For all that do such things,.... Keep, different weights and measures, and make use of them to defraud their neighbours in buying and selling:

[and] all that do unrighteously; what is not just and right between man and man, in any other instance whatever:

[are] an abomination unto the Lord thy God; both they and their actions; he is a righteous God, and loves righteousness, and hates injustice of every kind.

Deuteronomy 25:17

Ver. 17. Remember what Amalek did unto thee,.... The Amalekites, how they came out against them, and fought with them at Rephidim, Ex 17:8;

by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; which was an aggravation of their cruel and inhuman action, that they not only came out against them unprovoked, were the aggressors, and fell upon them as they were travelling on the road, but when they were just come out of Egypt, where they had been in hard bondage, and their spirits broken, and they not used to war; and so took them at all these disadvantages, a people that had not in the least injured them.

Deuteronomy 25:18

Ver. 18. How he met thee by the way,.... Not with necessary provisions, food and drink, which would have been but a piece of kindness and humanity to travellers; but met them sword in hand, in order to stop their journey, and make them captives, at least to harass and distress them:

and smote the hindmost of thee; came upon them in a sly cowardly manner, and attacked their rear:

[even] all [that were] feeble behind thee: women and children, and such men as were weak, sickly, labouring under some disorder, and so lagged behind, and could not keep up with the rest; on these Amalek first fell, and began his attack here:

when thou [wast] faint and weary; with travelling, and the more so for want of water, which was their case at Rephidim, when Amalek came out against them; which is another aggravation of their unkind usage of them they were not to forget:

and he feared not God; who was then in the pillar of cloud and fire with Israel, which phenomenon Amalek might see, and yet did not fear; and who had done such wonders for Israel in Egypt, and had brought them from thence, and had drowned Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, of which doubtless Amalek had heard, and yet feared not the Lord, who had done such great things.

Deuteronomy 25:19

Ver. 19. Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about,.... Not only when they had subdued the Canaanites, and got possession of their land, but when they were clear and free from all their neighbouring nations, Moabites, Midianites, Edomites, Ammonites, and Philistines; wherefore it may be observed, that this did not take place, as not immediately after the conquest of Canaan, so neither in the times of the judges, when they were harassed frequently by their neighbours, and not until the times of Saul, the first king of Israel:

in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee [for] an inheritance to possess it; the sense is, when they were in the full possession of the land given them by the Lord, as an inheritance to be enjoyed by them and theirs; and were at an entire rest from all enemies, and so had their hands at liberty to employ against Amalek:

[that] thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven: that is, utterly destroy them, so that there should be none left of them any where, to put in mind that there ever were such a people on earth; men, women, children, cattle of all sorts, were to be destroyed, and nothing left that belonged unto them; that it might not be said this beast was Amalek's, as Jarchi, and to the same purpose Aben Ezra; see the order for this renewed, and the accomplishment of it, at least in part, 1Sa 15:2, &c.

thou shall not forget [it]; neither the unkindness of Amalek, nor this order to destroy him. The Targum of Jonathan adds,

"and even in the days of the King Messiah it shall not be forgotten."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 26:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 26

This chapter treats of the basket of firstfruits to be brought and presented to the Lord, and the confession to be made along with it, De 26:1; and of the declaration to be made on the third year, the year of tithing, and the prayer annexed to it, De 26:12; and of the covenant made in a solemn manner between God and the people of Israel, De 26:16.

Ver. 1. And it shall be, when thou [art] come in unto the land,.... The land of Canaan, which they were now on the borders of, and just entering into:

which the Lord thy God giveth thee [for] an inheritance; which is often mentioned, to observe that it was not through their merits, but his gift, that they should enjoy the land; and the rather here to enforce the following law concerning the basket of firstfruits:

and possessest it, and dwellest therein; not only had entered into it, but got the possession of it, and settled there. This shows as Jarchi observes, that they were not bound to the firstfruits till they had subdued the land and divided it; not as soon as they were in it.

Deuteronomy 26:2

Ver. 2. That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth,.... This oblation of firstfruits was different front the sheaf of the firstfruits brought at barley harvest in the time of the passover, and from the two wave loaves of wheaten flour, at wheat harvest, at Pentecost; and from the cake of the first of their dough; see Le 23:10. They were of one sort only, these of various kinds; though, as Jarchi observes, not all firstfruits, or the first of all sorts of fruits, were to be brought; for all were not bound to firstfruits, but the seven kinds only, called here the fruit of the earth, and are particularly mentioned in **De 8:8**; and their manner of observing, selecting, and gathering their firstfruits, as the same writer notes, was this;

"a man goes into his field, and sees a mature fig, he binds a rush about it for a sign, and says, lo, this is firstfruits: and so, if he sees a bunch of grapes, or a pomegranate, more mature than the rest, he does the same,"

as is observed in the Misnah {z}:

which thou shalt bring of thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee; and the land being given them, and such a fruitful one as it was, they needed not to grudge bringing the firstfruits of it to the Lord. The quantity they were to bring is not fixed; this was left to their generosity; but, according to tradition, they were to bring the sixtieth part; so says Maimonides {a},

"the firstfruits have no measure (no fixed measure) from the law; but from the words of the wise men, a man ought to separate one out of sixty:"

and shalt put [it] in a basket; for the more convenient carriage of them and for the more decent oblation and waving of them together, The rich brought their firstfruits in baskets of silver and of gold, the poor in wicker baskets of willows barked {b}. The firstfruits of the seven several kinds were all put together in one basket, not into separate ones, or into as many as there were kinds; but then, as the last mentioned writer observes {c},

"they did not bring them mixed, but the barley (was put) beneath, or lowermost, and the wheat over that; and the olives above that, and the dates over them, and the pomegranates over them, and the figs uppermost in the vessel; and there was some one thing which separated between every kind, as leaves, and the like; and they put about the figs clusters of grapes without:"

and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there; which, as the event showed, was the city of Jerusalem; hither from all parts of the country were the firstfruits to be brought. All which may teach us, that we are to honour God with the firstfruits of our increase; that we are to be thankful in every thing, and for everything we have; and that our mercies should be acknowledged publicly in the place of public worship; and that all our sacrifices of praise should be offered in faith, which may be signified by the basket in which the firstfruits were brought, without which we cannot please God; and this being bore on the shoulder all the while, may denote reverence of God, and a sense of former state and condition, as this might put the Israelites in mind of their carrying loads in Egypt.

{z} Misn. Biccurim, c. 3. sect. 1. {a} Maimon. Hilchot Biccurim, c. 2. sect. 17. {b} Misn. Biccurim, c. 3. sect. 8. {c} Hilchot Biccurim, c. 3. sect. 7.

Deuteronomy 26:3

Ver. 3. And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days,.... Whose course and turn it would be to minister before the Lord; though, according to the Targum of Jonathan, it was the high priest they were to apply to on this occasion; and so Aben Ezra observes, that this law is obligatory all the time there is an high priest, as if it was not binding when there was none, and all depended on him; who in this case was typical of Christ our high priest, to whom we must bring, and by him offer up, the sacrifice of praise, even the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to God for all his mercies:

and say unto him; what follows, and the basket of firstfruits all the while on his shoulder {d}, even if a king:

I profess this day; it being done once in a year, and not twice, as Jarchi notes:

unto the Lord thy God; directing his speech to the priest:

that I am come into the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to give us; and not only come into it, but was in the possession of it, and in the enjoyment of the fruits of it; of which the basket of firstfruits he had brought on his shoulder was a token. The natural and moral use of these firstfruits to the Israelites, and the bringing of them, was hereby to own and acknowledge that God was the proprietor of the land of Canaan; that they had it by gift from him, and that they held it of him, the firstfruits being a sort of a small rent they brought him; and that he was faithful to his oath and promise he had made to their fathers, and which they professed with great humility and thankfulness.

The typical use of them was to direct to Christ himself, the firstfruits of them that sleep in him, the first begotten from the dead, the pledge and earnest of the resurrection of his people; to the Spirit of God and his grace, which are the earnest of glory; and to the first converts among Jews and Gentiles, in the first times of the Gospel; to Christians in general, who are the firstfruits of God and of the Lamb, and to their sacrifices of praise and thankfulness they are to offer up to God through Christ, which are acceptable to him through him; and whereby they glorify him as the author of all their mercies, to whom they are to bring their best, and in the first place; see
1Co 15:20.

{d} Misn. Biccurim, c. 3. sect. 4, 6. Maimon. Biccurim, c. 3. sect. 12.

Deuteronomy 26:4

Ver. 4. And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand,.... To wave it, as Jarchi says, putting his hand under the hand of the owner, and so waving it; and this being waved to and fro towards the several corners of the earth, was an acknowledgment of the Lord being the proprietor of it:

and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God; that it might have some appearance of a sacrifice, and be a fit emblem of the spiritual sacrifice of praise, which is accepted upon the altar Christ, which sanctifies every gift.

Deuteronomy 26:5

Ver. 5. And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God,.... Speak with a loud voice, lifting up the voice, as Jarchi interprets it; or "answer" {e}, to the question the priest will ask, saying, what is this thou hast brought? as Aben Ezra remarks; and this being said in the tabernacle, and before the priest of the Lord, and as in the presence of the Lord, is represented as said before him, which is as follows:

a Syrian ready to perish [was] my father; meaning Jacob, who though born in Canaan, his mother was a Syrian, and his grandfather Abraham was of Chaldea, a part of Syria; and Jacob married two wives in Syria, and all his children were born there but Benjamin, and where he lived twenty years; and sometimes persons are denominated, as from the place of their birth, so from the place of their dwelling, as Christ was called a Nazarene from Nazareth, where he dwelt, though he was born at Bethlehem, **Mt 2:23**; and Jether, though an Israelite, as Aben Ezra observes, is called an Ishmaelite, perhaps because he dwelt some time among that people, **1Ch 2:17**. Now Jacob might be said to be ready to perish when he fled for his life from his brother Esau, and was poor and penniless when he came to Laban; so the last mentioned writer interprets this phrase; to which may be added, that when in his service he was exposed to cold and heat, and had his wages frequently changed, and afterwards, when obliged to flee from Laban, was pursued by him with an intention to do him mischief, had not the Lord prevented him. The reason of this part of the confession was to show that it was not owing to the greatness of their ancestors from whence they sprung, whose condition was mean, but to the gift of God, and his goodness, that they enjoyed the land of Canaan. So every sensible soul, when he brings his sacrifice of praise to God for his mercies, especially spiritual ones, frankly acknowledges his lost perishing condition by nature, of which he is sensible; and that in order to magnify the riches of the grace of God in his salvation, to endear Christ as a Saviour the more, and to keep humble, and make thankful:

and he went down into Egypt; not directly, but some years after his former afflicted circumstances; so the Targum of Jonathan expresses it,

"after these things he went down into Egypt;"

after he had been in perishing circumstances in Syria, and when he was sore pressed with famine in Canaan:

and sojourned there with a few; with seventy souls, as Jarchi:

and became there a great nation, mighty and populous; insomuch that the king of Egypt was jealous of them, lest through their strength and numbers they should get away from them, when any favourable incident happened; they being when they came out from thence six hundred thousand men able to bear arms, besides women and children.

{e} tynew "et respondebis", Montanus, Vatablus; "et respondens dices", Munster.

Deuteronomy 26:6

Ver. 6. And the Egyptians evil entreated us,.... Ordered their male children to be killed by the midwives, and by another edict to be drowned by the people:

and afflicted us; by setting taskmasters over them, who put heavy burdens upon them:

and laid upon us hard bondage; in mortar and brick, and all manner of field service, in which they made them serve with rigour, and whereby their lives were made bitter; see **Ex 1:9**.

Deuteronomy 26:7

Ver. 7. And when we cried unto the Lord our God,.... As they did by reason of their hard bondage, **Ex 2:23**;

and the Lord heard our voice, and looked upon our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression; with a look of pity and compassion, heard their cries, answered their petitions, and sent them a deliverer, **Ex 2:25**.

Deuteronomy 26:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt,.... After some time:

with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm; by his almighty power, of which full proof was given by what he then did, **De 5:15**;

and with great terribleness: to Pharaoh and his people, through the plagues that were inflicted on them, especially the last, the slaying of their firstborn; see **De 4:34**;

and with signs and with wonders; wrought by the hands of Moses and Aaron, meaning the ten plagues, often so called.

Deuteronomy 26:9

Ver. 9. And he hath brought us unto this place,.... After forty years travel through the wilderness:

and hath given us this land, [even] a land that floweth with milk and honey; an usual description of the land of Canaan, because of the great fertility of it, and the abundance of good things in it; see **Ex 3:8**.

Deuteronomy 26:10

Ver. 10. And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me,.... Directing his speech not to the priest, but to the Lord himself; owning that the part of the land he had, and the fruits he enjoyed, were the gifts of God to him, and therefore, as in gratitude bound, brought him the firstfruits:

and thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God; these are the words of Moses, or of the law, directing the man what further he had to do; and this, as Jarchi thinks, shows that he took it after the priest waved it, and laid hold on it with his hand while he was reading (his confession), turning and waving:

and worship before the Lord thy God; bow before him in a reverend and humble manner, sensible of his obligations to him, and dependence on him.

Deuteronomy 26:11

Ver. 11. And thou shalt rejoice in every good [thing],.... In all the blessings of goodness and mercies of life, which God in his kind providence had favoured them with:

which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house; to them and their families, by which they were comfortably provided for:

thou and the Levite, and the stranger that [is] among you; by which it seems that not only a basket of firstfruits was brought and presented to the Lord, which is the perquisite of the priest, but there were others also brought, or bought with their money at Jerusalem, and a sort of a kept, which the Levite, and stranger or proselyte, of along with the owner; see De 12:11; though Jarchi understands it of the Levite and stranger being obliged to bring the firstfruits: the Levite, he says, is bound to the firstfruits of the plants in the midst of his cities, though he had no part in the division of the land; and the same writer says, the stranger brings the firstfruits, but does not proclaim, because he cannot say, "which he sware to our fathers", De 26:3; but it is said {f}, if his mother was an Israelitess he might proclaim; yea, Maimonides {g} says, on account of what is said of Abraham, Ge 17:5; who is the father of the whole world; see **Ro 4:10**; because mention is made of rejoicing; hence it is concluded, as Jarchi says, that the proclamation of the firstfruits was only made in the time of joy, from Pentecost unto the feast that a man gathers in his increase, and his fruits, and his wine, and his oil; though from that feast and onward he may bring, but not proclaim; to the same purpose, says the Misnah {h}, from Pentecost to the feast of tabernacles a man may bring the firstfruits, and proclaim; and even from the feast of tabernacles to the dedication of the temple, he may bring, but not proclaim; the reason given in Siphri {i} is, because proclamation is only to be performed in time of joy--and the joy of the year is finished at the end of the feast of tabernacles, as in Le 23:40.

{f} Misn. Biccurim, c. 1. sect. 4. {g} Maimon. Hilchot Biccurim, c. 4. sect. 3. {h} Ut supra, ({f}) sect. 6. {i} Apud Maimon. Hilchot Biccurim, c. 4. sect. 6.

Deuteronomy 26:12

Ver. 12. When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase,.... Which, according to Maimonides {k}, is to be understood of the feast, in which all tithes are finished, which is the feast of the passover:

the third year, [which is] the year of tithing; that is, the third from every seventh, when the land lay fallow. Every year a tithe was paid to the Levites; and besides that a second tithe, which was carried to Jerusalem and eaten there; and every third year it was eaten at home, in their towns and cities in the country instead of it, with the Levite, poor and stranger, and was called the poor's tithe; and hence the Targum of Jonathan here calls this year the year of the poor's tithe, as was also the sixth year, and was reckoned not complete till the passover in the following year, as the Jewish writers {l} say:

and hath given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow; that is, the poor's tithe of the third year, which these were to eat of with the owner, De 14:28; though the Jews commonly distinguish the Levite from the rest, and suppose that both first and second tithes are meant, the one to be given to the former, and the other to the latter; so the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi:

that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled: for this was a considerable entertainment, a sort of a feast, a full meal, however; hence it is concluded, as

Jarchi says, that they did not give less of corn to a poor man than half a kab of wheat, which was above three pints.

{k} In Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 5. sect. 6. {l} Misn. ib. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Deuteronomy 26:13

Ver. 13. Then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God,.... Make the following declaration as in his presence; for this was not made in the tabernacle or temple at, Jerusalem, since the tithe was to be eaten with the poor in the gates of the owner, as in De 26:12:

I have brought away the hallowed things out of [mine] house: which Aben Ezra and Onkelos interpret of the tithe; but it seems, besides that, to take in everything devoted to all holy uses, be they what they will, which were at this time to be separated from a man's own common goods, and applied to the purposes for which they were designed and devoted, and particularly what was to be given to the poor:

and also have, given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me; giving to each according as the law directs; which the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret as before, giving the first tithe to the Levites, and the second tithe to the rest:

I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten [them]: neither broken them wilfully, nor omitted them through carelessness, negligence, and forgetfulness, but was mindful to observe them punctually and exactly.

Deuteronomy 26:14

Ver. 14. I have not eaten thereof in my mourning,.... When in grief and sorrow on account of any afflictive circumstance, for these were to be eaten with joy, De 16:11; and especially of the loss of relations by death, when holy things were not to be eaten by such persons; see Le 10:19; and particularly tithes, though it is said {n}, "What is doubtful of tithing (whether it has been tithed or no) might be eaten by a mourner;"

and a man was reckoned such an one until his dead was buried. So Maimonides {o} observes,

"a mourner may not eat holy things, as it is written, De 26:14; he is one whose relation is dead, when he is obliged to mourn; for he is called by the law a mourner as long as the dead lies upon the face of the earth (above ground), or as long as he is not yet buried he is called a mourner; and so likewise on the day of burial:"

neither have I taken away [ought] thereof for [any] unclean [use]; or common use, or any other use than it was designed for, and devoted to; or for any unclean person, who by the law might not eat thereof; or, as Jarchi interprets it, that he had not removed it, or taken it away from being eaten, on account of any unclean person, because I am unclean and he pure, or he pure and I unclean:

nor given ought thereof for the dead; for the necessities of the dead, as Aben Ezra; more particularly Jarchi, to make for him a coffin and grave clothes; and so the Targum of Jonathan interprets it of grave clothes for the dead; though that of Jerusalem of clothes for those that are polluted by the dead. It may have respect also to the parentalia, or funeral feasts made at the interment of the dead; though Aben Ezra says, there are some that say it was for idolatry, and so the person here speaking denies that he had made use of any of the holy things in honour of idols, of dead men deified; and some are of opinion that all the above things may have some respect to idolatrous practices {p}:

[but] I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord my God, [and] have done according to all that thou hast commanded me; observed his word, and kept close to it, and not swerved from it, but acted according to it in all things before referred to.

{n} Misn. Demai, c. 1. sect. 2. {o} Maimon. in Misn. Pesachim, c. 8. sect. 6. {p} Vid. Patrick in loc.

Deuteronomy 26:15

Ver. 15. Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven,.... This is a prayer of the person that makes the above declaration annexed to it, desiring that God would vouchsafe to look with an eye of love, complacency, and delight, upon him and upon all his people, from heaven his holy habitation, though they were on earth, and unholy persons in themselves, and especially if compared with him; see Isa 57:15;

and bless thy people Israel; with blessings temporal and spiritual:

and the land which thou hast given us; with fertility and plenty of all good things, that it might be

as thou swarest to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey;
See Gill on "De 26:9".

Deuteronomy 26:16

Ver. 16. This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments,.... These are the words of Moses, as Aben Ezra rightly observes, and refer not only to the laws last mentioned, but to all others which he had repeated, or the Lord by him had ordered to be observed, recorded in this book: and though it is very probable Moses had been several days repeating former laws, and acquainting them with new ones; yet this being the last day, in which the whole account was finished, they are said to be commanded that day, and though commanded that day were to be observed and done every day; for, as Jarchi says, every day was to be considered and reckoned as new, as if on that day they were commanded them:

thou shall therefore keep and do them with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; cordially, readily, willingly, sincerely, constantly, and to the utmost of their abilities.

Deuteronomy 26:17

Ver. 17. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God,.... Said, affirmed, protested, and in the most solemn manner declared, that the Lord was their God, and him only; and that they would have no other God, nor worship, serve, or obey any other. The Lord is the God of all mankind, as he is the Creator and Preserver of them, and was of the people of Israel in a peculiar manner, they being chosen, redeemed, and privileged by him above all others;

and especially is of his elect in Christ among all nations, whom he has loved and set apart for himself, and determined to save; whom he has adopted and regenerated; he provides for them, protects and preserves them, gives them grace here and glory hereafter: he is their God in Christ, and by virtue of the covenant of his grace made with them in him; and is known by them to be so in the effectual calling by the application of covenant blessings to them; and which is certified to them by the Spirit of God, upon which they claim their interest in him, and make profession of him as their God:

and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice; that is, this was then their resolution and determination, their protestation and declaration, to walk in all the ways of God, both in private and in public, he directed unto; and to observe all his laws, ceremonial, moral, and judicial, which he had given them as the rule of their walk and behaviour; and to regard whatsoever he should reveal by his prophets and ministers as his will; and a view of covenant interest in God lays all good men under the strongest obligation in the strength of divine grace to attend to his will; nor can there be a greater motive to them than covenant love, grace, and mercy.

Deuteronomy 26:18

Ver. 18. And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people,.... Affirmed and declared them to be his special people, above all people on the face of the earth, and that they were looked upon and considered by him as his jewels, his peculiar treasure:

as he hath promised thee; on condition of their obedience to him, as he did in Ex 19:5;

and that [thou] shouldest keep all his commandments; at the same time declared this as his will, that they should observe all his precepts, to which they were laid under obligation by the special favour and peculiar privileges he bestowed upon them, **De 7:6**. The Targums interpret both these verses of the people of Israel choosing and making the Lord their King, and of his being made King over them; and so it respects their peculiar form of civil government, being a theocracy. The Lord's people in Christ are a peculiar people; they are distinct from all people, and are peculiarly regarded by him; they are the objects of his peculiar love, and receive peculiar favours from him; and whom having chosen and redeemed, he calls by his special grace, and witnesses their special relation to him by his Spirit; which grace obliges and excites them to a cheerful obedience to his commands.

Deuteronomy 26:19

Ver. 19. To make thee high above all nations,.... None of them having the Lord to be their God and King in such sense as Israel, nor they his people in such a peculiar sense as they were; nor having such laws and statutes as he had given to them; these things gave them a superiority over all other nations:

which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; that is, which nations he made praiseworthy, famous, and honourable, for their extent, wealth, riches, and number; and yet on the above accounts Israel was advanced higher than they:

and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken; the end of the Lord in being their God, and making them his people, was not only to make them high above all others, but to make them more holy than others; to set them apart for himself, as a people sacred to his worship and service, as he had both determined and declared, **De 7:6**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 27:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 27

In this chapter the people of Israel are ordered to write the law on plastered stones, and set them on Mount Ebal, De 27:1; where they are bid to erect an altar, and offer sacrifices on it, De 27:5; and are charged by Moses and the priests to obey the Lord, and keep his commandments, De 27:9; and a direction is given to each tribes which should stand and bless, and which curse, and where, De 27:11; and the curses which the Levites should pronounce with a loud voice, and the people should say Amen to, are recited, De 27:14; and the whole is concluded with a curse on all who in general do not perform the whole law, De 27:26.

Ver. 1. And Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying,.... The seventy elders, at the head of whom was Moses, which made the great sanhedrim, or council of the nation; Moses having recited all the laws of God to the people, these joined with him in an exhortation to them to observe and obey them:

keep all the commandments which I command you this day; not in his own name, as being the supreme legislator, but in the name of the Lord, whom they had avouched to be their God and King, from whom he had received them.

Deuteronomy 27:2

Ver. 2. And it shall be, on the day when you shall pass over Jordan,.... Not the precise day exactly, but about that time, a little after they passed that river, as soon as they conveniently could; for it was not till after Ai was destroyed that the following order was put in execution; indeed as soon as they passed over Jordan, they were ordered to take twelve stones, and did; but then they were set up in a different place, and for a different purpose; see **Jos 4:3**;

unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones; not in Jordan, as Jarchi, but on Mount Ebal, De 27:4; nor had the stones set up in Jordan any such inscription as what is here ordered to be set on these:

and plaster them with plaster: that so words might be written upon them, and be more conspicuous, and more easily read.

Deuteronomy 27:3

Ver. 3. And thou shall write upon them all the words of this law,.... Not the whole book of Deuteronomy, as some think, at least not the historical part of it, only what concerns the laws of God; and it may be only a summary or abstract of them, and perhaps only the ten commandments. Josephus {q} is of opinion that the blessings and the curses after recited were what were written on them:

when thou art passed over; that is, the river Jordan:

that thou mayest go in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, a land flowing with milk and honey; this account of the land of Canaan is so frequently observed, to imprint upon their minds a sense of the great goodness of God in giving them such a fruitful country, and to point out to them the obligation they lay under to observe the laws of God ordered to be written on plastered stones, as soon as they came into it:

as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee; **Ex 3:8**.

{q} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 44.

Deuteronomy 27:4

Ver. 4. And therefore it shall be, when ye be gone over Jordan,.... Some time after they had passed that river:

[that] ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in Mount Ebal; a mountain near Shechem in Samaria, and was, as Benjamin of Tudela says {r}, dry as stones and rocks itself, and perhaps had its name, as some think {s}, from the root in the Arabic language which signifies to strip a tree of its leaves, and a derivative from it, white stones and a mountain in which such are found. Hither the stones commanded to be set up were to be brought, and fixed here; from whence it is not certain; it may be from some part of the mountain. Here the Samaritan version has Gerizim instead of Ebal, which is generally thought to be a wilful corruption of the Samaritans, in favour of their temple built at Gerizim:

and thou shall plaster them with plaster; as before directed, De 27:2.

{r} Itinerar. p. 40. {s} Reland. Dissert. 3. de Monte Gerizim, p. 128. See Castel. Lexic. Heptaglott col 2642.

Deuteronomy 27:5

Ver. 5. And there shall thou build an altar to the Lord thy God,.... On the same mountain, though not of the same stones. Jarchi's note is,

"after that (the setting up of the plastered stones) thou shalt bring from thence (from Jordan) others, and build of them an altar on Mount Ebal;"

but Josephus {t} places this altar not on Mount Ebal, but between that and Gerizim. This altar, he says, was ordered to be built towards the rising sun, not far from the city of Shechem, between two mountains, Gerizim and Ebal; but

the text is express, that it was to be built where the stones were set up, which was on Mount Ebal, and there it was built, **Jos 8:30**; an altar of stones; of whole stones, as in
De 27:6, not broken, nor hewed, but rough as they were when taken out of the quarry:

thou shalt not lift up [any] iron [tool] upon them; to hew them, and make them smooth; See Gill on "Ex 20:25";

{t} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 44.)

Deuteronomy 27:6

Ver. 6. Thou shall build the altar of the Lord thy God of whole stones,.... And of such Joshua did build it, **Jos 8:31**;

and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord thy God; and very likely sin offerings too; for these frequently went together, the one to make atonement for sin, and the other as a gift, and by way of thankfulness for the acceptance of the former; and both typical of Christ, the true sacrifice, and the antitype of all the legal sacrifices.

Deuteronomy 27:7

Ver. 7. And thou shall offer peace offerings,.... Part of which belonged to God, which was burnt on the altar, and another part to the priest that offered them; and the rest to the owner that brought them, which he eat of with his friends; so it follows:

and shall eat there, and rejoice before the Lord thy God: now this altar, where these sacrifices were offered, was on the very spot where the stones were on which the law was written; and may point at the gracious provision God has made for the redemption of his people from the curse of it by Christ, who became a substitute for them in their legal place and stead. The altar being of rough unhewn stones was a type of him in his human nature, who is the stone in the vision cut out of the mountain without hands; and being unpolished may denote the meanness of his outward appearance, on account of which he was rejected by the Jewish builders; and no iron tool being to be lifted up on them, may signify that nothing of man's is to be added to the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ, and salvation by him; and this being in Ebal, where the curses were pronounced, shows that Christ, by the offering up of himself for the sins of his people, has made atonement for them, and thereby has delivered them from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them; all which is matter of joy and gladness to them.

Deuteronomy 27:8

Ver. 8. And thou shall write upon the stones all the words of this law,.... Not upon the stones of the altar, but upon the first stones brought to Mount Ebal, and set up there before, and on which the words were inscribed before the altar was erected; though according to the Misnah {u} the altar was built of these stones, and on that the law written; for it is said,

"they shall bring the stones (#De 27:2,4) and build the altar, and plaster it with plaster, and write upon it all the words of the law:"

with which Josephus agrees, who says {w},

"that when Moses was about to die, he ordered the blessings and the curses to be written on the altar, on both sides of it:"

could this be made clearly to appear, it would be easy to observe the accomplishment of it in Christ, who was made under the law, became subject to it, had it written on his heart, obeyed the precepts and bore the penalty of it, and had all the curses of it laid on him, and thereby redeemed his people from them. However, be it on which it may that the words of the law were written, they were written

very plainly; so that they might be easily read; in seventy languages, according to the Jewish writers; which they say was done, that whoever would learn the law might learn it, and so the Gentiles had no excuse {x}; for it is a prevailing notion with them, that there were so many nations and languages. The law being written on stones denotes the duration of it, which continued not only during the times of the Old Testament dispensation, and to the times of John, and had its fulfilment in Christ, but still continues; for though Christ has redeemed his people from the curse and condemnation of it, yet it is in his hands as a rule of direction to them as to their walk and conversation: nor is it made void by any doctrine of the Gospel, and nothing more strongly enforces obedience to it than the Gospel. The moral law is immutable, invariable, and eternal in its nature, and in the matter of it. This may also point at the hardness of men's hearts, their non-subjection to the law, and disobedience of it; and these stones being covered with plaster may be an emblem of formalists and hypocrites, who are like whited walls and sepulchres, Mt 23:27, have a form of the law in their heads, but not in their hearts; are Jews outwardly, but not inwardly, **Ro 2:28**; externally righteous before men, as if they were strict observers of the law, but internally very wicked; and have hard, blind, and impenitent hearts, under the cover of the law, and a profession of strict regard to it; and this being done on the same mount where the curses were pronounced, shows that they were on account of the breach of this law.

{u} Sotah, c. 7. sect. 5. {w} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 44.) {x} Sotah, ib. & Bartenora in ib. Targum Jon. & Jerus. & Jarchi in loc.

Deuteronomy 27:9

Ver. 9. And Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel,.... The priests who were Levites, as all the priests that were lawful ones were; and there were none but such at this time, who were. Eleazar and Ithamar, and their sons; these joined with Moses in the following exhortations to the people of Israel, as being particularly concerned in instructing them in the knowledge of the laws, and in seeing them put in execution:

saying, take heed, and hearken, O Israel; to what was about to be said unto them, as well as to what had: been said:

this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God; they were his people before; he had chosen them to be his special people above all others; he had redeemed them out of Egypt; he had led them through the wilderness, and provided for them and protected them there, and had given them laws and statutes to observe to walk in; all which showed them to be his peculiar people: but now in a very formal and solemn manner they were avouched and declared by him to be his people, and they had solemnly avouched and declared that he was their God and King; and every day, according to Jarchi, was to be considered as this day, as if it was the day of entering into covenant with him.

Deuteronomy 27:10

Ver. 10. Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God,.... In whatsoever he directs in his word, and by his prophets, and especially by his Son, eminently called the Word of the Lord:

and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day; See Gill on "De 27:1".

Deuteronomy 27:11

Ver. 11. And Moses charged the people the same,.... That he gave the above orders to set up stones, and plaster them, and write the law on them, and build an altar in the same place, and offer sacrifices when come into the land of Canaan:

saying; as follows.

Deuteronomy 27:12

Ver. 12. These shall stand upon Mount Gerizim to bless the people, widen ye are come over Jordan,.... Which was a mountain in Samaria opposite to Mount Ebal, a valley of a furlong broad lay between them {y}; and, according to Hillerus {z}, had its name from being broken off from that, they being, as it should seem, originally one mountain, and now two tops of the same; so Burchard; but others think it signifies the mountain of the mowers or cutters down {a}; that is, of grass or corn, being a very fruitful one; and Benjamin of Tudela says {b}, that in his time, on Mount Gerizim were fountains and orchards; and being such a fertile mountain, it was very proper to bless upon. Mr. Maundrel {c}, a late traveller in those parts, says,

"though neither of the mountains have much to boast of as to their pleasantness, yet as one passes between them, Gerizim seems to discover a somewhat more verdant fruitful aspect than Ebal; the reason of which may be, because fronting towards the north it is sheltered from the heat of the sun by its own shade; whereas Ebal looking southward, and receiving the sun that comes directly upon it, must by consequence be rendered more scorched and unfruitful."

Josephus {d} says, that Gerizim was on the right hand, and Ebal on the left; which may serve to strengthen the observation of Ainsworth, in allusion hereunto, that in the last judgment those on the right hand will be pronounced blessed, and those on the left hand cursed:

Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin: these appointed for blessing were children of the mistress, or free woman, as Aben Ezra and many others have observed; the four first were the sons of Leah, and the two last the sons of Rachel, and therefore employed in the most honourable and desirable service: and who so proper to pronounce or receive the blessing as the children of the free woman, of Jerusalem above, which is free, the mother of us all that are born again, and are made free by the Son of God, and are free indeed, and are entitled to all the blessings of grace and glory?

{y} Vid. Maundrel's Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 59, 62. {z} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 168. {a} Reland. Dissert. de Monte Gerizim. p. 128. {b} Itinerar. p. 40. {c} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 61. Edit. 7. {d} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 44.

Deuteronomy 27:13

Ver. 13. And these shall stand upon Mount Ebal curse,.... Which was dry and rocky, barren and fruitful, and like the earth, that bears briers and thorns, is rejected and nigh unto cursing, and so a proper place to curse, and a fit emblem of those to be cursed; see **Heb 6:8**;

Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali; four of these appointed for cursing were the children of the handmaids, Gad, Asher, Dan, and Naphtali; and since two were wanting, as Aben Ezra observes, and the sons of Leah were many, the oldest and the youngest were taken; Reuben, who had defiled his father's bed, and exposed himself to the curse of the law, and Zebulun, the last and youngest of Leah's sons; see **Ga 3:10**.

Deuteronomy 27:14

Ver. 14. And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel,.... Rather, "answer {e} and say"; not the whole tribe of Levi, for that stood on Mount Gerizim to bless, De 27:12; but the priests of that tribe who were placed in the valley, between the two mountains, and pronounced both the blessings and the curses in the hearing of all the tribes of Israel, to which they were to answer Amen; and that they might plainly hear, they expressed their words with a loud voice, clearly and distinctly, as follow.

{e} wne "respondebunt", Montanus.

Deuteronomy 27:15

Ver. 15. Cursed [be] the man that maketh [any] graven or molten image,.... The blessings and the form of them are not recorded, because they were not to be had from the law, and through obedience to it; and therefore there is a profound silence about them, to put men upon seeking for them elsewhere, and which are only to be had in Christ, especially spiritual ones; but we may suppose they were delivered in the same form, and respecting the same things as the curses, only just the reverse of them; as, "blessed is the man that maketh not any graven image", &c. The order of both is given in the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; See Gill on "De 11:29". This curse respects the breach of the first table of the law, and everything included in it relating to the nature and being of God, the worship of him, and the honour of his name; to do anything contrary to which, particularly to make an image, whether graven or molten, to worship, is

an abomination to the Lord; and therefore subjects a man to the curse of his law, it being

the work of the hands of the craftsman; and therefore it must be a most stupid thing to ascribe deity to it, and worship it as such:

and putteth [it] in [a] secret [place]; though it is not set in a place of public worship, or the house, so as to be seen by everyone; but in some retired place, in a secret chamber, and there worshipped, or kept to look at with pleasure; which would be a temptation, and lead on to idolatry, and therefore is forbidden, and to be guarded against: now one that committed idolatry, or anything like it, in the most secret manner, was liable to this curse; for the omniscient God, the legislator, knows what is done in the most private manner, and will resent and revenge every affront and injury to his honour and glory. And Aben Ezra observes, that all that follow respect things done in a secret way, and which were not cognizable by the civil magistrate, and therefore to deter persons from them these curses were pronounced:

and all the people shall answer and say Amen; even those on the one mountain as on the other, thereby approving of, and assenting to, the justice of the sentence pronounced.

Deuteronomy 27:16

Ver. 16. Cursed [be] he that setteth light by his father, or his mother,.... That secretly despises them in his heart, and by looks and gestures mocks at them in a private manner, unseen by others, Pr 30:17; for if he publicly cursed them, that was cognizable by the civil magistrate, and he was to be put to death, Le 20:9. This follows next, as in the order of the ten commands, to that which respects the fear and worship of God; honouring parents being next to the glorifying of God, the Father of all:

and all the people shall say Amen; applaud the righteous sentence, saying, "so let it be".

Deuteronomy 27:17

Ver. 17. Cursed [be] he that removeth his neighbour's landmark,.... Removes it backward, and steals ground, as Jarchi explains it; this is commonly done secretly; see De 19:14;

and all the people shall say Amen; See Gill on "De 27:15";
See Gill on "De 27:16".

Deuteronomy 27:18

Ver. 18. Cursed [be] he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way,.... By directing him wrong knowingly, or laying a stumbling block in his way, Le 19:14. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"that maketh a traveller wander out of the way, who like a blind man;"

who knows his way no more than a blind man does. Jarchi interprets it,

"that blinds in anything, and gives evil counsel;"

which leads men to take wrong steps, whether in things civil, or moral, or religious; all which are usually done privately:

and all the people shall say Amen; See Gill on "De 27:15";
See Gill on "De 27:16".

Deuteronomy 27:19

Ver. 19. Cursed [be] he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow,.... Who have none to assist them, and take their part, and therefore judges may be tempted to do an unjust thing; but God is the patron of them, and takes notice of every injury done them, and is the avenger of all such:

and all the people shall say Amen; See Gill on "De 27:15";
See Gill on "De 27:16".

Deuteronomy 27:20

Ver. 20. Cursed [be] he that lieth with his father's wife,.... As Reuben did, and which is forbidden Le 18:8;

because he uncovereth his father's skirt; see De 22:30;

and all the people shall say Amen; the tribe of Reuben said this as well as the rest.

Deuteronomy 27:21

Ver. 21. Cursed [be] he that lieth with any manner of beast,.... See Le 18:23;

and all the people shall say Amen; as being shocking and abhorrent to human nature.

Deuteronomy 27:22

Ver. 22. Cursed [be] he that lieth with his sister,.... Which is forbid, Le 18:9;

the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother; whether his sister by father or mother's side:

and all the people shall say Amen; detesting such uncleanness.

Deuteronomy 27:23

Ver. 23. Cursed [be] he that lieth with his mother in law,.... See Le 18:7. All these incestuous or brutal copulations may well be supposed to be done in secret:

and all the people shall say Amen; as abhorring such incest.

Deuteronomy 27:24

Ver. 24. Cursed [be] he that smiteth his neighbour secretly,.... And kills him, and the murder is not known; the curse of God follows such, and overtakes them sooner or later. Some interpret this of smiting with the tongue, of secret backbiting and slander; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"that smiteth with the third tongue;"

or false accusation:

and all the people shall say Amen; as disapproving of and condemning such a practice, even slander, and especially murder.

Deuteronomy 27:25

Ver. 25. Cursed [be] he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person,.... As an assassin, to murder him privately; or as a judge, that takes a bribe to condemn to death an innocent person: so Aben Ezra observes, that according to the sense of some a judge is meant; but, says he, in my opinion a false witness; one that swears a man's life away for the sake of a reward given him:

and all the people shall say Amen; at so detestable a crime.

Deuteronomy 27:26

Ver. 26. Cursed [be] he that confirmeth not [all] the words of this law to do them,.... That is, who does not perfectly perform all that the law requires, and continues to do so; for the law requires obedience, and that perfect and constant, and in failure thereof curses, in proof of which the apostle produces this passage,
See Gill on "Ga 3:10", for the reconciliation of these Scriptures, as to what seeming difference there is between them;

and all the people shall say, Amen; See Gill on "De 27:15";
See Gill on "De 27:16".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 28:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 28

In this chapter Moses enlarges on the blessings and the curses which belong, the one to the doers, the other to the transgressors of the law; the blessings, De 28:1; the curses, some of which concern individual persons, others the whole nation and body of people, and that both under the former and present dispensations, and which had their fulfilment in their former captivities, and more especially in their present dispersion, De 28:15.

Ver. 1. And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God,.... In his law, and by his prophets:

to observe [and] to do all his commandments, which I command thee this day; for without observing them to do them, hearing them would be to little purpose, and they were all of them to be observed and done, the lesser and weightier matters of the law as they were commanded by Moses in the name of the Lord, and as they would be taught, explained, and enforced by the prophets:

that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: as they were in the times of David and Solomon;
See Gill on "De 26:19".

Deuteronomy 28:2

Ver. 2. And all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee,.... After mentioned, which should come upon them from God from heaven, by the direction of his providence, and that freely and plentifully, and beyond their expectations and deserts, and continue with them:

if thou shall hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God; obedience to the law being the condition of their coming and continuance; for only temporal blessings in the land of Canaan are here intended, as follow.

Deuteronomy 28:3

Ver. 3. Blessed [shalt] thou [be] in the city,.... Not only in the city of Jerusalem, where the temple would be built, and there be blessed with the service, worship, and ordinances of God, but in all other cities of the land; where they should dwell in title, large, and spacious houses, and their cities should be walled and fenced, and be very populous; yet should enjoy health, and have plenty of all sorts of provisions brought unto them, as well as prosper in all kinds of merchandise there, as Aben Ezra notes:

and blessed [shalt] thou [be] in the field; in the country villages, and in all rural employments, in sowing and planting, as the same writer observes; in all kinds of husbandry, in the culture of the fields for corn, and of vineyards and oliveyards; all should prosper and succeed, and bring forth fruit abundantly.

Deuteronomy 28:4

Ver. 4. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body,.... Their children, of which they should have many, and these live; be healthful, thrive, and arrive to manhood, and increase and perpetuate their families. Grotius thinks this was eminently fulfilled in Mary, the mother of our Lord; see **Lu 1:42**;

and the fruit of thy ground; of their gardens, orchards, and fields; grass for the cattle, and the wheat, barley, vines, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates for the use of men:

and the fruit of thy cattle; which being distinguished from oxen and sheep in the following clause, must be understood of camels and asses, which were used for the carriage both of persons and burdens, and were very serviceable, and were a considerable part of their substance in those countries; see **Job 1:3**;

the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep; of their cows and oxen, and of their sheep and goats, which were very increasing creatures, and in the increase of which much of their outward happiness lay; see Ps 144:13.

Deuteronomy 28:5

Ver. 5. Blessed [shall be] thy basket,.... Which the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem restrain to the basket of firstfruits, and the cake of the first of their dough; but it intends any and every vessel in which they put their provisions for present use, and that that should never be empty of them, and that they should always have a sufficiency:

and thy store; what remained, and was laid up in their barns, cellars, and storehouses, for future use, or in proper places for seed.

Deuteronomy 28:6

Ver. 6. Blessed [shalt] thou [be] when thou comest in, and blessed [shalt] thou [be] when thou goest out. In all their business and employments of life whether within doors or without; in the administration of every office, whether more public or private; and in all their journeys going out and coming home; and particularly when they went out to war, and returned, all should be attended with success.

Deuteronomy 28:7

Ver. 7. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face,.... As the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, Edomites, and Ammonites were, especially in the times of David:

they shall come out against thee one way: in a body, all together, in large numbers, marching in great order, to give them battle:

and flee before thee seven ways; be entirely routed, and flee some one way, and some another, even every way they could take to make their escape. The phrase is expressive of an entire victory, and of a complete rout and dispersion of an enemy.

Deuteronomy 28:8

Ver. 8. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses,.... Barns, granaries, and cellar, where their corn, wine, and oil, were laid up; by preserving the corn from being devoured by vermin, and the casks of wine and oil from bursting and running out:

and in all thou settest thine hand unto; in all their manufactures, occupations, and trades, in which they were employed, and in the culture of their vines, olives, and other fruit trees:

and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee; with health and long life in it, and with an abundance of all good things, it being a land flowing with milk and honey.

Deuteronomy 28:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself,.... Having separated them from all others, for his service, honour, and glory, should continue them as such, and settle them in the land, and confirm all their privileges, natural, civil, and religious. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"the Word of the Lord shall establish thee, &c."

he that brought them out of Egypt, through the Red sea and wilderness, to the land of Canaan:

as he hath sworn unto thee: and to their fathers; see **De 7:12**;

if thou shall keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways; by which tenure they held the land of Canaan, and their settlement and continuance in it, and enjoyment of all the good things thereof; see **Isa 1:19**.

Deuteronomy 28:10

Ver. 10. And all the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord,.... Called his children, his people, his portion, and his inheritance; and that they are his, and he is theirs, by the care he takes of them, the provision he makes for them, and the protection they have from him:

and they shall be afraid of thee; as not only the Canaanites were, but all other nations; see De 11:25.

Deuteronomy 28:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods,.... In all temporal good things, give them an affluence of them, even all things richly to enjoy; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"the Word of the Lord shall, &c."

in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground: increase their children, cattle, and substance, as before, De 28:4;

in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee; the land of Canaan, often thus described.

Deuteronomy 28:12

Ver. 12. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure,.... The Lord has his treasures of snow and of hail, and of wind, Job 38:22; but here his good treasure, as appears by what follows, is his treasure of rain. In the Targum of Jonathan it is said,

"there are four keys in the hand of the Lord of the whole world, which he does not deliver into the hands of any prince; the keys of life, and of the grave, and of food, and of rain:"

the heaven, to give the rain unto thy land in its season; that is, he will open the heaven, where his good treasure of rain is laid up, and bring it forth or, the land of Canaan for the enriching of it; or will open the windows thereof, and pour down the blessing; see **Mal 3:10**; and that at the proper time, both in autumn and spring, the one is called the former, and the other the latter rain; the one was in Marchesvan, or October, and the other in Nisan, or March, as the Targum of Jonathan; the former rain for the fitting the earth for seed, or for watering it when sown, and the latter for the plumping of it before harvest:

and to bless all the work of thine hand; in agriculture, for without the blessing of rain, all the labour of the husbandman would be to little purpose:

and thou shall lend unto many nations, and thou shall not borrow;
See Gill on "De 15:16". The connection of these words with what goes before may lead to observe this sense of them, that they should furnish other countries with corn, and not need any of theirs; see Eze 27:17.

Deuteronomy 28:13

Ver. 13. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail,.... Give them dominion over others, and not make them subject to them; the head signifies rulers and governors, and the tail the common people that are subjects; or the one such that are honourable and in high esteem, and the other such that are mean and base; see **Isa 9:14**; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"the Word of the Lord shall make thee, &c."

and thou shalt be above only, and thou shall not be beneath; which explains what is meant by head and tail, being uppermost and lowermost, as the head is the upper part, and the tail the lower part of a creature; the one is more honourable, the other vile: the sense is, that they should be superior to other people in honour and dignity, and not below them, or vassals to them:

if that thou hearken to the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day to observe and to do [them]; which is the condition on which all this happiness depended.

Deuteronomy 28:14

Ver. 14. And thou shall not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day,.... Depart from them as a rule to walk by, turn out from them as a path to walk in, neglect and disobey them, and go into practices contrary to them: turning

[to] the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them; which to

do was to break the first and principal table of the law, than which nothing was more abominable and provoking to God.

Deuteronomy 28:15

Ver. 15. But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God,.... As directed, exhorted, and encouraged to, De 28:1, &c.

to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day; both moral and ceremonial:

that all these curses shall come upon thee; from the hand of God, certainly, suddenly, and unawares:

and overtake thee; pursuing after thee, will come up to thee, and seize upon thee, though they may seem to move slowly; see **Zec 5:3**; namely, the curses which follow. Manasseh Ben Israel {f} divides them into two parts, the first from hence to De 28:45; which respects the destruction of the first temple, and the things that went before or related to that; and the second from thence to the end of the chapter, which he thinks refers to the destruction of the second temple, and their present case and circumstances; and it must be owned that for the most part the distinction may seem to hold good; what is prophesied of that should befall the Jews for their disobedience being more remarkably and distinctly fulfilled in the one than in the other; yet there are things in the whole which respect both, or that were fulfilled, some under one dispensation, and some under another, and some that were fulfilled in both; but chiefly and more manifestly at and since their dispersion by the Romans.

{f} De Termino Vitae, l. 3. sect. 3. p. 126.

Deuteronomy 28:16

Ver. 16. Cursed [shalt] thou [be] in the city, and cursed [shalt] thou [be] in the field. In De 28:16 the curses are delivered out in form, as the reverse of the blessings in De 28:3; and by observing what the blessings mean, the sense of the curses may easily be understood, the one being directly opposite to the other.
See Gill on "De 28:3".

Deuteronomy 28:17

Ver. 17. Cursed [shall be] thy basket and thy store.
See Gill on "De 28:5".
See Gill on "De 28:16".

Deuteronomy 28:18

Ver. 18. Cursed [shall be] the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.
See Gill on "De 28:4".
See Gill on "De 28:16".

Deuteronomy 28:19

Ver. 19. Cursed [shalt] thou [be] when thou comest in, and cursed [shalt] thou [be] when thou goest out.
See Gill on "De 28:6".
See Gill on "De 28:16".

Deuteronomy 28:20

Ver. 20. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing,.... Which is either a general word for all that follows, or rather, since that had been expressed before in various instances, this may denote some particular judgment. Jarchi interprets it of penury, of want of all good things, extreme poverty, so as to be reduced to the utmost necessity, and as to stand in need of the common comforts and supports of life, and even to have their blessings and mercies turned into curses; the consequence of which must needs be

vexation; trouble, distress, and anguish of spirit:

and rebuke; this may well be considered as a rebuke and correction in Providence for sins committed, to awaken to a sense and acknowledgment of them, and to repentance for them:

in all that thou settest thine hand to do; nothing done should prosper, to relieve them under their pressing wants, a curse attending all their efforts, and so sad disappointment follows; and all as a just rebuke for their many sins: and this would be their case more or less,

until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; through famine, and want of the common necessaries of life; as at the sieges of Samaria and Jerusalem, by the kings of Syria, Assyria, and Babylon:

because of the wickedness of thy doings, because thou hast forsaken me; their several immoralities and impieties, and particularly their idolatry, which was a forsaking the worship of the true God, and following idols; an iniquity to be punished by the judge, and of all things the most provoking to the Lord.

Deuteronomy 28:21

Ver. 21. The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee,.... Not only to come upon them; but to continue with them:

until he have consumed thee from off the land whither thou goest to possess it; which shows that this respects not some particular seasons, when the pestilence came and continued awhile, and then ceased, as in the times of David; but when it became more general, and issued with other judgments in the utter consumption of them, as at the destruction of Jerusalem, both by the Babylonians and the Romans; at what times the pestilence raged and remained, until by that and other sore judgments the land was wholly depopulated.

Deuteronomy 28:22

Ver. 22. The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption,.... An emaciation of their bodies, either through famine or wasting diseases, whereby the fluids are washed off, and men are reduced to skin and bones:

and with a fever; a hot burning disease, which dries up the radical moisture, consumes it, and so threatens with death; of which there are various sorts, and some very pestilential and mortal Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it of a fire in the face, by which they seem to mean what is called St. Anthony's fire:

and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning; either in the inward parts, as an inflammation of the lungs; or in the outward parts, as carbuncles, burning ulcers, and the like:

and with the sword; in the margin it is, "with drought"; so Aben Ezra interprets the word, which seems better to suit with what it is in company with; and designs either drought in human bodies, occasioned by fevers, inflammations, and extreme burnings; or in the earth, through the force of the sun, and want of rain, which render the earth barren and unfruitful, and so cause a famine:

and with blasting and with mildew; whereby the corn that is sown, and springs up, comes to nothing, being blasted by east winds, or turns pale and yellow by the mildew, and so withers away; the consequence of which is want of food, and so destruction and ruin; see **Am 4:9**;

and they shall pursue thee until thou perish; follow hard after them, and come so close one after another upon them, until they are utterly destroyed.

Deuteronomy 28:23

Ver. 23. And the heaven that [is] over thy head shall be brass,.... Or like brass, not for its clearness, brightness, and splendour, or for its being spread out like a molten looking glass which was of brass, Job 37:18; but for its dryness and hardness, no moisture being in it, or passing through it; no showers of rain nor dew being let down from it:

and the earth that is under thee [shall be] iron; or like iron, hard and impenetrable, into which the plough and spade will not enter; nor anything spring out of it, for want of rain and dew to moisten and soften it. The same is said in Le 26:19; only there is an inversion of the figures; there the heaven is said to be as iron, and the earth like brass, but signify the same thing.

Deuteronomy 28:24

Ver. 24. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust,.... That is, instead of showers of rain in their season, to water, refresh, and enrich the earth, and make it fruitful; and for want of them, and through the heat of the sun, being dried and parched, and its clods crumbled into dust, this should be raised up into the air by the force of winds, and let down again in showers of dust; whereby the few herbs, plants, or green trees on it would be utterly destroyed: and so the Targum of Jonathan interprets it of the Lord's sending a wind that should raise the dust and earth upon the herbs of their fields. Such ploughing winds, that cast up the earth and sand, and dust, into the air, whereby men and cattle are sometimes covered, are frequent in the eastern countries; of which See Gill on "Jon 4:8";

from heaven shall it come down upon thee until thou be destroyed; that is, from the air, up to which the dust is carried by the wind, and then let fall in vast quantities, like showers, which are very destructive.

Deuteronomy 28:25

Ver. 25. The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten fore thine enemies,.... And by them, as they sometimes were by the Philistines and others, before their utter destruction, when they sinned against the Lord; and by the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Romans:

thou shall go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them; march out against them in a body, promising themselves victory, but be utterly routed; so that they shall flee every way they can for their safety; see De 28:7;

and shall be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth; this shows that Manasseh's case 2Ki 21:1, observed De 28:15; will not strictly and entirely hold good, nor is there any necessity to adhere closely to it; it is enough that the things threatened and prophesied of were at one time or another fulfilled in these people; for neither the ten tribes, when taken captive by Shalmaneser, were carried into all the kingdoms of the earth, only to some particular places mentioned in 2Ki 17:6; nor the two tribes by Nebuchadnezzar, who were carried by him to Babylon, and returned from thence again at the end of seventy years; but this was exactly fulfilled at their last destruction by the Romans, when they were sent by them into various countries, and have been ever since scattered about in each of the nations of the world. And yet it must be owned that Strabo {g}, who wrote before the last destruction of them, affirms, that it was not easy to find any place in the world which had not received them, and was not occupied by them.

{g} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 14. c. 7. sect. 2.

Deuteronomy 28:26

Ver. 26. And thy carcass shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth,.... Which was always reckoned a very grievous calamity, have no other burial than in the bowels of beasts and birds; and was the case of many of the Jews in the Antiochian persecution, Ps 79:2; and in a treatise of theirs {h}, which relates their many afflictions and sufferings in their present captivity, speaking of a persecution of them in Spain, in the Jewish year 5172, it is reported, how that those that fled to avoid punishment were killed in the fields, where their carcasses lying unburied became a prey to beasts:

and no man shall fray [them] away; the fowls and the beasts; none of their friends being left to do it, and their enemies would not show so much respect to them, and care of them.

{h} Shebat Judahm sive Hist. Jud. a Gentio, sect. 46. p. 312.

Deuteronomy 28:27

Ver. 27. The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt,.... Which some understand of the leprosy, Of that sort of it called "elephantiasis", frequent among the Egyptians; See Gill on "Le 13:2". Thevenot {i} relates, that when the time of the increase of the Nile expires, the Egyptians are attended with sharp prickings in their skin like needles. So Vansleb says {k},

"the waters of the Nile cause an itch in the skin, which troubles such as drink of them when the river increases. This itch is very small, and appears first about the arms, next upon the stomach, and spreads all about the body, which causes a grievous pain; and not only the river water, but that out of the cisterns drank of, brings it, and it lasts about six weeks."

Though some take this botch to be the botch and blain which the Egyptians were plagued with for refusing to let Israel go, **Ex 9:9**;

and with the emerods; or haemorrhoids, the piles, a disease of the fundament, attended sometimes with ulcers there; see **1Sa 5:9**;

and with the scab and with the itch: the one moist, the other dry, and both very distressing:

whereof thou canst not be healed; by any art of men; which shows these to be uncommon ones, and from the immediate hand of God.

{i} Apud Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 426, 427. {k} Relation of a Voyage to Egypt, p. 35, 36.

Deuteronomy 28:28

Ver. 28. The Lord shall smite thee with madness,.... At the calamities befallen them, and through the force of diseases on them:

and blindness; not of body, but of mind; with judicial blindness and hardness of heart:

and astonishment of heart; at the miserable condition they and their families should be in.

Deuteronomy 28:29

Ver. 29. And thou shalt grope at noon day as the blind gropeth in darkness,.... That is, being in darkness through the loss of their sight; otherwise the darkness and the light are alike to them, and they grope in the one as well as in the other. This comparison shows that the darkness and blindness of the Jews, threatened them, is to be understood not of the darkness of their bodily eyes, but of their minds; not being able to understand, or form a judgment of things that are as clear as noon day; and being at the utmost loss what methods to take and pursue, when they are plain and manifest before them; but being infatuated and besotted, follow the lusts and counsels of their own hearts, which lead them wrong:

and thou shall not prosper in thy ways; in any steps they may take to extricate themselves out of their difficulties, distresses, and calamities, or to bring themselves into easy and comfortable circumstances; to get wealth and riches, and honour and esteem with men; but, on the contrary, become forlorn and miserable, poor and wretched, mean and despicable:

and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore; continually, every day, all the days of their lives, oppressed with taxes and tributes, with mulcts and fines, and spoiled of their goods and substance under one pretence or another; which has been generally their case in Popish countries; for this seems not to refer to the Babylonish captivity, where they built houses, and dwelt in them, and planted gardens, and ate the fruit of them; and in the peace of cities had peace themselves, Jer 29:5;

and no man shall save [thee]; from the oppressions, exactions, and spoils of their enemies, nor deliver them out of their hands; whereas in process of time they had deliverance and salvation from the Babylonish captivity, by the means of Cyrus king of Persia.

Deuteronomy 28:30

Ver. 30. Thou shall betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her,.... Espouse a woman in order to make her his wife, and before he can take her home, and consummate the marriage, through some calamity or another coming upon them, they should be set at a distance from each other, and she should fall into the hands of another man, who either should ravish her, or gain her consent to lie with her, or become his wife; which, when the marriage was so near being consummated, must be a grievous disappointment, and a great vexation:

thou shall build an house, and thou shall not dwell therein; being, before it is quite finished, or however before he is got into it, carried captive, or obliged to flee to a distant place:

thou shall plant a vineyard, and shall not gather the grapes thereof; or make it common, on the fourth year to eat the fruits of it, as Jarchi; which might not be done until sanctified and redeemed according to the law in Le 19:23;
See Gill on "De 20:6".

Deuteronomy 28:31

Ver. 31. Thine ox [shall be] slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof,.... Shall be taken from the herd, and out of the field or stall, by the enemy, and killed for the soldiers to feed on, and not the least part of it given to them:

thine ass [shall be] violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored unto thee; no leave shall be asked to take it, but without their consent, and against their will, it should be taken away by the soldiers to carry them and their burdens, and it may be the booty and spoil of them, and never returned more:

thy sheep [shall be] given unto thine enemies, and thou shall have none to rescue [them]; not given them by themselves, but they should be suffered to fall into their hands, and they should never be able to get them out again, nor any for them. These, strictly and literally taken, suppose them to be in their own land, when those things would be done, where they were possessed of farms, and fields, cattle, being much employed in husbandry; but they may be put for any kind of substance they would be possessed of, which they should be stripped of under one pretence or another; which has been frequently their case in their present dispersion in several countries, and in ours; when Popish princes have wanted money, they have made very exorbitant demands on the Jews in their countries, and sadly squeezed and oppressed them, and who were not able to resist them, and never had any restoration made to them.

Deuteronomy 28:32

Ver. 32. Thy sons and thy daughters [shall be] given unto another people,.... This also was not true in the Babylonish captivity; for then their sons and daughters went with them, and continued with them, and returned again; but has been oftentimes verified since their captivity by the Romans; frequently their sons and daughters have been taken from them by force, to be brought up in another religion, by the edicts of kings and popes, and by the canons of councils, and particularly of the fourth council of Toledo:

and thine eyes shall look and fail; with longing:

for them all the day long; expecting every day their children would be returned to them, at least wishing and hoping they would; their hearts yearning after them, but all in vain:

and [there shall be] no might in thy hand; to recover them out of the hands of those who had the possession of them, or fetch them back from distant countries, whither they were carried. By an edict of the Portuguese, the children of the Jews were ordered to be carried to the uninhabited islands; and when, by the king's command, they were had to the ships in which they were to be transported, it is incredible, the Jewish historian says {l}, what howlings and lamentations were made by the women; and there wore none pitied them and comforted them, or could help them.

{l} Shebet Judah, sive Hist. Jud. sect. 59. p. 332.

Deuteronomy 28:33

Ver. 33. The fruit of thy land, and all thy labour, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up,.... The same was prophesied of by Jeremiah, concerning the Babylonish captivity, and was fulfilled in it, **Jer 5:17**; and has been also verified in the frequent pillage and spoil of this people, in their present state; for though they have no land to till, from whence to gather fruit, yet they are employed in manufactures and merchandise, the fruit and benefit of which they have been frequently stripped of:

and thou shall be only oppressed and crushed always; this seems best to agree with their present case; for in their former captivities they were not always oppressed and crushed, but had respite and deliverance;
See Gill on "De 28:29".

Deuteronomy 28:34

Ver. 34. So that thou shalt be mad, for the sight of thine eyes that thou shall see. On account of the shocking things seen by them, their dreadful calamities, oppressions, and persecutions, such as before related; not only violent diseases on their bodies, which were grievous to behold, as well as their pains were intolerable, and made them mad; but to be deprived of a betrothed wife, a newly built house, and a newly planted vineyard; to have an ox slain, and an ass taken away by their enemies, and their sheep given to them before their eyes; to have their sons and daughters taken from them, and brought up in another religion, and to be stripped of their substance; these have made them stark mad, insomuch that they have sometimes destroyed themselves and their families. In Germany, in their rage and madness, they burnt a city and themselves in it; and, in the same country, being summoned by an edict to change their religion, or to be burnt, they agreed to meet together in a certain house, and destroy one another; and first parents killed their children, and husbands their wives, and then killed themselves; leaving only one person to be their doorkeeper, who finished the tragedy by destroying himself, as their own historian relates {m}. Other stories of the like kind are reported of them, and some such facts as done in our own nation {n}.

{m} Ib. (Shebet Judah, sive Hist. Jud.) sect. 34, 36. p. 214, 215, 216, 217. {n}

See Bishop Patrick in loc. and Dr. Newton (Bishop of Bristol) on Prophecies, vol. 1. Dissert. 7. sect. 14. p. 195, 196.

Deuteronomy 28:35

Ver. 35. The Lord shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch, that cannot be healed,.... Which in those parts as it is very painful, so is not easily cured; and this which is threatened was incurable by the art of man, as others in De 28:27; and which should not stop there in the lower parts of the body, but proceed and spread:

from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head; and so be filled with them, as Job was with his boils and ulcers.

Deuteronomy 28:36

Ver. 36. And the Lord shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shall set over thee,.... This was fulfilled both in Jehoiachin and in Zedekiah, kings of Judah, who were carried captive to Babylon, by Nebuchadnezzar, 2Ki 24:15;

unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; the land of Babylon, which was at a distance from them, and is represented in Scripture as afar off, **Jer 5:15**; and which the Jews, not being a trading people, or dealing in merchandise in foreign parts, were unacquainted with:

and there shall thou serve other gods, wood and stone; which they were obliged to do in Babylon, of which it seems best to understand it; for though it may be interpreted of their compliance with the image worship of the Papists in their present condition, as the former clause may be of their rulers and governors, included in the name of king, carried captive by the Romans; who were a nation as little, if not less known than the Babylonians: but the former sense seems to suit best here, as this does with De 28:64; where the language is somewhat different, and very appropriate. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"shall pay tribute to those that worship idols of wood and stone."

Deuteronomy 28:37

Ver. 37. And thou shall become an astonishment,.... To neighbouring nations, that shall hear of their overthrow and captivity, and that shall see the miserable condition they are brought into:

a proverb and a byword among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee; both for the wickedness committed by them, and for the ill usage of them by the nations among whom they should be, as they were in the Babylonish captivity; see Jer 24:9; and now are, it being common to say,

"do you think I am a Jew?"

or,

"none but a Jew would have done such a thing."

Deuteronomy 28:38

Ver. 38. Thou shall carry much seed into the field,.... And sow it plentifully; this and what is said in some following verses plainly refer to them while in their own land, before carried captive, and not to their present case and circumstances:

and shall gather [but] little in at harvest; little springing up, or not coming to perfection, being blighted and blasted, and so yielded but a small crop; see **Hag 1:9**; and chiefly for the following reason:

for the locust shall consume it; which is a great destroyer of the fruits of the earth; see **Joe 1:4**.

Deuteronomy 28:39

Ver. 39. Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress [them],.... Plant them and prune them, in expectation of much fruit from them:

but shall neither drink [of] the wine nor gather [the grapes]; so far from drinking of the wine of them, that they should not be able to gather any grapes from them:

for the worms shall eat them; a sort of worms pernicious to vines, which the

Greeks call "ipes", or "ikes" {o}; and the Latins "convolvuli" and "volvoces", as Pliny {p}.

{o} See Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 27. col. 622, 623. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 17. c. 28.

Deuteronomy 28:40

Ver. 40. Thou shalt have olive trees throughout thy coasts,.... In the several parts of the land of Canaan, which is therefore called a land of olive oil, **De 8:8**;

but thou shalt not anoint [thyself] with the oil; nor any other relations, friends, guests, as was usual at entertainments; see
Ps 23:5; for the phrase "thyself" is not in the text. The reason why they should not anoint is, because they would have no oil to anoint with:

for thine olive shall cast [his fruit]; before it is ripe, by one means or another, as by winds, or blasting and mildew; see **Am 4:9**.

Deuteronomy 28:41

Ver. 41. Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shall not enjoy them,.... Or, "they shall not be thine" {q}; being taken from them, and given to others, see De 28:32; and for the following reason:

for they shall go into captivity; as when the ten tribes were carried captive by Shalmaneser, and the two tribes by Nebuchadnezzar, and all the people of the Jews by the Romans.

{q} Kl wyhy alw "et non erunt tibi", Pagninus, Montanus.

Deuteronomy 28:42

Ver. 42. All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume. Which is a creature that not only consumes grass, and herbs, and the corn of the field, but all green trees; see Ex 10:15. This sort here has its name from the shade they make, hiding the light of the sun, and darkening the face of the earth at no on day; or from the noise they make with their wings in flying; see **Joe 2:5**.

Deuteronomy 28:43

Ver. 43. The stranger that [is] within thee shall get up above thee very high,.... In wealth and riches, in power and authority, in honour and dignity. This Manasseh Ben Israel {r} interprets of the Samaritans, whom the king of Assyria drove out of Samaria, and the neighbouring places; but the design of the expression is to show how mean and abject they should be in another country; that even one who had been a stranger or proselyte of the gate, when in their own country, should now be vastly above them:

and thou shall come down, very low; into a very mean condition, to be in great subjection, a vassal and a slave; see Ps 106:41; and much more when reduced by the Romans, and sent to the mines in Egypt.

{r} De Termino Vitae, l. 3. sect. 3. p. 128.

Deuteronomy 28:44

Ver. 44. He shall lend to thee, and thou shall not lend to him,.... The stranger, or one of another nation, shall be in a capacity of lending to the Jew, when the Jew would not be able to lend to the Gentile, his circumstances being so low and mean; to show which is the design of the expression, and not the kindness or unkindness of either; see De 28:12;

he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail; he shall be ruler and governor, and thou shalt be subject to him; see De 28:13.

Deuteronomy 28:45

Ver. 45. Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee,.... Before related, as well as what follow:

and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee till thou be destroyed; which though they would endeavour to flee from and escape, should not be able, since they would follow them so closely and swiftly, and overtake them, and seize upon them; see De 28:15;

because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee; to which disobedience all the curses are to be imputed that go before or follow after.

Deuteronomy 28:46

Ver. 46. And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder,.... That is, those curses before pronounced, De 27:15, and what follow, should rest and remain upon them, continue with them, and be very visible on them; so as to be observed by others, as a sign of the wrath and displeasure of God, and of the fulfilment of prophecy, and of the truth of divine revelation: and so "for a wonder": as it is most astonishing to observe how exactly all the curses threatened them have fallen upon them and have abode with them, as they did in their former captivities, and more especially do in the present one: and, what is the greater wonder, that notwithstanding these dreadful calamities, and so long continued, enough to have crushed any people from being a people, yet they have continued, and still do continue, a distinct people; which is a standing miracle, and one would think sufficient to convince the most hardened and obstinate deist of the truth and authority of the sacred Scriptures; in which stand so many glaring prophecies that have been fulfilled, and are continually fulfilling in this people:

and upon thy seed for ever; this shows that these curses, said to be upon them, not only refer to those that came upon them at and in the Babylonish captivity, but to those that came upon them at their destruction by the Romans, and which have continued on them nineteen hundred years; and how much longer they will continue none can say: it will be their case, until new heavens and a new earth are created, or there will be a new state of things, at least with them; when they shall be converted to the Lord, and all Israel saved; see Isa 65:17; and it may be observed, that the ten tribes carried captive never returned.

Deuteronomy 28:47

Ver. 47. Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God,.... By attending his worship, and keeping his commandments:

with joyfulness and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all [things]; which they enjoyed in the land of Canaan, a land that abounded with all good things; which laid them under great obligations to serve the Lord: and yet, as they were wanting in a ready attendance on his worship, and in a cheerful obedience to his laws, so in their sacrifices, of praise and thanksgivings for their manifold mercies; and, because of all this, the curses written in this book came upon them.

Deuteronomy 28:48

Ver. 48. Therefore shall thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee,.... Since they would not serve the Lord their God, who was so good a master to them, and supplied them with all good things, and with plenty of them, they should serve other lords, their enemies, whom God would raise up and send against them; not only, the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Babylonians, but the Romans, after described, whom they should find hard masters, and from whom they; should have very severe usage, and should be

in hunger and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all [good things]; being destitute of food, and drink and raiment, and the common necessaries of life, and so in famishing and starving circumstances:

and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck; bring them into a state of subjection to their enemies, which would be intolerable to them, and from which they would not be able to free themselves, any more than to break an iron yoke; which, as it agrees with the Babylonish captivity, and their subjection in that state, see Jer 28:13; so more especially with their bondage under the Romans, who are the legs of iron in Nebuchadnezzar's image, and the fourth beast with great iron teeth in Daniel's vision, **Da 2:33**, and this yoke was to continue

until he have destroyed thee; the Jews were under the Roman yoke, Roman governors being set over them, and Judea made a Roman province many years before the destruction of their nation, city, and temple, by them.

Deuteronomy 28:49

Ver. 49. The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth,.... Now though Babylon is represented as a country distant from Judea, and said to be a nation "from far", **Jer 5:15**; yet not "from the end of the earth"; as here; and though the Roman nation, strictly speaking, was not at so great a distance from Jerusalem, yet the Roman emperors, and great part of their armies brought against it, were fetched from our island of Great Britain, which in former times was reckoned the end of the earth, and the uttermost parts of the world {s}; and so Manasseh Ben Israel {t} interprets this nation of Rome, and observes, that Vespasian brought for his assistance many nations (or soldiers) out of England, France, Spain, and other parts of the world: and not only Vespasian was sent for from Britain to make war with the Jews, but when they rebelled, in the times of Adrian, Julius Severus, a very eminent general, was sent for from thence to quell them. And it appears to be a very ancient opinion of the Jews, that this passage is to be understood of the Romans, from what is related in one of their Talmuds {u}: they say, that

"Trajan, being sent for by his wife to subdue the Jews, determined to come in ten days, and came in five; he came and found them (the Jews) busy in the law on that verse, "the Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far", &c. he said unto them, what are ye busy in? they answered him, so and so; he replied to them, this is the man (meaning himself) who thought to come in ten days, and came in five; and he surrounded them with his legions, and slew them:"

[as swift] as the eagle flieth; which may respect not so much the swiftness of this creature, the words which convey the idea being a supplement of the text, as the force with which it flies when in sight of its prey, and hastes unto it and falls upon it, which is irresistible; and this is the sense of the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and is what is ascribed to the eagle by other writers {w}. Now though this figure is used of the Chaldeans and Babylonians, **Jer 4:13**; it agrees full as well or better with the Romans, because of their swiftness in coming from distant parts, and because of the force and impetus with which they invaded Judea, besieged Jerusalem, and attacked the Jews everywhere; and besides, the eagle was borne on the standard in the Roman army {x}:

a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; which, though it is also said of the language of the Chaldean nation, **Jer 5:15**; yet as the Chaldee and Hebrew languages were only dialects of one and the same language, common to the eastern nations, the Chaldee language, though on account of termination of words, pronunciation, and other things, might be difficult, and hard to be understood by the Jews, yet must be much more easy to understand than the Roman language, so widely different from theirs.

{s} "----In ultimos orbis Britannos", Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 35. {t} De

Termino Vitae, l. 3. sect. 3. p. 129. {u} T. Hieros. Succah, fol. 55. 2. {w} Vid. Homer. Iliad. 21. l. 252. {x} Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 4.

Deuteronomy 28:50

Ver. 50. A nation of fierce countenance,.... Or, "strong of face" {y}; which aptly describes the old Romans, who are always represented as such; and whereas it is said of the Chaldeans, that they were a nation dreadful and terrible, **Hab 1:7**; the same is said of the fourth beast, or Roman empire, **Da 7:7**; who were a terror to all the world:

which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young: cruel, unmerciful, and uncompassionate, to persons of whatsoever age or sex; which, as it was the character of the Chaldeans, 2Ch 36:17; so of the Romans, who especially showed no mercy to the Jews, as Josephus {z}, who was an eyewitness, testifies.

"The Romans (says he) showed no mercy to any age, out of hatred to the nation (of the Jews), and in remembrance of the injuries done to Cestius;"

one of their governors, when among them. And in another place he says {a},

"the Romans, remembering what they suffered in the siege, spared none, and showed no mercy."

{y} Mynp ze "fortem faciebus", Montanus; "robustam facie", Vatablus. {z} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 1. {a} Ibid. sect. 34.

Deuteronomy 28:51

Ver. 51. And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle,.... Larger and lesser, oxen and sheep, as their calves and lambs, and kids of the goat:

and the fruit of thy land; their wheat, barley, figs, grapes, pomegranates, olives, and dates:

until thou be destroyed; the land of Judea, and all the increase of it: this being before said, De 28:31; and here repeated, shows that the same should be fulfilled at different times, as by the Chaldeans, so by the Romans; whose nation, or army, with their general at the head of them, may be more especially here intended by "he", that should eat up their fruit until utter destruction was brought upon them:

which [also] shall not leave thee [either] corn, wine, or oil, [or] the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee; all being consumed by the Roman army. There is a promise and prophecy, that though this would be the case, as it has been, there shall be a time when it shall be so no more; see
Isa 62:8.

Deuteronomy 28:52

Ver. 52. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates,.... That is, in all their cities and walled towns, which had gates and bars for security:

until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land; the Jews had several cities well fenced and strongly fortified, besides Jerusalem, which was fortified both by art and nature, and in which they greatly put their trust and confidence; but these were broken down, particularly by the battering rams of the Romans:

and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee; this is repeated for the certainty of it, and that it might be taken notice of, and abate their trust and confidence in their outward strength. Now all this was fulfilled, partly in the siege of Samaria by the king of Assyria, who went through all the land of the ten tribes, 2Ki 17:5; and in Sennacherib's taking the fenced cities of Judah, 2Ki 18:13; and in the siege of Jerusalem, and breaking down the walls of it by Nebuchadnezzar, 2Ki 25:10; and, last of all, in the siege of Jerusalem, and battering down the walls of it, by the Romans; at which time also all their strong and fenced cities throughout the land were taken and demolished.

Deuteronomy 28:53

Ver. 53. And thou shall eat the fruit of thine body,.... Than which nothing can be more shocking and unnatural, which is explained as follows:

the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee; which is an aggravation of the cruel and inhuman fact:

in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee; this shows the cause of it, a famine by reason of the closeness of the siege, so that no provisions could be brought in for their relief; and all within being eaten up, and everything that was eatable, even the most nauseous and disagreeable, they would be led on to this strange, unheard of, and barbarous action, eating their own children. This was fulfilled in the siege of Samaria, **2Ki 6:25**; and in the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, **La 2:10** and again in the Apocrypha:

"Moreover he hath delivered them to be in subjection to all the kingdoms that are round about us, to be as a reproach and desolation among all the people round about, where the Lord hath scattered them." (Baruch 2:4)

and in the siege of the same city by the Romans; of which an instance will be hereafter given.

Deuteronomy 28:54

Ver. 54. [So that] the man [that is] tender among you, and very delicate,.... Not only the rustic that has been brought up meanly, and used to hard living; but one that has been bred very tenderly, and lived in a delicate manner, like the rich man in Lu 16:19; that fared sumptuously every day:

his eye shall be evil towards his brother, and towards the wife of his bosom, and towards the remnant of his children which he shall leave; that is, he shall begrudge his brother, who is so nearly related to him, the least bit of food; yea, his wife, he dearly loved, and is one flesh with him, his other self, and even his children, which are parts of himself, such of them as were left not eaten by him; or his eye should be evil upon then, he should look with an evil eye on them, determining within himself to kill and eat them next. Though the particular instance in which his eye would be evil to them follows, yet no doubt there are other instances in which his eye would be evil towards them, as there were at the siege of Jerusalem, and have been since. Josephus {b} says,

"that in every house where there was any appearance of food (or anything that looked like it, that had the shadow of it) there was a battle; and the dearest friends fought with one another, snatching away from each other, the miserable supports of life;"

as the husband from his wife and children, and the wife from her husband and children; see more in De 28:56; and, in later times, we told by the Jewish historian {c}, that wrote an account of their sufferings and distresses since their dispersion, that at Fez the Jews sold their children for slaves for bread.

{b} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 3. {c} Shebet Judah, sive Hist. Jud. p. 326.

Deuteronomy 28:55

Ver. 55. So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat,.... Neither give to a brother, nor to a wife, nor to any of his remaining children, the least bit of the flesh of a child he has killed and dressed for his own food; which adds to the barbarity of his action:

because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates; every creature being eaten up, dogs, cats, &c. and whatsoever else could be any ways made food of; as the dung of beasts, belts, shoes, the leather on shields, &c. as Josephus {d} says they did eat; and this being the case, nothing eatable remaining, therefore his heart would be hardened against his nearest relations, and not allow them the least part with him, even of what was so shocking and unnatural.

{d} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 28:56

Ver. 56. And the tender and delicate woman amongst you,.... Who is instanced in because of her sex, which is more pitiful and compassionate, and especially one that has been brought up genteelly, and has always lived deliciously, on the most delicate fare, and nicest dainties, and used to all the delights of nature:

which would not venture to set her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness; for fear of taking cold, or defiling her feet:

her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter; begrudge them every bit they eat, and restrain food from them as much as in her lies, and even snatch it out of their mouths; so

Josephus {e} relates, that

"women snatched the food out of the mouths of their husbands, and sons out of the mouths of their fathers; and, what is most miserable, mothers out of the mouths of their infants."

{e} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. l0. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 28:57

Ver. 57. And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet,.... Or her secundine, "her afterbirth", as in the margin of our Bibles; so the Targum of Jonathan and Aben Ezra interpret it. The latter describes it,

"the place of the fetus, while it abides in the womb of its mother;"

the membrane in which the child is wrapped; and it is suggested that, as nauseous as that is, the delicate woman should eat it, and then the newborn child that was wrapped in it; so Jarchi interprets it, little children; though it seems to be distinguished from the children she bears or brings forth in the next clause:

and towards her children which she shall bear; that is, have an evil eye towards them, to eat them as follows:

for she shall eat them for want of all [things] secretly in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates; that is, eat her children, being reduced to the utmost extremity, being in want of all things, having nothing at all to abate her sharp hunger; which, and nothing else, could incline her, and prevail upon her to do an action so monstrously horrid: and which she would do in the most private and secret manner; both lest others should partake with her, as well as being conscious of the foulness and blackness of the crime, that would not by any means bear the light; and all this owing to the closeness of the siege, and the unspeakable distress they should be in through it. For the illustration of this, take the following story as related by Josephus {f};

"a woman, whose name was Mary, that lived beyond Jordan, illustrious for her descent and riches fled with the multitude to Jerusalem when besieged carrying with her her substance, and what food she could get that were left to her by the spoilers; where being pressed with famine, she took her sucking child, killed it boiled it, and ate half of it, and then laid up the rest, and covered it; and when the seditious party entered the house, they smelt it, and demanded her food, threatening to kill her if she did not deliver it; which when she brought forth, declaring what she had done, they were struck with horror; to whom she said, this is my son, and this my own deed; eat, for I have eaten; be not more tender or softer than a woman, and more sympathizing or more pitiful than a mother."

All the ideas that this prophecy of Moses conveys are to be met with in this account; as of a woman well bred and delicate, reduced to the utmost distress, and wanting all the necessaries of life, killing her tender infant, a sucking babe, eating it secretly, and laying up the rest covered for another time. If Moses had lived to have known the fact committed, as Josephus did, he could not have expressed it well in stronger and clearer terms than he has done. This is a most amazing instance of a prophecy delivered out two thousand years or more before the fact was done, and of the exact accomplishment of it; and if the observation of a learned critic {g} can be established, that the first word of this verse should be hlvbw, and so be rendered, "and she shall boil that which cometh out from between her feet, even her children which she shall bear", the fulfilment of the prophecy will appear still more exact, both at the siege of Samaria, **2Ki 6:20**; and of Jerusalem, as in the above relation of Josephus.

{f} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 4. {g} Dr. Kennicot's State of the Hebrew Text, Dissert. 1. p. 421.

Deuteronomy 28:58

Ver. 58. If thou wilt not observe to do all the words this law, that are written in this book,.... Of Deuteronomy, in which there is a repetition of the laws before delivered, and an addition of some new ones; all which were to be so observed as to be done, to this end,

that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name of the Lord thy God; or that it might appear that the fear of God was before their eyes, and in their hearts, by their obedience to his law; that they had a proper awe and reverence of him, who is glorious in his titles and attributes, and whose name Jehovah is holy and reverend; and who, as the covenant God of his people, is to, be feared for his goodness sake.

Deuteronomy 28:59

Ver. 59. Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful,.... Visible, remarkable, distinguishable, and astonishing to all that see them:

and the plagues of thy seed; for they were to continue, as they have done, With their posterity, age after age:

[even] great plagues, and of long continuance; great as to quality and quantity, and firm, sure, lasting, and durable; the word used is rendered "sure" in Isa 55:3; sure by prophecy and in the event; and which when inflicted remained, as they have 1700 years; all which might be believed as certain, or what would certainly come to pass, and be depended on:

and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance; besides those diseases mentioned De 28:27; or however others including them.

Deuteronomy 28:60

Ver. 60. Moreover, he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt,.... All that in a way of judgment were brought upon the Egyptians for refusing to let Israel go; or all such diseases as were peculiar to them, and common among them, as the leprosy, the itch, ulcers, &c.

which thou wast afraid of; when living among them, lest they should catch them of them, or they should be inflicted on them by the hand of God:

and they shall cleave unto thee; not only should come upon them, but continue with them; they should not easily get rid of them, or be cured of them.

Deuteronomy 28:61

Ver. 61. Also every sickness and every plague which [is] not written in the book of this law,.... Which is not here mentioned or threatened; and it suggests, that whatsoever sickness or disease that could be thought of or named, or were at any time in any place among men, might be expected to come upon them for their disobedience:

them will the Lord bring upon thee until thou be destroyed; the Jews themselves {h} own this has been fulfilled on them.

{h} Shebet Judah, p. 318.

Deuteronomy 28:62

Ver. 62. And ye shall be left few in number,.... There were but very few left in the land of Judea by Nebuchadnezzar's general when Jerusalem was taken by him; and these were of the poorer sort, and were left for vinedressers and husbandmen, Jer 39:10; and how much they were reduced by the Romans will appear by the accounts Josephus gives of those that were slain, and made prisoners by them: he says {i},

"there were 1,100,000 slain at the siege of Jerusalem and by the war, and 97,000 made prisoners;"

and it is computed that 1,240,490 were destroyed in Jerusalem and other parts of the nation {k}; and it is also said by their historian {l}, that of those that were transported from Jerusalem and other parts of Palestine into Spain, scarce a thousandth part remained and that an infinite number were slain in France and Germany; and though their number equalled those that came out of Egypt, yet scarce five thousand of them were left:

whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; and, as it is sometimes said, as the sand of the sea, as was promised to Abraham, Ge 15:5; and was fulfilled in the days of Solomon **1Ki 4:20**;

because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God; in his law, and by his prophets; and especially by the voice of the true Messiah, in his everlasting Gospel; of whom it is said, "today if ye will hear his voice"; &c. **Heb 3:7**.

{i} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 3. {k} See Dr. Newton (Bp. of Bristol) on Prophecies, vol. 1. Dissert. 7. sect. 6. p. 186. {l} Shebet Judah, sect. 49. p. 316.

Deuteronomy 28:63

Ver. 63. And it shall come to pass, [that] as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good,.... The Word of the Lord, as the Targum of Jonathan; who with great delight and pleasure in them brought them out of Egypt, conducted them through the wilderness, protecting them and providing all good things for them; and brought them into the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, and settled them there; and gave them judges and kings, priests and prophets, for a long series of time, with other innumerable blessings he bestowed upon them:

and to multiply you; so that they became as the stars of heaven, and the sand of the sea, as before observed:

so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you and to bring you to nought; take as much pleasure in their ruin and destruction, whereby his justice would be glorified, and the honour of his laws preserved, as before in bestowing good things on them, in which mercy and kindness were displayed:

and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it; in a violent manner, by their enemies, and against their wills, they being loath to leave it. The Emperor Adrian, to prevent their insurrections and rebellions, which had given him a great deal of trouble, ordered by an edict that no Jew should come into Jerusalem, nor into the land of Judea, or be seen in it, which is observed by several writers {m}; by which means the country was cleared of them. In later times some of them did get thither again, but they were but few. Benjamin of Tudela, a Jew of the twelfth century, travelled into several parts of the world in quest of his countrymen, and particularly into Judea, and his view was to magnify his people; and yet owns he found at Jerusalem only two hundred persons, whose employment was dyeing wool, and dwelt in a corner of the town under the tower of David; and but twelve at Bethlehem, three at Maresha, at Shunem indeed three hundred, none at Gilead, two at Nob, who were dyers, three at Ramah, one at Joppa, none at Jafne, where had been a famous academy, none at Ashdod, and at Tiberias about fifty {n}. And our countryman Sandys {o}, who travelled into Judea in the seventeenth century, says,

"here be some Jews, yet inherit they no part of the land, but in their own country do live as aliens."

{m} Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Eusebius. See Dr. Newton ut supra. (Prophesies, vol. 1. Dissert. 7. sect. 6. p. 186.) {n} Itinerar. p. 41-53. {o} Travels, sect. 3. p. 114. Ed. 5.

Deuteronomy 28:64

Ver. 64. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the other,.... Which refers to their present dispersion, being now, more or fewer, in all parts of the world, east, west, north, and south:

and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, [even] wood and stone: it may be observed, that the phrase, "which either thou nor fathers have known", is fitly added here, which is not used of them, De 28:36; and well agrees with the idols of the Papists, their images of the Virgin Mary, and saints departed, made of wood and stone, which were such the fathers of the Jews never knew; just as it is said of the host, the consecrated wafer, the breaden god honoured by antichrist, that it is "a god who his fathers knew not", Da 11:38; the apostles and ancient fathers of the church. Now in Popish countries the Jews have often been prevailed upon to change, or at least dissemble their religion, and embrace Popery: and have worshipped images of wood and stone. The author of the history of their calamities and sufferings owns this;

"multitudes (he says {p}) in Spain and Portugal forsook the law of Moses, and joined the Papists, pretending at least to be of their religion."

He makes mention of sixteen thousand at one time {q}, and some, he say {r},

"that were driven out of Spain, came into Italy, where the young men pressed with famine could not bear it, and changed their religion, and began to worship images that they might have to satisfy their hunger; and the Papists used to go about with a crucifix in one hand, and a piece of bread in the other, promising the bread to those that would worship the crucifix; and so many famishing persons forsook the law of Moses, and mixed with them:"

and to this day the convents of monks and nuns in Spain are full of them; and most of their canons, inquisitors, and bishops, are Jews {s}. The Targum of Jonathan indeed, to clear them from idolatry itself, gives another sense of these words, paraphrasing them,

"ye shall pay tribute to the worshippers of idols."

{p} Shebet Judah, p. 108, 154, 312, 313, 338, 339. {q} Ibid. p. 312. {r} Ibid. sect. 56. p. 327. {s} See Addison's present State of the Jews, c. 3. p. 3o, 31. Dr.

Newton ut supra, (Prophesies, vol. 1. Dissert. 7.) sect. 15. p. 197.

Deuteronomy 28:65

Ver. 65. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest,.... No quiet settlement, nor certain dwelling, being obliged to move from place to place through cruel edicts, heavy fines and mulcts, exorbitant taxes and impositions, and diligent search made after them by the courts of the inquisition, especially where any substance was to be gotten. The Jews themselves {t} own that this passage is now fulfilled in them:

but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart; being always in fear lest their persons should be seized on, their children taken from them, and their goods confiscated; hence the poet {u} gives them the epithet of "trembling":

and failing of eyes: in looking for a vainly expected Messiah, to deliver them from all their fears and troubles:

and sorrow of mind; under their present afflictions and calamities.

{t} Shebet Judah, p. 108, 109. Manasseh Ben Israel de Termino Vitae, l. 3. sect. 3. p. 132. {u} "----Judea tremens----". Juvenal, Satyr 6. v. 543.

Deuteronomy 28:66

Ver. 66. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee,.... Whether it shall be spared or not by the enemy:

and thou shalt fear day and night; being in continual dread of being killed:

and shalt have none assurance of thy life; of its being continued a moment scarcely, but live in constant fear and expectation of its being taken away.

Deuteronomy 28:67

Ver. 67. In the morning thou shalt say, would God it were even,.... Wishing they might get through the day well, fearing their life would be taken away before night, or some sad calamity befall them before the day was past:

and at even thou shall say, would God it were morning; dreading what would happen to them in the night, that some messenger of death would be sent to dispatch them, or they should be haled out of bed to a court of inquisition, and cast into a dungeon:

for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which, thou shalt see; often beholding such dreadful sights, as their countrymen put upon the rack, and cruelly tortured, and then burnt alive; and so their hearts would fear and tremble, lest they should be the next that would be taken up and used in this manner; besides other severities and hard usages, with which their brethren were treated, and they in continual fear of.

Deuteronomy 28:68

Ver. 68. And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships,.... Either into a state of hard bondage and slavery, like that their fathers were in, in Egypt; or rather, strictly and literally, should be brought into Egypt again, since it is said to be "with" or "in ships". This does not respect the going of those Jews into Egypt who were left in the land of Judea, after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; for that was against the express command of God, Jer 42:13. There were several movings of them into Egypt after that time; an Heathen historian {w} tells us, that not a few thousands of Jews went into Egypt and Phoenicia, because of the sedition in Syria after the death of Alexander; and where, it seems, in process of time, they became slaves: for we are told by Josephus {x}, that 120,000 slaves were set free by Ptolemy Philadelphus; but what is chiefly respected here is their case in the times of the Romans, and by their means. Now when Jerusalem was taken by Titus, those above seventeen years of age were sent by him to the works, or mines, in Egypt, as the same historian relates {y}; and after their last overthrow by Adrian many thousands were sold, and what could not be sold were transported into Egypt, and perished by "shipwreck", or famine, or were slaughtered by the people {z} whereby this prophecy was literally and exactly fulfilled, and which is owned by the Jews themselves. Manasseh Ben Israel {a} observes, that though Vespasian banished the Jews into various countries, Egypt is only mentioned by way of reproach, as if it had been said, ye shall go captives into the land from which ye went out triumphant:

by the way whereof I spake unto thee, thou shall see it no more again; the Targum of Jonathan is, "the Word of the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again in ships;"

even the same divine Word, the Son of God, that brought them out of it, and went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire, now provoked by their rejection of him, would lead them back again thither; the paraphrast adds,

"through the midst of the Red sea, in the path in which ye passed;"

as if they were carried over into Egypt in ships, just in that part of the sea in which they had passed before; but that was an unknown and unseen path, after the waters were closed up, and never to be seen more, and which is here meant; for not Egypt, but the way in which they passed, was to be seen no more:

and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and for bondwomen, and no man shall buy [you]; that is, there in Egypt they would be offered to sale, and so many would be sold until the market was glutted with them, and there would be no buyers. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"ye shall be sold there at first to your enemies, at a dear price, as artificers, and afterwards at a mean price as servants and handmaids, until ye become despised, and be brought to serve for nothing, and there be none to take you in."

Jarchi interprets it of they themselves being desirous, and seeking to be sold, to avoid cruelties and death; which agrees with the sense of the word, which may be rendered, "ye shall offer yourselves for sale"; but there will be no buyer, because their enemies will determine upon the slaughter and consumption of them; and to the same purpose Aben Ezra. There were such numbers of them to be sold both at Egypt and at Rome, that the sellers of them had but a poor market for them; and it seems not only because of their number, but the ill opinion had of them as servants. Hegesippus {b} says,

"there were many to be sold, but there were few buyers; for the Romans despised the Jews for service, nor were there Jews left to redeem their own."

It is said {c}, that thirty were sold for a penny; a just retaliation to them, who had sold their Messiah for thirty pieces of silver.

{w} Hecataeus apud Joseph. contr. Apion, l. 1. sect. 22. {x} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 2.

sect. 1. {y} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 2. {z} Hieron. in Zech. ii. fol. 120. I. {a} De Termino Vitae, l. 3. sect. 3. p. 131, 132. {b} De excidio Urb. Hieros. l. 5. c. 47. p. 645. {c} Ib. p. 680.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 29:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 29

This chapter begins with an intimation of another covenant the Lord was about to make with the people of Israel, De 29:1; and, to prepare their minds to an attention to it, various things which the Lord had done for them are recited, De 29:2; the persons are particularly mentioned with whom the covenant would now be made, the substance of which is, that they should be his people, and he their God, De 29:10; and since they had seen the idols in Egypt and other countries, with which they might have been ensnared, they are cautioned against idolatry and idolaters, as being most provoking to the Lord, De 29:16; which would bring destruction not only on particular persons, but upon their whole land, to the amazement of posterity; who, inquiring the reason of it, will be told, it was because they forsook the covenant of God, and particularly were guilty of idolatry, which, whether privately or openly committed, would be always punished, De 29:22.

Ver. 1. These [are] the words of the covenant,.... Not what go before, but follow after, in the next chapters, to the end of the book; in which are various promises of grace, and promises of good things, both with respect to Jews and Gentiles, intermixed with other things:

which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab; or to declare unto them, and acquaint them with, they being now in the plains of Moab, ready to enter into the land of, Canaan:

besides the covenant which he made with them at Horeb: or Sinai; which Jarchi interprets, besides the curses in Leviticus, delivered on Sinai; he seems to have respect to Le 26:14. This covenant was different from that at Sinai, spoken of Ex 24:8; being made not only at a different time, at near forty years' distance, and at a different place, nor Sinai; but when Israel were come nearer Mount Sion, and were actually possessed of part of their inheritance, the land of promise, that part of the land of Moab which the two kings of the Amorites had seized and dwelt in, whom Israel had dispossessed; and with different persons, that generation being dead, excepting a very few, which were at Sinai: but it was different as to the substance and matter of it, it not only including that, and being a renewal of it, as is generally thought, but containing such declarations of grace which had not been made before, not only respecting the repenting and returning Israelites, but the Gentiles also; for this covenant was made with the stranger, as well as with Israel, De 29:11; and relates to the times of the Messiah, the call of the Gentiles, the conversion of the Jews, and their return to their own land in the latter day.

Deuteronomy 29:2

Ver. 2. Moses called unto all Israel,.... He had been speaking before to the heads of them, and delivered at different times what is before recorded; but now he summoned the whole body of the people together, a solemn covenant being to be made between God and them; or such things being to be made known unto them as were of universal concernment:

and said unto them; what is in this chapter; which is only a preparation or introduction to what he had to declare unto them in the following:

ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"what the Word of the Lord did;"

for all the wonderful things there done in Egypt were done by the essential Word of God, Christ, the Son of God; who appeared to Moses in the bush, and sent him to Egypt, and by him and Aaron wrought the miracles there; which many now present had seen, and were then old enough to take notice of, and could remember, though their fathers then in being were now dead:

unto Pharaoh and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the plagues he inflicted on the person of Pharaoh, and on all his courtiers, and on all the people in Egypt, for they reached the whole land.

Deuteronomy 29:3

Ver. 3. The great temptations which thine eyes have seen,.... Or trials, the ten plagues which tried the Egyptians, whether they would let Israel go; and tried the Israelites, whether they would believe in the Lord, and trust in his almighty power to deliver them:

the signs and those great miracles: as the said plagues were such as were beyond the power of nature to produce, and which only Omnipotence could really effect.

Deuteronomy 29:4

Ver. 4. Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive,.... They had some of them seen the above miracles with their bodily eyes, but had not discerned with the eyes of their understanding the power of God displayed in them, the goodness of God to them on whose behalf they were wrought, in order to obtain their deliverance, and the vengeance of God on the Egyptians for detaining them; so Jarchi interprets it of an heart to know the mercies of the Lord, and to cleave unto him:

and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day; to see and observe the gracious dealings of God with them, and to hearken to his voice and obey it: so the understanding heart, the seeing eye, and hearing ear, in things spiritual, are from the Lord, are special gifts of his grace, which he bestows on some, and not on others; see Pr 20:12. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"the Word of the Lord did not give you an heart, &c."

Deuteronomy 29:5

Ver. 5. And I have led you forty years in the wilderness,.... From the time of their coming out of Egypt unto that day, which though not quite complete, is given as a round number. Eupolemus {d}, an Heathen writer, confirms this date of the ministry of Moses among the Israelites; he says, Moses performed the office of a prophet forty years:

your clothes are not waxen old upon you: were not worn out; all those forty years they had been in the wilderness, they had never wanted clothes fitting for them, according to their age and stature, and which decayed not; See Gill on "De 8:4";

and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot; which were necessary to wear in travelling, and especially in a rugged wilderness; and yet, thought they had been always in use during so long a time, were not worn out, which was really miraculous; See Gill on "De 8:4".

{d} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30. p. 447.

Deuteronomy 29:6

Ver. 6. Ye have not eaten bread,.... Bread made of corn, common bread, of their own preparing, made by the labour of their own hands; but manna, the food of angelS, the bread of heaven:

neither have you drank wine, nor strong drink; only water out of the rock, at least chiefly, and for constancy; though it may be, when they were on the borders of other countries, as of the Edomites, they might obtain some wine for their money:

that ye might know that I [am] the Lord your God; who was both able and willing to provide food, drink, and raiment for them, and supply them with all good things, and support them without the use of the common necessaries of life; which were abundant proofs of his power and goodness.

Deuteronomy 29:7

Ver. 7. And when ye came unto this place,.... The borders of Moab, the wilderness before it, to which joined the plains they were now in; see Nu 21:13;

Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, came out against us unto battle; not together, but one after the other, and that very quickly; as soon almost as they had fought with the one, and conquered him, the other came out against them:

and we smote them; killed them and their armies, and the inhabitants of their countries; the history of which see in Nu 21:23.

Deuteronomy 29:8

Ver. 8. And we took their land,.... Which belonged to the two kings, the lands of Jazer, Gilead, and Bashan, fine countries for pasturage:

and gave it for an inheritances unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half tribe of Manasseh; who requested it, and to whom it was granted on certain conditions, and they were now in possession of it; see Nu 32:1.

Deuteronomy 29:9

Ver. 9. Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them,.... To do which they were laid under great obligations, through the goodness of God to them, in giving them victory over the two kings, and delivering their countries into their hands, as well as by all the favours bestowed on them in the wilderness, where they were sufficiently supplied with food, drink, and raiment; all which is made use of as a motive and argument to engage them to observe and keep the covenant the Lord made with them:

that ye may prosper in all that ye do: in all their occupations and businesses of life, in their manufactures and commerce, in the culture of their fields and vineyards, and in whatsoever they were employed in a lawful way; the word used has sometimes, the signification of acting wisely and prudently, as in Isa 52:13; hence the Septuagint version is, "that ye may understand all that ye do"; and so the Jerusalem Targum.

Deuteronomy 29:10

Ver. 10. Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God,.... Being gathered together at the door of the tabernacle, at the summons of Moses. Aben Ezra interprets it round about the ark, which was the symbol of the divine Presence:

your captains of your tribes; the heads and rulers of them:

your elders and your officers, [with] all the men of Israel; not the seventy elders only, but their elders in their several tribes, cities, and families, men of gravity and prudence, as well as of age, and who were in some place of power and authority or another: and the "officers" may design such who attended the judges, and executed their orders; see De 16:18; and with them were the common people, the males, who were grown persons. Aben Ezra thinks they stood in the order in which they here are mentioned, which is not improbable; next to Moses the princes, then the elders, and after them the officers, and next every man of Israel, the males; and then the little ones with the males; after them the women, and last of all the proselytes.

Deuteronomy 29:11

Ver. 11. Your little ones, your wives,.... Who are scarce ever mentioned in any special law or solemn transaction:

and thy stranger that [is] in thy camp; not only the proselyte of righteousness, who embraced the Jewish religion entirely, but the proselyte of the gate, who was admitted to dwell among them, having renounced idolatry. These standing with the Israelites, when this covenant was made, has respect to the Gentiles, who as well as the Jews have an interest in the covenant of grace made with Christ; in whom there is, neither Jew nor Gentile, any difference between them:

from the hewer of thy wood to the drawer of thy water; that hewed wood for firing and other uses, and drew water for the camp; who were generally mean persons, and perhaps some that came out of Egypt with them are here intended; however, mean and abject persons are meant, and signifies that none should be excluded from a concern in this solemn affair on account of their meanness.

Deuteronomy 29:12

Ver. 12. That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God,.... That is, they were all to appear and stand in this order before the Lord, that they might solemnly avouch him to be their God, and hear him declaring them to be his people, and the many promises and prophecies of good things he should deliver to them, as well as threatenings of wrath and vengeance in case of disobedience to him: or "that thou shouldest pass" {e}: which some think is an allusion to the manner of making covenants, by slaying a creature, and cutting it in pieces, and passing between them, as in Jer 34:18; so Jarchi and Aben Ezra:

and into his oath; annexed to his covenant and promise, to show the immutability and certain fulfilment of it on his part; and may signify not only the oath he swore that they should be his people, but the oath he gave them, and they took, that he should be their God:

which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day; which refers both to the covenant and the oath, or the covenant confirmed by an oath, even the covenant now made in the plains of Moab, distinct from that at Horeb or Sinai.

{e} Krbel "ut transeas", V. L. Tigurine version, Munster, Vatablus, Pagniuns, Cocceius; "ad transeundum", Montanus.

Deuteronomy 29:13

Ver. 13. That be may establish thee this day for a people unto himself, and [that] he may be unto thee a God,.... Which contains the sum and substance of the covenant; see Jer 32:38;

as he hath said unto thee, and as he had sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; De 26:17.

Deuteronomy 29:14

Ver. 14. Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath. That is, Moses; for he was ordered to make this covenant with them in the name of the Lord; what promises of good things, or declarations of his mind and will, God would make, Moses was to deliver to them; and what was required of them he would inform them of. Aben Ezra interprets it, not only you, but those that will come after you, your sons and your sons' sons.

Deuteronomy 29:15

Ver. 15. But with [him] that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God,.... Who are before specified according to their dignity, age, sex, and station of life; or rather, "but [as] with him that standeth", &c.

and so with [him] that [is] not here with us this day; detained at home by illness and indisposition of body, or by one providence or another; so that they could not come out of their tents, and make their appearance before the tabernacle; though Jarchi interprets this of the people of future generations.

Deuteronomy 29:16

Ver. 16. For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt,.... How long they and their fathers had dwelt there, the number of years they had been in the land, as the Targum of Jonathan, which was upwards of two hundred years; and being a country the inhabitants of which were much given to idolatry, they had seen many of their idols, and much of their idolatrous worship; and their hearts had been apt to be ensnared by it, and the minds of some tinctured with it, and the remembrance thereof might make ill impressions on them; to remove or prevent which this covenant was made:

and how we came through the nations which ye passed by; as the Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, and Midianites, as Aben Ezra observes, through whose borders they came, as they passed by their countries in their journeys in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 29:17

Ver. 17. And ye have seen their abominations and their idols,.... Or, "their abominations, even their idols"; for the same are meant by both: it is common in Scripture to call the idols of the Gentiles abominations, without any other explanation of them; see 1Ki 11:5; because they are abominable to God, and ought to be so to men: the word for idols has the signification of dung, and may be rendered dunghill gods, either referring to such that were bred and lived in dung, as the beetle, worshipped by the Egyptians, as Bishop Patrick observes; or which were as much to be loathed and abhorred as the dung of any creature:

wood and stone, silver and gold; these are the materials of which the idols they had seen in the several countries they had been in, or passed through, were made of; some of wood, others of stone cut out of these, and carved; others more rich and costly were made of massive gold and silver, and were molten ones; or the images of wood were glided with gold and silver;

which [were] among them; now these being seen by them in as they passed along, they might run in their minds, or be called to remembrance by them, and so they be in danger of being drawn aside to make the like, and worship them.

Deuteronomy 29:18

Ver. 18. Lest there should be among you man or woman, or family, or tribe,.... These words stand in connection with De 29:15, with De 29:16 being in a parenthesis, as may be observed, and show the design of this solemn appearance of the people, and their entering afresh into covenant; which was to prevent their falling into idolatry, and preserve them from it, whether a single person of either sex, or a whole family, or even a tribe, which might be in danger of being infected with it, and so all the people:

whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go [and] serve the gods of those nations; whose heart is enticed and drawn aside at the remembrance of the idols he has seen worshipped by others; and is looking off from the Lord God, his faith in him being weakened, his fear of him removed, and his affections for him lessened; and is looking towards the idols of the nations, with a hankering mind to serve and worship them:

lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood: the word "rosh", which we render "gall", signifies, according to Jarchi, a bitter herb, which better suits with a root than gall, and is elsewhere by us rendered "hemlock", Ho 10:4; and is by him very rightly interpreted of a wicked man among them; for not a principle of immorality, or heresy, rooted in the mind, productive of bitter fruits, or evil actions, is meant; but a bad man, particularly an idolater, who is rooted in idolatry, and is guilty of and commits abominable actions; the issue of which will be bitterness and death, if not recovered; which agrees with what the apostle says, Heb 12:15; who manifestly alludes to this passage; see the Apocrypha:

"In those days went there out of Israel wicked men, who persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us: for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow." (1 Maccabees 1:11)

and is confirmed by what follows.

Deuteronomy 29:19

Ver. 19. And it cometh to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse,....

That is, the man before compared to a root bearing bitter herbs, when he should hear the curses pronounced by the law against such persons as himself:

that he bless himself in his heart; inwardly pronounce himself blessed, thinking himself secure from the curse of the law, and flattering himself it will never reach him nor come upon him:

saying, I shall have peace; all happiness and prosperity, in soul, body, and estate; inward peace of mind now, and eternal peace hereafter:

though I walk in the imagination of my heart; in worshipping idols which he vainly and wickedly imagined to be gods; to the worship of which his wicked heart prompted him, and he was resolutely and stubbornly bent upon, and in which he continued:

to add drunkenness to thirst; as a thirsty man to quench his thirst drinks, and adds to that, or drinks yet more and more until he is drunken; so a man inclined to idolatry, that has a secret desire after it, thirsts after such stolen or forbidden waters, and drinks of them, adds thereunto, drinks again and again until he is drunk with the wine of fornication, or idolatry, as it is called Re 17:2; so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan understand the words of adding sin to sin, particularly of adding sins of ignorance to pride, or to presumptuous ones. Wicked men, deceivers and deceived, always grow worse and worse, increasing to more ungodliness, and yet promise themselves peace and impunity, **1Th 5:3**.

Deuteronomy 29:20

Ver. 20. Then the Lord will not spare him,.... Have no mercy upon him, nor forgive him, being an hardhearted, impenitent, stubborn, and obstinate sinner, as well as guilty of the grossest and most provoking sin, as idolatry is:

but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man; or, "the nose of the Lord shall smoke" {f}; alluding to an angry, wrathful, furious man, whose brain being heated, and his passions inflamed, his breath steams through his nostrils like smoke; it denotes the vehement anger, the greatness of God's wrath and indignation against such a person, and his burning zeal or jealousy for his own honour and glory injured by the idolater:

and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him: for as he that offends in one point is guilty of all, and especially in such a principal point as this, which concerns the being and worship of God; so he makes himself liable to all the curses of the law, which shall not only come upon him, but abide on him; and there is no person clear of them but by redemption through Christ, who, by being made a curse for his people, has redeemed them from the curse of the law:

and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven; he shall have no name in Israel, not in the church, and among the people of God, from whom he is to be excommunicated; shall have no name and place in the earth, being cut off from the land of the living; and shall have no name or fame after his death, his memory shall rot and perish; and he shall appear to have no name in the book of life; see Ps 69:28.

{f} hwhy Pa Nvey "fumabit nasus Domini", Montanus.

Deuteronomy 29:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel,.... Unto the evil of punishment, devote and consign him to it, and make him a visible and distinguished mark of his displeasure and vengeance. So some men are righteously separated from others, and preordained unto condemnation, being wicked and ungodly men; for such God has made or appointed for the day of evil; see
Pr 16:4;

according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law; the evil of punishment he shall be separated unto shall be according to them, or include them all; the sense is, that the wrath of God, and the whole curse of the law due to him for his sin, shall come upon him; see De 28:16, &c.

Deuteronomy 29:22

Ver. 22. So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you,.... Not the next generation, but in future times, in ages to come, at a great distance, even after the destruction of Judea by the Romans; to which De 29:23 seems to refer:

and the stranger that shall come from a far land; on trade and business, or for the sake of travelling, his road either lying through it, or his curiosity leading him to see it:

shall say, when they see the plagues of the land; cities and towns in ruins, fields lie uncultivated, and the whole land depopulated, and all become a barren wilderness, which was once a fruitful country, a land flowing with milk and honey:

and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it; upon the inhabitants of it, as the pestilence and other diseases, which shall have swept the land of them; see De 28:22. This case supposes a general departure from the worship of God to the service of idols; otherwise single individuals are punished in their own persons, as in the De 29:21.

Deuteronomy 29:23

Ver. 23. [And that] the whole land thereof [is] brimstone and salt, [and] burning,.... That is, is become exceeding barren, as all such land is where there are sulphureous mines, or salt pits, or burning mountains; not that this would be, or has been the case of the land of Judea in a strict literal sense; only these are expressions made use of to show the barrenness of it, which is its case at this day, not through the nature of its soil being changed, but through the slothfulness of the inhabitants of it; to which time it better agrees than to the time of its falling into the hands of the Chaldeans, who left men in it for husbandmen and vinedressers. Aben Ezra understands this as a prayer to God, that the land might be burnt up; that is, for the sins of the people:

[that] it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein; not being sown, it would bear and produce no corn for men; and not being manured, no grass would spring up for the cattle: and so would be

like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Admah and Zeboim; which indeed are, strictly speaking, become a sulphurous and bituminous lake, called the salt sea, and the lake Asphaltites, and where no green grass or corn, or any kind of fruit grow: which the Lord overthrew in his anger and in his wrath the Targum of Jonathan is,

"which the Word of the Lord overthrew;"

and it was Jehovah, the Word, or Son of God, who rained, from Jehovah the

Father, out of heaven, fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah, and the rest of the cities; See Gill on "Ge 19:24", in which chapter is the history of this fatal overthrow.

Deuteronomy 29:24

Ver. 24. Even all nations shall say,.... For the destruction of this land, and the people of it, would be, as it has been, so very great and awful, and so very remarkable and surprising, that the fame of it would be heard among all the nations of the world, as it has been; who, upon hearing the sad report of it, would ask the following questions:

wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? so distinguished from all others for the fruitfulness and pleasantness of it; the people, the inhabitants of which, he chose, above all others, to be a special and peculiar people; and where he had a temple built for him, and where he had his residence, and worship used to be given unto him:

what [meaneth] the heat of this great anger? what is the reason of his stirring up his fierce wrath, and causing it to burn in so furious a manner? surely it must be something very horrible and provoking indeed!

Deuteronomy 29:25

Ver. 25. Then men shall say,.... The answer that will be returned to the above questions will be this

because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers: breakers of covenants with men are always reckoned among the worst of men, see **Ro 1:31**; and especially breakers of covenant with God, and with such a God as the God of Israel was, so good, so kind, and gracious; and of such a covenant he made with them, in which so many good things were promised unto them, on condition of their obedience; as the continuance in, such a land they dwelt in, with an abundance of privileges, civil and religious: and this covenant God of theirs was the God of their fathers also; and it was always reckoned an heinous sin among the Heathens to forsake the gods of their ancestors; see **Jer 2:11**;

which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt;

which is another aggravation of their breach of the covenant the Lord made with them; it being made with them by that God, and at that time, when he in so wonderful a manner, with such mighty power, and a outstretched arm, and in great kindness and tenderness to them, brought then, out of hard bondage and most wretched slavery in Egypt.

Deuteronomy 29:26

Ver. 26. For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them,.... As did all Israel, in the times of Solomon, and the ten tribes under Jeroboam, and other succeeding kings of Israel; and the two tribes in the times of Ahaz, and especially of Manasseh, when they worshipped all the host of heaven; see 1Ki 11:33;

gods whom they knew not; to whom they, as well as their fathers before them, were strangers and approved not of them; and of whose power and goodness they had no experience, and of which there never were any instances; yet such was their stupidity, as to leave their God, the only true God, of whom they had many proofs in both respects, and worship these idols, which had never been profitable and serviceable to them on any account:

and [whom] he hath not given unto them; which version seems not to afford a good sense; for to what people soever has God, the true God, given other gods to worship, which this seems to imply, though he had not given or allowed any to them? Onkelos paraphrases it, "did not do them good"; which Jarchi explains, the gods they chose them did not impart to them any inheritance, or any portion; for the word used signifies to divide, or part a portion or inheritance; now the Lord God did divide to Israel the land of Canaan for an inheritance, but these idols had never divided anything to them, and had been in no instance profitable or advantageous to them; and therefore it was madness and folly in them to worship them, as well as great ingratitude to the Lord their God, who had done such great and good things for them; for so the words may be rendered, "and did not impart" or "divide to them" {g} anything; that is, not anyone of them did; for the verb is singular.

{g} Mhl qlx alw "qui nihil impertitus est eis", Pagninus; "et quorum nullus impertitus fuerat eis quidquem", Piscator; "neque partitus est ipsis", Cocceius.

Deuteronomy 29:27

Ver. 27. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land,.... For this their idolatry and base ingratitude:

to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book; in this book of Deuteronomy, and particularly De 28:16; see **Da 9:11**.

Deuteronomy 29:28

Ver. 28. And the Lord rooted them out of the land,.... Which was true both at the Babylonish captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, and at their present one by the Romans; and especially the latter, by whom they have been so rooted out, as that they have not been able to return to it these 1700 years, nor to have any inheritance or possession in it; whereas, at the end of seventy years, they returned from the Babylonish captivity to their land again: and which was done

in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation; which were most abundantly shown in the utter destruction of their land, city, and temple, by the Romans:

and cast them another land, as [it is] this day; the ten tribes were cast into Assyria, and from thence into the cities of the Medes, the two tribes into the land of Chaldea, and now into all lands; and none their own, but another, a strange and foreign country. The word "cast" denotes the vehemence of the divine displeasure at them, expressed by the removal of them out of their own land into another. In the Hebrew word for "cast", a middle letter in it is greater than usual; the reason of which perhaps is, that this dealing of God with them might be observed and taken notice of as very remarkable; and Ainsworth thinks it is to observe the greatness of the punishment; and the Jews understand this of the casting away of the ten tribes: and they gather from hence that the ten tribes shall not return, though about it they are divided; for so they say in the Misnah {h},

"the ten tribes shall not return, as it is said, and cast them into another land, as this day; as the day goes and does not return, so they go and return not; these are the words of R. Akiba. R. Eliezer says, as the day brings on darkness and light, so the ten tribes who are now dark shall be enlightened."

{h} Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 29:29

Ver. 29. The secret [things belong] unto the Lord our God,.... Respecting the people of Israel, and the providential dealings of God with them, and especially the final rejection of them; with respect to which, the apostle's exclamation agrees with this, Ro 11:33; and though the Lord had revealed many things which should befall them, there were others still secret with him, and the reasons of others; and particularly the times and seasons of their accomplishment, which he retains in his own power, **Ac 1:6**. There are many secret things in nature, which cannot be found out and accounted for by men, which the Lord only knows; and there are many things in Providence, which are unsearchable, and past finding out by finite minds, especially the true causes and reasons of them; and there are many things relating to God himself, which remain secret with him; notwithstanding the revelation he has made of himself; for not only some of his perfections, as eternity, immensity, &c. are beyond our comprehension; but the mode of subsistence of the three divine Persons in the Godhead, the paternity of the one, the generation of the other, and the procession of the Spirit from them both; the union of the two natures, divine and human, in the person of Christ; the thoughts, purposes, and decrees of God within himself, until brought into execution; and so there are many things relating to his creatures, as the particular persons predestinated unto eternal life, what becomes of such who die in infancy, what will befall us in life, when we shall die, where and in what manner, and also the day and hour of the last judgment. The Jews generally interpret this and what follows of the sins of men, and punishment for them, and, particularly, idolatry; take Aben Ezra's sense instead of many,

"he that commits idolatry secretly, his punishment is by the hand of heaven (from God immediately); he that commits it openly, it lies upon us and upon our children to do as is written in the law:"

but those [things which are] revealed [belong] to us and to our children for ever; the things of nature and Providence, which are plain and manifest, are for our use and instruction; and especially the word and ordinances of God, which are the revelation of his will, the doctrines and promises contained in the Scriptures, each of the duties of religion, and the commandments of God, such as are of eternal obligation, which may be chiefly designed, because it follows:

that [we] may do all the words of this law: for the end of this revelation is practice; hearing and reading the word will be of no avail, unless what is heard and read is practised. Some render the words {i}, "the secret things of the Lord our God are revealed to us and to our children;"

but neither the construction of the words in the original, nor the Hebrew accents, will admit of such a version; otherwise it would furnish out a very great truth: for the secrets of God's love, of his council and covenant, are revealed unto his people, as well as many of his providences, and the mysteries of his grace; see Ps 25:14. There are some extraordinary pricks in the Hebrew text on the words "to us and to our children": which are designed to point out the remarkable and wonderful condescension and goodness of God, in making a revelation of his mind and will, both with respect to doctrine and duty, to the sons of men.

{i} So some in Fagius and Vatablus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 30:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 30

This chapter contains some gracious promises of the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, of their calling things to mind that have befallen them, of their repentance, and the circumcision of their hearts to love the Lord, of the return of them to their own land, and of the great increase of them, and of their enjoyment of plenty of good things, De 30:1; in it is an account of the Gospel, or word of faith, which at this time should be brought near to the Jews, and be received by them, De 30:11; and for the present Moses desires them to consider what he now set before them, and what would be the consequences of receiving or rejecting it, and so what it would be most proper for them to make choice of, De 30:15.

Ver. 1. And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee,.... Declared, pronounced, foretold, and prophesied of in the three preceding chapters, especially in De 28:1;

the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee; the blessings promised to those that pay a regard to the will of God and obey his voice, and curses threatened to the see De 28:1;

and thou shall call [them] to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy

God hath driven thee; recollect the promises and the threatenings, and observe the exact accomplishment of them in their captivities, and especially in this their last and present captivity.

Deuteronomy 30:2

Ver. 2. And shalt return unto the Lord thy God,.... By repentance, acknowledging their manifold sins and transgressions, particularly their disbelief and rejection of the Messiah, now seeking him and salvation by him; see **Ho 3:5**;

and shalt obey his voice; in the Gospel, yielding the obedience of faith to that; embracing the Gospel, and submitting to the ordinances of it:

according to all that I command thee this day, thou, and thy children; which was to love the Lord, and walk in his ways, directed to in the Gospel, and which were to be regarded from a principle of love to God and the blessed Redeemer; see De 30:6;

with all thine heart and with all thy soul; that is, both their return unto the Lord, and their obedience to his voice or word, should be hearty and sincere; which being the case, the following things would be done for them.

Deuteronomy 30:3

Ver. 3. That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion on thee,.... Return them from their captivity, or bring them out of it, both in a temporal and spiritual sense; free them from their present exile, and deliver them from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law; and all this as the effect of his grace and mercy towards them, and compassion on them; see Jer 30:18; The Targum of Jonathan is,

"his Word shall receive with good will your repentance;"

it being cordial and unfeigned, and fruits meet for it brought forth:

and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God scattered thee; or, "will again gather thee" {k}; as he had gathered them out of all places where they had been scattered, on their return from the Babylonish captivity; so will he again gather them from all the nations of the earth, east, west, north, and south, where they are now dispersed; when they shall turn to the Lord, and seek David their King, the true Messiah. Maimonides {l} understands this passage of their present captivity, and deliverance from it by the Messiah.

{k} Kubqw bvw kai palin sunaxei, Sept. "et rursum congregabit te", V. L. "et iterum colliget te", Piscator. {l} Hilchot Melachim, c. 11. sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 30:4

Ver. 4. If [any] of thine be driven out unto the outmost [parts] of heaven,.... As many of them are in this remote island of ours, Great Britain, reckoned formerly the uttermost part of the earth, as Thule, supposed to be Schetland, an isle belonging to Scotland, is said to be {m}; See Gill on "De 28:49"; and as some of them are thought to be in America, which Manasseh Ben Israel {n} had a firm belief of:

from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee; whose eye is omniscient, and reaches every part of the world; and whose arm is omnipotent, and none can stay it, or turn it back. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"from thence will he bring you near by the hands of the King Messiah."

{m} "Ultima Thule", Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. v. 30. Seneca Medea, Act 2. in fine. {n} Spes Israelis, sect. 38.

Deuteronomy 30:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it,.... That the Jews upon their conversion in the latter day will return to the land of Judea again, and possess it, is the sense of many passages of Scripture; among others, see Jer 30:18; the above Targum is;

"the Word of the Lord will bring thee, &c."

and he will do thee good; both in things temporal and spiritual; see

Eze 34:24;

and multiply thee above thy fathers; increase their number more than ever they were in any age; for they shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered, **Ho 1:10**.

Deuteronomy 30:6

Ver. 6. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed,.... No mention is made of circumcision of the flesh, which will now be out of use with the Jews; they being fully convinced of the abrogation of the ceremonial law by the Messiah, whom they will now receive. It is spiritual circumcision only that is here spoken of, with which the Jews will be circumcised, when they shall be pricked and cut to the heart, and be thoroughly convinced of sin; when the iniquity of their hearts will be laid open to them, and they put to pain, and filled with shame and loathing for it; when the hardness of their hearts will be removed, and the foolishness of them will be exposed and taken away, and they will be made willing to part with their sins, and with their own righteousness; when the graces of the Spirit will be implanted in them, and the blood of Christ applied to them for pardon and cleansing. This is the circumcision made without hands, which is not of men, but of God; what he calls for, and exhorts unto, as being necessary, De 10:16; he here promises to do; and deed none but himself can do it; for he only can come at the hearts of men, to take anything out of them, or put anything into them; it is he that opens the heart, softens, quickens, enlightens, and purifies it: Baal Hatturim says this respects the times of the Messiah:

to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; which, though the duty of every man, is performed by none but those that have the grace of God; there is no love to God in the heart before this inward and spiritual circumcision of it: it is a fruit of the Spirit in conversion when the affections are taken off of other things, and set on Christ; when a man sees his sin and his Saviour, and the one is odious, and the other precious; when the blessings of grace are applied, and the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, which cause love to God and Christ again:

that thou mayest live; spiritually and eternally; for there is no spiritual life in the soul till the heart is circumcised, or, in other words, regenerated and renewed; then it is quickened; then a man lives a life of faith on Christ, of holiness from him, communion with him, and has both an open right unto, and meetness for, eternal life.

Deuteronomy 30:7

Ver. 7. And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies,.... Recorded in De 28:16; that is, the Word of the Lord, as the Targum of Jonathan; for he being now sought unto, and embraced, will be their King and their Saviour, and revenge their enemies:

and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee: the Turks and Papists, the former having taken possession of their land, and the latter being violent persecutors of them in all their countries. This will be fulfilled when the vials of God's wrath will be poured on the antichristian states, Re 16:1.

Deuteronomy 30:8

Ver. 8. And thou shall return, and obey the voice of the Lord,.... In the Gospel; obey the form of doctrine delivered to them, embrace the truth of the Gospel cordially, and yield a cheerful subjection to the ordinances of it; or receive the Word of the Lord, as the Targum of Jonathan, Christ, the essential Word, by faith, as the Saviour and Redeemer, Mediator, Prophet, Priest, and King:

and do all his commandments which I command thee this day; the commandment nigh unto them, in their mouths and hearts, even the word of faith, the ministers of Christ preach, De 30:11; besides, all the moral precepts and commands of the law, which will then be in force, being eternal and invariable; which faith in Christ, and love to him, will influence and constrain them to observe.

Deuteronomy 30:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand,.... In every manufacture, trade, or business of life in which they should be employed; the meaning is, that the Lord will greatly bless them in all that they shall set their hands to in a lawful way; so that they shall abound in good things, and have enough and to spare, a redundancy of the good things of life, great plenty of them:

in the fruit of thy body; abundance of children:

and in the fruit of thy cattle; a large increase of oxen and sheep:

and in the fruit of thy land for good; it being by the blessing of God on their labours restored to its former fertility, though now barren through want of inhabitants, and the slothfulness of those that are possessed of it; for travellers observe {o}, the soil is still good, was it properly manured and cultivated:

for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers; particularly in the days of Solomon and David, when the people of Israel enjoyed plenty of all good things, and so they will hereafter; see **Ho 2:15**; The Targum of Jonathan is,

"the Word of the Lord will return to rejoice, &c."

See Jer 32:41.

{o} See Shaw's Travels, p. 336. Ed. 2.

Deuteronomy 30:10

Ver. 10. If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God,.... Or rather, "for thou shalt hearken" {p}; seeing it is before promised that the Lord would circumcise their hearts to love him, and they should obey his voice, De 30:6. The Targum is,

"receive the Word of the Lord:"

to keep his commandments and his statutes, which are written in this book of the law; particularly in this chapter, and all that are of a moral nature:

[and] if thou return unto the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; or, "for thou shall return", &c. as it is promised they should, De 30:8.

{p} emvt yk "quia obedies", Cocceius.

Deuteronomy 30:11

Ver. 11. For this commandment which I command thee this day,.... Which the Jews understand of the law, but the Apostle Paul has taught us to interpret it of the word of faith, the Gospel preached by him and other ministers, Ro 10:6; which better suits with the context, and the prophecies before delivered concerning the conversion of the Jews, their reception of the Messiah, and his Gospel:

it [is] not hidden from thee; being clearly revealed, plainly and fully preached: if hidden from any, it is from them that are lost; from the wise and prudent, while it is revealed to babes, and given to them to know the mysteries of it: or too "wonderful" {q}; hard, difficult, and impossible; its doctrines, are not beyond the understanding of an enlightened person; they are all plain to them that understand and find the knowledge of them; and the ordinances of it are not too hard and difficult to be kept; the commandments of Christ are not grievous:

neither [is] it far off; for though it is good, news from a far country, from heaven, it is come down from thence; it is brought nigh in the ministry of the word to the ears and hearts of men.

{q} talpn "mirabile", Montanus, Cocceius.

Deuteronomy 30:12

Ver. 12. It [is] not in heaven,.... The scheme of it was formed in heaven, it was hid in the heart of God there, before revealed; it was ordained before the world was for our glory; it was brought down from thence by Christ, and committed to his apostles and ministers of the word to preach it to men; and has been ever since continued on earth, and will be at the time of the conversion of the Jews:

that thou shouldest say; that there should be any occasion of saying; it forbids any such kind of speech as, follows:

who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it, and do it? there is no need of that, for it is brought from thence already, and may be heard, and should be obeyed; for to put such a question would be the same as to ask "to bring Christ down from above", who is come down already by the assumption of human nature, to preach the Gospel, give the sense of the law, and fulfil it, to do the will of his Father, bring in an everlasting righteousness, and save his people; so that there is no need of his coming again on the same errand, since he has obtained eternal redemption, and is the author of everlasting salvation, which is the sum and substance of the Gospel.

Deuteronomy 30:13

Ver. 13. Neither [is] it beyond the sea,.... There is no need to travel into foreign parts, into transmarine countries for it, as the Heathen philosophers did to get knowledge; for the Gospel is ordered to be preached to all the world, and sent into all nations; and at the time of the conversion of the Jews the earth will be filled with the knowledge of it, as the waters cover the sea; so that there will be no need to go into distant countries for it; nor any occasion

that thou shouldest say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? which would be all one as to desire "to bring up Christ again from the dead"; when he is already risen, and is gone to heaven, where he ever lives to make intercession for us; is thereby declared to be the Son of God with power, and is discharged as the surety of his people, having done completely what he engaged to do; and is risen for their justification, and become the firstfruits of the resurrection of the dead; wherefore whoever confesses with his mouth, and believes with his heart, that God has raised him from the dead, that is enough, he shall be saved: what a sublime sense of the words is this the apostle gives and how puerile is that of the Chaldee paraphrast in comparison of it!
See Gill on "Ro 10:6".

Deuteronomy 30:14

Ver. 14. But the word [is] very nigh unto thee,.... In the ministration of it by those who clearly, plainly, and faithfully preach it, and in the application of it by the Spirit of God to the heart; and in the gracious experience converted persons have of the power and efficacy of it in them, and of the comfort they receive from it:

in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it; in the mouth by confession, being not ashamed to own it, and profess it before men; and in the heart, where it is come with power, has a place, and works effectually, and is cordially believed, and comfortably experienced; and when this is the case, its ordinances will be faithfully kept as delivered, and cheerfully submitted to.

Deuteronomy 30:15

Ver. 15. See, I have set before thee this day,.... Moses here returns to press the Israelites to the present observance of the laws, statutes, and judgments of one sort and another, he had been delivering to them; as being of great moment and importance to them, no other than

life and good, and death and evil; which are the effects and consequences of obedience and disobedience to them; a happy temporal life, and a continuance of it in the good land of Canaan, and an enjoyment of the blessings and good things thereof to them that are obedient; for not spiritual and eternal life, or spiritual blessings and everlasting happiness, are to be had by man's obedience to the law of works, only through Christ, through his obedience, righteousness, sufferings, and death; see **Ga 3:21**; so temporal death, or a cutting short of natural life in the promised land, and evil things, calamities, and distresses, or a deprivation of all the good things of it to the disobedient; see **Isa 1:19**.

Deuteronomy 30:16

Ver. 16. In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God,.... Which is the sum and substance of the first table of the law, and includes the whole worship of God, the contrary to which are idolatry, superstition, and will worship, from which Moses had been dissuading and deterring them:

to walk in his ways; which he has prescribed, as his will to walk in, and his law directs to:

and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments; his laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, Moses had been repeating and reciting:

that thou mayest live and multiply; live in the land of Canaan, and have a numerous offspring and posterity to succeed and continue in it, which is confirmed by what follows:

and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it; with health and happiness, with an affluence of all good things, in the land of Canaan they were just entering into to take possession of.

Deuteronomy 30:17

Ver. 17. But if thine heart turn away,.... From the true God, and the right worship of him, and from his commands, statutes, and judgments:

so that thou wilt not hear; the voice of the Lord and obey it, or hearken to his laws, and do them:

but shalt be drawn away; by an evil heart, and by the ill examples of others:

and worship other gods and serve them; the gods of the Gentiles, the idols of the people, besides the one living and true God, the God of Israel.

Deuteronomy 30:18

Ver. 18. I denounce unto, you this day that ye shall surely perish,.... By one judgment or another; this he most solemnly averred, and it might be depended upon that it would certainly be their case; see **De 4:26**;

[and that] ye shall not prolong [your] days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it; but be cut short by death, of one kind or another, by sword, or famine, or pestilence, or be carried into captivity; one or other of which were frequently their case.

Deuteronomy 30:19

Ver. 19. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you,.... Either, literally understood, the heavens above him, and the earth on which he stood, those inanimate bodies, which are frequently called upon as witnesses to matters of moment and importance; see **De 4:26**; or figuratively, the inhabitants of both, angels and men:

[that] I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; had plainly told them in express words what would be the consequence of obedience and disobedience to the law of God; long life, and the blessings of it in the land of Canaan, to those that obey it; death, by various means, and dreadful curses, to those that disobey it; of which see at large De 28:16;

therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed may live; that is, prefer obedience to the law, and choose to perform that, the consequence of which is life; that they and their posterity might live comfortably and happily, quietly and safely, and constantly, even to the latest ages, in the land of Canaan.

Deuteronomy 30:20

Ver. 20. That thou mayest love the Lord thy God,.... And show it by keeping his commands:

[and] that thou mayest obey his voice; in his word, and by his prophets:

and that thou mayest cleave unto him; and to his worship, and not follow after and serve other gods:

for he [is] thy life, and the length of thy days; the God of their lives, and the Father of their mercies; the giver of long life, and all the blessings of it; and which he had promised to those that were obedient, to him, and which they might expect:

that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them; the land of Canaan, often thus described; this was the grand promise made to obedience to the law, and was typical of eternal life and happiness; which is had, not through man's obedience to the law, but through the obedience and righteousness of Christ.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 31:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 31

Moses being old, and knowing he should quickly die, and must not go over Jordan with the people of Israel, acquaints them with it, and encourages them and Joshua to go over notwithstanding, and not be afraid of their enemies, since the Lord would go with them, and deliver them into their hands, De 31:1; and having written the law, he delivered it to the priests, and ordered that it should be read at the end of every seven years before all the people, that they and theirs might learn it, and fear the Lord, De 31:9; and whereas the death of Moses was very near, and the Lord foreseeing the people would quickly fall into idolatry, which would bring great calamities upon them, he directed

Moses to write a song, which should be a witness for him, and against them, in ages to come; which Moses accordingly did, De 31:14; and Moses having given a charge to Joshua, and finished the writing of the law in a book, gave it to the Levites to put it in the side of the ark, De 31:23; and then ordered the chief of the tribes to be gathered together, that he might deliver the song, which by the direction and under the inspiration of God he had written, De 31:28; which song is recorded in De 32:1.

Ver. 1. And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel. The following words, even to the whole body of the people summoned together on this occasion. It seems that after Moses had made the covenant with them he was directed to, he dismissed the people to their tents, and went to his own, and now returned, having ordered them to meet him again, very probably at the tabernacle; with which agrees the Targum of Jonathan, he

"went to the tabernacle of the house of doctrine;"

though, according to Aben Ezra, he went to the each tribes separately, as they lay encamped; his words are these,

"he went to every tribe and tribe, to acquaint them that he was about to die, and that they might not be afraid, and to strengthen their hearts;"

he adds,

"in my opinion he then blessed them, though their blessings are afterwards written;"

which is not improbable.

Deuteronomy 31:2

Ver. 2. And he said unto them, I [am] an hundred and twenty years old this day,.... Whether the meaning is, that that day precisely was his birthday, is a question; it may be the sense is only this, that he was now arrived to such an age; though Jarchi takes it in the first sense, to which are objected his words in De 31:14; yet it seems by
De 32:48 that having delivered to the children of Israel the song he was ordered this day to write, on the selfsame day he was bid to go up to Mount Nebo and die: and it is a commonly received tradition with the Jews, that

Moses died on the same day of the month he was born;
See Gill on "De 34:7".

I can no more go out and come in; not that he could no longer go out of his tent and return without great trouble and difficulty, being so decrepit; but that he could not perform his office as their ruler and governor, or go out to battle and return as their general; and this not through any incapacity of body or mind, both being vigorous, sound, and well, as is clear from De 34:7; but because it was the will of God that he should live no longer to exercise such an office, power, and authority:

also the Lord hath said unto me, or "for the Lord has said" {r}, and so is a reason of the foregoing; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord said:"

thou shalt not go over this Jordan: to which he and the people of Israel were nigh, and lay between them and the land of Canaan, over which it was necessary to pass in order to go into it; but Moses must not lead them there, this work was reserved for Joshua, a type of Christ; not Moses and his law, or obedience to it, is what introduces any into the heavenly Canaan only Jesus and his righteousness; see **De 3:27**.

{r} hwhyw "praesertim cum et Dominus", V. L. w sometimes signifies "for". See Noldius, p. 285. So Ainsworth and Patrick here.

Deuteronomy 31:3

Ver. 3. The Lord thy God, he will go over before thee,.... This he said to encourage the people of Israel; that though he should die, and not go over with them, their ever living and true God, the great Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, he would go before them, and fight their battles for them; so that they had nothing to fear from their enemies:

[and] he will destroy those nations from before thee; the seven nations which then inhabited the land:

and thou shalt possess them; their countries, cities, and houses, fields, and vineyards:

[and] Joshua, he shall go over before thee; as their general to fight for them, subdue their enemies, and put them into the possession of the land, and divide it to them:

as the Lord hath said; **De 3:28**.

Deuteronomy 31:4

Ver. 4. And the Lord shall do unto them as he did unto Sihon, and to Og, kings of the Amorites,.... Deliver them up into their hands; see the history of this in Nu 21:10;

and unto the land of them whom he destroyed; put them into the possession of the land of Canaan, as they were now in possession of the land of those two kings he destroyed by them. This instance is given to encourage their faith, assuring them that what had been done to them would be done to the Canaanitish kings, and their subjects, and their lands.

Deuteronomy 31:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord shall give them up before your face,.... To ruin and destruction; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"the Word of the Lord shall deliver them up:"

that ye may do unto them according to all the commandments which I have commanded you; that is, utterly destroy them, make no covenant with them, enter into no alliances nor contract any marriages with them; but demolish their altars, cut down their groves, and break their images in pieces; of which last Aben Ezra interprets the words; but they are not to be restrained to that single instance; see **De 7:1**.

Deuteronomy 31:6

Ver. 6. Be strong and of a good courage,.... The Septuagint version is,

"play the men, and be strong;"

be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, trusting and relying on him that goes before you; and so take heart, and be of good courage, and act the manly part; the apostle seems to refer to this passage, 1Co 16:13;

fear not, nor be afraid of them; their enemies, though so numerous, so mighty, and some of them of a gigantic stature, and their cities strong and well fenced:

for the Lord thy God, he [it is] that doth go with thee: in comparison of whom, numbers of men, their strength of body, and fortified places, signify nothing:

he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee; not fail to fulfil his promises to them, not leave them till he had given them complete victory over their enemies, put them into the possession of their land, and settled them in it. This promise, though made to literal Israel, belongs to the spiritual Israel of God, and is made good to every true believer in the Lord; see Heb 13:5.

Deuteronomy 31:7

Ver. 7. And Moses called unto Joshua,.... Who might be at some distance from him, with the tribe to which he belonged. The Targum of Jonathan adds,

"out of the midst of the people:"

and said unto him, in the sight of all Israel; now assembled together, and what follows was said in their hearing, to make him the more respectable to them:

be strong and of a good courage; the same that is said to the people in De 31:6, and which was still more necessary in him, who was to be their general, and to go at the head of them, and lead them on to battle; and though Joshua was a man of courage and valour, as well as had military skill, as appears by his fight with Amalek, Ex 17:9; yet such an exhortation was not needless, seeing he had so much work to do, and so many enemies to contend with:

for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them, and thou shalt cause them to inherit it; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"which the Word of the Lord hath sworn to give;"

the land of Canaan, thither he must go with them; this was the will and determination of God, and he must go alone without him, Moses, which would be a trial of his courage.

Deuteronomy 31:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord, he [it is] that doth go before thee,.... The Word of the Lord, his Shechinah, according to the above Targum, and so in the next clause; the same that brought Israel out of Egypt, had gone before them in the wilderness, and now would go before Joshua and them into the land of Canaan:

he will be with thee; to guide and direct, to assist and strengthen, to protect and defend, to give success to his arms, and victory over his enemies:

he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee; not fail to give him counsel and direction, to afford him strength, and to fill him with courage, and to deliver his enemies into his hands; nor forsake him till he had finished the work he was to do, had made a complete conquest of the Canaanites, and settled the people of Israel in their land:

fear not, neither be dismayed; at the number and strength of the enemy, nor at any difficulties that might lie in the way of finishing so great an undertaking, since the Lord would be with him; see **Ro 8:31**.

Deuteronomy 31:9

Ver. 9. And Moses wrote this law,.... The book of Deuteronomy, or the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, which he had now finished, and which all of them together are sometimes called the law, **Ga 4:21**;

and delivered it unto the priests, the sons of Levi; who were the teachers of the law, as Aben Ezra observes; see **Mal 2:7**; and therefore it was proper to put it into their hands, to instruct the people in it, and that the people might apply to them in any matter of difficulty, or when they wanted to have any particular law explained to them:

which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord; for though they were the Levites, and particularly the Kohathites, who in journeying carried the ark; see

Nu 4:5; yet sometimes it was borne by the priests; see **Jos 3:13**;

and unto all the elders of Israel; the judges and civil magistrates in the respective tribes; for as there were in the book of the law several things which belonged to the priests to perform, and all of them they were to instruct in, so there were others which were to be the rule of judgment to judges, and all civil magistrates, and which they were to take care were put in execution; and therefore it was proper that they should have a copy of this law, and which must be here understood; for it cannot be thought that one and the same copy should be given both to the priests and to all the elders. The Jews say Moses wrote thirteen copies of the law, twelve for the twelve tribes, and one to be put into the ark, to convict of fraud or corruption, should any be made {s}.

{s} Debarim Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 244. 2.

Deuteronomy 31:10

Ver. 10. And Moses commanded them,.... The priests and the elders, to whom the law was delivered:

saying; as follows:

at the end of [every] seven years; every seventh year was a year of rest to the land, and of remission of debts to poor debtors: at the close of this year or going out of it, according to the Misnah {t}, even on the eighth year coming in, the following was to be done, namely, the reading of the law; and so Jarchi interprets it of the first year of release, the eighth, that is, the first year after the year of release; but Aben Ezra better interprets it of the beginning of the seventh year; for as he elsewhere observes on De 15:1; the word signifies the extremity of the year, and there are two extremities of it, the beginning and the end, and the first extremity is meant; which is more likely than that the reading of the law should be put off to the end of the year, and which seems to be confirmed by what follows:

in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, or "in the appointed time" {u}; of the year of release, of the release of debtors from their debts, De 15:1; when the time or season appointed and fixed was come: moreover, what is here directed to being to be done at the feast of tabernacles, shows it to be at the beginning of the year, since that feast was in the month Tisri, which was originally the beginning of the year, before the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and still continued so for many things, and particularly for the years of release {w}; and this was a very proper time for the reading of the law, when all the increase of the earth and fruits thereof were gathered in; and so their hearts filled, or at least should be, with gladness and gratitude; and when there was no tillage of the land, being the seventh year, and so were at leisure for such service; and when all poor debtors were released from their debts, and so were freed from all cares and troubles, and could better attend unto it.

{t} Sotah, c. 7. sect. 8. {u} demb "in tempore statuto", Pagninus, Montanus: stato tempor. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {w} Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 31:11

Ver. 11. When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God,.... As all the males were obliged to do three times in the year, and one of those times was the feast of tabernacles, and so a proper season for the reading of the law; see Ex 23:14;

in the place which the Lord shall choose; the city of Jerusalem, and the temple there:

thou shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing; the book of Deuteronomy, as Jarchi, or it may be the whole Pentateuch: who were to read it is not expressly said; the speech seems to be directed to the priests and elders, to whom the law written by Moses was delivered, De 31:9; and who were either to read it themselves, or take care that it should be read. Josephus {x} ascribes this service to the high priest; he says, standing in an high pulpit (or on an high bench),

"from whence he may be heard, he must read the laws to all;"

but the Jewish writers commonly allot this work to the king, or supreme governor, who at least was to read some parts of it; so Jarchi says, the king at first read Deuteronomy, as it is said in the Misnah {y};

"he read from the beginning of Deuteronomy to **De 6:4**; hear, O Israel, &c. and then added De 11:13; then De 14:22; after that De 26:12; then the section of the king, De 17:14; next the blessings and the curses, De 27:15, with which he finished the whole section;"

and so we find that Joshua, the governor of the people after Moses, read all his laws, **Jos 8:35**; and so did King Josiah at the finding of the book of the law, 2Ki 23:2, and Ezra, **Ne 8:3**. The king received the book from the high priest standing, and read it sitting; but King Agrippa stood and read, for which he was praised.

{x} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 12. {y} Sotah, ut supra. (c. 7. sect. 8.)

Deuteronomy 31:12

Ver. 12. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children,.... At the three grand festivals in other years, only males were obliged to appear; women might if they would, but they were not bound to it; but at this time all of every age and sex were to be summoned and assembled together; and it is said {z}, when the king read in the book of the law, all the people were obliged to come and bring their families, as it is said De 31:12; "gather the people", &c. and as it could not be done when it happened on the sabbath day, the reading of the section was put off to the day following:

and thy stranger that [is] within thy gates; not only the proselyte of righteousness, but the proselyte of the gate that renounced idolatry, for his further conviction and thorough conversion to the religion of the true God; or, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, that they might see the honour and glory of the law. The end is more fully expressed as follows,

that they may hear; all the laws which God had given:

and that they may learn; and attain unto the true knowledge and right understanding of them:

and fear the Lord your God; serve and worship him internally and externally, according to these laws:

and observe to do all the words of this law; so take notice of them as to put them in practice; and reading them in such a solemn and reverent manner made them the more servable, and raised the greater attention to them, to the importance of them; otherwise they were read in their families, and on sabbath days in their synagogues; see **De 6:7**

Ac 13:15.

{z} Bartenora in Misn. Megillah, c. 1. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 31:13

Ver. 13. And [that] their children, which have not known [anything],.... Of God and of his law and of their duty to God, to their parents, and the rest of their fellow creatures:

may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God; hear the law of God, learn the meaning of it, and so be brought up in the fear, nurture, and admonition of the Lord, and serve him their Creator in the days of their youth:

as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it; this being a means to continue the fear, service, and worship of God in their posterity, and so of their long continuance in the land of Canaan.

Deuteronomy 31:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... Either at the same time, or quickly after; rather, perhaps, the same day:

behold, thy days approach that thou must die; which does not necessarily imply that he had some days to live, though but few; but that the time of his death drew nigh, his last moments were approaching; the time of his death being, as every man's is, fixed by the Lord, with whom is the number of his years, months, days, and moments, beyond which he cannot pass, Job 14:5;

call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge; this looks as if the people had been dismissed after the above exhortations given; and now Joshua was called, and Moses with him, to have a charge given him:

and Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation; before the Lord. Aben Ezra says, Moses went from the camp of Israel where he was, to the camp of the Shechinah; the Jews pretend to know in what form they walked thither. Moses, they say {a}, went on the left hand of Joshua; and they went to the tabernacle, and the pillar of cloud descended and separated between them.

{a} Debarim Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 244. 2.

Deuteronomy 31:15

Ver. 15. And the Lord appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud,.... As he was wont to do, see Ex 33:9; in which cloud there was a lustre, a brightness, a glory visible, which showed that he was there:

and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle; it seems to have appeared first in the tabernacle, and then it came out of it, and stood over the door of it, near to which Moses and Joshua were: the Targum of Jonathan adds,

"Moses and Joshua stood without;"

though the former clause, according to Noldius {b}, should be "over the tabernacle", or above where the cloud was wont to be.

{b} Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 164. No. 737.

Deuteronomy 31:16

Ver. 16. And the Lord said unto Moses,.... Out of the pillar of cloud:

behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; a phrase expressive of death, frequently used both of good and bad men, which serves to render death easy and familiar, and less formidable; and to assure and lead into an expectation of an awaking out of it, or a resurrection from it:

and this people will rise up; in their posterity; for not till after Joshua's death, and the death of the elders of Israel, did they revolt to idolatry, Jos 24:31;

and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go [to be] amongst them; that is, after the gods of the Canaanites, who though at this time the inhabitants of the land, yet when the children of Israel became possessors of it, they were the strangers of it; and being suffered to continue contrary to the directions God had given to destroy them, would be a means of drawing them into the worship of their idols, expressed here by going a whoring after them, or committing whoredom with them. Idolatry in Scripture is frequently signified by fornication and adultery; and, as foretold, this was the case; see Ps 106:35;

and will forsake me: their husband, departing from his worship and service:

and break my covenant which I have made with them at Sinai; and now again in the plains of Moab, and which had the nature of a matrimonial contract; see Jer 31:32.

Deuteronomy 31:17

Ver. 17. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day,.... As the anger of a man is against his wife who has treacherously departed from him: and jealousy, which is the rage of such a man, is very cruel; and much more the wrath and anger of a jealous God, who is a consuming fire:

and I will forsake them; withdraw his favours from them, and his protection of them:

and I will hide my face from them; take no notice of them in a providential way for good, nor hear their cries, to deliver them from evil:

and they shall be devoured; by their enemies, or by the sore judgments of God, by famine, sword, pestilence, and evil beasts, they and their substance:

and many evils and troubles shall befall them; both in their own land, and in other countries, where they would be, and have been carried captive:

so that they will say in that day, are not these evils come upon us, because our God [is] not amongst us? of which they would be sensible by their being exposed to their enemies for want of his protection, and by the evils upon them through his displeasure, and by their being deprived of the good things that came from him; but no intimation is given of their being sensible of their sins as the cause of all this.

Deuteronomy 31:18

Ver. 18. I will surely hide my face in that day,.... Which is repeated for the certainty of it, and that it might be taken notice of; that he was the spring and source of all their good things, their sun and their shield, who being withdrawn from them, they would be deprived of every thing that was good, and be liable to all evil; and this he would do,

for all the evils which they shall have wrought; for all the immoralities they should be guilty of, every transgression of his law, whether of the first or second table, and especially idolatry:

in that they are turned unto other gods; to the worship and service of them, which of all evils would be the most provoking to God; and the way of speaking suggests as if all evils were included in idolatry, and sprang from it, or were committed with it.

Deuteronomy 31:19

Ver. 19. Now, therefore, write ye this song for you,.... Which was now dictated by the Lord, and given to Moses and Joshua to write, which is recorded in De 32:1:

and teach it the children of Israel; teach them by it, instructing them in the meaning of it: thus it was usual in ancient times to write things in verses, that they might be the more pleasingly attended to and regarded, and be longer retained in memory; and especially this practice was used with children, and still is:

put it in their mouths; oblige them to get it by heart, or lay it up in their memories, and repeat it frequently, that it may be familiar to them, and not be forgotten by them:

that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel; when in times to come they shall call to mind how in this song they were cautioned against such and such sins, and what they were threatened with should befall them on account of them, and how all things have come to pass exactly as foretold in it; which would be a testimony for God of his goodness to them, of his tender care of them, and concern for them, in the previous cautions he gave them; and of his foreknowledge of future events; and a testimony against them for their ingratitude and other sins.

Deuteronomy 31:20

Ver. 20. For when I shall have brought them into the land which I sware unto their fathers,.... To give it to them, and put them into the possession of it, even the land of Canaan, often thus described, and as it is by the following character:

that floweth with milk and honey; aboundeth with all good things; see **Ex 3:8**;

and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; that is, after they have for a considerable time enjoyed the good things of the land, and they abound with them, and increase in them, and have great fullness of them:

then will they turn unto other gods: turn from the Lord who has brought them into all this plenty, from the fear, worship, and service of him, and turn to the worship of idols:

and serve them: the works of men's hands, and at most but creatures, and not the Creator; than which nothing can be more absurd and stupid, as well as wicked and ungrateful:

and provoke me: nothing being more provoking to the Lord than idolatry, it striking at his very nature, being, and glory:

and break my covenant; now made with them; this being foretold by the Lord, which exactly came to pass in numerous instances, proves his precise foreknowledge of future events, even such as depend on the inclinations, dispositions, and wills of men.

Deuteronomy 31:21

Ver. 21. And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them,.... As did in the times of the judges, in the Babylonish captivity, and do now in their present exile:

that this song shall testify against them as a witness; which so clearly points at their sins, with all their aggravated circumstances, and describes so fully their calamities, distresses, and punishment for them:

for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed; which shows that it respects time to come, their later posterity, whose memory of this song would be conjured up by the evils that should come upon them for their sins; nor is it forgotten by them to this day, who acknowledge there are some things in it now fulfilled or fulfilling in them:

for I know their imagination which they go about even now: or are "making" {c}; forming and framing within themselves, there being a secret inclination in their minds to idolatry, which were working and contriving schemes to bring it about, and set it up; and this, God, the searcher of hearts, knew full well, and that in process of time this evil imagination would break forth into act, in an open and flagrant manner:

before I have brought thee into the land which I sware; to their fathers, to give it to them for an inheritance, as is suggested in
De 31:20.

{c} hve "faciens", Montanus; "quam facit", Pagninus.

Deuteronomy 31:22

Ver. 22. Moses therefore wrote this song the same day,.... The same day it was dictated to him by divine inspiration; he wrote it, as Josephus says {d},

"in hexameter verse, which he left in the holy Bible or book (the Pentateuch), containing (as he adds) a prophecy of things future, according to which all things have been done, and are done; and in nothing of it has he erred from the truth;"

which is a very just account of it, and worthy of observation:

and taught it the children of Israel; instructed them in the meaning of it, directed them to repeat it frequently, to lay it up in their memories, and often meditate upon it; as being a divine composition, and of great importance, as the consideration of it will make appear.

{d} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 44.

Deuteronomy 31:23

Ver. 23. And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge,.... It may be a question who gave this charge, the Lord or Moses; according to the connection of the words with the preceding, it seems to be the latter; for the immediate antecedent to the relative he is Moses, and so the Septuagint interpreters understand it; but then they are obliged to read some following clauses different from the original, as, instead of "I swear", they read "the Lord sware"; and the last clause they read, "and he shall be with thee"; but Aben Ezra gives the same sense without departing from the common and genuine reading, supposing that Moses gave the charge in the name and by the authority of the Lord; his words are,

"he gave charge by the commandment of the Lord, therefore he saith, "which I sware unto them";"

but it seems best to understand this of the Lord himself, since he ordered Moses and Joshua to present themselves before him, that he might give the latter a charge, De 31:14; and the language of the following clauses best agrees with him:

and said, be strong and of a good courage; See Gill on "De 31:6";
See Gill on "De 31:7";

for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them; See Gill on "De 31:7";

and I will be with thee; See Gill on "De 31:8"; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"my Word shall be thy help."

Deuteronomy 31:24

Ver. 24. And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book,.... In this book of Deuteronomy, and which concluded the Pentateuch:

until they were finished; all the words of the law, and the whole five books of Moses, excepting some few verses, De 34:1, which were added by another hand, Joshua or Ezra.

Deuteronomy 31:25

Ver. 25. That Moses commanded the Levites,.... These were not the common Levites, but the priests who were also Levites, to whom the law was given, De 31:9; and none but they might touch the ark, or go so near it as, they are bid to do, to put the law on the side of it; so Aben Ezra; it follows,

which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord; as the priests are said to do, See Gill on "De 31:9"; for though in journeying the Kohathites carried it, yet not until it was covered by the priests, for they must not touch it; as these must do when they put the law on the side of it, as they are ordered in De 31:26.

saying; as follows.

Deuteronomy 31:26

Ver. 26. Take this book of the law,.... Not Deuteronomy only, but the whole Pentateuch:

and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God; not in the ark, for there were nothing there but the two tables of stone with the ten commands on them, **1Ki 8:9**; but on one side of it; the Targum of Jonathan says, it was

"put in a chest (or box) on the right side of the ark of the covenant;"

which is very probable. Jarchi observes, that the wise men of Israel are divided about it in the Talmud {e}; some of them say there was a table (or ledge) that stood out from the ark without, and there it was put; others say it was put on the side of the tables of the law within the ark; the former are in the right:

that it may be therefore a witness against thee; when they fall into idolatry or any other sin, a transgression of any of the laws therein contained.

{e} T. B. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 1. 2.

Deuteronomy 31:27

Ver. 27. For I know thy rebellion and thy stiff neck,.... How rebellious they were against the Lord and his laws, and how unwilling they were to admit the yoke of his commandments to be put upon them, and submit to it; this he had an experience of for forty years past:

behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; murmuring at his providences, Ex 16:8, speaking against his ministers, Ex 16:2; breaking his laws, particularly being guilty of idolatry, in making and worshipping the golden calf, Ex 32:8; and even now, as in De 31:21, were imagining, forming, and framing in their minds something of the same kind, from the time of their coming out of Egypt unto this time they were now on the borders of Canaan; this had all along been their character; see **De 9:7**;

and how much more after my death? When he would be no more with them to instruct and advise them, to caution and reprove them, and to keep them in awe by his authority.

Deuteronomy 31:28

Ver. 28. Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers,.... The heads of the tribes, the princes, and all other inferior magistrates:

that I may speak these words in their ears; not the words of the law, but of the song which he was ordered to write, and is recorded in the following chapter:

and call heaven and earth to record against them; to bear witness of what he delivered to them, and to bear witness against them should they transgress the laws he gave them; and to bear witness that they had been faithfully cautioned against transgressing, and had been severely threatened, and the punishment plainly pointed out that should be inflicted on them in case of disobedience, so that they were left entirely without excuse.

Deuteronomy 31:29

Ver. 29. For I know that after my death,.... Which was just at hand, some time after that, not immediately; this he knew by a spirit of prophecy, namely, what follows:

ye will utterly corrupt [yourselves]; their ways, works, and manners, and so themselves; corrupt the worship of God by making idols, and serving them, which is the corruption chiefly intended:

and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you: from the way of the commandments of God, which Moses had given them in his name, and in which they were directed to walk; but, as here foretold, would wander and swerve from them as they did:

and evil will befall you in the latter days; not only in the times of the judges, and in the time of the Babylonish captivity, but in their present captivity, as they call it; which shows that the following song has things in it which respect times at a great distance, and even the present ones, and yet to come:

because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands; their idols, idolatry being the evil chiefly designed, which is of all things the most provoking of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 31:30

Ver. 30. And Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel,.... Not in the hearing of the whole body of the people, and every individual thereof; no man could be able to speak to such a numerous congregation, as that they should hear him; but in the hearing of their heads and representatives, the elders of their tribes and officers, ordered to be gathered together for this purpose, De 31:28;

the words of this song, until they were ended; which song is recorded in the following chapter, De 32:1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 32:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 32

This chapter contains the song mentioned and referred to in the former, the preface to it, De 32:1; the character of the divine and illustrious Person it chiefly respects, De 32:4; the ingratitude of the people of the Jews to him, who were a crooked and perverse generation, aggravated by his having bought, made, and established them, De 32:5; and which is further aggravated by various instances of divine goodness to them, first in providing and reserving a suitable country for them, at the time of the division of the earth to the sons of men, with the reason of it, De 32:7; then by what the Lord did for them in the wilderness, De 32:10; after that in the land of Canaan, where they enjoyed plenty of all good things, and in the possession of which they were, when the illustrious Person described appeared among them, De 32:13; and then the sin of ingratitude to him, before hinted at, is fully expressed, namely, lightly esteeming the rock of salvation, the Messiah, De 32:15; nor could they stop here, but proceed to more ungodliness, setting up other messiahs and saviours, which were an abomination to the Lord, De 32:16; continuing sacrifices when they should not, which were therefore reckoned no other than sacrifices to demons, and especially the setting up of their new idol, their own righteousness, was highly provoking; and by all this they clearly showed they had forgot the rock, the Saviour, De 32:17; wherefore, for the rejection of the Messiah and the, persecution of his followers, they would be abhorred of God, De 32:19; who would show his resentment by the rejection of them, by the calling of the Gentiles, and by bringing the nation of the Romans upon them, De 32:20; whereby utter ruin and destruction in all its shapes would be brought upon them, De 32:22; and, were it not for the insolence of their adversaries, would be entirely destroyed, being such a foolish and unwise people, which appears by not observing what the enemies of the Messiah themselves allow, that there is no rock like him, whom they despised, De 32:26; which enemies are described, and the vengeance reserved for them pointed out, De 32:32; and the song closed with promises of grace and mercy to the Lord's people, and wrath and ruin to his and their enemies, on which account all are called upon to rejoice in the latter day, De 32:36; and this song being delivered by Moses, the people of Israel are exhorted seriously to attend to it, it being of the utmost importance to them, De 32:44; and the chapter is concluded with a relation of Moses being ordered to go up to Mount Nebo and die, with the reason of it, De 32:48.

Ver. 1. Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. This song is prefaced and introduced in a very grand and pompous manner, calling on the heavens and earth to give attention; by which they themselves may be meant, by a "prosopopaeia", a figure frequently used in Scripture, when things of great moment and importance are spoken of; and these are called upon to hearken, either to rebuke the stupidity and inattention of men, or to show that these would shed or withhold their influences, their good things, according to the obedience or disobedience of Israel; or because these are durable and lasting, and so would ever be witnesses for God and against his people: Gaon, as Aben Ezra observes, by the heavens understands the angels, and by the earth the men of the earth, the inhabitants of both worlds, which is not amiss: and by these words of Moses are meant the words of the song, referred to in De 31:29; here called his words, not because they were of him, but because they were put into his mouth, and about to be expressed by him, not in his own name, but in the name of the Lord; and not as the words of the law, which came by him, but as the words and doctrines of the Gospel concerning Christ, of whom Moses here writes; whose character he gives, and whose person and office he vindicates against the Jews, whom he accuses and brings a charge of ingratitude against for rejecting him, to which our Lord seems to refer, **Joh 5:45**; the prophecies of their rejection, the calling of the Gentiles, the destruction of the Jews by the Romans, and the miseries they should undergo, and yet should not be wholly extirpated out of the world, but continue a people, who in the latter days would be converted, return to their own land, and their enemies be destroyed; which are some of the principal things in this song, and which make it worthy of attention and observation.

Deuteronomy 32:2

Ver. 2. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew,.... Which some, as Aben Ezra, take to be a prayer or wish, that the doctrine spoken by him might fall upon men like rain and dew on the earth, penetrate into their hearts, and influence them, and produce good effects there; but the words rather seem to be a prophecy of what would be: and by his "doctrine" and "speech", which signify the same thing, is meant, not his law, which was fiery, this cooling, like rain and dew; that was like a storm, this as a gentle rain; that was terrible, this desirable; that was distressing, this refreshing, this no other than the Gospel, the speech of God, the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of grace, and mercy through him, and of life and salvation by him: it has its name from a word, which signifies to "receive" {f}; for it was received from God by Moses, and by the prophets after him, by Christ himself, as Mediator, and by the apostles from him, and is worthy of the acceptation of all: this is comparable to "rain", because, like that, it comes from heaven, is the gift of God, tarries not for man, but comes without any desert of man, and often without his desire; falls by divine direction in places and on persons, as the Lord's will and pleasure is, and that in great plenty, with a fulness of spiritual blessings, and precious promises; and for its effects, it cools the conscience, filled with fiery wrath and indignation, moistens and softens the hard heart, like the dry and parched earth, refreshes and revives the drooping spirit, and makes barren souls fruitful in grace and good works: and it is like "dew", which also is from heaven, and of God, fell in the night of the world; and as that falls in a temperate air, so this, when the stormy dispensation of the law was over; and though but a small thing in the eyes of the world, is of great influence, the power of God unto salvation, very grateful and delightful, and of great moment and importance; hereby the love and favour of God is diffused, the blessings of grace dispensed, the heavenly manna communicated, and the Spirit and his graces received: and this, like rain and dew, "drops" and "distils" silently, not in a noisy manner as the law; insensibly, falling on persons at an unawares, in great abundance, like the drops of rain and dew; and effectually, working in all that believe: dew was a symbol of doctrine with the Egyptians {g}: this is further illustrated:

as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: the first of those words for "rain", according to Jarchi, has the signification of a stormy wind, but that seems to contradict the gentle dropping and distilling of it; rather it signifies "hairs" {h}, and denotes, as our version, the smallness of the rain, being as small, thin, and light as hairs; and the latter word {i} has the signification of millions and thousands, there being such vast, numbers as those in a shower of rain: the "tender herb" and "grass" may denote the multitude of persons to whom the Gospel would come, and be made useful; and may describe sensible sinners, tender consciences, such as are weak in themselves, with whom it is the day of small things, are newborn babes, little children; who are just springing up in grace, as among the grass, and as willows by the water courses: now all this is said by Moses, to recommend his doctrine, as well as what follows.

{f} yxql a xql "accepit". {g} Hor. Hieroglyph. l. 1. c. 26. {h} Mryev a rev "pilus", Lev. xiii. 10. {i} Mybybr a bbr "multum", see Psal. cxliv. 13.

Deuteronomy 32:3

Ver. 3. Because I will publish the name of the Lord,.... Not call on his name, as some, nor call to the heaven and earth in his name, as others, but proclaim his name, even the same that was proclaimed before Moses, Ex 34:6; and this is to be understood, not of Jehovah the Father, nor of Jehovah the Spirit, but of Jehovah the Son, the rock whose work is perfect, and the rock of salvation, De 32:4; and not of any particular name of his, unless any of those mentioned can be thought to be intended; rather his perfections and attributes, or his Gospel, called his name, **Ac 9:15**; though his name may signify no other than himself, who is the sum and substance of the Gospel, and who, in his person, office, grace, and salvation, is to be published and proclaimed, openly and publicly, constantly and faithfully, and his name only; for there is no other under heaven whereby man can be saved:

ascribe ye greatness unto our God; to Christ, the rock of salvation, who is truly God, our God, God in our nature, God manifest in the flesh, and who is the great God, and our Saviour, and therefore greatness is to be ascribed to him: he is great in his person and perfections; his works are great, those of creation and providence, and particularly of redemption and salvation; he is great in his offices, a great Saviour, a great High priest, a great Prophet, a great King, and the great Shepherd of the sheep: those that are called upon to give greatness to him, which is his due, are the heavens and the earth, De 32:1; and both have, literally and figuratively considered, bore a testimony to his greatness; the heavens, at his birth a wonderful star appeared, directing the wise men to him; at his death the sun was darkened; at his ascension the heavens were opened and received him, and still retain him; even God in heaven, by a voice from thence, bore witness of him as his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased; also by raising him from the dead, declaring him to be the Son of God with power, and by exalting him at his right hand as a Saviour, and by the effusion of the Spirit on his apostles, to preach and spread his Gospel; the angels in heaven ascribed greatness to him, by their worship of him when he came into the world, by the declaration they made of him at his incarnation, and by the testimony they bore to his resurrection, and by their subjection to him in all things: the church below, sometimes called heaven, in the book of the Revelation, ascribe all honour, glory, and greatness to him: the earth, the whole terraqueous globe, in it have been displayed the greatness of Christ, the power and glory of his divinity; in the sea by becoming a calm at his word of command, in the rocks by being rent at his death, and will be in both by delivering up the dead in them, at the last day: the inhabitants of the earth, especially the redeemed from among men, ascribe greatness to him, by attributing daily to him all the perfections of the Godhead, and the glory of their salvation: Aben Ezra says, Moses refers to the heavens and the earth, or respects them, and compares with this Ps 19:1.

Deuteronomy 32:4

Ver. 4. [He is] the rock,.... That is, Jehovah is the rock, whose name Moses proposed to publish; and our God, to whom the heavens and the earth are called upon to ascribe greatness, even Christ the rock of salvation: here begins the song; the first word in it is very emphatic; it has a letter in it larger than usual, to denote the greatness of this Person, and to make it observable; he is "this" or "that rock" {k}, by way of eminence, that rock and stone of Israel, Jacob prophesied of, which was typified by the rock Moses had smitten in the wilderness, and which, no doubt, he knew, as the Apostle Paul did, that it was a type of Christ, and had taught the Israelites so to understand it; and therefore this epithet of a divine Person would not seem strange to them, and yet is that rock the unbelieving Jews would and did stumble at, and the rock of salvation they lightly esteemed and rejected; the rock of refuge for sensible sinners to flee unto for shelter and safety from the wrath and justice of God, and from every enemy; the rock the church of God and every believer are built upon, and in which they dwell; and who is the rock of ages that will endure forever, as the Saviour of his people, and the foundation of their faith and hope:

his work [is] perfect; not so much the work of creation or of providence, which are both the works of Christ, but that of redemption and salvation, in which there is not only a display of all the divine perfections, but is complete in all its parts; the law is perfectly fulfilled, justice is fully satisfied, a perfect righteousness is wrought out, a complete pardon is procured, perfect peace is made, full atonement of sins obtained, and the whole work is finished; and is so perfect that nothing is wanting in it, or can be added to it, nor can it be unravelled or undone again: likewise the work of building the church on this rock is carrying on, and will be perfected when all the elect of God, all given to Christ and redeemed by his blood, shall be called by grace and gathered in; when the last of the chosen ones, and redeemed of the Lamb, is brought in and laid in the building; when Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father complete, and God shall be all in all, and his church and people will be in a perfect state to all eternity:

for all his ways [are] judgment; his ways, which he himself has taken and walked in; his ways of providence are according to the best judgment and highest wisdom, and according to the strictest justice and equity; his ways of grace towards the salvation of his people, and the building up his church on himself, the rock; all the methods he took in eternity and time were all formed according to the counsel of God, and planned with the greatest wisdom, founded in his righteous nature, and according to covenant compact with his Father, and entered into in the most honourable manner; and in which he brought about the salvation of his people, in perfect consistence with the justice and holiness of God, and to the honour of them and his holy law: and he has executed all his offices of prophet, priest, and King, in the most just and righteous manner: the ways which he has prescribed his people to walk in, and in which he leads them, are ways of truth, righteousness, and holiness; such are all his ordinances and commandments:

a God of truth; so Christ is called, See Gill on "Isa 65:16"; or the true God, which also is his name, **1Jo 5:20**; and is so called in opposition to fictitious deities, and such who are only so by name or office, but not by nature; whereas he is truly and properly God, as appears from his names and nature, from his perfections, works, and worship, ascribed to him: or "God the truth" {l}, for he is "the truth", Joh 14:6; the truth of all types, promises, and prophecies, which all have their accomplishment in him; the sum and substance of all truths and doctrines, from whom they all come, and in whom they all centre: or "the God of faith" or "faithfulness" {m}; the object of faith, and the author and finisher of it; and who is faithful, as the God-man and Mediator, to him that appointed him, being intrusted with all the elect of God, with all promises and blessings of grace for them, with the fulness of grace to communicate unto them, with the glory of God in their salvation, and with their future and final happiness; and is faithful in the discharge of his offices of prophet, priest, and King:

and without iniquity; in his nature, in his heart, in his lips, and in his life; nor was ever any committed by him:

just and right [is] he; just, both as a divine Person, and as man and Mediator; a lover and doer of righteousness, a worker out of righteousness for his people, and the justifier of them by it; just and righteous, as the, servant of God, as King of saints, and Judge of the whole world; "right" or "upright", which is the character of a divine Person, agrees with Christ, and may denote his sincerity, uprightness, and faithfulness.

{k} rwuh "quod attinet ad rupem illam", Piscator; "rupes illa", Van Till; "rupes illa", Vitringa. {l} hnwma la "Deus veritas", Pagninus, Montanus. {m} "Deus fidei", Vatablus, Cocceius; "Deus veritatis sive fidei", Vitringa.

Deuteronomy 32:5

Ver. 5. They have corrupted themselves,.... This and what follows may seem to be the characters of the enemies of Christ, who lightly esteemed and rejected him, set in a contrast with him; who were not only corrupt by nature, as all men are, but were men of corrupt minds in their tenets and principles; who corrupted the word of God by their traditions, in the times of Christ; and were men of corrupt practices themselves, and corrupters of others:

their spot [is] not [the spot] of his children; of the children of the divine Person before described; Christ the rock has "children" given him by his Father, in whose adoption he has a concern, and by whose Spirit they are regenerated: these have their "spots"; by which are meant sins, and by those men are stained and polluted; so called in allusion to the spots of animals, as leopards; or to spots in faces and garments, through dirt and the like: by nature they are as others, and while in an unregenerate estate, and indeed after conversion; though they are washed from their sins by the blood of Christ, and are justified by his righteousness, and so without spot, yet in themselves they are not without spots or sins, as their confessions and complaints, and all experience testify: but the spots or sins of wicked men are not like theirs; the children of Christ sin through infirmity of the flesh, and the force of temptation, but wicked men through the malignity of their hearts, willingly and purposely; what good men do of this kind they hate, but what Christless and graceless sinners do they love; saints do not continue in sin, but ungodly men do, and proceed to more ungodliness, and wax worse and worse; gracious souls when they sin, are sorry for it, repent of it, are melted for it, and take shame to themselves on account of it; but unconverted men repent not of their wickedness, are hardened in it, and glory of it; see the character of the Jews in Christ's time, to which this song refers, **Joh 8:44**; though these clauses may be rendered to another sense, more agreeably to the context, and to the Hebrew accents, as they are by some; "is there any corruption in him? no" {n}, that is, is there any corruption in the illustrious Person before described, as without iniquity, just, and right? no, none at all in his nature, divine or human; not in his divine nature, being the incorruptible God; nor in his human nature, which is entirely free from that corruption by sin, common to all that des, tend from Adam by natural generation, he being conceived under the power of the Holy Ghost; nor any in his life and conversation, being perfectly agreeable to the pure and holy law of God; nor any in his doctrines, however they may be charged by ignorant and malicious men, a proof of which follows: or "his children are their spot" {o}; so the clause may be rendered; the spots of the Jewish nation, the most wicked and vilest among them, became his children; not only the lowest and meanest of them, as to civil and worldly things, but the more ignorant and the more wicked, even publicans and harlots; these, and not the righteous, he came to call and save, and did receive; these were regenerated by his grace, and they believed in him; and to them gave he power to become his children: but then did they remain the wicked persons they had been? no, they were made new creatures, they were internally sanctified, and lived holy lives and conversations; a clear proof this, that there was no corruption in Christ, nor in his doctrine, and that he neither by his tenets nor example encouraged sin, but all the reverse; Wisdom is justified of her children, Mt 11:19; but then the rest, and the far greater part of the Jewish nation, in his time, have their character truly drawn, as follows:

[they are] a perverse and crooked generation; men of perverse and crooked natures, tempers, dispositions, ways, and works; who walked contrary to the will and law of God, and were indeed contrary to all men, **1Th 2:15**; this is the very character that is given of them, Mt 17:17.

{n} al wl txv "an est ipsi corruptio? non", Cocceius, van Till, Vitringa. {o} Mmwm wynb "filii ejus macula eorum", Van Till; "filii ejus labes ipsorum", Cocceius.

Deuteronomy 32:6

Ver. 6. Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise,.... This is also a proper character of the Jews in the times of Christ, who are often by him called "fools", Mt 23:17; being very ignorant of the Scriptures, and of the prophecies in them respecting him, setting up their own traditions on a level with the word of God, or above it; they were ignorant of the law of God, and the meaning of it; of the righteousness of God, of the righteousness of his nature, and of what the law required, as well as of the righteousness of Christ, and of him as a spiritual Redeemer, and of salvation by him; and a most egregious instance of their folly, and of want of wisdom, was their ingratitude to him, in disesteeming and rejecting him; which is what is here referred to and meant by ill-requiting him, though not expressed till De 32:15; and a most sad requital of him it was indeed, that he should come to them, his own, in so kind and gracious a manner, and yet be rejected by them; that he should become man, and yet for that reason be charged with blasphemy, for making himself God; horrid ingratitude, to infer the one from the other! and because he appeared as a servant, disowned him as the Son of God; and because he came in the likeness of sinful flesh to take away sin, they traduced him as a sinner:

[is] not he thy Father, [that] hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee? Moses, in order to aggravate this their ingratitude, rehearses the various instances of divine goodness to them, from the beginning of them as nation; it was the Lord that was the founder of them as a nation, whose Son, when sent unto them, was rejected by them; it was he that bought them, or redeemed them from Egyptian bondage, that made or formed them

into a body politic, or civil commonwealth, that established and settled them in the land of Canaan: this is expressed in general terms; particular instances of the goodness of God to them are after enumerated: or if this is to be understood of Christ himself, who was rejected by them, it is true of some among them, in a spiritual and evangelic sense, and so, by a figure, the whole is put for a part, as sometimes the part is for the whole: Christ, the everlasting Father of the world to come, had many children in the Jewish nation, for whose sake he became incarnate, and whom he came to seek and to save; and whom he "bought" with his precious blood, and whom, by his Spirit and grace, he "made" new creatures, the children of God, kings and priests unto God; and "established" them in the faith of him, and upon him, the sure foundation; or whom he fashioned, beautified, and adorned with his righteousness, and with the graces of his Spirit.

Deuteronomy 32:7

Ver. 7. Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations,.... That went before the times of Christ, and the Jews' rejection of him, and observe the instances of divine goodness to them; as in the time of the Maccabees, whom God raised up as deliverers of them, when oppressed by the Syrians and others; and in the time of the Babylonish captivity, how they were delivered out of it; in the times of David and Solomon, when they enjoyed great prosperity; and in the times of the judges, by whom they were often saved out of the hands of their enemies; and in the times of Moses and Joshua, how they were led, by the one out of Egypt and through the wilderness, and by the other into the land of Canaan; and thus might they be led on higher, to the provision and reservation of the good land for them in the times of Noah and his sons, which they are referred to in De 32:8: and in all these times, days, years, and generations, they might consider what notices were given of the Messiah, the rock of salvation, rejected by them; not only by the prophets since the captivity of Babylon and in it; but before it by Isaiah and others, and before them by David, and Solomon his son, by Moses and by all the prophets, from the beginning of the world; all which would serve to aggravate their sin in refusing him: Jarchi's note on the passage is,

""remember"--"consider"--to know what is to come; for it is in his hand (or power) to do you good, and cause you to inherit the days of the Messiah, and the world to come:"

ask thy father, and he will show thee; either their immediate parents, father for fathers, or such as were their seniors, or rather Abraham, their father, is meant; whom they might inquire of, not by personal application to him, but by consulting the writings of Moses, and observe what is there related of him; how he was called out of Chaldea to go into the land of Canaan, his seed was after to inherit; and how he had an express grant of that land to his posterity, and where they might be shown and see the prophecy delivered to him of their being in Egypt, and coming out from thence; and what he knew of the Messiah, whose day he saw, and rejoiced at, now rejected by them his offspring:

thy elders, and they will tell thee; not their present elders who rejected the Messiah, but those in ages past; the elders of Israel, who saw the glory of the God of Israel, and were present at the covenant made at Horeb, Ex 24:9; or rather the sons of Noah, by whom the earth was divided, to which De 32:8 refers; or the ancient writers, the writers of the Scriptures: Jarchi, by "father", understands the prophets, and by "elders", the wise men: the Targum of Jonathan is,

"read in the books of the law and they will teach you, and in the books of the prophets and they will tell you."

Deuteronomy 32:8

Ver. 8. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance,.... In the times of Noah and his sons, in the days of Peleg, who had his name (that is "Division") from thence, Ge 10:25; "the Most High" is a well known and proper, epithet of God; the dividing of the earth to the several nations of it, and giving to everyone their part and portion to possess and inherit, was the work of God; for though it was done by the sons of Noah, yet by the order, appointment, and direction of the Most High, who rules in heaven and in earth, Ge 10:32; men might not and did not take what they pleased, or seize on as much as they could, but each had their parcel allotted and portioned out to them, by the Lord himself; so the Targum of Jonathan.

"when by lot the Most High divided the world to the people that sprung from the sons of Noah:"

when he separated the sons of Adam; one from another; distinguished by the persons from whom they descended, by the tribes and nations to which they belonged, and by the countries they inhabited; for though they descended from

Noah and his sons, they were the sons of Adam, the first man: or rather "the children of men", as the wicked of that generation were called, in distinction from the sons of God, or his people and worshippers; and may have respect to the separation of them at Babel, where their languages were confounded, and they were scattered about, and some went into one part of the world, and some into another, according to the appointment and direction of divine Providence; so the builders of Babel are called, and this was what befell them, Ge 11:5; which sense the above Targum confirms,

"when he separated the writings, the languages of the children of men in the generation of the division:"

he set the bounds of the people; or nations, the seven nations of the land of Canaan; he pitched upon and fixed the land they should inherit, and settled the bounds of it, how far it should reach, east, west, north and south:

according to the number of the children of Israel: the sense is, that such a country was measured out and bounded, as would be sufficient to hold the twelve tribes of Israel, when numerous, and their time was come to inhabit it; and which, in the mean while was put into the hands of Canaan and his eleven sons to possess; not as their proper inheritance, but as tenants at will, until the proper heirs existed, and were at an age, and of a sufficient number to inherit; in which may be observed the wise disposition of divine Providence, to put it into the hands of a people cursed of God, so that to take it from them at any time could not have the appearance of any injustice in it; and their enjoying it so long as they did was a mercy to them, for so long they had a reprieve: now here was an early instance of the goodness of God to Israel, that he should make such an early provision of the land flowing with milk and honey for them, even before they were in being, yea, before their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, existed; as early as the days of Noah; and yet, ungrateful as they were despised and set at nought his Son, the rock of salvation, when sent unto them: thus the heavenly inheritance, typified by the land of Canaan, was not only promised, but prepared, provided, secured, and reserved for the spiritual Israel of God, before the foundation of the world, from all eternity, and which is appointed according to their number; there is room enough in it for them all, though they are many; in it are many mansions for the many sons to be brought to glory.

Deuteronomy 32:9

Ver. 9. For the Lord's portion [is] his people, Jacob [is] the lot of his inheritance. This is the reason why the Lord so early provided a portion or inheritance for the children of Israel in the land of Canaan; because they were his part, his portion, his inheritance, which he chose by lot for himself, or allotted to himself; whom he chose to be his special and peculiar people; for though all the world is his, he only reserved a part for himself, which he separated from all the rest, and considers as his portion and inheritance, see Ps 33:12; thus the spiritual Israel of God, as they are his people, whom he has chosen, taken into covenant, given to Christ, and are redeemed and saved by him; they are his part or portion, separated by distinguishing grace from the rest of the world; and are the inheritance of Christ, who is appointed heir of all things, and is an unalienable inheritance; and is obtained by lot, or rather is measured out by a rod or line; by the line of electing grace, by which the church and people of God are circumscribed, marked out, and distinguished from others; and by the line and rule of the sacred Scriptures, which are the measure and standard of faith and practice, of worship and discipline to them.

Deuteronomy 32:10

Ver. 10. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness,.... In De 32:10 instances are given of the goodness of God to the people of Israel, when in the wilderness; by which is meant, either "the wilderness of the land of Egypt", as it is called, Eze 20:36; where they were in a most miserable and forlorn condition, in which the Lord found them, and out of which he brought them; or rather the desert of Arabia, a waste place, where no provisions could be had; a howling wilderness, through the blowing of the winds, the cries of wild creatures, as dragons, owls, ostriches, and the like, as the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra, and the howling of passengers lost, or for want of provisions; here the Lord found them, and they were as acceptable to him as grapes to a traveller in a wilderness, See Gill on "Ho 9:10": this is an emblem of the world, in which the spiritual Israel are, when called by grace out of it; or of an unregenerate state, in which they are found, and out of which they are brought: the phrase sometimes signifies sufficing, or finding with everything sufficient; see Nu 11:22; so Onkelos renders it here; which is true of the Lord's dealing with this people; he supplied them with manna, the corn of heaven, angels' food, and with water out of the rock, and flesh to eat in fulness, yea, with raiment as well as food; with everything convenient for them: so the Lord does for his spiritual Israel, feeding them with his word and ordinances, clothing them with the righteousness of his Son, giving them fresh supplies of grace, and withholding no good thing from them; so that they have enough, having all things richly to enjoy:

he led him about; when he brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, he did not lead them the nearest way to the land of Canaan, through the the land of the Philistines, but he led them about the way of the wilderness of the Red sea; and when they were come to the borders of the land, because of their murmurings, and disobedience, they were ordered back into the wilderness again; nor were they suffered to go through the land of Edom when on the confines of it, which would have been a shorter way; but they were obliged to go round that land, which was very discouraging to them, see Ex 13:17; and thus the Lord, though he could if he would, bring his people at once to heaven; he could sanctify them at once, as well as justify them; he could take them the moment he regenerates them into his kingdom, as the thief on the cross; yet this is not his usual way: though he calls them out from among the men of the world, he continues them in it, having something for them to do or suffer for his name's sake; he indeed leads them soon into the right and plain way of salvation, and not in a roundabout way of duties; yet he leads them in many roundabout ways in Providence, which are all right, though sometimes rough; they seem at times to be near to heaven, and then they are turned into the world again; nay, the Apostle Paul was in heaven, and yet sent into the wilderness of the Gentiles again, for the good of souls and the interest of a Redeemer; however, they all at last come safe to heaven and happiness: the words may be rendered, "he surrounded" or "compassed him about" {p}, and the rather, since leading them about seems to be by way of resentment or punishment, whereas Moses is enumerating instances of goodness and kindness, as this was one; he covered them with the clouds of glory, so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, Jarchi and Aben Ezra: he protected them with his power and providence, and preserved them from serpents and scorpions, and the wild beasts of the wilderness, as well as from all their enemies: and the Lord surrounds his spiritual Israel with angels, who encamp about them; with himself, who is a wall of fire round about them; with his power, in which they are kept as in a garrison; and with his love, which encompasses them as a shield:

he instructed him; he taught him the law, as the Targum of Jonathan; so Jarchi and Aben Ezra; or the decalogue, as the Jerusalem Targum; he instructed him in the knowledge of the true God and his worship; in the knowledge of the Messiah, and of his righteousness, and salvation by him; for he instructed him by his good Spirit, **Ne 9:20**; so the Lord instructs his spiritual Israel, by his Spirit, his ministers, his word and ordinances, in the knowledge of themselves, and of himself in Christ, and of Christ and the way of life by him; and this being joined with the Lord's leading about his people, may suggest that he instructs them by adverse dispensations of Providence: the word {q} signifies causing to understand; and God only can teach and instruct in such sense as to give men an understanding of the things they are taught and instructed in:

he kept him as the apple of his eye; in the most careful and tender manner: the apple of the eye is an aperture in it, which lets in rays of light into the "retina" or chamber where the images of things are formed; this is wonderfully guarded in nature, for, besides the orbit of the eye, which is strong and bony, and the eyelids, which in sleep are closed, to prevent anything falling into the eye to disturb it; and the eyebrows, which are fringed with hair to break off the rays of light, which sometimes would be too strong for it; besides all these, there are no less than six tunics or coats to keep and preserve it: and in like manner did the Lord keep and guard Israel, while passing through the wilderness, from fiery serpents, scorpions, and the nations, that none might hurt, as Jarchi; and especially thus he keeps his spiritual Israel, who are parts of himself, one with him, near and dear to him; and about whom he sets guard upon guard, employs all his perfections to secure them, and constantly watches over them night and day, and keeps them from all evil and every enemy, and preserves them safe to his kingdom and glory.

{p} whnbboy "circumdedit eum", Piscator; so Cocceius, Van Till, Vitringa.
{q} whnnwby "intelligere fecit eum", Pagninus, Cocceius.

Deuteronomy 32:11

Ver. 11. As an eagle stirreth up her nest,.... Her young ones in it, to get them out of it: Jarchi says the eagle is merciful to its young, and does not go into its nest suddenly, but first makes a noise, and disturbs them with her wings, striking them against a tree or its branches, that so they being awakened may be fitter to receive her: with respect to literal Israel, Egypt was their nest, where they were who were then in their infant state, lay like young birds in a nest; and though it was a filthy one and where they were confined, yet they seemed sometimes as if they did not care to come out of it; until the Lord made use of means to get them out, by the ministry of Moses and Aaron, by suffering their taskmasters to make their bondage heavier, and by judgments inflicted on the Egyptians, which made them urgent upon them to depart: with respect to spiritual Israel, their nest is a state of unregeneracy, in which they are at ease, and do not care to be awakened and stirred out of it; but the Lord, in love to them, awakens them, stirs them up, and gets them out, by sending his ministers to arouse them, by letting in the law into their consciences, which works a sense of wrath, by convincing them by his Spirit of their sin and danger, opening their eyes to see their wretched and miserable estate and condition, and by exerting his almighty power, plucking them as brands out of the burning:

fluttereth over her young; by that means to get them out of the nest, and teach them to fly, as well as to preserve them from the attempts of any to take them away; for though some writers represent the eagle as hardhearted to its young, casting them out of the nest, when they are taken care of by the offifrage; yet this is to be understood of it when tired with nursing, and when its young are capable of taking care of themselves; or of some sort of eagles; for Aelianus {r} testifies, that of all animals the eagle is most affectionate to its young, and most studiously careful of them; when it sees anyone coming to them, it will not suffer them to go away unpunished, but will beat them with its wings and tear them with its nails: Jarchi thinks this phrase is expressive of the manner of its incubation on its young; it does not, he says, lie heavy upon them, but lifts up herself, and touches them as if she did not touch them; but it rather signifies the motion she makes with her wings to get her young, when fledged, out of the nest, and to teach them to make use of their wings, as she does; and we are told that young eagles, when their wings are weak, will fly about their dams and learn of them to fly {s}; and hence it is that young eagles while they are eating flutter their wings, that motion being so natural to them, and seeing their dams do so likewise {t}: this passage seems to contradict a notion that has obtained with some, that an eagle only breeds one at a time; the philosopher says {u}, the eagle lays three eggs and casts out two of them; according to the verse of Musaeus, it lays three, casts out two, and brings up one; and so, he says, it commonly is the case: but sometimes three young ones are seen together; and the black eagles are more kind to their young, and careful in the nourishment of them; and the same says Pliny {w}; yea we are told, that sometimes seven are seen in a nest {x}:

spreadeth abroad her wings taketh them, beareth them on her wings; that is, spreads forth her wings when she flutters over her young to instruct them; or she does this in order to take up her young and carry them on them: it is said that eagles fly round their nest, and vary the flights for the instruction of their young; and afterwards taking them on their backs, they soar with them aloft, in order to try their strength, shaking them off into the air: and if they perceive them too weak to sustain themselves, they with surprising dexterity fly under them again, and receive them on their wings to prevent their fall {y};
See Gill on "Ex 19:4"; thus the Lord, comparable to this creature for his affection to the people of Israel, his care of them, and his strength to bear and

carry them, did bear them as on eagles' wings, and carried and saved them all the days of old; even Christ, the Angel of Jehovah's presence, the rock of salvation they rejected, see Ex 19:4; and all this in a spiritual and evangelic sense may be expressive of the gracious dealings of God with his spiritual Israel; teaching and enabling them to mount up with wings as eagles, to soar aloft in the exercise of faith, hope, and love, entering thereby within the vail into the holiest of all, and living in the constant and comfortable expectation of heaven and happiness; and of the Lord's taking his people up from the low estate in which they are, and raising them up to near communion with himself, bearing them on his heart, in his hands, and on his arm, supporting them under all their afflictions, and carrying them, through all their troubles and difficulties, safe to eternal glory and happiness.

{r} Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 40. {s} Suidas, vol. 1. p. 89. {t} Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 3. col. 178. {u} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 6. {w} Nat Hist. l. 10. c. 3. {x} Vid. Bochart ut supra. ({t}) {y} See Harris's Voyages, vol. 1. B. 1. c. 2. sect. 14. p. 486.

Deuteronomy 32:12

Ver. 12. [So] the Lord alone did lead him,.... Out of Egypt, through the wilderness, to the land of Canaan, going before them in a pillar of fire and cloud; though this is not to be understood to the exclusion of the ministry of Moses and Aaron, by whom he led them, Ps 77:20; it may be interpreted of the people being alone in the wilderness when led:

and [there was] no strange god with him; with Israel; so Aben Ezra, no idolatry among them then; to which sense are the Targums of Jerusalem and Jonathan; but it may rather signify that the Lord alone was the leader of his people, and he had no assistant in that work, and therefore all the glory should be given to him: he is the leader of his people, in a spiritual sense, out of a state of unregeneracy, which is a state of darkness and bondage; out of the ways of sin, and from the pastures of their own righteousness, into an open state of grace, which is a state of light and liberty; in Christ the way, and in the paths of faith, truth, holiness, and righteousness, unto the heavenly glory, typified by the land of Canaan, the blessings of which are next described: the Jews say {z}, this will be in the days of the King Messiah; when there will be no abominable thing in Israel, the Lord alone shall lead him.

{z} Tikkune Zohar, Correct. 18. fol. 32. 2. 36. 2.

Deuteronomy 32:13

Ver. 13. He made him to ride on the high places of the earth,.... Or land, the land of Canaan; by which are meant the towers, castles, and fortified places in it, some of which might be built on hills and mountains; and being made to ride on them may denote the delivery of them into their hands, their conquests and possession of them, and triumph in them; see Isa 58:14; so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases, it,

"made him to dwell in the towers of the land of Israel,"

those high walled and strongly fenced cities which they dreaded; this may be an emblem of the conquest believers have of their spiritual enemies, sin. Satan, and the world, in and through Christ; of their safety and triumph in him; of their high and elevated frames of soul, when they have got above the world and the things of it; this will be the case of spiritual Israel in every sense in the latter day, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains:

that he might eat the increase of the fields: the produce of them, particularly corn for bread, and which the Israelites ate of as soon as they came into the land of Canaan, **Jos 5:11**; an emblem of the Gospel, and the truths of it, which are salutary, nourishing, strengthening, reviving, and cheering, and of Christ the bread of life, which believers by faith eat of, and feed upon and live:

and he made him to suck honey out of the rock; not water out of the rock, as sweet to them as honey, that they had in the wilderness; but either the honey of bees that made their nests in rocks, as a swarm of them did in the carcass of a lion; and so in like manner as honey came out of the lion, it may be said to be sucked out of the rock: so Homer {a} speaks of swarms of bees out of a hollow rock: or this was the honey of palm trees, as Aben Ezra observes, some say, which might grow on rocks, See Gill on "De 8:8"; and this is favoured by the Targum of Jonathan, which paraphrases the words,

"honey from those fruits which grow on the rocks,"

unless it means honey gathered by bees from such fruits; the rock may typify Christ, and the honey out of it the Gospel, which is from him and concerning him; comparable to honey for the manner of its production and gathering, by the laborious ministers of the word; for its nourishment, and especially for its sweetness, its precious promises, and pleasant doctrines:

and oil out of the flinty rock; that is, oil out of the olives, which grow on rocks, and these delight to grow on hills and mountains; hence we read of the mount of Olives, see Job 29:6; and so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and oil out of the olives and suckers which grow on the strong rocks;"

this may signify the Spirit and his graces, the unction which comes from Christ the Holy One, and the blessings of grace had from him, and the Gospel and its truths; which are cheering and refreshing, mollifying and healing, feeding and fattening, pure and unmixed, and useful for light, as oil is.

{a} Iliad. 2. l. 87, 88.

Deuteronomy 32:14

Ver. 14. Butter of kine,.... Made of milk, which kine or cows give; Jarchi says, this is the fat that is gathered on the top of milk, he means cream, and which indeed was the butter of the ancients, and is here meant:

and milk of sheep: which they give, though not in such plenty as the kine, yet what is very wholesome and nourishing: the philosopher {b} observes, that sheep give more milk in proportion to the size of their bodies than cows: and Pliny {c} says their milk is sweeter and more nourishing, and the butter made of it is the fattest:

with fat of lambs; or fat lambs, rich and delicious food:

and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats; a fruitful country abounding with pasturage, where rams and goats of the best sort were and the breed of them was coveted and had in the land of Canaan; the kine of Bashan are mentioned elsewhere, Ps 22:12;

with the fat of kidneys of wheat: that is, the best wheat, the grains are plump and full; and Aben Ezra observes, that a grain of wheat has some likeness to a kidney, see Ps 81:16;

and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape; wine which comes from the grape, red wine, pure and unmixed, see Ge 40:11; the land of Canaan was a land of vines, and abounded with good wine, **De 8:8**; which the Israelites, when they came into it, drank of in common, who had only drank water in the wilderness, and had but little flesh, and lived on manna, and now abounded with plenty of all good things; all which are observed as instances of divine goodness, and to aggravate their ingratitude in rejecting the Messiah, they then enjoying all these good things, the land being alike fertile and affluent then, as appears from **Isa 7:14**; Jarchi applies this fruitfulness to the times of Solomon, as the butter of kine, and the kidneys of wheat, **1Ki 4:22**; and fat of lambs, and the blood of the grape, to the times of the ten tribes, **Am 6:4**; but this was the constant fertility of the land, and lasted to the times of the Messiah: now all these may be expressive of the blessings of grace, and the spiritual food of the Gospel: Ainsworth very prettily remarks, that here is both food for babes and for grown persons, butter and milk for the one, and meat for the other, and drink for them both: the plain truths of the Gospel are like butter, soft and easy to be taken in, and like milk, easy of digestion, cooling, nourishing, sweet, and pleasant; the more sublime truths of the Gospel are meat for strong men, signified by the flesh of fat lambs, rams, and goats; which all being used in sacrifices were typical of Christ; as also the finest of wheat is an emblem of him the bread of life, on whom the weakest believer lives by faith; and the drink for both, the wine the blood of the grape, may signify the love of Christ, the Gospel and the truths of it, and the blessings of grace, which come through the everlasting covenant.

{b} Aristot. Problem. sect. 10. qu. 6. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 28. c. 9.

Deuteronomy 32:15

Ver. 15. But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked,.... This is undoubtedly a name of the people of Israel; it is to be met with only in three places more, in De 33:5; it is generally thought to come from a word {d} which signifies upright and righteous, such these people ought to have been, and some among them were; and they generally professed themselves, and outwardly appeared to be upright, just, and righteous persons, and were desirous of being reckoned so; which was their character in the times of Christ, when they rejected him: others derive it from a word {e} which signifies to behold, to see, and so describes them as seeing ones; and such they had been in the times of Moses, saw extraordinary sights and wonders in Egypt, the great salvation at the Red sea, the Lord going before them in a pillar of cloud and life; the manna every day falling about their tents; twice rocks smitten, and waters flowing from them, and had often very uncommon sights of the glory of God: and in the times of Christ, to which this song refers, they saw him in the flesh, preaching in their synagogues, doing miracles, riding on an ass to Jerusalem, according to one of their prophecies, and expiring on the cross, and yet rejected him. They are said to "wax fat", enjoy great outward prosperity, to abound in temporal good things, as they also did in spiritual, privileges; enjoying, or they might have enjoyed, such a ministry of the word, as never was before or since, the ministry of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, of Christ himself, and of his apostles, yet they "kicked"; which may denote their disobedience to the laws of God, moral and ceremonial, see **1Sa 2:29**; and particularly the introduction of idolatry among them, which was kicking against God, and his worship; first among the ten tribes, in the times of Jeroboam, and among the two tribes, more especially in the times of Manasseh; and this kicking was particularly verified in Judas's lifting up his heel against Christ, and betraying him; which was not merely the sin of him only, but what the whole body of the people were involved in, see Ps 41:9:

thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered [with fatness]; which is repeated and expressed by different words, both for the certainty of it, and to denote their great affluence of good things, and so the more to aggravate their impiety and ingratitude, next observed:

then he forsook God [which] made him; the worship of God, as the Targum of Jonathan, giving into idolatry in times past; and the written word of God, by giving heed to the traditions of the elders, to the making void and of none effect the word of God; or Christ, the essential Word of God; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"and left the Word of God, who created them;"

that Word of God which was in the beginning of all things, and by whom all things were made, and they also; who in the fulness of time was made flesh, and dwelt among men, **Joh 1:1**;

and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation; the same divine Person, described in De 32:4; and there called "the Rock",
See Gill on "De 32:4"; here "the rock of salvation"; because salvation flows from him: he is the author of it, and it is to be had of him, and no other; and this epithet shows not only his ability and strength to effect it, but the security of it in him, which being wrought out is an everlasting one. He is said to be the rock of "his" salvation, Jeshurun or Israel, he being of the Jews, raised up

among them, and sent unto them, and was the Saviour of some of them actually, even of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and on account of his salvation deserving of universal esteem. But the Jews "lightly esteemed" him, had no value for him, set this rock and stone at nought; he was refused and rejected by the builders, who is now the head of the corner; they despised him, mocked at him, and treated him with the utmost contempt and disdain, yea, with abhorrence; all which, and more, is signified by the word here used: they traduced him as a vile and wicked person, and charged and, treated him as such, so some render the word {f}; and, as others {g}, they made a dead carcass of him, they crucified and slew him; this is the crime of ingratitude hinted at in De 32:6; and all between is an enumeration of instances of divine goodness to this people, mentioned with a view to aggravate this unheard of sin.

{d} rvy "rectum esse". {e} rwv "cernere, intueri", Cocceius, Van Till. {f} lbny "pro scelerato tractavit", Cocceius. {g} "Cadaver fecit", Van Till.

Deuteronomy 32:16

Ver. 16. They provoked him to jealousy with strange [gods],.... Or "with others" {h}; the word "gods" is not in the text, nor were the Jews guilty of worshipping strange gods or idols in the times of Christ, nor had they been from the time of their coming out of the Babylonish captivity; but the word, as Cocceius observes, is used for "another", as in Job 19:27; and signifies other saviours, other messiahs, whom the Jews set up when they rejected Christ, the rock of salvation; and it is observable, that before the coming of Christ, they never attempted to set up any; but, after they had rejected him, were ready to embrace everyone that offered, of which one, called Bar Cochab, the son of a star, in allusion to Nu 24:17; is a flagrant instance; and whom, when they found themselves deceived, they called Bar Cozba, the son of a lie, or a lying fellow; to whom our Lord may be thought to have respect, **Joh 5:43**; and where he expressly calls him another. Now, not only to reject Jesus, the true Messiah, but to set up others in his room, false Christs, was highly provoking to God, who is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another:

with abominations provoked they him to anger; by advancing the traditions of the elders to an equality with, and above the word of God; and by continuing sacrifices, after the great sacrifice was offered up, when they ought to have ceased; for, by continuing them, it was saying Christ was not come in the flesh, nor his sacrifice offered up; it was trampling under foot the Son of God, and treating his blood and sacrifice with contempt; which must be an abomination to God, and highly provoking of his anger, when that sacrifice was of a sweet smelling savour to him; and especially what was abominable to him, and grievously provoked him to anger and wrath, was their setting up the idol of their own righteousness, refusing to submit to the righteousness of Christ, Ro 10:3; and indeed, whenever anything is set up in competition with him, or in opposition to him, be it what it will, it must be an abomination to God; because it opposes his purposes and resolutions of saving men by Christ alone, reflects on his wisdom in the scheme of salvation, flies in the face of his love, grace, and mercy, makes the death of Christ of none effect, advances pride in the creature, gives God the lie, who says there is no other Saviour, and is a total slight and neglect of his Gospel; all which must be abominable, and dreadfully provoking to him; see Isa 65:5;

{h} Myrzb "per alios", Cocceius.

Deuteronomy 32:17

Ver. 17. They sacrificed to devils, not to God,.... Their sacrifices being continued, when it was the will of God they should cease, were reckoned by him not as, offered to him, but to demons, and to such that were not God; they being therein under the instigation of Satan, and doing his lusts, **Joh 8:44**; just as Pagans and Papists, worshipping idols under the influence and direction of Satan, are said to worship devils, and sacrifice to them, 1Co 10:20; and indeed setting up their own righteousness was sacrificing to their own net, and burning incense to their own drag, to an idol, and not to God: to which may be added, that whereas they trampled under foot the Son of God, and did despite to the Spirit of grace, by which Christ cast out devils, and offered himself without spot, they excluded two of the divine Persons in the Deity, and so worshipped not the true God, Father, Son, and Spirit:

to gods whom they knew not, to [gods that] came newly up; such as angels, into the worship of which they fell, as their writings testify {i}, and to which the apostle seems to have respect, **Col 2:18**;

whom your fathers feared not; paid no regard unto, put no trust or confidence in; or, as the Targum of Jonathan,

"with whom your fathers had nothing to do:"

as they had not with the idol of man's righteousness, but wholly looked unto and trusted in the grace and righteousness of Christ, and expected salvation alone by him: the Gospel of righteousness and salvation by Christ was preached to our first parents in Eden's garden, which they embraced and believed in; Noah was an heir and preacher of the righteousness of faith, that is, of the righteousness of Christ, received by faith; that righteousness, which was what Abraham believed in, was imputed to him for his justifying righteousness; and Jacob waited for the Messiah, the salvation of God; in short all the Old Testament saints were saved by the grace of Christ, as we are; the idols, the works of men's own righteousness, are new deities they paid no deference to, placed no confidence in.

{i} Vid. Van Till in loc.

Deuteronomy 32:18

Ver. 18. Of the rock [that] begat thee thou art unmindful,.... The same with the rock of salvation, De 32:15; repeated and expressed in different words, that their wretched ingratitude might be taken notice of and observed: begetting is ascribed to this rock, as regeneration is to Christ, **1Jo 2:29**; and was true of some among the Jews: some choose to render the words, "the rock of thy kindred" {k}; being a near kinsman, a brother through his incarnation, which aggravated their unmindfulness of him:

and hast forgotten God that formed thee: for the rock they were unmindful of and forgot is the true God and eternal life, the essential Word of God, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem interpret it; him the Jewish nation forgot; they forgot the characters given of him in the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament; and therefore they knew him not when he came and fulfilled the voices of the prophets they were ignorant of in condemning him: hence they were unmindful of his person, his offices, his works, his benefits, and the great salvation by him; as indeed too many are that call themselves Christians: some observe that the word here used signifies bringing forth children with pain, and so way respect the bitter sorrows and sufferings of Christ, sometimes expressed by a word {l} which signifies the pains of women in childbirth, **Ac 2:24**; and called the travail of his soul, Isa 53:11; and so a further aggravation of their ingratitude, that they should forget him that suffered so much, at least on account of some of them; for, those he endured to bring forth children unto God, or to gather together the children of God, scattered abroad both in Judea and in the whole world, Joh 11:51.

{k} Kdly rwu "rupem cognationis tuae", i.e. "fratrum tuorum", Van Till; see Rom. ix. 4, 5. {l} Kllxm "parturientis te", Montanus; "parturitorem tuum", Van Till.

Deuteronomy 32:19

Ver. 19. And when the Lord saw [it],.... The disregard of the Jews to Christ, their forgetfulness of him, their disesteem and rejection of him; their continuance of sacrifices, when the great sacrifice was offered up; their setting up other messiahs and saviours, and the idol of their own righteousness, in opposition to the righteousness of Christ; all which not only as the omniscient God he saw, but took notice of, and considered, and did not at once pass judgment on them, at least did not immediately execute it, but waited some time to see how they would afterwards behave; for it was thirty years or more after the crucifixion of Christ that the utter destruction of the Jews came upon them:

he abhorred [them]; in his heart, despised them, and at last rejected them with contempt and abhorrence, very righteously and in just retaliation, see Zec 11:8; as for what before observed, so for what follows:

because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters; which is not to be understood of the Lord being provoked to wrath by the sins of those who called themselves or were called his sons and daughters; for these are such who were truly his sons and daughters, and different from those in De 32:20, said to be "children in whom [is] no faith": these are no other than the disciples and followers of Christ, that believed in him, both men and women, and so the children of God, his sons and his daughters by special grace; and the "provoking" of them is the wrath of the enemy against them, as the same word is used and rendered in De 32:27; and should be here, "because of wrath", or "indignation against his sons and his daughters" {m}; meaning the affliction, distress, and persecution of them, through the wrath of the unbelieving Jews; for after the death of Christ they persecuted his apostles, they beat them and cast them into prison, and put some to death; a persecution was raised against the church at Jerusalem, in which Saul was concerned, who breathed out threatenings and slaughters against the disciples of the Lord, and haled men and women, the sons and daughters of God, and committed them to prison, and persecuted them to strange cities, and gave his voice to put them to death; and in the Gentile world, when the Gospel was carried there, the Jews stirred up the Gentiles everywhere against the followers of Christ, to harass and distress them; and this the Lord saw, and he abhorred them for it, and rejected them.

{m} wynb oekm "prae ira in filios suos", Pagninus; "propter iram in filios suos", Van Till; so Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 36.

Deuteronomy 32:20

Ver. 20. And he said, I will hide my face from them,.... Now the Lord proceeds to pass sentence on the Jews for their ill treatment of his Son, and of his followers; which respects judgments that should come upon them, both spiritual and temporal, or corporeal; the former lies in De 32:20, and the latter in De 32:22; and this the Lord said in his own heart and mind, decreed and determined it within himself, and declared it in his word by his prophets, as here and in other places: and this first part of the sentence denotes the withdrawing of the gracious presence of God, and the manifestation of his favour, from the people of the Jews, his dislike and contempt of them, having taken out from among them the remnant according to the election of grace, the disciples and followers of Christ; and the removal of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, from them, the means of light and knowledge, joy and comfort, and the giving of them up to blindness and hardness of heart, which continues to this day; they have a vail of darkness and ignorance upon their hearts while reading the books of the Old Testament, which will be done away when they turn to the Lord, and not before; likewise this was fulfilled when all the symbols of the divine Presence were removed, when the temple was destroyed, and all things in it, or carried away; and this house, which was formerly the house of God, and where he dwelt, was left desolate by him; and it is remarkable, that a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, a voice was heard in the temple, "let us go hence", as Josephus relates {z}:

I will see what their end [shall be]: their destruction, called in the New Testament "the end of the world"; the end of the Jewish church state and commonwealth: this the Lord said, not as ignorant what it should be, or when it would be; but the sense is, either that he would cause them and others to see it, when he should bring wrath upon them to the uttermost; or that he would look upon it with pleasure and delight, which would be an aggravation of their punishment, **Pr 1:26**;

for they [are] a very froward generation; men of perverse spirits, of a contrary and contradictory temper and disposition, who pleased not God, and were contrary to all men; as well as contradicted and blasphemed the Gospel of Christ, were men of distorted principles in religion, implicated and inconsistent, they wresting the Scriptures to their own destruction; and were obstinate, stubborn, and inflexible in their notions and practices, and that to the last, which was their ruin:

children in whom [is] no faith; for though they had faith in one God, in the Scriptures of the Old Testament as the word of God, in the law of Moses, and in a future state, the resurrection of the dead, and judgment to come; especially the Pharisees, the greater part of the Jews; yet though they were the children of Abraham, and would be thought to be the children of God, they had no faith in Jesus, the true Messiah; him they disbelieved and rejected; and as their fathers could not enter into the land of Canaan, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, because of unbelief; so these were cast out of the land, and from the Lord, because of their unbelief in the rejection of the Messiah. Aben Ezra observes, that it may be interpreted there is no men of faithfulness, or no faithful men among them, as in Ps 12:1; they were a faithless generation, covenant breakers, broke their covenant with God, and therefore he rejected them.

{z} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 32:21

Ver. 21. They have moved me to jealousy with [that which is] not God,.... With a false messiah; for after the death of Jesus, the true Messiah, God as well as man, many false Christs arose, as he predicted, and were received for a time, who were mere men, and deceivers; and their now vainly expected messiah, or whom they look for, according to their own sense of him, is no other than a mere creature, and not God: or with the idol of their own righteousness; which, as an idol is nothing in the world, that is, nothing in the business of justification, and put in the room of Christ highly provokes the Lord to jealousy:

they have provoked me to anger with their vanities; such were their false Christs they in vain trusted in, and such the idol of their own righteousness they set up, but could not make to stand; and such were the traditions of their elders; they put upon an equality with, or above the word of God; all which stirred up the wrath and anger of God against them:

and I will move them to jealousy with [those which are] not a people: this is not to be understood of any particular nation, but of the Gentiles in general, and of God's elect among them, and of the calling of them; which would be provoking to the Jews, as the Apostle Paul has taught us to understand it, Ro 10:19. These were not the people of God, or not my people, as he says **Ro 9:25**; In some sense indeed they were his people, being chosen by him, and taken into covenant with him; for he is God not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also; and those were given to Christ as his people, and are his other sheep which were not of the Jewish fold; and who were redeemed by him to be a peculiar people out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, all which was before their calling: yet, in another sense they were not his people; they were without any spiritual privileges, the word and ordinances, without the knowledge of God and Christ, without communion with them; they were not a people near unto the Lord, he had not laid hold on and formed them for himself in regeneration and conversion; they were not reckoned the people of God, nor called so, and especially by the Jews, who accounted themselves to be the only people of God; see **Eph 2:11**;

I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation; either the Romans in particular are meant, so called because of their gross idolatry, to which they were addicted, who otherwise in their political affairs were a wise and understanding people; to these Judea became a province, and were subject to tribute; and by the exactions of the Romans, and their ill usage of them, they were provoked to rise against them, which issued in their ruin: or rather the Gentiles in general, who might be called foolish because of their superstition and idolatry, ignorance, and blindness in religious matters, and especially were so in the account of the Jews; and the elect of God among them in particular, who in their state of unregeneracy were foolish, as all unregenerate men are; both their principles and practices were foolish, and they were the foolish things of the Gentile world that God chose and called: and the calling of them was exceedingly provoking to the Jews; which was as if a man, moved to jealousy by the behaviour of his wife, should strip her of her ornaments and jewels, and reject her as his wife; and take another before her eyes of mean estate, and marry her, and put her ornaments on her, to which the allusion is; for the Lord, being moved to jealousy by the conduct of the Jewish nation towards him, rejected them from being his people, and stripped them of all their privileges, civil and religious, and took the Gentiles in the room of them, and so in just retaliation moved them to jealousy and wrath. It was displeasing to the carnal Jews to hear of the prophecies of the calling of the Gentiles, Ro 10:20; and the first display of grace to them was resented even by believing Jews themselves at first, Ac 11:2. The anger of the Scribes and Pharisees on this account is thought by some to be hinted at in the parable of the two sons,

Lu 15:27. The Jews were offended with Christ for eating with publicans, the Roman tax gatherers, and were greatly displeased when he told them the kingdom of God would be taken from them, and given to another nation, **Mt 9:10**
Mt 21:43. Their rage and envy were very great when the Gospel was first preached to the Gentiles, Ac 13:41; and there is such an extraordinary instance of their spite and malice to the Gentiles, and of their jealousy and anger they were moved unto, as is not to be paralleled, **1Th 2:15**.

Deuteronomy 32:22

Ver. 22. For a fire is kindled in mine anger,.... Here begins the account of temporal and corporeal judgments inflicted on the Jews for their disbelief and rejection of the Messiah, their contempt of his Gospel, and ill treatment of his followers; and this here respects the destruction of the land of Judea in general, and the burning of the city and temple of Jerusalem in particular, as the effect of the wrath and anger of God like fire kindled against them:

and shall burn unto the lowest hell; which denotes an entire destruction, like that of the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone from heaven; which issued in a sulphurous lake, and which sulphureous matter sunk to the bottom of the Dead Sea; and to that destruction is this of the land of Judea compared, De 29:23;

and shall consume the earth with her increase: the land of Judea, with the cities and towns in it, and buildings on it, and the fruits of the earth; which were either gathered into their barns and storehouses, or were growing in their fields, and vineyards, and oliveyards; all were destroyed and consumed at or before the destruction of Jerusalem, or quickly after it:

and set on fire the foundations of the mountains; the city of Jerusalem, as Jarchi himself interprets it, whose foundations were by the mountains, according to Ps 125:2; and the temple of Jerusalem particularly was built on Mount Moriah, and that as well as the city was utterly consumed by fire: and it is remarkable that when Julian the apostate attempted to rebuild it, as is related even by an Heathen historian {a}, that flames of fire burst out from the foundations, and burnt the workmen; so that he was obliged to desist from his rash undertaking.

{a} Ammian. Marcellin. l. 23. in initio.

Deuteronomy 32:23

Ver. 23. I will heap mischief upon them,.... One calamity upon another, which are after particularly mentioned:

I will spewed mine arrows upon them; God is here represented as an enemy to the Jews, as having bent his bow against them like an enemy, **La 2:4**; and as having a quiver, and that full of arrows, and as determined to draw out and spend everyone of them, in taking vengeance upon them; which arrows are his four sore judgments mentioned
Eze 14:21; and expressed in De 32:24.

Deuteronomy 32:24

Ver. 24. [They shall be] burnt with hunger,.... This is the arrow of famine, **Eze 5:16**; the force of which is such that it makes the skin black as if burnt, **La 5:10**; Onkelos paraphrases it,

"inflated or swelled with famine,"

which is a phrase Josephus {b} makes use of in describing the famine at the siege of Jerusalem. Jarchi observes, that one of their writers {c} interprets the words "hairs of hunger", because he says that a man that is famishing and pining, his hair grows, and he becomes hairy: this judgment was notorious among the Jews, at the siege of Jerusalem, and was very sore and dreadful: See Gill on "De 28:53":

and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction; with burning fevers, pestilential ones, with the plague, the arrow of the Lord that flies by day, the pestilence that walks in darkness, and the destruction that wastes at noonday, Ps 91:5; and which also raged at the siege of Jerusalem, arising from the stench of dead bodies, which lay in all parts of the city, and is one of the signs of the destruction of it given by our Lord, Mt 24:7;

I will also send the teeth, of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust; another of the arrows in the quiver of the Lord of hosts, or of his four judgments, and which he used to threaten the people of the Jews with in case of disobedience, Le 26:22. And such of the Jews who fled to deserts, and caves and dens of the earth, for shelter, could not escape falling into the hands of wild beasts, and of meeting with poisonous serpents that go upon their bellies, and feed on the dust of the earth; and besides, when Titus had taken Jerusalem, he disposed of his captives some one way and some another; and, among the rest, many were cast to the wild beasts in the theatre, as Josephus relates {d}; add to this, that both Rome Pagan, and Roman Papal, are called beasts, Re 13:1; into both whose hands the Jews fell, and from whom they have suffered much; with which in part agrees the Targum of Jerusalem,

"the teeth of the four monarchies, which are like to wild beasts, I will send upon them;"

and particularly the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

"and the Greeks, who bite with their teeth like wild beasts, I will send upon them;"

but it would have been much better to have interpreted it of the Romans.

{b} apo thv endeiav pefushmenoi, de Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 23. sect. 4. {c} R. Moses Hadarsan. {d} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 2. & l. 7. c. 3. sect. 1.

Deuteronomy 32:25

Ver. 25. The sword without,.... Either without the city, the sword of the Roman army besieging it, which destroyed all that came out or attempted to go in; or in the streets of the city, the sword of the seditious, which destroyed multitudes among themselves:

and terror within; within the city, on account of the sword of the Romans, and the close siege they made of it; and on account of the famine and pestilence which raged in it, and the cruelty of the seditious persons among themselves; all these filled the people with horror and terror in their houses; and even in their bedchambers, as the word signifies, they were not free from terror; yea, from the temple, and inward parts, and chambers of that, which may be referred to, terror came, that being in the hands of the seditious; they sallied out from thence, and ravaged the city, and filled all places with the dread of them; and many, no doubt, through fear died, as well as by the sword and other judgments; which it is threatened shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling [also], with the man of gray hairs; none of any age or sex were spared, even those unarmed; not the young man, for his strength and promising usefulness; nor the virgin for her beauty and comeliness; nor the suckling for its innocence and tenderness; nor the aged man through any reverence of his gray hairs, or on account of the infirmities of old age, but all would be destroyed; and never was such a carnage made at the siege of anyone city in the world before or since; no less than 1,100,000 persons perished in it, as Josephus relates {e}.

{e} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 32:26

Ver. 26. I said,.... Or could have said, or might have said; that is, determined and resolved, as it was in his power, and in right and justice might have done what follows:

I would scatter them into corners; which does not fitly express the sense of the word used, and besides this was what was done; it is notorious that the Jews were and are scattered into the several corners of the world, and there is no corner where they are not; whereas the phrase is expressive of something that could and might have been done, but was not: moreover, to disperse them into the several parts of the world does not agree with what follows; for that, instead of making their remembrance to cease, would make them the more known, and the more to be remembered. But the word literally taken may be rendered, "I will corner them" {f}; drive them up into a corner, and cut them off together, or search for them in, and ferret them out of, every corner in which they should get, and destroy them all: agreeably to which is the Targum of Onkelos,

"mine anger shall rest upon them, and I will destroy them;"

and so Aben Ezra interprets it of the destruction of them, and observes, that otherwise it would not agree with what follows. There may be an allusion in it to the corner of the field, which was ordered to be left to the poor, and not reaped, Le 19:9; and so the sense is, I could and might have determined when the harvest of this land and people was come, or the time of wrath upon them, to cut down every corner, and leave none, no, not one standing stalk of corn, but make clean riddance of them:

I would make the remembrance of them cease from among men; as of the Amalekites, Moabites, Midianites, Edomites, Chaldeans, and others, whose names as well as nations are no more. This is what the enemies of the Jews plotted and conspired to do, Ps 83:4; and what God could and might have done, but has not; the Jews continue to this day a distinct people, though it is now near 1900 years since the destruction of their city and temple, and their dispersion in the various parts of the world; which is what was never known of any other people in the like circumstances, and which is a most amazing and surprising event; the reasons of it follow.

{f} Mhyapa "angulabo illos", Oleaster, Vitringa; "ad angulos usque quaeram ipsos, seu ad verbum, angulabo ipsos", Van Till; "ab angulo succidam ipsos", Cocceius. Vid. Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 661.

Deuteronomy 32:27

Ver. 27. Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy,.... Satan, the enemy of mankind in general, of the people of God in particular, and especially of the Messiah, the seed of the woman, and of God himself, whom he would dethrone, or at least place himself on an equality with him; this enemy is full of wrath, enmity, and blasphemy, against God, and stirs up all of this kind in the hearts of men, and instigates them to persecute the people of God; and does all he can to obscure the glory of God, and lessens his own "grief", as the word signifies, occasioned by it: and now though God has nothing to fear, either from the power and policy of the devil, being infinitely mightier and wiser than he; yet as Moses expressed his concern, if God should cut off the people of Israel as one man, that the Egyptians would say he brought them out of Egypt for mischief, or that he was not able to bring them into the land of Canaan, Ex 32:12; so the Lord, speaking after the manner of men, as Aben Ezra observes, expresses his fears of the wrath of the enemy; not properly, but it denotes his precaution, provision, and preparation he made to put a check upon it, and a stop to it, that he might not have the opportunity of instilling it into the minds of men, that God was cruel to his people, or had not ability to save them from their enemies, or was unfaithful to his promises; and therefore he did not entirely cut them off, as he could and might have done, but made a reserve of them, as a standing proof to the contrary:

lest their adversaries; the Romans, who fought against them, took them, and carried them captive:

should behave themselves strangely; alienate the glory of God from him, and give it to their strange gods; which the Romans were wont to do, when they obtained victories, and did do something of this kind to Jupiter Capitolinus, when they carried the Jews captive, and their trophies in triumph to Rome: yet there was such an apparent hand of God in this affair, that the Heathens were obliged to own it. Titus the conqueror himself confessed that it was God that favoured him, and that it was he that brought the Jews out of the fortresses and fastnesses in which they were; and that no hands of men, or machines, were anything against such towers as they had {g}: and when some neighbouring nations would have crowned him because of his victories over the Jews, he refused it, saying, he was unworthy of it, he had not done this of himself, but had only lent an hand to God that was angry with them {h}. Cicero also observes {i} the hand of God in the conquest, captivity, and servitude of the Jewish nation; moreover, a remnant was preserved to be to the Romans, as the Canaanites were to the Israelites, thorns in their sides, and pricks in their eyes; to be a burden to them, a dead weight upon them, and to check their ovations and triumphs over them; for, that people conquered gave them great trouble, raised commotions and insurrections in many places, which obliged the emperors in succeeding reigns to come from distant parts, and quell them, and were the occasion of vast quantities of blood being shed; insomuch that one of their poets {k} wishes Judea had never been subdued by them: likewise a number of them was preserved to prevent the growth and spread of idolatry, and that they might be a standing example and caution to Christians among the Gentiles not to give into it, when they should observe what they suffered on the account of it, as their prophecies, extant in their sacred books preserved, abundantly testified and declared:

[and] lest they should say, our hand [is] high, and the Lord hath not done all this; lest anyone should say among the Gentiles, as particularly deists, lest they should lift up their horn on high, and speak with a stiff neck, and deny that ever any such things were done for this people the Scriptures speak of, as the miracles in the land of Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; and confidently affirm there never was any such people, and defy Christians to show them a Jew if they could: now here was a reserve made of them, to be a standing proof of the truth of divine revelation against such infidels; as also that they might be a check unto all false teachers, and leave them inexcusable who embrace the same errors that have been condemned in them, and God has shown his displeasure at, and which they still retain; such as the doctrines of freewill, of justification by a man's own righteousness, of salvation not being wholly by the Messiah, and of his being non-Jehovah, or only a mere creature; for the words may be rendered, "non-Jehovah hath done all this" {l}; or he that

is not Jehovah hath done all that is done for the people of the Jews; and say, all that the Messiah hath done, with respect to salvation, is done by him that is not Jehovah, or God, but a creature. These were the doctrines of the Jews in Christ's time; the Pharisees, the prevailing sect among them, were freewillers, as Josephus relates {m}; and the whole nation were self-justiciaries, as the Apostle Paul assures us, and sought for righteousness not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, **Ro 9:31**; and such they are to this day, as well as Unitarians to a man; now Arians, Socinians, Pelagians, and Arminians, may look upon these people, who are continued, as having imbibed the same errors; and may read theirs in them, and God's displeasure at them.

{g} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 1. {h} Philostrat. Vit. Apolion. l. 6. c. 14. {i} Orat. 24. pro Flacco. {k} "Atque utinam nunquam Judaea subacta fuisset", Rutilius. {l} hwhy alw "et non Jehovah operatus est omne hoc", Cocceius; so Van Till, Vitringa. {m} Antiqu. l. 18. c. 1. sect. 3.

Deuteronomy 32:28

Ver. 28. For they [are] a nation void of counsel,.... This is said not of the Jews, whose character is given, De 32:6; and instances of their ingratitude, folly, and want of counsel and understanding, have been already mentioned, and punishment for the same inflicted on them, according to this prophetic song; so that the prophecy respecting them is issued, and another people are taken notice of, even their enemies, of whom the Jewish writers in general interpret these words, and what follows; and was true of the Gentiles, both of the Pagan sort of them, who took too much to themselves, and ascribed the destruction of the Jews, and their conquest of them, to themselves, and their idols; and of false Christians among them, when the Roman empire became Christian, such as expressed themselves in the language of the latter part De 32:27, "our hand is high", &c. which plainly showed them to be a people devoid of the true knowledge of the Scriptures, they should have made the men of their counsel, and have consulted; and of the Gospel of Christ, which is the counsel of God, as the Arians, Pelagians, &c. must be, or they would never imbibe and advance tenets so diametrically opposite thereunto:

neither [is there any] understanding is them; of divine and spiritual things, of the Scriptures, and the doctrines of them; of the person of Christ, and his divine perfections, or they would never deny his deity; of the righteousness of God, of that which is required in the law, and revealed in the Gospel, or they would never set up a righteousness of their own for justification; and of themselves, their unrighteousness, impurity, and impotence to that which is good; or they would never so strongly assert the purity of human nature, and the power of man's freewill: God foreseeing all the folly, and want of counsel and understanding in the Gentile world, under different characters, preserved a remnant of the Jews as a standing admonition to them.

Deuteronomy 32:29

Ver. 29. O that they were wise,.... These are not the words of God, and so no instances of mere velleities, and unsuccessful wishes in him, and as arguing a power in man to make himself wise if he would; but of Moses, under a spirit of prophecy, foreseeing the ignorance and stupidity of the above persons; or as representing a true believer in Christ, in the times in which such men should live; for the person speaking is one that had faith in Christ, the rock of salvation, and built upon him alone for it; and who had enemies on that account, as appears from De 32:31: and these words are spoken not of the Jews, with whom this song has no more concern, unless it be in what respects, their conversion in the latter day; but of false Christians, Pelagians, Arians, &c. whose language and character are expressed in De 32:28: and contain a pathetic wish that they might have wisdom to see their follies, errors, and mistakes, and renounce them: or, "if they were wise" {k}; as they are not, and their tenets show it:

[that] they would understand this; namely what follows:

[that] they would consider their latter end; either the latter end of the Jews; had they wisdom, they would understand and observe that the displeasure of God against them, and his destruction of them, was for their lightly esteeming the rock of salvation, as Arians do; and for setting up their own righteousness, in opposition to the righteousness of Christ, as do Pelagians and Arminians; and were they wise, they would be hereby cautioned against such notions; and though imbibed by them, would relinquish them; as they may justly fear some such like end will be theirs: for if God does not give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth their end must be miserable; since the errors they embrace and profess are what the apostle calls "damnable heresies"; who, denying the Lord that bought them, bring on themselves swift destruction; and whose judgment, he says, lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not, **2Pe 2:1**.

{k} wmkx wl "o si sapcrent", Tigurine version; "si sapuissent", Vatablus; "si saperent", Cocceius.

Deuteronomy 32:30

Ver. 30. How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight,.... This is said for the conviction of the Pagan Romans of their folly in behaving strangely, attributing to their gods what belonged to the true God; for since the Jews were more numerous than they, both in Judea, in the times of Titus Vespasian, when the country was subdued by him; and in other parts of the world, in the times of Adrian, when the Jews rose up in vast numbers, greatly superior to the Romans, and yet were conquered; which, allowing the phrase to be hyperbolical, was like one to a thousand, and two to ten thousand: now since this was what was promised to the Jews in case of obedience, that they should in this manner chase their enemies, Le 26:8; it cannot be accounted for that they should in like manner be chased by their enemies, as threatened Isa 30:17;

except their rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up; that is, unless the Lord, who was their rock and fortress, and in whom they should have trusted as such, had forsaken them, and given them up into their enemies' hands, shut up as they were in the city of Jerusalem in the times of Titus, and afterwards in Bither in the times of Adrian; it is a plain case that this was of God, and not owing to the idols of the Gentiles; see Ps 44:9; Cocceius and Van Till interpret this of Constantine overcoming Maxentius, Licinius, and Maximinius, whereby the whole Roman empire on a sudden became Christian nominally, when but a little before Dioclesian had erected a trophy with this inscription on it,

"the Christian name blotted out;"

so that the odds between the Christians and Pagans were as one to a thousand, and two to ten thousand, and the victory therefore must be ascribed to God; this could never have been unless Satan, the great red dragon, had given his kingdom to the beast, which was done by the permission and sovereign will of God; see **Re 6:14**; so those interpreters, but the former sense seems best.

Deuteronomy 32:31

Ver. 31. For their rock [is] not as our rock,.... That is, the gods of the Heathens, the rock in which they trusted, are not like the God of Israel, the rock of salvation, in which all true believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, place their confidence; and indeed let that be what it will, that is short of Christ the rock, men lay the stress of their salvation on, it is no rock, but sand, and will stand them in no stead; see **Mt 7:24**;

even our enemies themselves [being] judges; as has been confessed of the God of Israel by the Heathens; see Ex 14:25; and was by Titus with respect to the destruction of Jerusalem;
See Gill on "De 32:27"; and by the Roman emperors when conquered by the Christians, who asked pardon of the God of the Christians, and owned that the God of Constantine was the true God;
See Gill on "Re 6:16".

Deuteronomy 32:32

Ver. 32. For their vine [is] of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah,.... This respects the false Christians in the Roman empire, who should have taken warning by the Jews, and not have embraced such sentiments of theirs, which had been resented by the Lord, and condemned in them; such as the doctrines of man's freewill, of justification and salvation not alone by Christ, but by their own works of righteousness, saying, "our hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this", De 32:27. Now out of the errors and heresies which arose in the primitive Christian church sprung the man of sin, the son of perdition, antichrist, or the antichristian and apostate church of Rome, the degenerate plant of a strange vine; and is here described as "of the vine of Sodom", a slip from that, transplanted from Judea, and from the worse part of it, Sodom; bearing a resemblance to the old Jewish church in its more degenerate state, reviving many of its antiquated rites and ceremonies, and embracing its unsound doctrines; especially which relate to justification, and salvation by the works of men; and having such a likeness to Sodom in its abominable practices, that it is even called Sodom itself, Re 11:8; particularly for pride, luxury, idleness, idolatry, profaneness, contempt of serious religion, and for bodily uncleanness; even for that sin which has its name from Sodom, which has not only been frequently committed by the popes and other great personages among their, and connived at; but praised and commended in printed books, published and sheltered under public authority; See Gill on "Re 11:8"; and with this compare
Eze 16:49; "and of the fields of Gomorrah"; another city of the plain, destroyed for the same sins that Sodom was; the phrase signifies the same as

before; who has not heard of the apples and fruits of Gomorrah, which are said to look very fair and beautiful without, but when touched into ashes? a fit emblem of the fair show of religion and devotion, and the many outward works of piety in the Romish church they pretend to perform, but when examined are "lies in hypocrisy", **1Ti 4:2**;

their grapes [are] grapes of gall, their clusters [are] bitter; which may denote the large number of the members of this church clustered together, and the many religious orders in it; which make a fair show in the flesh, but are in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; and the variety of ordinances and institutions of man's devising: so as the ordinances of the true church of Christ are compared to clusters of grapes, **So 7:7**; the ordinances of the false church are like clusters of bitter grapes, both for their quantity and quality; and may mean also their many evil works and actions, especially their oppression and cruelty in persecuting the saints, and shedding their blood; just as the wild grapes of the vine of Judah are interpreted of oppression and a cry, **Isa 5:4**.

Deuteronomy 32:33

Ver. 33. Their wine [is] the poison of dragons,.... Of these creatures, both land and sea dragons, See Gill on "Mic 1:8";
See Gill on "Mal 1:3"; Pliny says {l} the dragon has no poison in it; yet, as Dalechamp, in his notes on that writer observes, he in many places prescribes remedies against the bite of the dragon; but Heliodorus {m} expressly speaks of some archers, whose arrows were infected with the poison of dragons; and Leo Africanus {n} says, the Atlantic dragons are exceeding poisonous: and yet other writers {o} besides Pliny have asserted that they are free from poison. It seems the dragons of Greece are without, but not those of Africa and Arabia; and to these Moses has respect, as being well known to him. The Targum of Jerusalem is,

"the poison of this people is like the poison of dragons as they drink wine;"

and the Targum of Jonathan,

"as the poison of dragons, when they are at or from their wine;"

that is, after and as soon as they have drank it; for, according to natural historians, serpents, though they need and use but little drink, yet are very fond of wine: and it seems that thereby their poison becomes more sharp and intense, as Bochart {p} observes; wherefore the allusion is very proper and pertinent, and denotes the wine of fornication of the apostate church of Rome, frequently spoken of Re 14:8; which is no other than her corrupt doctrines, intoxicating, enticing, and leading to idolatry and superstition; and as the true Gospel of Christ is sometimes compared to wine, so the false doctrines of this church; but then it is such that is not only loathsome and abominable, but poisonous and pernicious to the souls of men, damnable and ruinous, and brings upon them swift destruction, **2Pe 2:1**; and may well be compared to the poison of dragons for such reasons; as also because they are doctrines of devils, and come from the great dragon, that old serpent called the devil and Satan, **2Ti 4:1**;

and the cruel venom of asps; which, of all kind of serpents, Pliny {q} says is the least curable; nay, according to the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions of this clause, it is incurable; and so Aristotle says {r} there is no remedy for it; and so says Aelianus {s}, who also observes {t}, that the mark it makes is so small, that it is scarcely discerned by the sharpest eye. Pliny {u} represents it as a most revengeful creature; when its mate is killed by any, it will pursue the slayer, flee where he will, and as far and fast as he can: it breaks through all difficulties, and is not to be stopped by rivers, or any obstacles, and will attack the person, whom it presently knows, let him be in ever such a crowd: and therefore it and its poison may well be called cruel; and as the poison of this creature lies under its tongue, this is a fit simile to express the poisonous and pernicious doctrines of the apostate church.

{l} Nat. Hist. l. 29. c. 4. {m} Ethiopic. l. 9. c. 19. p. 438. {n} Descriptio Africae, l. 9. p. 763. {o} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 4. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 72. {p} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 3. c. 14. col. 438, 439. {q} Nat. Hist. l. 29. c. 4. {r} Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 29. {s} De Animal. l. 1. c. 54. & l. 6. c. 38. {t} Ibid. l. 9. c. 61. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 23.

Deuteronomy 32:34

Ver. 34. [Is] not this laid up in store with me,.... The fruit of the degenerate vine, its bitter clusters of grapes, and poisonous wine; meaning the evil principles and practices of the apostate church, well known to God, taken notice of by him, and laid up in his mind and memory; for both she and her sins will come in remembrance before God, and will be brought to open view, and appear to have been laid up by him, in order to be exposed at a proper time; see Re 16:19; and so the Targums interpret it of evil works: or this may be understood of the punishment of the evil doctrines and practices of the antichristian church, the sentence of which God had secretly passed in his eternal mind, and which he had in reserve, and in due time would execute; it was drawn and signed by him, and, as he says,

[and] sealed up among my treasures; his treasures of wrath, denoting the secrecy of it, and the sure and certain performance of it, and the authority of Christ to execute it; to whom this sealed diploma is given, and all judgment committed; and particularly this to judge the whore of Rome; and who, is able to open the sealed book of God's purposes and decrees, and to accomplish them; and among the rest those which relate to the utter ruin of antichrist, and the antichristian states: so the Targum of Jerusalem, interprets it of the vengeance of the Lord, laid up for the wicked;

"is not the cup of the judgment of vengeance mixed and prepared for the ungodly sealed up among my treasures, to the day of the great judgment?"

it is true of the cup of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God, or of the wine of the wrath of God poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, which he will make great Babylon, and all the worshippers of the beast, drink of, Re 14:9.

Deuteronomy 32:35

Ver. 35. To me [belongeth] vengeance and recompense,.... Or, I will repay, or recompence, as it is quoted in Ro 12:19; and so all the three Targums, the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, here, and so Jarchi interprets it. Vengeance belongs only to a divine Person, not to an Heathen deity called Dice, or vengeance, Ac 28:4; nor to Satan and his spiteful angels, nor to any of the sons of men in a private capacity; though magistrates, being in public office, and representing God, are revengers to execute wrath on them that do evil, Ro 13:4; otherwise it is peculiar to God; and there is a great deal of reason to believe he will recompence it, as it may be concluded from his hatred of sin, his strict justice, and his faithfulness to his threatenings as well as his promises; from the instances of his vengeance on the old world, on Sodom and Gomorrah, and others; and from his taking vengeance on the inventions even of good men, whose sins he pardons, and especially from his sparing his own Son, when standing in the legal place and, stead of sinners: and this is applicable to Christ, who not only in the days of his flesh took vengeance Satan, and his principalities and powers; and, when he came in his kingdom and power, took vengeance on the Jews his enemies, who would not have him to rule over them; but also, at his spiritual coming, he will take vengeance on antichrist, whom he will destroy with the breath of his mouth, and send that son of perdition into the perdition appointed for him; and pour out the vials of his wrath on all the antichristian states, the time of which is next pointed at:

their foot shall slide in [due] time; there is a time fixed for the reign of antichrist, when it will end, forty two months, or 1260 days; that is, so many years; see Re 11:2; and a little before the expiration of them, his foot will begin to slide, as the slipping of the foot is just before a fall; and then will the foot of antichrist slip and slide, when the witnesses slain by him shall revive and stand upon their feet, and cause fear to fall on them that are on the earth; and when they shall ascend up into heaven, or rise to superior power and authority, greatness and splendour, than they formerly had, and this in the sight of their enemies; and when there will be earthquakes and revolutions in the several antichristian states; and the tenth part of the great city shall fall, and many persons of renown be slain, and others frightened, and will give glory to the God of heaven; when an angel, or a set of Gospel ministers, shall fly in the midst of heaven, with the everlasting Gospel, to preach to all nations; which will be immediately followed by another, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; when the kings of the earth will dislike and resent various things done by the pope of Rome, and shall hate him, and meditate his ruin, and then may his foot be said to slide; see. Re 11:11;

for the day of their calamity [is] at hand; a cloudy day, as the word signifies, when the kingdom of the beast will be full of darkness and confusion, Re 16:10; and when all those calamities shall come upon Babylon, expressed in Re 14:8;

and the things that shall come upon them make haste; even all those evil things God has determined in his counsels and purposes, and which are foretold in prophecy, these shall come upon antichrist in haste; for, though his judgment and damnation may seem to linger and slumber, it shall not; God will hasten it in his due time, and all his judgments will come on Babylon in one day, Re 18:8.

Deuteronomy 32:36

Ver. 36. For the Lord shall judge his people,.... The true church and members of it, in opposition to the false and apostate church; his chosen and covenant people, whom he gave to Christ, and who are redeemed by his blood, and effectually called by his grace; the people he shall call out of Babylon, or preserve from the corruptions of it before its fall; and who are the objects of his love and delight; a distinct, peculiar, and special people, near unto him, and all righteous: these he will judge at this time, distinguish between them and the followers of antichrist; he will take their cause in hand, and plead it, and do justice to them; he will right their wrongs and injuries, and take vengeance on their enemies; he will protect and defend them, reign and rule over them. Now will be the time, when the witnesses slain are raised, that he will take to himself his great power and reign, and the time of the dead when they will be judged, and a reward given to his servants and prophets, to his saints, and all that fear his name; and when he will destroy them that have destroyed the earth, Re 11:17; so the Targum of Jonathan interprets this of the word of the Lord that shall judge his people in mercy:

and repent himself for his servants; by whom are meant not only the ministers of the Gospel, his witnesses that prophesy in sackcloth, and who will be slain when they have finished their testimony; but all that are effectually called by grace, who though they have been the servants of sin, and the vassals of Satan, yet by the grace of God become the servants of God and of righteousness; dislike and cast off their old masters; readily, willingly, and cheerfully, take upon them the yoke of Christ, and freely obey him, constrained by his love, and influenced by views of interest in him: and so serve him without any selfish views, owning that, when they have done all they can, they are but unprofitable servants: now for or on account of these he will repent himself, because of the evils he has suffered to come upon them, being moved with pity, and compassion to them in their miserable circumstances, as they will be in when the witnesses his servants will be slain; not that, properly speaking, repentance is in God; he never changes his mind, counsel, and purposes; he never alters his love, his choice, nor his covenant; or repents of his gifts, and calling of special grace; though he is sometimes said to repent of outward good things he has bestowed, or promised to bestow conditionality; and of evils he has threatened or inflicted; yet this is only to be understood of a change of his outward dealings and dispensations with men, according to his changeable will; and this will be the case now with respect to his servants, whom he will have suffered to be slain, and lie unburied; but repenting or changing his manner of conduct to them will revive them, and cause them to ascend to heaven; see Re 11:11;

when he seeth that [their] power is gone; not the hand and power of the enemy, going and prevailing over them, and strong upon them, as the Targum of

Jonathan and Jarchi; but rather the hand and power of the righteous, as the Targum of Jerusalem; and respects not their internal power and strength, which they have not in themselves, but in Christ; though the exertion of that power, and the exercise of their graces, as faith, and hope, and love, will be greatly declined; but their external power, and protection which they had from Protestant princes; they being removed, and others not like them succeeding, or apostatizing to the church of Rome: the outward court or national establishments are a fence and protection to the inward court worshippers, or servants of God; when that shall be given to the Gentiles, the Papists, as it will, Re 11:2; the power or hand, the protecting sheltering hand of the saints, will be gone, and they will become a prey to their adversaries:

and [there is] none shut up or left; a phrase used to express the miserable state and condition of a people, when none are left, but all are carried off, or cut off, and destroyed, and there is none to help them; see 1Ki 14:10; when there are none shut up in garrisons, and left there to defend a people; or there are none shut up in prison, or any left to till the ground; which is sometimes the case when a nation is conquered, and the greater part are carried captives; but it denotes such a general destruction, that there are none remaining any where, and thus it will be at the slaying of the witnesses. This passage has respect to their dead bodies, which will not be shut up in graves, nor any left to bury them, Re 11:9. There will scarcely be a professor of religion, or any that will appear to favour the witnesses slain in any respect; there will be

"none to support and uphold,"

as the Targum of Jerusalem; not to support and uphold the true religion, or to help the people of God in these their distresses: and when the Lord shall see all this, he will look upon them with an eye of pity and compassion; he will repent for his servants, according to the multitude of his tender mercies; and will plead their cause, and judge them, and will put on the garments of vengeance, and repay fury and recompense to his and their enemies, Isa 59:15; who will insultingly say as follows.

Deuteronomy 32:37

Ver. 37. And he shall say, where [are] their gods?.... Not the Lord shall say to Israel, upbraiding them with their idols and their idolatries; but, as the Targum of Jonathan, "the enemy shall say, where is the God of Israel?"

and to the same purpose is, the Jerusalem Targum, and which is the sense of other Jewish writers {w}; and the words may be rendered impersonally, and in the singular number, "and it shall be said, where is their God?" as it follows,

[their] rock in whom they trusted? that is, it shall be said to the people of God, when in the low estate before described, and which will make it still more distressing; it shall be said to them by their enemies in a sneering way, where is the Lord their God they boasted of, and the rock of salvation in whom they trusted? which agrees with other passages of Scripture, Ps 42:3. The persons insulted and upbraided are the Protestant witnesses at the time of their being slain; when "they that dwell upon the earth", the Papists, "shall rejoice over them", Re 11:10; they are such who are true believers in the God and Father of Christ, as their God and Father in Christ, who of his own free grace has blessed them with all spiritual blessings in him; and who trust in Christ the rock alone for justification before God, for acceptance with him, and for their whole salvation; rejecting the Popish notion of justification by works, the doctrines of merit, and of works of supererogation, and the like; who now will be taunted at, and triumphed over, saying, where is the God of the Protestants they gloried in, as being on their side? and where is their rock on which they say the church is built, and not on Peter?

{w} Aben Ezra & R. Nehemiah in Jarchi in loc.

Deuteronomy 32:38

Ver. 38. Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, [and] drank the wine of their drink offerings,.... Alluding to the fat of the sacrifices under the law, which was claimed by the Lord as his, and represented as his food, **Le 3:11**; and to the drink offerings of wine, which were of a sweet savour to God, and with respect to which wine is said to cheer him, Nu 15:7. Now New Testament worship and services are here expressed in Old Testament language, which is not unusual; see Isa 56:7; and signify the best of the sacrifices and services of true believers in Christ, presenting their souls and bodies unto him as a holy, living, acceptable sacrifice, which is but their reasonable service; offering their sacrifices of prayer and praise unto him through Christ; doing all good works in his name and strength, and all acts of beneficence in love to him and his people, with which sacrifices he is well pleased; yea, cheerfully laying down their lives as victims in his cause, when called unto it. Now these words are a taunt at the Protestant doctrine of the acceptance of the service and sacrifices of believers in Christ, through him, and for his sake, and not for any merit or worthiness in them:

let them rise up and help you; their God and their rock, Jehovah the Father, their covenant God, and his Son the rock of their salvation, in whom they trust; and so they will arise and help them in this time of extreme distress; though they may seem as asleep, and to take no notice of the sad estate of saints, they will arise in wrath and indignation at their enemies, and deliver them out of their hands; the Spirit of life from God shall be sent to bring to life the slain witnesses, and Christ will rise up in the exertion of his kingly power; he will take to himself his great power, and reign, and destroy them that destroyeth the earth, Re 11:11;

[and] be your protection; or "let him be your hiding place" {x}; that is, the rock in whom they trusted, and so he is, and will be "an hiding place the wind, and a covert from the storm", Isa 32:2; not only from the wrath and justice of God, but from the rage and fury of men; Christ will protect and defend his people against all their enemies, and in his own time will deliver them from them; who, in answer to these taunts and derisions, rises up, and thus he says, as follows.

{x} hrto "absconsio", Pagninus, Montanus; "latibulum", Tigurine version; "latebra", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Deuteronomy 32:39

Ver. 39. See now that I, [even] I, [am] he,.... Which words are directed to the people of God in their low estate, to look to Christ, and expect deliverance and salvation from him; or to their enemies that insult them, to the despisers, to look, and wonder, and perish, as they will, when the witnesses slain by them shall arise, and go up to heaven in their sight, Re 11:11; they are spoken by the Word and Son of God, to whom the Father has committed all judgment, and who will now rise up and execute it; so the Targum of Jonathan,

"when the Word of the Lord shall reveal himself to redeem his people, he will say to all people, see now, &c."

and who will declare himself to be the great Jehovah, the self-existent Being, the eternal and immutable I AM; for this phrase is expressive of his existence, eternity, immutability, and sovereignty; and which the above Targum paraphrases thus,

"see now that I am he that have been, and am, and I am he that shall be,"

which, as it is a deciphering the word "Jehovah", is what is applied to Christ, **Re 1:8**. The repeating the word "I", as it may denote the strong affection of the speaker, and the certainty of what he would do, so it may have respect to both sorts of persons the words are directed to, and to the several sorts of things to be done, hereafter related; signifying that it is the same I, that does the one, does also the other, kills and makes alive, &c.

and [there is] no god with me; this the Redeemer and Saviour says elsewhere, Isa 44:6; see De 32:12; there is but one God, and Christ the Word, with the Father and the Spirit, are that one God, **1Jo 5:7**; and there is no other with him; he is the true God, in opposition to all factitious and fictitious gods; he is not a made god, nor a god by office, nor by name and title only, but by nature the one, true, only, and living God; and so it may be most truly believed of him, that he is able to do, and will do, what he next says:

I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: Christ is the sovereign disposer of life and death, of sickness and health, in a temporal sense; and in a spiritual sense he wounds and kills, by the law in the hand of his Spirit; and he heals and makes alive by his Gospel, as it is accompanied by his Spirit and grace also: this is by some referred to the resurrection from the dead, which will be by Christ the resurrection and the life, the earnest, exemplar, and efficient cause of it; so the Targum of Jerusalem,

"I am he that kills the living in this world, and quickens the dead in the world to come:"

but it refers to another resurrection previous to that, namely, the reviving of the witnesses after they have been slain three days; who, as they will be killed in a civil sense, in the same sense they will be quickened by the Spirit of life from Christ; that is, they will be raised from that very low estate into which they will be brought, into a glorious one, signified by their ascending up into heaven; which will be done by Christ when he takes to himself his great power, and reigns; then as he suffered his witnesses and people to be wounded and killed, he will make them alive, and heal them, and restore comforts and happiness to them, see Re 11:11;

neither [is there any] that can deliver out of my hand; for, at the same time that he saves his people, he will take their enemies into his hands, out of which there will be no escape; at this time seven thousand names of men, or men of name, will be slain,
See Gill on "Re 11:13".

Deuteronomy 32:40

Ver. 40. For I lift up my hand to heaven,.... Which is a gesture used in swearing, Ge 14:22, and is ascribed to a divine Person, Eze 20:5; and particularly to Christ the angel, that is so wonderfully described, Re 10:1; though sometimes it is used, as Aben Ezra observes, to excite the attention of hearers, but here it signifies swearing; and so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it,

"I have lift up my hands with an oath to heaven;"

and to the same sense is the Septuagint version:

and say, I live for ever; which is the form of an oath; when men swear, they are to swear, the Lord liveth, or to swear by the living God, and him only, **Jer 4:2**; and when the Lord swears in this manner, he swears by his life, by himself, because he can swear by no greater; and his form of swearing is, "as truly as I live, saith the Lord", Nu 14:21; so the above angel is said to swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, Re 10:6; and since Christ is the living God, without beginning of days, and end of life, and lives for evermore, he may be thought to swear by himself, by his own life, which is for ever; and as the oath of the Lord is used in condescension by him, to confirm the faith of his people in the immutability of his counsel and promises, and to ascertain unto them the sure performance of them; so it is also used to assure wicked men of the certain performance of his threatenings; and it is as if Christ here said, as sure as I am the living God, and do and shall live for ever, I will most certainly do the things which next follow.

Deuteronomy 32:41

Ver. 41. If I whet my glittering sword,.... That is, I will do it as sure as I live, if I do not, be it so and so; what that is is not said, but left to be concluded. A glittering sword is a sword drawn, the blade of it drawn out of the scabbard, cleaned and polished, whetted and made sharp, that it may more easily penetrate and pierce; and this, being brandished, glitters like lightning, as the word used signifies. Whetting the sword is a preparation for doing execution with it; and is a warning, a giving notice of it, as girding: the sword on the thigh also is ascribed to Christ, Ps 45:3. This sword intends a sword of justice, the sharp sword said to proceed out of the mouth of Christ, the judiciary sentence which he will pronounce and execute on antichrist, and all his followers, Re 19:15;

and my hand take hold on judgment: in order to execute it; the allusion is to the laying hold on the instruments of justice and death, as the glittering sword before mentioned, and arrows afterwards; and may have respect to the four sore judgments, or at least to some of them, which the Lord will execute on mystical Babylon, Eze 14:21; and particularly to the seven vials of God's wrath, which will be poured out on the antichristian states, Re 16:1;

I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and I will reward them that hate me; his enemies that hate him, and will not have him to rule over them, are the followers of antichrist, who has his name from his opposition to Christ, his hatred of him, and enmity against him; opposing him in his kingly office, taking upon him to exercise dominion and tyranny over the consciences of men, making new laws, and imposing them on them, and dispensing with the laws of Christ; and setting aside his priestly office by the sacrifice of the Mass, granting pardons and indulgences, and advancing the works and merits of men, in opposition to the righteousness of Christ, and pretending even to works of supererogation; making of none effect, as much as in him lies, his prophetic office, by setting up unwritten traditions before the word of God, and making them the rule of faith and practice, and assuming to himself an infallible interpretation of the sense of Scripture. The vengeance Christ will render, as a righteous reward to those his enemies, is expressed by destroying antichrist with the breath of his mouth; by the beast going into perdition; by leading them captive who have led others; by killing them with the sword who have killed others with it; by pouring out the vials of his wrath on them; by giving them the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; by smiting them with the sword that comes out of his mouth, and by bringing upon them death, mourning, and famine, and burning them with fire; all which he will most surely render unto them, **2Th 2:8**
Re 19:15.

Deuteronomy 32:42

Ver. 42. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,.... Signifying, that by various judgments he would bring upon them, which, like arrows, would come suddenly, fly swiftly, and pierce deeply, there would be a prodigious effusion of blood like that in Re 14:20; so that these arrows, which cause it, being plunged and soaked, and covered in it, may be said to be inebriated with it, just as the sword is said to be bathed and filled with blood, Isa 34:5; which prophecy respects the same vengeance of Christ on the selfsame enemies of his as here; and as the whore of Rome is said to be drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, the arrows of her destruction are represented in just retaliation as drunk with her blood, Re 17:6;

and my sword shall devour flesh: the flesh of kings, of captains, of mighty men, of horses, and of them that sit on them the flesh of all men, bond and free, small and great, Re 19:18; that is, shall destroy great multitudes of men:

[and that] with the blood of the slain, and of the captives; that is, his arrows should be drunk not only with the blood of these that were wounded and killed, but of the captives; who commonly are spared, but in this case should not, their blood should be shed: it may be rendered, "because of the blood of the slain", &c. {y}; because of the blood of the saints whom they have killed, and carried captive, and who have died in prisons:

from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy; or "of the enemy"; that is, from the time the enemy began to oppress the saints, and take revenge on them, and shed their blood; all that blood shall be found in them that has been from the beginning shed, and charged to their account, and revenged on them; just as the blood of all the righteous, from the beginning of the world, was brought upon the Jews, Mt 23:35. The Targum of Jerusalem is,

"from the heads of their mighty men, the generals of their armies;"

to, which agrees the Septuagint version,

"from the head of the princes of the enemies;"

and so may refer to the head or heads of the antichristian people, the pope of Rome, and his princes, the cardinals, and all the antichristian kings and states, the captains and generals of their armies, which will be brought to Armageddon, and there destroyed, see Ps 68:21.

{y} Mdm "propter sanguinem", Pagninus, Tigurine version.

Deuteronomy 32:43

Ver. 43. Rejoice, O ye nations, [with] his people,.... Or, "rejoice, ye nations", who are "his" people; so Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; the Gentiles, who are the Lord's chosen and covenant people, redeemed and called, and the fulness of them now brought in, and so matter of great rejoicing; or rather, as the Septuagint, which is approved and confirmed by the Apostle Paul, "rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people", Ro 15:10; and as it is there applied to the then state of the Christian church, when Jews and Gentiles were incorporated and united together; so here it respects future time, when, as the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in, so the Jews will be converted, and the "loammi", **Ho 1:9**, will be taken off from them, and they will be reckoned among the people of God; and Jews and Gentiles will be joined together in the same Gospel church state, and so are called upon to rejoice in their common salvation, and in their common blessings and privileges, and particularly for what follows:

for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries; by his servants are meant the martyrs of Jesus, whose blood has been shed by antichrist, and the antichristian powers, his adversaries; as the blood of the Waldenses in the valleys of Piedmont, the Albigenses in Spain, and the Petrobrussians in France, the Bohemians in Germany, the Wickliffites, Lollards and the "martyrs" in Queen Mary's days in England, with many others; and when inquisition is made for blood, the blood of those will be found out, and vengeance rendered for it:

and will be merciful unto his land, [and] to his people: or "will atone for" {z}, expiate, cleanse, and purge both land and people; clear the whole earth, which is the Lord's, from Mahometanism, Paganism, and Popery, and cover it with the knowledge of the Lord by the everlasting Gospel, which will be preached to all nations; and particularly the land of Canaan, laid under an anathema or curse, as threatened, **Mal 4:6**; under which it has lain ever since the destruction of it by the Romans, and has ever since been inhabited by Pagans, Mahometans, and Papists; and, though once a land flowing with milk and honey, has been turned into a barren wilderness, and will thus remain, and Jerusalem, its metropolis, trodden down by the Gentiles, until their times are fulfilled; which now will be, and then it will be restored to its former fruitfulness and fertility, Lu 21:24; and will be inhabited by the converted

Jews, to whom the Lord will be pacified, upon the foot or Christ's atonement, which now will be made known and applied unto them, with the full and free pardon of all their sins, Ro 11:25; and thus ends this most excellent and wonderful song, which is of such a large extent and compass, as to reach from the beginning of the Jewish nation, and before it, to the conversion of the Jews in the latter day; an history of more than four thousand years already; and how long more is yet to come before all in it is fulfilled no man call say.

{z} rpk "propitiabitur", Pagninus, Montanus; "expiabit", Vatablus; "expiat", Junius & Tremellius.

Deuteronomy 32:44

Ver. 44. And Moses came,.... To the people, as the Greek version, the heads of the people being gathered together according to his order, De 31:28; The Targum of Jonathan says, he came from the tabernacle, the house of instruction:

and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people; which is observed both before and after the reading of it, to show the certainty of it, and how punctually and faithfully he had delivered it:

he, and Hoshea the son of Nun; the same with Joshua, whose name at first was Hoshea, Nu 13:16, probably Joshua read the song to one part of the people, while Moses read it to the other.

Deuteronomy 32:45

Ver. 45. And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel. Finished all he had to say to them from the Lord, whether by way of precept, moral, civil, and ceremonial or in the form of a song.

Deuteronomy 32:46

Ver. 46. And he said unto them,.... By way of exhortation:

set your hearts to all the words which I testify among you this day; it was not enough to hear them, but they were to lay them up in their hearts, and retain them in their memories; and not only so, but reflect on them in their minds, and closely apply to the consideration of them, and get the true knowledge and sense of them, and put it in practice:

which ye shall command your children to observe, to do all the words of this law; which shows that the exhortation does not respect the song only, but the whole law delivered in this book; which they were not only to attend to themselves, but to transmit to their children, and enjoin them the observance of, that so religion might be perpetuated in their posterity.

Deuteronomy 32:47

Ver. 47. For it [is] not a vain thing for you,.... That is, the law is not, and the observance of it in them and their children; it was no light and trifling matter, but of great importance and consequence, obedience to it being attended with rewards, and disobedience with punishment:

because it [is] your life: if obeyed, the means of a comfortable and happy life, in the enjoyment of all good things, of the preservation and continuance of it to a length of time; and long life was always reckoned a great temporal mercy:

and through this thing ye shall prolong [your] days in the land whither you go over Jordan to possess it; that is, through their obedience to the law they should live long in the land of Canaan, which they were just going to possess; which explains what is meant by its being their life; their comfortable living and continuance in the land depended on their obedience to the law; see **Isa 1:19**.

Deuteronomy 32:48

Ver. 48. And the Lord spake unto Moses the selfsame day,.... On which he finished the reading of the law, and the above song, which was the seventh of Adar or February; according to the Targum of Jonathan, the day he died on; according to the Egyptian Calendar {a}, it was the sixteenth of that month, see De 34:5;

saying; as follows.

{a} Apud Ludolf. Lex. Ethiop. p. 537.

Deuteronomy 32:49

Ver. 49. Get thee up into this mountain Abarim,.... Which was near in sight, and pointed at; it was a range of mountains, of which see
Nu 21:11;

[unto] Mount Nebo; which was one of the mountains of Abarim, and had its name either from its height, or a city of this name, to which it was near, see Nu 32:38; Jerom says {b}, in his lays it was shown six miles from Heshbon to the east; it should be read, to the west:

which [is] in the land of Moab; it formerly belonged to it, but was taken from he Moabites by Sihon, and now possessed by Israel:

that [is] over against Jericho; which lay on the other side of Jordan, in the land of Canaan:

and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession; which he might take a view of from the high mountain of Nebo, especially his sight being strengthened by the Lord, as no doubt it was; and this would give him a pleasure to behold, though he might not go into it, and confirm his faith that Israel would possess it, as well as be an emblem to him of the heavenly Canaan he was going to inherit.

{b} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. N.

Deuteronomy 32:50

Ver. 50. And die in the mount whither thou goest up,.... Immediately after having taken a view of the land, expect to die, prepare for it, and willingly and cheerfully submit to it:

and be gathered unto thy people; to the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, his more immediate and more remote ancestors, the souls of good men; for otherwise there were none that died, and were buried here, before him, and therefore can have no respect to the buryingplace of his people:

as Aaron thy brother died in Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people; of

which Moses was an eyewitness; and which is observed, because there was a great likeness between the death of him, and what Moses was now called to, both as to the place and manner of it; and likewise the cause of it, later mentioned; as also to make death more easy and familiar, and less terrible to him, when he cared to mind how calmly, cheerfully, and comfortably, his brother Aaron died; see
Nu 20:25.

Deuteronomy 32:51

Ver. 51. Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel,.... By their unbelief, doubting whether God would give water or no to such a rebellious people, and by giving way to passion and wrathful expressions: and this was done

at the waters of Meribahkadesh; so called, to distinguish it from another Meribah, where also there was a contention on account of water, Nu 20:13:

in the wilderness of Zin; where Kadesh was, and further describes and distinguishes this place; of the one we read in Ex 17:7; and of the other, which is here referred to, in Nu 20:1;

because ye sanctified me not in, the midst of the children of Israel; through their unbelief and disagreeable behaviour, they sanctified him not themselves, and gave no honour to him, nor were the cause of his being sanctified by the Israelites; and this was the reason why Moses and Aaron might not enter into the land of Canaan, Nu 20:12.

Deuteronomy 32:52

Ver. 52. Yet thou shalt see the land before [thee],.... Which Jarchi interprets, afar off; and so does Noldius {c}; he saw it at a distance, as the Old Testament saints saw the things promised afar off, and were persuaded of them, though they did not enjoy them, Heb 11:13:

but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel; the land of Canaan was a gift of God to Israel, into which they were not to be introduced by Moses, but by Joshua; signifying that eternal life, or the heavenly Canaan, is the gift of God through Christ, the antitype of Joshua, and not to obtained by the works of the law.

{c} Ebr. part. Concord. p. 626. so Ainsworth.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 33:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 33

This chapter relates the blessings Moses pronounced upon the people of Israel a little before his death; first, in general, on account of their having a law given them in so glorious a manner, De 33:1; then, in particular, each of the tribes distinctly is blessed, Reuben, De 33:6; Judah, De 33:7; Levi, De 33:8; Benjamin, De 33:12; Joseph, De 33:13; Zebulun and Issachar, De 33:18; Gad, De 33:20; Dan, De 33:22; Naphtali, De 33:23; Asher, De 33:24; and the chapter is concluded with some strong intimations of what God was unto the people of Israel in general, and of what he had done and would do for them; all which are expressive of their great happiness, De 33:26.

Ver. 1. And this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. Namely, what is related in the following verses, this being the general title to the chapter: Moses is called "the man of God", being raised up of God, and eminently qualified by him with girls for the work he was called unto, and by whom he was inspired to say what is after expressed: it is a title given to prophets, **1Sa 9:6**; and so Onkelos here paraphrases it,

"Moses the prophet of the Lord,"

and Aben Ezra observes, that this is said to show that he blessed Israel by a spirit of prophecy, and which he did a little before his death, when very near it; and, as the same writer says, on the very day of his death.

Deuteronomy 33:2

Ver. 2. And he said,.... What follows, of which, in some things, he was an eye and ear witness, and in others was inspired by the Spirit of God, to deliver his mind and will concerning the future case and state of the several tribes, after he had observed the common benefit and blessing they all enjoyed, by having such a law given them in the manner it was:

the Lord came from Sinai; there he first appeared to Moses, and sent him to Egypt, and wrought miracles by him, and delivered his people Israel from thence, and when they were come to this mount he came down on it, as Aben Ezra, from Gaon, or he came "to" it; so to Zion, Isa 59:20, is "out of" or "from Zion", Ro 11:26; here he appeared and gave the law, and from thence went with Israel through the wilderness, and conducted them to the land of Canaan:

and rose up from Seir unto them: not to the Edomites which inhabited Seir, as say Jarchi, and the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, but to the Israelites when they compassed the land of Edom; and the Lord was with them, and gave them some signal proofs of his power and providence, kindness and goodness, to them; particularly, as some observe, by appointing a brazen serpent to be erected for the cure those bitten by fiery ones, which was a type of the glorious Redeemer and Saviour, and this was done on the borders of Edom, see Nu 21:4; for the words here denote some illustrious appearance of the Lord, like that of the rising sun; so the Targum of Onkelos,

"the brightness of his glory from Seir was shown unto us;"

and that of Jonathan,

"and the brightness of the glory of his Shechinah went from Gebal:"

he shined forth from Mount Paran: in which the metaphor of the sun rising is continued, and as expressive of its increasing light and splendour: near to this mount was a wilderness of the same name, through which the children of Israel travelled, and where the Lord appeared to them: here the cloud rested when they removed from Sinai; here, or near it, the Spirit of the Lord was given to the seventy elders, and from hence the spies were sent into the land of Canaan, Nu 10:12; in this wilderness Ishmael and his posterity dwelt, Ge 21:21; but it was not to them the Lord shone forth here, as say the above Jewish writers, and others {d}; but to the Israelites, for here Moses repeated the law, or delivered to them what is contained in the book of Deuteronomy, see **De 1:1**; beside, in a literal sense, as these mountains were very near one another, as Saadiah Gaon observes, the great light which shone on Mount Sinai, when the Lord descended on it, might extend to the other mountains and illuminate them, see **Hab 3:3**;

and he came with ten thousands of saints: or holy angels, as the Targums of

Onkelos and Jonathan, and so Jarchi; which sense is confirmed by the authorities of Stephen the protomartyr, and the Apostle Paul, who speak of the law as given by the disposition of angels, they being present, attending and assisting on that solemn occasion, **Ac 7:57**; see Ps 68:17; the appearance of those holy spirits in such great numbers added to the grandeur and solemnity of the giving of the holy law to the people of Israel, as the attendance of the same on Christ at his second coming will add to the lustre and glory of it, **Lu 9:26**;

from his right hand [went] a fiery law for them: the Israelites; Aben Ezra thinks the phrase, "his right hand", is in connection with the preceding clause; and the sense is, that fire came from the law, thousands of saints were at the right hand of God to surround Israel, as the horses of fire and chariots of fire surrounded Elisha; and the meaning of the last words, "a law for them", a law which stands or abides continually; and so the Septuagint version is,

"at his right hand angels with him:"

no doubt that law is meant which came from God on Mount Sinai, by the ministration of angels, into the hand of Moses; called a fiery law, because it was given out of the midst of the fire, **De 5:26**; so the Targum of Onkelos,

"the writing of his right hand out of the midst of fire, the law he gave unto us;"

and because of its effects on the consciences of men, where it pierces and penetrates like fire, and works a sense of wrath and fiery indignation in them, by reason of the transgressions of it, it being the ministration of condemnation and death on that account; and, because of its use, it serves as a lantern to the feet, and a light to the path of good men: this law may include the judicial and ceremonial laws given at this time; but it chiefly respects the moral law, and which may be said to come from God, who, as Creator, has a right to be Governor of his creature, and to enact what laws he pleases, and from his right hand, in allusion to men's writing with their right hand, this being written by the finger of God; and because a peculiar gift of his to the Israelites, gifts being given by the right hand of men; and may denote the authority and power with which this law came enforced, and Christ seems to be the person from whose right hand it came: see
Ps 68:17.

{d} Vid. Pirke Eliezer, c. 41.

Deuteronomy 33:3

Ver. 3. Yea, he loved the people,.... The people of Israel, of which his giving the law to them in such a glorious manner was an instance, and was a distinguishing blessing which other nations were not favoured with, see **De 4:6**; how much more is the love of God shown to his spiritual Israel and special people, by giving them his Gospel, the precious truths, promises, and ordinances of it, and, above all, in giving them his Son to be the Redeemer and Saviour of them, as revealed therein! these he embraces in his arms and in his bosom, as the word here signifies; admitting them to great nearness and familiarity with him, to commune with Father, Son, and Spirit, to a participation of all the blessings of grace here, and to the enjoyment of glory hereafter:

all his saints [are] in thy hand; not the sons of Levi, who were round about the ark, as Aben Ezra interprets it; rather all the people of Israel, who were chosen to be an holy people to the Lord above all people, and who were the care of his providence, protected by his power, and guided with his right hand; and were in a wonderful manner kept and preserved by him, both at the time of the giving of the law, and in their passage through the wilderness; it is eminently true of the chosen people of God, who are given to Christ, and made his care and charge, as all such who are sanctified and set apart by God the Father are, they are preserved in Christ, **Jude 1:1**; and these are sanctified in and by Christ, and by the Spirit of Christ, and so may be truly called his saints; and they are in the hands of Christ, as dear to him as his right hand, highly valued by him, held in his right hand; they are in his possession, are his peculiar people, portion, and inheritance, they are at his dispose, under his guidance and direction; and are in his custody and under his protection, and where they are safe from every enemy, and can never be snatched, taken, or removed from thence; see Joh 10:28; here they are put by the Father, as an instance of his love to them, and care of them, though not without the consent and desire of the Son, and this was done in eternity, when they were chosen in him:

and they sat down at thy feet; which may respect the position of the Israelites at the bottom of Mount Sinai, while the law was giving, which may be said to be the feet of the Lord, he being on the top of the mount, see Ex 19:17; all the Targums interpret it of the feet of the cloud of glory, they pitching their tents where that rested, **Nu 9:17**; some think it an allusion to scholars sitting at the feet of their masters to receive instructions from them, see Ac 22:3; so the disciples and followers of Christ sit at his feet, attending on his word and ordinances with calmness and serenity of mind, with much spiritual pleasure and delight, and where they continue and abide; and which may denote their modesty and humility, their subjection to his ordinances, and readiness to receive his doctrines, and their perseverance in them, see **Mr 5:15**; the word signifies, in the Arabic language, to sit down at a table {e}, and so the word is used in the Arabic version of **Mt 8:11**; and the ancient manner being reclining, the guests might be said to sit at the feet of each, especially at the feet of the master; so Christ sits at his table, and his people with him at his feet, **So 1:12**;

[everyone] shall receive of thy words; of the words of the law, as the Israelites, who heard them and promised obedience to them, Ex 24:7; and would hear and receive them again, **Jos 8:34**; and so Christ's disciples, everyone of them that hath heard and learned of the Father, and comes to him, and believes in him, receives the words or doctrines given him by the Father, Joh 17:8; so as to understand them, approve of them, love them, believe them, and act according to them; these they receive into their hearts as well as into their heads, with all readiness, gladness, and meekness; even everyone of the persons before described or loved by the Lord, are in the hands of Christ and sitting at his feet.

{e} Hence akt, "a table", with the Talmudists. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 42. 1. Pesach. fol. 110. 2. Kiddushin, fol. 81. 1.

Deuteronomy 33:4

Ver. 4. Moses commanded us a law,.... The law was of God, it came forth from his right hand, De 33:2; it is of his enacting, a declaration of his will, and has his authority stamped upon it, who is the lawgiver, and which lays under obligation to regard it; but it was delivered to Moses, and by him to the children of Israel, on whom he urged obedience to it; and so it is said to come by him, and sometimes is called the law of Moses, see **Joh 1:17**;

[even] the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob; which either describes the persons who were commanded to keep the law, the tribes of Jacob or congregation of Israel, who were the Lord's people, portion, and inheritance, De 32:9; or the law commanded, which was to be valued, not only as a peculiar treasure, but to be considered a possession, an estate, an inheritance, to be continued among them, and to be transmitted to their posterity, see Ps 119:111; these are the words of the people of Israel, and therefore are thus prefaced in the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem,

"the children of Israel said, Moses commanded, &c."

they were represented by Moses.

Deuteronomy 33:5

Ver. 5. And he was king in Jeshurun,.... That is, in Israel, or over the people of Israel, of which name of theirs, See Gill on "De 32:15"; either God, as Jarchi; for the government of the Israelites was a theocracy, and their laws were immediately from God, and by him they were guided and directed in all things; wherefore, when they were so importunate for a change in their government, and to have a king over them, they are said to reject the Lord, that he should not reign over them, **1Sa 8:7**; or Moses, as Aben Ezra on the place, Maimonides {f}, and others {g}; who, under God, had the civil government of the Hebrews; both may be received, God was the supreme Governor, and Moses the chief magistrate under him:

when the heads of Israel [and] the tribes of the people were gathered together; at Mount Sinai, to hear the law there and then given, or to hear it repeated by Moses, as in this book of Deuteronomy, who were at different times convened together for that purpose, see **De 1:1**; next follow the particular blessings of the several tribes, beginning with Reuben the firstborn.

{f} In Misn. Shebuot, c. 2. sect. 2. {g} Philo de Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 681.

Deuteronomy 33:6

Ver. 6. Let Reuben live, and not die,.... As a tribe, continue and not be extinct, though they should not excel, because of the sin of their progenitor; and it may have a special regard to the preservation of them, of their families on the other side Jordan, while they passed over it with their brethren into Canaan, and of them in that expedition to help the other tribes in the conquest of the country and the settlement of them in it; which Jacob by a spirit of prophecy foresaw, and in a prayer of faith petitioned for their safety: all the three Targums refer the words to a future state, as a wish for them, that they might live and enjoy an eternal life, and not die the death of the wicked in the world to come; and which they call the second death, and from whom the Apostle John seems to have borrowed the phrase, **Re 2:11**

Re 20:6; Reuben signifies, "see the Son"; and all that see the Son of God in a spiritual manner, and believe in him with a true faith, as they live spiritually now, shall live eternally hereafter, and never die the second or eternal death; on them that shall have no power, see **Joh 6:40**;

and let [not] his men be few; or, "though his men be few?" as Bishop Patrick chooses to render the words, and as they will bear, w, "vau", being sometimes so used, of which Noldius {h} gives instances; and the number of men in this tribe were but few in comparison of some others; and so those that see the Son of God and believe in him are but a small number; for all men have not faith. **2Th 3:2**

{h} Concord. part. Ebr. p. 292.

Deuteronomy 33:7

Ver. 7. And this [is the blessing] of Judah,.... Which follows; the same supplement of the words is made in the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; but Aben Ezra thinks it refers to what goes before, that this, the same thing prayed for or prophesied of Reuben, belongs also to Judah, that he should live and not die; it may be in the wars in which that tribe would be and was engaged:

and he said, hear, Lord, the voice of Judah; in prayer, as all the Targums paraphrase it, which was eminently fulfilled in David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and other kings, which were of this tribe; who, when in distress, lifted up their voice in prayer to God, and were heard and delivered, as the Lord's people in all ages are: Judah signifies professing, confessing, praising, &c. this tribe was both a praying and praising people, as all good men be; they profess the name of the Lord, and their faith in him; they confess their sins and unworthiness; they praise the Lord for his mercies, temporal and spiritual, and pray to him for what they want; and their voice is heard with pleasure, and answered: particularly Judah was a type of Christ, who was of this tribe, and whose voice in prayer for his people has been always heard:

and bring him unto his people; in peace, often engaged war, so all the Targums: and as it may refer to Christ his antitype, it may respect his incarnation, when he came to his own and was not received by them; and to his resurrection from the dead, when he appeared to his disciples, to their great joy; and to the ministry of the Gospel among the Gentiles, when to him was the gathering of the people; and will be further accomplished at the last day, when he shall return and appear to them that look for him, a second time, without sin unto salvation:

let his hands be sufficient for him; both to work with, and provide for themselves all the necessaries of life, and to fight with their enemies, and defend themselves against them; so Christ's hands have been sufficient, or he has had a sufficiency of power and strength in his hands, to combat with and overcome all his and our enemies, to work out the salvation of his people, and to supply all their wants:

and be thou an help [to him] from his enemies: which this tribe often experienced in their wars with their enemies, being very warlike and courageous, successful and victorious, both before they had kings and in the several kings of their tribe, as David, Jehoshaphat, and others; and was remarkably fulfilled in Christ, whose helper the Lord was as man and Mediator, see **Isa 1:7**; no mention is made of Simeon, because of the affair of Baalpeor, in which that tribe had a great concern, Nu 25:1; as Aben Ezra observes; or because, according to Jacob's prophecy, it was to be scattered in Israel; though the same is also said of Levi, who yet is here blessed; rather therefore the reason is, because Simeon had his inheritance in the midst of the tribe of Judah, and so was blessed in it, see Jos 19:1; thus the Targum of Jonathan expresses it here,

"and he joined in his portion and in his blessing, Simeon his brother;"

some copies of the Septuagint version, as that in the king of Spain's Bible, make mention of him at the end of Reuben's blessing,

"and let Simeon be much in number."

Deuteronomy 33:8

Ver. 8. And of Levi he said,.... That is, Moses said of the tribe of Levi, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem:

[let] thy Thummim and thy Urim [be] with thy Holy One; with Aaron, as the same Targums interpret it, who was of the tribe of Levi, and was a holy good man, a saint of the Lord, as he is called, Ps 106:16; of the Urim and Thummim, which were with him and with every high priest,

See Gill on "Ex 28:30"; and though they were not in use under the second temple, yet had their fulfilment in Christ the antitype of Aaron, who may be chiefly here intended; who is after called the Lord's Holy One, as he is, both as God and man, holy in both his natures, divine and human, and in his life and actions; and with him are the true Urim and Thummim, lights and perfections, the light of nature, grace and glory, and all perfections, both divine and human; See Gill on "Ex 28:30" {i}:

whom thou didst prove at Massah, [and with] whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; which, as it may respect Aaron, may be understood either of the Lord's proving him and contending with him, by suffering the children of Israel to murmur against him and Moses, at the said places; when, according to the three Targums, he stood in the temptation, and was perfect and found faithful; or of Levi, who, with the rest of the tribes, tried him, and strove with him at the same places; though Jarchi says they did not murmur with the rest that murmured: as it may refer to Christ the antitype of Levi, the sense is, that the Urim and Thummim should be with the Holy One, the Messiah, whom thou, O Levi, with the rest of the tribes, tempted and strove with at the places mentioned; for it is expressly said, they tempted the Lord, Ex 17:7; and which is interpreted of Christ, 1Co 10:9.

{i} See a Sermon of mine on this text, called "Levi's Urim and Thummim Found with Christ".

Deuteronomy 33:9

Ver. 9. Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him,.... Which some understand of the high priests who were of this tribe, and according to the law were not to defile themselves, or mourn for a father or mother, Le 21:11; or rather, as others, of their having no respect to them in judgment, but determining all causes that came before them according to the law of God, and the rules of justice and equity, in the most impartial manner, without having any regard to the nearest relations to them: with this compare what Christ the antitype of Levi says, in Mt 12:49;

neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children; had no respect to persons in judgment, though ever so nearly related: many restrain this to the affair of the golden calf, when the tribe of Levi gathered together, girded their swords on their thighs, and slew every man his brother, companion, and neighbour, guilty of that idolatry, Ex 32:26;

for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant; the law of God, spoken by him, and had the nature of a covenant with the people of Israel: this the tribe of Levi observed, not only what respects the worship of God, and the contrary to it, idolatry, but all other moral and religious duties; Christ fulfilled the whole law, and did always and all things what pleased the Lord, **Joh 8:29**.

Deuteronomy 33:10

Ver. 10. They shall teach Jacob thy statutes, and Israel thy law,.... The priests and Levites, being dispersed among each of the tribes, having cities in them allotted to them, taught the people the laws, statutes, and ordinances of the Lord, moral, civil, and ceremonial, see **Mal 2:6**;

they shall put incense before thee; upon the altar of incense, which none but a priest might do, as the case of Uzziah shows; and which, the Jews say {k}, he might do but once: the same priest might not offer incense twice; a new priest was always employed: in this they, were typical of Christ, the only Intercessor who is always at the golden altar, to offer up the prayers of all saints with his much incense, **Re 8:3**;

and whole burnt offerings upon thine altar; the altar of burnt offering, typical of Christ, who is both altar, sacrifice, and priest.

{k} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 26. 1.

Deuteronomy 33:11

Ver. 11. Bless, Lord, his substance,.... Which lay in tithes, firstfruits, &c. for the priests and Levites had no share in the division of the land; unless this can be understood of the cities and suburbs which were given them, or of houses and fields devoted, which fell unto them, or rather of their cattle, for the use of which they had suburbs appointed them; for otherwise in husbandry and merchandise they were not employed: some render it "an host" or army {l}, their service being a militia, or warfare, **Nu 4:3**; Jarchi refers this to the Hasmonaeans or Maccabees, which were of this tribe;

and accept the work of his hands; in offering incense and sacrifices, and all other administrations of the office of priests and Levites; thus the righteousness and sacrifice of Christ are of a sweet smelling savour, and very acceptable to God; and all the spiritual sacrifices of the saints who are priests unto God, as of prayer and praise, are acceptable to him through Jesus Christ:

smite through the loins of them that rise against him; such as were the companies of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and in all ages faithful ministers of the word meet with many enemies, whom they would not be, able to withstand were not the Lord to appear for them, and protect them from them, and smite them thoroughly:

and of them that hate them, that they rise not again; destroying them with an utter destruction, so that they are not able to make any other efforts upon them; for such who are enemies to the priests of the Lord are enemies to him, and to true religion, enemies to God and Christ, to the law and to the Gospel, to the word of God and to the ordinances of it, and therefore to be severely handled and thoroughly punished: Christ's enemies shall all be subdued under him; see Ps 110:1.

{l} wlyx "copiis ejus", Junius & Tremellius; "[vel] exercitibus ejus", Piscator.

Deuteronomy 33:12

Ver. 12. [And] of Benjamin he said,.... The tribe of Benjamin, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; which is taken notice of next to Levi, because, as the priesthood was in the tribe of Levi, the temple in which the priests officiated was in the tribe of Benjamin, or near it; and is observed next but one to Judah, and before his elder brother Joseph, because his tribe lay between Judah and Joseph, Jos 18:11; and Levi having no inheritance in the land:

the beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; this is commonly understood of the tribe of Benjamin, beloved by the Lord, as the head of the tribe was by his father Jacob; the first king of Israel being of that tribe, and the temple built in it, or on the edge of it, and its land the most fat and fertile of the land of Canaan, as Josephus {m} observes; and may be said to "dwell by him", the Lord, because the tabernacle of the Lord was so near that tribe, and so to dwell "in safety" under his protection, and which was the means of preserving it from apostasy, when ten tribes revolted: though the Messiah may be intended, the Son of God, and man of God's right hand, the antitype of Benjamin, the beloved of the Lord, and dear son of his love; his Benjamin, who is now in human nature exalted at his right hand: and this may denote his inhabitation in the flesh, and dwelling by or near Benjamin, being born at Bethlehem in the tribe of Judah, bordering on Benjamin, and frequently had his abode in Jerusalem, which was in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:28; and where he was in safety amidst his enemies, they not having power to lay hold on him until his hour was come:

[and the Lord] shall cover him all the day long; for ever, as Jarchi notes, because that, after Jerusalem was chosen, the divine Majesty dwelt in no other place: this may be understood either of the Messiah covering Benjamin and protecting him, as he is the covert of all his Benjamites and beloved ones, from all their enemies, from all evils and dangers, from all storms and tempests, and everything troublesome and distressing, see Isa 32:2; or the Lord's covering his beloved One the Messiah; as he did in his infancy, from the designs of Herod upon his life, and from the attempts of others before his time was come; he hid him in the shadow of his hand, Isa 49:2;

and he shall dwell between his shoulders; either the Lord shall dwell between the shoulders of Benjamin; the temple in which the Lord dwelt was built on Mount Moriah, in the tribe of Benjamin, in the highest part of his land, as Jarchi notes; the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase the words,

"in his border the Shechinah (or the glory of the Shechinah of the Lord) shall dwell,"

for if the temple was not within the tribe of Benjamin, yet it was certainly on the borders of it: or Benjamin shall dwell between the shoulders of the Lord, being bore up and supported by him: Christ dwells in the hearts of his people, and over them as an head, and they dwell upon his shoulders, on which the care and government of them lies, **Isa 9:6**; in the Talmud {n} this passage is applied to the days of the Messiah.

{m} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22. {n} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 118. 2.

Deuteronomy 33:13

Ver. 13. And of Joseph he said,.... The tribe of Joseph, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem:

blessed of the Lord [be] his land; as the lands inherited by his sons were extremely fruitful, the countries of lead and Bashan by Manasseh, and the fields of Samaria by Ephraim: Jarchi says,

"there was not in the inheritance of the tribes a land so full of all good things as the land of Joseph;"

typical of the church of Christ, the antitypical Joseph, which abounds with all good things through him, or of the better country in heaven:

for the precious things of heaven; that is, the pleasant, precious, and excellent fruits, reproduced by the influence of the heavens, particularly showers of rain which descend from thence; emblems of the grace of God, and Gospel of Christ, which bring spiritual blessings to the sons of men on earth, and make them fruitful in every good word and work: for the dew; which descends also from heaven, and is of unspeakable use to the fruits of the earth, and is sometimes used as an emblem of the favour and goodness of God to his people, Ho 14:5;

and for the deep that coucheth beneath; that is, beneath the earth, and breaks out upon it, and waters it, and makes it fruitful, which happiness the land of Joseph had, as well as the rain and dew of heaven: this is to be understood of springs and fountains that flow out of the earth to the enriching of it; and so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase the words, and may be applied to Christ and to his Gospel, **So 4:15**.

Deuteronomy 33:14

Ver. 14. And for the precious fruits [brought forth] by the sun,.... Which has a wonderful influence upon many and most of the fruits of the earth, to produce them out of their seeds in it, to bring them forward, to ripen and perfect them, and to make them rich and excellent. Jarchi says,

"the land of Joseph lay open to the sun, and it sweetened the fruits of it;"

it improved them, and made them more valuable; and this is spiritually true of Christ the sun of righteousness, to whose influence are owing the blessings of grace, redemption, peace, pardon, and justification, and the graces of the Spirit, faith, hope, and love, and by what believers are filled with, the fruits of righteousness, see **Mal 4:2**;

and for the precious things put forth by the moon; the fruits which the moon helps forward by its coolness and moisture; and those the above Jewish writer says are cucumbers and gourds; and as various creatures are affected by the moon, it is observed by a naturalist {o}, that onions, when the moon waxes old, increase, and flag when it is young; and Pliny says {p}, that at the increase of the moon all sort of corn grows bigger and larger; but a late learned writer {q} remarks, that though upon the pressure of the moon on the globe many things depend, as the ebbing and flowing of the sea, epileptic and convulsive paroxysms, yet it does not appear that this pressure exerts its power on plants, so as to thrust them forth, and therefore thinks this respects the ejection or protrusion of monthly fruits; for the word here used is in the plural number, and signifies "months"; and so Onkelos paraphrases the words,

"it produces precious fruits at the beginning of every month;"

or ripe fruit at the beginning of every month, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; for the spiritual meaning, see Re 22:2.

{o} Dalecamp. in Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 41. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 30. {q} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 437.

Deuteronomy 33:15

Ver. 15. And for the chief things of the ancient mountains,.... Which were from the beginning of the world, and for which the land, possessed by the children of Joseph, Manasseh, and Ephraim, were famous; as the mountains of Gilead and Bashan, inherited by the former, and Mount Ephraim, and the mountains of Samaria, by the latter; which produced, besides great quantities of grass and corn, also vines, figs, olives, &c.

and for the precious things of the lasting hills; which will endure as long as the world, the same as before in other words; and which precious things may be emblems of the spiritual blessings of grace, provided in an everlasting covenant, and given to Christ for his people before the world began, or any mountains and hills were formed, and which are as lasting and as immovable as they are; see **Pr 8:22**, Isa 54:10.

Deuteronomy 33:16

Ver. 16. And for the precious things of the earth, and fulness thereof,.... Corn of all sorts produced out of the earth, and grass that grows out of it, and cattle that feed upon it; for all which some part of the land of Joseph, particularly Bashan, was famous; as for the oaks that grew on it, so for the pasturage of it, and the cattle it bred, De 32:14; see Ps 22:12;

and [for] the good will of him that dwelt in the bush; the angel of the Lord, the Word and Son of God, who appeared to Moses in the bush, and made himself known as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and expressed his good will to Israel, by sending Moses to deliver them out of their bondage: and the favour and good will of the same divine Person is here wished for, and which has appeared in his assumption of human nature, obedience, sufferings, and death, **Lu 2:14**. The bush was an emblem of Israel, and the state they were then in, and of the church of Christ; of which See Gill on "Ex 3:2"; and where Christ may be said to dwell, as he did among men, when he was made flesh, and does dwell in the midst of his churches, and in the hearts of his people by faith:

let [the blessing] come upon the head of Joseph; that is, in all things, as Onkelos; or all these blessings, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; all before mentioned, let them come openly and visibly, and in great plenty, upon the posterity of Joseph, who was a type of Christ, the head of the righteous, on whom all the blessings of grace are, and from whom they descend to all his spiritual offspring, Pr 10:6;

and upon the top of the head of him [that was] separated from his brethren; when he was sold by them into Egypt; the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem are,

"and was shining in the glory of his brethren;"

that is, when he was a ruler in Egypt, and had honour from his brethren there, and was beautiful and glorious among them, as a Nazarite, as the word here used signifies, see **La 4:7**; and may he applied to Christ, who was chosen from among the people, and separated from sinners, and called a Nazarene, Ps 89:19.

Deuteronomy 33:17

Ver. 17. His glory [is like] the firstling of his bullock,.... Such as were in Bashan, a country possessed by the posterity of Joseph, see

Ps 22:12; and so might be called "his" bullock, or a young bull, was reckoned both comely and majestic; so Menis or Mnevis, king of Egypt, preferred a bull above all animals to be worshipped, because the most beautiful of all, as Aelianus {w} relates; and Astarte, according to Sanchoniatho {x}, put a bull's head upon her own, as a sign of royalty or kingly power. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem refer this to the birthright which belonged to Reuben, and was taken from him, and given to Joseph, see **1Ch 5:2**. Some will have Joshua intended by the firstling of his bullock, so Jarchi; who was of the tribe of Ephraim, and so famous for his strength and courage, his warlike exploits and victories, and the glory, honour, and renown he obtained; and who was a type of Christ, the first and only begotten Son of God, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; this is applied to the Messiah in some ancient Jewish writings {y}:

and his horns [are like] the horns of unicorns; of the monoceros or rhinoceros; and as the strength of these creatures, as of others, lies in their horns, these are figures of the power and strength of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph; see Nu 23:22;

with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth; not to the ends of the world, as if the posterity of Joseph should carry their conquests and spread their dominion over all people to the ends of the world, as the Targum of Jonathan suggests; but to the ends of the land of Canaan, which was done by Joshua, when he smote the thirty one kings of that country. The word "push" is used in allusion to the horns of creatures, with which they push, drive away from them, or hurt and destroy those that annoy them:

and they [are] the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they [are] the thousands of Manasseh; though Manasseh was the eldest son of Joseph, fewer are ascribed to him than to Ephraim the younger, according to Jacob's prediction, Ge 48:19. This has been in a spiritual sense verified in Christ, the antitype of Joseph, the horn of salvation, who by his great strength has vanquished all his, and the enemies of his people, and even spoiled principalities and powers.

{w} Hist. Animal. l. 11. c. 10. {x} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. p. 38. {y} Zohar in Numb. fol. 103. 4. & in Deut. fol. 117. 3. & 118. 3. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 66. 2.

Deuteronomy 33:18

Ver. 18. And of Zebulun he said,.... The tribe of Zebulun, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, with whom Issachar is joined, they being brethren, and of the same mother as well as father; though Zebulun the youngest is set before Issachar the older, as in Jacob's blessing, Ge 49:13;

rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; in their going out to sea, to merchandise, to traffic in foreign parts, it being a maritime tribe, see Ge 49:13; and so are called upon to rejoice and be thankful for their safe preservation on the seas, and success in trade; and to this sense are the paraphrases of Jonathan and Jerusalem: though Onkelos interprets it of their going out to war against their enemies, and certain it is that they were also a warlike as well as a seafaring tribe; see **Jud 5:18**;

and Issachar, in thy tents; being a tribe that stayed at home, and attended to husbandry, and dwelt in tents, to take care of and feed their cattle; in doing which they should be prosperous, and have occasion to rejoice, and be thankful to the Lord: though the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem carry it to a different sense, to their schools, in which they dwelt: this tribe being, as supposed, a learned tribe, studious, in the law; which is gathered from 1Ch 12:32.

Deuteronomy 33:19

Ver. 19. They shall call the people unto the mountain,.... To the mountain of the house of the sanctuary, as all the three Targums; to the temple built on a mountain, which Moses by a spirit of prophecy foresaw would be, to which the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar would not only come up themselves, though at the more distant parts of the land; but call and urge others, both Israelites and Gentiles, to do the same, partly by their example, and partly by persuasions and arguments; not the tribes of Israel that lay nearest them only, but the Heathens, the Tyrians and Sidonians, on whom they bordered, and the Gentiles in Galilee of the Gentiles, which were neighbours to them; a like instance see in **Isa 2:2**; and perhaps this may have respect to the times of Christ and his apostles, and to their being in those parts where the Gospel was preached, and many people were called, **Mt 4:13**;

there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness; or true sacrifices, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, in opposition to illegitimate ones, which were not according to the law, that had blemishes and defects in them, and to such as were gotten by robbery, or in an unlawful way; and may signify all righteous actions and good works done in faith, and from right principles, though not to be depended upon for a justifying righteousness before God; and all spiritual sacrifices, especially the sacrifices of praise for all blessings, and particularly for the righteousness of Christ; and these are to be offered in the church of God, and upon the altar, which sanctifies every gift, and from whence they come up with acceptance to God:

for they shall suck [of] the abundance of the sea; get a great deal of riches by trading at sea, and therefore under great obligations to offer sacrifices to the Lord, by whom they were prospered:

and [of] the treasure hid in the sand; as gold and silver, pearls and corals, and the like, extracted from thence; or riches buried there through shipwrecks; or it may design the great wealth and riches they got by glass made of sand, taken out of the river Belus, which washed the coast of the tribe of Zebulun, as many historians relate {z}.

{z} Strabo. Geograph. l. 16. p. 521. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19. Tacit. Hist. l. 5. c. 7.

Deuteronomy 33:20

Ver. 20. And of Gad he said,.... The tribe of Gad, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem:

blessed [be] he that enlargeth Gad; that is, the Lord, to whom the praise and glory were to be given, who had appointed to Gad a large inheritance on the other side Jordan, and had settled him in it, and which became larger by the conquest of the Hagarites, and others, **1Ch 5:18**;

he dwelleth as a lion; bold and courageous, secure, and without fear of any of his enemies, though near him, on his borders, as the Moabites and Ammonites were; of the same spirit and temper were the men of the tribe of Gad in the times of David, 1Ch 12:8;

and teareth the arm with the crown of the head, at once, just as a lion tears its prey; which figurative phrases are expressive of this tribe conquering and destroying strong and mighty men, signified by the "arm", in which the strength of a man lies, and of kings and governors, pointed at by the "crown of the head"; as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; which was done in the times of Joshua, when with and under him they subdued and destroyed the kings and princes of the land of Canaan.

Deuteronomy 33:21

Ver. 21. And he provided a first part for himself,.... That is, the portion of the land of Sihon and Og, as Jarchi rightly interprets it; which was the beginning or firstfruits of the subduing of the land that was promised; this he looked at, chose, and desired it as his inheritance, Nu 32:1;

because there, [in] a portion of the lawgiver, [was he] seated; or in the portion and part of the inheritance of Israel was he placed by Moses the lawgiver, according to the will of God; or because there were in it palaces and towers of great personages, lawgivers, kings, and princes, well covered and strongly fortified; or here he was "hid", or "protected", i.e. their families, wives, and children, while they assisted their brethren in subduing Canaan:

and he came with the heads of the people; either "to" them, to Moses, Eleazar, and the seventy elders, and the heads of the tribes of Israel, to ask leave to have his part and portion on the other side Jordan, or "with" them, as we supply it; came with them over Jordan armed, to assist in the conquest and subduing of the land of Canaan:

he executed the justice of the Lord, and his judgments with Israel; that is, either he justly and truly fulfilled all his promises and engagements, on condition of which he was placed on the other side; or he, together with the rest of the Israelites, executed the righteous judgment of God upon the Canaanites, in the expulsion and destruction of them.

Deuteronomy 33:22

Ver. 22. And of Dan he said,.... Of the tribe of Dan, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem:

Dan [is] a lion's whelp; or like one for boldness, strength, and courage; and was verified in Samson, who was of this tribe; who, when a young lion roared against him, the Spirit of the Lord came on him, and he tore it to pieces, Jud 14:5;

he shall leap from Bashan; not Dan, for he was seated far from that country; but the sense is, he was like to a young lion for its strength, when it leaps from Bashan, as Aben Ezra rightly explains it. Bashan was a mountain in which lions haunted, and from whence they might be said to leap, as they do when they seize on their prey: it may have some respect to the leap of the Danites from the northwest part of the land of Israel, where they were settled, but was not sufficient for them, to the northeast of it, when they went against Leshem, and took it, and called it Dan; see Jos 19:47.

Deuteronomy 33:23

Ver. 23. And of Naphtali he said,.... The tribe of Naphtali, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem:

O Naphtali, satisfied with favour; with the favour of men, which to have is a great blessing; and as he gave goodly words to others, he had the good word of others, Ge 49:21; and with the favour of God, as the next clause shows; which is the greatest blessing of all, and is special and peculiar, free and sovereign, and the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; and to be full of this, and satisfied of an interest in it, is the highest of enjoyments; and nothing is of a more satisfying nature, it is a feast of itself; see
Ps 63:3;

and full with the blessing of the Lord; as such must needs be who are full of and satisfied with the your, good will, and love of God; for they are filled with all spiritual blessings, with all the blessings of grace, which spring from his free favour, as pardon of sin, a justifying righteousness, adoption, sanctifying grace, a right and title to eternal life. This may have respect to the temporal happiness of this tribe, which had a remarkable share in the favour and good will of God, and in the blessings of his goodness. Strabo {a}, an Heathen writer, speaking of this part of the land of Judea, says it was a happy and fruitful country, bearing all manner of fruit; in this tribe was the fruitful country of Gennesaret, full of delightful gardens and fields, which lay along by a lake of that name, frequently mentioned in the New Testament; which country, Josephus says {b}, one may call the ambition of nature; and the Targum of Jonathan has it,

"ye shall be full of the fruits of the valley of Gennesaret;"

and particularly this country was favoured with the presence of our Lord Jesus

Christ; see **Mt 4:13**;

possess thou the west and the south; not the west and south of the land of Israel; for, according to Josephus {c}, this tribe lay to the east and north of it, just the reverse; and it is plain from Jos 19:34; that it had Asher on the west, and Zebulun on the south; wherefore some understand this of the commodities this tribe was supplied with, as through the tribe of Asher on the west, on which those trading cities Tyre and Sidon bordered; and through Zebulun on the south, which was near the sea, and was given to navigation and trade: though it should be observed that the word for "west" signifies the "sea" {d}; and intends not the Mediterranean sea, which this tribe did not reach; but the sea of Tiberias and Gennesaret, as all the Targums explain it; and Bochart {e} observes, that the portion of Naphtali reached from the south of the city of Dan to the sea of Tiberias; so that the south is observed with respect to Dan last mentioned, and the west or sea to the sea of Tiberias.

{a} Geograph. l. 16. p. 519. {b} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 9. sect. 8. {c} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22. {d} My "mare", Montanus, V. L. Cocceius. {e} Heirozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 18. col. 898.

Deuteronomy 33:24

Ver. 24. And of Asher he said,.... The tribe of Asher, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem:

[let] Asher [be] blessed with children; with large numbers, as it appears this tribe was, having in it 53,400 men of war, Nu 26:47. It was esteemed a great blessing to have many children, Ps 128:3; or "above the children"; above or more than the rest of the children of Jacob; see **Lu 2:36**; Jarchi observes, that he had seen, in a book called Siphri, that there was none in all the tribes blessed with children as Asher, but not known how:

let him be acceptable to his brethren; either for his excellent bread, and royal dainties, Ge 49:20; or for the goodness of his olives and oil, and for the brass and iron found in this tribe, as follows; or, as some say, because of his children, his daughters being very beautiful:

and let him dip his foot in oil; have such plenty of it, that if he would he might dip or wash his feet in it; and it was usual not only to anoint the head, but the feet {f} also, with oil, **Lu 7:46**.

{f} "Vidimus etiam vestigia pedum tingi", Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 3. Vid. Dalecamp. Not. in ib.

Deuteronomy 33:25

Ver. 25. Thy shoes [shall be] iron and brass,.... Either they should have such an abundance of these metals, that they could if they would have made their shoes of them; but that is not usual; though it is said of Empedocles {g} the philosopher, that he wore shoes of brass, which was very singular; and some think that this tribe, because of the abundance of these metals, used to stick their shoes with iron and brass nails at the bottom of them, as country people, soldiers, and travellers in various nations do; but the true sense seems to be, that the land that fell to this tribe, and on which they trod, should yield much iron and brass; as in Carmel, a mountain on the borders of it, brass was taken, as says Hesychius; and Zidon is by Homer {i} said to abound with brass, which belonged to this tribe; and Sarepta, another city in it, had its name from Pru, which signifies to melt, from the melting of these metals in it; see **De 8:9**; though some Jewish writers take the sense to be, that the land of Asher was so strongly fortified as if it had been enclosed with walls of brass and iron, or the gates of its cities were shut up with bolts and bars of iron and brass, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech observe; so the Arabic:

and as thy days, [so shall] thy strength [be]; the same in old age as in youth; which is the sense of the Latin Vulgate version, and all the Targums: such were the vigour and strength of. Moses himself, De 34:7; and so may denote a renewal of youth, like that of eagles; and, in a spiritual sense, a revival of the graces of the Spirit of God, as to the exercise of them, and an increase of spiritual strength, so that the inward man is renewed day by day; and may also denote such a measure of strength given, as is proportioned to the events that daily befall, or to the services and sufferings men are called unto; see 1Co 10:13.

{g} Laert. in Vit. Empedocl. l. 8. p. 613. Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 32. {i} Odyss. 15. l. 424.

Deuteronomy 33:26

Ver. 26. [There is] none like unto the God of Jeshurun,.... Or Israel, as all the

three Targums; for this is one of the names of the people of Israel; See Gill on "De 32:15"; and the Lord was their God in a special sense, having chosen, redeemed them, and made a covenant with them; and there is no God like him for the perfections of his nature, his purity and holiness, his goodness, wisdom, power, faithfulness, &c. and for the wonderful works of nature, providence, and grace, done by him; and for the blessings of goodness, temporal and spiritual, he bestows on men. The tribes being particularly blessed, the whole body of the people are pronounced happy, and whose happiness is enlarged on in
De 33:26;

[who] rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky; which he has the sovereign rule and disposal of, and can and does dispose of all the artillery therein, as illustrious proofs of his glory and excellency, and for the help of his people, and the destruction of their enemies; as when he sent forth hail, thunderings, and lightnings, upon the Egyptians, and frightened them; and cast down hailstones upon the Canaanites, and slew many of them; and when the stars in their course fought against Sisera; see Ps 68:4 **Jud 5:20**.

Deuteronomy 33:27

Ver. 27. The eternal God [is thy] refuge,.... God is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting; the Ancient of days, before all things, and all time; which is, and was, and is to come: the same is true of Christ, who is the everlasting Father, or Father of eternity, the true God, and eternal life; as appears from his nature, having the whole fulness, all the perfections of deity in him; from his office, as Mediator, in which he was set up from everlasting; from his concern in eternal election, in the everlasting covenant, and in the creation of all things out of nothing: and he is the refuge of his people, the antitype of the cities of refuge, to whom sinners, under a sense of sin, flee for refuge; and where they are safe from avenging justice, the wrath of God, the condemnation of the law, everlasting ruin and destruction, or the second death; or their "mansion", or "dwelling place" {k}; which he has been in all generations, as Moses also says, Ps 90:1. Such is Christ to his people, who dwelt secretly in him from everlasting, being chosen in him, and given to him; and openly in conversion, where they dwell as in a strong hold, safely, quietly, comfortably, and pleasantly:

and underneath [are] the everlasting arms; that is, of God, which are the support of his people, and their protection, safety, and security; such as the arms of his everlasting love, which encircle them, and compass them about as a shield; his everlasting covenant, which is immovable, and in which they ever remain; eternal redemption and salvation, wrought out by Christ, which secures them from destruction; and everlasting power, by which they are kept and preserved as in a garrison; and everlasting consolation, which flows from all this: and so the arms of Christ, or his almighty power, are under the world, to uphold it in being; and under his church, to support it, on whose shoulders the government of it is; and under particular believers, whom he carries in his arms, embraces in his bosom, bears them up under all their afflictions and temptations, trials and exercises; nor will he ever suffer them to drop out of his arms, or to be plucked from thence:

and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; the Canaanites out of the land of Canaan, to make room for Israel, which he was just about to do, and quickly did. In like manner Christ thrusts out Satan and the spiritual enemies of his people, whom to dispossess is a work of mighty power; and not only so, but gives orders to destroy them, and does destroy them, and makes his people more than conquerors over them:

and shall say, destroy [them]; the Canaanites: to do which the people of Israel had an order from the Lord, **De 7:1**.

{k} hnem "habitaculum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius.

Deuteronomy 33:28

Ver. 28. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone,.... The Canaanites being thrust out of their land, and Israel put into the possession of it, should dwell in safety, or "confidently" {l}; without fear of enemies, though surrounded with them on all hands; and though alone, a separate people, distinct from all others their neighbours round about them; see Nu 23:9. So the spiritual Israel dwell in the eternal God, their mansion, or dwelling place; in Christ, their rock; and in a strong city, the church, where they are in the utmost safety. God is all around them; Christ is their refuge, strong hold, and tower; the Holy Spirit in the midst of them is mighty; angels are their guardians, and the church their strong city, whose walls and bulwarks are salvation: here they dwell confidently and securely; though they have sometimes their fears, they have no just reason for them; and when faith is in exercise, are free from them, casting all their care on the Lord, and having confidence in him; where they are alone, not solitary; all the three divine Persons dwell with them, and also angels and saints their

fellow citizens; but independent of others, having large provisions in Christ, in the covenant, and in the house of God; and are a separate and distinct people now, and will be to all eternity;
See Gill on "Nu 23:9";

the fountain of Jacob [shall be] upon a land of corn and wine; that is, the Israelites that spring from Jacob, as streams of water from a fountain; see Isa 48:1; these shall be or dwell upon the land of Canaan, a land abounding with corn and wine, and all good things, **De 8:7**; or "in" or "by the fountain of Jacob" {m}; in a well watered land, there they should dwell. So the spiritual Israel of God dwell in and by Christ, the fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, of life and salvation, in whom all fulness of grace dwells for their supply: or "the eye of Jacob" {n} is or shall be on a land, &c. that is, the Israelites had their eye on the good land of Canaan, and would quickly not only be in sight, but in possession of it. Every true Israelite has a spiritual eye, which is the eve of faith, the evidence of things not seen, which looks to and upon that better country, the land afar off, heaven and eternal happiness, and expects and waits for the full, enjoyment of it:

also his heavens shall drop down dew: the heavens over the land of Canaan should drop down dew upon it, and make it fruitful to bring forth corn and wine, which was Jacob's blessing, Ge 27:28. Thus the Lord in the heavens drops down the dew of grace, and the blessings of it, upon his people, which make them revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; and Christ's heavenly ministers drop the dew of Gospel doctrine upon them, to the great refreshment of them, De 32:3.

{l} xjb "confidenter", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "secure", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {m} "Fonte Jabakobi", Junius & Tremellius, "apud fontem Jacobi", Cocceius. {n} bqey Nye "oculus Jahakob", V. L. Tigurine version, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster.

Deuteronomy 33:29

Ver. 29. Happy [art] thou, O Israel,.... This is the conclusion of the blessing on Israel summed up in a few words; they having God to be their God, and having so many good things promised them, and in sight of them; being now got through, the wilderness, and on the borders of the land of Canaan; as all such must be happy, whose covenant God is the Lord; since they must be beloved of him, chosen by him, and blessed with all spiritual blessings; and in the faith, hope, and view of eternal happiness:

who [is] like unto thee? for an interest in the favour of God, for a share in the blessings of goodness, for a good God, a good land, and good laws; for wisdom and knowledge, for riches and honour, for holiness and happiness:

O people saved by the Lord; redeemed by him out of Egypt, preserved in the wilderness, saved from many dangers and enemies, and now brought near to the land of Canaan. The Targum of Jonathan is,

"saved or redeemed in the name of the word of the Lord:"

by whom the spiritual Israel of God are redeemed from all their sins, from the curses of the law, and out of the hand of all their enemies; and are and will be completely saved in soul and body, with an everlasting salvation:

the shield of thy help; that, is, the Lord, by whom they are saved; he is the shield that protects them; the shield of faith and of salvation, which faith lays hold on and makes use of for its defence, and who is the help of his people in all times of trouble:

and who is the sword of thy excellency; to destroy their enemies, and whereby they would be raised to that excellency and glory they were in the land of Canaan;

and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; who threatened what they would do unto them, but were not able: or "shall lie unto thee" {o}, be in such dread and fear as to tell lies to save themselves, and pretend to be what they were not, as the Gibeonites did, of whom Jarchi interprets this passage:

and thou shall tread upon their, high places; be possessed of their cities and fortresses, built on an eminence; see De 32:13; all the three Targums, and so Jarchi, interpret it of treading on the necks of their kings, which was fulfilled, Jos 10:24.

{o} wvxky "mentientur", Montanus, Tigurine version; "mentiuntur", Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Deuteronomy 34:1

INTRODUCTION TO DEUTERONOMY 34

This chapter informs us of Moses going up to the top of Pisgah, where he was shown the whole land of Canaan, De 34:1; of his death, burial, and age, De 34:5; of Israel's mourning for him, and the time of it, De 34:8; of his successor Joshua, De 34:9; and of the character of Moses, to whom no prophet was to be compared, De 34:10.

Ver. 1. And Moses went up from the plains of Moab,.... Where the Israelites had lain encamped for some time, and where Moses had repeated to them the law, and all that, is contained in this book of Deuteronomy; and after he had read to them the song in De 32:1; and had blessed the several tribes, as in the preceding chapter: at the command of God he went up from hence,

unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that [is] over against Jericho; Nebo was one of the mountains of Abarim, which formed a ridge of them, and Pisgah was the highest point of Nebo, and this was over against Jericho on the other side Jordan, see De 32:49; hither Moses went, to the top of this high mountain, for aught appears, without any support or help, his natural force not being abated, though an hundred and twenty years old; and hither he seems to have gone alone, though Josephus {p} and the Samaritan Chronicle {q} say, Eleazar, Joshua, and the elders of Israel accompanied him:

and the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan; the Word of the Lord, as the Targum of Jonathan, who appeared to him in the bush, sent him to Egypt, wrought miracles by him there, led him and the people of Israel through the Red sea and wilderness, and brought them to the place where they now were: and though the eye of Moses was not become dim, as was usual at such an age he was of, yet it can hardly be thought it should be so strong as to take a distinct view of the whole land of Canaan, to the utmost borders of it: no doubt but his natural sight was wonderfully strengthened and increased by the Lord, by whom he was directed first to behold the land of Gilead on that side of Jordan where he was, and which was the possession of the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; and then he was directed to look forward to the land of Canaan beyond Jordan, to the northern part of it; for Dan is not the tribe of Dan, but a city of that name, formerly Leshem, which the Danites took, and lay the farthest north of the land, hence the phrase "from Dan to Beersheba", see Jos 19:47; this city is so called by anticipation: Aben Ezra thinks Joshua wrote this verse by a spirit of prophecy; and it is very likely the whole chapter was written by him, and not the eight last verses only, as say the Jewish writers: this view Moses had of the good land a little before his death may be an emblem of that sight believers have, by faith, of the heavenly glory, and which sometimes is the clearest when near to death; this sight they have not in the plains of Moab, in the low estate of nature, but in an exalted state of grace, upon and from off the rock of Christ, in the mountain of the church of God, the word and ordinances being often the means of it; it is a sight by faith, and is of the Lord, which he gives, strengthens, and increases, and sometimes grants more fully a little before death.

{p} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 48. {q} Apud Hottinger. Smegma, l. 1. c. 8. p. 456.

Deuteronomy 34:2

Ver. 2. And all Naphtali,.... Which lay in the northern part of the land, and where was Galilee of the Gentiles, and so he had a sight of all that country most frequented by the Messiah when come, see **Mt 4:13**;

and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh: which lay in the midland part of the country:

and all the land of Judah; which lay to the south:

unto the utmost sea; the Mediterranean sea, which was the western boundary of the land, called the "hinder sea", Zec 14:8; and might as well be so rendered here, for the same word is used: Jarchi would have it read, not the "hinder sea", but the "latter day": for, he says, the Lord showed to Moses all that should happen to Israel until the resurrection of the dead; and so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases the above passages, and observes that the Lord showed Moses the mighty deeds of Jephthah of Gilead, and the victories of Samson, who was of the tribe of Dan; the idolatries of that tribe, and Samson the saviour that should spring from them; Deborah and Barak, and the princes of the house of Naphtali; Joshua the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, that should fight with and slay the kings of Canaan; and Gideon the son of Joash, of the tribe of Manasseh, that should fight with Midian and Amalek, and all the kings of Israel, and the kingdom of the house of Judah; the king of the south, that should join the king of the north to destroy the inhabitants of the earth; and even the destruction of Armiilus or antichrist, and the war of Gog and Magog, and the great affliction Michael shall save from.

Deuteronomy 34:3

Ver. 3. And the south,.... The southern part of the land, even all of it; and having shown him that, he is directed eastward to take a view of

the plain of the valley of Jericho; which lay before him, a delightful plain; see **Jos 5:10**;

the city of palm trees; so Jericho was called, because of the multitude of palm trees which grew there, and which Josephus not only testifies {r}, who speaks of it as a plain planted with palm trees, and from whence balsam comes; but several Heathen writers: Pliny says {s} Jericho was set with palm trees; Diodorus Siculus {t} speaks of the country about Jericho as abounding with palm trees, and in a certain valley, meaning the vale or plains of Jericho, is produced that which is called balsam; so Strabo says {u}, Jericho is a plain surrounded with mountains abounding with palm trees, where there is a plantation of palm trees, with other fruit trees, the space of a hundred furlongs:

unto Zoar; near the salt sea; see Ge 19:22.

{r} De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 18. sect. 5. & l. 4. c. 8. sect. 2. {s} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 14. {t} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 132. {u} Geograph. l. 16. p. 525.

Deuteronomy 34:4

Ver. 4. And the Lord said unto him,.... The Word of the Lord, as the Jerusalem Targum, having shown him all the land of Canaan:

this [is] the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed; to Abraham, Ge 15:18; to Isaac, Ge 26:3; to Jacob, Ge 28:13;

I have caused thee to see [it] with thine eyes; not only had indulged him with a general view of it, but had strengthened his eyesight, that he had a full, clear, and distinct sight of it:

but thou shalt not go over thither; which he had said more than once before and abides by it, and this because of the behaviour of Moses at the waters of Meribah, Nu 20:12; see **De 3:25**.

Deuteronomy 34:5

Ver. 5. So Moses the servant of the Lord died there, in the land of Moab,.... Which formerly belonged to Moab, and was taken from them by Sihon king of the Amorites, and now in the possession of Israel: here on a mountain in this land Moses died; and yet, contrary to the express words of this text, some Jewish writers affirm {w} that be died not, but was translated to heaven, where he ministers; yea, that he was an angel, and could not die: but it is clear he did die, even though a servant of the Lord, as he was, and a faithful one; but such die as well as others, **Zec 1:5**; there is a saying of some {x} Jews,

"Moses died, and who shall not die?"

no man can promise himself immortality here, when such great and good men die: the Targum of Jonathan says, he died on the seventh of Adar or February, on which day he was born; and it is the general opinion of the Jewish writers {y}, that he died on the seventh of that month, in the middle of the day, and that it was a sabbath day: though, as Aben Ezra observes {z}, some say he died on the first of Adar; and Josephus {a} is express for it, that it was at the new moon, or first day of the month; and with this agrees the calculation of Bishop Usher {b}:

according to the word of the Lord; according to the prophecy of the Lord, and according to a command of his, that he should go up to the above said mountain and die, Nu 27:12; or, as the Targum of Jerusalem, according to the decree of the Lord; as the death of every man is, both with respect to time and place, and manner of it: it is appointed for men once to die, **Heb 9:27**; because it is in the original text, "according to the mouth of the Lord" {c}; hence some Jewish writers, as Jarchi particularly, interpret it of his dying by a kiss of his mouth, with strong expressions and intimations of his love to him, **So 1:2**; and no doubt but he did die satisfied of the love of God to him, enjoying his presence, and having faith and hope of everlasting life and salvation; but the true sense is, he died according to the will of God, not of any disease, or through the infirmities of age, but by the immediate order and call of God out of this life.

{w} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 13. 2. Yalkut & R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor in loc. {x} Seder Tephillot, fol. 213. 1. Ed. Basil. {y} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 38. 1. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 10. p. 29. Judasin, fol. 10. 1. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2. so Patricides apud Hottinger, p. 457. {z} Pirush in Deut. i. 2. so Midrash Esther, fol. 93. 2. {a} Ut supra, (De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 18.) sect. 49.

{b} Annales Vet. Test. p. 37. {c} yp le "super os", Montanus; "juxta os", Tigurine version.

Deuteronomy 34:6

Ver. 6. And he buried him,.... Aben Ezra says he buried himself, going into a cave on the top of the mount, where he expired, and so where he died his grave was; but though he died on the mount, he was buried in a valley: Jarchi and so other Jewish writers {d} say, the Lord buried him; it may be by the ministry of angels: an Arabic writer says {e}, he was buried by angels: it is very probable he was buried by Michael, and who is no other than the archangel or head of principalities and powers, our Lord Jesus Christ, for a reason that will be hereafter suggested, see **Jude 1:9**;

in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor; where stood a temple dedicated to the idol Peor, see **De 3:29**;

but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day; to the time when Joshua wrote this, or, as others think, Samuel: if Moses is the same with the Osiris of the Egyptians, as some think {f}, it may be observed, that his grave is said to be unknown to the Egyptians, as Diodorus Siculus {g} and Strabo {h} both affirm; and the grave of Moses is unknown, even unto this our day: for though no longer ago than in the year 1655, in the month of October, it was pretended to be found by some Maronite shepherds on Mount Nebo, with this inscription on it in Hebrew letters, "Moses the servant of the Lord"; but this story was confuted by Jecomas, a learned Jew, who proved it to be the grave of another Moses {i}, whom Wagenseil conjectures was Moses Maimonides {k}; but some think the whole story is an imposition: the reason why the grave of Moses was kept a secret was, as Ben Gersom suggests, lest, because of his miracles, succeeding generations should make a god of him and worship him, as it seems a sort of heretics called Melchisedecians did {l}: the death and burial of Moses were an emblem of the weakness and insufficiency of the law of Moses, and the works of it, to bring any into the heavenly Canaan; and of the law being dead, and believers dead to that through the body of Christ, and of the entire abrogation and abolition of it by Christ, according to the will of God, as a covenant of works, as to the curse and condemnation of it, and justification by it; who is Michael the archangel, and is the end of the law for righteousness; he abolished it in his flesh, nailed it to his cross, carried it to his grave, and left it there; the rites and ceremonies of it are to be no more received, nor is it to be sought after for righteousness and life, being dead and buried, **Ro 7:6**.

{d} Misn. Sotah, c. 1. sect. 9. Pirke Eliezer, c. 17. {e} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 32. {f} See Gale's Court of the Gentiles, B. 2. c. 7. p. 94. {g} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 18. {h} Geograph. l. 17. p. 552. {i} See Calmet's Dictionary, in voce "Sepulchre". {k} Not. in Sotah, p. 327. {l} Epiphan contr. Haeres. l. 2. Haeres. 55.

Deuteronomy 34:7

Ver. 7. And Moses [was] an hundred and twenty years old when he died,.... Which age of his may be divided into three equal periods, forty years in Pharaoh's court, forty years in Midian, and forty in the care and government of Israel, in Egypt and in the wilderness; so long he lived, though the common age of man in his time was but threescore years and ten, Ps 90:10; and what is most extraordinary is,

his eyes were not dim; as Isaac's were, and men at such an age, and under, generally be:

nor his natural force abated; neither the rigour of his mind nor the strength of his body; his intellectuals were not decayed, his memory and judgment; nor was his body feeble, and his countenance aged; his "moisture" was not "fled" {m}, as it may be rendered, his radical moisture; he did not look withered and wrinkled, but plump and sleek, as if he was a young man in the prime of his days: this may denote the continued use of the ceremonial law then to direct to Christ, and the force of the moral law as in the hands of Christ, requiring obedience and conformity to it, as a rule of walk and conversation, **1Co 9:21**.

{m} So Ainsworth.

Deuteronomy 34:8

Ver. 8. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days,.... According both to Josephus {n} and the Samaritan Chronicle {o}, they cried and wept in a very vehement manner, when he signified to them his approaching death, and took his leave of them; and when he was dead they mourned for him, in a public manner, the space of time here mentioned, the time of mourning for his brother Aaron, Nu 20:29;

so the days of weeping [and] mourning for Moses were ended; on the eighth of Nisan or March, as says the Targum of Jonathan, and on the "ninth" they prepared their vessels and their cattle for a march, and on the tenth passed over Jordan, and on the "sixteenth" the manna ceased, according to the said paraphrase.

{n} Ut supra. (De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 49.) {o} Apud Hottinger, p. 456.

Deuteronomy 34:9

Ver. 9. And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom,.... The successor of Moses, and who, by the spirit of wisdom on him, was abundantly qualified for the government of the people of Israel; in which he was a type of Christ, on whom the spirit of wisdom and understanding is said to rest, Isa 11:2;

for Moses had laid his hands upon him; which was a symbol of the government being committed to him, and devolving upon him after his death, and expressive of prayer for him, that he might be fitted for it, of which action see Nu 27:23;

and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses; or by the hand of Moses; they received him and owned him as their supreme governor under God, and yielded a cheerful obedience to his commands, as the Lord by Moses commanded them to do, and as they promised; see **Jos 1:16**.

Deuteronomy 34:10

Ver. 10. And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses,.... Not in the times of Joshua, who wrote this chapter, at least the last eight verses, De 34:5, as say the Jews {p}; nor to the times of Samuel, whom others take to be the writer: of them; nor to the times of Ezra, as others; nor even throughout the whole Old Testament dispensation to the times of Christ, the great Prophet, like to Moses, that was to arise; and the Messiah is by the Jews owned, as by Maimonides {q}, to be equal to him, and by others to be above him: it is a well known saying of theirs {r}, that "the Messiah shall be exalted above Abraham, and extolled above Moses, and made higher than the ministering: angels;"

but as to all other prophets he excels them, and therefore they call him the prince, master, and Father of the prophets, and say, that all prophesied from the fountain of his prophecy {s}: the difference between him and them is observed, by Maimonides {t} to lie in many things; as that they prophesied by a dream or vision, but he awake and seeing; they prophesied by the means of an angel, and saw what they did in parables and dark sayings; but Moses not by means of an angel, but the Lord spake to him face to face; they trembled and astonished, but not so Moses; they could not prophesy when they would, but he at any time, nor did he need to dispose and prepare his mind for it; some of which will not hold good, especially the last; the instances in which he really exceeded them follow:

whom the Lord knew face to face; owned, took notice of, and familiarly conversed with face to face, as a man with his friend; none were permitted to such familiarity with God as he; see Nu 12:6; the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it,

"whom the Word of the Lord knew."

{p} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. {q} Hilchot Teshuvah, c. 9. sect. 2. {r} Tanchuma in Yalkut in Isa. lii. 13. {s} Maimon. Yesode Hatorah, c. 7. sect. 6. & Vorst. in ib. {t} Ib. sect. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Deuteronomy 34:11

Ver. 11. In all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do,.... The same Targums also paraphrase here,

"which the Word of the Lord sent him to do;"

for he it was that appeared to him in the bush, and sent him to Egypt to work miracles, which he did by him:

in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land; to whom they were visible, and who were all affected by them more or less: this respects chiefly the ten plagues inflicted on the Egyptians: the Jews observe that the superior excellency of Moses to the rest of the prophets lay chiefly in his superior degree of prophecy rather than in miracles, and not so much in the nature or the quality of the miracles; the stopping of the sun by Joshua, and the raising of the dead to life by Elijah and Elisha, being greater than his; but either in the duration of them, as the manna which continued near forty years; or especially in the quantity of them, he working more than all the rest put together: Manasseh Ben Israel {u} has collected all that the prophets wrought or were wrought for their sakes, and they came to seventy four; but those that were wrought by Moses or on his account make seventy six; but whether this is a just account I will not say.

{u} Conciliator in Deut. Qu. 11. sect. 4. p. 238, 239, 240.

Deuteronomy 34:12

Ver. 12. And in all that mighty hand,.... In all done by his hand, which he stretched out over the sea and divided, to make a passage through it for the Israelites, and with his rod in it smote the rocks, and waters gushed out for them:

and in all that great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel; meaning either the terror the Egyptians were struck with by him, in the sight of all Israel, when he publicly and before them wrought the wonders he did in the land of Ham, which often threw them into a panic, especially the thunders and lightning, the three days darkness, and the slaying of their firstborn; see Ps 78:49; or the terror the Israelites were in at the giving and receiving of the law, Ex 19:16.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA

The Jews distinguish the prophets into former and latter; the first of the former prophets is Joshua, or Sepher Joshua, the book of Joshua, as it is commonly called in the Hebrew copies; the Syriac inscription is,

"the book of Joshua, the son of Nun, the disciple of Moses:"

in the Arabic version it is reckoned a book of the judges, which adds, "the first among the judges of the children of Israel was Joshua, the son of Nun, the twenty eighth from Adam, who reigned over Israel after the Prophet Moses."

This book bears the name of Joshua, either because it is concerning him, his actions and exploits in the land of Canaan, or because it was written by him, or both; though some ascribe it to Ezra, and others to Isaiah; but it must have been written before the times of Ahab, as appears from 1Ki 16:34; and even before the times of David, as is clear from Jos 15:63, compared with **2Sa 5:6**; for though mention is made in it of the mountains of Judah and of Israel, from whence some have concluded, that the writer must have lived after the times of Rehoboam, in whose days the kingdom was divided; yet we find the distinction of Israel and Judah took place before, even in the times of David and Asaph, Ps 76:1; It is most likely that this book was written by Joshua himself, as the Jews in their Talmud {a} assert; and, indeed, who more fit for it than himself? and if written or put together by another, it is most probable that it was taken out of his diary, annals, or memoirs; and though there are some things recorded in it, which were done after his death, these might be inserted under a divine direction and influence by Eleazar, or Phinehas, or Samuel, to each of whom some ascribe the writing of this book, just as Joshua is supposed to add some verses concerning Moses at the end of the Pentateuch: however, be it wrote by whom it may, there is no doubt to be made of the divine inspiration and authenticity of it by us Christians, since some histories recorded in it are taken from it, or referred to, in
Heb 11:30; and the promise made to Joshua is quoted, and applied to every believer, Heb 13:5; and the Apostle James refers to the case of Rahab, her character and conduct in it, **Jas 2:25**. The subject matter of this book is Joshua's taking upon him the government of the children of Israel, after the death of Moses, by a divine commission, exhortation, and encouragement given him to engage in war with the Canaanites; his conquests of them, the division of the land of Canaan to the children of Israel, and their settlement in it. It is of great use not only to give us the geography of the land of Canaan, and the history of the church of God, from the death of Moses to the times of the judges; but shows the exact fulfilment of prophecy, and the faithfulness of God to his promises in giving the land of Canaan to Israel, according to those made to their fathers, and the justice of God in punishing the Canaanites for their abominable sins, as had been foretold; and the wonderful care, of God, and his love to the people of Israel in preserving and protecting them, and in settling them in such a good land, notwithstanding all their murmurings, ingratitude, and unbelief, in the wilderness; and may serve to lead us to Christ,

whose type Joshua was in the whole affair here related: his name has the signification of the salvation of the Lord in and he is by the Greek writers, and so in the New Testament, called Jesus, a Saviour, **Ac 7:45** **Heb 4:8**; and as they agree in their name, so they do in their state, condition, and character; Joshua was a servant of Moses, Christ was made under the law, and became subject to it, both moral and ceremonial; and also in their office, Joshua was the governor of Israel, and the commander of their forces, for which he was well qualified with wisdom, courage, and integrity; Christ is King of saints, the Leader and Commander of the people, who has fought their battles for them, being abundantly qualified, having the spirit of wisdom, counsel, might, and of the fear of the Lord, resting on him. Joshua was a type of Christ in various actions of his; in leading the people through the river Jordan, an emblem either of baptism, or of afflictions, or of death itself, in which Christ is with his people, and carries them through; in saving Rahab and her family, so Christ saves the worst and chief of sinners; in receiving the Gibeonites, who submitted to him, as Christ does all that come to him; in his conquest of the several kings of the Canaanites, so Christ has conquered all the spiritual enemies of his people, sin, Satan, and the world; in bringing and settling the people of Israel in the land of Canaan, their rest, and dividing it to them by lot, which Moses might not do; so Christ only brings souls into the true rest, into spiritual rest here, and eternal rest hereafter; in whom they obtain the inheritance of the heavenly glory by lot, and by whom only they enjoy salvation and eternal life, and not by the works of the law. This book contains an history of Joshua, of his government, his acts and deeds, from the death of Moses to his own; how long that was is not certain; the Jewish chronologers {b} observe, that the time of his principality we find not in the text; though they {c} say he succeeded Moses when he was eighty two years of age, and governed Israel twenty eight years; Eupolemus {d}, an Heathen writer, says thirty years. Christian writers commonly make his reign to be twenty seven years {e}; but an Arabic writer {f} stretches it further to thirty one years; he says, he took the government of the people in the seventy ninth year of his age, and reigned thirty one; but it seems more probable that he was ninety three years of age when Moses died, who lived to be an hundred ten, so that only seventeen years intervened between the death of the one and of the other; seven years Joshua was in subduing the land, and ten years more were taken up in dividing it to the people, and settling them in it, and in the government of them; after which Eleazar might rule ten years more, whose death is mentioned in it; so indeed the book may be reckoned an history of twenty seven years, though Joshua lived only seventeen of them. The Chronicle, to which the Samaritans give the name of the book of Joshua, is a spurious work; an epitome of which Hottinger {g} has compiled, and translated out of the Arabic exemplar into Latin.

{a} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. {b} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 7. 2. {c} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. p. 33. Juchasin, fol. 10. 1. {d} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30. {e} Tertullian, Lactantius, Eusebius, Augustin. apud Hottinger. Thesaur. Philolog. l . 2. c. 1. sect. 2. p. 960. so Ben Gersom in Jud. 11. 26. & Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 25. {f} Elmacinus apud Hottinger. p. 524. {g} Ad Calcem Exercitat. Antimorin.

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 1

Moses being dead, the Lord directs and encourages Joshua to take the command of the children of Israel, and go over Jordan with them, and take possession of the land of Canaan, and divide it to them; giving him gracious promises and strong assurances of his presence, and some good advice with respect to his conduct, **Jos 1:1**; upon which Joshua orders the people to be ready in three days to go along with him, **Jos 1:10**; and particularly addresses the Reubenites and Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, and puts them in mind of what Moses had ordered, and they had promised, to go along with their brethren, and assist them in conquering the land, **Jos 1:12**; which they readily agreed to do, and promised obedience to him in all things, **Jos 1:16**.

Ver. 1. Now after the death of Moses,.... Or "and after" {h}; the book begins as if something went before, it is connected with; and indeed it seems to be the last chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, which treats of the death of Moses; and Joshua being the penman of De 34:5, as say the Talmudists {i}, and of this book, as has been seen, having wrote them, he goes on with the history of his own affairs in strict connection with that account, beginning where that ended; namely, at the death of Moses, whose character here given is

the servant of the Lord; and a faithful one he was in all things belonging to it, and in whatsoever was enjoined him by the Lord, see
De 34:5;

and it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun,
Moses's minister; either in a dream, or vision, or by an articulate voice out of the sanctuary: of Joshua's descent and relation, see
Ex 33:11; and of his office under Moses, not as a menial servant, but a minister of state, see Ex 24:13;

saying; as follows.

{h} yhyw "et factum est", V. L. "et fuit", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus. {i} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2.

Joshua 1:2

Ver. 2. Moses my servant is dead,.... Which was said not for the information of Joshua, but to lead on to, and show the cause and reason of what he was about to say to him:

now therefore arise, go over this Jordan; near to which the whole body of the people of Israel were, and very probably were in sight of it:

thou, and all this people: which were very numerous, six hundred thousand men or more, besides a great number of women and children, and no boats to carry them over, or pontoons to put across the river:

unto the land which I give unto them, [even] to the children of Israel; and therefore it could be no case of conscience with Joshua, to go and take it out of the hands of the present inhabitants, since the Lord, who had a right to dispose of it, gave it to them. As this land was a type of heaven, and eternal life, which is the free gift of God through Christ, passing over the river of Jordan to it may be an emblem of the passage through death to the heavenly state; both of the death of Christ, the antitypical Joshua, who passed through it, as a surety to make satisfaction for sin, and as a forerunner to set an example, to sanctify death, to open a way into the holiest of holies, and prepare a place for his people; and of the death of the saints, which is necessary to their enjoyment of perfect rest and happiness.

Joshua 1:3

Ver. 3. Every place that the sole of your feet shall tread upon,.... That is, in the land of Canaan:

that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses:
See Gill on "De 11:24"; though the Jews extend this to all without the land subdued by them, and even to all the countries they now tread on, and are exiles in; but the limits of what the Lord gave them are fixed in **Jos 1:4**.

Joshua 1:4

Ver. 4. From the wilderness,.... The wilderness of Kadesh and Sin, on the border of Edom; in the southeast corner, as Jarchi says, see Nu 34:3;

and this Lebanon; which though on the other side Jordan, and at a considerable distance, being the northern border of the land towards Syria, might be seen afar off; or it is expressed, because it was a well known place, as Kimchi remarks:

even unto the great river, the river Euphrates; which was the eastern border of the land, and to which it reached in the times of Solomon, whose dominion extended thither, **1Ki 4:21**; according to Jarchi, this was its breadth from south to north:

all the land of the Hittites: who, though only one of the seven nations of Canaan, are put for the rest, and the rather mentioned, because, as their name signifies, they were very formidable and terrible; among them dwelt the Anakim, and they themselves were very warlike and populous; or they are taken notice of particularly here, because they dwelt in the western part of the land described by them, so Kimchi thinks; according to Jarchi, this was its length from east to west:

and unto the great sea: the Mediterranean sea, which was the western border of the land of Canaan, called great, in comparison of the sea of Tiberias, and the salt sea, which were in it:

toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast; the western coast, See Gill on "De 11:24"; this will be more fully verified in Christ, when his kingdom is from sea to sea, Ps 72:8.

Joshua 1:5

Ver. 5. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life,.... What is promised to the people in common, De 11:25; is here particularly promised to Joshua their general; and which was fulfilled in him, and still more in Christ his antitype, who made an end of sin, destroyed the devil, spoiled principalities and powers, abolished death, and overcame the world:

as I was with Moses, [so] will I be with thee; to counsel and advise, guide and direct, protect and defend, prosper and succeed; the Targum of Jonathan is, as my Word

"was for the help of Moses, so will I be with thee:"

I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee; but grant him his presence, communicate strength unto him, make good his promises, and leave him not till he had made an entire conquest of the land of Canaan, and even not till the end of his days; and was true of Christ in his state of humiliation, in his sufferings and death, and even in the grave, where he was not left so long as to see corruption; as this is applied to particular believers, See Gill on "Heb 13:5".

Joshua 1:6

Ver. 6. Be strong, and of good courage,.... The same exhortation Moses gave him, De 31:7; and is afterwards repeated in this chapter, as being of great moment and importance, as it is in the general of an army to show greatness and strength of mind, valour and courage, and not be dismayed at the number and strength of the enemy. As Joshua's work in fighting with the Canaanites, and conquering their land, so Christ's work in the redemption of his people, and subduing their enemies, required strength and courage, and both were very eminent in him:

for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I sware unto their fathers to give them; and, this promise included and ensured the conquest of it, and the putting the people into the possession of it; for if he was to divide it to them, he must first take it out of the hands of the present inhabitants, and deliver it into the hands of the children of Israel, to be possessed by them, dividing to each tribe and family their part and portion.

Joshua 1:7

Ver. 7. Only be thou strong, and very courageous,.... For though Joshua was a man of valour and courage, as appears by his war with Amalek, yet there was need of this exhortation, and of repeating it, since he was to engage with a people more and mightier than those with him, and who dwelt in strong and fortified places, and had been preparing for some time, having had notice, and were in expectation of the Israelites' attempt upon them:

that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee; not only as a private man obliged to observe the whole law, and act according to it in all things; though no mere man is capable of it, only Joshua's antitype, who is the end of it for righteousness to all that believe, having fulfilled it in all respects; but as the supreme magistrate under God, who was to see that the law was obeyed by the people in all things, and particularly as the general of the army, who was to observe to do what had been ordered, with respect to the Canaanites, see **De 7:1**;

turn not from it [to] the right hand or [to] the left: from the law, by adding to it, or taking from it; so Ben Gersom explains it,

"turning to the right hand is, when any adds to its words; and turning to the left hand, when he diminishes from them;"

or "from him" {k}, that is, from Moses; from his good way, as Kimchi; though he adds, or else from the book of the law; for though he does not mention the book, he does the law; so Ben Melech:

that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest; succeed in every battle he engaged in; it would be well if generals of armies would observe this; the way to obtain victory over enemies being to be observant of the laws of God themselves, and to take care that they be observed by the soldiers under their command: or "that thou mayest act wisely" {l}; the word of God furnishing out instruction to men in every station of life, see **Lu 3:10**.

{k} wnmm "ab so", Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius. {l} lykvt Neml ina sunhv, Sept. "ut intelligas", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "ut prudenter agas", Tigurine version.

Joshua 1:8

Ver. 8. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth,.... He was often to read it, frequently repeat it, and speak of it, to refresh his own memory with it, and the memory of those about him. Jarchi restrains it to the book of Deuteronomy now before him:

but thou shalt meditate therein day and night; whenever he had any leisure from the important business of his office, whether by day or night, see **Ps 1:2**;

that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; which frequent speaking of it, and constant meditation on it, would lead unto:

for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success; in his wars with the Canaanites.

Joshua 1:9

Ver. 9. Have not I commanded thee?.... The above things, to go over Jordan with the people into the land of Canaan, and to observe the law of Moses in all things, and to be of good courage, which is again repeated; consider who it is that has given these orders and instructions, the great Jehovah, the everlasting I AM, who is faithful to his promises, and able to perform. The consideration of which would serve to animate him to the work he was called unto, to encourage his faith in God, to engage in his service cheerfully and readily:

be strong, and of a good courage; See Gill on "Jos 1:6";
See Gill on "Jos 1:7".

be not afraid, nor be thou dismayed; at his enemies, numerous and powerful, nor discouraged at anything in himself, any unfitness for such service, as he might think, or at any difficulties he might fear from the people he had the government of, and was to lead on; it was enough that the divine Presence was promised him, and which is repeated:

for the Lord thy God [is] with thee whithersoever thou goest: or, as the Targum of Jonathan,

"for thy help is the Word of the Lord thy God;"

See Gill on "Jos 1:5".

Joshua 1:10

Ver. 10. Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people,.... The same word is used in De 16:18; where it seems to design such officers that attended on the judges, and executed their orders; but one would think it should here rather signify officers in the army, as captains, and the like; unless it should design a sort of heralds, who were to make proclamation throughout the camp, each of the orders issued by Joshua, immediately upon his having the above directions and instructions from the Lord:

saying; as follows.

Joshua 1:11

Ver. 11. Pass through the host,.... The whole camp of Israel, consisting of six hundred thousand fighting men:

and command the people; even all the people of Israel; this includes women as well as men, for the one, as well as the other, were to do what follows, and especially it may seem the business of the former:

saying, prepare ye victuals; this must be understood; as Kimchi observes, of other sorts of food besides bread; for they had manna, the bread of heaven, which fell about their tents every morning, so that they were sufficiently provided with that always, and which did not cease until they had entered the land, even until the sixteenth of Nisan, **Jos 5:12**; though indeed, as Abendana observes, that might be said to be prepared, it being ground in mills, and beat in mortars, and made cakes of, Nu 11:8; but rather this designs meat and other provisions, which being upon the borders of Moab and Midian, they could furnish themselves with for their money; and besides, they were in the possession of a fine country, of Bashan and Gilead, they had taken from Sihon and Og. Jarchi interprets it of everything fit for journeying, and arms for war, with which they were supplied from the spoils of their enemies, the Egyptians at the Red sea, Amalek at Rephidim, and the Amorites and Midianites lately smitten by them; and to this sense Josephus {m} seems to agree:

for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan: or at the end of three days, as the Targum of Jonathan; and so Jarchi, while there are yet three days, after that ye shall pass over: but here arises a difficulty to be reconciled, how this could be done three days after, when the spies, which Joshua is afterward said to send into the land, stayed three days in the mountains, besides the time of their going, and returning, and stay at Rahab's house; and it was not till after their return that the camp began to move; to which it may be observed, that though the affair of the spies is afterward related, they might have been sent by Joshua before this order was given to prepare for the journey, and of this opinion are several of the Jewish writers {n}: this being the case, they might return before the expiration of these three days, at the end of which Joshua, with the whole host, moved, agreeably to these orders:

to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it; which must be a great inducement and encouragement to them to observe his instructions, and go over with him.

{m} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 1. {n} Jarchi, Ben Gersom, & Abarbinel in loc.

Joshua 1:12

Ver. 12. And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh,.... Who were settled on that side Jordan where Israel now were:

spake Joshua, saying; as follows.

Joshua 1:13

Ver. 13. Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you,.... In Nu 32:29; and to which they had solemnly agreed; and, now the time was come to put it into execution, Joshua reminds them of it:

saying, the Lord your God hath given you rest: from their travels, and a settlement in a country agreeably to their own desire:

and hath given you this land; where they now were, and which they had taken from Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, and joined to Moab, on the borders of which Israel lay encamped; and by this it appears, that the settlement of these tribes, on the other side Jordan, was according to the will of God; he gave it to them.

Joshua 1:14

Ver. 14. Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan,.... This was what they themselves

proposed, agreed unto, and confirmed,
Nu 32:16;

but ye shall pass over before your brethren armed; bearing arms, to fight for them; for none but such that were fit to bear arms were obliged to go; and these were to go "harnessed" {o}, as some render the word, or in a military order, in rank and file, by fives, five in a row; not at the front of the army, for the standard of Judah went first, but along with them; for "before them" signifies no other than in the presence of them, and in company with them:

all the mighty men of valour, and help them; to obtain a conquest over the Canaanites; all, according to the order of Moses, and by their agreement, were to go, all that were able to bear arms; but Joshua did not take them all, only a select company of strong and valiant for, out of an hundred thirty thousand, but forty thousand went with him, **Jos 4:13**.

{o} Myvmx "ordine militari", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "quintati", Montanus.

Joshua 1:15

Ver. 15. Until the Lord hath given your brethren rest, as [he hath given] you,.... Rest from their travels, as they had:

and they also have possessed the land which the Lord your God giveth them: are settled in the land of Canaan, as they were on that side Jordan:

then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it; the countries of Sihon and Og, they were put into the possession of:

which Moses the Lord's servant gave you on this side Jordan, toward the sunrising; the land, given to them lay to the east of Jordan.

Joshua 1:16

Ver. 16. And they answered Joshua,.... The two tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh, the heads of them, such as were deputed for that purpose, and were their mouths to him:

saying, all that thou commandest we will do; with respect to this affair of going over Jordan with their brethren, to assist them in the conquest of the land of Canaan:

and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go; in what position he would have them be in the army, and to whatsoever part of the country he should send them to subdue, and to whatsoever city he should order them to besiege.

Joshua 1:17

Ver. 17. According as we have hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee,.... Not right or wrong, but in all things that were according to the laws and will of God made known to them; and particularly it may refer to the above affair, which was settled between Moses and them, to whom they then hearkened, and now promise to confirm the same, and hearken to whatsoever orders and instructions Joshua should give them relative to it, according to the plan agreed upon:

only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses; which is not mentioned as a condition of their obedience to him, but rather as a reason of it, and as an encouraging motive to it; for, according to Kimchi, the true sense and meaning is,

"for the Lord thy God will be with thee, as he was with Moses;"

so Noldius renders it,

"seeing the Lord thy God is with thee."

Joshua 1:18

Ver. 18. Whosoever [he be] that doth rebel against thy commandment,.... Refuses to go over Jordan with his brethren the children of Israel, when commanded by Joshua so to do:

and will not hearken to thy words in all that thou commandest him; or, if he does go over, yet will not obey orders to take such a post, or go against such a city, or march into such a part of the country:

he shall be put to death; this part of military discipline they agree to, and hereby declare their entire submission to him as their general; some understand this as spoken by all Israel, and of their promise of obedience to Joshua, as their governor, in all things:

only be strong, and of a good courage; which also is not to be understood as a condition of their submission and obedience, but as a hearty wish and prayer for him, that he might have strength and courage necessary to the great work he was engaging in, and which to see would be no small encouragement to follow and obey him.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 2

This chapter gives an account of the spies sent by Joshua to Jericho, and of their entrance into the house of Rahab, who hid them from the king's messengers, **Jos 2:1**; of the relation she gave them of the fear and dread of Israel, which were fallen upon the Canaanites, **Jos 2:8**; and of the request she made to them, to save her and her father's house, when the city should be taken, and to have a sure sign of it given her, **Jos 2:12**; which the spies solemnly promised, and gave her a sign of it, with a charge not to discover the matter to any, **Jos 2:14**; and being let down by a cord through the window of her house, they made their escape to a mountain, where they lay three days, and then returned to Joshua, and made their report, **Jos 2:21**.

Ver. 1. And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men,.... Or "had sent" {p}; for this was done before the above order to depart: it is a tradition of the Jews {q}, that they were Caleb and Phinehas; but they were not young men, as in **Jos 6:23**; especially the former; nor is it probable that men of such rank and figure should be sent, but rather meaner persons; yet such as were men of good sense and abilities, and capable of conducting such an affair they were sent about, as well as men of probity and faithfulness; two good men, Kimchi says they were, and not as they that went on the mission of Moses; these were sent from Shittim, the same with Abelshittim, in the plains of Moab, where Israel now lay encamped, Nu 33:49, which Josephus {r} calls Abila, and says it was sixty furlongs, or seven miles and better, from Jordan:

to spy secretly; or "silently" {s}; not so much with respect to the inhabitants of the land, for it is supposed in all spies, that they do their business in the most private and secret manner, so as not to be discovered by the inhabitants, whose land they are sent to spy; but with respect to the children of Israel, that they might know nothing of it, lest they should be discouraged, thinking that Joshua was in some fear of the Canaanites, and under some distrust of the promise of God to give the land to them: the word for "smiths", and also for persons deaf and dumb, coming from the same root, have furnished the Jewish writers with various conceits, as that these spies went in the habit of smiths with the instruments of their business in their hands; or acted as deaf and dumb persons, and so as incapable of giving an account of themselves, or of answering to any questions put to them, should they be taken up and examined; their commentators in general take notice of this:

saying, go view the land, even Jericho; especially Jericho, so Noldius {t}; the land in general, and Jericho in particular, because it was a great city, as Kimchi notes; of this city, See Gill on "Lu 19:4". Whether it had its name from the sweetsmelling balsam which grew in plenty about it, or from the form of it, being that of an half moon, is not certain, Strabo {u} says of it, that here was a paradise of balsam, an aromatic, and that it was surrounded with hills in a plain, which bent to it like an amphitheatre. They were not sent to spy the land, as the spies in the times of Moses, to see what sort of land it was, and what sort of people dwelt in it; but to reconnoitre it, to know where it was best to lead the people at first, and encamp; and particularly to observe the passes and avenues leading to Jericho, the first city in it, nearest to them, of importance. Ben Gersom thinks it was to spy or pick out the thoughts of the inhabitants of the land, what apprehensions they had of the people of Israel, whether disheartened and dispirited at their near approach, and what were their intentions, resolutions, and preparations to act against them, offensively, or defensively; and which seems not amiss, since this was the chief information they got, and which they reported to Joshua upon their return; though Abarbinel objects to it as a thing impossible:

and they went, and came into a harlot's house, named Rahab; they went from Shittim, and crossed the river Jordan, by swimming or fording, and came to Jericho; which, as Josephus {w} says, was fifty furlongs, or seven miles and a half, from Jordan; and they went into a harlot's house, not purposely for that reason, because it was such an one, but so it proved eventually; though the Targum of Jonathan says it was the house of a woman, an innkeeper or victualler; for Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret the word it uses of a seller of food {x}; and if so, it furnishes out a reason why they turned in thither, where they might expect to have food and lodging; though the Jews commonly take her to be a harlot; and generally speaking, in those times and countries, such as kept public houses were prostitutes; and there are some circumstances which seem to confirm this in the context; and so the Greek version calls her, and is the character given of her in the New Testament: her name was Rahab, of whom the Jews have this tradition {y}, that she was ten years of age when Israel came out of Egypt; that she played the harlot the forty years they were in the wilderness, became the wife of Joshua, who had daughters by her, from whom came eight prophets, Jeremiah, Hilkiah, Maasia, Hanameel, Shallum, Baruch, the son of Neriah, Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, and some say Huldah the prophetess; but the truth is, she married Salmon, a prince of the tribe of Judah, See Gill on "Mt 1:5":

and lodged there; that is, they went thither in order to lodge.

{p} xlvyw "miserat", Vatablus, Masius, Drusius. {q} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2. {r} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 2. {s} vrx "silentio", Montanus, Munster; so Kimchi and Ben Melech. {t} P. 277. {u} Geograph. l. 16. p. 525. {w} Ut supra, sect. 4. ({r}) {x} And so R. Sol. Urbin. Obel Moed, fol. 24. 1. {y} Shalshalet Hakabala, ut supra. ({q})

Joshua 2:2

Ver. 2. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying,.... Who being alarmed at the near approach of the Israelites, and knowing their claim to the land of Canaan, and their design upon it, employed men to watch and observe what passed in the city, and parts adjacent, and inform him of it; or some persons of themselves, and for their own safety, and the good of their fellow citizens, gave notice to the king of it:

behold, there came men hither tonight of the children of Israel; who were known by their habit and language; or at least, being strangers, were suspected to be of that people, the terror of whom had fallen on all the inhabitants, so that every strange man they took for an Israelite; from hence it appears, that the spies came to Jericho at night, that they might not be observed: but with all their precaution they were taken notice of, and their design suspected, namely,

to search out the country; which were the proper places to attack first, and where there was the greatest probability of succeeding, as well as to find out the disposition of the inhabitants, whether fearful or fearless of them.

Joshua 2:3

Ver. 3. And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab,.... Not merely because she kept a public house, or being a prostitute had often strangers in it, and so conjectured that the men he had notice of might be there; but he sent upon certain information that they were seen to go in there, as it follows:

saying, bring forth the men that are come to thee; not to commit lewdness with her, though this is the sense some Jewish commentators give; but this neither agrees with the character of the men Joshua had chosen for this purpose, nor answers any end of the king to suggest; nor can it be thought that Rahab would so openly and freely own this, as in **Jos 2:4**: but what is meant by the phrase is explained in the following clause,

which are entered into thine house: in order to lodge there that night:

for they be come to search out all the country; so it was suspected, nor was the suspicion groundless.

Joshua 2:4

Ver. 4. And the woman took the two men,.... Or "she had taken" them {z} before the messengers came, upon a rumour she understood was gone abroad, that she had got Israelitish spies in her house, and so might expect to be visited and searched by the king's officers, and therefore took this precaution:

and hid them; the Hebrew word is singular, "him" {a}: hence the Jews, who take these two spies to be Caleb and Phinehas, say, that only Caleb was hid, and Phinehas, though he was before them, was not seen, being an angel, **Mal 2:7**; but the sense is, that she hid each of them, and very probably singly and apart, that if one was found, the other might escape, as Ben Gersom observes; and Abarbinel is of opinion that she hid them twice, now in the middle of her house, one in one place, and the other in another, for the reason before given, and after this hid them in the roof of her house, as afterwards related:

and said thus, there came men unto me; that is, into her house, this she owned:

but I wist not whence they [were]; of what country they were, whether Israelites or not; which whether she knew or not is not certain; it is probable she did, and told an untruth, as she also did in **Jos 2:5**.

{z} xptw "duxerat, tulerat"; so Syr. Ar. Kimchi, & Ben Melech. {a} wnputw "et abscondit eum", Montanus; "abdiderat eum", Vatablus.

Joshua 2:5

Ver. 5. And it came to pass, [about the time] of the shutting of the gate,.... Of the city, which was done every night, and at a certain time:

when it was dark; the sun set, and night come on:

that the men went out; out of her house, and out of the city too, as she said, though it was a downright lie, as well as what follows:

whither the men went I wot not; though she knew they were not gone, but were now in her house; she might not scruple telling a lie, being brought up a Heathen, and being done with a design to save the lives of persons that belonged to a people she was persuaded were the people of God, and to whom he had given the land; though her lies are not to be justified; evil is not to be done that good may come; nor are men to tell lies one to another upon any account; but these sins, with others, the Lord forgave her:

pursue after them quickly, and ye shall overtake them; this she encouraged them to do, to get rid of them the sooner, and to remove all suspicion of her having any respect for them, and of being concerned in concealing them.

Joshua 2:6

Ver. 6. But she had brought them up to the roof of the house,.... Before the messengers came; though Abarbinel thinks it was after they were gone, when she took them from the place of their concealment, and had them to the roof of the house, where she thought they would be safe and secure, should the messengers return, or others come in search of them, who would not, as she imagined, look for them there:

and hid them with the stalks of flax; that is, under them, or "in flax of wood", or "a tree" {b}; which may with as much propriety, or more, be called a tree than hyssop, **1Ki 4:33**; as it is in the Misnah {c}. Moreover, there was a sort of flax which grew in the upper part of Egypt towards Arabia, as Pliny says {d}, which they called "xylon", or wood, of which were made "lina xylina": though the words may be rightly transposed, as by as, "stalks of flax", which are large and strong before the flax is stripped or beaten off of them; the Targum renders it bundles of flax, or handfuls and sheaves of them, as they were when cut down and gathered:

which she had laid in order upon the roof; to be dried, as Kimchi observes; and Pliny {e} speaks of flax being bound up in bundles, and hung up and dried in the sun; which was done that it might be more easily stripped and beaten off; and the roofs of houses in those countries being flat, were very fit for such a purpose;
See Gill on "De 22:8"; and these being now laid there were very suitable and convenient to conceal the men under them. This seems to be in favour of Rahab, as being a virtuous and industrious woman; see
Pr 31:13.

{b} Ueh ytvpb "in linis ligni", Montanus; "vel arboris", Vatablus. {c} Sabbat, c. 2. sect. 3. & Bartenora in ib. {d} Nat. Hist. l. 19. c. 1. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 19. c. 1.

Joshua 2:7

Ver. 7. And the men pursued after them,.... As they thought:

the way to Jordan; on the other side of which the people of Israel lay encamped, to which they supposed, according to Rahab's account, these two men directed their course:

unto the fords; the fords of Jordan, the passages through it; for in some places, and at some times, it was fordable; which accounts for the way in which these spies could get over Jordan, see Ge 32:10; it was most reasonable to conclude they would return the same way; and so far the king's messengers went, but further they did not choose to go, because it would be to no purpose, and they might expose themselves to the camp of Israel, which lay on the other side:

and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate; that is, either as soon as the king's messengers were gone out of Rahab's house, either the spies, or rather the men of the house, Rahab's servants, shut the door of it to prevent their return, or others coming in; or rather, when they were got out of the city, the watchmen of the city, the porters of the city gates, shut them, that if they were not got out of the city, to prevent their escape, or however to keep out others from entering, that might be on some such design, or worse.

Joshua 2:8

Ver. 8. And before they were laid down,.... Under the stalks of the flax; or rather, since they are said to be hid in them, before they were fallen asleep, so Kimchi and Abarbinel:

she came up unto them upon the roof; to acquaint them how things were, and to converse with them on the following subjects.

Joshua 2:9

Ver. 9. And she said unto the men,.... The two spies:

I know that the Lord hath given you the land; the land of Canaan, of which she was an inhabitant, and in which they now were; this she knew either by some tradition that was among them; or by divine revelation, a supernatural impulse upon her mind: or by observing what the Lord had done already, in putting the land of the Amorites into their hands, which were one of the seven nations of Canaan; and by this it also appears, and more clearly by what follows, that she had knowledge of the Lord God, the God of Israel:

and that your terror is fallen upon us; which was another token or sign by which she knew the land would be delivered to them; that they who were a formidable people, and struck terror into others, now were terrified themselves, at the rumour of Israel being come to invade them; this was what the Lord said should be the case, De 11:25;

and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you; or "melt" {f}, like wax before the fire, as Moses had predicted,
Ex 15:15.

{f} wgmn "liquefacti sunt", Montanus, Piscator.

Joshua 2:10

Ver. 10. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt,.... To make a passage for them through it, to walk in as on dry land; this they had heard of and remembered, though it was forty years ago:

and what you did unto the kings of the Amorites that [were] on the other side Jordan: which were things more recent, done but a few months ago:

Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed; the history of which see in Nu 21:21; who were destroyed by them under Moses and Joshua their commanders; and Hercules, who is thought to be the same with Joshua, is by Lucian {g} called Ogmius, from slaying Og, as is supposed {h}.

{g} In Hercule. {h} Dickinson. Delph. Phoenic. c. 4. p. 44.

Joshua 2:11

Ver. 11. And as soon as we had heard [these things], our hearts did melt,.... Particularly what were done to the two kings of the Amorites, who, and their people, were utterly destroyed, their goods made a prey of, and their countries seized upon and possessed:

neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you; they looked dejected in their countenances, had no heart to go about any business, trembled at the shaking of a leaf, or at the least rumour and report made that the Israelites were coming on and were at hand; they had no spirit to prepare to go out and meet them, or to defend themselves:

for the Lord your God, he [is] God in heaven above, and in earth beneath; the Maker and Possessor of both; is the Governor of the whole universe, and does what he pleases in it; and disposes of all countries, persons, and things, as he thinks fit: this is a proof of her knowledge of the true God, and faith in him, and shows her to be a believer, and hence she is reckoned in the catalogue of believers,
Heb 11:31; and her faith is proved to be of the right kind by the works she did, **Jas 2:25**.

Joshua 2:12

Ver. 12. Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord,.... Which being a religious action, and done by men that feared the Lord, she knew it would be binding upon them: the Targum is,

"swear to me by the Word of the Lord:"

since I have showed you kindness; by receiving them with peace into her house, and hiding them when inquired for and demanded of her; in doing which she risked her own, life, had this treachery to her country, as it would have been deemed, been discovered;

that you will also show kindness unto my father's house; she mentions not herself and household, for if this was granted that would be implied and included; and this she presses for by the law of retaliation and friendship, for since she had shown kindness to them, it was but reasonable it should be returned:

and give me a true token; that she and her father's house would be saved by them when the city should be taken and the inhabitants destroyed; a token that would not deceive her, on which she might depend, and would be firm and sure.

Joshua 2:13

Ver. 13. And [that] ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters,.... She makes no mention of any husband or children she had, as harlots seldom have, and which seems to confirm her character as such; and so Abarbinel observes, that her father's house is only mentioned to tell us that she had no husband, for she was an harlot and had no children, and puts her father and mother in the room of an husband, and her brethren and sisters in the room of children:

and all that they have; not their substance only, but their children more especially, the children of her brethren and sisters:

and deliver our lives from death; here she manifestly includes herself, and requests the saving of her life, and the lives of all her relations, when she knew the inhabitants of the city would be all put to death upon the taking of it: thus she provided for the safety of her family, as Noah in another case and manner did, Heb 11:7; and indeed seemed more concerned for them than for herself; and thus souls sensible of their own estate and condition, by nature and grace, are very solicitous for the salvation of their relations and friends, **Ro 9:3**.

Joshua 2:14

Ver. 14. And the men answered her,.... The two spies:

our life for yours; or "our souls in your stead to die" {i}; that is, we engage for the security of your lives, should they be in danger; we promise to die in your room and stead rather than you should: this they said not as though their lives would be required of them for them, but to assure her of the safety of her and her father's house, on the following condition:

if ye utter not this our business; not their business in searching the land, for the discovery of that would be of little avail after they were gone; for it was known already that there were persons come to search the land; but "this our word" {k}, what they were going to say to her and bid her do, as a sign of safety to her and hers; which, if she discovered, others would give out the same sign, and then they could not promise her safety; or if she did not take care to bring in her father, mother, brethren, and sisters, and theirs into her house, they could not engage to protect them:

and it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land; not the whole land, but Jericho and the laud about it, that when that part of it should be delivered into their hands:

that we will deal kindly and truly with thee; "kindly", by sparing her and her father's house; "truly", by faithfully performing the promise and oath they made to her.

{i} twml Mkytxt wnvpn "anima nostra pro vobis ad moriendum", Pagninus, Montanus. {k} hz wnrbd ta "verbum nostrum hoc", Pagninus, Montanus; "sermonem nostrum hunc", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius.

Joshua 2:15

Ver. 15. Then she let them down by a cord through the window,.... Which must be large, and the cord strong, as well as she herself a masculine woman, to let down two men by it, unless she employed any of her servants in the affair; though this being so great a secrecy, it is probable she trusted none of her domestics with it as little as possible: in like manner the Apostle Paul was let down by the wall of Damascus in a basket, **Ac 9:25**; Jarchi supposes it was the same cord and window, by means of and in at which her gallants used to come and go:

for her house [was] upon the town wall; in a suitable and convenient place to receive her guests and gallants: and it is observed, that harlots have had their houses on or under walls: Martial speaks of harlots whom he calls {l} Summoenianae, whores that plied under the walls and in the suburbs of cities:

and she dwelt upon the wall; that part of the house in which she particularly dwelt was built on or over the wall, and the rest towards the city was for the entertainment of persons that resorted to her house.

{l} Epigram. l. 3. Ep. 62.

Joshua 2:16

Ver. 16. And she said unto them, get ye unto the mountain,.... Which was near to the city, and is supposed to be the same which is now called Quarantania: Dr. Shaw, a late traveller in those parts, says {m}, from the mountain Quarantania, the very same perhaps where the two spies concealed themselves, **Jos 2:16**, we have a distinct view of the land of the Amorites, of Gilead, and of Bashan, the inheritance of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and of the half tribe of Manasseh--to it joins the mountain of Adummim, and through it the road is cut that leads from Jerusalem to Jericho, where probably it was from the very nature of the situation that the man fell among thieves, Lu 10:30; which very probably is the same mountain which Josephus {n} says hung over the city, and was a very barren one; though the singular may be put for the plural, since, as Strabo says {o}, it was surrounded with mountains:

lest the pursuers meet you; on their return from the fords of Jordan, being disappointed:

and hide yourselves there three days: some of the Jewish Rabbins, as Jarchi and Kimchi, observe that she had this by the revelation of the Holy Ghost, that the pursuers would return at the end of three days; but the latter more truly remarks, that this was said by conjecture; that Jericho being, as he says, one day from Jordan, and a little more, by going, returning, and searching for the spies, they would be three days in doing it:

until the pursuers be returned; into the city; for until they were they could not be in safety, but must be in danger of being met by them and taken up:

and afterward may ye go your way: to Jordan, and so to the camp of Israel, and that without fear.

{m} Travels, p. 276. Ed. 2. {n} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 2. {o} Geograph. l. 16. p. 525.

Joshua 2:17

Ver. 17. And the men said unto her,.... Some think that this discourse, which passed between the spies and her, was while in the house before she let them down, or otherwise they would have been in danger of being overheard, and so the whole affair discovered; but as it was on the other side of the house, and under the wall of the city, and without it, they might with the greater safety converse together:

we [will be] blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear; that is, they would most faithfully and punctually keep it, it should be sacred to them, and she should have no occasion to lay any blame upon them in the least.

Joshua 2:18

Ver. 18. Behold, [when] we come into the land,.... The land of Canaan, and into this city, into that part of it, as the Septuagint, where her house was, meaning not themselves only, but the people of Israel they belonged to:

thou shall bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by; the word by refers either to the scarlet thread they were let down by, said to be a cord, **Jos 2:15**; and therefore must be a line twisted with various scarlet threads, as Kimchi; who observes, that according to the Targum, it was the border of a red garment; or to the window through which they were let down, as the Septuagint version; it may refer to both, and the sense be, that the same twisted cord of scarlet thread they were let down by should be bound to the same window they were let down through; only this objection there is to the same window, that it was not towards the city, and so not to be seen when they came into it, but looked over the wall without the city: now as Rahab was an instance of the salvation of sinners by the grace of God, for she was a sinner by birth, by practice, and a notorious one; she was an instance of distinguishing grace, of free and efficacious grace, a singular instance of it; and became a true penitent, a real believer, was a justified person, and saved: so the scarlet thread was an emblem of the blood of Christ, by which salvation is; redemption and all the blessings of grace are through it; justification, remission of sin, reconciliation, and atonement, and safety, and protection from avenging justice, and wrath to come, are only by it: likewise the spies, who are also called "messengers", **Jas 2:25**; may represent the ministers of the Gospel, who are the messengers of Christ, and the churches, are sent out by him the antitypical Joshua, men of wisdom, courage, and valour, and are sent as spies to bring to light men and things, who direct to the way of salvation and give the same token of it, Mr 16:16;

and thou shall bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household home unto thee; into her house, where the scarlet thread was bound, and where only they would be safe, as the Israelites were in the houses where the blood of the paschal lamb was sprinkled, Ex 12:23; and so they are safe, and they only, who are under the blood of sprinkling, and partake of the virtue of it.

Joshua 2:19

Ver. 19. And it shall be, [that] whosoever shall go out of the door of thy house into the street,.... After they have been taken in, and when the Israelites were come into the city:

his blood [shall be] upon his head, and we [will be] guiltless; if he is killed by any person, his death will be owing to himself, and no blame to be laid on us; nor shall we reckon ourselves guilty of the breach of the oath taken:

and whosoever [shall be] with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if [any] hand be upon him: if anyone within doors is killed by an Israelite entering in, the guilt of the blood shall lie upon us, and we will be answerable, according to the tenor of the oath, "our life for yours", **Jos 2:14**.

Joshua 2:20

Ver. 20. And if thou utter this our business,.... So that others would either hang out scarlet threads or get into her house for shelter,
See Gill on "Jos 2:14";

then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear; be under no obligation to make it good, by saving her and her father's house.

Joshua 2:21

Ver. 21. And she said, according to your words, so [be] it,.... She agreed, that if the conditions required were not performed, they would be quit of their oath, but if they were, she expected it would be fulfilled:

and she sent them away, and they departed; took their leave of each other:

and she bound the scarlet line in the window; immediately, as Abarbinel thinks, and in the sight of the spies, that they might see that she conformed to their direction, and that they might take notice where she fastened it; and that she herself might, at the sight of it, be put in mind of the design of it, and be an encouragement to her faith as to the safety of her and her father's house; and it being a thing so trifling and insignificant in itself, would not be taken notice of by the inhabitants, or be thought to be done with any design; though, according to the instruction of the spies, it seems as if it was to be done when they came into the land, and into the city, and which seems most likely that it was then done.

Joshua 2:22

Ver. 22. And they went, and came unto the mountain,.... Rahab had directed them to, the mountain Quarantania, See Gill on "Jos 2:16";

and abode there three days; being, no doubt, supplied with food by Rahab; and it might not be three wholly, but one whole day and part of the other two:

until the pursuers were returned; to the city of Jericho, as might reasonably be supposed:

and the pursuers sought [them] throughout all the way; from Jericho to the fords of Jordan, searching every hedge, field, and village as they went and returned:

but found [them] not; Rahab having hid them in her house, and then sent them to the mountain, there to remain till the return of the pursuers.

Joshua 2:23

Ver. 23. So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain,.... Or came down from it again, by which, it seems, they went to the top of it, and hid themselves in some cave there: this descent, Kimchi says, was,

"on the third day of their being sent, which was the second day of the three days Joshua made mention of when he said, "within three days";"

See Gill on "Jos 1:11";

and passed over; that is, the river Jordan, at the fords of it:

and came to Joshua the son of Nun; at Shittim, where he still continued, and from whence he sent them, **Jos 2:1**;

and told him all [things] that befell them; what house they went into when come to Jericho, what reception they met with, the report of them to the king of Jericho, how messengers were sent by him to demand them, and by what means they were preserved and made their escape.

Joshua 2:24

Ver. 24. And they said unto Joshua,.... Made a report of what they had got knowledge of, which answered the end of their mission:

truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land: which they concluded by the terror the inhabitants of it were in, and so in no condition to make resistance and defend themselves; and they not only judged of the whole land by the case of the inhabitants of Jericho, but were assured by Rahab that all the inhabitants of the land were in the same plight and condition, **Jos 2:9**;

for even the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us; this was the temper and disposition they appeared in, and seems to be what Joshua was chiefly desirous of knowing; since nothing else is told by the spies nor inquired of by him, but immediately upon this report began his march towards Canaan, as in the next chapter is related.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 3

Joshua removed from Shittim to Jordan, where he stayed three days, **Jos 3:1**; the people are directed to move when they saw the ark bore by the priests, and what distance they should keep from it, **Jos 3:3**; are bid to sanctify themselves against the morrow, when wonders would be wrought, **Jos 3:5**; and the priests are ordered to take up the ark, **Jos 3:6**; Joshua is encouraged by the Lord, and instructed to command the priests when they come to Jordan to stand still in it, **Jos 3:7**; and he declares to all the people, as a token that God would drive the Canaanites from before them, that as soon as the feet of the priests bearing the ark should rest in the waters of Jordan, they should be parted, and make way for them to pass through, **Jos 3:9**; which accordingly came to pass, so that all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, **Jos 3:14**.

Ver. 1. And Joshua rose early in the morning,.... The morning after the spies had returned and made their report; which, as Kimchi rightly observes, was the ninth of Nisan; for on the morrow, which was the tenth, the people passed over Jordan, see **Jos 3:5**. Moses, according to the Jewish writers, died on the seventh of Adar or February; the thirty days of his mourning ended the seventh of Nisan or March; two days before they were ended the spies were sent, who returned on the eighth day of the month; and the morning following Joshua rose early, which shows his readiness and alacrity to proceed in the expedition he was directed and encouraged to:

and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan; from Shittim in the plains of Moab, to the river Jordan:

he and all the children of Israel; he as their general, and they an army of six hundred thousand fighting men under him, besides women and children, and others that came along with them:

and lodged there before they passed over; lay there encamped a night before they passed over the river Jordan.

Joshua 3:2

Ver. 2. And it came to pass after three days,.... At the end of the three days they were bid to prepare food for their expedition, and to go over Jordan, **Jos 1:11**;

that the officers went through the host; the camp of Israel; very probably the same as in **Jos 1:10**; this was, no doubt, by the order of Joshua, and who was directed to it by the Lord.

Joshua 3:3

Ver. 3. And they commanded the people,.... In the name of Joshua, by whom they were sent:

saying, when ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it: the Targum reads, the priests and Levites; so the Septuagint: it was the business of the Levites, particularly the Kohathites, to bear the ark in journeying, but here the priests, who also were Levites, were to carry it: it is remarked in the Talmud {p}, that there are three places in which the priests are said to bear the ark; here, and when they surrounded Jericho, **Jos 6:6**; and when it was returned to its place in the times of David, 2Sa 15:29; and Kimchi and Abarbinel observe a fourth, when it was brought into Solomon's temple, **1Ki 8:6**;

then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it; their usual signal for marching was the cloud, when that was taken up, **Nu 9:17**, &c. but now the ark, the clouds of glory having removed at the death of Moses, and were seen no more, as Abarbinel and other Jewish writers observe; and therefore it was proper the Israelites should be made acquainted with this signal; for, as Jarchi says, this journey was different from all the journeys (though that of the three days journey from Sinai must be excepted, Nu 10:33), for all the time Moses was in being, the pillar of cloud marched first and showed them the way, and the ark moved after two of the standards (Judah and Reuben), and now the ark went first: the cloud was a figure of the dark and cloudy dispensation of the law, particularly the ceremonial law, the shadow of good things to come, and which continued only during the former state, and discontinued to be of any use when the Mosaic dispensation ceased, and when Joshua or Jesus was come: the ark was a type of Christ, the forerunner for us entered, and whom we are to follow whithersoever he goes or directs to, in the exercise of grace and performance of duty; and the ark being carried now by different persons, may denote that Christ was held forth in a weaker manner under the legal dispensation, and by his apostles and ministers under the Gospel dispensation in a clearer and stronger manner, and who are to be followed no further or longer than as they bear the ark or direct to Christ.

{p} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 33. 2.

Joshua 3:4

Ver. 4. Yet there shall be a space between you and it,.... The ark; the Keri or marginal reading is, "between you and them"; the priests that bear it: hence sprung a fiction among the Jews, that there were two arks, the ark of the Shechinah or divine Majesty, and the ark of Joseph, in which his bones were put, which went together {q}; which Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel take notice of, but has no foundation in the text:

about two thousand cubits by measure; by a certain well known measure, that of a common cubit; for the "caph" we render "about" is a note of truth, reality, and certainty, and designs the exact precise measure here given: this difference was to be observed, partly in reverence to the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence; Christ is to be reverenced by his people, and so his word and ordinances; and there is a reverence and respect due to his ministers and priests that bear the ark; as also that they might the better see the ark and go after it, as Ben Gersom; or the way in which they should go, as is suggested in the following clause; and likewise have the better view of the greatness of the miracle, as Abarbinel; the dividing of the waters of Jordan as soon as the ark came to it, and while it was in it: the Jews conclude from hence that this was the measure of ground they may go on a sabbath day, and no further, called a sabbath day's journey, **Ac 1:12**;

come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; over Jordan into Canaan's land; for being at some distance from them they could better discern that and the way he directed them to walk in: Christ the antitype of the ark is the way to the heavenly Canaan, and his ministers point out the right way of salvation by him, in the ministration of the word, by attending to which the way is seen and known in which men must go:

for ye have not passed [this] way heretofore; a path indeed untrodden by any; neither they nor any other ever went into Canaan the way they were now going, through the river Jordan as on dry land: the way to heaven by Christ is only revealed in the Gospel, and only trodden by believers in him, and especially the way to glory through Jordan's river; or death is an untrodden path, which, though the way of all flesh, is a trackless path, and gone through, but once, and those who pass it have never before gone that way.

{q} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 13. 1.

Joshua 3:5

Ver. 5. And Joshua said unto the people,.... On the third day; and the thirtieth day of the mourning for Moses, Jarchi says, was the first of the three days, and that being the seventh day of the month, this must be the ninth, as it is most clear the morrow was the tenth:

sanctify yourselves; in a ceremonial sense, by washing their bodies and their clothes, and abstaining from their wives; and in a moral sense, by acts of religion and devotion, by prayer and meditation, and the exercise of repentance and, good works: it may denote that sanctification is necessary to our passage over Jordan, or through death to the heavenly Canaan, for without holiness no man shall see the Lord:

for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you: in their sight and presence, and for them, by dividing the waters of Jordan, that they might pass through it as on dry land; this, as Kimchi says, was the tenth of Nisan, as is plain from **Jos 4:19**.

Joshua 3:6

Ver. 6. And Joshua spoke unto the priests,.... On the morrow, that is, on the tenth day of the month, the day on which they went over Jordan:

saying, take up the ark of the covenant; in which the law was put, which was the covenant between God and the people, from whence the ark had this name;

and in which it was typical of Christ, in whom both the law, the covenant of works, was fulfilled, and with whom the covenant of grace was made; who is the Mediator; surety, and messenger of it, and in whom all the blessings and promises of it are, and with whom it is, and will be kept for evermore: the ark, the priests were ordered to take up and bear on their shoulders; for no other way might they carry it; these typified the ministers of Christ who bear his name, his Gospel in the world, see **Ac 9:15**;

and pass over before the people; over the river Jordan, to direct them in the way through it, and encourage them to follow them:

and they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people; from the place where they had lodged the night before to the brink of the river.

Joshua 3:7

Ver. 7. And the Lord said unto Joshua,.... Out of the tabernacle:

this day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel; by working the miracle afterwards related; dividing the waters, which was done on this day, and was but the beginning of wonders; for other great and marvellous things were done for him and by him, by which it appeared he was high in the favour of God, greatly esteemed and honoured by him, and so would be great and honourable in the account of the people:

that they may know that as I was with Moses, [so] I will be with thee; by dividing the waters of Jordan for him, as he had divided the waters of the Red sea for Moses; which, as it was a token of his powerful presence with him, this would be a like token of it with Joshua. The Targum is,

"as my Word was for the help of Moses, so shall my Word be for thy help."

Joshua 3:8

Ver. 8. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the Lord,.... Who were subject to Joshua, the chief governor of the nation, and general of the army, as well as the common people; and whose commands they were to obey, and especially when they appeared to be from the Lord:

saying, when ye come to the brink of the water of Jordan; not of the bank of it, but of the water, which had now overflowed its bank; that is, the brink or extremity of it, which was nearest to them, and to which they first came; though it is a notion of some Jewish commentators {t}, and which some Christian interpreters {u} have given into, and both of considerable note, that this was the further extremity, or the brink on the other side of the river; but, according to this notion, they must pass the river to the other side before the waters were divided, which is not credible; and must return again into the midst of the river, which is not probable; and besides, it is expressly said, that as soon as their feet dipped in the brim, or extremity of the water, the waters parted, which must be the first brim or extremity they came at, **Jos 3:15**;

ye shall stand still in Jordan; after the waters were parted; upon their coming to, and touching, the brink of them, they proceeded, and went into the middle of the river, where they were ordered to stop and stand still.

{t} Kimchi, Abarbinel. {u} Masius, Drusius.

Joshua 3:9

Ver. 9. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, come hither,.... Very probably to the door of the tabernacle:

and hear the words of the Lord your God; which he was about to deliver to them as from him, and in his name.

Joshua 3:10

Ver. 10. And Joshua said,.... To the people as follows:

hereby ye shall know that the living God [is] among you; who has life in and of himself, and is the author of life to all his creatures; and is so called in opposition to the lifeless idols of the Gentiles: and it may be, as Abarbinel observes, to suggest to them, that though Moses was dead, the Lord lived, and lives for evermore; and by the following miracle of dividing the waters of Jordan, it would be a plain case that the Lord was yet among them, to protect and defend them, deliver and save them:

and [that] he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites; all the seven nations are mentioned, even the Girgashites, who are sometimes omitted, to assure them of the expulsion of them all, to make way for their entire possession of the land of Canaan, as had been promised them.

Joshua 3:11

Ver. 11. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth,.... Some both Jewish and Christian interpreters, because there is a distinguishing accent on the word "covenant", read the words "the ark of the covenant, even the Lord of all the earth"; so in some copies of our English Bible, as if the ark was called the Lord of all the earth, because of his presence and dwelling there; but, as Kimchi observes, either the word "ark" is wanting, or the word "covenant", and may be supplied either thus,

"the ark of the covenant, the ark (I say) of the Lord of all the earth;"

or thus,

"the ark of the covenant, which is the covenant of the Lord of all the earth:"

the true meaning is what Abarbinel gives,

"the ark of the covenant of the Lord, who is the Lord of the whole earth;"

the Maker and possessor of the whole earth, the whole terraqueous globe; and can do what he pleases in the earth, or in the water; and can control the powers of nature, and do what is beyond them, things miraculous and astonishing:

passeth before you into Jordan; not only unto it, but into it, into the river itself; and, by the power of him whose presence was with it, the waters of Jordan were to be divided, to give them a passage through it as on dry land, and so it came to pass.

Joshua 3:12

Ver. 12. Now therefore take ye twelve men,.... For what end and purpose is not mentioned. Abarbinel is of opinion, that they were chosen and appointed, that every man might pitch upon and take a place for his tribe to encamp in, when they came on the other side Jordan: whether this was Joshua's view or no is not certain; however, the use he made of these, thus provided by divine direction, is related **Jos 4:2**;

and these were to be taken out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man; Levi not reckoned, having no part in the land; and so we find that tribe left out in other accounts, when there was a choice of twelve men out of each of the tribes, Nu 13:4.

Joshua 3:13

Ver. 13. And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord,.... Which they were bid to take up and carry, **Jos 3:6**;

the Lord of all the earth; this shows that not the ark, but the Lord, is called "the Lord of all the earth", See Gill on "Jos 3:11":

shall rest in the waters of Jordan; the meaning is, as soon as their feet should touch them, or they should set their feet in them, when they came to the brink of them:

[that] the waters of Jordan shall be cut off [from] the waters that come down from above; from above the place where the priests came, and the children of Israel after passed over:

and they shall stand upon an heap; or one heap; stop and rise up high, as if piled up one upon another, and stand unmoved. This had been made known to Joshua by divine revelation, and is what he hints at, **Jos 3:5**; and now plainly speaks out, and foretells before it came to pass; and which must serve to magnify Joshua, as in **Jos 3:7**; and give him great credit and honour among the people.

Joshua 3:14

Ver. 14. And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents to pass over Jordan,.... Which they had pitched very near it, upon their removal from Shittim, and in which they had lodged the night past:

and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; at the distance of two thousand cubits.

Joshua 3:15

Ver. 15. And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan,.... Not to the bank, which was overflowed, but to the extremity of the water overflowing:

and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water; which was doubtless the first they came to, and not the brim or extremity of it on the other side:

for Jordan overfloweth all its banks all the time of harvest; that is, of barley harvest, as appears from the time of year; for it was in the first month, the month Nisan, or Abib, which answers to part of March, and April, it used to overflow, 1Ch 12:15; and it was now the tenth day of that month, **Jos 4:19**; on the sixteenth of which, at the time of the passover, the sheaf of the firstfruits of barley harvest was offered up, Le 23:10; the inundation continued all the time of harvest; and so Aristeas {w} testifies, that

"the river being filled, it overflows as the Nile in the time of harvest, and waters much of the country:"

it overflows its banks both on the one side and on the other, the eastern and western shores. This overflow is supposed to be occasioned either by the latter rains, which fell about this time; or rather by the snow on Mount Lebanon melting at this time of the year, when the sun has great strength in those parts, and which poured down in great quantities into this river, that took its rise from thence. Josephus {x} speaks of Mount Lebanon and of the fountains of Jordan together; and says they have their rise from the mountain; and of the snow of Lebanon see Jer 18:14. This river continued to overflow at this season in the times of David, 1Ch 12:15; and in the times of Aristeas, who lived in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, as before observed; and some late travellers {y} observe,

"it generally happens in the month Nisan; that is, from the middle of March to the middle of April, the time of the first harvest;"

but Mr. Maundrell {z}, who was upon the spot in 1697, and at the proper time of its overflowing, perceived nothing of it. He says,

"there is a small descent, which you may fitly call the, first and outermost bank of Jordan, as far as which it may be supposed the river does, or at least did anciently, overflow; but at present (whether it was because the river has by its rapidity of current worn its channel deeper than it was formerly, or whether because its waters are diverted some other way) it seems to have forgot its ancient greatness; for we could discern no sign or probability of such overflowings when we were there, which was the thirtieth of March, being the proper time for these inundations; nay, so far was the river from overflowing, that it ran at least two yards below the brink of the channel."

However, at this time of the passage of the children of Israel through it, it was overflowing; which made the miracle the greater.

{w} Hist. de 72. Interpret. p. 41. {x} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22. {y} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 335, 336. {z} Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 81, 82.

Joshua 3:16

Ver. 16. That the waters which came down from above,.... Above where the priests' feet rested, and which came down from Mount Lebanon, and the fountains of Jordan northward:

stood [and] rose up upon an heap; they stopped their current, and as the water came down they rose up on high, and made one vast heap of waters:

very far from the city of Adam, that is, beside Zaretan; the Cetib, or textual reading, is, "in Adam the city"; we follow the marginal reading, "from Adam": both readings, as is usually, if not always the case, are to be received; and the meaning is, that this heap of waters, though the river was at a considerable distance from Adam; yet through the overflow of it, it reached to, and was "in Adam": this city was in Perea, on the other side Jordan, that side on which the Israelites were before their passage; and Zaretan, which is supposed to be the same with Zartanah, and Zarthan, 1Ki 4:12, was on this side, in the tribe of Manasseh; and the sense is, not that Adam was on the side of Zaretan, or near it, for it was on the other side of the river; and according to the Talmudists {a} was twelve miles from it; but the construction is with the word "heap", "which [heap] was on the side of Zaretan"; it was there where the waters were heaped up; it seems as if they reached on the one side to Adam, and on the other side to Zaretan:

and those that came down towards the sea of the plain, [even] the salt sea, failed, [and] were cut off; those waters, which were below where the priests' feet rested, ran down into the lake Asphaltites, where Sodom and Gomorrah formerly stood, the sea of the plain, or vale of Siddim, Ge 14:3; sometimes called the dead sea, and here the salt sea, its water being exceeding salt; so, Mr. Maundrell, the above mentioned traveller {b} testifies on his own knowledge;

"the water of the lake (the lake Asphaltites, or dead sea, says he) was very limpid, and salt to the highest degree; and not only salt, but also extreme bitter and nauseous;"

so that these waters running down thither, and those above stopped, made a dry channel for sixteen or eighteen miles: and the people passed over right against Jericho; which was the city Joshua had in view to attack first, and had sent spies thither to get intelligence of it, and the disposition of the people in it: See Gill on "Jos 2:1".

{a} T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 21. 4. {b} Maundrell, ut supra, (Journel from Aleppo to Jerusalem) p. 84. Ed. 7.

Joshua 3:17

Ver. 17. And the priests that bare the ark of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan,.... Which for its breadth Mr. Maundrell, the above mentioned traveller, says {c} might be about twenty yards over, and its depth exceeded his height; but Dr. Shaw {d}, a later traveller still, says,

"the river Jordan is by far the most considerable river, excepting the Nile, either of the coast of Syria, or of Barbary. I computed it to be about thirty yards broad, but the depth I could not measure, except at the brink, where I found it to be three yards."

Now in the midst of this river the priests bearing the ark stood firm on dry ground, the waters above being stopped and those below cut off. This perhaps might give rise to the fables among the Heathens of the river Scamander being swelled for the destruction of Achilles, and dried up by Vulcan, of which

Homer {e} makes mention; and of the river Inachus, dried up by Neptune, as the Grecians fable; however, if Heathens can credit these accounts, surely we Christians ought to believe this, attested by divine revelation. And this may denote the presence of Christ with his people in afflictions, who will not suffer those waters to overflow them, and in death itself, when the swellings of Jordan shall not come near them to distress them; and when the covenant of grace will appear firm and sure, and be their great support; and when also the feet of the ministers of Christ stand firm, and their faith fails not; which is of great use, and very encouraging to the spiritual Israel of God:

and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground; the waters being divided to a space large enough for such a body of people to pass over, and which continued

until all the people were clean passed over Jordan; perfectly and completely, not one being left behind, or lost in the passage through it; in the midst of which the priests stood until all were passed over. So the spiritual Israel of God must all go over Jordan's river, or must all go through the valley of the shadow of death; and they will all go over safe to Canaan's land, to the heavenly glory; their souls go immediately to heaven at death, and their bodies will be raised at the last day, and be reunited to them, and partake of happiness with them; nor will anyone of them be lost; they all clean pass over, and arrive safe; for they are the chosen of God, the care and charge of Christ, the purchase of his blood, partake of his grace, and have the earnest of his Spirit.

{c} Maundrell, Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 83. {d} Travels, p. 346. {e} Iliad. 21.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 4

This chapter relates an order, that is men, should take twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, and carry them to the first place they lodged at as a memorial of their passage over it, **Jos 4:1**; and how Joshua set up twelve other stones in the river itself, **Jos 4:9**; and how many of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, went before the Israelites when they passed over, **Jos 4:10**; which being done, the priests were ordered to come out of Jordan, when the waters returned to their place, **Jos 4:15**; The time when this miracle was wrought is observed, **Jos 4:19**; and an account is given of Joshua's pitching the twelve stones taken out of Jordan in Gilgal, and the use they were to be of in future time, **Jos 4:20**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan,.... As related, **Jos 3:17**;

that the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying: as follows.

Joshua 4:2

Ver. 2. Take you twelve men out of the people,.... Joshua had before this ordered twelve men to be taken from among them, which seems to have been done of himself; and now he has a direction from God for it, and what to employ them in:

out of every tribe a man; so that what they did was in the name of the several tribes, and as representing them.

Joshua 4:3

Ver. 3. And command you them, saying,.... As follows:

take you hence out of the midst of Jordan; so that they were obliged to go back into the midst of Jordan, having already passed over it, as appears from **Jos 4:1**;

out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm; where being stones, they chose to stand upon them, and which were a firm standing for them; and which secured them from the slime and mud at the bottom of the river the waters left behind; though it is not absolutely necessary to understand it that they were to take, and did take, the stones from under their feet, but those that lay about the place where they stood:

twelve stones; each man a stone; and, according to the Samaritan Chronicle {f}, every man inscribed his name on the stone:

and ye shall carry them over with you; from the place they took them up, to the place they should next stop at:

and leave them in the lodging place where you shall lodge this night: which was in the place afterwards called Gilgal, **Jos 4:19**.

{f} Apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. p. 500, 503.

Joshua 4:4

Ver. 4. Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had prepared of the children of Israel,.... It may be for some other purpose, **Jos 3:12**; but this was the destination of them eventually, and as by divine direction:

out of every tribe a man: as he had before ordered, and was now directed to.

Joshua 4:5

Ver. 5. And Joshua said unto them,.... The twelve men:

pass ye over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan; that is, they were to go back to Jordan again, which they had passed over, and go into the midst of it, where were the priests bearing the ark; for it is not to be imagined that the ark went along with them, or followed them, they going before it; but they went where that was, just before it, from whence they were to take the stones, as next directed:

and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder; by which it appears they were large stones they were to take, not what they could carry in their hands, but what they were obliged to take upon their shoulders:

according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel; who had that day passed over Jordan, of which these stones were to be a memorial.

Joshua 4:6

Ver. 6. That this may be a sign among you,.... A commemorative one:

[that] when your children ask [their fathers] in time to come; or "tomorrow" {g} and so in all time, or any time hereafter:

saying, what mean you by these stones? what is the reason of setting them up, and in this place, and being just of such a number?

{g} rxm aurion, Sept. "eras", Pagninus, Montanus.

Joshua 4:7

Ver. 7. Then ye shall answer them,.... By informing them of the design and use of them:

that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord when it passed over Jordan; the waters below from those that were, above, which stood up on an heap; so that they were divided and separated from each other, and made dry land for a passage of the children of Israel; and this was done before, and in the presence of the ark of the covenant, to show that is was owing to the power of God, of whose presence the ark was a symbol:

the waters of Jordan were cut off; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and that it might be taken notice of as a very marvellous event, and to be ascribed to the divine omnipotence and goodness:

and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever; which, whenever seen and observed by them, would put them in mind of this wonderful appearance of God for them; and Jerom {h} speaks of them as if seen by Paula in his time, whose life and travels in those parts are written by him.

{h} Epitaph. Paulae in tom. 1. Oper. fol. 59. K.

Joshua 4:8

Ver. 8. And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded,.... That is, the twelve men taken out of the twelve tribes of Israel, and who were the representatives of them in this action;

and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the Lord spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel; they took the exact number, and out of the very place Joshua was ordered to direct them to do:

and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged: which, as Josephus says {i}, was fifty furlongs from Jordan, which was above six miles; so far they carried these stones on their shoulders:

and laid them down there; which afterwards were put in proper order by Joshua, or at least by his direction.

{i} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 4.

Joshua 4:9

Ver. 9. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan,.... Twelve other stones, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and so Jarchi; which he set one upon another, so that they might be seen above the water; or however the water of Jordan being clear, they might easily be discerned by those who either passed over the river, or walked by the side of it, where they were; and perhaps may be the very stones John the Baptist pointed at in **Mt 3:9**; since it was at Bethabara he was baptizing, supposed to be the very place of the passage of the children of Israel over Jordan, and had its name from thence, **Joh 1:28**;

in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood; and which was done in commemoration of it: the words will bear to be read "under the station" of the feet of the priests: hence Jarchi fancies these were set, that their feet might not sink in the mud at the bottom of the river; but this, though here recorded, might be done by Joshua immediately after the priests were come out of Jordan, or as they were coming up: hence some think Joshua was the last that came up from it; but Abarbinel observes, that the word signifies "in the room" or "stead of", See Gill on "Ex 21:24"; so that these stones were placed in the room and stead of the station of the priests, in the midst of the river, and in memory of it:

and they are there unto this day; to the time of the writing of this book, which is no objection to Joshua being the writer of it, though it is by some made one; since it might be wrote by him, as doubtless it was, when such an observation could not be impertinent; and if what has been before observed is true, these stones were in the same place in the times of John the Baptist; and that they were in the order in which they were first set; for that they were in the waters of Jordan, there could scarce be any question of it. This was done to perpetuate the memory of this remarkable event: so Alexander the great set up twelve altars on the borders of India, by the river Oraxes, in commemoration of his exploits {k}.

{k} Arrian. Expedit. Alex. l. 5. Curtius, l. 9. sect. 3.

Joshua 4:10

Ver. 10. For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan,.... Though on dry ground, the waters being divided:

until everything was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua; that is, until all the people had passed over Jordan, as the Lord had ordered Joshua, to encourage them unto, and go over with them, **Jos 1:2**; and which Moses, by divine direction, had given Joshua in charge to do,
De 31:7; Kimchi interprets this of the setting up of the stones in Jordan, and the removal of the other to Gilgal, of which Moses said nothing to Joshua; and though it may be true of the former, that the priests stood in Jordan till that was done, which is not certain, yet not of the latter; for it is plain, and it is most reasonable to conclude, that the priests were come up from the midst of Jordan before Israel marched to Gilgal, or even began their march, see **Jos 4:18**; and much less is this to be understood of the stones at Ebal, as others, and so referred to De 27:2; which was not done until after Ai was taken, **Jos 8:24**. And it is not reasonable to imagine that the priests should continue in Jordan to that time; Abarbinel thinks it refers to the words in **Jos 1:3**; which had been spoken by the Lord to Joshua, and had been expressed by Moses, De 11:24; and which he supposes were now repeated by Joshua, and the priests continued in their station until he had made an end of rehearsing them; the last clause relating to Moses is left out in the Septuagint version:

and the people hasted and passed over; not stood in fear of the waters of the river returning upon them; rather through an eager desire of setting their feet on the land of Canaan, and it may be to relieve the priests from their station as soon as might be.

Joshua 4:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass, when the people were clean passed over,.... Every one of them, as in **Jos 3:17**;

that the ark of the Lord passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people; that is, the priests bearing the ark came out of the midst of Jordan in the sight of all the people, who were on the banks of it, on the other side, where they had been stationed during the passage of the people; though this motion of them was not until they received an order for it, of which there is an after mention. The Septuagint version reads, "and the stones before them"; see **Jos 4:8**.

Joshua 4:12

Ver. 12. And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh,.... Who were settled on the other side Jordan, in the countries taken from Sihon and Og:

passed over armed before the children of Israel; the rest of the tribes:

as Moses spake unto them; or ordered them, and as they promised they would, Nu 32:17.

Joshua 4:13

Ver. 13. About forty thousand prepared for war,.... Accoutred with proper armour to defend themselves, and their brethren, and annoy their enemies: this is to be understood of such a number of the above mentioned tribes; otherwise the number of all Israel that went over Jordan, even armed or fighting men, besides women and children, were five hundred thousand or more. Now though the number of men fit for war, of these tribes, were an hundred thirty thousand, who were all, according to the original agreement, under obligation to go with their brethren over Jordan into Canaan's land, and continue with them until it was subdued, and they had rest in it; yet Joshua took no more than about forty thousand of them, who we may suppose were select men, and fit for his purpose; the rest were left to look after their flocks, their families, and their lands: these

passed over before the Lord unto battle; over Jordan, before the ark of the

Lord, as that stood in Jordan, bore by the priests there, being ready to engage in battle whenever it was necessary: and they went on with their brethren

to the plains of Jericho; to a place afterwards called Gilgal; see **Jos 4:19**. The Septuagint version is, to the city Jericho.

Joshua 4:14

Ver. 14. On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of Israel,.... Made him great and honourable in their esteem, by doing what he foretold would be done, dividing the waters of Jordan, drying up the river to make a passage for them through it, as on dry land:

and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life; had a reverend esteem of him, and affection for him, and yielded obedience to him all his days; see Ex 14:31.

Joshua 4:15

Ver. 15. And the Lord spake unto Joshua,.... When all the people had passed over jordan:

saying; as follows.

Joshua 4:16

Ver. 16. Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony,.... In all places before, in this history, the ark is called the ark of the covenant, here the ark of the testimony, which signifies the same thing, the law; which was both the covenant between God and the people, and a testimony of his will unto them; the Septuagint version has both words:

that they come up out of Jordan; where they stayed until all the people passed over, for the encouragement of them, and until they received this order.

Joshua 4:17

Ver. 17. Joshua therefore commanded the priests,.... In obedience to the Lord, and sent them an order:

saying; as follows:

come ye up out of Jordan; from the midst of the river to the bank of it, which was properly an ascent.

Joshua 4:18

Ver. 18. And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord were come up out of the midst of Jordan,.... According to the command of Joshua in the name of the Lord:

[and] the soles of the priests' feet were lift up upon the dry land; and set upon it, on the bank of Jordan, and shores of the land of Canaan:

that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place; those that came from above, and had stood on an heap, gradually came down into the channel, and those below that were cut off returned:

and flowed over all his banks, as [they did] before; and usually did at this time of the year, see **Jos 3:15**; so that there was no decrease or loss of the waters by their failing, and being cut off.

Joshua 4:19

Ver. 19. And the people came up out of Jordan,.... The channel of it, to the shore:

on the tenth [day] of the first month; the month Nisan or Abib, which from the time of Israel's coming out of Egypt was appointed the first month of the year, Ex 12:2; on the fifteenth of which month they came out of Egypt, having kept the passover on the fourteenth at even; so that their coming out of Egypt, to their entrance into Canaan, was just forty years, wanting five days. This tenth day was the day in which the passover was taken from the flock, and kept till the fourteenth, on which day the children of Israel kept their first passover in Canaan, in the plains of Jericho, **Jos 5:10**;

and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho; it has its name here by anticipation, for it was so named after this for a reason given, **Jos 5:9**; It was, according to Josephus {l}, ten furlongs, or a mile and a quarter, from Jericho. Jerom says {m}, there was shown in his time a desert place two miles from Jericho, had in wonderful esteem by men of that country, which he suggests was this place; as it was had in great veneration, both by the worshippers of the true God, and by idolaters, for many ages.

{l} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 4.) {m} De loc. Heb. fol. 91. M.

Joshua 4:20

Ver. 20. And those twelve stones which they took out of Jordan,.... The twelve men who were sent there for that purpose, and took them from thence, and brought them hither, **Jos 4:3**;

did Joshua pitch in Gilgal; set them in rows, or one upon another, and made a pillar of them commemorative of their passage over Jordan into the land of Canaan: according to Josephus {n}, he made an altar of these stones; and Ben Gersom is of opinion, that they were placed in the sanctuary by the ark, though not in it; which yet was the sentiment of Tertullian {o}, but very improbable; since that ark was not capable of such a number of large stones; and it must be a very large ark or chest, if one could be supposed to be made on purpose for them; but it is most likely they were erected in form of a pillar or statue, in memory of this wonderful event, the passage of Israel over Jordan, see **Jos 4:7**; they may be considered as emblems of the twelve apostles of Christ, and their ministrations and writings; their number agrees, and so does the time of their appointment to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel, which was after the resurrection of Christ, typified by the passage of Joshua over Jordan, and out of it; the name of one of them, and he a principal one, was Peter or Cephas, which signifies a stone; and all of them in a spiritual sense were lively stones, chosen and selected from others, and called by grace, and were very probably most, if not all of them, baptized in this very place, Bethabara, from whence these stones were taken; and were like them unpolished, as to external qualifications, not having an education, and being illiterate, but wonderfully fitted by Christ for his service; and were not only pillars, as James, Cephas, and John, but in some sense foundation stones; as they were the instruments of laying Christ ministerially, as the foundation of salvation, and of preaching the fundamental truths of the Gospel, in which they were constant and immovable; and their ministry and writings, their Gospels and epistles, are so many memorials of what Christ, our antitypical Joshua, has done for us in passing over Jordan's river, or through death; finishing thereby transgression and sin, obtaining peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation, opening the way to the heavenly Canaan, abolishing death, and bringing life and immortality to light.

{n} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 4.) {o} Contr. Marcion. l. 4. c. 13.

Joshua 4:21

Ver. 21. And he spoke unto the children of Israel, saying,.... At the same time he set up the stones:

when you children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying,
What [mean] these stones? See Gill on "Jos 4:6".

Joshua 4:22

Ver. 22. Then ye shall let your children know,.... The meaning of the erection of these stones, acquaint them with the whole history, the meaning of which they are designed to perpetuate:

saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land; and if they should ask how that could possibly be done, or if they did not, they were to inform them by what means it was brought about, as follows.

Joshua 4:23

Ver. 23. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over,.... As this is supposed to be said in future time, and to persons who were not upon the spot when this was done, and so entirely ignorant of the affair; it is not to be understood of them personally, but of the same people they were of, the people of Israel in former times, of their ancestors, and of them in them; the benefits of which they enjoyed by possessing the land of Canaan their fathers were at this time introduced into:

as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over; for though the generation of men, for the most part, was dead, that passed through the Red sea; yet as Joshua himself, and Caleb and Eleazar, and it may be some others that were not among the murmurers, were still living, for whom that miracle was wrought, this way of speaking is very properly made use of; and especially when it is observed, that there were many of the present generation then young, which passed over, and even those unborn were in and represented by their ancestors, and who enjoyed the advantages of that wonderful mercy; so these two strange events are joined together, as instances of divine power and goodness, in Ps 114:3.

Joshua 4:24

Ver. 24. That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it [is] mighty,.... Even almighty, and can do that which is marvellous and surprising, and above the power of nature to effect; things unsearchable and past finding out, which cannot be expressed, or conceived how and by what means they are brought about; this the very Heathens would own and acknowledge when they should see these stones, and be told the meaning of them, or should hear of this amazing event:

that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever; as the above mentioned end was to be answered among the people of the earth by these stones, this among the people of Israel; who upon sight of them would call to mind the power and goodness of God, which would serve to keep an awe of his majesty on their mind, a due reverence of him and his greatness, and engage them to fear, serve, and worship him; who by such acts as these had abundantly showed himself to be the only true and living God, and the covenant God of them his people Israel; the Septuagint version is,

"that ye may worship the Lord your God in every work."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 5

The Canaanites being dispirited on the passage of the children of Israel through Jordan, **Jos 5:1**; Joshua is ordered to circumcise such of the people of Israel that were uncircumcised, **Jos 5:2**; in order to their eating of the passover, which was now to be kept, **Jos 5:10**; and they being now provided with corn sufficient, the manna ceased, **Jos 5:11**; and there appeared to Joshua a divine Person, in an human form, to encourage and direct him what to do in the conquest of the land, and particularly Jericho, **Jos 5:13**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which [were] on the side of Jordan westward,.... On the side the Israelites were now on; and this is observed, to distinguish them from the other kings of the Amorites beyond Jordan, on the eastern side, who were already conquered by the Israelites, Sihon and Og, who seem to be a colony that went over from the Amorites in Canaan, and possessed themselves of that part of the land of Moab. These seem to be put for several others of the nations of the land not mentioned, who doubtless were as much dispirited as they; and they are the rather mentioned, because they were a principal nation, and a very powerful and warlike one, see **Am 2:9**.

and all the kings of the Canaanites which [were] by the sea; the Mediterranean sea; the Septuagint version calls them the kings of Phoenicia; and that which was strictly and property so lay on that coast, in which were the cities of Tyre and Sidon, though the whole land of Canaan was sometimes so called; unless this is to be understood, either of the dead sea, or of the sea of Galilee; of which Canaanites, see Nu 13:29; however, be they the one or the other, or both, as most likely, when they

heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted,
neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel; they lost all their courage, and never recovered it any more; concluding it was all over with them, since such wonderful things were done for them by the Lord: the word "we" shows that the writer of this history was one that passed over Jordan, and who can be supposed but Joshua himself? this circumstance, I think, strongly corroborates that opinion.

Joshua 5:2

Ver. 2. At that time the Lord said unto Joshua,.... When the people had passed over Jordan, and had pitched in Gilgal, and Joshua had set up the stones there; and particularly when the dread of them had seized the inhabitants of Canaan, and deprived them of all their courage; and so was a fit time for the execution of what is next ordered, and seems designed in the providence of God among other things particularly for that:

make them sharp knives; not that Joshua was to make them himself, but to order them to be made; for a considerable number would be wanted for the use to be made of them: the Targum calls them sharp razors; and Ben Gersom says they were made of brass, more likely of iron or steel, which perhaps he means; but the Hebrew text is, "knives of rocks", "flints" or "stones"; and so Maimonides {p} interprets the words, and as they are rendered in various versions {q}; with such an instrument Zipporah circumcised her son; and like them were the "samia testa" {r}, with which the priests of the mother of the gods were castrated; and the "saxum acutum" of Ovid {s}; and such the Americans used in slaying beasts, and the Egyptians {t} in the dissecting of their dead bodies; and which the Talmudists allow of as lawful; and in the east the Jews to this day use knives of stone in circumcision {u};
See Gill on "Ex 4:25".

and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time; not that circumcision was to be repeated on them that had been circumcised already, who had found out ways and means to draw over the foreskin again, as some in later times did; or who had been imperfectly circumcised according to the rite enjoined by Abraham, which some Jewish writers say was not perfect; neither of which was the case. Kimchi, and so Ben Melech, interpret the word, "oftentimes", frequently, one time after another; as if the sense was, Joshua was to circumcise them, or take care they were circumcised, some at one time, and some at another, until the whole was finished; but this is not what is meant, it refers to a former general circumcision; not to the circumcision, as first administered in Abraham's time, for there had been a multitude of instances of it since that time; but to the circumcision of the Israelites at, about, or quickly after their coming out of Egypt; either before their eating of their first passover, the night they went out of Egypt, as Jarchi {w}; or rather some time in the three days' darkness of the Egyptians, as Dr. Lightfoot {x} thinks; or else when they were about Sinai, just before the celebration of the passover there, **Nu 9:1**; from which time it had been neglected; not cause unnecessary, while they were in the wilderness, to distinguish them from others, which was not the principal, at least not the only use of it; nor because forbidden the Israelites for their disobedience, murmurings, and rebellion, it not being probable that God should prohibit the observance of a command of his on that account; nor so much through criminal neglect, at least contempt of it, as because of their frequent journeying, and the inconvenience of performing it, being always uncertain, when they had pitched their tents, how long they should stay, and when they should remove, since this depended upon the taking up of the cloud; wherefore, unless they could have been sure of a continuance for a proper time, it was not safe to administer it; and now it was

enjoined, partly because they were about to celebrate the passover, which required circumcision in all that partook of it,
Ex 12:43; and partly because they had now entered into the land of Canaan, which was given them in the covenant of circumcision,
Ge 17:8; wherefore it became them now to observe it, and as typical of spiritual circumcision, necessary to the heavenly Canaan, as well as to distinguish them from the uncircumcised Canaanites they were coming among; and they did not think themselves under obligation to observe it till they came to settle in that land, as some think, who hereby account for their long neglect of it.

{p} Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 16. {q} Myru twbrh macairav petrinav, Sept. "cultros lapideos", V. L. "cultros petrarum", Munster, Montanus, Piscator. {r} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 35. c. 12. Arnob. adv. Gentes, l. 5. p. 189. {s} Fast. l. 4. ver. 237. {t} Herod. Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 86. {u} Vid. Pfeiffer. Dubia Vexata, cent. 2. loc. 46. {w} So in Pirke Eliezer, c. 29. {x} Works, vol. 1. p. 40.

Joshua 5:3

Ver. 3. And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel,.... Not that Joshua circumcised them himself, any more than he made the knives himself, but he ordered both to be done, and took care that they were done. And as any that had skill might make the knives, so might any circumcise; circumcision was not restrained to any order of men, not to the priests and Levites, but any might perform it; so that though the number to be circumcised was great, it might soon be finished: and this was done

at the hill of the foreskins; as the place was afterward called from hence; these being heaped up one upon another, made a hill of them, as the Jews say {y}, being covered with dust. This circumcision performed by Joshua, or his orders, was typical of the spiritual circumcision without hands, which those that believe in Jesus, the antitype of Joshua, partake of.

{y} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 29.) Jarchi in loc.

Joshua 5:4

Ver. 4. And this [is] the cause why Joshua did circumcise,.... Or the reason of the command given him to circumcise the children of Israel at this time, namely, what follows:

all the people that came out of Egypt [that were] males, [even] all the men of war; meaning such that were twenty years old, and upwards:

died in the wilderness, by the way, after they came out of Egypt; not directly, but in a course of forty years, as they journeyed through the wilderness; this is to be understood with an exception of Joshua, Caleb, Eleazar, &c. but then there was a large number who were under twenty years of age, that came out of Egypt, and were now living.

Joshua 5:5

Ver. 5. Now all the people that came out were circumcised,.... All that came out of Egypt, and males, were circumcised, whether under or above twenty years of age; for though it is possible all were circumcised before they came out of Egypt, which favours the opinion of Dr. Lightfoot, that they might be circumcised during the three nights' darkness of the Egyptians, when they could take no advantage of it, as Levi and Simeon did of the Shechemites; and which seems more probable than that it should be on the night they came out of Egypt, when many must have been unfit for travelling, and seems preferable to that of their being circumcised at Mount Sinai, which was a year after their coming out of Egypt:

but all the people [that were] born in the wilderness by the way, as they came forth out of Egypt, [them] they had not circumcised; the reasons of which neglect; See Gill on "Jos 5:2". The phrase, "by the way", seems to point at the true reason of it, at least to countenance the reason there given, which was on account of their journey; that is, their stay at any place being uncertain and precarious; so the Jews say {z}, because of the affliction or trouble of journeying, the Israelites did not circumcise their children. This is to be understood of all males only born in the wilderness, they only being the subjects of circumcision.

{z} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 29.)

Joshua 5:6

Ver. 6. For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness,....

Wanting a few days, the round number is given: not forty two, as the Septuagint version:

till all the people [that were] men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed; all that were above twenty years of age, excepting Joshua and Caleb:

because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord; but murmured against him, and against his servants, and particularly against Aaron, being the high priest; and chiefly because of the report of the spies, and their murmurs then, which so incensed the Lord against them, that he threatened them with an entire consumption of their carcasses, and which accordingly was fulfilled, to which the following clause refers:

unto whom the Lord sware, that he would not show them the land which the Lord sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey; see Nu 14:23.

Joshua 5:7

Ver. 7. And the children [whom] he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised,.... Who were born to them in the wilderness, and succeeded them, some of which might be near forty years of age; as for those that were born before, of which there might be many now living, they had been circumcised already, but others, were not:

for they were circumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way; or while journeying the forty years in the wilderness; which, as before observed, seems to be the true reason of the omission of circumcision.

Joshua 5:8

Ver. 8. And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people,.... Which seems as if it was done in one day, even on the same day they passed over Jordan, and came to Gilgal; though Bishop Usher {a} thinks it was the day following; and so the Jews {b} say it was on the eleventh of Nisan:

that they abode in their places in the camp till they were whole: till the wound made by circumcision was healed; now as it was on the tenth day they passed over Jordan, and came to Gilgal, where they were circumcised, there were three entire days between that and the fourteenth, when they kept the passover; during which time they kept within their tents in the camp, being unfit to move from thence, for on the third day of circumcision they were usually sore, Ge 34:25; but being well on the fourth, were able to attend the passover. As the providence of God greatly appeared in favour of Israel, by causing a dread to fall on their enemies, that they durst not sally out of the city and attack them; so it showed great faith in Joshua, and the Israelites, to administer circumcision at this time, just as they were landed in an enemy's country; and when the waters of Jordan were returned, and there was no going back, and if they could, as they were not in a condition to fight, so not to flee.

{a} Annales Vet. Test. p. 38. {b} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31.

Joshua 5:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord said unto Joshua,.... Out of the tabernacle:

this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you; either the reproach of being reckoned office same religion with the Egyptians, they now having observed the command of the Lord, and thereby declared themselves to be his servants and worshippers, which sense Ben Gersom mentions; or else the reproach with which the Egyptians reproached them, that they were brought out from them into the wilderness for evil, to be destroyed there, they now being safely arrived in the land of Canaan; which tense he seems to approve of, and so Abarbinel: or rather by it is meant the reproach of being bondmen, and slaves, as they were in Egypt, having now entered upon their inheritance, they as free men, the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were heirs unto; and perhaps it was this sense of the phrase led Josephus {c} to give a wrong interpretation of the word "Gilgal", which he says signifies "liberty": and adds,

"for, having passed the river, they knew they were free from the Egyptians, and from troubles in the wilderness;"

though the more commonly received sense is, that this reproach is to be understood of uncircumcision, which was the reproach of the Egyptians, they at this time not using circumcision they afterwards did, when some of the nations thereabout used it, who descended, from Abraham, as the Midianites, Ishmaelites, Arabians, and Edomites:

wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day; which signifies "rolling" {d}; so that when it is met with before, it is so called by anticipation.

{c} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 11. {d} A llg "volvit, devolvit", Buxtorf.

Joshua 5:10

Ver. 10. And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal,.... Not after their circumcision, but before, and where they continued encamped during that, and until the passover had been kept by them; this was little more than a mile from Jericho, See Gill on "Jos 4:19";

and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even; exactly as it was ordered to be observed, and was observed when first kept, Ex 12:6;

in the plains of Jericho: a proper place both for their encampment, and the celebration of the passover, and where very likely they met with lambs enough for their purpose, which belonged to the inhabitants of Jericho; or however being now got into the good land, they needed not, and were under no temptation of sparing their own: historians agree, as Strabo {e}, Josephus {f}, and others, that Jericho was seated in a plain.

{e} Geograph. l. 16. p. 525. {f} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 2.

Joshua 5:11

Ver. 11. And they did eat the old corn of the land,.... That of the last year, as some versions {g}, which agree with ours; in which they seem to follow the Jewish writers, who, as particularly Kimchi, Gersom, and Ben Melech, interpret it of the old corn, for this reason, because they might not eat of the new until the wave sheaf was offered up,
Le 23:10; of which old corn they suppose the unleavened cakes were made, and was also parched corn, though that word the Septuagint version translates "new"; and indeed were it not for the above law, there does not seem to be any reason for rendering it old corn, only corn of the land, as the Septuagint does; and there is some difficulty how they should get at the old corn, which it may be supposed was laid up in the granaries, when Jericho was close shut up, and none went in or out; unless they met with it in some of the villages near at

hand, or it was brought them by the traders in corn, of whom they bought it, or found it in some houses and barns without the city:

on the morrow after the passover; which Kimchi and Ben Gersom say was on the fifteenth of Nisan, the passover being on the fourteenth; but if the morrow after the passover is the same with the morrow after the Sabbath, Le 23:11; that was the sixteenth of Nisan; and so Jarchi here says, this is the day of waving the sheaf, which was always done on the sixteenth: it is difficult to say which day is meant; if it was the sixteenth, then it may refer to what they ate on that day, after the sheaf was offered {h}; if it was the fifteenth, it seems necessary to understand it of the old corn; and such they must have to make their unleavened cakes of, both for the passover on the fourteenth, and the Chagigah, or feast of unleavened bread, which began the fifteenth, as it follows:

unleavened bread, and parched [corn] in the selfsame day; unleavened bread, for the uses before mentioned, they were obliged to, and parched corn for their pleasure; but new corn, as the Septuagint render it, was expressly forbidden before the waving of the sheaf, Le 23:14; and therefore old corn seems to be meant; this was just forty years to a day from their coming out of Egypt.

{g} rwbem "de frumento praeteriti anni", Montanus; sic, Munster, Tigurine version, Vatablus. {h} So in Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31.

Joshua 5:12

Ver. 12. And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land,.... There being now no further need of it; miracles are not wrought or continued when unnecessary; for the ceasing of the manna shows, that it was not a common but an extraordinary provision. The ceasing of the manna, which was a type of Christ, may signify the cessation of Gospel ordinances, in which Christ is held forth as food for his people. These are to continue till all the spiritual Israel of God have passed over the river Jordan, or death, even until the end of the world, and then to cease, Mt 28:19; the eating of the old corn may signify the glories of the future state, the joys and happiness of the heavenly Canaan, prepared for those that love the Lord from the foundation of the world; it may denote those ancient things the saints will feed and live upon to all eternity; the eternal love of the three divine Persons, electing grace, the ancient settlements of grace, the everlasting covenant of grace, and the blessings of it; the glorious Mediator of it, that was set up from everlasting, and the grace given to them in him before the world began:

neither had the children of Israel manna any more; having no more need of it, as the saints in heaven will stand in no more need of Gospel ordinances:

but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year; the increase of the land, not only of the fields, but of the vineyards and oliveyards, which they had neither sown nor planted, see **De 6:10**; which may denote the plenty and variety of the joys of heaven, and glories of the future state; the various fruits which grow on Christ, the tree of life, brought forth every month, or continually; all which will be enjoyed through the free grace of God, without the works or merits of men.

Joshua 5:13

Ver. 13. And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho,.... Or "in Jericho" {i}; not in the city itself, but in the border of it, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; or on the side of it, as Jarchi; on one side of which he was reconnoitring by himself, very probably seeking for a proper place where to make his first attack; or if he could find out some avenue to the city, whereby he could enter more easily; or it may be he was meditating a scheme how to subdue the city; and it is very likely praying to God that he would direct him, and succeed him. Ben Gersom interprets it, his thoughts were in Jericho; and both he, and Abarbinel, suppose, that what follows was in a vision of prophecy, that it seemed to him that he was in Jericho, and saw a person, as after described, and was only a dream or night vision; but, no doubt, whether this was in the day or in the night, which is not certain, it was a real sight that Joshua had, or one really appeared to him as a man, as after related:

that he lifted up his eyes, and looked; his eyes before looked downwards, as the eyes of a person in deep study and meditation usually do:

and, behold, there stood a man over against him; not a mere man, nor a created angel in an human form, but a divine Person in such a form, even the Son of God, who frequently appeared in this manner to the patriarchs; as is clear from the worship paid unto him by Joshua, by his calling him Lord, and owning himself to be his servant; and by the ground on which he stood, being holy through his presence, as well as by his title, the Captain of the Lord's host. Jarchi says, this is Michael, which, if understood of Michael the uncreated angel, the head of all principality and power, is right, who is always meant by

Michael, whenever he is spoken of in Scripture; and so this is interpreted by the ancient Jews {k} of the Angel the Redeemer:

with his sword drawn in his hand; who sometimes is said to have a twoedged one come out of his mouth, and sometimes one girt on his thigh, and here with one drawn out of the scabbard, to justify the war with the Canaanites, and to encourage Joshua to proceed in it. His sword has been drawn against his enemies, and those of his people from the beginning, ever since the fall of man, when enmity commenced between him and the seed of the serpent; it appeared drawn when here on earth combating with all our spiritual enemies, and will never be put up until all enemies are put under his feet:

and Joshua went unto him; which showed great courage, presence of mind, and magnanimity:

and said unto him, [art] thou for us, or for our adversaries? by his appearing in this warlike posture, he concluded it was to take on one side or the other, either on the side of Israel, or of the Canaanites; and he seemed to suspect that it was on the side of the latter, and that he was one that was come to defy the armies of Israel, as Goliath afterwards did, 1Sa 17:8; and to engage in a single combat with Joshua their general, and so decide the war; in which, had this been the case, Joshua was ready to fight with him.

{i} wxyryb en iericw, Sept. in Jericho, Pagninus, Montanus. {k} Bereshit. Rabba, sect. 97. fol. 84. 2. Nachmanides in loc.

Joshua 5:14

Ver. 14. And he said, nay,.... Not for or on the side of their adversaries was he come, as Joshua suspected at the first sight of him; the Septuagint version is, "he said unto him", taking al for wl, as it sometimes is:

but [as] Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come; of the host of the Lord both in heaven and in earth, angels and men, and particularly of the people of Israel, called the armies and host of the Lord, **Ex 7:4**; so that though Joshua was general, Christ was Generalissimo; and so Joshua understood him, and therefore showed a readiness to do whatsoever he should command him; the spiritual Israel of God, the chur

Joshua 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 6

In this chapter Joshua is assured, though Jericho was closely shut up, it should be delivered into his hands, **Jos 6:1**; and he is directed, with the army, to go round the city six days together, seven priests bearing the ark of the Lord, with seven trumpets sounding; and on the seventh day to go round it seven times in like manner, when its wall should fall, **Jos 6:3**; which order Joshua communicated to the priests, and to the people, and which was put into execution by them, with some other instructions he gave them, **Jos 6:6**; particularly that the city, and all in it, should be devoted to the Lord, and none spared, but Rahab and her family, **Jos 6:17**; the success was according to the assurance given by the Lord, **Jos 6:20**; when all in the city were destroyed, and that was burnt with fire, and the gold, silver, brass, and iron, brought into the house of the Lord, and Rahab and her father's household were saved alive, **Jos 6:21**; and the chapter is closed with an adjuration of Joshua, cursing the man that should rebuild the city; and with this observation, that the fame of Joshua upon this was spread abroad throughout the country, **Jos 6:26**.

Ver. 1. Now Jericho was straitly shut up, because of the children of Israel,.... Or "it shut up", or "was shutting, and was shut up" {u}; that is, the king and the inhabitants shut it up within; the Targum says with iron doors, and bars of brass, and it was blocked up without by the children of Israel:

none went out and none came in; none of their forces went out to make a sally on the Israelites, or to seek to make peace with them; nor any of their neighbours went in to them, to carry them any provision, or to assist them, or to be sheltered by them, not being able to do it because of the camp of Israel.

{u} trgomw trgo "claudens et clausa", Montanus, Vatablus.

Joshua 6:2

Ver. 2. And the Lord said unto Joshua,.... The same divine Person called in the preceding chapter the Captain of the Lord's host, **Jos 5:14**, now with him, and who gave him the following orders, instructions, and assurances:

see, I have given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof: which might be concluded from the fear that was fallen upon the inhabitants of the city and their king, and from their shutting themselves up so closely, not daring to come out against Israel: and especially from this declaration and promise of the Lord; and which should be done in such a manner, as that it would clearly appear to be of the Lord, and not men:

[and] the mighty men of valour; the military men, the soldiers, or army that were under the command of the king of Jericho; or, as Kimchi reads it, "though" mighty men, yet they should not be able to defend the city, or hinder its falling into their hands; for what were they to the mighty God of Israel?

Joshua 6:3

Ver. 3. And ye shall compass the city, all [ye] men of war,.... Joshua their chief commander under the Lord, and all that were able to make war, even all above twenty years of age; these were to compass the city, not in the form of a siege, but by a procession around it:

[and] go round about the city once; or one time, for the first once in a day, and no more:

thus shall thou do six days; one after another; that is, go round it, once every day, for such a time. This order was given, according to the Jews {w}, the twenty second of Nisan, after the feast of unleavened bread was over.

{w} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31.

Joshua 6:4

Ver. 4. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns,.... The ark was to be taken up and carried by priests round the city. Ben Gersom observes, that this was to direct the Israelites to keep and do according to all that was written in it; that is, in the law, which was contained in it; but no doubt the design of it was to show, that the subduing of Jericho, and the miracle that would be wrought, were owing to the power and presence of God, of which the ark was a symbol: and before it were to go seven other priests, with trumpets in their hands; which, according to our version, were made of rams horns: in the original it is "jobelim", or "jubilee" trumpets. Some think it means only such as they were to use in the year of jubilee; so Abarbinel and others, as Masius and Noldius {x}; that they had their name from Jubal, the first inventor of musical instruments, Ge 4:21; for rams' horns are objected to because they are solid, and not hollow; as if they could not be bored and made hollow, and fit for such a purpose. The Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret the word by rams horns, as we do {y}; and observe what R. Akiba said,

"when (says he) I went into Arabia, I heard them call; a ram "jobel"; and the trumpet itself is called "jobel", because made of a ram's horn {z}:"

and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times; in the same manner as on the other days:

and the priests shall blow with the trumpets; which they were to do; and did every day.

{x} P. 160. No. 1515. {y} So Joseph. Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 5. {z} Kimchi, Sepher. Shorash. rad. lby R. Sol. Urbim. Ohel Moed, fol. 39. 2.

Joshua 6:5

Ver. 5. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long [blast] with the ram's horn,.... Continue blowing, and protracting, and drawing out the sound a long time; which they did only on the seventh day; on the other days it was but a short blast they made at a time; so that this being different, it would be a good sign and token to the people to do what they are next directed to:

[and] when ye hear the sound of the trumpet; drawn out to a great length:

all the people shall shout with a great shout; at once, as when an onset is made in battle, or a victory is obtained:

and the wall of the city shall fall down flat; or "under itself" {a}; which Jarchi interprets, in its place; that is, where it stood, and be swallowed up in it: so the Targum,

"and it shall be swallowed up under it;"

yet so that somewhat of it should be seen, as an attestation and proof of the miracle, as Kimchi; who says,

"it means that it should be swallowed up in its place under the earth, and a little of it appear above ground for a memorial of the miracle:"

and the people shall ascend up, every man straight before him; just as they were in the order of procession; for the wall being fallen everywhere, they would have no occasion to make up to one certain place, as when a breach is only made in one place, and the besiegers are obliged to go so many a breast to enter at it; but in this case they might go straight up from whence they were, and enter the city without any obstruction and difficulty.

{a} hytxt "sub se", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "subtus se", Tigurine version; "sabter se", Masius.

Joshua 6:6

Ver. 6. And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests,.... Not the Levites and Kohathites, whose business it was in common to bear the ark, but upon this occasion the priests; not all of them, but as many as were sufficient for the purpose:

and said unto them, take up the ark of the covenant; by putting the staves into the rings of it, and so carry it, Ex 25:14; see **Nu 7:9**;

and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord: See Gill on "Jos 6:4".

Joshua 6:7

Ver. 7. And he said unto the people, pass on, and compass the city,.... The women and children, the young men under twenty years of age, the unarmed part of the camp, as distinguished from the armed men:

and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord; to guard the ark, protect the priests, and defend the people, should any sally be made by the enemy upon them. These seem to design all the males that were above twenty years of age able to bear arms, and fit for war; though some restrain it to the forty thousand of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, **Jos 1:14**.

Joshua 6:8

Ver. 8. And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken to the people,.... Both armed and unarmed; had finished the orders and directions he gave them before mentioned:

that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the Lord; in his sight, and by his direction, and at his command given by Joshua, and before the ark, the symbol of his presence:

and blew with the trumpets; a short blast as they went along; this they did on each of the six days:

and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them; being borne by priests, **Jos 6:6**.

Joshua 6:9

Ver. 9. And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets,.... Whom Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, interpret of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; that is, as many of them as Joshua took with him over Jordan; though rather all the armed men in the camp are meant; at least along with those mentioned went the standards of Judah and Ephraim:

and the rereward came after the ark; because the tribe of Dan was the rereward in journeying, **Nu 2:31**; hence the Targum paraphrases the words,

"and the tribe of the house of Dan went after the ark;"

and so both Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it: but rather the body of the people unarmed are designed; at least these were brought up by the standard of Dan; or otherwise no place in this procession is appointed for them, whose business it was to make the great shout on the seventh day with the rest:

[the priests] going on and blowing with the trumpets; the word "priests" is not in the text, but is rightly supplied; for, as Kimchi and Abarbinel observe, this is not said of the rereward, but of the priests, for they only bore and blew the trumpets; and so the Targum reads,

"the priests going on, &c."

Joshua 6:10

Ver. 10. And Joshua had commanded the people,.... When he gave them their orders to pass on, and compass the city, **Jos 6:7**;

saying, ye shall not shout; that is, on any of the six days as they went round the city, only on the seventh; for this being a sign of victory, it was not to be made until the day when it should be obtained; otherwise, had they shouted, and nothing followed on it, it would have exposed them to the contempt of the inhabitants of Jericho, and would have put them in spirit, and hardened them:

nor make any noise with your voice; as laughing, singing, &c. This profound silence was to be observed, to add to the gravity and solemnity of the procession; and on account of the surprising miracle that was to be wrought, and particularly because of the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence, borne before them; and when God in his providence was about to speak in so awful a manner, and to do such a surprising work, it was very fit and decent that they should be silent before him; see **Hab 2:20**;

neither shall [any] word proceed out of your mouth; no conversation or discourse were to be had with each other as they passed along; for this is only to be restrained to the procession; when they returned, and in their camp, they might talk and discourse as at other times:

until the day I bid you shout, then shall ye shout; for as yet it seems Joshua had not told them how many days they should surround the city in this manner, and on what day the shout should be made by them.

Joshua 6:11

Ver. 11. So the ark of the Lord compassed the city,.... Being bore by the priests, who carried it round the city; it may as well be rendered and interpreted as it is by Kimchi,

"he, i.e. Joshua, caused the ark of the Lord to compass the city;"

that is, he gave orders to the priests to take it up, and go round with it on the first day:

going about [it] once; on that day, and no more; keeping at such a distance, as to be out of the reach of stones or arrows cast from the walls of the city:

and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp; the night following; not only the priests that bare the ark, but those that blew with the trumpets, and all the armed men, and the people.

Joshua 6:12

Ver. 12. And Joshua rose early in the morning,.... Of the second day; to take care of, direct, and prepare everything for another procession on that day; so active and diligent was he to do the will and work of God, exactly and punctually:

and the priests took up the ark of the Lord; and carried it about as they had done the day before.

Joshua 6:13

Ver. 13. And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord,.... See Gill on "Jos 6:4";

went on continually; or, "going they went" {b}: kept on going, making no stop at all, until they had compassed the city:

and blew with the trumpets; as they went along:

and the armed men went before them, but the rereward came after the ark of the Lord; which the Targum paraphrases as on **Jos 6:9**;

[the priests] going on, and blowing with the trumpets;
See Gill on "Jos 6:9".

{b} Kwlh Myklh "euntes eundo", Montanus.

Joshua 6:14

Ver. 14. And the second day they compassed the city once,.... Went round it one time only; as on the first:

and returned into the camp: which was at Gilgal, **Jos 5:10**;

so they did six days: four more after these two successively, and proceeded in the same order and manner as on those two days.

Joshua 6:15

Ver. 15. And it came to pass on the seventh day,.... Which Jarchi says was the Sabbath day, and which is a common notion of the Jews {c}; but whether it was or not, it is certain that one of these seven days must be a sabbath, in which the several things ordered were done, and the procession made. Kimchi observes, that their Rabbins say this was the sabbath day; and he adds, what is pretty remarkable,

"though they slew and burnt on the sabbath day, he that commanded the sabbath commanded to profane the sabbath in the subduing of Jericho;"

with which compare what our Lord says, Mt 12:3;

that they rose early, about the dawning of the day; having seven times the work to do they did on the other six days:

and compassed the city after the same manner seven times; after the same manner as they had done the six preceding days:

only on that day they compassed the city seven times; whereas on the other days they only went round it once, which distinguished this day from the rest.

{c} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 312. 2.

Joshua 6:16

Ver. 16. And it came to pass at the seventh time,.... Of their going round the city on the seventh day: and at the seventh time,

when the priests blew with the trumpets; as they did every time they compassed the city:

Joshua said unto the people, shout; both those that were armed, and those that were not; they were to make one grand and general shout at once, as when victory is obtained, or is sure, and so it follows:

for the Lord hath given you the city; intimating that it would be presently delivered into their hands, and in such manner, that it would plainly show it was of the Lord, and no other.

Joshua 6:17

Ver. 17. And the city shall be accursed,.... Or, be a "cherem", devoted to the Lord, as it follows:

[even] it and all that [are] therein, to the Lord; the city and the inhabitants of it should be devoted to destruction, and the riches and spoil of it dedicated to sacred uses, and not become the property of the Israelites; for as this was the first city in the had of Canaan that was conquered, it was fit the firstfruits of the conquest should be the Lord's, as an acknowledgment of his gift of the land unto them, and that the conquest of it was owing to him; though it might be some mortification to the Israelites, and a trial of their faith and obedience, that the first and so fine a city should not become their habitation, but be utterly destroyed, and not to be built more; and all the riches of it either consumed, or converted to other uses, and not their own. This Joshua thought fit to declare to the Israelites, before the taking of the city, that they might know what they had to do. The Jewish doctors generally suppose that Joshua ordered this of himself, of his own accord and will; but Kimchi is of opinion that the Lord gave him this order, which is most probable, yea, certain from **Jos 7:11**;

only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that [are] with her in the house; she and her father's family, as she requested, and the spies promised; here the Targum calls her, as elsewhere, Rahab the innkeeper or victualler; and so in **Jos 6:22**;

because she hid the messengers that we sent; and so preserved them from being taken by the messengers of the king of Jericho, who were sent in pursuit of them. These though sent only by Joshua, without the knowledge of the people, yet it being on their account, and their good, and by him as their head and governor, is ascribed to them also. This fact of Rahab's is observed by him as a reason for sparing her, and those that were with her, when all the rest would be put to the sword; and is mentioned as an instance of her faith, and of the evidence of it, Heb 11:31.

Joshua 6:18

Ver. 18. And you in any wise keep [yourselves] from the accursed thing,.... From laying hold on, secreting, and enjoying as their own, what was devoted to another use:

lest ye make [yourselves] accursed; or a "cherem", also devoted to destruction:

when ye take of the accursed thing; any part of it, be it what it will, gold or any other metal, or raiment, and the like:

and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it; for being done secretly, and not known who did it, the whole body of the people would be chargeable with it, and suffer on account of it, unless discovered and punished, and as more fully appears by an after instance.

Joshua 6:19

Ver. 19. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, [are] consecrated to the Lord,.... Or rather, "for all the silver", &c. as the particle here used sometimes signifies, and is so rendered {d}: each of these metals, and whatsoever were made of them, were set apart for the Lord, and dedicated to sacred uses, and might not be converted to any other, unless what were upon their idols, which were to be burnt with fire, **De 7:25**;

they shall come into the treasury of the Lord; be brought into the tabernacle, as Kimchi and Abarbinel interpret it, into some apartment there destined for such service, and which is clear from **Jos 6:24**; the same where the offering of the officers was brought after the battle with Midian, Nu 31:54.

{d} lkw "nam totum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Joshua 6:20

Ver. 20. So the people shouted when [the priests] blew with the trumpets,....

As Joshua had charged them, **Jos 6:16**;

and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet,
and the people shouted with a great shout; that is, gave a loud shout, on hearing the long blast of the trumpets blown by the priests the seventh time, as they were no doubt directed by Joshua, agreeably to the order given to him; see **Jos 6:5**;

that the wall fell down flat; the wall of the city of Jericho, as the Lord said it should, See Gill on "Jos 6:5":

so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city; they went up to it from the plain, where they were, and entered it without any difficulty, the wall being fallen, and that everywhere: so that they went directly from the place where they were, and went in right over against them, into every quarter and, part of the city, and seized on it, and possessed it at once. Various things may be observed concerning this surprising event; as that it was supernatural, and cannot be ascribed to second causes, there being nothing in the procession round the city, the blowing of the trumpets, or shout of the people, that could occasion the wall to fall; and that no defences or fortifications are anything against God, when it is his will a city should be taken, with whom nothing is impossible; and that sometimes unlikely means are appointed and used by him for doing great things, that the power may appear to be his by which they are done; and that faith stops at nothing, when it has the word and promise of God to encourage and support it; and that God does everything in his own time and way. The falling of the walls of Jericho may be considered as an emblem of the fall of Babylon; these two cities agree, as in their greatness, so in their wickedness,
Re 17:4; and as Jericho stood in the way of Israel's inheriting the land, being a frontier and barrier town; so mystical Babylon stands in the way of the kingdom of Christ, and its spread in the world, and particularly of the conversion of the Jews, Re 11:14. The fall of Jericho was very sudden, and when not expected by the inhabitants of it; and so will be the fall of Babylon, Re 18:7; and as Jericho fell at the sound of rams horns, the destruction of antichrist, or mystical Babylon, will be through the preaching of the Gospel, Re 14:6; and as the one was by the sounding of seven priests, at the seventh time of sounding, on the seventh day; so the ruin of antichrist will be at the seventh angel's sounding the seventh trumpet, and pouring out the seventh vial, Re 10:7; and as at the destruction of the one, so of the other, but few saved from the common calamity, Re 18:4; and both never to be raised up and built again, Re 18:21; And it may be considered also as an emblem of the subjection

of the Gentile world to Christ; which, like Jericho, or the moon, as some observe the name signifies, is very changeable; and as that city, and the inhabitants of it, an enemy to God, and his people, and yet made subject by the ministry of his word; as particularly it will be when the kingdoms of this world shall become his: or rather it may be an emblem of the subjection of particular souls to Christ, and the means thereof; who are like the walled city of Jericho in their unregenerate state, their hearts hard, stubborn, and inflexible, and enmity to God; are self-confident, vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds, and shut up in unbelief, and kept and guarded by Satan, the strong man armed; but all these strong holds of sin and Satan are brought down and demolished in conversion; and that by means of the sound of the Gospel, which is as despicable with men as the sound of the rams' horns were to the inhabitants of Jericho; but is a jubilee and joyful sound, a sound of love, grace, mercy, and salvation; and being accompanied with the Spirit and grace of God, is the power of God unto salvation; and mighty through him for the removing the hardness of men's hearts, and bringing them into subjection and obedience to Christ.

Joshua 6:21

Ver. 21. And they utterly destroyed all that [was] in the city,.... All the inhabitants of it, by the direction of Joshua, and according to the order of the Lord, **De 7:1**; being guilty of capital crimes, which deserved death, as idolatry, incest, &c.

both men and women, young and old; neither sex nor age were spared:

and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword; in which creatures chiefly lay the substance of the eastern people; see **Job 1:3**.

Joshua 6:22

Ver. 22. But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country,.... Whom he had sent on that errand, **Jos 2:1**; and what follows he had said unto them before the people entered into the city, and perhaps before the walls of it fell; and indeed from **Jos 6:16**, it appears to have been said at the time he gave the people orders to shout:

go into the harlot's house: he does not mention her name but they full well knew who he meant:

and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath; not so much her substance, as her father's household, she had got together there, that they might be saved, as had been promised her:

as ye sware unto her; so that this order was partly on account of her kindness to them, **Jos 6:17**; and partly on account of the oath which they had taken, and which Joshua would have inviolably kept.

Joshua 6:23

Ver. 23. And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab,.... Not only went into the city, but into Rahab's house, which they knew again by the scarlet thread hung out at the window of it. But here a difficulty occurs, how they could be said to go into her house, when it was built on the town wall, **Jos 2:15**; and that was now fallen down flat. Abarbinel thinks that when the spies went round the city, they saw the scarlet thread in the window of her house, and set their eyes on the house, or wistly observed it; and marked it in such manner, that after the fall of the wall they went to the place of her house, and brought her out, though her house was broken down, and no wall standing: but then they could not be said properly to go into her house, and bring her out. Kimchi is of opinion that not all the wall of the city fell, but what was over against the camp of Israel; and that the house of Rahab was on the wall on the other side: but it seems by the account of it as if the whole wall fell; and the apostle says, "the walls of Jericho fell down", Heb 11:30; all of them; and so the Septuagint version of **Jos 6:20**.

"and the whole wall, or all the wall fell round about:"

and I see not why it may not be thought that the whole wall fell, excepting that small part alone which Rahab's house stood; and that standing alone would make the miracle the greater, and show the divine approbation of saving Rahab and her family: besides, if the wall sunk down in its place all around into the earth, as the Jews understand the phrase; See Gill on "Jos 6:5"; the house might continue on it firm and unmoved, going down with it to the surface of the earth, where it may be supposed the top of the wall was; and so they might go in and take her out, and preserve her from being destroyed with the rest of the inhabitants; and not only her, but her father and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; all other relations that were with her, particularly her sisters, which are in her request, **Jos 2:13**; with all that appertained to her brethren and sisters, which is there expressed also:

and they brought out all her kindred; before mentioned, or if there were any other of her relations she had taken into her house for safety; or "all her families" {e}, for her father's household might be branched out into various families, and become numerous, and so be an emblem of the number of Gentile sinners saved by Christ the antitype of Joshua:

and left them without the camp of Israel; until they, became proselytes, and embraced the religion of Israel, as Kimchi remarks. However, being Gentiles, some external rites and ceremonies were to be performed upon them, as well as a declaration at least of their renouncing idolatry was required of them, before they could be admitted into the camp of Israel; and which was required even of a proselyte of the gate, or of one that was only a sojourner among them.

{e} hytwxpvm lk "omnes familias ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.

Joshua 6:24

Ver. 24. And they burnt the city with fire, and all that [was] therein,.... As Babylon the great, of which this city was an emblem, as has been observed, See Gill on "Jos 6:20"; will be burnt with fire also, Re 18:8;

only the silver and the gold, and the vessels of brass and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord;
See Gill on "Jos 6:19".

Joshua 6:25

Ver. 25. And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive,.... From perishing by the sword, as the rest of the inhabitants did. Kimchi says, some interpret it of his giving her food, and an inheritance by which she might live; and Josephus {f} intimates the same: he says, he gave her fields, and had her in great honour and esteem; and it is the notion of some Jewish writers, that he took her to wife, and that this is meant by saving her alive; which sense Kimchi disapproves of, as being foreign; besides, it was not Joshua, but Salmon, a prince in Israel, that married her, **Mt 1:5**;

and her father's household, and all she had; that is, he saved alive all her relations, and it may be her cattle, if she had any; and those of her kindred also, as their sheep, oxen, and asses, when those of others were killed, **Jos 6:21**. Some also understand this of intermarriages of principal persons in Israel with some of her father's fairly; but it only signifies that their lives were spared, when the whole city was destroyed with the edge of the sword:

and she dwelleth in Israel [even] unto this day; which may be meant either personally of Rahab, who was living and dwelt in the land of Canaan, when this history was written; and serves to strengthen the opinion that Joshua was the writer of it, and to explain the meaning of the phrase "unto this day", elsewhere used in this book; and to remove any objection from it against his being the author of it; or else of her dwelling there in her posterity, and so she might dwell in it unto the times of the Messiah, who sprang from her, **Mt 1:5**;

because she hid the messengers which Joshua, sent to spy out Jericho; this was the reason of her and her father's family being saved alive;
See Gill on "Jos 6:17".

{f} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 7.

Joshua 6:26

Ver. 26. And Joshua adjured [them] at that time,.... When the city was burnt and spoiled; not that he adjured the people individually, or one by one, which was not very practicable, but in a general way:

saying, cursed [be] the man before the Lord; let him be cursed by him with the curses written in the book of the law; and let him be driven from him, from his presence, as Cain was:

that riseth up, and buildeth this city Jericho; that rises up in future time, and rebuilds it; for it cannot be thought that after such an adjuration anyone would start up quickly, and rebuild it:

he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest [son]

shall he set up the gates of it; that is, while he is laying, or as soon as he has laid the foundation of the city, his eldest son should die; and as he went on with the building, other sons of his, if he had more than two, should be taken away by death likewise; and by the time he has finished it, signified by setting up the gates of it, both for ornament and security, his youngest and last son should die also; so that his whole posterity should be taken alway, as a curse of God upon him for rebuilding the city; which was fulfilled in Hiel the Bethelite, the rebuilder of this city in the times of Ahab, five or six hundred years after this adjuration was made, when either it was forgotten, or, however, little regarded: Maimonides observes {g}, that this was made that the miracle might remain in perpetual memory, for whoever should see the wall sunk in the earth, it would be plain and clear to him that this was not the form of a building demolished, but that it fell by a miracle; and yet this city became a very flourishing one in later times; we soon hear of the school of the prophets in it, **2Ki 2:5**; here, Strabo {h} says, was a royal palace, where, as Josephus {i} relates, Herod died, and who speaks of an amphitheatre and hippodrome in it; in this city sometimes the sanhedrim sat, and a great number of the stationary priests dwelt, even half a station, twelve thousand of them, all which is observed by Dr. Lightfoot {k}; our Lord himself honoured it with his presence,
Lu 19:1.

{g} Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 50. {h} Geograph. l. 16. p. 525. {i} Antiqu. l. 17. c. 8. sect. 1. 2. {k} Chorograph. Cent. c. 47.

Joshua 6:27

Ver. 27. So the Lord was with Joshua,.... Counselling and directing him what to do, prospering and succeeding him in all that he engaged; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord was for the help of Joshua;"

the essential Word, Christ the Son of God, called the Captain of the Lord's host, **Jos 5:14**; and who, continued with him speaking to him and giving him orders, **Jos 6:2**;

and his fame was [noised] throughout all the country; for his wisdom and courage, for the wonderful things done for him and by him, and the great success that attended him, through the power and presence of God with him; which struck terror into the inhabitants of the land, and made his conquest of it the more easy.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 7

For the trespass of Achan the children of Israel were smitten and put to flight by the men of Ai, **Jos 7:1**; which gave him and the elders of the people great concern, both for Israel and for the name of the Lord, which was expressed by Joshua in prayer to God, **Jos 7:6**; when the Lord informed him of the reason of it, and gave him directions for finding out the guilty person, and for the punishment of him, **Jos 7:10**; which directions Joshua followed, and the person was found out, who being urged to a confession made one, **Jos 7:16**; upon which he and all he had, with the things he had taken, were burnt with fire, **Jos 7:22**.

Ver. 1. But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing,.... Or concerning it, with respect to it, by taking part of what was devoted to another use, and forbidden theirs: this was done, not by the whole body of the people, only by one of them; but it not being discovered who it was, it was imputed to the whole, on whom it lay to find out the guilty person and punish him, or else the whole must suffer for it: this chapter begins with a "but", and draws a vail over the fame and glory of Joshua, observed in **Jos 6:27**;

for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing; of what was devoted to the Lord and to sacred uses; this he had taken to himself out of the spoil of the city of Jericho, for his own use, contrary to the command of God: his descent is particularly described, that it might be known of what family and tribe he was; and it is traced up to Zerah, who was a son of Judah, Ge 38:30;

and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel; because of the sin of Achan.

Joshua 7:2

Ver. 2. And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai,.... Which was the next city of importance, though not so large as Jericho, and was, as the Jews say {l}, three miles distant from it; Abarbinel says {m} four miles, and so Bunting {n}; Jerom {o} says, that in his times very few ruins of it appeared, only the place was shown where it stood:

which [is] beside Bethaven; a name by which Bethel in later times was called, **Ho 4:15**; but here it is manifestly a distinct place from it; just hard by or near to this place, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it, was the city of Ai: Bethaven seems to have been the suburbs of it, or however was very near unto it:

on the east side of Bethel; near to which Abraham built an altar, as did Jacob also, and which in former times was called Luz, Ge 12:8; and was well known in later ages by the name of Bethel; it was reckoned about a mile from Ai: the situation of this city is so particularly described to distinguish it from another city of this name, Ai of the Amorites, Jer 49:3; and is here called "that Ai", that well known Ai, as Kimchi observes:

and spake unto them; at the time he sent them, when he gave them their orders to go thither:

saying, go up and view the country; the mountainous part of it; for they were now in a plain, where Jericho was seated; and observe what place was most proper to attack next, and which the best way of coming at it:

and the men went up and viewed Ai; what a sort of a city it was, how large, and what its fortifications, and what avenues were to it: by this it appears that Ai was built upon a hill, or at least was higher than Jericho and its plains; and with this agrees what a traveller says {p} of it, it is a village full of large ruins (in this he differs from Jerom) and from hence are seen the valley of Jericho, the dead sea, Gilgal, and Mount Quarantania, and many other places towards the east.

{l} Shemoth Rabba, sect. 32. fol. 185. 2. {m} In Josh. xx. fol. 34. 1. {n} Travels Of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 95. {o} De loc. Heb. fol. 87. E. {p} Baumgarten. Peregrinatio, l. 3. c. 1. p. 105.

Joshua 7:3

Ver. 3. And they returned unto Joshua, and said unto him, let not all the people go up,.... After they had reconnoitred the place, they came back to their general, and gave it as their opinion, that there was no need for the whole army to go up against the city:

but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; such a number they judged were sufficient to take it:

[and] make not all the people to labour thither; carrying their tents, bearing their armour, and going up hill:

for they [are but] few; the inhabitants of Ai, men and women making but twelve thousand; **Jos 8:25**.

Joshua 7:4

Ver. 4. So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men,.... Joshua detached from the army the largest number proposed, that there might be strength enough to take the place; and those he sent under proper officers to Ai, who went up to the very gate of the city, as appears from **Jos 7:5**:

and they fled before the men of Ai; for upon their appearing at the gate of their city, they came out with all their forces against them, and as soon as they did, the children of Israel durst not face them, but without engaging with them fled at once: God having forsaken them, their courage failed, the dread of their enemies falling on them.

Joshua 7:5

Ver. 5. And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men,.... In the pursuit of them, which were but few, but a sufficient rebuke of Providence; their loss was but small, but their shame and disgrace great:

for they chased them [from] before the gate; the gate of the city of Ai:

[even] unto Shebarim; not that there was a place of this name before, but it was so called from hence, because there they were broken, as Kimchi observes; and the Targum and Jarchi render it,

"until they were broken,"

their lines broken, not being able to retreat in order, but were scattered, and fled to their camp as they could: Gussetius {q} thinks it was the; name of a place, but not so called for the above reason, but because there lay broken pieces of the rock scattered about:

and smote them in the going down; the hill from Ai; "Morad", rendered "going down", may taken for the proper name of a place, and which, Kimchi says, was a place before Ai, in which there was a declivity and descent, and in that place they smote them when they fled:

wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water; that is, the whole body of the people, when this little army returned defeated, their spirits failed them, their courage was lost, their nerves were loosed, and they became languid, faint, and feeble; not that their loss was so great, but that they perceived God had forsaken them, and what the issue of this would be they dreaded.

{q} Comment. Ebr. p. 825.

Joshua 7:6

Ver. 6. And Joshua rent his clothes,.... As was usual in those ancient times, on hearing bad news, and as expressive of grief and trouble {r}; see Ge 37:29;

and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord, until the eventide; in a posture of adoration and prayer, in which he continued till even; how long that was cannot be said, since the time is not mentioned when the army returned from Ai; very probably it was some time in the afternoon: this was done before the ark of the Lord, the symbol of the divine Presence, not in the most holy place, where that usually was, and into which Joshua might not enter, but in the tabernacle of the great court, over against where the ark was:

he and the elders of Israel; either the elders of the people in the several tribes, or rather the seventy elders, which were the sanhedrim or council, and which attended Joshua, and assisted him as such;

and put dust upon their heads; another rite or ceremony used in times of mourning and distress, and that very anciently, before Joshua's time and after, see **Job 2:12**; and among various nations; so when Achilles bewailed the death of Patroclus, he is represented by Homer {s} taking with both his hands the black earth, and pouring it on his head; so Aristippus among the Athenians is said {t} to sprinkle dust on his head in token of mourning on a certain account.

{r} "Tum pius", Aeneas, &c. Virgil. Aeneid. l. 5. prope finem. {s} amfoterhsi te cersin, &c. Iliad. 18. ver. 23. Vid. Odyss. 24. "Sparsitque cinis", &c. Seneca, Troad. Act. 1. Chorus. {t} Heliodor. Aethiop. l. 1. c. 13.

Joshua 7:7

Ver. 7. And Joshua said, alas! O Lord God,.... What a miserable and distressed condition are we in! have pity and compassion on us; who could have thought it, that this would have been our case?

wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us: who are mentioned either for the whole people of the land of Canaan; or rather, because the people of Israel were now in that part of the country which they inhabited: these words discover much weakness, diffidence, and distrust, and bear some likeness to the murmurs of the children of Israel in the wilderness; but not proceeding from that malignity of spirit theirs did, but from a concern for the good of the people and the glory of God, they are not resented by him:

would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan; in which he seems to cast the blame, not upon the Lord but upon himself and the people, who were not content to dwell on the other side, but were desirous of a larger and better country; and now ruin seemed to be the consequent of that covetous disposition and discontented mind.

Joshua 7:8

Ver. 8. O Lord, what shall I say,.... For the comfort and encouragement of the people of Israel, in vindication of thy power and faithfulness, and against the charge of weakness in thyself, unfaithfulness to thy promises, and unkindness to thy people, brought by our enemies:

when Israel hath turned their backs before their enemies? or after they have done it; what is to be said now, this being the case? he speaks as a man confounded, and at the utmost loss how to account for the power, the providence, and promises of God.

Joshua 7:9

Ver. 9. For the Canaanites,.... Those that dwell on the east and on the west of the land, see Jos 11:3; who were one of the seven nations:

and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear [of it]; of this defeat; not only the Amorites, among whom they now were, and the Canaanites before mentioned, but the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites;

and shall environ us round; come with all their forces from all parts of the land, and surround us, so that there will be no escaping for us:

and cut off our name from the earth; utterly destroy us, that we shall be no more a nation and people, and the name of an Israelite no more be heard of, see Ps 83:4;

and what wilt thou do unto thy great name? this, though mentioned last, was uppermost in the heart of Joshua, and was reserved by him as his strongest argument with God to appear for them and save them; since his own glory, the glory of his perfections, his wisdom, goodness, power, truth, and faithfulness, was so much concerned in their salvation.

Joshua 7:10

Ver. 10. And the Lord said unto Joshua, get thee up,.... From the ground where he lay prostrate, with his face to it: this he said, not as refusing his supplication to him, but rather as encouraging and strengthening him; though chiefly he said this in order to instruct him, and that he might prepare for what he was to do:

wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? in this manner, so distressed and dejected; or for this thing, as the Targum, for this defeat of the army; something else is to be done besides prayer and supplication.

Joshua 7:11

Ver. 11. Israel hath sinned,.... For though one only had committed the sin, others might have known of it, and connived at it; however, there was sin committed among them, and it must be discovered, the guilt charged, and punishment inflicted:

and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them; not the law given on Mount Sinai, called the covenant, though in general that was now broken, inasmuch as they then promised to hear and obey all that the Lord should say unto them, Ex 24:7; but it particularly means the command given, **Jos 6:18**; that they should take nothing of that which was devoted the Lord, and thereby make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it; and which shows that that was not a command given by Joshua of himself, but what he had from the Lord:

for they have even taken of the accursed thing; somewhat of that which was devoted to sacred uses:

and have also stolen; taken it away, not openly, but by stealth, as being conscious they ought not to have done what they did, and so sinned both against God and their own consciences:

and dissembled also; or "lied" {u}; pretended they had not taken any of the accursed thing when they had; and it is probable that the people in general, each of the tribes, families, and houses, were examined by proper officers, whether they had taken any of the spoil, or not, to themselves, and they all denied they had, and he that had taken it among the rest; and perhaps was particularly asked the question, which he answered in the negative:

and they have put [it] even amongst their own stuff; their household stuff, mixed them with their own goods that they might not be known; or put them "in their own vessels" {w}, for their own use and service.

{u} wvxk "mentiti sunt", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {w} Mhylkb "in vasis suis", Montanus.

Joshua 7:12

Ver. 12. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies,.... Being forsaken of God for the sin committed among them:

[but] turned [their] backs before their enemies: had not courage to face them, but fled as soon as they appeared:

because they were accursed; of God for the accursed thing that had been taken, as was threatened would be their case, should they take any of it; **Jos 6:18**;

neither will I be with you any more, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you; that is, until they had put to death the person who had taken of the accursed thing, and made himself thereby accursed, and even all the camp of Israel; till this was done, the Lord would not be with them to protect and defend them, and give them success against their enemies.

Joshua 7:13

Ver. 13. Up, sanctify the people,.... The word "up" not only signifies getting up from the ground on which he lay, but to bestir himself, and to be active in what he would now be enjoined and directed to do, and in the first place to "sanctify the people", that is, by giving them orders to do it themselves:

and say, sanctify yourselves against tomorrow; either by some ceremonial ablutions, or by the performance of moral duties, as prayer, repentance, and good works; or rather, they were to "prepare" themselves, as the Targum and Kimchi interpret it, to get ready against the morrow, and expect to be thoroughly searched, in order to find out the person who had taken the accursed thing:

for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, [there is] an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel; an accursed person, who had taken of what was devoted to the Lord for his own use, and so accursed:

thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you; by putting him to death.

Joshua 7:14

Ver. 14. In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes,.... One or more of every tribe, according to the number of them, were to be brought the next morning before Joshua and the elders of Israel, the sanhedrim and council of the nation, and very probably the tabernacle, where they assembled for this purpose:

and it shall be, [that] the tribe which the Lord taketh; how a tribe and so a family or household were taken is differently understood; what some of the Jewish writers say deserves no regard, as the detention of persons by the ark, or of the dulness of the stones in the Urim and Thummim: it seems best to understand the whole affair as done by casting lots {x}; so Josephus {y} and Ben Gersom; and they might in this way be said to be taken by the Lord, because the disposition of the lot is by him, Pr 16:33; now it is said, that the tribe that should be taken, as Judah was, from what follows,

shall come according to the families [thereof]; that is, the families in that tribe, meaning the heads of them, as Kimchi well observes; these were to come to the place where the lots were cast:

and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; on whatsoever family in the tribe the lot should fall, the heads of households in that family should appear and have lots cast on them: and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man; that household that should be taken by lot, the men thereof, the heads of the house, should come each of them and have lots east on them, that the particular man that sinned might be discovered.

{x} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. Samaritan. Chronic. apud Hottinger. Smegma. Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 505. Jarchi in loc. {y} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 10.

Joshua 7:15

Ver. 15. And it shall be, [that] he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire,.... He that is taken by lot, and the accursed thing found with him, this should be the death, burning, one of the four capital punishments with the Jews: this was ordered in this case, because the city of Jericho, accursed or devoted, was burnt with fire, **Jos 6:24**;

he and all that he hath; the particulars of which are enumerated, **Jos 7:24**;

because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord;
See Gill on "Jos 7:11";

and because he hath wrought folly in Israel; as all sin and every transgression of the law is, and was the cause of Israel's turning their backs on their enemies; which, as Abarbinel says, was folly, and made the people of Israel look foolish, mean, and contemptible: the word has also the signification of a dead carcass, and may possibly have respect, to the thirty six men whose death he was the occasion of, **Jos 7:5**, and therefore justly ought to die himself.

Joshua 7:16

Ver. 16. So Joshua rose up early in the morning,.... Which showed his readiness and diligence to obey the command of God; and as there was much work to do, it required that he should rise early:

and brought Israel by their tribes: before the Lord, at the tabernacle, where he and the high priest and elders attended; each tribe was thither brought by their representatives:

and the tribe of Judah was taken: either his stone in the breastplate of the high priest looked dull, as some say, or rather the lot being cast fell on that tribe.

Joshua 7:17

Ver. 17. And he brought the family of Judah,.... That is, the tribe of Judah, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, {z}; or rather, the several families in that tribe, even the heads of them:

and he took the family of the Zarhites: which descended from Zerah the son of Judah; that was taken by lot:

and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and cast lots on them:

and Zabdi was taken: that part of the family of the Zarhites which sprung from Zabdi, a son of Zerah.

{z} So R. Sol. Ohel Moed, fol. 94. 2.

Joshua 7:18

Ver. 18. And he brought his household man by man,.... The household of Zabdi, the heads of each house therein:

and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken; the lot fell upon him, and he was laid hold on, and detained.

Joshua 7:19

Ver. 19. And Joshua said unto Achan, my son,.... Treating him in a very humane, affectionate, and respectable manner, though so great a criminal, being a subject of his, and of the same religion and nation:

give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, by acknowledging his omniscience, justice, power, truth, and faithfulness; as in his promises so in his threatenings:

and make confession unto him; of the sin he had been guilty of; this Joshua might urge, partly for his own good, who might more reasonably expect the forgiveness of his sin: so it is said in the Misnah {a}, whoever confesses has a part in the world to come, for so we find concerning Achan, **Jos 7:19**; and partly for the glory of God, this being the instance in which he is directed to give it to him; and partly on account of others, particularly the tribe, family, and household to whom he belonged, who after all might not be satisfied thoroughly that he was guilty, unless he had confessed it: according to Maimonides {b}, this was but a temporary law on which Achan was put to death; for, he says, our law condemns no man to death on his own confession, nor on the prophecy of a prophet, who says that he committed such a theft; and it was not on his confession, but by the order of God, determining the affair by lot, that he was put to death: the confession Joshua directs to was not what was made to man, but to God, that is, of the evil of it, and as committed against God, though the fact itself was to be owned before man, as follows:

and tell me now what thou hast done, hide [it] not from me; what were the particular things he had taken; the lot showed he had taken something, but what that was, as yet was unknown, and where it was; and this Joshua desires him he would inform him of and satisfy him about, and without any reserve openly declare the truth.

{a} Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 2. {b} Pirush in ib. & Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 18. sect. 6.

Joshua 7:20

Ver. 20. And Achan answered Joshua, and said,.... He made a free and open confession of his sin:

indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel; against him who had been so good to Israel in many instances, and particularly in delivering Jericho into their hands in so extraordinary a manner; against a law of his, respecting the spoil of that city, which sin was the more aggravated thereby; and that he had committed the sin he was taken for and charged with, he owns was a true and real fact:

and thus and thus have I done; such and such things have I taken, and in the manner as follows.

Joshua 7:21

Ver. 21. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment,.... One, as the Targum adds, for no more was taken; a garment made of Babylonish wool, as Jarchi; or a valuable garment made in Babylon, called "Shinar", for that is the word in the text, so Kimchi and Abarbinel; and Babylonian garments were in great esteem in other nations: Pliny says {c} Babylon was famous for garments interwoven with pictures of divers colours, and which gave name to them; and Plutarch {d} relates, that Cato in his great modesty, and being an enemy to luxury, having a Babylonish garment that came to him by inheritance, ordered it immediately to be sold: the Vulgate Latin version calls it a scarlet robe; and in some Jewish writings {e} it is interpreted, a garment of Babylonian purple, as if it only respected the colour; and purple and scarlet are sometimes promiscuously used and put for the same, see Mt 27:28; and were the colour worn by kings: and Josephus here calls it a royal garment, wholly interwoven with gold {f}; and some have thought it to be the garment of the king of Jericho, which is not unlikely; however, it is much more probable than that Jericho was subject to the king of Babylon, and that he had palaces in Jericho, and when he came thither was clothed with this robe, so Jarchi; as is elsewhere said {g} by others, that he had a deputy who resided in Jericho, who sent dates to the king of Babylon, and the king sent him gifts, among which was a garment of Shinar or Babylon:

and two hundred shekels of silver; which, if coined money, was near twenty five English pounds:

and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight: or a "tongue of gold" {h}; a plate of gold in the shape of a tongue, as Kimchi and Abarbinel; a piece of unwrought gold which weighed fifty shekels, and worth of our money about seventy five pounds, according to Brererwood {i}: where he saw these, and from whence he took them, is not said; according to some Jewish writers, these belonged to one of their idols; it is said {k}, he saw the Teraphim and the silver they offered before it, and the garment which was spread before it, and the tongue or wedge of gold in its mouth; and he desired them in his heart, and went and took them, and hid them in the midst of his tent: and the Samaritan Chronicle {l} makes him confess that he went into a temple in Jericho and found the above things there: and Masius conjectures that the wedge of gold was a little golden sword, with which the men of Jericho had armed their god, since an ancient poet {m} calls a little sword a little tongue:

then I coveted them, and took them; he is very particular in the account, and gradually proceeds in relating the temptation he was under, and the prevalence of it; it began with his eyes, which were caught with the goodliness of the garments, and the riches he saw; these affected his heart and stirred up covetous desires, which influenced and directed his hands to take them:

and, behold, they are [hid] in the earth in the midst of my tent; Josephus {n} says, he dug a deep hole or ditch in his tent, and put them there, that is, the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold; which, as Ben Gersom gathers from **Jos 7:25**, was wrapped up and hid within the garment; which is not improbable, since otherwise no account is given of that:

and the silver under it; the two hundred shekels of silver lay under the garment in which was the wedge of gold, and so it lay under them both.

{c} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 48. {d} In Vita Catonis. {e} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 85. fol. 75. 2. {f} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 48.) {g} Bereshit Rabba, ib. {h} bhz Nwvl "linguam auream", Montanus, Tigurine version, Masius; "lingulam auream", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {i} De Ponder. &. Pret. Vet. Num. c. 5. {k} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. (c. 38.) {l} Apud Hottinger, ut supra. (Smegm. Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 505.) {m} Naevius apud A. Cell. Noct. Attic. l. 10. c. 25. {n} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 48.)

Joshua 7:22

Ver. 22. So Joshua sent messengers,.... Directly to Achan's tent, to see if it was as he had said, and to bring the things with them:

and they ran unto the tent; either for joy that the iniquity was discovered, as Kimchi; or that none of the tribe of Judah or of Achan's family or relations should get there before them, and take them from thence and make void the lot; so Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and Abarbinel; but, no doubt, it is remarked, to show the readiness and diligence of the messengers to obey the order of Joshua:

and, behold, [it was] hid in his tent, and the silver under it; as Achan had said.

Joshua 7:23

Ver. 23. And they took them out of the midst of the tent,.... Out of the place, hole, or pit in which they were hid:

and brought them to Joshua and to the children of Israel; to Joshua as the chief ruler, and to the elders and heads of the tribes assembled together:

and laid them out before the Lord; or "poured them out" {o}; the golden wedge, out of the garment in which it was wrapped, and the two hundred shekels of silver found under it: it seems as if these were poured or laid out separately upon the ground before the tabernacle, where the ark of the Lord was, they belonging to the spoils which were devoted to him; as well as hereby they were plainly seen by the Israelites, that these were the very things which Achan had confessed.

{o} Mquyw "fundentes", Munster; "fuderunt", Piscator.

Joshua 7:24

Ver. 24. And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah,.... Joshua and all Israel are mentioned, to show the perfect agreement between Joshua and the heads of the people in this affair of Achan, and in the nature and manner of his punishment:

and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold; which, though devoted to sacred uses, yet having been converted to another's use, and made his property, was not to be employed in the service of the sanctuary, but to be burnt with him:

and his sons and his daughters; who, according to Ben Gersom, Abarbinel, and Abendana, were not brought forth to be put to death, only to be spectators of the sentence of judgment, and the execution of it, that they might keep themselves from such evil things; though, as Achan may be supposed to be a man in years, being but the fourth generation from Judah; his sons and daughters were grown up in all probability, and might be accessories in this affair; and so, as some Jewish writers remark, were worthy of death, because they saw and knew what was done, and were silent and did not declare it {p}; and it seems by what is said, Jos 22:20; that they died as well as Achan, since it is there said, "that man perished not alone in his iniquity"; though it may be interpreted of his substance, his cattle, perishing with him; and indeed from **Jos 7:25**; it seems as if none were stoned but himself, that is, of his family; no mention is made of his wife, who, if he had any, as Kimchi observes, knew nothing of the matter, it being hid from her:

and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep; in which lay his substance, as that of the eastern people generally did:

and his tent, and all that he had; the tent he and his family dwelt in, with all the household goods in it:

and they brought them unto the valley of Achor; so called by anticipation here; for it had its name from the trouble Achan gave to Israel, and with which he was troubled himself: some render it, "they brought them up" {q}; and as it is more proper to descend into a valley the to go up to it, it is thought there was a mountain between the camp of Israel and this valley, so Kimchi and Ben Melech; see **Ho 2:15**.

{p} Pirke Eliezer, ut supra (c. 38.) Kimchi in loc. {q} wley "ascendere fecerunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Vatablus.

Joshua 7:25

Ver. 25. And Joshua said, why hast thou troubled us?.... Been the occasion of so much trouble to us, by committing this sin:

the Lord shall trouble thee this day; by the destruction of him and all that belonged to him: this is said to show that his punishment was of God, and according to his will: in the Misnah {r} an emphasis is laid on the phrase "this day", and it is observed,

"this day thou shalt be troubled, but thou shalt not be troubled in the world to come;"

suggesting that though temporal punishment was inflicted on him, yet his iniquity was forgiven, and he would be saved with an everlasting, salvation; and as it may be hoped from the ingenuous confession that he made, that he had true repentance for it, and forgiveness of it:

and all Israel stoned him with stones; hence some gather, that only Achan himself suffered death, and not his sons and daughters:

and burnt them with fire after they had stoned them with stones; which the Jewish commentators understand of his oxen, asses, and sheep; so Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and Abarbinel: likewise his tent, and household goods, the Babylonish garment, gold and silver, were burnt, and he himself also, for that is the express order, **Jos 7:15**; the Jews say, as particularly Jarchi observes, that he was stoned because he profaned the sabbath, it being on the sabbath day that Jericho was taken, and stoning was the punishment of the sabbath breaker, and he was burnt on the account of the accursed thing; so Abendana.

{r} Sanhedrin ut supra. (Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 18. sect. 6.)

Joshua 7:26

Ver. 26. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day,.... That is, at the place where he suffered, or where they laid his ashes, they heaped up a pile of stones over him, as a monument whereby it might be known hereafter where he was executed and was buried; and which pile continued to the writing of this history: such sort of funeral monuments were usual with the Heathens {s} also as well as with the Jews, see **Jos 8:29**; so the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger; or the effects of it ceased; the outward face of things was altered, the dealings of God in his providence with Israel were changed; though, properly speaking, there is no change in God, nor such affections and passions in him as in man:

wherefore the name of the place was called the valley of Achor unto this day; from the trouble Achan met with, and the people of Israel on his account, see

Jos 7:24; and so it was called in the days of Isaiah and Hosea, Isa 65:10; and where it is prophesied of as what should be in time to come: according to Bunting {t}, it was twelve miles from Jerusalem; Jerom {u} says it was at the north of Jericho, but Lamy {w}, following Bonfrerius, places it to the south; see
Jos 15:7.

{s} Vid. Pausan. Arcadica, sive, l. 8. p. 477. & Phocica, sive, l. 10. p. 616, 617. {t} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 98. {u} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. B. {w} Apparat. Geograph. p. 61.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 8

Joshua is encouraged to go up and take Ai, and is directed what method to make use of, **Jos 8:1**; accordingly he set an ambush on the west side of it, and, he and the rest of the army went up before it, **Jos 8:3**; which, when the king of Ai saw, he and all his forces came cut against them, and the Israelites making a feint as if they were beaten, drew on the men of Ai to pursue them, upon which the ambush arose and entered the city and set fire to it, **Jos 8:14**; the smoke of which being observed by Joshua and Israel, they turned back upon the pursuers, and the ambush sallying out of the city behind them, made an entire destruction of them, then slew all the inhabitants, took the spoil, burnt the city, and hanged the king of it, **Jos 8:20**; after this Joshua built an altar at Ebal, wrote the law on stones, and read the blessings and curses in it before all Israel, **Jos 8:30**.

Ver. 1. And the Lord said unto Joshua,.... Immediately after the execution of Achan, the fierceness of his anger being turned away:

fear not, neither be thou dismayed; on account of the defeat of his troops he had sent to take Ai:

take all the people of war with thee; all above twenty years of age, which, with the forty thousand of the tribes on the other side Jordan he brought over with him, must make an arm, five hundred thousand men; these Joshua was to take with so much to animate and encourage him, or to terrify the enemy, nor because such a number was necessary for the reduction of Ai, which was but a small city; but that all might have a part in the spoil and plunder of it, which they were denied at Jericho, and chiefly to draw all the men out of the city, seeing such a numerous host approaching:

and arise, go up to Ai; which lay high, and Joshua being now in the plains of Jericho, See Gill on "Jos 7:2";

see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land; this city, though a small one, had a king over it, as most cities in the land of Canaan had; the number of his people in it were twelve thousand, and his land were the fields about it; all which were given to Joshua by the Lord, and were as sure as if he had them already in his hand.

Joshua 8:2

Ver. 2. And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst to Jericho and her king,.... Burn the one and slay the other:

only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves; which they were not allowed to do at Jericho:

lay thee an ambush for the city behind it; at the west side of it: some have called in question the lawfulness of the ambush, but, as this was appointed by the Lord, there is no room for it.

Joshua 8:3

Ver. 3. So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai,.... As the Lord had commanded him:

and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour; out of all the men of war; these were a select company, picked men, not the whole army, as some have thought, for he was ordered to take all the people of war, as he did:

and sent them away by night; from the main army, that they might pass the city and get behind it undiscovered, for they were sent for an ambush; and of these some were to take the city, and be left in it to burn it, and some to smite the men of Ai, as Abarbinel notes.

Joshua 8:4

Ver. 4. And he commanded them, saying,.... At the time he sent them away;

behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, [even] behind the city; that is, on the west side of it, **Jos 8:9**;

go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready; to enter into it, as soon as the forces are drawn out eastward to meet the army of Israel.

Joshua 8:5

Ver. 5. And I and all the people that [are] with me will approach unto the city,.... That is, Joshua with the main body of the army would march up to the city the next morning, in order to draw out the inhabitants of it to fight them:

and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first; as they had done before, when the three thousand were sent against them, **Jos 7:4**;

that we will flee before them; as the three thousand did, which would animate them to pursue them with the greater eagerness, and to a distance from their city.

Joshua 8:6

Ver. 6. For they will come out after us,.... Of which there could be no doubt, when they should see them run from them:

till we have drawn them from the city; some distance from it, that they could not return soon enough to save it from the ambush, or prevent their entrance into it, and burning it:

for they will say, they will flee before us, as at the first; they run away as they did before, and let us pursue them and smite them as we did then:

therefore we will flee before them; to draw them out of the city, and make your way easy to get into it,

Joshua 8:7

Ver. 7. Then ye shall rise up from the ambush,.... When they should see a signal made, that in **Jos 8:18**; and when their watch, they might set in a proper place, should see Israel flee, and the men of Ai at a distance from their city, pursuing, and give notice of it to the ambush:

and seize upon the city; enter into it, and take possession of it, its fortresses, and secure its passes:

for the Lord your God will deliver it into your hand; Joshua expresses himself with great confidence, having the promise of God, and relying on it.

Joshua 8:8

Ver. 8. And it shall be, when ye have taken the city,.... Entered it and become masters of it:

[that] ye shall set the city on fire; not the whole city, only some outlying houses of it, to make a smoke which might be seen both by Israel and the men of Ai, for different purposes; for the spoil of the city was first to be taken before it was utterly burnt with fire:

according to the commandment of the Lord shall ye do; plunder the city, destroy the inhabitants of it, and then burn it:

see I have commanded you; delivered the command of the Lord unto them, and therefore were left without excuse, and could not plead ignorance; besides, he was their general, and he expected his orders to be obeyed, as they ought to have been.

Joshua 8:9

Ver. 9. Joshua therefore sent them forth,.... The thirty thousand chosen men:

and they went to lie in ambush; as they were ordered, **Jos 8:2**:

and abode between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; for as Ai was on the east of Bethel, **Jos 7:2**. Bethel must be on the west of Ai, as Jarchi notes:

but Joshua lodged that night among the people; the main body of the army, to direct them in the affair of war, how they should behave the next day, when they came to fight; and to inspire them with courage and confidence, that they might not be afraid, because of their having been smitten before by this people, so Ben Gersom; or rather that he and they might be ready in the morning to march towards Ai, as Jarchi and Kimchi.

Joshua 8:10

Ver. 10. And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and numbered the people,.... To see if there were any wanting, and to put them in proper order for their march:

and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai; these elders were either the seventy elders who went with Joshua as council to him; or it may be rather they were inferior officers, who went at the head of their respective corps under them.

Joshua 8:11

Ver. 11. And all the people, [even the people] of war that [were] with him, and went up, and drew nigh,.... To the city of Ai:

and came before the city; as if they intended to besiege it, storm it, or force an entrance into it:

and pitched on the north side of Ai; which was judged fittest for the purpose:

now [there was] a valley between them and Ai; which the Rabbins call the valley of Halacah, as Jarchi says; so that they were upon a hill, at least on rising ground, and might the more easily be seen by the inhabitants of Ai, whom they wanted to draw out of their city.

Joshua 8:12

Ver. 12. And he took about five thousand men, and set them to lie in ambush,.... This was another ambush, as both Jarchi and Kimchi observe; and the latter adds, perhaps he set them nearer the city than the former; though some are of opinion that these are the same ambush spoken of, whose number is here given, being set on the same side of the city; and they suppose that Joshua had with him but thirty thousand men in all, five thousand of which he sent to lie in ambush, and the other twenty five thousand remained with him; but it seems clear that all the men of war were to be taken, and were taken by them, and that out of them thirty thousand were sent by him to lie in wait at first, and now five thousand more:

between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of the city; and though they were on the same side of the city with the first and larger ambush, yet, as Abarbinel observes, they might be set nearer the city and to the army; and he supposes the first ambush was to take the city, and the second little ambush, as he calls it, was placed, that when the men of the city came out, they might make a noise and a stir, and skirmish with them, that so they might not come upon the camp suddenly.

Joshua 8:13

Ver. 13. And when they had set the people,.... In battle array, as in 1Ki 20:12; that is, Joshua and the officers of the army:

[even] all the host that [was] on the north of the city; where Joshua and the main army were:

and the liers in wait on the west of the city: both the first and second ambush; when all, were prepared and got ready by their several officers, to act the part they were to do:

Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley; according to Ben Gersom, to see whether the guards or sentinels which were placed there were awake or asleep, lest the men of Ai should come suddenly upon them and smite them; but perhaps it might be to pray and meditate.

Joshua 8:14

Ver. 14. And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw [it],.... Not the ambush on the west side, but the host or army on the north side, or, however, some of his people gave him notice of it:

that they hasted and rose up early; or made haste to rise out of their beds, on the alarm given of Israel's near approach:

and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle; being raised out of their beds and accoutred with armour, and put into a military order, they marched out with their king at the head of them, to give Israel battle:

he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain; which was before the city, the same with the valley mentioned, **Jos 8:11**; the city was built on an eminence, and this plain or valley lay at the bottom of it; and on an eminence on the other side of the valley the army of Israel was pitched; wherefore the king of Ai and all his men of war went out hither to attack Israel, and this is said to be at an appointed time; it is difficult to say what is meant by it, when they seem to have hurried out as best as they could, as soon as they perceived the Israelites were near them: Ben Gersom and Abarbinel think it was the same time of the day they went out at first, which the king might choose as lucky, being before successful, and to encourage the men, that as they conquered then they should now; which seems not amiss, though perhaps it rather designs an appointed place, as their rendezvous, and where to attack Israel, and where they had been before victorious:

but he wist not that [there were] liers in ambush against him behind the city; that he knew nothing of, and therefore took no precaution against them to prevent their design.

Joshua 8:15

Ver. 15. And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them,.... Or smitten, as some of them might be in the pursuit:

and fled by the way of the wilderness; not a barren desert, but, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, a place for the pasture of cattle; though perhaps it is the same with the wilderness of Bethaven,
Jos 18:12. Epiphanius {w} makes mention of the wilderness of Bethel and Ephraim as near Jericho.

{w} Contr. Haeres. l. 1. tom. 2.

Joshua 8:16

Ver. 16. And all the people that were in Ai [were] called together to pursue after them,.... Because the host of Israel was very numerous, it was judged proper that all the people in Ai should assist in pursuing them, not only to kill the more in the pursuit, but to carry off the spoil and prisoners they should take; or rather the sense is, that all the people in Ai, which were come out with the king to battle, when they saw Israel flee, "cried" {x}, or shouted, as soldiers do when victorious, "in" or "while pursuing" {y} after them;

and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city; at some considerable distance from it; which was the design to be answered by feigning a flight.

{x} wqezw "vociferantes", V. L. "vociferati sunt", Pagninus, Montanus. {y} Pdrl "persequendo", Pagninus, Montanus.

Joshua 8:17

Ver. 17. And there was not a man left in Ai or Bethel that went not out after Israel,.... For as these two places were very near to each other, but a mile apart, they were in confederacy, and acted together, and could easily be called to the help of each other when required: though there is a difficulty how the men of Bethel could join those of Ai, when the ambush lay between them both, **Jos 8:12**; they either went another way, or the ambush purposely let them pass, for fear of a discovery by a skirmish with them, and that Bethel as well as Ai might be cleared of its armed inhabitants, and so fall an easy prey to them as well as Ai: this must be understood only of men of war; for otherwise there were inhabitants left, as old men, and such as were unfit for war, afterwards slain, **Jos 8:24**;

and they left the city open: they did not stay to shut the gates, nor left porters or any guards about, to take care of, protect, and defend the city:

and pursued after Israel; with great eagerness and vehemence, not having the least apprehension of their city being in any danger.

Joshua 8:18

Ver. 18. And the Lord said unto Joshua, stretch out the spear that [is] in thy hand towards Ai,.... On which was a flag, as Abarbinel and Ben Melech think; and which is not improbable, and served for a signal for the ambush to come out and seize the city, as both they and Jarchi observe, as well as a signal also to the army of Israel to prepare to turn and face about, and engage with the enemy; though they did not actually do this until they saw the smoke of the city, **Jos 8:21**;

for I will give it into thine hand; of which the stretching out of his spear seems also to be a confirming sign to him, and which he kept stretched out until all the inhabitants of Ai were destroyed, **Jos 8:26**;

and Joshua stretched out the spear that [he had] in his hand toward the city: and therefore must turn himself towards it; and it is highly probable that at the same time there was a full stop of the army, and that they immediately turned or prepared to turn about.

Joshua 8:19

Ver. 19. And the ambush arose quickly out of their place,.... As soon as the sentinels set in proper places observed the signal, and gave them notice of it, which was the stretching out of the spear, as appears by what follows:

and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand; and the spear in his hand; from whence it is plain, that though the Lord is said to bid Joshua do this now, he had orders from him for it before and the ambush must have been made acquainted with it before they were sent away; and this was only a renewal of the order from the Lord, and which pointed out the proper time, the very crisis, when it should be stretched out:

and they entered into the city; without any difficulty, the gates being open:

and took it; took possession of it, and the strong holds in it:

and hasted and set the city on fire; that is, they made haste to set some houses on fire as the signal to the army of Israel to return.

Joshua 8:20

Ver. 20. And when the men of Ai looked behind them,.... On some account or another, perhaps observing that the army of Israel made a full stop and was gazing at the city:

they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven; from whence they concluded an enemy was there, and had set fire to it:

and they had no power to flee this way or that way; for if they turned back to their city there was an enemy, how powerful they knew not, possessed of it, and whom they might expect would meet them; and if they pushed forward, there was the whole army of Israel against them, which now turned and faced them, showing no fear of them:

and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers; the people of Israel, that fled by the way of the wilderness, **Jos 8:15**, turned about, and fell upon the men of Ai that pursued them.

Joshua 8:21

Ver. 21. And when Joshua,.... Or "for Joshua" {z}:

and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city; which they knew by the smoke, as follows:

and that the smoke of the city ascended; in large columns, which sufficiently indicated that the whole city was taken and fired by the ambush:

then, or, "and",

they turned again and slew the men of Ai; great numbers of them.

{z} evwhyw "et enim Josua", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Masius.

Joshua 8:22

Ver. 22. And the other issued out of the city against them,.... That is, the ambush, or at least a part of them:

so that they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side; or, as we commonly say, they were between two fires, the ambush on one side, the army of Israel on the other:

and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape; not one was saved alive, excepting their king, as in **Jos 8:23**; no quarter was given them, nor any suffered to make their escape.

Joshua 8:23

Ver. 23. And the king of Ai they took alive,.... They spared him, and reserved him for a more shameful death:

and brought him to Joshua; their general; delivering him into his hands as his prisoner, to do will, him as seemed good in his sight.

Joshua 8:24

Ver. 24. And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai,.... That came out against them:

in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them; both in the arable lands that were sown with corn, and now clothed with it, the wheat especially, not being gathered in, as not yet ripe, and in the pasture ground, designed by the wilderness, see **Jos 8:15**; so Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it:

and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword; and were slain by it:

until they were consumed; and not one left:

that all the Israelites returned unto Ai; both the ambush that came out of it, and the army that came against it:

and smote it with the edge of the sword; that is, the inhabitants that were left in it unfit for war, as old men, infirm persons, women and children, as follows.

Joshua 8:25

Ver. 25. And [so] it was, [that] all that fell that day,.... Partly in the city, and partly in the field, both by the ambush and the army: both of men and women;

[were] twelve thousand, [even] all the men of Ai; so that the city was not a very large one, and the numbers of inhabitants were comparatively but few, as in **Jos 7:3**.

Joshua 8:26

Ver. 26. For Joshua drew not his hand back wherewith he stretched out his spear,.... But continued it, and that stretched out:

until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai; just as the hand of Moses was held up, and kept held up until Amalek was discomfited by Joshua, Ex 17:12.

Joshua 8:27

Ver. 27. Only the cattle, and the spoil of the city, Israel took for a prey unto themselves,.... Even all their substance, as besides their cattle, also their gold, silver, household goods, merchandise, &c.

according unto the word of the Lord which he commanded Joshua, **Jos 8:2**.

Joshua 8:28

Ver. 28. And Joshua burnt Ai,.... The whole city, fire being only set before to a few houses, to make a smoke as a signal; he did with it as he had done with Jericho, for so he was ordered, **Jos 8:2**;

and made it an heap for ever; that is, for a long time, for it appears to have been rebuilt, and to have been inhabited by the Jews, after their return from their Babylonish captivity, Ne 11:31;

[even] a desolation unto this day; to the time of the writing of this book; and by what has been just observed, it appears that Ezra could not be the writer of it, since this city was inhabited in his time.

Joshua 8:29

Ver. 29. And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide,.... By way of terror to other kings in the land of Canaan, that should refuse to submit unto him:

and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree; according to the law in De 21:23; and that the land might not be defiled:

and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city; this was done, according to Ben Gersom and Abarbinel, that it might be publicly known to the rest of the kings of the nations, that they might be afraid to fight with Israel:

and raise thereon a great heap of stones, [that remaineth] unto this day; as a sepulchral monument, showing that there was a person lay interred there; whether there was any inscription on the stone, showing who he was, does not appear; it looks as if it was only a rude heap of stones; and such kind of sepulchral monuments were common in former times in other countries.

Joshua 8:30

Ver. 30. Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal. As was commanded, De 27:5. The Samaritan Chronicle says, it was built in Mount Gerizim; but there is a difficulty arises, when this was done by Joshua; it should seem by inserting the account here, that it was done immediately after the destruction of Ai; and Mercator endeavours to prove that Ebal was near to Ai, but what he has said does not give satisfaction; for certain it is, that Ebal and Gerizim were near Shechem in Samaria, at a great distance from Ai, see **Jud 9:6**. The Jews {a} generally are of opinion, that this was done as soon as Israel, even the very day, they passed over Jordan, which they think the letter of the command required, De 11:29; though it does not, only that it should be done after they were passed over it; Ebal being at too great a distance from Jordan for them to accomplish it on that day, being, as they themselves say {b}, sixty miles from Jordan; so that they are obliged to make Israel travel that day an hundred twenty miles, and as they assert they did {c} and which they must do, if what they say was true, it being sixty miles to Ebal, and sixty more to return again to Gilgal that night, where they encamped, but this is incredible: and as this account of Joshua's building the altar is too soon after he had passed Jordan, what R. Ishmael {d} has pitched upon is too late, who says this was not done till after fourteen years, when the land was conquered, which was seven years doing, and when it was divided, which were seven years more; what Josephus says {e} is more probable than either, which is, that Joshua, five years after he had entered Canaan, when he had placed the tabernacle at Shiloh, went from thence and built an altar at Ebal; as for what R. Eliezer suggests {f}, that Ebal and Gerizim here mentioned are not the Ebal and Gerizim of the Samaritans, only two hills were made, and they were called by these names, cannot merit any belief or regard.

{a} Misn. Sotah, c. 7. sect. 5. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 30. Jarchi in loc. {b} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 36. 1. {c} T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 21. 3. {d} Apud ib. {e} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 14. {f} In T. Hieros. Sotah, ut supra. ({c})

Joshua 8:31

Ver. 31. As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses,....
De 27:5;

an altar of whole stones, on which no man hath lift up [any] iron;
See Gill on "Ex 20:25",
See Gill on "De 27:5", and,
See Gill on "De 27:6":

and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings; by way of thanksgiving for the good land they were introduced into, and this was what they were ordered to do by Moses,
De 27:6.

Joshua 8:32

Ver. 32. And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses,....
Not upon the stones of which the altar was made, though some have so thought; but upon other stones erected in the form of a pillar, and plastered over, De 27:4; which copy of the law was not the whole book of Deuteronomy, as some, at least only an abstract of the laws in it; but rather the decalogue, as Abarbinel; or the blessings and curses later read, as Ben Gersom:

which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel: they being witness of it, that he did what was enjoined.

Joshua 8:33

Ver. 33. And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark, and on that side,.... Some on Ebal, and some on Gerizim:

before the priests and the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord; it being brought out of the tabernacle on this occasion, and bottle by the priests and Levites:

as well the stranger, as he that was born among them; that is, as well the proselytes as the native Israelites, both appeared and were in the same situation:

half of them over against Mount Gerizim; that is, half of the tribes, and these were Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin:

and half of them over against Mount Ebal; which were the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali; See Gill on "De 27:12" and See Gill on "De 27:13";

as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel, as in De 27:12.

Joshua 8:34

Ver. 34. And afterwards he read all the words of the law,.... Not the whole Pentateuch, nor the whole book of Deuteronomy, but either some parts of it, the decalogue, or whatsoever he had written on the stones, and as follows:

the blessings and cursings, according to all that was written in the book of the law; De 27:14;
See Gill on "De 27:11".

Joshua 8:35

Ver. 35. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not,.... So punctually, precisely, and exactly did he observe the instructions and commands that were given him by Moses; and this he did in the most public manner:

before all the congregation of Israel; who were on this occasion called together, and not before the men only, but

with the women, and little ones: who all had a concern in the things that were read to them: yea, even

and the strangers that were conversant among them; not the proselytes of righteousness only, but the proselytes of the gate, that dwelt, walked, and conversed with them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 9

This chapter gives an account of the combination of the several kings of Canaan against Israel, **Jos 9:1**; and of the craftiness of the Gibeonites, pretending they were ambassadors from a far country, and desired to enter into a league with Israel, which they obtained, **Jos 9:3**; but when it was discovered who they were, it occasioned a murmuring among the people, **Jos 9:16**; which the princes quelled by proposing to make them hewers of wood, and drawers of water, **Jos 9:19**; in order to which Joshua summoned them before him, and chided them for beguiling them; and after they had made their excuse, he ordered them to the service the princes proposed, and so peace in the congregation of Israel was preserved, **Jos 9:21**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when all the kings which [were] on this side Jordan,.... On the side Israel now were, and was that in which the land of Canaan lay, and was now governed by many kings, and all that were now remaining, even all but the kings of Jericho and Ai, who were slain: both those

in the hills, and in the valleys; that dwelt in the mountainous part of the country, and in the plains of it:

and in all the coasts of the great sea, over against Lebanon; who inhabited and governed in that part of the country which lay on the coast of the Mediterranean sea, the country of Phoenicia, in which were Tyre, Sidon, and other cities, and were over against Mount Lebanon, which was on the northern part of the country; according to the Latin version, they dwelt near Lebanon; and according to the Septuagint, near Antilibanus. It seems best, with Noldius {g}, to render the words, "even unto Lebanon", for it designs all the sea coasts reaching to it; for all the maritime coasts did not lie over against it:

the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard [thereof]; what they heard is not said, but to be understood; particularly they heard what had been done by Joshua, and the people of Israel, to Jericho and Ai: and their kings, **Jos 9:3**. Some think, as Abarbinel, that they had heard of the altar Joshua had made, and of the stones he had set up, and of his reading the law to the people, by which they were to be governed; all which they understood as taking possession of the country, and looking upon it as conquered, and obliging his people to swear fealty to him. All the nations of Canaan are mentioned but the Gergasites; which, according to the Jewish writers, are omitted, because they were but few; the Septuagint version has them in some copies.

{g} Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 80. No. 370.

Joshua 9:2

Ver. 2. That they gathered themselves together to fight with Joshua, and with Israel,.... Not at this time, but they met together to consult what was proper to be done in order to secure themselves, and their people, and put a stop to the successes of the arms of Israel; and for this purpose entered into alliances with each other to assist one another, or at a convenient time and place to join their forces together, and attack Israel, as afterwards they did, Jos 11:1; and this they did

with one accord; were unanimous in their councils and resolutions; they all confederated together, and agreed as one man to make a common cause of it, and oppose Israel with their united forces.

Joshua 9:3

Ver. 3. And when the inhabitants of Gibeon,.... A large and royal city, a metropolitan one, which had three others belonging to it, and under it, mentioned **Jos 9:17**; see Jos 10:2; no mention is made of any king over them, perhaps they were governed by elders, **Jos 9:11**. Though an Arabic writer {h} says, the king of Gibeon wrote to Joshua, and desired security, and sent him large gifts, whom having preserved in safety, Joshua placed on his throne: when these

heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai; had taken the one in a miraculous way, and the other by a stratagem, and had burnt them both, destroyed the inhabitants, plundered their substance, and slew both their kings, all which struck them with terror.

{h} Patricides, p. 30. apud Hottinger. Smegm. Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 507.

Joshua 9:4

Ver. 4. And they did work wilily,.... Acted craftily, dealt in much cunning and subtlety; our version leaves out a very emphatic word, "also"; they also, as well as other nations, acted a cunning part, but in a different way; they did not enter into consultations and alliances with others, how to defend themselves, but made use of a stratagem to make peace, and enter into a league with Israel; or also as the Israelites had done, either as Simeon and Levi had dealt craftily with the Shechemites, who were Hivites, Ge 34:2; so now the Gibeonites, who also were Hivites, **Jos 9:7**; wrought in a wily and crafty manner with them, so Jarchi; or as the Israelites had lately done in the affair of Ai:

and went and made as if they had been ambassadors: from some states in a foreign country, sent on an embassy to the people of Israel, to compliment them on their successes, and to enter into alliance with them, which they thought would be pleasing and acceptable to them; the Targum is,

"they prepared food,"

which they took with them for their journey; and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions:

and took old sacks upon their asses: in which they put, their provisions:

and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up: not made of glass, as ours usually are, but of the skins of beasts, as the bottles in the eastern countries commonly were; which in time grew old, and were rent and burst, and they were obliged to mend them, and bind them up, that they might hold together, and retain the liquor put into them, see **Mt 9:17**.

Joshua 9:5

Ver. 5. And old shoes and clouted upon their feet,.... Which being worn out, were patched with various pieces of leather:

and old garments upon them; full of holes and rents, ragged and patched:

and the bread of their provision was dry [and] mouldy; having been kept a long time, and unfit for use; or like cakes over baked and burnt, as the Targum and Jarchi: the word for "mouldy" signifies pricked, pointed, spotted, as mouldy bread has in it spots of different colours, as white, red, green, and black, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; or it signifies bread so dry, as Ben Gersom notes, that it crumbles into pieces easily, with which the Vulgate Latin version agrees; or rather through being long kept, it was become dry and hard like crusts, so Noldius {i}; or very hard, like bread twice baked, as Castell {k}.

{i} P. 379. No. 1218. {k} Lex. col. 2395.

Joshua 9:6

Ver. 6. And they went to Joshua, unto the camp at Gilgal,.... From whence it appears, that after Jericho and Ai were destroyed, the army of Israel returned to their encampment at Gilgal, **Jos 5:10**; and here they were when the Gibeonites applied to them:

and said unto him, and to the men of Israel; not to the whole body of the people, but either to the seventy elders, the great council, who were with Joshua, or the princes of the congregation, after mentioned, who are said to swear to them; and so some render the words, "to the chief men of Israel" {l}; the word "Ish" here used sometimes denotes an eminent person or persons, see **Isa 2:9**;

we be come from a far country; this lie they told, that they might not be thought to be inhabitants of Canaan, and be destroyed as those of Jericho and Ai were; and as the rest of the inhabitants would be, of which they had intelligence, as the design of the Israelites, and what their orders were; according to Jerom {m}, Gibeon was but four miles from Bethel, unless he means Gibeah; however, it could not be at a much greater distance; and as Gilgal was a mile and a quarter from Jericho, where the Gibeonites now were, and Ai but three miles from Jericho, and Bethel a mile from thence, and Gibeon four miles from Bethel, they were come but little more than nine miles. Bunting {n} makes it twelve miles from Gilgal to Gibeon:

now therefore make yea league with us; offensive and defensive, to help and assist each other against a common enemy.

{l} larvy vya la "primoribus viris Israelis", Junius & Tremellius; so Piscator.
{m} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. A. {n} Travels, p. 96.

Joshua 9:7

Ver. 7. And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites,.... Though they did not know them to be such, but as they afterwards appeared to be the Hivites, as the Gibeonites were, they are here so called, see Jos 11:19. The name signifies "serpents"; according to a Derash, or mystical exposition, mentioned by Kimchi, the Gibeonites are so called, because they did the work of the serpent; that is to say, they deceived the Israelites, as the serpent deceived Eve:

peradventure ye dwell among us; of which they had some suspicion;

and how shall we make a league with you? which they were forbid to do with any of the seven nations, **De 7:2**.

Joshua 9:8

Ver. 8. And they said unto Joshua, we [are] thy servants,.... Not that they meant to be subjects of his, and tributaries to him; but this they said in great humility and lowliness of mind, being willing to be or do anything he should enjoin them. Abarbinel observes, that this they proposed to Joshua singly, not to be servants to all the people, but to him only, and to have him for their head and governor:

and Joshua, said, who [are] ye? and from whence come ye? by what name are ye called? and from what country do ye come? suspecting, as it should seem, that they were the inhabitants of Canaan; or however he was cautious and upon his guard, lest they should be such, and yet was not enough upon his guard to prevent imposition.

Joshua 9:9

Ver. 9. And they said unto him, from a very far country thy servants are come,.... Which they magnified and expressed in stronger terms than before, but were careful not to mention any country, lest such questions should be asked about it, their answers to which would betray them, but put it off by saying they were come,

because of the name of the Lord thy God; because of what they had heard of his name, his power and goodness; or "unto the name of the Lord thy God" {o}; that is, they were come to profess it, and to embrace the religion of the Israelites, and be proselytes to it; which they knew would be very agreeable to them, and engage them to show them favour; and so the Samaritan Chronicle {p} represents them as promising to do this, saying,

"we will believe in thy Lord, nor will we contradict him in what ye shall mark out for us, be it small or great;"

which seems to be, confirmed by what follows, unless it be considered as an explanation of the preceding clause:

for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt; the miracles wrought there, the plagues he inflicted on the Egyptians, and the wonderful deliverance of the children of Israel from their slavery.

{o} hwhy Mvl "ad nomen Domini", Masius; "ad nomen Jehovae": Junius & Tremellius. {p} Apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 507.

Joshua 9:10

Ver. 10. And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that [were] beyond Jordan,.... On the other side of Jordan from Gilgal:

to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan in Ashtaroth; the history of which see in Nu 21:21; they wisely took no notice of the miracle of dividing the waters of Jordan, to make a passage for the Israelites; nor of the destruction of Jericho and Ai, which were recent things, and could not be thought as yet to have reached a far country they pretended to come from; and which, if they mentioned, might have created a stronger suspicion still of their being Canaanites.

Joshua 9:11

Ver. 11. Wherefore our elders, and all the inhabitants of our country, spake unto us,.... They suggest, that their senate, or the states of their country, their principal men were convened, and that it was the unanimous voice of them, and of the people, that they should go on this embassy:

saying, take victuals with you for the journey; sufficient for so long a journey; for, in those times and countries, inns on the road were not frequent as now:

and go to meet them; to prevent their coming in an hostile manner unto them, and make peace, and enter into an alliance with them:

and say unto them, we [are] your servants; ready to come into any terms with them, just and reasonable:

therefore now make ye a league with us; that we may live in friendship, and mutually assist each other, as occasion should require.

Joshua 9:12

Ver. 12. This our bread we took hot [for] our provision out of our houses,.... These are not the words of the elders to the messengers they sent, continued, but of the ambassadors to the Israelites, pointing to the bread they brought with them, which they pretended was newly baked and took hot out of the oven:

on the day we came forth to go unto you, but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy: See Gill on "Jos 9:5"; which they gave as a demonstration and proof that they were come from a far country, as they had asserted.

Joshua 9:13

Ver. 13. And these bottles of wine, which we filled, [were] new,.... That is, on the day they came out on their journey:

and, behold, they be rent; which were owing to the long use that had been made of them, as they pretended:

and these our garments, and our shoes, are become old by reason of the very long journey: quite worn out through length of time and tedious travels. Isidore of Pelusium {q} thinks these Gibeonites were Cappadocians, of whom he gives a shocking character, and particularly that they were prone to lying and deceit; but his reason for it, that they were of the Philistines, will not hold good.

{q} L. 1. Ep. 281.

Joshua 9:14

Ver. 14. And the men took of their victuals,.... That is, the princes of Israel took thereof; not to eat of them, for it cannot be thought that such personages would eat of such dry and mouldy bread, and especially as they were now in a plentiful country, and possessed of the fruits of it; but to see whether it was in such a plight and condition as they said, whereby they might judge of the truth of what they said; and they learned and knew, as R. Jonah observes, from the dryness of their food, that it was truth they said; and so the Targum, the men hearkened to their words; and so Jarchi, they believed what they said on sight of their provisions; but, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, they ate with them, to confirm the covenant they made with them; but had this been the case, as it sometimes was a custom to eat together at making covenants, see Ge 26:30; the princes would doubtless have provided a better entertainment for such a purpose: the "margin" of our Bibles leads to the other sense,

"they received the men by reason of their victuals:"

and asked not [counsel] at the mouth of the Lord; as they might and should have done, by desiring the high priest to inquire of the Lord by Urim and Thummim; but this they neglected, which, had they attended to, the fraud would have been discovered; or however, they would have had the mind of God about making peace with the Gibeonites, which in all likelihood he would not have disapproved of, they becoming proselytes, and giving up their possessions to Israel; but this did not excuse their neglect.

Joshua 9:15

Ver. 15. And Joshua made peace with them,.... Upon the report the princes made of having examined what they had said, and which they found to be true, particularly concerning their victuals:

and made a league with them, to let them live; and not destroy them as he did the Canaanites, and was ordered to do; they being supposed not to belong to them by the representation of things they had made:

and the princes of the congregation sware unto them; that they would keep the league and covenant they had made with them inviolable; they ratified it by an oath, which was a sacred solemn thing.

Joshua 9:16

Ver. 16. And it came to pass at the end of three days, after they had made a league with them,.... The league seems to have been made the same day they came; the Gibeonites were no doubt in haste to have it concluded, lest they should be discovered; and Joshua, and the princes of Israel, took no pains, and gave themselves no great trouble to inquire about them, but made peace with them at once; and it was but three days after, or within three days of its being made,

that they heard that they [were] their neighbours, and [that] they dwelt among them; that is, in their neighbourhood, as the Arabic version; and so Noldius {r} renders the words, "and that they dwelt near them"; for the Gibeonites did not dwell among the Israelites, or in the midst of them, but near the place where they were; and this they understood either by some deserters that came to the camp of Israel, or by some of the Israelites who were sent to reconnoitre several parts of the country, especially such as lay nearest, or for the sake of getting provisions for their camp.

{r} Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 211. No. 932.

Joshua 9:17

Ver. 17. And the children of Israel journeyed,.... Not the whole camp, for that still remained at Gilgal, and continued there until the Gibeonites in distress sent to them for assistance in virtue of the league, as appears from the following chapter; but a party of them, who were sent along with some of the princes, to know the truth whether the Gibeonites were their neighbours or not, as had been reported to them:

and came unto their cities on the third day; not on the third day from their setting out on their journey, for it was but one night's march from Gilgal to them, Jos 10:9; but on the third day from the making of the league; it is very probable it was early on the third day they heard of their being their neighbours, upon which a party was sent out at once to know the truth of it, who arrived thither the same day:

now their cities [were] Gibeon and Chephirah, and Beeroth and Kirjathjearim; Gibeon was the metropolis, and the other three were subject to it; the three first fell to the lot of Benjamin, and the last to the tribe of Judah; we shall meet with them again in the lots of the several tribes, in Jos 15:60.

Joshua 9:18

Ver. 18. And the children of Israel smote them not,.... The inhabitants of the four cities, when they came to them, though they found it to be a true report that was brought them of their being neighbours, and that they were imposed upon by them:

because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel; by the Word of the Lord God of Israel, as the Targum, and therefore they restrained the people from smiting and plundering them; for it was not the oath of the princes the people so much regarded, or had such an influence on them as to abstain from seizing on them, but the princes, by reason of their oath, would not suffer them to touch them:

and all the congregation murmured against the princes; not only for taking such an oath, but chiefly because they restrained them from smiting the Gibeonites, and taking their substance for a prey; their eager desire of revenge, and of seizing their goods, and inhabiting their cities, raised a murmur in them against the princes. This is to be understood not of the whole body of the people at Gilgal, but of all that party that was sent to Gibeon, and of the princes that went with them.

Joshua 9:19

Ver. 19. But all the princes said to all the congregation,.... That is, all the princes that went to Gibeon addressed all the Israelites that were there:

we have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel; by the Word of the Lord God, as the Targum; an oath is a solemn sacred thing, and not to be broken, and a good man will make conscience of it, and keep it, though he has sworn to his own hurt: and

now therefore we may not touch them; neither take away their lives nor their substance.

Joshua 9:20

Ver. 20. This we will do to them,.... Either this favour we will show them, preserving their lives, next mentioned, or this punishment we will inflict on them, making them hewers of wood, and drawers of water; which though not mentioned directly, was what was upon their minds, and in their design to propose, only they were extremely desirous of sparing their lives, which they repeat:

we will even let them live; this by all means must be done, their lives must not be taken away as the rest of the Canaanites:

lest wrath come upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them; that is, lest the wrath of God come upon us princes, and upon the whole community, for perjury, a breach of the third command, Ex 20:7, a sin highly displeasing to God; since an oath is made not only in his presence, and before him as a witness, who is appealed unto, but in his name, and is often severely threatened, and sorely punished; and as even the breach of this oath was several hundreds of years after, in the times of David, 2Sa 21:1. The Vulgate Latin version therefore reads the words, "lest the wrath of the Lord come upon us": but Abarbinel observes, that it may be understood of the wrath of Israel; for the words may be rendered, "and there shall not be wrath upon us, because of the oath": there need be none, there is no occasion for it, since this was agreed upon on all hands, that the Gibeonites should be let to live; and since it was an act of kindness and goodness, and especially they would have no reason to be angry and wrathful with them, when they heard them out, what they had further to propose to them, to make them their servants, though they spared their lives.

Joshua 9:21

Ver. 21. And the princes said to them, let them live,.... They were very pressing upon them, and importunate with them, to save their lives, because of the oath they had taken:

(but let them be hewers of wood, and drawers of water, unto all the congregation): which was a very low and mean employment, De 29:11; as well as wearisome; and this being a yoke of servitude on the Gibeonites, and a punishment of them for their fraud, and of service, profit, and advantage to the people of Israel, the princess proposed it in hopes of pacifying them, and that they would yield to spare the lives of the Gibeonites; what they proposed was, not that they should hew wood and draw water for all the Israelites for their private use, but what was necessary for the service of the sanctuary, which the congregation was obliged to furnish them with; and now these men should do that work for them, which before was incumbent on them; for Joshua afterwards imposed this upon them, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of God, **Jos 9:23**; though Kimchi thinks that while the people of Israel were in camp, and before the land was divided, they were hewers of wood and drawers of water to the congregation; but after the land was divided, and they were settled in their cities and inheritances, then they only hewed wood and drew water for the sanctuary at Gilgal, Shiloh, Nob, Gibeon, and the temple; the Jewish writers say {s}, the Nethinim and the Gibeonites were the same, who became proselytes in the times of Joshua, see **1Ch 9:2**;

as the princes promised them; which is to be connected, not with their being hewers of wood and drawers of water, this the princes had said nothing of before, and which is rightly included in a parenthesis, but with their being let to live; this they had promised and sworn to, even all the princes, not only all that were now at Gibeon, and were persuading the people to let the Gibeonites live, but all the princes, even those that were not present, but in the camp at Gilgal.

{s} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 4. sect. 1.

Joshua 9:22

Ver. 22. And Joshua called for them,.... The Gibeonites, who came as ambassadors for their people, who were detained at Gilgal until the children of Israel returned from Gibeon; and upon their return, and having made their report to Joshua that they found it to be true that they were near neighbours, Joshua ordered them to be brought before him:

and he spake unto them, saying, wherefore have ye beguiled us? what is your reason and motive for so doing? what has induced you to act such a deceitful part, to tell such lies and falsehoods, and impose upon us after this manner?

saying, we [are] very far from you, when ye dwell among us: pretending to come from a very far country, when they were inhabitants of the land Israel were come to possess.

Joshua 9:23

Ver. 23. Now therefore ye [are] cursed,.... Appear to be the posterity of cursed Canaan, and, notwithstanding the artifice used, should not be exempted from the curse denounced on Canaan: "a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren", **Ge 9:25**; as these Gibeonites were; they became the servants of the Levites, who were servants to the priests; and they seemed to be spared in Providence, that that part of the curse on Canaan might be fulfilled: "and Canaan shall be his servant"; the servant of Shem, from whom the Israelites sprang, **Ge 9:25**; though the curse was turned into a blessing to the Gibeonites, since though their post and office was mean, yet they had a place in the sanctuary of the Lord, and opportunity of learning the law of God, and understanding the true religion, worship, and knowledge of God, and were an emblem and pledge of the reception of the Gentiles into the church of God:

and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen; which the oath taken did not oblige Joshua, and the princes, to exempt them from, only to let them live, **Jos 9:15**;

and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God; which explains what is meant by the "congregation", and who might purposely choose that phrase, to make the people more easy; but their work, as assigned them by Joshua, was not to hew wood and draw water for every one's private use, only for the service of the sanctuary, which in some sense was the service of the congregation; and a great deal of work there was to be done of this kind, much wood to hew for keeping the fire of the altar continually burning, and for boiling the flesh of the peace offerings, and the like, and much water to draw for various uses, for the washing of the priests and the sacrifices, and various other things.

Joshua 9:24

Ver. 24. And they answered Joshua, and said, because it was certainly told thy servants,.... Or "it was told", told {t}; not only certainly, told, but frequently told them, they had often heard of it by one means or another:

how that the Lord thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land; all the land of Canaan, no part excepted; they had heard much of the Lord God of Israel, and of Moses, what character he bore, and of the commands of the Lord to him; they seem to have knowledge of God, and faith in him as to his promises and threatenings, believing they would be fulfilled:

and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; as the gift of the land of Canaan to Israel was often spoken of by the Lord to Moses, and frequently mentioned by him; so there were instructions given him from the Lord, and which lie delivered to Israel, utterly to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan, so, that these people had accurate intelligence and information of this matter; see **De 7:1**:

therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing; they answer to Joshua's question, "wherefore have ye beguiled us?" **Jos 9:22**, that it was fear of losing their lives, than which nothing is dearer to a man, and the principle of self-preservation that put them upon framing and using this device.

{t} dgh dgh "indicando indicatum est", Pagninus, Montanus.

Joshua 9:25

Ver. 25. And now, behold, we [are] in thine hand,.... In thy power, and at thy disposal, and are ready to submit to whatsoever may be enjoined us:

as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do; do what is consistent with the laws of kindness, and with the rules of justice, and particularly with the league made, and oath taken; all which they left with him to consider of, and to do as in his wisdom and goodness he should see fit.

Joshua 9:26

Ver. 26. And so did he unto them,.... What was good and right, he showed them favour, and did them justice:

and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not; who were so incensed against them for imposing on them in the manner they did, that they were ready many of them to draw their swords and slay them; and would have done it, had it not been for the interposition of Joshua, and the orders he gave to the contrary.

Joshua 9:27

Ver. 27. And Joshua made them that day,.... Constituted and appointed them, ordered and settled them, in the post and office after mentioned; or "gave" them {u}; hence some think they had the name Nethinim, persons given to the Levites for the service of the sanctuary: namely, to be

hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord; some think they were employed both for the service of the congregation, when they wanted wood and water, and for the altar, and what belonged to it, that needed both. Abarbinel supposes that they served the congregation while they were engaged in war, and subduing the land, but after the division of the land they only served the sanctuary; See Gill on "Jos 9:21";

even unto this day in the place which he should choose; to have the tabernacle pitched, and the altar set up therein, as it was in various places, before the temple built by Solomon at Jerusalem, which was the place the Lord chose; and this shows that the writer of this book lived before the building of the temple, or otherwise it, is highly probable he would have expressly mentioned it; whereas he uses only the phrase that Moses frequently expressed it by in his time; see
De 12:5.

{u} Mntyw "deditque eos", Montanus. Vatablus, Drusius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 10

This chapter treats of the combination of five kings against the Gibeonites, Jos 10:1; and of the application of the Gibeonites to Joshua, for assistance, in virtue of the league between them, which was granted, Jos 10:6; of the slaughter of the army by the kings of Israel, and chiefly by hailstones from heaven, Jos 10:10; and of the standing still of the sun, and of the moon, while vengeance was taken on them, Jos 10:12; and of the five kings being hid in a cave, and of the usage of them when taken, Jos 10:15; and of the taking of Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir, Jos 10:28; which finished the conquest of the southern part of the land, Jos 10:40.

Ver. 1. Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem,.... So called, perhaps by anticipation, Jerusalem, since it seems to have had this name given it by the Israelites, when they had got possession of it: and Jerusalem signifies "the possession of Salem" {w}, and in memory of this its ancient name, the Jews say {x}, they do not put "jod" in Jerusalem between "lamed" and "mem"; though some make the signification of it, "they shall see peace" {y}; and others, nearer to its old name, and with respect to it, "fear Salem", O ye enemies. Now the king of this place

had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; which, being nearer to him than Jericho, the more alarmed him:

as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; burnt the one, and slew the other; and this terrified him, lest he and his city should undergo the same fate:

and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them; which as it weakened the interest of the kings of Canaan, might set an example to other places to do the like. Abarbinel suggests, that the Gibeonites making peace with Israel secretly, without the knowledge of their king, as he supposes, made Adonizedek fearful, lest his subjects should do the like; the Jewish chronologers say {z}, that these three acts respecting Jericho, Ai, and Gibeon, were all finished within three months.

{w} Reland, p. 833. {x} Gloss. in T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 16. 1. {y} Vid. Stockium, p. 480. {z} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31.

Joshua 10:2

Ver. 2. That they feared greatly,.... The king of Jerusalem and his people, lest they should fall into the hands of the Israelites, and be used as Jericho and Ai, and the kings and inhabitants of them were, and that they would be the next that should fall a sacrifice to them; for Gibeon was fifty furlongs from Jerusalem, as Josephus says {a}; and in another place he says {b} but forty, which were but five miles; and if fifty, but little more than six miles; according to Bunting {c}, it was but four miles: and what added to their terror was,

because Gibeon [was] a great city; being a metropolitan city, and having others subject to it; therefore the surrender of that to the Israelites might intimidate other cities, and lead them by example to do the like, and so of bad consequence:

as one of the royal cities; the Vulgate Latin version omits the note of similitude, and reads, "and one of the royal cities"; and sometimes "caph" or "as" is not a note of likeness, but of reality; yet as we nowhere read of a king of Gibeon, the sense may be, that though it was not a royal seat, it was equal to those that were, and like one, being a metropolitan city: and

because it [was] greater than Ai: had more inhabitants in it, and perhaps better fortified:

and all the men thereof [were] mighty; men of strength, courage, and valour, warlike men, and therefore for such a city to yield so easily, and in such a base, mean, and cowardly way, was setting a very bad example.

{a} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 19. sect. 1. {b} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 11. sect. 7. {c} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 98.

Joshua 10:3

Ver. 3. Wherefore Adonizedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron,.... Which, according to Jerom {d} was twenty two miles from Jerusalem; it was an ancient city built seven years before Zoan in Egypt; See Gill on "Ge 13:18" and
See Gill on "Nu 13:22":

and unto Piram king of Jarmuth; a city which fell to the lot of Judah, as did Hebron, Jos 15:35; according to Jerom {e}, it was four miles distant from Eleutheropolis; according to Procopius {f} fourteen, about the village Eshtaol, near to which Samson was buried, Jud 16:31; but Jerom {g} speaks of a city called Jermus, in the tribe of Judah, which seems to be the same with this; and which he says in his day was a village, that went by the name of Jermucha, ten miles from Eleutheropolis, as you go to Aelia or Jerusalem; and as Eleutheropolis lay twenty miles from Jerusalem, this place must be ten miles from it, lying between them both:

and unto Japhia king of Lachish; which the above writer says {h} was a city in the tribe of Judah, and in his time a village, seven miles from Eleutheropolis, as you go to Daroma, or the south; and, according to Bunting {i}, it lay between Eleutheropolis and Hebron, and was twenty miles from Jerusalem towards the southwest:

and unto Debir king of Eglon; which the Septuagint version calls Odollam or Adullam; and Jerom, following this version, makes Eglon the same with Adullam, when it is certain they were different places, and had distinct kings over them, Jos 12:12; and which he says {k} in his time was a very large village, twelve miles from Eleutheropolis to the east; and, according to Bunting {l} it was twelve miles from Jerusalem southward. To these four kings the king of Jerusalem sent:

saying; as follows.

{d} De loc. Heb. fol. 87. E. {e} lb. fol. 92. H. {f} Apud Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. l. 2. p. 505. {g} Ut supra, (De loc. Heb. fol. 92.) I. {h} Ib. M. {i} Travels, p. 99. {k} De loc. Heb. fol. 91. A. {l} Travels, p. 92.

Joshua 10:4

Ver. 4. Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon,.... For which he thought himself not a match, not only because it was a great city, and full of mighty men, and had other cities subject to it, but because he might reasonably judge that Joshua would come to their assistance if possible, being in league with him; he sends to these kings in an authoritative manner, as if they were in some respects subject to him; and he proposes Jerusalem as the place of their rendezvous, and which it seems lay higher than their cities, though they were in the mountainous part of the country:

for it hath made peace with Joshua, and with the children of Israel; their avowed enemies, and so had separated themselves from their countrymen, and from their common interest; and therefore it was thought proper to make an example of them, that others might fear to do the same.

Joshua 10:5

Ver. 5. Therefore the five kings of the Amorites,.... For though they were chiefly Hittites that dwelt in Hebron, and Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; yet as the Amorites were the most powerful people in the land, and had dispersed themselves in the several parts of it, and seem to have the greatest authority in it, they were all called Amorites, and perhaps the kings of those cities were of them, and set over them by them; so we find that the Gibeonites, who were Hivites, are said to be of the remnant of the Amorite, 2Sa 21:2;

the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they, and all their hosts; that is, to Jerusalem, the place of their rendezvous, and from thence they marched:

and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it: by besieging it, and attacking it in some of its forts.

Joshua 10:6

Ver. 6. And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal,.... Which some think they did when besieged, and not before, which showed their faith in the power of God, whom they now professed; but it is not likely that they should defer sending for help so long, since it is reasonable to suppose they might have heard of the design of the five kings against them; or that they should be able to send out messengers when surrounded on all sides; it may be better therefore to render the words, "had sent" {m}, which they did as soon as they heard of the preparations made by the five kings to war with them, and of their rendezvous at Jerusalem, and especially as soon as they had information of their march towards them:

saying, slack not thine hands from thy servants; they entreat that he would not neglect them, be indifferent to them, and delay to assist them, since they were his subjects; and were entitled to his protection:

come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us; they did not doubt, if he made haste and helped them, but they should be saved by him:

for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us. Jerusalem lay among mountains, and Hebron was in the hill country in Judea, see Ps 125:2; and the other cities were doubtless in a like situation.

{m} whlvyw "sed miserant", Piscator; so Pool and Patrick.

Joshua 10:7

Ver. 7. So Joshua ascended from Gilgal,.... Which lay low in the plains of Jericho:

he and all the men of war with him; which must not be understood of the whole camp of Israel, which consisted of five hundred thousand fighting men at least; since such a number was unnecessary for this expedition, and could not have proceeded with that haste the case required; nor would it have been prudent and advisable to have left the unarmed people, old men, women, and children, defenceless; but these were a select company of able men, fit for travel as well as war:

and all the mighty men of valour; or "even all", as many as were picked out for the purpose, being men of strength, activity, and courage.

Joshua 10:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord said unto Joshua,.... Either when upon the march, and while he was proceeding on in his journey to the assistance of the Gibeonites, or rather before he set out; and it is highly probable he consulted the Lord on this occasion, having, it may be, some doubt on his mind, whether he should go to their assistance, since the league between them was obtained by fraud; and the words may be rendered, "and the Lord hath said" {n}: before he set forward with his men of war:

fear them not; the five kings, and their combined army:

for I have delivered them into thine hand; had determined to do it, and which was as certain as if it had been actually done:

there shall not a man of them stand before thee; but be either cut off, or obliged to flee.

{n} rmayw "et dixerat", Masius, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Joshua 10:9

Ver. 9. Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly,.... Which no doubt threw them into consternation and confusion:

[and] went up from Gilgal all night; he chose the night for secrecy and surprise, and that he might be the sooner with the enemy, and to the assistance and relief of Gibeon; and as it was about nine or ten miles from Gilgal to Gibeon, it was easily performed in a night's march;
See Gill on "Jos 9:6".

Joshua 10:10

Ver. 10. And the Lord discomfited them before Israel,.... Disturbed, troubled, and frightened them, at the appearance and presence of the people of Israel; they were thrown into terror and confusion upon their approach, being so sudden and unexpected:

and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon; by the Israelites, who came upon them suddenly:

and chased them along the way that goeth up to Bethhoron; there were two places of this name, the upper and the nether, both built by Sherah, the daughter or granddaughter of Ephraim, **1Ch 7:24**; therefore here so called by anticipation. It was about an hundred furlongs, or twelve miles and a half, according to Josephus {o}, from Jerusalem, which agrees with Eusebius and Jerom; and from Gibeon thither, it was fifty furlongs, or six miles and a quarter; so far the kings were pursued by Joshua and his army, at least unto the ascent of it; for being built on a hill, it had an ascent on one side, and a descent on the other, after mentioned, and both were very narrow passages; of the former it is said in the Talmud {p}, that if two camels go up the ascent to Bethhoron, they both fall; upon which the gloss says, it is a narrow place, and there is no way to turn to the right hand, or the left:

and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah; the former of which is placed by Jerom {q} between Eleutheropolis and Jerusalem, and was a village in his days, and the other eight miles from Eleutheropolis, and both in the tribe of Judah, see Jos 15:35; according to Bunting {r}, they were both eight miles from Jerusalem towards the west.

{o} Antiqu. l. 20. c. 4. sect. 4. {p} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 32. 2. {q} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. A. & 93. C. {r} Travels, &c. p. 98.

Joshua 10:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass, as they fled before Israel, [and] were in the going down to Bethhoron,.... The descent of it on that side towards Azekah, and which was also a very narrow passage, of which Josephus {s} makes mention. The Jews say {t}, that the going down of Bethhoron was the place where the army of Sennacherib fell:

that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died; the Septuagint version calls them hailstones; and so they are called in the next clause; and that such sometimes have fallen as to kill men and cattle, is certain from the plague of hail in Egypt, **Ex 9:19**; and some in very late times {u} have been known to fall, which were from eight, nine, and twelve inches about, some bigger than the eggs of turkeys, and some half a pound weight,
See Gill on "Re 16:21"; but these seem to be proper stones, such as did not melt away as hailstones do; though so called, because they fell from heaven, as they do, but remained, and still remain, according to the notion the Jews have of them; for they say {w} whoever sees these great stones, in the going down to Bethhoron, is bound to bless; and frequent mention is made by historians of showers of stones being rained. Livy {x} speaks of such a shower when King

Tullus conquered the Sabines; and of another {y}, when Scipio succeeded at Carthage; and Pomponius Mela {z} relates, that when Hercules fought with the sons of Neptune, and darts failed him, he obtained of Jupiter to rains shower of stones, which lay spread in great abundance; and some {a} think it refers to this fact in Joshua's time, who is supposed to be the same with the Tyrian Hercules {b}, from hence also called Saxanus {c}; and in memory of this there are stony camps in various places, called by his name {d}:

[they were] more which died with hailstones than [they] whom the children of Israel slew with the sword; but what was the number of each of them is not said; it was doubtless very great, since there was an utter destruction and consumption of them, Jos 10:20.

{s} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 19. sect. 7, 8. {t} Gloss. in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 54. 2. {u} Vid. Louthorp. Abridg. Philosoph. vol. 2. p. 144, 146. {w} T. Bab. Betacot, fol. 54. 1. {x} L. 1. p. 17. {y} L. 30. c. 30. {z} De Orbis Situ, l. 2. c. 5. {a} Vossius de Origin. Idol. c. 1. sect. 16. {b} See Gale's Court of the Gentiles, l. 2. c. 5. {c} Dickins. Delph. Phoenic. c. 4. p. 42. {d} Sanford de Descens. Christi, l. 1. sect. 20. p. 35.

Joshua 10:12

Ver. 12. Then spake Joshua to the Lord,.... In prayer, and entreated as follows, that the sun and moon might stand still, until the victory was complete; though the Jewish writers interpret it of a song; so the Targum, then Joshua praised, or sung praise, as in the Targum on **So 1:1**; and which is approved of by Jarchi and Kimchi:

in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel; the five kings of the Amorites, and their armies,
Jos 10:5;

and he said, in the sight of Israel; in their presence, and in the hearing of great numbers, being under a divine impulse, and having strong faith in the working of the miracle, after related, and that it would be according to his word; he was bold to say what he did, being fully persuaded he should not be disappointed, and made ashamed:

sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon; where they now appeared, and were seen by all Israel, the one as if over

Gibeon, and the other as in the valley of which Masius thinks is the same with the valley of Gibeon, Isa 28:21; and so must be near Gibeon, and the sun and the moon not far from one another, as they might be if it was now new moon, as Kimchi and R. Isaiah; or on the decrease; some say seven days before her change: but Abarbinel is of opinion that it was near the full of the moon, which was just rising in the valley of Ajalon, and the sun near setting as it seemed over Gibeon, and were just opposite one to another; and Joshua fearing he should not have time to pursue his enemies, and make the victory entire, should the sun set, prays that both sun and moon might continue in the position they were; the sun that he might have the benefit of daylight, which was the chief thing desired; the moon being only mentioned, that the heavenly motions might not be confounded, and the order of the orbs disturbed; and he observes, with Jarchi and Kimchi, that Gibeon was in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:25; and Ajalon in the tribe of Dan, Jos 19:42; and it may be observed, that there was also another in the tribe of Zebulun, Jud 12:12; but that seems to be at too great a distance; and still less probable is what some late travellers have observed {e}, that the plain of Sharon near Joppa, is thought by many to be the place where Joshua defeated the five kings, when the sun stood still, &c. the opinion of Masius, first mentioned, seems most likely.

{e} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 290.

Joshua 10:13

Ver. 13. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,.... The sun that came out of his chamber like a bridegroom, and rejoiced as a strong man to run his course, stopped his course at once; and the moon that walks in her brightness proceeded not on, but both stood still, motionless, and continued in this position:

until the people had avenged themselves on their enemies: until the nation and people of Israel had taken vengeance on and destroyed the live kings and their forces: how this is to be reconciled to the Copernican system, or that with this, I shall not inquire. It was a most wonderful and surprising phenomenon, to see both luminaries standing still in the midst of heaven; it is pretended by some historians {f}, that a like miracle was wrought at the battle of Mulberg, won by the Emperor Charles the Fifth, on April 24, 1547. In the Chinese history {g} it is reported, that in the time of their seventh, emperor, Yao, the sun did not set for ten days, and that men were afraid the world would be burnt, and there were great fires at that time; and though the time of the sun's standing still is enlarged beyond the bounds of truth, yet it seems to refer to this fact, and was manifestly about the same time; for this miracle was wrought in the year of the world 2554, which fell in the seventy fifth, or, as some say, the sixty seventh year of that emperor's reign, who reigned ninety years:

[is] not this written in the book of Jasher? about which the Jews are divided; some say it is the book of Genesis, others the book of Deuteronomy, others the book of Judges {h}; the Targum interprets it of the book of the law, and so Jarchi and Kimchi; and Ben Melech interprets it of the book of the law of Moses, where they suppose this miracle was predicted. The former thinks, in the words of Jacob to Joseph, "his seed shall fill the nations", Ge 48:19; which he supposes was fulfilled in Joshua of the tribe of Ephraim, when the whole world was filled with the fame of him on account of this miracle; and the latter in the words, "before all thy people I will do miracles", Ex 34:10; one was in making the face of Moses to shine, the other the standing still of the sun for Joshua, as he interprets it. Bolducius, a commentator on the book of Job {i}, fancies that that book is designed, and that this miracle is foretold in it, particularly in **Job 9:7**; "which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not"; it is most likely that this book of Jasher, in which this miracle was recorded, was a public register, or annals, in which memorable events were written, as they happened in different ages by different persons; and Masius thinks Josephus {k} means this by the archives laid up in the temple, to which he appeals for the truth of this miracle:

so the sun stood still in the midst of heaven; somewhere above the horizon, very probably this was about noon, when the sun was in its meridian. Gussetius {l} thinks about ten or eleven o'clock; it may be supposed that early in the morning Joshua came up with his troops, and engaged the kings, and it might be noon before the battle was over, and the victory obtained, at least before Joshua had proceeded in his pursuit of them, so far as he had done, when the miracle was wrought; and the rather, as it would be the more conspicuous in the several parts of the world; for had it been near sun setting, it could not have been seen in some places, and particularly by the Chinese, as it seems to have been by what has been observed:

and hasted not to go down about a whole day; which was either artificial or natural; if an artificial day, then it stood still but twelve hours; if a natural day, twenty four hours; and accordingly the length of the day must be judged of; if it was at noon when it stood still, and continued so a natural day, or twenty four hours, then as it had gone six hours to noon, and, after it returned to its motion, had six more to go to its setting, this day must be thirty six hours long;

and so the Jews commonly say {m}; but if an artificial day, or twelve hours, then it was but a day of twenty four hours; but if this was, as the Jews say {n}, on the third of Tammuz, which answers to part of June, and was in the summer solstice, on the longest day in the year, when their days consisted of fourteen hours, this will make this long day four hours longer. According to the author of Ecclesiasticus, in the Apocrypha:

"Did not the sun go back by his means? and was not one day as long as two?" (Sirach 46:4)

it was a double day, or, as he expresses it, one day became two, or was as long as two.

(In the late 1960's, someone circulated a story that NASA had discovered there was a missing day in the solar system. Using this passage they accounted for about twenty one missing hours and the account in Isa 38:8 to account for the rest of the missing time. This story is a complete fable and has absolutely no basis in fact. Editor.)

{f} See Bayle's Dictionary, vol. 4. p. 268. {g} Martin. Sinie. Histor. l. 1. p. 25. {h} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 35. 1. {i} Bolduc. in Job. ix. 7. {k} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 17. {l} Comment. Ebr. p. 281. {m} Targum in Cant. i. 1. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 25. 1. Kimchi in loc. So Justin Martyr. Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 361. {n} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31. Kimchi in loc.

Joshua 10:14

Ver. 14. And there was no day like that, before it, or after it,.... Which must be understood as referring not to natural days, or such as are according to the natural course of things, as those in the northern and southern poles, which are much longer, but to miraculous and extraordinary ones: never was there such a day as this, occasioned by the sun standing still; and as for Hezekiah's day, which is objected, when the sun went ten degrees backward on the dial of Ahaz, it is not certain whether those degrees were hours, or half hours, or quarters of an hour; and if they were hours, as the going backwards was at once, in a moment, it could only make an addition of ten hours in the return of them, and so it must make but a day of twenty two hours: besides, the writer of this book only speaks of days that had been in his time, and not of what might be hereafter; add to which, that this respects not so much the length of the day, as the manner in which it became so long; and especially it regards the following circumstance, being at the entreaty of a man, and that delivered in a very authoritative manner:

that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; expressed in prayer, and which prayer was a prayer of faith:

for the Lord fought for Israel: by casting hailstones upon their enemies, and preserving them from them by the stopping the course of the sun, until they had taken full vengeance on them. The day on which this miracle was wrought, is conjectured to be Wednesday the eleventh of April, in the year before Christ 1454 {n}.

{n} Bedford's Chronology, p. 492.

Joshua 10:15

Ver. 15. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal. That is, he thought to have returned, had determined upon it, and prepared for it, but was prevented by hearing that the five kings had hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah; which he ordered to be stopped up till the people had finished the pursuit of their enemies, when he destroyed Makkedah, and which led him on to the conquest of other places before he returned; or else this verse stands not in its proper place, or is superfluous, since the same is expressed Jos 10:43; after all the above mentioned was done; the Septuagint version leaves it out.

Joshua 10:16

Ver. 16. But these five kings fled,.... They were not killed by hailstones, nor slain by the sword of the Israelites, but made their escape, being reserved by the providence of God for a more shameful end:

and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah; not in the city of Makkedah, which as yet was not in the hands of Israel, whereas this cave was, as appears by what follows; but it was in some hill, or mountain, near it; in the border of it, as Kimchi expresses it, and where a hill is shown to this day in which it was, as Drusius says.

Joshua 10:17

Ver. 17. And it was told Joshua,.... Either by some of his own people, or by some of the inhabitants of the land in his interest, who had observed it:

saying, the five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah: this seems to make it appear that they were others, and not Joshua's soldiers, that found them; for had they, no doubt they would have seized them, and brought them before him, or slain them, unless they chose first to know his will concerning them, next expressed.

Joshua 10:18

Ver. 18. And Joshua said, roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave,.... To keep the kings in, that they might not make their escape, until he had convenient time to have them brought before him, and be treated by him as they deserved; and no doubt there were plenty of stones about the hill or mountain, in which this cave was, fit for this purpose:

and set men by it for to keep them; as a guard upon them, to prevent their escape.

Joshua 10:19

Ver. 19. And stay you not, [but] pursue after your enemies,.... That is, do not stay at this cave, but having placed a sufficient guard there, go in pursuit of the enemy, with as much celerity as possible:

and smite the hindmost of them; their rear; or "tail" them {o}, as the word is, cut off the tail of them:

suffer them not to enter their cities; where they would not only be safe themselves for a while, but would be able to hold out against a siege for some time, and give much trouble to conquer them:

for the Lord your God hath delivered them into your hands; this he said to encourage them, and quicken them to the pursuit of them with all eagerness and vehemence. According to the Samaritan Chronicle {p}, the signal or watchword was, "God is strong in battle, God is his name."

{o} Mtba "caudam eorum caedite", Pagninus, Vatablus, Masius, Drusius; "et decaudetis eos", Montanus; "decaudabitis eos", Munster. {p} Apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 509.

Joshua 10:20

Ver. 20. And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel,.... Joshua seems to have pitched his camp at Makkedah, while the rest of his army pursued the fleeing Canaanites, and when he and they were at different places:

had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed: and not to be seen in any large bodies, but scattered here and there:

that the rest [which] remained of them entered into fenced cities; to which they belonged, and which were afterwards taken, as related in the latter part of this chapter, Jos 10:28.

Joshua 10:21

Ver. 21. And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace,.... Sound and well, as not one killed or missing, so not one wounded, as the Vulgate Latin version,

"sound and in full number:"

none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel; as to curse them, reproach them, and speak ill of them, for invading them, and using them in the manner they did, such was the terror that was upon them. It may be supplied, "not a dog moved" his tongue, as in Ex 11:7; as it was with them when they came out of Egypt, so it was when they entered the land of Canaan. It seems to be a proverbial expression, as Ben Gersom observes, signifying that no harm was done to them by word or deed.

Joshua 10:22

Ver. 22. Then said Joshua, open the mouth of the cave,.... That is, roll away the great stones that were laid at the mouth of it:

and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave; to receive their sentence in a public manner, for the encouragement of his troops and the terror of the Canaanites, particularly Makkedah, now besieged by him.

Joshua 10:23

Ver. 23. And they did so,.... Opened the mouth "of" the cave, by rolling away the stones:

and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave; who are next mentioned by name, one by one, according to their dignity, and in the order they were brought unto him:

the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, [and] the king of Eglon; who are particularly named for the greater glory of the conquest, and the triumph over them.

Joshua 10:24

Ver. 24. And it came to pass, when they brought out these kings unto Joshua,.... And set them before him, and he had passed sentence on them:

that he called for all the men of Israel; that is, for the chief men, the principal officers of the army:

and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him; the chiliarchs and centurions, the captains of thousands and hundreds, of the several regiments in the army who went out to battle with him, and under him:

come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings; not in a contemptuous and insulting manner, not through vanity and haughtiness, but for the mortification of the kings; and as a token of their extreme subjection, and as a proper punishment for their crimes of idolatry, tyranny, and cruelty; and by way of terror to others of the kings of Canaan that should fight against them, and as a pledge and confirmation of the subjection of the rest, as well as to fulfil the promises and predictions of God, De 33:29; and which was done not of himself, but by the order, and according to the will of God:

and they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them; as Joshua ordered them, and in obedience to him their general.

Joshua 10:25

Ver. 25. And Joshua said, rest not, nor be dismayed,.... Not meaning at the kings, who perhaps lay bound upon the ground, or however were not in a condition to make any resistance, so that they had nothing to fear from them; but this respects future time, and what other enemies they should meet with; who would be brought into subjection to them as these were, and therefore from hence should take heart:

be strong, and of good courage; and go on valiantly in subduing the rest of their enemies, and not be afraid of them:

for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight; put them into their hands, and give them power to tread on their necks: this shows that what Joshua did, or ordered to be done, was of the Lord.

Joshua 10:26

Ver. 26. And afterwards Joshua smote them and slew them,.... With the sword; either by his own hands, or by others whom he ordered to slay them:

and hanged them on five trees; to their shame and disgrace, and the terror of others:

and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening; by way of contempt of them, and as a spectacle of terror to others, especially to the inhabitants of Makkedah, and their king they were now besieging.

Joshua 10:27

Ver. 27. And it came to pass, at the time of the going down of the sun,.... Which was the time fixed by the law of God for taking down bodies that were hanged, De 21:23;

[that] Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees; not from, any respect to them, but that they might not defile the land, as dead bodies in a ceremonial sense did, De 21:23; and this Joshua was the more careful of, as they were just entered into it, and were taking possession of it:

and they cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid; so that what had been their hiding place now became their grave; and according to the Samaritan Chronicle {q}, the trees also on which they were hanged were cast in with them;

and laid great stones in the cave's mouth: not as a monumental pile, as in the instances of Achan and the king of Ai, **Jos 7:26**; but to prevent their carcasses being dragged out, and eaten by wild beasts, as some think; or that they might not be taken out, and buried in a more honourable manner:

[which remain] until this very day; when Joshua was grown old, the writer of this book.

{q} Apud Hottinger. Smegma. p. 511.

Joshua 10:28

Ver. 28. And that day Joshua took Makkedah,.... Some say it was the day on which the sun stood still; but it seems to mean the day in which the five kings were hanged:

and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof; slew the inhabitants of it and their king, after having entered and taken it:

he utterly destroyed them and all the souls that [were] therein, he let none remain; that is, all human souls or persons; for the cattle were taken for a prey:

and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho; slew him with the sword, along with the inhabitants, but did not hang him up, as he did the king of Ai and the five kings.

Joshua 10:29

Ver. 29. And Joshua passed from Makkedah,.... After he had taken it, and destroyed its inhabitants, and its king:

and all Israel with him; that is, all the men of war he took with him from the camp at Gilgal, from whence he went to the relief of Gibeon:

unto Libnah, and fought against Libnah; a city that fell to the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:42. Jerom {r} says, in his time it was a village, in the region of Eleutheropolis, and was called Libnah; according to Bunting {s} it was but two miles from Makkedah.

{r} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. M. {s} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 96.

Joshua 10:30

Ver. 30. And the Lord delivered it also, and the king thereof, into the hand of Israel,.... At once, no opposition being made that we read of:

and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that [were] therein, he let none remain in it; that is, Israel smote it, or Joshua, and indeed both; and this was according to the orders given them to be observed with respect to all the cities and nations of Canaan; and that because of their abominable sins and wickedness, and to make way and room for the people of Israel, **De 7:1**;

but did unto the king thereof as he did unto the king of Jericho: slew him with the inhabitants.

Joshua 10:31

Ver. 31. And Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, unto Lachish,.... Which, according to Bunting {d}, was eight miles from Libnah, and twenty miles from Jerusalem to the southwest of this city; see Jos 10:5;

and encamped against it, and fought against it; for it seems this city stood out, and would not surrender at once, which obliged Joshua to encamp about it, and besiege it.

{d} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 96.

Joshua 10:32

Ver. 32. And the Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which he took on the second day,.... Either the second day from the slaughter of the kings, or rather the second day of the encampment or siege; so Kimchi: and

smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that [were] therein, according to all that he had done to Libnah; no mention is made of its king, because he was one of the five kings that had been hanged up; so that at the taking of this city there was no king.

Joshua 10:33

Ver. 33. Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish,.... Perhaps the rather induced to it, because it had no king to defend it. In Jerom's {e} time it was a village called Gazera, four miles from Nicopolis, or Emmaus, to the north: if this king came before the city was taken, he was not able to raise the siege; and if he came after, and so too late, he fell into the hands of Joshua:

and Joshua smote him, and his people, until he had left him none remaining; destroyed him and all his army, so that there were none left to return and relate their unhappy case.

{e} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. A.

Joshua 10:34

Ver. 34. And from Lachish Joshua passed unto Eglon,.... Which, according to Bunting {f}, was eight miles from Lachish, and twelve from Jerusalem southward, of which see Jos 10:5;

and all Israel with him, and they encamped against it, and fought against it; it not surrendering at once, but attempted to hold out a siege.

{f} Ut supra. (Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 96.)

Joshua 10:35

Ver. 35. And they took it on that day,.... The same day they encamped about it and besieged it; the besieged finding they were not able to keep it:

and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that [were] therein he utterly destroyed that day; made an utter devastation of all its inhabitants:

according to all that he had done to Lachish; the last city he took; this having no king as that had not, its king being one of the five that had been hanged, Jos 10:26.

Joshua 10:36

Ver. 36. And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto Hebron,.... Which lay in the hill country, and therefore they are said to go up to it from Eglon, which lay lower; and, according to Bunting {g}, it was sixteen miles from it:

and they fought against it; it making some resistance at first, and did not surrender at once, as demanded.

{g} Ibid. (Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 96.)

Joshua 10:37

Ver. 37. And they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof,.... For though the king of Hebron was one of the kings that were taken in the cave of Makkedah, and hanged; yet before Joshua came up to it, they had set up another king over them:

and all the cities thereof; for Hebron was a metropolitan city, and had other cities dependent on it, and subject to it:

and all the souls that [were] therein; both in Hebron, and in the cities subject to it:

he left none remaining; in any of them:

according to all that he had done to Eglon; the last place he came from:

but destroyed it utterly, and all the souls that [were] therein; but it seems that afterwards some that made their escape before the taking of the city, and other Canaanites driven out of their habitations, repeopled it; so that after Joshua's death it was recovered again by the tribe of Judah, **Jud 1:10**; unless there is given in that place a more particular account of the taking of this city, with others at this time; but the former seems most likely.

Joshua 10:38

Ver. 38. And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir,.... A city, according to Kimchi, which he passed by when he went to Hebron, and did not fight against it; but, when he had taken Hebron, returned and took it; and which Bunting {h} says was but a mile from it, and twenty two miles from Jerusalem, towards the south; it is the same with Kirjathsepher and Kirjathsannah, Jos 15:15; the city of a book or books; and the Rabbins say {i}, that with the Persians Debir signifies the same, and had its name from a library which was here kept, or from the archives in which the most memorable things since the flood were recorded; or from the making of paper or parchment, or whatsoever was made use of for writing, and of which volumes of books were made:

and fought against it; it refusing to submit to him upon his summons.

{h} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 96. {i} T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 24. 2.

Joshua 10:39

Ver. 39. And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof,.... For this also was a royal city, and had others dependent on it; and therefore must lie further from Hebron than before suggested; and indeed Burchard {k} says it was five or six miles from it, and another writer {l} says ten miles:

and they smote them with the edge of the sword; the inhabitants of Debir, and the other cities adjacent to it;

and utterly destroyed all the souls that [were] therein, he left none remaining; and yet it seems this city recovered again, and was reinhabited, and after the death of Joshua was taken by Othniel, **Jud 1:11**; unless, as before observed, with respect to Hebron, there is there a more particular account of the taking of it at this time:

as he had done to Hebron, so did he to Debir, and to the king thereof,
as he had done also to Libnah and her king; that is, slew them.

{k} Apud Masium in loc. {l} Fuller's Pisgah Sight of Palestine, B. 2. c. 13. p. 276.

Joshua 10:40

Ver. 40. So Joshua smote all the country of the hills and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings,.... That part of the land of Canaan which lay southward, and consisted of hills and vales; which abounded with springs, and was a well watered country, and agrees with the description Moses gives of it, though he never saw it, **De 8:7**;

he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed; that is, all human creatures; for as for the cattle, they were spared as a prey:

as the Lord God of Israel commanded; this law is extant, De 20:16; and which is here observed to clear the Israelites from the charge of cruelty and inhumanity; since what they did was not of themselves, nor from a private spirit of revenge, nor a greedy desire after the substance of the inhabitants; but in obedience to the command of God, and who ordered this as a righteous punishment of those people for their gross abominations of idolatry, incest, &c. see Le 18:1.

Joshua 10:41

Ver. 41. And Joshua smote them, from Kadeshbarnea,.... Which lay to the south of the land of Canaan, Nu 13:17;

even unto Gaza, which lay to the southwest, and was one of the five principalities of the Philistines; of which city See Gill on "Am 1:7"; and See Gill on "Ac 8:26";

and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon; to which he returned back in his way to his camp at Gilgal, having conquered all the southern part of the country. This country of Goshen is not that in the land of Egypt, as Kimchi rightly remarks. Bishop Cumberland {m} is of opinion, that the Phoenician or Canaanitish pastors, who were driven out of Egypt before their expulsion, inhabited that part of Egypt called Goshen, which the Israelites some years after dwelt in; and when those shepherds were driven out, they came into this part of the land of Canaan, and called it after the name of the country they left in Egypt; and might perhaps the rather choose to give it this name, because of the goodness and fruitfulness of it, in which it resembled the country they had formerly dwelt in.

{m} Remarks on the History of Sanchoniatho, p. 380, 381.

Joshua 10:42

Ver. 42. And all these kings, and their land, did Joshua take at one time,.... Not in one day, but in a very short time, in a few days, as the history clearly shows:

because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel; which is the true reason of such quick dispatch being made, otherwise in all probability much longer time must have been consumed in subduing them. The Targum is,

"because the Lord God of Israel fought by his Word for Israel."

Joshua 10:43

Ver. 43. And Joshua returned,.... After all these kings and their cities had been taken by him, and not before; though the same is said,
Jos 10:15, before the history of those facts;
See Gill on "Jos 10:15":

and all Israel with him to the camp in Gilgal; where the body of the people were left, and where was the tabernacle of the Lord; and no doubt he and Israel with him gave public praise and thanksgiving there for the signal victories they had obtained over the Canaanites.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 11

This chapter relates how that the kings of the northern parts of Canaan combine together against Joshua, Jos 11:1; and that the Lord encouraged him to fight with them, and did deliver them into his hands, who, with all their people, were smitten by him, Jos 11:6; and how that he took their cities, and destroyed the inhabitants of them, and took the spoil of them for a prey, Jos 11:12; and so became master of the whole country, both southern and northern, which is described
Jos 11:16; and the chapter is concluded with an account of his cutting off the Anakim from various parts, which finished the conquest of the whole land, Jos 10:21.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard [these things],.... The taking of Jericho and Ai, the defeat of the five kings, and the conquest of the southern part of the land of Canaan; he was alarmed by them, and sent to all the northern kings to join with him against Israel; and he the rather took this upon him, because as Adonizedek king of Jerusalem was the principal king in the southern part of the land, so was he in the northern part; see Jos 11:10; Hazor fell to the tribe of Naphtali, Jos 19:36. It was situated, as Josephus {n} says, on the lake Samachonitis, the same with the waters of Merom,
Jos 11:5. According to Adrichomius {o}, it was four miles from the castle Theron to the north, six miles from Caesarea Philippi to the southwest, and nine miles from the great sea to the east; and was, in the times of Christ, one of the ten principal cities of the region of Decapolis, in which he preached, **Mt 4:25**; and is now called Antiopia; and in the Arabic version here it is called Caesarea, and, according to Bunting {p}, it lay eighty miles from Jerusalem to the north:

that he sent to Jobab king of Madon; of which place we nowhere else read but in Jos 12:19; though Brocard {q} finds a place near Dan, called Madan by the Turks at this day:

and to the king of Shimron; not Samaria, as many think, for that was built by Omri, king of Israel, and had its name from Shemer, the owner of the hill on which it was built some hundreds of years after this; besides Samaria was in the tribe of Ephraim, this in the tribe of Zebulun, Jos 19:15; and is called Shimronmeron, Jos 12:20; and in the Jerusalem Talmud {r} Simoniah, and here in the Septuagint version Symoson:

and to the king of Achshaph: a city which fell to the lot of the tribe of Asher, Jos 19:25. The Septuagint calls it Aziph, as if it was the same with Achzib, or Ecdippa, now called Zib: but Achshaph and Achzib are manifestly distinguished, Jos 19:25. Jerom says {s}, in his time it was a little village, and went by the name of Chasalus, eight miles from Diocaesarea, at the foot of Mount Tabor. The Arabic version adds a fourth king that Jabin sent to, called "the king of Mausel"; but we read not of any such place in the land of Canaan.

{n} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 1. {o} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 102. {p} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 101. {q} Apud Fuller's Pisgah Sight, B. 2. c. 4. p. 114. {r} Megillah, fol. 70. 1. {s} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. C. D.

Joshua 11:2

Ver. 2. And to the kings that [were] on the north of the mountains,.... Of Libanus and Antilibanus, with others near them; so Josephus {t} says, the kings about Lebanon being Canaanites, fought against them, i.e. the Israelites; for Lebanon lay to the north of the land:

and of the plains south of Cinneroth; or Gennesaret, of the land and lake of which we read in the New Testament, Mt 14:34; and seems to have respect chiefly to the famous plain of Jezreel, or Esdraelon, of which See Gill on "Ho 1:5";

and in the valley; which may more especially design the valley of Jezreel, as it is called in the above place, and distinguish it from other plains; it was two miles broad, and ten long:

and in the borders of Dor, on the west; which fell to the lot of the tribe of Manasseh, Jos 17:11; which Pliny {u} calls Dorum, and mentions it along with the promontory of Carmel; so Josephus says {w}, in Phoenicia, near Mount Carmel, is a city called Dora, four days' journey distant from Judea; that is, that part of the land of Israel particularly so called; some copies read Idumea. According to Jerom {x}, it was nine miles from Caesarea of Palestine, as you go to Tyre; and in his time a desert. It was a haven in the Mediterranean sea, and lies three leagues from the castle of the "pilgrims" near Mount Carmel; and, as a traveller says, is now so decayed, that there is nothing more extant than a large and high tower, which the inhabitants still call Dorteite {y}.

{t} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 18. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c 19. {w} Contr. Apion. l. 2. c. 9. {x} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. I. {y} Rauwolff's Travels, par. 3. c. 1. p. 211. Ed. Ray.

Joshua 11:3

Ver. 3. [And to] the Canaanites on the east and on the west,.... That is, that particular nation of the seven so called, part of which dwelt in the eastern part of the land, by the dead sea, and by the coast of Jordan, Nu 13:29; and others dwelt on the coast of the Mediterranean sea, which was to the west of the land:

and [to] the Amorite, and [to] the Hittite, and [to] the Perizzite: which were scattered about in several parts of the country:

and the Jebusite in the mountains; in the mountainous part of Judea, in the mountains about Jerusalem, and which they still inhabited, and did to the times of David:

and [to] the Hivite under Hermon, in the land of Mizpeh, so described to distinguish them from the Gibeonites, who were also Hivites. Mizpeh is the place, as Kimchi thinks, where the people of Israel are often said to meet together; which he supposes they did, on account of the great salvation wrought here in Joshua's time. Hermon was a mountain that adjoined to Lebanon, where it is certain some of the Hivites dwelt, **Jud 3:3**.

Joshua 11:4

Ver. 4. And they went out,.... The several kings and people sent to; these went out from the places they inhabited:

they and all their hosts with them; the kings of those several places, with their armies:

much people, even as the sand that [is] upon the seashore in multitude; a proverbial expression, to denote an exceeding great number:

with horses and chariots very many; being supplied with horses from Egypt, and their chariots were chariots of iron; see **Jud 4:3**; Josephus {z} gives us the number of this great army, and says it consisted of three hundred thousand footmen, ten thousand horse, and thirty thousand chariots; some copies read only twenty thousand; and these chariots were armed with iron hooks or scythes, to cut down men as they drove along, and so were very terrible.

{z} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 18.

Joshua 11:5

Ver. 5. And when all those kings were met together,.... At some certain place, which Jabin had appointed:

they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom: Josephus {a} says it was at Berotha; perhaps it should be Merotha, a city of upper Galilee, not far from Cedesa, the same he elsewhere calls {b} Meroth, These waters are the same with the lake Samachonitis, on which Hazor was situated; so that it was near Jabin where the rendezvous was. This lake is thought {c} to have its name from the Arabic word "Samacha", which signifies high, as Merom does in Hebrew. It was, as Josephus says {d} thirty furlongs broad, and sixty long, and its waters clayish. Jerom says {e}, in his time there was here a village called Merrus, twelve miles from the city Sebaste by Dothaim: here the kings and their armies met

to fight against Israel; so that they were the aggressors, which made the war still more lawful.

{a} Ibid. (Antiq. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 8.) {b} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 20. sect. 6. {c} Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 1. p. 262. {d} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 1. sect. 1. & l. 3. c. 9. sect. 7. {e} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. D.

Joshua 11:6

Ver. 6. And the Lord said unto Joshua, be not afraid because of them,.... Of their number, of their horsemen, and of their scythed chariots; which might at first hearing occasion some fear and dread. And according to Josephus {f}, the multitude of them terrified both Joshua and the Israelites; and therefore the Lord appeared and spoke to him for his encouragement: though what was said was for the sake of the Israelites, and to animate them who might be disheartened, rather than for the sake of Joshua, who was of a bold and courageous spirit. Whether this was said to him at Gilgal, and out of the tabernacle there, quickly after the tidings of the combination of the kings were brought to him, or whether when upon his march towards them, is uncertain:

for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up slain before Israel; as many were, and others wounded and put to flight, as the word signifies, so as to be as good as dead. If Gilgal was twenty two miles from the waters of Merom, as Bunting says {g}, and supposing this to be said to him before he set out, he must travel all night to reach thither the next day; and if it was sixty miles, as some say, this must be said to him when on his march, and within a day's march of the enemy; for Josephus says {h} it was on the fifth day that he came up with them, and fell upon them:

thou shalt hough their horses; cut their nerves under their hams, or hamstring them, so that they might be useless hereafter; for the kings of Israel were not to multiply horses; and Joshua, as their chief ruler, was to have no advantage of them by their falling into his hands:

and burn their chariots with fire; that so they might not be used by the Israelites afterwards, who might be tempted to put their trust and confidence in them, as many did.

{f} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 18. {g} Travels, p. 96. {h} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 18.)

Joshua 11:7

Ver. 7. So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them,.... Being encouraged by the Lord, they set out with Joshua at the head of them, to fight the kings and their forces. It is highly probable that these were not the whole body of armed men in the camp of Israel, but a select company Joshua took of them, and who would be able to make quicker marches on this expedition:

by the waters of Merom suddenly; the Targum is,

"they lay by the waters of Merom;"

as they were thoughtless and careless, and not on their guard, Joshua and his forces came to them suddenly, unawares, and they not provided for them:

and they fell upon them; at once, which threw them into disorder and confusion.

Joshua 11:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel,.... The whole host, who either were killed or wounded, or put to flight: it was of the Lord that Israel was directed to make so quick a march, and come upon them so suddenly, and that they were off their guard, and unprovided for them, and so fell into their hands:

who smote them; with the edge of the sword killed and wounded great numbers; and the rest fleeing, they

chased them unto great Zidon; not that there was another Zidon called the less, as Kimchi and Ben Melech thought there seemed to be, and which also Jerom {i} suggests; but this was so called because of its greatness, the large extent of it, and the abundance of wealth and riches in it: Curtius says {k}, it was renowned for its antiquity and the fame of its buildings; and Mela says {l}, that before it was conquered by the Persians, it was the greatest of the maritime cities, though now greatly reduced: Mr Maundrell {m} says of it,

"Sidon is stocked well enough with inhabitants but is very much shrunk from its ancient extent, and more from its splendour, as appears from a great many beautiful pillars that lie scattered up and down the gardens without the present walls:"

it lay, according to Strabo, not more than two hundred furlongs from Tyre {n}, or twenty five miles: it was more ancient than that, which is called the daughter of it: Homer speaks much of Sidon, as the same writer observes, but not a word of Tyre: Josephus {o} thinks it had its name from Sidon, the firstborn of Canaan, and that he built it,
Ge 10:15; but Justin says {p} it had its name from the plenty of fishes there: and Tzaid in the Chaldee and Syriac languages signifies fishing and a fisherman: hence Bethsaida, a city mentioned in the New Testament, Mt 11:21, had its name; and Sidon is at this day called Said, and is now in the hands of the Turks: and though it was a part of the land of Canaan, and belonged to the tribe of Asher, never was conquered and possessed by them, but remained an Heathen city to the time of Christ:

and unto Misrephothmaim, or "boilings of water", it seems as if it was a place of hot baths, but the Targum renders it "pits of water", which Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech say, were pits into which the salt waters of the sea were drawn, and where they were heated by the sun, and made salt of; and so it is thought this was a place of salt pits, where salt was boiled, either by the heat of the sun or by fire {q}: Junius and Tremellius render the word by "glass furnaces", furnaces in which glass was made; and it is certain, that at Sidon, and near it, within the borders of which this place was, Jos 13:6; glass was made: Pliny {r} calls Sidon the artificer of glass, or a city where glass was made: and Strabo says {s}, that between Ace and Tyre is a shore which bears glassy sand, but they say it is not melted there, but carried to Sidon to be melted; and some say the Sidonians have a glassy sand fit for melting: Calmet {t} thinks this place is the same with Sarepta, **Lu 4:26**; which had its name from melting: of what construction the furnaces were in this place cannot be said, no doubt great improvement has been since made {u}:

and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward, and they smote them, until they left them none remaining; the same with the valley of Lebanon; now as Sidon lay northwest and this was eastward, it seems that the armies of the Canaanites, in their consternation and confusion, fled some to the west and some to the east, who were pursued by different bodies of the army of Israel, separated for that purpose.

{i} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. B. {k} Hist. l. 4. c. 1. 4. {l} De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 12. {m} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 45. {n} Geograph. l. 16. p. 521. {o} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 2. {p} E Trogo, l. 19. c. 3. {q} Vid. Adrichom. Theatrum Terrae Sanct. sect. p. 2. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19. {s} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 16. p. 521.) {t} Dictionary on this word. {u} Vid. Merrett de Fornac. Vitriar. p. 421, &c.

Joshua 11:9

Ver. 9. And Joshua did unto them as the Lord bade him,.... Namely, in the following instances:

he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire; not consulting his own worldly interest or that of the people of Israel, but the command of God, which he carefully obeyed, and reserved none for himself or them, as David in another case afterwards did; see **2Sa 8:4**.

Joshua 11:10

Ver. 10. And Joshua at that time turned back and took Hazor,.... After he had chased the Canaanites to the places mentioned, he returned to Hazor, near to which Joshua first fell upon them, but through the pursuit he was led on many miles beyond it: Bunting says {w}, it was thirty two miles from Sidon:

and smote the king thereof with the sword; who, very probably, upon the surprise at the waters of Merom, fled to his capital for safety; but that being taken by Joshua, he was slain by him with the sword:

for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms; before mentioned, Jos 11:1; but not of all the land of Canaan: Jerom {x} says, it was the metropolis of all the kingdoms of the Philistines; and though they were not now subject to it, and had kings of their own, yet it appears that the king of this place was in great authority, and regard was paid unto him; and this seems to be the reason why Joshua hasted to take this city, slay the king of it, and burn it with fire, because it had been the principal in this war, and might, if not prevented, raise new troubles; wherefore, as a precaution to that, and to deter the rest, he hastened the conquest and destruction of it.

{w} Travels, p. 96. {x} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. B.

Joshua 11:11

Ver. 11. And they smote all the souls that [were] therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying [them],.... Men, women, and children:

there was not any left to breathe; any human creature; for as for the cattle they were taken for a prey:

and he burnt Hazor with fire; as he did Jericho and Ai, though no other cities he had taken; but it seems that this city, though burnt, was built again and inhabited by Canaanites, who had a king over them of the same name with this in the times of Deborah, **Jud 4:2**.

Joshua 11:12

Ver. 12. And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them did Joshua take,.... As particularly Madon, Shimron, and Achshaph, with others which he marched unto, after he had burnt Hazor; in which he took their kings, whither they had fled, or else he had taken them before in the pursuit:

and smote them with the edge of the sword; both the kings and the inhabitants of those cities:

[and] he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded; so that, in doing what he did, he did not indulge a spirit of revenge, cruelty, and avarice, but had regard purely to the command of Moses, which was of God, **De 7:1**.

Joshua 11:13

Ver. 13. But as for the cities that stood still in their strength,.... Whose walls were not demolished when taken, as Kimchi and Jarchi interpret it, or that "stood upon their heaps" {y}; upon an eminence, being built on hills and mountains:

Israel burned none of them; but reserved them for their own habitations, being well fortified, and having no need of new walls being built to them, or being in a very agreeable situation:

save Hazor only, [that] did Joshua burn; because it was the chief city where the scheme was formed, and the combination against Israel was made, and was the rendezvous of the confederate forces against them: the Jews have a tradition {z}, that God said to Moses, and Moses said to Joshua, that he should burn it, and that only.

{y} Mlt le "super tumulum eorum", Montanus; "quae erant in collibus et in tamulis sitae", V. L. {z} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 81. fol. 71. 1.

Joshua 11:14

Ver. 14. And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves,.... The gold, silver, household goods, corn, wine, oil, or any mercantile goods, together with cattle of every sort, all were taken by them for a prey, for their own use and benefit, which was allowed them:

but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe; for which they had warrant so to do from the Lord, as follows.

Joshua 11:15

Ver. 15. As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua,.... Which was to destroy the people of the land, **De 7:1**;

so did Joshua, he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses; both with respect to the destruction of the people, and of all their images, pictures, altars, groves, and high places; see
Ex 34:11.

Joshua 11:16

Ver. 16. So Joshua took all that land,.... The whole land of Canaan, described as follows, both as to the southern and northern parts of it:

the hills; the hill country of Judea, of which see **Lu 1:39**;

and all the south country; where lived the five kings; and those of other places, the account of the taking of which we have in the preceding chapter, Jos 10:40;

and all the land of Goshen; see Jos 10:41;

and the valley, and the plain; the low places and campaign fields which lay between the hills and mountains; particularly all the plain and campaign country near Eleutheropolis, towards the north and west, Jerom says, in his day, was called "Sephela", or "the vale" {a}:

and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same; by which may be meant Jerusalem, situated on a mountain, and is so called, Eze 17:23; and its valley may be the valley of Hinnom or of Jehoshaphat, as they were after called, which were near it: some think the hill of Samaria or the mountains about that are meant.

{a} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. M.

Joshua 11:17

Ver. 17. [Even] from the mount Halak, that goeth up unto Seir,.... Or the "smooth" and "bald" mountain, which had no trees on it, as some interpret it, observed by Kimchi; it was a mount on the borders of Edom, to which the land of Canaan reached on that side:

even unto Baalgad, in the valley of Lebanon, under Mount Hermon; and so describes the northern part of the land conquered by Joshua:

and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them; both in the southern and northern parts of the land.

Joshua 11:18

Ver. 18. Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. For, though the account of the conquest of them is put together, and lies in a small compass, yet those victories were not obtained at once, or in a few days, as were those of the five kings, and others, related in the preceding chapter, Jos 10:10; but were the work of some years; Josephus {b} says five years, but the common notion of the Jews is, that Joshua was seven years in subduing the land of Canaan {c}; our Bishop Usher {d} thinks it was done in six years; and it may be concluded that it was about six or seven years ere this work was completely finished.

{b} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 19. {c} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31. {d} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 39, 40.

Joshua 11:19

Ver. 19. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel,.... Though, according to the Jews, Joshua, upon his first landing in Canaan, sent letters and messages to all the inhabitants of the land, offering them peace on certain terms; particularly that he sent three messages, or proposed three things to them; that those who had a mind to flee might flee; that those who were desirous of making peace might make it; and they that were for war, let them fight; all were for the last, and so perished {e}:

save the Hivites and the inhabitants of Gibeon; these, some have thought, did not hear of the offers of peace, others think they did, and at first rejected them, but repenting were obliged to take the crafty methods they did to obtain it, of which see **Jos 9:1**;

all [other] they took in battle; refusing to submit to them and make peace with them.

{e} Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 37. 3.

Joshua 11:20

Ver. 20. For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts,.... As he hardened the hearts of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, that his power might be displayed in their destruction:

that they should come against Israel battle; and so fall in it:

that he might destroy them utterly; for their abominable wickedness, idolatry, incest, &c. they had been guilty of:

[and] that they might have no favour; which they would have had, had they made peace as the Gibeonites did; or that they might not pray and make supplication, the Lord not giving them a spirit of supplication, but an hard heart, as Gussetius {f} observes the words may be interpreted, though he seems to prefer the former, sense:

but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses; **De 7:1**.

{f} Comment. Ebr. p. 272.

Joshua 11:21

Ver. 21. And at that time came Joshua,.... After he had made a conquest of the land, or at the time he made it, as before related:

and cut off the Anakims from the mountains; whither, upon the conquest of the land, they had betaken themselves, and lived in dens and caves: these were giants, so called from Anak the father of them; though these are not to be restrained to his posterity, but include all other giants in the land; and the Targum renders the word by "mighty men"; and as some of them dwelt in mountains, others in cities, as follows:

from Hebron; where the children of Anak dwelt when the spies were sent into the land between forty and fifty years before this; and though the inhabitants of Hebron had been before destroyed by Joshua, these Anakims, who very likely then made their escape, returned and took possession of it after Joshua's departure, and while he was engaged in making other conquests; as we find that after this others of the same race again possessed it, and were in the possession of it after the death of Joshua, when they were slain by the tribe of Judah, **Jud 1:10**; from Debir: where others of them also had got after the conquest of it; unless we suppose, as I see no great reason to object to it, that these were cut off both at Hebron and Debir, at the time of the taking of them, of which see Jos 10:36;

from Anab; a city which fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:50. Jerom {g} says, in his time it was a village, near Diospolis or Lydda, about four miles from it to the east, and called Bethoannaba; but he says, that most affirm it to be eight miles from it, and called Bethannaba: Masius conjectures, that it is the same with the city of Nob; for, he says, that travellers in those parts affirm, that the city Nob is called Bethanoba and Bethanopolis:

and from all the mountains of Judah; the hill country of Judea, and the mountains round about Jerusalem:

and from all the mountains of Israel; as those about Samaria, and elsewhere:

Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities; which they had formerly inhabited, or had got into the possession of.

{g} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. C.

Joshua 11:22

Ver. 22. There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel,.... For those that escaped the sword fled elsewhere, particularly to the following places:

only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod there remained; that is, some of the Anakims or giants; these were three of the five principalities of the Philistines, and were never conquered and possessed by Israel, see
Jos 13:3; of the city of Gaza, See Gill on "Am 1:7";
See Gill on "Am 1:8"; and
See Gill on "Zep 2:4"; and of Gath, See Gill on "Am 6:2"; Ashdod is the same with Azotus, See Gill on "Ac 8:40": Mela says {h}, the port of Azotus was a mart for the merchandises of Arabia, and was built on such an eminence, that from the top of it, at the fourth watch, might be seen the rising of the sun at the mountain Azotus; see

"Who discomfited the right wing, and pursued them unto the mount Azotus." (1 Maccabees 9:15)

this city held out a siege of twenty nine years against Psammitticus, king of Egypt, See Gill on "Isa 20:1".

{h} De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 10.

Joshua 11:23

Ver. 23. So Joshua took the whole land,.... Of Canaan, the far greater and better part of it, all before described; all that he went against, he failed not in any of his attempts; no place stood out against him that he besieged or summoned, all yielded to him:

according to all that the Lord said unto Moses: in De 11:23;

and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel, according to their divisions by their tribes; as is after related in this book:

and the land rested from war; there were no combinations of any of the dispersed Canaanites, or insurrections made by them, nor any annoyance given to Israel by the Philistines, who inhabited five principal cities, with what belonged to them; nor did Joshua attempt anything more in a warlike manner: and so it became a land of rest, as the heavenly Canaan will be to the spiritual Israel and church of God, after their militant state is ended, in which they now are; being engaged with many spiritual enemies, the Canaanites that are in the land, but then their warfare will be ended.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 12

This chapter gives a short account of the conquests made by the Israelites, both in the times of Moses and of Joshua, and first of the kingdom of Sihon and Og on the other side Jordan, in the times of Moses, and which he gave to the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and which are particularly described,
Jos 12:1; and then of the kings and the countries on this side Jordan whom Joshua conquered, Jos 12:7; and the names of the thirty one kingdoms are recited, that so it might be exactly known and observed what were afterwards divided among the tribes and possessed by them, Jos 12:9.

Ver. 1. Now these [are] the kings of the land which the children of Israel smote,.... In the days of Moses, as Jarchi remarks, and as it clearly appears from what follows:

and possessed, their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun; on the east of the land of Canaan:

from the river Arnon unto the mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east; Arnon was the border of Moab between them and the Amorites,
Nu 21:13; and from hence to Hermon, a mountain adjoining to Lebanon, lay the country of the two kings of the Amorites after mentioned, **De 3:8**; and the plain on the east were the plains of Moab, which lay to the east of Jordan.

Joshua 12:2

Ver. 2. Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon,.... Which he took from the Moabites, and made his capital city, Nu 21:26;

[and] ruled from Aroer, which [is] upon the bank of the river of Arnon; a city of Moab, which never fell into the hands of Sihon, and therefore he is said to rule from it but not over it:

and from the middle of the river; that is, the river Arnon, which being the boundary of the Moabites and Amorites, the king of the Amorites might be said to rule from the middle of it:

and from half Gilead even unto the river Jabbok, [which is] the border of the children of Ammon; so it is said to be, **De 3:16**; it should be rendered, not "from half Gilead", but "and half Gilead", as it is in the Hebrew text, and so in the Targum; for half Gilead belonged to the kingdom of Sihon, as the other half did to the kingdom of Og, as in
Jos 12:5; and so Jarchi remarks.

Joshua 12:3

Ver. 3. And from the plain,.... Or rather, "and the plain", the plains of Moab, which, before possessed by the Israelites, belonged to the kingdom of Sihon; and the plains of Jordan, which reached

to the sea of Cinneroth on the east; the same with the lake of Gennesaret, and sea of Tiberias, mentioned in the New Testament,
Mt 14:34:

and unto the sea of the plain; where stood the cities of the plain, Sodom, Gomorrah, &c.

[even] the salt sea on the east; the same with the dead sea, into which the plain the above cities stood on was converted:

the way to Bethjeshimoth; which was a place in the plains of Moab,
Nu 33:49;

and from the south under Ashdothpisgah; or the springs of Pisgah, which flowed from the mount of that name, **De 3:17**.

Joshua 12:4

Ver. 4. And the coast of Og king of Bashan,.... The country that he reigned over, who was another king of the Amorites, smitten by Israel in the times of Moses:

[which was] of the remnant of the giants; See Gill on "De 3:11":

that dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei; of which two places see **De 1:4**; it seems as if Og had a palace in each of those cities, and sometimes was at one and sometimes at another, as is usual with kings.

Joshua 12:5

Ver. 5. And reigned in Mount Hermon,.... That is, over all the people that inhabited that mount or dwelt under it, Jos 11:17, and adjacent to it, of which mountain, See Gill on "De 3:8" and
See Gill on "De 3:9";

and in Salcah: which was a city belonging to the kingdom of Og, **De 3:10**;

and in all Bashan; or Batanea, a country famous for pasturage, **Mic 7:14**, and for fat cattle, Eze 39:18, and for oaks, **Isa 2:13**, frequently mentioned in Scripture:

unto the border of the Geshurites, and the Maachathites; which were two nations the Israelites never expelled, Jos 13:13; of which see **De 3:14**;

and half Gilead; which belonged to Og, as the other half did to Sihon, before observed, which was as follows:

the border of Sihon king of Heshbon; here the two kingdoms joined, even in the midst of Gilead, which was divided between them, but now wholly fell into the hands of Israel.

Joshua 12:6

Ver. 6. Them did Moses the servant of the Lord, and the children of Israel, smite,.... That is, the inhabitants of those kingdoms they smote with the edge of the sword, and took possession of them, the history of which see in Nu 21:1;

and Moses the servant of the Lord gave it; the whole dominion of the two kings before mentioned:

[for] a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of

Manasseh: of which grant, and the conditions of it, see
Nu 32:1.

Joshua 12:7

Ver. 7. And these [are] the kings of the country,.... After particularly named, Jos 12:9:

which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west; that is, on the west of Jordan:

from Baalgad, in the valley of Lebanon, even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir; of which see Jos 11:17;

which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel [for] a possession, according to their divisions; as after related in this book.

Joshua 12:8

Ver. 8. In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country,.... Which is a description of the whole land of Canaan; some parts of which were hills and mountains, others vales and champaign fields; others were dry and barren, and others well watered; some part of it lay to the north, as towards Lebanon, and others to the south, towards Seir:

the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; which were the nations that inhabited the land of Canaan before it was taken and possessed by the Israelites.

Joshua 12:9

Ver. 9. The king of Jericho, one,.... Who was first taken, and so named first, **Jos 6:21**;

the king of Ai, which [is] beside Bethel, one; who was next taken and though Bethel was so near Ai, it had a king of its own, after mentioned, see **Jos 7:1**.

Joshua 12:10

Ver. 10. The king of Jerusalem, one,.... Whose name was Adonizedek, and was one of the five kings taken and hanged, Jos 10:1;

the king of Hebron, one; another of the five kings, whose name was Hoham, Jos 10:3.

Joshua 12:11

Ver. 11. The king of Jarmuth, one,.... Whose name was Piram, a third of the five kings before observed, Jos 10:3;

the king of Lachish, one; another of them, whose name was Japhia, Jos 10:3.

Joshua 12:12

Ver. 12. The king of Eglon, one,.... The last of the five kings, and his name was Debir, Jos 10:3;

the king of Gezer, one; who came up to help Lachish, and his name was Horam, Jos 10:33.

Joshua 12:13

Ver. 13. The king of Debir, one,.... The same with Kirjathsepher, of which place, See Gill on "Jos 10:38";

the king of Geder, one: Jerom {h} seems to confound this with the tower of Eder, beyond which Jacob pitched his tent, Ge 35:21; and he speaks of a Gaddera in the tribe of Judah, in his time a village belonging to the country about Aelia or Jerusalem, and of Gahedur in the tribe of Judah, a large village, ten miles from Diospolis or Lydda, as you go to Eleutheropolis: it seems to be the same with Gederah, Jos 15:36, or Gedor, Jos 15:58.

{h} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. A. B.

Joshua 12:14

Ver. 14. The king of Hormah, one,.... Which was formerly called Zephath, **Jud 1:17**; see Jos 15:3;

the king of Arad, one; perhaps the same with Arath, which, Jerom {i} says, is the border of the land of Judah, and is twenty miles distant from Hebron to the south; see Nu 21:1.

{i} De Loc. Heb. fol. 92. L.

Joshua 12:15

Ver. 15. The king of Libnah, one,.... Taken at the same time as the kings of Makkedah, Debir, and of other places were, Jos 10:29;

the king of Adullam, one; a city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:35; Jerom says {k} there was a village in his time, not a small one, called by this name, ten miles to the east of Eleutheropolis: near to this place was a cave where David hid himself when he fled from Saul, 1Sa 22:1;
See Gill on "Mic 1:15".

{k} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. F.

Joshua 12:16

Ver. 16. The king of Makkedah, one,.... In a cave near to which five kings hid themselves, and were taken out and hanged, and the city afterwards was taken by Joshua, Jos 10:16; which fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:41;

the king of Bethel, one; a city near to Ai, about a mile from it, and yet had a king over it: it was taken at the same time that Ai was, **Jos 7:2**; and fell to the lot of Benjamin, Jos 18:22.

Joshua 12:17

Ver. 17. The king of Tappuah, one,.... Which Jerom calls {l} Thaffu; it signifies an apple, and perhaps had its name from plenty of that fruit that grew there: a city of this name fell to the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:34; where also was another place called Bethtappuah, Jos 15:53; and both different from another Tappuah on the border of Manasseh, which belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, Jos 17:8; by some thought to be meant here:

the king of Hepher, one; mention is made of Gittahhepher as on the border of Zebulun, Jos 19:13; the same with Gathhepher, of which place was the Prophet Jonah, 2Ki 14:25; and of the land of Hepher in **1Ki 4:10**; which is said by Jerom to be in the same tribe, and not far from Diocaesarea or Zippore; and we read of a Chepher or Hepher in the Jewish writings {m}, which, according to the account of it there given, could not be far from the same place, at least it must be less than twelve miles from it.

{l} De loc. Heb. fol. 95. C. {m} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 37. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 161. 4.

Joshua 12:18

Ver. 18. The king of Aphek, one,.... There was a place called Aphekah in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:53; and an Aphek that was on the border of the Amorites, Jos 13:4; and another in the tribe of Asher, Jos 19:30; but Adrichomius {n} places this Aphek in the tribe of Issachar, whose king Joshua smote, and takes it to be the same place where the Philistines in the times of Samuel and David brought their armies against Israel, **1Sa 4:1**; and where the king of Syria fought against Israel, 1Ki 20:26; and says that its ruins were now shown in the great plain not far from Gilboa to the east of Mount Carmel, and five miles from Tabor:

the king of Lasharon, one; which, according to the Vulgate Latin version, is the same with Saron, which, in **Ac 9:35**, in some copies is called Assaron; so Adrichomius {o}, who places it in the tribe of Ephraim, and takes it to be the same Sharon Isaiah speaks of, Isa 33:9; and of which Jerom says {p}, to this day there is a country between Tabor and the lake of Tiberias called Saronas, and also that from Caesarea of Palestine to the town of Joppa, all the land that is seen bears that name.

{n} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 35. {o} Ib. p. 30. {p} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. M.

Joshua 12:19

Ver. 19. The king of Madon, one,.... Whose name was Jobab,
Jos 11:1;

the king of Hazor, one; whose name was Jabin, and of him and his city,
See Gill on "Jos 11:1".

Joshua 12:20

Ver. 20. The king of Shimronmeron, one,.... See Jos 11:1: this place fell to the tribe of Zebulun, Jos 19:15;

the king of Achshaph, one; see Jos 11:1; this city fell to the lot of Asher, Jos 19:25.

Joshua 12:21

Ver. 21. The king of Taanach, one,.... It was in the tribe of Manasseh, Jos 17:11; Jerom says {q}, in his time it was a large village, distant from Legion on the plain of Esdraelon three miles:

the king of Megiddo, one; which belonged to the same tribe,
Jos 17:11; near this place were some waters where the Canaanites fought with the Israelites, **Jud 5:19**; and a valley where Josiah was slain, 2Ch 35:22.

{q} De Loc. Heb. fol. 95. D.

Joshua 12:22

Ver. 22. The king of Kedesh, one,.... Which afterwards fell to the tribe of Naphtali, and was one of the cities of refuge, Jos 19:37; it was situated in upper Galilee on Mount Naphtali, four miles from the city of Sephet, and as many from Capernaum, and twenty miles from Tyre {r}:

the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one; a city that came to the lot of the tribe of

Zebulun, Jos 19:11; and was given to the Levites,
Jos 21:34; it was not far from Mount Carmel, from whence it is described.

{r} Adrichom. Theatrum, p. 104.

Joshua 12:23

Ver. 23. The king of Dor, in the coast of Dor, one,.... Of which see
Jos 11:2; it fell to the lot of Manasseh, but never was possessed by them, as were not Taanach and Megiddo, before mentioned, Jos 17:11 **Jud 1:27**;

the king of the nations of Gilgal, one; not the place where Joshua encamped after he had passed Jordan, for that was then no city; the Septuagint version renders it the land of Galilee; and Dr. Lightfoot {s} is of opinion that Galilee is meant, and in the Apocrypha:

"Who went forth by the way that leadeth to Galgala, and pitched their tents before Masaloth, which is in Arbela, and after they had won it, they slew much people." (1 Maccabees 9:2)

Galgala is spoken of as near to Arbel, a city in Galilee: Jerom {t} takes this to be the same with Glagulis, which in his time was a village six miles from Antipatris to the north.

{s} Chorograph. Cent. c. 88. {t} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. B.

Joshua 12:24

Ver. 24. The king of Tirzah, one,.... To what tribe this place fell is nowhere said: Adrichomius {u} places it in the tribe of Manasseh; and so does Bunting {w}, who says of it, that it was a fair and beautiful city, situated on a high and pleasant mountain, in the tribe of Manasseh, twenty four miles from Jerusalem to the north: here Jeroboam had his royal seat, and so his successors unto Omri, 1Ki 14:17; and Dr Lightfoot {x} seems to suspect as if Shechem in Mount Ephraim and Tirzah were the same; for, he says, if Shechem and Tirzah were not one and the same town, it appears that Jeroboam had removed his court, when his son died, from where it was when he first erected his idols; compare 1Ki 12:25, with
1Ki 14:17; and so it may argue that there was some space between: it was, no

doubt, a very pleasant and beautiful city, as not only appears from its name, but from the allusion to it in **So 6:4**;

all the kings thirty and one: it may seem strange that, in so small a country as Canaan was, there should be so many kings in it, since the length of it from Dan to Beersheba was scarce an hundred sixty miles, as Jerom {y} says; who further observes, that he was ashamed to give the breadth of it, lest it should give occasion to Heathens to blaspheme; for, adds he, from Joppa to our little village Bethlehem (where they then were) were forty six miles, to which succeeded only a vast desert: but it may be observed, that in ancient times, in other countries, there were a great many kings, as here in Britain, and in France, Spain, and Germany, as Bishop Patrick has observed from several writers; and Strabo {z} testifies the same of the cities of Phoenicia or Canaan, that they had each of them separate kings, as Joshua here describes them.

{u} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 74. {w} Travels, &c. p. 160. {x} Works, vol. 1. p. 78. {y} Epist. Dardano, tom. 3. p. 22. I. K. {z} Geograph. l. 16. p. 519.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 13:1

INTRODUCTION JOSHUA 13

In this chapter Joshua is informed by the Lord, or put in mind, that part of the land of Canaan remained unconquered, and which it was; and is directed to divide the whole land among the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh, Jos 13:1; and since the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the other half tribe of Manasseh, had received their inheritance on the other side Jordan, Jos 13:8; that is described in general, Jos 13:9; and, then the particular portion of Reuben,
Jos 13:15; and of Gad, Jos 13:24; and of the half tribe of Manasseh, Jos 13:29.

Ver. 1. Now Joshua was old, [and] stricken in years,.... How old he was cannot be said precisely, but it is very probable he was now about an hundred years of age, for he lived to be an hundred ten; and the land of Canaan was seven years in dividing, as the Jews generally say, and it seems as if he did not live long after that:

and the Lord said unto him: either spoke to him out of the tabernacle, or appeared to him in a dream or vision:

thou art old, [and] stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed: that is, very much of the land of Canaan, which God had promised to Abraham, yet remained unconquered by Joshua, and unpossessed by the children of Israel; and the old age of Joshua is observed, to intimate to him that through it, and the infirmities of it, he was unable to go out to war, and to finish this work, which must be left to be done by others hereafter; and that he should with all expedition set about another work he was capable of doing, before he died, which was the division of the land among the tribes of Israel.

Joshua 13:2

Ver. 2. This [is] the land that yet remaineth,.... Unconquered and not enjoyed, namely, what is after described; and this account is given for Joshua's information, that he might know what to divide, and for the people of Israel's sake, that they might know what they had a right to a claim upon; what they should endeavour to possess themselves of, and what the Lord would deliver into their hands, provided they were obedient to his will, for, because they were not, hence many of these places never came into their possession, though divided to them by lot:

all the borders of the Philistines; whose country bordered and lay upon the shores of the Mediterranean sea, in the southwest of the land of Canaan:

and all Geshuri; the principal city belonging to it is said to be in Syria, 2Sa 15:8; and had a king over it in the times of David, **2Sa 3:3**; and seems never to have come into the hands of the Israelites.

Joshua 13:3

Ver. 3. From Sihor, which [is] before Egypt,.... Which Jarchi and Kimchi interpret of the river Nile, and so that river is called, **Jer 2:18**; it seems to have this name from the waters of it being black and turbid; and hence it was called by the Greeks "Melas"; and by the Latins "Melo"; though it is thought, that not properly the river itself is here meant, which did not reach to the borders of Palestine, but a branch of it, a rivulet from it, for so a traveller {a} writes,

"in a journey of about five days from Gaza towards Egypt, the hithermost arm of the Nile is received by the sea, and is commonly called Carabus?"

even unto the borders of Ekron northward: that is, from the southwest of Palestine, near to which was the river Nile, to the northern part of it, where stood the principality of Ekron, one of the five which belonged to the Philistines:

[which] is counted to the Canaanite; which was reckoned as belonging to the posterity of Canaan, though the Philistines got possession of it, who descended from Mizraim; and indeed it was only accounted as belonging to Canaan and his sons; of right, and according to the grant of God, it belonged to the seed of Abraham:

five lords of the Philistines; who had not kings, as other countries and cities in the land of Canaan had, and their cities were called lordships, principalities, and not kingdoms, and are as follow:

the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites,
and the Ekronites: so called from Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron, the cities they were in possession of:

also the Avites; it is not certain whether these were a distinct principality from the other five, or a people dispersed among them; which seems most likely, since those were the original inhabitants, but were driven out or destroyed by the Philistines, though it seems some remained and dwelt among them; see **De 2:23**.

{a} Jodocus a Gistella apud Drusium in loc.

Joshua 13:4

Ver. 4. From the south, all the land of the Canaanites,.... That is, of those Canaanites who were particularly so called, in distinction from those of the other nations or tribes, and who dwelt in several parts of the land, some in the east and others in the west, see
Jos 11:3; and, as it seems here, some in the south: now on the side of the south, as Kimchi interprets it, all the land of the Canaanites was left, that is, remained unconquered and not possessed:

and Mearah that [is] beside the Sidonians; the inhabitants of Sidon, and parts adjacent: what this place was, which belonged to the Sidonians, for so it may better be rendered, is not certain; some take it to be a cave belonging to them: Sandys {b} speaks of a number of caves cut out of the rock in those parts, called the caves of the Sidonians, and afterwards the caves of Tyre; so it is interpreted by the Targum, and in the Syriac and Arabic versions others take it to be the river Magoras, Pliny {c} makes mention of as on the borders of Lebanon near Zidon and Berytus: mention is made of the waters of Mearah along with the waters of Tiberias in Jewish writings {d}; but rather something of more importance than a cave or a river is meant; most likely a tract of land near Sidon, and which belonged to it, and reached

unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites; of this place,
See Gill on "Jos 12:18".

{b} Travels, l. 3. p. 169. Ed. 5. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 20. {d} Misn. Sabbat. c. 22. sect. 5. T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 6. 1.

Joshua 13:5

Ver. 5. And the land of the Giblites,.... This was another country that remained unconquered; the Greeks call it Byblus, and near to which Pliny {e} speaks of a place called Gabale, and is now called Gibyle; it is {f} said to be

"pleasantly situated by the seaside, and at present it contains but a little extent of ground, but yet more than enough for the small number of its inhabitants:"

it was in greater splendour, and its inhabitants of more fame, in the times of Ezekiel, Eze 27:9;

and all Lebanon toward the sunrising; or east of the land; all that inhabited that mountain remained unconquered, though the conquest was carried as far as the borders thereof:

from Baalgad, under Mount Hermon; of which see Jos 11:17;

unto the entering into Hamath: which was the north border of the land; see Nu 34:8.

{e} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 20.) {f} Maundrel's Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 33.

Joshua 13:6

Ver. 6. All the inhabitants of the hill country,.... Not in Judea, but in and about Lebanon, as follows:

from Lebanon unto Misrephothmaim; of which see Jos 11:8;

[and] all the Sidonians; the inhabitants of the ancient city of Sidon, and the villages and lands belonging to it: these remained unconquered, and never were possessed by the Israelites:

them will I drive out from before the children of Israel: which, though it may have a special respect unto the Sidonians, with whom the clause is closely connected, yet may include all the above lands unconquered, out of which, as well as Sidon, the Lord promises to drive the inhabitants, to make way for the children of Israel; that is, on condition of their obedience, for it appears that not only the Sidonians, but many others, even the chief, and most of those mentioned, were never possessed by them:

only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance; that is, the whole land, as Abarbinel rightly remarks, both what was subdued and what was not; that was the business, and all the business, Joshua had now to do; he was not to be employed in making any further conquests, but leave them to others, and apply himself to the division of the land, by lot, to the tribes that as yet had no portion assigned them:

as I have commanded thee; now, at this time.

Joshua 13:7

Ver. 7. Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance,.... Having the command and authority of God for it, he was to set about it at once, with all diligence and application:

unto the nine tribes: of Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, Dan, Ephraim, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali, in which order they are placed, when the Lord gave to Moses the names of the men that should divide the land under Eleazar and Joshua, Nu 34:16;

and the half tribe of Manasseh; that half which had no inheritance on the other side Jordan, and for which a prince of the children of Joseph was appointed to divide, Nu 34:23.

Joshua 13:8

Ver. 8. With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance,.... That is, along with the half tribe of Manasseh, but not with that half of it before mentioned, who was to haven division of a part with the nine tribes, but with the other half of the tribe settled beyond Jordan; with them the tribes of Reuben and Gad had received their portion at their own request, and so were to have no share in the present distribution:

which Moses gave them beyond Jordan eastward; at their desire, Nu 32:1, and upon certain conditions to be performed by them, Nu 32:20;

[even] as Moses the servant of the Lord gave them; this character of Moses, as the "servant of the Lord", seems to be observed to show that he gave the said tribes their inheritance: according to the will of God, and in obedience to it: here end the words of the Lord to Joshua, and next follows an account of the land given to the two tribes and a half described by the writer of this book.

Joshua 13:9

Ver. 9. From Aroer, that [is] on the bank of the river Arnon,.... A city belonging to Moab, from whence the description begins, the river Arnon, on which it was situated, being the border between Moab and the Amorites, Nu 21:13;

and the city that [is] in the midst of the river; or "even the city"; meaning the same city of Aroer, it lying both on the bank of it, and in the middle of it, or it was a double city, as may seem from Isa 17:2; and so differently situated at that river:

and all the plains of Medeba unto Dibon; of these two places, see Nu 21:30; between them lay a plain, which some take to be the plain of Moab; but it rather seems to be a plain that was between these two places, and, according to Jos 13:17, Dibon itself was in a plain.

Joshua 13:10

Ver. 10. And all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon,.... A city he took from the Moabites, and made it his royal seat, Nu 21:26:

unto the border of the children of Ammon; which was the river Jabbok, **De 3:16**.

Joshua 13:11

Ver. 11. And Gilead,.... The land of Gilead, which was part of the kingdom of Og, half of which was given to Reuben, and the other half to Gad:

and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites; of which see **De 3:14**;

and all Mount Hermon; called also Sirion, Shenir, and Sion, **De 3:9**;

and all Bashan unto Salcah; another part of the dominions of Og, **De 3:10**.

Joshua 13:12

Ver. 12. All the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei,.... See Gill on "Jos 12:4";

who remained of the remnant of the giants; was descended from those that remained in Ashtaroth, after the rest were cut off by Chedorlaomer, Ge 14:5; called there the Rephaim, as here:

for these did Moses smite, and cast them out: that is, not only the giants, but the inhabitants of the above kingdom, the greatest part of them; for the Geshurites and the Maachathites are excepted in Jos 13:13.

Joshua 13:13

Ver. 13. Nevertheless, the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites, nor the Maachathites,.... Neither in the times of Moses, nor in the times of Joshua:

but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day: in full possession of their cities unmolested; yea, in later times they became separate and distinct kingdoms; for we read both of the king of Geshur, and of the king of Maachah, **2Sa 3:3**.

Joshua 13:14

Ver. 14. Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance,.... Neither the Lord, nor Moses by his order, nor did he appoint any inheritance for them, either beyond Jordan, or on this side it, for the Lord was to be their inheritance, Nu 18:20;

the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire [are] their inheritance, as he said unto them; De 18:1; and which are put for the whole of what was granted to them for their subsistence, as tithes, firstfruits, &c.

Joshua 13:15

Ver. 15. And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben [inheritance] according to their families. According to the number of them, and sufficient for them.

Joshua 13:16

Ver. 16. And their coast was from Aroer that [is] on the bank of the river Arnon,.... As the country of Sihon is described, Jos 13:9; from whence it appears that it was his country which was given to Reuben, though not all of it:

and the city that [is] in the midst of the river;
See Gill on "Jos 13:9";

and all the plain by Medeba; which reached unto Dibon, Jos 13:9.

Joshua 13:17

Ver. 17. Heshbon, and all her cities that [are] in the plain,.... Which was by Medeba, and reached to Dibon:

Dibon, and Bamothbaal, and Bethbaalmeon; Dibon was rebuilt by Gad, though it belonged to Reuben, and perhaps was inhabited by both, being on the borders of each; and Bamothbaal signifies the high places of Baal; see Nu 22:41; perhaps this is the same with Bamoth in the valley, Nu 21:20; and Bethbaalmeon is the same with Baalmeon in Nu 32:38; where it is highly probable was a temple of Baal, since both "beth" signifies an house, and "meon" an habitation.

Joshua 13:18

Ver. 18. And Jahazah,.... Called Jahaz, Nu 21:23, where the battle was fought between Sihon and Israel:

and Kedemoth; near to which was a wilderness, which took its name from it, from whence Moses sent messengers with words of peace to Sihon, **De 2:26**;

and Mephaath; thought to be the Maipha of Ptolemy {f}; here Jerom says {g}, in his time was a garrison of Roman soldiers, because of the desert that was near. It was a city, with its suburbs, given to the Levites, as were the two preceding, Jos 21:36; Adrichomius {h} takes it to be the same with Malle, which, Josephus says, {i} was called the city of the strangers.

{f} Geograph. l. 6. c. 7. {g} De loc Heb. fol. 93. D. {h} Theatrum Ter. Sanct. p. 179. {i} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 8. sect. 3.

Joshua 13:19

Ver. 19. And Kirjathaim,.... Of which See Gill on "Nu 32:37";

and Sibmah; of which See Gill on "Nu 32:3" and
See Gill on "Nu 32:38";

and Zarethshahar, in the mount of the valley; which was built on one of the mountains that looked over the valley of Moab, as did Nebo, Pisgah, Abarim;

perhaps it is the same place Josephus {k} calls Zara, to which he joins the valley of the Cilicians, and mentions it along with Heshbon, Medeba, and other cities of Moab; according to Adrichomius {l}, it was in the mount of the valley of Bethpeor, which next follows.

{k} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 15. sect. 4. {l} Ut supra, (Theatrum Ter. Sanct.) p. 130.

Joshua 13:20

Ver. 20. And Bethpeor,.... So called from Peor, the idol of the Moabites, and where very likely there had been a temple built to the honour of it; over against this place was a valley, where Israel abode some time, **De 3:29**;

and Ashdodpisgah; of which see **De 3:17**;

and Bethjeshimoth; of which see Nu 33:49.

Joshua 13:21

Ver. 21. And all the cities of the plain,.... In the champaign country, as well as those in the mountainous part:

and all the kingdom of Sihon; or, as Masius renders the words, "which all had been the kingdom of Sihon"; for the whole kingdom of Sihon was not given to Reuben, only a part of it, and the rest to Gad, as in
Jos 13:27;

king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon; as in Jos 13:10;

whom Moses smote with the princes of Midian, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba; not at the same time that Sihon was smitten by him, but afterwards in a war with Midian, Nu 31:8; where their names are given as here; and there they are called kings of Midian, petty kings, and, as it seems by what follows, were subject to Sihon, and therefore are here mentioned:

[which were] dukes of Sihon dwelling in the country; for Midian, as Kimchi supposes, and not without reason, was under the government of Sihon, and these were his nobles, though they dwelt in the land of Midian.

Joshua 13:22

Ver. 22. Balaam also, the son of Beor the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword,.... At the same time that the princes of Midian were slain, and which is also observed, See Gill on "Nu 31:8". Kimchi supposes that he returned to Midian, on hearing that the counsel he gave to them, to ensnare Israel with their daughters, had taken effect, in order to receive his wages, and so received his righteous doom and just reward; it is commonly said by the Jews {m}, that he was slain by Phinehas:

among them that were slain by them; among the above princes, and the common soldiers, of which there was a great slaughter; even all the males of Midian were slain, Nu 31:7.

{m} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 2. Kimchi in loc.

Joshua 13:23

Ver. 23. And the border of the children of Reuben was Jordan, and the border [thereof],.... As their border eastward was Aroer on the river Arnon, so their border westward was the river Jordan:

this [was] the inheritance of the children of Reuben, after their families, the cities and the villages thereof; which Moses gave them on the other side Jordan; and next follow an account of the inheritance of the tribe of Gad in those parts.

Joshua 13:24

Ver. 24. And Moses gave [inheritance] unto the tribe of Gad,.... On the other side Jordan, as he did to Reuben:

[even] unto the children of Gad, according to their families: according to the number and largeness of them, dividing to each their part and portion.

Joshua 13:25

Ver. 25. And their coast was Jazer,.... Their southern coast; of Jazer, see Nu 21:32; where it is called Jaazer, and is mentioned in Isa 16:8; and in Jer 48:32, where it is spoken of as a city of Moab, as it was in the days of those prophets:

and all the cities of Gilead; which lay in those parts, for the whole was not given to this tribe, half of Gilead was given to the half tribe of Manasseh, Jos 13:31;

and half the land of the children of Ammon; not what then belonged to them, but what had been taken from them by the Amorites; and which Israel taking from them, had a right to retain, though they were forbid meddling with any of their land in present possession; see **De 2:19** Jud 11:13;

unto Aroer that [is] before Rabbath; Aroer was a city of Moab, situated on the river Arnon, Jos 13:9; and stood over against Rabbath, a city of the Amorites, since called Philadelphia, the same that Joab took, 2Sa 12:26; though Reland thinks {n}, that according to the situation of these cities another Aroer must be here meant, and which belonged to the Amorites.

{n} Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 583.

Joshua 13:26

Ver. 26. And from Heshbon unto Ramathmizpeh, and Betonim,.... This was their coast from the south to the north, and so describes their eastern border, which reached from Heshbon, given to the tribe of Reuben, Jos 13:7; to these places mentioned; Ramathmizpeh, the same with Ramothgilead, which Jerom {o} says was a village in his time, and lay two miles from Philadelphia or Rabbath before mentioned, to the east; it should be to the west; of Betonim we nowhere else read, it seems to have been near to Ramath:

and from Mahanaim unto the border of Debir; the former of these was the place where the angels met Jacob, and who gave it the name from thence; and in later times a city of this name was built there, and was near the river Jabbok, Ge 32:2; Debir is different from that in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:15; in the Septuagint version here it is called Daibon, perhaps the same with Dibon, the tribe of Gad rebuilt, and is called Dibongad, Nu 32:34; unless Lidbar here should be the same with Lodebar in Gilead, 2Sa 17:27.

{o} De loc. Heb. fol. 99. A.

Joshua 13:27

Ver. 27. And in the valley, Betharam,.... The same with Bethharan,
See Gill on "Nu 32:36":

and Bethnimrah; sometimes called Nimrah, Nu 32:3; near to which were some waters, called the waters of Nimrim, Isa 15:6; It was in Jerom's {p} time a large village; it seems to have its name from leopards, which perhaps had their haunts hereabout:

and Succoth: the place where Jacob pitched his tent after he had passed over Jabbok; it is called in the Jerusalem Talmud {q} Thaarabah:

and Zaphon; which in the same Talmud is Amatho or Amathus, which Jerom says {r} is a village beyond Jordan, twenty one miles from Pella to the south, though he places it in the tribe of Reuben:

the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon; which was not given to the tribe of Reuben, Jos 13:21;

Jordan and [his] border; that is, the cities which were near it, as Kimchi; or that were upon the bank of it, as Jarchi;

[even] unto the edge of the sea of Chinnereth; the same with the lake of Gennesaret, **Lu 5:1**;

on the other side Jordan eastward; the other from that in which the inheritance of Gad lay, which was beyond Jordan, from the land of Canaan.

{p} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. I. {q} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 38. 4. {r} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. E.

Joshua 13:28

Ver. 28. This [is] the inheritance of the children of Gad, after their families,....

As described in Jos 13:27:

the cities and their villages; the cities given them, some of which are mentioned by name, and the villages adjacent and belonging to them were included in them.

Joshua 13:29

Ver. 29. And Moses gave [inheritance] unto the half tribe of Manasseh,.... Whether at their request or of himself, there being land enough for them, and the two tribes of Gad and Reuben, is not certain:

and [this] is [the possession] of the half tribe of Manasseh, by their families; which is after related and described.

Joshua 13:30

Ver. 30. And their coast was from Mahanaim,.... A place in the tribe of Gad, Jos 13:26; which was the boundary of the half tribe that way:

all Bashan; so famous for its oxen, and for pasturage for them, and for its oaks, called by Josephus Batanea:

all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan; which, besides Bashan, took in the kingdom of Argob or Trachonitis, half the land of Gilead, all which was possessed by the half tribe of Manasseh: see **De 3:13**;

and all the towns of, Jair which [are] in Bashan, threescore cities; of Jair, and his relation to Manasseh, and of his taking these cities, and the number of them, see Nu 33:41.

Joshua 13:31

Ver. 31. And half Gilead,.... The other half not given to the Gadites, who had that half of it which Sihon possessed, and the tribe of Manasseh that half of it which Og possessed, see **De 3:12**;

and Ashtaroth, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan; which are particularly mentioned, because royal cities, Jos 13:10; see **De 1:4**;

[were pertaining] unto the children of Machir the son of Manasseh; and who was his only son; however, to his posterity only was this inheritance given, though not to them all:

[even] to one half of the children of Machir, by their families; which seems to confirm it that Manasseh had no other son, since his whole posterity, both the half tribe on the other side, as well as that in the land of Canaan, were denominated from him; though he seems to have had another son, who perhaps died without issue, **1Ch 7:14**.

Joshua 13:32

Ver. 32. These [are the countries] which Moses did distribute for inheritance in the plains of Moab,.... Which is particularly described, that each might know their proper portion:

on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward; of the land of Canaan; of Jordan by Jericho, See Gill on "Nu 22:1".

Joshua 13:33

Ver. 33. But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not [any] inheritance,.... Neither on the other side Jordan, nor did he order them any in Canaan; but expressly declared they were to have no part in the division of it, though they were his own tribe; which shows him to be a disinterested man, that he faithfully observed the orders and instructions the Lord gave him:

the Lord God of Israel [was] their inheritance, as he said unto them; what was given to the Lord out of the sacrifices, and the tithes, and firstfruits, that were theirs; see Nu 18:20.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 14

This chapter proceeds to give an account of the countries divided to the children of Israel in the land of Canaan, Jos 14:1; but previous to that division relates the claim of Caleb to Hebron, through a promise made unto him by Moses forty five years ago, upon his report of the good land, whither he was sent a spy by him, Jos 14:6; and the grant which Joshua made of it to him, with his blessing, Jos 14:13.

Ver. 1. And these [are the countries] which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan,.... Of which an exact account is given in the following chapters, particularly in the Jos 15:1;

which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for an inheritance unto them; namely, ten princes, one of each tribe, who, with Eleazar and Joshua, were appointed of the Lord by name to do this business, even seven years ago, before their entrance into the land of Canaan, Nu 34:17.

Joshua 14:2

Ver. 2. By lot [was] their inheritance,.... Every tribe had its part and portion assigned to it, by the casting of lots; which was done to prevent any future quarrels, animosities and strifes among the tribes, the disposition being of the Lord; and to show the exact agreement between the lot and the divine predictions by Jacob and Moses; and to make it appear that the division of the land was not owing to the private combination of the above men, and their private settlement of it; but to the providence of God, the directors of the lot; their chief business was to see that the lot was executed in a faithful manner, and that every tribe had its allotment according to it. In this Canaan was a type of the heavenly inheritance, which the saints obtain by lot, in and through Christ, the antitypical Joshua, **Eph 1:11**;

as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses, Nu 26:55;

for the nine tribes, and [for] the half tribe; see Jos 13:7; the reason why this number of them is particularly mentioned follows.

Joshua 14:3

Ver. 3. And Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes, and an half tribe,

on the other side Jordan,.... The two tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh, whose inheritance is described in
Jos 13:8:

but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them; this is frequently observed, that it might be taken notice of, to show the disinterestedness of Moses in this affair, Levi being his own tribe; and to recommend the care of the Levites to the other tribes, according to the provision God had made for them.

Joshua 14:4

Ver. 4. For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim,.... For the birthright being forfeited by Reuben, was given to Joseph, who had the double portion, the privilege of the firstborn; by which means the number of the twelve tribes was kept up in the division of the land, though that of Levi had no share in it; and which is also a reason why they had none, that Joseph's two sons might be reckoned two tribes:

therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land; to make way for the sons of Joseph to have the double portion:

save cities to dwell [in]; and that only, for they might not sell them, as other Israelites could theirs:

with their suburbs, for their cattle, and for their substance; the Targum is,

"for all their beasts, and for their cattle;"

that is, for convenient places to put them into, and for pasturage for, them; which Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret of their larger and lesser cattle, their herds and their flocks, their oxen and sheep.

Joshua 14:5

Ver. 5. As the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did,.... Particularly with respect to the division of the land, and making provision for the Levites; this they did by their heads and representatives, the high priest and chief ruler, and the princes of the several tribes:

and they divided the land; met about it, and began to take measures in order to do it; they prepared for it, though as yet it was not actually done, and previous to it was the following incident.

Joshua 14:6

Ver. 6. Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal,.... Whither he was returned after the conquest of the kings and their kingdoms; these were not the whole tribe of Judah, but some of the chief men of it who accompanied Caleb, for the honour of him, as Ben Gersom observes, he being their prince; and to second his petition, and to show their consent unto, and an approbation of such an assignment to him as he desired;

and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, said unto him; whether Caleb or Jephunneh called the Kenezite, and what the reason of the name, are not very material; and of which See Gill on "Nu 32:12"; and as Caleb was personally and singly concerned in the following affair, he alone dressed Joshua, attended with some principal men of his tribe:

thou knowest the thing the Lord said unto Moses the man of God, concerning thee and me, in Kadeshbarnea; the place from whence the spies were sent, and whither they returned to Moses there, of whom Caleb speaks with great respect and veneration, which he knew would be very pleasing and endearing to Joshua, who could not but remember what had been said by him concerning himself and Caleb, though it was now forty five years ago; it being so very striking and memorable, that only two of that generation then present should enter into the land of Canaan; the fulfilment of which, in all its circumstances, they had lived to see.

Joshua 14:7

Ver. 7. Forty years old [was] I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land,.... Not he alone, but eleven more with him, one out of every tribe; his age he mentions, and of which, or near it, it is highly probable the rest of the spies were, to show that he and they were in the prime of their days, both as to bodily strength and intellectual capacity, which were requisite for such service as to spy out the land, of what quality that and its inhabitants were; and Moses he calls the servant of the Lord, because it was by the order and appointment of God, signified to Moses, that this was done; and the place from whence they were sent forth is named, which ascertains what that Kadesh was, where Israel was encamped when the spies were sent, Nu 13:26;

and I brought him word again, as [it was] in mine heart; that is, he gave to Moses upon his return a sincere, honest and faithful representation of the land, and its inhabitants, as it appeared to him.

Joshua 14:8

Ver. 8. Nevertheless, my brethren that went up with me,.... Meaning the rest of the spies, excepting Joshua, that went up with him into the land of Canaan to spy it, which they might be properly said to do, since they went up a hill or mountain, in order to go into it,
Nu 13:17;

made the heart of the people melt; discouraged them, filled them with fears, sunk their spirits, that their hearts flowed, and became as weak as water, having no strength left in them, or hope of possessing the land; being told what stout and gigantic men the inhabitants of it were, and how strongly fortified were their cities:

but I wholly followed the Lord my God; and did not join with them in an ill report of the good land; but having the fear of God before his eyes, walked after that, and delivered in his report faithfully, according to the dictates of his conscience, and the real sentiments of his mind; of this phrase, See Gill on "Nu 14:24".

Joshua 14:9

Ver. 9. And Moses sware on that day, saying,.... Or declared the oath of the Lord, for it was the Lord that sware to what follows; see **De 1:34**;

surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever: not the whole land of Canaan, nor all the parts of it Caleb travelled through, but particularly Hebron; which though not expressly mentioned in the aforesaid oath, yet was understood and known to be the meaning of it, and which Joshua by the following grant owned, and it is elsewhere expressly affirmed, **Jud 1:20**; and it is remarked, that it is not said "they", but "he" came to Hebron, Nu 13:22; that is Caleb, so that it was literally true that his feet had trodden there: now the reason of this oath, and the inheritance assured by it to Caleb, was,

because thou hast wholly followed the Lord thy God; in all his ways, and with full purpose of heart, and particularly had acted the upright and faithful part in the report he made of the good land;
See Gill on "Nu 14:24".

Joshua 14:10

Ver. 10. And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said,.... Had upheld him in life, and preserved him from many dangers in the wilderness; and had continued him not only in life, but in health to that day, according to his promise to him, that he would bring him into the land of Canaan, and that he should see and possess it, Nu 14:24 **De 1:36**;

these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, and while [the children] of Israel wandered in the wilderness; not that the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness forty five years, but it was while they were in the wilderness this word or promise, concerning Caleb, was spoken by the Lord to Moses; and it was in the second year of their coming out of Egypt, after which they wandered in the wilderness thirty eight years, so that they had now been in the land of Canaan seven years; and from hence the Jewish chronologers {s} gather, that the land was seven years in subduing, and which their commentators in general take notice of. Maimonides {t} seems to be displeased with the Arabs for calling the wilderness, through which the Israelites travelled, "the desert of wandering"; but it appears from hence to be a very proper epithet of it; and Kadesh the place where they were first threatened, that they should be wanderers in the wilderness for such a time, had the additional name of Barnea, which signifies the son of a wanderer:

and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old; being forty years of age when sent a spy into the land, Jos 14:7; thirty eight years he was with Israel in the wilderness, and seven years more since they entered into the land, in all eighty five; there is no necessity of understanding it that this was his precise birth day, but that about this time, or that he was now completely of such an age, which was more by fifteen years than the age of man in common at that time, see

Ps 90:10.

{s} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31. {t} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 50. p. 512.

Joshua 14:11

Ver. 11. As yet I [am as] strong this day as [I was] in the day that Moses sent me,.... To spy the land, forty five years ago; suggesting that he was as sound in his mind, understanding, judgment and memory, and as hale, strong, and robust in his body now, as he had been so long ago; which was a wonderful instance of the care of divine Providence over him in upholding him in life, and continuing him in vigour and health at such an age, when the carcasses of so many thousands had pined away and fell in the wilderness:

as my strength [was] then, even so [is] my strength now for war; he had the same strength of body and courage of mind to engage in warlike enterprises as he had so many years ago; and this he the rather mentions, to prevent any objection Joshua might make to the giving of Hebron to him, since being inhabited by giants, it required a large share of strength and courage to attempt the conquest of it: but Caleb had strength

both to go out, and to come in; to do any civil business, to preside over his tribe, or to govern any city, and its appendages, that should be put into his hands.

Joshua 14:12

Ver. 12. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day,.... The mountainous part of the country, the hill country of Judea, in which Hebron, Debir, and other cities were; for it was not one particular city only that Caleb requested, but a large tract of ground;

for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims [were] there, and [that] the cities [were] great and fenced; that the giants, called Anakims, dwelt in the mountainous country, and their cities, Hebron, Debir, and Anab, were very large, and well fortified; this Joshua heard at the time the spies were sent into the land, he being one of them; and this he heard, not from the report of the spies, but from the people of the country, and therefore must know that to conquer these men, and subdue their cities, was an arduous undertaking; but since he had strength and courage, he hoped his request would be granted:

if so be the Lord [will be] with me; which he spake not as doubting of his presence and power to be with him, and assist him, but as placing his confidence therein, and, distrusting his own power and ability, having no dependence or that, but believing that the Lord, or, as the Targum, the Word of the Lord, would be with him for his help:

then, says Caleb,

I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said; that is, to drive the Anakims out of their cities, or out of the mountains, the caves and dens there, to which they betook themselves, since the taking of Hebron, Debir, and Anab, by Joshua, Jos 11:22; and he relied upon the promise of God to enable him to do this, and not upon his natural strength and courage, or the number and prowess of the warlike tribe of Judah, of which he was prince.

Joshua 14:13

Ver. 13. And Joshua blessed him,.... By granting him his request, congratulating him upon it, and praying for and wishing him success in his attempt to drive out the giants, and possess their country:

and gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance; being satisfied of the justness of his suit, of its being the will of God, and the order of Moses, that he should have this for an inheritance, which he had heard himself, had knowledge of, and well remembered: this is to be understood not of the city of Hebron itself, for that was given to the Levites, and was a city of refuge, but the country round about in the fields and villages annexed to it, as appears from Jos 21:12.

Joshua 14:14

Ver. 14. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day,.... The time of the writing of this book:

because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel; as in Jos 14:8; Hebron signifies fellowship or communion; and this in a spiritual sense is very desirable by all the people of God, as Hebron was by Caleb, even communion with God, Father, Son and Spirit, with angels and saints, both now and hereafter; and they are willing to engage with their spiritual enemies in the name and strength of Christ, though ever so potent, may they but enjoy this blessing, and which is more or less granted, to all the hearty, sincere, and faithful followers of Christ; see Joh 14:21.

Joshua 14:15

Ver. 15. And the name of Hebron before [was] Kirjatharba,.... According to Jerom {u}, it had its name of Hebron from a son or grandson of Caleb of that name, **1Ch 2:42**; and if so, then it is here, and in some other places, so called by anticipation: Kirjatharba may be rendered "the city of the four"; and had its name, as some think, from the four couple buried there, or near it, Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah; or from four eminent persons, who formerly dwelt there, Aner, Eshcol, Mamre, and Abraham; or rather from four persons that more lately dwelt there, Anak and his three sons, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai; or Arba is the name of some great man, to whom this city belonged, and so was called the city of Arba, which is the sense of our version, as appears by the following supplement:

[which Arba was] a great man among the Anakims; both in stature and in dignity, and in authority, which some take to be Anak himself, the father of the Anakims; so Jarchi and Kimchi:

and the land had rest from war; as is observed in Jos 11:23; after Joshua had finished his conquest; and here again it is remarked just before the division of the land, as being now a proper time for it.

{u} De loc. Heb. fol. 87. F.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 15

In this chapter are related the boundaries of the lot of the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:1; and the assignment of Hebron to Caleb, from whence he drove out the giants, and of Debir, which was taken by Othniel his brother, to whom, on that account, he gave his daughter in marriage, who made a further request to her

father, which was granted,
Jos 15:13; and then follows an account of the several cities by name, which fell to the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:20.

Ver. 1. This then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families,.... The land of Canaan was divided by lot to the several tribes, and the tribe of Judah had its lot first; of the manner of casting lots, See Gill on "Nu 26:55"; It seems as if the lot was first cast for the tribes of Judah and Joseph, when the former had the southern, and the latter the northern part of the land for their portion, which was done in Gilgal; after this lots were cast in Shiloh for the other seven tribes, who had the land divided among them, which lay between Judah and Joseph, or between the southern and northern parts of the land, see Jos 18:1, &c. and it seems that not only the land was divided to the tribes by lot, but that the portion of land which belonged to each tribe was divided in the same way to the several families and households belonging thereunto; as is here suggested, with respect to the tribe of Judah, whose lot reached

[even] to the border of Edom; or Idumea, which lay to the south of the land of Canaan:

the wilderness of Zin southward [was] the uttermost part of the south coast; the same with Kadesh, and lay upon the borders of Edom; see
Nu 33:36.

Joshua 15:2

Ver. 2. And their south border was from the shore of the salt sea,.... Sometimes called the dead sea, the sea of Sodom, and the lake Asphaltites, which, as Jarchi observes, was southeast of the land of Israel:

from the bay that looketh southward; or the "tongue", as the Hebrew, which the Targum and Kimchi interpret of a rock or promontory, the point that ran out into the sea, looking to the southeast.

Joshua 15:3

Ver. 3. And it went out to the south side of Maalehacrabbim,.... Or the ascent of Akrabbim, as it is called, See Gill on "Nu 34:4":

and passed along to Zin, and ascended upon the south side unto Kadeshbarnea; which perfectly agrees with the southern border of the land, as described in Nu 34:4;

and passed along to Hezron, and went up to Adar; which two places being near to one another, as is very likely, are put together, as if one place, and called Hazaraddar, Nu 34:4; and mention is made of Hezron, which is Hazor, Jos 15:25; but not of Adar:

and fetched a compass to Karkaa; which Jerom {w} calls Acchara, a village in the wilderness; and if the same with Carcaria, it was according to him a day's journey from Petra in Idumea; but that is not likely; see **Jud 8:10**.

{w} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. E. 90. C.

Joshua 15:4

Ver. 4. [From thence] it passed towards Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt,.... In like manner is this coast described,
Nu 34:5; it is called by Jerom {x} Asemona, and said to be a city in the desert, to the south of Judah, dividing Egypt, and the lot of the tribe of Judah, leading to the sea:

and the outgoings of that coast were at the sea; the Mediterranean sea; or to the west, as the Targum; this was the utmost border of the tribe of Judah this way:

this shall be your south coast; of the lot that fell to the tribe of Judah.

{x} De loc. Heb. fol. 87. K.

Joshua 15:5

Ver. 5. And the east border [was] the salt sea, [even] unto the end of Jordan,.... To the place where Jordan fell into it; so that this border was the whole length of the salt sea, which Josephus says {y} was five hundred eighty furlongs; and, according to Pliny {z}, an hundred miles:

and [their] border in the north quarter [was] from the bay of the sea, at the uttermost part of Jordan; this northern border began where the eastern ended, at the bay or creek of the sea, where Jordan fell into it.

{y} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 4. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 16.

Joshua 15:6

Ver. 6. And the border went up to Bethhoglah,.... A place in the tribe of Benjamin, mentioned along with Jericho, and probably near it, Jos 18:21; Jerom {a} speaks of a place called Betagla, in his time, which was three miles from Jericho, and two from Jordan, and perhaps is this same place:

and passed along by the north of Betharabah; another city belonged to Benjamin, Jos 18:22; and lay in a as its name shows; or in a plain, as the Targum:

and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben; by whom, or on whose account, it was placed, either as a sepulchral stone, he being buried there, or in memory of some famous exploit done by him there, he being one of those of the tribe of Reuben, that came with Joshua to assist in the war against the Canaanites; or it was set for a sign of the border, as Kimchi thinks, it being the boundary between Judah and Benjamin, Jos 18:17. Bunting says {b} it is near Bahurim, in the valley just in the king's way, and is of an extraordinary greatness, shining like marble.

{a} De loc. Heb. fol. 87. G. {b} Travels, &c. p. 144.

Joshua 15:7

Ver. 7. And the border went up towards Debir,.... This was neither the Debir in the tribe of Gad, on the other side Jordan, Jos 13:26; nor that in the tribe of Judah near Hebron, Jos 15:15; but a third city of that name, and was not far from Jericho:

from the valley of Achor; where Achan was put to death, and had its name from thence; which, according to Jarchi, lay between the stone of Bohan and Debir:

and so northward, looking towards Gilgal; not the place where Israel were encamped when this lot was made, but it seems to be the same that is called Geliloth, Jos 18:17;

that [is], the going up to Adummim; which, Jerom says {c}, was formerly a little village, now in ruins, in the lot of the tribe of Judah, which place is called to this day Maledomim; and by the Greeks "the ascent of the red ones", because of the blood which was there frequently shed by thieves: it lies on the borders of Judah and Benjamin, as you go from Jerusalem to Jericho, where there is a garrison of soldiers for the help of travellers, and is supposed to be the place where the man fell among thieves in his way from the one to the other, Lu 10:30. It was four miles distant from Jericho to the west, according to Adrichomius {d}, and was a mountain, and part of the mountains of Engaddi:

which [is] on the south side of the river; which some take to be the brook Kidron; but that is not very likely, being too near Jerusalem for this place: it may be rendered "the valley", so Jarchi, either the valley of Achor, before mentioned, or however a valley that ran along by the mount or ascent of Adummim, which lay to the south of it:

and the border passed to the waters of Enshemesh: or the "fountain of the sun"; but of it we have no account what and where it was. It might be so called, because dedicated to the sun by the idolatrous Canaanites, or because of the sun's influence on the waters of it. Our city, Bath, is, by Antoninus {e}, called "aquae solis", the waters of the sun; though there is a fountain in Cyrene, so called, for a reason just the reverse, it being, as Mela {f} and Pliny {g} affirm, hottest the middle of the night, and then grows cooler by little and little; and when it is light is cold, and when the sun is risen is colder still, and at noon exceeding cold; and, according to Vossius {h}, it is the same with the fountain of Jupiter Ammon; and so it appears to be from Herodotus {i}, by whom it is also called the "fountain of the sun", and which he places in Thebes, though Pliny distinguishes them:

and the goings out thereof were at Enrogel; which signifies "the fountain of the fuller"; so the Targum renders it, and probably was a fountain where fullers cleansed their clothes; and was called Rogel, as Jarchi and Kimchi say, because they used to tread them with their feet when they washed them. This was a place near Jerusalem, as appears from **1Ki 1:9**; near to which perhaps was the fuller's monument, at the corner tower of Jerusalem, Josephus {k} speaks of, as there was also a place not far from it called the fuller's field, **Isa 7:3**; according to Bunting {l}, it had its name from travellers washing their feet here.

{c} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. E. F. {d} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 14. {e} Vid. Cambden's Britannia, p. 141. {f} De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 8. {g} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 103. {h} Observat. in Pompon. Mel. ut supra. (De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 8.) {i} Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 181. {k} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2. {l} Travels, p. 148.

Joshua 15:8

Ver. 8. And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom,.... Which belonged to a man of that name formerly; and was near Jerusalem, placed by Jerom {l} to the east of it; but Reland {m} rather thinks it is to the south. It was infamous for the sacrifices of children to Moloch in it, by burning them, or causing them to pass through fire: hence, in allusion to it, hell fire is often in the New Testament called "Geenna", **Mt 5:22**
Lu 12:5; this border from the salt sea, and from Jordan, is all along said to "go up", because from hence to Jerusalem was an ascent, that lying on higher ground:

unto the south side of the Jebusite; of the place the Jebusite inhabited:

the same is Jerusalem; which was formerly called Jebus, from the inhabitants of it; yea, Jebusi, as here, and so may intend not the inhabitants, but the place, see Jos 18:28; and here the Jebusites lived, at least in some part of it, until the time of David, **2Sa 5:6**;

and the border went up to the top of the mountain that [lieth] before the valley of Hinnom westward: which is generally supposed to be the mount Moriah:

which is at the end of the valley of the giants, northward: the valley of Rephaim, as it is called **2Sa 5:18**, and here Mount Moriah, as it was to the west of the valley of Hinnom, it was to the north of the valley of Rephaim; which valley, as Josephus {n} says, was not far from Jerusalem, twenty furlongs from it. Some late travellers {o} tell us it lies in the way from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, and is not above two hours' ride from the former. From this account it appears, as Jarchi remarks, that Jerusalem was not within the line, and was not in the border of Judah, but of Benjamin, which tribe lay to the north of Judah: it seems indeed to have been one part of it in the tribe of Judah, and the other in the tribe of Benjamin; though the Jews frequently say it did not belong to either tribe.

{l} De loc. Heb. fol. 91. B. {m} Palest. lllustrat. tom. 1. p. 253. {n} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 4. sect. 1. & 12. 4. {o} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 370.

Joshua 15:9

Ver. 9. And the border was drawn from the top of the hill,.... Mount Moriah, and went round in a circuit, so Jarchi and Kimchi:

unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah; which lay at the bottom of it; which, according to the Jewish writers, is the same with the fountain of Etam, from whence a stream flowed to the dipping room in the water gate of the temple, where the high priest for the first time dipped himself on the day of atonement {p};

and went out to the cities of Mount Ephron; Jerom {q} speaks of an Ephron in the tribe of Judah, which was a very large village in his time, and went by the name of Ephraea, and was twenty miles from Aelia or Jerusalem to the north; and which Eusebius better places eight miles from it; and Jarchi observes, that the line went to the north side, and the border enlarged to this place; near to this mountain were cities, and it is not improbable that one of them might have its name from it; but whether this, or what mountain is here meant, is uncertain: some have thought of Ephraim, with its towns, mentioned in 2Ch 13:19; which seems to have been in the tribe of Ephraim; though Reland {r} places it in the tribe of Benjamin:

and the border was drawn to Baalah, which [is] Kirjathjearim; called Kirjathbaal, or the city of Baal, Jos 15:60; where it is probable there was a temple of Baal; and when it came into the hands of the Israelites, they changed its name to Kirjathjearim, or the city of the woods, because of the great number of trees which grew about it; for which reason it might have been pitched upon by the Heathens for their idolatrous service; it was one of the cities of the Gibeonites, **Jos 9:17**; and, according to Eusebius and Jerom {s}, it was nine or ten miles from Jerusalem, as you go to Lydda; it is also called Baalah in 1Ch 13:6; and Baale of Judah, **2Sa 6:2**.

{p} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 31. 1. & Gloss. in ib. & T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 54. 2. Kimchi in loc. {q} De loc. Heb. fol. 91. A. {r} Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 765. {s} Apud ib. tom. 1. p. 488.

Joshua 15:10

Ver. 10. And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto Mount Seir,.... Not that in Idumea, so famous for its being the seat of Esau, which lay remote from hence, but a third of that name near Kirjathjearim; and which Adrichomius {t} places on the borders of Azotus and Ashkelon: this compass is fetched from the north to the west:

and passed along unto the side of the mount Jearim, which [is] Chesalon, on the north side; that is, on the north side of the mount, which went by both those names; and which Jerom {u} places on the borders of Aelia or Jerusalem; but it seems to be at a distance from thence, and near to Kirjathjearim, and had its name, as that, from the multitude of trees that grow on it:

and went down to Bethshemesh; there were several cities of this name; but this, according to Jerom {w}, was a Levite's city in the tribe of Benjamin, and in his day was shown as you go from Eleutherepolis to Nicopolis or Emmaus, ten miles to the east; according to Burchard {x}, it was five miles from Kirjathjearim to the south; and Bunting {y} places it four miles from Jerusalem westward, taking it for a city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 21:16;

and passed on to Timnah; which, in Jerom's time, was a large village on the borders of Lydda, as you go to Jerusalem, in the tribe of Judah, or Dan {z}; his placed in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:57; though thought to be afterwards given to Dan; here Judah sheared his sheep,
See Gill on "Ge 38:12".

{t} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 24. {u} De loc. Heb. fol. 90. F. {w} Ib. fol. 89. H. {x} Apud Masium in loc. {y} Travels, p. 124. {z} De loc. Heb. fol. 95. C.

Joshua 15:11

Ver. 11. And the border went out unto the side of Ekron northward,.... Which was one of the principalities of the Philistines; and which, though it fell to the lot of Judah, Jos 15:45, was not possessed by them:

and the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to Mount Baalah; of which places we have no account elsewhere:

and went unto Jabneel; which Masius makes no doubt was one of the Jamnias, and particularly that which was a seaport; which Strabo says {a} was distant from Azotus and Ashkelon about two hundred furlongs, or twenty five miles:

and the goings out of the border were at the sea; the Mediterranean sea; here the northern border ended.

{a} Geograph. l. 16. p. 522.

Joshua 15:12

Ver. 12. And the west border [was] to the great sea, and the coast [thereof],.... The western border of the tribe of Judah went along by the Mediterranean sea, which lay west to the land of Canaan; and this border reached from Jabneel to the river of Egypt, where the southern border ended, Jos 15:4;

this [is] the coast of the children of Judah round about according to their families; but being too large, some part of it was afterwards given to Simeon, and some particular cities of it were given to Dan and Benjamin: it was bounded on the west by the tribes of Simeon and Dan towards the Mediterranean sea, and by the tribe of Benjamin on the north, and by the wilderness of Paran on the south, and by the dead sea and Jordan on the east.

Joshua 15:13

Ver. 13. And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah,.... That is, Joshua gave it to him. This account is inserted before the cities in the lot of the tribe of Judah were enumerated, to show what was to be excepted from them, and which had been given to Caleb previous to the lot:

according to the commandment of the Lord to Joshua; for as he had declared this to Moses, **De 1:36**; so it seems he also gave the same order to Joshua, who, it is not improbable, might consult the Lord about it when Caleb made his request, Jos 14:12;

[even] the city of Arba the father of Anak, which [city is] Hebron;
See Gill on "Jos 14:15".

Joshua 15:14

Ver. 14. And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak,.... Some think this was after the death of Joshua, and is here inserted by some other person divinely inspired, and thoroughly acquainted with this fact, that the gift and the possession of this place might appear in one view; but it rather seems to be done before:

Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak; the very same giants Caleb saw at Hebron, when he was sent a spy into the land, Nu 13:22; for these may as well be supposed to have lived to this time as himself, unless it can be thought that they were the sons of those men, called by their fathers' names; and though they were driven out when Joshua took Hebron, yet while he was engaged in making other conquests, or however before he died, they regained the possession of that city, and of the parts adjacent to it, from whence Caleb, with the help of his tribe, expelled them, conquered, and slew them, **Jud 1:10**.

Joshua 15:15

Ver. 15. And he went up from thence to the inhabitants of Debir,.... Having conquered Hebron, and got possession of that, Caleb marched to Debir, a city not many miles from Hebron, and seems to have been in the country, and part of the land, which was given him; of which
See Gill on "Jos 10:38";

and the name of Debir before [was] Kirjathsepher; or "the city of books"; either a place of literature, a sort of an academy, or where was a public library; the Targum calls it Kirjatharche, or the city of the archives, in which were laid up the public records of the Canaanites; the same is called Kirjathsannah for the like reason,
See Gill on "Jos 15:49".

Joshua 15:16

Ver. 16. And Caleb said, he that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it,.... Which he ordered to be proclaimed through the army that was under his command;

and which was done not so much on the account of the difficulty of taking the place, through the number of the inhabitants of it, and its fortifications, which it seems had fallen again into the hands of the Canaanites, since it was taken by Joshua; nor through inactivity, diffidence, and timorousness in himself; but that others, who were officers, and men of valour under him, might gather some laurels as well as himself; and chiefly being under a divine impulse, he ordered this declaration to be made, whereby his brother Othniel, who was to be a judge in Israel, might appear a great man, and fit for such an office; and as an encouragement, he promises as follows:

to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife; and to be married into the family of the chief prince of the tribe of Judah was a very great honour, as well as no doubt a very large dowry might be expected, and was given with her, and very probably the city of Debir was promised that should be taken. This Achsah seems to be a daughter of Caleb by a concubine, **1Ch 2:48**.

Joshua 15:17

Ver. 17. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it,.... The relation of Othniel to Caleb is a little intricate, and, as it is understood, occasions objections to the marriage of Caleb's daughter to him; it seems, at first sight, that he was Caleb's own brother, a younger brother, and so uncle to his daughter, and such marriages were forbidden, Le 18:14. Jarchi thinks he was the brother of Caleb by his mother's side; Kimchi, both by father and mother's side; but not to observe, that besides the word "brother" sometimes signifies only a kinsman, or near relation, and not precisely a brother; it is not Othniel that is called the brother of Caleb, but Kenaz, who was the father of Othniel; so that Caleb was Othniel's uncle, and Achsah and Othniel were brothers' children, or first cousins, between whom marriage was allowed of:

and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife; according to the tenor of his proclamation, and the promise he made.

Joshua 15:18

Ver. 18. And it came to pass, as she came [unto him],.... To her husband, being conducted from her father's house to his, in order to consummate the marriage, just as we may suppose when she was got to her husband's house, before she lighted off the beast on which she rode:

that she moved him to ask of her father a field; or persuaded him to make such a request to him, or that he would give her leave to make it; that is, Achsah put Othniel her espoused husband upon it, to entreat her father Caleb, or suffer her to use her interest with him to obtain a field of him, over and above, and something better, than what he had already given;

and she lighted off [her] ass; she leaped or threw herself from it; or bowing herself, she fell off on her feet, as Jarchi interprets it, and in an humble manner made her obeisance to her father; though De Dieu, from the use of the word in the Ethiopic language, gives a different sense, as if she continued on her ass, and did not alight, waiting the success of her husband's request; or that her father, taking notice of this, might ask the reason of it, which would give her an opportunity of asking the favour of him, which she judged was a proper time of doing it; and there are some versions which seem to countenance this sense the Septuagint version is,

"she cried from off the ass;"

and the Vulgate Latin version,

"she sighed as she sat upon the ass:"

and Caleb said unto her, what wouldest thou? what wouldest thou have? what is thy request for he perceived, by the posture she put herself in, that she had something to say to him.

Joshua 15:19

Ver. 19. Who answered, give me a blessing,.... By which she meant not a paternal benediction, or that he would wish and pray for a blessing on her; nor food, or a maintenance, as Jarchi, that her husband would provide for her; but rather an inheritance or possession, as the Targum; or a gift, as Abendana, a present, or something over and above what he had already given her; or an addition to her portion, as Kimchi: the word is sometimes used for a fish pool, as well as a blessing, and so glances at what she had in view, pools of water, or a well watered land:

for thou hast given me a south land; a dry land, as the Jewish writers {a} generally interpret this word, otherwise all the land belonging to the tribe of

Judah was south land, and Caleb could give her no other; but Debir, as Hebron was, was in the hill country, was mountainous and so dry, and wanted watering:

give me also springs of water; she means land in which there were springs of water; for unless she was possessed of the land in which they were, she would have no command of the springs, and so have little or no use of them:

and he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs; such as were in the higher grounds, and such as were in the lower ones, that she might have a sufficiency to water all her lands and fields; or as she moved her husband to ask a field, and he put her on doing the same, Caleb gave her a field, in the upper part of which were springs, and also in the lower part; though he seems to have given more than she requested.

{a} So Jarchi and Kimchi in loc. R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 34. 1.

Joshua 15:20

Ver. 20. This [is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah, according to their families. The general description of which is given in the preceding part of the chapter, as the particular cities belonging to it are enumerated in the following part; the account of the gift of Hebron to Caleb, and the taking of Debir by Othniel, with the request of Achsah, and the grant of it, are inserted between them, and stand as it were in a parenthesis.

Joshua 15:21

Ver. 21. And the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah,.... That is, those cities which were the outward part of the tribe of Judah, the southern border of it; for the midland cities are not in this part, of the description reckoned, which reaches from hence to the end of Jos 15:32;

toward the coast of Edom southward: it begins about the dead sea, and goes on in that part of the land of Canaan which bordered on Idumea, and so proceeds on westward towards Gaza, and the Mediterranean sea: the cities in this part of the tribe

were Kabzeel, called Jekabzeel, Ne 11:25; and was the native place of

Benaiah, one of David's mighty men, 2Sa 23:20;

and Eder and Jagur; of which we have no mention elsewhere.

Joshua 15:22

Ver. 22. And Kinah,.... Of this city we read of nowhere else;

and Dimonah; the second city is thought to be the same with Dibon, Ne 11:25; and Jerom {b} observes, that a place elsewhere was indifferently called in his time Dibon and Dimon;

and Adadah; the last of these cities is nowhere met with.

{b} Comment. in Esaiam, c. 15. 9.

Joshua 15:23

Ver. 23. And Kedesh,.... The first of these cities seems to be Kadeshbarnea, which was to the south of the land, and on the borders of Edom, from whence the spies were sent, Nu 32:8;

and Hazor is another city from that which is mentioned, Jos 11:1; and was in the tribe of Naphtali;

and Ithnan, which Jerom {c} calls Jedna, was, according to him, six miles from Eleutheropolis, as you go to Hebron; the Greek version joins this and the former city together, and makes them one.

{c} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. H.

Joshua 15:24

Ver. 24. Ziph,.... Ziph was of the tribe of Judah in the south, on the borders of Eleutheropolis, as Jerom says {d} and was eight miles from Hebron to the east; and in his time a village was shown, where David was hid; but that Ziph seems to be in another part of this tribe near Carmel, and from whence a wilderness had its name; see Jos 15:55;

and Telem is supposed to be the same with Telaim, 1Sa 15:4;

and Bealoth; of this city we read nowhere else.

{d} De loc. Heb. fol. 95. G.

Joshua 15:25

Ver. 25. And Hazor, Hadattah, and Kerioth, [and] Hezron, which [is] Hazor. According to the Targum, two cities only are here meant, which reads, "and Hazorhadattah, and Keriothhezron, which is Hazor"; and this reading seems to be right; there were three Hazors in this tribe, one in Jos 15:23, and two more here, which are distinguished; the first is called Hazorhadattah, or new Hazor; of which Jerom says {e}, there is a village at this day called Asor, in the borders of Ashkelon, to the east of it, which fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah; the Scripture makes mention of it, calling: it new Asor, to distinguish it from the old; and Keriothhezron is the same with Hezron, Jos 15:3; and had also the name of Hezron. From this place Judas Iscariot is thought to have his name, being Ishceriot, a man of Keriot.

{e} De. loc. Heb. fol. 88. B.

Joshua 15:26

Ver. 26. Amam,.... Of Amam we read nowhere else;

and Shema is thought by some to be the same with Sheba, though wrongly, given afterwards to the tribe of Simeon, as was also Moladah, mentioned with it, Jos 19:2;

and Moladah; it is also spoken of in **1Ch 4:28**, and seems to be the same with Malathi or Malatis, about twenty miles from Hebron {f}.

{f} Vid. Reland. Palest. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 885, 886.

Joshua 15:27

Ver. 27. And Hazargaddah,.... The first of these, it is probable, is the same, Jerom {g} calls Gadda, in the tribe of Judah, which was in his day a village in the extreme borders of Daroma to the east, hanging over the dead sea;

and Heshmon is met with nowhere else;

and Bethpalet is in Ne 11:26, where it is called Bethphelet.

{g} Ut supra, (De loc. Heb.) fol. 92. B.

Joshua 15:28

Ver. 28. And Hazarshual,.... The first of these seems to have its name from an haunt of foxes here, and was given to the tribe of Simeon, Jos 19:3; and is mentioned as here with Beersheba, **1Ch 4:28** Ne 11:27;

and Beersheba was a city well known in the extreme border of the land of Canaan southward; hence the phrase "from Dan to Beersheba", Jud 20:1, of which Jerom says {h}, Bersabee, in the tribe of Judah or Simeon, is at this day a large village, twenty miles from Hebron to the south, in which there is a Roman garrison; and from hence the borders of the land of Judea begin, and go on to Dan, which is by Paneas;

and Bizjothjah, of which mention is made elsewhere.

{h} Ibid. fol. 89. E. F.

Joshua 15:29

Ver. 29. Baalah,.... Baalah was given to the tribe of Simeon, Jos 19:3; for Baalah is the same with Balah there, as it is with Bilba, **1Ch 4:29**; though according to the Jerusalem Talmud {i} it is the same with Baalah, given to the tribe of Dan, Jos 19:44; and was one of those places whose houses were in Judah and their fields in Dan;

and Azem was also given to the tribe of Simeon, Jos 19:3; it is the same with Ezem, **1Ch 4:29**;

and Iim, of which we read nowhere else.

{i} Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 3.

Joshua 15:30

Ver. 30. And Eltolad,.... The first of these cities is called Tolad, **1Ch 4:29**;

and Chesil seems to be the same with Bethul and Bethuel, Jos 19:4 **1Ch 4:30**; and here the Greek version calls it Baithel;

and Hormah is the same with Zephath, **Jud 1:17**. All these three cities were given to the tribe of Simeon, Jos 19:4.

Joshua 15:31

Ver. 31. And Ziklag,.... Ziklag was also given to the tribe of Simeon, Jos 19:5, it was in the bands of the king of Gath, in the times of David, who gave it to him; it bordered on the Amalekites, and is placed by Jerom {c} in Daroma, on the south of the lot of Judah or Simeon.

and Madmannah, according to the same writer {d}, was in his time called Menois, a town near the city Gaza;

and Sansannah, of which no mention is made elsewhere.

{c} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. I. {d} Ibid. fol. 93. E.

Joshua 15:32

Ver. 32. And Lebaoth,.... Whether Lebaoth is the same with Bethlebaoth, given to the tribe of Simeon, Jos 19:6; is not certain;

and Shilhim is nowhere else spoken of;

and Ain seems to be the same with that in Nu 34:11; also
See Gill on "Nu 34:11"

and Rimmon, the place Jerom {e} calls Eremmon, which he says was a large village of the Jews, sixteen miles from Eleutheropolis to the south, in Daroma; this and the preceding are joined together as one, and called Enrimmon, Ne 11:29. It is probable they were near to each other, and in process of time the buildings of each might increase, so as to meet and join each other:

all the cities [are] twenty and nine, with their villages; but according to our version, and as we point them, they are thirty eight; some make them thirty six, others thirty seven; the Jews generally make thirty eight of them, as we do, and account for the difference of number thus; that nine of these cities were given to the tribe of Simeon, Jos 19:1; and these being taken out of the thirty eight, there remain twenty nine; so Jarchi and Kimchi account for it; but as the number of the cities is uncertain, and this account is given before the separation of the nine, and they are all reckoned together, this does not seem to be satisfactory; rather, as Abarbinel observes, the twenty nine of the places enumerated were cities, and the other were villages, unwalled towns, or not of so much note as the twenty nine.

{e} De loc. Heb. fol. 91. C.

Joshua 15:33

Ver. 33. [And] in the valley,.... In Jos 15:33 are enumerated the several cities belonging to the tribe of Judah which lay in the valley. Jerom {f} says, that now all the plain and champaign country near Eleutheropolis, which verges to the north and west, is called "Sephela", or the valley:

Eshtaol; the two first of these seem to be given afterwards to the tribe of Dan, Jos 19:41; between these two places Samson was born and buried, Jud 13:2; they were both at the same distance from Eleutheropolis, according to Jerom; of Eshtaol he says {g}, it is showed to this day ten miles from Eleutheropolis, to the north, as you go to Nicopolis or Emmaus;

and Zoreah, of which he calls Saara, he says {h} it is a village on the borders of Eleutheropolis, as you go to Nicopolis, about ten miles of it in the tribe of Dan or Judah;

and Ashnah, of which no mention is made elsewhere; there was another place of the same name, but different from this, Jos 15:43.

{f} De. loc. Heb. fol. 94. M. {g} Ibid. fol. 91. C. {h} Ibid. fol. 94. I.

Joshua 15:34

Ver. 34. And Zanoah,.... The first of these, Jerom says {i}, is in the borders of Eleutheropolis, as you go to Aelia (or Jerusalem); there is at this day a village called Zanua;

and Engannim, which signifies a fountain of gardens, is now (according to the same writer {k}) a village near Bethel;

and Tappuah was a royal city, of which see Jos 12:17. Enaim, in the tribe of Judah, Jerom says {l} in his day was the village Bethenim, about the turpentine tree, or oak of Mamre; but that seems to be the same with Ain, Jos 15:32; of which he says the same under that word, and makes it to be two miles from the oak, and four from Hebron. Masius thinks it is the same with Enam, near to Timnath, of which
See Gill on "Ge 38:14"; it following Tappuah one would be tempted to think with Jarchi it was the same with Entappuah, but that that was on the borders of Manasseh, Jos 17:7;

and Enam; it has an h prefixed to it, and may be read "that Enam", as pointing out some known and remarkable place, though now unknown.

{i} De loc. Heb. fol. 95. G. {k} Ibid. fol. 91. E. {l} Ibid. fol. 91. E.

Joshua 15:35

Ver. 35. Jarmuth, and Adullam,.... The two first of these were royal cities, of which see Jos 10:3;

Socoh; Jerom says {m} there were two little villages in his day of the name of Socho, as you go to Aelia (or Jerusalem), from Eleutheropolis, in the ninth mile on the public way, one in the mountain, and the other in the plain, (the same with this,) both of which were called Socoth: of this place was Antigonus, president of the sanhedrim, and successor of Simeon the just, called in the Misnah {n} a man of Socho;

and Azekah; See Gill on "Jos 10:10"; it appears to be near to Socoh from 1Sa

17:1, where the Philistines are said to pitch their camp between them.

{m} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. I. {n} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 3.

Joshua 15:36

Ver. 36. And Sharaim,.... Sharaim seems to be the Saara of Jerom, which he describes as a village on the borders of Eleutheropolis, to the north as you go to Nicopolis (or Emmaus), about ten miles from it in the tribe of Dan or Judah {o}; there was a place called Bethshaaraim, where the sanhedrim sometimes sat {p}, and where R. Judah was buried {q}. This seems to be the same with Shaaraim in 1Sa 17:52;

and Adithaim; Jerom observes {r}, under the word "Adithaim", that there is a village called Adia, near Gaza, and another Aditha, near Diospolis (or Lydda), to the east;

and Gederah, which seems to be the same Jerom calls Gaddera, in the tribe of Judah {s}, now, he says, called a village belonging to the country of Aelia (or Jerusalem), by the name of Gadera, about the turpentine tree.

and Gederothaim, of which we nowhere else read; Kimchi thinks Gederah and Gederothaim were one city:

fourteen cities with their villages; but, upon counting them, it will appear there are fifteen, which may be reduced to fourteen, if with Kimchi we take the two last to be but one, who in this way reconciles it; or with Jarchi make Tappuah and Enam to be one also, called Entappuah, which is the way he takes to solve the difficulty; but perhaps the case is this, that one of the places in the account was not a city, but a village.

{o} Ut supra. (De loc. Heb. fol. 88. E.) {p} T. Bab. Roshhashauah, fol. 31. 2. {q} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 47. 1. {r} Ut supra, (De loc. Heb.) fol. 88. F. {s} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. B.

Joshua 15:37

Ver. 37. Zenan,.... Here begins another list or catalogue of the cities in the valley or plain. Zenan perhaps is the same with Zaanan, **Mic 1:11**;

and Hadashah was so small a city in Judea in the times of the Misnic doctors, that they say {t} it had but fifty dwellings in it; and Jerom speaks {u} of a place called Adasa, in the tribe of Judah, in his times a village near Guphua; it should be Taphna;

and Migdalgad, of which we nowhere else read; some think it had its name from some famous exploit done here by one of the tribe of Gad, who came over with Joshua to assist in the war, as the stone of Bohan the Reubenite, Jos 15:6.

{t} Misn. Eruvim, c. 5. sect. 6. {u} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. F.

Joshua 15:38

Ver. 38. And Dilean,.... Of the first of these nothing is to be said;

and Mizpeh, of which name there were cities in other tribes; this in the tribe of Judah was in the times of Jerom {w} called Mapha, on the borders of Eleutheropolis to the south, as you go to Aelia, or Jerusalem;

and Joktheel, of which nothing is to be said.

{w} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. D.

Joshua 15:39

Ver. 39. Lachish,.... Lachish and Eglon were royal cities, of which see Jos 10:3;

and Bozkath, is called Boscath, of which place was the mother of King Josiah, 2Ki 21:1; some take it to be the same with Bascana, as in the Apocrypha:

"And when he came near to Bascama he slew Jonathan, who was buried there." (1 Maccabees 13:23)

and Eglon also was a royal city, of which see Jos 10:3.

Joshua 15:40

Ver. 40. And Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Kithlish. Cities of which we can give no account, not being mentioned elsewhere.

Joshua 15:41

Ver. 41. And Gederoth,.... Gederoth is reckoned among the cities of the low country, and south of Judah, 2Ch 28:18;

and Bethdagon; in it very probably was a temple of Dagon, which was a principal deity of the Philistines, **1Sa 5:2**; Jerom says {x} in his time was shown a large village called Capherdagon, between Diospolis and Jamnia; of Naamah, the same writer says nothing, only that it was a city of the tribe of Judah;

and Makkedah; see Jos 10:10; it was a royal city, Jos 12:16;

sixteen cities with their villages; and is the exact number of them, as before enumerated.

{x} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. F.

Joshua 15:42

Ver. 42. Libnah,.... Here begins another division or list of the cities of Judah, in the valley or plain. Libnah is the same with Libnah, a royal city; see Jos 10:29;

and Ether was given to the tribe of Simeon, Jos 19:7; and under Ether of the lot of Simeon, Jerom writes {y}, there is now a very large village called Jethira, in interior Daroma, near Malatha, twenty miles from Eleutheropolis;

and Ashan also was given to the tribe of Simeon, Jos 19:7; and the above writer relates {z}, that there was in his times a village called Bethasan, belonging to Aelia, or Jerusalem, fifteen miles from it.

{y} De loc. Heb. fol. 91. C. & 92. I. {z} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. G.

Joshua 15:43

Ver. 43. And Jiphtah,.... Jiphtah is nowhere else mentioned;

and Ashnah; there was another Ashnah of this tribe, and which was in the vale also, met with already in Jos 15:33;

and Nezib was in Jerom's {a} times called Nasib, seven miles from Eleutheropolis, as you go to Hebron.

{a} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. I.

Joshua 15:44

Ver. 44. And Keilah,.... The first of these is a well known city, which David saved from the hands of the Philistines, 1Sa 23:1, &c. In Jerom's time it was a little village to the east of Eleutheropolis, about eight miles from it, as you go to Hebron; in which was shown the sepulchre of the Prophet Habakkuk {b}.

And Achzib is said to be on the borders of Asher, Jos 19:29, and is supposed the same with Chezib, Ge 38:5; and the Ecdippa of Josephus and others, and now called Zib; See Gill on "Mic 1:14";

and Mareshah; Jerom says {c}, only the ruins of it were to be seen two miles from Eleutheropolis:

nine cities with their villages; which is just their number.

{b} De loc. Heb. fol. 90. A. {c} lbid. fol. 93. E.

Joshua 15:45

Ver. 45. Ekron, with her towns and her villages. One of the five principalities of the Philistines, which with two more next mentioned, though they fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah, were never possessed by them; for which reason perhaps Gath and Ascalon are not mentioned, and these are put for the rest; see Jos 13:3.

Joshua 15:46

Ver. 46. From Ekron even unto the sea,.... The Mediterranean sea, or the west, as the Targum:

all that [lay] near Ashdod, with their villages; this is the Azotus of the New Testament, **Ac 8:40**, another of the principalities of the Philistines, of which and Ekron See Gill on "Am 1:8" and
See Gill on "Zep 2:4".

Joshua 15:47

Ver. 47. Ashdod with her towns and, her villages, Gaza with her towns and her villages,.... Gaza was another of the principalities of the Philistines, of which
See Gill on "Am 1:7";
See Gill on "Zep 2:4";
See Gill on "Ac 8:26"; these, with the two other principalities not mentioned, Gath and Ashkelon, were in the western border of the tribe of Judah, which reached from Ekron, the first that is mentioned,

unto the river of Egypt; of which see Jos 15:4;

and the great sea, and the border [thereof]; the Mediterranean sea, called so in comparison of the lesser seas in Judea, the salt sea, and the sea of Tiberias; whose border was its shore, and the cities upon it, and not the isles in the sea, as Jarchi.

Joshua 15:48

Ver. 48. And in the mountains,.... The hill country of Judea, as it is called **Lu 1:39**, in which were the following cities:

Shamir: the Alexandrian copy of the Greek version reads Sophir as the name, of the first of these cities; and Jerom says {d} there was a village of this name in the mountainous parts, situated between Eleutheropolis, and Ashkelon in the tribe of Judah; see **Mic 1:11**;

and Jattir the same writer calls Jether, in the tribe of Judah; and says {e} there was in his time a very large village called Jethira, twenty miles from Eleutheropolis, the inhabitants of which were then all Christians: it was situated in interior Daroma, near Malatha;

and Socoh is different from Socoh in Jos 15:35; that was in the plain, this in the mountain; See Gill on "Jos 15:35".

{d} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. I. {e} Ibid. fol. 92. l.

Joshua 15:49

Ver. 49. And Dannah,.... Dannah is not mentioned elsewhere,

and Kirjathsannah, which [is] Debir; Kirjathsannah had three names, this and Debir, and Kirjathsepher; See Gill on "Jos 15:15"; all which are of much the same signification; for "Sanna" with the Arabs {f}, and so with the Phoenicians, signifies law, doctrine, and manner of life; and with the Mahometans the secondary law to the Koran, and answers to the Jewish Misnah; and the Greek version interprets this name "the city of letters". Jerom {g} calls it Daenna, and seems to confound it with Dannah.

{f} "mos vivendi, lex", Golius, col. 1221. Castell. col. 2567. Vid. Bochart. Canaan, 50:2. c. 17. col. 771. {g} De loc. Heb. fol. 90. I.

Joshua 15:50

Ver. 50. And Anab,.... Of Anab, See Gill on "Jos 11:21";

and Eshtemoh Jerom calls {h} Astemech, a village in the tribe of Judah, and belongs to the Jews in Daroma, and is to the north of a place called Anem, perhaps the same with Anim here;

and Anim Jerom says is the village Anea, near another of the same name; which he places to the south of Hebron, as he does this to the east, the inhabitants of which in his time were all Christians.

{h} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. G.

Joshua 15:51

Ver. 51. And Goshen,.... Of Goshen in the land of Canaan,
See Gill on "Jos 10:41";

and Holon, of which there is no other mention;

and Giloh was the city of Ahitophel, 2Sa 15:12;

eleven cities with their villages; the number agrees; this is the first division of cities in the mountains; a second follows.

Joshua 15:52

Ver. 52. Arab,.... Arab is the same Jerom {i} calls Ereb, and was in his time a village in the south, and was called Heromith;

and Dumah; Duma, Jerom says {k}, was a large village in the south, also on the borders of Eleutheropolis, seventeen miles from it;

and Eshean, of which we have no account.

{i} De loc. Heb. fol. 91. B. {k} Ibid. fol. 90. K.

Joshua 15:53

Ver. 53. And Janum,.... Under the word "Janum", Jerom writes {l}, there is a village called Janua, three miles from Legion to the south, but seems not to be what is written;

and Bethtappuah is by Jerom called Bethaphu {m}, and said to be a village in the tribe of Judah, fourteen miles beyond Raphia, as you go to Egypt, which is the border of Palestine;

and Aphekah; Jerom speaks {n} of a large castle in his time called Apheca, near the town of Palestine; there were several places of the name of Aphek; See Gill on "Jos 12:18". As for Bethtappuah, it seems to be a place which was dedicated to a deity to which apples were sacred, in memory of the apple by which mankind was seduced; there was in later times a goddess called Pomona from hence.

{l} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. I. {m} Ibid. fol. 89. F. {n} Ibid. fol. 88. D.

Joshua 15:54

Ver. 54. And Humtah,.... Of Humtah we nowhere else read;

and Kirjatharba, which [is] Hebron; of Kirjatharba we read frequently;
See Gill on "Jos 14:15";

and Zior; Jerom says {o}, that in his time there was a village shown by the name of Sihor, between Aelia (or Jerusalem) and Eleutheropolis, in the tribe of Judah:

nine cities with their villages; which is exactly their number, as expressed; here ends the second division, or of the cities in the hill country of Judea; a third follows.

{o} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. H.

Joshua 15:55

Ver. 55. Maon, Carmel,.... Maon was the dwelling place of Nabal the Carmelite, whose possessions were in Carmel, and were not far from one another, 1Sa 25:2. It gave name to a wilderness near where David hid himself from Saul, 1Sa 23:25; Jerom {p} places it to the east of Daroma, who also informs {q} us, that there was in his time a village that went by the name of Carmelia, ten miles from Hebron towards the east, and where was a Roman garrison.

and Ziph, according to the same writer {r}, was eight miles from Hebron to the east; and there was a village shown in his time where David was hid; this gave name to a wilderness also, 1Sa 23:14;

and Juttah, which Jerom calls {s} Jeshan, was in his time a large village of the Jews, eighteen miles from Eleutheropolis, to the southern part in Daroma. Reland {t} conjectures that this was the native place of John the Baptist; and that, instead of "a city of Judah", it should be read "the city Juta", **Lu 1:39**.

{p} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. E. {q} lbid. fol. 92. C. {r} Ibid. fol. 95. G. {s} Ibid. fol. 92. I. {t} Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 870.

Joshua 15:56

Ver. 56. And Jezreel,.... This Jezreel in the tribe of Judah is different from that which was once a royal seat of some of the kings of Israel, and from whence the famous valley of Jezreel or Esdraelon had its name: of this we have no other account elsewhere;

and Jokdeam; of which we have no other mention;

and Zanoah is a distinct place from the city of the same name in the valley, Jos 15:34.

Joshua 15:57

Ver. 57. Cain,.... Cain, or Hakain, "that Cain", we nowhere else read of; whether the name was given it by the old Canaanites, in memory of Cain, the son of Adam, is not certain:

Gibeah; there were other places that went by the name of Gibeah; there was a Gibeah in Benjamin, Jud 20:4, and another in the same tribe called Gibeah of Saul, 1Sa 11:4, to distinguish it from that; but this was in the tribe of Judah. Masius conjectures it is the same with that in 1Sa 23:19 which was near Ziph; and not amiss. Jerom {u} makes mention of Gabaha and Gabatha, little villages to the east of Daroma; and of another Gabatha, near Bethlehem, in the tribe of Judah; but whether either of these are meant it is doubtful;

Timnah, of this city, See Gill on "Jos 15:10";

ten cities with their villages; the number agrees with the names of them.

{u} Ut supra, (De loc. Heb.) fol. 92. C.

Joshua 15:58

Ver. 58. Halhul,.... Here begins a fourth division, or list, of the cities in the mountains. Halhul Jerom calls Ehul, and says {w} there was in his time in the country belonging to Aelia (or Jerusalem) a village by the name of Ahula, near Hebron; and

Bethzur, Jerom says {x}, was then called Bethseron, a village as you go from Aelia to Hebron, in the twentieth mile, near which was a fountain at the bottom of a mount, where it is said the eunuch was baptized by Philip: he makes mention of another village called Bethsur in the tribe of Judah, a mile from Eleutheropolis. In the Apocrypha:

"So he came to Judea, and drew near to Bethsura, which was a strong town, but distant from Jerusalem about five furlongs, and he laid sore siege unto it." (2 Maccabees 11:5)

it is said to be but five furlongs from Jerusalem, but it must have been at a greater distance;

Gedor, of this city, See Gill on "Jos 12:13".

{w} De loc. Heb. fol. 91. B. {x} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. G.

Joshua 15:59

Ver. 59. And Maarath, and Bethanoth, and Eltekon,.... Of these cities we have no account elsewhere; only mention is made of Eltekeh, in the tribe of Dan, Jos 19:44;

six cities with their villages; these were all in the mountainous part of Judea, as were the two following.

Joshua 15:60

Ver. 60. Kirjathbaal, (which [is] Kirjathjearim,),.... Of Kirjathbaal, and its several names, See Gill on "Jos 15:9";

and Rabbah, of which we nowhere else read; for this is a very different city from the Rabbah of the children of Ammon, 2Sa 12:26;

two cities with their villages; why these are reckoned by themselves is not certain.

Joshua 15:61

Ver. 61. In the wilderness,.... The wilderness of Judea, which was not a desert and uninhabited but had many cities and villages in it, those that follow:

Betharabah; the first of these seems to be in the borders of Judah and Benjamin, and so is ascribed to both; see Jos 15:6;

Middin, and Secacah; of the two last we read nowhere else, only in **Jud 5:10**; what we translate "ye that sit in judgment", Kimchi interprets, "ye that dwell by Middin", and says it is the name of a place in Joshua, and mentions this passage.

Joshua 15:62

Ver. 62. And Nibshan,.... Of Nibshan no mention is made elsewhere;

and the city of Salt some take to be Zoar, so called because near the salt sea, or where Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt,
Ge 19:22; but rather this city might be so called, because salt was made here.

and Engedi, or Engaddi, is a well known place, near the salt sea;
See Gill on "Eze 47:10". Jerom says {y}, there was a very large village of Jews in his time called Engaddi, near the dead sea, from whence comes the opobalsam; the same place is called Hazazontamar, from the palm trees which grew there, 2Ch 20:2. It was famous for vineyards also, **So 1:14**; it lay, according to Josephus {z}, three hundred furlongs or about forty miles from Jerusalem:

six cities with their villages; the sum total agrees with the particulars.

{y} De loc. Heb. fol. 91. B. {z} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 1. sect. 2.

Joshua 15:63

Ver. 63. As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem,.... From whom the city was called Jebus, Jud 19:10. The Jews say, that these Jebusites were not those of the seven nations; but there was a man whose name was Jebus, and he was of the Philistines, of the seed of Abimelech, and the place was called by his name Jebus; and the men of that family that dwelt at Jerusalem, their names were called Jebusites, having their descent from him; so Araunah, the Jebusite, was king of that place: and the fort of that place was Zion, which was at Jerusalem: so Kimchi relates from their Rabbins, and with whom Jarchi agrees, but without any foundation; there is no doubt to be made of it, that these Jebusites were Canaanites:

the children of Judah could not drive them out; according to the above Jewish writers they could have done it, but it was not fit and proper they should, because of the oath of Abraham to Abimelech, from whom they suppose these Jebusites sprung; but the case was this; though Joshua slew the king of this place, and took his land with the rest,
Jos 10:1; and though the men of Judah retook it after his death, it having been got into the hands of the Jebusites again, **Jud 1:8**; yet either the fort of Zion was never taken by either of them, or if taken, the Jebusites got possession of it again, and held it until the times of David; see **2Sa 5:6**;

but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day; the one in the fort of Zion, and the other in the city of Jerusalem, properly so called, and thus they continued unto the writing of this book; by which it should seem, that the Jebusites were not dispossessed of their fort, or a part of the city, by Joshua; or this might be added and inserted by some inspired man afterwards; or however it must be done before the times of David: and from the whole it appears, that the city of Jerusalem, at least a part of it, belonged to the tribe of Judah, as another part did to that of Benjamin, to which it is ascribed, Jos 18:28; see **Jud 1:21**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 16

This chapter gives us an account of the lot of the children of Joseph, Ephraim, and the half tribe of Manasseh, one half having settled on the other side Jordan; and first the borders of the whole lot in general are given, Jos 16:1; and then the borders of the tribe of Ephraim in particular, Jos 16:4; and it is observed, that this tribe had besides separate cities among the children of Manasseh, and that there were some Canaanites, particularly in Gezer, not driven out by the Ephraimites, Jos 16:9.

Ver. 1. And the lot of the children of Joseph fell,.... Or, "went out" {a}; of the pot or urn, this being the next lot that was drawn to that of Judah, the government being Judah's, and the birthright Joseph's, **1Ch 5:2**; and by his children are here meant the tribe of Ephraim, and the tribe of Manasseh: or the line and border according to the lot went forth

from Jordan by Jericho unto the water of Jericho on the east; by which it appears, that this was the southern border of the lot; for the tribe of Benjamin, in which Jericho was, lay between Judah and Ephraim, and the border began at Jordan, where it flowed near Jericho, and proceeded to a water which belonged to that city, and is generally thought to be the waters Elisha healed, **2Ki 2:19**;

to the wilderness that goeth up throughout Mount Bethel; this was the wilderness of Bethaven, Jos 18:12; Jarchi interprets it of the border that went up through Mount Bethel; which is true, and so might the wilderness also, for which the Targum is express; mention is made of a mountain on the east of Bethel, Ge 12:8.

{a} auyw "et egressa est", Pagninus, Montanus; "exivit", Piscator.

Joshua 16:2

Ver. 2. And goeth out from Bethel to Luz,.... For though these two places in time became one, yet they were originally distinct. Bethel, at which Jacob stopped, and who gave it its name, was a field adjacent to the city of Luz, Ge 38:11; and therefore with propriety may be, as they here are, distinguished:

and passeth along unto the borders Archi to Ataroth; or to Archiataroth; these two words being the name of one and the same place, and to be joined as they are, in the Greek version, and others; and is the same with Atarothaddar, Jos 16:5. Ataroth was its proper name, but it had these additional epithets to distinguish it from another Ataroth; see Jos 16:7; Jerom {b} makes mention of Atharoth by Ramma, in the tribe of Joseph, and of another in the tribe of Ephraim, now a village at the north of Sebaste, or Samaria, four miles from it, called Atharus; the former is here meant.

{b} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. G.

Joshua 16:3

Ver. 3. And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti,.... This place is now unknown, though no doubt well known to the sons of Joseph, when this lot fell to them, and its border was described:

unto the coast of Bethhoron the nether: so called to distinguish it from Bethhoron the upper, Jos 16:5; this was about twelve miles from Jerusalem; See Gill on "Jos 10:10"; and to Gezer: which was about a day's journey from Bethhoron, as appears from the passages in the Apocrypha:

"39 So Nicanor went out of Jerusalem, and pitched his tents in Bethhoron, where an host out of Syria met him. 40 But Judas pitched in Adasa with three thousand men, and there he prayed, saying, ... 45 Then they pursued after them a day's journey, from Adasa unto Gazera, sounding an alarm after them with their trumpets." (1 Maccabees 7)

Jerom {c} says in his time it was a village called Gazara, four miles from Nicopolis, or Emmaus. It is the same with Gadara, as it is sometimes called by Josephus, who says {d}, the tribe of Ephraim took in the land from the river Jordan to Gadara; this was a royal city; see
Jos 10:33;

and the outgoings thereof are at the sea: the Mediterranean sea.

{c} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. A. {d} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.

Joshua 16:4

Ver. 4. So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance. As it fell to them by the lot; by Manasseh is meant the half tribe of Manasseh, one half of that tribe having been settled by Moses on the other side Jordan; and next follows an account of the borders of the inheritance of Ephraim in particular, as that of the half tribe of Manasseh is given in Jos 17:1.

Joshua 16:5

Ver. 5. And the border of the children of Ephraim, according to their families, was [thus],.... Or what follows is the description of it:

even the border of their inheritance on the east side was Atarothaddar, unto Bethhoron the upper; the first was on the south of the inheritance, and the latter on the north, as Masius has placed them: who has given us a type of this description, by which it appears that this lot is here described in its breadth from south to north.

Joshua 16:6

Ver. 6. And the border went out towards the sea,.... The Mediterranean sea:

to Michmethah on the north side; of the border, the same on which Bethhoron was, from whence the border proceeded on to this place, of which we have no other account but in Jos 17:7; by which it appears to have been near Shechem, and in sight of it;

and the border went about eastward unto Taanathshiloh; this seems to be the same Jerom {e} calls Thenath in the tribe of Joseph; and who observes there was in his day a village of this name ten miles from Neapolis (or Shechem) to the east, as you go down to Jordan:

and passed by it on the east to Janohah: which the above writer {f} wrongly calls Janon, and says, that in his time a village of this name was shown in the country of Acrabatena, twelve miles to the east from Neapolis or Shechem; the border passed by Taanath on the east of it, and went on this place.

{e} De loc. Heb. fol. 95. C. {f} Ibid. fol. 92. I.

Joshua 16:7

Ver. 7. And it went down from Johanan to Ataroth,.... This is different from Ataroth before mentioned, Jos 16:2; there were several places of this name, as before observed; this seems to be that which Jerom places four miles from Sebaste or Samaria,
See Gill on "Jos 16:2";

and to Naarath; Jerom {g} says, that Naarath was in his time called Naorath, a village of the Jews, five miles from Jericho; and is the village Josephus {h} calls Neara, where was a water, half of which Archelaus turned, and led to the field planted with palm trees, near Jericho; and, according to the Jewish writers {i}: there was a place called Noaran near to Jericho, which seems to be this:

and came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan; where it ended this way, which was eastward.

{g} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. I. {h} Antiqu. l. 17. c. 15. sect. 1. {i} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 164. 3. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 9. 3. Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 4.

Joshua 16:8

Ver. 8. The border went out from Tappuah westward,.... Which was different from the Tappuah in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:34; this was in the tribe of Ephraim on the border of Manasseh, Jos 17:8;

unto the river Kanah; supposed by some to be the brook Cherith, by which Elijah hid himself, 1Ki 17:3; though objected to by others; it seems to have had its name from the reeds which grew in it, or on the banks of it:

and the goings out thereof were at the sea; if the river Kanah was the brook Cherith, this must be the dead or salt sea: but that is never called "the sea", rather the Mediterranean sea is meant, and consequently Kanah could not be Cherith, which was at too great a distance from this sea:

this [is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families; that is, this is the description of the border of it; for the cities within are not mentioned, and the descriptions in general are very obscure.

Joshua 16:9

Ver. 9. And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim,.... The tribe of Ephraim, being much larger than the half tribe of Manasseh, besides the lot that fell to it, described before by its boundaries, had several particular and distinct cities given to it: which

[were] among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh; some that were upon the borders of Ephraim, and within the territory of Manasseh, and it may be where it jetted out in a nook or corner, see
Jos 17:8;

all the cities with their villages; not the separate cities only, but the little towns adjacent to them.

Joshua 16:10

Ver. 10. And they drove not out the Canaanites which dwelt in Gezer,.... Which was the border of their tribe length ways, and was near the sea, Jos 16:3; in this they did not obey the command of God, and either they did not drive them out, because they could not, God not delivering them up into their hands, because of their sins; or through their slothfulness, or it may be through covetousness, being willing to make some advantage to themselves by them, being a trading people, which seems to be intended in the next clause:

but the Canaanites dwelt among the Ephraimites unto this day; which Joshua, the writer of this book, might truly say, and be no objection to it, since the same is observed after his death, **Jud 1:29**; and indeed they continued to dwell there until the times of Solomon, when it was taken by Pharaoh king of Egypt, and given as a present to his daughter, the wife of Solomon, **1Ki 9:15**; and though this clause does not furnish out an argument against the writing of this book by Joshua, yet, from the instance given, it appears it must have been written before the times of Solomon, and so not by Ezra, as some:

and serve under tribute; so that they were under their power, and therefore could have driven them out, or slain them, as by the command of God they should; but they spared them for the sake of the tribute they received from them, which seems to agree with the character of the Ephraimites, Ho 12:8.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 17

This chapter gives an account of the lot that fell to the half tribe of Manasseh, to the male children of Manasseh, and to the daughters of Zelophehad, Jos

17:1; and describes the coast of that lot,
Jos 17:7; and relates the request of the sons of Joseph, to have their lot enlarged, which was granted, Jos 17:14.

Ver. 1. There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh,.... As well as for the tribe of Ephraim:

for he [was] the firstborn of Joseph; and therefore ought to have his part and share in the lot of the children of Joseph, though Ephraim was preferred before him in the blessing of Jacob. Some think this is given as a reason why he had a double portion, one on the other side Jordan, and another in the land of Canaan:

[to wit], for Machir, the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead; who was the only son of Manasseh, and so through him, and by his son Gilead, the whole tribe sprung from that patriarch: and

because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan; which were given to his posterity by Moses, and lay on the other side Jordan, see **De 3:13**. This Machir very likely had shown his warlike disposition and courage in Egypt, and had fought under the kings there against the common enemy of that country; for it is highly probable he was dead before the children of Israel came out from thence, but the same warlike spirit continued in his posterity; they had their part assigned them on the other side Jordan, to defend that country, while the tribes of Reuben and Gad attended to the care of their flocks and herds.

Joshua 17:2

Ver. 2. There was also [a lot] for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families,.... For such that had no part in Gilead and Bashan on the other side Jordan, even for the other half tribe, whose families are particularly mentioned, as follows:

for the children of Abiezer; who is called Jeezer in Nu 26:30; and was a son of Gilead, the son of Machir, as the rest that follow were:

and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hepher, and for the children of Shemida; hence the families of the Jeezerites, Helekites, Asrielites, Shechemites, Hepherites, and Shemidaites, mentioned in Nu 26:30; and for which families was the lot here spoken of:

these [were] the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families; which is observed for the sake of, and to lead unto what follows, otherwise in common none but males inherited; but the following is an excepted and remarkable case.

Joshua 17:3

Ver. 3. But Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters,.... The descent of this man is particularly given, to show the truth and reality of it, upon which his daughters made their request, and that granted and now claimed:

and these [are] the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah; by the same names, and in the same order they are called in Nu 26:33; the order is a little different in Nu 36:11.

Joshua 17:4

Ver. 4. And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes,.... The ten princes, who, with Eleazar and Joshua, were appointed to divide the land, Nu 34:17; and were now met together for that purpose, Jos 14:1;

saying, the Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren; those of the same tribe with them; for upon their application to Moses he inquired of the Lord, who ordered him to grant their request, Nu 27:1;

therefore according to the commandment of the Lord he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their fathers; that is, to the half tribe of Manasseh.

Joshua 17:5

Ver. 5. And there fell ten portions to Manasseh, beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which [were] on the other side Jordan,.... The lot which fell to the half tribe of Manasseh was divided into ten parts: according to the Jewish writers, the six families before mentioned had six parts, and the daughters of Zelophehad had four parts; one on the account of Zelophehad their father, two on the account of their grandfather Hepher, who they say was the firstborn, and one on account of their uncle, their father's brother, who died in the wilderness without children; so Jarchi and Kimchi relate from the Talmud {k}; but the true case seems to be this, there were six portions for the six families, but there being no sons in Hepher's family, his part was divided into five, and given to the five daughters of Zelophehad:

beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which [were] on the other side Jordan: which were given to the other half tribe, as before observed, Jos 13:29.

{k} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 118. 2. & 119. 1.

Joshua 17:6

Ver. 6. Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons,.... Which occasioned such a number of portions; the daughters of Zelophehad are meant, who descended from Manasseh:

and the rest of Manasseh, some had the land of Gilead; that is, those besides the six families before expressed, namely, the two families of the Machirites and Gileadites, Nu 26:29.

Joshua 17:7

Ver. 7. And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher,.... Not from the border of the tribe of Asher, as Kimchi, in which he is followed by Vatablus; for that was at too great a distance; but a city of the tribe of Manasseh; and in Jerom's {l} time a village of this name was shown fifteen miles from Neapolis or Shechem, as you go from thence to Scythopolis, near the public road:

to Michmethah, that [lieth] before Shechem; the same place mentioned in the description of the border of Ephraim, See Gill on "Jos 16:6":

and the border went along on the right hand, unto the inhabitants of Entappuah; that is, leaving this place, and its inhabitants to the right, which was a place in the land of that name, next mentioned; and seems to be so called from a fountain in it, or near it, as well as from a multitude of apples growing there, and with which perhaps the country abounded, of which in Jos 17:8.

{l} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. G.

Joshua 17:8

Ver. 8. [Now] Manasseh had the land of Tappuah,.... The whole territory that went by that name, from a city of note in it, next mentioned; all the fields and villages in it belonged to the tribe of Manasseh:

but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh [belonged] to the children of Ephraim; and was one of those separate cities they had among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh; though it seems they had only the city, not the territory adjacent to it, and which was named from it.

Joshua 17:9

Ver. 9. And the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river,.... The same mentioned in the account of the coast of Ephraim, Jos 16:8; which was north of that river, as Manasseh was to the south of it:

these cities of Ephraim [are] among the cities of Manasseh; that is, the cities before mentioned, Asher, Michmethah, Entappuah, and Tappuah; though they were in the tribe of Manasseh, yet they were inhabited by the Ephraimites:

the coast of Manasseh also [was] on the north side of the river; of the river Kanah, as well as on the south of it; it had cities there, though possessed by the tribe of Ephraim:

and the outgoings of it were at the sea; the Mediterranean sea.

Joshua 17:10

Ver. 10. Southward [it was] Ephraim's, and northward [it was] Manasseh's,.... As Ephraim lay to the south of Manasseh, Manasseh lay to the north of Ephraim:

and the sea is his border; the Mediterranean sea was their boundary on the west:

and they met together in Asher on the north; that is, on the northwest towards the Mediterranean sea, as, at Mount Carmel:

and in Issachar on the east; towards Jordan.

Joshua 17:11

Ver. 11. And Manasseh had in Issachar, and in Asher, Bethshean, and her towns,.... As Ephraim had cities in Manasseh, so had Manasseh cities in these two tribes, which in some parts bordered on it, before described, even the cities following, and the first that is named is Bethshean: this lay in the tribe of Issachar, and was the uttermost border of Manasseh that way; it was, as Josephus {m} says, called Scythopolis; but not from the Scythians, as Pliny {n} suggests, but from Succoth, a place where Jacob resided, and which was not far from it, Ge 33:17; it lay before the great plain of Jezreel, and was at the entrance into it,

"After this went they over Jordan into the great plain before Bethsan." (1 Maccabees 5:52)

and was six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles, from Jerusalem, according to:

"From thence they departed to Scythopolis, which lieth six hundred furlongs from Jerusalem," (2 Maccabees 12:29)

and was one of the cities of Decapolis, from whence our Lord had hearers, **Mt 4:25**. It was such a pleasant place, that it is said in the Talmud {o}, that if the garden of Eden was in the land of Israel, Bethshean was the gate of it; on which the gloss says, that its fruits were the sweetest in the land of Israel:

and Ibleam and her towns; it seems to be the same with Bileam, by a transposition of the two first letters, **1Ch 6:70**; and was a place not far from

Megiddo, after mentioned, as appears from **2Ki 9:27**;

and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns; this had been a royal city,
See Gill on "Jos 11:2" and
See Gill on "Jos 12:23";

and the inhabitants of Endor and her towns; this place became famous for a witch there in the times of Saul, 1Sa 28:7; in the times of Jerom {p} it was a large village near Mount Tabor, four miles to the south, which he calls Aeudor, of or in Jezreel; and elsewhere {q} he speaks of Endor, as near the town of Nain, where our Lord raised the widow's son the dead, and is about: Scythopolis:

and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns; this had been a royal city, See Gill on "Jos 12:22";

and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: this was another royal city mentioned with the former; See Gill on "Jos 12:21"; there

[even] three countries; the three last cities, with their towns, that are mentioned, Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo; all which perhaps belonged to Dor, and may be the Naphothdor spoken of Jos 11:2; where the same word is used as here; so Jarchi interprets it.

{m} Antiqu l. 12. c. 8. sect. 5. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 18. {o} T. Bab. Eruvin, fol. 19. 1. {p} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. L. {q} lbid. fol. 91. E.

Joshua 17:12

Ver. 12. Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out [the inhabitants] of these cities,.... Mentioned in Jos 17:11; they had not strength at first to do it, or either were negligent and slothful, and suffered them to dwell among them, and did not take the advantage they might have done; and afterwards it was too late, they became too strong and numerous for them, at least for a time:

but the Canaanites would dwell in the land; whether they would or not.

Joshua 17:13

Ver. 13. Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxed strong,.... Increased in numbers, and became superior to the Canaanites, not only those of the tribe of Manasseh, but of the other tribes also:

that they put the Canaanites to tribute; they did not take away their lives, as they were commanded to do, but made them tributaries to them, which seems to arise from a covetous disposition, and done for the sake of gain:

but did not utterly drive them out; which they were ordered to do, and could now have done; for if they were able to make them pay tribute to them, they had power sufficient to drive them out, or destroy them, and therefore broke the commandment of God, **De 7:1**.

Joshua 17:14

Ver. 14. And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua,.... Which some understand of the children of Manasseh only; and, indeed, the complaint and arguments used, as well as some circumstances in the account, best agree with them; yet certain it is, that the children of Ephraim accompanied the children of Manasseh, and were present at this interview, as appears from Jos 17:17; and if they did not join with them in the request and complaint expressly, they countenanced and encouraged the same by their presence:

saying, why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit: this seems to suit better with one than both; for there was a lot for the tribe of Manasseh also, as well as for Ephraim, Jos 17:1; by which it should seem that there were two, and if both made this expostulation, it was not fact; but it may be, that the inheritance which came to them by lot was not as yet divided, and so they called it one lot and one portion, and then it might with propriety be said by them both; and their sense be, that the lot or portion assigned them was only sufficient for one of them, and not for both:

seeing I [am] a great people; as especially both tribes put together were;

forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto? this best agrees with the tribe of Manasseh, which, since their coming out of Egypt, was increased twenty thousand five hundred, whereas the tribe of Ephraim was decreased; compare **Nu 1:33** with Nu 26:34. Now it might have been expected by them, that as Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim, that he would have favoured their cause on that account, and that they should have obtained the grant of an addition by that means; but Joshua was impartial in his administration, and showed no favour and affection on that score, as appears by what follows.

Joshua 17:15

Ver. 15. And Joshua answered them,.... By retorting their own argument upon them:

if thou [be] a great people; which he does not deny, as they were for numbers and power:

[then] get thee up to the wood [country]; which was near them, and within their borders, and lay on hills and mountains, perhaps the mountains of Gilboa, and therefore are bid to go up:

and cut down for thyself there; cut down the trees of the wood, clear the ground of them, and so make it habitable, and by that means enlarge the places of their habitation:

in the land of the Perizzites, and of the giants; or Rephaim; the former of these were one of the seven nations of the Canaanites, who from their name seem to have dwelt not in the cities, and walled towns, but in villages, and scattered houses, in desert places, and among the woods, where also the giants had retired and dwelt after Joshua had driven them out of the cities; and by driving these out of their present habitations, they would gain more room to dwell in, and would find their lot sufficient for them:

if Mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee; either meaning all Ephraim, and even the whole lot of the sons of Joseph, or rattler the mount particularly so called; for the words may be rendered, "for Mount Ephraim hastens for thee" {q}; was clear or open for thee; ready to be delivered to thee, and thou mayest possess it at once.

{q} Vid Gusset. Ebr. Comment, p. 21.

Joshua 17:16

Ver. 16. And the children of Joseph said, the hill is not enough for us,.... Meaning either Mount Ephraim, and all included in it; or it may be rather the wood country on the hills and mountains they were bid to go up to; signifying, that if they could gain that out of the hands of the Perizzites and giants, and clear it of the wood, and make it habitable, even that would not be sufficient for them; or that hill and mountain cannot be "found by us" {r} or obtained and possessed by us; we are not able to get it into our hands; there being a valley between us and that:

and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron; not chariots made of iron, but chariots with iron scythes fastened to the sides, or axle trees of them, which when driven with great force and fury, would cut down the infantry in battle, as grass is cut down with scythes, see **Jud 4:2**;

[both they] who [are] of Bethshean and her towns, and [they] who [are] of the valley of Jezreel; both which belonged to the tribe of Manasseh, or were on the borders of it, though as yet they had not got possession, see Jos 17:11; and this circumstance seems to favour the notion, that tribe of Manasseh were at least chiefly concerned in this address.

{r} wnl aumy al "non invenietur nobis", Montanus; "non possumus montem istum assequi", Tigurine version; "non obtinebitur a nobis", Masius.

Joshua 17:17

Ver. 17. And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, [even] to Ephraim and to Manasseh,.... From whence it is clear that some of both were present; and they being brethren, and their interests united, and their cities intermixed, it would be to their mutual advantage to have an enlargement; which the tribe of Manasseh wanted more especially, more of their cities that fell to their lot being in the hands of the Canaanites, than of any other:

saying, thou [art] a great people, and hast great power; were very numerous, and so able to contend with the Canaanites, and make themselves more room:

thou shalt not have one lot [only]; or only have what they were possessed of, but should have more; and, as they wanted more, they were able enough to get more; and if they exerted their power, relying on the providence of God, through his blessing on their endeavours, they would certainly have an increase of their portion.

Joshua 17:18

Ver. 18. But the mountains shall be thine,.... Or "for" {s} it shall be thine; thou shalt get the possession of it, though attended with difficulties that seem insuperable:

for, or "if, though" {t}

it [is] a wood; the habitation of the Perizzites, and giants, and so dangerous to go un to it, and full of trees, and so seems unprofitable and useless:

and thou shalt cut it down; both the inhabitants of it, and the trees of it, and clear it of both, and make it both safe and commodious to dwell in, which would be a fine enlargement for them:

and the outgoings of it shall be thine; all it produces when cultivated, and all the parts adjacent to it:

for thou shall drive out the Canaanites; this Joshua assures them of, to encourage them to attempt it:

though they have iron chariots, [and] though they [be] strong; be not afraid of their chariots, though terrible, nor of their giants and mighty men, God will be on your side, and you have nothing to fear from them, see Jos 11:4; whether the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh took this advice of Joshua is not said.

{s} yk "quia", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Gussetius, p. 378.
{t} yk "si", Junius & Tremellius, "licet", Ar. vers. Lat.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 18

This chapter informs us of the setting up of the tabernacle at Shiloh, Jos 18:1; of the notice Joshua took, that seven tribes had not received their inheritance, Jos 18:2; of the instructions he gave them to send three men out of each tribe, and describe the land not yet disposed of, and bring the account to him, which was accordingly done, Jos 18:3; and then he cast lots for them, and the first lot came up for Benjamin,

Jos 18:10; the borders of whose lots are described,
Jos 18:12; and the several cities in it enumerated,
Jos 18:21.

Ver. 1. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh,.... The whole body of the people, men, women, and children, as well as the camp, Jos 18:9; at least all that had not received their inheritances in the land. Hither they came from Gilgal, where the camp and tabernacle had been ever since their passage over Jordan; but now the land being in the main subdued, that was too far off both for the camp and tabernacle, and therefore they moved further into the land, and nearer Jerusalem, where in time the tabernacle was to be placed. The place they assembled at, Shiloh, was in the tribe of Ephraim, of which tribe Joshua was, and whose lot and inheritance was now fixed, and it was not far from Jerusalem, about two leagues. Jerom says {u} it was ten miles from, Neapolis or Shechem, in the country of Acrabatena; and that there were scarce any ruins of it to be seen in his day, only an altar demolished was shown {w}. It seems to have its name from the peaceable condition the land was now in, and very likely was now given it on that account:

and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there; no doubt by the appointment and direction of God, signified to Eleazar the high priest, either by a voice, or by Urim and Thummim; and the removal of it seemed necessary, partly that because several camps which surrounded it were now broken up and settled in their cities, as Reuben, Judah, and Ephraim; and partly that it might be near where Joshua, the governor of Israel, resided, Ephraim being his tribe; and also since Gilgal, on the borders of the land, was too far off for the people to resort to the tabernacle, and therefore it was, proper it should be more in the heart of the country: when this was done, cannot certainly be determined; Kimchi says it was fourteen years after the Israelites came into the land of Canaan; and so says {x} their chronology; but it is highly probable it was before that time, and not longer than seven or eight years at most; here the tabernacle continued, according to the Jewish writers {y}, three hundred sixty nine years, even unto the times of Samuel, when for the sins of the sons of Eli it was removed. Eupolemus {z}, an Heathen writer, speaks of the holy temple being fixed at Shiloh by Joshua:

and the land was subdued before them: the far greater part of it, and all so as to have no disturbance from, or war with, the inhabitants.

{u} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. I. {w} Comment. in Soph. c. 1. fol. 94. I. Epitaph.

Paul. fol. 59. L. {x} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 32. {y} Maimon. in Misn. Zebachim, c. 14. sect. 6. Bartenora in ib. sect. 7. Seder Olam Rabba, ut supra. ({x}) {z} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30. p. 447.

Joshua 18:2

Ver. 2. And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes,.... Which were those of Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan:

which had not yet received their inheritance; and for which the lots were not cast.

Joshua 18:3

Ver. 3. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel,.... To those of the seven tribes:

how long [are] you slack to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you? not that they might have taken possession of it of themselves, without having it assigned to them by lot; that they did not do this, is not what is complained of, and they stand reproved for; but that when two tribes and a half had received their inheritance, these seemed indifferent to it, showed no inclination and disposition towards it, and much less eagerness to have a settlement, and did not apply to the court for it; which dilatoriness might arise from the present affluence of all good things they enjoyed through the spoils of the enemy; and partly through slothfulness, being tired of the war, and perceiving that they must be involved in it again to dispossess the Canaanites of some of the cities that would fall to their lot; and, perhaps, their slackness might be the more increased, by observing the dissatisfaction of the tribes with the lot they had received, and therefore waited till things were adjusted to greater satisfaction.

Joshua 18:4

Ver. 4. Give out from among you three men for [each] tribe,.... That is, for each of the seven tribes, in all twenty one; though some think they were to be taken out of all the nine tribes and a half, and were thirty six; and so Josephus {a} seems to understand it; but then he makes but one out of each tribe to be sent, and but ten in all, which is a great oversight in that historian:

and I will send them; Joshua would not take upon him to name the persons, but left it to their own choice for their greater satisfaction; but when chosen and presented to him, he would give them a commission and directions what to do:

and they shall rise; gird themselves, and prepare for their journey, and set out:

and go through the land; of Canaan; not the whole of it, but that part which as yet was not disposed of; though some think they were to go through and describe the whole land; but I see no reason for that, for what was described was to be divided into seven parts only, and what belonged already to Judah and Joseph, seem plainly to be excepted in
Jos 18:5:

and describe it according to the inheritance of them; take the dimensions of it, and divide it into seven parts, according to the number of the tribes that had not received their inheritance. Jarchi thinks this description and division were not to be made equally, but according to the largeness and smallness of the tribes; but this could not be done by the measurers, since the inheritance of each depended on the lot that was afterward to be cast, which by this means would have been rendered needless:

and they shall come [again] to me; which seems to be not only a precept or instruction to them, that when they had done their business, they should come to Joshua and give him an account of it; but an assurance also of their safety, that they should receive no disturbance nor hurt from the remaining Canaanites, but should return safe and well.

{a} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 21.

Joshua 18:5

Ver. 5. And they shall divide it into seven parts,.... According to the number of the seven tribes not yet settled; and this they were to describe and divide was all the land subdued, or not subdued, only the following excepted:

Judah shall abide in their coast on the south; on the south of the land of Canaan, where their lot fell, so that needed not to be measured and described; and this tribe was to retain what they were possessed of, unless it should appear they had too much, and others wanted, and they willing to part with some of it to their brethren, as they afterwards did to the tribes of Simeon and Dan:

and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coast on the north; on the north of the tribe of Judah; not of the land of Canaan, for some other tribes lay more northerly.

Joshua 18:6

Ver. 6. Ye shall therefore describe the land [into] seven parts,.... Or ye shall describe the land, even the seven parts of it when divided; it seems as if they were first to describe in general all the land not disposed of, and then divide it into seven parts, and make a particular description of each part, or form a plan, or draw a map of every part:

and bring [the description] hither to me; not by word of mouth, but as written in a book, or marked out in a map, and laid before him, see Jos 18:9;

that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord your God; in Shiloh, at the door of the tabernacle, and so before the Lord who dwelt in it, at whose disposal the lot was, and by which everyone of the seven tribes would have their part and portion assigned them most fitting and convenient for them, according to the will and counsel of God, in which it became them to acquiesce.

Joshua 18:7

Ver. 7. But the Levites have no part among you,.... And so needed not to send any men out of their tribe to measure the land on their account, and is a reason why the remaining part of the land was to be divided into seven parts only:

for the priesthood of the Lord [is] his inheritance; not only the office, but what appertained to it, all the perquisites of it, the tithes, firstfruits, parts of the sacrifices, &c. see Jos 13:14;

and Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave them; and so had no share in the division of the land of Canaan, being sufficiently provided for.

Joshua 18:8

Ver. 8. And the men arose, and went away,.... The seven tribes took the advice of Joshua, chose three men out of each tribe, and presented them to him, who gave them their commission and instruction to go and describe the land of Canaan, not yet disposed of, and whether subdued, or not subdued; upon which they prepared for their journey, and took it, after he had given them the following charge:

and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land; before they departed from him:

saying, go and walk through the land; and take particular notice, and an exact survey of it, both of the quality and the quantity of it:

and describe it; its cities and towns, hills and dales, the goodness and badness of the soil, and put it down in a book, or lay it out in a map, that it may be discerned by the eye what number of cities, and what space of ground it contains, and what parts are hilly and woody, and what otherwise:

and come again to me; to make a report of it:

that I may cast lots for you before the Lord in Shiloh; that is, for the several tribes which they belonged to, and by whom they were chosen for this purpose.

Joshua 18:9

Ver. 9. And the men went and passed through the land,.... Undisturbed by the inhabitants that remained; the fear of the Israelites being still upon them, and the providence of God restraining them, so that the men passed through the whole country, and took a survey of it without any molestation:

and described it by cities, into seven parts, in a book; or map, or rather made seven maps of it, and set down the several cities in each division, with the places adjacent, hills and vales, and marked out a plain and exact chorography of the whole, by which it appears they must be men well skilled in geometry. Josephus {b} says, that Joshua added to them some that understood geometry; but doubtless the persons each tribe chose and sent were such whom they knew were well versed in that art, and so fit for the business; and which they had, no doubt, learned in Egypt, this being one part of the wisdom and learning of the Egyptians; who boasted of it as an invention of theirs, as Diodorus Siculus {c} relates; and indeed they were obliged to study it, their country being divided into several homes, and these into lesser districts, and which also were subdivided, and according thereunto were the king's taxes levied upon them; and what with the confusion frequently made by the overflowings of the Nile, they were frequently obliged to measure their land over again; and hence they became expert in this science, which is commonly believed took its rise from them, and passed into Greece, as Herodotus {d}, and Strabo {e}, and other authors relate; however, it is certain from this instance in the time of Joshua, that geometry was not the invention of Anaximander, about five hundred years before Christ, as some have asserted {f}:

and came [again] to Joshua to the host at Shiloh; where the camp, as well as the people in common, and the tabernacle, were; they returned, as Josephus {g} says, at the end of seven months; and to measure so much land, and make such divisions of it, and give the plans and maps of each division, must take up a considerable time.

{b} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 21. {c} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 63. {d} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 109. {e} Geograph. l. 17. p. 541, 542. Vid. Suidam in voce gewmetria. {f} Vid. Strabo. Geograph. l. 1. p. 5. Lar. l. 2. Vit. Anaximan I. {g} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 21.)

Joshua 18:10

Ver. 10. And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord,.... For the seven tribes, as he had for the two tribes and a half at Gilgal; of the manner of casting lots, See Gill on "Nu 26:55";

and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their division: the land that was divided into seven parts, he distributed to the seven tribes, as the lot came up for them, and then divided these several parts according to the families and households in each tribe.

Joshua 18:11

Ver. 11. And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families,.... This was the first lot of the seven that came up; it was but a small lot, and therefore called "little Benjamin", Ps 68:27; but the land was very pleasant and fruitful. Josephus {h} says, this lot was very strait, because of the goodness of the soil, for it took in Jericho, and the city of Jerusalem:

and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph; having Judah on the south, and Joseph on the north; this was so ordered by the providence of God, that Benjamin should lie close to Joseph, being own brothers, and the only children of Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife; and that it should be next to Judah, with whom it was to unite, both in religious and civil affairs, and both met in and had a part of Jerusalem, the metropolis of Israel; and this lot fell exactly according to the prediction of Moses, and the order of it, who places Benjamin between Judah and Joseph, the tribe of Levi having no share in the division of the land, De 33:7.

{h} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.

Joshua 18:12

Ver. 12. And their border on the north side was from Jordan,.... Which was the eastern boundary of the tribe, and hence proceeded from east to west, and formed its northern border, which is described in like manner as the lot of the children of Joseph, Jos 16:1;

and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side; from Jordan it went to the north of Jericho, and so took in that place, which was within the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:21;

and went up through the mountains westward; the mountains that were on the north of Jericho; for, as Strabo says {i}, Jericho was surrounded with mountains, see **Jos 2:16**; through these mountains the coast went on towards the western border of the tribe:

and the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Bethaven: a place near Bethel and Ai, to which there was a wilderness adjoining, see **Jos 7:2**; here ended the northern border.

{i} Geograph. l. 16. p. 525.

Joshua 18:13

Ver. 13. And the border went over from thence towards Luz,.... From Bethaven, where the northern border ended, the western began, and went on to Luz:

to the side of Luz, which is Bethel, southward; that is, passed along, leaving that city to the south, which formerly was called Luz, but now Bethel, which though distinct places formerly, yet being very near, might in process of time be joined; See Gill on "Jos 16:2";

and the border descended to Atarothadar, the same with Archiataroth,
See Gill on "Jos 16:2", and
See Gill on "Jos 16:5":

near the hill that [lieth] on the south side of the nether Bethhoron; so called to distinguish it from Bethhoron the upper, situated on an hill or mountain, Jos 16:5; this was rebuilt by Solomon, **1Ki 9:17**.

Joshua 18:14

Ver. 14. And the border was drawn [thence],.... From Bethhoron:

and compassed the corner of the sea southward; it is hard to say what sea is meant, or what by it. Fuller {k} conjectures, that as the Hebrews call any confluence of water a sea, as we call such a "mere", the great waters in Gibeon may be meant, Jer 41:12; for it cannot mean the Mediterranean sea, for Dan lay between Benjamin and that; and yet if a sea is meant, no other can be; wherefore it is best to render it the "west quarter", as it is in the latter part of this verse; and so the same word is translated, Jos 18:12; the "west", and not the "sea", as it sometimes is; for the border of Benjamin did not reach the sea any where; though Josephus {l} makes it to extend to it, and says, that the length of it was from the river Jordan to the sea:

the hill that [lieth] before Bethhoron southward; the hill that lay to the south of nether Bethhoron, as in Jos 18:13:

and the goings out thereof, the end of the western coast,

were at Kirjathbaal, which [is] Kirjathjearim, a city of the children of Judah; of which see Jos 15:9;

this [was] the west quarter; as thus described.

{k} Pisgah Sight, B. 2. c. 12. p. 251. {l} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.)

Joshua 18:15

Ver. 15. And the south quarter [was] from the end of Kirjathjearim,.... Where the western quarter ended:

and the border went out on the west; not directly south, but somewhat westerly. It is, in the original, "the sea", and should be rendered, "from the sea", or "from the west" {m}; and Jarchi confesses his ignorance, and says, I know not what sea it is; and well he might, for there was no sea here; but the Mediterranean sea, being to the west of the land of Israel, it is often used for the west in the Hebrew language, and so here:

and went out to the well of waters of Nephtoah;
See Gill on "Jos 15:9";

{m} hmy "a mari", Masius; "ab occidente", Noldius, No. 1083. p. 239.

Joshua 18:16

Ver. 16. And the border came down,.... In the description of the border of Judah, hereabout, it is said to go up, Jos 15:5; because there, as Jarchi observes, the measure was from east to west, but here from west to east:

to the end of the mountain that [lieth] before the valley of the son of Hinnom; this south border of Benjamin is the same with the north border of Judah; and the same places are mentioned in the description of the one as of the other, see Jos 15:8. The mountain is Mount Moriah,

[and] which [is] in the valley of the giants on the north; on the north of the

valley of Rephaim:

and descended to the valley of Hinnom; the border from the end of Mount Moriah to that valley:

to the side of Jebusi on the south; to the south side of Jerusalem, having that city on the south;

and descended to Enrogel; of which See Gill on "Jos 15:7".

Joshua 18:17

Ver. 17. And was drawn from the north,.... Turning northward, and looking that way from the west to the east:

and went forth to Enshemesh; or the fountain of the sun, see Jos 15:7;

and went forth toward Geliloth; called Gilgal, Jos 15:7;

which [is] over against the going up to Adummim; a place between Jerusalem and Jericho, see Jos 15:7;

and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben; see Jos 15:6.

Joshua 18:18

Ver. 18. And passed along toward the side over against Arabah northward,.... The same with Betharabah, Jos 15:6; and so it is called here in the Greek version:

and went down unto Arabah; the same as before, and included it, for it is mentioned among the cities of this tribe, Jos 18:22.

Joshua 18:19

Ver. 19. And the border passed along to the side of Bethhoglah northward,....

Inclining somewhat toward the north, but not leaving the city to the north, for it is included in the lot of Benjamin,
Jos 18:21; of which place see Jos 15:6;

and the outgoings of the border were at the north bay of the salt sea; here ended the southern border of Benjamin, even at the bay or creek of the salt sea, which looked northward, as the southern border of Judah began at that bay of it, which looked southward, Jos 15:2;

at the south end of Jordan; where it fell into the salt sea:

this [was] the south coast; as before described.

Joshua 18:20

Ver. 20. And Jordan was the border of it on the east side,.... It had Jordan on the east, Dan on the west, Judah on the south, and Joseph or Ephraim on the north:

this [was] the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about, according to their families; this is the general description of the limits of this tribe, the particular cities in it follow.

Joshua 18:21

Ver. 21. Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin,
according to their families, were Jericho,.... Which though destroyed, and not to be rebuilt as a city, was yet a place inhabited, and in future times was rebuilt, and in great splendour, and continued to the time of Christ; of which see **Jos 2:1**;

and Bethhoglah, where or near to which was the threshing floor of Atad, at which lamentation was made for Jacob, See Gill on "Ge 1:10", and
See Gill on "Jos 15:6";

and the valley of Keziz; or Emekkeziz; so the Greek version calls it Amecasis: it is highly probable it was in the valley or plain of Jericho, and perhaps might have its name from the incision of the balsam tree there; which, as Pliny {n} says, was cut with glass or a stone, or with knives made of bone; if cut with iron, it kills it.

{n} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 25.

Joshua 18:22

Ver. 22. And Betharabah,.... Of the first of these,
See Gill on "Jos 15:6";

and Zemaraim; one of the sons of Canaan was named Zemira, Ge 10:18; by whom this city Zemaraim might be built, or however have its name given it, in memory of him; there was a mountain of this name in the tribe of Ephraim, near to which this city might be, 2Ch 13:4.

and Bethel; of the last of these, See Gill on "Jos 7:2".

Joshua 18:23

Ver. 23. And Avim, and Parah,.... Of the two first of these we read nowhere else;

and Ophrah is not the same with Ophrah in **Jud 6:11**; that belonged to the tribe of Manasseh, but rather that which was in the land of Shuah, 1Sa 13:17. Jerom calls this place Aphrah, in the tribe of Benjamin, and says {o}, in his time there was a village called Effrem, five miles from Bethel to the east, which very probably is the same with this.

{o} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. H.

Joshua 18:24

Ver. 24. And Chepharhaammonai, and Ophni,.... Of the two first of these no mention is made elsewhere;

and Gaba is the same with Gibeah, a well known place, because of the foul fact committed there, which had like to have been the ruin of this tribe, Jud 19:14; and for being the native place of King Saul, hence called "Gibeah of Saul", 1Sa 11:4; it was about six or seven miles from Jerusalem, See Gill on

"Ho 5:8"; twelve cities with their villages; which agrees with the account of them.

Joshua 18:25

Ver. 25. Gibeon,.... Gibeon is the place from whence the Gibeonites came, who deceived Joshua, **Jos 9:3**. Jerom says {p}, in his time there was a village shown of this name, four miles from Bethel to the east, near Ramah, next mentioned;

and Ramah, which Jerom relates {q} was six miles from Aelia or Jerusalem to the north, against Bethel. Rauwolff, a traveller in those parts, says {r}, that the town of Rama is situated on an ascent, in plain fields, which extend themselves for two leagues to the hill of the city of Jerusalem; these fields are very fruitful and well tilled, and sown with corn, cotton, and Indian millet; the town is pretty large, but very open, like unto a village, very pitifully built, where one may still see here and there some signs of old buildings;

and Beeroth was a city that belonged to the Gibeonites, **Jos 9:17**; and Jerom says {s}, in his time was shown the village, seven miles from Aelia or Jerusalem, as you go to Neapolis or Shechem.

{p} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. A. {q} Ibid. fol. 94. B. {r} Travels, par. 3. c. 1. p. 215. Ed. Ray. {s} Vid. Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 618.

Joshua 18:26

Ver. 26. And Mizpeh,.... Frequent mention is made of Mizpeh in Scripture; according to Fuller {t}, it was about eight miles from Gibeah; it was near Ramathon, which Josephus says {u} was forty furlongs from Jerusalem;

and Chephirah was one of the cities subject to Gibeon, **Jos 9:17**.

and Mozah; there was a place called Motza, near to Jerusalem, where they used to go to get willows at the feast of tabernacles {w}.

{t} Pisgah-Sight, B. 2. c. 12. p. 209. {u} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 12. sect. 3. {w} Misn. Succah, c. 4. sect. 5.

Joshua 18:27

Ver. 27. And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah. Of these cities there is no mention made elsewhere.

Joshua 18:28

Ver. 28. And Zelaheath,.... Zelah was the buryingplace of Saul and his family, 2Sa 21:14.

Eleph is nowhere else mentioned; some join it with Zelah, and make one city of it, but then the number of cities given could not be completed; both Jarchi and Kimchi say they were two cities, as doubtless they were;

and Jebusi, which [is] Jerusalem; of Jerusalem being called Jebusi, see Jos 15:63; it belonged partly to the tribe of Judah, and partly to the tribe of Benjamin; Mount Zion belonged to Judah, and Moriah to Benjamin;

Gibeath was a distinct city both from Gaba and Gibeon; by its being mentioned with Jerusalem, it should seem to be near it. Jerom {y} speaks of Gabaatha in the tribe of Benjamin, twelve miles from Eleutheropolis, where the grave of the Prophet Habakkuk was shown;

[and] Kirjath signifies a city, but what city is meant is not known:

fourteen cities with their villages; and just so many are mentioned by name:

this [is] the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families; these cities, with others perhaps not mentioned, were allotted to the tribe of Benjamin for their families to dwell in.

{y} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. C.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 19

In this chapter an account is given of the lots of the six remaining tribes, and the cities in them, as of Simeon, whose cities were chiefly within the tribe of Judah, Jos 19:1; of Zebulun, its border and cities, Jos 19:10; of Issachar, its border and cities,
Jos 19:17; of Asher, its border and cities, Jos 19:24; of Naphtali, its border and cities, Jos 19:32; of Dan, its border and titles, Jos 19:40; and lastly of a gift of inheritance to Joshua, Jos 19:49.

Ver. 1. And the second lot came forth to Simeon,.... That is, the second of the seven lots, of which Benjamin's was the first; otherwise there were the two lots of Judah and Joseph, which preceded both these:

[even] for the tribe of the children of Simeon, according to their families; for though many of their cities had been given by lot to the tribe of Judah, yet it seems as if there were others they had by a special lot cast for them, as many as were sufficient for their families:

and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah; which was done partly because this was but a small tribe, and particularly because the lot put up, which fell to the tribe of Judah, was too large for it, more than they could occupy, too much being put to this lot by the first measurers of the land; and partly to fulfil the prophecy of Jacob, that the Simeonites should be scattered in Jacob, and divided in Israel, Ge 49:7; and hence it is that the lots of these two tribes lying together, and being so intermixed, that the tribe of Judah called upon that of Simeon to join them in fighting against the Canaanites, and taking out of their hands the cities that belonged to them, **Jud 1:3**.

Joshua 19:2

Ver. 2. And they had in their inheritance Beersheba and Sheba,.... Or, Beersheba, that is, Sheba; for so the particle "vau" is sometimes used {z}, and must be so used here; or otherwise, instead of thirteen, it will appear that there are fourteen cities, contrary to the account of them, Jos 19:6; so Kimchi and Ben Melech make them one city. And it may be observed, that in the enumeration of the cities of Simeon, **1Ch 4:28**; Sheba is left out, and only Beersheba is mentioned; which, was a well known place in, the farthest border of the land of Israel southward, and the reason of its name is manifest, Ge 21:31;
See Gill on "Jos 15:28";

and Moladah; another of the cities of Judah, Jos 15:26.

{z} Vid. Noldium, p. 280. No. 1200.

Joshua 19:3

Ver. 3. And Hazarshual,.... See Gill on "Jos 15:28";

and Balah, and Azem; of these places see Gill "Jos 15:29"; for Balah is the same with Baalah there, and with Bilhah **1Ch 4:29**; and Azem with Ezem there.

Joshua 19:4

Ver. 4. And Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah. These were all cities of Judah, Jos 15:30; Eltolad is the same with Tolad, and Bethul with Bethuel, **1Ch 4:29**, and with Chesil, Jos 15:30, mentioned there along with Hormah; See Gill on "Jos 15:30".

Joshua 19:5

Ver. 5. And Ziklag,.... Another of the cities of Judah,
See Gill on "Jos 15:31";

and Bethmarcaboth, and Hazarsusah; or Hazarsusim, as in **1Ch 4:31**; the one signifies a chariot house, and the other a court or stable for horses, which made Bochart conjecture {a}, that they were places where Solomon kept his chariots and horses; but it should be observed that these were the names by which these places went in the times of the old Canaanites; and seem to me rather where some of their kings had their horses and chariots; or rather where there were temples dedicated to the horses and chariots of the sun; see 2Ki 23:11.

{a} Hierozoic. l. 2. c. 9. col. 158.

Joshua 19:6

Ver. 6. And Bethlebaoth, and Sharuhen,.... Whether the first is the same with Lebaoth, a city of Judah, Jos 15:32; and with the Bethleptepha of Josephus {b}, and the Betholene of Pliny {c}, is not certain: in this place secret to have been an idol temple of the Canaanites, dedicated to lions, as in Egypt there was a city called Leontopolis, from whence was the Leontopolitan nome, the inhabitants of which worshipped lions {d}; and the Egyptians had temples dedicated to them, as Aelianus {e} relates. Both these places are thought to be the same with Bethbirei and Shaaraim in **1Ch 4:31**; of the latter of which see Jos 15:36. Those who take Sheba, Jos 19:2, to be the same with Shema, Jos 15:26, make but one city here, and take away the last, as the Greek version does, and render the word "and their fields", and so the number still is as follows:

thirteen cities and their villages; the sum total of those enumerated above.

{b} De Jud. Bell. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 1. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 14. {d} Strabo. Geograph. l. 17. p. 559. {e} De Animal. l. 12. c. 7.

Joshua 19:7

Ver. 7. Ain, Remmon,.... Of the two first, which were cities of Judah,
See Gill on "Jos 15:32";

and Ether, and Ashan; of the two last, see Gill "Jos 19:42";

four cities and their villages; Ain, Remmon, therefore, could not be one city, at this time, as it seems to have been in the times of Nehemiah, Ne 11:29; or otherwise there would have been but three cities.

Joshua 19:8

Ver. 8. And all the villages that [were] round about these cities,.... Not only the suburbs adjoining to those cities which are mentioned before, but the several small distinct towns and villages, scattered up and down in the country:

to Baalathbeer, Ramath of the south: this is the same with Baal in **1Ch 4:33**; and with Ramath of the south, or south Ramoth, as it is called 1Sa 30:27; all these are the names of one and the same city:

this [is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon, according to their families; that is, the above named cities fell to the lot of the inheritance of the Simeonites, and were divided among them according to the number of their respective families; at least, these were the chief and principal of them; for all that they possessed are not mentioned, particularly one called Tochen, **1Ch 4:32**; and another, the name of which is Etam there, unless that is thought to be the same with Ether here in Jos 19:7. Josephus says {f}, this tribe took by lot that part of Idumea which lay near to Egypt and Arabia.

{f} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.

Joshua 19:9

Ver. 9. Out of the portion of the children of Judah [was] the inheritance of the children of Simeon,.... Which is the reason why no description is given of the border of their inheritance, because that is before given in the account of the lot of Judah:

for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them: they had more cities than they could fill with people, and more land than they could cultivate; they had an hundred fourteen cities with their villages:

therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them; the one being a small tribe, and the other large, and for the reasons given; See Gill on "Jos 19:1".

Joshua 19:10

Ver. 10. And the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun, according to their families,.... Who, though younger than Issachar, has his lot before him, agreeably to the order in which his blessing is predicted, both by Jacob and Moses, Ge 49:13;

and the border of their inheritance was unto Sarid; or "by Sarid", as Masius, who takes this to be the southwest border of Zebulun, being near Carmel; in which he seems to be right.

Joshua 19:11

Ver. 11. And their border went up toward the sea,.... Westward towards the Mediterranean sea, which fulfilled the prophecies of Jacob and Moses, that Zebulun should dwell by the sea, be an haven of ships, and take of the abundance of the seas, as in the places before referred to; and so Josephus says, the Zebulunites took the land unto the lake of Gennesaret, by or about Carmel and the sea:

and Maralah; which Jerom calls {g} the ascent of Zebulun; for from hence it went up from the sea, and reached to Dabbasheth; which Jerom calls Dasbath; the word signifies a hump that is on a camel's back,
Isa 30:6; so called because when that is hurt by burdens it is cured with honey {h}; it seems to denote some place or city at a point of land or promontory, that stood out towards the sea, as that of Carmel; or some city on the back of Carmel, resembling a camel's hump:

and reached to the river that [is] before Jokneam; of Jokneam,
See Gill on "Jos 12:22"; and this river was either the river Kishon, or Belus, sometimes called Pagida; from whence sand was taken to make glass of {k}, and was near Carmel, as Jokneam was.

{g} De loc. Heb. fol. 90. K. {h} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 154. 2. {k} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19. & l. 36. c. 26.

Joshua 19:12

Ver. 12. And turned from Sarid eastward,.... This describes the southern border, going on from west to east:

towards the sunrising, unto the border of Chislothtabor; this Jerom places in the tribe of Issachar, it bordered on both tribes; and he says {l}, that in his time there was a little village called Chaselus, eight miles from Diocaesarea, at the foot of Mount Tabor in the plains:

and then goeth out to Daberath; which also was a city in the tribe of Issachar, given to the Levites, Jos 21:28. Jerom {m} speaks of a little village of the Jews by Mount Tabor, of the country belonging to Diocaesarea, called Dabira; this place is still in being. Mr. Maundrell says {n}, at the bottom of Tabor westward stands Debarah, supposed by some to take its name from Deborah, the famous judge and deliverer of Israel:

and goeth up to Japhia; this Jerom {o} says is the town called Sycamine, as you go from Caesarea to Ptolemais, above the sea, because of Mount Carmel, called Epha, thought by some to be the Jebba of Pliny {p}. It seems, however, to be the Japha of Josephus {q}, which he speaks of as being a strong fortified place both by nature and art.

{l} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. D. H. {m} Ibid. fol. 90. I. {n} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 115. {o} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. K. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19. {q} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 31.

Joshua 19:13

Ver. 13. And from thence passeth on along on the east to Gittahhepher,.... Which was the native place of Jonah the prophet, 2Ki 14:25; and where Jerom says {r} his grave was shown, and was a small village in his time two miles from Sippore, then called Diocaesarea,

to Ittahkazin; of this place we have no account elsewhere, but it was not far from the former:

and goeth out to Remmonmethoar to Neah; where the eastern border ended. Some versions make Remmonmethoar distinct places; but where either of them were exactly is not known: some, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, render the word "Methoar which goes about"; that is, the border went about from Remmon to Neah, which by Jerom is called Anna, and who observes {s}, that there is another village called Anna, ten miles from Neapolis, as you go to Aelia; and by whom also Methoar is reckoned a distinct place, and called Amathar.

{r} Praefat. in Jonam. {s} De loc. Heb. fol. 38. H.

Joshua 19:14

Ver. 14. And the border compasseth it from the north side to Hannathon,.... This is the northern border of the tribe, which took a circuit from the last place to this; of which and the following place we have no account; Jerom only makes mention of them as in the tribe of Zebulun:

and the outgoings thereof are in the valley of Jiphthahel; here the northern border ended, which, Masius conjectures, was part of the valley of Carmel.

Joshua 19:15

Ver. 15. And Kattath, and Nahallal,.... Of the two first of these we read nowhere else, but in Jos 21:34;

and Shimron was a royal city, the king of which Joshua took and hanged, Jos 11:1;

and Idalah is a place Bochart conjectures {t} where the goddess Venus was worshipped, Idalia being one of her names;

and Bethlehem is a different place from that which was the birthplace of our Lord, called Bethlehem of Judah, to distinguish it from this:

twelve cities with their villages; more are named, but some of them belonged to other tribes, and only lay on the borders of this; and others might not be properly cities, but small towns.

{t} Canaan, l. 1. c. 3. col. 356.

Joshua 19:16

Ver. 16. This is the inheritance of the children of Zebulun, according to their families,.... Which was allotted to it and divided, according to the number of its families:

these cities with their villages; before enumerated, excepting such as only bordered on them; though indeed there were other cities which belonged to them, or might be after given them, not here mentioned, as Kartah and Dimnah, Jos 21:34.

Joshua 19:17

Ver. 17. [And] the fourth lot came out to Issachar,.... The fourth of the seven drawn at Shiloh:

for the children of Issachar, according to their families: among whom the inheritance that came to them by the lot was divided, according to the number of them.

Joshua 19:18

Ver. 18. And their border was towards Jezreel,.... Which was a royal seat in the time of Ahab, 1Ki 21:1; and according to Jerom was near to Maximianopolis; See Gill on "Ho 1:5"; and the same writer {u} says in his day a large village of this name was shown in the great plain between Scythopolis and Legion (he means the plain of Jezreel), and it was the border of Issachar:

and Chesulloth was different from the Chislothtabor, Jos 19:12; that, as Masius observes, was to the north, this to the south of Mount Tabor;

and Shunem is a place well known for being the dwelling place of a certain woman in the times of Elisha, whose son the prophet raised from the dead, **2Ki 4:8**; Jerom calls it Sonam, where was the Shunammite woman; but this city here seems to be what he calls Salem, in the tribe of Issachar; and he adds, that there was shown in his day a village by this name, five miles from Mount Tabor to the south {w}: according to Bunting {x}, it was forty eight miles from Jerusalem to the north, not far from Nain.

{u} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. I. {w} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. K. L. {x} Travels, p. 143.

Joshua 19:19

Ver. 19. And Hapharaim,.... The first of these is by Jerom {y} called Aphraim, a city of the tribe of Issachar; and adds, there is at this day a village called Affarea, six miles from Legion to the north;

and Shion; of Seon or Soen, the same with Shion here, he says {z}, there was a village of this name shown in his time near Mount Tabor;

and Anaharath, of which we have no account elsewhere.

{y} Ut supra, (De loc. Heb.) fol. 88. I. {z} Ibid. fol. 94. K.

Joshua 19:20

Ver. 20. And Rabbith,.... The first of these Jerom calls {a} Rabboth in the tribe of Issachar;

and Kishion, as Masius notes, seems to given name to the river Kishon near it; some take it to be the same with Kedesh, **1Ch 6:72**;

and Abez, of which no mention is made elsewhere.

{a} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. B.

Joshua 19:21

Ver. 21. And Remeth,.... Remeth seems to be the same with Jarmuth, Jos 21:29; and with Ramoth, **1Ch 6:73**;

and Engannim seems to be the same with Anem in **1Ch 6:73**: there were several of this name, which seem to have been places full of gardens, and well watered; for the word signifies a fountain of gardens. Engannim is now called Jenine, distant from Tabor twenty two miles, a place of gardens, of water, and of pleasure, as a traveller {b} of ours tells us; who also declares {c}, that, in his whole journey from Damascus to Jerusalem, he saw not more fruitful ground, and so much together, than he did in twenty two miles of riding between Mount Tabor and Engannim. This seems to be the same place Mr. Maundrell {d} calls Jeneen, a large old town on the outskirts of Esdraelon. Dr. Lightfoot {e} is inclined to believe, that Nain, where the widow's son was raised to life, **Lu 7:11**, is the same with Engannim, for which he gives various reasons;

and Enhaddah; Jerom says, in his time {f} there was a village called Enadda, ten miles from Eleutheropolis, as you go from thence to Aelia; but seems not to be the same with Enhaddah here;

and Bethpazzez; of Bethpazzez no mention is made elsewhere. "Beth" signifies a "house", and "Pazzez" in the Arabic tongue signifies "silver"; so this with the old Canaanites might be a treasure city, like those in Egypt, **Ex 1:11**. But where a word begins with "Beth", as the name of a place, I always suspect there was an idol temple there; now as the word in Hebrew signifies the same as "Peor", opening, here might be a temple to that deity, or to one that was similar to the god of the Moabites, and design a Priapus, among the Canaanites like that; or as the word in the Syriac and Chaldee languages signifies to redeem, deliver, and save, this temple might be dedicated to some idol as their deliverer and saviour.

{b} Biddulph apud Lightfoot. Talmud. Exercitat. in John iv. 1. {c} lb. apud Fuller's Pisgah Sight, p. 161. {d} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 111. {e} Chorograph. notes in Luke, p. 370. {f} Ut supra. (De. loc. Heb. fol. 94. B.)

Joshua 19:22

Ver. 22. And the coast reacheth to Tabor,.... Tabor was the name of a mountain in those parts; it is generally supposed to be the mountain on which our Lord was transfigured, though it is not sufficiently evident;
See Gill on "Jer 46:18". There was a city of this name near it, **1Ch 6:77**, and which is meant here, and which either gave unto or received name from the mount. The Greeks call it Itabyrium, and it is described by Polybius {g} as situated on a hill rising in the form of a pap or breast, and has an ascent of more than fifteen furlongs, and he calls it a city;

and Shahazimah is not mentioned any where else;

and Bethshemesh; there seem to have been several cities, at least more than one, of the name of Bethshemesh; one in the tribe of Judah,
Jos 21:16; and another in the tribe of Naphtali, Jos 19:38; which perhaps may be the same with this, it lying on the borders of both tribes. In this, and so in others of the same name, was a temple dedicated to the sun by the Heathens, as there was one of the same name in Egypt for the same reason, Jer 43:13;

and the outgoings of their border were at Jordan; here it ended: so Josephus says, that the border of this tribe in the length of it were Mount Carmel (at one end), and the river (i.e. Jordan, at the other); and at the breadth of it the mountain Itabyrium, or Mount Tabor: it had Jordan on the east, the sea on the west, Zebulun on the north, and Manasseh on the south:

sixteen cities with their villages; which was the sum total of them.

{g} Hist. l. 5. p. 413.

Joshua 19:23

Ver. 23. This [is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar,.... Which fell to them by lot, as before described:

according to their families; was divided among them, according to the number of them:

the cities and their villages; the cities before enumerated, and the villages adjacent to them.

Joshua 19:24

Ver. 24. And the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher,.... Which entitled them to an inheritance next described:

according to their families; which was sufficient for them, and divided to them according to their number.

Joshua 19:25

Ver. 25. And their border was Helkath,.... Helkath seems to be the same with Hukok, **1Ch 6:75**; and according to Masius it lay ten or twelve miles above Ptolemais;

and Hali, of which we read nowhere else.

and Beten is by Jerom {h} called Bathne, and was in his time a village by the name of Bethebem, eight miles from Ptolemais to the east. Reland {i} seems to think it might be the Ecbatana of Pliny {k}, which he speaks of as near Mount Carmel, and not far from Ptolemais;

and Achshaph was a royal city, whose king was taken by Joshua,
See Gill on "Jos 11:1".

{h} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. H. {i} Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 617. {k} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.

Joshua 19:26

Ver. 26. And Alammelech, and Amad,.... Of the two first of these there is no mention elsewhere;

and Misheal is the same with Mashal, **1Ch 6:74**; and is by Jerom {l} called Masan, and said to be near Carmel to the sea:

and reacheth to Carmel westward; or, "to the sea", as Carmel is called "Carmel by the sea", See Gill on "Jer 46:18": it is hereby distinguished from Carmel in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:55; (Pliny {m} calls it a promontory):

and to Shihorlibnath; the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions make two places of it: but the sum of the cities after given will not admit of it: more rightly Junius renders it Sihor by Libhath, and takes Sihor to be the river Belus, or Pagidus; so called either because of its likeness to the Nile, one of whose names is Sihor, **Jer 2:18**; or because its waters might be black and muddy; it was the river out of which sand was fetched to make glass of: and Libnath, which has its name from whiteness, the same writer thinks may be the Album Promontorium, or white promontory of Pliny {n}, which he places near Ptolemais, between Ecdippa and Tyre, and is very probable.

{l} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. E. {m} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.) {n} Ibid.

Joshua 19:27

Ver. 27. And turneth towards the sunrising,.... Or eastward,

to Bethdagon; there was a city of this name in the tribe of Judah, See Gill on "Jos 15:41". Dagon, being a god of the Phoenicians, had temples built for him in various places in Canaan:

and reacheth to Zebulun; not the tribe of Zebulun, but a city so called, the same Josephus {o} calls a strong city of Galilee, which had the name of Men, perhaps from the populousness of it, and separated Ptolemais from Judea;

and to the valley of Jiphthahel; see Jos 19:14;

toward the north side of Bethemek; of Bethemek no mention is made elsewhere: perhaps here was an idol temple before dedicated to the god of the valleys; see 1Ki 20:28;

and Neiel; which the Greek version calls Inael, of which Jerom says {p}, it is a certain village called Betoaenea, fifteen miles from Caesarea, situated on a mountain to the east, on which are said to be wholesome baths:

and goeth out to Cabul on the left hand; not the land of Cabul, **1Ki 9:13**; but a city, which Josephus {q} calls a village on the borders of Ptolemais. The Jews {r} speak of a city of this name, destroyed because of contentions in it.

{o} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 18. sect. 9. {p} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. I. {q} Vita ejus, sect. 43. {r} Echa Rabbati, fol. 75. 4.

Joshua 19:28

Ver. 28. And Hebron,.... Hebron seems to be the same with Abdon, Jos 21:30; r and d being changed, of which there are other instances; and hereby this is distinguished from another Hebron in the tribe of Judah, more commonly known, Jos 15:54;

and Rehob; in the time of Jerom {s}, there was a village called Rooba, four miles from Scythopolis, and which he says was a city separated to the Levites, as this was, or one of the same name in this tribe; for there was another, Jos 19:30; see Jos 21:31; but whether either of them is the same with this is not certain;

and Hammon; of this city we read nowhere else:

and Kanah; this Kanah is generally thought to be the same where Christ wrought his first miracle, **Joh 2:1**. Jerom expressly says {u}, there was a Cana in the tribe of Asher, where our Lord and Saviour turned water into wine, **Joh 2:1**, and from whence was Nathanael,
Joh 21:2; and it is at this day, adds he, a town in Galilee of the Gentiles. Phocas {w} places Cana between Sippori and Nazareth, which is now shown six Roman miles from Sippori to the west, a little inclining to the north; and there is also in the same tract Cephar Cana, four miles from Nazareth to the north, inclining to the east; and it is disputed which of these two is Cana of Galilee the New Testament: with this account agrees pretty much what our countryman Mr. Maundrell {x} gives of his travels in those parts:

"taking leave of Nazareth, (he says,) and going at first northward, we crossed the hills that encompassed the vale of Nazareth at that side; after which we turned to the westward, and passed in view of Cana of Galilee, the place signalized with the beginning of Christ's miracles, **Joh 2:11**; in an hour and a half more we came to Sepharia;"

or Sippori:

[even] unto great Zidon; of great Zidon, and why so called,
See Gill on "Jos 11:8".

{s} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. A. {u} Ibid. fol. 90. B. {w} Apud Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 680. {x} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 117.

Joshua 19:29

Ver. 29. And [then] the coast turneth to Ramah,.... Which was a city in the tribe of Naphtali, Jos 19:36; and on the borders of Asher; though Jerom {y} distinguishes them, and speaks of a Ramah in Asher, and another in Naphtali, as different cities of the same name; as there were several of this name, so called from their being built on an eminence. Masius conjectures it is the same with Sarepta, **Lu 4:26**; famous for its wine; and Bacchus, as the poet says, loves the hills:

and to the strong city Tyre; it is thought this is not to be understood of the famous city, so much spoken of in other parts of Scripture, and in profane history; since, as it is observed, that is not mentioned in Scripture until the times of David; and though Homer makes frequent mention of Sidon, yet never of Tyre. The words signify the strong fortress of a rock, or a fortress on a high rock; so Kimchi and Ben Melech; and it might be a fortified city, which being built on a rock, might have the name of Zor or Tyre, and not be the famous city of that name. Jerom {z} renders it the fortified city of the Assyrians:

and the coast turneth to Hosah; of which we nowhere else read:

and the outgoings thereof are at the sea; the Mediterranean sea; where the coast ended this way:

from the coast to Achzib; this Jerom {a} says is Ecdippa, nine miles from Ptolemais, as you go to Tyre; and this is confirmed by a learned traveller of our own nation {b}; it is now called Zib;
See Gill on "Mic 1:14".

{y} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. B. {z} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. B. {a} Ibid. fol. 88. I. {b} Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 53.

Joshua 19:30

Ver. 30. Ummah also,.... Ummah is not mentioned any where else;

and Aphek; of which, See Gill on "Jos 12:18";

and Rehob; of which, See Gill on "Jos 19:28";

twenty and two cities with their villages: there are more set down in the account, but some of them did not belong to the tribe, only were on the border of it.

Joshua 19:31

Ver. 31. This [is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher,.... As before described, a goodly heritage; it was, according to the prediction of Jacob and Moses, Ge 49:20; a very fruitful country. Josephus {c} says, the country from Carmel called the valley, because it was such, even all over against Sidon, fell to the Asherites, Asher had Mount Libanus on the north, Naphtali on the east, Zebulun on the south and southeast, the sea on the west:

according to their families; the number of them, so their lot was divided to them:

these cities with their villages; before named.

{c} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.

Joshua 19:32

Ver. 32. The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali,.... The tribe of Naphtali, and directed what should be the inheritance of this tribe:

[even] for the children of Naphtali, according to their families; which was to be divided among them, according to the number of their, families.

Joshua 19:33

Ver. 33. And their coast was from Heleph,.... That is, their northern coast, reaching from west to east, as appears by the ending of it at Jordan; the Alexandrian copy of the Greek version calls it Mlepeh, the Targum, Meheleph, and Jerom, Mealeb, which he calls the border of Naphtali; which, though to the north, cannot be expressly said what and where it was:

from Allon to Zaanannim; or rather from the oak, or from the plain in Zaanannim {d}; for it seems to be the same with the plain of Zanaaim, **Jud 4:11**.

and Adami, Nekeb; some make these to be but one city, and the latter only an epithet of the former; but the Talmudists {e} make them two, as we do, and call the first Damin, and the latter Ziadetha; but what and where either of them were exactly is not known; for Adami cannot be the same with Adam, **Jos 3:16**; as some think; for that was in Peraea, on the other side Jordan; See Gill on "Jos 3:16":

and Jabneel; Jabneel is different from that which was on the borders of Judah, Jos 15:11; and is called by the Jews {f} since Cepherjamah;

unto Lakum; of which we nowhere else read:

and the outgoings thereof were at Jordan; here the coast ended this way.

{d} "Ab querceto in Tzahanannimis", Junius & Tremellius; so Piscator. {e} T. Hieros. Megillah, fol. 70. 1. {f} T. Hieros. Megillah, fol. 70. 1.

Joshua 19:34

Ver. 34. And [then] the coast turneth westward to Aznothtabor,.... This was the southern border, reaching from east to west; it began at Aznothtabor, which

Jerom {g} says was a village in his time belonging to the country of Diocaesarea, in the plains; there is another place called Chislothtabor, on the borders of Zebulun, Jos 19:12;

and goeth out from thence to Hukkok: there the southern border ended, which was in the border of Asher, and is the same with Helkath, Jos 19:25; with which compare **1Ch 6:75**;

and reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side and to Judah upon Jordan towards the sunrising; so that as it was bounded by Lebanon, on the north, near to which some of the cities were, mentioned in Jos 19:33, it had Zebulun on the south, Asher on the west, and Jordan to the east; for by Judah is not meant the tribe of Judah, from which Naphtali was at a great distance, but a city so called, as Fuller {h} seems rightly to conjecture.

{g} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. I. {h} Pisgah-Sight, B. 2. c. 4. p. 104.

Joshua 19:35

Ver. 35. And the fenced cities [are] Ziddim,.... The later name of Ziddim, according to the Talmud {i}, was Cepharchitiya, or the village of wheat, perhaps from the large quantity or goodness of wheat there;

Zer is called by Jerom {k} Sor, and interpreted Tyre, the metropolis of Phoenicia, very wrongly, and, in the tribe of Naphtali;

and Hammath probably was built by the youngest son of Canaan, Ge 10:18; or had its name in memory of him; it lay to the north of the land of Israel; see Nu 34:8;

Rakkath, and Chinnereth; Rakkath according to the Jewish writers {l} is the same with Tiberias, as Chinnereth with Gennesaret, from whence the lake or sea of Tiberias, and the country and lake of Gennesaret, had their names, often mentioned in the New Testament. Gennesaret was a most delicious and fruitful spot, and fulfilled the prophecy of Moses, De 33:23; concerning Naphtali.

{i} Ut supra. (T. Hieros. Megillah, fol. 70. 1.) {k} De loc. Heb. fol. 95. A. {l} T. Hieros. ut supra. (Megillah, fol. 70. 1.)

Joshua 19:36

Ver. 36. And Adamah,.... Adamah is different from Adami,
Jos 19:33; and may seem to confirm the notion of some, that Nekeb there is an epithet of it, and so distinguishes it from Adamah here;

and Ramah; of Ramah, as there were several places of this name,
See Gill on "Jos 19:29";

and Hazor was a royal city, of which, See Gill on "Jos 11:1".

Joshua 19:37

Ver. 37. And Kedesh,.... This is Kedesh in Galilee, in Mount Naphtali, to distinguish it from others of the same name; it was one of the cities of refuge, Jos 20:7. Jerom says {m} in his day it was called Cidissus, and was twenty miles from Tyre by Paneas;
See Gill on "Jos 12:22".

and Edrei is a different place from one of that name in the kingdom of Og, Nu 21:33;

and Enhazor, of which we read nowhere else.

{m} Ut supra, (De loc. Heb.) fol. 90. B.

Joshua 19:38

Ver. 38. And Iron,.... Of Iron no mention is made elsewhere;

and Migdalel, which Jerom calls Magdiel, he says {m} was shown a small village, five miles from Dara, as you go to Ptolemais;

and Horem is not mentioned anywhere elsewhere;

and Bethanath; Jerom also relates {n}, that Bathana, in the tribe of Naphtali, was a village that went by the name of Betbanes, fifteen miles from Caesarea;

and Bethshemesh was another city, in which was a temple dedicated to the sun, when inhabited by the Canaanites; see Jos 19:22; and so in Bethanath there might be a temple dedicated to some deity, though now uncertain what:

nineteen cities with their villages; there are more mentioned, but some of them might be only boundaries, and so belonged to another tribe.

{m} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. L. {n} Ibid. fol. 89. H.

Joshua 19:39

Ver. 39. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali,.... Which Josephus {o} thus describes;

"the country to the east, as far as Damascus the city, and upper Galilee, the Naphtalites took, unto Mount Lebanon, and the fountains of Jordan, which flow out of the mount, reaching the northern border of the city Arce:"

according to their families; which was divided among them, according to the number of their families:

the cities and their villages; before enumerated.

{o} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.

Joshua 19:40

Ver. 40. [And] the seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan,.... Which was the last lot drawn, and which appointed an inheritance to this tribe:

according to their families; the number of them.

Joshua 19:41

Ver. 41. And the coast of their inheritance was Zorah, and Eshtaol,.... The tribe of Dan is not described by places the boundaries of it, as other tribes, but by its cities, which were chiefly, at least several of them, taken out of the tribe of Judah, as the two first of these most manifestly were; See Gill on "Jos 15:33";

and Irshemesh signifies the city of the sun, as the Targum interprets it, and was so called very probably from a temple in it, dedicated to the idolatrous worship of the sun, but a different place from Bethshemesh in other tribes; though those of that name, as this, had it for the like reason; and so Heliopolis, in Egypt, which signifies the same, where was a temple of the same kind; as there was another city of this name, between the mountains of Libanus and Antilibanus, now called Balbec {p}, where the ruins of the temple are yet to be seen: but this was a different place, the Septuagint version calls it Sammaus, and it was, according to Jerom {q}, the same with Emmaus, afterwards called Nicopolis; which, if the same Emmaus with that in Lu 24:13; though some doubt it, was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, or seven miles and a half.

{p} See Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 120, 138. {q} Comment. in Ezek. xlviii. fol. 263. A.

Joshua 19:42

Ver. 42. And Shaalabbin,.... The first of these is the same with Shaalbim, **Jud 1:35**; and which Jerom {r} calls Selab, in the tribe of Dan; and which he says was in his day shown a large village on the borders of Sebaste, by the name of Selaba.

and Ajalon is famous for the standing still of the moon in its valley while Joshua pursued his enemies, See Gill on "Jos 10:12";

and Jethlah, of which we read nowhere else.

{r} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. K.

Joshua 19:43

Ver. 43. And Elon,.... Of Elon no mention is made elsewhere;

and Thimnathah is a different place from Timnah in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:10. Jerom {s} speaks of the Thamnitic country, so called from the village Thamna, which seems to be this;

and Ekron was one of the five principalities of the Philistines, and never possessed by the Israelites; it first fell by lot to the tribe of Judah, and afterwards given to the tribe of Dan, Jos 15:45.

{s} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. E.

Joshua 19:44

Ver. 44. And Eltekeh,.... Eltekeh was a city given to the Levites, Jos 21:23; and supposed by some to be the same with Eltekon in the tribe of Judah given to the Danites, Jos 15:59;

and Gibbethon was in the hands of the Philistines in the reign of Asa, 1Ki 15:21; and in the same place Jerom {t} calls Gabatha a city of the strangers, or Philistines; and which lie places near Bethlehem in the tribe of Judah;

and Baalath is not the same with Baalah, Jos 15:29; but the Baalath rebuilt by Solomon, **1Ki 9:18**; called by Josephus {u} Baleth, and spoken of by him as near to Gazara in the land of the Philistines; of these two last cities, the Talmudists {w} say that their houses belonged to Judah, and their fields to Dan.

{t} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. C. {u} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 1. {w} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 3.

Joshua 19:45

Ver. 45. And Jehud,.... Of Jehud no mention is made elsewhere;

and Beneberak signifies sons of lightning; see **Mr 3:17**. Jerom {x} speaks of tills as the name of two places, Bane in the tribe of Dan, and Barach in the same tribe, and which was in his day near Azotus. This place was famous in later times among the Jews for being a place where one of their noted Rabbins, R. Akiba, abode and taught for some time {y}:

and Gathrimmon was in Jerom's {z} time a very large village, twelve miles from Diospolis, or Lydda, as you go from Eleutheropolis to it; it was a city given to the Levites, Jos 21:24.

{x} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. H. {y} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 32. 2. {z} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. C.

Joshua 19:46

Ver. 46. And Mejarkon, and Rakkon,.... Of the two first of these we read no where else.

with the border before Japho; Japho is the same with Joppa, now called at this day Jaffa, a port in the Mediterranean sea, famous for being the place where Jonah took shipping, See Gill on "Jon 1:3"; and where the Apostle Peter resided some time, See Gill on "Ac 9:36"; and
See Gill on "Ac 9:38". It is not certain whether Joppa itself was in the tribe of Dan, or only on the borders of it; the coast of Dan reached "over against" it, as it may be rendered, and included the villages and little cities that were near it; for such there were, as Josephus {b} testifies.

{b} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 4.

Joshua 19:47

Ver. 47. And the coast of the children of Dan went out [too little] for them,.... Being a very numerous tribe, the cities allotted them were not sufficient for them; or rather, leaving out the supplement "too little", the words will run, it "went out from them"; they lost part of it, being driven out of the valley into the mountain by the Amorites, **Jud 1:34**; which obliged them to seek out elsewhere for habitations:

therefore the children of Dan went out to fight against Leshem; called Laish, Jud 18:1, where the whole story is related of their lighting against this place and taking it; which, though some time after the death of Joshua, is here recorded to give at once an account of the inheritance of Dan; and which is no argument against Joshua's being the writer of this book, as is urged; since it might be inserted by another hand, Ezra, or some other inspired man, for the reason before given:

and took and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it,
and dwelt therein; being a Canaanitish city, they put all in it to the sword, as the Lord had commanded, and took possession of it for an habitation:

and called Leshem Dan, after the name of Dan their father; this is the place which is always meant, where the phrase is used "from Dan to Beersheba", Jud 20:1, this being at the utmost northern border of the land of Canaan, as Beersheba was at the further part of the southern coast of it. It was, according to Jerom {c}, situated near Paneas, out of which the river Jordan flowed; and Kimchi on the text observes, their Rabbins {d} say, that Leshem is Pamias (i.e. Paneas), and that Jordan flows from the cave of Pamias, and had its name Ndm ddwyv because it descended from Dan; and so Josephus {e} says, that Panium is a cave under a mountain, from whence rise the springs of Jordan, and is the fountain of it; and Pliny also says {f}, the river Jordan rises out of the fountain Paneas. This city was enlarged and beautified by Philip Herod, and he called it by the name of Caesarea Philippi, both in honour of Tiberius Caesar {g} and after his own name, by which name it goes in Mt 16:13; and is called in the Jerusalem Targum on Ge 14:14, Dan of Caesarea.

{c} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. A. {d} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 6. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 74. 2. {e} Antiqu. l. 15. c. 10. sect. 3. De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 21. sect. 3. & l. 3. c. 9. sect. 7. {f} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 15. {g} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 2. sect. 1.

Joshua 19:48

Ver. 48. This [is] the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan,.... Before described by its cities, which were in it. This tribe was bounded by Ephraim on the north, by Judah on the east, by Simeon on the south, and by the Mediterranean sea on the west. Josephus {h} says, the Danites enjoyed the vale which lies to the setting sun, bounded by Azotus and Doris, and all Jamnia and Getta, from Accaron (or Ekron) to the mountain from whence the tribe of Judah begins:

according to their families; which inheritance was distributed according to the number of their families:

their cities with their villages; before named.

{h} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.

Joshua 19:49

Ver. 49. And when they made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts,.... That is, Eleazar, Joshua, and the ten men appointed for this, purpose; when all the lots were drawn, and the several inheritances which came up to them were divided among the families of the respective tribes, this work being finished:

the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them; most interpreters observe the modesty of Joshua, that though the oldest and the greatest man in the nation, the chief governor, yet had his inheritance last of all; nor did he take any part to himself, it was given to him by the people, who had the whole land divided among them; in which he was a type of Christ; see **2Co 8:9** **Php 2:6**.

Joshua 19:50

Ver. 50. According to the word of the Lord,.... Or mouth of the Lord; either according to the oracle of Urim and Thummim, which Eleazar consulted on this occasion; or according to what the Lord had said to Moses, at the same time that Hebron was ordered to Caleb, Jos 14:6; and

they gave him the city which he asked, [even] Timnathserah in Mount Ephraim; he chose a place in his own tribe, for he was of the tribe of Ephraim; and it seems that what he chose was none of the best of places; for Paula, as Jerom {i} relates, when she travelled into those parts, wondered that the distributor of the possessions of the children of Israel should choose such a rough and mountainous place for himself; of its situation, see Jos 24:30;

and he built the city, and dwelt therein; he rebuilt it, and fitted it for his own habitation, and for those that belonged to him.

(Timnathserah means "an abundant portion" or "a place in the sun". Joshua great reward was in seeing the promises of God fulfilled before his very eyes Jos 21:45 and the children of Israel serving the Lord's during his lifetime Jos 24:31. Joshua may have received but a small inheritance in the promised land but this was just an earnest of his future glorious inheritance in eternity. The saints of God have the best portion saved for the last **Joh 2:10** whereas the worldling has his best portion now; his worst is yet to come. Editor.)

{i} Epitaph. Paulae, fol. 59. L.

Joshua 19:51

Ver. 51. These [are] the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun,.... The one the high priest, and the other the chief governor of the nation:

and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel; the princes appointed for this service, whose names are given
Nu 34:18; the inheritances before described in the preceding chapters by their boundaries and cities, these the said persons

divided for an inheritance by lot in Shiloh; and so has particular reference to the seven lots drawn there for seven of the tribes, by which their inheritances were assigned to them: and this was done

before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; see
Jos 18:1;

so they made an end of dividing the country; though it was not as yet wholly subdued.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 20

The contents of this chapter are the renewal of the order to appoint cities of refuge for such that commit manslaughter ignorantly, to flee unto, and have shelter in from the avenger of blood, Jos 20:1; and the execution of this order, Jos 20:7.

Ver. 1. The Lord also spake unto Joshua,.... Out of the tabernacle, at the door of which he with the high priest and princes were; the Lord had spoken to him before concerning dividing the land among the tribes,
Jos 13:1; and this being done he speaks to him again:

saying: as follows.

Joshua 20:2

Ver. 2. Speak to the children of Israel, saying,.... Whom the affair concerned the Lord spake to Joshua about, they having now the whole land divided among them:

appoint out for you cities of refuge; of the name, nature, use, and number of these cities, See Gill on "Nu 35:6";

whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses: Nu 35:1.

Joshua 20:3

Ver. 3. That the slayer that killeth [any] person unawares, [and] unwittingly, may flee thither,.... Who through mere accident, and without design, killed a person, friend or foe, one of his own kindred, or a stranger, without any malice against him, or intention to take away his life:

and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood; from any of the relations of the deceased, who might be stirred up to avenge the blood of his kinsman on the slayer; see Nu 35:12.

Joshua 20:4

Ver. 4. And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities,.... Any one of them, that was nearest to him:

shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city; for he might not rush in without leave:

and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city; lay before them the whole matter, how that he had killed a person unawares, by what means it came about, and that it was merely through error, without any malicious design, and was a mere accident:

they shall take him into the city unto them; directly, lest the avenger of blood should come and seize on him, and kill him; and they were to take him into the city, not only to prevent that, but to examine him still more closely about the matter, and get further satisfaction; and being satisfied, were to continue him in it:

and give him a place, that he might dwell among them; until his death, or the death of the high priest, if that was first. Kimchi observes from their Rabbins, the he was not to hire a house all the time of his dwelling there, but was to have one freely, because it is said, "and give him", &c.

Joshua 20:5

Ver. 5. And if the avenger of blood pursue after him,.... To the city of refuge, whither he is fled, and demand him:

then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hands; to be slain by him, but shall protect him:

because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime;
See Gill on "Nu 35:22",
See Gill on "Nu 35:23", and
See Gill on "De 19:6".

Joshua 20:6

Ver. 6. And he shall dwell in that city until he shall stand before the congregation for judgment,.... That is, until his cause was heard in the court of judicature in his own city, or in any other to which the avenger of blood should appeal: see Nu 35:24; who if they found him guilty of death, they put him to death; but if only guilty of accidental manslaughter, then they delivered him up to his city of refuge for safety, where he was to abide

until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days; see
Nu 35:25;

then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled; and live with his family in the enjoyment of his possessions and estates, honours, and privileges belonging to him, as before; see Nu 35:28.

Joshua 20:7

Ver. 7. And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in Mount Naphtali,.... Of which see Jos 19:37; the appointment of this and the two cities following was made by the children of Israel at this time:

and Shechem in Mount Ephraim; called Sichem, Ge 12:6; and Shechem from a prince of that name that possessed it, Ge 34:2; it fell to the lot of the tribe of Ephraim; its name in the New Testament is Sychar, **Joh 4:5**; and it is now called Neapolis, or Naplouse:

and Kirjatharba, which [is] Hebron, in the mountain of Judah; it stood in the hill country of Judea, **Lu 1:39**; of which see Jos 14:15. There seems to be a difficulty here, since this city was before given to Caleb, Jos 14:13; and yet afterwards given to the Levites, and appointed a city of refuge. The Jews reconcile this by observing, that the city and suburbs were given to the Levites, and fixed for a city of refuge; but the villages and fields, and country around it, and belonging to it, were given to Caleb, Jos 21:12; and Abarbinel makes no doubt that the children of Judah gave something else to Caleb in lieu of it. As these cities of refuge were typical of Christ, as has been observed on Nu 35:29; their names are applicable to him. "Kedesh" signifies "holy" or "holiness"; Christ is holy in both his natures, divine and human; and so abundantly qualified to be the Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer; and is the fountain of holiness to his people, and is made sanctification to them, Ps 16:10 **1Co 1:30**; and "Shechem" signifies the "shoulder"; and not only the government of the church and people of God is on the shoulder of Christ, but all their sins have been laid upon him, and bore by him; and every particular soul in conversion, every lost sheep, is looked up by him, and taken up and brought home on his shoulder, **Isa 9:6**
Lu 15:4. "Hebron" signifies "fellowship"; in the effectual calling, the saints are called into fellowship with Christ, and their fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ; through him they have access to God, and communion with him now, and shall have uninterrupted communion with him to all eternity, **1Co 1:9**
Joh 17:24.

Joshua 20:8

Ver. 8. And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward,.... In the country possessed by the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh:

they assigned Bezer in the wilderness, upon the plain, out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh; of these places, and the signification of their names, and of the application of them to Christ, the antitype of the cities of refuge, See Gill on "De 4:43". These last cities were not appointed now, they were appointed in the times of Moses, and severed by him, **De 4:41**; nor are they here said to be appointed, but to be assigned or "given" {c}; they were now delivered up into the hands of the Levites for cities of refuge, for they were before severed for that use; they were not, according to the Jews {d}, made use of as such, until the other three were appointed.

{c} wntn "dederunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {d} Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 4. Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 2, 3.

Joshua 20:9

Ver. 9. These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel,.... For the common use of them all, and not for that tribe only in which they stood:

and for the stranger that sojourneth among them; not only for the proselytes of righteousness, but for the proselytes of the gate also, as well as for the natives of Israel; Christ is a refuge for Jews and Gentiles, for all sinners that flee to him:

that whosoever killeth any person unawares might flee thither; and find shelter and safety:

and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood; getting thither before he could overtake him:

until he stood before the congregation: either before the congregation, the elders of the city, or court of judicature in the city of refuge, or before the court of his own city, from whence he fled, if summoned thither.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 21

This chapter contains the address of the Levites to the court, to have the cities and suburbs given them according to the command of God by Moses, Jos 21:1; the grant of them by lot out of the several tribes, Jos 21:3; the particular cities out of the tribes of Judah and Simeon are mentioned by name, Jos 21:9; then those out of the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 21:17; next those out of the tribe of Ephraim, Jos 21:20; afterwards those out of the tribe of Dan, Jos 21:23; then those out of the half tribe of Manasseh, Jos 21:27; and out of the tribe of Issachar, Jos 21:28; and out of the tribe of Asher, Jos 21:30; and of Naphtali, Jos 21:32; and of Zebulun, Jos 21:34; and of Reuben, Jos 21:36; and of Gad, Jos 21:38; which in all made forty eight, Jos 21:41; and the chapter is concluded with observing, that God gave Israel all the land of Canaan, and rest in it, according to his promise, very faithfully and punctually, Jos 21:43.

Ver. 1. Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites,.... When the land was divided to the several tribes, and everyone knew the cities that belonged to them, and what they could and should part with to the Levites, and when the six cities of refuge were fixed; the Levites came to put in their claim for cities of habitation, they having no share in the division of the land; and yet it was necessary they should have habitations; the persons that undertook to put in a claim for them were the principal men among them; the fathers of them were Kohath, Gershon, and Merari; the heads of those were the chief men that were then living: these came

unto Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun; the high priest and chief magistrate:

and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel; the princes appointed to divide the land with the two great personages before mentioned, Nu 34:17.

Joshua 21:2

Ver. 2. And they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan,.... Where the tabernacle was fixed, at or near which the above persons met to cast lots for the division of the land to the seven tribes that had not received their inheritance:

saying, the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle; this command is extant in Nu 35:2.

Joshua 21:3

Ver. 3. And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance,.... Knowing full well there was such a command, made no objection to their motion, but freely gave them cities out of the portion of inheritance allotted to them; this they did

at the commandment of the Lord, and in obedience to it, even gave these cities and suburbs; after mentioned: this was done by the tribes themselves; as there were a certain number fixed by the commandment of God, they agreed among themselves how many and what cities should be given out of each tribe; and then lots were cast for them by Joshua, what and which cities should be appropriated to their several divisions, as the Kohathites that sprang from Aaron, and the rest of them that did not, and the Gershonites and Merarites, as follows.

Joshua 21:4

Ver. 4. And the lot came out for the family of the Kohathites,.... The first lot that was drawn out of the pot or urn was for the descendants of Kohath, a son of Levi:

and the children of Aaron the priest, [which were] of the Levites; who descended from Amram, the eldest son of Kohath, and these were not only Levites, but priests: these

had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities; which are after mentioned by name; and as these were priests, whose business was to serve in the temple, and at the altar, the cities assigned them by the lot, were, by the wise disposal of divine Providence, ordered them out of those tribes which lay nearest to Jerusalem; the place God had chosen to put his name in, where the temple would be built, and the altars erected for sacrifices and incense.

Joshua 21:5

Ver. 5. And the rest of the children of Kohath,.... Which did not descend from him in the line of Amram and Aaron, but of Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, who were not priests, but Levites:

[had] by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh, ten cities; these other sort of Kohathites had their cities in tribes next to the other three where the Kohathites that were priests had theirs.

Joshua 21:6

Ver. 6. And the children of Gershon [had] by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar,.... These were Levites who descended from Gershon, the eldest son of Levi, and had their cities by lot assigned them in tribes at a greater distance, not only out of Issachar, but

out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half tribe of Manasseh in Bashan; which was the other half of the tribe beyond Jordan:

thirteen cities; as many as were given out of the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin.

Joshua 21:7

Ver. 7. The children of Merari by their families,.... The descendants of Merari, the third son of Levi:

[had] out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad; which were both on the other side Jordan:

and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities; in all forty eight, as the Lord commanded, Nu 35:7.

Joshua 21:8

Ver. 8. And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the Levites these cities with their suburbs,.... Reaching two thousand cubits from the cities all around: these cities did not lie all together, and so could not be described by their coasts; but in the several tribes, and intermixed with their cities; which fulfilled Jacob's prophecy, that they should be divided and scattered in Israel, Ge 49:7; as well as it was so ordered for the benefit of the several tribes, that they might have the assistance of the priests and Levites, to instruct them in the knowledge of the laws and commandments of God, and all divine things:

as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses; Nu 35:2.

Joshua 21:9

Ver. 9. And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah,.... Here follows a particular account of the several cities which were given out of each tribe, and first out of this:

and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon; which is joined with that of Judah, because the cities of it lay within it, Jos 19:1;

these cities which are [here] mentioned by name; Jos 21:13.

Joshua 21:10

Ver. 10. Which the children of Aaron, [being] of the families of the Kohathites,.... Who descending from Kohath, in the line of Aaron, were priests:

[who were] of the children of Levi, had; they were Levites, as descending from Levi, but were priests also, as being of the stock of Aaron, and the cities hereafter mentioned in the said tribe fell to their portion:

for theirs was the first lot; for being of the line of Aaron, and priests, they had the honour and privilege to have the first lot drawn for them, and out of the tribe for which the first lot was also drawn, the tribe of Judah; here they had their cities allotted them, for a reason before given.

Joshua 21:11

Ver. 11. And they gave them the city of Arba, the father of Anak,.... Which from him was called Kirjatharba, Jos 14:15; and Anak, according to Kimchi, is not the name of a man, but a general name, comprehending the Anakims, a race of giants, among whom Arba was the chief and principal man, a prince and ruler over them, as Ben Melech:

which [city is] Hebron in the hill [country] of Judah; as in Jos 14:15; see **Lu 1:39**;

with the suburbs thereof round about it; as far as two thousand cubits, which were to put their cattle in, and provision for them.

Joshua 21:12

Ver. 12. But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof,.... Which lay beyond the two thousand cubits:

gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh, for his possession; as Moses had promised, and Joshua had confirmed to him; and now the children of Israel gave them to him, and put him in the possession of, Jos 14:6; and the same is to be observed of all the other cities given to the Levites, that they and their suburbs, extending to such a distance only, were given to them; but the fields and villages, which belonged to them, continued the inheritance of the tribes in which they were.

Joshua 21:13

Ver. 13. Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest,.... The families of the Kohathites, that part of them which descended from him, and were priests:

Hebron with her suburbs, [to be] a city of refuge for the slayer; that had slain a person unawares, and without design; see on Jos 20:3;

and Libnah with her suburbs; a royal city, of which see Jos 10:29.

Joshua 21:14

Ver. 14. And Jattir with her suburbs,.... See Gill on "Jos 15:48";

and Eshtemoa with her suburbs; See Gill on "Jos 15:50".

Joshua 21:15

Ver. 15. And Holon with her suburbs,.... See Gill on "Jos 15:51";

and Debir with her suburbs; See Gill on "Jos 15:49".

Joshua 21:16

Ver. 16. And Ain with her suburbs,.... See Gill on "Jos 15:32";

and Juttah with her suburbs; See Gill on "Jos 15:55";

[and] Bethshemesh with her suburbs; which is not mentioned among the cities of Judah, Jos 15:21; only as in the borders of it, Jos 21:10; and perhaps is the same Bethshemesh to which the ark was directed by the Philistines from Ashdod, **1Sa 6:9**; in it formerly was a temple dedicated to the sun, from whence it had its name:

nine cities out of those two tribes; and they seem all but one, which is Ain, to be of the tribe of Judah, and that originally belonged to it; and as that tribe had the largest number of cities in its lot, the more were given out of it to the Levites, according to a rule prescribed, Nu 35:8.

Joshua 21:17

Ver. 17. And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her suburbs,.... See Gill "Jos 18:25"; from which came the Gibeonites.

Geba with her suburbs. Of which See Gill on "Jos 18:24".

Joshua 21:18

Ver. 18. Anathoth with her suburbs,.... This is not mentioned among the cities of Benjamin, Jos 18:11; it was the native place of the Prophet Jeremiah, See

Gill on "Jer 1:1"; it lay about two or three miles north of Jerusalem; three, says, Jerom {k}. Rauwolff {l} speaks of it as a small village, when he travelled into those parts, and as lying on a height or eminence, and which was within twenty furlongs of Jerusalem, as Josephus writes {m}:

and Almon with her suburbs; this also is not mentioned among the cities of Benjamin, Jos 18:11; it is called Alemeth, **1Ch 6:60**. Jarchi and Kimchi say it is the same with Bahurim, **2Sa 3:16**; where the Targum renders it by Almeth, and both words signify the same thing, "youth":

four cities; which were a large number for so small a tribe as little Benjamin to give.

{k} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. H. {l} Travels, par. 3. c. 2. p. 216. {m} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 7. sect. 3.

Joshua 21:19

Ver. 19. All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests,.... Those of the Kohathites that came from him:

[were] thirteen cities with their suburbs; and just so many are mentioned by name in Jos 21:11.

Joshua 21:20

Ver. 20. And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites,.... Who were not priests:

which remained of the children of Kohath; these are the children of Moses, as Jarchi says, and those that descended from Kohath in the lines of Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel,

even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim; and were as follow.

Joshua 21:21

Ver. 21. For they gave them Shechem, with her suburbs, in Mount Ephraim,.... Of which see Jos 20:7;

[to be] a city of refuge for the slayer; which being on a mountain, was the more conspicuous, and the fitter for this purpose, as was Hebron in the hill country of Judea, Jos 21:11; this is the second; city of refuge mentioned:

and Gezer with her suburbs: a place from whence the Canaanites were not expelled; See Gill on "Jos 16:10".

Joshua 21:22

Ver. 22. And Kibzaim with her suburbs,.... Which seems to, be the same with Jokneam, **1Ch 6:68**; of it we read nowhere else;

and Bethhoron with her suburbs; upper Bethhoron, for there were two, an upper and a nether: see Jos 16:3;

four cities; as mentioned by name.

Joshua 21:23

Ver. 23. And out of the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with her suburbs,.... See Gill on "Jos 19:44";

Gibbethon with her suburbs, See Gill on "Jos 19:44".

Joshua 21:24

Ver. 24. Aijalon with her suburbs,.... See Gill on "Jos 19:42";

Gathrimmon with her suburbs, four cities; See Gill on "Jos 19:45".

Joshua 21:25

Ver. 25. And out of the half tribe of Manasseh, Taanach with her suburbs,.... Of which see Jos 17:10;

and Gathrimmon with her suburbs, there was a city of this name in Dan, as in Jos 21:24; nor was it unusual for cities to be called by the same name in different tribes:

two cities; these are called Aner and Bilean in **1Ch 6:70**; in process of time cities changed their names; two cities were a proper proportion for this half tribe; two more were given out of the other half tribe on the other side Jordan, as appears by what follows.

Joshua 21:26

Ver. 26. All the cities [were] ten, with their suburbs,.... Four out of Ephraim, four out of Dan, and two out of the half tribe of Manasseh: which were

for the families of the children of Kohath that remained: who were of the other branch of the Kohathites, and who did not descend from Aaron, and were only Levites, and not priests; See Gill on "Jos 21:20".

Joshua 21:27

Ver. 27. And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites,.... The descendants of the second son of Levi:

out of the [other] half tribe of Manasseh; that which was settled beyond Jordan:

[they gave] Golan in Bashan, with her suburbs, [to be] a city of refuge for the slayer; see Jos 20:8; this is the third city of refuge mentioned:

and Beeshterah with her suburbs; called Ashtaroth, **1Ch 6:71**; which had been the royal city of Og, king of Bashan, where he had his palace, **De 1:4**. Here seems to have been formerly a temple dedicated to the goddess Astarte; for Beeshterah is a compound of "Beth" and "Ashterah", or Astarte; that is, the house or temple of Astarte, but now become a city of the Levites:

two cities; two more having been before given out of the other half tribe.

Joshua 21:28

Ver. 28. And out of the tribe of Issachar, Kishon with her suburbs,.... From whence the river Kishon probably had its name, or the city from that; it is the same with Kishion, Jos 19:20; and called Kedesh, **1Ch 6:72**.

Dabareh with her suburbs; the same with Daberath on the border of Zebulun, See Gill on "Jos 19:12".

Joshua 21:29

Ver. 29. Jarmuth with her suburbs,.... Called Ramoth, **1Ch 6:73**; very probably the same with Remeth, Jos 19:21;

Engannim with her suburbs; called Anem, **1Ch 6:73**;

four cities; so many are mentioned by name.

Joshua 21:30

Ver. 30. And out of the tribe of Asher, Mishal with her suburbs,.... The same with Misheal, Jos 19:26; called Mashal, **1Ch 6:74**;

Abdon with her suburbs; not mentioned among the cities of Asher, unless the same with Hebron, Jos 19:28.

Joshua 21:31

Ver. 31. Helkath with her suburbs,.... See Gill on "Jos 19:25"; the same with Hukok in **1Ch 6:75**;

and Rehob with her suburbs, four cities; See Gill on "Jos 19:28".

Joshua 21:32

Ver. 32. And out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs,.... Of which see Jos 20:7;

[to be] a city of refuge for the slayer; this is the fourth city of refuge mentioned:

and Hammothdor with her suburbs; the same with Hammon, **1Ch 6:76**; and with Hammath, Jos 19:35; and is thought by some to be Tiberias, so called from the hot baths in or near it:

and Kartan with her suburbs; called Kirjathaim, **1Ch 6:76**; but cannot be the Kirjathaim in Nu 32:37; for that belonged to the tribe of Reuben, and was on the other side Jordan:

three cities; this being a lesser tribe than some others gave fewer cities, according to the rule in Nu 35:8.

Joshua 21:33

Ver. 33. All the cities of the Gershonites, according to their families,.... Which were divided among them, according to the number of their families:

[were] thirteen cities with their suburbs; two out of the half tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan, four out of Issachar, four out of Asher, and three out of Naphtali.

Joshua 21:34

Ver. 34. And unto the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites,.... The descendants of the youngest son of Levi, who were all that remained of the Levites unprovided of cities:

out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with her suburbs; which lay near Carmel, and was a royal city; See Gill on "Jos 12:22";

and Kartah with her suburbs; perhaps the same with Kattath, Jos 19:15.

Joshua 21:35

Ver. 35. Dimnah with her suburbs,.... Nowhere mentioned, unless the same with Rimmon, **1Ch 6:77**;

Nahalal with her suburbs; see Jos 19:15;

four cities; only two are mentioned, **1Ch 6:77**; and they by different names; the one is Rimmon, before observed, and the other Tabor; perhaps the same with Chislothtabor, Jos 19:12.

Joshua 21:36

Ver. 36. And out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with her suburbs,.... Which was a city of refuge, and the fifth of them in this account, though not observed as such here, but is in the Greek version; see Jos 20:8;

and Jahazah with her suburbs; called Jahaz, See Gill on "Nu 21:23".

Joshua 21:37

Ver. 37. Kedemoth with her suburbs,.... Near to which was a wilderness of that name; see **De 2:26**;

and Mephaath with her suburbs; of which See Gill on "Jos 13:18"; where the two preceding cities are mentioned along with it:

four cities, Jos 21:35, are not in some ancient copies of the Hebrew Bible, as is noted by the Masorites; but are in some others, as Kimchi owns, and stand in the Targum, in the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and in a manuscript referred to by Hottinger {e}; and the same words are to be, found in **1Ch 6:78**, and are absolutely necessary to be retained, since without them there would be but eight cities for the Merarites, whereas they are expressly said to be twelve, Jos 21:40.

{e} Thesaur. Philolog. l. 1. c. 2. p. 181, &c.

Joshua 21:38

Ver. 38. And out of the tribe of Gad,.... Which also, as that of Reuben, lay on the other side Jordan:

Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs; of which see Jos 20:8;

[to be] a city of refuge for the slayer; and is the sixth and last city of refuge in this account:

and Mahanaim with her suburbs; here it was the angels met Jacob, which gave rise to the name of the place, Ge 32:1; afterwards a city was built here, and was on the borders of the tribe of Gad, and belonged to it, Jos 13:26; mention is made of it in other places, **2Sa 2:8** **1Ki 2:8**.

Joshua 21:39

Ver. 39. Heshbon with her suburbs,.... Which was formerly the royal city of Sihon king of the Amorites, and was first given to and rebuilt by the Reubenites, but was upon the border of the tribe of Gad; and appears from hence to have been one of their cities, Nu 21:26;

Jazer with her suburbs; sometimes called Jaazer, another city in the same country, and near Heshbon; see Nu 21:32;

four cities in all: which were Ramothgilead, Mahanaim, Heshbon, and Jazer.

Joshua 21:40

Ver. 40. So all the cities for the children of Merari by their families,.... Which were distributed by lot to them, according to the number of their families, and were sufficient for them:

which were remaining of the families of the Levites; the last division of them, besides those of the Kohathites, Levites, and the Gershonites:

were [by] their lot twelve cities; four out of the tribe of Zebulun, four out of the tribe of Reuben, and four out of the tribe of Gad, whose names are before given,

Joshua 21:41

Ver. 41. All the cities of the Levites, within the possession of the children of Israel,.... As comprised in one sum total:

[were] forty and eight cities with their suburbs; which is just the number that Moses from the mouth of God ordered to be given unto them, before they entered into the land, and before they were in possession of one city in it, Nu 35:7; which, as it is a proof of the omniscience, prescience, and predetermination of God; so of the sure and true prediction of Moses, who could not be otherwise certain than from the Lord of the Israelites being able to give so many cities to them, out of each of their tribes: and it is to be observed, that this tribe of Levi, though it had no share in the division of the land, yet had more cities by lot given to it than any other, excepting the tribe of Judah; though indeed, in the account of some of the tribes, all the cities in them are not mentioned; and besides, they had only the cities they had with their suburbs round about them, but not the lands belonging to them, nor the villages; however this shows that a large and liberal maintenance of the ministers of the Lord, that serve in his sanctuary should be allowed and made for them, as in the legal, so under the Gospel dispensation

Joshua 21:42

Ver. 42. These cities were everyone with their suburbs round about them,.... Which reached to the space of two thousand cubits on every side; and such a space was assigned to everyone of the above cities for their cattle, to keep them in and lay up provision for them:

thus [were] all their cities; six of them cities of refuge, and forty two for the priests and Levites to dwell in, and for the commodious use of their herds and flocks.

Joshua 21:43

Ver. 43. And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers,.... It was all given them by lot, whether subdued or not subdued, and the far greater part was actually put into their hands, and they had as much as they could for the present occupy and cultivate; and such as were in the hands of the Canaanites, were subject to pay tribute to them; and it was owing to their own slothfulness and sluggishness that they did not possess more hereafter; though it was the will of God that their enemies should be driven out by little and little, until the Israelites were so increased as to occupy the whole, lest any part of the land should lie waste and become barren, and lest the wild beasts of the field should multiply upon them:

and they possessed it, and dwelt therein; each according to their lot in the several places assigned them, as many cities as they could at present people, and as much land as they could now manage.

Joshua 21:44

Ver. 44. And the Lord gave them rest round about,.... Not only from their travels, with which they had been fatigued forty years in the wilderness, but from wars with the Canaanites they had been engaged in for some years past:

according to all that he sware unto their fathers; not only to give them the land, but peace, rest, and safety in it:

and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; for whenever any rose up to oppose them, they were immediately cut off: this is to be understood while Joshua was living; for afterwards, sinning against God, they were again and again delivered up into the hands of their enemies:

the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hands; that is, that made war with them.

Joshua 21:45

Ver. 45. There failed not ought of any good thing,.... Not only every good thing in general, but every part and particular of that good thing; that, with all that was included in it, or were appendages to it, or circumstances of it:

which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel; as of their deliverance out of Egypt, and passage through the Red sea and wilderness, with all conveniences for them therein; so of their passage through Jordan, success of their arms, the conquest of their enemies, possession of their land, a land flowing with milk and honey:

all came to pass; exactly, precisely, and punctually, even everything relative to their temporal and spiritual good: so all that God promises to his spiritual Israel, with respect to their present comfort or everlasting happiness, all is exactly fulfilled, all his promises in Christ are yea and amen.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 22

The war with the Canaanites being ended, Joshua called to him the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who came over Jordan with him to assist in it, and commended them for their obedience to Moses and to himself, and to God by them; and then dismissed them, with some instructions to keep the ways and worship of God, and with his blessing upon them, Jos 22:1; upon which they returned to their country, and when they came to the borders of it set up an altar by Jordan, Jos 22:9; which, when the children of Israel heard of, it gave them great offence, they fearing they were going to make a revolt from the pure worship of God, and therefore sent a deputation of princes to them, with the son of the high priest, to inquire into the matter, and expostulate with them about it, who did, Jos 22:11; and who received from them a very satisfactory answer, Jos 22:21; with which they returned and reported to the children of Israel, and which gave them pleasure, Jos 22:32.

Ver. 1. Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh. The promise of God to Israel being fulfilled, the land of Canaan being for the most part subdued, the war at an end, and rest had on all sides from their enemies, and the land divided among the nine tribes and an half, and they settled in the quiet possession of their lots; Joshua sent for the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who had, at their own request, their portion allotted them on the other side Jordan, and who came over that river with him to assist their brethren in their wars with the Canaanites, and addressed them in the following respectable manner.

Joshua 22:2

Ver. 2. And said unto them, ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you,.... Which was, that they should leave their wives and children, and flocks, and herds, behind them in the land of Gilead, and pass over Jordan, with their brethren the children of Israel armed, and fight with them, and for them, until the Canaanites were subdued, and not return until their brethren were peaceably settled in the possession of their inheritances; all which they had punctually observed, and inviolably kept, as they agreed to, Nu 32:1;

and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you; as the generalissimo and commander in chief of the Israelitish forces; as what rank and position to be in, what part to take in an engagement, what attack to make, when and where, or on what expedition to go; wherever he ordered them to go, they went; and upon whatsoever and wheresoever he sent them, they readily and cheerfully obeyed, as they promised, **Jos 1:16**; and approved themselves as good soldiers under him; for all which he commends them, and gives them military honour.

Joshua 22:3

Ver. 3. Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day,.... For the space of fourteen years, which is the commonly received notion of the Jews {f}; seven years according to them the land was subduing, and seven more spent in dividing it, and then these tribes were sent for and dismissed; all this time they stayed close by their brethren, and assisted them in their wars, and never offered to return to their wives and children, until they had an order from their general:

but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God; for what both Moses and Joshua commanded them was from the mouth of the Lord; so that, in obeying them, they obeyed him.

{f} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 32.

Joshua 22:4

Ver. 4. And now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them,.... As in Jos 21:44; see De 12:9;

therefore now return ye, and get ye unto your tents; not their military tents in the army, from which they now came to Joshua, but their houses, as the Greek version, and their cities, as the Targum; they having been so long used to tents in the wilderness, and during the wars in Canaan, this was a familiar word for their dwellings:

[and] unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you, on the other side Jordan; before his death, on condition of doing what they now had done; even the land of Gilead and Bashan, beyond Jordan.

Joshua 22:5

Ver. 5. But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law,.... The ten commandments, and all other laws, both ceremonial and civil:

which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you; in the name of the Lord, to keep and observe:

to love the Lord your God; of which keeping the commands of God is an evidence, and which is the true principle and motive of hearty, sincere, and cheerful obedience to them:

and to walk in all his ways; which he has prescribed, all his ways of worship, paths of duty, faith, truth, holiness, and righteousness:

and to keep his commandments; whether moral, ceremonial, or judicial: whether of natural and moral obligation, or of positive institution:

and to cleave unto him; and not depart from his ways, worship, word, and ordinances:

and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul: in the most strict and affectionate manner. This advice Joshua thought proper to give them, and inculcate into them, now they were about to leave their brethren, and go on the other side Jordan; where they would be at a distance from the tabernacle, altar, and service of God, and might be under temptation to relinquish it, and set up another form of worship elsewhere.

Joshua 22:6

Ver. 6. So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away,.... Dismissed them from his presence with a blessing, in order to go to their own country; this he did by wishing them well, praying to God for a blessing on them, their persons, and families, who had been so useful in assisting their brethren to get possession of the land of Canaan. Some think this blessing includes gifts and presents he bestowed on them:

and they went unto their tents; here the word means their military tents in the camp of Israel, to which they returned, in order to take with them their goods, their substance and riches, their part of the spoil of the enemy, which of right belonged to them.

Joshua 22:7

Ver. 7. Now to the [one] half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given [possession] in Bashan,.... The kingdom of Og, see **De 3:13**;

but unto the [other] half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward: of which an account is given, and the border of their lot described, Jos 17:1;

and when Joshua sent them also unto their tents, then he blessed them; it seems as if this half tribe was separately dismissed and blessed, they being more nearly related to Joshua, who was of the tribe of Ephraim, and so had a more particular dismission and blessing; and he took his leave of them in a different and affectionate manner. Kimchi makes mention of a Derash, or Exposition of theirs, which says, that after they had taken leave they stayed two days, and returned and took leave a second time, and which he understands of them all, and not of the half tribe only; but it is plainly the half tribe that is only spoken of.

Joshua 22:8

Ver. 8. And he spake unto them,.... To the half tribe of Manasseh only, though some think also to the other ten tribes:

saying, return with much riches unto your tents; that is, return to their own land, and habitations there, with whatsoever riches they had got from the spoil of the enemy:

and with very much cattle; they had taken from them, and fell to their share, and for which they had good pasturage in Gilead and Bashan, and therefore very proper to take with them,

with silver and with gold, and with brass, and with iron; whether in massive pieces, or wrought up into vessels, which they found in the houses of the Canaanites when they plundered them:

and with very much raiment; some no doubt very rich and costly, such as their kings, princes, nobles, and great personages among them wore:

divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren; according to Jarchi and Kimchi, this is spoken to the half tribe of Manasseh, to divide their spoil with the tribes of Reuben and Gad; but it rather means the dividing the above spoil, when they came to their own country with their brethren they left behind; who as they were employed in guarding and defending their cities, their wives and children, herds and flocks, in their absence, they had a right to part of the spoil; and as in other instances it appears to be a common case for those that stayed at home to share in the spoil with them that went to war, see Nu 31:27; though the notion of Abarbinel pleases me best, that by "their brethren" are meant the other half tribe of Manasseh that remained in Canaan, and were settled there: when the spoil of the Canaanites was divided among all the tribes, the whole tribe of Manasseh had its share; and whereas now half of it were going to their own country on the other side Jordan, it was but reasonable they should have their part of the spoil to carry with them; and this seems to be the true reason of their being separately addressed, and dismissed and blessed.

Joshua 22:9

Ver. 9. And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, returned,.... First to the camp to take their substance, and then set forward to their own land:

and departed from the children of Israel; from the rest of them, for otherwise they were children of Israel also:

out of Shiloh, which [is] in the land of Canaan; for here the camp of Israel was, as well as the tabernacle:

to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed; Gilead is put for the whole country on the other side Jordan, as the land of Jazer, and the kingdom of Bashan, which the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, were possessed of:

according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses; for when they moved to have that country, Moses, it seems, consulted the Lord about it, who declared it to be his will they should have it, on performing what they promised, see Nu 32:1.

Joshua 22:10

Ver. 10. And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that [are] in the land of Canaan,.... To the banks of it, or the sand heaps, some take the word to signify, which were thrown up to restrain the waters from overflowing; some by Geliloth understand a place so called; and Jerom {g} says it was near Jordan in the tribe of Benjamin: but rather the word signifies the meanders, windings, and turnings, of the river {h}; and such circuits and compasses it fetched near Jericho, as the same writer {i} observes, where we may suppose these tribes went over, and at a place where the river jetted out into the land of Canaan:

the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, built there an altar by Jordan; or "then"; that is, when they had passed over the river into their own country, for which Josephus is express {k}; and certain it is, that the altar was built not on the Canaan side of Jordan, but on the opposite side, as is clear from Jos 22:11: and indeed they had no right to build on any other ground than their own; and they pitched upon a spot where the river jetted out into the land of Canaan, as most proper to erect it on, to be a witness, that though separated from the rest of the Israelites by the river Jordan, yet were a part of them, and had a right to join them in the service of God, and bring their sacrifices to the altar of God in the tabernacle, as more fully appears in some after verses:

a great altar to see to; built up very high, so that it might be seen at a great distance.

{g} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. C. {h} Vid. Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 170, 573. Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 1. l. 1. c. 43. p. 274, 279. {i} Ut supra, (De loc. Heb. fol. 92.) G. {k} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 26.

Joshua 22:11

Ver. 11. And the children of Israel heard say,.... Those that dwelt in the land of Canaan, for otherwise, as before observed, the two tribes and a half on the other side Jordan were Israelites also; and this is a further proof that the altar was built on their side, or those in the land of Canaan would have known of the building of it, and have seen them at it, and not come at the knowledge of it by hearsay only, as it seems they did, it being reported to them by some who had been in those parts, and had seen the structure:

behold, the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, have built an altar over against the land of Canaan; which clearly shows it was on the other side Jordan, though Noldius, who places it in the land of Canaan, renders the words, "in the neighbourhood of" it {l}; which will not much help him, since it might be in the neighbourhood of it, and yet not in it:

in the borders of Jordan; on the banks of it, or in one of the meanders and windings of it, at a place where it ran out and fetched a compass in the land of Canaan:

at the passage of the children of Israel; where they passed over when they first came into Canaan, and where those tribes also passed over at their return; supposed to be the Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing, **Joh 1:28**.

{l} lwm la "in vicinia", Noldius, No. 369. p. 80.

Joshua 22:12

Ver. 12. And when the children of Israel heard [of it],.... Of the building the altar in the above place, namely, the nine tribes and a half settled in the land of Canaan:

the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh; where the tabernacle and altar of the Lord were, whose cause they undertook to avenge, being injured as they imagined by the altar the other tribes had built, and where they could consult the Lord by Urim and

Thummim, if needful; hither they repaired from the several places around, where their tribes were settled; not the whole body of the people, but their heads and representatives:

to go up to war against them; to consult about it, and to prepare for it, which they were obliged to do by the law of God, as in the case of a city, so of a tribe drawn aside to idolatry; and which they imagined was the case of these tribes, or at least what they had done had a tendency to apostasy from the true worship of God, which they were zealous to defend at the hazard of their lives, and though it should issue in an extirpation of one or more of their tribes; see De 13:12.

Joshua 22:13

Ver. 13. And the children of Israel,.... In the land of Canaan:

sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead; they were possessed of, and had now returned unto and dwelt in; hither they sent an embassy to them, to inquire into the truth of what they had heard, and the reason of it, before they went to war with them, or proclaimed it, or took any further steps towards it; and which they were obliged to do by the above law, when there was any suspicion of idolatry, and any good ground and reason for it, De 13:14; and at the head of this deputation was

Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest; a man zealous for the Lord of hosts, and his glory, of which there is an instance in Nu 25:7; and so a fit person to be employed in this affair, who would be faithful, bold, and zealous, as well as capable of giving advice and counsel to both parties, if needful.

Joshua 22:14

Ver. 14. And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince, throughout all the tribes of Israel,.... The nine tribes and a half, so that the half tribe of Manasseh sent a prince, as well as the whole tribes:

and each one [was] an head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel; that is, among the rulers of the thousands of Israel; and so the Greek version calls them Chiliarchs, rulers of thousands; for the people were divided into tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands, over whom there were distinct rulers, Ex 18:25. Now these were among the chief of them, of the highest rank and authority; they were the chief princes, heads of several tribes; a very honourable deputation this! the son of the high priest, and ten princes, the heads of the tribes; these were chosen and sent, partly in honour to their brethren beyond Jordan, and partly that they might carry the greater authority with them, and prevail upon them to hearken to them.

Joshua 22:15

Ver. 15. And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead,.... The deputation came thither; they either sent for the chiefs among the two tribes and a half, to meet them at some place, or they, having a notion of their coming, assembled together to receive them, and hear what they had to say to them:

and they spake with them, saying; as follows; very probably Phinehas was the mouth of the whole, for there could be but one speaker.

Joshua 22:16

Ver. 16. Thus saith the whole congregation of the Lord,.... By whom they were sent, and whom they represented; and they do not call them the congregation of Israel, but of the Lord, because it was not on a civil but religious account they were come, and not to plead their own cause, but the cause of God; and not so much to show a concern for their own honour and interest as for the glory of God:

what trespass [is] this that ye have committed against the God of Israel; they took it for granted that they had committed a sin, and that so great, they were not able to express the greatness of it in all its aggravated circumstances, and plainly suggest it was idolatry; which was too premature, when as yet they had not inquired into it; but their zeal for God, and his honour, hurried them into this hasty step:

to turn away this day from following the Lord; they intimate, that they had begun a revolt from the worship of God, which is aggravated by their falling into it so soon, having received so many favours from God, and had so lately seen such wonderful appearances of his power and goodness, and had just had such excellent instructions, exhortations, and cautions given them by Joshua, when he dismissed them:

in that ye have built you an altar; which they supposed was to offer sacrifices upon; whereas there was to be but one altar, and that in the place which the Lord should choose to put his name in, and which he had now chosen, where all sacrifices were to be brought and offered up; see
Ex 20:24;

that ye might rebel this day against the Lord? against the commandment of the Lord expressed in the places referred to, which they charge with rebellion against himself, a very high and heavy charge indeed! but they should first have inquired whether they were guilty of the trespass, or with what view they had built the altar, whether for sacrifice, or for some other use; but they took it for granted it was for sacrifice.

Joshua 22:17

Ver. 17. [Is] the iniquity of Peor too little for us,.... The worshipping of that idol, when in the plains of Moab; the history of which, see in Nu 25:2, was that so small a sin, that another must be added to it, or a greater committed? since building an altar seemed designed not for a single action of idolatrous worship, but for the continuance of it, whereas the sin of Peor was only committed at one time, and not continued in:

from which we are not cleansed until this day; not cleared from the shame and disgrace of it, or the guilt of it expiated or removed; but it might be expected, as in the case of the golden calf, that God would still at times punish for it, when provoked by new crimes; or the sense is, that there were those among them that were infected with the same contagion, and whose inclinations were to commit the same, or like sin of idolatry:

although there was a plague in congregation of the Lord; of which twenty four thousand died, Nu 25:9.

Joshua 22:18

Ver. 18. But that you must turn away this day from following the Lord?....

From the worship of the Lord, as the Targum, and so on Jos 22:16; not content with the former transgression, but must add this revolt unto it, and at a time which sadly aggravates it:

and it will be, that [seeing] ye rebel to, day against the Lord; against the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, and so on Jos 22:16;

that tomorrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel; or, in a little time, if a stop is not put to this revolt, the whole body of the people will suffer for it: here they express a concern for the whole nation of Israel, as well as for the glory of God; for sometimes the whole congregation has been charged with the sins of individuals, and punished for it, as a case after mentioned shows; see **Jos 7:1**.

Joshua 22:19

Ver. 19. Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession [be] unclean,.... That is, if it was judged to be so by them, because not cleansed from the sins of the former inhabitants of it by sacrifice, or because there was no altar in it to offer up sacrifice for the expiation of sin:

[then] pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the Lord, wherein the Lord's tabernacle dwelleth; if you repent of the choice you have made of a country to dwell in, quit it, and come over into the land of Canaan, which the Lord has taken possession of, and residence in, and where his tabernacle is fixed, the place of his presence and worship, and where an altar is erected to sacrifice upon:

and take possession among us; they were willing to quit possession of their own, and make room for them in each of their tribes, and even though they straitened themselves, and parted with much of their estates, rather than they should make a schism, or go into idolatrous practices; which was a brave, noble, spirit indeed, and showed their great concern for the honour and glory of God, and his worship, and their love to their brethren, and affectionate regard for their spiritual welfare, above their own private, personal, and temporal good:

but rebel not against the Lord: the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, either Christ the essential Word, the Angel of Jehovah's presence, or his word of command:

nor rebel against us; by breaking off from us, and setting up another religion or form of worship:

in building you an altar beside the altar of the Lord our God: which ought to be common to both, and no other to be set up against it, or used beside it.

Joshua 22:20

Ver. 20. Did not Achan the son of Zerah,.... One that descended from Zerah the son of Judah, **Jos 7:18**;

commit a trespass in the accursed thing; in taking what was devoted to sacred uses:

and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and which was what was feared now; and this instance is brought to show that such fears were not groundless:

and that man perished not alone in his iniquity: which seems to confirm the notion of those who think that his children suffered with him; though it may be observed, that it was through his sin that thirty six men were slain by the men of Ai, **Jos 7:5**.

Joshua 22:21

Ver. 21. Then the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, answered,.... By some person whom they appointed to deliver the answer in their name:

and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel; who were over those that were rulers of the thousands of Israel, persons of greater authority than they, being princes of the respective tribes to which they belonged.

Joshua 22:22

Ver. 22. The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods,.... They first set out in their answer with asserting their firm belief of Jehovah, the God of Israel, being the supreme God, God over all; over all that are called gods, whether angels, of whom Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; or civil magistrates and judges of the earth, who bare the same name; nor are the gods of the Gentiles to be spoken of with Jehovah, the God of Israel, who is the supreme Being, self-existent, the Being of beings, eternal and immutable, all which is contained in his name Jehovah; now this is repeated by them for the confirmation of their faith in this great article of it, and shows the steadiness of it, and to express their earnest and vehement affection for this truth, and to clear themselves from any imputation of idolatry, or thought of it, or doing anything that might have a tendency to it:

he knoweth; he is the omniscient God, the searcher of the hearts and the trier of the reins of the children of men; he knows our cordial belief of this truth, the integrity of our hearts, the intention of our minds, that we never had a thought in us of departing from his worship, and of setting up an altar beside his in opposition to it:

and Israel he shall know; our brethren the Israelites that dwell in the land of Canaan, whose representatives you are, shall know, not only by our present declaration, but by our future conduct, and strict adherence to the pure worship of God in time to come, that it was never our view by what we have done to depart from it:

if [it be] in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord; with a design to rebel against his word, and transgress his command:

save us not this day; this is said with respect to God, and as an apostrophe to him, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel observe; as expressing their desire to have no mercy shown them by him, but that vengeance might be taken on them by him, to whom all things were naked and open, and who full well knew whether they were guilty or not; or else the address is to Phinehas, and the princes, that they would rise up and put them to death by sword, if this appeared to be the case; or that all the other tribes would rise up, and make war against them, and cut them off with the edge of the sword, and not spare them.

Joshua 22:23

Ver. 23. That we have built us an altar, to turn from following the Lord,.... That is, we desire, as we deserve, to be cut to pieces, and not saved, if it should appear to be our view, in building this altar, to revolt from the pure worship of

God:

or if to offer thereon burnt offering, or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings; even to the Lord himself: they declare that as they had no design to apostatize from God, and worship idols, so it was not their intention to offer any kind of sacrifice on the altar they had built, even to the Lord himself; and they take notice of every kind of offering, to remove every charge of this sort from them, and to purge themselves of every imputation of this nature: then

let the Lord himself require [it]; seek it out, who is the omniscient God, and revenge it, who is the Lord God Almighty, just and true.

Joshua 22:24

Ver. 24. And if we have not [rather] done it for fear of [this] thing,.... So far they suggest were they from doing this, in order to turn from the pure worship of God, and introduce idolatrous worship, that it was to guard against everything of that kind for the future; and through fear of it, and anxiety and distress of mind, lest some time or another there should be any temptation to it in their posterity, had they built this altar:

saying, in time to come your children might speak unto our children; or "tomorrow" {m}, in a short time after your heads, and ours, are laid in the grave, your posterity will accost us:

saying, what have you to do with the Lord God of Israel? you are aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel, live in a foreign land, and not in the land, of Canaan; are separated from us by the river Jordan, are a different people from us, and have nothing to do with the tabernacle of the Lord, and the service of it, or with the altar of the Lord, to offer sacrifice on it. Now as they returned to their own country, or when got there, such anxious thoughts and fears rose up in their minds, which they communicated to one another, and thought of this expedient to prevent what would be so fatal to their posterity. The Targum is,

"you have no part in the Word of the Lord God of Israel;"

see Joh 13:8.

{m} rxm "cras", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Joshua 22:25

Ver. 25. For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you,.... And by it separated them from them, as if they were a distinct people; not that this was really the case, but so they feared it would be represented in time to come; for though Jordan was the border of the land of Canaan, strictly so called, eastward, Nu 34:12; yet it did not exclude the land of the two tribes and a half from being part of the land of promise; for the Amorites, which before inhabited it, and were driven out of it, were Canaanites, and were one part of the people, whose land the Lord promised to Abraham, Ge 15:18;

ye children of Reuben, and children of Gad, have no part in the Lord; in his covenant and promises, in his worship, word, and ordinances; these are things you have nothing to do with, being separated from us his peculiar people; or "have no part in the Word of the Lord", as the Targum, the promised Messiah, being without, or separated from him, as the Gentiles are said to be, **Eph 2:12**;

so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord; from worshipping the Lord, the fear of the Lord being often put for the whole worship of God, external and internal, Ec 12:13; by behaving in the above manner towards them, they would be the cause and occasion of their apostasy from the true God, and it would be in effect to say to them, "go, serve other gods", 1Sa 26:19.

Joshua 22:26

Ver. 26. Therefore we said,.... One to another, in order to prevent the apostasy of our children from God, their departure from his worship, and going into idolatry:

let us now prepare to build us an altar; get materials ready, and set about it instantly, without any delay, while the thing dwells upon our minds:

not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice; not for offerings of any kind required by the law, neither for sin offerings nor trespass offerings, nor any other not named.

Joshua 22:27

Ver. 27. But [that] it [may be] a witness between us and you, and our generations after us,.... That we are one people, worship one God, and serve at one altar, of which this built was a resemblance, and would put them in mind of it:

that we might do the service of the Lord before him; in the tabernacle, and at the altar, in the place where he had chosen to put his name and dwell:

with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; to be brought at stated times, or as occasion required:

that your children may not say to our children, in time to come, ye have no part in the Lord; nor right to his altar, and so forbid them offering their sacrifices on it; or

"have no part in the Word of the Lord,"

as the Targum; the Messiah, whose sacrifice was typified by the sacrifices of the legal dispensation, and all such, who offered theirs in the faith of that, had a part in it, and their sins were expiated by it.

Joshua 22:28

Ver. 28. Therefore said we,.... To prevent any such usage of our children, and that they might have a ready answer to give:

that it shall be, when they should [so] say unto us, or to our generations, in time to come; as above suggested, that they were a separate people from them, and had no interest in the Lord, nor right to his altar, nor concern in his worship:

that we may say [again]; in reply, that is, our posterity:

behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord, which our fathers made; which exactly agrees with the Mosaic altar, and which they could never have framed in so exact a manner if they had not seen it, and served at it; wherefore this was a plain proof of their being originally worshippers of the same God, partakers of the same altar, and were in the faith, fellowship, and communion of Israel. According to Gussetius {n}, this was not the altar the Reubenites, &c. built, which the children of Israel would be bid to behold, but the Mosaic altar at the tabernacle or temple, which was the archetype and exemplar, according to which that of the Reubenites was formed; and therefore say not, come and behold, but behold the altar present before them, that of Moses, and acknowledge that to be a type and exemplar, which they had related, and so confess it to be a testimony of their mutual fellowship: and what they had made in imitation of it, which exactly answered to it, was

not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; of any sort, that was not the intention of erecting it:

but it [is] a witness between us and you; that we worship the same God, and are of the same faith and fellowship.

{n} Ebr. Comment. p. 135.

Joshua 22:29

Ver. 29. God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord,.... Against the command of the Lord, who ordered one altar to be made, to which all sacrifices were to be brought from the several parts of the land of Israel, and there to be offered on it; or

"against the Word of the Lord,"

as the Targum, Christ typified both by the altar and the sacrifices on it; and who is but one, one priest, one sacrifice, one altar, one Mediator and Saviour:

and turn this day from following the Lord; apostatize from him, and from his worship:

to build an altar for burnt offerings, for meat offerings, or for sacrifices; which was never our intention, or ever entered into our hearts to erect one for such a purpose:

besides the altar of the Lord our God, that [is] before his tabernacle; it standing in the court of the tabernacle before the holy place.

Joshua 22:30

Ver. 30. And when Phinehas the priest,.... For he was, being the son of Eleazar the high priest, so the word "priest", Jos 22:13; is to be joined, not to Eleazar but to Phinehas:

and the princes of the congregation; the ten princes, who were sent by the congregation of Israel, one out of each tribe:

and heads out of the thousands of Israel; these are the same with the princes, and this belongs to their title, who were heads of the Chiliarchs, or those who were rulers of thousands in Israel:

which [were] with him; with Phinehas, who were joined with him in the embassy, and now present with him:

heard the words that the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh; spake; in defence of themselves, explaining the meaning and design of the altar they had built:

it pleased them; they were not only satisfied with their answer, but highly delighted with what they had done, as tending to preserve the common faith and fellowship of Israel.

Joshua 22:31

Ver. 31. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest,.... As the mouth of the deputation, and in their name:

said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh; the representatives of them assembled together on this occasion:

this day we perceive that the Lord [is] among us; his Shechinah, as the Targum; his powerful Presence in preserving their brethren from committing a trespass, as they feared; his gracious Presence smiling upon them; and as the God of peace and order, and not of confusion, uniting and cementing their hearts in love to one another:

because ye have not committed this trespass against the Lord; which they were fearful and jealous of they had, but they found that the Lord had been good and gracious in preserving them from it:

now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord; into which they would have fallen, had that been the case, and would have felt the effects of the divine resentment, but now they were secure from them.

Joshua 22:32

Ver. 32. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes,.... Being fully satisfied with the relation of things that had been given them, and having taken their leave of the assembly:

returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad; the Greek version adds, "and from the half tribe of Manasseh"; which, though not in the Hebrew text, is undoubtedly meant:

out of the land of Gilead: which, though only a part of the country these tribes inhabited, is put for the whole, and it is not improbable that the assembly might be held in it:

unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel; the rest of the children of Israel who dwelt in the land of Canaan, properly so called:

and brought them word again; reported the whole affair, related all that had passed, and acquainted them with the intention and design of their brethren erecting the altar, and what had been the issue of their embassy to them.

Joshua 22:33

Ver. 33. And the thing pleased the children of Israel,.... They were quite satisfied with the account of things, and were pleased and delighted with what their brethren, the other two tribes, had done:

and the children of Israel blessed God: returned thanks to him, that there was no trespass committed against him, and no schism like to be made among them, nor any wrath to come upon them:

and did not intend to go up against them in battle; for though upon first hearing of their building an altar, which they supposed was for idolatry, they had intended to make war against them, but now understanding the design of that building, they laid aside all thoughts of that kind:

to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt; which they judged by the law in De 13:12 they were obliged to do. The Greek version here adds also, "and the half tribe of Manasseh", and renders the last clause, and "they dwelt in it"; continued to dwell in it undisturbed by their brethren.

Joshua 22:34

Ver. 34. And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, called the altar [Ed],.... Which signifies a "witness"; they caused such an inscription to be put upon it, or this word to be engraved on it, that so the intention of erecting it might be known in future time; that it was not for sacrifice, but to be a testimony of their being one with their brethren on the other side Jordan, in worship, faith, and fellowship:

for [it shall be] a witness between us that the Lord [is] God; is the one God, the God of them both, of all Israel, whether on the one or the other side of Jordan; to be worshipped by them in one and the same manner, and their sacrifices to be offered to him on his altar before the tabernacle.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 23

Joshua being old, convenes the states of Israel a little before his death, Jos 23:1; and in his address to them observes what God had done for them, and would do, Jos 23:3; and exhorts them to keep the commandments of God, and cleave to him, and not to mix with the Gentiles, and join with them in idolatrous practices, and then it would be well with them, Jos 23:6; but otherwise should they join with them, and depart from the Lord, who had so faithfully and punctually performed every good thing he had promised them, they might expect all evils and calamities, utter ruin and destruction, to befall them,
Jos 23:12.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass a long time after,.... Or "after many days" {o}, that is, years:

that the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about; the greatest part of the land of Canaan was subdued, the whole divided by lot to the tribes of Israel, and they quietly settled in the respective portions assigned them, the Canaanites that remained giving them no disturbance, in which state of rest and peace they had now been for some years; and this may be reasonably supposed to be the last year of the life of Joshua, see Jos 23:14.

that Joshua waxed old [and] stricken in age; and became feeble and decrepit, and greatly declined; for though he was ten years younger than Moses when he died, yet not so vigorous, strong, and robust as he, but was pressed and bore down with the infirmities of age.

{o} Mybr Mymym "post dies multos", Pagninus, Masius, Tigurine version; "exactis maltis diebus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Joshua 23:2

Ver. 2. And Joshua called for all Israel,.... Summoned them together, whether at Timnathserah, his own city, he being old and infirm, and not able to go elsewhere; or whether at Shechem, where it is plain they were afterwards convened, Jos 24:1, or whether rather at Shiloh, where the tabernacle was, is not certain; and by "all Israel" cannot be meant the whole body of the people, unless it can be thought to be at one of the feasts, when all the males in Israel appeared before the Lord; though this seems to be not a stated convocation, but occasionally made, and to be understood of the representatives of the people called together, as explained in the following clause:

[and] for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; the first and is supplied, and another word or words may be supplied, as "even", or "that is", or the like, and so explanative of all Israel, namely, "their elders", both in age and office, especially the latter, the seventy elders, or who composed what in later times was called the great sanhedrim; and the "heads" of their tribes, the chief princes of every tribe; and their "judges" in their several cities, who heard and tried causes, and administered justice and judgment to the people; and their "officers", who attended on them to execute the judgment they pronounced:

and said unto them, I am old [and] stricken in age; which he observes as a reason of his calling them together to give them some advice and instructions before his death, and in order to command greater reverence of him, and respect to him, and to excite attention to what he had to say to them.

Joshua 23:3

Ver. 3. And ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto all those nations because of you,.... How he had destroyed them, and driven them out of their habitations to make room for them, meaning the seven nations of the Canaanites:

for the Lord your God [is] he that hath fought for you; Joshua does not attribute any of the things that were done to his own valour, nor theirs, nor so much as mentions himself or them as instruments, but wholly ascribes all to the Lord, who fought their battles for them, and conquered their enemies, and subdued them under them; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord fought for you;"

the Captain of the host of the Lord, **Jos 5:14**.

Joshua 23:4

Ver. 4. Behold, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain,.... Who are unsubdued, not yet conquered, as well as those that are

to be an inheritance for your tribes; to be possessed by them and their children for ever:

from Jordan, with all the nations I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward; the phrase, "with all the nations I have cut off", is to be read in connection with "those nations that remain"; both those that were cut off by the sword of Joshua, and those that remained unconquered, being divided by lot to the tribes of Israel; and which reached from Jordan eastward, where Joshua and Israel entered into the land, to the Mediterranean sea, called the great sea in comparison of little ones in Canaan, as the Dead sea, and the sea of Tiberias; and which great sea lay west to the land of Israel, or where the sun sets, as the phrase in the Hebrew text is.

Joshua 23:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord your God he shall expel them from before you,.... That is, such of them as yet remained among them:

and drive them from out of your sight; the same thing expressed by different words, for the confirmation of it:

and ye shall possess their land, as the Lord your God hath promised unto you; all which is to be understood on condition of their good behaviour towards the Lord, and obedience to his commands; by which tenure they held the possession of the land when put into it, and for their disobedience did not possess the whole.

Joshua 23:6

Ver. 6. Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses,.... To observe which required spiritual strength, fortitude of mind, a holy courage, a firm and fixed resolution, and particularly to destroy the Canaanites required in that book, and to abstain from all communion and fellowship with them:

that ye turn not aside therefrom, [to] the right hand or the left;
See Gill on "Jos 1:7".

Joshua 23:7

Ver. 7. That ye come not among these nations, those that remain among you,.... That remained unsubdued, or that were suffered to dwell among them, being tributaries to them; with these they were not to converse freely and familiarly, nor to carry on trade and commerce with them, nor enter into any alliances or marriages with them, and not even attend any of their feasts, and especially their idolatrous ones:

neither make mention of the name of their gods; not in common conversation, and still less in any religious matters; never with any reverence of them, or in any respectable manner; but always with indignation and contempt, calling them dunghill gods, and the like, as they often are in Scripture:

nor cause to swear [by them]; neither swear by them themselves, nor cause others to swear by them, as Abarbinel; or a man his neighbour, as Kimchi; no, not a Gentile, as Ben Melech; so it is said in the Misnah {p},

"he that vows in the name of an idol, and confirms in his name, (which Bartenora interprets, swears by his name,) transgresses a negative precept."

Maimonides {q} also says,

"he that vows in the name of an idol, and swears by it, is to be beaten--he that swears by it himself, or causes a Gentile to swear by it; for it is forbidden to cause a Gentile to swear by his fear (or idol), and even to cause him to make mention of it, though not in the way of an oath, it is forbidden:"

neither serve them; by offering any sacrifice or incense to them, or by praying to them, or offering them praises on any account, or by performing any religious service in any instance or form whatever:

nor bow yourselves unto them; give them any adoration or worship, external or internal.

{p} Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 6. {q} Hilchot & Obedeth Cochabim, c. 5. sect. 10.

Joshua 23:8

Ver. 8. But cleave unto the Lord your God,.... To his word, worship, and ordinances; externally, by close adherence to them, and strict observation of them; and internally, by strong affection to him, hope, trust, and confidence in him, expectation of all good things from him, and constant application to him for help in all times of need, and a fixed dependence on him:

as ye have done unto this day; that is, since they came into the land of Canaan, and had been under the government of Joshua; for otherwise, while in the wilderness, they frequently revolted from God, and murmured against him; and this is to be understood not of individuals, who doubtless were guilty of various failings and sins, but of the whole body, and with respect to any notorious offence, particularly idolatry, which they had not fallen into since they came into the land of Canaan, and had very lately shown great zeal against it; not only the tribes on this side, but those on the other side Jordan, as the preceding chapter largely relates.

Joshua 23:9

Ver. 9. For the Lord hath driven out before you great nations and strong,.... Especially as they were reckoned in those times, before any great monarchies had existed, as did afterwards; and indeed these were, considering the land they inhabited, very numerous and populous, and were very stout and able bodied men, and some of a gigantic stature; and all dwelt in strong fortified cities, and were able to bring out large armies into the field, with chariots of iron, so that they were very formidable; but notwithstanding all this, the Lord drove them out of their strong holds, and put Israel into the possession of them, and of their land:

but [as for] you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day; that is, of those that came out against them, and fought with them; these were all to a man cut off by them, or fled before them, and became tributaries to them; otherwise there were many, who as yet were not expelled by them; this the Lord had promised, and now had fulfilled, De 11:25.

Joshua 23:10

Ver. 10. One man of you shall chase a thousand,.... Here Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, that the future tense is put for the past, and that the sense is, one of them had chased a thousand in their war with the Canaanites; but Abarbinel disapproves of this observation, and thinks it refers to time to come, what they should be able to do if they cleaved unto the Lord; this was fulfilled in Samson, Jud 15:15; such a promise was made, Le 26:8;

for the Lord your God he [it is] that fighteth for you; and no wonder then that a thousand should be put to flight by one man; the Targum interprets it of the Word of the Lord, as in Jos 23:3;

as he hath promised you; see **De 1:30**.

Joshua 23:11

Ver. 11. Take good heed therefore unto yourselves,.... To be upon their guard, and to be watchful, were very necessary to them, that they might not be ensnared by the Canaanites, and drawn aside by them into idolatry, and so apostatize from the Lord and his worship, since their temptations would be many:

that ye love the Lord your God; which would the most strongly influence and engage them to serve and worship the Lord, and obey his commands, and be the best preservative against idolatry and false worship.

Joshua 23:12

Ver. 12. Else if ye do in any wise go back,.... From the Lord and his worship, from his word and ordinances:

and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, [even] those that remain among you; in cities not taken, or in several which the Philistines were in possession of, or lived among them as tributaries to them, if they should take to them, and be free and familiar with them, which may lead on to nearer connections in civil and religious matters:

and shall make marriages with them; marry their daughters to the sons of Canaanites, or admit the daughters of Canaanites to be married to their sons:

and go in unto them, and they to you; which is expressive of the consummation of marriage, and of the performance of the conjugal duty,

Joshua 23:13

Ver. 13. Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out [any] of these nations from before you,.... Or, "knowing ye shall know" {r}; or "know ye"; this may be taken for granted, or the fullest proof, and clearest demonstration, and strongest assurance will be given of it, that in case of such bad conduct, and disobedience to the will of God, no more of the nations of the Canaanites will be driven out of the cities in which they are:

but they shall be snares and traps unto you; who by their bad examples would draw them both to idolatry and superstitious worship, and into all irreligion, profaneness, and immorality, as they did,

Ps 106:35;

and scourges in your sides; who either, by ensnaring them, would get an advantage over them, and distress them in their persons, families, and estates; or would be the means of the Lord's correcting and chastising them with the rod and stripes of men, for the iniquities these would draw them into; the allusion is to scourges and lashes laid on the sides of men, or to goads with which beasts are pushed on their sides and driven:

and thorns in your eyes; very troublesome and distressing; for even a mote in the eye is very afflicting: and much more a thorn;
See Gill on "Nu 33:55". Jarchi interprets this word by camps surrounding them, as shields do the bodies of men, and which is approved of by Gussetius {s}:

until ye perish from off this good land, which the Lord your God hath given you; by sword, famine, pestilence, or captivity, which has been their case.

{r} wedt ewdy "sciendo scietis", Montanus; "sciendo scitote", Pagninus, Vatablus. {s} Comment. Ebr. p. 717.

Joshua 23:14

Ver. 14. And, behold, this day I [am] going the way of all the earth,.... That is, about to die; not that precise day, but in a short time, of which the daily increasing infirmities of old age gave him notice. Death is a journey from this world to another, a man's going to his long home, a path trodden by all men, and but once {t}; a way in which all men without exception must and do walk, and even the best as well as the greatest of men, such as Joshua; no man is exempted from death, be he ever so great or good, ever so wise and knowing, ever so holy or so useful; see **1Ki 2:2**;

and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls; in their consciences; it was a glaring truth, which none could deny; it had a testimony in every man's breast:

that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God hath spoken concerning you; particularly concerning the good land, and the Lord's bringing them into it, removing the old inhabitants, and settling them in their room, and putting them in possession of all temporal good things and spiritual privileges, as the word and ordinances:

all are come to pass unto you, [and] not one thing hath failed thereof; see Jos 21:45.

{t} "----Sed omnes una manet nox, Et calcanda semel via lethi". --Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 28.

Joshua 23:15

Ver. 15. Therefore it shall come to pass, [that] as all the good things are come upon you which the Lord hath promised you,.... Of which there was full proof, and it could not be denied:

so shall the Lord bring upon you all evil things; calamities and distresses, by his sore judgments of famine, sword, pestilence, evil beasts, and captivity, in case of disobedience to his commands:

until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you; for as he is faithful to his promises, so to his threatenings; and from his punctual performance of the one may be argued and expected the sure fulfilment of the other, and which has been abundantly verified in that people; see Le 26:1 and the notes there.

Joshua 23:16

Ver. 16. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you,.... The law, so called, and the several precepts of it, particularly those which relate to the faith and worship of the one only true God; see Ex 24:7;

and have gone and served other gods, and have bowed down yourselves unto them; been guilty of idolatry, of having and worshipping other gods, which are no gods, with or besides the God of Israel, see Jos 23:7;

then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you; nothing being more provoking to him than idolatry, he being a jealous God of his honour and worship:

and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you; as they did at the time of the Babylonish captivity, and at the last destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joshua 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOSHUA 24

This chapter gives us an account of another summons of the tribes of Israel by Joshua, who obeyed it, and presented themselves before the Lord at Shechem, Jos 24:1; when Joshua in the name of the Lord rehearsed to them the many great and good things the Lord had done for them, from the time of their ancestor Abraham to that day,
Jos 24:2; and then exhorted them to fear and serve the Lord, and reject idols, Jos 24:14; and put them upon making their choice, whether they would serve the true God, or the gods of the Canaanites; and they choosing the former, he advised them to abide by their choice,
Jos 24:15; and made a covenant with them to that purpose, and then dismissed them, Jos 24:25; and the chapter is concluded with an account of the death and burial of Joshua and Eleazar, and of the interment of the bones of Joseph, Jos 24:29.

Ver. 1. And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem,.... The nine tribes and a half; not all the individuals of them, but the chief among them, their representatives, as afterwards explained, whom he gathered together a second time, being willing, as long as he was among them, to improve his time for their spiritual as well as civil good; to impress their minds with a sense of religion, and to strengthen, enlarge, and enforce the exhortations he had given them to serve the Lord; and Abarbinel thinks he gathered them together again because before they returned him no answer, and therefore he determined now to put such questions to them as would oblige them to give one, as they did, and which issued in making a covenant with them; the place where they assembled was Shechem, which some take to be Shiloh, because of what is said Jos 24:25; that being as they say in the fields of Shechem; which is not likely, since Shiloh, as Jerom says {u}, was ten miles from Neapolis or Shechem. This place was chosen because nearest to Joshua, who was now old and infirm, and unfit to travel; and the rather because it was the place where the Lord first appeared to Abraham, when he brought him into the land of

Canaan, and where he made a promise of giving the land to his seed, and where Abraham built an altar to him, Ge 12:6; where also Jacob pitched his tent when he came from Padanaram, bought a parcel of a field, and erected an altar to the Lord, Ge 33:18; and where Joshua also repeated the law to, and renewed the covenant with the children of Israel, quickly after their coming into the land of Canaan, for Ebal and Gerizim were near to Shechem, **Jos 8:30**;

and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers: See Gill on "Jos 23:2";

and they presented themselves before God; Kimchi and Abarbinel are of opinion that the ark was fetched from the tabernacle at Shiloh, and brought hither on this occasion, which was the symbol of the divine Presence; and therefore the place becoming sacred thereby is called the sanctuary of the Lord, and certain it is that here was the book of the law of Moses, Jos 24:26; which was put on the side of the ark,
De 31:26.

{u} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. I.

Joshua 24:2

Ver. 2. And Joshua said unto all the people,.... Then present, or to all Israel by their representatives:

thus saith the Lord God of Israel; he spoke to them in the name of the Lord, as the prophet did, being himself a prophet, and at this time under a divine impulse, and spirit of prophecy. According to an Arabic writer {w}: the Angel of God appeared in the form of a man, and with a loud voice delivered the following, though they are expressed by him in a different manner; perhaps he mean, the Captain of the Lord's host,
Jos 15:13; and which is not unlikely:

your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time; on the offer side the, river Euphrates; so the Targum,

"beyond Perat;"

i.e. Euphrates; in Mesopotamia and Chaldea; meaning not the remotest of their ancestors, Noah and Shem, but the more near, and who are expressly named:

[even] Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; the Israelites sprung from Terah, in the line of Abraham, on the father's side, and from him in the line of Nachor on the mother's side, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel, being of Nachor's family:

and they served other gods; besides the true God, strange gods, which were no gods: "idols"; the idols of the people, as the Targum; so did Terah, Abraham, and Nachor; See Gill on "Ge 11:26";
See Gill on "Ge 11:28";
See Gill on "Ge 12:1".

{w} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 35.

Joshua 24:3

Ver. 3. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood,.... The river Euphrates, as before: or "your father, to wit, Abraham", as Noldius {x}; he took him not only in a providential way, and brought him from the other side of the Euphrates, out of an idolatrous country and family, but he apprehended him by his grace, and called and converted him by it, and brought him to a spiritual knowledge of himself, and of the Messiah that should spring from his seed, and of the Covenant of grace, and of the blessings of it, and of his interest therein; which was a peculiar and distinguishing favour:

and led him throughout all the land of Canaan; from the northern to the southern part of it; he led him as far as Shechem, where Israel was now assembled, and then to Bethel, and still onward to the south,
Ge 12:6; that he might have a view of the land his posterity was to inherit, and, by treading on it and walking through it, take as it were a kind of possession of it:

and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac; he multiplied his seed by Hagar, by whom he had Ishmael, who begat twelve princes; and by Keturah, from whose sons several nations sprung; see Ge 17:20; and by Sarah, who bore him Isaac in old age, in whom his seed was called; and from whom, in the line of Jacob, sprung the twelve tribes of Israel, and which seed may be chiefly meant; and the sense is, that he multiplied his posterity after he had given him Isaac, and by him a numerous seed; so Vatablus: Ishmael is not mentioned, because, as Kimchi observes, he was born of an handmaid; but Abarbinel thinks only such are mentioned, who were born in a miraculous manner, when their parents were barren, as in this and also in the next instance.

{x} Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 119.

Joshua 24:4

Ver. 4. And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau,.... When Rebekah was barren, so that the children appeared the more to be the gift of God; though Esau perhaps is mentioned, for the sake of what follows:

and I gave unto Esau Mount Seir to possess it; that Jacob and his posterity alone might inherit Canaan, and Esau and his seed make no pretension to it:

but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt; where they continued many years, and great part of the time in bondage and misery, which is here taken no notice of; and this was in order to their being brought into the land of Canaan, and that the power and goodness of God might be the more conspicuous in it.

Joshua 24:5

Ver. 5. I sent Moses also and Aaron,.... To demand Israel's dismission of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to be the deliverers of them:

and I plagued Egypt according to that which I did amongst them; inflicting ten plagues upon them for refusing to let Israel go:

and afterwards I brought you out; that is, out of Egypt, with an high hand, and outstretched arm.

Joshua 24:6

Ver. 6. And I brought your fathers out of Egypt,.... Which more fully expresses the sense of the last clause of Jos 24:5:

and you came unto the sea; which respects some senior persons then present; for, besides Caleb and Joshua, there were many at this time alive who came to and passed through the Red sea, at their coming out of Egypt; for those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness were such as were mere than twenty years of age at their coming out from Egypt, and who were the murmurers in the wilderness; and it may be reasonably supposed, that many of those who were under twenty years of age at that time were now living:

and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers, with chariots and horsemen, into the Red sea; of the number of their chariots and horsemen, see Ex 14:7; with these they pursued the Israelites, not only unto, but into the Red sea, following them into it; the reason of which strange action is given in Jos 24:7.

Joshua 24:7

Ver. 7. And when they cried unto the Lord,.... That is, the Israelites, being in the utmost distress, the sea before them, Pharaoh's large host behind them, and the rocks on each side of them; see Ex 14:10;

he put darkness between you and the Egyptians; the pillar of cloud, the dark side of which was turned to the Egyptians, and which was the reason of their following the Israelites into the sea; for not being able to see their way, knew not where they were; see Ex 14:20;

and brought the sea upon them, and covered them; or "upon him, and covered him" {y}; on Pharaoh, as Kimchi; or on Egypt; that is, the Egyptians or on everyone of them, as Jarchi, none escaped; see
Ex 14:26;

and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt; what signs and wonders were wrought there, before they were brought out of it, and what he had done to and upon the Egyptians at the Red sea; some then present had been eyewitnesses of them:

and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season; forty years, where they had the law given them, were preserved from many evils and enemies, were fed with manna, and supplied with the necessaries of life, were led about and instructed, and at length brought out of it.

{y} whokyw-wyle "super eum, et operuit eum", Munster, Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus.

Joshua 24:8

Ver. 8. And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan,.... The kingdoms of Sihon and Og, and they fought with you; the two kings of them, and their armies:

and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land; and which was now possessed by the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh:

and I destroyed them from before you; the kings, their forces, and the inhabitants of their countries; the history of which see in
Nu 21:10.

Joshua 24:9

Ver. 9. Then Balak the son of Zippor, the king of Moab, arose,.... Being alarmed with what Israel had done to the two kings of the Amorites, and by their near approach to the borders of his kingdom:

and warred against Israel; he fully designed it, and purpose is put for action, as Kimchi observes; he prepared for it, proclaimed war, and commenced it, though he did not come to a battle, he made use of stratagems and wiles, and magical arts, to hurt them, and sent for Balaam to curse them, that they both together might smite the Israelites, and drive them out of the land, Nu 22:6; so his fighting is interpreted by the next clause:

and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you; by which means he hoped to prevail in battle, and get the victory over them; but not being able to bring this about, durst not engage in battle with them.

Joshua 24:10

Ver. 10. But I would not hearken unto Balaam,.... Who was very solicitous to get leave of the Lord to curse Israel, which he knew he could not do without; he had a goodwill to it but could not accomplish it:

therefore he blessed you still; went on blessing Israel to the last, when Balak hoped every time he would have cursed them; and Balaam himself was very desirous of doing it; but could not, being overruled by the Lord, and under his restraint; which shows his power over evil spirits, and their agents:

so I delivered you out of his hands: both out of the hand of Balak, who was intimidated from bringing his forces against them, and out of the hand of Balaam, who was not suffered to curse them.

Joshua 24:11

Ver. 11. And ye went over Jordan,.... In a miraculous manner, the waters parting to make way for the host of Israel:

and came unto Jericho; the first city of any size and strength in the land, which was about seven or eight miles from Jordan;
See Gill on "Nu 22:1";

and the men of Jericho fought against you; by endeavouring to intercept their spies, and cut them off; by shutting up the gates of their city against Israel; and it may be throwing darts, arrows, and stones, from off the walls of it at them. Kimchi thinks that some of the great men of Jericho went out from thence, to give notice and warning to the kings of Canaan of the approach of the Israelites, and in the mean time the city was taken; and that these afterwards joined with the kings in fighting against Joshua and the people of Israel:

the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; the seven nations of Canaan; this they did at different times, and in different places:

and I delivered them into your hand; these nations and their kings.

Joshua 24:12

Ver. 12. And I sent the hornet before you,.... Of which
See Gill on "Ex 23:28";

which drave them out from before you, [even] the two kings of the Amorites; who were Sihon and Og, and not only them, and the Amorites under them, but the other nations, Hivites, Hittites, &c.

[but] not with thy sword, nor with thy bow; but by insects of the Lord's sending to them, which, as Kimchi says, so blinded their eyes, that they could not see to fight, and so Israel came upon them, and slew them; in which the hand of the Lord was manifestly seen, and to whose power, and not, their own, the destruction of their enemies was to be ascribed.

Joshua 24:13

Ver. 13. And I have given you a land for which you did not labour,.... Or, in which {z}, by manuring and cultivating it, by dunging, and ploughing, and sowing:

and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; neither built the houses in them, nor the walls and fortifications about them; in which now they dwelt safely, and at ease, and which had been promised them as well as what follows; see **De 6:10**,

of the vineyards and oliveyards, which ye planted not, do ye eat; thus far an account is given of the many mercies they had been and were favoured with, and thus far are the words of the Lord by Joshua; next follow the use and improvement Joshua made of them.

{z} hb "in qua", V. L. Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Joshua 24:14

Ver. 14. Now therefore fear the Lord,.... Since he has done such great and good things, fear the Lord and his goodness, fear him for his goodness sake; nothing so influences fear, or a reverential affection for God, as a sense of his goodness; this engages men sensible of it to fear the Lord, that is, to worship him both internally and externally in the exercise of every grace, and in the performance of every duty:

and serve him in sincerity and in truth: in the uprightness of their souls, without hypocrisy and deceit, and according to the truth of his word, and of his mind and will revealed in it, without any mixture of superstition and will worship, or of the commands and inventions of men:

and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; that is, express an abhorrence of them, and keep at a distance from them, and show that you are far from giving in to such idolatries your ancestors were guilty of, when they lived on the other side Euphrates, in Chaldea, or when they were sojourners in Egypt; for it cannot be thought that the Israelites were at this time guilty of such gross idolatry, at least openly, since Joshua had bore such a testimony of them, that they had cleaved to the Lord unto that day, Jos 23:8; and their zeal against the two tribes and a half, on suspicion of idolatry, or of going into it, is a proof of it also:

and serve ye the Lord: and him only.

Joshua 24:15

Ver. 15. And if it seem evil to you to serve the Lord,.... Irksome and troublesome, a burden, a weariness, and not a pleasure and delight:

choose you this day whom you will serve; say if you have found a better master, and whose service will be more pleasant and profitable:

whether the gods your fathers served, that [were] on the other side of the flood; the river Euphrates; these may bid rid rest for antiquity, but then they were such their fathers had relinquished, and for which undoubtedly they had good reason; and to take up with the worship of these again was to impeach their wisdom, judgment, and good sense:

or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but then these were such as could not preserve their worshippers in the land, or the Israelites had not dwelt in it, and therefore no dependence could be had upon them for future security. The Amorites are only mentioned, because they were a principal nation, some of which dwelt on one side Jordan, and some on the other, and indeed there were of them in the several parts of the land:

but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord; be your choice as it may be: this was the resolution of Joshua, and so far as he knew the sense of his family, or had influence over it, could and did speak for them; and which he observes as an example set for the Israelites to follow after; he full well knowing that the examples of great personages, such as governors, supreme and subordinate, have great influence over those that are under them,

Joshua 24:16

Ver. 16. And the people answered and said,.... To Joshua, upon his proposal to them, the option he gave them to serve the Lord or idols, and which was only done to try them:

God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods; they speak with the utmost abhorrence of idolatry, as a thing far from their hearts and thoughts, as the most abominable and execrable that could be thought or spoken of; to forsake the word, and worship, and ordinances of God, and serve the idols of the Gentiles, strange gods, whether more ancient or more recent, such as their fathers worshipped in former times, or the inhabitants of the land they now dwelt in, for which they were spewed out of it.

Joshua 24:17

Ver. 17. For the Lord our God, he [it is] that brought us up and our fathers, out of the land of Egypt,.... When Pharaoh, the king of it, refused to let them go, yet he wrought such wonders in it and inflicted such plagues on it, as obliged Pharaoh and his people to dismiss them:

from the house of bondage: where they were held in the greatest thraldom and slavery, and their lives made bitter and miserable:

and which did those great signs in our sight; meaning the wonders and marvellous things wrought before Pharaoh and his people, and in the sight of Israel, Ps 78:11; though Abarbinel is of opinion it refers to what had been done in their sight of late in the land of Canaan, as the dividing of the waters of Jordan, the fall of the walls of Jericho, the standing still of the sun in Gibeon; but this seems not so well to agree with what follows:

and preserved us in all the way wherein we went: in the wilderness from serpents and scorpions, and beasts of prey, and from all dangers from every quarter:

and among all the people through whom we passed; through whose borders they passed, as the Edomites, Moabites, and Amorites; though the above writer seems to understand it of preservation from the dangers of their enemies in the land of Canaan.

Joshua 24:18

Ver. 18. And the Lord drave out from before us all the people,.... The seven nations of the land of Canaan:

even the Amorites which dwelt in the land; the strongest and most populous of the nations, **Am 2:9**, or especially the Amorites, so Vatablus; or "with the Amorites", as others; those that lived on the other side Jordan, over whom Sihon and Og reigned:

[therefore] will we also serve the Lord: as well as Joshua and his house, for the reasons before given, because he had done such great and good things for them:

for he [is] our God: that has made and preserved us, and loaded us with his benefits, and is our covenant God, and therefore will we fear and serve him.

Joshua 24:19

Ver. 19. And Joshua said unto the people,.... To their heads and representatives now assembled together, and who had returned to him the preceding answer:

ye cannot serve the Lord; which he said not to discourage or deter them from serving the Lord, since it was his principal view, through the whole of this conversation with them, to engage them in it, but to observe to them their own inability and insufficiency of themselves to perform service acceptable to God; and therefore it became them to implore grace and strength from the Lord to assist them in it, and to depend upon that and not to lean to and trust in their own strength; as also to observe to them, that they could not serve him perfectly without any defect and failure in their service, for there is no man that does good and sins not; and therefore when a man has done all he can, he must not depend upon it for his justification before God; or consider it as his justifying righteousness, which was what that people were always prone to; some supply it,

"you cannot serve the Lord with your images,"

or along with them, so Vatablus:

for he [is] an holy God: perfectly holy, so that the best of men, and the heat of their services, are impure and unholy before him and will not bear to be compared with him, and therefore by no means to be trusted in; and it requires much grace and spiritual strength to perform any service that may be acceptable to him through Christ. In the Hebrew text it is, "for the Holy Ones [are] he": which may serve to illustrate and confirm the doctrine of the trinity of, persons in the unity of the divine Essence, or of the three divine holy Persons, holy Father, holy Son, holy Spirit, as the one God, see **Isa 6:3**;

he [is] a jealous God; of his honour and glory, and of his worship, in which he will admit of no rival, of no graven images, or any idols to be worshipped with him, or besides him; nor will he suffer the idol of men's righteousness to be set up in the room of, or in opposition to, the righteousness of God, even no services and works of men, be they ever so good, since they cannot be perfect before him:

he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins; even the transgressions and sins of such that forsake the worship and service of him, and fall into idolatry, or who seek for justification by their own services, these are both abominable to him; otherwise he is a God pardoning the iniquity, transgression, and sin, of all those who seek unto him and serve him, confess their sins, and renounce their own righteousness; see Ex 23:21.

Joshua 24:20

Ver. 20. If you forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods,.... Joshua knew the proneness of this people to idolatry, and therefore expresses his jealousy of them, that they would not be able to continue in the service of God, and would be apt to be carried away after idols; and therefore, to make them the more cautious and watchful, he represents to them the danger they were in, and what would befall them should they forsake the Lord they now promised to serve, and follow after other gods, which their fathers worshipped before they were called out of their estate of Heathenism, or which the Canaanites, or Egyptians worshipped, whose examples they were too ready to imitate:

then he will turn and do you hurt; not that there is properly any change in God, either of his counsel or covenant, or of love and affection to his people, but of his providential dealings, or outward manner of acting towards men; or the sense is, he will again do you hurt, bring evils and calamities upon you again and again, frequently as you revolt from him, such as the sword, pestilence, famine, and captivity, which these people after experienced when they fell into idolatry:

and consume you; by these his sore judgments:

after that he hath done you good; by bringing you into such a good land, and bestowing so many good things upon you, natural, civil, and religious; and yet, notwithstanding, being disobedient to him, and especially in the instances mentioned, they are made to expect his resentment, and the effects of it.

Joshua 24:21

Ver. 21. And the people said unto Joshua, nay,.... We will not serve strange gods:

but we will serve the Lord; according to his revealed will, and him only.

Joshua 24:22

Ver. 22. And Joshua said unto the people,.... In reply to their answer and resolution:

ye [are] witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen you the Lord God to serve him; that is, should they, after this choice of him, which they had so publicly declared, desert his service, and go into idolatry, their testimony would rise up against them, and they would, be self-condemned:

and they said, [we are] witnesses; should we ever apostatize from the Lord and his worship, we are content to have this our witness produced against us.

Joshua 24:23

Ver. 23. Now therefore put away, [said he],.... Which last words are rightly supplied, for they are the words of Joshua:

the strange gods which [are] among you; not their private notions and secret sentiments that some of them had imbibed in favour of idols, and the worship of them, as Ben Gersom thinks; but, as the Targum expresses it, "the idols of the Gentiles;"

either such as they had brought out of Egypt, or had found among the plunder of the Canaanites, and had secretly retained; or, as others think, their "penates", or household gods, they had privately kept and worshipped, such as those that were in Jacob's family, which he caused to be delivered to him, and which he hid under an oak in this place where Israel were now assembled, Ge 35:2; and which Joshua by a prophetic discerning spirit perceived were now among them:

and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel; to love, fear, and serve him; that is, pray that your hearts may be inclined thereunto, and make use of all means that may tend to direct your hearts to him, and his service; so the Targum,

"to the worship of the Lord God of Israel."

Joshua 24:24

Ver. 24. And the people said unto Joshua,.... A third time, that as by the mouth of two or three witnesses everything is confirmed, so by three testimonies of the same persons:

the Lord our God will we serve; as they had before declared, and to which they add:

and his voice will we obey; or his word, as the Targum, not only his word of command, but his essential Word, the Son of God.

Joshua 24:25

Ver. 25. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day,.... Proposing to them what was most eligible, and their duty to do, and they agreeing to it, this formally constituted a covenant, of which they selves were both parties and witnesses:

and set statute and an ordinance in Shechem; either made this covenant to have the nature of a statute and ordinance binding upon them, or repeated and renewed the laws of Moses, both moral and ceremonial, which had been delivered at Mount Sinai, and now, upon this repetition in Shechem, might be called a statute and ordinance there.

Joshua 24:26

Ver. 26. And Joshua wrote these words,.... Which had passed between him and the people:

in the book of the law of God; written by Moses, and which he ordered to be put in the side of the ark, and that being now present, the book could be easily taken out, and these words inserted in it, De 31:26;

and took a great stone: on which also might be inscribed the same words:

and set it up there under an oak, that [was] by the sanctuary of the Lord; or "in it" {a}; that is, in the field or place where the ark was, which made it sacred, and upon which account the place was called a sanctuary, or an holy place; for there is no need to say that the tabernacle or sanctuary itself was brought hither, only the ark; and much less can it be thought that an oak should be in it; though it was not improbable, that had it been thither brought, it might have been placed under, or by an oak, as we render it; and it is a tradition of the Jews, which both Jarchi and Kimchi make mention of, that this was the same oak under which Jacob hid the strange gods of his family in Shechem, Ge 35:4; Mr. Mede {b} is of opinion that neither ark nor tabernacle were here, but that by "sanctuary" is meant a "proseucha", or place for prayer; such an one as in later times was near Shechem, as Epiphanius {c} relates, built by the Samaritans in imitation of the Jews; but it is a question whether there were any such places so early as the times of Joshua, nor is it clear that such are ever called sanctuaries.

{a} vdqmb "in sanctuario", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatasblus, Junius & Tremellius. {b} Discourse 18. p. 66. {c} Contr. Haeres. l. 3. tom. 2. Haeres. 80.

Joshua 24:27

Ver. 27. And Joshua said unto all the people,.... The chief of them now gathered together, and who represented the whole body:

behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; of the covenant now made, and the agreement entered into, as the heap of stones were between Jacob and Laban, Ge 31:45;

for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us; this is said by a figure called "prosopopaeia", frequent in Scripture, by which inanimate creatures are represented as hearing, seeing, and speaking, and may signify, that should the Israelites break this covenant, and disobey the commands of the Lord they had promised to keep, they would be as stupid and senseless as this stone, or more so, which would rise in judgment against them. Nachmanides {d} a Jewish commentator, interprets this stone of the Messiah, the same as in Ge 49:24;

it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God; for a memorial and testimony to prevent them from going into atheism, a denying of the true God, or into apostasy from him, and into idolatry and false worship. The Targum of which is,

"behold, this stone shall be to us as the two tables of stone of the covenant, for we made it for a testimony; for the words which are written upon it are the sum of all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us, and it shall be unto you for a memorial, and for a testimony, lest ye lie before the Lord."

{d} Apud Masium in loc.

Joshua 24:28

Ver. 28. So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance. Dismissed them, and took his final leave and farewell of them, dying soon after; upon which they returned to the possessions and inheritances assigned by lot to the several tribes, of which they were the heads and princes.

Joshua 24:29

Ver. 29. And it came to pass, after these things,.... Some little time after, very probably the same year:

that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, [being] an hundred and ten years old; he wanted ten years of Moses his predecessor, De 34:7, and just the age of Joseph, Ge 50:22, from whom he sprung, being of the tribe of Ephraim, Nu 13:8.

Joshua 24:30

Ver. 30. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance,.... In a field belonging to his estate; for they buried not in towns and cities in those times. The Greek version adds,

"and they put into the tomb, in which he was buried, the stone knives with which he circumcised the children of Israel at Gilgal, when he brought them out of Egypt;"

and an Arabic writer {e} affirms the same, but without any foundation:

in Timnathserah, which [is] in Mount Ephraim; which was his city, and where he dwelt; and of which See Gill on "Jos 19:50"; and his grave was near the city; here, they say {f}, his father Nun, and Caleb also, were buried:

on the north side of the hill of Gaash; of the brooks or valleys of Gnash mention is made in 2Sa 23:30; which very probably were at the bottom of this hill.

{e} Patricides, p. 31. apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 523. {f} Cippi Heb. p. 32.

Joshua 24:31

Ver. 31. And the children of Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua,.... Without going into idolatrous practices:

and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua; that lived a few years longer than he; some of them that came young out of Egypt, and were now elderly men; and some of them doubtless were of the court of the seventy elders; these could not overlive Joshua a great many years, for, in the times of Chushanrishathaim, Israel fell into idolatry, **Jud 2:6**;

and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel; in Egypt, at the Red sea, in the wilderness, as well as since their coming into the land of Canaan.

Joshua 24:32

Ver. 32. And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt,.... At the request, and by the order of Joseph, Ge 50:25; which were punctually observed by the children of Israel under the direction and command of Moses, and therefore is ascribed to him, as here to them, Ex 13:19;

buried they in Shechem; not in the city, but in a field near it, as the next clause shows. The Jews in their Cippi Hebraici say {g}, that Joseph was buried at a village called Belata, a sabbath day's journey from Shechem; but Jerom says {h} he was buried in Shechem, and his monument was to be seen there in his time. Not that they buried him at the same time Joshua was buried, but very probably as soon as the tribe of Ephraim was in the quiet possession of this place; though the historian inserts the account of it here, taking an occasion for it from the interment of Joshua:

in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of silver; of which purchase
See Gill on "Ge 33:19";

and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph; and particularly of the tribe of Ephraim by lot, agreeably to the gift and disposal of it by Jacob to Joseph, See Gill on "Ge 48:22".

{g} Ut supra. (Cippi Heb. p. 32.) {h} Quaest. Heb. in Genesim, fol. 73. C.

Joshua 24:33

Ver. 33. And Eleazar the son of Aaron died,.... Very probably in a short time after Joshua; and, according to the Samaritan Chronicle {i}, he died as Joshua did, gathered the chief men of the children of Israel a little before his death, and enjoined them strict obedience to the commands of God, and took his leave of them, and then stripped himself of his holy garments, and clothed Phinehas his son with them; what his age was is not said:

and they buried him in a hill [that pertaineth to] Phinehas his son; or in the hill of Phinehas; which was so called from him, and might have the name given it by his father, who might possess it before him, and what adjoined to it. The Jews in the above treatise say {k}, that at Avarta was a school of Phinehas in a temple of the Gentiles; that Eleazar was buried upon the hill, and Joshua below the village among the olives, and on this hill is said {l} to be a school or village of Phinehas:

which was given him in Mount Ephraim; either to Eleazar, that he might be near to Shiloh, where the tabernacle then was, as the cities given to the priests and Levites were chiefly in those tribes that lay nearest to Jerusalem; though the Jews say, as Jarchi and Kimchi relate, that Phinehas might come into the possession of that place through his wife, or it might fall to him as being a devoted field; but it is most likely it was given to his father by the children of Ephraim, for the reason before observed. The Talmudists say, that Joshua wrote his own book, which is very probable; yet the last five verses, Jos 24:29, must be written by another hand, even as the last eight verses in Deuteronomy, De 34:5, were written by him, as they also say; and therefore this is no more an objection to his being the writer of this book, than the addition of eight verses by him to Deuteronomy is to Moses being the writer of that; and the same Talmudists {m} also observe, that Jos 24:29, "Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died", &c. were written by Eleazar, and Jos 24:33, "and Eleazar, the son of Aaron, died", &c. by Phinehas, which is not improbable.

{i} Apud Hottinger. p. 524. {k} Cippi Hebraici, ut supra. (p. 32.) {l} See Weemse's Christ. Synagog, l. 1. c. 6. sect. 5. p. 157. {m} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. & 15. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Judges 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES

The title of this book in the Hebrew copies is Sepher Shophetim, the Book of Judges; but the Syriac and Arabic interpreters call it,

"the Book of the Judges of the Children of Israel;"

and the Septuagint only Judges; so called, not because it was written by them, though some think it was compiled out of annals and diaries kept by them; but it seems to be the work of one person only: the true reason of its name is, because it treats of the judges of Israel, gives an account of their lives and actions, and especially such as concerned their office; which office was different from that of kings, and seems only to have been occasional, and chiefly lay in delivering the people out of the hands of their enemies, when oppressed, distressed, or carried captive by them; in protecting them in the enjoyment of their country, rights, and liberties; in leading out their armies against their enemies when needful; and in settling differences, judging law suits, and administering justice. The government of the nation, during their time, was a theocracy. It is not certain who was the penman of this book; some ascribe it to King Hezekiah, others to Ezra; but the Jewish writers {a} are generally of opinion that it was written by Samuel, which is most likely, who was the last of the judges; and it seems plainly to be written before the times of David, us appears from a speech of Joab, 2Sa 11:21; and from some passages in Ps 68:8, which seem to refer or allude to **Jud 5:4**; and from Jerusalem being called Jebus, which shows it to be inhabited by the Jebusites in the time of the writer of this book, whereas it was taken out of their hands by David; besides, Samuel himself refers to the annals of this book; 1Sa 12:9; and from whose testimonies, as well as from others in the New Testament, there is no doubt to be made of its being genuine and authentic, and written by divine inspiration; as is evident from the use the Apostle Paul, and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, have made of it, Ac 13:20; it is useful as an history, and without which the history of the people of Israel would not be complete; it containing an account of all their judges, excepting the two last, Eli and Samuel, of whom an account is given in the following books, and of some facts incidental to those times, related in an appendix at the end of it, concerning the idol of Micah, and the war of Benjamin; and furnishes out many useful moral observations concerning God's displeasure at sin in his own people Israel, and his corrections for it; and about his providential care of them in raising up for them deliverers in their time of need, as well as points at various virtues and excellencies in great and good men, worthy of imitation. It contains, according to Piscator, Dr. Lightfoot, and others, an history of two hundred ninety and nine years.

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 1

The children of Israel, after Joshua's death, inquiring of the Lord which tribes should first go up against the remaining Canaanites, Judah is ordered to go up, who with Simeon did, **Jud 1:1**; and had success against the Canaanites under Adonibezek, whom they brought to Jerusalem **Jud 1:4**; and against the Canaanites in Hebron, Debir, Zephath, Hormah, Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron, **Jud 1:9**; the Benjamites had not such good success as Judah against the

Jebusites in Jerusalem, **Jud 1:21**; nor as the house of Joseph had against Bethel, **Jud 1:22**; nor could the tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali, drive out the Canaanites from several places which belonged unto them, though many of them became their tributaries, **Jud 1:27**; and as for the Amorites, they were too powerful for the tribe of Dan, though some of them became tributaries to the house of Joseph, **Jud 1:34**.

{a} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2.

Ver. 1. Now after the death of Joshua,.... With the account of which the preceding book is concluded, and therefore this very properly follows after that; though Epiphanius {b} places the book of Job between them:

it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the Lord; that is, the heads of them who gathered together at Shiloh, where the tabernacle was; and standing before the high priest, either Eleazar, or rather Phinehas his son, Eleazar being in all probability dead, inquired by Urim and Thummim:

saying, who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? for they had no commander in chief, Joshua leaving no successor, though the Samaritan Chronicle {c} pretends he did; one Abel, a son of Caleb's brother, of the tribe of Judah, on whom the lot fell, out of twelve of the nine tribes and a half, to whom Joshua delivered the government of the nation, and crowned him: but this inquiry was not for any man to go before them all as their generalissimo, but to know what tribe should first go up, and they were desirous of having the mind of God in it, when they might expect to succeed; which to do, at their first setting out, would not only be a great encouragement to them to go on, but strike dread and terror into their enemies; and this is to be understood of the Canaanites who remained unsubdued, that dwelt among them, and in cities, which though divided to them by lot, they were not in the possession of; and these being troublesome neighbours to them, and besides the Israelites daily increasing, needed more room and more cities to occupy, and more land to cultivate.

{b} De Mensur. & Ponder. c. 13. {c} Apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 522.

Judges 1:2

Ver. 2. And the Lord said,.... By an articulate voice, which it is probable was the usual way of answering by Urim and Thummim:

Judah shall go up; not Judah in person, who was long ago dead, but the tribe of Judah; it was the will of the Lord that that tribe should engage first with the Canaanites, being the principal one, and the most numerous, powerful, and valiant, and perhaps had the greatest number of Canaanites among them; and who succeeding, would inspire the other tribes with courage, and fill their enemies with a panic:

behold, I have delivered the land into his hands; that part of it which belonged to that tribe as yet unsubdued, the conquest of which they are assured of for their encouragement.

Judges 1:3

Ver. 3. And Judah said unto Simeon his brother,.... The men of the tribe of Judah said to those of the tribe of Simeon, they being not only brethren by father's and mother's side, which was not the case of all the sons of Jacob, but their possessions and inheritances lay near together; and indeed those of Simeon were within the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, Jos 19:1; so that as they lived in great nearness and familiarity with each other, their interests were closely united together:

come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; conjunctly: the meaning is, that the tribe of Simeon, as many of their warlike men as could, would come and join their forces with those of the tribe of Judah, in order to reduce such cities, in the lot of that tribe, the Canaanites as yet were in the possession of:

and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot: the cities being conquered which were in the lot, of the tribe of Judah, that tribe proposed to bring their united forces into the lot of the tribe of Simeon, and reduce such cities as were in that lot:

so Simeon went with him: the tribe of Simeon agreed to the proposal, and went along with the tribe of Judah against their common enemy.

Judges 1:4

Ver. 4. And Judah went up,.... Simeon being along with him, from the southern parts of the land, where they dwelt, and went more northward towards Jerusalem, and which therefore is called a going up:

and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and Perizzites into their hands: into the hands of Judah and Simeon: the Canaanites here is not the common name of the seven nations, but the name of one of those nations, distinguished from the rest, as here from the Perizzites, who otherwise were also Canaanites; and both these, at least many of them, dwelt in those parts, and were subdued by the united forces of Judah and Simeon, whereby the Lord's promise was fulfilled, **Jud 1:2**;

and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men: that is, in and about Bezek, first and last, in the course of this war, as after related. Jerom says {d} there were two villages of this name in his time near one another, seven miles from Neapolis, as you go to Scythopolis; and our countryman Mr. Sandys {e} says, that when they departed from Bethlehem, bending their course from the mountains of Judea lying west from it, near to which, on the side of the opposite hill, they passed a little village called Bezek, as he took it, two miles from Bethsur, see
1Sa 11:8.

{d} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. H. {e} Travels, p. 142. Ed. 5th.

Judges 1:5

Ver. 5. And they found Adonibezek in Bezek,.... Who was king of, the place, and whose name signifies lord of Bezek; not that they took him there, for he is afterwards said to make his escape from thence, but here he was when they came against that city, and into which they rushed upon him, and fell upon him as follows:

and they fought against him; entering the city with their forces:

and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites: that were in it, or about it, even to the number of ten thousand, as before related, **Jud 1:4**.

Judges 1:6

Ver. 6. But Adonibezek fled, and they pursued after him, and caught him,.... It is very probable his view was to get to Jebus or Jerusalem, a strong and fortified city and he made his way thither as fast as he could, but was pursued and overtaken by some of the forces of Judah and Simeon; and the rather it may seem he took this course, since when he was taken by them, they brought him thither, as follows:

and cut off his thumbs and his great toes; whereby he was disabled both for fighting and for fleeing. So the Athenians cut off the thumbs of the right hand of the Aeginetae, the inhabitants of the island of Aegina, to disable them from holding a spear, as various writers {f} relate. Whether the Israelites did this, as knowing this king had used others in like manner, and so, according to their law of retaliation, "eye for eye", &c. Ex 21:23, required it; or whether, ignorant of it, were so moved and directed by the providence of God to do this, that the same measure might be measured to him which he had measured to others, is not certain; the latter seems most probable, since the Israelites did not usually inflict such sort of punishments; and besides, according to the command of God, they should have put him to death, as they were to do to all Canaanites.

{f} Valerius Maximus, l. 9. c. 2. Aelian, Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 9. Cicero de Officiis, l. 3. c. 11.

Judges 1:7

Ver. 7. And Adonibezek said,.... To the men of Judah, after his thumbs and toes were cut off, his conscience accusing him for what he had done to others, and being obliged to acknowledge he was righteously dealt with:

threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off; that is, by him, or by his orders, whom he had conquered and made captives; according to Josephus {g}, they were seventy two; the number may be accounted for by observing, that in those times, as appears by the preceding book, every city had a king over it; and besides, these seventy kings might not be such who had had the government of so many cities, but many of them such who had reigned successively in the same city, and had fallen into the hands of this cruel and tyrannical king, one after another, and their sons also with them might be so called: and these he says

gathered [their meat] under my table: were glad to eat of the crumbs and scraps which fell from thence, and might in their turns be put there at times for his sport and pleasure, and there be fed with the offal of his meat, as Bajazet the Turk was served by Tamerlane, who put him into an iron cage, and carried him about in it, and used him as his footstool to mount his horse, and at times fed him like a dog with crumbs from his table {h}:

as I have done, so God hath requited me; whether he had any knowledge of the true God, and of his justice in dealing with him according to his deserts, and had a real sense of his sin, and true repentance for it, is not certain; since the word for God is in the plural number, and sometimes used of Heathen deities, as it may be here by him; however, the righteous judgment of God clearly appears in this instance:

and they brought him to Jerusalem; to that part of Jerusalem which belonged to the tribe of Judah; see Jos 15:8; here they brought him alive, and dying, buried him, as Josephus {i} says; which might be their view in carrying him thither, perceiving he was a dying man; or they had him thither to expose him as a trophy of victory, and as an example of divine justice:

and there he died: whether through grief and vexation, or of the wounds he had received, or by the immediate hand of God, or by the hands of the Israelites, is not said; neither are improbable.

{g} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 2. {h} Such dogs are called trapezhev kunev, in Homer. Iliad. 23. ver. 173. & Odyss. 17. ver. 227. {i} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 2.

Judges 1:8

Ver. 8. Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it,.... Which accounted for their carrying Adonibezek thither. This they had done in the times of Joshua; for when the king of that place was taken and slain by Joshua, it seems that he and Israel went and fought against the city, and took that in which the tribe of Judah had a principal concern; so Kimchi and Ben Gersom interpret it; but Jarchi and Abarbinel are of opinion, that now from Bezek they went up to Jerusalem, and fought against it, and took it; and so others think, because only the children of Judah are mentioned, and not all Israel, who fought together in Joshua's time; nor is there any mention made of its being taken in his time, and yet it seems plain that it was inhabited in part by the children of Judah, Jos 15:63; some therefore have thought that it was twice taken; that after Joshua had taken it, he and the children of Israel being employed in making conquests in other parts of the land, the Jebusites repossessed it, from whence they were now again in part driven, not wholly; and Josephus says {k}, the lower part was taken, and all the inhabitants killed, but the upper part was hard to be taken, because of the strength of the walls, and the nature of the place:

and smitten it with the edge of the sword; the "inhabitants of it", so far as they got possession of it:

and set the city on fire; some part of it only, for in some part of it dwelt the children of Judah, and in another part the Jebusites.

{k} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 2.)

Judges 1:9

Ver. 9. And afterwards the children of Judah,.... After the taking of Bezek, and the king of it, having him to Jerusalem, where he died: they

went down; from Jerusalem; which was on high ground:

to fight against the Canaanites that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley; into which several parts the lot of the tribe of Judah was divided; in each of which they had cities, and some, as it seems, yet unsubdued, and in the hands of the Canaanites; of these several parts, and the cities in them, see Jos 15:21.

Judges 1:10

Ver. 10. And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron,.... Hebron was first taken by Joshua, and the inhabitants of it put to the sword, Jos 10:36; but while Joshua was employed in making other conquests, the Canaanites found ways and means of getting into the possession of it again; wherefore, when a grant of it was made to Caleb, he, with the assistance of the tribe of Judah, of which he was prince, regained it, Jos 15:12; wherefore what is recorded here is only a repetition of what was then done; unless it can be thought that this fact was there inserted by anticipation, or that there were two expeditions of the children of Judah against this place:

now the name of Hebron, before [was] Kirjatharba: see Jos 14:15; in the first of which Caleb, with the assistance of this tribe, drove out the three giants only, who afterwards got possession again, and in this put them to death, as follows:

and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai; see Nu 13:22; but what follows concerning their going from hence to Debir, and the offer of Caleb to give his daughter in marriage to whomsoever should take it, does not seem so well to agree with times after the death of Joshua; since it is highly probable that Caleb, who was contemporary with him and Eleazar, was now dead, and at least cannot well be thought to have a young daughter at this time undisposed of in marriage; wherefore these facts are only repeated upon observing Judah's having taken Jerusalem, to show what exploits were performed by men of that tribe; wherefore for what is after said, **Jud 1:11**, as is said in Jos 15:15, where the same things are related in express words as here, containing the request of Caleb's daughter: such an one, as made to Domitian, is related by Martial {l}.

{l} "Est mihi sitque precor", &c. l. 9. ep. 16.

Judges 1:11

Ver. 11. And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before [was] Kirjathsepher.
See Gill on "Jos 15:15".

Judges 1:12

Ver. 12. And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjathsepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.
See Gill on "Jos 15:16".

Judges 1:13

Ver. 13. And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.
See Gill on "Jos 15:17".

Judges 1:14

Ver. 14. And it came to pass, when she came [to him], that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off [her] ass;
and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou?] See Gill on "Jos 15:18".

Judges 1:15

Ver. 15. And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.
See Gill on "Jos 15:19".

Judges 1:16

Ver. 16. And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law,.... The posterity of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses; for though Jethro returned to his own country, after he had paid a visit to Moses in the wilderness, yet Hobab his son, at the persuasion of Moses, travelled with him and Israel through the wilderness, and went with them into Canaan, at least some of his descendants, and settled there, some in one part of the land, and some in another, of whom we read in several places of Scripture; they continued to the days of Jeremiah, and then went by the name of Rechabites, so called from Rechab, a descendant of Jethro: these

went up out of the city of palm trees; from the city of Jericho, as the Targum, so called from the great number of palm trees which grew near it, see De 34:3. This is to be understood not of the city itself, that was utterly destroyed by Joshua, and the rebuilding of it was forbidden under a curse, but the country adjacent, the valley in which it stood, which was set with palm trees; here was a grove of palm trees {m}, and the garden of balsam, which grew nowhere else, as Strabo {n} says; and who also observes, that here was a royal palace in his time; this belonged to Herod king of Judea in the times of Augustus Caesar, to whose palm tree groves there Horace {o} refers. Here the Kenites first settled when they came first over Jordan with Joshua, being a most pleasant and delightful place, and suitable to such persons who dwelt in tents, as they did, and answered to the promise of Moses to Hobab, Nu 10:29; and here it seems they had remained to this time: and now they left it, and came with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah; which was also a convenient place for the habitation of such persons, who loved a solitary life. Perhaps the Canaanites about Jericho might be troublesome to them, and therefore chose to stay no longer, there; or, having a peculiar affection for the tribe of Judah, they chose to be within their lot; and the rather, as they were a warlike and valiant tribe, they might expect the greater safety and protection among them:

which [lieth], in the south of Arad; that is, which wilderness of Judah lay there, of which name there was a country or city, see Nu 21:1; and here some of them dwelt to the times of Saul, the Amalekites then having got possession of the southern parts, which they infested and were troublesome to, see 1Sa 15:6;

and they went and dwelt among the people; of the tribe of Judah, near some of the cities which were in the wilderness; of which see
Jos 15:63.

{m} Justin. e Trogo, l. 36. c. 3. {n} Geograph. l. 16. p. 525. {o} Praeferat Herodis. Palmetis Pinguibus----De Arte Poet. ver. 184.

Judges 1:17

Ver. 17. And Judah went with Simeon his brother,.... Having subtitled his Canaanites which were in his own lot, according to his promise, he went with his brother Simeon, or the tribe of Simeon, into their lot to reduce those that were in that:

and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it: where and what this city was is not certain; there was a place of this name in upper Galilee, mentioned in Jewish writings {p}, which cannot be meant here; and we read of the valley of Zephathah,
2Ch 14:10; which might have its name from hence, and if so it was near Mareshah:

and the name of the city was called Hormah; from the destruction made of it, and of the country about it; for now what had been vowed by Israel in the wilderness, when near Arad, was fulfilled, Nu 21:1.

{p} Juchasin, fol. 68. 1.

Judges 1:18

Ver. 18. Also Judah took Gaza, with the coast thereof,.... Which by lot fell to that tribe, Jos 15:47; it was not till now subdued:

and Ashkelon with the coast thereof; which, according to our countryman Sandys {q}, was ten miles from Gaza:

and Ekron with the coast thereof; this also is the lot that fell to Judah, but was afterwards given to the tribe of Dan, Jos 15:45; for whom Judah now fought and took it; but in a short time all these places were retaken, and possessed by the Philistines, and were three of their five principalities which they ever after retained, see **Jud 3:3**.

{q} Travels, p. 118. Ed. 5.

Judges 1:19

Ver. 19. And the Lord was with Judah,.... Encouraging, strengthening, succeeding, and giving the tribe victory over the Canaanites; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord was for the help of the house of Judah:"

and he drove out [the inhabitants of] the mountains; the mountainous part of Judea, such as was about Jerusalem, and where Hebron stood, and other cities, see Jos 15:48, &c. which though fortified both by nature and man, yet God being with them, they were easily subdued:

but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley; God forsaking them, because they were afraid of them, for a reason after mentioned, or through slothfulness, and being weary of fighting, or because they fell into some sins, which occasioned the divine displeasure; so the Targum,

"after they had sinned, they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley:"

because they had chariots of iron; but this was no reason why they could not drive them out, if God was with them, who could as easily have delivered these into their hands, as the inhabitants of the mountains; but is the reason why they were afraid to fight with them, and to attempt to drive them out, and which they themselves gave why they did not.

Judges 1:20

Ver. 20. And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said,.... Which was done in the times of Joshua, both by him and all the people, according to the order of Moses. This is to be understood not of the city which was given to the Levites, but of the fields and parts adjacent,
Jos 14:13;

and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak: whose names are given **Jud 1:10**; this shows that this refers to the same expedition as in
Jos 15:14; and is expressed in the same manner.

Judges 1:21

Ver. 21. And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem,.... That is, that part of it which belonged to them, for it lay between Judah and Benjamin; and neither of them separately, nor both conjunctly, could drive out the Jebusites from it, particularly the strong hold on the top of Mount Sion, which they held to the times of David. Abarbinel is of opinion, that Jerusalem in those times was not a city enclosed about, but was a large province, part of which belonged to the tribe of Judah, and another to the tribe of Benjamin, and another was possessed by the Jebusites; and so Jarchi says it was a province, the name of which was Jebusi:

but the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Benjamin unto this day; when this book was written, which was done by Samuel, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom; and it is certain from hence it must have been written before the reign of David, who dispossessed the Jebusites, **2Sa 5:6**.

Judges 1:22

Ver. 22. And the house of Joseph, they also went up against Bethel,.... Which lay upon the borders of the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, Jos 16:1; and though it seems to have been taken when Ai was, **Jos 8:17**; yet it appears that it was now in the possession of the Canaanites; wherefore the tribes of

Ephraim and Manasseh being desirous of enlarging their borders after the example of Judah, went against this place in order to take it:

and the Lord [was] with them; the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, directing, assisting, and succeeding them in their attempt.

Judges 1:23

Ver. 23. And the house of Joseph sent to descry Bethel,.... To reconnoitre the place, to observe its passes and avenues, which were most accessible, and to examine the walls of it, where they were weakest and least defended:

now the name of the city before [was] Luz; which signifies a "nut"; perhaps it was so called from large numbers of nut trees which grew near it; the Jews suggest as if it was like a nut, no entrance into it but through a cave or some subterraneous passage, see Ge 28:19.

Judges 1:24

Ver. 24. And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city,.... Or "the keepers" {r}; those that were sent to watch, and observe, and get what intelligence they could of the city, and the way into it:

and they said unto him, show us, we pray, thee, the entrance into the city; not the gate or gates of it, which no doubt were visible enough, but some private way into it; the Jews, as before observed, think the entrance was by the way of a cave, or some hidden passage, of which Jarchi and Kimchi make mention:

and we will show thee mercy; give him a reward for it, or spare him and his family when the city came into their hands.

{r} Myrmvh "custodes", Pagninus, Montanus; "observatores", Vatablus, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Judges 1:25

Ver. 25. And when he showed them the entrance, into the city,.... Pointing to it with his fingers, as the same writers observe:

they smote the city with the edge of the sword; they gave notice of what intelligence they had got to the body of the army, who came up, entered the city, took it, and put the inhabitants of it to the sword, as they were ordered to do with all the Canaanites:

but they let go the man and all his family; who had returned to it, encouraged by the promise made him, and for the sake of saving of his family; which though not expressed, he might have asked the favour of sparing them, which might be promised, as was in the case of Rahab; provided he would either renounce Heathenism, and embrace the true religion, or depart to another country, the latter of which he chose.

Judges 1:26

Ver. 26. And the man went into the land of the Hittites,.... With his family; Kimchi says this was not one of the seven nations of Canaan; and it is very clear from this narrative, that the land this man went to was not in the land of Canaan; though it is certain a people of this name formerly dwelt there, Ge 15:20; and the land of Canaan is called the land of the Hittites, **Jos 1:4**; these either might flee to another country upon Joshua's entry into the land of Canaan, or a colony of them from thence might settle elsewhere, to which this man chose to go, who might be originally of them:

and built a city; his family was numerous, and he a man of wealth, and was allowed to carry all his substance with him:

and called the name of it Luz; in memory of the place he left, and had long lived in. There is a city called Loussa, among the cities which Josephus says {s} were taken by the Jews from the Arabians; and which is very probably the Lysa of Ptolemy {t}, which he places in Arabia Petraea, and might be the same with this Luz; and, if so, this shows the land this man went into was in Edom, which is not unlikely; there is another Luza, which Jerom {u} says fell to the lot of the sons of Joseph, near Sichem, three miles from Neapolis:

which [is] the name thereof unto this day: the time of the writing of this book; See Gill on "Jud 1:21".

{s} Antiqu. l. 14. c. 1. sect. 4. {t} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17. {u} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. M.

Judges 1:27

Ver. 27. Neither did Manasseh,.... One of the sons of Joseph before mentioned; and it respects that half tribe of Manasseh, which had its portion on this side Jordan in the land of Canaan: these did not

drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: all which were places the half tribe had assigned them in Issachar and Asher; of which See Gill on "Jos 17:11". This tribe seems to have been sluggish, and not to have exerted itself at all, or made any attempts to drive out these people:

but the Canaanites would dwell in that land; not only desired it, but were determined on it, and rather chose to submit to a tribute than be expelled, at least would not depart unless they were forced.

Judges 1:28

Ver. 28. And it came to pass, when Israel was strong,.... All the tribes of Israel were become numerous, and able to drive the Canaanites out of the land everywhere, and particularly were able to assist Manasseh in expelling the Canaanites out of the above places, yet they did not; but all they did was,

that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out; which flowed from covetousness, and a love of ease; they did not care to be at the trouble of expelling them, as they found it turned more to their account and present advantage to make them tributaries; and this was true of the Israelites in general, and of the half tribe of Manasseh in particular; which, as Abarbinel thinks, is here respected.

Judges 1:29

Ver. 29. Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer,.... Not so much as made them tributaries, but made a covenant with them, it is probable, contrary to the express will of God:

but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them; the Ephraimites agreeing to it, and here they dwelt to the times of Solomon;
See Gill on "Jos 16:10"; where indeed they are said to be under tribute; but that seems to respect some later time, and not when they were first admitted to dwell among them, since no mention is made of it here.

Judges 1:30

Ver. 30. Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol,.... The first of these seems to be the same with Kattah or Kartah, and the latter with Nahalal, both cities given to the Levites, Jos 19:15; which perhaps was the reason of their sloth in driving them out; though it aggravated their sin not to take care to rid those cities of the Canaanites, which were given to religious persons:

but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries; which is observed so far in their favour, that they exerted themselves to make them tributaries, which was more than was done by some others.

Judges 1:31

Ver. 31. Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho,.... The same with Ptolemais, See Gill on "Ac 21:7"; so called from the first Ptolemy king of Egypt, who enlarged it; but it has since recovered its ancient name pretty nearly, and is now called Acca or Acra.

"On its north and east sides (Mr. Maundrell says {w}) it is encompassed with a spacious and fertile plain; on the west it is washed by the Mediterranean sea; and on the south by a large bay, extending from the city as far as Mount Carmel:"

nor the inhabitants of Zidon; a well known city in Phoenicia, belonging to this tribe, see Jos 19:28;

nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor Helbah, nor Aphik, nor of Rehob; two of these places, Ahlab and Helbah, are not mentioned among the cities of the tribe of Asher, Jos 19:24; unless Helbah is the same with Helkath, **Jud 1:25**; of the rest, Achzib,
See Gill on "Jos 19:29", Aphik, and Rehob,

See Gill on "Jos 19:30".

{w} Journey from Aleppo, p. 54.

Judges 1:32

Ver. 32. But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land,.... They were in a worse condition than those before mentioned; for the Canaanites were possessed of their country, especially of the above cities, and were masters of them; and the Asherites only dwelt among them upon sufferance:

for they did not drive them out; either they did not attempt it, or they could not do it, and contented themselves with having leave to dwell among them.

Judges 1:33

Ver. 33. Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, nor the inhabitants of Bethanath,.... Of which places
See Gill on "Jos 19:38";

but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; in the same disgraceful manner as Asher did, owing to cowardice or sloth:

nevertheless, the inhabitants of Bethshemesh, and of Bethanath, became tributaries unto them; these two cities did at length exert themselves, and got the mastery over the Canaanites, as to make them pay tribute to them; though they ought to have expelled them, and even destroyed them, according to the command of God, but avarice prevailed over them.

Judges 1:34

Ver. 34. And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain,.... Into the mountainous part of the tribe of Dan; the most noted mountains in it were Sear and Baalah, which lay on the border of Judah, Jos 15:10; Joppa in this tribe was built on an high rock, and so Gibbethon, as its name seems to import, perhaps was built on a hill or mountain, as were the cities after mentioned:

for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley; which lay between Joppa and Caesarea, the plain of Sharon, in which were Lydda, Jamnia, &c. which belonged to their tribe, and they afterwards enjoyed;
See Gill on "Jos 19:48".

Judges 1:35

Ver. 35. But the Amorites would dwell in Mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim,.... And they would not suffer the Danites to dwell in the valley, a fruitful and delightful part of their country, terrifying them with their iron chariots, which in the vale they could make use of to great advantage; so neither would they let them dwell alone in the mountainous part of their tribe, but would dwell with them, particularly in three places mentioned: where Mount Heres was is not certain; it signifies the "sun"; very probably it had its name from the worship of the sun on it, or from the sun standing still near it; for Aijalon, where that miracle was wrought, is next mentioned. Perhaps it might be near to Timnathheres, which was in Mount Ephraim, **Jud 2:9**; since Ephraim assisted in making these places tributaries; of the two cities, Aijalon and Shaalbim, see Jos 19:42;

yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries; or "the hand of [it] became heavy" {x}; by which it does not clearly appear whether the hand of Joseph was made heavy, and to hang down, by the Amorites; or whether it was heavy upon them, and so prevailed over them, as our version; but the Septuagint puts it out of doubt, reading the words,

"and the hand of the house of Joseph was heavy upon the Amorites;"

the Ephraimites being near to the tribe of Dan, and observing how they were pressed by the Amorites, took up arms in their favour, and obliged the Canaanites of the above places to become tributaries to the Danites.

{x} dy dbkty "et aggravata est manus", V. L. Paginus Montanus.

Judges 1:36

Ver. 36. And the coast of the Amorites [was] from the going up to Akrabbim,.... Of which See Gill on "Nu 34:4" and

See Gill on "Jos 15:3":

from the rock, and upwards; even from the city Petra in Idumea, and beyond that; and there was a country near Idumea, called Acrabatane, from this mountain Akrabbim,

"Then Judas fought against the children of Esau in Idumea at Arabattine, because they besieged Gael: and he gave them a great overthrow, and abated their courage, and took their spoils." (1 Maccabees 5:3)

such was the extent of these people, that their coast reached from the places, mentioned to the mountains where the above cities of Dan were; they were the most powerful people among the Canaanites, and lay on both sides of Jordan, and were very troublesome to Israel, yet were at length destroyed, **Am 2:9**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Judges 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 2

This chapter gives an account of an angel of the Lord appearing and rebuking the children of Israel for their present misconduct, **Jud 2:1**; of their good behaviour under Joshua, and the elders that outlived him, **Jud 2:6**; and of their idolatries they fell into afterwards, which greatly provoked the Lord to anger, **Jud 2:11**; and of the goodness of God to them nevertheless, in raising up judges to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, of which there are many instances in the following chapter, **Jud 2:16**; and yet that how, upon the demise of such persons, they relapsed into idolatry which caused the anger of God to be hot against them, and to determine not to drive out the Canaanites utterly from them, but to leave them among them to try them, **Jud 2:19**.

Ver. 1. And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim,.... The Targum calls him a prophet {y}; and the Jewish commentators in general interpret it of Phinehas {z}; and that a man is meant is given into by others, because he is said to come from a certain place in Canaan, and not from heaven, and spoke in a public congregation, and is not said to disappear; but neither a man nor a created angel is meant, or otherwise he would have spoken in the name of the Lord, and have said, "thus saith the Lord", and not in his own name; ascribing to himself the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and swearing to them, and making a covenant with them, and threatening what he would do to them because of their sin; wherefore the uncreated Angel, the Angel of the covenant, is meant, who brought Israel out of Egypt, was with them in the wilderness, and introduced them into the land of Canaan, and appeared to Joshua as the Captain of the Lord's host at or near Gilgal, **Jos 5:13**; and because he had not appeared since, therefore he is said to come from thence to a place afterwards called Bochim, from what happened at this time:

and said, I made you to go out of Egypt; that is, obliged Pharaoh king of Egypt to let them go, by inflicting plagues upon him and his people, which made them urgent upon them to depart:

and I have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; into the land of Canaan, now for the most part conquered, and divided among them, and in which they were settled:

and I said, I will never break my covenant with you; if the covenant between them was broken, it should not begin with him, it would be their own fault; all which is mentioned, as so many instances of divine goodness to them, and as so many aggravations of their sins against God.

{y} So Maimonides, Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 15. & par. 2. c. 6. {z} The Rabbins in Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 42.

Judges 2:2

Ver. 2. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land,.... This the Lord charged them not to do, when he covenanted with them, and assured them of bringing them into the land; and yet they had done it, as some instances in the preceding chapter show, which were the occasion of the angel's coming to them to rebuke them, see **De 7:2**;

you shall throw down their altars; this they aught to have done as soon as they were come into the land, and possessed of the places where they were erected, to show their detestation of idolatry, and to prevent the use of them to idolatrous purposes, see **De 7:5**;

but ye have not obeyed my voice; the command of God, but on the contrary had made leagues and covenants with several inhabitants of the land, allowing them to dwell among them on paying a certain tax or tribute to them; and had suffered their altars to continue, and them to sacrifice upon them to their idols, according to their former customs:

why have ye done this? transgressed the commandment of God in the instances mentioned. It showed the wickedness of their hearts, their ingratitude to God, who had done such great things for them, and their proneness to idolatry, and liking of it.

Judges 2:3

Ver. 3. Wherefore I also said,.... Supposing, or on condition of their being guilty of the above things, which was foreseen they would:

I will not drive them out from before you; the seven nations of the Canaanites entirely, and which accounts for the various instances related in the preceding chapter; where it is observed, that they could not, or did not, drive the old inhabitants out of such and such places, because they sinned against the Lord, and he forsook them, and would not assist them in their enterprises, or them to their sloth and indolence:

but they shall be [as thorns] in your sides: very troublesome and afflicting, see Nu 33:55; or for straits, as the Septuagint, or be such as would bring them into tribulation, and distress them, as the Targum; so they often did:

and their gods shall be a snare unto you; which they suffered to continue, and did not destroy them, as they ought to have done; they would be, as they proved, ensnaring to them, and whereby they were drawn to forsake the worship of the true God, and bow down to them, as we read in some following verses.

Judges 2:4

Ver. 4. And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel,.... This being either one of the three solemn feasts, when all the males appeared at the tabernacle of the Lord; or else here was now a solemn convention of all the tribes to inquire of the Lord the reason why they were not able to drive out the Canaanites in some places, and why they prevailed over them in many:

that the people lift up their voice, and wept; being affected with what the angel said, and convicted in their consciences of their sins, and so fearing the bad consequences thereof, they wept because of the sins they had been guilty of, and because of the evils that were like to befall them on account of them.

Judges 2:5

Ver. 5. And they called the name of that place Bochim,.... Which signifies "weepers", from the general lamentation of the people, which before had another name; very probably it was Shiloh itself since all Israel was gathered together, the tabernacle being now at Shiloh, and also because sacrifices were offered up, as follows:

and they sacrificed there unto the Lord; to atone for the sins they had committed; and if they did this in the faith of the great sacrifice of the Messiah, they did well; however, so far there was an acknowledgment of their, guilt, and a compliance with the appointments of God directed to in such cases.

Judges 2:6

Ver. 6. And when Joshua had let the people go,.... This is not to be connected with what goes before, as if that was done in Joshua's lifetime; for during that, as is after testified, the people of Israel served the Lord; whereas the angel, in the speech to them before related, charges them with disobeying the voice of the Lord, making leagues with the inhabitants of the land, and not demolishing their altars, all which was after the death of Joshua; but this refers to a meeting of them with him before his death, and his dismission of them, which was either when he had divided the land by lot unto them, or when he had given them his last charge before his death, see Jos 24:28; and this, and what follows, are repeated and introduced here, to connect the history of Israel, and to show them how they fell into idolatry, and so under the divine displeasure, which brought them into distress, from which they were delivered at various times by judges of his own raising up, which is the subject matter of this book:

the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land; as it was divided to the several tribes and their families; which seems to confirm the first sense given, that this refers to the dismission of the people upon the division of the land among them.

Judges 2:7

Ver. 7. And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel. In Egypt, at the Red sea, in the wilderness, at the river Jordan, and in the land of Canaan;
See Gill on "Jos 24:31". The Jews {a} say, the elders died on the fifth of Shebet, which answers to part of January and part of February, on which account a fast was kept on that day.

{a} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.

Judges 2:8

Ver. 8. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died,
[being] an hundred and ten years old. See Gill on "Jos 24:29".

Judges 2:9

Ver. 9. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres,.... In Jos 24:30; it is called Timnathserah, the letters of "serah" being here inverted, make "heres", which sometimes is used for the sun, **Job 9:7**; and therefore some observe, that the whole name signifies the figure of the sun, which the Jews say was put on his monument, in commemoration of the miracle of the sun standing still at his request, and had this inscription on it,

"this is he that caused the sun to stand still;"

but this is not very probable, since it might have had a tendency to idolatry, the sun being what was the first object of idolatrous worship among the Heathens, and had the greatest show of reason for it:

in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash;
See Gill on "Jos 24:30".

Judges 2:10

Ver. 10. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers,.... Were dead and buried, that is, the greatest part of those that were contemporaries with the elders that outlived Joshua; for they might not be all dead, at least not all that came out of Egypt, and still less all that came into the land of Canaan; for, according to the computation of Ben Gersom, the time of Joshua and the elders were but twenty seven years; and there were no more than sixty seven years from their coming out of Egypt to this time; and no doubt there were men living of eighty years of age and more, but these might be but few:

and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord; so as to love, fear, serve, and worship him; did not own him to be the one only living and true God, otherwise they must know him nationally, being educated in the true religion:

nor yet the works which he had done for Israel; some of them, as before observed, might have seen the works and wonders of the Lord for Israel, at their first coming out of Egypt; though not being wise, as the above writer observes, it had no effect upon them, to keep them from doing evil in the sight of God; and they all of them had been informed of them, and many had seen, and must have had personal knowledge of what was done for them at their coming into the land of Canaan; but not a practical knowledge, or such as had any influence upon them, to preserve them from idolatry.

Judges 2:11

Ver. 11. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord,.... Openly and publicly, boldly and impudently, in the very face of God, and amidst all the good things they received from him, which were aggravating circumstances of their sins; what the evil was they did is next observed:

and served Baalim; the idol Baal, as the Arabic version, of which there were many, and therefore a plural word is used; to which the apostle refers **1Co 8:5**; for the word signifies "lords", and there were Baalpeor, Baalzebub, Baalberith, &c. and who seem to have their name from Bal, Bel, or Belus, a king of Babylon after Nimrod, and who was the first monarch that was deified, the Jupiter of the Heathens. Theophilus of Antioch {p} says, that, according to the history of Thallus, Belus the king of the Assyrians, whom they worshipped, was older than the Trojan war three hundred twenty two years; and that some call Cronus or Saturn Bel and Bal; by the Assyrians called Bel, and in the

Punic or Phoenician language Bal {q}.

{p} Ad Autolyc. l. 3. p. 138, 139. Vid. Lactant. de fals. Relig. l. 1. c. 23. {q} Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. 1. prope finem.

Judges 2:12

Ver. 12. And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers,.... The covenant God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of their more immediate ancestors; his worship they forsook, neglected his tabernacle, and the service of it:

which brought them out of the land of Egypt; out of wretched misery and bondage there, with an high hand, and outstretched arm; and led them through the wilderness, and provided for them there, and brought them into the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey; but all these mercies were forgotten by them:

and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that [were] round about them: the gods of the Canaanites and Phoenicians, of the Egyptians, and of the Moabites, Amorites, and Edomites, that were round about them, on the borders of them; instead of one God they worshipped many, even all in or about the land of Canaan; so much given were they to idolatry:

and bowed themselves unto them; giving them all religious worship and honour they were capable of:

and provoked the Lord to anger; nothing is more provoking to him than idolatry; he being a jealous God, and will not bear any rival in worship, nor his glory to be given to another, to a strange god.

Judges 2:13

Ver. 13. And they forsook the Lord,.... The worship of the Lord, as the Targum; this is repeated to observe the heinous sin they were guilty of, and how displeasing it was to God:

and served Baal and Ashtaroth; two images, as the Arabic version adds; Baal, from whence Baalim, may signify the he deities of the Gentiles, as Jupiter,

Hercules, &c. and Ashtaroth their female deities, as Juno, Venus, Diana, &c. the word is plural, and used for flocks of sheep, so called because they make the owners of them rich; and Kimchi and Ben Melech say these were images in the form of female sheep. Perhaps, as Baal may signify the sun, so Ashtaroth the moon, and the stars like flocks of sheep about her. Ashtaroth was the goddess of the Zidonians,
1Ki 11:5; the same with Astarte, the wife of Cronus or Ham, said to be the Phoenician or Syrian Venus. So Lucian says {r} there was a temple in Phoenicia, belonging to the Sidonians, which they say is the temple of Astarte; and, says he, I think that Astarte is the moon; and Astarte is both by the Phoenicians {s} and Grecians {t} said to be Venus, and was worshipped by the Syrians also, as Minutius Felix {u} and Tertullian {w} affirm; the same with Eostre, or Aestar, the Saxon goddess; hence to this day we call the passover Easter {x}, being in Eoster-month; and with Andraste, a goddess of the ancient Britains {y}. There were four of them, and therefore the Septuagint here uses the plural number Astartes; so called either from Asher, being reckoned "blessed" ones, or from Asheroth, the groves they were worshipped in; or from ve, "Ash", and rwt, "Tor", the constellation Taurus or the bull; so Astarte by Sanchoniatho is said to put upon her head the head of a bull, as the token of her sovereignty; See Gill on "Ge 14:5".

{r} De Dea Syria. {s} Sanchoniatho apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. p. 38. {t} Suidas in voce astarth. {u} In Octavio, p. 6. {w} Apolog. c. 24. {x} Vid. Owen. Theologoumen, l. 3. c. 4. p. 192. {y} lb. c. 11. p. 244.

Judges 2:14

Ver. 14. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel,.... For the idolatries they were guilty of; it burned within him, it broke forth, and was poured out like fire on them, and consumed them; see **Na 1:6**;

and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them; that rifled their houses, and plundered them of their goods and substance:

and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about; the is, delivered them into their hands, who carried them captive, where they were as men sold for slaves; see Ps 44:12; and this was in just retaliation, that as they had said themselves to work wickedness, the Lord sold them into the hands of their enemies for their wickedness; and, as they had followed the gods of the people round about them, so he delivered them up, into the hands of their enemies round about them, as the Mesopotamians, Moabites, Midianites, Philistines, and Ammonites:

so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies; but turned their backs on them, and fled whenever engaged in war with them.

Judges 2:15

Ver. 15. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil,.... They prospered not in any business they undertook, or put their hands unto; or in any expedition they went upon, or when they went out to war, as Kimchi, Ben Melech, and Abarbinel explain the phrase: the battle went against them, because God was against them; his hand was against them, and there was no resisting and turning that back; and this sense seems to agree with what goes before and follows after; though in some Jewish writings {a} it is explained of those that went out of the land to escape the calamities of it, and particularly of Elimelech and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, **Ru 1:1**;

as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them; having ratified and confirmed his threatening with an oath, that if they served other gods, he would surely bring upon them all the curses of the law; see De 29:12;

and they were greatly distressed; by the Canaanites they suffered to dwell among them, who were pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their sides, as had been threatened them; and by the nations round about them, who came in upon them, and plundered them, and carried them captive.

{a} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. p. 34.

Judges 2:16

Ver. 16. Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges,.... Who are particularly mentioned by name, and their exploits recorded, in some following chapters, and from whom the book in general has its name: these were men that God raised up in an extraordinary manner, and spirited and qualified for the work he had to do by them; which was to deliver the people of Israel out of the hands of their oppressors, and restore them to their privileges and liberties, and protect them in them, and administer justice to them; which was a wonderful instance of the goodness of God to them, notwithstanding their many provoking sins and transgressions:

which delivered them out of the hands of those that spoiled them; who took away their goods and cattle from them, and carried their persons captive: these were the instruments of recovering both again, just as Abraham brought again Lot and all his goods.

Judges 2:17

Ver. 17. And yet they would not hearken unto their judges,.... Afterwards, or not always; but when they admonished them of their sins, and advised them to walk in the good ways of God, and serve him only; they turned a deaf ear to them, and went on in their own ways, which is a sad aggravation of their iniquities:

but they went a whoring after their gods, and bowed themselves unto them; committing spiritual adultery, for such idolatry is, and is often so represented in Scripture; for by it they broke the covenant God made with them, which had the nature of a matrimonial contract, and in which God was an husband to them; and therefore serving other gods was rejecting him as such, and committing whoredom with others; than which nothing was more provoking to God, jealous of his honour and glory:

they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in; as soon as ever Joshua and the elders were dead, they departed from the God of their fathers, and the way in which they worshipped him; and so likewise quickly after they had been delivered by the judges, or however as soon as they were dead:

obeying the commandments of the Lord; serving him at his tabernacle, according to the laws, commands, and ordinances he gave to Moses, which is to be understood of their fathers:

[but] they did not so; did not walk in the same way, nor serve the Lord, and obey his commands, as their fathers did; but all the reverse.

Judges 2:18

Ver. 18. And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge,.... Every one of them that he raised up; as he stirred up their spirits for such service, to judge his people, and qualified them for it, he assisted and strengthened them, and abode by them, and succeeded them in whatsoever they engaged for the welfare of the people; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord was for the help of the judge:"

and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies all the days of the judge; so long as a judge lived, or continued to be their judge, they were protected by him, and preserved from falling into the hands of their enemies:

for it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them; the Lord being merciful had compassion upon them, when they groaned under their oppressions, and cried unto him, then he received their prayer, as the Targum, and sent them a deliverer; and so did what men do when they repent of a thing, change their conduct; thus the Lord changed the outward dispensation of his providence towards them, according to his unchangeable will; for otherwise repentance, properly speaking, does not belong unto God: the Targum is,

"he turned from the word he spake;"

the threatening he had denounced.

Judges 2:19

Ver. 19. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead,.... Any one of them, the first and so all succeeding ones:

[that] they returned; to their evil ways and idolatrous practices, from which they reformed, and for which they showed outward repentance during the life of the judge; but he dying, they returned again to them:

and corrupted [themselves] more than their fathers; in Egypt and in the wilderness; or rather than their fathers that lived in the generation after the death of Joshua; and so in every generation that lived before a judge was raised up to deliver them out of the evils brought upon them; the children of those in every age successively grew worse than their fathers:

in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; not content with the idols their fathers served, they sought after and found out others, and were more constant and frequent in their worship and service of them, and increased their sacrifices and acts of devotion to them:

they ceased not from their own doings; or, "did not let them fall" {b}; but retained them, and continued in the practice of them, being what they were naturally inclined unto and delighted in:

nor from their stubborn way; which they were bent upon, and determined to continue in: or "their hard way" {c}; which their hard hearts had chosen, and they obstinately persisted in, being obdurate and stiffnecked; and which, in the issue, they would find hard, troublesome, and distressing to them, though at present soft and agreeable, and in which they went on smoothly; but in time would find it rough and rugged, offensive, stumbling, and ruinous; or it may signify a hard beaten path, a broad road which multitudes trod in, as is the way of sin.

{b} wlyph al "non Cadere faciebant", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius.
{c} hvqh Mkrdm "de via sua dura", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Drusius.

Judges 2:20

Ver. 20. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel,.... As at first, so whenever they fell into idolatry; see **Jud 2:14**;

and he said, because this people have transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers; made at Sinai, in which they were enjoined to have no other gods before him:

and have not hearkened to my voice; in his commands, and particularly what related to his worship and against idolatry.

Judges 2:21

Ver. 21. I also henceforth will not drive out and from before them,.... At least not as yet, not very soon nor hastily, as in **Jud 2:23**;

of the nations which Joshua left when he died; that is, unsubdued; which was owing either to the infirmities of old age coming upon him, which made him incapable of engaging further in war with the Canaanites; or to the sloth and indolence of the people, being weary of war, and not caring to prosecute it; or to want of men to cultivate any more land, and people other cities, than what they were possessed of; and chiefly this was owing to the providence of God, who had an end to answer hereby, as follows.

Judges 2:22

Ver. 22. That through them I may prove Israel,.... Afflict them by them, and so prove or try them, their faith and patience, which are tried by afflictions; and such were the Canaanites to them, as afflictions and temptations are to the spiritual Israel of God; or rather, whether they would keep in the ways of God, or walk in those the Canaanites did, as follows:

whether they will keep the way of the Lord, as their fathers did keep [it], or not; whether they would worship the true God their fathers did, or the gods of the Canaanites; not that the Lord was ignorant of what they would do, and so made the experiment; but that the sincerity and faithfulness, or insincerity and unfaithfulness of their hearts, might appear to themselves and others.

Judges 2:23

Ver. 23. Therefore the Lord left these nations, without driving them out hastily,.... Left them unsubdued, or suffered them to continue among the Israelites, and did not drive them out as he could have done; which was permitted, either that it might be seen and known whether Israel would give into the idolatry of these nations or not, **Jud 2:22**; of which there could have been no trial, if they and their idols had been utterly destroyed; or because the children of Israel had transgressed the covenant of the Lord, therefore he would drive no more of them out, but leave them to afflict and distress them, and thereby prove and try them, **Jud 2:20**; both senses may very well stand, but the former seems rather to agree with what follows:

neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua; having an end to be answered by them, before suggested, namely, to prove and try Israel; and, for a like reason, the indwelling sin and corruptions of God's people are suffered to remain in them, for the trial of their graces, and that the power of God in the support and deliverance of them might appear the more manifest.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Judges 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 3

This chapter gives an account of the nations left in Canaan to prove Israel, and who became a snare unto them, **Jud 3:1**; and of the servitude of Israel under the king of Mesopotamia for their sins, from which they were delivered by Othniel, **Jud 3:8**; and of their subjection to the Moabites, from which they were freed by Ehud, who privately assassinated the king of Moab, and then made his escape, **Jud 3:12**; and of the destruction of a large number of Philistines by Shamgar, with an ox goad, **Jud 3:31**.

Ver. 1. Now these [are] the nations which the Lord left to prove Israel by them,.... Which are later mentioned, **Jud 3:3**;

[even] as many [of Israel] as had not known all the wars of Canaan; those that Joshua, and the people of Israel under him, had with the Canaanites, when they first entered the land and subdued it; being then not born, or so young as not to have knowledge of them, at least not able to bear arms at that time.

Judges 3:2

Ver. 2. Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know and teach them war,.... That is, the following nations were left in the land, that the young generations of Israel might by their wars and conflicts with them learn the art of war, and be inured to martial discipline; which, if none had been left to engage with, they had been ignorant of: besides, their fathers in Joshua's time, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe, had no need to learn the art of war, for God fought for them; they did not get possession of the land by their own arm, and by their sword, but by the power of God in a miraculous way; but now this was not to be expected, and the Canaanites were left among them to expel, that they might be trained up in the knowledge of warlike affairs, and so be also capable of teaching their children the military art; which they should make use of in obeying the command of God, by driving out the remains of the Canaanites, and not give themselves up to sloth and indolence; though some think that the meaning is, that God left these nations among them, that they might know what war was, and the sad effects of it; and the difference of fighting with their enemies alone, as other men, and the Lord fighting along with them, and for them, as he did for their fathers:

at least such as before knew nothing thereof; being either unborn, or at an age incapable of bearing arms, or learning the art of war.

Judges 3:3

Ver. 3. [Namely], five lords of the Philistines,.... The places they were lords of were Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron; see Jos 13:3; three of these, Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron, had been taken from them by Judah, since the death of Joshua, **Jud 1:18**; but they soon recovered them again, perhaps by the help of the other two. The Philistines were a people originally of Egypt, but came from thence and settled in these parts, and were here as early as in the times of Abraham, and were very troublesome neighbours to the Israelites in later times; see Ge 10:14;

and all the Canaanites; these were a particular tribe or nation in the land so called, which inhabited by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan, Nu 13:29; otherwise this is the general name for the seven nations:

and the Sidonians; the inhabitants of the famous city of Sidon, which had its name from the firstborn of Canaan, Ge 10:15;

and the Hivites that dwelt in Mount Lebanon; on the north of the land of Canaan:

from Mount Baalhermon; the eastern part of Lebanon, the same with Baalgad, where Baal was worshipped:

unto the entering in of Hamath; the boundary of the northern part of the land, which entrance led into the valley between Libanus and Antilibanus; see Nu 34:8.

Judges 3:4

Ver. 4. And they were to prove Israel by them,.... They were left in the land, as to inure them to war, and try their courage, so to prove their faithfulness to

God:

to know whether they would hearken to the commandments, of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses; even all the commandments of the Lord delivered to them by Moses, moral, civil, and ceremonial, and particularly those that concerned the destruction of the Canaanites, their altars, and their idols, **De 7:1**.

Judges 3:5

Ver. 5. And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites,.... As if they had been only sojourners with them, and not conquerors of them; and dwelt by sufferance, and not as proprietors and owners; such were their sloth and indolence, and such the advantage the inhabitants of the land got over them through it, and through their compliances with them; and this was the case not only of one sort of them, the Canaanites, but of the rest:

the Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites; who all had cities in the several parts of the land, with whom the children of Israel were mixed, and with whom they were permitted to dwell.

Judges 3:6

Ver. 6. And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons,.... The Israelites intermarried with the inhabitants of the land, contrary to the express command of God, **De 7:3**; whereby they confounded their families, debased their blood, and were ensnared into idolatry, as follows: perhaps to these unlawful marriages, in their first settlement in the land of Canaan, reference is had in Eze 16:3, "thy father [was] an Amorite and thy mother an Hittite"; an Amorite marrying a daughter of Israel, and an Israelitish man an Hittite woman:

and served their gods; this was the natural consequence of their intermarriages, which the Lord foresaw, and therefore cautioned them against them, Ex 34:15.

Judges 3:7

Ver. 7. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord,.... Both by marrying with Heathens, and worshipping their gods:

and forgot the Lord their God; as if they had never heard of him, or known him, their Maker and Preserver, who had done so many great and good things for them:

and served Baalim, and the groves; of Baalim, see **Jud 2:11**; the groves mean either idols worshipped in groves, as Jupiter was worshipped in a grove of oaks, hence the oak of Dodona; and Apollo in a grove of laurels in Daphne: there were usually groves where idol temples were built; and so in Phoenicia, or Canaan, Dido the Sidonian queen built a temple for Juno in the midst of the city, where was a grove of an agreeable shade {d}: so Barthius {e} observes, that most of the ancient gods of the Heathens used to be worshipped in groves. And groves and trees themselves were worshipped; so Tacitus says {f} of the Germans, that they consecrated groves and forests, and called them by the names of gods. Groves are here put in the place of Ashtaroth, **Jud 2:13**; perhaps the goddesses of that name were worshipped in groves; and if Diana is meant by Astarte, Servius {g} says that every oak is sacred to Jupiter and every grove to Diana; and Ovid {h} speaks of a temple of Diana in a grove. But as they are joined with Baalim, the original of which were deified kings and heroes, the groves may be such as were consecrated to them; for, as the same writer observes {i}, the souls of heroes were supposed to have their abode in groves;
See Gill on "Ex 34:13" and
See Gill on "De 7:5". It was in this time of defection that the idolatry of Micah, and of the Danites, and the war of Benjamin about the Levite's concubine, happened, though related at the end of the book; so Josephus {k} places the account here.

{d} "Lucus in urbe fuit media", &c. Virgil. Aeneid. l. 1. {e} Animadv. ad Claudian. de raptu Proserp. l. 1. v. 205. {f} De mor. German. c. 9. Vid. Plin. l. 12. 1. {g} In Virgil. Georgic. l. 3. col. 295. {h} "Est nemus et piceis", &c. Ep. 12. v. 67. Vid. Metamorph. l. 11. Fab. 9. v. 560. {i} In Virgil. Aeneid. l. 1. col. 481. & in l. 3. col. 721. {k} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. & 3.

Judges 3:8

Ver. 8. Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel,.... Because of their idolatry; see **Jud 2:14**;

and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim, king of Mesopotamia; or Aramnaharaim; that is, Syria, between the two rivers, which were Tigris and Euphrates; hence the Greek name of this place is as here called Mesopotamia. Josephus {l} calls him king of Assyria, and gives him the name of Chusarthus; and indeed Chushanrishathaim seems to be his whole name, though the Targum makes Rishathaim to be an epithet, and calls him Cushan, the wicked king of Syria; the word is of the dual number, and signifies two wickednesses; which, according to the mystical exposition of the Jews {m}, refers to two wicked things Syria did to Israel, one by Balaam the Syrian, and the other by this Cushan. Mr. Bedford {n} thinks it may be rendered,

"Cushan, king of the two wicked kingdoms;"

the Assyrian monarchy being at this time like two kingdoms, Babylon being the metropolis of the one, and Nineveh of the other; but it is question whether the monarchy was as yet in being. Hillerus {o} makes Cushan to be an Arab Scenite, from **Hab 3:7**; and Rishathaim to denote disquietudes; and it represents him as a man very turbulent, never quiet and easy, and so it seems he was; for not content with his kingdom on the other side Euphrates, he passed over that, and came into Canaan, to subject that to him, and add it to his dominions. Kimchi says that Rishathaim may be the name of a place, and some conjecture it to be the same with the Rhisina of Ptolemy {p}; but it seems rather a part of this king's name, who came and fought against Israel, and the Lord delivered them into his hands:

and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years; became tributaries to him during that space of time, but when that began is not easy to say. Bishop Usher {q} places it in A. M. 2591, and before Christ 1413.

{l} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 3. sect. 2. {m} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 105. I. {n} Scripture Chronology, p. 507. {o} Onomastic. p. 154, 155. {p} Geograph. l. 5. c. 18. {q} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 42.

Judges 3:9

Ver. 9. And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord,.... Towards the close of the eight years' bondage, as it may be supposed, groaning under the oppressive taxes laid upon them, and the bondage they were brought into: and

the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel; he heard their cry, and sent them a saviour, whose spirit he stirred up, and whom he qualified for this service:

who delivered them; out of the hands of the king of Mesopotamia, and freed them from his oppressions:

[even] Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother; the same that took Debir, and married Achsah, the daughter of Caleb, **Jud 1:12**; who now very probably was a man in years.

Judges 3:10

Ver. 10. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him,.... Moved him to engage in this work of delivering Israel, inspired him with courage, and filled him with every needful gift, qualifying him for it; the Targum interprets it the spirit of prophecy; it seems father to be the spirit of counsel and courage, of strength and fortitude of body and mind:

and he judged Israel; took upon him the office of a judge over them, and executed it; very probably the first work he set about was to reprove them for their sins, and convince them of them, and reform them from their idolatry, and restore among them the pure worship of God; and this he did first before he took up arms for them:

and he went out to war; raised an army, and went out at the head of them, to fight with their oppressor:

and the Lord delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim; gave him the victory over him and his army, so that he fell into his hands, became his captive, and perhaps was slain by him.

Judges 3:11

Ver. 11. And the land had rest forty years,.... As it should seem from the time of this deliverance; though, according to Ben Gersom and Abarbinel, the eight years' servitude are to be included in them; and Bishop Usher {r} reckons these forty years from the rest first settled in the land by Joshua; but the former sense seems best:

and Othniel the son of Kenaz died: not at the end of the forty years; it is not likely he should live so long, but when he died is not certain; Eusebius {s} says he judged Israel fifty years.

{r} Anual. Vet. Test. p. 42. {s} Evangel. Praepar. l. 1O. c. 14. p. 502.

Judges 3:12

Ver. 12. And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord,.... Fell into idolatry again, which was a great evil in the sight of God, and what they were prone to fall into:

and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel; put it into his heart to invade them, and encouraged him to it, and gave him success; what kings reigned over Moab between Balak and this king we know not: it is a commonly received notion of the Jews, that Ruth was the daughter of Eglon; see **Ru 1:4**; and it was about this time that Elimelech with his two sons went into Moab, and when many of those things recorded in the book of Ruth were transacted:

because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord; which had greatly provoked him to anger, and was the cause of stirring up the king of Moab against them.

Judges 3:13

Ver. 13. And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek,.... Either the Lord gathered them to Eglon, inclined them to enter into a confederacy with him, to assist in the war against Israel; or the king of Moab got them to join with him in it, they being his neighbours, and enemies to Israel, and especially Amalek:

and went and smote Israel; first the two tribes and a half, which lay on that side Jordan Moab did, whom it is reasonable to suppose he would attack first; and having defeated them, he came over Jordan:

and possessed the city of the palm trees; Jericho, as the Targum, which was set with palm trees; see De 34:3; not the city itself, for that was destroyed by

Joshua, and not rebuilt until the time of Ahab; but the country, about it, or, as Abarbinel thinks, a city that was near it; here Josephus says {t} he had his royal palace; it is probable he built a fort or garrison here, to secure the fords of Jordan, and his own retreat; as well as to keep up a communication with his own people, and prevent the tribes of the other side giving any assistance to their brethren, if able and disposed to do it.

{t} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 1.

Judges 3:14

Ver. 14. So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years. Ten years longer than they served the king of Mesopotamia, **Jud 3:8**, as a severer correction of them for their relapse into idolatry.

Judges 3:15

Ver. 15. But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord,.... After being long oppressed, and groaning under their burdens, and brought to a sense of their sins, and humiliation for them, they asked forgiveness of God, and deliverance from their bondage; for it is very probable they were until towards the close of those years stupid and hardened, and did not consider what was the reason of their being thus dealt with:

the Lord raised them up a deliverer; another saviour, one that he made use of as an instrument of their deliverance:

Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded; who is described by his parentage, a son of Gera, but who his father was is not known; by his tribe a Benjamite, in which Jericho was, Eglon possessed, and so might be more oppressed than any other part; and therefore the Lord stirred up one of that tribe to be the deliverer; and by his being a lefthanded man, as several of that tribe were, Jud 20:16; though a Benjamite signifies a son of the right hand; and he perhaps was one of those lefthanded Benjamites that fled to the rock Rimmon, as Dr. Lightfoot {u} conjectures, Jud 20:47; for that affair, though there related, was before this: the Septuagint calls him an "ambidexter", one that could use both hands equally alike; but the Hebrew phrase signifies one that is "shut up in his right hand" {w}; who has not the true use of it, cannot exercise it as his other hand, being weak and impotent, or contracted through disuse, or some disease; or, as Josephus {x} expresses it, who could use his left hand best, and who also calls him a young man of a courageous mind and strong of body, and says he dwelt at Jericho, and was very familiar with Eglon, and who by his gifts and presents had endeared himself to all about the king:

and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab; either their yearly tribute, or rather a gift unto him, to soften him, and reconcile him to them, and make their bondage easier; or to give him access to him with more confidence and safety, though it does not seem that they knew anything of Ehud's design.

{u} Works, vol. 1. p. 46. {w} wnymy dy rja "obturatum manu dextera sua", Montanus; "habens manum dexterum obturatum", Munsterus; "erat clausa manu dextera", Tigurine version; "clausum manu dextera", Drusius; "perclusum", Junius & Tremellius; "praaeclusum", Piscator. {x} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4.) sect. 2.

Judges 3:16

Ver. 16. But Ehud made him a dagger, which had two edges, of a cubit length,.... A little sword, as Josephus calls it {y}, with two edges, that it might cut both ways, and do the execution he designed by it, and was about half a yard long; which he could the more easily conceal, and use for his purpose:

and he did gird it under his raiment; that it might not be seen, and give occasion of suspicion; this was a military garment, the "sagum", as the Vulgate Latin version, which was coarse, and made of wool, and reached to the ankle, and was buttoned upon the shoulder, and put over the coat {z}; the Septuagint makes use of a word Suidas {a} interprets a coat of mail:

upon his right thigh; whereas a sword is more commonly girt upon the left; though some observe, from various writers, that the eastern people used to gird their swords on their right thigh; or this was done that it might be the less discernible and suspected, and chiefly as being most convenient for him, a lefthanded man, to draw it out upon occasion.

{y} Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2.) {z} Vid. Valtrinum de re militar. Roman. l. 3. c. 13. {a} In voce manduav.

Judges 3:17

Ver. 17. And he brought a present unto Eglon king of Moab,.... Accompanied by two servants, as Josephus says {b}, and who doubtless bore the presents; for that there were such with him that did is clear from **Jud 3:18**; nor can it be thought that so great a personage as a judge in Israel should go alone and carry a present in his own hands; though it is possible, when come to the king of Moab, he might take it from his servants, and deliver it to him with his own hands:

and Eglon [was] a very fat man: and so the less active, and unable to decline and avoid the stroke, he might see, when about to be given him.

{b} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2.

Judges 3:18

Ver. 18. And when he had made an end to offer the present,.... Had delivered the several things contained in it, and very probably made a speech to the king in the name of the people of Israel from whom he brought it:

he sent away the people that bare the present; not the servants of Eglon that introduced him, as if they assisted in bringing in the present to the king; for over them he could not have so much power as to dismiss them at pleasure; but the children of Israel that came along with him, and carried the present for him: these he dismissed, not in the presence of the king of Moab, but after he had taken his leave of him, and when he had gone on some way in his return home; and this he did for the greater secrecy of his design, and that he might when he had finished it the more easily escape alone, and be without any concern for or care of the safety of others.

Judges 3:19

Ver. 19. But he himself turned again from the quarries that [were] by Gilgal,...., For so far he accompanied the men that came with him. These quarries were places where they dug stones and hewed them, according to the Targum, and most Jewish writers; but some render the word "engravings", and understand them of inscriptions engraved on pillars here, which remained from the times of Seth the son of Adam; of which see more on **Jud 3:26**; but according to the Vulgate Latin, and other versions, graven images or idols are meant, which the king of Moab set up here in contempt of the Israelites, it being a place where the ark remained some time, and circumcision had been performed, **Jos 5:3**; or in order to draw them into idolatry, those idols perhaps being made of the twelve stones they had set up there, **Jos 4:20**; or rather in honour of his gods, to invoke their assistance when he first entered into the land, or by way of gratitude and thankfulness for the subduing of it: and this it is thought by some stirred up the spirit of Ehud, and caused him to turn back, resolving to avenge this profaneness:

and said; when he came to the palace of the king of Moab, and into his presence:

I have a secret errand unto thee, O king; which he had forgot when with him before, as he might pretend; or something new had occurred unto him to acquaint him of, and which required privacy:

who said, keep silence; that is, the king of Moab said so either to Ehud, to be silent until be had sent out his servants that were about him, that they might not hear the secret; or to a person or persons that were speaking to him, whom he bid to desist and depart, it being his pleasure to hear Ehud before them; so Ben Gersom; but the former sense rather seems best:

and all that stood by him went out from him; his servants, his courtiers that were waiting upon him, or such as were admitted into his presence, to have audience of him, and deliver their messages, or make their petitions to him.

Judges 3:20

Ver. 20. And Ehud came unto him,.... Somewhat nearer him than he was before; it seems probable that Eglon retired from the presence chamber, where he received company, into his summer parlour; which was smaller and more private, and in which he had used to be alone, as follows, and whither Ehud went in unto him, as he directed him:

and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone: into which he was wont to go and sit alone, for the sake of coolness and refreshment in the hot season of the year, which it seems it now was; a room this was, in which, as Kimchi and others observe, were many windows to let in air to cool and refresh; or it was in such a part of the palace that was cool, and sheltered from the heat of the sun; see **Am 3:15**;

and Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee; which was to kill him; and undoubtedly he was sent of God on this errand to him: whether it be rendered a "word" or "thing" from God, as it signifies both, it was true, and no lie; for it was the Lord that spoke to him by an impulse on his spirit, and the thing was from the Lord he was to do, for nothing less could have justified him in such an action; and therefore this instance can be no warrant for the assassination of princes; as Ehud did not this of himself, but of the Lord, so neither did he do it as a private man, but as a judge of Israel. Josephus {c} says, he told him that he had a dream at the order of God to declare unto him; but for this there is no warrant; however it seems pretty plain that his view in making mention of the name of God, and of Elohim, a name given to false gods as well as the true, rather than Jehovah, was to strike his mind with awe and reverence, and cause him to rise from his seat, that he might the better thrust him with his dagger; and it had the desired effect:

and he arose out of [his] seat; in reverence of God, from whom he expected to receive a message; this he did, though in his mind a blind ignorant idolater; in his body fat, corpulent, and unwieldy; and in his office a king, and a proud and tyrannical man. The above writer says, that, for joy at the dream he was to hear, he rose from his throne.

{c} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2.

Judges 3:21

Ver. 21. And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh,.... Being, as before observed, a lefthanded man; **Jud 3:15**, and this he could the better do, without being taken notice of by the king, who, if he saw him move his left hand, would have no suspicion of his going to draw a dagger with it, and which also was hidden under his raiment, **Jud 3:16**;

and thrust it into his belly; Josephus {d} says into his heart; it is certain the wound was mortal, and must have been in a part on which, life depended.

{d} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2.

Judges 3:22

Ver. 22. And the haft went in, after the blade,.... The handle of the dagger, as well as the blade; so strong and violent was the thrust, he determining to do his business effectually;

and the fat closed upon the blade; being an excessive fat man, the wound made by the dagger closed up at once upon it, through the fat:

so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; being not able to take hold of the haft or handle, that having slipped in through the fat after the blade, so that he was obliged to leave it in him:

and the dirt came out; the margin of our Bibles is, "it came out at the fundament"; that is, the dagger did, the thrust being so strong and vehement; but that is not so likely, the dagger being so short, and Eglon a very fat man. The Targum is,

"his food went out;"

which was in his bowels; but as the wound was closed up through fat, and the dagger stuck fast in it, it could not come out that way: rather therefore this is to he understood of his excrements, and of their coming out at the usual place, it being common for persons that die a violent death, and indeed others, to purge upon it; some, as Kimchi observes, interpret it of the place where the guards were, the guard room, through which Ehud went out, but that is expressed in another word in **Jud 3:23**; the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "he went out in haste", that is, Ehud.

Judges 3:23

Ver. 23. Then Ehud went forth through the porch,.... Which the Targum interprets by "exedra", a place, as Kimchi, where there were many seats, either for the people to sit in while waiting to have admittance into the presence of the king, or where the guards sat, and may be called the guard room; through this Ehud passed with all serenity and composure of mind imaginable, without the least show of distress and uneasiness in his countenance, being fully satisfied that what he had done was right, and according to the will of God:

and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them; joined the doors of the parlour, as the Targum, the two folds of the door, shut them close together upon Eglon within the parlour, and bolted them within, or drew the bolt on the inside, which he was able to do with a key for that purpose; of which see more on **Jud 3:25**; and which it is probable he took away along with him; this must be understood as done before he went through the porch, and therefore should be rendered, "when" or "after he had shut the doors", &c. {e}; wherefore in the Vulgate Latin version this clause is put first.

{e} rgoyw "quum occlusisset", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Judges 3:24

Ver. 24. When he was gone out, his servants came,.... When Ehud was gone through the porch, and out of the palace, the servants of Eglon, who had been put out, came to the parlour door to reassume their former place, and finish their business with the king, or in order to wait upon him as usual:

and when they saw that behold the doors of the parlour [were] locked; which they supposed were done by the king himself with inside, having no suspicion of Ehud:

they said, surely, or "perhaps", as Noldius {f} renders it,

he covereth his feet in his summer chamber; that is, was easing nature; and, as the eastern people wore long and loose garments, when they sat down on such an occasion, their feet were covered with them; or they purposely gathered them about their feet to cover them, and so this became a modest expression for this work of nature, see 1Sa 24:3; though some think that in that place, and also in this, is meant lying down to sleep; and that Eglon's servants supposed that he had laid himself down on his couch in his summer chamber to take sleep, when it was usual to cover the feet with long garments, to hide those parts of nature which otherwise might be exposed; and it must be owned that this seems more agreeable to a summer parlour than the former, and better accounts for the servants waiting so long as they did; and Josephus {g} is express for it, that his servants thought he had fallen asleep. Indeed, the Jews in later times used the phrase in the first sense {h}, which seems to be taken from hence.

{f} Ebr. Concord. part. p. 47. No. 237. {g} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2.) {h} Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 2.

Judges 3:25

Ver. 25. And they tarried until they were ashamed,.... And knew not what to think of it, or what methods to take to be satisfied of the truth of the matter, and what should be the meaning of the doors being kept locked so long:

and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour; this was what surprised them, and threw them into this confusion of mind, that they knew not what course to take for fear of incurring the king's displeasure, and yet wondered the doors were not opened for so long a time:

therefore they took a key and opened [them]; this is the first time we read of a key, which only signifies something to open with; and the keys of the ancients were different from those of ours; they were somewhat like a crooked sickle {i}, which they put in through a hole in the door, and with it could draw on or draw back a bolt, and so could lock or unlock with inside, see **So 5:4**; and at this day the keys in the eastern countries are unlike ours. Chardin {k} says, that a lock among the eastern people is like a little harrow, which enters half way into a wooden staple, and the key is a wooden handle with points at the end of it, which are pushed into the staple, and so raise this little harrow:

and, behold, their lord [was] fallen dead on the earth; lay prostrate on the floor of the parlour, dead.

{i} klhid' eukampea, Homer. Odyss. 21. ver. 6. & Eustathius in ib. {k} Apud Calmet's Dictionary, on the word "Key".

Judges 3:26

Ver. 26. And Ehud escaped while they tarried,.... While the servants of the king of Moab tarried waiting for the opening of the doors of the parlour, this gave him time enough to make his escape, so as to be out of the reach of pursuers; or else the sense is, that even when they had opened the doors, and found the king dead, while they were in confusion at it, not knowing what to ascribe it to, the dagger being enclosed in the wound, and perhaps but little blood, if any, issued out, being closed up with fat, and so had no suspicion of his being killed by Ehud; but rather supposing it to be an accidental fall from his seat, and might call in the physicians to examine him, and use their skill, if there were any hopes of recovery; all which prolonged time, and facilitated the escape of Ehud:

and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped to Seirath; he got beyond the quarries, which were by Gilgal, which shows that it could not be at Jericho where the king of Moab was, as Josephus thinks, but either in his own country beyond Jordan, though no mention is made of Ehud's crossing Jordan, or however some place nearer the fords of Jordan; since Gilgal, from whence he returned, and whither he came again after he had killed the king of Moab, lay on that side of Jericho which was towards Jordan; and this Seirath he escaped to was in or near the mountain of Ephraim, as appears from **Jud 3:27**:, but of it we have no account elsewhere; but it is thought by some learned men {l} to be the place where Seth's pillars stood, and they to be the engravings here spoken of, which we translate "quarries": the words of Josephus {m} are, that the posterity of Seth, who very much studied astronomy, having heard that Adam foretold the destruction of the universe at one time by fire, and at another by water, erected two pillars, one of stone, and the other of brick, on which they inscribed their inventions (in astronomy), that they might be preserved, and which remain to this day in the land of Siriad; but this account of Josephus seems to be taken from a fabulous relation of Manetho, the Egyptian, and is abundantly confuted by Dr. Stillingfleet {n}. Jarchi interprets this of Seirath, a thick wood or forest, the trees of which grew as thick as the hair on a man's head, and so a proper place to escape to, and hide in: it may be it was the woody part of the mount Ephraim, see
Jos 17:18.

{l} Marsham. Chronicon, p. 39. Vossius de 70 Interpret. p. 271. {m} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 3. {n} Origines Sacrae, l. 1. c. 2.

Judges 3:27

Ver. 27. And it came to pass, when he was come, That is, to Seirath, **Jud 3:26**, in the tribe of Ephraim:

that be blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim; which being an high mountain, the sound of the trumpet was heard afar off; and if Ehud's design was known to the Israelites, what he intended to do, this might be the token agreed on, should he succeed, to call them together, see
Jer 31:6;

and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them; being there assembled together, and which might be the place before appointed for their rendezvous, and where and when he took the command of them, and went before them as their general.

Judges 3:28

Ver. 28. And he said unto them, follow after me,.... This he said to encourage them, putting himself at the head of them showing himself ready to expose his own life, if there was any danger:

for the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hands; which he concluded from the success he had had in cutting off the king of Moab which had thrown the Moabites into great confusion and distress, and from an impulse on his mind from the Lord, assuring him of this deliverance:

and they went down after him: from the mountain of Ephraim:

and took the fords of Jordan towards Moab; where the river was fordable, and there was a passage into the country of Moab, which lay on the other side Jordan; this they did to prevent the Moabites, which were in the land of Israel, going into their own land upon this alarm, and those in the land of Moab from going over to help them:

and suffered not a man to pass over; neither out of Israel into Moab, nor out of Moab into Israel.

Judges 3:29

Ver. 29. And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men,.... Who had been sent into the land of Israel to keep it in subjection, or had settled themselves there for their better convenience, profit, and pleasure; it is very probable there were some of both sorts:

all lusty, and all men of valour; the word for "lusty" signifies "fat", living in ease for a long time, and in a plentiful country were grown fat; and, according to Ben Gersom, it signifies rich men, such as had acquired wealth by living in the land of Canaan; or who came over Jordan thither and settled about Jericho, because of the delightfulness of the place, and others were stout and valiant soldiers, whom the king of Moab had placed there to keep the land in subjection he had subdued, and to subdue what remained of it; but they were all destroyed:

and there escaped not a man; for there being no other way of getting into the land of Moab but at the fords of Jordan they fell into the hands of the Israelites possessed of them, as they made up unto them.

Judges 3:30

Ver. 30. So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel,.... Or the Moabites were broken, as the Targum, that is, their forces in the land of Israel; for the land of Moab itself was not subdued and brought into subjection to the Israelites; but they were so weakened by this stroke upon them, that they could not detain the Israelites under their power any longer:

and the land had rest fourscore years; eighty years, which, according to Ben Gersom, are to be reckoned from the beginning of their servitude, and that the rest properly was but sixty two years, and so both rest and servitude were eighty years, as R. Isaiah; and, according to Abarbinel, the rest was from the death of Othniel; and our Bishop Usher {o} reckons this eightieth year from the former rest restored to it by Othniel; but others {p} are of opinion that there were several judges at a time in several parts of the land, and that the land was at rest in one part when there was war in another; and so that at this time it was only the eastern part of the land that had rest, while the western parts were distressed by the Philistines, and the northern parts by Jabin king of Canaan, as in **Jud 3:31**.

{o} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 42. {p} Marsham. Canon. Chron. p. 306, 307. Patrick in loc. Vid. Lampe Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 5. p. 21, 22.

Judges 3:31

Ver. 31. And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath,.... That is, after the death of Ehud, when the people of Israel were in distress again from another quarter, this man was raised up of God to be a judge and deliverer of them; but who he was, and who his father, and of what tribe, we nowhere else read:

which slew of the Philistines six hundred men; who invaded the land, and came in an hostile manner into it; or rather, as it seems from **Jud 5:6**; they entered as a banditti of thieves and robbers, who posted themselves in the highways, and robbed travellers as they passed, so that they were obliged to leave off travelling, or go through bypaths, and not in the public road; and this man, who seems to have been called from the plough to be a judge of Israel, as some among the Romans were called from thence to be dictators and deliverers of them from the Gauls:

with an ox goad; which he had used to push on his oxen with at ploughing, cleared the country of them, and with no other weapon than this slew six hundred of them, either at certain times, or in a body together; which is no ways incredible, being strengthened and succeeded by the Lord, any more than Samson's slaying a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass, Jud 15:15. So Lycurgus is said to put to flight the forces of Bacchus with an ox goad {q} which is said to be done near Carmel, a mountain in Judea, which makes it probable that this is hammered out of the sacred history; or that Shamgar and Lycurgus are the same, as Bochart conjectures {r}. The ox goad, as now used in those parts, is an instrument fit to do great execution with it, as Mr. Maundrell {s}, who saw many of them, describes it; on measuring them, he found them to be eight feet long, at the bigger end six inches in circumference, at the lesser end was a sharp prickle for driving the oxen, and at the other end a small spade, or paddle of iron, for cleansing the plough from the clay:

and he also delivered Israel, from those robbers and plunderers, and prevented their doing any further mischief in the land, and subjecting it to their power, and so may very properly be reckoned among the judges of Israel; but how long he judged is not said, perhaps his time is to be reckoned into the eighty years of rest before mentioned; or, as Abarbinel thinks, into the forty years of Deborah, the next judge; and who also observes, that their Rabbins say, Shamgar judged but one year.

{q} bouplhgi, Homer. Iliad. 6. ver. 135. {r} Hieozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 39. col. 385. & Canaan. l. 1. c. 18. col. 446. {s} Journey to Aleppo, &c. p. 110, 111.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Judges 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 4

This chapter shows how that Israel sinning was delivered into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, by whom they were oppressed twenty years, **Jud 4:1**;

and that Deborah and Barak consulted together about their deliverance, **Jud 4:4**; and that Barak, encouraged by Deborah, gathered some forces and fought Sisera the captain of Jabin's army, whom he met, and obtained a victory over, **Jud 4:10**; who fleeing on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber, was received into it, and slain by her while asleep in it, **Jud 4:16**; which issued in a complete deliverance of the children of Israel, **Jud 4:23**.

Ver. 1. And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord,.... Which was the fruit and effect of the long rest and peace they enjoyed; and which is often the case of a people favoured with peace, plenty, and prosperity, who are apt to abuse their mercies, and forget God, the author and giver of them; and the principal evil, though not expressed, was idolatry, worshipping Baalim, the gods of the nations about them; though it is highly probable they were guilty of other sins, which they indulged in the times of their peace and prosperity:

when Ehud was dead; Shamgar is not mentioned, because his time of judging Israel was short, and the people were not reformed in his time, but fell into sin as soon as Ehud was dead, and continued. Some choose to render the words, "for Ehud was dead" {t}, who had been, the instrument of reforming them, and of preserving them from idolatry, but he being dead, they fell into it again; and the particle "vau" is often to be taken in this sense, of which Noldius {u} gives many instances.

{t} dwhaw "enim, vel quia Ehud", Bonfrerius; so Patrick. {u} Concord. Ebr. part. p. 285, 295.

Judges 4:2

Ver. 2. And the Lord sold them,.... Delivered them into a state of bondage and slavery, where they were like men sold for slaves, see **Jud 3:8**;

into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; there was a city of this name, and a king of it of the same name, as here, in the times of Joshua, which city was taken and burnt by him, and its king slain, Jos 11:1; and either the country about it is here meant, as Jericho in the preceding chapter is put for the country adjacent to it; or this city had been rebuilt, over which reigned one of the posterity of the ancient kings of it, and of the same name; or Jabin was a name common to the kings of Canaan, as Pharaoh to the Egyptian kings; and by Canaan is meant, not the land of Canaan in general, but a particular part of it inhabited by that, or some of that nation or tribe, which was peculiarly so called:

the captain of whose host [was] Sisera; Jabin maintained a standing army to keep the people of Israel in subjection, the general of which was Sisera, of whom many things are after said:

which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles; not Jabin, as many understand it, for he had his royal seat and residence in Hazor; but Sisera his general, and where the army under his command was. This place had its name either because it was built by same of various nations, or inhabited by workmen of different countries; or rather it was a wood originally, as the name signifies, to which many of the seven nations of the Canaanites fled from before Joshua, and hid and sheltered themselves, and in process of time built strong towers and fortresses in it, and became numerous and powerful; and so the Targum paraphrases the words,

"and he dwelt in the strength of the towers of the people;"

and in other times, as Strabo relates {w}, the northern parts of the land of Canaan, as those were where Hazor and Harosheth were, were inhabited by a mixed people, Egyptians, Arabians, and Phoenicians; such were they, he says, that held Galilee, Jericho, Philadelphia, and Samaria.

{w} Geograph. l. 16. p. 525.

Judges 4:3

Ver. 3. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord,.... Because of their hard bondage, and begged deliverance from it, being brought to a sense of their sins, and humbled for them:

for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; the same with the armata to drepanhfora, chariots which carried scythes at the side of them, fastened to the orbs of the wheels {x}, and were on both sides; and in some stood out ten cubits {y} which running furiously among the infantry, cut them to pieces in a terrible manner; of which Cyrus had in his army at first but an hundred, afterwards increased to three hundred {z}; and yet here a petty prince of Canaan had nine hundred of them; and which Josephus {a} has increased, beyond all belief, to the number of three thousand; which struck great terror into the Israelites, and who therefore durst not attempt to shake off his yoke, but cried to the Lord for help:

and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel; as they increased their sins, and repeated their revolts, the Lord increased their oppressions, and continued them the longer; the first was only eight years, the next eighteen, and this twenty, and which was a very heavy one; the other being foreign princes that oppressed them, but this a Canaanitish king, an implacable enemy, and who doubtless used them the more severely for what they had done to his ancestors, killed his father or grandfather, burnt the city of Hazor, and destroyed the inhabitants of it in Joshua's time; and the servitude was the harder, and the more intolerable to the Israelites, that they were under a people whose land had been given them to possess, and whom they had expelled, and now were become subject to them.

{x} Vid. Suidam in voce drepanhfora. {y} Curtius, l. 4. c. 9, 12, 15. Liv. Hist. l. 37. c. 41. {z} Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 6. c. 13. {a} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 1.

Judges 4:4

Ver. 4. And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth,.... Deborah was a name common to women with the eastern people, see Ge 35:8; as Melissa, which is of the same signification with the Greeks, and both signify a "bee"; and to which Deborah answered in her industry, sagacity, and sweetness of temper to her friends, and sharpness to her enemies: she was a "prophetess", and foretold things to come, as the drawing of Sisera and his army to a certain place named by her, the victory that should be gained over him, and the delivery of him into the hands of a woman. Who Lapidoth was, or what is meant by the name, is not certain; most take it to be the name of her husband, which seems best, but who he was is not known; the Jews will have him to be the same with Barak, there being, as they think, some agreement in the names, Barak signifying lightning, and Lapidoth, lamps; but the whole context shows the contrary, that he was not her husband. Some render the words, "a woman of Lapidoth", taking it for the name of her native place on habitation; but where there was a place of this name no account can be given: some say she was so called from her employment before she was a prophetess and judge, making wicks for the lamps in the sanctuary, as Jarchi relates; and others take it to be expressive of her excellencies and virtues, which shone in her as lamps; the first sense is best:

she judged Israel at that time; toward the close of the twenty years' oppression under Jabin, being raised up of God as other judges were, and eminently endowed with gifts and grace; she endeavoured to convince the people of their sins, exhorted them to repentance, and was a means of reforming them, and administering justice and judgment in all cases brought before her; and which Jabin might admit of, connive at, or take no notice of, she being a woman, of whose growing power and interest he had no jealousy.

Judges 4:5

Ver. 5. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah,.... Her dwelling house was under a palm tree, or rather she sat under one, in the open air, when the people came to her with their cases, and it was called from hence after her name; though some, as Abarbinel observes, think it was so called, because Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, was buried here, and which was near Bethel, one of the places next mentioned, see
Ge 35:8,

between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim; which places were in the tribe of Benjamin in the borders of Ephraim, see Jos 16:2. The Jews conclude, from the situation of her, that she was a very opulent woman; the Targum is,

"she was dwelling in a city in Ataroth, Deborah was supported of her own; she had palm trees in Jericho, orchards in Ramah, olives producing oil in the valley, a place of watering in Bethel, and white dust in the kings mountain:"

and the children of Israel came up to her; from all parts of the land to the mount of Ephraim:

for judgment: to have her advice and counsel in matters of difficulty, and to have causes between contending parties heard and decided by her, so that she might be truly reckoned among the judges.

Judges 4:6

Ver. 6. And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedeshnaphtali,.... So called to distinguish it from other places of the same name, this being in the tribe of Naphtali, and a city of refuge, Jos 20:7; of which tribe and place Barak was, but who he and his father Abinoam were we have no other account; it seems clear from hence that he was not the husband of Deborah, as the Jews say, or they would have lived together; though, according to Ben Gersom, she lived separate from him, because of the spirit of prophecy that was upon her; however, in this mission and message to Barak she acted not as a private person, but as a judge in Israel, and as having and exercising public power and authority:

and said unto him; when come to her upon her summons:

hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded: can any doubt be made of it? can Barak in the least question it, as if she should say? the interrogation carries in it a strong affirmation, that the Lord had commanded, and that he had commanded by her mouth:

[saying], go and draw toward Mount Tabor; a mountain on the border of Zebulun, and between the tribes of Issachar and Naphtali, and so lay very convenient for the inhabitants of these tribes to meet here; of which See Gill on "Jos 19:22"; here Balak is directed to steer his course, and betake himself, and draw others with him by persuasive motives and arguments, urging the command of God by Deborah the prophetess, and the assurance given from the Lord by her of victory over their enemies, and deliverance from them; for otherwise the children of Israel were in great fear of Jabin, because of his large army, and iron chariots:

and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali, and of the children of Zebulun? which were near at hand, and were the tribes which perhaps were most oppressed, and therefore more easily to be persuaded to engage in this expedition; and the number of them is fixed, as being sufficient for this service, and whose hearts the Lord would engage in it, so that Barak would have little to do but to move it to them, and enforce it with proper arguments; and as they would willingly offer themselves, as it appears afterwards they did, he was at once to take them with him to Mount Tabor, on the top of which was a plain of twenty six furlongs or about three miles, as Josephus {b} says, surrounded by a wall; though modern travellers make it much less, on which, however, he might draw up his army of ten thousand men, and muster and exercise them.

{b} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 1. sect. 8.

Judges 4:7

Ver. 7. And I will draw unto thee,.... Which are the words of the Lord by Deborah, as are the preceding, signifying, that by the secret and powerful influence of his providence he would so order things, and the circumstances of them; and so powerfully operate on the mind and heart of the Canaanitish general as to engage him to come

to the river Kishon, Sisera the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots, and his multitude; called the ancient river, the river Kishon, **Jud 5:21**. According to Mr. Maundrell {c}, the fountain of it was near the valley, at the bottom of Mount Tabor, where Barak was to have his army in readiness to attack Sisera; and which river, according to the same traveller {d} cuts his way down the middle of the plain of and then continuing his course close by the side of Mount Carmel, falls into the sea at a place called with which agrees the account of Mr. Sandys {e}, says it flows from the mountains of Tabor and Hermon, and, gliding by the north skirts of Carmel, discharges itself into the sea. This river is supposed to be the Chorsaeus of Ptolemy {f}: hither the Lord in his providence would incline the mind of Sisera to come with his large army and chariots, and give Barak an opportunity to fall upon him:

and I will deliver him into thine hand; not his person only, but his numerous hosts, and his nine hundred chariots.

{c} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 115. {d} Ib. p. 57. {e} Travels, l. 3. p. 158. Ed. 5. {f} Geograph. l. 5. c. 15.

Judges 4:8

Ver. 8. And Barak said unto her,.... To Deborah, after she had delivered the words of the Lord unto him:

if thou wilt go with me, then I will go; which showed faith hi the word of the Lord, for which he is commended, and a readiness to do the will of God, and courage to engage in such a work with a powerful adversary, and is therefore reckoned among the heroes for faith, Heb 11:32;

but if thou wilt not go with me, [then] I will not go; which though it might discover some weakness in him, yet showed the high opinion he had of Deborah as a judge of Israel, and prophetess of the Lord; being desirous that he might have her with him to pray to God for him, to give him advice and counsel on any emergency, she being as the oracle God; and whereby he testified his regard to the Lord, and to his presence, which he concluded he should have, the prophetess being with him; and more especially his reason for insisting on her going with him might be to prevail upon the inhabitants of Naphtali and Zebulun to go with him, who he might fear would not believe him, or pay any regard to his words, and be in dread of engaging with the enemy, unless she was present; which he supposed would satisfy them as to the mind of God in it, and animate them, and give them heart and spirit.

Judges 4:9

Ver. 9. And she said, I will surely go with thee, She made no hesitation about it, but agreed at once to go with him for his encouragement; perceiving some degree of weakness in him, and yet an hearty and sincere inclination to engage in the work proposed, and that this might be no hinderance, she readily assents to it: adding,

notwithstanding the journey thou takest; the way or course he steered, the methods he took in insisting on it that she should go with him:

shall not be for thine honour; as a general of an army, who is commonly solicitous to have the whole glory of an action:

for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman; meaning either herself, for she being judge of Israel, and going along with him, would have the glory of the victory ascribed to her, as usually is to the principal person in the army; and so it would be said in future time, that the Lord delivered Sisera and his army, not into the hand of Barak, but into the hand of Deborah, whereby he would not have all the honour which otherwise he would have, if she went not with him; or else Jael, Heber's wife, is meant, into whose hands Sisera did fall, and by whom he was slain; but this seems to have no connection with Deborah's going or not going with him, it did not depend upon that one way or another; unless it can be thought that thus it was ordered in Providence as a rebuke of his diffidence and weakness, that because he would not go without a woman, Sisera should fall not into his hands, but into the hands of a woman; and if so, this is a clear instance of Deborah's having a spirit of prophecy, and of a prediction of a future contingent event:

and Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh; that is, they went together from the palm tree between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim, to Kedesh in Mount Naphtali, in order to raise the ten thousand men that were to fight with Sisera.

Judges 4:10

Ver. 10. And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh,.... This he did either by the sound of a trumpet, as Ehud did, or by sending messengers to them to collect ten thousand men from among them, which they accordingly did, and came to him in Kedesh:

and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet; they following him up to Mount Tabor cheerfully and readily, being all footmen; for the Israelites had no cavalry, and yet got the victory over Sisera's army, which, according to Josephus {g}, had ten thousand horses in it:

and Deborah went up with him; and his ten thousand footmen, to the top of Mount Tabor, to encourage him and them with her presence, and give her best advice when to descend and engage the enemy.

{g} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 1.

Judges 4:11

Ver. 11. Now Heber the Kenite,.... A descendant of Kain, a principal man among the Midianites; the Targum calls him the Salmaean:

[which was] of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses; who came along with the children of Israel through the wilderness into the land of Canaan, and first settled about Jericho, and then removed into the wilderness of Judah, **Jud 1:16**;

had severed himself from the Kenites; which dwelt in the said wilderness; to whom he belonged when this separation was made, and on what account is not certain. Abarbinel thinks that it was done now, and with a design to help Israel, that hearing Barak was gone up to Mount Tabor, and seeing Sisera prepared to fight with him, he made as if he was disgusted with his own people, and separated from them, that Jabin, with whom he was at peace, might the more confide in him; when it was out of love to Israel, and with a view to assist them, as occasion should offer, that he removed; but this is not very likely, as these Kenites were a people that kept themselves from meddling with military affairs as much as possible:

and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which [is] by Kedesh: for these people dwelt in tents as the Midianites did, from whence they sprung, and as the Scenite Arabs; and yet near to cities, as here, and in places fit for the pasturage of their cattle, in which they were chiefly employed, and here pitched upon a plain where were fields and meadows: the Targum calls it a plain of pools, where were pools of water for the watering of their flocks; or rather it might be rendered the oak or grove of oaks of Zaanaim, the same with Alonzaanannim,
See Gill on "Jos 19:33". This place lay between Harosheth of the Gentiles, from whence Sisera came, and Mount Tabor, where Barak was. This little piece of history is inserted here, partly to account for it that there should be any Kenites here, when we are told before they settled in the wilderness of Judah, and partly on account of the following narrative of Sisera being slain by this man's wife.

Judges 4:12

Ver. 12. And they showed Sisera,.... Either some of the Canaanites that dwelt near Tabor, or some spies that Sisera had out; though some think the Kenites told him, who were at peace with Jabin, **Jud 4:17**; yet whether out of good will or ill will cannot be said: however, so it was ordered by the providence of God, that by some means or another Sisera should be informed

that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to Mount Tabor; and no doubt at the same time he was told the number of men that went with him; from whence he might well conclude, that such a warlike man, with such a force collected together, and having posted himself in an high and strong mountain, must have some design to cause a revolt of Israel from Jabin his prince.

Judges 4:13

Ver. 13. And Sisera gathered together all his chariots,.... Or "therefore" he gathered them together, which might lie some in one place, and some in another, for the better quartering of the men that belonged to them:

[even] nine hundred chariots of iron; and which, as before observed, are magnified by Josephus, and made to be three thousand;

and all the people that [were] with him; his soldiers, Jabin's army, of which he was captain, and are called a multitude, **Jud 4:7**; and which, the above writer says {h}, consisted of three hundred thousand foot, and ten thousand horse, besides the iron chariots: these he collected together, and brought with him,

from Harosheth of the Gentiles; the place where he resided with his army, **Jud 4:2**;

unto the river of Kishon; which was near Mount Tabor, the rendezvous of Barak and his men, see **Jud 4:6**.

{h} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 1.)

Judges 4:14

Ver. 14. And Deborah said unto Barak, up,.... Not go up higher for they were upon the top of a mountain; but rise, bestir thyself, prepare for battle, put the army in rank and file, and march and meet the enemy without delay:

for this [is] the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand; by a spirit of prophecy she knew this was the precise day, the exact time in which it was the will of God this deliverance should be wrought; and she speaks of it as if it was past, because of the certainty of it, and the full assurance she had of it, and Barak might have; nor is what she says any contradiction to what she had said before, that Sisera should be sold or delivered into the hands of a woman, **Jud 4:9**; for both were true, Sisera first fell into the hands of Jael, a woman, and then into the hands of Barak, and into the hands of both on the same day:

is not the Lord gone out before thee? it was manifest he was, at least to Deborah, who was fully assured of it, and therefore it became Barak and his men, and great encouragement they had, to follow, since as the Lord went before them as their Generalissimo, they might be sure of victory: perhaps there might be some visible appearance, some shining lustre and splendour of the Shekinah, or divine Majesty; the Targum is,

"is not the angel of the Lord gone out before thee, to prosper thee?"

so Barak went from Mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him; no mention is made of Deborah's coming down with them, perhaps she stayed on the mountain till the battle was over: nor might Barak be urgent upon her now to go with him, being confident of success, and having all the ends answered by her presence he could wish for.

Judges 4:15

Ver. 15. And the Lord discomfited Sisera and all [his] chariots, and all [his] host,.... Frightened them, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, or disturbed them with a noise and tumult, as the word signifies; with a noise in the heavens, which were in their ears, as Abarbinel observes, like the noise of a large army, as was the case of the Syrians, **2Ki 7:6**; and they saw, he says, horses and chariots of fire, and the like, which terrified them; and all this he supposes was done before Barak descended from the mountain, so that he had nothing to do when he came but to pursue and kill, whereby it plainly appeared it was the Lord's doing. Josephus {i} says there was a great tempest of rain and hail, and the wind blew the rain in their faces, which so blinded their eyes, that their slings and arrows were of no use to them; and they that bore armour were so benumbed, that they could not hold their swords. Something of this kind is intimated by Deborah in her song, **Jud 5:20**; and this was accompanied or followed by a slaughter

with the edge of the sword before Barak; the fright and dread they were put into was increased by the appearance of Barak, who fell upon them in their confusion, and cut them to pieces:

so that Sisera lighted down off [his] chariot, and fled away on his feet; being very probably swift of foot; and besides thought it safest to quit his chariot, which in the confusion was in danger of being run against by others; as also he might judge he should not be so easily discerned who he was when on foot, as a common soldier, as in his splendid chariot; and this he might do in his fright, not considering his horses were swifter than he: thus Homer represents a Trojan warrior leaping out of his chariot to escape Diomedes, and another as doing the same to get clear of Achilles {k}.

{i} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 1.) sect. 4. {k} Vid. Iliad. 5. & 20.

Judges 4:16

Ver. 16. But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles,.... The place from whence they came, and to which they endeavoured to escape: but he followed them, so close all that way, and made such havoc of them, that

all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword, [and] there was not a man left; no, not one, excepting Sisera, as in **Jud 4:17**; or "even to one" {l}, as in the original text; not one escaped to Hazor to acquaint Jabin of the loss of his army. Philo Byblius says, that nine hundred and ninety seven thousand of Sisera's army were slain.

{l} dxa de "usque ad unum", Montanus.

Judges 4:17

Ver. 17. Howbeit, Sisera fled away on his feet,.... Got off, and made his escape

to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; before spoken of, **Jud 4:11**; and he made to that, because he might think himself safer in a tent than in a town; and especially in the tent of a woman, where he might imagine no search would be made; for women of note, in those times, had separate tents, see Ge 24:67; and the rather he made his escape hither for a reason that follows:

for [there was] peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite; which Jabin might the more readily come into, because these were not Israelites, nor did they make any claim to the country, and lived only in tents, and attended their flocks, and were a quiet people, and not at all disposed to war; and it might be so ordered by the providence of God, as a rebuke to the Israelites for their sins, when those who were only proselytes kept close to the worship of God, and so enjoyed liberty, peace, and prosperity.

Judges 4:18

Ver. 18. And Jael went out to meet Sisera,.... Seeing him coming, and knowing him full well, she stepped forward towards him, to invite him into her tent: some think she was looking out, that if she saw Israelite in distress to take him in; and very probably had been some time at her tent door, to inquire the battle went, and which, no doubt, living so near Kedesh, she knew was expected:

and said unto him, turn in, my lord; that is, into her tent: and she addresses him with the title of "lord", for the sake of honour, having been general of a large army; and not because her husband was a servant, and in subjection to him, as Abarbinel suggests:

turn in to me, fear not; she repeats the invitation, to show she was hearty and sincere, and that he had nothing to fear from her, nor in her house; and it may be at first she had no thought of doing what she afterwards did to him, it put into her heart after this:

and when he had turned in unto her in the tent; and laid himself down upon the ground, being weary:

she covered him with a mantle; either to hide him, should any search be made for him, or it may be to keep him from catching cold, being in a sweat through his flight, and being also perhaps inclined to sleep through weariness. The word for a mantle, according to Kimchi, signifies such a garment which has locks of wool on both sides of it, a sort of rug, and so very fit to cover with, and keep warm. So David de Pomis {m} describes it, as having locks and threads hanging down here and there.

{m} Tzemaeh David, fol. 216. 3.

Judges 4:19

Ver. 19. And he said unto her, give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty,.... Which might be occasioned by the heat of the battle, and by the heat of the day, and by heat in running; he asks for a little water, that being very desirable by persons athirst. Some think he did not ask for wine, because he knew the Kenites did not drink any, and so of course kept none in their tents; but though this was the custom of the Rechabites, who were the same with the Kenites,
Jer 35:8; yet it is very probable this custom had not yet obtained among them, since it was enjoined by Jonadab their father, who lived in the times of Jehu,
2Ki 10:15;

and she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him to drink; which she did either out of courtesy, being a better liquor, or with design to throw him into a sleep, which milk inclines to, making heavy, as all the Jewish commentators observe; though Josephus {n} has no authority to say, as he does? that the milk she gave him was bad and corrupt:

and covered him: again, after he had taken a draught of milk, which it seems she poured into a dish with the cream on it, see **Jud 5:25**.

{n} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 1.)

Judges 4:20

Ver. 20. And he said unto her, stand in the door of the tent,.... This he said, not in an imperious way, as some think, but by entreaty:

and it shall be, when any man shall come and inquire of thee; seeing her at the door, and where he desired she would stand to prevent their coming into the tent:

and say, is there any man here? any besides what belongs to the family? or any of Sisera's army?

that thou shalt say, no; there is no man; but to this she made no answer that is recorded.

Judges 4:21

Ver. 21. Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a nail of the tent,.... When she perceived he was fast asleep, and it being now put into her heart to kill him, having an impulse upon her spirit, which she was persuaded, by the effect it had upon her, that it was of God; not filling her with malice and revenge, but a concern for the glory of God, the interest of religion, and the good of Israel, she took this method to effect the death of this enemy of God, and his people; having no arms in the house, for the Kenites used none, she took up an iron pin, with which her tent was fastened to the ground:

and took a hammer in her hand; which perhaps she knew full well how to handle, being used to drive the pins of the tents into the ground with it:

and went softly unto him; lest she should awake him and smote the nail into his temples: as he lay on one side, these being the tenderest part of the head, from whence they have their name in the Hebrew language, and into which therefore a nail, or iron pin, might be more easily driven:

and fastened it into the ground; she smote the nail with such force and violence, that she drove it through both his temples into the ground on which he lay; and then, as it seems, from **Jud 5:26**; cut off his head, to make sure work of it:

for he was fast asleep and weary; and so heard not; when she came to him:

so he died; not in the field of battle, but in a tent; not by the sword, but by a nail; not by the hand of a man, but of a woman, as Deborah foretold, **Jud 4:9**.

Judges 4:22

Ver. 22. And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera,.... Knowing the way he took, at least as he supposed:

Jael came out to meet him; as she did Sisera, but with greater pleasure:

and said unto him, come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest; for she full well knew whom he was in pursuit of:

and when he came into her [tent]; at her invitation:

behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail [was] in his temples: which she did not attempt to draw out, but left it there, that it might be seen in what way she had dispatched him.

Judges 4:23

Ver. 23. So God subdued on that day Jabin king of Canaan before the children, of Israel. Freed Israel from subjection to him and delivered him into the hands of the Israelites; for Josephus {o} says, that as Barak went towards Hazor, he met Jabin, and slew him; who perhaps having heard of the defeat of his army under Sisera, came forth with another against Israel, which being overcome by them, he was slain, and the city utterly destroyed, as the same writer says; but by what follows it seems rather that the total conquest of him was afterwards and gradually accomplished.

{o} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 4.

Judges 4:24

Ver. 24. And the hand of the children of Israel, prospered and prevailed against Jabin, the king of Canaan,.... They continued their wars with him, in which they were successful:

until they had destroyed Jabin, king of Canaan; took him, and put him to death, and took his cities, and destroyed the inhabitants of them, and so acted more agreeably to the declared will of God, that they should not spare the Canaanites, but destroy them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Judges 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 5

This chapter contains a song of praise on account of the victories obtained over Jabin, and his kingdom; after an exhortation to praise is given, and kings excited to attend to it, the majestic appearance of God at Seir, on Sinai, is observed, to raise in the mind a divine veneration of him, **Jud 5:1**; then the miserable state and condition Israel was in before these victories, and therefore had the more reason to be thankful, **Jud 5:6**; the governors, and judges, and the people that were delivered, together with Deborah and Barak, are stirred up to rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, and bless his name, **Jud 5:9**; and those who willingly engaged in the war are praised, and such who were negligent reproved, and some even cursed, **Jud 5:14**; but Jael, Heber's wife, is particularly commended for her exploit in slaying Sisera, **Jud 5:24**; and the mother of Sisera, and her ladies, are represented as wondering at his long delay, and as assured of his having got the victory, **Jud 5:28**; and the song is concluded with a prayer for the destruction, of the enemies of the Lord, and for the happiness and glory of them that love him, **Jud 5:31**.

Ver. 1. Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam,.... Deborah is first mentioned, because she was, as Kimchi says, the root or foundation of the work, the chief person in it, both in the direction of the war, and in the composition of this song; and indeed, as Ben Gersom observes, she alone composed it, see **Jud 5:7**; and the verb is singular: "then sang Deborah"; and after her, and in her words, sung also Barak; he joined with her, not in making the song, but in singing it; and so likewise the people of Israel joined with her in singing it, as they did with Moses at the Red sea; and this song was sung

on that day; not on the precise day on which the victory was obtained over Sisera and his army, but on occasion of that memorable day, and what followed upon it:

saying; the following divine hymn or song, penned by Deborah, under divine inspiration, as the sublimity of the style, the fine and noble thoughts and sentiments that are in it, the beautiful and elegant phrases in which they are expressed, abundantly show; no Sappho, or any Grecian poetess, nor indeed any poet whatever, uninspired, being equal to the writer of this poem.

Judges 5:2

Ver. 2. Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel,.... The injuries done to Israel by any of their enemies, and particularly what wrongs had been done them by Jabin, king of Canaan, for twenty years past; though some understand it of the vengeance God took on Israel for their sins; and though praise is not given directly for that, yet inasmuch as, when that was the case, there were some whose spirits were stirred up to engage voluntarily in the deliverance of them from the oppression of their enemies, it was matter of praise:

when the people willingly offered themselves: to go and fight for Israel against their enemies, particularly those of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, **Jud 5:18**; though not excluding others that joined, who could not have been forced to it, had they not freely offered themselves; and which was owing to the secret influence of divine Providence on their hearts, moving and drawing them to this service; and therefore praise was due to the Lord on this account, who works in the hearts of men both to will and to do, as in things spiritual and religious, so in things natural and civil.

Judges 5:3

Ver. 3. Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes,.... Not only the neighbouring ones, but all the kings and princes of the earth, far and near, then and in succeeding ages; Deborah desires and wishes that all potentates might hear of the wonderful works of God done for his people, that they might learn to know there is one that is higher than they, to whom all the amazing things done in the world are to be ascribed; and be cautious how they oppressed the people of God, since sooner or later he would avenge them on them. The Targum restrains this to the kings that came with Sisera and the governors with Jabin; but if there were any such, as it is not improbable there were, see **Jud 5:19**; yet it is most likely that they were slain with them: there are some, as Kimchi observes, who think this respects the people of Israel, who were all the sons of kings; but the first sense is best:

I, [even] I, will sing unto the Lord, I will sing [praise] to the Lord God of Israel: which are the words of Deborah particularly, and the repetitions serve to express how cordial, earnest, and vehement she was in her praise and thankfulness to God; thereby setting an example to others, encouraging them to the same practice, and directing persons of every rank and quality to give praise only to Jehovah, the self-existing, everlasting, and unchangeable Being; to him who is the Lord and God of Israel in a peculiar manner, and not to any of the gods of the Gentiles.

Judges 5:4

Ver. 4. Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the fields of Edom,.... Here properly begins the song, what goes before being but a preface to it; and it begins with an apostrophe to the Lord, taking notice of some ancient appearances of God for his people, which were always matter of praise and thankfulness; and the rather are they taken notice of here, because of some likeness between them and what God had now wrought; and this passage refers either to the giving of the law on Sinai, as the Targum and Jarchi; see De 33:2; or rather, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and others, to the Lord's going before Israel, after they had encompassed the land of Edom, and marched from thence towards the land of Canaan, when they fought with Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, and conquered them; which struck terror into all the nations round about them, and the prophecies of Moses in his song began to be fulfilled, Ex 15:14; and which dread and terror are expressed in the following figurative phrases:

the earth trembled; and the like figure Homer {a} uses at the approach of Neptune, whom he calls the shaker of the earth, perhaps borrowed from hence; it may design the inhabitants of it, the Amorites, Moabites, Edomites, Philistines, Canaanites, and others:

and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water; which, as it may literally refer to the storm and tempest of rain that might be then as now, see **Jud 4:15**, so may figuratively express the panic great personages, comparable to the heavens and the clouds in them were thrown into, when their hearts melted like water, or were like clouds dissolved into it.

{a} treme d' ourea makra kai ulh, Iliad. 13. v. 18, 34, 44.

Judges 5:5

Ver. 5. The mountains melted from before the Lord,.... The inhabitants of them, through fear, the Lord going before Israel in a pillar of cloud and fire, and delivering mighty kings and their kingdoms into their hand:

[even] that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel; or, "as that Sinai", the note of

similitude being wanting; and the sense is, the mountains melted, just as the famous mountain Sinai in a literal sense did, when it trembled and quaked at the presence of God on it; the tokens of it, the fire and smoke, thunders, lightnings, and tempests there seen and heard; and which being observed, would call to mind the benefit Israel then received, which required praise and thankfulness, as well as would serve to express the awe and reverence of God due unto him.

Judges 5:6

Ver. 6. In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath,.... Of whom see **Jud 3:31**; who succeeded Ehud as a judge, but lived not long, and did not much; at least wrought not a perfect deliverance of the children of Israel; but during his time till now, quite through the twenty years of Jabin's oppression, things were as they are after described:

in the days of Jael; the wife of Heber the Kenite, spoken of in the preceding chapter, **Jud 4:17**, who appears to be a woman of masculine spirit, and endeavoured to do what good she could to Israel, though not a judge among them, as Jarchi suggests; and who before this affair of Sisera had signalized herself by some deeds of hers in favour of Israel, and against their enemies; yet far from putting a stop to the outrages committed; for in the times of both these persons,

the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways; the public roads were so infested with thieves and robbers, who stopped all they met with, and robbed them of what they had, that travellers and merchants with their carriages were obliged either to quit their employments, and not travel at all; or, if they did, were obliged to go in private roads, and roundabout ways, to keep clear of those rapparees the highways and public roads abounded with.

Judges 5:7

Ver. 7. The inhabitants of the villages ceased,.... Not only did those Canaanitish robbers go upon the highway, and robbed all they met with, which made travelling difficult and dangerous; but entered into the villages and unwalled towns, and broke into houses and plundered them; so that the inhabitants of them were obliged to quit their dwellings, and go into the fortified cities for security; by which means the villages were left empty, and in time fell to ruin, and ceased:

they ceased in Israel: for they were the villages which belonged to the Israelites that were plundered, and not those that belonged to any of the Canaanites; and these were the unhappy circumstances Israel were under

until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel; until it pleased God to raise her up, and endow her in a very wonderful and extraordinary manner with gifts qualifying her to be a nursing mother to Israel, to teach and instruct them in the mind and will of

God, to administer judgement and justice to them, to protect and defend them, and in all which she discovered a maternal affection for them; and as a good judge and ruler of a people may be called the father of them, so she, being a woman, is with propriety called a mother in Israel, having an affectionate concern for them as her children: now, till she arose, there was no perfect salvation and deliverance wrought for them, since the death of Ehud, even throughout the days of Shamgar and Jael; which is observed to excite praise and thankfulness on the present occasion, which hereby became the more illustrious.

Judges 5:8

Ver. 8. They chose new gods,.... That is, Israel, as most of the Jewish commentators interpret it; for the verb is singular, and Israel agrees well with it: this they did after the death of Joshua; it refers to their first idolatry, begun by Micah, Jud 17:1 they chose other gods than the true God; Baalim and Ashtaroth they are said to serve, **Jud 2:11**, and besides the gods of the Canaanites and Phoenicians, they sought after and introduced new ones from other places, or the same may be meant; since all besides the true God, the eternal Jehovah, the Ancient of days, and everlasting King, are new gods that lately sprung up: the Arabic and Syriac versions are,

"God chose a new king;"

so Ben Gersom; to perfect this wonder; for not only Sisera and his army were drawn to the gates of Israel to a proper place to fall in, but the victory was not obtained by Israel by their own force and strength; for they had no weapons of war, not a shield nor a spear, but for a very few men, but it was the Lord that fought for them in a new way; the former sense seems best, and agrees with what follows:

then was war in the gates; when they fell into idolatry, then God suffered the judgment of war to come upon them, even into the gates of their fortified cities, which were the security of them, and where were their courts of judicature, but by war disturbed and made to cease:

was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel? though the number of the Israelites were several hundred thousands, yet there were not to be seen among them shields and spears sufficient for 40,000; or not one among 40,000 was armed; which was owing either to their negligence and sloth in not providing themselves with arms, or not taking care of them in a time of peace; so that when war came into their gates, they had nothing to defend themselves with, or annoy their enemies; or to their cowardice, not daring to take up a shield or spear in their own defence; or to the enemy, Jabin king of Canaan, having disarmed them, that they might not be able to make a revolt, from him, and recover their liberties. Ben Gersom refers it to the times of Joshua, when there was no need of a shield and spear among the 40,000 of the children of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, that came over Jordan with them, since God fought for them; and the Targum seems to understand it of Sisera's army, that came against Israel with shields, spears, and swords; and makes the number of them to be in all 300,000, which is just the number of foot soldiers Josephus makes his army to consist of; and yet, though so numerous and so well armed, could not stand before Barak with 10,000 men only; See Gill on "Jud 4:17", the words rather refer to the cival war of the Benjamites with the Israelites, when 40,000 of the latter were killed, which was before the times of Deborah, Jud 20:21.

Judges 5:9

Ver. 9. My heart is towards the governors of Israel,.... Most of the Jewish commentators interpret this of their wise men and Scribes, who were willing to teach the people the law and the commandments, even in times of trouble, and did not cease from doing it on that account, and therefore Deborah praises them for it; so the Targum; but Kimchi and Ben Melech understand by them the great men of the nation, their nobles and rulers, who enacted good laws and statutes; or at least took care to see that the good laws they had were put in execution; and these had a share in the affections and good wishes of Deborah, and that chiefly for the following reason:

that offered themselves willingly among the people; to go along with them, and march at the head of them, to fight Sisera and his army; thereby setting a good example, and animating the people to battle, and inspiring them with courage and intrepidity; when they saw their chiefs and the heads of them exposing their lives with them in defence of their country, and the rights of it:

bless ye the Lord; for giving them such spirits, to engage so willingly in this service, and for giving them success in it.

Judges 5:10

Ver. 10. Speak, ye that ride on white asses,.... Though in some countries, as in ours, it is reckoned disgraceful to ride on asses; so Leo Africanus {b} makes mention of a preacher in Africa, who was called the ass rider; because he was continually, sitting on an ass; yet in Judea, where there were no horses, or very few, it was accounted honourable; so it was in the time of our Lord; for his riding on an ass to Jerusalem was not mean and disgraceful, but honourable and glorious: and so it certainly was in those early times of the judges; for we read of the sons of two of them, which were very numerous, that rode on asses' colts, Jud 10:4, and it seems that white asses were the most valuable, and chiefly used by great personages. The ass in the Hebrew language has its name from redness, that being the usual colour of them in those parts; and hence they were hateful to the Egyptians, because that their Typhon was of that colour {c}; but there were some that were white, as there are wild ones now of that colour. A traveller {d} in those parts in the beginning of the last century tells us, that on the banks of the Euphrates they beheld every day great droves of wild beasts, as wild asses "all white", &c. The word we translate "white" is "zechorot", and perhaps may describe the same animal the Ethiopians call "zecora", and some "zebra"; said to excel in beauty all four footed creatures in the whole world. It is an animal of the size of a mule, found in the woods beyond Abyssinia, is easily tamed, and is the frequent and chief present of the kings of that country; about its loins is a circle of a black colour, in the form of a girdle, which is followed with more on each side, according to the part of the body, some broader, others narrower, both black and white, or of an ash colour, so neat that they seem to exceed the art of the most eminent painter; its only deformity are its ears, which are long; hence it is called by the Portuguese the wild ass, though wrongly; of what value and esteem it was appears from the large price it has been sold for; one, that was the gift of a king to a Turkish governor, was sold to an Indian for 2,000 pieces of Venetian money, to make a present of to the great Mogor, king of the Indians {e}, which was the value of nine hundred pounds. Those that rode on these creatures were the princes and nobles of Israel; though they are generally interpreted by the Jewish commentators of merchants that rode from place to place about business; and these are called upon to speak of the wonderful things God had done for Israel, in freeing them from the bondage of the Canaanites, so that these nobles or merchants might ride about the country without any fear; and to discourse of them to others, and in their meditations give praise to God on account of them:

ye that sit in judgment; which seems to describe judges upon the bench, sitting to hear and try causes, and pass righteous judgment; these are also exhorted to give thanks to the Lord, that they were now restored to their seats of judgment, from which they were driven; or where they could not peaceably exercise their office, which they now might and did: Cocceius renders the word "on measures", as if these were persons that presided over measures, and took care that they were just and right. Though Kimchi and Ben Melech say, that Middin, which we render "in judgment", is either the name of a city in the book of Joshua,
See Gill on "Jos 15:61", or the name of a way {f} well known, in which they were afraid to go because of the enemy, but now went in it with safety, and therefore had reason to speak well of God, and praise his name; but this is rather intended in the next clause:

and walk by the way; the common people that travelled from place to place on business, who before were obliged to leave the public roads, and go in byways, **Jud 5:6** but now could travel in the common road without fear, and therefore ought to be thankful.

{b} Descriptio Africae, l. 5. p. 574. {c} Plutarch. de Iside. {d} Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 106. {e} Ludolph. Ethiop. Hist. l. 1. c. 10. Vid. Philostorg. Eccles. Hist. l. 3. c. 11. {f} Vid. David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 19. 3.

Judges 5:11

Ver. 11. They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the place of drawing water,.... Meaning either the army of the Israelites, delivered from the archers of Sisera's host at the river Kishon; or such persons, as maidens and others, that went out of the cities to fountains and wells of water, to fetch water from thence for their necessities, but were frightened by the noise of archers that shot at them; or shepherds who led their flocks to water them there, but were repulsed or slain by archers that lay in wait in woods or lurking places thereabout; but now the country being cleared of them, they could without fear have recourse to these places of drawing water for their flocks or other uses, which laid them under obligation to do as directed in the next clause. The words are by some rendered,

"because of the voice of those that number (sheep and other cattle) at the places of drawing water {g}:"

which now they could do, being a time of peace; and for which the persons before described ought to be thankful:

there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord; coming to those places again, it would put them in mind to what hazards and dangers they had been exposed formerly by the enemy, but now were freed from; and this would lead them to discourse of and repeat the righteous dealings of God in taking vengeance on their enemies and delivering them from them:

even the righteous acts towards the inhabitants of his villages in Israel; they being now in no danger of having their houses broke open, and their substance plundered as before, **Jud 5:7** then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates; either of their enemies, pursuing them unto them, as they did, **Jud 4:16** or rather to the gates of their own cities, where they had now free egress and regress; and those that were in the fortified cities, who had fled thither from the villages because of the rapine of the enemy, now would go down to the gates, and pass through them, and return to their villages again; or else the meaning is, that the people would now frequent as formerly the courts of judicature held in the gates of their cities, to have justice done them, and be in no fear of being disturbed by the enemy, as before.

{g} So Cocceius, Noldius, p. 561. No. 1992.

Judges 5:12

Ver. 12. Awake, awake, Deborah, awake, awake, utter a song, &c] Either perceiving some languor and remissness in her spirits, while she was delivering this song, and therefore arouses herself to attend to this service with more ardour and zeal; or rather finding herself more impressed with a sense of the great and good things the Lord had done for Israel, calls upon her soul to exert all its powers in celebrating the praises of the Lord, and therefore repeats the word awake so often as she does:

arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam; for though the whole army of Sisera was destroyed, that not a man was left, **Jud 4:16** yet as Barak pursued to Harosheth of the Gentiles, many there and in other places which fell into his hands, that belonged to Jabin, might be taken captive by him; and though the Canaanites were to be slain, yet they might first be led captive in triumph; and besides, there might be some of other nations that were taken by him in this war; see Ps 68:18.

Judges 5:13

Ver. 13. Then he made him that remaineth,.... The people of Israel that remained, who had been under the yoke of Jabin king of Canaan, under which many of the Israelites very probably died; but now the few mean and miserable that remained were raised to an high estate, and made to

have dominion over the nobles among the people; that is, over the Canaanitish nobility, that were among the people under Jabin; but he being conquered by the Israelites, his people and even his nobles became subject to them; and this was the Lord's doing, as the following words show:

the Lord made me have dominion over the mighty; that is, Deborah, to whom God gave dominion either over the mighty ones of Israel, being raised up to be their judge; or over the mighty Canaanites, she having a concern in the conquest of them and triumph over them, through her direction, advice, command, and presence, though a woman.

Judges 5:14

Ver. 14. Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek,.... In this and some following verses, Deborah makes mention of the tribes that were siding and assisting in this war, and of those that were not; and begins with Ephraim, where she herself dwelt, **Jud 4:5** who was the root, foundation, and source of this expedition, that under a divine influence directed, animated, and encouraged to it; and by whom, and from whence, a detachment was sent against the Amalekites, who upon all occasions were ready to assist the Canaanites, and now were about to do it; and to prevent their junction, a party was sent from Ephraim, and by the Ehpraimites; though the Targum, and the Jewish commentators in general, refer this to a past action, which Deborah here commemorates and celebrates; and understand by "root", Joshua, who was of that tribe, and who discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword, Ex 17:13

after thee, Benjamin, among thy people; which the same Targum and the same writers interpret of a future fact, and as spoken of by way of prophecy; and suppose that Saul of the tribe of Benjamin is meant, and the people of Benjamin, the two hundred thousand footmen he took with him, and fought against Amalek, and destroyed them, 1Sa 15:1 but it is rather to be understood of the tribe of Benjamin in general, which at this time went out against Amalek, to prevent their giving any assistance to Jabin king of Canaan, and who were followed in it by a party of the Ephraimites; so that Benjamin has the greatest honour given it, partly as it was first in this affair, and partly as it was general, the whole tribe engaged, whereas only a few in Ephraim, and those stimulated by the example of Benjamin:

out of Machir came down governors; Machir was the only son of Manasseh, and therefore this must respect that tribe, half of which was settled on the other side Jordan, and to which Jarchi and other Jewish writers ascribe this, and suppose it refers to the princes and great men of it, who subdued the Amorites, and took the sixty cities of Argob in the time of Moses; though Kimchi and Ben Gersom understand it of some of them that came from thence to assist in this war; but it is clearly suggested in **Jud 5:17** that they abode beyond Jordan, and gave no assistance at all; it therefore must be understood of the half tribe of Manasseh, within Jordan, from whence came great personages, with a number of men no doubt along with them, to lend an helping hand against the Canaanites, or to be employed as assistants under Barak in this expedition:

and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer; which being a maritime tribe, and employed in trade and navigation, had many clerks famous for their readiness in handling the pen; but these through a zeal for the common cause dropped their pens, and took to the sword, in vindication of the rights and liberties of themselves and their brethren; for which they are justly commended.

Judges 5:15

Ver. 15. And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah,.... On Mount Tabor, whither they came to offer themselves to join in the war against Jabin; or to assist with their counsels, the men of this tribe being understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, 1Ch 12:32

even Issachar: not the princes only, but the whole tribe also; so the Targum paraphrases it,

"the rest of the tribe of Issachar:"

and also Barak, he was sent on foot into the valley; which was at the bottom of Mount Tabor, from whence he was sent down by Deborah, when Sisera's army was come thither; and where he went cheerfully on foot at the head of his 10,000 men, to engage Sisera with his horse and chariots; and which latter were capable of doing great execution in the valley, by running among the foot, and cutting them in pieces with the scythes at the side of them; but Barak, fearless of danger, readily obeyed the command of the judge and prophetess, believing it was of God: or the words may be rendered, as by Noldius {h}

as Issachar, so Barak; he was sent, &c. the one as the other, with equal readiness and cheerfulness, courage and intrepidity, descended the mountain, at the order of Deborah, and took the field in the open plain, to engage with Sisera and his numerous host:

for the division of Reuben [there were] great thoughts of heart; either for their divisions among themselves in their own councils, some being for going over Jordan to assist their brethren the Israelites against Jabin, and free them from his yoke, pitying their distressed state and condition; and others were for keeping at home, and taking care of their flocks, and not intermeddle in the quarrel; judging it to be most for their worldly peace and profit to observe a neutrality: by reason of which divisions no assistance was given. Or for their divisions and separations from their brethren the Israelites, from whom they were not only separated by the river Jordan, but in their affections to them, and regards for them; keeping at a distance from them, when their help was required: and this conduct of theirs caused many thoughts of heart in Deborah and Barak, in the princes and people of Israel, who could not well understand the reason of it; and which caused much grief and uneasiness of mind, that so powerful a tribe, and who had been assisting to them in the conquest of the land, and lay convenient to help them, yet should be so very indifferent to them.

{h} qrb Nk rkvvyw "sicut Issachar sic Barach", Concord. Ebr. part. p. 305. No. 1214. So Belg.

Judges 5:16

Ver. 16. Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks?.... This tribe abounded with flocks and herds, and therefore chose the country on the other side Jordan, as suitable for them; and now, at this critical juncture, they judged it wisest, and their best policy, to abide by them, and the care of them; lest by intermeddling, should Jabin prevail, he might be provoked to fall upon them, and take them from them; wherefore the bleatings of their flocks, and the whistlings of the shepherds that kept them, sounded louder in their ears, and more engrossed their attention, than the groans and cries of Israel under oppression; or than the soundings of the trumpet, the alarm of war, or the loud calls of Deborah and Barak; being under the influence of a carnal worldly spirit, and wanting affection and sympathy towards their brethren, about which Deborah here expostulates with them:

for the divisions of Reuben [there were] great searchings of heart; this is repeated to show how much the prophetess, the general of the army, the princes and people, were affected with this conduct of the tribe of Reuben; it gave them much pain and uneasiness, occasioned many inquiries, caused much discourse and conversation, and put them upon thinking, and greatly exercised their minds, what should be the meaning of their behaving after this manner. Cocceius takes these words to be spoken ironically, and renders them,

"at the rivers of Reuben were great men in searchings of heart;"

there were wisdom, prudence, counsel, searching, and discerning of spirits, preferring their flocks to the people of God.

Judges 5:17

Ver. 17. Gilead abode beyond Jordan,.... A country which lay on the other side Jordan, and was given by Moses, half of it to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the other half to the half tribe of Manasseh, **De 3:12** and being here distinguished from Reuben, it seems that not only that tribe, but also the tribe of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, on that side Jordan, came not to the help of Israel; but abode where they were, attending their flocks and herds, and preferring their own private profit to the public good; yet as Gilead was given to Machir, **De 3:15** and some are said to come out from thence to serve in this expedition, **Jud 5:14** some read the words, as Kimchi observes, with an interrogation, "did Gilead abide beyond Jordan?" no, he did not; though his situation was beyond it, as well as Reuben's, yet he did not continue there, but came over to help his brethren; and so this is introduced to upbraid Reuben, and leave him without excuse, since he could as well have left his flocks as Gilead did, and come over to the help of his brethren as well as he:

and why did Dan remain in ships? the Danites inhabiting Joppa, and other places bordering on the Mediterranean sea, attended their navigation and merchandise; and which they chose rather to do, than to appear in the field of battle in the behalf of their brethren; judging this to be a sufficient excuse, though the question put implies the contrary; according to the Targum, they were meditating a flight, and put their goods into ships to flee with them, should Sisera get the day:

Asher continued on the sea shore; on the shore of the Mediterranean sea, attending traffic and business, and did not concern themselves at all in this war:

and abode in his trenches; in his towns and cities, the walls of which had been broken down by the Canaanites, and remained unrepaired, nor were they suffered to repair them; and therefore excused themselves on this account from engaging in the war, being obliged to stay at home to keep and defend their cities; which were in such a ruinous and weak condition, that the enemy might enter at any time: some render it, "in their creeks" {i} bays and havens where they had much shipping, and which required their attendance.

{i} wyurpm le "in portubus", V. L. "ad sinus suos", some in Vatablus.

Judges 5:18

Ver. 18. Zebulun and Naphtali were a people,.... These two tribes were chiefly concerned in this war; out of them were the 10,000 men that followed Barak, who willingly offered themselves, and were the most active and vigorous:

[that] jeoparded themselves unto the death; exposed them to the utmost danger, fearless of death itself: or reproached {k} their lives; were careless of them, valued them not; they were not dear to them, but were ready to part with them freely, in the cause of liberty in which they were engaged:

in the high places of the field; on the top of Mount Tabor, where they were mustered, and from whence they beheld the vast host of Sisera surrounding them; and yet, with an undaunted bravery and courage, descended the hill to fight with them. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "in the country of Merome"; in the plains and fields of it, near which were the waters of Merom, where Joshua fought Jabin, a former king of Canaan, and supposed by some to be the same with Kishon here,
Jos 11:5.

{k} Prx "probris affecit", Pagninus; so the Targum.

Judges 5:19

Ver. 19. The kings came,.... Who were with Sisera, as the Targum adds; unless Deborah can be thought to refer to the battle, supposed to be fought about the same place, between Joshua and the kings in confederacy with Jabin, Jos 10:1

then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; the other kings of Canaan, which came into the assistance of Jabin, either in the times of Joshua; or rather which now joined Sisera's army, in those places, which both belonged to Manasseh, but were in the tribe of Issachar, of which See Gill on "Jos 17:11" and were at some distance from each other, as appears by the villages and country around, and belonging to each; and such was the largeness of Sisera's army, reinforced by those kings, that according to the Targum it reached from Taanach to Megiddo; the same is observed by the Jewish commentators; the waters of Megiddo are the same with the river Kishon, which ran near the city:

they took no gain of money; that is, either of Jabin king of Canaan, whom they came to serve; but freely engaged with him, and maintained their own troops, which they brought into the field, and had raised at their own expense; but according to Kimchi the sense is, they took no money of the Israelites that fell into their hands, but slew them, would not save their lives, though they offered them money, being like the merciless Medes, Isa 13:17 but rather the meaning is, that whereas they came big with expectation of a large booty among the Israelites, they were disappointed, and obliged to flee without any.

Judges 5:20

Ver. 20. They fought from heaven,.... Either the angels of heaven, afterwards called stars; or the heavens, the elements, fought for Israel, and against Sisera; a violent storm of rain and hail falling at this time, which discomfited Sisera's army; See Gill on "Jud 4:15", or this victory was obtained in such a manner as plainly showed it was not of man, but of God from heaven; so the Targum, "from heaven war was made with them;"

with the kings before mentioned; God fought against them, and no wonder they were conquered:

the stars in their courses fought against Sisera it seems as if it was in the night that this battle was fought, at least that the pursuit lasted till night, when the stars by their brightness and clear shining favoured the Israelites, and were greatly to the disadvantage of the Canaanites; unless it can be thought, as is by some, that the stars had an influence to cause a tempest of rain, hail, thunder, and lightnings, by which the army of Sisera was discomfited in the daytime, as before observed.

Judges 5:21

Ver. 21. The river of Kishon swept them away,.... To which Sisera's army was drawn, and where it was discomfited; and very probably many of them, in their confusion, endeavoured to make their escape by fording or swimming over the river, by which they were swept away and drowned, the waters of it at this time swelling in a miraculous manner, as Ben Gersom thinks; or were increased by the large showers of rain that fell, as some note from Josephus, though I find it not in him; however it is not improbable it might be the case; for our countryman Mr. Maundrell {l} thus observed when he was at it;

"in the condition we saw it, its waters were low and inconsiderable; but passing along the side of the plain, we discovered the track of many lesser torrents falling down into it from the mountains, which must needs make it swell exceedingly upon sudden rains, as doubtless it actually did at the destruction of Sisera's host, **Jud 5:21**"

that ancient river, the river Kishon; called ancient, either because it was from the beginning of the creation, and not cut by the art of men, as some rivers are; or because it was spoken of by poets and historians in ancient times; or because of famous exploits done here of old; so the Targum,

"the river where signs and mighty works were done for Israel of old."

Some take the word Kedumim to be another name of the river, so called from its windings and turnings, and, as it were, meeting itself. So some travellers tell us {m} the river Kedumim, the same with Kishon, is so called, because it meets itself, being by its meanders formed like a sling or noose, as Kishon signifies; it rises at Mount Tabor, and discharges itself into the Mediterranean sea, at the foot of Mount Carmel; so Hillerus {n} says, Kishon signifies bending in manner of a snare, or net, or meander, and takes it to be the same with the Pagida of Pliny {o}, which in the Greek tongue signifies the same:

O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength; a strong and mighty army, through her prayers and supplication, advice and direction; or thou hast trodden with strength, that is, the river Kishon, as some Jewish interpreters understand it, who suppose that another miracle was wrought; that as the waters of the river swelled when the Canaanites attempted to escape over it, so it sunk and became fordable for Deborah and the Israelites; a miracle, as they suppose, somewhat similar to that at the Red sea.

{l} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 57. {m} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, par. 2. p. 2. {n} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 186, 405, 865. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.

Judges 5:22

Ver. 22. Then were the horse hoofs broken by means of the pransings,.... Either through the force of the waters of the river, where they pranced and plunged, and could have no standing; or through the swift haste they made to run away, striking the earth so quick, and with such force and vehemence, that their hoofs were broken thereby, especially on stony ground, and so their speed retarded:

the pransings of the mighty ones; either their riders, princes, and great personages, who made them prance, leap, and run with great speed and force; or horses strong and mighty, being such as were selected for this purpose, and trained to war.

Judges 5:23

Ver. 23. Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord,.... Not Barak, as the Targum and Jarchi, but Deborah herself said this under a spirit of prophecy, not from her own spirit in a revengeful way, but from the Spirit of God; or this was suggested to her by an angel, not a created, but the uncreated one, the Angel of the covenant, by whom she was inspired, and an impulse made by him on her to denounce a curse on Meroz; which some say was a star, Sisera's star; others the name of a mighty man {p}, so Jarchi; but rather it is some name of a city or place near where the battle was fought, so Kimchi, Ben Gersom, and Ben Melech: some take Meroz to be the same with Merom, at the waters of which Joshua fought with Jabin, Jos 11:5 and supposed to be the same with the waters of Megiddo, and the river Kishon, where this battle was fought; and Jerom {q}, under the word Merom, observes, that there was in his time a village called Merrus, twelve miles from the city Sebaste near Dothaim, and that Meroz here is the name of a place is clear from what follows:

curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; or "curse cursing" {r}; repeat it, give them curse upon curse, curse them most vehemently: the reason of which follows:

because they came not to the help of the Lord; that is, of the people of the Lord, whose cause was the Lord's; for though he stood in no need of their help, yet their negligence and neutrality were highly resented by him, and therefore repeated:

to the help of the Lord against the mighty; the mighty Canaanites, and their mighty kings, and mighty hosts; or "with the mighty" {s}, Barak and his 10,000: now though others, who did not come into their assistance, are only discommended, being at a distance, yet those are cursed, being very near, and saw the peril their brethren were in, and yet would not lend an helping hand.

{p} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 16. 1. {q} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. D. {r} rwra wra "maledictie maledicendo", Pagninus, Montanus. {s} Myrwbgb "cum fortibus", Pagninus, Tigurine version; so Patrick.

Judges 5:24

Ver. 24. Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be,.... Under the same influence that Meroz was cursed, Jael is blessed, the one for not helping Israel in a public way, the other for doing it in a private manner; this blessing is pronounced, either in a way of prayer that it might be, or in a way of prophecy that it should be, and indeed in both:

blessed shall she be above the women in the tent; above all women that dwell in tents: this being a proper description of a woman, whose character it is to abide in her tent, dwell at home, and mind the business of her family; and may have respect to the manly action she performed in her tent, equal, if not superior, to what was done in the field.

Judges 5:25

Ver. 25. He asked water, and she gave him milk,.... That is, Sisera asked it of her, as the Targum expresses it, when he turned into her tent:

she brought him fresh butter in a lordly dish; which signifies either the same, the milk with cream on it, for that is meant by butter; or having first taken off the cream, she gave him milk to drink, and then brought the cream in a dish for him to eat, and thereby the more incline him to sleep; and this she brought in a dish fit for any lord or nobleman to eat out of; in such a polite and courteous manner did she use him, so that he could have no suspicion of her having any ill design against him. R. Jonah, as Kimchi notes, interprets this of a dish of the mighty or lordly ones, of the shepherds, the principal of the flock, as they are called in Jer 25:34, out of which they had used to drink their milk, or eat their cream, and such an one was likely enough to be Jael's tent; from this Hebrew word "sepel", here used, seems to come the Latin word "simpucium" or "simpulum", used in things sacred, and which, according to Pliny {t}, was an earthen vessel; and so some of the Rabbins, as Kimchi observes, say, this was a new earthen vial; it is very probable it was a broad platter or dish fit for such an use.

{t} Nat. Hist. l. 35. c. 12.

Judges 5:26

Ver. 26. She put her hand to the nail,.... Her left hand, as the Septuagint, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin versions express it, and as appears by what follows; she having taken up a pin from her tent, with which it was fastened to the ground, she clapped it to the temples of Sisera:

and her right hand to the workman's hammer; in her right hand she took a hammer, such as carpenters, and such like workmen, make use of, and workman like went about her business she had devised, and was determined upon, being under a divine impulse, and so had no fear or dread upon her:

and with the hammer she smote Sisera; not that with the hammer she struck him on the head, and stunned him, but smote the nail she had put to his temples and drove it into them:

she smote off his head; after she had driven the nail through his temples, she took his sword perhaps and cut off his head, as David cut off Goliath's, after he had slung a stone into his forehead; though as this seems needless, nor is there any hint of it in the history of this affair, the meaning may only be, that she struck the nail through his head, as the Septuagint, or broke his head, as the Targum:

when she had pierced and stricken through his temples; that being the softest and tenderest part of the head, she drove the nail quite through them to the ground, **Jud 4:21**.

Judges 5:27

Ver. 27 At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down,.... Perhaps at her first approach to him, and attempt to drive the nail, or at the blow she gave, he rose up, but she had done the business so effectually at the first stroke, that he dropped at once, and laid down his head again:

at her feet he bowed, he fell; when she redoubled her blow:

where he bowed, there he fell down dead; and struggled and stirred no more; thus ingloriously did this general of a vast army die. This action is not otherwise to be justified, but by its being done through an impulse of the Spirit of God upon her, to take away the life of an implacable enemy of God's people; otherwise it might seem to be a breach of hospitality towards her guest she had invited in, and of the peace which subsisted between this general's prince and her husband; and therefore is not to be drawn into an example where there is no appearance of a divine warrant.

Judges 5:28

Ver. 28. The mother of Sisera looked out at a window,.... Which perhaps looked towards the high road, in which she expected Sisera to return in his chariot with his victorious army; and she was looking out for him, not through fear of any ill that had befallen him, or suspicion of misfortunte, but through impatience to see him in triumph return, wreathed with laurels:

and cried through the lattice; which is but another word for a window, which was not of glass, that being of a later invention, but made in lattice form, in a sort of network, full of little holes to let in air and light, and look out at; here she stood and cried with a very loud uneasy tone; the word signifies a sort of a groaning howling noise, discovering impatience and uneasiness; and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it, "she howled"; saying in a whining way,

why is his chariot so long in coming? she did not doubt at all of victory, and concluded it would soon be obtained, and there would be very little trouble and difficulty in getting it, and therefore wondered his chariot was not in sight:

why tarry the wheels of his chariots? the nine hundred he took with him, of the return of which she made no doubt, only was uneasy until they appeared, that she might be delighted with the glory of the triumph; the Targum is,

"why are the runners hindered, who should bring me a letter of the victories?"

Judges 5:29

Ver. 29. Her wise ladies answered her,.... Every one in their turn endeavouring to comfort her and make her easy. The Vulgate Latin version is,

"one that was wiser than the rest of his wives;"

but they seem rather to be her maids of honour, or ladies of her acquaintance, who were come to pay her a visit, and share in the pleasing sight they expected to have of Sisera:

yea, she returned answer to herself; before they could well give theirs, she soon recollected herself what might be, and must be, the occasion of this delay; and this, according to the Targum, she made in her wisdom, what her great wisdom quickly suggested to her was certainly the case, and with which she comforted and quieted herself.

Judges 5:30

Ver. 30. Have they not sped?.... Or "found" {u} the enemy, Barak and his army, or the spoil of them? no doubt they have:

have they not divided the prey? doubtless they have, which being large, and the captives many, has taken up much of their time to look over, and make an equal and proper division of, and that most certainly is the cause of the delay:

to every man a damsel or two? or "a womb or two {w}", using both unchaste and contemptuous language {x}, and pleasing themselves with the virgins of Israel being abused by the common soldiers, which was too frequently the case with the Heathens at gaining a victory:

to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides; suits of clothes of different colours, such as were the works of the women of Sidon {y}, and those curiously interwoven or wrought with a needle, and that on both sides of the silk or material of which they were made; and so such as were of great worth and esteem, and such it was expected, and with confidence and assurance of it, Sisera would bring with him, and make presents of to his mother and her ladies, or which he would have for his own wear and use, or both:

meet for the necks of them that take the spoil? the general of the army, and the chief men to whom the spoil was brought, and then divided suitably to the rank and quality of every soldier. Pliny {z} says, the Phrygians first invented the art of needlework; hence the garments wrought, and those that made them, were called after their name; but it is certain it was known by the ancient Hebrews and Canaanites, see Ex 26:36.

{u} waumy alh "nonne invenient", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus {w} Mytmxr Mxr "vulvam vulvas duas", Piscator. {x} Vid. R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 59. 1. {y} Julian. Opera, par. 1. crat. 2. p. 94. Vid. Homer. Iliad. 6. ver. 289, 290. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 48.

Judges 5:31

Ver. 31. So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord!.... As Sisera and his army did, and be disappointed as his mother and her ladies were; which is not only a wish or prayer that it might be, but a prophecy that so it would be:

but let them that love him; that love the Lord superlatively and sincerely, with all their heart and soul, and from love serve and fear him:

[be] as the sun when he goeth forth in his might; in the middle of the day, when its heat and light are the greatest, and in the summer solstice, in the month of June, when the sun is in Cancer, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel observe, and it is hottest: the sense is, let the true friends of God be as bright and as glorious, and increase in light, lustre, and splendour, as that glorious luminary in midday, and be no more liable to be resisted and stopped by their enemies, and as much out of the reach of them as that is:

and the land had rest forty years; these are not the words of Deborah, whose song ends with the last clause, but of the writer of this book; which years, according to most, are to be reckoned from the death of Ehud, including the twenty years' bondage under Jabin, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel; so that strictly speaking the rest was but twenty years; one would think they should be reckoned from the victory obtained over Jabin king of Canaan.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible. Judges 6:1**

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 6

In this chapter we have an account of the distressed condition Israel was in through the Midianites, **Jud 6:1**, of a prophet being sent unto them to reprieve them for their sins, **Jud 6:7** of an angel appearing to Gideon, with an order to him to go and save Israel out of the hands of the Midianites, **Jud 6:11** and of a sign given him by the angel, whereby he knew this order was of God, **Jud 6:17**, and of the reformation from idolatry in his father's family he made upon this, throwing down the altar of Baal, and building one for the Lord, **Jud 6:25**, and of the preparation he made to fight the Midianites and others, **Jud 6:33**, but first desired a sign of the Lord, that Israel would be saved by his hand, which was granted and repeated, **Jud 6:36**.

Ver. 1. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord,.... After the death of Deborah and Barak, during whose life they kept to the pure worship of God, and who, perhaps, lived pretty near the close of the forty years' rest, or of the twenty years from their victory over Jabin; but they dying, the children of Israel fell into idolatry, for that that was the evil they did appears from **Jud 6:10**, even worshipping the gods of the Amorites:

and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years: this was not the Midian where Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, lived, which lay more southward, but that which joined to Moab, and was more eastward. This people had been destroyed by the Israelites in the times of Moses, in their way to the land of Canaan, Nu 31:1 wherefore they might bear them a grudge, and now took the opportunity to revenge themselves on them, God permitting them so to do for their sins; and though the destruction of this people by Israel was very general, yet as some of them might make their escape, and afterwards return to their own land, and this being about two hundred years ago, might, with others joining them, repeople their country by this time, and become strong and powerful.

Judges 6:2

Ver. 2. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel,.... They were too strong for them, and overcame them, and brought them into subjection to them, and no wonder, when the Lord delivered them into their hand:

and because of the Midianites; because of their usage of them, their manner of coming upon them yearly, and pillaging and plundering their substance, as after related:

the children of Israel made them dens which are in the mountains; the word for "dens" has the signification of light in it, and are so called either by an antiphrasis, because they were dark, or, as Kimchi thinks, because they had a window at the top of them, which let in the light {a} but Ben Gersom conjectures they were torches, which gave a great light, and when they that held them saw from the mountains the Midianites, by these torches they made a signal to the Israelites to take care and hide themselves and their substance:

and caves, and strong holds; the caves were for the poorer sort, and the strong holds for the richer to retire to with their goods; though, according to Jarchi, the latter were no other than fences they made in woods, by cutting down trees, and setting them round about them, perhaps much the same as the thickets, 1Sa 13:6.

{a} So David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 90. 3. or "because men flowed and flocked to them for safety"; so Buxtorf.

Judges 6:3

Ver. 3. And so it was, when Israel had sown,.... Their land, and it was grown up, and near being ripe, or quite; for the Midianites gave them no disturbance in the winter, and during seedtime, when they came out of their lurking holes, and manured their land, and sowed it:

that the Midianites came up; into the land of Canaan, from the other side Jordan, where their country lay, and which it seems lay lower than the land of Israel:

and the Amalekites, and the children of the east: the former were implacable enemies of Israel, and on every occasion would join other nations in oppressing them; and the children of the east were Arabians, as Josephus {b} expressly affirms:

even they came up against them; all these three sorts of people in a confederacy.

{b} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 1.

Judges 6:4

Ver. 4. And they encamped against them,.... Formed a camp, from whence they sent out parties to plunder the people; or

"they were fixing their tents among them,"

as the Vulgate Latin version; and so the Targum,

"they dwelt by them,"

or fixed their habitations by them; for they seem not to have come as a regular army, but as a sort of banditti to pillage, and plunder, and destroy the fruits of the earth; and the Midianites and Arabians dwelt in tents chiefly:

and destroyed the increase of the earth; the corn and grass before they were well ripe, and fit to cut down; this they did, and gave it to their cattle, and the rest they carried off:

till thou come unto Gaza; a principality of the Philistines, which lay in the western part of Canaan, on the shore of the Mediterranean sea; so that as these people came out of the east, and entered the eastern part, they went through the whole land from east to west, cutting down all the fruits of the earth for forage for their cattle:

and left no sustenance for Israel; nothing to support life with, cutting down their corn and their grass, their vines and olives, so that they had nothing to live upon:

neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass; not anything for those creatures to live upon, nor did not leave any of them, but carried them all away.

Judges 6:5

Ver. 5. For they came up with their cattle, and their tents,.... Brought their flocks and their herds with them, to eat up the increase of the earth, and their tents, which they pitched and removed from place to place, for the convenience of feeding their cattle, and while they cut down the fruit of the earth everywhere, which serves to confirm the sense of the Targum and Vulgate Latin version of **Jud 6:5**

and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; or "as locusts" {c}, they were like them for their number, and for devouring all they came to:

and their camels were without number; which they brought with them, to load and carry off their plunder they could not eat. Midian was a place famous for camels and dromedaries, Isa 60:6 and so Arabia, the people of which joined the Midianites in this expedition; of whom Leo Africanus says {d}, that they reckon of their riches and possessions by their camels; wherefore if anyone speaks of the riches of such a prince or nobleman, he says that he is possessed of so many camels, and not of so many thousands of pieces of gold, see **Job 1:3**

and they entered into the city to destroy it; this was their sole view. In suchlike manner as this did Alyattes king of the Lydians make war with the Milesinns, as Herodotus {e} relates; which passage Grotius has quoted at large.

{c} hbra ydk "tanquam locustae", Pagninus, V. L. Tigurine version, Junius

& Tremellius, Piscator. {d} Descriptio Africae, l. 9. p. 745. {e} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 17.

Judges 6:6

Ver. 6. And Israel was greatly impoverished, because of the Midianites,.... Were reduced very low, brought into famishing circumstances through the Midianites thus destroying the fruits of the earth year after year:

and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord; which they should have done at first, instead of going into dens and caves; however, better late than not at all; they cried, not to the idols they had served, being sensible they could not help them, though so as to worship them; but to Jehovah the God of the whole earth, and who was in a special sense their God, though they had forsaken him.

Judges 6:7

Ver. 7. And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, because of the Midianites. Because of their oppressions and ill usage of them, and not because of their sins, which had brought those evils on them, of which, at present, they seemed not to be sensible; and yet such was the goodness and compassion of God to them, that having a mind to deliver them, he immediately, on their crying to him, sends them a messenger to bring them to a sense of their sins, and prepare them for the deliverance he designed to work for them, as follows.

Judges 6:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel,.... "A man, a prophet" {f}, as in the Hebrew text, not an angel, but a man; and this not Phinehas, as say some Jewish writers {g}; for it is not probable he should live so long as more than two hundred years; and had he been living, it is very much he should not have been heard of in the times of the preceding judges, and that he was not made use of before now to reprove the people for their sins; but who the prophet was we have no account now nor hereafter, here or elsewhere. Abarbinel supposes he was raised up for a short time:

which said unto them, thus saith the Lord God of Israel; he came in the name of the Lord, and using the form and manner of speech the prophets of Israel did, putting them in mind of the true God they had forgot, and who yet was their Lord and God:

I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; reminding them of the benefits they received from God, and the obligations they lay under to serve him, who, when they were bond slaves in Egypt, he appeared for them, and brought them out of their miserable condition.

{f} aybn vya "virum prophetam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {g} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 53.

Judges 6:9

Ver. 9. And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians,.... Even after they were brought out of Egypt, when the Egyptians pursued after them, and overtook them at the Red sea; where they were in the utmost distress, and the Lord wrought salvation for them, gave them a passage through it, and destroyed the Egyptians in it:

and out of the hand of all that oppressed you: the Amalekites who made war with them at Rephidim, Sihon, and Og, kings of the Amorites, who came out to fight with them, and oppose their passage through their land into Canaan, and the kings of the Canaanites also, who combined against them:

and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land: not only the land of Sihon and Og, but the whole land of Canaan, out of which more properly the inhabitants of it may be said to be driven.

Judges 6:10

Ver. 10. And I said unto you, I am the Lord your God, &c:] The covenant God of them and their fathers, and they ought not to have owned and acknowledged any other besides him:

fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; meaning not a fear of being hurt by them, but such a fear and reverence of them as to worship them, which was only to be given to the Lord. The Amorites are here put for all the Canaanites, they being a principal people among them:

but ye have not obeyed my voice; to cleave to him, fear and worship him; they had been guilty of idolatry, and this is the sin the prophet was sent to reprove them for, and bring them to a sense of.

Judges 6:11

Ver. 11. And there came an angel of the Lord,.... This was not the prophet before mentioned, as Ben Gersom thinks, but an angel of God, as expressed, and not a created one, but the Angel of Jehovah's presence, the Word and Son of God, and who is expressly called Jehovah himself, **Jud 6:14**

and sat under an oak; or stayed there a while, as Kimchi interprets it, seeing, according to his observation, angels are not said to sit, but stand:

which was in Ophrah, that pertaineth to Joash the Abiezrite; which shows that this Ophrah is different from a city of this name in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:23 for the oak that was in it, under which the angel sat, belonged to Joash an Abiezrite, a descendant of Abiezer, son of the sister of Gilead, who was the son of Machir the son of Manasseh, Jos 17:2, it is called by Josephus {h} Ephra, and by Jerom {i} Ephrata:

and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites; lest they should take it away, and bereave his father's family of their sustenance, as they were wont to do, wherever they could find it; and all circumstances attending this affair were on this account; he threshed it himself, this he chose to do, and not trust his servants, lest it should be discovered; and he beat the wheat out with a staff, that it might be more silently done, and not with oxen, which was the usual way of treading out corn, who, bellowing {k}, would discover it; and this was done not on a threshing floor, but where a winepress stood, where there could be no suspicion of such work being doing.

{h} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 5, 7. {i} De loc. Heb. fol. 90. K. {k} Vid.

Homer. Iliad. 20. ver. 495, 496, 497.

Judges 6:12

Ver. 12. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him,.... He stayed some time under the oak, and Gideon being busy in threshing, took no notice of him wherefore he came and stood before him, in his sight:

and said unto him, the Lord is with thee; the gracious presence of God was with Gideon while he was threshing, who very probably was sending up ejaculations to heaven, on account of the distressed case of Israel, and was deep in meditation about the affairs of the people of God, and contriving how to deliver them; or the angel might mean himself, who was no other than Jehovah, the eternal Word of God, who was present with him, and spake unto him; and so the Targum,

"my Word is thy help:"

thou mighty man of valour; who very probably was a stout man in body, and of a courageous mind naturally, and might at this instant have an increase both of bodily strength and greatness of soul; or, however, this was said to animate and encourage him to do what he was about to be sent to do.

Judges 6:13

Ver. 13. And Gideon said to him, oh my Lord,.... Taking him not to be an angel, but some illustrious and eminent person:

if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? all these troubles and calamities through the oppression of the Midianites; for he understood what was said to him in the salutation, respecting not himself personally and privately, but the people of Israel; and he could not tell how to reconcile the Lord's being with them, and yet suffering such sad things to befall them they groaned under:

where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? when God was with his people, and brought them out of Egypt, he wrought miracles for them, whereby they were delivered out of their bondage; of this their fathers had assured them, but nothing of this kind was wrought for them now, and therefore there was no appearance of the Lord being with them, but all the contrary, as follows:

but now the Lord has forsaken us, and delivered us into the hand of the Midianites; and there was good reason for it, because they had forsaken the Lord, and worshipped the gods of the Amorites.

Judges 6:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord looked upon him,.... The same before called the angel of the Lord, and who was no other than Jehovah himself; who looked upon him with great earnestness, and with great delight and pleasure smiled upon him, and thereby showing he had a kindness for him, and meant well to him: and

said unto him, go in this thy might; both of body and mind, which had been before given unto him, and was now increased, and which no doubt Gideon was sensible of:

and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites; as he did, and therefore justly reckoned among the saviours and judges of Israel:

have not I sent thee? to do this great work, save the people of Israel, from whence Gideon might perceive who it was that talked with him, and having a command and commission from God, had authority enough to go about this service.

Judges 6:15

Ver. 15. And he said unto him, oh my Lord,.... Whether he had yet suspected who he was, or took him still for some eminent person, is not certain; it is very probable he began to think he was some extraordinary person sent of God, and speaking in his name, and therefore expostulates with him about the work he put him upon:

wherewith shall I save Israel? in what way is it possible for me to do it, who had neither men nor money sufficient for such an undertaking?

behold, my family is poor in Manasseh; of which tribe he was, and the "thousand" in it, as the word {l} here used signifies, was the meanest of all the thousands in that tribe; some render it, "my father" {m}:

and I am the least in my father's house; perhaps the youngest son; though some take him, and others his father, to be the Chiliarch, or head of the thousand; but by these words of his it does not seem as if either was true; not but that he was of some wealth and substance, power and authority, by having such a number of servants as to take "ten" of them with him, **Jud 6:27** however, this he says in great humility and modesty, having no high thoughts of himself and family, nor any dependence on his own strength, and on an arm of flesh.

{l} ypla "chilias, mea", Montanus, Drusius; "mea millenaria", Tigurine version; "mille meum", Piscator. {m} "Pater meus", Pagninus; so some in Drusius.

Judges 6:16

Ver. 16. And the Lord said unto him, surely I will be with thee,.... The Targum is,

"my Word shall be thy help,"

which was sufficient to answer all objections taken from his meanness, unworthiness, and weakness:

and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man; all together, and as easily as if thou hadst but one man to deal with, and the destruction be so entire and general that none shall be left.

Judges 6:17

Ver. 17. And he said unto him, if now I have found grace in thy sight, &c. Or seeing he had, as appeared by his salutation of him as a man of might, by the work he gave him a commission to do, and by the promise of assistance and success:

then show me a sign that thou talkest with me; in the name of God, as a messenger sent by him, whether an angel or a man; for who he was as yet Gideon was not clear in it, and that what he had said was truth, and would be certainly fulfilled; and which Gideon might desire, not so much, or at least not only for his own sake, and the confirmation of his faith, for which he is renowned, as that he might be able to satisfy others that he had a commission from God, by a messenger of his, to attempt the deliverance of Israel.

Judges 6:18

Ver. 18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee,.... Intending to go to his own, or his father's house, to fetch some food to entertain him with, and therefore entreats he would not quit the place where he was until he returned:

and bring forth my present, and set it before thee; to treat him with, as a stranger and a messenger of God; and perhaps he thought, by this means, the better to discover who he was, whether an angel or a man: the word for the "present" is "minchah", often used for a meat offering, therefore some have thought of a sacrifice; but it appears by what follows that it was not of the nature of a sacrifice; and, besides, Gideon was no priest, nor was this a place for sacrifice, nor was there here any altar; and, besides, as Gideon did not yet know that it was the Lord himself, he could never think of offering a sacrifice to him:

and he said, I will tarry until thou come again; which was a wonderful instance of divine condescension, it being some time he waited ere Gideon could prepare what he brought, as follows.

Judges 6:19

Ver. 19. And Gideon went in,.... Into his own house, or his father's:

and made ready a kid; boiled it, as appears by the broth he brought, at least part of it was so dressed; and perhaps it was only some part of one that he brought, since a whole one was too much to be set before one person, and if even he himself intended to eat with him:

and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour; that is, probably those were made out of an ephah of flour; not that the whole ephah was made into cakes; since an omer, the tenth part of an ephah, was sufficient for one man a whole day; and, according to the computation of Waserus {n} an ephah was enough for forty five men for a whole day; unless it can be thought that this was done to show his great hospitality to a stranger, and the great respect he had for him as a messenger of God: the rather unleavened cakes were brought, because of dispatch, being soon made. Jarchi says, from hence it may be learned that it was now the time of the passover, and of waving the sheaf; but this is no sufficient proof of it; besides, if this was new wheat Gideon had been threshing, it shows it to be about the wheat harvest, which was not till Pentecost; it was the barley harvest that began at the passover:

the flesh he put in a basket; the flesh of the kid which was boiled, or if any part of it was dressed another way, it was put by itself in a basket for more easy and commodious carriage:

and he put the broth in a pot; a brazen pot, as Kimchi interprets it, in which the kid was boiled; and this, as he says, was the water it was boiled in:

and brought it out unto him under the oak; where he appeared, and was now waiting the return of Gideon there:

and presented it; set it before him, perhaps upon a table, which might be brought by his servants, or on a seat, which was placed under the oak to sit upon under its shade for pleasure.

{n} De Antiqu. mensuris Heb. l. 2. c. 5. sect. 9.

Judges 6:20

Ver. 20. And the angel of God said unto him,.... Instead of sitting down and partaking of the entertainment made for him, he bid him do as follows:

take the flesh, and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock; not as a table to eat it from, but as an altar to offer it upon; and which rock and altar might be typical of Christ, who sanctities every gift, present, and offering of his people: this rock was undoubtedly in sight, and very probably the oak, under which they were, grew upon it, or at the bottom of it, where it was no unusual thing for oaks to grow, Ge 35:8, but it was upon the top of the rock that these were to be laid, where afterwards an altar was built, **Jud 6:26**

and pour out the broth; upon the flesh and cakes, and upon the rock also, which by bringing from his house must have been cool and it became cooler by being poured out, and cooler still by being poured upon a cold rock:

and he did so; he readily obeyed his orders; though he had reason to wonder he should have so ordered the food he brought for his entertainment to be thus made use of; perhaps he might expect that he intended to give him a sign, as he desired, and therefore the more readily, without any objection, complied with his order.

Judges 6:21

Ver. 21. Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand,.... With which he walked, appearing as a traveller, and which was one reason of Gideon's providing for his refreshment, before he proceeded on in his journey:

and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; did not strike the rock with it, as Moses did with his rod, to fetch out water for the Israelites, but touched the provisions brought him; not using it instead of a knife to separate any part of them, but for the working of a miracle, as follows:

and there rose up fire out of the rock; had he struck the rock with his staff, the miracle would not have appeared so great, because it might be thought there was an iron ferrule at the end of it, which striking on a flinty rock might cause fire; but it was the flesh and cakes only that were touched, and these also as having broth poured on them, and the rock likewise:

and consumed the flesh, and the unleavened cakes; though they had the broth poured on them, and were sodden with it; so that the miracle was similar to that wrought by Elijah on Mount Carmel, 1Ki 18:33, and those who think that this angel was the man, the prophet before mentioned, and he Phinehas, and Phinehas Elijah, are confirmed in their opinion by this likeness; though there is no sufficient ground for it:

then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight: not went on his journey, as he might seem, but vanished immediately; which circumstance plainly showed, and fully convinced Gideon, that he was not a man, but an angelic spirit, as well as the miracle wrought proved him to be more than a man; and so Gideon had what he desired, a sign that he might know who talked with him, and that what he talked of would certainly come to pass.

Judges 6:22

Ver. 22. And when Gideon perceived he was an angel of the Lord,.... By the miracle wrought, and the manner of his departure:

Gideon said, alas! O Lord God; woe to me, what will become of me, or befall me, I shall surely die:

for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face; and whom he had reason to believe was the Lord himself, a divine Person, by the miracle wrought; and it was a commonly received notion even among good men, in those times, that the Lord was not to be seen by them and live, as appears from Jacob, Manoah, and others; at least the appearance of a divine Person, and even of any messenger from heaven, was startling, surprising, and frightful to them; which arose from a sense they had of the divine Being, and of their own sinfulness and frailty.

Judges 6:23

Ver. 23. And the Lord said unto him,.... Either by a secret impulse upon his spirit, or by a voice from heaven; and even, as Kimchi observes, the angel, after he ascended, might cause this voice to be heard, seeing him in great fear, because he knew he was an angel; and which is another proof of this angel being Jehovah himself, the eternal Word:

peace be unto thee, fear not, thou shall not die; let not thy mind be ruffled and disturbed, but serene and calm; fear not that any evil shall befall thee, and particularly death; thou shall be safe from any danger whatever, and especially from death, which he expected in his flight would immediately follow.

Judges 6:24

Ver. 24. Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord,.... On the top of the rock where he had laid his provisions, and which had been consumed by fire issuing out of it, as a token of divine acceptance, and as an assurance of his destroying the Midianites as easily and quickly as the fire had consumed them, and therefore had great encouragement to erect an altar here for God:

and called it Jehovahshalom; the Lord is peace, the author and giver of peace, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; so Jarchi,

"the Lord is our peace,"

a fit name for the angel that appeared to him, who was no other than the man of peace; who is our peace, the author of peace between God and man. This name he gave the altar, with respect to the words of comfort said to him in his fright,

peace be to thee; and by way of prophecy, that peace would be wrought for Israel by the Lord, and prosperity given them; or by way of prayer, the Lord grant or send peace:

unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites; that is, the altar Gideon built remained to the times of Samuel, the writer of this book, and was then to be seen in the city of Ophrah, which belonged to the family of the Abiezrites, who were of the tribe of Manasseh.

Judges 6:25

Ver. 25. And it came to pass the same night,.... The night which followed the day in which the angel appeared to Gideon as he was threshing:

that the Lord said unto him; perhaps in a dream, since it was in the night: take thy father's young bullock: or "the bullock, the ox" {p}; a bullock which was a large grown ox, and was not only his father's property, but what his father designed and set apart for the service of Baal; and though it was his father's, yet having a divine warrant for it, it was sufficient for him to take it without his leave, and especially as it was designed for such an ill use:

even the second bullock of seven years old; which, according to Hesiod {q} is in its prime and full strength at nine years old, and lives much longer. In Homer {r}, one of five years old is said to be sacrificed: this further describes what he was to take, the second that stood in the stall of the bullocks, or that drew in the second row at plough, or the second in age and value, or the second that was set apart for the service of Baal; though the words may be rendered, "and the second bullock" {s}; besides that of his father's, he was to take another, which perhaps belonged to the people, and was the second in birth or age with respect to the former, being seven years old; or, as the Targum is, that had been fatted seven years, and had been so long preparing for the sacrifice of Baal; which was as long as the tyranny of the Midianites over them, and was occasioned by the idolatry of the people of Israel; and such a bullock was ordered to be taken with respect to that, and to show that it would end with the sacrifice of this creature:

and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath; upon his ground, in some part of his possessions, and perhaps built at his own expense, though for public use:

and cut down the grove that is by it; or "about it", as the Vulgate Latin version; it being usual with the Heathens to plant groves near or around their altars and temples where religious worship was performed; partly to make them more pleasant and venerable, and partly for the commission of deeds which would not bear the light; or "over it", for they were commonly tall trees which grew over the altar they erected. Some render it, "upon it" {t}, and understand by it an idol placed on it: so the Arabic version is,

"cut down the female idol Asira (perhaps the same with Astarte), which is upon the same altar;"

and so the Syriac version to the same purpose, which calls it the idol Estere, set upon the altar.

{p} rwvx rp "juvencum bovem", Drusius; "juvencum adultiorem", Junius &

Tremellius. {q} Opera & dies, l. 2. ver. 54. 55. {r} Iliad. 2. ver. 403. & Iliad. 7. ver. 35. {s} rpw "et juvencum alium", Tigurine version; "et alterum taurum", V. L. "et juvencum secundum", Pagninus, Montanus. {t} wyle ep' anto, Sept. "super illud", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.

Judges 6:26

Ver. 26. And build an altar to the Lord thy God upon the top of this rock,.... Where the provisions were laid, and out of which came forth fire that consumed them; and where the altar, called by the name of Jehovahshalom, had been built by him, near it very probably; and there might be room enough for both upon the top of the rock; for this seems to be a distinct altar from that that was erected as a monumental altar, in memory of the miracle there wrought, and in gratitude by Gideon for the preservation of his life, and the peace and prosperity there and then promised, and which altar was to continue, and did; but this was for sacrifice, and only for the present time; for the proper place for sacrifice was the tabernacle: and this was to be built in the ordered place; either in the place where Gideon was ordered to put the flesh and the unleavened cakes; or in an orderly way and manner, according as was commanded in the law, as that it should be of earth and unhewn stones, and so framed as that it might be fit to have the wood and sacrifice laid in order on it; or in a plain place, as Kimchi, upon the top of the rock, where he might lay in order the stones of the altar:

and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shall cut down; mention being made only of one bullock that was to be offered, has made some think that only one was ordered to be taken, namely, this second, which agrees with our version of **Jud 6:25** for if two were taken, what became of the first, since only the second was ordered to be sacrificed? to which Kimchi makes answer, that he was ordered to take it away, that his father might not offer it to an idol, as he intended, and therefore this was done to prevent idolatry; and as this second bullock was to be a burnt sacrifice, and to be burned with the wood of the grove just cut down, it seems to confirm the sense of such versions and interpreters who understand it of an idol on the altar of Baal; since wood just cut down would not be fit to burn, whereas an idol of wood, that had been of some standing, would be very proper: everything ordered and done were different from the laws and usages directed to by Moses, and practised by the Jews. Gideon was no priest, and yet bid to offer sacrifice, and that on an altar of his own erecting, and not the altar of God; and upon the top of a rock, and not at the tabernacle; and the wood of a grove or idol was to be made use of, which in other cases was not allowed; and all this done in the night, which was not the time of sacrificing; but the divine warrant was sufficient for Gideon. The Jews say {u}, there were eight things that were made free or allowed now, which were not at another time: and it was necessary, before Gideon acted the part of a deliverer, that he should become a reformer, and it was proper to begin at his own family.

{u} T. Bab. Temurah, fol. 28. 2. & 29. 1.

Judges 6:27

Ver. 27. Then Gideon took ten men of his servants,.... Not only whom he could command, but could confide in, and whom he knew would cheerfully engage in this work, being like himself, who had not bowed the knee to Baal; and as there was much work to do, and it required dispatch, such a number was necessary; since he had not only the altar of Baal to throw down, and his grove or idol to cut down, but an altar to build, and a sacrifice to be taken and offered:

and did as the Lord had said unto him; all the above things, he set about them at once, and dispatched them all in one night; so ready and cheerful was he in obedience to the divine command:

and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night; for both his father's family, and the inhabitants of the city of Ophrah, were all idolaters, worshippers of Baal; and this fear of them was not a fear of being reproached or punished for what he did, or of any harm coming to him for the fact, which as he might expect would be known, so the risk was the same, be it done when it would; but it was a fear of being restrained and hindered from doing it, and therefore in point of prudence, and consulting the honour of God and religion, and not his own safety, he took the time of the night to do it in.

Judges 6:28

Ver. 28. And when the men of the city arose early in the morning,.... And came to the place where the altar of Baal, his grove and image, were, to pay their morning devotions to him: behold,

the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built; upon the new altar that Gideon built, and which very probably was burning when they came: and it is very likely that the place, where the altar of Baal had stood, was not far from the rock where this new altar was erected.

Judges 6:29

Ver. 29. And they said one to another, who hath done this thing?.... They were struck with amazement, and could not devise who could be so daring and wicked as to do such an action:

and when they inquired and asked; one and another, everyone present, or they could think of as proper to inquire of; they were very diligent and industrious to find it out; and perhaps they inquired of the family and servants of Joash and Gideon, in whose ground the altar stood:

they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing; when they had inquired of everybody they could, and thought of one person and another, there was none appeared to them more likely to have done it, than Gideon; partly because they knew he was no friend of Baal, and partly because he was a man of spirit and courage, and they concluded none but such an one would have ventured to have done it; and besides, they considered he was the son of Joash, who perhaps was their chief magistrate, and that he might presume on his father's protection, as they might surprise; and being near the premises, he was the most likely person they could think of; and it is not improbable, that upon inquiry they got it out of the servants concerned, or that had knowledge of it from them, or from some that saw him that morning at the sacrifice, or returning from it, and therefore peremptorily assert he was the man that did it.

Judges 6:30

Ver. 30. Then the men of the city said unto Joash,.... The principal inhabitants of the place met together, and in a body went to Joash their chief magistrate, to have justice done in this case:

bring out thy son, that he may die; they do not ask to have the cause tried by him, to hear what proof they had of the fact, or what Gideon had to say in his own defence; nor do they wait for the sentence of Joash, but determine it themselves, and require the delinquent to be given up to them, that they might put him to death; a strange request of Israelites, whose law judged no man before it heard him; and besides, according to that, the worshippers of Baal, and not the destroyers of him, and his altars, were to be put to death, which shows how strangely mad and infatuated these people were:

because he hath cut down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it; they take no notice of the bullock which he had taken and offered, it being his father's property; and which seems to confirm the sense of our version, that there was but one, **Jud 6:25** for had the second been a different one, and the people's property, they would have accused him of theft as well as sacrilege respecting that.

Judges 6:31

Ver. 31. And Joash said unto all that stood against him,.... Against his son; that were his accusers and adversaries, and required him to be given up to them, that they might put him to death:

will ye plead for Baal? what, Israelites, and plead for Baal! or what need is there for this, cannot he plead for himself?

will ye save him? what, take upon you to save your god! cannot he save himself? he ought to save both himself and you, if he is a god, and not you save him:

he that will plead for him, let him be put to death, while it is yet morning; immediately, before noon, for it was now morning when they came to him; this he said to terrify them, and to express the hatred he now had of idolatry, and the just sense of its being punishable with death by the law of God. This he may be supposed to say, to save his son from their present wrath and fury, hoping by that time to find out some ways and means for his safety:

if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar; if he is a god, he knows who has done it, and is able to avenge himself on him, and put him to death himself that has done it, and therefore leave it with him to plead his own cause, and avenge his own injuries; this he said, deriding the deity; for though Joash had been a worshipper of Baal, yet he might be now convinced by his son of the sinfulness of it, and of the necessity of a reformation, in order to a deliverance from the Midianites, for which he had a commission, and had perhaps informed his father of it; or however he was not so attached to Baal, but that he preferred the life of his son to the worship of him.

Judges 6:32

Ver. 32. Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal,.... That is, Joash called his son Gideon by that name; who, some think, is the same with Jerombalus, the priest of the god Jevo, or Jehovah; from whom Sanchoniatho, an ancient Phoenician writer, as Philo Byblius says {w}, received the principal things in his history respecting the Jews:

saying, let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar; giving this as the reason of the name of Jerubbaal he called him by, which signifies, "let Baal plead"; let Baal plead his own cause, and avenge himself on Gideon for what he has done to him, and put him to death if he can.

{w} Apud Euseb. Evangel Praepar. l. 1. p. 31.

Judges 6:33

Ver. 33. Then all the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east,.... The Arabians, **Jud 6:3** were gathered together; not as being alarmed with this fact of Gideon in destroying the altar of Baal, and so came to avenge it; but it was their usual time of gathering together to come into Canaan, being harvest time, as appears by Gideon being employed in threshing, to fetch away the increase of the earth, as they had done for some years past:

and went over; the river Jordan, which lay between the Midianites and the Israelites:

and pitched in the valley of Jezreel; a very large, delightful, and fruitful plain; of which See Gill on "Ho 1:5"; a very proper place for such a large number to pitch on, and from whence they might receive much; and a suitable place to bring the increase of the land to, from the several parts of it, which was the business they came upon; and as this lay on the borders of Issachar and Manasseh, it was not far from Gideon, and this gave him an opportunity of exerting himself, and executing his commission.

Judges 6:34

Ver. 34. But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon,.... Not the spirit of prophecy, as Maimonides {x}, who calls this spirit the first degree of prophecy, but a spirit of fortitude and courage, as the Targum; the Spirit of God filled him, or, as in the Hebrew text, "clothed" {y} him with zeal, strength, and might, moved and animated him to engage with this great body of people come into the land, to ravage and waste it, and to attempt the deliverance of Israel from their bondage:

and he blew a trumpet; as an alarm of war, and as a token to as many as heard to resort to him, and join with him in the common cause against the enemy:

and Abiezer was gathered after him; the Abiezrites, one of the families of the tribe of Manasseh, of which Gideon and his father's house were; and even it is probable the inhabitants of Ophrah, who were Abiezrites, being now convinced of their idolatry, and having entertained a good opinion of Gideon as a man of valour, and who, in the present emergence, they looked upon as an hopeful instrument of their deliverance, and therefore joined him.

{x} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 45. {y} xvbl "induit", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. Vid. Maimon. ut supra. (T. Bab. Temurah, fol. 28. 2. & 29. 1.) So Homer often represents his heroes as clothed with fortitude and courage; see Iliad. 17.

Judges 6:35

Ver. 35. And he sent messengers through all Manasseh,.... Of which tribe he was; not only he called by the trumpet that part of the tribe, the Abiezrites, who were within the sound of it, but the rest of the tribe at a greater distance from him he sent messengers to, acquainting them with his design, and inviting them to his assistance. Some think this refers both to the half tribe of Manasseh within Jordan, and the other half tribe on the other side Jordan; but that is not very probable, only the half tribe within it is meant:

who also was gathered after him; obeying the summons and invitation he gave them by the messengers:

and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; which three tribes lay nearest to him on the north; but he sent not to the inhabitants of the tribe of Ephraim, which lay to the south, and which afterwards occasioned a quarrel, **Jud 8:1**

and they came up to meet them; that is, the inhabitants of the above three tribes, at least many of them, came up from the places of their habitations to meet Gideon, and those that were associated with him, at their place of rendezvous.

Judges 6:36

Ver. 36. And Gideon said unto God,.... Not to a prophet of God who was there, of whom he asked the following signs to be done, as Ben Gersom, but to God in prayer, as Abarbinel:

if thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said; not that he doubted of it, but was willing to have a confirmation of his faith; and perhaps his view was more for the encouragement of those that were with him than himself, that he desired the following signs; and though he had had one before, that was to show that he was truly an angel that spoke to him, and not to ascertain the salvation that should be wrought by him; though that might be concluded from his being an angel that spoke to him, and assured him of it.

Judges 6:37

Ver. 37. Behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the floor,.... On the floor where he was threshing, where the angel first appeared to him, and which lay exposed to the open air, so that the dew might easily fall upon it:

and if the dew be on the fleece only; the dew that falls from heaven in the night, when he proposed it should lie on the floor till morning:

and it be dry upon all the earth beside; meaning not upon all the world, nor even upon all the land of Israel, but upon all the floor about the fleece: then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said; for the dew being a token of divine favour, see Ho 14:5 it would show that Gideon would partake of it, while his enemies would be dry and desolate, and ruin and destruction would be their portion.

Judges 6:38

Ver. 38. And it was so,.... The Lord condescended to work this miracle for the confirmation of his faith, and for the encouragement of those that were with him; the fleece was wet with the dew of heaven, and all the ground about it dry:

for he rose up early in the morning; being eagerly desirous of knowing whether his request would be granted, and how it would be with the fleece:

and thrust the fleece together; to satisfy himself whether the dew had fallen on it, and there was any moisture in it, which by being squeezed together he would more easily perceive:

and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water; so that it appeared it had not only fallen on it, but it had taken in a large quantity of it; the word here used is the same as in **Jud 5:25** See Gill on "Jud 5:25"; the Targum calls it a flagon.

Judges 6:39

Ver. 39. And Gideon said unto God,.... In the same way as before, and on the morning when he had been favoured with the sight of the above miracle:

let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once; he was conscious to himself that it showed great presumption and boldness in him to repeat his request, and that it had the appearance of great diffidence and distrust in him, after he had been indulged with such a sign to confirm his faith; but as it was not so much on his own account as others, and promising to ask no more favours of this kind, he hoped his boldness would not be resented:

let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece one time more with it, and that not to try the power of God, of which he had no doubt, but the will of God, whether it was the good pleasure of God to save Israel by his hand, and whether now was the time, or another:

let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew; which might seem to be a greater, at least a plainer miracle than the former, and less liable to cavil and objection; for it might be urged, that a fleece of wool naturally draws in and drinks up moisture about it; wherefore that to be dry, and the ground all around it wet, would be a sure sign and evidence of the wonderful interposition of the power and providence of God, in directing the fall of the dew on the one, and not on the other.

Judges 6:40

Ver. 40. And God did so that night,.... The night following, the night being the season in which the dew falls:

for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground; and this might signify, that not Gideon only, as before, should partake of the divine favour, but all the Israelites, who would share in the salvation wrought by him. Many interpreters observe, that all this is an emblem of the different case and state of the Jews and Gentiles under the different dispensations; that whereas under the former dispensation the Jews partook of the divine favour only, and of the blessings of grace, and enjoyed the words and ordinances with which they were watered, when the Gentiles all around them were like a barren wilderness; so, under the Gospel dispensation, the Gentiles share the above benefits to a greater degree, while the Jews are entirely destitute of them.

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 7

In this chapter we have an account of the army under Gideon gathered out of several tribes, which from 32,000 were reduced to three hundred, and we are told by what means this was done, **Jud 7:1** and how he was directed to go into the host of the Midianites, where he heard one of them telling his dream to his fellow, which greatly encouraged him to believe he should succeed, **Jud 7:9** also we are told the form and manner in which he disposed of his little army to attack the Midianites, and the orders he gave them to observe, which had the desired effect, and issued in the total rout of that large body of people, **Jud 7:16** and those that were not destroyed were pursued by persons gathered out of several tribes, and the passages of Jordan were taken by the Ephraimites, so that those that attempted their escape into their own country, there fell into their hands, **Jud 7:23**.

Ver. 1. Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon,.... That being the name his father had lately given him, **Jud 6:32**

and all the people that were with him, rose up early; encouraged by the signs and miracles wrought, by which he was assured of success; he was eager to be about his work, and therefore rose early in the morning, and got his army together, and marched to engage the enemy:

and pitched beside the well of Harod; which he might choose for the refreshment of his army on occasion; or, however, so he was directed in Providence here, where a trial was to be made of them by water: this well, or fountain, seems to be the same with that in 1Sa 29:1 it signifies fear and trembling, and might have its name either from the fear and trembling of the 22,000 Israelites, whose hearts were dismayed at the Midianites, and they were ordered to return home; or from the fear and trembling of the Midianites, who were discomfited here; the former seems to be the true reason, see **Jud 7:3** so that the Midianites were on the north side of them; which Gideon, no doubt, judged to be an advantageous post to him:

by the hill of Moreh, in the valley; the valley of Jezreel, one of the mountains of Gilboa, as is supposed; the Targum is, "by the hill which looks to the plain;"

from whence he could have a view of the Midianitish army, and the disposition of it. Some think this hill had its name from the Midianitish archers; but, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, from there being a watch here to direct the ways, or to give notice to the inhabitants of the valley when an army came against them; though some take it to be a school of some eminent teacher in those days {z}.

{z} See Weemse's Christian Synagogue, l. 1. c. 6. sect. 5.

Judges 7:2

Ver. 2. And the Lord said unto Gideon, the people that are with thee are too many,.... It appears, by what follows, that there were 32,000 of them, which was but a small army to engage with one of 100,000 more than they; for such was the army of the Midianites and their associates, see **Jud 8:10** but the people were too many, says the Lord,

for me to give the Midianites into their hands; who would be apt to ascribe the victory to themselves, and not to the Lord; to their number, strength, and valour, and not to the hand of the Lord:

lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, mine own hand hath saved me; or glory over me, take the glory from me, and ascribe it to themselves, boasting that by their power and prowess they had obtained the victory.

Judges 7:3

Ver. 3. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people,.... Such a proclamation as follows, was, according to the law of God, to be made when Israel went out to battle against their enemies, De 20:8; though it looks as if Gideon would not have made such proclamation, had he not been directed to it by the Lord, his army being so small in comparison of the enemy; and perhaps Gideon might understand that law to have respect only to war made for the enlargement of their country, and not for defence against invaders:

saying, whosoever is fearful and afraid; to, engage in battle, because of the number of the enemy:

let him return, and depart early from Mount Gilead; where it seems they now were, being the same with the hill of Moreh, or adjoining to it; a mountain in the tribe of Manasseh, so called either from its likeness to Mount Gilead on the other side Jordan; or rather in memory of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, from whence the half tribe sprung, which was on this side, as well as that on the other; and perhaps this name might be given to the mount, to show that they were of the same tribe, though separated by Jordan: now the fearful and faint hearted had leave given them by this proclamation to return home directly; and as both armies lay so near, and it might reasonably be expected the battle would be the next day, they are directed to get away in the morning, as early as they could, that they might not be seen, and so be filled with shame themselves, and discourage others. Though some think Mount Gilead, on the other side Jordan, is meant, from whence it is supposed many came to Gideon, **Jud 6:35** and now are ordered to return back, as many as were fearful; and instead of "from", they render the word "to", or "towards", or "beyond" Gilead. Kimchi thinks the word we render "depart early" has the signification of surrounding, a diadem being expressed by a word from hence, which encompasses the head, Isa 28:5 and so the sense is, that they were ordered to go round about Mount Gilead, and so return home; but it rather may signify their hasty departure and speedy flight, like that of a bird, Ps 11:1 and there returned of the people 22,000, and there remained 10,000; so that they were in all 32,000: now though these of their own accord came and joined Gideon with an intention and resolution to stand by him, and fight the enemy, yet when they came and saw what a large host they had to engage with, and how small the army was with Gideon, their hearts failed them, and they were glad to take the advantage of the proclamation.

Judges 7:4

Ver. 4. And the Lord said to Gideon, the people are yet too many,.... Though they were but just the number that Barak had with him, when he attacked Sisera's army and got the victory, which yet was ascribed to God, whose hand was manifestly seen in it; but as these might be supposed to be able men of valour that remained, they were too many for God to have that glory he intended to display in this victory:

bring them down unto the water; from the hill on which they were, to a brook that ran at the bottom of it, perhaps a stream from the fountain or well of Harod, **Jud 7:1**

and I will try them for thee there, or "purge them" {a}, as silver is purged from dross, so the word signifies, as Kimchi observes, the righteous from the wicked, as he thinks; who, with others, suppose that by those who bowed on their knees to drink, were such as had been used to bow the knee to Baal, and the rest not, and so one were discerned from the other; but this trial was only for the sake of Gideon, to direct him whom he should take with him, and whom not:

and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, this shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, this shall not go with thee, the same shall not go; by the different manner of his men drinking at the water, later related, Gideon knew not who should go with him, and who not, whether they that bowed down to drink, or only lapped the water; this was determined by the mouth of the Lord, as follows but this trial was only for the sake of Gideon, to direct him whom he should take with him, and whom not:

and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, this shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, this shall not go with thee, the same shall not go; by the different manner of his men drinking at the water, after related, Gideon knew not who should go with him, and who not, whether they that bowed down to drink, or only lapped the water; this was determined by the mouth of the Lord, as follows.

{a} wnprua "defaecabo", Drusius; "eliquabo, seu purgabo", Piscator.

Judges 7:5

Ver. 5. So he brought them down to the water,....] His whole army of 10,000 men:

and the Lord said unto Gideon, everyone that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shall thou set by himself; this has led some, as particularly Grotius, to think of the Egyptian dogs; of whom Aelianus relates {b}, that they do not drink at once freely, and to satiety, being afraid of the crocodiles in the river; but run about the bank, and by stealth snatch a little here and a little there, and so satisfy themselves: but the allusion here is to dogs in common, whose usual way it is not to sup in, and drink a drought, but by putting out their tongues to lick and lap water with them, as Aristotle {c} says all creatures do that have teeth like saws; and the likeness between the drinking of these men, to be observed lay not in anything else but in the single action of lapping; for they first took the water in the hollow of their hands, out of the stream, and then lapped it, as in **Jud 7:6** whereas a dog does not and cannot take water that way; and this lapping was standing upright, whereas dogs in common, as Aelianus in the same place suggests, bow themselves, and lap as much water as will satisfy their thirst; and by this these men were distinguished from those that bowed on their knees to drink; for had they not taken up water in their hands, they must have bowed down on their knees to have lapped, as well as those did, to sup it, or take in a large draught of it; now all those that thus lapped were to be set apart by themselves; but whether they were to go with Gideon or not, as yet he knew not: likewise everyone that boweth down on his knee to drink; were to be set by themselves also, but which of those were to go with him is after related.

{b} Var. Hist. l. 1. c. 4. {c} Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 6.

Judges 7:6

Ver. 6. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth,.... That is, that took up water in the hollow of their hands, which they lifted up to their mouths, and so lapped it, as the Egyptians about the Nile are said {d} to do, who drank not out of pots and cups, but used their hands to drink with:

were three hundred men; only such a number out of 10,000: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water; even 9,700; and it was the custom of some nations, as the Ichthyophagy, or fish eaters, to cast themselves with their face to the ground, and drink after the manner of oxen {e}.

{d} Achilles Tatius, l. 4. {e} Strabo. Geograph. l. 16. p. 532.

Ver. 7. And the Lord said unto Gideon, by the three hundred men that lapped I will save and deliver the Midianites into thine hand,.... It is hard to say what character this action of the three hundred is expressive of, whether of weakness or of courage. Some think that those who drank upon their knees were faint and weary, and men of intemperance, and indulged themselves, and were unfit for war, while those that only lapped a little water to refresh themselves appeared to be eager, and in haste and readiness to engage in it; and so Ben Gersom takes those that bowed to be slothful persons, and those that lapped courageous and mighty men, and so were ordered to be taken and go along with Gideon; and this agrees with the method before taken, to dismiss the fearful, and only take those that were men of courage; but Josephus {f} is of opinion that they that drank upon their knees were the men of spirit and courage, and those that lapped, such who drank hastily, with trembling, and through fear of the enemy, and these were ordered to go with Gideon, and not the other: and indeed this most displays the glory of God to save Israel, and deliver them from the Midianites by a handful of such poor dispirited creatures. Though it seems that all the 10,000 men were men of courage; and this method was taken not to distinguish those that were the most courageous from those that were the least so, but only to reduce the number that should be engaged in this battle; for it being the summer season, it may reasonably be supposed that the greater part of the army was very thirsty, and would kneel down to take a large draught of water, when those that were not so thirsty would be the fewer number, and so taken:

and let all the other people go every man to his place; all the rest, who bowed on their knees to drink, which were 9,700, these were ordered to march homewards; though perhaps before they got home, hearing of the victory, they returned and joined in the pursuit, **Jud 7:23**.

{f} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 3.

Ver. 8. So the people took victuals in their hands and their trumpets,.... That is, the three hundred took victuals of those that departed, as much as was necessary for them, and also their trumpets, being directed thereunto by Gideon, no doubt; perhaps they took all the trumpets they had; however, as many as would furnish every man with one. And from hence it appears, that these three hundred that were ordered to stay and go with Gideon were unarmed men, at least could carry no arms in their hands; for in one hand they carried their victuals, and in the other hand their trumpets, so that the salvation wrought by them would most clearly appear to be of the Lord:

and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent; not to his tent in the army, but to his own house, in the tribe and city to which he belonged: and retained these three hundred men; that had lapped water, to engage with the Midianites and their associates:

and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley; in the valley of Jezreel; for it seems as if Gideon, after he had brought down his men to the water to be tried, went up to the hill again with his three hundred men only, to wait the divine orders, when he should attack the army of Midian below him.

Judges 7:9

Ver. 9. And it came to pass the same night that the Lord said to him,.... The night after there had been so great a reduction of his army, from 32,000 to three hundred:

arise, get thee down unto the host, for I have delivered it into thine hands; that is, go down from the hill where he and his little army were, to the valley of Jezreel, where lay the numerous host of Midian; assuring him, that though the disproportion was so very great, the army of Midian should be delivered into his hands; and it was enough that the Lord had said it, for him to believe it; but in such circumstances that he was, it is no wonder that he had his fears and misgivings of heart, wherefore it follows;

Judges 7:10

Ver. 10. But if thou fear to go down,.... With his little army, to attack a numerous host in the night, then he is directed to take this step first:

go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host; in a private manner; perhaps this man was his aid-de-camp, or however a trusty servant in whom he could confide, as well as valiant: more it was not proper to take in such a secret expedition, and the fewer the better to trust, and less liable to the observation of the enemy; and yet it was proper to have one with him, being company and animating, and who would be a witness with him of what should be heard; in like manner, and for like reasons, as Diomedes and Ulysses went into the Trojan army {y}.

{y} Homer. Iliad. 10. ver. 222, &c.

Judges 7:11

Ver. 11. And thou shalt hear what they shall say,.... The Midianites, or what shall be said by any of them; for though it was the night season, and so not a time for much conversation, as it may be supposed to be the dead of the night; yet something would be said and heard, which is a clear proof of the prescience of God respecting future contingent events:

and afterwards shall thine hands be strengthened; and his heart encouraged by what he should hear:

to go down into the camp; in an hostile manner, with his three hundred men, after his return to them:

then went he down with Phurah his servant; first privately, only they two, leaving his little army on the hill: and came

unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host; the sentinels, who were without side the camp, and stood complete in armour to guard it; and they came as near to them, in as still and private manner as they could, without being discovered. The Septuagint version is,

"to the beginning of the fifty that were in the host;"

and the Syriac and Arabic versions,

"to the captain of the fifty;"

these might be a party of the outer guards, consisting of fifty men, with one at the head of them, placed for the safety of the army in the night season, and to give notice of any approach to them, or attempt on them.

Judges 7:12

Ver. 12. And the Midianites and the Amalekites, and the children of the east,.... The Arabians, who with the Amalekites joined the Midianites in this expedition:

lay along in the valley in the valley of Jezreel, in their tents, which overspread the valley, or at least great part of it:

like grasshoppers for multitude; or locusts, which usually come in great numbers, and cover the air and the sun where they fly, and the earth where they light, as they did the land of Egypt; this army consisted at least of 135,000 men, as is clear from **Jud 8:10**

and their camels were without number; as the sand is by the sea side for multitude; an hyperbolical expression, setting forth the great number of them which the countries of Midian and Arabia abounded with; and were very proper to bring with them, to load and carry off the booty they came for, the fruits of the earth; see **Jud 6:4**.

Judges 7:13

Ver. 13. And when Gideon was come,.... With his servant, near and within hearing the talk and conversation of the outer guards or sentinels: there was

a man that told a dream unto his fellow; his comrade that stood next him, and was upon guard with him; perhaps it was a dream he had dreamed the night before or this selfsame night, being just called up to take his turn in the watch, and so it was fresh upon his mind:

and said, behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo; thus it was as I am going to relate; twice he uses the word "behold", or "lo", the dream having rely much struck and impressed his mind, and was what he thought worthy of the attention of his comrade:

a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian: barley bread, Pliny {z} says, was the most ancient food; the word for "cake" {a} signifies a "shadow", and may design the appearance of a barley loaf; or something like one to him appeared in the dream: or a "noise"; the noise of it rolling and tumbling, so that it seemed to the soldier that he heard a noise, as well as saw something he took for a barley loaf. Jarchi observes, that it signifies a cake baked upon coals, and it seemed to this man as if it came smoking hot from the coals, tumbling down an hill, such an one where Gideon and his army were and rolling into the host of Midian, which lay in a valley:

and came unto a tent; or, "the tent {b}" the largest and most magnificent in the host; and Josephus {c} calls it expressly the king's tent, and the Arabic version the tent of the generals:

and smote it that it fell; which might justly seem strange, that a barley loaf should come with such a force against a tent, perhaps the largest and strongest in the whole camp, which was fastened with cords to stakes and nails driven into the ground, so as to cause it to fall: yea, it is added,

and overturned it, that the tent lay along: turned it topsy-turvy, or turned it "upwards" {d}, as the phrase in the Hebrew text is; it fell with the bottom upwards; it was entirely demolished, that there was no raising and setting of it up again.

{z} Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 7. {a} lwlu "umbra", vid. Gussetium, p. 715. "strepitus", Tigurine version; so Kimchi & Ben Gersom; "subcineritius", V. L. "tostus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {b} lhah {c} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 4. {d} hleml "desuper", Pagninus, Montanus; "superne", Tigurine version.

Judges 7:14

Ver. 14. And his fellow answered and said,.... As the dream was no doubt from God, so the interpretation of it was; it was he that put into the mind of the soldier's comrade to whom he told it to interpret it as follows; or otherwise in all likelihood he would never have thought of it:

this is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of

Israel; that is, this signifies nothing else, and a fit emblem it was of him and his little army. A cake is but a small thing, and, let it come tumbling as it will, can have no force or strength in it equal to overturn a tent; and a cake of barley is mean and contemptible; and a cake baked under ashes, or on coals, is what is soon and hastily done, and fitly represented the smallness and weakness of Gideon's army, their meanness and contemptibleness; the Israelites being, as Josephus {e} represents the soldier saying, the vilest of all the people of Asia; and those that were with Gideon were suddenly and hastily got together, raw and undisciplined, and very unfit to engage the veteran troops of the united forces of Midian, Amalek, and Arabia. It appears from hence that Gideon's name was well known in the camp of Midian, what was his descent, and his character as a valiant man, which is meant by

a man of Israel; namely, a courageous mighty man, and the very name of him might strike with terror:

for into his hands hath God delivered Midian and all his host; which the man concluded from this dream, and the interpretation of it suggested to him from God, and impressed upon his mind; which he speaks of with the greatest assurance and confidence, which he was inspired to do, for the strengthening of Gideon, and the encouragement of him to come down with his army, and fall on the host of Midian.

{e} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 4.)

Judges 7:15

Ver. 15. And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof,.... Or, "the breaking of it" {g}; the dream itself being like something closed up and sealed, and the interpretation of it was like the breaking of a seal, and discovering what is hid under it; or like a nut, the kernel of which cannot be come at till the shell is broken:

that he worshipped; bowed his head with an awful reverence of God and a sense of his divine Majesty, and worshipped him by sending an ejaculatory prayer and praise to him; and so the Targum,

"and he praised"

praised God for this gracious encouragement he had given, the assurance of victory he now had; for he saw clearly the hand of God in all this, both in causing one of the soldiers to dream as he did, and giving the other the interpretation of it, and himself the hearing of both:

and returned into the host of Israel; such an one as it was, consisting only of three hundred unarmed men: and said, arise; from their sleep and beds, it being the night season; and from their tents, and descend the hill with him:

for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian; he made now no doubt of it, it was as sure to him as if it had been actually done; hence Gideon is renowned for his faith, though he sometimes was not without his fits of diffidence; see Heb 11:32.

{g} wrbv "fractionem ejus", Vatablus, Drusius; "fracturam ejus", Piscator.

Judges 7:16

Ver. 16. And he divided the three hundred men into three companies,.... One hundred in a company, partly to make the better figure, a show of an army, with a right and left wing, and partly that they might fall upon the camp of Midian in different parts:

and he put a trumpet in every man's hand; they that returned of the trumpeters having left their trumpets behind them, whereby there was a sufficient number for three hundred men; and these were put into their hands, that when they blew them together, the, noise would be very great; and it would seem as if they were an exceeding great army, and so very much terrify their enemies:

with empty pitchers, and lamps with the pitchers; the pitchers were of earth, and so easily broken, and would make a great noise when clashed against each other; and these were empty of water, or otherwise would not have been fit to put lamps into, and the lamps put in them were not of oil; for then, when the pitchers were broken, the oil would have run out; but were a kind of torches, made of rosin, wax, pitch, and such like things; and these were put into the pitcher, partly to preserve them from the wind, and chiefly to conceal them from the enemy, till just they came upon them, and then held them out; which in a dark night would make a terrible blaze, as before they served to give them light down the hill into the camp.

Judges 7:17

Ver. 17. And he said unto them, look on me, and do likewise,.... Observe what I do, and do the same, in blowing a trumpet, breaking a pitcher, and shouting with the words expressed by him:

and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp; where the sentinels stood, and the watch was set:

it shall be, that as I do, so shall ye do; and not before; a trumpet was not to be blown, nor a pitcher broken, nor a torch held out, nor a word spoken, till just they came to the outside of the camp: and then they were to observe the motions of Gideon, and do as he did.

Judges 7:18

Ver. 18. When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me,.... He being at the head of one of the three companies, **Jud 7:19** perhaps the middlemost, which might stand for the body of the army; and the other two be one to the right and the other to the left of him, and so could more easily discover his motions:

then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp; for it seems they were so disposed as to be around the camp, which when the trumpets were blown at once on every side, with such a blaze of light, and crashing of the pitchers, must be very terrifying, as if there was no way for them to escape, and especially when they should hear the following dreadful sounds:

and say, [the sword] of the Lord, and of Gideon; or "for the Lord, and for Gideon"; and which may be supplied, either the light is for the Lord, and for Gideon; or the victory is for the Lord, and for Gideon; we supply it from **Jud 7:20**. The name Jehovah, these Heathens had often heard, as the God of Israel, would now be dreadful to them, and the name of Gideon also; whose name, as appears by the interpretation of the dream, was terrible among them; for which reason Gideon added it, and not out of arrogance and vanity; and puts it after the name of the Lord, as being only an instrument the Lord thought fit to make use of, otherwise all the glory belonged to him.

Judges 7:19

Ver. 19. So Gideon, and the one hundred men that were with him,.... Which was one of the three companies his army was divided into, and which company he had the command of particularly:

came unto the outside of the camp, in the beginning of the middle watch; the second watch, for the night was divided into three watches; for though in later times there were four watches, among the Romans {h}, and which the Jews received from them; hence in the New Testament we read of the fourth watch; yet in earlier times, with the Jews and other eastern nations, there were but three watches, as affirmed by Jarchi and Kimchi on the place: and very wisely did Gideon fix on this watch for the time of his coming; for had he come at the first watch, many as yet might not have been in bed, or at least not fallen asleep; and had he come in the third watch, many might have been awake out of their sleep, and others up; but he took this time, a little after midnight, in the dead of the night, when the whole army was fast asleep:

and they had but newly set the watch; the first watch were just gone off, and the second were placed in their room; but since such an observation seems in a good measure unnecessary, for as Gideon came in the beginning of the watch it must in course be newly set; rather the words may be rendered, "in raising they raised up the watch" {i}; that is, Gideon and his men did it by their approach; and they might call to them on purpose to give the alarm to the army, who upon that would at once hear the sound of the trumpets, and the clattering of the pitchers, and see the torches burning, to their great surprise:

and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands; as soon as they came up to the watch and had raised them; this did Gideon and his hundred men.

{h} Liv. Hist. l. 36. c. 24. "Suidas in. voce" profnlakh, "et in voce" fnlakh {i} Myrmvh ta wmyqh Mqh "suscitando suscitaverunt custodes", Pagninus, Montanus.

Judges 7:20

Ver. 20. And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers,.... The other two, observing what Gideon and his company did, followed their example, and at the same time blew their trumpets, and broke their pitchers; for that there were four companies, three besides Gideon's, as Kimchi and Ben Melech suggest, there is no reason to believe:

and held the lamps in their left hands; which they took out of the pitchers when they broke them, and holding them up in their left hands, gave a great blaze of light, which must be very surprising to the host of Midian, just awaked out of their sleep:

and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal; and which they continued blowing, the sound of which must be very dreadful, since it might be concluded, from such a number of trumpets, that there must be a vast army:

and they cried, the sword of the Lord and of Gideon; signifying that was drawn against the Midianites, and they must expect to be cut in pieces by it, since the sword was Jehovah's, sent and commissioned by him, and was put into the hand of Gideon as an instrument, with which execution would be done, the Lord helping him. The Targum is,

"the sword of the Lord, and victory by the hand of Gideon"

which victory was to be ascribed to the sword and power of God. This was an emblem of the efficacy of the word of God, accompanied with his power, to the destruction of the kingdom of Satan; the blowing of the trumpets may denote the ministration of the Gospel, the great trumpet to be blown by the apostles and ministers of the word; the holding forth the lamps may signify the same, the light of the divine word in the ministers of it, and the holding forth of it to others; and which is carried in earthen vessels, frail mortal men; and done that the excellency of the power may appear to be of God, and not of men; and the sword of the Lord is the word of God in the mouths of ministers, accompanied by the power of God; for it can only be through God that such weapons of warfare can become mighty to do the execution that is done by them; see **2Co 4:7** blowing of trumpets, and then a cry or shout of the soldiers to terrify the enemy, were used in later times {k}.

{k} "At tuba terribilem sonitum", &c. Virgil Aeneid. 9.

Judges 7:21

Ver. 21. And they stood every man in his place around the camp,.... To see the salvation of God, and that it might most clearly appear to be his own doing; and indeed, had they gone into it, they could have done nothing; they had no weapons in their hands, a trumpet in one hand, and a lamp in the other; though this their position served to increase the terror of the enemy, who might suppose that they stood either to light and introduce a large army at the back of them; or to light the forces already in the midst of them, while they destroyed them; which latter seems rather to be the thing their imaginations were possessed with, since they fell to slaying their fellows, supposing them to be enemies, as in the following verse:

and all the host ran, and cried, and fled; or "were broken" {l}; as some render the first word, their lines were broken; they could not put themselves in rank and file, but were thrown into the utmost confusion; and cried as being in the utmost danger of their lives, and fled for their safety as fast, as they could; see Isa 27:13.

{l} Uwr "confracta", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

Judges 7:22

Ver. 22. And the three hundred men blew the trumpets,.... Kept blowing them to continue and increase the terror of the enemy, and still held the lamps in their hands, and stood as torch bearers to light the Midianites and their associates to destroy one another, as follows:

and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow throughout the host; and so slew one another; either suspecting treachery, as Grotius, and so in revenge, wrath, and indignation, drew their swords on each other; or through the terror and amazement they were in at the sounds they heard, and the blazing torches dazzling their eyes, they knew not what they did, or who they fell upon, taking their friends for foes, supposing the Israelites were got into their camp; and the rather they might be led into this mistake, since there were people of different languages among them, as Josephus {m} observes; but the thing was of God, it was he that took away their reason and judgment from them, and infatuated them, and filled their imaginations with such strange apprehensions of things; and threw into their minds such terror and amazement, and directed them to point their swords at one another:

and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath; that is, which was left of it, which had not destroyed each other; the first of these places should be read Bethhashittah; and perhaps had its name from the "shittah" or "shittim" trees which might grow near it in plenty, or the houses in it might be built of shittim wood; or it may be here stood a temple formerly dedicated to some deity of this name, and near it a grove of the above trees. Zererath, Kimchi observes, is written with two "reshes", or R's, to distinguish it from another place called Tzeredah; but where either of these places mentioned were cannot be particularly said; though it is highly probable they were in the tribe of Manasseh, and in the way to Jordan, whither in all probability the Midianites would steer their course to escape to their own land:

and to the border of Abelmeholah unto Tabbath; the former of these was the birth place of Elisha the prophet, 1Ki 19:16 and it appears very plainly that it was in the tribe of Manasseh, being mentioned with other places in that tribe, **1Ki 4:12**. Jerome {n} under this word says, there was in his time a village in Aulon, or the plain, ten miles from Scythopolis to the south, which was called Bethahula; and the Targum is,

"to the border of the plain of Abelmeholah;"

but of Tabbath we nowhere else read.

{m} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 5. {n} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. M.

Judges 7:23

Ver. 23. And the men of Israel gathered themselves together,.... Not out of all the tribes, but out of those which lay nearest, and which are particularly mentioned:

out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh: and these seem to be the same persons out of those tribes who first joined Gideon, but were separated from his army; both those that were fearful, and those that bowed their knees to drink, and who perhaps had not gone far before they heard of the defeat and flight of the Midianites; and therefore though they had not courage to face the enemy, at least most of them, yet had spirit enough to pursue a flying enemy; wherefore they returned, or however directed their course the nearest way, where they supposed they fled:

and pursued after the Midianites; and those that were with them.

Judges 7:24

Ver. 24. And Gideon sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim,.... To raise the inhabitants of it, who lay nearer Jordan, to which the Midianites would make, in order to intercept them in their flight; or however get possession of the fords of Jordan before them, and hinder their passage over it:

saying, come down against the Midianites; for though he had routed them, and they were fled before him, yet he had not men enough with him to destroy them; and besides, as they had their camels to ride on, and he and his men only on foot, they could not come up with them:

and take before them the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan; namely, all the fords and passages over Jordan, reaching from the lake of Gennesaret to Bethbarah, the same with Bethabara, **Joh 1:28** which was a passage over Jordan; or these waters were, as Kimchi thinks, distinct from those of Jordan; and were waters that lay in the way of the flight of the Midianites, before they came to Bethbarah, their passage over Jordan; and Jarchi thinks they were waters, which divided between Syria and the land of Canaan, which is not likely; others think the waters are the same with Jordan, and render the words, "take the waters" --even Jordan {o}; gain the passes over that before them, and so prevent their escape to their own land:

then all the men of Ephraim; that is, great numbers of them, whose hearts were inclined to, and whose situation lay best for this service:

gathered themselves together; in a body, at some place of rendezvous appointed:

and took the waters unto Bethbarah and Jordan; took possession of all the passes, and guarded them, as Gideon directed.

{o} "Nempe Jordanis aquas", Junius & Tremellius; "nempe Jordanem", Piscator.

Judges 7:25

Ver. 25. And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb,.... The one signifies a "raven", and the other a "wolf"; which were either nicknames given them because of their voraciousness and cruelty, or which they took themselves, or their ancestors before them, to make themselves terrible to others; so the Romans had the families of the Corvini, &c.

and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb; perhaps they found him in a cave of the rock, and dragging him out slew him, from whence the rock afterwards had its name. So we read of the rock Corax in Homer {p}, which was in Ithaca, and another high mountain of the same name in Aetolia, mentioned by Livy {q} and which signifies the same as Oreb. This is a different rock or mountain from Horeb, the same with Sinai, from whence the law was given; which always ought to be written with an "H" or "Ch", to distinguish it from this; though that is written Oreb by Lactantius {r}, and so by Milton {s}, contrary to the propriety of the language:

and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb; the Targum is, the plain of Zeeb, which, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom suppose, was in the form of a winepress, having high lips or hills around it, and which afterwards took its name from this prince being slain in it:

and pursued Midian; the rest of the Midianites, even beyond Jordan, those that got over it:

and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan; that is, when he had passed over it the next morning, as Jarchi remarks; for after this we read of Gideon's going over Jordan, **Jud 8:4** unless this is said by way of anticipation; though the phrase will bear to be rendered, "on this side Jordan", for it signifies both. It seems they cut off the heads of those two princes, and presented them to Gideon, as it has been usual to bring the heads of enemies to kings and conquerors; see 1Sa 17:54.

{p} Odyss. 13. "prope finem". {q} Hist. l. 36. c. 30. {r} De vera Sap. l. 4. c. 17. {s} Paradise Lost, l. 1. ver. 7.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**
Judges 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 8

In this chapter we are told how Gideon pacified the Ephraimites, who complained because they were not sent unto to fight the Midianites, **Jud 8:1** how he pursued the Midianites, until he took their two kings, and on his return chastised the men of Succoth and Penuel, because they refused to relieve his men with food as they were pursuing, **Jud 8:4** how he slew the two kings of Midian, **Jud 8:18** and after this conquest refused to take the government of Israel when offered him, **Jud 8:22** how he requested of the Israelites the earrings they had taken from the Midianites, with which he in weakness made an ephod, which proved a snare to his house, **Jud 8:24** how that the people were in peace forty years during his life, and that he had a numerous issue, and died in a good old age, **Jud 8:28** but that after his death the Israelites fell into idolatry, and were ungrateful to his family, **Jud 8:33**.

Ver. 1. And the men of Ephraim said unto him,.... To Gideon, when they brought him the heads of Oreb and Zeeb; taking this to be a proper opportunity to expostulate and chide with him, when they had done so much service:

why hast thou served us thus; neglected them, overlooked them, which they took as a reproach to them, and as if he had bore them ill will:

that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? that he did not call them first, when he called other tribes, as Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, when they were as near or nearer, and more nearly allied, being both the descendants of Joseph; and were the tribe that Jacob had given the preference to; and being of proud spirits they envied the glory that Gideon, who was of the tribe of Manasseh, had got; and by which they were jealous he would advance that tribe above theirs:

and they did chide with him sharply; used rough words and ill language, and threw out many keen and biting expressions, which discovered great anger and wrath, envy and ill will.

Judges 8:2

Ver. 2. And he said unto them,.... In a very mild and gentle manner, giving soft words, which turn away wrath:

what have I done in comparison of you? he and his men, he signifies, had only blew trumpets, broke pitchers, and held torches; it was the Lord that did all, and set the Midianites one against another to slay each other; and in the pursuit as yet he had only picked up and slain some common soldiers, they had taken two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, and had brought their heads in triumph to him:

is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? the family of Abiezer, of which Gideon was; the meaning is, that whereas he began the fight, which may be called the vintage, and they had finished it, which was like gleaning; yet what they did last was much preferable to what was done by him at first; or the princes of Midian, which they had taken in the pursuit, and was like gleaning after a vintage, were equal, yea, superior to all the camp of Midian, or that part of it that had fallen into his hands. The Targum is,

"are not the weak of the house of Ephraim better than the strong of the house of Abiezer?"

Judges 8:3

Ver. 3. God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb,.... A high honour this conferred upon you, and with which you may be well contented:

and what was I able to do in comparison of you? what he had done in defeating and pursuing the army of Midian, in slaying and taking any of them prisoners, was nothing in comparison of what they had done; nay, he signifies that he was not capable of doing anything worth mentioning without them; the glory of finishing this conquest was reserved for them:

then their anger was abated towards him when he had said that; it being what gratified their pride and was pleasing to them; and this conduct of Gideon showed him to be a wise and humble man.

Judges 8:4

Ver. 4. And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over..... That river; See Gill on "Jud 7:25" he and three hundred men that were with him, at the defeat of the Midianites in the valley of Jezreel; so that neither at that nor in the pursuit of them hitherto, had he lost one man:

faint, yet pursuing [them]: they were faint with being up all night, and continually blowing their trumpets; and had been upon the pursuit of their enemies ever since the defeat; and yet, though they were so faint, they did not leave off the pursuit, but were eager at it.

Judges 8:5

Ver. 5. And he said to the men of Succoth,.... The inhabitants of that place, the principal men of it, which lay in his way as he was pursuing the Midianites in their flight to their own country; for this was a city on the other side Jordan, and in the tribe of Gad and was inhabited by Israelites, Jos 13:27 it had its name from the booths or tents which Jacob erected here, Ge 33:17

give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; he did not desire them to leave their habitations and families, and join him in pursuing his and their enemies, or to furnish him and his men with arms; only to give them some provisions and that not dainties, but loaves of bread; or "morsels of bread" {t}, and broken pieces; and these he did not demand in an authoritative manner, as he might have done as a general, but in a way of entreaty; and the arguments he uses are, for they be faint; for want of food, through the long fatigue from midnight hitherto, in the pursuit of the enemy, and which was not over:

and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian; who had fled with 15,000 men, and were now, as Jarchi conjectures, destroying the countries of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; and now Gideon and his men were closely pursuing them, in hopes of taking them, and so complete the conquest, and thoroughly deliver Israel from their bondage on both sides Jordan, the benefits of which these men of Succoth would share with others; these were the arguments, and cogent ones they were, to persuade them to give his weary troops some refreshment.

{t} Mxl twrkk "buccellas panis", Vatablus; "tractas panis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so the Targum.

Judges 8:6

Ver. 6. And the princes of Succoth said,.... The chief magistrates of the place made answer, one in the name of the rest; for the word said is in the singular number:

are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hands; that is, are they taken prisoners, and handcuffed, or their hands bound behind them, and put into the hands of Gideon, to do with them as he pleased? no, they were not; and they suggest they never would, deriding him and his small number of men as not a match for these kings, whom, perhaps a little before, they had seen pass by with 15,000 men; with whom his little army would not be able to encounter, should they turn and fall upon them, which they supposed would be the case; and therefore, say they, when these are in thine hands, which they thought would never be, it will be time enough

that we should give bread to thine army? for they feared, should they do that, these kings would hear of it, and they should suffer for it, and their bondage be harder than it was before; so selfish and diffident in themselves, so cruel and uncompassionate to their brethren, and so ungrateful to their deliverers, which stirred up the spirit of this humble and good man to great resentment.

Judges 8:7

Ver. 7. And Gideon said,.... In answer to the princes of Succoth:

therefore when the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand; of which he made no doubt, having the promise of God that he would deliver the host of Midian into his hand, on which his faith rested; and having it in great part performed already, most firmly believed the full performance of it, see **Jud 7:7**

then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness, and with briers; which grew in a wilderness near this city, and from whence as Kimchi thinks, it had its name; the word "Succoth" being used for thorns in Job 41:7 and the sense is, either that he would scourge them with thorns and briers; or, as the Targum thrust their flesh upon them; which Kimchi interprets of casting their naked bodies upon thorns and briers, and then treading on them with the feet; or draw a cart over them as they thus lay, in like manner as it was usual to do when corn was threshed out; see Isa 28:27.

Judges 8:8

Ver. 8. And he went up thence to Penuel,.... A place not far from Succoth, and to which also Jacob gave name, from the Lord's appearing to him there face to face, Ge 32:30 but here was nothing of God in this place now:

and spoke unto them likewise; desired bread for his men, as he had of the inhabitants of Succoth:

and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him; denied him his request in the same jeering manner.

Judges 8:9

Ver. 9 And he spoke also unto the men of Penuel,.... In a threatening way, as he had spoken to the men of Succoth: saying, when I come again in peace: having conquered all his enemies, and delivered Israel from their bondage, and restored peace and prosperity to them, of which he had no doubt:

I will break down this tower; pointing to it and which stood in their city, and in which they placed their confidence; and when he threatened them, boasted of it as their security.

Judges 8:10

Ver. 10. Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor..... Jerom {u} under this word says, there was in his time a castle called Carcuria, a day's journey from Petra, which was the metropolis of Idumea; but whether the same with this is not clear:

and their host with them, about fifteen thousand men; to which number Gideon and his three hundred men were very unequal; and yet, faint and weary as they were, closely pursued them, attacked and conquered them. Josephus {w} very wrongly makes this number to be about 18,000:

all that were left of the hosts of the children of the east; the Arabians, who with the Amalekites joined the Midianites in this expedition; and perhaps the remainder of the army chiefly consisted of Arabians, the others having mostly suffered in the valley of Jezreel, and at the fords of Jordan:

for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword; besides infirm men, women, and children, which may reasonably be supposed; so that this host consisted of 135,000 fighting men.

{u} De loc. Heb. fol. 90. B. {w} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 5.

Judges 8:11

Ver. 11. And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwell in tents,.... That is of the Arabians and Kedarenes, who dwelt in tents for the sake of feeding their flocks, as the Targum and Jarchi; he did not pursue them in the direct road, but went a roundabout way, where these people dwelt, that he might surprise the host of the kings of Midian at an unawares: and he came upon them,

on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah; the first was in the tribe of Manasseh, and the latter in the tribe of Gad, and both it seems were on the confines of those tribes; see Nu 32:35 the Targum calls the latter Ramatha; both words have the signification of height in them, this city very probably being built on an eminence. According to Bunting {x} Penuel was two miles from Succoth, Nobah two miles from Penuel, and Jogbehah four miles from Nobah and Karkor four miles from Jogbehah, whither he pursued the kings, and took them, after he had discomfited the army:

and smote the host, for the host was secure: having got over Jordan, and at night very probably, they thought themselves safe from Gideon's army, who they could have no thought that they would come up with them so soon, on foot, weary, and fatigued.

{x} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 109.

Judges 8:12

Ver. 12. And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled,.... Their host being smitten and thrown into confusion by the sudden approach of Gideon's army; and who probably attacked them in somewhat like manner as before, blowing their trumpets, and calling out the sword of the Lord and of Gideon; which were such terrifying sounds to them, that they fled at once:

he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host; or terrified them, so that they fled some one way and some another, and the kings being left alone were easily taken.

Judges 8:13

Ver. 13. And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle,.... To Penuel and Succoth, to chastise them for their ill treatment of him and his men:

before the sun was up; by which it appears that it was in the night that he fell upon the host at Karkor, which must be the night following; it could not be the same night in which he had defeated them in the valley of Jezreel; though Vatablus thinks this battle was begun and finished in one night; but there were, according to this history, so many things done after the first defeat, as sending messengers to Mount Ephraim and the Ephraimites, upon the taking the fords of Jordan, and bringing the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, expostulating with him, and his answer to them, and his stay at Succoth and Penuel; which make it more probable that the day following was spent in the pursuit, and that it was the night after that that the whole affair was finished; and before sunrise Gideon returned to Penuel and Succoth again; so Ben Gersom and Abarbinel; but according to the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, this phrase is to be rendered, "before the sunset", while it yet appeared, and was above the horizon; and so it must be in the daytime that he pursued the two kings and took them, and returned before sunset. Abendana observes the word for "sun" may be the name of a place, and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions call it the ascent of Ares or Heres; as if it was the name of the place from whence Gideon returned, so called in like manner as the ascent of Akrabbim, and the like.

Judges 8:14

Ver. 14. And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and inquired of him,.... Just before he came to the city, he spied a young man which belonged to it, and laid hold on him, and inquired of him about the chief magistrates of the city, who they were, what their names, and their places of abode:

and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, even seventy seven men; by which it appears that this was no inconsiderable city to have so many princes and elders in it; these the young man described to Gideon, what sort of men they were, what their names, and where they dwelt: or "he wrote unto him" {y}; wrote down their names, and what part of the city they dwelt in; or Gideon took down in writing for himself their names and places of abode from the young man, that he might not forget: and in this Gideon showed great wisdom, and strict justice; being desirous to punish only the delinquents, and not the innocent with the wicked, the people with their rulers; for though he asked bread of the men of Succoth, the answer was returned in the ill natured manner it was by the princes.

{y} wyla btkyw "et scripsit ad eum", Montanus, Piscator; "et scripsit sibi", Pagninus, Munster; so some in Drusius.

Judges 8:15

Ver. 15. And he came unto the men of Succoth,.... Entered the city, and bespoke the inhabitants of it in the following manner:

and said, behold, Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me; as not in his hands, and never would be, he being with his three hundred men an unequal match to them with 15,000; but he had taken them, and brought them with him, and perhaps spared them for this very reason, to let them see they were in his hands, and now calls upon them to behold them with their own eyes, concerning whom they had flouted and jeered him:

saying, are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thy hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary? he delivers their own express words, which he had carefully observed and laid up in his memory, for their greater conviction and confusion; only adds the character of his men, that they were "weary", to expose their vile ingratitude the more, that they should refuse them a few loaves of bread, who were faint and weary in the service of them.

Judges 8:16

Ver. 16. And he took the elders of the city,.... All of them, especially those of them who had been most guilty, and had them to a proper place, where they might be made public examples of:

and thorns of the wilderness, and briers; which were near at hand, and soon cut up, for which he gave orders to proper persons:

and with them he taught the men of Succoth; either the inhabitants of the place, as distinct from the elders, whose punishment he taught them to be cautious not to follow such examples, or to behave ill to their superiors; or the princes and elders of the city are meant by the men of it, whom Gideon taught or chastised with thorns and briers; and so it is usual with us for a parent or master to say to his child or servant that has offended, I will "teach" you to do so or so, or to do otherwise, when he threatens to chastise: or "with them he made them to know" {z}; that is, their sin and the heinousness of it, by the punishment he inflicted on them. Abarbinel thinks the word "know" has the signification of mercy in it, as in **Ex 2:25** in that he did not punish in general the men of that city, only the elders of it. The Targum is,

"he broke upon them, or by them, the men of Succoth;"

so Jarchi and others; that is, he broke the briers and thorns upon them, scourging them with them; or rather broke and tore their flesh by them: whether they died or no is not certain.

{z} edyw "et cognoscere fecit", Montanus; so some in Vatablus; "notificavit", Piscator.

Judges 8:17

Ver. 17. And he beat down the tower of Penuel,.... As he threatened he would, **Jud 8:9** whether this was before or after he had chastised the elders of Succoth, is not clear; one would think by the course he steered going from Succoth to Penuel, as he went, he should come to Penuel first at his return; however, he demolished their tower in which they trusted:

and slew the men of the city; perhaps they might, as Kimchi conjectures, resist when he went about to beat down their tower; on which a fray might ensue, in which they were slain; or they might upon his approach, sensible of the offence they had given him, fly to their tower for safety, and were killed in it when that was beaten down about them. In what manner this was done is not said; no doubt they had instruments in those days for demolishing such edifices.

Judges 8:18

Ver. 18. Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna,.... Not at Penuel or Succoth, but when he had brought them into the land of Canaan, and perhaps to his own city Ophrah:

what manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? Mount Tabor, to which these men had betaken and hid themselves, in some caves and dens there: see **Jud 6:2** and these kings some little time before the battle had taken them, and slew them, of which it seems Gideon had notice; and some of his brethren being not to be found, he suspected they were the persons, and therefore asked this question:

and they answered, as thou art, so were they; very much like him in countenance and stature, stout, able bodied men, of a graceful and majestic appearance. Abarbinel takes it to be a curse on Gideon, be thou, or thou shalt be, as they are; as they died by the hand of the Midianites, so shalt thou; but the former sense seems best, and agrees with what follows:

each one resembled the children of a king; being brought up in a delicate manner, as these persons seemed to have been: according to Jarchi and Kimchi, the sense is, they were like him, and had all one and the same form and lovely aspect, resembling kings' children; but according to Ben Gersom they were in general very much like Gideon, and one of them was like his children, who were then present, particularly his eldest son, as appears from **Jud 8:20**. It is said in the Misnah {a} all the Israelites are the children of kings.

{a} Sabbat, c. 14. sect. 4.

Judges 8:19

Ver. 19. And he said, they were my brethren, even the sons of my mother,.... His brethren by his mother's side, but not by his father's side; or the phrase

the sons of my mother is added, to show that he did not mean brethren in a large sense, as all the Israelites were, but in a strict sense, being so nearly related as his mother's children:

as the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you; for not being Canaanites, he was not obliged by the law of God to put them to death, and by the law of nations, as they had surrendered themselves, and were made prisoners of war, they ought to have been saved; but as they appeared to be murderers, and had slain the Israelites in cold blood, they deserved to die; and the persons they had slain being Gideon's brethren, he was the avenger of blood, and it became him to put them to death.

Judges 8:20

Ver. 20. And he said unto Jether, his firstborn, up, and slay them,.... Being the near kinsman of his father's brethren, whom these kings had slain, was a proper person to avenge their blood on them; and the rather Gideon might order him to do it, for the greater mortification of the kings, to die by the hand of a youth; and for the honour of his son, to be the slayer of two kings, and to inure him to draw his sword against the enemies of Israel, and embolden him to do such exploits:

but the youth drew not his sword, for he feared, because he was yet a youth; his not drawing is sword was not out of disobedience to his father, but through fear of the kings; not of their doing him any harm, being bound; but there was perhaps a ferocity, as well as majesty in their countenances, which made the young man timorous and fearful.

Judges 8:21

Ver. 21. Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, rise thou and fall upon us,.... Since they must die, they chose rather to die by the hand of so great a man and valiant a commander as Gideon, which was more honourable than to die by the hand of a youth:

for as the man is, so is his strength; signifying, that as he was a stout able man, he had strength sufficient to dispatch them at once, which his son had not, and therefore they must have died a lingering and painful death: wherefore as they consulted their honour, so their ease, in desiring to die by the hand of Gideon:

and Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna; nor was it unusual in those early times for great personages, as judges and generals, to be executioners of others, as were Samuel and Benaiah, 1Sa 15:33

and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks; the Targum calls them chains, as in **Jud 8:26** no doubt of gold; so the horses of King Latinus {b} had golden poitrels or collars hanging down their breasts. They were, according to Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Gersom, in the form of the moon; see **Isa 3:18** some have thought that these were worn in honour of Astarte, or the moon, the goddess of the Phoenicians, from whom these people had borrowed that idolatry.

{b} Virg. Aeneid. l. 7. v. 278.

Judges 8:22

Ver. 22. Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon,.... Some time after his return, the chief men of Israel having met in a body, and consulted matters among themselves, sent a deputation to Gideon with an offer of the government of them:

rule thou over us, both thou and thy son, and thy son's son also; by which they meant, that he would take the kingly government of them, and which they proposed to settle in his posterity for ages to come; for, as a judge in Israel, he had a sort of rule and government of them under God already, but amounted not to regal power and authority; and this was what the people of Israel were fond of, that they might be like their neighbours; and this they tempted Gideon with, who had done such very wonderful and extraordinary things for them, which they allege as a reason:

for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian; from the bondage they were in to them, and therefore fit to be a king over them.

Judges 8:23

Ver. 23. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you,.... Not that he declined the government of them as a judge, to which he was raised of God, but as a king, for which he had no authority and call from God; the choice of a king belonging to him, and not to the people:

neither shall my son rule over you; which Abarbinel thinks he spake as a prophet, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; for after his death neither Jether his eldest son, nor any of the rest of his legitimate sons, ruled over them; for they were all slain by Abimelech, the son of his concubine, who was made king:

the Lord shall rule over you; as he did; their government was a theocracy, which they would have changed, but Gideon would not agree to it.

Judges 8:24

Ver. 24. And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you,.... Which he thought they would scarcely deny, and it was now a fair opportunity to make it, since they had offered him a crown, or to be king over them: and the favour he asked was,

that you would give me every man the earrings of his prey; or, "an earring of his prey"; for it is in the singular number; every man one earring, as Abarbinel interprets it; for though they might have more, yet only one ear ring of every man is desired:

for they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites; so the Midianites and Ishmaelites are spoken of as the same, they being mixed and dwelling together, or very near each other, Ge 37:25 and Kimchi accounts for it thus, why the Midianites are called Ishmaelites; because they were the sons of Keturah, and Keturah was Hagar the mother of Ishmael. The Targum calls them Arabians, and who it seems used to wear earrings, as men in the eastern countries did; see Ge 35:4. So Pliny says {c} in the east it was reckoned ornamental for men to wear gold in their ears.

{c} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 37.

Judges 8:25

Ver. 25. And they answered, we will willingly give them,.... Or, "in giving we will give" {d}; give them with all their hearts, most freely and cheerfully:

and they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey; every man one, which would amount to no more than three hundred; though perhaps those who joined in the pursuit might take many more, or otherwise the weight of them would not amount to what in the next verse they are said to weigh.

{d} Ntn Nwtn "dando dabimus", Pagninus, Montanus.

Judges 8:26

Ver. 26. And the weight of the golden earrings he requested was one thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold,.... Which, as Schcuchzer {e} computes, was eight hundred and ten ounces, five drachms, one scruple, and ten grains, of the weight of physicians; but as reckoned by Moatanus {f} amounted to eight hundred and fifty ounces, and were of the value of 6800 crowns of gold; and, according to Waserus {g}, it amounted to 3400 Hungarian pieces of gold, and of their money at Zurich upwards of 15,413 pounds, and of our money 2,380 pounds:

besides ornaments; such as were upon the necks of the camels, **Jud 8:21** for the same word is used here as there:

and collars; the Targum renders it a crown, and Ben Melech says in the Arabic language the word signifies clear crystal; but Kimchi and Ben Gersom take them to be golden vessels, in which they put "stacte", or some odoriferous liquor, and so were properly smelling bottles:

and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian; which it seems was the colour that kings wore, as they now do; so Strabo {h} says of the kings of Arabia, that they are clothed in purple:

and besides the chains that were about their camels' necks; which seem to be different from the other ornaments about them, since another word is here used; now all these seem to have been what fell to his share, as the general of the army, and not what were given him by the people.

{e} Physica Sacra, vol. 3. p. 468. {f} Tubal Cain, p. 15. {g} De Numis. Heb. l. 2. c. 10. {h} Geograph. l. 16. p. 539.

Judges 8:27

Ver. 27. And Gideon made an ephod thereof,.... That is, of some of this gold; for such a quantity could never have been expanded on an ephod only, even taking it not for a linen ephod, but such an one as the high priest wore, made of gold, of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, with curious work, together with a curious girdle of the same work; unless we suppose such a breastplate with it, of twelve precious stones, as Aaron had; and with little images of teraphim or cherubim in it, as Dr. Spencer thinks {i}. The Jewish commentators generally understand this ephod to be made as a memorial of the great salvation God had wrought by his hands for Israel, and of the wonderful things done by him; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Gersom; but such a garment, whether worn by him, or hung up in some certain place, seems not so proper and pertinent to perpetuate the memory of his victories, as a monument or pillar would have been; it looks therefore more likely to be done with a religious view, which afterwards was perverted to superstitious uses; and whereas Gideon had built an altar already by the command of God, and had sacrificed upon it, he might think himself authorized as a priest, and therefore provided this ephod for himself; or however for a priest he might think of taking into his family, and so use it as an oracle to consult upon special occasions, without going to Shiloh, the Ephraimites having displeased him in their rough expostulations with him; and so R. Isaiah interprets it of a kind of divination or oracle which gave answers:

and put it in his city, even in Ophrah; hung it up in some proper place as a monument of his victories, as is generally thought; or in a structure built on purpose for it, to which he might resort as to an oracle:

and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: made an idol of it and worshipped it, and so committed spiritual fornication, which is idolatry. Some render it, "after him" {k}; not after the ephod, but after Gideon; that is, after his death, so Jarchi; no ill use was made of it in Gideon's time, though he cannot be altogether excused from sin and weakness in making it; but after his death it was soon made an ill use of:

which thing proved a snare to Gideon and to his house; it was a snare to him if he consulted it as an oracle, which could not be without sin, since the only Urim and Thummim to be consulted were in the breastplate of the high priest at the tabernacle; and it was what led his family into idolatry, and was the ruin of it, as well as it reflected great discredit and disgrace upon so good and brave a man: some read the words {l}: "to Gideon, that is, to his house"; or family; he being so good a man himself, it is not thought that he could be ensnared into idolatry itself; though it is apparent that men as wise and as good have fallen into it, as particularly Solomon.

{i} De leg. Heb. l. 3. c. 3. Dissert. 7. sect. 5. {k} wyrxa "post ipsum", Vatablus. {l} So Junius & Tremellius, Noldius, p. 280. No. 1205.

Judges 8:28

Ver. 28. Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel,.... By the hand of Gideon humbled and brought under, their power over Israel was broken, and they delivered out of their hands:

so that they lifted up their heads no more; in a proud and haughty manner to insult them, and in an hostile way to invade and oppress them; such a blow was given them that they could not recover themselves, nor do we read of any effort of theirs ever after, or of their giving or attempting to give any disturbance to Israel, or any other nation:

and the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon; that is, the land of Canaan; it was free from wars with Midian, or any other people, and enjoyed undisturbed peace and tranquillity. According to Bishop Usher {m}, this was the fortieth year from the rest restored by Deborah and Barak; and, according to Abarbinel and others, these forty years are to be reckoned from the beginning of the servitude; that is, the seven years' oppression under the Midianites are included in them; but I cannot see that in this instance, and in others before met with, years of bondage can be counted with years of peace and prosperity, and go under that general name. The true sense seems to be, that after the Israelites had been in subjection to the Midianites for seven years, and Gideon had delivered them, that from thenceforward they had rest and quietness forty years, which in all probability was the time Gideon lived after his victories.

{m} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 43.

Judges 8:29

Ver. 29. And Jerubbaal the son of Joash,.... That is, Gideon, Jerubbaal being another name of his; see **Jud 6:32** went and dwelt in his own house; which was at Ophrah, as appears from **Jud 9:5** the war being ended, he disbanded his army, and retired to his own house; not that he lived altogether a private life there, but as a judge in Israel.

Judges 8:30

Ver. 30. And Gideon had seventy sons of his body begotten,.... Not after his victories, for it is plain he had children before; mention is made of Jether, his firstborn, as a youth able to draw a sword, and slay with it, **Jud 8:20** but this was the number of all his sons, both before and after, and a large number it was; and the phrase "of his body begotten", or "that went out of his thigh" is used to show that they were his own sons, begotten in wedlock, and not sons that he had taken into his family by adoption, or that he was father-in-law to, having married a woman or women that had sons by a former husband; but these were all his own:

for he had many wives; which, though not agreeable to the original law of marriage, was customary in those times, and even with good men, and was connived at; and this is a reason accounting for his having so many sons.

Judges 8:31

Ver. 31. And his concubine that was in Shechem,.... Which was not an harlot, but a secondary or half wife; such were generally taken from handmaids, and of the meaner sort, and were not in such esteem as proper wives, had not the management of household affairs, only a share in the bed, and their children did not inherit. This concubine of Gideon's seems not to have been taken into his house at all, but lived at Shechem, perhaps in her father's house, and here Gideon met with her when he went to Shechem as a judge to try causes; her name, according to Josephus {l}, was Druma:

she also bare him a son; as his other wives did; perhaps all the children he had were sons, and this was one over and above the seventy, and not to be reckoned into that number:

whose name he called Abimelech: which signifies, "my father a king"; which he gave him either in memory of the offer made him to be king of Israel, or through foresight of what this son of his would be; or he might be moved to it by the mother from pride and vanity, and which name might afterwards inspire the young man to be made a king, as he was; and the account given of his name is because of the narrative of him in the following chapter.

{l} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 1.

Judges 8:32

Ver. 32. And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age,.... Having lived it seems forty years after his war with Midian, blessed with a large family, much wealth and riches, great credit and esteem among his people, and in favour with God and men:

and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites; a city which belonged to the family of the Abiezrites, who were of the tribe of Manasseh, in which Gideon lived, and his father before him; and where there was a family vault, in which he was interred. In the days of this judge it is supposed {m} was the famous expedition of the Argonauts to Colchis, to fetch from thence the golden fleece.

{m} Gerard. Voss Chronolog. Sacr. Dissert. 1. p. 4.

Judges 8:33

Ver. 33. And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again,.... from God, and the pure worship of him, to idolatry:

and went a whoring after Baalim; the gods of the Phoenicians and Canaanites, the several Baals of other nations, the lords many which they served; these they committed spiritual whoredom with; that is, idolatry: particularly

and made Baalberith their god; which was the idol of the Shechemites, as appears from a temple being built at Shechem for it, **Jud 9:4** and had its name either from Berytus, a city of Phoenicia, of which Mela {n} and Pliny {o} make mention, and where this Baal might be first worshipped; it was fifty miles from Sidon, and was in later times a seat of learning {p}; of this

city was Sanchoniatho, a Phoenician historian, who is said to receive many things he writes about the Jews from Jerombalus, supposed to be Jerubbaal, or Gideon;
See Gill on "Jud 6:32" and who tells {q} us, that Cronus or Ham gave this city to Neptune and the Cabiri, and who also relates {r} that Beruth is the name of a Phoenician deity. Though it may be rather this idol had its name from its supposed concern in covenants, the word "Berith" signifying a covenant; and so the Targum and Syriac version call him the lord of covenant; and the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions are,

"and they made a covenant with Baal, that he should be their god;"

as if he had his name from hence; though rather from his presiding over covenants, as Janus is said {s} to do, and from his avenging the breach of them, and rewarding those that kept them; the same with Jupiter Fidius Ultor, and Sponsor {t} with the Romans, and Horcius {u} with the Greeks.

{n} De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 12. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 20. {p} Eunapius in Vita Proaeresii, p. 117. {q} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. p. 38. {r} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. p. 36. {s} Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 12. "Latonaeque genus", &c. Vid. Liv. Hist. l. 8. c. 5, 6. {t} Vid. Kipping. Antiqu. Roman. l. 1. c. 1. p. 48. {u} Pausan. Eliac. 1. sive. l. 5. p. 336. Sophocles in Philoctete, prope finem.

Judges 8:34

Ver. 34. And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God,.... Or, as the Targum, the worship of the Lord their God; they forgot him, and forsook him, which showed base ingratitude:

who had delivered them out of the hands of their enemies on every side; not only out of the hands of Midian, but all other nations round about them, as Edom, Moab, Ammon, &c. not one attempting to oppress them.

Judges 8:35

Ver. 35. Neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely Gideon,.... But, on the contrary, great unkindness and cruelty, slaying his seventy sons, as related in the following chapter:

according to all the goodness which he had showed unto Israel; in exposing his life to danger for their sake, in delivering them out of the hands of their oppressors, in administering justice to them, in protecting them in their civil and religious liberties, and leaving them in the quiet and peaceable possession of them.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Judges 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 9

This chapter contains an account of the craft and cruelty of Abimelech, by which he got himself made king of the Shechemites, **Jud 9:1** of the parable of Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon, concerning the trees, in which he exposes their folly in making Abimelech king, and foretells the ruin of them both, **Jud 9:7** of the contentions which arose between Abimelech, and the men of Shechem, increased by Gaal the son of Ebed, **Jud 9:22** who was drawn into a battle with Abimelech, and beaten and forced to fly, **Jud 9:30** but the quarrel between Abimelech and the men of Shechem ceased not, but still continued, which issued in the entire ruin of the city and the inhabitants of it, **Jud 9:42** and in the death of Abimelech himself, according to Jotham's curse, **Jud 9:50**.

Ver. 1. And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, unto his mother's brethren,.... It seems that though the mother of Abimelech lived at Shechem, he was taken and brought up in his father's house at Ophrah, where he was when he died; and from hence he came to Shechem, to pay a visit to his uncles there; whether his mother was now living, is not certain:

and communed with them; about the death of his father, the state of his family, and the government of Israel:

and with all the family of the house of his mother's father; that descended from his grandfather, the several branches of them, and of the family, the heads of them at least:

saying, as follows.

Ver. 2. Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem,.... Which, though the Targum calls the inhabitants of the place, Ben Melech better interprets it the lords of Shechem, as the phrase will bear to be rendered; for it is more likely he would have this first whispered and suggested to the principal men of the city, before the common people were acquainted with it, and indeed in order to use their influence with them:

whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, [which are] seventy persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? intimating thereby, that though Gideon his father had refused the regal government when offered him, it was but reasonable that his sons, or some one of them, should be tried, whether it would be acceptable to them; nay, he would insinuate, that the sons of Gideon, who were seventy in number, were either contending with one another about it, or contriving to divide the government among them, and therefore desired it might be moved to consideration, whether it would not be more eligible to fix upon some one person to be their ruler, than to be under the government of seventy; or, in other words, whether it was not better to have one king than seventy kings; but in reality there was no necessity for any consultation about this matter, the sons of judges never succeeded their fathers in government; nor does it appear that any of Gideon's sons had any thought about it, nor any desire to be made kings, as appears from Jotham's parable; and this was only a wicked insinuation of this man's, with an ambitious view of getting the kingdom to himself, as follows:

remember also that I am your bone and your flesh; was of the same tribe and city with them, born among them, his mother always living with them, and he having now many near relations by his mother's side that dwelt there; and therefore while they had this affair of government under consideration, he would have them think of him to be their king, which would be to their honour, and to their advantage, to have one so nearly related to them on the throne, from whom they might expect many favours.

Ver. 3. And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of the men of Shechem all these words,.... Got them together in some certain place, and laid before them all that Abimelech had suggested to them, and spake in his favour to them:

and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, he is our brother; being fond of kingly government, as the Israelites generally were, it seemed most agreeable to them to have one king over them, and none more acceptable than one so nearly related to them, who they doubted not, from his alliance to them, would be ready to oblige them on all occasions.

Judges 9:4

Ver. 4. And they gave him seventy pieces of silver out of the house of Baalbirith,.... The temple of their idol; of this name See Gill on "Jud 8:33", out of the money which had been dedicated to his service by freewill offering, or out of a bank which they deposited there for greater safety, and perhaps out of a superstitious notion of its being more prosperous and successful: of what value these pieces were is not certain; by pieces of silver, commonly shekels are meant; but these are thought to be of too little value to be given to a man to raise an army with, or carry on a scheme to advance himself to the throne; and talents are judged to be too large a sum for such a city to contribute out of a temple of theirs, and that but lately built, as it must be since the death of Gideon; they are therefore thought to be pounds, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; however, in the number of them there seems to be some reference to the number of Gideon's sons, who were to be destroyed by bribing men with this sum, which was the scheme concerted between Abimelech and the men of Shechem;

wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him; perhaps seventy of them, giving to each a piece or pound of silver; these were a base scoundrel sort of people, that lived in an idle scandalous manner, a sort of freebooters, that lived upon what they could lay hold on in a way of force and rapine; men of light heads and empty brains, and whose pockets were as light and empty as their heads, and fit to engage in any enterprise, though ever so barbarous, for the sake of a little money.

Ver. 5. And he went to his father's house at Ophrah,.... Which, according to Bunting {a}, was ten miles from Shechem:

and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being seventy persons, upon one stone: in which he was assisted by the ruffians he had hired with seventy pieces of silver; these were laid one after another upon one and the same stone, as being convenient for the execution of them; or as serving as an altar on which they were sacrificed to Baal, out of whose temple the money was taken to hire the executioners with. They are said to be seventy that were slain, though one escaped, the round number being given, as in many other instances, as in Ge 46:27,

notwithstanding, yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; or remained alive, not out of compassion to his youth, but because he could not be found:

for he hid himself; for no doubt Abimelech, and his crew, were most forward to lay hold of the eldest, and sacrifice them first, as being most in his way; this gave Jotham the youngest not only notice of their design, but an opportunity of providing for his safety, or however his friends; for it may be rendered, as in some versions, "he was hidden" {b}, that is, by others.

{a} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 111. {b} abxn ekrubh Sept. "absconditus est", V. L. "qui absconditus fuit", Tigurine version; so the Targum.

Ver. 6. And all the men of Shechem gathered together,.... Upon the return of Abimelech, after he with his banditti had committed the execrable murder of his brethren:

and all the house of Millo; which was either the men of a place near to Shechem, or of his brother's family, or of some grand leading family in Shechem; or it may mean the town hall, where the principal inhabitants met in full house, as Millo signifies, on this occasion:

and went and made Abimelech king; which was a most bold and daring action; being done without asking counsel of God, without which no king was to be set over Israel, and by a single city, without the knowledge, advice, and consent of the body of the people of Israel: by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem; the place where they met together, and did this business in voting Abimelech to be king, was near a place where a pillar was set in Shechem; or by the oak of the pillar in Shechem, and so may mean the stone under an oak, which Joshua placed there as a testimony between God and the people, Jos 24:25 and here, in the same place where Joshua convened the people of Israel, and made his last speech to them, was this business done.

Judges 9:7

Ver. 7. And when they told it to Jotham,.... Or when it was told him that Abimelech was made king in Shechem by some of his friends:

he went and stood in the top of Mount Gerizim; a mount near Shechem; it hung over the city, as Josephus says {c}, and so a very proper place to stand on and deliver a speech from it to the inhabitants of it; who, as the same writer says, were now keeping a festival, on what account he says not, perhaps to Baalberith their idol: over against this mountain was another, called Ebal, and between them a valley; and very likely they were assembled in this valley, where the children of Israel stood when the blessings were delivered from Gerizim, and the curses from Ebal; and if so, Jotham might be heard very well by the Shechemites:

and he lifted up his voice, and cried; that he might be heard by them:

and said unto them, hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you; which was a very solemn manner of address to them, tending to excite attention, as having somewhat of importance to say to them, and suggesting, that if they did not hearken to him, God would not hearken to them when they cried to him, and therefore it behoved them to attend: it is an adjuration of them to hearken to him, or a wish that God would not hearken to them if they were inattentive to him.

{c} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 2.

Judges 9:8

Ver. 8. The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them,.... This is an apologue or fable, and a very fine and beautiful one; it is fitly expressed to answer the design, and the most ancient of the kind, being made seven hundred years before the times of Aesop, so famous for his fables, and exceeds anything written by him. By the trees are meant the people of Israel in general, and the Shechemites in particular, who had been for some time very desirous of a king, but could not persuade any of their great and good men to accept of that office:

and they said unto the olive tree, reign thou over us; a fit emblem of a good man, endowed with excellent virtues and qualifications for good, as David king of Israel, who is compared to such a tree, Ps 52:8, Jarchi applies this to Othniel the first judge; but it may be better applied to Gideon, an excellent good man, full of fruits of righteousness, and eminently useful, and to whom kingly government was offered, and was refused by him; and the men of Shechem could scarcely fail of thinking of him, and applying it to him, as Jotham was delivering his fable.

Judges 9:9

Ver. 9. But the olive tree said unto them,.... In reply to the request of the trees:

should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man; by "fatness" oil is meant, pressed out of the fruit of the olive tree, and which was much made use of both in the burning of the lamps in the tabernacle, and in many sacrifices, as the meat offerings and others, whereby God was honoured; and it was also made use of in the investiture of the greatest personages with the highest offices among men, as kings, priests, and prophets, as well as eaten with pleasure and delight by all sorts of men, and even by the greatest, and so men are honoured by it:

and go to be promoted over the trees; desert so useful a station, in which it was planted and fixed, to move to and fro, as the word signifies, and reign over trees; suggesting that it was unreasonable, at least not eligible to a good man to desert a private station in life, to which he was called of God, and in which he acted with honour and usefulness to others, and take upon him a public office, attended with much care and trouble, and with neglect of private affairs, and with the loss of much personal peace and comfort.

Judges 9:10

Ver. 10. And the trees said to the fig tree,.... Another useful and fruit bearing tree, and to which also good men are sometimes compared, see **So 2:13**,

come thou, and reign over us: which Jarchi applies to Deborah, but may be better applied to one of Gideon's sons, who, though they had not a personal offer of kingly government themselves, yet it was made to them through their father, and refused, as for himself, so for them; and had it been offered to them, they would have rejected it, as Jotham seems to intimate by this parable.

Judges 9:11

Ver. 11. And the fig tree said unto them,.... Rejecting the offer made:

should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit; for such the fruit of the fig tree is, sweet and good: so Julian {d} the emperor shows from various authors, Aristophanes, Herodotus, and Homer, that nothing is sweeter than figs, excepting honey, and that no kind of fruit is better, and, where they are, no good is wanting:

and go to be promoted over the trees? the same is designed by this as the former.

{d} Opera, par. 2. ep. 24. Sarapioni, p. 142.

Judges 9:12

Ver. 12. Then said the trees unto the vine,.... Another emblem of good and useful men; and it may be observed, that Jotham takes no notice of any trees but fruitful ones till he comes to the bramble, and them only such as were well known, and of the greatest use, in the land of Judea, as olives, figs, and vines, see **De 8:8**

come thou, and reign over us; this Jarchi applies to Gideon; but since there are three sorts of trees brought into the fable, and when the kingdom was offered to Gideon, it was proposed to him, and to his son, and his son's son, and refused, some reference may be had unto it in this apologue. Abarbinel thinks three sorts of men are intended as proper persons for rule and government, as honourable ones, such as are wealthy and rich, and also of good behaviour to God and man, as Gideon's sons were; but Abimelech was all the reverse.

Judges 9:13

Ver. 13. And the vine said unto them,.... By way of denial and refusal, as the other two:

shall I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man; which being used in the drink offerings was acceptable to God, and of a sweet savour to him, Nu 15:7 and being drank by than, revives, refreshes, and makes glad, when before sorrowful, drooping, faint, and weary, Ps 104:15 though some by Elohim, rendered God, understand great personages, as men of quality, magistrates, &c. and by man the common people, and so in **Jud 9:9**

and go to be promoted over the trees? all speak the same language, being of the same sentiment.

Judges 9:14

Ver. 14. Then said all the trees unto the bramble,.... Perceiving they could not prevail upon any of the useful and fruitful trees to take the government of them, they unite in a request to a bramble, scarce to be called a tree, and however a very barren and fruitless one, yea, hurtful and distressing:

come thou, and reign over us; this respects Abimelech, and describes him as a mean person, the son of a concubine, as having no goodness in him, not any good qualifications to recommend him to government, but all the reverse, cruel, tyrannical, and oppressive; and this exposes the folly of the Shechemites, and their eagerness to have a king at any rate, though ever so mean and despicable, useless and pernicious.

Judges 9:15

Ver. 15. And the bramble said unto the trees,.... Accepting of their offer at once:

if ye in trust anoint me king over you; suspecting they were not hearty and cordial in their choice and call to the kingly authority over them:

then come and put your trust in my shadow; promising protection to them as his subjects, requiring their confidence in him, and boasting of the good they should receive from him, as is common with wicked princes at their first entering on their office; but, alas! what shadow or protection can there be in a bramble? if a man attempts: to put himself under it for shelter, he will find it will be of no use to him, but harmful, since, the nearer and closer he comes to it, the more he will be scratched and torn by it:

and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon; signifying, that if they did not heartily submit to his government, and put confidence in him, and prove faithful to him, they should smart for it, and feel his wrath and vengeance, even the greatest men among them, comparable to the cedars of Lebanon; for thorns and brambles catching fire, as they easily do, or fire being put to them, as weak as they are, and placed under the tallest and strongest cedars, will soon fetch them down to the ground; and the words of the bramble, or Abimelech, proved true to the Shechemites, he is made to speak in this parable.

Judges 9:16

Ver. 16. Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king,.... If they had done this conscientiously, and in the uprightness of their hearts, to take such a base man, and a murderer, and make him their king, which Jotham doubted, and put it in this manner to them, that they might consider of it themselves:

if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal, and his house; if they could think so, which surely they could not, when they reflected upon the murder of his family they had consented to:

and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands; to his memory, and to his family, according to the merit of his works which he had performed on their account, next mentioned.

Judges 9:17

Ver. 17. For my father fought for you,.... In the valley of Jezreel, and at Karkor, where with three hundred men he routed and destroyed an army of 135,000:

and adventured his life far: which, according to our version, may seem to have respect to his going over Jordan, and following the Midianites, fleeing into their country, and fighting them at Karkor, at a great distance from his native place; but the phrase in the original text is, "he cast away his life afar" {e}, made no account of it, exposed it to the greatest danger; or, as the Targum,

"he delivered his life as it were to destruction:"

and delivered you out of the hand of Midian; from the oppression and bondage of the Midianites, under which they had laboured seven years.

{e} dgnm wvpn ta Klvyw "et projecit animam suam a louge", Pagninus; "vel eminus", Montanus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Judges 9:18

Ver. 18. And ye are risen up against my father's house this day,.... Which was an instance of great ingratitude in them, after such services done for them, and favours received by them:

and have slain his sons, seventy persons on one stone; excepting one, himself, and he was intentionally slain, their design was to cut off everyone; and all being slain but one, the round number is given, and this being so large, is the rather observed; and though Abimelech committed the fact, the men of Shechem were accessory to it, they gave him money, with which he hired men to assist him in it, see **Jud 9:20** and it is very probable they were privy to his intention, and encouraged him to it; and certain it is they showed their approbation of it, by making Abimelech king after it, and therefore they are justly charged with it:

and have made Abimelech, the son of his handmaid, king over the men of Shechem; which was both to the disgrace of Gideon, and his family, and of themselves too, that a base son of his should be made their king; when it would have been more to the credit of Gideon, and his family, that he had lived in obscurity, and had not been known as a son of his; and this was to the reproach of the men of Shechem, and especially to the princes thereof; for, by the men of Shechem are meant the lords, and great men thereof, as Kimchi observes; and great contempt is cast on Abimelech himself, who is here represented as making a very poor figure, being by extraction the son of an handmaid, and king only over the men of Shechem; and who made him so for no other reason but this,

because he is your brother; not because he had any right to the kingdom, or had any qualification for it, but because his mother lived among them, and her family belonged to them, and so he was related to many of them, and they hoped on that account to have preferment and favours from him.

Judges 9:19

Ver. 19. If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and his house this day,.... If they could in their consciences think and believe they had done well, and acted the faithful and upright part by him and his family, which he left with them to consider of:

then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you; may you be happy in him as a king, and he be happy in you as his subjects, and live peaceably and comfortably together; and this he suggests as a test of their former conduct, that should this alliance between Abimelech and them be attended with happiness, which he could not believe would be the case, then it would seem that they had done a right part by Gideon and his family; but if they should be unhappy together, as he supposed they would, then it would be clear that they had acted a base and disingenuous part by his father's family.

Judges 9:20

Ver. 20. But if not,.... If it appeared that they had not acted uprightly and sincerely in this matter:

let fire come out of Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; let wrath, rage, and fury, break out from Abimelech like fire, and issue in the destruction of those that made him king, both those of Shechem and of Millo:

and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech; let them be incensed against Abimelech, and seek his ruin, and procure it: the sense is, that he wishes that strife, contention, and quarrels, might arise among them, and they mutually destroy each other; the words are imprecative of evil upon them both, and which had its exact fulfilment.

Judges 9:21

Ver. 21. And Jotham ran away, and fled,.... Having delivered his fable, and the application of it, he made his escape, having the advantage of being on the top of a mountain, at some distance from the people, and perhaps they might not be inclined to do him any harm:

and went to Beer; which some take to be the same with Baalathbeer in the tribe of Simeon, Jos 19:8 Jerom {f} says, the village Bera, whither Jotham fled, is eight miles from Eleutheropolis to the north; but Mr. Maundrell {g}, who was in those parts in 1697, gives us a better account of it; and, according to him, it is about two hours and a half's travel from Bethel to it, and three hours and one third from it to Jerusalem; Beer, he says, enjoys a very pleasant situation, on an easy declivity, fronting southward; at the bottom of the hill it has a plentiful fountain of excellent water, from which it had its name:

and dwelt there for fear of Abimelech his brother; how long he dwelt there is not certain, and we hear no more of him after this, Josephus says {h} he lay hid in the mountains three years for fear of Abimelech, which perhaps he concluded from Abimelech's reigning three years, as follows.

{f} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. I {g} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 64, 66. {h} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 2.

Judges 9:22

Ver. 22. When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel. The people in general consenting to what the men of Shechem had done, at least not opposing it, all being desirous of a king, and therefore put up with a mean person, rather than have none; though it is amazing they should, and that they had not rose up as one man against Abimelech, and avenged the blood of the sons of Gideon, who had been so useful and serviceable to them; it is indeed said that he reigned over all Israel, and his reign, such as it was, was very short, as is often the case with wicked princes.

Judges 9:23

Ver. 23. Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem,.... Permitted, yea, gave a commission to Satan, the evil spirit, to go among them, who stirred up suspicions, jealousies, hatred, and ill will to one another, and sowed the seeds of discord and contention among them; or God gave them up to their own hearts' lusts, to think ill of one another, grow jealous, and meditate revenge:

and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech; did not openly declare their minds, but secretly conspired against him, and privately consulted ways to find means to get rid of him, and shake off his government.

Judges 9:24

Ver. 24. That the cruelty done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might come,.... That vengeance might come on the authors of it; so things were ordered in Providence that this might come to pass:

and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; be charged to his account, and he suffer for shedding it:

and upon the men of Shechem which aided him in killing of his brethren; by giving him money to hire men to go with him to do it, and perhaps by words encouraging the assassins, and who might be of the city of Shechem.

Judges 9:25

Ver. 25. And the men of Shechem set liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains,.... Of Ebal and Gerizim, which were near Shechem, by the way of which he passed when he came to that city, and these they set there, either to slay him, or to seize his person, and bring him to them:

and they robbed all that came along that way by them; that belonged to Abimelech and others also; and this they did to show their contempt of his government, and that they were no longer under it, and every man did what was right in his own eyes, as if they had no governor over them; though some think this was done to draw him thither to secure his subjects from such rapine and violence, that they might have an opportunity to lay hold upon him, or this they did on purpose to begin a civil war:

and it was told Abimelech; that they lay in wait for him, and so he kept himself from them.

Judges 9:26

Ver. 26. And Gaal the son or Ebed came with his brethren, and went over to Shechem,.... Who this Gaal was, and who his brethren, and from whence he came, and the place he went over, are all uncertain. Jarchi thinks he was a Gentile, and it looks, by some speeches of his afterwards, as if he was a descendant of Hamor, prince of Shechem, in the times of Jacob, who, since the expulsion of the Canaanites, his family had retired to some distant parts; but hearing of a difference between Abimelech and the Shechemites, Gaal, with some of the family, came over, perhaps over Jordan, to make what advantage he could of it:

and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him; freely told him their mind, the ill opinion they had of Abimelech, and what was their design against him; and he assuring them he would take their part, and defend them to the uttermost, they depended on him, and therefore very securely went about their business in the fields, as follows.

Judges 9:27

Ver. 27 And they went into the fields, and gathered their vineyards,.... Before they kept within the city, and durst not stir out to gather in the vintage, the time being come, for fear of the troops of Abimelech; for their lying in wait for him, and the robberies committed being made known to him, he had prepared to raise some forces, and attack them, of which they had had information; but now being encouraged with the protection of Gaal, they ventured out to gather their grapes in their vineyards without fear:

and trode the grapes, and made merry: sung songs and danced, as was usual at the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, and treading the winepress, Isa 16:10 though Abendana thinks this joy and merriment were made to their idol, to whom they gave the praise of their vintage, they should have done to the true God, and what follows may seem to confirm it:

and they went into the house of their god; the temple of Baalberith, **Jud 9:5**

and did eat and drink; in their idol temple, as was the manner of idolaters to do, bringing their firstfruits to rejoice, and make glad with:

and cursed Abimelech; wished they had never seen him and known him, hoped they should be rid of him in a little time, and that he would meet with his deserved disgrace and punishment; and this they did in that very temple from whence they had taken money to assist him in making way for his government of them; so fickle and changeable were they.

Judges 9:28

Ver. 28. And Gaal the son of Ebed said,.... As they were then making merry, drinking and carousing:

who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him? who is this Abimelech the Shechemite? or who is he more than Shechem, the old prince of this place, long ago dispossessed of it? the one is no better than the other, nor has a better title to rule and government than the other, that we should serve him; nay, of the two, the descendants of the old Shechem have the best title:

is not he the son of Jerubbaal? that pleaded against Baal, and threw down his altar, the god you now serve:

and Zebul his officer? has he not set him over you? not content to rule you himself, he has set up another as an officer over you under him, and thus you are like to be governed in a tyrannical manner, and oppressed:

serve the men of Hamor--for why should we serve him? that is, rather serve them than him; which was speaking very contemptuously of his government, preferring the descendants of Hamor, the old Canaanitish prince, that ruled in this place, to Abimelech; and if Gaal was a descendant of his, he spoke in good earnest, and thought this a proper opportunity to get the government of the city restored to him and his family, since their old religion and idolatry were established among them; and if they had received the one, why not the other?

Judges 9:29

Ver. 29. And would to God this people were under my hand,.... Or government, that I were but the ruler of their city, and general of their forces:

then would I remove Abimelech; from his kingly office, and rid Shechem of him, and all the country round about, and indeed remove him out of the world:

and he said to Abimelech; as if he was present, in a hectoring and blustering manner; or he said what follows to his officer under him, that represented him; or he sent a messenger to him, saying,

increase thine army, and come out; bidding him defiance, challenging him to come into the open field and fight him, and bring as many forces along with him as he could or would, not doubting but he should be a match for him; and the men of Shechem would see they had nothing to fear from him, having such a man as Gaal at the head of them; this he said to engage the Shechemites to make him their ruler.

Judges 9:30

Ver. 30. And when Zebul the ruler of the city,.... Whom Abimelech had placed there under him: heard

the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled; because he spoke slightly of him, and wished to have his place; perhaps before Zebul was inclined to be on the side of the Shechemites against Abimelech, or at least dissembled that he was; but now, being incensed at the words of Gaal, determined to take the side of Abimelech, and let him know how things were carrying on against him.

Judges 9:31

Ver. 31. And he sent messengers unto Abimelech privily,.... In a secret manner, unknown to Gaal and the men of Shechem; or "craftily", as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it, still dissembling, notwithstanding his anger, to be in the interest of Gaal, and the men of Shechem, as appears indeed afterwards by a show of friendliness with Gaal, **Jud 9:36** though, according to Joseph Kimchi and Ben Gersom, Thormah is the name of the place where Abimelech was, the same with Arumah, **Jud 9:41** and the sense is, that he sent messengers to Abimelech at Thormah or Arumah:

saying, Gaal the son of Ebal, and his brethren, be come to Shechem; a family that Abimelech well knew, and if they were of the race of the old Canaanites, he would easily perceive their design:

and, behold, they fortify the city against thee; by repairing its fortifications, or adding new works; or "besiege" {i} it, which, as that is done by placing an army around it without, that none can come out of it, so by setting a watch within, and upon the walls, and at the gates of it, that none can come in, which is here meant; though some interpret it of their design to besiege the city Thormah, where Abimelech was, of which he gives him notice; or rather they set the city against thee, make the inhabitants thine enemies.

{i} Myru "obsident", Pagninus, Munster, Drusius; "obsidere cogitant", Piscator.

Judges **9:32**

Ver. 32. Now therefore up by night,.... The night following, that no time might be lost:

and the people that is with thee; the troops he had with him; not only such he had for his own guards, but what he had been raising, having intelligence before this of the revolt of the Shechemites from him:

and lie in wait in the fields; he thought it most advisable for him to march with the forces he had, from the place where he was in the night, and less liable to be discovered, and remain in the fields of Shechem till morning, and then come upon Shechemites before they were aware, and surprise them.

Judges **9:33**

Ver. 33. And it shall be, that in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city,.... For being with his forces advanced near to it by a march in the night, he would be able by sunrising to attack the city before the inhabitants were up to defend it, and so surprise them:

and, behold, when he and the people that is with him come out against thee; that is, Gaul, and the men with him, as many as he upon a surprise can get together:

thou mayest do to them as thou shalt find occasion; as the situation of things would direct him, and he, in his wisdom, and according to his ability, and as opportunity offered, would see plainly what was fit and right to be done; Zebul did not pretend to advise him further, but left the rest to his discretion, as things should appear to him.

Judges **9:34**

Ver. 34. And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that were with him, by night,.... According to the advice of Zebul:

and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies; he divided his army into four parts, which he placed on the four sides of the city, at some distance from it, to act as they should have opportunity, to find ways and means of getting into it on either quarter.

Judges 9:35

Ver. 35. And Gaul the son or Ebed went out,.... He rose up early that morning, being a man of vigilance and activity, and perhaps had some intelligence of the preparations of Abimelech, his design against the city, though he did not expect he was so near at hand:

and stood in the entering of the gate of the city; to see whether the guards were on their duty within, and whether he could observe any thing without, any approaching danger:

and Abimelech rose up, and the people that were with him, from lying in wait; came out of their ambush, and appeared just as Gaul was at the gate.

Judges 9:36

Ver. 36. And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul,.... Who was up as early, and came to the gate of the city, to see how things went, and whether there was any appearance of Abimelech and his forces, and whether any opportunity offered to let him into the city; and it seems as if he came and stood by Gaul, and appeared friendly with him:

behold, there come people down from the tops of the mountains; the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim, which were near to Shechem:

and Zebul said unto him, thou seest the shadow of the mountains, as [if they were] men; either deriding him, as being just out of his bed, and his eyes scarce open, that he could not discern shadows from men; or rather as being of such a timorous spirit, that he was afraid of shadows; or else he said this, putting on an air of seriousness, as if he really believed this to be the case, on purpose to deceive him, and keep him from talking about them, while Abimelech and his men made further advances before Gaul could make any preparation to meet them.

Judges 9:37

Ver. 37. And Gaal spake again, and said,.... Looking towards the mountains, and taking another view of what he before saw, for further satisfaction:

see, there come people down by the middle of the land; either in the valley between the two mountains; or rather those he first saw on the top of the mountains were now come down about the middle of them, called in the Hebrew text the navel, from the prominence of the mountains thereabout, or because the navel is in the middle of the body, as this part of them was the middle on which he saw them. R. Isaiah interprets it, between the two cities:

and another company come along by the plain of Meonenim; of which we read nowhere else. Montanus renders it, "the oak of Meonenim"; or of the soothsayers; oaks being had in great esteem with idolaters for their oracles and divinations; and perhaps this was a place, whether an oak or, a plain, where such persons used to meet to make their divinations.

Judges 9:38

Ver. 38. Then said Zebul unto him,.... Not being able to put him off any longer, and willing to take the opportunity to upbraid him with what he had said:

where is now thy mouth, [wherewith] thou saidst, who is Abimelech, that we should serve him? darest thou say the same thou hast done, and utter the contemptuous language concerning Abimelech, asking who he was, that he should be served? Here he is, speak to his face; what are become of those boasts and brags, and great swelling words, what thou wouldest do if thou hadst the command of this city?

is not this the people thou hast despised? as small and insignificant, bidding Abimelech increase his army, and come out and fight:

go out, I pray thee, now, and fight with them; and show thyself to be a man of courage, and not a mere blusterer, a man that can use his sword as well as his tongue.

Judges 9:39

Ver. 39. And Gaal went out before the men of Shechem,.... At the head of them, to meet Abimelech, having gathered together as many, and put them in as good order, as he could, and the time would admit of:

and fought with Abimelech; without the city.

Judges 9:40

Ver. 40. And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him,.... Abimelech got the better of him in the battle, and obliged him to give way, and he pursued him closely as he was fleeing:

and many were overthrown and wounded, even unto the entering of the gate; or, "they fell many wounded" {k}, or slain, as the Targum; that is, many were killed and wounded, as in the battle, so in the pursuit, and lay all the way to the entrance into the gate of the city, to which Gaal, and the men of Shechem, made for their safety, and got in.

{k} Myllx wlpn "et ceciderant vulnerati multi", Pagninus, Montanus.

Judges 9:41

Ver. 41. And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah,.... Called also Aarima as Jerom {l} says, and in his time called Remphtis; it seems to be not far off from Shechem, he returned to the place where he was before, see **Jud 9:31** contenting himself with the advantage he had got, and waiting when another opportunity would offer, which quickly did, to be revenged on the Shechemites:

and Zebul thrust out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not dwell in

Shechem; there seems to have been two parties in Shechem before, one that hated Abimelech, and another more friendly to his interest; by which means Zebul his officer kept his post, and Gaal could not get the government into his hand; and now by the loss in the late battle, who were Abimelech's sworn enemies, and the disgrace Gaal fell into by being beaten, Zebul was able, so far able to carry his point, as to drive Gaul and his brethren out of the city; though he had not strength to put him to death, or to seize him and deliver him into the hands of Abimelech.

{l} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. B.

Judges 9:42

Ver. 42. And it came to pass on the morrow,.... The day after the battle:

that the people went out into the field; some think to fight, and try the event of another battle, in order to be freed from Abimelech, but that seems not so likely: rather to finish their vintage, as Josephus {l}, or to till their ground, to plough and sow, which quickly came on after the vintage was ended; find this they might do the more securely, since Abimelech had withdrawn himself and his forces to his place of habitation, and so concluded he would not soon at least return to them; and the rather they might think he would be more easy, with then, since Gaal was thrust out from among them:

and they told Abimelech; or it was told Abimelech, that the people came out into the field, and so an opportunity offered to him to come and cut them off, as they were at their business unarmed.

{l} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 4.

Judges 9:43

Ver. 43. And he took the people,.... That is, the forces he had with him at Arumah:

and divided them into three companies: each having a separate leader, and the command of one of them he had himself:

and laid wait in the field; in the field of Shechem, one company in one part, and one in another part of the field:

and looked, and, behold, the people were come forth out of the city; he watched them when they did:

and he rose up against them, and smote them; the companies rose up out of their ambush, in different parts, and killed them.

Judges 9:44

Ver. 44. And Abimelech, and the company that was with him,.... Which he had the particular command of; or "the heads" {m}, for in the company with him, as Kimchi observes, were great men; and so the Septuagint renders it, the princes that were with him:

rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city; to prevent the people that were in the field getting into it, and any from coming out of it to their relief:

and the two other companies ran upon all the people that were in the fields, and slew them; so that by this means none escaped.

{m} Myvarhw "et capita", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "et principes", Vatablus.

Judges 9:45

Ver. 45. And Abimelech fought against the city all that day,.... By throwing stones or arrows into it:

and he took the city; it was surrendered to him, not being able to stand out against his forces:

and slew the people that was therein; all but those that were of his own family and his friends; all that had taken up arms against him, or had shown their dislike of his government, and were his enemies:

and beat down the city; the houses in it, and walls of it, though it was his native place:

and sowed it with salt; not to make it barren, for he would rather then have sowed the field, though this would not have had any effect of that kind, for any time at least; but to show his detestation of it, because of the ill usage he had met with, and as a token of its perpetual destruction, to which he devoted it, determining that if it was in his power it should never be rebuilt; but it was hereafter, and became again a very flourishing city in Jeroboam's time. Thus the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, in the year 1162, when he took Milan, not only ploughed it up, but sowed it with salt; and in memory of it there is a street in it, now called "la contrada della Sala" {n}: besides, Abimelech did this to deter other cities from rebelling against him; for if he so used his own city, more severely, if possible, would he use others.

{n} Sigonius de regn. Ital. l. 13, & 14.

Judges 9:46

Ver. 46. And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard that,.... That the city of Shechem was taken, the inhabitants of it slain, the city beaten down, and sowed with salt; by which it appears that this tower was not within the city, for then the men of it would have seen what was done, and not be said only to hear it; though it was not far from it, and possessed by Shechemites, and whither some of the principal inhabitants had now fled for safety; perhaps it is the same with the house of Millo, and so that part of Jotham's curse, which respected that, had now its accomplishment, otherwise no account is given of it:

they entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith; not thinking themselves safe enough in the tower, they betook themselves to the temple of Baalberith their god, see **Jud 9:4** which was a strong fortified place, as temples often were; or however had a strong hold belonging to it, and hither they fled, either because of the greater strength of the place, or because of the sanctity of it, and imagining Abimelech would not destroy it on that account; and the rather, because of the supply he had from it, which enabled him to raise himself to the government of Israel.

Judges **9:47**

Ver. 47. And it was told Abimelech,.... Who had his spies about, and particularly to observe the motions of the men in this tower:

that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together; in the hold of the temple of Baalberith.

Judges **9:48**

Ver. 48. And Abimelech got him up to Mount Zalmon,.... A mountain near Shechem, and thought to be the same with Salmon in Ps 68:14 which seems to have had its name from the shade of the trees which grew upon it:

he and all the people that were with him; his whole army:

and Abimelech took an axe in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees; which grew upon Mount Zalmon:

and took it, and laid it on his shoulders; and carried it along with him:

and said unto the people that were with him, what ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done; take an axe, and every man cut down a bough with all possible haste, and lay it on his shoulder.

Judges **9:49**

Ver. 49. And all the people likewise cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech,.... With their boughs on their shoulders, so that they were men that seemed to be as trees walking:

and put them to the hold, and set the hold on fire upon them; upon the men in it, or with them, the boughs of trees; it is probable the hold was made of wood, and so could the more easily be set on fire. Jarchi says it was a wood or forest, where they bent the trees, and divided them round about, and made a fence of them; but they would scarcely have left the tower for such a shelter:

so that all the men of the tower of Shechem died also; fire being put to the hold, and they burnt in it; the Vulgate Latin version adds, with fire and smoke; for they being boughs of trees just cut down, with which they set fire to the hold, they would not burn easily and clearly, but make a prodigious smoke, with which many might be suffocated, as others burnt with fire; and it is unaccountable that Josephus {o} should say that faggots of dry wood were taken, and with them fire set to the hold, when the text is so express for it that they were boughs of green trees just cut off:

about a thousand men and women; but the above historian makes them to be many more; he says the men were about 1500, and the rest a great multitude; this literally fulfilled Jotham's curse.

{o} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 4.

Judges 9:50

Ver. 50. Then went Abimelech to Thebez,.... Which, according to Ben Gersom, had rebelled against him; it was near to Shechem. Adrichomius says {p}, the ruins, where he thinks stood the city of Thebez, were but one furlong from Neapolis or Shechem, where, to the left of Jacob's well, were to be seen ruins of a large town, marble stones, whole pillars, and other signs of large palaces, and the soil wonderfully fruitful; and Jerome says {q}, that in his time there was a village called Thebes, on the borders of Neapolis or Shechem, as you go to Scythopolis, thirteen miles from it. It must be near Shechem, inhabited by Shechemites, to fulfil Jotham's curse, **Jud 9:20**

and encamped against Thebez, and took it: it seems not to have held out long, being deserted by its inhabitants, who fled to the tower, as follows.

{p} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 70. {q} De loc. Heb. 95. D.

Judges 9:51

Ver. 51. But there was a strong tower within the city,.... The tower of Shechem was without the city, but this within, as towers generally are:

and hither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city; men, women, and children, man and maid servants, all the inhabitants of the city; the tower being a large place, having not only many rooms in it, but perhaps a large area in the midst of it, as well as it had battlements on the top of it:

and shut it to them; the gates of it, and which no doubt they strongly barred and bolted, to keep out the enemy:

and gat them up to the top of the tower; to observe the motions of Abimelech, and annoy him as much as they could with what they carried with them, as stones, and the like.

Judges 9:52

Ver. 52. And Abimelech came unto the tower,.... With his army to besiege it:

and fought against it; using all the methods he could to oblige those in it to surrender:

and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire; in order to get entrance into it; and perhaps the tower was built of stone, so that no other part could be set fire to; and to do this he drew near to the door himself, for nothing more is meant by the phrase, "went hard", than drawing near in his own person to the door; hazarding his life in the enterprise, being so bent upon it, thinking to do by this tower what he had done to the hold of the temple of Baalberith.

Judges 9:53

Ver. 53. And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone,.... Of the upper millstone, as the word signifies, which is observed by Jarchi and other Jewish commentators; this with other stones being carried up to the top of the tower, to do what execution they could with them: and a woman observing Abimelech making up to the door of the tower, took up this piece of millstone, and threw it down

upon Abimelech's head, and all to break his skull; she did it with that view, though it may as well be rendered, or "she", or "it broke his skull" {r}; it made a fracture in it, which was mortal. Abendana observes, and so others, that that was measure for measure, a righteous retaliation, that as he had slain seventy of his brethren on one stone, he should die by means of a stone.

{r} wtlglg ta Urtw "et confregit cranium ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Tigurine version.

Judges 9:54

Ver. 54. Then he called hastily to the young man his armourbearer,.... Perceiving it was a mortal blow that was given him, and he should soon expire; and that the cast of the stone was by the hand of a woman, and therefore he was in haste to have the young man come to him:

and said unto him, draw thy sword and slay me, that men say not of me, a woman slew him; it being reckoned very ignominious and reproachful to die by the hand of a woman, and especially any great personage, as a king or general of an army {s}; to avoid this, he chose rather to be guilty of suicide, or of what cannot well be excused from it, and so died by suicide; which, added to all his other sins, he seemed to have no sense of, or repentance for; and the method he took to conceal the shame of his death served the more to spread it; for this circumstance of his death could not be given without the reason of it, and which was remembered and related punctually near two hundred years afterwards, 2Sa 11:21.

{s} "O turpe fatum! foemina Herculeae, necis Auctor feretur ----" Seneca Oetaeo.

Judges 9:55

Ver. 55. And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead,.... That is, those that were with him, the men of his army, who were all Israelites:

they departed every man to his place; disbanded themselves, and went everyone to their own home, and so the inhabitants of Thebez escaped the vengeance of Abimelech.

Judges 9:56

Ver. 56. Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech which he did unto his father,.... To the disgrace of his father's character, and to the hurt of his father's family:

in slaying his seventy brethren; excepting one, which was a piece of unheard of wickedness, attended with most sad aggravations; the shedding such blood required blood to be shed again, and it was righteous judgment God rendered to him; this, and the following verse contain the remarks made upon this history by the writer of it, who, as we have seen, in all probability, was the Prophet Samuel.

Judges 9:57

Ver. 57. And all the evil of the men of Shechem,.... In aiding Abimelech to slay his brethren, and in making him king after so foul a fact committed:

did God render upon their heads; by suffering Abimelech to beat down their city, and destroy the inhabitants of it, and by burning the hold in which the men of the tower of Shechem were, and them in it:

and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal; both upon Abimelech, and the men of Shechem, they being destroyed by one another, as Jotham imprecated they might, and foretold they would, see **Jud 9:20**.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Judges 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 10

This chapter gives an account of two judges of Israel, in whose days they enjoyed peace, Jud 10:1, after which they sinning against God, came into trouble, and were oppressed by their enemies eighteen years, and were also invaded by an army of the Ammonites, Jud 10:6, when they cried unto the Lord for deliverance, confessing their sin; but he had first refused to grant them any, though upon their importunity and reformation he had compassion on them, Jud 10:10 and the chapter is concluded with the preparation made by both armies for a battle, Jud 10:17.

Ver. 1. And after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel,.... To save, deliver, and protect Israel; which does not necessarily imply that Abimelech did; for he was no judge of God's raising up, or the people's choosing, but usurped a kingly power over them; and was so far from saving and defending them, that he involved them in trouble and distress, and ruled over them in a tyrannical manner, and left them in the practice of idolatry: it only signifies that after his death arose a person next described to which this may well be attributed, that he was raised up as a judge by the Lord; and though we read of no enemies particularly, that he delivered the people from in his days, yet it is not impossible nor unlikely that there might be such, though not made mention of; besides, he might be said to save them, as the word signifies, in that he was an happy instrument of composing those differences and dissensions, which Abimelech had occasioned, and of recovering them from the idolatry they had fallen into in his times, and of protecting them in their liberties, civil and religious: and this was

Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; he was of the tribe of Issachar, and bore the same name as the eldest son of Issachar did, as his father Puah had the name of the second son of Issachar, **1Ch 7:1** and as for Dodo his grandfather, this is elsewhere mentioned as the name of a man, as it doubtless is here, 2Sa 23:9 though some copies of the Targum, the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, render it, the son of his uncle, or father's brother; meaning that his father Puah was the son of Abimelech's uncle, or father's brother, and so was one of the family which was raised up to be a judge after his death; but it is not likely that Gideon, the father of Abimelech, and Puah, the father of this man, should be brethren, when the one was of the tribe of Manasseh, and the other of the tribe of Issachar:

and he dwelt in Shamir in Mount Ephraim: that is, when he became judge in Israel he removed to this place, as being in the midst of the tribes, and near the tabernacle of Shiloh, and so fit for a judge to reside in, to whom the people might apply from all parts to have justice and judgment administered to them. It is called Shamir in Mount Ephraim, to distinguish it from another of the same name in the mountain of Judah, Jos 15:48 it seems to have its name from the thorns which grew about it.

Judges 10:2

Ver. 2. And he judged Israel twenty three years, and died,.... He did not take upon him to be king, as Abimelech did, but acted as a judge, in which office he continued twenty three years, and faithfully discharged it, and died in honour:

and was buried in Shamir; the place where he executed his office. It is said {t}, that in the first year of Tola, the son of Puah, Priamus reigned in Troy.

{t} Juchasin, fol. 136. 1.

Judges 10:3

Ver. 3. And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite,.... Who was of the half tribe of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan, which inhabited the land of Gilead, and who is the first of the judges that was on that side Jordan; it pleased God, before the government was settled in a particular tribe, to remove it from one to another, and to honour them all, and to show that though the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, were separated from their brethren by the river Jordan, they were not neglected by the Lord; and generally speaking judges were raised up in all those parts which were most oppressed, and liable to be oppressed by their enemies, as Gilead by the Ammonites; wherefore this, and the next judge that followed him, Jephthah, were of Gilead:

and judged Israel twenty two years; protected them from their enemies, administered justice to them, and preserved them in the true religion.

Judges 10:4

Ver. 4. And he had thirty sons that rode upon thirty ass colts,.... Which to ride on in those times was reckoned honourable, and on which judges rode in their circuit, **Jud 5:10** and such might be these sons of Jair, who were appointed under him to ride about, and do justice in the several parts of the country, as Samuel's sons were judges under him, **1Sa 8:1**, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havothjair unto this day, which are in the land of Gilead; or the villages of Jair. There were some of this name that belonged to Jair, a son of Manasseh, in the times of Moses, Nu 32:41 and these may be the same, at least some of them; for they were but twenty three he had, whereas these were thirty, **1Ch 2:22** and these coming by inheritance to this Jair, a descendant of the former, and he being of the same name, and these cities perhaps repaired and enlarged by him, the name of them was continued and established, for it is not reasonable to suppose, as some have done, that this is the same Jair that lived in the times of Moses, who, if so, must have lived more than three hundred years, an age men did not live to in those times.

Judges 10:5

Ver. 5. And Jair died, and was buried in Camon. A city of Gilead, as Josephus {u} calls it; Jerom {w}, under this word Camon, makes mention of a village in his times, called Cimana, in the large plain six miles from Legion to the north, as you go to Ptolemais; but, as Reland {x} observes, this seems not to be the same place, but rather this is the Camon Polybius {y} speaks of among other cities of Peraea, taken by Antiochus.

{u} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 6. {w} De loc. Heb. fol. 90. B. {x} Palestina Illustr. tom. 2. p. 679. {y} Hist. l. 5.

Judges 10:6

Ver. 6. And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord,.... After the death of the above judges they fell into idolatry again, as the following instances show:

and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth; as they had before, See Gill on "Jud 2:11" see Gill on "Jud 2:13" and, besides these,

also the gods of Syria; their gods and goddesses, Belus and Saturn, Astarte and the Dea Syria, Lucian writes of:

and the gods of Zidon; the goddess of the Zidonians was Ashtaroth, 1Ki 11:5 and it seems they had other deities:

and the gods of Moab; the chief of which were Baalpeor and Chemosh, Nu 25:3

and the gods of the children of Ammon, as Milcom or Molech, 1Ki 11:5

and the gods of the Philistines; as Dagon the god of Ashdod, Beelzebub the god of Ekron, Marnas the god of Gaza, and Derceto the goddess of Ashkalon:

and forsook the Lord, and served not him; not even in conjunction with the above deities, as Jarchi and others observe; at other times, when they worshipped other gods, they pretended to worship the Lord also, they served the creature besides the Creator; but now they were so dreadfully sunk into idolatry, that they had wholly forsaken the Lord and his worship at the tabernacle, and made no pretensions to it, but entirely neglected it.

Judges 10:7

Ver. 7. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel,.... His anger burned like fire, he was exceedingly incensed against them, nothing being more provoking to him than idolatry, as after mentioned:

and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon; that is, delivered them into their hands, and they became subject and were in bondage to them, as such are that are sold for "slaves"; part of them, that lay to the west of the land of Israel, fell into the hands of the Philistines; and another part, which lay to the east, were oppressed by the children of Ammon, particularly those that were on the other side Jordan came into the hands of the latter.

Judges 10:8

Ver. 8. And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel,.... The Philistines on one side, and the children of Ammon on the other; meaning either that year in which Jair died, as Jarchi; or the first year they began to bring them into bondage, as R. Isaiah: "and from that year", as Kimchi and Ben Melech, that they vexed and distressed them, they continued to vex and distress them

eighteen years; or, as Abarbinel interprets it, "with that year", they vexed and oppressed them eighteen years, that is, so many more, or reckoning that into the number of them; and these eighteen years of their oppression are not to be reckoned into the years of Jair's government, and as commencing from the fourth of it, as Bishop Usher, Lightfoot, and others; for it does not appear that there was any oppression in his days, but from the time of his death to the raising up of Jephthah a new judge: and the people oppressed by the children of Ammon during that time

were all the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan, in the land of the Ammonites, which is in Gilead; even the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

Judges 10:9

Ver. 9. Moreover, the children of Ammon passed over Jordan,.... Not content with the oppression of the tribes on the other side Jordan, which had continued eighteen years, they came over Jordan into the land of Canaan to ravage that, and bring other of the tribes into subjection to them, particularly the three next mentioned, which lay readiest for them, when they were come over Jordan:

to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim who lay to the south and the southeast of the land of Canaan, and were the first the Ammonites had to fight with and subdue, when they had crossed Jordan to the east of it:

so that Israel was sore distressed; by the Ammonites in the east, threatening those three tribes, mentioned, and the Philistines on the west, who gave disturbance to the tribes that lay nearest them, as Asher, Zebulun, Naphtali, Issachar, and Dan; and this distress was begun the same year in different parts, by different enemies.

Judges 10:10

Ver. 10. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord,.... In this their distress, seeing nothing but ruin and destruction before their eyes, their land being invaded by such powerful enemies in different quarters; this opened their eyes to a sense of their sins, the cause of it, and brought them to a confession of them:

saying, we have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim; had been guilty not only of sins of omission, neglecting the pure of God, but also of sins of commission, even gross idolatry, in serving Baalim, and other gods, before mentioned.

Judges 10:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord said unto the children of Israel,.... By a prophet he sent unto them, as Kimchi and Abarbinel, see **Jud 6:8**, whom Ben Gersom takes to be Phinehas, but he could not be living at this time; or by an angel, a created one, sent on this occasion; or the uncreated one, the Son and Word of God, who might appear in an human form, and to whom all that is here said is applicable:

did not I deliver you from the Egyptians; by bringing them out of subjection and bondage to them, and by delivering them out of their hands at the Red sea:

and from the Amorites; the kings of Sihon and Og, whose countries were taken from them, and put into their hands, when they attempted to stop them in their march to the land of Canaan:

from the children of Ammon; when they joined with the Moabites against them, **Jud 3:13**

and from the Philistines? in the times of Shamgar, **Jud 3:31**.

Judges 10:12

Ver. 12. The Zidonians also,.... Who were left in the land to distress them, though there is no particular mention of them, and of the distress they gave them, and of their deliverance from it, which yet is not at all to be questioned:

and the Amalekites; both quickly after they came out of Egypt, Ex 17:13 and when they were come into the land of Canaan, joining the Moabites and the Midianites against them, **Jud 3:13**

and the Maonites did oppress you; meaning either the old inhabitants of Maon, a city in the mountains of Judah, near to which was a wilderness of this name, Jos 15:55 or rather a people of Arabia, called by Strabo {z}, and Diodorus Siculus {a}, Minaeans, the same with Mehunim, mentioned with the Arabians, 2Ch 26:7 and who perhaps came along with the Midianites, when they oppressed Israel; though some have thought of the old inhabitants of Bethmeon and Baalmeon, Nu 32:38

and ye cried unto me, and I delivered you out of their hands; all those mercies and deliverances are mentioned to aggravate their sins, that notwithstanding the Lord hath so often and eminently appeared for them, yet they deserted him and his worship, and fell into idolatry. Jarchi observes, that here are seven salvations or deliverances mentioned in opposition to the seven sorts of false gods or idols they had served, Jud 10:6.

{z} Geograph. l. 16. p. 528. {a} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 176.

Judges 10:13

Ver. 13. Ye have forsaken me, and served other gods,.... Since they had been so remarkably saved, time after time, and delivered from so many powerful enemies, which was dreadful ingratitude:

wherefore I will deliver you no more; which is not to be understood absolutely, since after this he did deliver them, but conditionally, unless they repented of their idolatries, and forsook them. This is said to bring them to a sense of their sin and danger.

Judges 10:14

Ver. 14. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen,.... For they were their choice, and not what they were obliged to serve through persecution, and by compulsion of others, and whom they needed not, having the Lord Jehovah to be their God; and they are bid not seriously, but in an ironical or sarcastic way, to call upon them for help in this their time of distress, in whose power it was not to relieve them:

let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation; if they can, whom you have served in your prosperity.

Judges 10:15

Ver. 15. And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, we have sinned,.... By serving other gods particularly; and they seemed to have a true sense of their sin, and their confessions of it to be ingenuous, by what follows:

do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; inflict what punishment he would upon them, as famine or pestilence, they could not but own it would be just and righteous, and what their sins deserved:

deliver us only, we pray thee, this day; out of the hands of men; they chose rather to fall into the hands of God; and however he thought fit to deal with them, they entreated that this once he would save them out of the hands of their enemies.

Judges 10:16

Ver. 16. And they put away the strange gods from among them,.... Which was an evidence of the truth of their repentance, and showed their confessions and humiliations to be genuine:

and served the Lord; and him only, both in private and public; in the observance of duties, both moral and ceremonial; in an attendance on the service of the sanctuary, and by offering sacrifices to God there, according to his will:

and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel; which is to be understood after the manner of men; for grief properly does not belong to God, there being no passion in him; but it denotes a carriage or behaviour of his, which shows what looks like sympathy in men; a love and affection for Israel, notwithstanding their ill behaviour to him, and a change of his dispensations Providence towards them, according to his unchangeable will; so Maimonides {b} understands it of the good will and pleasure of God, to cease from afflicting the people of Israel; but Abarbinel is of opinion that this refers to the soul of Israel, which was shortened and contracted, as the word signifies, because of the labour of servitude, the affliction and distress they were in.

{b} Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 41.

Judges 10:17

Ver. 17. Then the children of Ammon were gathered together,.... By a crier, as Jarchi; they had passed over Jordan, as in Jud 10:9 and had been distressing three of the tribes of Israel on that side; but now being informed, by an herald at arms, that the children of Israel, on the other side Jordan, were risen up in defence of their country, rights, and liberties, the children of Ammon came back and crossed over Jordan again:

and encamped in Gilead; in the land of Gilead, part of which belonged to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the other part to the half tribe of Manasseh:

and the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped at Mizpeh: of which name there were several cities in the land of Israel, on both sides Jordan; this must design a place on the other side Jordan, either in the tribe of Gad or Manasseh, for it seems there was of this name in each, see Ge 31:49.

Judges 10:18

Ver. 18. And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another,.... Being thus assembled and encamped:

what man is he that will begin to fight with the children of Ammon? for though the forces were assembled together for battle, yet it seems they had no general to command them, and lead them on to it:

he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead, this they ordered to be proclaimed, to encourage some person to take the command of them, and go before them to battle, promising him that he should be judge or governor over all the tribes on that side Jordan.

Judges 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 11

This chapter gives an account of another judge of Israel, Jephthah, of his descent and character, Jud 11:1 of the call the elders of Gilead gave him to be their captain general, and lead out their forces against the Ammonites, and the agreement he made with them, Jud 11:4 of the message he sent to the children of Ammon, which brought on a dispute between him and them about the land Israel possessed on that side Jordan the Ammonites claimed; Israel's right to which Jephthah defended, and made it clearly to appear, hoping thereby to put an end to the quarrel without shedding of blood, Jud 11:12 but the children of Ammon not attending to what he said, he prepared to give them battle, and previous to it he made a vow, and then set forward and fought them, and got the victory over them, Jud 11:28 and the chapter concludes with the difficulties Jephthah was embarrassed with upon his return home, on account of his vow, and the performance of it, Jud 11:34.

Ver. 1. Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour,.... Jephthah had his name of Gileadite either from his father, whose name was Gilead, or from the city and country in which he was born, which is most likely, and so was of the same country with the preceding judge; and he was a man of great strength and valour, and which perhaps became known by his successful excursions on parties of the enemies of Israel, the Ammonites, being at the head of a band of men, who lived by the booty they got from them:

and he was the son of an harlot; the Targum says, an innkeeper; and, according to Kimchi, she was a concubine, which some reckoned no better than an harlot, but such are not usually called so; some Jewish writers will have her to be one of another tribe his father ought not to have married; and others, that she was of another nation, a Gentile, so Josephus {c}: and, according to Patricides {d}, he was the son of a Saracen woman; but neither of these are sufficient to denominate her a harlot:

and Gilead begat Jephthah; he was his son; this was a descendant of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, called after the name of his great ancestor.

{c} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 7. {d} Apud Selden. de Success. ad leg. Ebr. c. 3. p. 32.

Judges 11:2

Ver. 2. And Gilead's wife bare him sons,.... It seems that, after the birth of Jephthah, Gilead took him a lawful wife, who bore him sons:

and his wife's sons grew up; to the estate of men:

and they thrust out Jephthah: out of his father's house, his father in all likelihood being dead, or he would not have suffered it, and what follows confirms it that he was dead:

and said unto him, thou shalt not inherit in our father's house: as he might not, if the son of an harlot, or of a woman of another tribe, or of a concubine; though as Kimchi, from their Rabbins, observes, the son of such an one might, provided his mother was not an handmaid nor a stranger. And it looks as if this was not rightly done, but that Jephthah was injuriously dealt with by his brethren, of which he complains:

for thou art the son of a strange woman: or of another "woman" {e}, that was not their father's lawful wife; or of a woman of another tribe, as the Targum; or of another nation, as others, prostitutes being used to go into foreign countries to get a livelihood, and hide the shame of their families; hence a strange woman, and a harlot, signified the same {f}, see Jud 11:1.

{e} trxa hva "mulieris alterius", Pagninus, Montanus; "exterae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Tigurine version. {f} "Pro uxore hanc peregrinam", Terent. Audria, act 1, scen. 1. l. 118.

Ver. 3. Then Jephthah fled from his brethren,.... Being ill used by them, and a man of spirit and courage, and could not bear to be treated with contempt, nor to live in a dependence on others, and therefore sought to make himself another way:

and dwelt in the land of Tob; which Kimchi and Ben Gersom think was the name of the lord and owner of the land; Abarbinel interprets it, a good land, as Tob signifies, so the Targum; but others the name of a city or country, and conjecture it may be the same with Ishtob, and which was not far from the children of Ammon, since they sent thither for assistance, 2Sa 10:6. Jerom {g} takes it for a country, in which Jephthah dwelt, but says no more of it. Junius says it was on the entrance of Arabia Deserta, in the Apocypha:

"Yea, all our brethren that were in the places of Tobie are put to death: their wives and their children also they have carried away captives, and borne away their stuff; and they have destroyed there about a thousand men." (1 Maccabees 5:13)

"Then departed they from thence seven hundred and fifty furlongs, and came to Characa unto the Jews that are called Tubieni." (2 Maccabees 12:17)

where the inhabitants of it are called Tobienians or Tubienians:

and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah; not wicked men, but empty men, whose pockets were empty; men without money, as Abarbinel interprets it, had nothing to live upon, no more than Jephthah, and he being a valiant man, they enlisted themselves under him:

and went out with him; not on any bad design, as to rob and plunder, but to get their living by hunting; or rather by making excursions into the enemy's country, and carrying off booty, on which they lived. Josephus {h} says he maintained them at his own expense, and paid them wages.

{g} De loc. Heb. fol. 25. A. {h} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 7.)

Judges **11:4**

Ver. 4. And it came to pass in process of time,.... Some time after Jephthah had been expelled from his father's house, and he was become famous for his martial genius, and military exploits; or at the close of the eighteen years' oppression of the children of Israel by the Ammonites, or some few days after the children of Israel were gathered together at Mizpeh, that the people and princes of Gilead were preparing for war with Ammon, and were thinking of a proper person to be their general:

that the children of Ammon made war against Israel; not only passed over Jordan again, and encamped in Gilead, but began to attack them in some place or another, at least threatened them with it, and made motions towards it.

Judges **11:5**

Ver. 5. And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel,.... Were preparing for it, and had assembled their forces near them, and had began to make some efforts against them:

the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob; they did not send messengers to him, but went themselves, partly to show greater respect to him, and partly in hopes of better success, being aware of objections he would make, which they could better answer themselves than a deputation.

Judges **11:6**

Ver. 6. And they said unto Jephthah, come and be our captain,.... The general of their army, to conduct and lead on their forces; they did not propose him to be their king, being convinced by Abimelech's conduct that such a step would be wrong; nor did they say anything of his being their judge, having no other view than to serve their present exigence; besides, a judge was not one chosen by the people, but raised up of God, and which honour was conferred on Jephthah afterwards:

that we may fight with the children of Ammon; with judgment, courage, and success; they did not make this proposal to him to save themselves from being engaged in the war, but that they might have one skilful in military affairs at the head of them, to instruct them in the art of war, and lead them on in a regular manner, and animate them by his brave example.

Judges 11:7

Ver. 7. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead,.... In answer to their request; who though not backward to engage in the war with them, yet thought it proper to take this opportunity to upbraid them with their former unkindness to him:

did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? for it seems some of these elders at least were his brethren; for who else could be thought to hate him, and through hatred to thrust him out of his father's house, but they? nor is it at all improbable that they were among the elders of Gilead, considering what family they were of: though indeed the magistrates of the city might be assisting to Jephthah's brethren in the expulsion of him, or however connived at it, when they should, as he thought, have protected him, and taken care that he had justice done him; for even though illegitimate, a maintenance was due to him:

and why are ye come unto me now, when ye are in distress? intimating, that it was not love and respect to him, but necessity, that brought them to him with this request; and that since they used him so ill, they could not reasonably expect he should have any regard unto them.

Judges 11:8

Ver. 8. And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah,.... In reply to his objection:

therefore we turn again unto thee now; being sensible of the injury they had done him, and repenting of it, of which their return to him was an evidence; it being with this view to remove the disgrace and dishonour that had been cast upon him, by conferring such honour on him, as to be their chief ruler:

that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead; the end of their coming to him was not only to bring him back with them to his own country, and to fight against the Ammonites, and the defence of it, but to be the sole governor of it; not of all Israel, but of the tribes beyond Jordan, which inhabited the land of Gilead: more than this they could not promise, though he afterwards was judge over all Israel, notwithstanding there was a law in Israel, that no spurious person should enter into the congregation, or bear any public office; so it was a law with the Athenians {i}, that unless a man was born of both parents citizens, he should be reckoned spurious, and have no share in the government, see Jud 11:2.

{i} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 6. c. 10. l. 13. c. 24. "Suidas in voce" dhmopoihtov.

Judges 11:9

Ver. 9. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead,.... Considering the former usage he had met with from them, and the character which he himself bore, and the fickleness of men, when their turn is served, was willing to make a sure bargain with them:

if ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon; that is, should he consent to go along with them, and fight their battle for them:

and the Lord deliver them before me; or into his hands, on whom he depended for success, and not on his own courage and valour, and military skill:

shall I be your head? not only captain general of their forces during the war, but the chief ruler of them when that was ended.

Judges 11:10

Ver. 10. And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah,.... Assenting to his proposal, and not only giving their word for it, but their oath:

the Lord be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words; that is, make him head over them; they appealed to the omniscient God, and called on him to be a witness of their agreement to it, and swore by him they would fulfil it; or if they did not, that the Lord would take vengeance on them for it, and punish the breach of this covenant and oath in some way or another; the Targum of Jonathan is,

"the Word of the Lord be a witness between us, &c."

Judges **11:11**

Ver. 11. Then Jephthah went with the elders of Israel,.... From the land of Tob into the land of Gilead, his native country:

and the people made him head and captain over them; ratified and confirmed what the elders had promised, and by a general unanimous vote appointed him both to be the captain of their forces, and to be the chief ruler and governor of them. And this they did, though he was the son of an harlot; and according to the law in De 23:2, such an one was not to be a civil magistrate; but this was a case of necessity, and in which, no doubt, they were directed by the Lord, who could dispense with his own law: besides, they had come to such an agreement before they had pitched on any particular person, that who should begin to fight with the children of Ammon should be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead so that they were obliged to it by their vote and decree, when they assembled at Mizpeh, where it is probable they consulted the Lord, and acted under his direction, Jud 10:17 and where this was confirmed, as seems from the following clause:

and Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh; where the congregation of Israel were assembled, and in which the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, dwelt, as is observed by Jarchi and Kimchi, and not Mizpeh in Jos 11:3, as the latter says, but this was on the other side Jordan, in the land of Gilead; however, as it was a solemn meeting, the Lord was there, and, as in his presence, Jephthah rehearsed all that passed between him and the elders of Gilead; and, no doubt, in prayer to God, desired he would signify his approbation and ratification of their agreement, and would give him success in his undertakings against the children of Ammon.

Judges **11:12**

Ver. 12. And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon,.... Being now declared chief and sole governor of the tribes on the other side Jordan, he acted in character, and as such sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, to know the reason of his invading the land that belonged to Israel, being desirous of adjusting things in an amicable way, and to prevent the shedding of blood; in which he behaved as a good man, and not at all inconsistent with a man of valour and courage:

saying, what hast thou to do with me; to invade my land, and disturb my people, what have I or they done to give occasion for it?

that thou art come against me to fight in my land? he speaks in the language of a governor, and as a man of spirit concerned for the good of his country, and determined to defend the rights and liberties of it.

Judges 11:13

Ver. 13. And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah,.... Who this king of Ammon was is not said, however he returned an answer to Jephthah's messengers, which they brought to him, and it was to this purpose; that the reason of his invading the land, and bringing war into it, was,

because Israel took away my land when they came out of Egypt; not as soon as they came out of Egypt, for it was thirty nine years afterwards, and upwards, even a little before they entered into the land of Canaan; and the land they took was not theirs, but in the possession of Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites; though indeed, before their conquest of it, it had been in the hands of the Moabites and Ammonites, and who being confederates, or subjects of the same king, is here claimed by the king of the children of Ammon:

from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan; the river Arnon was the border between Moab and the Amorites, and the river Jabbok was the border of the children of Ammon, Nu 21:13, the one was to the south of the country claimed, and the other to the north and to the west, which was Jordan, and the wilderness to the east, Jud 11:22, now therefore restore these lands again peaceably; this is demanded or proposed as terms or conditions of peace, and what would prevent a war, and nothing short of this would do it.

Judges 11:14

Ver. 14. And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon. Being willing to give him all the satisfaction he could, and if possible live peaceably with him, and prevent the effusion of blood.

Judges 11:15

Ver. 15. And said unto him,.... By his messengers:

thus saith Jephthah; in a majestic style, as governor of Israel:

Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon; they were charged not to take any, nor did they take any that belonged to any of these countries, or that was then in the possession of either of them, **De 2:9** what they did take was in the hands of Sihon and Og, and they had obtained it by conquest, and so no more belonging to either of these.

Judges 11:16

Ver. 16. But when Israel came up from Egypt,.... In order to go to the land of Canaan, which was higher than the land of Egypt, which lay low {k}:

and walked through the wilderness unto the Red sea; which is to be understood not of their walking to it; when they first came out of Egypt, they indeed then came to the edge of the wilderness of Etham, and so to the Red sea, and walked through it as on dry land, and came into the wilderness of Shur, Sin, and Sinai; and after their departure from Mount Sinai they came into the wilderness of Paran, in which they were thirty eight years; and this is the wilderness meant they walked through, and came to Eziongaber, on the shore of the Red sea, Nu 33:35

and came to Kadesh; not Kadeshbarnea, from whence the spies were sent, but Kadesh on the borders of Edom, from whence messengers were sent to the king of it, as follows.

{k} cyamalov aiguptov Theocrit. Idyll. 17. ver. 79.

Judges 11:17

Ver. 17. Then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom,.... The history of which may be read in Nu 20:14, &c.

saying, let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land; the land of Edom, from the south to the north of it, according to Jarchi, which was the nearest and shortest way to the land of Canaan; so far were the Israelites from invading and seizing upon the properties of others, that they would not attempt to set their foot in another's country without leave; which they asked in an humble manner, promising to do no injury to any, but pay for whatever they ate and drank in their passage:

but the king of Edom would not hearken thereto; or grant their request, but refused them passage through his country:

and in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab, but he would not consent; that they should pass through his country, which lay, as Jarchi says, at the end of the land of Edom, to the west of it, and to the south of Canaan; and though we nowhere else read of their sending messengers to the king of Moab, and of the denial he made them, it is not at all to be doubted of, and the Jewish commentators observe, that it is clearly intimated by Moses, **De 2:29**

as the children of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, and the Moabites which dwelt in Ar, did unto me; which they interpret thus, as the children of Esau would not suffer Israel to pass through their land, when desired of them, so neither would the Moabites, when the same request was made to them:

and Israel abode in Kadesh; quietly and peaceably, and did not attempt to force their way through either country, but continued in Kadesh some little time to consider what way they should take, and to wait for divine direction.

Judges 11:18

Ver. 18. Then they went along the wilderness,.... The wilderness of Paran, which lay along the borders of Edom; they went, according to Jarchi, from the west to the east on the south border of Edom and Moab:

and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab; all the south of the land of Edom, and all the south of the land of Moab; towards the sunrising, as in Nu 21:11

and pitched on the other side of Arnon; the river Arnon, which, according to Jarchi, was at the east end of the land of Moab, where began the country of Sihon and Og:

but came not within the border of Moab; so far were they from attempting to take away any part of that land from the king of it, though ill treated by him:

for Arnon was the border of Moab; which divided between Moab and the Amorites, Nu 21:13.

Judges 11:19

Ver. 19. And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon,.... Which was his royal city, where he had his palace, and kept his court, and is therefore particularly mentioned; and the rather, because he had taken it from the Moabites, and was part of that land now in dispute; and this Sihon was not only in possession of, when Israel sent messengers to him, but it was his royal seat, the metropolis of his kingdom, and he was called king of it:

and Israel said unto him, let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land unto my place; the land of Canaan, prepared and reserved for them when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, promised by the Lord to their ancestors and to them, and given unto them, who is sovereign Lord of all; and all that Israel desired of Sihon was only a passage through his land to that, promising the same as to the king of Edom; see the history of it in Nu

21:21.

Judges 11:20

Ver. 20. But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through, his coast,.... For fear they should seize upon his dominions, and retain them; and the more fearful he might be, as he knew that his people were one of the seven nations of the Canaanites, whose land they were going to possess, and whom they were to destroy:

but Sihon gathered all his people together; in some certain place, and armed them, and went out in an hostile manner against Israel in the wilderness, to attack them; whereby it appears that he was the aggressor, and therefore Israel was not to be blamed, as not for fending themselves, so neither for seizing and possessing his country when they had conquered him:

and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel; there was a battle between them at the place mentioned, and the victory was on Israel's side, see Nu 21:23.

Judges 11:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel,.... So that as Sihon, his people, and his country, fell into the hands of Israel through the victory the Lord gave them over him, they had a divine right to the land now in dispute:

and they smote them: destroyed him and all his people, as they were ordered to destroy the seven nations of Canaan, of which the Amorites were one, **De 7:1**,

so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country; by means of the above victory they came into the lawful and rightful possession of all the land that belonged to the Amorites, who were at that time, and none else, the inhabitants of it; and therefore the Ammonites could have no claim to it, nor was any made till now.

Judges **11:22**

Ver. 22. And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites,.... Peaceably and quietly, nor did any pretend to call their right in question, or dispute their title, or give them any disturbance:

from Arnon unto Jabbok: which was the length of the country, and the direction was from south to north, and reached from the river Arnon, the border of Moab, to the river Jabbok, the border of Ammon; so that it included no part of what was at this time in the possession of either:

and from the wilderness even unto Jordan; which was the breadth of it, and its direction was from the west to the east, reaching from the wilderness of Arabia to the river Jordan.

Judges **11:23**

Ver. 23. So now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel,.... It is his doing, and not the work of the Israelites; it is he that dispossessed the Amorites, and put the Israelites into the possession of their land, and therefore they enjoy it by a good tenure:

and shouldest thou possess it? what through the blessing of God on their arms they have obtained by conquest, and he has settled them in; did they conquer, that thou should possess what they conquered? did their God put it into their hands to deliver it into thine? did they fight to recover for thee what thou hadst lost, and to put thee into the possession of it? did not they fight in their own defence, and their enemies and their land fell into their hands, and by the laws and right of nations became theirs? and canst thou expect to possess it? what reason is there for it?

Judges **11:24**

Ver. 24. Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess?.... Chemosh was the idol of the Moabites, see Nu 21:29, which has led some to think, that the present king of Ammon was also king of Moab, and who insisted on that part of the country, which formerly belonged to Moab, to be delivered to him, as well as that which had belonged to Ammon. Now since the land, which they now inhabited, as well as what they had lost, they had taken away from others, **De 2:10**, having conquered them, and which they ascribed to the help and assistance they had from their idol, and possessed as his gift; Jephthah argues with them "ad hominem", from the less to the greater:

so whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess; we have surely as good a claim to what the Lord our God gives to us in a way of conquest, as you have, or can think you have, to what your idol, as you suppose, has given you: however, what we have got, or get this way, we are determined to possess, and keep possession of.

Judges 11:25

Ver. 25. And now art thou anything better than Balak the son of Zippor king of Moab?.... This argument seems to strengthen the conjecture, that this king was king of Moab at this time, and so Balak was one of his predecessors. Now he is asked, whether he thought he was a wiser and more knowing prince than he, as to what was his right and due; or whether he had a better claim, or any additional one to the land in dispute the other had not; or whether he judged he was more able to regain what belonged to him:

did he ever strive against Israel? for the land they took away from Sihon formerly in the possession of the Moabites? did he ever lay any claim to it, or enter into any dispute, or litigate with Israel about it? not at all:

or did he ever fight against Israel? that is, on that account; no, he sent for Balaam to curse Israel, and sought to defend and secure his own country he was in possession of, which he thought was in danger by the Israelites being so near him; but he never made war with them under any such pretence, that they had done him any injury by inheriting the land they had taken from Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites.

Judges 11:26

Ver. 26. While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns,.... This was the principal city, which formerly belonged to the Moabites, and was taken from them by Sihon; who being conquered by Israel, it fell into their hands, and they inhabited it, and the towns adjacent to it, from that time to the present; see Nu 21:25

and in Aroer and her towns; another city with its villages, taken at the same time, and ever since inhabited by the Israelites, even by the tribe of Gad, who rebuilt it; it lay near the river Arnon; see Nu 32:34

and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon; which lay along by the side of that river, which divided Moab from the kingdom of the Amorites; these Israel had dwelt in three hundred years; and during this time, neither Balak king of Moab, nor any of his successors, had ever disputed Israel's title to those cities, or commenced a war with them on account of them; but they had continued in the peaceable enjoyment of them so long as three hundred years; which are thus reckoned in the Jewish chronology {z}; Joshua governed Israel twenty eight years, Othniel forty, Ehud eighty, Deborah forty, Gideon forty, Abimelech three, Tola twenty three, Jair twenty two, and eighteen years Israel was oppressed by the children of Ammon, which with the six years of Jephthah make just three hundred; so that, according to this computation, there were six years short of it; but being so near, the round number is given:

why therefore did ye not recover them within that time? signifying they ought to have put in their claim sooner, and endeavoured to have recovered them long before this time, if they had any right unto them; wherefore Jephthah pleads prescription, and which in a course of time ought to take place; or otherwise the world would be full of endless contentions and controversies, and kingdoms and states would never be at peace, nor each one know and enjoy for certainty its proper domains.

{z} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. Vid. Jarchium & Kimchium in loc.

Judges 11:27

Ver. 27. Wherefore I have not sinned against thee,.... Had done him no injury, not wronged him of anything, nor had taken away any part of his country from him; this Jephthah said in the name of all Israel, of whom he was governor:

but thou doest me wrong to war against me; meaning that he had no just cause to commence a war against Israel, but acted an injurious part; and seeing things could not be adjusted in an amicable way, but must be decided by the sword, he leaves the affair with the Lord, and appeals to him:

the Lord the Judge; the Judge of the whole earth, the omniscient God, that knows all things, the right and wrong of every cause, on which side truth and justice lie:

be Judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon; not that he expected a decision of the controversy between them would be made that precise and exact day; but that from henceforward the Lord would appear, by giving success to that party which was in the right in this contest.

Judges 11:28

Ver. 28. Howbeit, the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him. He attended not to the arguments Jephthah made use of, and did not choose to seem at least to be convinced by them, nor to regard the awful appeal he had made to the great Jehovah.

Judges 11:29

Ver. 29. Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah,.... The spirit of strength, as the Targum; of fortitude of mind, of uncommon valour and courage, and of zeal for God and Israel, and against their enemies; such a spirit as used to be given to men, when they were in an extraordinary manner raised up by the Lord, to be judges, saviours, and deliverers of his people; so that as Jephthah was before chosen by the people to be the general and head of the tribes beyond Jordan, he was raised up and qualified by the Lord now to be the judge of all Israel; of which the Spirit of the Lord coming on him was a sufficient proof and evidence:

and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh; the countries that belonged to Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; however, all that part of it which lay from the place where he was, to the land of the children of Ammon:

and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead; which lay to the north of the land of Gilead, or tribe of Gad:

and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over to the children of Ammon; did not stay for them, to bring on the war in the land of Gilead, but prevented it by carrying it into the land of the children of Ammon. It seems by this, that though the children of Ammon had encamped in Gilead some time before, Jud 10:17, yet for some reason or another they had decamped, and had retired into their own country; but yet threatening Israel with a war, and preparing for it.

Judges 11:30

Ver. 30. And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord,.... Before he set out for the land of the children of Ammon, and to fight with them; hoping that such a religious disposition of mind would be regarded by the Lord, and be acceptable to him, and he should be blessed with success in his enterprise:

and said, if thou shall without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands; though he was assured of the justness of his cause, and of his call to engage in it, he seems to have some little diffidence in his mind about the success of it; at least, was not fully certain of it.

Judges 11:31

Ver. 31. Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me,.... If this phrase, "to meet me", is meant intentionally, then no other than an human creature can be meant; a child, or servant, or any other of mankind; for none else could come forth with a design to meet him: but if this is to be understood eventually, of what might meet him, though not with design, then any other creature may be intended; and it must be meant what came forth first, as the Vulgate Latin version expresses it, or otherwise many might come forth at such a time:

when I return in peace from the children of Ammon: safe in his own person, and having conquered the Ammonites, and restored peace to Israel:

shall surely be the Lord's; be devoted to him, and made use of, or the price of it, with which it is redeemed, in his service: and I will offer it for a burnt offering; that is, if it is what according to the law may be offered up, as an ox, sheep, ram, or lamb; some read the words disjunctively, "or I will offer it", &c. it shall either be devoted to the Lord in the manner that persons or things, according to the law, are directed to be; or it shall be offered up for a burnt offering, if fit and proper for the service; so Joseph and David Kimchi, Ben Melech, and Abarbinel, with others, interpret it; but such a disjunction is objected to as improper and ridiculous, to distinguish two sentences, when the one is more general, and the other more special.

Judges 11:32

Ver. 32. So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon, to fight against them,.... As in Jud 11:29, after he had made the above vow:

and the Lord delivered them into his hands; when both armies met and engaged, victory was on the side of Jephthah; the Lord being with him, and giving him success, to where all is justly ascribed.

Judges 11:33

Ver. 33. And he smote them from Aroer,.... A city which lay near the river Arnon, on the borders of Moab, **De 3:12**

even till thou come to Minnith; which seems to have been a place famous for wheat, Eze 27:17 so David de Pomis {a} says it was a place where the best wheat grew. Jerom says {b} in his time was shown a village called Mannith, four miles from Esbus (or Heshbon), as you go to Philadelphia. Josephus {c} calls it Maniathe, and it is thought by some to be the Anitha of Ptolemy {d}, which he places in Arabia Petraea even "twenty cities"; which he pursued them through and took:

and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter; or, Abel Ceramim. Jerom says {e} in his time was seen a village called Abela, planted with vineyards, seven miles from Philadelphia:

thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel; so that they were not able to oppress them any more.

{a} Tzemach David, fol. 81. 3. {b} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. E. {c} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 10. {d} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17. {e} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. K.

Judges 11:34

Ver. 34. And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house,.... Where he had uttered his words before the Lord, which had passed between him and the elders of Gilead, and from whence he set out to fight the children of Ammon, and whither he returned after he had got the victory over them, Jud 11:11 and where it seems he had a house, and his family dwelt; for upon his being fetched from the land of Tab, he brought what family he had with him, and settled them at Mizpeh, while he went on the expedition against the children of Ammon:

and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him, with timbrels, and with dances; accompanied with young women, having timbrels in their hands, and playing upon them, and dancing as they came along; expressing their joy at, and congratulating him upon, the victory he had obtained over the children of Ammon:

and she [was his] only child: and so dear unto him, and upon whom all his hopes and expectations of a posterity from him depended:

besides her he had neither son nor daughter: some read it, "of her" {f}; that is, she had neither son nor daughter; and so by this vow, be it understood in which way it may be, if fulfilled, she must die without any issue; though the phrase in the Hebrew text is, "of himself" {g}; he had none, though his wife whom he married might have sons and daughters by an husband she had before him, and so these were brought up in Jephthah's house as his children; yet they were not begotten by him, they were not of his body, not his own children; he had none but this daughter, which made the trial the more grievous to him; her name, according to Philo, was Seila.

{f} hnmm Targum apud Kimchi. Vid. Masoram in loc. "ex ea", so some in Vatablus. {g} wnmm "ex se", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; so Noldius, p. 614. No. 1641.

Ver. 35. And it came to pass, when he saw her,.... She being the first person that presented to his view, as she was at the head of the virgins with their timbrels and dances:

that he rent his clothes; as was the usual manner, when anything calamitous and distressing happened; see Ge 37:34

and said, alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low; damped his spirits, sunk him very low, so that he was ready to drop into the earth, as we say; he that was now returning in triumph, amidst the acclamations of the people, in the height of his glory, and extolled to the skies, and perhaps elated in his own mind; on a sudden, at the sight of his daughter, was so depressed in his spirits, that he could not bear up; but was ready to sink and die away, all his honour being as it were laid in the dust, and nothing to him:

and thou art one of them that trouble me: or among his troublers, and the greatest he ever met with; he had been in trouble from his brethren, when they drove him from his father's house, and he had had trouble with the children of Ammon to subdue them; but this was the greatest trouble of all, that his daughter should be the first that should meet him; of whom, according to his vow, he was to be deprived, and so all his future comforts, hopes, and expectations from her gone; and therefore ranks her among, and at the head of, his troublers:

for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord; in a vow; not only had purposed it in his heart, but had expressed it with his lips:

and I cannot go back; or retract it; looking upon himself under an indispensable obligation to perform it; of which, be it as it may, he seems to have had mistaken notions and apprehensions; for if his vow was to sacrifice her, as some think, he was not obliged to do it, since it was contrary to the law of God, and abominable in his sight; and besides, what was vowed to be the Lord's, or devoted to him, might be redeemed according to the law, a female for thirty pieces of silver, Le 27:2 and if the vow was to separate his daughter from the company of men, and oblige her never to marry, such a power as this parents had not allowed them over their children, according to the laws of God or of men, in the Jewish nation; and therefore, be it which it will, what he had to do was to repent of this rash vow, and humble himself before God for making it, and not add sin to sin by performing it.

Judges 11:36

Ver. 36. And she said unto him, my father, [if] thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord,.... The conditional word "if" may be left out, as it is not in the original text; for her father had told her that he had opened his mouth, or made a vow to the Lord, and had no doubt explained it to her what it was, though it is not expressed; she knew it respected her, as it had issued, and was concerning her, as appears by her later request:

do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; which is a remarkable instance of filial subjection and obedience to a parent, and which perhaps was strengthened by a like mistaken notion as that of her father concerning the vow, that it could not be dispensed with; and therefore was moved under a sense of religion, as well as filial duty, to express herself in this manner, as well as by what follows:

forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon: such was her public spirit, and the grateful sense she had of the divine goodness, in giving victory over Israel's enemies, and delivering them from them, with vengeance on them, she cared not what was done to her; yea, desired that what was vowed might be performed.

Judges 11:37

Ver. 37. And she said unto her father, let this thing be done for me,.... She had but one favour to ask of him, which she thought might be granted, without any breach of the vow:

let me alone two months she desired such a space of time might be allowed her before the vow took place; and the rather she might be encouraged to expect that her request would be granted, since no time was fixed by the vow for the accomplishment of it, and since the time she asked was not very long, and the end to be answered not unreasonable that I may go up and down upon the mountains; or, "ascend upon the mountains" {h}; Jepthah's house in Mizpeh being higher than the mountains; or there might be, as Kimchi and Ben Melech note, a valley between that and the mountains, to which she descended in order to go up to the mountains; see **Jud 9:25** these she chose to make her abode, and take her walks in, during the time she asked, as being most fit for retirement and solitude; where she might give up herself to meditation and prayer, and conversation with her fellow virgins she would take with her, and so be wrought up to a greater degree of resignation and submission to her father's will, and to the will of God in it, as she might suppose:

and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows; the virgins her companions; this she proposed to be the subject that she and her associates would dwell upon, during this time of solitude; and the rather, as this may be thought to be the thing contained in the vow, that as she was a virgin, so she should continue; by which means she would not be the happy instrument of increasing the number of the children of Israel, nor of being the progenitor of the Messiah; upon which accounts it was reckoned in those times to be very grievous and reproachful to live and die without issue, and so matter of lamentation and weeping.

{h} Myrhh le ytdryw "et descendam super montes", Pagninus, Montanus; "descendamque ad montes", Tigurine version.

Judges 11:38

Ver. 38. And he said, go,.... He granted her request at once:

and he sent her away for two months; as she desired:

and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains; for the space of two months: the Jewish commentators make mention of an allegorical exposition of a writer {i} of theirs, who by mountains understands the sanhedrim, to whom she proposed to go, who perhaps might find a way for the loosing of the vow; but it is a question whether there was such a court then in Israel; and had there been one, and either she or her father had applied to it, in this case the priests would have pointed out what was to be done, and especially if the vow had any regard to the sacrifice of his daughter; and even to her virginity, which he had no power to oblige her to; but the literal sense is no doubt to be followed.

{i} Tanchuma.

Judges 11:39

Ver. 39. And it came to pass at the end of two months she returned to her father,.... For the request she made was not a pretence to make her escape out of his hands; but having done what she proposed to do, and the time fixed for it being come, she returned to her father's house, and delivered herself to him:

who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: but what he did is a question, and which is not easily resolved; some think he really sacrificed her, through a mistaken sense of Le 27:29 and which his action are accounted for through his living a military life, and in a distant part of the country, and at a time when idolatry had greatly prevailed in Israel, and to such a degree as it had not before, and no doubt that branch of it, sacrificing children to Molech; and Jephthah might think that though that was sinful, yet such a sacrifice might be acceptable to the Lord; and especially since his vow, as he thought, bound him to it; and how far the instance of Abraham offering up his son Isaac might encourage him to it, cannot be said: of this mind were Josephus {k}, Jonathan Ben Uzziah the Targumist, and some other Jewish writers {l}; and many of the ancient Christian fathers, and many modern authors of every name among Christians; and it has been thought that the story of Iphigenia, who Capellus {m} thinks is the same with Jepthigenia, that is, the daughter of Jephthah, and was slain by her father Agamemnon, having several circumstances in it similar to this, is taken from hence: and there is much such a case as this related {n} of Idomeneus, a king of the Cretians, who upon his return after the destruction of Troy, being in a tempest, vowed, should he be saved, that he would sacrifice the first he met with to the gods; and as it was his son he first met with, he sacrificed him; or, as others say, would have done it, but was prevented by the citizens, and who on this account drove him from his kingdom. But others are of opinion that what Jephthah did according to his vow was, that he shut up his daughter, and separated her from the company of men, and obliged her to live unmarried all her days, and therefore she is said to bewail her virginity. Kimchi and Ben Melech say, he built a house for her without the city, where she dwelt alone, and knew no man; and where her father supported her, and obliged her to live all her days; and Abarbinel thinks, that the Romanists from hence learnt to build their cloisters to put their nuns in; and so Ben Gersom interprets this vow of her being separated from men, and devoted to the service of God; and which is the sense of many Christian interpreters. Now though Jephthah had no such power over his daughter, as to oblige her to perpetual virginity, nor did his vow bind him to it; for persons devoted to the Lord were not obliged to abstain from marriage, nor have we any instances of a monastic life in those times, nor among the Jews at any time; yet as he did something not right, which he thought his vow obliged him to, one would be rather tempted to think, in charity to him, that of the two evils he did the least; for if she was put to death, it must be done either by the magistrates, or by the priests, or by Jephthah himself; neither of which is probable:

and she knew no man; never married, but lived and died a virgin: "and it was a custom in Israel"; the Targum adds,

"that a man might not offer his son or his daughter for a burnt offering, as Jephthah the Gileadite did, and did not consult Phinehas the priest; for had he consulted Phinehas the priest, he would have redeemed her with a price;"

so Jarchi, according to Le 27:4 but each stood upon their honour, as the Jews say {o}; Jephthah being a king would not go to Phinehas, and Phinehas being an high priest; and the son of an high priest, would not go to a plebeian; and so, between them both, the maiden was lost: but the custom refers to what follows.

{k} Antiqu l. 5. c. 7. sect. 10. {l} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 60, fol. 52. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 37. fol. 176. 4. {m} De Voto Jephthae, sect. 12. {n} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 22. Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 3. col. 693. in l. 11. col. 1634. {o} Bereshit Rabba & Vajikra, ut supra. ({l}); Midrash Kohelet, fol. 81. 3.

Judges 11:40

Ver. 40. That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite,.... Either the death of her, as some, or her virginity, as others; though the word {p} used may signify to talk and discourse with her, to hold a confabulation with her, and comfort her, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; to bring her some news, and tell her some diverting stories, to cheer and refresh her in her solitude. De Dieu observes, that the word signifies in the Arabic language to "praise", or speak in commendation of a person or thing; and indeed in this sense it seems to be used in this book, **Jud 5:11**, "they shall rehearse", that is, with praise and thanksgiving, "the righteous acts of the Lord"; and so the daughters of Israel went every year to the place where the daughter of Jephthah was, to speak in the praise of her, of her heroism, in so cheerfully submitting to her father's vow, and expressing such gratitude and joy at the same time for victory over the enemies of Israel; and this they did in her presence and while she lived, to keep up her spirits; or it may be, in some public place, and even after her death, in memory of her, and to celebrate her praise. Epiphanius says {q}, that in his time, at Sebaste, formerly called Samaria, they deified the daughter of Jephthah, and kept a feast for her every year. The meeting of the daughters of Israel, so long as the custom lasted, which perhaps was only during the life of Jephthah's daughter, was four days in a year; but whether they were four days running, or once in a quarter of a year, is not certain; the latter seems most probable.

{p} twntl "ad alloquendum", Pagninus, Montanus; "ut dissererent", Tigurine version; "ut colloquerentur", Vatablus; "ad confabulandum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {q} Contr. Haeres. l. 2. Haeres. 55.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Judges 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 12

This chapter relates a quarrel between Jephthah and the Ephraimites, which was fatal to the latter, Jud 12:1, the time of Jephthah judging Israel, his death and burial, Jud 12:7 and it briefly makes mention of three more judges of Israel, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, Jud 11:8.

Ver. 1. And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together,.... Or "cried" {r}; got together by a cry or proclamation made: in the Hebrew text it is, "a man of Ephraim"; not a single man, but a body of men, who met together and joined as one man. It is highly probable that there were no less than

50,000 of them; for 42,000 of them were slain, Jud 12:6

and went northward; or, "went over northward {s}"; that is, over the river Jordan, which lay between Gilead and Ephraim; and when they had crossed the river, they turned northward; for Mizpeh, where Jephthah lived, was in the north of the land, near Hermon and Lebanon, Jos 11:3

and said unto Jephthah, wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon? not over Jordan, but over that part of the land of Israel from the plain where Jephthah dwelt, to the country of the children of Ammon:

and didst not call us to go with thee? they quarrel with him just in the same manner as they did with Gideon: these Ephraimites were a proud and turbulent people, and especially were very jealous of the tribe of Manasseh, of which both Gideon and Jephthah were; the one of the half tribe on this side Jordan, and the other of the half that was on the other side; and they were jealous of both, lest any honour and glory should accrue thereunto, and they should get any superiority in any respect over them, since Jacob their father had given the preference to Ephraim; and this seems to lie at the bottom of all their proceedings:

we will burn thine house upon thee with fire; that is, burn him and his house, burn his house and him in it; which shows that they were in great wrath and fury, and argued not only the height of pride and envy, but wretched ingratitude, and a cruel disposition; who, instead of congratulating him as Israel's deliverer, and condoling him with respect to the case of his only child, threaten him in this brutish manner.

{r} qeuy ebohsen, Sept. "clamatus", i.e. "clamando convocatus", Piscator. "mnellius", Pimcator. {s} rbey "transivit", Pagninus, Montanus; "transiverunt", Junius et Tremellius, Piscator.

Judges 12:2

Ver. 2. And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at a great strife with the children of Ammon,.... As to the cause of the war, or the reason of his going over to fight the children of Ammon, it was a strife or contention between the Gileadites and them, concerning their country; which the children of Ammon claimed as theirs, and the Gileadites insisted on it they had a just right to it; by which it appeared that this was not a personal contention between Jephthah and them; and therefore the Ephraimites had no reason to fall so furiously upon him particularly; and it was a contention which chiefly concerned the two tribes and a half, and not the rest; and so could not be blamed for defending themselves alone if they could, without interesting others in the quarrel: but this is not all he has to say, he adds,

and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands; it seems he had called them to assist in driving the enemy out of their boarders when there, and they refused to help him; though it is not elsewhere said, and it is not denied by them, so that it was false what they alleged; or however, since they declined giving him any assistance, when the children of Ammon were in his country, he could not expect they would join him in an expedition into theirs.

Judges 12:3

Ver. 3. And when I saw that ye delivered me not,.... Gave him no assistance against their common enemy, did not attempt to save him and his people out of their hands, but left them to defend themselves:

I put my life in my hands; ready to deliver it up in the defence of his country; the meaning is, that he exposed himself to the utmost danger, hazarded his life in going with a few troops into an enemy's country to fight him, and so liable to lose his life; which was in as much danger, as some observe, as any brittle thing contained in the hand is in danger of falling, or of being snatched out of it:

and passed over against the children of Ammon: took a long and fatiguing march over the land of Gilead into that of the children of Ammon, to fight with them:

and the Lord delivered them into my hand; gave him victory over them, which showed that his cause was just, and his call to engage in it clear:

wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day to fight against me? who rather should have come with thanks to him for the service he had done, not only for the Gileadites, but for all Israel; for had he not fought against the children of Ammon, and conquered them, they would have soon not only overrun and oppressed Gilead, but would have come over Jordan, and dispossessed the other tribes, and particularly Ephraim, as they had done already, Jud 10:9 so that it was base ingratitude in these people to come to fight against Jephthah, who had fought for them, and wrought salvation for them.

Judges 12:4

Ver. 4. Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim,.... The Ephraimites not being pacified with the account Jephthah gave of the war between him and the children of Ammon, but continuing in their tumultuous outrage; he, being a man of spirit and courage, got as many of the Gileadites together as he could, and gave them battle:

and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim; had the advantage of them, worsted them, killed many of them, and put the rest to flight:

because they said, ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites; what provoked them to fall upon them with the greater fury, and use them the more severely when, they had the better of them, was their reproachful language to them, insulting the Gileadites, who perhaps were chiefly, if not all, of the half tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan, of which Jephthah was, that they were the scum of the house of Joseph, that they had run away from their brethren, and dwelt in a corner of the land by themselves; and were of no account at all among Ephraim and Manasseh, and disclaimed by them both, and not esteemed by either. The Targum is,

"the fugitives of Ephraim said, what are ye Gileadites accounted of among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites?"

on which Kimchi remarks, that those Ephraimites that came in this tumultuous manner, and insulted Jephthah, were a most abject company of men, the refuse of the tribe of Ephraim, shepherds who through necessity were obliged to come over Jordan with their flocks and herds for pasture: but the words may be rendered, "for they said, fugitives of Ephraim are ye, even the Gileadites, who were, or being between the Ephraimites and the

Manassites"; that is, the Gileadites called the Ephraimites so, when they fled before them, and when they got at the fords of Jordan, which lay between Ephraim and the half tribe of Manasseh on the other side Jordan; and they are in the next verse expressly so called.

Judges 12:5

Ver. 5. And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites,.... Being either swifter of foot, or going a nearer and shorter way, being better acquainted with their own country:

and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, let me go over; the fugitives of Ephraim, as before called, who ran away from the battle, made their escape, and the best of their way to the passages of Jordan, to get over there to their own country:

that the men of Gilead said unto him; to everyone of them, as they came up,

art thou an Ephraimite? or an Ephrathite; for so it seems those of the tribe of Ephraim were called, as Jeroboam, 1Ki 11:26

if he said, nay; that he was not an Ephraimite;

Judges 12:6

Ver. 6. Then said they unto him, say now "Shibboleth",.... Which signifies a stream or course of water, at which they now were; and so it was as if they had bid them say,

"may I, or let me, pass over the stream of this river;"

so Jarchi; and this being the case, though it was done to try them, and by their pronunciation learn whether they were Ephraimites or not, they were not upon their guard, but in an hurry, and at once expressed the word as they commonly did:

and he said, sibboleth; pronouncing the letter "shin" as if it was "sin", or a "samech"; just as the French, as Kimchi observes, pronounce "s" like a "t";

and though the Gileadites and Ephraimites were of the same nation of Israel, and spoke the same language, yet their pronunciation differed, as did that of the Galilean Jews from others in the times of Christ, Mt 26:73, and so in all nations, among the Greeks, Romans, and among ourselves, people in different counties pronounce in a different manner; which Kimchi thinks was in the Ephraimites owing to the air or climate, as the French, he observes, pronounce "s" as a "t", with a soft and gentle sound:

for he could not frame to pronounce it right; or "thus" {t}, as he was bid to do; being used to pronounce otherwise, he could not frame the organs of speech, or so dispose and order them as to say "shibboleth"; or he did not frame, order, and dispose {u}; he was not careful to do it, though with some care he could, being not aware of the design of the Gileadites in it:

then they took him and slew him at the passages of Jordan; everyone as they came thither, who could not say "shibboleth"; these they suffered not to pass over, but slew them:

and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand; not at the passages of Jordan only; but what fell there, with those at the battle, and in the pursuit, amounted to this number; so that the Ephraimites paid dearly for their pride and insolence.

{t} Nk "sic", Pagninus, Montanus. {u} Nwkn al "non dirigebat", Montanus.

Judges 12:7

Ver. 7. And Jephthah judged Israel six years,.... After the affair of the Ephraimites, he was acknowledged by all Israel as their judge and supreme governor, but did not live long; being perhaps depressed and worn away with grief, on account of his daughter, and other troubles that attended him:

then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead: it is not said in what city he was buried, but very probably it was in his own city Mizpeh, where he dwelt. Josephus {w} says it was in his own country, Sebee, a city of Gilead.

{w} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 12.

Judges **12:8**

Ver. 8. And after him Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. There were two Bethlehems, one in the tribe of Zebulun, Jos 19:15 of which some think this man was; and another in the tribe of Judah, the city of Jesse and David, and of the Messiah; and Josephus says {x}, Ibzan was of the tribe of Judah, of the city of Bethlehem; and because Boaz was of the same place, and lived in the times of the judges, the Jewish Rabbins {y} are of opinion that he is the same with Ibzan; so Jarchi and Ben Gersom.

{x} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 13. {y} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1.

Judges **12:9**

Ver. 9. And he had thirty sons and thirty daughters,.... Which was a very uncommon case for a man to have so many children, and those as to their sex to be equal. Between the former judge and him there was a great difference, in respect of this circumstance of children; he had but one daughter, an only child; and she, by reason of his vow, not suffered to marry. Such a difference does God, in his all wise Providence, make even among good men: nor is this any certain characteristic of a good man. Danaus had fifty daughters, and his brother Egyptus fifty sons, who were married to each other; and the husbands were all slain by their wives but one, on the wedding night, and so far from being happy in them: but it was otherwise with this judge:

whom he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons; his daughters he sent abroad, or married them, to persons not of another nation, nor of another tribe, but of another family of the same tribe, and these he dismissed from him to live with their husbands; and he took in daughters of families in the same tribe to be wives to his sons, and who seem to have dwelt together; it being the custom then for sons, though married, to abide with their father, and their wives with them; as Abarbinel says is the custom at Zenobia unto this day:

and he judged Israel seven years; and in his days the wars of Troy are said {z} to begin; but they began in the times of Jephthah his predecessor, and ended in his {a}.

{z} Juchasin, fol. 136. 1. {a} Gerard. Vossii Isagoge Chron. dissert. 1. p. 4.

Judges 12:10

Ver. 10. Then died Ibzan, and was buried in Bethlehem. He died at the end of his seven years of government, and was buried in his native place; nothing memorable having happened during his being judge; this is all that is recorded of him.

Judges 12:11

Ver. 11. And after him Elon a Zebulonite judged Israel,.... One of the tribe of Zebulun:

and he judged Israel ten years; administered justice to them, preserved them in the true religion, and from idolatry; though it does not appear that any enemies arose in his time against them, from whom he delivered them.

Judges 12:12

Ver. 12. And Elon the Zebulonite died,.... At the end of his ten years of government:

and was buried in Aijalon in the country of Zebulun; which is added to distinguish it from another Aijalon in the tribe of Dan **Jud 1:35**.

Judges 12:13

Ver. 13. And after him Abdon the son of Hillell, a Pirathonite, judged Israel. So called from Pirathon, where he was born, and which was in the tribe of Ephraim, as appears from Jud 12:15.

Judges 12:14

Ver. 14. And he had forty sons, and thirty nephews,.... Or sons' sons, that is, grandsons; so that he lived not only to see his sons married, but his grandchildren grown up to men's estate; since it follows,

that rode on seventy ass colts; who were either employed by him to ride about on these animals, which in those times were honourable; see **Jud 5:10** to administer justice throughout the nation in their circuits; or rather, not following any trade, or being concerned in husbandry, or feeding cattle, but being men of estates, rode about like gentlemen:

and he judged Israel eight years; in his time it is said {b} the city of Troy was destroyed; so Eusebius {c}, who calls this judge Labdon, though he elsewhere {d} places it in the times of Eli; See Gill on "Jud 12:9".

{b} Juchasin, ut supra. (fol. 136. 1.) {c} Evangel. Praepar. l. 10. c. 11. p. 484. {d} Evangel. Praepar. l. 10. c. 11. p. 503.

Judges 12:15

Ver. 15. And Abdon the son of Hillell the Pirathonite died,.... At the end of his eight years' government;

and was buried at Pirathon, in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites; in the place where he was born, and from whence he had the name of a Pirathonite; and this was in the tribe of Ephraim, and the particular spot was Mount Amalek; so called either from the name of the person to whom it belonged, or because the Amalekites formerly dwelt in it; or rather because of some remarkable advantage got over them at this place: here, Josephus says {e}, this judge had a magnificent funeral.

{e} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7.) sect. 15.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Judges 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 13

This chapter relates the birth of Samson, another of the judges of Israel, which was foretold by an angel to his mother, who told her husband of it, Jud 13:1 upon whose entreaty the angel appeared again, and related the same to them both, Jud 13:8 and who was very, respectfully treated by the man, and by the wonderful things he did was known by him to be an angel of the Lord, which greatly surprised him, Jud 13:15 and the chapter is closed with an account of the birth of Samson, and of his being early endowed with the Spirit of God, Jud 13:24.

Ver. 1. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord,.... Committed idolatry, which was the evil they were prone unto, and were frequently guilty of:

and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines forty years: which according to Josephus {f} are to be reckoned from the death of the last judge, and the time of Samson's birth; or rather from some time after the death of Jephthah, particularly taking in the two last years of Ibzan, when the Ephraimites having been weakened through the slaughter of them by Jephthah, might encourage the Philistines to break in upon them; from which time to the birth of Samson were twenty years, and twenty more may be allowed before he could begin to deliver Israel out of their hands; so that the oppression lasted forty years. According to others, it began at the same time as the oppression of the Ammonites did, though it lasted longer, Jud 10:7.

{f} Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 5.) c. 8. sect. 1.

Judges 13:2

Ver. 2. And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites,.... Of the tribe of Dan, in which tribe Zorah was, and seems to have lain both on the borders of Judah and Dan, Jos 15:33; See Gill on "Jos 15:33", See Gill on "Jos 19:41", and this man was not a mean man, but of rank and figure, a principal man in the country, according to Josephus {g}; though the Talmudists {h} say he was a plebeian:

whose name was Manoah; which signifies "rest", and has much the same signification as Noah; and by this name he was well known in those times, and among his people:

and his wife was barren, and bare not; had no child, as the Targum; and it is observed by many, that several eminent persons were born of women that had been barren, as Isaac, Jacob, Samuel, and John the Baptist; and it is remarkable, that the strongest man that ever was born of such a woman, as the following account relates. The name of this woman, the mother of Samson, is said {i} to be Zalalponith; see **1Ch 4:3**.

{g} Antique. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 2. {h} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 61. 1. {i} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1. Juchasin, fol. 10. 8.

Judges 13:3

Ver. 3. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman,.... According to Josephus {k}, it was in a plain without the city; and that he appeared in the form of a man is certain from Jud 13:6 but was not a mere man, a prophet of the Lord, nor a created angel, but the uncreated one, the Angel of the covenant, the Son and Word of God, who often appeared in an human form; since his name is said to be "Wonderful", and he to do wonderful things, and is called "Jehovah", Jud 13:18,

and said unto her, behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not; barren at that time, and so she had been ever since she was married to that time; and this is observed, that it might appear the more wonderful that she should after this have a child:

but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; which to do, must be ascribed to divine power, that one in her circumstances should bear a son; as the prediction of it was owing to divine omniscience, and a proof of it.

{k} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 2.

Judges 13:4

Ver. 4. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink,.... Any liquor inebriating and intoxicating, neither new wine nor old wine, as the Targum, and so Jarchi; the reason of this appears in the next verse, because the child she should conceive and bear was to be a Nazarite, and to be one from his mother's womb; and from all such liquors, Nazarites, according to the law, were to abstain, **Nu 6:3**

and eat not any unclean thing; meaning not so much such sort of food as was forbidden by the law to be eaten, which every Israelite was to abstain from, but such as were particularly forbidden to Nazarites, as moist and dried grapes, or anything made of the vine tree, from the kernel to the husk, **Nu 6:3**. The reason of this is, because the child in the womb is nourished with the same the mother is; and as this child was to be a Nazarite from the womb, and even in it, his mother was to abstain both from eatables and drinkables forbidden a Nazarite by the law.

Judges 13:5

Ver. 5. For, lo, thou shalt conceive and bear a son,.... Which is not only repeated for the confirmation of it, but that she might take notice that he was to be a Nazarite, and therefore must conform to everything agreeable to the law of the Nazarites, and take care that it was observed in him:

and no razor shall come on his head; to cut off the hair of it, not from the time of his birth to his death; for he was to be a perpetual Nazarite: other Nazarites during the time of their Nazariteship were not to suffer a razor to come upon them, but afterwards might; but for such an one as Samson, it was not lawful ever to suffer his hair to be cut off; see **Nu 6:5**

for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb; in which he was a type of Christ, who was sanctified by the Lord, separated from sinners, and called a "Nazarene": was born of a virgin, as Samson was of a barren woman, and his birth foretold by an angel as this:

and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines; for the salvation he wrought for Israel was not complete and perfect; it was only begun by him, and carried on in the times of Eli, Samuel, and Saul, and perfected by David. In this his antitype exceeds him, who is the author of the complete salvation of his people out of the hands of all their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world; though in this there is a great resemblance between Samson and our Lord Jesus, in that what he did he did himself alone; not at the head of an army, and with forces under him, as other judges; so Christ with his own arm, and of himself, and without others, wrought salvation for his people; see Isa 63:5.

Judges 13:6

Ver. 6. Then the woman came and told her husband,.... To whom it would be joyful news, as it was to her:

saying, a man of God came unto me; he appeared in an human form, and therefore she calls him a man; and by his mien and deportment, and the message he brought, she concluded he was a man of God, that is, a prophet; by which name such persons went in those days; and so the Targum calls him a prophet of the Lord: but it is a mere conceit of Ben Gersom that it was Phinehas, who in all probability was not living; besides what is after related shows that this was a divine Person, and no other than the Son of God:

and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible; for though she might never have seen an angel, yet it being a common notion that angels were very illustrious, of a beautiful form and of a shining countenance, and very majestic, she compares the man she saw to one; for by being "very terrible", is not meant that he was frightful, and struck her with horror, but venerable and majestic, which filled her with admiration:

but I asked him not whence he [was], neither told he me his name; this she added to prevent her husband's inquiring about his name and place of abode; and perhaps, as she came along, she reflected on herself that she did not ask those questions; which might be owing to the surprise she was in, partly at the awful and venerable appearance of the person, and partly at the joyful news he brought her; though it seems as if she did ask his name, but he did not tell her what it was.

Judges 13:7

Ver. 7. But he said unto me, behold, thou shalt conceive and bear a son,.... She says nothing of her barrenness, which the angel took notice of to her, that having been to her reproach:

and now drink no wine nor strong drink; neither new wine nor old wine; so the Targum as before:

neither eat any unclean thing; which was so in a ceremonial sense; otherwise every creature of God is good, and not to be called common or unclean; it here respects what was forbidden Nazarites to eat; see Jud 13:4

for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb; it is here added, what is not before expressed,

unto his death; for he was to be a perpetual Nazarite; some were only Nazarites for a time, for so many days or months, according to their vow; but this son was to be a Nazarite all his days, by the appointment of God; nor is it any objection to what is here said, that his hair was cut off before his death, which caused his Nazariteship to cease; since these words are not a prophecy, but a precept; and besides, that affair happened but a little before his death, he died quickly afterwards.

Judges 13:8

Ver. 8. Then Manoah entreated the Lord,.... Josephus {l} makes the woman to entreat the Lord; but the text is clear for it that it was Manoah that prayed:

and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send unto us; he believed that the man that came to his wife was a man of God, and that he was of his sending; nor was he incredulous of the message he brought, as appears by what follows:

and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born; he believed there would be a child born, and he knew what was to be done to a Nazarite in common, according to the law of God respecting such, and the angel had mentioned somewhat to the woman; yet this being an extraordinary case, a Nazarite from his birth to his death, he was desirous of knowing what was further to be done; or if there was any thing more special and particular to be observed concerning him; which showed his readiness and cheerfulness to obey the will of God in all things.

{l} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8.) sect. 3.

Judges 13:9

Ver. 9. And God hearkened unto the voice of Manoah,.... Heard his prayer and answered it:

and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field; who very likely returned to the same place where she was before, in hope her husband's prayers would be heard, and the man return and come to her where he had before met her; as well as she might be here retired for meditation and prayer; unless it can be supposed that she had business here to do, as keeping a flock of sheep, which women, and those great personages too, were wont to do in those times and countries, as Rebekah the sister of Laban, and the daughters of Jethro, prince of Midian:

but Manoah her husband was not with her; the angel appeared to the woman again, because she would know him to be the same; whereas had he appeared to Manoah, especially alone, he could not have known whether he was the same or not. This clause is observed for the sake of what follows.

Judges 13:10

Ver. 10. And the woman made haste, and ran,.... It is not improbable what Josephus says {m}, that she entreated the angel to stay a little till she fetched her husband, which he assented to, and then made all the haste she could to him, partly through eagerness to acquaint him with it, and partly that she might not make the prophet she took him to be wait too long:

and showed her husband; that his prayer was heard:

and said unto him, behold, the man hath appeared unto me that came unto me the [other] day; or, as the Targum, "this day"; so Kimchi and Ben Melech; for the word "other" is not in the text. It is very probable it was the same day he came again he had appeared to her; perhaps it was in the former part of the day he first came to her, when she went home to her husband, and acquainted him with it, who prayed to the Lord that he might be sent again; and then she returned to her place in the field, and in the latter part of the day the angel appeared again.

{m} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 3.

Judges 13:11

Ver. 11. And Manoah arose and went after his wife,.... As soon as she had delivered the above, she made all the haste she could to the man again, lest he should think her too long, and depart; and it was proper enough she should go first, to direct her husband where the man was; Jarchi interprets it, after her counsel and advice:

and came to the man, and said unto him, art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? meaning his wife then present:

and he said, I am; the very same person; for though he was not a man, yet appearing in an human form was taken for one; and therefore makes answer according to the supposition of him, and was the selfsame person, and in the same form he had appeared before.

Judges 13:12

Ver. 12. And Manoah said, now let thy words come to pass,.... Which was not only a wish that they might, but a prayer of faith that they would come pass:

how shall we order the child? and how shall we do unto him? he believed a child would be born, and as he was to be a Nazarite, he knew what were the rules and orders to be observed concerning one in common; but as he was to be an extraordinary one, he was desirous of knowing what particular laws and rules were to be observed with respect to him, or what more was to be done to him than to another: the words may be rendered, as in the margin of our Bibles, "what shall be the judgment of the child, and his work?" and seems to relate not to what should be done to it, but what that should do; for being an extraordinary Nazarite, he supposed that some extraordinary work would be done by him, and he was curious to know it; and so Abarbinel interprets it of his request to know things future and wonderful, that should be done after the child was grown up; but this the angel chose not to inform him of, since it might have been prejudicial to them, should the Philistines get knowledge that this child would be a judge and saviour of Israel, and do such and such things to them as he did, they would have sought to have slain his wife while she bare him, or the child when born; and it may be observed, that though the angel told the woman at first, that he should "begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines", Jud 13:5, yet she said nothing of it to her husband, nor did the angel repeat it.

Judges 13:13

Ver. 13. And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah,.... Giving him no direct answer to his question, either what should be done to the child, or what that should do; only reminds of and repeats what he had said to his wife, which she should be careful to observe and would, and that was enough for him to know:

of all that I said to the woman, let her beware; take to abstain from everything in eating and drinking during the time of her going with child, he had joined, which are particularly repeated in the next verse.

Judges 13:14

Ver. 14. She may not eat of anything that cometh from the vine,.... Grapes moist or dried, kernels, or husks, or anything made of them:

neither let her drink wine, or strong drink; as she was to be careful to abstain from such liquors, so her husband also is enjoined not to suffer her to drink any:

nor eat any unclean thing; which was so by the law of Moses, and particularly by the law of the Nazarites:

all that I commanded her, let her observe; both with respect to herself and the child.

Judges 13:15

Ver. 15. And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord,.... Being satisfied with what he had said, and perceiving that he chose to say no more, and was about to depart:

I pray thee let me detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee; to eat a meal with them, in token of gratitude for the trouble he had been at in bringing these messages to them, taking him to be a man, a prophet of the Lord, for whom they were wont to make entertainments; and Abarbinel thinks Manoah proposed this, on purpose to detain him, in hope that while they were eating together he would reveal some secrets unto him.

Judges 13:16

Ver. 16. And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah,.... In answer to his request:

though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; that is, should he be prevailed upon to stay awhile with him, until an entertainment should be got ready, he would not eat of any of his provisions; for "bread" is put for all eatables, or whatsoever he might provide for the entertainment:

and if, or "but if" {n}

thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord; if he meant to provide not a festival entertainment, but a sacrifice, then he should take care that he did not offer it to strange gods, as was now very much the custom with Israel in this their time of apostasy, Jud 13:1 but to the true Jehovah, and not to a servant of his, a prophet or an angel, but to himself:

for Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the Lord; he took him to be a man, a prophet sent of God, and not an angel; and much less the uncreated one, to whom as such only the sacrifice could be offered.

{n} Maw "si autem", V. L. "quod si", Tigurine version; "sin autem", Junius & Tremellius; "si vero", Piscator.

Judges 13:17

Ver. 17. And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, what is thy name,.... Who art thou, and by what name art thou called? for since he could not prevail upon him to stay and eat a meal with him, he desired to know his name, and where he lived, that when he heard his name mentioned he might speak well of him, or send to him upon occasion; or if any message was sent from him, as Jarchi suggests, that he might show a respect to him, and observe it: and particularly,

that when thy sayings come to pass, we may do thee honour? say that such a prophet, whose name is such, and lives in such a place, foretold these things; or that they might send him a present, in gratitude for, and as a reward of his service and trouble; so the reward of a labourer, and the maintenance of a Gospel minister, is called "honour", **1Ti 5:17** and thus Josephus {o} understood it, that they might give him thanks, and send him a present.

{o} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 3.

Judges 13:18

Ver. 18. And the angel of the Lord said unto him,.... Being so importunate, and pressing upon him;

why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret? and not to be known; as his nature and essence as a divine Person, which may be meant by his name, is what passes knowledge, is infinite and incomprehensible; see Pr 30:4 or "wonderful" {p}; which is one of the names of Christ, and fitly agrees with him, who is wonderful in his person, as God and man; in his incarnation, in his offices and relations, in his love to his people, and in all he is unto them, and has done for them; See Gill on "Isa 9:6".

{p} yalp yaumaston, Sept. "mirabile", V. L. Montanus; "mirificus", Junius & Tremellius.

Judges 13:19

Ver. 19. So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering,.... The kid which he proposed to make an entertainment with, for the man of God, he took him to be, he fetched and brought for a burnt offering, at the hint which the angel had given him, and joined to it a meat offering, as was usual whenever burnt offerings were made; see Nu 15:3,

and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord; for though Manoah was not a priest, nor was this a proper place for sacrifice; high places were now forbidden, and only at the tabernacle in Shiloh were offerings to be brought; yet all this was dispensed with, and Manoah was justified in what he did by the warrant of the angel, Jud 13:16. The rock was probably near the place where this meeting of Manoah and his wife with the angel was, and where the discourse between them passed; and which served instead of an altar, and on which Manoah sacrificed, not to idols, but to the true Jehovah, as the angel directed:

and the angel did wondrously; agreeably to his name, which was "Wonderful", Jud 13:18 or "he, Jehovah, did wondrously" for this angel was no other than Jehovah the Son. The instance in which he did wondrously was, as Kimchi observes, by bringing fire out of the rock, which consumed the flesh of the kid, and the meat offering; and so Josephus {q} says, that he touched the flesh with a rod he had, and fire sparkled out, and consumed it with the bread, or meat offering; just in the same manner as the angel did with the kid and cakes that Gideon brought, **Jud 6:21**

and Manoah and his wife looked on; to see either fire come down from heaven, or spring up out of the rock, which consumed the sacrifice, and showed the Lord's acceptance of it, and also the angel's ascending in it, as follows.

{q} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 3.)

Judges 13:20

Ver. 20. For it came to pass, when the flame went up towards heaven from off the altar,.... That is, from the rock, which served instead of an altar, and from whence perhaps the fire sprung which consumed both the burnt offering and the meat offering, the flame of which went up to heaven; this rock or altar having no covering, but was "sub dio", open to the heavens:

that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar; making use of the smoke, as Josephus {r} says, as a vehicle in which he openly went up to heaven:

and Manoah and his wife looked on it; on the flame and smoke, and the angel in it as he ascended; just as the disciples of Christ looked steadfastly on him as he went up to heaven, when a cloud received him out of their sight, **Ac 1:9**

and fell on their faces to the ground; with astonishment and surprise at what they saw, through fear and reverence of the divine Being, of whose presence they were now sensible, and as worshipping of him, and praying to him.

{r} Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 3.)

Judges 13:21

Ver. 21. But the angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife,.... As the flame and smoke ascended, he disappeared therewith, and was seen no more:

then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord; by the wondrous things he did, causing fire to come down from heaven, or out of the rock, ascending in the midst of the flame, without being hurt by it, and going up to heaven in it.

Judges 13:22

Ver. 22. And Manoah said unto his wife,.... Being risen from the ground, where they fell on their faces:

we shall surely die, because we have seen God; by which it appears that he not only believed him to be an angel, and not a man, but a divine Person; for though angels are sometimes called "Elohim", the word here used, yet good men were not wont to fear death, or conclude they should die on sight of an angel; but their notion was, that an appearance of God to them was death, and were surprised when it did not follow, Ge 32:30.

Judges 13:23

Ver. 23. But his wife said unto him,.... Who was less fearful, and the strongest believer of the two, seeing her husband so very much intimidated, endeavoured to comfort and strengthen him by the three following arguments:

if the Lord was pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands; for it was at the direction of this illustrious Person that they offered these offerings, and who testified the divine acceptance of them, by causing fire in an extraordinary manner to consume them, which was always reckoned a token of God's acceptance of them; and besides, the angel went up in the flame, as being well pleased with them, and, as it were, carrying up the sacrifice to heaven with him, as a sweetsmelling savour to God. Here the angel is called Jehovah by the woman, and shows this was the uncreated angel:

neither would he have showed us all these things; which they saw as the appearance of a divine Person to them in an human form, the consuming of the sacrifice by fire in so strange a manner, and the ascent of the angel heavenwards in the flame of it:

nor would, as at this time, have told us [such things] as these; as that they should have a son; how the woman was to manage herself, while with child of him; and how when born he was to be brought up, and what things God would do by him, and begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Now all this would not have been told at such a time of distress, as the nation was now in, but to comfort them, or he would never have told them of a son to be born of them, if they were to be destroyed immediately. So an enlightened soul may reason from the sight and sense he has had of his sinful, lost, and undone state by nature; from the revelation of Christ to him as the only way of salvation; from the views he has had of the glories of his person, and the riches of his grace; and from that communion with God he has sometimes enjoyed; from all this he may reason, that if God had a design to damn him for his sins, he would never have made such discoveries of love, grace, and mercy to him; as well as from the sacrifice of Christ, God has provided and accepted of, on the foot of which justice is engaged to save; and besides, grace and glory are inseparable.

Judges 13:24

Ver. 24. And the woman bare a son, and called name Samson,.... After these appearances were over, Manoah and his wife returned to their habitation, and she soon became pregnant, and at the usual course of time brought forth a son, and she gave him the name of Samson; for what reason it is not easy to determine. Josephus says {s} the word signifies "strong"; perhaps he was born a strong robust child, which is not unlikely, or the woman might have some prophetic hint of his future strength, and so gave him this name; but the word has not the signification of strength in it; it rather signifies the sun, which is indeed a strong body, and is compared to a strong man running his race, and so a strong man may be compared to that; but rather, with respect to the sun, this name might be given him, because of the splendour of his countenance with which he might be born, or in memory of the shining countenance of the angel which brought the tidings of his birth, or because he was to be the instrument of dispelling the darkness of calamity and distress Israel were now in: but the word more properly signifies a minister or servant, from whence the sun has its name; for Samson was to be, and was, a minister and servant of God, and of his people Israel. There is an agreement between the type and the antitype in this name in either sense. Christ is the mighty God, and mighty Saviour, the sun of righteousness, the light of the world, and the deliverer of his people from darkness of calamity and distress; and who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and perform the great service of redemption and salvation:

and the child grew in bodily strength and stature, and grew up to man's estate, **Lu 2:40**

and the Lord blessed him; not only with extraordinary strength of body, but with great endowments of mind, with the Spirit and graces of the Spirit; with grace, and blessings of it, and with his gracious presence; with this compare Ps 21:3.

{s} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8.) sect. 4.

Judges **13:25**

Ver. 25. And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan,.... To go out into it, in order to be trained up in and inured to military exercises; or it began to "strike" his mind, inject thoughts into it, and impress it with them concerning doing great things for the people of God in time to come; and for the present put him upon doing strange and wonderful exploits, which were omens of what was to be done by him hereafter; and these were done by him now and then, not always, but as the Spirit of God came upon him, under the impulse of which he did them, and by the strength he gave him; so the Targum,

"and the Spirit of strength from the Lord began to strengthen him."

This camp of Dan was either a camp formed in that tribe, to prevent the incursions of the Philistines; or rather, since it does not seem that Israel had strength enough to resist them, they having got the power over them, this was the name of a place called Mahanehdan near Kirjathjearim, from the Danites encamping in it, when they went to besiege Laish, Jud 18:11 for the fact was done before this time, though related afterwards:

between Zorah and Eshtaol; which were two cities in the tribe of Dan, and upon the borders of the tribe of Judah; of which see Jos 15:33. It may be observed, that as the tribe of Dan lay near to the Philistines, and so liable to their ravages, and might be most oppressed by them, so a deliverer of Israel was raised up in this tribe.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Judges **14:1**

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 14

This chapter treats of Samson's courtship, and marriage of a Philistine woman, Jud 14:1 of his meeting with a young lion as he went courting, and of his slaying it, and afterwards finding honey in it, Jud 14:6, of a riddle which be framed out of this incident, and put to his companions at his marriage to solve, giving them seven days to do it in, with a promise of a reward, Jud 14:10 and of their solving it by means of his wife, who got the secret from him, Jud 14:15, which led him to slay thirty Philistines, to make good his promise of thirty sheets and changes of raiment, and to leave his newly married wife, who was given to his companion, Jud 14:19.

Ver. 1. And Samson went down to Timnath,.... A city which by lot fell to the tribe of Judah, but was afterwards given to the tribe of Dan, and now in the hands of the Philistines, Jos 15:57. Judah is said to go up to it, because the place where he lived lay below it, Ge 38:13, but Samson is said to go down to it, because he lived above it. The Jews {t} differ about the reconciliation of these two places; some say there were two of this name, the one is a descent, and the other is an ascent; others say there was but one, so situated, that they that came to it on one side ascended, and they that came to it on the other side descended. Bochart {u} approves of the former. According to Bunting {w}, this was twelve miles from Eshtaol, where Samson lived:

and saw a woman in Timnath, of the daughters of the Philistines; who at this time dwelt there; he saw no doubt many other women besides her, but he took special notice of her, and entertained a particular affection for her; or, in other words, on sight of her fell in love with her.

{t} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1. {u} IIierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 4. col. 763, 764. {w} Travels, &c. p. 115.

Judges 14:2

Ver. 2. And he came up, and told his father and his mother,.... Of his passion of love, being desirous of having their approbation and consent, in which he acted a dutiful part, and what became him; and may be an example to children to advise with their parents, and have their opinion and consent before they engage in such an enterprise, even before courtship: and said,

I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines; whom he had a good liking of, and a strong affection for; he is very open and ingenuous in his account, does not go about to hide anything from his parents, or colour things over, or conceal her descent, but frankly tells them she was a Philistine woman, which he knew would at once furnish out an objection against her:

now therefore get her for me to wife: for it seems it was the custom then, when a young man had found a woman he liked, that it was left to his parents to entreat with the woman and her friends about the marriage of her to him.

Judges 14:3

Ver. 3. Then his father and his mother said unto him,.... What he might expect, and doubtless did expect:

is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? none in their own family, nor in the tribe of Dan, nor among the whole nation of Israel, but must go among the uncircumcised Philistines; for though they were not of the seven nations of the Canaanites, with whom marriage was forbidden, yet they not only dwelt where they did, and where the Israelites should, but were idolaters and impure persons, and therefore affinity should not be contracted with them, as being of a dangerous consequence, which might entice to idolatry. Ben Gersom observes, that their Rabbins say he made her a proselyte first, though he did not acquaint his parents with it, and so Abarbinel; but this seems not likely, for, had this been the case, he would have had an easy and ready reply to this objection of theirs:

and Samson said unto his father, get her for me, for she pleaseth me well; or "is right in mine eyes" {x}; not only his eyes were taken with her beauty or external form, but it was right in his sight, in his judgment, to marry her; he having an impulse upon his mind from the Spirit of God unto it, though he did not let his parents know of it, but left them to conclude it sprung from a strong affection to her person. Abarbinel observes, that he only addressed his father, and not his mother, she being most vehemently against the match, and expressing more uneasiness at it than his father did; but it is most likely that he addressed his father particularly, because he was the proper person to negotiate this affair for him.

{x} ynyeb hrvy "recta in oculis meis", Montanus, Junius et Tremellius.

Ver. 4. And his father and mother knew not that it was of the Lord,.... That he should marry this uncircumcised Philistine; Samson knew it was, and that his desire of having her in marriage did not arise from carnal affection to her merely, being captivated with her beauty and external form, for she was not so very fair, her younger sister was fairer than she, Jud 15:2 but he perceived it was the mind and will of God that he should take such a person to wife, by the impulse of the Spirit of God upon him, pointing it, unto him, inclining and urging him to it, suggesting the end and design of it, and the opportunity it would give him of quarrelling with the Philistines, and taking vengeance on them; but this his parents were ignorant of, nor did he let them know that this was of God:

that he sought an occasion against the Philistines; in this way, by this means; they might know he sought to get an opportunity to be avenged on them for their oppression, and to attempt the deliverance of Israel; but they knew not that it was the will of God that a way should be opened for it by this means. Samson might be directed by the Lord to reason thus in his mind, that if he proposed to the Philistines to marry one of their daughters, and they should reject his proposal, this would give him a reason to fall out with them, and fall upon them; and if they should agree to such a match, he might expect they would be kind to him, and to his people for his sake, being in alliance with them, or he should resent it, and take occasion from hence to come to a quarrel with them:

for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel; had invaded their country, and dwelt in their cities, and made them tributary to them, and used them ill; which Samson observing, was provoked to seek an opportunity of avenging the injuries done them, and of delivering them, and he was directed to it this way.

Ver. 5. Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath,.... They were prevailed upon to go with him, either because they perceived his affections were so strongly set upon a wife, that they thought it advisable to agree to it, lest it should be of bad consequence to him, or because he let them know that the thing was of God, and what was his design in it:

and came to the vineyards of Timnath; the land of Canaan was a land of vineyards, and particularly that part of it which was inhabited by the Philistines and Phoenicians; and though we nowhere read of the wine of Timnath, yet frequent mention is made in authors of the wine of Ashkelon, Gaza, and Sarepta, inhabited by the above people; these vineyards seem to have lain somewhat out of Samson's way; but hither he turned on some account or another from his parents, perhaps to eat some grapes:

and, behold, a young lion roared against him; not a whelp, that is expressed by another word, but one more grown, and is afterwards called a lion simply; and, by the Targum, a lion, the son of lions or lionesses; which seeing him in the vineyards, where he was lurking, came out to meet him, and roared at him in a hideous manner, and came up to him to destroy him: these creatures, though now more rare in those parts, were at this time frequent, and in later times: see 1Sa 17:34 and several writers {y} make mention of lions in Mesopotamia and Syria; and Strabo {z}, and Pliny {a} speak of a city in Phoenicia near Sidon, called the city of lions, because perhaps it had been much infested with them; and for a like reason it may be some cities in the tribes of Judah and Simeon were called Lebaoth and Bethlebaoth, Jos 15:32.

{y} Strabo. Geograph. l. 16. p. 514. Curtius, l. 8. sect. 1. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16. {z} Geograph, l. 16. p. 520. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 20.

Judges 14:6

Ver. 6. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him,.... The Spirit of might from the Lord, as the Targum, inspiring him with courage and intrepidity of mind, and increasing his bodily strength:

and he rent him as he would rend a kid; as he came up to him to seize him, he laid hold on him and strangled him, as Josephus {b} says, caught him by the throat, and tore it out; for it does not seem that the carcass was torn to pieces, or limb from limb, by what follows; and this he did with as much ease as if he had had only a kid to deal with:

and he had nothing in his hand; not a staff to keep it off, nor a spear, sword, or knife to stab it with: in this Samson was a type of Christ, who has destroyed our adversary the devil, compared to a roaring lion, **1Pe 5:8** to a lion for his strength, cruelty, and voraciousness; to a roaring lion, making a hideous noise and stir when the Gospel was carried unto the Gentiles, and they were about to be called and espoused to Christ; from among whom he was cast out, and by no other weapon than the ministration of the Gospel, accompanied with the power of Christ, and his Spirit:

but he told not his father or his mother what he had done; when he overtook them, as he quickly did, he said not a word to them of his meeting with a lion and slaying it; which, as it showed his modesty in not blazing abroad his wonderful and heroic actions, in which also he was a type of Christ, but his great prudence in concealing this, lest his great strength should be known too soon, and the Philistines be upon their guard against him, or seek to dispatch him privately; though no doubt he had pondered this in his own mind, and considered it as an omen and presage of the advantage he should have over the Philistines his enemies, whom he should as easily overcome as he had that lion, and that without any instrument of war.

{b} Antiqu l. 5. c. 8. sect. 5.

Judges 14:7

Ver. 7. And he went down, and talked with the woman,.... Entered into a conversation with her, that he might the better judge of her other qualifications, besides that of outward form and beauty, whether she would be a suitable yoke fellow for him; and he talked with her about marriage, and proposed it to her, or talked about her to her father and near relations; and, as the Targum expresses it, asked the woman, not only asked of her consent, but demanded her of her friends: it may refer, as Abarbinel observes, to his father, that he went down and talked with the woman and with her relations about her, concerning the affair of his son's marriage with her:

and she pleased Samson well; he liked her conversation as well as her person, and the more he conversed with her, the more agreeable she was to him, and the more desirous he was to marry her. Though some observe from hence, that she did not please the father of Samson as himself; so Abarbinel.

Ver. 8. And after a time he returned to take her,.... Matters being agreed on, and settled on both sides, and the espousals made, he and his parents returned, and, at the proper usual time for the consummation of the marriage, he went again to Timnath for that purpose. It is in the Hebrew text, "after days" {c}, which sometimes signifies a year, see **Ge 4:3** and so Ben Gersom interprets it, that a year after this woman became Samson's wife (i.e. betrothed to him) he returned to take her to himself to wife; and it seems, adds he, that twelve months were given her to prepare herself; and some considerable time must have elapsed, as appears from what had happened to the carcass of the lion, next related:

and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion: just before he came to Timnath he thought of the lion he had slain some time ago, and he went a little out of the way to see what was become of it, or had happened to it. Josephus says {d}, when he slew it he threw it into a woody place, perhaps among some bushes, a little out of the road; for which reason it had not been seen and removed, and was in a more convenient place for what was done in it:

and, behold, [there was] a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion; and though naturalists {e} tell us that bees are averse to flesh, and will not touch any, yet in the course of time that the carcass of this lion had lain, its flesh might have been clean eaten off by the fowls of the air, or was quite dried away and consumed, so that it was nothing but a mere skeleton; a bony carcass, as the Syriac version. Josephus {f} says, the swarm was in the breast of the lion; and it is no more unlikely that a swarm of bees should settle in it, and continue and build combs, and lay up their honey there, than that the like should be done in the skull of Onesilus king of Cyprus, when hung up and dried, as Herodotus {g} relates. Besides, according to Virgil {h}, this was a method made use of to produce a new breed of bees, even from the corrupt gore and putrid bowels of slain beasts; and Pythagoras {i} observes, they are produced from thence. This may be an emblem of those sweet blessings of grace, which come to the people of Christ through his having destroyed Satan the roaring lion, and all his works; particularly which came to the poor Gentiles, when the devil was cast out from them, and his empire there demolished.

{c} Mymym "a diebus", Montanus; "post dies", Vatablus. {d} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 5.) {e} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 40. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 21. {f} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8.) sect. 6. {g} Terpsichore, sive, l. 5. c. 114. {h} "----quoquo modo caesis", &c. Georgic. l. 4. ver. 284, &c. "Liguefacta boum per viscera", &c. Ib ver. 555. {i} Apud Ovid. Melamorph. l. 15. fab. 4. ver. 365, 366.

Judges 14:9

Ver. 9. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating,.... Josephus {k} says he took three honeycombs, he means three pieces of the honeycomb, and ate the honey as he went along to Timnath; which he might do without touching the carcass of the lion, and defiling himself thereby, which, as a Nazarite, he was more especially to be careful of:

and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat; who went down with him to the consummation of the marriage, and from whom he had turned a little aside; and now overtook them, and to whom he gave some of his honey to eat, which, having travelled some way, might be grateful to them. The above writer takes no notice of this, but says he gave of it to the young woman whom he betrothed, when he came to her; but of that the text makes no mention:

but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion; either lest they should scruple eating it, being taken out of such a carcass; or that the riddle, which perhaps he meditated as he came along eating the honey, might not be found out, which might more easily have been done, had this fact been known by any.

{k} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 6.)

Judges 14:10

Ver. 10. So his father went down unto the woman,.... At Timnath, whom Samson had espoused; the Targum is,

"about the business of the woman;"

about the consummation of the marriage with her; they all three went, the father, the mother, and the son, as appears from the preceding verse:

for Samson made a feast, for so used the young men to do; at the time of marriage; this was the nuptial feast common in all nations; but it seems the custom now and here was for the bridegroom to make it; whereas from other instances we learn, that the father of the bridegroom used to make it,see Gill on "Mt 22:2" and the Vulgate Latin version here renders it,

and he made a feast for his son Samson; the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions add, seven days, and so long this feast was kept, Jud 14:12. Now this marriage of Samson with a daughter of the Philistines was a type of the marriage of Christ with his people, especially with the Gentile church, such as were not of the commonwealth of Israel, but sinners of the Gentiles, very ignorant of divine things, reproached by the Jews, and their calling an offence to them; and may fitly express the love of Christ to his church, though unworthy of it, which is a love of complacency and delight, arising from his own good will and pleasure, and not owing to any superior beauty, excellence, worth, or worthiness in them, they being no better than others, children of wrath, even as others, see Jud 15:2 as well as there is an agreement in the manner of his obtaining and betrothing her, which was by applying to his father to get her for him, and being got and given, be betrothed her; so Christ asked his people of his father to be his spouse, which request being obtained, he betrothed them to himself in righteousness; and the Gospel feast, or ministry of the word, is kept and continued on account of it, Ps 21:2.

Judges 14:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass; when they saw him,.... That is, the Philistines, the citizens of Timnath, when they saw that he was come to consummate his marriage:

that they brought thirty companions to be with him; to be the bridegroom's men, or children of the bridechamber, as they are called, **Mt 9:15** or friends of the bridegroom, **Joh 3:29** to keep him company during the nuptial feast: this they did according to custom, and in honour and respect unto him;

though some think, and so Josephus {1}, that they were brought to be guards upon him, observing that he was a man of great might, strength, and courage, so that they were afraid of him, lest he should have some design upon them; but it is not certain that there was anything very visible or terrible in him, more than in another man, that showed him to be of extraordinary courage and strength, since it was but at times the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and as yet he had done nothing to their knowledge which showed him to be such; had they indeed known of his encounter with the lion, they might have had such thoughts of him, but this they knew nothing of.

{1} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 6.)

Judges 14:12

Ver. 12. And Samson said unto them,.... His thirty companions, very likely on the first day of the feast:

I will now put forth a riddle to you: a secret, hidden, abstruse thing, not easy to be understood; a dark saying, wrapped up in figurative terms; and this he proposed as an amusement to them, to exercise their wits, which it seems was usual to entertain guests with, and might be both pleasing and profitable:

if you can certainly declare it unto me within the seven days of the feast; for so long the nuptial feast was usually kept, see Ge 29:27. If they could find it out; and with clearness and certainty explain the riddle to him within that period of time, which was giving them time enough to do it in:

then I will give you thirty sheets, and thirty change of garments: that is, every man one of each. By "sheets" he means, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, a covering of the body in the night next to the flesh, in which a man lies, and was made of linen; meaning either what we call shirts, or bed sheet, and by change of raiment, a suit of clothes worn in the daytime.

Judges 14:13

Ver. 13. But if ye cannot declare it unto me,.... Explain the riddle in the space of time allowed:

then shall ye give me thirty sheets, and thirty change of garments; so many shirts and suits of apparel:

and they said unto him, put forth thy riddle that we may hear it; not thereby to judge whether they would agree to his proposals, but hereby suggesting that they accepted his terms and conditions, either to give or receive the above premium, if they did or did not hit on the explanation of the riddle.

Judges 14:14

Ver. 14. And he said unto them, out of the eater came forth meat,.... Out of a devouring eater, such as the lion is, came forth honey, or that was taken out of it, which Samson, and his father and mother, ate of, and which was the common food of some persons, as of John the Baptist:

and out of the strong came forth sweetness: not only out of that which was strong in body while alive, but of a strong and ill scent, as the carcass of a dead lion is, and out of that came forth honey, than which nothing is sweeter. Josephus {m} expresses it,

"that which devours all things furnishes out pleasant food, when that itself is altogether unpleasant:"

and they could not in three days expound the riddle; so long they laboured to find it out, but then began to despair of it.

{m} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 6.

Judges 14:15

Ver. 15. And it came to pass on the seventh day,.... Not on the seventh day of the feast, for some time before that they applied to his wife, and she pressed him hard to disclose it; but on the sabbath day, as Kimchi, and so Jarchi says, on the seventh day of the week, not on the seventh day of the feast, for it was the seventh day of the feast; this is so clear, that the

Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, instead of the seventh, read the fourth day:

that they said unto Samson's wife, entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle; that is, persuade him to tell the meaning of it to her, that she might declare it to them:

lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire; in which she now was, not as yet being taken home to her husband, and her in it; this they said to terrify her, and make her importunate with Samson to explain the riddle to her, if he had any value for her, and her life:

have ye called us to take that we have? invited them to the wedding feast, to strip them of their clothes, and even take their very shirts off of their backs, which they must have been obliged to part with, if they could not explain the riddle, or send for other suits and shirts from their own houses: "is it not so?" verily this is the case, nor can it be understood otherwise than a contrived business between thee and thy husband, to get our raiment, woollen and linen, from us.

Judges 14:16

Ver. 16. And Samson's wife wept before him,.... When she came to him to get out of him the explanation of the riddle, thinking that her tears would move him to it:

and said, thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: another artifice she used, well knowing he could not bear to have his affection called in question, which was now very strong, as is usual with newly married persons:

thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people; her countrymen, fellow citizens, and neighbour, and could not but be dear to her, and respected by her; so that what affected and afflicted them must have some influence upon her:

and hast not told me; that is, the explanation of it, otherwise it is likely she had heard the riddle itself told:

and he said unto her behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee? his parents he was greatly indebted to, for whom he had the highest reverence and esteem, whose fidelity and taciturnity he had sufficient knowledge of, and yet he had not thought fit to impart it to them; how therefore could she expect to be trusted with such a secret, with whom he had not been long acquainted, not long enough to know whether she could keep it or not?

Judges 14:17

Ver. 17. And she wept before him the seven days, while the feast lasted,.... Those that remained of the seven days, from the fourth to this time, as Kimchi seems rightly to interpret it; though some think she began to beseech him with tears, on the first day of the feast, to impart the secret to her for her own satisfaction; and then, after the men had urged her on the fourth day to persuade her husband to it, she continued pressing him more earnestly with tears unto the seventh day. Some, as Abarbinel observes, and to whom he seems to incline, think there were fourteen days, seven days before the festival began, on the last of which they importuned her to try to get the secret from him, Jud 14:15, and that she continued pressing all the second seven days; but it seems quite clear that it was at the beginning of the seven days of the feast that the riddle was put, which was to be explained within that time, Jud 14:12

and it came to pass on the seven day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him; pressed him most earnestly with her entreaties, cries, and tears:

and she told the riddle to the children of her people; though she knew it would be to her husband's detriment, and that he must be obliged to give them thirty sheets of linen, and as many suits of apparel, and though it is probable she had promised not to tell them.

Judges 14:18

Ver. 18. And the men of the city said unto him, on the seventh day, before the sun went down,.... And so soon, enough to free them from the obligation they otherwise would have been under, to have given him the sheets and changes of raiment agreed unto:

what is sweeter than honey? nothing, at least that was known, sugar not being invented. Julian the emperor {n}, in commendation of figs, shows, from various authors, that nothing is sweeter than they, excepting honey:

and what is stronger than a lion? no creature is, it is the strongest among beasts, Pr 30:30. Homer {o} gives the epithet of strong to a lion:

and he said unto them, if ye had not ploughed with my heifer; meaning his wife, whom he compares to an heifer, young, wanton, and unaccustomed to the yoke {p}; and by "ploughing" with her, he alludes to such creatures being employed therein, making use of her to get the secret out of him, and then plying her closely to obtain it from her; and this diligent application and search of theirs, by this means to inform themselves, was like ploughing up ground; they got a discovery of that which before lay hid, and without which they could never have had the knowledge of, as he adds:

ye had not found out my riddle; the explanation of it. Ben Gersome and Abarbinel interpret ploughing of committing adultery with her; in which sense the phrase is used by Greek and Latin writers {q}; but the first sense is best, for it is not said, "ploughed my heifer", but with her.

{n} Opera, par. 9. epist. 24. {o} Odyss. 4. ver. 336. {p} Vid. Horat. Carmin, l. 2. ode 5. Graja. "Juvenca venit". Ovid. ep. 5. ver. 117. {q} Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic par. 1. l. 2. c. 41. col. 406.

Judges 14:19

Ver. 19. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him,.... The Spirit of might from the Lord, as the Targum; which filled him with zeal and courage, animating him to the following undertaking, and increased his bodily strength to perform it:

and he went down to Ashkelon; one of the five principal cities of the Philistines; it lay near the Mediterranean sea, and, according to Bunting {r}, was twenty four miles from Timnath; why he went so far, is not easy to say; some think there was some grand solemnity or festival observed there at this time, which he knew of, when persons put on their best suits of apparel, and such he wanted: and slew thirty men of them; in vindication of which, it may be observed, that Samson was now raised up of God to be judge of

Israel; and that he acted now as such, and under the direction and impulse of the Spirit of God, and the persons he slew were the common enemies of Israel; and if now observing a festival in honour of their gods, they were justly cut off for their idolatry:

and took their spoil; their clothes off their backs, stripped them of their apparel, and even of their shirts, all which he brought away with him: and here it may be observed, that though Samson was a Nazarite, yet not a common one, and was an extraordinary person, and not in all things bound to the law of the Nazarites; at least that law was dispensed with in various instances relative to him, as taking honey out of the carcass of the lion, and here stripping dead bodies which were defiling, and other things:

and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle; to the thirty companions, to whom it was proposed, each man a suit of apparel taken from the thirty men he slew at Ashkelon, and sheets or shirts also no doubt, though not expressed. Indeed some have thought, because they did not find out the riddle of themselves, he did not give them the whole premium, and that by their own consent:

and his anger was kindled; against his wife, for her treachery and unfaithfulness to him, and against his companions for their deceitful usage of him, and against the citizens of the place, who perhaps laughed at him, being thus tricked and deceived:

and he went up to his father's house; left his wife, and her relations, and his companions, and the men of Timnath, and betook himself to his father's house again, as if he had been never married; his parents very probably had returned before him.

{r} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 116.

Judges 14:20

Ver. 20. But Samson's wife was given to his companion,.... By her father, and with her consent, both being affronted and provoked by Samson leaving her, who judged her not only to be injured, but hereby discharged from him, and free to marry another:

and whom he had used as his friend; though there were thirty of them that were his companions, yet there was one of them that was the principal of them, and was the most intimate with him, whom he used in the most friendly manner, and admitted to a more free conversation than the rest, the same that is called the friend of the bridegroom, **Joh 3:29** while the others were called the children of the bridechamber, **Mt 9:15**. It is not unlikely that this person had too much intimacy with Samson's wife before, and so had the secret of the riddle from her, and so very readily married her, as soon as Samson departed; and all this furnished out an occasion and opportunity, which Samson sought for, to be revenged on the Philistines, as in the following chapter.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**
Judges 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 15

This chapter relates, that Samson being denied his wife, did by a strange stratagem burn the corn fields, vineyards, and olives of the Philistines, Jud 15:1, and that because of their burning her and her father, he made a great slaughter of them, Jud 15:6, which brought the Philistines against the men of Judah, who took Samson and bound him, to deliver him to the Philistines, when he, loosing himself, slew a thousand of them with the jaw bone of an ass,
Jud 15:9 and being athirst, God in a wonderful manner supplied him with water, Jud 15:18.

Ver. 1. But it came to pass within a while after,.... Or "after days", a year after, the same phrase as in Jud 14:8 in the time of wheat harvest; which began at Pentecost, as barley harvest did at the passover; this circumstance is mentioned for the sake of the following piece of history:

that Samson visited his wife with a kid; by this time his passion of anger subsided, and he "remembered" his wife, as the Targum expresses it, and thought proper to return to her, and attempt a reconciliation with her; and for that purpose took a kid with him to eat a meal with her in her own apartment, which in those days was reckoned an elegant entertainment, and was a present to a king, 1Sa 16:20. Isidore {s} derives the Latin word for a kid, "ab edendo", from eating, as if it was food by way of eminency, as it is both savoury and wholesome:

and he said, I will go with my wife into the chamber; where she was, as women had their chambers and apartments by themselves; this he said within himself, or resolved in his own mind, and perhaps expressed it in her father's hearing, or however moved that way, which plainly indicated his design:

but her father would not suffer him to go in; placed himself perhaps between him and the door, and parleyed with him, and declared he should not go into his daughter's chamber; Samson, through his superior strength, could easily have pushed him away, and broke open the door, but he did not choose to use such violent methods, and patiently heard what he had to say, and submitted.

{s} Origin. l. 12. c. 1. p. 101.

Judges 15:2

Ver. 2. And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her,.... Not only thought so, but said so, and had said it over and over again; for the words are, "saying I said" {t}, affirmed it confidently and constantly, that "in hating thou hast hated her" {u}, with an implacable hatred, that there was no hope of any reconciliation:

therefore I gave her to thy companion; this he said to excuse his daughter, and soften his resentment, that it was not his daughter's doing, but his, and that he had disposed of her not to anybody, but to a companion of Samson's; and what follows seems to be said with the same view, for he might be in some fear of Samson, knowing him to be a man of spirit and strength:

is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her; that is, to wife; and two things he observes to recommend her, her youth and beauty, in which she was preferable to her sister. Such incestuous marriages were common with the old Canaanites, and it seems still continued; but were condemned by the law of God, and not allowed an Israelite, which Samson knew full well, and therefore listened not to the proposal; see Le 18:3.

{t} ytrma rma "dicendo dixi", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator. {u} htanv anv "odiendo odires eam", Pagninus, Montanus; so Piscator.

Judges 15:3

Ver. 3. And Samson said concerning them,.... His wife's father, and other relations, and the citizens of Timnath; this, which is what follows, he said either within himself respecting them, or he said it to them openly and publicly before them all:

now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure; signifying, that if he did them an ill thing, or what might be reckoned an injury to their persons or properties, and which would be disagreeable and displeasing to them, they could not justly blame him for it, since they had given him such a provocation as to dispose of his wife to another man; though Samson did not mean to act, nor did he act in the following instances as a private person taking private revenge, but as a public person, and judge of Israel; and took occasion, from the private injuries done him, to avenge the public ones of the children of Israel upon the Philistines; and they might thank themselves for giving the opportunity, which they could not justly condemn him for taking.

Judges 15:4

Ver. 4. And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes,.... Nor should this be thought at all incredible, since Canaan and Palestine abounded with foxes; hence several places therein had their names of Shual, which signifies a fox, Jos 15:28. A traveller {w} in those parts says that foxes swarm there, and that there are very great numbers of them in the hedges, and ruins of buildings: and these creatures were very pernicious to vines, and so may reasonably be thought to be about Timnath in great numbers, because of the vineyards there, Jud 14:5, besides, there is no necessity of supposing that Samson took all these himself, he might employ others in catching them for him, nor that he took them at the same time, on one and the same day; he might be many days and weeks about it, and keep them up until he had got his number: to which may be added, there was a creature in those parts very much like a fox, called Thoes, which, as Bellonius {x} says, were about Caesarea and Palestina, and go two hundred in company;

and so making use of proper means, which Samson was not unacquainted with, great numbers might be taken together; but, above all, it may be observed, that as this was under the direction of the divine Providence, God could easily cause such a number of creatures to be gathered together, and taken, as he ordered all the living creatures, as by an instinct, to come into the ark to Noah:

and he took fire brands; or rather torches, made of oily and resinous matter, which were not easily extinguished:

and turned tail to tail; took two foxes, and tied their tails together with a cord, giving them room enough to run about, as such creatures do, not forward, but in a crooked, flexuous manner, here and there:

and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails: which torch seems to have been fastened to the cord with which the tails were tied; he did not put a firebrand or torch to the tail of every single fox, which then would have made its way to its own den, but between two, which could not enter into one hole, and would draw different ways, and stop each other, and so do greater damage to the fields and vineyards into which they came.

{w} Morrison's Voyage, l. 2. c. 31. apud Calmet in the word "Fox". {x} L. 2. c. 11. apud Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 476.

Judges 15:5

Ver. 5. And when he had set the brands on fire,.... Disposed as before related; and foxes being naturally fearful of, and frightened with fire, and especially so near them as at their tails, would run into the first place they could for shelter:

he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines; which being ripe, as it was now wheat harvest, would soon take fire; and taking fire, this would in course cause the foxes to run still further to other parts of standing corn, and set fire to them also; besides, it is reasonable to suppose that Samson did not let them go all at once on one spot, but disposed of them, some here, and some there, to do the greater and more speedy execution:

and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives; for as it was in the time of harvest, in some places the corn was standing, and in other places it was cut down, and put into shocks or heaps; and to these the foxes would naturally run to shelter themselves, and so set fire to them, as well as they would make their way to the vineyards or oliveyards, either for shelter also, or for the sake of the grapes and olives, to satisfy their hunger, after having been detained long for this purpose; and thus by one means or another they destroyed the corn, the vines, and olives of the Philistines in those parts. Some would have it, in order to shun the difficulties objected by the enemies of revelation, that the word for "foxes" should be rendered "sheaves" or shocks of corn, set end to end {y}, which the word for "tail" is said to signify; and firebrands or torches being set on fire, communicated it to standing corn, shocks of corn, vineyards, and oliveyards; but there is no need to put such a sense upon the words, as already observed; nor is the word translated "foxes" ever used in Scripture in any form for "sheaves" or shocks of corn, but always others; nor in any Jewish writings, nor in the sister dialects, Arabic, Chaldee, or Ethiopic; and in any place of Scripture where it is translated "fox" or "foxes", should the word "sheaves" or "shocks" be put, the sense would appear most ridiculous; nor is the word for "tail" ever used in Scripture, in a literal sense, but for the tail of a living creature; nor is the word for "took" or "caught" ever used of taking anything in common, but either of taking men or cities by force, or of creatures in nets, traps, and snares: and the sense which such a version of the words would give is not only contrary to the Hebrew text, and to the Chaldee paraphrase, but to all the ancient versions, Arabic, Syriac, Septuagint, and Vulgate Latin, and to Josephus. The memory of this great event was kept up, or a custom borrowed from it, as some learned men have observed in the Vulpinaria of the Romans, mentioned by Ovid {z}, and others, which bore a great resemblance to this, and which was observed at the same time of the year, about the middle of April, or calends of May; which exactly agrees with the time of wheat harvest in Palestine; when in the Circus they used to send out foxes with burning torches fixed to their backs. Nor need this affair of Samson's seem more strange or incredible than the great number of creatures brought into the Circus at Rome, to be seen there together. Sylla first introduced one hundred lions, after him Pompey the great three hundred, and Julius Caesar, when he was dictator, four hundred, as Pliny {a} relates. Probus {b} sent into the amphitheatre at one time, which he made like a wood full of trees, 1000 ostriches, a like number of harts, does, boars, and other creatures each; and at another time one hundred lions, as many lionesses and leopards each, and three hundred bears; Heliogabalus {c} got together 1000 weasels, 10,000 mice, 10,000 weight of spiders and flies.

{y} Observ. Halens. apud Stockium in voc. lev, p. 1126. & Hardtius apud Marck. Dissertat. Philolog. Exercitat. 5. sect. 7. p. 196. {z} Fasti, l. 4. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 26. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16. {b} Vopiscus in Vita Probi. {c} Ib. in "Vita ejus".

Judges 15:6

Ver. 6. Then the Philistines said, who hath done this?.... They asked and inquired one of another, who they thought could be the author of such mischief:

and they answered, Samson, the son in law of the Timnite; this they said either by conjecture, which might be the case of some; and others more confidently asserted it, having heard what he said, Jud 15:3 and they assign a very good reason for it,

because he had already taken away his wife, and given her to his companion, which had provoked him to do such an action as this; and perhaps the very same persons that were very well pleased before that Samson was so served, yet now were full of wrath and indignation at the Timnite, having suffered so much in their property on his account:

and the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire; Josephus {d} says, her and her relations; they set fire to her father's house, where she was, and burnt them both in it, whereby that evil came upon her she thought to avoid by getting the secret of the riddle out of Samson, and telling it to his companion, Jud 14:15 and suffered the proper punishment for her adultery; the people that did this were those that lived in the towns adjacent, from whence they came up to Timnath, whose fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, had been destroyed by the foxes with their firebrands.

{d} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 7.

Judges 15:7

Ver. 7. And Samson said unto them,.... After they had burnt his wife and her father in their dwelling house, by which they thought to appease him, being afraid of him:

though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you; not for burning his wife and father-in-law; his sense is, that though they had done this, in order to ingratiate themselves with him, yet he should not stop on this account, but be avenged on them, not for private injuries done to him, or any that had been in connection with him, but for public injuries done to Israel, and their oppression of them:

and after that I will cease; when he had taken full vengeance on them, and not before.

Judges 15:8

Ver. 8. And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter,.... Either smote them on their hips and thighs with his hands (for it does not appear he had any weapon of war), so that they were sadly bruised, and maimed, and lamed, that they could not stir, and of which blows and bruises multitudes died: or he smote them with his legs on their thighs, kicked them about at pleasure, which kicks numbers of them never got over; or the meaning of the proverbial expression is, he laid on them at a great rate, and smote them here and there, and any where, which issued in the death of many of them: the Targum is,

"he smote them horse and foot,"

their cavalry and infantry, destroyed them both; but it does not appear that they came out in an hostile manner unto him, and much less in the form of a regular army:

and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam. Josephus says {e}, that Samson having slain many in the fields of the Philistines, went and dwelt at Etam, a strong rock in the tribe of Judah; and which agrees with 2Ch 11:6, where mention is made of the city Etam, along with Bethlehem and Tekoah, cities in that tribe, which had its name either from this rock, or the rock from that. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions read,

"in a cave of the rock of Etam;"

and the Syriac and Arabic versions, in Sahaph, which is on the rock of Etam, as if Sahaph was the name of a city there; hither Samson went, not through fear, or for safety, but to wait for another opportunity of further avenging the injuries of Israel on the Philistines.

{e} Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8.) sect. 8.

Judges 15:9

Ver. 9. Then the Philistines went up,.... From Palestine, which lay low on the shore of the Mediterranean sea:

and pitched in Judah; in the laud of Judea, which lay higher, particularly in the tribe of Judah, whither they came with an army, and encamped there:

and spread themselves in Lehi; their forces were so many, that they extended a considerable way, and particularly reached to Lehi, that is, which was afterwards so called; for it has its name by anticipation from the jaw bone, which it signifies, with which Samson slew many in this place, as after related.

Judges 15:10

Ver. 10. And the men of Judah said,.... To the Philistines, very probably by a deputation, which they sent unto them, to know the reason of this formidable appearance:

why are ye come up against us? in this hostile manner, with such a number of forces, since they were not conscious to themselves that they had done anything to offend them; they had not attempted to cast off their yoke, they quietly submitted to their government, and had paid their whole tribute, as Josephus {f} represents them saying; they could not imagine what should be the meaning of all this:

and they answered, to bind Samson are we come up; that is, to oblige them to bind him, and deliver him into their hands:

to do to him as he hath done to us: to put him to death, as he had slain many of their people in the last rencounter with them.

{f} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 8.)

Judges 15:11

Ver. 11. Then three thousand of Judah went up to the top of the rock of Etam,.... Or "went down" {g}; that is, into the cave of the rock of Etam, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; and so it is taken by David de Pomis {h} for a cave dug in the rock: this was a large number that went to take one man; the reason is, they knew his great strength:

and said to Samson, knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? and therefore it must be a very unwise thing to disoblige and provoke them, when it lay in their power to oppress them yet more and more, to increase their tribute, and make their burdens heavier, and even take away their lives:

what is this that thou hast done unto us? they ask not what he had done to them, but unto us; though they mean that, but express themselves thus, because what he had done to the Philistines was the occasion of their coming up against them, and so eventually it was doing them ill:

and he said unto them, as they did unto me, so have I done to them; they had done him ill, and therefore he did ill to them; they had burnt his wife and her father with fire, and he had slain many of them; at least this was what he thought fit to say in his own vindication; otherwise what he did was not in a way of private revenge, but on account of the injury done to the people of Israel, he taking what was done to them as done to himself, the chief magistrate and judge of Israel.

{g} wdryw, "et descenderunt", Pagninus, Montanus; "descenderunt ergo", V. L. Tigurine version. {h} Tzemach David, fol. 112. 3.

Judges 15:12

Ver. 12. And they said unto him, we are come down to bind thee,.... That is, they were come down into the cave where he was; otherwise more properly they were come up to the top of the rock:

that we may deliver thee into the hands of the Philistines; they own what was their intention in binding him, and what put them upon it was not ill will to him, but fear of the Philistines:

and Samson said unto them, swear unto me that ye will not fall upon me yourselves; which shows he did not fear them, though they were 3000; and that if they attempted to take away his life, he should defend himself, but he chose not to shed the blood of any of them; and rather than they should come into any distress through the Philistines, consented to be bound by them, and delivered into their hands; which he was a type of Christ, who was betrayed by the Jews, and delivered by them into the hands of the Romans; and though he could have delivered himself by his great strength, would not, but suffered himself to be taken and bound, and given into the hands of his enemies, that his own people might go free; see Joh 18:4.

Judges 15:13

Ver. 13. And they spake unto him, saying, no,.... They declared they would not fall upon him themselves and slay him; nor would the Jews put Christ to death themselves, though they were virtually his betrayers and murderers, Joh 18:31

but we will bind thee fast and deliver thee into their hands; as the Jews did Christ, and not only delivered him bound to the high priest, but also to the Roman governor, Mt 27:2

but surely we will not kill thee: not with their own hands, but then they proposed to deliver him into the hands of the Philistines, from whence nothing but death could be expected; so that had they put him to death, they would have been accessory to it, as the Jews were to the death of Christ by delivering him to the Gentiles, and are charged with it, **Ac 2:23**.

and they bound him with two new cords; not with one only, lest it should not be sufficient to hold him, knowing his strength, but with two, and these not old worn out ones, but new ones just made, and very strong; and, as Joseph Kimchi, noted by Ben Melech, were trebled, or made of three cords or thongs, for greater security; and of flax, as the following verse intimates, and such are most firm and strongest to hold anything; hence nets were made of flax to hold creatures in, fish, fowl, or beasts {i}:

and brought him up from the rock; the place, as Kimchi says, where the men of Judah dwelt, being higher than the rock; though rather the true sense is, they brought him up out of the cave in the rock.

{i} Vid. Plin Nat. Hist. l. 19. 1.

Judges 15:14

Ver. 14. And when he came unto Lehi,.... The place which was afterwards so called, from what happened there at this time, and where the Philistines were spread, Jud 15:9 this, according to Bunting {k}, was six miles from Etam:

the Philistines shouted against him: for joy that they had got him into their hands, and in the circumstances he was, being bound, so that they had nothing to fear from him:

and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him: as it at times did, and had done before; the Targum is,

"the Spirit of might from the Lord,"

which gave him courage and resolution of mind, and great strength of body, even while he was speaking, as a token of the wonders God more than he had at other times:

and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire; as easily parted as the flax when fire takes it, which is consumed at once:

and his bonds loosed off from his hands; by which it appears that both arms and hands were bound with the cords; his arms were pinioned close to his body, as well as his hands were tied together; and these, as in the original, "melted away" {l}, like wax before the fire, or snow before the sun, so easily were these bands separated from him; this may be an emblem of Christ's loosing himself from the cords of death, **Ac 2:24**.

{k} Travels, p. 116. {l} womy "diffuxerunt", Tigurine version; "liquefacta sunt", Piscator.

Judges 15:15

Ver. 15. And he found a new jawbone of an ass,.... That is, the jawbone of an ass lately killed, which perhaps had some of the flesh upon it, the blood or purulent matter on it; for Jarchi says, he had read in the books of physicians, that the word here used signifies the sanies or purulent matter of a wound; however, it was moist, and fresh, and so tough and strong, and would bear to strike with, and give hard blows with, when an old jawbone would have been dry and brittle; and perhaps the asses of those countries were larger than ours, and so their jawbones bigger and stronger:

and put forth his hand and took it; it lay near him, being so disposed by the providence of God at the time and place where his cords were loosed from him, and he reached and took it up:

and slew one thousand men therewith, such was his great strength, that every blow he gave in all probability killed a man; there have been wonderful things done by mighty warriors, but none like this; they have by the use of warlike weapons destroyed many, as with the sword or spear, but not with such an instrument. One of David's worthies slew three hundred men at one time with his spear, 1Ch 11:11 and Scanderbeg with his sword slew great numbers of the Turks with his own hand at different times; what comes nearest to this is Shamgar's killing six hundred Philistines with an ox goad, **Jud 3:31**, this may be an emblem of the weak and contemptible means of the Gospel, the foolishness of preaching, by which Christ has conquered and subdued multitudes to himself.

Judges 15:16

Ver. 16. And Samson said,.... In a kind of triumphant song:

with the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps; that is, with such an instrument he had slain heaps of men, who lay dead in heaps upon one another; in the words for an "ass", and for an "heap", is an elegant "paronomosia", not easy to be expressed in our language:

with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men: this he said not in a proud and haughty manner, ascribing it to himself, as Josephus suggests {m}, since he takes notice of the mean instrument he used; which showed that he was sensible it was not done by his own power, but by the power of God, which enabled him by such weak means to do such wonderful things.

{m} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 9.

Judges 15:17

Ver. 17. And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking,.... Of delivering out the above song, which very probably consisted of much more than what is here expressed:

that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand; which he held in his hand had wrought by him through the means of it, and so served to animate him to praise and thankfulness; but having no further use for it, he threw it away:

and called the place Ramathlehi; that is, the casting away the jawbone, so Kimchi; but Ben Gersom thinks it was an high place where it was thrown, and so signifies the elevation or lifting up of the "jawbone", as the Septuagint version renders it.

Judges 15:18

Ver. 18. And he was sore athirst,.... Which Josephus {n} thinks came upon him as a rebuke unto him, for ascribing the victory he had obtained to his own strength, and not to the Lord, whereby he was shown his own weakness, and how easily his strength could be reduced; but for this there seems to be no foundation; it is not to wondered at, in a natural way, that he should be athirst after he had been bound with cords, after he had so exerted himself, and slain 1000 men with his own hand, and after he had celebrated this victory with a triumphant song; and it may also be observed, that it was so ordered in Providence, that he might in this be a type of the Messiah, who on the cross, as he was spoiling principalities and powers, and triumphing over them in it, said, "I thirst", Joh 19:28

and called on the Lord, and said; in prayer to him:

thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant; he owns the deliverance to be great, as indeed, it was, and that it was of the Lord, and he only his servant and instrument in it:

and now shall I die for thirst; when my life has been saved in so wonderful a manner, and so great a salvation has been wrought by my hands, as an instrument:

and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised? which would be matter of joy and triumph to them, and mar the glory of the deliverance wrought.

{n} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 9.

Judges 15:19

Ver. 19. And God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout,.... A socket in which was fastened one of the teeth, and was in the form of a mortar; so Jarchi and Ben Melech, as the word for an hollow place signifies; one of the grinders was knocked out, and so the place where it had been was left hollow, and out of that sprung a stream or flow of water; which was very wonderful, since out of such a place rather blood, or purulent matter, would naturally have issued; the Targum is,

"the Lord clave the rock which was in the jaw;"

which Kimchi interprets thus, the rock was under the jaw and the rock was made as a hollow place, and therefore they call it "mactes", a mortar: the sense seems to be this, that the place on which Samson cast the jawbone was a rock, and there God clave an hollow place, out of which water sprung, and which perhaps was under the jawbone, and sprung under it, and through it; and so Josephus says {o}, that God at his prayer brought a sweet and large fountain out of a certain rock; and the words of the text will bear to be rendered, "and God clave, an hollow place, which is in Lehi"; that is, in the place called Lehi, Jud 15:9 and not in the jawbone itself:

and when he had drank, his spirit came again, and he revived; his spirit was sunk and gone, as it were, but upon drinking a draught of this water he was refreshed and cheered, recovered his spirits, and became brisk and lively:

wherefore he called the name thereof Enhakkore; that is,

"the fountain of him that was calling;"

of Samson that called upon God in prayer, and was heard, in memory of which he gave it this name; so the Targum,

"therefore its name was called the fountain that was given through the prayer of Samson:"

which is in Lehi unto this day; or in the jawbone: not that the jawbone continued unto the time of the writer of this book, but the name of the place where this miracle was wrought, which was in Lehi, continued to be called Enhakkore unto that time, and it may be the fountain itself continued also; nay, Giycas {p} says, who lived but about six hundred years ago, that the fountain continued unto his time, and was to be seen in the suburbs of Eleutheropolis, and was called the fountain of the jawbone.

{o} Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 9.) {p} Annal. par. 2. p. 164. apud Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. p. 872.

Judges 15:20

Ver. 20. And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years. While they had the power over the Israelites, who were not entirely delivered out of their hands by Samson, he only began to deliver them, but did not completely do it; though he got many advantages over them, and wrought many salvations and deliverances, yet was not the author of perfect salvation, see Jud 13:5 however, he was a check upon the Philistines, and protected the Israelites from heavier oppressions, which otherwise they would have come under; and no doubt administered justice and judgment among them, and was an instrument of their reformation, and of preserving them from idolatry; for in such things the work of a judge chiefly lay: some from hence observe, that this shows the years of servitude and bondage are included in the years of the judges.

Judges 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 16

In this chapter we have an account of Samson's too great familiarity with two harlots; by the one he was brought into great danger, and narrowly escaped, Jud 16:1, and by the other he was betrayed into the hands of the Philistines, having got the secret out of him wherein his great strength lay, Jud 16:4 who having him in their hands, put out his eyes, imprisoned him, and in their idol temple made sport of him, Jud 16:21, where praying for renewed strength from the Lord, he pulled down the temple, and destroyed multitudes with the loss of his own life, Jud 16:26.

Ver. 1. Then went Samson to Gaza,.... One of the five principalities of the Philistines, which was ten miles from Ashkelon, as Sandys {q} says; who also describes {r} it as standing upon an hill environed with valleys, and these again well nigh enclosed with hills, most of them planted with all sorts of delicate fruits; and, according to Bunting {s}, forty two miles from Ramathlehi, the place where we last hear of him, See Gill on "Am 1:6" see Gill on "Zep 2:4" what he went hither for is not easy to say; it showed great boldness and courage, after he had made such a slaughter of the Philistines, to venture himself in one of their strongest cities, where he must expect to be exposed to danger; though it is highly probable this was a long time after his last encounter with them:

and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her; the Targum renders it an innkeeper, one that kept a victualling house; so Kimchi, Ben Gersom, and Ben Melech interpret it; into whose house he went for entertainment and lodging, and very probably in the dusk of the evening; and the woman that kept this house might herself be an harlot, or, however, Samson saw one in her house, with whom he was captivated, and went in unto her, or had criminal conversation with her; it seems as if he did not turn in thither with any such wicked design, but on sight of the person was ensnared to commit lewdness with her; and, as Lyra says, there were many hostesses in some places, and so here, who too easily prostituted themselves to their guests.

{q} Travels, l. 3. p. 118. {r} Travels, l. 3. p. 116. {s} Ut supra. (Travels, l. 3. p. 118.)

Judges 16:2

Ver. 2. And it was told the Gazites,.... The inhabitants of Gaza, the principal ones of it, the magistrates of the city, either by some persons that saw him come in, who knew him, or by the harlot into whose company he fell, to whom he made himself known:

saying, Samson is come hither; the man so famous for his strength, and such an enemy to the Philistines; his name was well known for his great exploits, and rung throughout Palestine, and was a terror to the whole country:

and they compassed [him] in; not that they surrounded the house where he was, which perhaps they might not certainly know, but they secured all the avenues and gates of the city, made them fast, and placed guards there, that he might not escape their hands:

and laid wait for him all night in the gate; particularly at that gate, where, if he went out for his country, he must pass:

and were quiet all the night; did not attempt to disturb Samson, or seize on him, if they knew where he was; knowing his great strength, and what a tumult might be raised in the city, they said nothing of it to anybody that passed, what they were placed there for, lest it should come to his ears; they made as if they were deaf and dumb, as some interpret it, and heard and knew nothing:

saying, in the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him; when they should better know him, and make sure their blow at him, and do it suddenly, unawares to him, as he came to the gate, to pass through it.

Judges 16:3

Ver. 3. And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight,.... Either not being able to lie any longer through the conviction of his conscience for his lewdness, or being warned by a dream, or having an impulse upon his spirit, which suggested to him that wait was laid for him, and the danger he was in; and coming to the gate of the city, which he found shut and fast barred and bolted, and the watch perhaps asleep, not expecting his coming until daylight:

and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all; did not stand to break open the doors of the gate, but took the two side posts up, on which the folding doors of the gate were hung, out of the ground in which they were fastened, with the bar which went across the doors for the security of them:

and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron; if this hill was near Hebron, as the words thus read seem to intimate, he must carry the gates twenty miles upon his shoulders, for so far was Hebron from Gaza; so Josephus says it was over Hebron; but according to Adrichomius {t}, it was near Gaza, looking towards Hebron; and so Sandys says {u}, in the valley, on the east side of the city, are many straggling buildings, beyond which there is a hill more eminent than the rest, on the north side of the way that leads to Babylon, said to be that to which Samson carried the gates of the city. It is very probable, as some think, that it was between Gaza and Hebron, in sight of both cities, which may be meant by the phrase "before", or "on the face of"; being so high might be seen as far as Hebron, as well as at Gaza. This was an emblem of Christ's resurrection, of whom Samson was a type, who being encompassed in a sepulchre, and sealed and watched by soldiers, broke through the bars of death and the grave, and carried off the doors in triumph; and in a short time ascended to heaven, whereby he declared himself to be the Son of God with power. It was usual for doors and bars of gates to be carried in triumph, and laid up in temples {w}; and the Jews say these doors were not less than sixty cubits, and suppose Samson's shoulders to be as broad {x}.

{t} "Theatrum Terrae Sanet". p. 133. {u} Ut supra, (Travels l. 3.) p. 117. {w} "----sacris in postibus arma: ----et portarum ingentia claustra." Virgil. Aeneid. 7. ver. 185. {x} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1.

Judges 16:4

Ver. 4. And it came to pass afterwards, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek,.... Which, according to Adrichomius {y} was but half a mile from the brook Eshcol, from whence the spies brought a bunch of grapes, as a specimen of the fruit of the land of Canaan; and this valley of Sorek seems to have been famous for the best wine, and hither Samson retired for refreshment and pleasure; but, according to Jerom {z}, it was on the north of Eleutheropolis, where, he says, was shown a village in his time called Capharsorech, near the village Zorah, from whence Samson was; and Bunting {a} makes it to be twelve miles from Hebron, and twelve from Jerusalem; where he met with a woman he loved; whether she was an Israelite, or one of the daughters of the Philistines, they now being the rulers of Israel, is not said; most likely the latter, as say Ben Gersom and Abarbinel, since the lords of the Philistines were so intimate with her, and were entertained in her house, and she showed more respect to them than to Samson. The Jews say she became a proselyte, but if she did, there is very little evidence of her being a sincere one: some have thought, that the courtship to her was a lawful conjugal love; that falling in love with her, he courted and married her; but this is not very likely, since no mention is made of his marriage to her, nor did he take her home, but dwelt in her house: it rather seems to be an impure and unlawful love he had to her, and that she was an harlot, as Josephus {b}; and all her conduct and behaviour confirm the same:

whose name was Delilah; the Jews say {c} she was so called because she weakened the heart and spirit of Samson, and weakened his strength, and weakened his works; and therefore, if this had not been her name, they say it was one very proper for her.

{y} Ut supra, (Theatrum Terra Sanct.) p. 24. {z} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. L. {a} Travels, p. 116, 117. {b} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8.) sect. 11. {c} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 9. 2.

Judges 16:5

Ver. 5. And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her,.... Having heard that Samson kept company with her, she being a noted strumpet, like Lais among the Grecians. These were in number five, as appears from **Jud 3:3** and had under them five principalities, into which Palestine was divided; and these, if not united in their government, which possibly might be the case at this time, yet were united against their common enemy Samson; and being great personages, it is thought by some they came not themselves to this harlot's house, but sent a deputation of five persons in their names, though the text is very express here and after: they are said to come up to her, because their country lay on the shore of the sea, and lower than Judea:

and said unto her, entice him; persuade him with soothing and flattering words; take an opportunity when in an amorous mood to improve her interest in his affections:

and see wherein his great strength lieth; for it might not appear by the size of his body, or from his natural constitution, and in the common actions of life, but only at certain times, and as it should seem when he pleased; and he might have been heard to say that it was a secret he kept to himself, and no man knew it; or they might suspect something of magic in the case, that he carried something about with him, which, if it could be gotten from him, would deprive him of his strength:

and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him; to humble him, bring him low, and reduce him to the common condition of men; they did not propose to kill him, which they might think she would not agree to, and so reject their proposal at once, but at most to distress him, and to chastise him with mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonment, for the mischief he had indeed done them, and prevent him from doing more:

and we will give thee, everyone of us, eleven hundred [pieces] of silver or shekels; it may seem strange that they should promise each 1100: some think their principalities offered each 1000 shekels, and the princes themselves one hundred; but Abarbinel supposes that this was, on some account or another, in those times an usual sum or computation, since the same is mentioned in the following chapter; though it may be observed that these five several sums put together make a round number, 5500 pieces of silver; which, taking them to be shekels, according to Waserus {d}: they amounted to 1375 rix dollars, and of Helvetian money 3666 pounds, and a little more, and of our money near seven hundred pounds sterling; a considerable bribe, and very tempting to a person of such a character, and which she readily embraced, as appears by what follows.

{d} De Antiquis Numis, l. 2. c. 5.

Judges 16:6

Ver. 6. And Delilah said to Samson,.... At a proper opportunity, when in his hands and caresses, as Josephus relates {e}, and introduced it in an artful manner, admiring his strange exploits, and wondering how he could perform them:

tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth; which she proposed seemingly out of mere curiosity, and as it would be a proof of his affection to her, to impart the secret to her:

and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee; not that she suggested to him that she was desirous to have him afflicted, or to try the experiment herself in order to afflict him, but to know by what means, if he was bound, it would be afflicting to him so that he could not relieve himself; she knew he might be bound, if he would admit of it, as he had been, but she wanted to know how he might be bound, so as to be held, and could not loose himself.

{e} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 9.)

Judges 16:7

Ver. 7. And Samson said unto her,.... In answer to her pressing solicitations:

if they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried; the word is sometimes used for nerves, and cords or ropes; but neither of these can be here meant, since these, if moistened or made wet, are the less fit to bind with, and the drier the better; but rods or branches of trees just cut off, such as faggots are bound up with, or green osiers, which are easily bent and twisted, and may bind with; Josephus {u} calls them vine branches:

then shall I be weak, and be as another man; which cannot well be excused from a lie; for Samson knew full well that being bound would not weaken his strength; but as he had fallen into one sin, it is no wonder he was drawn into another: unless this can be understood, as it is by some, as jesting with her; however, it shows that he was "compos mentis", as Josephus {w} observes, and was upon his guard with respect to the secret of his strength.

{u} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 9.) {w} Ibid.

Judges 16:8

Ver. 8. Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her,.... To the chamber where she was with Samson, she having acquainted them with what he had told her:

seven green withs, which had not been dried; just such as he had described and directed to:

and she bound him with them; taking an opportunity, very likely, when he was asleep, and drunk too, according to Josephus {x}: the Philistines did not attempt to bind him, supposing that he would not admit them to do it, if aware of them; and they might fear, if asleep, he might awake before they could do it, and fall upon them and destroy them; but as for Delilah, if she had been found at it, she could have excused it as a piece of curiosity, being willing to try whether he told her truth or not.

{x} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 11.

Judges 16:9

Ver. 9. Now there were men lying in wait,.... Very likely some of the servants of the lords of the Philistines, who were placed privately on purpose, that when an opportunity offered, they might rush out, and fall upon Samson; Josephus {y} calls them soldiers:

abiding with her in the chamber; in a private part of it, or otherwise they could not be said to lie in wait; in it may mean near it; perhaps it was in the next apartment to hers, where they were set:

and she said unto him, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson; are just ready to fall upon thee, and seize thee; this she said to arouse him, and try whether he could break the withs or not, before she called in the men that lay in wait, and whether he had told her the truth or not:

and he brake the withs as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire; or "smells it" {z}; as soon as it comes near it; a thread of tow or linen catches the fire presently, it being so weak that it cannot stand before the least force of it; so easily did the withs give way, and were broken, when Samson did but just stir himself, and move his arms:

so his strength was not known; by Delilah, nor by the Philistines; that is, where it lay, so as that it might be weakened; for otherwise it was known by the easy breaking of the withs.

{y} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 11. {z} wxyrhb "cum olfecerit", Drusius, so Piscator.

Judges 16:10

Ver. 10. And Delilah said unto Samson,.... Not on the same day, but some time after, as Kimchi observes, when an opportunity offered, and he was in like circumstances as before; for had she immediately attacked him, it might have created some suspicion in him of a design against him:

behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies; deceived her with lies, by telling her the other day that if he was bound with green withs, he should become as weak as other men; which she, out of curiosity as she might pretend, had tried, and had found to be false; and which, she might add, was an argument of want of true love to her, to mock her in such a manner:

now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound; so as to be held.

Judges 16:11

Ver. 11. And he said unto her,.... Abarbinel presents Samson replying to her, that he had told her the truth at first, only forgot one circumstance, that the "cords", for so he takes the word for "withs" to signify, should be "new", such as were never used, as follows:

if they bind me fast with new ropes, that never were occupied; the word signifies thick ropes, which, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, were trebled, or made of three cords twisted together, and those such as were just made, and had never been put to any use, and so strong and firm:

then shall I be weak, and be as another man; see Jud 16:7.

Judges 16:12

Ver. 12. Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith,.... Tried this experiment with him, according to his directions, being very desirous of getting the sum of money offered her:

and said unto him, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson: using the same words, and with the same view as she had done before, Jud 16:9

(and there were liers in wait abiding the chamber); as before, ready upon occasion to rush in upon him, as soon as any notice was given them:

and he brake them from off his arms like a thread; as easily as a thread of linen can be snapped asunder.

Judges 16:13

Ver. 13. And Delilah said unto Samson,.... At another time, when she thought it most proper to upbraid him with his deception of her:

hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies; both the times that she had solicited him to impart the secret of his strength to her:

tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound; tell me the real truth, and deceive me no more:

and he said unto her, if thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web; it seems that Samson's hair was parted into seven locks, which no doubt hung down very long; and now he tells her, that if these were interwoven with the warp which was upon the beam in a loom near by; perhaps in the same room, where Delilah used to weave, as was the custom of those times, and in various nations {a}; his strength would be weakened; for Braunius {b} is mistaken in supposing this to be the beam about which the web was rolled, as he is also in the pin next mentioned, which he takes to be the "spatha", or lathe, with which the threads are knocked together.

{a} "Arguto conjux", &c. Virgil. Georgie. l. 1. v. 294. So Penelope in Homer, Minerva & Arachne in Ovid. Metamorph. l. 6. fab. 1. v. 55, &c. Vid. Pignorium de servis, p. 418. Braunium de Vest. Sacerd. Hebr. l. 1. c. 17. sect. 33. {b} "De Vest". Sacerd. Hebr. l. 1. c. 16. sect. 8.

Judges 16:14

Ver. 14. And she fastened it with the pin,.... That is, after she had interwoven the locks of his hair into the warp, she fastened the beam on which it was with the pin, that it might not roll back; or else her machine or loom to the ground, that it might stand more firmly; or the web into which the hair was woven, with the hair itself; which of them is right, it is difficult to say: but if the addition of the Septuagint version can be admitted as genuine, which supplies some things which seem to be wanting, and which best agrees with what follows, the whole will be plain and easy, and which after the preceding verse runs thus;

"and fastenest "them" with a pin to the wall, then shall I be weak as another man; and it came to pass when he slept, and Delilah took seven locks of his head, and wove "them" in the web, and fastened them with a pin to the wall;"

and then it follows as here:

and said unto him, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson; as she had twice before:

and he awaked out of his sleep; in which he was during her weaving his locks into the web; and this makes it probable that he was in the same circumstances when she bound him both with withs and ropes, though it is not expressed:

and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web; carried off not the pin of the beam only, but the beam itself, and the warp on it, and the whole web into which his hair was woven. The Septuagint version is, he took the pin of the web out of the wall; and the Vulgate Latin, the pin with the hairs and web.

Judges **16:15**

Ver. 15. And she said unto him, how canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?.... She took an opportunity, when he was caressing her, to upbraid him with dissembled love, and a false heart: thou hast mocked me these three times; she had urged him to tell her where his strength lay, and by what it might be weakened, first pretending it might be done by binding him with green withs, and then with new ropes, and a third time by weaving his locks into the web:

and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth; the thing so frequently and so importunately requested.

Judges **16:16**

Ver. 16. And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him,.... Lay at him day after day to communicate the secret to him, gave him no rest, but was incessant in her applications to him:

so that his soul was vexed unto death: could hardly bear to live, but wished to die, being in the utmost perplexity what to do between two different passions, love and fear; on the one hand chained by his lust to this harlot, that was continually teasing him, and whom he had not an heart to leave, or otherwise that would have cleared him of his difficulties; and on the other hand, should he disclose the secret, he feared, and was in danger of losing his strength, in which his glory lay: or

"his soul was shortened unto death" {c};

it was the means of shortening his days, and hastening his death. Abarbinel thinks that Samson was sensible of this, that his days were short, and the time of his death at hand; which made him the more willing to impart the secret. This may put in mind of the story of Milo, a man famous for his great strength, said to carry an ox upon his shoulders a furlong without breathing; of whom it is reported, that none of his adversaries could deliver themselves out of his hands, but his whore could, often contending with him; hence it is observed of him, that he was strong in body, but not of a manly soul {d}; and there are many other things said {e} of him concerning his great strength, which seem to be taken from this history of Samson.

{c} ruqt "abbreviata est", Montanus, Drusius. So Munster. {d} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 24. {e} Vid. Pausan. Eliac. 2. sive. l. 6. p. 309.

Judges 16:17

Ver. 17. That he told her all his heart,.... All that was in his heart concerning this affair, all that he knew relating to it; he had told her something before, or at least what came nearer to the truth of the matter, when he directed her to the weaving of his locks into the web; but now he told her all, which is as follows:

and said unto her, there hath not come a razor upon mine head; his head had never been shaved since he was born; which was the order of the angel that foretold his birth, and it had been carefully observed to that time:

for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb; one condition of which, or what was enjoined a Nazarite, was, that he should not be shaved, and which had been religiously observed in Samson; and whereas abstinence from wine and strong drink was another part of the law of Nazariteship, or what such persons were obliged unto, what Josephus says concerning Samson being drunk in the above cases could not be true; since his Nazariteship would have been made void by it, and so have affected his strength: but it must be owned that there were other things Nazarites were obliged to, which were dispensed with, as has been observed in the case of Samson, a perpetual Nazarite; and therefore it is probable, that the principal thing he was to regard, and upon which his strength was continued, was not shaving his head:

if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man; in which he says more than he ever did before, namely, that his strength should go from him; for though that did not arise from his hair, yet the keeping on of that was the condition of his retaining it.

Judges 16:18

Ver. 18. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart,.... Which she perceived by his countenance, and the serious manner in which he expressed himself; and Abarbinel conjectures that he might swear to her that what he said was truth; and who observes from their Rabbins, as does also Kimchi, that she concluded he had told her the truth, by his making mention of the name of God, saying he was a Nazarite unto God, whose name she knew he would not take in vain; and with the account he gave agreed the long hair he wore:

she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, come up this once; for it seems as they were returned home, finding that she could do nothing with him, and was not able to get the secret out of him; but now, believing she had it, sends to them, and entreats them to come once more, being very desirous of having the money they had offered her:

for he hath showed me all his heart; there is a double reading of this clause; the Keri or marginal reading, which our version follows, is, "hath showed me", as being the words of Delilah to the lords of the Philistines; but the Cetib or textual reading is, "he hath showed her", as being the words of the messengers to them:

then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her; that is, from their own country; for it can hardly be understood of their coming up into her room, or chamber; and especially since it follows,

and brought money in their hand; 1100 shekels of silver apiece, the sum they first proposed to give her; and now being pretty well assured of success, brought it along with them to pay her for the service done.

Judges 16:19

Ver. 19. And she made him sleep upon her knees,.... Giving him, as some think, a sleepy potion; or however encouraged him to take a nap upon her knees, and by her fondness lulled him to sleep:

and she called for a man; a barber; in former times to shave was the work of a servant {f} and sometimes of a woman; she gave orders for one to be sent for; for Jarchi calls him a messenger of the lords of the Philistines:

and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; this shows that they were not wove into one another, and made but one lock, as some interpret what she was before directed to do:

and she began to afflict him; as his hair was shaving off; though he was asleep, yet he discovered some uneasiness, the effects of it began to appear: though the word "began" here may be redundant, as in Nu 25:1 and then the meaning is, that she afflicted him, or again afflicted him; for she had afflicted him, or at least attempted it, three times before, and therefore did not begin now; this Hebraism is used in **Mr 4:1** and frequently in Jewish writings {g}:

and his strength went from him; sensibly and gradually; though some understand it of her shaking him in a violent manner to awake him, and shrieking and crying out terribly to frighten him, with her old cry of the Philistines being on him, and of her binding him, though not expressed; whereby she perceived his strength was gone, and he could not loose himself.

{f} Vid. Pignorium de servis, p. 89, 90, 91. & Popma de servis, p. 57, 58.
{g} See Lightfoot. Hor. Heb. in Mark iv. 1. Vid. Sterringae Animadv. Philolog. Sacr. p. 248.

Judges 16:20

Ver. 20. And she said, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson,.... In like manner as she had before, that she might have full proof that the case was really such, that his strength was gone from him:

and he awoke out of his sleep; upon the cry she made: and said; within himself, purposing and determining in his own mind:

I will go out as at other times before; as he had done at the three former times, and did not meet with any Philistines to fall upon him, and so concluded it would be the case now, and he, if he did, should be able to defend himself against them:

and shake myself; that he might be thoroughly awake, and be on his guard and defence:

and he wist not that the Lord was departed from him; might have forgot what he had told Delilah of, and knew not what had been done to him, that his hair was shaved off; or if he did, was not sensible that the Lord had removed from him; but might hope that he would renew his strength, when he should stand in need of it; but he soon found his mistake; he was quickly taken by the Philistines, and ill used, and in a little time lost his life. And from hence it is thought sprung the story of Nisus, king of the Megarenses, who is supposed to reign about this time; of whom it is reported {h}, that the hair of his head was of a purple colour, and was told by the oracle, that so long as that was kept on he should be safe, but if it was shaved off he should die; and so it was, that when the Cretians besieged him, his daughter falling in love with Minos, the king of the Cretians cut off her father's hair, and so both he and his country were delivered into the hands of the enemy.

{h} Pausaniae Attica, sive, l. 1. p. 33. Ovid Metamorph. l. 8. Fab. 1.

Judges 16:21

Ver. 21. But the Philistines took him,.... Being assured by Delilah that his strength was gone from him, of which perhaps she had made trial by binding him, and found he could not free himself from the bonds till she loosed them; or otherwise they would have been afraid to have ventured to lay hold upon him;

and put out his eyes; that should his strength return to him, be might not be able to see where and whom to strike, and so be incapable of doing much mischief any more; the word signifies, they "dug" or "bored them" {i} out; they plucked or cut out his eye balls, so that it was impossible his sight should ever be recovered; according to the Arabic version, they blinded him by putting fire to his eyes; the Jews observe, that this was done in just retaliation, measure for measure; Samson, they say {k}, went after his eyes; that is, by taking one harlot after another; therefore the Philistines put out his eyes:

and brought him down to Gaza: which lay on the sea coast, and therefore they are said to bring him down to it; here he had been before of his own will, now against it; for in one instance he had acted to his own shame, by going in to an harlot; and in another, to the shame and disgrace of the city, and the inhabitants of it, by carrying off their city gates; through which they now brought him in triumph, in order to repair the dishonour done them: though, perhaps, the true reason of carrying him thither was, that he might be at the greater distance from the Israelites, should they think of rescuing him out of their hands; and especially because it was a very strong fortified city, it had its name from strength; hence Mela {l} calls it "Munita admodum Gaza", and says, that when Cambyses made war in Egypt, he carried his wealth and money to this place:

and bound him with fetters of brass; the Targum calls them chains of brass, and the word being of the dual number, it is probable there were two of them, with which he was bound the greater security:

and he did grind in the prison house; the motion of mills by water or wind was as yet not invented, but it was usual, as it is still in the eastern countries, to grind with hand mills, at which one or more worked; or with mills moved around by beasts or slaves, and was a work prisoners were employed in, Ex 11:5 and Samson being a strong man, they might expect much service from him this way. The Talmudists {m} understand this in a criminal sense, as they do Job 31:10 but this is justly rejected by Kimchi.

{i} wrqny "effoderant", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremelius, Piscator {k} Misn. Sotah. c. sect. 8. {l} De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 11. {m} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1.

Judges 16:22

Ver. 22. Howbeit, the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven. It began to grow immediately no doubt, as it naturally would do; but it is highly probable it grew in an extraordinary manner, and in a short time became as when it was shaved {n}, as it may be rendered, and upon which his strength was renewed; not that his strength naturally lay in his hair, and so naturally increased as that grew; but he being made sensible of his sin, and repenting of it, renewed his Nazariteship, of which letting his hair grow was a token; and it pleased God, who accepted of his repentance as genuine, of his own good will and pleasure to renew his strength; particularly upon his prayer to him, after related.

{n} xlg rvak "ut rasus fuerat", Tigurine version, Vatablus; "ut quum abraderetur", Junius & Tremellius.

Judges 16:23

Ver. 23. Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together,.... The five lords, with their friends, not directly upon Samson's being taken and committed to prison, but some time after; perhaps some months:

for to get a great sacrifice to Dagon their god; in later times their god was called Marnas {o}, which signifies the lord of men, but now Dagon; who also had a temple at Ashdod, another of the five principalities of the Philistines, **1Sa 5:2** and seems to have been at this time their common and chief deity: according to Jarchi in the place referred to, it was in the form of a fish, for "dag" in Hebrew signifies a fish; and Kimchi on the same place says, that from its navel upwards it was in the form of a man, and from thence downwards in the form of a fish {p}; and Diodorus Siculus {q} relates that Derceto, a goddess of Ashkelon, another of the five principalities of Palestine, its face was human, and the other part of its body resembled a fish; and the same Lucian says of the Syrian goddess; and Cicero {r} testifies, that the Syrians worshipped a fish, and Porphyry {s} says they will not eat any; and Gaza being a maritime city, a sea port, this might be their sea god in this form: but Ben Gersom in the above place says, it was in the form of a man; and Sanchoniatho {t} making mention of Dagan, a brother of Saturn, Philo Byblius, who translated his history into Greek, interprets it by Siton, which signifies corn, deriving it from Dagan, which so signifies; as if this deity presided over corn, as Ceres in other nations, and Jupiter Frumentarius, or Aratrius; yea, he says he invented corn and the plough; however this be, the Philistine princes met together to sacrifice to him, not a common offering, but a great sacrifice. It is very probable that this was a public festival of the Philistines, as Josephus {u} says, an anniversary one; and perhaps was held in a more grand manner on the present occasion, since it is added,

and to rejoice: for they said, our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hands; for though Samson's harlot had done it, and they had paid her for it, yet they attribute it to their god, such was their blindness and stupidity; and yet this may shame us believers in the true God, who are so backward to ascribe to him the great things he does for us, when such Heathens were so forward to give glory to their false deities, without any foundation for it.

{o} Hicron. in Isa. xvii. fol. 39. K. {p} So David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 18. 3. & Milton in his Paradise Lost, l. 1. v. 462, 463. "Dagon his name; sea monster! upward man, And downward fish." {q} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 92. & Ovid Metamorph. l. 4. Fab. 1. v. 44, &c. {r} De Natura Deorum, l. 3. {s} De Abstinentia, l. 2. sect. 6. {t} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. p. 36, 37. {u} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 12.

Judges 16:24

Ver. 24. And when the people saw him,.... In the condition he was, blinded and fettered, of whom and of his great exploits they had heard so much: they praised their god; as Belshazzar did his, **Da 5:4** in hymns and songs composed for them, the substance of which was as follows:

for they said, our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country; as he had been, by tying firebrands to the tails of three hundred foxes, and letting them go into their cornfields, vineyards, and oliveyards:

which slew many of us; thirty men at Ashkelon, more at Timnath, and 1000 with the jawbone of an ass at Lehi.

Judges 16:25

Ver. 25. And it came to pass when their hearts were merry,.... With wine, for which Gaza is famous in many writers {w}; with eating and drinking, dancing, and music; for it was usual for the Heathens to feast in their temples, and especially no doubt they would on such an occasion as this:

and they said, call for Samson, that he may make us sport; by which it seems that what is before said, "when the people saw him", Jud 16:24 is said by anticipation; for as yet he was not in the temple, but in the prison; and therefore a motion was made by some of the great personages, that he might be fetched from thence, and they might have some diversion with him:

and they called for Samson out of the prison house; sent some messengers to fetch him from thence:

and he made them sport; not actively, but passively; it cannot well be thought, that a man of so great a spirit as Samson was, and in such circumstances as he now was, would ever, either by words or gestures, do anything on purpose to divert his enemies, and make them laugh; but he was the object of their sport and scorn, and he bore it patiently, their cruel mockings, buffetings, and spittings; in which he was a type of Christ. It was a diversion to them to see him in his rattling chains, groping, and blundering along from post to pillar, one perhaps giving him a box of the ear, or a slap of the face, another plucking him by his nose or beard, and another spitting in his face, and others taunting at him, and reproaching him:

and they set him between the pillars; that he might be the better seen, and in which there was the direction of Providence to bring about what follows.

{w} Vid. Rivinum de Majumis, &c. c. 6. sect. 13.

Judges 16:26

Ver. 26. And Samson said to the lad that held him by the hand,.... And led him about; as nothing is more common now than for a blind man to be led by a boy:

suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth; he might by information know in what manner the house was built, that it was supported by pillars, if he had never been in it before when he had his sight; and he might understand, by some means or another, that he was near these pillars, and placed between them, though being blind, did not know which way to direct his hands towards them to feel them, as he proposed to do, and therefore desired the lad that led him to guide his hands towards them:

that I may lean upon them; being, as he might at least pretend to be, weary, as Josephus says {x}; either by grinding at the mill, or through being led to and fro in this house, that all might see him, and cast their flouts and jeers at him,

{x} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 12.)

Judges **16:27**

Ver. 27. Now the house was full of men and women,.... Within it, who were gathered together from all parts of the city, and perhaps from other places on this occasion:

and all the lords of the Philistines were there; their five lords, the lords of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron:

and there were upon the roof three thousand men and women; it being a flat roof, as the houses in Canaan and Phoenicia, and the places adjacent, were; see De 22:8 and there might be some openings or windows in several parts of it, through which the people might see who were below them, and were within the house, and what was doing there, and particularly could have a sight of Samson through them as follows:

that beheld while Samson made sport; or was made a sport of; while he was buffeted and used in a ludicrous manner.

Judges **16:28**

Ver. 28. And Samson called unto the Lord,.... In an ejaculatory manner, by mental prayer; though he might possibly express it aloud, without being heard and observed by the people, amidst their noise and mirth; and if it was heard, it might only furnish out more ridicule and contempt; and be it as it may, the prayer must have been preserved by the Lord himself, and given by inspiration to the writer of this book; since there were none that heard it that lived to relate it to others, no, not Samson himself:

and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee; the office that I bear as judge of Israel, the reproaches cast upon me, and which fall upon thy people, cause, and interest; remember thy lovingkindness, formerly expressed to me, the gracious promises made unto me, and the help and assistance I have had from thee:

and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God; and it was a prayer of faith, as appears by its being heard, accepted, and answered; and shows that his strength did not come with his hair, but was owing to the immediate communication of it from the Lord:

that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes; once for all, and no more; take his last and final vengeance on them; or one vengeance for his two eyes, or vengeance for one of his two eyes; either senses will bear. This was said not from a private spirit of revenge for personal injuries; but as a civil magistrate, a judge of Israel, whose office it was to be a revenger, to execute wrath; and though he mentions only his own eyes, yet he suffered the loss of them, and every other indignity and injury, as a public person, the common enemy of the Philistines, and destroyer of their country, and protector of Israel; and in this character he now acted.

Judges 16:29

Ver. 29. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars, upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up,.... Some have objected, that a building so large and so capacious as this was could not be supported by two pillars, and those placed in the middle, and so near to each other that Samson could lay hold on them; on which it has been observed, that the architecture of the ancients is little known to us, and they might have curious and ingenious arts of building, now lost; and several authors have taken notice of two Roman theatres built by Curio, that held abundantly more people than this house did, which were supported only by a single pin or hinge, as Pliny {y} relates; and our Westminster hall, which was built by William Rufus, and is two hundred and seventy feet long, and seventy four broad {z}, and has a roof the largest in all Europe, is supported without any pillars at all; add to all which, that mention being made of the two middle pillars of this house, supposes that there were others in other parts of it, though these were the main and principal ones, on which the weight of the building chiefly lay. Kimchi observes, that the word signifies to incline or bend, as if Samson made the pillars to bend or bow; but it is a better sense that he laid hold of them:

of the one with his right hand, and the other with his left; and thus he stood with his arms stretched out, as Jesus on the cross, of whom he was a type, as often observed.

{y} Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 15. {z} Rapin's History of England, vol. 1. p. 188.

Judges 16:30

Ver. 30. And Samson said, let me die with the Philistines,.... He sought their death, and was content to lose his own life to be avenged on them; in neither of which did he act a criminal part as a judge of Israel; and from a public spirit he might desire the death of their enemies, and seek to effect it by all means possible; and was the more justifiable at this time, as they were not only insulting him, the representative of his nation, but were affronting the most high God with their idolatries, being now in the temple of their idol, and sacrificing to him. As for his own death, he did not simply desire that, only as he could not be avenged on his enemies without it, he was willing to submit to it; nor did he lay hands on himself, and cannot be charged with being guilty of suicide, and did no other than what a man of valour and public spirit will do; who for the good of his country will not only expose his life to danger in common, but for the sake of that will engage in a desperate enterprise, when he knows most certainly that he must perish in it. Besides, Samson said this, and did what he did under the direction and influence of the Spirit of God; and herein was a type of Christ, who freely laid down his life for his people, that he might destroy his and their enemies:

and he bowed himself with all his might, having fresh strength, and a large measure of it given him at this instant, which he had faith in, and therefore made the attempt, and for which he is reckoned among the heroes for faith in Heb 11:32

and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein; who were all killed, and Samson himself; an emblem this of the destruction of Satan, and his principalities and powers, by the death of Christ:

so the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life; for besides the lords, and they that were in the house, there were 3000 men and women on the roof, which fell in, and lost their lives also, so that it is very likely there were at least 6000 or 7000 slain; Philo Byblius says 40,000, which is not probable; whereas in his life we only read of 1000 slain by him with the jawbone, besides thirty men at Ashkelon, and the slaughter made when he smote hip and thigh, the number of which is not

known. As this house pulled down by Samson is generally thought to be the temple of Dagon, a traveller {a} in those parts tells us, that there is now extant the temple of Dagon in half demolished, and the pillars of it are yet to be seen; but he doubtless mistakes an edifice of a later construction for it: and another traveller {b} of our own country says, on the northeast corner and summit of the hill (on which the city is built) are the ruins of huge arches sunk low in the earth, and other foundations of a stately building; the Jews, adds he, do fable this place to have been the theatre of Samson pulled down on the heads of the Philistines; but he takes it to be the ruins of a later building;
See Gill on "1Sa 5:2".

{a} Baumgarten. Perogrinatio, l. 2. c. 3. p. 27. Vid. Adrichom. Theatrum Terrae S. p. 134. {b} Sandy's Travels, l. 3. p. 116.

Judges 16:31

Ver. 31. Then his brethren, and all the house of his father, came down,.... To Gaza, having heard of what had befallen him there. This must be understood of his kindred and near relations, those of his father's family; though it is not unlikely that he had brethren in a proper sense, since though his mother was barren before his birth, yet afterwards might have many children, as Hannah had, whose case was similar to her's:

and took him and brought him up; took his body out of the ruins of the house, and brought him up on a bier, or some proper carriage, to his own country; and perhaps in great funeral pomp, as a judge of Israel; nor need it be wondered at that the Philistines should admit of it, it being usual in all ages, and among all people, to allow even an enemy to bury their dead; besides Samson's friends had done them no injury, only Samson himself, and the Israelites in general were quiet and peaceable under their government; add to this, they were now in distress themselves for their own dead, and might be in some fear of the Israelites falling upon them, and attempting to deliver themselves out of their hands, since their five lords were dead, and no doubt many more of their principal men with them; so that they might judge this was not a proper time to refuse such a favour, lest it should occasion a quarrel, which they were not in a condition to engage in; and had Israel taken this opportunity, in all likelihood they might have freed themselves from them:

and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the burying place of Manoah his father; the former of these seems to have been his native place, and the other was near it; and between these the Spirit of the Lord first began to move him, and here his father's sepulchre was, in which he was laid; see Jud 13:2 and he judged Israel twenty years; by distressing and weakening their enemies; and though he did not complete their deliverance out of their hands, yet no doubt their oppressions were fewer, and their burdens easier, on his account; the time of his judging Israel is observed before, Jud 15:20 and here repeated for the confirmation of it, and the rather because they were now ended by his death. Ben Gersom observes, that this is said to show that the time that Samson dwelt in the land of the Philistines is included in these twenty years; some would infer from hence that he judged Israel forty years, twenty in the days of the Philistines, as it is expressed in the above place; that is, when they had the dominion over Israel, and twenty more afterwards; but it does not appear that their dominion over Israel ceased in his time. In the Jerusalem Talmud {c} it is also said that he judged Israel forty years, but for it there is no foundation; nor is the reason given of any force, that the Philistines feared him twenty years after his death; the other Talmud {d} says he judged Israel twenty two years; but the word "two" is put into a parenthesis.

{c} T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 17. 2. {d} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1.

Judges 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 17

This chapter relates the first rise of idolatry in Israel after the death of Joshua, which began in Mount Ephraim, occasioned by a sum of money stolen by a man from his mother, which being restored, part was converted to an idolatrous use; two images were made of it, Jud 17:1 and there being no king in Israel to take cognizance of it, the idolatry took place and continued, and afterwards spread, Jud 17:6, and this idolater not only made one of his sons a priest, but took a Levite for another, whom he hired by the year to serve him, Jud 17:7.

Ver. 1. And there was a man of Mount Ephraim,.... This and the four following chapters contain an history of facts, which were done not after the death of Samson, as some have thought, and as they may seem at first sight, by the order in which they are laid; but long before his time, and indeed before any of the judges in Israel, when there was no king, judge, or supreme governor among them, as appears from Jud 17:6 even between the death of Joshua and the elders, and the first judge of Israel, Othniel; and so Josephus {e} places them in his history, and the connection of them is with **Jud 2:10** and so accounts for the rise of idolatry in Israel, how it got into the tribe of Dan, and spread itself over all the tribes of Israel, **Jud 2:11** which brought on their servitude to Cushanrishathaim, in which time the Jewish chronology {f} places those events; but they were certainly before that, for the idolatry they fell into was the cause of it; yet could not be so early as the times of Joshua, and before his death; because in his days, and the days of the elders, Israel served the Lord; the reasons why they are postponed to the end of this book, and the account of them given here, are, according to Dr. Lightfoot {g}, that the reader observing how their state policy failed in the death of Samson, who was a Danite, might presently be showed God's justice in it, because their religion had first failed among the Danites; that when he observes that 1100 pieces of silver were given by every Philistine prince for the ruin of Samson, Jud 16:5 he might presently observe the 1100 pieces of silver that were given by Micah's mother for the making of an idol, which ruined religion in Samson's tribe; that the story of Micah, of the hill country of Ephraim, the first destroyer of religion, and the story of Samuel, of the hill country of Ephraim, the first reformer of religion, might be laid together somewhat near. That the facts after related were so early done as has been observed, appears from the following things; the priest of the idol Micah made was a grandson of Moses, Jud 18:30, the Danites' seeking to enlarge their possessions, related in the same chapter, was most probably as soon as they were driven into the mountains by the Amorites, **Jud 1:34**. Mahanah Dan, from whence they marched, and had its name from their expedition, Jud 18:12 is mentioned before in the history of Samson, Jud 13:25 and therefore the expedition must be before his time. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, was alive at the battle of Gibeah, Jud 20:28 and Deborah speaks of the 40,000 Israelites slain by Benjamin at it, **Jud 5:8**. This man with whom the idolatry began was of the tribe of Ephraim, and dwelt in the mountainous part of it:

whose name was Micah; in the original it is Micajehu, with part of the name

Jehovah affixed to it, as Dr. Lightfoot {h} remarks, till he set up his image, and thenceforward was called Micah; but, according to Abarbinel, the former was his name while he was a child, and in his youth, and with his mother, being a diminutive term, and when he became a man be was called Micah, Jud 17:5.

{e} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 8, &c. {f} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. p. 33. {g} Works, vol. 1. p. 46. {h} Works, vol. 1. p. 45.

Judges 17:2

Ver. 2. And he said unto his mother,.... Who seems to have been a widow, and an ancient woman since Micah had sons, and one of them at age to become a priest:

the eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee: which were taken away by stealth from her, though it may be rendered "taken to thee" {i}; which she had taken to herself out of the rest of her substance, and had separated and devoted it to religious uses; but Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it as we do, and which seems to be the best sense; of the value of this sum, See Gill on "Jud 16:5" and because the like sum is there offered, and was given to Delilah, hence some have thought, as Jarchi relates, that this woman was Delilah; but, as he observes, it is a mistake; for this woman lived long before the times of Samson and Delilah:

about which thou cursedst; which when she perceived was stolen from her, she fell into a passion, and cursed and swore, cursed the thief that took it, whether of her own family or another; or adjured her son, that if he knew anything of it, that he would declare it, suspecting him of the robbery; some think this refers to the oath she had made, that she would devote the silver to a religious use:

and spakest of also in mine ears; of the sum how much it was, and of the use she had designed it for; or rather the curse was delivered in his hearing, and cut him to the heart, and wrought that conviction in him, that he could not retain the money any longer, not being able to bear his mother's curse; though Abarbinel connects this with the following clause, "behold, the silver is with me"; as if the sense was, that she spake in his ears, and charged him with the theft to his face; saying, verily the silver is with thee, thou hast certainly taken it; upon which he confessed it, "I took it"; but the former sense seems best, that not being willing to lie under his mother's curse, he owned that the money was in his hands, and he had taken it from her:

and his mother said, blessed be thou of the Lord, my son; she reversed the curse, and pronounced a blessing on him, or wished one to him, and that without reproving him for his sin, rejoicing to hear of her money again.

{i} Kl xql "captum est tibi", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.

Judges 17:3

Ver. 3. And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother,.... The whole sum, having embezzled none of it:

his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand, for my son to make a graven image and a molten image; this she had done either before it was stolen, and it troubled her the more, and caused her the rather to curse the man that had taken it; or after it was stolen, that if it should be recovered again she would appropriate it to such an use; so Abarbinel; and by the Lord, or Jehovah, she doubtless meant the true God; for she had no intention to forsake him, but to worship him in and by these images, and which she designed for the use of her son and his family, that they might not go so far as Shiloh to worship at the tabernacle there:

therefore I will restore it unto thee; for that use, and so gave him the money again, to be laid out in images, or to make images of it.

Judges 17:4

Ver. 4. Yet he restored the money unto his mother,.... Gave it to her a second tithe, not as disapproving her idolatrous intention, as the sequel shows, but being desirous to be entirely free of it, and not have his mind disturbed with it as it had been, and that she might do with it as she thought fit:

and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image, and a molten image; the other nine hundred pieces she kept to herself, repenting of her vow, and being unwilling to part with so much money for such an use; or else they were laid out in an ephod, and teraphim, and what else were thought necessary for the idolatrous worship they were about to set up; though Kimchi is of opinion, that the two hundred shekels were what she gave the founder for making the images, and of the nine hundred the images were made; and indeed the images must be very small ones, if made out of two hundred shekels of silver only; some have thought there was but one image, called both molten and graven; because after the silver was melted, and cast into a mould, it was fashioned with a graving tool, as the golden calf was by Aaron; but they are manifestly distinguished and represented as two, Jud 18:17 and they were in the house of Micah; in an apartment in his house, peculiar for them, as appears by the next verse; here they were put and continued.

Judges 17:5

Ver. 5. And the man Micah had an house of gods,.... Having two images in it, besides teraphim, which were a sort of idols; and the Targum is, an house of images, or idols; though it may be rendered "an house of God"; a temple, a place for religious worship:

and made an ephod; a priestly garment, a linen one very probably, not so rich an one with a breastplate to it as the high priest had, which was very costly. Ben Melech interprets it a girdle, and there was a curious girdle of the ephod, with which it was girt; this may be here put for the rest of the priestly garments which Micah provided:

and teraphim; which were a sort of household gods, like the Lares and Penates of the Romans, and by which consultations were made; See Gill on "Ho 3:3" see Gill on "Ho 3:4" see Gill on "Zec 10:2" Micah proposed to have an oracle in his house, whereby he might consult the Lord about future things, and not be at the trouble of going to the tabernacle, and consult there by Urim and Thummim; and the same some take the teraphim to be:

and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest; or, "filled the hand" {k} of one of them; that is, with offerings, as Ben Melech interprets it; in which way priests were initiated, and consecrated to their office; see Ex 28:41 or, as Kimchi expresses it, he offered his offerings by the hand of one of his sons, and appointed him to be a priest, very probably his eldest son.

{k} dy ta almyw "et implevit manum", Montanus, V. L.

Judges 17:6

Ver. 6. In those days there was no king in Israel,.... That is, no supreme magistrate, judge, or ruler, Joshua being dead and Caleb also, and the elders contemporary with them; for what the Samaritan Chronicle says {l} is without foundation, that Joshua a little before his death cast a lot in the presence of the congregation, to know who should govern after him, and the lot came to one Abel, of the tribe of Judah:

[but] every man did that which was right in his own eyes; which accounts for the idolatry of Micah, there being no supreme magistrate to take cognizance of his sin, and restrain him from it, or punish him for it according to the law of God.

{l} Apud Hottinger. Smegma Orient. p. 522.

Judges 17:7

Ver. 7. And there was a young man out of Bethlehemjudah,.... As there were two Bethlehems, one in the tribe of Zebulun, Jos 19:15 and another in the tribe of Judah, the place here designed, Judah is added to it, to distinguish it from the other:

of the family of Judah: which refers either to the young man, who was by his father's side a Levite, and by his mother's side, as Jarchi thinks, of the tribe of Judah, which seems very probable, though the genealogies of families were not reckoned from the mother; wherefore he might be so called because he had lived chiefly in the tribe of Judah, and particularly at Bethlehem; but Kimchi, and several other Jewish commentators, refer this to the city of Bethlehem, that was of the tribe of Judah, family being put for the tribe; or belonged to the children of Judah; though one would think there was no need to have added this, since it was fully expressed before by calling it Bethlehemjudah; the former sense therefore seems best:

who was a Levite; his father being, as before observed, of that tribe, though his mother might be of the tribe of Judah: and he sojourned there; that is, at Bethlehem; he was not a native, nor an inhabitant there, but a sojourner, it not being a Levitical city.

Judges 17:8

Ver. 8. And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehemjudah, to sojourn where he could find a place,.... Either being a man that had a rambling head, and of an unsettled mind, and could not easily fix any where; or else there being no supreme magistrate, to take care that the Levites had their due maintenance, for which there was a sufficient provision made by law; and the people being negligent of paying their tithes, there being none to oblige them to it, and they indifferent to the true worship of God, and prone to idolatry; this man was obliged to go abroad, and seek for a livelihood where he could get it, and sojourn in a place the most convenient for him:

and he came to Mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he journeyed: not with a design to stay there, but called by the way, having heard perhaps that Micah was both a wealthy and an hospitable man, and he also might have heard of the new form of worship he had set up in his house.

Judges 17:9

Ver. 9. And Micah said unto him, whence comest thou?.... For as he might ask for a meal, or for a night's lodging, it was but natural to put such a question to him, as from whence he came, and what was his business in these parts? or whither he was going?

and he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehemjudah; the tribe he was of was Levi, and so a Levite by tribe and office, and the place he came last from, and where he had sojourned awhile, was Bethlehem, a city in the tribe of Judah:

and I go to sojourn where I may find a place; the most convenient to abide in, where he could get a livelihood.

Judges 17:10

Ver. 10. And Micah said unto him, dwell with me,.... Hearing that he was a Levite, he thought him a fit man for his purpose, and would give some credit to, and put a better face upon his new form of worship, and therefore, without further inquiry after him and his character, invites him to make his abode with him:

and be unto me a father and a priest; a father to instruct him in the knowledge of divine things; so prophets were called fathers, and their disciples their sons; and a priest to offer sacrifices for him, and to consult before him by his teraphim upon occasion:

and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year; or yearly, which was but a small sum, a poor salary for a priest, at most amounting but to twenty five shillings, and scarce so much:

and a suit of apparel; or "an order of apparel" {m}; such as was fit for one of his rank and order as a priest to wear, so Jarchi and Abarbinel; or a couple of garments, as the Targum and Septuagint, a double suit of apparel, according to the order of the season, one for summer and another for winter, as Kimchi and Ben Melech:

and thy victuals; his meat and drink:

so thy Levite went in; into his house, and it looks as if the parley was made, and the bargain struck at the door, Micah being at it as the Levite passed by, or came to it upon his knocking at it; he went after his counsel and advice, as Jarchi, or to do his business, as Kimchi.

{m} Mydgb Kre "irdinem vestimentorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Muuster, Vatablus; "demensum vestimentorum", Tigurine version.

Judges 17:11

Ver. 11. And the Levite was content to dwell with the man,.... To continue with him; after he had made trial for some time, he liked his service, and his wages, and way of living; it was all agreeable to him:

and the young man was unto him as one of his sons; as dearly beloved by him, and used as kindly and tenderly, as if he had been one of his own children; so strong were the affections of Micah to him, and so well pleased was he with his service.

Judges 17:12

Ver. 12. And Micah consecrated the Levite,.... Installed him into, and invested him with the priestly office; in like manner he had consecrated his son before, by filling his hand with sacrifices; see Jud 17:5

and the young man became his priest; and did the work and office of one; this was a very daring piece of presumption in them both; in Micah, to take upon him to consecrate a priest, who was himself of the tribe of Ephraim; and in the young man, to suffer himself to be put into such an office, which did not belong to him, for though every priest was a Levite, or of the tribe of Levi, yet every Levite had not a right to be a priest, only those who were of the family of Aaron:

and was in the house of Micah; and continued there.

Judges 17:13

Ver. 13. Then said Micah,.... Within himself, pleased with what he had done, and with what he engaged in:

now know I that the Lord will do me good; that I shall enjoy his favour, be a happy man, and prosper; and by this it appears, that notwithstanding the idolatry he had fallen into, he had not utterly forsaken the Lord, but worshipped him in and by his images; there was a mixture of the worship of God, and of the worship of images:

seeing I have a Levite to my priest; who was of the same tribe the priests were, and so the nearest to them of any, and which he thought would be acceptable to God, and an omen of good to himself.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**
Judges **18:1**

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 18

This chapter relates how the Danites, being overcrowed in their inheritance, sent out spies to search the land, and see if they could find any proper place to add unto it, and enlarge it, Jud 18:1 who returned and reported Laish as such, and encouraged the Danites to go and possess it; for which purpose they sent six hundred men up to it, Jud 18:7 and as they went, called at the house of Micah, and took away his priests and his gods, Jud 18:13 and having taken Laish, set up Micah's graven image there, Jud 18:28.

Ver. 1. In those days there was no king in Israel,.... No supreme magistrate, no judge, for it was before the time of the judges, after the death of Joshua and before Othniel the first judge; this is observed before, Jud 17:6 and here repeated to account for the evil things done by the Danites, their consulting Micah's oracle, taking away his priest and his gods, and setting up his graven image in Dan, by which means idolatry was spread in Israel, and brought on their servitude to Chushanrishathaim, from which Othniel the first judge was their deliverer:

and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; that is, a family of them, as in the next verse, not the whole tribe; for as a family is sometimes put for a tribe, **Jos 7:17** so a tribe for a family, Jud 20:12

for unto that day [all their] inheritance had not fallen to them among the tribes of Israel: we rightly supply the words "all their"; for otherwise an inheritance had fallen to them by lot, as the other tribes. Jos 19:40, but that was not only too little for them, Jos 19:47 but all that was allotted to them did not come into their possession, but a part remained unsubdued; and some they had possession of they could not keep, either through the superior strength of the Amorites, or their own sloth and cowardice, or for want of the help of their brethren; see **Jud 1:34**.

Ver. 2. And the children of Dan sent of their family five men,.... According to Abarbinel one out of a family, as Moses sent one out of a tribe to spy the land; and so there must be five families concerned in this affair:

from their coasts, men of valour from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; these men were sent from the borders of the tribe, the extreme parts of it, as the word may signify, where perhaps they were the most pressed and overcrowded: Zorah and Eshtaol are particularly mentioned, and were the first cities in their lot, and were the coast of their inheritance, See Gill on "Jos 19:41" some take the phrase rendered "from their coasts" to signify persons of extreme meanness, men of the lowest class among them; but the above mentioned writers interpret it to a quite contrary sense, by "Katzinim", princes, such as Moses sent to spy the land; and this better agrees with the next clause, "men of valour": and the word used signifies not only magnanimity and fortitude of mind, but wealth and riches; and these were sent not to spy the land of Canaan, but such places as fell to this tribe, but were possessed by the Canaanites; and their errand was to observe in what condition they were, and whether fit for their purpose, and easy to obtain, and how they might get the possession of any of them:

and they said unto them, search the land; and see if some convenient place cannot be found out to enlarge their inheritance, and give them more room and liberty for their families, now pent up, and a pasturage for their flocks and herds:

who when they came to Mount Ephraim; which lay upon the borders of them:

to the house of Micah, they lodged there; that is, when they were come near to the house of Micah, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, they took up their lodging in the neighbourhood of it, perhaps at a public house or inn; for the sense is not, that they lodged in Micah's house, for after this we read of their turning into it, as in the next verse. According to Bunting {r}, this place was twenty four miles from Zorah and Eshtaol, from whence these men came.

{r} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 112.

Judges 18:3

Ver. 3. When they were by the house of Micah,.... At their inn, which might be next to it, or as they were passing by it:

they knew the voice of the young man the Levite; who had been in their country, and they had been in his company and conversation, and they knew the tone of his voice when they heard it; a particular brogue he might have. Abarbinel conjectures, that he was singing to Micah's idol, or multiplying his prayers before him:

and they turned in thither; into Micah's house, and into the apartment where the young man was;

and said unto him, who brought thee hither? they knew he was of Bethlehemjudah; they inquire therefore how he came there, who sent for him, and by what means he was brought to that place:

and what makest thou in this place? they knew he was a Levite, and that such an one had no business to minister but at the tabernacle, and therefore they inquire what was his employment here: and what hast thou here? to support himself with, what he had for his maintenance, or how he lived.

Judges 18:4

Ver. 4. And he said unto them, thus and thus dealeth Micah with me,.... Told them the whole story, how he came to the door of Micah's house, how he inquired of him who he was, and from whence he came, and whither he was going, and then invited him into his house to stay with him:

and hath hired me; by the year, for ten shekels of silver, a suit of clothes, and meat and drink, and by this means he got a livelihood, and was supported:

and I am his priest; and that was his business to offer sacrifice for his family, and to consult his oracle for him, and for whomsoever should apply.

Judges 18:5

Ver. 5. And they said unto him, ask counsel, we pray thee, of God,.... They did not reprove him for assuming the priestly office, when they knew he was a Levite, such was the corruption of those times, and the great depravity and declensions they were fallen into; nor even for the idolatry he was guilty of, but encourage him in it, and thought they had got a fine opportunity, which they readily laid hold on, to have counsel asked for them of God, about the success of the errand they were sent about; to this they were led at sight of the ephod, which was like that in the tabernacle, and of the teraphim, images which, according to a notion that prevailed, when consulted, foretold future things; whether by God they meant the true God, who they thought would give an answer by these, or Micah's gods, is not certain; according to the Targum of Jonathan, they meant the true God, which paraphrases it,

"ask of the Word of the Lord:"

that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous or no; whether they should find out a proper place to dwell in, and be able to get possession of it.

Judges 18:6

Ver. 6. And the priest said to them, go in peace,.... After he had consulted the oracle, or had asked counsel by the ephod and teraphim; either of his own head, or by a voice he had heard, which Satan might be permitted of God to deliver, he very roundly told them that they might proceed on in their journey with their minds quite easy, and with full assurance of success:

before the Lord is your way wherein ye go; it is seen, observed, and taken notice of by him, and he approves of it; it is according to his will, and under his direction and protection, and success from him may be depended upon; though some observe that this answer is delivered in ambiguous terms, as generally the oracles of demons were, and might be taken in a good or bad sense, as the event should be; as that their way was before the Lord, and was seen by him either with pleasure or displeasure, with approbation or disapprobation, for their good, or for their harm: so that let it fall out as it might, the credit of the oracle was saved.

Judges 18:7

Ver. 7. And the five men departed,.... From Mount Ephraim, and Micah's house there:

and came to Laish; which, according to Bunting {s}, was one hundred and four miles from Mount Ephraim, and so many he makes it to be from Jerusalem; it lay at the furthest northern border of the land of Canaan, at the foot of Mount Lebanon, near the fountain of Jordan; it was four miles from Paneas, as Jerom says {t}, as you go to Tyre; it is the Caesarea Philippi of the New Testament, and the same that is called Leshem, See Gill on "Jos 19:47",

and saw the people that were therein; went into the city, and made their observations on the inhabitants of it, their number, strength, and manner of living:

how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; the inhabitants of Zidon, whose customs they might imitate, whose laws they might use, and might be under their government, since they are said to have no magistrate within themselves; and their carelessness and confidence might arise from their strong fortresses; or rather because they thought their city, and the land adjacent to it, did not belong to the land of Israel, and did not know that the Israelites made any pretensions to it, and therefore were quite easy, and in no fear of them; had no watchmen to guard their city, and did not take care to furnish themselves with weapons of war for their defence, even as the Zidonians; who, besides their city being a strong and fortified one, were in no fear of the Israelites, because their city was not in the land of Canaan, only the border of it reached to it:

and there was no magistrate in the land that might put them to shame in anything; to restrain them from vice, and punish them for it, or even to reprove and correct them, and so put them to shame; or put any mark of infamy and disgrace upon them in a public manner, that might shame them; hence they lived in a disorderly and dissolute manner, whereby they became the more easy prey to others: or the sense is, there was no king, nor an heir of the kingdom, as Kimchi interprets it, so that there were none to contest his right to the government of the place, or to accuse another, and put him to shame for taking it away from him. Jarchi takes the sense to be, that none needed to turn back his neighbour empty, when he asked anything of him for his relief, since there was no want of anything in the land, as after observed; but the first sense seems best:

and they were far from the Zidonians; who were the only people that could help them, being in friendship with them; and it may be they were under their government, as before observed; they are said {u} to be about eleven miles from them; Josephus {w} says, a day's journey:

and had no business with any man; no trade or commerce, but lived independent of others, and within themselves, their land affording them everything sufficient for them. Some understand it of their not being in any league or alliance with any other people, and so had none to call in to their assistance in case of any attack upon them.

{s} Ut supra. (Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 112.) {t} De loc. Heb. fol. 90. H. {u} Adrichom. Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 105. {w} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 3. sect. 1.

Judges 18:8

Ver. 8. And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol,.... After they had well viewed the city, and made their remarks on the inhabitants of it, the condition and circumstances in which they were, and took notice of the goodness of the land about it, they returned to their brethren that sent them, particularly those that dwelt at the two places mentioned:

and their brethren said unto them, what say ye? what tidings do you bring? what account of the place and country where you have been?

Judges 18:9

Ver. 9. And they said, arise, that me may go up against them,.... That is, prepare for war, and go up in an hostile manner against the present possessors of the land, not doubting of being masters of it easily:

for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good. Adrichomius {x} says it was very good pasture land, and fertile, abounding with fruits of all kinds; and the same is attested by Josephus {y}:

and are ye still? can ye sit still, and be easy, and not bestir yourselves to go up and possess so good a country, of which an easy conquest may be made? or, affirmatively, "ye are still or silent" {z}; ye make no answer to what we say, and seem careless and indifferent about the matter; or by way of exhortation, "be silent", either that the people may remain in their quiet, easy, careless state, and lest, on hearing designs against them, should prepare for their defence; or, as Abarbinel, lest any of the other tribes of Israel should hear of it, and go take it before them:

be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land; they suggest that there was scarce anything more to be done than to go and take possession, and that it would be altogether owing to their sloth and indolence if they did not.

{x} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 3. sect. 1.) {y} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 3. sect. 1.) {z} Myvxm Mta "vos autem desidetis", Tigurine version; "et vos quiescitis", Munster.

Judges 18:10

Ver. 10. When ye go, ye shall come to a people secure, and to a large land,.... For though it was but one city, the territories of it were large, and the villages belonging to it might be many; which, with the security of the people, might easily be surprised and taken, not being upon their guard, are the arguments used by the spies to encourage their countrymen to go up and take it, to which they add others:

for God hath given it into your hands; which they concluded from the state and condition they found the people in, thoughtless and defenceless; or it may be on account of the oracle in Micah's house they had consulted, and to which they gave credit; though some think their faith was grounded upon this place being given by lot to the tribe of Dan, but this does not appear:

a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth; in the land of Canaan; meaning, that there was nothing in the whole land but might be found there, as wheat and barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, olives, and honey, with all other necessaries and conveniences of life.

Judges 18:11

Ver. 11. And there went from thence of the family of the Danites,.... Or families, the singular being put for the plural; for it can hardly be thought that such a number of men, as after mentioned, went out of one family:

out of Zorah, and out of Eshtaol; the two places the spies were sent from, and now had returned unto: and upon their report, and at their instigation, and by the encouragement they gave, there were

six hundred men appointed with weapons of war; that set out armed from the above places, on the expedition to take Laish.

Judges 18:12

Ver. 12. And they went up and pitched in Kirjathjearim in Judah,.... Of which place see Jos 15:9. According to Bunting {a} it was sixteen miles from Zorah and Eshtaol, and this was their first day's march:

wherefore they called the name of that place Mahanehdan unto this day; which signifies the camp of Dan, or of the Danites; so it was called in the times of Samson, Jud 13:25 and is a proof that this expedition was before his time; and it was so called, it seems, in the time of Samuel, the writer of this book:

behold, it is behind Kirjathjearim; to the west of it; for though they are said to pitch in that place, the meaning is, that they pitched near it, in the fields adjacent to it, which were the most proper and convenient for a camp.

{a} Ut supra. (Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 112.)

Judges 18:13

Ver. 13. And they passed thence unto Mount Ephraim,.... Steering their coast still northward; this, according to Bunting {b}, was eight miles from Kirjathjearim, or Mahanehdan, in which Micah's house was, for as yet they were not come to it, see Jud 18:15.

{b} Ibid. (Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 112.)

Judges 18:14

Ver. 14. Then they answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish,.... That were sent by their brethren, Jud 18:5 and, as it seems from hence, were sent particularly to Laish; they had some notion of that place as proper for them, and therefore sent those men to reconnoitre it; and now as they had passed this way before, when they came within sight of Micah's house, it put them in mind of what they had seen there; wherefore one in the name of the rest, and with their approbation, acquainted the company with it:

and said unto their brethren, do ye know that there is in those houses; in one of them, pointing to the houses of a village or town in sight:

an ephod and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? of which see Jud 17:4 and no doubt but they acquainted them, only that they had seen them, and so were certain but had consulted them, and that with success:

now therefore consider, say they,

what ye have to do; whether it may not be proper to consult them again, or rather to take them with us, to consult as occasion may require, and as tokens and pledges of God being with us, and so may the rather hope that everything will succeed to our wishes.

Judges 18:15

Ver. 15. And they turned thitherward,.... It seems as if the house lay a little out of their way, and therefore they turned on one hand to go unto it:

and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah; for the young man's house was only an apartment of Micah's, and lay very probably next to that in which the images, and oracle were; and they made up to the young man's apartment, rather than to Micah's, because the above things were under his care:

and saluted him; asked him of his welfare in a kind and obliging manner, the rather to ingratiate themselves unto him.

Judges 18:16

Ver. 16. And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war,.... Who were armed men, and marched with their armour about them:

which were of the children of Dan; for no other were concerned in this expedition: stood by the entering of the gate; not of Micah's house, but of the city in which his house was; here they stood while the five men went up to the house.

Judges 18:17

Ver. 17. And the five men that went out to spy the land went up and came thither,.... They first came to Micah's house, and saluted the young man, and after that salutation told him there was such a number of their brethren at the gate of the city, very probably, who would be glad to see him; and the young man being desirous also of seeing them, and paying his respects to them, went with them thither, and after they had introduced him, left him discoursing with them, and then returned to his apartment:

and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image; and brought them away with them; and from hence it appears plainly that there were two images, the one graven, and the other molten, since they are so manifestly distinguished, and the ephod and teraphim are spoken of between them:

and the priest stood in the entering of the gate, with the six hundred men that were appointed with the weapons of war; who kept him in talk, while the five men went and stole the above things.

Judges 18:18

Ver. 18. And these went into Micah's house,.... Into that part of it where his gods were; not the six hundred men last mentioned, but the five men who knew the house, and the chapel where the things were:

and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image; and brought them away in their hands to their brethren at the gate, where the priest also was: and when he saw them,

then said the priest to them, what do ye? what do you mean by this? is this your kindness to me, to take away what are my care and charge, and on which my livelihood depends? and do you consider the wickedness, the sin of sacrilege you are guilty of, to take away these sacred things, these objects of religious devotion?

Judges 18:19

Ver. 19. And they said unto him, hold thy peace,.... Be silent, make no disturbance, be quiet and easy:

lay thy hand upon thy mouth; as a token of silence; so the Egyptians used to paint Harpocrates, the god of silence, with his fingers pressing his lips:

and go with us; for they wanted him as well as his gods, not knowing well how to make use of them without him:

and be to us a father and a priest; to direct them, instruct them, perform acts of devotion for them, and ask counsel on their account; it seems as if it was common in those days to call a priest a father, see Jud 17:10

is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel? suggesting, that it must be much more honourable for him, and more to his advantage, to officiate as a priest to a body of people, that might be called a tribe, or to a family consisting of various houses, than in the house of a private person; this they left him to consider and judge of.

Judges 18:20

Ver. 20. And the priest's heart was glad,.... He rejoiced that such an opportunity offered; it suited well with his covetous, ambitious, rambling, and unsettled disposition of mind:

and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image; and no doubt the molten image also, out of the hands of the five men into his own, agreeing to go with them, and officiate for them:

and went in the midst of the people; the six hundred armed men, either for the security of himself, if Micah should raise his servants, and his neighbours, to pursue after him, and fetch him back, with his images; or, as others think, in imitation of the priests bearing the ark, who in journeying marched in the middle of the camp.

Judges 18:21

Ver. 21. So they turned and departed,.... Turned from the gate of the city where Micah dwelt, and marched forward to Laish:

and put the little ones, and the cattle, and the carriage, before them; partly for safety from Micah, and his friends and neighbours, and partly that they might not be overdriven: their wives, who doubtless were with them, though not mentioned, and their children, and also their flocks and herds, they brought with them from Zorah and Eshtaol, as never intending to return again thither, and being fully assured they should take Laish, and the country about, and settle there; and also all their wealth and substance, as the Targum renders the word for "carriage", whatever they were possessed of that was movable; their vessels, silver and gold, and other movables, as Kimchi interprets it, whatever was weighty, valuable and glorious, as the word signifies, or that was of any importance and worth.

Judges 18:22

Ver. 22. And when they were a good way from the house of Micah,.... For it might be some time before Micah knew that his gods were stolen, and his priest was decoyed from him; and it must take up more time still to get his servants and neighbours together to pursue after those that injured him:

the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together; no doubt at the request of Micah, who informed them of what had happened to him: and they being not only his neighbours, but deeply involved in the same superstition and idolatry, and closely addicted to it, and to whom it might in some respects be advantageous at it brought people from various parts to worship, or to consult the oracle: these being got together in a body, pursued

and overtook the children of Dan; who were obliged to move but slowly, because of their wives, little ones, and heavy substance they carried with them.

Judges 18:23

Ver. 23. And they cried unto the children of Dan,.... When they had got pretty near them, and in their hearing, they called to them aloud, and desired they would stop, having something to say to them:

and they turned their faces; that is, the Danites turned and looked at them, and stopped to hear what they had to say to them; these were they who were in the rear in marching:

and said unto Micah; who was at the head of them:

what aileth thee that thou comest with such a company? as if he intended to attack them in an hostile way, and therefore asks what should be the occasion of it? what affront had been given him, what injury had been done him, that had provoked him to come out and follow them in such a manner?

Judges 18:24

Ver. 24. And he said, ye have taken away my gods that I made,.... Meaning his graven and molten images, which he had made, or caused to be made, out of the silver his mother gave him, or however had paid for the making of; and though this might be an argument proving his right unto them, it was a very poor one in favour of their deity; and it is astonishing he should call them gods he knew the making of, and who could not save themselves from being stolen and carried off:

and the priest and ye are gone away; they had not only took away his gods, but the priest that sacrificed for him unto them, and assisted him in acts of devotion to them, or to God by them, and were gone off with both:

and what have I more? signifying, that all he had in the world, wife, children, and substance, were all nothing in comparison of these; there was nothing he so much valued as he did these, nor could he take any pleasure or comfort in anything, being deprived of them, so much was his heart set on them:

and what is this that ye say unto me, what aileth thee? what a question is this you ask, as if the injury done me was none at all, and that I had no reason to complain; that it was a trifling insignificant thing, worthy of no regard, when it was a matter of the greater moment and importance to him in life.

Judges 18:25

Ver. 25. And the children of Dan said unto him, let not thy voice be heard among us,.... Complaining of us as having done an unjust thing, charging and reproaching us with theft and sacrilege, insisting upon a restoration of the things taken, and abusing with odious names and characters:

lest angry fellows run upon thee: lest men of bitter and passionate spirits, provoked by ill language given them, should draw their swords and fall upon thee:

and thou lose thy life, and the life of thy household; the life of himself, his family, servants, tenants, and neighbours with him, which ought to have been more precious and valuable than his gods; of which there was great danger in demanding his gods, which by this they let him know they would not part with.

Judges 18:26

Ver. 26. And the children of Dan went their way,.... Went on their way, would not stay to have any further talk with him, as being an impertinent man, and unworthy of their regard, bidding him defiance, and do his worst, having nothing to fear from him:

and when Micah saw they were too strong for him; that he could not prevail upon them by words and arguments; to take up arms, and use them, he perceived it was to no purpose, since they were more numerous and more mighty than he and his neighbours:

he turned and went unto his own house; and if he returned from his idolatry to the true God, and the right worship of him, having lost his gods, it was well for him they were taken away.

Judges 18:27

Ver. 27. And they took the things which Micah had made,.... The ephod, teraphim, and the two images, the Danites took them, or having taken them kept them, and went on with them:

and the priest which he had; him also they took, and who was willing enough to go with them:

and came unto Laish, unto a people that were quiet and secure; having no sentinels placed at any distance to give them warning of an enemy, nor any watchmen on their walls to discover one; and perhaps their gates not shut, nor any guard at any of their passes and avenues, having no apprehension at all of being visited by an enemy, especially from Israel, not being apprized that they had any pretensions to their city, and the land about it:

and they smote them with the edge of the sword; entered their city, and fell on them suddenly, and cut them to pieces:

and burnt the city with fire; to strike terror to all about; or it may be only they set fire to some part of it, as they entered, only to frighten the inhabitants, and throw them into the greater confusion, that they might become a more easy prey to them; for their intention was to inhabit it, and it seems to be the same city still, though they rebuilt it, and called it by another name.

Judges 18:28

Ver. 28. And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon,.... Under whose government and protection they seem to have been; and that city being at a distance from them, and the Danites coming upon them suddenly, there was no time to send to them for help, or any to come in to their assistance, and save them from their enemies, see Jud 18:7

and they had no business with any man; that could have given them notice of the design of the children of Dan against them, nor to the Zidonians to come soon enough for their protection and defence; none there were in alliance with them except them:

and it was in the valley that lieth by Bethrehob; which lay in the northern border of the land of Canaan, as you go to Hamath of Syria, See Gill on "Nu 13:21".

and they built a city to dwell there; not a new one altogether, but they rebuilt and enlarged Laish, and made it convenient for them to dwell in.

Judges 18:29

Ver. 29. And they called the name of the city Dan,.... The name of their tribe, and to show that though they were at the furthest part of the land northward, and at such a distance from their tribe, which lay to the southwest, yet they belonged to it:

after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel; one of the twelve sons of Jacob or Israel:

however, the name of the city was Laish at first; which signifies a "lion", and might be so called from its being infested with lions, which might come from the mountain of Lebanon, near to which it was, and whither Dan, as a lion's whelp, leaped, De 33:22 and now the prophecy had its accomplishment. This place was also called Leshem, Jos 19:47 and it is remarkable that Leshem is the name of the precious stone in the high priest's breastplate, on which the name of Dan was engraved, which was done many years before this city fell into the hands of the Danites, though that might portend it.

Judges 18:30

Ver. 30. And the children of Dan set up the graven image,.... In their new city Dan, and very probably had a house built for it, peculiar to it, in the same place where Jeroboam, in later times, set up one of his golden calves. The Danites having succeeded, according to the oracle in Micah's house, they had a very great veneration for the images they brought away with them from thence, and set them up for religious worship in a proper place; for though only mention is made of the graven image, yet no doubt the molten image, and the teraphim, with the ephod, were all placed together for devotion and consultation:

and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan: not to the whole tribe, but to that part of it which resided in this city, called Dan; and this Jonathan seems to be no other than the Levite Micah took into his house, and made a priest of; and whom the Danites took with them to Laish, to be their priest, who is said to be the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh: now Gershom was the son of Moses, and this man is thought by some to be a grandson of his; and with this agrees the time in which he lived, for as Phinehas the grandson of Aaron was now living, Jud 20:28 so might a grandson of Moses; and though he is called a young man, he might be a younger son of Gershom's; nor is his being a Levite any objection, since it is a clear case that Moses made no provision for his family, so disinterested was he, which may be observed against the deists: and it is remarkable that the "nun", or "N" in Manasseh, is suspended over the other letters in our printed copies of the Hebrew Bible, and so without it may be read, Moses; and the Jews {c} have a notion, that this was done for the honour of Moses, and to observe that he was more like a son of Manasseh than of Moses; though rather this being the first letter of hvn, "to forget", may suggest, as Alting {d} observes, that he had forgot the virtues of his grandfather; and the Vulgate Latin version reads, the son of Moses; and some {e} are of opinion that this is the true reading of the text; though it may be that another Gershom than the son of Moses, and another Manasseh we know nothing of, are here intended, so

Marcus Marinus {f}: however, this man, and his sons in succession after him, were priests in Dan,

until the day of the captivity of the land; not till the captivity of Sennacherib or Salmaneser, when Dan, with the rest of the ten tribes, were carried captives, as Jarchi; for this idolatry, and these idolatrous priests, can hardly be thought to be continued here through the times of Samuel, David, and Solomon: nor is it to be understood of the captivity of Israel by Jabin king of Canaan, as Ben Gersom; for as the other is too long a time, this is too short, since it is clear, by the next verse, that this idolatry continued all the time the house of God was at Shiloh; and which directs us to the captivity here spoken of, when the ark was carried captive by the Philistines, and the house of Shiloh was forsaken; which is the sense of Kimchi, R. Isaiah, and Abarbinel; and may be illustrated and confirmed by some passages in Ps 78:58.

{c} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 109. 2. {d} Shiloh, l. 4. c. 28. p. 334. {e} See Dr. Kennicott's Dissertation 2. p. 51, &c. {f} Apud Glassium in Philolog. Sacr. l. 1. tract. 1. sect. 2.

Judges 18:31

Ver. 31. And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made,.... Which is repeated for the sake of the time of its continuance next expressed:

all the time the house of God was in Shiloh; which, according to some Jewish writers {g}, was three hundred and sixty years; that is, so long as the tabernacle was there, which was afterwards removed to Nob.

{g} Maimon. in Misn. Zebachim, c. 14. sect. 6. & Bartenora in ib. sect. 7.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Judges 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 19

This chapter gives an account of a sad affair of a Levite and his concubine, and of the bad consequence of it, how that she played the whore, and went away from him to her father's house, whither he followed her, and where he was kindly entertained by her father several days, Jud 19:1 and then set out on his journey to his own country; and passing by Jebus or Jerusalem, he came to Gibeah, and could get no lodging, Jud 19:10, but at length was taken in by an old man, an Ephraimite, Jud 19:16 when the house where he was beset by some wicked men in Gibeah, with the same intent as the men of Sodom beset the house of Lot, Jud 19:22 and after some expostulation of the old man with them, the concubine was brought out to them and abused by them even unto death, Jud 19:25 upon which the Levite her husband cut her into twelve pieces, and sent them into all the coasts of Israel, which was shocking and surprising, Jud 19:29 the consequence of which is related in the next chapter.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel,.... The same is observed in Jud 17:6 and refers to the same times, the times before the judges, between them and the death of Joshua, during which time there was no supreme magistrate or ruler in Israel, which is meant; and this is observed, as before, to account for wickedness being committed with impunity, such as adultery, sodomy, murder, &c. afterwards related:

that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of Mount Ephraim; in a city that was on one side of that mountain; it seems not to have been a Levitical city, because he was only a sojourner in it; perhaps he chose to reside there, as being near to the tabernacle of Shiloh, which was in that tribe;

who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehemjudah; the same place from whence the wicked Levite came, spoken of in the preceding chapters, and who was the means of spreading idolatry in Israel; and here a wicked concubine of a Levite comes from the same, and was the cause of great effusion of blood in Israel; which two instances may seem to reflect dishonour and disgrace on Bethlehem, which were wiped off by the birth of some eminent persons in it, as Boaz, Jesse, David, and especially the Messiah. The woman the Levite took from hence is in the Hebrew called, "a wife, a concubine" {h}; for a concubine was a secondary wife, taken without espousals and a dowry: some think they were espoused, though there was no dowry, and were reckoned truly wives, though they had not all the honour and privilege as others; and that this woman was accounted the wife of the Levite, appears from his being called her husband frequently;

and her father is said to be his father-in-law, and he his son-in-law; nor could she have been chargeable with adultery otherwise.

{h} So Pagninus, Tigurine version, Drusius.

Judges **19:2**

Ver. 2. And his concubine played the whore against him,.... Was unfaithful to him and his bed, and broke the covenant and agreement between them; or "with him" {i}, while she was with him in the house; or "before him" {k}, of which he had knowledge and proof; though some think this is not to be understood of whoredom or adultery, but of her ill usage of him, and departure from him. The Targum is, she despised him; so Kimchi and Ben Gersom interpret it of her declining and turning aside from him, and returning to her father's house, as follows: and indeed, had she been guilty of such a crime, one would think he would never have sought after her to reconcile her, and take her again, since she not only deserved to be put away, but to be put to death according to the law of God:

and went away from him to her father's house to Bethlehemjudah; where she was received, as she knew she should, having a parent perhaps too indulgent, and which was an encouragement to her to leave her husband:

and was there some whole months or a year and four whole months, according to Ben Gersom; so Kimchi and Ben Melech observe the copulative "and" is wanting, which is expressed in 1Sa 27:7 and "yamim, days", is so the times used for a year, Jud 14:8.

{i} wyle "apud eum", Pagninus, Piscator; "cum eo", Junius & Tremellius.
{k} "Conspectu ejus", Vatablus; "coram eo", Drusius.

Judges **19:3**

Ver. 3. And her husband arose,.... From the place where he lived:

and went after her; to Bethlehemjudah, where her father lived:

to speak comfortably to her "or to her heart" {l}; having heard perhaps that she repented of her sin, or if it was only upon a quarrel between them, his anger might cool and subside, and therefore sought for a reconciliation; and which was the more commendable in him, as he did not put her away, but she departed from him: and

to bring her again; to his own city, and to his own house and bed, as before:

having his servant with him, and a couple of asses; one of them for her to ride upon, and the other to carry provisions on:

and she brought him into her father's house; it seems she met with him before he came thither, in the fields, or in the street; and by this it appears that she was glad to see him, and received him in a loving manner, and introduced him into her father's house, so that things looked well, and promised success:

and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him; having a good opinion of him, and perhaps understood, even by his daughter's story, that she was most in fault, and therefore was well pleased to see him come after her; though he ought before this time to have sent her home, or sought for a reconciliation of her to her husband.

{l} hbl le "ad cor", Pagninus.

Judges 19:4

Ver. 4. And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him,.... Prevailed upon him to stay some time with him:

and he abode with him three days; it seems as if he agreed to stay with him so long, and that time he stayed contentedly:

so they did eat and drink, and lodged there; the Levite and his servant were very handsomely entertained, and had everything provided for them convenient for meat, drink, and lodging.

Judges 19:5

Ver. 5. And it came to pass on the fourth day,.... The time the Levite had agreed to stay being up:

when they arose early in the morning the Levite, his concubine and servant, in order to set out on their journey: that he arose to depart; the Levite rose up from his seat to take his leave of his father-in-law, and depart from his house, and proceed on his way homeward; for rising out of his bed is before expressed:

and the damsel's father said to his son in law, comfort thy heart with a morsel of bread; take a breakfast first, that he might be fitter for his journey, for bread comforts or strengthens men's hearts, Ps 104:15 though here it may be put for any and all sorts of provisions, whatever might be proper to take early in a morning, and before setting out on a journey: and afterwards go your way; he seemed as if he was willing he should set forward, after he had refreshed him with a meal.

Judges 19:6

Ver. 6. And they sat down,.... Not only sat down upon their seats again, the Levite having rose up in order to go away, but sat down at table:

and did eat and drink both of them together; both the Levite and his father-in-law; and it appears by this, and what follows, that the Levite did not take only a short repast, or breakfast with him, but stayed and dined with him, when they ate a plentiful meal, and drank freely after dinner:

for the damsel's father had said to the man, be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart be merry; let us spend a pleasant evening together, in drinking freely, though not to excess, in cheerful conversation, and innocent mirth. This he proposed to him, and hoped he would agree to it.

Judges 19:7

Ver. 7. And when the man rose up to depart,.... Rose up from table, having ate and drank sufficiently, in order to depart the house, and proceed on his journey:

his father in law urged him; with much entreaty, and earnest solicitations, that he would stay all night with him:

therefore he lodged there again; another night, being prevailed upon through his father's importunity.

Judges 19:8

Ver. 8. And he rose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart,.... With a full intention to take his leave of his father, and be gone:

and the damsel's father said, comfort thine heart, I pray thee; with a meal's meat, with a breakfast, before he set out on his journey, that he might be heartier and stronger for it:

and they tarried until afternoon; or "until the decline of the day" {m}, when the sun had passed the meridian, and was declining, as it immediately does when noon is past:

and they did eat both of them; the man stayed and took a dinner with his father-in-law; and though no mention is made of the concubine, neither in this, nor in the other instances, no doubt she ate with them.

{m} Mwyh twjn de "usque ad declinare diem", Montanus; to the same purpose Pagninus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Judges 19:9

Ver. 9. And when the man rose up to depart, he and his concubine, and his servant,.... Rose up from table, having comfortably refreshed themselves:

his father in law, the damsel's father, said unto him, behold, now the day draweth towards evening; or is "remiss", or "weak" {n}; that is, the heat, light, and strength of the sun abated, and became weaker and more remiss, as it does the more it declines, and is nearer setting:

I pray you tarry all night; suggesting, it was a very improper time to set out in on a journey:

behold, the day groweth to an end; or "behold, it is the encampment of the day" {o}, when the day or sun seems to be pitching its tent, and going to rest; or it being the time when an army on the march stops and pitches their tents, in order to continue all night; or when men go to their tents and habitations, and lie down and take their rest:

lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and let us have another pleasant evening together, which cannot be had in an inn upon the road; you cannot be comfortable there, as here, and therefore be persuaded to stay, since it is not possible to get home tonight:

and tomorrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home; to thy city, as the Targum; signifying, that he should not insist upon their staying any longer, and then they might set out on their journey as soon as they pleased.

{n} hpr "debilitata est", Pagninus, Vatablus; "remissus est", Junius & Tremellius. {o} Mwyh twnh "castrametatio diei", Drusius.

Judges 19:10

Ver. 10. But the man would not tarry that night,.... He was determined upon his journey; he perceived there was no end of the solicitations of his father-in-law, and did not know how long he intended to detain him, and therefore was resolved not to hearken to him any longer:

but he rose up and departed; rose up from his seat, took his leave of his father-in-law, and proceeded on his journey:

and came over against Jebus, which is Jerusalem; which was then called Jebus, because inhabited by the Jebusites, as appears from the following verse; this was about six miles from Bethlehem {p}; so far they were come on in their journey homewards:

and there were with him two asses saddled; which he brought with him when he came to Bethlehem, Jud 19:3 now said to be "saddled", either for him and his concubine to ride on; or they were bound or girt, as the word signifies, being loaded with bread, and wine, and provender; or it may be one of them was for him and his concubine to ride on by turns, and the other to carry the provisions:

and his concubine also was with him; matters being now made up between them, she had agreed to go with him, and did, which was the end of his coming to her father's house; and therefore this is observed on that account, as well as for what follows in the tragical part of this history.

{p} Hieron. de loc. Heb. fol. 89. E.

Judges 19:11

Ver. 11. And when they were by Jebus the day was far spent,.... Or "was gone down very much" {q}, the sun was going down apace, and near setting:

and the servant said unto his master, come, I pray thee: he proposed it to him in a submissive manner, and might use some entreaty for his master's good and safety:

and let us turn in unto this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it; for though that part of the city which belonged to the tribe of Judah was taken by them after the death of Joshua, yet that which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, part of it was still possessed by the Jebusites, whom the Benjamites could not expel, **Jud 1:21** and Ben Gersom thinks, that this affair of this Levite, and his concubine, was before the men of Judah fought against it, and took it; which not unlikely, seeing it is called here a city of the Jebusites, and because the Levite objected going into it on that account; whereas there would not have been much in his objection, if one part or it was in the session of the men of Judah, and the other in the hands of the tribe of Benjamin, though they had some Jebusites dwelling among them.

{q} dam dr "descenderat valde", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.

Judges 19:12

Ver. 12. And his master said unto him, we will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger,.... A city of the children of the Gentiles, as the Targum, as the Jebusites were, being one of the seven nations of the land of Canaan, who were to be dispossessed and destroyed; and which, one would think, he would not have so called, had it been inhabited, though but in part, by the children of Judah and Benjamin: by this it appears, that this Levite was a good man, and conscientious, and shunned all appearance of evil, and the company of wicked men, as became his character and profession: and it is added,

that is not of the children of Israel; which further confirms the above conjecture, that this city was not as yet at all in the hands of the Israelites; or if it had been, was retaken, and now in the hands of the Jebusites:

we will pass over to Gibeah; which was in the tribe of Benjamin, and inhabited by men of that tribe, and so more agreeable to this Levite, though it proved fatal to him; this was, as Josephus says {r} thirty furlongs, or near four miles from Jebus or Jerusalem; and though it was near sun setting, he chose rather to proceed on to this place, than to lodge at Jebus, and the rather it may be, as it was a Levitical city, Jos 21:17.

{r} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 1.

Judges 19:13

Ver. 13. And he said to his servant, come, and let us draw near,.... And get on as fast as we can:

to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah; which were both in the tribe of Benjamin, and he left it to his servant to go to either, to that which was most convenient, because of the time of the day, it being near sun setting; now, as before observed, Gibeah was not quite four miles from Jerusalem; whereas, according to Jerom {s}, Ramah was six miles, and therefore we find they took up at Gibeah, as being nearest of these two places; See Gill on "Jos 18:24" see Gill on "Jos 18:25" see Gill on "Ho 5:8"

{s} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. B.

Judges 19:14

Ver. 14. And they passed on, and went their way,.... Proceeded on in their journey from Jebus or Jerusalem, near to which they were:

and the sun went down upon them when they were by Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin; which is added, to distinguish it from another Gibeah in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:57 when they were come pretty near to this place, on the side of it, as it seems, the sun was just setting, which determined them to take up their lodging here, as follows.

Judges 19:15

Ver. 15. And they turned aside thither to go in and lodge in Gibeah,.... Instead of going right forward, and passing by Gibeah, over against which they were, they turned out of their road, and went into the city to seek a lodging in it:

and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city; to see whether any person would invite him into any of their houses, as was usual in those hospitable times and countries, and where there were few inns for the entertainment of travellers and strangers, or none at all, and especially in cities; if any where, they were upon the public road:

for there was no man that took them into his house to lodging; the spirit of hospitality being greatly declined, and even gone from among them; or as some think, those that had such a spirit, and were willing to receive strangers, were afraid, because of their wicked neighbours, who would beset their houses to abuse strangers, as the sequel of this history shows.

Judges 19:16

Ver. 16. And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even,.... Which is the time that men come from their labour, and take their rest; and this man, though a man in years, and of some substance, as appears by what follows, yet attended the business of his calling, which was very commendable in him:

which was also of Mount Ephraim; as the Levite was, which when the old man understood, he was the more ready no doubt to receive him into his house:

and he sojourned in Gibeah; he was not a native of the place, and yet more kind to strangers than such as were; nor does he appear to be a Levite, though it was a Levitical city; on what account he sojourned here is not manifest:

but the men of the place were Benjamites: for as yet the number of Levites were not large, others dwelt in the cities besides them, even such as were of the tribe to which they belonged.

Judges 19:17

Ver. 17. And when he had lifted up his eyes,.... For it may be, as he came out of the field, he was musing and meditating with his eyes downwards directed, but coming into the city looked up:

he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city; whom he supposed to be a traveller and a stranger by his dress, and other circumstances, having never seen him before, and knowing pretty well the inhabitants of the place:

and the old man said, whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? the meaning of the questions is, what place he was travelling to, and from whence he came last.

Judges 19:18

Ver. 18. And he said unto him, we are passing from Bethlehemjudah,.... He answers to his last question first, for this was the place from whence they came:

towards the side of Mount Ephraim: thither they were going, which is an answer to the first question: and then adds, which is more than what was requested, from thence am I; that is, he was an inhabitant of a city on one side of Mount Ephraim, but what that city was, he says not, nor is it elsewhere said:

and I went to Bethlehemjudah; on what account he does not declare, but the above narrative clearly shows for what reason he went thither:

but I am now going to the house of the Lord; that is, the tabernacle in Shiloh, there he proposed to go first to offer sacrifice for the success of his journey, and for the reconciliation of his wife to him, and to pray to God for happiness in his family yet to come, and where some think his habitation was; but rather it was at some distance, not far from Mount Ephraim, and on the side of it, whither he should return when he had performed those acts of religion and devotion, which he judged were his duty:

and there is no man that receiveth me to house: that had invited him to his house to take a lodging there, as was common to do to travellers, as the instances of Abraham, Lot, Job, and others, show. It was a law with the Lucani (a people in Italy), that if a stranger came at sun setting, and was desirous of coming under the roof of anyone, if such an one did not receive him, he was to be fined, and suffer the punishment of inhospitality {t}.

{t} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 4. c. 1.

Judges 19:19

Ver. 19. Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses,.... Straw to litter them with, and provender to feed them with, which he had brought with him on them:

and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thine handmaid; meaning himself and his concubine; there were enough for them both, which were packed up, and carried by the asses:

and for the young man which is with thy servants; the supplement, which is, seems quite needless, and even impertinent; for as yet the young man, by whom he means his servant, was not as yet in company with the servants of the old man; but the sense is, that there was not only provisions with him for himself, and his wife, and also for his servant, but even enough for the servants of the old man, whether maid or manservants: there is no want of anything; and therefore none needed to be shy of taking them in, since they should not be burdensome to any upon any account; all they wanted was a lodging.

Judges **19:20**

Ver. 20. And the old man said, peace be with you,.... All happiness attend thee, particularly ease and tranquillity of mind, let nothing disturb or distress thee:

howsoever, let all thy wants lie upon me; signifying, that if he had neither bread nor wine for himself, his wife, and his servant, nor any litter nor provender for his asses, he was welcome to all from him; and whatever his wants were, he would supply them, which was nobly and generously said:

only lodge not in the street: that I cannot bear to think of, as if he should say; for a stranger, an Israelite, one of my own country, a good man, a Levite going to the house of God, to take up a lodging in the streets, let it not be said.

Judges **19:21**

Ver. 21. So he brought him into his house,.... Showed him the way to it, and in a kind and friendly manner introduced him, and bid him welcome:

and gave provender unto the asses; this is mentioned first, it being then perhaps, as now, the first thing that a careful man is concerned for, to see that his cattle is taken care of, and then himself; and such a method this ancient good man took with his guest:

and they washed their feet; which was commonly done to strangers in those hot countries, and was very refreshing, see Ge 18:4

and did eat and drink; sat down at table and supped with him.

Judges **19:22**

Ver. 22. Now as they were making their hearts merry,.... With a glass of wine after supper, and conversing together in a cheerful manner about their country and friends:

behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial; very wicked, lawless, ungovernable, worthless, and unprofitable creatures, men under the influence of Satan, and their own lusts:

beset the house round about: that none might escape out of it, especially the Levite, his wife and servant:

and beat at the door; to get entrance, either by those within opening to them, or by breaking it open:

and spake to the master of the house, the old man; who, upon this noise and clamour made, came to the door, to inquire what was the meaning of all this: to whom they replied, saying,

bring forth the man that came into thy house, that we may know him; not what manner of person he was, of what country and profession, whither he was going, and what business he had here; but that they might have carnal knowledge of him in an unnatural way, or commit that sin with him which is commonly called sodomy; and the men of Sodom expressed their lust by the same word, Ge 19:5.

Judges 19:23

Ver. 23. And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them,.... Opened the door, and went out to converse with them, and talked them after this manner:

and said unto them, nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; it is plain he understood them in such sense, that they meant not bare knowledge of the man, as who he was, &c. but to commit wickedness the most abominable; so great, that it cannot be well said how great it is; and to dissuade from it, he uses the most tender language, and the most earnest entreaties:

seeing this man is come into my house, do not this folly; he argues from the law of hospitality, which ought not to be infringed; a man being obliged to protect a stranger under his roof; and from the nature of the crime, which was folly, stupidity, and what was abominable to the last degree.

Judges 19:24

Ver. 24. Behold, here is my daughter, a maiden, and his concubine,.... His own daughter, a virgin, and the concubine of the Levite his guest:

them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you; those he proposed to bring out, and deliver to them, to lie with, to do with as they pleased to gratify their raging lust, which to do was more than he ought, or had power to do: he had no right to prostitute his own daughter, and much less the concubine or wife of another man, though perhaps it might be with the consent of the Levite; but all this he said in a hurry and surprise, in a fright and terror, and of two evils choosing the least, and perhaps in imitation of Lot, whose case might come to remembrance:

but unto this man do not so vile a thing; as he apprehended that to be which they were desirous of, whether to kill him, as he himself says, Jud 20:5 or to commit the unnatural sin, and which, rather than comply with, he should have chosen to have been slain.

Judges 19:25

Ver. 25. But the men would not hearken to him,.... Especially with respect to his daughter, whom they knew very well, and had no affection for, perhaps was not handsome enough for them:

so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; that is, not the old man, but the Levite took his own wife or concubine, and put her forth to them, very probably with her consent, to try if that would pacify them, she being a fair and beautiful woman, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel suggest; and Josephus {u} intimates, that some young men of the city had seen her in the street, and were captivated with her beauty, and came on purpose for her, and would not be satisfied unless she was delivered to them; and upon which her husband, perceiving this, laid hold on her by main strength, as the word signifies, and brought her out whether she would or not, as Kimchi notes:

and they knew her, and abused her all night until the morning; had carnal knowledge of her, and used her in a most shocking manner one after another, all the night long, until the morning appeared:

and when the day began to spring; at break of day, when the light dawned: they let her go; their works being works of darkness, and would not bear the light.

{u} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 8.

Judges 19:26

Ver. 26. Then came the woman in the dawning of the day,.... When those wicked wretches who had abused her had left her, having had her from place to place, at some distance from the house out of which she was put, and to which she got again, as well as she could:

and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was; her husband, so called, not because she had been his servant, but because she was his wife; and at the door of the old man's house, where he was, which she knew, and had found out by one means or another; she fell down, either purposely for her ease, and to lie and wait there, until the time of opening the door in the morning; or rather through weakness, not being able to stand, nor so much as to knock at the door to get admittance: and there she lay

till it was light; broad daylight.

Judges 19:27

Ver. 27. And her lord rose up in the morning,.... Very early no doubt, and it is scarcely reasonable to think he should sleep quietly after such a riot, and his concubine or wife delivered up to the lust of such brutish creatures:

and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way; either in search of her, or rather to make the best of his way on his journey, to preserve his own life, having given her up for lost:

and, behold the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold; in a posture that persons are when they fall, stretching out their hands to save themselves what they can; or of such who lay themselves down to sleep with their hands under their heads, and which her husband thought was her case, by what follows.

Judges 19:28

Ver. 28. And he said unto her, up, and let us be going,.... He spoke to her as supposing her asleep, in order to awake her, and prepare for their journey with all the haste they could, lest greater mischief should befall them:

but none answered; for she was dead; and her death was occasioned, as Josephus {w} says, partly through grief at what she had suffered, and partly through shame, not daring to come into the sight of her husband; but chiefly through the injuries done her by the number of persons that had lain with her: so it is reported {x} of the Thessalonians, when they took Phocis, many women were destroyed through the abundance of rapes committed upon them. To these Abarbinel adds, the cold of the night, being without her clothes, or anything to cover her:

then the man took her up upon an ass; and carried off her dead body, without making any remonstrance to the inhabitants, from whom he could not expect that any justice would be done him:

and the man rose up, and got him unto his place; to his city on one side Mount Ephraim, to which he made as much haste as he could, instead of going to the house of God at Shiloh, as he proposed; for now the circumstances of things were changed with him, and instead of sacrificing and giving praise to God in his house, his business was to seek for justice from the tribes of Israel.

{w} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 8.) {x} Herodot. Urania, sive, l. 8. c. 33.

Judges **19:29**

Ver. 29. And when he was come into his house,.... Having taken the dead body of his wife from off the ass, and brought it in thither, and laid it in a proper place and order:

he took a knife; a carving knife, such as food is cut with, as the word signifies; the Targum is, a sword:

and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces; cut off her limbs at the joints of her bones, and made twelve pieces of them, according to the number of the tribes of Israel:

and sent her into all the coasts of Israel; that is, to every tribe, as Josephus says {y}: there was now no supreme magistrate to apply unto for justice, nor the court of seventy elders, and therefore he took this strange and unheard of method to acquaint each of the tribes with the fact committed; this he did not out of disrespect to his wife, but to express the vehement passion he was in on account of her death, in the way it was, and to raise their indignation at the perpetrators of it. Ben Gersom thinks he did not send to the tribe of Benjamin, where the evil was done; but Abarbinel is of another mind, and as Levi was not a tribe that lay together in one part of the land, but was scattered in it, pieces might be sent to the two half tribes of Manasseh, as the one lay on the one side Jordan, and the other on the other, and so there were twelve for the twelve pieces to be sent unto. So Ptolemy king of Egypt killed his eldest son, and divided his members, and put them in a box, and sent them to his mother on his birthday {z}. Chytraeus {a} writes, that about A. C. 140, a citizen of Vicentia, his daughter being ravished by the governor Carrarius, and cut to pieces, who had refused to send her to him, being sent back again, he put up the carcass in a vessel, and sent it to the senate of Venice, and invited them to punish the governor, and seize upon the city.

{y} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 8.) {z} Justia. e Trogo, l. 38. c. 8. {a} Apud Quistorp. in loc.

Judges **19:30**

Ver. 30. And it was so, that all that saw it,.... The dismembered pieces of the dead body, and were made acquainted with the cause of it; for so Josephus {b} says, he gave the messengers a command to declare what was the cause of her death:

said, there was no such deed done nor seen, from the day that the children of Israel came out of Egypt, unto this day; meaning not so much the cutting in pieces the dead body, and sending it to different parts; though that was awful and shocking, as the complicated wickedness committed at Gibeah, which was the cause of it, to which reference is had, **Ho 9:9** this is an observation of the writer of this book, Samuel; but what follows are the words either of those the Levite sent, who were bid to deliver them to those to whom the pieces were sent, or else of the persons present at the time of the delivery of the pieces to them, or whom they got together to disclose the matter to:

consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds; well weigh and think of the matter within yourselves, consult with one another what is proper to be done, and give your opinion freely without any reserve.

{b} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 8.)

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Judges 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 20

This chapter relates, how that there was an assembly of the children of Israel at Mizpeh, upon what had happened to the concubine of the Levite, where he appeared and related the whole affair to them, Jud 20:1 upon which they unanimously agreed to chastise the inhabitants of Gibeah for what they had done, Jud 20:8, and in order to do that sent to the tribe of Benjamin to deliver the guilty, but instead of that they took to their arms, and prepared for battle in defence of them, Jud 20:12 and two battles ensued on this, in which the Israelites, who were on the right side of the question, were worsted, Jud 20:18 but upon their seeking the Lord again, and their humiliation before him, they engaged a third time in battle, and got an entire victory over the Benjaminites, and destroyed them all excepting six hundred men, Jud 20:26.

Ver. 1. Then all the children of Israel went out,.... Of their tribes, cities, habitations, not every individual of them, but some of the chief of them, with a select company with them:

and the congregation was gathered together as one man; with as much unanimity and ease met together in one place, at the same time, as if only one man had been pitched upon and deputed for that purpose:

from Dan even to Beersheba, from the city Dan, lately built, which was in the most northern parts of the land of Canaan, to Beersheba, a city in the most southern part, which included all the tribes in the land of Canaan, who all, excepting Benjamin, assembled:

with the land of Gilead; which lay on the other side Jordan, inhabited by the two tribes of Reuben and Dan, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who also came on this occasion:

unto the Lord in Mizpeh; a city which lay upon the borders of Judah and Benjamin, and is therefore assigned to them both, Jos 15:38 for this was not Mizpeh in the land of Gilead, but a city near to Shiloh; and, according to Fuller {b}, eight miles from Gibeah, and so was a convenient place to meet at: it is not to be thought the tribes met here, by a secret impulse upon their minds, but by a summons of some principal persons in one of the tribes, very probably in the tribe of Ephraim, where the Levite dwelt, and in which was the tabernacle of the Lord, and of which the last supreme magistrate was, namely, Joshua; and all having notice of the occasion of it, met very readily; and because they assembled in the name and fear of God, and it was in the cause of God, and as a solemn assembly, a judicial one, in which God was usually present, they are said to be gathered unto him, and the rather, as they sought for direction and counsel from him in the affair before them.

{b} Pisah-Sight, B. 2. c. 12. p. 259.

Judges 20:2

Ver. 2. And the chief of all the people,.... The princes of the tribes and heads of families, rulers of thousands, and hundreds, and fifties, and tens; or the "corners" {c}, who were like the corner stones in a building, which are not only the most valuable and ornamental, but the strength of the building, which cement it, and support it, and hold it together; though Abarbinel thinks this intends the division and separation of each tribe, which encamped in a separate corner and side by itself: but the former sense seems best, and the meaning is, that the principal men of them,

even of all the tribes of Israel; excepting the tribe of Benjamin:

presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God; now gathered together: which assembly consisted, besides the heads of them, of

four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword; or were armed men; there were 600,000 or more in Israel able to bear arms; but as now the wars in Canaan were pretty much at an end, the militia of the nation was not so regularly kept up, and many were employed in tilling the ground, and dressing the vines, and the like; and besides, as there were none of the tribe of Benjamin present, it need not be wondered at there should be no more, but rather that so many should be gathered together on such an occasion.

{c} twnp "anguli", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Drusius, Tigurine version.

Judges 20:3

Ver. 3. Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh,.... Having no doubt the same notice the rest of the tribes had; but the thing complained of being done in their tribe, and by some of it, they might be willing to screen the delinquents, or were careless about and indifferent to the case, and secure and easy, as imagining their brethren would never go to war with them about it; or were proud and haughty, and would pay no regard to the summons given them:

then said the children of Israel, tell us, how was this wickedness? proclamation was made in the assembly, that if any person there knew anything of this shocking affair, and horrid iniquity, which was the occasion of their meeting together, that they would rise up and declare what was the cause of it, how it came about, and by whom it was done; or they addressed themselves particularly to the Levite, and his host, and his servant, who might all be upon the spot to bear witness in this case, as it is certain the former of them was, who upon this stood up, and spoke as follows.

Judges 20:4

Ver. 4. And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered, and said,.... He rose up, and, in answer to their request, declared the whole affair as follows: and none so proper as he, who was upon the spot when it was done, and so near a relation of the deceased, and had a right to demand justice to be done; for from hence it appears that she was his lawful wife, though called a concubine:

I came into Gibeah, that belongeth to Benjamin; which he so particularly describes, to distinguish it from another of the same name in the tribe of Judah, lest any mistake should be made, and an innocent people should suffer in their reputation, or otherwise; and which also would account for the tribe of Benjamin not being present at this convention:

I and my concubine, to lodge; thither they came, not with an intention to stay, to sojourn there, and much less to do them any injury, or to infringe any of their rights and privileges; nor in the least to be burdensome to them, having brought all necessary provisions with them for themselves, servants, and cattle, only to get a night's lodging with them.

Judges 20:5

Ver. 5. And the men of Gibeah rose against me,.... Not all of them, but some that dwelt in that city; he forbears giving them the character they justly deserved, sons of Belial. These came in a tumultuous and violent manner,

and beset the house round about upon me by night; that he might not make his escape, resolving if possible to get him into their hands, and do with him according to their will:

and thought to have slain me; their first intention was to commit the unnatural sin on him, and, if he resisted, to slay him; but this he modestly conceals, as being a sin not to be named in an assembly of saints; and besides he might say this, because he himself chose rather to be slain than to submit to their lust, which he knew must be the case upon his refusal and resistance; and even if he had yielded, being overpowered, this would have been the consequence, that he should have been abused even unto death, as his wife was:

and my concubine have they forced, that she is dead; or "afflicted", or "humbled" {d} her; which is a modest expression for carnal knowledge of her, and which they had to such excess that she died through it.

{d} wne "afflixerunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

Judges 20:6

Ver. 6. And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces,.... Lest it should be thought that these barbarous creatures, after they had used her in such a manner that occasioned her death, that they had committed this fact also; the Levite takes it to himself, and owns that he did that:

and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel; to alarm them, and excite their attention to what had passed, and to raise their indignation against it:

for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel; being guilty of adultery and murder, and would have committed the unnatural crime, if they could have had an opportunity of doing it.

Judges 20:7

Ver. 7. Behold, ye are all children of Israel,.... The descendants of one man that feared the Lord; were of one nation, and of one religion, men professing godliness, and therefore ought to bear testimony against sin and wickedness of every sort, and especially such crying abominations as these:

give your advice and counsel: in this place, being assembled together on this occasion; consult what is best to be done, and let every man speak his mind freely what step he thinks should be taken for the glory of God, and honour of religion, and to bring such persons to justice who had committed so foul a fact.

Judges 20:8

Ver. 8. And all the people arose as one man,.... Either the heads of the people assembled in council, all agreed unanimously in one vote or resolution, or all the 400,000 men were of the same mind, when the case was reported to them:

saying, we will not any of us go to his tent, neither will we any of us turn into his house; that is, they would not return home, to take one nights rest in their houses, or attend to the business of their callings or to any affair of life, however urgent, till satisfaction was made for the evil committed.

Judges 20:9

Ver. 9. But now this shall be the thing which we will do to Gibeah,.... Where the fact was done; what follows was proposed by some, and unanimously agreed to by all:

we will go up by lot against it; cast lots who shall go up to it and demand satisfaction for the offence committed; and if denied, to act in an hostile manner against it.

Judges 20:10

Ver. 10. And we will take ten men of an hundred, throughout all the tribes of Israel,.... Excepting that of Benjamin which was not with them, not any of them:

and a hundred out of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand; in all 40,000, out of the 400,000:

to fetch victual for the people; ten men were to provide food for ninety, and one hundred men for nine hundred, and 1000 men for 9000, in all 40,000, for 360,000; these were either to go to their own tribes and habitations, or to the towns and cities adjacent, to procure food for this large army; for they came from their homes without any provision, not knowing that the affair would keep them long; but perceiving that it would require time before it could be determined, they judged it the wisest method for some to be appointed to take care of provision for the army, that it might not be scattered about on that account, but pursue the war with vigour till satisfaction was obtained:

that they might do, when they came to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel; punish with death the delinquents, and chastise the inhabitants, and especially the magistrates, for their connivance at such wicked persons among them, and negligence of doing their duty.

Judges 20:11

Ver. 11. So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city,.... Of Gibeah, even 360,000 men:

knit together as one man; went heart and hand together, united in their sentiments and resolutions, determining to have justice done, or lose their lives in this cause: according to the Jews {e}, this was on the twenty third of Shebet, which answers to part of January and part of February, on which day a fast was kept on this account.

{e} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.

Judges 20:12

Ver. 12. And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribes of Benjamin,.... Meaning the families of Benjamin; for as sometimes a tribe is called a family, **Jos 7:17** so a family is called a tribe; and there were ten families in the tribe of Benjamin, according to the number of his sons, the fathers of these families. Ge 46:21, which being numerous and powerful, and consisting of men of courage, and expert in war, thought themselves a match for the ten tribes of Israel now assembled, who sent one out of each tribe, very probably ten in all, upon this errand; for they judged it most advisable, before they went to war with them, to try to get the offenders, delivered up to justice, and so prevent the shedding of blood of either side; and the rather, as there were none of the tribe of Benjamin at this assembly, and which indeed might give them reason to suspect they meant not to join with them in an amicable manner in this affair: however, they were willing to try peaceable methods first:

saying, what wickedness is this that is done among you? not that they were sent to inquire what the crime was that was committed, that was fully known; but by putting the question in this manner, their design was to aggravate it, and to put the men of Benjamin on considering how great it was, what an enormous sin it was that was committed, and that among them; and therefore it lay upon them, either to punish the perpetrators of it themselves or deliver them up to them to be punished according to the common law of Israel.

Judges 20:13

Ver. 13. Now, therefore, deliver us the men, the children of Belial, which are in Gibeah,.... Those wicked men that were the authors of that abominable wickedness there committed:

that we may put them to death; as they deserved, since they were guilty both of adultery and murder; their meaning is, that they in conjunction with the tribe of Benjamin might condemn them to death and punish them with it, as their crime deserved:

and put away evil from Israel; prevent both the spread of such a sinful evil in the nation, encouraged by such examples, and the evil of punishment coming upon them from God, should they let such wickedness pass with impunity:

but the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel; they refused to give up the men of Gibeah, that had been guilty of such great wickedness; reckoning it a reproach, as Josephus {f} says, to obey the commands of others, for fear of war, and unwilling to yield to any in arms, neither on account of multitude nor courage.

{f} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 9.

Judges 20:14

Ver. 14. But the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah,.... To protect and defend it against the other tribes, being a city of theirs and where the persons charged with the crime lived; these got together thither out of the several cities of the tribe of Benjamin, as many as could bear arms:

to go out to battle against the children of Israel; they neither denied the fact, nor attempted to palliate and excuse it, nor sought for peace but at once betook themselves to arms; which showed not only want of prudence but pride, passion and self-confidence, and that they were sadly depraved in their morals to rise up in defence of such wicked men; and a strange infatuation to expect success against such vastly superior numbers, and in so bad a cause.

Judges 20:15

Ver. 15. And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities,.... All that they could muster up, and gather together out of their several cities, were no more man than

twenty and six thousand men that drew the sword able bodied men fit for war, and expert in it:

beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men young, stout, and strong, and in all but 26,700; and what are these to an army of 400,000 men, or however 360,000 that came up against Gibeah, while 40,000 were employed in getting provisions for them? Josephus {g} makes the number of the Benjaminites still less, no more than 25,600, led thereunto by an later account, that 25,000 Benjaminites were slain in the third and last battle, and only six hundred escaped to a rock for safety, not considering that 1000 men may well be supposed to be lost in the two first battles; for it would be strange indeed that they should lose none in two engagement with so large an army; the same error is committed in the Vulgate Latin version, which makes them no more than 25,000; with which agrees the Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint version: though that, according to the Vatican exemplar, has but 23,000. The numbers in the Hebrew text are no doubt the right.

{g} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 10.

Judges 20:16

Ver. 16. Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded,.... According to Ben Gersom, these were the seven hundred men of Gibeah; but this does not appear from the text, but, on the contrary, that these were among all the people; or there were so many to be selected out of them all, who were lefthanded men; nor is it likely that all the inhabitants of one place should be such. Benjamin signifies a son of the right hand, yet this tribe had a great number of lefthanded men in it, see **Jud 3:15**. Josephus {h} wrongly reduces the number to five hundred:

everyone could sling stones at an hair's breadth, and not miss: the mark they slung the stone at, so very expert were they at it; and perhaps their having such a number of skilful men in this art made them more confident of success, and emboldened them in this daring undertaking, to point to which this circumstance seems to be mentioned. There were a people that inhabited the islands, now called Majorca and Minorca, anciently Baleares, from their skilfulness in slinging stones, to which they brought up from their childhood, as it is related various writers, Strabo {i}, Diodorus Siculus {k}, Floras {l} and others {m}; that their mothers used to set their breakfast on a beam or post, or some such thing, at a distance, which they were not to have, unless they could strike it off; and the first of these writers says, that they exercised this art from the time that the Phoenicians held these islands; and, according to Pliny {n}, the Phoenicians, the old inhabitants of Canaan, were the first inventors of slings, and from these the Benjaminites might learn it. The Indians are said {o} to be very expert in slinging stones to an hair's breadth.

{h} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 10. {i} Geograph l. 3. p. 116. {k} Bibliothec. l. 5. p. 298. {l} Roman Cost. l. 3. c. 8. {m} Vid. Barthii Ammadv. ad Claudian. in 3 Consul. Honor. ver. 50. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56. {o} Philoetrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 2. c. 12.

Judges 20:17

Ver. 17. And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin,.... Who did not join them in this affair, but opposed them,

were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: see Jud 20:9

all these were men of war; inured to it, skilful and courageous.

Judges 20:18

Ver. 18. And the children of Israel arose,.... From Mizpeh, where they were assembled, having heard that the Benjaminites were gathered together to defend the men of Gibeah:

and went up to the house of God; to the tabernacle which was in Shiloh, Jud 18:31, see Jos 18:1 though the Targum takes Bethel for the name of a place so called; and so do Ben Gersom and Josephus {p}, which was near Shiloh, for Shiloh is said to be on the north side of Bethel, Jud 21:19 but as there is no reason to believe the tabernacle was now removed from Shiloh thither, so it is not likely they would go to any other place but where the tabernacle ark, and high priest were:

and asked counsel of God; before Phinehas the high priest, according to the judgment of Urim and Thummim, Jud 20:28

and said which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? there being no supreme magistrate, judge, or general, to lead them; they did not ask whether they should go to war or no with their brethren; they made no doubt of that, taking it for granted they had sufficient reason for so doing, and that it was according to the will of God; nor did they inquire whether they should be victorious or not, they made no doubt of being victorious, both from their superior numbers, and the justness of their cause; they only inquire who should lead them on, having no general; and this they might do, to prevent any contentions among them about being precedence:

and the Lord said, Judah shall go up first: which tribe pitched their standard first about the tabernacle, and marched first in their journeys in the wilderness, and was ordered to go up first and fight the Canaanites, being a powerful and warlike tribe.

{p} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 10.)

Judges **20:19**

Ver. 19. And the children of Israel rose up in the morning,.... After they had had counsel at Shiloh, and which perhaps was by a deputation sent thither:

and encamped against Gibeah: formed a camp near Gibeah of 360,000 men, enough to have stormed and taken that city at once, one would think.

Judges **20:20**

Ver. 20. And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin,.... From the place where they were encamped:

and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah; not only against the inhabitants of Gibeah, but the children of Benjamin, that came to the defence of them; they formed, themselves in a line of battle, and prepared for an action.

Judges **20:21**

Ver. 21. And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah,.... Which was their place of rendezvous, and which they came to defend; and in and about which they had stationed their whole army of 26,000 men:

and destroyed down to the ground: killed dead upon the spot:

of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men; wanting but 4000 of their whole number, excepting the men of Gibeah, which was such a rebuff the Israelites did not expect, being engaged in so just a cause, and having such a numerous army. Several Jewish, writers {q} think this was on account of their idolatry, that though they were very zealous to revenge corporeal adultery in the case of the Levite's concubine, and to remove such iniquity from Israel; yet were not zealous to revenge and put away spiritual adultery or idolatry in the case of the Danites, who had set up the image of

Micah, and so had spread idolatry not only in their own tribe, but throughout Israel; and therefore God took this opportunity to avenge his own quarrel, and rebuke them for their sin; and now did Benjamin raven as a wolf, according to Jacob's prophecy, Ge 49:27.

{q} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 103. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 28. Jarchi & Kimchi in loc.

Judges 20:22

Ver. 22. And the people, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves,.... That though they had lost a great number of men, yet still their forces were large and greatly superior to those of Benjamin, and above all their cause was good:

and set their battle again in array formed a line of battle again facing their enemy, inviting to another battle, and bidding defiance:

and in the place where they put themselves in array the first day; by which it seems they kept the field of battle; though they lost so many men, they did not flee before the children of Benjamin, but stood their ground; nor were they so superstitious as to fancy the place unlucky; nor was it a bad situation they were in, to which their want of success was owing, for then they would have changed it.

Judges 20:23

Ver. 23. And the children of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until even,.... The evening of the day in which the battle was fought; not that the whole army went up to Shiloh to the house of God there, but a deputation of them, who lamented their defeat, and the loss of so many lives, but not their sins and transgressions, and particularly the idolatry they had been guilty of:

and asked counsel of the Lord, saying, shall we go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? they seemed to have some doubt, by the loss they sustained, whether they were right in going to war with Benjamin, especially as he was their brother; and therefore the question now is, not who should go up first, which was already determined, but whether they should go at all; and still they do not ask any help of God in battle, nor success, but were depending on their numbers, and the justness of their cause, and therefore neither is promised to them, only they have an answer to their question:

and the Lord said, go up against him; for Benjamin was certainly in the wrong, and therefore the Israelites are directed to go against him, and they also were not sufficiently chastised, nor thoroughly humbled.

Judges 20:24

Ver. 24. And the children of Israel came near,.... To the city of Gibeah, drew nigh to battle:

against the children of Benjamin the second day; for the two battles were fought two days successively.

Judges 20:25

Ver. 25. And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day,.... Flushed with the victory they had obtained the day before:

and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men, all these drew the sword, were armed men; this, with the 22,000 slain the day preceding, made 40,000; the same number singled out from among them by lot to provide food for them, and is thought by some to be the case Deborah refers to, **Jud 5:8** and is what is certainly intended in Ho 10:9.

Judges 20:26

Ver. 26. Then all the children of Israel and all the people went up, and came unto the house of God,.... This looks as if the whole body of the army, with other people from parts adjacent, went up to the tabernacle of God in Shiloh:

and wept and sat there before the Lord; not only wept, but continued weeping, and that not merely for their defeat, but for their sins, since it follows:

and fasted that day until even; afflicted their bodies with fasting, which was a token of the humiliation of their souls for their sins:

and offered burnt offering's and peace offerings before the Lord, to make atonement for their sins, and to implore success on their arms.

Judges 20:27

Ver. 27. And the children of Israel inquired of the Lord,.... By the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, and which has the same expression in Jud 20:18 for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days; in Shiloh, where the tabernacle was.

Judges 20:28

Ver. 28. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,.... Before the ark, ministering before the Lord, which shows that this affair was long before the times of Samson, though placed after them; or otherwise Phinehas must have been more than three hundred years of age, which is not probable {r}. Phinehas's standing before the ark was the posture of the priest when he inquired of the Lord for any by Urim and Thummim; the person that inquired stood before him that was inquired of, as Kimchi observes, and he that was inquired of stood before the Shechinah, or the presence of the divine Majesty, of which the ark was a symbol:

saying, shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? in which the question is put in somewhat different manner than before, not only desiring to know whether it was the will of God they should renew the battle or not, since Benjamin was their brother, but whether they should have success or not; intimating, that if the Lord would bless and help them, they were willing to go up, but if not they chose to desist; for they were fully convinced now they were wrong in depending on their numbers, or the justness of their cause; whereas success depended wholly on the will and pleasure of God, to which they desired to submit:

and the Lord said, go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into thine hand; now they are not only directed to go up to the battle, but are promised victory.

{r} Vid. Rainold. de lib. Apocryph. Praelect. 149, 150. p. 345, 353, 354.

Judges 20:29

Ver. 29. And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah. For though they were assured of success and victory, yet they thought proper to make use of means: and though their numbers were very great, they had recourse to art and stratagem, and set an ambush in divers places, much in like manner as Israel did for the men of Ai; the two cases being pretty much similar; this ambush was set in the night, as Josephus says {s},

{s} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2.) sect. 11.

Judges 20:30

Ver. 30. And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day,.... Not the day following the second battle, since it would take more time to go to Shiloh, and fast and offer sacrifices there, but on the third day from the second battle:

and put themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times; as they had done on the first and second days of battle.

Judges 20:31

Ver. 31. And the children of Benjamin went out against the people,.... Sallied out of Gibeah upon them, where they had put themselves in array against them:

and were drawn away from the city; the Israelites retreating, and dissembling a flight, which drew the Benjaminites to pursue after them, by which means they were drawn off to a greater distance from the city of Gibeah:

and they began to smite the people, and kill as at other times; at the other two battles;

in the highways; where it seems two ways met:

of which one goeth up to the house of God; to Bethel, as the Targum {t}; or rather to Shiloh, where the house or tabernacle of God was, and was two miles from Gibeah, as Bunting {u} says:

and the other to Gibeah in the field; so called, to distinguish it from the other Gibeah situated on an hill:

about thirty men of Israel; which were killed in this running fight; and it seems as if one part of the army of Israel took one road, and the other the other road, and so divided the army of the Benjaminites that pursued after them.

{t} So the Septuagint, and Noldius, p. 69. No. 345. {u} Travels, &c. p. 121.

Judges 20:32

Ver. 32. And the children of Benjamin said, they are smitten down before us, as at first,.... At the first battle, which gave them great spirit, and they concluded they should have victory, as before:

but the children of Israel said, let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways; pretending to be afraid of them, and not able to face them, and therefore made as if they fled through fear and cowardice, which inspired the Benjaminites with fresh ardour to pursue them closely, and so were drawn from the city to the highways, as expressed in the preceding verse.

Judges 20:33

Ver. 33. And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place,.... The main body of the army, which fled before Benjamin, when they were come to a proper place, stopped, and rose up out of it, and stood in their own defence:

and put themselves in array at Baaltamar; drew up in a line of battle at that place, facing their enemies, in order to engage with them: this place the Targum calls the plains of Jericho, that being the city of palm trees, which Tamar signifies; and so Jarchi interprets it; but these are too far off; it must be some place near Gibeah. Jerom {w} speaks of a little village in his time in those parts, called Bethamari, and may be thought to be this same place; perhaps in the times of the old Canaanites here was a grove of palm trees, in which Baal was worshipped, from whence it had its name:

and the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of their places, even out of the meadows of Gibeah; or plain of Gibeah, as the Targum; for as the city was built on a hill, at the bottom of it were a plain and fine meadows of grass, and here an ambush was placed at some little distance from the city; and when the army of the Benjaminites were drawn off from it, in pursuit of Israel, these came forth and placed themselves between them and the city.

{w} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. I.

Judges 20:34

Ver. 34. And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel,.... Which, according to Ben Gersom, were the liers in wait; and came from the south, as the Targum says:

and the battle was sore; not between those liers in wait, and the Benjaminites, but between those at Baaltamar, and them who set themselves in battle array against them, and they fought stoutly on both sides:

but they knew not that evil was near them; that there was an ambush laid, by which they were in great danger; they knew nothing of the 10,000 men that were now come out against Gibeah, and were between them and that.

Judges 20:35

Ver. 35. And the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel,.... Gave Israel the victory over them at Baaltamar; for notwithstanding all the art and stratagem they used, their numbers and their valour, victory was of the

Lord, and to him it is ascribed; for until now Benjamin, though fewer in number, had been always victorious; and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjaminites that day 25,100; which is the total sum of all that were slain of them that day, the particulars of which are afterwards given:

all these drew the sword; were armed men.

Judges 20:36

Ver. 36. So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten,.... Their forces broken and worsted, many being killed:

for the men of Israel gave place to the Benjaminites; at first, and made as if they were afraid of them, and so fled before them, which was only to decoy them to a greater distance from the city Gibeah:

because they trusted unto the liers in wait, which they had set beside Gibeah; that these would not only enter the city, and burn it, but meet the Benjaminites fleeing back to it, when they should turn upon them and smite them, and so cut off all that remained of them.

Judges 20:37

Ver. 37. And the liers in wait hasted,.... When the time was come agreed upon for them to rise out of their ambush:

and rushed upon Gibeah; at unawares, with great force and violence entered the city, and took possession of it; or "extended" {x}, or spread themselves unto it; before they lay close in a narrow compass, but now they put themselves in a regular order, and marched rank and file, and reached from the meadows in which they were, Jud 20:33, to the city:

and the liers in wait drew themselves along; along the city, in every part of it, spread themselves all over it, and made themselves masters of every corner of it; or "made a long sound" {y} with a trumpet, protracted that to a great length, which was done to terrify the inhabitants, or to let the Israelites know they were possessed of the city:

and smote all the city with the edge of the sword; old men, women, and children, who were not able to bear arms.

{x} wjvpy "extenderunt se", Tigurine version. {y} Kvmy "pertraxerunt buccinae sonitum", Paguninus; so Jarchi and Limchi.

Judges 20:38

Ver. 38. Now there was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the liers in wait,.... Or an appointed time {z} as the Targum; so Kimchi and Abarbinel. There was a time fixed, at which the men of Israel proposed to be at Baaltamar, exactly when the Benjaminites would be drawn at a proper distance from the city, and then the liers in wait were to break forth, and rush upon it, and enter it:

and that they should make a great flame with smoke to rise up out of the city; set it on fire, and cause the fire to burn fiercely, that there might be a large ascent of flame and smoke to be seen afar off; which, when the men of Israel saw, they would know the city was taken.

{z} dewmh "tempus constitutum", Panginus, Montanus, Junius et Tremellius, Piscator.

Judges 20:39

Ver. 39. And when the men of Israel retired in the battle,.... Which is before expressed by their fleeing, and giving place to the Benjaminites, and was only an artifice of theirs, to draw them off from the city:

Benjamin began to smite and kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons; which was done in the highways leading to Shiloh and Gibeah in the field, Jud 20:31

for they said, surely they are smitten down before us as in the first battle; when the greater number of the Israelites were slain by them.

Judges 20:40

Ver. 40. But when the flame began to arise up out of the city with a pillar of smoke,.... Fire being set to it by the liers in wait, who had entered it, and who made a large fire, which caused a vast pillar of flame and smoke to arise, which might be seen a great way off:

the Benjamites looked behind them; perhaps at hearing the blowing of the trumpet, and the long sound of that:

and, behold, the flame of the city ascended up to heaven; went upwards, and reached to a great height.

Judges 20:41

Ver. 41. And when the men of Israel turned again,.... Turned their faces to the Benjaminites, on whom they had turned their backs; and which they did on hearing the sound of the trumpet, or seeing the flame of the city, or both, and that in order to fight the Benjaminites, and smite them, as now was their opportunity:

the men of Benjamin were amazed; at this strange and sudden change of things, at the sight of the flame of their city behind them, and at the Israelites turning back to fight them, when they thought themselves sure of victory, as at other times:

for they saw that evil was come upon them; that they were in the utmost danger, between two fires, as we usually say, liers in wait behind them, which had seized their city and burnt it, and the army of Israel turning upon them with great spirit and resolution.

Judges 20:42

Ver. 42. Therefore they turned their backs before the men of Israel,.... And fled from them:

unto the way of the wilderness; what wilderness is not certain, perhaps the wilderness of Judah; they did not turn directly back towards Gibeah, perceiving that was taken, and in the hands of a body of men that would meet them, and therefore they turned on one side towards the wilderness, if happily they could make their escape thither, and shelter themselves:

but the battle overtook them; that is, they that made war, as the Targum, the Israelites that were engaged in battle with them pursued them, and overtook them:

and them which came out of the cities they destroyed in the midst of them; either the Israelites that came out of their cities to assist their brethren destroyed the Benjaminites as they fled, or the Benjaminites who came out of other cities to Gibeah, these were destroyed in the midst of it with the inhabitants, by the liers in wait, when they entered it.

Judges 20:43

Ver. 43. Thus they enclosed the Benjaminites round about,.... Surrounded them on all sides, the army of Israel being posted in different places, and people coming out of all the cities to their assistance. Josephus {a} says, they were forced into, and cooped up, in a hollow place in a valley, so that they could not escape:

and chased them; or "caused to pursue" {b}; calling after them a pursuit, crying to one another as they went along, saying, pursue them, pursue them; so Jarchi and Kimchi; which cry, as it inspired the pursuers with zeal, so they pursued with terror:

and trod them down with ease; they making no resistance, being quite dispirited; the Targrim is,

"from the house of their rest,"

where they took up their rest, and designed to rest that night, but could not, being so closely pursued, and diligently sought after. Some take "menuchah", rendered "ease", to be the name of a place, from or unto which they were pursued and trodden down, see **1Ch 2:52** and so the Septuagint seems to take it for the name of a place, rendering it, "from Noua":

over against Gibeah, towards the sunrising; that is, as Jarchi interprets it, to the east of Gibeah, there was this overthrow and slaughter made.

{a} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 10.) {b} whpydrh "persequi fecerunt eum", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "vel eos", Vatablus.

Judges 20:44

Ver. 44. And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men,.... Just the number they had slain of Israel in the second battle. This is the number of them that were slain when Israel turned upon them, and by that time they got to the east of Gibeah; afterwards 5000 more were slain on the highways, and 2000 near Gidom, as after related:

all these were men of valour; as appears by three times facing and engaging with the army of Israel, so vastly superior to them, and twice beating them.

Judges 20:45

Ver. 45. And they turned and fled toward the wilderness, unto the rock of Rimmon,.... Which signifies pomegranate; perhaps it was in the form of one, and may be the same as in 1Sa 14:2 where Saul is said to be under a pomegranate tree, or under Rimmon, the rock Rimmon, for that is said to be near Gibeah, as this was. There was a village in the times of Jerom called Remmon, fifteen miles from Jerusalem to the north {c}, but could not be near this rock to have its name from thence; hither the rest of the army fled for shelter:

and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men; who were scattered one from another, and as they were found in the highways, and picked up, they were slain one after another, just as ears of corn are gleaned one by one, after the harvest is got in, or as grapes in single berries, after the vintage is over:

and pursued hard after them unto Gidom; which perhaps had its name from the cutting off of the Benjaminites there:

and slew two thousand men of them; that is, 2000 more besides the 5000 before mentioned.

{c} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. B.

Judges 20:46

Ver. 46. So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and thousand men,.... It is before said 25,100 Jud 20:35 here the one hundred are omitted, and the round number of thousands given, which is no unusual way of speaking and writing; the whole army of Benjamin consisted of 26,700 of which 18,000 were slain in the field of battle, 5000 in the highways, and 2000 at Gidom, in all 25,000; and we may suppose one hundred as they were straggling in the road, or found in by places, or are not mentioned with either of the thousands for the sake of a round number, and six hundred fled to the rock Rimmon; as for the other 1000, it is highly probable, they fell in the two first battles, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel rightly suppose; for it is not credible, that though they got such amazing victories, it was without the loss of men, and these are as few as well can be imagined. Jarchi thinks these thousand fled to the cities of Benjamin, and were slain when the Israelites entered them, as after related, Jud 20:48 which is much more probable than a tradition they have, that they went into the land of Romania, and dwelt there. Now all those that were slain were men

that drew the sword; soldiers, not husbandmen, artificers, &c. but armed men:

all these were men of valour; even those that fled, who chose rather to lose their lives than ask for quarter.

Judges 20:47

Ver. 47. But six hundred men,.... Who were all that were left of 26,700

turned and fled to the wilderness; turned out of the highway or common road, and being swift of foot, got to a wilderness; what wilderness is not certain:

unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months; very probably in a cave of that rock, which might be large enough to hold such a number; Saul is said to have just the same number under it, and David had also a like number in a cave at Engedi, 1Sa 14:2, and from hence these men might send out of their number to fetch in provision for them from parts adjacent, after the heat of the action was over, and the rage and fury of the Israelites subsided.

Judges 20:48

Ver. 48. And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin,.... After they had destroyed their army, the city of Gibeah, and the inhabitants of it: not content with this, in their wrath and fury, turned and went,

and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of every city; even men, women, and children, in every city of Benjamin, at least all that lay in their way; and which they might do to be avenged on them, for sending out their militia against them, which had made such a slaughter among them to the loss of 40,000 men, or to fulfil their oath, that such who came not to Mizpeh should be put to death; for which reason also the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead, as well as of the cities of Benjamin, were put to death, men, women, and children, dealing in the same severity with them as with the Canaanitish nations, or as with a city given to idolatry:

as the beast, and all that came to hand; spared no living creature, herds and flocks:

also they set on fire all the cities that they came unto; which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, so exceedingly wroth were they with them, for protecting such that had been the authors of such abominable wickedness, and for the loss of the lives of so many valuable men.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**
Judges 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDGES 21

This chapter relates how that when the Israelites calmed down, and seriously to reflect on what had passed, they were sore grieved, and much lamented the case of Benjamin, and were particularly concerned what they

should do for wives for those few men that remained, that the tribe might be built up again, Jud 21:1 and for these they provided wives, partly out of Jabeshgilead, the inhabitants of which came not up to the convention at Mizpeh, and therefore they smote them, men, women, and children, only reserved four hundred virgins, whom they gave to the men of Benjamin, Jud 21:8, and partly from among the daughters of Shiloh, taken at a yearly feast there, the taking of whom was connived at, the other number not being sufficient,
#Jud 21:16-25.

Ver. 1. Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh,.... Where they were there convened, before the war began; after they had heard the account the Levite gave of the affair, which brought them thither; and after they had sent messengers to Benjamin to deliver up the men of Gibeah, that had committed the wickedness; and after they perceived that Benjamin did not hearken to their demand, but prepared to make war with them; then, as they resolved on the destruction of Gibeah, and of all the cities that sent out men against them, even all the inhabitants of them, men, women, and children, entered into an oath, that they would use those men that remained as Heathens, and not intermarry with them, as follows:

saying, there shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife; seeing those that used the wife of the Levite in such a base manner, and those that protected and defended them, deserved to have no wives.

Judges 21:2

Ver. 2. And the people came to the house of God,.... Not to the city Bethel, as the Targum, Septuagint, and other versions, but to Shiloh, where were the tabernacle and ark; and this is to be understood of the army after they had utterly destroyed the Benjaminites: hence we read of the camp in Shiloh, Jud 21:12, here they came not so much to rejoice, and be glad, and to return thanks for the victory they had at last obtained, as to lament the unhappy case of the tribe of Benjamin, and to have counsel and advice, and consider of ways and means to repair their loss:

and abode there till even before God; fasting and praying, instead of feasting and rejoicing:

and lifted up their voices, and wept sore; not so much, or at least not only for the 40,000 Israelites that were slain, but for the tribe of Benjamin, in danger of being lost, as follows.

Judges 21:3

Ver. 3. And said, O Lord God of Israel,.... Jehovah, the only living and true God, the Being of beings, eternal, immutable, omnipotent and omnipresent, the God of all Israel, of the twelve tribes of Israel, their covenant God and Father; who had shown favour to them in such a peculiar and gracious manner, as he had not to other nations, and therefore hoped he would still have a kind regard unto them, and suffer them to expostulate with him in the following manner:

why is this come to pass in Israel; expressing, as Abarbinel thinks, a concern for the 40,000 men of Israel which fell in the two first battles; but it manifestly refers to the case in the next words:

that there should be today one tribe lacking in Israel; meaning the tribe of Benjamin, which was all destroyed, excepting six hundred men, and these had no wives to propagate the tribe; and therefore, unless some provision could be made for that, it must in a short time be totally extinct; for which they express great concern, it not being their intention when they made the above oath to extirpate them; but such were now the circumstances of things in Providence, that it must perish unless some way could be found to relieve it, and which their oath seemed to preclude; and this threw them into great perplexity.

Judges 21:4

Ver. 4. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early,.... The day after their fasting and prayer, and a sense of their present case and circumstances being deeply impressed upon their minds, they rose early in the morning to acts of devotion, and exercises of religion, hoping that being in the way of their duty, the difficulties with which they were perplexed would be removed:

and built there an altar; if this place was Bethel, as Kimchi reasons, there

Jacob had built an altar; but that in such a course of years might have been demolished: and if it was Shiloh, there was the tabernacle, and so the altar of the Lord there; wherefore this either signifies the repairing of that, being in ruins, which is not likely, since it was but lately used, Jud 20:26 or the building of a new one, which to do in the tabernacle was not unlawful, especially when the number of sacrifices required it, which it is highly probable was the case now, as it was at the dedication of the temple, **1Ki 8:64** though the above mentioned writer thinks, that building an altar signifies, as in many places, only seeking the Lord; but the use for which it was built is expressed:

and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings; both to atone for the sins they had been guilty of in the prosecution of the war, and to return thanks for victory given, and to implore fresh favours to be bestowed upon them.

Judges 21:5

Ver. 5. And the children of Israel said,.... One to another, after they had offered their sacrifices, and while they were together in Shiloh:

who is there among all the tribes of Israel, that came not up with the congregation unto the Lord? when they were summoned to come to Mizpeh, to consult together about the affair of the Levite's concubine, as appears by what follows:

for they had made a great oath; in a very awful and solemn manner, with a curse annexed to it, as that about not giving a wife to Benjamin, Jud 21:18

concerning him that came not up to the Lord to Mizpeh: not about him who did not go out to battle against Benjamin, nor about every individual that did not come to consult about it; but every city that did not send their proper representatives or quota to assist in that affair:

he shall surely be put to death; this was sent along with the summons, in order to quicken their attention to them.

Judges 21:6

Ver. 6. And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother,.... Not that they went to war with them, as if their cause was not good; but for the severity they had exercised towards them, especially in destroying their women and children, and for the fatal consequences like to follow here after, particularly the dissolution of the whole tribe:

and said, there is one tribe cut off from Israel this day; that is, there is a likelihood or great danger of it.

Judges 21:7

Ver. 7. How shall we do for wives for them that remain,.... By which it seems, as well as by what is after related, that they knew of the six hundred men hid in the rock Rimmon:

seeing we have sworn by the Lord; by the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; and such an oath with them was a sacred thing, and to be kept inviolable, even to their own hurt:

that we will not give them of our daughters to wives; as in Jud 21:1 and therefore they must either marry among the Heathens, which was forbidden, or they must make void their oath, or the tribe in a little time would be extinct; these were difficulties they knew not how to surmount, and this was the object of their inquiry.

Judges 21:8

Ver. 8. And they said, what one is there of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the Lord?.... This is asked not only to bring them to justice, and put them to death, according to their oath, who should be found guilty, Jud 21:5 but as an expedient to find wives for the surviving Benjaminites; since these, as they came not to Mizpeh, so consequently swore not that they would not give their daughters to Benjaminites; wherefore from among them wives might be given to them, without the violation of an oath:

and, behold, there came none to the camp from Jabeshgilead to the assembly; this was observed by some upon the question put, which caused an inquiry to be made as after related. This city was in the land of Gilead, from whence it had its name, on the other side Jordan, and is placed by Adrichomius {a} in the half tribe of Manasseh; and Jerom {b} says it was a village in his time six miles from the city Pella, upon a mountain, as you go to Gerasa.

{a} Theatrum Terrae S. p. 90. {b} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. K. & fol. 93. L.

Judges 21:9

Ver. 9. For the people were numbered,.... To know who did come up, and who did not, and particularly to know whether the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead did or not, against whom an information was brought:

and, behold, there were none of the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead there; for as yet none that came had returned home; all came to Shiloh first, to pay their devotion to the Lord; and as none were found among the living, it did not appear they were among the slain; and very probably the muster roll was taken before they went to battle, and they were not on that.

Judges 21:10

Ver. 10. And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest,.... That were in their army; in the Vulgate Latin version it is only 10,000; but the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and Josephus {c}, agree with the Hebrew text. This place, according to Bunting, to which this army was sent, was fifty two miles from Shiloh {d}:

and commanded them, saying; these were the orders they gave them, when they marched out:

go and smite the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children; which it seems was according to the oath they had made, Jud 21:5.

{c} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 10.) {d} Travels, &c. p. 121.

Judges 21:11

Ver. 11. And this is the thing that ye shall do,.... Which they gave them in charge to execute:

ye shall utterly destroy every male; without any reserve, young or old, married or unmarried:

and every woman that hath lain by man; whether lawfully or unlawfully, in a married or unmarried state.

Judges 21:12

Ver. 12. And they found among the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead four hundred young virgins,.... Or damsel virgins {e}; damsels that were virgins: that had known no man by lying with any male: which was judged of by their age, and by their unmarried state, and by common report, unless it can be thought they were examined by matrons; but how it was that they were not obliged, or did not think themselves obliged by their oath to put these to death, as well as others, is not easy to say; whether they thought the necessity of the case would excuse it, or they had a dispensation from the Lord for it, on consulting him; however, so it was:

and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan; this is observed because that Jabeshgilead was not in the land of Canaan, from whence they were brought, but in the land of Og king of Bashan; only what was on this side Jordan was the land of Canaan, and in that Shiloh was, to which they were brought; and this shows that not the city Bethel, but Shiloh, was the place whither the people or army of Israel came to offer sacrifice after the war was ended.

{e} hlwtb hren "puellam viginem", Montanus; "puellas virgines", Pagninus, Tigurine version, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Judges 21:13

Ver. 13. And the whole congregation sent some to speak to the children of Benjamin,.... Sent some messengers to them, to call them, and desire them to come to them:

that were in the rock Rimmon; the six hundred men who had hid themselves in a cave in it, of which the people of Israel were informed:

and to call peaceably unto them; to proclaim peace to them, and assure them of it, and to let them know that they had no ill design against them, that they might come safely to them, and would be kindly received and protected by them.

Judges 21:14

Ver. 14. And Benjamin came again at that time,.... The six hundred Benjaminites returned with the messengers at the same time to the people of Israel, putting confidence in the assurances they had given them of peace and safety:

and they gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabeshgilead; in doing which they supposed they had not violated their oath, since though they had sworn that they would not give their own daughters, they had not sworn they would not give the daughters of others; and besides, as the men of Jabeshgilead were not at Mizpeh when the oaths were made, they had taken none, and so their daughters might be given in marriage to the Benjaminites, notwithstanding that oath:

and yet so they sufficed them not; there were not wives enough for them all; for they were six hundred men, whereas the daughters of the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead were but four hundred, so that there were two hundred more wanting. Abarbinel interprets the word we render "so" in a different manner, by "right", as in Nu 27:7 and gives the sense thus, that it was not a point of justice and judgment to do this to the daughters of Jabeshgilead, namely, to save and give them in marriage; but they did this because the people repented for Benjamin, as follows.

Judges 21:15

Ver. 15. And the people repented them for Benjamin,.... That they had destroyed all their women, and that they had saved no more of the daughters of Jabeshgilead, not a sufficient number to be wives to the Benjaminites:

because the Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel; by almost destroying one of them; for though this was done by the Israelites, yet by the permission and according to the will of God, and through his overruling providence.

Judges 21:16

Ver. 16. Then the elders of the congregation said.... This being the case, that there were not wives enough for them, they were obliged to consult again, and consider of another expedient to provide for them; and this motion came from the elders of the people, not only in years, but in office:

how shall we do for wives for them that remain: the other two hundred, who had none:

seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin? and so no wives to be had there; and as for the Israelites which came to Mizpeh, who were of all the tribes of Israel, they had solemnly sworn that they would not give any of their daughters to them, and therefore it was a very difficult thing to provide wives for them.

Judges 21:17

Ver. 17. And they said, there must be an inheritance for them that be escaped Benjamin,.... The escaped are the six hundred men in the rock Rimmon; four hundred of them were supplied with wives, the other two wanted; and as there was an inheritance divided by lot to the tribe of Benjamin, to that tribe and to that only it belonged, and they must have it and no other; it now of right devolved on these six hundred men, and them only, and therefore provision must be made to increase their number, that they may occupy the inheritance they have a right to, rebuild their cities, till their land, cultivate their vineyards and oliveyards, and enjoy all the advantages of their possessions:

that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel; but the full number of the tribes be preserved, and their inheritances belonging to them, according to the predictions of Jacob and Moses, and the assignment of them by lot unto them by Joshua.

Judges **21:18**

Ver. 18. Howbeit, we may not give them wives of our daughters,.... Though their case was so very necessitous and desperate:

for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin, Jud 21:1 and therefore without the violation of their oath could not give any of their daughters in marriage to them: wherefore some other way must be devised to help them.

Judges **21:19**

Ver. 19. Then they said,.... Some of the elders that sat in council debating this matter, and considering of ways and means to assist their brethren the Benjaminites, and preserve their tribe from being lost:

behold, there is a feast of the Lord in Shiloh yearly; where the tabernacle then was, and before which the males of Israel were obliged to appear three times of the year; and this was one of them, as is clear by its being called a feast of the Lord; and therefore cannot design any civil festival or fair kept for trade and commerce. Some have thought of the feast of the passover, but it is most likely to be the feast of tabernacles, as Abarbinel takes it to be; which in Jewish writings is emphatically called "the feast"; and the time of year when that was kept was a time of great rejoicing, on account of the fruits of the earth being gathered in, and the reading of the law and especially at the tithe of drawing of water at this feast; insomuch that it is said {e} that he who never saw the rejoicing at drawing of water never saw rejoicing in his life, which was attended with piping, and dancing, and singing. It is pretty strange what Kimchi notes, that this may be either one of the above feasts, or the day of atonement, at which, he says, the daughters of Israel used to go and dance in the vineyards, according to the words of the Rabbins; when though that is reckoned among the feasts, Le 23:1 it was properly a fast, as it is called, Ac 27:9 and all tokens of festivity and joy were forbidden on it; and where these words of their Rabbins are to be met with, he says not: in a place which is on the north side of Bethel; we rightly supply "in a place": for the intention is not to describe the situation of Shiloh, which was well known, but a place not far from it, where at this festival the daughters of Shiloh used to dance:

on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem; this place lay to the east of a public road, that led from Bethel to Shechem:

and on the south of Lebonah; which Mr. Maundrell {f} takes to be a place now called Kane Leban, which stands on the east side of a delightful vale, having a village of the same name standing opposite to it on the other side of the vale; one of these places, either that Kane or the village, is supposed to be the Lebonah mentioned Jud 21:19 to which both the name and situation seem to agree.

{e} Misn. Succah, c. 5. sect. 1, 4. Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Lulab, c. 8. sect. 13. {f} Journey from Aleppo, p. 63.

Judges 21:20

Ver. 20. Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin,.... The two hundred men of the tribe that wanted wives; they ordered them as follows, and which they spake with authority, being the elders of the congregation, Jud 21:16

saying, go and lie in wait in the vineyards; which might belong to Shiloh, or it may be to Lebonah, which perhaps is the same with Bethlaban, famous for its wine with the Misnic writers; who say {g} the second places for wine are Bethrimah and Bethlaban; and I suspect that Bethrimah is the same with Bethrimmon, near which was the rock Rimmon these men were in; now this being the time of year when the vintage was just over, the vines were full of branches and leaves, under which the men might the better hide themselves; and the grapes being gathered, there were no men in the vineyards, and so might lie in wait safely, and under cover.

{g} Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 6.

Judges **21:21**

Ver. 21. And see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances,.... As they used to do at this festival, not along with men, but by themselves; and so might the more easily be taken and carried off; and though only males were obliged to appear from all parts at this feast, yet females might come if they would; and, no doubt, from neighbouring places, at least many did; however, the daughters of Shiloh, who dwelt where the tabernacle was, these always attended the feast with demonstrations of joy, and among the rest with dancing, and that as expressive of spiritual and religious joy, as in the case of Miriam, and the Israelitish women, Ex 15:20 and as in latter times the most religious men used to express their joy at this feast; now the two hundred men in the vineyards, which lay near the field where these virgins used to dance at this time, were to watch and observe when they came out of the city thither, and were engaged in such an exercise:

then come ye out of the yards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin; they are directed to rush out at once upon them, as they were dancing, secure, as they thought, from molestation and danger; and they were to take everyone one, not more, and go off directly with them to their own tribe.

Judges **21:22**

Ver. 22. And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain,.... Of this rape of their daughters or sisters, or to bring an action against them, and desire they might be summoned before them, the elders of the people, and be tried and judged according to law for what they had done; or to put them upon going to war with them again for such treatment of them:

that we will say unto them, be favourable unto them for our sakes; for the sake of the elders, who advised them to do what they did; or for the sake of us Israelites, your sake and ours, who were too severe upon them, and prosecuted the war with too much vigour, which made what they have done necessary, or otherwise a tribe must have been lost in Israel:

because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war; either in the war with Benjamin, which they carried on with such wrath and fury as to destroy all the women, so that there were no wives left for the men that remained, which they now repented of; or in the war with Jabeshgilead, they did not reserve enough of the women taken, only four hundred virgins, whereas there were six hundred men: but the first seems best:

for ye did not give unto them at this time, that you should be guilty; the meaning is, that if they had any uneasiness upon their minds about the oath which they had taken, not to give any of their daughters in marriage to Benjamin, they need not be disturbed at that, since they did not "give" them to them, but these "took" them by force; which was the scheme these elders contrived to secure from the violation of the oath. This they proposed to say to quiet them, and make them easy, to which other things might have been added as that these were their brethren, and not strangers they were married to, and not to mean men, but to men of large estates, having the whole inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin devolved upon them; and their daughters would be the original mothers of the posterity of that tribe in succeeding ages.

Judges 21:23

Ver. 23. And the children of Benjamin did so,.... Went and laid wait in the vineyards, and when the daughters of Shiloh came out to dance, they rushed upon them:

and took them wives according to their number; two hundred of them, each man a wife, and no more; for though polygamy was in use in those times, and if at any time necessary, and could be excused, it might seem now; yet it was not indulged to, neither by the elders, nor by the children of Benjamin:

of them that danced whom they caught; the rape of the Sabine virgins by Romulus, at the arena plays and shows, mentioned by various authors {h}, and the carrying off of fifteen Spartan virgins from the dances by Aristomenes the Messenian {i}, are sometimes observed as parallel cases to this, and justified by it, particularly that of Romulus {k}:

and they went and returned unto their inheritance; the six hundred Benjaminites, with their wives, returned to their own tribe, which was their inheritance by lot; and these, being the only survivors, had a right to the whole:

and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them: in process of time they rebuilt the cities the Israelites had burnt in the late war, and repeopled them as their posterity increased. And the Jewish writers say, that in later times they were allowed to marry with other tribes as before, since the oath only bound those present at Mizpeh; for they observe, that it ran only,

there shall not any of us, &c. not any of our sons; they might give wives to Benjamin, and so in time they became numerous again.

{h} Liv. Hist. l. 1. p. 7, 8. Flor Hist. Rom. l. 1. c. 1. Aurel. Victor. de Vir Illustr. c. 2. Valer. Maxim. l. 1. c. 4. {i} Hierop adv. Jovinian. l. 1. fol. 17. B, C. {k} Vid. Albericum Gentil. de armis Roman l. 2. p. 114.

Judges 21:24

Ver. 24. And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family,.... The war being ended, and things settled as well as circumstances would admit of, for the preservation of the tribe of Benjamin, who were the cause of it, and had suffered so much in it; the Israelites that had met at Mizpeh, and who had not fallen in the war, returned to their respective countries, to their wives and children, and the business of their callings:

and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance; divided by lot to them, to their estates and possessions, which each had a right unto.

Judges 21:25

Ver. 25. In those days there was no king in Israel,.... No supreme magistrate, Joshua being dead, and as yet no judge in Israel had risen up; for all related in the five last chapters of this book were done between the death of Joshua and the time of the judges:

every man did that which was right in his own eyes; there being none to restrain him from it, or punish him for it; and this accounts for the many evil things related, as the idolatry of Micah and the Danites, the base usage of the Levite's concubine, the extreme rigour and severity with which the Israelites treated their brethren the Benjaminites, the slaughter of the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead, and the rape of the daughters of Shiloh.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ruth 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF RUTH

This book is called Ruth, not because she was the author of it, but because she is the principal subject of it. In the Syriac and Arabic versions, it is called the Book of Ruth the Moabitess, which describes her by the country of which she was. Her name, according to Hillerus {l}, signifies beautiful, of a good aspect, the same with Calliope in Greek. As to the author of this book, some attribute it to Eli the priest, who seems to have been too soon to give an account of the birth of David; others to Gad or Nathan; some to Hezekiah, and others to Ezra; but what the Talmudists assert, which is most generally received, and most probable, is, that it was written by Samuel; so they say Samuel {m} wrote his own book, Judges, and Ruth; and it is commonly said that this book is an appendix to that of the Judges, and the introduction to Samuel, and is fitly placed between them both. According to Eusebius {n}, with the Hebrews, Judges and Ruth make one book they call Shophetim, or Judges; the principal design of it is to give the genealogy of David, whom Samuel had anointed to be king of Israel, and from whom the Messiah was to come, and who therefore may be said to be the aim and scope of it, as he is of all Scripture; and whereby it appears that he sprung both from Jews and Gentiles, and is the Saviour of both, and there is a good foundation for both to hope in him; and the call and conversion of Ruth the Moabitess may be considered as a shadow, emblem, and pledge of the conversion of the Gentiles. Manythings besides may be learnt from this little book, as the different circumstances of good people in this life, and the particular providence of God respecting them. It furnishes out examples of bearing afflictions patiently, of industry, courteousness, kindness to strangers, and young converts; and none can doubt of the divine authority of this book, that considers the use made of it in the genealogies of Christ by the Evangelists Matthew and Luke.

{l} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 211. {m} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 13. 2. {n} Eccl.

Hist. 1. 6. c. 25.

INTRODUCTION TO RUTH 1

This chapter treats of a family that removed from the land of Canaan to the land of Moab on account of a famine, where the father of it and his two sons died, and each of them left a widow, **Ru 1:1** the mother-in-law proposed to return to her own country, and set forward with her two daughters-in-law, whom, when they had gone a little way with her, she entreated to go back, and expostulated with them about it, **Ru 1:6**, upon which one of them did, but the other, Ruth, the subject of this book, resolved to go the journey with her, **Ru 1:14** and they both came to Bethlehem, the former residence of her mother-in-law Naomi, who was greatly taken notice of by her old friends and acquaintance, to whom she related her present circumstances, **Ru 1:19**.

Ver. 1. Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled,.... So that it appears that this history is of time and things after the affair of Micah, and of the concubine of the Levite, and of the war between Israel and Benjamin; for in those times there was no king nor judge in Israel; but to what time of the judges, and which government of theirs it belongs to, is not agreed on. Josephus {o} places it in the government of Eli, but that is too late for Boaz, the grandfather of Jesse, the father of David, to live. Some Jewish writers, as Jarchi, say it was in the times of Ibzan, who they say {p} is the same with Boaz, but without proof, and which times are too late also for this history. The Jewish chronology {q} comes nearer the truth, which carries it up as high as the times of Eglon, king of Moab, when Ehud was judge; and with which Dr. Lightfoot {r} pretty much agrees, who puts this history between the third and fourth chapters of Judges, and so must belong to the times of Ehud or Shamgar. Junius refers it to the times of Deborah and Barak; and others {s}, on account of the famine, think it began in the times the Midianites oppressed Israel, and carried off the fruits of the earth, which caused it, when Gideon was raised up to be their judge; Alting {t} places it in the time of Jephthah; such is the uncertainty about the time referred to:

that there was a famine in the land; the land of Canaan, that very fruitful country. The Targum says this was the sixth famine that had been in the world, and it was in the days of Boaz, who is called Ibzan the just, and who was of Bethlehemjudah; but it is more probable that it was in the days of Gideon, as before observed, than in the days of Ibzan and a certain man of Bethlehemjudah; so called to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun, Jos 19:15 which had its name from the fruitfulness of the place, and the plenty of bread in it, and yet the famine was here; hence this man with his family removed from it:

and went to sojourn in the country of Moab; where there was plenty; not to dwell there, but to sojourn for a time, until the famine was over:

he and his wife, and his two sons; the names of each of them are next given.

{o} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 1. {p} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 8. 2. Jarchi & Abendana in loc. {q} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. p. 33. {r} Works, vol. 1. p. 48. {s} Rambachius in loc. & Majus in ib. so Biship Patrick. Lampe Hist. Eccl. l. 1. c. 5. p. 22. {t} Theolog. Hist. loc. 2. p. 84.

Ruth 1:2

Ver. 2. And the name of the man was Elimelech,.... Which signifies "my God is King", as he was King over Israel. In the times of the judges, the government was a theocracy; the judges were raised up immediately by the Lord, and ruled under him; the Targum calls him a great man, and so Jarchi; and it is very likely he was, especially if it be true what is said the Jewish chronology {u}, that he was the brother of Salmon, prince of the tribe of Judah; and it is certain that Boaz the son of Salmon was a kinsman of his, **Ru 2:1**,

and the name of his wife Naomi; which signifies "sweet, pleasant", very likely a comely person, and of a sweet disposition; a name of the same signification with Naamah, the sister of Tubalcain, **Ge 4:22** and according to the Talmudists she was Elimelech's brother's daughter; for they say {w}, that Elimelech, Salmon, and the kinsman (spoken of in this book), and the father of Naomi, were all of them the sons of Nahshon, prince of the tribe of Judah; the same Jarchi observes on **Ru 1:22**

and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion; which seem to have their names from weakness and consumption, being perhaps weakly and consumptive persons; and it appears they both died young. It is a tradition of the Jews, mentioned by Aben Ezra, that these are the same with Joash and Saraph, who are said to have dominion in Moab, **1Ch 4:22** which is not likely:

Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah: Jarchi interprets Ephrathites by men of worth and esteem; and the Targum is,

"Ephrathites, great men of Bethlehemjudah"

but no doubt they were called so, because Ephratah was one of the names of Bethlehem, Ge 35:19 so called from its fruitfulness; though Aben Ezra thinks it had its name from Ephratah the wife of Caleb; but it was so called in the time of Moses, as in the passage referred to:

and they came into the country of Moab, and continued there; unto their death; all excepting Naomi, who returned when she heard the famine was over.

{u} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. p. 34. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 8. 1. {w} T. Bab Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1.

Ruth 1:3

Ver. 3. And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died,.... According to Josephus {x}, after he had dwelt in the land ten years, and had married his two sons to Moabitish women; but, as Alshech observes, the text shows that while he was living they were not married to them, but after his death; and it is said of them only that they dwelt there about ten years; so that it is most probable that their father died quickly after he came into the land of Moab: and she was left, and her two sons; in a strange land, she without a husband, and they without a father.

{x} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 1.)

Ruth 1:4

Ver. 4. And they took them wives of the women of Moab,.... Not before they were proselyted to the Jewish religion, as Aben Ezra thinks, and which seems plainly to be the case of Ruth; at least she was so afterwards, if not before; and also of Orpah, as the same writer concludes from **Ru 1:15** though others are of a different opinion, and some excuse their marriage, and others condemn it as unlawful, among whom is the Targumist, who paraphrases the words,

"and they transgressed the decree of the Word of the Lord, and took to them strange wives of the daughters of Moab;"

however it was so permitted by the Lord, and ordered in Providence, that from one of them the Messiah might spring:

and the name of the one was Orpah; she was married to Chilion; and Alshech gathers from hence that the youngest was married first before his brother:

and the name of the other Ruth the Targum adds,

"the daughter of Eglon, king of Moab;"

and that she was his daughter, or the daughter of his son, is a notion commonly received with the Jews {y} though without any just foundation; she was married to Mahlon, **Ru 4:10**, one Philo {z} asserts these two women to be own sisters, for what reason does not appear; and a Jewish writer {a} says they were both daughters of Eglon, king of Moab: and they dwelt there about ten years; that is, Mahlon and Chilion, who married these women; which is to be reckoned either from the time they came into the land, or from the time of their marriage; the latter seems to be the case from the connection of the words.

{y} T. Bab. Nazir, fol. 23. 2. Sotah, fol. 47. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 105. 2. Horayot, fol. 10. 2. Zohar in Deut. fol. 109. 2. {z} Apud Drusium in loc. {a} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 8. 1.

Ruth 1:5

Ver. 5. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them,.... As well as their father, in the land of Moab, after they had lived with their wives in it about ten years; the Targum is, "because they transgressed the decree of the Word of the Lord, and joined in affinity with strange people, their days were cut off;"

or shortened:

and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband; deprived both of her husband and her sons, which was a great affliction, aggravated by her being in a strange country; many are the afflictions of the righteous.

Ruth 1:6

Ver. 6. Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab,.... After the death of her two sons, and having heard of the ceasing of the famine in Israel, she had a desire to go into her own country, where she would have better opportunities of serving the Lord; and having no heart to stay in Moab, an idolatrous country, where she had lost her husband, and her two sons; and therefore prepared for her journey, and set forward, and her two daughters-in-law with her, to accompany her some part of the way; for it does not appear to be their intention, at least at first setting out, to go with her into the land of Canaan; and therefore it is only said, that they arose

that she might return, &c.

for she had heard in the country of Moab: which was near the land of Israel, the borders of it reaching to the salt sea; the Targum says she heard it by the mouth of an angel, but it is highly probable it was by common fame:

that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread; that he had been kind and gracious to the people of Israel, by granting them plenty of provisions; which might be their happy case after Gideon had vanquished the Midianites, who came yearly, and destroyed and carried off the fruits of the earth, which had caused a famine; see **Jud 6:3**. It seems as if the famine had continued ten years, see **Ru 1:4** nor need this be thought incredible, since there was a famine in Lydia, which lasted eighteen years {b}.

{b} Herodot Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 94.

Ruth 1:7

Ver. 7. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was,.... What part of Moab she had dwelt in, and now removed from, is not said; it is called the country or field of Moab, she returned from; hence some have thought, that she and her husband, and her sons, did not live in any of the cities of Moab, but in a field; either because the Moabites would not suffer them to dwell in their cities, only allowed them to pitch their tents in their fields; or they chose to dwell there, that they might as much as possible avoid conversation with them, and be preserved from their idolatry, and other corruptions:

and her two daughters in law with her; who, out of respect to her, accompanied her some part of the way, as relations and friends usually did:

and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah; they went along with her to the border of the land of Judah, in her return thither; for returning can only be said of her with any propriety, because her two daughters had never been there; that was not the country from whence they came, and therefore could not be said to return thither.

Ruth 1:8

Ver. 8. And Naomi said to her two daughters in law,.... When they were come, as it is very probable, to the utmost limits of the land of Moab, and to the borders of the land of Israel:

go, return each unto her mother's house: the mother's house is mentioned, and not the father's, not because they had no father living; for it is certain Ruth had a father as well as a mother, **Ru 2:11** but because mothers are most affectionate to their daughters, and they most conversant together; and because women in those times had apartments to themselves, and who used to take their daughters to them when become widows; though such was the strong love of those young widows to their mother-in-law, that they chose rather to dwell with her, while she lived in Moab, than with their own mothers:

the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me; that is, with their husbands, who were dead; as the Targum is, that they refused to marry men after their death; or rather it respects their affectionate care of their husbands, and behaviour towards them when living, as well as the respect they showed to their memory, at and since their death; and also their filial duty to her, both before and since; and particularly, as the Targum expresses it, in that they had fed and supported her.

Ruth 1:9

Ver. 9. The Lord grant you,.... Some make a supplement here, the Targum a perfect reward, Aben Ezra an husband; and so Josephus says {c}, she wished them happier marriages than they had with her sons, who were so soon taken from them; but a supplement seems needless, for what follows is connected with the wish, and contains the sum of it:

that you may find rest; each of you:

in the house of her husband; that is, that they might each of them be blessed with a good husband, with whom they might live free from brawls and contentions, as well as from the distressing cares of life, having husbands to provide all things necessary for them, and so from all the sorrows and distresses of a widowhood estate:

then she kissed them; in token of her affection for them, and in order to part with them; it being usual then as now for relations and friends to kiss at parting:

and they lifted up their voice and wept; to think they must part, and never see one another more; their passions worked vehemently, and broke out in sobs, and sighs, and tears, and loud crying.

{c} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 1.

Ruth 1:10

Ver. 10. And they said unto her,.... When they had eased themselves in cries and tears, and had recovered their speech:

surely we will return with thee unto thy people; to be proselyted, as the

Targum; not only to dwell with them, but to worship with them.

Ruth 1:11

Ver. 11. And Naomi said, turn again, my daughters,.... Supposing this resolution of theirs only arose from a natural affection, and not from any love to the God or people of Israel; at least doubting whether it was so or not, and willing to try whether anyone, or both of them, were really from a principle of religion inclined to go with her; and desirous that they would thoroughly consider what they did, lest they should repent and apostatize, and bring a reproach upon the true religion:

why will ye go with me? what reason can you give? this she said in order to get out of them if there was any real inclination in them to the true worship and service of God; though she keeps out that from her own questions put to them as follows, that it might come purely from themselves:

are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? is there any likelihood that I should ever have any sons to be instead of husbands, or really husbands to you? can it be thought that at my age, supposing I had an husband, or an husband's brother to marry me, that there is in me a natural power of conceiving and bearing children? this therefore can surely be no inducement to you to go along with me; for some, as Jarchi, think she refers to the law of a husband's brother marrying his widow, and raising up seed to him, which was known among the Gentiles before it was given to Israel; see Ge 38:8, to which Aben Ezra rightly objects, that that law respects a brother by the father's side, and not by the mother's only; to which may be added, that this law was not binding on a brother unborn, but on one that was living before the death of his brother; besides if this law had been in her mind, it would rather have furnished out an encouraging reason them to go with her, since there were kinsmen of her sons, to whom they might be married, as one of them afterwards was.

Ruth 1:12

Ver. 12. Turn again, my daughters, go your way,.... This she repeated still to try their affections to her, and especially whether there was any real love to the God of Israel, his people, and worship, but still proceeds upon the same topic:

for I am too old to have an husband; and can never think of marrying again on account of age, nor can you surely ever think I should, at these years I am now arrived to:

if I should say I have hope; of marrying, and bearing children; suppose that:

if I should have a husband also tonight; be married to a man directly, suppose that:

and should also bear sons; conceive and bear, not female but male children, allow that; all which are mere suppositions, and, could they be admitted, would not furnish out any reason why you should be desirous of going with me.

Ruth 1:13

Ver. 13. Would you tarry for them till they were grown?.... It is not to be thought that they would tarry till she was married and had children, and then till these infants were grown up to men's estate, and be marriageable; for though Tamar tarried for Shelah, yet he was born, and of some years of age, though not a grown man, Ge 38:11

would ye stay for them from having husbands? they were young widows, and it was fit they should marry again; and it could not be imagined that they would deny themselves having husbands, in expectation of any sons of her's:

nay, my daughters; I am well satisfied you will never tarry for them, nor deprive yourselves of such a benefit; it is unreasonable to suppose it:

for it grieveth me much for your sakes; that she could be of no manner of service to them, either to give them husbands, or to support and maintain them, should they go with her; or "I have exceedingly more bitterness than you" {d}; her condition and circumstances were much worse than theirs; for though they had lost their husbands, she had lost both husband and children: or it was more bitter and grievous to her to be separated from them, than it was for them to be separated from her; her affection to them was as strong, or stronger than theirs to her; or they had friends in their own country that would be kind to them, but as for her, she was in deep poverty and distress, and when she came into her own country, knew not that she had any friends left to take any notice of her:

that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me; in taking away her husband and children, and reducing her to a low estate, penniless and friendless; so poor, as it appears, that her daughter-in-law, when come to the land of Canaan, was obliged to glean for the livelihood of them both, as in the next chapter.

{d} Mkm dam yl rm "amaritudo mihi (est) valde prae nobis", Montanus, Rambachius; so Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius.

Ruth 1:14

Ver. 14. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again,.... Not being able to bear the thought of parting, or that they must be obliged to it:

and Orpah kissed her mother in law; gave her the parting kiss, as the Jews {e} call it; and which was used by other people {f}; but not without affection to her, and took her leave of her, as her kiss testified, since it must be so; and being moved by her reasons, and having a greater inclination to her own country than Ruth had; of the kiss at parting, see Ge 31:28

but Ruth clave unto her; hung about her, would not part from her, but cleaved unto her in body and mind; forsaking her own people, and her father's house; neither the thought of them, nor of her native country, nor of not having an husband, or any likelihood of it, nor of poverty and distress, had any manner of influence upon her, but determined she was to go and abide with her.

{e} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 70. fol. 62. 4. Shemot, sect. 5. fol. 94. 4. {f} "---- discedens oscula nulla dedi". Ovid. ep. 3. ver. 14.

Ruth 1:15

Ver. 15. And she said,.... That is, Naomi to Ruth, after Orpah was gone:

behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods; meaning Orpah, who was the wife of her husband's brother, as the word used signifies; she was not only on the road turning back to her own country and people, but to the gods thereof, Baalpeor or Priapus, and Chemosh, Nu 21:29 from whence Aben Ezra concludes, that she had been a proselyte to the true religion, and had renounced the gods of her nation, and retained the same profession while her husband lived, and unto this time, and now apostatized, since she is said to go back to her gods; and in this he is followed by some Christian interpreters {g}, and not without reason:

return thou after thy sister in law: this she said, not that in good earnest she desired her to return, at least to her former religion, only relates, though not as approving of, the conduct of her sister, rather as upbraiding it; but to try her sincerity and steadfastness, when such an instance and example was before her.

{g} Clericus & Rambachius.

Ruth 1:16

Ver. 16. And Ruth said, entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee,.... Do not make use of any arguments to persuade me to go back: or "do not meet me", or "be against me" {h}; do not meet me with objections, or be in my way, or an hinderance to me, in going along with thee; do not be against it, for to be against that was to be against her inclination, desires, and resolutions, and against her interest:

for whither thou goest I will go: let the country she was going to be what it would, though unknown to her, and though she should never see her own country any more:

and where thou lodgest I will lodge; though in ever so mean a cottage, or under the open air:

thy people shall be my people; whom I shall choose to dwell among, and converse with; whose religion, laws, and customs she should readily comply with, having heard much of them, their wisdom, goodness, and piety, of which she had a specimen and an example in Naomi, and by whom she judged of the rest:

and thy God my God; not Chemosh, nor Baalpeor, nor other gods of the Moabites, be they what they will, but Jehovah, the God of Naomi, and of the people of Israel. So a soul that is truly brought to Christ affectionately loves him, and heartily cleaves unto him, resolves in the strength of divine grace to follow him, the Lamb, whithersoever he goes or directs; and is desirous to have communion with none but him, and that he also would not be as a wayfaring man, that tarries but a night; his people are the excellent of the earth, whom to converse with is all his delight and pleasure; and Christ's God is his God, and his Father is his Father: and, in a word, he determines to have no other Saviour but him, and to walk in all his commands and ordinances.

{h} yb yegpt le "ne occurras mihi", Vatablus, Rambachius; "ne obstes me", Tigurine version; "ne adverseris mihi", V. L. Drusius; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Ruth 1:17

Ver. 17. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried,.... She was determined to abide with her unto death, and not only was desirous to die as she did, but where she should die; in the same country, cottage, and bed, and be laid in the same grave, in hope of rising together at the resurrection of the just; having no regard at all to the sepulchres of her fathers, which people in all ages and countries have been fond of being laid in, as an honour and happiness. So with the Greeks and Romans, not only relations, but intimate friends, and such as had a strong affection for each other, were sometimes buried in the same grave, as Crates and Polemon {i}, Paris and Oenome {k}, and others {l}; see **Ga 2:20**,

the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me; this is the form of oath she used for confirmation of what she had said, and to put an end to the debate on this subject; what she imprecates upon herself is not expressed, should she otherwise do than what she swears to; leaving Naomi to supply it in her own mind, and as being what was not fit to be named, and the greatest evil that could be thought to befall a perjured person.

{i} La‰rt. in Vita Cratet. {k} Strabo. Geograph. l. 13. p. 410. {l} Vid. Kirchman. de Funer. Roman. l. 3. c. 14. p. 433.

Ruth 1:18

Ver. 18. When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her,.... That she was strong in her resolutions, and steadfast in her determinations not to go back to her own country, but to go forward with her; and nothing could move her from the firm purpose of her mind, which was what Naomi wanted to make trial of:

then she left speaking unto her: that is, upon that head of returning home; otherwise, no doubt, upon this a close, comfortable, religious conversation ensued, which made their journey the more pleasant and agreeable.

Ruth 1:19

Ver. 19. So they two went until they came to Bethlehem,.... Went on their way directly till they came to it, without lingering or staying by the way, at least not unnecessarily, and not for any time; and they kept together, though Ruth was a younger woman, and could have gone faster, yet she kept company with her ancient mother, and was no doubt very much edified and instructed by her pious conversation; and it seems that they were alone, only they two; for as they had no camels nor asses to ride on, but were obliged to travel on foot, so they had no servants to wait upon them, and assist them in their journey, such were their mean circumstances:

and it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem; had entered the city, and were seen by some that formerly had known Naomi, or at least to whom she made herself known:

that all the city was moved about them; the news of their arrival was soon spread throughout the place, and the whole city rang of it; so the Septuagint version, "all the city sounded"; it was all the talk every where, it was in everybody's mouth, that Naomi, who had been so long out of the land, and thought to be dead, and it was not expected she would never return again, was now come; and this drew a great concourse of people in a tumultuous manner, as the word signifies, to see her; and as it may denote a corporeal motion of them, so the inward moving and working of their passions about her; some having pity and compassion on her to see such a change in her person and circumstances; others treating her with scorn and contempt, and upbraiding her for leaving her native place, and not content to share the common affliction of her people, intimating that she was rightly treated for going out of the land at such a time into a strange country; and others were glad to see their old neighbour again, who had always behaved well among them; so the Syriac and Arabic versions, "all the city rejoiced"; many no doubt knew her not, and would be asking questions about her, and others answering them, which is commonly the case of a crowd of people on such an occasion:

and they said, is this Naomi? that is, the women of the place said so, for the word is feminine; and perhaps they were chiefly women that gathered about her, and put this question in a way of admiration; is this Naomi that was so beautiful, and used to look so pleasant and comely, and now so wrinkled and sorrowful, who used to dress so well, and now in so mean an habit! that used to be attended with maidens to wait on her, and now alone! for, as Aben Ezra observes, this shows that Elimelech and Naomi were great personages in Bethlehem formerly, people of rank and figure, or otherwise there would not have been such a concourse of people upon her coming, and such inquiries made and questions put, had she been formerly a poor woman.

Ruth 1:20

Ver. 20. And she said, call me not Naomi, call me Mara,.... The one signifying "prosperity", according to Josephus {m}, and the other "grief"; but he is not always correct in his interpretation of Hebrew words, or to be depended on; by this indeed her different states are well enough expressed, and he rightly observes, that she might more justly be called the one than the other; but the words signify, the one "sweet" and pleasant, and the other "bitter", see Ex 15:23, and the reason she gives confirms it:

for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me; had wrote bitter things against her, brought bitter afflictions on her, which were very disagreeable to the flesh, as the loss of her husband, her children, and her substance; see **Lam 3:15**.

{m} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 2.

Ruth 1:21

Ver. 21. I went out full,.... Of my husband and children, as the Targum; of children and riches, as Aben Ezra and Jarchi; wherefore some Jewish writers blame her and her husband for going abroad at such a time, and ascribe it to a covetous disposition, and an unwillingness to relieve the poor that came to them in their distress, and therefore got out of the way of them, on account of which they were punished, so Jarchi on **Ru 1:1**, see **Jud 2:15** but this is said without any just cause or reason that appears:

and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: deprived of her husband, children, and substance; she acknowledges the hand of God in it, and seems not to murmur at it, but to submit to it quietly, and bear it patiently:

why then call ye me Naomi; when there is nothing pleasant and agreeable in me, nor in my circumstances:

seeing the Almighty hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? had bore witness that that was not a name suitable for her; or that she had sinned, and had not done what was well pleasing in his sight, as appeared by his afflicting her; she seemed therefore to be humbled under a sense of sin, and to consider afflictions as coming from the Lord on account of it, and submitted to his sovereign will; the affliction she means was the loss of her husband, children, and substance; see Job 10:17.

Ruth 1:22

Ver. 2. So Naomi returned,.... Aben, Ezra thinks this is to be understood of her returning at another time; but it is only an observation of the writer of this history, to excite the attention of the reader to this remarkable event, and particularly to what follows:

and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter in law with her, which returned out of the country of Moab; to Bethlehem, the birth place of the Messiah, and who was to spring from her a Gentile; and which, that it might be the more carefully remarked, she is called a Moabitess, and said to return out of the country of Moab:

and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest; which began on the second day of the feast of unleavened bread, on the "sixteenth" of Nisan, which answers to our March, and part of April, when they offered the sheaf of the firstfruits to the Lord, and then, and not till then, might they begin their harvest, See Gill on "Le 23:10", See Gill on "Le 23:14": hence the Targum here is,

"they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the day of the passover, and on that day the children of Israel began to reap the wave sheaf, which was of barley."

So the Egyptians and Phoenicians, near neighbours of the Jews, went about cutting down their barley as soon as the cuckoo was heard, which was the same time of the year; hence the comedian {n} calls that bird the king of Egypt and Phoenicia. This circumstance is observed for the sake of the following account in the next chapter.

{n} Aristoph. in Avibus, p. 565.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Ruth 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO RUTH 2

In this chapter we have an account of Ruth's gleaning corn in the fields of Boaz, a relation of Naomi, **Ru 2:1**, and of Boaz coming to his reapers, whom he saluted in a very kind manner; and observing a woman gleaning after them, inquired of them who she was, and they informed him, **Ru 2:4**, upon which he addressed himself to her, and gave her leave to glean in his field, and desired her to go nowhere else, and bid her eat and drink with his servants, **Ru 2:8** and gave directions to his servants to let her glean, and to let fall some of the handfuls on purpose, that she might gather them up, **Ru 2:15** and then an account is given of her returning to her mother-in-law with her gleanings, to whom she related where she had gleaned, who was owner of the field, and what he had said to her, upon which Naomi gave her advice, **Ru 2:18**.

Ver. 1. And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's,.... That was her kinsman by her husband's side, who now lived at Bethlehem; and yet it does not appear that Naomi made any application to him for assistance in her circumstances, though well known to her, as the word used signifies; which might arise from her modesty, and being loath to be troublesome to him, especially as he was a relation, not of her own family, but of her husband's; but, what is more strange, that this kinsman had taken no notice of her, nor sent to her, who yet was a very generous and liberal man, and had knowledge of her coming, for he had heard of the character of Ruth, **Ru 2:11** but perhaps he was not acquainted with their indigent circumstances:

a mighty man of wealth; a man of great wealth and riches, and of great power and authority, which riches give and raise a man to, and also of great virtue and honour, all which the word "wealth" signifies; to which may be added the paraphrase the Targumist gives, that he was mighty in the law; in the Scriptures, in the word of God, a truly religious man, which completes his character:

of the family of Elimelech; the husband of Naomi; some say that his father was Elimelech's brother, See Gill on "Ru 2:2",

and his name was Boaz; which signifies, "in him is strength", strength of riches, power, virtue, and grace; it is the name of one of the pillars in Solomon's temple, so called from its strength. This man is commonly said by the Jews to be the same with Ibzan, a judge of Israel, Jud 12:8: he was the grandson of Nahshon, prince of the tribe of Judah, who first offered at the dedication of the altar, **Nu 7:12**, his father's name was Salmon, and his mother was Rahab, the harlot of Jericho, **Mt 1:5**. A particular account is given of this man, because he, with Ruth, makes the principal part of the following history.

Ruth 2:2

Ver. 2. And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi,.... After they had been some little time at Bethlehem, and not long; for they came at the beginning of barley harvest, and as yet it was not over, nor perhaps for some time after this; and knowing and considering the circumstances they were in, and unwilling to live an idle life, and ready to do any thing for the support of her life, and of her ancient mother-in-law; which was very commendable, and showed her to be an industrious virtuous woman: she addressed her, and said:

let me now go to the field; she did not choose to go any where, nor do anything, without her advice and consent; so dutiful and obedient was she to her, and so high an opinion had she of her wisdom and goodness; she desired to go to the field which belonged to Bethlehem, which seems to have been an open field, not enclosed, where each inhabitant had his part, as Boaz, **Ru 2:3** though Jarchi interprets it of one of the fields of the men of the city; hither she asked leave to go, not with any ill intent, nor was she in any danger of being exposed, since it being harvest time the field was full of people: her end in going thither is expressed in the next clause,

and glean ears of corn after him, in whose sight I shall find grace; or "in" or "among the ears of corn" {o}; between the ears of corn bound up into sheaves, and there pick up the loose ears that were dropped and left. This she proposed to do with the leave of the owner of the field, or of the reapers, whom she followed; she might be ignorant that it was allowed by the law of God that widows and strangers might glean in the field, Le 19:9 or if she had been acquainted with it by Naomi, which is not improbable, such was her modesty and humility, that she did not choose to make use of this privilege without leave; lest, as Jarchi says, she should be chided or reproved, and it is certain she did entreat the favour to glean, **Ru 2:7**

and she said unto her, go, my daughter; which shows the necessitous circumstances Naomi was in; though perhaps she might give this leave and direction under an impulse of the Spirit of God, in order to bring about an event of the greatest moment and importance, whereby she became the ancestor of our blessed Lord.

{o} Mylbvb en toiv stacusi, Sept. "in spicis", Montanus, Drusius, Piscator; "inter spicas", De Dieu, Rambachius.

Ruth 2:3

Ver. 3. And she went, and came,.... That is, she went out of the house where she was, and out of the city, and came into the field; though, according to the Midrash {p}, she marked the ways as she went, before she entered into the field, and then came back to the city to observe the marks and signs she made, that she might not mistake the way, and might know how to come back again:

and gleaned in the field after the reapers; when they had cut down and bound up the corn, what fell and was left she picked up, having first asked leave so to do:

and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech; the providence of God so ordering and directing it; for though it was hap and chance to her, and what some people call good luck, it was according to the purpose, and by the providence and direction of God that she came to the reapers in that part of the field Boaz, a near kinsman of her father-in-law, was owner of, and asked leave of them to glean and follow them.

{p} Midrash Ruth, fol. 31. 4. Vid. Jarchi & Alshech in loc.

Ruth 2:4

Ver. 4. And, behold, Boaz came to Bethlehem,.... Into the field, to see how his workmen went on, and performed their service, and to encourage them in it by his presence, and by his courteous language and behaviour, and to see what provisions were wanting, that he might take care and give orders for the sending of them, it being now near noon, as it may be supposed; and though he was a man of great wealth, he did not think it below him to go into his field, and look after his servants, which was highly commendable in him, and which showed his diligence and industry, as well as his humility. So a king in Homer {q} is represented as among his reapers, with his sceptre in his hand, and cheerful. Pliny {r} relates it, as a saying of the ancients, that the eye of the master is the most fruitful thing in the field; and Aristotle {s} reports, that a Persian being asked what fattened a horse most, replied, the eye of the master; and an African being asked what was the best dung for land, answered, the steps of his master:

and said unto the reapers, the Lord be with you; to give them health, and strength, and industry in their work; the Targum is,

"may the Word of the Lord be your help:"

and they answered him, the Lord bless you; with a good harvest, and good weather to gather it in; and though these salutations were of a civil kind, yet they breathe the true spirit of sincere and undissembled piety, and show the sense that both master and servants had of the providence of God attending the civil affairs of life, without whose help, assistance, and blessing, nothing succeeds well.

{q} Iliad. 18. ver. 556, 557. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 6. {s} De Administrat. Domestic. l. 1. c. 6.

Ruth 2:5

Ver. 5. Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers,.... To direct them their work, what part each was to do, and to see that they did it well; to take care for provisions for them, and to pay them their wages when their work was done. Josephus {t} calls him agrokomov, that had the care of the field, and all things relative to it; the Jews {u} say, he was set over two and forty persons, whom he had the command of:

whose damsel is this? to whom does she belong? of what family is she? whose daughter is she? or whose wife? for he thought, as Aben Ezra notes, that she was another man's wife; the Targum is, of what nation is she? perhaps her dress might be somewhat different from that of the Israelitish women.

{t} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 2. {u} Midrash Ruth, fol. 32. 1.

Ruth 2:6

Ver. 6. And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said,.... Who had taken a great deal of notice of Ruth, and had conversed with her, and so was capable of giving answers to his master's question:

it is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi, out of the country of Moab; perhaps he had not got knowledge of her name, and therefore only describes her by the country from whence she came; and by her coming from thence along with Naomi, when she returned from Moab, with whose name Boaz was well acquainted, and of whose return he had been informed; and perhaps had seen her in person, and even Ruth also, though he might have forgot her; the Targum makes the servant to add, that she was become a proselytess.

Ruth 2:7

Ver. 7. And she said,.... These are the words of the servant continued, who goes on with the account of Ruth, and her conduct, since she had been in the field:

I pray you let me glean, and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: for though by the law of Israel she had a right, as a poor widow and stranger, to glean, yet as the owner of the field, and his servants, by his appointment, under him, might have power of fixing the time when such might glean, and of judging who were the proper persons to be admitted, Ruth in her great modesty and meekness did not choose to enter on this work without leave:

so she came; into the field and gleaned, having obtained leave:

and hath continued even from the morning until now; had been very diligent and industrious in gathering up the loose ears of corn among the sheaves, as she followed the reapers cutting down and binding up the corn in sheaves; she began pretty early in the morning, and had stuck close to it till that time, which may be supposed to be about noon, or pretty near it, for as yet it was not mealtime, **Ru 2:14**. The Septuagint version is therefore very wrong, which reads

"from the morning until the evening,"

for that was not yet come, **Ru 2:17** but

she tarried a little in the house; not that she went home to the city, and stayed a little in the house of Naomi her mother, and then returned again, for she went not home until the evening, **Ru 2:17**, but the meaning of the passage is, that she had been constant and diligent in gleaning all the morning, only a very little time that she was in the house, which was in the field; either a farm house of Boaz adjoining to the field; or rather a cottage or booth, as Aben Ezra interprets it, which was in the field, whither the reapers betook themselves when they ate their meals; or to shelter themselves under the shade of it, as Abendana, from the heat of the sun at noonday; and here Ruth set herself down awhile for a little rest, and ease, and refreshment; and some think she was here when Boaz came, and therefore took the more notice of her.

Ruth 2:8

Ver. 8. Then said Boaz unto Ruth,.... Having heard what the servant said concerning her, he turned himself to her, and addressed her in the following manner:

hearest thou not, my daughter? meaning not what the servant had said, but hereby exciting her to hearken to what he was about to say to her. Noldius {w} takes the particle to signify beseeching and entreating, and renders the words, "hear, I pray thee, my daughter". Some from hence conclude that Boaz was a man in years, and Ruth much younger than he, and therefore calls her his daughter:

go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence; which she might be inclined to, lest she should be thought to be too troublesome to be always in one man's field; but Boaz taking a liking to her, and willing to do her some favour, chose she should not go elsewhere:

but abide here fast by my maidens; not maidens that gleaned also as she did, poor maidens he permitted to glean; or that gleaned for the poor, and much less that gleaned for him; a person so rich and liberal as he was would never employ such for his advantage, and to the detriment of the poor; nor would it be admitted of it being contrary to the law as it should seem, and certain it is to the later traditions of the elders; for it is said {x},

"a man may not hire a workman on this condition, that his son should glean after him; he who does not suffer the poor to glean, or who suffers one and not another, or who helps any one of them, robs the poor."

But these maidens were such, who either gathered the handfuls, cut and laid down by the reapers, and bound them up in sheaves, or else they also reaped, as it seems from the following verse; and it was very probably customary in those times for women to reap, as it is now with us.

{w} Ebr. Concord. part. p. 257. No. 1150. {x} Misnah Peah, c. 5. sect. 6.

Ruth **2:9**

Ver. 9. Let thine eyes be upon the field that they do reap, and go thou after them,.... And gather up the loose ears of corn dropped and left by them:

have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? do her no hurt, or offer any incivility or rudeness to her, or even play any wanton tricks with her, as is too common with young persons in the fields at harvest time. This charge he now gave in her hearing, or however suggests that he would, and therefore she might depend upon it she should have no molestation nor any affront given her:

and when thou art athirst: as at such a season of the year, and in the field at such work, and in those hot countries, was frequently the case:

go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn; which they had fetched from wells and fountains in or near the city, and had put into bottles, pitchers, &c. for the use of the reapers and gatherers; we read of the well of Bethlehem, 2Sa 23:15 now she is ordered to go to these vessels, and drink when she pleased, without asking leave of any; and Boaz no doubt gave it in charge to his young men not to hinder her.

Ruth **2:10**

Ver. 10. Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,.... In great humility, and under a deep sense of the favour done her, and as showing the greatest respect, in a civil manner, she was capable of:

and said unto him, why have I found grace in thine eyes: how is it that one so mean and unworthy should have such favour shown?

that thou shouldest take knowledge of me; take such notice of her, show such affection to her, and bestow such kindness on her:

seeing I am a stranger? not a citizen of Bethlehem, nor indeed one of the commonwealth of Israel; but, as the Targum,

"of a strange people, of the daughters of Moab, and of a people who were not fit and worthy to enter into the congregation of the Lord."

Ruth 2:11

Ver. 11. And Boaz answered and said unto her,.... Alshech thinks, that he lift up his voice that all that stood by might hear:

it hath fully been showed me; either by Naomi, or rather by some persons of Boaz's Naomi and reacquaintance, that had conversed with Naomi and related to Boaz what passed between them, by which he was fully informed of the following things mentioned by him; though the above writer supposes, that it was showed him by the Holy Ghost:

all that thou hast done to thy mother in law since the death of thine husband; how that, instead of going home to her father and mother, she continued with her; how tenderly she used her; what strong expressions of love she had made unto her; what care she had taken of her, and how she had fed and nourished her, as the Targum, and now was gleaning for her support, as well as her own:

and how thou hast left thy father and mother; in a literal sense, to go along with her mother-in-law, to assist her in her journey, and see her safe to the end of it: and in a figurative sense her idol gods, as in **Jer 2:27** so the Midrash {y}:

and the land of thy nativity; the land of Moab, where she was born, and where her kindred, relations, and friends lived, dear and engaging to her:

and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore; but by hearsay, and what she learned of them from her husband and mother-in-law, even the people of Israel; to whom she was come to be a proselyte, and dwell among them, as the Targum.

{y} Midrash Ruth, fol. 32. 3.

Ruth 2:12

Ver. 12. The Lord recompence thy work,.... The Targum adds, in this world; meaning the kind offices she had performed, and the good service she had done to her mother-in-law; nor is God unrighteous to forget the work and labour of love, which is shown by children to their parents; and though such works are not in themselves meritorious of any blessing from God here or hereafter, yet he is pleased of his own grace to recompence them, and return the good into their bosom manifold, it being acceptable in his sight:

and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel; the Targum adds, in the world to come; which is called the reward of the inheritance, **Col 3:24** a reward not of debt, but of grace; and that will be a full one indeed, fulness of joy, peace, and happiness, an abundance of good things not to be conceived of, see **2Jo 1:8**,

under whose wings thou art come to trust; whom she professed to be her God, and whom she determined to serve and worship; whose grace and favour she expected, and to whose care and protection she committed herself: the allusion is either to fowls, which cover their young with their wings, and thereby keep them warm and comfortable, and shelter and protect them, see Ps 36:7 or to the wings of the cherubim overshadowing the mercy seat, Ex 25:20 and the phrase is now adopted by the Jews to express proselytism; and so the Targum here,

"thou art come to be proselyted, and to be hid under the wings of the Shechinah of his glory,"

or his glorious Shechinah.

Ruth 2:13

Ver. 13. Then she said, let me find favour in thy sight, my lord,.... Or rather, since she had found favour in his sight already: the words are to be considered, not as a wish for it, but as acknowledging it, and expressing her faith and confidence, that she should for time to come find favour in his sight, and have other instances of it; for so the words may be rendered, "I shall find favour" {z}, for which she gives the following reasons:

for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid; had spoken in her commendation, and wished her all happiness here and hereafter; said kind and comfortable words to her, to her very heart, as in Isa 40:2 which were cheering, refreshing, and reviving to her:

though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens; not worthy to be one of them, or to be ranked with them, being meaner than the meanest of them, a poor widow, and a Moabitish woman; the Septuagint and Syriac versions leave out the negative particle, and read, "I shall be as one of thine handmaids".

{z} Nx auma "inveniam gratiam", Pagninus, Montanus.

Ruth 2:14

Ver. 14. And Boaz said, at mealtime come thou hither,.... This looks as if she was now in the booth, or house in the field, where the reapers used to retire to eat their food, or rest themselves, or take shelter from the heat of the sun. This meal was very likely dinner, the time of which was not yet come, but would soon, and to which Boaz invited Ruth:

and eat of the bread; his servants did, that is, partake of the provisions they should have; bread being put for all. So Homer {a} speaks of a large ox slain for such a meal for the reapers, besides the "polenta" afterwards mentioned, which the women prepared, and who uses the same word for it the Septuagint does here: "to dip thy morsel in the vinegar"; which was used because of the heat of the season, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra remark, for cooling and refreshment; and such virtues Pliny {b} ascribes to vinegar, as being refreshing to the spirits, binding and bracing the nerves, and very corroborating and strengthening; and it is at this day used in Italy, it is said, in harvest time, when it is hot; where they also use wine mixed with vinegar and water, as Lavater says {c}; and who from a learned physician {d} observes, that reapers, instead of wine, use vinegar mixed with a great deal of water, which they call household wine, allayed with water; to which if oil and bread be put, it makes a cooling meal, good for workmen and travellers in the heat of the sun; and the Targum calls it pottage boiled in vinegar. The Romans had an "embamma", or sauce, made of vinegar, in which they dipped their food {e}; and Theocritus {f} makes mention of vinegar as used by reapers: in the Syriac version it is bread dipped in milk; and in the Arabic version milk poured upon it. The Midrash {g} gives an allegorical sense of these words, and applies them to the Messiah and his kingdom, and interprets the bread of the bread of the kingdom, and the vinegar of the chastisements and afflictions of the Messiah, as it is said, "he was wounded for our transgressions", &c. Isa 53:5 which, by the way, is a concession that the prophecy in that chapter relates to him:

and she sat beside the reapers; the women reapers; she did not sit along with them, or in thee midst of them, in the row with them, as ranking with them, but on one side of them, which was an instance of her great modesty:

and he reached her parched corn; either Boaz himself, or he that was set over the reapers. This parched corn seems to be the new barley they were reaping, which they fried in a pan and ate. Galen says {h}, the parched corn which is best is made of new barley moderately dried and parched; and that it was the custom of some to drink the same with new sweet wine, or wine mixed with honey, in the summertime, before they went into the bath, who say they feel themselves by this drink freed from thirst. But this seems to be a kind of food, what is sometimes called "polenta", which is barley flour dried at the fire, and fried after it hath been soaking in water one night; so Lavater says, they dry the barley, having been soaked one night in water, the next day they dry it, and then grind it in mills; some dress new barley beaten out of green ears, and make it while moist into balls, and being cleansed, grind it; and thus dressed with twenty pound of barley, they put three pound of linseed, half a pound of coriander seed, and of salt, all being dried before, are mingled in a mill; and if to be kept, are put into new earthen vessels with the meal and bran: but a later writer {i} takes this "Kali", rendered parched corn, not to be anyone certain species, but something made of corn and pulse, as lentiles, beans, &c. and especially fried or parched vetches, of all which together was this kali or pulse; and he refutes the notion of some, who take it to be "coffee", since that has only been in use since the beginning of the sixteenth century, and at first in Arabia; and is not of the kind of pulse, but is the fruit of a certain tree, of which a liquor is made, something to drink; whereas this was food, and was ate, as follows, see 2Sa 17:28

and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left; she had such a plentiful share given her, that she had more than she could eat, and was obliged to leave some, and which it seems she carried home to her mother-in-law, **Ru 2:18**.

{a} Iliad. 18. ver. 559, 560. {b} Nat. Hist. l. 23. c. 1. {c} In loc. {d} Christophor. "a Vega de arte Medendi", l. 2. apud ib. {e} Salmuth in Pancirol, par. 2. tit. 2. p. 83. {f} Idyll, 10. ver. 13. {g} Melrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2. {h} De Aliment. Facult. l. 1. apud Lavater. in loc. {i} Neumann. apud Rambachium in loc.

Ruth 2:15

Ver. 15. And when she was risen up to glean,.... After she had ate sufficiently, and refreshed herself, she rose up from her seat to go into the field and glean again; which shows her industry:

Boaz commanded his young men; the reapers, or who gathered the handfuls, and bound them up in sheaves:

saying, let her glean even among the sheaves; this she had requested of the reapers when she first came into the field, and it was granted her, **Ru 2:7** but this, as it was granted by Boaz himself, so was still a greater favour; and there is some difference in the expression, for it may be rendered here, "among those sheaves" {h}, pointing to a particular spot where might be the best ears of corn, and where more of them had fallen:

and reproach her not; as not with her being a poor woman, a widow, a Moabitish woman, so neither with being a thief, or taking such corn she should not, or gleaning where she ought not.

{h} Myrmeh Nyb "inter ipsos manipulos", Tigurine version, Rambachius.

Ruth 2:16

Ver. 16. And let fall some of the handfuls on purpose for her,.... That is, when they had reaped an handful, instead of laying it in its proper order, to be taken up by those that gathered after them, or by themselves, in order to be bound up in sheaves, scatter it about, or let it fall where they reaped it:

and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not for taking them, as if she did a wrong thing.

Ruth **2:17**

Ver. 17. So she gleaned in the field until even,.... An instance of her great diligence and industry, attending to this mean employment constantly from morning tonight:

and beat out that she had gleaned: she did not bind up her gleanings in a bundle, and carry it home on her head, as gleaners with us do, but she beat it out with a staff in the field, where she gleaned it, and winnowed it, very probably in the threshingfloor of Boaz; by which means what she had gleaned was brought into a lesser size and weight, and was a lighter burden to carry home:

and it was an ephah of barley; or three seahs of barley, as the Targum; which, according to Bishop Cumberland {i}, was six gallons, and three pints, and three solid inches: an omer is said to be the tenth part of an ephah, and, made into bread, was as much as a man could eat in one day, Ex 16:16, so that Ruth got enough in one day, for herself and her mother-in-law, which would last five days at least. This was a great deal for one woman to pick up, ear by ear, in one day; and must be accounted for, not only by her diligence and industry, but by the favour shown her by the reapers, under the direction of Boaz, who suffered her to glean among the sheaves, and let fall handfuls for her to pick up.

{i} Of Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 3. p. 64.

Ruth **2:18**

Ver. 18. And she took it up,.... The ephah of barley, into her arms, or on her shoulders:

and went into the city; the city of Bethlehem;

and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: she set it down before her, and she looked at it with admiration, that she should glean so much in one day:

and she brought forth; not Naomi, as Josephus {k} represents it, who understood it as if she brought forth some food her neighbours had brought her, part of which she kept for Ruth, though he takes it in the other sense also; but the meaning is, that Ruth brought forth out of a scrip, as the Targum adds; besides the ephah of barley she set before her, she brought some victuals out of a bag:

and gave to her, that she had reserved after she was sufficed; not that she ate of the barley, and her mother-in-law also; and then she gave her the rest to lay up against another time, as some interpret it; but the remainder of the food which Boaz gave her at dinner time, which she could not eat, **Ru 2:14** she reserved for her mother, and now gave it to her; an instance of that piety commended by the apostle, **1Ti 5:4**.

{k} Antiqu l. 5. c. 9. sect. 2.

Ruth 2:19

Ver. 19. And her mother in law said unto her, where hast thou gleaned today?.... In what part of the field of Bethlehem? or on whose land, that she had gleaned so much? not that she suspected that she had got it in an illicit manner, but supposed she had been directed by the providence of God to a spot of ground where there was good gleaning; of that she had met with some hand, that had dropped ears of corn plentifully in her favour:

and where wroughtest thou? which is the same question repeated in other words, and shows that gleaning is a work, and a hard work too, closely followed, to be stooping and picking up ears of corn a whole day together:

blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee: she knew, by the quantity of corn she brought home, that she must have had kindness shown her by somebody; and especially she knew it by the food she brought home, and therefore pronounced the man blessed, or wished him happiness, before she knew who he was; though perhaps she might guess at him, or conjecture in her mind who it was that had taken notice of her:

and she showed her mother in law with whom she had wrought: that is, with whose reapers, men and maidens, she had wrought, whom she followed in gleaning, they working in one sort of work, and she in another, yet in the same field:

the man's name with whom I wrought today is Boaz; that is, in whose field, and with whose servants, she wrought; for Boaz wrought not himself, unless this can be understood of her eating and drinking with him; but the other sense is best.

Ruth 2:20

Ver. 20. And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, blessed be he of the Lord,.... Or the Lord bless him with all kind of blessings, temporal and spiritual; and as he has blessed him already, may he be blessed more and more:

who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead; he had been kind to Elimelech and to his sons, who were now dead, and he continued his kindness to the reliefs of them, Naomi and Ruth, who were living, and was kind to them for the sake of the dead; and showing kindness to them expressed his respect to the memory of the dead:

and Naomi said unto her; continued her speech to her, and added to what she had said:

the man is near of kin to us; a near relation of ours, meaning by her husband's side: yea,

one of our next kinsmen; the nearest we have, there was but one nearer than he: the word for kinsman here is "Goel", a redeemer; for to such who were in the degree of kindred as Boaz was, and he that was nearer still than he to them, belonged the right of redemption, and therefore were called by the name of "Goel", a redeemer, as Ben Melech observes; they had a right to avenge the blood of the slain, to redeem their houses and possessions, if sold or mortgaged, and their persons by marrying them, and raising up seed to a deceased brother, or kinsman.

Ruth 2:21

Ver. 21. And Ruth the Moabitess said, he said unto me also,.... Besides the favours he has shown me already, he has given me reason to expect more, for he has given me this strict order:

thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest; both barley harvest and wheat harvest; his will was, that she kept following them, and gleaned after them, as long as both harvests lasted. The Septuagint version is, "with my maidens", and which agrees with **Ru 2:8**, where the order of Boaz is expressed, and with the instructions of Naomi in the next verse, who so understood it; but if we understand it of young men here, there is no contradiction; for both young men and maidens wrought together in the same field, either in reaping or binding up; so that if she kept fast by the one, she also would do the same by the other.

Ruth 2:22

Ver. 22. And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law,.... Observing the charge Boaz had given her, she thought fit to advise her upon it:

it is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens; that is, go out in the morning with them, set out from Bethlehem when they went to work, and so continue with them all the day:

that they meet thee not in any other field; the meaning is, either that men might not meet her in another field alone, or rush upon her at once and unawares, and reproach her, or beat her, or indeed force her; or else that the servants of Boaz might not meet her, or see her in another field, and report it to their master, who would be offended at her; and take it as a slight of his kindness to her; which latter seems rather to be the sense.

Ruth 2:23

Ver. 23. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean,.... Accepting the kindness of Boaz, and attending to the advice of her mother-in-law, as well as using all diligence to get a livelihood for her mother and herself; in which she was a wonderful instance of dutiful affection, humility, and industry: and so she continued

unto the end of barley harvest, and of wheat harvest; which latter began at

Pentecost, as the former did at the passover; and, according to the Midrash {l}, from the beginning of the one, to the end of the other, were three months; though it may be, they were gathered in sooner: indeed from the passover to Pentecost were seven weeks, which was the difference between the beginning of one harvest, and the beginning of the other:

and dwelt with her mother in law; which is to be understood either of her coming home at night, after she had been gleaning all day, and lodging with her mother-in-law, which was her constant custom during both harvests; or that after the harvests were ended, she continued to dwell with her mother-in-law; which seems to be added for the sake of carrying on the history in the following chapter.

{l} Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. so Alshech in loc.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Ruth 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO RUTH 3

In this chapter we have a proposal of Naomi to Ruth, with advice and directions to get Boaz for her husband, **Ru 2:1**. Ruth's obedience to the instructions she gave her, **Ru 2:5**, the notice Boaz took of her, and the conversation that passed between them, **Ru 2:8** the dismission of her in the morning to her mother-in-law with a gift, to whom she returned, and acquainted her with what had passed, **Ru 2:14**.

Ver. 1. Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her,.... After the harvests were over, and so gleaning likewise; when Naomi and Ruth were together alone in their apartment, the mother addressed the daughter after this manner:

my daughter, shall I not seek for thee, that it may be well with thee? that is, in the house of an husband, as in **Ru 1:9** her meaning is, to seek out for an husband for her, that she might have an house of her own to rest in, and an husband to provide her; that so she might be free from such toil and labour she had been lately exercised in, and enjoy much ease and comfort, and all outward happiness and prosperity in a marriage state with a good husband. This interrogation carries in it the force of a strong affirmation, may suggest that she judged it to be her duty, and that she was determined to seek out such a rest for her; and the Targum makes her way of speaking stronger still, for that is,

"by an oath I will not rest, until the time that I have sought a rest for thee."

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Ver. 2. And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast?.... He was, and her question supposes and concludes it, and which she observes, that Ruth might take notice of it, and encouragement from it; and the rather, since she had been admitted into the company and conversation of his maidens; and which was more, though not mentioned, into the company and conversation of himself, and whom Ruth knew full well; and who being, Naomi thought, the next nearest kinsman, and obliged by the law in De 25:5 to marry Ruth, with which view his relation is mentioned:

behold, he winnoweth barley tonight in the threshingfloor; which afforded a fit opportunity of meeting with him, being at night, and out of the city, from his own house, and alone, and after a feast for his reapers and threshers of corn, seems, from **Ru 2:7** as it was usual to have threshingfloors in an open place without the city, so to winnow at them, whereby the chaff was more easily separated from the corn, and that, in the evening, when in those countries there were the strongest breezes of wind to carry it off; hence the Targum here has it,

"behold, he is winnowing the barley floor with the wind, which is in the night."

For before the invention and use of fans in winnowing, it was only done by the wind carrying off the chaff, as the oxen trod the corn, for it was done in the threshingfloor, as here: hence Hesiod {m} advises that the threshingfloors should be cwrw en euaei, in a place exposed to wind; and so Varro {n} observes, the floor should be in the higher part of the field, that the wind might blow through it; to this manner of winnowing Virgil {o} has respect. Nor was it unusual for great personages, owners of farms and fields, to attend and overlook such service. Pliny {p} reports, that Sextus Pomponius, father of the praetor and prince of the hither Spain, presided over the winnowing of his reapers; so Gideon, another judge Israel, was found threshing wheat, **Jud 6:11**.

{m} Opera & Dies, l. 2. ver. 221. {n} De re Rustica, l. 1. c. 41. {o} "Cum graviter tunsis", &c. Georgic. l. 3. Vid. Homer. Iliad 5. ver. 499. & Iliad, 13. ver. 588, &c. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 22. c. 25.

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Ver. 3. Wash thyself, therefore,.... Thy flesh, as Ben Melech, that she might appear clean and neat, and free from all spots, and every thing that might occasion a disagreeable aspect, or an ill scent, and so be acceptable to the man proposed:

and anoint thee; not with aromatic ointments, as great personages, both men and women, used as Aben Ezra notes, but with common oil, Ruth being a poor widow that she might look sleek and smooth:

and put thy raiment upon thee; that is, her best raiment; for it cannot be supposed that she was now without clothes; or else her ornaments as the Targum; her mother-in-law advises her to put off her widow's weed, the time of mourning for her husband being perhaps at an end, and put on her ornamental dress she used to wear in her own country, and in her husband's lifetime. Jarchi interprets it of her sabbath day clothes:

and get thee down to the floor; to the threshingfloor where Boaz was winnowing, and which it seems lay lower than the city of Bethlehem:

but make not thyself known unto the man; some understand it, that she should not make herself known to any man, not to any of the servants of Boaz; who, though they knew her before, when in the habit of a gleaner, would not know her now in her best and finest clothes, unless she made herself known to them; but rather Boaz is meant, to whom it was not advisable to make herself known; and who also, for the same reason, though he might see her at supper time, might not know her because of her different dress: and the rather he is particularly intended, since it follows,

until he shall have done eating and drinking; when Naomi thought it would be the fittest time to make herself known unto him in order to gain the point in view, marriage with him.

Ver. 4. And it shall be, when he lieth down,.... On the threshingfloor, under the open air, in order to sleep, and take rest:

that thou shall mark the place where he shall lie; the spot he shall lie on, and the direction in which he shall lie, whether east, west, &c. that when the light shall be taken away, and the darkness of the night come on, she might pretty easily find the place where he lay:

and thou shall go in and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; go into the threshingfloor, or to the place where he lay down and gently lay aside the covering upon his feet, whether a blanket, or rug, or his own long clothes, with which his feet were wrapped, and then lay herself down at his feet; this seems to be advised to, in order to give him a hint that there was somebody at his feet. This may seem to us to be strange advice, and not consistent with the character of pious and virtuous women, which they both bore, and with that modesty they otherwise seem to be possessed of; to clear this, let it be observed, that this man was, as Naomi thought, the next kinsman, and so in right of the law in De 25:5, was the husband of Ruth, and therefore might take such a freedom with him as she did; and it seems by the same law as if the woman was to make the demand of marriage, which may serve to reconcile the carriage of Ruth to her character: besides, what things in one age, and in one nation, are reckoned immodest, are not so accounted in another age, and in another nation; add to this the age and gravity of Boaz, and the well known virtue of Ruth to Naomi, she might think herself quite safe in the advice she gave: and yet after all, it must be owned, it is somewhat difficult to account for her simplicity and wisdom in it; since she could not be sure that sin and folly would not be committed, considering the infirmity of human nature; or that such a behaviour in Ruth would not alienate the affection of Boaz from her, and cause him to consider her as a light and loose woman, and unfit to be his wife:

and he will tell thee what thou shall do; being a judge of Israel, and expert in the law, he would inform her whether he was the next kinsman, and had the right of redemption or not, and what methods must be taken, and what rites used, in order to her marriage with him, or another person.

Ruth 3:5

Ver. 5. And she said unto her,.... Having the highest opinion of her piety and prudence, and being confident she would never advise her to what was contrary to true religion and virtue:

all that thou sayest unto me I will do; observe every instruction and direction she gave her, and attend strictly to every circumstance pointed out to her, as she did; the word for "unto me" is one of those instances, the Masora observes, is not written but read; the letters of the word are not in the text, only the vowel points, the reason of which cannot well be said; what the Midrash {q} gives can never satisfy.

{q} Midrash Ruth, ut supra. (fol. 33. 3.)

Ruth 3:6

Ver. 6. And she went down unto the floor,.... From the city of Bethlehem, from her mother-in-law's house there, to the threshingfloor of Boaz, which was at some distance from it, and lower:

and did according to all that her mother in law bade her; both before she went, and after: she washed and anointed herself, and put on her best clothes before she went down, and when she was there took care not to make herself known to any, especially to Boaz, and marked the place where he lay down after he had supped.

Ruth 3:7

Ver. 7. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry,.... Having ate and drank freely, though not to excess; and innocent mirth was always allowed in the time of harvest, and of the vintage, and of gathering the fruits of the earth, see **Jud 9:27** or "his heart was good"; he was in a good frame and disposition of mind, praising God for his goodness to him, and to his people; so the Targum,

"and his heart was good, and he blessed the name of the Lord who had received his prayer, and removed the famine from the land of Israel:"

he went to lie down at the heap of corn; in the threshingfloor, which had either been threshed out, or lay in sheaves to be threshed out: however, it seems probable that he had laid himself down on some of the straw of the corn threshed out, with his clothes on, covering his feet with the lower part of his garment; it being usual in those countries to wear long garments, which served to sleep in by nights, as well as to cover them by day; nor was it thought mean and unworthy of persons of note to sleep in such a place, and in such a manner as this {r}. And it might be chosen for coolness in those hot countries. Jarchi thinks it was to preserve his corn from thieves; though it might be because it was late ere the festival was over, and too late to go home, and besides he was ready for his business the next morning:

and she came softly; with stillness and quietness, as Jarchi, making as little noise as possible; or secretly, as the Targum, that no one might see her, and have knowledge of what she did:

and uncovered his feet; turned up the skirt of the garment that was upon his feet, or removed whatever covering was laid on them:

and laid her down; not on the side of him, which would have seemed immodest, but at his feet, perhaps across them.

{r} "Nec pudor in stipula", &c. Ovid. Fast. l. 1.

Ruth 3:8

Ver. 8. And it came to pass at midnight,.... So long Boaz slept without knowledge of any person being at his feet, and so long Ruth had lain there; but awaking, and perceiving something at his feet, which pressed them, it made him look about and feel, and so affected him,

that the man was afraid; though a man, and a man of spirit, he was afraid, a panic seized him, not knowing but it might be a spectre, a spirit, or a demon, as Jarchi; and such an instance we have in history {s} of an apparition, which seemed to put off clothes, and place itself in a bed where a man lay, &c.

and turned himself; to see who it was:

and, behold, a woman lay at his feet; which he knew by putting his hand upon her head, as Jarchi thinks, and so knew her by her headdress, or vail; or rather by her voice, as Aben Ezra, and who supposes the moon might shine, and he might be able to discern she had no beard, as well as also discover her by her clothes.

{s} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 9.

Ruth 3:9

Ver. 9. And he said, who art thou?.... He spoke quick and short, as one displeased, or however surprised and frightened, just coming out of sleep, and in the night:

and she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid; that had gleaned in his fields with his maidens, and with whom he had conversed there, and knew her by name:

spread therefore thy skirt over thy handmaid; which seems to account for the reason of her uncovering his feet, or turning up the skirt of his garment that was upon them; not through wantonness and immodesty, but to direct him, when opportunity offered, to spread it over her as a token of his taking her in marriage, and of her being under his care and protection, and of her subjection to him; so the Targum,

"let thy name be called upon me to take me for a wife,"

Whether the custom now used with the Jews at marriage, for a man to cast the skirt of his "talith", or outward garment, over the head of his spouse, and cover it, was in use so early, is questionable; and yet something like it seems to have been done, as this phrase intimates, and to which there is an allusion in Eze 16:8. So Jarchi,

"spread the skirt of thy garments to cover me with thy talith, and this is expressive of marriage;"

and Aben Ezra says, it intimates taking her to him for wife; though as the word signifies a wing, the allusion may be to the wings of birds spread over their young, to cherish and protect them, which are acts to be done by a man to his wife:

for thou art a near kinsman; as she had been informed by Naomi, to whom the right of redemption of her husband's estate belonged, and in whom it lay to marry her, and raise up seed to his kinsman, her former husband.

Ruth 3:10

Ver. 10. And he said, blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter,.... Instead of calling her an immodest woman for laying herself down at his feet, and a bold impudent woman, she being poor, to ask marriage of him; and instead of being angry with her, and chiding and reproving her for disturbing and frightening him in the night, he blesses her, and pray's to God to bless her, and prosper her in what she had engaged, and in a kind and loving manner calls her his daughter:

for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning; that is, to her husband's family; she had shown much love to her husband living and dying, and to her mother-in-law, in leaving her country and kindred to come with her into a strange country, and in labour to support her, as she had done, all which was great kindness; to which the Targum adds, her being proselyted; but the kindness she now showed exceeded all the former, in that she was desirous, according to the law of God, to build up her husband's family, to marry the next near kinsman, even though an old man, to raise up seed to the name and memory of her husband:

inasmuch as thou followedst not the young men, whether poor or rich; the phrase of following young men is not to be understood of committing fornication with them, as the Targum explains it, but of marriage to them: she shunned their company and conversation, and did not put herself in the way of being caressed and addressed by them, and refused everything of that sort; and did not choose to follow any young man, rich or poor, as a bride follows her husband when married to him. Now Boaz mentions this as an instance of her virtue, and of her great respect to her husband's family, that a woman of such amiable qualities, virtuous, young, and beautiful, who doubtless might have been married to a young man in her own country, or in Israel, but chose to marry the nearest of kin in her husband's family, to perpetuate his name and memory; the Jews say {t} Boaz was now eighty years of age, and Ruth forty.

{t} Midrash Ruth, fol. 31. 4. & 34. 2.

Ruth 3:11

Ver. 11. And now, my daughter, fear not,.... Either of being forced and defiled, to which he had exposed herself by lying down at a man's feet, or of being reproached as an immodest woman for so doing, or of being despised as a poor woman, and of not succeeding in her suit and enterprise:

and I will do to thee all that thou requirest; which could be done according to the law of God, and without injury to another person after mentioned:

for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman; or righteous, as the Targum; a good woman, possessed of grace and virtue, having every agreeable qualification to recommend to the marriage state; and therefore, should they come to the knowledge of the step taken to obtain it, will never reproach thee for it, nor blame me for marrying a person, though poor, of such an excellent character, which, by her conduct and behaviour, was universally established. It is in the original text, "all the gate of my people" {u}; meaning either all the people that pass through the gate of the city, that is, all the inhabitants of it, or the whole court of judicature, the elders of the city, that sit in judgment there, as was usual in gates of cities, see **Ru 4:1**. So the Targum,

"it is manifest before all that sit in the gate of the great sanhedrim of my people that thou art a righteous woman"

{u} yme rev-lk "tota porta populi mei", Montanus; so Vatablus, Tigurine version.

Ruth 3:12

Ver. 12. And now it is true, that I am thy near kinsman,.... Her husband and he being brothers' sons, so own cousins:

howbeit, there is a kinsman nearer than I, who was, the Jews say {w}, the brother of her husband's father, and so his uncle, which was a nearer relation than an own cousin.

{w} Midrash Ruth, ut supra. (31. 4. & 34. 2) Jarchi in loc.

Ruth 3:13

Ver. 13. Tarry this day,.... Or lodge here tonight, where she was; this he said not from any design upon her, but for her own safety and honour, that she might not be exposed to danger or disgrace, by returning home at such an unseasonable time of night. The first letter in the word for "tarry" is larger than usual in the Hebrew text; which may be done to raise the attention of the reader, to observe it as a thing very singular, that a widow should lodge with a man without any diminution of her chastity; so Buxtorf {x} says, that hereby attention is noted, even the honesty of Boaz ordering Ruth to lodge without a man, and wait until a nearer kinsman, according to the law, should come, and promising that on failure thereof he would be the lawful redeemer; but Dr. Lightfoot {y} observes, that as there is a special mark over a word in the story of Lot's eldest daughter lying with her father, Ge 19:34 and a special mark on this word here, in the story of Ruth going to Boaz his bed, seems to relate one to the other, and both together to point at the great providence of God in bringing light out of darkness, Ruth, a mother of Christ, out of the incest of Lot:

and it shall be, in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well, let him do the kinsman's part; by marrying Ruth, and redeeming her husband's estate, which if he did, it would be all very well, and right according to law; and it would be very well for Ruth, as Aben Ezra and Abendana interpret it; seeing, as they observe, that kinsman was a very respectable man, a man of great esteem and worth, a man of wealth and authority, and she would be well matched to him. Some think, as the same writers observe, that the word "Tob", translated "well", is the name of the kinsman, the same with Tobias; so R. Joshuah says {z}, that Salmon (who was the father of Boaz), and Elimelech (the father of Ruth's husband), and Tob (this near kinsman), were brethren:

but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth: that is, he swore he would marry her, and redeem the inheritance, if the other would not; for the phrase, "as the Lord liveth", is the form of an oath, it is swearing by the living God; so the Targum,

"I say with an oath before the Lord, that as I have spoken unto thee, so will I do:"

lie down until the morning; and take some sleep and rest, and be at ease in mind, depending upon the performance of what I have promised.

{x} Tiberias, c. 14. p. 38. {y} Works, vol. 1. p. 48. {z} In Midrash Ruth, ut supra. (fol. 31. 4. & 34. 2.)

Ruth 3:14

Ver. 14. And she lay at his feet until the morning,.... In the same place where she first lay herself down:

and she rose up before one could know another, because of the darkness, as the Targum, it not being yet break of day:

and he said, let it not be known that a woman came into the floor, to whom he spoke these words is not said, perhaps to Ruth, whom he might call to arise so early as she did, before one could know another, and distinguish a man from a woman; and so sent her away, and bid her be cautious, as much as in her lay, that it might not be known she had been there; for though they were both conscious of their purity and chastity, yet it became them to be careful of their good name, and to prevent scandal upon them, or hinder the nearer kinsman from doing his part, who might refuse upon hearing that Boaz and Ruth had been together; or this was said to his young men, as the Targum adds, charging them to let no one know of it; which is not so likely: it is the sense of some Jewish writers {a}, that Boaz said this in his heart, in an ejaculatory prayer to God, entreating that affair might be a secret, that it might not be known that a woman had been in the floor that night, lest the name of God should be blasphemed, and he and Ruth be wrongfully reproached.

{a} Midrash Ruth, fol. 34. 14. so some in Abendana in Miclol Yophi in loc.

Ruth **3:15**

Ver. 15. Also he said,.... Which seems to confirm the first sense, that what he had said before was to Ruth, beside which he also said to her what follows:

bring the vail which thou hast upon thee, and hold it; by which it appears that he rose also thus early, since he ordered her to bring her vail to him, and hold it with both her hands, while he filled it from the heap of corn: this vail was either what she wore on her head, as women used to do, or a coverlet she brought with her to cover herself with, when she lay down; the Septuagint renders it a "girdle", that is, an apron she tied or girt about her; which is as likely as anything: and when she held it, he measured six measures of barley; what these measures were is not expressed; the Targum is six seahs or bushels, as the Vulgate Latin version, but that is too much, and more than a woman could carry; unless we suppose, with the Targum, that she had strength from the Lord to carry it, and was extraordinarily assisted by him in it, which is not very probable; rather six omers, an omer being the tenth part of an ephah, and so was a quantity she might be able to carry:

and laid it upon her; upon her shoulder, or put it on her head, it being, no doubt, as much as she could well bear, and which required some assistance to help her up with it:

and she went into the city; of Bethlehem, with her burden; or rather he went {b}; for the word is masculine, and to be understood of Boaz, who accompanied her to the city, lest she should meet with any that should abuse her; and so the Targum expresses it,

"Boaz went into the city."

{b} abyw "et ingressus est", Tigurine version. Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Ruth **3:16**

Ver. 16. And when she came to her mother in law,.... To Naomi, in

Bethlehem:

she said, who art thou, my daughter? it being near dusk, she could not discern her, or perhaps she put the question before she opened the door and saw her; though one would think, if Ruth had called to her, she would have known her voice: rather therefore the particle may be rendered, "what" or "how" {c}, instead of "who"; and the sense be, what had befallen her? what success had she had? how had things gone with her? was she married or not? or rather, had she got a promise of it? or was it likely that she should be married? with which the answer agrees:

and she told her all that the man had done to her; what kindness he had shown her, what promises he had made to her, that either he, or a nearer kinsman, would marry her, and redeem her husband's estate.

{c} ta ym "quid egisti?" V. L. "quid tibi?" Tigurine version; so R. Jonah in Aben Ezra, & Abendana in loc. "quomodo tu filia mea?" Nold. p. 602. No. 1626.

Ruth 3:17

Ver. 17. And she said, these six measures of barley gave he me,.... Which she laid down before her, which was a proof of his kindness to her, that she was acceptable to him, and had well sped; of these six measures, see **Ru 3:15** which by some are allegorically interpreted of six blessings that should be bestowed upon her, as the spirit of wisdom, understanding, &c. as Isa 11:2 so Jarchi; or of six persons that should spring from her, as David, Daniel, and his companions, and the King Messiah, as the Targum:

for he said unto me, go not empty unto thy mother in law; which, as it expressed a regard to Naomi, and a compassionate concern for her support, so would give her assurance of the success Ruth met with, she would relate to her.

Ruth 3:18

Ver. 18. Then, said she, sit still, my daughter,.... Keep at home, say nothing of this affair to any person, be easy about it, take no other steps in it, wait the issue of it:

until thou know how the matter will fall; not that she thought it was a chance matter, a fortuitous and contingent event with respect to God; for all decrees come from heaven, as Aben Ezra on the text says, and particularly marriages are decreed in heaven, and come about according to such decrees; so the Targum,

"sit, my daughter, with me, in the house, until the time thou shall know how it is decreed from heaven:"

for the man will not be at rest until he have finished the thing this day; which she concluded, partly from his known integrity and faithfulness, diligence and industry, and partly from his affection to Ruth, and her interest in it; for she perceived, she had got his heart, both by what he had said to her, and by the present he had sent by her, and she was satisfied he would not be easy until he knew whether he should have her or not.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ruth 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO RUTH 4

This chapter relates how an offer was made to the nearest kinsman of Ruth to redeem her, and the field her husband left, which he refused to do, **Ru 4:1**, upon which Boaz redeemed both, and married Ruth before the elders of the city as witnesses, and who congratulated him and her on that occasion, **Ru 4:9**, to whom a son was born, called Obed by the neighbours, **Ru 4:13** and the chapter is concluded with the genealogy of David, who sprung from him, **Ru 4:18**.

Ver. 1. Then went Boaz up to the gate,.... In the middle of the day, as Josephus {d} says, to the gate of the city, where people were continually passing and repassing to and from the country, and where he was most likely to meet with the person he wanted to see and converse with, and where courts of judicature were usually held, and where it was proper to call one to determine the affair he had in hand; so the Targum,

"and Boaz went up to the gate of the house of judgment of the sanhedrim:"

and set him down there; waiting for the person or persons passing by, with whom be chose to speak:

and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; the kinsman that was nearer than he, of whom he had spoke to Ruth, that if he would not redeem her, he would; a "behold" is prefixed to this, to observe the providence of God that ordered it so, that he should come that way just at the time Boaz was sitting there, and waiting for him; who perhaps was going into his field to look after his threshers and winnowers, as Boaz had been:

unto whom he said, ho, such an one; calling him by his name, though it is not expressed; which the writer of this history might not know, or, if he did, thought it not material to give it, some have been of opinion that it is purposely concealed, as a just retaliation to him, that as he chose not to raise up seed to his kinsman, to perpetuate his name, so his own is buried in oblivion; though it might be done in his favour, that his name might not be known, and lie under disgrace, for refusing to act the part he ought according to the law to have done; hence the plucking off the shoe, and spitting in his face, were done to such an one by way of contempt and reproach. The words are "peloni almoni", words used by the Hebrews of persons and places, whose names they either could not, or did not choose to mention, which two words are contracted into "palmoni" in **Da 8:13**. The name of this man was "Tob" or "Tobias", according to some Jewish writers, See Gill on "Ru 3:13", to him Boaz said,

turn aside, and sit down here; and he turned aside, and sat down; instead of going right forward, as he intended, about his business, he turned on one side as he was desired, and sat down by Boaz.

{d} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 4.

Ruth 4:2

Ver. 2. And he took ten men of the elders of the city,.... Who were such, not merely in age but in office, who were the heads of thousands, fifties, and tens; ten of whom were a quorum to do business in judiciary affairs, to determine such matters as Boaz had propose, as to whom the right of redemption of a brother and kinsman's widow, and her estate, belonged, and who were the proper witnesses of the refusal of the one to do it, and of the other's doing it and from hence the Jews {e} gather, that the blessing of the bride and bridegroom at their marriage is not to be done by less than ten persons:

and said, sit down here, and they sat down; and so made a full court.

{e} Misnah Megillah, c. 4. sect. 3. T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 7. 1. Midrash Ruth, fol. 35. 1.

Ruth 4:3

Ver. 3. And he said unto the kinsman,.... That is, Boaz said to the kinsman he called to, and who sat down by him before the ten elders that were present:

Naomi, that is come again out of the land of Moab, selleth a parcel of land; meaning, that she was determined upon it, and was about to do it, and would do it quickly, and he had it in commission to propose it to a purchaser:

which was our brother Elimelech's; not in a strict sense, but being akin to the kinsman and himself, and having been a neighbour of them all, and an inhabitant of the place, he is called their brother; though some Jewish writers {f} say, that he was in a strict sense a brother of Boaz and this kinsman, and that Tob, Elimelech, and Boaz, were brethren, and so Tob was reckoned the nearest kinsman, and had the first right to redeem, because he was the elder brother but this does not seem likely; See Gill on "Ru 3:13".

{f} Midrash Ruth, fol. 34. 2.

Ruth 4:4

Ver. 4. And I thought to advertise thee,.... To give him notice of it; or "I said" {g}; he said in his heart and mind, purposing to do it; or he said it to Ruth, promising her that he would do it:

saying, buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people; or before those that sat there, even the elders, as witnesses of the purchase:

if thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: for it was redeemable by a near kinsman according to the law, even when said to another, in Le 25:25,

but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; what to do in this affair, whether to redeem it or not:

for there is none to redeem it besides thee, and I am after thee; he was the first, and Boaz was the next near kinsman, to whom the right of redemption belonged:

and he said, I will redeem it: he chose to make the purchase, he liked the land, which he probably full well knew, and it might lie near his own, and make a good addition to it; and as the widow was determined, and under a necessity to sell, he might expect to have it at a cheap rate; all which might induce him at once to agree to be the purchaser.

{g} ytrma ynaw "et ego dixi", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Ruth 4:5

Ver. 5. Then said Boaz,.... In order to try the kinsman, whether he would abide by his resolution, he acquaints him with what he had as yet concealed:

what day thou buyest the field of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead; the wife of Mahlon, who was dead, the eldest son of Naomi, and so his widow, Ruth the Moabitess, had the reversion of the estate; wherefore the purchase must be made of her as well as of Naomi, and the purchase could not be made of her without marrying her; which, though no law obliged to, yet it seems to be a condition of the purchase annexed to it by Naomi, that she would sell it to no man, unless he would consent to marry Ruth, for whose settlement she had a great concern, having been very dutiful and affectionate to her; which is clearly intimated in the next clause:

to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance; and so Naomi had another end to answer thereby, not only to provide a good husband for her daughter-in-law, but to perpetuate the name of her son, agreeably to the design of the law in De 25:5.

Ruth 4:6

Ver. 6. And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself,.... On such a condition, because he had a wife, as the Targum suggests; and to take another would, as that intimates, tend to introduce contention into his family, and make him uncomfortable; so Josephus says {h}, he had a wife and children, for that reason it was not convenient for him to take the purchase on such a condition:

lest I mar my own inheritance; he considered, that as he had a wife and children already and as he might have more by marrying Ruth, his family expenses would be increased, and his estate diminished; and what would remain must be divided among many, and this estate in particular go to Ruth's firstborn, whereby his own inheritance would be scattered and crumbled, and come to little or nothing; add to all which, he might suppose that her ancient mother Naomi would be upon his hands to maintain also:

redeem thou my right for thyself which I am ready to give up to thee, for thou hast no wife, as the Targum expresses it:

for I can not redeem it; in the circumstances I am, and upon the condition annexed to the purchase.

{h} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 4.

Ruth 4:7

Ver. 7. Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming,.... It is a custom, and not a law, that seems here referred to, when an estate was bought and sold; not the law in Le 25:25, though that respects the redemption of an estate by a near kinsman, yet no such manner was enjoined as here practised afterwards, made mention of; nor the law in De 25:5 which does not concern the redemption of estates, nor a kinsman's marrying the widow of a deceased kinsman, but a brother's marrying the widow of a deceased brother, and the rites and ceremonies there enjoined upon refusal are different from those here used; though Josephus {i} is express for it, that the law is here referred to; but this is not only concerning purchase of estates, but "concerning changing" also one field for another as Aben Ezra interprets it: "for to confirm all things"; the following custom was observed for the confirmation of any bargain whatever, whether by sale or barter, and where there was no marriage in the case:

a man plucked off his shoe and gave it to his neighbour; signifying thereby, that he yielded his right to him in the thing sold or bartered; the Targum says, he plucked off the glove of his right hand, which perhaps was then in use, when the Targumist wrote, and answered the same purpose; and, according to Jarchi, it was a linen cloth, vail, or handkerchief, that was used, and delivered by the one to the other; and of this way of buying writes Elias {k}; at this day, says he, we purchase by a linen cloth or handkerchief called "sudar", which is a garment; and this two witnesses take, and explain before them the words of their agreement, and each of the witnesses stretches out the skirt of the garment, and those that take upon them to confirm every matter, touch the skirt of their garments; and this is called purchasing by "sudar", or the linen cloth:

and this was a testimony in Israel; a witness to, or a confirmation of the bargain made; but who gave the shoe, whether the kinsman or Boaz, is not certain from the text; and about which the Jewish writers are divided, as Jarchi observes.

{i} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 4. {k} Tishbi, p. 207. See Leo Modena's History of the Rites, &c. of the present Jews, part 2. c. 6.

Ruth 4:8

Ver. 8. And therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, buy it for me,.... Which is repeated to show he gave his full consent to it, that he should make the purchase of it if he pleased, and which he confirmed by the following rite:

so he drew off his shoe; thereby signifying that he relinquished his right to the purchase of the estate, and ceded it to him; the Targum has it,

"and Boaz drew off the glove off his right hand, and bought it of him;"

and so Aben Ezra,

"and Boaz drew off his shoe, and gave it to his kinsman,"

as if this was some acknowledgment for yielding his right unto him; and about this there is a great dissension among the Jewish writers {l}; one says it was the shoe of Boaz that was plucked off; another says it was the shoe of the kinsman; which latter seems most correct: and it may be observed, that this custom is different from what is enjoined De 25:6 there the woman was to pluck off the shoe of him that refused to marry her, but here the man plucked off his own shoe, who chose not to redeem; nor is there mention of spitting in his face; nor does it appear that Ruth did the one or the other; though Josephus {m} affirms it, and says, that she both plucked off his shoe, and spit in his face; neither of which are mentioned.

{l} Midrash Ruth, fol. 35. 2. {m} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 4.)

Ruth 4:9

Ver. 9. And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people,.... Who were present at the gate of the city, or in court:

ye are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's; all the land which belonged to him, who was the husband of Naomi, and the father of Ruth's husband, whose estate Boaz now bought, paying the value for it to Naomi:

and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's; the two sons of Elimelech, who, had they been living, would have enjoyed their father's estate; but they being dead, it devolved on the mother, and after her on the widows, who must therefore agree to the sale of the estate, as Ruth did, see **Ru 4:5**. Of Orpah no notice is taken, because she returned to her own land; and besides Mahlon, the husband of Ruth, was the elder brother, and therefore had the first right to the inheritance; but as it was in the hands of Naomi now, the purchase was made of her principally, and therefore Boaz is said to purchase it

of the hand of Naomi; to whom the money was paid, and who delivered the estate to him.

Ruth 4:10

Ver. 10. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife,.... Which was the condition on which the purchase of the land was, that whoever bought that should take her for his wife; nor did Boaz do evil in marrying her, though a Moabitess. Moab was not one of the nations with whom marriage was forbidden; and though it was a Heathenish and idolatrous nation, and so on that account it was not fit and proper to marry with such, yet Ruth was become a proselytess; nor was this contrary to the law in De 23:3, since, according to the sense the Jews give of it, it respects men, and not women, and such men who otherwise were capable of bearing offices in the congregation;

"an Ammonite, and a Moabite (they say {n}) are forbidden, and their prohibition is a perpetual one, but their women are free immediately:"

to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance; the name of Mahlon, Ruth's former husband, to whom the inheritance would have come had he lived; the raising up of his name is not upon a son of hers by Boaz, for her firstborn was called Obed, and not Mahlon, and is always spoken of as the son of Boaz, and not of Mahlon, but upon his inheritance, having bought his wife along with it, which the register of the purchase would show, and so cause his name to be remembered; and, as Jarchi says, when Ruth went in and out upon the estate or inheritance, they would say, this was the wife of Mahlon, and so through her his name would be made mention of:

that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of this place; might not be quite forgotten both in the city and in the court, and be remembered no more:

ye are witnesses this day; this is repeated, that they might answer to it, as they do in the next verse.

{n} Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 3.

Ruth 4:11

Ver. 11. And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, we are witnesses,.... Both of the purchase of the estate by Boaz being legally made, and of the marriage of Ruth to him, the condition of the bargain:

the Lord make the woman that is come into thine house; not into his house, strictly and literally taken, the place of his habitation; for both he and she were now at the gate of the city, and as yet she was not introduced into his house; but by his marriage of her she was brought into his family, and was become a principal part of it, being his wife. This is a wish, prayer, or benediction of the elders, of one in the name of the rest, congratulating the married couple, and wishing them well; and particularly that the woman Boaz had married before them, as witnesses, might be

like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: the two wives of Jacob; the Targum adds, with twelve tribes; for though some of the tribes sprung from their maids, which they gave to Jacob, yet the children born of them were reckoned theirs by a moral estimation, as some express it. Rachel is set before Leah, though the youngest, and had the fewest children, because she was his first wife in his intention, and according to the covenant made with her father, though imposed upon and deceived; and she was his more lawful wife, and his most beloved one. By the children of these two, and their maidens, the house or family of Israel was built up, and became a great nation, consisting of twelve tribes, very numerous:

and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem; two names of one and the same place, Ge 35:19. These words seem to be directed to Boaz, particularly praying that he might continue to do worthy and virtuous actions, as well as increase in wealth and riches, power and authority, and retain his name and fame, and grow in credit and reputation among his fellow citizens.

Ruth 4:12

Ver. 12. And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah,.... Of whose tribe the Bethlehemites were, and were also of the house or family of Pharez, as appears from **Ru 4:18**, &c. who was born to Judah of Tamar, one of another nation, as Ruth was, and from whom sprung a very numerous family, one of the five families of Judah; and they wish that the family of Boaz, by Ruth, might be as numerous; and if Boaz was the same with Ibzan, as the Jews say, though that wants proof, he had a very numerous offspring, thirty sons and thirty daughters, Jud 12:8

of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman; by which it is plain Ruth was present, for they do, as it were, point to her, and that she was a young woman, though a widow: the Jews say she was forty years of age, as observed in **Ru 3:10** and the elders wish and pray he might have a numerous family of the children the Lord would give him by her; and this might be the rather expected of her, as being a young woman, yet only as the gift of God, as children are, Ps 127:3.

Ruth 4:13

Ver. 13. So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife,.... Without any other rites or ceremonies than what are here expressed; for as yet the rites and ceremonies now in use with the Jews {o}, in marriages had not obtained: and when he went in unto her; which is a modest expression of the conjugal duty performed him:

the Lord gave her conception; for this is of God, let the circumstance of the person, as to age, be as it may:

and she bare a son; at the year's end, as Josephus {p} relates,

{o} Vid. Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 39. Leo Modena's History of the Rites of the present Jews, part 4. c. 3. {p} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 4.)

Ruth 4:14

Ver. 14. And the women said unto Naomi,.... The inhabitants of Bethlehem, as they fell into her company; or perhaps these were the women that were called to the labour of Ruth, and attended the birth of the child:

blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman; a grandchild born to her that day. In Moab she was bereaved of her husband and of two sons; but now she is not left without a relation, a kinsman, and a redeemer, for which the women blessed God, and stirred her up to do the same. Alshech observes, that the women said, blessed be the Lord, because from him would spring the Messiah of the Lord, as did. Some refer this to Boaz, to whom the name of kinsman, or redeemer, more properly belonged; and who appeared to have done the office and duty of such an one, by redeeming the estate of his kinsman, and marrying his widow, the effect of which was, that a son was born, who would be heir of the estate; but the text speaks of what was done that day, and what is after said in the next verse all relates to the child born:

that his name may be famous in Israel; some refer this to the name of God, by whose providence this was brought about; others to Boaz, who was well spoken of for his charity, integrity, and humility, shown in redeeming the estate, and taking Ruth to wife; or rather it refers to the newborn child, of whom they express their hope and confidence, that when he came to man's estate would be very famous and honourable in Israel, being a worthy and virtuous man himself, and the progenitor of such illustrious persons as Jesse, David, &c. and even of the Messiah.

Ruth 4:15

Ver. 15. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life,.... Of the joys, pleasures, and comforts of it, which she had been deprived of through the death of her husband and her two sons, ever since which she had lived a sorrowful life; all the comfort she had was from her daughter-in-law, and now a grandchild being born to her of her would be a means of restoring comfort to her mourning sorrowful spirit, and give her pleasure in those years in which she did not expect any:

and a nourisher of thine old age; that would when grown up feed her, support her, and supply her with all necessaries of life, being heir to a large and rich estate:

for thy daughter in law which loveth thee; Ruth the wife of Boaz, who had shown her love, in leaving her own country and kindred, to come along with her into a strange land, and who had laboured for her support in it, and still retained the same affection for her:

which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him: either which had been so in the time of her widowhood, as the Targum; or rather which was so now, being the wife of so rich a person, and having now brought forth a son, heir to the estate, who would be more capable of doing for her than if she had seven sons living, having no other than their paternal estate.

Ruth 4:16

Ver. 16. And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom,.... As a token of her most tender love and affection for it; this it is probable she did quickly after the birth of it:

and became a nurse unto it; that is, after the mother had suckled and weaned it, then she took it from her, and brought it up.

Ruth 4:17

Ver. 17. And the women her neighbours gave it a name,.... Josephus says {q} Naomi gave it, by the advice of her neighbours; very probably on the eighth day when he was circumcised, and the neighbours were invited on that occasion, at which time it seems it was usual to give names to children, see **Lu 1:59**. The Romans gave names to females on the eighth day, to the males on the ninth; hence the goddess Nundina had her name {r}; the Greeks generally on the tenth, sometimes on the seventh {s}: it was commonly the province of the father to give the name, and sometimes his neighbours and nearest friends were called, and in their presence the name was given, and by any of them he should choose in his stead {t}:

saying, there is a son born to Naomi; to her family, and even to herself, being born of her who had been wife to her eldest son; and this was to her as instead of him, and was as he to her; so Aben Ezra compares this with **Ex 2:10** and moreover, this child was born, as the neighbours presaged, for the great comfort and advantage of Naomi, to be her supporter and nourisher in her old age, **Ru 4:15**

and they called his name Obed; which signifies "serving", as Josephus {u} rightly observes, though he does not always give the true sense of Hebrew words: this name was given, not in remembrance of the service his mother was obliged to, before marriage with Boaz; but rather on the account of the service that he would be of to Naomi, as they hoped and believed; though the reason of it, as given by the Targum, is not to be overlooked, which interprets it,

"who served the Lord of the world with a perfect heart;"

and so they might have some respect to his being hereafter a servant of the Lord:

he is the father of Jesse, and the father of David: so Jesse is called the Bethlehemite, 1Sa 16:1, being of the city of Bethlehem, of which city Boaz was when his son Obed was born, who was the father of Jesse; of whom was David king of Israel, and from whom sprung the Messiah, for whose sake this book was written, that his genealogy might clearly appear; and of which use it is made by the Evangelists Matthew; and Luke.

{q} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 4.) {r} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 25. {s} Harpocration & Suidas in voce ebdomeuomhnou, Scholiast. in Aristoph. Aves, p. 565. & Euripid. & Aristot. in ib. {t} Vid. Sperling. de Baptism. Ethnic. c. 14. & 15. {u} Ibid.

Ruth 4:18

Ver. 18. Now these are the generations of Pharez,.... The son of Judah, by Tamar before mentioned, **Ru 4:12**, for the intention of this genealogy is to confirm the truth of Jacob's prophecy, of Shiloh the Messiah coming from the tribe of Judah, Ge 49:10 and therefore it begins with Pharez, well known to be the son of Judah, and ends with David, whose son the Messiah was to be, as is owned by all Jews and Gentiles that believe the divine revelation:

Pharez begat Hezron; who was one of those that went down with Jacob into Egypt, being born in the land of Canaan, Ge 47:12 called Esrom in **Mt 1:3**.

Ruth 4:19

Ver. 19. And Hezron begat Ram,.... Called Aram by the Septuagint, and so in **Mt 1:3**,

and Ram begat Amminadab; in whose name there is no variation, neither in the book of Chronicles nor in the Evangelists; both these, as well as the next, were born in Egypt.

Ruth 4:20

Ver. 20. And Amminadab begat Nahshon,.... The prince of the tribe of Judah, as the Targum adds; and so he was when the Israelites were come out of Egypt, and were in the wilderness at the time of the dedication of the altar, **Nu 7:12** called Nahsson, **Mt 1:4**, and Nahshon begat Salmon; or, as in the Hebrew text, Salmah, and in **1Ch 2:11**, Salma; and yet in the verse following Salmon, as we read it.

Ruth 4:21

Ver. 21. And Salmon begat Boaz,.... Of Rahab the harlot, whom he married, **Mt 1:5** the very same person that makes a principal part of this book, and whom the Targum here takes to be the judge Ibzan, See Gill on "Ru 1:1".

and Boaz begat Obed; of Ruth; of whom see the preceding verses.

Ruth 4:22

Ver. 22. And Obed begat Jesse,.... The Bethlehemite, the father of David:

and Jesse begat David; the Targum adds, the king of Israel; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions add, the king; from whence it is by some concluded that this book was written by Samuel, not only after the birth of David, but after he had been anointed king by him: here being but four generations mentioned, from the coming of the Israelites into Canaan, to the birth of David, which was three hundred and sixty years, each of the four persons, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, and Jesse, must beget a son when one hundred years old and upwards; and which is not at all incredible, as appears by instances in later times, and therefore not at all improbable, that in those ancient times men of sobriety and good constitutions should have children at such an age.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL OTHERWISE CALLED THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

This book, in the Hebrew copies, is commonly called Samuel, or the Book of Samuel; in the Syriac version, the Book of Samuel the Prophet; and in the Arabic version, the Book of Samuel the Prophet, which is the First Book of the Kings; and the Septuagint version, the Book of the Kingdom: it has the name of Samuel, because it contains an history of his life and times; and the Jews say {a} it was written by him; and as it may well enough be thought to be, to the end of the twenty fourth chapter; and the rest might be written by Nathan and Gad, as may he gathered from 1Ch 29:29 as also the following book that bears his name; and both may be called the Books of Kings, because they give an account of the rise of the kings in Israel, and of the two first of them; though some think they were written by Jeremiah, as Abarbinel; and others ascribe them to Ezra: however, there is no doubt to be made of it that this book was written by divine inspiration, when we consider the series of its history, its connection and harmony with other parts of Scripture; the several things borrowed from it, or alluded to in the book of Psalms, particularly what is observed in Ps 113:7, seems to be taken out of **1Sa 2:8**, and the sanction which the Lord gives to it, by referring to a fact in it, whereby he stopped the mouths of the Scribes and Pharisees cavilling at his disciples, Mt 12:3, compared with 1Sa 21:3, yea, even, as Huetius {b} observes, some Heathen writers have by their testimonies confirmed some passages in these books, which they seem to have been acquainted with, as Nicolaus of Damascus {c}, and Eupolemus {d}; it contains an history of the government of Eli, and of the birth of Samuel, and his education under him; of the succession of Samuel in it, and the resignation of it to Saul, when he was chosen king; of his administration of his office, and of things done in the time of it, both before and after his rejection, and of the persecution of David by Saul, and is concluded with his death.

{a} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. {b} Demonstrat. Evangel. Prop. 4. p. 199. {c} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5. sect. 2. {d} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30.

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 1

This chapter gives an account of the parents of Samuel, of the trouble his mother met with from her rival, and comfort from her husband, **1Sa 1:1**, of her prayer to God for a son, and of her vow to him, should one be given her, **1Sa 1:9** of the notice Eli took of her, and of his censure on her, which he afterwards retracted, and comforted her, **1Sa 1:12** of her conception and the birth of her son, the nursing and weaning of him, **1Sa 1:19** and of the presentation of him to the Lord, with a sacrifice, **1Sa 1:24**.

Ver. 1. Now there was a man of Ramathaimzophim, of Mount Ephraim,.... Ramathaim is a word of the dual number, and signifies two Ramahs; the city consisted of two parts, being built perhaps on two hills, and were called Zophim; because, as the Rabbins say, they looked one to another; or rather, because situated on eminences, there were watchtowers in them, where watchmen were placed; or because they were inhabited by prophets, who were sometimes called watchmen, **Eze 3:17** and here is thought to be a school of the prophets, see
1Sa 19:19 and which seems to be countenanced by the Targum, in which the words are paraphrased thus, "and there was one" man of Ramatha, of the disciples of the prophets; or, as others think, the sense is this, this man was one of the Ramathites, the inhabitants of Ramah, and of the family of Zuph, or the Zuphites, which gave the name to the land of Zuph, and the grand ancestor of Elkanah is in this verse called Zuph, see **1Sa 9:5**. According to Jerom {e}, this is the same with Arimathaea, of which Joseph was, Mt 27:57 for thus he writes,

"Armatha Sophim, the city of Helcanah and Samuel, in the Thamnitic region near Diospolis (or Lydda), from whence was Joseph, who in the Gospels is said to be of Arimathaea;"

but Reland {f} thinks it cannot be the same that was about Lydda, which was all a champaign country; whereas this was in the mountains of Ephraim, which must be sought to the north of Jerusalem, and not the west, and so it follows:

of Mount Ephraim: which is added to distinguish it from other Ramahs in several tribes, as in Benjamin, Naphtali, &c. though this may refer not to the situation of Ramathaim, but to the country of this man, who was originally of Mount Ephraim, as was the Levite in Jud 19:1 who was the cause of much evil to Israel, as this was of great good, as Kimchi observes:

and his name was Elkanah; which signifies "God hath possessed"; that is, possessed him, or he was in possession of God; he had an ancestor of the same name, **1Ch 6:23**. This man was a Levite, one of the Kohathites, and a descendant of Korah; so that the famous prophet Samuel was of the sons of Korah:

the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph; the three last of these names are somewhat differently read in **1Ch 6:26**, where they are Eliab, Nahath, Zophai; and in **1Ch 6:34**. Eliel, Toah, Zuph:

an Ephrathite; which appellation is to be connected, according to Kimchi, not with Elkanah, but with Zuph; though neither of them were so called from Bethlehemjudah, the inhabitants of which were indeed called Ephrathites from Ephratah, another name of it; so Elimelech, and his sons Mahlon and Chilion, being of that city, were so called, **Ru 1:2** not from their being of the tribe of Ephraim, as Jeroboam of that tribe is called an Ephrathite, 1Ki 11:26, see Jud 12:5 for these were Levites, the descendants of Kohath, in the line of Korah; but because they sojourned in Mount Ephraim, or dwelt there, as Elkanah did; and it is well known that the Kohathites had cities given them in the tribe of Ephraim, Jos 21:5.

{e} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. K. {f} Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 581.

1 Samuel 1:2

Ver. 2. And he had two wives,.... Which, though connived at in those times, was contrary to the original law of marriage; and for which, though a good man, he was chastised, and had a great deal of vexation and trouble, the two wives not agreeing with each other; perhaps not having children by the one so soon as he hoped and wished for, he took another:

the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah; the first name signifies "grace" or "gracious", and she was a woman who had the grace of God, and very probably was also very comely, beautiful, and acceptable, as she was in the sight of her husband; the other signifies a cornered gem, a precious stone or jewel, as the pearl, ruby, amethyst, &c. Very likely Hannah was his first wife, and having no children by her, he took Peninnah, who proved to be a rough diamond: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children; how many Peninnah had is not said, perhaps ten; see **1Sa 1:8** and that Hannah had none was not because she was naturally barren, but because the Lord had shut up her womb, or restrained her from bearing children, to put her upon praying for one, and that the birth of Samuel might be the more remarkable: see **1Sa 1:5**.

1 Samuel 1:3

Ver. 3. This man went up out of his city yearly,.... From year to year; or, as the Targum, from the time of the solemn appointed feast to the solemn appointed feast, from one to another; there were three of them in the year, at which all the males in Israel were to appear at the tabernacle; and being a Levite, this man was the more careful to observe this rule. He is said to "go up" out of his city, which was Ramathaim or Ramah; for though it was built on an eminence, from whence it had its name, yet Shiloh, whither he went, was higher; that being, as Adrichomius says {a}, on the highest mountain of all round about Jerusalem, and the highest of all the mountains of the holy land. So that as he first went down the hill from Ramah, he went up an high ascent to Shiloh, which is the place he went up to as follows:

to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh; where the tabernacle was, the place of worship, and the altar of burnt offerings, on which sacrifices were offered. This place, according to Bunting {b}, was twelve miles from Ramah, though others say it was not more than seven miles from it; hither he went to worship, or bow before the Lord; to pray unto him, as it is commonly interpreted; and being put before sacrifice, is said to be preferable to that, and more acceptable to God, and more eligible to be done in the tabernacle or temple than at home; see Lu 18:10 and though he is said to go up to sacrifice, it is not to be understood of his performing it himself, but by others, by the priest; for he himself was a Levite and could not offer sacrifices. This is the first time that mention is made of this title of Jehovah, Lord of hosts, of all the hosts and armies in heaven and in earth, the Lord of Sabaoth, as in **Jas 5:4** from abu, an "host", or army; and from hence the Heathens called some of their deities by the name of Sabazius, as Jupiter Sabazius {c}; and the Phrygians and Thracians used to call Bacchus Sabazius, and other Grecians following them did the same {d}:

and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas the priests of the Lord, were there; Eli was the next judge of Israel after Samson, and who also was the high priest, as is generally supposed; but when and how the high priesthood came into his family is nowhere said, who was a descendant of Ithamar, the younger son of Aaron, in whose line it continued to the time of Solomon; and Josephus {e} places three between Phinehas and Eli, who were all of the line of Eleazar, whom he calls Abiezer, Bouci, and Ozis; but their Scripture names are Abishua, Bukki, and Uzzi, **1Ch 6:50**. And according to him, after Uzzi came Eli to be high priest, and therefore must be the first of the line of Ithamar that was in that office. His two sons are mentioned as officiating as priests in Shiloh, at the time Elkanah used to go yearly thither to worship and sacrifice; who were very wicked men, as appears by an after account of them; and it is generally thought that this is observed here, to show that the wickedness of these priests did not hinder this good man from doing his duty; nor did he make use of it as an excuse for not attending the worship of the sanctuary.

{a} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 30. So Sandys's Travels, l. 3. p. 157. {b} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 122. {c} Valer. Maxim. l. 1. c. 3. Vid. D. Herbert de Cherbury de Relig. Gent. c. 3. p. 22. {d} Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 212. Harpocration in voce
saboi, Lucian. Concil. deor. sect. 4. Cicero de legibus. l. 2. Aristophan vespae, v. 9, 10. Aves, 582. & Scholia in ib. Lysistrate, p. 860. & Scholia in ib. {e} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 11. sect. 5.

1 Samuel 1:4

Ver. 4. And when the time was that Elkanah offered,.... That is, brought his offering to the priest, to offer it for him, which was at one of the three festivals. According to R. Joshua Ben Levi {f}, this was at the time of Pentecost; but Abarbinel thinks it was at the time of the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, which was a time of rejoicing, even the feast of tabernacles, and which is most likely:

he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions; parts of the offering, everyone a part, or portion; by which it appears, that this was a peace offering he offered, the greater part of which belonged to the owner, and which he made a feast of for his family and friends; see De 12:5. Jerom {g} interprets these portions of garments.

{f} Apud Kimchium in loc. {g} Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 74. H.

1 Samuel 1:5

Ver. 5. But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion,.... Or, one choice portion, as the Targum; the best part or portion in the peace offering, of what the priest had not; he had the breast and the right shoulder, the next best piece he gave to Hannah; and the word being of the dual number, some render it a double portion; others, "one part of two faces" {h}; which Jerom interprets, which might be received with a cheerful countenance, it was so good and excellent in its kind; others interpret it that he gave it with a sorrowful {i} and displeased countenance, because of the reason following, that she had no children; but Ben Gersom understands it of a part or portion of meat that had two faces or appearances; that he gave her one of the pieces, one part of which was very fat, and the other had no fat on it, so that she might choose what she liked best:

for he loved Hannah; loved her best, and therefore did everything to please her, and make her comfortable under her affliction for want of children, and to express his tender affection for her:

but the Lord had shut up her womb; restrained her from conception, and bearing children; see Ge 20:18 or "though the Lord had shut up her womb" {k}; this did not abate his love to her.

{h} Mypa txa hnm "unam portionem duarum facicrum", Sanctius Belgae. {i} Sic Stockins, p. 79. {k} hwhyw "quanquam Jehovah", Piscator.

1 Samuel 1:6

Ver. 6. And her adversary also provoked her sore,.... That is, Peninnah, the other wife of Elkanah; for when a man had more wives, two or more, they were usually at enmity to one another, as the two wives of Socrates were, being always jealous lest one should have more love and respect than the other from the husband; and this woman provoked Hannah one time after another, and continually, by upbraiding her with her barrenness; and this was another reason why Elkanah did all he could to comfort her, not only because the Lord had restrained her from bearing children, but because also she that envied and emulated her sadly provoked her:

for to make her fret; and be uneasy, and murmur at and complain of her unhappy circumstances: some render it, "because she thundered" {l} against her; that is, Peninnah was exceeding loud and clamorous with her reproaches and scoffs, which were grievously provoking to Hannah. So said Socrates, when Xantippe first scolded at him, and then poured foul water on him: did not I say, says he, that Xantippe first thunders, and then rains {m}?

because the Lord had shut up her womb; it was this Peninnah upbraided her with, and at which Hannah fretted and grieved.

{l} hmerh rwbeb "propterea quod intonabat contra eam", Piscator. {m} Laert. in Vit. Socrat. p. 112.

1 Samuel 1:7

Ver. 7. And as he did so year by year,.... Elkanah went up every year to Shiloh, and offered sacrifices, taking his family with him, and gave to Peninnah and her children their portion, and to Hannah a double portion, or if but one yet the best:

when she went up to the house of the Lord; that is, Peninnah, along with her husband, with whom she went every year to the tabernacle at Shiloh:

so she provoked her; her rival Hannah, upbraiding her with her barrenness; to which she was stirred up by seeing her husband on these festivals take so much notice of her, and show so much love and respect for her, as always to give her the best portion. Abarbinel thinks that Peninnah and Hannah lived at two separate places, the one at Ramah and the other at Ramatha, which both together are called Ramathaim; and that they only met with and saw one another at these festivals, and then it was that the one was so very insulting and provoking to the other:

therefore she wept and did not eat; that is, Hannah wept at the insults, reproaches, and scoffs, cast at her by her antagonist; insomuch that she could not eat of the peace offerings, though her husband always gave her the best part and portion of them; but her grief took away her stomach and appetite, that she could not eat; see
Ps 42:3.

1 Samuel 1:8

Ver. 8. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou?.... Since it was a time of rejoicing, as every festival was, especially at the ingathering of the fruits of the earth:

and why eatest thou not? since they were at a feast, and she had the best part and portion of the provision:

and why is thy heart grieved? to such a degree that she could neither eat nor drink:

am not I better to thee than ten sons? which, as Jarchi says, Peninnah had borne to him; his meaning is, that the share she had in his love and affections ought to have been esteemed by her more than if she had ten or many children by him; and it suggests that Peninnah would have been glad to have such a share in his affections as Hannah had; and it would have been more eligible to her, than to have borne him so many children as she had.

1 Samuel 1:9

Ver. 9. So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drank,.... After dinner, after Elkanah and Peninnah, and their children, had eaten heartily, and drank freely, and made a comfortable meal, and even a feast of it, at the place where the tabernacle and altar were, and their peace offerings were offered up, part of which they had been regaling themselves with. The Targum is,

"after she had eaten in Shiloh, and after she had drank;"

for upon the entreaty of her husband, and to make him easy, she might be prevailed upon to eat somewhat, though it might be but little; and to drink, though it was but water; for as for wine and strong drink, she declares afterwards she had not drank, **1Sa 1:15**

now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord; for so the tabernacle was called, and sometimes the temple is called a tabernacle, Jer 10:20. Now at the door posts and side of the threshold of the temple of the Lord, as the Targum; at the entrance of the great court of the Israelites, Eli had a seat placed, on which he sat; this must be at the gate of the court of the tabernacle, by the pillars of it; for in the court itself none afterwards might sit but kings of the family David {n}; here Eli sat as an high priest and judge, give advice in difficult cases, and to try and judge all causes that were brought before him; some say {o} that he was on this day constituted an high priest, and others say {q} he was now made a judge; but no doubt he was both high priest and judge before this time.

{n} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 1. {o} Shoched Tob apud Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 12. 4. {q} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 37.

1 Samuel 1:10

Ver. 10. And she was in bitterness of soul,.... Because of her barrenness, and the taunts and reflections she had met with on that account; her life was bitter to her, she could take no pleasure in any of the comforts of it:

and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore; her prayer was with strong crying and tears; it was very fervent and affectionate; she prayed most vehemently, and wept bitterly. This perhaps was about the time of the evening sacrifice, about three or four o'clock in the afternoon; seeing it was after dinner that she arose up and went to prayer in the house of God, at the door of the tabernacle, or near it, as it should seem by the notice Eli took of her, who sat there.

1 Samuel 1:11

Ver. 11. And she vowed a vow,.... Which might be confirmed by her husband; otherwise the vow of a woman, if disapproved of by her husband, was not valid, Nu 30:8 and Elkanah might make the same vow his wife did, and so it stood; for as this was a vow of Nazariteship, it is a tradition of the Jews {r}, that a man may vow his son to be a Nazarite, but a woman may not; but as this instance contradicts the tradition, they endeavour to explain away this vow, as it may respect a Nazarite, as will be observed hereafter:

and said, O Lord of hosts; this is properly the first time this title was used by any that we know of; for though it is expressed in **1Sa 1:3** there it is used as the words of the writer of this history, and so long after this prayer was put up; See Gill on "1Sa 1:3"; and it is an observation in the Talmud {s}, that from the day God created the world, no man called him the Lord of hosts till Hannah came and called him so:

if thou wilt indeed look upon the affliction of thine handmaid the sorrow of heart she had, the reproach she met with, on account of her having no children:

and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid; which petitions are the same in other words, and are repeated to denote her vehemence and importunity in prayer, and may allude to usages among men, that will look upon a person in distress, and turn away and forget them, and never think of them more; which she deprecates may not be her case with God:

but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child; or, "a seed of men" {t}; a son in the midst of men, as the Targum; such as is desirable by men, as a male child for the most part is; though some Jewish writers interpret it of the seed of righteous, wise, and understanding men, such as be fit to serve the Lord, which seems to be a sense foreign to the text; a man child she asks, because no other could serve the Lord in the temple; and that she meant by this phrase such an one is clear, because she vowed that a razor should not come on its head, which is never said of females, as Kimchi observes:

then will I give him unto the Lord all the days of his life; to serve him, and minister unto him in the sanctuary; being born a Levite, it was incumbent on him to serve the Lord, and he had a right to his service; but then a common Levite did not enter on it until twenty five or thirty years of age, and was not always serving, but was dismissed from it at fifty **Nu 8:24**; but the child she vows, if the Lord would give her such an one, should be trained up in his service from his infancy, and continue it all the days of his life; and was to be also a perpetual Nazarite, as Samson was, as follows:

and there shall no razor come upon his head; as was not to come upon a Nazarite, during his Nazariteship, **Nu 6:5** and as such a vow made by a woman contradicts the tradition of the Jews before mentioned, they give another sense of this clause; as the Targum, which paraphrases it,

"and the fear of man shall not be upon him;"

but about this there is a division {u}; but that Samuel was Nazarite, and a perpetual one, is the sense of their best interpreters.

{r} Misn. Sotah. c. 3. sect. 8. {s} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 31. 2. {t} Myvna erz "semen virorum", Montanus. {u} Misn. Nazir, c. 9. sect. 5.

1 Samuel 1:12

Ver. 12. And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord,.... Being very earnest and importunate with him to grant her request, and therefore repeated her petition, and prolonged her prayer, being unwilling to let the Lord go, until she had a promise, or some satisfaction, that she should have the thing she liked; some think she continued an hour in prayer:

that Eli marked her mouth; observed the motion of her lips, and no doubt her distorted countenance, and uplifted eyes and hands, but chiefly the former; not knowing what the woman was at, and what could be the meaning of such motions.

1 Samuel 1:13

Ver. 13. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart,.... It was mental prayer she used, some ejaculations of her mind she sent up to God, which she was sensible were well known to him, and she needed not to express vocally:

only her lips moved; as her heart spoke, and sent up her petitions, as if she had used words and phrases in form:

but her voice was not heard: that she might not seem to be ostentatious in her prayer, and that she might not interrupt others in their devotions; and she knew that her voice was not necessary with respect to God:

therefore Eli thought she had been drunken; by the motions she made, and gestures she used, as if she was muttering something to herself, and by her long continuance therein, and it being after a feast she had been at with her husband, and the rest of the family; from all which Eli concluded this must be her case.

1 Samuel 1:14

Ver. 14. And Eli said unto her, how long wilt thou be drunken?.... What, every day drunk? what, continually in this wicked practice? when will it be stopped? for Eli might have observed on other days, and at other times, odd looks, and a strange behaviour in her, which he took for the effects of drinking too much wine: or how long will this drunken fit last? she had been a considerable time as he thought in it, and it was not gone off yet: the Targum is,

"how long wilt thou behave like a fool, or a mad woman?"

as drunken people generally do act, as if they were fools, or mad:

put away thy wine from thee; not as if she had any with her there to drink of, but he advises her, since it had such an effect upon her, to abstain from it, and wholly disuse it, and so break off such an habit and custom she had got into; or he would have her go home and sleep it out, and wait till she had digested it, and the strength of it was gone off, before she came to such a place of devotion and worship; from hence the Jews say {w} it may be learnt, that a drunken person ought not to pray.

{w} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 31. 1.

1 Samuel 1:15

Ver. 15. And Hannah answered and said, no, my lord,.... That is not my case, you have greatly mistaken it; she answered with great mildness and meekness, without falling into a passion at such a scandalous imputation upon her, and with great respect and reverence to Eli, suitable to his office; so in later times the high priest used to be addressed after this manner, particularly on the day of atonement, "Lord high priest", do so and so {x}; indeed these words of Hannah are interpreted as not so very respectful, as if the sense was, not a lord art thou in this matter; nor does the Holy Ghost dwell upon thee {y}; which thou hast sufficiently shown, or thou wouldest never have suspected me of drunkenness:

I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: depressed with trouble and grief on account of afflictions; if she was drunk, it was not with wine, but with sorrow: or "a woman of a hard spirit" {z}; which is sometimes taken in an ill sense, and, according to Abarbinel, is here denied by her, who connects this clause with the preceding thus; not, my lord, am I a woman of a hard spirit, or such a hardened wretch, and such an impudent woman, as I must be, were it so, to come drunk into the house of God, and pretend to pray unto him:

I have drank neither wine nor strong drink; not any sort of intoxicating liquors that day, neither wine new or old, as the Targum:

but have poured out my soul before the Lord: the affliction of it, as the same paraphrase; the grievances and distresses, the complaints of her soul, which were many, and which she had poured out before the Lord freely and plentifully, and which had taken up some time to do it; see
Ps 42:8 where phrases similar to this are used, and which seem to be taken from hence.

{x} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 3, 5, 7. {y} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 31. 2. Jarchi in loc. {z} xwr tvq "dura spiritu", Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Samuel 1:16

Ver. 16. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial,.... A yokeless, a lawless, impudent, and abandoned creature; one of the most wicked, vilest, and most profligate wretches; as she must be to come drunk into the sanctuary of God; see 1Sa 25:17. Drunkenness in man is an abominable crime, but much more in a woman. The Romans {a} forbad wine to women, and drunkenness in them was a capital crime, as adultery, or any other; and indeed a drunken woman is liable to all manner of sin:

for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto; out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak, whether it is matter of trouble or of joy; the heart of Hannah was full of grief, and her mouth full of complaints, on which she long dwelt, in order to give vent thereunto, and ease herself.

{a} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 14. c. 13.

1 Samuel 1:17

Ver. 17. Then Eli answered and said, go in peace,.... He found he was mistaken in her, and that her discourse was not only sober and rational, but religious and spiritual; and therefore dismisses her in peace, and bids her not distress herself with what he had said to her, nor with anything she had met with from others, or from the Lord; but expect peace and prosperity, and particularly success in what she had been engaged, and had been solicitous for:

and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him; which may be considered either as a prayer for her, he joining with her in a request to the Lord, that what she had asked might be granted; or as a prophecy that so it would be, it being revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, as the high priest of the Lord; or impressed by an impulse upon his spirit that the favour asked would be given; and therefore she might go home in peace, and with satisfaction of mind.

1 Samuel 1:18

Ver. 18. And she said, let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight,.... She had found favour in his sight she perceives, and she desires it might be continued and increased; and that as he had prayed for her, he would still use his interest at the throne of grace for her:

so the woman went her way; took her leave of Eli, and went from the tabernacle to her husband: and did eat; what remained of the peace offerings, which were to be eaten that night, and not left till the morning; and though she would not eat her dinner, her heart was so full of grief, yet she could now make a good supper, being eased and relieved in her mind:

and her countenance was no more sad; sorrowful and dejected, but cheerful, brisk, and lively; believing that her prayers, and those of the high priest, would be answered.

1 Samuel 1:19

Ver. 19. And they rose up in the morning early,.... Partly for devotion, and partly for the sake of their journey:

and worshipped before the Lord; went up to the tabernacle, and prayed with their faces towards that part of it, the western part, where stood the ark of the Lord, the symbol of the divine Presence; and when they no doubt gave thanks for all the favours they had received there, and prayed for a safe and prosperous journey home, committing themselves to the care of divine Providence:

and returned, and came to their house to Ramah; or "Ramatha", the same with Ramathaim, **1Sa 1:1**. Abarbinel thinks that Elkanah had two houses, one at Ramah for Peninnah, and another at Ramatha for Hannah; and that this was Hannah's house, to which they returned and came:

and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife: cohabited with her as a man with his wife; it is a modest expression of the conjugal act; see **Ge 4:1** and is observed to show that the conception and birth of Samuel were not in a supernatural way, but in the ordinary way and manner of generation:

and the Lord remembered her; the prayer she had made to him, opened her womb, as he had before shut it, and gave her power to conceive.

1 Samuel 1:20

Ver. 20. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about, after Hannah had conceived,.... Or, "at the revolutions of days" {b}; at the end of a year, of a complete year, as Ben Melech, from their return from Shiloh; for it might be some time after their return that she conceived; or rather the sense is, that at nine months' end, the usual time of a woman's going with child from her conception, which is the date here given:

that she bare a son: was brought to bed of a son:

and called his name Samuel, [saying], because I have asked him of the Lord; one would think rather his name should have been Saul, for the reason given; but, as Ben Gersom observes, givers of names are not always grammatically strict and critical in them, or in the etymology of them, as in the names of Reuben and Noah, in which he instances; and this may be the rather overlooked in a woman, than in a man of learning. According to Kimchi, it is as if it was Saulmeel; that is, "asked of God", and by contraction Samuel; but Hillerus {c} gives a better account of this name, and takes it to be composed of Saul-mul-el, "asked before God", "in the sight of God", "before the ark of God". This name Hannah gave her son (for sometimes the father, and sometimes the mother, gave the name) in memory of the wonderful favour and goodness of God in granting her request; and to impress her own mind with a sense of the obligation she lay under, to perform her vow, and to engage her son the more readily to give up himself to the service of God, when he reflected on his name, and the reason of it.

{b} Mymyh twpqtl "in revolutionibus dierum", Montanus; so Piscator. {c} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 418, 419, 487.

1 Samuel 1:21

Ver. 21. And the man Elkanah, and all his house,.... All his family, excepting Hannah, and her son Samuel; or all the men of his house, as the Targum; for only the males were obliged to appear at the three festivals:

went up to Shiloh; to the house of God there:

to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice; either the passover, to which men commonly went up with their families: see **Lu 2:41**, or rather it may be what was offered at the feast of tabernacles, as Abarbinel thinks, the time of the ingathering the fruits of the earth, when men went up with their families to offer sacrifice, and express their joy on that account, De 16:10

and his vow: which he had made between feast and feast; for whatever vows men made at home, on any account, they paid them at the yearly festivals; and this vow might be on the account of the birth of his son, by way of thanksgiving for that.

1 Samuel 1:22

Ver. 22. But Hannah went not up,.... For women, though they might go if they pleased to the yearly feasts, yet they were not obliged to it; whether she went up at the time for her purification, and for the presenting and redemption of the firstborn, is not certain; some say the Levites were not obliged by that law, the perquisites of it falling to them, and so did not go up; others that she did, though it is not expressed, the Scriptures not relating all facts that were done; though by what follows it looks as if she did not:

for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned: which, according to Jarchi, was at the end of twenty two months; but others say at the end of twenty four months, or two years, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; and sometimes a child was three years old before it was weaned, and sometimes longer, which very probably was the case here; See Gill on "Ge 21:8". Comestor {d} observes, there was a three fold weaning of children in old times; the first from their mother's milk, when three years old; the second from their tender age, and care of a dry nurse, when seven years old; the third from childish manners, when at twelve years of age; and that it is this last and metaphorical weaning which is here meant, when Samuel was twelve years of age, and fit to serve in the temple; but the proper sense is best, since she is said to bring him when weaned: her reason for it seems to be this, because had she went up with her sucking child, she must have brought him back again, since he would not be fit to be left behind, and would be entirely incapable of any kind of service in the sanctuary; and according to the nature of her vow, she could not think of bringing him back again, after she had once entered him there:

and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord; and minister in the service of the sanctuary in what might be suitable to his age; there and then she would present him, and give him up to the Lord, as she had promised she would:

and there abide for ever; that is, as long as he lived; for her vow was that he should be a Nazarite all the days of his life, and be separated to the service of God as long as he had a being in the world.

{d} Apud Weemse's Observ. Nat. c. 18. p. 76.

1 Samuel 1:23

Ver. 23. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, do what seemeth thee good,.... He spake like a kind and indulgent husband, knowing that she would not thereby break any law of God; and it might be more for her own health, and the health of the child, to stay longer:

tarry till thou have weaned him; when he would be more fit for the journey, and to be left behind:

only the Lord establish his word; which some understand of the prophecy of Eli that God would grant her request, which being delivered under the direction of the Spirit of God, is called his word; but this was already fulfilled, and established by Hannah's bearing a son: or the word "his" refers not to the Lord, but to Samuel, and so may respect the word which his mother spake concerning him; either when she made her vow, as Abendana, that he should be a perpetual Nazarite, and the Lord's as long as he lived: and so Elkanah wishes that he might have health and grow strong, and be fit for the service of the Lord, and live many years to perform it; or what she had just now said, as Abarbinel, that he should abide in the house of God for ever, or as long as he lived:

so the woman abode; at home, while Elkanah and his family went up to Shiloh:

and gave her son suck until she weaned him; did not put him out to a wet or dry nurse, but suckled him herself with what nature had provided for his nourishment, as becomes women to do, if their circumstances of health, and the provisions of nature, will admit of it.

1 Samuel 1:24

Ver. 24. And when she had weaned him,.... At the usual time of weaning children; See Gill on "1Sa 1:23" some refer this not only to the milk of the breast, from which he was weaned, but to such food as was common to children, and so supposes him grown up to nine or ten years of age:

she took him up with her; to the tabernacle at Shiloh, at a yearly festival: with three bullocks; for three sorts of offerings, burnt offering, sin offering, and peace offering; or since one only is spoken of as slain, that is, for sacrifice, the other two might be for food to entertain her family and friends with while there; or as a present to the high priest, to whose care she committed her son:

and one ephah of flour; if the bullocks were all sacrificed, three tenth deals, or three tenth parts of the ephah, went for a meat offering to each bullock, which made nine parts out of ten, and the tenth part she had to dispose of at pleasure; see Nu 15:9, though that seems to be restrained to a burnt offering only:

and a bottle of wine; part of which might be for the drink offering which always attended a meat offering, and the rest for her own use, and that of her friends:

and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh: the tabernacle there, and delivered him up to the care of the high priest, to be trained up in the service of God:

and the child was young; a very child, very young in years, a little infant; not a sucking child, as the Targum, because weaned, otherwise of a very tender age; though some think this expresses that he was a well grown lad, and was sharp and acute, and could well distinguish between good and evil.

1 Samuel 1:25

Ver. 25. And they slew a bullock,.... One of the three Hannah brought, unless the singular is put for the plural, and so all three were slain, some for sacrifice, and some for food perhaps; or if only one was slain, it might be offered as a sacrifice previous to the presentation of Samuel; or else was made a present of to Eli, at the introduction of Samuel to him, as follows:

and brought the child to Eli: to be under his care, to he instructed and trained up by him in the service of the tabernacle; from hence it appears that Elkanah the husband of Hannah came along with her at this time.

1 Samuel 1:26

Ver. 26. And she said, O my lord,.... According to the Targum, it is a supplication or request, I beseech thee, my lord; that is, to look upon her son, and take him under his care as his disciple or scholar, to instruct him in the law of God, and enter him into his service; to which Eli might be very backward and indifferent, and even treat it with some degree of contempt, that such a young Levite should be brought to him, when the soonest the Levites were admitted was at twenty five years of age:

as thy soul liveth, my lord; which Ben Gersom takes for the form of an oath, as if she swore to the truth of what follows by the life of the high priest; but as it was forbidden to swear by any but by the living God, by his life, it cannot be thought so good a woman as Hannah would be guilty of such a sinful and Heathenish practice; this rather is a wish or prayer for his life and health, and the continuance thereof, to bring up her son in the exercise of true religion:

I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord: by which it appears that Eli was now at the tabernacle, and in the same place he was, **1Sa 1:9** when she was some years ago praying near him, at the distance of four cubits, as the Jews say: she takes no notice of his mistaking her for a drunken woman, nor of his censure on her, and the reproof he gave her; but puts him in mind only of her praying to the Lord standing near to him, which made him take the more notice of her; standing is a prayer posture; the Jews say there is no standing but what is prayer, or prayer is meant by it; See Gill on "Mt 6:5".

1 Samuel 1:27

Ver. 27. For this child I prayed,.... Which she now had in her hand, and was presenting to Eli:

and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him; and which he also desired might be granted her, or foretold that it would be, **1Sa 1:17** though perhaps he knew not then particularly what it was she asked; nor did she acquaint him with it at parting, as she now did, having obtained of the Lord what she was so solicitous for, and now makes mention of with thankfulness.

1 Samuel 1:28

Ver. 28. Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord,.... To be employed in his service, not for a few days, months, or years, but for his whole life. The Targum is,

"I have delivered him, that he may minister before the Lord;"

as she had received him front him as an answer of prayer, she gave him up to him again according to her vow: as long as he liveth he shall be lent unto the Lord, or as the Targum,

"all the days that he lives he shall be ministering before the Lord;"

or "all the days he shall be asked" (or "required") by or for the Lord {e}; that is, he shall be lent unto him, and serve him as long as it is desired:

and he worshipped the Lord there; in the tabernacle at the same time; either Elkanah, who with Hannah brought the child to Eli, and now gave thanks to God for giving them the child, and prayed unto him that he might be received into the service of the sanctuary; or else Eli, to whom the child was brought for admittance, who when he heard that Hannah's request was granted, which he had entreated also might be or had declared it would be, bowed his head, and gave thanks to God for it; or rather the child Samuel, as he was taught and trained up, bowed himself before the Lord, and worshipped him in the tabernacle as soon as he was brought into it, though a child; for he only is spoken of in this and the preceding verse; and by some interpreters {f} the name Samuel is supplied; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read in the plural number, "and they worshipped the Lord there": that is, Elkanah and his wife; so Mr. Weemse {g} translates and interprets it.

{e} "Quamdiu" lwav, h. e. "expetitus aut requisitur", Peter Martyr; "quoties a Jehova postulatur", Piscator. {f} Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {g} Observat. Nat. c. 18. p. 77.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 2

In this chapter the song of Hannah is recorded, **1Sa 2:1**, and an account is given of the return of Elkanah and Hannah to their own home, and of the care she took yearly to provide a coat for Samuel, and of her being blessed with many other children, and of the growth and ministry of Samuel before the Lord, **1Sa 2:11**, and of the wickedness of the sons of Eli, **1Sa 2:12**, and of Eli's too gentle treatment of them when he reproved them for it, **1Sa 2:22** and of a sharp message sent him from the Lord on that account, threatening destruction to his house, of which the death of his two sons would be a sign, **1Sa 2:27**.

Ver. 1. And Hannah prayed and said,.... She had prayed before, but that was mental, this vocal; she had prayed and was answered, and had what she prayed for, and now she gives thanks for it; and thanksgiving is one kind of prayer, or a part of it; see **1Ti 2:1**, wherefore though what follows is a song, it was expressed in prayer; and therefore it is said she prayed, and that by a spirit of prophecy, as the Targum; hence she is by the Jews {h} reckoned one of the seven prophetesses; and indeed in this song she not only relates the gracious experiences of divine goodness she had been favoured with, and celebrates the divine perfections, and treats of the dealings of God with men, both in a way of providence and grace; but prophesies of things that should be done hereafter in Israel, and particularly of the Messiah and of his kingdom. There is a great likeness in this song to the song of the Virgin Mary; compare **1Sa 2:1** with **Lu 1:46** and **1Sa 2:2** with **Lu 1:49** and **1Sa 2:4** with **Lu 1:51**,

my heart rejoiceth in the Lord: not in her son the Lord had given her, but in the goodness and kindness of the Lord in bestowing him on her, as an answer of prayer; which showed great condescension to her, the notice he took of her, the love he had to her, and his well pleasedness in her, and his acceptance of her prayer through Christ; she rejoiced not in her husband, nor in the wealth and riches they were possessed of, nor in any creature enjoyments, but in the Lord, the giver of all; nor in her religious services and sacrifices, but in the Lord Christ, through whom her duties were acceptable to God, and who was the antitype of the sacrifices offered; and it is in the person, offices, and grace of Christ, that we should alone rejoice: see **Php 4:4** this joy of Hannah's was not worldly, but spiritual; not outward, but inward; not hypocritical, but real and hearty:

mine horn is exalted in the Lord: which supposes that she had been in a low estate, was crest fallen, and her horn was defiled in the dust, as Job says was his case, Job 16:15, when God had shut up her womb, and her adversary upbraided her with it, and provoked and fretted her; and when she was so full of grief, that she could not eat her food, and prayed in the bitterness of her soul; but now she could lift up her horn and her head, as horned creatures, to whom the allusion is, do, when they are lively and strong; now she could look pleasant and cheerful, and even triumph, being raised to an high estate, and greatly favoured of the Lord, to whom she ascribes this change of her state and circumstances: it was owing to his power and grace that she was thus strengthened and exalted; as it is owing to the same, that the people of God, who are in a low estate by nature, are raised out of it in conversion, and brought into an open state of grace and favour with God, and put into the possession of rich blessings and mercies, and have hope of eternal glory, on account of which they can exult and triumph:

my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; meaning Peninnah, and those that provoked her, and upbraided her with her barrenness, to whom she was not able to make any reply; but now her mouth was opened, and she could speak largely, and did; not in a way of reproach and reviling, in retaliation for what she had met with from others; but in prayer to God, to whom she could come with open mouth, and use freedom and boldness, and plead with importunity, fervency, and in faith, and in praise and thanksgiving to him for the great and good things he had done for her, and would now freely and largely speak of them to others; to some, her friends, to their joy and pleasure; and to others, her enemies, to their grief and confusion:

because I rejoice in thy salvation; not only in temporal salvation wrought by the Lord for her, whereby she was delivered from the reproach of barrenness, through a son being given unto her; but in spiritual and eternal salvation, through the Messiah, she had knowledge of, and faith in, as appears from **1Sa 2:10**, as all believers in him do, as it is contrived by the wisdom of God, wrought out by Christ, and applied by his Spirit; it being so great, so suitable, so perfect and complete, entirely free, and of an everlasting duration; see Ps 20:5.

{h} T. Megillah, fol. 14. 1.

1 Samuel 2:2

Ver. 2. There is none holy as the Lord,.... From the consideration of what the Lord had done for her, which had filled her heart and mouth with joy and praise, she is led to celebrate the perfections of God, and begins with his holiness, in which he is glorious, and which appears in all his ways and works; he is essentially, originally, independently, perfectly, and immutably holy, as others are not. Angels are holy, but not of themselves; their holiness is from the Lord; nor is it perfect in comparison of his, and therefore they cover their faces while they celebrate that perfection of his; nor immutable, at least not naturally so, as the loss of it in those that fell demonstrates. Of men, some under the legal dispensation were holy, not truly, but in a typical and ceremonial sense; some are only outwardly and hypocritically holy, and only so in the sight of men, not in the sight of God; and those that are truly holy, being called to holiness, and have the principle of it implanted in them, and live holy lives and conversations; yet though there is a likeness of the holiness of God in them, being made partakers of the divine nature; it is far from an equality to it; for the holiness of the best of men is imperfect; they are not without sin in them, nor without sin committed by them, and perfection is disclaimed by them all; but the Lord is without iniquity, just and true is he; none in his nature, nor in any of his works, not the least shadow thereof:

for [there] is none besides thee; there is no God besides him; no being but what is of him, and none is holy but by him; the holiness of angels is from him; the holiness of Adam in innocence was of him; and all the holiness of his chosen ones comes from him, to which they are chosen by him, and which is secured in that choice unto them, and are sanctified by God the Father, in Christ, and through the Spirit:

neither is there any rock like our God; the word rock is used for Deity, and sometimes for a false one, De 32:31 and so it may here, and the sense be, there is no god like to our God; there is indeed none besides him; there are fictitious gods, and nominal ones, as the idols of the Gentiles, and who are so in an improper and figurative sense, as magistrates; but there is but one true and living God; nor is there any like him for the perfections of his nature, and the blessings of his goodness, whether in providence or grace. Under this metaphor of a rock, our Lord Jesus Christ is often signified; he is the rock of Israel, the rock of refuge, and of salvation; and there is no rock can do what he does, hide and shelter from the justice of God; there is no rock like him for strength and duration; none like him for a foundation to build upon, or for safety and protection from the wrath of God, and the rage of men, see Ps 18:31.

1 Samuel 2:3

Ver. 3. Talk no more so exceeding proudly,.... At such an high rate, in such an overbearing manner, as if above everyone; this may have respect to Peninnah, and all that joined with her to provoke Hannah to anger, and make her fret, insulting and triumphing over her, because she had not children, as they had; but now their mouths would be stopped, and their talk over, and not give themselves the haughty airs they had done, at least there would be no occasion for them:

let not arrogancy come out of your mouth; arrogating to themselves, and to their merits, what they enjoyed, as children, riches, &c. when all come from the Lord; or what is "hard" {i}, intolerable, which bears so hard on those to whom it is said, that it cannot be bore with; or what is "old" {k}, and trite, old sayings concerning barren women, as if of no use in the world, and disagreeable to God, and as having no share in his favour. The Targum renders the word by reproaches, or blasphemies:

for the Lord is a God of knowledge; or knowledges {l}: of perfect knowledge; he knows all persons and things; he knows himself, his perfections, purposes, thoughts, words and works; he knows all his creatures, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, angels and men; the hearts of all men; all that they say, all their hard sayings, all their proud, haughty, overbearing expressions, calumnies, and reproaches, as well as all they think and all they do, good or bad; and God will sooner or later convince them of and punish them for their hard speeches against his people: and he is the author of all knowledge, natural, civil, spiritual, and evangelical:

and by him actions are weighed: his own actions; his works "ad intra"; his purposes and decrees, the counsels of his will, and the thoughts of his heart, the things his mind is set upon; all his appointments and designs, his whole will and pleasure; all are pondered by him, and are formed with the utmost wisdom, and for the best ends and purposes: and all, his actions and works without, whether of creation, providence, and grace, all are weighed and done according to infinite wisdom, unerring justice and truth; all respecting things temporal or spiritual, what relate to the outward estate of men, or to their everlasting happiness: all the actions of men, as they are known unto him, they are weighed and examined by him, whether they proceed from a right principle to a right end or not; upon which, many actions, thought to be good, are not found to be so, and others, though good, yet not found perfect before God; so that there is no justification nor salvation by the best: or the sense is, such actions as are done well, they are "directed to him" {m}; as they are ordained by him that men should walk in them, they are for his use, and are done with a view to his glory. There is a double reading of these words; the marginal, which we follow, is "to" or "by him" actions are directed or weighed; but the textual reading is a negative, "actions are not weighed" {n}, or numbered; the works of God cannot be comprehended, or the actions of men are not disposed and ordered without his will and pleasure, or cannot be performed unless he wills or permits; and all are disposed of, overruled, and directed, to answer his own ends and purposes.

{i} qte "durum", Vatablus, Drusius, Piscator; so R. Isaiah. {k} "Vetera", V. L. "vetus", Pagninus, Montanus. {l} twed la "Deus scientiarum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Drusius. {m} wnktn alw "ipsi directa sunt", Pagninus. {n} "Non disponuntur", Junius & Tremellius; "non numerantur", so some in Vatablus; "non perficiuntur", so some in Munster.

1 Samuel 2:4

Ver. 4. The bows of the mighty men are broken,.... Hannah, from relating gracious experiences, and celebrating, the divine perfections of holiness, omniscience, and sovereignty, passes on to take notice of the dealings of God with men in providence and grace; bows are here put for all military arms, which men of might and war make use of, and which God can easily break in pieces, and so make war to cease in the earth, and hinder warlike men from doing what they design and attempt; they are enfeebled and weakened by him, and their hands cannot perform their enterprises: so the bows of Satan, and his principalities and powers, are broken, and his fiery darts are quenched, and the people of the Lord enabled to stand against him, and wrestle with him and them, being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, as it follows:

and they that stumbled are girt with strength; who, through weakness, are ready to stumble at everything they meet with in the way; yet, being girded with strength by the Lord, are able to do great exploits, as David did, that being his case, Ps 18:29, so such as are weak in grace, in faith, in knowledge, and ready to stumble at every trial and exercise, let it come from what quarter it will; yet being girded by the Lord with strength, are able to exercise grace, perform duty, go through every service they are called to, whether in a way of doing or suffering, to bear the yoke and cross of Christ, to oppose every enemy, to walk on in the ways of God, and to persevere in faith and holiness to the end.

1 Samuel 2:5

Ver. 5. They that are full have hired out themselves for bread,.... Such as have been full of the good things of this life have been stripped of all, and reduced to such circumstances as to be obliged to hire themselves out to persons to labour under them for their bread. Hannah has either respect to some instances she had known, or prophesies of what would be hereafter, and was fulfilled in the Israelites, when in the hands of the Egyptians and Assyrians, **Lam 4:6** and may be exemplified in the case of the prodigal son, Lu 15:13 and is true of such who have larger gifts, but not grace, and which they exercise for lucre sake, and are mere hirelings; and of self-righteous persons who are full of themselves, of their goodness and righteousness, purity, and power; are quite mercenary do all they do for gain, work for life, and labour for perishing meat, and for that which is not bread, and is unsatisfying:

and they that were hungry ceased; that is, from being hungry, being filled with good things, having a large and sufficient supply to satisfy their craving desires, **Lu 1:53**. Such are the changes sometimes in Providence, that those who have lived in great plenty and fulness are obliged to work for their bread; and, on the other hand, such as have been starving, and in furnishing circumstances, have been brought into very plentiful and affluent ones. The "hungry", in a spiritual sense, are such who hunger an thirst after Christ, and his righteousness, for justification before God; after him and his blood for the remission of their sins, and the cleansing of their souls; after him, and salvation by him, in whom alone it is to be had; after a view of interest in him, and a greater degree of knowledge of him; and after more communion with him in his word and ordinances; and after the enjoyment of them for that purpose: now when they enjoy what they are craving after, they cease to hire out themselves for bread, as others do; they do not cease from working, but from dependence on their works, on which they cannot feed and live, having found and got other and better bread to feed upon; they cease to be hungry, for they are filled and satisfied with the love of God, with the righteousness of Christ, with the blessings of grace, and salvation by him, with the goodness of his house, and with all the fulness of God and Christ; and so having what satisfies them, they desire no other food, shall have no more want, or be in a starving condition any more, especially this will be the case hereafter:

so that the barren hath born seven; meaning herself, who had born many, even five children besides Samuel, **1Sa 2:20** which either was the case before this song was delivered; or rather what she believed would be the case after Eli had blessed her, and prayed for the children by her; seven being a number put for many, Pr 24:16

and she that hath many children is waxed feeble; and incapable of bearing more; and stripped of what she had; this may be understood of Peninnah, concerning whom the Jews have this tradition {o}, which Jarchi relates, that when Hannah bore one child, Peninnah buried two; and whereas Hannah had five, Peninnah lost all her ten children. This may be applied to the case of the Gentile and Jewish churches, under the Gospel dispensation, when more were the children of the desolate or barren, the Gentiles, than of the married wife, the Jews, Isa 54:1.

{o} Vid. Hieron, Trad. Heb. in. lib. Reg. fol. 34. K.

1 Samuel 2:6

Ver. 6. The Lord killeth, and maketh alive,.... Which is true of different persons; some he takes away by death, and others he preserves and continues in life; and of the same persons, whom God removes by death, and restores them to life again, of which there are instances both in the Old and New Testament; and be they which they will, both are of God, he is the great Disposer of life and death. Death is of him; it is by his appointment; it is sent by his order; and when it has a commission from him, there is no resisting it; and let it be brought about by what means it will, still it is of God: and life is of him; it is first given by him, and it is preserved by him; and though taken away, it shall be restored at the resurrection of the dead; of which some interpret this clause, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom observe: and what is here said is true, in a spiritual sense; the Lord kills by the law, or shows men that they are dead in sin, and in a legal sense; and he makes alive by his Spirit, through the Gospel, quickening such who were dead in trespasses and sins; which is his own work, and the effect of divine power and grace; See Gill on "De 32:39".

he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up; he bringeth some very near to the grave, to the very brink of it; so that in their own apprehensions, and in the opinion of their friends, they are just dropping into it, and no hope of recovery left; when he says to them "Return", and brings them back from the pit, and delivers them from going into it, Job 33:22 and even when they are laid in it, he brings up out of it again, as in the case of Lazarus, and which will be the case in the resurrection, **Joh 5:28**.

1 Samuel 2:7

Ver. 7. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich,.... Which is true in a natural sense of the same persons, as might be exemplified in the case of Job; and of different persons, as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; for both poverty and riches are of God, see
Pr 22:2. Poverty is of God; for though it is sometimes owing to a man's own conduct, yet that there is such a difference among men in general, that some should be poor, and others rich, is owing to the wise providence of God, that men may be dependent on one another. Riches are of God, and are the gifts of his bountiful providence; for though they are oftentimes the fruits of industry and diligence, as means, yet not always; and whenever they are, they are to be ascribed to the blessing of God attending the diligent hand. This is also true in a spiritual sense; for though spiritual poverty is owing to the fall of Adam, and to the actual sins and transgressions of men, whereby they become poor and miserable, yet all this is not without the knowledge and will of God: and it is he that makes men sensible of their poverty, and then makes them rich in spiritual things, with his own grace, and the blessings of it, with the riches of grace here, and of glory hereafter; all which flow from the good will of God, who has laid up much for his people, bestowed much on them, and entitles them to more; and which come to them through the poverty of Christ, who, though he was rich, became poor, that they through his poverty might be made rich, **2Co 8:9** he bringeth low, and lifteth up; which has been verified in the same persons, as in Job, Nebuchadnezzar, &c. and in different persons, for he puts down one, and raises up another; so he rejected Saul from being king, and took David from the sheepfold, debased Haman, and raised Mordecai to great dignity: and, in a spiritual sense, the Lord shows men the low estate and condition they are brought into by sin, humbles them under a sense of it, brings down their proud spirits to sit at the feet of Jesus, and to submit to him, and to his righteousness; and he lifts them up by his son out of their fallen, captive, and miserable estate, and by his Spirit and grace brings them out of the horrible pit of nature into the state of grace; sets them upon the rock Christ, and makes their mountain to stand strong by the discoveries of his love, and will at last lift them up to glory, and place them on the same throne with Christ.

1 Samuel 2:8

Ver. 8. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill,.... This is but a further illustration of what is before expressed. Literally; such poor as are beggars, are those that are extremely poor, that sit in the dust and beg, and have nothing but a dunghill to lie on; yet God is able to raise and lift up persons in such an extremely low condition to a very high one: spiritually; such are the poor, who are poor in spirit, and spiritually poor, and are sensible of it, and they, and they only, are beggars. For all that are poor, as they are not sensible of their poverty, so they beg not; but some are and beg; they knock at the door of grace and mercy; their language is petitionary, they entreat the grace and mercy of God; their posture is standing, and waiting till they have an answer; they are importunate, and will not easily take a denial; and they observe all opportunities to get relief, and are thankful for everything that is given then. Their conditions, in which they are, is represented by the "dust" and "dunghill"; which in general denotes that they are in a mean estate, in a sinful one, and in a very polluted and loathsome one; in this condition the Lord finds them, when he calls them by his grace; and from this he raises and lifts them up by his Spirit and grace, out of which they could never have raised themselves; and in which estate of sin and misery they must have lain, had he not exerted his powerful efficacious grace, in bringing them into a glorious one, next described:

to set them among princes the people of God called by grace, who are the sons of the King of kings by adoption, manifested in their regeneration and faith; have a princely spirit, the spirit of adoption, a free, generous, and bountiful one; live and look like princes, are well fed and clothed, and attended; have the riches of princes, and are heirs of a kingdom: and to be set among them, is to be made one, and ranked as such; to have a place and a name in the church, and among the people of God; to sit down with them at the table of the Lord, and have communion with them: and to make them inherit the throne of glory; eternal glory and happiness, which as it is signified by a kingdom and crown, so by a throne, and is the same with Christ's, **Re 3:21** and therefore must be a glorious one: and this is had by way of inheritance; not obtained by industry, nor purchased with money; but comes by adoption grace, and belongs only to children, is a bequest of our heavenly Father, and comes through the death of Christ the testator; and this phrase denotes not barely the right unto, but the possession of his happiness and glory:

for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them; the earth has its foundations on which it is laid, and its pillars by which it is supported; but these are no other than the power and providence of God; otherwise the earth is hung upon nothing, in the open circumambient air: and that God can and does do this may well be thought, and to do all the above things in providence and grace, related in the preceding verses; in the support, and for the proof of which, this is observed. Figuratively, the pillars of the earth may design the princes of the world, the supreme rulers of it, and civil magistrates, who are sometimes called cornerstones, and the shields of the earth, Zec 10:4, and so pillars, because they are the means of cementing, supporting, and protecting the people of the earth, and of preserving their peace and property. Likewise good men may be meant in a figurative sense, who, as they are the salt of the earth, are the pillars of it, for whose sake it was made, and is supported, and continued in being; the church is the pillar and ground of truth; and every good man is a pillar in the house of God, and especially ministers of the Gospel; see **Re 3:12**.

1 Samuel 2:9

Ver. 9. He will keep the feet of his saints,.... Now follow promises and prophecies of future things respecting the Israel of God, either in a literal or spiritual sense. By "his saints" are meant not angels, though they are his Holy Ones, but men, and a body of them; who though unholy in themselves, nor can they make themselves holy, yet are made so by the grace of God, in consequence of electing grace, by which they are chosen to be holy, from Christ the source and spring of all holiness, by the Holy Spirit of God, as the efficient cause, and which is done in the effectual calling; hence they live holy lives and conversations, though not altogether without sin in the present state. The word also signifies such to whom God has been kind and gracious, and on whom he has bestowed blessings of goodness, and who are bountiful and beneficent to others. These are the Lord's, whom he has set apart for himself, and has sanctified in Christ, and by his Spirit; and of these he is keeper, not angels, nor ministers of the word, nor themselves, but the Lord himself is the keeper of them; and who is an able, faithful, tender and compassionate, constant and everlasting keeper of them; and particularly he keeps their "feet"; he indeed keeps their whole persons, their bodies and souls; the members of their bodies, and the powers of their souls, their head, their heart, their affections, from turning aside from him; he guides, directs, and orders all their actions and goings; he keeps their feet in his own ways, where he has guided them; he keeps them in Christ the way, and in all the paths of faith, truth, righteousness, and holiness, and in the way everlasting: he keeps them from falling; for though they are liable to fall into sin, and by temptation, and from a lively exercise of grace, yet not totally and finally; they are secured from it by his love to them; the promises he has made them; his power exerted on their behalf; their being in the hands of Christ, and the glory of all the three Persons concerned herein:

and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; sin has spread darkness over all human nature; every man is born and brought up in darkness, and walks in it: a state of unregeneracy is a state of darkness, in which wicked men continue; and they are in the dark about God, the perfections of his nature, his mind and will, word and worship; about Christ, and the way of life, peace, and salvation by him; about their own state and condition by nature, and the danger they are in; about the nature and necessity of regeneration; and about the Scriptures, and the doctrines of the Gospel; and living and dying; in such a state, darkness, blackness of darkness, is their portion forever: so the Targum,

"the wicked in hell in darkness shall be judged:"

and it is said they shall be "silent" in it; they are quiet, easy, and content in the state of natural darkness in which they are; they neither do nor will understand; they do not care to come to the light, but shun the means of light and knowledge; they have nothing to say of God, of Christ, of the Spirit of God, or of divine things; they can talk enough of evil things, and pour them out in great plenty, but not of any good; and when their evils are charged upon them by the law, their mouths are stopped, and they pronounced guilty, and have nothing to say why justice and judgment should not take place; and so they will be silent and speechless at the great day of judgment. Some interpret it, they shall be "cut off in darkness"; so Kimchi and Ben Melech; that is, by death, by the hand of God, by the sword of justice:

for by strength shall no man prevail; which is a reason both why God will keep his saints, and why the wicked shall be silent, or cut off and perish: with respect to good men, they are not saved, kept, and preserved by their own strength; they are not saved without a righteousness, without regeneration, without repentance towards God, and faith in Christ; neither of which they can perform in their own strength: nor can a saint keep himself from, or prevail over his spiritual enemies of himself, not over sin, nor Satan, nor the world; but it is by the power of God that he is kept through faith unto salvation: and with respect to wicked men, these shall not prevail by their strength over good men, or the church, who are built upon a rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; nor can the wicked so prevail by their strength as to hinder their being cut off, and cast into outer darkness; they have no power over the spirit to retain it in the day of death; and whether they will or not, they shall be cast into hell, and go into everlasting punishment.

1 Samuel 2:10

Ver. 10. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces,.... Or Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, "shall break in pieces those that contend with him"; with the Lord, or with his people, or with Samuel particularly; for this may be considered as a prophecy of Hannah concerning her son, what God would do for him against his enemies, that should rise up, contend, and fight with him, as the Philistines; of whom Ben Gersom interprets it, whom the Lord discomfited and broke to pieces; see the literal fulfilment of this prophecy in **1Sa 7:1** in a spiritual sense all wicked men are the enemies of God, and of his people, and sooner or later shall be broken to pieces. Some, in a good sense; when they are smitten with the words of his mouth, cut to the heart, and made contrite; are humbled and brought into subjection to him, and their enmity slain and abolished, and they filled with love to him; and are so broken to pieces, that they have nothing to depend upon, or trust in for life or salvation, but apply to Christ alone for it. Others, in an ill sense; and the meaning is, that the wicked shall be utterly destroyed by the Lord, with an everlasting destruction, with an incurable and irreparable one; shall be broken in pieces like a potter's vessel, which can never be put together again, see **Ps 2:9**

out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: as the Lord did upon the Philistines in the times of Samuel, when Israel were engaged in war with them, **1Sa 7:10**. And the last vial of the wrath of God, poured out upon his adversaries the antichristian states, will be attended with thunders and lightnings, Re 16:17, it denotes the terrible manner in which God will destroy his adversaries; the Septuagint version is, "the Lord ascended to heaven and thundered"; hence Procopius Gazaeus, following this version, says, Hannah prophesied of the taking up of the Saviour, and of the mission of the Holy Ghost, and of the preaching of the apostles, and of the second coming of Christ, as follows: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; not of the land of Israel by Samuel, as some interpret it, see **1Sa 7:15** but of the whole world, and may refer to the government of it in general by the Lord, or to the judgment of it by his Son; for he judges none, but has committed all judgment to him; who at his first coming judged the world, by the ministry of the word in Judea and in the Gentile world, by setting up ordinances, and by qualifying and constituting persons to act in the government of his church under him; and at his spiritual coming he will take to himself his great power and reign, and judge the whore of Babylon; and at his last or second coming he will judge the whole world, quick and dead, righteous and wicked:

and he shall give strength unto his king: either who was made king in the times of Samuel, Saul, who was the first of the kings of Israel, or David, whom Samuel anointed; and it is true of them both, that the Lord gave them strength to fight with and conquer their enemies; or rather the King Messiah, who in the next clause is called the Lord's anointed, or Messiah:

and exalt the horn of his anointed; and so the Targum paraphrases the words,

"he shall give strength to his king and enlarge the kingdom of his Messiah."

with which Kimchi agrees, and says, the thing is doubled or repeated, for the King is the Messiah; and to him the words are applied by other Jewish writers {p}, ancient and modern. Christ is King over all, angels and men, particularly he is King of saints; he is Jehovah's King, set up and anointed by him from everlasting; was in time promised as such, and in the fulness of time came in that character, and at his ascension to heaven was made and declared Lord and Christ; and through the success of his Gospel in the world has appeared yet more so, and will be still more manifest in the latter day, when he shall be King over all the earth, and especially in his personal reign. Now when "strength" is said to be given him, this must be understood either of strength given to him in human nature, to perform the great work of our redemption and salvation, which required great strength; as a divine Person he needed none, as man he did; or of that strength communicated to him as Mediator, to give unto his people, in whom they have both righteousness and strength; or rather of that power and dominion given him as King particularly; all power in heaven and in earth were given him at his resurrection, and will appear more fully hereafter, when his kingdom will be from sea to sea, and his dominion from the river to the ends of the earth, see **Da 7:13**. And the same thing is meant by "horn", which is an emblem of strength, power, dominion, and glory; hence he himself is called the horn of David, and the horn of salvation; it is a name and title given to kings, **Da 7:24** in allusion to the horns of beasts, in which their strength lies to defend themselves, and annoy their enemies; and the exaltation of him prophesied of may respect and include his resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of God, the judgment of all committed to him, and the glorious exercise of his kingly office in the spiritual and personal reigns. This is the first time we meet with the word Messiah, or anointed, as ascribed to a divine Person, the Son of God; who has this name or title from his being anointed, not with material oil, but with the oil of gladness, with the Holy Ghost, and his gifts and graces without measure; and who is called the Lord's anointed, because he was anointed by his Father to be prophet, priest, and King, or invested by him with those offices even from eternity, see **Ps 2:6** and which was more manifestly declared at his birth, his baptism, and ascension to heaven; see **Lu 2:40**.

{p} Zohar in Gen. fol. 58. 4. Midrash Echa Rabbati, fol. 53. 3. R. Saadiah Gaon, Comment. in Dan. vii. 13.

1 Samuel 2:11

Ver. 11. And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house,.... Of which see **1Sa 1:19**. This was after he had offered the sacrifices at the feast, worshipped the Lord, and Hannah had delivered her prayer or song of praise, and both had committed Samuel to the care of Eli, and left him with him:

and the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest; he not only read in the book of the law, but learned to sing the praises of God vocally, and to play upon an instrument of music used in the service of God in those times, and to light the lamps in the tabernacle, and open and shut the doors of it, and the like; which were suitable to his age, and which might not be quite so tender as some have thought; or this may respect some small beginnings in the ministry of the sanctuary, in which he gradually increased under the inspection, guidance, and instruction of Eli, which is meant by ministering before him; the Targum is,

"in the life of Eli the priest;"

he began his ministration before his death.

1 Samuel 2:12

Ver. 12. Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial,.... Not that Eli their father was Belial, a wicked man; but though they had so good a father, they were very wicked men, unprofitable abandoned wretches, that cast off the yoke of the law of God, and gave themselves up to all manner of wickedness:

they knew not the Lord; not that they had no knowledge of God in theory, or were real atheists, but they were so practically; they denied him in works, they had no love to him, nor fear of him, and departed from his ways and worship, as much as if they were entirely ignorant of him; so the Targum,

"they did not know to fear before the Lord,"

or serve him; or, as Kimchi,

"they did not know the way of the Lord,"

that is, practically.

1 Samuel 2:13

Ver. 13. And the priest's custom with the people was,.... Not what was according to the will and law of God, but which the sons of Eli had introduced; and in which they were followed by the rest of the priests, and so it became an established custom, and had the force of a law, statute, or judgment, as the word signifies:

[that] when any man offered sacrifice; not any sort of sacrifice, for if it was a burnt offering, it was wholly consumed by fire, and in that the following custom could not take place; and if it was a sin offering, that was eaten by the priests, and so there was no need of taking such a method as after related; but a peace offering, part of which belonged to the Lord, the fat that was burnt, and the breast and shoulder to the priest, and the rest to the owner, who made a feast of it for his family and friends:

the priest's servant came while the flesh was in seething; that is, while those parts were boiling for the owner and his family; which was done in some part of the tabernacle, as afterwards in the temple:

with a flesh hook of three teeth in his hand; with a three forked instrument, with which he was sent by order of the priest that slew the sacrifice, and offered it, to whom belonged the parts before mentioned, allowed him by the law; but not content with these, he sent his servant, while the rest were boiling, with such an instrument as here described, to draw up more out of the boiling pot.

1 Samuel 2:14

Ver. 14. And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or cauldron, or pot,.... Whatever vessel was made use of, larger or lesser, according to the quantity of flesh the owner boiled for himself and friends, the trident the priest's servants brought with him, he struck into the boiler to the bottom; of it:

all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself; as his own property; whereas no part of it at all belonged to him, he having had the breast and shoulder delivered to him in the first place; and yet, by this method, all that he could drag up with this three forked instrument he claimed as his own; which might be much, that would hang upon three teeth of it, or in which they were fastened; and, according to Abarbinel, each of them would bring up a pound of flesh, and perhaps more:

so they did in Shiloh, unto all the Israelites that came thither; to offer their sacrifices, which was the proper place for them, the tabernacle and altar being there; and men of all ranks and degrees were treated alike, princes and people, rich and poor; the custom universally obtained, and all sorts of men met with the same usage.

1 Samuel 2:15

Ver. 15. Also before they burnt the fat,.... Which belonged to the Lord, and was to be offered to him by fire, in the first place, as it ought to be; and the order of sacrificing required that he should have his part first before the priest or the owner: but so impious were the priests become, that

the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed; not to the priest that offered, but to the man that brought his sacrifice to be offered by the priest:

give flesh to roast for the priest; meaning, not what was his by law, as the breast and shoulder, though for these he ought to have stayed until the fat was offered to the Lord; but other parts of the peace offering, which he had no right unto, for roasting or boiling, and yet in an imperious manner demanded it by his servant:

for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw though this was not the only reason of this demand, because they liked roast meat better than boiled; but because the three forked flesh hook did not always bring up the best pieces out of the boiling pot; and therefore he resolved to have flesh raw, that he might have the best, as well as dress it to his own liking.

1 Samuel 2:16

Ver. 16. And if any man said unto him, let them not fail to burn the fat presently,.... Or stay till they have offered the fat, as the Targum; let that be done in the first place, which may be quickly done, in a very little time, and let as much haste be made as can be to do it:

and then take as much as thy soul desireth; by which it appears that the men that brought the sacrifice had more religion at heart, and were more concerned for the honour and glory of God than the priest; being willing to suffer in their property, but could not bear that the Lord should be dishonoured, and so rudely treated: they were willing the priests should take what they pleased of theirs, though they had no right to any; only they desired the Lord might be served first, which was but reasonable:

then he would answer him, nay, but thou shall give it me now, and if not, I will take it by force; signifying, he would not stay till the fat was burnt, and the Lord had his portion, but he would have it directly; and if he would not give it him freely, he would take it whether he would or not; to such a height of insolence and impiety were the priests arrived, as to put it in the power of their servants to make such wicked demands, and treat God, and those that brought their sacrifices to him, in such a contemptuous manner.

1 Samuel 2:17

Ver. 17. Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord,.... That is, the sons of Eli; for they were the ringleaders who set these bad examples, which other priests followed, and therefore the sin is ascribed to them; and which was sadly aggravated by taking what was not their own, and by taking it in a forcible manner, and before the Lord had his part in the offering, and all this done in the tabernacle, in the presence of God; which plainly showed that they had not the fear of God before their eyes, nor any sense of his omniscience and omnipresence, any more than of his holiness and justice:

for men abhorred the offering of the Lord; it was irksome and disagreeable to them to bring their sacrifices, when they saw the law of God was not attended to, and the rules of sacrificing were not observed; such contempt of God, such abuse of sacrifices, such injury done to the sacrificers, and such covetousness and sensuality in the priests, that it even set the people against sacrifices, and made them loath them, and neglect to bring them. And this aggravated the sin of the young men, though the sacrificers were not excused hereby, **1Sa 2:24**.

1 Samuel 2:18

Ver. 18. But Samuel ministered before the Lord,.... The ministration of Samuel, though a child, is observed both before and after the account of the ill behaviour and wickedness of Eli's sons; partly to the shame and disgrace of them, and as serving to aggravate their sin, and make it appear the more black and heinous; and partly to his honour and reputation, that he was not corrupted and turned aside from God by their evil practices. The phrase here used is different from that in **1Sa 2:11** there he is said to minister before Eli, under his direction and guidance, but here before the Lord; being now engaged in higher services, and which he could perform without the assistance of Eli, as in the presence of God more immediately; it seems to have respect to him when more grown in age, stature, knowledge, and experience, though here related: yet still being "a child"; not got out of his childhood, or arrived to manhood:

girded with a linen ephod; such as priests used to wear, but not Levites in common, nor extraordinary persons on extraordinary occasions, see 1Sa 22:18. This seems to be a peculiar favour, and a special honour which Eli granted to Samuel when so very young, on account of the grace of God bestowed on him in a wonderful manner; and because brought up in the tabernacle as a holy person, and a Nazarite; and because his birth was foretold, and he asked of God, as his name signified, as Procopius Gazaeus observes.

1 Samuel 2:19

Ver. 19. Moreover, his mother made him a little coat,.... Suitable to his stature; this was an outer coat to wear over others, and this also was such an one as the priests wore; it is the same word that is used for the priest's robe, Ex 28:4, and this, it is very likely, was altogether of her own spinning, and weaving, and making up; which were works women did in those times: and this Hannah did partly out of her great love to her son Samuel, and partly to lessen the expense that Eli, or the congregation, were at in the maintenance of him; and the

Talmudists {q} observe, that a priest might wear a garment, and minister in it, if his mother made it; and they give instances of priests, Ishmael and Eleazar, for whom their mothers made garments:

and brought it to him from year to year; for it seems this was only to be worn at festivals, and not on common days; and therefore she did not leave it with him, but took it home with her, and brought it again at the returning festival:

when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice: whether at the passover, or at Pentecost, or at the feast of tabernacles; and it is very probable she came with her husband at them all, yearly; for though she was not by the law obliged thereunto, yet her religious zeal and devotion, and her great desire to see her son as often as she could, induced her to come.

{q} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 25. 1.

1 Samuel 2:20

Ver. 20. And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife,.... Not only the first time they brought Samuel to him, and left him with him; but every year they came to worship, as the Jewish commentators mostly interpret it:

and said, the Lord give thee seed of this woman; children by her, year after year:

for the loan which is lent to the Lord; instead of Samuel, who was asked of the Lord and given to him again; and as they were thereby in some measure deprived of him, and could not always enjoy him, and be delighted with him, Eli prayed for them, and gave them his benediction as a priest, that they might be favoured with other children, who might be of delight and service to them when in old age:

and they went unto their own home; at Ramah, as in **1Sa 2:11** or to his place {r}, Elkanah's; hence Kimchi concludes that Hannah was of another city originally; but the Targum is,

"to their place;"

and indeed, what was now the place or home of the one, was of the other.

{r} wmwqml "in locum suum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, &c.

1 Samuel 2:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord visited Hannah,.... In a way of mercy, approving and confirming the blessing of Eli; or rather granting the blessing he prayed for, by giving her power to conceive, bear, and bring forth children, as the following words explain it:

so that she conceived and bare three sons and two daughters; whereby the prophecy of Hannah was fulfilled, **1Sa 2:5**, and was no doubt matter of great joy to her, though of these children we nowhere else read, nor even of their names. Josephus {s} says, Elkanah had other sons by Hannah, and three daughters; which agrees not with the text:

and the child Samuel grew before the Lord: in age and stature, in grace and goodness, and improved much in the worship and service of God, both in the theory and practice of it; or became great with him, high in his esteem and favour, and was blessed with much of his presence, and with large gifts of his grace.

{s} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 10. sect. 3.

1 Samuel 2:22

Ver. 22. Now Eli was very old,.... It is very probable he was now about ninety years of age, since when he died he was ninety eight, **1Sa 4:15** which is observed to show his incapacity for the discharge of his office, and inspection into public affairs; which gave his sons opportunity of acting the wicked part they did without reproof, and with impunity, Eli knowing nothing of it; and accounts in some measure for the gentle reproof he gave them, when he did know of it; for being old, he was not so full of spirit and vigour, and more given to tenderness and mercy; besides, his sons were grown up and married, and he had less authority over them; though he ought to have considered himself not as a father only, but as an high priest and judge of Israel, and performed his office as such; however, it must be a great affliction to him in his old age, and added to the weight of it, that his sons should behave so unworthily as they did:

and heard all that his sons had done unto Israel; who, besides what was by the law allowed them, took flesh out of the pot as it was boiling, and demanded raw flesh to roast before the fat was offered to the Lord; and in this manner they used all, without distinction, that came with their sacrifices:

and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; not that they lay with them at the door in a public beastly manner; but the women that came thither they decoyed into their own apartments, or into some of the courts of the tabernacle, and there debauched them: who these women were, and what their business at the tabernacle, is not easy to say; some think they came about business which belonged to women to do there, as to wash and clean the rooms, to sew and spin, and the like; but one would think that these latter works should be done, not at the door of the tabernacle, but in some apartment in it, or rather at their own houses, for the use of it: the Targum is, that they there assembled to pray, which is more likely, and that they were devout women; who came there in large numbers, for the word used has the signification of armies; to perform religious exercises in fasting, and praying, and bringing sacrifices to be offered for them; though they do not seem to be such, as was Anna the prophetess, **Lu 2:37** who made their abode in the tabernacle, and served God night and day with fastings and prayers, since these were only at the door of the tabernacle; nor were there in the tabernacle conveniences for such persons, as afterwards in the temple. The Jews, for the most part, by these understand new mothers, who came with their offerings for purification, attended with many other women, their relations, friends, and neighbours, and which especially, when several met together on such an occasion, made a crowd at the door of the tabernacle; and some are of opinion that these men did not lie with them, or debauch them, according to the literal sense of the word; but that they delayed the offering of their nests of doves they brought, so that they were forced to stay all night, and could not return home; and because by this means they were restrained from their husbands, it is reckoned as if these men had lain with them {t}; and which they think is confirmed, in that the man of God sent to Eli, after mentioned, takes no notice of this lewdness of theirs, only of their ill behaviour as to sacrifices, but the text is so express for their debauchery, that it cannot be denied.

{t} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 2. Ben Gersom & Abarbinel in loc.

1 Samuel 2:23

Ver. 23. And he said unto them, why do ye such things?.... As to impose upon the people that bring their offerings, by taking more than is due, and in a very indecent and imperious manner; and especially to defile the women when they came to worship: these were very scandalous sins, and deserved a more severe reprimand, and indeed a greater chastisement than by mere words; Eli should have rebuked them more sharply, and laid open the evil of their doings, and as a judge punished them for them:

for I hear of your evil doings by all this people; the inhabitants of Shiloh, or who came thither to worship, who were continually making their complaints to Eli; which still shows his backwardness to reprove them in the manner he did until he was obliged to it by the continual remonstrances of the people against the practices of his sons; he did not attend to the information he had from a few persons, until it became general.

1 Samuel 2:24

Ver. 24. Nay, my sons,.... This seems to be too soft and smooth an appellation, too kind and endearing, considering the offence they were guilty of, and were now reproving for; rather they deserved to be called sons of Belial, the children of the devil, than sons of Eli, or brutes and shameless wretches, and such like hard names:

for it is no good report that I hear; a very bad one; far from being good, scarce anything worse could have been said of them; to rob persons of the flesh of their offerings, when there was a sufficient allowance made for them by law, and to be so impious as to require what was not their due, and even before the Lord had his; and to debauch the women that came to religious worship, and that in the sacred place of worship, they also being priests of the Lord, and married men; sins very shocking and sadly aggravated, and yet Eli treats them in this gentle manner:

ye make the Lord's people to transgress: by causing them to forbear to bring their sacrifices, being used in such an injurious and overbearing way; and by decoying the women into uncleanness, and by setting examples to others: or, "to cry out"; as in the margin of our Bibles, to exclaim against them for their exorbitant and lewd practices; so the Targum,

"the people of the Lord murmur because so ill used by them:"

this clause may be read in connection with the former, "it is no good report that I hear, which ye cause to pass through the Lord's people"; ye occasion the people to speak ill of you everywhere, in the camp of Israel, throughout the whole nation; the report as it is bad, it is general, is in everyone's mouth; so Maimonides {u} interprets it; with which Jarchi and others agree {w}.

{u} Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 21. {w} Vid. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 2. & praefat. Ben Chayim. ad Bib. Heb. Bomberg. & Buxtorf.

1 Samuel 2:25

Ver. 25. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him, &c. When one man does an injury to another in his person and property, the case is brought before the judge, he hears it, examines into it, and determines upon it, and does justice, orders that the injured person have satisfaction made him, and so the matter is ended:

but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? all sin is in some sense against God, as it is contrary to his nature, and a breach of his law, and especially bold, daring, presumptuous sins; but there are some sins that are more immediately and particularly against God, as sins against the first table of the law, which relate to the worship of God, and such were the sins of Eli's sons in the affair of sacrifices; all sin against God is aggravated by the perfections of his nature, and made tremendous, as being against a God of strict justice, of unspotted purity and holiness, and who is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent; and by the relation and connection there is between God and men, he is their Creator and Preserver, the God of their lives and mercies, and of all the blessings they enjoy, and yet sin against him! who will entreat the favour of God for such persons, ask pardon for them, and beseech the Lord to be propitious and merciful to them? who on earth will do it? such persons are scarce and rare, few care to stand up in the gap between God and sinners; in some cases they ought not, in others they cannot. Eli suggests by this question, that he could not, even for his own sons; and who in heaven can or will do it? not saints departed, who know nothing of what is done below, nor angels, only the Lord Jesus Christ; he is the only Mediator between God and men, who has engaged his heart to approach unto God, and interpose between him and sinful men, and has made peace and reconciliation by his blood, and is become the propitiation for sin, and ever lives to make intercession for transgressors, and is always prevalent and successful in his mediation and intercession; excepting him, there is none to entreat for those that have sinned against the Lord, see **1Jo 2:1**. In answer to this question, who shall entreat for him? the Jews say {x} repentance and good works; but these are insufficient advocates for a sinner, without the atoning sacrifice of Christ, who is propitiation for sin, and upon which a plea can only be founded:

notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto the voice of their father; to his reproofs and counsels, his reasonings and expostulations; though his rebukes were so gentle, and this last reasoning of his so close and strong, so nervous and striking:

because the Lord would slay them; it was his purpose and decree, his will and pleasure, to cut them off for their wickedness; wherefore he gave them up to a judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, as he did Pharaoh, so that they were proof against all advice, admonitions, and arguments used with them: some choose to read the words, "therefore the Lord would slay them" {y}, because they were disobedient to the voice of their father; but the former sense is best; for his will to destroy them was not so much for their disregard to the reproofs of their father in which he himself was culpable, as for their breach of his laws.

{x} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 87. 1. {y} yk "ideo", Noldius, p. 395. No. 1342. "idcirco vel quapropter", Quistorp, so Patrick.

1 Samuel 2:26

Ver. 26. And the child Samuel grew up,.... Increased in stature and in grace, grew more and more in all respects, and better and better, while Eli's sons grew worse and worse; the contrast between these make the one to shine and appear illustrious, and the other to look the blacker: or "he went on, and grew, and was good" {z}; as he proceeded on in years, and grew in stature, he appeared more and more to be a good man, a virtuous, holy, and gracious person:

and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men; the Lord was pleased to give him some tokens of his favour, that he delighted in him, that he was wellpleasing in his sight, and that his person and services were acceptable to him; and the more Eli's sons disgusted the people by their ill lives and conduct, the greater esteem among them did Samuel obtain by his becoming life and conversation; all admired him, spoke well of him, and thanked God that in such bad times he was raising up one among them, of whom they had the most hopeful prospect of usefulness to them.

{z} bwjw ldgw Klh "ambulans, et grandescens et bonus", Montanus; so Vatablus & Drusius.

1 Samuel 2:27

Ver. 27. And there came a man of God unto Eli,.... A prophet, as the Targum; he had gifts and graces bestowed on him by the Lord, qualifying him for that office; he came from God, and spoke in his name, as prophets used to do: who this was is not said, nor can it be known with certainty; many conjectures are made; some think he might he Phinehas, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel {a}, which is not at all likely; it is not probable that he was living, for if he had been alive, Eli would not have been high priest; the more ancient Jews say {b} he was Elkanah, the father of Samuel; and so Jarchi; and he is said in the Targum on **1Sa 1:1**, to be one of the disciples of the prophets, and was reckoned by them among the two hundred prophets that prophesied in Israel {c}; but of his prophecy we nowhere read in Scripture, or that he was one: other's {d} think he was Samuel himself, who through modesty conceals his name; but he was now a child, as in the preceding verse; indeed, some are of opinion that what follows is recorded in this chapter by way of anticipation, and properly belongs to, and is a part of the message sent from the Lord by Samuel to Eli, in the following chapter:

and said unto him, thus saith the Lord; using the language prophets in later times did, who spake not of themselves, but in the name of the Lord; and from whence it appears that this was not a divine Person, the Son of God in human form, since he never used to speak in this manner when he appeared:

did I plainly appear to the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? he did; this was evident and certain, and a wonderful instance of condescending goodness: the house of his father is the house of Aaron, who, and all his sons, were born in Egypt, from whose youngest son, Ithamar, Eli descended; and to whom the Lord appeared when in Egypt, and sent him to meet Moses, whose spokesman he appointed him to be; and who prophesied in Egypt, and reproved the Israelites, which is recorded in Eze 20:1 as say the Jews {e}.

{a} Judaei apud Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. A. {b} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 53. {c} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 14. 1. {d} See Weemse's Christ. Synagog. l. 2. c. 3. p. 250. {e} Jarchi & Ben Gersom in loc.

1 Samuel 2:28

Ver. 28. And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest,.... He did; of all the tribes of Israel the Lord chose the tribe of Levi to place the priesthood in, and of all the families of that tribe he chose the house of Aaron, Eli's ancestor, to minister in the priest's office, see Ex 28:1

to offer upon mine altar; burnt offerings, sin offerings, and peace offerings; this is the altar of burnt offering, which stood in the court of the tabernacle:

to burn incense; on the altar of incense, which was in the holy place, and on which incense was burnt morning and evening:

to wear an ephod before me? in which was the breastplate, with the Urim and Thummim, with which the high priest went into the most holy place, where was the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence, and where he inquired of the Lord by the above things:

and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? he did; the priests who were of the house of Aaron had not only the sin offerings, and part of the peace offerings, but even of the offerings made by fire, the burnt offerings; the skin of them was the priest's, and the meat offerings that went along with them, see **Le 6:25** and **Le 8:8** which were given them for their maintenance. Now these instances of God's goodness to the family of Aaron are mentioned to aggravate the sins of Eli and his sons.

1 Samuel 2:29

Ver. 29. Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice, and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation,.... To be offered in the tabernacle, where the Lord had his dwelling; which they might be said to kick and spurn at, despising them, as if there were not enough of them, nor the best of them given to them for their maintenance; a metaphor taken from cattle well fed and fat, which kick and spurn with their feet at even the owners and feeders of them. The Targum is,

"why do ye use force with the holy offerings?"

that is, take them away by force, when there was such a sufficient quantity allowed them for their support. Some understand this of their driving away such, that before used to bring their sacrifices to be offered, but being so ill treated, refrained from bringing them:

and honourest thy sons above me; by suffering them to take their part of the sacrifices, and even what did not belong to them, before God had his part, or before the fat was burnt; and by continuing them in their office, to the dishonour of God, his name and worship, when they ought to have been turned out by him and punished; but by this he preferred the honour of his sons before the honour of God, and chose rather that he should be dishonoured, than that they should be censured:

to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? they took the best pieces of the peace offerings from them by force, having no right unto them; and this they did to indulge their luxury and sensuality, which Eli connived at; and it is highly probable took part of the roasted meat his sons provided for themselves, out of the choicest pieces of the offerings of the people; since he himself is included in this clause, "to make yourselves fat", as his sons might be, and it is certain he himself was, **1Sa 4:18**.

1 Samuel 2:30

Ver. 30. Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith,.... This being the case, so much contempt cast upon his sacrifices, and dishonour on himself:

I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever; or minister in the priest's office before him: if the house of Aaron in general is meant, it did continue so to do, in one branch or another of it, as long as the Mosaic dispensation lasted, which is meant by the phrase "for ever"; but since it is afterwards denied that it should, rather the house of Ithamar, or of the immediate parent of Eli, is meant, and this said when the priesthood was translated from the family of Eleazar to the family of Ithamar; when, and on what account that was done, we nowhere read. It is a tradition {f}, that it was in the time of the Levite's concubine; and because Phinehas, and the other priests, did not go from city to city, and reprove the Israelites for the many sins they were fallen into, that the priesthood was taken away out of the family of Eleazar, and translated to that of Ithamar:

but now the Lord saith, be it far from me; to continue the priesthood in the line of Ithamar; which argues no change in the purposes or promises of God, this being not a decree of his, but a declaration of his will; that if the house of Ithamar behaved well in the discharge of the office of the high priest, it should continue with them to the end of the Mosaic dispensation, but if not, it should be taken from them, and restored to the family of Eleazar; as it was in Solomon's time:

for them that honour me I will honour; as Phinehas the son of Eleazar did at Shittim, where he showed his zeal for the Lord of hosts, and had the promise of the everlasting priesthood; and which continued in his family until the Babylonish captivity, excepting the interval in which it was in the family of Ithamar, and for what reason is not known:

and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed; as the posterity of Eli, whose sons despised the Lord, and his offerings, as appeared by their conduct; and these were killed in battle in one day, and in the times of Solomon, Abiathar, of the posterity of Eli, was thrust out of the priesthood, and Zadok, of the line of Eleazar, was put in his room, **1Ki 2:27**.

{f} Midrash Samuel, apud Jarch. & Kimch. in loc.

1 Samuel 2:31

Ver. 31. Behold, the days come,.... Or, are coming {g}; and will quickly come, in a very little time the things, after threatened, began to take place, even in the days of Eli's sons, and the whole was accomplished in about eighty years after:

that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house: that is, the strength of him and them, as the Targum, the strength of a man for doing business lying in his arm; meaning by it not long life, as Kimchi, who concludes this sense from what follows; but rather power and authority, or the exercise of the office of high priest, which gave him and his family great esteem and power; or it may be best of all, his children, which are the strength of a man, and the support of his family, see Ge 49:3

that there shall not be an old man in thine house; as there were none when he died, and his two sons, the same day; and the children they left were very young, and Ahitub, who was one of them, could not die an old man, since Ahimelech his son was priest in the time of Saul, who with eighty five priests were slain by his order; and Abiathar his son was deprived of his priesthood in the time of Solomon; though some understand this not of an elder in years, but in office; and that the sense is, that there should be none of his family a senator, or a member of the great sanhedrim, or court of judicature; and so it is interpreted in the Talmud {h}; with which agree Ben Gersom and Abarbinel.

{g} Myab "venientes", Montanus. {h} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 14. 1.

1 Samuel 2:32

Ver. 32. And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation,.... Either the Philistines in the land of Israel, where God chose to dwell, who quickly after made war against Israel, and pitched in Aphek, **1Sa 4:1** or, as in the margin of our Bibles, and other versions {i}, "thou shalt see the affliction of the tabernacle"; as he did when the ark of God was taken, at the news of which he died, **1Sa 4:17** and so the Targum understands it of affliction and calamity, yet not of the house of God, but of his own house; paraphrasing the words thus,

"and thou shall see the calamity that shall come upon the men of thine house, for the sins which they have committed before me in the house of my sanctuary:"

but it seems best to interpret it of a rival, which not he in his own person should see, but whom his posterity should see high priest in the temple; as they did in Solomon's time, when Abiathar, of the family of Eli, was thrust out, and Zadok, of the family of Eleazar, was put in; for, as Kimchi observes, when a man has two wives, they are rivals or adversaries to one another, jealous and emulous of each other, as Elkanah's two wives were, and of one of them the same word is used as here, **1Sa 1:6** so when one high priest was put out, and another taken in, the one was the rival or adversary of the other, as in the case referred to:

in all the wealth which God shall give Israel; which points exactly at the time when this should be, even men God did well to Israel, gave them great prosperity, wealth and riches, quietness and safety, a famous temple built for the worship of God, and everything in a flourishing condition, both with respect to temporals and spirituals, as was in the days of Solomon, see **1Ki 4:20** and then it was amidst all that plenty and prosperity, and when the high priesthood was most honourable and profitable, that Eli's family was turned out of it, and another put into it:

and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever;
See Gill on "1Sa 2:31" this is repeated for confirmation, and with this addition, that this would be the case for ever.

{i} Nwem ru yliqin katoikhsewv Symmachus; "angustiam tabernaculi", Junius & Tremellius. Piscator.

1 Samuel 2:33

Ver. 33. And the man of thine,..... Of his family, which should spring from him: whom I shall not cut off from mine altar: from serving there: who though he shall not be an high priest, but a common priest, as all the descendants of Aaron were,

shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart; that is, the eyes and heart of his posterity; who though they should see of their family ministering in the priest's office, yet should make so poor a figure on account of their outward meanness and poverty, or because of their want of wisdom, and intellectual endowments, or because of their scandalous lives, that it would fill their hearts with grief and sorrow, and their eyes with tears, so that their eyes would fail, and be consumed, and their hearts be broken:

and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age; or "die men" {k}; grown men, not children, when it would not be so great an affliction to part with them; but when at man's estate, in the prime of their days, perhaps about thirty years of age, the time when the priests entered upon their office to do all the work of it; the Targum is,

"shall be killed young men:"

it is more than once said in the Talmud {l}, that there was a family in Jerusalem, the men of which died at eighteen years of age; they came and informed Juchanan ben Zaccai of it; he said to them, perhaps of the family of Eli are ye, as it is said, **1Sa 2:33**.

{k} Myvna wtwmy "morientur viri", Montanus, Tigurine version; "morientur virile aetate", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so V. L. {l} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 18. 1. & Yebamot, fol. 105. 1.

1 Samuel 2:34

Ver. 34. This shall be a sign unto thee,.... A confirming one, that all which had been now said would be fulfilled:

that shall come upon thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas; which Eli would live to see fulfilled on them; and when it was, he might be assured the rest would be most certainly accomplished, and it was this:

in one day they shall die both of them; as they did in battle with the Philistines, **1Sa 4:11**.

1 Samuel 2:35

Ver. 35. And I will raise up a faithful priest,.... Not Samuel, as some, for he was not of the seed of Aaron, and of the priestly race; nor had he a sure house, for his sons declined from the ways of truth and justice; but Zadok, as it is commonly interpreted, who was put into the office of the high priest by Solomon when he came to the throne, in the room of Abiathar, of the line of Eli; who was an upright man, and faithfully discharged his office, and answered to his name, which signifies righteous, see Eze 44:15 that shall do according to that which is in my heart, and in my mind: according to the secret will and pleasure of God, as revealed in his word; do everything relating to the office of an high priest, according to the laws of God respecting it; so the Targum,

"that shall do according to my word, and according to my will:"

and I will build him a sure house; which some understand of a numerous family and posterity he should have to succeed him, so that there should never be wanting one of his seed to fill up that high office; or rather it may design the establishment of the high priesthood in his family, which was an everlasting one, as promised to Phinehas his ancestor, and which continued unto the times of the Messiah, who put an end to it, by fulfilling it; unless it can be thought that this may refer to the temple built by Solomon, which was a firm house, in comparison of the tabernacle, which was a movable one; it was built for Zadok and his posterity, who was the first that officiated in it as a legal priest. There is one writer, who says {m},

"this agrees with no man, only with our Lord Jesus, who is called our high priest, that offered up a sacrifice to the Father for us therefore to Christ properly this prophecy belongs; but, according to the history; to Zadok:"

and Christ is said indeed to be a faithful, as well as a merciful high priest, faithful to him that appointed him, and faithful to those for whom he officiated; he always did the things which pleased his Father, was obedient to his will and commands in all respects; and a sure house is built by him, his church, against which the gates of hell can never prevail: however, the next clause is by others interpreted of him,

and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever; or "before my Messiah", as the high priests did; they were types of Christ, and represented him, and acted under him, and in his stead, and prefigured and pointed at what he was to do, when he came in the flesh, and now does in the most holy place in heaven. Though it is more commonly understood of Zadok and his posterity, walking or ministering, as the Targum, before Solomon the Lord's anointed, and before the kings of the house of David, as they did until the Babylonish captivity.

{m} Procopius Gazaeus in loc.

1 Samuel 2:36

Ver. 36. And it shall come to pass, that everyone that is left in thine house,.... That is not cut off by death, the few remains of Eli's posterity in succeeding times, after the high priesthood was removed out of his family into another; so that they were reduced at best to common priests, and these, as it should seem, degraded from that office for their maladministration of it, or scandalous lives:

shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread; which Grotius interprets of their coming to God, and bowing themselves before him, and praying to him for the smallest piece of money to cast into the treasury, and for a morsel of bread to be accepted as an offering, instead of a bullock, sheep, lamb, or even a bird, which they were not able to bring; but the meaning is, that such should be the low estate of Eli's family, when another, even Zadok, was made high priest, that they should come and humble themselves before him, as the Targum expresses it, beseeching him to give them a piece of silver, even the smallest piece, that is, as the word signifies, a "gerah" or "meah", about a penny or three halfpence of our money, the twentieth part of a shekel, Eze 45:12 and a piece of bread, not a whole loaf, but a slice of it, to such extremity would they be brought:

and shall say, put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread; or into one of the wards of the priests; their custodies or courses, as the Targum; with which the Jewish commentators generally agree, and of which there were twenty four; see 1Ch 24:4, and there are some traces of them in the New Testament, see **Lu 1:5**, but these were regular priests, who were in those courses, and had a sufficient maintenance for them, and had not barely a piece of bread to live on, or just enough to keep them from starving, as the phrase denotes; wherefore this must be understood, as before hinted, of priests degraded from their office, on some account or another, and reduced to poverty and want; and therefore, that they might be kept from starving, would solicit the high priest in those days, and beg that he would put them in some inferior post under the priests, to do the meanest offices for them, slay the sacrifices for them, wash their pots, open and shut up doors, and the like, that so they might have a living, though a poor one; and this may reasonably be thought to be the case of Eli's posterity, in process of time, after Abiathar was deposed from the high priest's office, and was ordered to go and live upon his fields and farm at Anathoth, **1Ki 2:26** with which compare Eze 44:10. This, as Ben Gersom observes, was a fit punishment, and a righteous retaliation on Eli's posterity, that they should be brought to crouch to others, and be glad of a morsel of bread, who had behaved so imperiously towards the Lord's people, and had taken away their flesh from them by force; and, not content with their allowance, took the best pieces of the sacrifices, to make themselves fat with them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 3

This chapter gives an account of the Lord's calling to Samuel in the night season, which he first took for the voice of Eli, but being instructed by him, made answer to the voice, **1Sa 3:1**, and of a message sent from him by Samuel to Eli, foretelling the destruction of his family, **1Sa 3:11** and of the delivery of it to him, which Samuel was first fearful of doing, but, encouraged by Eli, he delivered it to him, to which he patiently submitted, **1Sa 3:15** and the chapter is closed with the establishment of Samuel as a prophet of the Lord, who continued to appear and reveal himself to him, **1Sa 3:19**.

Ver. 1. And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli,.... Under his direction and instruction; the Targum is, in the life of Eli, and in such parts of service, relating to the tabernacle of the Lord, as he was capable of, such as opening and shutting the doors of it, lighting the lamps, singing the praises of God, &c. according to Josephus {n}, and others, he was now about twelve years of age:

and the word of the Lord was precious in those days; that is, a word from the Lord in a dream or vision, directing, informing, instructing, or reproving, this was very rarely had; of late there had been but very few instances; and which accounts for it why not only the child Samuel knew not that it was the voice of the Lord that called to him, but Eli himself thought nothing of it until he had called a third time, so rare and scarce was any instance of this kind; for which reason these words are premised in the following narration: and as everything that is scarce and rare is generally precious, so the word of God in this way also was; and so it is as considered in every view of it; as the written word of God; when there was but little of it penned, as at this time, and few or none to teach and instruct in it, Eli being old, and his sons so vile; or when it is forbidden to be read, and the copies of it destroyed, and become scarce, as in the times of Dioclesian; or when there are but very few faithful evangelical ministers of the word; which, though it is always precious to them that have precious faith in it, the promises of it being exceeding great and precious, and the truths of it more precious than fine gold, and the grand subject of it a precious Saviour, who is so in his person, offices, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; yet is generally more precious when there is a scarcity of it, when God makes a man, a Gospel minister, more precious than fine gold, even than the golden wedge of Ophir, see
Isa 13:12 where the word is used in the same sense as here:

there was no open vision; or prophecy, as the Targum; no publicly known prophet raised up, to whom the people could apply for counsel, direction, and instruction in divine things; in all the times of the judges we read only of Deborah the prophetess, and one prophet more, **Jud 4:14**, excepting the man of God lately sent to Eli, **1Sa 2:27**, and this want of prophecy served to set off with greater foil the glory of Samuel as a prophet of the Lord, when he was an established one; there having been none of that character in the memory of man, and therefore he is spoken of as at the head of the prophets, **Ac 3:24**, for though there might be some private visions to particular persons, or God might appear in vision to private persons for their own special use and instruction; yet there was no public vision, or what was for public good and general use: some render it, "no broken up vision" {o}; it lay hid, concealed out of sight, as if it was immured and shut up within walls, or like water pent up, that cannot break through its fences, and spread itself; or "not multiplied", as R. Isaiah, not frequent and repeated, the instances of it few and rare; the sense of this clause is much the same as the former.

{n} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 10. sect. 4. {o} Urpn "perrupta", Piscator; "fracta vel rupta", Drusius.

1 Samuel 3:2

Ver. 2. And it came to pass at that time,.... When the word of the Lord was scarce and precious, and there was no open vision; or, as Ben Gersom, the same day the man of God came to Eli at night, the following affair happened:

when Eli was laid down in his place; on his bed to sleep, in one of the chambers or apartments of the tabernacle; for as there were such in the temple for the priests, so in that:

and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; to help himself to anything he might want when in bed; which seems to be the reason Samuel lay near him, and why, when he heard his voice, he immediately ran to him, supposing he needed his assistance. Some, as Kimchi and others, understand this not of the eyes of his body, but of his mind; and that the Holy Spirit, as a spirit of prophecy, was departing from him, because of his connivance at the sins of his sons; and so the following prophecy came not to him, but to Samuel.

1 Samuel 3:3

Ver. 3. And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord,.... The tabernacle so called; lamp is put for the lamps in the candlestick in the tabernacle, which were lighted every evening, and burnt till morning; by which time some of them at least usually went out, only it is said the western lamp never went out. Now the reason why this is observed is to show that it was in the night, before morning, that the following transaction was: some by this lamp understand the lamp of prophecy, that before that was quite extinct in Eli, only began to depart, as his eyes are said to begin to wax dim, the spirit of prophecy came to Samuel; so that, as the Jews express it, before one sun was set another arose; thus before the sun of Moses set, the sun of Joshua arose; and before the sun of Eli set, the sun of Samuel arose:

where the ark of God was; that is, in the temple or tabernacle; not in that part of it where the lamps were burning in the candlestick, that was in the holy place; but the ark was in the holy of holies, where the Lord dwelt, and was the symbol of his presence; and which is observed to point out the place from whence the voice came, after mentioned; and which the Targum expresses here,

"and a voice was heard out of the temple of the Lord, where the ark of the Lord was:"

and Samuel was laid down to sleep; after Eli was in bed, and Samuel had done all his business, he laid himself down to sleep in his place; in the court of the Levites, as the Targum, with which the Jewish commentators in general agree: it must be somewhere near to Eli, so that he could quickly come at him, when he needed his assistance; though, according to the Misnah {p}, the priests shut the doors of the court within, and the Levites slept without. It is highly probable that Samuel's apartment was near to Eli, or he could not have so readily come to him, as it is plain he did. This circumstance is also observed, to show that it was in the night, and before morning, that the following vision was; and, as Kimchi thinks, about cock crowing; and it may be from hence Strabo {q} had the notion, that Moses ordered such to sleep (in the temple) for themselves, and others, who were fit to receive good dreams, and who might expect from God a good gift, who lived soberly and righteously; and because the tabernacle was covered with skins, hence might spring the notion of others to sleep in temples, for the above reason, under the skins of the sacrifices, See Gill on "Amos 2:8", though they seem rather to have slept upon them, for the above purposes, namely, to converse with their deities, and get knowledge from them {r}.

{p} Middot, c. 1. sect. 8. {q} Geograph. l. 16. p. 523. {r} Vid. Virgil. Aeneid. 7. "huc dona Sacerdos", &c. ver. 86-95.

1 Samuel 3:4

Ver. 4. That the Lord called Samuel,.... By a voice which came forth from the most holy place, from between the cherubim, the seat of the divine Majesty:

and he answered, here am I; which was not intended to declare the place where he was, but to express his readiness and cheerfulness to do any thing that was required of him.

1 Samuel 3:5

Ver. 5. And he ran unto Eli, and said here [am] I,.... He got out of his bed as fast as he could, and put on his clothes, and ran with all haste to the apartment where Eli lay, supposing he wanted some immediate assistance, which he was there ready to give him to the utmost of his ability; and he made the more haste, as knowing his age and infirmities, and being desirous, out of affection to him, to help him as soon as possible:

for thou calledst me; he took it to be the voice of Eli, partly because there was no other man in the tabernacle, it being in the middle of the night, or early in the morning, before the doors were opened, or any of the priests were come in to minister, and partly because the voice might be very much like Eli's, and which was done to direct him to him:

and he said, I called not, lie down again; he signified he wanted nothing, and so had no occasion to call him, nor had he, but bid him go to bed again, and sleep quietly:

and he went and lay down; and very probably fell asleep again.

1 Samuel 3:6

Ver. 6. And the Lord called yet again, Samuel,.... Called him a second time by his name, with a like audible voice as before:

and Samuel arose, and went to Eli; did not run as before, being perhaps more thoughtful of this affair, that he should be called a second time, and careful not to awake Eli, should he be mistaken again, and find him asleep:

and said, here am I, for thou didst call me; perceiving that he was awake, he desired to know what he wanted, and he was ready to help him; for he was now certain of it that he did call him:

and he answered, I called not, my son, lie down again; by this appellation, my son, he expresses his affection to him, and signifies he took it kindly that he should show such readiness to do anything for him and would not have him be discouraged and abashed, because he was mistaken, but return to his bed and rest again.

1 Samuel 3:7

Ver. 7. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord,.... He knew that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was the true God; he had spiritual knowledge of him, and knew somewhat of his word and worship, ways and ordinances, in which he had been instructed by Eli; wherefore, though the Targum is,

"Samuel had not yet learned to know doctrine from the Lord;"

it can only be understood, that he had not learnt it perfectly; somewhat he knew of it, but in an imperfect manner, being a child: but the sense of the word is, that as yet he was ignorant that God had used to speak with ordinary and familiar voice to men, as Maimonides says {s}; he perhaps had never heard of any such thing, and much less was experimentally acquainted with it, that God ever did speak after such a manner to men, and could not distinguish between the voice of God and the voice of Eli:

neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him; what of the written word that was in being he had, and read, as the law of Moses; but the meaning is, that no word of prophecy of the Lord was revealed unto him, as the Targum; he never had prophesied as yet, and knew not the form and manner of prophecy, as the above writer observes, or what methods God took to reveal himself, his mind and will, to men, at least not this by an audible voice.

{s} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 44.

1 Samuel 3:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time,.... In the same manner he had done before, expressing his name no doubt:

and he arose and went to Eli, and said, here am I, for thou didst call me; as if he should say, it must certainly be so, I cannot be mistaken a third time:

and Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child; he was satisfied now that Samuel must have heard a voice, and he knew there was no man in the tabernacle but himself, and therefore it must be the voice of the Lord out of the most holy place; and he had formerly been acquainted with such voices, and used to them, and now called them to mind; and besides, as Aben Ezra observes, he was the rather confirmed in this, that the Lord called Samuel, because Samuel heard the voice, and not Eli, though Eli lay nearer the most holy place than Samuel did; which showed that this must be the voice of prophecy the Lord makes whom he pleases to hear; and that Eli might be fully persuaded of this, before the matter of the prophecy was delivered to him, Samuel was so often directed to him.

1 Samuel 3:9

Ver. 9. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, go, lie down,.... Once more;

and it shall be, if he call thee; the voice, or the Lord by it:

that thou shalt say, speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth; his meaning is, that he should not rise and come to him, as he had done, but continue on his bed, on hearing the voice again, but desire the Lord to speak to him what he had to say, to which he was ready to attend:

so Samuel went and lay down in his place; which, as commonly understood, was in the court of the Levites, See Gill on "1Sa 3:3".

1 Samuel 3:10

Ver. 10. And the Lord came, and stood,.... At the place where Samuel lay; either there was, as Kimchi, a form before his eyes in the vision of prophecy, some visible corporeal shape assumed; or a bright splendour an illustrious appearance of the glory of God; or it may be rather the voice, which before seemed to be at some distance whereabout Eli lay; it now seemed nearer, and was as the voice of one just by him, that sounded in his ears:

and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel: repeating his name, in order the more to excite his attention:

then Samuel answered, speak, for thy servant heareth; he leaves out the word Lord, which Eli bid him use; for he might be afraid as yet to make mention of the name of the Lord in the vision of prophecy, as Kimchi speaks; or lest it should be the voice of another, as Jarchi; as yet he might not be quite certain whether it was the voice of the Lord, or the voice of a man; for that he should have any mistrust of its being the voice of a demon or spectre, there is no reason to believe.

1 Samuel 3:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord said to Samuel,.... The voice of the Lord continued speaking to him: behold,

I will do a thing in Israel; which may be particularly interpreted of the taking of the ark, and the slaying of the two sons of Eli; and which is elsewhere represented as the Lord's doing, for the sins of Eli's family, Ps 78:61

at which both the ears of everyone that heareth it shall tingle; be struck with horror and amazement, and quite stunned, and know not what to think or say, like persons surprised with a violent clap of thunder, which strikes their ears so strongly, that the noise of it is not soon gone from them; this was verified in Eli, and in his daughter-in-law particularly, who, at the news of the above things, the one fell backwards and broke his neck, and the other fell into labour and died; and all Israel were struck with astonishment at these things.

1 Samuel 3:12

Ver. 12. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house,.... Or family, that is, by the man of God, **1Sa 2:27** as that he would cut off the strength of it, that there should not be an old man in it; and such as remained should be reduced to the utmost poverty and meanness; this shows that that prophecy was antecedent to this, contrary to the sense of some:

when I begin, I will also make an end; not immediately, and at once, but by degrees; he began in the death of Hophni and Phinehas, and went on in the slaughter of Abimelech, and the eighty five priests at Nob, in the times of Saul, and finished in the thrusting out of Abiathar from the priesthood, in the times of Solomon, whereby that family was brought to disgrace and poverty.

1 Samuel 3:13

Ver. 13. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever,.... That is, bring his judgments upon them, which should continue on them to their utter destruction; this, as to the substance, he said before by the man of God:

for the iniquity which he knoweth; for the iniquity of his sons, which he thoroughly informed of, and fully acquainted with by others; and somewhat of which he must have been sensible of, and seen with his own eyes, and therefore was inexcusable:

because his sons made themselves vile; mean and contemptible in the sight of men, abhorred and accursed in the sight of God, by taking the flesh of the sacrifices of the people, which did not belong to them, who came to sacrifice, and by debauching the women that came to the door of the tabernacle for religious service. It is said this clause was originally written, "because his sons made light of me"; or cursed the Lord, and is one of the eighteen places called the correction of the Scribes, who corrected it as we have it; and it may be observed, the Septuagint version is, "because his sons spake ill of God"; or cursed him; however, this they did, they preferred their lusts, and the indulging of them, to the honour and glory of God: this Eli knew,

and he restrained them not; from their evil practices; he did not make use of his authority, neither as a father, and especially not as high priest, and the judge of Israel, who ought not only to have sharply reproved them, which he did not, but to have censured or punished them, and turned them out of their office: "or did not frown upon them" {t}, as in the margin of our Bibles; he did not knit his brows, or wrinkle up his face, and by his countenance show his displeasure at their proceedings, but in an easy, smooth, gentle manner, expostulated with them about them.

{t} Mhb hxk alw "et non contraxit frontem", Osiander; "non contraxit rugas", Belg. De Dieu.

1 Samuel 3:14

Ver. 14. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli,.... Either had done this before, which was signified to him by the man of God, or did swear now for the confirmation of his threatenings, and to assure the certain performance of them:

that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever: not even typically, which was all that legal sacrifice could do; and not so that the priesthood should ever return to the family again, as the office of high priesthood never did; or, as Abarbinel interprets it, because of sacrifice and offering, that the iniquity Eli's sons were guilty of in taking the flesh of the sacrifices and offerings, which did not belong to them, and before the Lord had his part, should never be expiated.

(There are some sins that are not covered in the atonement of Jesus Christ. This is one of them and the sin against the Holy Ghost is another. Mt 12:31. Editor.)

1 Samuel 3:15

Ver. 15. And Samuel lay until the morning,.... It is not said he slept; it can hardly be thought he should, when it is considered what a new, strange, and uncommon thing had befallen him; what honour had been conferred on him a child, that the Lord should vouchsafe to speak and communicate his mind to him, and what dreadful things were said of Eli's family; all which must greatly affect his mind, and keep him waking: however, he lay musing thereon until morning, and then arose,

and opened the doors of the house of the Lord; as he had used to do, and which was the business of the Levites; though he had been so highly honoured, he was not elated with it, nor thought himself above so low and mean an employment in the house of God; nor did he run to Eli or others, boasting of what he had met with that night, but modestly and carefully attended to what was his common and constant employment every morning:

and Samuel feared to show Eli the vision; the vision of prophecy, as the Targum; what God had foretold should befall him and his family, lest he should be grieved on more accounts than one; partly because he, an old man, an high priest, and judge of Israel, was overlooked and neglected, and the prophecy was delivered to a child, and not to him; and partly because of the sad things that should come upon his family.

1 Samuel 3:16

Ver. 16. Then Eli called Samuel,.... Perceiving he was risen by the opening of the doors of the tabernacle, which he might hear; and observing he did not come to him as usual, to know whether he wanted anything, and being impatient to hear what was said to him of the Lord:

and he said, Samuel, my son; called him by his name, and in a very tender and affectionate manner, the more to engage him to hasten to him, and thereby also putting him in mind of his filial duty to obey him:

and he answered, here am I; ready to attend and perform any service enjoined him.

1 Samuel 3:17

Ver. 17. And he said, what is the thing that the [Lord] hath said unto thee?.... The word "Lord" is not in the text, but it is "that it hath said"; the voice that had so often called him in the night, and which yet Eli knew was the voice of the Lord; and as it was, he was sensible there was something of importance said, and he had great reason to believe it respected him and his family; and the rather he might conclude this, by what the man of God had lately said to him, whose words perhaps he had too much slighted, questioning his authority; and therefore the Lord took this way and method to assure him that what was said came from him; for hereby Eli was fully convinced that this voice Samuel heard was of the Lord, and so what was said must be from him, and this he was impatient to know:

I pray thee, hide it not from me; and he not only beseeched and entreated him, but adjured him, as in the next clause:

God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from me of all the things that said unto thee; it is the form of an oath or curse, wishing that God would do some great evil to him, and more than he chose to express, if he concealed anything from him that had been told him. So Kimchi and Abarbinel take it to be an oath; and Josephus, {u} and Procopius Gazaeus on the place say, that Eli obliged Samuel by oaths and curses to declare what had been said to him.

{u} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 10. sect. 4.

1 Samuel 3:18

Ver. 18. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him,.... And so approved himself to be a faithful prophet of God, and man of God, as he is afterwards called; the whole counsel of God is to be declared by his servants the prophets, and the ministers of his word; nothing is to be concealed, which it is the will of God should be made known, whether it be pleasing or displeasing to man:

and he said, it is the Lord; that has said it, and there is nothing to be said against it, and that will do it; and there is no resisting him: or "the Lord is he" {w}; who has a sovereign right to all his creatures, and may dispose of them as he pleases; he is all wise, and does all things well; he is holy and righteous in all his ways and works, and there is no unrighteousness in him; he is faithful to his word, whether in a way of promise or threatening; and all he does to his people is in love, mercy, and kindness:

let him do what seemeth him good; not what seems good to men, or is so in their esteem, but what seems good to the Lord, who knows what is best for his people, and can do nothing but what is good; all is good he does; there is nothing but goodness in him, and nothing but goodness comes from him; he does good, and nothing else, and even when he afflicts his people; all he does is well done in creation, providence, and grace: and Eli's desire is, that he would fulfil the good pleasure of his will; he appears to be in an excellent temper, not surly and morose, taking it ill that such a message should be sent him by a child; nor was he unaffected with the case of his family, but humbly submitted to the will of God, and acquiesces in it as good, and neither arraigns his justice, nor murmurs at his providences.

{w} awh hwhy kuriov autov, Sept. "Dominus ipse", Montanus.

1 Samuel 3:19

Ver. 19. And Samuel grew,.... Not only in years and stature, but in grace and goodness, in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, both with respect to things natural and spiritual, and in esteem, credit, and reputation among men:

and the Lord was with him; he was not only in favour with men, but with God; and had fresh and repeated tokens of the grace and good will of God towards him; he indulged him with his presence, and assisted him in his service, and prospered and succeeded him in all things in which he was engaged. The

Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord was his help;"

the essential Word of God, the Messiah:

and did let none of his words fall to the ground {x}; in allusion either to water that falls to the ground, and becomes useless, or to an arrow falling out of the bow, and to the ground, before it reaches the mark, and so unsuccessful {y}; or to any weapon of war, sword or spear, falling out of the hand of the soldier, whereby he is disarmed and rendered unserviceable: and these words, according to Kimchi, and in which he is followed by Abarbinel, are to be understood, not only of the words which he spake by the Holy Ghost under a spirit of prophecy, and had their exact accomplishment; but his common words, which were spoken by weight and measure, as the last expresses it, and which were delivered out according to the rules of justice, probity, and truth; and so he failed not of performing that which he had said, or of doing what was right, whereby Israel knew he was fit, prepared, and designed to be a prophet of the Lord, as in the following verse; but it seems rather to have respect to the things predicted by him under a spirit of prophecy concerning Eli and his house, which soon began to be fulfilled.

{x} camaipetev epov, Pindar. Pythia, Ode 6. {y} Vid. Homer. Iliad. 17. ver. 633.

1 Samuel 3:20

Ver. 20. And all Israel, from Dan even unto Beersheba,.... That is, from the most northern border of the land of Israel, on which Dan lay, to the utmost border of it southward, where Beersheba was, the fame of Samuel for his piety, prudence, and prophecy, was spread abroad; so that all

knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord; or that he was faithful {z} to God and man, to be credited in what he said; and so a fit man to be a prophet of the Lord, being eminently qualified with gifts by him for that office; the Targum is,

"that Samuel was faithful in the words of the prophecy of the Lord,"

in relating them.

{z} Nman "fidelis", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.

1 Samuel 3:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh,.... In the tabernacle there; he had appeared before to Samuel, when he called him, and declared to him what he designed and resolved to do to Eli and his family, and now appeared again to him in the same place before the battle of the Israelites with the Philistines, of which there is an account in the following chapter. Such appearances had not been usual in Shiloh for a long time, but were now renewed and repeated:

for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel by the Word of the Lord; by Christ, the Word of the Lord, who appeared to him, it is probable, in an human form, as he was wont to do to the patriarchs and prophets, and by whom the Lord revealed his mind and will unto them, being the Angel of his presence, and the messenger of his covenant; or by giving him a word of command to be delivered by him to the children of Israel, and which is expressed and delivered, in the next chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 4

This chapter is a narrative of a war between Israel and the Philistines, in the time of Samuel, and of the consequences of it. In the first battle, the Philistines had the better of the Israelites, which caused the latter to inquire into the reason of it, and who proposed to fetch the ark of the Lord, and did, to repair their loss, and prepare for a second battle, in which they hoped to succeed, and which struck a panic into their enemies, **1Sa 4:1**, who yet encouraged and stirred up one another to behave in a courageous manner, and victory a second time was on their side, a great number of the Israelites were slain, among whom were Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, and the ark of God was taken, **1Sa 4:8**, the news of which being brought to Eli, he fell back and died, **1Sa 4:12** and to his daughter-in-law, who upon it fell into labour, and died also, **1Sa 4:19**.

Ver. 1. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel,.... Or was "known", as the

Targum, the word of prophecy by him, which related to what befell Eli and his family; this was spread throughout the land, and everyone almost had knowledge of it, and which began to be fulfilled in the war between Israel and the Philistines, later related; or the doctrine, instructions, and exhortations of Samuel to the people of Israel, were by the means of others conveyed throughout the land; and yet they went into measures which proved fatal and ruinous to them; or the word of Samuel, which was from the Lord, came to Israel, to stir them up to go to war with the Philistines, whereby the punishment threatened to Eli's family would begin to have its accomplishment:

now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle; according to the word of Samuel, or of the Lord by him; though Ben Gersom thinks they did this of themselves, which was their sin, and did not ask counsel of the Lord, nor of Samuel his prophet; but it seems as if the Philistines were the aggressors, and first came forth to war against them, and they went out to meet them {a}, as the word is, and defend themselves as it became them: this was forty years after the death of Samson, and at the end of Eli's government, who judged Israel so many years, when they had recruited themselves, and recovered their losses they sustained by Samson; and when they perceived a new judge was raised up among the Israelites, who was likely to be of great service to them, and to prevent their authority over them, and therefore thought to begin with them as soon as possible:

and pitched beside Ebenezer; a place so called by anticipation, and had its name from an later victory obtained, when Samuel set up a stone between Mizpeh and Shen, and called it by this name, **1Sa 7:12**, it signifies a stone of help:

and the Philistines pitched in Aphek; a city in the tribe of Judah, bordering on the Philistines, See Gill on "Jos 12:18".

{a} tarql "in occursum", Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Samuel 4:2

Ver. 2. And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel,.... Prepared for battle, and put themselves in a posture for it; formed themselves in a line of battle, and so invited and challenged the Israelites to fight them:

and when they joined battle; engaged with each other, the Israelites doing the

same, putting themselves in a proper form and posture for fighting; or "the battle was spread", or "spread itself" {b}; that is, as the Targum, they that made war were spread; the soldiers were placed in order for battle, to the right and left, which took up on both sides a large space; though Abarbinel understands this in a very different sense, and takes the word to have the same signification as in
Ps 78:60, where it has the sense of forsaking; and so here the Israelites forsook the battle, and fled, which brought on their destruction, flight being, as the Jews say {c}, the beginning of fall or ruin, as it follows:

Israel was smitten before the Philistines; they had the worst of it and were beaten:

and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men; so many fell upon the spot, in the field.

{b} hmxlmh vjtw "et diffusum est praelium", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius.
{c} Misn. Sotah, c. 8. sect. 6.

1 Samuel 4:3

Ver. 3. And when the people came into the camp,.... At Ebenezer, where they pitched their tents, and from whence they went out to battle, and whither they returned after their defeat:

the elders of Israel said, wherefore hath the Lord smitten us today before the Philistines? they were right in ascribing it to the Lord, who had suffered them to be defeated by their enemies, but it is strange they should be so insensible of the cause of it; there was a reason ready at hand, their sins and iniquities were the cause of it, the corruption of manners among them, their neglect of bringing their offerings to the Lord, and the idolatry that many of them were guilty of, at least secretly, **1Sa 2:24** to punish them for which, they were brought into this war, and smitten in it; and yet they wonder at it, that so it should be, that they the people of God should be smitten before Heathens and uncircumcised Philistines; and the rather, since they went to battle with them according to the word of the Lord by Samuel; not considering that they went into this war without humiliation for their sins, and without praying to God for success, and that it was intended as a correction of them for their offences against God:

let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us; in which the law was, sometimes called the covenant between God and them; and which was a symbol of the divine Presence, for want of which they supposed they had not the presence of God with them, and so had not success; and the rather they were encouraged to take this step and method, because that formerly Israel had success against their enemies when the ark was with them, Nu 31:6 though no doubt in this there was an overruling providence of God, by which they were led to take such a step as this, in order to bring the two sons of Eli into the camp, that they might be slain in one day, according to the divine prediction:

that when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies; foolishly placing their confidence in an external symbol, and not in the Lord himself; ascribing salvation to that, which only belongs to him, whether of a temporal or spiritual kind: and such folly and vanity are men guilty of when they seek to, make use of, and trust in anything short of Christ for salvation; as in carnal descent; in the rituals of the law; in the ordinances of the Gospel; in any religious exercises, private or public; or in any works of righteousness done by them: in Christ alone is salvation from spiritual enemies; and indeed from the Lord only is salvation and deliverance from temporal enemies.

1 Samuel 4:4

Ver. 4. So the people sent to Shiloh,.... They liked the proposal of the elders, took their advice, and joined with them in a message to Eli the high priest at Shiloh:

that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubim; which overshadowed the mercy seat that was upon the ark, and was the residence of the divine Majesty; wherefore having this with them, they concluded they should have the presence of God with them, and so success, see Ps 53:1

and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God; these, either with or without the leave of Eli, took the ark out of the tabernacle, and carried it on their shoulders to the camp, or however attended it there, being borne by other priests or Levites; and by this means they were brought into the camp, and so to battle, to meet their doom there; according to Bunting {d}, it was carried by them forty two miles.

{d} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 123.

1 Samuel 4:5

Ver. 5. And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp,.... Being brought thither by the men that carried it:

all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again; this they did as now sure of victory, because of the ark, and to give spirit and courage to each other to go forth to battle, and to strike a panic into their enemies.

1 Samuel 4:6

Ver. 6. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout,.... For it being so loud as to make the earth ring, it was heard in the camp of the Philistines, which might not be at any great distance from the camp of Israel; how far from each other were Aphek and Ebenezer is not certain;

they said, what meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? they could not conceive what should be the reason of it, seeing they had no occasion to shout for joy, having been lately defeated; and a shout is made generally just before a battle is begun, and the onset made, or when victory is obtained; neither of which was the case now:

and they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp: this they understood by spies, which they sent to find out the meaning of the shout; which is more probable than that they came to the knowledge of it by deserters; seeing it is not very likely that any Israelites would desert to the Philistines.

1 Samuel 4:7

Ver. 7. And the Philistines were afraid,.... When the spies returned, and reported to them the reason of the shouting:

for they said, God is come into the camp; into the camp of Israel, because the ark represented him, and was the symbol of his presence; and these Heathens might take the ark itself for an idol of the Israelites; the Targum is, "the ark of God is come"

and they said, woe unto us; it is all over with us, destruction and ruin will be our case, victory will go on their side now their God is among them:

for there hath not been such a thing heretofore; if by this they meant that the ark had never been in the camp of Israel before, they were mistaken; and it is no great wonder they should, being not so well acquainted with the affairs of Israel, and their customs; or rather, it was not so yesterday, or three days ago, when they were defeated; there was no shouting then: or the state of the war is altered; before we fought with the men of Israel, but now we must fight with the God of Israel also.

1 Samuel 4:8

Ver. 8. Woe unto us, who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods?.... Of whom they spoke in an ironical and sneering manner; or if seriously and through fear, they use their own Heathenish language, as if the Israelites had many gods, as they had, though mightier than theirs; though the Syriac and Arabic versions read in the singular, out of the hand of God, or the most strong God; and so the Targum, out of the hand of the Word of the Lord:

these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness: the ten plagues were inflicted on the Egyptians in the land of Egypt, and not in the wilderness; wherefore the Philistines may be supposed to be mistaken in this circumstance; which is not to be wondered at, since many historians who have written of the affairs of the Jews have been mistaken in them, as Justin, Tacitus, and others; nay, even Josephus himself in some things: but perhaps respect is had to the drowning of Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, which had the wilderness of Etham on both sides of it; and this stroke was the finishing one of the plagues on the Egyptians. R. Joseph Kimchi supposes the word for wilderness has the signification of speech, as in **So 4:3** and that the sense of the Philistines is, that God smote the Egyptians with all the plagues he did by his word, his orders, and commands; but now he was come in person, and would smite them by himself; this sense Abarbinel calls a beautiful one.

1 Samuel 4:9

Ver. 9. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines,.... Since this was all they had to depend upon, their manly courage; if they did not exert that it was all over with them; and seeing their case was desperate, having gods as well as men to fight with, it became them to exert themselves to the uttermost; which did they, there was a possibility still of gaining victory, and so immortal honour to themselves; these words seem to be spoken by the generals and officers of the army of the Philistines to the common soldiers:

that ye be not servants to the Hebrews, as they have been to you; that is, before and in the times of Samson; but it appears from hence that at this time neither the Philistines ruled over the Israelites, nor the Israelites over them; but as there was danger of their becoming subject to Israel, they had better die gloriously in the field of battle than to be in the base state of servitude:

quit yourselves like men, and fight; this is repeated to animate them to battle, which they supposed was not far off by the shoutings of the Israelites, and which they must prepare for.

1 Samuel 4:10

Ver. 10. And the Philistines fought,.... With great ardour and spirit, quitted themselves like men of valour and courage, their case being desperate as they imagined, since God was in the camp of Israel:

and Israel was smitten: were routed and beaten:

and they fled every man into his tent; such of them as escaped the sword of the Philistines fled to their own houses in the several cities from whence they came; so the Targum,

"every man to his city"

so that their army was quite broken up:

and there was a very great slaughter far greater than in the first battle:

For there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen; their army chiefly, if not altogether, consisting of footmen, there being few horses in Israel; and if any cavalry now, these may be supposed to flee; before they lost only 4000, now

30,000; so that the ark was no security to them, which was suffered, to show their vain trust and confidence in it.

1 Samuel 4:11

Ver. 11. And the ark of God was taken,.... By the Philistines; which was suffered partly as a punishment to the Israelites, for fetching it from the tabernacle without the will of God, and for their vain confidence in it; and partly that the Philistines might have an experiment of the power and might of God, as Procopius Gazaeus observes, by what they would suffer through having it among them; some have thought that this was an emblem of Christ being delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, and of the Gospel being translated from the Jews to them: and the two sons of Eli,

Hophni and Phinehas, were slain; which fulfilled the prophecy of the man of God, that they should both die in one day, **1Sa 2:34**. It is very probable they stood fast by the ark, and chose rather to die than to give it up freely; having received a charge from their father, that if the ark was taken, not to desire life, nor ever dare to come into his presence more, as Josephus {a} relates.

{a} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 11. sect. 2.

1 Samuel 4:12

Ver. 12. And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army,.... Out of the rank in which he was, before the whole army was quite broken up. This was a young man as Josephus {b} says, which is highly probable; though not at all to be depended on is what the Jews {c} say, that this was Saul, later king of Israel:

and came to Shiloh the same day; which, according to Bunting {d}, was forty two miles from Ebenezer, near to which the battle was fought; and that it was a long way is pretty plain by the remark made, that this messenger came the same day the battle was fought; though not at such a distance as some Jewish writers say, some sixty, some one hundred and twenty miles {e}; which is not at all probable:

with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head; which were both tokens of distress and mourning, and showed that he was a messenger of bad tidings from the army; See Gill on "Jos 7:6".

{b} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 11. sect. 3. {c} Shalshalet Hakabala. fol. 8. 1. Jarchi in loc. {d} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 123. {e} Midrash Schemuel apud Abarbinel in loc.

1 Samuel 4:13

Ver. 13. And when he came,.... To Shiloh; he either passed by Eli, who being blind could not see him, **1Sa 4:15** or he came in at another gate of the city on the other side of it, as Abarbinel thinks; though the former seems more likely by what follows, he not choosing to deliver the bad news to Eli first, whom he knew it would very much grieve, and therefore slipped by him into the city:

lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: by the "hand" of the way, as the marginal reading, and which we follow; it seems to be a place where two ways or more met, and where was a way post erected, with an hand directing what places they led to. The text is, "he", or "it smote", as if his heart smote him for letting the ark go; so Kimchi {f}; here Eli had a seat placed, which, as the Targum says, was at the ascent of the way to the gate; and so the Septuagint has it, at the gate; and Josephus {g} says it was at one of the gates; either of his own house, or of the tabernacle, or rather of the city; here he was watching for news, to hear what he could, and as soon as he could, how it fared with the army, with his sons, and especially with the ark;

for his heart trembled for the ark of God; not so much for his sons, whose death he might expect from the divine prediction, but for the ark, about which he was doubtful; fearing lest it should fall into the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines, who would triumph upon it, and which would make sad the heart of every true Israelite, and reflect much dishonour on the God of Israel; and very probably he might tremble the more when he reflected on his own sin and folly in suffering his sons to take it with them. Eli here may represent a good man in pain for the church of God, and the interest of religion in declining times, both with respect to ministers of the word, and members of churches: as when Gospel ministers are removed by death, few raised up in their stead, and those that do appear in the ministry, either unregenerate, as it may be feared; or have not gifts and abilities qualifying them for it; or are of immoral lives and conversations, or propagate false doctrines, errors, and heresies: and also when among professors of religion and members of churches there is a great decay of powerful godliness; and they are got into a drowsy, sleepy, frame of spirit, are become lukewarm and indifferent to spiritual exercises, want zeal for the Gospel and cause of Christ; are careless about the honour and interest of religion, unstable and inconstant in doctrine and worship, and in their affections to one another, and the ministers of the word; and their conversation not as becomes their profession:

and when the man came into the city, and told it; how that the army of Israel was beaten, what a number of men was killed, among whom were the two sons of the high priest, and the ark was taken:

all the city cried out; that is, all the inhabitants of the city, having most of them perhaps relations and friends in the army, for whom they were concerned, fearing their lives were lost; but especially the loss of the ark was insupportable by them, it being of so much advantage to that city particularly, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual; wherefore, upon hearing this bad news, there was a general shriek and cry throughout the whole city.

{f} Vid. David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 47. 1. {g} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 11. sect. 3.)

1 Samuel 4:14

Ver. 14. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying,.... The shrieks of the men and women, which were very clamorous and terrible. Eli had his hearing, though not his sight; he could not see the distress in their countenances, but he heard the lamentations they made:

and said, what meaneth the noise of this tumult? it seems the people ran about, wringing their hands, and making doleful shrieks; the noise of which Eli heard, and the meaning of which he inquired after, or what should be the cause of it:

and the man came in hastily, and told Eli; or made haste, and came to him, and related all that is later expressed; for Eli was not in any house, but on a seat by the way side, and therefore could not be said to come "in" to him; but he came to him, where he was, being brought by some of the citizens Eli had inquired of what should be the meaning of this noise; and therefore without delay the man was hastened to give the whole account unto him, as it was highly proper he should, being the supreme magistrate.

1 Samuel 4:15

Ver. 15. Now Eli was ninety eight years old,.... Which is very properly observed, he being now come to the end of his days, and which also accounts for his blindness after mentioned:

and his eyes were dim, that he could not see; could not see the messenger, and read in his countenance, and perceive by his clothes rent, and earth on his head, that he was a bringer of bad tidings; or his eyes each of them "stood" {h}; were fixed and immovable, as the eyes of blind men be. In **1Sa 3:2** it is said, "his eyes began to wax dim"; but here that they "were" become dim; and there might be some years between that time and this, for Samuel then was very young, but now more grown up: though Procopius Gazaeus thinks that Eli was then ninety eight years of age, and that the affair there related was just before his death; but it rather appears to be some time before.

{h} hmq "stetit", Montanus; "stabant", Tigurine version.

1 Samuel 4:16

Ver. 16. And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army,.... It is very probable that the people Eli inquired of told him there was a messenger come from the army, though they did not choose to relate to him the news he brought:

and I fled today out of the army; so that as he was an eyewitness of what was done in the army, the account he brought was the earliest that could be had, in bringing which he had made great dispatch, having ran perhaps all the way:

and he said, what is there done, my son? has a battle been fought? on which side is the victory? is Israel beaten, or have they conquered? how do things go? he uses the kind and tender appellation, my son, to engage him to tell him all freely and openly.

1 Samuel 4:17

Ver. 17. And the messenger answered and said,.... He delivered his account gradually, beginning with generals, and then proceeding to particulars, and with what he thought Eli could better bear the news of, and so prepared him for the worst; in which he acted a wise part:

Israel is fled before the Philistines; they have given way and retreated, and which might possibly be done without great loss, and which, though it was bad news, might not be so very bad:

and there hath also been a great slaughter among the people; this is worse news still; however, the number of the slain is not given, nor any mention of particular persons that were killed: so that, for any thing yet said, his own sons might be safe: but then it follows,

and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; the news of which must be very affecting to him, and strike him closely; though he might expect and be prepared for it by what both the man of God and Samuel from the Lord had related to him:

and the ark of God is taken; the thing he feared, and his heart trembled before for it; this was the closing and cutting part of the account; the messenger foresaw that this would the most affect him, and therefore referred it to the last.

1 Samuel 4:18

Ver. 18. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God,.... Of the taking of that, it struck him to the heart, and killed him; the rest he bore tolerably well, the flight of Israel before the Philistines, the great slaughter made of them, the death of his two sons; but the taking of the ark was so dreadful to him, that he could not support under it:

that he fell from off the seat backward, by the side of the gate; which confirms the sense of **1Sa 4:13** though whether it was the gate of his own house, or of the tabernacle, or of the city is not certain; the latter is most probable: it seems the seat on which he sat had no back to it, and might be placed only for present convenience:

and his neck brake; the back part of it, the "vertebrae" of it, which has its name in Hebrew from the several joints in it:

and he died; not through the breaking of his neck, for it is very probable he died directly upon hearing the ark was taken, and which was the reason of his falling backward, and that brake his neck:

for he was an old man, and heavy; full of flesh, a very fat man, and so fell heavy, which occasioned the breaking of his neck:

and he had judged Israel forty years; had governed them in the capacity both of an high priest and judge, so that he must enter on his government when fifty eight years of age; the Septuagint version has it very wrongly twenty years. According to the Jews {i}, he died on the tenth of Ijar, answering to part of April and May, and his two sons and the ark taken; for which a fast was kept on it.

{i} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.

1 Samuel 4:19

Ver. 19. And his daughter in law, Phinehas's wife, was with child, near to be delivered,.... Was near her time, as it is commonly expressed. Ben Gersom derives the word from a root which signifies to complete and finish {k}; denoting that her time to bring forth was completed and filled up; though Josephus {l} says that it was a seven months' birth, so that she came two months before her time; the margin of our Bibles is, "to cry out" {m}; and so Moses Kimchi, as his brother relates, derives the word from a root which signifies to howl and lament, and so is expressive of a woman's crying out when her pains come upon her:

and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken: which is mentioned first, as being the most distressing to her:

and that her father in law and her husband were dead; her father-in-law Eli is put first, being the high priest of God, and so his death gave her the greatest concern, as the death of an high priest was always matter of grief to the Israelites; and next the death of her husband, who should have succeeded him in the priesthood; for though he was a bad man, yet not so bad as Hophni, as Ben Gersom observes; and therefore the priesthood was continued in his line unto the reign of Solomon; and no notice is taken by her of the death of her brother-in-law:

she bowed herself, and travailed; put herself in a posture for travailing; perceiving she was coming to it, she fell upon her knees, as the word used signifies; and we are told {n}, that the Ethiopian women, when they bring forth, fall upon their knees, and bear their young, rarely making use of a midwife, and so it seems it was the way of the Hebrew women:

for her pains came upon her; sooner it is very probable than otherwise they would, which is sometimes the case, when frights seize a person in such circumstances: or were "turned upon her" {o}; they ceased, so that she could not make the necessary evacuations after the birth, which issued in her death; some render it, "her doors were turned" {p}, or changed; the doors of her womb, as in **Job 3:10**, though these had been opened for the bringing forth of her child, yet were reversed, changed, and altered, so as to prevent the after birth coming away, which caused her death, as follows.

{k} hlk "absolvere, consummare, perficere", Buxtorf. {l} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 5. c. 3.) sect. 4. {m} tll "ad ululandum", Montanus; so some in Munster; "ad ejulandum", as some in Vatablus. {n} Ludolph. Hist. Aethiop. l. 1. c. 14. {o} wkphn "versae erant", Pagninus, Montanus. {p} "Quoniam inversi sunt super eam eardines ejus", Munster; so Jarchi; Vid. T. Bab. Becorot, fol. 45. 1.

1 Samuel 4:20

Ver. 20. And about the time of her death,.... Which quickly came on after she was brought to bed:

the women that stood by her; who were called to her labour, and assisted at it:

said unto her, fear not, for thou hast born a son; perceiving that she was very low spirited, endeavoured to cheer and comfort her, by observing to her that the worst was over; and besides she had brought forth a man child, which was usually matter of joy to a family, and particularly to the woman that bears it, which causes her to forget the sorrows and pains she has gone through in bearing it, Joh 16:21 but she answered not, neither did she regard it; said not one word in answer to them, nor was the least affected with joy and pleasure at what they related to her; being not only a dying woman, on the borders of another world, and so had no relish for temporal enjoyments, but also overcome with grief with what had happened, not only to her family, but more especially to the ark of God.

1 Samuel 4:21

Ver. 21. And she named the child Ichabod,.... Which some render, "where is the glory?" as in the margin of our Bibles; but it signifies "no glory", as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; her husband being dead, she gives her child its name; the reason for which name follows:

saying, the glory is departed from Israel: the God of glory, or the glorious Lord, was departed from Israel; the ark, the symbol of his presence, being taken from them, and carried captive by the enemy; see
Ps 78:61

because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law, and her husband; who were dead; these are the words either of the writer of this book, or, as Abarbinel thinks, of the women that assisted at her labour; who interpreted the name of the child, and suggested what were her intentions in giving this name, which she had only expressed in general terms; the particulars of which they thought fit to give, agreeably to her meaning, as they supposed; which were the taking of the ark, and the death of her father-in-law, and of her husband; but according to the same writer she before her death corrected the sense they put upon her intention in thus naming the child; showing that it was not on the account of the death of her father and husband that she supposed the glory to be departed, and therefore named her child Ichabod: but solely and alone because the ark was taken, as in the next verse.

1 Samuel 4:22

Ver. 22. And she said,.... Repeating what she had said before, for the confirmation of it, or as correcting what the women had said; and so may be rendered,

but she said; giving her own and only reason for the name of the child:

the glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken; so when the word, worship, and ordinances of God are removed from a people, the glory is gone from them; the God of glory is no more seen among them, who is so glorious in his nature, perfections, and works; and Christ, the Lord of life and glory, is no more held forth unto them in the glories of his person, offices, and grace; and the glorious Gospel of Christ is no more preached unto them, so full of glorious doctrines and promises; and the glorious ordinances of it no more administered: and, when this is the case, the glory is departed from a people;

and which is owing to their formality, lukewarmness, unfruitfulness, negligent attendance on the worship of God, contempt of the word and ordinances, and an unbecoming walk and conversation.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 5

This chapter relates how that the ark being brought by the Philistines to Ashdod, and placed in the temple of their idol, that fell down before it, **1Sa 5:1**, that the hand of the Lord was upon the men of Ashdod, and smote them with emerods, **1Sa 5:6** and being carried to Gath, the men of Gath were smitten likewise with the same, **1Sa 5:8**, and after that the men of Ekron, whither it also was carried, **1Sa 5:10**.

Ver. 1. And the Philistines took the ark of God,.... Which fell into their hands, Israel being beaten, and caused to flee, and the priests that had the care of the ark slain; and when possessed of it, they did not destroy it, nor take out of it what was in it, only took it up:

and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. Ebenezer was the place where the camp of Israel was pitched, **1Sa 4:1** and near to which the battle was fought. Ashdod was one of the five principalities of the Philistines, the same with Azotus, **Ac 8:40**. The distance between these two places, according to Bunting {q} was one hundred and sixty miles; though one would think the distance from each other was not so great: why it was carried to Ashdod is not plain; perhaps it might be the nearest place of note in their country; and certain it is that it was one of their most famous cities, if not the most famous;
See Gill on "Isa 20:1", and had a famous idol temple in it.

{q} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 122.

1 Samuel 5:2

Ver. 2. When the Philistines took the ark of God,.... And had brought it to Ashdod:

they brought it into the house of Dagon; a temple dedicated to that idol, and in which his image stood; of which See Gill on "Jud 16:23",

and set it by Dagon; by the side of him, either in honour to the ark, as Abarbinel, designing to give it homage and adoration, as to their own deity; for though the Gentiles did not choose to change their gods, yet they would add the gods of other nations to them; and such the Philistines might take the ark to be: or else, as Procopius Gazaeus, they brought it into their idol's temple, as a trophy of victory, and as a spoil taken from their enemies, and which they dedicated to their idol. Laniado {r} observes, that the word here used signifies servitude, as in Ge 33:15 and that the ark was set here to minister to, or serve their god Dagon. The temple of Dagon at Ashdod or Azotus was in being in the times of the Maccabees, and was burnt by Jonathan,

"83 The horsemen also, being scattered in the field, fled to Azotus, and went into Bethdagon, their idol's temple, for safety. 84 But Jonathan set fire on Azotus, and the cities round about it, and took their spoils; and the temple of Dagon, with them that were fled into it, he burned with fire." (1 Maccabees 10)

{r} Cli Yaker, fol. 162. 4.

1 Samuel 5:3

Ver. 3. And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, &e.] Either the people, the inhabitants of the place, who came early to pay their devotions to their idol, before they went on their business; or the priests of the idol, who came to sacrifice in the morning:

and, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord; as if he was subject to it, and giving adoration to it, and owning it was above him, and had superior power over him:

and they took Dagon, and set him in his place again; having no notion that it was owing to the ark of God, or to the God of Israel, that he was fallen, but that it was a matter of chance.

1 Samuel 5:4

Ver. 4. And when they arose early on the morrow morning,.... For the same purpose as before; unless they had any curiosity to indulge, to see whether the ark and Dagon agreed better together, if they had any suspicion that the former mischance was to be attributed to some variance and disagreement between them:

behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord: again, and in a worse condition than before:

and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, were cut off upon the threshold; of the temple, upon which he fell with such force, that the threshold cut off his head, and both his hands; which signified he had neither wisdom to contrive for his own safety, nor strength and power to defend himself; and therefore of what advantage could he be to his votaries? This may be an emblem of the fall of idolatry in the Gentile world, before the preaching of Christ and his Gospel in it; or of the idol of man's righteousness, which is set up, though it cannot stand, against the righteousness of Christ, and of man's renouncing that, when convinced of the weakness and insufficiency of it, and submitting to the righteousness of Christ:

only the stump of Dagon was left to him: his body, as the Targum, his head and hands being cut off; or, as it is in the Hebrew text, only Dagon was left; that is, the fishy part of this idol; for "Dag" signifies a fish; and, as Kimchi relates, this idol, from the navel upwards, had the form of a man, and from thence downwards the form of a fish; and it was the lower part that was left; See Gill on "Jud 16:23".

1 Samuel 5:5

Ver. 5. Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house,.... Neither the priests that continually attended the worship and service of Dagon, nor the people that came there to pay their devotions to him:

tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day: but used to leap over it, either reckoning it sacred because touched by their idol, which fell upon it; or rather, as it should seem, in a way of detestation, because it had been the means of cutting off the head and hands of their idol; and this custom not only continued to the latter days of Samuel, the writer of this book; but even among the Philistines in one place or another to the times of Zephaniah, who seems to allude to it, **Zep 1:9**. In later times there was another deity worshipped at Ashdod; according to Masius {s}, the Philistine Venus, or Astarte, was worshipped in this place; though perhaps she may be no other than Atergatis,

or Adergatis, which with Selden {t} is only a corruption of Addir-dag, the magnificent fish, in which form Dagon is supposed to be; so the Phoenician goddess Derceto, worshipped at Ashkelon had the face of a woman, and the other part was all fish; though Ben Gersom says Dagon was in the form of a man, and which is confirmed by the Complutensian edition of the Septuagint, which on **1Sa 5:4** reads, "the soles of his feet were cut off"; which is a much better reading than the common one, "the soles of his hands", which is not sense; by which it appears that he had head, hands, and feet; wherefore it seems most likely that he had his name from Dagon, signifying corn:
See Gill on "Jud 16:23".

{s} Comment. in Jos. xv. 47. {t} De Dis. Syr. Syntagu. l. 2. c. 3. p. 267.

1 Samuel 5:6

Ver. 6. But the hand of the Lord was heavy on them of Ashdod,.... Not only on their idol, but on themselves; it had crushed him to pieces, and now it fell heavy on them to their destruction:

and he destroyed them; either by the disease after mentioned they were smitten with, or rather with some other, since that seems not to be mortal, though painful; it may be with the pestilence:

and smote them with emerods; more properly haemorrhoids, which, as Kimchi says, was the name of a disease, but he says not what; Ben Gersom calls it a very painful disease, from whence comes a great quantity of blood. Josephus {u} takes it to be the dysentery or bloody flux; it seems to be what we commonly call the piles, and has its name in Hebrew from the height of them, rising up sometimes into high large tumours:

even Ashdod and the coasts thereof; not only the inhabitants of the city were afflicted with this disease, but those of the villages round about.

{u} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 1.

1 Samuel 5:7

Ver. 7. And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so,.... That many of their inhabitants were taken away by death, and others afflicted with a painful disease; all which they imputed to the ark being among them:

they said, the ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us; like the Gergesenes, who besought Christ to depart their coasts, having more regard for their swine than for him:

for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon, our god, not the hand of the ark, unless they took it for a god, but the hand of the God of Israel; in this they were right, and seem to have understood the case better than the other lords they after consulted; his hand was upon Dagon, as appeared his fall before the ark, and upon them by smiting with the haemorrhoids, the memory of which abode with the Philistines for ages afterwards; for we are told {w} that the Scythians, having plundered the temple of Venus at Ashkelon, one of their five principalities, the goddess inflicted upon them the female disease, or the haemorrhoids; which shows that it was thought to be a disease inflicted by way of punishment for sacrilege, and that it was still remembered what the Philistines suffered for a crime of the like nature.

{w} Herodot. Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 105.

1 Samuel 5:8

Ver. 8. They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them,.... The other four lords, for there were five with this; see Jos 13:3,

and said, what shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? they no doubt told them what they and their idol had suffered on account of it, and the resolution they were come to that it should be no longer with them; and therefore desire to know what must be done with it, whether they should return it to the people of Israel, or dispose of it somewhere else; it is probable some might be for the former, but the greater part were not, and were for keeping it in their possession somewhere or another:

and they answered, let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath; which was another of the five principalities of the Philistines, and not far from Ashdod; according to Jerom {x}, it is included in the remnant of Ashdod, Jer 25:20 and according to Bunting {y} but four miles from it. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions make this to be the answer of the men of Gath, the one reading it, "and they of Gath said, let the ark of God come to us;"

and the other,

"they of Gath answered, let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about;"

for they suspected, as Procopius Gazaeus observes, that the destruction did not come from God, but was a disease arising from some pestilential cause. They perhaps imagined it was in the air in and about Ashdod, or that though the situation of the ark was not liked, in another place it might be otherwise, and more agreeable:

and they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither; they seem not to carry it directly to the place, but carried it in a round about way, as if they had a mind to give it an airing, before they fixed it any where.

{x} Comment. in Hierem. c. 25. fol. 151. B. {y} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 123.

1 Samuel 5:9

Ver. 9. And it was so, that after they had carried it about,.... And at last placed it in the city of Gath;

the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction: greater than that at Ashdod, more persons were destroyed; the distemper sent among them was more epidemic and mortal:

and he smote the men of the city, both small and great; high and low, persons of every class, rank, and station, young and old, men, women, and children:

and they had emerods in their secret parts; and so had the men of Ashdod; and the design of this expression is, not to point at the place where they were, which it is well known they are always in those parts, but the different nature of them; the emerods or piles of the men of Ashdod were more outward, these more inward, and so more painful, and not so easy to come at, and more difficult of cure; for the words may be rendered,

and the emerods were hidden unto them {z}; were inward, and out of sight; and perhaps this disease as inflicted on them might be more grievous than it commonly is now. Josephus {a} wrongly makes these to be the Ashkalonites, when they were the men of Gath.

{z} Mylpe Mhl wrtvyw "et absconditi erant", Montanus; so Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius. {a} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 1.)

1 Samuel 5:10

Ver. 10. Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron,.... Another of the five principalities of the Philistines, about ten miles from Gath, where Baalzebub, or the god of the fly, was worshipped:

and it came to pass, that as the ark of God came to Ekron; and had been there some little time:

that the Ekronites cried out; when they perceived the hand of God was upon them, as upon the other cities; these were the chief magistrates of the city, with the lord of them, as appears by what follows:

saying, they have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us; from one city to another, and at length to us:

to slay us and our people; not that this was their intention, but so it was eventually.

1 Samuel 5:11

Ver. 11. So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines,.... As the men of Ashdod had done before on the same account, **1Sa 5:8**

and said, send away the ark of the God of Israel; as these lords were united in their government, and made one common cause of it against Israel, one could not dispose of this capture without the consent of the rest; otherwise the lord of Ekron, with his princes, were clearly in it that it was right and best to send it away out of any of their principalities:

and let it go again to its own place; to the land of Israel and Shiloh there, though to that it never returned more:

that it slay us not, and our people; that is, all of them, for great numbers had been slain already, as follows:

for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; a mortal disease went through the whole city, and swept away a multitude of people:

the hand of God was very heavy there; it seems by the expression to haste been heavier on the inhabitants of this city than upon those of Ashdod and Gath, which made them the more pressing to get rid of the ark.

1 Samuel 5:12

Ver. 12. And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods,.... As the inhabitants of Ashdod and Gath had been; this shows that those that died did not die of that disease, but of some other; very likely the pestilence:

and the cry of the city went up to heaven; not that it was heard and regarded there, but the phrase is used to denote the greatness of it, how exceeding loud and clamorous it was; partly on the account of the death of so many of the inhabitants, their relations and friends; and partly because of the intolerable pain they endured through the emerods. There is something of this history preserved in a story wrongly told by Herodotus {b}, who relates that the Scythians returning from Egypt passed through Ashkelon, a city of Syria (one of the five principalities of the Philistines), and that some of them robbed the temple of Venus there; for which the goddess sent on them and their posterity the disease of emerods, and that the Scythians themselves acknowledged that they were troubled with it on that account.

{b} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 105.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 6

In this chapter we are told the Philistines advised with their priests what to do with the ark, and wherewith to send it home, 1Sa 6:1 whose advice was to send with it a trespass offering, golden images of emerods and mice, and to put it on a new cart, and the images in a coffer on the side of the ark, and draw it with two cows, **1Sa 6:3**, and gave them a token whereby they might know whether they had been smitten by the God of Israel or not, **1Sa 6:9** which advice they took, and acted in all things according to it; and the lords of the Philistines accompanied the ark to the border of Bethshemesh, **1Sa 6:10**, where they of Bethshemesh received it with joy, and offered the kine for a burnt offering to the Lord, and the Levites took care of the ark and presents in it, and the lords of the Philistines returned home, **1Sa 6:13**, but they of Bethshemesh looking into the ark were smitten of God, upon which they sent to the men of Kirjathjearim to fetch it from them, **1Sa 6:19**.

Ver. 1. And the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months. Or "in the field" {c} of the Philistines; hence Procopius Gazaeus observes, that none of the cities daring to receive the ark, they left it without under the open air, so thinking they should be delivered from their calamity. But the word is often used for country, and is generally so understood here; the Targum is,

"in the cities of the Philistines;"

in one or other of them, first for a while in Ashdod, and then for some time in Gath, and last in Ekron, and in all seven months from the time of its being taken; and it being in wheat harvest when it was returned, **1Sa 6:13**, these seven months will carry us back to the beginning of winter, or towards the end of autumn, when the battles between Israel and the Philistines were fought, and the ark was taken. Josephus {d} says it was with the Philistines four months only, contrary to the text.

{c} hdvb en agrw, Sept. "in agro", Pagninus, Montanus. {d} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 4.

1 Samuel 6:2

Ver. 2. And the Philistines called for the priests and for the diviners,.... The one were skilled in the rites and ceremonies of religion, not only of their own, but of other nations, particularly of Israel; and that they were not strangers to the history and affairs of that people is plain from **1Sa 6:6** and the other were skilled in judicial astrology, and knowledge of future events, at least as they pretended to; and therefore were both thought fit persons to advise with on the occasion of the ark, and the circumstances they were in through that:

saying, what shall we do to the ark of the Lord? shall we send it back to its own land, or not? the Ekronites had moved it might be sent back, and the five lords sent for the priests and diviners to have their advice upon it, whether it was right or not, and what they should do to it, or with it; for if it was advisable to send it back, then another question follows:

tell us wherewith we shall send it to its place; whether on men's shoulders, or on horses or asses, or on a carriage; and whether just as it was taken, or with some presents with it.

1 Samuel 6:3

Ver. 3. And they said, if ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty,.... As they perceived they had either resolved upon, or at least were inclined to do; and which they also thought advisable and therefore would have them by no means send it away as it was, but with some presents along with it; for the meaning of this word "empty" is not that they should take care that all that were in it when taken should go with it, and nothing be taken out of it, or it be stripped of its contents; but that some gifts and offerings should be sent along with it: perhaps they might have some notion of, or respect unto a law in Israel, Ex 23:15 or might say this from a common principle received among Heathens, that deities were to be appeased by gifts {e}:

but in any wise return him a trespass offering; here again they seem to have some notion of the sorts and kinds of sacrifice among the Israelites; and advise to a trespass offering, to make satisfaction and atonement for the offence they had committed in taking away the ark; and that they should make restoration not only by returning the ark, but by sending an expiatory offering along with it:

then ye shall be healed; of the disease with which they were smitten; for it seems it still continued on them, at least on many:

and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you; which was because the ark was detained by them; but when that should be sent home, and they be healed upon it, then it would be a plain case that the reason why the disease was inflicted and continued was because of that.

{e} "Munera crede mihi", &c. Ovid. de arte amandi, l. 3.

1 Samuel 6:4

Ver. 4. Then said they, what shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him?.... They paid a great deference to their priests and diviners, and were willing to be directed in all things by them; being ignorant of what was most proper in this case, and might be acceptable to the God of Israel:

they answered, five golden emerods, and five golden mice; images of these made of gold, as appears from the next verse; the reason of the former is easy, from the above account of the disease they were afflicted with; but of the latter no hint is given before: indeed in the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions of **1Sa 5:6** is inserted a clause, that

"mice sprung up in the midst of their country;"

which is not in the Hebrew text, nor in the Chaldee paraphrase; yet appears to be a fact from the following verse, that at the same time their bodies were smitten with emerods, their fields were overrun with mice, which destroyed the increase of them; wherefore five golden mice were also ordered as a part of the trespass offering, and five of each were pitched upon:

according to the number of the lords of the Philistines; who were five, and so the principalities under them; see Jos 13:3

for one plague was on you all, and on your lords; the lords and common people were equally smitten with the emerods, and the several principalities were alike distressed and destroyed with the mice; and therefore the trespass offering, which was a vicarious one for them, was to be according to the number of their princes and their principalities; five emerods for the five princes and their people smitten with emerods, and five mice on account of the five cities and fields adjacent being marred by mice.

1 Samuel 6:5

Ver. 5. Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods,.... Which some take to be images of the five cities; others of a man at large with the disease in his back parts; others of that part of the body of a man only, in a circular form, in which the disease was, and expressing that; but the text is plain for the disease only, as high large tumours: though Maimonides {f} says of these images, that the word is attributed to them, not because of their external form, but because of their spiritual virtue and influence; whereby the damage or disease of the emerods in the hinder parts were removed: he seems to take them to be a sort of talismans, which were images of a disease or noxious creature a country was infected with, made under some celestial influence to remove it; and Tavernier {g} relates, as Bishop Patrick observes, that it is a practice with the Indians to this day, that when any pilgrim goes to a pagoda for the cure of any disease, he brings the figure of the member affected, made either of gold, silver, or copper, according to his quality, which he offers to his god. There is a tradition among the Heathens, which seems to be borrowed from this history, and serves to establish the credit of it; the Athenians not receiving Bacchus and his rites with due honour, he was angry with them, and smote them with a disease in their private parts, which was incurable; on which they consulted the oracle, which advised them in order to be rid of the disease to receive the god with all honour and respect; which order the Athenians obeyed, and made images of the several parts, privately and publicly, and with these honoured the god in memory of the disease {h}: both the disease and cure are here plainly pointed at:

and images of your mice that mar the land; that devoured the fruits of it, as these creatures in many instances have been known to do; and particularly in Palestine, the country of the Philistines, where in some places their fields were sometimes almost deserted because of the abundance of them; and were it not for a sort of birds that devoured them, the inhabitants could not sow their seed {i}: the Boeotians sacrificed to Apollo Pornopion (which signifies a mouse), to save their country from them {k}; Aristotle {l} reports of field mice, that they sometimes increase to such incredible numbers, that scarce any of the corn of the field is left by them; and so soon consumed, that some husbandmen, having appointed their labourers to cut down their corn on one day, coming to it the next day, in order to cut it down, have found it all consumed; Pliny {m} speaks of field mice destroying the harvest; Aelianus {n} relates such an incursion of field mice into some parts of Italy, as obliged the inhabitants to leave the country, and which destroyed the corn fields and plants, as if they had been consumed by heat or cold, or any unseasonable weather; and not only seeds were gnawn, but roots cut up; so the Abderites {o} were obliged to leave their country because of mice and frogs:

and ye shall give glory to the God of Israel; by sending these images as monuments of their shameful and painful disease, and of the ruin of their fields; owning that it was the hand of the Lord that smote their bodies with emerods, and filled their fields with mice which devoured them; seeking and asking pardoning of him by the trespass offering they sent him:

peradventure he will lighten his hand from you: abate the violence of the disease, and at length entirely remove it:

and from your gods; not Dagon only, but others seem to have suffered, wherever the ark came: for the Philistines had other deities; besides Dagon at Ashdod, there were Baalzebub at Ekron, and Marnas at Gaza, and Derceto at Ashkelon; and perhaps another at Gath, though unknown; and besides the gods suffered, or however their priests, by the number of men that died, and by the fruits of the earth being destroyed; which must in course lessen their revenues: and from off your land; the fruits of which were destroyed by mice.

{f} Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 1. {g} Travels, p. 92. {h} Scholia in Aristoph. Acharnen. Act ii. Scen. 1. p. 383, 384. Edit. Genev. 1607. {i} Magini Geograph. par. 2. fol. 241. {k} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 13. {l} Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 37. "----saepe exiguus mus", &c. Virgil, Georg. l. 1. v. 181, 182. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 65. {n} De Animal. l. 17. c. 41. {o} Justin. l. 15. c. 2.

1 Samuel 6:6

Ver. 6. Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?.... And would not let Israel go, when their dismission was demanded by Moses and Aaron in the name of the Lord; but was refused from time to time, being given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart: and it seems by this, that though it was proposed by some to send back the ark, and which the priests and diviners approved of; yet there were some that were against it, who, notwithstanding the plagues inflicted on them, like Pharaoh and the Egyptians hardened their hearts; which story these priests were acquainted with by the tradition of their ancestors, this being a fact then generally known in the world; or by the relation of the Israelites, over whom they had ruled many years, and were conversant with them:

when he had wrought wonderfully among them: that is, the God of Israel, though they mention not his name, who had wrought wonders in the land of Egypt; the ten plagues he inflicted on them are referred to:

did they not let the people go, and they departed? who were convinced by these plagues that they ought to let Israel go, and by them were prevailed upon to dismiss them, and the people did go out of their land; and therefore should not we let the ark go likewise, on whom plagues have been inflicted for detaining it? and may we not expect more and greater, should we refuse to dismiss it?

1 Samuel 6:7

Ver. 7. Now therefore make a new cart,.... For there were no Levites, nor priests of the Lord to carry it upon their shoulders, as it was wont to be when carried, and therefore they ordered a cart to be made; and they might know the Levites were allowed wagons to carry some of their sacred things on, **Nu 7:1** and a new one for the honour of the ark, as David afterwards did, **2Sa 6:3**

and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke; which also might be designed for the honour of the ark; but there was a further view in it, at least in the providence of God; since two such creatures, who had young, would be apt, if left to themselves, as these were, to return home to them, and not to proceed on a journey; and being unaccustomed to a yoke, would draw one way, and another another, in different ways; and not go on in a direct road, as such that are used to the yoke do:

and tie the kine to the cart; in order to draw it:

and bring their calves home from them; that they might not cry after them, which would cause them to turn back.

1 Samuel 6:8

Ver. 8. And take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart,.... Which was dispensed with in these uncircumcised Philistines, there being no other to do this service:

and put the jewels of gold; or rather "vessels of gold" {p}; the five golden emerods, and the five golden mice:

which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; in a basket, as the Syriac version: in a scrip, as the Arabic; in a purse, or bag, as Josephus {q}; which latter is probable enough:

and send it away, that it may go; that is, set it a going, without any driver or guide; but leave it to take its course of itself to the land of Israel. Josephus {r} says it was set in a place where three ways met, that it might take which it might; and the taking of the right way must be a strong evidence of its being under the direction of God.

{p} bhzh ylk "vasa aurea", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, &c. {q} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 2. {r} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 2.

1 Samuel 6:9

Ver. 9. And see if it goeth up by the way of its own coast to Bethshemesh,.... The nearest city to the land of the Philistines, which lay on their borders, and the borders of the tribe of Judah,
See Gill on "Jos 15:10". Now the lords of the Philistines are directed by their priests to observe, whether these kine, that drew the cart on which the ark was, took the direct road to the borders of the land of Israel, and to Bethshemesh, the nearest city that lay on that coast: if so, they might conclude then,

he hath done us this great evil; that is, the God of Israel, whose ark this was; he had inflicted the disease of the emerods on them, and sent such numbers of mice into their fields, that had destroyed the increase of them:

but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that hath smote us; but that there is some other cause of it:

it was a chance that happened to us; and so might have been the case if the ark had never been taken or detained, and to be imputed to fate, or to the stars, or some secret causes they know not of.

1 Samuel 6:10

Ver. 10. And the men did so,.... Made a new cart, not the lords of the Philistines, but workmen by their orders:

and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart; with the gear that horses, asses, or oxen, were usually fastened to a carriage they drew:

and shut up their calves at home; or, "in the house" {s}; the cow house or stable where they used to be put; this they did to restrain them from following the cows, which would disturb them in drawing the cart.

{s} tybb "in domo", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

1 Samuel 6:11

Ver. 11. And they laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart,.... Perhaps the same men that made the cart; however they were the Philistines, yet were not punished for touching it, as Uzzah was, though an Israelite, **2Sa 6:6**

and the coffer with the mice of gold, and the images of their emerods; which coffer was placed in a purse or bag hung at the side of the ark, with the golden mice and emerods in it.

1 Samuel 6:12

Ver. 12. And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh,.... Though they had none to drive, lead, or guide them, yet they steered their course to the road that led to Bethshemesh, though there were other ways they might have taken; which shows they were under the direction of God himself:

and went along the highway; or, "in one highway", or "post" {t}; though they had never been used to a yoke, they drew together in one path; and did not draw one way, and another another, as oxen unaccustomed to a yoke do:

lowing as they went; on account of their calves, which showed their sense of them, and their natural affection for them; and yet went on, did not attempt to go back to them; by which it was plain they were under a supernatural influence:

and turned not aside to the right or to the left; when other ways presented, on the right hand or on the left; they kept going straight on in the road that led to the place they were destined for; all which can be reckoned nothing less than a miracle:

and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh; not before them to guide them, or on the side of the ark to take care of it, but behind: and not at all out of respect and reverence to it, but to see

what would be the issue of things, whether it would turn out an imposture or not; and that they might be able to make a true judgment of what had befallen them, as their priests and diviners had directed them to; they followed it until it was out of their territories, and in the hands of the Israelites. This place Bethshemesh is thought by some, as R. Isaiah observes, to be the same with Timnathheres, where Joshua was buried, in **Jud 2:9**, which signifies the figure of the sun, as this does the house of the sun; and where, perhaps, when inhabited by the Canaanites, was a temple of the sun; and it was, according to Bunting {u}, twelve miles from Ekron, from whence the ark came; and so far it was followed by the Philistines. This was a city given to the Levites, and so a proper place for the ark to come to be taken care of; hence mention is made of Levites that took it down from the cart, **1Sa 6:15**,
See Gill on "Jos 21:16".

{t} txa hlomb "in via elata una", Montanus; "eadem semita", Tigurine version; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {u} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 123.

1 Samuel 6:13

Ver. 13. And they of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley,.... Which began at Pentecost, in the month Sivan, about our May; so that there were many people in the fields, who were eyewitnesses of this wonderful event:

and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it; for though the ark while in the tabernacle was only seen by the high priest, when he went into the holy of holies; yet this having been brought out from thence, and exposed in the camp of Israel, some of this place very probably were there at that time, and had seen it, and knew it again by its form and splendour; and which gave them great pleasure to behold, which had been taken, and had been so long in the hand of the enemy, and the people of Israel deprived of it; which was the symbol of the divine Presence among them, and now restored to them again; and in this wonderful way, without seeking for it, without going to war on account of it, without paying a ransom for it; and was brought to them in a cart drawn by cattle without a driver, the lords of the Philistines with a large retinue following it. This is to be understood not of their looking "into" it, as they afterwards did, and were punished, as Kimchi; but of their looking "on" it.

1 Samuel 6:14

Ver. 14. And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite,.... In that part of the valley where they were reaping wheat which belonged to him, whom we nowhere else read; whether a priest or Levite, which is not improbable, since this was a city of the Levites, or a common Israelite, is not certain:

and stood there where there was a great stone; afterwards called the great stone of Abel, **1Sa 6:18**. By the providence of God it was so ordered, that the kine made a stop just at this place; and proceeded no further, as if sensible they were come to their journey's end, and had brought the ark into the hands of its friends, and to a proper place for them to express their thankfulness for it; for this stone seemed designed to be, as it was, the altar on which the burnt offering, by way of thanksgiving for the return of the ark, was to be offered; the Jews say {w} this stone was the altar built by Abraham:

and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the Lord; the cart they cut in pieces, and laid the wood of it in order upon the stone, and slew the two cows, and laid their pieces on the wood, and set fire to it, and burnt them with it, as expressive of joy and thankfulness that the ark was returned. This was done, not by the lords of the Philistines, as some of the ancient Jews thought, as Kimchi relates, in which they are followed by some Christian interpreters; but by the men of Bethshemesh, as Kimchi, by the priests there; for though this was not the proper and usual place for sacrifice, nor were cows offered in sacrifice; yet this being an extraordinary case, and thank offerings were necessary as soon as the ark was returned, these things were dispensed with; and the rather, since Shiloh, where the tabernacle was, was destroyed; and besides, the ark of the Lord was here present, which sanctified the place, as it did the tabernacle, and made it fit for such service; and as for these cows, they had been employed in sacred service, and the Lord had a right unto them, and claim upon them; and it seemed not fitting that they should be after employed to any other use and service than his own; nor were the men of Bethshemesh blamed or punished for this, though they afterwards were for looking into the ark.

{w} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. D.

1 Samuel 6:15

Ver. 15. And the Levites took down the ark of the Lord,.... Or, "had took it

down" {x}; for this, though here related, was done as soon as the ark came into the field, or quickly after, and before the burnt offering could be made, which was burnt with the wood of the cart; and though the persons that took it down are called Levites, they were priests, who were of the tribe of Levi; for it was the work of the priests to take it down, though the Levites then might carry it; and it is remarkable that Bethshemesh was given to the Kohathite Levites, whose business it was to carry the ark on their shoulders; see
Jos 21:10

and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were; the purse or bag in which were the five golden mice, and the five golden emerods:

and put them on the great stone; both the ark and the coffer, by which the cart stood, and on which the sacrifice of burnt offering was probably offered:

and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed sacrifices, the same day unto the Lord; besides the burnt offering of the two cows, they offered others to testify their thankfulness for the return of the ark; and also peace offerings, on which they feasted with one another, to express their greater joy.

{x} wdyrwh "deposuerant", Meudoza; so Pool.

1 Samuel 6:16

Ver. 16. And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it,.... Observed all that was done, how the kine performed their journey, drew the cart in which the ark was straight to Bethshemesh, stopped in a field near it, where it was received joyfully by the people, and sacrifices offered on account of it:

they returned to Ekron the same day; as they might very well, since it was but twelve miles from Bethshemesh.

1 Samuel 6:17

Ver. 17. And these are the golden emerods, which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering unto the Lord,.... Along with the ark:

for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon, one, for Gath one, for Ekron one;

which were the five principalities of the Philistines that belonged to the five lords before mentioned; and each of these were at the expense of a golden emerod, and sent it along with the ark to make atonement for the offence they had been guilty of in taking and detaining it.

1 Samuel 6:18

Ver. 18. And the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords,.... That is, as many golden mice as there were cities under the jurisdiction of the five lords, which are the same before mentioned:

both of fenced cities and of country villages; walled and unwalled towns; it seems by this, as it was but reasonable it should be, that the several villages adjacent and belonging to the five principal cities contributed their part towards the expense of the five golden emerods, and five golden mice, since they were afflicted both in their persons, and especially in their fields, as well as those in the cities; though Kimchi and others think that the country villages sent each of them a golden emerod, and a golden mouse, fearing the presents of the five cities would not serve for them; and therefore, though the priests and diviners only ordered five of each, according to the number of the principal cities, yet they of themselves sent more: all the country villages that reached

even unto the great stone of Abel; the Targum is,

"unto the great stone";

and so the Septuagint version, reading Eben instead of Ebal; or "lamed" is put for "nun", as "nun" for "lamed", Ne 13:7. The Vulgate Latin version is unto great Abel, taking it for a city, as does Procopius Gazaeus, who calls it the great city Abel, through which they carried the ark of the Lord; so Jerom {y}, who takes it to be the same with Bethshemesh, called Abel because of the mourning in it for the men of Bethshemesh after slain; or to distinguish it from another Abel is called "great", 2Sa 20:15 but it seems plainly to be the same with the great stone, **1Sa 6:14**, here called Eben Gedolah, here Abel Gedolah, by the change of a letter, having its latter name by anticipation from the great mourning hereafter made, next mentioned:

whereon they set down the ark of the Lord; when it was taken out of the cart, as also the coffer in which were the presents, **1Sa 6:15**,

which: stone remaineth unto this day in the field of Joshua the Bethshemite: the supplement, which stone remaineth, seems necessary, lest it should be thought the ark remained there unto the time of the writing this book, which was not true, for it was soon after this fetched to Kirjathjearim; but the stone remained, and might be seen; and posterity in following times were told that was the stone on which the ark was put when it returned to Israel.

{y} Trad. Heb. ut supra. (Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. D.)

1 Samuel 6:19

Ver. 19. And he smote the men of Bethshemesh,.... That is, God smote them, though they had received the ark with such expressions of joy, and had offered sacrifices on account of it; yet sinning in one particular after mentioned, which was highly resented, they were smitten by him with a thunderbolt, as Josephus says {z}:

because they had looked into the ark of the Lord; which was forbidden the Levites, **Nu 4:20** out of curiosity these men opened the ark, to see whether the Philistines had taken anything out of it, or put anything into it; and this, when in the tabernacle, being only to be seen by the high priest; and supposing they should never have the like opportunity again, to look upon the tables of the law which were in it, took it; and the rather they might be emboldened to this action, since it had been in the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines, who had profaned it; and as yet not restored to its pristine purity, holiness, and place:

even he smote of the people fifty thousand and seventy men; but as Bethshemesh was but a small place, a village, as Josephus {a} calls it, and it seems not likely that there should be such a number of persons in it, and especially that should look into the ark; or that God, who is good and merciful, should destroy so large a number for this offence, however he might think fit to make an example of some, it is thought that the case was not as our version represents it. Some who think there were so many slain, yet distinguish them, seventy of the elders of the people, and 50,000 of the congregation, or common people, as the Targum; which accounts not for the difficulty at all: others think that only seventy of the men of Bethshemesh died, and that 50,000 were such as flocked out of the country on this occasion; but as this was on the same day the ark came into those parts, it can hardly be thought that so great a number should be got together so soon; and still less that they should all of them open the ark, and look into it. Abarbinel is of opinion that only seventy men of Bethshemesh were slain, and that the other 50,000 were the Philistines that died on account of the ark while it was among them; and reads the words, "with the men of Bethshemesh he smote--even he smote of the people seventy"; that is, of the men of Bethshemesh; 50,000, that is, of the Philistines, and so this gives the sum of all that died on account of the ark, both while it was in the hands of the Philistines, and when returned to Bethshemesh, which is not an improbable sense: but others, and perhaps more truly, think that only seventy persons were smitten with death; for the order in which this account is given is different from all others in the Hebrew text, the lesser number being put first with a considerable distinguishing accent upon it, whereas the greater number is always expressed first; it stands thus, "of the people seventy men; 50,000 men": 5000, according to the Syriac and Arabic versions. Josephus {b} is express for it that only seventy men were slain, and so some of the ancient Jews {c}; who say that these seventy were equal to 50,000, because of their superior excellency and dignity, as Ben Gersom observes, being the priests of the Lord, or the sanhedrim; but Bochart's {d} sense seems to be preferable to all others, that there is a defect of the particle m, "out of"; and so to be read, either seventy men out of fifty thousand; that out of the 50,000 that flocked on this occasion from various parts, seventy were smitten for the reason before given; or rather seventy men, fifty out of 1000 men; that is, a twentieth part of the number of them, so that, out of 1400, seventy men were struck with death for their curiosity {e}. Something of this story seems to be retained by tradition among the Heathens; we are told {f} that when Troy was taken an ark was found, in which was the image of Bacchus; which being opened by Eurypylus, he was struck with madness as soon as he saw the image:

and the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten [many] of the people with a great slaughter; I see no occasion for the supplement "many"; it was a great slaughter, if we consider the awful manner in which it was made, by thunder and lightning, as may be supposed; however, by an immediate stroke from heaven; and the persons on whom it was made, men of a sacred character, priests and Levites; and a great number, considering it was but a small city. Hence the place was called Abel, which signifies weeping, mourning, lamentation, **1Sa 6:18**.

{z} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 4. {a} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 3. {b} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 3. {c} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 35. 2. T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 20. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 5. fol. 186. 2. {d} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 36. col. 370. {e} So Noldius, No. 779. {f} Pausan. Achaica, sive, l. 7. p. 435.

1 Samuel 6:20

Ver. 20. And the men of Bethshemesh said, who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?.... The Targum is,

"before the ark of this holy Lord God;"

which is said either by way of complaint of the severity of God, and the strictness of his justice; or in reverence of his holiness, acknowledging their imperfection, sin, and guilt, by reason of which they could not stand before him; nor can any, but on account of the mercy seat over the ark, or through Christ, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice:

and to whom shall he go up from us? that is, the ark, the symbol of God's presence, which they seem to be desirous of parting with; being unworthy of it, and conscious of their impurity in comparison of God that dwelt in it; and of their weakness to give the honour and reverence that was due unto it; and yet they knew not who were fit for it, or would choose to receive it, because of the danger they were liable to through every inadvertency in them, and irreverence of that.

1 Samuel 6:21

Ver. 21. And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim,.... Which was a city further on in the tribe of Judah, and lay among some woods, from whence it had its name, and was formerly called Kirjathbaal, from Baal's being worshipped there; of which see Jos 15:9, they might choose to send hither to fetch the ark from them, because it was at a greater distance from the Philistines, their city Bethshemesh being on the borders of them; and because it might be a place of greater eminence and strength, and besides lay in the way to Shiloh, whereby they might suppose it was intended to be had; unless Shiloh was before this time destroyed:

saying, the Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; which they doubted not would be good news to them:

come ye down, and fetch it up to you; but say not one word of the reason of this request, lest it should discourage them; but rather represent it as a favour to them, and an honour done them, as indeed it was. Kirjathjearim seems to have stood on an eminence in comparison of Bethshemesh, and therefore it is said to come down from the one, and go up to the other. That Bethshemesh was in a valley, see **1Sa 6:13** and this on a hill, **1Sa 7:1**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 7

This chapter gives an account of the ark being brought to Kirjathjearim, where it continued twenty years, **1Sa 7:1** of the exhortation of Samuel to the people of Israel to reform from idolatry, and which had its desired effect, **1Sa 7:3** of Samuel's praying for the people, and offering sacrifices for them, and of the success thereof, victory over their enemies, **1Sa 7:5**, and of his administration of justice to them, and constancy in it, **1Sa 7:15**.

Ver. 1. And the men of Kirjathjearim came and fetched up the ark of the Lord,.... From Bethshemesh, which was near unto them, as Josephus {g} says; they made no difficulty of fetching it, but gladly received it; for if they knew of what happened to the men of Bethshemesh, they knew it was not owing to the presence of the ark among them, but to their irreverent behaviour to it; and though Kirjathjearim was not a Levite city, and so the men of it could not bear the ark themselves, yet they might have proper persons from Bethshemesh to do this service:

and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill; which; hill was within the city of Kirjathjearim, and is mentioned either to distinguish this Abinadab that dwelt on it from another of the same name in the city, as Kimchi observes; or else to remark the propriety of the place, and the reason of the choice of it for the ark to be placed in; hills and high places being in those times accounted fittest for sacred services to be performed in, as well as places of safety; who this man was is not certain. Josephus {h} says he was a Levite, but if so he could only be a sojourner in this place; however he might be, as he suggests he was, a man of great esteem for religion and righteousness:

and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord; not only to watch it that it might not be taken away, but to keep persons from it, from touching it, or using it irreverently; and such as were not allowed to come nigh it; as well as to keep the place clean where it was put; and for this he was appointed by the priests, or the elders of the city; and was set apart for this service, and prepared for it by washings and sacrifices; and the rather he and not his father was invested with this office, because he was a young man, and his father might be old and decrepit; and this his son also a holy goodman, wise and prudent, and active and zealous for God, and true religion; and on all accounts a fit person for this post.

{g} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 4. {h} Ibid

1 Samuel 7:2

Ver. 2. And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long,.... It could not be less than between forty and fifty years, for it remained here until the times of David, who removed it from hence after he was made king over all Israel, and when he had reigned over Judah seven years; and from the death of Eli to that time, which included the government of Samuel and Saul, it could not be less than what has been hinted:

for it [was] twenty years; not that this was all the time the ark was at Kirjathjearim, but it was so long there before it was much taken notice of, and sought unto, and the Lord by it; there was a great neglect of God, and his worship, which through the means of Samuel began to revive about this time, as it follows:

and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord; became sensible of their evil doings, and repented of them, and sought the Lord with fasting, and prayer, and tears; bewailed their backslidings and revoltings from him, and cried after a departing God.

1 Samuel 7:3

Ver. 3. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel,.... When they assembled at one of their three yearly feasts, or as he went from place to place, exhorting them to repentance and reformation; and perceiving they began to be awakened to a sense of their sins, and seemed desirous of returning to God, and restoring his worship:

saying, if ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts; truly and sincerely;

for he might fear there was hypocrisy and dissimulation at least in some of them:

[then] put away the strange gods; as all but the true God are; or the gods of another people, as the Philistines, Canaanites, &c. Baalim seem chiefly intended, as appears from the following verse:

and Ashtaroth from among you; female deities, such as with other nations went by the name of Juno, Venus, &c. so the Arabic version,

"the idols of the women ye secretly worship."

Aquila renders it, "the images of Astarte"; so they call Venus as Procopius Gazaeus observes, from "aster", a star; but the word signifies flocks of sheep, and these deities are supposed by some to be in the form of them; but be they what they may, they were to be put away out of their houses, and out of their hearts:

and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; that is, direct your hearts to him while in his service; let it proceed from the heart, and let it be done to him only, and not to another with him; or to him in and by another, as may be pretended, and commonly is by idolaters:

and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines; under whose dominion they had been for many years; for though their power over them was weakened by Samson, yet they were not completely delivered by him; so all the time of Eli they were not wholly free from them; and especially since their last defeat by them; when the ark was taken, they had been under oppression by them; now Samuel promises them deliverance from it, in case they relinquish their idols, and served the Lord solely and heartily.

1 Samuel 7:4

Ver. 4. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth,.... Both their male and female deities, of which see **Jud 2:13**

and served the Lord Only; Dr. Lightfoot {i} observes, that a spirit of repentance and conversion came generally upon all the people; a matter and a time as remarkable as almost any we read of in Scripture, one only parallel to it; and that is in Acts, chapters two and three, at the great conversion there.

{i} Works, vol. 1. p. 54.

1 Samuel 7:5

Ver. 5. And Samuel said, gather all Israel to Mizpeh,.... Not Mizpeh in Gilead, on the other side Jordan, but a city which lay on the borders of Judah and Benjamin, where the tribes met on the account of the Levite's concubine, Jud 20:1. This order Samuel gave by messengers sent to the several tribes, or the heads of them, to meet him at this place:

and I will pray for you unto the Lord; no doubt he prayed for them privately, that the reformation begun might be carried on, and appear to be sincere, and hearty, and general, and universal; but he was desirous that they might appear in a body, and join with him in public prayer for their spiritual and temporal welfare; that they might have true repentance for their sins, reform from them, and have remission of them, and be delivered out of the hands of their enemies.

1 Samuel 7:6

Ver. 6. And they gathered together to Mizpeh,.... Even all Israel, at least the heads of the people, and representatives of them:

and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord; drew it from some fountain near at hand, and poured it out as in the presence of God, who was where his people were met together. Jerom {k} relates it as tradition of the Jews, that curses were cast into this water, as in the water of jealousy, and that idolaters were tried by it; and that whatever idolater, who denied he worshipped idols, and tasted of it, his lips so stuck together that they could not be separated, and by this means was known and put to death; and therefore it is said Samuel judged now at this place: but it should be observed, this water was not drank, but poured out; and that as a token of their humiliation, as Jarchi, that they were before the Lord, as water poured out; and of the sincerity of their repentance, as the Targum, which is,

"they poured out their heart in repentance, as water;"

and of the atonement and expiation of their sins, which passed away as water to be remembered no more, as Kimchi, or rather signifying hereby that they thoroughly renounced idolatry, that nothing of it should remain; as water entirely poured out, there remains not so much as any smell of it in the cask, as does of honey or oil, or such kind of liquor; for what a learned writer {l} says, that this was in token of joy, like that at the feast of tabernacles, when they drew water out of the fountain of Siloah, seems not so agreeable, since this was a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, as follows:

and fasted on that day, and said there, we have sinned against the Lord; Samuel prayed in public for them, with whom they joined; and they fasted in a literal sense, abstaining from food, and made a confession of their sins; this was the work of that day:

and Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh; not that he now began to judge them, but went on in a more public and vigorous manner to judge them; he sat, and heard, and tried causes that came before him; explained the laws of God to them, and enforced the obedience of them; reformed abuses that were among them, and punished idolaters.

{k} Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. F. {l} L'Empereur, annot. in Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 5. No. 7.

1 Samuel 7:7

Ver. 7. And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh,.... Not knowing it was upon a religious account; but supposing they met to form schemes and measures to cast off their yoke, and deliver themselves out of their hands; and were preparing to take up arms, and fall upon them:

the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel; with forces out of their several principalities united to fight with them; judging it advisable to lose no time, but attack them before they were well prepared and provided to defend themselves:

and when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines; because they were unarmed, and not at all prepared for war, and having no expectation of it.

1 Samuel 7:8

Ver. 8. And the children of Israel said to Samuel,.... To whom they applied, not as the general of their forces, but as the prophet of the Lord; believing his prayers for them would be of more avail to them than an army of men ever so numerous, or so well accoutred:

cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us: he had been praying for them that day, and they desired he would continue praying for them, well knowing that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much; they knew their salvation was of the Lord, and that he only could save them, and that he must be sought unto for it; and as Samuel had an interest in him, they beg he would continue to make use of it on their behalf; in which they expressed their trust in God, their regard to means, the duty of prayer, and the high esteem they had of the prophet of the Lord, whom they entreat to pray for them:

that he will save us out of the hands of the Philistines; who were now coming up against them, and who had for a long time tyrannised over them.

1 Samuel 7:9

Ver. 9. And Samuel took a sucking lamb,.... Which it might be, and yet more than eight days old, for under that it might not be sacrificed, Ex 22:30

and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord; the whole of it was burnt, skin and all, whereas the skin was the priest's in other burnt offerings; and this is remarked {m} as one of the three things in which it differed from other offerings; the word being feminine, the Jews gather from hence, as Jarchi notes, that females might be offered at a private altar:

and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; not only offered a sacrifice for them, but prayed for them:

and the Lord heard him; and answered him, either by causing fire to come down on the sacrifice, by which it was consumed, or by the voice of thunder, which frightened and discomfited the Philistines; and the event of things manifestly showed it.

{m} Midrash Schemuel apud Abarbinel in loc.

1 Samuel 7:10

Ver. 10. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering.... Which he might do by a priest, as Ben Gersom suggests, he being only a Levite; though he being a prophet, and an extraordinary person, and this an extraordinary case, he might do it himself, as Gideon and others, as well as offer it in another place than where the tabernacle was; Shiloh being now destroyed, persons and places for sacrifice were now dispensed with: and before Samuel had made an end of offering the sacrifice,

the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; and were come as far almost as Mizpeh, where Israel were, and Samuel was sacrificing:

but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines; which fulfilled Hannah's prophecy, **1Sa 2:10** and this, as Josephus {n} says, was attended with lightning, which flashed in their faces, and shook their weapons out of their hands, so that they fled disarmed; and also with an earthquake, which caused gaps in the earth, into which they fell:

and discomfited them; disturbed, affrighted them, and threw them into confusion and disorder, as well as destroyed many of them:

and they were smitten before Israel; the meaning of which is not that they fled before them, and were killed by them; but that before Israel could come out against them, and fight with them, they were smitten and destroyed, many of them by the thunder and lightning, and by the earth opening upon them, and devouring them; for this phrase, "before Israel", denotes time, as Abarbinel observes, and not place.

{n} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 2. sect. 2.

1 Samuel 7:11

Ver. 11. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh,.... To which they were encouraged by hearing or perceiving that the army of the Philistines was discomfited by the thunder, and lightning, and earthquake:

and pursued the Philistines; who, when they came out, were fleeing from the opening earth, and frightened with thunder and lightning, and many were killed, and all put in disorder; so that they stayed not to engage in battle with Israel, and who had nothing to do but to pursue their enemy:

and smote them: with what weapons of war they could get at Mizpeh, and with what some might have with them for private use, and in common wear; but more especially with the weapons of the Philistines, which they in their confusion and fright had thrown away:

until they came under Bethcar; a place so called; "car" signifies a lamb; here might be formerly a temple dedicated to the lamb, unless it had its name in memory of the lamb Samuel now offered, which was followed with such success. Josephus {o} calls this place Corraea; and in the Targum it is Bethsaron, which signifies a fruitful field or champaign country.

{o} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 2. sect. 2.

1 Samuel 7:12

Ver. 12. And Samuel took a stone, and set it,.... Not for worship, but as a monument of the victory obtained by the help of God: and this he placed

between Mizpeh and Shen; which latter signifies a tooth, and designs the precipice of a rock which juts out, and hangs over in the form of one:

and called the name of it Ebenezer; which signifies "the stone of help"; and is the same place which by anticipation has this name, **1Sa 4:1**, so that in the selfsame place where the Israelites were twice beaten by the Philistines, and the ark taken, was this salvation wrought for them:

saying, hitherto hath the Lord helped us; this was but the beginning of their deliverance from the Philistines, and which was owing to the help of the Lord; and as he had begun to help them, they might hope and encourage themselves that he would go on to help them until their deliverance was completed: however, they with Samuel thought it their duty, which was right, to acknowledge what the Lord had done for them, and perpetuate the memory of it, though they could not be sure what he would do for them hereafter; yet as they were sensible of, and thankful for this instance of his goodness, they hoped for more, and had their dependence on him for future success against their enemies.

1 Samuel 7:13

Ver. 13. So the Philistines were subdued,.... Not that their country was conquered, or they made subject and become tributaries to Israel; but they were so humbled, as not to attempt to give the people of Israel any further trouble and distress, who were now delivered from their oppression and tyranny:

and came no more into the coast of Israel; at this time they did not gather together their forces dispersed, nor raise and bring a new army into the land of Israel; they contented themselves with placing garrisons on the coast, but did not attempt to enter and invade them any more; that is, for a long time, even until Samuel was grown old, and the people would have a king, and had one, which offended the Lord, and then he suffered them to be distressed by them again; but while Samuel was alone governor they came no more, though they did quickly after Saul was made king, as it follows:

the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel; not all the days of his life, but all the days of his sole government, which restrained them from making incursions into the land of Israel; and indeed in later times, when they did come forth to make war with them, the battle was against them during the times of Samuel.

1 Samuel 7:14

Ver. 14. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel,.... We nowhere read that the Israelites went out to war with them, and took these cities from them by besieging and assaulting them; but they made a demand of them after the above victory obtained, by which the Philistines were so intimidated, that they quietly surrendered them to them:

from Ekron even unto Gath, and the coasts thereof, did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines; not by dint of sword, but by demand, to which they submitted; and though Ekron, if not Gath, fell to the tribe of Judah by lot, yet were never in their possession; and so are to be understood exclusively here, that not they, but the cities and towns that lay between them and the coasts thereof, which the Philistines had seized upon, these they were obliged to deliver up again to Israel; and if Ekron and Gath were delivered, they were not long held by them, for we soon read of them as in the hands of others:

and there was peace between Israel and the Amorites; who were a principal nation of the Canaanites, and are put for the whole of them that remained; and so Josephus {p} calls them the remnant of the Canaanites; these, finding the Philistines were subdued, were quiet and peaceable, and gave Israel no more trouble.

{p} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 2. sect. 2.)

1 Samuel 7:15

Ver. 15. And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. Not only before Saul was made king, but afterwards; for though he had not the exercise of the supreme government of the nation, yet he might act as a judge under Saul, and hear and try causes brought before him, and execute justice and judgment; and as a prophet he taught and instructed the people, and reformed abuses among them; and besides, he held and exercised his extraordinary office, to which he was raised up of God, and even took upon him to reprove Saul himself, and to kill Agag. The Jews say {q} he judged Israel thirteen years only, eleven by himself, and two with Saul; but his government must be much larger, his with Saul is reckoned forty years, Ac 13:21.

{q} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 35. Midrash Tillim apud Abarbinel in loc. Kimchi in loc.

1 Samuel 7:16

Ver. 16. And he went from year to year in circuit,.... As judges do; or "from the year in the year" {r} from the time of the year in the year, as the Targum, from the middle of it, that is, every half year; and so Josephus says {s}, that he went twice a year in circuit: and the places he went to, and where he held his courts of judicature, were

Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh; by Bethel is not meant Shiloh, as Abarbinel, for that was now destroyed; nor Kirjathjearim, where the ark was, for it would have been called by its name; but the same Bethel that was near to Ai, and not far from Shiloh, and was in the tribe of Benjamin, as all those places were. Gilgal was where the tabernacle, ark, and camp of Israel were first pitched, when they came over Jordan, and Mizpeh where the people used to be assembled on occasion, see **1Sa 7:5**,

and judged Israel in all those places; who came from all parts hither with their causes, and for advice and counsel in all cases, at the returning periods.

{r} hnvb hnv ydm "ex anno in anno". {s} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 1.

1 Samuel 7:17

Ver. 17. And his return was to Ramah,.... When he had gone his circuit, he came back to this city, which was his native place, and where his father and mother had dwelt, see **1Sa 1:1**

for there was his house; and his father's house before him, and perhaps the same, **1Sa 1:19** and there he judged Israel; here was his fixed residence, and here he was always to be met with, except when on his circuit; and hither the people of Israel might come from all parts, to have justice done them between man and man, or receive information in matters of difficulty and importance:

and there he built an altar unto the Lord: to offer his own sacrifices, and the sacrifices of the people, either by himself, or by a priest, when the people came to have justice administered to them; or to desire him to pray for them, teach and instruct them, or to give them advice. Shiloh being destroyed, and no place appointed for the tabernacle and altar, the Jews say, high places for a private altar were lawful, and even for one that was not a priest to offer; these things, though settled by law, yet were for a time dispensed with, until things could be fixed in their proper place and order.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 8

This chapter relates, how that Samuel being old, and his sons behaving ill, the people desired to have a king set over them, **1Sa 8:1**, which case Samuel laid before the Lord, and he was directed by him to yield to the people's desire, but at the same time to set before them all the disadvantages and ill consequences that would arise from thence, which he did, **1Sa 8:6**, but they insisting upon it, nevertheless, he gave them reason to expect that their request would be granted, **1Sa 8:19**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when Samuel was old,.... The common notion of the Jews is, that he lived but fifty two years {t}; when a man is not usually called an old man, unless the infirmities of old age came upon him sooner than they commonly do, through his indefatigable labours from his childhood, and the cares and burdens of government he had long bore; though some think he was about sixty years of age; and Abarbinel is of opinion that he was more than seventy. It is a rule with the Jews {u}, that a man is called an old man at sixty, and a grey headed man at seventy:

that he made his sons judges over Israel; under himself, not being able through old age to go the circuits he used; he sent them, and appointed them to hear and try causes in his stead, or settled them in some particular places in the land, and, as it seems by what follows, at Beersheba; though whether that was under his direction, or was their own choice, is not certain.

{t} Seder Olam Rabba, ut supra. (c. 13. p. 35.) {u} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21.

1 Samuel 8:2

Ver. 2. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel,.... In **1Ch 6:28** he is called Vashni; See Gill on "1Ch 6:28". This was not Joel the prophet, as some have thought, neither his parentage, nor his office, nor his times, will agree with this:

and the name of his second Abiah: which two sons seem to be all he had:

they were judges in Beersheba; in the utmost border of the land, to the south, as Ramah, where Samuel dwelt and judged, was more to the north; where they were placed by their father, for the greater convenience of the people of Israel that lived southward, to bring their causes to them, as those lived more northward might bring them to him: according to Josephus {w}, they were placed by their father, the one in Bethel, one of the places Samuel used to go to in his circuit and judge, and the other at Beersheba. But some, as Junius and others, think it should be rendered, "unto Beersheba"; and so takes in its opposite, Dan, which lay at the utmost border of the land northward; hence the phrase, "from Dan to Beersheba"; and that the one was settled at Dan for the sake of the northern part of the land, and the other at Beersheba, for the sake of the southern: or rather these sons of Samuel placed themselves at Beersheba;

which was an ill judged thing, to be both in one place, and which must give the people of Israel a great deal of trouble, and put them to a large expense to come from all quarters thither, to have their causes tried; but that is not the worst.

{w} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 3.) sect. 2.

1 Samuel 8:3

Ver. 3. And his sons walked not in his ways,.... The meaning of which is not that they did not go the circuit he did, which is too low a sense of the words some Jewish writers give; but they did not walk in the fear of God, in the paths of religion and righteousness, truth and holiness; they neither served God, nor did justice to men, as Samuel had done:

but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment; indulged to covetousness, sought to get riches at any rate, took bribes, which blind the eyes of judges; and so passed wrong judgment, and gave the cause to those that gave the largest gifts, right or wrong.

1 Samuel 8:4

Ver. 4. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together,.... At some place of rendezvous appointed; these were the heads of the tribes, and fathers of the houses and families of Israel, the principal persons of age and authority:

and came to Samuel unto Ramah; the place of his nativity and abode, and where he now dwelt, and judged Israel; they went in a very respectable body with an address to him.

1 Samuel 8:5

Ver. 5. And said unto him, behold, thou art old,.... See **1Sa 8:1**, his age was no reproach to him, nor was it becoming them to upbraid him with it; nor was it a reason why he should be removed from his office, for it did not disqualify him for it; but rather, having gained by age experience, was more fit for it, though he might not be able to ride his circuits as formerly:

and thy sons walk not in thy ways; whom he had made judges; this is a better reason than the former for what is after requested; and had they only besought them to remove him from their places, and rested content with that, it would have been well enough; but what they were solicitous for, and always had an inclination to, and now thought a proper opportunity offered of obtaining it, was what follows:

now make us a king to judge us like all the nations; to rule over them as sole monarch; to go before them in battle as their genera], as well as to administer justice to them, by hearing and trying causes as their judge; which only they mention to cover their views, and make their motion more acceptable to Samuel; what they were desirous of was to have a king appearing in pomp and splendour, wearing a crown of gold, clothed in royal apparel, with a sceptre in his hand, dwelling in a stately palace, keeping a splendid court, and attended with a grand retinue, as the rest of the nations about them had had for a long time. The first kings we read of were in the times of Abraham, but after it became common for nations to have kings over them, and particularly the neighbours of Israel, as Edom, Moab, Ammon, &c. and Cicero says {x}, all the ancient nations had their kings, to whom they were obedient: Israel had God for their King in a peculiar manner other nations had not, and stood in no need of any other; and happy it would have been for them if they had been content therewith, and not sought after another: however, they were so modest, and paid such deference to Samuel, as to desire him to make or appoint one for them.

{x} De Legibus, l. 3.

1 Samuel 8:6

Ver. 6. But the thing displeased Samuel,.... Not that they called him an old man, and suggested that he was incapacitated for his office, nor for observing the unbecoming walk of his sons, but for what follows:

when they said, give us a king to judge us; what displeased him was, that they were for changing their form of government, not only to remove it from him, and his sons, but from the Lord himself, who was king over them; the ill consequences of which, many of them at least, he easily foresaw, and which gave him great uneasiness, both on account of the glory of God, and their own good; insomuch, as Josephus {y} says, he could neither eat nor sleep, but watched all night, and spent it in prayer, as follows:

and Samuel prayed unto the Lord; to know his mind and will, and what answer he should return unto them.

{y} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 3.) sect. 3.

1 Samuel 8:7

Ver. 7. And the Lord said unto Samuel,.... He appeared to him in a vision or dream, and by an articulate voice delivered to him what follows:

hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; not as approving of what they said, but permitting and allowing what they asked, as a punishment of them for their disloyalty and ingratitude, and as resenting their ill behaviour to him; for it was in anger he assented to their request, Ho 13:11

for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me that I should not reign over them; most interpreters supply the word "only", as if the sense was, that they had not only rejected Samuel from judging them, but the Lord also from reigning over them; and which is spoken to comfort Samuel, and to alleviate the pressure on his mind for the ill treatment he had met with; for since they had served the Lord after this manner, it was no wonder he should be ill used, and might bear it with great patience: but I see no reason why the word may not be taken absolutely, that they had not rejected Samuel from all share in the government, at least from judging the people; for so he continued all the days of his life, even after they had a king over them; but they entirely rejected the sole and peculiar government of God over them.

1 Samuel 8:8

Ver. 8. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them out of Egypt,.... This was no new thing; all that they had done since they were wonderfully favoured of God, as to be brought out of Egyptian bondage, was all of a piece with this; one continued series of ingratitude, of rebellion against God, and against his servants, that he employed under him, as Moses, Aaron, &c.

even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods; this is what this people were always addicted to, to east off the worship and service of God, and go into idolatry:

so do they also unto thee; acted the like ungrateful part to him for all the service he had done them, from his childhood to that time; wherefore, as the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord, if such things as before observed were done to Jehovah himself, Samuel could not expect to meet with better treatment, other than he had, see Mt 10:24.

1 Samuel 8:9

Ver. 9. Now therefore hearken unto their voice,.... And appoint them a king as they desire:

howbeit, yet protest solemnly unto them; not against the thing itself, which was permitted, but against the evil of their request, as to the unseasonable time, ill manner, and unjustifiable reason, in and for which it was made; the Lord would have Samuel lay before them their evil in requesting it, and the evils that would follow upon it to them, and faithfully represent them to them, that they might be left without excuse, and have none to blame but themselves when they, should come upon them:

and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them: or the right or judgment {z}; not a legal right or form of government, but an assumed, arbitrary, and despotic power, such as the kings of the east exercised over their subjects, a king like whom the Israelites desired to have; namely, what unbounded liberties he would take with them, what slaves he would make of them, and what of their property he would take to himself at pleasure, as is after related. The word signifies, not a divine law, according to which the king should govern, but a custom, or a custom he would introduce, as the word is rendered, **1Sa 2:13** and is different from that in 1Sa 10:25.

{z} Klmh jpvm "jus regis", V. L. Tigurine version, Munster; "judicium regis", Vatablus, Drusius.

1 Samuel 8:10

Ver. 10. And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto them,.... How he considered this request of theirs as a rejection of him as their king, and that it was acting the same ungrateful part they had always done; and since they were so importunate to have it granted, it should be done; but that he was ordered to lay before them all the inconveniences that would attend it, and the evils that would follow upon it unto them:

that asked of him a king; which is observed, not to distinguish a part of them from the rest; for this was an united request of the people.

1 Samuel 8:11

Ver. 11. And he said, this will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you,.... Not in which he ought to proceed, but what he will do: and this not the manner of one king, or of the first only, but of all of them, more or less; of kings in general, who are commonly inclined to arbitrary power. So Aristotle {a} in opposition to theocracy, describes a full and absolute kingdom, as he calls it, when a king does all things according to his will: and observes, that he that would have the mind or reason preside, would have God and the laws rule; but he that would have a man to reign, adds also a lust, or one led by his own lust: so it follows,

he will take your sons, and appoint them for himself; for his own use and service, to wait upon him, to be his pages, or grooms, or guards:

for his chariots; to take care of them, and drive them, though not without paying them for it; yet this being but a mean and servile employment, and what they should be obliged to, whether they would or no, is observed to show the tyranny and bondage to which they would be subject, when their sons otherwise might be free men, and possessed of estates and carriages of their own:

and to be his horsemen; or rather "for his horses", to take care of them, and go out along with him, and attend his person, whether when going to war, or on pleasure:

and some shall run before his chariots; be his running footmen, being swift of foot, and trained up for that service; some are naturally swift, as Asahel was **2Sa 2:18**. Pliny {b} speaks of some swifter than horses; and of the swiftness of some he elsewhere gives {c} many surprising instances. It seems as if it was usual to have fifty such men to run before them, see 2Sa 15:1.

{a} In Politicis, l. 3. c. 16. {b} Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 2. {c} Ibid. c. 20.

1 Samuel 8:12

Ver. 12. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties,.... Which though posts of honour, yet when they are not matter of choice, and especially being precarious, and depending on the arbitrary will of a prince, are not eligible, and less so to persons that choose another sort of life:

and [will set] them to ear his ground; to plough it; not the same persons made captains of thousands and fifties, but others, whom he will employ in tilling and manuring his fields, and oblige them to it:

and to reap his harvest; when it is ripe, and gather it in, and bring it home into his barns and garners:

and to make his instruments of war: as swords, spears, bows and arrows, most commonly used in those times:

and instruments of chariots; which seem to design chariots of war, and the iron spikes and scythes which were joined to them, to cut down the foot soldiers, when driven among them in battle, which are commonly called chariots of iron; see Jos 17:16.

1 Samuel 8:13

Ver. 13. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries,.... Such as deal in spices, and mix them, and make them up in various forms very agreeable to the taste. Men are commonly in our countries and times employed in such arts, but it seems this was the business of women in those times and places. Some versions {d} render it "unguentariae", makers or sellers of ointments, and such there were in some nations {e}, such was Lydia in Juvenal {f};

and to be cooks; to dress all sorts of food, especially what were boiled, as the word signifies: and to be bakers; to make and bake bread, which though with us is the work of men, yet in the eastern countries was usually done by women; See Gill on "Le 26:26".

{d} So V. L. and Tigurine. {e} Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 5. {f} Satyr. 2. ver. 141. Vid. Turnebi Adversar. l. 15. c. 17.

1 Samuel 8:14

Ver. 14. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards,.... Which includes the whole increase of their land, their corn, and wine, and oil; and it is these, the fruits of their fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, which are here meant; for otherwise kings might not, and did not by their absolute authority, take away those from their subjects; otherwise Ahab would have taken away Naboth's vineyard at once, nor would Jezebel have needed to have taken such a method she did, to put Ahab into the possession of it:

even the best of them, and give them to his servants; for their service; and which some restrain to times of war, when necessity obliged to use such methods.

1 Samuel 8:15

Ver. 15. And he will take the tenth of your seed,.... When grown up and ripe, as their wheat and barley:

and of your vineyards; the tenth of the grapes they should produce:

and give to his officers, and to his servants; for the support and maintenance of them; and to pay this, besides the tithes of the priests and Levites, would make it very burdensome to them; and this was no other than what kings of other nations usually had, the like to whom they were desirous of having, and therefore must expect that they would insist upon the privileges and revenues that others had. In Babylon, as Aristotle {g} relates, there was an ancient law which required the tenth of whatever was imported for the public revenue, which was revived in the times of Alexander by Antimenes the Rhodian. In Arabia Felix was an island abounding with frankincense and myrrh, and various spices, the tenth of the fruits of which the king always had, as Diodorus Siculus {h} reports, as in the Apocrypha:

"And as for other things that belong unto us, of the tithes and customs pertaining unto us, as also the saltpits, and the crown taxes, which are due unto us, we discharge them of them all for their relief." (1 Maccabees 11:35) {g} Oeconomic. l. 2. p. 283. {h} Bibliothec. l. 5. p. 317.

1 Samuel 8:16

Ver. 16. And he will take your manservants, and your maidservants,.... Into his own family, for his own use and service, if he wants them, or likes them better than what he has:

and your goodliest young men: that are tall and lusty, comely and beautiful, of a proper stature and good aspect; and such in all countries used to be chosen for officers in courts, or attendants there; and so the Turks to this day pitch upon young men to attend on great personages, who are of a comely form, have admirable features, and are well shaped, See Gill on "Da 1:4",

and your asses, and put them to his work; employ them in ploughing his fields, drawing his carriages, or bearing his burdens; and so any other cattle that would serve the same purposes, as oxen, camels, &c.

1 Samuel 8:17

Ver. 17. He will take the tenth of your sheep,.... As well as of their seed and vineyards; and not the tithe of their flocks only, but of their herds also, which are here included, as Kimchi observes:

and ye shall be his servants: made slaves of by him, even as the Canaanitish servants were, according to Abarbinel; though others interpret it more mildly of their being obliged to pay tribute and taxes, for the support of his government.

1 Samuel 8:18

Ver. 18. And ye shall cry out in that day, because of your king,.... His power and pride, his oppression and tyranny, his heavy exactions, and intolerable yoke, and yet not be able to free themselves from them; all that they could do would be only to cry out under them as grievously distressed, and not knowing how to help themselves; and which would be the more aggravated, because they brought all this upon themselves, as it follows:

which ye shall have chosen you; for though the choice of a king for them, at a proper time, God had reserved to himself, yet in later times, as is here suggested, they would choose for themselves, and did, see **Ho 8:4** besides, to have a king in general was at first their own choice, though the particular person was by the designation of the Lord:

and the Lord will not hear you in that day; will not regard them, have no compassion on them, suffer them to remain under their oppressions, and not deliver them out of them; because they rejected him from being their King, and put themselves out of his protection, into the hands of another, and therefore it was just to leave them to their own choice.

1 Samuel 8:19

Ver. 19. Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel,.... The advice he gave not to think of a king, but be content with the government under which they were; but to this they would not hearken, notwithstanding all the inconveniences that would attend such a change:

and they said, nay, but we will have a king over us; they would not believe what Samuel said concerning a king, even though they were the words of the Lord he delivered to them; and though they knew Samuel was a prophet, and spoke by a spirit of prophecy, and none of his words had ever fallen to the ground: but such was their stubbornness and obstinacy, and so set upon having a king, that one they would have, let them suffer what hardships, or be at what expenses they might; at all events, and against all remonstrances, they were determined to have one.

1 Samuel 8:20

Ver. 20. That we also may be like all the nations,.... Even though they were slaves, like them; a king they would have, as they had, such was their stupidity. It was their greatest honour and glory, as well as happiness, not to be like other nations; as in their religion, laws, and liberties, so in their form of government; God being their King in such a peculiar sense as he was not of others, but with this they could not be content:

and that our king may judge us; hear their causes, administer justice and judgment to them, protect their persons and properties, and rule them according to the civil laws that were given them:

and go out before us, and fight our battles; which Samuel their present judge did not, and to which perhaps they may have some respect; but then he gained more for them by his prayers, than a king or general would by his military skill or prowess, see **1Sa 7:10**, and it is very remarkable, and what is observed by some, that their first king died in a battle. What made them so pressing and importunate to have a king at, this time, and not defer it to another, it is very probable was, that they understood that Nahash, king of the children of Ammon, was preparing to attack them, and therefore they were desirous to have a king also to go out before them, and meet him, and give him battle, 1Sa 12:12.

1 Samuel 8:21

Ver. 21. And Samuel heard all the words of the people,.... Patiently, and without interruption; attentively heard them, took notice of them, laid them up in his memory; but gave no answer to them, but reported them to the Lord, as in the next clause:

and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord; privately, in a free and familiar manner, with great exactness, as they were expressed; this he did, not before the people publicly, but in secret prayer, seeking for direction what he should further do, or what answer he should return to them.

1 Samuel 8:22

Ver. 22. And the Lord said to Samuel,.... an audible voice, or by an impulse upon his mind:

hearken unto their voice, and make them a king; since they will have a king, let them have one, and let them know that they shall have one:

and Samuel said unto the men of Israel: the elders of the people that addressed him on this occasion, **1Sa 8:4**

go ye every man unto his city; signifying they might return in peace, and be assured their request would be granted, and a king would be appointed in a short time, and which they might report to their fellow citizens; and they might expect to hear from him quickly, as soon as he had instructions from the Lord who should be their king, which right he had reserved to himself; and therefore in the mean while they might rest contented that they would have one in a little time.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 9

This chapter gives an account of Saul, the person the Lord had appointed to be king of Israel; it relates his descent, and describes his person, **1Sa 9:1** and how seeking his father's asses, which were lost, he providentially came to the place where Samuel dwelt, **1Sa 9:3** and being advised by his servant, and approving of his advice, he concluded to go to him, and inquire the way he should go, **1Sa 9:6** and being directed by some young maidens, they found him presently in the street going to a feast, **1Sa 9:11** and Samuel having some previous notice from the Lord of such a person's coming to him that day, when he met him invited him to dine with him, and obliged him to stay with him that day, **1Sa 9:15** satisfied him about his asses, and gave him a hint of the grandeur he was to be raised to, to which Saul made a modest reply, **1Sa 9:20** and Samuel treated him at the feast in a very respectable manner, **1Sa 9:22** and privately communed with him of things preparatory to what he was about to make known unto him, **1Sa 9:25**.

Ver. 1. Now there was a man of Benjamin,.... Of the tribe of Benjamin, which had its name from the youngest son of Jacob, and one of this tribe was the first king of Israel:

whose name was Kish: whom the apostle calls Cis, Ac 13:21, and Josephus {i} Cises; his name, according to Hillerus {k}, signifies "ensnared"; for what reason it was given him is not certain:

the son of Abiel; in **1Ch 8:33**, he is called Ner that begat Kish; and in this book, 1Sa 14:50 Ner and Kish are represented as brethren, the sons of Abiel: to reconcile this, it may be observed, that Ner being the elder brother, on the death of his father Abiel, had the care and bringing up of his younger brother Kish; and therefore when he is said to beget him, the meaning is, not that he was the parent of him, but the bringer up of him; or rather, as Kimchi thinks, Abiel had two sons, one of which was Ner; and that he had two sons, one that was called after his own name Ner, who was the father of Abner; and the other Kish, the father of Saul:

the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite; of these persons we nowhere else read:

a mighty man of power; not a man of riches, or of authority, neither a wealthy man, nor a magistrate, for his family was mean and contemptible, **1Sa 9:21** but a man of great strength, an able bodied man, and of great natural fortitude, and courage of mind.

{i} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 1. {k} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 405.

1 Samuel 9:2

Ver. 2. And he had a son whose name was Saul,.... Of this name was the great apostle of the Gentiles before his conversion, and was of the same tribe also; but very different in stature; he was a little man, this a large tall man, like his father perhaps;

a choice young man, and a goodly; **1Sa 2:1** of a goodly aspect, a comely man, tall and well shaped, in the prime of his age, a very agreeable person, one among a thousand:

and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; meaning not for the endowments of his mind, or his moral character and behaviour. There might be as good, or better men than he, on such accounts, but for his outward appearance, his bodily shape, and the dignity of his person:

from his shoulders and upwards he was higher than any of the people; this description of him is enlarged upon and explained, to show that he was just such a person the people were desirous of having king over them, such an one as the nations about them had; and it was usual with the eastern people, and so with the Greeks and Romans, to choose persons to the highest offices of magistracy that made a personable appearance superior to others, and is what they often take notice of, as a recommendation of them as princes. Herodotus {l} reports of the Ethiopians, that they judged the largest of the people, and him who had strength according to his size, most worthy to be king. And the same writer observes {m}, that among the many thousands of men of the army of Xerxes, there was not one who for comeliness and largeness was so worthy of the empire as Xerxes himself; so Ulysses, because of his height, was the more acceptable to the people of Corfu {n}; so Alexander's captains, it is said {o}, might be thought to be kings for their beautiful form, height of body, and greatness of strength and wisdom. Julius Caesar is said to be of high stature; and so Domitian {p}; Virgil {q} represents Turnus as in body more excellent than others, and by the entire head above them; and Anchises as walking statelier and higher than the rest {r}; among the many encomiums Pliny {s} gives of Trajan, as to his outward form and appearance, this is one, "proceritas corporis", height of body, being higher than others; the Gentiles had a notion that such men came nearer to the deities, and looked more like them; so Diana is described as taller than any of the nymphs and goddesses {t}. Solomon, according to Josephus {u}, chose such young men to ride horses, and attend his person, when he himself rode, who were conspicuous for their height, and greatly above others.

{l} Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 20. {m} Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 187. {n} Homer. Odyss. 8. ver. 20, 21. {o} Justin. e Trogo, l. 13. c. 1. {p} Sueton. Vit. Caesar. c. 45. Domitian. c. 18. {q} Aeneid. l. 7. ver. 783, 784. & 9. ver. 29. {r} Ib. l. 8. ver. 162. {s} Panegyr. c. 4, 22. {t} "Tamen altior illis ipsa dea est". Ovid. Metam. l. 3. fab. 2. ver. 180, 181. {u} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. sect. 3.

1 Samuel 9:3

Ver. 3. And the asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost,.... Had got out of the stables or fields, in which they were kept, and strayed from thence:

and Kish said to Saul his son, take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses; he chose not to send his servants only, who might not be so careful and diligent in searching for them, but his son, and not him alone, but a servant with him to wait upon him, and assist him. And it was quite agreeable to the simplicity of those times for persons of equal or greater substance to be employed in such an affair; asses made a considerable part of the wealth and riches of men, were rode upon by persons of quality, and were fed and taken care of by the sons of dukes and princes; see **Job 1:3**. The Jews {w} have a tradition, that this servant was Doeg the Edomite.

{w} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in Paralip, fol. 83. A.

1 Samuel 9:4

Ver. 4. And they passed through Mount Ephraim,.... The mountainous part of that tribe, which lay contiguous to the tribe of Benjamin, where it might be supposed the asses had strayed to:

and passed through the land of Shalisha; a tract in the tribe of Benjamin, so called from some illustrious person, prince, and duke of it; in it very probably was the place called Baalshalisha; **2Ki 4:42** and which perhaps is the same Jerom calls {x} Bethshalisha; and says there was a village of this name in the borders of Diospolis, almost fifteen miles distance from it to the north, in the Tamnitic country; though Bunting {y} says it was situated in Mount Ephraim, eight miles from Jerusalem to the northwest:

but they found them not; the asses, neither in Mount Ephraim, nor in the land of Shalisha:

then they passed through the land of Shalim which some take to be the same with Salim, where John was baptizing, **Joh 3:23** but Jerom says {z} it was a village on the borders of Eleutheropolis, to the west, seven miles distant from it:

and [there they] were not; the asses could not be found there:

and he passed through the land of the Benjamites; or rather of Jemini, which was in Benjamin, so called from a famous man of that name; for it cannot be thought they should pass through the whole tribe of Benjamin in one day. And, according to Bunting {a}, from Gibeah, the native place of Saul, through the mountain of Ephraim, and the land of Shalisha, to the borders of Shalim, were sixteen miles; and from thence to Jemini, in the tribe of Benjamin, sixteen more:

but they found them not; the asses.

{x} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. K. {y} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 129. {z} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. L. {a} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 126.

1 Samuel 9:5

Ver. 5. And when they were come to the land of Zuph,.... In which was Ramathaimzophim, the native place of Samuel, **1Sa 1:1** and so the Targum here,

"the land in which was the prophet"

Saul said to the servant that was with him, come, and let us return; home, despairing of finding the asses after so long a search in divers places:

lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us; fearing some evil should have befallen his son and his servant, in comparison of whom, and especially his son, the asses would be of no account, and so give himself no concern for them, but be in great care and uneasiness for his son and servant; wherefore Saul thought it most advisable to return home as soon as possible, lest his father should be overwhelmed with grief and trouble.

1 Samuel 9:6

Ver. 6. And he said unto him,.... That is, the servant of Saul:

behold, now, there is in this city a man of God; a prophet of the Lord, as the Targum; such were called men of God, because not only partakers of the grace of God, but of extraordinary gifts, which qualified them for the office of prophets. The city near to which they now were was Ramah, the place where Samuel lived, and he is the man of God here meant:

and he is an honourable man; of great esteem among men for his wisdom and knowledge, integrity and faithfulness, and particularly for his gift of prophecy, being a true prophet of the Lord; so the Targum,

"and he is a man that prophesies truth,"

and that made him honourable, and gave him great credit:

all that he saith cometh surely to pass; as his prophecies concerning Eli's family, and other things, which were well known to have had their accomplishment, and this had gained him universal esteem, see **1Sa 3:19**,

now let us go thither; being very near it, within sight of it, insomuch that the servant could point at it, and say "this city", as in the preceding part of the verse:

peradventure he can show us our way that we should go; to find the asses; he was not certain he could or would, but thought it possible and probable he might.

1 Samuel 9:7

Ver. 7. Then Saul said to his servant, but behold, if we go,.... The Targum is,

"if he receives money,"

which it seems Saul was not clear in; some sort of persons that set up for prophets, and a sort of diviners and fortune tellers, did; but he could not tell whether so eminent and honourable a person as Samuel was, did; in as much he was not better known by him, who had been so many years a judge in Israel:

what shall we bring the man? it being usual, when persons addressed great men for a favour, to carry a present with them; or a man of God, a prophet of the Lord, to inquire of the Lord by him concerning any thing, see 1Ki 14:2,

for the bread is spent in our vessels; the food they brought with them in their bags or scrips for their journey, this was all exhausted; not that he meant by it, that if they had had any quantity, they might present it to the man of God, though yet sometimes such things were done, as the instances before referred to show; but that since their stock of bread was gone, what money they had, if they had any, must be spent in recruiting themselves, and therefore could have none to spare to give to the man;

and there is not a present to bring to the man of God; neither bread nor money, without which he seems to intimate it would be to no purpose to go to him:

what have we? Saul knew he had none, he had spent what he brought out, with him for the journey, and he put this question to try what his servant had; unless it can be supposed it was the custom now, as afterwards among the Romans {b}, for servants to carry the purse, and as it was with the Jews in Christ's time, Joh 12:6 though this may have respect not to a price of divination, but to the common custom in eastern countries, and which continues to this day with the Turks, who reckon it uncivil to visit any person, whether in authority, or an inferior person, without a present; and even the latter are seldom visited without presenting a flower, or an orange, and some token of respect to the person visited {c}.

{b} A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 20. c. 1. {c} Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 26, 27.

1 Samuel 9:8

Ver. 8. And the servant answered Saul again, and said,.... As he had answered him before, when Saul proposed to return home, by telling him there was an honourable man of God in the city near at hand, that might possibly be able to direct them which way they should go to find the asses: so he answers him again with respect to the present it was proper to carry with them, and what he had in his hands to make:

behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: a "zuze" of silver, as the Targum, four of which made a shekel, about seven pence halfpenny of our money, and scarce so much:

that will I give to the man of God to tell us our way; that they should go to find the asses: which he would give him very freely for that purpose: both Saul and his servant must entertain a mean opinion of prophets, and men of God, and especially of so great a man as Samuel, that he should be employed at any time in directing persons in such cases, and take money for so doing, and so small a gratuity as this before mentioned; though it seems as if, at some times, something of this kind was done by prophets, and men of God, which might be permitted to keep the people from going to diviners and soothsayers.

1 Samuel 9:9

Ver. 9. Before time in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God,.... To ask doctrine of him, as the Targum, to be taught by him, to have his mind and will in any affair of moment and importance; which was usually done by applying to some man of God, eminent for grace and piety, and a spirit of prophecy:

thus he spake, come, and let us go to the seer; a man used to say to his friend, when he wanted some instruction or direction, let us go together to such an one, the seer, and ask counsel of him what is proper to be done in such an affair:

for he that is now [called] a prophet was before called a seer; for though these names are used freely of the same persons, both before and after this time; yet now the more common appellation which obtained was that of a prophet; custom, and the use of language, varied at different times, though the same was meant by the one and the other; such men were called seers, because of the vision of prophecy, because they saw or foresaw things to come; and they were called prophets, because they foretold what they saw, or delivered out their predictions by word of mouth. This verse is put in a parenthesis, and is commonly supposed to be the words of the writer of this book: hence some draw an argument against Samuel being the writer of it, as Abarbinel does, who concludes from hence that it was written by Jeremiah, or some other person long after Samuel, or that this verse was added by Ezra; but as this book might be written by Samuel in the latter part of his life, he might with propriety observe this, that in his younger time, and quite down to the anointing of Saul king, both when there was no open vision, and afterwards when there was scarce any that had it but himself, he was used to be called the seer; but in his latter days, when there were many that had the vision of prophecy, and there were schools set up, it was more common to call them prophets; though perhaps these are the words of Saul's servant, spoken to encourage Saul to go to the man of God, and inquire of him, since in former times, as he could remember, being perhaps an old servant, or he had heard his parents so say, that such men used to be called seers, because they saw what others did not, and declared and made others to see what they did; and therefore there was a probability that this man of God, who was a seer, might show them the way they should go to find the asses.

1 Samuel 9:10

Ver. 10. Then said Saul to his servant, well said,.... Or "good is thy word" {d}, thou hast well spoken; it is a good proposal thou hast made, and thou art very generous to give all thou hast to the man; and very promising it is, that since he is a seer he may inform us where the asses are, or which way we must take to find them. Things look feasible enough:

come, let us go: to the city, and to the man of God there, and hear what he will say to us, and what information he will give us:

so they went unto the city where the man of God [was]; to Ramah, where Samuel dwelt.

{d} Krbd bwj "bonum verbum tuum", Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Samuel 9:11

Ver. 11. And as they went up the hill to the city,.... For the city was built upon an hill, from whence it had the name of Ramah, which signifies high and lifted up:

they found young maidens going out to draw water: going out of the city, to a fountain which was at the bottom of the hill; and this was the usual business of maidens in those countries to fetch water for the service of the family, See Gill on "Ge 24:11",
See Gill on "Ge 24:15",
See Gill on "Ge 24:16". R. Akiba {e} makes this observation, that whenever a man meets maidens coming out of a city before he goes into it, it is a token of prosperity to him; and instances in the cases of Abraham's servant, of Jacob, and of Moses, and here of Saul, who was informed of a kingdom, and anointed for it, see Ge 24:14 **Ex 2:16**,

and said unto them, is the seer here? meaning, is he in the city? or is he at home? or is he in the country?

{e} In Pirke Eliezer, c. 36. fol. 39. 1. 2.

1 Samuel 9:12

Ver. 12. And they answered them, and said, he is,.... That is, he is in the city, at home, and to be spoken with:

behold, he is before you; his house is straight before you as you go along, you cannot miss of it. Some Jewish writers say {f} they gave a token to know it by, that there was a cloud at the door, and when they saw that, they might know it was the seer's house:

haste now, for he came today to the city; from the suburbs to it, or from his country house, or from the other Ramah, for there were two of them, one over against the other, see **1Sa 1:1**, for that he was just now come off a circuit, is not so probable, since he was now old, and past riding his circuits; and indeed the meaning may be no more than as it may be rendered, "today he comes into the city" {g}; that is, he comes out of his own house into the city, and was then just coming out; so that, if they made haste, they might meet him in the street before he got to the place of sacrifice and feasting:

for there is a sacrifice of the people today in the high place; whether it was the new moon, or some festival they observed, though the tabernacle was not there, is not certain; at which, besides the offerings required, freewill offerings and peace offerings were brought by the people, on part of which they feasted with their friends; and very probably, as Samuel was acquainted by the Lord that he who was to be king of Israel would be with him that day, he might add to the sacrifices of the people, to make the entertainment the more grand and liberal; since he had a principal concern in ordering the guests, and dividing the portions, as well as blessing the food, which indeed he might take upon him, as being judge, priest, and prophet: this was an high place where this sacrifice or feast was; for Shiloh being destroyed, and the tabernacle removed elsewhere, and that being in one place, and the ark in another, and they not together, no distinction of places was made, none being yet chosen, all were fit; and particularly high places, which were always reckoned the most proper for divine service and sacrifice.

{f} Midrash Schemuel & Pesikta apud Abarbinel in loc. {g} ab "venit", Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Samuel 9:13

Ver. 13. As soon as ye come into the city, ye shall straightway find him,.... By which it seems that the house of Samuel was at that end of it at which they entered; and with which agrees what is observed in the preceding verse, that "he was before them", his house was in sight of them:

before he go up to the high place to eat; intimating they would, if they made haste, come up to him before he got thither to sit down and eat with the people; for if they did not, they would not be able to see him and speak with him for some time, if on that day:

for the people will not eat until he come; partly out of affection and veneration for him, being their chief magistrate, as well as seer or prophet, and partly for the reason following:

because he doth bless the sacrifice; ask a blessing upon it, upon the meat of the peace offerings before it was eaten; for as this was usually done at every common meal, then much more at such a solemn festival as this. Jarchi gives us the form of blessing used on such an occasion,

"blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who hath sanctified us by his commandments, and hath commanded us to eat the sacrifice:"

and "afterwards they eat that be bidden"; for when a man offered his peace offerings, he not only had his family with him, but invited his friends, and the poor, and the fatherless, the strangers, and the Levites, to partake with him, see De 12:18, the number of the guests at this time, see in **1Sa 9:22**.

Now therefore get ye up; ascend the hill as fast as ye can:

for about this time ye shall find him; that is, by the time they could get up the hill into the city they would find him coming out of his house to go to the sacrifice: or "as this day" {h}; so sure as the day is, so sure shall ye find him.

{h} Mwyhk "invenietis cum tam certo quam certum est hunc diem esse", Drusius; so Jarchi.

1 Samuel 9:14

Ver. 14. And they went up into the city,.... Saul and his servant went up the hill to the city of Ramah: and

when they were come into the city; were within it, within the walls of it;

behold, Samuel came out against them; came out of a door of his house upon them, just as they came up: or "to meet them" {i}; his way to the high place lay where they were coming; unless it can be thought he went out purposely to meet them, having, as in the following verse, an intimation, that about that time one from the tribe of Benjamin, who should be king, would come to him, and so made this his way, knowing that one coming from that tribe must come that way; but it seems most likely that this was his readiest way:

for to go up to the high place; or place of sitting down, or feasting, as the Targum, See Gill on "1Sa 9:12".

{i} Mtarql "in occursum eorum", Pagninus, Montanus; "eis obviam", V. L.

Tigurine version.

1 Samuel 9:15

Ver. 15. Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear,.... In a private manner, whispering in his ear, telling him in a free, familiar, friendly way, as a secret:

a day before Saul came; that he might prepare for the entertainment of him, and not be surprised at his coming, as well as hereby be assured he was the person designed to be king of Israel, when he should come:

saying; as follows.

1 Samuel 9:16

Ver. 16. Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin,.... Who without any thought or design of his own, but merely directed by the providence of God, should come to him, not expecting a kingdom; at most only to hear of his father's asses, and which way he should take to find them; missing the finding of which would and did bring him thither:

and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel; the leader, ruler, and governor of them; to which high office he was to be appointed by pouring oil upon him, and was the first king on whom this ceremony was performed, and from whence he was called the Lord's anointed:

that he may save my people out of the hands of the Philistines; who, since Samuel was grown old, made encroachments upon them, built garrisons on their borders, and made, it is very probable, incursions upon them, and ravages and oppressions of them:

for I have looked upon my people; with an eye of pity and compassion:

because their cry is come unto me; by reason of the oppressions of the Philistines, and the war they were threatened with by the Ammonites; though Abarbinel thinks this refers to their importunate cry, supplication, and request to have a king set over them.

1 Samuel 9:17

Ver. 17. And when Samuel saw Saul,.... Who could not but take notice of him for his height, and which might give him a suspicion he was the man the Lord had spoken of to him; and the rather, because this was the exact time in which he was to be sent to him, and therefore he fixed his eyes upon him: and that he might be assured it was he, and be left at no uncertainty about it,

the Lord said unto him; by a still small voice, or by an impulse upon his mind:

behold the man whom I spake to thee of; yesterday, this is he:

this same shall reign over my people; be their king, as they have desired: or "shall restrain" {k} them, keep them in due bounds, in the discharge of their duty to God and man; and keep them from doing that which is evil, or walking in evil ways, which is the business of a good king; or who shall restrain them from having their own will, but shall rule over them in an absolute manner, according to his own arbitrary will and pleasure.

{k} ruey "cohibebit", Montanus; "continebit", Tigurine version; "retinebit", Drusius; i.e. "coercebit", Piscator.

1 Samuel 9:18

Ver. 18. Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate,.... Either at the door of his own house, just as he was coming out of it, or within the gate of the city as Saul entered that, Samuel came to it, in order to go through it to the high place, which it is probable was without the city; wherefore it is very properly said that Samuel came out to meet them, **1Sa 9:14**

and said, tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is; one knows not which to wonder at most, the simplicity and humility of Samuel to be in so plain an habit, unattended by servants, and yet going to a public festival, so that he seemed to be no other than a common man, to be inquired of whereabout his house was; or the ignorance of Saul, who had lived so long in the world, and so near Samuel, and yet had never seen and knew not the chief magistrate in the nation, so famous both for his civil and religious character.

1 Samuel 9:19

Ver. 19. And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer,.... For he supposed, by inquiring for his house, that his business was with him; wherefore this he said, not as boasting of his character and office, or in the pride and vanity of his mind, but merely for information sake:

go up before me unto the high place; instead of returning home with him, he invited him to go to the place of feasting, as the Targum, whither he was going to partake of the entertainment there; and he bids him go before him, either because he was an old man, and could not go his pace, or he had business to do by the way, or this was in honour to Saul, whom he knew was to be king of Israel:

for ye shall eat with me today; he and his servant, at the public feast: he insisted upon his dining, or it may be rather supping with him:

and tomorrow I will let thee go; for it being in the evening when this feast was, he could not depart that night, but must stay till morning, and then he promised to dismiss him:

and will tell thee all that is in thine heart; answer all questions he had in his mind to ask him, for which he came into the city, and inquired for his house. The Jews {l} have a tradition that it was in the heart of Saul that he should be a king, having in a vision seen himself placed on the top of a palm tree, which was a sign of royalty, and this Samuel told him.

{l} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. G.

1 Samuel 9:20

Ver. 20. And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago,.... Which, according to Kimchi, is to be understood not of the time from whence they were lost, but to be reckoned from the time that Saul had been seeking of them; so the Targum,

"as to the business of the asses, which are lost to thee, and thou art come to seek them today, these three days:"

though it is probable enough that the same day they were lost Saul set out to seek them, Now Samuel telling him of the asses that were lost, and of the time of their being lost, or of his seeking them, so exactly, before ever he said a word to him about them, must at once convince him that he was a true prophet, and which must prepare him to give credit to all that he should hereafter say to him:

set not thy mind on them, for they are found; of the truth of which he could not doubt, after he had said the above words; and which he said to make his mind easy, that he might the more cheerfully attend the feast, and be the more willing to stay all night:

and on whom is all the desire of Israel? which was to have a king; in this they were unanimous, and who so fit and proper as Saul, it is intimated, whom Samuel knew God had chosen and appointed to be king over them?

is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house? not that the Israelites had their eye on Saul, and their desire after him to be their king, though he was such an one as they wished for; but that as this desire of theirs was granted, it would issue and terminate in him and his family; he should be advanced to the throne, which would be attended with the promotion of his father's house, as Abner particularly, who was his uncle's son, and was made the general of the army.

1 Samuel 9:21

Ver. 21. And Saul answered and said, am not I a Benjamite,.... Or the son of Jemini, the name of one of his ancestors, see **1Sa 9:1** or rather, as the Targum, a son of the tribe of Benjamin:

of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? having been greatly reduced, even to the number of six hundred men, by the fatal war between that tribe and the rest, on account of the Levite's concubine, and is called little Benjamin, Ps 68:27.

and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? the smallest in number, had the least share of authority in the tribe, and of land and cattle, wealth and substance:

wherefore then speakest thou so to me? Saul presently understood Samuel's meaning, that he should be chosen king of Israel, the affair of a king being at this time in everyone's mind and mouth; but could not believe that one of so small a tribe, and which sprung from the youngest son of Jacob, and of so mean a family, would be raised to such dignity, but that a person of great figure and character would be settled upon; and, therefore he took Samuel to be in joke, as Josephus {m} says, and not in earnest.

{m} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 1.

1 Samuel 9:22

Ver. 22. And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour,.... The dining room of the house, which belonged to the high place:

and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden; and who very probably were the principal persons in the city; and yet Saul was placed at the head of them by Samuel, to convince him that what he had said to him was in earnest, and to do him honour before all the people; and for the sake of him, and to show his respect to him, he placed his servant; his minister, also in the chief place with him; what was reckoned the highest and most honourable places at table,
See Gill on "Mt 23:6". The guests were placed by the master of the feast according to their rank; and the dignity of the person, as Jarchi observes, was known by his manners and place of sitting:

which were about thirty persons; more or less; Josephus {n} says seventy, disagreeing with the text, the Targum, Syriac and Arabic versions, but agreeing with the Septuagint.

{n} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 1.

1 Samuel 9:23

Ver. 23. And Samuel said unto the cook,.... That dressed and prepared the food for the entertainment of the guests:

bring the portion which I gave thee; to dress; for part of the provisions of the feast was Samuel's, and the other part the people's that brought the peace offerings:

of which I said unto thee, set it by thee; do not bring it in with the rest, but keep it in the kitchen till called for.

1 Samuel 9:24

Ver. 24. And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it,.... Meaning either, as some think, some sauce that was poured on it, or garnish about it; or the thigh, as the Targum, and so Jarchi, Kimchi, and others; or rather the breast, as a more ancient Jew {o}; since this joined to the shoulder before separated, and in sacrifices went along with it; though most think this was the left shoulder and breast, because the right shoulder and breast of the peace offerings were given to the priest, to be eaten by him and his sons, **Le 7:34** but in those unsettled times, with respect to sacrifices, many things were dispensed with; and Samuel, though a Levite, might officiate as a priest, and so the right shoulder and breast belonged to him as such; and this best accounts for his having the disposal of it; and upon this extraordinary occasion, Saul, though not the son of a priest, might be admitted to eat of it, it being the choicest part, and fit to be set before one designed to be king; and to show that he was to live in friendship with the priests of the Lord, and to take care of and protect the ministerial function:

and set it before Saul; by the direction of Samuel no doubt, as a token of honour and respect unto him; it being usual in other countries to commend the best dishes, or best pieces of flesh, to the more excellent and worthy persons at table {p}; and this was, as Josephus {q} calls it, a royal portion: the arm or shoulder, especially the right arm, being a symbol of strength, may denote that strength which was necessary for him to bear the burden of government, to protect his people, and fight in defence of them; and the breast being the seat of wisdom and prudence, of affection and love, may signify how necessary such qualities were for kingly government, to know how to go in and out before the people, and be heartily concerned for their good: and Samuel said,

behold that which is left; not by the guests, and what they could not eat; for till Samuel came they did not begin to eat; and as for this part, it was but just brought in, and was never set before the guests, but it was left by Samuel in the hands of the cook, and reserved for the use of Saul:

set it before thee, and eat; it was already set before him, but he would have him keep it by him, and eat of it, and make his meal of it, it being the best dish at the table:

for unto this time hath it been kept for thee; by which he gave him to understand that he knew of his coming before hand, and therefore had made this provision for him; and which might serve to persuade him of the truth and certainty of what he had hinted to him:

since I said I have invited the people; not the thirty persons before mentioned, for it does not appear that they were invited by Samuel, but rather by those who brought the peace offerings, who had a right to invite any of their friends they thought fit; but by "the people" are meant Saul and his servant; for in the eastern languages two or three persons, and even one, are called a people; and this Samuel had said to his cook, when he bid him set by the shoulder, and what was on it, because he had invited some, for whom he had designed it:

so Saul did eat with Samuel that day: they dined together.

{o} R. Eliezer in T. Bab. Avodah Zara, fol. 25. 1. {p} Vid. Diodor. Sicul. l. 5. p. 306. {q} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 1.)

1 Samuel 9:25

Ver. 25. And when they came down from the high place into the city,.... After the feast was ended; and though Ramah itself was situated on an eminence, yet it seems this high place was higher than that, being without the city upon an hill, and therefore they are said to come down from the one to the other; or they came down from the high place, and then ascended the hill to the city:

Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house: of Samuel's house; when they were come thither, Samuel took Saul up to the roof of his house, which was flat, as the roofs of houses in this country were; see De 22:8 on which they could walk to and fro, and converse together; hence you read of preaching and praying on housetops, Mt 10:27 what they communed about is not said, but may be guessed at, that it was about Saul's being made king; of the certainty of it, by divine designation; of the manner of executing that office wisely and justly; about the objections Saul had made of the smallness of his tribe and family; and of Samuel's willingness to resign the government to him, with other things of the like kind.

1 Samuel 9:26

Ver. 26. And they arose early,.... Neither of them being able to sleep, as Abarbinel supposes; not Samuel for thinking what he was to do the next morning, anoint Saul king over Israel; nor Saul for what Samuel had hinted to him about the desire of all Israel being upon him, and for the honour done him at the feast, and because of the conversation they had together afterwards:

and it came to pass about the spring of the day; or the "ascents of the morning" {x}, when day was about to break, before the sun was up:

that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house; where they had conversed together the evening before:

saying, up, that I may send thee away; meaning not rise from his bed, for he was risen; but that he would prepare to set out on his journey, that Samuel might take his leave of him for the present, when he had accompanied him some part of his way, as he intended; and he was the more urgent upon him, because there was something to be done before people were stirring:

and Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad; out of Samuel's house, without doors, into the street.

{x} rxvh twlek "circa ascendere auroram", Montanus; "quum ascenderet aurora", Junius & Tremellius.

1 Samuel 9:27

Ver. 27. And as they were going down to the end of the city,.... That end of it that led the way to the place where Saul was going. As this city was built on an hill, going to the end of it was a declivity, a descent:

Samuel said to Saul, bid the servant pass on before us; being another man's servant, he did not choose of himself to bid him go on, but desired his master to order him to go before them, that he might not hear what Samuel had to say to Saul, or see what he did unto him; for as the choice of Saul to be king was to be declared by lot, as coming from the Lord, all those precautions were taken of rising early, and going abroad, and sending the servant before them, that it might not be thought that Samuel did this of himself:

and he passed on; his master bidding him:

but stand thou still a while; that he might hear the better, and more attentively than in walking; such a posture was most fitting also for what was to be done, anointing him with oil:

that I may show thee the word of God: tell him more of the mind of God concerning his being king, and declare more fully the word, will, and decree of God about that matter, by an action which would put it out of all doubt that he was the man God designed to be king, as in the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 10

In this chapter we read of Saul's being anointed king by Samuel, 1Sa 10:1, and of certain signs given as confirming the same, which should come to pass, and did, before Saul got to his father's house, 1Sa 10:2, of his arrival at his father's house, and of what passed between him and his uncle there, 1Sa 10:14, of Samuel's calling all Israel together at Mizpeh, and of the election of Saul by lot to be king, and of his being declared such, 1Sa 10:17, and of his return to his city, being respected by some, and despised by others, 1Sa 10:26.

Ver. 1. Then Samuel took a vial of oil,.... Out of his pocket very probably, which he brought along with him on purpose for the use he made of it: this, as the Jews {y} say, was not the anointing oil that was in the tabernacle, which was at another and distant place, and with which only the kings of the house of David were anointed; but common oil, or, as they say, oil of balsam; and this was not an horn, but a vial, which held a small quantity, and was brittle; and they observe that Saul and Jehu, who were anointed with a vial, their reigns were short, whereas David and Solomon, who were anointed with a horn, their reigns were long; and as oil is a symbol of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, it may denote a smaller measure conferred on Saul than on David and Solomon:

and kissed him; congratulating him on the dignity he was raised to, and in reverence and respect to him, because of the high office he was arrived to; and as a token of subjection and homage, and to testify his well pleased in his being king, and that he readily, willingly, and with pleasure resigned the government to him:

and said, is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance? the people of Israel, so called, De 32:9 and which is observed here to show, that though Saul was anointed king over them, they were the Lord's possession still, and he was accountable to him for his government and usage of them, over whom he was to be a captain, leader, and commander, to go before them, and fight their battles for them, of which his being anointed with oil was a token; and therefore it is said, "is it not?" or dost thou not see by this? or knowest thou not, as R. Isaiah supplies it, that this is of the Lord? for it was the Lord that anointed him, or Samuel by his orders; and such questions as these, as Kimchi observes, are for the greater confirmation of what is spoken; and if Saul had any doubt upon his mind, as perhaps he might because of his meanness, and the high honour designed hereby, not only this question is put, but three following signs are given him, whereby he might be assured of the truth of it.

{y} T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 11. 2. & 12. 1.

1 Samuel 10:2

Ver. 2. When thou art departed from me today,.... Not as soon as he was departed, for he had some few miles to go from Ramah to Rachel's grave near Bethlehem:

thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin, at Zelzah; the Jews move a difficulty here, that Rachel's sepulchre should be said to be in the border of Benjamin, when it was by Bethlehemephrath, in the tribe of Judah, Ge 35:19 and which they solve by observing, that these men were now, at the time Samuel was speaking, by the grave of Rachel, but as they were coming on he would meet them at Zelzah, in the border of Benjamin {z}; but there is no need of this, Rachel's grave was not at Bethlehem, but in, the way to it; and besides, as these two tribes were contiguous, and this city being on the borders of both, it might be said at one time to be in the border of Benjamin, and at another in the border of Judah, or in Judah, without any contradiction. Of Zelzah we nowhere else read, but it is plain it was near the sepulchre of Rachel, and perhaps nearer than Bethlehem. The Arabic geographer {a} speaks of Rachel's grave as in the midway between Jerusalem and Bethlehem; and says there were twelve stones upon it, and a stone arched vault over it; and the same is affirmed by Benjamin of Tudela {b}, who makes it to be but half a mile from Bethlehem. Jarchi would have Zelzah to be the same with Jerusalem, which is not probable:

and they will say unto thee, the asses which thou wentest to seek are found; as Samuel had before told Saul they were, **1Sa 9:20**

and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses; or had left all thoughts about them, and concern for them, not minding whether he heard of them or not, and this before they were found; or otherwise it would have been no strange thing to drop all thoughts about them, when they were found:

and sorroweth for you; for Saul, and his servant; such was the anxiety and distress of his mind lest any evil should befall them, having been gone so long in quest of the asses, that he had as it were forgot them, and lost all care and concern about them, in comparison of his son and servant; but especially his sorrow rose high for his son, as follows:

saying, what shall I do for my son? though he was concerned for his servant, yet most for his son; he might have another servant, and not another son, and Saul seems to be his only one, which made his grief for him the greater, see **1Ch 8:33**. Now as these were contingent events here foretold, as meeting with two men at a certain place described, the words related expressly they should say to him when he met them, and these exactly coming to pass, would most clearly prove Samuel to be a true prophet, and confirm Saul in the belief of what he had said and done to him concerning the kingdom. Another sign follows.

{z} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 82. fol. 71. 4. R. Isaiah, Jarchi, Kimchi, Abarbinel, & Abendana in loc. {a} Chinat. 3. par. 5. {b} ltinerar. p. 47.

1 Samuel 10:3

Ver. 3. Then shall thou go on forward from thence,.... From Zelzah and Rachel's sepulchre there:

and thou shall come to the plain of Tabor; not that which lay at the bottom of the famous and well known mountain Tabor; for that was in the tribe of Zebulun, at a great distance from hence: but a plain, so called perhaps from the name of the owner of it:

and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel: the same with Luz, where Jacob built an altar, and called upon God; and so Elohimbethel here is the same with Elbethel, Ge 35:6. Here was an high place as at Ramah, whither in those times, when there was no fixed place for worship, the tabernacle at one place, and the ark at another, the people went up to worship; and they might the rather choose this, because it was a place devoted to the worship and service of God by their father Jacob; so the Targum paraphrases it,

"going up to worship God in Bethel;"

so Josephus {c}, they were going thither to pray, and, as it seems by what follows, to sacrifice: one carrying three kids; which were used in sacrifice, and were a pretty heavy load if carried far; though, according to Josephus {d}, it was but one kid:

and another carrying three loaves of bread; for the minchah, the meat offering, or rather bread offering, **Le 2:4**

and another carrying a bottle of wine; for the drink offering, the fourth part of an hin of wine being required for each kid, Nu 15:5. This bottle, Ben Melech says, was a bottle made of skin, a leathern bottle or bag, or a potter's vessel or pitcher; the Targum renders it, a flagon of wine.

{c} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 2. {d} Ibid.

1 Samuel 10:4

Ver. 4. And they will salute thee,.... Not as king, of which they knew nothing, but in a common way; and though a stranger and unknown to them, yet finding their hearts disposed and affected towards him, would inquire of his welfare, and wish him all happiness, peace, and prosperity:

and give thee two [loaves] of bread; which was pretty much that they should give him two out of three, and leave but one for themselves, and especially if they were going to sacrifice; but perhaps they knew they could buy more bread at Bethel, and so were disposed to give two of their loaves to Saul, one for himself and another for his servant; though Kimchi thinks that these are not the same before called loaves; and indeed the word "loaves" is not in the text, but cakes of bread, which were lesser than loaves, and which they carried for their own use, besides three loaves of bread:

which thou shall receive of their hands; being sent out by Samuel early that morning without eating any food, and having travelled some miles, might become weary and faint, and which the three men might discern, and so had compassion on them, and relieved them; and Saul was not to refuse the offer of them, but take them at their hands, though he was anointed to be king; and this was to teach him humility, and to be kind to the poor and needy, and relieve them when he was in more elevated circumstances. All these actions also were contingent, and when they came to pass, as they did, must be still more confirming than the former sign.

1 Samuel 10:5

Ver. 5. After that thou shall come to the hill of God,.... The Targum is, the hill in which was the ark of the Lord, and that was in the house of Abinadab, on a hill in the city of Kirjathjearim, **1Sa 7:1** and so the Jewish commentators generally interpret this hill of God of Kirjathjearim; but rather it was Geba, a city of Benjamin, partly because by this time he must have got out of the tribe of Judah into the tribe of Benjamin, and even almost to the end of his journey, and among those that were his relations, 1Sa 10:11 and partly because it is certain there was a garrison of the Philistines at Geba, 1Sa 13:3 as there was at this place, as follows:

where is the garrison of the Philistines; which they were allowed by the terms of peace made between Israel and them; or which through their growing power over them in the latter days of Samuel they placed there, and which yet they kept, without giving the people any molestation in their worship and service:

and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city; to the city Geba, or near it:

that thou shall meet a company of prophets; of Scribes, as the Targum; which were, as Kimchi observes, disciples; for the disciples of the wise men were called Scribes, and these were the disciples of prophets, the same with the sons of the prophets; and the prophets that were at this time, as he says, from Eli to David, were Elkanah, Samuel, Gad, Nathan, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun; here was a school or college of young prophets, where they were trained up, under the care and tuition of one or other of the above prophets, in the knowledge of the word of God, in psalmody, and other religious exercises; for though the word of the Lord was scarce and precious in the beginning of Samuel's time, yet through his industry, influence, and encouragement, divine knowledge was greatly promoted, and many were trained up and qualified to instruct the people; who, though they had not the gift of foretelling future events, or of the vision of prophecy, yet had gifts qualifying for the edification of the people; and out of these schools and colleges God sometimes raised up prophets in the highest sense, who foretold things to come, and to whom the Lord appeared in dreams and visions. And this company Saul would meet

coming down from the high place; where they had been to worship, to sacrifice, or to pray, for here was an high place for such service, as well as at Ramah:

with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; which were several instruments of "music" used in singing praises to God in those times:

and they shall prophesy; or praise, as the Targum, sing praises at the same time they played on their instruments of music; and singing praises is one sort of prophesying, see 1Ch 25:1, and in which sense it seems to be used in 1Co 11:4.

1 Samuel 10:6

Ver. 6. And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee,.... As a spirit of prophecy, so the Targum; whereby he would be enabled at once to compose psalms and hymns of praise, and sing them in a proper manner, though he had not been trained up in this exercise in the school of the prophets; which made it more wonderful to those that knew him:

and thou shalt prophesy with them: or "praise" with them, as the same Targum; join with them in singing praises, and perform this service in an orderly manner, as if he had been instructed in it, and used to it:

and shall be turned into another man; for the Spirit of God would not only operate on him in that way, as to fit him for composing and singing psalms and hymns, but inspire him with wisdom, and prudence, and greatness of mind, and with every qualification necessary for a king; so that he would appear quite another man than he was before, in his outward behaviour, as well as in the endowments of his mind; and from a rustic, an husbandman, a farmer's son, would appear with the air of a prince, and in the majesty of a king; and, as Procopius Gazaeus, have a royal mind or heart given him.

1 Samuel 10:7

Ver. 7. And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee,.... And are all fulfilled, especially the last:

that thou do as occasion shall serve thee: as his circumstances would require, and as he in his great wisdom and prudence, with which he should now be furnished, would see necessary to prepare for his taking upon him the kingdom he was anointed to, and would be in a little time openly chosen to, and invested with. Some understand this of royal ornaments befitting a king, or of preparing arms for the defence of the kingdom:

for God is with thee; or the Word of the Lord is thy help, as the Targum, and therefore he need not fear engaging in any enterprise that might be for the glory of God, and good of the kingdom.

1 Samuel 10:8

Ver. 8. And thou shall go down before me to Gilgal,.... Not immediately; for the first summons of the people, and of Saul, and the first meeting of them by Samuel, were at Mizpeh, where Saul was chosen by lot; nor the first time of Saul's being at Gilgal, when the kingdom was renewed; for Saul had no need to wait seven days there, since he and Samuel went together, 1Sa 11:14 rather at the second time of his being there, where not staying the time quite up, was reproved for it, which was two years after this, 1Sa 13:1, though it may be this was a general rule to be observed by Saul, that whenever anything turned up of importance to the children of Israel, and was a difficulty with him, he should go to Gilgal, and there wait seven days for Samuel, from the time he gave him notice of it, who would come at the appointed time, and would give him what advice and instructions were necessary; and this place was the rather appointed, because it was the place where the Israelites first pitched their camp when they came over Jordan, and where the tabernacle first was; and where prayer and sacrifices were wont to be made; and where the kingdom of Saul was renewed; and which lay convenient for all the tribes, both on the one and the other side of Jordan:

and, behold, I will come down to thee to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings; so he did when the kingdom was renewed, and Saul was confirmed in it, 1Sa 11:15 but two years after, Saul not staying the full time, he offered them himself by another, for which he was reproved, 1Sa

13:9

seven days shalt thou tarry till I come to thee; either from the time of the notice he should give to Samuel of his going thither, or from the time of his arrival there; for it can by no means be understood as from the time of his present departure from him, for the reasons before given:

and show thee what thou shalt do; in the then present emergency or difficulty on his hands; and this he said to encourage him under the weight and burden of government laid upon him.

1 Samuel 10:9

Ver. 9. And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel,.... When he had taken his leave of him, and set forward on his journey:

God gave him another heart; not in a moral or spiritual sense, not a new heart, and a new spirit, as in conversion, but in a civil sense, a right heart, a heart fit for government; filled with wisdom and prudence to rule a people; with courage and magnanimity to protect and defend them against their enemies, and fight for them; a heart not taken up with the affairs of husbandry, with care for his father's asses, and looking after his herds, but filled with concern for the civil welfare of Israel, and with schemes and contrivances for their good, and with warm resolutions to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies:

and all these signs came to pass that day; the two first, which are not particularly mentioned as fulfilled, being more private, as finding two men at Rachel's sepulchre, and meeting with three others going to Bethel, which came to pass just as they were described; and the third, which was more public, and gave Saul more reverence and respect among the people, is next particularly observed.

1 Samuel 10:10

Ver. 10. When they came thither to the hill,.... Or, to Gibeah, as the Targum, and so Josephus {e}:

behold, a company of prophets met him; as foretold, 1Sa 10:5, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he prophesied among them; the spirit of prophecy, as the Targum, and he sung praises among them; he joined with them in their psalmody, and performed it as regularly as if he had been brought up with them. The Jews say {f} he prophesied of the world to come, of Gog and Magog, and of the rewards of the righteous, and of the punishment of the wicked.

{e} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 2.) {f} Hieron. Trad. Heb. fol. 75. H.

1 Samuel 10:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass, that when all that knew him before time,.... As there must be many that personally knew him, and were acquainted with him, since Gibeah, the place he was near to, was his native place:

saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets; or praised among them, as the Targum, sung psalms and hymns with them:

what is this that is come unto the son of Kish? a rustic, a plebeian, that never was in the school of the prophets, or learned music, and yet is as dexterous at it as any of them:

is Saul also among the prophets? an husbandman, an herdsman that looked after his father's farms, fields, and cattle, and now among the prophets of the Lord, bearing his part with them, and performing it as well as any of them: this was matter of wonder to those who knew his person, family, and education; and so it was equally matter of admiration that Saul the persecutor, one of the same tribe, should be among the preachers of the Gospel, **Ac 9:20**.

1 Samuel 10:12

Ver. 12. And one of the same place answered, and said,.... One of the same city, and in the same company, that expressed their admiration at what was come to Saul, and at what he did, and wondering how he came into such company, and to have such a gift, who was of so mean an education:

but who is their father? the father of the prophets; their fathers were not prophets, no more than Saul's was; their Father that taught them is the Lord, and he was able to teach Saul, and bestow on him the gift of prophecy, as well as on them; and so the Targum, who is their master or teacher; for though they might have an undermaster or teacher, as Samuel, or another prophet, yet their chief teacher was God; who could and did give men the gift of prophecy, and even in the highest sense, who had neither prophets for their fathers, nor were indeed trained up in any of the schools of the prophets, which was the case of Amos:

therefore it became a proverb, is Saul also among the prophets? that when a person of a mean parentage, and of a low life and education, was raised up to any degree of dignity in sacred and civil things, they used to apply this proverbial expression to him, or speak of him in this manner, is Saul among the prophets?

1 Samuel 10:13

Ver. 13. And when he had made an end of prophesying,.... For, as Procopius Gazaeus observes, he had not the gift of prophecy always; it did not continue with him, but, like that of the seventy elders in the times of Moses, it was designed to make him respectable among the people, and to be taken notice of as a person that God had honoured with a peculiar gift, that so, when he should be chosen king, they would the more readily receive him:

he came to the high place; to return thanks to God for the gift bestowed on him, and for that high honour and dignity he was raised unto, of which he had private knowledge; and to pray God to fit him more and more for government, and to, assist him in it, and help him to discharge his office in a wise and faithful manner.

1 Samuel 10:14

Ver. 14. And Saul's uncle said unto him, and to his servant, whither went ye?.... Since they had been absent so long a time. This was his father's brother, as the Targum, and so Aquila; whose name was Ner, the father of Abner, 1Sa 14:50 who met with him at the high place, or found him in the city, in his father's house it may be. Josephus {g} says, Saul went into the house of his kinsman Abner, whom he loved above all his relations, and that it was he that discoursed with Saul, and asked him, the questions before and after related:

and he said, to seek the asses: he first observes the end of their going, the business they went upon, in which not succeeding, then he answers more directly to the question:

and when we saw that [they were] nowhere; could not see them, nor find them any where, or hear of them where they went:

we came to Samuel; at Ramah, to inquire of him, if he could direct us which way to go, and what methods to take, to find the asses.

{g} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4.) sect. 3.

1 Samuel 10:15

Ver. 15. And Saul's uncle said, &c. l On hearing he had been with Samuel, and perceiving so great an alteration in Saul, perhaps he began to suspect something about the kingdom; it being what everyone was talking of, and expecting every day to hear from Samuel who should be king, according to the Lord's appointment:

tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you; the earnestness with which he put this question seems to confirm the above conjecture.

1 Samuel 10:16

Ver. 16. And Saul said unto his uncle,.... In answer to his question:

he told us plainly the asses were found; or "in telling told us" {h}; not only plainly in so many words, but he affirmed it with the greatest certainty that the asses were found, and we need not give ourselves further trouble about them:

but of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not; he said not one word about that, which is commonly ascribed to his modesty; or he might conceal it, as Josephus {i} observes, because he thought it would not be believed by his relations, or might create in them envy to him; and besides, he knew it was the pleasure of Samuel that it should be kept a secret until the election by lot was over, lest it should be thought to proceed from Samuel himself; and Saul chose it should remain so, that it might not be thought to be of his own seeking; and by keeping it from his relations and friends, it would be a clear case that he did not make interest for it.

{h} dygh dgh "indicando indicavit", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {i} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. scet. 3.)

1 Samuel 10:17

Ver. 17. And Samuel called the people together unto the Lord at Mizpeh. Not that in Gilead, but in the tribe of Benjamin, where the people had been before convened on a certain occasion, 1Sa 7:5 and the people called together could not be every individual of the nation, but the heads and elders of the people, their representatives, and who were summoned by the orders of Samuel; perhaps by an herald making proclamation and cry of the same, as the word signifies; and these were gathered together to the Lord, to have the following affair transacted before him, and under his guidance and direction; the priest perhaps being here with the Urim and Thummim, as Kimchi thinks, and who also conjectures that the ark might be brought hither at this time, the symbol of the divine Presence; though wherever the church and people of God were gathered together in his name, in a solemn manner, there the Lord was.

1 Samuel 10:18

Ver. 18. And said unto the children of Israel,.... In the name of the Lord, using the phrase which the prophets used when they spoke in the name of the Lord:

thus saith the Lord God of Israel; the great Jehovah, the Being of beings, the covenant God of his people Israel:

I brought up Israel out of Egypt; when in bondage there, with a mighty hand and outstretched arm, by means of signs and wonders done by the hands of Moses and Aaron; the Lord working mightily with them, and thereby inclining Pharaoh and his people to let them go:

and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians; at the Red sea, drowning them in it, when they threatened Israel with an utter destruction:

and out of the hand of all kingdoms, [and] of them that oppressed you; as the Arabic writers, the kingdoms of Og and Bashan in their way to Canaan, and the Mesopotamians, Moabites, Canaanites, Midianites, Ammonites, and Philistines, in the times of the judges; all which is observed to show their ingratitude, and aggravate their guilt.

1 Samuel 10:19

Ver. 19. And ye have this day rejected your God,.... As their king, by desiring another to be set over them;

who himself saved you out of all your adversity and your tribulations; that they had been in at any time in Egypt, in their passage through the wilderness to Canaan, and after they were settled there:

ye have said unto him, [nay], but set a king over us: they did as good as say God should not be their King, but they would have one set over them like the kings of the nations about them; Samuel reminds them of this their request and resolution to have a king, which they had expressed some time ago, that it might appear to them that this was wholly of their own seeking; the motion came from themselves, and not from the Lord, nor from Samuel, and therefore, whatever ill consequences might follow upon it, they had none to blame but themselves:

now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands; by the heads of their tribes, and by the rulers of the thousands into which their tribes were divided, that it might be known either by Urim and Thummim, or rather by casting lots, out of which tribe, and out of which thousand, house, and family in it, their king was to be chosen; which method, an it would clearly appear to be a choice directed by the Lord, so it would prevent all contention and discord among themselves.

1 Samuel 10:20

Ver. 20. And when Samuel had caused all the tribes to come near,.... The heads and representatives of them, to the place where the lots were cast:

the tribe of Benjamin was taken; the lot fell upon that tribe for the choice of a king out of it; not the tribe of, Reuben, who was the firstborn, nor the tribe of Judah, to whom the kingdom was promised, but the tribe of Benjamin, the least of all the tribes, and which sprung from the youngest son of Jacob, contrary, as it were probable, to the expectation of all.

1 Samuel 10:21

Ver. 21. And when he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families,.... By the heads of them, to have lots cast for them, out of which of the families the king should be chosen:

the family of Matri was taken; that is, by lot; the lot fell upon that family for the choice of a king out of them: in the account of the families of the tribe of Benjamin, **1Ch 8:1** no mention is made of this family, nor any where else, and yet no doubt there was such a family, and Saul was of it; it seems to have its name from the butt or mark arrows were shot at; some of the Benjamites being famous for their skill in darting and slinging, and perhaps this family might be so:

and Saul the son of Kish was taken; the lot being cast upon the men in the family of Matri, though it is not expressed, fell upon Saul; for though he was not there, as Jarchi observes, the lot fell upon him; for their names were written on a piece of paper, and put into a box, and the prophet put in his hand and took out one, and on that was the name of Saul, and this was the manner of the lot:

and when they sought him, he could not be found; because he had hid himself, as in the next verse; it is very probable, and indeed plain, that he was in this assembly at the first opening of it; and knowing what Samuel had said and done to him, and perceiving in what way the lot was going concerning the same, the tribe of Benjamin being taken, he concluded how it would issue, and therefore left the assembly, and hid himself, as follows.

1 Samuel 10:22

Ver. 22. Therefore they inquired of the Lord further,.... Or again, by lot, by which they knew who the person was the was chosen king, but they did not know where he was, and therefore inquire further how they must come at him; and this inquiry was made either before the high priest by Urim and Thummim, or by Samuel the prophet of the Lord: and the inquiry was,

if the man should yet come thither; whether he was already come, or would come there, and if not, what methods they must take to find him:

and the Lord answered, behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff the word signifies household stuff, vessels, utensils, arms, &c. which the people had brought along with them for their use, and were laid up in some one place; and among these baggages Saul hid himself, hoping that if he was not found they would proceed to another choice, so free from ambition was he, and such was his modesty; nor does this seem to be affected and dissembled, but real; though afterwards, when he was settled in the kingdom, he did not care to part with it, and sought to kill David, whom he looked upon as his rival: there were many things which now concurred, that made him uneasy and unwilling to assume the government of the people; partly the envy and ill will of some of them, which he must expect; chiefly the sense he had of his own unfitness for such an office, being of a mean family, and having had so mean an education, and so little knowledge of the maxims of government; and besides, must at once, as soon as on the throne, enter into a war with the Ammonites; but what might most of all distress him, he perceived by Samuel's speech to the people, that the affair of a king was displeasing to the Lord, though he condescended to grant the people's request; and therefore what comfort and happiness could he expect in such a situation?

1 Samuel 10:23

Ver. 23. And they ran and fetched him thence,.... Being in haste to see their king elect, and proclaim him:

and when he stood among the people; being brought among them, and presented to them:

he was higher than any of the people, from the shoulders, and upwards; which made him look very graceful and majestic; height of stature, and a comely form, as Kimchi observes, recommend to royal dignity; and make the people stand more in awe of a prince, and have always been reckoned among all other nations to make a prince venerable,
See Gill on "1Sa 9:2".

1 Samuel 10:24

Ver. 24. And Samuel said to all the people, see ye him whom the Lord hath chosen,.... For the choice being made by lot, the disposal of which is of the Lord, it is properly attributed to him, and the people could not object to it, but must allow it was the Lord's doing. Eupolemus {k}, an Heathen writer, says, that Saul was made king by Samuel by the counsel or will of God; and Samuel appeals to their eyes for the goodness of the choice, a better could not have been made:

that there is none like him among the people? so graceful, so stately, so prince like and majestic; they wanted to have a king like such the nations had; and Saul was such an one, had all the outward appearance of grandeur that could be wished for, and which in other nations recommended persons to the imperial dignity:

and all the people shouted; made a general ado:

and said, God save the king; or "let the king live" {l}; they owned and saluted him as their king, and prayed he might live long to reign over them; the Targum is, "let the king prosper"; let his reign be prosperous and glorious, and let him enjoy all health and happiness, peace and prosperity.

{k} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30. p. 447. {l} Klmh yxy "vivat rex", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

1 Samuel 10:25

Ver. 25. Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, &e.] According to Ben Gersom, he laid before them the power a king had over his people, and the punishment he might inflict upon them, if they rebelled against him; and some think this is the same he delivered in **1Sa 8:10** concerning the arbitrary power of their kings, and how they would be used by them; and which he here repeated, and then wrote it, that it might be a testimony against them hereafter; with which what Josephus {m} says pretty much agrees, that in the hearing of the king he foretold what would befall them, and then wrote it, and laid it up, that it might be a witness of his predictions; but that in 1Sa 8:10-17. Samuel said, was the manner of their king, or how he would use them, but this the manner of the kingdom, and how the government of it was to be managed and submitted to, what was the office of a king, and what the duties of the subject; and yet was different from, at least not the same with that in De 17:15, for that had been written and laid up already:

and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord; in the ark of the Lord; as Kimchi; or rather by the ark of the Lord, on one side of it, as Ben Gersom; or best of all, as Josephus {n}, in the tabernacle of the Lord, where recourse might be had to it, at any time, at least by a priest, and where it would be safe, and be preserved to future times:

and Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house; for though Saul was chosen king, he did not take upon him the exercise of government directly, but left it to Samuel to dismiss the people, who had been for many years their chief magistrate.

{m} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 6. {n} Ibid.

1 Samuel 10:26

Ver. 26. And Saul also went home to Gibeah,.... His native place, where was his father's house, to which he retired; where were no royal palace, or princely court, nor any of the ensigns of kingly majesty; and whither it does not appear that he was followed by the nobility or princes of the tribes, only accompanied by a few men, as next observed:

and there went with him a band of men; an army, or part of one they seem to be military men, at least men of strength, valour, and courage; gallant men, who, in honour to their king elect, freely offered themselves to be his body guard, however, until he was come to his house at Gibeah; the Targum is only, "some of the people"

whose heart God had touched; and inclined to show honour and respect to their king; the Targum describes them,

"men that feared to sin, and in whose hearts the fear of God was put."

1 Samuel 10:27

Ver. 27. But the children of Belial said,.... Wicked, dissolute, lawless persons; men without a yoke, as the word signifies, who did not care to be under the yoke of government, at least not under the yoke of Saul; and these might be men of wealth, and of larger tribes, and better families than Saul was of, and therefore envied him, and thought themselves better for government than he was; and in a jeering scornful manner said, how shall this man save us? whose family is so mean, and whose tribe is so small, that they can give but little assistance to deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, the Philistines and Ammonites; intimating, that a king ought to have been of a rich family, and a large tribe, and a prince in it, whose interest and influence were great, not only in his own tribe, but in others, which would enable him to engage in war with an enemy, and protect the people; but what, as if they should say, can be expected from "this man?", this mean contemptible man, of no birth nor fortune, brought up in an obscure manner, and altogether inexpert in things civil and military?

and they despised him; on account of the above things, not only in their hearts, but spared not to speak out, and use opprobrious language, and with which their actions and conduct agreed:

and brought him no presents; as others did, and as it was usual when a king came to the throne; nor were any visits made unto him, in token of their subjection to him, and complacency in him, and by way of congratulation of him, see **1Ki 4:21** the Targum is, they did not salute him, or ask of his welfare:

but he held his peace, or "was as one that is deaf and dumb" {o}; took no notice of what they said, as if he was deaf and heard it not, and was as silent as if he had been a dumb man, which showed his wisdom and prudence; for had he taken notice of them, he must have punished them, and he judged it more advisable to use lenity and mildness, and not begin his reign with contention and bloodshed.

{o} vyrxmk yhyw "et fuit veluti surdus", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "fuit quasi obmutescens", Drusius; "veluti tacens [aut] silens", so some in Vatablus; so the Targum.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 11

This chapter relates the distress the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead were in on account of the Ammonites, 1Sa 11:1 upon which they sent messengers to Saul, whose spirit was immediately stirred up to help them, 1Sa 11:4, and prepared for it, and came up soon enough for their relief, and slew their enemies, 1Sa 11:7, which gained him much honour and reputation among the people, and occasioned the renewal of the kingdom to him, 1Sa 11:12.

Ver. 1. Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabeshgilead,.... A month after, as in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, that is, a month after Saul was chosen king; so Josephus {p}: this prince was preparing for war against Israel before, which they hearing of, requested they might have a king to go before them in battle, 1Sa 12:12 but now he actually marched from his own country, and besieged Jabeshgilead, a city in the land of Gilead, from whence it had its name, and lay in the half tribe of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan, see Jud 21:8. It lay near to the Ammonites, and was part of the country they laid claim to in the times of Jephthah, which they now renewed, and attempted to gain it by force. This Nahash was king of the Ammonites, as he is called in the Targum, and by Josephus {q}, and so in the Arabic version, see
1Sa 12:12

and all the men of Jabeshgilead said unto Nahash, make a covenant with us; they desired to be his allies and confederates, live in peace and friendship with him, and enjoy their religion and liberties on certain conditions they were willing to come into; and this was the sense of them all, or at least the greatest part, which showed a mean and abject spirit in them, to make no defence of themselves, but as soon as besieged to move for a capitulation. This doubtless arose from a sense of their weakness, not being able to hold it out long, and from an apprehension that their brethren the Israelites, on the other side Jordan, could give them no assistance, being in an unsettled condition, having chosen a king, and he scarcely on the throne, and the Philistines having great power over them:

and we will serve thee; not as slaves, but as tributaries; they were willing to pay a yearly tax to him.

{p} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 1. {q} Ibid.

1 Samuel 11:2

Ver. 2. And Nahash the Ammonite answered them,.... In a very haughty and scornful manner:

on this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes; some Jewish writers go into a mystical and allegorical sense of these words, as that Nahash ordered the book of the law to be brought, which was their right eye, that he might erase out of it these words,

an Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; others understand it of the sanhedrim, which were the eyes of Israel; and others, which come a little nearer to the sense, of the slingers and archers, the desire of the eyes of Israel; and who, by having their right eyes thrust out, would be in a great measure spoiled for taking aim; for the words are to be understood literally; the intention of Nahash was to disable them for war, and that they might become quite unfit for it, as Josephus observes {r}; the left eye being under the shield, as it usually was in war, and the right eye plucked out, they would be as blind men: he did not choose to have both their eyes thrust out, for then they could have been of no use and service to him as slaves or tributaries:

and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel; that they did not come up to the relief of their brethren, and defend them, and signifying that they must all expect the same treatment from him.

{r} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 1.

1 Samuel 11:3

Ver. 3. And the elders of Jabesh said,.... The magistrates and principal men of the city:

give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers to all the coasts of Israel; that is, cease from besieging them, from throwing in darts into the city, or any other missive weapons, and from attempting to break open the gates, or break down the walls of it, and storm it; such a space of time they desire, which was as little as could be granted, to go and return in, and without this it would not be a reproach to all Israel, if they were ill used by them, since they had no knowledge of their case, nor time to come up for their assistance:

and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee; and submit to be used at thy pleasure. And it seems that this was granted by Nahash out of a bravado, and to reproach and insult all Israel, and bid them defiance; with whom he sought to quarrel, having a design upon their land, and knowing very well their condition, being awed by the Philistines; and having just chosen a king, and he an inexperienced man in the affairs of war, and had no army; nor was it likely that one could be assembled in so short a time, and come to the relief of this people, and therefore he thought himself safe enough in granting their request.

1 Samuel 11:4

Ver. 4. Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul,.... Where he was born, and brought up, and now dwelt; and he being elected king, it brought an honour to the place; and from hence had this name, to distinguish it from the others, and this is the first time it was so called. Now the messengers from Jabesh came hither directly, because they knew that Saul, the chosen king, dwelt here, and the Benjaminites, of all the tribes, had great reason to show regard to them, since it was from thence they had four hundred wives, when they were reduced to six hundred men only, in order to raise up their tribe:

and told the tidings in the ears of the people; Saul being not at home in the city, but in the fields, they reported to them the hardships their city was under, being besieged by the Ammonites, and threatened that if not relieved in such a time, all their right eyes would be plucked out:

and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept; moved with sympathy to their brethren, and who by their intermarriage with them were nearly related to them; and who might fear they would not stop there, but having taken that place would march forward, and come to them, and use them in like manner; the thought of which was very distressing to them.

1 Samuel 11:5

Ver. 5. And, behold, Saul came after the herd out the field,.... Where he had been to look after the and take care of them, and see what condition they were in, and followed them on their return home; for though he was elected king, he was not inaugurated, and did not take upon him any state; and being despised by some, and no provision as yet made for his support and maintenance as a king, and no business as such for him to do, Samuel still acting in his office, he returned to his father's house, and employed himself in rustic affairs, as he used to do: though some think this was casual, that he had been in the field to recreate himself, or to meditate on the affairs of government, and happened to return just as the herd came out of the field, and so followed them; thus Jarchi interprets it not of his coming after the herd, but of his coming after the fixed and usual time of the herd's coming out of the field; but Josephus {r} is clear for it, that he had been about some rustic business, some part of husbandry in the field, and returned to the city; nor has it been unusual for emperors and kings, and persons in high offices among Greeks and Romans, and other nations, in times of peace, to employ themselves in husbandry; so did the judges of Israel, as Shamgar, and Gideon, and Boaz, **Jud 3:31** so Quinctius Cincinnatus being taken from the plough and made dictator, after he had conquered his enemies, returned to his husbandry {s}:

and Saul said, what aileth the people, that they weep? he supposed some evil had befallen them, and desired to know what it was, that, if it lay in his power to help them, he might:

and they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh; the message they brought, and the account they gave of the distressed case of their city.

{r} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5.) sect. 2. {s} Flor. Hist. Roman. l. 1. c. 11. Aurel. Victor. de Vir. Illustr. c. 20. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 11.

1 Samuel 11:6

Ver. 6. And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings,.... And filled him with pity and compassion to the inhabitants of Jabesh, and with wisdom and prudence, and set his thoughts at work to contrive ways and means for their relief, and with fortitude, courage, and resolution, to attempt their deliverance; so the Targum,

"the spirit of fortitude from the Lord dwelt on Saul:"

and his anger was kindled greatly; against Nahash the Ammonite for insulting Israel, and threatening to use the inhabitants of Jabesh in such a cruel manner.

1 Samuel 11:7

Ver. 7. And he took a yoke of oxen,.... Of his own or his father's, which he had just followed out of the field, and for which chiefly that circumstance is mentioned:

and hewed them in pieces; as the Levite did his concubine, Jud 19:29

and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers; some carrying a piece one way, and some another, throughout all the tribes; for to them all the government of Saul extended, and which by this he let them know it did:

saying, whosoever cometh not after Saul and after Samuel; he names both, because he himself, though chosen king, was not inaugurated into his office, nor was Samuel put out of his; and because he knew he was despised by some, who would not object to and refuse the authority of Samuel, and therefore if they would not follow him, they would follow Samuel; and he mentions himself first, because of his superior dignity:

so shall it be done unto his oxen; be cut to pieces as these were; he does not threaten to cut them in pieces, but their oxen, lest he should seem to exercise too much severity at his first coming to the throne:

and the fear of the Lord fell on the people; they feared, should they be disobedient, the Lord would cut them to pieces, or in some way destroy them, as well as Saul would cut their oxen to pieces; for their minds were impressed with a sense of this affair being of the Lord:

and they came out with one consent; or "as one man" {t}, as if they had consulted together; being under a divine impulse, they set out from different parts about much the same time, and met at a place of rendezvous next mentioned.

{t} dxa vyak "tanquam vir unus", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

1 Samuel 11:8

Ver. 8. And when he numbered them at Bezek,.... Which was the place appointed to meet at, the same with that in **Jud 1:4**,
See Gill on "Jud 1:4" though some take the word to be an appellative, and not, the proper name of a place, and render it, "with a stone"; with which he numbered, taking a stone from each, and laying them on a heap, and then telling them {u}; so Bizakion signifies little stones {w} with the Greeks: or "with a fragment"; either of an earthen vessel, or of a stone, or of the branch of a tree they carried in their hands, and so the king's servants numbered not the men, but the branches {x}:

and the children of Israel were three hundred thousand men; who came together on this occasion; these were of the eight tribes and a half on this side Jordan:

and the men of Judah thirty thousand; which tribe is mentioned distinctly, because a noble and warlike tribe, which usually first went up to battle; and though the number of them at this time assembled may seem comparatively small, yet this may easily be accounted for; because they bordered upon the Philistines, who watched every opportunity to take an advantage of them, and therefore could not leave their tribe destitute, but reserved a sufficient number to guard their coasts, and yet were desirous to testify their obedience to Saul, though chosen king out of another tribe, when they might have expected from prophecy that the dominion belonged to them. Josephus {y} has made a gross mistake in the numbers here, he makes the men of Israel to be 700,000, and the men of Judah 70,000, contrary to the text, the Targum, Syriac and Arabic versions; but the Septuagint comes pretty near him, which has 600,000 of the men of Israel, 70,000 of the men of Judah.

{u} Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 22. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {w} Suidas in voce bizakiwn {x} Vid. Sheringham. in Misn. Yoma, c. 2. sect. 1. p. 14. {y} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5.) sect. 3.

1 Samuel 11:9

Ver. 9. And they said unto the messengers that came,.... From Jabeshgilead, that is, Saul and Samuel said to them, as follows:

thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabeshgilead: when they returned unto them, as they were now upon the departure:

tomorrow, by that time the sun be hot; when it smites with the greatest heat, as at noon: this morrow seems not to be the next from their return home, or going from Saul, but the morrow after they were got home, and should deliver the message to those that sent them, 1Sa 11:10 and so Josephus {z} says, it was on the third day the assistance was promised them:

ye shall have help; Saul with his army by that time would come and raise the siege: and the messengers came and showed it to the men of Jabesh; what Saul had promised, and what a numerous army he had raised, and had now upon the march for their relief, and tomorrow would be with them:

and they were glad; it was good news and glad tidings to them; it cheered their hearts, and gave them spirit.

{z} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5.) sect. 3.

1 Samuel 11:10

Ver. 10. Therefore the men of Jabesh said,.... To Nahash the Ammonite:

tomorrow we will come out unto you; meaning if they had no help, which they were well assured they should have; but this condition they expressed not, which they were not obliged to, but left him to conclude they had no hope of any, the messengers being returned, and the next being the last of the seven days' respite; and by this artifice the Ammonites were secure, and not at all upon their guard against an approaching enemy:

and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you; make shows of them, pluck out their eyes, or put them to death, or do what they would with them.

1 Samuel 11:11

Ver. 11. And it was so on the morrow,.... After the messengers were returned, and delivered their message, and the men of Jabeshgilead had given the Ammonites reason to expect that they would come out to them according to their agreement:

that Saul put the people into three companies; or "heads" {a}, under so many commanders, assigning to each their number, if equally, 110,000 in each, as Gideon divided his three hundred into three companies, one hundred in each, **Jud 7:16** and Abimelech, **Jud 9:43** it seems to have been their way of fighting in those days:

and they came unto the midst of the host: that is, of the Ammonites:

in the morning watch; the third and last watch of the night, by break of day, or before, however before the sun was up; so quick was Saul and his men in their march, though on foot. Bunting {b} computes the distance from Gibeah to

Bezek forty miles, and from thence to Jabesh sixteen; it is commonly reckoned that it was about sixty miles from Gibeah to Jabesh. Josephus {c} says it was ten "schaeni", each of which contained five or six miles:

and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day; that is, till noon, so that from the morning watch till noon he was making slaughter of them:

and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered; those that were not cut off by the sword of Saul were broken and dispersed, they could not stand their ground against him:

so that two of them were not left together; to flee together, but every one shifted for himself, and fled alone.

{a} Myvar "capita", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {b} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 126. {c} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 3.)

1 Samuel 11:12

Ver. 12. And the people said unto Samuel,.... By which it seems that Samuel accompanied Saul in this expedition; though it is somewhat difficult to account for it, that a man of his years should be able to attend so quick a march that Saul made; it may be, therefore, that he might follow after him gently, and meet him quickly after the battle was fought, when the people made the following speech to him:

who is he that said, shall Saul reign over us? is such a mean inexperienced man fit to rule over us? who can bear his government, and submit to it? what can be expected from him, that he should deliver and save us out of the hands of our enemies? in this they had respect to the sons of Belial, and what they said, 1Sa 10:27, but now it appeared he was sufficiently qualified, and God had made him an instrument of salvation, and was a proper person to be king over them:

bring the men, that we may put them to death; so transported were they with affection to Saul, and indignation against those men.

1 Samuel 11:13

Ver. 13. And Saul said,.... Preventing Samuel from giving an answer, being ready to forgive injuries; as it was in his power as a king, and him only, to pardon those persons that treated him in so ill a manner, and it was policy so to do, especially in the beginning of his reign; and it plainly appears that this temper did not always continue with him; though there is no reason to believe otherwise, that this was now owing to his lenity as well as his prudence:

there shall not be a man put to death this day; who by their appearance to his summons had testified their obedience, and by their courage and valour had showed their attachment to him, and to the interest of their country. Ben Gersom takes the sense to be, that it might be right after, but not on this day to put them to death; or that this was an artifice of Saul to deliver those men out of the hands of the Israelites, suggesting as if it was his intention hereafter to put them to death, though not now, for the following reason:

for today the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel; he does not ascribe the victory to the quick dispatch he made, to his wisdom and prudence in forming the scheme he did, and to his valour and courage, and that of his troops, but to the power and goodness of God.

1 Samuel 11:14

Ver. 14. Then said Samuel to the people,.... Agreeing to what Saul had said, and in order to put them off from demanding the lives of the offenders, and willing to take them while they were in a good disposition:

come, and let us go to Gilgal; which was the nearest place to them, on the other side Jordan, from which they now were, and where the children of Israel first encamped when they passed over Jordan, where the tabernacle and ark first were, and an altar was built, and where meetings used to be held on certain occasions; all which might be reasons why Samuel proposed to go to this place. According to Bunting {d}, this place was thirty six miles from Jabeshgilead:

and renew the kingdom there; that is, recognize Saul, own and declare him king of Israel.

{d} Ut supra. (Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 126.)

1 Samuel 11:15

Ver. 15. And all the people went to Gilgal,.... Agreed to the motion, and marched along with Saul and Samuel thither:

and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal; that is, they declared him to be king there; he was inaugurated into, and invested with his office, otherwise it was God only that made him king, who only had the power of making one, see **Ac 2:36**. Josephus says {e} that Samuel anointed him with the holy oil; and so the Septuagint version here renders it,

"and Samuel anointed Saul there to be king;"

and it is not improbable, that as he privately anointed him, he did it publicly also; if not at the election of him, then at this time; and it is observable, that in the next chapter, and not before, he is called the Lord's anointed. Now this was "before the Lord"; in this place; this being, as Abarbinel observes, a sanctified place, where the tabernacle and ark of God had been; and he supposes it probable that the ark was brought hither; but it was enough that the people and congregation of the Lord were here, and who, when assembled in his name, his presence was with them:

and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord; where an altar was built, and on which they offered these peace offerings by way of thanksgiving, partly for the victory obtained over the Ammonites, and partly for the renewal of the kingdom to Saul, and their unanimity in it, as well as to implore and obtain future peace and prosperity:

and there Saul, and all the people of Israel, rejoiced greatly; they in their king, and he in the good will of his people, and both in the great salvation God had wrought for them.

{e} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5.) sect. 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 12

In this chapter Samuel, resigning the government to Saul, asserts the integrity with which he had performed his office, and calls upon the people of Israel to attest it, who did, 1Sa 12:1, he then reminds them of the great and good things the Lord had done for them in times past, 1Sa 12:6 and whereas they had desired a king, and one was given them, it was their interest to fear and serve the Lord; if not, his hand would be against them, 1Sa 12:10 he terrifies them by calling for thunder in an unusual time, 1Sa 12:16 and then comforts and encourages them, that in doing their duty God would be with them, and not forsake them, otherwise they might expect nothing but ruin and destruction, 1Sa 12:20.

Ver. 1. And Samuel said unto all Israel,.... When assembled at Gilgal, after they had recognized Saul as their king, and he was established in the kingdom, and while in the midst of their mirth and joy:

behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye have said unto me; respecting the affair of a king, to which it must be limited, as appears by what follows; otherwise it is possible, in some things they might apply to him about, he did not think fit to hearken to them, and grant their request, or speak for them:

and have made a king over you; that is, had by the direction and appointment of God chosen one by lot, anointed and declared him king; for it was the Lord alone, that, properly speaking, made him a king.

1 Samuel 12:2

Ver. 2. And now, behold, the king walketh before you,.... He invested with his office, and in the exercise of it, and goes in and out as the captain, commander, and leader of the people; it is expressive of his being in the full possession of regal power and authority, and therefore Samuel might speak the more freely, as he could not be thought to have any hope and expectation of being reinstated in his government, or to have parted with it with any regret; and he wisely took this opportunity of reproving the people for their sin of desiring a king, when Saul was settled and established in his kingdom, and when they were in the midst of all their mirth and jollity, who might, from the success that had attended this first adventure of their king, conclude that they had done a right and good thing in requesting to have one:

and I am old, and grey headed; and so unfit for government, and very willing to be eased of the burden of it: he must surely be more than fifty two years of age, as the Jews generally say he was, since it is not usual at such an age to be grey headed, See Gill on "1Sa 8:1"; however, on this account he merited reverence and respect, and demanded attention:

and, behold, my sons are with you; as private persons in the condition of subjects, making no pretension to government; and if they had committed anything criminal, they were open to the law, and might be charged, and tried, and treated according to their deserts; and there they were, and might be asked what questions they thought proper with respect to what they knew of his conduct; and to be hostages or bail for him, if they could prove anything against him; or to be taken to make satisfaction for any injuries committed by him:

and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day; his manner of and conversation from his infancy to this time was well known to them, and he had spent all his days in the service of God, and for the good of Israel.

1 Samuel 12:3

Ver. 3. Behold, here I am,.... No longer the supreme governor, but a subject, and accountable for any misdemeanour charged upon me, and to which I am ready to give answer, being now at your bar to be tried and judged before you:

witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed; signifying, that if they had anything to lay to his charge, that they would produce it, and give proof and evidence of it in the presence of God, in whose name they met, and of Saul, anointed king, and supreme judge and ruler of the nation:

whose ox have I taken? by force to employ in his own service in ploughing his ground, or treading out his corn:

or whose ass have I taken? to ride about on in his circuit, or to carry any burden for him:

or whom have I defrauded? of their money or goods, by any artifice circumventing and cheating them:

whom have I oppressed? struck, beaten, broken, or caused to be so used wrongfully; to whose person have I been injurious any more than to their property? Some derive the word from a root which signifies favour and goodwill, and interpret it as some of the Rabbins do, of his not taking money of persons with their goodwill; or rather, that he had done nothing as a judge for favour and affection, but had acted the upright part, without regard to rich or poor, friends or foes:

or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? his meaning is, that he had never taken a gift or present from any person to favour his cause, that was to be brought before him, and give it for him right or wrong; to connive at any injury he had done, or to turn away his eyes from seeing where the justice of the cause lay; or that he had not received money to spare the life of a criminal that deserved to die; for the word used for a bribe signifies a ransom price, see De 16:19

and I will restore it to you; the ox or ass, money or goods, gifts and presents, or bribes taken, or make compensation for any injury done to the persons or estates of men. Some render it, "I will answer you" {f}, or give in an answer to any such charges when exhibited.

{f} Mkl byva "respondebo vobis", Munster.

1 Samuel 12:4

Ver. 4. And they said,.... One in the name of the rest, or they all cried out as one man:

thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us; had done them no wrong, neither privately nor publicly, by fraud or by force:

neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand; as a gift, present, or bribe, to fit your his cause. Some would infer hence that be took nothing of them for his support and maintenance, and that he lived upon his own substance; but that is not likely or reasonable; it was but just that they should support him and his family suitably to his character as a judge, whose whole life was spent in their service.

1 Samuel 12:5

Ver. 5. And he said unto them, the Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day,.... Should they hereafter reproach and vilify him, and charge him with any acts of corruption, injustice, and violence:

that ye have not found ought in my hand; that they had nothing to accuse him of and charge him with throughout his whole administration, but had asserted his innocence and integrity, had honourably acquitted him, and given him a fair character: and they answered, he is witness; the omniscient God is a witness against us, should we depart from this testimony, and Saul, the Lord's anointed, is a witness that we have fully cleared thee from any imputations of maladministration. The word is singular, he "said" or answered {g}, that is, Israel said, the whole body of the people, they all replied as one man: the reason why Samuel made such a speech at this time, when he resigned his government to Saul, was not only to secure his own character, but to suggest to Saul how he should rule and govern according to his example; and that having established his own character, he could the more freely, and with the better grace, reprove the people for their sin, as in some following verses.

{g} rmayw "et dixit", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; Drusius.

1 Samuel 12:6

Ver. 6. And Samuel said unto the people,.... Having cleared and established his own character, he proceeds to lay before the people some of the great things God had done for them formerly, and quite down to the present time, the more to aggravate their ingratitude in rejecting God as their King:

[it is] the Lord that advanced Moses and Aaron; raised them from a low estate, the one in a foreign country in Midian, the other in bondage in Egypt, to be deliverers, guides, and governors of his people Israel. Kimchi thinks this refers to what goes before, and that the sense is, that God, that raised Moses and Aaron to great honour and dignity, was a witness between him and the people; in which he is followed by some Christian interpreters. Ben Gersom makes mention of the same, but rather approves of the connection of the words with what follows, as does Abarbinel, and is doubtless most correct; the Targum is,

"who hath done mighty things by the hands of Moses and Aaron:"

and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt; when they were in bondage there, and that by the means of Moses and Aaron, by whose hands he wrought signs and wonders and inflicted plagues on the Egyptians, which made them willing at last to let Israel go.

1 Samuel 12:7

Ver. 7. Now therefore stand still,.... Keep your place, and do not as yet break up the assembly, but wait a little longer patiently, and with reverence and attention hearken to what I have further to say:

that I may reason with you before the Lord; as in his presence; and which he observes to command the greater awe upon their mind, and the greater regard to the subject of his discourse and resolutions; which would be,

of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and to your fathers; not only in a way of judgment delivering them into the hands of their enemies, when they sinned against him, but rather in a way of mercy and kindness in delivering them out of their hands.

1 Samuel 12:8

Ver. 8. When Jacob was come into Egypt,.... With his family to see his son Joseph, and dwelt there; or rather the posterity of Jacob are meant, who settled in Egypt, and continued there many years, and at length were oppressed by the Egyptians, and brought into hard bondage:

and your fathers cried unto the Lord; by reason of their bondage, for help and deliverance:

then the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt; after various messages carried by them from the Lord to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and after many signs and wonders wrought by them, by which the heart of that king was at last brought to consent to their dismission:

and made them dwell in this place; the land of Canaan; they conducted them through the Red sea, guided them through the wilderness, and accompanied them, especially Moses, to the borders of the land of Canaan; for neither of them went into it, but died before the people's entrance there. Joshua, the successor of Moses, of whom Samuel makes no mention, introduced Israel into it, conquered the land for them, and settled them in it; though Moses and Aaron, as they were the instruments of bringing them out of Egypt, were the cause, by conducting them through the wilderness, and by their prayers, counsels, and instructions, of their entrance into and settlement in it: besides, Moses appointed Joshua in his stead, and ordered him to lead the people there, and directed to the division of the land among them, yea, two tribes and an half were settled by him on the other side Jordan; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read in the singular number, "he made them dwell, that is, the Lord".

1 Samuel 12:9

Ver. 9. And when they forgat the Lord their God,.... The worship of the Lord their God, as the Targum; that is, they fell into idolatry, which is a plain instance and proof of forgetfulness of God; for such that neglect his worship, and serve idols, may be truly said to forget him:

he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor; who was general of the army of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor, **Jud 4:2**, where they are said to be sold into the hands of Jabin, here into the hands of Sisera; because it is highly probable he was sent against them by Jabin, and subdued them, as he afterwards was sent by him, when they rebelled against him, and were delivered out of his hand:

and into the hand of the Philistines: as they were in and before the times of Samson, Jud 13:1

and into the hand of the king of Moab; as in the times of Ehud, **Jud 3:14**, the exact order of these things is not observed:

and they fought against them; the king of Moab, Sisera, and the Philistines, and overcame them, and so they fell into their hands.

1 Samuel 12:10

Ver. 10. And they cried unto the Lord,.... When in the hands of their enemies, and in bondage to them, and cruelly oppressed by them:

and said, we have sinned; the word for "said" is in the Cetib, or written text, singular, and in the Keri, or marginal reading, plural; and may signify, that everyone of them had a sense of their sin, and made acknowledgment of it; their confession was universal, as their sin was:

because we have forsaken the Lord; the Word of the Lord, as the Targum:

and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth; See Gill on "Jud 2:11",
See Gill on "Jud 2:13".

but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee; they did not ask for a king to go before them, and fight their battles, as they did now, but applied to the Lord for deliverance, promising to serve him as their King and their God.

1 Samuel 12:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord sent Jerubbaal,.... Or Gideon, as the Targum, for Jerubbaal was the name given to Gideon, when he first became a judge, **Jud 6:32**

and Bedan; if this was one of the judges, he must have two names, or is one that is not mentioned in the book of Judges; the Targum interprets it of Samson; so Jerom {h}, for the word may be rendered "in Dan"; one in Dan, who was of the tribe of Dan, as Samson was; and it was in the camp of Dan the Spirit of God first came upon him; and Kimchi observes that it is the same as Bendan, the son of Dan, that is, a Danite; and though he was after Jephthah, yet is set before him, because he was a greater man than he; and this way go the generality of Jewish writers {i}; but a man of this name being among the posterity of Manasseh, **1Ch 7:17**. Junius, and who is followed by others, thinks that Jair is meant, and is so called to distinguish him from a more ancient Jair, the son of Manasseh, and with whom the order of the judges better agrees, see Nu 32:41 but the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions read Barak; and he may rather be thought to be meant, because he was the instrument of delivering Israel out of the hand of Sisera, the captain of the host of Hazor before mentioned, 1Sa 12:9 and agrees with the words of the apostle, Heb 11:32, who mentions those judges much in the same order:

and Jephthah, and Samuel; meaning himself, who was the last of the judges, and who speaks of himself as of a third person, as Lamech does, **Ge 4:23** and this he did not out of ostentation, but to observe that God had made him an instrument of delivering them out of the hand of the Philistines, which must be fresh in their memory, as he had made use of others before him, when he sent judges, and not kings, and therefore they had no need to ask a king. The Syriac and Arabic versions read Samson instead of Samuel, and which also agrees

best with
Heb 11:32

and delivered you out of the hands of your enemies on every side; not the judges, but the Lord; for the word for "delivered" is of the singular number:

and ye dwelled safe; in the greatest security and confidence, without any fear of enemies, having God their King in the midst of them, and stood in no need of any other king to protect and defend them.

{h} Heb. Trad. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. K. {i} So in T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 25. 1.

1 Samuel 12:12

Ver. 12. And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you,.... Or "but yet" {k}; however, notwithstanding though the Lord had been so kind and gracious to them, as to raise up judges one after another to deliver them, when they cried unto him, yet when they perceived that Nahash the Ammonite was preparing to make war with them, instead of applying to the Lord for his protection, they desired to have a king to go before them, and fight their battles, as follows: nay,

but a king shall reign over us; though Samuel told them they had no need of one:

when the Lord your God was your King; and would protect and defend them, if they applied to him, and would put their trust in him; and he himself Samuel was their judge, and would be their general and commander, and they had experience of success under him to the utter destruction of their enemies, **1Sa 7:10** and yet, notwithstanding all this, they insisted upon it to have a king. According to Abarbinel, this preparation of Nahash to war with them was after they had asked for a king, and was a punishment of them for their request; and yet they repented not of it, but in effect said, though Nahash, and all the enemies in the world come against us, we will not go back from our request, but insist on it, that we have a king to reign over us; such was their obstinacy and perverseness.

{k} wartw "videntes autem", V. L. "sed", Tigurine version; "et tamen", Vatablus, Piscator.

1 Samuel 12:13

Ver. 13. Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired,.... For though God chose their king for them, it was at their request; they chose to have a king, and desired one, and they approved of and consented to, and confirmed the choice he had made, and so it was in effect their own:

and, behold, the Lord hath set a king over you; he gratified them in their desires; though he did not suffer them to make themselves a king, he suffered them to have one, and he gave them one; this power he reserved to himself of setting up and pulling down kings at his pleasure.

1 Samuel 12:14

Ver. 14. If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice,.... All worship and service of God, and obedience to his word and ordinances, should spring from fear and reverence of him; and therefore the whole of worship, both external and internal, is sometimes expressed by the fear of the Lord:

and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord; break it, and thereby exasperate him, and provoke him to wrath and bitterness:

then shall both ye, and also the king that reigneth over you, continue following the Lord your God; the Targum is,

"after the worship of the Lord your God;"

which was their duty to do, and is expressed in the preceding clauses; and this therefore is rather a promise of some benefit and privilege to their duty, and to encourage them to it, since it stands opposed to the threatening of punishment in the next verse; and the words in the original are, "then shall ye &c. be after the Lord your God" {l}: that is, though they had in effect rejected the Lord from being their King, by asking and having one; yet notwithstanding, if they and their king were obedient to the commands of the Lord, he would not cast them off; but they should follow him as their guide, leader, and director, and he would protect and defend them as a shepherd does his sheep that follow after him; so Jarchi takes it to be a promise of long life and happiness to them and their king,

"ye shall be established to length of days, both ye and the king."

{l} hwhy rxa-Mtyyh "eritis post Dominum", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator.

1 Samuel 12:15

Ver. 15. But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord,.... They and their king, by sinning, disregarding his precepts, both affirmative and negative:

then shall the hand of the Lord be against you; by sending some judgments upon them, as famine, sword, or pestilence, particularly captivity and subjection to their enemies:

as it was against your fathers; who had no king; and it is suggested that their case, who had one, would be no better than theirs; their king would not be able to save them from the hand of God: the words in the original are, "and against your fathers" {m}; which is interpreted in the Talmud {n} of their fathers dead, and in their graves, and of their enemies digging them up, and taking them out in contempt; but much better, by Kimchi, of their kings, who are, or should be, fathers of their subjects, as Augustus Caesar was called the father of his; and so the Septuagint version renders it, "and upon their king"; signifying that both they and their king should feel the weight of the hand of the Lord, if they rebelled against him.

{m} Mkytbabw "et contra patres vestros", Pagninus, Tigurine version. {n} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 63. 2.

1 Samuel 12:16

Ver. 16. Now therefore stand,.... Which does not so much respect the position of their bodies as the fixed attention of their minds:

and see this great thing which the Lord will do before your eyes; meaning the storm of thunder and rain which presently followed; which coming at a time when such things were not usual, and on a day when there was no appearance or likelihood of anything of this kind, and suddenly, at once, upon the prayer of Samuel, it was no less than a miracle, and might be called a "great thing", new and unheard of, and the pure effect of almighty power.

1 Samuel 12:17

Ver. 17. Is it not wheat harvest today?.... Of the time of wheat harvest, See Gill on "1Sa 6:13". Rain usually fell in Judea only twice a year, called the former and the latter rain; and from the seventeenth of Nisan or March, to the sixteenth of Marchesvan or October, it was not usual for rain to fall, and so not in harvest, at that time especially, see Pr 26:1. R. Joseph Kimchi says, in the land of Israel rain never fell all the days of harvest; and this is confirmed by Jerom, who lived long in those parts; who says {o}, at the end of the month of June, and in the month of July, we never saw rain in those provinces, especially in Judea. And Samuel not only by putting this question would have them observe that it was the time of wheat harvest in general, but on that day in particular the men, were at work in the fields reaping the wheat, &c. and so was not cloudy, and inclining to rain, but all serene and clear, or otherwise they would not have been employed in cutting down the corn; all which made the following case the more remarkable:

I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain; in a miraculous and preternatural way, there being nothing in nature preparatory thereunto, and this purely at the prayer of Samuel:

that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king; was attended with aggravated circumstances, and highly offensive to God, though he had gratified them in it, of which this violent storm would be an indication, and might serve to convince them of their folly, as well as of their wickedness, and that they had no need of a king, since Samuel their judge could do as much or more by his prayers than a king could do by his sword; and of which they had had sufficient proof before this, and that in the same way, **1Sa 7:10**.

{o} Comment. in Amos iv. 7.

1 Samuel 12:18

Ver. 18. So Samuel called unto the Lord,.... Not in an authoritative way, or by way of command, but by prayer; so the Targum renders the clause in the preceding verse,

"I will pray before the Lord:"

and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day; immediately, though there was no appearance of it; it was harvest time, and a fine harvest day. Josephus says {p} he sent thunder, lightning, and hail, a terrible storm and tempest it was:

and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel; the Lord that sent this tempest, and Samuel who had such power with God in prayer. Clement of Alexandria {q} thinks that from hence the Greeks borrowed their fable concerning Aeacus invoking God, when there was a drought in Greece; and as soon as he prayed, immediately there was thunder, and the whole air was covered with clouds; but perhaps they rather framed it from the instance of Elijah praying for rain {r}, at whose request it came, 1Ki 18:42.

{p} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 6. {q} Stromat. l. 6. p. 630. {r} Vid. Schmid. in Pindar. Nemea, Ode 5. p. 110.

1 Samuel 12:19

Ver. 19. And all the people said unto Samuel, During the tempest, and in the midst of it; it was the general cry of the people, they were unanimous in it:

pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not; though they had rejected him as their judge and supreme governor in desiring a king, now they were his humble servants, at least feignedly; and knowing what interest he had with God in prayer, they entreat him to make use of it on their behalf, who having sinned so greatly, had not the assurance to call the Lord their God, though they had no doubt of his being the God of Samuel, whose prayers he had heard, of which this tempest was a full proof; and was so violent, that if it continued, they were afraid they should be destroyed by the thunder and lightning, or they and their cattle, with the fruits of the earth, be washed away with the prodigious rain:

for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king; though Samuel had laid before them the evils and inconveniences of having a king, and had in the name of the Lord charged them with rejecting God as their king; yet nothing convinced them of their evil till this storm came, and then all their sins came fresh to their minds; and this added to the weight of them, and lay heaviest on them, that they had rejected the Lord, and slighted his prophets, and, notwithstanding all remonstrances, resolved on having a king.

1 Samuel 12:20

Ver. 20. And Samuel said unto the people, fear not,.... Being destroyed by the tempest:

ye have done all this wickedness; in asking a king; that is, though they were guilty of so heinous a sin, yet there were grace and mercy with God, and they should not despair of it, so be it that they did not depart from him, but cordially served him; the Targum is,

"ye have been the cause of all this evil;"

the storm of thunder and rain; and though they had, he would not have them despond or indulge slavish fear;

yet turn not aside from following the Lord; the worship of the Lord, as the Targum; provided they did not depart from the Lord, and forsake his worship, word, and ordinances, they need not fear utter ruin and destruction, though they had been guilty of this sin:

but serve the Lord with all your heart; if their service of God was kept up, and was hearty and sincere, they might still expect things would go well with them.

1 Samuel 12:21

Ver. 21. And turn ye not aside,.... From his worship: for then; if they turned aside from that:

should ye go after vain things; idols, which are vanity, and less than vanity:

which cannot profit nor deliver; neither bestow good things on their votaries, nor deliver them from evils, or from the hands of their enemies

for they are vain; empty, useless, and unprofitable; an idol is nothing in the world, **1Co 8:4**.

1 Samuel 12:22

Ver. 22. For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake. For the sake of himself, his honour and glory; should he forsake his people, and suffer them to come to ruin, his name would be blasphemed among the Heathens; he would be charged either with want of power to help them, or with want of faithfulness to his promise to them, and with inconstancy to himself, or want of kindness and affection for them; all which would reflect upon his honour and glory:

because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people; it was not owing to any worth or worthiness in them that they became his people, but to his own sovereign good will and pleasure; and therefore, as it was nothing in them that was the cause of their being taken by him for his people, so nothing in them could be the cause of their being rejected by him as such; it was of free grace and favour that they were taken into covenant with him, and by the same would be retained: the Vulgate Latin version is,

"the Lord hath sworn to make you a people for himself;"

so Jarchi interprets it, he swore, and takes it to have the same sense as in 1Sa 14:24.

1 Samuel 12:23

Ver. 23. Moreover, as for me,.... As he had given them reason to believe that God would forgive their sin, by which they had offended him, rejecting him as their King, so he likewise forgave their offence against him in rejecting him as their governor under him, and so neither need fear the Lord nor him with a servile fear; and as God would still be gracious to them, if they abode by his service, so he, Samuel, would do all the good offices for them that lay in his power:

God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you; for since they had returned to the Lord, and acknowledged their sin, it would have been an evil in him not to pray for them, that they might share in the pardoning grace and mercy of God, and have all good things bestowed upon them they stood in need of; this he judged to be his duty to do, and therefore abhorred the thought of being indifferent to it, negligent of it, or of dropping it:

but I will teach you the good and the right way; would not only pray for them, but instruct them in the way of their duty; a way that was a good one, agreeable to the will and word of God, and in walking in which good things were enjoyed, and which being a good way, must needs be a right way; though Samuel ceased to be a judge and chief magistrate among them, he should not cease to act the part of a prophet to them, both by his prayers and by his instructions.

1 Samuel 12:24

Ver. 24. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart,.... Fear him not with a servile fear, which is before dehorted from, but with a filial fear, a reverential affection for God; and includes the whole of religious worship, internal and external; explained further by serving him according to the truth of his word, and in a cordial, sincere, and affectionate manner; and if this was wanting in them, he suggests that his prayers and instructions would be of little avail, and not to be depended on:

for consider how great things he hath done for you; in bringing them out of Egypt: settling them in the land of Canaan; giving them his laws, statutes, commands, and ordinances; sending prophets unto them, and raising up judges for them, and bestowing all good things on them, in nature, providence, and grace; though some restrain this to the great thing he had done that day, to convince them of their sin, and by which they were returned to the Lord, namely, the violent storm of thunder; which wonderful instance of the power of God, and token of his displeasure against them, they were to lay up in their minds, and not forget, that it might be a means of preserving them from sin for the future.

1 Samuel 12:25

Ver. 25. But if ye shall still do wickedly,.... Continue to rebel against God, revolt from him, and depart from his worship, and despise his prophets, and serve idols:

ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king; their king would be so far from protecting, that he should perish with them, be killed by the sword, as Saul their first king was, or go into captivity, as others of their kings did.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 13

This chapter relates how Saul disposed of his army, 1Sa 13:1 that Jonathan his son smote a garrison of Philistines, which provoked them to come out with a large army against them, to the great terror of the Israelites, many of whom fled to secret places, and to distant parts, 1Sa 13:3, that Saul tarried at Gilgal waiting for Samuel, but he not coming so soon as expected, offered sacrifice himself, 1Sa 13:8 for which Samuel, when he came, reproved him, and told him the kingdom should not continue with him, but be given to another man, 1Sa 13:11 on which Saul departed to Gibeah, where he continued, the Philistines being encamped at Michmash, 1Sa 13:15 from whence went out spoilers, in three companies, into the land of Israel, where they met with no opposition; for there were no weapons in the hands of any but Saul and Jonathan, the Philistines having taken care that there should be no smith in the land of Israel to make them any, so that they were defenceless, 1Sa 13:17.

Ver. 1. Saul reigned one year,.... "Or the son of a year in his reigning" {s}; various are the senses given of these words: some interpret them, Saul had a son of a year old when he began to reign, Ishbosheth, and who was forty years of age when his father died, **2Sa 2:10**, others, who understand the words of Saul himself, think there is an "ellipsis" or defect of the number, and that it may be supplied, that Saul was the son of thirty or forty years, or whatsoever age he may be supposed to be at when he began his reign; others take the words in a figurative sense, that he was like a child of a year old, for purity and innocence; so the Targum,

"as the son of a year, in whom there are no faults, so was Saul when he reigned;"

or he was but a year old, reckoning from the time he was turned into another man, and had another heart, which was immediately after he was anointed king at Ramah by Samuel; or he was but a year old with respect to his kingdom: the inauguration of a king is "natalis imperil", the birthday of his kingdom, and therefore the words are well enough rendered by us, "Saul reigned one year"; which is to be reckoned either from his unction at Ramah, or rather from his election at Mizpeh, to the renewal of the kingdom at Gilgal:

and when he had reigned two years over Israel; which the Jewish chronologers {t} make to be the whole of his reign, which is not probable, considering the many things done in his reign, the many battles he fought with all his enemies on every side of him, and his long persecution of David; and there were no less than three high priests in his reign; Josephus says {q} he reigned eighteen years in the lifetime of Samuel, and twenty two years after his death, in all forty; which agrees with Ac 13:21. Some interpret it he reigned two years well, and the rest in a tyrannical way; or that at the end of two years, when David was anointed, the kingdom was not reckoned to him, but to David; and to this purpose Dr. Lightfoot writes, that he had been king one year from his first anointing by Samuel at Ramah, to his second anointing by him at Gibeah (Gilgal I suppose he means); and he reigned after this two years more, before the Lord cast him off, and anointed David; and the time he ruled after that was not a rule, but a tyranny and persecution {r}; but the sense Ben Gersom gives is best of all, that one year had passed from the time of his being anointed, to the time of the renewal of the kingdom at Gilgal; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, then he did what follows, chose 3000 men, &c. In the first year of his reign was done all that is recorded in the preceding chapter; and when he had reigned two years, not two years more, but two years in all, then he did what is related in this chapter.

{s} wklmb lwav hnv Nb "filius anni Saul in regnando ipsum", Montanus. {t} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 35. Juchasin, fol. 11. 1. {q} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 9. {r} Works, vol. 1. p. 55.

1 Samuel 13:2

Ver. 2. Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel,.... Out of the 300,000 that went with him to fight the Ammonites, and returned with him to Gilgal, where he now was, and had stayed as may be supposed about a year, since now he had reigned two years. These 3000 men some of them doubtless were appointed as a guard about his person, and the rest were a standing army to preserve the peace of the nation, to protect them from their enemies, to watch the motions of the Philistines, and to be ready on any sudden invasion:

whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash, and in Mount Bethel; "Michmash", according to Bunting, {s} was four miles from Gilgal. Jerom {t} says, in his time it was shown a large village on the borders of Aella, or

Jerusalem, retaining its ancient name, nine miles distant from it, near the village Rama. Adrichomius {u} says it is now called Byra, and Mr. Maundrell {w} observes that it is supposed by some to be the same with Beer, whither Jotham fled after he had delivered his parable, **Jud 9:21**. Michmash is in the Misnah {x} celebrated for the best wheat being brought from it; and near to it, as appears from hence, was Bethel, and the mount of that name; and so Jerom {y} speaks of Bethel as over against Michmash; and this mount very probably is the same said to be on the east of Bethel, where Abraham built an altar, Ge 12:8 for Michmash lay to the east of Bethel:

and one thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin; the native place of Saul, and this Jonathan was the son of Saul, 1Sa 13:16. According to Bunting {z}, Gibeah, where Jonathan was stationed, was eight miles from Michmash:

and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent; to their own houses; or, as the Targum, to their cities; these were they that came at his summons, and were numbered at Bezek, and went with him to the relief of Jabeshgilead, and had been with him ever since, and now dismissed.

{s} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 126. {t} De loc Heb. fol. 93. F. {u} Thestrum Terrae S. p. 28. {w} Journey from Aleppo, p. 64. {x} Menachot, c. 8. sect. 1. {y} Ut supra, (De loc Heb.) fol. 89. G. {z} Ut supra, (Travels of the Patriarchs, &c.) p. 127.

1 Samuel 13:3

Ver. 3. And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba,.... Not the same with Gibeah of Benjamin, as Jarchi; for it can hardly be thought that Jonathan should place himself with his thousand men where the Philistines had a garrison; or that if this was the same with that in the preceding verse, that it should be called by another name in this; but Gibeah and Geba were two places, as Kimchi observes, both indeed in the tribe of Benjamin, and it is very probable not far from one another; see Jos 18:24. This seems to be the same with the hill of God, where was a garrison of the Philistines, 1Sa 10:5, who after their defeat by Samuel contented themselves with some strong holds and garrisons in some parts of the land to keep Israel in awe; the Targum understands this of a single person, a governor of the Philistines in this place, whom Jonathan slew, and so Jarchi; and according to R. Isaiah he was one that was appointed to gather the tax for them:

and the Philistines heard of it, which alarmed them, and made them prepare for war:

and Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land; not he in person, for he was at Gilgal, as the next verse shows; but he ordered it to be blown, being aware of the preparations the Philistines were making to attack him:

saying, let the Hebrews hear; both what his son had done, and what the Philistines were doing.

1 Samuel 13:4

Ver. 4. And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines,.... For though it was smitten by Jonathan, yet it was by the order of Saul, and so ascribed to him; it seems to be a concerted thing to fall upon the garrisons of the Philistines, and get them out of their hands, and so deliver Israel entirely from them; but it was not wise for Saul, if he had such a scheme in his head, to disband his large army, as he had lately done:

and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines; who were highly incensed against them by this action, and vowed revenge; the name of an Israelite was abhorred by them; and perhaps this action might be attended with much craft and cruelty; and if these garrisons were held by agreement, they might charge them with perfidy, with breach of articles, and so their name was made to stink among them, as the word signifies:

and the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal; by sound of trumpet.

1 Samuel 13:5

Ver. 5. And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel,.... To prevent their further encroachments on them, and designs against them; for they perceived they intended to cast off their yoke, and free themselves entirely from them:

thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen; it may seem incredible that so small a people as the Philistines were, who only were possessed of five cities, or lordships, with the villages belonging to them, except what they had taken from Israel; and even if assisted by the Tyrians, the author of Sirach in the Apocrypha says:

"And he destroyed the rulers of the Tyrians, and all the princes of the Philistines." (Sirach 46:18)

though he seems to have respect not to this time, but when Samuel discomfited them, **1Sa 7:10**. I say it may seem incredible that they should bring such a number of chariots into the field; wherefore this must either be understood of 30,000 men that fought in chariots, as Lyra interprets it, and in which sense it is plain and certain the word chariots is sometimes used, as in 2Sa 10:18, or else of some sort of carriages, not chariots of war, at least not all of them; but what were brought to carry the baggage of their infantry, which was very large, and to carry away the goods and substance of the Israelites; some have thought that there is a mistake of the copier, who instead of vlv, "three", read Myvlv, "thirty": so Capellus; and the rather because in the Arabic and Syriac versions it is only "three thousand"; but even this is too great a number, understood of chariots of war; for never any people in the world was known to have so many chariots of war; Pharaoh in his large host had but six hundred, Ex 14:7 Jabin king of Canaan had indeed nine hundred, **Jud 4:3** and David took from the king of Zobah one thousand chariots; but whether they were all chariots of war is not certain, **2Sa 8:4**. Solomon indeed had one thousand and four hundred chariots, but they do not appear to be chariots of war, but some for use, and some for state and grandeur. Wherefore, if a mistake in the copy is admitted of, and this can be confirmed by some MSS, yet we must recur to one or other of the above senses; some of them must be understood of other sort of carriages, or of men that fought in these chariots; and allowing ten men to a chariot, which seems to be the usual number by comparing 2Sa 10:18 with 1Ch 19:18 then 3000 men would fill three hundred chariots, which are as many as it can well be thought the Philistines had Zerah the Ethiopian, who brought into the field an army of million men, had no more than three hundred chariots, 2Ch 14:9, and no more had Antiochus Eupator in his army,

"And with him Lysias his protector, and ruler of his affairs, having either of them a Grecian power of footmen, an hundred and ten thousand, and horsemen five thousand and three hundred, and elephants two and twenty, and three hundred chariots armed with hooks." (2 Maccabees 13:2)

Darius in his vast army had but two hundred {a}, and in the very large one which Mithridates brought against the Romans there was but one hundred; and now 3000 men in three hundred chariots were but a proportion to 6000 horsemen, which in those times and countries was a large cavalry:

and the people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude; the infantry was so large as not to be numbered; however, the phrase denotes a great multitude of them; Josephus says {b} there were 300,000 footmen:

and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven; where Saul, before he went to Gilgal, had his quarters, 1Sa 13:2. Bethaven was a place near Bethel, on the east of it, **Jos 7:2** though Bethel itself was afterwards so called when Jeroboam had set up the worship of the calves there, **Ho 4:15** it signifying the house of vanity or iniquity.

{a} Curtius, l. 4. c. 9. {b} Antiqu, l. 6. c. 6. sect. 1.

1 Samuel 13:6

Ver. 6. When the men of Israel saw they were in a strait, for the people were distressed,.... By reason of the vast army that the Philistines brought into the field, greatly superior to theirs, and were likely to be encompassed by them on every side; so that nothing but destruction was expected, which gave them the utmost anxiety and uneasiness; though Abarbinel refers this last clause, not to the people of Israel, but to the people of the Philistines, and takes it in this sense,

for the people drew nigh; the army of the Philistines was approaching, and got near to them; and so they were in great danger of being quickly attacked by them, and destroyed, their numbers being so great:

then the people did hide themselves in caves; of which there were many in the land of Judea, capable of receiving a large number, as the cave of Adullam, the cave of Engedi, &c. and such as the Israelites made to hide themselves when oppressed by the Midianites, **Jud 6:2**

and in thickets; woods and forests, or among thorns, as Jarchi; where there was a very great number of brambles and thorn bushes; some, as Kimchi, interpret the word of munitions, garrisons, and fortified places, to which they betook themselves:

in rocks, and in high places, and in pits; in the holes of rocks and mountains, particularly in Mount Ephraim; see 1Sa 14:22 and where there were any pits or ditches, high or deep places, where they might be out of sight, and be sheltered from their enemies.

1 Samuel 13:7

Ver. 7. And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead,.... As far off as they could from the Philistines, who lay on the west of the land of Israel, and these countries were to the east. Kimchi observes, that the land of Reuben is not mentioned, which was on the other side Jordan also; because that was nearer to it than what was inhabited by Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; and therefore they chose to go further, thinking themselves there safer:

as for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal; where he stayed till Samuel should come to him, as directed, 1Sa 10:8 to have his advice and counsel:

and all the people followed him trembling; all that were with him, the army as distinct from the common people; they abode by him, and were at his command, and were ready to go where he should direct them; but with trembling hearts when they saw the pain of the people, fleeing into holes and corners, and considered what a huge host the Philistines were coming upon them with, and Samuel their prophet not with them to encourage and counsel them.

1 Samuel 13:8

Ver. 8. And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed,.... He tarried to the seventh day, but not to the end of it, or towards the close of it, as he should have done:

but Samuel came not to Gilgal; so soon as Saul expected:

and the people were scattered from him; many deserted him, the Philistines drawing nigh, and Samuel not coming, as Saul expected, and had given the people reason to expect.

1 Samuel 13:9

Ver. 9. And Saul said,.... Being impatient, and seeing the people deserting him apace, and unwilling to engage in a battle without first sacrificing to God, and imploring his help and assistance:

bring hither a burnt offering to me; that is, a creature for a burnt offering, a bullock, sheep, goat, or lamb:

and peace offerings; which also were either of the herd, or of the flock:

and he offered the burnt offering; either he himself, or by a priest. In this unsettled time, while the tabernacle, altar, and ark, were at different places, and not yet fixed, it is thought that such who were not priests might offer, and that in high places, and where the tabernacle and altar were not.

1 Samuel 13:10

Ver. 10. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burn offering,.... And before he could offer the peace offerings:

behold, Samuel came; and it was told Saul that he was come:

and Saul went out to meet him; left off sacrificing, and would proceed no further, leaving the rest for Samuel and out of respect to him, and to prevent a chiding of him, he went forth to meet him:

that he might salute him, or "bless him" {c}; congratulate him on his coming, ask of his health and welfare, and wish him all peace and prosperity.

{c} wkrbl "ad benedicendum ei", Montanus.

1 Samuel 13:11

Ver. 11. And Samuel said, what hast thou done? This question he put to bring him to a confession of what he had done, otherwise he guessed at it by his countenance; or rather, by the prophetic spirit he was endowed with, he knew it certainly that he had offered the sacrifices without waiting for him:

and Saul said because I saw the people were scattered from me; they were deserting, and he feared, if he stayed any longer, they would all leave him; this was one reason of doing what he did:

and that thou camest not within the days appointed; seven days were appointed, and because the seventh day was come, though it was not gone, he concluded Samuel would not come at all; and that was another reason why he did what he did; and by this would have laid the blame on Samuel, as if he did not keep his time; whereas it was Saul's impatience that hurried him to this action:

and that the Philistines gathered themselves together to Michmash; where his station before was, and from thence he might quickly expect them at Gilgal; and this was another reason why he hastened the sacrifice.

1 Samuel 13:12

Ver. 12. Therefore said I..... That is, within himself:

the Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal; on a sudden, unprepared for them, especially in a religious way:

and I have not made supplication to the Lord; for his direction and assistance, and for success in the war; which it seems went along with sacrifices, or was implied in them:

I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering; it was reluctant to him, it was against his will as well as the command of Samuel, to offer before he came, he suggests; but such were the circumstances he was in, that he was obliged to it; these are the reasons or excuses he made, and some of them have a specious appearance in them.

1 Samuel 13:13

Ver. 13. And Samuel said to Saul, thou hast done foolishly,.... Not by intruding himself into the priest's office, with that he is not charged, but not waiting the full time till Samuel came; which showed his impatience, disregard to Samuel, and distrust of God; and though he thought he had acted wisely, and taken the proper precautions in his circumstances, yet he acted foolishly; and though a king, Samuel being a prophet of the Lord, and in his name, spared not to tell him so:

thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee; by his prophet, that he should wait seven days for his coming, who would then offer sacrifices, and tell him what he should do; and not to keep the commandment of God was acting a foolish part:

for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever; that is, for a long time, on his son, and son's son; and then, according to promise and prophecy, it would come to one of the tribe of Judah; but now seeing he had acted such a part, it should not continue long in his family, no longer than his own life, and quickly come into other hands.

1 Samuel 13:14

Ver. 14. But now thy kingdom shall not continue,.... That is, in his family, nor in his tribe, but be removed to another:

the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart: who was David; though as yet Samuel knew him not, he knew by divine revelation that there was another one chosen, to whom the kingdom would be given; a man every way agreeable to the will of God, and who would fulfil his will, though he knew not particularly who he was:

and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people; that is, had appointed him to be king over Israel. God's decrees have the force of a law in them, and must be fulfilled; and cannot be resisted so as to be frustrated:

because thou hast not kept that which the Lord hath commanded thee; it matters not whether the thing commanded is greater or less, it is disobedience to the command that is the sin, and is resented: this might seem a small thing, since to offer the sacrifice was not criminal; but doing it before the time, a little before it should have been done, not waiting long enough for the prophet; yet it being against the command of God, or in neglect of it, it was sinful, and severely chastised; and the rather, that it might be an example to all succeeding kings how they offended, or broke the least of God's commandments; and this being the first king of Israel, he was made an example of to the rest.

1 Samuel 13:15

Ver. 15. And Samuel arose,.... Seemingly in wrath and displeasure, not staying to offer up the peace offerings which remained; and though no mention is made of Saul's going with him, yet it seems as if he did, or at least quickly followed him, as appears from the next verse:

and got him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin; the native place of Saul, thereby directing Saul where he should go, and which might be a stronger place than Gilgal; or however where he might expect to be joined by more persons of his own tribe, as well as in the first place protect and defend that; and it looks by Samuel's going thither, though he was displeased with Saul, yet that he did not intend to forsake him directly and entirely:

and Saul numbered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men: which was done either before he left Gilgal, or as soon as he came to Gibeah; so great a desertion was there from him, that of the 3000 first chosen by him, and of the people after called and gathered to him at Gilgal, only six hundred remained with him; a small number indeed to encounter so large an army the Philistines had brought into the field, and which therefore Saul could not face.

1 Samuel 13:16

Ver. 16. And Saul, and Jonathan his son,.... Who were now joined to their men, on Saul's coming to Gibeah:

and the people that were present with them; the six hundred men before numbered: abode in Gibeah of Benjamin; being perhaps a strong fortified place, not choosing to go forth to meet the army of the Philistines, so vastly superior to them:

but the Philistines encamped at Michmash; the old quarters of Saul before he went to Gilgal, 1Sa 13:2.

1 Samuel 13:17

Ver. 17. And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies,.... Saul not daring to come out to fight them, and there being none throughout the land to oppose them, they sent out three companies of soldiers to ravage and spoil the country; of so little use and service was a king to Israel, they were so extremely desirous of; and this was suffered, to convince them of their vain confidence in him, and that their trust ought to be in the Lord their God; never was their country more exposed to rapine and violence than now:

one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah; a city in the land of Benjamin, of which see Jos 18:23 and lay southwest from Michmash, where the army of the Philistines were:

unto the land of Shual: which the Targum paraphrases,

"the land of the south;"

it seems to have had its name from the multitude of foxes in it, Shual signifying a fox.

1 Samuel 13:18

Ver. 18. And another company turned the way to Bethhoron,.... Of which name there were two cities, the upper and nether, and both in the tribe of Ephraim, of which see Jos 16:3 this lay northwest from the camp of the Philistines at Michmash; eight miles from it, according to Bunting {d}:

and another company turned to the way of the border, that looketh towards the valley of Zeboim, toward the wilderness; some take this to be the Zeboim which was destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah; and the wilderness, the wilderness of Jordan; but as that, so the valley in which it stood, was turned into a bituminous lake; this seems to be a city in the land of Benjamin, Ne 11:34 near to which was a valley, and this towards the wilderness of Jericho, and so lay eastward; the Targum calls it the valley of vipers, perhaps from its being infested with many; and so David de Pomis {e} says it is the name of a place where plenty of serpents were found, and which he says were called so because of the variety of colours in them; with which agrees Kimchi's note on the place; they seem to mean serpents spotted {f}, as if they were painted and dyed of various colours, as the Hebrew word which is thus paraphrased signifies: according to Bunting {g}, it was eight miles from Michmash.

{d} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 133. {e} Tzemach David, fol. 13. 2. & 153. 1. {f} aiolon ofin, Homer. Iliad. 12. ver. 208. "notis maculosus grandibus", Virgil. Georgic. l. 3. v. 427. {g} Ut supra. (Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 133.)

1 Samuel 13:19

Ver. 19. Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel,.... The Philistines, when they ruled over them, having removed them into their own country, and forbid any to learn or exercise that trade in Israel:

for the Philistines said, lest the Hebrews make swords or spears: this they did to prevent their having arms, and the use of them, that they might not rebel against them, and fight with them, and overcome them; it was a piece of policy to keep them subject to them; so Nebuchadnezzar, when he conquered the Jews and carried them captive, took care particularly to carry away their smiths, and left none but the poorest sort of people in the land, 2Ki 24:14 and Porsena, king of the Etrusci, when he made a covenant with the Romans, upon the expulsion of their kings, made this a condition of peace with them, that they should use no iron but in husbandry {h}. When this course was taken by the Philistines with the Israelites, and how long it had continued is not certain; it is probable it might be in the space of forty years they ruled over Israel, in which Samson was born, for we never read of any sword or spear that he made use of; and though there were two battles in the times of Eli, in both which Israel were beaten, they might make use only of bows and arrows, slings, and stones, clubs, &c, as also in the battle of Saul with the Ammonites; and as for the defeat of the Philistines in the time of Samuel, it was by thunder; and though the Philistines were then subdued, yet, as Samuel grew old, they regained their power in a good measure, and the Israelites had not spirit enough to oppose them, nor diligence and industry to learn and revive the trade of smiths among them; not even for what was necessary to husbandry, as the following verse shows.

{h} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 34. c. 14.

1 Samuel 13:20

Ver. 20. But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines,.... Were obliged to go into Palestine, into some one or other of the cities of the Philistines, or to their garrisons, where the trade of a smith was exercised:

to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter; which are the parts of the plough made of iron, with which the earth is cut and thrown up:

and his axe and his mattock; or pick axe; with the one wood is felled and cut, and with the other stones are dug; and each of these for their several uses needed sharpening; and when they did, they were obliged to go to the Philistines to have them done, they having no smiths among them.

1 Samuel 13:21

Ver. 21. Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes,.... Those that would not go to the Philistines, or were not able, or thought it too much trouble, these kept files by them to sharpen those several instruments with upon occasion; though the words are by some rendered in connection with the preceding, to this sense, that they went to the Philistines to sharpen them, when the mouths, or edges, of the mattocks, coulters, &c. were dull; or "blunt" {i}; and so needed sharpening; and even

to sharpen the goads; with which they pricked and pushed on the oxen in ploughing, when sluggish and remiss.

(The word for "file" in the verse is Myp "pim", and occurs only here in the Hebrew scriptures. It is not used elsewhere in other Hebrew writings. Therefore the translators of the 1611 Authorised Version had only the root derivation to deduce what the word meant. Literally, it means "a file with mouths". However, recently archaeologists have found a stone inscribed with this word. Also they found a stone inscribed with the word "shekel". Hence they deduced that the word was really a weight of measure equal to about one third of a shekel. Newer translations usually translate this as "the charge was a third of a shekel ...", hence removing the obvious contradiction between this verse and the preceding one. Editor.)

{i} Myp hryuph htyhw "retusae itaque erant acies vomerum", V. L. "quandoquidem acies cultrorum aratri", &c. "obtusae erant", Tigurine version.

1 Samuel 13:22

Ver. 22. So it came to pass in the day of battle,.... When that drew near, and they were called to it, and obliged to fight or flee, or surrender:

that there were neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: which was not owing to their leaving them behind in the camp, or casting them away from them through fear, as they followed Saul with trembling, but to the cause now mentioned. In what manner some preceding battles were fought with the Philistines and Ammonites, notwithstanding, have been accounted for on 1Sa 13:19, but it is strange that the Israelites did not furnish themselves with the arms of the Philistines at the defeat of them in Ebenezer, **1Sa 7:10** and with the arms of the Ammonites at Jabeshgilead, 1Sa 11:11 and that such a warlike prince as Saul appeared at his first setting out to be should not in the first place take care to provide armour for his men by some means or another; for that those that left him should have arms, and not those that abode with him, does not seem reasonable. It may be the Benjamites, being expert in slinging, were indifferent to and neglected the use of any other weapon, or method of fighting:

but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found; swords and spears, and with them only.

1 Samuel 13:23

Ver. 23. And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash. According to Jarchi, these two places, Michmash where the Philistines were, and Gibeah where Saul and Jonathan were, lay on two hills over against each other, and there was a valley between them; and the garrison of the Philistines drew nigh to the passage of Michmash, which led to the side of Gibeah, to the valley between them, either with an intention to besiege Gibeah, or to dare Israel to come out and fight them: but rather it seems to be some strong pass between the rocks near Michmash, where the garrison placed themselves to guard and keep against any sudden surprise; see 1Sa 14:4. The Targum is,

"the governor of the Philistines went out to the ford or passage of Michmash;"

and Kimchi interprets it of the princes or generals of the army; these might go to mark out a camp, and pitch upon a proper place to draw up in a line of battle.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 14

This chapter gives an account of an adventure of Jonathan and his armourbearer smiting a garrison of the Philistines, 1Sa 14:1, which with other circumstances struck terror into the whole army; which being observed by Saul's spies, he and his men went out against them, and being joined by others, pursued them, and obtained a complete victory, 1Sa 14:15, but what sullied the glory of the day was a rash oath of Saul's, adjuring the people not to eat any food till evening which Jonathan not hearing of ignorantly broke, 1Sa 14:24 and which long fasting made the people so ravenous, that they slew their cattle, and ate them with the blood, contrary to the law of God, for which they were reproved by Saul, 1Sa 14:32, upon which he built an altar, and inquired of the Lord whether he should pursue the Philistines all that night till morning, but had no answer; which made him conclude sin was committed, and which he inquired after, declaring that if it was his own son Jonathan that had committed it he should surely die, 1Sa 14:35, the people being silent, he cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonathan; who had it not been for the resolution of the people that rescued him out of his hands, because of the great salvation he had wrought, must have died, 1Sa 14:40 and the chapter is cited with an account of Saul's battles with the neighbouring nations in general, and of his family, 1Sa 14:47.

Ver. 1. Now it came to pass upon a day,.... At a certain time, a little after the garrison of the Philistines had made the movement, 1Sa 13:23 and it is not to be taken strictly for the day time; for it is probable it was in the night that the following proposal was made, and began to be carried into execution; for Josephus {k} says it was day light when Jonathan and his armourbearer came to the camp of the Philistines; he had formed his scheme perhaps the night before, and he and his man set out in the night time, and by break of day came up to the garrison, as after related:

that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour; as was usual in those times for generals of armies to have such, and so in later times; such were Automedon to Achilles, and Achates to Aeneas, as Grotius observes:

come and let us go over to the Philistine garrison that is on the other side; that is, go over the valley which lay between Michmash and Gibeah, to the Philistines, that lay on the other side the valley beyond it; and so was not in it, but at a pass on the hills, at the bottom of which this valley lay, and could be seen at a distance, and pointed at with the finger, as Jarchi notes:

but he told not his father; lest he should disapprove of his project, and hinder him from pursuing it; and had not his spirit been stirred up to this by the Lord, of which he was fully persuaded, he would have acted not only a rash part, but contrary to military discipline, in engaging in an enterprise without the knowledge and direction of his general; unless we can suppose he had all unlimited commission from his father to attack the enemy, at discretion, at any time, and any where.

{k} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 2.

1 Samuel 14:2

Ver. 2. And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah,.... Not daring to go out against the Philistines, but remained in the furthest part of Gibeah, at the greatest distance from the camp of the Philistines, in the strongest part of the city, or deeply entrenched in the outer, part of it in the field:

under a pomegranate tree; where were his headquarters; his tent or pavilion was erected under a large spreading pomegranate, which protected him from the heat of the sun: or

under Rimmon; the rock Rimmon; under the shelter of that, and in the caverns of it; where a like number of Benjaminites he now had with him formerly hid themselves, Jud 20:47

which is in Migron; a part of Gibeah, or rather of the field of Gibeah, so called; for near it it certainly was; and is also mentioned along with Michmash, and as lying in the way of the march of Sennacherib king of Assyria, to Jerusalem, Isa 10:28

and the people that were with him were about six hundred men; which is observed to show that no addition was made to his little army; it was the same it was when he came thither, the people did not flock to his assistance, being in fear of the army of the Philistines, which was so powerful; see 1Sa 13:15.

1 Samuel 14:3

Ver. 3. And Ahiah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother,.... Ichabod was the child that Phinehas's wife bore prematurely on hearing the news of the ark being taken and of the death of her husband and father-in-law, which name she gave him on that account, and died; see **1Sa 4:19**, he, it seems, had an elder brother, called Ahitub, who died young, and this Ahiah was the son of him; for not he, but Ahitub, was Ichabod's brother:

the son of Phinehas; so Ichabod was:

the son of Eli; so Phinehas was:

the Lord's priest in Shiloh; this refers not to Ahiah for he was not now priest in Shiloh, which was destroyed: and besides, he was now in the camp of Saul; but to Eli, who when living exercised the priest's office in Shiloh:

wearing an ephod; as Ahiah now did; not such as common priests wore, but the ephod the high priest wore, which had the breastplate of judgment, the Urim and Thummim, in it, by which inquiry was made, 1Sa 14:37. The meaning of all this is, that the high priest is now with Saul, and the ark also, which and the high priest might be sent for on this occasion, 1Sa 14:18

and the people knew not that Jonathan was gone; or they would have gone with him, namely, the military men that were particularly with him; he and Saul were in two different parts of Gibeah, with distinct bodies of men; whether the thousand that Jonathan first had with him all continued is not certain; it seems probable they did not; it can hardly be thought he should have more with him than were with Saul; see 1Sa 14:2, though from 1Sa 14:17 they seem now to have been together.

1 Samuel 14:4

Ver. 4. And between the passages by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison,.... One of which is called the passage of Michmash, 1Sa 13:23 and was that by which they went from Gibeah to Michmash; the other, which might be called the passage of Gibeah, was that by which they went from Michmash to Gibeah, and in effect was but one; and this was seized by the garrison of the Philistines, on that part of it which was towards Michmash; so that there was no way of access to the camp of the Philistines, which Jonathan therefore proposed to go over to and destroy, but his difficulties were very great:

there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side; not that there was on each side of the passage or passages to the right and left a cragged rock, between which men passed as they went from place to place; for the position of them in the next verse shows the contrary; but there was "the tooth of a rock" {l}, as it is in the original text; or a promontory or prominence on the one side towards Michmash, which stood out like a tooth; and another promontory or prominence on that towards Gibeah; so that both must be gone over to get to the camp, the only passage being guarded by the garrison; and indeed it seems to me there was but one rock, and two precipices at the opposite parts of it, and which stood between the passages, which precipices must be climbed over:

and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh; which, according to the Targum, the one signifies "lubrication", being smooth and slippery, and the other "treading", being more trodden and beaten: but Hillerus {m} derives both from clay, which seems not so agreeable to a rock; though in another place {n} he makes the former to have its name from whiteness, which is the colour of some rocks and clifts; and one should think the latter rather has its name from bushes, brambles, and thorns, that might grow upon it.

{l} eloh Nv "dens petrae", Pagninus, Montanus; "scopulus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {m} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 73, 82. {n} Ibid. p. 43.

1 Samuel 14:5

Ver. 5. The forefront of the one was situate northward, over against Michmash,.... The northern precipice of this rock was towards Michmash, where the Philistines lay encamped, and where was the passage of Michmash the garrison went into and possessed:

and the other southward, over against Gibeah; the southern precipice faced Gibeah, and both precipices were to be got over before he could get to the garrison, these lying between the two passages; the one at one end, called the passage of Michmash, the other at the other, which might be called the passage of Gibeah.

1 Samuel 14:6

Ver. 6. And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour,.... A second time, as Abarbinel thinks; the young man giving no answer to him the first time, perhaps through fear, he repeats it, and enlarges upon it for his encouragement:

come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised; as these Philistines were, whereas several of the other nations, though Heathen, were circumcised; as the Edomites, Arabians, and others; and this Jonathan observes to the young man, in hope that they being such the Lord would deliver them into their hand:

it may be that the Lord will work for us; a sign, as the Targum, a miracle, as indeed he did; and of which Jonathan was persuaded in his own mind, though he did not choose to express himself in a confident way; not knowing in what manner, and whether at this time the Lord would appear, and work salvation and deliverance; and yet had a strong impulse upon his mind it would be wrought, and therefore was encouraged to try this expedient:

for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few; he is not limited to numbers, and can easily work salvation by a few as by many. It is no difficult thing to him to save by few, nor can anything hinder him, let the difficulties be what they will, when he has determined to deliver his people.

1 Samuel 14:7

Ver. 7. And his armourbearer said unto him,.... Very readily and cheerfully:

do all that is in thine heart; whatever is thy pleasure, that thou hast a mind to do, that is upon thy heart, and thou art desirous of, and strongly inclined and affected to:

turn thee; which way thou wilt, towards the garrison of the Philistines, or elsewhere:

behold, I am with thee, according to thy heart; I will go with thee wherever thou goest, and do whatsoever thou wouldest have me to do; I am at thy command, and according to thy wish and desire, and in all things subject to thy will; I am as thine own heart.

1 Samuel 14:8

Ver. 8. Then said Jonathan, behold, we will pass over to these men,.... Over the precipices to them, as steep and as cragged as they are:

and we will discover ourselves to them; present themselves to them at daylight, and let them know plainly who they were, that they were Hebrews.

1 Samuel 14:9

Ver. 9. If they say thus unto us,.... By this and what follows he gives his man a sign by which both might know how they should conduct themselves in this expedition, and what would be the issue, whether they should succeed or not: should they say,

tarry until we come to you; this, as it would express boldness in the men of the garrison, and show that they were ready to come out and fight, would portend evil, and then what they had to do was to be upon the defensive:

then we will stand still in our place; wait till they came to them, and make the best defence of themselves as they could, showing as little fear as possible, and not attempting to retreat and flee:

and will not go up unto them; neither go backwards nor forwards; not backward, which would show fear; nor forward, to expose themselves to too much danger from the garrison, they appearing to be bold and intrepid.

1 Samuel 14:10

Ver. 10. But if they say unto us, come up unto us,.... Which however spoken in contempt of them, yet would discover some fear, that they did not care to come out of their hold to them, and expose themselves to any danger; and besides being bid to come up, though it might be in a sneering ironical way, as supposing it impracticable for them; yet this would lead them on to make the attempt; and while the men were careless and secure, they might obtain their point:

then we will go up: the precipice, which was supposed impassable:

for the Lord hath delivered them into our hands: they being afraid to come out, and scornful and self-confident in their garrison: and this shall be a sign unto us; a direction how to behave, what steps to take, and a confirming sign assuring of success. Bishop Patrick and others observe, from Herodotus {o}, something similar to this, of the Paeonians, who went to war with the Perinthians, directed by the oracle; and were ordered that if the Perinthians provoked them to fight, calling them by name, then they should invade them; but, if not, should abstain; and so they did, and overcame; for when they met, there were three single combats; in the two first the Perinthians were conquerors, and began to triumph and insult; upon which the Paeonians said to one another, now is the oracle fulfilled, now is our business, and so fell upon them, and left few of them.

{o} Terpsichore, sive, l. 5. c. 1.

1 Samuel 14:11

Ver. 11. And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines,.... They passed over the valley that lay between Michmash and Gibeah, and presented themselves at the bottom of the hill or rock on which the garrison was, to the open view of it; and who might easily discern who they were, that they were Hebrews, as they did, as follows:

and the Philistines said, behold, the Hebrews came forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves, being in want of provisions, and almost starved, and so obliged to come out to seek for sustenance; see
1Sa 14:6.

1 Samuel 14:12

Ver. 12. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer,.... The guards that were set to watch the garrison, who descrying them, called to them, and said:

come up to us, and we will show you a thing; we have something to say to you, a pretty thing to show you, when you shall pay dear for your boldness and impudence, in daring to come so near; not imagining that they could come, or would dare to attempt to come any further:

and Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, come up after me; follow me, and never fear but we will find a way to come up to them, however difficult it may be:

for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel; he knew by their language that God had given them a spirit of fear, that they durst not come out of their hold, and come down to them; and that he had cast them into a spirit of security and vain confidence, that they could never come at them, and give them any trouble; and from thence he concluded deliverance was at hand for the people of Israel, he seeking not his own private interest and glory, but the public good; and which he was ready to ascribe not to his own valour and courage, but to the power, kindness, and goodness of God.

1 Samuel 14:13

Ver. 13. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet,.... He did not attempt to go up the way or pass the Philistines kept, but turned aside and climbed up a precipice thought inaccessible, and came upon them unseen, and at unawares; for had he attempted to come up in any part where he was seen, they could easily have beat him down, and prevented his ascent; but though the place he climbed was so very steep and cragged, yet going on all four, as we say, he surmounted the difficulty; for he took this method of going on his hands and feet, not so much that he might not be seen; but because otherwise he could not have got up, not being able to stand on his feet; some think it was the precipice called Bozez he climbed, which, according to the Targum, had its name from its being lubricous and slippery:

and his armourbearer after him; who clambered up in the same manner, in imitation of his master, and as taught and directed by him:

and they fell before Jonathan, and his armourbearer slew after him; Jonathan, coming upon them at an unawares, knocked them down; or falling upon them, and laying about him with great dispatch, wounded them, and laid them prostrate to the ground; and his armourbearer following them, put them to death, dispatched them at once; and so between them both made quick riddance of them.

1 Samuel 14:14

Ver. 14. And the first slaughter which Jonathan and his armourbearer made was about twenty men,.... Or the first blow they struck, as the Targum, they killed about twenty men; that is, they did not stop smiting, but followed their blows so quickly, that in a very little time, as well as in a very small space of ground, so many were killed:

even within as it were an half acre of land, which a "yoke" of oxen might plough; that is, in one day; the word is used for a furrow, Ps 129:3 and is supposed by some {p} to be the length of one furrow; but if so, it must be a circular furrow; so much ground was given to Horatius Cocles as could be ploughed round about in one day, for his brave opposition to Porsena, king of the Etruscans, when he endeavoured to restore the family of the Tarquins {q}. This was a space of ground which the Romans call "actus", a measure of land one hundred and twenty feet square, which being doubled made an acre, called by them "jugerum", being as much as a yoke of oxen could plough in one day, as Pliny says {r}; so that an acre was two hundred and forty feet long, and one hundred and twenty broad, and contained an area of 28,800 four square Roman feet; and this space here mentioned, which was half an acre, contained 14,400 Roman feet {s}; and within this space of ground, without going any further, twenty men were killed, which struck a panic into the whole garrison and host, supposing there was a large army of men behind them coming on, as follows. The Septuagint version renders these words as representing the slaughter made "with darts, and the casts of stones, and flints of the field" {t}.

{p} Vid. David. de Pomis Lexic. fol. 129. 1. {q} Aurel. Victor. de vir. illustr. c. 14. Liv. Hist. l. 2. c. 10. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 3. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 20. {s} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. p. 487. {t} See Dr. Kennicett's Dissertat. 1. p. 453.

1 Samuel 14:15

Ver. 15. And there was trembling in the host in the field,.... Belonging to Michmash, where the army lay encamped:

and among all the people; the inhabitants of Michmash, or that attended the army, and furnished them with provisions, trafficking with them; the common people, as distinguished from the soldiers:

the garrison; those that were in it, who did not sally out, but perceiving a great slaughter made of their outer scouts, were seized with a panic:

and the spoilers they also trembled; who had been about the country, ravaging and plundering it, and were returned with their booty; see
1Sa 13:17

and the earth quaked; the inhabitants of it thereabout, or the earth itself literally; a real earthquake was caused at the same time, which increased the terror:

so that it was a very great trembling; both with respect to the numbers that were affected with it throughout the camp and garrison, and the causes of it; the terrible apprehension they had of a large army just ready to rush upon them; the earth quaking and opening in various places, threatening to swallow them up; and perhaps suspicions of treachery among themselves, they consisting of various nations, and some among them Hebrews; hence they fell upon and slew one another, 1Sa 14:20, or "a trembling of God" {u}; either in the same sense to which we translate it, as cedars of God, flame of God, &c. that is, large and great ones; or which came from God; it was he that sent this trembling among them, struck their minds with fear and dread, so that they were in the utmost consternation, and knew not what to do, nor which way to take, and had no heart to oppose the enemy, and defend themselves.

{u} Myhla tdrxl "in trepidationem Dei", Montanus, Drusius, Vatablus.

1 Samuel 14:16

Ver. 16. And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked,.... The city of Gibeah was built on an hill, from where it had its name; and these watchmen or sentinels of Saul were set by him no doubt in the highest part of it, whereby they could overlook the army of the Philistines as they lay encamped, and could observe their motions, and give notice accordingly; and it being now broad day light, could see the condition they were in:

and, behold, the multitude melted away; like snow gradually, and yet apace; they could discern their numbers lessening more and more, through the slaughter of many made among them by one another, and the flight of others; and they went on beating down one another; they could perceive they fled with great precipitation, throwing one another down in running, tumbling over one another, and trampling on each other which were in their way.

1 Samuel 14:17

Ver. 17. Then said Saul unto the people that were with him,.... To some of the officers, particularly the muster master;

number now, and see who is gone from us: for he concluded that this agitation and confusion in the host of the Philistines were occasioned by an enterprise of some of his men, who by some stratagem or another had thrown them into this disorder:

and when they had numbered: which was soon done, being but six hundred men in all:

behold, Jonathan and his armourbearer were not there; from whence it might be inferred, that this commotion the Philistines were in was occasioned by an onset of theirs on the outer guards or sentinels of their garrison or army, which had alarmed them.

1 Samuel 14:18

Ver. 18. And Saul said unto Ahiah, bring hither the ark of the Lord,.... That he, the high priest, might put on the ephod, with the Urim and Thummim, and inquire by them of the Lord before it, concerning the affair of Jonathan, what he had done, and the agitation that was in the host of the Philistines; so the Septuagint version, "bring the ephod", of which, with the Urim and Thummim, Kimchi interprets it; and ask, whether it was right for him to go out unto them, or continue where he was:

for the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel; and so it always was, except a few months it was in the hands of the Philistines; so it was at Kirjathjearim, where it was last. Jarchi thinks a word is wanting, and to be supplied thus,

"the ark of God was [there] at that time with the children of Israel,"

at Gibeah; perhaps it might be removed first to Gilgal, when Saul and Samuel were there, and when they came to Gibeah it was brought along with them; but the last words may be considered as a distinct clause, and, literally tendered, are, "and the children of Israel": which Abarbinel accounts for thus, and Saul said this,

bring hither the ark of the Lord; and the children of Israel said so likewise, joined with him in it: though the ark had been with Saul, and the people, some time, and also the high priest, yet we do not find that Saul in all his straits and difficulties consulted the Lord before; but perceiving something extraordinary was doing, and might turn to his advantage, he begins to inquire.

1 Samuel 14:19

Ver. 19. And it came to pass, while Saul talked with the priest,.... With Ahiah about bringing the ark, and inquiring before it:

that the noise that was in the host of the Philistines went on, and increased; the shrieks and cries of those that were beat down and trampled upon, and were bruised and wounded; and indeed the cry of the whole host, being alarmed with the enemy being upon them, or among them; and it seems that not only their motions could be seen, but the noise of them heard at this distance:

and Saul said unto the priest, withdraw thine hand; from putting on the ephod, or opening the breastplate of Urim and Thummim, or placing the ark in a proper position, to inquire before it, or from lifting up both hands in prayer for direction. Saul by the noise he heard concluded the army of the Philistines was routed, and therefore there was no need to consult the Lord, and he had no leisure for it; no time was to be lost, the advantage was to be taken directly, and the enemy pursued, to complete the victory. The Jews look upon this as a piece of profaneness in Saul, as no doubt it was, and reckon it one of the sins for which his kingdom was not prolonged {o}.

{o} Vajikra Rabba & Midrash Tillim apud Abarbinel in loc.

1 Samuel 14:20

Ver. 20. And Saul, and all the people that were with him, assembled themselves,.... The six hundred men that were with him, unless we can suppose the 1000 that had been with Jonathan in Gibeah were here still, see 1Sa 13:2

and they came to the battle; to the field of battle, the place where the army of the Philistines had lain encamped:

and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow; taking one another for Hebrews, or treacherous and disaffected persons; so that, though the Israelites had neither swords nor spears, they needed none, for the Philistines destroyed one another with their own swords; and there was a

very great discomfiture; noise, tumult, confusion, slaughter, and destruction.

1 Samuel 14:21

Ver. 21. Moreover, the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time,.... Who either were their servants and bondsmen they brought along with them, or such in whose cities they dwelt, or had taken as they came along, and forced into their army; or it may be some of them were renegades from the Israelites, deserters, who for safety and subsistence betook themselves to them as the stronger party. The Greek version reads,

"the servants that were with the Philistines:"

which went up with them into the camp [from the country] round about; either willingly or by force; the words, "from the country", are not in the text, wherefore some observe, as Kimchi and Abarbinel, that this respects their being round about the camp, and that they were not within it, but without it, that if possible they might escape fighting against the Israelites:

even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan; who were now joined; when they saw the dread and confusion in the camp of the Philistines, and them destroying one another, and the Israelites prevailing over them, victorious and pursuing, they took part with them, and assisted them in completing the victory.

1 Samuel 14:22

Ver. 22. Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in Mount Ephraim,.... In the caves and rocks, thickets and pits there, see 1Sa 13:6 when

they heard that the Philistines fled; now being delivered from their fears, and thinking themselves safe, ventured out of their lurking places:

even they also followed hard after them in the battle; they joined the pursuers who came their way, and stuck to them, and closely pursued the flying army of the Philistines. According to Josephus {p}, the army of Saul was now increased to 10,000.

{p} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 3.

1 Samuel 14:23

Ver. 23. So the Lord saved Israel that day, &c] And a wonderful salvation it was, that two men should throw such a vast army into confusion, which issued in the utter rout and destruction of them; this only could be of the Lord, to whom it is justly ascribed, and was the effect of his sovereign good will and pleasure, and of his unmerited goodness; a free favour bestowed on an undeserving prince, who had behaved ill to his prophet at Gilgal, and now to him and his high priest at Gibeah:

and the battle passed over unto Bethaven; the men of battle or war; those that made war, as the Targum, these pursued and went as far as Bethaven, or rather "passed Bethaven" {q}; they not only, went as far as that, but "from" it, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel interpret it; they passed that place, and went on from thence in pursuit of the Philistines; for their camp at Michmash was eastward from this place, and had it on the east, 1Sa 13:5.

{q} Nwa tyb ta hrbe "transiit Bethaven", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "vel, beliatores transierunt Bethaven", Pagninus, Vatablus, Drusius.

1 Samuel 14:24

Ver. 24. And the men of Israel were distressed that day,.... By reason of the following order Saul gave with an oath, forbidding any to taste meat till evening, when the people were faint and weary, which is the common sense of interpreters; but Jarchi interprets it, the men of Israel were ready, forward, and hasty, and drew nigh to fight with the Philistines, and so refers it to the persons before mentioned, who came out of their lurking places; and this sense is approved of by Abarbinel: "for", or "and Saul had adjured", or "did adjure the people"; or willed them, signified to them his will and pleasure, which would not have been so much amiss, had he not annexed a curse to it, as follows:

saying, cursed be the man that eateth any food until the evening: or "bread", which comprehends all food, and among the rest honey; the design of which was, that no time might be lost, and that he might make the victory over the Philistines, and their destruction, as complete as possible; though it may seem a little too hard and severe upon the people, and too imperious in him, as well as imprudent; since a little refreshment would have animated and enabled them to have pursued their enemies with more ardour and rigour; and yet by the lot afterwards made, it seems to have been countenanced by the Lord:

that I may be avenged on mine enemies; who long tyrannised over the people of Israel, more or less for many years, and lately had sadly spoiled and plundered them:

so none of the people tasted any food; so observant were they of, and so obedient to the order of their king, and so much awed by the oath or imprecation annexed to it; though they were faint and hungry, and had an opportunity of refreshing themselves as follows, which was no small temptation to disobedience.

1 Samuel 14:25

Ver. 25. And all they of the land came to a wood,.... Which lay between Bethaven and Aijalon; by whom are meant not all the inhabitants of the land of Israel, but all that came with Saul and Jonathan, and that joined them in the pursuit:

and there was honey upon the ground; which dropped upon it, as in the following verse, or where it was produced by bees; for Aristotle {r} reports, that bees in some places make their combs upon the ground; this was wild honey, which Diodorus Siculus {s} speaks of as common in Arabia, and which perhaps John the Baptist ate of, **Mt 3:4**. Jarchi says, this was the honey of canes, or sugar canes, which grew in the land of Israel; and affirms from Nathan an Ishmaelite, that in the Ishmaelitish or Arabic language they call honey, sugar; but neither of these can be proved.

{r} Hist. Animal. l. 5. c. 22. {s} Bibliothec. l. 19. p. 731.

1 Samuel 14:26

Ver. 26. And when the people came into the wood, behold, the honey dropped,.... Either from trees, which produced it; so Diodorus Siculus {t} speaks of trees in some countries which produce honey; or from the sugar canes, as Jarchi; or rather from the honeycombs which were framed in trees by bees; so Hesiod {u} speaks of bees making their nests or combs in trees. Ben Gersom thinks that bee hives were placed here in rows by the wayside, from whence the honey flowed; or "went" {w}, or there was a going of it; perhaps the combs being pressed by the Philistines as they fled: the land of Canaan was a land flowing with milk and honey:

but no man put his hand to his mouth; that is, took not any of the honey and ate it, though it was so near at hand, and there was plenty of it:

for the people feared the oath: Saul adjured them by, or the imprecation he made on the person that should eat any food that day.

{t} Bibliothec. l. 17. p. 548. {u} Hesiod, Theogon. ver. 230. Vid. Diodor. Sic. ut supra. (Bibliothec. l. 17. p. 548.) {w} vbd Klh "ambulatio mellis", Montanus; "itio mellis", Drusius; so in Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. fab. 3. "----jam flumina nectaris ibant".

1 Samuel 14:27

Ver. 27. But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath,.... Which charge was given, either before he came from Gibeah, before he came to Jonathan, or while pursuing, when Jonathan was with another party either fighting or pursuing:

wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand: the staff with which he walked, or rather the spear which he carried in his hand, and fought his enemies with:

and dipped it in an honeycomb; or sugar cane, as Jarchi; or in wood honey, as the margin of our Bibles; but best, in the honeycomb, as the word is rendered, **So 5:1** and so the Targum, into the nest of honey {x}:

and he put his hand to his mouth; first he took the honey off of the top of his rod, and then put it to his mouth and ate it;

and his eyes were enlightened: which before were dim and dull through want of food, which is a common case; but became brisk and lively on eating the honey, nourishment being presently communicated, and he refreshed with it, and his spirits revived; and which quickly appeared in the briskness and sparkling of his eyes: honey being of a subtle nature, gives immediate refreshment and rigour; hence this phrase is frequently used by Jewish writers {y} for refreshment, after hunger, fatigue, and weariness; and which virtue is ascribed by them to fine bread, wine, oil, and particularly to honey.

{x} "Progeniem nidosque fovent----", Virgil. Georgic. l. 4. ver. 56. {y} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 42. 1, 2. Yoma, fol. 18, 2. & 83. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Maacolot Asurot, c. 14. sect. 16.

1 Samuel 14:28

Ver. 28. Then answered one of the people, and said,.... To Jonathan, who might direct and encourage the people to do as he had done, at least so he did by his example, if not by words; the latter is not improbable: and therefore one of the men that came along with Saul, and had now joined Jonathan, and who heard what Saul had said, replied,

thy father straitly charged the people with an oath; gave them a strict charge, with an oath or imprecation annexed to it:

saying, cursed be the man that eateth any food this day; that is, until the evening, as in 1Sa 14:24

and the people were faint; which is either the observation of the writer of the book; or it may be the words of the man, imputing the faintness of the people to this adjuration of Saul restraining them from food; or as taking notice how strictly the people observed it, though they were hungry, faint, and weary.

1 Samuel 14:29

Ver. 29. Then said Jonathan, my father hath troubled the land,.... The people of the land, as the Targum, the soldiers in his army; afflicted and distressed them, and made them uneasy in their minds, like troubled waters; the Arabic version is, "my father hath sinned against the people;"

hath done them injury by forbidding them to eat. This was not wisely said by Jonathan; how much soever his father was to be blamed, it did not become him as a son thus to reflect upon him, and it might have tended to mutiny and sedition:

see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey; the benefit he received by it was very visible; it might easily be discerned that he was greatly refreshed with it, and his spirits invigorated by it; it was to be seen in the cheerfulness of his countenance, and the briskness of his eyes: and he suggests it would have had the same effect upon the people, had they eaten of it, as he had done.

1 Samuel 14:30

Ver. 30. How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found?.... That is, had they been, allowed eat freely of the provisions, of bread, wine, &c. they found in the enemy's camp, they would have been much more refreshed and strengthened than it could be supposed he was with eating a little honey; if that had had such an effect upon him, of what service would a full meal have been to the people?

for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines? the people would have had more strength to smite them, and would have pursued them with greater ardour and swiftness, and so have made a greater slaughter among them than they had; he intimates that Saul's end would have been better answered by suffering the people to eat, than by forbidding them.

1 Samuel 14:31

Ver. 31. And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon,.... Michmash was the place where the camp of the Philistines was when Jonathan first attacked them, and from whence they fled, and they were pursued by the Israelites that day as far as Aijalon. There was a city of this name in the tribe of Dan, famous for the moon standing still in a valley adjoining to it, in the time of Joshua, Jos 10:12 and another in the tribe of Zebulun, Jud 12:12, but they both seem to be at too great a distance to be the place here meant, which rather seems to be Aijalon in the tribe of Judah, 2Ch 11:10 according to

Bunting {z}, it was twelve miles from Michmash:

and the people were very faint; as they might well be, with pursuing the enemy so many miles, and doing so much execution among them, without eating any food.

{z} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 127.

1 Samuel 14:32

Ver. 32. And the people flew upon the spoil,.... Like a swift and ravenous bird, as the eagle, and which seems to have its name in Greek from this word, see Isa 46:11. When the evening was come, and they were free from the oath of Saul, and being extremely hungry, faint, and weary, they were even ravenous for food and with the greatest haste and eagerness laid hold on what came first to hand:

and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew [them] on the ground; and there they lay in their blood, which in such a position would not run out freely as when slain and hang up:

and the people did eat them with the blood; they were so hungry they could not stay the dressing of them, but ate them raw with the blood in them, not being squeezed or drained out, at least not half boiled or roasted. Some of the Jewish Rabbins {a} are of opinion

{a} See Jarchi in loc.

1 Samuel 14:33

Ver. 33. Then they told Saul,.... Some that were more conscientious and religious, were more circumspect, and strictly attended to the laws forbidding the eating of blood, and were concerned at the indecent behaviour of others, and therefore thought fit to acquaint Saul with it, to restrain it:

behold, the people sin against the Lord, in that they eat with the blood; by breaking the laws of God respecting the eating of blood in **Ge 9:4**, especially in Le 19:26

and he said, ye have transgressed; the above laws of God; that is, Saul said to some persons who were accused of the breach of them, and were ordered to come before him, and did come:

roll a great stone unto me this day; pointing, perhaps, at one which lay at some distance from him, and which he ordered to be rolled to him; this was done, that the creatures might be slain on it, and their blood drawn out from them, or to offer sacrifice upon, and indeed for both.

1 Samuel 14:34

Ver. 34. And Saul said, disperse yourselves among the people,.... In the camp, some one way, and some another, and make proclamation throughout it; this he said to some of his officers, whom he sent out as heralds, to publish his will and pleasure:

and say unto them, bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here; on the great stone he had ordered to roll to the place where he was:

and eat them; in the same place, being rightly slain, and the blood let out; all this was to be done, the slaying of the beasts, and eating them, in the presence of Saul, and under his inspection, that every thing might be done decently, and in order, and according to the law of God:

and sin not against the Lord, in eating with the blood; as some of them had done, 1Sa 14:32 and all the people brought every man his ox with him; and his sheep also, though not expressed, yet to be supplied from the preceding clause: and these every man brought "with him that night"; the Jewish Rabbins {c} are divided about these creatures slain, whether for sacrifices or common food; and those that think sacrifices are meant dispute whether it was lawful to slay them in the night, which some allow to be lawful, if on a small and private altar, but not upon a large and public one; but these were slain no doubt for common food, which all agree might be slain in the night:

and slew them there; before Saul, and on the great stone rolled unto him.

{c} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 120. 1.

1 Samuel 14:35

Ver. 35. And Saul built an altar unto the Lord,.... To offer peace offerings upon, in thankfulness for the victory obtained over his enemies, or sin offerings to make atonement for the sin of the people, perhaps both, however the former:

the same was the first altar that he built unto the Lord; for though he had offered sacrifice at Gilgal, there was an altar ready built for him: or "he began to build"; he laid the first stone of it, and the builders built upon it; so some others say, that he was the first of the kings that built an altar to the Lord {d}; others, the first of the judges that built one; though Gideon built one, it was for his own private use, not for all Israel, as this, so R. Isaiah; but Ben Gersom, and so Abarbinel, refer this to the great stone Saul ordered to be rolled to him, and take the sense to be, that that began to be built an altar to the Lord; that was the beginning of one; for he did not now stay to finish it, being eager on his pursuit of the Philistines, as follows.

{d} See Kimchi in loc.

1 Samuel 14:36

Ver. 36. And Saul said,.... To his son Jonathan, or to some of the principal officers of his army:

let us go down after the Philistines by night; or tonight, that same night; which is another hardship he laid his troops under; as he had restrained them from eating all that day until evening, now he proposed they shall take no sleep that night, but proceed on in their pursuit of the Philistines, having eaten, and drank, and refreshed themselves. The Arabic version is, "let us go down to the Philistines"; and so Noldius {e} chooses to render the words; which I pretty much wonder at, and especially at what he observes in favour of it, and against the common rendering; that at this time the Philistines had not turned their backs, so that the Israelites could not be said to go after them, but were in a camp opposite to them; but that they had fled, and were pursued, is most certain from 1Sa 14:22,

and spoil them until the morning light; or kill of them, as the Targum, and so the Arabic version; for spoiling must be meant of killing; for as for the spoil of their provisions, riches, &c. that had already fallen into their hands, 1Sa 14:30, and this is confirmed by what follows:

and let us not leave a man of them; great numbers had been slain already, partly by their falling upon one another, and partly by the swords of Jonathan and his armourbearer at the first onset, and by Saul and his men in the pursuit of them; and so intent was Saul in the utter destruction of them, that he was for following and cutting them off, that none of their prodigious army might return home:

and they said, do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; they had religiously observed his oath, in refraining from food all the day, and now they were as willing to be obedient to his command in denying themselves refreshing rest in sleep:

then said the priest, let us draw near hither unto God; Ahiah the priest, Josephus {f} calls him Ahitob, who was present with the ark, agreed to the proposal of Saul, only moved, that before they set forward they would seek the Lord; perhaps reflecting upon the abrupt manner in which Saul departed from Gibeah, just as he was consulting the Lord, and not staying for an answer from him; which the priest might fear would be resented by him, and therefore proposes first to draw nigh to God; not to the altar Saul had built, or had just begun to build, but to the ark, with which the high priest was, and was a symbol of the divine Presence: the Targum is,

"let us draw near hither, and inquire by the word of the Lord."

{e} Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 15. No. 92. {f} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 4.

1 Samuel 14:37

Ver. 37. And Saul asked counsel of God,.... He agreed to the motion of the high priest, and asked counsel by Urim and Thummim; the Targum is, as before,

"inquired by the Word of the Lord:"

shall I go down after the Philistines? pursue after them in their flight to their own country, which, lying to the sea, was a descent:

wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? what remain of them, otherwise a victory over them was obtained:

but he answered him not that day; no answer was returned by Urim and Thummim, so that he was left in suspense whether he should pursue or no; the Targum is,

"he received not his prayer that day;"

this was treating him in a righteous manner; since he would not stay for an answer from the Lord, 1Sa 14:19, the Lord now will not give him any; though the principal view was, that he might take the step he did.

1 Samuel 14:38

Ver. 38. And Saul said, draw ye near hither all the chief of the people,.... Or, the corners of the peoples {g}; the princes, as Jarchi interprets it: and so the Targum, the heads of the people, in allusion to the cornerstones in buildings, which are the ornament, strength, and cement of them, see Zec 10:4, though Abarbinel thinks the tribes themselves are meant, which lay encamped everyone in a corner by themselves, separated from one another; and these he would have brought together; not the heads only, but everyone, small and great, that it might be seen and known where the sin lay; but he should have observed, that the tribes of Israel were not now present with Saul, but a small number of them:

and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day; he concluded, from having no answer from the Lord, that sin had been committed, which was the cause of it; but never thought of his own rash oath, which was the cause of the people's sinning, and had brought his son into danger; nor the sin of the people in eating the flesh with the blood; nothing ran in his mind but the breach of the oath with which he had adjured the people, and this he was determined to find out, if possible.

{g} Meh twnp "anguli populi", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

1 Samuel 14:39

Ver. 39. For as the Lord liveth, which saveth Israel,.... And had saved them that day with a great salvation and had wrought a great deliverance for them in freeing them from the Philistines, who had threatened the ruin of the whole nation. This is the form of an oath:

though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die; that is, though the sin should be found in him, or he should be found guilty of the breach of what he had charged them with an oath to observe, namely, to eat no food that day till evening:

but there was not a man among all the people that answered him; who knew that Jonathan had tasted of honey, but they would not acquaint him with it; partly because they knew he did it ignorantly, having no knowledge of his father's charge and oath, and partly because of their great affection to him, who had been the instrument of their deliverance and salvation that day.

1 Samuel 14:40

Ver. 40. Then said he unto all Israel,.... As many of them as were present; not the principal men only, but the common people; not the officers only, but the common soldiers in the army:

be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side: so they divided to the right and left, one went one way, and the other the other; there were two boxes or urns, as Kimchi says, in one of which were the names of Saul and Jonathan, and in the other Israel; though Abarbinel observes, that such a partition of them on one side, and the other, is not according to the manner of lots; and he suspects that Saul knew that Jonathan had tasted of honey, being told it by the man that saw him eat it; and who said to him then, "thy father straitly charged", &c. 1Sa 14:27 but chose this way to make it manifest to the people, and to show what a strict regard he had to justice:

and the people said unto Saul, do what seemeth good unto thee; they were very obsequious to him in everything, see 1Sa 14:36.

1 Samuel 14:41

Ver. 41. Therefore Saul said to the Lord God of Israel,.... After the division was made between him and his son on one side, and the people of Israel on the other, and everything was ready for the drawing of the lot; Saul put up to God the following petition, as knowing that though the lot is cast into the lap, the disposing of it is of the Lord:

give a perfect lot; or man, let it fall upon the guilty person, and let the innocent go free; the Targum is,

"cause it to come in truth;"

let truth and righteousness take place; let the right man be found out, and taken; the petition seems to be too arrogant and presumptuous, and insinuates as if the Lord did not always dispose the lot aright:

and Saul and Jonathan were taken; the lot being cast, it fell upon them:

but the people escaped; from the lot, and appeared to be innocent, clear of any blame; so that it was not the sin they had been guilty of, in eating flesh with the blood, which was the cause that no answer was returned.

1 Samuel 14:42

Ver. 42. And Saul said, cast [lots] between me and Jonathan my son,..... Which showed his regard strict justice, and that he had no consciousness of guilt in himself, and should not spare his own son if found guilty:

and Jonathan was taken: the lot fell upon him, which was so directed, that his ignorance of his father's charge and oath might appear; and that the affection of the people might be discovered; and that a regard is to be had to the orders and commands of princes, and obedience to be yielded to them in all in which conscience is not concerned, though they may be grievous; and to bring Saul to a sense of rashness in making such an oath, which brought his own son into so much danger.

1 Samuel 14:43

Ver. 43. Then Saul said to Jonathan, tell me what thou hast done,.... What sin he had committed, the lot having fallen on him, and found him out:

and Jonathan told him; the whole of the matter, all the truth, without any reserve:

and said, I did but take a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand; he speaks of the fact as a trivial thing, as if it was not deserving of death, though he was willing to submit to it; yet it seems strange he should say nothing of his ignorance of the charge and oath of Saul, and plead that in excuse of it; though Josephus {h} makes him to take notice of it: and, "lo, I must die"; am condemned to die, as the Targum; for which he was prepared and ready, being willing to testify an entire subjection to his father's authority and will. Josephus {i} represents him speaking with a generosity and greatness of soul, after this manner,

"death is most sweet to me, which is for the sake of maintaining thy piety and religion; and after so glorious a victory, it is the greatest consolation to me to leave the Hebrews conquerors of the Philistines."

{h} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 4. {i} Ibid.

1 Samuel 14:44

Ver. 44. And Saul answered, God do so and more also,.... A form of an oath imprecating evils upon him more and greater than he chose to mention, see the like form in **Ru 1:17**, though Abarbinel thinks this is not the form of an oath, but an asseveration of a curse that would befall him; as that God would not answer him when he inquired of him, and that he would add to do so again and again, if he died not:

for thou shall surely die, Jonathan; such words from a father must be very striking to a son, and argue a want of paternal affection in Saul, that could call his son by his name, and deliver such a speech unto him in so strong a manner.

1 Samuel 14:45

Ver. 45. And the people said unto Saul,.... Hearing such words, and filled with grief, pity, and sympathy for Jonathan, as Josephus {k} observes:

shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? no, he shall not; what, such a man as he die, who, under God, has been the instrument of so great deliverance, who first began it himself with one man only with him, and has proceeded in it to the finishing of it?

God forbid: this shall not be so; they speak of it with the utmost abhorrence and detestation, as a shocking piece of cruelty and ingratitude, unheard of, and not to be paralleled:

as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; as Saul swore he should die, they also swear he should not, expressing their firm resolution to stand by him, and preserve his life; and so far should it be from him to have his life taken away, that an hair of his head should not be touched, or the least injury done to his person; for though they had yielded a ready obedience to all the orders and commands of Saul, which were distressing to themselves, they were determined to oppose him in this case of his son:

for he hath wrought with God this day; God has been with him, assisted him to do great things for Israel, and therefore should not die for a thing so trivial; and it being not done in disobedience to his father, nor in contempt of him, but through pure ignorance, as some of them well knew; so the Targum,

"for it is known before the Lord, that in ignorance he did it this day:"

so the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not; not by force, but by their resolution and importunity; or "redeemed" him {l}, by exposing their own lives to danger in opposing their king, and by their petitions to him for him; and, as Josephus says {m}, by their prayers to God for him, that his fault might be forgiven.

{k} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 4. {l} wdpy "redemerunt", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {m} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6.) sect. 5.

1 Samuel 14:46

Ver. 46. Then Saul went up from following the Philistines,.... Returned home to his own city, finding that he could get no answer from the Lord, whether he should pursue further or not, and losing the time and opportunity of doing it, by examining into the affair of his son, and casting lots to find it out:

and the Philistines went to their own place; their country and cities, such of them as remained, who were not cut off by their own and the sword of the Israelites. Josephus {n} says, Saul killed about 60,000 of them. It seems to be the will of God that they should not now be utterly destroyed, that they might be a rod of correction in his hand, to chastise the people of Israel hereafter.

{n} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 5.

1 Samuel 14:47

Ver. 47. So Saul took the kingdom over Israel,.... Which seemed to be almost taken from him when he was shut up in Gibeah, and the Philistines ravaged his country at pleasure; but now, having obtained a victory over them, he recovered his kingdom, and reassumed his power and authority; or he was now strengthened in it, as Kimchi interprets it; the people seeing that he succeeded in his wars with their enemies, they readily submitted to his government without any hesitation, and obeyed his commands; so the Targum,

"Saul prospered in the kingdom over Israel;"

and, according to Abarbinel, these words will admit of another sense, that whereas, after he was anointed and made king, he followed the herd, and attended rustic affairs; but now, after this victory over the Philistines, he took upon him the state and majesty of a king, and no more concerned himself with his farm and cattle, but betook himself wholly to regal and military affairs, as follows:

and fought against all his enemies on every side; who invaded his kingdom from different quarters; he defended himself against them, and preserved his kingdom:

against Moab, and against the children of Ammon; who lay to the east of him:

and against Edom; which was on the southern border of his land:

and against the king of Zobah; a part of Syria, which was to the north of the land of Israel, and was near Damascus, see **2Sa 8:3**, and, according to Benjamin of Tudela {o}, the same with Haleb, or Aleppo, There never were but two kings of it, Rehob and Hadadezer, who lived in the reigns of Saul and David, **2Sa 8:3**

and against the Philistines; who were on the western border of the land of Canaan:

and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them; disturbed and disquieted them, and made them very uneasy; he terrified and distressed them; the Targum is, he "condemned" them, he treated them as wicked and ungodly persons, and punished them as such.

{o} Itinerar. p. 59.

1 Samuel 14:48

Ver. 48. And he gathered an host,.... A large army; for after the battle with the Ammonites he disbanded his army, and sent them home, retaining only 3000 men, and these deserted him to six hundred, which were all the men he had with him, when he fought last with the Philistines; but now, finding he had enemies on every side of him, he gathered a numerous host to defend his country against them, and particularly to attack the people next mentioned:

and he smote the Amalekites; a people that Israel, by the law of God, were bound to destroy, and blot out their name; a particular account of his expedition against them is given in the following chapter:

and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them; the nations before mentioned, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Syrians, and Philistines.

1 Samuel 14:49

Ver. 49. And the sons of Saul were Jonathan,.... Who seems to be his firstborn, of whom, his valour and success, we read in this and the preceding chapter:

and Ishui; the same with Abinadab, **1Ch 8:33** for he had two names:

and Melchishua; and besides these three there was another, whose name was Ishbosheth, sometimes called Eshbaal, **2Sa 2:8** who succeeded him in the kingdom; for which reason Abarbinel thinks he is not mentioned here, because he was a king; though it is generally supposed the reason why these only are named is, because they went out to war with him, and died with him, but this did not; he had other children by a concubine, or secondary wife, whose name was Rizpah, not mentioned here, 2Sa 21:8,

and the names of his two daughters were these, the name of the firstborn Merab; who was afterwards married to Adriel the Meholathite, 1Sa 18:19 and the name of the younger Michal; who became the wife of David, 1Sa 18:27.

1 Samuel 14:50

Ver. 50. And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz,.... Who very probably was the mother of all the above children, and therefore taken notice of; and Abarbinel conjectures that Ishbosheth was not a son of her's, but the son of Saul by another wife, and which he takes to be another reason why he is not mentioned here; but though Saul had a concubine, we nowhere read of his having another wife:

and the name of the captain of his host was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle; not Abner, but Ner, was Saul's uncle; for Kish the father of Saul, and Ner, were brothers, as Josephus {p} says, and as appears from the next verse; and Abner was first cousin to Saul, whom he raised and advanced to be captain of his army, and a very valiant man he was: we hear of him again in this history, and in the beginning of David's reign.

{p} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 5.)

1 Samuel 14:51

Ver. 51. And Kish was the father of Saul,.... See **1Sa 9:1**

and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel; this Abiel was the father both of Kish and Ner, and the grandfather of Saul, see **1Sa 9:1**.

1 Samuel 14:52

Ver. 52. And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul,.... For notwithstanding the late victory over them, and slaughter made among them, they recovered themselves, and came out again to battle, and gave Saul a great deal of trouble, and he at last died in battle with them:

and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him; to be his bodyguard, as Josephus {q} says; or for soldiers and officers in his army, even such, as the same writer observes, that exceeded others in comeliness of person, and in largeness and height; such as were in some measure like himself, that were strong, able bodied men, and of courage, and valour, and fortitude of mind.

{q} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 5.)

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 15

In this chapter are recorded the order Saul had from the Lord to destroy Amalek utterly, 1Sa 15:1 the preparation he made to put it in execution, and the success thereof, 1Sa 15:4 the offence the Lord took at his not obeying his order thoroughly, with which Samuel was made acquainted, and which grieved him, 1Sa 15:10, upon which he went out to meet Saul, and reprove him; and a long discourse upon the subject passed between them, the issue of which was, that by an irrevocable decree he was rejected from being king, 1Sa 15:12 and the chapter is concluded with an account of Samuel's hewing in pieces Agag king of Amalek, and of his final departure from Saul, 1Sa 15:32.

Ver. 1. Samuel also said unto Saul,.... When and where he said to him what follows, it is not easy to determine, perhaps at Gilgal, where they after met again:

the Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel; that is, he gave him orders to anoint him king of Israel, otherwise Saul was in providence sent to Samuel to be anointed, and not Samuel to Saul:

now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord; for so great a favour, and such high honour he had conferred on him, laid him under great obligation to obey the commands of the Lord; and whereas he had been deficient in one instance before, for which he had been reproved, he suggests, that now he should take care to observe and do, particularly and punctually, what should be enjoined him.

1 Samuel 15:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... Of the celestial host of angels, and of the army of Israel, yea, of all the armies of the earth: this is premised to engage the attention of Saul:

I remember that which Amalek did to Israel; four hundred years ago:

how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt; in the valley of Rephidim, just before they came to Mount Sinai, and fell upon the rear of them, and smote the feeble, and faint, and weary, see Ex 17:8

1 Samuel 15:3

Ver. 3. Now go and smite Amalek,.... This was one of the three things the Israelites were obliged to do when they came into the land of Canaan, as Kimchi observes; one was, to appoint a king over them, another, to build the house of the sanctuary, and the third, to blot out the name and memory of Amalek, see De 25:19 and this work was reserved for Saul, their first king:

and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; all were to be devoted to destruction, and nothing remain to be made use of in any way, to any profit and advantage; living creatures were to be put to death, and everything else burnt and destroyed:

but slay both men and women, infant and suckling; neither sex nor age were to be regarded, no mercy and pity shown to any; they had shown none to Israel when weak and feeble, and by the law of retaliation none was to be exercised on them:

ox and sheep, camel and ass; though useful creatures, yet not to be spared; as not men, women, and children, through commiseration, so neither these through covetousness, and neither of them on any pretence whatsoever. Children suffered for their parents, and cattle because of their owners, and both were a punishment to their proprietors; an ox, or any other creature, might not be spared, lest it should be said, as Kimchi observes, this was the spoil of Amalek, and so the name and memory of Amalek would not be blotted out.

1 Samuel 15:4

Ver. 4. And Saul gathered the people together,.... Or "made them to hear" {r}, by the sound of a trumpet; or by sending heralds into all parts of the land to proclaim the above order of the Lord, and summon them to come to him, perhaps at Gilgal; so the Septuagint version, and Josephus {s}:

and numbered them in Telaim; thought to be the same with Telem, a place in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:24, the word signifies "lambs"; hence the Vulgate Latin version is,

"he numbered them as lambs;"

and the Jews {t} say, because it was forbid to number the children of Israel, which was the sin of David; therefore every man had a lamb given him, and so the lambs were numbered, by which it was known what was the number of the people; and the Targum says, this was done with the passover lambs, it being now the time of the passover; but the numbering here made was not of the people of the land in general, and so there was no occasion of such a precaution, only a numbering and mustering of the army when got together and rendezvoused in one place: the sum of which is here given,

two hundred thousand footmen and ten thousand men of Judah; which last were reckoned separately, as distinct from the other tribes of Israel, to show their obedience to Saul, who was of another tribe, though the kingdom was promised to theirs; but R. Isaiah observes, that the reason why so few of the men of Judah came, in comparison of the other tribes, was, because they envied the government being in one of the tribe of Benjamin, when they thought it should have been in one of theirs; the number is greatly increased in the Septuagint version, which makes the whole to be 400,000, and 30,000 men of Judah; and so Josephus {u}.

{r} emvyw "audire fecit", Vatablus, Drusius. {s} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 7. sect. 2. {t} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 22. 2. Jarchi in loc. {u} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 7. sect. 2.)

1 Samuel 15:5

Ver. 5. And Saul came to a city of Amalek,.... With his army, perhaps the nearest city of it to the land of Israel; though some think that Amalek was the name of the city, and was the metropolis of the nation, and had its name from thence: and laid wait in the valley; which was near the city, to intercept the inhabitants when they should come out against him: or "he contended" {w} as some render it, he fought with them there; the Targum, "he ordered his army,"

set them in battle array, or pitched his camp there.

{w} bryw "et certavit Pagninus"; "ut contenderet cum eo", Junius & Tremellius.

1 Samuel 15:6

Ver. 6. And Saul said unto the Kenites,.... Who were of the posterity of Jethro the father-in-law of Moses, or related to him; why Josephus {x} calls them the nation of the Sicimites, who dwelt in the midst of the land of Midian, I know not:

go, depart, get ye down from among the Amalekites; for though some of these people came with Israel into the land of Canaan, and were first at Jericho, and then came into the wilderness of Judah, **Jud 1:16** and were in other tribes also; yet as they removed from place to place, and from country to country, for the convenience of their flocks and herds, they dwelling in tents, might come into the country of Amalek and pitch there, and as they chose to dwell in rocks, and the caverns of them, to be near their flocks and herds in the valleys, they are called upon to get down from thence, see Nu 24:21

lest I destroy you with them; they dwelling among the Amalekites, might perish with them; and especially as the Amalekites, upon their being routed, would naturally flee to the rocks, hills, and mountains, where these people had their tents, they would be in the greater danger of being destroyed with them, unless they removed:

for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt; as Jethro, by the advice he gave to Moses to appoint proper officers in Israel, and Hobab, by being eyes to the people, in conducting them through the wilderness, and accompanying them to the land of Canaan:

so the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites; took the advice of Saul, and removed and pitched their tents, elsewhere.

{x} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 7.) sect. 3.

1 Samuel 15:7

Ver. 7. And Saul smote the Amalekites,.... Engaging in battle with them, he overcame them, and beat them, and slew great numbers of them:

from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt; having routed them in the valley, or in whatsoever place the battle was fought, he pursued them from one end of their country to the other; from Havilah, which lay to the northeast, to Shur, which lay to the southwest, and destroyed all that came in his way between those two points, see Ge 25:18.

1 Samuel 15:8

Ver. 8. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive,.... This name seems to be a common name of the kings of these people, as Pharaoh was of the Egyptians, see Nu 24:2. When this king fell into the hands of Saul, he did not put him to death, as he should have done, but preserved him; for what reasons, see in the following verse:

and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword; that is, all that came in his way, or fell into his hands; all between Havilah and Shur; all excepting those that made their escape, for we after read of Amalekites, and that in large bodies, 1Sa 27:8.

1 Samuel 15:9

Ver. 9. And Saul and all the people spared Agag,.... Perhaps Saul made the motion to spare him, and the people agreed to it; it may be, out of respect to him as a king; or because of the comeliness of his person, the height of his stature, and the largeness of his body, as Josephus {y} notes; or to carry him in triumph in a public show, see 1Sa 15:12

and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings; or "of the second sort", as in the margin, the second best; or rather which shed their two long teeth, as sheep at two years old did when reckoned at their full strength, and fittest for sacrifice {z}:

and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; as they were commanded, but kept them for their own private use and advantage, and this not only the best and fattest of the flocks and herds, but of their household goods:

but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly: such of the cattle that were poor and lean, lame or blind, or had any defect in them, and household goods that were mere rubbish and lumber; such they entirely destroyed, killed the creatures, and burnt the goods; in doing which they thought they fulfilled the will of God.

{y} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 7.) sect. 2. {z} Bidentes, Virgil. Aeneid. l. 6. ver. 39. Vid. Servium in ib.

1 Samuel 15:10

Ver. 10. Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel,.... The word of prophecy, as the Targum; this came to him in a dream or vision, or by an articulate voice:

saying; as follows.

1 Samuel 15:11

Ver. 11. It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king,.... Which is not to be understood of any change of mind, counsel, purpose, or decree in God, which is not consistent with his unchangeable nature; but of a change of dispensation, and outward dealings, and is spoken after the manner of men, who, when they repent of anything, change the course of their conduct and behaviour; and so the Lord does without any change of his mind and will, which alters not; and though he changes the outward dispensations of his providence, yet he never changes and alters in the matters and methods of his grace; though he repented he made Saul king, he never repents of his making his saints kings and priests for himself; his outward gifts he sometimes takes away, as an earthly crown and kingdom; but his gifts and calling, which are of special grace, are without repentance, See Gill on "Ge 6:6".

for he is turned back from following me; from after my worship, as the Targum, from doing his will and work:

and hath not performed my commandments: particularly in this affair relating to Amalek:

and it grieved Samuel; that Saul should so soon be rejected from being king, and that he should do anything to deserve it; and whom Samuel had anointed king, and for whom he had a cordial respect, and to whom he wished well, both for his own personal good, and for the good of the people of Israel; so far was he from rejoicing at his fall, who came in his stead, and to whom he gave way in the affair of government:

and he cried unto the Lord all night; or prayed, as the Targum; either that the Lord would inform him of the particulars wherein Saul had done amiss, or that he would forgive his sin, and not reject him from the kingdom.

1 Samuel 15:12

Ver. 12. And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning,.... Having had no sleep since the revelation of the will of God was made unto him, and therefore rose early, being in haste to converse with Saul about it:

it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel; not to Carmel where Elijah offered sacrifice, for that was very remote from hence; but to Carmel, a city in the tribe of Judah, which lay in the way of Saul's return from Amalek, Jos 15:55

and, behold, he set him up a place; to divide his spoil in, as the Targum; or to encamp in, as Kimchi; or to build an altar on, as Jarchi, who takes it to be the same that Elisha after repaired; but, as before observed, this place was at a great distance from Mount Carmel where Elijah sacrificed. The word for a "place" signifies a hand; and, according to the Vulgate Latin version, it was a triumphal arch, and was perhaps an obelisk or pillar, a trophy or monument erected in memory of the victory he had obtained over the Amalekites. So Jerom says {a}, when a victory was obtained, they used to make an arch of myrtle, palm, and olive branches, a sign of it; these trophies were sometimes of brass, sometimes of marble; some were only heaps of stones, others a remarkable tree with the branches cut off {b} so the pillar Absalom erected is called his hand, 2Sa 18:18

and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal; he took a circuit, and moved in great pomp and parade, carrying the king of the Amalekites in triumph with him, and the spoil he had taken and reserves. To Gilgal be went, expecting to meet Samuel there, and offer up peace offerings to the Lord for the victory he had got.

{a} Heb. Trad. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. B. {b} Vid. Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 22.

1 Samuel 15:13

Ver. 13. And Samuel came to Saul,.... At Gilgal:

and Saul said unto him, blessed be thou of the Lord; signifying that he had abundant reason to bless the Lord on his account, not only that he had anointed him king, but had sent him on such an errand, in which he had succeeded so well, and it was a pleasure to him that he might report it to him:

I have performed the commandment of the Lord; either he was really ignorant that he had done amiss; and thought that his sparing Agag, when he had destroyed all the rest, and reserving some of the best of the cattle for sacrifice, could not be interpreted a breach of the orders given him; or if he was conscious he had broken the commandment of the Lord, this he said to prevent Samuel's reproof of him, and to sooth him with flattering words.

1 Samuel 15:14

Ver. 14. And Samuel said, what meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears,.... For the orders were to destroy all living creatures belonging to the Amalekites, 1Sa 15:3 if therefore Saul had performed the commandment of the Lord, as he said he had, from whence were these sheep Samuel heard bleating?

and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? where do they come from? these questions he put to convict him of the falsehood he had delivered; the bleating and lowing of these creatures proved him a liar, and were witnesses of his breach of the divine command; and one would think every bleating and lowing of these must alarm his conscience, unless dreadfully stupefied.

1 Samuel 15:15

Ver. 15. And Saul said, they have brought them from the Amalekites,.... That is, the people, laying the blame upon them, as Adam did on his wife, as if he had no concern at all in it, when it is clear from
1Sa 15:9 he was the principal one; nor is it probable the people should do this of themselves, without his consent and authority, which was so directly contrary to the express order of God; and then to excuse the people as well as he could, on whom he laid the blame, he observes this was not done for their own private profit and advantage, but for the service and worship of God:

for the people spared the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; by way of gratitude and thankfulness for the victory they had obtained; and therefore, since they had so good an end and design in sparing what they had, and those the best and fittest for sacrifice, he hoped they would easily be excused; and that the prophet would use his best interest with the Lord, who was his God, to whom they designed to do honour, that he would overlook what was amiss in them:

and the rest we have utterly destroyed; as they were commanded; but then it was only the vile and the refuse, the best they had reserved for their own use; though he now coloured it with this specious pretence of sacrificing to God, when he found it was taken notice of, and was resented.

1 Samuel 15:16

Ver. 16. Then Samuel said unto Saul, stay,.... Stop a little, do not be in haste to be gone, as he might seem to be, fearing a reproof, and that something would be said to him not very agreeable; or "suffer" {c} me, that is, to speak, give me leave to say a few words; for Saul being a king, Samuel treats him as such, and asks audience of him, or leave of him to deliver what he had to say to him:

and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night; and since it was not anything from himself, but from the Lord, he had to say, he might expect the rather to be heard, and especially since it was what had lately, even that very night, been told him:

and he said unto him, say on; he gave him leave, perhaps hoping he should hear something said in his praise, commending him for what he had done in destroying the nation of Amalek, see **Lu 7:40**. There is a double reading of this clause, the Cetib or textural reading is, "and they said unto him"; meaning

Saul, and the elders with him; the Keri, or marginal reading is, which we follow, "and he said unto him"; meaning Saul, as Kimchi notes.

{c} Prh "permitte", Pagninus, Montanus; "sine me", V. L. so Abarbinel.

1 Samuel 15:17

Ver. 17. And Samuel said, when thou [wast] little in thine own sight,.... Humble and lowly, and had a mean opinion of himself, his family and tribe, and judged himself unworthy of the kingdom; see 1Sa 9:21 suggesting, that now he was proud and haughty, and would have his own will and way:

wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel; not of his own tribe only, which was the least, but of all the tribes, and so they were all subject to him, and at his command:

and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel; all which is observed, partly to point out unto him the high honour he was raised unto, from a low estate, which laid him under obligation to serve the Lord, and obey him; and partly as an answer to him, excusing himself, and laying the blame upon the people; whereas seeing he was made king over them, his business was to rule and govern them, guide and direct them in the right way, and restrain them from that which was evil; and since he was anointed by the Lord, and not by the people, he ought to have obeyed him, and not regarded the pleasure of them.

1 Samuel 15:18

Ver. 18. And the Lord sent thee on a journey,.... And therefore he ought to have attended to the errand sent upon, and executed the orders given; in vain, therefore, was it to lay the blame on the people:

and said, go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites; those notorious sinners, who deserve no mercy at the hands of God or men; who had so highly offended the Lord, and had been so injurious to his people at their first coming out of Egypt. The orders were plain, not to be mistaken, and full and strong for the utter destruction of them without any exception, and therefore nothing could be pleaded in excuse for the violation of them:

and fight against them until they be consumed; entirely; they were not to be left until an end was made of them; or "until they had consumed them" {d}, the people of Israel, or the soldiers with Saul.

{d} Mta Mtwlk de "donec consumant ipsi eos", Pagninus; so Vatablus.

1 Samuel 15:19

Ver. 19. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord,.... Who had made him king, and sent him on this errand, and gave him such plain directions, and such strong orders to make an entire consumption of Amalek:

but didst fly upon the spoil; like a bird of prey, such as an eagle or vulture, not to devote it to the Lord, by an entire destruction of it, but to seize it for his own use, as being greedily desirous and covetous of it:

and didst evil in the sight of the Lord? by disobeying his commands, from whose sight nothing can be hid.

1 Samuel 15:20

Ver. 20. And Saul said to Samuel, yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord,.... Here Saul breaks in upon Samuel before he had declared all that the Lord had said unto him; for having expostulated with him for not obeying the voice of the Lord, he could not forbear interrupting him, but with the utmost assurance affirms he had obeyed the voice of the Lord; but then it was very imperfectly, and poor proof does he give of it:

and have gone the way which the Lord sent me; it is very true he went into the country of Amalek, but he did not do there all the Lord commanded him:

and have brought Agag the king of Amalek; took him alive, and brought him captive; whereas he ought to have destroyed him at once, and not have reserved him for triumph; a sad proof this of his obeying the voice of the Lord:

and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites; all that came in his way, in which he did right; but then he had not destroyed the principal of them, their king.

1 Samuel 15:21

Ver. 21. But the people took the spoil, the sheep and oxen,.... Still he continues to lay the blame on the people, when he, as king, ought to have restrained them:

the chief of the things, which should have been utterly destroyed; this betrays him, and is an evidence against him; he could not plead ignorance, he knew and he owns, that according to the command of God they were all devoted to destruction; and therefore he ought not to have suffered the people to have spared any on whatsoever pretence, but to have seen all destroyed; but he was as deeply in it as they, and therefore palliates the thing, and endeavours to excuse them by observing, that their end was good, the service and glory of God, which perhaps were never thought of till now: namely,

to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal; as peace offerings, by way of thanksgiving for the victory obtained, 1Sa 15:15.

1 Samuel 15:22

Ver. 22. And Samuel said,.... In reply to Saul:

hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? no, certainly, the one being merely ceremonial, the other moral; the one supposes sin committed, for which sacrifice is offered; the other moral, and is a compliance with the will of God, and is neither sinful, nor supposes anything sinful, and therefore must be the more acceptable:

behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams; which always was claimed by the Lord as his right and due; or the fattest rams or best sacrifices, of whatever sort, whether burnt offerings, or sin offerings, or peace offerings; for had man obeyed the will of God, and not sinned, there would have been no need of sacrifice; and that was only acceptable to God when offered with a heart truly sensible of sin, and penitent for it, and in the faith of the great sacrifice of Christ, of which all sacrifices under the law were typical, and led unto.

1 Samuel 15:23

Ver. 23. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,.... Or divination {e}, in whatsoever way it was exercised; for there were various sorts of it among the Heathens, and all condemned by the law of God, De 18:10. Now rebellion against God, or disobeying his commands, though in things otherwise, were they not forbidden by him, lawful to be done, is as heinous a sin as to be guilty of witchcraft, or any kind of divination forbidden by the law of God, and deserves as sore a punishment:

and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry: for a man, when he has committed a sin, to persist in it obstinately, or to vindicate himself in it, and insist on his innocence, which was Saul's case, is as hateful to God as any iniquity whatever; yea, as bad as idolatry, or making use of the teraphim, as is the word here; of which see **Ho 3:4** than which nothing is more abominable to the Lord:

because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord; disregarded his command, treated it with contempt and abhorrence:

he hath rejected thee from being king; not actually, for he continued to exercise kingly power and authority to his death, and was treated as a king by his subjects, and even by David, though anointed by the Lord; but the sentence of rejection was pronounced upon him, and the bestowal of the government on his posterity was cut off.

{e} Moq tajx "peccatum divinationis", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "ariolandi", V. L. "magiae", Munster, Tigurine version.

1 Samuel 15:24

Ver. 24. And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned,.... This confession of his sin does not appear to be ingenuous, cordial, and sincere, and was made chiefly for the sake of getting the sentence of rejecting him from being king reversed:

for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words; which last seems to be added to collogue with Samuel, and to ingratiate himself with him; and Abarbinel thinks that Saul suspected that Samuel had aggravated the matter of himself, and that he did not really transgress the words of the Lord, but as the words of Samuel; and therefore according to the words of Samuel he had sinned, but not according to the words of the Lord only;

because I feared the people; Doeg the Edomite, who was reckoned as all of them, Jarchi says: this was a mere excuse of Saul's, he stood in no fear of the people, he kept them in awe, and did as he would with them, as a sovereign prince:

and obeyed their voice; in sparing the best of the cattle; so be pretended, when it was his own will, and the effect of his covetousness.

1 Samuel 15:25

Ver. 25. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin,.... It can hardly be thought that Saul was so ignorant as to imagine that Samuel could pardon his sin, as committed against God, which none but God can do, but that he would forgive it, so far as he had offended him; or rather his meaning is, that as he was a prophet of the Lord, and had great interest in him, that he would make use of it on his behalf, and pray to God that his sin might be forgiven him, and the sentence reversed concerning his rejection from the kingdom; which perhaps is the chief thing he means by the pardon of his sin, which sometimes means no more than averting a threatened judgment, or freedom from punishment:

and turn again with me; to Gilgal, for he was come out from thence to meet Samuel, having heard that he was coming:

that I may worship the Lord: by offering sacrifice, either in thankfulness for the victory obtained, or to atone for his sin, and seek pardon for it, or both; this he thought would be a motive and inducement to Samuel to go along with him.

1 Samuel 15:26

Ver. 26. And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee,.... Not being satisfied with his repentance and confession, he still extenuating his sin, and laying the blame of it on the people. This he said by way of resentment, and as expressing his indignation at him, though he afterwards did return with him on a change of his mind; which a good man may be allowed to make, without any imputation of falsehood or a lie unto him:

for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel; which is repeated from 1Sa 15:23 for the confirmation of it, and to let Saul know that his pretended confession and repentance had made no alteration in the decree and sentence of God respecting the kingdom.

1 Samuel 15:27

Ver. 27. And as Samuel turned about to go away,.... From Saul, a different way from Gilgal, perhaps towards his own city Ramah, with an intention to have nothing more to say to Saul, or to do with him, or to see his face no more; so displeased was he with him:

he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle; in order to detain him, and prevent his departure from him, and his going a different way:

and it rent; Samuel twitching away from him with great vehemence and warmth. The Jewish {f} Rabbins are divided about this, whose skirt was rent; some say it was Samuel that rent the skirt of Saul, and by this signified to him, that he that cut off the skirt of his garment should reign in his stead; whereby Saul knew that David would be king when he cut off the skirt of his robe, 1Sa 24:4, others, that Samuel rent the skirt of his own mantle himself, which is the way of good men when things are not right; but the plain sense is, that Saul rent the skirt of Samuel's mantle, which, when Samuel saw, he understood what that rent was a sign of, as expressed in the following verse.

{f} Midrash Schemuel, sect. 18. apud Jarchi, Kimchi & Abarbinel in loc.

1 Samuel 15:28

Ver. 28. And Samuel said unto him, the Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day,.... Seeing his mantle rent by Saul, he took occasion from thence to predict, and no doubt it was impressed on his mind by the Spirit of God, that his kingdom should be in a like manner rent from him, on account of his own evil conduct and behaviour; and from this day forward he might expect it; the sentence was gone forth from God, and it would not be reversed; and by a like sign was signified the rending of the ten tribes from the kingdom of Solomon in his son Rehoboam, 1Ki 11:30,

and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou; who was David, a man after God's own heart, that would fulfil his will, who was more holy, just, and wise than Saul; whose works were better and righter than his, as the Targum; who was an Israelite, of the same nation and religion as he, and so his neighbour; and though he was not of the same tribe, yet of a neighbouring tribe; Benjamin, and Judah, of which tribe David was, joining closely to one another. It is highly probable that at this time Samuel knew not personally who he was that was designed to be made king in his room, though under the direction of the Spirit of God he thus describes him; for after this he is bid to go to Jesse's family, from thence to anoint a king, and several passed before him ere the Lord pointed out the proper person to him.

1 Samuel 15:29

Ver. 29. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent,.... Neither of the evil which he had threatened to Saul in taking away the kingdom from him; nor of the good which he had promised to David in giving it to him; nor of his purpose and promise to Israel to protect and defend them, save and deliver them from the Philistines, and continue them a nation and kingdom: and for the confirmation of all this, this title or character of the Lord is given, "the Strength of Israel"; hence he cannot lie, which is the effect of weakness; nor repent or change his mind, as men do, when something unforeseen arises, which hinders the execution of their first design, and which through weakness they cannot surmount: and hence God would support Israel as a nation, and strengthen them against their enemies, and work deliverance and salvation for them: or "the victory of Israel" {q}; the author of Israel's victories, and to whom they are to be ascribed, and who is able to give them more, and would; and as he did especially by David, to whom the kingdom is promised: or "the eternity of Israel" {r}; that gives firmness, permanency, and duration to them; all which is true of Israel in a spiritual sense; he gives them spiritual strength, victory over their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, permanent duration, everlasting salvation, immortality, and eternal life:

for he is not a man, that he should repent; men are weak and feeble, and cannot perform what they purpose or promise, and therefore repent; but God, the Strength of Israel, is able to perform whatever he has purposed or promised, and therefore repents not; men are changeable in their minds, and repent of their first thoughts and designs; but God is unchangeable, and never alters his counsels, breaks his covenant, reverses his blessings, repents of his gifts, nor changes his affections to his Israel. Abarbinel says this may be understood of Saul, and so be given as a reason why God would not repent of the evil he had threatened him with, because he was a man that repented not of his sin; but the first sense is best, and agrees with and is confirmed by Nu 23:19.

{q} larvy xun "victoria Israel", Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator; "victor Israelis", Tigurine version. {r} "Aeternitas Israelis", Junius & Tremellius.

1 Samuel 15:30

Ver. 30. Then he said, I have sinned,.... So he had said before, 1Sa 15:24 but his confession there was attended with an extenuation of his sin, pleading in excuse of it that it was through fear of the people, but here it is without any; and yet by what follows it appears to be not ingenuous and sincere, but hypocritical:

yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel; with his company; since should he be slighted openly by the Lord, and by his prophet, he would fall into contempt both with the principal men, and with the common people; wherefore he seemed more concerned for the loss of honour and reputation with the people, than for his sin against God, which is always the case of hypocrites:

and turn again with me, and worship the Lord thy God;
See Gill on "1Sa 15:25".

1 Samuel 15:31

Ver. 31. So Samuel turned again after Saul,.... Though he before said he would not, 1Sa 15:26 yet he did, changing his mind, as he might without being chargeable with a lie; and he also might have an impulse from the Lord so to do, and which he did not in order to worship with Saul, which it does not appear he did, but rather the contrary; but that Saul might not be despised by the people, and his authority lessened, while he continued king; and that he might do what Saul had neglected to do, destroy Agag: and Saul worshipped the Lord; alone, by offering sacrifice to him.

1 Samuel 15:32

Ver. 32. Then said Samuel, bring you hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites,.... This he said very probably to some of Saul's officers, and in his presence, and before all the people met together for sacrifice:

and Agag came unto him delicately; fat and plump, as the Vulgate Latin version, and yet trembling, as that and the Septuagint; well dressed, in the garb and habit of a king, and with the air and majesty of one; or with pleasure and joy, as Kimchi, choosing rather to die than to be a captive, and live in such reproach as he did; though R. Isaiah and Ben Gersom give the sense of it, that he came bound in chains, and fetters of iron, according to the use of the word in Job 38:31

and Agag said, surely the bitterness of death is past; this he said, either as not expecting to die, that since he had been spared by Saul, the king of the nation, a fierce and warlike prince, he had nothing to fear from an ancient man and a prophet, and who now bore not the sword of justice; and especially when he came into his presence, and saw his form, which showed him to be a man of clemency and mercy, as Ben Gersom observes: or as expecting it, and so Kimchi interprets it to this sense, "the bitterness of death is come"; and is near at hand, and will be soon over; or suggesting that that which was bitter, to others grievous and terrible, was to him sweet and desirable; but the former sense seems best by what follows.

1 Samuel 15:33

Ver. 33. And Samuel said, as thy sword hath made women childless,.... Or, "bereaved {s}" them, not of their children only, but of their husbands also, and so made them both childless and widows; by which it appears that he was a cruel prince, and justly died for his own barbarity and wickedness, as well as for the sins of his ancestors four hundred years ago:

so shall thy mother be childless among women; which was according to the law of retaliation, and what the Jews call measure for measure:

and Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal; either before the ark of the Lord, the symbol of the divine Presence; or before the altar, where Saul and the people had been sacrificing; this he did either himself, though an old man, or by others to whom he gave the orders; and which he did not as being the chief magistrate, and by virtue of his office, but acting as on a special occasion, at the command of God, and to show his zeal for him, and indignation at such a breach of his command. In what manner this was done, is not easy to say; he was not torn to pieces by the hand, without an instrument, as Baebius by the Romans {t}; or sawn asunder, as some by Caligula {u}; and as Isaiah the prophet is said to be by Manasseh, king of Judah, to which it is thought the apostle alludes, Heb 11:37. According to Ben Gersom, the word signifies he cleaved him, as wood is cleaved; or divided him into four parts, as Jarchi; perhaps he slew him with the sword, and then quartered him; that is, ordered it to be done.

{s} hlkv "orbavit", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, &c. {t} Flori Hist. l. 3. c. 21. {u} Sueton. in Vita ejus, c. 27.

1 Samuel 15:34

Ver. 34. Then Samuel went to Ramah,.... His native place, and where was his usual residence:

and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul; which was also his birth place, and where was his father's house, and where he had his palace, and kept his court; and took its name from him, to distinguish it from another Gibeah; and so Josephus {w} says it was called Gabathsaoule, and was about thirty furlongs or four miles from Jerusalem.

{w} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 1.

1 Samuel 15:35

Ver. 35. And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death,.... Or "added not to see him" {x}; not that he saw him no more, he saw him afterwards, 1Sa 19:24, but it was accidentally, he did not go to see him, but Saul came to him; and Abarbinel supposes he might not see him then, but hid his face from him; and he observes that it is said,

until the day of his death; which intimates, he thinks, that he saw him after his death, when raised up by the witch of Endor; but that Samuel was then really raised, and was seen, wants proof. The meaning of the expression here is no more than this, that Samuel afterwards did not visit Saul as he used to do; he did not go to him, to give him his advice and counsel, as he wonted:

nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul; because of his sin, his impenitence, and hypocrisy; and because of the loss of the kingdom to him, and to his posterity; and he might be concerned also about his eternal welfare; for he appears to have a natural affection for him, and was far from envying him as his rival, and rejoicing at his fall:

and the Lord repented that he made Saul king over Israel; nor was his mind altered, neither by the hypocritical confession of Saul, nor by the cordial prayers and heart of Samuel; see 1Sa 15:11.

{x} twarl-Poy alw "et non addidit ad videndum", Montanus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 16

In this chapter Samuel is ordered to anoint a king among the sons of Jesse of Bethlehem, 1Sa 16:1 all whose sons were made to pass before him, excepting David, 1Sa 16:6 who being then with his father's sheep, was sent for and was anointed, 1Sa 16:11, after which the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and he became melancholy, and it was advised to seek out a musician for him, and David was mentioned to him as a proper person, 1Sa 16:14 upon which he was sent for, and acted as a musician to Saul, and also became his armourbearer, which was the first rise of him, 1Sa 16:19.

Ver. 1. And the Lord said unto Samuel,.... In a vision or dream, or by an articulate voice: how long wilt thou mourn for Saul? he does not blame him for mourning, but for mourning so long; but how long that was cannot be said; and though his affection for him might cause him to indulge to it, yet it was in vain, seeing the sentence was irreversible:

seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? that is, his posterity; for he himself reigned as long as he lived, though in a very inglorious manner:

fill thine horn with oil; with common oil; for that this was the holy anointing oil kept in the tabernacle, as the Jewish writers generally suppose, with which they say David and Solomon, and the kings of Judah, were anointed, there is no reason to believe; since the tabernacle, where this oil was, was at a distance from Samuel, and which seems to have been only for the anointing of the priests. This was not a phial he was bid to take, as when he anointed Saul; but an horn, denoting the abundance of gifts bestowed on David, and the firmness and duration of his kingdom:

and go, and I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite; the son of Obed, whom Boaz begat of Ruth the Moabitess, **Ru 4:21**

for I have provided me a king among his sons; but which he says not; this was reserved for an later discovery; however God had in his own mind picked him, whom he would hereafter make known; this was a king for himself, raised up to fulfil his will; Saul was chosen by him, but then it was at the request of the people, and so he was rather their king than his; but this was not at their desire, nor with their knowledge, but of his own good will and pleasure; the one was given in wrath, and the other in love; the one was to the rejection of God as King, the other to the rejection of Saul by the will of God.

1 Samuel 16:2

Ver. 2. And Samuel said, how can I go?.... Which argues weakness of faith in Samuel, and fear of man, and a diffidence in and distrust of divine power; for otherwise he that sent him on such an errand could protect him:

if Saul hear it, he will kill me; should hear that Samuel went and anointed another king, it would so enrage him, that he would either immediately lay hands on him, and put him to death, or order him to be put to death; and indeed were it not that this was done by the command of God, he would deserve to die; it being an overt act of treason to anoint another king:

and the Lord said, take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord; a peace offering, which might be done any where in those unsettled times, the ark being at one place, and the tabernacle at another; and might be offered upon a private altar, and by a private person; and as it seems Samuel used to sacrifice at different places; see **1Sa 7:9**. Ben Gersom relates it as the sense of one of their Rabbins in his age, that there was a person slain in those parts, not known by whom he was slain; and so Samuel is ordered to take an heifer to fulfil the law in De 21:1 and therefore Saul would make no inquiry into his reason of going thither with an heifer, and this is commended both by him and Abarbinel.

1 Samuel 16:3

Ver. 3. And call Jesse to the sacrifice,.... His family, both him and his sons, to partake of the peace offerings; as every offerer had a right to invite his friends, and whomsoever he pleased, to eat of those parts of them which belonged to him, as a feast before the Lord:

and I will show thee what thou shall do; when Jesse and his family were with him:

and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee; that is, anoint him to be king over Israel, whom he should point out so plainly to him, as if he called him by name.

1 Samuel 16:4

Ver. 4. And Samuel did that which the Lord spake,.... He filled a horn of oil, and took an heifer with him:

and came to Bethlehem; where Jesse and his family lived, which, according to Bunting {y}, was sixteen miles from Ramah; though it could hardly be so much, since Ramah was six miles from Jerusalem on one side, as Bethlehem lay six miles from it on the other {z};

and the elders of the town trembled at his coming; for he being now an old man, and seldom went abroad, they concluded it must be something very extraordinary that brought him thither; and they might fear that as he was a prophet of the Lord, that he was come to reprove them, or denounce some judgment upon them for their sins. The Targum is,

"the elders of the city gathered together to meet him;"

out of respect and in honour to him, and to the same sense Jarchi's note is,

"they hasted to go out to meet him";

see Ho 11:11

and, said comest thou peaceably? the word "said" is singular; one of the elders put this question, the chiefest of them, perhaps Jesse; and the meaning of it is, whether he came with ill news and bad tidings, or as displeased with them himself on some account or another; or with a message from God, as displeased with them; or whether he came there for his own peace and safety, to be sheltered from Saul; and which, if that was the case, might not be for their peace and good; but would draw upon them the wrath and vengeance of Saul; for they doubtless knew that there was a variance, at least a shyness, between Saul and Samuel.

{y} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 125. {z} Vid. Hieron. de loc. Heb. fol. 89. F. & 94. B.

1 Samuel 16:5

Ver. 5. And he said, peaceably I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord,.... Which he could say with truth, it being one end of his coming, though not the only one for which he came, and which he was not obliged to tell:

sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice; prepare themselves for it, which was done by washing their garments, &c. and then attend with him, and assist him in the sacrifice:

and he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice; he ordered them to sanctify themselves; he distinguished them from the rest of the inhabitants, and invited them to partake of the feast, the remainder of the peace offerings.

1 Samuel 16:6

Ver. 6. And it came to pass, when they were come,.... Jesse and his sons, into the house where the entertainment was; and perhaps before they sat down, went into a private apartment by the direction of Samuel, where he acquainted Jesse with the business he came upon:

that he looked on Eliab; who was Jesse's firstborn, **1Ch 2:13**, called Elihu, 1Ch 27:18

and said, surely the Lord's anointed is before him; or this is the person it is his pleasure should be anointed king.

1 Samuel 16:7

Ver. 7. But the Lord said to Samuel,.... By a secret impulse upon his mind, as if he had spoken with an articulate voice to him:

look not on his countenance; which was comely and majestic:

or on the height of his stature; which was like that of Saul's; and because the Lord had chosen him, who was superior to the people in this respect, Samuel thought he meant to have such an one now anointed king:

because I have refused him; or it is not my pleasure that he should be king; though Ben Gersom thinks this refers to Saul, that the Lord had rejected him, though of an high stature, and therefore Samuel should not look out for such a person to be king; and Abarbinel refers it to the height of stature itself, that God had rejected that, and laid it aside as a qualification of a king, or as a rule to judge of a proper person to be a king; but no doubt it respected Eliab:

for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; man only sees what is without, but the Lord sees what is within; only the outward visible form of the body is seen by man, but the inward qualifications and endowments of the mind are seen by the Lord:

for man looketh on the outward appearance; the comeliness of a man's person, the majesty of his countenance, the height of his stature, and size of his body, things which recommended men to be kings among the nations of the world; See Gill on "1Sa 9:2", or "to the eyes" {a}; the liveliness, and briskness, and sharpness of them, thereby to judge of the sagacity and penetration of the mind, as physiognomists do; who guess at the disposition of men by them, when they are small or great, watery or dry, of this or the other colour {b};

but the Lord looketh on the heart; and knows what is in that, what wisdom and prudence, justice and integrity, mercy and goodness, and other princely qualifications are in that. The Jewish writers conclude from hence that the heart of Eliab was not right; it may be, full of wrath, pride, envy, &c. which disqualified him for government.

{a} Mynyel "ad oculos", Montanus. {b} Vid. Schotti Thaumaturg. Physic. par. 4. l. 7. c. 8.

1 Samuel 16:8

Ver. 8. Then Jesse called Abinadab,.... His second son, 1Sa 17:13

and made him pass before Samuel: that he might take a full view of him:

and he said, neither hath the Lord chosen this; which he knew by a private suggestion from him.

1 Samuel 16:9

Ver. 9. Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by,.... His third son, 1Sa 17:13, sometimes called Shimma, and Shimeah, **1Ch 2:13**

and he said, neither hath the Lord chosen this; which he knew in the same way as before.

1 Samuel 16:10

Ver. 10. Again Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel,.... Not seven more, for he had but eight sons in all with David, 1Sa 17:12 but four more, which with the other three made seven; three of these four are mentioned by name, Nathanael, Raddai, and Ozem, **1Ch 2:14**, but the fourth we nowhere read of; perhaps he died quickly after this, was an obscure person, and of no fame and note, or might be by another woman:

and Samuel said unto Jesse, the Lord hath not chosen these; not anyone of them.

1 Samuel 16:11

Ver. 11. And Samuel said unto Jesse, are here all thy children?.... For neither of these being the person God would have anointed king, and yet it was one of Jesse's sons that was to be anointed, he concluded he must have more, at least one more, and therefore puts this question to him:

and he said, there remaineth yet the youngest; or, "the little one" {c}; not of a little diminutive stature, for he was a mighty man, a man of strength, courage, and valour, 1Sa 16:18 or of a puerile age, for the Jews say {d} he was now twenty nine years of age; but that is not likely, he hardly exceeded more than twenty, or was so much; thereabout he might be; but he is so called because he was the youngest son, as we render it:

and, behold, he keepeth the sheep: and from following them, he was taken and anointed king; see Ps 78:70. Some of the greatest of men have been taken from rustic employment, as Moses, Gideon, Saul, and others:

and Samuel said unto Jesse, send and fetch him; out of the field by a messenger:

for we will not sit down till he come hither; that is, at table, to eat of that part of the peace offerings which belonged to the offerer Samuel, and which he had invited Jesse and his sons to partake of.

{c} Njqt "parvulus", V. L. {d} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 36.

1 Samuel 16:12

Ver. 12. And he sent and brought him in,.... Sent messengers into the field and to the flock for him, and being come home Jesse introduced him into the room where Samuel was:

now he was ruddy; which some understand not of the ruddiness of his complexion, or of his cheeks, but of the redness of his hair; the former seems best:

and withal of a beautiful countenance; of comely features: or "beautiful eyes" {e}; bright, clear, and sparkling; eyes that are black or blue are reckoned beautiful:

and goodly to look to; of a pleasant countenance, delightful to behold; he carried sweetness as well as majesty in his face; in this he was a type of Christ, **So 5:10**. A beautiful aspect, as well as shape and height, recommended persons for government, as with the Ethiopians, as Aristotle {f} relates; so Agamemnon is represented by Priamus {g} for his personable appearance, as like a king, and fit to be one:

and the Lord said, arise, anoint him, for this is he; that he had spoken to him of, and who it was his pleasure should be anointed king; and therefore, by a secret strong impulse upon his mind, was put upon doing it immediately, without any hesitation or delay.

{e} Mynye hpy Me "simul pulcher oculis", Montanus; "cum pulchritudine oculorum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {f} Politic. l. 4. c. 4. {g} Homer. Iliad. 3. v. 166.

1 Samuel 16:13

Ver. 13. Then Samuel took the horn of oil,.... Out of his pocket, which he brought along with him by the direction of God:

and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; not in the presence of them, they sitting around, or standing by and seeing the ceremony performed; which is not consistent with the secrecy with which Samuel was directed to manage this affair, and which was necessary to observe, to keep it from the knowledge of Saul; and with Eliab's treatment of David afterwards, who would never have addressed him in the manner he did, had he known that he was anointed king, 1Sa 17:28 but the sense is, according to Kimchi and Abarbinel, that he was selected out of them, and separated from them, and privately anointed by Samuel, and at most only his father Jesse present; wherefore some observe, that the words may be rendered, "anointed him from the midst of his brethren" {h}; that is, he took him apart from them, and anointed him:

and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward; not as a spirit of grace and holiness, which probably had come upon him before this time; but a spirit of prophecy, as did on Saul after his unction; and which particularly showed itself in music and poetry, in which he immediately became very eminent, and he was taken notice of for it, and which was the means of bringing him into Saul's court; and a spirit of wisdom and prudence, in civil as well as in sacred things; and a spirit of fortitude, as the Targum, of strength of body, and courage and valour of mind; whereby he was enabled to encounter with the lion and bear, and get the mastery of them; which, with all other gifts of the spirit fitting him for government, he was now endowed with, and which continued with him:

so Samuel rose up and went to Ramah his native place, and where he resided; that is, after the festival of the peace offerings, to which Jesse and his sons were invited; for the anointing seems to be before that.

{h} So Pool, Patrick, &c.

1 Samuel 16:14

Ver. 14. But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul,.... As a spirit of prophecy as at first, as a spirit of wisdom and prudence in civil government, and as a spirit of fortitude and courage, as the Targum:

and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him; the reverse of the former, which by the permission of God, and as a punishment to him for his sins, came upon him; he seemed to be a demoniac, as Josephus represents {i} him, as if possessed with the devil; by whom he was almost suffocated and strangled, as well as was distracted in his counsels, and became weak and foolish; lost all courage and greatness of mind, was timorous and fearful, and alarmed by everything, and was full of envy, suspicion, rage, and despair.

{i} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 8. sect. 2.

1 Samuel 16:15

Ver. 15. And Saul's servants said unto him,.... His courtiers, who observing him to act in a frantic manner, to be dull and melancholy, timorous, and irresolute, unsteady, divided, and distressed; or his physicians, who were called in to assist him, and remove his disorder from him:

behold, now an evil spirit from God troubleth thee: the disorder was not from any natural cause, or any bodily disease, and therefore out of the reach of physicians to do any service, but was from an evil spirit suffered of God to harass and disturb him.

1 Samuel 16:16

Ver. 16. Let our Lord now command thy servants which are before thee,.... Meaning either themselves, or some of a more inferior rank, who were in some post and office at court, waiters there, such as yeomen of the guards:

to seek out a man who is a cunning player on the harp: a musical instrument much in use in those days:

and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee; when in a melancholy mood, and Satan takes the advantage of it to distress and terrify, to spread the gloom, and stir up evil passions, and promote distraction and confusion:

that he shall play with his hand: upon the harp, that being not an instrument of wind, but of hand music:

and thou shalt be well: music being a means of cheering the spirits, and removing melancholy and gloomy apprehensions of things, and so of restoring to better health of body and disposition of mind; and that music has such an effect on the bodies and minds of men is certain from observation and experience in all ages. Music has been found to be medicine to various diseases, not only for the curing of the bite of vipers, and of the tarantula, but for easing the pains of the sciatica, and for helping persons labouring under the disorders of the frenzy {k}; and Pythagoras used to compose the mind, and remove the perturbations of it, by the use of the harp {l}, the thing here advised to.

{k} A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 4. c. 13. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 17. Vid. Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. Tyan. l. 5. c. 7. {l} Seneca de Ira, l. 3. c. 9.

1 Samuel 16:17

Ver. 17. And Saul said unto his servants,.... Approving of, and pleased with the advice they gave:

provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me; for being a sovereign prince, he could command whom he would to attend to his person and service.

1 Samuel 16:18

Ver. 18. Then answered one of the servants,.... Which the Jews say {m} was Doeg the Edomite, who out of envy and ill will to David spake of him, that Saul might have an opportunity of slaying him; but this is not at all likely; rather it was one of David's friends and acquaintance, that was desirous of promoting him at court, and no doubt was directed to that motion by the overruling providence of God:

and said, behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite; he does not mention the name of his son, but so describes him, that he might be easily known by those who knew anything of the family of Jesse; besides it was sufficient that he was one of Jesse's sons, to find him out:

[that is] cunning in playing; that is, on the harp; has good skill in music, and is expert in it:

and a mighty valiant man; as appeared by his encountering with and slaying the lion and the bear; an event now past, as very probable:

and a man of war some think this character of him was given after the affair of his fighting with Goliath and killing him, but here put by a prolepsis or anticipation; and indeed if David had been taken into Saul's court before that affair, it is difficult to account for Saul's ignorance of him, since he must be so near him, and so often with him, as his musician and armourbearer; though that difficulty may be removed, as may be observed in its proper place:

and prudent in matters; in his talk and conversation, and conduct and behaviour; knew how to carry himself, even in a prince's court: and a comely person; which always recommended to the courts of the eastern nations; See Gill on "Da 1:4".

and the Lord is with him; prospering and succeeding him in whatsoever he is engaged; and seeing the Lord was with him, it might be expected the evil spirit would depart from Saul, when this person, with whom the Lord was, was in his presence. The Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord is for his help;"

all that is said of him showed that he was fit to be in the palace of a king, and a proper person to be with Saul in his present circumstances.

{m} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 2. So in Hieron. Trad. Heb in lib. Reg. fol. 76. C.

1 Samuel 16:19

Ver. 19. Wherefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse,.... For David; not choosing to take him without his leave, though Samuel suggests that kings would do so,

1Sa 8:11

and said, send me David, thy son, which is with the sheep; he had learnt his name, and what was his employment; and which last he mentions not by way of contempt, it not being reckoned mean and despicable even in the sons of great personages, in those times and countries, to attend flocks and herds: so with the Arabs, as Philo {n} testifies, young men and maids of the most illustrious families fed cattle; and with the ancient Romans, the senator {o} fed his own sheep. Paris, son of Priamus, king of Troy, is said {p} to feed his father's oxen and sheep; and Saul himself had done the same; but to describe him particularly.

{n} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 610. {o} "Pascebatque suas", &c. Ovid. Fast. l. 1.
{p} Coluthi Raptus Helenae, v. 71, 101.

1 Samuel 16:20

Ver. 20. And Jesse took an ass [laden] with bread,.... Laden with a load of bread, as the Targum; with as much as it could carry, or was used to carry; the Septuagint version is, an omer of bread, which was as much as a man could eat in one day; and, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, it may be interpreted an heap of bread, agreeably to the use of the word in Jud 15:16, and a bottle of wine; or a skin of wine, a leather bag or sack, which held more than our bottles; the Targum is, a flagon of wine:

and a kid; of the goats, as the same Targum:

and sent [them] by David his son unto Saul; some think that Jesse suspected that Saul had known the secret of David's being anointed, and was fearful that he had a design upon his life, and therefore sent this present by his son to pacify him, and ingratiate him unto him; but rather he sent it as a token of respect and subjection to his sovereign, and according to the custom of those times, when men used to carry presents when they waited upon princes, and indeed in their common visits; and do in the eastern countries to this day; See Gill on "1Sa 9:7".

1 Samuel 16:21

Ver. 21. And David came to Saul, and stood before him,.... As a servant, and ministered to him in the way, and for the purpose for which he was sent:

and he loved him greatly; being a comely person, and a well behaved youth, and especially as he was serviceable to him with his music, in driving away melancholy from him:

and he became his armourbearer; that is, he appointed him to this office, though we never read that he exercised it; nor did he go with Saul in this capacity to the battle related in the following chapter: it may be literally rendered: "and he was to him a bearer of vessels", or "instruments" {q}; and Abarbinel thinks this is to be understood not of instruments of war, but of instruments of music to play with; which he brought in and bare before him when he went in to the king.

{q} Mylk avn wl yhyw "et fuit ei ferens vasa", Montanus; "ferens instrumenta", Piscator.

1 Samuel 16:22

Ver. 22. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, let David, I pray thee, stand before me,.... Continue in his service; which was great condescension in him, and great respect shown to Jesse, not to detain his son without his leave, and to ask it as a favour of him:

for he hath found favour in my sight: was very acceptable to him which must be very pleasing to Jesse to hear; especially if he was in any fear that Saul had an ill design upon him, when he first sent for him.

1 Samuel 16:23

Ver. 23. And it came to pass, when the [evil] spirit from God was upon Saul,.... See 1Sa 16:14 though the word evil is not in the text here; wherefore Abarbinel thinks that this here was the Spirit of God, which stirred up in him thoughts of divine things, put him in mind of what God had said, that he had rejected him from being king, and had rent the kingdom from him; and this filled him with grief and trouble, and he became melancholy:

that David took an harp, and played with his hands; upon it; and, as Josephus {r} says, at the same time sung hymns and psalms; made use both of vocal and instrumental music:

so Saul was refreshed, and was well; became cheerful, his grief was removed, his black and gloomy apprehensions of things were dispersed, and he was cured of his melancholy disorder for the present:

and the evil spirit departed from him: at least for a while; he had his fits and intervals; of the effects of music in a natural way,
See Gill on "1Sa 16:16", though no doubt the music of David was more than natural, being attended with the power and blessing of God, in order to raise his fame and credit at court.

{r} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 8. sect. 2.)

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 17

This chapter relates how the armies of Israel, and of the Philistines, prepared for battle, and where, 1Sa 17:1, describes a champion of the Philistines, who defied the armies of Israel, 1Sa 17:4, and while he was so doing, it informs us that David came into the camp, and he heard his words, and signified to one and another his inclination to fight with him, 1Sa 17:12, which being reported to Saul, David was sent for by him, and much discourse passed between them about it, 1Sa 17:31 when we are told the manner in which he engaged with the Philistine, and the victory he obtained over him, 1Sa 17:38 upon which the Philistines fled, and Israel pursued them; and on account of this action David was taken notice of by Saul, and brought to court again, as the following chapter shows, 1Sa 17:52.

Ver. 1. Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle,.... Josephus {s} says this was not long after the things related in the preceding chapter were transacted; and very probably they had heard of the melancholy and distraction of Saul, and thought it a proper opportunity of avenging themselves on Israel for their last slaughter of them, and for that purpose gathered together their dispersed troops:

and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah; a city of the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:35, which shows that, notwithstanding their last defeat, they had great footing in the land of Israel, or however had penetrated far into it in this march of theirs:

and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah; which were both in the same tribe, and near one another, of which See Gill on "Jos 10:10",
See Gill on "Jos 15:35".

in Ephesdammim; which, by an apocope of the first letter, is called Pasdammim, 1Ch 11:13 which the Jews {t} say had this name because there blood ceased.

{s} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 1. {t} Midrash Ruth, fol. 48. 2. Kimchi in loc.

1 Samuel 17:2

Ver. 2. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together,.... He being cured, at least being better of his disorder, through the music of David, and alarmed and aroused by the invasion of the Philistines, which might serve to dissipate any remains of it, or prevent its return, got together his forces:

and pitched by the valley of Elah; which Jerom {u} says Aquila and Theodotion interpret "the valley of the oak"; but the Vulgate Latin version, the valley of Terebinth; which, according to our countryman Sandys {w}, was four miles from Ramaosophim, where Samuel dwelt; for he says,

"after four miles riding, we descended into the valley of Terebinth, famous, though little, for the slaughter of Goliath;"

and in the Targum this valley is called the valley of Butma, which in the Arabic language signifies a "terebinth", or turpentine tree; though some translate it "the oak"; and, according to some modern travellers {x}, to this day it bears a name similar to that; for they say it is

"now called the vale of Bitumen, very famous all over those parts for David's victory over Goliath:"

and set the battle in array against the Philistines; prepared to give them battle.

{u} Deloc. Heb. fol. 91. F. {w} Travels, p. 157. ed. 5. {x} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 305.

1 Samuel 17:3

Ver. 3. And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, &e.] Before the Israelites are said to encamp in or by the valley; but here they are said to take the higher ground, and face the Philistines, who were on a mountain or hill on the other side over against them, which Kimchi reconciles thus; the whole or the grand army lay encamped in the valley, and, they that were set in array, or the first ranks, the first battalion, ascended the mountain to meet the Philistines. Vatablus takes it to be the same mountain, that on one part of it the Philistines formed their first battalion, and the rest of the army was in the valley; and on the other part of the mountain the Israelites pitched their camp:

and there was a valley between them; the same as in the preceding verse.

1 Samuel 17:4

Ver. 4. And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines,.... Or a "middle person", or a man "between two" {y}; meaning either one that went and stood between the two armies of Israel and the Philistines, as the Jewish writers generally interpret it: or a "dueller" {z}, as others, with which our version agrees; one that proposed to fight a duel, and have the war decided by two persons, of which he would be one:

named Goliath of Gath; which was one of the places where the Anakims or giants were driven, and left, in the times of Joshua, and from whom this man descended, Jos 11:22

whose height was six cubits and a span; and taking a cubit after the calculation of Bishop Cumberland {a} to be twenty one inches, and more, and a span to be half a cubit, the height of this man was eleven feet four inches, and somewhat more; which need not seem incredible, since the coffin of Orestea, the son of Agamemnon, is said {b} to be seven cubits long; and Eleazar, a Jew, who because of his size was called the giant, and was presented by Artabanus, king of the Parthians, to Tiberius Caesar, is said by Josephus {c} to be seven cubits high; and one Gabbara of Arabia, in the times of Claudius Caesar, measured nine feet nine inches, as Pliny {d} relates, and who elsewhere {e} speaks of a people in Ethiopia, called Syrbotae, who were eight cubits high; the Septuagint version makes Goliath to be only four cubits and a span high, and so Josephus {f}; that is, about eight feet.

{y} Mynybh vya "vir intermedius", Montanus; "inter duo", Vatablus; "vir medietatum", Noldius, p. 194. No. 283. {z} "Quidam duellator", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {a} Of Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 2. p. 57. {b} Herodot. Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 68. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 16. {c} Antiqu. l. 18. c. 5. sect. 5. {d} Nat. Hist. ib. {e} Ibid. l. 6. 30. {f} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 1.

1 Samuel 17:5

Ver. 5. And he had an helmet of brass upon his head,.... This was a piece of armour, which covered the head in the day of battle; these were usually made of the skins of beasts, of leather, and which were covered with plates of iron, or brass; and sometimes made of all iron, or of brass {g}; as this seems to have been:

and he was armed with a coat of mail; which reached from the neck to the middle, and consisted of various plates of brass laid on one another, like the scales of fishes {h}, so close together that no dart or arrow could pierce between:

and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass: which made one hundred and fifty six pounds and a quarter of zygostatic or avoirdupois weight; and therefore he must be a very strong man indeed to carry such a weight. So the armour of the ancient Romans were all of brass, as this man's; their helmets, shields, greaves, coats of mail, all of brass, as Livy says {i}; and so in the age of the Grecian heroes {j}.

{g} Vid. Lydium "de re militari": l. 3. c. 5. p. 63. {h} "----Rutilum thoraca indutus a‰nis Horrebat squamis----" Virgil. Aeneid. l. 11. {i} Hist. l. 1. c. 22. {j} Pausan. Messenica, l. 3. p. 163. So Homer frequently describes the Grecians with a coat of mail of brass.

1 Samuel 17:6

Ver. 6. And he had greaves of brass upon his legs,.... Which were a sort of boots, or leg harnesses, which covered the thighs and legs down to the heels; such as Iolaus {k} and the Grecians usually wore, as described by Homer;

which are supposed to be double the weight of the helmet, reckoned at fifteen pounds, so that these must weigh thirty pounds of avoirdupois weight:

and a target of brass between his shoulders; the Targum is,

"a spear or shield of brass, which came out of the helmet, and a weight of brass upon his shoulders."

Jarchi says the same, and that it was in the form of a spear to defend the neck from the sword; it seems to be a corslet of brass, worn between the helmet and the coat of mail for the defence of the neck, supposed to weigh thirty pounds {l}

{k} Hesiod. Scutum Herc. ver. 122. {l} Vid. Hostii Monomach. David & Goliath, c. 5.

1 Samuel 17:7

Ver. 7. And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam,.... The wooden part of it, held in the hand; this for thickness was like the beam in the weaver's loom, about which the warp, or else the web, is rolled; and it is conjectured that, in proportion to the stature of Goliath, his spear must be twenty six feet long, since Hector's in Homer {m} was eleven cubits, or sixteen feet and a half:

and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; the iron part of the spear, the point of it, which has its name in Hebrew from a flame of fire, because when brandished it looks shining and flaming; and being the weight of six hundred shekels, amounted to eighteen pounds and three quarters of avoirdupois weight, and the whole spear is supposed to weigh thirty seven pounds and a half; and the whole of this man's armour is thought to weigh two hundred and seventy two pounds, thirteen ounces {n}; which was a prodigious weight for a man to carry, and go into battle with; and one may well wonder how he could be able with such a weight about him to move and lay about in an engagement; though this is nothing in comparison of the weight some men have carried. Pliny {o} tells us that he saw one Athanatus come into the theatre clothed with a leaden breastplate of five hundred pounds weight, and shod with buskins of the same weight:

and one bearing a shield went before him; which when engaged in battle he held in his own hand, and his sword in the other; the former was reckoned at thirty pounds, and the latter at four pounds, one ounce; though one would think he had no occasion for a shield, being so well covered with armour all over; so that the carrying of it before him might be only a matter of form and state. His spear is the only piece of armour that was of iron, all the rest were of brass; and Hesiod {p}, writing of the brazen age, says, their arms and their houses were all of brass, for then there was no iron; and so Lucretius {q} affirms that the use of brass was before iron; but both are mentioned together, See Gill on "Ge 4:22", hence Mars is called calceov arhv {r}.

{m} Iliad. 18. {n} Hostius, ut supra. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 20. {p} Opera & Dies, l. 1. ver. 147, 148. {q} "De rerum natura". l. 5. & "prior aeris erat", &c. {r} Homer. Iliad. 5. ver. 704, 859, 864. Pindar. Olymp. Ode 10.

1 Samuel 17:8

Ver. 8. And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel,.... He stood in the valley between the two armies, and cried with a loud voice that he might be heard; and as he was of such a monstrous stature, no doubt his voice was very strong and sonorous; and as the battalions of Israel designed by armies were posted on the mountain or hill, his voice would ascend, and be the more easily heard:

and said unto them, why are ye come out to set your battle in array? either as wondering at their boldness, to set themselves in battle array against the Philistines; or rather suggesting that it was needless, since the dispute between them might be issued by a single combat:

am not I a Philistine, and you servants to Saul? a common Philistine, according to Jarchi; not a captain of a hundred, or of a thousand; and yet would fight anyone of them, their general officers, or be they who they would; or rather, as Abarbinel, he was a prince among the Philistines, and king of Gath; and though he was, and it was usual with great persons to engage with their equals, yet he did not insist on that; but would engage with any man, though of an inferior rank, even with any of Saul's servants; and by calling the Israelites the servants of Saul, he might have some respect to Saul's arbitrary government over them; and since they must be servants and slaves, it was as well to be servants to the Philistines as to him:

choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me; according to Jarchi and the Targumist, the challenge first respects Saul their king; that if he was a man of fortitude and courage, let him come and engage with him; if not, choose another, and send him down into the valley to fight with him. These same writers represent him as blustering and bragging that he killed the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, took the ark captive, and carried it into the temple of Dagon; that he had been used to go out with the armies of the Philistines, and had obtained victories, and slain many, and yet had never been made captain of a thousand among them; all which is improbable, and some of it notoriously false; for in every battle after the taking of the ark the Philistines had been beaten.

1 Samuel 17:9

Ver. 9. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants,.... For which it does not appear he had any commission or authority to say; nor did the Philistines think themselves obliged to abide by what he said, since, when he was slain, they did not yield themselves servants to the Israelites:

but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us; to which terms also the Israelites did not consent; nor did David, who engaged with him, enter the fray on such conditions.

1 Samuel 17:10

Ver. 10. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day,.... Or "reproach" {s} them; that is, should they not accept his challenge, and send down a man to fight with them, he should then upbraid them with cowardice; and now he disdained them, as if there was not a man among them that dared to encounter with him:

give me a man that we may fight together; and so decide the controversy between us; such as were those duels fought between Paris and Menelaus in the Trojan war, and between the Lacedemonians and the Argives in the times of Orthryades, and between the Athenians and Romans by the Horatii and Curiatii, as Grotius observes.

{s} ytprx "exprobravo". V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "probro affeci", Tigurine version; "probro affecero", Junius & Tremellius.

1 Samuel 17:11

Ver. 11. When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine,.... For they were delivered with such a tone and strength of voice, as to be heard very generally, at least by many, and which soon was reported through the whole army:

they were dismayed, and greatly afraid; which may seem strange, when there were so many valiant men among them, as Saul himself, who had behaved with so much courage against the Ammonites, Philistines, and Amalekites; but now the Spirit of God was departed from him, and he was become timorous and fearful; and though he was much better than he had been, yet still he was not the man of spirit and resolution as before: there was also Abner, the general of his army, a very valiant man, a great man in Israel, and yet appears not on this occasion; and, what is more wonderful, Jonathan the son of Saul was present, as appears from
1Sa 18:1 who had not only smitten a garrison of the Philistines, but with one man more only had attacked another garrison, and routed the whole army of the Philistines, and yet now shows not his head against a single man: so it is when God cuts off the spirits of princes, or takes away their courage; victory over this man, and the glory of it, were reserved for David; and all this fear and dread throughout the armies of Israel were suffered, that he might appear the more glorious.

1 Samuel 17:12

Ver. 12. Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehemjudah, whose name was Jesse,.... Before made mention of, 1Ch 16:1

and he had eight sons; seven only are mentioned, **1Ch 2:13** one of them being, as is thought by some, a grandson, perhaps Jonadab the son of Shammah; or was a son by another woman, or died without children, as Jarchi, and therefore not mentioned:

and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul; the phrase, "among men", either signifies that he was ranked among old men, infirm and unfit for war, and so excused, and his sons went in his room, so Kimchi; or he was reckoned among men of the first rank, men of esteem, credit, and reputation, so Jarchi and R. Isaiah, with which agrees the Targum; or whenever he went abroad, he was attended by many men, had a large retinue, which sense Abarbinel mentions, and is that of Ben Gersom, and agrees with the Talmud {t}; but the Syriac and Arabic versions read "stricken in years", which seems most agreeable.

{t} T. Bab. Beracot: fol. 58. 1.

1 Samuel 17:13

Ver. 13. And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle,.... Either of their own accord, or rather at their father's motion, or however with his knowledge and consent, who because he could not go himself, willed them to go; and these were forward, and some of the foremost that followed Saul to the battle, being zealous and well disposed to defend their king and country:

and the names of the three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah; who are the three mentioned by name that passed before Samuel, when he came to anoint one of Jesse's sons to be king, 1Sa 16:6.

1 Samuel 17:14

Ver. 14. And David was the youngest,.... For the sake of whom this account is given of Jesse and his family, and who after this makes a considerable figure in the camp and court of Saul:

and the three eldest followed Saul; as before related, and which is repeated, that it might be observed that they only of Jesse's sons followed Saul; not David particularly, but who was providentially sent to the army at the time the Philistine was defying it.

1 Samuel 17:15

Ver. 15. But David went, and returned from Saul,.... Or "from above Saul"; Josephus {u} says, the physicians of Saul advised to get a man to stand uper kefalnv, "over his head", and sing psalms and hymns to him; and Saul being recovered from his frenzy and melancholy, by means of David's music, he was dismissed from him, or had leave to go home, or he returned upon Saul's taking the field; though one would think, if he was now his armourbearer, he would have gone with him, see 1Sa 16:21. It seems that when he was called to the court of Saul, that he did not continue there, but was going and coming, was there at certain times when Saul wanted him; and so when in the camp he might go and return as there was occasion for it:

to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem; for though he was anointed king, and was called to court, yet such was his humility, that he condescended to attend this employment of keeping sheep; and though Jesse knew all this, yet he kept him at home to this business, when it might be more reasonably thought he would have lain in the way of preferment, had he followed Saul to the camp, and appeared in the army; but he chose to leave things to the providence of God to work the way for him, and by which he was directed to take the following step, though perhaps without any design to his son's future promotion.

{u} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 8. sect. 2.

1 Samuel 17:16

Ver. 16. And the Philistine drew near morning and evening,.... Twice a day he came near the camp, within the hearing of it. The Jews {w} say, he took those seasons on purpose to disturb them in reading their "Shema", or "hear, O Israel", &c. and saying their prayers morning and evening:

and presented himself forty days; Successively, before the armies of Israel, daring them to send down a man to fight with him, and reproaching them for their cowardice in not doing it.

{w} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 42. 2.

1 Samuel 17:17

Ver. 17. And Jesse said unto David his son,.... His youngest son, that was at home with him keeping sheep; he had three more at home, and who were elder than David, and yet he is directed by the providence of God to pick and send him on the following errand, there being work for him to do Jesse knew nothing of:

take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched [corn]; pointing to a quantity of it in a certain place; this was wheat or barley dried in a furnace or oven, and ground into meal, and being mixed with water, or milk, or butter, or honey, or oil, was eaten, and reckoned very delicious; and besides this, there was another sort of "kali", the word here used, which was parched pulse, as beans, peas, &c. parched, and which to this day is by the Arabs called by this name {x}; of both which mention is made, 2Sa 17:28. Now an "ephah" was as much as ten men could eat in a day, it consisted of ten omers, Ex 16:16, and the number ten is after used of loaves and cheese:

and these ten loaves of bread; or cakes of bread, as Kimchi interprets it; pieces or morsels of bread, as the Targum; which seems not so agreeable as loaves or cakes, which are not in the text, but to be supplied:

and run to the camp to thy brethren; which, according to Bunting {y}, was four miles from Bethlehem; and whither it seems he went on foot, and is bid to make haste, and even to run, as his brethren might be in want of provision; and Jesse was very desirous of relieving them, and hearing from them as soon as possible; it is very likely he had a servant or servants to attend him, and assist in carrying this load of provision, which, with what follows, was too much for one man to run with.

{x} Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 7. col. 47. {y} Travels, &c. p. 135.

1 Samuel 17:18

Ver. 18. And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand,.... Their chiliarch or colonel, who had the command of 1000 men, and under whom Jesse's sons fought; Jarchi thinks this was Jonathan, who had 1000 men with him at Gibeah, and so now, 1Sa 13:2, these cheeses were sent by Jesse to the captain, to be distributed among his men, or a present to himself, that he might use his sons well who were under his command:

and look how thy brethren fare; whether in good health, in good spirits, and in safety:

and take their pledge; that is, if they had been obliged for want of money to pawn any of their clothes, or what they had with them to buy food with, that he would redeem and take up the pledge, by paying the money for which they were pawned; for it is thought that soldiers at this time were not maintained at the expense of the king and government, but at their own, and the families to which they belonged: though some are of opinion that this was some token which they had sent by a messenger to their father, by which he might know he came from them, so Ben Gersom; and which David was now to take with him, and return it; or a token that he was to bring from them, whereby he might be assured of their welfare; and so the Targum, "and bring their goodness", a token of their being in good health. The Jews {z} understand it of bills of divorce to be given to their wives, that if they should die in battle, or be taken captive, that their wives might marry after three years.

{z} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. D.

1 Samuel 17:19

Ver. 19. Now Saul, and they,.... That is, the sons of Jesse, and brethren of David:

and all the men of Israel; the soldiers in the army:

were in the valley Elah; or "by" it, near unto it; for they were set in array on the mountain on the side of it:

fighting with the Philistines; not actually engaged in battle, but drawn up for it; prepared and in readiness to engage whenever it was necessary, or they were obliged to it; and perhaps there might be now and then some skirmishes in the outer parts of the camp.

1 Samuel 17:20

Ver. 20. And David rose up early in the morning,.... Being very ready and eager to obey his father's orders, and visit his brethren:

and left the sheep with a keeper; which showed his care and faithfulness in the discharge of his office; he was not unmindful of his father's sheep, any more than of his commands:

and took; the ephah of parched corn, the ten loaves, and the ten cheeses:

and went, as Jesse had commanded him; went and carried them to the camp, according to his orders:

and he came to the trench; foss or ditch, which was cast up all around the army, partly to prevent the enemy falling on them before, and partly to prevent deserters from them behind; or the word signifying a wagon or carriage, which is here used, this might be a fence around the camp made of wagons fastened to each other; though it may only signify, the camp itself, which lay in a circular form, with proper guards about it to watch the enemy. Now David came up to it just

as the host was going forth to the fight; preparing and getting every thing ready to the battle, and in motion, and upon the march to meet the enemy:

and shouted for the battle; which was usually done when about to make the onset, to animate the soldiers, and strike the greater terror into the enemy; and this noise was sometimes made with the voice in a hideous and howling way, and was called "barritus" {a} by the Romans; with the Trojans it was like the noise of cranes in the air {b}; it was also attended with the clashing of shields and spears {c}; with the Persians, it was a rough, boisterous, and confused noise {d}.

{a} Vid. Valtrimum de re militar. Roman. l. 5. c. 3. p. 314, 315. & A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 1. c. 11. {b} Homer. Iliad. 3. ver. 1, 2, 3. {c} Vid. Lydium de re militari, l. 4. c. 3. p. 158, 159. {d} Curt. Hist. l. 3. c. 10. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 7.

1 Samuel 17:21

Ver. 21. For Israel and all the Philistines had put the battle in array,.... Both sides prepared for it, and drew up in line of battle:

army against army; rank against rank, battalion against battalion, the right wing of the one against the left of the other, &c.

1 Samuel 17:22

Ver. 22. And David left his carriage in the hand the keeper of the carriage,....

That is, he left load of provisions he brought with him in the hand of the keeper of the bag and baggage of the army, their clothes, and such like things; not having an opportunity to deliver them to his brethren, who were just going to engage in battle:

and ran into the army; which showed the valour and courage of David, who chose rather to expose himself in battle, than to abide with the keeper of the carriages:

and came and saluted his brethren; asked them of their welfare, in his father's name and his own.

1 Samuel 17:23

Ver. 23. And as he talked with them,.... About their health, and the errand he came upon, and the message of his father to them, and how it was with him, who sent them his best wishes:

behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name: of whom see 1Sa 17:4; he came out of the valley, and drew near to the mountain the Israelites were descending:

out of the armies of the Philistines: from the plains where they were encamped, as Kimchi, though they seem to have been encamped on a mountain as the Israelites were; or from the ranks of the Philistines; according to the marginal reading, he came out of one of the battalions that were set in array:

and spake according to the same words; which he had spoken time after time forty days successively, namely, what is expressed 1Sa 17:8;

and David heard [them]; and observed them.

1 Samuel 17:24

Ver. 24. And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man,.... Even as it should seem before they heard him; knowing who he was, and what he was about to say, having seen and heard him forty days running:

fled from him, and were sore afraid; it is pretty much a whole army should be afraid of one man, and flee from him; they must be greatly forsaken of God, and given up by him, see De 32:30; but perhaps they were not so much afraid of personal danger from him, as that they could not bear to hear his blasphemy.

1 Samuel 17:25

Ver. 25. And the men of Israel said,.... To one another:

have ye seen this man that is come up? taken notice of him, and observed him?

surely to defy Israel is he come up; to challenge them to fight with him, and upbraid them with cowardice that they did not:

and it shall be [that] the man who killeth him; this, and what follows, they said to encourage any person to engage with him, though none of them cared to encounter him themselves:

the king will enrich him with great riches; give him a large gratuity, make a present of a great sum of money to him:

and will give him his daughter to be his wife, in like manner as Caleb promised to give his daughter in marriage to the person that should take Kirjathsepher, **Jud 1:12**;

and make his father's house free in Israel; from all tributes, taxes, levies, impositions, king's service, and duty; or, as the Targum,

"make his father's house freemen, nobles;"

raise it to the rank of nobility.

1 Samuel 17:26

Ver. 26. And David spake to the men that stood by him,.... Who were next to him, looking upon the Philistine, and hearing what he said,

saying, what shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine,
and taketh away the reproach from Israel? which he asked not for the sake of the reward, but to observe the necessity there was of some man's engaging

with him, and killing him, or otherwise it would be a reproach to Israel, and to signify that he had an inclination to attempt it:

for who [is] this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? there were two things which provoked David, and raised indignation in him against this man; the one was, the character of the person that reproached, a Philistine, an uncircumcised person, a profane man, that had no true religion in him, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenants of promise; and the other was the persons whom he reproached, the armies of the living God, of the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and which in effect was reproaching the Lord himself, and which David, filled with zeal for God, and for his people, could not bear; and the consideration of these things animated him to engage with him, not doubting of success.

1 Samuel 17:27

Ver. 27. And the people answered him after this manner,.... Told him what was proposed to be done in honour to the man that should attempt to kill him, and succeed:

saying, so shall it be done to the man that killeth him; as before related, that he should be enriched, marry the king's daughter, and his family be ennobled, 1Sa 17:25.

1 Samuel 17:28

Ver. 28. And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men,.... Heard the questions he put to them, by which he perceived his inclination:

and Eliab's anger was kindled against David; because what he had said carried in it a tacit reproach of him, and others, that they had not the courage, and did not attempt to encounter with the Philistine; or the displeasure he expressed was either out of affection to him, fearing, or being assured almost he would perish in the enterprise; or rather out of envy to him, lest succeeding in so bold an action, he should gain superior glory to him, and the rest of his brethren, who yet was the youngest of them:

and he said, why comest thou down hither? for though David had talked with his brethren, or had begun to talk with them, yet he had not sufficiently explained the reasons of his coming:

and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? the wilderness of Judea, or some wilderness near Bethlehem; by this he would not only insinuate a charge of unfaithfulness, in not taking care of his father's flock committed to him; but his view was to make him look little and mean in the eyes of the people, that in the family he belonged to he was thought to be fit for nothing but to keep sheep, and those but a small flock, and in doing this was negligent and careless:

I know thy pride, and the haughtiness of thine heart; that he was too proud to keep sheep, and wanted to advance himself in the army, and make a figure there, and thereby gratify his vanity and ambition, which was the reverse of David's character; for, such was his humility, that, though he was anointed king, and had been preferred in Saul's court, yet condescended with all readiness to keep his father's sheep; and what he now proposed was not from any bad principle in his heart, but purely for the glory of God, and the honour of the people of Israel, who were both reproached:

for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle: out of curiosity, and to take every advantage and opportunity of signalizing and making himself famous.

1 Samuel 17:29

Ver. 29. And David said, what have I now done?.... That is criminal and blameworthy; as if he should say, I have only expressed an indignation against this uncircumcised Philistine, and a concern for the glory of God, and the honour of the people of Israel:

[is there] not a cause? either for his coming to the camp, being sent by his father; or of his expressing himself with indignation at the Philistine's defiance of the armies of Israel. Some take the sense to be, that he had done nothing, he had not committed any fact; it was mere words what he had said, he had attempted nothing, and therefore there was no reason to bear so hard upon him; to this purpose is the Targum,

"what have I done as yet? is it not a word "only" which I have spoken?"

but the former sense seems best.

1 Samuel 17:30

Ver. 30. And he turned from him towards another,.... From his brother Eliab, to another person right against him, and directed his discourse to him:

and spake after the same manner: as in 1Sa 17:26; inquiring what encouragement would he given to a man that should attempt to kill the Philistine, and expressing his concern to hear the armies of the living God defied by such a wretch:

and the people answered him again after the former manner; telling him what gratuities and honours would be conferred on such a person, as in 1Sa 17:25; and the design of his talking to one, and to another, was, that what he had said might spread and reach to the ears of Saul, to whom in modesty he did not choose to apply himself.

1 Samuel 17:31

Ver. 31. And when the words were heard which David spake,.... To one, and to another, and these reported to other persons, and so they went from one to another through many hands:

they rehearsed [them] before Saul; coming to the ears of some of his courtiers and counsellors, or officers about him, they told him what such an one had said:

and he sent for him; to his tent or pavilion where he was, to talk with him on this subject. The whole of 1Sa 17:11 is wanting in the Septuagint version, according to the Vatican exemplar; and these "twenty" verses are thought, by some {e}, to be an interpolation; and it must be owned there are difficulties in them, and that the connection of 1Sa 17:11 with the following is very clear and consistent, as also is 1Sa 17:50 left out in the same version; and likewise the last four of the chapter, 1Sa 17:55, and five with which the next begins, 1Sa 18:1.

{e} See Dr. Kennicott's Dissert. 2. p. 418, &c.

1 Samuel 17:32

Ver. 32. And David said to Saul, let no man's heart fail because of him,.... The Philistine, though so gigantic, mighty, and blustering: this he said within himself, so Kimchi; as David perceived the hearts of most, if not all, did, since none dared to go out and fight him, but on the contrary fled from him:

thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine; and therefore there need be no thought, care, or concern to look out for another man.

1 Samuel 17:33

Ver. 33. And Saul said to David, thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him,.... Had neither strength of body, nor skill in military affairs, to encounter with a man of his stature, and warlike genius and practice:

for thou [art but] a youth; some say about fourteen or sixteen years of age, but very probably about twenty, and not more, and so not only weak, but inexpert in the art of fighting:

and he a man of war from his youth; a gigantic man, trained up in, inured to, and expert in the affairs of war; so that David could not, on any account, be a competitor with him, and a match for him.

1 Samuel 17:34

Ver. 34. And David said unto Saul,.... In answer to his objection of inability to encounter with one so superior to him; and this answer is founded on experience and facts, and shows that he was not so weak and inexpert as Saul took him to be:

thy servant kept his father's sheep; which he was not ashamed to own, and especially as it furnished him with an stance of his courage, bravery, and success, and which would be convincing to Saul:

and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; not that they came together; though Kimchi so interprets it, "a lion with a bear"; but these are creatures that do not use to go together; and besides, both could not be said with propriety to take one and the same lamb out of the flock: to which may be added, that David in 1Sa 17:35 speaks only of one, out of whose mouth he took the lamb; wherefore the words may be rendered, "a lion or a bear" {f}; and if the copulative "and" is retained, the meaning can only be, that at different times they would come and take a lamb, a lion at one time, and a bear at another.

{f} bwdh taw yrah "leo vel ursus", V. L. "leo aut ursus", Junius & Tremellius, Bochart. Noldius, p. 271.

1 Samuel 17:35

Ver. 35. And I went out after him,.... Whether a lion or a bear; but mention after being made of his beard, a lion rather is meant:

and smote him; with his fist, or rather with his shepherd's staff:

and delivered [it] out of his mouth; snatched it out from thence, or obliged him to drop it, by beating him:

and when he arose against me; after he had let go the lamb, threatening to tear him in pieces for attempting to disturb him in his prey, and take it away from him;

I caught [him] by his beard; such as lions have; hence a lion is often called in Homer {g} liv heugeneiov, the well-bearded lion. Kimchi thinks the beard with the nether jaw is meant, which David caught hold on:

and smote him, and slew him; tore him to pieces, as Samson did, Jud 14:5, or slew him with some weapon in his hand.

{g} Iliad. 17. ver. 109. & Iliad. 18. ver. 318.

1 Samuel 17:36

Ver. 36. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear,.... At different times, and several of them at one time or another; whenever any of them came into the flock, he used to lay hold on them and kill them, with all the ease imaginable. The Jews suppose this phrase denotes many of them {h}.

And this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them; as he was like them in nature, savage, cruel and unclean, so he would be in his end, killed as they; of this David was fully persuaded and assured in mind having an impulse from the Spirit of God, by which he was certified of it:

seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God; so that as he justly deserved to die, he made no doubt of it it would be his case.

{h} See Halicot Olam, p. 177.

1 Samuel 17:37

Ver. 37. And David said moreover,.... For the further confirmation of it, and as more strongly expressing his faith of it; not as owing to any natural strength or skill of his, but to the power of God, of whose assistance he made no question:

the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear; for to him he ascribes his deliverance from those savage creatures, and his victory over them, and on him he relied for help and salvation in the present case:

he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine; David did not go forth in his own name and strength, but in the name and strength of the Lord of hosts:

and Saul; seeing him so positive, and fully assured of victory:

said unto David, go, and the Lord be with thee; to help and assist him, to deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine, and give him victory over him; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord be for thy help."

1 Samuel 17:38

Ver. 38. And Saul armed David with his armour,.... Not with what he wore himself; for it cannot be thought he would strip himself of his armour in the field of battle, and when just going to it; and besides what suited the one would not be fit for the other, their bulk and stature being different i but this was some armour Saul had brought with him, besides what he himself wore, to furnish any with that might want it:

and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; such an one, though not so large as Goliath had, these being usually made of brass;
See Gill on "1Sa 17:5";

also he armed him with a coat of mail; which probably was of brass also, and like that of Goliath's too, only lesser, 1Sa 17:5.

1 Samuel 17:39

Ver. 39. And David girded his, sword upon his armour,.... Which Saul also perhaps furnished him with:

and he assayed to go; made an attempt, and had a mind to go thus accoutred; he at first showed an inclination to go in such an habit, but afterwards would not:

for he had not proved [it]; as warriors were wont to do; so Achilles did {i}; he never made trial of such armour before, he had not been used to it, and knew not how to behave in it, or walk with it on him; it was an encumbrance to him: Abarbinel renders it, "but he had not proved [it]"; he would have gone with it but for that reason; the Targum is,

"because there was no miracle in them;"

because if he had made use of this, there would have been no appearance of a miracle in getting the victory over the Philistine, as was by using only a sling and stones:

and David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these, for I have not proved [them]; he thought fit to acquaint Saul with it that he could not go thus accoutred, and his reason for it, lest he should be offended with him:

and David put them off him; took off the helmet from his head, ungirt the sword upon his armour, and stripped himself of his coat of mail, and went forth entirely unarmed.

{i} Homer. Iliad. 19. ver. 384, 385. so Theocrit. Idyll. 10. ver. 61.

1 Samuel 17:40

Ver. 40. And he took his staff in his hand,.... His shepherd's staff, which he used in keeping his father's sheep, and chose rather to appear in the habit of a shepherd than of a soldier:

and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook; which ran in the valley, which became smooth by lying in the water running over them; and which being smooth were fitter for his purpose, being the more easily cast out of the sling; though De Dieu is of opinion that these were parts or pieces of stones, cleft ones, which were rough and rugged, and which would more easily and firmly be fixed in the forehead of the Philistine:

and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; in which he had been wont to put things he needed for the good of the flock, and was such as travellers put their food in; and this might also be the use of it with shepherds; but, according to the Ethiopic interpreters {k}, it was that piece of the leather in the midst of the sling, in which the slingers used to put the stones, that they might stick the more firmly:

and his sling [was] in his hand; which he intended to use in slinging the stone or stones he had in his scrip; and which was an exercise he had been accustomed to in all likelihood, and for which the Benjaminites his neighbours, of the next tribe, were very famous:

and he drew near to the Philistine; marched towards him, thereby signifying that he accepted his challenge, and would enter the list with him.

{k} Apud Ludolf. Lexic. Ethiop. p. 84.

1 Samuel 17:41

Ver. 41. And the Philistine came on, and drew near unto David,.... By slow paces, because of the weight of his armour, and bulk of his body, yet with a haughty air, and a proud gait:

and the man that bare the shield [went] before him;
See Gill on "1Sa 17:7".

1 Samuel 17:42

Ver. 42. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him,.... He looked about for his antagonist, to take a view of him, what sort of a man he was, expecting to see one much like himself; but observing a puny young man, he despised him in his heart, and perhaps looked upon it as an affront to him to send such a man to fight with him:

for he was [but] a youth; his age was one reason why he despised him, being, as before observed, about twenty years of age, and not come to his full strength, a stripling, as he is called, 1Sa 17:56, another reason follows,

and ruddy, and of a fair countenance; looked effeminate, had not the appearance of a soldier, of a weather beaten veteran, exposed to heat and cold, and inured to hardships.

1 Samuel 17:43

Ver. 43. And the Philistine said unto David, [am] I a dog?.... Truly David did not think him much better, because of his impudence, impurity, and barking blasphemy against God, and the armies of Israel; the Targum is,

"am I a despised dog?"

verily he was by David:

that thou comest to me with staves? or with a staff, the plural for the singular, to beat him with it as a dog is beaten, and as David used to beat his dog with, while keeping his father's sheep, when the dog he had with him did not do his business as he should; he says nothing of his sling and stones, they being out of sight:

and the Philistine cursed David by his gods: by Dagon and others; he made an imprecation by them, and wished the greatest evils might befall him from them; he devoted him to them, and doubted not to make a sacrifice of him.

1 Samuel 17:44

Ver. 44. And the Philistine said to David, come to me,.... He seems to have stood still, disdaining: to take another step towards such a pitiful combatant, and therefore bids him come up to him, and he would soon dispatch him; unless he said this, because David was light and nimble, and he heavy and unwieldy because of his bigness, and the burden of armour on him, and therefore could not make such haste as he wished to destroy his adversary, of which he made no doubt:

and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field; the wild beasts he means; though Jarchi thinks he spoke improperly, since it is not the way of the beasts of the field, as sheep, oxen, &c. to devour a man, or even to eat any flesh; and therefore he observes, when David comes, he uses another word, which signifies the wild beasts of the earth, and so we render it, 1Sa 17:46; but Kimchi shows that even these are comprehended in the word here used, see Isa 18:6.

1 Samuel 17:45

Ver. 45. Then said David to the Philistine,.... In answer to the contempt he held him in, and to the threatening words he gave him:

thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; the word for "shield" is not the same with that so rendered, 1Sa 17:41; which his armourbearer carried before him, but with that translated a "target", which was between his shoulders, 1Sa 17:6; however, they were all weapons of war, either defensive or offensive:

but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied; the Lord of all hosts, in heaven and in earth in general, and in particular the God of the armies of Israel; which he was at the head of, led on, protected and defended, having a kind and merciful regard unto them, and which this Philistine had defied, reproached, and blasphemed; and now David was come, by a commission from this great Jehovah, to vindicate his honour, and to avenge his people on him: he had asked for a man, and now the Lord of hosts, as the Jews {l} observe, comes forth as a man of war, for the battle was his, as in 1Sa 17:47; and David was his messenger, and came in his name, and was the man into whose hands he should be given.

{l} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 42. 2.

1 Samuel 17:46

Ver. 46. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hands,.... Of which he was assured by divine inspiration, by the impulse of the Spirit of God upon him; or otherwise he could not have expressed himself with such certainty, and have given the particulars of what he should do, as in the following clauses:

and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and yet he had no weapon in his hand to do it with, 1Sa 17:50, but it was revealed to him that he should do it, and he believed it; though the Philistine no doubt looked upon all this as romantic:

and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; not only this man's carcass, which should fall and become a prey to fowls and wild beasts, but the carcasses of the Philistine army, which fleeing upon the fall of their champion, and pursued by the Israelites as they were, would be cut off, and become the food of wild creatures, see 1Sa 17:52; though some think the plural is put for the singular, and that it only means his carcass, who was a Philistine; but the host of the Philistines, carries it to the other sense: and this would be done,

that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel; not only the land of Canaan or Palestine, but the whole earth, and all the inhabitants of it, who should hear of the fall of this giant by such means, and of the rout of the Philistine army upon it; the report of which no doubt was spread far, and near.

1 Samuel 17:47

Ver. 47. And all this assembly shall know,.... The congregation of Israel, and church of the living God, great part of which were now gathered together, and were spectators of this wonderful event:

that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; that is, by outward means and instruments, by arms and armed men; he does not save by them only, or by them always; he can save as well without them as with them:

for the battle [is] the Lord's; it is under his direction; the issue and event of it depend on his will, and are owing to him; or, as the Targum, "from the Lord is the victory of wars,"

it is he that gives it to whom he pleases:

and he will give you into our hands; not only this Philistine into the hands of David, but the army of them into the hands of the Israelites; David knew, and was assured of this by the Lord, and it was on this he relied, and was what animated him to engage with this champion in the manner he did.

1 Samuel 17:48

Ver. 48. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose,.... Or prepared for the encounter, and was in all probability in great wrath and fury at hearing what David said, and which hastened him to it:

and came and drew nigh to meet David; as fast as his unwieldy body, and heavy load of armour on him, would admit of:

that David hasted and ran toward the army; the army of the Philistines, from whence this champion came:

to meet the Philistine; to get up to him before he could draw his sword, or put himself in a posture to make use of any weapon to strike at David with.

1 Samuel 17:49

Ver. 49. And David put his hand in his bag,.... The shepherd's scrip, in which he had put the five stones he took out of the brook:

and took thence a stone; and put it into his sling he had in his hand:

and slang [it], and smote the Philistine in his forehead; it is made a difficulty of how he should smite him on his forehead, when he had a helmet of brass upon his head, 1Sa 17:5; in answer to this Kimchi observes, that some say, that when David said he would give his flesh to the fowls of the air, at the mention of that he looked upwards, and what was upon his forehead fell backwards, and then David slung and smote him; or he might put back his helmet to talk with David, and hear and be heard the better; and having nothing to fear from an unarmed man, might neglect to put it forward again; or there might be some open space left in the helmet for him to look through, in at which the stone might pass; so the Targum renders it, he smote him in the house of his eyes, so the stone passed through the eye hole into his brain: but after all, supposing his forehead ever so well covered, as the stone slung by David was under a divine direction, so as to hit a person in motion, it came with a divine power, which nothing could resist; and supposing this, of which there need no doubt, it could as easily pass through the helmet of brass, as pierce into his forehead and sink there; nor can this be thought the least incredible, if what Diodorus Siculus {m} relates of the Baleares be true, that they were so dexterous at slinging, that they not only would sling stones bigger than others could, and were so directed, that they seldom missed their mark, being inured to it from their youth, but would even in battle break in pieces shields, helmets, and all kinds of armour, with which bodies were covered:

that the stone sunk into his forehead; and so into his brain, as a stone is immersed and sinks in water, when thrown into it; with such force did it go, and with so much ease did it make its way, through the direction and power of God:

and he fell upon his face to the earth; Jarchi observes, that it was most natural for him to have fallen backwards, being struck upon his forehead; but so it was, that David might have no trouble to cut off his head, for by this means he fell nearer to him.

{m} Bibliothec. l. 5. p. 298.

1 Samuel 17:50

Ver. 50. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone,.... And with them only, without any other warlike weapon:

and smote the Philistine, and slew him; smote him with the stone, which brought him to the ground, and then slew him with his own sword, as afterwards related:

but [there was] no sword in the hand of David; when he engaged with the Philistine, and smote him, for he had put off all his armour, 1Sa 17:39.

1 Samuel 17:51

Ver. 51. Therefore David ran and stood upon the Philistine,.... Upon his carcass, as it lay prostrate on the ground, and trampled on him, in just contempt of him who had defied, reproached, and despised the armies of Israel:

and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof; which no doubt was a very large one, and required a good deal of strength to unsheathe it, and use it; and therefore either David, though so very young, was naturally very strong, or he had at this time a more than ordinary measure of strength given him:

and slew him; for it seems that by the blow of the stone he was only stunned, and fell to the ground, but still had life in him, which David soon put an end to by his own sword:

and cut off his head therewith; by which it would appear to both armies looking on that his business was done, and he was thoroughly dispatched:

and when the Philistines saw their champion was dead; of which the cutting off his head was a demonstrative proof, and which they could discern at a distance:

they fled; being struck with a panic at this unexpected event, and no doubt by the Lord; for otherwise, had they given themselves the least time to reflect on their own numbers and strength, they had no just occasion to flee; their safety not depending on a single man, though ever so strong: upon this occasion David penned the ninth psalm; see **Ps 9:1**.

1 Samuel 17:52

Ver. 52. And the men of Israel and of Judah arose,.... From their encampment and entrenchment, or they prepared for a pursuit:

and shouted, and pursued the Philistines; shouted when they first set out, and continued shouting as they pursued, to animate their own troops, and terrify the enemy:

until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron; which was one of the five principalities of the Philistines; so that they pursued them to their own cities, and to the very gates of them:

and the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim; a city in the tribe of Judah, and seems to be the same with Sharaim,
See Gill on "Jos 15:36". Josephus says {n}, there were killed of the Philistines thirty thousand, and twice as many wounded:

even unto Gath, and unto Ekron; Josephus {o} has it, to the borders of Gath, and to the gates of Ashkelon, which were two other principalities of the Philistines; according to Bunting {p}, the whole chase was this, to the valley and river Sorek four miles; from thence to Ekron eight miles; to Ashkelon twenty miles, and to Gath twenty four miles; that is, from the place where Goliath was killed.

{n} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 5. {o} Ibid. {p} Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 128.

1 Samuel 17:53

Ver. 53. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines,.... The remainder that escaped having got into their fortified cities:

and they spoiled their tents; which they left in their camp, all their armour, goods, money, and provisions, they found there, they seized upon as their prey and booty; these they did not stay to meddle with as soon as the Philistines fled, but first pursued them, and slew as many of them as they could, and then returned to the spoil; which was wisely done.

1 Samuel 17:54

Ver. 54. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem,.... After he had been introduced with it to Saul, and when he had passed through various cities in Israel, carrying the head in triumph; where he was congratulated by the women, who came out singing and dancing, and speaking highly in his commendation and praise: why he carried it to Jerusalem is not easy to say, this not being a royal city, nor was it wholly in the hands of the Israelites; part of it indeed was in the possession of Judah and Benjamin, but the stronghold of Zion was possessed by the Jebusites; and it is generally thought that it was to the terror of them that the head of Goliath was carried there. R. Joseph Kimchi thinks, that Nob, where the tabernacle was at this time, was surnamed Jerusalem, but for what reason cannot be said:

but he put his armour in his tent; not where the army was encamped before the engagement; for David had not his tent there, and beside the camp broke up upon this victory obtained; but rather in his tent or apartment at Bethlehem, when he returned thither, and where he laid up the armour he took from Goliath; though Abarbinel thinks, and so other Jews {q}, that by his tent is meant the tabernacle of the Lord, called David's, because of his attachment to it; and certain it is that the sword of Goliath was either now, or at least hereafter, laid up there, see 1Sa 21:9; where all that went to sacrifice might see it, and call to mind this wonderful instance of the power and goodness of God, and praise him for it.

{q} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. E.

1 Samuel 17:55

Ver. 55. And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine,.... Set out to meet him, and engage with him, as he might from the side of the mountain, where he was encamped:

he said unto Abner, the captain of the host; his own cousin, whom he had raised to this high post in the army, 1Sa 14:50;

Abner, whose son [is] this youth? it is thought strange by many that Saul should not know who he was, when he had been often at his court, and served him as a musician, and had been very useful to him, and he loved him, and made him his armourbearer, and even had just now conversed with him about encountering with the Philistine, and had clothed him with his own armour: to get rid of the former part of the objection, some have supposed that this event happened before David was his musician and armourbearer, and is by anticipation spoken of in 1Sa 16:14, but that the connection with this and the following chapter will not admit of; and besides, before this event, David is said to return home from Saul, 1Sa 17:15; so that it is certain he had been at Saul's court, and in his presence before: but to remove this seeming difficulty it may be observed, that Saul, having laboured under a disorder of body and mind, might easily forget David, and his serving him in the above capacity; and to which the multiplicity of business, and of persons in a court, might greatly contribute; and what with the distance of time, and the different habits in which David appeared, sometimes as a musician, and sometimes as a shepherd, and at other times as a soldier, and always as a servant, it is no wonder the king should not know him again; though after all it is not about his person that he inquires, but whose son he was, what was his father's name, and from what family he sprung; for though Saul was made acquainted with this in the time of his disorder, and therefore sent to his father Jesse for him, and afterwards desired leave for his continuance; yet this might slip out of his memory in a course of time, he having had no personal knowledge of Jesse, nor any correspondence with him, but just at that time; and it behoved him to know the pedigree of David, since, if he was victorious, he was not only to be enriched by him, but to have his daughter for wife, and his family ennobled:

and Abner said, [as] thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell; he swore by the life of Saul, as Joseph by the life of Pharaoh, that he knew nothing of him; which need not at all seem strange, that a general of an army, always employed in military affairs, and often abroad, should know nothing of a domestic servant of Saul's, under the character of a musician, and not always at court either; and still less that he should be ignorant of his family, and know nothing of his father, who lived in obscurity in Bethlehem, and was an old man in those days.

1 Samuel 17:56

Ver. 56. And the king said, inquire thou whose son the stripling [is]. Still the question is the same, being very desirous of knowing of what family he was, for the reason before given, See Gill on "1Sa 17:55".

1 Samuel 17:57

Ver. 57. And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine,.... Carrying his head in triumph, and no doubt accompanied with the acclamations of the people:

Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand; to give an answer to the king's question concerning him, who could best do it himself; and that Saul might have the opportunity of rewarding him, according to his merit, for so great a piece of service he had done for Israel, of which the head in his hand was a sufficient proof.

1 Samuel 17:58

Ver. 58. And Saul said unto him, whose son [art] thou, [thou] young man?.... Still the question was such as did not necessarily imply ignorance of his person, but of his family:

and David answered, I [am] the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite; which doubtless refreshed the memory of Saul, and he quickly called to mind who he was. This interview was very probably at Gibeah of Saul, which was the place of his birth and residence, 1Sa 10:26, and where he kept his court, and to which he returned after the above victory was obtained.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 18

This chapter gives an account of the respect shown to David by Saul and Jonathan, by the servants of Saul, and all the people, and of what was said in his praise in the songs of the women, 1Sa 18:1; which latter gave Saul a great offence, and upon which he envied him, and eyed him, and indeed sought his life, and removed him from him; and yet still he continued the darling of the people, behaving wisely among them, which greatly embarrassed Saul, that be knew not what to do, 1Sa 18:8; he proposed his eldest daughter to him in marriage, which he had a claim to by killing the Philistine, and then he cheated him by giving her to another, 1Sa 18:17; and then he offered his youngest daughter to him, on condition that he would bring him an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, execution of which he thought his life would be exposed to danger, which yet he performed, 1Sa 18:20; and having the affection of his wife, and the good esteem of the servants of Saul, Saul was more afraid of him, and became his enemy, 1Sa 18:28.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul,.... In answer to his questions about his descent and family, and doubtless more things were talked of than are recorded:

that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David: he won his heart, made a conquest of his affections, these went out towards him, and cleaved unto him; such were the comeliness of his person, his graceful mien and deportment, his freedom and fluency of expression, his courage and undauntedness, joined with prudence, modesty, and integrity, that they strongly attached him to him:

and Jonathan loved him as his own soul; not only according to the excellency of David's soul, and the greatness of it, as that deserved respect and love, as Abarbinel suggests, but he loved him as he loved himself. There was a similarity in their persons, in their age, in the dispositions of their minds, in their wisdom, courage, modesty, faithfulness, and openness of soul, that attracted them to each other, that they became as another self; as one soul, as Aristotle speaks {r} of true friends: instances of very cordial friendship are given by Plutarch {s}, as in Theseus and Pirithous, Achilles and Patroclus, Orestes and Pylades, Pythias and Damon, Epaminondas and Pelopidas; but none equal to this.

{r} Ethic. l. 9. c. 4, 9. So Porphyr. de Vita Pythagor. {s} Apud Patrick in loc.

1 Samuel 18:2

Ver. 2. And Saul took him that day,.... Not only into his favour, and into his service, but into his court; even on that very day he slew the Philistine, or however as soon as it could be done:

and would let him go no more home to his father's house; as he used to do before; when he only served as a musician to him, then he was only at court when Saul was in a melancholy disposition, and wanted him, and so was going and returning, and in the intervals kept his father's sheep, 1Sa 17:15; but now he would not suffer him to attend such business any longer, since he was not only to become a courtier, and be made a prince or noble, but to marry his daughter, according to the declaration he had made, with respect to any man that should kill Goliath.

1 Samuel 18:3

Ver. 3. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant,.... A covenant of friendship; entered into a solemn agreement to keep up and maintain a cordial respect to each other, and to support each other's interest both in life and after death, whoever was the survivor; and in consequence of this David had a friend at court, when Saul fell out with him, and who pleaded his cause, and discovered his father's plots, and was the means of preserving David's life:

because he loved him as his own soul; so that this covenant was not founded in mere words, but in sincere and cordial affection, and was lasting and inviolable.

1 Samuel 18:4

Ver. 4. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that [was] upon him,.... As a token of his hearty love and true friendship, and that David might appear at court not in the habit of a shepherd, but in that of a prince:

and gave it to David, and his garments; his other garments besides his robe, and so clothed him from tip to toe, and which fitted him; for as there was a similarity in their souls, and the disposition of them, so in the make and hulk of their bodies, and in the stature of them:

even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle; these he gave him to accoutre himself with, that he might appear as a soldier, as well as like a prince, and as another Jonathan, or rather the same; that they might seem as one, as alike in body, so in garb and habit.

1 Samuel 18:5

Ver. 5. And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him,.... About any business whatsoever, especially about martial affairs, for which he was abundantly qualified:

[and] behaved himself wisely; in the management of them, using great prudence and discretion, and so failed not of success, and of recommending himself; the Targum renders it "prospering"; he was prosperous and successful in whatsoever he engaged, for the Lord was with him, and blessed him:

and Saul set him over the men of war; that is, of some of them, gave him the command of a troop; for Abner was captain or general of the army, and continued so:

and he was accepted in the sight of all the people; of all the people in the land in general, of all that knew or heard of him; being looked upon as a wise, valiant, and successful commander, and which gained him the esteem and affection of the people:

and also in the sight of Saul's servants; which was very much, and a rare thing, for servants are too apt to envy such as are rising in their credit and reputation; though this must not be understood of all, without exception; but of the generality of them; nor is the word "all" used of them, as is of the people; for some of them took the part of Saul afterwards against David, and were secretly his enemies, see
1Sa 18:22.

1 Samuel 18:6

Ver. 6. And it came to pass, as they came,.... The armies of Israel, with their commanders at the head of them:

when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine; either from the slaughter of Goliath, with his head in his hand, going to Jerusalem, and Saul accompanying him; or rather from the slaughter of the Philistines at some other time, the singular being put for the plural; since, according to the order of the history, this seems to be done after David was brought to court, and had been made a captain, and had been sent out on military expeditions, and had been successful therein, and from one of which he now returned:

that the women came out of all the cities of Israel; through which they passed:

singing and dancing; as were usual after great victories obtained, and deliverances wrought, the female sex being generally greatly affected with such things; since when things go otherwise they suffer much, and their fears rise high in time of battle; and when victory goes on their side, it gives them great joy, and which they used to express in this way:

to meet King Saul; the commander-in-chief, with his other officers, and David among the rest:

with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music; with pipes or flutes, which they both blew with their mouths, and played on with their hands, and other musical instruments exciting joy; the last word is, by the Targum, rendered, "with cymbals;"

and so the Septuagint version; it signifies a musical instrument of three cords, according to Kimchi; and others, as Ben Gersom, understand it of principal songs, in which things wonderful, excellent, and honourable, were spoken of: see Ex 15:20. Such sort of women were among the Romans called Cymballatriae and Tympanistriae {t}, who shook the cymbals, and beat upon tabrets and drums at times of rejoicing.

{t} Vid. Pignorium de Servis, p. 166, 174.

1 Samuel 18:7

Ver. 7. And the women answered [one another] as they played,.... They sung vocally to their instruments, and that by turns, one rehearsing one line or verse in the song, and then the other another:

and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands; which, if to be referred to the battle in the preceding chapter, as it commonly is, must be understood thus, that though Saul, in pursuit of the Philistines, slew many thousands of them, and David but one, even Goliath; yet the slaying of him was the occasion of slaying ten thousands, and therefore it is ascribed to him: but it seems rather that in some after battles David had been more prosperous and victorious than Saul, and therefore superior commendations are given him by the author of the song the women sung; which, however just it might be to give them, was not wise, since it served to irritate their king, as follows.

1 Samuel 18:8

Ver. 8. And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him,.... Partly because they called him plain Saul, and not King Saul; did not give him his royal title, which might serve to strengthen his suspicion, after suggested; and chiefly because they attributed a greater number of slain to David than to him, as follows:

and he said, they have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they ascribed [but] thousands; and so had given more honour to an inferior officer than to the commander-in-chief, more to a subject than to a sovereign:

and [what can] he have more but the kingdom? there is nothing left out of their song, and nothing remains to be given him but that; some think that Saul knew, by the prudent behaviour of David, and the favour he was in with God and men, and by these commendations of the women, that the kingdom would be his; and that the words of Samuel were true, and would be confirmed, that the kingdom would be rent from him, and given to his neighbour better than he. This clause, with 1Sa 18:9, is left out of the Greek version, according to the Vatican copy.

1 Samuel 18:9

Ver. 9. And Saul eyed David from that day and forward. Instead of looking pleasantly, and with a smile, upon him, as a courtier and favourite, he was justly entitled to by his gallant behaviour, he looked at him with a sour, ill natured look; he looked at him with an evil, spiteful, malicious, and envious eye; or he diligently watched and observed all his motions and actions, whether they tended to disloyalty and treason, to dethrone him, and take the kingdom to himself, which he was suspicious of; he laid wait for him, as the Targum, and laid snares too, as the following history shows.

1 Samuel 18:10

Ver. 10. And it came to pass on the morrow,.... After the women had met him with their music and dancing, and when returned home:

that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul; thinking on the above things that had passed, he became melancholy:

and he prophesied in the midst of the house; either really, delivering out divine songs, as the prophets did; according to Abarbinel, he foretold that David would be king, and the kingdom would be taken from him, and given to him; or he feigned himself a prophet, mimicking their motions and gestures; or, as the Targum, acted like a mad man, or a fool, uttering foolish words, and using ridiculous gestures, which seems most agreeable to the evil spirit in him:

and David played with his hand as at other times; upon his harp, to remove the evil spirit, or melancholy disposition from Saul; for though he was now advanced at court, and an officer in the army, and high in the affections and applause of the people: yet he did not think it below him to act as a musician, to do service to his prince; of such an humble, kind, and ingenuous disposition was he:

and [there was] a javelin in Saul's hand; a kind of spear, or half pike, which he had taken into his hand on purpose to kill David while playing; for persons in such circumstances as his, as they are very mischievous, so very subtle at contriving.

1 Samuel 18:11

Ver. 11. And Saul cast the javelin,.... Out of his hand at David:

for he said; in his heart, determining in his mind:

I will smite David even to the wall [with it]; he determined to cast it with such force and violence, that it should pierce through David, and enter into the very wall, by the side of which David was:

and David avoided out of his presence twice; to escape the javelin cast at him; either he went out at the first time of its being thrown, and then came in again, when he threw it a second time at him, upon which he also withdrew; or this was one of the times, and the other some time after, of which see 1Sa 19:9. Abarbinel thinks, that David, while he was playing, his eyes were so fixed upon his own hands, that he was not aware of the javelin, and turned himself from Saul without intention both times, and so escaped without knowledge of it; such was the good providence of God towards him, and which, when Saul perceived, it wrought upon him, as follows.

1 Samuel 18:12

Ver. 12. And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him,.... Protecting and preserving him, prospering and succeeding him, giving him victory over his enemies, and favour among the people; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord was for his help."

Procopius Gazaeus interprets it of the Holy Ghost, whose grace was vouchsafed unto him: he might be afraid in his melancholy fits, that as he had attempted to take away the life of David, that David would contrive and seek an opportunity, and take away his life, and seize the kingdom which God had given him, and his being with him strengthened these fears:

and was departed from Saul; so that he was destitute of courage, and greatness of mind, and of wisdom and prudence, and became mean and abject, and exposed himself to the contempt of his subjects.

1 Samuel 18:13

Ver. 13. Therefore Saul removed him from him,.... From court, partly that he might be out of his sight, having such an hatred of his person that he could not bear to see him, and partly that he might be safer from any designs of his upon his life, which he might fear, because of his treatment of him:

and made him his captain over a thousand; not out of respect to him, and in honour of him, but partly to cover his malice, and please the people, and partly in hope that he might be slain by the enemy at the head of his troop:

and he went out and came in before the people; or at the head of them, as the Targum; he led them out to war, and returned with them in safety, with victory and in triumph, with great honour, and highly respected by them; quite contrary to the intention and hope of Saul.

1 Samuel 18:14

Ver. 14. And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways,.... Both in the court and in the camp, in whatsoever service he was employed; or "prospered" {u}, as the word also signifies; for, generally speaking, those that behave wisely succeed well; in this he was a type of Christ, Isa 52:13; the reason of it follows,

and the Lord [was] with him; from whom he had his wisdom and success; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord was for his help."

{u} lykvm "prospere admodum res gerebat", Vatablus; "secundabatur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so the Targum and Jarchi.

1 Samuel 18:15

Ver. 15. Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely,.... So that he could get no advantage against him, and he succeeded and was prosperous in all his enterprises, and was more and more in favour with the people:

he was afraid of him; lest the time was drawing near that the kingdom should be rent from him, and given to David.

1 Samuel 18:16

Ver. 16. And all Israel and Judah loved David,.... The verb is singular, and denotes that everyone of them loved him in all the tribes of Israel, as well as in Judah his own tribe; in such general esteem was he, and so much had he got the hearts and affections of the people:

because he went out and came in before them; the people, as in 1Sa 18:13; so the Septuagint version, in which, according to the Vatican copy, the verses 1Sa 18:17 are wanting.

1 Samuel 18:17

Ver. 17. And Saul said to David,.... Not in friendship and good will to him, but designing to lay a snare for him:

behold, my eldest daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife; most interpreters understand it, that he was obliged to this by promise, on account of David's slaying Goliath, 1Sa 17:25; but Abarbinel is of another mind, and he rightly observes, that the words referred to are not the words of Saul, but of the men of Israel, who might suppose what the king would do; or if they heard anything like it spoken by Saul, it was only in a hyperbolical way, signifying he did not care what he gave, and what he parted with, to the man that killed the Philistine, but was not strictly bound to this particular thereby; nor did David ever claim such promise, nor did Saul think himself bound to do it, but proposes it as an instance of his great kindness and favour, as he pretended, and therefore expected great returns for it, as follows:

only be thou valiant for me, and fight the Lord's battles: he knew he was a valiant man, and ready enough to fight; but he expected that in consideration of such a favour, and such high honour as this, that he would exert himself in an extraordinary manner, and engage in hazardous attempts, and show himself worthy to be the son of a king, in the defence of him and of his country, and for the glory of the God of Israel; all this he suggests, when his view was, that he should expose his life to such danger, that it might be hoped it would be taken away:

for Saul said; not openly and verbally, but in his heart; he thought within himself,

let not mine hand be upon him; he had attempted to lay hands on him, or to kill him with his own hands, but now he thought better, and consulted his credit among the people:

but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him; he hoped by these means that he would fall by their hands at the head of his troop, while he was displaying his valour, and hazarding his life for the good of his king and country; what Saul contrived proved his own case, he died in battle with the Philistines, 1Sa 31:4.

1 Samuel 18:18

Ver. 18. And David said unto Saul,.... Surprised at the offer Saul made him, yet not refusing it, but expressing himself with great modesty and humility:

who [am] I? as to his person, parentage, and employment, mean and despicable, at least in his own eyes, a type of the lowly Jesus, Mt 11:29;

and what [is] my life? keeping sheep, for from thence was he taken and advanced; though some think his meaning is, that to hazard his life, as Saul proposed, was not equivalent to such an honour he meant to confer upon him, and that he was ready to do it at all times:

[or] my father's family in Israel; though in an honourable tribe, and was an honourable family, yet it seems not to be very great, at least was not in David's esteem worthy of such high advancement, as that one of it should be so nearly related to the king; Ben Gersom thinks David has reference to the original of his family, Ruth the Moabitess:

that I should be son in law to the king? as he would be by marrying his daughter.

1 Samuel 18:19

Ver. 19. But it came to pass, at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David,.... Either when the giving of her to him was talked of, or when the time fixed for her marriage was come:

that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite to wife: Saul either having in reality never designed she should be given to David, only proposed it to please the people, or to affront David, and expose him to shame and confusion by the step he meant to take, or however he soon changed his mind; though Abarbinel's notion is, that the young lady had disposed of herself to this person without her father's knowledge, which seems not likely; the person she was given to was the son of Barzillai the Meholathite, 2Sa 21:8; and some have observed, as the curse of God on this match, that all her sons were delivered to the Gibeonites, and hanged up, as related in the same place; for though these sons are said to be brought up by Michal, they were bore by Merab to him.

1 Samuel 18:20

Ver. 20. And Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David,.... His youngest daughter fell in love with him, because of the comeliness of his person, his gallant behaviour, his wise conduct, and the general esteem and reputation he was had in, as may be supposed:

and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him; not that his daughter loved David, or that he should be his son-in-law, but that he should have an opportunity, as he hoped, of destroying David, which he had lost by giving his elder daughter to another; as also of retrieving his credit with the people, which was greatly sunk by using David in the manner he did, who had become the darling of the people.

1 Samuel 18:21

Ver. 21. And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him,....

The cause and occasion of his fall and ruin, by means of what he should propose to him as the condition of marriage; but instead of proving a snare to him, as he hoped, she was the means of his deliverance, when Saul sent messengers to slay him, 1Sa 19:11,

and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him; provoked by what he should put him upon doing to them. The scheme he had in his head after appears, and what he now said was not openly said before his servants and courtiers, whom he did not trust with his secrets, but this he said within himself, conceived and contrived it in his own mind:

wherefore Saul said to David; who was as yet at court, or whom he sent for on this occasion:

thou shalt this day be my son in law in [the one of] the twain; by marrying one of his two daughters; signifying, that he would not defer the marriage, or put it off to a longer time, as he had done before, but that he should be married immediately to one or other of his daughters; and seeing he could not have the eldest, she being disposed of, he should have the youngest, and so be equally his son-in-law. If we read the words without the supplement, "shalt be my son-in-law in the two", or in both, the sense is, that he should have them both; and so the Jews say {w}, that he married them both, first Merab, and after her death Michal; or that he should be his son-in-law on two accounts, one by betrothing Merab, though he was not married to her, and the other by being married to Michal, so that he would be doubly his son in law; but the sense, according to the supplement, is best.

{w} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 2.

1 Samuel 18:22

Ver. 22. And Saul commanded his servants, [saying], commune with David secretly,.... And persuade him to marry Michal, and assure him of Saul's real regard to him, and good intention towards him; for it seems that David being ill used in the affair of his eldest daughter, did not listen to the proposals of Saul as to the youngest, and therefore Saul took this method to bring him into them:

and say, behold, the king hath a delight in thee; bore a good will towards him, had an high opinion of him, and it would be a pleasure to him that he should he his son-in-law:

and all his servants love thee; which might be true in general, excepting some few; which was no small mortification to Saul, though he here pleads it, and puts his servants on making use of it to gain his present purpose:

now therefore be the king's son in law; accept of the proposal he has made, and marry his youngest daughter.

1 Samuel 18:23

Ver. 23. And Saul's servants spake these words in the ears of David,.... Those before related, which Saul commanded them to speak, which they delivered exactly according to their orders, with an audible voice, clearly, plainly, and distinctly, so that David might hear and understand them:

and David said, seemeth it to you [a] light [thing] to be a king's son in law; a small a trifling matter, an easy thing to come into, every thing requisite to it:

seeing that I [am] a poor man; and not able to give a dowry suitable to the daughter of a king; it being usual in those times for a man to give a dowry to, and not receive a portion with a wife; and which also was the custom of the Germans, as Tacitus {x} relates; and this was to be according to the rank and quality of the person married, and which in this case David was not equal to:

and lightly esteemed? not by the people of Israel and Judah, who loved him, as he was loved even by the servants of Saul, at least in profession; but by Saul himself, who had slighted him in giving his elder daughter to another man, when he had promised her to him, which was discouraging to David, and resented by him.

{x} De Moribus German. c. 18.

1 Samuel 18:24

Ver. 24. And the servants of Saul told him, saying, on this manner spake David. Such and such words were spoken by him, to this purpose; the sum and substance of them were expressive of his unworthiness to be a king's son-in-law, and of his inability to bring a dowry suitable to her quality.

1 Samuel 18:25

Ver. 25. And Saul said, thus shall ye say to David,.... In answer to his objections, and in order to remove them, and especially what concerned the dowry:

the king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies; that is, he required or desired no other dowry of David, but that he would slay an hundred Philistines, and bring their foreskins to him; by which he would be able to know that they were Philistines he slew, not Israelites who were circumcised; though it cannot well be thought that Saul should have any suspicion of that, or take such a method to prevent it; but as those were almost, if not altogether, the only uncircumcised persons that were their neighbours, since the Arabians, Edomites, Midianites, &c. received circumcision from their ancestors, it would be a clear case to him that these were the men he slew; and whom he the rather pitched upon, because they were his enemies, and the enemies of Israel, and abhorred of the Lord; which carried in it a show of zeal for the glory of God, and the good of his people, and because he hoped David would fall by them in the enterprise, or however render himself very odious to them, and they would bear him ill will, and seek his ruin. Strabo {y} reports of the people in Carmania, that no man among them marries a wife before he cuts off the head of an enemy, and brings it to the king; and the king lays up the skulls in a treasury, and he is the most famous that has the most heads brought unto him. Saul chose not heads, but foreskins, for the reasons before given:

but Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines; he hoped in the enterprise the Philistines would be too powerful for him, and kill him.

{y} Geograph. l. 15. p. 500. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. l. 1. c. 24.

1 Samuel 18:26

Ver. 26. And when his servants told David these words,.... That the king desired no other dowry than an hundred foreskins of the Philistines:

it pleased David well to be the king's son in law; on such conditions; partly because of the honour of it, and partly because of his love to Michal; and chiefly because it would give him an opportunity of destroying the enemies of God, and of his people, as well as such a match would lead the way, and be a step in Providence to ascend the throne designed for him in due time:

and the days were not expired; neither for the bringing in of the foreskins, nor for the consummation of the marriage.

1 Samuel 18:27

Ver. 27. Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men,.... This he did himself, for the verb is singular, and which were an hundred more than required; this he did to show his regard to the orders of Saul, and his obedience to him, and to testify the sincerity of his afflictions to his daughter, for whose sake he risked his life in this expedition, as well as to express his zeal for God, and his country, against their avowed enemies; the Greek version has only one hundred men, see **2Sa 3:14**;

and David brought their foreskins; along with him to Saul's court, having taken them off when slain. Josephus says {z} he cut off their heads, and brought them to him, and he makes the number to be six hundred; neither are according to the text, but to make his history more agreeable to the Gentiles, see 1Sa 18:21; an Arabic writer {a} makes mention of a people, that cut off the genital parts of men, and gave them to their wives for their dowry:

and they gave them in full tale to the king; the messengers David sent in with them, even the full tale of two hundred, which were as many more as were demanded:

that he might be the king's son in law; being now as desirous of it as the king was:

and Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife; which he could not in honour refuse to do, seeing he had performed the condition he had required. David's marriage of the younger sister, when upon various considerations it might have been expected that he should have married the elder, may be an emblem of Christ's espousing the Gentile church, when the Jewish church, her elder sister, is neglected by him, she having rejected him.

{z} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 10. sect. 3. {a} Alcamus apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 19. col. 130.

1 Samuel 18:28

Ver. 28. And Saul saw and knew that the Lord [was] with David,.... This he perceived by the favour he gave him among men, by overruling all the steps Saul took to do him hurt, for his good, and in giving him success in all that he engaged in; the Targum is,

"that the Word of the Lord was for the help of David:"

and [that] Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him; and therefore could entertain no hope of making use of her as an instrument of his ruin, but, on the contrary, would, out of her great affection to her husband, betray the designs of her father against him, and do all she could to preserve him.

1 Samuel 18:29

Ver. 29. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David,.... Because the Lord was with him, and his wife loved him; so that he feared he should never be able to accomplish his designs, and that this marriage, which he intended as the means of his ruin, would pave the way for his ascending the throne:

and Saul became David's enemy continually; was every day giving fresh evidence of his enmity against him; before it was by fits, and at certain times, there were some intervals; but now enmity was rooted and habituated, and was constant and continually showing itself.

1 Samuel 18:30

Ver. 30. Then the princes of the Philistines went forth,.... Out of their cities in troops, to revenge and spoil the land of Israel, being enraged at their defeat when Goliath their champion was slain, and at the injury and dishonour done them by David very lately in slaying two hundred of them, and taking off their foreskins; and, as the Jews say {b}, having heard of the marriage of David, and understanding the Israelites had a law, that a newly married man might not go to the war the first year, took this opportunity of invading and spoiling them; whereas David understood that law better than they, and knew it referred not to a voluntary war, but to that which was the command of God against the seven nations; and even in that case, as some think, it did not oblige such persons to remain at home, but left it to their choice to do as they pleased:

and it came to pass after they went forth; and were met and opposed by the Israelites, by the troops of Saul, under different commanders:

[that] David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; showed himself to be more expert in the art of war, and formed designs with great wisdom and prudence, and which he as wisely executed, as well as with great courage and valour, to the annoyance and defeat of the enemy, and to the advantage, defence, and safety of the people of Israel; or he was more "prosperous" than they, as the Targum, and so others interpret it; he was more successful in his attacks on the Philistines, and in his skirmishes with them:

so that his name was much set by; he was in high esteem with the people; his name was "precious" {c} to them, as the word signifies; they made mention of it, as, Ben Gersom interprets it, with great honour and glory; so that Saul failed much, and was greatly disappointed in the scheme he had formed against him,

{b} Midrash Schemuel apud Abarbinel. in loc. {c} rqyyw "et in pretio esset [vel] erat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 19

This chapter relates the dangers David was exposed unto through Saul's enmity at him, and his deliverance from them, as by the notice Jonathan gave him of his father's designs against him, and by his kind interposition on his behalf, 1Sa 19:1; by David's slipping out of Saul's presence, when he was about to cast a javelin at him, 1Sa 19:8; by Michal's letting him down through a window, when Saul sent messengers to kill him, and by deceiving them with an image laid in his bed in the room of him, 1Sa 19:11, and again by Samuel's protection of him at Naioth, whither David fled, and where Saul sent messengers after him, and at length came himself; and instead of laying hands on David, both he and the messengers were set a prophesying, 1Sa 19:18.

Ver. 1. And Saul spake to Jonathan his son,.... Who was heir to his crown; and though he knew he loved David, and was in strict friendship with him, yet he might hope, that as his succession to the kingdom was in danger, as he thought, and that David was his rival in it, his mind would be alienated from him; and that he would listen rather to a father than a friend, and would see where his true interest lay, and abandon David, yea, seek his ruin, which Saul was intent upon

and to all his servants; who yet pretended to love David, and as he himself said they did, and some of them might; with these he might rather hope to succeed, as they were attached to him, and might be secretly enemies of David, and therefore to these, as well as to his son, he spake, and gave his orders:

that they should kill David; as if he was a traitor, and an usurper of his throne, and one that had a design upon that, and upon his life; finding he could do nothing by the schemes, and snares, and stratagems, he used in a private manner, he grew outrageous and furious, and openly declared his views, and laid his injunctions on his son and servants to take away David's life, as a very dangerous person to his crown and government.

1 Samuel 19:2

Ver. 2. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David,.... In his company and conversation; he loved him with a love of complacency, and was constant and steadfast in it, and which was a kind providence to David; for by this means he came to the knowledge of Saul's designs upon him, and could the better guard against him:

and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee; to inform him of which was acting the part of a sincere and faithful friend:

now therefore, I pray thee, take heed of thyself until the morning: it seems it was now evening when he informed him of it; and as he knew not what emissaries Saul might have out that night in quest of him, he advises him to take care of himself, and not expose himself to any danger, and to keep a strict guard about him; and in the morning he would try to conciliate his father to him, when he might hope, having slept upon it, that he would be in a better temper, and more disposed to hear what might be said to him:

and abide in a secret [place], and hide thyself; he seems to suggest as if it was not safe for him to be in his own house, and in his own bedchamber that night, but that it was advisable to retire to some private place, where it might not be known or suspected that he was there. By what follows he means some field, and a private place in it.

1 Samuel 19:3

Ver. 3. And I will go out,.... In the morning, at the same time his father used to take his morning walk:

and stand beside my father in the field where thou [art]; on that side of him next to David, that he might not see him, and yet be so near, that David might hear what passed between them:

and I will commune with my father of thee; speak in favour of him, and endeavour to dissuade him from attempting to take away his life, which was of so much importance and usefulness in the commonwealth of Israel:

and what I see that I will tell thee; what David could not well hear he would inform him of, and what he could perceive in the countenance of Saul, as well as conclude from his words, that he would make known to David, that so he might know better what he had to do, and provide for his safety.

1 Samuel 19:4

Ver. 4. And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father,.... Observed to him what a good man be was, and what good things he had done, what wisdom and prudence he had shown in the management of all his affairs, what valour and courage in all his expeditions, what faithfulness and integrity to his king and country in every instance:

and said unto him, let not the king sin against his servant, against David; by taking away his life; which would have been a great sin indeed, a sin against the law of God, which forbids murder, and which would have been attended with sad aggravations of cruelty and ingratitude:

because he hath not sinned against thee; had not disobeyed any of his orders, but faithfully served him in everything, and much less ever thought to take away his life, or seize his crown, as he might imagine:

and because his works [have been] to thee-ward very good; by slaying the

Philistines, when he and his army were in the utmost terror; by driving away the evil spirit from him, through playing on his harp before him; as well as by commanding his troops, and leading them against the Philistines, and obtaining victory over them.

1 Samuel 19:5

Ver. 5. For he did put his life in his hand,.... Exposed himself to the utmost danger, when no one in all the camp of Israel would do the like:

and slew the Philistine; Goliath of Gath, who defied the armies of Israel; against him he went unarmed, only with his sling and stones, and fought him, and slew him:

and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel; by his hand, so that they were delivered from their enemies, who fled before them, and they pursued them, and got a complete victory over them:

thou sawest [it], and didst rejoice; he was an eyewitness of David's going forth against the Philistine, and slaying him, and of all the happy effects of it, which then greatly affected him, and he could not forbear expressing great joy on that occasion:

wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? and so entail the guilt of it on himself and family.

1 Samuel 19:6

Ver. 6. And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan,.... Not only heard him out what he had to say, but was affected with it, and wrought upon by it, and was convicted for the present that he was wrong in seeking the life of David, and therefore would desist from it; the Lord working upon his mind by what Jonathan said, and inclined him to listen to it, and act accordingly:

and Saul sware, [as] the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain; this oath he added to what he said to Jonathan, for the confirmation of it; and which was taken either with a real intention to keep it, though that intention did not long continue; or with a view to deceive Jonathan, that he might acquaint David with it, and so prevent his flight and escape, and that he might the more easily fall into his hands; but the former seems rather to be the case.

1 Samuel 19:7

Ver. 7. And Jonathan called David,.... Out of his lurking place in the field, after Saul was returned home:

and Jonathan showed him all these things: which had passed between him and his father, and particularly the oath he had made that he should not be slain:

and Jonathan brought David to Saul: introduced him at court again, and into the presence chamber of Saul; who, in appearance, received him courteously, and a reconciliation was seemingly made:

and he was in his presence as in times past; when he was first received at court, and in great esteem both with Saul and his courtiers.

1 Samuel 19:8

Ver. 8. And there was war again,.... Between Israel and the Philistines; it does not appear that either of them sent out their whole force, only some parties or detachments, between which there were skirmishes:

and David went out and fought with the Philistines; he went out with his thousand men, over which he was made captain, 1Sa 18:13; for he had not the command of the whole army; that belonged to Abner:

and slew them with a great slaughter, and they fled from him; he killed many of them in his engagements with them, and the rest fled, and he returned victorious; which stirred up the envy and increased the jealousy of Saul, to observe which this is related.

1 Samuel 19:9

Ver. 9. And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul,.... His melancholy and frantic disorder returned upon those victories of David, and he grew envious, jealous, spiteful, and malicious:

as he sat in his house with his javelin his hand; which either describes the posture he was in when the evil spirit came upon him; or the effects of it, he became dull and melancholy, did not care to go abroad, but kept at home, and was suspicious of everybody; and therefore kept a javelin in his hand to defend himself; or it may be rather to dispatch David with it, when an opportunity should offer, which quickly did:

and David played with [his] hand; on some instrument of music, particularly the harp, to drive away the evil spirit, the melancholy disorder, from Saul; which showed his humility, that though he was an officer in the army, had a considerable post in it, yet deigned to act the part of a musician to Saul, and his great kindness and affection for him his sovereign, willing to serve him what he could to promote his health and comfort, and the trust and confidence he put in his promise and oath, or rather in the providence of God for his protection in the way of his duty, though he knew how spiteful and injurious Saul had been to him.

1 Samuel 19:10

Ver. 10. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with his javelin,.... To strike it through him, and fasten him to the wall with it, as he had attempted before, 1Sa 18:11;

but he slipped away out of Saul's presence: he perceived his design, and being of great agility of body, moved out of his place before him very nimbly:

and he smote the javelin into the wall; he threw it with suck force that it entered into the wall, and stuck there; so great was his resolution to destroy David, and such the rage and passion that he was in, and such his strength of body, and which, in person; in his circumstances, is strangely exerted at times:

and David fled, and escaped that night; it being towards night, or in the evening, very probably, when this affair happened; upon which he departed from Saul's court, and went to his own house, and so escaped the danger he was exposed to for the present.

1 Samuel 19:11

Ver. 11. And Saul sent messengers unto David's house,.... Supposing that he was gone thither; where this was is not said, very likely in Gibeah, where Saul lived:

to watch him; that he might not get out from thence in the night:

and to slay him in the morning; the reason why he did not order them to break into the house, and slay him at once, but wait till morning, seems to be, lest should he be alarmed by their breaking in, he might take the advantage of the night, and easily escape, or another person through mistake might be slain for him; and therefore, that they might be sure of him, they were to watch till it was broad daylight, when they could not well miss him. Josephus {d} says, the orders to watch him until morning were, that he might be taken and brought to a court of judicature, and be condemned and put to death, which was usually held in a morning; but Saul's orders to the messengers were to put him to death themselves, and he had no notion of dealing with him according to a formal process of judgment:

and Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, if thou save not thy life tonight, tomorrow thou shalt be slain; meaning, if he did not take the benefit and advantage of the night to make his escape, he would not be able to do it in the morning; the house being so beset, as she perceived, by persons whom she might suspect were sent by Saul to destroy him, knowing the ill will her father bore to him, or a messenger at the same time might be dispatched to her, either from her brother Jonathan, or from one of her friends at court, acquainting her with the design against David, and the danger he was in. Upon this occasion David penned the fifty ninth psalm, see Ps 59:1.

{d} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 11. sect. 4.

1 Samuel 19:12

Ver. 12. So Michal let David down through a window,.... In like manner as Rahab let down the spies from her house in Jericho, when the king's messengers were in quest of them, **Jos 2:15**; and as the disciples let down the Apostle Paul at Damascus, to preserve him from the designs of the Jews upon him:

and he went, and fled, and escaped; he departed from his house, and ran with all the haste he could, and escaped the messengers that had beset the house, and were waiting for him.

1 Samuel 19:13

Ver. 13. And Michal took an image,.... Or "teraphim", as the word is; which, if the same with those that Rachel stole from her father, they seem to be of the same sort with the penates or household gods of the Heathens, which were privately kept by Michal; for, had David known of them, he would not have suffered them to have been in his house. Aben Ezra supposes they were images made in the form of men under such a constellation, a sort of talismans, to receive the heavenly influences, and which being consulted, foretold things to come; and R. Isaiah is of opinion, that Michal chose and placed these in the bed, that her father might conclude, when he should hear of them, that David had found them; and by thus means know that his intention was to kill him, and therefore fled; but to consult such images was very far from David, and without it he knew Saul's intention. Abarbinel makes mention of several sorts of teraphim, some for idolatry, some to draw down the heavenly influences, some to know the time of the day, a sort of dials; some were made after the form of a man known, and like him in his form and features; and women, he says, used to have the forms or statues of their husbands, that they might have them continually before them, because of the great love they had to them; and of this sort he supposes were the teraphim of Michal, and which is approved of by Abendana; and that this image had the likeness of an human face is very probable, or it could not have so well answered her purpose:

and laid [it] in the bed; where David used to lie, that it might seem to be he himself;

and put a pillow of goats' [hair] for his bolster; she took the finest of the goats' hair, which she had in the house, women being used to spin in those days, even great personages, and put it into a pillow, and made a bolster of it, and put it under the head or block of the image, which would sink it, being soft, and so look like a sick man, whose face could not easily be discerned; though some think this goats' hair was put about the head of the image, to make it look the more like an human head; goats' hair being very much like human hair {e}, and of different colours, and such a colour might be chosen as was most like David's, see **So 4:1**; the Targum interprets it, a bottle of goats skins, that is, a leathern bottle or bag made of goats skins, such as they used to put wine into; hence the conceit in the Midrash {f}, that a bottle of wine was put instead of David: but the pillow or bolster had the form of a leathern bag or bottle; the Septuagint version is very odd, "and put the liver of goats at his head;"

and so Josephus says {g}; and it is observed {h}, that the liver of a goat will move a long time after it is taken out, and so make a show of the palpitation of the heart: but then this was put, not within the bed, but at the head of the image:

and covered [it] with a cloth; to keep her sick husband warm, as she would have it understood.

{e} Vid. Stockium, p. 509. {f} Apud Kimchium & Abarbinel. in loc. {g} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 11. sect. 4.) {h} Vid. Hudson. not. in ib.

1 Samuel 19:14

Ver. 14. And when Saul sent messengers to take David,.... Either the same who in the morning inquired for David, or those staying longer than Saul expected, and fearing they were negligent or corrupted, he sent others: to whom

she said, he [is] sick; and in bed, and cannot be spoke with; this lie she told through her affection to David, and to preserve his life; and this stratagem she devised to gain time, that while she was amusing the messengers with this tale of hers, before they could discover the truth of the matter David would be out of their reach; whereas, had she denied his being at home, or signified that he had made his escape, they would have immediately pursued after him, and he would have been in danger of being taken by them.

1 Samuel 19:15

Ver. 15. And Saul sent the messengers [again] to see David,.... Not to visit him, or to see how he was, or inquire of his health, in a kind manner, but to see his person, whether he was sick or not, and whether he was there or not; for Saul might suspect some deceit was used, because the messengers took the report of Michal, and saw not David, nor attempted to see him; but now they have strict orders to see him, and not take Michal's word as before, 1Sa 19:14; wherefore the supplement again may be left out:

saying, bring him up to me in the bed; if so bad that he was not able to rise, or not fit to be taken out of his bed, his orders were, that he should be brought to him in it; resolved he was to have him, sick or well:

that I may slay him: not content that he should die a natural death, or willing to wait for it, he is in haste, being full of wrath and malice, to slay him himself.

1 Samuel 19:16

Ver. 16. And when the messengers were come in,.... To David's house, and into the room where he was supposed to lie:

behold, [there was] an image in the bed to their great surprise; they expected to see David, but instead of him the teraphim, as in 1Sa 19:13; if they had been in the room before, and thought they had seen David in the bed, they might be the more surprised to find that it was only an image they saw:

with a pillow of goats' [hair] for his bolster;
See Gill on "1Sa 19:13".

1 Samuel 19:17

Ver. 17. And Saul said unto Michal,.... After the messengers returned and reported what they had seen, when Saul either came to her at her house, or sent for her to his palace:

why hast thou deceived me so; for deceiving his messengers was deceiving him, by pretending David was sick and in bed, when she had placed an image there, and had let him down through a window, and he was gone:

and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? as if she was more obliged to gratify the wicked passion of a father, than to provide for the safety of her husband:

and Michal answered Saul, he said unto me, let me go, why should I kill thee? though she was concerned for the preservation of her husband, yet not for his honour and credit, nor for her own veracity; she attempted not to vindicate her husband from the charge of being an enemy to Saul, as she might; but suggested that he was so desperate a man, that if she had offered to have detained him, he would have murdered her, and threatened, if she did, he would do when both were false; that he should say to her let me go, when it was she that advised him to go, and that if she refused he would kill her; which lies were framed by her to excuse herself, at the expense of her husband's reputation.

1 Samuel 19:18

Ver. 18. So David fled and escaped,.... Fled from his own house, and escaped falling into the hands of the messengers of Saul, and so of Saul himself:

and came to Samuel to Ramah; the place where Samuel dwelt: to him David chose to come, by whom he had been anointed king, that his faith might be strengthened by him with respect to the kingdom, which might be weakened by what had happened to him; and that he might have some advice and direction from him what he should do, and what course he should take in his present circumstances, and that he might receive some comfort from him under his present troubles:

and told him all that Saul had done to him; how he had spoken to his servants to kill him, had cast a javelin at him himself, and had sent messengers to his house to slay him:

and he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth; which was in or near to Ramah, as appears by 1Sa 19:19; which perhaps was a more retired place, and so chosen for the sake of conversation between them, or reckoned a more safe place. Here being a school or college of the prophets, might be a kind of an asylum, and where it might be thought Saul would not attempt to lay hands on David, should he know where he was; for if the Philistines gave no disturbance to the hill of God, and the prophets in it, 1Sa 10:5; it might be reasonably concluded Saul would not; so the Targum paraphrases it, "he and Samuel went and dwelt in the house of doctrine", or in the school, the school of the prophets. R. Abimi the Nothite, or Naiothite, mentioned in the Talmud {i}, is supposed {k} to be of this place; it is said {l} to be six miles from Jerusalem to the north.

{i} T. Bab. Sabbat, c. 1. fol. 17. 2. Avodah Zarah, c. 2. fol. 36. 1. {k} Aruch in voce twwn, fol. 98. 4. Juchasin, fol. 74. 2. {l} Adrichom, Theatrum T. S. fol. 28. 2.

1 Samuel 19:19

Ver. 19. And it was told Saul,.... By some officious persons who saw David at Ramah, and observed that he and Samuel went together to Naioth:

saying, behold, David [is] at Naioth, in Ramah; or near it; according to R. Isaiah, Ramah was the name of a hill, or mountain, so called from its height, and Naioth the name of a place on it; it signifies pastures and pleasant places, as meadows and pastures are; and here in the fields near Ramah was the house of doctrine, as the Targum calls it, or the school of the prophets, being pleasant and retired, and fit for study.

1 Samuel 19:20

Ver. 20. And Saul sent messengers to take David,.... Notwithstanding the sacred place he was in, so bent was he upon his destruction:

and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying; or praising, as the Targum; singing hymns and songs of praise to God, under the inspiration and influence of the Spirit of God, who endited these songs for them, and excited them to sing them; these prophets belonged to the school or college of prophets at Naioth, whom the messengers saw when they came thither, and found them thus employed; or "when he saw" {m}, for the word is singular, that is, the chief of the messengers, or everyone of them, so Kimchi:

and Samuel standing [as] appointed over them; he was president of the college, and he stood to instruct and teach them in the knowledge of divine things: so the Targum,

"standing, teaching over them or by them,"

and to direct and assist them in singing their songs of praise:

the Spirit of the Lord was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied: or praised, as the Targum; sung hymns and songs of praise as the prophets did, and were so taken up with these religious exercises, that they forgot, or were inattentive to the business they were sent to do. Ben Gersom thinks they foretold things to come, and so Abarbinel; and particularly that they prophesied that David should rule over all Israel, and that God would not suffer Saul to slay him; and so were indifferent to, and negligent of doing the errand they were sent on, yea, purposely avoided it.

{m} aryw "et vidit", Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version; "et vidit quisque [vel] unusquisque illorum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

1 Samuel 19:21

Ver. 21. And when it was told Saul,.... That the messengers he had sent, instead of seizing on David, were prophesying of him, or however were attending to services of a different nature than what they were sent upon:

he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise; when they came to the same place:

and Saul sent messengers again a third time, and they prophesied also; joined the rest in singing praises, or foretelling future events.

1 Samuel 19:22

Ver. 22. Then went he also to Ramah,.... That is, Saul; his messengers not returning to him, when he sent one after another to take David, at length he set out himself from Gibeah to Ramah:

and came to a great well that [is] in Sechu; which was either the name of a man, the owner of the well, or a place near to which the well was, and is commonly thought to be the same with Shochoh, 1Sa 17:1; at such places there was generally a concourse of people at certain times, to fetch water for the inhabitants of the place, and for the watering of flocks and herds, and so a proper place to stop at, and ask the following questions:

and he asked and said, where [are] Samuel and David? for his messengers not returning to him, he could not be sure where they now were, though he had heard they were at Naioth:

and [one] said, behold, [they be] at Naioth in Ramah; at the house of doctrine, or school in Ramah, as the Targum; thus one at the well replied, in answer to his question, who had seen them go there, or knew they were there.

1 Samuel 19:23

Ver. 23. And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah,.... He went on from the well towards the place:

and the Spirit of God was upon him also; as well as upon his messengers; even the spirit of prophecy, as the Targum:

and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah: in this he differed from his messengers; they did not prophesy till they came to that place, but Saul began to prophesy before he came thither, as he was in his way from the well to it.

1 Samuel 19:24

Ver. 24. And he stripped off his clothes also,.... Not all his clothes, but his upper garments, as men in such circumstances used to do, as the prophets sometimes did, and as it seems his messengers had done; according to Jarchi, R. Isaiah, and others {n}, he stripped himself of his royal robes, and put on the habit of the scholars, the disciples, and sons of the prophets:

and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, as the messengers had done, singing such like songs, or foretelling such like things as they did; he and they speaking not of themselves, but as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of prophecy; for such gifts have sometimes been bestowed on men that were destitute of the grace of God, as Balaam, Caiaphas, and others;

and lay down: or "fell down" {o}, as persons in an ecstasy or trance: and lay

naked all that day, and all that night; not entirely naked, both without his upper garment or royal robes, or else his armour; so an unarmed man is said to be naked, though otherwise he has his clothes on: thus Gelon having conquered the Carthaginians, and made himself master of all Sicily, went into the forum "naked" (i.e. unarmed), and declared he would restore the government to the citizens, wherefore a naked statue for him was erected in the temple of Juno {p}; so Quinctius Cincinnatus was found ploughing naked {q}, who cannot be supposed to be without any clothes on him. Jarchi, from Menachem, reports, that he had heard from an Arabian, that the word the Targum makes use of for "naked", signifies, in the Arabic language, one that is furious or mad, as persons in an ecstasy, or under a prophetic spirit, sometimes seemed to be; now Saul was kept and held in such circumstances a whole day and night, that David might have an opportunity of making his escape, and getting at such a distance from him that he could not overtake him:

wherefore they say, [is] Saul also among the prophets? this became a common saying, a proverbial expression, at least was now revived and observed with admiration; that Saul, who had behaved himself in so ill a manner, as an enemy to so good a man, should be found among the prophets of the Lord, and prophesying as they did.

{n} Vid. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. G. {o} lpyw "et cecidit", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, "et corruit", Vatablus. {p} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 6. c. 11. {q} Aurel. Victor. de Vir. Illustr. c. 20.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 20

David fleeing from Naioth came to Jonathan, and acquainted him with his circumstances, and entreated his favour, 1Sa 20:1; which Jonathan promised, and renewed the covenant with him, 1Sa 20:9; a scheme was formed between them, by which David might know whether Saul was reconciled to him, and he might come to court, 1Sa 20:18; which being tried, Jonathan found it was not safe for him to appear, 1Sa 20:24; of which he gave notice by the signals agreed on, 1Sa 20:35; and they took their leave of one another with strong expressions of affection and attachment to each other, 1Sa 20:41.

Ver. 1. And David fled from Naioth in Ramah,.... While Saul was prophesying, or lay in a trance there:

and came; to Gibeah, where Saul dwelt, and had his palace, and kept his court:

and said before Jonathan; whom he found there, and for whose sake he thither fled to have his advice, and to use his interest with his father, and be his friend at court:

what have I done? what [is] mine iniquity? and what [is] my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life? surely, as if he should say, I must have been guilty of some very great crime, and yet I am not sensible of it; canst thou tell me what it is that has so provoked thy father, that nothing will satisfy him but the taking away of my life, which he seeks to do?

1 Samuel 20:2

Ver. 2. And he said unto him, God forbid, thou shalt not die,.... He could not believe his father had any such intention; and that if he discovered anything of that kind, it was only when he was in a frenzy, and a melancholy disorder had seized him; and that David had nothing to fear on that head, and that he would secure him from all danger in that respect; the thing was too gross and detestable to be credited:

behold, my father will do nothing, either great or small, but that he will show it me; such an interest had he in him, and in his favour, being his son and heir to his crown, and having done many warlike exploits, which had the more endeared him to him, that he made him privy to all his secret designs, and took his opinion in all matters of moment and importance:

and why should my father hide this thing from me? his design of taking away the life of David, if he had really formed one:

it [is] not [so]; Jonathan concluded, from his ignorance of it, there was nothing in it, and that it was only a surmise of David's; and yet it is strange that Jonathan should know nothing of the messengers being sent to David's house to take him, and of others sent to Naioth after him, and of Saul's going there himself with such a design; and if he did know anything of the matter, he made the best of it to David, partly to allay his fears, and partly that his father might not appear so black and vile as he really was.

1 Samuel 20:3

Ver. 3. And David sware moreover, and said,.... To assure Jonathan of the truth of it, that he did most certainly seek after his life, of which, as he had no doubt himself, by an oath he endeavoured to remove any that might be in Jonathan, who was not willing to believe his father could be guilty of so foul a crime:

thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes: that he was high in his favour, that he had a great value for him, and he had a large share in his love and friendship, and that was the reason why he hid from him his base intentions:

and he saith, let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved; as he would be, both for the evil his father would be guilty of, and the danger David, his beloved friend, would be in:

but truly, [as] the Lord liveth, and [as] thy soul liveth, [there is] but a step between me and death; as appeared by his casting a javelin at him, 1Sa 18:11, sending messengers to his own house to slay him, 1Sa 19:11, and others to Naioth to seize him, 1Sa 19:20, and coming himself thither with an intention to kill him, 1Sa 19:22, and in each of these instances he had a narrow escape for his life; and this he declared in the most solemn manner by an oath, for the confirmation of the truth of it to Jonathan.

1 Samuel 20:4

Ver. 4. Then said Jonathan unto David,.... Now giving credit to what he had said, and in order to comfort and support him under the apprehensions he had of danger:

whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do [it] for thee; for the preservation of his life, by speaking to his father on his behalf, endeavouring to dissuade him from his evil intentions, or by hiding and concealing him in some obscure place, that he might not execute his evil designs upon him, or by any method he could point out to him.

1 Samuel 20:5

Ver. 5. And David said unto Jonathan,.... Moved that the following method might be taken as a trial of the disposition of Saul's mind towards David:

behold, tomorrow [is] the new moon; the first day of the month, which was kept solemnly with burnt offerings and peace offerings, see Nu 10:10. Some say {r} this feast was not kept for the new moon, but because it was the day of the feast of trumpets or the first day of the new year, which fell together on that day; the calends, or first day of the month, was with the Heathens sacred to deity {s}, in imitation of the Jews:

and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat; it had been usual for him at such a time to sit at table with the king; next to him, as Jarchi interprets it, either as his son-in-law, or as one of his princes; the custom being for the king, and his family and nobles, to eat together on that day upon the peace offerings; and it was the duty of David to attend at that time, and it might be expected he would:

but let me go; he asked [leave] of Jonathan, who had power in his father's absence to grant it, he not being yet returned from Naioth:

that I may hide myself in the fields, unto the third [day] at even; or until the time of the evening of the third day, as the Targum, which was the evening of the second day of the month; for that was the third from that evening they were discoursing together, as Ben Gersom observes; the fields he proposed to hide himself in were near to Gibeah, and he doubtless meant some cave in those fields, where he might be, and not be seen by men; though it cannot be thought that he remained, or proposed to remain, in such a place during that time, where he would be in want of food, but that he would abide incognito among his friends somewhere or another, until the festival was over.

{r} Weemse's Expos. Ceremon. Law, c. 22. p. 100, 101. {s} Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 15. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 18. in fine.

1 Samuel 20:6

Ver. 6. If thy father at all miss me,.... Or diligently inquires after me:

then say, David earnestly asked leave of me, that he might run to Bethlehem his city: the place of his birth, called the city of David, where he was born and had lived, **Lu 2:4**, which was not far from Gibeah, and whither he could soon run; and which shows the haste he proposed to make, and his eager desire to be there, and which also is signified by his earnest and importunate request; for all this might be true, and no lie of David, framed for an excuse; and after he had hid himself some time in the field, until it was evening, he might go to Bethlehem, and return soon enough to meet Jonathan in the field at the time fixed by them on the third day:

for [there] is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family; it was customary for the family of Jesse one day in a year, and as it should seem on a first day of the month, and perhaps the first day of the first month, or New Year's Day, to have an anniversary feast by way of gratitude and thankfulness for the mercies of the year past, and for the continuance of them for time to come; in which the family rejoiced together at the great goodness of God unto them, **1Sa 9:12**.

1 Samuel 20:7

Ver. 7. If he say thus, [it is] well,.... It is very well, it is very good and right in him to do so:

thy servant shall have peace; it will be a token that the wrath of the king was removed, and that his mind was well disposed towards David, and things had taken an happy turn, and would issue in his peace and prosperity:

but if he be very wroth; with Jonathan for giving leave, and with David for going away:

[then] be sure that evil is determined by him; that he has a settled obstinate malice in his heart, which is become implacable and inveterate, and confirmed in him; and that it is a determined point with him to slay David if possible, which he hoped to have an opportunity of doing at that time in which he was disappointed, and caused such wrath in him.

1 Samuel 20:8

Ver. 8. Therefore thou shall deal kindly with thy servant,.... By informing him how his father's mind stood affected to him, that he might conduct himself accordingly, either by appearing at court, or by providing for his safety by flight:

for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee; a covenant of friendship between Jonathan and David, of which Jonathan was the first mover, and so is said to bring or persuade him into it; called the covenant of the Lord, because made in his name and fear, and before him as a witness of it; and this David pleads as an argument with Jonathan, to deal kindly and faithfully by him in the present case:

notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself: or pass sentence upon him to be slain; which, if guilty, he might have power to do in his father's absence, and which David desires might be done, notwithstanding the covenant of friendship between them, should he appear to deserve it by any action of his, of which he was not conscious; this expresses the strong sense he had of his own integrity, and served to confirm Jonathan in his opinion of it;

for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father? deliver him up into his hands to be put to a cruel death by him, or give him the trouble of doing it, when he might as well dispatch him at once.

1 Samuel 20:9

Ver. 9. And Jonathan said, far be it from thee,.... To entertain such a thought of me, or to have the least suspicion of me, that I should conceal my father's ill intentions against thee, if known to me;

for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would I not tell it thee? certainly I would; canst thou doubt of my kindness and fidelity? surely thou hast no reason, when such a covenant of friendship subsists between us, and there has not been the least breach of it on either side.

1 Samuel 20:10

Ver. 10. Then said David to Jonathan, who shall tell me?.... The disposition of Saul's mind towards him, whether he gave a kind answer to the report of Jonathan concerning him:

or what [if] thy father answer thee roughly? or hard words, as the Targum, whether he answers in a kind, loving, and smooth manner, or whether in a rough and angry one: the question is here, how he should be informed of this, since especially, if in the latter, it would not be safe for Jonathan to come himself to him, nor could he well trust the message with any other. Abarbinel thinks, that the first of these expressions is by way of question, who should declare to him his father's will and intention, whether good or bad: and the latter by way of outcry, woe unto me, if thy father should answer thee roughly; I greatly fear he will chide thee for my sake; my heart will be filled with sorrow if thou shouldest suffer reproach and rebuke on my account.

1 Samuel 20:11

Ver. 11. And Jonathan said unto David, come, and let us go out into the field,.... That they might more fully, and freely, and familiarly talk of this affair between them, without any danger of being overheard by the servants of Saul, as they were in his palace, where they now were:

and they went out both of them into the field; which belonged to Gibeah.

1 Samuel 20:12

Ver. 12. And Jonathan said unto David, O Lord God of Israel,.... Or by the Lord God of Israel, I swear unto thee; for this is the form of the oath, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe:

when I have sounded my father about tomorrow any time, [or] the third [day]; searched, inquired, and found out how his disposition is:

and, behold, [if there be] good toward David; if he is well disposed to him, as may appear by speaking respectfully of him, or kindly inquiring after him, and by being satisfied with the account given him:

and I then send not unto thee, and show it thee; then let the vengeance of God fall upon me in some remarkable manner or another, as follows; or "shall I not then send unto thee, and show it thee" {t}? certainly I will; that is, I will send a messenger to thee to acquaint thee with it, who shall tell it, and cause thee to hear it, as from myself.

{t} Kyla xlva za alw "an non tune mitterem?" Junius & Tremellius; "nonne tunc mittam ad te?" so some in Vatablus.

1 Samuel 20:13

Ver. 13. The Lord do so and much more to Jonathan,.... Recompense evil more than can be thought of and expressed, should he neglect to inform David of the good disposition of Saul unto him:

but if it please my father [to do] thee evil; if he seems determined upon it to take away thy life:

then I will show it thee; not by a messenger, by whom it would not be safe to communicate it, lest by that means Saul would know where he was, and come and slay him; but Jonathan would come himself, and acquaint him with it:

and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace; give him leave, and advise him to depart, and provide for his own safety, adding his blessing on him, and prayer for him:

and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father; in the beginning of his reign, giving him counsel and advice in all things, and victory over his enemies, succeeding and prospering him in whatsoever he engaged in; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord be for thy help, &c."

Jonathan seemed to be fully apprized that David was to succeed in the kingdom.

1 Samuel 20:14

Ver. 14. And thou shalt not only, while yet I live, show me the kindness of the Lord,.... Such kindness as is well pleasing in the sight of God, and imitate what he shows to men, and which was covenanted, promised, and agreed to in the presence of the Lord, when David and Jonathan entered into covenant with each other; this Jonathan did not doubt of, and therefore did not make this a request:

that I die not; he had no fear nor dread on his mind, should David come to the throne while he was alive, that he would take away his life; which was usually done by tyrants and usurpers, when there were any that had a fairer title, and better claim to the throne than they.

1 Samuel 20:15

Ver. 15. But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever,.... His family should partake of it as well as himself:

no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David, everyone from the face of the earth; Saul and his sons, and everyone that should oppose his settlement in the kingdom: Jonathan's meaning is, that the covenant between them should not be only between them personally, but include their posterity, as follows.

1 Samuel 20:16

Ver. 16. So Jonathan made [a covenant] with the house of David,.... Not with David himself only, which was now renewed, but with his family also:

[saying], let the Lord even require [it] at the hand of David's enemies; take vengeance on Jonathan, or on any of his posterity, should they break this covenant, by showing themselves enemies to David, and his crown; and, on the other hand, also on David, and his posterity, should they not show kindness to Jonathan and his seed, according to the tenor of this covenant.

1 Samuel 20:17

Ver. 17. And Jonathan caused David to swear again,.... Or Jonathan added to make David swears {u}; having sworn himself to make a covenant of friendship with David and his family, he moved and insisted on it, that David should swear to keep covenant with him, and his family:

because he loved him; it was not so much for the good and safety of his offspring that he made this motion, and was so desirous of renewing and enlarging his covenant with David, as it was his strong love and affection for him; being on that account desirous that there might be the strictest friendship imaginable retained between the two families; or he made him swear by his love to him, as some understand it, which is not so likely; the former sense is better, for he himself sware by the Lord, 1Sa 20:12;

for he loved him as his own soul; or "with the love of his soul" {w}; with the most cordial affection, with a truly hearty and sincere love, see 1Sa 18:1.

{u} Poyw "et addidit", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so the Tigurine version.
{w} wvpn tbha "secundum dilectionem animae suae", Pagninus; "amore sui ipsius", Junius & Tremellius.

1 Samuel 20:18

Ver. 18. Then Jonathan said to David, tomorrow [is] the new moon,.... The first day of the month, as David had before observed, 1Sa 20:5;

and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty; or be inquired after, because not in his usual place at mealtime.

1 Samuel 20:19

Ver. 19. And [when] thou hast stayed three days,.... From court, either at Bethlehem, which seems most probable, or in some other place incognito; however, not in the field he proposed to hide himself in, where he could not continue so long for want of food:

[then] thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself; which makes it clear that he did not continue there during that time, but went elsewhere; from whence he was to come in haste at the expiration of three days, to the place he first hid himself in, and which was fixed upon to meet at:

when the business was [in hand]; when the affair was discoursed of, about getting knowledge how Saul was affected to David, and of informing him of it; or "on the day of work" {x}; or business, on a working day, as the Septuagint; and so the Targum, on a common day; when, as the Vulgate Latin, it was lawful to work on it; and such was the day when Jonathan and David conversed together about the above affair; it being the day before the new moon, or first day of the month, on which day they used not to work: Some render it, "thou shalt three times go down" {y} to that place; and the sense is, that he should come on the morrow, and if he found not Jonathan there, he might conclude that as yet he knew nothing of his father's mind, and therefore should come the day following that; and if he found him not then, to come on the third day, that so he might be on the spot, let him come on which day he would:

and shalt remain by the stone Ezel; which, because it signifies "going", the Jewish commentators generally understand it as a sign to direct travellers which way to go; but one would think this should be an improper place for David to be near, since it must be where two or more ways met, and so a public frequented place; others think therefore it had its name from David and

Jonathan often going thither, to discourse with each other; the Septuagint calls it Ergab; and so the place where Jonathan, the son of Saul, exercised himself by shooting darts, is called by Jerom {z}; it is said by Josephus {a} to be an hundred fifty furlongs (about nineteen miles), from Jerusalem, and from Jordan sixty, (about eight miles).

{x} hvemh Mwyb "in die operis", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "die profesto", Tigurine version. {y} dam drt tvlv "tertiabis, descendes valde", Montanus; "descendes ter, [vel] tertiabis descendere", Castalio; so Patrick. {z} De loc. Heb. fol. 91. C. {a} Apud Adrichem. Theatrum T. S. p. 17.

1 Samuel 20:20

Ver. 20. And I will shoot three arrows on the side [thereof],.... On the side of the stone Ezel; three are pitched upon, according to the number of the days David was missing:

as though I shot at a mark; as if he made the stone the mark he shot at; so that his shooting would not be taken notice of.

1 Samuel 20:21

Ver. 21. And, behold, I will send a lad,.... That attended on him, and carried his bow and arrows, and fetched his arrows when he had shot them:

[saying], go, find out the arrows; where they are fallen, and return them:

if I expressly say unto the lad, behold, the arrows [are] on this side of thee, take them; on one side of him, whether the one or the other, which he would bid him take up, and bring them to him:

then come thou; David, out of the place where he hid himself:

for [there is] peace to thee, and no hurt, [as] the Lord liveth; he might appear, and not be afraid of being seen by any, since by this sign he might be assured that Saul was well affected to him, and would show him favour, and do him no injury; and that he might promise himself prosperity and safety, and be assured of it for the present.

1 Samuel 20:22

Ver. 22. But if I say thus unto the young man, behold, the arrows [are] beyond thee,.... Being shot to a greater distance than where the young man was:

go thy way, for the Lord hath sent thee away; then he was to depart directly, without staying to have any conversation with Jonathan, which would not be safe for either of them, and so make the best of his way into the country, and escape for his life; for so it was ordered by the providence of God, that he must not stay, but be gone immediately: the signals were these, that if things were favourable, then he would shoot his arrows on one side of the lad, and David might come out and show himself at once; but if not, he would shoot them beyond him, by which he might know that he must flee for his life.

1 Samuel 20:23

Ver. 23. And [as touching] the matter which thou and I have spoken of,.... The covenant they had made between them and their families:

behold, the Lord [be] between me and thee for ever: as a witness of the covenant, and a revenger of those that should break it; so the Targum,

"behold, the Word of the Lord be between me and thee a witness for ever."

1 Samuel 20:24

Ver. 24. So David hid himself in the field,.... Not directly, but at the time appointed; for he went to Bethlehem, and returned from thence before that time:

and when the new moon was come; the first clay of the month, which was a solemn festival:

the king sat him down to eat meat; Saul sat down at his table to eat of the provisions that were set upon it; which it is very probable were the peace offerings for that day, which he, his family, and nobles, feasted on together; it is in the Hebrew, "he sat down at the bread" {b}, which is put for all the food on the table, and the provisions of it.

{b} Mxlh le "ad [vel] juxta panem", Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Samuel 20:25

Ver. 25. And the king sat upon his seat as at other times,.... Upon the seat he usually sat on:

[even] upon a seat by the wall; on a couch by the side of the wall; or, as Jarchi and R. Isaiah say, at the head of the couch by the wall, which was the most honourable place; and Kimchi observes, it was the custom in those days to eat meat sitting on beds or couches, see
1Sa 28:23;

and Jonathan arose; either in reverence to his father, when he came in and took his seat, or in respect to Abner upon his coming in, being the son of Saul's uncle, and general of the army; for though he arose, he did not depart, it is plain he sat down again, 1Sa 20:34. Kimchi thinks, that after Jonathan had sat down at the side of his father, he arose and placed Abner there, because he would not be near his father, that if he should be wroth with him on account of David, he might not be near him to smite him:

and Abner sat by Saul's side; according to Josephus {c} Jonathan sat at his right hand and Abner on the left, and it was usual for the master, or principal person, to sit in the middle; so Dido in Virgil {d}. Abarbinel places them thus, Saul was at the head of the table, and David was used to sit by him, and Jonathan by David, and Abner by Jonathan; and now the king sat in his place, and Jonathan in his place, and Abner after him; and David's place being empty, Jonathan was left next to his father, without any between; wherefore he now arose from his place, and Abner sat on that side where Saul was, so that Abner was between Jonathan and Saul:

and David's place was empty; where he used to sit at table, he not being there, and no one taking it.

{c} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 11. sect. 9. {d} "----- mediamque locavit". Aeneid. 1. prope finem. Vid. Servium in ib.

1 Samuel 20:26

Ver. 26. Nevertheless, Saul spake not anything that day,.... About David's absence, took no notice of it, said nothing about it:

for he thought something had befallen him; some impurity, some nocturnal pollution, see Le 15:16;

he [is] not clean, surely he [is] not clean; which he repeated in his mind for the confirmation of it, and in contempt, and to the reproach of David; and in this way he accounted for his absence the first day, and so was easy, it not being lawful and fitting for an unclean person in a ceremonial sense to eat of the peace offerings, which Saul and his family were now partaking of.

1 Samuel 20:27

Ver. 27. And it came to pass on the morrow, [which was] the second [day] of the month,.... The Targum is,

"and it was on the day after it, which was the intercalation of the second month;"

when the beginning of the month was judged of by the appearance of the moon, and there was a difficulty about that, what day it appeared on, two days were kept for it; and Abarbinel {e} is clear for it, that two days were kept in this month; but if this was not the case, since the remainder of peace offerings might be eaten the next day, **Le 7:16**. Saul and his guests might meet on the second day for that purpose:

that David's place was empty: on that day also:

and Saul said to Jonathan his son; who he knew was David's friend and confident, and could give the best account of him:

wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday nor today; he accounted for his not coming yesterday, because he supposed he might be under some ceremonial uncleanness; but then that only lasted to the evening of that day; but not coming the second day when he was clean, he inquires after him; and not owning him for his son-in-law, by way of contempt, and to lessen him in the esteem of all at table, he calls him the son of Jesse.

{e} Comment. in Exod. xii.

1 Samuel 20:28

Ver. 28. And Jonathan answered Saul,.... In reply to Saul's question, and to excuse David, he said,

David earnestly asked [leave] of me [to go] to Bethlehem; his own city, his native place, where his family lived, whom he was desirous to see, and yet chose not to go without asking leave; and as Saul was not at home, he asked leave of Jonathan, who was next to him, and acted for him; and he was very pressing and importunate in his suit, and therefore Jonathan could not well deny him it; and he hoped this would ben sufficient excuse for his absence, especially when what follows should be observed.

1 Samuel 20:29

Ver. 29. And he said, let me go, I pray thee, for our family hath a sacrifice in the city,.... In the city of Bethlehem where they lived, a peace offering on account of the new moon, and as an anniversary thanksgiving for the mercies of the year, 1Sa 20:6; and seeing, though he was not at the feast in one place, he observed it in another, his absence at court was the more excusable; and the rather, since it was kept by him with his own family, in his own city: besides, it is added,

and my brother he hath commanded me [to be there]; his elder brother Eliab, whose commands, as a younger brother, he judged he ought to obey; it is probable his father was now dead, since no mention is made of him, and his elder brother took upon him the command of the family:

and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, see my brethren: he should take it as a favour to have leave to depart, and be free for the present from waiting upon the king at court, and so have an opportunity of seeing his brethren, for which he had a great desire; having not seen them a long time, not even since he saw them in the camp, when he slew Goliath:

therefore he cometh not to the king's table: this was the reason of it, at least one reason of it, and Jonathan was not obliged to tell the whole.

1 Samuel 20:30

Ver. 30. Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan,.... For giving David leave to go, and for excusing him in this manner:

and he said unto him, thou son of the perverse and rebellious [woman]; most of the Jewish commentators supply it as we do, but the supplement of woman may as well be left out, and be read, "thou son of perverse rebellion" {f}; thou perverse and rebellious wretch, perverse in thy temper, and rebellious in thy conduct; for the design of the expression is not to reproach his mother, for which there seems no provocation, but Jonathan only; and the next clause confirms it, which expresses a concern for his mother's honour and credit; the Targum is,

"an obstinate son, whose rebellion is hard,"

or intolerable; according to which, Abarbinel says, it may refer to David:

do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness? The above writer observes, that he does not say to his own confusion, because David would not reign in his lifetime, only after his death, but to the shame of Jonathan and his mother; to Jonathan's shame, who would be reckoned by men an arrant fool, to be so friendly to a rival, and who in all probability would jostle him out of the throne; and what would men say of him? that either he was not fit to reign, or had no right to the throne, that a son-in-law took place before him; and that his mother had played the whore, and he was no son of Saul, having nothing of his genius, temper, and disposition in him, as appeared by loving such his father hated; and besides, his mother would not have the honour she expected, to be the mother of a king.

{f} twdrmh twen Nb "fili perversae rebellionis", Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Samuel 20:31

Ver. 31. For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom,.... He would not, though heir to the crown, be sure of it; it would be precarious to him, he would be in great danger of being deprived of it on the death of his father; and therefore it would be his highest wisdom to deliver David up to be slain, as it was his greatest folly to protect him, and provide for his satiety:

wherefore now send and fetch him unto me; send to Bethlehem for him to come to court directly:

for he shall surely die; or he is "the son of death" {g}; guilty of death, as the Targum, deserves to die, and Saul was determined upon his death if possible.

{g} twm Nb "filius mortis", V. L. Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator; "reus mortis", Junius & Tremellius.

1 Samuel 20:32

Ver. 32. And Jonathan answered Saul his, father, and said unto him,.... Making no answer to the charges of perverseness, rebellion, and folly brought against himself, which he bore with patience, but could not bear to hear his dear friend spoken against, and as worthy of death; and therefore in answer to that says,

wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done? has he attempted to take away thy life? to deprive thee of thy crown? to settle himself upon the throne? what overt act of treason has he been guilty of; that he should die? on the contrary, has he not done many things worthy of immortal honour, for the good of the nation, and the glory of thy reign? and if God has determined the kingdom for him, and anointed him to it, what blame can be laid upon him? nay, should he not be the rather respected and honoured?

1 Samuel 20:33

Ver. 33. And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him,.... So provoked to wrath was he by what he said. It seems by this that Saul always had a javelin or spear in his hand, which is to be accounted for by the custom of those times; in other countries, as well as in this, the kings used to carry spears in their hands instead of sceptres, and which they used as such; so Justin {h}, speaking of the times of Romulus, says, that kings in those times had spears, as an ensign of royalty, which the Greeks call sceptres; and so the Greeks called sceptres spears {i}:

whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David; for since he attempted to smite him, his own son, for speaking on his behalf, it might be well concluded, that such was his settled wrath and malice, that he would if possible kill David, could he get him into his hands.

{h} E Trogo, l. 43. c. 3. {i} Pausanias in Boeoticis, sive, l. 9. p. 859. Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian in nupt. Honor ver. 119.

1 Samuel 20:34

Ver. 34. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger,.... Resenting his father's attempt to smite him, and his resolution to slay David:

and did eat no meat the second day of the month; not then at that meal he was just sat down to, nor at another time that day, his stomach was so full through indignation at his father, and grief for his friend David; and besides, being a mourner on the above accounts, he might not eat of the sacrifices:

for he was grieved for David; that his death should be determined upon by his father, and he in so much danger of it; as also that he himself must be parted from and lose so dear a friend, which was one reason he ate no meat that day: and another follows,

because his father had done him shame; the copulative "and" being wanting; and this he did by calling him a perverse and rebellious son, and representing him as an arrant fool, and particularly by casting a javelin at him to smite him.

1 Samuel 20:35

Ver. 35. And it came to pass in the morning:,.... The next morning, the morning of the third day of the month:

that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David; he went to the place in the field, or near it, where David hid himself, and at the time agreed between them; which, Abarbinel says, was the time the nobles agreed on for walking, and motion, and for hunting, and casting of arrows, so that Jonathan could go forth without suspicion:

and a little lad with him; to carry his bow and arrows, and fetch his arrows when cast.

1 Samuel 20:36

Ver. 36. And he said unto his lad, run, find out now the arrows which I shoot,.... He no doubt told him the mark which he should shoot at, the stone Ezel, and bid him look out about that for them:

[and] as the lad ran; before he had got to the mark:

he shot an arrow beyond him: or it; beyond the lad, or beyond the mark he shot at; purposely shooting with great strength, that he might exceed, and thereby give notice to David how things stood, which was the sign agreed on.

1 Samuel 20:37

Ver. 37. And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot,.... To the mark which he told him he should shoot at, and whereabout he might expect to find the arrow:

Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, [is] not the arrow beyond thee? he cried with a loud voice and said this, not so much that the lad might hear him, but that David, who lay hid near the place, might hear him; so that if they had no opportunity of seeing and conversing with each other through any person going by at that time, David might know by this sign that evil was determined against him, and must flee for his life; the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions read, "behold, the arrow is beyond thee"; so Noldius {k}.

{k} Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 265. No. 1141.

1 Samuel 20:38

Ver. 38. And Jonathan cried after the lad, make speed, haste, stay not,.... But bring the arrows to him directly, that he might dismiss him; for, observing that no man was passing by, he was desirous of embracing the opportunity for a few minutes to have an interview with David alone before he fled:

and Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows; for though the textual reading is singular, the marginal is plural, to show, as Kimchi observes, that he cast three arrows, as he said he would, 1Sa 20:20;

and came to his master; with them.

1 Samuel 20:39

Ver. 39. But the lad knew not anything,.... What was meant by shooting the arrows, and by shooting them beyond where he was, and by bidding him make haste to bring them:

only Jonathan and David knew the matter; what was signified by them, those being signs agreed upon between them.

1 Samuel 20:40

Ver. 40. And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad,.... "His vessels" {l} or instruments; his arms, as the Targum, his quiver, bow, and arrows:

and said unto him, go, carry [them] to the city; to Gibeah, to Jonathan's house, or to his apartments at court there.

{l} wylk ta "vasa sua", Montanus; "instrumenta sua", Piscator; "arma sua", V. L. Tigurine version.

1 Samuel 20:41

Ver. 41. [And] as soon as the lad was gone,.... Which David could observe from his lurking place:

David arose out of [a place] toward the south; to the south of the field in which he was hid, or to the south of the stone Ezel, near which he was; and so the Targum,

"and David arose from the side of the stone Atha, which was towards the south;"

Jonathan shooting his arrows to the north of it, lest the lad should have discovered David when he ran for them: and fell on his face to the ground; in reverence of Jonathan, as the son of a king, and in respect to him as his friend, who had so faithfully served him, and was so concerned to save his life:

and bowed himself three times: this was before he fell prostrate on the ground. Abarbinel observes, that bowing three; times was fit and proper to be done to a king; once at the place from whence they first see him, the second time in the middle of the way to him, and the third time when come to him; but though this may have been a custom in more modern times, it is a question whether it obtained so early; however it is certain bowing was as ancient, and therefore Xenophon {z} is mistaken in ascribing it to Cyrus as the first introducer of this custom; and be it that he was the first that began it among the Persians, it was in use with others before, as this behaviour of David shows:

and they kissed one another; as friends about to part:

and wept one with another: as not knowing whether they should ever see each other's face any more:

until David exceeded; in weeping more than Jonathan; he having more to part with, not only him his dear friend, but his wife and family, and other dear friends and people of God, and especially the sanctuary and service of God, which of all things lay nearest his heart, and most distressed him; see 1Sa 26:19; and many of his psalms on this occasion. Ben Gersom suggests that he wept more than was meet, through too much fear of Saul; but that seems not to be the case.

{z} Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 23.

1 Samuel 20:42

Ver. 42. And Jonathan said to David, go in peace,.... In peace of mind, committing himself, his family, and affairs, to the providence of God, who would take care of him, and keep him in safety from the evil designs of Saul; and particularly he would have him be easy with respect to what had passed between them two, not doubting but it would be faithfully observed on both sides:

forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord: had made a covenant with each other by an oath, in the name and presence of God as a witness to it:

saying, the Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever; as a witness of the agreement between them, including them and their offspring, and as a revenger of such that should break it. The Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord be between thee and me, &c."

and he arose and departed; that is, David arose from the ground, and took his leave of Jonathan, and departed into the country for the safety of his person and life:

and Jonathan went into the city; into the city of Gibeah, where Saul dwelt and had his court.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 21

This chapter relates that David went to Nob, and pretending he was on secret business for the king, got shewbread, and the sword of Goliath, from Ahimelech the priest, 1Sa 21:1; and that passing from thence to Gath, where he was known, through fear feigned himself mad, and so escaped from thence, 1Sa 21:10.

Ver. 1. Then came David to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest,.... The high priest, as Abarbinel rightly calls him; he was the brother of Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, who being dead he succeeded him; though some say {a} he was the same; see 1Sa 14:3; who was now at Nob, the tabernacle being there, whither probably it was removed by Saul, and where and at Gibeon, according to the Jews {b}, it continued fifty seven years; as in the times of Joshua it was in Shiloh, in the tribe of Ephraim, of which tribe he was; and in the times of David it was placed in the tribe of Judah, to which he belonged; so in the times of Saul it was in Nob, a city of his tribe, twelve miles from Gibeah, according to Bunting {c}; for that it was in the tribe of Benjamin appears by its being mentioned along with Anathoth, Ne 11:32; and according to Jarchi and Kimchi {d} it was near Jerusalem, and so near that it might be seen from thence; some say they are the same {e}; Jerom {f} speaks of it as near Diospolis or Lydda. David, before he departed further off, was willing to see the tabernacle once more, and there worship his God, and inquire of him by the high priest, as he did, 1Sa 22:10; to direct him what way he should take, and that he would prosper and succeed him in it, grant him his presence, and keep him in safety:

and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David; hearing that he was come or coming, he went out to meet him, but when he saw him alone he trembled; especially if he had heard of his having fallen under the displeasure of Saul, and that he now fled from him, therefore he might fear that he should fall into disgrace and danger should he entertain him:

and he said unto him, why [art] thou alone, and no man with thee? he might well wonder at it, and put such a question, seeing he was so great a man, both in the court and camp, and the king's son in law; he might therefore reasonably suspect something more than ordinary was the case, and which occasioned his fears.

{a} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. H. {b} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Zebachim, c. 14. sect. 7. {c} Travels, &c. p. 136. {d} Comment. in lsa. x. 32. {e} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 8. 1. {f} Epitaphium Paulae, fol. 59. A.

1 Samuel 21:2

Ver. 2. And David said unto Ahimelech the priest,.... In reply to his question, and to account for such an appearance he made without an equipage:

the king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, let no man know anything of the business thereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee; he pretended he was upon a secret expedition, by the order of Saul, which none were to know of, no, not his own servants, and that was the reason why he came to him alone; which was a downright lie, and was aggravated by its being told only for the sake of getting a little food; and especially told to an high priest, and at the tabernacle of God, and when he was come to inquire of the Lord there; and was attended with a dreadful consequence, the slaughter of the Lord's priests there, which afterwards lay heavy on David's mind, 1Sa 22:22; and is the very sin he is thought to refer to in
Ps 119:28. This shows the weakness of the best of men, when left to themselves; David who as much hated lying as any man did, fell into it himself:

and I have appointed [my] servants to such and such a place; to such a place, of such an one, not naming place nor person, that they might not be known; so the Targum calls it a place hidden and kept; and that David had some servants, though not now with him, who ate of the shewbread, appears from Mt 12:3; whom Jonathan might send after him, to a place agreed on and appointed between them; so that this might be true.

1 Samuel 21:3

Ver. 3. Now therefore what is under thine hand?.... Meaning, what food had he in his house?

give [me] five [loaves of] bread in mine hand; to take with him, for him and his servants in such a place:

or what there is present; or to be found {g} in the tabernacle; if not five loaves, two, or three, or four, or what food soever he had by him.

{g} aumnh "quicquid inveneris", V. L, "inventum", Montanus; "quicquid inventum fuerit", Tigurine version.

1 Samuel 21:4

Ver. 4. And the priest answered David, and said, [there is] no common bread under mine hand,.... In the tabernacle, though he might have such in his own house; which was common for any man to eat of, even such as were not priests; but he had none there, and David was in haste to be gone because of Doeg, and could not stay till such was fetched:

but there is hallowed bread; such as was devoted to sacred use. Kimchi's father thinks this was the bread of the thank offering, to which Ben Gersom inclines; otherwise the Jewish writers in general understand it of the shewbread; and it is clear it was that from
1Sa 21:6 and from what our Lord says, Mt 12:4. Now this the priest had under his hand, being just taken off of the shewbread table, and was the perquisite of the priests; and which, though it was not lawful for any but priests to eat of, yet in this case of necessity he seemed willing to give it to David and his men, on this condition: if the young men have kept themselves at least from women; from their wives or others, and from any pollution by them, in any way or manner; but as this was also only of a ceremonial kind, it might as well have

been dispensed with, had this been the case, as the other.

1 Samuel 21:5

Ver. 5. And David answered the priest, and said unto him,.... In reply to the case of the young men his servants, and of himself too, who also was intended by the priest, though out of reverence to him not mentioned:

of a truth women [have been] kept from us these three days since I came out; reckoning either from the time he fled from Saul at Naioth, or from the time he left Jonathan, during which time both he and his men could have no converse with women, and receive no pollution by them; and this was the time which according to the law was required for the sanctifying of persons in this way, Ex 19:15;

and the vessels of the young men are holy; their garments, as Kimchi, not being defiled with any ceremonial uncleanness, as by the touch of any unclean person: or what instruments soever they were provided with for their journey; or rather their bodies; see **2Co 4:7**; and with respect to the priest's saying that the bread he had was hallowed or sacred, and so not for common use, David replies,

and [the bread] is in a manner common; inasmuch as it was taken off of the shewbread table, and was now common to the priest and his family, though not to others, yet in case of necessity through hunger might be allowed to strangers:

yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel; even though it had been set but that day on the shewbread table, and so became holy to the Lord; and yet even in such a case and circumstances as David and his men were in, it might be taken from thence and eaten of; for, as Abendana observes, nothing stands in the way of preservation of life, but idolatry, adultery, and murder; everything else may be done for the sake of that but them: or as in the margin of our Bibles, "especially when there is this day other sanctified bread"; that is, since other bread is this day put upon the shewbread table, in the room of that which has been taken away, whereby it is become holy to the, Lord; then that which is removed may be eaten, and be allowed to us in our circumstances. It seems by this that this was the sabbath day; for on that day the removal of the shewbread loaves was made, Le 24:8; and R. Isaiah says, that it was at the going out of the sabbath that David came there; and which still makes it a more appropriate case, as produced by our Lord to justify his disciples in plucking ears of corn on the sabbath day, Mt 12:1.

1 Samuel 21:6

Ver. 6. So the priest gave him hallowed [bread],.... Being satisfied with the account he gave of himself, and his young men, and of the lawfulness of it in case of necessity, acts of mercy being to be preferred to ritual services. Whether he gave him five loaves, as he desired, is not said; but the reason of his giving him such sort of bread is observed,

for there was no bread there; in the tabernacle, whatever might be in the house of the priest:

but the shewbread that was taken from before the Lord; from off of the shewbread table; and it seems to have been just taken off, it being sabbath day, and not as yet carried to the house of the priest, and divided among the other priests as usual; and which was then removed, to put hot bread, in the day that it was taken away; that is, new bread, twelve fresh cakes; for when the twelve, that had stood a week on the shewbread table were removed, twelve more were immediately put in their room, and it seems by this they were put hot there; but here arises a difficulty, how they could be put hot there, when it was not lawful to bake on a sabbath day. About this the Jews are divided; some say they were baked on the sabbath day, but the greater part say that baking did not drive away the sabbath, or it was lawful on the sabbath day; but others say that they were baked on the evening of the sabbath, and kept in the oven until the time of their being set upon the table {h}; and, as Abarbinel observes, the mouth of the oven might be stopped up till that time to keep in the heat; but others say {i} this heat was miraculous, or that a miracle was wrought for the sake of it; which is not probable.

{h} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 95. 2. {i} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21. 1. Menachot, fol. 96. 2.

1 Samuel 21:7

Ver. 7. Now a certain man of the servants of Saul [was] there that day,.... When David came to Nob, and asked bread of the priest, and had it, which this man was an eyewitness of, 1Sa 22:9;

detained before the Lord; either because it was sabbath day, and so he might not travel, at least no more than two thousand cubits; or by some vow of his, which he was obliged to stay and perform; or on account of some impurity he had contracted, which he came to be cleansed from; or this detention was voluntary, in order to offer sacrifice to the Lord, or pray unto him, or to study the law of God in the tabernacle, pretending to be a very religious man:

and his name [was] Doeg, an Edomite, being by birth an Idumean, but a proselyte to the Jewish religion; or he was of the seed of Israel, but because he had dwelt in Edom, he was called an Edomite, as Kimchi thinks; just as Uriah is called for a like reason the Hittite:

the chiefest of the herdmen that [belonged] to Saul; Saul had his herds and men to look after them, and this man was set over them all, to see that they faithfully discharged their trust. The same officer the Romans called the praefect, or master of the cattle {k}; See Gill on "1Ch 27:29", and See Gill on "1Ch 27:31"; though this man was not only over the king's cattle, but over those that kept them; and was in the same office as Phorbas was, under Laius king of Thebes {l}, and Melanthius in Homer {m}, and Faustulus to Amulius {n}: but Abarbinel is of opinion that this is to be understood not of the keepers of herds and flocks, but of the shepherds or rulers of the people; and that this man was set over all the other magistrates and rulers of the people, hence said to be "set over the servants of Saul", 1Sa 22:9; and so Jarchi calls him "Ab Beth Din", or father of the sanhedrim, or great court of judicature; who was detained in the tabernacle to learn the law there, that he might be the better qualified for his office; but Kimchi interprets it as we do, the chief of the keepers of the herd, and both the Septuagint and Josephus {o} say that he fed the king's mules.

{k} Vid. Pignorium de servis, p. 539. {l} Senecae Oedipus, Act. 4. v. 815, 816, 839. {m} Odyss. 20. ver. 21. {n} Aurel. Victor. orig. Gent. Roman. {o} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 12. sect. 1.

1 Samuel 21:8

Ver. 8. And David said unto Ahimelech,.... After he had given him some of the loaves of the shewbread:

and is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? any weapon, meaning in the tabernacle, and in his keeping, and at his disposal; he knew the sword of Goliath was there, and perhaps had a principal view to it, and put this question in order to get that in his possession:

for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me; neither his sword, nor any part of his armour, but was come quite naked and unarmed and, as he pretended,

because the king's business required haste; still continuing his lie; whereas the true reason was, he was let down in haste by his wife through a window of his house, and could not stay to take his armour with him; and had lain hid for some time, and passed incognito from place to place, and without armour, that he might be the less known and observed, and least suspected; though it may seem strange that Jonathan had not provided him with a sword.

1 Samuel 21:9

Ver. 9. And the priest said, the sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah,.... See 1Sa 17:2;

behold, it [is here] wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; the garment of the high priest, in which were the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate, or the linen vestments of the priests; see 1Sa 22:18; which were laid up in a chamber for their use; and behind them the sword of Goliath was wrapped up in a linen cloth, and reserved as a monument of the goodness of God to Israel, and the salvation of them wrought by the hands of David, who slew Goliath with this his own sword, and brought it with him. The Targum understands this word, rendered "behind", not of the place where the sword was, but of the time when the priest said this, and paraphrases the words,

"after he had inquired for him by the ephod;"

see 1Sa 22:10;

if thou wilt take that, take [it]; as if he should say, it is not mine to give thee, but thou mayest take it if thou pleasest; none has a better right to it; it is what thou tookest from the Philistine, and may take it again for thy use if thou art so inclined; and thou must either take this or none:

for [there is] no other save that here; in the tabernacle, nor even in the priest's house, nor in the city; for it was a city of priests, who did not wear swords:

and David said, [there is] none like that, give it me; and which, as he was capable of wielding and making use of, as it is plain he was by cutting off Goliath's head with it; so it might serve to strengthen his faith in God, as often as he looked upon it, that he would keep and preserve him, and in due time deliver him out of the hands of Saul, and all his enemies.

1 Samuel 21:10

Ver. 10. And David arose and fled that day for fear of Saul,.... He had fled before for fear of him both from his own house, and from Naioth, 1Sa 19:18; but now he fled out of the land of Israel, for fear of him; or it may be the reason of his fear and flight on this day was because of Doeg the Edomite, lest he should go directly to Saul, and tell him where he was; and therefore through fear of him would not stay any longer, but the same day he came, he fled:

and went to Achish the king of Gath; Gath, according to Bunting {p}, was twenty four miles from Nob. Achish, the king of it, is called Abimelech in the title of the thirty fourth psalm, see Ps 34:1, that name being common to the kings of the Philistines, as Pharaoh was to the kings of Egypt. It may seem strange that David should go into an enemy's country, and especially to the country of the Philistines, by whom he was mortally hated for the victories he had obtained over them, and the numbers of them he had slain; and particularly that he should go to Gath, the place of Goliath, their champion, whom he had slain, and whose sword he now had with him: but this is to be said for him, that such was the fury of Saul against him, and his resolution to slay him, that he was as safe in an enemy's country as in the land of Israel; and that if he must die, he might as well die in one place as another; and that he went particularly here, the reason might be, because all other lands were at peace with Saul, and so would have delivered him up to him, had he went elsewhere; but this people were at war with him, and he might hope not to be known by them; and if he was, that they might think it their interest, to detain such a person that was so serviceable to Saul, and so harmful to them; and being Saul's enemy, they might hope to engage him on their side against him; and besides, he might know that Achish was well disposed towards him, as he seems to be, and might like him never the worse for cutting off Goliath's head, who might not be heartily in the interest of Achish. After all, as impolitic as this step of David's may seems to be, it is what great men have taken in their distress, to go over to their enemies, as Themistocles to the Molossians, and

Alcibiades to the Lacedemonians.

{p} Travels, &c. p. 136.

1 Samuel 21:11

Ver. 11. And the servants of Achish said unto him,.... Who knew who David was, and perceiving that he was respected by Achish:

[is] not this David the king of the land? of the land of the Philistines; so some render the words, "the king of this land" {q}; which belongs unto him for his conquest of Goliath; for this was what was proposed by him, that whoever was the conqueror should possess the kingdom; and seeing it belongs to him, O Achish, why dost thou admit him to court? thou wilt be driven from the throne, and we shall be his servants, and not thine {r}: but rather they mean the king of the land of Israel, having heard that he was anointed king by Samuel, and was to succeed Saul; or rather, they called him so because he led out the armies of Israel as their general, and being victorious was more respected than even Saul was; for they had heard what the women sung in their songs as follows:

did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands? which are the burden of their song, 1Sa 18:7; and from whence the servants of Achish concluded, that he was in greater authority or honour, and in greater esteem than Saul their king was.

{q} Urah Klm "rex hujus regionis", Vatablus. {r} Vid. Jarchium & Jesaiam in loc.

1 Samuel 21:12

Ver. 12. And David laid up these words in his heart,.... Pondered upon them, and thought them over in his mind, finding that he was known, and his character also, and considered with himself what might be the consequence of this:

and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath; lest he should be set against him, and be prevailed upon by his servants to take away his life, or deliver him up into the hands of Saul.

1 Samuel 21:13

Ver. 13. And he changed his behaviour before them,.... Behaved like a fool, or a madman: or changed his "taste" {s}; which some understand of his reason, acted as if he was deprived of it; and others of his speech, his words and the accent of them, drawled them out, as such persons do:

and feigned himself mad in their hands; for in their hands he was, being taken by them, as the title of the fifty sixth psalm shows, Ps 56:1; and this stratagem he used to get himself out of their hands, acting the part of a madman, delirious, and out of his senses:

and scrabbled on the doors of the gate; as if he was writing something there, and making marks upon them:

and let his spittle fall down upon his beard; slavered, as idiots and madmen do; and however mean this may seem in David to act such a part, it cannot be condemned as wicked, since it was only a stratagem to deliver himself, out of an enemy's hand, and stratagems are always allowed to be used against an enemy; and such a method as this has been taken by men of the greatest sense and wit, as by Brutus {t} and Solon {u}; and yet, according to the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions, this case of his was real and not feigned; that through the surprise of being known in the court of Achish, he was seized with an epilepsy; that his countenance was changed, and his mouth distorted, as persons in such fits are; that he fell among them as one convulsed, and fell at, and dashed against the doors of the gates, and foamed at the mouth, as such persons do; see **Lu 9:39**; and so in the following words the Greek version is, ye see the man is an epileptic; I do not want epileptics; but the thirty fourth and fifty sixth psalms, composed by him at this time, show that as he was of a sound mind, so in good health of body, and not subject to such fits as here represented, see
Ps 34:1; which would have rendered him unfit for such composures.

{s} wmej "sensum suum", Montanus, Vatablus; "sermonem suum", Pagninus. {t} Liv. Hist. l. 1. c. 56. Aurel. Victor. de Vir. Illustr. c. 13. {u} Justin e Trogo, l. 2. c. 7.

1 Samuel 21:14

Ver. 14. Then said Achish to his servants, lo, you see the man is mad,.... Which he said, as willing his servants should think so, and therefore rather the object of their pity than of their rage and malice; or as really believing he was so, which he and they might conclude not merely from these his actions, before described, which they might judge real and not feigned; but they might suppose this was truly his case, brought upon him by the ill usage of Saul, who pursuing him from place to place, and sending after him to take away his life, had really brought him to distraction; and this they might rather conclude from his coming to Gath, an enemy's country, and whose champion he had slain, and many others of them; which it might be thought no man in his senses would have done:

wherefore [then] have ye brought him to me? for if he was brought to be employed in his service, he seemed very unfit for it, whether in the camp, or in the court; and if to be tried and condemned as an enemy, since he was a madman, he was rather to be pitied.

1 Samuel 21:15

Ver. 15. Have I need of madmen?.... Or fools, do I want them? have not I enough of them already at my court? I want wise men, and not fools and madmen. The Jews say {w} that the wife and daughter of Achish were mad; that while David was playing the fool and madman without, they were acting the same part within; so that Achish had enough of that sort of diversion, if it was to be reckoned such; as it was according to the taste of some persons, who used, as in later so in earlier times, to keep fools in their houses to make them sport; but Achish had enough of that, and too much, at least needed no more:

that ye have brought this [fellow] to play the madman in my presence? or act the part of a fool before me:

shall this [fellow] come into mine house? court or palace, and have a post there; you need be in no pain about it; he is neither agreeable to me, nor fit for any; and therefore Achish drove him away as a fool or madman, instead of imprisoning him as an enemy, or taking away his life; see the title of the thirty fourth psalm, Ps 34:1.

{w} Midrash Tillim apud Abarbinel. in loc.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 22

This chapter gives us an account of the flight of David from place to place, from Gath to the cave of Adullam, where his relations came to him; from thence to Mizpeh in Moab, where he got leave of the king of Moab for his father and mother to dwell there; and from thence, by the advice of Gad the prophet, departed into the land of Judah, and came to the forest of Hareth, 1Sa 21:1; and of the complaint of Saul to his servants of their unfaithfulness to him, and indolence and unconcern at the behaviour of Jonathan and David to him, 1Sa 22:6; when Doeg the Edomite informed him of David being seen by him at Nob, and of his receiving food and a sword from Ahimelech the priest, who inquired of the Lord for him, 1Sa 22:9; upon which Saul sent for Ahimelech and all the priests at Nob, and charged them with a conspiracy against him; and notwithstanding the defence the priest made, Saul ordered him and the rest of the priests to be slain by his guards; which they refusing, Doeg became the executioner of them, and of all the inhabitants of the city of Nob, and the cattle in it, 1Sa 22:11; only Abiathar a son of Ahimelech escaped and fled to David with the sorrowful news; which greatly affected David, looking upon himself to be the occasion of this sad disaster, and he took Abiathar under his protection, and promised him safety, 1Sa 22:20.

Ver. 1. David therefore departed from thence,.... From Gath, being driven by Achish from his court, and let go by his servants, and glad he was of the deliverance:

and escaped to the cave Adullam; which was no doubt near to a city of the same name in the tribe of Judah, of which See Gill on "Jos 15:35"; this being a strong place, and in his own tribe, he might hope to be in greater safety; here he penned his hundred forty second psalm, see
Ps 142:1:

and when his brethren and all his father's house heard [it]; that he was come thither:

they went down thither to him; to visit and comfort him, counsel and assist him all they could; and chiefly to secure themselves from the rage and malice of Saul, who they might fear would fall upon them, and avenge himself on them for David's sake.

1 Samuel 22:2

Ver. 2. And everyone [that was] in distress,.... In straitened circumstances, through the oppression of men, through poverty, and afflictive providences in their families:

and everyone [that was] in debt; and not able to pay their debts, and whose creditors were pressing upon them:

and everyone [that was] discontented; with Saul's government and conduct: or "bitter in soul" {x}; distressed and uneasy in their minds, being pinched with want, or pressed with sore afflictions, which made them very disconsolate: these

gathered themselves unto him; to help him, or rather to be helped by him; hoping in time things would take a favourable turn with him, and he should be advanced to the throne, and so their circumstances would be mended thereby:

and he became a captain over them; they enlisted themselves in his service, and he took the command of them; he might not know the circumstances of those in debt, nor of any of them thoroughly, nor their views in joining him; however he meant not to shelter them from paying their just debts if able, nor to encourage them in disloyalty to their king, only to make use of them for his own preservation for the present. In this he was a type of Christ, who receives sinners distressed with a sense of sin, discontented in their present state, and in debt, and, unable to pay their debts; see Mt 11:28;

and there were with him about four hundred men; among whom some think were the three mighty men spoken of in 2Sa 23:13.

{x} vpn rm "amarus animo", Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Samuel 22:3

Ver. 3. And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab,.... So called to distinguish it from a place of the same name in the land of Israel; which Junius says is the same with Malle, and signifies a fortified place, and refers to the Apocrypha:

"And how that many of them were shut up in Bosora, and Bosor, and Alema, Casphor, Maked, and Carnaim; all these cities are strong and great:" (1 Maccabees 5:26)

here he might think himself safer, though in an enemy's country, than in the land of Israel:

and he said unto the king of Moab, let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth; out of the land of Israel, or out of the cave of Adullam, whither they were come to him:

[and be] with you; if not with the king of Moab at his court, yet in some part or other of his country, where they might be safe from the rage of Saul:

till I know what God will do for me; on whose power and providence he wholly relied, and not upon the men that flocked to him, nor upon his own power and policy, courage and wisdom; he knew the promise of God to him, and he put his trust in him for the performance of it; but knew not the time, nor way, and manner, in which it would be performed; and expected in the meanwhile to be obliged to remove from place to place; and considering that his aged parents were not fit for such quick and sudden motions, and long flights, he provided as well as he could for their settlement; which was an instance of his filial affection for them, and piety towards them. His father's name is well known, Jesse, **Ru 4:22**, &c. but his mother's name is nowhere mentioned; the Jews say her name was Natzbet, the daughter of Adal {y}.

{y} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1.

1 Samuel 22:4

Ver. 4. And he brought them before the king of Moab,.... Having leave from him for it, and left them with him; so the Targum,

"caused them to remain before him:"

and they dwelt with him all the whole time that David was in the hold; either in the cave of Adullam, as some think; or rather at Mizpeh in Moab, which might be a fortified place; or the sense may be, while he was in any hold in those parts, as he might go from one to another; what became of David's parents afterwards, we nowhere else read. The Jews {z} say the king of Moab slew his father and his mother, and his brethren, all but one, whom Nahash the Ammonite preserved; and is the kindness David speaks of, 2Sa 10:2; and if this was the case, now it was that his father and mother forsook him, and God took him up, Ps 27:10.

{z} Bemnidbar Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 212. 1. Tanchuma apud Jarchium in loc.

1 Samuel 22:5

Ver. 5. And the prophet Gad said unto David,.... Who either accompanied him in his exile, or was sent unto him on this account, being one of the company of the prophets, over whom Samuel was president, 1Sa 19:20;

abide not in the hold, depart, and get thee into the land of Judah; this seems to confirm it that the hold David was in was not the cave of Adullam, because that was in the tribe of Judah; but rather some hold in the land of Moab, which he is directed by the prophet to leave, and go into the country of Judah, his own tribe, where Saul would not be so forward to pursue him, and where he would be among his friends, and in the way, upon Saul's death, to be anointed king over Judah; besides, appearing more openly would show the innocence of his cause, and his confidence in the Lord, more than to lurk about in a foreign land:

then David departed; from "Mizpeh" in "Moab"; or, however, from the hold in which he was:

and came into the forest of Hareth; where he would have places and opportunity enough to hide himself as he saw fit. Jerom {a} speaks of a village called Arath, where David abode, to the west of Jerusalem. Kimchi says this was a dry barren place, but for the sake of David it was made by the Lord a well watered and fruitful one.

{a} De loc. Heb. fol. 88. L.

1 Samuel 22:6

Ver. 6. When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that [were] with him,.... That it was known where David was, and what number of men were gathered to him, and that they now openly appeared in the tribe of Judah; for some time Saul had heard nothing of him, but now a report had reached his ears that David was in arms, and at the head of a number of men; which now greatly alarmed Saul, and possessed him with fears and jealousies of his people, and all about him:

now Saul abode in Gibeah, under a tree in Ramah; this was Gibeah of Saul, and in or near which was a place called Ramah, or an high place, as the word signifies, on which was a remarkable tree, and under that Saul abode, being a proper shelter for him from any inclemency of the weather; for this was not Ramah where Samuel dwelt, though the Jews in the Talmud {b} so think, and metaphorically understand the tree in it of Samuel in Ramah praying for him, by means of which he continued two years in the height of his kingdom; but this was a tree in a literal sense. R. Jonah {c} says it is possible it might be the same which in Arabia is called Ethel, and is like to a tamarisk tree:

having his spear in his hand: ready to defend himself, and revenge his enemies; or rather which he held as a sceptre in his hand;
See Gill on "1Sa 20:33";

and all his servants [were] standing about him; in reverence of him, and honour to him, waiting upon him, and ready to obey his orders: these were his courtiers, or his guards, or both.

{b} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 5. 2. {c} Apud Ben Melech in loc.

1 Samuel 22:7

Ver. 7. Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him,.... He took this opportunity of addressing them in the following manner, upon the report of David being at the head of a certain number of men:

hear now, ye Benjamites; for Saul being of the tribe of Benjamin, his courtiers and his bodyguards chiefly, if not altogether, consisted of persons of that tribe; and therefore as they were under obligation to him, and ought to abide by him, and adhere closely to him, so it was the more ungrateful in them, as he thought, not to be concerned for his honour and interest:

will the son of Jesse give everyone of you fields and vineyards; as Saul had done, or was capable of doing, and would do if they were faithful to him;

whereas it was not in the power of David, whom in contempt he calls the son of Jesse, to do it; and even should he ever be king, and in his power to make such donations, it cannot be thought he would give them to them, but to the favourites of his own tribe:

[and] make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds; which he now could not do, since he had with him but four hundred men in all; and should his army increase, and the kingdom come into his hands, so far would all of them be from being advanced to posts in the army, that it was probable none of them would, but those of his own tribe and party.

1 Samuel 22:8

Ver. 8. That all of you have conspired against me,.... For though they had not revolted from him, and been guilty of overt acts of treason, yet since they did not discover to him what he supposed they knew, and showed no concern for the circumstances in which he was, he interpreted this a conspiracy against him:

and [there is] none that showeth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse; Saul did not know this certainly, he only suspected it from the strict and close friendship between them, and imagined that some of his servants were acquainted with it, though they kept it from him; whereas none knew of it but Jonathan and David themselves:

and [there is] none of you that is sorry for me; concerned, troubled, and grieved, that he should be in such circumstances, his own son and his son-in-law in league against him: or, as De Dieu renders it, were not "solicitous" for him, cared not how things went with him, or, against him:

or showeth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me to lie in wait, as at this day? which he concluded was the case, from Jonathan's not appearing at court since Saul cast the javelin at him, 1Sa 19:10; or, however, if he did, his countenance showed he was uneasy and discontented, and displeased with Saul; and, besides, he could not think that David, with such a handful of men he had with him, would ever attempt to invade his kingdom, and seize his crown and throne, unless he was privately encouraged by his own son; and David's being either in the cave of Adullam, or forest of Hareth, whichever of them Saul heard of, he interpreted as lying in wait for him, whereas it was only for the security of himself; and what Saul took ill of his servants was, that none of them apprized him of his son's concern in this matter.

1 Samuel 22:9

Ver. 9. Then answered Doeg the Edomite,.... Josephus {d} calls him a Syrian, and so the Septuagint version; see 1Sa 21:7; being full of enmity to David, and willing to curry favour with Saul, and eager of further preferment, which Saul seemed to promise; and being more forward than the rest of his servants, prevented them and spoke first:

(which was set over the servants of Saul): over his herdsmen; see 1Sa 21:7;

and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub; in imitation of Saul, he calls David by way of contempt the son of Jesse; and signifies that what he had to say of him was not by report, but he himself was an eyewitness of his coming to Nob, a city of the priests, and to Ahimelech the high priest there, and of what passed between them.

{d} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 12. sect. 1, 4.

1 Samuel 22:10

Ver. 10. And he inquired of the Lord for him,.... Which not being expressed before, some have taken it to be a lie of Doeg's, he being charged with lying by David, Ps 52:3; but it is not at all improbable that David should desire him to inquire of the Lord for him, and that he did; and he seems to acknowledge it, 1Sa 22:15; but according to the Jewish writers Doeg meant by this to prove a charge of treason both against David and Ahimelech; that the former made himself king, and the latter owned him to be so, since inquiry by Urim and Thummim was not made for a private person, but for a king {e}:

and gave him victuals; hallowed bread, loaves of shewbread, which none but priests might eat of; such was his kindness to him:

and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine; which David took from him, and slew him with it. All this was true, but then he acted the deceitful part, with which he is charged in the above psalms, in not declaring how David had imposed upon the priest, by pretending he was sent in haste on the king's business; which was the reason he was so ill provided with servants, food, and armour; which if Doeg had reported faithfully, as he ought to have done, would have saved the credit and life of the priest, and of his family.

{e} Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 5.

1 Samuel 22:11

Ver. 11. Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub,.... Sent messengers to him, and summoned him to appear before him:

and all his father's house; the family of Eli, which God had threatened to destroy, and now the time was hastening on:

the priests that [were] in Nob; in which dwelt none but priests, at least these were the chief of the inhabitants, and therefore called the city of the priests, 1Sa 22:19;

and they came all of them to the king; not being conscious of any evil they had committed, or that could be charged upon them; or otherwise they would not have appeared, but would have fled to David for protection.

1 Samuel 22:12

Ver. 12. And Saul said, hear now, thou son of Ahitub,.... The charge exhibited against him; in contempt of him, he does not so much as call him by his name, nor give him the title of his office, as high priest; though he was the second person in the kingdom, and to whose office a few years ago the civil government was annexed:

and he answered, here I [am], my lord; giving due honour to Saul, though he received none from him, and appearing with great boldness, as having a clear conscience, and so ready to hear what was to be said unto him.

1 Samuel 22:13

Ver. 13. And Saul said unto him, why have ye conspired against me, thou, and the son of Jesse?.... No less than treason and rebellion is he charged with, in conjunction with David; the proof follows:

in that thou hast given him bread and a sword; the shewbread, and the sword of Goliath, 1Sa 21:6, and so had furnished him with food and arms; one that he suggests was in rebellion against him, and therefore he must be involved in the same crime; but the stronger proof follows

and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait as at this day: inquired of the Lord for him by Urim and Thummim, to know his mind in this affair, and thereby encouraged him to rise up in rebellion against him, and to lie in wait, as he did at the present time, watching for an opportunity to seize his crown and kingdom.

1 Samuel 22:14

Ver. 14. Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said,.... First with respect to David, and then with regard to himself; with respect to David as follows,

and who [is so] faithful amongst thy servants as David; I considered him, as if he should say, as a servant of thine, upon an errand of thine, and doing thy business; and as a faithful one, none more so, and as such I valued and regarded him, not as a rebel to thee, having no such thought of him:

which is the king's son in law; who has behaved himself so well, and thou hast entertained such an opinion of him, as to take him into thy family, and marry thy daughter to him; wherefore showing him favour, and doing him honour, was doing honour to thee and thy family, and surely there can be no blame in that:

and goeth at thy bidding; has always been ready to execute thy commands, and obey thine orders, let them be what they will; as to go out against an enemy, and fight Saul's battles for him:

and is honourable in thine house? behaved honourably there, and highly esteemed by all, as well as had the honour bestowed upon him to be the king's son-in-law, and made captain of a thousand; and therefore who could think that showing respect to such a man could be deemed treason and conspiracy, or he be thought to be a traitor to the king? and then with respect to himself he answers,

1 Samuel 22:15

Ver. 15. Did I then begin to inquire of God for him?.... Was this the first time of inquiring of God for him? no; I have done this many a time, when he has been going upon the king's business, engaging in war with his enemies; he has then consulted the Lord by me, and I have inquired of the Lord for him, as I now did; and which I did as innocently, and as much for the king's service, as ever I did any. Kimchi observes it may be read without the interrogation, "that day I began to inquire of God for him"; it was the first time I ever did, and I did not know it would have been grievous to thee, or have given thee any disturbance or uneasiness. I did not know that he fled from thee, or was not in thy service, and upon thy business; had I known it, I would never have done it, and as it is the first time it shall be the last:

be it far from me; from doing such a thing, had I known it to be disagreeable to thee, or how David stood with thee:

let not the king impute [any] thing unto his servant, [nor] to all the house of my father; charge me or them with the crime of treason, or conspiracy against him, or with aiding:, assisting, and abetting traitors and conspirators:

for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more; was entirely ignorant of this affair; which plain, honest, account of things, one might have thought, would have been satisfying to Saul; but it seems it was not by what follows.

1 Samuel 22:16

Ver. 16. And the king said, thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech,.... He pronounces the sentence himself, without taking the opinion and advice of others, or further time; which was an act of arbitrary power, and upon an innocent person, which was an act of great injustice:

thou, and all thy father's house; more unrighteous still; but God suffered him to do this to fulfil his will, and execute his threatenings against the house of Eli, which was this priest's father's house, for former wickedness; but this is no excuse for, nor extenuation of the sin of, Saul.

1 Samuel 22:17

Ver. 17. And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him,.... Or the "runners" {f}; the running footmen, that used to run before him when he went out from place to place, and were here waiting on him, ready to set out whenever he should give the orders to go elsewhere. The tradition of the Jews is, that these were Abner and Amasa {g}; but, as Kimchi observes, they were not footmen, but princes, captains in the army, and the first of them the general of it:

turn and slay the priests of the Lord; he owns them to be the priests of the Lord, and calls them so, and yet gave orders to put them to death, though innocent; one would have thought this their character would have flown in his face, and stung his conscience, and deterred him from so foul a fact:

because their hand also [is] with David; as well as Ahimelech; which did not at all appear, nor that they had so much as seen him at Nob, only Ahimelech; and still less that they had entered into a conspiracy with him:

and because they knew when he fled, and did not show it to me; which also was false; they knew nothing of the flight of David, and therefore could not discover it to the king:

but the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord; their consciences would not suffer them to do it; they refused to obey the king's orders, and chose rather to expose themselves to his resentment, than to be guilty of such a crime. Saul's footmen had more sense of honour, justice, and truth, than he himself had, and were worthy of praise; but they would have been deserving of more, if they could not have prevailed upon him by entreaties and remonstrances to have forborne such a bloody execution, instead of being the tame spectators of it, they had taken him, and bound him as a madman, and so facilitated the escape of the priests, and prevented this shocking scene of wickedness.

{f} Myurl "cursoribus", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
{g} Midrash Tillim apud Abarbinel. in loc.

1 Samuel 22:18

Ver. 18. And the king said to Doeg, turn thou and fall upon the priests,.... For determined he was they should die; if one would not put them to death, another should, and who so fit for this bloody work as the false accuser of them, and false witness against them?

and Doeg the Edomite turned; immediately, he at once obeyed the king's orders, as brutish as they were:

and fell upon the priests; with his sword in hand:

and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod; not the ephod of Urim and Thummim, which was only worn by the high priest, but a garment wholly linen, worn by common priests; the Targum is,

"who are fit to be clothed with a linen ephod;"

not that they were clothed with it, but were deserving of it; or it designs the great and more honourable among the servants of the Lord, as Kimchi observes, for such were clothed with this garment, as Samuel and David; and he thinks it suggests, that more were slain than these; and the Septuagint version makes them to be eight hundred five, and Josephus {h} three hundred eighty five; in the slaying of whom, as the same writer says, Doeg was assisted by some wicked men like himself; and the slaughter did not end here, as the 1Sa 22:19 shows.

{h} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 12. sect. 6.

1 Samuel 22:19

Ver. 19. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword,.... Either Doeg or Saul; who, as Josephus {i} says, sent men thither to slay all the inhabitants of it:

both men and women, children and sucklings; not sparing sex nor age:

and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword; Saul, who was so tender hearted and merciful in the case of the Amalekites, when his orders from the Lord were utterly to destroy them, 1Sa 15:2, that he spared their king, and the best of their cattle, 1Sa 15:7; yet now so cruel to a city of the priests, as to destroy all the inhabitants of it, and cattle in it; and yet this bloody affair of Saul's is not taken notice of afterwards, only his slaughter of the Gibeonites, 2Sa 21:1; and Abarbinel is of opinion, that the inhabitants of this place were Gibeonites, who were hewers of wood, and drawers of water, to the house of the Lord here, **Jos 9:23**. Now Saul was the more severe this city, to deter others from joining with David, who, if they did, must expect the same treatment.

{i} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 12. sect. 6.

1 Samuel 22:20

Ver. 20. And one of the sons of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped,.... Who very probably was left by his father to take care of the sanctuary, and the holy things in it, when he and the rest of the priests were summoned to appear before Saul; who having heard of his bloody execution of them, before his messengers could get to Nob, took, the ephod, with the Urim and Thummim, and made his escape, as appears from 1Sa 23:6; this man succeeded his father in the high priesthood, and continued in it until the times of Solomon:

and fled after David; who was now removed, or removing from the forest of Hareth to Keilah, whither Abiathar followed him, and came to him there, 1Sa 23:6, and with whom only he could be safe, and therefore it was right to flee unto him.

1 Samuel 22:21

Ver. 21. And Abiathar showed David that Saul had slain the Lord's priests. Of which perhaps he had not as yet heard; though tidings of such a nature generally fly swiftly; and a sorrowful shocking account he had to give, and which was so to David.

1 Samuel 22:22

Ver. 22. And David said unto Abiathar, I knew [it] that day,.... That is, he thought in his mind at that time:

when Doeg the Edomite [was] there; at Nob; in the tabernacle, at the same time that David was there:

that he would surely tell Saul; that he saw David there, and what passed between him and Ahimelech; he knew he was a spiteful mischievous man; that he was a true Edomite, though a proselyte, and bore hatred and enmity in his mind against an Israelite, and especially an Israelite indeed, as David was:

I have occasioned [the death] of all the persons of thy father's house: or have been the cause of all the evils that befell them, and the death they were put unto, not with design, but by accident; and it grieved him that he should be any ways an accessory thereunto, though without intention.

1 Samuel 22:23

Ver. 23. Abide thou with me, fear not,.... He appeared to be in a fright; which is not to be wondered at, as not knowing what to do, and where to go and provide for his safety; when, to allay his fears, and make him easy, David invites and encourages him to stay with him, and not be afraid of Saul, nor any other:

for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life; or, as Kimchi observes, it may be interpreted, "my life he seeks who seeks thy life"; we are in the same circumstances, and have the same common enemy, and therefore it is best and safest to be together; as the Targum,

"he that seeks to kill me seeks to kill thee;"

and as Jarchi adds, he that loves me will love thee, and he that keeps my life will keep thine:

but with me thou [shalt be] in safeguard; intimating, that he would be as careful of him as of himself; and that for this reason, as Ben Gersom suggests, because he brought the ephod with the Urim and Thummim with him, by which he could inquire of God for him; but this was the thing David was confident of, that God would preserve him, and raise him to the kingdom, and therefore Abiathar might be sure of safety with him: at this time he penned the fifty second psalm, which shows the frame of spirit he was now in; see Ps 52:1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 23

This chapter gives an account of David's relieving Keilah, when it had like to have fallen into the hands of the Philistines, 1Sa 23:1; and of Saul's design to surprise him there, which David having notice of, and inquiring of the Lord, departed from thence; which when Saul heard of, he forbore to come forth, 1Sa 23:7; and of David's being in the wilderness of Ziph, where, in a wood there, he had an interview with Jonathan, 1Sa 23:14; and of the Ziphites offering to deliver him up to Saul, for which he commends them, and gives them instructions how they should behave to him in that affair, 1Sa 23:19; and of his seeking him in the wilderness of Maon, where David and his men were in great danger of being taken; which was prevented by the news of the Philistines invading the land coming to Saul just at the nick of time, 1Sa 23:24.

Ver. 1. Then they told David,.... Either the men of Keilah sent to him, being near them, or some well wishers of theirs, and of their country, acquainted him with their case:

saying, behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah; had laid siege to it, being a fortified place, 1Sa 23:7; it was a city in the tribe of Judah, on the borders of the Philistines; of which
See Gill on "Jos 15:44";

and they rob the threshing floors; took away the corn upon them, which they were threshing and winnowing, which were usually done without the city for the sake of wind, see **Jud 6:11**; it was harvest time when the three mighty men came to David in the cave of Adullam, and so now it might be the time of threshing, harvest being over, see
1Sa 22:1; compared with 2Sa 23:13.

1 Samuel 23:2

Ver. 2. Therefore David inquired of the Lord, saying, shall I go and smite these Philistines?.... For though David was well disposed to serve his country, and was desirous of freeing them from their enemies the Philistines, he might have some doubts in his mind whether it would be right for him to engage with them now; partly because he could not act under a commission from his prince, Saul the king; and partly because he had such a small number of forces with him, that it might be hazardous for him to attack the armies of the Philistines with them, and attempt to raise the siege of Keilah; and therefore he thought it advisable, as doubtless it was, to inquire of the Lord what was his mind and will in this matter: how and by what means he inquired it is not said, very probably it was by the prophet Gad, who was with him, 1Sa 22:5; for as for Abiathar, he was not yet come with the ephod, the Urim and Thummim, to inquire by them, 1Sa 23:6; though some think that is observed there to show in what way David did inquire, namely, by Urim and Thummim; and so Kimchi and Abarbinel understand it; and it is supposed that he came to David when he was about Keilah, and near unto it, and so before he came thither, and time enough for him to inquire by him whether he should go thither or not:

and the Lord said unto David, go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah; which was not only giving him leave to go, and signifying it was his mind and will he should; but that he should be successful, and rout the Philistines, and raise the siege of Keilah, and save the city from falling into their hands.

1 Samuel 23:3

Ver. 3. And David's men said unto him, behold, we be afraid here in Judah,.... Of Saul and his army falling upon them, and crushing them, though they were in the tribe of Judah, where they had many friends, and in the heart of that tribe:

how much more then if we come to Keilah; which, though in the same tribe, yet in the further parts of it, and on the borders of the Philistines: and there engage

against the armies of the Philistines? too numerous and powerful for them, and so by this means be driven out of their place of safety, the forest of Hareth, where they could hide themselves upon occasion; to be exposed not only to the Philistines, before them, on the edge of their country, from whence they could have re-enforcements easily, but to Saul and his army behind them; and so, being between two fires, would be in danger of being cut off.

1 Samuel 23:4

Ver. 4. Then David inquired of the Lord yet again,.... Not for his own sake, who firmly believed it was the will of God he should go and succeed, but for the sake of his men, and to remove the doubts and fears that hung on their minds:

and the Lord answered him, and said, arise, go down to Keilah; immediately, make no stay, nor hesitate about it, but go with all haste to the relief of the place:

for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hands; which is still more explicit, and is a promise not only of delivering Keilah out of the hands of the Philistines, but of delivering them into David's hands, and so of an entire: victory; and therefore none of David's men had anything to fear after such a declaration of the will of God.

1 Samuel 23:5

Ver. 5. So David and his men went to Keilah,.... Animated by a commission from God, and a promise of success by him:

and fought with the Philistines; encamped before Keilah:

and brought away their cattle; which they had brought with them for the support of their army; or having routed them, they pursued them into their own country, and brought off their cattle from thence:

and smote them with a great slaughter; killed great numbers of them, and put the rest to flight:

so David saved the inhabitants of Keilah; from falling into the hands of the Philistines, by timely raising the siege of the city.

1 Samuel 23:6

Ver. 6. And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah,.... Either when he was there, or near the place:

[that] he came down with an ephod in his hand; not with a linen ephod on his back, which the priests in common wore, but the ephod with the Urim and Thummim in his hand, which was peculiar to the high priest; and his father the high priest being dead, it belonged to him, and therefore he took care to bring

it with him; though the words may be literally rendered, "the ephod came down in his hand" {k}, as it were by chance, and not with design; and so some Jewish interpreters {l} understand it, that in his fright and flight, among his garments and other things he took hold of to carry with him, and not minding well what he took, this happened to be, being so ordered by the providence of God; though the Targum renders it,

"the ephod he made to descend in his hand,"

or brought it in his hand; and so Kimchi and Abarbinel observe it may be interpreted, though they seem to incline to the other sense.

{k} wdyb dry dwpa "ephod descendit in manu sua", Pagninus, Montanus; "ephod descendebat in manu sua", Munsterus; so Tigurine version and Piscator. {l} Kimchi & Ben Melech.

1 Samuel 23:7

Ver. 7. And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah,.... No doubt it was told him what he came thither for, to relieve it, and deliver it out of the hands of the Philistines, and what success he had; which one would have thought would have reconciled his mind to him, and made him think well of them; but instead of that, it only led him to contrive mischief against him:

and Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; as if the success he had given to David was against, him, and in favour of Saul:

for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars; while he betook himself to caves, and fields, and woods, he had no great hopes of finding him out, and coming up with him, and seizing him; but now he had got into a fortified place, enclosed with walls, and that had gates to it, kept bolted and barred; when he brought his army against it, and surrounded it, he imagined he would not be able to get out, and escape his hands.

1 Samuel 23:8

Ver. 8. And Saul called all the people together to war,.... Or "caused [them] to hear" {m} summoned them by an herald, whom he sent into all parts of the kingdom to proclaim war, and require them in his name to attend him; which was the prerogative of a king to do:

to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men; that was what he privately intended, but the pretence was to make war against the Philistines.

{m} emvy "fecit audire", Montanus, Piscator.

1 Samuel 23:9

Ver. 9. And. David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him,.... That is, plotted and contrived it, formed schemes in order to do him mischief, giving out one thing, and designing another; so he pretended war against the Philistines, but his intention was to come against Keilah, and take David there:

and he said to Abiathar the priest, bring hither the ephod; not for David to put on, but for the priest himself, that being clothed with it, and the Urim and Thummim in it, he might inquire for him of the Lord.

1 Samuel 23:10

Ver. 10. Then said David,.... By the priest, for it was he that put the questions for and in the name of the inquirer:

O Lord God of Israel; the great Jehovah, the covenant God of his people, who always has a merciful regard unto them:

thy servant hath certainly heard; had good information of it, on which he could depend:

that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah; that was his intention and resolution:

to destroy the city for my sake; to besiege it, and demolish it, if that was necessary, in order to take him.

1 Samuel 23:11

Ver. 11. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hands? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard?.... That is, if David continued there, which is the supposition all proceeds upon. The questions are not orderly put, as may easily be observed, the last should have been first; which shows some perturbation of mind David was in upon hearing the design of Saul against him:

O Lord God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant; give an answer by Urim and Thummim, as he did:

and the Lord said, he will come down; if David abode there; that was in his thoughts, in his purpose and design, which the Lord, being omniscient, full well knew, who knows all future contingencies: hence the Jews {n} gather, that two things are not to be asked together; and if they are asked, only answer is made to one, and the answer is only made to that which it was proper to ask first; and that which is asked out of order should be asked again, which was the case here, as follows.

{n} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 73. 1, 2.

1 Samuel 23:12

Ver. 12. Then said David, will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?.... That is, the lords and great men of the place, the governor of the city, and the heads of it, the chief magistrates in it:

and the Lord said, they will deliver [thee] up: that is, provided he stayed there; for the Lord knew the dispositions and affections of their minds, that they were inclined to do it, and would do it, if he continues among them till Saul came down; which showed the great ingratitude of this people to their deliverer.

1 Samuel 23:13

Ver. 13. Then David and his men, [which were] about six hundred,.... Having had an increase of two hundred since he was at the cave of Adullam, 1Sa 22:1, and upon his relief of Keilah, 1Sa 23:5; so that he sustained no loss of men by fighting with the Philistines, but had an addition to his small forces:

arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go; not knowing whither they should go, having no particular place in view; but went where they thought they could be safest, or that appeared the most proper place for them; so the Targum,

"they went to a place which was fit to go unto;"

which was fittest for their purpose, and most for their safety and security, be it where it would:

and it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; very likely some of the inhabitants informed him of it, since they were disposed to deliver David to him, had he stayed among them, and Saul had come down:

and he forbore to go forth: from the place where he was, in order to come to Keilah,

1 Samuel 23:14

Ver. 14. And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds,.... In the wilderness of Ziph, in high and strong rocks there, as it seems to be explained by what follows:

and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph; which had its name from a city in the tribe of Judah, of which
See Gill on "Jos 15:55";

and Saul sought him every day; for though he did not go forth from the place where he was to Keilah, yet hearing which way he went, and whereabout he lurked, he sought after him continually, if haply he might find him:

but God delivered him not into his hand: which suggests, that it was only the providence of God that secured him, or, in all probability, such was the diligence of Saul, that he would have found him out, and he must have fallen into his hands, as he expected.

1 Samuel 23:15

Ver. 15. And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life,.... Either he saw him with his bodily eyes from the top of the mountain where he was, 1Sa 23:14; or he perceived, he understood by information given him by his friends, it may be by Jonathan, or by spies he sent to observe his motions:

and David [was] in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood; where he and his men could hide themselves among the trees in it; sometimes he was in a mountain in this wilderness, and sometimes in a wood, where he thought himself the safest; thus was this great man obliged to shift about for his safety.

1 Samuel 23:16

Ver. 16. And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose,.... And came from Gibeah, which, according to Bunting {o}, was twenty two miles from the place where David was:

and went to David into the wood: having had intelligence where he was, this being a proper place to have an interview with him privately:

and strengthened his hand in God; and his heart too, his hand of faith to lay hold on God, as his covenant God and lean and rely upon him; he strengthened him in his power and in his providence, and in his promises to him; the Targum is,

"he strengthened him in the Word of the Lord;"

not only in his word and promise, but in Christ the essential Word of God, who should spring from him according to the flesh.

{o} Travels, &c. p. 334. (text not clear could be 834 or some other number)

1 Samuel 23:17

Ver. 17. And he said unto him, fear not,.... Distrust not the power, providence, and promises of God, nor dread the wrath of Saul, or fear falling into his hands:

for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; to lay hold on him, seize him, and do him any hurt:

and thou shalt be king over Israel; meaning after the death of his father; which he knew either by some special revelation made to him; or rather by being informed he had been anointed by Samuel, and which he had either from

Samuel or from David himself; and this he most firmly believed, though David was now in so low a condition:

and I shall be next unto thee; not succeed him in the kingdom; but if living when he came to the throne, he should be the second man in civil affairs, as he now was, and that he should be content with:

and that also Saul my father knoweth; having knowledge of the anointing of David by Samuel; or he might, and did conclude this from various circumstances, that David was his neighbour Samuel had told him of, God had given his kingdom to, 1Sa 15:28.

1 Samuel 23:18

Ver. 18. And they two made a covenant before the Lord,.... Renewed the covenant they had before made in the name and fear of God, and before him as a witness of it. Kimchi and Abarbinel interpret this phrase,

before the Lord, of the covenant being made before Abiathar, with the Urim and Thummim in his hand; and so Jerom {p}, before Gad the prophet, and Abiathar who wore the ephod:

and David abode in the wood; being a proper place for him for secrecy and safety:

and Jonathan went to his house; in Gibeah; and these two dear and cordial friends never saw one another more, as is highly probable.

{p} Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. K.

1 Samuel 23:19

Ver. 19. Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah,.... Who though he had been out in quest of David, yet was now returned to Gibeah, the place of his residence, and where he kept his court; and hither came the Ziphites, the inhabitants of Ziph, in the wilderness of which David hid himself, with a proposal to deliver him to Saul; for though they were of the same tribe with David, yet being terrified with what Saul had done to Nob, they thought it best for their own security to inform Saul where he was, and make an offer to deliver him to him. Some interpreters, as Kimchi, think that this was done before Jonathan was with Saul, and should be rendered, "the Ziphites had come up to Saul"; and hence it is before said, and David saw, &c. for he had heard that the Ziphites should say to Saul, that David had hid himself there; and at this time it was that David wrote the fifty ninth psalm, Ps 54:1:

saying, doth not David hide himself with us in the strong holds in the wood; which is in the wilderness of Ziph, in their neighbourhood; they were informed he had hid himself there, and they thought it their duty to let the king know of it: and particularly

in the hill of Hachilah, which [is] on the south of Jeshimon? Hachilah is by Jerom {q} called Echela; and he speaks of a village of that name seven miles from Eleutheropolis, and of Jeshimon as ten miles from Jericho to the south, near the dead sea; on the top of this hill, which was an ascent of thirty furlongs or about four miles, Jonathan the high priest built a castle, and called it Masada, often spoken of by Josephus; who says {r}, that Herod built a wall around it of seven furlongs or about a mile, twelve cubits high, and eight broad, and thirty seven towers of fifty cubits stood in it.

{q} De loc. Heb. fol. 91. C. {r} De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 8. sect. 3. Vid. Adrichom. Theatrum T. S. p. 38. 2. & 39. 1.

1 Samuel 23:20

Ver. 20. Now therefore, O king, come down,.... From Gibeah to Ziph, and the wilderness of it, where David was:

according to all the desires of thy soul to come down; to seize such a prey which he was greatly desirous of, and of nothing more so than of that according to Abarbinel, the sense is, that the thing was ready in whatever way he should desire it; if he chose to come down himself, and lay hold on him, they invite him to come down; but if he did not choose to come down himself, they would seize him, and bring him to him, and deliver him up into his hand, and so he would be under no necessity of going down after him:

and our part [shall be] to deliver him into the king's hand; this we will take upon us to do, and save the king the trouble of coming down.

1 Samuel 23:21

Ver. 21. And Saul said, blessed [be] ye of the Lord,.... He highly commends them for the offer they made to him, blesses God for them, and desires the blessing of God upon them for it:

for ye have compassion on me; pitied him on account of the troubles he met with from his son-in-law, were sorry for him, and sympathized with him, which others did not, of which he complained, 1Sa 22:8.

1 Samuel 23:22

Ver. 22. Go, I pray you, prepare yet,.... That is, go home, return to their habitations, and get things in a greater readiness for him; inquire more diligently after David, get more intelligence of him, and inform themselves more exactly about him:

and know and see his place where his haunt is; or "foot" {s} is, where that steps and walks most frequently, not only get knowledge of it by information, but if they could get sight of it with their own eyes, that they might describe it more exactly:

[and] who hath seen him there; not only seen the place, but him in the place, and that often, that it may be certain it is the place he usually resorts to:

for it is told me [that] he dealeth very subtilly; sometimes he is seen in one place, and sometimes in another; he is here today, and elsewhere tomorrow; and by such crafty methods it is not easy to know where the place is, and where to be found; this Saul had information of from some, who knew the methods David took to keep it unknown where it was; or "it says to me"; my heart says so to me, as R. Isaiah interprets it; my mind suggests this to me, knowing the man, that he uses such wiles as these: or "he said to me", so Kimchi; when he was with me, and we were intimate, when I used to ask him how he smote the Philistines, so and so, and preserved himself from them; his answer was, "that he dealt very subtilly", he used a good deal of craftiness; and so I imagine he does now.

{s} wlgr "pes ejus", Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Samuel 23:23

Ver. 23. See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself,.... Which he most frequents, that ye may be able to describe them, and the way to them, and easily find them when necessary:

and come ye again to me with the certainty; of time and place, when and where he may be certainly found:

and I will go with you; upon such certain intelligence: it is very much he did not seize this opportunity, and go directly with them; for by this delay, David being informed of the Ziphites coming to Saul to betray him, had time to depart elsewhere:

and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land; in the land of Israel, or rather in the land that is in the tribe of Judah:

that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah; through all the divisions of that tribe, which, as others, were divided into thousands, see **Mic 5:2**.

1 Samuel 23:24

Ver. 24. And they arose, and went to Ziph, before Saul,.... Not before his person, as if he went with them, and they before him leading the way; but they went thither before he went, to prepare things more exactly, and with more certainty, before he came, and in order to return to him again and go with him:

but David and his men [were] in the wilderness at Maon; for by the time the Ziphites returned home, David had intelligence of their design, and therefore removed from the wilderness of Ziph to the wilderness of Maon; which, though in the same tribe, was a distinct place;
See Gill on "Jos 15:55";

in the plain on the south of Jeshimon; the same as in 1Sa 23:19; only David was now farther to the south of it, and in a plain, whereas before he was on an hill.

1 Samuel 23:25

Ver. 25. And Saul also and his men went to seek [him],.... Whether the Ziphites returned to him with better intelligence, or sent him word where David was, is not said, however Saul with his army came out in search of him:

and they told David; or it was told him, that Saul was come in quest of him:

wherefore he came down into a rock; either into a cave in it, or he came down from the hill Hachilah to a plain or valley, in order to go up to a rock, the same with the mountain in 1Sa 23:26:

and abode in the wilderness of Maon; in which was the rock or mountain he came to:

and when Saul heard [that], he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon; for upon the intelligence of the Ziphites, he came out to seek for him in the wilderness of Ziph, but hearing that he was removed to the wilderness of Maon, he pursued him there.

1 Samuel 23:26

Ver. 26. And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain,.... Saul with his army came to the very mountain where David and his men were, the one was on one side of it, and the other on the other side; there was only one mountain between them:

and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; he fled on one side of the mountain, while Saul was pursuing him on the other, and hastening to get round unto him:

for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them; he took methods by dividing his troops, and sending them different ways, to surround David and his men, and had very near effected it.

1 Samuel 23:27

Ver. 27. But there came a messenger unto Saul,.... From his court, by order of his council there; though the Jews {t} say it was an angel from heaven; but be it which it will, it was certainly the providence of God that directed this affair, that a messenger should come to Saul just at that very time that David was like to fall into his hands:

saying, haste thee, and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land; were come into it, and spread themselves in it, as the word signifies, which expresses their numbers they had poured in, the force they came with, and the possessions they had already got; perhaps they had taken the advantage of Saul's departure in quest of David, to penetrate into the tribe of Benjamin, where his patrimony, residence, and court were, and which were liable to fall into their hands; and therefore his presence was immediately required, and haste was necessary.

{t} Midrash apud Yalkut in loc.

1 Samuel 23:28

Ver. 28. Therefore Saul returned from pursuing after David,.... Stopped short at once, as soon as ever he received the message:

and went against the Philistines; to stop them in their progress, and drive them out of his country:

therefore they called that place Selahammahlekoth, which signifies the rock of divisions. David and his men, very probably, gave it this name, not only because it divided between Saul and his men, and David and his men, when they were one on one side of it, and the other on the other side of it; but because Saul was, by the providence of God, divided and separated from David here, whereby he escaped falling into his hands. The Targum is,

"therefore they called that place the rock of division, the place where the heart of the king was divided to go here and there:"

he was divided in his own mind, and at a loss what to do; he was in two minds, as Jarchi says, and did not know which to follow, whether to return and deliver his country from the hands of the Philistines, or to pursue and take David; and others represent the soldiers of Saul as divided, some saying that since the son of Jesse was just falling into their hands, they should not leave him; others, that the war of Israel should be regarded before him, who might be found at any time {u}.

{u} Midrash apud Yalkut in loc.

1 Samuel 23:29

Ver. 29. And David went up from thence,.... From the wilderness of Maon, having had a narrow escape for his life:

and dwelt in strong holds in Engedi; another place in the tribe of Judah, and which lay in the wilderness of Judah, and from whence that is called the wilderness of Engedi; and here Dr. Lightfoot {w} thinks he penned the sixty third psalm, Ps 63:1, the wilderness about Engedi being the most desert of all other places, that being upon the borders of the dead sea; of this place, See Gill on "Jos 15:62".

{w} Works, vol. 1. p. 58.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 24

Saul being returned from following the Philistines, renews his pursuit after David, 1Sa 24:1; and they meeting in a cave, where David had the opportunity of taking away the life of Saul, which his men pressed him to, yet only cut off the skirt of his robe, 1Sa 24:3; which, calling after him, he held up to him to convince him he had his life in his hands, but spared it, 1Sa 24:9; upon which he very pathetically reasons with him about the unreasonableness and unrighteousness of his pursuit after him, to take away his life, 1Sa 24:11; which so affected Saul, that he confessed he was more righteous than he, and owned that the kingdom would be his, and only desired him to swear to him not to cut off his offspring, which David did, and so they parted, 1Sa 24:16.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines,.... Having, as it should seem, got the victory over them, and driven them out of his country, and pursued them to their own:

that it was told him, saying, behold, David [is] in the wilderness of Engedi; in the strong holds of it, the high rocks and mountains in it, 1Sa 23:29.

1 Samuel 24:2

Ver. 2. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel,.... Out of his army, with which he had been pursuing the Philistines:

and went to seek David, and his men, upon the rocks of the wild goats; which were in the wilderness of Engedi; those rocks were exceeding high and terrible to look at, full of precipices, and so prominent, that to travellers they seemed as if they would fall into the adjacent valleys, that it even struck terror into them to look at them {x}; called the rocks of wild goats, because these creatures, called from hence "rupicaprae", or rock goats, see Job 39:1; delighted to be there; and are, as Pliny {y} says, of such prodigious swiftness, that they will leap from mountain to mountain, and back again at pleasure; these mountains David and his men chose for safety, and the height and craggedness of them did not deter Saul and his men from seeking him there.

{x} Adrichom Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 47. & Brocard. in ib. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 53.

1 Samuel 24:3

Ver. 3. And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where [was] a cave,.... For the sheep to be led into at noon, to shelter them from the heat: such was the cave of Polyphemus, observed by Bochart {z}, in which sheep and goats lay down and slept; See Gill on "Zep 2:6";

and Saul went in to cover his feet; the Targum is, to do his necessaries; and so Josephus {a}; and the Jewish commentators generally understand it of easing nature; and as the eastern people used to wear long and loose garments, these, when they performed such an action, they used in modesty to gather them close about them, that no part of the body, their feet, and especially the parts of nature which should be concealed, might be seen; but the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "and there he lay" or "slept"; which suggest, that his going into the cave was in order to take some sleep and rest, when it was usual to cover the feet, both to prevent taking cold, and the private parts of the body being exposed to view; and this accounts better for Saul not hearing David's men in the cave, and for his being insensible of David's cuttings off the skirt of his garment, and best agrees with the use of the phrase in **Jud 3:24**; the only place besides this in which it is used; See Gill on "Jud 3:24";

and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave; unseen and unobserved by Saul, even six hundred of them; nor need this seem strange, since in those parts of the world there were caves exceeding large, made so either by nature or art. Vansleb {b} speaks of a cave in Egypt so extraordinary large, that, without hyperbole, a thousand horses might there draw up in battle array, and of another larger than that; and Strabo says {c}, that towards Arabia and Iturea are mountains difficult to be passed, and in which are deep caves, one of which would hold four thousand men: and as the mouths of these caves were generally narrow, and the further parts of them large, and also dark, persons at the entrance of them could be seen, when those in the more remote parts could not; and this cave is said to be extremely dark {d}; which accounts for Saul's being seen when he came into the cave, whereas David and his men could not be seen by him.

{z} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 45. col. 467, 468. {a} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 13. sect. 4. {b} Relation of a Voyage, p. 227. {c} Geograph. l. 16. p. 520. {d} Le Bruyn's Voyage to the Levant, ch. 51. p. 199.

1 Samuel 24:4

Ver. 4. And the men of David said unto him,.... Some of his principal men, who were about him, and near him, such as Joab and Abishai:

behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee: now the time was come that he spoke of to him by Samuel, or Gad, or to himself directly:

behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand; and such was Saul, as appeared by his seeking to take away his life; and now he was in the hand of David to take away his life, if he pleased:

that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee; an opportunity of this kind now offered:

then David arose; from that part of the cave in which he was, the further part of it:

and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily; unawares to him, and unobserved by him, which might be easily done, if Saul was asleep, and it is probable he was; and by the same way it may be accounted for that he did not hear the discourse that passed between David and his men.

1 Samuel 24:5

Ver. 5. And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him,.... His conscience accused him, and he repented of what he had done:

because he had cut off Saul's skirt; which though less than what his servants put him upon, and he might have thoughts of doing, yet was considered by him as a great indignity to his sovereign, and therefore sat uneasy on his mind.

1 Samuel 24:6

Ver. 6. And he said unto his men,.... When he returned and brought the skirt of Saul's garment in his hand; or else he said this before that, though here mentioned, when they moved it to him to dispatch him, as he had a fair opportunity of doing it:

God forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed; and which he could not think of but with detestation and abhorrence, since he was his sovereign lord and master, and he a subject of his, and was anointed by the order of God, and his person sacred:

to stretch forth my hand against him; to take away his life; to cut off the skirt of his garment gave him uneasiness; but to slay him, the thought of it was shocking to him:

seeing he [is] the anointed of the Lord; anointed by Samuel to be king, 1Sa 10:1, by order of the Lord, **1Sa 9:17**.

1 Samuel 24:7

Ver. 7. So David stayed his servants with these words,.... Or pacified them, as the Targum, and made them quiet and easy in that he had not slain him, and reconciled their minds to his conduct, and restrained them from laying hands on him, by observing to them, that he was the anointed of the Lord:

and suffered them not to rise against Saul; to take away his life; he not only argued with them, but laid his commands on them that they should not slay him:

but Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on [his] way; he rose from his sleep, and went out of the cave unhurt, and proceeded on in the way he came to the sheepcotes, and which led on further, 1Sa 24:3.

1 Samuel 24:8

Ver. 8. David also arose afterward,.... After Saul was gone:

and went out of the cave; where he had been all the time that Saul had been in it:

and cried after Saul: with a loud voice: my lord the king; by which titles Saul would know that he was called unto:

and when Saul looked behind him; to see who it was that called unto him:

David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself: giving reverence and honour to him as a king; See Gill on "1Sa 20:41".

1 Samuel 24:9

Ver. 9. And David said to Saul, wherefore hearest thou men's words,.... The false charges and accusations, that some of Saul's courtiers brought against David, as Doeg the Edomite, and such like sycophants and flatterers, to whom Saul hearkened, and believed what they said, and acted upon it. David chose rather to lay the blame on Saul's courtiers than on himself; and he began with him in this way, the rather to reconcile him to him, and cause him to listen to what he had to say: and represents them as

saying to him,

behold, David seeketh thy hurt? seeks to take away thy life, and seize upon thy crown and throne; than which nothing was more foreign from him.

1 Samuel 24:10

Ver. 10. Behold, this day thine eyes have seen,.... Or may see; there is full proof and evidence of it, and which will be presently shown:

how that the Lord had delivered thee today into mine hand in the cave; from whence they were both just come:

and [some] bade [me] kill thee; some of the men that were with David, some of his officers or principal friends put him upon it, having a fair opportunity, and thinking it no evil, since he was his enemy, and sought his life; or "it said, kill thee"; my heart prompted me to it, that said so at first, as Ben Gersom interprets it; some refer it to God, who in his providence said so, or so it might be understood by David, as if Providence directed him to it, by giving film such an opportunity of doing it:

but [mine eye] spared thee; had pity on him, and notwithstanding the suggestions of friends, and of his own heart at first, or the seeming direction of Providence, yet he had mercy on him, and forbore slaying him:

and I said, I will not put forth my hand against my lord; and king, whose subject I am:

for he [is] the Lord's anointed; the Lord has raised him to this dignity; invested him with the office of a king, and as such I regard him, and therefore have refrained mine hand from him, from hurting him,

1 Samuel 24:11

Ver. 11. Moreover, my father,.... So he was in a natural sense, as having married his daughter; and in a civil sense, as he was a king, and was, or ought to have been, the father of his country, and to treat his subjects as his children, and David among the rest:

see, yea see, the skirt of thy robe in my hand; look on it again and again; view it with the eyes of thy body intently, that thou mayest be satisfied of it, and behold with the eyes of thy mind and understanding, and consider that I could as easily have had thine head in my hand as the skirt of thy robe; and here see an instance and proof of the integrity and sincerity of my heart, and cordial affections to thee, and an evidence against all the charges and accusations of my enemies, and that I have no ill design upon thy person and life, and am far from seeking thy hurt, as they say:

for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not; not only did that to show that he was in his power, but did not cut off his head, as he could:

know thou, and see, that [there is] neither evil nor transgression in mine hand; this might be a full conviction to him that he had no ill, neither in his heart nor hand, to do unto him:

and I have not sinned against thee; done nothing to offend him, never acted against his will, nor disobeyed any of his commands, or had been guilty of one overt act of treason or rebellion, but all the reverse:

yet thou huntest my soul to take it; pursued him from place to place, hunted him in the wildernesses of Ziph and Maon, and upon the rocks of Engedi, as a partridge on the mountains, 1Sa 26:20; and lay in wait for him to kill him, as the Targum: he may be thought to have penned the "seventh" psalm at this time, or on this occasion; at least there are some passages in it, which seem to refer to his present circumstances, **Ps 7:1**.

1 Samuel 24:12

Ver. 12. The Lord judge between me and thee,.... And make it appear who is in the right, and who in the wrong:

and the Lord avenge me of thee; if he continued thus to persecute him:

but mine hand shall not be upon thee; to kill thee, though it may be in my power again to do it, as it has been; but this I am determined upon, let me suffer what I will, I will not lay hands on thee to do thee any hurt, but leave thee with God to requite all the evil done to me by thee.

1 Samuel 24:13

Ver. 13. As saith the proverb of the ancients,.... It is an old saying, has been long in use, and may be applied to the present case; or the "proverb of the ancient one"; of the oldest man, the first man Adam, and of all others after him, so Kimchi; or of the Ancient One of the world, the Ancient of days, the Lord himself; so in the Talmud {d}:

wickedness proceedeth from the wicked; as is a man, so are his actions; if he is a wicked man, he will do wicked things; a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruits, an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil things; and as if David should say, if I had been the wicked man as I am represented, I should have committed wickedness; I should have made no conscience of taking away thy life when it was in my power; but my heart would not suffer me to do it:

but, or "and"

my hand shall not be upon thee; as it has not been upon thee, because of the fear of God in me, so neither shall it be hereafter: or the sense of the proverb may be, the wickedness that comes from a wicked man, that will kill him, or be the cause of his ruin, or he will be slain by wicked men such as himself; and this may be thy case, O king, unless thou repentest: but be that as it may, which I leave with the righteous Judge, this I am determined on, "mine hand shall not be upon thee"; to take away thy life.

{d} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 10. 2.

1 Samuel 24:14

Ver. 14. After whom is the king of Israel come out?.... From his court and palace, with an army of men, and at the head of them:

after whom dost thou pursue? with such eagerness and fury:

after a dead dog; as David was in the opinion, and according to the representation of his enemies, a dog, vile, mean, worthless, of no account; a dead dog, whose name was made to stink through the calumnies cast upon him; and if a dead dog, then as he was an useless person, and could do no good, so neither could he do any hurt, not so much as bark, much less bite; and therefore it was unworthy of so great a prince, a lessening, a degrading of himself, as well as a vain and impertinent thing, to pursue after such an one, that was not worthy of his notice, and could do him neither good nor harm:

after a flea? a little contemptible animal, not easily caught, as it is observed by some, and when caught good for nothing. David, by this simile, fitly represents not only his weakness and impotence, his being worthless, and of no account, and beneath the notice of such a prince as Saul; but the circumstances he was in, being obliged to move from place to place, as a flea leaps from one place to another, and is not easily taken, and when it is, of no worth and value; signifying, that as it was not worth his pains to seek after him, so it would be to no purpose, he should not be able to take him.

1 Samuel 24:15

Ver. 15. The Lord therefore be Judge, and judge between me and thee,.... Signifying he did not desire to be judge in his own cause, but leave it with God to determine it for him in his providence:

and see, and plead my cause; look with pity upon him, take his cause in his hand, plead it, and do him justice:

and deliver me out of thine hand: which was a prayer of faith, believing he would do it in due time, see **Ps 7:6**.

1 Samuel 24:16

Ver. 16. And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul,.... And wonderful it is that Saul, so full of wrath and fury, and so eager of David's life, should stand still and hear him out, and not fall upon him; this must be owing to the restraining providence of God, and to the surprise Saul was in at the sight of David coming out of the cave, whom he expected not; and especially what awed and quieted him was the sight of the skirt of his robe in his hand, which was a sure token he had his life in his hand, and spared it, which made him listen attentively to all he said:

that Saul said, [is] this thy voice, my son David? he changes his language; before, when he spoke of David, it was only the so of Jesse now my son David, as he was by marriage to his daughter, and as appeared by his filial affection to him; and though he was at such a distance from him, that he was not able to discern his countenance, yet he knew his voice, at least supposed it to be his, as his question implies, and which he might conclude fro in the whole of his discourse:

and Saul lifted up his voice and wept; being affected with the kindness of David to him, and with his deliverance from the danger he was in, and yet without true repentance of his sins; for there may be many tears shed where there is no real repentance, as in the case of Esau.

1 Samuel 24:17

Ver. 17. And he said to David, thou [art] more righteous than I,.... By which it appears he thought himself righteous, though David was more so; the righteousness of David was so glaring, that his enemy himself being judge acknowledges it, but will not confess his own wickedness, having no true sense of sin, nor real sorrow for it:

for thou hast rewarded me good; in times past, and now; heretofore in killing Goliath, fighting his battles for him against the Philistines, driving the evil spirit from him, by playing on the harp before him, and now by sparing his life, only cutting off the skirt of his garment, when he could with equal ease have cut off his head:

whereas I have rewarded thee evil: in seeking to take away his life at various times, by casting a javelin at him more than once, sending messengers to kill him, and hunting after him from place to place, to take him and slay him.

1 Samuel 24:18

Ver. 18. And thou hast showed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me,.... The cutting off of the skirt of his robe only, when his life was in his hand, was a clear proof and full demonstration of his dealing well with him, and might sufficiently convince him he had no ill design upon him:

forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not; this was a plain proof and evidence of his kindness to him, which he owns, and also the providence of God in this affair, which had delivered him into the hands of David; by which he might see the Lord was for David, and against him, and might have deterred him from seeking David's hurt hereafter; but it did not.

1 Samuel 24:19

Ver. 19. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?.... Or "in a good way" {e}, in peace and safety, without doing him any hurt; this is not usual among men, and yet this was the present case; David had found his enemy Saul, which Saul tacitly owns, and yet had let him go well away from him, without hurting him:

wherefore the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day; he does not promise to reward him himself, but prays the Lord to reward him; and had he been sincere in it, he could not have done better for him. Some connect the former clause with this, after this manner, "if a man find his enemy, and let him go away, the Lord will reward him, the Lord reward thee", &c. so the Syriac and Arabic versions.

{e} hbwj Krdb "in via bona", Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Samuel 24:20

Ver. 20. And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king,.... Not merely by the common report, that he was anointed by Samuel, to which yet he might give credit; but by the providence of God prospering and preserving him, and by his princely spirit and behaviour, and by calling to mind what Samuel had said to him, that his kingdom should be given to a neighbour of his better than he, and so David was by his own confession, 1Sa 24:17; and the cutting off the skirt of his garment might put him in remembrance of the rending of the skirt of Samuel's mantle, upon which he told Saul his kingdom should be rent from him; though some think that was Saul's skirt, and so now he knew thereby, when David cut off his skirt, that the kingdom would be his; and it is a tradition of the Jews {f}, that Samuel said to him at that time, that he that cut off the skirt of his garment should reign after him:

and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand; and not be rent from him; and yet notwithstanding after this he sought to destroy him.

{f} Midrash Tillim apud Abarbinel. in loc.

1 Samuel 24:21

Ver. 21. Swear now therefore unto me by the Lord,.... By the Word of the Lord, as the, Targum:

that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me; as was usually done in despotic governments in the eastern countries, and is at this day, when one is advanced to the throne of another, by whom issue is left, who may be rivals and competitors with him:

and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house; by cutting off his seed, the same thing in different words repeated, for the confirmation of it; children bear the names of their fathers, and by them their memory is perpetuated, and cutting off them is destroying the name of their parents.

1 Samuel 24:22

Ver. 22. And David sware unto Saul,.... That he would not cut, off his posterity; which oath he religiously observed, in sparing Mephibosheth, 2Sa 21:7, and in punishing the murderers of Ishbosheth, **2Sa 4:12**; and as for the seven sons of Saul, delivered up to the Gibeonites, 2Sa 21:6, it may be questioned whether they were his genuine legitimate offspring; and if they were, it was by the appointment and command of God, and according to his will and pleasure they were executed, who is not bound by the oaths of men, and to whom they must be submitted, 2Sa 21:1;

and Saul went home; to his palace in Gibeah:

but David and his men got them up unto the hold; in Engedi, 1Sa 23:29; not trusting to Saul, whose inconstancy, perfidy, cruel hatred, and malice, David full well knew; and therefore thought it not safe to return to his own house, nor to dwell in the open country, but in the wilderness, and among the rocks, and in the caves there, such as were in the wilderness of Engedi; and here, and at this time, he penned the fifty seventh psalm, see Ps 57:1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 25:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 25

This chapter gives an account of the death of Samuel, and of the ill treatment David met with from Nabal; it begins with the death of Samuel, which was greatly lamented in Israel, 1Sa 25:1; it draws the character of Nabal, and his wife, 1Sa 25:2; records a message of David to him, by his young men, desiring he would send him some of his provisions made for his sheep shearers, 1Sa

25:4; and Nabal's ill-natured answer to him reported by the young men, which provoked David to arm against him, 1Sa 25:10; and this being told Abigail, the wife of Nabal, and a good character given of David and his men, and of the advantage Nabal's shepherds had received from them, and the danger his family was in through his ingratitude, 1Sa 25:14; she prepared a present to pacify David, went with it herself, and addressed him in a very handsome, affectionate, and prudent manner, 1Sa 25:18; and met with a kind reception, 1Sa 25:32; and the chapter is closed with an account of the death of Nabal, and of the marriage of Abigail to David, 1Sa 25:32.

Ver. 1. And Samuel died,.... In the interval, when Saul and David were parted, and before they saw each other again; according to the Jewish chronology {g}, Samuel died four months before Saul; but other Jewish writers say {h} he died seven months before; Abarbinel thinks it was a year or two before; which is most likely and indeed certain, since David was in the country of the Philistines after this a full year and four months, if the true sense of the phrase is expressed in 1Sa 27:7; and Saul was not then dead; and so another Jewish chronologer {i} says, that Saul died two years after Samuel, to which agrees Clemens of Alexandria {k}; and according to the Jews {l}, he died the twentieth of Ijar, for which a fast was kept on that day:

and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him; his death being a public loss, not only to the college of the prophets, over which he presided, but to the whole nation; and they had reason to lament his death, when they called to mind, the many good offices he had done them from his youth upwards; and when the government was in his hands, which was administered in the most prudent and faithful manner; and after that they had his wise counsel and advice, his good wishes and prayers for them; and the rather they had reason to lament him, since Saul their king proved so bad as he did, and at this time a difference was subsisting between David and him:

and buried him in his house at Ramah; where he lived and died; not that he was buried in his house, properly so called, or within the walls of that building wherein he dwelt; though the Greeks {m} and Romans {n} used to bury in their own dwelling houses; hence sprung the idolatrous worship of the Lares, or household gods; but not the Hebrews, which their laws about uncleanness by graves would not admit of, see
Nu 19:15; but the meaning is, that they buried him in the place where his house was, as Ben Gersom interprets it, at Ramah, in some field or garden belonging to it. The author of the Cippi Hebraici says {o}, that here his father Elkanah, and his mother Hannah, and her two sons, were buried in a vault shut

up, with, monuments over it; and here, some say {p}, Samuel's bones remained, until removed by Arcadius the emperor into Thrace; Benjamin of Tudela reports {q}, that when the Christians took Ramlah, which is Ramah, from the Mahometans, they found the grave of Samuel at Ramah by a synagogue of the Jews, and they took him out of the grave, and carried him to Shiloh, and there built a large temple, which is called the Samuel of Shiloh to this day:

and David arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran; on hearing of the death of Samuel, there to indulge his mourning for him; or rather that he might be in greater safety from Saul, being further off, this wilderness lying on the south of the tribe of Judah, and inhabited by Arabs, and these called Kedarenes; and now it was that he dwelt in the tents of Kedar, Ps 120:5.

{g} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 37. {h} In Kimchi & Abarbinel in loc. {i} Juchasin, fol. 11. 1. {k} Stromat. l. 1. p. 325. {l} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2. {m} Plato in Mino‰. {n} Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 6. p. mihi, (?) 1011. {o} P. 30. {p} Heldman apud Hottinger in ib. {q} Itinerar. p. 52.

1 Samuel 25:2

Ver. 2. And [there was] a man in Maon,.... A city of the tribe of Judah, from whence the wilderness had its name before mentioned; of which place, see Jos 15:55; though Ben Gersom takes it to signify a dwelling place; and that this is observed to show, that he did not dwell in a city, but had his habitation where his business lay, which was in Carmel, where his fields, gardens, and vineyards were: wherefore it follows,

whose possessions [were] in Carmel; not Carmel in the tribe of Issachar, but in the tribe of Judah, not far from Maon, and are mentioned together, See Gill on "Jos 15:55"; his cattle were there, his sheep particularly, for they are afterwards said to be shorn there; or "his work" {r}; his agriculture, his farming, where he was employed, or employed others in sowing seed, and planting trees:

and the man [was] very great; in worldly substance, though not in natural wisdom and knowledge, and especially in true religion and piety:

and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats; so the substance of men in those times was generally described by the cattle they had, whether of the herd or flock, in which it chiefly lay:

and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel; which was the custom in Judea and Syria, and was a very ancient one, as early as the times of Judah, yea, of Laban, see Ge 31:19; though the old Romans used to pluck off the wool from the sheep's backs; hence a fleece of wool was called "vellus [a] vellendo", from the plucking it off; and Pliny says {s}, in his time, that sheep were not shorn everywhere, but in some places the custom of plucking off the wool continued; and who elsewhere observes {t}, that the time of shearing was in June or July, or thereabouts; at which times a feast was made, and it is for the sake of that this is observed.

{r} whvem "opus ejus", Montanus, Vatablus; "eujus opus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {s} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 48. {t} Ibid. l. 18. c. 27.

1 Samuel 25:3

Ver. 3. Now the name of the man [was] Nabal,.... Which signifies a "fool"; one would think his parents should not give him this name, though it is a name proper enough to men in common; and Kimchi thinks this was a nickname, which men gave him agreeably to his genius and conduct, and which is not improbable:

and the name of his wife Abigail; which signifies "my father's joy", he delighting in her for her wit and beauty, as follows:

and [she was] a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance; she was not only of a good understanding in things natural, civil, and domestic, but in things spiritual, as her speech to David shows, and which, with her external form, completed her character, and greatly recommended her; which is the character Aelianus {u} gives of Aspasia, wise and fair:

but the man [was] churlish and evil in his doings; morose and ill natured in the temper and disposition of his mind, and wicked in his conversation, and fraudulent and oppressive in his dealings with men:

and he [was] of the house of Caleb; or he was a Calebite {w}, a descendant of that great and good man Caleb the son of Jephunneh; which was an aggravation of his wickedness, that he should be the degenerate plant of such a noble vine: some interpret it, he was as his heart, as his heart was bad, so was he; some men, their outside is better than their inside; but this man was no hypocrite, he was as bad outwardly as he was inwardly: the word "Caleb" sometimes signifies a dog; hence the Septuagint version renders it, a doggish man, a cynic; and to the same purpose are the Syriac and Arabic versions; and so some Jewish writers interpret it; but the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, supply it as we do, that he was of the house or family of Caleb, and so of the tribe of Judah, as David was.

{u} Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 1. {w} wblk "keri" yblk "Calibita", Pagninus, Montanus; "Calebita" Tigurine version, Junius & Tremcilius, Piscator.

1 Samuel 25:4

Ver. 4. And David heard in the wilderness,.... In the wilderness of Paran, where he was, and a wilderness it was to him, being in want of food, as the following relation shows:

that Nabal did shear his sheep; when there was generally good living, and so a proper person, and a proper time, for David to apply for the relief of his wants.

1 Samuel 25:5

Ver. 5. And David sent out ten young men,.... Such persons, and such a number of them, he sent to show honour and reverence to Nabal:

and David said, unto the young men, get ye up to Carmel; which lay higher than the wilderness, in which he was:

and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name; ask him of his peace and welfare, as the Targum; wish all health and happiness in my name, present my service and best respects to him.

1 Samuel 25:6

Ver. 6. And thus shall ye say to him that liveth [in prosperity],.... That lives, while others, as David and his men, might be rather said to starve than live; they lived in great meanness, but he in great abundance, and therefore in a capacity to give to others, and particularly to relieve them: or the sense is, they should say to him, "thus" shall it be, or may it be "for life": for the time of life, for the year to come; at this time next year, at next sheep shearing, mayest thou be in as great prosperity then as now, and even all the days of thy life:

peace [be] both to thee, and peace [be] to thine house, and peace [be] unto all that thou hast; that is, all prosperity to thy person in soul and body, to thy family, wife, children and servants, and let the same attend thy estate, cattle, farms, fields, vineyards, and all that belong to thee; and wish for a blessing on him, and his, and all that were his, or he had; a more extensive one could not well be made.

1 Samuel 25:7

Ver. 7. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers,.... Men employed in shearing his sheep, which was a time of feasting and gladness, and therefore David sent his young men to him at this time with his compliments upon it; and in order to obtain what he intended by this message to him, he observes the favours he and his men had done to his servants, and the advantages which they had received from them:

now thy shepherds which were with us; feeding their sheep near the wilderness of Paran, which was not far from Carmel and Maon:

we hurt them not; by taking any of their sheep and lambs from them, or by abusing, beating them, or giving them ill language; or "did not put them to shame" {x}, by denying them anything they asked of them, which was in their power to grant, nor mocked and scoffed at them, and jeered them on account of their occupation:

neither was there ought missing unto them; they did not steal a sheep or lamb from them, as was common for soldiers to do; nor did they suffer any of the Arabs, that dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, to rob them, who lived upon plunder, or any of the wild beasts to hurt them, as much as in them lay; so careful were they of them, and were a wall unto them by night and day, as Nabal's servants owned, 1Sa 25:16; and this was the case,

all the while they were in Carmel; or in the fields, 1Sa 25:15; which were joining to the wilderness of Paran.

{x} Mwnmlkh al "non affecimus verccundia eos", Montanus; so some in

Vatablus.

1 Samuel 25:8

Ver. 8. Ask thy young men, and they will show thee,.... The shepherds before mentioned, who kept their flocks hard by them:

wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes; the ten young men David sent to Nabal:

for we are come in a good day; a day in which Nabal made a feast for his shearers, as was usual then, and still is, see 2Sa 13:23; and at such times as persons are generally cheerful and merry, so free and liberal, and as there were plenty of provisions, not only enough for the guests and shearers, but to spare, and there was no need for an increase of expense, it might upon the whole be concluded it was a proper time for David to apply for accommodations for himself and his men:

give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants,
and to thy son David; he did not request anything extraordinary of him, or to put him to any expense, but what was at hand, and he could spare, he prayed him to deliver to the young men he sent, for their use, and the use of other his servants, and particularly David, who styled himself his son, being of the same tribe with Nabal, and Nabal his senior.

1 Samuel 25:9

Ver. 9. And when David's young men came,.... To Carmel:

they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David; they delivered their message punctually and exactly, in the very words, or however according to the purport of them, in David's name, as he enjoined them:

and ceased: from speaking, waiting for Nabal's answer; or "they rested" {y}, from the fatigues of their journey; which they did not until they had delivered their message to Nabal, and then they took the liberty to sit down and rest themselves; but the former sense seems best, and is preferred by Maimonides {z}.

{y} wxwnyw "et quieverunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster. {z} Moreh Nevochim par. 1. c. 67.

1 Samuel 25:10

Ver. 10. And Nabal answered David's servants, and said,.... In a very haughty manner, in great wrath, just as churlish covetous persons do, when they do not care to give what is asked of them:

who [is] David? and who [is] the son of Jesse; his two questions, which relate to the same person, do not well agree together, since by both he would suggest as if he knew not the person they came from, and whose name they made use of: had he stopped at the first question, it might have gone so, but his second question betrays him, and plainly shows he did know him, though he speaks with contempt of him, calling him "the son of Jesse", as Saul often did, 1Sa 20:27. Abarbinel, of all interpreters, is of opinion only, that Nabal did not say this disrespectfully of David, and to his dishonour; he knew he was the Lord's anointed, and the king's son-in-law; but the sense, according to him, is, "who [is] David? and who [is] the son of Jesse?" are they not one man? but though he is the son of Jesse, and prides himself saying, I shall be king, I should not regard that, but would send him corn, and bread, and food, as much as is needful for his own use; but what can I do when there are so many servants? for they are six hundred of them, and they are too many to relieve:

there be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master; which words also the same writer thinks have no reference to David, only to his men; but they seem plainly to strike at David himself, and suggest that he had revolted from and rebelled against Saul his master, as well as received and protected fugitives and renegades, such as fled from their masters and from their creditors; see 1Sa 22:2.

1 Samuel 25:11

Ver. 11. Shall I then take my bread, and my water,.... Which include all food and liquors, everything eatable and drinkable; and "water" may be particularly mentioned, because very scarce in the wilderness, and so precious; though the Septuagint version has "wine" instead of "water":

and my flesh which I have killed for my shearers; whether oxen, or sheep, or lambs, as there might be of each sort, for an entertainment made on such an occasion:

and give [it] unto men whom I know not whence they [be]? which is another argument Abarbinel makes use of that he meant not David, but his men only, because he did not know who and from whence they were.

1 Samuel 25:12

Ver. 12. So David's young men turned their way,.... Their backs on him, without making any reply; and though they did not return railing for railing, they treated him with silent contempt; and though they did not offer to do any injury to his person, nor to take anything away by force, yet they were determined to report this usage to David, who they doubted not would avenge the affront put on him and them:

and went again; to the wilderness from whence they came:

and came and told him all these sayings; rude and reproachful ones, just as they were delivered.

1 Samuel 25:13

Ver. 13. And David said unto his men,.... Provoked to the last degree to have such a rude churlish answer returned to such a civil and humble message as he had sent:

gird you on every man his sword; and prepare to march and chastise Nabal for his insolence:

and they girded on every man his sword; in obedience to David, and in vindication of his honour and their own:

and David also girded on his sword; in order to march at the head of them, fired with indignation at the affront given him:

and there went up after David about four hundred men; out of the six hundred he had with him, 1Sa 23:13;

and two hundred abode by the stuff; the baggage in their camp; the Targum is, they

"were left to watch the vessels;"

the things necessary for their use, for the dressing of their food, their bedding, &c.

1 Samuel 25:14

Ver. 14. But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife,.... Not one of David's young men, as what follows shows, but one of Nabal's young men or servants, one of those David directs him to for the truth of what he said, 1Sa 25:8; this was one of those that had been employed in feeding sheep in the wilderness, where David was, and knew him, but was now at Carmel, and was present when David's messengers came to Nabal, and was privy to what passed:

saying, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; in a very kind and handsome manner, to ask of his peace and welfare, and to wish him all happiness and prosperity; or "masters" {y} master and mistress, including both Nabal and Abigail:

and he railed on them; gave them very abusive language, represented David and his men as a parcel of scoundrels, fugitives, and runaway servants, 1Sa 25:10; or "he flew at them" {z}; or "upon" them, in great wrath and fury, calling them hard names, bidding them begone about their business; the allusion is to a ravenous bird, which will fly at persons when it apprehends its young in any danger.

{y} wnynda "dominus nostros", Malvenda. {z} Mhb jeyw "et involavit in eos", Coccei Lex. col. 607.

1 Samuel 25:15

Ver. 15. But the men [were] very good unto us,.... Very kind and civil, yea, very useful and serviceable, even all the messengers David sent and Nabal railed on, yea, all David's men, and therefore deserved better treatment than they met with from Nabal:

and we were not hurt; neither by them nor others:

neither missed we anything: of our flocks, or anything belonging to us; they neither robbed us themselves, nor suffered others to rob us:

as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields; feeding the sheep by them: thus he confirms everything that David said of himself and his men, See Gill on "1Sa 25:7": and says even more of them to their commendation, as follows.

1 Samuel 25:16

Ver. 16. They were a wall unto us both by night and day,.... Protecting and defending them against the Philistines, who, as they robbed the threshing floors of Keilah, would have plundered the flocks of Nabal; or it may be rather against the incursions of the Arabs in the wilderness of Paran, the posterity of Ishmael, who lived by plunder, and against the wild beasts of the desert, who otherwise would have carried off many of their sheep and lambs, by night or by day:

all the while we were with them keeping the sheep; all which showed how reasonable it was that Nabal should have used them well, and given them a portion of his entertainment at his sheep shearing; for had it not been for them, he would not have had so many sheep to shear as he had.

1 Samuel 25:17

Ver. 17. Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do,.... For the preservation of her family:

for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household; which he concluded, either from something that dropped from David's messengers, as they turned away from Nabal; or from the martial spirit of David himself, who would never put up such an affront and indignity cast upon him; or from some intelligence he had of David's arming his men, and marching to take vengeance:

for he [is such] a son of Belial, that [a man] cannot speak to him; meaning

Nabal, who was such a worthless, passionate, and ill natured man, such a lawless and imperious one, that he would not suffer a man to speak to him about anything; and it was to no purpose to attempt it, which was a reason this servant did not choose to speak to him about this affair, but to Abigail; and suggests, that it would signify nothing for her to speak to him about it, but it would be most advisable for her to consider with herself what was to be done immediately, without consulting him: the words may be rendered, "for he is a son of Belial that speaks unto him" {a}; or when "he speaks unto him", or it is told him; meaning not the servant that reported to David what Nabal said; for Abarbinel observes there were ten of them, and therefore it could not be said of them, he is a son of Belial; but rather David himself, as he and Kimchi observe it may be interpreted of; that though he was so good and upright a man, yet when it should be told him how Nabal had treated him, he would be so provoked at it, that he would become and act like a son of Belial; storm and rage, and vow destruction to Nabal and his family, and come out with his whole army to destroy them; but the first sense is best.

{a} wyla rbdm "loquens ad cum".

1 Samuel 25:18

Ver. 18. Then Abigail made haste,.... As the case required, her family being in imminent danger:

and took two hundred loaves; of bread; of what size or weight they were is not said; though it may be reasonably concluded they were pretty large, since they are not called cakes, but loaves, and since they were to be a present to David and his men, who were numerous:

and two bottles of wine; not such as ours are, which would have borne no proportion to the rest of the provision; but these were leathern bags which held a large quantity, in which they put and carried wine in those times and countries; the Septuagint version is, two vessels or casks of wine:

and five sheep ready dressed; killed and dressed by the butcher, or made ready by the cook, boiled or roasted; the word which the Targum uses, according to the interpretation of Jarchi, from one of their Rabbins, signifies such as were stuffed with small pieces of meat, and eggs in them, or, as it should seem, made into pastries:

and five measures of parched [corn]; or five seahs, a measure which held, according to Bishop Cumberland {b}, two wine gallons, four bottles, and a little more; of this parched corn, See Gill on "1Sa 17:17"; where mention is made of an ephah of it; and the Septuagint version has the same measure here, and calls them five ephahs of flour:

and an hundred clusters of raisins; or dried grapes, as the Targum; the Septuagint is, one omer of them, which was the tenth part of an ephah:

and two hundred cakes of figs; which were dried, and pressed, and made into lumps, and she took two hundred of these; or, as the Targum, two hundred pound weight of them:

and laid [them] on asses; one not being sufficient to carry all this provision.

{b} Of Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 3. p. 86.

1 Samuel 25:19

Ver. 19. And she said to her servants, go on before me,.... With the present, the sight of which she wisely considered would in a great measure pacify David, and prepare him to hear patiently what she had to say to him:

behold, I come after you; signifying it would not be long before she came up to them, and overtook them:

but she told not her husband Nabal; neither the danger he and his family were in through his conduct, nor the preparations she had made to prevent it; knowing his perverse and obstinate disposition, that it would take up too much time to reason with him, and persuade him, and bring him into proper measures; and which may be observed to excuse the conduct of Abigail in doing what she did, and taking and disposing of her husband's gods, without his knowledge and leave; the case required haste, and it was done to preserve him and his family from imminent ruin; and besides, he might not be in a fit condition to be spoken to, being drunk with passion, or with wine, or both, see 1Sa 25:36; and no doubt she was directed by the Spirit of God to do what she did; and this being an extraordinary case, is not to be drawn into an example.

1 Samuel 25:20

Ver. 20. And it was [so, as] she rode on the ass,.... After her servants:

that she came down, by the covert of the hill; by the side of it, which was covered with bushes, and she rode among them, in a way that led through them, and so was not seen by David and his men; or by the shadow of the hill, toward the bottom of it, where by reason of that, and the opposite hill, it was darkish, and they could not see each other:

and, behold, David and his men came down against her; came down a hill opposite to that she came down:

and she met them; in the valley between two hills.

1 Samuel 25:21

Ver. 21. Now David had said,.... When the messengers returned and told him how they had been used by Nabal; or he "said" {c}, or was saying within himself, or to his men, what follows, just as Abigail met him:

surely in vain have I kept all that this [fellow] hath in the wilderness; which shows that lie was in a violent passion, and had Nabal in the utmost contempt and indignation, in that he mentions not his name, only says "this", this man or follow; leaving a blank to be filled up with the most ignominious name and character that could be thought of; and repents that he had taken so much care of his flocks when they were feeding by him in the wilderness:

so that nothing was missed of all that [pertained] unto him; and seems to have wished he had suffered his flocks to have been robbed by the Arabs, or worried by wild beasts, since he had been such an ungrateful wretch to him:

and he hath requited me evil for good; he had requited evil to him by denying to send him any of his provisions, and by abusing him and his men with opprobrious language; and this was done in return for the good deeds he had done in protecting his servants and his flocks in the wilderness, and for the good words and respectful message he had sent unto him.

{c} rma "ait", V. L. "dixit", Pagninus, Montanus; "dicebat", Vatablus.

1 Samuel 25:22

Ver. 22. So and more also do God unto the enemies of David,.... Give them as much health and prosperity, as much wealth and riches, as Nabal has, and much more:

if I leave of all that [pertain] to him, by the morning light, any that pisseth against the wall; which is generally understood of a dog, that he, would not leave him so much as a dog: but it is better, with Ben Gersom, to interpret it of the males in his house, himself, his sons, and servants; and so the Targum paraphrases it of reasonable creatures, of such

"that know knowledge,"

or are knowing and understanding creatures; it seems to have been towards the evening; of the day when David was marching towards Nabal's house, designing to fall upon him and his, amidst their jollity that night, and cut them all off before morning. This must be imputed to the sudden and violent passion David was thrown into when off his guard, through the necessity he was in, the disappointment he met with, and the opprobrious language he was treated with; but in this his conduct was not as it used to be, and as it was towards Saul his enemy. Nor is his rage and passion to be vindicated, or the rash vow he made to destroy Nabal and his family; his crime, though great, yet not to be published with death; his ingratitude and insolence deserved resentment, but were not capital crimes worthy of death, and especially of the destruction of his whole family; the Jews indeed make him to be guilty of treason, in that he knew that David was anointed king, and yet both abused him, and disobeyed his commands, and therefore being guilty of overt acts of treason, he and his were deserving of death; but David was not yet king.

1 Samuel 25:23

Ver. 23. And when Abigail saw David,.... Whom she either knew personally, or rather supposed who he was by the number of men that followed him:

she hasted, and alighted off the ass; on which she rode:

and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground; in respect to, and reverence of, so great a person as David was.

1 Samuel 25:24

Ver. 24. And fell at his feet,.... As an humble supplicant, having a favour to ask of him; it is very probable David was on foot:

and said, upon me, my lord, [upon] me [let] this iniquity [be]; which her husband had been guilty of; she desires it might be transferred from him to her, and be reckoned as if done by her; she would have it imputed to herself, and all the blame lie upon her, and the punishment for it be inflicted on her; for iniquity may be put for the punishment of iniquity: this was very artfully said, as well as expressed great affection for her husband, and care of his life; for she knew, if she could get the fault removed from him to her, she would be able to vindicate herself, and her innocence would soon appear; nor would this strong affection for her husband fail of answering some good purpose, as she full well knew:

and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience and hear the words of thine handmaid: as it was but reasonable she should be heard, since she stood now as the criminal, taking all the blame of her husband's conduct on herself.

1 Samuel 25:25

Ver. 25. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, [even] Nabal,.... He is a worthless man, it must be owned, a weak foolish man, rather to be despised than regarded by him; what either he says or does is unworthy of the notice of any, and much less of so great a person as David was:

for as his name [is], so [is] he; his natural disposition, genius, and conduct, agree with his name; when anyone knows his name, he may judge what is to be expected from him:

Nabal [is] his name: which signifies a fool:

and folly, in Hebrew, "Nebalah",

[is] with him; attends all, his words and actions. This character of her husband, though no doubt a just one, yet it would not have been right in her to have

given it, whose folly she should rather have concealed, but that it was his well known character; and she observes it not to reproach him with it, but to excuse his sin, his rudeness and ingratitude and preserve his life; and suggests that what he had done was not to be imputed to malice in his heart, but to his stupidity and folly, and so not to be regarded, and was not a peculiar single action of his, but what he was daily more or less guilty of; his folly was with him wherever he went and appeared in everything he said or did, and therefore to be overlooked and despised:

but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send: as she had taken the blame upon herself, now she answers for herself, and pleads ignorance of his messengers, and their message; she had not so much as seen them with her eyes, and much less heard their message when reported; had she, she would have taken care, she intimates, that it should have been attended to; having so much interest in her husband, that she could have prevailed on him to have used them with civility, and granted their request.

1 Samuel 25:26

Ver. 26. Now therefore, my lord, [as] the Lord liveth, and [as] thy soul liveth,.... Which is an oath, and respects either what goes before, that she never saw the young men that were sent to Nabal, or to what follows, the providence of God in preventing David from shedding blood, which she was sure of by an impulse on her own mind, and by observing a change in David's countenance:

seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to [shed] blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand; she does not impute this to her prudence, and the provision she made to appease David, and prevent him from shedding the blood he intended, and taking the vengeance he had resolved on; but to the Lord, and the interposition of his providence, which she knew would have its weight on the mind of so good a man as David was; who upon reflection would be thankful that he had been prevented from shedding innocent blood, as the Targum calls it:

now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal; meaning Saul and those with him, wishing they might be as inconsiderable as Nabal; as unable, as weak, and impotent as he to do him any hurt, and as short lived, and cut off by the hand God, as he would be; for, according to Jarchi, she prophesied under the direction of the Holy Spirit. It may be observed that in 1Sa 25:24, she frequently gives David the title of "my lord", in reverence of him, and to atone for the rudeness and insolence of her husband, in speaking of him as a runaway servant, 1Sa 25:10.

1 Samuel 25:27

Ver. 27. And now this blessing, which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord,.... The present, consisting of the things mentioned in 1Sa 25:18; which came as a blessing from God, and with good will from her:

let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord; the servants of David: in the original it is, "that walk at the feet of my lord": and which the Targum paraphrases, "who minister before my lord"; and so Abigail's damsels are called "pedissequae", or "that walked at her feet", 1Sa 25:42; and with the Romans, in later times, servants were called a "pedibus" and "pedissequi" {d}. This also is very artfully said, as if the present was not good enough for David, and worthy of his acceptance; might be agreeable to his men, and of service to them.

{d} Vid. Pignorium de Servis, p. 140, 248, 293.

1 Samuel 25:28

Ver. 28. I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid,.... The trespasses, as the Targum, either the sin of her husband, she had taken upon herself, or her boldness in troubling him with her petitions and solicitations, and even with the present she had brought:

for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house; or a firm kingdom, as the Targum; would raise him to the kingdom of Israel, and establish it in his posterity, that it should not be taken from him, as it would be from Saul:

because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord; the battles of the people of the Lord, as the Targum, of the people of Israel against the Philistines; which he had often done with success, the Lord being with him, and prospering him and therefore would firmly settle him on the throne, and continue the kingdom in his posterity:

and evil hath not been found in thee [all] thy days; no unjust action had been committed by him against his king and country, however he had been reproached and calumniated; and she hoped that therefore none would be done by him now to stain so fair a character.

1 Samuel 25:29

Ver. 29. Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul,.... His life, to take it away, meaning Saul, whom she chose not to name, because he was king:

but the soul of my lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; should be dear unto the Lord, precious in his esteem, and be carefully preserved by him, among other his chosen ones, and should be safe with him, in his hands, and under his care and keeping; the Jews refer this to eternal life in the world to come, and the safety and security of his soul hereafter; so the Targum,

"the soul of my lord shall be treasured up in the treasury of eternal life, before the Lord thy God:"

hence they speak of the souls of the righteous being laid up under the throne of glory {e}, in proof of which they produce this text; and so Maimonides {f} understands it of what should be after death, see **Re 6:9**;

and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, [as out] of the middle of a sling; that is, remove them swiftly and suddenly, and with force, out of the world, as a stone is slung out of the middle of a sling; see Jer 10:18.

{e} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 152. 2. {f} Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 41.

1 Samuel 25:30

Ver. 30. And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee,.... Performed his promise, especially with respect to his kingdom, as follows:

and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; that is, actually raised him to be, and settled him as king upon the throne of Israel; for he was both appointed and anointed already; and this Abigail knew, and was now well known in Israel, and the common talk of the people.

1 Samuel 25:31

Ver. 31. This shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord,.... It would give him no trouble, nor distress of mind, or sit uneasy on his conscience:

either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself; which she suggests it might do, if he had shed the blood of Nabal's family, his children and servants, who were no ways concerned with him in his rudeness and ingratitude; or had avenged himself on him for the same, by taking away his life, which such crimes, however great and aggravated, did not deserve; but, on the contrary, it would be a satisfaction and pleasure to him to reflect upon it, that he had passed over such an offence, and shed no blood on account of it:

but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord; by delivering him out of the hands of all his enemies, and have raised him to, and settled him on the throne of Israel, of which she made no doubt:

then remember thine handmaid; the advice she gave not to shed blood, and take vengeance, for which he would then be thankful, and gratefully remember: some, as Ben Gersom, think she said this under a spirit of prophecy, that Nabal should die quickly, and she should be David's wife; but rather her meaning is, that when he should be king, and she should apply to him on any account, to have justice done her, and to be assisted and relieved when oppressed, that he would then remember her, and show her favour.

1 Samuel 25:32

Ver. 32. And David said to Abigail,.... Having heard her out, and being overcome with her rhetoric and powerful arguments:

blessed [be] the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me; who put it into her heart to come out and meet him, and endeavour to avert him from his bad design, which his heart was set upon; he saw plainly the hand of God in it, and in the first place acknowledges the goodness of divine Providence, in directing her to take the step she did.

1 Samuel 25:33

Ver. 33. And blessed [be] thy advice,.... Thanks be to God, and to thee for it, being wise, good, and seasonable; or "thy taste" {g}, thy good sense, knowledge, as the Targum, discretion, prudence, and understanding:

and blessed [be] thou which hast kept me this day from coming to [shed] blood; he came out with a full resolution to shed the blood of Nabal, and of all the males in his house, but was stopped by Abigail; who by her arguments so prevailed upon him as to cause him to desist from his design, and thankful he was to God for it; for though he had vowed he would destroy Nabal and his family, yet being a rash sinful vow, he saw it was better to break it than to keep it:

and from avenging myself with mine own hand; which to do would have been sinful, vengeance only belonging to God; and now he leaves it to him, and is very thankful that he was prevented doing it himself.

{g} Kmej "sapor tuus", Piscator; "discretio tua", Montanus.

1 Samuel 25:34

Ver. 34. For in very deed, [as] the Lord God of Israel liveth,.... An oath for the confirmation of what he was about to say:

which hath kept me back from hurting thee: from doing any ill to her family, as he intended, though not to her person, his resolution being only to slay the males; but that would have been an hurt, an evil, an affliction to Abigail, from which the Lord in his providence restrained him, and that through her good advice:

except thou hadst hasted, and come to meet me: if she had not made quick dispatch in preparing her present, or had stayed to persuade her husband into her measures; if she had delayed a little longer, David would have been at Nabal's house, executing his vengeance on him and his:

surely there had not been left unto Nabal, by the morning light, any that pisseth against the wall: See Gill on "1Sa 25:22".

1 Samuel 25:35

Ver. 35. So David received of her hand [that] which she had brought him,.... Her present, 1Sa 25:18; and which he kindly took for his own use, as well as for his men; for it was a present for a prince:

and said to her, go up in peace to thine house; in peace of mind, having her request granted, and nothing to fear from David and his men, and so might return home with the greatest safety in her own person, with those that were with her, and be under no apprehensions of danger and destruction to Nabal and his family:

see, I have hearkened to thy voice; to her arguments and reasonings, which were powerful; to her petitions, which were granted; and to her good counsel and advice, which he took:

and have accepted thy person: done as she desired, forgave the offence, and so lifted her up, as the word signifies, and made her countenance cheerful; received her present kindly, and took well all she said and did; and promised to grant her, for the future, anything that lay in his power, whenever she should apply to him, see Job 42:8.

1 Samuel 25:36

Ver. 36. And Abigail came to Nabal,.... Having sped with David, and taken her leave of him, she returned home to her husband Nabal:

and, behold, he held a feast in his house like the feast of a king; both for the number of dishes on his table and of guests at it though only on the account of sheep shearing; but very probably there were others that were invited to this entertainment besides the shearers; covetous men are generally very profuse when they make feasts:

and Nabal's heart [was] merry within him, for he [was] very drunken: which was a very ill example for the master of the feast to set, and was one instance among others of his folly, and of his conduct answering to his name:

wherefore she told him nothing less or more until the morning light; where she had been, and what she had been about, the danger that he and the whole family were in through his rude and churlish behaviour towards David and his men, and how she had prevented it by a timely application to David, meeting him when in full march, and in a great passion, and with a firm resolution to destroy him and his; but finding Nabal in such a condition, bereaved of his reason, and incapable of attending to what she should say, said not one word about it till the next morning.

1 Samuel 25:37

Ver. 37. But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal,.... When he had slept, and was become sober, and so capable of attending to and understanding what might be related to him:

and his wife had told him these things; recorded in this chapter, before observed:

that his heart died within him, and he became [as] a stone; he swooned away, became as cold as a stone, and remained as senseless, spoke not a word, but lay in a stupor; the Jewish writers generally say this was occasioned by the distress and uneasiness the present his wife carried to David gave him; but it is more likely the sense of the danger that was impressed upon his mind, which he had been exposed to through his carriage to David and his men; who, he feared, notwithstanding all his wife said would return and take vengeance on him.

1 Samuel 25:38

Ver. 38. And it came to pass, about ten days [after],.... After he had lain in this stupid and senseless manner for ten days:

that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died; with some disease or increased the grief of his heart, and the fears of his mind that he died therewith.

1 Samuel 25:39

Ver. 39. And when David heard that Nabal was dead,.... As he soon might, Maon and Carmel not being far from the wilderness where David was:

he said, blessed [be] the Lord, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal; not that he rejoiced at the death of Nabal, simply considered, or from a private spirit of revenge; but because of the glory of divine justice, which he had shown to him in vindicating him from the reproach Nabal had cast upon him, and particularly was thankful for what follows;

and hath kept his servant from evil; from slaying Nabal with his own hand, and doing hurt to his family:

for the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head; and upon no other, none of his family suffered but himself, and which was another cause of thankfulness to David; had he been suffered to have done as he in his wrath determined, not only Nabal, but all the males in his house, had been cut off; but now, through the righteous judgment of God, only Nabal suffered, and not any of his family:

and David sent and communed with Abigail; by his messengers to her; or "concerning" her {h}, about marrying her:

to take her to him to wife; for being both a beautiful and wise woman, he thought her a proper person to be his wife; which she might lawfully become, Nabal being dead, and Michal, David's wife, being taken from him, and given to another man, with whom she lived in adultery; or as divorced by David, as the Jews say, David by the law of God was free from her. These messengers were sent by David at a convenient time, at a proper distance from the death of Nabal; and he chose rather to send messengers than to go himself, lest being denied he should be put to shame, she being a rich widow, and he a poor persecuted man, and that her answer might be entirely free and unawed by him, and that it might appear that she was not taken to him by force; and besides, such a method has been always reckoned most honourable with great personages.

{h} lygybab peri abigaiav, Sept. "de Abigail", Vatabulus.

1 Samuel 25:40

Ver. 40. And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel,.... For though Nabal lived in Maon, yet having possessions in Camel, he had no doubt an house there also; and here Abigail was, and perhaps chose to be after his death, rather than at Maon:

they spake unto her; delivered the message to her they were sent with by David:

saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife; that is, to treat with her about his marriage to her, to propose it to her, and, if they could prevail upon her, to bring her with them, that David might espouse her.

1 Samuel 25:41

Ver. 41. And she arose, and bowed herself on [her] face to the earth,.... As she did before David, 1Sa 25:23; and did as she would have done had he been present, considering his messengers as representing him and therefore showed the same respect and reverence and did the same honour, as if he had been there in person:

and said; expressed herself in such language as if David had been before her:

behold, [let] thine handmaid [be] a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord; which she said through her great humility, this being one of the meanest services she could be put to; intimating, that she was so far from being worthy to be the wife of such a man that she was only fit and it would be honour enough to her to perform the meanest services to those that waited upon him; or her sense is that it would be enough for her to be the wife of one of David's servants, and not his; it being the business of a wife, as Ben Gersom observes to wash the feet of her husband.

1 Samuel 25:42

Ver. 42. And Abigail hasted and arose,.... She had no objection nor hesitation in her mind about marrying David but at once consented, and immediately prepared for her journey, having as high an opinion, and as great an esteem of David, as he of her; and though she was rich and he peer this was no obstacle in the way, she knew and believed he would be king of Israel, 1Sa 25:30; and though he could not support her, she had enough to support herself, and supply him, till he came to the throne: and

rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; whom she took with her, partly to wait upon her, and partly for her honour, and the honour of David, whom she was going to marry:

and she went after the messengers of David: not following them directly, but some time after they were gone; partly for the sake of decency, and partly that they going before might acquaint David with the success of their message, and he might prepare to receive Abigail when she came:

and became his wife; he espoused and married her according to the custom of the times.

1 Samuel 25:43

Ver. 43. And David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel,.... A city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:56; that is, he took her to wife, and as it seems before Abigail became his wife; see **2Sa 3:2**;

and they were also both of them his wives; polygamy, though not agreeably to the law of nature, nor the law of God, was a custom which prevailed in those times, which good men gave into, though not to be commended for it.

1 Samuel 25:44

Ver. 44. But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish,.... Or "for Saul", &c. {i}; which is a reason for his marrying again, but no reason for marrying more wives than one. Michal was his first wife, and they lived lovingly together, until David was obliged to flee from Saul, and then he gave her to another; partly to vex David, and partly if he could to break the relation between him and David, that he might not be thought to be his son in law, and he to persecute one in such a relation to him; and that this might not give David any show of claim, or be the means of his rising to the throne. This Phalti, to whom he gave her, is called Phaltiel, **2Sa 3:15**;

which [was] of Gallim; which very probably was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, since it is mentioned with several cities of that tribe, and as near Gibeah of Saul, Isa 10:29.

{i} lwavw "Saul enim", Tigurine version; "nam Saul", Junius & Tremcillius, Piscator; so Pool and Patrick.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 26:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 26

This chapter relates that Saul, upon the information of the Ziphites, went out again with an armed force to seek David, 1Sa 26:1; of which David having intelligence, and of the place where he pitched, came with one of his men and reconnoitred his camp, and finding Saul and his men asleep, took away his spear, and the cruse of water at his head, and departed, without taking away his life, though solicited to it by his servant, 1Sa 26:4; which spear and cruse of water he produced to the reproach of Abner, Saul's general, and as a testimony of his sincere regard to Saul, and that he had no design upon his life, 1Sa 26:13; of which Saul being convinced, blessed David, and returned home again, 1Sa 26:21.

Ver. 1. And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah,.... Of Benjamin, called sometimes Gibeah of Saul, because it was the place of his birth and residence; hither Saul had returned after his last interview with David; whether, notwithstanding what had passed between him and David, he had privately encouraged the Ziphites to watch David, and give him information of him where he was, and when it was a proper opportunity to seize him; or whether the Ziphites were so officious as of themselves to acquaint him with it, is not certain; the latter is probable, since having attempted to betray David, they might fear, that should he come to the throne, he would remember it, and therefore they might be desirous of having him cut off by the hand of Saul:

saying, doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, [which is] before Jeshimon? the same place where he was when the Ziphites before gave information of him, 1Sa 23:10; here he might choose to be, supposing that the Ziphites now would not meditate anything against him, since Saul had declared he would be king after him, and had made him swear that he would not cut off his posterity; and as he thought it his wisdom to provide against the worst, knowing the inconstancy of Saul, he might judge this the most proper place of safety, and from whence he could, on occasion, easily retreat into the wilderness; and it may be also, because it was near to Abigail's estate and possessions, which were now a good resource for him.

1 Samuel 26:2

Ver. 2. Then Saul arose,.... Immediately, glad of an opportunity to seize on David, having the same disposition towards him as ever; and perhaps had repented he had not laid hold on him when he followed him out of the cave:

and went down to the wilderness of Ziph: or towards it:

having three thousand chosen men of Israel; young men, so called, because usually chosen for business, and for war particularly, rather than old men; the same number he took with him when he sought him at Engedi, 1Sa 24:2;

to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph; where or whereabouts he was informed by the Ziphites he was.

1 Samuel 26:3

Ver. 3. And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which [is] before Jeshimon, by the way,.... To the wilderness; the very same place where the Ziphites suggested David was:

but David abode in the wilderness; not in the hill of Hachilah, but in the wilderness of Ziph itself:

and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness; he understood, by some information he had, that Saul had set out from Gibeah, and was coming to seek for him in the wilderness of Ziph; perhaps Jonathan had given him intelligence; however, he was not quite certain, as appears by what follows.

1 Samuel 26:4

Ver. 4. David therefore sent out spies,.... To observe if he was coming or come, and where he was, that he might not be surprised by him; for though David knew the Lord was and would be his protection, he thought proper to be upon his guard, and to make use of means for his safety:

and understood that Saul was come in very deed; that he was most certainly come, and come to some certain place; which he himself went to reconnoitre, as in 1Sa 26:5.

1 Samuel 26:5

Ver. 5. And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched,.... Came near it, within sight of it; so that he could take a view of it with his naked eye, and observe where and in what manner he was encamped:

and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host; where he and his general had their quarters in the camp:

and Saul lay in the trench; or circuit; not in the foss or ditch thrown up, in which an army sometimes lies entrenched; but this is to be understood either of the camp itself, so called, as Ben Gersom, Abarbinel, and Ben Melech think, because it lay in a circular form, that all comers to it on every side might be seen; or else a sort of fortress all around the camp, made of carriages joined together; and as the word signifies a carriage, cart or chariot, it may design the chariot in which Saul slept, as kings have been used to do when not in their houses; and to this the Septuagint agrees, which uses a word that Procopius Gazaeus says signifies one kind of a chariot, and is used of a chariot drawn by mules, in the Greek version of Isa 66:20; Grotius observes, kings used to sleep in chariots where there were no houses;
See Gill on "1Sa 17:20"; though he rather seems to have slept, "sub die", in the open air:

and the people pitched round about him; both for the sake of honour, and for his greater security; this shows it could not be the loss he laid in, for then they could not pitch around him.

1 Samuel 26:6

Ver. 6. Then answered David,.... Or addressed himself to the two following persons:

and said to Ahimelech the Hittite; who was either an Hittite by birth, but was become a proselyte, or he was an Israelite that had dwelt among the Hittites, and so had this name given him; the former seems most probable; some say {k} this was Uriah the Hittite:

and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab; Zeruiah was the sister of David, **1Ch 2:15**; and these were two sons of hers, who very probably joined David at the cave of Adullam, 1Sa 22:1;

saying, who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? that is, which of you two?

and Abishai said, I will go down with thee; the other being timorous, or Abishai being most forward spoke first.

{k} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. M.

1 Samuel 26:7

Ver. 7. So David and Abishai came to the people by night,.... Josephus {l} wrongly says, that he took with him both Abishai and Ahimelech; he chose to have but one, for the greater secrecy. This was a bold enterprise, for two men to go into a camp of three thousand men, though it was in the night; when though they might suppose the greater part of them were asleep, yet they could not well suppose this of all, and especially of the guards or sentinels; but no doubt David was moved to this, not merely by the dint of his natural courage, but by the Spirit of God, by whom he might be assured of protection, and that Saul and the people were cast into a deep sleep by the Lord, as they were, 1Sa 26:12; and this the Lord moved him to, that he might have an opportunity a second time to convince Saul of his innocence, and that he had no design upon his life:

and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench;
See Gill on "1Sa 26:5";

and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster; ready to take up and defend himself, should he be surprised; or this was his sceptre, which he always carried about with him, as an ensign of royalty, and by which very probably David knew which was Saul's tent or couch, where he slept:

but Abner and the people lay round about him; as in 1Sa 26:5.

{l} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 13. sect. 9.

1 Samuel 26:8

Ver. 8. Then said Abishai to David,.... Seeing Saul fast asleep, and a spear so near him:

God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: or at this time, properly it was night:

now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear; with Saul's own spear, which was stuck in the ground at his bolster. He remembered that David would not put forth his hand to stay him before, when he had an opportunity; and since now another offered, he did not move it to him to do it, but begged leave to do it himself; which he might think would be granted, since there was such a remarkable hand of Providence in it, which seemed to direct to such a step:

even to the earth at once, and I will not [smite] him the second time; signifying, that he would give such a home blow or thrust, that the spear should pierce through him, and fasten him to the ground, that there would be no need to repeat it.

1 Samuel 26:9

Ver. 9. And David said to Abishai, destroy him not,.... He laid his commands upon him not to hurt him:

for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless? since Saul was king, and appointed to that office by the Lord, and was anointed by his order for it, and invested with it by him, his person was sacred, and not to be touched; nor could his life be taken away by any without being guilty of a very great crime indeed, which it might be justly expected the Lord would resent and punish.

1 Samuel 26:10

Ver. 10. And David said furthermore,.... In order to make Abishai easy, and prevent his doing what he proposed:

[as] the Lord liveth; which was the form of an oath, made to assure Abishai of

the truth of what follows, and therefore he need not be hasty to put Saul to death, since it would not be long before he should die, in one or other of the three following ways: either

the Lord shall smite him; suddenly, which the Jews call cutting off, or death by the hand of heaven, by the immediate hand of God:

or his day shall come to die; the time appointed for him to die a natural death, of some disease common to men:

or he shall descend into battle, and perish; which was commonly reckoned death, casual or accidental, and in which last way Saul did die, 1Sa 31:3.

1 Samuel 26:11

Ver. 11. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed,.... Or suffer any about him to do it; he speaks of it with the utmost detestation and abhorrence:

but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that [is] at his bolster; not to smite him with, as he desired, but to carry off, and was no other than his sceptre; See Gill on "1Sa 20:33";

and the cruse of water; which stood in the same place, as appears by 1Sa 26:12. Some take this to be a pot to make water in; others an hourglass, to know the time of night, in which not sand, but water, flowed for that purpose: but rather this was for his refreshment should he be hot and thirsty in the night, or to purify him from any nocturnal pollution that might happen; for, according to Clemens of Alexandria {m}, it was a custom of the Jews often to purify themselves in bed: though Fortunatus Scacchus {n} thinks Saul had this pot or cup for a religious use; which he had with him, and with it gave thanks to God, the author of all good, whenever he sat down to a meal; such as the golden cup Philip king of Macedon always had under his pillow when he slept {o}:

and let us go; and do nothing more; which would be sufficient to convince they had been there, and to show what was in their power to do, had they been so inclined.

{m} Stromat. l. 4. p. 531. {n} Elaeochrism. Myrothec. l. I. c. 44. col. 224. {o}

Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 3.

1 Samuel 26:12

Ver. 12. So David took the spear, and the cruse of water, from Saul's bolster,.... Abishai either refusing to take them, since he might not take away his life; or it may be rather David thought better of it, and took them himself, lest Abishai should be tempted, when so near to Saul, and his spear in his hand, and should thrust him with it; though David may be said to take them by the hands of Abishai:

and they gat them away; with the above things along with them:

and no man saw [it], nor knew [it]; saw them in the camp, or knew what they did:

neither awaked; at their talking together, at the motion of their feet, and taking away the spear and cruse:

for they [were] all asleep; which was very extraordinary, that among three thousand men none should be awake, not even the sentinels; which might seem impossible in a natural way, but it is accounted for by what follows:

because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them; or "a sleep of the Lord" {p}; a very great one, an uncommon one; so great trees, mountains, &c. are called trees and mountains of God; or, according to our supplement, it was from the Lord, he was the cause and author of it; he cast them into this sleep, or caused it to fall upon them, and locked them up in it, that they might not hear David and his servant when they came among them.

{p} hwhy tmdrt, "sopor Domini", V. L. Montanus, Munsterus "altus sopor Jehovae", Junias & Tremellius, Piscator.

1 Samuel 26:13

Ver. 13. Then David went over to the other side,.... To a hill on the other side, opposite to Hachilah, where Saul lay encamped; or "passed over the passage" {q}, the valley that lay between the two hills, and perhaps passed over a brook that ran in the valley, which is not unusual; so Josephus {r} says, that he went over a brook and came to the top of a mountain:

and stood on the top of an hill afar off; he chose the top of an hill, that his voice might be heard at a distance, as it might in a clear air, and still night; and to be afar off, that he might the better make his escape, should an attempt be made to pursue him:

a great space [being] between them; a large valley lying between the two hills.

{q} rbeh rbeyw "et transivit transitum", Montanus. {r} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 13. sect. 9.

1 Samuel 26:14

Ver. 14. And David cried unto the people,.... To the army of Saul with a loud voice, that he might be heard:

and to Abner the son of Ner; particularly to him, because he was general of the army:

saying, answerest thou not, Abner? it seems he had called to him more than once, and he had returned no answer; perhaps not being thoroughly awake, or not knowing whose voice it was, and from whence it came:

then Abner answered and said, who [art] thou [that] criest to the king? but it does not appear that David called to the king, only to the people, and to Abner their general, and therefore may be better rendered, "by the king" {s}; that is, near him, or "before him" {t}, in his presence. Kimchi and Ben Melech explain it, upon the king, or over him; and the Targum is, at the head of the king; the meaning is, how he could act such a part as to call so loud within the king's hearing, as to disturb the king's rest, and awake him out of his sleep.

{s} Klmh la "juxta regem", Vatablus {t} Ceram rege, Nodlus, p. 58. No. 284.

1 Samuel 26:15

Ver. 15. And David said to Abner, [art] not thou a [valiant] man?.... Or a man {u}, a man of great fame for courage and valour, a man of great authority, who had the next post in the army under Saul, but had not behaved like a man, worthy of his character and office:

and who [is] like to thee in Israel? none that bare so great a name, or was in so high an office, who therefore should have been careful to have acted according to both:

wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? took care to have set a guard about his person while he slept; which perhaps was neglected through a contempt of David and his men, as being in no fear of them:

for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord; that is, there had been one in the camp that night, who had entered there with that view to have destroyed him, had he an opportunity, and which did offer; this was true of Abishai, who no doubt went down with David into the camp with that intent, though David did not, and therefore he says, "one of the people", not more; for though two went in, only one with that view: David observes to them the danger the king was in, his carefulness of him to preserve his life, to whom only it was owing, and the negligence of Abner, and those under his command.

{u} vya "vir", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator.

1 Samuel 26:16

Ver. 16. This thing [is] not good that thou hast done,.... Yea, it was very bad, a great fault, and very blameworthy, if he had neglected to set a watch over the king, whose business it was as a general; the words are expressed in a figure called "meiosis", in which less is said than was intended:

[as] the Lord liveth, ye [are] worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed; if a watch was set, and these had fallen asleep, and neglected their duty, or had deserted their post; which to do was a capital crime, and deserving of death; wherefore he does not say this of Abner, but of the watch:

and now see where the king's spear [is], and the cruse of water that [was] at his bolster; which he then held up as proofs and evidences of the truth of what be said, that one had been in the camp and had carried off these, and who could as easily have destroyed the king as to have taken these away; and as he came hither with an intent to destroy him, would have done it, had he not been prevented by David; all which likewise plainly proved the negligence of

Abner, in not setting a watch about his master, or the negligence of the watch that was set.

1 Samuel 26:17

Ver. 17. And Saul knew David's voice,.... Though Abner at first did not, as appears by his words, but Saul did, by being this time thoroughly awake through the discourse that passed between David and Abner:

and said, [is] this thy voice, my son David? the same question he put before, when he followed him out of the cave, See Gill on "1Sa 24:16":

and David said, [it is] my voice, my lord, O king; he not only owns him to be king, whom he sought not to depose, but his own liege lord and sovereign, whose commands he was ready to obey.

1 Samuel 26:18

Ver. 18. And he said, wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant?.... Suggesting that it was both below him to do it, and against his interest; for David was his servant, and he would gladly have continued in his service, and done his business, but he drove him from it, and pursued him as a traitor, when he had not been guilty of any offence to his knowledge: and therefore puts the following questions:

for what have I done? or what evil [is] in mine hand? what crime had he committed, that he was pursued after this manner, and his life sought for? what had he done worthy of death? having a clear conscience, he could boldly ask these questions.

1 Samuel 26:19

Ver. 19. Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant,.... Whether David waited for an answer to his question is not certain; probably he did, and observing none returned, desired audience of what he had further to say:

if the Lord have stirred thee up against me; if he had put it into his heart to persecute him after this manner, for some sin he had committed against him, though not against Saul: did that appear to be the case,

let him accept an offering; my offering, as the Targum; or my prayer, as Jarchi; I would offer a sin offering according to the law, to make atonement for my offence, and might hope it would be accepted; or I would make my supplication to God, and entreat him to forgive mine iniquity, and so an issue be put to these troubles; or should it be a capital crime deserving of death he was guilty of, he was content to die, and satisfy for his fault in that way; or if both of them had sinned, in any respect, he proposed to join in an acceptable sacrifice to God, and so reconciliation be made, and matters adjusted in such a religious way; if it was the evil spirit from the Lord that had entered into Saul, or God had suffered a melancholy disorder to seize him, which had put him upon those measures, let an offering agreeable to the will of God be offered, or supplication made for the removal of it:

but if [they be] the children of men; that incited him to such violent methods, as Abner his general, or Doeg the Edomite, and others:

cursed [be] they before the Lord; an imprecation of the vengeance of God upon them:

for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord; meaning not from his own house and fatally, nor from the palace of Saul, but from the land of Canaan the Lord had given to his people Israel for an inheritance, and from the worship of God in it, which made it dear and precious to him; he knew if Saul went on pursuing him in this manner, he mast be obliged to quit the land, and go into a foreign country, as he quickly did; so the Targum renders it the inheritance of the people of the Lord: by being driven out of the land which was their inheritance, he should be deprived of their company and conversation, and of all social worship; the consideration of which was cutting to him, and caused the above imprecation from him on those who were concerned in it, and who in effect by their actions were

saying, go, serve other gods; for by being forced to go into an idolatrous country, he would be in the way of temptation, and be liable to be corrupted by ill examples, and to be persuaded and enticed into idolatrous practices; and if he was kept from them it would be no thanks to them, they did all they could to lead him into them; and if he was preserved, it would be owing to the power and grace of God; the Targum is, "go David among the people that worship idols;"

the Jews have a saying, that he that dwells without the land of Israel, it is as if he had no God and as if he served an idol {q}.

{q} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 110. 2.

1 Samuel 26:20

Ver. 20. Now therefore let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord,.... For should it be spilled, God, who is omniscient, will see it, and take notice of it; and being righteous, and to whom vengeance belongs, he will avenge it: some render it, "my blood shall not fall to the earth before the face of the Lord" {r}; I am continually under his eye and care, and he will protect and defend me; and in vain is it for thee to pursue after me; I shall never fall into thine hands, though I may be obliged to quit my country, and go into an idolatrous nation, against my will:

for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea; which leaps from place to place and is not easily taken: or this may denote what a mean, poor, weak, insignificant person David was; and how much it was below Saul to come out with an army of chosen men in pursuit of him; so the Targum,

"the king of Israel is come out to seek one that is weak or feeble:"

as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains; as kings for their delight used to do, as Abarbinel observes; but this being a business of pleasure, and this a bird of worth, some other is thought to be here intended. Indeed the is represented as worth no more than an "obolus", or five farthings, though fifty drachmas or drachms were ordered to be paid for one {s}; the Septuagint renders the word an "owl": the word is "kore", and from the etymology of it one would think it was the raven or crow. Jarchi on Jer 17:11 takes it to be the cuckoo, though here the partridge as others; Bochart {t} will have it to be the woodcock, snipe, or snite {u}. Some choose to read the words,

"as the kore or partridge on the mountains hunts;"

which, it is said, hunts and seeks after the nests of other birds, and sits on their eggs {v}: see Jer 17:11; so Saul hunted after David, though he could not take him; several naturalists {w} observe, that the partridge is very difficult to be taken by the hunter.

{r} wmd lpy la "non effundetur", Martyr. and to this sense are Syr. Ar. vers. {s} Laert. l. 2. in Vita Aristippi. {t} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 12. col. 81. {u} (A snite is like a snipe, yet a different species of lark-like bird. Oxford English Dictionary. Editor) {v} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 140. 2. Jarchi & Abarbinel in loc. {w} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 8. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 33. Aelian. Hist. Animal. l. 3. c. 16.

1 Samuel 26:21

Ver. 21. Then said Saul, I have sinned,.... Which is more than he acknowledged before, and yet, it is to be feared he had no true sense of his sin, and real repentance for it; but, like Pharaoh, his guilty conscience for the present forced this confession from him; see **Ex 9:27**;

return, my son David: meaning to his own house, or rather to his palace, since he had disposed of his wife to another man:

for I will no more do thee harm: or seek to do it by pursuing him from place to place, as he had done, which had given him a great deal of trouble and fatigue:

because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day; and therefore spared, when he could have taken it away; which showed that his life was dear to him, of great worth and value in his account; and therefore he would neither take it away himself, nor suffer another to do it:

behold, I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly: in seeking after his life, and pursuing him again, when he had such a convincing proof of his sincerity and faithfulness, and of his cordial affection for him, when he only cut off the skirts of his garment in the cave, and spared his life.

1 Samuel 26:22

Ver. 22. And David answered and said, behold the king's spear!.... And which perhaps was his sceptre, and which David therefore would not keep, lest it should be thought or said that he had deprived him of an ensign of his royalty, and be interpreted as a token of his design to seize his crown and throne:

and let one of the young men come over and fetch it; for notwithstanding the acknowledgment Saul had made of his sin and folly, David did not choose to carry the spear to him; not caring to trust him, and put himself into his hands, lest the evil spirit should return and come upon him suddenly, and alter his disposition and carriage; nor would he send any of his men with it, whose lives were dear to him, lest they should be seized as traitors, but desires one of Saul's men might be sent for it.

1 Samuel 26:23

Ver. 23. The Lord render to every man his righteousness, and his faithfulness,.... Or recompense every man that deals justly and faithfully with others, as he had done with Saul; or the Lord, who is just and faithful to his promises, reward the men that act the good and upright part; and this was a prayer of faith; for David doubted not that, though Saul might fail, yet God could not;

for the Lord delivered thee into [my] hand this day; or, "into an hand" {x} into the hand of Abishai, who had it in his power to slay him, when he went and took the spear that was at his bolster, and would have done it, but David suffered him not:

but I would not stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed; nor suffer another to stretch forth his hand against him; so careful and tender was he of his life.

{x} dyb "in manum", Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Samuel 26:24

Ver. 24. And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes,.... Or "magnified" {y}; and made great account of, as being the life of the king of Israel, and the Lord's anointed, and so spared:

so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord; he does not say in the eyes of Saul, as it should have been by way of retaliation, and as it might have been expected he would have said; but he had no dependence on Saul, nor expected justice to be done him by him; but he prays that his life might be precious in the sight of Lord, and taken care of, and protected by him, as he believed it would:

and let him deliver me out of all tribulation; for as yet he did not think himself quite out of it, notwithstanding all that Saul had said, but believed the Lord would deliver him in due time; from him alone he looked for it, and on him he depended.

{y} hldg "magnificata est", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Samuel 26:25

Ver. 25. Then Saul said to David, blessed [be] thou, my son David,.... He desired God to bless him, and pronounced him blessed himself, believing he would be a happy and prosperous man:

thou shall both do great [things]; he had done great things already, in slaying Goliath, obtaining victories over the Philistines, and escaping the hands of Saul, and keeping out of them with so small a force; and he should do greater things yet:

and also shalt still prevail; against Saul and all his enemies; the Targum is,

"even in reigning thou shalt reign, and even in prospering thou shalt prosper;"

he believed he would be king, so he had said before, 1Sa 24:20;

so David went on his way: to the wilderness again very probably, putting no trust and confidence in Saul, knowing how fickle and unstable he was:

and Saul returned to his place; to Gibeah, where his palace was.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 27:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 27

David, fearing he should perish by the hand of Saul at one time or another, went into the land of the Philistines, which Saul hearing of, sought no more after him, 1Sa 27:1; and finding favour in the eyes of the king of Gath, desired a place in his country might be given him to reside in; and accordingly Ziklag was given him, 1Sa 27:5; from whence he made excursions into the land of the Amalekites, and others, and utterly destroyed them; but imposed on the king of Gath, pretending he had made his road into the southern parts of Judah, 1Sa 27:8.

Ver. 1. And David said in his heart,.... Within himself, and to himself; while he was pondering things in his own mind, and considering the circumstances in which he was, and things appearing, very gloomy to him, he falls into a fit of unbelief and thus addresses himself:

I shall now one day perish by the hand of Saul; for though he was returned to his place, he knew he was restless and uneasy, very inconstant and unstable, and not at all to be depended on; yea, he might conclude that Saul, observing that God was with him in protecting and defending him, and by delivering him into his hands once and again, he would be the more jealous of him, and envious at him, and seek all opportunities and advantages against him; and he feared that one time or another such would offer, and would be taken, and so he should perish by him: this was a strange fit of unbelief he was sunk into, and very unaccountable and unreasonable it was, had he but considered his being anointed king by the Lord, the promise of God to him, which could not fail, and the providence of God that watched over him from time to time:

[there is] nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; which may seem strange, when he was advised by the Prophet Gad to depart from the land of Moab, and go into the land of Judah, 1Sa 22:5, and where he had been so wonderfully preserved; and when he was in so much danger, when in the land of the Philistines before, insomuch that he was obliged to feign himself mad, 1Sa 21:13; and seeing this also was the very thing he lately dreaded, and cursed the men that should be the cause of his going out of his own land into an idolatrous one:

and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel; hearing that he was gone into a foreign country, would seek for him no more in any part of the land of israel, and so despair of ever getting him into his hands, would lay aside all thoughts about him for the future:

so shall I escape out of his hand; and be for ever safe: these were the carnal reasonings of his mind, under the prevalence of unbelief; and shows what poor weak creatures the best of men are, and how low their graces may sink as to exercise, when left to themselves.

1 Samuel 27:2

Ver. 2. And David arose,.... From the place where he was:

and he passed over; the borders of land of Canaan:

with the six hundred men that [were] with him; having neither lost any, nor had any added to him, since he was at Keilah, 1Sa 23:13;

unto Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath; whether this was the same Achish David was with before, 1Sa 21:10, is not certain; it seems as if he was not the same, since he is described as the son of Maoch, as if it was to distinguish him from him; though it is not improbable that he was the same person. Some think {a} that he is described not from his father, but from his mother, whose name was Maacha. The circumstances of David were now very much altered from what they were when he went to Gath before; then he went secretly, now openly; then as a person unknown, now as well known; then alone, now with six hundred men; then when discovered he was seized by the princes of Gath, and brought before the king, and was driven from his presence; but now he came either at the invitation of Achish, hearing how he had been treated by Saul, and thinking to attach him to his interest, and make him more and more the enemy of Saul, and so free himself from a very powerful one, and of whose wisdom and prudence, and military skill, and courage, and valour, he might hope to avail himself; or David sent an embassy to him, to treat with him about his coming into his country, and settlement in it, and terms to mutual satisfaction were agreed upon.

{a} Hieron. Trad. Heb, in 2 Reg. fol. 78. E.

1 Samuel 27:3

Ver. 3. And David dwelt with Achish at Gath,.... The metropolis of his kingdom, called, 1Sa 27:5, the royal city:

he and his men, every man with his household; or family; which they brought with them, to secure them from the malice of Saul; who in their absence might have destroyed them, as being the families of traitors and fugitives, and might be the more readily received by Achish, as he might hope for some advantage front them; and besides were pledges of their fidelity to him, and of their design to continue with him:

[even] David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife; who had been the wife of Nabal; of these
See Gill on "1Sa 25:43".

1 Samuel 27:4

Ver. 4. And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath,.... Who very probably had his spies out to watch his motions, and report to him where he was, and what he was doing:

and he sought no more again for him; by which it seems as if he would have sought after him again, had he continued in the land of Israel; but now being gone, and in an enemy's country, and having nothing to fear from him while there, he laid aside all thoughts of seeking after him.

1 Samuel 27:5

Ver. 5. And David said unto Achish,.... After he had been some time with him:

if I have now found grace in thine eyes; or was in favour, as he thought himself to be, by various instances of respect shown him:

let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there: he does not ask for a city or town, but a place in one of them, though one was given him; but of whom he asks it, it is not easy to say; though it is certain that Achish gave it him, 1Sa 27:6. Perhaps he might desire it might be given him by Achish, with the consent of his princes and nobles, or at least of his privy council; that so it might be to general satisfaction, and the grant more authentic; though it may be impersonally read, as in the Vulgate Latin version, "let there be given me", &c. David's view in this might be partly to prevent the envy of the courtiers of Achish, who might think that David was too near the king, and might have too great an interest in him, and receive too many of his favours, and become his chief confidant and prime minister; and partly to preserve himself and people from all temptations to idolatry, and corruptions in religion; as also that ho might have an opportunity, without the knowledge of Achish, to fall upon the enemies of Israel; though the excuse he made was as follows:

for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee? for so Gath was; and six hundred men and their families might seem to crowd the city; and this reasoning of his might suggest, that he and his men were a straitening of him, and a burden on him; and it might seem as if he was a rival with him in state and dignity, when he was no other than a servant of his.

1 Samuel 27:6

Ver. 6. Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day,.... A city which in the division of the land was given to the tribe of Judah, and after that to the tribe of Simeon, Jos 15:31; though it seems not to have been possessed by either of them, at least not long, but soon came into the hands of the Philistines, who kept it till this time, and now it returned to its right owners; according to Bunting {g} it was twelve miles from Gath:

wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day; not to the tribe of Judah, though it originally belonged to it, but to the kings of it, it, being granted to David, who quickly after this became king of Judah; and this was annexed to the crown lands, and ever after enjoyed by the kings, of the house of Judah; for this was not given for a temporary habitation, but for perpetual possession. This clause seems to be added by the continuator of this history, after the death of Samuel; who might be Gad or Nathan; some say Ezra, and Abarbinel that Jeremiah was the writer of it.

{g} Travels, &c. p. 136.

1 Samuel 27:7

Ver. 7. And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines,.... At Gath and Ziklag:

was a full year and four months; or "days and four months"; days being sometimes put for a year, Jud 17:10; though some interpret it not of a year, but of some few days out of the fifth month, besides the four months; so Jarchi and Kimchi; and Josephus {h} makes his abode to be four months and twenty days; but, according to the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, it was only four months; and so it may be rendered, "days, that is, four months"; for

according to the Jewish chronology {i} Samuel died four months before Saul, and this flight of David was after the death of Samuel, and when Saul died he left the land of the Philistines, and took the throne of Judah;
See Gill on "1Sa 25:1".

{h} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 13. sect. 10. {i} Sepher Olam Rabba c. 13. p. 37.

1 Samuel 27:8

Ver. 8. And David and his men went up,.... From Ziklag, where they dwelt:

and invaded the Geshurites; some of the old inhabitants of the land of Canaan, the remains of the Amorites, whose land was given to the half tribe of Manasseh, but could never be expelled; and therefore David had a just right to invade them, and, if he could, either expel or destroy them; see **De 3:14**; these are the Geshurites which are joined with the Philistines, Jos 13:2;

and the Gezrites; the inhabitants of Gezer, which place fell to the tribe of Ephraim; but that tribe could not drive out the inhabitants of it, and therefore David now fell upon them as the enemies of Israel, and seized on their country, as belonging to them, Jos 16:3;

and the Amalekites; the sworn and implacable enemies of Israel, and whose memory they were laid under obligation to root out. These were such as had escaped the sword of Saul, and had fled to the more distant parts, against whom David now went; and perhaps these had fled to and mixed themselves with the people here mentioned:

for these [nations were] of old the inhabitants of the land; of the land of Canaan;

as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt; see 1Sa 15:7.

1 Samuel 27:9

Ver. 9. And David smote the land,.... In which the above mentioned people dwelt, that is, the inhabitants of it:

and left neither man nor woman alive; for these being the old Canaanites and

Amalekites, according to the law of God were not to be spared, but utterly destroyed; which may be observed to remove the charge of cruelty that might be brought against David on this account, **De 7:2**; though this must be understood of such that came within his reach; for it is certain there were people of these several names after this; see 1Sa 30:1;

and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish; at Gath, to make a report of what he had been about and done; and what he brought was a good booty for the support of his men and their families.

1 Samuel 27:10

Ver. 10. And Achish said, whither have ye made a road today?.... Or whither had they rushed in, or poured in and spread themselves? or where had they made their excursion to fetch in the prey and booty they now brought?

and David said, against the south of Judah; he meant against some people that lay to the south of the land of Judah, without it; but expressed himself so, that Achish might think he meant the southern parts of Judah within the country; which, though not a downright lie, was an equivocation, and made with a design to deceive; and was by no means agreeably to the character of David, nor to be defended nor imitated:

and against the south of the Jerahmeelites; these were the descendants of Jerahmeel, the son of Hezron, the grandson of Judah, and so inhabited in the tribe of Judah, and very probably in the southern part of it, **1Ch 2:9**,

and against the south of the Kenites; the posterity of Jethro; these, at least some of them, at the first seating of the children of Israel in the land of Canaan, went with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad, **Jud 1:16**.

1 Samuel 27:11

Ver. 11. And David saved neither man nor woman alive to bring [tidings] to Gath,.... How David had fallen upon these people, and destroyed great numbers of them, and carried off their substance; which would have given great offence to Achish, and caused him to have driven him out of his country once more; though Abarbinel is of opinion that these Geshurites, &c. were haters and enemies of Achish, and therefore were smitten and spoiled by David; or otherwise it would have been such a piece of perfidy, rebellion, and ingratitude, as mast have made the name of David to stink, since it could not but be known sooner or later; but being the enemies of Achish, no notice was taken of it afterwards, nor inquiry made about it, nor complaint made of it, by any of their neighbours: nor does he suppose they were all cut off, and much less that this was done that it might not be told in Gath what destruction he had made; but that the sense is, that he did not carry the captives to Gath, to be disposed of there; for they would have told from whence they came, and so have contradicted what David said, and what he would have Achish understand, as if he had been out against and smote some of the cities of Judah, that he might place the greater confidence in him; which end would not have been answered, if he had brought any of them to Gath; and so the words may be read without the supplement we make, "spared neither man nor woman alive to bring to Gath": and so could tell no tales. Though Josephus expressly says {k} that David spared the men, and abstained from the slaughter of them, fearing lest they should declare to the king what he had done in plundering them:

saying, lest they should tell on us, saying, so did David: in such and such places, such numbers of people he destroyed, and such quantities of cattle and goods he carried off:

and so [will be] his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines: this is what may be expected will be done by him in one place or another, as long as he stays here; nothing will be heard of but desolation and destruction, in some part of the country of the Philistines or another; or among those that were tributaries to them; so that it was not safe that he should be allowed to abide in it.

{k} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 13. sect. 10.

1 Samuel 27:12

Ver. 12. And Achish believed David,.... As he would have him understand his story; imposing upon him by ambiguous terms, insinuating he had been against the southern parts of Judah, when he had been against foreign nations that lay to the south of Judah:

saying, he hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; they shall never forgive him the destruction of their cities, and the inhabitants of them, and the plunder of their goods and cattle; his name will be had in the utmost detestation and abhorrence, and he must never return thither any more:

therefore he shall be my servant for ever: would be glad to continue with him as a servant, and be obliged to serve him faithfully and truly, since his own people, and even those of his own tribe, would never more receive him; it being, as he understood it, the south of Judah that he had been plundering.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 28:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 28

The Philistines gathering together, to fight with Israel, Saul trembled at it, not being able to get any answer from the Lord about it in any way whatever, 1Sa 28:1; upon which he applies to a woman that had a familiar spirit to bring him up Samuel, which she did, 1Sa 28:7; and what passed between Saul and Samuel, or at least the apparition in his form, is recorded, 1Sa 28:15; which so struck him, as to make him strengthless, and so melancholy, that he refused to eat until persuaded, or rather compelled, by the woman and his servants, 1Sa 28:20.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass in those days,.... That David was in the country of the Philistines:

that the Philistines gathered their armies together: out of their five principalities or lordships:

for warfare to fight with Israel; with whom they were continually at war, and though sometimes there was a cessation of arms, yet never any settled peace; and the Philistines took every opportunity and advantage against them, as they now did; when David was among them, and so had nothing to fear from him, but rather expected his assistance; and Samuel was dead, and Saul in a frenzy:

and Achish said unto David: who seems to have been at the head of the combined armies of the Philistines:

know thou assuredly that thou shall go with me to battle, thou and thy men;

against Israel; which was a trying thing to David, and whereby he was like to be drawn into a dilemma; either to fight against his country, which he could not do conscientiously; or be guilty of ingratitude to Achish, and incur his displeasure, and be liable to be turned out of his country, or treated in a worse manner, even he and his men, to be seized on and cut to pieces by the forces of the Philistines, should he refuse.

1 Samuel 28:2

Ver. 2. And David said to Achish, surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do,.... By which he would have Achish understand, and so he did, that he would exert himself in favour of the Philistines, and against Israel, and do great and brave things, of which Achish would be, made sensible, through his heroic courage and valour; though he meant rather what he could and should do for Israel against the Philistines, if he had an opportunity: but it seems best of all to consider David as quite undetermined, and at a loss what to do, hoping that God in his providence would extricate him out of this difficulty, and direct him what he should do, which then Achish would know; and accordingly he was delivered out of it:

and Achish said to David: putting confidence in him on account of his answer, and believing he was hearty in engaging in the war with the Philistines against Israel:

therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever; the captain of his bodyguard, which post he should hold for life; or he proposed to put him into this post, that he might be with him, near his person, and under his eye, that he might observe how he behaved himself; which may show some suspicion of him.

1 Samuel 28:3

Ver. 3. Now Samuel was dead,.... Had been so for some time; which is mentioned before, 1Sa 25:1; and here repeated, partly to observe the reason of the Philistines renewing the war, and partly to account for the conduct of Saul, in seeking to a witch to raise Samuel, and for the sake of that story:

and all Israel lamented him; as they had great reason to do;
See Gill on "1Sa 25:1"; and buried him in Ramah, even his own city; there

being two Ramahs, as Kimchi observes, it is added, "in his own city", to show that he was buried in that Ramah which was his native place, and where his constant residence was; though, as he says, it may mean that he was buried within the city, and not without it; but the Targum gives a different sense,

"and they buried him in Ramah, and mourned for him every man in his city:"

and Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: out of the land of Israel; had by an edict banished them, or had given orders that neither witches nor wizards should abide in the land; but should be taken up, and prosecuted according to the law of God; which he had done either at the instigation of Samuel; or, as some think, from a conceit that the evil spirit he had been troubled with was owing to them; or to make some appearance of a zeal for religion, and the honour and glory of God: this is observed to show the inconstancy of Saul, and his folly in applying after this to a person of such a character, and to account for the fears of the woman when applied to, and afterwards when she was engaged, when she found it was by Saul; see 1Sa 28:7.

1 Samuel 28:4

Ver. 4. And the Philistines gathered themselves together,.... From different parts, and formed a considerable army:

and came and pitched in Shunem; a city, in the borders of the tribe of Issachar, of which See Gill on "Jos 19:18";

and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa; a range of mountains, near Jezreel, and which Jerom {b} calls the mountains of the Philistines, six miles from Scythopolis, where there is a large village called Gelbus.

{b} De loc. Heb fol. 92. D.

1 Samuel 28:5

Ver. 5. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines,.... From the mountains of Gilboa, where he had pitched his camp:

he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled; on sight of the numbers of them, and thinking perhaps of the death of Samuel, and of the loss of David; who was now among the Philistines, and might possibly fight against him, and for the Philistines, of which he might be informed; however, he was not with him, and his conscience might accuse him of various sins he had been guilty of, for which he might fear the Lord would now reckon with him.

1 Samuel 28:6

Ver. 6. And when Saul inquired of the Lord,.... And this being not done truly and heartily, nor continued in, it was as if he had not inquired, and especially after he had inquired of one that had a familiar spirit, as Kimchi observes; for so it is said, 1Ch 10:14;

the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams; which he dreamed himself, from whence he could not conclude anything relating to the will of God; so the Targum,

"the Lord did not receive his prayer even by dreams;"

or by dreamers, diviners, who pretended to give answers by dreams:

nor by Urim; there being no priest to consult in this way, Abiathar having fled with the ephod, in which were the Urim and Thummim, to David, 1Sa 23:9; though some think that he sent to Abiathar, who was with David, to inquire for him; and others that he made another ephod with Urim, and appointed another priest to consult by them; neither of which are probable:

nor by prophets; of which there was a school not far from him, even at Naioth in Ramah, of which Samuel in his lifetime was president; but neither by the one nor the other could Saul get an answer from God, who for his sins had departed from him.

1 Samuel 28:7

Ver. 7. Then said Saul unto his servants,.... That waited upon him, to some of them, to such as he could place most confidence in to keep a secret; perhaps only the two after mentioned:

seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her; that was mistress of the bottle, a ventriloquist, that spoke out of her belly, or seemed to do; who had the spirit of Python or divination, conversed with the devil, and by his assistance pretended to bring up a dead person, and thereby foretell things to come; See Gill on "De 18:11"; a woman is pitched upon, because such were most addicted to those wicked arts, and being of the weaker sex, were more easily imposed upon by Satan; and Saul showed himself to be as weak, to seek after such persons; but being left of God, he acted the part of a mad man, as well as of a bad man:

and his servants said to him, behold, [there is] a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor; a city in the tribe of Manasseh, of which see Jos 17:11; it was not far from Gilboa. Mr. Maundrell speaks {c} of it as near Nain, at the foot of Mount Hermon; and turning, a little southward, he says, you have in view the high mountains of Gilboa. It is a tradition of the Jews {d} that this woman was the mother of Abner, the wife of Zephaniah; some say her name was Zephaniah; but, as Abarbinel observes, if so she would have known Saul, and also Saul would have known her, and what she was, if, as they say, she was spared because of her relation to him; nor needed he to have inquired of his servants for such a woman.

{c} Journey from Aleppo, p. 115. {d} Pirke Eliezer, c. 33. foi. 35. 2. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 8. 1. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 77. B.

1 Samuel 28:8

Ver. 8. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment,.... Stripped himself of his royal robes, or military apparel, as supreme commander, and clothed himself in the habit of a peasant or a common soldier; and this not only that he might not be known by the woman, but that he might pass from his army incognito, and it might not be known that he was gone, and especially whither he was gone:

and he went, and two men with him: these, according to the tradition of the Jews {e}, were Abner and Amasa; but it is not probable that Saul should leave his army destitute of their general at such a time as this:

and they came to the woman by night; not only that they might not be seen, but because it was a work of darkness they were going about, and it was only in the night season that such persons exercised their black art; though the Jews {f} say it was day, only because of their distress it was like tonight with them; but the literal sense is best:

and he said, I pray thee divine unto me by the familiar spirit; exercise her art of divination, by the assistance of the familiar spirit she conversed with:

and bring me up whom I shall name unto thee: that is, from the dead; for necromancy was the kind of divination she professed; and such persons pretended to have a power to bring up a deceased person, and consult with him about secret and future things.

{e} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 26. fol. 167. 1. Shalshalet ib. {f} Tanchuma apud Jarchiura in loc.

1 Samuel 28:9

Ver. 9. And the woman said unto him,.... Not knowing who he was:

behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done; for by his speech and habit she perceived he was an Israelite, and so must be acquainted with what had passed in the nation, especially of a public nature, and which made a great noise, as doubtless this, lid:

how he both cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land; as many of them as he had knowledge of, or information about; and by this it appears that he did not merely expel them his dominions, but he put them to death, according to the law of God, Ex 22:18; so the putting them out of the land, 1Sa 28:3, was putting them to death, and the woman's after reasoning confirms this: one should think for Saul to be told this to his face must fill him with shame and confusion, and his conscience must accuse him of sin and folly to make this attempt; and he must stand self-convicted and self-condemned; and it was enough to have deterred him from pursuing his scheme, had not his heart been strangely hardened:

wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? she suspected that Saul and his men were persons that came to entrap her; that when they had prevailed upon her to exercise her art, would turn informers against her, to the taking away of her life, it being death to practise it.

1 Samuel 28:10

Ver. 10. And Saul sware to her by the Lord,.... By the Word of the Lord, as the Targum: it is much that Saul, being about such a work of darkness and wickedness, could take the name of the Lord into his mouth, and swear by him in such a solemn manner; which must surely put him in mind of his omniscience, from whom this wicked action could not be hid:

saying, [as] the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing; the tenor of the oath was, and so the woman understood it, that he would never make any discovery of what she did, and so she would be sat from punishment; though as he was the supreme governor, and a very arbitrary prince, had it been discovered, he could have screened her from justice, though contrary to the law of God; however, he could not secure her from eternal punishment.

1 Samuel 28:11

Ver. 11. Then said the woman, whom shall I bring up unto thee?.... For such persons, according to their profession, pretended they were able to bring up any of the dead, that he who inquired of them should name:

and he said, bring me up Samuel; the prophet Samuel he meant, and no doubt the woman so understood him, whose name was well known; he had been an old acquaintance and friend of Saul's, his counsellor and adviser in many things and though he greatly neglected him in the latter part of his life, was very desirous of an interview with him now dead, that he might be advised by him how to get out of the straits and difficulties in which he was involved; but it argued extreme folly and madness in him to imagine, that the spirit of this great and good man was at the beck of a witch, and he to be called out of the state of the dead by her enchantments; or that God would permit him to appear to him, and by him give an answer, when he would not answer him by living prophets, nor any other way.

1 Samuel 28:12

Ver. 12. And when the woman saw Samuel,.... The appearance of him whom she took for Samuel; no mention is made of the methods she used to raise him, to check the curiosity of such as might be desirous to know them, and to prevent the imitation of them; though some think that Samuel, or the apparition, was seen before she made use of any, which surprised her; but this seems not so probable, and is only observed for the sake of an hypothesis; though it must be owned the word "when" is not in the text:

she cried with a loud voice; not so much frightened at what she saw, and the manner of his appearing, and as thinking the resurrection of the dead was come, as say the Jews {b}, as what she feared would be the consequence to her, even death by the hand of Saul; for though he had sworn no punishment should come upon her, she might begin to fear she was not safe, perceiving who he was:

and the woman spake to Saul, saying, why hast thou deceived me? for thou [art] Saul: how she knew this is a question; it could not be by the appearance of Samuel, for it was Samuel she was to bring up; unless with Ben Gersom it can be thought that she understood him of another man, whose name was Samuel, and not Samuel the prophet; and so when she saw him, concluded he was Saul, because of the intimacy between them in his lifetime; but this is not probable, nor does it appear that she as yet knew who it was, but rather she was told by her familiar spirit, or by the apparition, so Josephus {c}, that it was Saul that inquired of her; or she guessed at it by some gesture of the apparition to Saul, by way of homage and honour; and so Abarbinel thinks that the clause in
1Sa 28:14 respects not Saul's bowing to Samuel, but Samuel bowing to Saul; and so by this means the woman knew who he was.

{b} Pirke Eliezer, c. 33. {c} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 2.

1 Samuel 28:13

Ver. 13. And the king said unto her, be not afraid,.... Meaning not of the apparition, but of him; since he had sworn no punishment should come upon her, and he should inviolably observe his oath: for what sawest thou? for as yet Saul himself saw not anything, the woman being between him and the apparition; or she might be in another room with her familiar spirit performing the operations when Samuel appeared:

and the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth; a great personage, one of a majestic form, like the gods, or judges and civil magistrates, sometimes so called, as Kimchi and R. Isaiah rightly interpret it;

and so the Targum,

"I saw an angel of the Lord;"

a person that looked like one; for not many came up with him, and particularly Moses, as say some Jewish writers {d}.

{d} T. Bab. Chagigah, fol. 4. 8. Pirke Eliezer, c. 33.

1 Samuel 28:14

Ver. 14. And he said unto her, what form [is] he of?.... Of what stature is he? or rather of what age does he seem to be? and what clothes has he on? as appears from the answer:

and she said, an old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle; such as either priests or judges wore, and Samuel did in his lifetime:

and Saul perceived that it [was] Samuel; by the description she gave of him, by his age and apparel; for as yet it is not certain that he himself saw him, though it should seem as if he did by what follows: it is in the original, "that it was Samuel himself"; which seems to make for those who think the real Samuel appeared, and no doubt Saul thought it was really he himself:

and he stooped with [his] face to the ground, and bowed himself: either in reverence to Samuel, and from whom he hoped relief, and therefore was all obeisance; or he put himself in this posture, that he might listen and hear what should be said; it being a general notion that such spirits gave their responses whispering and muttering, **Isa 8:19**; though Abarbinel, as before observed, is of opinion, that this is to be understood of Samuel, that he bowed to Saul in reverence of him as a king; which does not so well agree with the connection of the words. Some have thought that it was the true Samuel, or the soul of Samuel, that appeared; so Josephus {e}, and many other writers; but to this may be objected, that that would not have ascended out of the earth, but come down from heaven; and that it cannot reasonably be supposed that it was in the power of the witch, by the assistance of the devil, to fetch it from heaven; nor be thought that God would send it from thence on such an errand, to give Saul an answer, when he would not answer him by any prophet on earth, nor in any other way; and especially it seems quite incredible that he should send it at the motion of a witch, and through her enchantments, who, according to a law of his, ought not to live; whereas nothing could have given greater countenance to such a wicked profession than this: nor would the true Samuel have admitted such worship and homage to be paid him, as is expressed in this last clause, which angelic spirits have refused, Re 19:10; though perhaps no more than civil respect is intended: but rather this was a diabolical spectre, or apparition, or the devil, that appeared in the form and shape of Samuel, and mimicked him; and was one of those deceiving spirits Porphyry speaks {f} of, that appear in various shapes and forms, and pretend to be gods or demons, or the souls of the deceased. Some {g} think all this was the cunning and imposture of the woman alone, or that she was assisted with a confederate, who acted the part of Samuel; but this is not probable.

{e} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 2.) {f} De Abstinentia, l. 2. apud Grotium in loc. {g} See Webster's Displaying of supposed Witchcraft, &c. ch. 8. p. 166, &c.

1 Samuel 28:15

Ver. 15. And Samuel said to Saul, why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?.... This makes it a clear case that this was not the true Samuel; his soul was at rest in Abraham's bosom, in the state of bliss and happiness in heaven, and it was not in the power of men and devils to disquiet it; nor would he have talked of his being brought up, but rather of his coming down, had it been really he; much less would he have acknowledged that he was brought up by Saul, by means of a witch, and through the help of the devil:

and Saul answered, I am sore distressed; in mind, being in great straits and difficulties, pressed hard upon by men, and forsaken of God, as follows:

for the Philistines make war against me; so they had many times, and he had been victorious, and had no reason to be so much distressed, if that was all: but he adds,

and God is departed from me: and therefore he feared he should be left to fall into their hands; and that he had forsaken him he concluded from hence,

and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams:
See Gill on "1Sa 28:6"; he makes no mention of Urim, either because they were not with him to inquire by, being carried away by Abiathar when he fled to David, 1Sa 23:9; or, as the Jews say {h}, through shame, he said nothing of

the Urim before Samuel, as he took this appearance to be, because he had slain the priests at Nob, and because of this shame, they say, his sin was forgiven him:

therefore have I called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do; which was downright madness and folly to imagine, that since God had forsaken him, and would give him no answer, that a prophet of his should take his part; or when he could get no answer from a prophet of God on earth, that he could expect an agreeable one from one fetched down from heaven: one would be tempted to think that he himself believed it was the devil he was talking to, and whom he had called for under the name of Samuel, and expected to see; for from whom else could he expect advice, when he was forsaken of God, and his prophets?

{h} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 12. 2.

1 Samuel 28:16

Ver. 16. Then said Samuel, wherefore then dost thou, ask of me,.... Whom thou knowest to have been a prophet of the Lord, and therefore can say nothing more or less than what comes from him, and is according to his will, if anything at all; the "devil" representing Samuel, whom Saul had called for, and reasons in such language as might be thought to be his own, though sometimes he betrays himself:

seeing the Lord is departed from thee; as Saul himself owned: to which he adds,

and is become thine enemy; to make his case appear still more desperate; for his whole view is to lead him to despair, which shows what sort of spirit he was: though some understand this as spoken of David, and read the words, and "he is with thine enemy" {i}; is on his side, and favours his cause; so the Targum,

"and he is for the help of a man, whose enmity thou sharest in;"

or who is at enmity with thee, meaning David; but now the true Samuel would never have said this, or suggested it, that David was an enemy to Saul, for he was not.

{i} Kre yhyw "et est cum inimico tuo", Pagninus, Vatablus; so V. L.

1 Samuel 28:17

Ver. 17. And the Lord hath done to him,.... To David, Saul's enemy, as he insinuated he was:

as he spake by me; pretending to be the true Samuel, and wearing the guise of him, he speaks his very words, which he was well acquainted with, and could deliver exactly as he did:

for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour; which words are expressed by Samuel, 1Sa 15:28;

[even] unto David; which is added by the apparition, by way of explanation, interpreting the words of David; which he might safely venture to do, seeing such a train of circumstances had occurred since the delivery of these words, which plainly made it appear he was intended.

1 Samuel 28:18

Ver. 18. Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord,.... At Gilgal, as Abarbinel thinks; which is the first thing for which the kingdom was threatened to be taken from him, 1Sa 13:13;

nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek: in sparing Agag, and the best of the cattle, 1Sa 15:9;

therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day; forsaken him, rent his kingdom from him, and would deliver him into the hands of the Philistines, as follows: had he been the true Samuel, he would have told him of some other sins of his, provoking to the Lord; as his slaughter of the priests at Nob, his cruel persecution of David, and especially of his asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit at this time, of which not a word is said, and yet was the very transgression for which Saul died, 1Ch 10:13.

1 Samuel 28:19

Ver. 19. Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hands of the Philistines,.... Not a word of comfort does he speak unto him, it being the business of this foul spirit to drive him to despair by the permission of God; had he been the true Samuel, he would have directed him to have altered his course of life, and especially his behaviour toward David, and advised him in those difficulties to send for him, who might have been of singular use unto him; he would have exhorted him to repentance for his sins, and humiliation before God on account of them, and given him hope on this that God would appear for him, and work deliverance, as he had done; but instead of this tells him, that he and his army would be delivered into the hands of the Philistines, which he might make a shrewd guess at, and venture to say from the circumstances of things, and the situation Saul and his people were in; the armies of the Philistines were very numerous, and those of Israel comparatively weak; Saul was quite dispirited, and God had forsaken him:

and tomorrow [shalt] thou and thy sons be with me; which if understood in what sense it may, seems to be a lie of the devil, and at best an ambiguous expression, such as he has been wont to give in the Heathen oracles; if he meant this of himself as an evil spirit, it could not be true of Saul and all his sons, that they should be with him in hell, especially of Jonathan who appears throughout the whole of his life to have been a good man; if he would have it understood of him as representing Samuel, and of their being with him in heaven, it must be a great stretch of charity to believe it true of Saul, so wicked a man, and who died in the act of suicide; though the Jews {k}, some of them, understand it in this sense, that his sins were pardoned, and he was saved; and if it is taken in the sense of being in the state of the dead, and in the earth, from whence he is said to ascend, and where the body of Samuel was, which seems to be the best sense that is put upon the phrase, "with me"; yet this was not true, if he meant it of all the sons of Saul, as the expression seems to suggest; for there were Ishbosheth, and his two sons by Rizpah, which survived him; nor was it true of Saul and his sons that they were cut off, and that they died the next day; for the battle was not fought till several days after this, see 1Sa 28:23; if it should be said, that "tomorrow" signifies some future time, and not strictly the next day, this shows the ambiguity of the expression used, and the insignificance of it to the present purpose; for who knew not that Saul and his sons would die some time or another?

the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines; which is only a repetition of what is said in the first clause.

{k} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 12. 2.

1 Samuel 28:20

Ver. 20. Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth,.... Fell at his full length at once, as if he had been thunderstruck, or pierced through with a dart or sword:

and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel; as he supposed they were, whose words never failed:

and there was no strength in him: to rise up again, he was quite dispirited and strengthless:

for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night; which contributed the more to his weakness; not only his fears, but not eating any food, occasioned his weakness, and that through want of an appetite, by reason of the great concern of his mind in his present troubles.

1 Samuel 28:21

Ver. 21. And the woman came unto Saul,.... Having left him and the apparition in a room by themselves to converse together, and perhaps on hearing him fall to the ground came in:

and saw that he was sore troubled: by his lying on the ground, and the agonies he seemed to be in, and the uneasiness that sat upon his countenance:

and said unto him, behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice; in divining by her familiar spirit for him, and in bringing up Samuel to him, as he desired:

and I have put my life in my hand; exposed it to the utmost danger, since a person of her profession, and token in the exercise of it, was punishable with death; and especially she was in the greater danger, as it was Saul himself, who had by an edict expelled all such persons from his dominions, who now employed her, as she perceived:

and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me: to the oath he had taken, that no hurt should come to her, which she confided in, and relied upon, and to what he bid her do, according to her art of divination.

1 Samuel 28:22

Ver. 22. Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid,.... She argues, that as she had hearkened unto him to the endangering of her life, it was but reasonable, and might be expected, that he would hearken to her in a case that would be to the preservation of his life:

and let me set a morsel of bread before thee, and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way; which she might urge, not merely out of respect to the king, but for her own sake, lest should he die in her house, she might be taken up, not only for a witch, but as being accessory to the death of the king; and therefore she moves, that he would take some food for refreshment of nature, that he might be able to depart her house, and go on his way to his army.

1 Samuel 28:23

Ver. 23. But he refused, and said, I will not eat,.... Choosing rather to die with famine than by the sword of the Philistines; though perhaps his meaning is, he could not eat, his stomach loathed it, being overwhelmed with grief and trouble:

but his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; not by force, but by arguments; they reasoned with him, and prevailed upon him to try to eat:

and he hearkened unto their voice; and agreed to eat, if he could;

so he arose from the earth; on which he lay at his full length:

and sat upon the bed; or couch, it being now the custom to recline on couches at caring; though some deny that this custom obtained so early.

1 Samuel 28:24

Ver. 24. And the woman had a fat calf in the house,.... This was reckoned a very dainty dish in those countries, and fit for any guests, see Ge 18:7; Josephus says {l}, she vouchsafed to feed and take care of it in her house, and it was very familiar with her; and he highly commends the liberality of the woman, and as worthy of imitation:

and she hasted and killed it; and dressed it in some way or another, and which in those times was done speedily:

and took flour and kneaded [it], and did bake unleavened bread therewith; which was soonest made, she not having time to leaven it.

{l} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 3. 4.

1 Samuel 28:25

Ver. 25. And she brought [it] before Saul, and before his servants, and they did eat,.... Of the fatted calf, and unleavened bread, which she set upon a table before them, in the best manner she could:

then they rose up, and went away that night; that it might not be seen in what house they had been, and that they might get to the camp without being discovered by the Philistines, or known by the Israelites that they had been out.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 29:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 29

This chapter gives an account of David's going forth with the armies of the Philistines, 1Sa 29:1; of his being objected to by the princes of the Philistines, who insisted upon his being sent back, 1Sa 29:3; of the report Achish made of it to David, and the discourse that passed between them upon it, 1Sa 29:6; whereby David had a way unexpectedly opened for him to be freed from this service, which he gladly embraced, 1Sa 29:11.

Ver. 1. Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek,.... Not the city in the tribe of Judah of that name, Jos 15:53; where the Philistines had a camp in the time of Samuel, **1Sa 4:1**; but rather that in the tribe of Asher, Jos 19:30; unless there was one of this name in the tribe of Issachar, not mentioned, since it seems to have been near Jezreel and Shunem, which were both in that tribe, Jos 19:18;

and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel; in the valley of Jezreel; of which See Gill on "Jos 19:18" and
See Gill on "Ho 1:5".

1 Samuel 29:2

Ver. 2. And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands,.... Not that there were so many lords, for there were but five of them; but these marched, some at the head of hundreds with them, and others at the head of thousands:

but David and his men passed on in the rereward with Achish; who being the generalissimo brought up the rear, and David, whom he had appointed captain of his bodyguards, attended him with his men, which in point of gratitude he could not refuse; and yet was in the greatest strait and difficulty how to act, it being both against his conscience and his interest to fight against Israel, and was waiting and hoping for some appearance of Providence to deliver him out of this dilemma, and which was quickly seen; but Abarbinel thinks David had no other notion in going to the battle, but of being the bodyguard of Achish, and accompanying him, and that he should not fight against Israel, nor for the Philistines: neither harm the one, nor help the other.

1 Samuel 29:3

Ver. 3. Then said the princes of the Philistines,.... To Achish; not those of the court of Achish, who were his subjects, but the confederate princes with him in this war, the lords of the other principalities, as appears by the freedom they took with him, 1Sa 29:4;

what [do] these Hebrews [here]? or Jews, as the Targum; what hast thou to do with them, or they to be with thee? men of another nation and religion, and known enemies to the Philistines:

and Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines; in order to soften them, and reconcile them to these men, and their being with him:

[is] not this David the servant of Saul the king of Israel; between whom there had been a quarrel, and the former had fled from the latter to him:

which hath been with me these days, or these years; had been with him many days, and he might say years, as he had been with him one whole year, and part of another, see 1Sa 27:7; and he might have known him longer, if he was the same Achish David first fled to; Kimchi interprets it, that he knew him as well as if he had been with him as many years as days:

and I have found no fault in him since he fell [unto me] unto this day? the affair of David's going against the Geshurites, &c. not being yet known by him, or, if it was, he approved of it, they being enemies of his; this shows that David behaved with a great deal of prudence to have such a character as this from a king of the Philistines.

1 Samuel 29:4

Ver. 4. And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him,.... With Achish, for giving such a character of David, and taking his part, in order to detain him, if possible:

and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, make this fellow return; they speak of him with contempt, and insist on it that Achish order him to turn back, and go no further with them:

that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him; to Ziklag, the place that Achish had given him for his residence, 1Sa 27:6; they did not desire to have him sent to his own country, and to Saul, since should a reconciliation be made between them, he would be of great service to Saul against them:

and let him not go down with us to battle; into the valley of Jezreel, where the Israelites had pitched:

lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: and fall upon them behind, being in the rear, while they were engaging in the front with Israel:

for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? to Saul he had offended, and fled from:

[should it] not [be] with the heads of these men? the Philistines; or unless by the heads of these men {m}; he had no other way of making his peace with his master but by cutting off the heads of the Philistines; and therefore he was a dangerous man to take with them into the battle.

{m} yvarb alh "nisi per capita", Noldius, p. 257. No. 1147.

1 Samuel 29:5

Ver. 5. [Is] not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances,.... Long ago:

saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands; so that he is an old sworn enemy of ours; and the more valiant and victorious he has been, the less is he to be trusted, see 1Sa 18:7.

1 Samuel 29:6

Ver. 6. Then Achish called David,.... Being so near him, that he could call unto him himself, or he sent some person to him, to require his presence with him:

and said unto him, surely, [as] the Lord liveth; or "Jehovah liveth"; an oath by the true God, of whom Achish might have some knowledge, as he also had of angels, from his conversation with David; though the Heathens had a notion of a supreme Being, and yet worshipped other gods, and whom they called Jove, from this name of Jehovah. Kimchi observes, that all confess a first cause; and therefore when he swore to David, he swore by him in whom David believed, perhaps out of complaisance to him, or that David might pay the greater regard to his oath:

thou hast been upright; sincere, honest, faithful, and just in all his deportment; yet not so sincere as he thought him to be, witness the road he pretended he had taken against the south of Judah, 1Sa 27:1;

and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host [is] good in sight; his behaviour in the army, attending him as the keeper of his head, or captain of his bodyguard, was exceeding agreeable to him, and he could wish to have him continued:

for I have not found evil in thee, since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day; whatever he had done before to the Philistines, having greatly afflicted and distressed them in his wars with them, of which this seems to be an exception:

nevertheless, the lords favour thee not; or thou art not acceptable to them, yea, very offensive and disagreeable.

1 Samuel 29:7

Ver. 7. Wherefore now return,.... To Ziklag:

and go in peace; not only in a peaceable manner, easy and satisfied, as David was at his very heart to hear this, but all prosperity and happiness attend thee; the Jews {n} distinguish between wishing persons to go in peace, and to go to peace; the former they observe has not issued happily, when the other has, and they instance in the wish of Jethro to Moses, and of David to Absalom;

that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines: and what would be the consequence of that he could not say, but suggests it would be most for his peace and safety to depart.

{n} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 64. 1. Sepher Alphes, par. 1. fol. 421. 2.

1 Samuel 29:8

Ver. 8. And David said unto Achish, what have I done?.... This question is anticipated by the speech of Achish, who had declared he had found no evil in him; but David must say something to put on an appearance of concern for being dismissed, when he was heartily glad of it:

and what hast thou found in thy servant, so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king? which cannot be excused of great dissimulation, since nothing was more foreign from his heart, and against his will, than fighting against the Israelites, and which he determined to avoid if possible; and glad at heart he was to be thus excused, and freed from the straits and difficulties he was involved in; but that the Philistines might have no cause of suspicion of him, and that he was warmly attached to their interest among whom he was still to continue, he put on these airs. Abarbinel is of opinion that the lords of the Philistines were only afraid of David, but not of his men, and therefore were not solicitous about their going, but his, which gave David a concern; and since he was particularly singled out, he desired to know what special evil had been found in him; but when he understood, by the following answer of Achish, that his servants were to go with him, he was content, and said no more; but the princes asked, "what do these Hebrews here?" 1Sa 29:3.

1 Samuel 29:9

Ver. 9. And Achish answered and said unto David,.... In reply to the questions:

I know that thou [art] good in my sight as an angel of God: for his great wisdom, and graceful behaviour, and inoffensive carriage:

notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, he shall not go up with us to the battle; though Achish had so good an opinion of him, and had declared it in council, yet an order had passed there that he should not go to battle with them; there were but five of them, and Achish was one of the five, so that there were four to one for the dismissing him; and Achish, though a king, was obliged to submit.

1 Samuel 29:10

Ver. 10. Wherefore now rise up early with thy master's servants that are come with thee,.... Meaning his six hundred men, who were considered as the servants and subjects of Saul, though with David: and which tacitly carried in it the objection of the Philistine lords unto them, that since they were the servants and subjects of Saul, they were not to be trusted in a battle with him; lest finding an opportunity, they should seize it, and thereby ingratiate themselves into his favour again:

and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart; he advises them to get away as soon as they could, lest the Philistines should fall upon them, and force them, and he could not say what mischief might befall them; wherefore for their safety it was best to depart as soon as they could see their way.

1 Samuel 29:11

Ver. 11. So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning,.... Being as willing and ready to go as the Philistines were desirous they should:

to return into the land of the Philistines; for now they were in the land of Israel, at Aphek, near Jezreel, from whence they went back to Ziklag, which was within the principality of Gath; and, according to Bunting {o}, was eighty eight miles from the place where the army of the Philistines was; but it seems not very likely that it should be so far off:

and the Philistines went up to Jezreel; where the army of the Israelites lay encamped, in order to fight them. By the dismission of David from the army of the Philistines, he was not only delivered from a sad plight he was in, either of acting an ungrateful part to Achish, or an unnatural one to Israel; but also, by the pressing charge of Achish to get away as early as possible in the morning, he came time enough to rescue the prey the Amalekites had taken at Ziklag his city, as in the following chapter; and the providence of God in this affair is further observable, as by some represented, since if David had stayed in the camp of the Philistines, it would not have been so easy for him, on the death of Saul, to have got from them, and succeed in the kingdom, as he could and did from Ziklag.

{o} Travels, &c. p. 137.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 30:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 30

This chapter relates the condition Ziklag was in when David and his men came to it, the city burnt, and their families carried captive by the Amalekites, which occasioned not only a general lamentation, but mutiny and murmuring in David's men, 1Sa 30:1; the inquiry David made of the Lord what he should do, who is bid to pursue the enemy; and being directed by a lad where they were, fell upon them, and routed them, and brought back the captives with a great spoil, 1Sa 30:7; the distribution of the spoil, both to those that went with him, and to those who through faintness were left behind, 1Sa 30:21; and the presents of it he sent to several places in the tribe of Judah, who had been kind to him when he dwelt among them, 1Sa 30:26.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag, on the third day,.... Either from their departure from thence, when they went out with Achish, or rather from the time of their leaving Achish, and the camp of the Philistines; so long they were upon their march homewards, see **2Sa 1:1**; and no wonder, if it was the distance of eighty eight miles, See Gill on "1Sa 29:11";

that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag; the southern parts of the land of the Philistines, and of Judah, as appears from 1Sa 30:14; taking the opportunity of the Philistines being gone into the land of Israel, and particularly of David's absence from Ziklag, to whom they bore a grudge for his invasion, destruction, and spoil of them not long ago, see 1Sa 27:8;

and smitten Ziklag, and burnt it with fire; not that they smote the inhabitants of it, there were no men in it, and the women and children they carried captive; but they demolished the buildings in it, pulled down the houses after they had rifled them, and burnt them with fire, that David and his men might dwell there no more.

1 Samuel 30:2

Ver. 2. And had taken the women captives, that [were] therein,.... There being no other to take, the men were gone with David:

they slew not any, either great or small; that is, of the women, whether married or unmarried, old, or maidens, or children; which was very much, since David destroyed all that came within his reach, men and women, when he invaded them, 1Sa 27:9; but perhaps this was not owing to their humanity, but to their covetousness, designing to make an advantage of them by selling them for slaves; no doubt they were restrained by the providence of God:

but carried [them] away, and went on their way; homewards with their captives.

1 Samuel 30:3

Ver. 3. So David and his men came to the city,.... Or however to the place where it had stood, and where it now lay in ruins:

and, behold, [it was] burnt with fire; the whole city was laid in ashes:

and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives; as it appeared afterwards; for upon their first coming they knew not but they were all destroyed; and which they might reasonably suppose from their former treatment of them, unless there were any left upon the spot which could inform them how things were, which does not appear, and which must make their distress the greater.

1 Samuel 30:4

Ver. 4. Then David and the people that [were] with him lifted up their voice,.... In doleful shrieks, and loud lamentations:

and wept, until they had no more power to weep; till nature was quite exhausted, and no moisture left; so the Vulgate Latin version, "till tears failed in them"; they could shed no more.

1 Samuel 30:5

Ver. 5. And David's two wives were taken captives,.... Which is observed as one cause of his particular distress, and another follows in 1Sa 30:6:

Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite: that is, who had been his wife; for he was now dead, 1Sa 25:39, and was so before she was married to David; both these came with him to Gath, and were left at Ziklag when he went with Achish, and here they were taken; see 1Sa 25:42.

1 Samuel 30:6

Ver. 6. And David was greatly distressed,.... Partly for the loss of his two wives, and partly because of the mutiny and murmuring of his men:

for the people spake of stoning him; as the Israelites did of Moses and Aaron, Nu 14:10; the reason of this was, because, as they judged, it was owing to David that they went along with Achish, and left the city defenceless, and because he had provoked the Amalekites by his inroad upon them, who took this opportunity of avenging themselves. Abarbinel is of opinion that it was his excess of sorrow for his two wives, and his remissness and backwardness to take vengeance on their enemies, that provoked them, and put them on talking after this manner:

because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters; as well as David; and they were very desirous of recovering them if possible, and of taking vengeance on those who had carried them captive:

but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God; took all patiently, and exercised faith on his God; he encouraged himself in the power and providence of God; in the promises of God, and his faithfulness in keeping them; in a view of his covenant relation to God; in remembrance of the grace, mercy, and goodness of God, and his former experiences of it; hoping and believing that God would appear for him in some way or another, and work salvation for him. The Targum is,

"he strengthened himself in the Word of the Lord his God;"

in Christ the Word of God, and in the power of his might, and in the grace that is in him, **Eph 6:10**.

1 Samuel 30:7

Ver. 7. And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son,.... The son of Ahimelech, who was slain at Nob by the order of Saul, 1Sa 22:19; and Abiathar his son, who fled to David with the ephod, on the death of his father, 1Sa 22:20, was now high priest in his room; and who it seems was with David when he went with Achish, and returned with him; for had he been left at Ziklag, he and his ephod, in all probability, had been carried off by the Amalekites, unless we can suppose him under the protection of a special providence: it is much David had not inquired of the Lord by him about his going with Achish; perhaps the present disaster brought to mind that neglect, and made him the more diligent now:

I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod; not to put it on himself, but that the high priest might put it on, and inquire by it before him of the Lord:

and Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David; for the sake of David, that inquiry might be made before him of the Lord by Urim and Thummim.

1 Samuel 30:8

Ver. 8. And David inquired of the Lord,.... That is, by Abiathar, who reported his questions to the Lord in his name:

saying, shall I pursue after this troop? the large company of the Amalekites, as it appears by what follows they were:

shall I overtake them? two questions are here put together, and answers returned to them, contrary to a notion of the Jews;
See Gill on "1Sa 23:11";

and he answered him, pursue; which respects the first question:

for thou shall surely overtake [them]; which is an answer to the second question, and a full one, giving full assurance of overtaking; to which is added more than what was inquired about;

and without fail recover [all]; their wives, sons, and daughters, and the spoil that was taken; or "in delivering thou shall deliver" {p}, out of the hands of the Amalekites, whatsoever they had taken.

{p} lyut luh "eruendo erues", Pagninus, Montanus; "eripiendo erepturus es", Piscator.

1 Samuel 30:9

Ver. 9. So David went, he and the six hundred men that [were] with him,.... Encouraged by the oracle of the Lord:

and came to the brook Besor; which Adrichomius {q} places in the tribe of Simeon; it is thought to be near Gaza. Aristaeus {r} speaks of brooks that flowed by Gaza and Ashdod, places that belonged to the Philistines; some take it to be the river of the wilderness in Amos,
See Gill on "Am 6:14":

where those that were left behind stayed: or a part of them were left, as the Targum; all the six hundred came to this brook, but two hundred of them were left here, 1Sa 30:10 shows, and stayed here till the rest returned; for this is not to be understood of any that were left behind at Ziklag, for all came from thence to this brook.

{q} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 133. {r} Hist. 72. Interpret. p. 41.

1 Samuel 30:10

Ver. 10. But David pursued, he and four hundred men,.... Not discouraged with being obliged to leave a third part of his little army behind; though it was doubtless a trial of his faith, with these to pursue an enemy, whose numbers he knew not, which must greatly exceed his; for after the rout and slaughter of them, as many escaped on camels as David had with him, 1Sa 30:17;

for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint; through their grief and sorrow for the loss of their wives and children, and through their march from the camp of the Philistines to Ziklag, and from thence hither, that they looked like a corpse, as the word signifies; Procopius Gazaeus has it only seventy men:

so that they could not go over the brook Besor: being so weak and feeble; for this was not owing to fear of their enemies, and faint heartedness on that account, then it would rather have been said, "they would not go over"; the Targum renders the word "faint" by "restrained" or prohibited, as if they were forbid by David to go over, but were ordered to tarry here by the stuff, while the rest pursued; and, according to the Syriac and Arabic versions, they were placed there, that none might go over the brook; and it seems, by 1Sa 30:22, that they had a good will to go over, but were made to abide there; or as all Gideon's army, but three hundred, were sent back, and not suffered to go with him, being too many, **Jud 7:2**.

1 Samuel 30:11

Ver. 11. And they found an Egyptian in the field,.... As they passed along, lying there, having been sick, and was half starved, almost dead:

and brought him to David; to know what was to be done with him; being in the habit of a soldier, they concluded he might be one of the company they were in pursuit of; but whether they should kill him, or make use of him for intelligence and as a guide, could they bring him to himself, they knew not, and therefore brought him to David:

and gave him bread, and he did eat, and they made him drink water; both which they had with them for their own use; had he been an Amalekite, and not an Egyptian, they might not have relieved or spared him, but must have destroyed him at once; see De 25:19.

1 Samuel 30:12

Ver. 12. And they gave him a piece of cake of figs,.... That were dried and pressed together, and made into cakes:

and two clusters of raisins; or dried grapes, as the Targum:

and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him; he seemed to be quite dispirited, almost lifeless, but upon eating some food he was refreshed, and his spirits revived, and he was capable of conversing:

for he had eaten no bread, nor drank [any] water, three days and three nights; that is, one whole day, and part of two days, as appears from 1Sa 30:13.

1 Samuel 30:13

Ver. 13. And David said unto him, to whom [belongest] thou?.... To what country or people? and to whom among them?

and whence [art] thou? of what nation? where wast thou born? what countryman art thou? for his being called an Egyptian before seems to be by anticipation, unless it was guessed at by his habit; for until he had eaten and drank he could not speak, and so could not be known by his speech:

for he said, I [am] a young man of Egypt; that was the country he belonged to, and came from; he was an Egyptian by birth:

servant to an Amalekite; one of those that had invaded the country, and burnt Ziklag, as it follows:

and my master left me, because three days agone I fell sick; which was very barbarous and cruel to leave him at all, when they had camels with them, 1Sa 30:17; and no doubt carriages for their arms, provision, and spoil, and men; and more so to leave him without anybody with him to take care of him, and without any food, when he capable of eating any; but so it was ordered by the providence of God, that should be left to be the instrument of the just ruin of his master, and of the whole troop.

1 Samuel 30:14

Ver. 14. We made an invasion [upon] the south of the Cherethites,.... The Philistines so called, or at least one nation of them, such that dwelt to the south of the land, 1Sa 30:16;
See Gill on "Zep 2:5";

and upon [the coast] which [belongeth] to Judah; the south of Judah, where David pretended he had been, and had spoiled, and which was now actually done by the Amalekites, 1Sa 27:10;

and upon the south of Caleb; that part of the tribe of Judah which belonged to Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and his posterity, and which was the southern part of it, Jos 15:19;

and we burnt Ziklag with fire; and then departed.

1 Samuel 30:15

Ver. 15. And David said unto him, canst thou me down to this company?.... That is, show him, or direct him where they were:

and he said, swear unto me by God; the Targum is, by the Word of the Lord; but it is highly probable this man had no notion of Jehovah, and his Word, or of the true God; only that there was a God, and that an oath taken by him was solemn, sacred, and inviolable, and might be trusted to and depended on:

that thou wilt neither kill me; for he found now he was in the hands of those whose city he had been concerned in plundering and burning, and so might fear his life was in danger:

nor deliver me into the hands of my master; who had been a cruel one to him, and therefore would gladly be clear of him; and if he had nothing else against him, his late usage of him was sufficient to raise his resentment of him:

and I will bring thee down to this company; or show him where they were, having heard them say where they would stop, and make merry, and divide their spoil; and perhaps his master might tell him they would be at such a place at such a time, where, if he was better, he might come to them; the Vulgate Latin version adds, "and David swore to him": which, though not expressed in the original text, was no doubt done by him; and the Syriac and Arabic versions begin 1Sa 30:16 thus, "when David had sworn to him".

1 Samuel 30:16

Ver. 16. And when he had brought him down,.... To the place where the company of the Amalekites were, or near it:

behold, [they were] spread abroad upon all the earth; they were not in any regular order, and much less in any military form, but lay about in the fields, scattered here and there, were in detached parties:

some eating and drinking; in one place:

and dancing; others, in another place, expressing their joy, and perhaps their thankfulness to their idols

because of the great spoil they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah; from Ziklag, and from the south of the Cherethites, and the south of Judah, they had invaded, 1Sa 30:14; and here they were in the greatest security; knowing: that the armies of the Philistines were gone into the land of Israel, and were about to engage in battle with the Israelites, and David they supposed was with the Philistines, so that they had nothing to fear from any quarter; and thus it is often, that when men cry peace, peace, sudden destruction comes upon them.

1 Samuel 30:17

Ver. 17. And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day,.... As there are two twilights, the twilight of the morning, and the twilight of the evening; this is differently understood some take it for the twilight of the morning, and that it was night when David came to them, and let them alone till they were drunk and asleep, and then early in the morning fell upon them, and smote them until the evening; so Josephus {s} relates it; but others take it to be the twilight of the evening, and that he fell upon them that night, and continued the slaughter of them to the evening of the next day, with which agrees the Targum; nay, some take the next day, or the morrow, to be that which followed after the two evenings; so that this slaughter was carried on to the third day:

and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men that rode upon camels, and fled; that sort of camels called dromedaries, according to Josephus {t}, and which were very swift, and much used by the Arabians, near whom these people dwelt, see Isa 60:6.

{s} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 6. {t} Ibid.

1 Samuel 30:18

Ver. 18. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away,.... The wives and children of the Israelites, and their goods, excepting the provisions they had eaten:

and David rescued his two wives; which is particularly observed, because a special concern of his.

1 Samuel 30:19

Ver. 19. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters,.... Not any of the least or youngest, nor any of them that were grown up; for as these were not slain but carried captive, so they were brought back, and not one missing, see 1Sa 30:2;

neither spoil, nor any [thing] they had taken to them: except the food they had eaten and the liquor they had drank, as before observed; and perhaps what they had ate and drank were none of theirs, but the Philistines: so that

David recovered all; taken in the utmost extent.

1 Samuel 30:20

Ver. 20. And David took all the flocks, and the herds,.... Which they had taken from the land of the Philistines, or which belonged to the Amalekites properly:

[which] they drave before those [other] cattle; which had been carried from Ziklag; first went the spoil taken from other places, and then those taken from David and his men, or what was found at Ziklag. Abarbinel supposes the meaning to be this, that the herds were driven before the flocks, that the oxen were led out first, and then the sheep followed, as being the weaker sort, and more easily to be driven, and carried off; but the former sense seems best:

and said, this [is] David's spoil; either the whole of it, it being owing to him that it was got or brought back; or this may respect some peculiar part of it made a present of to him; or it may design what the Amalekites had taken from others, which was at the disposal of David, as distinguished from what was taken from Ziklag, and was restored, or to be restored to the proper owners: it may be taken in the first and more general sense, as being the song, or the burden of the song, sung by David's men as they returned with the spoil, giving him all the honour of it, of whom, but a little before, they talked of stoning.

1 Samuel 30:21

Ver. 21. And David came to the two hundred men,.... Left at the brook Besor:

who were so faint that they could not follow David; or, as the Targum, were restrained from going over after him; either through faintness of spirits, and weakness of body, or through the order of David that they should not follow him; and which seems to receive some countenance from what follows:

whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor; to guard the passage there, and to tarry by and keep the stuff:

and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that [were] with him; to congratulate them upon the victory they had obtained, and to see and receive their wives and children, and what portion of the spoil might be divided to them:

and when David came near to the people, he saluted them; asked them of their welfare, whether they were in better health, and recovered of their faintness and weakness, as it should seem they were, by their coming forth to meet him.

1 Samuel 30:22

Ver. 22. Then answered all the wicked men, and [men] of Belial, of those that went with David,.... Who were ill natured men, and of covetous dispositions, as what is called their answer shows; and it seems by that as if the two hundred men had moved that they might have their share in the spoil, or that David had given some intimation that they should:

and said, because they went not with us, we will not give, them [ought] of the spoil that we have recovered: which was very unreasonable not to let them have what was before their own which was recovered; and indeed it was but right they should have their share in the spoil that was taken which was of others, as will appear hereafter: but they were of opinion and were come to a resolution, they should have no more,

save to every man his wife and his children; which was very unkind and ungenerous:

that they may lead [them] away, and depart; but whither? Ziklag was burnt, the land of Israel they would not return unto, where they must fall a sacrifice to Saul; these men cared not where they went, so that they were rid of them, that they might not have any share with them in the spoil.

1 Samuel 30:23

Ver. 23. Then said David, ye shall not do so, my brethren,.... Though he saw through their wickedness, and disapproved of the bad sentiments they had embraced, yet he deals gently with them, calling them brethren, being of the same nation and religion, and his fellow soldiers; yet at the same time keeps up and maintains his dignity and authority as a general, and declares it should not be as they willed, and gives his reasons for it, that it was not fit they should do as they pleased:

with that which the Lord hath given us; what they had was given them, and therefore, as they had freely received, they should freely give; and what was given them, was not given to them only, but to the whole body, by the Lord:

who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand; it was not by their own power and might that they got the victory over the enemy, and the spoil into their hands, but it was through the Lord only; and therefore, as they should not assume the honour of the victory to themselves, so neither should they claim the spoil as wholly belonging to them.

1 Samuel 30:24

Ver. 24. For who will hearken unto you in fit is matter?,.... No wise and just man will take on your side of the question, and join with you in excluding your brethren from a share in the spoil:

but as his part [is] that goeth down to the battle, so [shall] his part [be] that tarrieth by the stuff; as these two hundred men did; they were placed to abide by and watch the carriages, the bag and baggage the rest had left there, that they might be the lighter, and make their pursuit more swiftly: besides, they guarded the pass here, and were also exposed to danger; for if the four hundred had been cut off, and the enemy had returned, they must all have perished; and therefore as they had their post assigned them, and were liable to danger, it was but just and reasonable they should have the share in the spoil; especially since it was not want of will in them they did not go with them, but weakness of body:

they shall part alike; this was David's determination and decision, and it was an equitable one: something similar to this was directed by the Lord in the war of Midian, Nu 31:25, &c. and was practised in the times of Abraham, Ge 14:24; and is agreeable to the light of nature, and what has been practised by the Heathens, particularly the Romans, as Polybius {u} relates; who tells us, that every man brought booty into the camp, when the tribunes divided it equally to them all; not only to those which remained in battle, but to those that guarded the tents and the baggage, to the sick, and to those that were appointed to any service, see Ps 68:12; and so the Turkish historian says {w}, that the Pisidians, who lived on spoil, gave a part not contemptible to those that abode at home with their wives.

{u} Hist. l. 10. p. 365. {w} Chalcocondyl. de reb. Turc. l. 5. p. 161.

1 Samuel 30:25

Ver. 25. And it was [so] from that day forward,.... Or "upwards" {x}, of old, formerly; and so may refer either to what was done at the war with Midian, Nu 31:27; or in the times of Abraham, Ge 14:23; and so Jarchi observes, it is not said, "henceforward", but "upwards", it being a statute and custom in the days of Abraham; the same he notes on Ge 14:24; where he, David, learnt this from thence; though Josephus {y} is express for it, that this law obtained from the time of David; and such was his authority, though as yet not king, but a wise and just commander:

that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day; it appeared so reasonable and equitable, that it was always regarded and attended to.

{x} hlemw "et supra", Pagninus, Montanus; "et jam olim", Tigurine version.
{y} Antiqu. l. 6. c, 14. sect. 6.

1 Samuel 30:26

Ver. 26. And when David came to Ziklag,.... Perhaps with an intention to rebuild it, and make it still the place of his residence; and it is possible there might be some houses that escaped flames, and if not, tents might be pitched until the city was rebuilt, and it appears that he continued there some time:

he sent of the spoil to the elders of Judah: of that part of it which belonged to himself as a general:

[even] to his friends; such as had been kind to him when he sojourned among them; so that this was a piece of gratitude, as well as of policy in him, to make his way to the throne the easier, he perceiving the time drawing on for the expiration of the kingdom in the family of Saul; and besides, some in those parts he sent of the spoil to might have been sufferers by the Amalekites, so that it was but a point of justice to restore to them what had been taken from them; for they had invaded the south of Judea, and took spoils from thence, 1Sa 30:14; it was to his friends in those parts he sent, not to the inhabitants of Ziph and Keilah, which were places in the tribe of Judah; but these having attempted to betray him, were not entitled to his favours, though they were not the objects of his vengeance:

saying, behold, a present for you, of the spoil of the Lord's enemies; or a "blessing" {z}, which he sent them with a good will, wishing health and happiness to them; which they might without hesitation receive, seeing it was not the spoil of private enemies, or of what was taken from them in a way of private revenge, but the spoil of the enemies of the Lord, his and their common enemies; nor need they scruple eating and enjoying it, though the spoil of those that cursed the Lord, Abarbinel observes, since this they had with the blessing of the Lord.

{z} hkrb "benedictio", Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Samuel 30:27

Ver. 27. To [them] which [were] in Bethel,.... One part of the spoil was sent to them; not to those in Bethel, in the tribe of Benjamin, but in Kirjathjearim, called Bethel, or the house of God, because the ark was there, see **1Sa 7:1**; moreover, this place was also called Baalah, which some think is referred to here, see Jos 15:9;

and to [them] which [were] in south Ramoth; a city of the tribe of Simeon, which lay within the lot of Judah; of which see Jos 19:8;

and to [them] which [were] in Jattir; a city of the tribe of Judah, See Gill on "Jos 15:48".

1 Samuel 30:28

Ver. 28. And to [them] which [were] in Aroer,.... Not Aroer in the tribe of Gad beyond Jordan, where David is never said to be, but some city of this name in the tribe of Judah; the Greek version of Jos 15:22, instead of Adadah, has Arouel:

and to [them] which [were] in Siphmoth; which very probably was in the tribe of Judah, though nowhere else mentioned:

and to [them] which [were] in Eshtemoa; a Levitical city given to the Levites by the children of Judah, Jos 21:14.

1 Samuel 30:29

Ver. 29. And to [them] which [were] in Rachal,.... Another city of the tribe of Judah, but nowhere else spoken of:

and to [them] which [were] in the cities of the Jerahmeelites: which lay to the south of Judah, 1Sa 27:10;

and to [them] which [were] in the cities of the Kenites; who dwelt in the wilderness of Judah, in the south of Arad, **Jud 1:16**.

1 Samuel 30:30

Ver. 30. And to [them] which [were] in Hormah,.... This was a city also in the tribe of Judah; of which see Jos 15:30;

and to [them] which [were] in Chorashan; or the lake of Ashan, which was in the same tribe, see Jos 15:42;

and to [them] which [were] in Athach; nowhere else mentioned; the Greek version has Nombe instead of it, which some take to be the same with Nob; but that was in the tribe of Benjamin.

1 Samuel 30:31

Ver. 31. And to [them] which [were] in Hebron,.... A noted city in the tribe of Judah, in the mountainous part of it, and a city of refuge, and where David was afterwards anointed, first king over Judah, and then over Israel, **2Sa 2:4**;

and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt; where they had their walks, and went to and fro when persecuted by Saul; all such places, and the inhabitants of them, David had a grateful remembrance of, who sheltered and relieved him in the times of his distress.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Samuel 31:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 31

This chapter gives an account of the battle between the Philistines and the Israelites, which had been preparing for, and the issue of it; in which Saul, his three sons, and his servants, were slain, upon which his army fled, and several of his cities were taken, 1Sa 31:1; what the Philistines did with his body and his armour, 1Sa 31:8; the former of which, together with the bodies of his sons, the men of Jabeshgilead rescued, and burnt them, and buried their bones under a tree at Jabesh, expressing great sorrow and concern, 1Sa 31:11.

Ver. 1. Now the Philistines fought against Israel,.... Being come to Jezreel where Israel pitched, 1Sa 29:1; they fell upon them, began the battle:

and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines; at the first onset, as it should seem:

and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa; which was near, and whither fleeing they were pursued and slain, at least great numbers of them.

1 Samuel 31:2

Ver. 2. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul,.... Stuck to him, pushed him close, bore hard upon him in that part of the army where he was having a design upon his person:

and upon his sons; who were with him:

and the Philistines slew Jonathan; who is mentioned first, being the eldest son, and perhaps first slain; and this was so ordered by the providence of God, that David's way to the throne might be more clear and easy; for though Jonathan would not have opposed him himself, yet the people, fond of him, would, at least many of them, been for setting him on the throne; and though he would have refused it, knowing David was the Lord's anointed, and have made interest for him, this would have looked as if he had made him king, and not the Lord:

and Abinadab and Malchishua, Saul's sons; these also were slain; former of these is called Ishui, 1Sa 14:49; Ishbosheth either was not in the battle, being left at home, as unfit for war, or to take care of the kingdom; or else he fled with Abner, and others, and escaped, and who was to be a trial to David.

1 Samuel 31:3

Ver. 3. And the battle went sore against Saul,.... Pressed heavy upon him; he was the butt of the Philistines, they aimed at his person and life:

and the archers hit him; or "found him" {a}; the place where was, and directed their arrows at him:

and he was sore wounded of the archers; or rather "he was afraid" of them, as the Targum, for as yet he was not wounded; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, and is the sense Kimchi and Ben Melech give of the word: he was not afraid of death, as Abarbinel observes, he chose to die; but he was afraid he should be hit by the archers in such a way that he should not die immediately, and should be taken alive and ill used; the Philistines, especially the Cherethites, were famous for archery; See Gill on "Zep 2:5".

{a} whaumyw "et inveserust cum", Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Samuel 31:4

Ver. 4. Then said Saul unto his armourbearer,.... Who, the Jews {b} say, was Doeg the Edomite, promoted to this office for slaying the priests:

draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; for if he was wounded, yet not mortally, and it is certain he did not so apprehend it. It is much the sword of the armourbearer should be sheathed in a battle; but perhaps he was preparing for flight, and so had put it up in its scabbard:

lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me; lest they should not dispatch him at once, but put him to a lingering and torturing death, and insult him, and mock at him, as they did Samson:

but his armourbearer would not, for he was sore afraid; to lay his hand on the king the Lord's anointed, to take away his life, being more scrupulous of doing that, if this was Doeg, than of slaying the priests of the Lord; or he might be afraid of doing this, since should he survive this action, he would be called to an account by the Israelites, and be put to death for killing the king:

therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it; or rather "the sword", the sword of his armourbearer, and so was a suicide: the Jews endeavour to excuse this fact of Saul, because he knew he should die in battle from the words of Samuel; and being pressed sore by the archers, he saw it was impossible to escape out of their hands and therefore judged it better to kill himself than to fall by the hands of the uncircumcised; but these excuses will not do. Josephus {c} denies he killed himself; that though he attempted it, his sword would not pierce through him, and that he was killed by the Amalekite, and that that was a true account he gave to David in the following chapter; though it seems rather to be a lie, to curry favour with David, and that Saul did destroy himself.

{b} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 77. B. {c} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 7.

1 Samuel 31:5

Ver. 5. And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead,.... By his own hands, and not by the hands of the Amalekite, which the armour bearer would scarcely have suffered:

he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him; some think that Saul, and his armourbearer, died by the same sword, which was the armourbearer's; and if he was Doeg, they fell probably by the same sword with which the priests of the Lord were murdered at Nob, 1Sa 22:18; and it is observed by an historian {d}, that the murderers of Julius Caesar slew themselves with the same dagger they destroyed him.

{d} Sucton. Vit. Caesar. c. 89.

1 Samuel 31:6

Ver. 6. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer,.... Only with this difference, his three sons died honourably in the field of battle, but he and his armourbearer destroyed themselves. Josephus says {e} he reigned eighteen years in the life of Samuel, and after his death twenty two years, which make the forty years the apostle ascribes to him, Ac 13:21; Eupolemus {f}, an Heathen writer, makes him to reign twenty one years; but of the years of his reign, both before and after the death of Samuel, chronologers are not agreed, see 1Sa 25:1; and
See Gill on "Ac 13:21";

and all his men that same day together; not all the soldiers in his army; for many of them fled and escaped, and even Abner the general of the army, but his household servants, or those that were near his person, his bodyguards.

{e} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 9. {f} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 3. p. 447.

1 Samuel 31:7

Ver. 7. And which the men of Israel that [were] on the other side of the valley,.... The valley of Jezreel; of which
See Gill on "Ho 1:5";

and [they] that [were] on the other side Jordan; or rather "on that side"; for the phrase will bear to be rendered either way, and so may mean that side of Jordan on which the battle was fought; for as for the other side, or that beyond it, the Israelites there could not be in such fear of the Philistines, nor do we ever read of their inhabiting any cities there; though as the phrase is used of the valley, as well as of the river, it may be rendered "about the valley, [and] about Jordan" {g}, and so describes such that dwelt near to each of them:

saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead; that is, had information and intelligence of those facts, for it is not to be supposed they saw them with their eyes:

they forsook, the cities, and fled; fearing they should be put to the sword, or carried captive:

and the Philistines came and dwelt them; having nothing more to do than to come and take possession.

{g} Ndryh rbeb-qmeh rbeb "circa convellem illiam--circa Jordanem", Junius & Tremellius, Picator; so Noldius, p. 295. No. 936.

1 Samuel 31:8

Ver. 8. And it came to pass on the morrow,.... The day after the battle, which perhaps was fought till night came on:

when the Philistines came to strip the slain; of their clothes, and take from them whatever was valuable, as their booty:

that they found Saul and his sons fallen in Mount Gilboa; to which they had betaken themselves, when the battle went against them in the valley; of which see 1Sa 28:4.

1 Samuel 31:9

Ver. 9. And they cut off his head,.... And fastened it in the temple of Dagon, 1Ch 10:10; perhaps that which was at Ashdod, one of the principalities of the Philistines, **1Sa 5:1**;

and stripped off his armour; or vessels {h}, his clothes as well as his armour, and what he had about him; as for his crown on his head, and the bracelet on his arm, the Amalekite took them before the Philistines came, **2Sa 1:10**;

and sent into the land of the Philistines round about: not his head and his armour, for they were placed in the temple of their idols; unless we can suppose these were first carried about for show, and as proofs of the victory: but rather messengers, who were sent express with the news,

to publish [it in] the house of their idols, and among the people; that so they might be glad and rejoice, and give praise to their idols, to whom they ascribed the success they had.

{h} wylk ta "vasa ejus", Munster, Montanus.

1 Samuel 31:10

Ver. 10. And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth,.... A temple dedicated to their deities, called by this name; of which
See Gill on "Jud 2:13"; Nothing was more common with the Gentiles than to place in their temples the arms they took from their enemies, as is strongly expressed by Homer {i} and Virgil {k}; and indeed the Jews did the same, as appears by the sword of Goliath being laid up in the tabernacle, 1Sa 21:9. Here also the Heathens {l} hung up their own arms when the war was ended:

and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan; which Josephus {m} says is the same which in his time was called Scythopolis, from the Scythians that possessed it, before called Nysa, according to Pliny {n}: it was given to the tribe of Manasseh, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of it, so that it was always in the possession of others, Jos 17:11; where it is called Bethshean; to the wall of the city they fastened the body of Saul with nails, as it is commonly understood; but it is more likely they hung it on a gibbet without, and near the walls of the city; so the Targum, they hung his body; or, as Josephus {o}, they crucified it there; and so they did also the bodies of his sons, as appears from 1Sa 31:12.

{i} teucea sulhsav, Iliad. 7. ver. 83. {k} "Multaque praeterea sacris in postibus arma", &c. Aeneid. 7. ver. 183. So Persius, Satyr. 6. ver. 45. {l} Messal. Corvin. de August. Progen. {m} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14.) l. 8. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 18. Vid. Solin. Polyhistor. c. 49. {o} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. l. 8.)

1 Samuel 31:11

Ver. 11. And the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead,.... Who lived on the other side Jordan, about eight miles from Bethshan, according to Fuller {p}:

heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul; not only that they had got the victory over him, and routed his army, but had abused his body, and hung it up by way of reproach and ignominy; which they could not bear to hear of, remembering with gratitude the kindness he had shown to them, in delivering them out of the hands of Nahash the Ammonite, 1Sa 11:1.

{p} Pisgah-Sight of Palestine, b. 2. ch. 2. p. 82.

1 Samuel 31:12

Ver. 12. All the valiant men arose,.... Of the city of Jabeshgilead, fired with indignation at the Philistines' ill usage of Saul and the bodies of his sons:

and went all night; not only for secrecy, but for haste:

and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh; brought them with them thither, the Philistines either having no knowledge of it, or not daring to oppose them:

and burnt them there: that is, the flesh of them, for the bones they buried, as in 1Sa 31:13; and this they did, contrary to the common usage of the country, which was not to burn; but this they did, that if the Philistines should come to recover them, they would not be able to do it: though the Targum is,

"they burnt over them, as they burn over their kings there;"

they made a burning for them of spices over them; or of their beds, and other household goods, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, though they prefer the other sense; see 2Ch 16:14 perhaps the true reason might be, because they were putrid and infectious.

1 Samuel 31:13

Ver. 13. And they took their bones, and buried [them] under a tree at Jabesh,.... For though they burned the bodies, yet so as to preserve the bones; and these, together with the ashes of the parts burnt, they gathered up, and buried under a tree near this city; this tree is said to be an oak, 1Ch 10:12; so Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, was buried under an oak, Ge 35:8. The Jews generally interred their dead under some oak, as aforementioned writer observes {q}; pleased perchance with the parallel, as he expresses it, that as these plants, seemingly dead in winter, have every spring an annual resurrection, so men's dry bones shall have new sap put into them at the day of judgment:

and fasted seven days; not that they ate and drank nothing all that time, but they fasted every day till evening, as the Jews used to do; so long it seems a man may live without eating, but not longer;
See Gill on "Ex 24:18" and
see Gill "1Ki 19:8"; this they did, as Kimchi thinks, in memory of the seven days Nahash the Ammonite gave them for their relief, in which time Saul came and saved them, 1Sa 11:3.

{q} Pisgah-Sight of Palestine b. 2. ch. 2. p. 82.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL

This book, in many copies of the Hebrew Bible, is carried on without any new title put unto it; the reason of it is, because, by some, this, with the preceding, has been reckoned but one book: hence the Jews say {a}, Samuel wrote his book, not his books; in others it is called Samuel Second; and by the Vulgate Latin the Second Book of Samuel, which we call the Second of Kings; though why his name should be put to it at all I see not, since it neither concerns him, nor could it be written by him, being an history of events after his death. The Greek version calls it the Second of Kings; and the Syriac version, the Second Book of the Kings of Israel; whereas there is but one king of Israel it makes mention of, and of whose actions only it is an history; and therefore with greater propriety it is called, as the Arabic version, the Book of David the Prophet, of whose reign, from the beginning to the end of it, it gives an account: wherefore Isidore {b} thinks it was written by David; and if so, it has this mark of simplicity and integrity, that the writer does not spare himself, nor conceal his own faults, and particularly that very capital one, the affair of Bathsheba, and also his numbering of the people; but it is most probable that it was written by Nathan and Gad {c}, see
1Ch 29:29; but whoever was the penman of it, there is no doubt to be made of its being written by inspiration, or that it is canonical; which has never been questioned, since there stands in it a famous prophecy concerning the building of the temple by a son of David, which had an exact accomplishment, **2Sa 7:12**; as well as of the family of David, for a great while to come, which also was fulfilled, **2Sa 7:19**; and an eminent passage concerning the Messiah, the son of David, and of his divine sonship, **2Sa 7:14**; quoted by the Apostle Paul in proof of it, **Heb 1:5**. It contains an history of about forty years, for so long David reigned, seven years and six months in Hebron, over Judah, and thirty three years in Jerusalem, over all Israel and Judah; and this book relates his last words.

{a} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. {b} Origin. l. 6. c. 2. {c} Alting. Theolog. Hist. loc. 2. p. 86.

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 1

This chapter contains an account of the death of Saul and Jonathan, as related to David by an Amalekite, **2Sa 1:1**; of the sorrow he and his men were filled with at the news of it, **2Sa 1:11**; of his order to put to death the messenger that brought the tidings, for his concern in the death of Saul, according to his own testimony, **2Sa 1:13**; and of a lamentation composed by David on this occasion, **2Sa 1:17**.

Ver. 1. Now it came to pass after the death of Saul,.... The third day after, as appears from the next verse:

when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites; as related in 1Sa 30:17;

and David had abode two days in Ziklag; which, though fired by the Amalekites, was not utterly consumed, but there was still some convenience for the lodging of David and his men; within this time he sent his presents to several places in the tribe of Judah, of which mention is made in the chapter before quoted, and at the same time it was that so many mighty men came to him from several tribes spoken of in 1Ch 12:1.

2 Samuel 1:2

Ver. 2. It came to pass on the third day,.... After the battle was fought, in which Saul was slain:

that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul; that is, from them who were in the camp with Saul, for he was dead. Some say {d} this was Doeg the Edomite, which is not likely that he should come with such tidings to David; besides, if he was Saul's armourbearer, as others say, see 1Sa 31:4; he died with Saul; nor his son, as others {e}, which is not at all probable, though his being an Edomite is no objection, since the Amalekites were of the race of Edom:

with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: in token of mourning, and was the bringer of bad tidings, see **1Sa 4:12**;

and [so] it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance; as being the rising sun, Saul's successor, and now king.

{d} Pesikta in Jarchi in loc. {e} Tanchuma in Yalkut in loc. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 lib. Reg. fol. 77. C.

2 Samuel 1:3

Ver. 3. And David said unto him, from whence comest thou?.... It is very likely by his appearance and circumstances he suspected from whence he came:

and he said unto him, out of the camp of Israel am I escaped; which plainly suggested that that was in danger, confusion, and distress.

2 Samuel 1:4

Ver. 4. And David said unto him, how went the matter? I pray thee, tell me,.... That is, how went the battle? on which side the victory?

and he answered, that the people are fled from the battle; meaning the people of Israel, they had given way, and turned their backs upon their enemies, and were fled:

and many of the people also are fallen and dead; fell by the sword in the pursuit of them, and were not only wounded, but were slain, and these great numbers of them:

and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also; which are mentioned last, because they fell some of the last; and this part of the account is reserved by the messenger to the last, because it was the article of the greatest importance; the death of these two persons, the one the enemy, and the other the friend of David, and the death of both made way for his accession to the throne.

2 Samuel 1:5

Ver. 5. And David said unto the young man that told him,.... These tidings:

how knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead? this he particularly inquired after, as what most affected him, and was most material for him to know; and his meaning is, whether he had this of his own sight and knowledge, or by report.

2 Samuel 1:6

Ver. 6. And the young man that told him,.... So it seems he was, and therefore could not be Doeg, more likely his son of the two; but there is no reason to believe he was either of them, who cannot be thought to be well disposed to David:

said, as I happened by chance upon Mount Gilboa; who was either a traveller that came that way just as the army was routed, and part had fled to Gilboa; or if a soldier, was not one of those that attended Saul, and was of his bodyguard, but happened on the flight to come to the same spot on Gilboa where Saul was:

behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; that that might pierce him through and die; but this seems not true, for he fell upon his sword for that purpose, 1Sa 31:4;

and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him; the charioteers and cavalry, of which part of the Philistine army consisted; though this also does not agree with the account in the above place; for according to that they were the archers that pressed him hard, and hit him.

2 Samuel 1:7

Ver. 7. And when he looked behind him,.... To see how near the enemy was, and who were pursuing him:

he saw me, and called unto me; by which it should rather seem that he belonged to the Philistines than to the Israelites, and as his being an Amalekite shows; for such an one would hardly be admitted among the latter, though it is most likely he was with neither, but happened to come that way just at that time:

and I answered, here [am] I; ready to hear what thou hast to say, and do thy pleasure.

2 Samuel 1:8

Ver. 8. And he said unto me, who [art] thou?.... Being willing to know whether a friend or an enemy, which by his coming behind him he could not tell:

and I answered him, I [am] an Amalekite: which he might be; but it is not likely he should tell Saul he was, which would not recommend him to him; though indeed he was now in such circumstances, that the Amalekites had nothing to fear from him; and if he was slain by him, as Josephus {f} affirms he was, it seems to be a just retaliation on him for sparing any of that race, contrary to the will of God.

{f} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 7.

2 Samuel 1:9

Ver. 9. And he said unto me again, stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me,.... Which it can hardly be thought Saul would say; since he might as well have died by the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines, which he endeavoured to avoid, as by the hands of an Amalekite:

for anguish is come upon me; or trembling, as the Targum, not through fear of death, but through fear of falling into the hands of the Philistines, and of being ill used by them. Some render the words, "my embroidered coat", or "breastplate", or "coat of mail", holds me {g}, or hinders me from being pierced through with the sword or spear; so Ben Gersom {h}:

because my life [is] yet whole in me: for though he had been wounded by the archers, yet he did not apprehend he had received any mortal wound, but his life was whole in him; and therefore feared he should fall into their hands alive, and be ill treated by them.

{g} Ubyh "tunica scutulata", Braunius; "ocellata chlamys", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "thorax villosus seu pelliceus", Texelii Phoenix, p. 210.
{h} Vid. Braunium de Vest. Sacredot. Heb. l. 1. c. 17. sect. 9.

2 Samuel 1:10

Ver. 10. So I stood upon him, and slew him,.... Pressed with all his weight upon his body, that so the spear might pierce through him, and slay him; thus he represents his death to be brought about:

because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen; this is not consistent with what he had said before, both that he was leaning on his spear, and not fallen to the ground, and that his life was whole in him:

and I took the crown that [was] upon his head; which made him conspicuous, and therefore the Philistines aimed at him, and pressed hard after him, 2Sa 1:6;

though some think that this was not on his head, but carried into the field of battle, ready to be put on if victory was on his side; and others say it was in the possession and care of Doeg, who at his death gave it to his son to carry to David, and thereby gain his favour:

and the bracelet that [was] on his arm; of gold no doubt, so Josephus {i}; such as great personages used to wear, men as well as women, see Ge 38:18, especially military men {k}. Jarchi takes them to be the "totaphot" or phylacteries on the arm, which is not probable:

and have brought them hither unto my lord; as ensigns of royalty, fit only for a king, Saul's successor, as this person, by calling him lord, owned him to be, and thought by bringing those to him to be highly he neared and rewarded.

{i} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 7.) {k} Vid. Liv. Hist. Decad. 1. l. 10. c. 44.

2 Samuel 1:11

Ver. 11. When David took hold on his clothes,.... Not on the young man's but his own:

and rent them; on bearing of the death of Saul and Jonathan, see Ge 37:34; from whence the Jews {l} gather, that a man is bound to rend his clothes for a prince, and for the father of the sanhedrim, since Saul, they say, was the prince, and Jonathan the father of that court:

and likewise all the men that [were] with him; rent their clothes also, in imitation of him; the same custom obtained among the Gentiles on mournful occasions {m}.

{l} T. Bab. Moed. Katon, fol. 26. 1. {m} "-----it scissa veste Latinus". Virgil. Aeneid. 12. prope finem.

2 Samuel 1:12

Ver. 12. And they mourned and wept,.... Inwardly mourned, and outwardly wept, no doubt sincerely:

and fasted until even; ate no food all that day until it was evening, the manner in which fasts used to be kept:

for Saul, and for Jonathan his son; it is no wonder that David and his men should mourn for Jonathan, a good man, and a valiant one, and a dear and faithful friend of David's; but it may seem not so clear a thing that they should, mourn for Saul, a wicked man, and a persecutor of David without cause: but it should be observed that he had been reconciled to David, and had not since attempted anything against him; besides, he was his prince, his father-in-law, and the rather he might be grieved for his death, and his men with him, because it was matter of joy to the Philistines, and they would endeavour to avail themselves of it; and especially the manner of his death, that he should be the cause of it himself, and die without repentance, as it might be feared, and quickly after consultation with a witch, and when left of God, if these particulars were known to David:

and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel; that is, the people of the Lord, even the house of Israel, or who were of the house of Israel; or if they are to be distinguished, the former may respect the people of the Lord who died in battle, for whom mourning was made; and the latter the people that survived, the whole kingdom of Israel, which had sustained a great loss by the slaughter made in this battle, as it follows:

because they were fallen by the sword; so many of them.

2 Samuel 1:13

Ver. 13. And David said unto the young man that told him, whence [art] thou?.... From what place, or of what people and nation art thou? though Abarbinel thinks it neither respects place nor people, but that David thought he was another man's servant; so that the sense of the question is, to what man did he belong?

and he answered, I [am] the son of a stranger, an Amalekite; he was not any man's servant, but the son of a proselyte, of one that was by birth and nation an Amalekite, but proselyted to the Jewish religion; he might know of what nation he originally was, by the account he had given of what passed between him and Saul, **2Sa 1:8**; though the mind of David might so disturbed as not to advert to it; or if he did, he might be willing to have it repeated for confirmation's sake.

2 Samuel 1:14

Ver. 14. And David said unto him, how, wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand,.... By which it should seem that he did more than stand upon him, and press his body, that the spear might pierce through him, but that he drew his sword, and slew him; so David understood him, and is the sense of the phrase in 1Sa 17:51;

to destroy the Lord's anointed? a reason why David did not destroy him, when it was in the power of his hands, and which he made use of to dissuade others from it; and here charges it not only as a criminal, but a daring action in this young man, at which he expresses his admiration how he could do it; hereby representing it as a very shocking and detestable action; see 1Sa 24:6.

2 Samuel 1:15

Ver. 15. And David called one of the young men,.... His servants that attended on him:

and said, go near, [and] fall upon him; by smiting him with his sword:

and he smote him, that he died; his orders were instantly obeyed. Kings and generals of armies had great power in those times and countries to execute a man immediately, without any other judge or jury: what may serve, or David might think would serve, to justify him in doing this, is what follows.

2 Samuel 1:16

Ver. 16. And David said unto him, thy blood [be] upon thy head,.... The blood that he had shed, let him suffer for it; for as he had shed blood, his blood ought to be shed, according to the law of God; and for proof of this, that he had so done, he appeals to his own confession:

for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed; and what might serve to confirm the truth of what he had said were the crown and bracelet which he brought along with him; and besides he was an Amalekite, of a nation that was devoted to destruction; and, as Abarbinel thinks, David might suppose that he killed Saul to take vengeance on him for what he had done to their nation; but, after all, both he and Maimonides {n} allow the punishment of him was not strictly according to law, but was a temporary decree, an extraordinary case, and an act of royal authority; for in common cases a man was not to be condemned and put to death upon his own confession, since it is possible he may not be in his right mind {o}; but David chose to exercise severity in this case, partly to show his respect to Saul, and to ingratiate himself into the favour of his friends, and partly to deter men from attempting to assassinate princes, who himself was now about to ascend the throne.

{n} Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 18. sect. 6. {o} T. Bab. Yehamot, fol. 25. 2. Maimon. ibid.

2 Samuel 1:17

Ver. 17. And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul, and over Jonathan his son. Composed the following elegy on account of their death, and sung it in a tune agreeable to it, he and the men that were with him.

2 Samuel 1:18

Ver. 18. (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah [the use] of the bow,.... These words, with what follow in this verse, are rightly put into a parenthesis, since they do not begin nor make any part of the elegiac song, or lamentation of David; and are here inserted to show, that, amidst his sorrow and lamentation, he was not unmindful of the welfare of the people, and to provide for their defence and security; and therefore gave orders that care should be taken, especially in the tribe of Judah, which was his own tribe, and where he had the greatest authority, and for whom he might have the chiefest concern, that they should be trained up in military exercises, learn the art of war, and the use of every weapon of war, particularly of the bow, which, being a principal one, may be put for all; and which may be the rather mentioned, because the Philistines were expert in the use of it, and seemed to have done much execution with it in the recent battle, see 1Sa 31:3. They are said {p} to be the inventors of it; though Pliny {q} ascribes it to others; and it may be the people of Israel and of Judah had of late neglected to learn the use of it, and to make use of it, and instead of that had taken to other sort of arms in fighting; for that that was not unknown to them, or wholly disused, is clear from this song, **2Sa 1:22**; see also 1Ch 12:2. Moreover, as the Philistines, especially the Cherethites, were expert in archery, David found ways and means to get some of them afterwards into his service, and by whom he might improve his people in the art, see **2Sa 8:18**; though some {r} are of opinion that the word "keshet", or bow, was the title of the following lamentation or song, taken from the mention of Jonathan's bow in it; which song the children of Judah were to be taught to sing; but then, as has been observed by some, for this there would have been no need of the following reference, since the whole this song is here recorded:

behold, it is written in book of Jasher); which the Targum calls the book of the law; and Jarchi and Ben Gersom restrain it to the book of Genesis, the book of the upright, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and suppose respect is had to the prophecy concerning Judah, Ge 49:8, but Kimchi, extending it to all the five books of Moses, adds his blessing, in De 33:7. In the Arabic version it is explained of the book of Samuel, interpreted the book of songs, as if it was a collection of songs; which favours the above sense. Jerom {s} interprets it of the same book, the book of the righteous prophets, Samuel, Gad, and Nathan: hut this book seems to have been a public register or annals, in which were recorded memorable actions in any age, and had its name from the uprightness and faithfulness in which it was kept; and in this were set down the order of David for the teaching the children of Judah the use of the bow, and perhaps the method which he directed to for instruction in it; See Gill on "Jos 10:13".

{p} Bedford's Chronology, p. 245. {q} Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56. {r} See Gregory's Notes and Observations, &c. ch. 1. and Weemse of the Judicial Laws, c. 44. p. 171. {s} Trad. Heb. in 2 lib. Reg. fol. 77. D.

2 Samuel 1:19

Ver. 19. The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places,.... The high mountains of Gilboa, where Saul their king, and Jonathan his son, a prince of the blood, and natural heir to the crown, and multitudes of young men, the flower of the nation, were wounded and slain. Here begins the lamentation, or the elegiac song:

how are the mighty fallen! mighty men of war, strong and valiant, as Saul and his sons were, and the soldiers in his army.

2 Samuel 1:20

Ver. 20. Tell [it] not in Gath,.... One of the five principalities of the Philistines, and the chief of them, being raised to a kingdom, and whose king was at the head of the armies of the Philistines that engaged with Saul. This is not to be understood of a command of David, who could not hinder the victory the Philistines had got over Israel being known at Gath, and talked of with pleasure there, but a wish it had not:

publish [it] not in the streets of Ashkelon; another of the principalities of the Philistines, and the sense the same as before:

lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph; it being usual in those times and countries for women, young women more especially, to express their joy, on occasion of victories obtained, by singing and dancing, Jud 11:34.

2 Samuel 1:21

Ver. 21. Ye mountains of Gilboa,.... On which fell Saul and his sons, and many of the people of Israel, **2Sa 1:6**;

[let there be] no dew, neither [let there be] rain upon you; which is not to understood as a real imprecation; for David would never curse any part of the land of Israel, for which he had so great a regard; but only as a poetical figure, expressing his concern for, and abhorrence of what happened on those mountains; much less did this in reality take place, as some have feigned, as if never dew nor rain descended on them {t} afterwards; which has been refuted by travellers, particularly Borchard {u}, who, speaking of this mountain, says, that as he was upon it, there was such a violent shower fell, that he was wet through his clothes; and in the year 1273, laying all night upon this hill, there was a great dew fell upon him:

nor fields of offerings; of heave offerings; the meaning is, that he could wish almost that those hills were not fruitful, and that they brought no fruit to perfection, so much as that heave offerings for the service of the sanctuary might be taken; which is expressive of great sterility and scarcity, see **Joe 1:13**;

for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away; mighty men were obliged to cast away their shields and flee, which were greatly to their reproach and scandal, and to that of the whole nation: it was always reckoned very scandalous, and a great crime, even punishable with death, to cast away a shield, both with the Greeks and others {w}: yea, also

the shield of Saul, [as though he had] not [been] anointed with oil; as if he was not the anointed king of Israel, but a common soldier: or else this respects his shield, as if that was not anointed, as shields used to be, that they might be smooth and glib, and missile weapons, as arrows and others, might not pass through them, but slide off, see
Isa 21:5; though Gersom gives a different turn, that Saul's shield being in continual use, needed not to be anointed, as those did which for a time had been laid aside. Abarbinel interprets these words thus, that he, who was the shield of the mighty, even Saul himself, was vilely cast away, or become loathsome; and that his shield was anointed, not with oil, but with the blood of the slain, and the fat of the mighty, connecting them with the words following.

{t} Cippi Heb. p. 34. {u} Apud Hottinger not. in ib. see Bunting's Travels, p, 131. {w} Isocrates de Pace, p. 364. Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode 7. Tacitus de Mor. German. c. 6. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 13.

2 Samuel 1:22

Ver. 22. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back,.... That is, it always did execution, the arrows shot frown it pierced into men, shed their blood, and slew them; even they entered into the fat of the mighty, or mighty ones, that were fat, and brought them down; so the arrows of the Medes and Persians, the expert men among them, are said not to return in vain, Jer 50:9;

and the sword of Saul returned not empty; but was the means of slaying many; though Abarbinel observes also that this may be interpreted of the blood of the slain, and of the fat of the mighty men of Israel; and that though Saul and Jonathan saw many of these fall before their eyes, yet "for" or "because" of their blood, they were not intimidated and restrained from fighting; the bow of the one, and the shield of the other, turned not back on that account.

2 Samuel 1:23

Ver. 23. Saul and Jonathan [were] lovely and pleasant in their lives,.... To one another, had no quarrel or difference with each other, only on the account of David; otherwise they agreed together in the court, and in the camp, in their councils, and in their conduct:

and in their death they were not divided; neither from the people, nor from one another; Jonathan stuck close by his father to the last; which is observed to clear him from any imputation of conspiracy against him:

they were swifter than eagles; in the quick dispatch of business, in hasting to the relief of the distressed, as Saul to the men of Jabeshgilead, and in the pursuit of their enemies, as of the Philistines, more than once:

they were stronger than lions; fighting with their enemies, who became an case prey to them; and what is stronger than a lion among beasts?
Jud 14:18; or swifter than an eagle among birds, which is said to cut the air with its wings {x}?

{x} Aelian. Hist. Animal. l. 15. c. 22. Vid. Ciceron. de Divinatione, l. 2. prope finem.

2 Samuel 1:24

Ver. 24. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,.... In their mournful elegies;

who clothed you with scarlet, with [other] delights; not only with scarlet, but with other fine and delightful apparel, such as were very pleasing to the female sex, especially young people, who are delighted with gay apparel; this Saul was the means of, through the spoil he took from his enemies, and by other methods taken by him to the enriching of the nation, whereby husbands and parents were enabled to provide rich clothes for their wives and children:

who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel; broidered work, jewels of gold, &c. See **Isa 3:18**.

2 Samuel 1:25

Ver. 25. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!.... The mighty and valiant men of war, the common soldiers as well as their general officers, whose loss David mourns, and the repetition of shows how much it affected him:

O Jonathan, [thou wast] slain in thine high places; in the high places of the land of Israel, the mountains of Gilboa, which though high, and in his own country, could not protect him from his enemies, and from falling by their hands: he who had been so valiant and victorious a prince, and yet he fell, not in an enemy's country, but his own.

2 Samuel 1:26

Ver. 26. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan,.... So he was, not only by nation and religion, but by affinity, having married the sister of Jonathan; and still more so by affection and friendship, he being a friend of David's, that stuck closer to him than a brother, and who loved him as his own soul; he was distressed for him, not on account of his spiritual and eternal state, which he doubted not was happy, but for the manner of his death, his loss of him, and want of his pleasant conversation, of his counsel and advice, and assistance in his present circumstances:

very pleasant hast thou been unto me; in their friendly visits of, and conversation with, one another; many a pleasant hour had they spent together, but now must see each other's faces no more in this world:

thy love to me was wonderful; as indeed he might well say, being towards one of a mean extract in comparison of his, to one who was not his own brother, but a brother-in-law; and to one that was a rival to the crown he was heir to, and would take it before him: and who ran the risk of losing his father's affection, and even his life, for espousing his cause: see 1Sa 18:1;

passing the love of women; either that which they are loved with by men, or that with which they love their husbands and children; which is generally the strongest and most affectionate. The Targum is,

"more than the love of two women,"

than his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail; so Kimchi; meaning that he was more strongly and affectionately loved by Jonathan than by them, who yet might love him very well too.

2 Samuel 1:27

Ver. 27. How are the mighty fallen,.... This is the burden of this elegiac song, being the third time it is mentioned:

and the weapons of war perished! not only the valiant soldiers were killed, but their arms were lost; and particularly he may mean Saul and Jonathan, who as they were the shields of the people, so they were the true weapons and instruments of war, and with them all military glory perished; which must be understood as a poetical figure, exaggerating their military characters; otherwise David, and many mighty men with him, remained, and who revived and increased the military glory of Israel, as the following history shows.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 2

This chapter relates that David, upon inquiring of the Lord, was directed to go up to Hebron, and did, where he was anointed king of Judah, **2Sa 2:1**. And that being told of the kindness of the men of Jabeshgilead in burying Saul, he sent them thanks, and promised to remember it, and took the opportunity to let them know he was anointed king over Judah, **2Sa 2:5**. It also relates that Abner set up Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, to be king over Israel, **2Sa 2:8**; and that there was an encounter between twelve of Abner's men and twelve of David's, which brought on a sore battle between them, in which Abner was beaten, **2Sa 2:12**; and Asahel, who was of David's party, was slain in the pursuit by Abner, **2Sa 2:18**; when a retreat was sounded by Joab, at the influence of Abner, who, with his wen, betook themselves to Mahanaim, where he had left Ishbosheth, **2Sa 2:26**. And the chapter closes with an account of the slain on both sides, the burial of Asahel, and the return of Joab with David's men to Hebron, **2Sa 2:30**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass after this,.... After David had heard of the death of Saul and Jonathan, and made a lamentation over them, perhaps the next day; since David and his men are only said to mourn, and weep, and fast till even, **2Sa 1:10**;

that David inquired of the Lord; of the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, by

Abiathar the priest, and through the Urim and Thummim, in the ephod he had put on on this occasion:

saying, shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? though the Lord had promised him the kingdom, and he had been anointed by Samuel by his appointment, yet he was not hasty to take it into his hands, but was desirous of acting according to the will of God, and by his direction, and wait his time when and where he should go and take possession of it; he mentions Judah because it was his own tribe, and where he had the most friends:

and the Lord said unto him, go up; from Ziklag into the tribe of Judah, but did not mention any particular place whither he should go; hence another question was put:

and David said, whither shall I go up? To what town or city in the tribe of Judah? whether Jerusalem or any other?

And he said, unto Hebron; a city of the priests, a city of refuge, Jos 21:13, twenty miles from Jerusalem, or more, which is not directed to, because it was then chiefly in the hands of the Jebusites, and because, as Procopius Gazaeus says, Hebron was now the metropolis of Judah.

2 Samuel 2:2

Ver. 2. So David went up thither,.... From Ziklag to Hebron, which was sixteen miles according to Bunting {y}

and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, Nabal's wife, the Carmelite; who were beloved by him, and who had shared with him in his troubles, and which he took with him to partake of his honour and grandeur, wealth and riches; in which he was now a type of Christ. See **Ro 8:17**.

{y} Ut supra, (Travels &c.) p. 137.

2 Samuel 2:3

Ver. 3. And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household,.... They and their families, and no doubt provided well for them when he was settled on the throne, who had shown themselves to be his

faithful friends, closely attached to his interest, and had run the risk of their all on his account. See
Mt 19:28.

And they dwelt in the cities of Hebron; in the towns and villages about it; for that itself being a city of refuge, and inhabited by priests, there was not room enough for all David's men, who were now increasing, persons from various tribes flocking to him. See 1Ch 12:1.

2 Samuel 2:4

Ver. 4. And the men of Judah came,.... The inhabitants of the tribe of Judah came from the several parts of it to Hebron, that is, the principal of them, the elders of each city:

and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah; they did not take upon them to make him king over all Israel, but left the rest of the tribes to act for themselves; and no doubt in this they had the mind of David, who was not willing to force himself upon the people at once, but by degrees get the whole government into his hands, as Providence should make his way; these men knew the kingdom was promised to their tribe, from Ge 49:10; and were quite clear in what they did, and, without question, knew that David had been anointed by Samuel: but as that anointing was only a declaration of the Lord's choice of him, and of his will that he should be king after Saul's death, he is again anointed by the people, as an inauguration into his office:

and they told David, saying, [that] the men of Jabeshgilead [were they] that buried Saul. It is highly probable, that as soon as David was anointed king, the first thing he thought of was to inquire after the body of the late king, and give it an honourable interment, and upon inquiry was told that the men of Jabeshgilead had buried him already. See 1Sa 31:11.

2 Samuel 2:5

Ver. 5. And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabeshgilead,.... To return them thanks for their courage and boldness in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons out of the hands of the Philistines, and for their civility in the burial of them:

and said unto them, blessed [be] ye of the Lord; which may be considered either as a wish, the Lord bless you for it, or as a prediction, the Lord will bless you:

that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, [even] unto Saul,
and have buried him. To bury the dead, with the Jews, was always reckoned an instance of humanity and kindness, and indeed of piety; an act done in imitation of God {z}, who buried Moses, and so it might be expected the divine blessing would attend it.

{z} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 32. 2. and Sotah, fol. 14. 1.

2 Samuel 2:6

Ver. 6. And now the Lord show kindness and truth unto you,.... Or true kindness; confer real favours, bestow upon you good and substantial blessings, blessings indeed!

and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing. He not only prayed to God to bless them and reward them for it, but would remember them himself, and at a proper opportunity would show favour to them for this act of kindness to Saul. De Dieu proposes to consideration whether it may not be as well interpreted to this sense, "and I also do you this kindness" because of it; that is, have done you this honour by sending messengers to you, to thank you for it, and by wishing a blessing upon you on account of it, and by praising and commending you for it; but the former sense seems best.

2 Samuel 2:7

Ver. 7. Now therefore let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant,.... And not be afraid of the Philistines, who might resent their conduct in taking away from them the bodies of Saul and his sons, whom they had hung up in triumph; and these men might fear they would bring their armies against them, and destroy them; but David bids them be of good heart and courage, and not be afraid of them:

for your master Saul is dead; or rather "though" {a} he is dead; for that he was dead they knew full well, having buried him, and needed no information of it;

but being dead, they might be discouraged, as having none to protect and defend them, or come to their relief as he did, should they be attacked:

and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them; or "for even", or "notwithstanding" {b}; and this therefore being the case, he would take their parts, and help and assist them; and which he suggests to them, to invite them to own him as their king also, and put themselves under his protection.

{a} yk "licet enim", V. L. "quamvis", Piscator. So Pool and Patrick. {b} Mgw "tamen", V. L. "nam similiter", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

2 Samuel 2:8

Ver. 8. But Abner, the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host,.... This man's father, Ner, was Saul's uncle, 1Sa 14:50, and he was his own cousin, and being general of his army, a post he was willing to keep, might be the reasons for doing what he did, as follows:

took Ishbosheth the son of Saul; and who seems to be his only son left, except what he had by his concubine. This man's name is Eshbaal in **1Ch 8:33**. Baal is the name of a shameful idol, and which was therefore sometimes called Bosheth, "shame". See **Ho 9:10**; wherefore such names of men, which had Baal in them, were changed for Besheth or Bosheth, as the names of Jerubbaal and Meribbaal, who were called Jerubbesheth and Mephibosheth. See **Jud 8:35**; compared with
2Sa 11:21, and **2Sa 4:4** with **1Ch 8:34**. The latter of these, a son of Jonathan, bid fairest for the crown by lineal succession, but he being but five years of age, and lame, this man Abner judged fittest for his purpose; and though he knew it was the will of God, and he had sworn that David should be king, yet so blind and obstinate was his ambition, that he set up another against him:

and brought him over to Mahanaim; a city on the other side Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, on the border of the half tribe of Manasseh; see
Jos 13:26; and hither Abner had Ishbosheth, partly to keep the men of Jabeshgilead in awe, to whom David had sent messengers, acquainting them with his being king of Judah, and prevent their joining with him; and partly that he might be at a proper distance both from the Philistines and from David, till he could form his measures, and gradually carry his point, as he did.

2 Samuel 2:9

Ver. 9. And he made him king over Gilead,.... Which lay beyond Jordan, and included the tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh; these he prevailed upon to acknowledge Ishbosheth, their king, and proclaimed him king over them:

and over the Ashurites: that is, those of the house or tribe of Asher, as the Targum, and indeed none else can well be thought of; some indeed read the Geshurites, as the Vulgate Latin version; but these were never expelled by the Israelites, and had at this time a king over them, **2Sa 3:3**; see Jos 13:13;

and over Jezreel; the great plain which went along the borders of Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali, and included these tribes:

and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin: the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin:

and over all Israel, excepting the tribe of Judah; that is, he prevailed first on one of these, then on another, until he got all the tribes of Israel to own him for their king; David all this time being still and quiet, and not opposing him, waiting God's own time to open the way for his possession of the kingdom over all Israel, and having a strict regard to his oath to Saul, 1Sa 24:21.

2 Samuel 2:10

Ver. 10. Ishbosheth, Saul's son, [was] forty years old when he began to reign over Israel,.... Being born the same year his father began to reign. See Gill on "1Sa 31:6";

and reigned two years; which some understand of these, and no more; and whereas David reigned seven years and a half over Judah, before he reigned over all Israel, it is thought by the Jewish chronologer {c} that there was a vacancy in the throne of Israel for the space of five years, and so says Kimchi; which vacancy was either before the reign of Ishbosheth, it being a matter in dispute whether he or Mephibosheth should be set up, or after his death; the tribes of Israel being so long before they acknowledged David their king; or Ishbosheth's reign of two years must be in the middle of David's reign over Judah; but there is no need to suppose either of these, for the text says not that Ishbosheth reigned only two years; but the meaning is, as Ben Gersom observes, that he had reigned two years when the following things happened, and a war began, and not by him but by Abner, and carried on by him; and he being an inactive prince, the rest of his reign was reckoned as no reign, whereas he lived and reigned the same length of time David did over Judah; see **2Sa 3:1**;

but the house of Judah followed David; kept close to him as their king, yielding a cheerful obedience to him.

{c} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 37.

2 Samuel 2:11

Ver. 11. And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah,.... And over them only,

was seven years and six months; to which being added thirty three years he reigned over all Israel in Jerusalem, made forty years and six months; and which, for the roundness of the number, is usually called forty years. See **2Sa 5:4**.

2 Samuel 2:12

Ver. 12. And Abner the son of Ner,.... Who was before captain of Saul's host, and now of Ishbosheth's:

and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul; who seem to be not only his domestic servants, that waited upon him, or his courtiers, but his whole army by what follows:

went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon; came from the city on the other side Jordan, where perhaps they had been two years past, concerting schemes to bring all Israel under the government of Ishbosheth; in which they had succeeded, only Judah stood out with David; and in order to reduce that tribe, they passed over Jordan and came to Gibeon, a city in Benjamin. See Jos 18:25.

2 Samuel 2:13

Ver. 13. And Joab the son of Zeruiah,.... A sister of David, and this her son was general of David's army:

and the servants of David, went out; that is, his army went out from Hebron to Gibeon, which was twenty four miles {d} to meet that under Abner; for though he had but one tribe with him, and Ishbosheth had all the rest, yet Judah was a numerous, powerful, and warlike tribe; and besides many out of the other tribes had joined them, and, above all, God was on their side, and they had his promise to rely upon with respect to the establishment of the kingdom in the house of David, and his power and providence to trust in, and therefore went out boldly and cheerfully to meet the armies of Israel under Abner:

and met together by the pool of Gibeon; the same perhaps with the great waters in Gibeon, Jer 41:12;

and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool; facing one another, and watching each other's motions.

{d} Bunting's Travels, p. 146.

2 Samuel 2:14

Ver. 14. And Abner said to Joab,.... Perceiving he made no motion towards an engagement with him, his orders from David being only to act on the defensive, and avoid as much as possible the effusion of blood:

let the young men now arise, and play before us; with their swords after the manner of gladiators or duellers; that it might appear who were best skilled in the use of the sword, and who were the bravest, stoutest, and most courageous; and this he proposed in a way of bravado, and in order to bring on a battle, or to decide the quarrel between them; and this bloody barbarous exercise Abner calls play, as if it was a diversion and pastime to see men wounding and killing one another:

and Joab said, let them arise; he accepted the challenge, not caring to be hectored and bullied by Abner.

2 Samuel 2:15

Ver. 15. Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin,.... Whom Abner had picked out of that tribe, being his own, and whom he knew to be stout and courageous men, and closely attached to him. It seems by this as if Abner's men,

[which pertained to] Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, passed over the pool of Gibeon unto Joab's men; so forward were they to engage in this duel, and it makes it still more appear that they were the aggressors:

and twelve of the servants of David; of his army under Joab, whom Joab either selected, or they, offered themselves as willing to engage with the twelve that were come over.

2 Samuel 2:16

Ver. 16. And they caught everyone his fellow by the head,.... By the hair of his head with his hand:

and [thrust] his sword in his fellow's side; which he had in the other;

so they fell down together; the twelve on each side, all the twenty four; some think only the twelve on Abner's side fell; but to me it seems that they all fell dead as one man, since they thrust their swords in each other's sides:

wherefore that place was called Helkathhazzurim, which [is] in Gibeon; the field of rocks, or of mighty men as strong as rocks, who stood as immovable, and would not give way, but fell and died in the field of battle; the Targum interprets it, the inheritance of the slain.

2 Samuel 2:17

Ver. 17. And there was a very sore battle that day,.... When the twenty four men fell together, and no decision could be made thereby, or any triumph on either side, both armies drew up in battle array, and fought very furiously:

and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David; the army under him had the worst of it, and were routed, and obliged to flee before the army of David under the command of Joab.

2 Samuel 2:18

Ver. 18. And there were three sons of Zeruiah there,.... In the battle,

Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel; Joab was the general of the array, Abishai was he who went into Saul's host at night, and took away his spear and cruse of water at his head, 1Sa 26:6; and it is for the sake of the third, Asahel, that the account is given, the story of his death being about to be told.

And Asahel [was as] light of foot as a wild roe: swiftness of foot, as well as courage, for which this man was famous, 1Ch 11:26; was a very great qualification for a warrior {e}. So Achilles, in Homer {f}, is often said to be swift of foot, and others of his heroes are commended for their swiftness. Harold son of King Canutus, was from his swiftness {g} called Harefoot; as here this man for the same reason is compared to a wild roe, which is a very swift creature, or to one of the roes that were in the field as in the original text. See **So 2:7**; one sort of which, called "kemas", is said to run as swift as a tempest {h}.

{e} Cornel. Nepos, Epaminond. l. 2. {f} podav wkuv, Iliad. 1. lin. 15. {g} Rapin's History of England, vol. 1. p. 128. {h} Aelian. Hist. de Animal, l. 14. c. 14.

2 Samuel 2:19

Ver. 19. And Asahel pursued after Abner,.... Ambitious of the glory of taking or slaying the general of the army of Israel; trusting to his swiftness, not considering that the race is not always to the swift, and that he had to do with a veteran soldier, and he a raw young man, though valiant:

and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left in following Abner; he kept his eye upon him, and pursued him closely, disregarding persons on the right or left he could have made prisoners; but those he neglected, being bent on taking Abner if possible.

2 Samuel 2:20

Ver. 20. Then Abner looked behind him,.... Perceiving one at his heels, and making haste up to him.

And said, [art] thou Asahel? for it seems he knew him personally, being well acquainted with his family:

and he answered, I [am]; so that they were very near to each other, as to discourse together, and be heard and understood by each other.

2 Samuel 2:21

Ver. 21. And Abner said unto him,.... Having a respect for him, and consulting his good, and however fearing his brother Joab should he slay him:

turn thee aside to thy right or to thy left; he does not advise him to go back, which would have been to his disgrace, having engaged in the pursuit, but to turn to the right or left, as if pursuing some other person and not Abner:

and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour; one of the common soldiers, or an attendant on Abner, a young man like himself, whom he might be able to cope with, and take him a prisoner and disarm him, when he was not a match for such an old experienced officer as he was; and this Abner seems to speak as a friend, consulting the young man's safety and his honour too.

But, Asahel would not turn aside from following him; fired with the ambition of taking him, and not content with any prey short of him; and perhaps was the more animated by what he said, as supposing it arose from fear of him.

2 Samuel 2:22

Ver. 22. And Abner said again to Asahel,.... Being loath to dispatch him:

turn thee aside from following me, wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? which was giving him fair warning, and letting him know what he must expect, if he did not desist from his pursuit:

how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother? the general of David's army, a stout valiant commander, a man of spirit and resentment, whom Abner knew full well, and that should he slay his brother, he would never be friendly with him, or look pleasantly on him; he would never forgive him, but seek ways and means to avenge his blood on him and by this it seems as if Abner was conscious to himself that he was in a wrong cause, that the kingdom was of right David's, and would be his, and he must be obliged to make peace with him; when he should stand in need of Joab as his friend, which he could not expect, if he slew his brother, nor to live in favour and friendship with him hereafter.

2 Samuel 2:23

Ver. 23. Howbeit, he refused to turn aside,.... Determined on making him his captive if possible.

Wherefore Abner, with the hinder end of the spear; he had in his hand, which seems to have had a pike at both ends; so that with the hinder end of it, next to Asahel, he thrust it at him, without turning to him: and

smote him under the fifth [rib]; the place where hang the gall and liver, as the Jewish commentators from their Talmud {i} observe. There are twelve ribs, seven of which are called true ones, and five spurious; if this was the fifth of the seven, the spear must pierce the breast {k}, and strike the seat of life, the heart and lungs; if the fifth from the eighth and first of the spurious ones, then wounding the hypochondria, it must pass to the vital bowels of the abdomen, which seems to be the case here {l}: according to some {m} this is meant of the inferior ribs, which we call the short ribs, and any of these five are called the fifth rib; and Abner must strike him in the right side, because he was behind him, and which stroke must be deadly, because he struck him through the liver:

that the spear came out behind him: the thrust was so violent that the spear went through him, and came out at his back:

and he fell down and died in the same place; he fell at once, and died on the spot immediately:

and it came to pass, [that] as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still; that is, such of David's men who were in the pursuit after the Israelites, when they came to the spot, and saw Asahel dead, they had no power to proceed in the pursuit, being so troubled and grieved at the death of him.

{i} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 49. 1. {k} "Transadigit costas, et crates pectoris ensom". Virgil. Aeneod. l. 12. ver. 506. {l} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 501. {m} Weemse's Portrait of Man, p. 24.

2 Samuel 2:24

Ver. 24. Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner,.... Or rather but Joab, &c. {n}. They stood not still as the rest, but, filled with indignation and resentment, pursued after Abner, to be avenged on him:

and the sun went down when they came to the hill of Ammah; a hill by the side of which was a pool of water, as Kimchi thinks, and from thence so called:

that [lieth] before Giah; a place near Gibeon, but nowhere after mentioned:

by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon; very likely not far from the city from which it had its name.

{n} "Autem", V. L. Tiguriue version; "sed", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Kimchi.

2 Samuel 2:25

Ver. 25. And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner,.... Either those that were with him before, who upon the battle were dispersed, but now got together again; or others of that tribe, who, hearing of the defeat of Abner, went out of the several cities after him, to strengthen his hands, and renew the fight with Joab:

and became one troop; were united together in a body, and became a regular troop:

and stood on the top of an hill; which was some advantage to them, and from whence they could take a view of Joab's army, and observe its motions.

2 Samuel 2:26

Ver. 26. Then Abner called to Joab,.... For having now a troop of men with him, he could stop with the greater safety; and being on an hill, and perhaps Joab on one opposite to him, could call to him, so as to be heard:

and said, shall the sword devour for ever? slay men, and devour their blood. See Jer 46:10. That he was not thoughtful of, nor concerned about, when he set the young men to fighting before the battle, and called it play to wound and shed the blood of each other; but now the battle going against him, he complains of the devouring sword; and though it had been employed but a few hours, it seemed long to him, a sort of an eternity:

knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? since it might issue in the death of himself, or of Joab, or of both, as it had in Asahel, or, however, in the death of a multitude of others; and which at last would cause bitter reflection in the prosecutors of the war:

how long shall it be then ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren? he pleads relation, that the men of Israel and the men of Judah were brethren; so they were by nation and religion, and therefore should not pursue one another to destruction; but who was the aggressor? It was Abner, that brought his forces against Judah; the men of David acted only on the defensive.

2 Samuel 2:27

Ver. 27. And Joab said, as God liveth,.... Which was the form of an oath, swearing by the living God:

unless thou hadst spoken; that is, these words in **2Sa 2:14**; "let the young men arise and play", that he had not given the challenge to fight:

surely then in the morning the people had gone up everyone from following his brother; they would have gone away and never fought at all; they were not desirous of shedding their blood, and following after them to slay them: thus he lays the blame upon Abner, and makes him to be the cause and beginner of the war. Some render the particle by "if", and give the sense, that if he had spoken what he last did sooner, the people would long before this time have desisted from pursuing them; for it was not from a thirst after their blood, and a desire to luke vengeance on them, that they pursued them, but to bring them to submission, and lay down their arms; for they could not in honour retreat until they desired it; but the former sense seems best, and is the general sense of the Jewish commentators.

2 Samuel 2:28

Ver. 28. So Joab blew a trumpet,.... Or caused one to be blown as a signal of a retreat:

and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more; as soon as they heard the trumpet sound, the meaning of which they understood, they stepped at once, and left off their pursuit:

neither fought they any more; that day, and perhaps no pitched battle afterwards; for none we read of, though the war continued after this a long time, and there might be often skirmishes, which greatly weakened Abner's party. See **2Sa 3:1**.

2 Samuel 2:29

Ver. 29. And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain,.... The plain of Jordan. He marched with his men all night, lest Joab should return, and pursue him, and take vengeance on him for the death of his brother:

and passed over Jordan; at one of the fords of it:

and went through all Bithron; the name of a province or country, as Jarchi, called so perhaps from its being separated from the rest of the tribes of Israel by the river Jordan; some think the mountains of Bether were in this country, **So 2:17**. From Gibeon, where the battle was fought, to Bithron, according to Bunting {o}, was twenty eight miles, the which he says was in the tribe of Gad, twenty eight miles from Jerusalem northeastward, lying between Dibon and Jordan:

and they came to Mahanaim: from whence they came, and where they had left Ishbosheth, **2Sa 2:8**. From Bithron to this place, according to the same writer {p}, was sixteen miles.

{o} Travels, &c. p. 145, 146. {p} Ibid.

2 Samuel 2:30

Ver. 30. And Joab returned from following Abner,.... It being in his commission from David to shed as little blood as he could:

and when he had gathered all the people together; who had been pursuing the Israelites, some one way and some another:

there lacked of David's servants nineteen men, and Asahel; who is particularly mentioned, because a very honourable man, valiant and courageous, a relation of David, and brother of Joab the general, and the loss of him was greater than all the rest. This has made some think that the twelve men of the servants of David were not killed in the duel, or otherwise there must be but seven slain in the battle; though that is not more strange than that in the battle with Midian not one should be slain, and, yet a terrible slaughter was made of the Midianites, Nu 31:1. So in a sharp battle between the Spartans and Arcadians, ten thousand of the latter were slain, and not one of the former {q}. Stilicho killed more than an hundred thousand of the army of Rhadagaisus, king of the Goths, without losing one of his own men, no, not so much as one wounded, as Austin affirms {r}. At the battle of Issus the Persians lost an hundred ten thousand men, and Alexander not two hundred {s}. Julius Caesar killed in the three camps of Juba, Scipio, and Labienus, ten thousand men, with the loss of fifty men only {t}. After these instances, not only the case here, but that between the Israelites and Midianites, cannot be thought incredible, for the sake of which the above are produced. This account, according to Josephus {u}, was taken the day following.

{q} Diodor. Sic. l. 15. p. 383. {r} De civilate Dei, l. 5. c. 23. {s} Curtius, l. 3. c. 11. {t} Hirtius de Bello African. c. 86. {u} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 1. sect. 3.

2 Samuel 2:31

Ver. 31. But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and Abner's men,.... Of those of the tribe of Benjamin that joined him, and of those that he brought with him from Mahanaim; so many of them were smitten, as appeared by their bodies lying on the field of battle,

[so that] three hundred and threescore men died; the number of the slain on

each side was very unequal.

2 Samuel 2:32

Ver. 32. And they took up Asahel,.... From the place where he fell; that is, Joab and Abishai, his brethren, as Josephus {w} relates; after they had buried the dead in the field of battle, they took up him:

and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which [was in] Bethlehem: not in the city of Bethlehem, but without it, on the south side of it; so says Fuller {x},

"southward, i.e. of Bethlehem, we find Asahel's sepulchre, who was buried in the grave of his father."

What was his father's name is not known, only his mother's name, Zeruiah, is mentioned in Scripture, a sister of David, and daughter of Jesse the Bethlehemite. Bethlehem was sixteen miles from Gibeon, according to Bunting {y}.

And Joab and his men went all night; not the night following the battle, but the night following the next day, after he had been to Bethlehem, and buried his brother there; wherefore, lest David should think it long before he came, he travelled all night:

and they came to Hebron at break of day; where David was, which, according to the same writer {z}, was twenty miles from Bethlehem.

{w} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 1. sect. 3. {x} Pisgah-Sight of Palestine, B. 2. c. 14. sect. 21. p. 301. {y} Travels, ut supra. (p. 145, 146.) {z} Travels, ut supra. (p. 145, 146.)

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 3

This chapter begins with the continuation of the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, 2Sa 3:1; and gives an account of the wives of David, and his sons by them, 2Sa 3:2; of a quarrel between Ishbosheth and Abner, 2Sa 3:6; and of Abner's proposal to make a league with David; but David would not see his face unless Michal his wife was returned to him, who was accordingly, 2Sa 3:12; and of the interest Abner made with the elders of Israel in favour of David, which he reported to him, and promised to make more, 2Sa 3:17; but Joab returning from a pursuit, and with great spoil, just as Abner departed, and hearing of it, chided David for letting him go, and privately sent for him back, and treacherously murdered him, 2Sa 3:22; from which murder David cleared himself and his kingdom, and for it made dreadful imprecations on Joab and his family, 2Sa 3:28; and buried Abner with great lamentation, expressing much concern for his death, and the high opinion he had of him, 2Sa 3:31.

Ver. 1. Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David,.... The recent battle, though so much in favour of David, did not, put an end to the war between him and Ishbosheth, which lasted five years longer; for it was when Ishbosheth had reigned two years that that battle was fought, and he reigned five years longer; for not till his death, and when David had reigned above seven years in Hebron, was he made king over all Israel; and during this time peace was not made, but the war carried on; though perhaps not in pitched battles, of which we no more read, but in skirmishes:

but David waxed stronger and stronger; he having the advantage in all such skirmishes, and persons continually coming over to his side from the several tribes:

and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker: being always worsted whenever they skirmished with David's men, and by continual revolts from them. This is reckoned an emblem of the kingdoms of Christ and antichrist, the one increasing more and more, as it has and will do, and the other decreasing, and before long will be consumed; and of the two parties in a regenerate man, grace and indwelling sin, the one as to its exercise growing stronger and stronger, and the other as to its influence on the outward conversation weaker and weaker.

2 Samuel 3:2

Ver. 2. And unto David were sons born in Hebron,.... He was married before he came there, had wives in his state of exile, but had no children by them there, at least no sons; if any, only daughters:

and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; who being mentioned first, and her son his firstborn, seems to have been his wife before be took Abigail; he had not much comfort of this firstborn son of his; see 2Sa 13:1.

2 Samuel 3:3

Ver. 3. And the second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite,.... That is: who had been the wife of Nabal. This son's name is called Daniel, **1Ch 3:1**; and was the first name he had, and which his father gave him, because as if he should say, "God hath judged me", and pleaded the cause of his reproach from Nabal, 1Sa 25:39; but why he should be called Chileab is not easy to say; the name is commonly thought to signify "like unto his father", or "all father": had all the features of his father, and was exceedingly like him; the Jews have a fabulous story concerning this {w}, not worth relating:

and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; in 1Sa 27:8 we read of David's invading the land of the Geshurites; and the Jews say {x} that he then took the daughter of this king captive, and she being a beautiful woman married her, after made a proselyte according to the law in De 21:10; but it should be observed that David slew all the women of that country, and left not any alive; and besides that lay to the south of Judah, whereas this Geshur, of which Talmai was king, was a part of Syria, 2Sa 15:8; and lay to the north of the land of Israel; and with this king David hereby entered into an alliance, to strengthen his interest against Ishbosheth in those parts; of the trouble he met with from Absalom, see 2Sa 13:1, &c. contrary to the expectations he had raised when he gave him the name of Absalom, or Leabsalom, as in **1Ch 3:2**; that is, one given "for his father's peace".

{w} Jarchi, Kimchi, & Abarbinel in loc. {x} Tanchuma apud Abarbinel in loc.

2 Samuel 3:4

Ver. 4. And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith,.... The same that usurped the throne before his father's death, to anticipate Solomon, and died by his order, **1Ki 1:5**;

and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; of whom we read nowhere else.

2 Samuel 3:5

Ver. 5. And the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife,.... Who also is not spoken of in any other place; only, in a like chronological account as the former, it is remarked that the mother of this only is called David's wife; the reason of which is supposed to be, either because she was a person of no note, and had nothing else to distinguish her; but the same may be said of the two foregoing; or because she was his beloved wife, his heifer, as her name signifies; hence the Jews {y} take her to be Michal his first wife, whom he greatly loved, and who, though she had no children after her contempt of David for playing before the ark, unto the day of her death, yet might have before: but it should be observed, that as yet she was not returned to David in Hebron; and when she was returned, did not seem to continue there long enough to have a son there; and besides, being his first wife, would not be reckoned last; but still more foreign is another notion of the Jews {z}, that she was Saul's widow, who though she might not be married to another might be married to a king, as David was; and this they suppose receives some confirmation from 2Sa 12:8; but after all it may be this phrase "David's wife", as some have observed, by a figure the rhetoricians call "zeugma", or "hypozeugma", is to be joined to everyone of the women before mentioned, **2Sa 3:2**, who were his wives, and so called to distinguish them from his concubines, by whom he had sons also. Polygamy, or plurality of wives, which David gave into, is no favourable part of his character.

{y} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 1. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 77. F. {z} In Kimchi & Ben Gersom in loc.

2 Samuel 3:6

Ver. 6. And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David,.... As long as that continued, as it did until the following quarrel happened between Ishbosheth and Abner:

that Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul; or was strongly in the interest of that house, and used his utmost endeavours to support and confirm it.

2 Samuel 3:7

Ver. 7. And Saul had a concubine, whose name [was] Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah,.... By whom he had two sons, 2Sa 21:8. Josephus {a} calls her father's name Sibathus:

and [Ishbosheth] said to Abner; though the word "Ishbosheth" is not in the text, it is rightly supplied; for no other can be supposed to speak:

wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine? and defiled her; though perhaps it was not so much the act of uncleanness that so much offended him, or the dishonour reflected on him and his family thereby, as it discovered an ambitious view in Abner to get the kingdom into his own hands, to which this was the leading step; see **1Ki 2:22**. Whether Abner was really guilty of this sin or no is not easy to determine; though, by his not absolutely denying it, it looks as if it was not merely a jealousy of Ishbosheth, or a false report made unto him; though, especially if he was not fully satisfied of it, it would have been his wisdom to have said nothing of it to him, since his continuance on the throne so much depended on him.

{a} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 1. sect. 4.

2 Samuel 3:8

Ver. 8. Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ishbosheth,.... If false he had a good deal of reason for it; and if true, he thought he deserved better at his hands, than to be reproved for and upbraided with what he might think was a very small fault, and might easily be connived at, and especially in one that had been so serviceable to him:

and said, [am] I a dog's head; such a mean, vile, contemptible person with thee, as if no better than a dog, and as useless and as unserviceable as a dead dog, the head of a dog cut off; see 1Sa 24:14 **2Sa 9:8**; or am I esteemed and to be treated as a head of dogs, a keeper of a pack of hounds, and not as a general of the armies of Israel? so Jarchi and others; but it seems rather to respect the filthy nature of a dog, that will couple with any; and so the sense is, am I such a filthy lustful creature that care not with whom I lie, no more, than a dog?

which against Judah do show kindness to the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends; who in opposition to the tribe of Judah, which alone abode by David, had shown respect to the family of Saul, and all his friends, by his close attachment to Ishbosheth:

and have not delivered thee into the hand David; when it was in his power to have done it many a tithe:

that thou chargest me today with a fault concerning this woman? he neither denies nor owns the charge, and yet, by his not denying it, tacitly owns it; though, by his way of speaking, he suggests as if it was no fault at all, at least a very trifling one, and such as ought not to have been mentioned to him, considering the services he had done to Ishbosheth and his family.

2 Samuel 3:9

Ver. 9. So do God to Abner, and more also,.... He wishes the worst of evils to himself, such as he cared not to name; but left them to be supposed what he meant as utter ruin and destruction of himself, soul and body:

except as the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him; meaning if he did not do that David, which God had sworn should be done, namely, what follows, the translation of the kingdom to him; by which it appears that Abner knew of the promise and oath of God respecting this matter; and therefore acted against his conscience, in setting up Ishbosheth on the throne; which he knew would not prosper, and that he was fighting against God; which shows what a hardened wicked creature he was, and how far ambition, and being thought to be of consequence, will carry a man.

2 Samuel 3:10

Ver. 10. To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul,.... Which was what the Lord had sworn to do, 1Sa 15:28; and which Abner now threatens to do, insolently taking that to himself which belonged to the Lord, and as if he could not do it without him:

and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah; over the one as well as over the other; for it was set over Judah already:

from Dan even unto Beersheba; which were the utmost borders of the land of Israel, from north to south, and so includes the whole.

2 Samuel 3:11

Ver. 11. And he could not answer Abner a word again,.... That is, he would not, he durst not; otherwise, if it was fact he charged him with, he could have insisted on the truth of it, and aggravated the crime and scandal of it; and observed it to him, that the kindness he had shown him was no excuse for it; but such things, though he would, he durst not say:

because he feared him; he had the army at his command, and could dethrone him when he pleased; and it has been the fate of greater men than Ishbosheth to be awed by their generals, and even David himself; see **2Sa 3:39**.

2 Samuel 3:12

Ver. 12. And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf,.... On his own account, and not on the account of Ishbosheth, or the people of Israel; but to obtain terms for himself, or in his own name, as representing him and standing in his stead; or secretly, as Kimchi explains it, unknown to Ishbosheth, or the people of Israel. The Targum is,

"out of his place;"

he sent them from the place where he was, from Mahanaim:

saying, whose [is] the land? the land of Israel, is it not thine, David? verily it is; to whom does it belong but unto thee, to whom the Lord has given it? not to any of Saul's posterity: this he ordered the messengers to say in the first place, in order to ingratiate himself to David, and gain his messengers an audience. The Targum is,

"I swear by him that made the earth;"

so Jarchi says, it is an oath by him whose the earth is, even by the living God, whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof:

saying [also], make thy league with me; he desired to enter into a covenant of friendship with him, that everything that had passed might be forgiven and forgotten:

and, behold, my hand [shall be] with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee: he promises on his part to do his utmost to bring all Israel under his government and to obedience to him.

2 Samuel 3:13

Ver. 13. And he said, well, I will make a league with thee,.... He accepted of the offer, he was ready and willing to enter into a covenant of friendship with him, and forgive all past offences:

but one thing I require of thee; as the condition of this covenant:

that is, thou shall not see my face; be admitted into my presence, or have any mark of my favour and respect:

except thou first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face; he insisted on it that Michal, Saul's daughter, and his wife, should be brought along with him, and presented to him; this was the preliminary to the league and covenant; if this was not complied with, the proposal would not be attended to. This shows the great affection David retained for his first wife, though he had had six since, see **2Sa 3:2**, and though she had lived with another man, 1Sa 25:44; as also his great regard to the honour of Saul's family, that one of them might share with him in the grandeur of the kingdom; though this also might be a piece of policy in him, to gain the friends of Saul's family to him.

2 Samuel 3:14

Ver. 14. And David sent messengers to Ishbosheth, Saul's son,.... When Abner's messengers returned to him, and acquainted him with the condition of David's entering into a league with him, it is highly probable that Abner sent them or others to David, to let him know that he could not do this of himself; that it was advisable for him to write to Ishbosheth, whose sister she was, and demand her of him; and that then he would use his interest with Ishbosheth to grant it, and this method David took:

saying, deliver [me] my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines; two arguments he made use of to enforce his demand; one is, that it was his wife he required, to whom he had a right, and no other man; and the other is, that he had purchased her at a great expense, at the risk of his life, in slaying an hundred Philistines, whose foreskins he paid in for her at the instance of Saul; he mentions but one hundred, though he gave two hundred as her dowry, no more being required than one hundred; see 1Sa 18:25. Josephus very wrongly says six hundred {b}; the Syriac and Arabic have here two hundred.

{b} Antiqu. l 7. c. 1. sect. 4.

2 Samuel 3:15

Ver. 15. And Ishbosheth sent and took her from [her] husband,.... Her second husband, to whom Saul had given her, 1Sa 25:44;

[even] from Phaltiel the son of Laish; he is called Phalti in 1Sa 25:44.

2 Samuel 3:16

Ver. 16. And her husband went with her along weeping behind her,.... Because of his great affection to her, unwilling to part with her, but forced to it at the command of the king her brother:

to Bahurim; a city in the tribe of Benjamin, 2Sa 19:16; perhaps the same with Almon, Jos 21:18; these two words being of the same signification; and the Targum has it hero Almuth; so Alemeth in **1Ch 6:60**. It seems to be the same Josephus {c} calls Bachures, and says it was not far from Jerusalem. Bunting {d} says it was something more than a mile towards the northeast, and at this time is a fair castle strongly fortified, standing in a high place, and in the valley near it, at the stone Bohan, Jos 15:6; see 2Sa 17:18;

then said Abner to him, go, return, and he returned; by which it appears that Abner came with her to introduce her to David, without whom he was not to see his face; and he did not choose her husband should go with her any further, and was at his orders obliged to go back, who otherwise would have gladly accompanied her further still, through his great affection for her.

{c} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 7. {d} Travels, p. 144.

2 Samuel 3:17

Ver. 17. And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel,.... Had a conference with the chiefs of the several tribes about the affairs of the kingdom:

saying, ye sought for David in time past [to be] king over you; that is, at the death of Saul, and not before; for it was pretty generally known throughout the kingdom that David was anointed by Samuel and Saul himself had declared that he knew the kingdom would come to him; so that upon his death it was the general expectation and desire of the people that the government would devolve upon him, as it doubtless would, if Abner had not set up one of Saul's house, and persuaded the Israelites to own him their king.

2 Samuel 3:18

Ver. 18. Now then do [it],.... Make him your king, and I shall no longer oppose it as I have done:

for the Lord hath spoken of David; concerning his being king, and the saviour of his people Israel:

saying, by the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies; and which, though where recorded in so many words, yet was the sense of the promise of making him king, and the design of his unction; and besides they might have been spoken to Samuel, though not written; and which he might report, and so might pass from one to another to be generally known.

2 Samuel 3:19

Ver. 19. And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin,.... Of the inhabitants of the tribe of Benjamin, of which tribe he was, and among whom he had the greatest influence; and with whom it was necessary to take some pains, because of their attachment to the family of Saul, which was of that tribe; and being near to that of Judah, might give David a good deal of trouble, if they were not won over to him:

and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron; having sounded the elders of Israel, and won their thoughts about the change of government, and found them well disposed to David, and had prevailed upon them to consent to make him king, and had gained the tribe of Benjamin on his side, went and reported to David the success he had:

all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin; how agreeable it was to the elders of Israel, and particularly to the tribe of Benjamin, to have David king over them.

2 Samuel 3:20

Ver. 20. So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him,.... Before he went privately to him, and conferred with him, but now, having gained so many of the Israelites in favour of David, he appeared more publicly and brought perhaps some of the principal of the nation with film, to join in the league and covenant to be made:

and David made Abner and the men that [were] with him a feast; not only in honour to them, as great personages, especially Abner, and as expressive of reconciliation; but as a token of the covenant they were entering into, and for the confirmation of it; it being usual to have feasts when covenants were made; see Ge 26:28.

2 Samuel 3:21

Ver. 21. And Abner said to David, I will arise and go,.... Into the several parts of the land of Israel:

and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king; the princes of the several tribes, and the elders of the people, their heads and principal men:

that they may make a league with thee; come into the league and covenant now made with Abner, and those with him:

and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth: which he supposed reached to all the people of the house of Israel and of Judah, though David had not expressed any eager and impatient desire of government, but waited the

Lord's time to be put into the possession of the whole kingdom of Israel:

and David sent Abner away, and he went in peace; with inward satisfaction of mind, pleased that things were so well settled and adjusted to the content of all parties, and with outward satiety of body, no insults or attempts being made upon him by any of David's men; which perhaps would not have been the case if Joab had been at court, as may be concluded from what follows.

2 Samuel 3:22

Ver. 22. And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from [pursuing] a troop,.... A troop of robbers, that made an incursion into the land, taking the advantage of a civil war between Israel and Judah; such as the Edomites, Amalekites, and especially the Philistines; which Joab hearing of went out in pursuit of them, and overtook them:

and brought in a great spoil with them; which they took from them:

but Abner [was] not with David in Hebron: when Joab and his army entered the city with their booty:

for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace; he had just dismissed him, and he was gone off safely.

2 Samuel 3:23

Ver. 23. When Joab and all the host that [was] with him were come,.... To Hebron, or rather to David's court; for their coming to the city is before mentioned; this must be understood not of the whole army, of all the common soldiers, but of the chief officers, who with Joab came to court, to wait upon David, and report their success:

they told Joab, saying, Abner the son, of Ner came to the king; some of the courtiers informed him of it, who knew it would not be very agreeable to him:

and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace: instead of seizing him, and laying him in a prison as his enemy, he has let him go with all the marks of friendship and good will.

2 Samuel 3:24

Ver. 24. Then Joab came to the king,.... To the apartment where he was; perhaps he was told the above at his first entering into the king's palace, by some in waiting, before he came to the king, which filled him with wrath, so that he came to him in a passion:

and said to him, what hast thou done? which was very insolent in a subject to say to his prince:

behold, Abner came unto thee; I have been credibly informed of it, and am assured it is a fact which cannot be denied; he represents it as if he had done a wrong thing to admit him to come to him; but perhaps the great fault was that he had let him go:

why [is] it [that] thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone? or "going, [is] gone" {e}; is clean gone off, when he ought to have been laid hold on as a traitor, and put in irons.

{e} Kwlh Klyw "et abiit eundo", Pagninus, Montanus.

2 Samuel 3:25

Ver. 25. Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner,.... Thou canst not be ignorant what a cunning deceitful man he is, nor of his designs; or dost thou not know? art thou ignorant? so read the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, with an interrogation:

that he came to deceive thee: with false hopes, or to lead into wrong measures with an intention to involve and ruin him:

and to know thy going out, and coming in; the affairs of his court, the secrets of his government, to observe his conduct and behaviour, and all his actions, and improve them against him:

and to know all that thou doest; he suggests that he came not as a friend, but as a spy, and therefore ought to have been taken up, and detained, and not dismissed. This Joab said to set David against him, fearing, if he should be received into favour, he would be a rival of his; and besides his breast was full of revenge against him for the death of his brother.

2 Samuel 3:26

Ver. 26. And when Joab was come out from David,.... Which perhaps he did at once, as soon as ever he had spoken his mind, and flew out of the room in a great passion, not waiting for the king's answer, since we read of none returned; though it may be the king disdained to give him one, or cared not to confer with him while in his passion, until it subsided; or chose not to provoke him more, for it is plain he had great power over him; which generals of armies at this time very much assumed, see **2Sa 3:39**;

he sent messengers after Abner; in the name of the king, as Abarbinel rightly supposes, and so Josephus {f}; for otherwise it can hardly be thought he would have returned on a message from Joab only, who he knew bore him ill will:

which brought him again from the well of Sirah; which might have its name from the thorns and briers that grew about it. Josephus {g} calls it Besira, and says it was twenty furlongs or two and an half miles from Hebron:

but David [knew] it not; that Joab had sent messengers in his name after Abner to fetch him back; it was not done by his order, with his consent or knowledge; this is observed, to clear David from any concern in the death of Abner, as follows.

{f} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 1. sect. 5. {g} Ibid.

2 Samuel 3:27

Ver. 27. And when Abner was returned to Hebron,.... Alone, and not the twenty men with him; not to David's court, but just to the city, to the gate of it:

Joab took him aside in the gate: where he was waiting for him, and met him; this was a public place, where people were continually passing and repassing, and where courts of judicature used to be held; wherefore Abner might think himself safe here with Joab, and have no suspicion at all of his design, and shows how fearless Joab was of God or men:

to speak with him quietly; peaceably, in a friendly manner, as all his gestures towards him showed; so that Abner made no difficulty of turning aside with him, supposing he had something to communicate to him from the king, which he had forgot:

and smote him under the fifth [rib], that he died; in the same place that Abner had smote his brother, of which see **2Sa 2:23**; and this he did:

for the blood of Asahel his brother; for Abner's shedding his brother's blood; but this was not the only reason, and perhaps not the chief; but, as Josephus {h} observes, because he was fearful if Abner was received into the friendship of the king, he would be preferred unto him, and take his place as general of the army, as being an older and more experienced officer; so Procopius Gazaeus, and Theodoret.

{h} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 1. sect. 5.

2 Samuel 3:28

Ver. 28. And afterward, when David heard [it],.... That Joab had sent to fetch Abner back, and that he had stabbed him in the gate of the city, and he was dead; it was some time after it was done that the news of it was brought to David; this circumstance is observed, the more to clear the king from any concern in this affair:

he said; in a public manner, in open court, before all his princes; he called God to witness, and, as Josephus {i} says, stretching out his right hand to God, he cried aloud:

I and my kingdom [are] guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner; he was sensible it would be known that Abner had been with him, and that Joab his general had killed him; and therefore it might be suspected that he had an hand in it, and that it was done by his order, with his privy council; and therefore, to purge him and them from it, he made this public declaration, that neither he nor his council knew anything of it; and that it was not done with their knowledge and consent, and by their order, but through the resentment of a single person; and therefore hoped that no man would impute the shedding of this blood unto them, or that God would punish them for it; and he was the rather led to make this public declaration, because he knew that the death of Abner in this way would be resented by the friends of Saul's family, and be an obstruction to the union of the two kingdoms, which it was known Abner was endeavouring to bring about.

{i} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 1. sect. 6.

2 Samuel 3:29

Ver. 29. Let it rest on the head of Joab,.... That is, the blood of Abner, who was the shedder of it; let the guilt of it be charged to him, and let punishment for it be inflicted on him:

and on all his father's house; on Abishai his brother, and other relations that might be privy to the death of Abner, and advising to it, and ready to assist in it if necessary:

and let there not fail from the house of Joab; let there be always in his family, and of his seed, one or other of the persons described as follows:

one that hath an issue; a gonorrhoea, which was reckoned infamous, and very impure, according to the Jewish law, and rendered persons unfit for society; see Le 15:1;

or that is a leper; whose disease was very loathsome and infectious, and shut him out of the company of men; see Le 13:1;

or that leaneth on a staff; being blind, as Aquila renders the word; or through weakness of body, not being able to walk without one; or through some disease of the feet, as the Jewish writers generally understand it; and R. Isaiah interprets it of the gout particularly: the word for "staff" is rendered "spindle", Pr 31:19; and to this sense it is rendered here in, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and then the meaning is, let his posterity, or some of them, be so poor, that they shall be obliged to get their livelihood in so mean a way as by spinning; or let them be of such an effeminate disposition, as be more fit to handle the spindle, and do the, work of women, than to use the sword:

or that falleth on the sword; not by it honourably in the field of battle, but cowardly destroying themselves with it:

or that lacketh bread; and is obliged to beg it: all which David might say, not by a spirit of prophecy, but in a passion; and to show with what horror he resented the action, and how detestable it was to him, and how far it was for him to have any concern in it: but though it was a very wicked action in Joab to murder Abner in this manner, and for the reasons he did; yet it was a just vengeance from the Lord on Abner for fighting against God, and acting against the dictates of his own conscience; for his rebellion against David, and perfidy to Ishbosheth, and for having been the cause of much bloodshed in Israel.

2 Samuel 3:30

Ver. 30. So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner,.... For though it was only Joab that gave him the thrust of which he died, Abishai was in the secret, and was consenting and advising to his death, and so an accessory to it; and might be present, ready to assist in it, if occasion required; and so Josephus {k} expressly says, that Abishai his brother was with him when he drew his sword, and smote him:

because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle: which was no just reason at all; his blood was shed in war, this in peace, in cold blood, and under the guise of friendship; that was shed with reluctance, and after fair warning, and in defence of himself; but this wilfully in Joab, unawares to Abner, and in great deceit and hypocrisy; see **1Ki 2:5**.

{k} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 1. sect. 6.)

2 Samuel 3:31

Ver. 31. And David said to Joab, and to all the people that [were] with him,.... To his whole court, Joab being present: for he did not flee, nor was he laid hold on in order to be brought to justice; which shows how great his power was, and that he was too hard for David, as in **2Sa 3:39**; however this he did, he enjoined his whole court, and Joab also, to express public mourning on this account:

rend your clothes and gird you with sackcloth; which were expressions of mourning used on various occasions, and on account of the dead, and which with the Heathens were carried to a greater excess, even to the tearing of their flesh,

and mourn before Abner; before his corpse, as carried to the grave, when it was usual to make great lamentations: see **Ac 8:2**;

and King David [himself] followed the bier; or "bed" {l} on which his body was laid, and carried to the grave. On these the rich and noble among the Greeks and Romans were carried, and those of the meaner sort on biers {n}; and so with the Jews; See Gill on "Lu 7:14"; some of which were gilded with gold, and were made of ivory, and had ivory feet {o}; that of Herod's was all of gold, inlaid with precious stones, and the body covered with purple, and followed by his sons and kindred, the soldiers going before armed, and their leaders following {p}; the bier or bed with the Romans was sometimes carried by six persons, sometimes by eight or more {q}. It was not usual for kings, as the Jews say {r}, to attend a funeral, to go out of the doors of their palace after their own dead, and much less others; but David did this to satisfy the people, and to root out of their mind all suspicion of his having any hand in Abner's death; and to show that he was not slain by his will, and with his consent.

{l} hjmh thv klinhv, Sept. "lectum", Piscator. {n} Salmuth. ad Pancirol. par. 1. tit. 62. p. 343. Kirchman. de Funer. Roman. l. 2. c. 9. p. 375. {o} Alstorph. de lect. vet. c. 19. p. 149. {p} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 33. sect. 9. {q} Kirchman. ut supra. (de Funer. Roman. l. 2. c. 9. p. 375.) {r} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 3. Maimon in Hilchot Ebel. c. 7. sect. 7. David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 119. 4.

2 Samuel 3:32

Ver. 32. And they buried Abner in Hebron,.... According to the Jewish account of places of burial {s}, he was buried in the midst of the city, though burying places were generally without; and so Fuller {t} places this in his map; whether the cave of Machpelah, which was near Hebron, was now used for a burying place, is not certain:

and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner; made a great outcry, a loud lamentation, so as to be heard by all the people; and which no doubt was real and hearty, and not done merely with political views:

and all the people wept; through concern for the death of Abner, especially on account of the manner in which it was, and in imitation of the king, and being affected with his tears and cries.

{s} Cippi Heb. p. 8. {t} Pisgah-Sight, &c. in the Map of Judah.

2 Samuel 3:33

Ver. 33. And the king lamented over Abner,.... Delivered an elegy or funeral oration, which he had composed on this occasion, as Josephus {u} suggests: for he had cried and wept before, but now he expressed something as follows:

and said, died Abner as a fool dieth? the meaning of the interrogation is, he did not; the Targum is

"did Abner die as wicked men die?"

no, he did not; he did not die for any wickedness he had been guilty of; he did not die as a malefactor, whose crime has been charged and proved in open court, and sentence of condemnation pronounced on him righteously for it; but he died without anything being laid to his charge, and much less proved, and without judge or jury; he was murdered in a clandestine, insidious, and deceitful manner; so the word "fool" is often taken in Scripture for a wicked man, especially in the book of Proverbs; the Septuagint version leaves the word untranslated,

"died Abner according to the death of Nabal?"

no; but it could hardly be thought that David would mention the name of any particular person on such an occasion.

{u} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 1. sect. 6.)

2 Samuel 3:34

Ver. 34. Thy hands [were] not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters,.... As malefactors are when they are taken up for any crime, and especially when proved upon them, and condemned for it, and brought forth to be executed. This was not his case, and had he been aware of the design against him, as his hands and feet were at liberty, he might have defended himself; or if he found he had too many to deal with, might have made use of his feet and fled:

as a man falleth before wicked men, [so] fellest thou; as a man being before bloodthirsty and deceitful men, falls before them, through treachery and deceit, privately and unawares, so fell Abner before Joab and Abishai; this David said in the presence of Joab, and before all the people, to declare the plain fact how it was, to express his detestation of it, and to show he had no hand in it; and Joab must be an hardened creature to stand at the grave of Abner, and hear all this, and not be affected with it:

and all the people wept again over him; over Abner, being laid in his grave; they had wept before, but hearing this funeral oration delivered by the king in such moving language, and in such a mournful tone, it drew tears afresh from them.

2 Samuel 3:35

Ver. 35. And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day,.... The custom was to bury in the daytime, and after the funeral was over to provide and send in food to the relations of the deceased, and come and eat with them; as was also the usage with the Greeks and Romans {w}; See Gill on "Jer 16:5" and
See Gill on "Jer 16:7"; and kings themselves used to attend those feasts; for the Jews say {x},

"when they cause him (the king) to eat, all the people sit upon the ground, and he sits upon the bed;"

but in this case David refused to eat with them:

David sware, saying, so do God to me, and more also; may the greatest evils, and such as I care not to mention, befall me; and even more and worse than I can think of and express:

if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down; perhaps the funeral was in the morning, as funerals with the Jews generally now are; for otherwise if it was now towards evening, his abstinence from food till that time would not have seemed so much, nor required much notice, and still less an oath.

{w} Vid. Kirchman. de Funer. Roman, l. 4. c. 5. & 6. {x} Misn. ut supra. (Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 3.) David de Pomis ut supra. (Lexic. fol. 119. 4.)

2 Samuel 3:36

Ver. 36. And all the people took notice [of it],.... Not only of his oath, that he would not eat food till evening, but of his whole conduct at the funeral of Abner; the sorrow he expressed for his death, and the oration he made on account of it, in which he pretty severely reflected on his murderer:

and it pleased them; that he showed such a concern for his death, and that it was a clear case he had no hand in it:

as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people; what he did at this time, burying Abhor with so much pomp and ceremony; and indeed he had so much the hearts of the people, and such a share in their affections, and they had such an high opinion of him, that all that he did in public and private affairs they reckoned well done; they were highly approved of by them, such an interest had he in them.

2 Samuel 3:37

Ver. 37. For all the people and all Israel understood that day,.... Not the people of Judah only, but of Israel also, to whom the knowledge of these things came; they knew and were satisfied by his conduct and behaviour, by his words and actions:

that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner; it was not by the counsel or advice of the king, as the Targum; it was without his knowledge and consent, was contrary to his mind and will; that he had no manner of concern in it, and that if it had been in his power he would have prevented it.

2 Samuel 3:38

Ver. 38. And the king said unto his servants,.... His courtiers, giving a reason why he mourned as he did; or "had said" {w}, and so is a reason why the people concluded, and were fully satisfied, he had no hand in his death; but the first is best, because what follows was said not to the people at the grave, but to his servants at court:

know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? a "prince", being of the royal family, his father was Saul's uncle, and he his own cousin; a "great" man, being general of the army, a very valiant and skilful commander, a man of great wisdom and parts. David says nothing of his grace and virtue, only of his grandeur, his high birth and civil excellencies; he praises him in what he was commendable, and proceeds no further; and this was sufficient to show there was just cause of mourning on civil accounts; and this they might easily know and perceive, that the fall or death of such a man, which had that day happened in Israel, was a public loss, and matter of lamentation; and the rather as he was employing all his excellent talents in civil affairs, and all his interest in the people of Israel, to unite them to Judah, and bring them under the government of David.

{w} rmawy "nam dixerat", Junius & Tremellius.

2 Samuel 3:39

Ver. 39. And I [am] this day weak, though anointed king,.... Which seems to be given as a reason, or for an excuse why he did not inflict just punishment upon the murderer, according to the law of God, because he was "weak"; not in body or mind, but with respect to the kingdom, that was like a tender branch, or in its infant state; and great care and caution were to be used that it was not overturned: he was a king by unction, not by birth; a son of the late king was yet up against him, and was possessed of the far greater part of the kingdom; he was indeed anointed by Samuel to be king over all Israel; but as yet he was not put into the possession of the kingdom he was anointed to; he was anointed and made king over Judah, and invested with the office of king there, and settled in it; and yet his power was not very great there, for as follows:

and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, [be] too hard for me; his sister's sons, Joab and Abishai, they were a check upon him; he could not do what he would, their influence was so great, both in the court and in the camp; the one was general of the army, and the other a considerable officer in it, and both variant men, and very respectable among the people, for their achievements in war, and the success they had; so that they were very much out of the reach of David to bring them to justice, without shaking his kingdom; and therefore in point of prudence he thought it best to connive at this fact until he was more established in the kingdom. Whatever may be said for this conduct, it is certain he was too dilatory, and which did not sit easy upon his mind, and therefore gave it in charge to Solomon before his death not to suffer Joab to go to his grave in peace, **1Ki 2:5**. Some take these words, "weak" and "hard", in a different sense, that David was weak or "tender" {x}, as it may be rendered, tenderhearted, of a merciful disposition, and therefore spared Abner when he was in his hands, though he had done him so much harm, who was the Lord's anointed; but these men, his sister's sons, were of cruel tempers, more unmerciful than he, and therefore slew him; but the first sense seems best:

the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness; which may be considered either as an imprecation of evil on Joab, or a prediction, that sooner or later righteous judgment would be rendered to him by the Lord; with whom he leaves it to take vengeance on him, satisfying himself with this for the present, that though it was not in his power to do it, the Lord would in his own time and way: but after all that can be said in favour of David, he seems to have been too much in fear of men, and too distrustful of the power and promise of God to establish him in his kingdom, and was too negligent of public justice; which had it been exercised, might have prevented other sins, as the murder of Ishbosheth, to which the authors of it might be encouraged by this lenity.

{x} Kr "tener", Pagninus, Montanus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 4

This chapter relates the concern the death of Abner gave to Ishbosheth, and the men of Israel, **2Sa 4:1**; the murder of Ishbosheth by two of his captains, who cut off his head, and brought it to David, **2Sa 4:2**; by whom they were rewarded according to their deserts, he putting them to death, and exposing their bodies to shame and ignominy, **2Sa 4:9**.

Ver. 1. And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron,.... By Saul's son is meant Ishbosheth, to whom tidings were soon brought of the death of Abner his general, and that he died in Hebron, where David his rival reigned, and was there murdered by Joab the general of his army:

his hands were feeble: not only in a natural sense, being quite dispirited at hearing such news; but in a civil sense, having lost his main support and strength, he being president of his council, and commander of his forces, and in whom he placed all his confidence: and if he knew nothing of his being at Hebron, it must surprise him to hear of his dying there; from whence he might conclude, that since he was there without his knowledge, it could not be in his favour, some plot was forming, and schemes laying with his rival to dethrone him; or if he knew of it, and understood it in this light, that he was endeavouring to make peace between him and David, and upon advantageous terms to him, of which now he might entertain no hopes; he was dispirited, and might conclude that Joab was against any terms at peace, and therefore had dispatched him:

and all the Israelites were troubled; at the loss of so great a man in their kingdom, and of whose designs to unite them to Judah, and put them under the government David, they were not ignorant; but now were in the utmost confusion, not knowing what step to take, and whom to send to carry on the treaty, in which Abner was concerned; and whether it would be safe for any to go upon it, since he who had the management of it was murdered, and no justice done on the murderer, and therefore might question David's sincerity and uprightness in this affair; these things greatly distressed and embarrassed them for the present, but Providence opened a way for their future establishment and prosperity.

2 Samuel 4:2

Ver. 2. And Saul's son had two men [that were] captains of bands,.... Of troops in the army, or of guards about the person of Ishbosheth son of Saul:

the name of the one [was] Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin; so that these men were brethren in nature, as well as in iniquity; they had the same father, who is described by his name and city, and their names are expressly mentioned and recorded to their infamy; and they were not only the servants of Ishbosheth, who had commissions under him, but were of the same tribe with him; all which is observed as an aggravation of their crime:

for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin; the place from whom Rimmon their father is denominated, and where he dwelt, as well as Gittaim, where they had sojourned, as in **2Sa 4:3**. This place, Beeroth, originally belonged to the Gibeonites, and fell to the lot of Benjamin at the division of the land, see **Jos 9:17**.

2 Samuel 4:3

Ver. 3. And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until that day. At the death of Saul, when many of the Israelites deserted their cities, and left them to the Philistines, 1Sa 31:7; and so the inhabitants of Beeroth forsook their city, which was near the Philistines, and went to Gittaim, a city in the same tribe, though a little further off, see Ne 11:33.

2 Samuel 4:4

Ver. 4. And Jonathan, Saul's son,.... His eldest son, who died at the same time with him:

had a son [that was] lame of [his] feet; of both feet, which were broken or bruised by a fall, as later related: and

he was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel: that is, when the tidings of their death came from Jezreel, the place where the battle was fought in which they died, to Gibeah, and the royal palace there; so that he was now twelve years of age:

and his nurse took him up and fled; fearing the Philistines would come thither and destroy the family of Saul; and this child being the son of Jonathan, the eldest son of Saul, was by birth heir to the crown, his father and grandfather being both dead, and which might make the nurse the more solicitous to save his life by flight:

and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame; in her hurry and fright he dropped out of her arms, and had some bone broken or dislocated, which was never rightly replaced, or had some contusion, of which he was never cured,

and his name [was] Mephibosheth, called Meribbaal, **1Ch 8:34**; of the change of such names See Gill on "2Sa 2:8". This story of Mephibosheth, and of his nurse's flight with him, and what happened upon it, is here inserted on occasion of the flight of the Beerothites, **2Sa 4:3**; but chiefly to observe in what condition Saul's family now was, and what encouraged the murderers of Ishbosheth to be guilty of the crime they were, since when he was taken off, there was none but this lame child of that family; and as the removal of Ishbosheth would be of so much service to David, they doubted not but it would be very acceptable to him, and they should be greatly rewarded and honoured; and which they might do with the greatest safety, since the nearest kinsman and avenger of blood was so young, and lame of both his feet: or rather this is mentioned to show that Ishbosheth had no right to the throne, his eldest brother's son being living; so that those murderers might think they did the right thing, to take away the life of an usurper.

2 Samuel 4:5

Ver. 5. And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went,.... From Gittaim, where they were sojourners, 2Sa 4:3; or from the army, where they had commissions, wherever it was:

and came, about the heat of the day; the middle of the day, at noon, as follows:

to the house of Ishbosheth; which was at Mahanaim:

who lay on a bed at noon; as was usual in hot countries, especially for great personages, as kings; so the Targum,

"and he was sleeping the sleep of kings;"

or at a time when king's usually slept; though this is remarked by some as an instance and proof of the sluggishness and inactivity of this prince, who left the management of all affairs to Abner his general, and gave himself to sloth and sensuality; which, when indulged, bring ruin on princes and their kingdoms.

2 Samuel 4:6

Ver. 6. And they came thither into the midst of the house,.... They not only came unto it, but entered into it, and went into the inmost part of it; the guards being asleep also perhaps, or not on duty, so that there were none to obstruct them; or if there were, they deceived them, since they went in

[as though] they would have fetched wheat; out of the king's granaries, for the payment and support of the soldiers under them, who in those days were paid in corn, as were the Roman soldiers {y} in later times; and these granaries might not only be in the king's house, but near his bedchamber; for in those ancient ages of simplicity there was not such grandeur in the courts of princes as now; the Targum is, "as sellers of wheat,"

in the guise and habit of such persons, pretending they came to sell wheat to the king's purveyors, who were at the granaries; or, as others interpret it, they went in along with the wheat merchants as if they belonged to them, and so found their way to the king's bedchamber:

and smote him under the fifth [rib]; See Gill on "2Sa 2:23";

and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped; they got out of the palace after they had committed the murder undiscovered and unsuspected.

{y} Vid. Valtrinum de re militar. Roman. l. 3. c. 15. p. 236.

2 Samuel 4:7

Ver. 7. For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber,.... This is repeated to give a more particular account of the murder; though Abarbinel thinks they went in twice; when they went in first they smote him under the fifth rib, and made their escape; but fearing they had not left him dead, they returned, and did as follows:

and they smote him, and slew him; so that it was out of all doubt with them that he was dead:

and beheaded him; to make sure work of it:

and took his head; along with them, perhaps in one of the sacks they had to fetch wheat in, and so passed undiscovered, to carry to David, to curry favour with him:

and gat them away through the plain all night; through the plain of Jordan; all the way from Mahanaim to Hebron being for the most part a plain country till they came to Hebron, which was mountainous; the way from Mahanaim to Hebron was a space of sixty eight miles, according to Bunting {z}.

{z} Travels, p. 145, 148.

2 Samuel 4:8

Ver. 8. And they brought the head of Ishbosheth unto David to Hebron,.... Supposing it would have been a very acceptable present to him:

and said to the king, behold the head of Ishbosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; all which, his relation to Saul, his enmity to David, and his designs upon his life, are artfully put together to raise the indignation of David against him, and make their present of his head to him the more agreeable:

and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul and of his seed; for all the evils and injuries they had done him; this being the last of the sons of Saul by a lawful wife, the two remaining were by a concubine; and these men impiously ascribe to the Lord what they with wicked hands had done.

2 Samuel 4:9

Ver. 9. And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite,.... In a manner they did not expect:

and said unto them, [as] the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity; spiritual and temporal, especially the latter is meant, and particularly what he had been brought into by the persecution of Saul, while living, and by those that adhered to his house since his death; which he ascribes to the Lord, and doubted not that he would still deliver him, and complete what he had designed for him, and that he needed not the assistance of such wicked hands as theirs; the words contain the form of an oath made to testify the truth of the following narrative, concerning the man that brought the tidings of Saul's death to him, or for the certainty of what he would do those persons for the murder of Ishbosheth.

2 Samuel 4:10

Ver. 10. When one told me, saying, behold, Saul is dead,.... No more is related, not that he killed him, or assisted in killing him, only that he was dead; by which it appears, as Abarbinel thinks, that the Amalekite did not slay Saul, and that David did not put him to death on that account, but for what follows:

thinking to have brought good tidings; which would have been very acceptable to David, that he would have rejoiced and exulted at it as he did; but he was mistaken; instead of that,

I took hold of him, and slew him at Ziklag; that is, ordered one of his young men to lay hold on him, and slay him, as he did, **2Sa 1:15**;

who [thought] that I would have given him a reward for his tidings; a handsome present, as the Targum here, a gift, or raised him to some post of honour and profit.

2 Samuel 4:11

Ver. 11. How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person,.... As Ishbosheth was in comparison of the wicked men that slew him; though not with respect to David, if he knew of his divine designation to the throne; nor with respect to Mephibosheth his eldest brother's son, whose right to the throne was prior to his, which he must know; though with respect to his conduct towards David, in assuming the throne of Israel, it might not be owing to any bad principles of malice and injustice, but to his ignorance of David's having a right to the throne upon his father's death, and by the advice of his friends he took it: the sin of these men in murdering him is aggravated, in that they slew him

in his own palace, upon his bed? in cold blood, and not in the field of battle, not being engaged in war with him; in his own palace, where he might justly think himself in safety; on his bed asleep, and so at an unawares, when insensible of danger, and not in a posture of defence; and now David argues from the lesser to the greater, that if the man that brought him the tidings of Saul's death had no reward given him for bringing what he thought would be reckoned good tidings, then much less would any be given them who had actually slain their master, and that in such a base and barbarous way; and if the above person, who only was a bringer of tidings, was taken and slain, then how much more did they deserve to die, who had been guilty of such a cruel and barbarous murder?

shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hands, and take you away from the earth? avenge his blood on them, by putting them to death, out of the world, and from the land of the living, as men that deserved to live no longer on it.

2 Samuel 4:12

Ver. 12. And David commanded his young men, and they slew them,.... He ordered some of his guards about him to fall on them, and put them to death; and they accordingly did:

and cut off their hands and their feet; their hands, which had smote Ishbosheth, and cut off his head; and their feet, which had been swift to shed his blood, and made haste to bring his head so many miles to David; this was what the Jews call measure for measure:

and hanged [them] up over the pool in Hebron; not their hands and their feet, but the trunks of their bodies, thus mutilated; so Theodoret; though others think their hands and their feet were hung up, and not their bodies, because dead bodies were not to hang upon the tree more than a day; they were hung up over the fish pool in Hebron, because a public place, and where they were the more exposed to their shame, and the terror of others:

but they took the head of Ishbosheth, and buried [it] in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron; by order of David no doubt, who it seems had made, or ordered to be made, a sepulchre, for Abner, see 2Sa 3:38; all which David did to show his regard to the family of Saul, his abhorrence of such execrable murders, and to remove all suspicion of his being concerned in them, and to conciliate the minds of the Israelites to him.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 5

In this chapter we have an account of all the tribes of Israel coming to Hebron, and anointing David king over them, 2Sa 5:1; of his expedition against the Jebusites in Jerusalem, and taking from them the strong hold of Zion, 2Sa 5:6; of his building an house for himself, and of his building up his family, by taking more wives and concubines, and having more children, whose names are given, 2Sa 5:11; and of an invasion of the land by the Philistines, and David's victory over them, 2Sa 5:17.

Ver. 1. Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron,.... All the rest of the tribes, save the tribe of Judah, who had made him king over them in Hebron seven years ago. These were ambassadors sent in the name of the several tribes to him, quickly after the deaths of Abner and Ishbosheth; from having any hand in which David had sufficiently cleared himself, and which had tended to reconcile the minds of the people of Israel to him:

and spake, saying, we [are] thy bone and thy flesh; for though he was of the tribe of Judah, yet as all the tribes sprung from one man, they were all one bone, flesh, and blood; all nearly related to each other, all of the same general family of which David was; and so, according to their law, a fit person to be their king, De 16:18; and from whom they might expect clemency and tenderness, being so near akin to them.

2 Samuel 5:2

Ver. 2. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us,.... Even over all the tribes of Israel:

thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel; that led out the armies of Israel against their enemies, fought their battles for them, obtained victories, and brought the troops under his command home in safety; and the remembrance of these valiant acts of his, which then endeared him to the people, was now another reason for their choosing him king: and another follows, the chiefest of them all:

and the Lord said to thee; when anointed by Samuel; for though what follows is not recorded in so many words, yet the sense of it is expressed in the anointing him to be king, whose office, as such, lay in doing the following things:

thou shalt feed my people Israel; as a shepherd feeds his flock; hence kings were frequently called shepherds, and David particularly, in which he was an eminent type of Christ, see Ps 78:71;

and thou shalt be a captain over Israel; the Targum is,

"and thou shalt be king over Israel;"

which gives the true sense of the tribes, and which was the chief and prevailing reason with them to make him their king; and which they, at least many of them, would have done before, even immediately upon the death of Saul, but that they were persuaded by Abner to yield obedience to Ishbosheth he set up.

2 Samuel 5:3

Ver. 3. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron,.... Which either explains what is meant by the tribes coming to him, **2Sa 5:1**; namely, coming by their elders as their representatives; or else the meaning is, that the messengers the tribes sent, when they returned and reported the favourable reception they had met with from David; the elders of the several tribes, the princes or principal men met, and came together to David in Hebron:

and King David made a league with them before the Lord; the states of the nation; he entered into a covenant with them; he on his part promising to rule them in justice and judgment according to the laws, and they promising to yield a cheerful obedience to him in all things just and lawful: and this was done "before the Lord"; either before the ark of the Lord, as Abarbinel; but that was in Kirjathjearim, from whence it was after this brought by David to this city; rather, as Kimchi observes, wherever all Israel, or the greater part of them, were assembled, there the divine Shechinah or Majesty dwelt; so that what was done in a public assembly was reckoned as done before the Lord, and in his presence; or this covenant was made before the Lord, and each party appealed to him as witness of it, so that it was a very solemn one:

and they anointed David king over Israel; that is, over all Israel, which was the third time of his being anointed; the first was by Samuel, pointing out the person the Lord chose and appointed king; the second was by the tribe of Judah, when they invested him with the office of a king over them; and now by all the tribes, when he was inaugurated into the whole kingdom of Israel; and not only the elders came at this time, but great numbers of the people from the several tribes, and continued with David some days, eating, drinking and rejoicing, see 1Ch 12:1.

2 Samuel 5:4

Ver. 4. David [was] thirty years old when he began reign,.... Over Judah, which was the age of his antitype Christ, when he entered upon his public ministry, **Lu 3:23**;

[and] he reigned forty years; and six months, as appears by **2Sa 5:5**; but the months are not mentioned, only the round number of years given: two reasons the Jews {a} give for this; the one, that he fled six months from Absalom; the other is, that he was ill in Hebron so long, and therefore are not reckoned.

{a} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 77. I.

2 Samuel 5:5

Ver. 5. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months,.... So long the kingdom of Israel continued in the house of Saul after his death; and by this it appears that David was near thirty eight years of age when the elders of Israel came and made him their king:

and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah; which in all made forty years and six months, see **1Ki 2:11**; upon his being made king over all the tribes, as soon as he had taken the strong hold of Zion, which he immediately attacked, as follows, he removed the seat of his kingdom from Hebron to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 5:6

Ver. 6. And the king and his men went to Jerusalem,.... Which, at least part of it, belonged to the tribe of Benjamin; and therefore until all Israel, and that tribe, with the rest, made him king, he did not attempt the reduction of it, but now he immediately set out on an expedition against it:

unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: who inhabited the country about it, and even dwelt in that itself; for the tribe of Judah could not drive them out at first from that part of it which belonged to them, nor the tribe of Benjamin from that part which was theirs; in short, they became so much masters of it, that it was called, even in later times, Jebus, and the city of the Jebusites; see Jos 15:63 **Jud 1:21**;

which spake unto David; when he came up against them, and besieged them:

except thou take away the blind and lame, thou shalt not come in hither; which many understand of their idols and images, which had eyes, but saw not, and feet, but walked not, which therefore David and his men in derision called the blind and lame; these the Jebusites placed for the defence of their city, and put great confidence in them for the security of it, and therefore said to David, unless you can remove these, which you scornfully call the blind and the lame, you will never be able to take the place. And certain it is the Heathens had their tutelar gods for their cities as well as their houses, in which they greatly trusted for their safety; and therefore with the Romans, when they besieged a city, the first thing they attempted to do was by any means, as by songs particularly, to get the tutelar gods out of it {b}; believing otherwise it would never be taken by them; or if it could, it was not lawful to make the gods captives {c}: and to this sense most of the Jewish commentators agree, as Kimchi, Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and R. Isaiah, who take them to be images; some say, made of brass, which were placed either in the streets of the city, or on the towers: it was usual with all nations to place on their walls both their household and country gods, to defend them from the enemy {d}. A learned countryman of ours {e} is of opinion that these were statues or images talismanically made, under a certain constellation, by some skilful in astrology, placed in the recess of the fort, and intrusted with the keeping of it, and in which the utmost confidence was put: but it seems better with Aben Ezra and Abarbinel, and so Josephus {f}, to understand this of blind and lame men; and that the sense is, that the Jebusites had such an opinion of the strength of their city, that a few blind and lame men were sufficient to defend it against David and his army; and perhaps in contempt of him placed some invalids, blind and lame men, on the walls of it, and jeeringly told him, that unless he could remove them, he would never take the city:

thinking: or "saying" {g}; this was the substance of what they said, or what they meant by it:

David cannot come in hither; it is impossible for him to enter it, he cannot and shall not do it, and very probably these words were put into the mouths of the blind and lame, and they said them frequently.

{b} Vid. Valtrinum de re militar. Rom. l. 5. c. 5. {c} Vid. Macrob. Saturnal. l. 3. c. 9. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 4. {d} Cornel. Nepot. Vit. Themistocl. l. 2. c. 7. {e} Gregory's Notes and Observations, &c. ch. 7. {f} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 3. sect. 1. {g} rmal "dicendo", Pagninus, Montanus.

2 Samuel 5:7

Ver. 7. Nevertheless, David took the strong hold of Zion,.... A fortress without the city, and separate from it, and which was very strong; and the taking it might facilitate the taking of the city, which yet as appears by what follows, was very difficult to do:

the same [is] the city of David; it was afterwards so called, where he built an house, and dwelt.

2 Samuel 5:8

Ver. 8. And David said on that day,.... On which he took the strong hold of Zion:

whosoever getteth up to the gutter; where it is generally supposed the blind and lame were, whether images or real men: but what is meant by "Tzinnur", we render "gutter", is not easy to say; we follow some of the Jewish writers, who take it to be a canal, or water spout, used to carry off the water from roofs of houses into cisterns, as the word is rendered in Ps 42:7; which is the only place besides this in which it is used in Scripture; but R. Isaiah takes it to be the bar or bolt of the gate, and the sense to be, whoever got up to the gate, and got in at that, unbolting it, or breaking through it; the Targum interprets it of the tower of the city, or strong fortress, and so Abarbinel; but Jarchi says it was a ditch, agreeably to which Bochart {h} translates the words, and indeed more agreeably to the order of them;

"whosoever smites the Jebusites, let him cast into the ditch (next the wall) both the blind and the lame, extremely hated by David."

But a learned modern writer {i} gives a more ingenious and probable interpretation of these words thus;

"whosoever (first) smiteth the Jebusites, and through the subterraneous passages reaches the lame and the blind, &c."

and which seems to be favoured by Josephus, as he observes; who says {k}, the king promised the command of the whole army to him who should dia twn upokeimenwn faraggwn, "through the subterraneous cavities", go up to the citadel, and take it: to which I would add that the word is used in the Chaldee paraphrase of **Ec 1:7**, of the several subterraneous passages, through which the rivers flow out of and reflow into the ocean: remarkable is the note of Theodoret,

"a certain Hebrew says, Aquila renders it "through a pipe"; on which, he observes, David being willing to spare the walls of the city, ordered the citizens should enter into the city by an aqueduct;"

according to the Jews, there, was a cave underground, which reached from the king's house in Jerusalem to Jericho, when it was taken by Nebuchadnezzar; See Gill on "Jer 39:4"; in which story there may be a mixture of fable; yet it is not improbable that there was such a subterraneous passage; since Dio Cassius {l} speaks of several such, through which the Jews made their escape in the last siege of the city:

and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind; or even the lame and the blind men the Jebusites had placed to mock David; and therefore it follows,

[that are] hated of David's soul: because he was despised and jeered at by them, and through them: if these could be understood of their idols and images, the phrase would be easily accounted for, nothing being more abominable to David than idolatry:

[he shall be chief and captain]; these words are not in the original text here, but are supplied from 1Ch 11:6; that is, he shall be chief commander of the army, as Joab became, who was the first that went up and smote them:

wherefore they said, the blind and the lame shall not come into the house; that is, either the Jebusites said this, that their images, called in derision by David the blind and the lame, if these did not keep David out, they should never be intrusted with the safety of their fort any more {m}; or rather because the blind and the lame men said this of David, he shall not come into the house, the fort, or citadel, therefore David hated them; which is the sense of the above learned writer {n}.

{h} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 36. col. 304. {i} Dr. Kennicott's Dissert. 1. p. 35. {k} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 3. sect. 1.) {l} Hist. l. 66. {m} Gregory, ut supra. (Notes and Observations, &c. ch. 7.) {n} Dr. Kennicott, ut supra. (Dissert. 1. p. 35.)

2 Samuel 5:9

Ver. 9. So David dwelt in the fort,.... The strong hold of Zion, which he took:

and called it the city of David; from his own name, to keep up the memory of his taking it, and of his habitation in it:

and David built round about, from Millo and inward; built a wall about it, and enlarged the place, increased the buildings both within and without. Millo is supposed to be a ditch round the fort, full of water, from whence it had its name; or was a large hollow place which divided the fort from the lower city, and which afterwards Solomon filled up, and made it a level, and therefore is called so here by anticipation; though Jarchi says it was done by David. According to Dr. Lightfoot {o}, it was a part or Sion, or some hillock, east up against it on the west side; his first sense is best, Millo being no other than the fortress or citadel; which, as Josephus says {p}, David joined to the lower city, and made them one body, and erecting walls about it made Joab superintendent of them; and this was the "round about", or circuit, which David made, reaching from Millo, or the citadel, to that again, which is meant by "inward", or "to the house" {q}, as it should be rendered; that is, to the house of Millo, as in 2Ki 12:20; and so it is said 1Ch 11:8; that David built the city "from Millo round about"; that is, to the same place from whence he began {r}.

{o} Works, vol. 2. Chorograph. Cent. c. 24. p. 25. {p} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 3. sect. 2. {q} htybw "et ad domum". {r} See Dr. Kennicott, ut supra, (Dissert. 1.) p. 49, &c.

2 Samuel 5:10

Ver. 10. And David went on, and grew great,.... In honour and wealth, in fame and reputation, in subduing his enemies, obtaining conquests over them, and enlarging his dominions:

and the Lord God of hosts, of armies above and below,

[was] with him: to whom all his prosperity and success was owing. The Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord God of hosts was for his help,"

or his helper.

2 Samuel 5:11

Ver. 11. And Hiram king of Tyre,.... This was father of that Hiram that lived in the times of Solomon, whose name was Abibalus before he took the name of Hiram, which became a common name of the kings of Tyre; his former name may be seen in the ancient historians quoted by Josephus {s}; of the city of Tyre, See Gill on "Isa 23:1"; which was built one year before the destruction of Troy {t}. This king, on hearing of David's being acknowledged king by all Israel, and of his taking Jerusalem out of the hands of the Jebusites,

sent messengers to David; to congratulate him upon all this:

and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons; these might not be sent at first, but David intending to build himself an house, might, by the messengers on their return, request of Hiram to send him timber and workmen for that purpose; the people of Israel being chiefly employed in cultivating their fields, and vineyards, and oliveyards, and feeding their flocks and herds, few of them had any skill in hewing: timber and stone, and building houses, at least not like the Tyrians and Sidonians; see **1Ki 5:6**; and accordingly he sent him cedars from Lebanon, a great part of which was in his dominions, and artificers in wood and stone, to build his house in the most elegant manner:

and they built David an house; to dwell in, a stately palace, called an house of cedar, **2Sa 7:2**.

{s} Contr. Apion. l. 1. sect. 17, 18. {t} Justin e Trogo, l. 18. c. 3.

2 Samuel 5:12

Ver. 12. And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel,.... By the prosperity and success which attended him in everything he set his hand to:

and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake; for their advantage and glory more than for his own.

2 Samuel 5:13

Ver. 13. And David took [him] more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron,.... He had six when he was at Hebron, **2Sa 3:2**, and now he took more, which was not to his honour, and contrary to the law of God, De 17:17; the concubines were a sort of half wives, as the word may signify, or secondary ones, and under the others:

and there were yet sons and daughters born to David; besides those in Hebron mentioned in **2Sa 3:2**.

2 Samuel 5:14

Ver. 14. And these [be] the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem,.... The names of his sons, for his daughters are not mentioned, and these seem to be such only that were born of his wives, see **1Ch 3:9**;

Shammua, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon; these four were by Bathsheba; the first of these is called Shimea, **1Ch 3:5**.

2 Samuel 5:15

Ver. 15. Ibhar also, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia. Elishua is called Elishama, **1Ch 3:6**.

2 Samuel 5:16

Ver. 16. And Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphalet. Seven more by some other wife or wives; nine are mentioned in **1Ch 3:6**; there being in that account two Eliphalets, and another called Nogah; which two, one of the Eliphalets, and Nogah, might die without sons, as Kimchi thinks, and so are not mentioned here.

2 Samuel 5:17

Ver. 17. But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel,.... That the civil war in the nation was now at an end, which they hoped would have issued in their destruction, and therefore lay still and quiet; but now being united under the government of David, and he hereby greatly strengthened and become powerful; and hearing also of his success against Jerusalem, and the friendship he had contracted with Hiram king of Tyre, they thought it was high time to bestir themselves, and put a stop to his power and greatness; and now it was, as Kimchi thinks, that David penned the second psalm, which begins, "why do the Heathen rage", &c. **Ps 2:1**,

all the Philistines came up to seek David: in order to fight him, all the five principalities of the Philistines combined together against him; perhaps his old friend Achish king of Gath was now dead, or had now entertained a different opinion of him:

and David heard [of it]; that they had invaded his kingdom, and sought to fight him:

and went down to the hold; some fortified place or strong hold near Jerusalem, which lay lower than the city, or than the strong hold of Zion, in which David dwelt; hither he went, not so much for safety, or with an intention to abide there, but as a rendezvous for his men, and to prepare to meet the Philistines.

2 Samuel 5:18

Ver. 18. The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. Or "of the giants", as Jos 15:8; which lay to the west of Jerusalem; of which, See Gill on "Jos 15:8"; the Philistines spreading themselves in it, shows that they were very numerous.

2 Samuel 5:19

Ver. 19. And David inquired of the Lord,.... By Abiathar, and the Urim and Thummim, in the ephod he had on:

saying, shall I go up to the Philistines? who by this time were gone from the valley to an higher place, to Mount Perazim, as in Isa 28:21;

wilt thou deliver them into my hand? here two questions are put together, and an answer returned to both, contrary to a notion of the Jews, See Gill on "1Sa 23:11";

and the Lord said to David, go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand; by which oracle he had both the mind of God that he should go up, and was assured of victory.

2 Samuel 5:20

Ver. 20. And David came to Baalperazim,.... As it was after called, for here it has its name by anticipation, and whither the Philistines were come from the valley of Rephaim; see 1Ch 14:11; which was at no great distance, the one being the hill, to which the other was the valley, computed to be about three miles from Jerusalem, in the way to Bethlehem {u}, between which places were two hours' travels {w}:

and David smote them there; there a battle was fought, in which David had the victory assured him:

and said, the Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters; as when waters, through their mighty force, break down the banks of rivers, and carry all before them; or as one breaks an earthen vessel full of water, so the Targum on 1Ch 14:11.

therefore he called the name of the place Baalperazim; which signifies "the master of breaches", where the Philistines were broke in upon, and broken to pieces, of which God was the author, and which gave David the mastery over his enemies; the Targum renders it "the plain of breaches", and seems to take it to be the same with the valley of Rephaim; see **2Sa 5:22**.

{u} Bunting's Travels, &c. p. 138. {w} Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 87. ed. 7.

2 Samuel 5:21

Ver. 21. And they left their images,.... Their idol gods, which they brought with them to protect and defend them, and give them success; perhaps in imitation of the Israelites, who formerly brought the ark of God into their camp against the Philistines, **1Sa 4:3**; and it appears to have been the custom of other countries, in later times, to bring their gods with them to battle {x}:

and David and his men burnt them: that is, his men burnt them at his command, 1Ch 14:12; agreeably to the law of God, that so no profit might be made of them, **De 7:5**; the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and others, render it, "and took them", or "carried them away" {y}; as they might do, and, after they had exposed them in triumph, then burnt them.

{x} "Omnigenumque Deum", &c. Virgil. Aeneid. l. 8. {y} Mavyw kai elabosan autouv, Sept. "tulit", V. L. Tigurine version, Montanus; "sustulit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

2 Samuel 5:22

Ver. 22. And the Philistines came up yet again,.... And, as Josephus says {z}, with an army three times larger than the former:

and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim; in the same place where they were before, **2Sa 5:20**.

{z} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 4. sect. 1.

2 Samuel 5:23

Ver. 23. And when David inquired of the Lord,.... For though he had success before, and got the victory, he would not engage again with them without having the mind and will of God, on whom he knew victory alone depended:

he said, thou shalt not go up; that is, directly, and in a straight line:

[but] fetch a compass behind them; and get to the rear of them, instead of falling upon them in the front:

and come upon them over against the mulberry trees: which grew in the valley of Rephaim, and near where the Philistines had pitched.

2 Samuel 5:24

Ver. 24. And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees,.... Of a going of the wind on the tops of these trees, making a rustling upon them, and that in such a manner as to resemble the going of men, or march of armies, as if they were moving in the air over the tops of the

mulberry trees; which Jarchi and R. Isaiah interpret of angels being sent of God, and moving at that time to help David, and destroy the Philistines; so the Targum on
1Ch 14:15. These trees being in Judea account for silk there, Eze 16:10; though some think time was not known so early; others suppose it was, and to be the Hebrew byssus mentioned by Pausanias {a}, as being of a yellow colour:

that then thou shall bestir thyself; or move towards the camp of the Philistines, and fall upon them in the rear, who, by reason of the sound in the trees, would not hear the motion of the Israelites; or, if they heard it, would take it to be no other than the motion of the trees they heard, both sounds being confounded together; or they would take the sound they heard for the motion of the enemy in the front, and give way, and so fall into the hands of the Israelites in their rear, which must throw them into the utmost confusion and consternation:

for then shall the Lord go out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines: by an angel or angels; so the Targum,

"for then shall go forth the angel of the Lord, to make thee prosperous to slay in the camp of the Philistines;"

that being the precise time for the salvation of Israel, and the destruction of the Philistines, and the token of it.

{a} Eliac. sive, l. 5. p. 294.

2 Samuel 5:25

Ver. 25. And David did so as the Lord commanded him,.... In all things he was obedient to the command of God; Saul was not: he got behind the army of the Philistines, as he was directed; and when he heard the sound in the mulberry trees, he arose and fell upon his enemies:

and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer; or from Gibeon, as in 1Ch 14:16; a city in the tribe of Benjamin, near to which this battle was fought, and where the pursuit began, which was carried as far as Gazer, a city that lay on the borders of the Philistines, as Josephus says {b}; and so far they were pursued, and were smitten as they fled; and, according to Bunting {c}, it was a space of eighteen miles.

{b} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 4. sect. 1. {c} Travels, &c. p. 138.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
2 Samuel 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 6

In this chapter we are told that David fetched the ark from Baale of Judah, with an intent to bring it to his own city, **2Sa 6:1**; but Uzzah being smitten for his error concerning it, David was displeased, and left it at the house of Obededom, where it remained three months, and proved a blessing to his house, **2Sa 6:6**; which David hearing of, went and brought it from thence with great expressions of joy before it as it came along, and offered offerings to the Lord at the setting it in its place, and gave gifts to the people, **2Sa 6:12**; but Michal his wife was displeased with some of his gestures on that occasion, which made some difference between them, and which, on Michal's part, was resented by the Lord himself; for she became barren for it to the time of her death, **2Sa 6:20**.

Ver. 1. Again, David gathered together all [the] chosen [men] of Israel, thirty thousand. Which was done by the advice of his officers, 1Ch 13:1; the word "again" refers either to the gathering of them when they made him king in Hebron, as the Jewish writers generally observe; but then they gathered themselves, and not David: or rather to his gathering them to fight the Philistines a little while ago; and as they were the choice and young men that were gathered for war, as being the fittest, so now to fetch up the ark with dancing and singing, and to protect it; the Septuagint version says they were about seventy thousand; but the Targum, Syriac, and Arabic versions, have thirty thousand, agreeably to the Hebrew text.

2 Samuel 6:2

Ver. 2. And David arose, and went with all the people that [were] with him,.... The thirty thousand chosen men gathered together, and as many else as chose to go:

from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God; that is, they first went to this place, as in 1Ch 13:6; in order to fetch the ark from thence, as here expressed, and then they came from thence with it; this place is the same that is called Baalah and Kirjathbaal, a city in the tribe of Judah; hence Judah is added to it, and the same with Kirjathjearim, Jos 15:9; the place where it was brought to when fetched from Bethshemesh, **1Sa 7:1**; and had been here now near fifty years; nor was it any where else during this time, only once at Gibeah of Saul with him, 1Sa 14:18;

whose name he called by the name of the Lord of hosts, that dwelleth [between] the cherubim; not the ark, but the Lord, whose is the ark; his name is called by the name of Jehovah, the infinite, incomprehensible, eternal, and immutable Being, the Lord of armies above and below; whose habitation was between the cherubim that overshadowed the mercy seat, which was above the ark; all this is said, not only to express the greatness and majesty of God, but for the honour of the ark, which belonged to him.

2 Samuel 6:3

Ver. 3. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart,.... Which was a great mistake, since it ought not to have been put upon a cart, old or new; it was to be borne upon men's shoulders, and carried by Levites only, and those of the family of Kohath, to whom no wagons were given, when others had them, for the above reason, **Nu 7:9**; it is strange that so many priests and Levites, and of the people of Israel gathered together on that account, and David also, so well versed in the law of God, should not refer to it; perhaps they were led by the example of the Philistines, who put it in a new cart, and set it forward towards Bethshemesh, and were not punished for it; but it should have been considered they were an ignorant Heathen people, and who had no proper persons among them to bear it, and so might be dispensed with. This mistake was afterwards seen by David, and rectified, 1Ch 15:2; wherefore there is no reason to charge the text with an error or escape, and that the word "Kirjathjearim" is wanting, and to be supplied, as Spinosa {d} suggests:

and brought it out, or "after they had brought it out" {e},

of the house of Abinadab that [was] in Gibeah; or which was on the hill in Kirjathjearim, **1Sa 7:1**;

and Uzzah and Ahio the sons of Abinadab drew the new cart; perhaps not only Abinadab himself was dead, but Eleazar also, his eldest son, who was sanctified to keep the ark, as in **1Sa 7:1**; and these might be his younger sons who at this time had the care of it, and it may be especially Uzzah.

{d} Tractat. Theol. Politic. c. 9. p. 176. {e} whavyw "quum extulissent", Piscator.

2 Samuel 6:4

Ver. 4. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which [was] at Gibeah,.... That is, the new cart, which is the last thing spoken of, **2Sa 6:3**; and the bringing of the ark out of his house is mentioned before; though some take this to be the coffer in which were the presents of the Philistines, which was now brought out along with the ark, see **1Sa 6:8**;

accompanying the ark of God; or "with the ark of God" {f}; that is, they brought the new cart "from" the house of Abinadab on the hill, with the ark of God upon it:

and Ahio went before the ark; guiding the oxen that drew it, and Uzzah might go behind, or on one side, to take care that the ark fell not out of it.

{f} Myhlah Nwra Me "cum arca Dei", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator.

2 Samuel 6:5

Ver. 5. And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord,.... That is, before the ark, which was a symbol of the presence of the Lord:

on all manner of [instruments made of] fir wood: which is a general expression, the particulars follow; though instruments of different sorts are mentioned, and even some of metal, as cymbals, which were vessels of brass, they struck one against another, and gave a very acute sound, being hollow {g};

even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals; harps, psalteries, and timbrels, are frequently met with; cornets, according to Kimchi, are such sort of instruments, that in playing upon them it required an agitation of the whole body. Now it was that David penned the sixty eighth psalm, which begins, "let God arise", &c. Ps 68:1, words used by

Moses when the ark set forward, Nu 10:35.

{g} Suidas in voce kumbala.

2 Samuel 6:6

Ver. 6. And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor,.... Who is called Chidon, 1Ch 13:9; he seems to have had two names; or it was a place that had two names, as say the Jews {h}; according to a tradition of theirs {i}, Chidon is the name of the place where it was said to Joshua, stretch out the spear or shield in thine hand towards Ai, **Jos 8:18**; so indeed the word signifies, nor was it unusual to stretch out the shield as a signal on occasion. Thus Aeneas lifted up his shield in his left hand, as a token to his Trojans that he was come to relieve them {k}: where this threshingfloor was is not said; some say {l} it was the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite; it could not be far from Jerusalem, since Baalejudah or Kirjathjearim was but about a mile from it, according to Bunting {m}, from whence they fetched the ark:

Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; to keep it from falling: the reason was,

for the oxen shook [it]; the same word is used in 1Ch 13:9; and there it is rendered, "for the oxen stumbled"; and by their stumbling the cart was shaken, and the ark in it, and in danger of falling, as Uzzah thought: or "the oxen shook", for the word "it" is a supplement; they shook as if their members were plucking asunder and parting, as Kimchi expresses it, because of the holiness of the ark; as if they were sensible it was wrong for them to draw it, when it ought to have been carried on the shoulders of Levites; and by this way, as well as by the death of Uzzah the error committed was pointed out: but others render it, "for the oxen stuck in the clay" {n}, and could not go on; which Uzzah observing, and fearing that in their struggle to get out the cart should be overturned, or that the procession would be retarded too much, took hold of the ark to take it out, and carry it the remainder of the way, it not being far from Jerusalem.

{h} T. Bab Sotah, fol. 35. 2. {i} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Paralipom. fol. 83. G. {k} Virgil. Aeneid. 10. ver. 261, 262. Vid. Diodor. Sic. l. 20. p. 787. {l} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 35. 3. {m} Travels, &c. p. 138. {n} rqbh wjmv yk "nam luto haeserunt boves", Noldius, p. 396. No. 1343. so Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 37. col. 374. ex Arabica Lingua.

2 Samuel 6:7

Ver. 7. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah,.... And which was manifest by smiting him:

and God smote him there for [his] error; committed at this time, which was complicated; as that the ark was put upon a cart, to which he might be the chief adviser, as Procopius Gazaeus notes, when it should have been carried on the shoulders of the Levites; and that be touched it with his hand, which none but priests might do, supposing him to be a Levite, which it is not clear he was, however not a Kohathite; and he took hold of it in order to carry it in his arms, which even Levites, and those Kohathites, might not do, but with staves put into it, which only they were to hold; and besides, as Abarbinel observes, he showed little faith in the power and providence of God, as if he could not take care of the ark without him:

and there he died by the ark of God; directly, upon the spot, by the side of it; whether he was struck by lightning, or in what way, cannot be said; however, he died by the immediate hand of God, in token of his displeasure: and this shows that it is dangerous in matters of worship to act contrary to the command of God, even in things that may seem small and trivial; and though what may be done may be done with a good intention, as this was, yet that will not excuse the sin; nor are those who are the most forward and zealous in religious matters exempted from marks of God's displeasure when they go wrong.

2 Samuel 6:8

Ver. 8. And David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah,.... He could not easily submit, and be reconciled to the providence; his heart was ready to rise up against God, and murmur at him for striking him dead in such an awful manner, for so small a matter as this might seem to be; and the rather, as this put a stop to the procession, and cast a damp upon their joy and mirth on this occasion, and might seem to be an ill omen to David, and be improved by his enemies against him:

and he called the name of the place Perezuzzah unto this day; the name he gave the place, which signifies "the breach of Uzzah", continued to the time of writing this book.

2 Samuel 6:9

Ver. 9. And David was afraid of the Lord that day,.... Lest he should be smitten for his error also, and especially as he had discovered some resentment at the Lord's dealing with Uzzah; when he ought to have been still and quiet, and submitted to the will of God, and owned his justice in it, confessed his own error, and been thankful for his sparing mercy vouchsafed to him:

and said, how shall the ark of the Lord come to me? the meaning of which is not, how it should be brought to the place provided by him in Jerusalem, now Uzzah was dead, for there were Levites enough to carry it, as they afterwards did; but as signifying that it would be either boldness and presumption in him to do it, since God had shown such a mark of his displeasure at their proceeding, that he might be in doubt whether it was the will of God it should come to him; or as fearing it would be dangerous to him to have it with him, since he might be guilty of such an error, of the same, or like it, that had been committed.

2 Samuel 6:10

Ver. 10. So David would not remove the ark of the Lord unto him into the city of David,.... As yet, but wait a little longer, until he had more thoroughly considered of it, and made himself acquainted with everything relative to the ark, that he might know how to behave for the future, without giving offence:

but David carried it aside into the house of Obededom the Gittite; which was close by, on one side of the place where they were; this man was a Levite, as appears from his being afterwards appointed to be doorkeeper for the ark, and to sing praise before it, and so a proper person to commit the care of it to, 1Ch 15:18; he is called a Gittite, either because he had sojourned in Gath some time, or rather because he was of Gathrimmon, a city of the Levites, Jos 21:24.

2 Samuel 6:11

Ver. 11. And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obededom the Gittite three months,.... David, and those with him, returned to their habitations, where they continued during this time:

and the Lord blessed Obededom, and all his household; him, and all his family, with spiritual blessings, and with an affluence of temporal good things; for godliness has the promise of this life, and of that which is to come; men are not losers but gainers, even in things temporal, for their attachment to the cause of religion, and the service of God, and their regard to that in their own houses, as well as in the house of God. Josephus {o} says, that Obededom was very poor before, and in a low condition, out of which he soon emerged, and came into affluent circumstances, so as to be taken notice of by his neighbours, and reported abroad; by which means David came to the hearing of it, as follows.

{o} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 4. sect. 2.

2 Samuel 6:12

Ver. 12. And it was told King David,.... By some of his courtiers who had heard of it:

saying, the Lord hath blessed the house of Obededom, and all that [pertaineth] unto him, because of the ark of the Lord; it was so suddenly, in so short a time, and so largely, that it could not escape the notice and observation of men that knew him; and this increase was not in any natural way by which it could be accounted for; so that it could be ascribed to no other cause but the blessing of God, and that on account of the ark of God that was with him; nothing else could be thought of:

so David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obededom into the city of David with gladness: being animated and encouraged by the blessing of God on the house of Obededom, because of it, and thereby freed from those slavish fears he was before possessed of, and filled with hopes of being blessed also on account of it; if not with temporal blessings, he needed not, yet with spiritual ones.

2 Samuel 6:13

Ver. 13. And it was [so], that when they that bare the ark of the Lord,.... The Levites; for now David had seen the former mistake, and rectified it, and ordered the Levites to "carry" it, as they did upon their shoulders, with the staves therein, see 1Ch 15:2; when these

had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings; upon an altar, which was at once erected for that purpose; the number and kind of sacrifices offered were seven bullocks and seven rams, 1Ch 15:26; and these David offered, not by himself, but by the priests that were with him, and that as soon as they had gone six paces from the house of Obededom; whereby they perceived the Levites, were able to carry the ark, with what was in it, the Lord helping them, as in 1Ch 15:2, and without stumbling and falling, or any evil attending them; and Kimchi thinks these six paces were just the measure of the ground Uzzah went before what befell him; but it is highly probable that he had gone further; however, no doubt by the order of David, the Levites set down the ark, and sacrifices were offered by way of thanksgiving to God, and for the continuance of his goodness, and for atonement for former errors. Some think these seven oxen and rams were offered, at seven different times and places, at every six paces an ox and a ram; but this is not very likely.

2 Samuel 6:14

Ver. 14. And David danced before the Lord with all [his] might,.... That is, before the ark of the Lord; not a set dance, or along with others; but he leaped and skipped as "car", a lamb, does, and that for joy that the ark was like to be brought home to his house, without any token of the divine displeasure, as before; the Targum is,

"he praised before the Lord with all his might;"

exerted himself to the uttermost in singing the praises of God vocally, or by playing on an instrument; to which sense are the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, which is approved of by Castel {p}; who observes, it nowhere appears to have been a custom to dance before the ark; but it might be now done, though not usual, and therefore was observed by Michal with contempt, **2Sa 6:16**; a later writer {q} shows that dancing is the proper sense of the word:

and David [was] girded with a linen ephod; which others, besides priests, sometimes wore, as Samuel did, and which David might choose to appear in, rather than in his royal robes, as being more agreeable to the service of God, and lighter for him both to walk and dance in on this occasion.

{p} Lexic. col. 1793. {q} Hackman. Praecidan. Sacr. p. 156, 157.

2 Samuel 6:15

Ver. 15. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord,.... The elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, 1Ch 15:25; besides the common people; there might be as large a number with him now as before:

with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet; with the shouts of the people in common, and with blowing of trumpets by those who were appointed for that purpose, and with other instruments of music, see 1Ch 15:27; Josephus says {r}, that seven choirs went before the priests bearing the ark, as the king commanded, he himself playing on the harp; so the Septuagint version.

{r} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 4. sect. 2.

2 Samuel 6:16

Ver. 16. And as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David,.... Being brought thither on the shoulders of the Levites:

Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window; in the king's palace, to see the procession, which was very grand, and in great pomp, attended by a vast number of people, and with music of all sorts. She is said to be Saul's daughter, though David's wife, as having a good deal of her father's haughty temper and disposition, as appears by what follows:

and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; the ark of the Lord, by these outward gestures expressing the inward joy of his heart on this occasion;

and she despised him in her heart; as acting a mean part, quite beneath himself, and unbecoming his royal dignity.

2 Samuel 6:17

Ver. 17. And they brought in the ark of the Lord,.... Into the city of David, the strong hold of Zion:

and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: or "stretched out"; for this was not the tabernacle of Moses, David pitched any where; that was at this time at Gibeon, where it continued to the time of Solomon, 1Ch 21:29; but this was a curtain, or curtains, which he had stretched out or drawn around for the ark to be pitched in the midst of; and this was not in his own house, for he is afterwards said to go to that, but somewhere in Jerusalem or the city of David:

and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord; that is, before the ark, and that by way of thanksgiving for its being brought safe thither, without any error or mistake on the side of him, the Levites, and the people, and without offence to God, and any mark of his displeasure as before. This must be supposed to be done by priests, and not by David himself, who was no priest.

2 Samuel 6:18

Ver. 18. And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings,.... Or these were performed according to his order:

he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts; not as a priest, but as a prince, as the common father of them, wishing them all happiness and prosperity outward and inward, praying to God to bless them with all blessings temporal and spiritual, who is the God of armies above and below, and can do what he pleases, and more than his people can ask or think.

2 Samuel 6:19

Ver. 19. And he dealt among all the people,.... Gave a dole unto them, divided among them:

[even] among the whole multitude of Israel: and if there were so many as at first, there were thirty thousand of them, **2Sa 6:1**; and perhaps more, since it follows:

as well to the women as men; to both the one and the other; and the women, it is very probable, were not among those that went to fetch the ark, but assembled to attend the entrance of it into the city, and were present at the solemnities of its settlement:

to everyone a cake of bread; or a loaf of bread, of what quantity is not said, no doubt sufficient for anyone person, or more:

and a good piece [of flesh]: not only that was good in quality, but large in quantity, a very large piece of it; the Jews say {s} the sixth part of a bullock, they dividing it into six parts as we into four quarters; but it is not likely that such a quantity of flesh should be given to each person;

and a flagon [of wine]; but what such a vessel held cannot be said, though at least we may suppose it equal to a bottle of ours, or more; see **So 2:5**;

so all the people departed everyone to his house; to refresh themselves with the provisions David had given them.

{s} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 36. 3.

2 Samuel 6:20

Ver. 20. Then David returned to bless his household,.... His wife, children, and servants, to wish all happiness to them on this occasion, and pray to God for blessings on them temporal and spiritual. This was done when he came from the place where the ark was set, and was come to his own palace:

and Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David; before he had gotten quite to his own house:

and said, how glorious was the king of Israel today; which she spoke in an ironical jeering way, meaning the reverse, how inglorious, mean, and despicable he had made himself to be, by his airs and gestures:

who uncovered himself today in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! because he had put off his royal robes, and put on a linen ephod; for that he had stripped himself naked cannot be supposed, nor do her words import so much though a passionate exaggeration of the case.

2 Samuel 6:21

Ver. 21. And David said unto Michal, [it was] before the Lord,.... Before the ark of the Lord, what was done was done there; she upbraided him with his dancing and singing, which was designed for the honour and glory of God, and in thankfulness to him for the bringing the ark to his city, and therefore she ought not to have reproached him with it, and he adds,

which chose me before thy father, and before all his house; see 1Sa 13:14; which he observed to humble her pride, and mortify her, as well as to remark the distinguishing goodness of God to him, which laid him under obligation to express his thankfulness to him in every shape:

to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel; which was a high honour conferred upon him, and required the utmost gratitude:

therefore will I play before the Lord; upon the harp, or praise before him, as the Targum, sing his praise before the ark, unto any instrument of music, without once imagining I disgrace myself, on the contrary think it to be the highest honour to me to be employed in such service.

2 Samuel 6:22

Ver. 22. And I will yet be more vile than thus,.... If this is to be vile, I will endeavour to be viler still; if to dance before the ark, and sing the praises of God, be reckoned a lessening of me, I will more and more be found in doing such things, or what is similar to them:

and will be base in mine own sight: humble himself, and lie low in his own eyes, admiring the grace and goodness of God to him, thinking he could never condescend too low to exalt the Lord, and magnify the riches of his goodness:

and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour; who the more humble I am, and the more I condescend, by laying aside all state in acts of devotion and religion, the more shall I be honoured and spoken well of by them.

2 Samuel 6:23

Ver. 23. Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child until the day of her death. The children she brought up for Adriel were not her own, but adopted ones, or Adriel's by another woman, 2Sa 21:8; however, she had none after this time, whatever she had before, and it does not appear that she had any, though the Jews say she was Eglah, and Ithream her son, See Gill on "2Sa 3:5". And thus she that vilified David brought a reproach upon herself, as barrenness was always reckoned, and no one descending from her arrived to royal dignity, and sat on the throne of David; and so it was ordered in Providence, as Abarbinel observes, that the seed of David and of Saul might not be mixed.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 7

This chapter expresses David's concern for building an house for the ark of God, which he communicated to Nathan the prophet, and was approved of by him, **2Sa 7:1**; and who was that night sent by the Lord to David, to acquaint him, that as he had for many years dwelt in a tent, and had never given directions to the tribes of Israel, and the rulers of them, to build him an house, so neither should David build him one; but his son that would succeed him in the throne should; and also observes to him the many great things he had done for him, and promises him more, and particularly the establishment of his throne and kingdom for ever, in which he has respect to the Messiah, that should spring from him, **2Sa 7:4**. Then follows a prayer of David, in which he expresses the sense he had of the greatness and goodness of God, and of his own unworthiness to receive such favours from him he had, returns him thanks for the promises he had made, and prays for the performance of them, **2Sa 7:18**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house,.... Which Hiram's servants had built for him, having no occasion to go out to war:

and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies; both at home and abroad; though this rest and peace did not last long; for the next chapter gives an account of each of the people he was engaged in war with, **2Sa 8:1**.

2 Samuel 7:2

Ver. 2. That the king said unto Nathan the prophet,.... This is the first time this prophet is made mention of, but often afterwards, yet who he was, and from whence he came, is not known; he appears to be a man of great piety and prudence, as well as endowed with a prophetic spirit, and was very familiar with David, and perhaps dwelt in his palace; being a man on all accounts fit for conversation with princes, to whom David imparted what he had been meditating upon in his heart. The Jews have a tradition {t} that he was the same with Jonathan the son of Shimea, the brother of David, 2Sa 21:21; which is not very likely:

see now, I dwell in an house of cedar; made of the cedars of Lebanon; see what a spacious palace it is:

but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains; in a tabernacle within curtains, as the Targum; not the tabernacle of Moses, for that was at Gibeon, 1Ch 21:29; but that which David had made for it, which consisted of curtains that were drawn around it, **2Sa 6:17**. It gave him a concern that he should dwell in so magnificent a palace, and the ark of God should have so mean an habitation; wherefore it was upon his mind to build a grand edifice for it, and this he suggested hereby to Nathan, and so he understood him, as appears by what follows; and the rather he was led to such a thought, being now at rest and in peace; for then it was an house was to be built for God, in which he would cause his name to dwell, as David might easily learn from De 12:9; and who so proper to set forward such a work as a king, and he when at rest from his enemies?

{t} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 79. M. & in lib. Paralipom. fol. 89. B. F.

2 Samuel 7:3

Ver. 3. And Nathan said to the king, go, do till that [is] in thine heart,.... He perceived it was in his heart to build an house for God; he knew an house was to be built at one time or another, by some person or another; he knew it was a good work, and fit for a king to do, and might think this was a proper time any, he being at leisure, and therefore encouraged him to it: but inasmuch as the time when and the person by whom this was to be built were not pointed out particularly in the word of God, David and he should have consulted the Lord about it; in this they erred, and for which they were tacitly reproved; for, as the event shows, this was not the time when, nor David the person by whom, it

was to be built. Nathan said this as a pious and good man, in a private capacity, not as a prophet, or under a spirit of prophecy; for prophets did not always speak under such an influence, but, as private men, said some things ignorantly and through mistake; see
1Sa 16:6;

for the Lord [is] with thee; prospering and succeeding him in all he undertook, giving him rest from all his enemies; and he might think that this motion he now made of building an house was from the Lord; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord shall be for thine help,"

or thine helper, and shall assist thee in this work. David being thus encouraged by the prophet, his thoughts were more employed about it, and he was resolute and eager to perform it; and now it was he penned the hundred thirty second psalm, in which he expresses his oath and vow to find a place to build on, Ps 132:1.

2 Samuel 7:4

Ver. 4. And it came to pass that night,.... The same night following the day in which David and Nathan had had the above conversation, that neither of them might continue long in their error and mistake, and especially lest David, in his great zeal and warm affection, should take an hasty and improper step:

that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan; the word of prophecy, as the Targum; before he was not under a prophetic influence, but spoke in his own words, and had not the word of God; but now it came to him:

saying; as follows.

2 Samuel 7:5

Ver. 5. Go and tell my servant David,.... The Lord speaks very honourably and respectfully of him, owns him to be his servant in other things, though he did not choose to employ him in this; and though he was not the person, nor this the time, to build the house of the Lord, yet, as he showed a good will towards it, so far it was acceptable to God:

thus saith the Lord, shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? no, thou shalt not, as appears from 1Ch 17:4; which seems to be expressed with much spirit, and some degree of resentment, to resolve on such a work, without seeking to know his mind in it. Eupolemus {u} an Heathen, confirms this account, only instead of a prophet he speaks of an angel, whose name he says was Dinnathan, who, when David was desirous of building a temple for God, and very anxious to be shown the place where the altar was to be erected, this angel appeared to him; and, though he showed him the place for the altar, forbad him building it, because he was polluted with human blood, and had been engaged in wars many years, and bid him leave the building of it to his son.

{u} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 30. p. 447.

2 Samuel 7:6

Ver. 6. Whereas I have not dwelt in [any] house,.... Fixed, stated, habitation:

since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt,
even to this day; a space of five or six hundred years, though he might before:

but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle; moving from place to place while in the wilderness, and since in the land of Canaan, first at Gilgal, then at Shiloh, afterwards at Nob, and now at Gibeon. "Tent" and "tabernacle" are distinguished, though they were but one building and habitation; the tent was the curtains of goats' hair, and the tabernacle the linen curtains, see Ex 26:1. In 1Ch 17:5 it is "from tent to tent, and from [one] tabernacle [to another]"; which does not intend variety of tabernacles, but change of place.

2 Samuel 7:7

Ver. 7. In all [the places] wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel,.... See Gill on "2Sa 7:6" on the places mentioned there:

spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel; or rather the sceptres of Israel; so the word is rendered, Ge 49:10; the sceptre bearers, rulers, and governors, whose custom was to carry a sceptre in their hands, as Ben Melech observes; and so in a parallel text, 1Ch 17:6, it is, "to any of the judges of Israel"; any of those from the times of Moses and Joshua to the times of Saul and David, and this is confirmed by what follows:

whom I commanded to feed my people Israel; that is, to rule and govern them, protect and defend them, which cannot be said of the tribes, but of the rulers of them; and the Lord asks this question, whether ever he had said a word to any of those, in all that space of time, expressing anything of this kind:

saying, why build ye not me an house of cedar? they never were bid to do it, or expostulated with why they did not, or ever reproved for not doing it; therefore why should David think of doing it?

2 Samuel 7:8

Ver. 8. Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David,.... For it was taken well at his hands, in part, that it was in his heart, and he had a desire to build an house for God, though he was wrong in determining upon it without seeking the Lord; and lest he should be discouraged by the prohibition of him from building, the following things are observed to assure him it was not from disregard unto him, or displeasure at him, that he would not be employed in this service; since the Lord had given sufficient tokens of his favour to him, and with which he should be content, as having honour enough done him; it was enough that God had raised him up from a low estate to great grandeur and dignity:

thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel; for that was his employment, to keep his father's sheep, before he was taken into Saul's court, and married his daughter, when after his death he came to have the crown, of Israel: now this is said, not to upbraid him with his former meanness, but to observe the goodness of God unto him, and what reason he had for thankfulness, and to look upon himself as a favourite of God, who of a keeper of sheep was made a shepherd of men, to rule and feed them; so Cyrus is called a shepherd, Isa 44:28; and Agamemnon, in Homer {w}, is called "the shepherd of the people".

{w} Iliad. 2.

2 Samuel 7:9

Ver. 9. And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest,.... When he went against Goliath, when he went forth against the Philistines, when in Saul's court, when he fled from Saul, and was obliged to go to various places, God was with him protecting and preserving him, prospering and succeeding him every where, and in everything:

and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight: as Saul, and others in the land of Israel, and the Philistines, and other enemies round about him, so that he had rest from them all;

and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great [men] that [are] in the earth; a name for a mighty king, warrior, and conqueror, such as some mighty kings and great men of the earth had obtained, and such fame, being made king over all Israel; and his success against the Jebusites had got him a name, as well as former victories he had been favoured with; on account of all which his name and fame had been spread abroad in the world, and he was reckoned as one of the greatest princes in it.

2 Samuel 7:10

Ver. 10. Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israel,.... The land of Canaan: this the Lord had of old appointed to them, and had introduced them into and settled them in it, but not entirely and alone; in many places the Canaanites had inhabited; but now they should be expelled, and the Israelites should have the place to themselves:

and will plant them; so that they shall take root and flourish, and continue:

that they may dwell in a place of their own; and not as they dwelt in Egypt, in a land that was not theirs; or "under themselves" {x}; under their own rulers and governors:

and move no more; as they did in the times of the judges, when, sinning against God, they were often delivered into their enemies' hands, and carried captives:

neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime; when in Egypt, and in the times of the judges; all which is supposed, provided they did not depart from the Lord, but abode by his word, worship, and ordinances, and obeyed his will; for it was by their obedience they held their tenure of the land of Canaan, see **Isa 1:19**; or all this may respect future times, when they shall be converted to the Messiah, and return to their own land, and ever continue in it, and never more be harassed and distressed, Jer 32:41.

{x} wytxt, "sub se", Montanus.

2 Samuel 7:11

Ver. 11. And as since the time that I commanded judges [to be] over my people Israel,.... Before the time the judges were raised they were greatly afflicted by one nation or another around them, and between judge and judge, but now they should be no more so; here the parenthesis should end:

and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies; this belongs to David personally, and intends the same as in **2Sa 7:1**;

also the Lord telleth thee, that he will make thee an house; not only build up his family, and make that numerous, but establish the house of his kingdom, as the Targum; that whereas he was desirous of building an house for God, God would build up an house for him; which would be a clear proof, that though he did not think fit to make use of him in the building of his house, yet he was not cast out of his favour, nor was it to be so interpreted by himself or others.

2 Samuel 7:12

Ver. 12. And when thy days be fulfilled,.... The days of his life, which were appointed by the Lord for him to live, and when he had filled up the common term of man's life, as he exactly did; for he lived just seventy years, see **2Sa 5:4**;

and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; die and be buried; for this is a phrase expressive of death, and the grave the common portion of men:

I will set up thy seed after thee; sons to succeed in the kingdom, as they did for the space of five hundred years; though here it respects one particular seed or son, even Solomon, as appears by what follows:

which shall proceed out of thy bowels; be begotten by him, and born unto him, and has regard to a future son of his not yet born; not Absalom nor Adonijah, nor any of the rest born in Hebron were to succeed him in the kingdom, but one as yet unborn:

and I will establish his kingdom; so that he shall have a long and happy reign, as Solomon had.

2 Samuel 7:13

Ver. 13. He shall build an house for my name,.... For the honour of it, for the worship and service of God, as it is well known Solomon did; and so his antitype the Messiah, **Zec 6:12**;

and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever; that is, for a long time. Solomon's reign was forty years, and the kingdom of Judah continued in his posterity until the Babylonish captivity, and a prince that descended from him was the ruler of the people when they returned: this has its fulfilment more eminently in Christ, who was of his seed, to whom God has given "the throne of his father David", and who "shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever", **Lu 1:32**.

2 Samuel 7:14

Ver. 14. I will be his father, and he shall be my son,.... That is, I will be as kind unto him, and careful of him, as a father of a son; or he shall be, and appear to be my son, by adopting grace, as no doubt Solomon was, notwithstanding all his failings. This is applied to Christ, the antitypical Solomon, who was, in an higher sense, the Son of God, even by natural and eternal generation; see **Heb 1:5**;

if he commit iniquity; which cannot be supposed of Christ; for though he was made sin by imputation, he neither knew nor did any, but may be supposed of his spiritual offspring, whom he represented as an head and surety, as of Solomon, who committed many sins and transgressions:

I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; either with men themselves, as Hadad the Edomite, Rezon the son of Eliadah, and Jeroboam the son of Nebat, by all whom he was afflicted and distressed, after he felt into idolatry, 1Ki 11:14; or with such rods and stripes as men correct their children with, not to destroy them, but to chastise them for their good; and so the phrases denote humane, kind, gentle, moderate corrections given in love, and which answer some good purposes.

2 Samuel 7:15

Ver. 15. But my mercy shall not depart away from him,.... Which is not to be understood of special mercy and grace, though it is true of these with respect to Solomon, and so to all the adopted children of God, see Ps 89:32; but then this here designs such mercy as may be taken away from another, and as it was from Saul, as it follows:

as I took [it] from Saul, whom I put away before thee; and therefore must be understood of his mercy and kindness, in giving him a kingdom, and setting him on the throne; this should not be taken away from him, as it was from Saul, whom God rejected from being king; not him personally, but his posterity; but so the Lord would not do, nor did he, to Solomon, in whose posterity the kingdom of Judah continued to the Babylonish captivity.

2 Samuel 7:16

Ver. 16. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee,.... That is, both his family and his government should be perpetuated, or he should always have one of his family to sit upon his throne; the accomplishment of which, in the beginning of it, he saw with his eyes in his son Solomon, and with an eye of faith in his greater Son the Messiah, in whom only these words will have their complete fulfilment; and so Abarbinel says this vision or prophecy is explained by some of the days of the Messiah; and this house and kingdom, in 1Ch 17:14; are called by the Lord "my" house, and "my" kingdom:

thy throne shall be established for ever; which is a repetition of the same in other words for the confirmation of it.

2 Samuel 7:17

Ver. 17. According to all these words, and according to all this vision,.... All the words of this prophecy, just as they were delivered to Nathan, were exactly expressed by him; he did not vary from them in the least, but with the greatest faithfulness related them:

so did Nathan speak unto David; though in the part which related to the history of the house of God, it was contrary to the advice which he had given; but he was not ashamed to retract his sense, when he was made acquainted with the mind of God.

2 Samuel 7:18

Ver. 18. Then went King David in,.... Into the tabernacle where the ark was, which he had prepared for it, **2Sa 6:17**;

and sat before the Lord; before the ark, the symbol of his presence, and prayed, and gave thanks, as follows: from whence it appears that a sitting posture was sometimes used in prayer, of which we have other instances, Ex 17:11. It is said {y} that Pythagoras, and also Numa, ordered that worshippers should sit. So that this act of devotion is not to be limited to any particular posture, though it seems most agreeable either to stand or kneel; and the Jews look upon this to be a peculiar case, and infer from hence that none were allowed to sit in the court but the kings of the house of Judah {z}; and some of them {a} will not allow that to them, since the seraphim above are even said to stand, **Isa 6:2**; and suppose the meaning of this to be only that David supported himself in the court; and some render the words, "he remained before the Lord" {b}; he continued in meditation, prayer, and thanksgiving, and such like acts of devotion, for a considerable time; so the Targum, in 1Ch 17:16.

"King David came and continued in prayer before the Lord:"

and he said, who [am] I, O Lord God? a creature, a sinful creature, a mean and unworthy one, undeserving of a place in the house of God, and of access unto him, and to receive any favour from him, less than the least of all saints, less than the least of all mercies:

and what [is] my house: or family of which he was, the family of Jesse; for though it sprung from a prince in Israel, yet was but low and mean, in comparison of some others, and especially unworthy of the regard of the great God:

that thou hast brought me hitherto? to such grandeur and dignity, as to be king over all Israel and Judah, to have all his enemies subdued under him, and to be at peace and rest from them, and established in his kingdom; and which he signifies the Lord alone had brought him to, through many difficulties and tribulations, and which he could never have attained unto by his own wisdom and power, nor by the assistance of his friends; it was all the Lord's doing, and wondrous in his eyes.

{y} Vid. D. Herbert. de Cherbury de Relig. Gent. c. 7. p. 65. {z} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 69. 2. Maimon & Bartenor. in Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 1. {a} Midrash in Abarbinel in loc. {b} bvyw "et mansit", Vatablus.

2 Samuel 7:19

Ver. 19. And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God,.... This of raising him to the throne, and settling him on it, was but a small thing in comparison of what he promised to do for him and his:

but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come; since he had not only spoken of a son that should succeed him in the kingdom, but that he would make him an house, and establish his kingdom; yea, that the throne of his kingdom should be established for ever, that a race of kings should spring from him, and especially the King Messiah, of whose kingdom there would be no end; and so the Targum,

"thou hast spoken of the house of thy servant unto the world to come,"

a phrase often used by the Jews for the times of the Messiah; see **Heb 2:5**; and so Abarbinel thinks this clause has respect to Messiah the son of David:

and [is] this the manner of man, O Lord God? to bestow their favours on their inferiors, persons of no worth and merit, and is a profuse manner? it is not; and yet to one so much below thee, and so undeserving, hast thou most largely and liberally given such great and unmerited mercies: or is it the manner, or customary to deal thus with men mean and abject, though it may with great personages that make a great figure in the world? it is not: and yet I am regarded by thee as if I was one of the greatest monarchs on earth: this sense agrees with the parallel text in 1Ch 17:17; "and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree"; or, "this is the law", or "doctrine of the man [who is] the Lord God" {c}. This doctrine contained in the promise now made respects the seed of the woman, the promised Shiloh, the illustrious man, Jehovah's fellow, the incarnate God, the Messiah, who is Jehovah our righteousness, the true God and eternal life.

{c} So Luther and Osiander; or "this is the delineation of the man who is the Lord", &c. So Hiller. Onomastic. Sacr. p. 447.

2 Samuel 7:20

Ver. 20. And what can David say more unto thee,.... In a way of self-abasement, or in thankfulness for such wonderful favours, or in prayer for more and other mercies; he wants words, as if he should say, to express his sense of his own nothingness and unworthiness, and to praise the Lord for all his benefits; and so large are the grants and promises made, that there is no room for him to ask for more:

for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant; what a sense he has of his own meanness and vileness, what gratitude his heart is filled with, and what his wants and necessities are, which God only can supply, and does abundantly, even more than he is able to ask or think. The Targum is,

"and thou hast performed the petition of thy servant, O Lord God."

2 Samuel 7:21

Ver. 21. For thy word's sake,.... For the sake of the promise he had made to him by Samuel, that he should be king, and his kingdom should be established; or for the sake of the Messiah, that should spring from him; the Memra, as the Targum, the essential Word of God; and so the Septuagint version, "because of thy servant", with which agrees the parallel text in 1Ch 17:19;

and according to thine own heart; of his own sovereign good will and pleasure, of his own grace, as the Arabic version, and not according to the merits and deserts of David:

hast thou done all these great things; in making him king of Israel, and settling the kingdom in his posterity to the times of the Messiah, who should spring from him:

to make thy servant know [them]; as he now did by Nathan the prophet, what he and his should enjoy for time to come; so that it is not only a blessing to have favours designed, purposed, and promised, but to have the knowledge of them, to know the things that are freely given of God.

2 Samuel 7:22

Ver. 22. Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God,.... In his name, nature, persons, and perfections, purposes, promises, and works:

for [there is] none like thee; for his essence and attributes, for his greatness and goodness, for what he is in himself, for what he is to his people, and has done for them:

neither [is there any] God beside thee; there is but one God, the living and true God, the former and maker of all things; all others are but fictitious and factitious gods, see **1Sa 2:2**;

according to all that we have heard with our ears; concerning what he did in the land of Egypt upon the Egyptians, and in the wilderness, in favour of the Israelites, and in the land of Canaan, by driving out the inhabitants before the people of Israel, and in the times of the judges, in raising them up to deliver his people.

2 Samuel 7:23

Ver. 23. And what one nation in the earth [is] like thy people, [even] like Israel,.... For the knowledge and worship of the true God among them, for laws and or given them, and for blessings of goodness bestowed upon them:

whom God went to redeem for a people to himself; the words are plural, "whom the gods went to redeem"; the Targum is,

"they that were sent from the Lord,"

meaning Moses and Aaron, of whom Jarchi interprets them, of the first of which it is said, "I have made thee a god unto Pharaoh", **Ex 7:1**; but Kimchi and R. Isaiah understand it of the true God, only suppose, as the former, that the plural expression is used for the sake of honour and glory; whereas, no doubt, respect is had to the three divine Persons in the Trinity, who were all concerned in the redemption of Israel, see Isa 63:9, where mention is made of the Lord, and of the Angel of his presence, and of his holy Spirit, as engaged therein:

and to make him a name; either to get himself a name, and honour and glory in the world, to show forth his power and might, as well as his mercy and goodness, or to make his people famous, great, and glorious in the earth:

and to do for you great things and terrible; as he did in the land of Ham, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan, great things for his people, and terrible ones to their enemies:

for thy land; which is either spoken to God, whose was the land of Israel, and which he had chosen to dwell in, and had given to his people; or else to Israel, to whom the grant of this land was made, and who were put into the possession of it:

before thy people which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt: that is, the great and terrible things were done in their sight, when they were redeemed from the bondage of Egypt, see Ps 78:12;

[from] the nations, and their gods? meaning, that they were redeemed not only from Egypt, but the nations of the Canaanites were driven out before them; nor could their idols save them, but destruction came upon them as upon the gods of the Egyptians: some leave out the supplement "from", and interpret this of the persons redeemed, even of the nations and tribes of Israel, and their great men, their rulers and civil magistrates, sometimes called gods.

2 Samuel 7:24

Ver. 24. For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel [to be] a people unto thee for ever,.... So long as they were obedient to him, and observed his laws and statutes, and abode by his worship and ordinances, otherwise he would write a "loammi" on them, as he has, see **Ho 1:9**;

and thou, Lord, art become their God; their covenant God, they having avouched him to be their God, and he having avouched them to be his people, De 26:17.

2 Samuel 7:25

Ver. 25. And now, O Lord God,.... From confessions of unworthiness, and of the goodness of God, and a recital of favours conferred on him and the people of Israel, David proceeds to petitions:

the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish [it] for ever: he prays for the sure performance of the promise of God respecting himself and his family, and the stability and perpetual continuance of the kingdom in it, and has, no doubt, a special regard to the Messiah, the promised seed that should spring from him:

and do as thou hast said: for though God had purposed and promised to do those several things, and would do them, yet it was expected by him, and it was right in David to pray for the performance of them; see Eze 36:37.

2 Samuel 7:26

Ver. 26. And let thy name be magnified for ever,.... David desired the performance of the above things not so much for his own sake, and for the sake of his family, as for the glory of God; his great concern was, that God might be magnified, and his greatness displayed, in making him and his family great; and particularly that he might be magnified and glorified in that famous Son of his, the Messiah, as he has been, Joh 13:31; and by all his people in succeeding ages:

saying, the Lord of hosts [is] the God over Israel; the Lord of armies above and below, is God over all, and in a special and peculiar manner God over Israel, literal and spiritual, that takes care of them, supplies, protects, and defends them:

and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee; as he had promised, **2Sa 7:16**.

2 Samuel 7:27

Ver. 27. For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel,.... As he is called in **2Sa 7:26**:

hast revealed to thy servant; which he otherwise could not have known:

saying, I will build thee an house; see **2Sa 7:11**;

therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee; found his heart disposed to this service, or found freedom and boldness in him to put up this prayer to God; what encouraged and emboldened him to do it was the gracious promise of God, that he would build up his family, and establish his kingdom; or otherwise he could not have taken such liberty, and used such boldness with God in prayer, as to have requested it of him.

2 Samuel 7:28

Ver. 28. And now, O Lord God, thou [art] that God,.... Who is the Lord of hosts, and the God of Israel, that has promised and is able to perform, and is faithful to his promise:

and thy words be true; are truly, punctually, and faithfully performed, never fail:

and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant; concerning building and establishing his house. David repeats this promise as being greatly affected with it, and fully assured of the performance of it.

2 Samuel 7:29

Ver. 29. Now therefore let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant,.... Not according to the merits of him or his family, but according to the sovereign will and pleasure of God; the Targum is, begin and bless; let the promised blessings begin to descend, that there may be some appearance of the performance of the promise, which may give encouragement that the whole will be fulfilled:

that it may continue for ever before thee; under his care and protection:

for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken [it]; whose words never fall to the ground, but have a sure accomplishment:

and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever; even both with temporal and spiritual blessedness.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 8

This chapter gives a relation of the wars of David with his enemies, and his victories over them, particularly the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and Edomites, and of the spoils he took from them, and of the presents made to him by others, 2Sa 8:1; and of his righteous administration of government, and of the principal officers in his court and camp, 2Sa 8:15.

Ver. 1. And after this it came to pass,.... After David had rest from his enemies for a time, and after the conversation he had had with Nathan about building the house of God, and after the message sent to him from the Lord by that prophet, forbidding him to build, and David's prayer to the Lord upon it, the following events happened; and which are recorded to show that David's rest from his enemies did not last long, and that he had other work to do than to build the house of God:

that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them; these had been long and implacable enemies of Israel; Samson began to weaken them in his days; a war was waged between them and Israel in the times of Samuel and Saul, and the battle sometimes went on one side and sometimes on the other; but now David made an entire conquest of them: before they had used to come into the land of Israel, and there fight with Israel, but now David entered into their land, and took it from them:

and David took Methegammah out of the hands of the Philistines; the name of a province in Palestine, and from the parallel place in 1Ch 18:1, it appears to be Gath, and its adjacent towns; but why that was called the bridle of Ammah, or the bridle of a cubit, as it may be rendered, is not easy to say. The conjecture of Kimchi is, that there was a pool or river of water, so Ammah is thought to signify; and Aquila renders it a water course, which passed through the city, having been brought from without it into it, the communication of which from place to place it may be David cut off, by stopping or turning its stream; but interpreters more generally suppose that Gath was built upon an hill called Ammah, see 2Sa 2:24; thought to be the same with the Amgaris of Pliny {d} though that is sometimes read Angaris, a mountain he places in Palestine; and that it was called Metheg, a bridle, because being a frontier city, and being very strong and powerful, erected into a kingdom, it was a curb and bridle upon the Israelites; but now David taking it out of their hands, opened his way for the more easy subduing the rest of their country: or the word may be rendered Metheg and her mother, that is, Gath, the metropolis, since that and her daughters, or towns, are said to be taken, 1Ch 18:1; and Metheg might be one of them.

{d} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 13.

2 Samuel 8:2

Ver. 2. And he smote Moab,.... He next went against that, and invaded it, the people of it being always troublesome and distressing to the children of Israel; and though the king of it had shown some favour to David, yet it was when he considered him as an enemy to Saul, and Saul to him; but things having taken a different turn, his and his people's enmity against David and his people appeared; wherefore he went and fought them, and made them his subjects, whereby was fulfilled the prophecy of Balaam, Nu 24:17; as it referred to David:

and measured them with a line: either their country and fields, to distribute among his people, or rather the soldiers he took prisoners; which, as Procopius Gazaeus says, were so numerous that they could not be told, and therefore they were ordered to lie prostrate on the ground, and they were measured with a line, as it follows:

casting them down to the ground; or ordering them to lie down; though some understand this of casting down their cities, towers, and strong holds, and levelling them with the ground:

even with two lines measured he; with one, so it may be supplied, as the Vulgate Latin,

to put to death, and with one full line, to keep alive; that is, in measuring them with his lines, he divided them into two parts, one he put to death, and the other, the full line, which contained the most, he saved alive; though it seems according to our version, and so most understand it, that David slew two thirds, and saved one, and so Josephus {e}. This must be understood of the army of the Moabites that fell into his hands, so Josephus, who persisted and refused to submit, not of all the inhabitants of the land. The Jews say {f}, that the reason of this severe treatment of them was because they slew the father, and mother and brethren of David, whom he left to the care and custody of the king of Moab, when he fled from Saul, see 1Sa 22:3; since after that they are heard no more of; though it should rather be imputed to their enmity against the people of Israel. The phrase of "meting out the valley of Succoth" seems to be an allusion to this fact, Ps 60:6, the psalm being written on occasion of the victories here related:

and [so] the Moabites became David's servants; the inhabitants of the land who were left in it, perhaps that part of the soldiers preserved alive were brought home captives:

[and] brought gifts; paid a yearly tribute to King David, as they afterwards did to Solomon and to Rehoboam, until the revolt of the ten tribes, and then they paid it unto the kings of Israel, to the times of Ahab, see **2Ki 3:4**, though these gifts may be distinct from, and besides the tribute paid, which is supposed in their being servants, see 2Ch 17:11. Thus the Arabians {g} carried gifts to the king of Persia besides tribute.

{e} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5. sect. 1. {f} Bemidbar Rabba, l. 14. fol. 212. 1. {g} Herodot. Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 97.

2 Samuel 8:3

Ver. 3. And David also smote Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah,.... Called sometimes Aramzobah, and was a part of Syria, as its name shows. Benjamin, of Tudela {h} takes it to be the same with Haleb or Aleppo; Josephus {i} calls it Sophene; but that is placed by Ptolemy {k} beyond the Euphrates; whereas this country must be between that river and the land of Israel, and was contiguous to it, and near Damascus; and it was so near the land of Israel, and being conquered by David, that it became a controversy with the Jews, whether it was not to be reckoned part of it, and in several things they allow it to be equal to it {l}. Rehob was the first king of this part of Syria, and then his son the second and last; he is called Hadarezer in 1Ch 18:3; the letters d "D" and r "R", being frequently changed in the Hebrew tongue: him David fought with, and overcame,

as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates; which some understand of Hadadezer, so Jarchi and Kimchi, who attempted to recover part of his dominions that had been taken by some one or another from him, which lay upon the river Euphrates; or he endeavoured to enlarge his dominions, and carry them as far as the river, and establish the borders of them; and while he was doing this, or attempting it, David fell upon him, and routed him; or rather this refers to David, who considering that the ancient border of the land of Israel, as given to Abraham, reached to the river Euphrates, Ge 15:18; he set out on an expedition to recover this border, and whereas the country of this king lay in his way, he invaded that; upon which Hadadezer rose up against him, and was conquered by him, and by this means the border was recovered to the kingdom of Israel, and reached so far, as is plain it did in Solomon's time, **1Ki 4:21**.

{h} Itinerar. p. 59. {i} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5. sect. 1.) {k} Geograph. l. 5. c. 13. {l} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 8. 1. 2. Misn. Demai, c. 6. sect. 11. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

2 Samuel 8:4

Ver. 4. And David took from him a thousand [chariots], and seven hundred horsemen,.... "Chariots" are not in the text here, it is only 1700 "horsemen"; but it is supplied from 1Ch 18:4; where the word is expressly mentioned, and there the horsemen are said to be seven thousand as in the Septuagint version here, and in Josephus {m}; which may be reconciled by observing, with Kimchi and Abarbinel, that here the chief officers are meant, there all the chariots and horsemen that were under their command are mentioned, which together made up that large number; or else here are meant the ranks and companies of horse David took, which were seven hundred; and these having ten in a company or rank, made seven thousand; and there the complement of soldiers in those companies and ranks are intended:

and twenty thousand footmen; the same as in 1Ch 18:4; and so in Josephus {n}:

and David houghed all the chariot [horses]; or hamstrung them, as Joshua was ordered to do with respect to the Canaanites, Jos 11:6; he did not kill them, which might seem cruel and unmerciful to the brute creatures, but hamstrung them, that they might be useless for war; and the reason of it was, that horses might not be multiplied in Israel for that purpose, that so their trust and confidence might not be placed in them; see De 17:16;

but reserved of them [for] an hundred chariots; for his own use, not for war, but for grandeur; which accounts in some measure for the number of chariots and horses Solomon had, **1Ki 4:26**; the number of horses reserved is supposed to be four hundred, four horses being used in a chariot, which Jarchi gathers from **2Ch 1:17**.

{m} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5. sect. 1.) {n} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5. sect. 1.)

2 Samuel 8:5

Ver. 5. And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah,.... These seem to have had no king at this time, or, if they had, Hadadezer was their king, which is not improbable; and Nicholas of Damascus {o}; an Heathen writer, is clear for it, whom he calls Adad, who, he says, reigned over Damascus, and the other Syria without Phoenicia, who made war with David king of Judea, and was routed by him at Euphrates: and he seems to be the first king of Damascus, which he joined to the kingdom of Zobah, and all the kings of Damascus afterwards were called by the same name; though Josephus {p}, who also speaks of Adad being king of Damascus and of the Syrians, yet makes him different from this Hadadezer, to whose assistance he says he came:

David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men; that is, of the Syrians of Damascus.

{o} Apud Joseph. ib. (l. 7. c. 5.) sect. 2. {p} Ibid.

2 Samuel 8:6

Ver. 6. Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus,.... Which was Coele-Syria, and lay between Libanus and Antilibanus, the chief city of which was Damascus; which Curtius {q} calls Damascus of Syria, being the head of it, **Isa 7:8**; in the principal places of which he put garrisons of soldiers to keep the country in subjection to him; or he put commanders or governors, as the Targum, in the, chief cities, and so Ben Gersom and R. Isaiah interpret it:

and the Syrians became servants to David, [and] brought gifts; or paid him tribute by way of homage, acknowledging themselves his subjects:

and the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went; he covered his head in the day of battle, and saved him from the hurtful sword.

{q} Hist. l. 3. c. 8.

2 Samuel 8:7

Ver. 7. And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer,.... That were found with them, which they had in their hands; these must be supposed to be with the principal officers of his army; or golden chains, as Aquila, or golden bracelets on their arms, as the Septuagint; the Syriac version is "quivers of gold", such as they put arrows into, and so Jarchi and R. Isaiah understand it of such, and refer to Jer 51:11; and so Josephus {r}:

and brought them to Jerusalem; where they were laid up, and converted to the use of the sanctuary Solomon built; see **So 4:4**.

{r} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5.) sect. 3.

2 Samuel 8:8

Ver. 8. And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer,.... Which, in 1Ch 18:8, are called Tibhath and Chun, they having different names; or their names might be changed upon this conquest of them, and the one might be the names they went by with the Syrians, and the other the Israelites called them by; the latter is the same with Berothah in Eze 47:16; and the Barathena of Ptolemy {s}, placed by him near Mesopotamia; in the Arabic version of 1Ch 18:8, they are called Emesa and Baalbec, the former was a city of Coele-Syria, the latter was at the foot of Mount Lebanon; See Gill on "Am 1:5";

King David took exceeding much brass; whereby he was furnished and able to give the large quantity he did for the service of the temple, 1Ch 29:7. The Septuagint version adds here what is expressed in 1Ch 18:8,

"wherewith Solomon made the brazen sea, and the pillars, and the layers, and all the vessels."

{s} Geograph. l. 5. c. 19.

2 Samuel 8:9

Ver. 9. When Toi king of Hamath,.... Which was another small kingdom in Syria, perhaps lately erected to defend themselves against Hadadezer, and this the first king of it, at least the first we hear of; his name is Tou in 1Ch 18:9; where in the Targum he is called king of Antioch. Hamath lay to the north of the land of Canaan;
See Gill on "Nu 34:8": it is said {t} to be three days' journey from Tripoli, and that it stands in the midway to Aleppo, on a very goodly plain, replenished with corn and cotton wool, but very much in ruins, and falls more and more to decay: at this day (says my author, who travelled in those parts in the beginning of the seventeenth century) there is scarce one half of the wall standing, which hath been very fair and strong. The king of this place

heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer; the news of which soon reached him, he being in the neighbourhood.

{t} Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 6.

2 Samuel 8:10

Ver. 10. Then Toi sent Joram his son unto King David,.... Who is called Hadoram in 1Ch 18:10; though the Syriac and Arabic versions read Joram there:

to salute him: to inquire of his welfare after his fatigue in the battles he had had with the Moabites and Syrians, and to wish him all happiness and prosperity for the future:

and to bless him; to congratulate him on his victory, and to wish him success in all after wars he might be engaged in; and particularly to give him thanks for delivering him from so great an enemy as Hadadezer had been to him, as also to bring a present to him, which is sometimes called a blessing; see Ge 33:11;

because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him; that is, David had, which had endeared him to Toi:

for Hadadezer had wars with Toi; was an enemy of his, sought to take his kingdom from him, and had had many battles with him: and though he could not conquer him, he sadly harassed him, being too mighty for him:

and [Joram] brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass; as a present to David, in gratitude for his deliverance from his enemy by him, and as a token of his homage and subjection to him; at least as a sign that he put himself under his protection, and desired to be his friend and ally. The word "Joram", though not in the Hebrew text, is rightly supplied; for none else can be supposed to bring the present.

2 Samuel 8:11

Ver. 11. Which also King David did dedicate unto the Lord,.... He devoted it to sacred uses, particularly to the building of the house of the Lord, as he also had the gold and the brass he took from Hadadezer: together

with the silver and the gold he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued; who are after particularly mentioned; he did not convert the spoils he took to his own use, but observed the law God gave to the kings of Israel, that they should not greatly multiply to themselves silver and gold, De 17:17. He set it apart, and laid it up for the service of the sanctuary; and this accounts for the abundance of gold, silver, and brass, which David had amassed together, and left to his son Solomon to build the temple with; see 1Ch 28:1.

2 Samuel 8:12

Ver. 12. Of Syria,.... Of Syria of Damascus, as distinct from Syriazobah, Hadadezer was king of, after mentioned; this is omitted in 1Ch 18:11;

and of Moab: who brought him gifts and presents, and were tributaries to him, **2Sa 8:2**;

and of the children of Ammon; who very probably joined the Moabites, and were conquered and spoiled at the same time:

and of the Philistines; when Methegammah was taken from them, **2Sa 8:1**;

and of Amalek; for though we have no account of any war of his with that people, since he was king, yet he doubtless had, and had been victorious and spoiled them; see Ps 83:7;

and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah; see **2Sa 8:3**. These conquests of David, are confirmed by the testimony of Eupolemus, an Heathen writer, who says that he overcame the Syrians by Euphrates, and the Assyrians in Galadene (or Gilead), and the Phoenicians; that he fought against the Idumeans (or Edomites), the Ammonites, Moabites, Ituraeans, Nabathaeans, and Nabdaeans; also against Syron king of Tyre and Phoenicia; all of whom he obliged to pay tribute to the Jews {a}.

{a} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30. p. 447.

2 Samuel 8:13

Ver. 13. And David gat [him] a name,.... Fame and reputation in the several nations of the world for valour and courage, for the many and signal victories that he obtained; the Jewish writers generally refer this to his humanity in burying the dead bodies of his enemies slain in war, which gained him great esteem among all, and even his very enemies; but nothing of that kind is pointed at here, but his conquests: or "he made himself a name"; erected a triumphal arch {b} in memory of his victories:

when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt, [being] eighteen thousand [men]; in the relation of this fact in different places some difficulties arise, both as to the people smitten, and their numbers, and by whom; in this place they are said to be Syrians, but in 1Ch 18:12, and in the title of Ps 60:1, which was composed on account of these victories, they are called Edomites, and said to be of Edom; which may be reconciled by observing, that the Syrians and Edomites were confederates in this war; and that whereas the latter were auxiliaries to the former, the whole body of the army might be called Syrians, of which twenty two thousand were slain that were properly Syrians, and eighteen thousand Edomites, in all forty thousand; which was a very great slaughter: or the sense is, that when he had smitten the twenty two thousand Syrians, and was upon the return, he met with a body of Edomites, who came to the assistance of the Syrians, and he slew eighteen thousand of them; and the Jews say, as Jarchi observes, there were two battles;

and if so, this would remove all the difficulties started; as for the numbers slain, here eighteen thousand, and Ps 60:1, twelve thousand, it is reconciled by observing, that Abishai first began the attack upon the Edomites, and slew six thousand of them; and then Joab fell upon them, and slew twelve thousand more, in all eighteen thousand; in 1Ch 18:12, this slaughter is ascribed to Abishai, because he began it, even the whole number; and in Ps 60:1, to Joab, the twelve thousand slain by him, who seconded Abishai; and the whole is here attributed to David, because he was king, under whom Abishai and Joab served as generals: and no less difficult is it to ascertain the place where this slaughter was made, called "the valley of salt": it seems by our text that it was in Syria, but in other places as if it was in Edom; see 2Ki 14:7; but in Edom itself is no such valley to be found, though there is in Syria; one traveller {c} tells us, that in the way from Aleppo to the banks of Euphrates are many villages, among which is one of note, called Tedith, famous for a synod held here by the Jews, in the year from the creation 3498, of which Ezra was the scribe; when were placed the books of the Old Testament in the order in which they now are; and near this town, he says, is the valley of salt, memorable for the victory here recorded: others say {d} about three or four hours' journey from Aleppo is the valley of salt, near which is a salt spring, whose waters running over the place leave, when dried by the sun, a great quantity of excellent salt; this salt is thrown together in the Gabboul, or salt house; but by others {e} we are informed, that near about an hour's distance from the city of Tadmor, see **1Ki 9:18** **2Ch 8:3**, is to be seen a large valley of salt, affording great quantities thereof; and it is thought that this is more probably the valley of salt mentioned here, than another which lies about four hours from Aleppo, and has sometimes passed for it; and which the above accounts show: but a modern writer {f}, in his account of Palmyra, the same with Tadmor, speaks of a great plain, all covered with salt, from whence the whole country round is supplied. This plain is about a league from Palmyra, and extends itself towards the eastern part of Idumea (or Edom) the capital city of which was Bozra; and indeed this valley being both in Syria, and reaching to the borders of Edom, bids fair to be the valley here spoken of.

{b} So Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 78. D. {c} Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 11. {d} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 2. p. 347. {e} See Lowthorp's Philosophical Transactions abridged, vol. 3. p. 504. {f} Halifax apud Calmet's Dictionary in the Word "Salt".

2 Samuel 8:14

Ver. 14. And he put garrisons in Edom,.... To keep the inhabitants in subjection to him; as their forts and strong holds came into his hands, he placed companies of soldiers in them for the said purpose; or governors, as the Targum, men of his own nation, into whose hands he put their principal cities, who governed them for him, and under him. Jarchi interprets it of officers appointed to collect the tribute he exacted of them:

throughout all Edom put he garrisons; which is observed to show that the whole country was brought into subjection to him:

and all they of Edom became David's servants; and hereby were fulfilled the oracle delivered to Rebekah, and the prophetic blessing of Isaac, Ge 25:23;

and the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went;
See Gill on "2Sa 8:6".

2 Samuel 8:15

Ver. 15. And David reigned over all Israel,.... Not only over Judah, but over all the tribes of Israel, and over the whole land of Canaan, as promised to Abraham, Ge 15:18; reaching to the river Euphrates, as Syria did, now conquered by David:

and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people; when he returned from his wars, he heard and tried all causes impartially, brought before him, and gave sentence according to the law of God, and administered righteous judgment without any respect to persons; all had justice done them that applied unto him, whether high or low, rich or poor; and indeed during his wars he was not negligent of the civil government of his subjects, and the distribution of justice to them by proper officers, in which he was a type of Christ; see Isa 11:5.

2 Samuel 8:16

Ver. 16. And Joab the son of Zeruiah [was] over the host,.... Which was not only owing to his relation to David, being his sister's son, but to his promise that whoever smote the Jebusites first should be chief and captain; that is, should have the command of the army under him; this Joab did; and so was entitled to this office, and was put into it, and continued in it, 1Ch 11:6;

and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud [was] recorder; of memorable events, who kept a diary of whatsoever remarkable happened, which were digested into a chronicle, history, or annals; see **Es 6:1**; so the Targum, he

"was appointed over the memorials;"

or book of memorials, as Kimchi interprets it; that is, to take care of it, and see that everything worthy of notice was inserted in it; or was "remembrancer" {g}; one that put the king in mind what was to be done every day, or in certain cases, and so R. Isaiah explains it, the king's counsellor; some take him to be chancellor, as Luther and others {h}.

{g} rykzm "commemorans", Montanus; "commemorator", Syr. Ar. "memorans, sive reducens in memoriam", Vatablus. {h} Vid. Beckium in Targ. 1 Chron. xviii. 15.

2 Samuel 8:17

Ver. 17. And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, [were] the priests,.... Not high priests, as Josephus {i} suggests, for there was only one high priest at a time; indeed there was a "sagan", or deputy priest, on occasion; and so Abarbinel says that Zadok was the high priest, and Ahimelech his second or deputy; but the truth of the case was this, Abiathar was high priest only, and continued so until the time of Solomon, when he was thrust out of his office, and Zadok put into it; and Ahimelech his son and Zadok were the principal priests under him, the one of the family of Ithamar, the other of Eleazar; so the Targum on 1Ch 18:16 calls them "sagans", or deputies of the high priesthood. Zadok is mentioned first, though Ahimelech was the son of the present high priest, because he was in great favour with David, as afterwards with Solomon, in whose days the high priesthood was translated to him; the family of Eli being now upon the decline, and near being removed from the high priesthood, as was foretold by Samuel it should:

and Seraiah [was] the scribe; or secretary of state; in 1Ch 18:16 he is called Shavsha; he seems to have had two names.

{i} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5.) sect. 4.

2 Samuel 8:18

Ver. 18. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada [was] over both the Cherethites and Pelethites,.... These, according to Josephus {k}, were the king's bodyguards, and this man is expressly said to be set over his guards, 2Sa 23:22; and which some think were of the nation of the Philistines, famous for archery, and slinging of stones; and so the Targum renders it,

"was appointed over the archers and slingers;"

so "choriti" in Virgil {l} are quivers for arrows; the great use of which in fighting David had observed, and therefore got a select company of these men, partly to teach Israel, and partly to guard himself: but others are of opinion that David would never suffer such as were Heathens to be so near his person, and therefore take them to be Israelites; and so some Jewish writers say they were two families in Israel; which is much better than to interpret them as others do of the sanhedrim, and even of the Urim and Thummim, as in the Targum on 1Ch 18:17;
See Gill on "Zep 2:5"; and it is most probable that they were Israelites, who were David's guards, and consisted of the chiefs that were with him in Philistia, and particularly at Ziklag, which lay on the south of the Cherethites, 1Sa 30:14; and so had their name from thence; and among the chief of those that came to him at Ziklag there was one named Peleth, from whence might come the Pelethites, and they were all of them archers; see 1Ch 12:2;

and David's sons were chief rulers; princes, princes of the blood, or "chief about the king", as in 1Ch 18:17; they were constant attendants at court, waiting on the king, ready at hand to do what he pleased to order; they were the chief ministers, and had the management of the principal affairs at court. Abarbinel thinks that this respects not only David's sons, but Benaiah, and the family of the Cherethites and Pelethites, who had none of them particular posts assigned them, which were settled and known, as those before mentioned had, but were always near at hand, to do whatsoever the king commanded them; and which seems better to agree with the literal order and construction of the words; which are,

and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and Pelethites,
and the sons of David, [were] princes, or chief rulers; or priests, who according to Gussetius {m} brought the offerings or presents to the king, and did that to him the priests did to the Lord.

{k} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5. sect.4.) {l} Aeneid. 10. {m} Ebr. Comment. p. 366.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 9

This chapter relates David's inquiry after the posterity of Saul, whether any were living and where they were, 2Sa 9:1; and on inquiry being informed of one, he sent for him, and kindly received him, 2Sa 9:5; and restored to him the land of his fathers, and appointed a person to till it for him, and bring him the fruits of it, and maintained him at his own table, 2Sa 9:9.

Ver. 1. And David said,.... To some of his courtiers:

is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul? which question was put by him, not in order to destroy them, lest they should disturb his government, as was usual with other princes, and especially such who got their crowns by usurpation; but to prevent any suspicion of that kind in the persons he inquired of, he adds,

that I may show him kindness, for Jonathan's sake? not for Saul's sake, who had been his implacable enemy, though he had sworn to him that he would not cut off his seed; but for Jonathan's sake, his dear friend, whose memory was precious to him. Some of the Jewish writers have thought, because this follows upon the account given of the officers of David, both in his camp and court, that this question was occasioned by a thought that came into his mind, while he was appointing officers, that if there were any of Saul's family, and especially any descendant of Jonathan, that was fit for any post or office, he would put him into one; but this seems to be a long time after David had settled men in his chief offices; for Mephibosheth, after an inquiry found out, was but five years of age when his father was slain, and so but twelve when David was made king over all Israel, and yet now he was married, and had a young son, 2Sa 9:12; so that it was a long time after David was established in the kingdom that he thought of this; which is to be imputed to his being engaged so much in war, and having such a multiplicity of business on his hands.

2 Samuel 9:2

Ver. 2. And [there was] of the house of Saul a servant whose name [was] Ziba,.... Or there was a servant that belonged to Saul's family; not that any of Saul's family was a servant; and this servant the Jews commonly say was a Canaanitish servant, and who upon the death of his master was not made free, but became the inheritance and possession of his children after him, Le 25:46; though Josephus {n} says he was made free by Saul:

and when they had called him unto David; who it seems was now at court, or in Jerusalem, on some account or another; or was in David's service, in some inferior post or another; however, having been a quondam servant of Saul, it was thought he could give the best intelligence of his family, and whether any were living, and therefore was sent for; and when he was come into the king's presence,

the king said unto him, [art] thou Ziba? for he had been told before by some of his courtiers what his name was:

and he said, thy servant [is he]; or my name is Ziba, and I am at thy command.

{n} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5.) sect. 5.

2 Samuel 9:3

Ver. 3. And the king said, [is] there not yet any of the house of Saul; that is, remaining or living:

that I may show the kindness of God unto him? great kindness, some large favour or benefit; for the word God added to things, as to trees, mountains, &c. serves to set forth the excellency of them; and this kindness is in imitation of God, or such as he had sworn in the presence of God to show; and that is expressed in the same language, 1Sa 20:14;

and Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son; a son still living;

[which is] lame on [his] feet; on both his feet, as the Targum; of which occasion, See Gill on "2Sa 4:4".

2 Samuel 9:4

Ver. 4. And the king said unto him, where is he?.... In what part of the land, city, or town, does he dwell?

and Ziba said unto the king, behold, he [is] in the house of Machir,
the son of Ammiel; a descendant of Machir, the son of Manasseh, to whom the land of Gilead was given, which lay on the other side Jordan:

in Lodebar; a place in that country, perhaps the same with Debir in Jos 13:26. Here it may be his mother's relations lived, and here he might dwell in obscurity, and lie hid from the knowledge of David; who, it might be feared by his friends, would have dispatched him, had he known where he was. Some take it to be an appellative, and render it, as Abarbinel observes, "without anything"; as if he was so poor that he had not anything to support himself with. No mention as yet is made of his name, perhaps because the historian had given it before, **2Sa 4:4**.

2 Samuel 9:5

Ver. 5. Then King David sent,.... Messengers; it may be Ziba, none being more proper than he that knew him, and where he was:

and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar; they demanded him in the king's name, and being delivered to them, they brought him from thence to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 9:6

Ver. 6. Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul,.... For that was his name, though sometimes called Meribbaal, **1Ch 8:34**; and this was his relation to Jonathan and Saul, the son of the one, and grandson of the other:

was come unto David; to his court and palace in Jerusalem, being thither brought; for he could not go of himself, being lame:

he fell on his face, and did reverence; to him as a king, in a civil way, and in the best manner he could, considering that he was lame on his feet:

and David said, Mephibosheth; is it he? having learnt what his name was, this he expressed with great vehemency and affection, as glad that he had found one of Jonathan's posterity: and

he answered, behold thy servant! he answered to his name, and owned his subjection to David, and was ready to take the oath of allegiance to him, and give him homage, and serve him in what way he could.

2 Samuel 9:7

Ver. 7. And David said unto him, fear not,.... He might observe a dejection in his countenance, a trembling in his limbs, and might discover signs of fear lest David should cut him off, because he was of the seed royal:

for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake; whom he loved as his own soul, and to whom he had sworn that he would not cut off his kindness from his house for ever, and now remembering his oath was determined to observe it:

and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; his grandfather, such sometimes being called fathers; which David had taken to him, as crown lands, or in the right of his wife; or as being confiscated by Ishbosheth's rebellion:

and thou shall eat bread at my table continually; he gave him an apartment in the court, a place at his table, admitted him to be a guest with him as long as he should live; which was a very great favour and high honour, and showed what an unshaken friendship he had for his father, and would maintain with him. This was the kindness of God he meant to show to him.

2 Samuel 9:8

Ver. 8. And he bowed himself,.... In token of gratitude, and as a sign of humility, and of the sense he had of his unworthiness to enjoy such a favour:

and said, what [is] thy servant, that thou shouldest look on such a dead dog as I [am]? one so mean, and base, and worthless; which he might say with respect to the infirmities of his body, the rejection of his family by the Lord, their attainder of high treason for rebellion against David, and the low circumstances he was brought into and now under; though one of the royal family, the son of a prince, and grandson of a king; such was his humility, and the sense he had of his being undeserving of any favour from the king, and says this with admiration and astonishment.

2 Samuel 9:9

Ver. 9. Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant,.... Who had been his servant:

and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son; meaning either, as some, the son of Mephibosheth, Micha after mentioned; or rather Mephibosheth himself, the grandson of Saul, whose servant Ziba had been:

all that pertained to Saul, and to all his house; all his paternal estate, or what he had acquired, or in any wise belonged to him and his family; which David had in possession, and which he readily and cheerfully delivered up to Mephibosheth, having so great a regard to the memory of his father.

2 Samuel 9:10

Ver. 10. Thou therefore, thy sons, and thy servants,.... Which were many, and whose numbers are after given:

shall till the land for him; manure it, plough it, sow it, and reap it:

and thou shall bring in [the fruits]; the corn, and oil, and wine, the land produces:

that thy master's son may have food to eat; meaning either Micha, the son of Mephibosheth, since Mephibosheth seems to be distinguished from him, and opposed to him in the next clause: and who would stand in no need of food from any other quarter, being a guest at the king's table continually; or else Mephibosheth, who by this means would have a sufficiency for his son and servants, and in which Ziba's family and servants would have a share:

but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat always at my table; wherefore the land was to be tilled not for him personally, but for his family, and for what uses he should think fit to put the produce of it to:

now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants: who were enough to cultivate a considerable quantity of land.

2 Samuel 9:11

Ver. 11. Then said Ziba unto the king, according to all the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do,.... Till the land, and bring the fruits of it to Mephibosheth, for the support of his family; he promised very fair, had he been as faithful to his trust:

as for Mephibosheth, [said the king], he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons; which is repeated, for the confirmation of it, and to show that he should be treated with equal respect, and fare as the king's sons themselves did; though the clause "said the king" is not in the original text, and the words are thought by Abarbinel and others to be the words of Ziba continued; who promised to do what the king had ordered, though Mephibosheth had eaten at his table, as one of the king's sons, and needed not anything, and needed not to eat at the king's table; and if it was his pleasure, he would maintain him out of this estate like the son of a king; but the phrase "my table" seems to be too arrogant for Ziba to say, and rather fits the mouth of David the king.

2 Samuel 9:12

Ver. 12. And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name [was] Micha,.... What his age was is not said from him sprung a progeny of several generations, **1Ch 8:34**;

and all that dwelt in the house Ziba [were] servants to Mephibosheth; his sons and his servants.

2 Samuel 9:13

Ver. 13. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem,.... Either in some apartments in the king's palace, or in some house in the city provided for him; for he returned not to Lodebar, nor to any mansion house upon the estate, of Saul restored unto him:

for he did eat continually at the king's table; to which he was invited, and he accepted of:

and was lame on both his feet; or "though" he was {n}, yet this was no objection to David, he admitted him notwithstanding his infirmity; nor any obstruction to Mephibosheth, who found ways and means to be carried to the king's table daily.

{n} awhw "quamvis esset", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Patrick.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 10

This chapter gives an account of the ill treatment of David's messengers to the king of Ammon, who were sent to condole the death of his father, and were basely used by him, which David resented, 2Sa 10:1; which the Ammonites perceiving prepared for war, and got the Syrians to be confederates with them; of which David being informed, sent Joab and Abishai into their country, 2Sa 10:6; who divided the army between them, and attacked the Ammonites and Syrians with great courage, and routed them both, and returned to Jerusalem, 2Sa 10:9; after which the Syrians gathered together again to fight with David, who went out to meet them, and got an entire conquest over them, and made them servants to him, 2Sa 10:15.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass after this,.... After the wars with the Moabites, Syrians, and Edomites, being friendly with the children of Ammon, David sent an embassy to their king, after related; by which it appears what is said concerning the spoils of the children of Ammon, **2Sa 8:12**, is by anticipation; for these spoils were not taken until the following war with them, the occasion of which is here told:

that the king of the children of Ammon died; whose name was Nahash, as is clear from 2Sa 10:2, and probably might be the same that came against Jabeshgilead, from whom Saul delivered the inhabitants of that place, 1Sa 11:1;

and Hanun his son reigned in his stead; who, being his son, was heir to his crown, and succeeded him in his kingdom.

2 Samuel 10:2

Ver. 2. Then said David, I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash,.... Send him a friendly compliment of condolence on the death of his father:

as his father showed kindness unto me; when David was persecuted by Saul, he sent him aid, and invited him into his country for protection it may be, and some way or other showed respect unto him; though not out of real love and friendship to David, but in enmity to Saul, who had defeated him at Jabeshgilead, and had often wars with him: the Jews say {o} the particular kindness was, that when David left his father, mother, and brethren, with the king of Moab, he slew all but one, who fled to the king of the children of Ammon, and was by him saved alive:

and David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father; for the death of his father; to condole the loss of him, which was the custom of kings in friendship and alliance in former times, and still continues:

and David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon; even to Rabbah, the metropolis of the nation, and the royal city, where the king kept his court.

{o} Tanchuma apud Jarchium in loc.

2 Samuel 10:3

Ver. 3. And the princes of the children of Ammon said to Hanun their lord,.... His nobles and prime ministers, the courtiers that were about him:

thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? could he imagine that David was sincere, and that he really meant to do honour to the memory of his father, and comfort him under the loss of him, by sending his ambassadors to him on such an errand? there was no reason, they thought, to believe this, since an Israelite was forbidden to seek their peace and prosperity, or ask of it, nor might Ammonite enter into their congregation unto the tenth generation, De 23:3; and indeed some have thought that David did not do a right thing in sending this embassy, and was justly requited; but it is certain he acted according to the laws of friendship, and was cordial and sincere in what he did, though these courtiers of Hanun put an ill construction on his conduct, their minds being filled with enmity against the Israelites:

hath not David [rather] sent his servants unto thee to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it? to reconnoitre the place, to observe, as they walked about in it, which were the weakest and most defenceless parts of it, and what avenues there were to it, and which were most accessible, that they might the better know how to attack it, and destroy it; these surmises and suspicions they endeavoured to fill the king's head with, to set him against them, and treat them ill.

2 Samuel 10:4

Ver. 4. Wherefore Hanun took David's servants,.... His ambassadors:

and shaved off one half of their beards; that is, he ordered them to be shaved off; than which a greater indignity could not have been well done to them and to David, whom they represented, since the Israelites shaved not their beards, and were very careful of preserving them; for had it been the custom to shave, they might have shaved off the other half, and then they would not have appeared so ridiculous; and with other people it has been reckoned a very great punishment as well could be inflicted, and as great an affront as could well be offered, to mar a man's beard, or shave it off in whole or in part {p}. The Lacedemonians, as Plutarch {q} relates, when any fled from battle, used, by way of reproach, to shave off part of their beards, and let the other part grow long; and with the Indians, as Bishop Patrick observes from an ancient writer, the king used to order the greatest offenders to be shaven, as the heaviest punishment he could inflict upon them; but what comes nearest to the case here is what the same learned commentator quotes from Tavernier, who in his Indian Travels tells us, that the sophi of Persia caused an ambassador of Aurengzeb to have his beard shaved off, telling him he was not worthy to wear a beard, and thereupon commanded it should be shaved off; which affront offered him in the person of his ambassador was most highly resented by Aurengzeb, as this was by David:

and cut off their garments in the middle, [even] to their buttocks; and as they wore long garments in those countries, without any breeches or drawers under them, those parts by these means were exposed to view which modesty requires should be concealed {r}; so that they must be put to the utmost shame and confusion:

and sent them away; in this ridiculous manner, scoffing and leering at them no doubt; that since they came with compliments of condolence, it was proper they should appear in the habit of mourners, with their beards shaved, and their garments rent; cutting of garments, and standing in them from morning tonight, was a punishment of soldiers with the Romans, when they offended {s}.

{p} Apollon. Vit. Philostrat. l. 7. c. 14. {q} In Agesitao. {r} "Dimidiasque nates Gallica palla tegit". Martial. {s} Valer. Maxim. l. 2. c. 2.

2 Samuel 10:5

Ver. 5. When they told [it] unto David,.... Not the ambassadors, for they were not yet arrived, but some of their servants, perhaps, they sent before them to acquaint David of the usage they had met with:

he sent to meet them: he sent men to meet them with proper garments to put on, and to assure them how much he resented the indignity done to them and him, and would avenge it in due and proper time, and to direct them where to go for the present, as follows:

because the men were greatly ashamed: to proceed on their journey, and come to court in the condition they were:

and the king said; gave orders by the messengers he sent to them:

tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, or "bud" {t},

and [then] return; that is, to Jerusalem; Jericho, though not yet built, might have some cottages at or near the spot on which it had stood, for the convenience of shepherds, and gatherers of fruit, in the plains of it; here the ambassadors were directed to go, it being the first place they came to when they had passed over Jordan, from the country of Ammon; and being a place where there were scarcely any inhabitants, or very few, was very proper for them in their present circumstances; and this confirms what is before observed, that it was now the custom of the Israelites not to shave their whole beards; or otherwise it was but shaving off the other half, and being now provided with other clothes, they would have had no need to have stayed at Jericho, but might have proceeded on in their journey.

{t} xmuy "germinet", Pagninus, Montanus.

2 Samuel 10:6

Ver. 6. And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David,.... Or had made themselves odious to him, as it is rendered in 1Ch 19:6; were abominable to him, that he was incensed against them, and enraged at them, and was determined to be avenged on them for the affront given, of which they had certain information: but instead of seeking to appease him, and give him satisfaction for the affront,

the children of Ammon sent, and hired the Syrians of Bethrehob; a place near Hamath, Nu 13:21; there was a city of this name in the tribe of Asher, out of which the Canaanites could not be driven, and perhaps now inhabited by Syrians, or by a people so called, Jos 19:28;

and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen: that is, out of both places; this place Hadadezer was king of, with whom David had fought before, and beat, and who owed him a grudge on that account, and was ready to assist the Ammonites against him, **2Sa 8:3**,

and of King Maacah a thousand men; that is, of the king of Maacah, which was a place in the tribe off Manasseh, from whence the inhabitants could not be expelled, Jos 13:11; and seems now to have been inhabited by Syrians, and therefore is called Syriamaachah, 1Ch 19:6;

and of Ishtob twelve thousand men; which is thought to be the same with the land of Tob, whither Jephthah fled, and dwelt in it, when ill used by his brethren, Jud 11:3; these mercenary soldiers were in all thirty three thousand men; 1Ch 19:6, it is said, chariots and horsemen, even thirty two thousand; these were hired with a thousand talents of silver.

2 Samuel 10:7

Ver. 7. And when David heard of [it],.... Of the preparation made by the Ammonites to fight with him:

he sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men: he sent out Joab his general, and an army under his command, consisting of men of strength, valour, and courage; or all the host and the mighty men, as Kimchi and Ben Melech, the famous mighty men mentioned in 2Sa 23:8; he did not think it advisable to wait for the Ammonites, but carried the war into their own country, and, instead of suffering them to invade his dominions, he invaded theirs.

2 Samuel 10:8

Ver. 8. And the children of Ammon came out,.... Either out of Rabbah their metropolis, as Josephus {u}; or rather out of Medeba, as it seems from 1Ch 19:7; a city that lay on the borders of their country, and was a frontier town, see Nu 21:30;

and put the battle in array, at the entering in of the gate; of the city of Medeba; they were first within the city, but, upon the approach of Joab and his army, they came out and drew up in a line of battle at the gate of it:

and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Ishtob, and Maacah, [were] by themselves in the field; at some distance from the city, the Ammonites not choosing to trust: mercenaries in it; and perhaps they placed these ambush in the field, to get Joab between two fires, as we now express it.

{u} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 6. sect. 2.

2 Samuel 10:9

Ver. 9. When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind,.... Or "the face" of it {w}; armies appeared both before and behind, about to attack him both in front and rear; the Targum is,

"and Joab saw that the warriors, or those that made war, were strong against him before and behind:"

he chose of all the choice [men] of Israel; the most eminent for strength, and valour, and military skill, who had been tried, and were famous for warlike exploits, the flower of the army:

and put [them] in array against the Syrians; who might be the strongest party, and the best soldiers; though being but mercenaries, if hard beset, would sooner give way, as he might suppose, upon which the Ammonites would do the same.

{w} ynp "facies", Pagninus, Montanus.

2 Samuel 10:10

Ver. 10. And the rest of the people he delivered into the hands of Abishai his brother,.... Who was a commander under him, and a very valiant man; and thus, as his enemy had two armies, he divided his into two parts, that he might the better attack them:

that he might put [them] in array against the children of Ammon: draw them up in a line, place them rank and file to meet the children of Ammon, and give them battle.

2 Samuel 10:11

Ver. 11. And he said, if the Syrians be too strong for me,.... Which he might perceive by Joab's forces giving way, or by some signal agreed on between them

then thou shall help me; detach a part of his army to his support and assistance:

but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee; in the same manner.

2 Samuel 10:12

Ver. 12. Be of good courage, and let us play the men,.... This Joab said, not only to encourage Abishai and himself, but in the hearing of the rest of the officers of the army, and of many of the people, to hearten them to the battle; who might be somewhat intimidated with the number of their enemies, and the position they were in, being before and behind them; and therefore he thought proper to make such a speech to them to animate them to light:

for our people, and for the cities of our God; that the people of Israel might not be carried captive, and their cities spoiled and plundered; and instead of being cities where the people of God dwelt, and he was worshipped, would, if taken, become the habitations of idolatrous Heathens, and where temples would be erected to idols, and the worship of them; these were the arguments he used to engage them to fight manfully for their country, the liberties and religion of it:

and the Lord do that which seemeth him good: tacitly suggesting that victory was of the Lord, and that it became them to do their part in fighting courageously, and leave the issue to the Lord, on whom alone success depended.

2 Samuel 10:13

Ver. 13. And Joab drew nigh, and the people that were with him, unto the battle against the Syrians,.... Fell upon them; attacked them first, began the battle with them; rightly judging, that if they, being hired soldiers, were closely pressed, they would give way, which would discourage the Ammonites, who depended much upon them; and the fight, according to Josephus {x}, lasted some little time, who says, that Joab killed many of them, and obliged the rest to turn their backs and flee, as follows:

and they fled before him: the Syriac and Arabic versions in this verse, and in all others in this chapter where the word "Syrians" is used, have "Edomites", reading "Edom" instead of "Aram", the letters r "R" and d "D" in the Hebrew tongue being very similar.

{x} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 6. sect. 2.)

2 Samuel 10:14

Ver. 14. And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled,.... In whom they put great confidence:

then they fled also before Abishai; without engaging at all with him, as it seems:

and entered into the city; out of which they came, either Rabbah or Medeba, for their safety:

so Joab returned from the children of Ammon; did not stay to lay siege to their city, the season of the year not being proper for it, winter drawing near; see 2Sa 11:1;

and came to Jerusalem; in triumph, to report to David the victory he had obtained.

2 Samuel 10:15

Ver. 15. And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel,.... Considered it in their minds, and conversed with one another about it, and fearing what would be the consequence of it:

they gathered themselves together; not only the forces got together again, that fled before Joab, but all the kings of Syria united their forces together, as appears from 2Sa 10:19; supposing that David would avenge himself on them for assisting the Ammonites against him; and therefore judged it advisable to raise a large army, that they might be in a condition to receive him.

2 Samuel 10:16

Ver. 16. And Hadarezer sent,.... The same with Hadadezer, **2Sa 8:3**, who was at the head of this confederacy, and to whom the rest of the kings of Syria were servants, 2Sa 10:19;

and brought out the Syrians that [were] beyond the river; the river Phrat or Euphrates, as the Targum; so the Arabic version and Josephus {y}, who says, that he hired them:

and they came to Helam; which, according to the same writer, was king of the Syrians beyond Euphrates; but it seems to be the name of a place, where was the general rendezvous of the Syrian army. Junius conjectures that it is the same with the Alamatha of Ptolemy {z}, which he places with the Trachonite Arabs near the Euphrates:

and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer [went] before them: before the whole combined army, which according to Josephus {a}, consisted of eighty thousand foot, and ten thousand horse: this general is called Shophach, 1Ch 19:16 the letters "B" and "P" being of the same pronunciation in the

Hebrew tongue, as Kimchi observes, though it is there read "Shobach", in the Syriac and Arabic versions; he was no doubt a very able, valiant, and skilful general, since he is particularly mentioned by name, and whose name was then famous; the Arabic version calls him a spear bearer of Hadarezer.

{y} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 6.) sect. 3. {z} Geograph. l. 5. c. 15. {a} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 6. sect. 3.)

2 Samuel 10:17

Ver. 17. And when it was told David,.... What preparations the Syrians were making to fight him, and where they were:

he gathered all Israel together; all the fighting men in the country:

and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam: which, according to Bunting {b}, was twenty miles from Jerusalem. David seems to have gone himself in person to this war:

and the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him; they formed themselves in a line of battle, and attacked him first, being eager to fight, and perhaps confident of victory, because of their numbers.

{b} Travels, &c. p. 140, 141.

2 Samuel 10:18

Ver. 18. And the Syrians fled before Israel,.... After an obstinate and bloody fight between them:

and David slew [the men of] seven hundred chariots of the Syrians; the word "men" is rightly supplied, for chariots could not be said to be slain, but the men in them; in 1Ch 19:17, they are said to be seven thousand, here seven hundred; which may be reconciled by observing, that here the chariots that held the men are numbered, there the number of the men that were in the chariots given, and reckoning ten men in a chariot, seven hundred chariots held just seven thousand men; though Kimchi takes another way of reconciling the two places, by observing that here only the choicest chariots are mentioned, there all of them, but the former way seems best:

and forty thousand horsemen; in 1Ch 19:17; it is forty thousand "footmen", and so Josephus {c}; and the same may be called both horse and foot, be cause though they might come into the field of battle on horseback, yet might dismount and fight on foot; and so one historian calls them horsemen, and the other footmen; or the whole number of the slain, horse and foot mixed together, were forty thousand; Kimchi makes use of another way of removing this difficulty, and which perhaps is the best, that here only the horsemen are numbered that were slain, and there the footmen only, and both true; an equal number of each being slain, in all eighty thousand, besides the seven thousand in the chariots:

and smote Shobach the captain of their host, who died there; of his wounds upon the spot.

{c} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 6. sect. 3.)

2 Samuel 10:19

Ver. 19. And when all the kings [that were] servants to Hadarezer,.... That were subject to him, and at his beck and command, at least were hired by him into his service:

saw that they were smitten before Israel; could not stand their ground against them, being too powerful for them;

they made peace with Israel, and served them; became tributaries to them, whereby the promise of the land of Canaan made to Abraham and his seed, as reaching to the river Euphrates, had its accomplishment, Ge 15:18;

so the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more; who standing by themselves, they were soon and easily conquered by David's forces, as recorded in the following chapters.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 11

This chapter begins with the destruction of the Ammonites, and the siege of Rabbah their chief city, 2Sa 11:1; and enlarges on the sins of David in committing adultery with Bathsheba, 2Sa 11:2; in contriving to conceal his sin by sending for her husband home from the army, 2Sa 11:6; in laying a scheme for the death of him by the hand of the Ammonites, 2Sa 11:14; and in marrying Bathsheba when he was dead, 2Sa 11:26.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, that after the year was expired,.... Or at the end of the year, as the Targum, which concluded with the month Adar or February, the spring of the year:

at the time when kings go forth [to battle]; in the month Nisan, as the Targum on 1Ch 20:1; adds, the same with Abib, which was the first month of the year, Ex 12:2, a fit time to go out to war; when, as the Jewish commentators observe, the rains were over, and there were grass in the fields, and fruit on the trees, and corn ripe, and so food for horse and men. This month was called Nisan, as some think {d}, from
Myon, the military banners then erected; so by the Romans it is called Martius, and by us March, from Mars, the god of war; though some {e} take this to be the month Tisri, answering to part of September, and part of October, when all the fruits of the earth were gathered in, and supposed to be a fit time for war, when the heat of the year was declining:

that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; his whole army under Joab as general; in 1Ch 20:1; it is "the power of the army"; the whole body of it: and they destroyed the children of Ammon; burnt their cities, and slew the inhabitants of them, and laid their land waste wherever they came:

and besieged Rabbah; their chief city, called Rabathamana by Polybius {f}, that is, Rabbah of Ammon, and afterwards. Philadelphia, from Philadelphus, king of Egypt, as it was in the times of Jerom {g}:

but David tarried still at Jerusalem; which is observed for the sake of the following history; it would have been well for him if he had gone forth with the army himself, then the sin he fell into would have been prevented.

{d} Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 50. col. 557. {e} Weemse of the Judicial Law, c. 28. p. 106. {f} Hist. l. 5. p. 414. {g} De loc. Heb. fol. 94. C.

2 Samuel 11:2

Ver. 2. And it came to pass in an eveningtide,.... Some time in the afternoon, when the sun began to decline; not in the dusk of the evening, for then the object he saw could not have been seen so distinctly by him:

that David arose from off his bed; having taken a nap in the heat of the day after dinner; indulging himself more than he used to do to sloth and luxury, which prepared him, and led him on the more eagerly to the lust of uncleanness:

and walked upon the roof of the king's house; to refresh himself after his sleep, it being the cool of the day, and the roof of the house being flat and fit to walk upon, as the houses of Judea were; see
De 22:8;

and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; in a bath in her garden, or in an apartment in her house, the window being open:

and the woman [was] very beautiful to look upon; of a fine shape and good complexion, and comely countenance; all which were incentives to lust, at which his eye was attracted to, and his heart was ensnared with her.

2 Samuel 11:3

Ver. 3. And David sent and inquired after the woman,.... Who she was, what her name, and whether married or unmarried; if the latter, very probably his intention was to marry her, and he might, when he first made the inquiry, design to proceed no further, or to anything that was dishonourable; but it would have been better for him not to have inquired at all, and endeavoured to stifle the motions raised in him at the sight of her:

and [one] said, [is] not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam; who in **1Ch 3:5**; is called Bathshua, and her father Ammiel, which is the same with Eliam reversed:

the wife of Uriah the Hittite? who either was of that nation originally, and became a proselyte; or had sojourned there for a while, and took the name or had it given him, for some exploit he had performed against that people, as Scipio Africanus, and others among the Romans; this was said by one that David inquired of, or heard him asking about her, and was sufficient to have

stopped him from proceeding any further, when he was informed she was another man's wife: some say {h} she was the daughter of Ahithophel's son; see
2Sa 23:34.

{h} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 8. 2.

2 Samuel 11:4

Ver. 4. And David sent messengers,.... To invite her to his palace:

and took her; not by force, but through persuasion:

and she came in unto him; into the apartment where he was:

and he lay with her; she consenting to it, being prevailed upon, and drawn into it through the greatness and goodness of the man, which might make the sin appear the lesser to her. This is recorded to show what the best of men are, when left to themselves; how strong and prevalent corrupt nature is in regenerate persons, when grace is not in exercise; what need the saints stand in of fresh supplies of grace, to keep them from falling; what caution is necessary to everyone that stands, lest he fall; and that it becomes us to abstain from all appearance of sin, and whatever leads unto it, and to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation; and such a record as this is an argument for the integrity of the Scriptures, that they conceal not the faults of the greatest favourites mentioned in them, as well as it serves to prevent despair in truly penitent backsliders:

for she was purified from her uncleanness; this clause is added in a parenthesis, partly to show the reason of her washing herself, which was not for health and pleasure, and to cool herself in a hot day, but to purify herself from her menstruous pollution, according to the law in Le 15:19; the term of her separation being expired; and partly to give a reason why she the more easily consented, and he was the more eager to enjoy her; and in this he sinned, not that he did not lie with an unclean person; but, then, as some observe, he did that which was much worse, he committed adultery; also this may be added to observe, that she was the more apt for conception, as Ben Gersom notes, and to account for the quickness of it, with which the philosopher {i} agrees:

and she returned unto her house; whether that evening, or next morning, or how long she stayed, is not said.

{i} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 7. c. 2.

2 Samuel 11:5

Ver. 5. And the woman conceived,.... Whereby the sin would be discovered, and shame, and disgrace, or worse, would follow upon it:

and sent and told David, and said, I [am] with child; this message she sent to David, that he might think of some ways and means to prevent the scandal that would fall both upon him and her, and the danger she was exposed unto; fearing the outcries of the people against her, in acting so unfaithful a part to her husband, so brave a man, who was now fighting for his king and country; and the rage and jealousy of her husband when he should come to the knowledge of it, and the death which by the law she was guilty of, even to be stoned with stones, see **Joh 8:5**.

2 Samuel 11:6

Ver. 6. And David sent to Joab,.... Who was with the army besieging Rabbah, which, according to Bunting {k}, was sixty four miles from Jerusalem:

[saying], send me Uriah the Hittite; the scheme David had contrived in his mind was to get Uriah home to his wife for a few days, that it might be thought the child she had conceived was his, whereby the sin of David, and her own, might be concealed:

and Joab sent Uriah to David; not knowing his business, and besides it was his duty to obey his command.

{k} Travels, &c. p. 146.

2 Samuel 11:7

Ver. 7. And when Uriah was come unto him,.... To David, to whom he came first, before he went to his own house, desirous of knowing what was the special business of the king with him:

David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered; he asked of the welfare of Joab the general, and of the common soldiers, and of the warriors, as the Targum, the mighty men that went along with Joab, 2Sa 10:7. David seems to have been at a loss what to say to him. These questions were so mean and trivial, that it might justly give Uriah some suspicion that it could never he on this account, that he was sent for; since David could not want intelligence of such things, expresses being daily sending him.

2 Samuel 11:8

Ver. 8. And David said to Uriah, go down to thy house, and wash thy feet,.... For his refreshment, and to prepare for bed, which was what he wanted to get him to:

and Uriah departed out of the king's house; in order as it might seem to the king to go to his own:

and there followed him a mess [of meat] from the king: no doubt a delicious dish, to eat with his wife before he went to bed, to excite him the more to desire the enjoyment of her this mess consisted, according to Abarbinel, of bread, wine, and flesh; and who also observes, after Ben Gersom, that the word may be interpreted of a torch to light him home to his house, being night.

2 Samuel 11:9

Ver. 9. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house, with all the servants of his lord,.... The bodyguards, which were placed there to watch the palace in the night season; Uriah first fell into a conversation with these as is highly probable, to whom he was well known, and who might inquire of one and another of their friends in the army; and he being weary, laid himself down among there, and slept:

and went not down to his house; whether the trifling questions David asked him, or the information the guards might give him of his wife being sent for to court; made him suspect something, and so had no inclination to go to this own house; or however so it was ordered by the providence of God, which directed him to act in this manner, that the sin of David and Bathsheba they studied to hide might be discovered.

2 Samuel 11:10

Ver. 10. And when they had told David,.... The next morning, either those that went with the mess of meat, or the guards with whom he slept all night:

saying, Uriah went not down to his house; as the king had ordered him; which those persons being acquainted with, informed him of it, as an act of disobedience to him:

David said unto Uriah; having sent for him upon the above information:

camest thou not from [thy] journey? and which was a long one of sixty four miles, as before observed and therefore might well be weary, and want refreshment and rest, and his own house was the most proper place for it; for which reason David suggests he had sent him thither, and did not require nor need his service among his guards:

why [then] didst thou not go down unto thine house? which was the fittest place for him in such circumstances.

2 Samuel 11:11

Ver. 11. And Uriah said unto David,.... As an apology for this conduct:

the ark, and Israel and Judah, abide in tents; meaning not the people of Israel and Judah in the land of Canaan; for they did not now dwell in tents, though indeed the ark of the Lord did, **2Sa 7:2**, which some think is here referred to; but the armies of Israel and Judah besieging Rabbah, with whom it seems the ark was, which sometimes was carried with them when they went out to war, **1Sa 4:4**, though Abarbinel thinks this was not the ark in which were the two tables of stone, and therefore is not called the ark of the covenant, but an ark which was made to put the ephod, and Urim and Thummim in that they might upon occasion inquire of the Lord by them:

and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields: around Rabbah they were besieging; he calls Joab his lord, because he was the chief general under whom he served and the rest of the commanding officers he calls the servants of his lord as distinguished from the common soldiers. The Jews, who are for excusing David from blame in the case of Uriah, observe {l}, that he was guilty of rebellion against David, and so worthy of death not only because he disobeyed his command, in not going to his house when he ordered him but by calling "Joab my lord" in his presence: but this was only a respectable character of his general and no overt act of treason to his king; nor did David so understand it, nor in the least resent it: now seeing such great men, who were far superior to him in rank and office were obliged to lie on the bare ground, he argues:

shall I then go into mine house to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? if he had any suspicion of David's crime, he might purposely add the last clause; and if not, it was enough to awaken the conscience of David, and cut him to the quick had he not been greatly hardened through the deceitfulness of sin to observe, that a faithful subject and a soldier of his would not allow himself the enjoyment of lawful pleasures, when his fellow soldiers were exposing their lives to danger for their country; and yet he under such circumstances indulged to sinful lusts and criminal pleasures:

[as] thou livest and [as] thy soul liveth I will not do this thing; he swears to it for the confirmation of it; this he did to prevent any further solicitations from the king, or his wife unto it, who were both anxiously desirous of it; for though no mention is made of his wife, yet no doubt she did all she could to prevail upon him to come to his house but all to no purpose; his mind was so bent to the contrary through the overruling providence of God to which it must be ascribed.

{l} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 56. 1.

2 Samuel 11:12

Ver. 12. And David said to Uriah, tarry here today also,.... In his court, when he found he could not persuade him to go to his own house:

and tomorrow I will let thee depart: after he had tried one method more with him:

so Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day and the morrow; not in his own house, but the king's palace.

2 Samuel 11:13

Ver. 13. And when David had called him,.... Invited him to sup with him:

he did eat and drink before him; very freely and plentifully:

and he made him drunk: this was another sin of David's, done in order to make him forget his oath and vow, and that being inflamed with wine, desires might be excited in him to go home and lie with his wife; but even this scheme did not succeed:

and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord: in the guard room, where he had lain before:

but went not down to his house; for he was not so drunk but he remembered his oath, and kept his resolution not to go down to his own house; the Lord no doubt working upon his mind and disinclining him to it.

2 Samuel 11:14

Ver. 14. And it came to pass in the morning,.... When David was informed that Uriah did not go to his own house, but slept with his servants, Satan put it into his head and heart to take the following wicked and cruel method:

that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent [it] by the hand of Uriah; to have him cut off by the sword of the enemy. If Uriah suspected David's criminal conversation with his wife, he was so true and trusted a servant to him, that he would not open his letter to Joab, which had he, it would have betrayed the base design. No one that knows the story of Bellerophon can read this without thinking of that, they are so much alike; and indeed that seems to be founded upon this, and taken from it with a little alteration. Bellerophon rejecting the solicitations of Sthenobaea, who was in love with him, she prevailed upon her husband Praetus to send letters by him to Jobates (a name similar to Joab), the general of his army, which contained instructions to take care that he was killed; who sent him upon an expedition for that purpose {m}.

{m} Apollodorus de Deorum Orig. l. 2. p. 70.

2 Samuel 11:15

Ver. 15. And he wrote in the letter, saying,.... Giving the following orders to Joab:

set ye Uriah is the forefront of the hottest battle: over against that part of the city where the enemy was strongest, and the battle the fiercest, and the stones and arrows were cast the thickest:

and retire ye from him; leave him to himself to combat the enemy alone; who seeing him deserted, would sally out upon him, and the few that might be with him, and slay him:

that he may be smitten, and die; thus he sought to add murder to adultery, and that in the basest manner, and which he accomplished; and this is often the case, that murder follows adultery, either by way of revenge for it, or in order to cover it, as here.

2 Samuel 11:16

Ver. 16. And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city,.... Where lay its greatest strength, and where it was best defended; or besieged it, as the Targum:

that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men [were]; who would not easily give way, and when they saw an opportunity would sally out, Joab cannot be excused from sin, unless he thought that Uriah had been guilty of death, and that David took this way of dispatching him for some political reason; however David was king, and to be obeyed.

2 Samuel 11:17

Ver. 17. And the men of the city went out,.... Made a sally out, as Joab expected they would, when they appeared before them at that part of the city where valiant men were:

and fought with Joab; at least with part of his army posted with Uriah:

and there fell [some] of the people of the servants of David: which made David's sin the more heinous, that several lives were lost through the stratagem he devised to procure the death of Uriah; who could not be placed in a dangerous post alone, and therefore others must be sacrificed with him, as were:

and Uriah the Hittite died also; which was the thing aimed at, and the end to be answered by this scheme.

2 Samuel 11:18

Ver. 18. Then Joab sent,.... Messengers to David, as soon as Uriah was killed:

and told David all the things concerning the war; how the siege had been carried on; what success they had had, good or ill; what their advantages and disadvantages; what men they had lost, and especially in one sally of the enemy upon them, for the sake of which the express was sent.

2 Samuel 11:19

Ver. 19. And charged the messenger,.... Gave him a particular direction and instruction what he should say at the close of his narrative, according as he should observe the king's countenance to be:

saying, when thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king; giving an account of all the events that happened since the siege was begun to that time.

2 Samuel 11:20

Ver. 20. And if so be that the king's wrath arise,.... Which might be seen in his countenance, or expressed in his words:

and he say, wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? as to expose the king's troops to the enemy on the wall, who by stones or darts greatly annoyed them, or sallied out on them, and killed many of them:

knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall? they must have known that, and therefore should have kept out of the reach of their shot.

2 Samuel 11:21

Ver. 21. Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth?.... The same with Jerubbaal, who was Gideon, **Jud 6:32**; Baal, one part of his name, was the name of an idol, and sometimes called Bosheth or Besheth, which signifies shame, being a shameful idol; Gideon had a son called Abimelech, who was smitten, and it is here asked, by whom?

did not a woman cast a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? which should have been a warning not to go too near the wall of an enemy; the history is recorded in **Jud 9:52**;

why went ye nigh the wall? exposing your lives to so much danger, and by which so many lives were lost:

then say thou, thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also; the whole has not been told, the worst of all is, as the messenger was to represent it, that brave gallant soldier Uriah is dead; this Joab ordered to be told last, as knowing very well it would pacify the king's wrath, and was the agreeable news he wanted to hear.

2 Samuel 11:22

Ver. 22. So the messenger went,.... From Joab, from the army before Rabbah:

and came; to David in Jerusalem, a course of sixty four miles:

and showed David all that Joab had sent him for; all the events of the war hitherto.

2 Samuel 11:23

Ver. 23. And the messenger said unto David,.... The particulars of his account follow:

surely the men prevailed against us; the men of the city of Rabbah, the besieged there, in one onset they made upon them:

and came out unto us in the field; the besiegers that lay encamped there; they sallied out upon them:

and we were upon them, even unto the entering of the gate; rallied upon them, and drove them back, and pursued them to the gate of the city.

2 Samuel 11:24

Ver. 24. And the shooters shot from off of the wall upon thy servants,.... Arrows out of their bows, or stones out of their engines; the Israelites following them so closely to the gate of the city, came within the reach of their shot from the wall:

and [some] of the king's servants be dead; killed in the sally upon them, and by the shot from the wall:

and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also; the messenger did not entirely obey the orders of Joab to wait and observe if the king's wrath arose, but was in haste to tell him the last piece of news; perhaps he had some suspicion, from the manner of Joab's telling him what he should say, that this would be acceptable to the king.

2 Samuel 11:25

Ver. 25. Then David said to the messenger,.... Whom he dispatched again to Joab upon the delivery of his message:

thus shall thou say to Joab; in the name of David:

let not this thing displease thee; be not grieved, and cast down, and intimidated at the repulse he had met with, and the loss of so many brave men, and especially Uriah;

for the sword devours one as well as another; officers as well as soldiers the strong as well as the weak, the valiant and courageous as well as the more timorous; the events of war are various and uncertain, and to be submitted to, and not repined at, and laid to heart. David's heart being hardened by sin, made light of the death of his brave soldiers, to which he himself was accessory; his conscience was very different now from what it was when he cut off the skirt of Saul's robe, and his heart in a different frame from that in which he composed the lamentation over Saul and Jonathan:

make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it; more closely besiege it, more vigorously attack it; assault it, endeavour to take it by storm, and utterly destroy it, razing the very foundations of it: and encourage thou him; which words are either said to the messenger to encourage and animate Joab in David's name, which is not so likely that a messenger should be employed to encourage the general; or rather the words of David to Joab continued, that he would "encourage it", the army under him, who might be disheartened with the rebuff and loss they had met with; and therefore Joab is bid to spirit them up, to carry on the siege with vigour.

2 Samuel 11:26

Ver. 26. And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead,.... The news of which were soon sent her by David, though it is very probable she knew nothing of the plot to take away his life; and, besides, David chose to have his death published abroad as soon as possible, the more to hide his sin:

she mourned for her husband; expressed tokens of mourning by shedding tears, putting on a mourning habit, seeing no company, and this continued for the space of seven days, it may be, 1Sa 31:13; as little time as possible was spent in this way, and the marriage hastened, that the adultery might not be discovered.

2 Samuel 11:27

Ver. 27. And when the mourning was past,.... The seven days were at an end, or sooner; for he stayed not ninety days from the death of her husband, which the Jews in later times enjoined {n}, that it might be known whether with child by her former husband, and so to whom it belonged; and because David did not wait this time, Abarbinel charges it upon him as an additional sin:

David sent, and fetched her to his house; took her home to his palace to live with him:

and she became his wife; he married her according to the usual form of marriage in those days:

and bare him a son; begotten in adultery:

but the thing that David had done displeased the Lord; or "was evil in the eyes of the Lord" {o}; for though it was not done in the eyes of men, being scarcely or very little known, yet was in the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro throughout the earth, and sees all things that are done: the adultery he had been guilty of with another man's wife was abominable to the Lord, and for which, according to the law, both he and she ought to have been put to death, Le 20:10; the murder of her husband, which he was accessory to, as well as the death of many others, and the marriage of her under such circumstances, were all displeasing to God, and of such an heinous nature, that his pure eyes could not look upon with approbation: the Jews {p} endeavour to excuse David from sin; from the sin of murder, by making Uriah guilty of rebellion and treason, as before observed; and from the sin of adultery, by affirming that it was the constant custom for men, when they went out to war, to give their wives a bill of divorce; so that from the time of giving the bill they were not their wives, and such as lay with them were not guilty of adultery; but for this there is no foundation: it is certain David was charged with it by the Lord; he himself owned it, and bewailed it, both that and his blood guiltiness, and the following chapter abundantly proves it.

{n} Misn. Yebamot, c. 11. sect. 6. {o} hwhy ynyeb ery "malum in oculis Domini", Montanus. {p} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 56. 1. Gloss. in ib.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 12

Nathan is sent to David to charge him with his sin, and convince him of it by a parable, 2Sa 12:1; which being accommodated and applied to David's case, brought him to a conviction and acknowledgment of it, and repentance for it, which was forgiven him, 2Sa 12:7; though he is told the child begotten in adultery should die, and it was quickly struck with sickness and died; and David's behaviour during its sickness and at its death is recorded, 2Sa 12:14; after which Solomon was born to him of the same woman, and had the name of Jedidiah given him by the Lord, which signifies the beloved of the Lord, and as a token of reconciliation, and a confirmation of his sin being forgiven him, 2Sa 12:24; and the chapter is concluded with the taking of the city of Rabbah, and the spoil in it, and the usage of the inhabitants of it, 2Sa 12:26.

Ver. 1. And the Lord sent Nathan unto David,.... Quickly after the child was born begotten on Bathsheba, and when it was known and became the public talk of people, and the enemies of religion were full of it, and blasphemed on account of it, 2Sa 12:14; so that David was nine months or more without any true sense of his sin, his heart hardened, his graces dormant, the joys of salvation taken from him, and he without any communion with God, and having little concern about it; though perhaps he might have some pangs at times, which quickly went off; though some think he exercised repentance in a private way before; acknowledged his sin to the Lord, and had a sense of pardon, and before this time penned the thirty second and the hundred thirtieth psalms on this occasion, Ps 32:1; but Nathan is sent to awaken and arouse him, to express a sense of his sin, and repentance for it in public, which he did by penning and publishing the fifty first psalm after Nathan had been with him, Ps 51:1; for though the Lord may leave his people to fall into sin, and suffer them to continue therein some time, yet not always; they shall rise again through the assistance of his Spirit and grace, in the acts of repentance and faith, both in private and public:

and he came unto him, and said unto him: he came as if he had a case to lay before him, and to have justice done, and he told the story as if it was a real fact, and so David understood it:

there were two men in one city: pointing at David and Uriah, who both lived in Jerusalem:

the one rich and the other poor; David the rich man, king over all Israel; Uriah a subject, an officer in his army, comparatively poor.

2 Samuel 12:2

Ver. 2. The rich [man] had exceeding many flocks and herds. In which the wealth of men lay in those times and countries; these in the parable signify David's wives and concubines, which were many; he had six wives in Hebron, and he took more wives and concubines out of Jerusalem, when he was come from Hebron, **2Sa 3:2**; and besides his master's, or Saul's wives, given to him, 2Sa 12:8.

2 Samuel 12:3

Ver. 3. But the poor [man] had nothing, save one little ewe lamb,.... Uriah had but one wife, who was much younger than he, called a lamb, an ewe lamb, a little one. Abarbinel thinks Uriah had been a widower; and had children by another wife, supposed in the parable, and was much older than Bathsheba:

which he had bought; for men in those times and countries did not receive portions with their wives, but gave dowries to them, and for them:

and nourished up; as his own flesh, as husbands should their wives, **Eph 5:29**;

and it grew up together with him, and with his children; which Kimchi also supposes Uriah had by a former wife:

it did eat of his own meat, and drink of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter; all which are expressive of the care, kindness, love, and tenderness of a loving husband, whose affections are endeared to his wife, making her partaker of all he has, and to share in whatever he eats and drinks, and in his dearest embraces; and as there were instances of creatures, lambs and others, particularly tame or pet lambs, used in this way in a literal sense, to which the reference in the parable is, David had no suspicion of its being a parable. Bochart {q} has given many instances of creatures nourished and brought up in such a familiar manner.

{q} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 46. col. 521, 522.

2 Samuel 12:4

Ver. 4. And there came a traveller unto the rich man,.... By which some understand Satan, who came to David, and stirred up his lust by the temptations that offered; who is a walker, as the word used signifies, that goes about seeking whom he may devour, and is with good men only as a wayfaring man, who does not abide with them; and whose temptations, when they succeed with such, are as meat and drink to him, very entertaining but the Jews generally understand it of the evil imagination or concupiscence in man, the lustful appetite in David, that wandered after another man's wife, and wanted to be satiated with her:

and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that came unto him; when his heart was inflamed with lust at the sight of Bathsheba, he did not go as he might, and take one of his wives and concubines, whereby he might have satisfied and repressed his lust:

but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that came to him; sent for Bathsheba and lay with her, for the gratification of his lust, she being a young beautiful woman, and more agreeable to his lustful appetite. The Jews, in their Talmud {r}, observe a gradation in these words that the evil imagination is represented first as a traveller that passes by a man, and lodges not with him; then as a wayfaring man or host, that passes in and lodges with him; and at last as a man, as the master of the house that rules over him, and therefore called the man that came to him.

{r} T. Bab. Succah, fol. 52. 2. Jarchi, Kimchi, & Abarbinel in loc.

2 Samuel 12:5

Ver. 5. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man,.... That had done this, taking it for a real fact:

and he said to Nathan, [as] the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this [thing] shall surely die; which be said in the transport of his wrath and fury; otherwise a thief, according to the law of Moses, was not to be put to death, but to make restitution; and if he was not able to make it, then to be sold, but he was not to die for it; but David thought the crime was so greatly aggravated by being done by a rich man, and by the loss the poor man sustained, it being his all, and the fact, in all its circumstances, so cruel and barbarous, that the guilty person ought to die: how much more vehemently, and indeed with justice, would he have passed the sentence of death on him, or condemned him to it, had it been put in the parable, that the rich man not only took the poor man's ewe lamb, but killed the poor man himself? but this Nathan left out, that David might not take his meaning, as Abarbinel thinks, who then would have been upon his guard, and not have condemned himself; and hereby also Nathan had this advantage against him, that if this man deserved to die, who had only taken the poor man's ewe lamb, then how much more ought he to die, who had not only committed adultery with Bathsheba, but had slain Uriah?

2 Samuel 12:6

Ver. 6. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold,.... Which was according to the law in Ex 22:1; but Kimchi thinks, because the word is of the dual number, it signifies double the number, and that the sentence was to restore eight lambs, because he being a rich man stole from the poor man; so Mr. Weemse {s} renders it, twice four, twice as much as was commanded in the law; for the Hebrews, he observes, double in the dual number till they come to seven:

because he did this thing; committed this theft:

and because he had no pity; on the poor man, but took his all. The Jews observe, that accordingly David was punished with the loss of four of his children, that which was born of Bathsheba, Ammon, Tamar, and Absalom; so most of the commentators, but Ben Gersom, instead of Tamar, has Adonijah.

{s} Of the Moral Law, l. 2. ch. 10. p. 252. Vid. Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 776.

2 Samuel 12:7

Ver. 7. And Nathan said to David, thou [art] the man,.... The rich man, or who is designed by him in the parable, and answers to him {t}:

thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel; that is, ordered Samuel to anoint him, who did, 1Sa 16:1; to which this chiefly refers; and after that he was anointed first by the tribe of Judah, and then by all the tribes of Israel, by the appointment and providence of God; and this was great dignity he designed for him, and raised him to:

and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; when he persecuted him, and sought to take away his life.

{t} "----- mutato nomine, de te Fabula narratur -----". Horat. Sermon. l. 1. Satyr. 1. ver. 69,70.

2 Samuel 12:8

Ver. 8. And I gave thee thy master's house,.... Not his palace at Gibeah, but rather his family, his wives, servants, wealth, and riches, all being confiscated through the rebellion of Ishbosheth; or rather his kingdom he succeeded him in:

and thy master's wives into thy bosom; though we read of no more than one that belonged to Saul, if he is meant by his master, excepting Rizpah his concubine, nor ever of David taking them into his bosom and bed; wherefore this can be understood only of his having them at his disposal, to give them to whom he pleased; the word may be rendered his "women", as well as his "wives", and may design his daughters, Merab and Michal, who were both given to David, though taken again and given to others: the Jews say, that Eglah, David's sixth wife, was the wife of Saul, See Gill on "2Sa 3:5";

and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; the kingdom of both; gave him to be king over all the tribes of Israel:

and if [that had been] too little; either his wives too few, as the Jews interpret it, or his kingdom too small:

I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things; more and greater favours; and indeed such he had promised him, as a firm or stable house or kingdom, and that the Messiah should spring from him.

2 Samuel 12:9

Ver. 9. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight?.... The commandment referred to is the law of God, particularly the sixth and seventh precepts of it, Ex 20:13; which David had shown no regard unto, and by his breaking them had slighted and despised them:

thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; and so had despised and broken the sixth command, Ex 20:13; for though he had not taken away his life with his own hand, he had plotted and contrived it, and had given orders to put him in such a position as would issue in it:

and hast taken his wife [to be] thy wife; after he had defiled her, being another man's wife, and had taken such unlawful methods to make her his wife, whereby he had despised and broken both the sixth and the seventh commands, Ex 20:13:

and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon; though he had not put him to death with his own sword, he had done that which was as bad or worse in some respects, he had exposed him to the sword of the Ammonites, by which it was taken away; and not his only, but that of some of the Israelites also, which gave that uncircumcised people reason to triumph over the children of Israel, and even to blaspheme the God of Israel.

2 Samuel 12:10

Ver. 10. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house,.... During his life, and as appeared in the slaughter of his sons Ammon and Absalom before his death, and of Adonijah quickly after, and in his posterity through their wars with the children of Israel, and other nations:

because thou hast despised me; his commandments, and that in effect was despising him the lawgiver:

and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife; which being repeated shows that it was very displeasing to God, and a very heinous crime in his sight.

2 Samuel 12:11

Ver. 11. Thus saith the Lord,.... For what he said was not of himself, but under a spirit of prophecy:

behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house: that is, evil persons, who should be guilty of evil things, and that as a chastisement of him for the sins he had committed, and those out of his own family, as Amnon and Absalom:

and I will take thy wives before thine eyes; which is so expressed, because it was done in his lifetime, and he knowing it, but not able to hinder it, though he did not, strictly speaking, see it with his eyes:

and give [them] unto thy neighbour; or friend, meaning his son Absalom, as they were:

and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun; pointing to the sun in the firmament, and which might be then shining in the room where they were:

and which is represented by Homer {u} as seeing all things, "and eyes" are ascribed to it here in the original; the meaning is, that this fact should be done in the daytime, openly and publicly, and was fulfilled, when by the advice of Ahithophel a tent was spread on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel, 2Sa 16:22.

{u} Odyss. 11. ver. 119. & 12. ver. 380.

2 Samuel 12:12

Ver. 12. For thou didst [it] secretly,.... Committed adultery with Bathsheba privately, and endeavoured to conceal it, by getting her husband killed in battle, and then marrying her as soon as he could to hide the shame of it:

but one will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun; as the above fact was; that is, he would suffer it to he done, and so order it in his providence, that everything should concur to the doing of it; as David's leaving his wives behind him, Ahithophel's wicked counsel he was suffered to give, and the lustful inclination Absalom was left unto, and not any of the people of Israel having religion, spirit, and courage enough to remonstrate against it.

2 Samuel 12:13

Ver. 13. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord,.... Which confession, though short, was a full one, arising from a thorough conviction of the evil of the sin he had been guilty of, accompanied with real brokenness of heart, sincere humiliation, and a sorrow after a godly sort, as the fifty first psalm, that penitential psalm composed upon this occasion shows, Ps 51:1:

and Nathan said unto David; being fully satisfied with the sincerity and genuineness of his repentance, of which he gave proof by words and deeds, and being under the direction and impulse of the Spirit of God:

the Lord hath put away thy sin; would not charge it upon him, impute it to him, or punish him for it, but freely and fully forgive it, cast it behind his back, and into the depth of the sea; cause it to pass from him and never more bring it against him, and which is the Lord's act, and his only, against whom sin is committed:

thou shall not die; though he should die a corporeal death, yet not by the immediate hand of God, or by the sword of justice as a malefactor, a murderer, and adulterer, as he, according to the law, deserved to die; nor should he die a spiritual death, though his grace had been so low, and his corruptions had risen so high; nor an eternal death, the second death, the lost wages of sin.

2 Samuel 12:14

Ver. 14. Howbeit, because by this deed,.... This complicated wickedness, adultery with Bathsheba, and the murder of her husband, and occasioning the death of others:

thou hast given great reason to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme; to insult over Israel, and the God of Israel, and to magnify their own idols on account of the advantage they got when Uriah and other Israelites were slain; and to speak ill of God as a respecter of persons, who had cast off Saul and his family from the kingdom, and yet established David in it, guilty of crimes the other was not; and of the word, ways, and worship of God, and of the true religion, as all hypocrisy and deceit, when men that made such pretensions to it were guilty of such atrocious crimes; wherefore to let such see and know that the Lord did not approve of and countenance such actions, but abhorred and resented them:

the child also [that is] born unto thee shall surely die; which would be a visible testimony of God's displeasure at his sin, to all men that should hear of it, and know it; and being taken away in such a manner would be a great affliction to him, and the more as his affections were much towards the child, as appears by what follows; or otherwise the removal of it might have been considered as a mercy, since its life would have kept up the remembrance of the sin, and have been a standing reproach to him.

2 Samuel 12:15

Ver. 15. And Nathan departed unto his house,.... His own house, which probably was in the city of Jerusalem, having delivered his message, and brought David to a sense of his sin, and declared to him from the Lord the forgiveness of it; yet for the honour of religion, and the stopping of the mouths of blasphemers, the death of the child is threatened and foretold, and then Nathan took his leave of him, having nothing more from the Lord to say to him:

and the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David; for so she was, and not David's wife, when this child was begotten of her; and, as a mark of God's displeasure at the sin of adultery, the child was struck with a sore disease by the immediate hand of God:

and it was very sick; even unto death, as the event showed.

2 Samuel 12:16

Ver. 16. David therefore besought God for the child,.... Perhaps went into the tabernacle he had built for the ark, and prayed to the Lord to restore the child, and spare its life; for though the Lord had said it should die, he might hope that that was a conditional threatening, and that the Lord might be gracious and reverse it, 2Sa 12:22;

and David fasted: all that day:

and went in; to his own house from the house of God:

and lay all night upon the earth; would neither go into, nor lie upon a bed, but lay on the floor all night, weeping and praying for the child's life, and especially for its eternal welfare: he having through sin been the means of its coming into a sinful and afflicted state.

2 Samuel 12:17

Ver. 17. And the elders of his house arose, [and went] to him, to raise him up from the earth,.... To persuade him to rise up, and sit upon a seat, and go to bed, after having taken some food; these were some of the chief officers at court, and had the management of the affairs of his household:

but he would not; they could not persuade him to it:

neither did he eat bread with them; that evening, as he had used to do; they being the princes of his court, who were wont to sit at table with him.

2 Samuel 12:18

Ver. 18. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died,.... Not the seventh day from its being taken ill, but from its birth; for it cannot be thought that David should fast seven days:

and the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; lest he should be overwhelmed with too much sorrow:

for they said, behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him; to rise from the ground, and eat food:

and he would not hearken unto our voice; we could not prevail upon him to do the one nor the other:

how will he then vex himself if we tell him that the child is dead? or should we acquaint him with it, "he will do mischief" {w} to himself, to his body; he will tear his flesh to pieces, and cut and kill himself; this they were afraid of, observing the distress and agony he was in while it was living, and therefore they concluded these would increase upon hearing of its death.

{w} her hvew kai poihsei kaka, Sept. "faciat malum", Pagninus, Montanus; "malum [sibi] inferet", Syr. Ar.

2 Samuel 12:19

Ver. 19. And when David saw that his servants whispered,.... For they said the above to one another with a low voice, that he might not hear them, though in the same room with them:

David perceived the child was dead; he guessed it was, and that this was the thing they were whispering about among themselves:

therefore David said unto his servants, is the child dead? and they said, he is dead; for putting the question to them so closely, they could not avoid giving the answer they did, and which he was prepared to receive, by what he had observed in them.

2 Samuel 12:20

Ver. 20. Then David arose from the earth,.... From the floor on which he lay:

and washed, and anointed [himself], and changed his apparel; neither of which he had done during his time of fasting:

and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped; went into the tabernacle he had built for the ark of God, and then in prayer submitted himself to the will of God, and acknowledged his justice in what he had done; gave thanks to God that he had brought him to a sense of his sin, and repentance for it, and had applied his pardoning grace to him, and given him satisfaction as to the eternal welfare and happiness of the child, as appears from 2Sa 12:23;

then he, came to his own house; from the house of God, having finished his devotion there:

and when he required; ordered food to be brought in:

they set bread before him, and he did eat: whereas before, while the child was living, he refused to eat.

2 Samuel 12:21

Ver. 21. Then said his servants unto him, what thing [is] this that thou hast done?.... Or what is the reason of such conduct and behaviour? they knew what was done, but they did not know the meaning of it, which is what they inquired after:

thou didst fast and weep for the child, [while it was] alive; prayed with fasting and weeping for it, that it might live and not die:

but when the child was dead thou didst rise and eat bread; and appeared cheerful; this seemed strange to them, when they expected his sorrow would be increased.

2 Samuel 12:22

Ver. 22. And he said, while the child was yet alive,.... And so there was hope it might be continued:

I fasted and wept; or sought the Lord by prayer, and fasting, and weeping, that the threatening might not take place, that the child's life might be spared:

for I said; within himself, thus he reasoned in his own mind:

who can tell [whether] God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? and in hope of this he kept praying, fasting, and weeping; he could not tell but God might repent of the evil he had threatened, as in some cases he has done; see **Joe 2:13**. Abarbinel thinks that David fasted and wept to hide this matter from his wife, and his servants, and did not let them know that this was in his punishment, that the child should die.

2 Samuel 12:23

Ver. 23. But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast?.... And pray; it is to no purpose, no end can be thought to be answered by it:

can I bring him back again? from the state of the dead, bring him to life by fasting, and praying, and weeping; that is not to e expected:

I shall go to him; to the state of the dead, to the grave, where his body was, or would be; to heaven and eternal happiness, where his soul was, as he comfortably hoped and believed: from whence it appears, that the Old Testament saints did not suppose an annihilation at death; but believed the immortality of the soul, a future state after death of eternal life and bliss:

but he shall not return to me; in the present mortal state, though at the resurrection they should meet again.

2 Samuel 12:24

Ver. 24. And David comforted Bathsheba his wife,.... Which is the first time she is so called, Uriah being dead, and David having married her; which though at first displeasing to the Lord, because the circumstances attending it, was afterwards confirmed by him. Bathsheba no doubt was very much distressed, and greatly disconsolate, on account of the sin she had committed, and because of the wrath and displeasure of God, and because of the death of the child, which was a token of it; and she might have some scruples in her mind whether it was lawful to continue cohabiting with David. Now David comforted her, by telling her that God had pardoned that iniquity they had been guilty of, and that he would give them another son, who should succeed him in the throne, and build an house for his name:

and went in unto her, and lay with her, as his wife:

and she bare a son; at the proper time:

and he called his name Solomon; either the Lord called him so, or David by his direction; for this name was given before his birth, 1Ch 22:9; the Keri or marginal reading is, "and she called his name", &c. that is, Bathsheba, who had been informed by David that this was the name the Lord would have him called by, which signifies "peaceable"; and the birth of this son was a confirmation of the peace and reconciliation between God and them, and which his name carried in it; as well as pointed to the peaceable times that should be during his reign, and in which be was a type of Christ, the Prince; of peace; who is the author of peace between God and men by the blood of his cross, and from whom spiritual peace flows, and by whom eternal peace and happiness is:

and the Lord loved him; and was to him a father, and he to him a son, as was promised, **2Sa 7:14**. This love and affection of the Lord to Solomon was signified to David by Nathan, as follows.

2 Samuel 12:25

Ver. 25. And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet,.... Either David did; he sent by him to Bathsheba, to acquaint her with the name of the child, that it was to be Solomon; which is not so likely: or "he, David, delivered it into the hand of Nathan the prophet"; to educate it, instruct it, and bring it up in the nurture of the Lord; or rather the Lord sent a message by Nathan the prophet to David, that he loved Solomon:

and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord: that is, David also called him by this name, because of the love of the Lord unto him; for Jedidiah signifies "the beloved of the Lord"; a name and character which well agrees with the Messiah, Solomon's antitype, **Mt 3:17**.

2 Samuel 12:26

Ver. 26. And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon,.... Of his being sent against it, and of his besieging it, we read in 2Sa 11:1; but it can hardly be thought that he had been so long besieging it, as that David had two children by Bathsheba; but the account of the finishing of it is placed here, that the story concerning Bathsheba might lie together without any interruption:

and took the royal city; or that part of it in which the king's palace was, and which, as Abarbinel observes, was without the city, as the palaces of kings now usually are.

2 Samuel 12:27

Ver. 27. And Joab sent messengers to David,.... To acquaint him how he had proceeded, and what success he had had:

and said, I have fought against Rabbah; laid siege to it, and skirmished with parties that sallied out upon them:

and have taken the city of waters; the same with the royal city, and so the Targum here renders it; so called because situated by the waterside; Adrichomius says {x} the river Jabbok flowed round about it: or it abounded with fountains of water, from whence the other part of the city, or what was properly the city Rabbah, was supplied with water; and which communication being cut off, it could not hold out long, which Joab being sensible of, therefore sent for David. Junius and Tremellius render the words, "I have intercepted the water from the city"; with which the account of Josephus {y} agrees, who says, that he cut off the water from them, and precluded other supplies, so that they were in great distress for want of food and drink; and in like manner it was taken by Antiochus some hundreds of years later; for that; historian says {z} the siege by him lasted long, and they could not prevail, because of the multitude of men it, until one of the prisoners showed them a subterraneous passage, through which they came and fetched water; which they stopped up with stones and such like things, and then through want of water yielded.

{x} Theatrum T. S. p. 34. {y} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 7. sect. 5. {z} Polyb. Hist. l. 5. p. 414.

2 Samuel 12:28

Ver. 28. Now therefore gather the rest of the people together,.... The rest of the soldiers in the land of Israel, and come to Rabbah:

and encamp against the city; invest it in form:

and take it; upon a surrender or by storm; for it could not hold out long:

lest I take the city, and it be called after my name; so great a regard had Joab, though an ambitious man, to the fame and credit of David his king: so Craterus {a} at the siege of Artacacna, being prepared to take it, waited the coming of Alexander, that he might have the honour of it.

{a} Curt. Hist. l. 6. c. 6.

2 Samuel 12:29

Ver. 29. And David gathered all the people together,.... The soldiers that were with him, or near him; which was done partly to recruit Joab's troops, who, by the continuance of the siege, and the sallies of the enemy on them, might be greatly diminished; and partly to make conquests of other cities of the Ammonites, and to carry off the spoil of them:

and went to Rabbah; which must be after the death of Uriah, and very probably during the time of Bathsheba's mourning for him:

and fought against it, and took it; by assault.

2 Samuel 12:30

Ver. 30. And he took their king's crown from off his head,.... The crown of Hanun the king of the Ammonites, who now fell into his hands, and whom he stripped of his ensigns of royalty, who had so shamefully abused his ambassadors, 2Sa 10:4:

(the weight whereof [was] a talent of gold with the precious stones): or, "and a precious stone"; there might be more, as our version suggests, but there was one in it remarkably large and valuable; Josephus {b} says it had in it a very precious stone, a sardonyx; and this, according to the Talmud {c} was of the value of a talent of gold. A talent was equal to three thousand shekels, as appears from Ex 38:25; and was in value, according to Brerewood {d} of our money, 4500 pounds; but according to Bishop Cumberland {e} 5067 pounds, three shillings and ten pence. This crown was of the same value with the golden candlestick in the tabernacle, Ex 25:39; and some think that value here is meant, and not the weight, a talent of gold being very heavy; according to Bishop Cumberland {f}, ninety three and three quarter pounds; some say an hundred thirteen pounds ten ounces, and more; too great a weight to be borne on the head by Hanun or David; but, what with the gold and precious stones about it, it might be equal in value to a talent of gold; but weight is expressly mentioned, and the crowns of the eastern princes were of great bulk and weight, as well as value: Athenaeus {g} makes mention of one made of ten thousand pieces of gold, placed on the throne of King Ptolemy, and of some of two cubits, of six, yea, of sixteen cubits. Some {h} are of opinion that this crown was not the crown of the king of Ammon, but of Milcom or Molech, their idol, and that the proper name should be retained in the version, and that David had a crown made of it he could bear; but if, as others {i}, the Syriac talent is meant, which was but the fourth part of an Hebrew one, the difficulty is greatly lessened; for it seems to be the same crown David afterwards wore, as follows:

and it was [set] on David's head; to show that the kingdom was translated to him, or was become subject to him; as Alexander, on the conquest of Darius, put the Persian diadem on his own head {k}, in token of that monarchy being translated to him: though, after all, the phrase, "from off", may be rendered "from above" or "over" {l} his head, and so it was set "above" or "over" the head of David, being supported by some means or other, that its weight did not bear thereon however, Paschalius, who wrote a learned work, "De Coronis", must be mistaken when be says {m} this seems to be the first use of a crown in the kingdom of Judah, there being no mention of a crown before, either of Saul or David, only of anointing; since express mention is made of Saul's crown, **2Sa 1:10**; though his observation may be just, that this crown, allowed to be worn by David, was a pledge of the renewal of his royal dignity, and of his acceptance with God upon his repentance for his above sins:

and he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance; which, or at least part of it, was dedicated to the building of the sanctuary, **2Sa 8:11**.

{b} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 7. sect. 5.) {c} T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 44. 1.

{d} De Ponder. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 4. {e} Of Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 4. p. 121. {f} Ib. p. 119. {g} Apud Paschalium de Coronis, l. 9. c, 8. p. 587. {h} Vid. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 78. H. & in Paralipom. fol. 83. M. Weemse of Jewish Weights, p. 141. {i} Pfeiffer. Difficil. Script. Loc. cent. 2. loc. 87. {k} Diodor. Sic. l. 17. p. 549. {l} lem "desuper", Montanus, "supra caput David", Munster. {m} Ut supra, (Apud Paschalium de Coronis) l. 10. c. 10. p. 695.

2 Samuel 12:31

Ver. 31. And he brought forth the people that [were] therein,.... Not all the inhabitants of the place, but the princes of the children of Ammon, the counsellors of Hattun, who advised him to use David's ambassadors in so shameful a manner, and others that expressed their pleasure and satisfaction in it:

and put [them] under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron; whereby they were cut asunder, as some were by the Romans and others {n}, or their flesh torn to pieces, and they put to extreme pain and agony, and so died most miserably; see 1Ch 20:3;

and made them pass through the brickkiln; where they burnt their bricks, by which they were not only scorched and blistered, but burnt to death; so the word in the "Keri", or margin, signifies, which we follow; but in the text it is, they caused them to pass through Malcem, the same with Milcom or Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon, 1Ki 11:5; unto which they made their children pass through the fire, and burnt them; and now in the same place they themselves are made to pass through, and be burnt, as a righteous punishment of them for their barbarous and wicked idolatry. The word used in the Greek version, according to Suidas {o}, signifies an army, or a battalion of men drawn up in a quadrangular form, like a brick; and in the same sense Josephus {p} uses it; hence a learned man {q} conjectures that David's army was drawn up in the like form, through which the Ammonites were obliged to pass, and as they passed were assailed with darts, and killed; a like punishment to which is what the Italians call "passing through the pikes":

and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon; to the inhabitants of them; that is, the chief, who bad expressed their joy at the ill usage of his ambassadors: this he did to strike terror into other nations, that they might fear to use his ambassadors in such like manner. This action of David's showing so much severity, is thought by most to be done when under the power of his lust with Bathsheba, in an hardened and impenitent state, when he had no sense of mercy himself, and so showed none; which is too injurious to his character; for this was a righteous retaliation of this cruel people, 1Sa 11:2. Which may be observed in other instances, **Jud 8:6**; but the charge of cruelty in David will be easily removed by following the translation of a learned {r} man, and which I think the words will bear, "and he obliged the people that were in it to go out, and put them to the saw", to cut stones; "and to the iron mines", to dig there; "and to the axes of iron", to cut wood, with; "after he had made them to pass with their king" out of the city.

So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem; in triumph, and with great spoil.

{n} Suetonius in Vita Caii, c. 27. Vid. Herodot. l. 2. c. 139. {o} In voce plinyion. {p} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 4. sect. 4. {q} Menochius de Repub. Heb. l. 8. c. 3. col 752. {r} Danzii Commentat. de miligat. David in Ammon. crudel. Jenae 1710, apud Michael. in 1 Chron. xx. 3. Vid. Stockium, p. 392.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 13

This chapter relates some of the evils that were to arise out of David's house, and which were similar to the evils committed by him; the deflowering of his daughter, and the murder of his eldest son: the story is this; Amnon falls in love with Tamar, his sister, and grew thin upon it, which being observed by a friend of his, inquires the reason of it, which having got out of him, forms a scheme for obtaining his desire, and which succeeded; for by it he had the opportunity of ravishing his sister, 2Sa 13:1; the consequences of which were extreme hatred of her, hurrying her out of doors, lamentation and mourning on her part, grief to David, and enmity in the heart of Absalom to Amnon, which put him upon meditating his death, 2Sa 13:15; and which was brought about after this manner. Absalom had a sheep shearing, to which he invited the king and all his sons, and to which they all came excepting the king, 2Sa 13:23; when Absalom gave orders to his servants to observe Amnon when he was merry, and at his word smite him and kill him, as they did, 2Sa 13:28; tidings of which soon came to the ears of David, and these aggravated, that all the king's sons were killed, which threw the king into an agony; but Jonadab endeavoured to pacify him, by assuring him that only Amnon was dead, the truth of which soon appeared by the coming of the king's sons, 2Sa 13:30; but Absalom fled to Geshur, where he remained three years, when David's heart began to be towards him, and to long for him, who was to bring more evil against him, 2Sa 13:37.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass after this,.... After the sin of David with Bathsheba, his repentance for it, and pardon of it, and the birth of Solomon as a token of reconciliation; yet after all this the divine threatenings must take place; they had begun already in the death of the child begotten in adultery, and others here follow:

that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name [was] Tamar; she was his sister both by father and mother's side; the mother o, f them was Maacah, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; she was a very comely person, her name signifies a palm tree:

and Amnon the son of David loved her; not in an honourable way, to make her his wife, but in a lustful manner, to make an harlot of her; he was David's eldest son by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, **2Sa 3:2**.

2 Samuel 13:2

Ver. 2. And Amnon was so vexed,.... Distressed, straitened, and perplexed in his mind through unruly and unbridled lusts that raged in him:

that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; as Antiochus son of Seleucus did for his mother in law Stratonice, who, to cure him of it, was delivered to him by his father {s}:

for she [was] a virgin; and so kept very recluse from the company of men, that he could not come at her; so Philo {t}, speaking of the Jewish women, and particularly virgins, says, that they were shut up in their chambers, and through modesty shun the sight of men, even those of their own house; hence they are called twmle, from a word which signifies to hide; and Phocylides {u} the poet advises to the shutting of them up in like manner:

and Amnon thought it hard for him to do anything to her; that it was difficult to have access to her, almost impossible, what he despaired of, and what, if attained to, would be wonderful and amazing; he was at his wits' end how to contrive any scheme to get at her, and obtain his desire.

{s} See the Universal History, vol. 3. p. 519. Ed. fol. {t} In Flaccum, p. 977. {u} Poem. admon. v. 203, 204.

2 Samuel 13:3

Ver. 3. But Amnon had a friend,.... Though in the issue his friendship proved his ruin:

whose name [was] Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother; so that they were own cousins, the same with Shammah, 1Sa 16:9;

and Jonadab [was] a very subtle man; a very penetrating man into the dispositions of men, and could judge by their countenances what they were, and the affections of their minds, and had a talent in forming schemes; he was wise to do evil and was wickedly cunning.

2 Samuel 13:4

Ver. 4. And he said unto him, why [art] thou, [being] the king's son, lean from day today?.... Or "morning by morning", {w}; he was the king's eldest son, heir to the crown, fed at his table, had everything to make him gay and cheerful, and yet pined away; his flesh wasted {x}, his countenance waxed wan and pale, and especially in the mornings; in the daytime he met with diversions which, in some measure, took off his thoughts from the object his mind was impressed with, but in the night season they were continually employed about it; so that he could have no rest and sleep, which made him look ruefully in the morning; and this man had a suspicion of his case, and therefore put this and the following question to him:

wilt thou not tell me? who am so nearly related to thee, and who have such a particular value and affection for thee:

and Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister; he does not call her his sister, but Absalom's sister, to lessen his sin of unlawful love to her, which, being thus closely pressed, and by a friend, he could not conceal.

{w} rqbb rqbb, "in mane in mane", Montanus. {x} "Fecit amor maciem -----".

Ovid Metamorph. l. 11. Fab. 11. v. 793.

2 Samuel 13:5

Ver. 5. And Jonadab said unto him,.... Being a subtle man, he presently formed a scheme to relieve him, and open a way for the enjoyment of what he desired:

lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick; feign thyself sick, pretend that thou art so, by lying down on the bed, and making complaints of one kind or another:

and when thy father cometh to see thee; as he quickly would, after hearing of his illness, being very affectionate to his children:

say unto him, I pray thee let, my sister Tamar come, and give me meat; here he is directed to call her not Absalom's sister, but his own, the more to cover his ill design upon her:

and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see [it], and eat [it] at her hand; pretending that his stomach was very weak and squeamish, that he could not eat anything which his servants dressed for him, and which he did not see done with his own eyes.

2 Samuel 13:6

Ver. 6. So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick,.... Took the advice of his cousin Jonadab, and acted according to it:

and when the king was come to see him; as he quickly did, after he had heard of his illness:

Amnon said unto the king; who perhaps inquired of his appetite, whether he could eat anything, and what:

I pray thee let my sister Tamar come; he calls her sister, as Jonadab had directed, the more to blind his design; though it is much that so sagacious a man as David was had not seen through it; but the notion he had of his being really ill, and the near relation between him and Tamar, forbad his entertaining the least suspicion of that kind:

and make me a couple of cakes in my sight; heart cakes, as the word may be thought to signify; called so either from the form of them, such as We have with us, or from the effect of them, comforting and refreshing the heart:

that I may eat at her hand; both what is made by her hand, and received from it.

2 Samuel 13:7

Ver. 7. Then David sent home to Tamar,.... Who perhaps was not in the king's palace, but at her brother Absalom's house, 2Sa 13:20;

saying, go now to thy brother Amnon's house; who also had a separate house and equipage, being the king's son, and his eldest son:

and dress him meat; such as he may desire, and his stomach will bear.

2 Samuel 13:8

Ver. 8. So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house,.... In obedience to the king's commands, and in affection to her brother, with an innocent breast, having no suspicion of any design upon her chastity:

(and he was laid down); upon a couch or bed in his chamber, as being sick as was pretended, into which she was introduced:

and she took flour, and kneaded [it]; made it into a paste:

and made cakes in his sight; a kind of fritters of them, as in the Talmud {y}:

and did bake the cakes: or fried them in a frying pan, in oil.

{y} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 1.

2 Samuel 13:9

Ver. 9. And she took a pan, and poured [them] out before him,.... Out of the frying pan, in which they were, into another dish; and all this was done in his presence, that he might see and know of what, and in what manner it was made, that his stomach might not recoil at it:

but he refused to eat: for that was not what he wanted:

and Amnon said, have out all men from me; as if company was troublesome to him, and he wanted rest, &c.

and they went out every man from him; at his orders, that he might get some sleep, as he seemed desirous of it.

2 Samuel 13:10

Ver. 10. And Amnon said unto Tamar, bring the meat into the chamber,.... An inner chamber, at a greater distance, where they might be more secret, and out of the reach of the hearing of any of his domestics:

that I may eat of thine hand; this he pretended, though his design was of another kind:

and Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought [them] into the chamber to Amnon her brother; being quite innocent herself, and having no suspicion of a brother having any ill design upon her, she made no scruple of going into an inner chamber alone with him.

2 Samuel 13:11

Ver. 11. And when she had brought [them] unto him to eat,.... Not only into the chamber, but to the side of the bed or couch where he had laid himself, or sat, in a proper position to answer his purpose:

he took hold of her; by the arm, or threw his hands about her:

and said unto her, come, lie with me, my sister; one would think the relation he observes she stood in to him would have checked him from making so vile a motion.

2 Samuel 13:12

Ver. 12. And she answered him, nay, my brother,.... Which carried in it a reason sufficient for her denial, that he was her brother, and she his sister, and therefore should not offer such an indignity to her:

do not force me; which was another forbidding expression, signifying she would never freely yield to his will; and to force her, to defile her against her will, to commit a rape upon her, would be very criminal indeed:

for no such thing ought to be done in Israel; among God's professing people, who were better taught and instructed; and to give into such impure practices would bring a dishonour upon them, and upon the religion they professed; she urges the honour of religion, and the reputation of Israel, and the glory of the God of Israel:

do not thou this folly: as all sin is, especially such an impure and indecent action as this.

2 Samuel 13:13

Ver. 13. And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go?.... She desires him to consider hey reputation, which would be lost; was she to go into a corner, into a place the most private and retired, yet she would blush at the thought of the crime committed; and still less able would she be to lift up her face in any public company; nor could she ever expect to be admitted into the matrimonial state; in short, her character would be entirely ruined:

and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel; as the vilest and basest and most abandoned in the nation; who ought of all men to be most careful of his reputation, being a prince in Israel, and heir apparent to the throne:

now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king: to give me to thee in marriage:

for he will not withhold me from thee; this she said, either as ignorant of the law, which forbids such marriages, or as supposing the king had a power to dispense with it, and, rather than he should die for love, would; though she seems to say this, and anything that occurred to her mind, to put him off of his wicked design for the present, holding then she should be delivered from him;

besides, she was not his sister by the mother's side, and, as the Jews say, was born of a captive woman before she was proselyted and married to David, and so was free for Amnon {z}; and others say {a} she was the daughter of Maacah by a former husband, and not by David.

{z} Maimon. Hilchot Melacim, c. 8. sect. 8. Kimchi in 2 Sam. xiii. 1. {a} R. Moses Kotzensis, pr. affirm. 122.

2 Samuel 13:14

Ver. 14. Howbeit, he would not hearken unto her voice,.... His lust was so inflamed and enraged, that he could not attend to any arguments, though ever so forcible, that were offered to him:

but being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her; whether she cried out or not, as the law directs in such cases, De 22:25; is not said; she might, and nobody hear her and come to her assistance; or she might not choose to expose her brother to his servants.

2 Samuel 13:15

Ver. 15. Then Amnon hated her exceedingly,.... Having gratified his lust, his conscience stung him for it, that he could not bear the sight of the object that had been the instrument of it; and it may be the sharp words she had used, representing him as one of the fools in Israel, and perhaps she used sharper words still after he had abused her, filled him with hatred to her:

so that the hatred wherewith he hated her [was] greater than the love wherewith he had loved her; a like instance of love being changed into hatred, after the gratification of lust, we have in Honorius towards his sister Placidia {b}:

and Amnon said unto her, arise, be gone; without calling her by her name, or owning the relation she bore to him, using her as the basest and vilest of creatures. This conduct was very brutish, as well as imprudent, and foolish to the last degree; had he had any regard to his own reputation, he would never have turned her out of doors so soon, and in such a public manner; but so it was ordered by divine Providence, that his sin might be made known, and so the murder of him for it by Absalom was brought on, and both were suffered as a correction and chastisement to David for his sins of adultery and murder, 2Sa 12:11.

{b} Olympiodorus apud Grotium in loc.

2 Samuel 13:16

Ver. 16. And she said unto him, [there is] no cause,.... For such treatment as this:

this evil in sending me away [is] greater than the other that thou didst unto me; not that this was a greater sin, but it was a greater evil or injury to her, that being done secretly, this openly; being turned out in that open manner, it might look as if she was the aggressor, and had drawn her brother into this sin, or however had consented to it; had it been kept a secret, she would not have been exposed to public shame and disgrace, and she might have been disposed of in marriage to another; it would not have been known to the grief of her father, to the revenge of Absalom, and to the dishonour of religion; besides, the sin of Amnon might have been more easily excused, if any excuse could be made for it, as that it arose from the force of lust, and a strong impure affection, but this from barbarity and inhumanity:

but he would not hearken unto her; but insisted upon her immediate departure.

2 Samuel 13:17

Ver. 17. Then he called his servants that ministered unto him,.... His domestic servants that waited on him:

and said, put now this [woman] out from me; she not willing to depart at once, he ordered her to be put out immediately by force; using her and speaking of her in a very rude and scandalous manner, calling her this, leaving it to be supplied, as they would understand it, this base woman, this strumpet, &c.

and bolt the door after her; that she might not return; this was more disgraceful still.

2 Samuel 13:18

Ver. 18. And [she had] a garment of divers colours upon her,.... Of embroidered work, which made her the more observable, and her shame the more manifest. Whether this was interwoven with threads of various colours, or embroidered with figures of flowers, animals, &c. and wrought with the needle, or was painted with different colours, or made up of pieces of various colours, is not certain. See Gill on "Ge 37:3"; but according to Braunius {c} it was neither, and so the coat of Joseph, but was a garment with sleeves, reaching down to the ankles, and pieced at the borders with fringe; and, indeed, garments of flowers and various colours were such as in other nations, as in Athens, harlots wore {d} and not virgins, as follows:

for with such robes were the king's daughters [that were] virgins apparelled; which they wore to distinguish them both from common people, and from married persons of the same quality:

then the servants brought her out, and bolted the door after her; laid hold on her, and brought her out by main force; thrust her out of doors, and turned the key upon her.

{c} De Vest. Sacerdot. Heb. l. 1. c. 17. sect. 21. {d} Suidas in voce etairan.

2 Samuel 13:19

Ver. 19. And Tamar put ashes on her head,.... In token of sorrow and distress; see **Jos 7:6**;

and rent her garment of divers colours that [was] on her; signifying that her virginity was rent from her in a forcible manner, or that she was ravished:

and laid her hand on her head; through grief and shame; see **Jer 2:37**;

and went on crying; from Amnon's house to her brother Absalom's, as one abused and injured.

2 Samuel 13:20

Ver. 20. And Absalom her brother said unto her,.... Either meeting her in the street, or rather when come to his house:

hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? been rude with thee, and lain with thee, which is the meaning of this modest expression; which he guessed at, having heard of her being sent to his house, and knowing his lustful disposition, and seeing her in such a forlorn condition: he calls him Aminon, for so it is in the Hebrew text, and not Amnon, by way of contempt, as Kimchi observes:

but hold now thy peace, my sister; be silent, take no notice of this matter, say nothing of it to the king, nor any other, keep it in thine own breast, and make thyself easy:

he [is] thy brother, regard not this thing; it is thy brother that has done it, and not so disgraceful as a meaner person, done in the heat of lust, and a youthful one, and should be forgiven; besides, to divulge it would bring disgrace upon the whole family, and no recompence would be obtained by telling the king of it, since he was his son, his firstborn, and heir to the crown; this he said not out of love of Amnon, but as desirous of gratifying private revenge upon him for it when opportunity should serve.

So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house; not seeing any company, being filled with grief and shame, and none applying to her as a suitor, knowing she was vitiated; how long she continued here, or lived after this, is not certain; no mention is made of her afterwards.

2 Samuel 13:21

Ver. 21. But when King David heard of all these things,.... Of Amnon's ravishing Tamar, and turning her out of doors in that inhuman manner he did, and of her distress upon it:

he was very wroth; with Amnon; but we read not of any reproof he gave him, nor of any punishment inflicted on him by him. Abarbinel thinks the reason why he was not punished was because his sin was not cognizable by a court of judicature, nor was punishable by any way, or with any kind of death inflicted by the sanhedrim, as stoning, burning, &c. nor even by scourging, because there were no witnesses; but the punishment of it was cutting off, i.e. by the hand of God. The Jews say {e} a law was made on this, that virgins or unmarried persons should not be alone; for if this was done to the daughter of a king, much more might it be done to the daughter of a private man; and if to a modest person, much more to an impudent one.

{e} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 1.

2 Samuel 13:22

Ver. 22. And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad,.... That is, said nothing at all to him about the rape of his sister; not that he was sulky with him, and would not converse with him at all; for then Amnon would have mistrusted that he was meditating revenge, and therefore would have been upon his guard; but on the contrary he talked freely, and in appearance friendly, on other things, the better to conceal his hatred of him, and his design to avenge the injury of his sister:

for Absalom hated Amnon; or, "though" {f} he hated him, yet he behaved in this manner towards him:

because he had forced his sister Tamar: who was so by father and mother's side, and so near and dear unto him, and therefore resented the injury done her.

{f} yk, "quamvis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Pool, & Patrick.

2 Samuel 13:23

Ver. 23. And it came to pass after two full years,.... Two complete years after the rape was committed; so long Absalom kept it in his mind, and was contriving how to avenge it; he let it alone so long, that it might be thought by the king and Amnon, and all the family, that it was quite worn out of his mind, and entirely forgotten by him, and therefore might the more safely confide in him:

that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baalhazor, which [is] beside Ephraim; though a prince, the son of a king, he had his flocks, and attended to the care of them, and had shearers to shear them at the proper time of the year, which it now was. The Chinese shear their sheep three times a year, the spring, summer, and autumn; but the first time of shearing yields the best wool {g}. The place of shearing them was, no doubt, near where they were kept in Baalhazor, in the plain of Hazor, as the Targum, and so some versions; which was a city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:25; and near to Ephraim; not that it was a city in the tribe of Ephraim, as Josephus says {h}; but it was near to another city called Ephraim, perhaps the same as in 2Ch 13:19 and in Joh 11:54; it lay to the northeast of Jerusalem, as you go to Jericho, and is thought by Reland {i} to lie between Bethel and Jericho; and, according to Eusebius {k}, it was eight miles from Jerusalem; though Jerom {l}, through mistake, says twenty; and both these places, according to Bunting {m}, were eight miles from Jerusalem; it seems to be the same place that was spoken of in the Misnah {n}, called Ephraim in the valley, and which is said to be the second place in the land of Israel for fine flour, and might have its name from its fruitfulness:

and Absalom invited all the king's sons; to the sheepshearing: that is, to the feast which was usually made at such times, and still is; see Ge 38:12.

{g} Semedo's History of China, part 1. ch. 3. {h} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 8. sect. 2. {i} Palestina Illustrat. tom. 1. p. 377. {k} Apud Reland, ib. & p. 490. & tom. 2. p. 765. {l} De loc. Heb. fol. 91. A. {m} Travels, &c. p. 143, 363. {n} Menachot, c. 8. sect. l.

2 Samuel 13:24

Ver. 24. And Absalom came to the king,.... At Jerusalem, to invite him in person:

and said, behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; persons employed in shearing his sheep: and this being a time of entertainment and joy,

let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants, go with thy servant; he invited the king and the whole royal family to go with him to Baalhazor, and partake of the sheepshearing feast; for by "his servants" are not meant the king's domestic servants, his guard and retinue, but his sons, as appears by what follows.

2 Samuel 13:25

Ver. 25. And the king said to Absalom, nay, my son, let us not all now go,.... He did not object to the invitation entirely, he was willing some of the family should go, but not all; it seems probable that he particularly excepted himself and his eldest son, the heir to his crown, for the reason following:

lest we be chargeable unto thee; one or two persons more, supposing them to be private persons, would have added but little to the expense, if any; but as David was a king, he must have come with the retinue of a king, with a large number of servants and guards, and must be entertained as such; and Amnon, his eldest son, and heir apparent to the crown, must make a figure suitable to his quality, which would have considerably raised the expense; and perhaps Absalom's estate he had to live upon might be but small, which David knew, and therefore chose not to be burdensome to him:

and he pressed him; urged him to go; not that he expected he would, or really desired he should, but this he did to hide his intention, that he might have no suspicion of his design against Amnon; or otherwise he might think he would not have been so pressing upon him to go with him:

howbeit he would not go, but blessed him; thanked him for the invitation he gave him, and wished him much happiness and pleasure at his entertainment with his friends.

2 Samuel 13:26

Ver. 26. Then said Absalom, if not,.... If it is not thy pleasure to go with me, if I cannot have the honour of thy company:

I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us; let me have the next mark of honour that can be given me, the presence of the king's eldest son, and heir to the crown; he seems to express affection for him, and a particular desire of his company, as if all ill will towards him was removed from him, and this would be a public declaration of reconciliation between them:

and the king said unto him, why should he go with thee? he particularly, he more than any other; David seems to have suspected some design, and it is strange he should not; and yet if he had, it is much, notwithstanding the pressing arguments used, he should let him go; or he might think it would be more expensive to have him than the rest, and therefore asks why he should desire his company above all others.

2 Samuel 13:27

Ver. 27. But Absalom pressed him,.... Which one would think would have increased his suspicion, if he had any, or have raised it in him; but his mind was blinded, that Amnon's incest might be punished and the threatening to David and his house be fulfilled on account of the affair of Uriah and Bathsheba:

that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him; if he had any suspicion at all, he might choose they should all go, that they might protect and defend him, if any attempt was made upon him; or, as others think, that no exceptions might be taken, as might be, if Amnon had gone alone.

2 Samuel 13:28

Ver. 28. Now Absalom had commanded his servants,.... Before he and his guests were set down to the entertainment:

saying, mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine; as he was determined to make him if possible, and as he supposed he would be, knowing his inclination to drink:

and when I say unto you, smite Amnon, then kill him; smite him that he die, and be sure he is dead before you leave him:

fear not, have not I commanded you? who am your lord, the king's son, and will then be heir to the crown; fear not, I will protect you; let all the blame be laid to me, if any; I will be answerable for it, you have nothing to do but to obey my commands:

be courageous, and be valiant; show yourselves to be men of courage and valour, not fearing the king's sons, or any in company, or what will be the consequences of it; do your business effectually, and leave all with me; it is very reasonably supposed that Absalom had not only in view to revenge the rape of his sister, but to get himself next heir to the crown.

2 Samuel 13:29

Ver. 29. And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded,.... They smote him, and killed him, when he gave the word:

then all the king's sons arose; from the feast, imagining they were all designed to be slain:

and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled; creatures much used in Judea instead of horses, which, though they might not be bred, might be used {o}.

{o} Vid. Misn. Celaim, c. 8. sect. 1.

2 Samuel 13:30

Ver. 30. And it came to pass while they were in the way,.... On their road homewards, before they got to Jerusalem:

that tidings came to David; perhaps brought by one who was at the entertainment, who upon seeing Amnon smitten, immediately rose up and fled with the news of it to David:

saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left; which he might suppose was the design of Absalom, and was done before that time; however, so it was ordered in Providence, that David, that rejoiced at the news of the death of Uriah, might be terrified with the tidings of the death of all his sons; and for a while it was as if it was really so, which occasioned the following behaviour in him.

2 Samuel 13:31

Ver. 31. Then the king arose, and tore his garments,.... In token of extreme grief and sorrow, as Jacob did when he was shown the coat of Joseph, supposing him to have been slain, as David thought all his sons were, Ge 37:34;

and lay on the earth; on the bare ground, another token of mourning; so Job did on hearing the death of his sons, **Job 1:20**;

and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent: did as David did, in imitation of him, joining with him in expressions of sorrow; these were his courtiers, ministers of state, and principal officers in his household.

2 Samuel 13:32

Ver. 32. And Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother,.... The same that advised Amnon to feign himself sick, to get Tamar sent to him, that he might enjoy her, 2Sa 13:3;

answered and said; said in answer to the report brought to the king, which threw him into such an agony:

let not my lord suppose [that] they have slain all the young men the king's sons; he did not believe it himself, and would not have the king entertain such a thought, and distress himself with it:

for Amnon only is dead; he is very positive, and speaks with great assurance; it looks as if he was in the secret, and knew of the plot against Amnon's life; and, if so, he must be a very wicked man, first to form a scheme whereby Amnon might come at Tamar to ravish her, and then be accessory to the murder of him, as he must, if he knew of the design against his life, and did not acquaint him and the king of it; and this seems to be confirmed by what follows:

for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined, from the day that he forced his sister Tamar; that is, the slaying of Amnon; the meaning is, either that Absalom had given orders to his servants to slay him, whenever they had an opportunity; or it was "in the mouth of Absalom" {p}, as it may be rendered; he used to declare it to his intimate friends, that it was the purpose and resolution of his heart to kill Amnon some time or another; and this he had taken up from the time of his sister Tamar's being forced, and because of that, of which Jonadab had intelligence by some means or another; and who speaks of this rape without any seeming emotion, as if he had no concern at all in it.

{p} Mwlvba yp le "in ore Absalom", V. L. Vatablus.

2 Samuel 13:33

Ver. 33. Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart,.... Neither suppose it, nor be troubled for it:

to think that all the king's sons are dead: which was not to be thought, nor could any good reason be given for such a supposition for Amnon only is dead; he repeats it again with great assurance, which seems to confirm the suspicion of him before suggested; though some think he said this not from certain knowledge, but by conjecture.

2 Samuel 13:34

Ver. 34. But Absalom fled,.... He who promised his servants protection could not protect himself, and who no doubt fled with him; he knew what he had done was death by law, and that there was no city of refuge for such sort of murder as this, and he had no reason to hope the king would suffer so foul a crime as this to pass unpunished:

and the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked: to the way that led from Absalom's house to Jerusalem, to see if he could spy any other messenger on the road from thence:

and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side behind him; that is, behind the watchman, who, looking round him, saw them; these people were the king's sons and their attendants, who, being at some distance, the young man could not discern who they were; they did not come the direct road from Absalom's house, but came a round about way, for fear, as R. Isaiah rightly conjectures, lest Absalom should pursue, or send pursuers after them, and slay them; though others, as Kimchi, think this refers to the hill, and that the sense is, that the watchman saw them coming from the way which was behind the hill, and began to see them when they came to the side of it, which was the way that led to the city, surrounded by mountains, see Ps 125:2.

2 Samuel 13:35

Ver. 35. And Jonadab said to the king, behold, the king's sons come,.... For as they came nearer, it was plainly discovered that they were the king's sons, seen on the side of the hill:

as thy servant said, so it is; he seems to applaud himself, and exult at his penetration and foresight.

2 Samuel 13:36

Ver. 36. And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking,.... As soon as the above words were out of his mouth:

that, behold, the king's sons came: into the palace, and into the apartment where the king was:

and lifted up their voice and wept; not being able to tell the sorrowful news with their mouths, but declared it by gestures:

and the king also and all his servants wept very sore; they joined the king's sons in weeping, and were the more moved to it by their weeping, and the rather, since hereby the news of Amnon's murder was confirmed.

2 Samuel 13:37

Ver. 37. But Absalom fled,.... As before related, but here repeated for the sake of what follows:

and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur: his mother's father, see 2Sa 3:3, where he might hope for protection and safety:

and [David] mourned for his son every day; or "all the days" {q}, i.e. of the three years Absalom was in Geshur, about the end of which he was comforted concerning Amnon, as the following verses show. Some think it was for Absalom he mourned, but rather for Amnon. The reason why he mourned for him, when he did not for his child by Bathsheba, who died, because that was an infant, this a grown man, and heir to his crown, and was slain by the sword of his brother, and so fulfilled a threatening to himself on account of his own sin, which, hereby no doubt, was brought fresh to his mind.

{q} Mymyh lk "cunctis diebus", V. L. "omnibus diebus", Pagninus, Montanus.

2 Samuel 13:38

Ver. 38. So Absalom fled,.... This is the third time it is mentioned, and the reason of it here Abarbinel thinks is, that when he first fled to his grandfather, he used to stand openly in the court of his palace, and go with him wherever he went from place to place; but when he understood that his father mourned so for the death of Amnon, he was afraid he would send some person to lay hold on him, and take vengeance on him; and therefore he would go no more with the king from place to place, but went and abode in Geshur always, which was a fortified city, as it follows:

and went to Geshur, and was there three years: and never went out of it, until he was fetched by Joab, as 2Sa 14:23 relates; nor is there anything in 2Sa 13:37 disturbed and mutilated, as Spinosa {r} intimates, but the whole is very expressive and emphatic.

{r} Tractat. Theolog. Politic. c. 9. p. 176.

2 Samuel 13:39

Ver. 39. And [the soul of] King David longed to go forth unto Absalom,.... In like manner it is supplied and paraphrased in the Targum, because the word rendered "longed" is feminine; though it may be used to denote the effeminateness of David's disposition and carriage on this occasion. Aben Ezra thinks the word "wife", should be supplied, and then the sense is, that the wife of King David, the mother of Absalom, made supplication to him to send forth one of the young men to fetch Absalom, and that by her importunity to him she stirred up a longing desire in David after him. Abarbinel observes, from another writer of theirs, that all the three years David was mourning for his son, he went out continually to seek to take vengeance on Absalom; but after that time, the mother of Absalom, or Tamar his sister, or his daughter, was importunate with the king, and restrained him from going forth to seek vengeance on Absalom; and when he was comforted concerning Amnon, that woman found means to restrain him from going out, and he restrained his servants from going forth against Absalom; and so he observes the word is used for withholding or restraining in
Ps 40:10; and this agrees with several ancient versions, as the Vulgate Latin,

"King David ceased to persecute Absalom;"

and the Septuagint,

"King David ceased to go out to Absalom;"

and the Syriac version,

"and King David abstained from going out after Absalom:"

for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead; and could not be brought back from the grave, though Absalom might be from his exile, to which he had an inclination; but he knew not how to do it, consistent with justice and his own honour.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 14

This chapter relates that Joab, perceiving David's inclination to bring back Absalom, employed a wise woman of Tekoah to lay before him a feigned case of hers, drawn up by Joab, whereby this point was gained from the king, that murder might be dispensed with in her case, 2Sa 14:1; which being applied to the case of Absalom, and the king finding out that the hand of Joab was in this, sent for him, and ordered him to bring Absalom again, though as yet he would not see his face, 2Sa 14:21; and after some notice being taken of the beauty of Absalom's person, particularly of his head of hair, and of the number of his children, 2Sa 14:25; it is related, that after two full years Absalom was uneasy that he might not see the king's face, and sent for Joab, who refused to come to him, till he found means to oblige him to it, who, with the king's leave, introduced him to him, 2Sa 14:28.

Ver. 1. Now Joab the son of Zeruiah,.... The general of David's army:

perceived that the king's heart [was] towards Absalom; and longed to have him returned, though he knew not how to bring it about with credit to himself, his crime being so foul, and worthy of death. This Joab perceived by some words he now and then dropped, and by his conduct, not seeking by any ways and means to bring him to justice, and being now reconciled to the death of Amnon; wherefore Joab devised a way to make known to him his own mind, and the sense of the people, which would serve to encourage him to restore him; and the rather Joab was inclined to take such a step, as he knew it would establish him in the king's favour, and ingratiate him into the affection of Absalom, the next heir to the crown, as well as please the people, whose darling he was. Though Abarbinel is of opinion that Joab proceeded upon another view of things, not because he saw the heart and affection of David were towards Absalom, but the reverse; that though David restrained himself and his servants from going out after Absalom, yet Joab knew that the heart of the king was against him, and that his heart was to take vengeance on him, though he did not go out to seek him; he perceived there was still enmity and hatred in his heart to take vengeance on Absalom, and therefore he took the following method to remove it, and reconcile his mind to him; and so the Targum,

"and Joab the son of Zeruiah knew that the heart of the king was to go, out against Absalom;"

and it may be observed, that when Joab had so far prevailed upon him as to admit him to bring him back to Jerusalem, he would not suffer him to see his face, nor did he for two years after.

2 Samuel 14:2

Ver. 2. And Joab sent to Tekoah,.... Which Kimchi says was a city in the tribe of Asher, and others in the tribe of Benjamin, but it seems rather to be in the tribe, of Judah, 2Ch 11:5; according Jerom {s}, it was twelve miles from Jerusalem, though in another place {t} he says it was but nine; of this place was Amos, and some think {u} the woman after mentioned was his grandmother. It was proper to lay the scene of the affair to be proposed to the king at some distance, that it might not soon and easily be inquired into:

and fetched thence a wise woman; one much advanced in years, as Josephus says {w}, whose years had taught her wisdom by experience; a woman of good sense, and of a good address, apt at expression and reply, and knew how to manage an affair committed to her; and among other things, perhaps, was famous for acting the part of a mourner at funerals, for which sometimes women were hired; however, she was one that was talked of for her wisdom and prudence, and Joab having heard of her, sent for her as one for his purpose. The Jews {x} say, that Tekoah was the first place in the land of Israel for oil, and because the inhabitants were much used to oil, wisdom was found among them:

and said unto her, I pray thee feign thyself to be a mourner; a woman of a sorrowful spirit, and in great distress, and show it by cries and tears:

and put on now mourning apparel; black clothes, such as mourners usually wore:

and anoint not thyself with oil; as used to be done in times of feasting and rejoicing, to make them look smooth, and gay, and cheerful, and of which there might be much use at Tekoah, if so famous for oil:

but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead; her countenance pale and foul with weeping, her mourning clothes almost worn out, &c.

{s} Proem. in Amos, & Comment. in Jer. vi. 1. {t} De loc. Heb. in. voce "Elthei", fol. 91. B. {u} In Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 78. 1. {w} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 8. sect. 4. {x} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 85. 2.

2 Samuel 14:3

Ver. 3. And come to the king,.... At his palace, in the above condition and circumstances:

and speak on this manner unto him; something to the following purpose he dictated to her:

so Joab put the words in her mouth; the substance of what she should say; the fable she was to deliver as her own case might be framed by Joab, and which she delivered word for word exactly as he put it, and the application of it; but as he knew not what questions the king would ask her, so he could not dictate to her what to reply, unless he supposed this and the other, and so formed answers; but this he left to her prudence, and for the sake of which he chose a wise woman to manage this affair.

2 Samuel 14:4

Ver. 4. And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king,.... Or after she had spoken to him, being introduced by Joab, as is probable; when she had saluted him with God save the king, or May the king live, or some such like expressions:

she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance; to him as her king, in reverence of his majesty:

and said, help, O king; signifying that she was in great distress, and came to him for assistance and deliverance.

2 Samuel 14:5

Ver. 5. And the king said unto her, what aileth thee?.... Or what is thy case? What is the condition, and what the circumstances, that thou art in, which require help and assistance? intimating that he was ready to grant it on knowledge thereof; however, he was ready to hear what she had to say:

and she answered, I [am] indeed a widow woman; of a truth a widow, as the Targum; she was really one, a widow indeed, as in **1Ti 5:3**; not one that was separated from her husband, he being alive, or divorced from him on any account; and therefore she adds,

and mine husband is dead; and has been a long time; this she said to move the pity and compassion of the king, who, as the supreme magistrate in God's stead, was a Father of the fatherless, and the judge of the widow.

2 Samuel 14:6

Ver. 6. And thy handmaid had two sons,.... Two are observed, that her case might suit with Amnon and Absalom:

and they two strove together in the field; they quarrelled, and fought in the field, where there were no witnesses of what they did to each other; whereby she would suggest that Ammon was killed in the field, of which there were no witnesses, and therefore Absalom ought not to die; whereas it was in Absalom's house, at his table, and where the rest of the king's sons were present, and witnesses of it:

and [there was] none to part them; which, had there been, might have prevented the sad disaster; this, as Abarbinel thinks, is pointed at David, who when Amnon forced Tamar, did not correct him for it, nor seek to make peace between the brethren, and hence followed what had happened:

but the one smote the other, and slew him; as say the accusers of him that is living; for the fable supposes there was none with them; however, she suggests, as the above writer observes, that one gave the first blow, and so was the aggressor; and that he that was smitten rose up in his own defence, and in his passion slew him that smote him; which is observed to lessen the crime, and to intimate that Amnon was the aggressor, who first began the sin and quarrel, in ravishing Tamar, and so reproaching Absalom; and therefore his blood was upon his own head.

2 Samuel 14:7

Ver. 7. And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid,.... Who had sheltered her son, that slew his brother, from the avenger of blood; and not only the next akin, the avenger of blood, but even all the kindred and relations of the deceased, those of her husband's family rose up as one man, demanding justice:

and they said, deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he slew; pretending great regard to the deceased, and a zeal for justice, when the main thing aimed at was to get the inheritance into their own hands, as appears by what follows:

and we will destroy the heir also; and hereby she would insinuate to the king, that the reason why the rest of the king's sons spake against Absalom to him, and stirred him up to punish him with death, was because he was heir to the crown, and they thought by removing him to make way for themselves:

and so they shall quench my coal that is left; she had but one son, as she represents her case, who was like a coal left among ashes, in the ruins of her family; the only one to support her, keep alive her family, and bear up and continue her husband's name; and, as the Targum,

"they seek to kill the only one that is left;"

and so the family be extinct:

and shall not leave to my husband [neither] name nor remainder upon the earth; should he be delivered up to them and slain; but herein the fable or apologue differed greatly from the case it was intended to represent; for had Absalom been put to death, as the law required, David had sons enough to inherit his throne, and keep up his name.

2 Samuel 14:8

Ver. 8. And the king said to the woman, go to thine house,.... Go home and make thyself easy:

and I will give charge concerning thee; intimating that he would inquire into her case; and if it was as she had represented it, he would give orders that she should not be disturbed, or be obliged to deliver up her son, and that he should be safe from those that sought his life.

2 Samuel 14:9

Ver. 9. And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, my lord and king,.... With much vehemence, and yet with great respect, fearing an inquisition into her case; which it would not bear, being a fable, and being very desirous of having sentence on it immediately pronounced:

the iniquity [be] on me and on my father's house; let the crime be imputed to me and my family, and punishment inflicted on us for it, if I have misrepresented the case, told lies, and deceived the king:

and the king and his throne [be] guiltless; let neither he nor his kingdom be charged with any sin, or suffer any damage on that account: or else the sense is, supposing that the king through much business should forget and neglect this affair; and her son should be put to death, through the violence and rage of the family; then she wishes that the fault and punishment of such neglect might not fall upon the king and his kingdom, but upon her and her family: in this form she put it, for the honour of the king, and because she would not be thought to wish ill to him and his kingdom; yet tacitly suggests, that should this be the case, he and his kingdom must expect to answer and suffer for it.

2 Samuel 14:10

Ver. 10. And the king said, whoever saith [ought] unto thee,.... Demanding her to deliver up her son to justice, and reproaching her for not doing it:

bring him to me; give him in charge to a proper officer to be brought before me, and I shall chastise him for it:

and he shall not touch thee any more; give her any further trouble, by words or deeds.

2 Samuel 14:11

Ver. 11. Then said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the Lord thy God,.... Who is a God gracious and merciful, and imitate him in showing mercy to the distressed; pitying their case, having compassion upon them, and relieving them, as she hoped he would commiserate her case, and provide for the safety of her son. Some think she desires not only to give his word, but his oath, for her son's safety: "remember the Lord thy God"; i.e. make mention of him, as men do when they swear by him; swear to me by the Lord thy God:

that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son, or, "from multiplying the avenger of blood" {o}; that there might not rise one after another to destroy her son: her meaning is, that the king would swear to her, and give out a general prohibition, an universal edict, that no one should slay her son; otherwise if only the avenger of blood that was next of kin was forbidden, others would rise up one after another, so that he would never be in safety:

and he said, [as] the Lord liveth; if she desired an oath, he granted her request, and swore by the living God:

there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth; so far shall his life be from being touched, or taken away, that the least hurt shall not be done him, as this proverbial expression signifies.

{o} Mdh lag twbrhm "a multiplicando redemptorem sanguinis", Montanus; so the Tigurine version.

2 Samuel 14:12

Ver. 12. Then the woman said, let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak [one] word unto my Lord the king,.... Having gained her point, and gotten a decree from him confirmed by an oath, that her son though he had killed his brother should not die; she proceeds to accommodate the parable, and apply it to the case of Absalom, and improve it in his favour:

and he said, say on; gave her leave to say what she had further to observe to him; see **Lu 7:40**.

2 Samuel 14:13

Ver. 13. Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God?.... That they would be so wicked as to slay my son, or that they are the people of God that would slay Absalom; people so cruel could not be reckoned such, as the king's sons; so Abarbinel; who gives it as the sense of Ephodaeus, that by the people of God are meant Absalom, and his men; or Absalom only, one man being sometimes called people, Ex 21:8; and she expostulates with the king how he could entertain such a thought, as to seek to take away his life, when he had so fully expressed himself in her case on behalf of her son, who had slain his brother; or rather the meaning is, why he should think of doing such a thing as this, so contrary to the will of the people of Israel, the people of God, who would be greatly offended and grieved at it; so contrary to their wishes, which were to see him fetched back from an Heathenish court and country, where he was in danger of being corrupted, and to be restored to his father's favour and to his country, that he might be upon the spot at his death, to succeed in the throne and kingdom; for the provocation that Absalom had to kill Amnon had greatly lessened the evil in the esteem of the people:

for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty: he contradicts and condemns himself, in swearing that her son who had killed his brother should not die, nor an hair of his head be hurt, but should be in the utmost safety; and yet he sought to put his own son to death for a like crime, as the next clause explains it:

in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished; meaning Absalom, who was in a foreign country, an exile, 2Sa 13:34, and in danger of falling into idolatry; not daring to come home, lest his father should order him to be put to death; and which he might justly fear he would, should he return without leave, since he sought not by any means to fetch him back.

2 Samuel 14:14

Ver. 14. For we must needs die,.... As all must, herself, the king, and his sons, and indeed all men; this is the common case and lot of men; particularly she insinuates that David must die, and that there must be a successor named, and perhaps a dispute would arise about one; which might be fatal, if Absalom was not recalled in his lifetime; and that Amnon must have died in a little time if he had not been killed by his brother; and Absalom, he must die also quickly, and therefore what signifies taking away his life? he may as well live a little longer; this, however plausible, was but bad reasoning in the case of a malefactor:

and [are] as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; which sinks into the earth, and cannot be got out of it again; so men, when they die, are buried in the earth, and cannot be gathered or restored to life again, until the resurrection of the dead; and since Amnon is dead, and he cannot be brought to life again, it is best to be easy, and not seek to take away the life of another; which is to bring him into the same irrecoverable state and condition:

neither doth God respect [any] person; the words in the original are, "God doth not take away the soul or life" {p}; of every offender, but spares them notwithstanding the crimes they have committed; and therefore it became the king to be sparing and merciful to offenders, and particularly to his own son; and perhaps she any tacitly have respect to David himself who had been guilty both of murder and adultery, either of which deserved death; and yet God had not taken away his life, but in his great mercy had spared him; and therefore, since he had received mercy, he should show it: or "God hath not taken away [his] soul or life"; the life of Absalom; he had not cut him off himself by his immediate hand, nor suffered the king's sons to take away his life, nor any other to seize upon him, and bring him to justice, whom David might have employed; but had by his providence protected and preserved him; so that it seemed to be his will and pleasure that he should not be put to death:

yet doth he devise means that his banished be not expelled from him; from his word, worship, and ordinances, as Absalom was; and by protecting him by his providence, it looked as if it was his will, and he would find out ways and means for bringing him back to his country, his father's court, and the sanctuary of the Lord; even as, by the law concerning the cities of refuge for the manslayer, provision was made that at the death of the high priest the exiled person might return to his country.

{p} vpn Myhla avy alw "et non tollet Deus animam", Montanus; so the Tigurine version.

2 Samuel 14:15

Ver. 15. Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king,.... Of the case of Absalom, under a feigned one of hers:

[it is] because the people have made me afraid; having heard of their whisperings, murmurings, and uneasiness among them, because Absalom was not sent for home, fearing there would be an insurrection in the nation, or an invasion of it by Absalom at the request of his friends; in which he might be supported by the king of Geshur; or however that disputes would arise about the succession, at the death of David; on these accounts she determined to speak to the king, and him them to him in the manner she had done; though some understand this of the discouragement the people laid her under, telling her the king would not hear her; nevertheless she was resolved to make trial:

and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be the king will perform the request of his handmaid; not only with respect to her own son, as feigned; but with respect to Absalom, the grand thing in view.

2 Samuel 14:16

Ver. 16. For the king will hear,.... She was fully persuaded of it, as now he had heard her:

to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man [that would] destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God; he had given his word and his oath that he would deliver her son from the avenger of blood, that neither he nor any other should destroy him; which would have been the destruction of her and her whole family out of the land of Israel, the land which God had chosen for his inheritance, and had given to the of Israel to be theirs; and since the king had heard her, and granted her this favour, she doubted not but that he would deliver his own son from death, and restore him to the inheritance of the land, where he might worship the Lord God of his fathers, of which he was now deprived.

2 Samuel 14:17

Ver. 17. Then thine handmaid said, the word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable,.... Or, "for rest" {q}; what will give ease and satisfaction not only to her, but to all the people of Israel, when they shall hear of the king's intention and resolution to bring back Absalom:

for as an angel of God, so [is] my lord the king; as they are very wise, knowing, and understanding creatures, so was David:

to discern good and bad; to hear both the one and the other, and to discern the difference between them, and choose and pursue what is right, as in all other things, so in the present case:

therefore the Lord thy God shall be with thee; as to counsel and advise, so to assist in performance, and to prosper and succeed; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord thy God shall be for thine help."

{q} hxnml "ad requiem", Pagninus, Montanus; "ad tranquillitatem", Tigurine version; "ad quietem", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

2 Samuel 14:18

Ver. 18. Then the king answered and said unto the woman,.... Understanding plainly what she meant by all this, that the case she brought was a feigned one, and that the intention of it was to let him know the sense of the people with respect to Absalom, and the recall of him:

hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee; he suspected that this was not a scheme of her own, but some considerable person had formed it, and made use of her to execute it, which was what he desired to know:

and the woman said, let my lord the king now speak; ask what question he pleases, I am ready to answer.

2 Samuel 14:19

Ver. 19. And the king said, [is not] the hand of Joab with thee in all this?.... That is, is not this done by the advice, assistance, and direction of Joab? did not he form this scheme for thee, and direct thee to this method, and put thee upon prosecuting it?

and the woman answered and said, [as] thy soul liveth, my lord the king; what I am about to say is as sure as thou art alive; though this may be only a wish that he might long live and be happy; nothing is more desirable than thy valuable life:

none can turn to the right hand or the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken; he has hit upon the truth of the matter; there is no dissimulation or prevarication to be used; the thing cannot be denied; for thy servant Joab he bade me, and put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid: he sent for me, and laid his commands on me, and directed me what to say to the king, and how to conduct this affair.

2 Samuel 14:20

Ver. 20. To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing,.... Feigned a story in such form and manner as had been delivered to the king, that it might be accommodated and applied to the case of Absalom, and to transfer it in a figure to the king, to use the apostle's phrase, **1Co 4:8**;

and my lord [is] wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God; as not only to understand the design of this fable or parable, but of such sagacity and penetration as to find out the author of it; and even

to know all [things] that [are] in the earth; either in the whole world, or rather in the land of Israel; and it is to be understood not of all actions natural and moral done by men in it, which would be to ascribe omniscience to him; but of all political things, all things respecting civil government; that he had such a spirit of discerning of men and things, that nothing could be said or done, or scheme formed, but he got intelligence of it, and insight into it; and which was carrying the compliment to a great height.

2 Samuel 14:21

Ver. 21. And the king said unto Joab,.... Who was present, or but at a little distance, waiting the issue of this affair:

behold now I have done this thing; have agreed to recall Absalom, at the suit of this woman, which thou hast put her upon; or, according to the textual reading, "thou hast done this thing" {r}; contrived this scheme, to let me know the mind of the people with respect to Absalom, or to represent to me the propriety of sending for him home:

go, therefore, bring the young man Absalom again; I give my consent to it, and you may send for him, or fetch him as soon as you please; it is thought he calls him a young man, to extenuate his crime, that it was done in youthful heat and passion, and therefore he should pass it over.

{r} tyve "fecisti", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

2 Samuel 14:22

Ver. 22. And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself,.... Or bowed so low as to the ground, in reverence of the king:

and thanked the king; for giving him leave to fetch Absalom home, as if it was a favour done to himself: or "blessed" {s} him; wished all happiness and prosperity might attend him, in consequence of this grant, which he knew would be acceptable to the people:

and Joab said, today thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant; he might presume upon this, that as the king had given orders at his request to recall Absalom, who had murdered his brother, which was tacitly giving him a pardon; so he would forgive him the murder of Abner, **2Sa 3:30**, and think no more of it; since he perceived now, which he had not so clearly perceived before from that time, that he found grace in his sight, or shared in his favour and good will, as now he saw he did.

{s} Krbyw "et benedixit", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

2 Samuel 14:23

Ver. 23. So Joab arose and went to Geshur,.... Where Absalom was with his grandfather, the king of the place; see 2Sa 13:37;

and brought Absalom to Jerusalem; from thence, which, according to Bunting {t}, was the distance of eighty eight miles from it.

{t} Travels, &c. p 146, 148.

2 Samuel 14:24

Ver. 24. And the king said,.... Very probably to Joab, when he informed him of Absalom's being come to Jerusalem:

let him turn to his own house; depart from the king's palace, where Joab had brought him, and go to his own house, which was in Jerusalem; for here he had one before he fled to Geshur; see 2Sa 13:20;

and let him not see my face; which he ordered, partly to show his detestation of the crime he had been guilty of, and some remaining resentment in his mind at him on account of it; and partly for his credit among some of the people at least, who might think it was a crime so great as not to go unpunished, though others were of a different mind; and also for the greater humiliation of Absalom, who, the king might think, had not been sufficiently humbled for his sin, or had not truly repented of it:

so Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face; in obedience to his father's orders.

2 Samuel 14:25

Ver. 25. But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty,.... Which is observed to account in some measure for the interest he had in the affections of the people, both now and hereafter:

from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him; not any spot, freckle, wart, scurf, or scab; nothing deficient or superfluous in him; no disproportion of parts, nor any disagreeable feature; but an entire symmetry, and perfect comeliness, which made him very respectable. The Talmudists {u} make him to be of a gigantic stature.

{u} T. Bab. Niddah, fol. 24. 2.

2 Samuel 14:26

Ver. 26. And when he polled his head,.... Or cut off the hair of it; for that was one thing, a good head of hair which he had, that made him look very comely and beautiful:

for it was at every year's end that he polled [it]; or cut it off once a year; but the Jews say {w} he was a perpetual Nazarite:

because [the hair] was heavy upon him, and therefore he polled it; it grew so very thick and long in one year's time, that he was obliged to cut it; and what might add to the weight of it, its being oiled and powdered; and, as some say, with the dust of gold, to make it look yellow and glistering:

he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels, after the king's weight; and a shekel being the weight of half an ounce of avoirdupois weight, as Bishop Cumberland {x} has shown from various writers, the weight of his hair must be an hundred ounces; which was a very great weight indeed on his head. Some think that the price it was sold at, and not the weight of it, is meant; which they suppose was sold to women for ornament about their temples, and the money given either to the poor, or for the use of the sanctuary; and reckoning a shekel at two shillings and sixpence, as some do, the value of it came to twenty five pounds of our money; but the above mentioned writer {y} reduces it to about two shillings and four pence farthing; which makes the value somewhat less; but inasmuch as it is not so probable that a person of such rank should sell his hair, nor does it appear that any, such use was made of hair in those times as suggested; and this being said to be according to the king's weight or stone, by which all weights were to be regulated, it is best to understand this of the weight, and not of the price of his hair; which, according to Josephus {z}, was five pounds; but, according to the above account, it must be six pounds and a quarter. The Jews say {a} this weight was according to what the inhabitants of Tiberias and Zippore used, but do not tell us what it was.

{w} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Nazir, c 1. sect. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 194. 3. Gloss. T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 2. {x} Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 4. p. 103. {y} Ibid. p. 104. {z} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 8. sect. 5. {a} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 2.

2 Samuel 14:27

Ver. 27. And unto Absalom there were born three sons,.... Who very probably died young; and the rather it may be thought so, since their names are not given, and more especially since it is said that Absalom had no sons, and therefore erected a pillar to keep up the remembrance of his name; unless it can be thought that that was set up before he had any sons, which is not so likely; see 2Sa 18:18;

and one daughter, whose name [was] Tamar; and whom he named after his sister Tamar, who was ravished by Amnon; the Septuagint version in some copies adds,

"and she became the wife of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and bore to him Abia;"

and so says Josephus {b}; see 1Ki 15:22;

she was a woman of a fair countenance; as was her aunt, after whom she was named, 2Sa 13:1; by this it appears that she lived to a woman's estate, though the sons of Absalom died young.

{b} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 8. sect. 5.)

2 Samuel 14:28

Ver. 28. So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem,.... After his return from Geshur:

and saw not the king's face; all that time; which was owing either to the king's resentment of the fact committed by him, or to state policy.

2 Samuel 14:29

Ver. 29. Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king,.... To introduce him into his presence, being uneasy to be thus confined at his own house, and not suffered to come to court:

but he would not come to him; knowing the king's mind, and being unwilling to disoblige him by a troublesome solicitation:

and when he sent again the second time, he would not come; knowing his business with him; and perhaps between the first time of his sending and this he had sounded the king about it, and found it was not agreeable to him to admit him to access to him as yet.

2 Samuel 14:30

Ver. 30. Therefore he said unto his servants,.... That did his business for him in the field, in keeping his flocks, and tilling his ground:

see Joab's field is near mine: for great personages in those days attended to husbandry:

and he hath barley there, go and set it on fire; it being ripe, and so capable of being fired, and therefore must be some time in March or April, when barley harvest began; he served Joab as Samson did the Philistines, Jud 15:4; which shows him to be a bold, and revengeful, and ungrateful man, to use his friend, and the general of the king's army, after this manner:

and Absalom's servants set the field on fire; as their master had bid them, and which is no wonder; for as they murdered Ammon at his command, they would not stop at burning Joab's field, when he bid them do it; see 2Sa 13:28.

2 Samuel 14:31

Ver. 31. Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto [his] house,.... Provoked at what he had done, and to know the reason of it; and which was answering Absalom's end:

and said unto him, wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire? which was not only injurious to his property, but a malicious action.

2 Samuel 14:32

Ver. 32. And Absalom answered Joab,.... Neither denying the fact, nor being ashamed of it, nor asking pardon for it; but endeavouring to vindicate it, by giving a reason as he thought sufficient for it:

behold, I sent unto thee, saying, come hither, that I may send thee to the king; which was assuming great authority over a person in such an high office as Joab was; had he been king, he could not have used more, to send for him, and command his attendance, and send him on what errand he thought fit, as here:

to say, wherefore am I come from Geshur? why did the king send for me? why did not he let me alone where I was? to what purpose am I brought hither, since I am not admitted to court?

[it had been] good for me [to have been] there still; and better, where he lived in a king's court, and had honour and respect shown him, suitable to his rank; and where he had his liberty, and could go where he pleased; and where this mark of his father's displeasure, not suffering him to see his face, would not be so manifest as here, and so less disgraceful to him:

now therefore let me see the king's face; that is, speak to the king, and intercede for me, that I may see his face; which he was so importunate for, not from affection to the king; but that being at court, he might be able to ingratiate himself among the courtiers and others, and carry the point which his ambition prompted him to, supplant the king, and seize the crown:

and if there be [any] iniquity in me, let him kill me; signifying he chose to die, rather than to live such a life he did: but of being put to death he was not much afraid; presuming partly upon his innocence, thinking that the killing of his brother was no crime, because he was the aggressor, had ravished his sister, and for it ought to die; and since justice was delayed, and not done him, he had committed no iniquity in putting him to death; and partly on his father's affection to him, which he was sensible of; at least he had reason to believe he would not now put him to death; for had he designed that, he would have ordered it before now, since he had had him so long in his hands.

2 Samuel 14:33

Ver. 33. So Joab came to the king, and told him,.... What Absalom had said to him:

and when he had called for Absalom; sent messengers to his house to order him to come to him:

he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king; made a very reverend bow to him, according to the custom of those times, throwing himself at his feet in great submission to him:

and the king kissed Absalom; in token of his reconciliation to him; which laid the foundation of his after troubles from him, related in the following chapters.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 15

This chapter relates how that Absalom by various artful methods stole away the hearts of the people of Israel, 2Sa 15:1; that pretending a vow he had made, he got leave of the king to go to Hebron to perform it, 2Sa 15:7; where he formed a considerable conspiracy, 2Sa 15:10; of which David having information, thought it advisable to depart from Jerusalem, both for his own safety, and the good of the city, which he did with his family, and guards, and much people, 2Sa 15:13; though he would have persuaded Ittai the Gittite to have returned, but could not prevail upon him, 2Sa 15:19; however, he sent back the priests and the Levites with the ark, lest any harm should come to that, 2Sa 15:24; and as he and the people went up the mount of Olives weeping, it was told him that Ahithophel was among the conspirators, on which he put up a prayer that his counsel might be infatuated, 2Sa 15:30; and Hushai the Archite coming to him at that juncture, he sent him back to Jerusalem to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, and to send him word by the priests what he should hear there from time to time, 2Sa 15:32.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass after this,.... After the reconciliation of David and Absalom, and the latter was admitted to court again:

that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses; to make himself look grand and respectable among the people; perhaps he got these from his grandfather at Geshur in Syria:

and fifty men to run before him; which added to his pomp and magnificence; and such great personages in later time have had; Nero the Roman emperor never went on a journey with less than a thousand calashes or chariots, and a great number of men that ran before him {c}: and this was tacitly setting himself up for king, at least preparing for it, as Adonijah afterwards did in the same way and manner, **1Ki 1:5**.

{c} Suetonius in Vit. Neron. c. 30. Vid. Senecae, Ep. 87. & 123.

2 Samuel 15:2

Ver. 2. And Absalom rose up early,.... Every morning, to show how diligent and industrious he should be, and closely apply himself to business, was he in any office trader the king, and especially when he should be king himself; this he did to ingratiate himself into the affections of the people:

and stood beside the way of the gate; either of the king's palace, so Josephus {d}, or of the city, where courts of judicature are held: the former seems most probable by what follows:

and it was [so], that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment; that had a controversy with another man on any account, and came to the king to have it decided according to law, or the rules of justice and equity:

then Absalom called unto him, and said, of what city [art] thou? which question he asked, only to lead on to some further discourse:

and he said, thy servant [is] of one of the tribes; that is, of one of the cities of the tribes of Israel, and not of a city of another nation.

{d} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 1.

2 Samuel 15:3

Ver. 3. And Absalom said unto him,.... After some further talk, and finding he had a suit at law to bring on, and either seeing it drawn up in writing, or hearing his account of it, at once declared, without hearing the other party:

see, thy matters [are] good and right; thy cause is a good cause, and if it could be heard by proper persons there is no doubt but things would go on thy side, and thou wouldest carry thy cause:

but [there is] no man [deputed] of the king to hear thee; the king is grown old himself and his sons are negligent, and do not attend to business, and there are none besides them appointed to hear causes; and he suggested, as appears by what follows, that he was not in commission, but if he was, or should he appointed a judge, he would attend to business, and people should not go away after this manner, without having justice administered unto them,

2 Samuel 15:4

Ver. 4. Absalom said, moreover,.... To the same persons, at the same time:

oh that I were made judge in the land; by which it appears that he had no office under the king; partly either because of his crime, and so not thought fit, and partly because he appeared to be an ambitious aspiring man, and so it was thought not safe to put him into any office:

that every man that hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice; at once, without any further trouble, or coming often, and in vain, and to no purpose.

2 Samuel 15:5

Ver. 5. And it was [so], that when any man came nigh [to him] to do him obeisance,.... To pay his respects, and bow to him, as being the king's son, a prince of the blood, and heir to the crown, as was supposed:

he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him; he put out his hand and shook hands with him, or took him about the neck and kissed him, and by this free, familiar, affable, and courteous manner, strangely won upon and gained the affections of the people, as follows. Fortunatus Schacchus {e} thinks he put forth his hand to be kissed by them, and then kissed them, which was more than was usual.

{e} Eloeochrism. Myrothec. l. 3. c. 34. col. 964.

2 Samuel 15:6

Ver. 6. And in this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment,.... Told them there was none to be had, wished that he was in office to administer it to them, and behaved in the above loving manner towards them:

so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel; got the affections of the people in a private and clandestine manner, and robbed the king of them, who had the best right unto them.

2 Samuel 15:7

Ver. 7. And it came to pass after forty years,.... Or four years; so long it was from the reconciliation of Absalom to David, as Josephus {f} says; and so read Theodoret on the place, the Syriac and Arabic versions: but some say it was either forty years from the time Israel first had a king; and which might be an era of reckoning with the Jews, as the era of Seleucidae was with the Greeks, on the like account; or from the time Saul slew the priests at Nob, as Jerom {g}; or from the time of David's being anointed by Samuel; or this was the year of Absalom's age, or of David's reign: but these, and other attempts made to account for this passage, are not entirely satisfactory; and therefore one may be tempted to conclude there must be a mistake in the copy, of "arbaim" for "arba", forty for four; which makes it quite easy, and confirms the first sense:

that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord, in Hebron; not what he vowed in Hebron; for according to his own account he had vowed it in Geshur, as in 2Sa 15:8; but his request is, that he might pay it in Hebron; which place he fixed upon, being his native place, and where David was anointed king; and which, being about twenty miles from Jerusalem, was at a proper distance to lay the scene of his conspiracy in, and bring it to perfection.

{f} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 1. {g} Trad. Heb. in 2 lib. Reg. fol. 78. M.

2 Samuel 15:8

Ver. 8. For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria,.... When at his grandfather's court there:

saying, if the Lord will bring me again indeed to Jerusalem; which he might be sincerely desirous of:

then I will serve the Lord; but it is a question whether he ever made a vow to this purpose, or concerned himself about serving the Lord; but it rather may be, this was a lie of his, now framed in order to get leave of the king to go to Hebron.

2 Samuel 15:9

Ver. 9. And the king said unto him, go in peace,.... He gave him leave to go, and wished happiness and prosperity might attend him:

so he arose and went to Hebron; with a company of men, whose number is after mentioned.

2 Samuel 15:10

Ver. 10. But Absalom sent spies throughout all the land of Israel,.... To sound the disposition of the people towards him, to insinuate things into their minds in favour of him, and to improve every opportunity of recommending him to their esteem and affections:

saying, as soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet; in any place; and which it is probable he employed men to sound in many places:

then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron: which is the cause of the trumpet's sounding; and by this means they would learn how the people stood affected to him, whether the news was grateful or not.

2 Samuel 15:11

Ver. 11. And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, [that were] called,.... Invited by him to go with him and partake of his peace offerings, as the payment of his vow in Hebron; part of which was made a feast of for his friends, whomsoever he should think fit to invite, as he did to the number of two hundred, and for the entertainment of whom a large provision ought to be made; the Jews {h} have a tradition, that he had leave of his father only to invite two to go with him, and that he asked two more unknown to the first, and so on, two after two, until they amounted to two hundred:

and they went in their simplicity; to partake of the feast of the peace offerings, to which they were invited; being quite harmless and upright in their intentions, having no thought of disloyalty and rebellion in their breasts:

and they knew not anything; of an intended conspiracy; howbeit, doubtless many of them were drawn into it when got thither; and as these may be supposed to be some of the principal men of Jerusalem, it was a great weakening of David's interest, and laid a considerable foundation for Absalom to begin upon.

{h} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 194. 4.

2 Samuel 15:12

Ver. 12. And Absalom sent for Ahithophel, the Gilonite, David's counsellor,.... To advise with about this treasonable affair he was engaged in, and to get out of him David's secrets, who was reckoned the best counsellor in the land; and he might rather hope he would come to him, if he was the grandfather of Bathsheba, as say the Jews, 2Sa 11:3; since he might be disgusted with and resent David's adultery with Bathsheba his granddaughter, and the murder of her husband Uriah: him he sent for,

from his city, [even] from Giloh; a city in the tribe of Judah, in the mountainous part of it, near to Hebron, where Absalom now was; and, according to Bunting {i}, twenty miles from Jerusalem, see Jos 15:48;

while he offered sacrifices; not Ahithophel, but Absalom, his peace offerings at Hebron, to which he invited Ahithophel to come and partake of:

and the conspiracy was strong; or there was a great number in the conspiracy, who were assembled together:

for the people increased continually with Absalom; being drawn to him by the comeliness of his person, his affable behaviour, the pomp and magnificence in which he appeared, the great number of the principal inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and he the king's eldest son, and so heir to the crown; whereas it might begin to be rumoured about, that David designed Solomon, a son of Bathsheba, a young prince, to be his successor, which did not meet with general approbation at first.

{i} Travels, &c. p. 149.

2 Samuel 15:13

Ver. 13. And there came a messenger to David,.... Perhaps one of the two hundred that went with Absalom, ignorant of his design; which, when discovered, he disapproved of, and got away from him, and came to David, and informed him how things were:

saying, the hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom; to make him king.

2 Samuel 15:14

Ver. 14. And David said unto all his servants that [were] with him at Jerusalem,.... His courtiers and ministers of state, the officers of his household, as many of them as were with him in the city; for some of them very probably were in the country, as Ahithophel was, and some might be along with Absalom, whom he had invited to his peace offerings:

arise, and let us flee; it is much that a man of such courage and valour as David should be so intimidated at once as to make a flight as soon as he heard of a conspiracy forming against him:

for we shall not [else] escape from Absalom; his fears ran so high, that he fancied he would be upon them presently:

make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly; which still more clearly shows the panic he was in:

and bring evil upon us; kill them, or make them prisoners:

and smite the city with the edge of the sword; the inhabitants of it, should they make resistance.

2 Samuel 15:15

Ver. 15. And the king's servants said unto the king,.... In answer to him, and to show that they were quite conformable to his pleasure:

behold, thy servants [are ready to do] whatsoever my lord the king shalt appoint; or "choose" {k}, whether to prepare to fight, and defend him and the city, or to depart and make their escape.

{k} rxby "elegerit", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

2 Samuel 15:16

Ver. 16. And the king went forth,.... Which determined the case:

and all his household after him family and his court; they followed his example, and attended him in his flight:

and the king left ten women, [which were] concubines, to keep the house; not to defend it, which they were unable to do, but to look after the household goods and furniture, that they were not damaged by the conspirators; though one would think they could be of little service, and may wonder what he should leave them behind for; but this seems to be ordered by the overruling providence of God, to bring about what was threatened him, 2Sa 12:11; and it is much he had not thought of it; but it was hid from his eyes, that it might be fulfilled.

2 Samuel 15:17

Ver. 17. And the king went forth,.... From Jerusalem; which is repeated, that it might be observed in what a hurry and fright he was:

and all the people after him; his family, court, and servants, and as many of the people of Jerusalem as chose to go with him:

and tarried at a place that was afar off; when they had got at some distance from the city, they stopped and stayed a while; it could not be a great way from it, for they had not as yet passed over the brook Kidron, 2Sa 15:23.

2 Samuel 15:18

Ver. 18. And all his servants passed on beside him,.... Or at his hand or side; his household servants walking perhaps some on one side of him, and some on the other, see 2Sa 16:6;

and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites; which were his bodyguards, see **2Sa 8:18**;

and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath; which either came with him from Gath, when he conquered that city, and took it out of the hands of the Philistines, **2Sa 8:1**; compared with 1Ch 18:1; and who might become proselytes, and be incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel, and into David's army, a troop of men, of which Ittai, after mentioned, was captain, 2Sa 15:22; or else these were Israelites, so called, because with David they sojourned in Gath a while, when he fled from Saul; and so Josephus {l} says, they were companions of him in his first flight, when Saul was living; and this number is just the number of the men that were with him at Gath, 1Sa 27:2; and it may be David kept a troop of men always of the same number, to whom he gave this name in memory of them, having been a set of trusty and faithful men to him: these, with the Cherethites and Pelethites,

passed on before the king: in this form and manner David and his men marched in their flight.

{l} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9.) sect. 2.

2 Samuel 15:19

Ver. 19. Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite,.... Who was over the band of Gittites, the six hundred men, 2Sa 15:22;

wherefore goest thou also with us? one should think the king should not have discouraged any from joining and following him, when his numbers were not very large, and the in such fear on account of Absalom:

return to this place; to Jerusalem, where his station was:

and abide with the king; with Absalom, who set himself up for king, and whom the people perhaps had proclaimed as such in Hebron, where the conspiracy began:

for thou [art] a stranger, and also an exile; not a native of Israel, but of another nation, and at a distance from it, and therefore not altogether under the same obligations to attend David in his troubles as others were; and by this it seems that he was a Gittite by nation, whatever the six hundred men were, and rather favours the first sense given of them in 2Sa 15:18.

2 Samuel 15:20

Ver. 20. Whereas thou camest [but] yesterday,.... From Gath, or from an expedition he and his men had been on:

should I this day make thee, go up and down with us? wander up and down from place to place with David, when he was but just come off a journey, weary and fatigued:

seeing I go whither I may; where it will be most safe for me, I know not where; may be obliged to flee here and there, which would be very inconvenient to Ittai in his circumstances:

return thou, and take back thy brethren; the six hundred men under him, and whom David could ill spare at this time, and yet, consulting their ease, advises to return to Jerusalem with them:

mercy and truth [be] with thee; the Lord show mercy and kindness to thee, in that thou hast shown favour and respect to me, and make good all his promises to thee, who hast been true and faithful to me.

2 Samuel 15:21

Ver. 21. And Ittai answered the king, and said,.... With an oath, as follows:

[as] the Lord liveth, and [as] my lord the king liveth; which he took to confirm what he after says, and to put an end to the debate between them:

surely, in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be; signifying that he would attend him wherever he went, hazard his life in his cause, and live and die with him.

2 Samuel 15:22

Ver. 22. And David said unto Ittai, go, and pass over,.... It being his resolution to abide with him, he urged him no more to depart, but bid him pass over the brook Kidron before him:

and Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men; the six hundred Gittites that were under his command:

and all the little ones that [were] with him; that belonged to him and his men, and no doubt their wives also.

2 Samuel 15:23

Ver. 23. And all the country wept with a loud voice,.... The people that came out of the country villages round about, upon the report of the king's leaving Jerusalem, because of his son's conspiracy against him; these wept when they saw him in the circumstances in which he was, obliged to fly from a rebellious son:

and all the people passed over; the people that were with David passed over Kidron, and so the Cherethites, and Pelethites:

the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron; this explains what place it was they passed over, which is not before mentioned, but is particularly named in the account of the king's passing over it; over which same brook the Messiah, his antitype, passed a little before his sufferings and death; of which brook, See Gill on "Joh 18:1". It is often by Josephus {m} called a valley, sometimes a brook, it having little water, except in winter; Mr. Maundrell {n} says, it ran along the bottom of the valley of Jehoshaphat, a brook in the wintertime; but without the least drop of water in it all the time, says he, we were in Jerusalem; and so Reland {o}, that in summertime it ceases to be a river, and has the name of a valley; and Le Bruyn says {p}, it is at present dried up; it runs along the valley of Jehoshaphat, and is not above three paces broad; it has no other but rain water, which flows from the adjacent hills:

and all the people passed over to the way of the wilderness; which lay between Jerusalem and Jericho.

{m} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 1. sect. 5. & l. 9. c. 7. sect. 3. De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 3. c. 4. sect. 2. c. 6. sect. 1. {n} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 102. {o} Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 1. p. 294, 351. {p} Voyage to the Levant, ch. 48. p. 188.

2 Samuel 15:24

Ver. 24. And, lo, Zadok also,.... The priest, as he is called, 2Sa 15:27;

and all the Levites [were] with him: with Zadok, or with David, and indeed with both; but the former is rather meant here, being the immediate antecedent:

bearing the ark of the covenant of God: these were the Kohathite Levites, whose business it was to bear the ark when carried from place to place, **Nu 3:31**; called the ark of the covenant, because the law which was the covenant between God and the people, was put into it:

and they set down the ark of God: from off their shoulders, on which they carried it:

and Abiathar went up; who was the high priest, and whose business it was to attend the ark, and inquire before it, as occasion required; he went up very probably to the mount of Olives, later mentioned, 2Sa 15:30:

until all the people had done passing out of the city; for from the top of that mountain he could see the city of Jerusalem, and the people as they passed out of it, and observe when they were all come out, or however ceased coming, and so knew when it was a proper time to march forward.

2 Samuel 15:25

Ver. 25. And the king said unto Zadok, carry back the ark of God into the city,.... The reason of which is not easy to account for, since being carried back it would fall into the hands of the conspirators; and now the priests were with it to take care of it, and there might be occasion to inquire at it before the Lord; but David thought it being a sacred thing would not be violated by Absalom and his men, and that it would be safest in its own habitation or tabernacle, which David had built for it; for, that the reason of it should be, what Procopius Gazaeus suggests, cannot be given into, that he could not bear to carry about him the law, which accused of adulteries and murders:

if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord: if he will appear for me, be on my side, and deliver me from those who have risen up against me:

he will bring me again: to Jerusalem, and to his palace there:

and show me [both] it and his habitation; the ark, and the tabernacle he had erected for it, **2Sa 6:17**.

2 Samuel 15:26

Ver. 26. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee,.... As a king, or in his temporal prosperity, though he might and had delight in him as a chosen vessel of salvation, as a saint and child of God, and in his spiritual and everlasting welfare:

behold, [here am] I; his humble servant, ready to be, and do and suffer whatever is his pleasure:

let him do to me as seemeth good unto him; strip me of all the ensigns of royalty, dispossess me of my crown and kingdom, and dispose of me as seems good in his sight; who is a sovereign Being, and has a right to do with his creatures what he pleases.

2 Samuel 15:27

Ver. 27. And the king said unto Zadok the priest, [art not] thou a seer?.... A prophet, as well as a priest; see **1Sa 9:9**; or a seeing, knowing, man; one that can penetrate into men and things, and so might be of more service to David at Jerusalem than with him: wherefore he said to him,

return into the city in peace; to the city of Jerusalem with peace, quietness, and satisfaction of mind; where he doubted not, at least hoped and wished, he would be in safety and prosperity, being one of the Lord's priests:

and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar; the one was of the line of Eleazar, and the other of the line of Ithamar.

2 Samuel 15:28

Ver. 28. See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness,.... Towards the way of which David and the people went when they came over Kidron, 2Sa 15:23;

until there come word from you to certify me; of the truth of the conspiracy, of the number of the conspirators, and who they are, what progress they have made, whether come to Jerusalem, and how they behave there, if come; or of anything relative hereunto he could get intelligence of.

2 Samuel 15:29

Ver. 29. Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem,.... That is, ordered it to be carried, and took care that it was carried, by the Kohathite Levites, and they themselves attended it:

and they tarried there; at Jerusalem; though their two sons that went with them entered not into the city, but stayed at a place called Enrogel, at some little distance from it, 2Sa 17:17.

2 Samuel 15:30

Ver. 30. And David went up by the ascent of [Mount] Olivet,.... So called from the olive trees that grew upon it, which is often mentioned in the New Testament, and where our Lord Jesus Christ, the antitype of David, often was, in his state of humiliation, Mt 26:30, and from whence he ascended to heaven after his resurrection, **Ac 1:12**; it was about a mile from Jerusalem, to the east of it:

and wept as he went up; thinking perhaps of the wickedness and rebellion of his son, of his own hard case, to be obliged to quit his metropolis and palace, and make his flight afoot; and perhaps also of his own sins, which were the cause of his calamities:

and had his head covered; with his mantle, with which he enwraped himself as a mourner, 2Sa 19:4; so the Egyptians used to cover their heads in mourning, and the Romans in later times {q}; so Megara in sorrowful circumstances is represented as having her head covered with a garment {r}:

and he went barefoot; in token of mourning also, and like one forlorn, and going into captivity, see Isa 20:2;

and all the people that [was] with him covered every man his head; as David did, and in imitation of him, and sympathizing with him; and which was sometimes done when men were ashamed and confounded, Jer 14:3;

and they went up, weeping as they went up; the mount of Olivet, grieved for their king, and the distresses and calamities that were coming upon them.

{q} Vid. Solerium de Pileo, sect. 2. p. 14, 19. {r} Senec. Hercul. furens, act. 2.

2 Samuel 15:31

Ver. 31. And [one] told David,.... That came either from Hebron or from Jerusalem:

Ahithophel [is] among the conspirators with Absalom; Absalom sent for him, and it seems he came to him, and continued with him, see
2Sa 15:12;

and David said, O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness; either suffer him to give foolish counsel, or confound the schemes projected by him, and let them not be carried into execution; for God can, and sometimes does, disappoint crafty counsellors, that they cannot perform what they devise, but they are taken in their own craftiness, and their counsel is carried headlong, **Job 5:12**; this prayer was answered, 2Sa 17:14.

2 Samuel 15:32

Ver. 32. And it came to pass, that [when] David was come to the top [of the mount],.... Of the mount of Olives:

where he worshipped God; by prayer and praise; here very probably he composed and sung the third psalm **Ps 3:1**, which, as the title shows, was made when he fled from Absalom:

behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him, with his coat rent, and earth upon his head; in token of mourning, and as a bringer of bad tidings, see **2Sa 1:2**; perhaps he was an inhabitant of Archi, at least originally, which lay on the borders of the tribe of Ephraim, Jos 16:2; from whence he had his name.

2 Samuel 15:33

Ver. 33. Unto whom David said,.... After he had heard what he had to say, and what tidings he brought:

and if thou passest on with me; in his march and flight:

then thou shalt be a burden to me; being to be maintained by him; and David having but scanty provisions, and so could not receive useless persons, as Hushai might be, perhaps an old man, that could be of no service to him, and unfit for travelling, and so would rather be an hinderance than an help unto him.

2 Samuel 15:34

Ver. 34. But if thou return to the city,.... To the city of Jerusalem, from whence it seems he came:

and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as he was by usurpation, and by the proclamation of the people with him. David directs him to address him thus, that he might have no suspicion of him, having been an old friend of his:

[as] I [have been] thy father's servant hitherto; perhaps in the character of a counsellor, as it should seem, since as such he was afterwards employed by Absalom:

so [will] I now also [be] thy servant; in whatsoever thou shall please to employ me under thee:

then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel; for being taken into Absalom's service, and made one of his counsellors, he would be privy to the advice of Ahithophel, and so be able to work against him.

2 Samuel 15:35

Ver. 35. And [hast thou] not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests?....

To assist in forming schemes directly opposite to Ahithophel's, or to whom he could communicate the secrets of Absalom's court:

therefore it shall be [that] what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house; Absalom's, who had now, at possession of the house and palace of David:

thou shalt tell [it] to Zadok and Abiathar the priests; to whom he might have recourse without suspicion, pretending he had business with them as priests, on religious accounts, to offer sacrifices for him, &c.

2 Samuel 15:36

Ver. 36. Behold, [they have] there with them two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's [son], and Jonathan, Abiathar's [son],.... As in 2Sa 15:27; not that they were in the city with them, but they were near it, 2Sa 17:17; with whom they had a communication:

and by whom ye shall send unto me everything that ye can hear; that is, by the sons of the priests; he telling the priests how things were at court, and they sending their sons with messages to David; which was a good scheme to get intelligence, and easy to be put into execution.

2 Samuel 15:37

Ver. 37. So Hushai David's friend came into the city,.... The city of Jerusalem, by the direction and persuasion of David, and in obedience to him, in order to serve him to the uttermost:

and Absalom came into Jerusalem: just at the same time; so that he knew not that Hushai had been out of it, and been with David, and which also appears from what he said to him, 2Sa 16:17.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 16

In this chapter is an account of Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, getting his inheritance by misrepresentation of him, and by presents to David, 2Sa 16:1; and of Shimei's cursing David as he passed along, which David bore patiently, and would not suffer others to avenge it on him, 2Sa 16:5; and of Hushai's offer of his service to Absalom, who admitted him to be of his privy council, 2Sa 16:15; and of the counsel which Ahithophel gave, 2Sa 15:20.

Ver. 1. And when David was a little past the top [of the hill],.... Of the mount of Olives, the ascent of which he is said to go up by, and to come to the top of it, 2Sa 15:30;

behold, Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, met him; of whom see **2Sa 9:2**;

with a couple of asses saddled: and so fit to ride on, but for the present he used them to another purpose:

and upon them two hundred [loaves] of bread; an hundred on each ass very probably:

and an hundred bunches of raisins; or dried grapes, as the Targum:

and an hundred of summer fruits: not in number, but in weight, as apples, pears, plums, apricots, &c. so the Targum, an hundred pounds of figs:

and a bottle of wine: a cask or flagon of wine; for a bottle, such as is in use with us, would have signified nothing in such a company.

2 Samuel 16:2

Ver. 2. And the king said unto Ziba, what meanest thou by these?.... Are they to be said, or are they presents?

and Ziba said, the asses [be] for the king's household to ride on; for himself, his wives, and children, his courtiers, and the principal officers of his house; it being usual in those times and countries for great personages to ride on asses, see **Jud 5:10**;

and the bread and summer fruits for the young men to eat; the king's menial servants, his guards and his soldiers:

and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink; where no water was to be had, that their fainting spirits might be revived, and they be able whether to fight or march.

2 Samuel 16:3

Ver. 3. And the king said, and where [is] thy master's son?.... The son of Saul, who was Ziba's master, meaning Mephibosheth:

and Ziba said unto the king, behold, he abideth at Jerusalem; as there was reason for it, since he was lame of both his feet, **2Sa 9:13**, though he could have rode upon an ass, and followed the king, as he proposed to do; but his servant deceived him, and carried off the asses to serve a purpose for himself, see 2Sa 19:26;

for he said, today shall the house of Israel restore unto me the kingdom of my father; his father Saul; which was far from his thoughts; and a most wicked suggestion of his servant to blacken his character, and get his estate from him; nor was there the least probability of the kingdom coming to him, but all the reverse; for let it go how it would with David, Absalom, and not Mephibosheth, stood fair for the kingdom.

2 Samuel 16:4

Ver. 4. Then said the king to Ziba, behold, thine [are] all that [pertaineth] to Mephibosheth,.... Being forfeited to the king by an overt act of treason as they had been before by the rebellion of Ishbosheth, but had been graciously restored to Mephibosheth; and had it been true what Ziba suggested, it would have been a righteous thing to have taken them from him; though it seems to be too hasty a step in David to take and give them away without further inquiry:

and Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee [that] I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king; he had found favour already, but seems not to be sufficiently thankful for it, and satisfied with it, but craved more and other favours, when opportunity should serve.

2 Samuel 16:5

Ver. 5. And when King David came to Bahurim,.... The Targum is, Alemath, perhaps the same that is said to be a city of the Levites, given unto them out of the tribe of Benjamin, **1Ch 6:60** for the man next described, who was of this place, was a Benjaminite, 2Sa 19:16;
See Gill on "2Sa 3:16"; David was not yet come to the city itself, but into the neighbourhood of it, the fields adjacent to it: and

behold, thence came out a man of the family of Saul; a descendant of a branch of his family, who had entertained a private grudge and secret enmity against David, to whom he imputed the fall of the family of Saul:

whose name [was] Shimei, the son of Gera: which might be a name common in the tribe of Benjamin, one of Benjamin's sons being named Gera, Ge 46:21. Some say {s} he was the same with Nebat, the father of Jeroboam; but he was of the tribe of Ephraim, this of Benjamin:

he came forth, and cursed still as he came; he came out of Bahurim, of which place he was, and all the way he came continued cursing David, until he came near unto him.

{s} Hieron. Trad. Helb. in 2. Reg. fol. 79. B.

2 Samuel 16:6

Ver. 6. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of King David,.... Not that he was within the reach of them, or could hurt them, by casting them at them; but this he did to show his contempt of them, and to intimate that they deserved to be stoned, and especially David, at whose adultery he might point by it:

and all the people, and all the mighty men [were] on his right hand,
and on his left; that is, of David; which is observed, not so much to indicate the safety of David's person, as the impudence and madness of Shimei, to cast stones at David when so guarded.

2 Samuel 16:7

Ver. 7. And thus said Shimei, when he cursed, come out, come out,.... Or rather, "go out, go out" {t}; that is, out of the nation, where he deserved not to live, as he judged, and out of the kingdom, which he had usurped, as he supposed; and the repeating the words not only denotes his vehement desire to have him gone, but the haste he should make to get out, or he was liable to be overtaken by Absalom and his forces; upbraiding him also with the hurry he was in, and the speedy flight he was making:

thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial; or wicked man; perhaps referring by these characters in the one to the murder of Uriah, and in the other to his adultery with Bathsheba; and these crimes coming fresh into David's mind hereby, might make him more mild and humble under his reproaches.

{t} au au "egredere, egredere", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

2 Samuel 16:8

Ver. 8. The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul,.... Which he would suggest was shed by David, or, however, that he was the cause of its being shed; as if he had stirred up the Philistines to that battle in which Saul and his sons were slain, and had an hand secretly in the deaths of Ishbosheth and Abner, all which were false insinuations; and it may be the seven sons of Saul before this time, though after related, were delivered into the hands of the Gibeonites to be hanged, to which respect may be had:

in whose stead thou hast reigned; not by right, but by usurpation he suggests:

and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son; in this he seems to contradict himself; for if David had got the kingdom by usurpation, it would rather have, been delivered by the Lord into the hand of one of Saul's family, and not of David's:

and behold, thou [art taken] in thy mischief; punished for his sins; the mischief he had brought on others was retaliated to him:

because thou [art] a bloody man; guilty of slaying, as the Targum of shedding innocent blood, and so worthy of death.

2 Samuel 16:9

Ver. 9. Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king,.... A sister's son of his, and a general in the army, who could not bear to hear the king abused in this manner:

why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? be suffered to do it with impunity; a "dog" he calls him, because of his vileness and baseness, and because of his impudence, and on account of his reproachful and abusive language, aptly signified by the snarling and barking of a dog; and a "dead" dog, as being useless, detestable, and abominable:

let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head; go over the plain where David and his men were, to the hill on which Shimei was, and strike off his head with his sword; which he could easily do, and soon put an end to his cursing.

2 Samuel 16:10

Ver. 10. And the king said, what have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?.... It seems as if Joab, the brother of Abishai, joined with him in this request to have leave to take off the head of Shimei; and though David had to do with them as his relations, his sister's sons, and as they were generals in his army; yet in this case he would have nothing to do with them, would not take their advice, nor suffer them to take revenge on this man for his cursing him: or "what [is it] to me, [or] to you" {u}? what signifies his cursing? it will neither hurt me nor you:

so let him curse; go on cursing after this manner; do not restrain him from it, or attempt to stop his mouth: or, "for he will curse" {w}; so is the textual reading; you will not be able to restrain him, for the following reason:

because the Lord hath said unto him, curse David; not by way of command, or a precept of his; for to curse the ruler of the people is contrary to the word and law of God, Ex 22:28, nor by any operation of his spirit moving and exciting him to it; for the operations of the Spirit are to holiness, and not to sin; but by the secret providence of God ordering, directing, and overruling all circumstances relative to this affair. Shimei had conceived enmity and hatred to David; God left him to the power of this corruption in his breast, opened a way in Providence, and gave him an opportunity of exercising it on him: it was not a bare permission of God that Shimei should curse David; but it was his will, and he ordered it so in Providence, that he should do it; which action was attended with the predetermined concourse of divine Providence, so far as it was an action; though, as a sinful action, it was of Shimei, sprung from his own heart, instigated by Satan; but as a correction and chastisement of David, it was by the will, order, and appointment of God, and as such David considered it, and quietly submitted to it:

who shall then say, wherefore hast thou done so? for though Shimei might justly be blamed, and reproved for it, yet the thing itself was not to be hindered or restrained, it being according to the will and providence of God, to answer some good end with respect to David.

{u} Mklw yl hm "quid mihi et vobis", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus. {w} yk "quia", Moatanus.

2 Samuel 16:11

Ver. 11. And David said to Abishai, and all his servants,.... In order to make them easy, and reconcile them to this usage of him:

behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life; meaning Absalom:

how much more now [may this] Benjamite [do it]? who was not only of the same tribe that Saul was, but of the same family, and so bore an ill will to David because of his succession in the throne:

let him alone, and let him curse; do nothing to restrain him, not even by words, and much less by any violent actions, and still less by taking away his life:

for the Lord hath bidden him; in the sense explained in 2Sa 16:10.

2 Samuel 16:12

Ver. 12. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction,.... Through the rebellion of his son, and now aggravated by the cursing of Shimei; that is, with an eye of pity and commiseration, and deliver him out of it: or "look upon my eye" {x}; for there is a various reading; the tear of mine eye, as the Targum; so Jarchi and R. Isaiah; the tears in it, which fell plentifully from it, on account of his troubles, and particularly the curses and reproaches of Shimei:

and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day; he does not speak with assurance, yet with hope; he knew his sins deserved such treatment, but also that God was gracious and merciful, and pitied his children, and resented all ill usage of them; and therefore hoped he would favour him with such intimations of his love as would support him, comfort, refresh him, and do him good, see **Ro 8:28**.

{x} ynyeb "in oculum meum", Montanus; "oculum meum lachrymantem", Munster.

2 Samuel 16:13

Ver. 13. And as David and his men went by the way,.... In the high road that led to Bahurim, taking no notice of the cursing of Shimei, which made him bolder and more impudent; here is a large pause in the Hebrew text, in the midst of this verse:

Shimei went along on the hill side over against him; as David and his men walked in the plain, he went on a range of hills that ran along right against them:

and cursed as he went; continued his curses and imprecations, to which he was the more emboldened by the behaviour of David and his men:

and threw stones at him, and cast dust; in a way of contempt, though the stones recoiled on his own head, and the dust flew in his own face, as the consequence of things showed; and now David composed and penned the seventh psalm, **Ps 7:1**.

2 Samuel 16:14

Ver. 14. And the king, and all the people that [were] with him, came weary,.... With their journey, and through grief and trouble at what they met with:

and refreshed themselves there: that is, at Bahurim, with food and rest; which revived their spirits, and put as it were new life and soul into them, as the word used signifies. Josephus {y} says, when David came to Jordan, he refreshed his weary men.

{y} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 4.

2 Samuel 16:15

Ver. 15. And Absalom, and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem,.... At the same time that David and his people came to Bahurim; which, as Josephus {z} says, was a place near to Jerusalem; and, according to Bunting {a}, was little more than a mile from it; though elsewhere {b} he makes it three miles; so that had not David made the hasty flight he did, he had fallen into the hands of Absalom:

and Ahithophel with him: a famous counsellor, and who had been of David's privy council, and chief in it, see 2Sa 15:12 and whom David refers to in Ps 55:12.

{z} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 4. {a} Travels, &c. p. 144. {b} Ib. p. 150.

2 Samuel 16:16

Ver. 16. And it came to pass that when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom,.... Who came into Jerusalem at the same time that Absalom did, and who, no doubt, took the first opportunity to make his court to him, 2Sa 15:37;

that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king; or "may the king live" {c}, live long, and his kingdom be permanent; these words are very ambiguous, he might mean David, who was true and lawful king, though he would have them understood of Absalom, who was king by usurpation, in which he used great deceit and flattery; and that he might not be suspected of it, but be thought to be sincere and truly loyal to Absalom, he repeats the wish.

{c} Klmh yxy "vivat rex", Pagninus. Montanus, &c.

2 Samuel 16:17

Ver. 17. And Absalom said to Hushai, [is] this thy kindness to thy friend?.... Meaning to David; though he would not mention his name, nor his title, nor even the relation of a father he stood in to him, only speaks of him as Hushai's friend: Hushai had professed great friendship to David, and David had been a friend to Hushai, had raised him to great honour in making him a counsellor, and had bestowed many favours and benefits on him, as Absalom knew full well; and therefore, to try his integrity, he puts this question, not as displeased with him, but overjoyed that such a trusty friend of David, and a wise counsellor of his, had deserted him, and come over to him and his party; nor does he mean to charge him with ingratitude, which he could not do without reproaching himself; on whom it might be justly retorted, is this thy kindness to thy father that begot thee, and has always expressed such a strong affection for thee, as to rebel against him?

why wentest thou not with thy friend? with David, when he went out of Jerusalem; for Absalom knew not that Hushai had been with David, but thought he stayed behind at Jerusalem, when David fled, which made him less suspicious of him.

2 Samuel 16:18

Ver. 18. And Hushai said to Absalom,.... In answer to his questions:

nay, but whom the Lord, and his people, and all the men of Israel choose: here again he speaks very ambiguously; for this circumlocution, or descriptive character of the king of Israel, better agrees with David, whom he might bear in mind, than with Absalom; for the Lord had chosen David, and he was anointed by his order, and all the people of Israel had chosen and anointed him likewise; but as for Absalom, it was only a part of them that had declared for him, nor was there any evidence of the Lord's choosing him; though Hushai undoubtedly would be under stood of him, and as interpreting the voice of the people to be the voice of God:

his will I be, and with him will I abide; though he designed no such thing, which was a great piece of dissimulation and hypocrisy; and if he meant David, it was a piece of deceit and equivocation: there is a various reading in the first clause; we follow the marginal reading,
wl, "to him" or "his", but the textual reading is al, "not": and both may be taken in by rendering the words by an interrogation, "shall I, or should I not be his" {d}? I will; that is, be his servant, faithfully obey his commands, be closely attached to him, and continue with him as a loyal subject.

{d} hyha al "non ero", Montanus; "non essem ejus?" Junius & Tremellius.

2 Samuel 16:19

Ver. 19. And again, whom should I serve?.... Or "secondly" {e}, a second reason is here given for serving Absalom: the first was the choice of God and the people, the second follows:

[should I] not [serve] in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence: he signifies, that as the kingdom was not translated into another family, but continued in succession in David's house, the alteration made was of no great consequence; it was indifferent to him whom he served, the father or the son; and he could as freely, and would as faithfully serve the son as the father; nor did he think it any breach of friendship to David, nor would David resent it, that he should serve his son, and do the best offices, and give him the best counsel he could; and he seems to bespeak the office of a counsellor, in which he had been to David, that he might be admitted into the presence of Absalom, and be of his privy council, and have the opportunity of giving his best advice.

{e} tynvh "secunda", Montanus, Munster, Vatablus; "secundo", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

2 Samuel 16:20

Ver. 20. Then said Absalom to Ahithophel,.... Having two such able counsellors as he and Hushai, he directs his speech to Ahithophel, as being his first and chief counsellor:

give counsel among you what we shall do; he orders them to form a counsel, consult among themselves what was proper to be now done at Jerusalem, whether it was right to stay here or pursue after David and his men. Absalom did not send to the high priest to ask counsel of God, by Urim and Thummim before the ark, but wholly confided in his privy council.

2 Samuel 16:21

Ver. 21. And Ahithophel said unto Absalom,.... Either immediately of himself, without consulting with others; or after a consultation had been held between them, he as the president of it, and their mouth, gave the following advice; though the former seems most correct:

go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left, to keep the house; and lie with them; there were ten of them, 2Sa 15:16;

and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father; this fact will be so abominable to him, and he will so highly resent it, as never to forgive thee, and be reconciled unto thee:

then shall the hands of all that [are] with thee be strong; he intimates that they were now weak, and did not act with spirit; they were fearful that David and Absalom would be reconciled, and then they should be reckoned traitors, and fall a sacrifice to David's vengeance, for their treason against him: but by Absalom's taking such a step as this, which would make him for ever the object of his father's hatred, their hands and hearts would be strengthened, and their fears removed, and they would not have the least jealousy of a reconciliation between them, and of their being left to the resentment of David. Some think this was not his only reason for giving this counsel, but also to revenge David's abuse of Bathsheba, his son's daughter, as she is supposed to be, See Gill on "2Sa 15:12"; however, it was so ordered in Providence, that this advice should be given and taken, to fulfil the prophecy of the Lord to Nathan, 2Sa 12:11.

2 Samuel 16:22

Ver. 22. So they spread Absalom a tent on the top of the house,.... On the top of his father's palace; this, as houses in Jerusalem and Judea were, was built flat, De 22:8; and it was on the very spot from whence David had a sight of Bathsheba, and conceived an impure lust after her. The Targum renders it, a canopy; which Kimchi describes as consisting of four pillars, upon and round about which curtains were hung:

and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel; they saw the tent or canopy erected, and saw him go into it, and might reasonably conclude he lay with his father's concubines, or half wives, in it; and this being done in so public a manner fulfilled the prophecy, which said it should be done in the sight of the sun, and of all Israel, 2Sa 12:11; this shows how corrupt the people of Israel were at this time, at least those that were with Absalom, that there should be none to object to the counsel Ahithophel gave, nor any to remonstrate against the execution of it, but all seemed to look upon it with pleasure; nor even did Hushai, David's friend, oppose it; perhaps he saw it was to no purpose.

2 Samuel 16:23

Ver. 23. And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he had counselled in those days,.... Both in the days of David, and in the days of Absalom, before and since the rebellion:

[was] as if a man had inquired of the oracle of God; such an opinion was entertained of it, so well satisfied were they with it, and as confident of success in taking it, as if the Lord himself had been consulted by Urim and Thummim; this is a very great exaggeration of Ahithophel's counsel, and is observed as a reason why it was so readily taken, though so bad in the preceding instance:

so [was] all the counsel of Ahithophel, both with David and with Absalom; Ahithophel was a crafty man, a time server, that temporized with princes, and knew how to suit his counsels with their tempers and interests: to David he gave good counsel, what was acceptable with him, and to Absalom bad counsel, which was pleasing to him.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 17

This chapter relates the advice Ahithophel gave to march out speedily with a number of men in pursuit of David, which at first seemed agreeable, 2Sa 17:1; but Hushai's opinion being asked, and he giving counsel to raise a larger army, which required time, and was taken to, hereby the counsel of Ahithophel was defeated, 2Sa 17:5; upon which he hanged himself, 2Sa 17:23; these different counsels being communicated by Hushai to the priests, they found means to transmit them to David, with an instruction to him to pass over Jordan immediately; which he did, and pitched in Gilead, and whither he was followed by Absalom, 2Sa 17:15; and where he met with a supply of provisions for his army from some eminent persons in and near that place, 2Sa 17:27.

Ver. 1. Moreover, Ahithophel said unto Absalom,.... Either at the same time, or quickly after he had given the foregoing advice:

let me now choose out twelve thousand men: out of those that were with Absalom, which shows their number to be large; and twelve thousand are pitched upon with respect to the twelve tribes of Israel, a thousand from every tribe; Josephus has only ten thousand;

and I will arise and pursue after David this night; he took upon him to be general of the army, as well as a counsellor; or this he said to show how confident he was of the success of his counsel, that if Absalom, or any other, should decline the conduct of the army upon it, as a hazardous attempt, he would undertake it himself; or rather it may be, he was not willing that Absalom should go out in person with the army, not so much for his own safety, as lest through his affection for the king he should spare him, when he fell into his hands, or they two should be reconciled; he proposed to do it that night, partly for expedition, no time being to be lost, and partly for the greater surprise of David and his men.

2 Samuel 17:2

Ver. 2. And I will come upon him while he [is] weary,.... With travelling, and with grief, and when endeavouring to get some rest by sleep, and so surprise him unawares, when not on his guard, and in no posture of defence:

and weak handed; while the number of men with him is small, and before the people from different parts can come to his assistance:

and will make him afraid; strike terror into him and his then, by surprising them suddenly in the night with such a number of men:

and all the people that [are] with him shall flee; one one way, and another another, for their own security, and leave David alone:

and I will smite the king only; dispatch him, and let the people flee without pursuing them.

2 Samuel 17:3

Ver. 3. And I will bring back all the people unto thee,.... Meaning not the people only that were with David, that he would make them prisoners, and bring them with him; for he before proposed to let them make their escape; but to reduce all Israel to the obedience of Absalom at once, by executing this scheme which he had formed:

the man whom thou seekest [is] as if all returned; meaning David, whom he speaks of contemptibly, and whose life it seems Absalom sought, as well as his crown; and he being dead, it would be all over at once with the people; they would immediately return to their own habitations, and yield obedience to Absalom as the rightful heir and successor; all depended on his death, he intimates: from whence it appears that Abarbinel is wrong in suggesting that Absalom did not design to take away the life of his father, only to secure the kingdom to himself in his father's lifetime, who he understood had disposed of it by his will to Solomon; but here Ahithophel plainly declares the intention of Absalom, nor would he have proposed in plain terms to take away the king's life, had Absalom been averse to it; and it is plain by what follows that the thing was pleasing to him:

[so] all the people shall be in peace; both parties coalesce under the government of Absalom, and live peaceably under it, and so an entire end of the war.

2 Samuel 17:4

Ver. 4. And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all elders of Israel. That were of the privy council; for it was a well contrived scheme to surprise David his men by night, in the condition they were in; nothing like seizing an opportunity, and making quick dispatch in executing a villainous design; only it is strange that Absalom could so easily come into a scheme to take away the life of so indulgent a father, which is only to be accounted for by his ambition; but it is stranger still that the elders of Israel should be pleased with it, and agree to and determine upon the death of a prince, who had so many years ruled them with justice and equity, clemency and mercy; and fought their battles for them, and raised their nation to such a pitch of glory it never had before.

2 Samuel 17:5

Ver. 5. Then said Absalom, call now Hushai the Archite also,.... For it seems he was not at the council board at this time; whether he was as yet admitted to it is not certain: there is something very remarkable in the providence of God, to incline Absalom to have the opinion of Hushai upon this point, when the counsel of Ahithophel was so universally approved of; and Hushai also being well known to have been an intimate friend and confident of David's, and not so settled and established in the interest of Absalom, and such a sworn friend of his as Ahithophel was; this can only be ascribed to the will of God, to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, and the wisdom of divine Providence in blinding the mind of Absalom with respect to his counsel, and inclining it to take the opinion of Hushai:

and let us hear likewise what he saith; which he might say without any diffidence about the "counsel" given, but knowing that in the multitude of counsellors there is safety; and Hushai being a wise and good counsellor, he might hope and expect that he would give the same advice, and so strengthen and confirm it.

2 Samuel 17:6

Ver. 6. And when Hushai was come to Absalom,.... Into the council chamber, very probably:

Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner; and then related the counsel he had given as before:

shall we do [after] his saying? is it right to proceed on this scheme, and carry it into execution?

if not, speak thou; thy mind freely, without any reserve, or fear of giving any offence.

2 Samuel 17:7

Ver. 7. And Hushai said to Absalom,.... Having leave to give his opinion freely:

the counsel that Ahithophel hath given [is] not good at this time; he owns that

Ahithophel was a good counsellor, and that the counsel he gave was for the most part, if not always, good, but what he gave at this time was not so; the wisest of men may sometimes be mistaken. Abarbinel thinks he respects his former counsel, particularly that that was good, advising him to defile his father's bed, 2Sa 16:21; but this was not, for which he gives the following reasons.

2 Samuel 17:8

Ver. 8. For (said Hushai) thou knowest thy father and his men, that they [be] mighty men,.... Men of courage and valour, and not such weak-handed and weak-hearted men, and so easily intimidated, as Ahithophel suggests:

and they [be] chafed in their minds; or "bitter in soul" {f}; not merely filled with trouble and anguish, and depressed in their spirits, on account of that, as the phrase sometimes signifies; but enraged and full of wrath at the rebellion raised against their prince, which obliged them with him to leave their habitations; and now being desperate, their all lying at stake, their wives and children, their families and estates, they would fight furiously in the defence of the king and themselves, and not so soon flee as Ahithophel had represented:

as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field; a bear is a very furious creature, especially a she bear, and the more when it has whelps, and more so when deprived of them {g}, when it ranges about in the field, and in its fury attacks whomsoever it meets with;
See Gill on "Ho 13:8";

and thy father [is] a man of war; not only bold and courageous, but expert and skilful in all the arts of war and not easy to be surprised and circumvented, as Ahithophel intimated:

and will not lodge with the people; in the camp, but at some distance from it; partly to prevent any traitorous design upon him in it, and partly that he might not be surprised by the enemy, knowing that their chief view was to seize his person; and therefore as it would not be easy to find him where he was, he could not be smitten alone, as Ahithophel proposed.

{f} vpn yrm "amari animo", Pagninus, Montanus; "amaro animo", V. L. Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {g} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 18. & 9. 1.

2 Samuel 17:9

Ver. 9. Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some [other] place,.... Some lurking place, as he was acquainted with many when he fled from Saul, and where he preserved himself from him; so that he could never take him, as he would now from Absalom, as he insinuates: but this is not all; not only by this means he would shelter himself, and be in safety; but lying thus concealed with others, and in ambush, there would be danger of his staring out of his hiding place when opportunity should offer, and falling on some of Absalom's troops unawares:

and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first; that is, some of Absalom's party, on whom David and his men coming out of an ambush should fall, and make a slaughter among them first, before they could do anything of consequence; and so having got the first advantage, it would serve to animate them, and dishearten their enemies:

that whosoever heareth it; at that time, or the next day:

will say, there is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom; there has been a defeat of them, and that may cause a defection.

2 Samuel 17:10

Ver. 10. And he also [that is] valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt,.... That is, whoever should hear of Absalom's forces, or a part of them, being routed, would be intimidated, though ever so courageous, or of such a lion-like temper and disposition; and even Ahithophel himself, notwithstanding all his boasted courage, his heart would fail, he would melt like water {h}, **Jos 7:5**; should he meet with such a rebuff at first setting out. A lion is well known for its courage as well as strength, and has not only a fierce countenance, hence we read of lion-like men in their faces, 2Sa 23:20; but has a courageous heart, and from thence it is thought to have its name Labi, from "leb", which signifies the heart; so Hercules is represented by the poet as having a lion's heart {i}, and others also; though Leo Africanus {k} relates of some lions in Africa that are so naturally fearful that they will flee at the cry of children, particularly at a place called Agla; hence it became a proverb with the inhabitants of Fez to call blustering cowards the lions of Agla; and he speaks of great numbers of lions elsewhere {l}, who are easily driven away with a small stick by the most timorous persons; but for the most part lions are very bold and daring, as well as strong, to which the allusion is here. Some apply this to David himself, who was a valiant man, and whose heart was like that of a lion, and so read the last clause with an interrogation: "shall he utterly melt?" no, he will not; he is not to be made afraid so easily as Ahithophel has intimated:

for all Israel knoweth that thy father [is] a mighty man, and [they] which be with him [are] valiant men: this is so universally known that it cannot be denied.

{h} ----hute leibeai udwr, Moschi Idyll 2. ver. 45. {i} yumoleonta Homer. Iliad. 5. ver 639. Iliad. 7. ver. 228. Odyss. 11. ver. 279. Vid. Hesiod. Theogoniam prope finem. {k} Descriptio Africae, l. 3. p. 400. {l} Ib. p. 474.

2 Samuel 17:11

Ver. 11. Therefore I counsel,.... My advice is as follows:

that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that [is] by the sea for multitude: not all the inhabitants of the land, but such as are fit to bear arms, or that were soldiers, employed in military affairs, in keeping garrisons, guarding the coasts, &c. even the militia of the nation, from the extreme boundary of it on the north to the extreme boundary of it on the south; in such a direction lay Dan and Beersheba. This is opposed to the counsel of Ahithophel, which was only to select twelve thousand men, and send them against David at once; and this is designed chiefly to gain time, since such a collection could not be made soon, and so David would have more time to get farther off, and to prepare the better for his defence; and this advice might be the more agreeable to Absalom, as it promised a greater certainty of success through numbers, and might feed the vanity and ambition of that prince to have such a large army under him, as well as suggested that all Israel were on his side, and at his command, and might easily be gathered to him:

and that thou go to battle in thine own person; this was another part of his advice opposed to the counsel of Ahithophel, who proposed to have the command of the twelve thousand men himself, and to leave Absalom at Jerusalem; now Hushai suggests that it would be more to his interest and his honour to take command of the army himself, and go in person into the field of battle; since this would serve to animate his soldiers, when they saw their prince at the head of them, and he would have the glory of the victory, which he might insinuate hereby Ahithophel sought to deprive him of: it is in the Hebrew text, that "thy face" or "faces go to battle" {m}, where he might be seen in person, and have the oversight and direction of things himself; the Targum is,

"and thou shalt go at the head of us all;"

and this advice Hushai was directed to give, and which was taken, that Absalom might fall in battle.

{m} Myklh Kynp "facies tuae euntes", Montanus, "facies tua vadat", Pagninus.

2 Samuel 17:12

Ver. 12. So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found,.... For such a numerous army, which would be spread abroad, could not well fail of finding him out, let him be in what lurking place he would; whereas he might lie concealed, and escape so small a number as twelve thousand men:

and we will light upon him as the dew falleth upon the ground; whose drops are innumerable, and cover all the ground where they fall; and the phrase not only expresses their numbers, but the irresistible force they should come with, and the manner, secretly, unawares, opportunely; the Romans had a sort of soldiers, called from the dew "rorarii", who carried light armour, and fought first in the battle, from whence they had their name, because dew falls before it rains {n}:

and of him, and of all the men that [are] with him, there shall not be left so much as one; so that for the future Absalom would sit easy upon the throne, there being none left to molest him.

{n} Valtrinus de Milit. Roman. l. 3. c. 3.

2 Samuel 17:13

Ver. 13. Moreover, if he be gotten into a city,.... A strong fortified place, thinking to secure himself there, where he might hold out against those that were risen against him; the former part of the account supposes him in the field, where he would soon be detected, if hidden in a pit or any other place, or if he appeared openly would quickly be overthrown by the numerous forces of Absalom; and here it suggests, should he betake himself to a city for shelter,

then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city; scaling ropes, and thereby get upon and over the walls of it, and take it by storm; or engines worked with ropes, used for the demolishing of cities; so Tacitus speaks of "vincula tormentorum", the bands or ropes of engines, as Grotius observes; the Targum renders it by "armies", thus,

"all Israel shall be gathered against the city, and surround it with armies,"

besiege it in form, and so surround it that David could not possibly make his escape out of it, nor could it hold out long against such numerous forces; or this is an hyperbolical expression, as Kimchi calls it, signifying that their numbers would be so many, that they could soon and easily demolish it:

and we will draw it into the river; by the side of which it was built, or the ditch or trench around it, or the valley near it, that being built on an hill; and by this boasting, bragging, hyperbolical expression, he signifies that they should be able easily and utterly to destroy its walls, buildings, and towers, as if a number of men were to fasten a rope about anything, and by their main strength, and through their numbers, draw it down whither they pleased:

until there be not one small stone found there; and this being the case, David and his men must inevitably fall into their hands, and none escape.

2 Samuel 17:14

Ver. 14. And Absalom and all the men of Israel said,.... That is, the elders, who before approved of the counsel of Ahithophel, 2Sa 17:4;

the counsel of Hushai the Archite [is] better than the counsel of Ahithophel; it appeared to them most plausible, and most likely to be attended with success:

for the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel; for so it was to Absalom and his party the best and wisest that could be given them; but it was the Lord's will it should be defeated, and therefore the minds of

Absalom and of the elders of Israel were blinded:

to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom; his person and cause; that his cause might be ruined, and he himself slain in battle; see Pr 19:21.

2 Samuel 17:15

Ver. 15. Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests,.... After he was returned from the council board, he immediately went to these priests, who he knew were in the interest of David, and to whom he was to communicate, and by them transmit, what passed at Jerusalem, 2Sa 15:35;

thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; relating to them in express words what he advised to:

and thus and thus have I counselled; telling them in what manner he had given his counsel.

2 Samuel 17:16

Ver. 16. Now therefore send quickly and tell David,.... What has been advised to on both sides:

saying, lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness; which reached to Jericho; this advice he gave, because he knew not whether his counsel would be abode by, though preferred; Absalom and the elders of Israel might change their minds, and Ahithophel might, by the strength of his oratory, prevail upon them after all to follow his advice; and therefore, to guard against the worst, he judged it most prudential in David to make all the haste he could from that place where he was, and not continue a night longer in it; for, if Ahithophel's counsel should take place, he would be in pursuit of him that very night:

but speedily pass over; the river Jordan:

lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that [are] with him: be destroyed by the forces Ahithophel should bring with him, which he would not be able to withstand.

2 Samuel 17:17

Ver. 17. Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by Enrogel,.... Who were the sons of the priests; these did not go into the city of Jerusalem with their parents, when they were sent back by David, 2Sa 15:27; but stayed by their direction at this place, which was near Jerusalem, and is called in the Targum the fuller's fountain, where they washed their clothes; and, as Kimchi and Jarchi say, by treading them with their feet, whence it had the name of Rogel, of which See Gill on "Jos 15:7";

(for they might not be seen to come into the city); having been charged by their parents to continue there for the sake of carrying intelligence to David, or because suspected by Absalom's party of carrying on such an intrigue:

and a wench went and told them: what Hushai had communicated to the priests, and what was his advice to David; this girl is supposed by Kimchi and Abarbinel to be of the family of Zadok, by whom she was sufficiently instructed to tell her message, and of whom there would be no suspicion:

and they went and told King David; the sons of the priests went and related to him all that had been transmitted to them.

2 Samuel 17:18

Ver. 18. Nevertheless, a lad saw them, and told Absalom,.... Saw them conversing with the girl, and departing for David's army; according to Josephus {o}, they were some horsemen that saw them about two furlongs or a quarter mile from Jerusalem, and acquainted Absalom with it:

but they went both of them away quickly; made all the haste they could with their message to David:

and came to a man's house in Bahurim; where very probably they had been informed David had been, whither he came weary, and had refreshment, 2Sa 16:14; or rather, perceiving they were discovered and pursued, they turned in hither, the first place they came to, for safety:

which had a well in his court; which they observed, and was the reason of their turning in:

whither they went down; to hide themselves from their pursuers, it being dry, as sometimes wells were in the summertime: Josephus says {p}, a woman let them down by a rope.

{o} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 7. {p} Ibid.

2 Samuel 17:19

Ver. 19. And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth,.... This woman, very probably, was the man's wife of the house, as Abarbinel notes; who took a cloth, and spread it over the well's mouth, that it could not be seen or known that there was a well there:

and spread ground corn thereon: just taken out of the mill, before it was sifted, while in the bran; or corn unhusked, or just threshed out, in order to be dried in the sun, and then parched; or wheat bruised for that purpose: Josephus says {q} they were locks of wool she spread:

and the thing was not known; that the young men were in the well.

{q} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 7.

2 Samuel 17:20

Ver. 20. And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house,.... Who were sent after then, had intelligence which way they took, and into what house they turned:

they said, where [are] Ahimaaz and Jonathan? calling them by their names, being persons well known, and as to them, so to the woman of the house, as they supposed:

and the woman said unto them, they be gone over the brook of water; the river Jordan; so the Targum,

"they have already passed over Jordan;"

this was a lie she told them, which is not to be justified; the Vulgate Latin version,

"they passed over hastily, having drank a little water;"

and so Josephus {r} in some copies:

and when they had sought and could not find [them]; not only searched that house, but very probably others in Bahurim:

they returned to Jerusalem; to give an account what success they had.

{r} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 7. Hudson. not. in ib.

2 Samuel 17:21

Ver. 21. And it came to pass after they were departed,.... The servants of Absalom:

that they came up out of the well; the sons of the priests, being informed by the woman that they were gone; Josephus {s} says they were drawn up by the woman with a rope:

and went and told King David; who was now in the plain of the wilderness, perhaps near Jericho, and not a great way from Jordan, to whom they related the whole of their message:

and said unto David; as they were directed:

arise, and pass quickly over the water; the river Jordan:

for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you; to come with twelve thousand men, and fall upon him that very night; and it was not certain his counsel would be rejected; and therefore it was advisable for David to prepare against the worst.

{s} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 7. Hudson. not. in ib.

2 Samuel 17:22

Ver. 22. Then David arose, and all the people that [were] with him, and passed over Jordan,.... Taking the advice of Hushai:

by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan; they travelled all night, and before it was morning they had all passed the river in boats, or through the fords, and not one was lost in the passage, nor any deserted, see Joh 17:12; and now perhaps David penned the forty second and forty third psalms, Ps 42:1.

2 Samuel 17:23

Ver. 23. And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed,.... But that of Hushai:

he saddled [his] ass; or ordered it to be saddled:

and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city; which was Giloh in the tribe of Judah, 2Sa 15:12;

and put his household in order; made his will, and disposed of his estates, see Isa 38:1; or "commanded his house" or "household" {t}; gave orders and instructions, both relating to himself when dead, where and how he should be buried, and to his family, how they should behave to one another and among their neighbours, and towards their superiors; and particularly, the Jews say {u}, he gave them this charge, not to rebel against the government of the house of David:

and hanged himself; so to his other sins added that of suicide, which was done deliberately, as the preceding clause shows; this he did, partly because his proud spirit could not bear it that his counsel should be slighted, and that of another be preferred to it; and partly because he plainly foresaw that the cause of Absalom would be ruined by neglecting his counsel and following that of Hushai's, whereby he himself would fall into the hands of David, and be put to death by him as a traitor; and he chose to die by his own hand, and not his; and the rather, to prevent the confiscation of his goods and estates as a traitor, and his heirs being deprived of them; though some think he died of a disease, by strangling or suffocation in the throat, was choked through grief and trouble; so R. Elias observes {w}, that some say that this disease came upon him through the greatness of his grief of mind and trouble of soul, because his counsel was not taken, and he died of strangling; and they say this, because they reckon it an absurdity for so wise and understanding a man as he was to hang himself; but the case seems very clear that he did kill himself; the Jews say {x} he was but thirty three years of age when he died; for being a bloody and deceitful man, he did not live out half his days, Ps 55:23; which psalm was penned on his account; but one so young could hardly be a counsellor of David, and so famous for his wise counsel; and besides, if so young, could not be the grandfather of Bathsheba, as the Jews say:

and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father; though he died an ignominious death, he had an honourable burial; it perhaps not being usual in those times to put any mark of infamy on those that killed themselves, by refusing them interment in the common burying places of their friends and neighbours.

{t} wtyb la wuy "praecepit ad domum suam", Montanus. {u} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 1. {w} In Tishbi, p. 129. & David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 148. 2. {x} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 2.

2 Samuel 17:24

Ver. 24. Then David came to Mahanaim,.... A city on the other side Jordan in the tribe of Gad, Jos 13:26, famous for its being the place where the angels of God met Jacob, Ge 32:1; and was for some time the seat of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, **2Sa 2:8**;

and Absalom passed over Jordan, he, and all the men of Israel with him; not directly after David, but some time after, when, according to the counsel of Hushai, he had gathered all the warlike men of Israel to him that he could, and with this army pursued his father; not content to drive him to the other side Jordan, sought to seize his person, and take away his life, and so secure the crown and kingdom to him, of which he made no doubt, having such a numerous army, on which he relied.

2 Samuel 17:25

Ver. 25. And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab,.... Who was along with David:

which Amasa [was] a man's son whose name [was] Ithra, an Israelite; he is called Jether the Ishmaelite, **1Ch 2:17**; either because he was an Ishmaelite by birth, and being proselyted to the Jewish religion, was called an Israelite; or rather he was an Israelite by birth, and having sojourned in the land of Ishmael some time, was called an Ishmaelite, as Uriah the Hittite, and others; and when Amasa is called a "man's son", it means a great man, as Kimchi observes:

that went in to Abigail, the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah, Joab's mother: so that Joab and Amasa, the generals of David and Absalom, were own cousins, sisters' children, and David uncle to them both; for Abigail and Zeruiah were David's sisters, **1Ch 2:16**; children of Jesse, whose name is here called Nahash, having two names, or this was his surname; though others think Nahash is the name of a woman, the wife of Jesse, and that these two sisters had two mothers, but one father; it seems by this expression, "went in to", as if Amasa was not begotten in the conjugal state, but was illegitimate.

2 Samuel 17:26

Ver. 26. So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead. Which belonged to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; here the Israelites that were with Absalom encamped, in order to give battle to David and his men.

2 Samuel 17:27

Ver. 27. And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim,.... When he first came thither, 2Sa 17:24;

that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon: who was either the son, or rather the brother of Hanun king of the Ammonites, that used David's ambassadors in so shameful a manner, whom David overcame and deposed, and set up this brother in his room; who had showed his dislike of his brother's conduct, and now makes a grateful return to David for his favours; though some say this was Hanun himself, as Jarchi, now become a proselyte, which is not so likely; others take this man to be an Israelite that continued in Rabbah, the metropolis of the Ammonites, after it was taken by David:

and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar; the same that brought up Mephibosheth, from whom David received him and took him off of his hands, for which now he requited him, see **2Sa 9:5**;

and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim; a place that lay under the hills of Gilead {y}; it had its name from the "fullers" who dwelt here for the convenience of fountains of water to wash their clothes in.

{y} Fuller's Pisgah-View, B. 2. c. 3. sect. 10. p. 94.

2 Samuel 17:28

Ver. 28. Brought beds,.... For David and his men, who, fleeing from Jerusalem in haste, could bring none with them, and therefore were ill provided while in the plains of the wilderness; the Septuagint version says there were ten of them, and that they were of tapestry, wrought on both sides, and such the ancients used {z}, see **Pr 7:16**; and so ten basins in the next clause:

and basins, and earthen vessels; to put their food and liquors in, and eat and drink out of, and for other services:

and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched [corn]; or "kali", which was made of the above corn ground into meal, and mixed with water or milk, and eaten with honey or oil, as there was another sort made of pulse, later mentioned:

and beans, and lentiles, and parched [pulse]; or "kali", made of these in the above manner. Some think {a} coffee is meant, but without reason.

{z} Vid. Aristophan. in Pluto, p. 55. {a} Sterringa, Animadv. Philol. Sacr. p. 48.

2 Samuel 17:29

Ver. 29. And honey and butter,.... Honey was much in use with the ancients; Homer {b} speaks of it as a part of the provisions at a feast, and as food with which persons were nourished and brought up; and the ancient Scythians lived on milk and honey {c}; and this and butter were pretty much the food of the people in Judea; see **Isa 7:15**;

and sheep; with which and goats the land of Gilead abounded; see **So 4:1**;

and cheese of kine: made of the milk of cows, as it commonly is:

for David, and for the people that [were] with him, to eat; and no doubt they brought wine with them for them to drink; the men that brought these, some brought one sort, and some another, or however different parcels of the same, and did not join in one present; for they came from different parts:

for they said, the people [is] hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness; where they had been some time, and out of which they had just come, and so weary with travelling, and therefore brought beds to lie down and rest upon; and being hungry and thirsty, through want of bread and water in the wilderness, they brought them both eatables and drinkables; for though the latter is not expressed, it is to be understood, as the word "thirsty" supposes.

{b} Iliad. 11. ver. 630. Odyss. 10. ver. 245. & Odyss. 20. ver. 72. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 11. Sueton. Vita Nero. c. 27. {c} Justin e Trogo, l. 2. c. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 18

In this chapter is an account of David's review of his army, preparing it for battle with Absalom, and those with him, 2Sa 18:1; and of the defeat and flight of the rebels, 2Sa 18:6; and of the death of Absalom, and the manner of it, and of his burial, 2Sa 18:9; and of the news of it brought to David by different persons, 2Sa 18:19; and of his great grief and sorrow on that account, 2Sa 18:33.

Ver. 1. And David numbered the people that [were] with him,.... Which Josephus says {d} were four thousand; but one would think there should be more by what follows:

and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them; he divided his army into companies, which consisted some of a thousand and others of a hundred; over each of which he set captains, to lead them on, direct, and command them in battle.

{d} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 10. sect. 1.

2 Samuel 18:2

Ver. 2. And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab,.... Very likely that which made the centre of the army, since Joab was the general of the army; though this distribution was made when David thought to have headed the army himself, and so made with respect to that:

and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother; who was next to Joab in the army, and fought with him against the Syrians and Ammonites, 2Sa 10:10;

and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite; of whom see 2Sa 15:19; of these two parts consisted the right and left wings of the army:

and the king said unto the people; the soldiers, and particularly the officers:

I will surely go forth with you myself also; in which he seemed very resolute and peremptory; and this he proposed to do, not merely to animate the soldiers with his presence, and to show that he was willing to hazard his life with them, but chiefly for the sake of Absalom, to preserve his life, if possible.

2 Samuel 18:3

Ver. 3. But the people answered, thou shalt not go forth,.... They were as resolute as David:

for if we flee away, they will not care for us; to pursue after us;

neither if half of us die, will they care for us; they will make no account of the victory; but if they could slay David, or get him into their hands, it would be more to them than if the whole army was routed:

but now [thou art] worth ten thousand of us; not only in our own esteem, but in the account of the enemy, who had rather thou shouldest fall into their hands than ten thousand of us; and as the advantage to them, so the loss to us would be more than ten thousand men:

therefore now [it is] better that thou succour us out of the city; either by sending them provisions or recruits, that might be there in reserve, if necessary; or by being ready to receive them into it should they be repulsed; or rather by his prayers to God for them; so the Targum,

"now it is better that thou pray for us out of the city;"

that is, that the Lord would help us; and so most of the Jewish commentators understand it of helping them by his prayers and counsels.

2 Samuel 18:4

Ver. 4. And the king said unto them, what seemeth you best I will do,.... Which was an instance of great condescension in him; and it was his wisdom and prudence to yield to them at such a time as this, and especially as their sentiments were founded on affection and loyalty to him:

and the king stood by the gate side; of the city of Mahanaim:

and all the people came out by hundreds, and by thousands; and passed by him, to whom no doubt he gave his blessing and best wishes; and, as Abarbinel thinks, now it was he composed and said the twentieth psalm, "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble", &c. Ps 20:1.

2 Samuel 18:5

Ver. 5. And the king commanded Joab, and Abishai, and Ittai,.... His three generals, to whom he had committed his army divided into three parts:

saying, [deal] gently for my sake with the young man, [even] with Absalom; he does not call him his son, being in rebellion against him, but the young man, who was young, and rash, and foolish, and so to be pitied; his request is, that they would spare him, and not take away his life, when in their power; that they would not aim at him, and push him hard, and fall upon him with wrath and fury; but if he fell into their hands, to take him alive, and bring him away, and not put him to death. This flowed from a natural affection to him, and a concern for the welfare of his soul, that he might not die in this sin; and also from a consciousness that it was for his own sins that he was raised up to rebel against him; and he seems to speak as if he was certain that the battle would go for him, and against Absalom; and which he might conclude from the answer of prayer he had in defeating the counsel of Ahithophel:

and all the people heard when he gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom; not only the three generals, but all the captains of hundreds and thousands, and this was heard by the common soldiers as well as by the people of the city that were spectators on this occasion, see 2Sa 18:12.

2 Samuel 18:6

Ver. 6. So the people went out into the field against Israel,.... Josephus {e} calls it a great field, with a wood behind it:

and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim; or near it {f} rather; not in a wood in the tribe of Ephraim, which lay on this side Jordan; whereas this battle was fought on the other side Jordan, in the land of Gilead, not far from Mahanaim, where was this wood; and which was so called, either from the slaughter of the Ephraimites here in the times of Jephthah, Jud 12:4; or from the Ephraimites feeding their cattle here and near it; for the Jews say {g}, that Joshua gave them a grant to feed their cattle in any wood in any of the tribes of Israel; and lying near Jordan, they used to drive their cattle over to this place, from whence it had its name.

{e} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 10.) sect. 2. {f} reyb "ad sylvam", Junius & Tremellius; "prope sylvam", Piscator. {g} In Jarchi, Kimchi, & Abarbinel, in loc.

2 Samuel 18:7

Ver. 7. Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David,.... That is, the people of Israel that were under Absalom, these were beaten by David's army:

and there was a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand [men]; including both those that fell in the field of battle, and that were slain in the pursuit; and this is to be understood only of Absalom's party.

2 Samuel 18:8

Ver. 8. For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country,.... Or the warriors were scattered, as the Targum; Absalom's soldiers, their ranks were broken, and they were thrown into the utmost confusion, and ran about here and there all over the field or plain in which the battle was fought, and into the neighbouring wood:

and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured; there were more slain in it the in the field of battle, what by one thing or another; as by falling into pits and on stumps of trees, and being entangled in the bushes, and could make but little haste, and so were overtaken by David's men, and slain; insomuch that, as Josephus {h} observes, there were more slain fleeing than fighting, and perhaps some might perish by wild beasts; so the Targum,

"and the beasts of the wood slew more of the people than were slain by the sword;"

and so the Syriac and Arabic versions render the words to the same purpose.

{h} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 10. sect. 2.)

2 Samuel 18:9

Ver. 9. And Absalom met the servants of David,.... When his army was routed, he was in such a fright that he knew not which way to flee, and instead of flying from David's men, he fled in the way of them; but none of them attempted to slay him, nor even to stop him, but let him pass by them, knowing David's charge concerning him:

and Absalom rode upon a mule; as was common for great personages to do in those days, 2Sa 13:29;

and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak; and running full speed, Absalom could not guide him, nor stop, nor divert him from going under it:

and his head caught hold of the oak; either the hair of his head was twisted and entangled in the thick boughs of the oak; or rather his head was jammed into a forked branch of the oak:

and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; hung in the air between both, as unworthy to live in either:

and the mule that [was] under him went away; and left him hanging in the oak.

2 Samuel 18:10

Ver. 10. And a certain man saw [it],.... Saw him in the above posture, one of David's soldiers:

and told Joab, and said, behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak; caught by the neck in one, out of which he could not disengage himself, but there he hung, though alive.

2 Samuel 18:11

Ver. 11. And Joab said unto the man that told him,.... That gave the above account of him:

and, behold, thou sawest [him]; in reality; or, "didst thou see him?" is it a fact?

and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground; kill him on the spot, that he might have dropped from the tree to the ground:

and I would have given thee ten [shekels] of silver; on the news of it, for doing it, which was near twenty four shillings of our money; Josephus says {i} fifty shekels; the Arabic version has it ten thousand talents of silver, too great a sum by far:

and a girdle? which was a mark of great honour, and a token of a commission under him, and of investing: him with a military office; see 1Sa 18:4; it used to be given as an honorary reward to soldiers that behaved well, as on the contrary it was reckoned a reproach to be ungirt, or the girdle to be taken away {k}.

{i} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 10. sect. 2.) {k} Vide Lydium de re militare, l. 3. c. 6.

2 Samuel 18:12

Ver. 12. And the man said unto Joab,.... Disdaining his proposal:

though I should receive a thousand [shekels] of silver in mine hand; or such a sum should be offered to me; the Arabic version is a million;

[yet] would I not put forth my hand against the king's son; to smite him, and slay him:

for in our hearing the king charged thee, and Abishai, and Ittai; his three generals:

saying, beware that none [touch] the young man Absalom; so as to slay him; they were charged to abstain from it themselves, and to watch and observe others, and keep them from doing it.

2 Samuel 18:13

Ver. 13. Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life,.... Or "soul"; he should not only have exposed his life to danger, but acted falsely to the king, by going contrary to his orders; yea, would have done that which was contrary to his own conscience; and if he had buoyed himself up with the hope of impunity, or of a reward, he should have found himself mistaken; the textual reading is, "against his life" {1}, or "soul", the life of Absalom, by taking it away:

for there is no matter hid from the king; this, though done ever so secretly, would have come to his knowledge by some means or another, and then I should have incurred his displeasure, and suffered for it:

and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against [me]; to accuse and bring him to justice; he would have been so far from protecting him, that he would have been the first man that would have insisted on it that he should be punished for it; or why dost not thou thyself set thyself against him, and smite him? thou mayest if thou pleasest, yonder he hangs, go and smite him.

{1} wvpnb en th quch autou, Sept. "contra animam illius", Piscator.

2 Samuel 18:14

Ver. 14. Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee,.... It is not worth while to talk with thee any longer, nor must I lose time, and neglect my opportunity; I do not desire you to go and smite him, I will go and do it myself:

and he took three darts in his hand; or three rods, which were either all iron, or however the tops of them were iron spikes:

and thrust them through the heart of Absalom; or through the midst of his body; for if he had thrust through his heart, properly speaking, he must have died instantly, whereas he seems to have lived after this:

while he [was] yet alive; Joab found him alive when he came to him, and so he was when he thrust his darts through him; and so he was afterward; for the words may be rendered, "being yet alive", even after the darts were fixed in him, and even so deeply as to pierce through his body:

in the midst, or "heart",

of the oak; into which the darts penetrated.

2 Samuel 18:15

Ver. 15. And ten young men that bare Joab's armour,.... That waited upon him in the battle, to carry his armour, and supply him with it as he should have occasion; these, by his orders,

compassed about, and smote Absalom, and slew him; they enclosed him that none might rescue him, and smote him with their spears or swords, or whatsoever armour they had, until it was a clear case that he was really dead. Joab in this disobeyed the king's order, but provided for the good of the nation, and the safety of the king. The Jews observe {m}, that measure for measure was given to Absalom; he was proud of his hair, 2Sa 14:25, and therefore was hanged by it, 2Sa 18:9; he lay with ten concubines of his father, 2Sa 16:21, and therefore was smitten with ten lances or spears by ten young men; and he stole three hearts, the heart of his father, the heart of the sanhedrim, and the heart of the men of Israel, and therefore three darts were fixed in him, 2Sa 18:14.

{m} Misn. Sotah, c. 1. sect. 8.

2 Samuel 18:16

Ver. 16. And Joab blew the trumpet,.... As the sign of a retreat:

and the people returned from pursuing after Israel; upon the sound of the trumpet, the meaning of which they understood:

for Joab held back the people: from shedding any more blood; the head of the conspiracy being removed, the thing would be crushed at once; and Joab neither chose to slay any more, nor take any prisoners, to be tried as traitors, being unawares, without thought, drawn into this rebellion.

2 Samuel 18:17

Ver. 17. And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood,.... In the wood of Ephraim, near to which the battle was fought, and into which Absalom fled, and where he was slain:

and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: his punishment was very exemplary; he was first hanged on an oak, and then thrust through with darts, and swords, and then covered with stones, 2Sa 18:9, pointing to the death that a rebellious son, according to the law, ought to die, De 21:21; though this might be done in honour of him as a king's son; for such "tumuli", or heaps of stones or earth, were used by the ancients as sepulchral monuments, and the larger the more honourable {n}; See Gill on "Jos 7:26" and
See Gill on "Jos 8:29";

and all Israel fled everyone to his tent; or to his city, as the Targum; everyone returned to their own house, and to their own business, and so the rebellion ceased.

{n} Homer. Iliad. 23. ver. 245, 257.

2 Samuel 18:18

Ver. 18. Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken,.... Had taken it into his head, had of himself devised it, as Kimchi explains it; he contrived the following scheme to perpetuate his memory:

and reared up for himself a pillar, which [is] in the king's dale: or valley, the valley of Jehoshaphat; this pillar was of marble, as Josephus {o} says, and stood about two furlongs or a quater mile from Jerusalem. The author of Cippi Hebraici {p} places it at the bottom of the mount of Olives: this is observed to show how vain are the devices and contrivances of men's hearts; Absalom intended to have been buried under or by this monumental pillar near Jerusalem, and, lo, he was buried in a pit, under an heap of stones, in a wood on the other side Jordan; whether his bones were ever removed hither it is not certain, though a notion has obtained that his grave was near this pillar. Rauwolff {q} says, that as you go from the valley of Jehoshaphat {r} to the Mount of Olives, you see below, towards your left hand, near unto the bridge of the river Kidron, an old square building like unto a steeple; this, although it is believed to this day, not only by Christians, but also by Turks and Moors, to be the grave of Absalom, as you shall see them fling stones into it as they go by, to revenge his unfaithfulness to his father, yet was he not buried there. Sandys {s} says, at the east end of the bridge (over Kidron), and a little on the north, stands the pillar of Absalom, being yet entire, and of a good fabric, rising in a lofty square, below adorned with half columns, wrought out of the sides and corners, of the Doric form; and then changing into a round, a good height higher doth grow to a point in fashion of a bell, all framed of the growing stone; against this there lies a great heap of stones, which increaseth daily, by Jews and Mahometans throwing stones as they pass by; so that the frontispiece of it, which faces the road, as Le Bruyn {t} says, looks like a mountain of stones; but as to the fabric itself, he says, there is not a finer piece of workmanship to be met with in all those parts; it takes up a compass of ground of eighty two feet and an half square; the body, which is square, with its moulding, is one entire piece; and the coping, which is an ornament to it, and runs up into a point, taken with the rest of the work, is above thirty feet high; twenty columns, cut out of the same rock, add to the beauty of this pile; one sees through a broken window a great many pieces of antiquity that hang up in a chamber. Adrichomius also relates {u}, from travellers, that in the king's valley is now a tower, and a large heap of stones, which is increased every day more and more; for Heathens and strangers passing by there have a custom to cast everyone a stone at it, as it were revenging, according to the law, Absalom's rebellion against David his father, and curse him after this manner; let Absalom the parricide be cursed, and whoever unrighteously persecutes their parents are cursed for ever:

for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance; for though he had three sons, it seems they were all dead, see 2Sa 14:27;

and he called the pillar after his own name, and it is called unto this day Absalom's place; or his "hand" {w}, the work of his hand; some wrongly think it was in the form of an hand; it was an obelisk, or monument, erected to preserve his name; but since it became so infamous, it would have been better to have had it buried in oblivion. Such sepulchral monuments were used in other nations; so Minerva advised Telemachus {x} to go in quest of his father Ulysses, and if he could not find him, but was assured of his death, then to raise a signal or monument in memory of him, which he resolved to do.

{o} Antiqu l. 7. c. 10. sect. 3. {p} P. 26. Ed. Hotting. {q} Travels, part 3. c. 21. p. 310, 311. Ed. Ray. {r} So Benjamin. Itinerar. p. 43. {s} Travels, l. 3. p. 147. Ed. 5. {t} Voyage to the Levant, c. 48. p. 188. {u} Theatrum Terrae Sanet. p 174. {w} dy ceir, Sept. "manus", V. L. Montanus. {x} Homer. Odyss. 1. ver. 297. Odyss. 2. ver. 243.

2 Samuel 18:19

Ver. 19. Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok,.... To Joab; for it seems he stayed with the army when he with Jonathan brought the message from Hushai to David:

let me now run, and bear the king tidings how that the Lord hath avenged him on his enemies; which he thought would be very acceptable to hear of as soon as possible; and to be a messenger with tidings of a victory, as it was honourable, so likewise profitable then as now; though perhaps Ahimaaz might have no respect to the reward, as indeed none could be expected, since the death of Absalom would be so disagreeable to the king; but was desirous of it, that the king might be acquainted with the event of the battle as soon as might be.

2 Samuel 18:20

Ver. 20. And Joab said unto him, thou shall not bear tidings this day,.... Because Joab knew the tidings of Absalom's death would not be acceptable to the king; and Ahimaaz being a good man, and the son of a priest, for whom Joab had a respect, he would not send the tidings by him, which he was sensible would not recommend him to the king:

but thou shalt bear tidings another day; when any salvation is wrought, or victory obtained, the tidings of which will be welcome:

but this day thou shall bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead; and thou must carry the news concerning his death, which it is not proper thou shouldest, being a priest, nor will it be to thine advantage.

2 Samuel 18:21

Ver. 21. Then said Joab to Cushi,.... The Ethiopian, or blackamoor; who either was an Ethiopian by birth and proselyted, or he was an Israelite of a black complexion, and therefore so called; and was judged a proper person by the general to carry such dismal news to the king, as he knew it would be. Some Jewish writers {a} take him to be the same with Cush the Benjaminite, in the title of the seventh psalm, **Ps 7:1**; and that he is the same that told Joab he saw Absalom hanging in an oak, and declared that, if a thousand shekels of silver were offered him, he would not have put forth his hand against him, 2Sa 18:10; though some think this was one of the ten young men that waited on Joab, and by his orders slew Absalom; but it would have been dangerous for one of these to have carried the tidings, had he been known by David to have done it:

go tell the king what thou hast seen: by which it should seem that he was present when Absalom was killed:

and Cushi bowed himself unto Joab; in reverence to him as his general, and in thankfulness for sending him on this errand:

and ran; as fast as he could.

{a} Pirke Eliezer, c. 53.

2 Samuel 18:22

Ver. 22. Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab,.... He could not be easy, even though a messenger was dispatched, but pressed Joab still:

but howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi; only permit me to go after him, though not as a messenger:

and Joab said, wherefore wilt thou run, my son? having a great affection for him, and concerned that he should take trouble on him to no purpose:

seeing thou hast no tidings ready; no news to carry, but what Cushi is gone with, and so can have no audience of the king, nor any reward from him.

2 Samuel 18:23

Ver. 23. But howsoever ([said he]) let me run,.... Be it as it may, I beg I may have leave; and being so very importunate, it was granted:

and he said unto him, run; since he would take no denial:

then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cushi; who ran by the way of the mountains; which though the shorter way, that through the plain was easiest, and soonest run, though the longest.

2 Samuel 18:24

Ver. 24. And David sat between the two gates,.... Of the city of Mahanaim; which being a fortified place had two walls, one within another, and in each wall a gate; and between these David sat, waiting for news of the battle:

and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall; the gate to the outward wall, over which was a tower, and on that a flat roof; to which the watchman went to observe if he could see an express coming; no doubt by David's orders:

and lifted up his eyes and looked; that is, very diligently and wistfully:

and, behold, a man running alone: which made him the more observable, and was the more likely to be a messenger.

2 Samuel 18:25

Ver. 25. And the watchman cried and told the king,.... Called with a loud voice from the roof of the watchtower to the king, sitting between the gates, and informed him what he saw:

and the king said, if he [be] alone [there is] tidings in his mouth; for if the army was routed and fled, and were pursued, there would be more in company, or several running one after another; but being but one, it was highly improbable that he was sent express:

and he came apace, and drew near; which was another sign of his being a messenger, the haste he made towards the city.

2 Samuel 18:26

Ver. 26. And the watchman saw another man running,.... At a further distance:

and the watchman called unto the porter; that kept the gate, under which the watchtower was:

and said, behold, [another] man runneth alone; as the other, and has the same appearance of a messenger:

and the king said, he also bringeth tidings; it being usual then, as now, to dispatch one messenger after another, as fresh accounts coming in made it necessary.

2 Samuel 18:27

Ver. 27. And the watchman said, me thinketh,.... Or, "I see" {b}; I perceive, so it appears to me:

that the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok; who it seems was well known, and famous for his manner of running and swiftness in it, having been employed in carrying expresses before from Jerusalem to David, and his army, wheresoever they were; and some of these persons thus employed were very swift; we read {c} of one that was a king's messenger, that went from Jerusalem to Tyre, on the first of Elul, or August, in a night and a day; which, according to Bunting {d} was an hundred miles: this watchman must be one of David's sentinels, who was well acquainted with the people about him:

and the king said, he [is] a good man, and cometh with good tidings; he knew he was a man of courage, and therefore was not one that fled, but must be a messenger; and that he was well affected to him, and would never be the messenger of evil tidings to him.

{b} har yna egw orw, Sept. "ego videns", Montanus; "video", Tigurine version. {c} T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 68. 3. {d} Travels, p. 200.

2 Samuel 18:28

Ver. 28. And Ahimaaz called and said unto the king,.... As soon as he came so near as to be heard by him, before he came up to him, he said with a loud voice:

all is well; the king's army has had success, beat the rebels, and obtained a complete victory: or "peace" {e}; for it is but one word in the original, which signifies all happiness and prosperity, and this he wished the king; and so it is the same as if he had said, God save the king, may all happiness attend him:

and he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king; when he came nearer to him, not only in reverence of him, but in thankfulness to God:

and said, blessed [be] the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king; in which he ascribes the victory, not to Joab and his army, but to the Lord, to whom he gives thanks; and this agreeably to his character as a good man, and a priest of the Lord.

{e} Mwlv eirhnh, Sept. "pax", Montanus, Pagninus; "salus", Tigurine version; "salve rex", V. L.

2 Samuel 18:29

Ver. 29. And the king said, is the young man Absalom safe?.... Or, is there "peace" {f} to him? you say there is peace, and that prosperity and success have attended my army; but what peace has Absalom? is he well, and in safety? David seemed more concerned for him than for his army and the success of it; and even suggests as if it was nothing if Absalom was not safe, so great were his affections towards him:

and Ahimaaz answered, when Joab sent the king's servant; which was Cushi, the first messenger, whose office perhaps it was to be one of the king's messengers, and therefore called his servant:

and [me] thy servant: Ahimaaz himself who was sent after the other:

I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what [it was]; he perceived that the tidings of the death of Absalom would be disagreeable to the king, and therefore concealed it from him; and though a good man, he cannot be excused from lying, for certainly he knew that Absalom was dead, as appears from 2Sa 18:19; though indeed what he said might be true, that after Joab had sent him and Cushi, as the Targum paraphrases it, he saw a company of people gathered together in a tumultuous manner, the meaning of which he knew not; but then this was no other than an evasion.

{f} renl Mwlv "estne pax puero?" V. L. "pax puero", Pagninus, Montanus.

2 Samuel 18:30

Ver. 30. And the king said [unto him], turn aside, [and] stand here,.... On the side of him, not far from him, until the other messenger came, that he might learn from them both the true state of the case:

and he turned aside, and stood still; saying nothing more to the king, nor he to him.

2 Samuel 18:31

Ver. 31. And, behold, Cushi came,.... A little after:

and Cushi said, tidings, my lord the king; news is sent and brought by me, and good news it is:

for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee; they are either killed or dispersed; there is an entire victory over them, and deliverance from them.

2 Samuel 18:32

Ver. 32. And the king said unto Cushi, is the young man Absalom safe?.... The same question that was put to Ahimaaz, 2Sa 18:29; which shows what lay nearest his heart, and was uppermost in his mind,

and Cushi answered, the enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do [thee] hurt, be as [that] young man [is], which was tacitly saying he was dead, and so David understood it; and he expressed it in such a manner, that David could not be displeased with the messenger; though the message was grievous to him.

2 Samuel 18:33

Ver. 33. And the king was much moved,.... His affections were moved, his passions were stirred up; he was greatly troubled, distressed, and grieved:

and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; got out of sight and company as soon as he could; as his own dwelling was at some distance, he made haste to the chamber in the watchtower, over the gate of the city, where the watchman was, to vent his grief; and could not suppress it till he got thither:

and as he went; up the stairs to the chamber:

thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! which repetition expresses the vehemence of his affections, and how inconsolable he was on account of his son's death:

would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son! some think he said this on account of his eternal state, being satisfied of his own; but it may be it was only the effect of natural affection, indulged to too great a degree, and unbecoming so good a man in such a case; the Targum is,

"I wish I had died for thee, and thou hadst remained this day."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 19

David indulging to too much grief for the death of his son, is rebuked by Joab, and threatened with a revolt of the people from him, if he did not change his conduct, which be accordingly did, 2Sa 19:1; upon which the men of Israel were the first that moved for the bringing him back to Jerusalem, and the men of Judah were solicited to join with them in it, which was effected, 2Sa 19:9; and at Jordan, Shimei, that had cursed him, met him, and asked his pardon, and was forgiven, 2Sa 19:16; and when come to Jerusalem, Mephibosheth excused so well his not going out with him, that he had half his land restored to him, which had been given to his servant, 2Sa 19:24; and Barzillai, who had very liberally supplied the king, was allowed to return to his own city, and Chimham his son was taken to court, 2Sa 19:31; and a contention arose between the men of Israel and of Judah about the restoration of the king, which issued in an insurrection, as the next chapter shows, 2Sa 19:41.

Ver. 1. And it was told Joab,.... When returned to Mahanaim, or on his way to it; perhaps by the messengers he sent; and this report he had before he saw the king:

behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom; for the death of him, instead of rejoicing at the victory obtained, and the deliverance from his enemies.

2 Samuel 19:2

Ver. 2. And the victory that day was [turned] into mourning unto all the people,.... They also mourned too, instead of expressing joy upon the occasion:

for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son; this report was spread among them, which damped their joy, and hindered them from giving any tokens of it, as were usual at such times.

2 Samuel 19:3

Ver. 3. And the people got them by stealth that day into the city,.... Did not march into it in companies, in a public and triumphant manner, as conquerors used to do; but entered in a private manner, one by one, or a very few together, not caring to be seen or known, at least by the king, as fearing they had incurred his displeasure: but as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle; as if they had been conquered, and not conquerors; nay, had acted a cowardly part, and ran away; and so cared not to be seen, lest they should be reproached, or suffer for their cowardice.

2 Samuel 19:4

Ver. 4. But the king covered his face,.... And would not see his generals, and thank them for their services: but wrapped himself in his mantle, after the manner of mourners:

and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son! and this was some time, perhaps some days after he had received the news of his death, since Joab and the army were returned from the battle; had it been a sudden start of passion, upon first hearing thee news, and had continued a few hours, it would have been more excusable; but to continue some days, as it is very probable it did, was very unbecoming.

2 Samuel 19:5

Ver. 5. And Joab came into the house to the king,.... For by this time he was removed from the chamber over the gate to his own dwelling house or palace, where he continued the same doleful ditty as at first:

and said, thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants; they cannot lift up their heads, and look any in the face, nor one another; but behave as if they had committed some very great fault, in fighting with the rebels, and beating them:

which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons, and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines; which in all probability would have been taken away if the victory had been on the side of Absalom.

2 Samuel 19:6

Ver. 6. In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends,.... Which though not strictly true, there was some appearance of it, which is here greatly exaggerated; in that he expressed so much grief and sorrow for Absalom his enemy, who had rebelled against him, and showed so little regard to his friends, that had exposed their lives for him:

for thou hast declared this day: by his conduct and behaviour, mourning for his rebellious son, and taking no notice of his faithful servants:

that thou regardest neither princes nor servants; neither the officers of the army, the generals and captains, nor the common soldiers: since neither the one were admitted into his presence privately, nor had the other public thanks as they entered the city, as might have been expected: or "that thou hast no princes and servants" {g}; none that are accounted of as such; they are nothing with thee, in no esteem at all, as if thou hadst none:

for this day I perceive that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well; this was carrying the matter too far; for though it would have been agreeable to David if Absalom had lived, and not been slain, yet not that his army should perish, or his people be destroyed; it would have pleased him well if both had lived.

{g} Mydbew Myrv Kl Nya "non tibi principes et servi", Pagninus, Montanus; "nihil tibi sint principes et servi", Piscator.

2 Samuel 19:7

Ver. 7. Now therefore arise, go forth,.... Arise from his couch, he was watering with his tears, and go forth from his house, where he had shut himself up retired from all company, to the gate of the city, where the people passed and repassed, and there was a concourse of them: this he said not by way of command, but by way of advice; though all along he seems to take too much upon him, and to speak unbecoming a subject, and not with that decency as was necessary in, speaking to a king; but it may be observed, that a general of an army had great power over princes in those times; and presumed very much on their interest in the army, which led them sometimes not to behave with that decorum as became them:

and speak comfortably unto thy servants; commend them for their courage and faithfulness, thank them for their services, and reward them suitably; at least give them assurance of it:

for I swear by the Lord; by the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; this he said to arouse him, and make him bestir himself, and think what was proper for him to do:

if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night; signifying that he would use his interest in the army to go off with it, and set up another king; and did not doubt of success, as well knowing what temper and humour the people were in through the king's conduct:

and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now; for when he was persecuted by Saul he had a number of friends that adhered close to him; and when Ishbosheth was set up against him by Abner as king of Israel, the tribe of Judah cleaved to him, anointed him their king, and abode by him; wherefore, should he now be abandoned by his army, his case would be worse than ever it had been.

2 Samuel 19:8

Ver. 8. Than the king arose, and sat in the gate,.... Of the city, a public place, where the inhabitants met on divers accounts at times, and where there were always people passing and repassing:

and they told unto all the people; or it was reported to the soldiers particularly:

saying, behold the king doth sit in the gate; has laid aside his mourning, appears in public, and receives his friends, and attends to business:

and all the people came before the king; to congratulate him on the victory obtained, to receive his thanks and his favours:

for Israel had fled every man to his tent: or to his city, as the Targum; that is, those that followed Absalom; which is observed not on account of what goes before, but of what follows after; see 2Sa 18:17.

2 Samuel 19:9

Ver. 9. And all the people were at strife through all the tribes of Israel,.... Excepting the tribe of Judah; they blamed and reproved one another for taking part with Absalom in the rebellion, and especially for their coldness and backwardness in bringing back David to Jerusalem:

saying, the king saved us out of the hand of our enemies; exposed his life to danger, fought our battles for us, and gained us victory over our enemies, and saved us from them, especially those next mentioned:

and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; in the times of Saul, and since; which were benefits which ought to have endeared him to them, and were aggravations of the crime of those who had been concerned in the late rebellion; and were such as ought not to be buried in oblivion, and were proper arguments to engage them to return to their allegiance to him, and abide by it:

and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom; being obliged to quit Jerusalem, and the land of Judea on this side Jordan, and to pass that river; not from a spirit of cowardice, but from tenderness to his son, he did not choose to fight against; and from a concern for his metropolis Jerusalem, lest that should be hurt, as well as for the safety of his person.

2 Samuel 19:10

Ver. 10. And Absalom, whom we anointed over us,.... To be king; which either was really done by Absalom's party, or in effect by proclaiming and appointing him king:

is dead in battle; which shows the thing was not of God, and by which means they were released from their oath of allegiance to him:

now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back? nobody speaks of it, gives the least hint of it, or shows any concern about it; but the greatest coldness and indifference, as if it was a matter of no importance.

2 Samuel 19:11

Ver. 11. And King David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests,.... Who were at Jerusalem, and in his interest; perhaps by Ahimaaz and Jonathan their sons:

saying, speak unto the elders of Judah; particularly those that were at

Jerusalem, with whom they had an interest:

saying, why are ye the last to bring back the king to his house? to his palace at Jerusalem, since David was of their tribe, and was first anointed their king: what might make them the more backward to it was their being so deep in the rebellion, which was formed and cherished among them, and brought to the height it was, through their connivance and encouragement, both at Hebron and Jerusalem; and therefore they might fear the resentment of David, and that he would not be easily reconciled unto them:

seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, [even] to his house: or he has received invitations from all the tribes of Israel to return to his house or palace at Jerusalem; and so this was a part of the message of David to the priests, to be told to the elders as an aggravation of their backwardness, and as an argument to excite them to their duty; though some think these are the words of the historian, to be inserted in a parenthesis, as in our version.

2 Samuel 19:12

Ver. 12. Ye [are] my brethren, ye [are] my bones and my flesh,.... Being of the same tribe, and therefore he should deal gently with them, as if they were parts of his body; and not be severe upon them, for the hand they had in the conspiracy, as they might fear:

and wherefore then are ye the last to bring the king back? since they were so nearly related to him, and he so ready to forgive them.

2 Samuel 19:13

Ver. 13. And say ye to Amasa,.... Who was the general of Absalom's army, and who might fear he should never be pardoned, whoever was, and looked upon his case as desperate; who had led on the army with Absalom against the king's threes, and fought them:

[art] thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? nearly related to him, being his sister's son:

God do so to me, and more also: than he had done to Absalom; or he imprecates the greatest evil upon himself that could be thought of or named:

if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab; signifying that he would not only pardon the treason he had been guilty of, but raise him to the highest post in the army; and to assure him of it, of which he might be doubtful, considering what he had done to merit his displeasure, he makes this oath or imprecation. Joab had got his ill will by many instances, as by the murder of Abner, and now by slaying Absalom against his orders; and by his rude and insolent behaviour to him when lamenting the death of his son; he wanted to be rid of him, and now, having an opportunity of putting a valiant man into his place, and thereby attaching him to his interest, he was determined to make use of it.

2 Samuel 19:14

Ver. 14. And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as [the heart of] one man,.... This the Jewish commentators generally understand of Amasa that he used his interest with the men of Judah, and so wrought upon them, that they agreed as one man to send for the king, and bring him back; but it seems best to understand it of David, who by these gentle methods, kind messages, and affectionate speeches, powerfully inclined and engaged the hearts of the people towards him; so that they were unanimously and affectionately agreed to restore him: in this way David chose to return; he could have come without their leave, or any invitation from them, as he was their lawful king, and a victorious one, the rebellion being crushed; and had it in his power to chastise those concerned in it, and use them with severity; but he chose rather to gain the hearts of his people, and to come in a way peaceable to them, and honourable to himself:

so that they sent [this word] unto the king, return thou and all thy servants; perhaps by the same messengers that David sent; or it may be, rather for honour's sake they deputed some of their principal men to wait on David, and invite him to return to them with all his retinue and army, promising allegiance and fidelity to him.

2 Samuel 19:15

Ver. 15. So the king returned, and came to Jordan,.... From Mahanaim thither, which according to Bunting {i} was twenty eight miles:

and Judah came to Gilgal; that is, the elders, or principal men of the tribe of Judah, came thither; which place, according to the same writer {k}, was twelve miles from Jerusalem, and four from Jordan; and was the first place the Israelites came to when they passed that river in Joshua's time; but it seems to be rather more; See Gill on "Jos 2:1" and See Gill on "Jos 4:19";

to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan; but then they must proceed further on, for Gilgal seems to be live or six miles on this side Jordan.

{i} Travels, &c. p. 142. {k} Travels, &c. p. 142, 143.

2 Samuel 19:16

Ver. 16. And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which [was] of Bahurim,.... Of whom see 2Sa 16:5;

hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David: he took the first opportunity to meet the king, and ask his pardon for his ill treatment of him when he fled from Jerusalem; for, hearing: that Absalom was slain, and the victory was on the side of David, who was returning in triumph, he thought it advisable as soon as possible to make his submission, and entreat forgiveness, lest he should fall a just sacrifice to his vengeance; and a better opportunity he could not well have than to go along with the men of Judah, who met the king first of all.

2 Samuel 19:17

Ver. 17. And there were a thousand men of Benjamin with him,.... Of which tribe he was, and these were either a band of soldiers, of which he was the chiliarch; or tenants of his, which showed him to be a great man; or his neighbours, and persons of some figure, whom he prevailed upon to come as intercessors for him:

and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul; who had imposed upon David, and got his master's inheritance from him, knowing that David would be undeceived by Mephibosheth his master, when he came to Jerusalem; and therefore that he might be more tenderly dealt with, and come off the better, he was thus forward to meet the king, and pay his respects to him:

and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him: which made a considerable appearance; see **2Sa 9:10**;

and they went over Jordan before the king: to meet him on the other side, both Shimei and his a thousand men, and Ziba with his sons and servants.

2 Samuel 19:18

Ver. 18. And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household,.... His wives and children, who could not so well ford the river on foot: some will have this to be a bridge of boats, a pontoon; and Abarbinel thinks it might be a company of men, who carried the women and children on their shoulders, one after another:

and to do what he thought good; to carry over whatever else the king pleased, besides his family:

and Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan; or just as he was about to come over, when he came to Jordan to take the boat in order to come over; for he went over Jordan to meet him, and therefore would take the first opportunity of coming into his presence, and fall down before him, and make his submission to him.

2 Samuel 19:19

Ver. 19. And said unto the king, let not my lord the king impute iniquity unto me,.... That is, deal with him according to the desert of it, punish him for it, but forgive it: for non-imputation of sin is in effect the pardon of it:

neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day my lord the king went out of Jerusalem: he desires that he would not only forgive, but forget it; he owns it was a perverse action, and aggravated by being done at the time when the king was in great trouble and distress:

that the king should take it to his heart; and determine to avenge himself on him for it.

2 Samuel 19:20

Ver. 20. For thy servant doth know that I have sinned,.... He was sensible of it, and sorry for it, and publicly acknowledged it before all the men he brought with him, and before all the servants of David; and as a token of the sincerity of his repentance, and as an earnest of his future fidelity, he made this early submission:

therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph, to go down to meet my lord the king; but why does he make mention of the house of Joseph, when he was of the tribe of Benjamin? Kimchi says that Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, were called the house of Joseph; and it may be observed that it is sometimes used for all Israel, as in Ps 80:1; and he was the first of them that came, inasmuch as he came along with the men of Judah, who came first of all to fetch the king back; or Joseph may stand for the tribes of Israel, as distinct from Judah, and he was the first of them; some of the Jewish writers think he makes mention of the name of Joseph, because as the brethren of Joseph used him ill, and he returned good to them; so though he had used David ill, he hoped he would do as Joseph did, return good for evil; and others represent him as suggesting hereby to David, that all Israel had used him ill, and he worse than them all; and now he was come first, and they were all waiting what he would do to him, that if he received him kindly, all would come and make their peace with him.

2 Samuel 19:21

Ver. 21. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said,.... The same person that would have taken off the head of Shimei at the time he cursed David, if he would have given him leave, 2Sa 16:9;

shall not Shimei be put to death for this? this humiliation and acknowledgment he has made, shall he be forgiven on that account? shall so small a matter as this atone for so great a crime he has been guilty of, as that he shall not die?

because or "though" {l}

he cursed the Lord's anointed; is asking pardon sufficient to expiate so foul an offence, for which according to the law he ought to die? or for this action which he has done, as the Arabic version, in cursing the Lord's anointed.

{l} yk, "quamvis, vel cum tamen", Piscator.

2 Samuel 19:22

Ver. 22. And David said, what have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?.... See Gill on "2Sa 16:10";

that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? or a Satan unto me, as the word is, by advising him to do what would be prejudicial to his interest; see Mt 16:22; as to use severity at such a time as this would have been; for had he immediately ordered Shimei to be put to death, though he deserved it, who was the first man that came to ask pardon, the Israelites in general, or all however concerned in the rebellion, would have concluded they must share the same fate, and so would not have submitted, but have raised a new rebellion against him; and some think Joab and Abishai had this in view, that they might keep their posts in the army:

shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? there shall not: the glory of this day shall not be sullied by the death of any; nor the joy of it be turned into sorrow in any family in Israel, as would, if any was put to death for what had passed during the rebellion:

for do not I know that I [am] this day king over Israel? and can and will do as I please; as he had been driven from his throne and palace, and was now invited back again, and upon his return, it was as if he was made king anew, and afresh inaugurated into his office; and therefore no blood should be split on that day on which he was restored to his kingdom.

2 Samuel 19:23

Ver. 23. Therefore the king said unto Shimei, thou shalt not die,.... This day by my hands, or order, or by the sword, **1Ki 2:8**;

and the king sware unto him; that he should not die for that offence, or for that only; but if he committed a new one, this oath was no longer binding on him, and not at all upon his heir and successor.

2 Samuel 19:24

Ver. 24. And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king,.... Not down to Jordan, but Jerusalem; when the king was come thither, he came from his own dwelling to the king's palace; he is called the son of Saul, though he was his grandson, and grandsons are sometimes called sons; though in the Septuagint it is, the son's son of Saul; and the Syriac and Arabic versions are, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul:

and had neither dressed his feet; had not cut his nails, as the Septuagint adds, his toenails; or rather had not washed his feet, as the Targum paraphrases it; which was frequently done in those countries, partly for refreshment, and partly to remove the filth of them contracted by walking barefooted, or only with sandals; as also because of the ill smell of them, which was offensive:

nor trimmed his beard; or shaved his upper lip, and took no care that the hair of his chin should be in any order; otherwise that was never shaved, to do it would be contrary to the law in Le 19:27;

nor washed his clothes; his linen clothes, his shirts, or any other that used to be washed; or "whitened" them, as the Targum, he had not sent them, his woollen clothes, to the fuller, to get out the spots, and whiten them. All these were tokens of mourning, and showed him to be a sincere mourner for the king's departure, and the trouble he was in, since it was so long continued:

from the day the king departed, until the day he came [again] in peace; which must be a considerable time, and therefore he must be in a most sordid and rueful condition.

2 Samuel 19:25

Ver. 25. And it came to pass, when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king,.... Perhaps from the place where his estate was; or, as the Arabic version, when he came from Jerusalem, from whence he went a little way to meet the king, as he was coming thither; for it was said he abode at Jerusalem, 2Sa 16:3;

that the king said unto him, wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth? when he departed from Jerusalem, being obliged to flee from thence because of Absalom; it is very probable David would never have asked him this question, knowing his lameness, had it not been for the suggestion of Ziba his servant, that he stayed at Jerusalem, hoping that the kingdom of his father would be restored to him, 2Sa 16:3.

2 Samuel 19:26

Ver. 26. And he answered, my lord, O king, my servant deceived me,.... His servant Ziba, who, instead of saddling an ass for him by his order, went off with that and another himself, 2Sa 16:1; for thy servant

said, I will saddle me an ass; he not only determined this in his own mind, but gave orders to his servant to saddle one for him:

that I may ride thereon, and go to the king, because thy servant [is] lame; and could not walk afoot, being lame of both his feet, **2Sa 4:4**.

2 Samuel 19:27

Ver. 27. And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king,.... By suggesting that he stayed at Jerusalem with a view to the kingdom, hoping that the quarrel between David and Absalom would issue in the restoration of it to his father's family; which was a mere calumny, he having had no such thought, nor was there any foundation for it:

but my lord the king [is] an angel of God; for understanding and wisdom, to discern the falsehood of such suggestions:

do therefore [what is] good in thine eyes; condemn him or acquit him; reject him or receive him into favour; he entirely submitted himself to him, to do with him as seemed good in his sight.

2 Samuel 19:28

Ver. 28. For all [of] my, father's house were but dead men before my lord the king,.... Or "men of death" {m}; worthy of death, not on account of Saul's persecution, for which his family did not deserve to suffer; rather for the attempt of Ishbosheth to get the kingdom from him, which might be deemed treason, and so the family was tainted for it; though the sense may be only this, that their lives lay at his mercy, and that if he had dealt with rigour and severity towards them, as was usual for princes to do towards the family of their predecessors, who had any claim to the kingdom, put them to death, this would have been their case:

yet didst thou set thy servant among them that eat at thine own table; which was showing him great kindness, and doing him great honour:

what right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king? to ask any favour of him, or make any complaint to him.

{m} twm yvna "viris mortis", Montanus.

2 Samuel 19:29

Ver. 29. And the king said unto him, why speakest thou any more of thy matters?.... Of his father's family, and the injuries done by them to David, and of the benefits and favours which he had received from David, or of his temporal affairs, of his estate, which David had given away to Ziba:

I have said, thou and Ziba divide the land; revoking his last grant to Ziba, which gave him all that belonged to Mephibosheth, 2Sa 16:4; he established his first decree, that Ziba should have half the profit of the land for tilling it, and the other half be given to Mephibosheth; he did not choose to punish Ziba for slandering his master, being inclined to clemency and mercy, and determined to show no severity at that time; and might be in some fear of Ziba, being a considerable man, lest he should raise a new insurrection, if he bore hard upon him; besides, he might have a large share in his affection, having made a present to him in the time of his distress, and was one of the first that came to meet him upon his return, 2Sa 19:17.

2 Samuel 19:30

Ver. 30. And Mephibosheth said unto the king, yea, let him take all,.... The whole estate, as David had given it to him; he was content that that last grant should stand:

forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house; his palace in Jerusalem; which was a strong expression of affection for him, and loyalty to him.

(Solomn used a similar test to determine which woman's baby was alive. **1Ki**

3:16. He purposed the baby be cut in two to reveal who the real mother was. Likewise, David suggests the property should be divided between Ziba and Miphibosheth to determine the true loyalty of the later. 2Sa 19:29 Editor.)

2 Samuel 19:31

Ver. 31. And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim,.... The place of his habitation, to Jordan, see 2Sa 17:27;

and went over Jordan with the king to conduct him over Jordan; to accompany him over the river, and then take his leave of him.

2 Samuel 19:32

Ver. 32. Now Barzillai was a very aged man, [even] fourscore years old,.... Which was ten years beyond the common term of man's life, and reckoned a very great age in David's time, and has been ever since, and still is, see Ps 90:10;

and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim: had supported him and his family, furnished him with provisions, and all the necessaries of life, during his stay there:

for he [was] a very great man; in wealth and riches, and was a very liberal man, and a man of great wisdom and good sense; and very probably was a man of great grace, which taught him his duty to his prince, and influenced him to show mercy to him in distress.

2 Samuel 19:33

Ver. 33. And the king said to Barzillai, come thou over with me,.... Over Jordan; Barzillai came with an intent to accompany the king over Jordan; but the king meant not only to go over Jordan, but when over to go further with him, even to Jerusalem:

and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem; meaning, that he should dwell with him in his palace, and eat at his table, in return for feeding him at Mahanaim.

2 Samuel 19:34

Ver. 34. And Barzillai said unto the king,.... In answer to the grateful proposal he made:

how long have I to live; that could not be said with exactness by any; but it might be probably conjectured from the age he was of, and the infirmities that attended him, that he could not live long; it was but a short time he had to be in the world:

that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? take so long a journey as that, seeing he might die before he got thither; and if he did not, since it could not be thought he should live long, he could not think of it, or judge it advisable at such an age to take such a journey, change his place of abode, and manner of living.

2 Samuel 19:35

Ver. 35. I [am] this day fourscore years old,.... Not that that day was precisely his birthday, but that he was about such an age, very little under or over; very probably he was full that age:

[and] can I discern between good and evil? signifying, either that his intellectual powers were impaired, and could not distinguish what was right and wrong, and so could be of no service to David in his privy council, or any court of judicature, he was fit for no post or office under him; or that his natural senses were not quick to distinguish between good and bad, particularly between good and bad food, which he could neither discern by smell nor taste, as follows:

can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? have any gust or relish of, or take any delight or pleasure in eating and drinking; so that the most delicious food, and richest wines, and all the dainties of a king's table, would signify nothing to him:

can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? either being so deaf that he could not hear them at all, or however not with any delight; the evil days being come upon him, in which he could take no pleasure in the diversions of a court:

wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? he could neither take any pleasure himself, nor be of any service to the king, but on the contrary a burden to him; not only on account of his sustenance, and being obliged to have servants to attend him, which might be the least part of his burden, but his company would be disagreeable and troublesome, through the infirmities of old age upon him.

2 Samuel 19:36

Ver. 36. Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king,.... That is, go a little way after he was over Jordan with him, and then return to his own city:

and why should the king recompense it with such a reward? the sense is, why should the king recompense so trifling a thing as I have done, and which was but my duty, with such a reward, as to maintain me in so grand a manner at his court?

2 Samuel 19:37

Ver. 37. Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again,.... To his own city, after he is gone ever Jordan, and seen the king a little way on his journey:

that I may die in my own city: the city of Rogelim, where perhaps he was born, and had lived all his days, and where it is natural for people to desire to die, even in their native place:

[and be buried] by the grave of my father, and of my mother: or "in" their grave, as Kimchi and Ben Melech, in the sepulchre of his fathers, where men usually choose to be buried:

but behold, thy servant Chimham: who was his son; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions express it, my son Chimham:

let him go over with my lord the king; not only over Jordan, but to Jerusalem with him:

and do to him what shall seem good unto thee; advance him, and put him into any post or office the king should think fit, or bestow a pension upon him, or give him an estate to live upon, or whatever he pleased.

2 Samuel 19:38

Ver. 38. And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me,.... He admitted of him instead of his father:

and I will do unto him that which shall seem good unto thee; he puts it to Barzillai, and leaves it with him to ask what he would for his son, and he would grant it. We nowhere read what it was that Barzillai asked, or whether he asked anything; only this we read, that some hundreds of years afterward there was a place called the habitation of Chimham near Bethlehem, Jer 41:17; which makes it probable that David gave him a paternal estate of his there, since Bethlehem was his city; and the Targum on that place is expressly for it; See Gill on "Jer 41:17":

and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, [that] will I do for thee; whatever suit he should make to him, or whatever favour he should ask of him hereafter, when returned to his own city, he would grant it to him, if it could be possibly done; such a sense should he always retain of his kindness to him.

2 Samuel 19:39

Ver. 39. And all the people went over Jordan,.... That were with David:

and when the king was come over; over Jordan, had got to the other side of it, whither Barzillai accompanied him:

the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; took his leave of him with a kiss, as friends were wont to do at parting, thanked him for all his favours, wished him well, and prayed to God to bless him with all blessings temporal and spiritual:

and he returned to his own place: his own city Rogelim, having crossed over again the river Jordan.

2 Samuel 19:40

Ver. 40. Then the king went on to Gilgal,.... Which, according to Josephus {n}, was fifty furlongs from Jordan, six miles and a quarter:

and Chimham went on with him; after Barzillai had left them, and accompanied the king to Jerusalem:

and all the people of Judah conducted the king; to Jerusalem; who came to meet him, 2Sa 19:15;

and also half the people of Israel; or a part of them, as the word used signifies, and not always an equal half, so Kimchi observes; even such of Israel as went out with David at first, and the a thousand men of Benjamin that came to meet him, 2Sa 19:17.

{n} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 4.

2 Samuel 19:41

Ver. 41. And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king,.... A large number of them, the other part that did not come over with David, some of their principal men, who met him upon the road:

and said unto the king, why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen thee away; secretly, privately, and unknown to them, and were bringing him back to Jerusalem:

and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan? him, and his family, and soldiers.

2 Samuel 19:42

Ver. 42. And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel,.... Such of them as went down to fetch the king back, replied to the men of Israel that now met them, and objected to their conduct:

because the king [is] near of kin to us; being of their tribe, and his palace was within their borders, and therefore they were proper persons to bring him home:

wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? for bringing the king back, and being the first in it; for who so proper as they, not only to do their duty, but to show their affection to the king as early as possible?

have we eaten at all of the king's [cost]? they had maintained themselves at their own expense, going and returning; they had no self-interest or selfish views to serve, but on the contrary had been at a considerable charge to meet the king, and conduct him home:

or hath he given us any gift? no, he had not, nor did they expect any; it was not with a view to any reward that they had taken this step, but purely out of affection to the king, and for the good of their country.

2 Samuel 19:43

Ver. 43. And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said,.... They replied to them, as follows:

we have ten parts in the king; being ten tribes, reckoning Simeon in the tribe of Judah, within which it lay, Jos 19:1;

and we have, also more [right] in David than ye; being more numerous than they; or, according to the Targum, they had more affection and good will towards David than the men of Judah, though he was of their tribe, and dwelt among them; since the rebellion was begun, and was cherished and carried on among them:

why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? they were as ready and as desirous as they to fetch the king back; and since they were far the largest body of men, and the far greater part of the nation, they thought they ought to have been consulted in an affair of so much importance, and that doing it without them was slighting them, and casting contempt upon them, and insinuating as if they were enemies to the king; or, as the Targum expresses it,

"was not my word first to bring back my king?"

the first motion was from them, as appears from 2Sa 19:11; and therefore the thing should not have been done without them; they should have been apprized of it, that they might at least have joined them, and shared in the honour with them of bringing the king back:

and the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel; not those that are here recorded, but what followed, and are not written, being so very warm and indecent; and David being silent in this hot dispute between them, which was interpreted taking the part of Judah, the men of Israel were incensed at it; and hence arose a new rebellion, of which more in the next chapter how it began, and was crushed.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 20

This chapter gives an account of a new rebellion raised by Sheba, 2Sa 20:1; of David's shutting up his concubines unto the day of their death, whom Absalom had lain with, 2Sa 20:3; of Amasa being ordered to assemble the men of Judah to crush the rebellion, but being dilatory, Abishai is sent out with David's servants, and was followed by Joab with the men under him, 2Sa 20:4; and of the murder of Amasa by Joab, 2Sa 20:8; and of Sheba being shut up in the city Abel, 2Sa 20:14; whose head, by the means of a wise woman, was delivered to Joab, and so an end was put to the rebellion, 2Sa 20:16; and, lastly, of the chief officers in David's camp and court, 2Sa 20:23.

Ver. 1. And there happened to be a man of Belial,.... A wicked man, as the Targum, a lawless, yokeless man, that had cast off the yoke of the law, and was without it, as Belial is by some interpreted; or one unprofitable and useless, yea, noxious and pernicious: this man, though, with respect to second causes, may be said to be there by chance, yet it was so ordered by the providence of God that he should be present at this time for the further fulfilment of the threatening to David, that the sword should not depart from his house:

whose name [was] Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite; one perhaps that had been in the rebellion of Absalom, and had a grudge against David for the removal of the kingdom out of that tribe:

and he blew a trumpet; which was done to draw off the Israelites from David, and gather a party to himself:

and said, we have no part in David; so he interpreted what the men of Judah said, because they claimed kindred to David, the rest of the Israelites had no interest in him; thus they, who just before said they had ten parts in him, now had none at all:

neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse; so he calls David by way of contempt, as if he was no king, but a private person, and a descendant from a mean family:

every man to his tent, O Israel; there to consider what to do, and whom to choose to be their king, and let Judah take David for their king, and enjoy him alone, since they had so slighted, and dealt so injuriously and roughly with the rest of the tribes.

2 Samuel 20:2

Ver. 2. So every man of Israel went up from after David,.... Those that met him on the road departed from him, and went no further with him:

[and] followed Sheba the son of Bichri; and made him their captain, who was the author of their mutiny and sedition:

but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan to Jerusalem: never left him, after they had conducted him over Jordan, until they had brought him safely to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 20:3

Ver. 3. And David came to his house at Jerusalem,.... His palace there, which was in that part of the city called the fort of Zion, and city of David:

and the king took the ten women [his] concubines, whom he had left to keep the house; when he fled from Jerusalem because of Absalom, 2Sa 15:16;

and put them in ward; partly as a punishment for easily yielding to the lust of Absalom, and partly that they might not be seen, which would bring to remembrance his sin:

and fed them; he did not put them to death, nor put them away, but kept them thus confined, and made a proper provision for them, not suffering them to marry any other, and be maintained by them:

but went not in unto them: into their apartments to lie with them, having been defiled by his son, 2Sa 16:22;

so they were shut up unto the day of their death; kept in the ward till they died:

living in widowhood; neither used by the king as his concubines, as they had been before, nor suffered to many any other; or "in the widowhood of life" {o}, which is so expressed, to distinguish it from widowhood made by death; this was such sort of widowhood as obtained while their husband was living; so the Targum,

"widows of their husband alive,"

or remaining.

{o} twyx twnmla "in viduitate vitae", Pagninus, Montanus.

2 Samuel 20:4

Ver. 4. Then said the king to Amasa,.... Whom he had promised to make general of his army, 2Sa 19:13; and by the following order declared him such:

assemble me the men of Judah within three days; which was done by the sound of the trumpet, or by the proclamation of a herald; it seems that the men of Judah, who attended David to Jerusalem, were gone to their respective cities and places of abode, or there would have been no occasion for such a summons; though it is strange they should, when the men of Israel appeared so inclinable to a new rebellion:

and be thou here present; to take the command of them.

2 Samuel 20:5

Ver. 5. So Amasa went to assemble [the men of] Judah,.... To gather, them together out of their several tribes, and bring them to Jerusalem:

but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him: than the three days; whether this was owing to the remissness of Amasa, or the unwillingness of the people to serve under him, who had been Absalom's general in the late rebellion, or not having time sufficient allowed him, is not certain.

2 Samuel 20:6

Ver. 6. And David said to Abishai,.... For it seems he would have nothing to say to Joab, being displeased with him for slaying Absalom, and having removed him from his posts; and therefore speaks to the next officer in his army, Abishai; though Josephus {p} says, he addressed himself to Joab, contrary to the express words of the text:

now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than [did] Absalom; gain a greater party, and give more trouble to subdue him, unless suppressed in time:

take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him; without waiting for Amasa, and the troops he was assembling; delays in such a case as an insurrection being dangerous, which ought to be nipped in the bud, and crushed as soon as possible; in order to which, he bids him take his servants that were about him, his bodyguards, and pursue Sheba:

lest he get him fenced cities; where he may secure himself, and hold out a siege a long time, and give a great deal of trouble:

and escape us; for the present; or "escape our eyes", as the "Keri", or marginal reading is; we shall lose sight of him, and not know which way he is gone, if he is not pursued quickly.

{p} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 11. sect. 6.

2 Samuel 20:7

Ver. 7. And there went out after him Joab's men,.... Who though he was removed from his post as general, yet might still have the command of a regiment:

and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites; over whom Benaiah was, 2Sa 20:23;

these attended David in his flight, and had now returned with him, 2Sa 15:18;

and all the mighty men; the military men that were at Jerusalem as many as could be spared:

and they went out of Jerusalem to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri; with Abishai at the head of them; Josephus {q} says there were six hundred, besides the soldiers at Jerusalem that went on this pursuit.

{q} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 11. sect. 7.

2 Samuel 20:8

Ver. 8. When they [were] at the great stone which [is] in Gibeon,.... Which, according to Josephus {r}, was forty furlongs, or five miles from Jerusalem: what this great stone was, whether an obelisk, or what, is not certain; one of the greatest stones we read of was that which Semiramis cut out of the mountains of Armenia, which was an hundred thirty feet long, and twenty five broad and thick {s}. This place was appointed for the rendezvous of David's forces, and hither Amasa came with what he had assembled together, and joined them, and took the command of them: for it follows,

Amasa went before them; as the general of them:

and Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him; who went along with his brother Abishai at the head of his own men, to which he was obliged by virtue of his commission; or went of himself to serve the common cause, and perhaps chiefly with a design to murder Amasa, whom he envied, because he was put into his post as general, and therefore accoutred himself for it; he put on, not a coat of mail, but a common garment which he girt about him, that it might be no incumbrance to him or hinderance of him, in doing what he intended, but that he might more expeditiously execute it:

and upon it a girdle [with] a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; the sword in the belt was not on his thigh, but on his loins, on the outside of his clothes, and was put into a sheath too large, and placed in such a position, that with the least motion, when he pleased, it would easily drop out of it, without drawing it, and so give no suspicion of his design:

and as he went forth; to meet Amasa, just as he came to him:

it fell out; the sword fell out of the sheath to the ground.

{r} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 11. sect. 7. {s} Diodor. Sic. l. 2. p. 100. Vid. ib. p. 53. Herodot. Euterpe, c. 111.

2 Samuel 20:9

Ver. 9. And Joab said to Amasa,.... In a friendly manner, with all the air of pleasantry and good humour:

[art] thou in health, my brother? this looked like a friendly salutation to ask of his health, and wish him it, and a loving appellation to call him brother; though they were near of kin, sisters' children, and so own cousins; thus he addressed him, to cover his design:

and Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him: as was usual for the eastern people to do when they addressed and saluted one another in an affectionate way, and as the Turks and Arabs do to this day, as travellers relate. Barthius {t} has collected passages from the Greek poets, which show it to be a custom, that when a man asked a favour of another, he caught hold of his beard with the right hand, and of his knee with the left; and in such a posture Joab might easily do what follows.

{t} Animadv. ad Claudian. de Raptu Proserp. l. 1. ver. 50. vid. Homer. Iliad. ver. 500, 501. Iliad. 8. ver. 371. & Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 19.

2 Samuel 20:10

Ver. 10. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that [was] in Joab's hand,.... In his left hand, for with his right hand he took him by the beard; he might see the sword drop out of the scabbard, and Joab take it up, which he supposed he did in order to put it into its sheath again, having no suspicion of his wicked design, and therefore not at all upon his guard to prevent it:

so he smote him therewith in the fifth [rib]; in the same place where Abner smote Asahel, and Joab Abner; See Gill on "2Sa 2:23" and See Gill on "2Sa 3:27": he must strike him, as some observe, on the left side, because he was embracing him; and the stroke must be deadly, because he struck him in the pericardium, which surrounds the heart round with water, to refrigerate it; for the lower part of the heart reaches to the fifth rib; see Joh 19:34 {u}:

and shed out his bowels to the ground; which fell out through the incision made by the sword:

and struck him not again: he gave him such a home thrust, there was no need to repeat it, he dispatched him at once:

and he died; and thus, though he was pardoned by David, and promoted to honour by him, yet the providence of God would not suffer him to go unpunished for joining with Absalom in an unnatural rebellion against his uncle:

so Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri: for Amasa being slain, Joab without any ceremony reassumed his post as general, and, with his brother Abishai under him, made all the haste they could in pursuit of the rebel.

{u} Weemse's Portrait of Man, p. 25.

2 Samuel 20:11

Ver. 11. And one of Joab's men stood by him,.... By the body of Amasa; no doubt by the order of Joab, to satisfy the people as they came up, and reconcile them to this fact, and to exhort them not to stop, but to follow after Joab; for though Amasa their general was dead, Joab had taken the command of the army, and the pursuit was carried on with as much rigour as ever:

and said, he that favoureth Joab, and he that [is] for David, [let him go] after Joab: he that likes Joab should be general, and is in the interest of David, let him make no stay here, but follow after Joab; Joab and David are put together, as if their interests were the same; though there seems to be an indecency in placing Joab first.

2 Samuel 20:12

Ver. 12. And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway,.... By which it seems, that though the wound was mortal, and of which he died, that as yet there was life in him, and through the pain he was in, and the pangs of death on him, he rolled himself about in his own blood in the high road, where the fact was committed:

and when the man saw that all the people stood still; gazing at the shocking sight, and could not be prevailed upon to go on:

he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field; which was adjoining to it:

and cast a cloth upon him; that the body might not be seen:

when he saw that everyone that came by him stood still; and so retarded the people in their march, to prevent which he took the above method, and it was a very prudent one.

2 Samuel 20:13

Ver. 13. When he was removed out of the highway,.... Into the field, and covered over with a cloth, that he could not be seen:

all the people went on after Joab; made no stop at all, knowing nothing of the matter, or what had happened:

to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri; these were the troops that Amasa had been assembling, which followed one another after him; for Joab and Abishai, with their men, were at Gibeon first.

2 Samuel 20:14

Ver. 14. And he went through all the tribes of Israel,.... That is, Sheba the son of Bichri, last mentioned, 2Sa 20:13, who passed through all the tribes of Israel to get as many to be of his party as he could, and to be proclaimed their king; or finding himself pursued, he passed on as fast as he could from place to place, through all the tribes, until at length he fixed for safety in a place later named; though Josephus {w} understands this of Joab pursuing Sheba through all the tribes of Israel with the forces under him; and to this sense the Syriac and Arabic versions, and so R. Isaiah interprets it; but the first sense is more generally received, that Sheba is meant, who passing through various tribes, came

unto Abel, and unto Bethmaachah; which were two places very near one another, if not one and the same place; since Abel is in 2Sa 20:15 called Abel of Bethmaachah, to distinguish it from any other place: it was a city that lay to the north of Israel near Syria; and from 2Ki 15:29, it appears to be in the tribe of Naphtali. There was one city of this name of Abel, six miles from Philadelphia, another twelve miles from Gadara, and a third between Paneas and Damascus, which, of the three, Reland thinks {x}, is most eligible to be the place here meant; though he rather chooses to look for it in Galilee, to the west or south of Paneas, than to the east or north in the way to Damascus; and so Adrichomius {y} calls it a city of upper Galilee, sixty furlongs or seven and an half miles from Jordan; and though he also places it in the tribe of Naphtali, in the plain of the country of Berim (from whence perhaps were the Berites next mentioned), not far from Caesarea Philippi; see 1Ki 15:20;

and all the Berites; the inhabitants of Beeroth, in the tribe of Benjamin, of which tribe Sheba was, they followed him hither, as in the next clause:

and they were gathered together, and went also after him; unto Abel; of these, see Jos 18:25; though perhaps these Berim or Berites were nearer to Abel; or rather that was in their country, as has been observed by Adrichomius.

{w} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 11. sect. 7.) {x} Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. p. 519. {y} Theatrum Terrae S. p. 101.

2 Samuel 20:15

Ver. 15. And they came and besieged him in Abel of Bethmaachah,.... That is, Joab and Abishai, with the forces under them, who pursued him hither:

and they cast up a bank against the city; which some understand of a warlike machine or engine, with which stones were cast; but it rather seems to be a bank of earth thrown up, for the better working of such engines to more advantage against the city, by throwing from thence darts into the city, or stones against the walls of it, to batter it down; such banks were used in sieges, as that Caesar's soldiers raised in twenty five days, which was three hundred thirty feet broad, and eighty feet high {z}; Kimchi interprets this of filling up the ditches round about the city with dust and earth, and so making it level, whereby they could come the more easily to the walls and batter them, or scale them, and take the city by storm:

and it stood in the trench; the army under Joab stood where the trench round the city had been, now filled up:

and all the people that [were] with Joab battered the wall to throw it down; with their engines, or whatever battering instruments they had; so, often, as Hesiod {a} says, a whole city suffers for one bad man.

{z} Caesar. Comment. l. 7. c. 24. {a} Opera & Dies, l. 1. ver. 236.

2 Samuel 20:16

Ver. 16. Then cried a wise woman out of the city,.... And such an one as the woman of Tekoah, supposed by some to be the governess of the city; but whoever she was, she well deserved the character of a wise woman; her conduct in this affair shows it: she cried with a loud voice, upon the wall of the city, to Joab's men, who were underneath battering it,

hear, hear; which she repeated to make them hear:

say, I pray you, unto Joab, come near hither, that I may speak with thee; tell your general I desire to speak with him; which was wisely done, to have nothing to say but to the general himself.

2 Samuel 20:17

Ver. 17. And when he was come near unto her,.... As he did, upon the information of his men, that a woman on the wall had something to say to him:

the woman said, [art] thou Joab? she was willing to be satisfied that he was really the general, before she would impart her mind to him:

and he answered, I [am he]; the very person you ask after:

and she said unto him, hear the words of thine handmaid; though a woman, vouchsafe to hear what I have to say:

and he answered, I do hear: am ready to hear, and shall patiently and attentively hear whatever may be spoken; which was giving her leave and encouragement to proceed.

2 Samuel 20:18

Ver. 18. Then she spake, saying, they were wont to speak in old time,.... It was a common saying, a proverbial expression among the ancient sages:

saying, they shall surely ask [counsel] at Abel, and so they ended [the matter]. Abel, it seems, had been a city so famous for wise and prudent men, that it was common for the inhabitants of other cities, in the several parts of the kingdom, when any controversy arose among them, to say to one another, since we cannot agree this matter among ourselves, let us go to Abel, and take advice there, and leave it to their arbitration; and so they did, and things were presently brought to an issue, and happily concluded; nay, when the king had a mind to make a decree or law, as R. Isaiah observes, he used to send to Abel to know whether they would submit to it; and if they agreed to it, then he proceeded in it; for other cities followed their example, so famous was this city, and of so great account: now the woman argues from hence, that surely such a renowned city should not hastily be destroyed; but the Targum directs to another sense, and which perhaps is best, and is followed by Jarchi, Kimchi, and others, paraphrasing the words thus,

"she spake, saying, I remember now what is written in the book of the law, to ask a city first, saying, (will ye make peace?) so shouldest thou have asked of Abel, will ye make peace, or receive terms of peace?"

referring to the law in De 20:10; signifying, if that had been attended to as it ought (for if such methods were to be taken with Heathen cities, much more with a city of Israel, as Abel was), things would soon have been agreed and issued; had Joab upon approaching the city proposed his terms of peace, they would have immediately yielded to them, and so the matter would have ended at once; for they were a peaceable people, as it follows: though Dr. Lightfoot {b} gives another sense of these words, that Sheba and his party when they came to the city,

"they at first certainly said thus, that they would ask Abel of its peace (or on whose side it was), and so they made the matter entire, or made a show of their own integrity:"

by which this woman assured Joab, that the men of Abel had not invited, nor willingly received Sheba and his rebels into the city, but they had deceived them by fawning and false words, pretending only to inquire about the peace and welfare of their city.

{b} Works, vol. 2. p. 367.

2 Samuel 20:19

Ver. 19. I [am one of them that are] peaceable [and] faithful in Israel,.... Her meaning is, that she was of a city which consisted of peaceable and faithful men, that were peaceable among themselves, and faithful to their king, who never were concerned in any insurrection or rebellion, not in the late one under Absalom:

thou seekest to destroy a city, and a mother in Israel; a metropolitan city, which had several towns and villages under its jurisdiction, which were as daughters to it. Some think she means herself, because very old, supposed {c} to be Serah, the daughter of Asher, a son of Jacob, which is improbable:

wilt why thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord? a city which is a part of the land, that is the Lord's inheritance.

{c} Jarchi & Kimchi in loc. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 79. L.

2 Samuel 20:20

Ver. 20. And Joab answered and said, far be it from me, far be it from me,.... He repeats these words, to show how detestable it was to him to do what she suggested:

that I should swallow up or destroy; any in a violent and unrighteous manner, and especially a city of which she had given such a character for its greatness and worth, and for the peaceableness and fidelity of its inhabitants.

2 Samuel 20:21

Ver. 21. The matter [is] not so,.... I am not come with the army against this city with any ill will to it, and with an intention to destroy it: the case is this,

but a man of Mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name; for though he was by birth a Benjaminite, his dwelling was in Mount Ephraim in that tribe; unless there was a place of this name in the tribe of Benjamin, so called from any memorable event there, as the wood of Ephraim, 2Sa 18:6. This same man, says Joab,

hath lifted up his hand against the king, [even] against David; is in rebellion against the king, even so great and good a king as David; he has lifted up his hand, and blown a trumpet to draw off men from David, and after himself; he has committed acts of hostility and treason; he has drawn his sword, and raised an insurrection and rebellion in the nation:

deliver him only, and I will depart from the city: he did not desire any of his followers to be delivered up, only himself, knowing the rebellion would cease upon the delivery of him; and being unwilling that the blood of any Israelite should be shed, whom he had unawares drawn into this rebellion, and who he knew would return to their own cities upon this:

and the woman said unto Joab, behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall; she knew the fright the inhabitants of the city were in, and how disposed they were to do anything to save their city; she knew what influence she had among them, and how weak Sheba's party was, and therefore could assure Joab that this should be done.

2 Samuel 20:22

Ver. 22. Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom,.... Went from the wall of the city into it, and convened the principal inhabitants together, and made so wise a speech to them, and represented things in such a light, and so prudently conducted, that they unanimously agreed to her motion:

and they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast [it] out to Joab; whose face Joab knew full well, and was satisfied it was his head that was thrown over:

and he blew a trumpet; as a sign of retreat:

and they retired from the city, every man to his tent; the army under Joab broke up the siege, and departed, every man to his own city, as the Targum:

and Joab returned unto Jerusalem unto the king; to give him an account of his success, and how the rebellion was crushed; and this gave him courage and boldness to appear before the king, which one would wonder else he should have, when he had killed his general in cold blood, the king had sent out, and without his leave had reassumed his post as general of the army; but he was a bold daring man, a man of blood, and hardened in sin, and had power in the army, and over David himself, that he could not do what he would with him, but was obliged to be silent, and overlook things, and even to reestablish him in his office, as appears by what follows.

2 Samuel 20:23

Ver. 23. Now Joab [was] over all the host of Israel,.... Established in the post in which he formerly was; either having been never displaced, which though David thought to do, he was not able to effect it, because of his power and influence with the people; or if he had displaced him, which by some things in this chapter seemed to be the case, yet Amasa being dead, and the rebellion crushed by Joab, which still made him more haughty, and increased his popularity, David saw it most advisable to replace him; and because mention is made of him, as established in his office as general over the whole army, an account is given of the rest of David's officers; and the rather, as it was a sort of beginning his reign anew, after quelling the above rebellions:

and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada [was] over the Cherethites, and over the Pelethites; was continued in his post, see **2Sa 8:18**.

2 Samuel 20:24

Ver. 24. And Adoram [was] over the tribute,.... Or over those that collected and brought it, as the Targum; this was a new office, and which respected both the revenue he received from his own people, and the tribute brought him from the nations conquered by him:

and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud [was] recorder; who was in this office before, and now continued and established in it, **2Sa 8:16**.

2 Samuel 20:25

Ver. 25. And Sheva [was] scribe,.... Either the same with Benaiah, or he was dead or removed, and Sheva was put in his place, see **2Sa 8:17**;

and Zadok and Abiathar [were] the priests; as before;
See Gill on "2Sa 8:17".

2 Samuel 20:26

Ver. 26. And Ira also the Jairite,.... Which some take to be the same with Ira the Ithrite, 2Sa 23:38; a son of Jether or Ithra the Israelite, 2Sa 17:25; though others suppose he was Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, 2Sa 23:26; and so the Targum here calls him Ira the Jairite, which was of Tekoah; and Tekoah being the chief place in Israel for oil olive {d}, with which the lamps were lighted, Jarchi thinks he had the name of Jairite from Jair, which signifies to enlighten; but rather he was a descendant from Jair the Gileadite, and perhaps was a great friend to David when in Gilead, and from whence he brought him and promoted him: for he

was a chief ruler about David; a prime minister, an intimate friend, the chief of his privy council; perhaps he succeeded Ahithophel; it is much we hear nothing of Hushai.

{d} Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 3.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 21

A famine being in the land three years, the Lord was inquired of, to know the reason of it; and it being answered, that it was on account of Saul's slaughter of the Gibeonites, they were summoned by David to know what satisfaction they required for the cruel usage of them, 2Sa 21:1; to which they replied, that they only desired seven of Saul's sons to be delivered up to them, to be hanged by them, which was granted, 2Sa 21:4; whose bones, with those of Saul and

Jonathan, David buried in the sepulchre of their fathers, 2Sa 21:10; and the chapter is closed with an account of the various battles fought with the Philistines, in which four of their generals were slain, 2Sa 21:15.

Ver. 1. Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year,.... That is, three years running, one after another; some think this, though here related, was before the rebellions of Absalom and Sheba, and not after, and there are several things which may incline to it, as that the sin of Saul should otherwise be so long unpunished, and that the bones of Saul and Jonathan were not sooner removed, here related; and that there should be so many battles the Philistines after they were subdued, as recorded in this chapter; and in one of the Jewish {e} writings it is said, that this was the year after Saul was slain; though, in other copies of the same book, it is said to be thirty years after; and so in that Abarbinel used, and who is of the mind that what is here related stands in the order in which it was, and of the same opinion are some of our best chronologers {f}:

and David inquired of the Lord; before the high priest by Urim and Thummim, what should be the cause of the famine perhaps suspecting it was some sins of his; the first year he might take no notice of it, hoping for a more fruitful season the next year, it arising, as he might suppose, from some natural cause; the second year he might begin to think it was for some national sins, but might be remiss in his inquiry into them; but the third year he was alarmed, and concluded there was something extraordinary and special, and feared it was on his account, and this put him on making inquiry:

and the Lord answered, [it is] for Saul, and for [his] bloody house; on account of the blood shed by him and his family; which answer must in a good measure relieve the mind of David, if he was fearful it was for his sins:

because he slew the Gibeonites: which was contrary to the oath that Joshua and all Israel had given them not to slay them, but save them alive, **Jos 9:15**. When this was done is not certain; the Jews commonly say {g} that he slew them when he slew the priests at Nob, they being hewers of wood and drawers of water to them, and were slain with them; or because their maintenance depended on the priests, they being slain, it was in effect slaying them; but rather this refers to another time, and to other action or actions of Saul, who sought by various means to destroy these people, and root them out of the land. The Heathens had a notion that barrenness, unfruitfulness, and famine, were inflicted by God for murder. Philostratus {h} reports of the Ethiopian Indians, that for the murder of their king, Ganges, their ground was unfruitful, their cattle starved, their wives abortive, and their cities and houses fell to ruin, until the murderers were destroyed.

{e} Pirke Eliezer, c. 17. {f} Usser. Annal. Vet. Test. p. 55. Bedford's Scripture Chronology, p. 558. {g} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 119. 1. {h} Vita Apollon. Tyanei, l. 3. c. 6.

2 Samuel 21:2

Ver. 2. And the king called the Gibeonites,.... Sent messengers unto them, and summoned them to come to him,

and said unto them; what is expressed in 2Sa 21:3; for what follows is in a parenthesis:

(now the Gibeonites [were] not of the children of Israel; originally, though they were proselyted to the Jewish religion, and were employed in the menial services of the sanctuary:

but of the remnant of the Amorites; they were the remains of the old Canaanites, who sometimes in general were called Amorites, otherwise the Gibeonites were called Hivites; see **Jos 9:7**;

and the children of Israel had sworn unto them; by their princes, as Joshua; yet,

and Saul, contrary to this oath, sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah); pretending a great concern for them, for their honour and profit; that these men ought not to live in their cities, and take the bread out of their mouths, and be employed in the service of the sanctuary; but that they ought to be expelled, and even cut off, being the old inhabitants of the land, the Lord ordered to be destroyed; and that though the Israelites had given an oath to the contrary, they were drawn into it by guile and deceit, and therefore not binding upon them; hence he sought by all means to harass and oppress them, and slew many of them, and destroyed them out of their cities, that they might be possessed by Judah and Benjamin; see **2Sa 4:2**, compared with **Jos 9:17**.

2 Samuel 21:3

Ver. 3. Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, what shall I do for you,....

By way of satisfaction for the injuries done them:

and wherewith shall I make the atonement; for the offences committed, that so the wrath that was gone forth against the land in a famine might be appeased:

that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord? pray for a blessing upon the land which the Lord had chosen for his inheritance, and given as such to the people of Israel, that rain might descend upon it, and make it fruitful.

2 Samuel 21:4

Ver. 4. And, the Gibeonites said unto him,.... In reply to his motion:

we will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; this shall not be the ransom or atonement; it was not silver and gold Saul took from them, but the lives of their brethren, and therefore they insist upon life for life:

neither for us shall thou kill any man in Israel; who were not of the house of Saul; they did not desire any man should die, but who were of that family by whom they had suffered:

and he said, what you shall say, [that] will I do for you; whether by inflicting pecuniary fines, or punishing with death, which latter seems to be what they suggested, and afterwards insisted on; whatever, according to law and justice, was required, he was ready to do it for them.

2 Samuel 21:5

Ver. 5. And they answered the king,.... Declaring expressly what they would have done: the man that consumed us; meaning Saul, who lessened their number by cruel oppressions of some, and by taking away the lives of others:

and that devised against us, [that] we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel; who had formed schemes, and published edicts, for banishing them out of the land; perhaps at the same time that he put away wizards and those that had familiar spirits out of the land, under the same pretence for zeal for the glory of God, and the good of the people of the land, 1Sa 28:3.

2 Samuel 21:6

Ver. 6. Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us,.... They settled upon this number, either because they were seven, and no more of the Gibeonites, whom Saul slew, as the Jew say {i}; two hewers of wood, two drawers of water, a keeper (of a synagogue), a scribe, and a servant; but perhaps the true reason was, they knew there were no more besides Mephibosheth, for whom David had a great respect, and therefore required no more:

and we will hang them up unto the Lord; not to gratify a revengeful spirit of theirs, but in honour to the justice of God, and to appease his wrath:

in Gibeah of Saul, [whom] the Lord did choose; which was Saul's native place, and where he always lived; so that to hang them there was to the greater disgrace of him and his family; and he being chosen of the Lord to be a king of Israel, was an aggravation of his crime in violating the oath made to the Gibeonites

and the king said, I will give [them]; for though he had sworn to Saul that he would not cut off his seed, yet as he had a divine direction in this case, as appears by the Lord's being pleased with it, and was entreated for the land by it, this oath of his was dispensed with; nor did he cut them off himself but delivered them to others, according to the will of God.

{i} T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 65. 2.

2 Samuel 21:7

Ver. 7. But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul,.... As they did not name particular persons, only required seven sons, it was at the option of the king what sons to deliver to them, and therefore kept back Mephibosheth, who is thus described, to distinguish him from a son of Saul's of the same name, after mentioned:

because of the Lord's oath that [was] between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul; not merely or only out of affection to Mephibosheth, but because of the oath, that he might not be guilty of the same crime Saul was in slaying the Gibeonites.

2 Samuel 21:8

Ver. 8. But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah,.... Saul's concubine, **2Sa 3:7**;

whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; of whom we read nowhere else; after the name of the latter, it is probable, Jonathan's son was called, before mentioned:

and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite; Michal had no children to the day of her death, nor was she the wife of Adriel, but Merab her sister, 1Sa 18:19; wherefore these sons were not whom she "bare", as the word used signifies, but, as we rightly render it, whom she "brought up" or educated, so the Targum, her sister being dead; and so the Jews say {k}, Merab brought them forth, and Michal brought them up, therefore they were called by her name; or the words may be supplied thus, "and the five sons [of the sister of Michal]", and, as in
2Sa 21:19, is supplied, "[the brother of] Goliath". Barzillai is here called the Meholathite, to distinguish him from Barzillai the Gileadite, spoken of in a former chapter, see 2Sa 17:27.

{k} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 2.

2 Samuel 21:9

Ver. 9. And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites,.... The two sons of Rizpah and the five sons of Merab, two sons of Saul and five grandsons:

and they hanged them in the hill before the Lord; in the hill at Gibeah, that they might be seen by all that passed by, and serve to deter from such evils, which brought on them that punishment; gibbetings or crucifixions were commonly made on hills and mountains {l}: the phrase, "before the Lord", is either the same as "unto the Lord", 2Sa 21:6; to make atonement to the Lord, and in his sight; or it denotes that it was done publicly before the sun, and in the sight of it; for it cannot mean before the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence, for that was not there:

and they fell [all] seven together; they were hanged together, and died at one and the same time:

and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first [days], in the beginning of barley harvest; which began at the passover, the morrow after the first day of the feast, Le 23:10; which was the sixteenth of Nisan, on which day, the Jews say {m}, these men were hanged, and which must be about the beginning of our April.

{l} Vid. Lipsium de Cruce, l. 3. c. 13. {m} Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 190. 1.

2 Samuel 21:10

Ver. 10. And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth,.... Both as a token of mourning for her sons, and as fittest to defend from the weather, the heat by day of cold by night:

and spread it for her upon the rock; the hill on which her sons were hanged; this she spread as a canopy or tent to sit under, and be covered with it; not to cover the bodies with it, but herself, and where she sat to mourn the loss of her sons, and to watch their bodies, that they might not be devoured by birds and breasts of prey, as after observed: and here she sat

from the beginning of harvest until water dropped on them out of heaven; that is, as the Jews say {n}, from the sixteenth of Nisan, when barley harvest began, to the seventeenth of Marchesvan, when the former rain fell; that is, from the beginning of April to the beginning of October: but it is not likely that she continued so long watching the bodies, nor would there be any need of it to keep the birds and beasts from them; for after they had hung so many months, there would be nothing left for them; but rather the meaning is, that she continued there until it pleased God to send rain from heaven, which had been restrained, and a famine came upon it, because of the ill usage of the Gibeonites: and very probably the order from the king was, that the bodies should hang till rain came, that it might be observed what was the reason of their suffering; and no doubt Rizpah sat there praying that rain might come, and which, as Abarbinel thinks, came in a few days after, though not usual in summertime; but this was an extraordinary case, as in 1Sa 12:17; and was done to show the Lord was entreated for the land; and so Josephus says {o}, that upon the hanging up of these men, God caused it to rain immediately, and restored the earth to its former fruitfulness. According to the law in

De 21:22, the bodies should have been taken down and buried the same day: but these men suffered not for their own personal, sins, but for the sins of others, and to avert a public calamity, and therefore must hang till that was removed; nor were they executed by men bound by that law; and besides their continuing on the tree was according to the will of God, till he was entreated, who could dispense with this law; to which may be added, the ceremonial and judicial laws, of which this was one, gave place to those of a moral nature {p}, as this did to that of sanctifying the name of God in a public manner; hence the saying of one of the Rabbins upon this {q}, which is by many wrongly expressed,

"it is better that one letter should be rooted out of the law, than that the name of God should not be sanctified openly;"

that is, a lesser precept give way to a greater, or a ceremonial precept to a moral one, such as the sanctification of the name of God is:

and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day; as it is usual for crows {r} and ravens, and such sort of birds, to light on bodies thus hung up, and pick their flesh:

nor the beasts of the field by night; for it seems it was usual to make the gibbets, and so in some other nations the crosses, so low, that wild beasts could easily come at the bodies and devour them; so Blandina was hung upon a tree so low, that she might be exposed to the wild beasts to feed upon her, but not one of them would touch her body {s}; now Rizpah, by her servants, had ways and means to frighten away the birds, and beasts from doing any injury to the carcasses.

{n} Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 190. 1. {o} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 1. {p} See Stillingfleet's Origines Sacr. p. 140. {q} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 79. 1. {r} "---- non pasces in cruce corvos", Horat. Epist, l. 1. Epist. 16. ver. 48. {s} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 1. Vid. Lipsium de Cruce, l. 3. c. 11. & l. 3. c. 13.

2 Samuel 21:11

Ver. 11. And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. Whether this was told out of good will or ill will is not certain; however, it was not disagreeable to David, but served to move pity and compassion in him to the woman, and to stir him up to give an honourable interment to Saul and his sons; and which would show that this fact was not done out of personal pique and revenge to his family, but in obedience to the will of God, and the honour of his name.

2 Samuel 21:12

Ver. 12. And David went and took the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son, from the men of Jabeshgilead,.... Which, according to Bunting {t}, was fifty two miles from Jerusalem; though perhaps David did not go thither in person to fetch them, but by his messengers, see 2Sa 21:14;

which had stolen them from the street of Bethshan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa; the history of all which see in 1Sa 31:8.

{t} Travels, &c. p. 122, 143.

2 Samuel 21:13

Ver. 13. And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son,.... Which had been buried there under an oak, 1Ch 10:12;

and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged; the seven sons of Saul, who had been lately hanged; who either had hung so long that their flesh was consumed, and the bones dropped upon the ground, from whence they gathered them; or they took them down and burnt the flesh off of them, and took the bones to bury them, which was not usually done {u}.

{u} Lipsins de Cruce, l. 2. c. 16.

2 Samuel 21:14

Ver. 14. And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son,.... Together with those who had been hanged:

buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah; a city in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:28;

in the sepulchre of Kish his father; the father of Saul, **1Sa 9:1**; and which, according to Fuller {w}, and the position of it in his map, was not far from the hill on which the seven sons of Saul were hanged:

and they performed all that the king commanded; that is, David's messengers and servants did; they fetched the bones of Saul and Jonathan from Jabeshgilead, and buried them with those of his seven sons hanged, in the burying place of his father Kish, and made a general mourning for them; for the Jews say {x}, that by David's order Saul's coffin was carried through every tribe, and men, women, and children, came out and expressed concern:

and after that God was entreated for the land; not after the burial of the said persons, but after the seven men were hanged up; by this the wrath of God was appeased, which was seen by his sending rain and fruitful seasons, so that the famine ceased.

{w} Pisgah-Sight, B. 2. c. 12. p. 258. {x} Bemidbar Rabba, ut supra. (fol. 190. 1.)

2 Samuel 21:15

Ver. 15. Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel,.... Besides what is before recorded in this and the preceding book; being animated to it partly by the number of giants among them, and partly by the decline of David's life, and it may be chiefly by the insurrections and rebellions in Israel; though some think that these battles were not after the rebellions of Absalom and Sheba, and the affair of the Gibeonites, though here recorded; but before, and quickly after the war with the Ammonites, next to which they are placed in 1Ch 20:1; but they seem to be placed here in their proper order:

and David went down, and his servants with him; to the borders of the Philistines, perceiving they were preparing to make war against him:

and fought against the Philistines; engaged in a battle with them:

and David waxed faint; in the battle, not able to bear the fatigues of war, and wield his armour as he had used, being in the decline of life; after he had been engaged a while, his spirits began to fail, not through fear, but through feebleness; but, according to Josephus, it was through weariness in pursuing the enemy put to flight, which the following person perceived, and turned upon him {y}.

{y} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 1.

2 Samuel 21:16

Ver. 16. And Ishbibenob, which [was] of the sons of the giant,.... Of Goliath, or of a giant, of the race of them:

the weight of whose spear [weighed] three hundred [shekels] of brass in weight; which must be understood either of the wood of it, or of the head of it, the flaming point of it, as many interpret it; and if so, it was but half the weight of Goliath's spear, unless there was any difference of the weight of iron and of brass, see 1Sa 17:7;

he being girded with a new [sword]; or rather with a new girdle, as the Targum; and so Jarchi, which might be given him as a mark of honour, or as a token of his having a commission in the army:

thought to have slain David; his aim was at him, and perceiving him faint and feeble, thought to take the advantage of it, and dispatch him.

2 Samuel 21:17

Ver. 17. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him,.... Observing him in danger, made haste to his relief:

and smote the Philistine, and killed him; it seems as if Abishai engaged with the Philistine, and killed him; but inasmuch as it will bear to be interpreted of David, and since the four giants here and hereafter mentioned are said to fall by the hand of David and his servants, 2Sa 21:22, it may be thought that this man fell by his hand; seeing it is clear that all the rest fell by the hands of his servants:

then the men of David sware unto him; after they had observed the danger he was exposed unto, and how narrowly he escaped with his life:

saying, thou shalt go no more with us to battle; they had persuaded him not to go to the battle with Absalom; they had suffered him to go with them now, he being, no doubt, forward and pressing to it; but now they were resolute, and determined he should never go more:

that thou quench not the light of Israel; signifying that their glory and prosperity depended on his life, and that, should he be taken away, they should be in affliction and adversity, their honour and their happiness would be at an end; the Targum is,

"thou mayest not extinguish the kingdom of Israel,"

the light and glory of it.

2 Samuel 21:18

Ver. 18. And it came to pass after this,.... After the former battle:

that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob; in 1Ch 20:4 it is called Gezer; either the place had two names, or these two places were near each other; so that the battle may be said to be fought both at the one and at the other, being fought equally near to both:

then Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, which [was] of the sons of the giant; who is called Sippai, 1Ch 20:4; he had his name from the lintel of a door, being as high as one, so tall that he could scarce go under one. Sibbechai was one of David's worthies, 1Ch 11:29; perhaps a descendant of Hushah, who sprung from Judah, **1Ch 4:4**.

2 Samuel 21:19

Ver. 19. And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines,.... Another battle with them in the same place:

where Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemite, slew [the brother of] Goliath the Gittite; the word "brother" is rightly supplied from 1Ch 20:5; where his name is said to be Lahmi, for not Goliath himself was slain, though some so interpret it, and take Elhanan to be David; so Jarchi, and with which agrees the Targum; but he was slain not at Gob, but in the valley of Elah, nor had David any such name as Elhanan; he was one of David's worthies, 2Sa 23:24; where he is called the son of Dodo, and in 1Ch 20:5, the son of Jair; and Lahmi there may not be the name of Goliath's brother, but, as here, the country name of Elhanan; for the words {z} there may be rendered,

"and Elhanan the son of Jair, the Lehemite (i.e. the Bethlehemite), slew the brother of Goliath the Gittite,"

and so perfectly agrees, with this:

the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam; not of Goliath's brother, but of Goliath himself, 1Sa 17:7.

{z} Vid. Buxtorf. Anticritic. par. 2. c. 2. p. 421.

2 Samuel 21:20

Ver. 20. And there was yet a battle in Gath,.... Besides the battles in the above place or places; for this does not necessarily suppose that one of the said battles had been there, only that this, which was another battle, had been there:

where was a man of [great] stature; for so the sense of the word appears to be from 1Ch 20:6; though here it signifies a man of strife and contention, a man of war, and both were true of him:

that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; twelve fingers on his two hands, and twelve toes on his two feet. Pliny {a} speaks of one M. Curiatius, a patrician, who had two daughters that had six fingers on an hand, and were called "Sedigitae", six-fingered; and of Volcatius, a famous poet, called "Sedigitus", or six-fingered, for the same reason; and elsewhere, from other writers {b} he makes mention of a people that had eight toes each foot; so Ctesias {c} speaks of a people in the mountains of India, which have eight fingers on each hand, and eight toes on each foot, both men and women:

and he also was born to the giant; a son of a giant.

{a} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 43. {b} Megasthenes apud ib. l. 7. c. 2. {c} In Indicis, c. 31.

2 Samuel 21:21

Ver. 21. And when he defied Israel,.... The armies of Israel, as Goliath had done some years ago, 1Sa 17:10;

Jonathan the son of Shimea the brother of David slew him; this brother of David is called Shammah, 1Sa 16:9; and Shimma, **1Ch 2:13**; this son of his is another man from Jonadab his son, who was famous for his subtlety as this was for his valour, 2Sa 13:3. The Jews say {d} this was Nathan the prophet, a son of Shammah.

{d} Hieron. Trad. Heb. fol. 76. D.

2 Samuel 21:22

Ver. 22. These four were born to the giant in Gath,.... Not to Goliath, for one of them was his brother, but to some giant or another of that place, for which it was famous; they were all of them of the race of the giants; and so the Septuagint version, they were

"the offspring of the giants in Gath, whose family was Repha;"

and this Repha, or Arepha, as the Vulgate Latin version, according to Abarbinel, was a woman of the daughters of the giants; the Talmudists {e} make her to be the same with Orpah, **Ru 1:4**. These giants, it is highly probable, were the descendants of the Anakim which remained in Gath after they were cut off by Joshua in other places, Jos 11:22;

and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants; the first, Ishbibenob, fell by the hand of David assisted by Abishai, and the other three by the persons mentioned.

{e} T. Bab. Sotah. fol. 42. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 22

This chapter contains a song or psalm, the same with the eighteenth psalm, and which, according to Jarchi, was composed by David in his old age, and, as Kimchi says, at the end or close of his days; but Abarbinel is of opinion that it was written in his youthful time, in the midst of his troubles, and was sung by him as often as he had a deliverance from any; and which may account for the several variations in it from the eighteenth psalm, which, the same writer observes, are seventy four; and are not to be ascribed to the difference of copies, or neglect of copiers: and very probably, towards the close of his days, he revised it, and made it fit for general use, and sent it with the rest of his psalms to the chief musician; but the particular consideration of it, and of the differences in it from Ps 18:1 are referred to the exposition of that book in its course.

Ver. 1. And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day [that] the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul. See Gill on "Ps 18:1".

2 Samuel 22:2

Ver. 2. And he said, The Lord [is] my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer. See Gill on "Ps 18:2".

2 Samuel 22:3

Ver. 3. The God of my rock; in him will I trust: [he is] my shield,
and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour;
thou savest me from violence. See Gill on "Ps 18:2".

2 Samuel 22:4

Ver. 4. I will call on the Lord, [who is] worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. See Gill on "Ps 18:3".

2 Samuel 22:5

Ver. 5. When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. See Gill on "Ps 18:4".

2 Samuel 22:6

Ver. 6. The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me. See Gill on "Ps 18:5".

2 Samuel 22:7

Ver. 7. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God:
and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry [did enter] into his ears. See Gill on "Ps 18:6".

2 Samuel 22:8

Ver. 8. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth. See Gill on "Ps 18:7".

2 Samuel 22:9

Ver. 9. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. See Gill on "Ps 18:8".

2 Samuel 22:10

Ver. 10. He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness [was] under his feet. See Gill on "Ps 18:9".

2 Samuel 22:11

Ver. 11. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind. See Gill on "Ps 18:10".

2 Samuel 22:12

Ver. 12. And he made darkness pavilions round about him, dark waters,

[and] thick clouds of the skies. See Gill on "Ps 18:11".

2 Samuel 22:13

Ver. 13. Through the brightness before him were coals of fire kindled. See Gill on "Ps 18:12".

2 Samuel 22:14

Ver. 14. The Lord thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered his voice. See Gill on "Ps 18:13".

2 Samuel 22:15

Ver. 15. And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them. See Gill on "Ps 18:14".

2 Samuel 22:16

Ver. 16. And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the Lord, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils. See Gill on "Ps 18:15".

2 Samuel 22:17

Ver. 17. He sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters. See Gill on "Ps 18:16".

2 Samuel 22:18

Ver. 18. He delivered me from my strong enemy, [and] from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me. See Gill on "Ps 18:17".

2 Samuel 22:19

Ver. 19. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the Lord was my stay. See Gill on "Ps 18:18".

2 Samuel 22:20

Ver. 20. He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me. See Gill on "Ps 18:19".

2 Samuel 22:21

Ver. 21. The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.
See Gill on "Ps 18:20".

2 Samuel 22:22

Ver. 22. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. See Gill on "Ps 18:21".

2 Samuel 22:23

Ver. 23. For all his judgments [were] before me: and [as for] his statutes, I did not depart from them. See Gill on "Ps 18:22".

2 Samuel 22:24

Ver. 24. I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity. See Gill on "Ps 18:23".

2 Samuel 22:25

Ver. 25. Therefore the Lord hath recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness in his eye sight.
See Gill on "Ps 18:24".

2 Samuel 22:26

Ver. 26. With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful, [and] with the upright man thou wilt show thyself upright.
See Gill on "Ps 18:25".

2 Samuel 22:27

Ver. 27. With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself unsavoury. See Gill on "Ps 18:26".

2 Samuel 22:28

Ver. 28. And the afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes [are] upon the haughty, [that] thou mayest bring [them] down.
See Gill on "Ps 18:27".

2 Samuel 22:29

Ver. 29. For thou [art] my lamp, O Lord: and the Lord will lighten my darkness. See Gill on "Ps 18:28".

2 Samuel 22:30

Ver. 30. For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall. See Gill on "Ps 18:29".

2 Samuel 22:31

Ver. 31. [As for] God, his way [is] perfect; the word of the Lord [is] tried: he [is] a buckler to all them that trust in him.
See Gill on "Ps 18:30".

2 Samuel 22:32

Ver. 32. For who [is] God, save the Lord? and who [is] a rock, save our God?] See Gill on "Ps 18:31".

2 Samuel 22:33

Ver. 33. God [is] my strength [and] power: and he maketh my way perfect. See Gill on "Ps 18:32".

2 Samuel 22:34

Ver. 34. He maketh my feet like hinds' [feet]: and setteth me upon my high places. See Gill on "Ps 18:33".

2 Samuel 22:35

Ver. 35. He teacheth my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. See Gill on "Ps 18:34".

2 Samuel 22:36

Ver. 36. Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great. See Gill on "Ps 18:35".

2 Samuel 22:37

Ver. 37. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me; so that my feet did not slip. See Gill on "Ps 18:36".

2 Samuel 22:38

Ver. 38. I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them; and turned not again until I had consumed them. See Gill on "Ps 18:37".

2 Samuel 22:39

Ver. 39. And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise: yea, they are fallen under my feet.
See Gill on "Ps 18:38".

2 Samuel 22:40

Ver. 40. For thou hast girded me with strength to battle: them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me.
See Gill on "Ps 18:39".

2 Samuel 22:41

Ver. 41. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me. See Gill on "Ps 18:40".

2 Samuel 22:42

Ver. 42. They looked, but [there was] none to save; [even] unto the Lord, but he answered them not. See Gill on "Ps 18:41".

2 Samuel 22:43

Ver. 43. Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the street, [and] did spread them abroad.
See Gill on "Ps 18:42".

2 Samuel 22:44

Ver. 44. Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people, thou hast kept me [to be] head of the heathen: a people [which] I knew not shall serve me. See Gill on "Ps 18:43".

2 Samuel 22:45

Ver. 45. Strangers shall submit themselves unto me: as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me. See Gill on "Ps 18:44".

2 Samuel 22:46

Ver. 46. Strangers shall fade away, and they shall be afraid out of their close places. See Gill on "Ps 18:45".

2 Samuel 22:47

Ver. 47. The Lord liveth; and blessed [be] my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation. See Gill on "Ps 18:46".

2 Samuel 22:48

Ver. 48. It [is] God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me. See Gill on "Ps 18:47".

2 Samuel 22:49

Ver. 49. And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man. See Gill on "Ps 18:48".

2 Samuel 22:50

Ver. 50. Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name.
See Gill on "Ps 18:49".

2 Samuel 22:51

Ver. 51. [He is] the tower of salvation for his king: and showeth mercy to his

anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore.
See Gill on "Ps 18:50".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 23

In this chapter are recorded the last words of David under a divine inspiration, 2Sa 23:1; and an account is given of his great men, famous for warlike exploits, particularly of three mighty men who did very marvellous things, 2Sa 23:8; and of two others next unto them, which belonged to another class of three, 2Sa 23:18; and then of thirty one more, 2Sa 23:24; who are all mentioned by name.

Ver. 1. Now these [be] the last words of David,.... Which refer not to the psalm in the preceding chapter, but to what follows; not the last words he spoke, for he said many things afterwards; for the advice he gave to Solomon, and the instructions to him about building the temple, were delivered after this time; but these were the last after he had finished the book of Psalms; or the last that he spoke under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or that he delivered out by way of prophecy; though the Jews {f} will not allow him to speak by the spirit of prophecy; they own he spoke by the Holy Spirit, which they distinguish from prophecy; but the Targum calls these words a prophecy, and takes them to be a prophecy of the Messiah, and of things to come, as undoubtedly they are, paraphrasing them thus;

"these are the words of the prophecy of David, which he prophesied concerning the end of the world, concerning the days of consolation that should come;"

this is observed to excite attention, the last words of dying men being usually regarded and remembered:

David the son of Jesse said; he began with his descent, which was comparatively mean, in order to illustrate the distinguishing goodness of God to him in his exaltation:

and the man [who was] raised up on high; from a low estate to an high one, from the sheepfold to the throne, to be king over all the tribes of Israel, and a conqueror, and head of the nations round about him:

the anointed of the God of Jacob; who was anointed king by Samuel by the order of the God of Jacob; and which was an instance of his being the God of Jacob or Israel, and of his care of them, and regard unto them, that he anointed such a man to be king over them, as well as it was an honour to David:

and the sweet psalmist of Israel; who composed most of the psalms and hymns of praise for the people of Israel; invented and set the tunes to them to which they were to be sung, and the instruments of music on which they were sung; and appointed singers to preside, and lead them in that part of divine worship, singing psalms and hymns; and very sweet were the psalms he composed as to the matter of them, and very sweet and delightful to the ear was the music in the manner of singing them: it may be rendered, who was "sweet" or "pleasant [in the] songs of Israel" {g}, his warlike exploits and victories being the subject of them, 1Sa 18:6;

said; as follows; for all that goes before are the words of the penman of this book, drawing the character of David; in which he was a type of Christ, a branch out of the root of Jesse, highly exalted, and chosen from among the people, anointed to be prophet, priest, and King; and who sweetly expounded the psalms concerning himself, and ordered them to be sung in the churches, and of which he is the subject, and may be said to be sweetly held forth in them, see Lu 24:44.

{f} Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 45. {g} twrmz Myen "jucundus psalmis", Montanus; "suavis in canticis", Vatablus; "amoenus psalmis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

2 Samuel 23:2

Ver. 2. The Spirit of the Lord spake by me,.... The psalms and songs he composed were not the fruits of his own genius, but were written by him under the inspiration of the Spirit of God; by whom holy men of God, the penmen of the Scriptures, spoke, even as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, of whom David was one, being a prophet; see **Ac 1:16** **Ac 2:30**; so the Targum here,

"David spoke by the spirit of prophecy of the Lord:"

or spake "in me" {h}; what he spoke was first internally impressed upon his mind by the Spirit of God, and then he expressed it with his tongue, as follows:

and his word [was] in my tongue; not only the matter of his psalms was indited by the Spirit of God, and suggested to his mind; but the very words in which they are delivered were given to him, and he was directed to make use of them, and did.

{h} yb "in me", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.

2 Samuel 23:3

Ver. 3. The God of Israel said,.... To David, or by him; he who was the covenant God of Israel literally considered, and is the covenant God and Father of the whole spiritual Israel, and who is owned, believed in, and worshipped by them:

the Rock of Israel spake to me; the same with the God of Israel in other words, who is the strength and security of Israel; or the second divine Person, the Son and Word of God, is meant, who is often called a rock in Scripture; and is the rock on which the Israel or church of God is built, and in whom it remains safe and firm, the gates of hell not being able to prevail against it; and so here is an instance and proof of a trinity of persons in the Godhead; the God of Israel, Jehovah the Father; the Rock of Israel, Jehovah the Son; and the Spirit of Jehovah, as in 2Sa 23:2, who is Jehovah the Spirit: now what was said by these three divine Persons to David, and by him, and concerning himself as a type of the Messiah, follows:

he that ruleth over men [must be] just, ruling in the fear of God; which is a character every king among men ought to have, administering justice to their subjects; ruling not only according to the laws of the land, but according to the law of God; having his fear before their eyes, and acting with a view to his honour and glory, whose vicegerents they are, and to whom they are accountable; they should rule with gentleness and humanity, considering they are men, and not brutes, they rule over. Agamemnon in Homer is often called "king of men". This character, in all respects, was found in David, **2Sa 8:15**; and may be here given as an instruction to his son and successor, Solomon; and is in all respects applicable to the Messiah, who is a "ruler" or King by the designation of his father; a ruler "over men", even over all men, yea, over the greatest of men, King of kings, and Lord of lords, and especially, and in an eminent sense, King of saints; and he is "just", a King that reigns in righteousness, righteous in all his ways and works, and particularly just as a King, as well as in all his other characters, see Jer 23:5; and upon whom, as man and Mediator, the Spirit of "the fear of the Lord" rests, and under the influence of which, as such, he has acted, Isa 11:1; so the Targum applies these words to the Messiah thus,

"the true Judge said, he would appoint to me a King, who is the Messiah, who shall arise and rule in the fear of the Lord:"

and they may be rendered, there shall be "a ruler over men, just, ruling in the fear of God"; or ruling, appointing, ordering, and directing the worship of God, and the ordinances of it under the Gospel dispensation, as Christ did, see Mt 28:18.

2 Samuel 23:4

Ver. 4. And [he shall be] as the light of the morning, [when] the sun riseth, [even] a morning without clouds,.... That is, such a ruler that rules in righteousness, and in the fear of God; he is the light and glory of his people, who guides and directs them, makes them cheerful and comfortable; his administrations are pleasant and delightful, and promise a growing and increasing happiness to them, like the morning light and rising sun; and there are no clouds, nor forebodings of dark times, affliction and distress, coming upon them, but all the reverse: and with Christ these metaphors well suit, who is the true light that shines, **Joh 1:9**; the morning star, Re 22:16; the dayspring from on high, **Lu 1:78**; the sun of righteousness, **Mal 4:2**; and light of the world, **Joh 8:2**; his going forth or appearance in human nature, at his incarnation, was as the morning, **Ho 6:3**; the first discovery him to Adam, after sin had brought a night of darkness on the world, was as the dawn of the morning; and this light like that of the morning increased, fresh and clearer discoveries of him being made to the patriarchs afterwards; and though as yet the sun was not up, and it was not a morning without clouds, yet the discoveries then made brought joy with them, as to Abraham and others, and were a sure sign of the sun rising. When Christ appeared in the flesh, the sun of righteousness then arose, and scattered the darkness of the night, both in the Jewish and Gentile world; introduced the light of the Gospel to a greater degree than it was under the legal dispensation, and made the Gospel day; which was not only like the morning light, growing and increasing, but was as a morning without clouds, without the darkness of the ceremonial law, the shadows of which now disappeared; and without the storms and tempests of the moral law, its curses being bore and removed by Christ; and without the frowns of divine wrath, reconciliation and satisfaction being made by him: and this is all applicable particularly to the government of Christ, which is delightful and grateful to his people, serviceable and beneficial to them, under which they enjoy great peace and prosperity; and which will more and more increase, and stilt be more glorious and illustrious, see Ps 72:7. A learned writer {i} has observed, that in an ancient manuscript the word "Jehovah" is inserted and read thus,

"and as the light of the morning shall arise Jehovah the sun,"

which clearly points to Christ the sun of righteousness; and be it an interpolation, it gives the true sense of the words: a glorious, beautiful, and illustrious person is described in Ovid {k} by the same figure as here:

[as] the tender grass [springing] out of the earth by clear shining after rain; which springs up the faster, and is more flourishing after a shower of rain, and when upon that the sun breaks out and shines clearly: or "from clear shining from rain" {l}; that is, the springing of the tender grass out of the earth is owing partly to the rain which falls in the night, and partly to the sun rising in the morning, and the clear shine of it: this may denote the fruitful and flourishing estate which a good and righteous ruler over men is the happy instrument of bringing his people into; and may be applied both to the incarnation of Christ, when he grew up as a tender plant, or as the tender grass, mean in his original and descent, weak in himself as man; and yet this fruit of the earth was excellent and comely, beautiful and glorious, and the springing of it owing to the favour and good will of God, and his coming was as the latter and former rain to the earth, **Ho 6:3**; and to the government of Christ, and the benefits of it to his church and people; who flourish under it the light of his grace and favour, and through rains of Gospel doctrines they are blessed with: or "than clear shining, than rain"; Christ is more beneficial to his people, who are comparable to grass for their meanness, and weakness, and number, than the sun and rain are to the grass in the field.

{i} Dr. Kennicott's State of the Hebrew Text, Dissert. 1. p. 468. {k} "Talisque apparuitilli", &c. Metamorph. l. 14. Fab. 16. ver. 767. {l} rjmm hgnm "a splendore, a pluvia germen de terra", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

2 Samuel 23:5

Ver. 5. Although my house [be] not so with God,.... So bright, and flourishing, and prosperous as the government of the just ruler before described; or is not "right" {m} with God, meaning his family, in which great sins were committed, and great disorders and confusions brought into it, as the cases of Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah showed; or "not firm" or "stable" {n}, through the rebellion of one, the insurrection of another, and the usurpation of a third; yet he believed it would be firm and stable in the Messiah that should spring from him, promised in the everlasting covenant; though the Jewish writers understand this of the firmness and stability of his kingdom and government: "but my house is not so", &c. like the morning light, which increases by little and little, and like the morning, which sometimes is not cloudy, and sometimes is; sometimes the sun shines clearly, and sometimes not; or like the tender grass, which is sometimes flourishing, and after withers; but so is not my kingdom, it is a perpetual one, given and secured by an everlasting covenant; and such certainly is or will be the kingdom of the Messiah:

yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all [things], and sure; or, "for {o} he hath made", &c. the covenant by which the kingdom was settled on David and his seed was a covenant that would continue for ever, and would be kept, "observed", and "preserved" {p} in all the articles of it, and so be sure to his seed, particularly to the Messiah that should spring from him, in whom it was fulfilled, **Lu 1:32**; and the covenant of grace made with David's antitype, with Christ the head of the church, and the representative of it, and so with all his people in him, is an everlasting one: it was made with Christ from everlasting, as appears from the everlasting love of God, the source and spring of it; the earliness of the divine counsels on which it is formed, and blessings and promises of it, with which it is filled, which were before the world was; and from Christ being set up as the Mediator of it from everlasting: and it will continue to everlasting; it is a covenant that cannot be broken, will never be removed, nor give way to or be succeeded by another: it is "ordered in all things": to promote and advance the glory of all the three Persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit; to secure the persons of the saints, and to provide everything needful for them for time and eternity: and it is "sure"; it stands upon a sure basis, the unchangeable will and favour of God, and is in the hands of Christ, the same today, yesterday, and for ever; its mercies are the sure mercies of David, and its promises are yea and amen in Christ, and are sure to all the seed. Though things may not be with them God-ward, as they desire, and could be wished for; though they may be attended with many sins and infirmities, the temptations of Satan, divine desertions, and various afflictions, and be guilty of many backslidings, yet covenant interest always continues; and so, though in the kingdom and interest of Christ in the world, there are, and may be, many things disagreeable; it may be attended with persecutions, heresies, scandals, &c. yet it shall continue and increase, and spread, and be an everlasting kingdom:

for [this is] all my salvation: all depends upon this covenant; the safety of David's family, and the security of the kingdom in it, and to his seed, till the Messiah came, depended on the covenant made with him respecting that; and the spiritual and eternal salvation of the Lord's people depends upon the covenant of grace; which was contrived, formed, and settled in it, in which the Saviour is provided, and the persons to share in his salvation are taken into it and secured, with all blessings both of grace and glory:

and all [my] desire; to see it fulfilled; as it is the desire of good men to be led more and more into it, to see their interest in it, to have the blessings and promises of it applied unto them, and to be saved by it, and not by the covenant of works; and there is all that in it that a believer can desire to make him comfortable here, or happy hereafter; and it is what gives him delight and pleasure in all his troubles: it may be supplied he is, as well as "this is", and be applied to Christ, the ruler over men, described, 2Sa 23:3; with whom the covenant of grace is made, in whom is the salvation of men; he is the author and the only author of it; in whom it is complete and perfect; "all" salvation is in him, and which they can claim as theirs; to whom is "all [their] desire"; and in whom is "all [their] delight", as it may be rendered; on account of the glory of his person, the fulness of his grace, and his suitableness as a Saviour; whom they desire to know more of, and have more communion with:

although he made [it] not to grow; though there may not be at present any growth of outward prosperity, or of inward grace, or even of the produce of the earth, **Hab 3:17**; though the horn of David is not yet made to bud, or his family in growing and flourishing circumstances, or the Messiah, the man, the branch, does not yet shoot forth, though he certainly would; or, "for shall he not bud forth" he shall, Jer 23:5.

{m} Nk al "non recta", Cocceius. {n} "Non est re firma", Vitringa in Jesaiam, c. xi. 1. {o} yk "quia", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator. {p} hrmv "scrvatum", Tigurine version, Vatablus; "conservatum", Junius & Tremellius.

2 Samuel 23:6

Ver. 6. But [the sons] of Belial [shall be] all of them as thorns thrust away,.... Not like the tender grass that springs up, and flourishes after rain, and the sunshine upon that; but like thorns, useless, hurtful, and pernicious, and fit only for burning: this is true of wicked men in general, that cast off the yoke of the Lord, and become unprofitable, as Belial signifies; and of wicked governors in particular, who, instead of being helpful, are harmful to a commonwealth; and instead of being the joy and comfort of their subjects, and of giving pleasure to them, and making them cheerful and prosperous, give pain and trouble, and cause grief and sorrow; and are, if possible, to be thrust away, and deposed from government:

because they cannot be taken with hands; thorns cannot be handled and gently dealt with, but some instrument must be used to put them away with force; so wicked men, and especially wicked rulers, are untractable, and not to be managed in a gentle way, and therefore violent ones must be taken.

2 Samuel 23:7

Ver. 7. But the man [that] shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear,.... To remove these thorns, or sons of Belial, out of the way, or to defend himself against them; or weapons of war must be made use of to conquer and destroy them, according to the sense of Ben Gersom, and which De Dieu follows; a man that meddles with them must expect to be as much hurt and wounded by them, all over the body, as if not only the point or iron head of a spear, but the wood or handle of the spear, were thrust up in him; but the former sense seems best:

and they shall be utterly burnt with fire in the [same] place: where the thorns grew, or whither they are removed, or are sitting; where persons are sitting to warm themselves by them: and this may be understood of the destruction of wicked rulers, when their kingdom is taken from them, and they are consumed root and branch; and was true not only of Saul, and his posterity, as some apply it, and of Jeroboam, and those like to him, as the above Jewish writer; but of the wicked Jews, and their rulers, those sons of Belial, who rejected the yoke of Christ, and would not have him to rule over them; to whom the Lord sent the Roman armies fenced with swords and spears, and burnt their city, and destroyed them in the same place; and may take in antichrist, and antichristian states, those sons of Belial, of the wicked anomov, and lawless one, the son of perdition, whose city, Rome, shall be burnt with fire; and even all wicked men, at the great day of judgment, to which the Targum refers these words; when they, whose end, like thorns, is to be burnt, will be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

2 Samuel 23:8

Ver. 8. These [be] the names of the mighty men whom David had,.... Besides Joab his general, who is not mentioned; for these were all military men under him, which are distinguished into three classes; the first and highest consisted of three only, who were general officers; and the second also of three, who perhaps were colonels of regiments; and the third of thirty, who were captains of thousands and hundreds:

the Tachmonite that sat in the seat, the chief among the captains: not in the chief seat in the sanhedrim, and was the head of that, and so had the name of Tachmonite, from his wisdom, as the Jewish writers say; but in the council of war, where he presided under the general, or in his absence, and was, perhaps, lieutenant general, and so over all the captains; and therefore was neither David nor Joab, to whom some of the Rabbins apply these words, as observed by Kimchi; or rather he was the chief of the three to whom he belonged; his name, in 1Ch 11:11, is Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, or the son of an Hachmonite, the same as in 1Ch 27:2; and here it may be as well read Josheb-bashebeth the Tachmonite, the same name, with a little variation; which seem to be names given him, taken from his character and office; for his proper name was as follows:

the same [was] Adino the Eznite: so called either from the family he was of, or from the place of his birth; though a learned man thinks it should be read as in the following supplement {q},

[he lifted up his spear] against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time; which, though a very extraordinary exploit, yet not more strange, or so strange as that of Shamgar's slaying six hundred men with an ox goad, **Jud 3:31**, or as that of Samson's killing a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass, Jud 15:15: in 1Ch 11:11, the number is only three hundred, which some attempt to reconcile by observing, that not the same person is meant in both places; here he is called Joshebbashebeth, there Jashobeam; here the Tachmonite, there the son of an Hachmonite; nor is he there called Adino the Eznite; but yet it seems plain that in both places the chief of the three worthies of David is meant, and so the same man: others observe, that he engaged with eight hundred, and slew three hundred of them, when the rest fled, and were pursued and killed by his

men; and he routing them, and being the occasion of their being slain, the slaying of them all is ascribed to him; or he first slew three hundred, and five hundred more coming upon him, he slew them also: but what Kimchi offers seems to be best, that there were two battles, in which this officer was engaged; at one of them he slew eight hundred, and at the other three hundred; for so what is omitted in the books of Samuel, and of the Kings, is frequently supplied in the books of Chronicles, as what one evangelist in the New Testament omits, another records. The above learned writer {r} conjectures, that v being the first letter of the words for three and eight, and the numeral letter being here reduced to its word at length, through a mistake in the copier, was written hnmv, "eight", instead of
vlv, "three": the Septuagint version is,

"he drew out his spear against eight hundred soldiers at once,"

and says nothing of slaying them; and seems to be the true sense of the word, as the same learned writer {s} has abundantly shown.

{q} Kennicott's Dissert. 1. so Hillerus in Onomastic. Sacr. p. 230, 231, renders it, "the glory of the spear or spearmen stood against eight hundred", &c. and Weemse, "his delight was to lift up his spear". Exercitat. 16. p. 137. {r} P. 96. {s} P. 103.

2 Samuel 23:9

Ver. 9. And after him [was] Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite,.... Or the son of Ahohi, perhaps the same with Ahoah, a descendant of Benjamin, **1Ch 8:4**; this Eleazar was the next to the Tachmonite, the second worthy of the first class:

[one] of the three mighty men with David; the second of the three valiant men that were with David in his wars, and fought with him, and for him:

when they defied the Philistines; clapped their hands at them, gloried over them, daring them to come and light them; so did David and his mighty men, as Goliath had defied them before:

[that] were there gathered together to battle; at Pasdammim, as appears from 1Ch 11:13;

and the men of Israel were gone away; fled when they saw the Philistines gather together to fight them, notwithstanding they had defied them; and so David, and his three mighty men, were left alone to combat with the Philistines.

2 Samuel 23:10

Ver. 10. He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary,.... He rose up when the Israelites fled, and stood his ground alone, and fought with the Philistines, and smote them with his sword, until his hand was weary with smiting:

and his hand clave unto the sword; which was contracted by holding it so long, and grasping it so hard, that it could not easily be got out of it; or through the quantity of blood which ran upon his hand, as it was shed, so Josephus {t}; and which being congealed, and dried, caused his hand to stick to the hilt of his sword, so that they were, as it were, glued together by it; or the sense may be only, that though weary, he did not drop his sword, but held it fast till he had destroyed the enemy:

and the Lord wrought a great victory that day; for to him it must be ascribed, and not to the strength and valour of the man:

and the people returned after him only to spoil; they that fled, when they saw what a victory was obtained by him, returned and came after him; not to help him in smiting, but to spoil those that were slain, and strip them of what they had.

{t} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 4.

2 Samuel 23:11

Ver. 11. And after him [was] Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite,.... One who was of the mountainous country, as the Targum, the hill country of Judea, of Hebron, or the parts adjacent; this was the third of the first three; there was one of this name among the thirty, 2Sa 23:33;

and the Philistines were gathered together into a troop; but so they were no doubt at first; R. Isaiah takes it to be the name of a place called Chiyah; as the

Targum, Chayatha; and which Kimchi says was a village, an unwalled town; and Ben Melech observes, that it is said in the Arabic language, a collection of houses is called Alchai: it may be the same with Lehi, where Samson slew a thousand with the jawbone of an ass, Jud 15:17, whence it had its name; and Josephus {u} says, the place where the Philistines were gathered together was called "the Jawbone": but perhaps the sense of Ben Gersom may be best of all, that they gathered together in this place for provision, for food and forage, to support the life of them and their cattle: since it follows,

where was a piece of ground full of lentiles; a sort of pulse, which was eaten in those countries, and the pottage of which was delicious food, see Ge 25:30;

and the people fled from the Philistines; as they did before under Eleazar, 2Sa 23:9.

{u} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 4.

2 Samuel 23:12

Ver. 12. But he stood in the midst of the ground,.... The field of lentiles:

and defended it; the field, so that the Philistines could not ravage it, and get food and forage from it:

and slew the Philistines; made a great slaughter among them, entirely routed them, so that they that escaped his sword were obliged to flee:

and the Lord wrought a great victory; to whom the glory of it belonged; a similar fact is ascribed to Eleazar before mentioned in 1Ch 11:13; and, indeed, it seems to be the same, and in which they were both concerned; for it is plain from the account that there were more than one engaged in this action, since it is there said, "and they set themselves in the midst of that parcel"; and though that parcel of ground is said there to be full of barley, it may easily be reconciled by observing, that one part of it might be sowed with barley, and the other part with lentiles; so the Targum in 1Ch 11:13; for it was half lentiles and half barley; and Eleazar might be placed to defend the one, and Shammah the other; from whence it appears it was about March when this action was, at the latter end of which barley harvest began.

2 Samuel 23:13

Ver. 13. And three of the thirty chiefs went down,.... Or three that were chief of the thirty, superior to them; which some understand of the three before mentioned, so Josephus {w}; and that having related some particular exploits of theirs, here observes one, in which they were all concerned; and others think the three next are meant, of whom Abishai was the chief, Benaiah the next, and the third Asahel; but the first sense is best:

and came to David in the harvest time, unto the cave of Adullam; not when he was there, upon his flight from Saul, 1Sa 22:1; but after he was king, when engaged in war with the Philistines; perhaps wheat harvest is here meant:

and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim; the army of the Philistines, as the Targum; of the valley of Rephaim,
See Gill on "Jos 15:8".

{w} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 4.

2 Samuel 23:14

Ver. 14. And David [was] then in an hold,.... In a strong hold; the strong hold of Zion, as Josephus {x}, or one on a rock near the cave of Adullam, see 1Ch 11:15;

and the garrison of the Philistines [was] then [in] Bethlehem; which was about six miles from Jerusalem; the valley of Rephaim lay between that and Bethlehem; so far had they got into the land of Judea, and such footing in it, as to have a garrison so near its metropolis.

{x} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 4.

2 Samuel 23:15

Ver. 15. And David longed, and said,.... It being harvest time, the summer season, and hot weather, and he thirsty:

oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which [is] by the gate! which he was well acquainted with, being his native place; and which might make it the more desirable, as well as its waters might be peculiarly cool and refreshing, and very excellent, as Kimchi suggests. This well was about a mile from Bethlehem, now called David's well, as some travellers say {y}. It is said to be a very large well, with three mouths, and lies a little out of the road {z}; and that there is now near Rachel's grave a good rich cistern, which is deep and wide; wherefore the people that go to dip water are provided with small leathern buckets, and a line, as usual in those countries {a}; but Mr. Maundrell {b} says it is a well, or rather a cistern, supplied only with rain, without any excellency in its waters to make them desirable; but it seems, he adds, David's spirit had a further aim. Some think he meant by this to get Bethlehem out of the hands of the Philistines, and obtain the possession of it; others, as Jarchi, that he intended to ask some question of the sanhedrim that sat there; and others, that his desire was after the law of God, called waters, as in Isa 55:1; and some Christian writers, both ancient and modern {c}, are of opinion, that not literal but spiritual water was desired by him, and that he thirsted after the coming of the Messiah, to be born at Bethlehem, and the living water which he only can give, **Joh 4:10**.

{y} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 363. {z} Le Bruyn's Voyage to the Levant, ch. 52. p. 204. {a} Rauwolff's Travels, part 3. p. 317, 318. {b} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 90. {c} Ambros. Apolog. David l. 1. c. 7. gloss. ordinar. & Schmidt in loc. Pfeiffer. Difficil. Loc. Script. cent. 2. loc. 91. Horn. Dissert. de desiderio David. sect. 10.

2 Samuel 23:16

Ver. 16. And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines,.... Which lay in the valley of Rephaim, between the hold in which David was and the well of Bethlehem; these three men hearing David express himself in the above manner, though without any view that any should risk their lives to obtain it, only in a general way said, oh for a draught of the water of the well of Bethlehem! immediately set out, and made their way through the army of the Philistines to the well:

and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that [was] by the gate, and took [it], and brought [it] to David; in a vessel which they probably carried with them for that purpose:

nevertheless he would not drink thereof; because, say they who take these words in a spiritual sense, it was not this water, but spiritual water, he desired:

but the reason is given in 2Sa 23:17:

but poured it out unto the Lord; as a libation to him, it being rather blood than water, being fetched at the hazard of men's lives, and therefore more fit to be offered as a sacrifice to God than to be drank by him; and this he might do in thankfulness to God for preserving the lives of the men. Gersom thinks it was now the feast of tabernacles, which was the feast of ingathering the fruits of the earth, when great quantities of water were drawn and poured out at the altar, which was done to obtain the blessing of the former rain; See Gill on "Joh 7:37" and See Gill on "Joh 7:38".

2 Samuel 23:17

Ver. 17. And he said, be it far from me, O Lord, that one should do this,.... Drink of the water these men had brought him:

[is not this] the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? who risked the shedding of their blood, and went in danger of their lives to get it:

therefore he would not drink it: some compare with this the story of Alexander {d} to whom a vessel of water was offered when in extreme thirst, which he refused, because he could not bear to drink it alone, and so small a quantity could not be divided among all about him; but the reasons are not the same:

these things did these three mighty men; which made them very famous.

{d} Curt. Hist. l. 7. c. 5.

2 Samuel 23:18

Ver. 18. And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among the three,.... Another triumvirate, of which he was the head:

and he lifted up his spear against three hundred, [and] slew [them]; Josephus {e} says six hundred; this seems to confirm the reading of 2Sa 23:8, that the number eight hundred is right, for if it was only three hundred, Abishai would have been equal to one, even the first, of the former three; which yet is denied him in 2Sa 23:19:

and had the name among three; of which he was one; and he had the chief name among them, or was the most famous of them.

{e} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 4.

2 Samuel 23:19

Ver. 19. Was he not most honourable of three?.... He was; who, besides the exploit here mentioned, did many other things; he went down with David into Saul's camp, and took away his spear and cruse, which were at his bolster, 1Sa 26:6; he relieved David when in danger from Ishbibenob the giant, 2Sa 21:16; he beat the Edomites, and slew eighteen thousand of them in the valley of salt, 1Ch 18:12:

therefore he was their captain; of the other two, or was head over them, took rank before them:

howbeit he attained not unto the [first] three; for fortitude, courage, and warlike exploits, namely, to the Tachmonite, Eleazar, and Shammah.

2 Samuel 23:20

Ver. 20. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel,.... A city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:21; the father of this man was a man of great vivacity, valour, and strength, so that it was like father like son. Procopius Gazaeus says Benaiah was David's brother's son, and a grandson of Jesse:

who had done many acts; which may refer either to the father of Benaiah or to Benaiah himself; and indeed the Syriac and Arabic versions refer the preceding character, "a valiant man", not to the father, but the son:

he slew two lionlike men of Moab; two princes of Moab, as the Targum, or two giants of Moab, as the Syriac and Arabic versions; men who were comparable to lions for their strength and courage; for this is not to be understood of two strong towers of Moab, as Ben Gersom, which were defended by valiant men like lions, or which had the form of lions engraved on them: nor of Moabitish altars, as Gussetius {f}, the altar of the Lord, being called by this name of Ariel, the word used; but of men of uncommon valour and fortitude:

he went down also, and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow; not Joab, **1Ki 2:34**, as is the tradition {g}, but a real lion, the strongest among the beasts; and that in a pit where he could not keep his distance, and turn himself, and take all advantage, and from whence he could not make his escape; and which indeed might quicken his resolution, when he must fight or die; and on a snowy day, when lions are said to have the greatest strength, as in cold weather, or however are fiercer for want of food; and when Benaiah might be benumbed in his hands and feet with cold. Josephus {h} represents the case thus, that the lion fell into a pit, where was much snow, and was covered with it, and making a hideous roaring, Benaiah went down and slew him; but rather it was what others say, that this lion very much infested the places adjacent, and did much harm; and therefore, for the good of the country, and to rid them of it, took this opportunity, and slew it; which one would think was not one of the best reasons that might offer; it seems best therefore what Bochart {i} conjectures, that Benaiah went into a cave, for so the word used may signify, to shelter himself a while from the cold, when a lion, being in it for the same reason, attacked him, and he fought with it and slew it; or rather it may be an hollow place, a valley that lay between Acra and Zion, where Benaiah, hearing a lion roar, went down and slew it {k}.

{f} Ebr. Comment p. 95. {g} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 80. C. {h} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 4.) {i} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 4. col. 758. {k} See the Universal History, vol. 4. p. 227.

2 Samuel 23:21

Ver. 21. And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man,.... A person of good countenance and shape, very large and tall; in 1Ch 11:28, he is said to be a man of great stature, and five cubits high, and so wanted a cubit and a span of the height of Goliath, 1Sa 17:4;

and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; as large as Goliath's; for in 1Ch 11:23, it is said to be like a weaver's beam, as Goliath's was,
See Gill on "1Sa 17:7":

and he went down to him with a staff; with a walking staff only, having no other weapon:

and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand; and therefore must be a man very nimble and dexterous, as well as bold and courageous:

and slew him with his own spear; as David cut off Goliath's head with his own sword. This is supposed {l} to be Shimei, the son of Gera, **1Ki 2:46**.

{l} Hieron. Trad. Heb. ut supra. (in. 2 Reg. fol. 80. C.)

2 Samuel 23:22

Ver. 22. These [things] did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada,.... Slew a lion, and two lion-like men of Moab, and an Egyptian of a gigantic stature, 2Sa 23:20:

and had the name among three mighty men; of which he was one, and Abishai another, the third Asahel, one of the thirty; or was over them, 2Sa 23:24, since thirty are reckoned without him. Abarbinel thinks that the third was Adina, the son of Shiza, the Reubenite, 1Ch 11:42; since thirty were with him, and he at the head of them.

2 Samuel 23:23

Ver. 23. He was more honourable than the thirty,.... Whose names are after recorded:

but he attained not to the [first] three; the first triumvirate, Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah; he was not equal to them for fortitude, courage, and military exploits:

and David set him over his guard; his bodyguard, the Cherethites and Pelethites, **2Sa 8:18**; who are called in the Hebrew text "his hearing" {m}, because they hearkened to his orders and commands, and obeyed them.

{m} wtemvm la "ad auditum suum", Pagninus, Montanus.

2 Samuel 23:24

Ver. 24. Asahel the brother of Joab [was] one of the thirty,.... Or rather over the thirty {n}, who are next mentioned; since there are thirty reckoned besides him, and the Arabic version calls him the prince of the thirty; Joab is not named at all, because he was general of the whole army, and so not to be reckoned in any of the three classes:

Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem: a townsman of David.

{n} Myvylvb "supra triginta istos", Junius & Tremellius.

2 Samuel 23:25

Ver. 25. Shammah the Harodite,.... Called Shammah the Harorite in 1Ch 11:27; by a change of the letters r "R" and d "D", which is frequent:

Elika the Harodite; or who was of Harod, as the Targum; these both were from one place: mention is made of the well of Harod, **Jud 7:1**.

2 Samuel 23:26

Ver. 26. Helez the Paltite,.... Who was of a place called Pater, as the Targum; in 1Ch 11:27, he is called the Pelonite:

Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; who was of the city of Tekoah, the native place of Amos the prophet, famous for oil, about twelve miles from Jerusalem; See Gill on "Am 1:1".

2 Samuel 23:27

Ver. 27. Abiezer the Anethothite,.... He was of Anathoth, in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 21:18, the birthplace of Jeremiah the prophet, **Jer 1:1**:

Mebunnai the Hushathite; the same with Sibbecai, 1Ch 11:29; this man had two names, and was a descendant of Hushah, who came of Judah, **1Ch 4:4**.

2 Samuel 23:28

Ver. 28. Zalmon the Ahohite,.... The same with Ilai, 1Ch 11:29; a descendant of Ahoah, a grandson of Benjamin, **1Ch 8:4**;

Maharai the Netophathite, who was of Netophah, a city of the tribe of Judah, mentioned along with Bethlehem, **Ne 7:26**; a place of this name is spoken of in the Misnah {o}, famous for artichokes and olives.

{o} Misn. Peah, c. 7. sect. 1. Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 5.

2 Samuel 23:29

Ver. 29. Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite,.... Called Heled, 1Ch 11:30;

Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin: sometimes called Gibeah of Benjamin, Jud 20:10, and Gibeah of Saul, 1Sa 11:4, being a city in the tribe of Benjamin, and the birth place of Saul king of Israel; and this man is distinguished hereby from Ittai the Gittite, 2Sa 15:19.

2 Samuel 23:30

Ver. 30. Benaiah the Pirathonite,.... Who was of Pirathon, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, Jud 12:15.

Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash; which perhaps ran by the hill Gaash, and was also in the tribe of Ephraim, Jos 24:30. This man is called Hurai, 1Ch 11:32.

2 Samuel 23:31

Ver. 31. Abialbon the Arbathite,.... A native of Betharabah, either in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:6, or in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:18; he is called Abiel in 1Ch 11:32;

Azmaveth the Barhumite; or Bachurimite, the letters transposed, an inhabitant of Bachurim or Bahurim, a city in the tribe of Benjamin, 2Sa 16:5.

2 Samuel 23:32

Ver. 32. Eliahba the Shaalbonite,.... Of Shaalboa or Shaaiabin, a city in the tribe of Dan, Jos 19:42; perhaps the Silbonitis of Josephus {p}:

of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan; in 1Ch 11:34, it is, the sons of Hashem the Gizonite: sons are spoken of, though but one, as in Ge 46:23.

{p} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 3. sect. 3.

2 Samuel 23:33

Ver. 33. Shammah the Hararite,.... From the mountainous country, as the Targum; the Arabic and Syriac versions say, from the mount of Olives:

Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite: from the high mountain, as the Targum; in 1Ch 11:35, he is called the son of Sacar.

2 Samuel 23:34

Ver. 34. Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite,.... In 1Ch 11:35, he is called Eliphal the son of Ur:

Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite; David's counsellor, that went off to Absalom, 2Sa 15:12; Eliam his son is supposed, by the Jews, to be the father of Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, 2Sa 11:3; according to Hillerus {q}, he is the same with Ahijah the Pelonite, 1Ch 11:36.

{q} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 906.

2 Samuel 23:35

Ver. 35. Hezrai the Carmelite,.... Of Mount Carmel; or from Carmela, as the Targum, see 1Sa 25:2; he is called Hezro, 1Ch 11:37;

Paarai the Arbite; or from Arab, as the Targum, a city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:52; according to Hillerus {r}, the same with "Naarai the son of Ezbai", in 1Ch 11:37.

{r} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 499.

2 Samuel 23:36

Ver. 36. Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah,.... kingdom in Syria, **2Sa 8:3**; according to Hillerus {s} the same with Joel, 1Ch 11:38;

Bani the Gadite; who was of the tribe of Gad, as the Targum; in the room of this stands "Mibhar, the son of Haggeri", in 1Ch 11:38.

{s} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 856.

2 Samuel 23:37

Ver. 37. Zelek the Ammonite,.... Who was so either by birth, and became a proselyte; so the Targum says, he was of the children of Ammon; or is so called, because he had sojourned some time in their land, or had done some exploits against them; unless he was of Chepharhaammonai, a city of the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:24;

Naharai the Beerothite; native of Beeroth, a city in the same tribe, Jos 18:25;

armourbearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah; Joab had ten of them, this perhaps was the chief of them, 2Sa 18:15; who was advanced to be a captain, and therefore has a name and place among the thirty, very likely for some military, exploits performed by him; he is in the list of David's worthies, though not Joab his master, as before observed; the reason of Joab being left out is either because he was over them all, as before noted; according to Josephus {t}, Uriah the Hittite, after mentioned, was an armourbearer to Joab.

{t} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 7. sect. 1.

2 Samuel 23:38

Ver. 38. Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite. These were of Jether, as the Targum, a descendant of Caleb, of the tribe of Judah, **1Ch 2:50** **1Ch 4:15**.

2 Samuel 23:39

Ver. 39. Uriah the Hittite,.... The husband of Bathsheba; of whom
See Gill on "2Sa 11:3";

thirty and seven all; reckoning the three mighty men of the first class, the three of the second, and the third class consisting of thirty men, whose names are as above, and Joab the general and head of them all. In 1Ch 11:41, Zabad the son of Ahlai follows Uriah as one of this catalogue; he succeeding in honour one that soon died, particularly Elika, 2Sa 23:25, who is omitted in Chronicles, where a list of fifteen more is given, 1Ch 11:42; at the head of which stands Adina a Reubenite, "and thirty" are said to be "with him", according to our version; but should be rendered, as by Junius and Tremellius, "but the thirty were superior to him", that is, the above thirty; for these fifteen, though brave men, were of lesser note.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Samuel 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 24

In this chapter an account is given of David's numbering of the people, 2Sa 24:1; of the sense he had of his sin, and of his acknowledgment of it; and of the Lord's displeasure at it, who sent the prophet Gad to him, to propose three things to him, one of which he was to choose as a punishment for it, 2Sa 24:10; when he chose the pestilence, which carried off a great number of the people, 2Sa 24:14; and David was directed to build an altar to the Lord in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite, with whom he agreed for it, and built one on it, and offered upon it, and so the plague was stayed, 2Sa 24:18.

Ver. 1. And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel,.... It had been kindled, and appeared before in sending a three years' famine among them for Saul's ill usage of the Gibeonites, 2Sa 21:1; and now it broke forth again, either for some secret sins committed, as Kimchi suggests, or for the rebellion of Absalom, and the insurrection of Sheba, in which multitudes of them joined; so Abarbinel; no doubt there was cause for it, though it is not expressed:

and he moved David against them; not the Lord, but Satan, as may be supplied from 1Ch 21:1; or "it moved him"; the anger of the Lord, as the last mentioned writer interprets it; or the heart of David, as Ben Gersom; that is, the evil imagination of his heart, as Kimchi; the Lord left him to the corruption of his nature, sometimes called Satan, 2Co 12:7; which wrought powerfully in him, and stirred him up to take a step contrary to the interest of Israel, and what was prejudicial to them, as the event showed: it moved him to say; to Joab and his captains:

go, number Israel and Judah: not all the individuals, but such as were fit for war, able to bear arms, see 2Sa 24:9.

2 Samuel 24:2

Ver. 2. For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which [was] with him,.... Or who was with him, even Joab, who was now at court, and was a counsellor of David, as well as his general; or which army was with Joab, a standing army he had the command of:

go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba; from the northern part of the land of Israel to the southern part of it, and this course was accordingly steered, 2Sa 24:6;

and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people; so that this appears to be done not through any urgent necessity, but merely out of curiosity, and to gratify the pride of his heart, and please himself with the thought of ruling such a numerous people, and brag of their numbers to other nations, and place his confidence therein; and no wonder it was displeasing to the Lord.

2 Samuel 24:3

Ver. 3. And Joab said unto the king,.... Not so rudely and insolently as he did on account of his mourning for Absalom, but in a more modest, decent, and polite manner:

now the Lord thy God add unto the people (how many soever they be) an hundredfold; he wished his subjects were an hundred times more numerous than they were:

and that the eyes of my lord the king may see [it]; that he might live to see with his own eyes so great an increase:

but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing? he being now old, and therefore it might seem strange to indulge such curiosity, pride, and vanity, and besides quite needless and useless: the numbering of them would not make them more or less; and they were all the king's servants, who were ready to obey him whenever he needed them, whether numbered or not; and it might be prejudicial to them, and bring down the wrath of God upon them, as well as be a troublesome and expensive business; all which, though not expressed here, is hinted at in
1Ch 21:3.

2 Samuel 24:4

Ver. 4. Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host,.... Who it seems were of the same mind with Joab, and were against numbering the people, yet their arguments and remonstrances were of no avail with the king; he was determined it should be done, and laid his commands upon them to do it, which they were obliged to comply with:

and Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel; seeing him resolute and determined, they submitted, took his orders, and set out to execute them.

2 Samuel 24:5

Ver. 5. And they passed over Jordan,.... To take the number of the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh first:

and pitched in Aroer; for it seems that Joab and the captains had the army with them, and the several captains under their command, partly to assist in numbering the people, and partly to keep them in awe, lest they should oppose them, not knowing what was the design of all this Aroer was a city given to the tribe of Gad, and rebuilt by them, Nu 32:34;

on the right side of the city; that is, of Aroer, the south side of it, as the Targum, did Joab and his army pitch:

that [lieth] in the midst of the river of Gad; which was the river Arnon, so called now from the tribe of Gad, which possessed it, and so the Targum, in the midst of the river of the tribe of Gad; for in the midst of the river Arnon

Aroer lay, see Jos 13:9;

and toward Jazer; another city given to the Gadites, Nu 32:3; and, according to Bunting {u}, was sixteen miles from Aroer.

{u} Travels, &c. p. 147.

2 Samuel 24:6

Ver. 6. Then they came to Gilead,.... The land of Gilead, half of which was given to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the other half to the half tribe of Manasseh, **De 3:12**; which tribes were numbered, and the first of all:

and to the land of Tahtimhodshi; or the low lands of a new place; it seems to be a country newly possessed and inhabited; the Targum calls it the southern land of Hodshi; Bunting {w} calls it the lower country of Hodshi, near to the city Corazin, in the half tribe of Manasseh, fifty two miles from Jerusalem, and towards the northeast, and signifies a new land:

and they came to Danjaan; the same that is simply called Dan, and formerly Leshem, Jos 19:47; why Juan is added to it is not easy to say; it lay at the northern border of the land of Israel, and was four miles from Paneas as you go to Tyre {x}:

and about to Zidon; from Dan they went round about to Zidon, to the parts adjacent to it; for with Zidon itself they had nothing to do, of which See Gill on "Jos 11:8".

{w} Travels, &c. p. 147. {x} Hieron. de loc. Heb. fol. 90. H.

2 Samuel 24:7

Ver. 7. And came to the strong hold of Tyre,.... That is, old Tyre, which stood thirty furlongs from new Tyre, the island {y}; of which See Gill on "Isa 23:1"; this must be understood of the parts near unto it; for that itself was not within the land of Israel, and so its inhabitants not to be numbered:

and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: which were possessed by them, and from whence they were not driven out by the Israelites; to all places contiguous to them, Joab and his captains came to take the number of them:

and they went out to the south of Judah: [even] to Beersheba; passing through the western part of the land, they came to the southern part of it, even as far as Beersheba, which was the extreme part of the land to the south.

{y} Strabo. Geograph. l. 16. p. 521.

2 Samuel 24:8

Ver. 8. So when they had gone through all the land,.... Beginning at the east, and from thence to the north, and then going about to the west, came to the south, which finished their circuit:

they came to Jerusalem, at the end of nine months and twenty days: they were ten months wanting ten days in numbering the people; in which they seem to have been very expeditious.

2 Samuel 24:9

Ver. 9. And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king,.... Having collected from the several captains employed in this work their several particular numbers, he put them together, and gave in the sum total to David:

and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; though many of them might be under the age of twenty, yet being robust and tall, and fit to bear arms, though but sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, or nineteen years of age, were mustered, contrary to the law; which, according to Cornelius Bertram {z} was David's sin, see 1Ch 27:23. In 1Ch 21:5, they are said to be a million and an hundred thousand, which is three hundred thousand more than the sum here given; several methods are taken to reconcile this; but what seems to be the best solution of the difficulty is what is observed by a Jew {a}, that here the number of the people in the several parts of the land of Israel was given, which were eight hundred thousand, there along with them, the numbers of the standing army which waited on the king in their courses, which were twenty four thousand every, month, and amounted in the twelve months to 288,000, and reckoning lo thousand officers to them, they make the sum of three hundred thousand wanted, see 1Ch 27:1, &c.

and the men of Judah [were] five hundred thousand men. In 1Ch 21:5, they are said to be only 470,000, thirty thousand less than here; which may be accounted for by making use of a round number, though something wanting, as is often done; or else the thirty companies, consisting of a thousand each, under the eighty captains mentioned in 2Sa 23:8, are taken into the account here, but left out in the book of Chronicles; or there were so many in the sum total of the men of Judah before the plague, but thirty thousand being consumed thereby, are left out in the latter accounts, so Kimchi; but the other solutions seem best: Levi and Benjamin were not counted; it being abominable to Joab, he did not finish it, and especially being displeasing to God, who smote Israel for it, 1Ch 21:6.

{z} Lucubrat. Frauktall, c. 2. {a} R. Eliezer in Halicot Olam, tract. 4. c. 3. p. 181.

2 Samuel 24:10

Ver. 10. And David's heart smote him, after that had numbered the people,.... For nine or ten months his conscience lay asleep, but now the thing was done, it is awakened, and accuses him for it, and he repents of it; now he began to see the pride and haughtiness of his heart; his vanity and confidence in the creature, which led him to it; aggravated by doing it without seeking to know the mind of God, and without giving him his due, the half shekel, according to the law, Ex 30:12; intent only upon increasing his own revenue, as some think, intending to impose a poll tax upon the people when he had numbered them; and attempting to number a people who were not to be numbered; and numbering those who were under the age of twenty, and therefore the plague began before it was finished, 1Ch 27:23;

and David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done; he saw and owned his sin to be exceeding sinful, attended with very aggravating circumstances:

and now I beseech thee, Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; the guilt of it from his conscience, which lay heavy there, and suffer not the punishment it deserves to take place on him, but grant an application of pardon to him:

for I have done very foolishly; all sin is folly, and some sins are exceeding foolish, and so this appeared to David; or, "though I have done very foolishly" {b}, yet forgive my sin, see Ps 38:5.

{b} yk "quamvis", so Goassius notes it may be rendered; so Pool.

2 Samuel 24:11

Ver. 11. For when David was up in the morning,.... Which it is probable was very early, he not being able to sleep through the distress of mind he was in; for the words should be rendered, "and David arose in the morning" {c}, for, as we render them, they seem to imply as if he had no sense of his sin before the prophet came to him next mentioned; whereas it was in the night he had been under the conviction of it, and had acknowledged it, and prayed for the pardon of it; upon which the prophet was sent to acquaint him what was the will of God concerning him:

the word of the Lord came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer; with whom he had used to advise about the will of God on various occasions, though in this he had neglected to consult him; the Targum calls it the word of prophecy from the Lord:

saying; as follows.

{c} Mqyw "et surrexit", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

2 Samuel 24:12

Ver. 12. Go, and say unto David,.... Not my servant David, as Nathan was bid to say to him when it was in his heart to build an house for him, **2Sa 7:5**; but now he had sinned and displeased the Lord, and therefore it is only plain David:

thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three [things]; or lay them before thee to consider of which thou wouldest have done; the Targum is,

"one of three things I cast upon thee,"

as a burden to bear; one of the three I will certainly inflict upon thee by way of chastisement:

choose thee one of them, that I may [do it] unto thee; here is mercy mixed with judgment; the Lord is angry, yet shows great condescension and goodness; a sovereign Being, who could have imposed what punishment he pleased, and even all the three after mentioned, yet resolves but on one, and leaves that to the option of David.

2 Samuel 24:13

Ver. 13. So Gad came to David, and told him,.... Said nothing to him about his sin, but correction for it; which confirms it that David was made sensible of his sin before he came to him:

and said unto him, shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? in 1Ch 21:12, only "three years" are mentioned, and so the Septuagint version here; but Josephus {d}, the Targum, the Syriac and Arabic versions, have the number "seven"; three seems to be more agreeable to the numbers after mentioned, and no more as to come were designed, though seven are here expressed; for the reconciling of which let it be observed, that there had been three years of famine already on account of the sin of Saul, 2Sa 21:1; and in the current year, through the rains not falling in the proper time, the land was barren and unfruitful; or through the penury of the preceding years the famine would be continued at least until the harvest; and then three years more now proposed made seven years; or, if these three years would have immediately followed the other three, the following in course would be a sabbatical year, in which were no ploughing, sowing, nor reaping, or the current year was such an one: and the sense is, shall there be a continuance of seven years of famine, that is, three more added to what had been? which must be most dreadful to think of; but a learned writer {e} thinks it a mistake of the copier, writing z, "seven", for g, "three":

or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? be in such a condition as not to be able to face or fight his enemies, or, if he did, would not be able to stand his ground, but be forced to flee before them, and be pursued by them three months running; during which time a prodigious number might well be thought to be slain, sad devastations made in the land, and great shame and disgrace endured, and what a man of David's spirit could not bear the thoughts of:

or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? which in

1Ch 21:12 is called "the sword of the Lord", in distinction from the sword of man, it coming immediately from him, and the destroying angel, in all the coasts of the land; being inflicted by means of one:

now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me; that is, consult with himself, or with his friends, or both, what answer the prophet must return to the Lord that sent him; for him he means.

{d} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 13. sect. 2. {e} Dr. Kennicott's Dissert. 1. p. 474.

2 Samuel 24:14

Ver. 14. And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait,.... Not knowing well which to choose, each of them being so grievous, and an answer being to be returned immediately; but by his next words, and by the event, it seems he chose the pestilence, though that is not expressly said:

let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; the Targum in
1Ch 21:13, is

"into the hand of the Word of the Lord:"

(for his mercies [are] great), and let me not fall into the hand of men; indeed all the three judgments mentioned are by the hand of the Lord whenever they come; but in the pestilence the hand of the Lord is more visible, it coming immediately from his hand, as especially this was to do, and did; it did not arise from second causes, a noxious air, &c. but by means of an angel of God: David chose this, because he and his people would have nothing to do with men, as in famine they must have gone into other countries for food, and in war flee before their enemies, and lie at their mercy, and either of them more disgraceful than this; and which he might the rather choose on his own account, that his people might not be able to say he sought himself and his own interest; for had he chosen famine, as his people had been lately distressed that way already, they might, besides urging that, say, that he could lay up stores for himself and family; or had he chosen war, they might observe he had fortified places to flee to, one after another, and shelter himself; but for the arrows of the pestilence he was as likely a mark as the meanest of his subjects: but what seems to have moved him chiefly to make this choice is, that it would not only be the soonest over, but that it wholly depended on the pleasure of God what use he would make of it in that time; and chiefly because he knew

God was gracious and merciful, and it was upon his great mercy he cast himself and his people.

2 Samuel 24:15

Ver. 15. So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel,.... Upon the land of Israel, the people of the land, directly employing an angel to go through the coasts of it, and empowering him to inflict a pestilential disease:

from the morning even to the time appointed: from the morning the prophet Gad came to David with a message from the Lord; that very morning the plague began, and lasted to the time set for it, the three days, or at least unto the beginning of the third, when reaching Jerusalem, the Lord repented of it, and stayed his hand; though many think a much shorter time is intended; some think it lasted no more than half a day, if so much; some say but three hours {f}; the Septuagint version, until dinnertime; and the Syriac and Arabic versions, until the sixth hour of the day, which was noon; and so Kimchi says, some of their Rabbins interpret it of the half or middle of the day; the Targum is,

"from the time the daily sacrifice was slain until it was burnt;"

and it is the sense of several learned men that it was only from the morning until the time of the evening sacrifice, or evening prayer, about three o'clock in the afternoon, and so lasted about nine hours:

and there died of the people, from Dan even to Beersheba, seventy thousand men; so that there was a great diminution of the people in all places where they were numbered; and David's sin may be read in the punishment of it; his heart was lifted up by the numbers of his people, and now it must be humbled by the lessening of them.

{f} Pirke Eliezer, c. 43.

2 Samuel 24:16

Ver. 16. And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it,.... Which, as it was perhaps the last place where the people were numbered, it was the last to which the plague came: this angel appeared in an human form, standing "between the earth and the heaven"; in the midst of the heaven, in the air, right over Jerusalem: "having a drawn sword in his hand stretched over the city"; as is said in 1Ch 21:16; which was done as a menace, and to inject terror into David and the inhabitants of the city, and to give them notice of what they must expect:

the Lord repented him of the evil; he was inflicting, and now threatened Jerusalem with; having compassion on the place where the ark, the symbol of his presence, was, where a temple was to be built to the honour of his name, and where he should be worshipped; and therefore stopped proceeding; as men, when they repent of anything done by them, cease from it, so did the Lord now; otherwise repentance, properly speaking, falls not on him, and so it is next explained:

and said to the angel that destroyed the people; not the angel of death, the devil, but a good angel, who had a commission from God for this business:

it is enough: stay now thine hand: there is a sufficient number slay no more:

and the angel of the Lord was by the threshing place of Araunah the Jebusite; that is, he was in the air, right over the spot, or near it, where was this man's threshingfloor; and was seen by Araunah and his four sons, who upon it hid themselves, perhaps among the sheaves they were threshing, 1Ch 21:20; and this threshingfloor was on Mount Moriah, **2Ch 3:1**; as threshingfloors commonly were on mountains for the sake of winnowing the corn when threshed; See Gill on "Ru 3:2"; who, according to Ben Gersom, though he was by birth a Jebusite, was proselyted to the Jewish religion.

2 Samuel 24:17

Ver. 17. And David spake unto the Lord,.... In prayer; he and the elders of Israel being clothed in sackcloth, and fallen on their faces, he prayed, not unto the angel, but to Jehovah that sent him; see
1Ch 21:16;

when he saw the angel that smote the people; in the air over Jerusalem, with a drawn sword in his hand, which made him appear terrible:

and said, lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; in numbering the people:

but these sheep, what have they done? he looked upon himself as the only transgressor, and his people as innocent, and as harmless as sheep; he thought of no sins but his own; these were uppermost in his mind, and lay heavy on his conscience; and it grieved him extremely the his people should suffer on his account: but they were not so innocent as he thought and suggests; and it was not only for his, but their sins, this evil came; he was suffered to do what he did, to bring upon them deserved punishment for their rebellion against him, and other sins; however, this shows the high opinion he had of them, the great affection he had for them, and his sympathy with them in this time of distress:

let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house; let me and mine die, and not they; a type of Christ, the good Shepherd, willing to lay down his life for the sheep, and suffer in their stead, that they might go free.

2 Samuel 24:18

Ver. 18. And Gad came that day to David,.... Ordered and directed by the angel of the Lord, 1Ch 21:18;

and said unto him, go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite: it was too far to go to Gibeon, where the tabernacle was, at such a time of extremity, when the sword of the angel was stretched out over Jerusalem, 1Ch 21:29; and this was the most proper place, as it was the very spot over and nearest to which the angel was; and was on Mount Moriah, where the Jews say Abraham offered up Isaac; and where the temple was afterwards built, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom observe; and Eupolemus, an Heathen writer {g}, says, that when David desired to build a temple for God, and that he would show him the place of the altar, an angel appeared to him, standing over the place where the altar at Jerusalem was to be built.

{g} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 30. p. 447.

2 Samuel 24:19

Ver. 19. And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the Lord commanded. From the place where he was in a lower part of the city to Mount Moriah, on which was the threshing floor, a place fit for winnowing corn when threshed.

2 Samuel 24:20

Ver. 20. And Araunah looked,.... Peeped up out of the place in which he had hid himself with his four sons, for fear of the angel, and which they saw, 1Ch 21:20;

and saw the king and his servants coming towards him; he perceived, by the course they steered, that they were coming to him:

and Araunah went out; of the threshingfloor, out of the place where he had hid himself, for he had been threshing wheat, 1Ch 21:20; nor was it thought below great personages in those times to be employed in such work; so Gideon was threshing, when the angel of the Lord appeared to him, **Jud 6:11**; Boaz winnowed barley in his threshingfloor, **Ru 3:2**;

and bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground; in reverence of the king.

2 Samuel 24:21

Ver. 21. And Araunah said, wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant?.... Which both implies admiration in him, that so great a person should visit him in his threshingfloor; that a king should come to a subject his servant, who should rather have come to him, and would upon the least intimation; it was a piece of condescension he marvelled at; and it expresses a desire to know his pleasure with him, supposing it must be something very urgent and important, that the king should come himself upon it: and to this David made answer,

and David said, what he was come for:

to buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar to the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people; for though David had acknowledged his sin, and God had repented of the evil he inflicted for it, and given orders for stopping it; yet he would have an altar built, and sacrifices offered, to show that the only way to have peace, and pardon, and safety from ruin and destruction, deserved by sin, is through the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, of which fill sacrifices were typical, and were designed to lead the faith of the

Lord's people to that.

2 Samuel 24:22

Ver. 22. And Araunah said unto David, let my lord the king take and offer up what [seemeth] good unto him,.... Build an altar, offer sacrifices of whatsoever he found upon the premises fit for the same, and make use of whatever came to hand proper to perform such service with, as follows:

behold, [here be] oxen for burnt sacrifice: which were employed in treading the corn, hence the law in De 25:4;

and threshing instruments; not flails, such as are used by us, but wooden sledges, drays or carts drawn on wheels, which were filled with stones, and the bottom of them stuck with iron teeth, and were drawn by oxen to and fro over the sheaves of corn; see Isa 28:27;

and [other] instruments of the oxen for wood; as their yokes; these Araunah gave leave to take to burn the sacrifice with; and in 1Ch 21:23, it is added, "and the wheat for the meat offering", which was upon the threshingfloor; and there always went a meat offering with a burnt offering.

2 Samuel 24:23

Ver. 23. All these [things] did Araunah, [as] a king, give unto the king,.... The note of similitude as is not in the text; from whence some have thought he was king of the Jebusites before Jerusalem was taken out of their hands, or however was of the royal race, perhaps the son and heir of the then king at that time; or he has this title given him, because of his great liberality, having the spirit of a prince in him, even of a king; so Ulysses addressed Antinous, saying, thou art like a king, and therefore should give more largely than others {h}:

and Araunah said unto the king, the Lord thy God accept thee; thine offering with a good will; with pleasure and delight, as the Targum; that so the plague might be removed, and which no doubt made him the more ready to part with the above things, and all that he had; so dreadful did the calamity appear to him, and especially after he saw the angel with his drawn sword just over him.

{h} Homer. Odyss. 17. ver. 335.

2 Samuel 24:24

Ver. 24. And the king said unto Araunah, nay, but I will surely buy [it] of thee at a price,.... And a full price too, 1Ch 21:24; that is, give him as much for it as it was worth:

neither will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing; which shows an ingenuous spirit, and contrary to the temper of many, who like to serve the Lord in the cheapest manner, or with little cost to themselves:

so David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver; which, reckoning a shekel at two shillings and sixpence, made but just six pounds five shillings of our money; though its value is but about two shillings and four pence farthing, which reduces the sum; in 1Ch 21:25, David is said to give six hundred shekels of gold by weight; two ways are proposed by the Jews {i} for the reconciling of the difficulty; the one is, that fifty shekels were collected out of every tribe, and twelve times fifty make six hundred shekels, and these were of the value or weight of gold; but this seems not likely, that it should be collected out of all the tribes, and since it appears plainly to be the king's purchase, and with his money: the other is, that there were two purchases, the first was of the threshingfloor, oxen, and instruments, which were bought for fifty shekels of silver, as here, and the other was a purchase of the place, as it is called in the book of Chronicles; that large space of ground on which afterwards the temple, and all the courts adjoining to it, were built, and which was now Araunah's farm, and on which were his dwelling house, and other buildings; and for all this David gave him six hundred shekels of gold, which made three hundred ounces {k} and reckoning gold as twelve times the value of silver, according to Brerewood {l}, it amounted to four hundred fifty pounds of our money; and learned men have not been able to give a better solution of this difficulty; and with this Montanus {m} agrees. Bochart and Noldius have taken another way, but not so clear and satisfactory; the Septuagint of 1Ch 21:25 has fifty shekels, as here.

{i} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 2. {k} Vid. Gronov. de Pecunia Vet. l. 3. c. 7. p. 369. {l} De Ponder. & Pretiis, c. 5. {m} Tubal-Cain, p. 15. So Hieron. Trad. Heb. fol. 80. F.

2 Samuel 24:25

Ver. 25. And David built there an altar unto the Lord,.... After he had made the purchase:

and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings; the one to expiate the sin or sins committed, the other to give thanks for the intimation given, that the plague would be stayed upon this:

so the Lord was entreated for the land; was pacified and prevailed upon to remove the pestilence from it; which was signified by fire descending upon the altar of burnt offering, which showed the sacrifice was accepted, and by the angel being ordered to put his sword into its sheath, 1Ch 21:26; and the Targum is,

"and the Lord received the prayer of the inhabitants of the land:"

and the plague was stayed from Israel; no more died of the pestilence, either at Jerusalem, or in any other part of the land Israel.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST KINGS

This, and the following book, properly are but one book, divided into two parts, and went with the Jews under the common name of Kings. This, in the Syriac version, is called the Book of Kings; and in the Arabic version, the Book of Solomon, the Son of David the Prophet, because it begins with his reign upon the death of his father; and, in the Vulgate Latin version, the Third Book of Kings, the two preceding books of Samuel being sometimes called the First and Second Books of Kings, they containing the reigns of Saul and David; and in the Septuagint version both this and the following book are called Kingdoms, because they treat of the kingdom of Israel and Judah, after the division in the times of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, and of the several kings of them; as of Solomon before the division, so afterwards of the kings of Judah; Rehoboam, Abijam, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Jehoash, Amaziah, Uzziah or Azariah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah; and of the kings of Israel, Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam the son of Joash, Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea; so that these books may, with great propriety, be called the books or histories of the kings in the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel: who they were written by, is not easy to say; some think they were written by piecemeal by the prophets that lived in the several reigns successively, as Nathan, Ahijah the Shilonite, Iddo, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and afterwards put together by an inspired writer. The Jews commonly say {a}, that Jeremiah wrote the book of the Kings, by which they mean this, and the following book; though very probably they were written by Ezra, since the history in them is carried down to the liberty granted to Jehoiachin in Babylon; but that Ezra was the writer of all the preceding historical books, and even of the Pentateuch, cannot be admitted, which is the conceit of Spinosa {b}; part of whose tract is just now republished by somebody, word for word, under a title as in the margin {c}; but that Ezra was not the writer of the Pentateuch is clear, since he refers to it as written by Moses, and as the rule of religion and worship in his times, **Ezr 3:2**; and it is certain these writings were in being in the times of Josiah, Amaziah, Joash, yea, of David, and even of Joshua, 2Ch 34:14; and as for the book of Joshua, that also was written long before Ezra's time; it must be written long before the times of David, before the Jebusites were expelled from Jerusalem, since the writer of it says, that they dwelt there in his days, Jos 15:63; the book of Judges must be written before the times of Samuel and David, since the former refers to the annals of it, 1Sa 12:9; and the latter alludes to some passages in it, Ps 68:7; see **Jud 5:4**; and a speech of Joab's, 2Sa 11:21, shows it to be an history then extant: to which may be added, that in it Jerusalem is called Jebus, Jud 19:10; which it never was, after it was taken by David out of the hands of the Jebusites, **2Sa 5:6**; the book of Ruth very probably was written by Samuel; had it been of a later date, or written by Ezra, the genealogy with which it concludes, would doubtless have been carried further than to David: the Book of Samuel, and particularly the song of Hannah in it, were written in all probability before the penning of the hundred thirteenth psalm, Ps 113:1, in which some expressions seem to be taken from it wherefore, though the two books of Kings may be allowed to be written or compiled by Ezra, the ten preceding ones cannot be assigned to him: however, there is no room to doubt of the divine authority of these two books, when the honour our Lord has done them is observed, by quoting or referring to several histories in them; as to the account of the queen of Sheba coming to hear the wisdom of Solomon; of the famine in the times of Elijah; and of that prophet being sent to the widow of Sarepta, and of the cleansing of Naaman the Syrian in the times of Elisha, Mt 12:42 from

1Ki 17:1 **2Ki 5:10**; to which may be added, the quotations and references made by the apostles to passages in them, as by the Apostle Paul in Ro 11:2 from 1Ki 19:14; where this book is expressly called the Scripture; and by the Apostle James, **Jas 5:17**; who manifestly refers to 1Ki 17:1; and there are various things in this part of Scripture, which are confirmed by the testimonies of Heathen writers, as will be observed in the exposition of it. The use of these books is to carry on the history of the Jewish nation, to show the state of the church of God in those times, and his providential care of it amidst all the changes and vicissitudes in the state; and, above all, to transmit to us the true genealogy of the Messiah, which serves to confirm the Evangelist Matthew's account of it.

{a} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. {b} Tractat. Theolog. Politic. c. 8. & 9. p. 150, &c. {c} Tractatus de Primis 12. Vet. Test. Lib. &c. Londini 1763.

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST KINGS 1

This chapter gives an account of the infirmities of David in his old age, and the method used to relieve him under them, **1Ki 1:1**; of the preparation his son Adonijah made to usurp the throne, **1Ki 1:5**; of Bathsheba's address to the king upon it, in favour of her son Solomon, on which she was put by, Nathan the prophet, and seconded in it by him, **1Ki 1:11**; when the king with an oath confirmed the succession of Solomon in the kingdom, and ordered Nathan the prophet, and Zadok the priest, to anoint him, which was accordingly done with great ceremony, to the satisfaction of the king and his servants, **1Ki 1:28**; the news of which being brought to Adonijah and his friends, struck them with terror, and on which they dispersed, **1Ki 1:41**; and upon the promise of Adonijah, that he would behave well to Solomon, he was pardoned and dismissed, having fled and lain hold on the horns of the altar, **1Ki 1:51**.

Ver. 1. Now King David was old, [and] stricken in years,.... Was seventy years of age; for he was thirty years of age when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years, **2Sa 5:4**; this was just the age of man, Ps 90:10;

and they covered him with clothes; not wearing apparel, but bed clothes; he seems to have been bedridden and paralytic:

but he got no heat; by them; having no natural heat in him, clothes could not communicate any to him, only keep the cold from him, see **Hag 1:6**; there are many persons at the age he was, that are lively, healthful, and robust, comparatively speaking at least; but David's strength was impaired, and his natural force abated by his many wars, fatigues by night and day in campaigns, and the many sorrows and afflictions he met with from his family and his friends, as well as enemies; which exhausted his natural moisture, weakened his nerves, and drank up his spirits, and brought upon him the infirmities of a decrepit old age very soon.

1 Kings 1:2

Ver. 2. Wherefore his servants said unto him,.... His physicians; so Joseph's physicians are called his servants, Ge 50:2;

let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin; not only a young woman, but a virgin, that has more natural heat than women that have bore children have, which is abated thereby:

and let her stand before the king: minister to him, serve him with whatsoever he should want to eat or drink; and so by being in his presence, and taking things at her hand, she might be the more ingratiated into his affections:

and let her cherish him; as the husband the wife, so she her husband, as doubtless David was; and that by giving him cordials to cheer his spirits, and everything that was convenient for him, and particularly by lying with him. Kimchi interprets the word of her being profitable to him, in which sense the word is used, Job 22:2; that is, by warming him; Ben Gersom understands it of her being made mistress of his treasures, according to the sense of the word in Isa 22:15; that she might have the command of his purse, and provide anything proper for him, without being taken notice of or obstructed; but the Targum is better,

"and let her be near him,"

lie close unto him, and even in his bosom, as in the next clause:

and let her lie in his bosom; which shows that it was proposed that he should marry her, at least that she should become his concubine wife, since this phrase is descriptive of a wife, **Mic 7:5**; nor can it be thought his physicians would advise, or he agree to have a young woman admitted to his bed, without marriage; and if this had not been the case, it would not have answered the design of Adonijah in requesting her in marriage after his father's death, which was to make way to ascend the throne when opportunity should offer; nor would his request have been so much resented by Solomon as it was, **1Ki 2:17**;

that my lord the king may get heat: and somewhat similar to this, Galen, that great physician, prescribed in like cases {d}.

{d} Vid. Poli Synopsin in loc.

1 Kings 1:3

Ver. 3. So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel,.... Not only a damsel, but a beautiful one, that she might be the more acceptable to the king; who otherwise, if deformed and ugly, would not have endured her in his sight, or received at her hands, and much less suffered her to lie in his bosom:

and found Abishag a Shunammite; a native of the city Shunem, a city in the tribe of Issachar, Jos 19:18;

and brought her to the king; for his approbation of her, and to make her his concubine wife, as he did.

1 Kings 1:4

Ver. 4. And the damsel [was] very fair,.... And so very agreeable to the king to be in his presence, and wait upon him, and take things of her hand, as well as lie with him:

and cherished the king; enlivened his spirits by her amiable countenance, her graceful behaviour, and tender care of him, and especially by bedding with him:

and ministered to him; serving him with her own hands whatever he took for his sustenance:

but the king knew her not; as a man knows his wife; which shows that she was his wife, and that it would not have been criminal in him had he known her; but this is observed, not to point at the chastity of David, but his feebleness, and loss of desire after women, and that the damsel remained a virgin; and that was the ground of Adonijah's request, and his hope of succeeding.

1 Kings 1:5

Ver. 5. Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself,.... This was his mother's name, **2Sa 3:4**; his father David being old and infirm, and not like to live long, notable to oppose him; and he being the eldest son, and a comely person, was inspired with ambition to set up for king:

saying, I will be king; though he knew that Solomon was appointed of God, and promised by David, and expected by the people to be king, yet he was resolved to set up himself for king, and try if he could not get himself to the throne; on this he was bent and determined:

and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him; just as Absalom had done, when he had the same thing in view, to make him respectable among the people, see 2Sa 15:1.

1 Kings 1:6

Ver. 6. And his father had not displeased him at any time,.... Always humoured him in everything, let him have his own way and will, and granted him what he desired, and never corrected him for his faults, or made him ashamed, as the Targum, by telling him of them, and chastising him for them; this was not to the credit of David, being guilty of the same sin with Eli; and on this Adonijah presumed much, that he would not contradict and countermand in this as he had not in other things before:

in saying, why hast thou done so? never so much as asked a reason of his conduct, so far was he from reproving him for it:

and he [also] was a very goodly [man]; of a comely countenance, tall and well proportioned, as his brother Absalom, and which was another thing on which he built his hopes of succeeding in his enterprise; for in those times, as in later times, and other nations, a comely aspect and personable appearance recommended a man to the choice of the people for a supreme magistrate, See Gill on "1Sa 9:2";

and [his mother] bare him after Absalom; not that the same woman bore him as did Absalom; for Absalom's mother was Maachah, this man's Haggith; but she bore him after Absalom's mother had bore him, so that he was next son; and now Amnon, Chileab, or Daniel, and Absalom, being all dead, he was the eldest son living, and upon this he founded his claim to the throne, and his hope of succeeding.

1 Kings 1:7

Ver. 7. And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest,.... About getting the kingdom into his hands: and they were very proper persons to consult with, who, if gained to his interest, might be of great service, the one being the general of the army, and so had a great interest in the soldiery, with whom he could make way for him, and defend him, and the other was the high priest, who might be thought to have a great share in the affections of the people, and whose office it was to anoint the king; and he might the rather apply to them, knowing them to be, on some accounts, discontented persons:

and they following Adonijah, helped [him]; they took on his side; Joab knowing David's hatred of him on account of his murder of Abner and Amasa, and especially for his slaying his son Absalom, and his insolent behaviour towards him, and perhaps he might fear, or had an him of what he had charged Solomon with concerning him; and Abiathar, who saw plainly that the priesthood in Eli's family was declining, and that Zadok was the favourite priest with David, and in all probability would be with Solomon; all which might influence these two persons to join Adonijah, and who, by so doing, greatly encouraged him, and many others to flock to him, which much helped and served his cause.

1 Kings 1:8

Ver. 8. But Zadok the priest,.... Who bid fair to be the high priest on Solomon's coming to the throne as he was:

and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; who was near David's person, and over his bodyguards, the Cherethites and Pelethites:

and Nathan the prophet; a very great intimate of David's, and his seer, whom he consulted on all occasions:

and Shimei; who, according to Abarbinel, was Shimei the son of Gera, who had cursed David, and was afraid of entering into the conspiracy, lest he should be involved in trouble again: though some think this may be that Shimei, one of Solomon's twelve officers, as after constituted, **1Ki 4:18**;

and Rei; whom the same writer takes to be Hushai the Archite, David's friend:

and the mighty men which [belonged] to David; that were about his person, his guards, the Cherethites and Pelethites:

were not with Adonijah; they did not join him, and indeed were not invited by him.

1 Kings 1:9

Ver. 9. And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle,.... To make a feast of for those that were of his party, which was numerous, and some of them persons of the first rank, and therefore a large and elegant entertainment was provided for them:

by the stone of Zoheleth, which [is] by Enrogel; or the fullers' fountain, as the Targum, where the fullers washed their clothes, using their feet in doing it, from whence it had its name; and which they laid upon this stone for the water to drain out of them, "Zoheleth" signifying a slow motion of waters, or on which they beat them to get out the spots; the Targum calls it the stone of a watchtower, on which they could stand and look to a great distance; or, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom suggest, it was a large smooth stone, which young men used to come to, and cast to and fro to try and exercise their strength; it was, as Josephus {e} says, in or near the king's gardens:

and called all his brethren the king's sons: which David by his wives and concubines had in Hebron and Jerusalem; who were all younger than he, and so had not the pretension he had, and who might be displeased at the appointment of Solomon as well as he; see **1Ch 3:4**;

and all the men of Judah the king's servants; excepting those in **1Ki 1:8**.

{e} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 14. sect. 4.

1 Kings 1:10

Ver. 10. But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not. Did not invite them to this feast; not Nathan, who he might know had prophesied of Solomon's succession in the throne, and therefore it could not be thought he would be drawn over to him; nor "Benaiah and the mighty men"; David's bodyguards, over whom this officer was; and still less Solomon, his competitor and rival.

1 Kings 1:11

Ver. 11. Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bathsheba the mother of Solomon,.... Who not only had an interest in the king, being his wife, and an easy access to him, but had a special concern in this affair, as it affected her son, to whom the succession of the kingdom was designed and promised:

saying, hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign? has usurped the throne, and is proclaimed king by a party, who at least have drank his health as such; has taken the title, and is about to exercise the power of a king; this Bathsheba might not have heard of, and which he expresses in this manner to quicken her to make an immediate application to the king:

and David our Lord knoweth [it] not; being so infirm, and in his bed, and nobody about him to inform him of it; it was done without his knowledge, and far from being with his consent and approbation.

1 Kings 1:12

Ver. 12. Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel,.... How to conduct in this affair, which she being a woman, and no doubt surprised and confounded at this relation, might be at a loss what to do; wherefore Nathan, being a wise man, and a faithful friend, offers to give the best advice he could, and desires her attention to it: says he,

that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon; which would be the usurper's first care to take away, that he might have no rival, and none to disturb him in his government; which step has been often taken by usurpers to secure themselves, see **Jud 9:5**.

1 Kings 1:13

Ver. 13. Go and get thee in unto King David,.... That is, go into the chamber where the king lay, at once, without any ceremony:

and say unto him, didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? though no mention is elsewhere made of such an oath, there undoubtedly was one, of which Nathan had knowledge, either from David or Bathsheba, or from them both, or might be present himself at the making of it; for not only Bathsheba affirms it, **1Ki 1:17**; but David owns it and confirms it, **1Ki 1:30**;

why then doth Adonijah reign? surely it cannot be with the king's knowledge and consent, so manifestly contrary to his promise and oath.

1 Kings 1:14

Ver. 14. Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king,.... Before, or by the time she could deliver the above words to him, or such as she should think fit to use, to awaken the king to a concern for the interest of her and her son:

I will also come in after thee; directly into the king's chamber:

and confirm thy words; as he could very well do, if he was present as a witness of the oath he had made to her, as well as he could confirm the truth of Adonijah's usurpation; nay, could plead the will and promises of God he had formerly notified to him: or, "fill up thy words" {f}, make up what might be wanting in her address to him, in her account of things, or in the arguments used by her; he means, that he would second her in her motion in favour of Solomon, and press the king to take some steps for the security of the succession to him. Nathan knew it was the will of God that Solomon should succeed in the kingdom, he had promised it by him, see **2Sa 7:12**; yet, as a wise and good man, he thought it right to make use of all proper means to attain the end.

{f} ytalm "complebo", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "explebo", Ar.

1 Kings 1:15

Ver. 15. And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber,.... Where he lay, being bedridden; she took Nathan's advice, and directly went to the king's apartment:

and the king was very old: and decrepit, borne down with the infirmities of old age, though but seventy years of age:

and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king; she was then waiting upon the king, and serving him with what was necessary and proper for him; and perhaps there was no other in the chamber at that time.

1 Kings 1:16

Ver. 16. And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance to the king,.... Not only as being her husband, but her sovereign; and this behaviour might intimate, that she had something to say to him, and more than to inquire of his health:

and the king said, wouldest thou? what hast thou to say to me? or to ask of me? what is thy will and pleasure, or thine errand to me?

1 Kings 1:17

Ver. 17. And she said unto him, my lord, thou swarest by the Lord thy God unto thine handmaid,.... Which was a very solemn oath, and binding, and which she puts David in mind of, knowing that so conscientious a man as he was would religiously observe it:

[saying], assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and shall sit upon my throne; be his successor in it, and established on it.

1 Kings 1:18

Ver. 18. And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth,.... Has set up himself as king, and is by some saluted as such; but lest it should be thought by David that she suggested by this that he was guilty of the breach of his oath, or on any account to be blamed, she adds:

and now my lord, O king, thou knowest [it] not; which as it acquitted him from all blame, so it made the sin of Adonijah the more heinous, that he should do this without consulting his father about it; and was not only neglect of him as a father, and an act of disrespect and disobedience to him as such, but even of high treason, to assume the throne in his father's lifetime, without his consent.

1 Kings 1:19

Ver. 19. And he hath slain oxen, and fat cattle, and sheep in abundance,.... Has made a grand entertainment, and is feasting and rejoicing; which was another instance of irreverence and disrespect to his aged father, labouring under the infirmities of old age, and on his dying bed, and he carousing, and showing all the tokens of pleasure in the view of his death, and wishing for it:

and hath called all the sons of the king; invited them to his entertainment, in order to gain them to his interest:

and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host; two persons, though of eminent rank, she knew David had no respect for, and therefore it would not be pleasing to him to hear that they were invited, had this affair been more acceptable than it was; Bathsheba, considering the shortness of the time she had to think, and the flurry she must be in, very artfully threw together the most material things that might work upon the mind of David in her favour:

but Solomon thy servant hath he not called; which made it a plain case that it was not a feast of a peace offering, nor a common friendly entertainment, but a feast made on account of his accession to the throne; and that he looked upon Solomon as his rival, and bore an ill will to him on that account, and bad a design upon him.

1 Kings 1:20

Ver. 20. And thou, my lord, O king,.... As for thee, or what concerns thee, or is incumbent on thee, will appear from the expectations of the people:

the eyes of all Israel [are] upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him; this she said, to dissipate any fears that might possess his mind on hearing what Adonijah had done, that the people in general had assented to it, and encouraged him to it; whereas the body of the people were waiting to hear what was the will and determination of David: for they not only considered him as having a power to name a successor, as was afterwards done by Rehoboam, but as one that had the mind of God revealed to him who should be his successor, to which they should pay a regard.

1 Kings 1:21

Ver. 21. Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers,.... That is, shall die, and be buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors, where he shall lie till he awakes in the morning of the resurrection:

that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders; or "sinners" {g}; not as if she would be reckoned an adulteress, and her son as illegitimate, as some think, and so be branded and treated as such; but as being traitors, making pretensions to the throne, she on the behalf of her son, and he for himself, when he had no right to it, being the younger son, and not declared successor by his father.

{g} Myajh "peccatores", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

1 Kings 1:22

Ver. 22. And, lo, while she yet talked with the king,.... Just as she was concluding her speech to him:

Nathan the prophet also came in; as he promised he would; perhaps was at the chamber door all the while Bathsheba was speaking, and when he perceived she was just finishing, he entered in without ceremony, as he had used to do, being the king's seer and counsellor, and a prophet, who had admittance to the king at any time.

1 Kings 1:23

Ver. 23. And they told the king,.... Some that attended at the door, or were in the chamber:

saying, behold, Nathan the prophet; or he is in the room, which the king through his infirmities might not be sensible of:

and when he was come in before the king; nearer to him, and as to be properly in his presence:

he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground; showing him the same reverence, though in bed, as if on his throne.

1 Kings 1:24

Ver. 24. And Nathan said, my lord, O king,.... He addresses him as with great veneration and respect due to his office, so as if he knew noticing of Bathsheba's application to him; and therefore begins and tells his story, as if the king had never heard anything relative to it:

hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? surely it can never be, because of the notice which he himself had given him from the Lord, that one to be born should succeed him, plainly pointing to Solomon; and also because of the oath which he had sworn, to which Nathan was privy, that Solomon should reign after him; and yet if he had not given such orders, it was exceeding strange that Adonijah should presume to do what he had done.

1 Kings 1:25

Ver. 25. For he is gone down this day,.... From Jerusalem, which lay high, to the stone of Zoheleth, in Enrogel, which lay in the valley, **1Ki 1:9**;

and hath slain oxen, and fat cattle, and sheep in abundance; not by way of sacrifice, but for a feast, on account of his coming to the kingdom:

and hath called all the king's sons; invited them to the entertainment:

and the captains of the host; or army; not only Joab, it seems, the general of it, but the captains of thousands and hundreds under him, being desirous of engaging the militia in his favour, and which was not an impolitic step:

and Abiathar the priest; to consult with by Urim and Thummim, and to anoint him, and use his interest with the populace for him, who might be supposed a man of influence, being the high priest of the nation:

and, behold, they eat and drink before him; they were now at it, at this time, they were not only invited, but they accepted the invitation, and came; which is afore than what was before related:

and say, God save King Adonijah; they proclaimed and saluted him as king, and drank his health, and wished him all prosperity; and so the Targum,

"may King Adonijah prosper!"

1 Kings 1:26

Ver. 26. But me, [even] me thy servant,.... Meaning himself, Nathan the prophet, who was David's servant, his seer, and counsellor:

and Zadok the priest; for whom David had a great respect:

and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; who was captain of his bodyguards; here Nathan observes more than Bathsheba had, and supplies what she had omitted, and so filled up her words, as in **1Ki 1:14**;

and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called; which showed his ill intention.

1 Kings 1:27

Ver. 27. Is this thing done by my lord the king,.... With his knowledge and consent, and by his orders:

and thou hast not showed [it] unto thy servant; meaning himself, who had brought him a message from the Lord, signifying that Solomon should succeed him; and therefore if that had been countermanded, it seemed strange that he should not have acquainted him with it: or "to thy servants", as the Arabic version; for the word has a plural ending, though pointed as singular; and so it may mean not only himself, but the rest of David's faithful servants that were about him at court, as Kimchi observes:

who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him? if he had altered his mind, or had had any direction from the Lord to make any change, he wondered at it that he should neither acquaint him, nor any of his trusty friends, with it.

1 Kings 1:28

Ver. 28. Then King David answered and said,.... Observing that Nathan confirmed the account that Bathsheba had given, and that it must be a matter of fact that Adonijah had usurped the throne, gave orders to those about him, saying,

call me Bathsheba; who either went out of the room when Nathan entered it, or however removed to some distant part of it, out of the sight of David:

and she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king; came to the side or foot of his bed, hearkening to what he had to say to her.

1 Kings 1:29

Ver. 29. And the king sware,.... To his former oath, he added another for greater confirmation:

and said, [as] the Lord liveth; which was the proper form of an oath, which ought to be taken by the living God; and as what would lay him under the greater obligation to observe it, he adds,

that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress; saved his life when in the most imminent danger; delivered him out of the hand of Goliath, and from the Philistines and other enemies, in his wars with them; and from Saul and his persecuting rage and fury, and from the rebellion of his son Absalom, and the insurrection of Sheba.

1 Kings 1:30

Ver. 30. Even as I sware unto thee by the Lord God of Israel,.... And so owns and confirms the truth of what Nathan had suggested to Bathsheba, and she had asserted, **1Ki 1:13**;

saying, assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; this was the substance of the oath:

even so will I certainly do this day; perform this oath, and set Solomon on the throne.

1 Kings 1:31

Ver. 31. Then Bathsheba bowed with [her] face to the earth, and did reverence to the king,.... Thereby expressing her veneration of him, and thankfulness to him for his favour to her and her son, in fulfilling his promise and oath:

and said, let my lord King David live for ever; which though a common form of salutation of kings, not only in Israel, but in other nations, is not to be considered as a mere compliment, but as expressing the real desires and affection of her heart to the king; signifying hereby that her solicitations on the behalf of her son did not arise from any desire of the king's death; she heartily wished him health to live long and easy; and all her request was, that Solomon her son might succeed him, whenever it pleased God to remove him; or seeing he was now a dying man as it were, her prayer was that his soul might live for ever in happiness in the world to come; so Kimchi interprets it.

1 Kings 1:32

Ver. 32. And King David said, call me Zadok the priest,.... Not Abiathar the high priest, for he had joined Adonijah; and besides Zadok was David's favourite priest, and for him the high priesthood was designed, as it was in a little time translated to him:

and Nathan the prophet; who very probably went out of the room when Bathsheba was called in: and

Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; the captain of his guards:

and they came before the king; who it is very likely sat up in his bed, and they stood around him.

1 Kings 1:33

Ver. 33. And the king said unto them, take ye the servants of your lord,.... Meaning his own servants, his bodyguards, the Cherethites and Pelethites, as appears from **1Ki 1:38**; the Jews {a} from hence gather, that a king is superior to an high priest, since David calls himself the lord of Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet:

and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule; for it seems on such a creature David used to ride, as did his sons; horses not being so common in Judea as they were afterwards. Some of the Jews {b} say it was not lawful to ride upon a mule, and that this case of David is to be excepted; for they pretend that this was a peculiar mule; and if the instance of his son urged, they reply, an argument from what kings and their sons used to do is of no force. Now this was one way of testifying that it was his will that Solomon should reign in his stead; for no private person might ride upon the beast the king was wont to ride on; this is now one of the Jewish canons {c},

"no one may ride on the king's horse, nor sit on his throne, nor use his sceptre:"

and bring him down to Gihon; a fountain near Jerusalem, on the west side of it, which flowed from Mount Gihon, 2Ch 32:30; the same with Siloah according to the Targum, of which mention is made, **Joh 9:7**. The reason for this order is not easily given; whether it was to denote the peaceableness and gentleness of Solomon's government, the waters of Shiloah moving softly, **Isa 8:6**, or the spread, constancy, firmness, and perpetuity of it, as the Jews say {d}, since the water of a fountain is ever running; or because there might be a concourse of people there, and so he would be anointed and proclaimed king in a public manner, and be attended to the city with great pomp and solemnity.

{a} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 6. fol. 186. 3. {b} Vid. Bartenoram in Misn. Celaim, c. 8. sect. 1. {c} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 5. {d} T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 12. 1.

1 Kings 1:34

Ver. 34. And let Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, anoint him there king over Israel,.... For it might be done by either of them, as the unctions of Saul and David show:

and blow ye the trumpet, and say, God save King Solomon; the blowing of the trumpet was to make it public; the proclamation of him as king was to be made by the sound of it, and the acclamation of the people was to express their concurrence with it, their loyal affection to the new king, and their hearty wishes for his health, prosperity, and long life.

1 Kings 1:35

Ver. 35. Then ye shall come up after him,.... When anointed, proclaimed, and cheered, then he was to mount the mule, and ride before them as their king, at the head of them; they following after, in token of their subjection to him:

that he may come and sit upon my throne; at Jerusalem, in the king's palace, and there exercise his kingly power he would now be invested with:

for he shall be king in my stead; even during David's life, as well as after his decease:

and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel, and over Judah; that is, over all the twelve tribes of Israel Judah may be particularly mentioned, though included in Israel, because Adonijah had invited the men of Judah to his feast and party, **1Ki 1:9**; and therefore had they not been named, might think he had no power over them.

1 Kings 1:36

Ver. 36. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king,.... In the name of the rest:

and said, Amen; they all assented to it, and expressed their satisfaction in it:

the Lord God of my lord the king say so [too]; let it appear, by the prosperity and success that shall by divine Providence attend the new king, that this is according to the will of God.

1 Kings 1:37

Ver. 37. As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with

Solomon,.... To guide and direct him, protect and defend him, succeed and prosper him the Targum is,

"as the Word of the Lord has been the help of my lord the king, so let him be for the help of Solomon:"

and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David: which he knew would not displease David, who not only had an affectionate regard for Solomon his son, but wished heartily the prosperity of the kingdom of Israel; and the wish on all accounts was grateful to him, though to an envious and ambitious prince it might have been disagreeable.

1 Kings 1:38

Ver. 38. So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada,.... The three men that David sent for on this occasion:

and the Cherethites and the Pelethites; not the sanhedrim, as Ben Gersom, but David's guards, over whom Benaiah was: these

went down; from Jerusalem;

and caused Solomon to ride upon King David's mule; as he had ordered:

and brought him to Gihon; or Siloah, as the Targum; hence the Jews say {e}, they do not anoint a king but at a fountain; but this is the only instance of it.

{e} T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 2.

1 Kings 1:39

Ver. 39. And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle,.... Not out of the tabernacle of Moses, for that was at Gibeon; see 1Ch 21:29; and if the oil had been there, it would have been too far to have fetched it, since haste was now required; but this was taken out of the tabernacle David had built for the ark, **2Sa 6:17**; where the ark was, and before which the pot of oil was; so Jarchi; but Kimchi indeed says, that though it was at this time at Gibeon, Zadok went thither, or sent thither to fetch it; and though it is said, the pot of oil was set before the ark, this was when the ark was in the tabernacle; but when they took it out from thence at the war with the Philistines, that and the pot of manna were left in the tabernacle; and they took nothing but the ark; but if they brought the pot afterwards, and put it before the ark in Jerusalem, then it may be understood of the tabernacle David pitched for it; but that he disapproves of. Here Zadok is only said to take the oil, and anoint with it; which he did either as the deputy of the high priest, or he was made use of because the high priest was on the side of Adonijah:

and anointed Solomon; whether it was by pouring it on his head, as Saul was anointed, 1Sa 10:1; or, as the Jews say {f}, by putting it round about his head in the form of a crown, and then between his eyebrows, is not very material; and they also say {g}, that it is not usual to anoint the son of a king that has been anointed; and that the reason of the anointing of Solomon was, because of the sedition of his brother Adonijah, and to confirm the kingdom to him; this anointing was an emblem of the gifts, graces, and virtues, necessary to qualify a king for the discharge of his office:

and they blew the trumpet; and proclaimed him king:

and all the people said, God save King Solomon; wished him long life and happiness, and gave him a general huzza or shouting.

{f} T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 2. {g} Ibid.

1 Kings 1:40

Ver. 40. And all the people came up after him,.... Following him from the fountain to the city, with their loud acclamations:

and the people piped with pipes; which were hollow instruments, and full of holes which they blew with their mouths, and upon with their fingers; Jarchi says they were and very probably:

and rejoiced with great joy; which they expressed by such loud shouts:

so that the earth rent with the sound thereof; an hyperbolical expression, showing the great numbers gathered together on this occasion, and the sonorous acclamations they made.

1 Kings 1:41

Ver. 41. And Adonijah and all the guests that [were] with him,.... Or that were "called" {h}; that is, invited to the entertainment he had made:

heard [it], as they had made an end of eating; the shouting of the people, which reached their ears just as they had finished their meal, and before they had risen from the table, where they had been a long while; for when Nathan went in to David, they were then eating and drinking, **1Ki 1:25**; and when he had finished his speech to David, Bathsheba was called in, and the kingdom promised to her son with an oath, three persons of the first rank were sent for, and had their orders and instructions, for the immediate execution of which they made preparation, and had Solomon down to Gihon, and there anointed him king, and brought him up to Jerusalem again; all which were done before Adonijah and his guests rose from table:

and when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, wherefore [is] this noise of the city being in an uproar? the city is in a tumult by the noise that is made, what should be the meaning of it? he speaks as one surprised, and in great concern, being general of the army, whose care should be to preserve the peace of the city, and prevent mutiny and disorder.

{h} Myarq "invitati", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

1 Kings 1:42

Ver. 42. And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came,.... Whom his father had left in the city, to observe what passed there, and give him notice of it:

and Adonijah said unto him, come in, for thou [art] a valiant man, and bringest good tidings; which seems to be not a very wise speech, as if there was a connection between being valiant, and bringing good news, or that the one had any influence upon the other; though perhaps it means no more than a good man, "a man of virtue" {i}, as it may be rendered; one that fears sin, as the Targum, and so would report nothing but what was true, and therefore might be depended on; see
2Sa 18:27; the same phrase is rendered "a worthy man", **1Ki 1:52**.

{i} lyx vya "vir virtutis", Montanus, Vatablus.

1 Kings 1:43

Ver. 43. And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, verily,.... Or, "nay, but" {k} it is not so as you imagine; it is not good tidings, but bad tidings to thee I bring:

our lord King David hath made Solomon king; of which he gives the following account in proof of it.

{k} lba "nequaquam", V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

1 Kings 1:44

Ver. 44. And the king hath sent with him,.... To the fountain of Gihon:

Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites; over whom the latter was captain:

and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule; by his order and direction.

1 Kings 1:45

Ver. 45. And Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, have anointed him king in Gihon,.... Or at Gihon; that is, Siloah, according to the Targum; here the act of anointing is ascribed to them both, as in **1Ki 1:34**; Zadok very probably applied the oil to him, and Nathan might be some way or other assisting in it; however he was here present, not only as approving of it, but declaring it as a prophet, that it was according to the will of God, as well as of the king:

and they are come up from thence rejoicing; with a multitude of people along with them:

so that the city rang again; with the blowing of trumpets, the sound of pipings, and the shouts of the people:

this [is] the noise which ye have heard; which had so alarmed them.

1 Kings 1:46

Ver. 46. And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom. Where he was placed to exercise his regal power when returned to Jerusalem, as a further token and confirmation of his being really and actually king.

1 Kings 1:47

Ver. 47. And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord the king,.... To give him thanks for the wise and good provision he had made before his death for the welfare of the kingdom, by making Solomon his son king in his stead, and to congratulate him upon it; which showed that they highly approved of it, and were ready to swear allegiance to Solomon, and therefore Adonijah had nothing to hope for from them:

saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name; that is, may he be more famous, and his name be more celebrated in the world than his was, or be more respectable and valued among his people Israel:

and make his throne greater than thy throne; see **1Ki 1:37**;

and the king bowed himself upon the bed; signifying not only his approbation of what was done, but also of their prayers and wishes; as well as he bowed himself to give thanks to God that he had lived to see this work done, as follows.

1 Kings 1:48

Ver. 48. And also thus said the king,.... Being in a proper posture for an address to God:

blessed [be] the Lord God of Israel, which hath given [one] to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes seeing [it]; he ascribes this whole affair to God, and his kind providence, though all things were done according to his own orders; and gives thanks to him, who had directed him to take such steps as these were, and that the business was finished without any obstruction, and to the great joy and satisfaction of the people; and that there was such a prospect of Solomon's having a happy and peaceable reign.

1 Kings 1:49

Ver. 49. And all the guests that [were] with Adonijah [were] afraid,.... Though many of them were military men, the general of the army, and the captains thereof, **1Ki 1:19**; yet they were struck with a panic, their courage failed them, they had no spirit left in them, their hearts became as weak as water; had they exerted themselves according to their character, betaken themselves to arms, and put themselves at the head of their troops in favour of Adonijah, it would have given Solomon and his friends a great deal of trouble; no doubt this panic was of God:

and rose up, and went every man his way; or to his house, as the Arabic version; on hearing what Jonathan reported, they immediately rose up from table in great haste, and made the best of their way to their houses, that it might not be known that they had been with Adonijah.

1 Kings 1:50

Ver. 50. And Adonijah feared because of Solomon,.... Lest he should seize him as an usurper and traitor, and put him to death:

and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar; either that which was at Gibeon, where the tabernacle now was; see **1Ki 3:4**; so Jarchi; or rather that which was nearest, the altar that David had built in the threshingfloor of Araunah, 2Sa 24:25; the altar was a sort of asylum, or refuge, for such who had committed any crime worthy of death; not by divine appointment, but by custom, it being supposed that none would presume to defile with blood that which was sacred to the Lord; or shed the blood of men where the blood of beasts was poured; or use severity and strict justice, but mercy, where sacrifices were offered to atone for sin, and mercy was shown on account of them; these were notions, and this a custom, which obtained very early, and even among the Jews; see Ex 21:14; as well as among Gentiles; with whom it was usual, as to flee to the statues of their emperors, and to the temples of their deities, so likewise to their altars; this was customary among the Molossians, Samothracians, Crotoniatae, and Messenians; and particularly the altar of Jupiter Servator was an asylum, or place of refuge, to the Ithacians {l}. Cornelius Nepos {m} has given us an instance of one that fled to a temple of Neptune, and sat upon the altar for his security, as here Adonijah laid hold on the horns of this, that none might force him from it.

{l} Alexander ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 20. {m} Vit. Pausan l. 4. c. 4.

1 Kings 1:51

Ver. 51. And it was told Solomon,.... By some of his courtiers:

saying, behold, Adonijah feareth King Solomon; lest he should take away his life:

for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar; which was the last resort of the guilty when they despaired of mercy otherwise:

saying, let King Solomon swear unto me this day that he will not slay his servant with the sword; he owns Solomon to be king, and himself his subject and servant; this no doubt he did to conciliate his favour, nor did he think his life safe, unless Solomon promised with an oath, that he would not take it away.

1 Kings 1:52

Ver. 52. And Solomon said, if he will show himself a worthy man,.... Will behave himself well as a good subject, and be careful not to offend for the future, or appear to be one that fears sin, as the Targum; particularly the crimes of sedition, rebellion, and treason:

there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth; not the least harm should be done him:

but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die; that is, if any crime worthy of death be committed by him, or any overt act of treason, and the like, he should surely be put to death, and find no mercy, notwithstanding the present general pardon. This was very wisely done by Solomon, to begin his reign without shedding blood even of delinquents; and especially of his brother, and his elder brother too; and by granting his life for the future on his good behaviour.

1 Kings 1:53

Ver. 53. So King Solomon sent, and they brought down Adonijah from the altar,.... It being built upon an hill, as both that at Gibeon, and in Araunah's threshing floor, were:

and he came and bowed himself to King Solomon; in a way of reverence and subjection, acknowledging him to be king, and himself his subject:

and Solomon said to him, go to thine house; in peace; signifying that he pardoned him, and he might go home, and enjoy his family and substance; and by this intimating that he should only regard the affairs of his family, and not trouble himself with those of the kingdom and state, Abarbinel fancies, that because Solomon said, that if he showed himself to be a worthy man, or a man of fortitude and valour, that Adonijah thought that his meaning was, that he should go before him as a man of war, and minister to him; which made him so ready to come and stand before him; in which he was mistaken, Solomon meant no such thing; nor would he take him into his court and service, but sent him home to his own house.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST KING 2

This chapter gives an account of the charge David gave to his son Solomon, a little before his death, to walk in the ways of the Lord, **1Ki 2:1**; and of some instructions delivered to him concerning some particular persons he should either show favour to, or execute justice on, **1Ki 2:5**; and the next account in it is concerning his death and burial, and the years of his reign, **1Ki 2:10**; after which it relates an address of Bathsheba to Solomon in favour of Adonijah, which was refused, and the issue of it was his death, **1Ki 2:12**; and the deposition of Abiathar from the priesthood, **1Ki 2:26**; and the putting of Joab to death for his treason and murders, **1Ki 2:28**; in whose post Benaiah was put, as Zadok was in the place of Abiathar, **1Ki 2:35**; and lastly the confinement of Shimei in Jerusalem, who had cursed David, **1Ki 2:36**; who upon transgressing the orders given him was put to death, **1Ki 2:39**.

Ver. 1. Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die,.... The number of his days fixed and determined by the Lord, Job 14:5; and which might be perceived as drawing nigh, both by himself and others, through the growing infirmities of old age, decline of nature, and various symptoms of an approaching dissolution which were upon him; see Ge 47:29. Abarbinel observes, that he is called only David, not King David; because Solomon his son was now anointed king, and reigned in his stead; so in **1Ki 1:10**; but there is another reason given by some Jews {n}, that no man, even a king, has power in the day of death; he is no king then, he has no rule over that, but that rules over him:

and he charged Solomon his son; gave him his last and dying charge:

saying; as follows.

{n} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 96. fol. 83. 3.

1 Kings 2:2

Ver. 2. I go the way of all the earth,.... A path which is the path of death {o}, which all pass in, kings and peasants, high and low, rich and poor, great and small, good and bad; none are exempted, all must die, and do; it is the appointment of God, a decree which can never be reversed; all experience confirms it: this same phrase is used by Joshua, from whom David seems to have borrowed it, and shows that that book was written in his days, Jos 23:14;

be thou strong therefore; not discouraged at my death, being a common thing, and to be expected; nor at being left alone, the Lord can give thee wisdom and counsel, assistance and strength, protection, and defence; take heart therefore, and be of good courage:

and show thyself a man; in wisdom and understanding, and in fortitude of mind, though so young a man; which were necessary for the government of so great a people, and to guard against the secret intrigues of some, and the open flatteries of others, and the fear of attempts against his person and government, and the temptations he might be liable to, to do wrong things; and especially they were necessary to enable him to keep the commands of God, as follows; which required great strength of mind and of grace, considering the corruptions of nature, the temptations of Satan, and the snares of men; see **Jos 1:7**.

{o} "------ omnes una manet nox, Et calcanda semel via lethi". Horat. Carmin. l. 1. ode 28. ver. 15, 16.

1 Kings 2:3

Ver. 3. And keep the charge of the Lord thy God,.... Which may in general respect his whole walk and conversation, and his obedience to the law and will of God; and in particular his just government of Israel committed to his charge:

to walk in his ways; directed to in his word:

to keep his statutes and his judgments; his laws, ceremonial, moral, and judicial:

and his testimonies; as the above laws, which testify of his mind, and declare what he would have done and observed:

as it is written in the law of Moses; which a king of Israel was obliged to write a copy of, keep by him, and read it, and rule according to it, De 17:18:

that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself; to reign in righteousness, and according to the law of God, is the only way to have a prosperous and happy reign: or "that thou mayest act wisely" {p}; the law of God furnishing out the best rules of government and maxims of policy; see **De 4:6**.

{p} lykvt Neml "ut prudenter agas", Montanus, Tigurine version; "ut intelligas universa", V. L.

1 Kings 2:4

Ver. 4. That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me,.... his word of promise concerning the kingdom of David, and the succession of it, and confirm and establish it:

saying, if thy children take heed to their way; they are directed to walk in, even the way of the Lord, and not turn to the right hand or the left:

to walk before me in truth: in the sincerity and integrity of their hearts, according to the word of truth, and under the influence of the spirit of truth:

with all their heart, and with all their soul; in the most cordial manner, with the strongest affection and zeal; with all eagerness and earnestness; with their whole hearts engaged in every duty performed by them: then the Lord said,

there shall not fail thee a man on the throne of Israel; one to succeed him in the throne; this, with respect to his throne, literally considered, was conditional; but, spiritually considered, was absolute, and had its fulfilment in the Messiah, whose throne is for ever; see **Lu 1:32**.

1 Kings 2:5

Ver. 5. Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did unto me,.... In slaying Absalom, contrary to his orders, and in behaving insolently towards him on account of his mourning for him, and at other times; but as these things might not be personally known to Solomon, only by hearsay, this may respect his disloyalty towards him, in joining with Adonijah, who set himself up for king in his lifetime, and without his knowledge and consent; or it may respect the instances next mentioned, in which he did injury to the interest, honour, and character of David:

[and], or "even",

what he did to the two captains of the host of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew; to Abner who was under Ishbosheth, and Amasa under David, who had not only the promise of the post, but was actually in it when Joab slew him; and indeed out of envy to him for it:

and shed the blood of war in peace; when they were at peace with him, as if they had been in open war; and even under a pretence of friendship to them, asking of their peace and welfare, as if he meant nothing less than to behave peaceably towards them; hence the Targum is,

"whom he slew in craftiness:"

and put the blood of war upon the girdle that [was] about his loins, and in his shoes that [were] in his feet; which particularly respects the affair of Amasa, whose blood he shed with his sword, that dropped out of its scabbard, girded upon his loins, and into which he put it again, all over bloody, and wore it girded upon his loins; and which he also stooped for when it fell, as if he was going to unloose or buckle his shoes, and into which the blood ran down when he stabbed him; and after this barbarous action marched on without any shame or remorse, with his bloody sword on his loins, and the blood of the murdered in his shoes.

1 Kings 2:6

Ver. 6. Do therefore according to thy wisdom,.... Which though young began to appear in him, even in the life of his father; he therefore exhorts him to use the wisdom he had, and take the first and fittest opportunity to cut him off for his former murders and late treason, as a dangerous man to his government and the peace of it:

and let not his hoary head go down to the grave in peace; that is, let him not die a natural, but a violent death; and let not his grey hairs be any argument for sparing him, or any reason for delaying the taking of him off, because he would in course die quickly; for he must be now an old man, as old as David, or perhaps older; since he had been his general forty years, even all the time of his reign; see **2Sa 2:13**.

1 Kings 2:7

Ver. 7. But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite,.... Who perhaps was now dead, and therefore he would have kindness shown to his posterity for his sake:

and let them be of those that eat of thy table; as Mephibosheth had at his, who also perhaps was dead, since no notice is taken of him; and as David would have had Barzillai, but he desired to be excused on account of his age:

for so they came to me, when I fled because of thy brother, Absalom; that is, they came to him, not only Barzillai, but his sons it seems; and fed him or furnished him with provisions, when he was obliged to fly to the other side Jordan, because of the rebellion of his son Absalom.

1 Kings 2:8

Ver. 8. And behold [thou hast] with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim,.... Of whom, and of his native place,
See Gill on "2Sa 16:5"; he was now at Jerusalem, and so with Solomon, or near at hand; and was on his side, and of his party; see **1Ki 1:8**; but not to be trusted, or looked upon as a real friend:

which cursed me with a grievous curse, when I went to Mahanaim; a place on the other side Jordan, of which place, and the curses this man cursed David, with, see 2Sa 16:7;

but he came down to me at Jordan; after the defeat of Absalom, and when David was returning, and humbled himself to him, and begged his pardon:

and I sware unto him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword; but this oath was not binding upon his successor, and especially should he commit a new crime.

1 Kings 2:9

Ver. 9. Now therefore hold him not guiltless,.... Do not look upon him as an innocent person; and if he commits an offence against thee, as he has against me, do not acquit him as I have done:

for thou [art] a wise man; so it seems he was before the appearance of the Lord to him at Gibeon, even before his father's death he had given some proofs of it to David himself:

and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; to watch and observe him, and, if found offending, to punish him according to the rules of justice, and the laws of the land:

but his hoary head bring thou down to the grave with blood; spare him not on account of his age, but put him to death whensoever he shall be found guilty, let him not die a natural death.

1 Kings 2:10

Ver. 10. So David slept with his fathers,.... Died as his ancestors before him did; for, buried with them he was not; and therefore cannot be understood of his lying with them in the grave, but in the state of the dead; he died according as the Jews say {q} on the day of Pentecost, and according to Bishop Usher {r} A. M. 2990, and before Christ 1014;

and was buried in the city of David; not at Bethlehem, in the sepulchre of Jesse, who was a private man; but being a king, in his own city, the hold of Zion he took from the Jebusite, and which afterwards was called by his name, **2Sa 5:7**; and his sepulchre remained unto the times of the apostles, upwards of a thousand years, See Gill on "Ac 2:29".

{q} T. Hieros. Chagigah, fol. 78. 1. {r} Anuals, &c. p. 56.

1 Kings 2:11

Ver. 11. And the days that David reigned over Israel [were] forty years,.... So says Eupolemus {s}, an Heathen writer, which are thus reckoned:

seven years reigned he in Hebron; the six months over are omitted, **2Sa 5:5**; this part of his reign was over Judah only:

and thirty three years reigned he in Jerusalem; over the twelve tribes, in all forty, which round number is only given; though in fact he reigned six months more.

{s} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30.

1 Kings 2:12

Ver. 12. Then sat Solomon on the throne of David his father,.... So he did in his lifetime, with his consent, and by his order, and now by the agreement of the whole people:

and his kingdom was established greatly; all submitting to it, and none opposing it.

1 Kings 2:13

Ver. 13. And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon,.... Into her apartment; Abarbinel thinks it was a few days after the death of David:

and she said, comest thou peaceably? in a friendly manner, with no ill design, only to pay a friendly visit; for she might fear he came to avenge himself on her, and destroy her, because she had been the instrument of disappointing him of the kingdom, and of getting her son Solomon set upon the throne, and established in it; and therefore could not tell what envy, rage, and disappointment, might prompt him to:

and he said, peaceably; he meant no harm unto her.

1 Kings 2:14

Ver. 14. He said, moreover, I have something to say unto thee,.... Signifying that he came upon business:

and she said, say on; intimating her readiness to hear what it was.

1 Kings 2:15

Ver. 15. And he said, thou knowest that the kingdom was mine,.... Belonged to him by virtue of his birthright; he was heir to it, being the eldest son:

and [that] all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign; which was not true; for, as Bathsheba says, the body of the people were in suspense, their eyes being on David, waiting to hear whom he would declare his successor; and when Solomon was declared and anointed, vast numbers attended him; unless Adonijah thought that the high priest, and general of the army, with the captains, represented the whole people; however this he observes by way of preface, to show how unhappy he was, being disappointed, and to move the compassion of Bathsheba, that she might be the more easily prevailed upon to seek to obtain so small a favour as he was about to ask:

howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's; things had taken another turn, and what was his, and he thought himself sure of the other day, was now become his brother's; such were the uncertainty and vicissitude of human affairs:

for it was his from the Lord; by the appointment of the Lord, by a promise of his, and a prophecy concerning it; which if he knew of, it was both vain and sinful in him to act contrary thereunto; or it was brought about by the overruling providence of God, which he now plainly saw and submitted to; this he said to show that he had laid aside all hopes of the kingdom, and was fully satisfied of the disposition of it in Providence, and so to hide his real design in the petition he was about to make.

1 Kings 2:16

Ver. 16. And now I ask one petition of thee,.... And but one, and a small one too, as Bathsheba herself after calls it:

deny me not, or "turn not away my face" {t}; with shame and sorrow, which would be the case should he be denied:

and she said unto him, say on; let me hear it.

{t} ynp ta ybyvt "ne avertere facias faciem meam", Pagninus.

1 Kings 2:17

Ver. 17. And he said, speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king,.... He owns him to be king, and which he the rather did to engage her to take his suit in hand, and to cover his design:

for he will not say thee nay; or turn away thy face, or deny thy request; she being his mother, for whom he had a great affection, and to whom he was under obligation on all accounts:

that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife; which was contrary to the law of God, Le 18:8; which surely Adonijah must have been ignorant of, and Bathsheba likewise; or the one would never have made such a request, nor the other have undertaken to try to obtain it; but perhaps they did not take her to be David's wife, or the marriage to be consummated, because he knew her not: but yet not being returned to her father's house, and being at the dispose of

Solomon, prove that she must be a concubine wife, and which became the property of the next heir and successor; see 2Sa 12:8; nor did Adonijah apply to her or her friends; which, if he was really in love with her, he would have done, if at her own or their disposal; but this he knew, that she was solely at the disposal of Solomon, to whom he did not care to apply himself, but makes use of his mother.

1 Kings 2:18

Ver. 18. And Bathsheba said, well,.... Very well spoken, the thing is good and right:

I will speak for thee unto the king; and use her interest with him, not seeing into his design, but pitying an unfortunate man.

1 Kings 2:19

Ver. 19. Bathsheba therefore went unto King Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah,.... She went from her own house to the palace; for she might not live at court; or however had an apartment to herself, from whence she went to the king with her suit in favour of Adonijah:

and the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her; upon her entrance into the presence chamber, in honour to her as a parent, he rose up from his throne, and made his obeisance to her, as a dutiful son:

and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; a magnificent seat or throne, as the word is, was ordered to be set for her:

and she sat on his right hand; where he placed her in honour to her as his mother; so Nero {a} placed Tiridates king of Armenia at his right hand, to do him honour.

{a} Suetonius in Vit. Neron. c. 13.

1 Kings 2:20

Ver. 20. Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee,.... It was but one, and a little one, and therefore she hoped it would be granted:

[I pray thee], say me not nay; do not refuse it, or deny it me, or turn away my thee with shame and disappointment:

and the king said, ask on, my mother, for I will not say thee nay; since it is a small one, as thou sayest, and provided it is fit and lawful to be granted.

1 Kings 2:21

Ver. 21. And she said, let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife. For so Adonijah was by his father's side; and Bathsheba makes use of the relation, the more to move upon him to grant the request.

1 Kings 2:22

Ver. 22. And King Solomon answered and said unto his mother,.... With as much gentleness and mildness as he could, but inwardly fired at her request, and amazed at it, and could not forbear using some degree of tartness and resentment:

and why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? is this a small petition? is this a fit and lawful one?

ask for him the kingdom also; for this is what he means by it, that by marrying the king's widow he may step into the throne whenever any opportunity offers, as any uneasiness, or insurrection in the kingdom, or the death of Solomon; for none but a king, the Jews say {b}, might marry a king's widow, not any private man; and therefore for Adonijah to ask this was interpreted affecting the kingdom, and aspiring to it, and taking his measures to obtain it; yea, it is said {c}, that none but another king, the successor, might make use of his servants, handmaids, and ministers; and it is observed, that Abishag was free to Solomon, but not to Adonijah:

for he [is] mine elder brother; and has that to plead in his favour, and if he could obtain this, it would strengthen his title, or at least be a plausible pretence, which he might make use of, when opportunity served, to gain the people to his interest:

even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah; she might as well ask for them as for him; whose interest it was, and therefore desirous it might be that he should be king, that so the one might be continued in the office of high priest, and the other as general of the army; who, Solomon knew, bore him no good will, but were secretly his enemies; and he suspected that this was a scheme of theirs, and that it was by their advice Adonijah made this request; so the Targum,

"are not he, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the son of Zeruiah, in the counsel?"

in this counsel; it is what they had consulted among themselves as a preparation to bring about a design they are contriving; probably Solomon had private notice that they were plotting against him, and this confirmed him in the truth of it; and therefore all of them were upon this punished with deprivation of office, or loss of life.

{b} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 2. {c} Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1.

1 Kings 2:23

Ver. 23. Then King Solomon sware by the Lord,.... To prevent his mother pressing him to have her petition granted:

saying, God do so to me, and more also; lay such and such evils upon me, and more than I care to express:

if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life; to his own prejudice, and even to the loss of his life; in which Solomon suggests it would issue, being a fresh overt act of treason; he knew, from what Bathsheba said, that this was his petition, and that he had spoken of this to her, and put her upon making it for him; and who no doubt related to Solomon the whole of the conversation that passed between them, and to which he seems to have some respect in his answer.

1 Kings 2:24

Ver. 24. Now therefore, as the Lord liveth,.... Which is another oath; and one may easily perceive hereby in what a temper and disposition Solomon was, how warm, earnest, and vehement, how resolute against the petition, and how determined he was to punish Adonijah and his confederates:

which hath established me, and set me upon the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised; who had placed him on his father's throne, and established him there, in spite of all his enemies, and had given him a firm and stable kingdom, which was not to be shaken and subverted by the power and policy of conspirators, according to the promise of God by Nathan, **2Sa 7:11**;

Adonijah shall be put to death this day; both for his former conspiracy, he only having had a reprieve, and which was to continue on his good behaviour, **1Ki 1:51**, and for his fresh attempt in forming treasonable schemes to ascend the throne if possible; wherefore, being a dangerous man, and no longer to be trusted, Solomon was determined to dispatch him at once, and being established in his kingdom, he had nothing to fear from those in the conspiracy with him.

1 Kings 2:25

Ver. 25. And King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada,.... Orders to execute him, and proper persons to do it; perhaps some of the Cherethites and Pelethites under him, to assist at least in it:

and he fell upon him, that he died; Benaiah rushed in upon him with his men, and thrust his sword into him, and killed him; executions used to be done in those times and countries by great personages, as the instances of Gideon, Doeg, and others, show, and not by common executioners.

1 Kings 2:26

Ver. 26. And unto Abiathar the priest said the king,.... Who was either at court, or he sent for him, and thus addressed him:

get thee to Anathoth; a city of the tribe of Benjamin, given to the priests, Jos 21:18; of which place Abiathar might be originally, and whither he is bid to return:

unto thine own fields; which belonged to him there, either by inheritance or purchase; and these he was to mind, and not perform the functions of his office, however as high priest, and at Jerusalem, and the tabernacle there, and still less appear at court, or meddle with state affairs, only to attend to his private domestic concerns:

for thou [art] worthy of death; in joining with Adonijah in the lifetime of David, and setting him up as a king without his knowledge, and in opposition to Solomon, contrary to the will of God, and promise of David, of which he, being high priest, cannot be thought to be ignorant, and for his late confederacy with Adonijah, of which Solomon had knowledge:

but I will not at this time put thee to death; he does not give him a full pardon, only a respite; suggesting, that should he be guilty of any overt act, he would be put to death another time, though not now:

because thou barest the ark of the Lord God before David my father; when he fled from Absalom, 2Sa 15:24;

and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted; shared with him in all his afflictions under the persecutions of Saul, from the time he slew the priests at Nob, and at the rebellion of Absalom; in each of which he accompanied him, and suffered and sympathized with him.

1 Kings 2:27

Ver. 27. So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord,.... He deposed him from his office of high priest, otherwise I suppose he might officiate as a common priest, at least in some of the branches of it; this was done by his own authority as a king, and not as a prophet, as Bellarmine vainly distinguishes; and not by the authority of the college of the, priests, at the instance of Solomon, as Fortunatus Schacchus says {d} for which there is no foundation:

that he might fulfil the word of the Lord; which he might do intentionally, having knowledge of it, or however eventually:

which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh; of which house Abiathar was, and which, according to that prophecy, was to be demolished, and the priesthood translated from it, which was in the line of lthamar, to another house, in the line of Eleazar; the word of the Lord, referred to, is in **1Sa 2:31**.

{d} Elaeochrism. Myrothec. l. 3. c. 50. col. 1069.

1 Kings 2:28

Ver. 28. Then tidings came to Joab,.... Of the death of Adonijah, and the deposition of Abiathar:

for Joab had turned after Adonijah; publicly appeared at his feast, when he was saluted king by him, and others, and privately gave him advice in the affair of Abishag:

though he turned not after Absalom; did not join with him in his rebellion, but faithfully adhered to David; and yet both in his lifetime, and after his death, acted the traitorous part in favour of Adonijah: Ben Gersom gives these words a different sense, as if he was blameworthy in both cases; that he turned after Adonijah to make him king, without consulting David, and having his consent; and he did not turn after Absalom, to deliver him from death, as David commanded him; but the former sense is best:

and Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord; which was at Gibeon, see **2Ch 1:3**; it was four miles from Jerusalem to the north, situated on an hill {e}; according to Josephus {f}, it was forty furlongs, or five miles, from it; though Kimchi thinks it was the altar in Jerusalem he fled to, which was before the ark, in the tent David made for it; but that is never called the tabernacle of the Lord, only that of Moses: Joab's fleeing hither showed guilt, and that he was in the conspiracy of Adonijah, and was conscious he deserved to die, and now expected it, since Adonijah was put to death; while he remained reprieved or pardoned, he thought himself safe, but now in danger, and therefore fled for it:

and caught hold of the horns of the altar; See Gill on "1Ki 1:50".

{e} Bunting's Travels, &c. p. 98. {f} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 11. sect. 7.

1 Kings 2:29

Ver. 29. And it was told King Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord,.... This account was brought him very probably by some of his courtiers:

and, behold, [he is] by the altar; to which he betook himself for refuge, laying hold on the horns of it:

then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, go, fall upon him; slay him; Josephus {g} says, the orders were to cut off his head; but perhaps it might be only to lay hold on him, and take him thence, and bring him to Solomon to have judgment passed upon him; for the Targum is,

"exercise your power over him,"

take him into custody; and certain it is that the first orders were not to slay him, at least upon the spot where he was.

{g} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 1. sect. 4.

1 Kings 2:30

Ver. 30. And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the Lord,.... At Gibeon:

and said unto him; that is, to Joab:

thus saith the king, come forth; meaning, out of the tabernacle; which plainly shows that his orders were not to slay him in it:

and he said, nay, but I will die here; since he must die, he chose to die there; but what was his reason for it is not so clear; the Jews, some of them, say, to save his goods, and that they might come to his heirs, which would have been forfeited to the crown if he had been tried and condemned in a court of judicature; others, that he might be buried with his ancestors, whereas, had he been sentenced to death by the court, he would have been buried in the common place of malefactors; but rather he thought, or at least hoped, he should not die at all; either that, by gaining time, Solomon might be prevailed upon to pardon him; or however that he would not defile that sacred place with his blood; or, if he should die, he chose to die there, as being a sacred place, and so might hope to receive some benefit from it, as to his future state, where sacrifices were offered to atone for sin:

and Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, thus said Joab, and thus he answered me; told me he would not come out, and, if he must die, he would die there.

1 Kings 2:31

Ver. 31. And the king said unto him, do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him,.... Let him die where he is, slay him upon the spot, and then bury him; not by the altar, but in his own sepulchre, as later related, that in, give orders to bury him there; for Benaiah being a priest, could not be concerned in the burial of him, and besides it was below the dignity of his office:

(see Gill on "1Ch 27:2" where Gill advances resaons for Benaiah not being a priest. Editor.)

that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father; which had been too long connived at, and had called for vengeance; and now here was a proper opportunity upon fresh sins committed to avenge it, and so remove the guilt, which lay upon him and his father's house, for not inflicting deserved punishment on him for it.

1 Kings 2:32

Ver. 32. And the Lord shall return his blood upon his own head,.... By way of retaliation, blood for blood:

who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he; later named; for though they had been in open rebellion against David, yet had submitted, and were reconciled and received into favour; and even their open crimes were not so bad, Solomon judged, as his secret treacherous murders of innocent persons in cool blood; they were men of more honour and integrity than he was, not so cruel and barbarous, though guilty in other respects:

and slew them with the sword, my father not knowing [thereof]; this is observed to remove all suspicion, and which doubtless had been entertained by some, that David had an hand in their death; and that Joab did what he did with his knowledge and consent, and by his advice and order; they having been both concerned in rebellion against him, the one under Ishbosheth, and the other under Absalom:

[to wit], Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah: the reason of the two hosts, of which they were captains or generals, being thus distinguished, is, because the tribes of Israel were on the side of Ishbosheth, whose general Abner was, in opposition to Judah, who made David their king; and, on the other hand, they were the men of Judah that were first and chiefly in the rebellion of Absalom, whose general Amasa was; of the murder of these two men by Joab, see **2Sa 3:27**.

1 Kings 2:33

Ver. 33. Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever,.... Not only upon Joab, but upon his posterity as long as there would be any; signifying, that Joab's death would not be a sufficient satisfaction, but the punishment of his murders would be continued to his offspring: see **2Sa 3:29**;

but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the Lord; such traitors and murderers being removed, peace and happiness might be expected and believed would attend the family and kingdom of David; whether this be considered as a prayer, or a prophecy, it can and will have its full accomplishment only in the kingdom of the Messiah the son of David, of the increase of whose government, and the peace thereof, there shall be no end, **Isa 9:7**.

1 Kings 2:34

Ver. 34. So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up,.... To Gibeon, which was a great high place, **1Ki 3:4**;

and fell upon him, and slew him; at the altar; or, dragging him from it at some distance, drew his sword and slew him:

and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness; not in his dwelling house strictly taken, but in a garden or field adjoining to it, which house in the wilderness; not a waste place uninhabited; for, as Kimchi observes, this word sometimes signifies a place uninhabited, though not tilled, but left for pasture of cattle; and in such a place might Joab's house be, at least his country house, where he might have a farm, and fields, and cattle, as it is plain he had, 2Sa

14:30.

1 Kings 2:35

Ver. 35. And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host,.... Advanced him from being captain of his bodyguards to be general of the army:

and Zadok the priest did he put in the room of Abiathar; from a common priest he promoted him to the high priesthood; whereby that office was restored to its ancient line, the family or Eleazar, having been in the line of Ithamar for many years; and the prediction of the destruction of Eli's house, made eighty years ago, began to be fulfilled, **1Sa 2:31**.

1 Kings 2:36

Ver. 36. And the king sent and called for Shimei,.... Who had cursed his father; he lived at Bahurim, in the tribe of Benjamin, and from thence he sent for him to him, 2Sa 16:5;

and said unto him, build thee an house in Jerusalem and dwell there,
and go not from thence any where; the orders were to remove from Bahurim to Jerusalem, where he was to provide himself a dwelling house, and there continue, and never go out of the city, at least not further on any side of it than it was to the brook Kidron, which was not more than half a mile from the city. This Solomon ordered, to prevent this man going about in the country sowing and stirring up sedition; and that he might be under his eye and notice, that should he commit any evil, and give him an opportunity of punishing him, he might do it as his father had directed him; and he might judge from the temper of the man, and indeed from the nature of men in general, that what they are forbidden they are the most prone unto, that he would transgress in this case, and give him an occasion against him.

1 Kings 2:37

Ver. 37. For it shall be, [that] on the day thou goest out,.... Out of the city of Jerusalem: and passest over the brook Kidron: which is particularly mentioned, because this lay in his way to Bahurim, his native place; he must cross that to go to it, see 2Sa 15:23; and where it might reasonably be supposed he would some time or another be inclined to go, through business, or a desire to see it again:

thou shalt know for certain that thou shall surely die: it may be depended on as what will be most certainly the case; no reprieve nor pardon will be granted:

thy blood shall be on thine own head; fair warning being given, he could blame none but himself, should he be guilty and suffer.

1 Kings 2:38

Ver. 38. And Shimei said unto the king, the saying [is] good,.... It was an act of goodness in the king, and what was good, grateful, and acceptable to him; for being sent for by him, and knowing how he had used his father, and hearing of several traitors being put to death, he expected this would have been his case; and wherefore, instead of being put to death, was only obliged to leave his habitation in the country, and come and live at Jerusalem, a pleasant and delightful city, and the metropolis of the nation, it was very agreeable to him:

as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do; and he not only promised, but swore to it, which Solomon obliged him to, **1Ki 2:42**;

and Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days; he accordingly built or purchased a house in Jerusalem, and removed from Bahurim to it, where he lived for the space of three years, as follows.

1 Kings 2:39

Ver. 39. And it came to pass, at the end of three years,.... He had dwelt at Jerusalem:

that two of the servants of Shimei ran away to Achish the son of Maachah king of Gath; and they told Shimei, saying, behold, thy servant [be] in Gath; he being a churlish, ill-natured man, always cursing or beating them, or imposing too hard service upon them, or not allowing them the necessaries of life; wherefore they broke away from him, and fled to Gath, and put themselves under the protection of the king of that place, who was now at peace with Israel, and a tributary to them: if this Achish was the same that was David's friend, who sheltered him when persecuted by, Saul, he must be an old man; for that was between forty or fifty years ago; and as he seems to be, since he is called the son of Maoch, 1Sa 27:2; which may be thought to be the same with Maachah here.

1 Kings 2:40

Ver. 40. And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants,.... And demand them; through the passion he was in with his servants, and his hurry to get them home, and the covetous disposition which prevailed on him, he might forget, or be tempted to neglect, the prohibition he was under not to go out of Jerusalem; or he might think Solomon had forgot it; or that he could come and go secretly without his knowledge; or if he should know of it, he might hope he would never punish him with death for so small a fault; however, so it was ordered by the providence of God leaving him to his own lust, and the temptations of Satan, that he might suffer just punishment for cursing David:

and Shimei went and brought his servants from Gath; for the king being at peace with Israel, and a tributary to them also, did not choose to detain them, but delivered them up lest it should be resented, and bring him into trouble.

1 Kings 2:41

Ver. 41. And it was told Solomon,.... By the spies he set to watch and observe his motions, or by some others who had seen him go out and return, and knew that it was contrary to the king's orders:

that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again; which was thirty four miles from Jerusalem {h}; whereas his utmost bounds, whither he might go, was the brook Kidron, about half a mile from it.

{h} Bunting's Travels, &c. p. 124.

1 Kings 2:42

Ver. 42. And the king sent and called for Shimei,.... He sent messengers to him, and by them ordered him to come to him, who accordingly came:

and he said unto him, did not I make thee swear by the Lord; which, though not before mentioned, was no doubt done, nor did Shimei deny it:

and protested unto thee; that is, declared before witnesses:

saying, know for certain, that on the day thou goest out; namely, out of the city of Jerusalem:

and walkest abroad any whither; further at most than the brook Kidron, or any other place equally distant from Jerusalem, on any side of it; for when he went to Gath, he did not go over Kidron, but went the road the other way around. Kidron lay to the east, and Gath to the west of Jerusalem: now the protestation made to him was, that if he went out of Jerusalem any way,

that thou shalt surely die; it would be sure and certain death to him:

and thou saidst unto me, the word [that] I have heard [is] good; not only he promised to obey it, and that with an oath, but declared it was agreeable and acceptable to him, and therefore the offence was a very aggravated one.

1 Kings 2:43

Ver. 43. Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the Lord,.... Which was made by him, and in his presence, and in which he was appealed to, and so by not keeping it was guilty of perjury:

and the commandment that I have charged thee with? and so guilty of disobedience to him as his sovereign; for which two reasons he ought to die.

1 Kings 2:44

Ver. 44. The king said moreover to Shimei,.... Not as another reason for his putting him to death, but to remind him of his former sins, and to observe to him the providence of God in suffering him to fall into others, that justice might take place upon him for them also:

thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father; which conscience must bear witness to, and accuse him of, not only of the words and actions themselves uttered and done by him, but of the malice and wickedness from whence they sprung:

therefore the Lord shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head; the punishment of it; which though not directly inflicted for that, yet in providence was brought about as a just retaliation for it.

1 Kings 2:45

Ver. 45. And King Solomon [shall be] blessed,.... With a long and peaceable reign, and large dominions, notwithstanding all the attempts to make him unhappy:

and the throne of David shall be established before the Lord for ever; the kingdom of David over Judah for a long time, in his natural line; and the kingdom of Israel, spiritual Israel, for ever in his son the Messiah; and that in the presence of the Lord, he observing, ordering, and succeeding all things to that purpose.

1 Kings 2:46

Ver. 46. So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, which went out,.... From the presence of the king, and took Shimei with him to the proper place of execution, it not being fitting to execute him before the king:

and fell upon him, that he died; put him to death by the sword:

and the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon; Adonijah the usurper, and Joab the general of the army, who took on his side, being both put to death; and Abiathar the high priest deposed, who was in the same conspiracy; and Shimei, a dangerous and troublesome man, dispatched, there remained none to give any disturbance; so that he now sat easy and quiet on his throne, and things with respect to the civil government were on a firm and settled foundation.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST KINGS 3

This chapter relates the marriage of Solomon with Pharaoh's daughter, **1Ki 3:1**; his piety and devotion, **1Ki 3:2**; his prayer for wisdom and understanding, which was acceptable to God, who promised to grant his request, with an addition to it, **1Ki 3:5**; an instance and proof of the wisdom given him in determining a case between two harlots brought before him, which greatly raised his reputation, and gave him reverence among his people, **1Ki 3:16**.

Ver. 1. And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt,.... Pharaoh was a common name of the kings of Egypt, of whom no mention is made in Scripture from the times of Moses until this time; which may seem strange, when it is considered that that kingdom was a potent one, and near the land of Canaan; but it was governed by a race of kings in this period of time, of whom, as Diodorus Siculus {i} says, there is nothing worthy of relation. The name of this Pharaoh, according to Eupolemus {k}, an Heathen writer, was Vaphres; for he says, that David contracted a friendship with this king, and he relates some letters which passed between him and Solomon, concerning sending him workmen for the building of the temple, which are still preserved; but Calvisius {l} thinks it was Sesostris; what this affinity was is next observed:

and took Pharaoh's daughter: that is, married her; who, according to Ben Gersom, was proselyted first to the Jewish religion; which is very probable, or otherwise it can hardly be thought Solomon would marry her; and as the forty fifth psalm, Ps 45:1, and the book of Canticles, supposed to be written on that occasion, seem to confirm; to which may be added, that it does not appear she ever enticed or drew him into idolatry; for, of all the idols his wives drew him into the worship of, no mention is made of any Egyptian deities. The Jews say {m} Rome was built the same day Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter, but without foundation: this was not Solomon's first wife; he was married to Naamah the Ammonitess before he was king, for he had Rehoboam by her a year before that for Solomon reigned only forty years, and Rehoboam, who succeeded him, was forty one years of age when he began to reign, 1Ki 11:41;

and brought her into the city of David; the fort of Zion:

until he had made an end of building his own house: which was thirteen years in building, and now seems to have been begun, **1Ki 7:1**;

and the house of the Lord; the temple, which according: to the Jewish chronology {n}, was begun building before his marriage of Pharaoh's daughter, and was seven years in building; and therefore this marriage must be in the fourth year of his reign; for then he began to build the temple, **1Ki 6:37**; and so it must be, since Shimei lived three years in Jerusalem before he was put to death, after which this marriage was, **1Ki 2:37**;

and the wall of Jerusalem round about; all which he built by raising a levy on the people, **1Ki 9:15**; and when these buildings were finished, he built a house for his wife, but in the mean while she dwelt in the city of David.

{i} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 42. {k} Apud. Euseb. Praeparet. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30, 31, 32. {l} Chronolog. p. 191, 192. {m} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 56. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 2. {n} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 15. p. 41.

1 Kings 3:2

Ver. 2. Only the people sacrificed in high places,.... On the tops of their houses, on hills and mountains, and particularly at the high place in Gibeon, where the tabernacle was:

because there was no house built unto the name of the Lord until those days; to which they were obliged to repair as afterwards, and there offer their sacrifices, as the Lord had commanded, De 12:5.

1 Kings 3:3

Ver. 3. And Solomon loved the Lord,.... The worship of the Lord, as the Targum: and which he showed by

walking in the statutes of David his father; in which his father walked, which were the statutes of the Lord, or which he exhorted him to walk in, and were the same, **1Ki 2:3**;

only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places; besides that at Gibeon, which it seems David did not.

1 Kings 3:4

Ver. 4. And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there,.... About four or five miles from Jerusalem; See Gill on "1Ki 2:28";

for that [was] the great high place; not that the place itself might be higher than others that were used; but here were the tabernacle of Moses, and the altar; so that it was a more dignified place, and more sacred because of them:

a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar; the brazen altar of burnt offerings there; not at one time, but on several days successively; though Jarchi says on one day; and which was a prodigious number, never was known the like, unless at the dedication of the temple, **1Ki 8:63**.

1 Kings 3:5

Ver. 5. In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night,.... This was not a common natural dream, but an extraordinary, divine, and supernatural one, a prophetic dream, a night vision, such as God used to speak in to his prophets; in which he had the full use of his reasoning powers, was under divine impressions, and in a spiritual frame of mind, and in the exercise of grace; it was not a mere dream that the Lord did appear to him, but he really did appear to him while sleeping and dreaming, by some display of his glory in some way or another:

and God said, ask what I shall give thee; he did not hereby dream that God said to him, but he really did say this; bid him ask what he would and it should be given him; he knew what he designed to give, but he would have it asked of him, as he will be inquired of by all his people to do that for them which he has intended and provided for them; and it is encouragement enough for them to ask, since he has promised to give.

1 Kings 3:6

Ver. 6. And Solomon said,.... In his dream; not that he dreamt he said, when he did not; but he really said, as follows:

thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy; bestowed many favours and blessings upon him, both temporal and spiritual:

according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; in the truth of doctrine and worship, according to the revealed will and word of God, and which he observed with great strictness, living soberly, righteously, and godly, though not without failings and imperfections, yet with great integrity and sincerity; and this holy walk of his was not the cause of God's showing mercy to him, nor was it in proportion to that, but what he was influenced to by the mercy that was shown him:

and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as [it is] this day; a son to be his successor, meaning himself; which was an additional favour to all the rest, and was in reserve, and now bestowed, as time had made to appear.

1 Kings 3:7

Ver. 7. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father,.... Removed by death, in whose stead he reigned by the appointment of God, and through his overruling providence, notwithstanding the attempts made to prevent it, and therefore to God he ascribes it:

and I [am but] a little child; not in age and stature, but in knowledge and understanding; for though his father called him a wise man, and he was judged so by others, and really was one, yet in his own opinion and thought of himself such was his modesty and humility, that he was but a child as to his intellectual powers and capacity for government: some understand this of age; and the Jews commonly say he was but twelve years of age when he was anointed king, which they reckon thus; that he was born at the time that Ammon ravished Tamar, two years after which was Absalom's sheep shearing, when he slew Amnon, on which he fled to Geshur, and was there three years; here are five years; he returned thence and was at Jerusalem two years; lo, seven years; he rebelled and was slain, and after that there was a famine of three years, which make ten; and in the year following David numbered the people, which was nine or ten months in doing; the next year he died, which was the fortieth of his reign, in all twelve years; so reckon Jarchi and Kimchi; and Eupolemus, an Heathen writer {n}, is express for it, who says, that David, when he had reigned forty years, delivered up the kingdom to Solomon his son, being then twelve years of age, which he must receive from the tradition of the Jews; the same is said by several of the ancient fathers, as Ignatius {o} and Jerom {p}; but this cannot be fact; for, if so, his son Rehoboam must be born to him when he was but eleven years of age; See Gill on "1Ki 3:5"; it is best therefore to interpret this of the sense he had of the weakness of his understanding, and of his incapacity for government, as the next clause explains it:

I know not [how] to go out or come in; in the administration of government, to execute his office as a king, in allusion to shepherds, as kings are sometimes called, going in and out before their sheep.

{n} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praeparat. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30, 31, 32.) {o} Epist. ad Magnesios, p. 141. Ed. Voss. {p} Epist. Rufino & Vitali, fol. 24, 25. tom. 3.

1 Kings 3:8

Ver. 8. And thy servant [is] in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen,.... To be his special and peculiar people above all people on the earth; this is not to be understood locally, though Jerusalem, where his palace was, was in the middle of the land; but of the exercise of his office, he being placed over the people, and among them, and having the care and inspection of them:

a great people, that cannot be numbered and counted for multitude; being for number as the stars in the sky, and as the sand upon the seashore, as had been promised.

1 Kings 3:9

Ver. 9. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people,.... Not an understanding of things spiritual, nor of things natural, though both were given him, but of things political, what related to the civil government, that he might be able to judge or rule the people of Israel in the best manner:

that I may discern between good and bad; not merely between moral good and evil, of which he had a discernment; but between right and wrong in any case or controversy that came before him between man and man, that so he might be able to pass a right sentence, and do justice to every one:

for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? who are so very numerous, and have so many causes to be heard and and those many of them very intricate and difficult; so that no man is equal to such arduous work, unless he has more than an ordinary capacity given him by the Lord.

1 Kings 3:10

Ver. 10. And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. Understanding in the affairs of civil government; since he had respect not to his own private benefit and advantage, but the good of the people he governed, and the honour and glory of God, who had set him over them, they being his chosen people, and whose vicegerent he was.

1 Kings 3:11

Ver. 11. And God said unto him,.... Being yet in a dream:

because thou hast asked this thing; wisdom for government:

and hast not asked for thyself long life; which is naturally desired by men, and always reckoned a great temporal blessing, and especially to be wished for by a king living in great pomp and splendour:

neither hast asked riches for thyself; to support his grandeur; for though David his father had left him much, yet not for himself, but for the building of the temple:

nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; victory over them, and to have it in his power to take away their lives when he pleased; which kings, and especially tyrants, are desirous of, such as are ambitious, haughty, and revengeful:

but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; where the right of a cause lay, that so he might make a right judgment of it, and pass a righteous sentence, a sentence not to the injury of any.

1 Kings 3:12

Ver. 12. Behold, I have done according to thy words,.... Expressed in his request: he not only promised he would grant him it, but he had already done it, or at least had begun to do it:

lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; had greatly increased his wisdom and understanding in things political, things respecting civil government, and also in things natural, in the knowledge of the things of nature as appears from **1Ki 4:33**; and of the arts and sciences:

so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee: which some restrain to kings, and to the kings of Israel; that there were none of the kings before him, as Saul and David, like him for wisdom, nor any of the kings of Judah and Israel after him; but it may include all men of all nations in the world, since he is said to be wiser than all men; and some other nations, and particular men of other nations, famous for wisdom, are expressly mentioned as inferior to him, **1Ki 4:30**; but then this must be understood of men since the fall; for Adam, doubtless, had a larger stock of knowledge and understanding in his state of innocence than ever Solomon had; and it must be restrained to political and natural knowledge; for, as for divine knowledge, Kimchi excepts Moses; and we may well except the apostles of Christ for spiritual and evangelical knowledge; and as for our Lord, the antitype of Solomon, he is greater than him in all kind of knowledge, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge being hid in him, see Mt 12:42.

1 Kings 3:13

Ver. 13. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked,.... That is, intended to give him, and now promised it, and was about to bestow it on him:

both riches and honour; the former through the presents and tribute of the nations about him, and his trading to foreign parts; and the latter chiefly through his wisdom, the fame of which was spread everywhere:

so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days; that is, none like him for riches and honour among all the kings of the neighbouring nations so long as he lived; though there might be kings in later times as rich, or richer than he, as Croesus, Alexander, &c. but then not so honourable as he; so, putting both together, there were no kings like him before or after, and especially if wisdom be added to them, as in **2Ch 1:12**.

1 Kings 3:14

Ver. 14. And if thou wilt walk in my ways,.... Prescribed and directed to in his word,

to keep my statutes and my commandments; ceremonial, moral, and judicial:

as thy father David did walk; which Solomon himself had observed, **1Ki 3:6**; and whose walk was worthy of his imitation:

then I will lengthen thy days; the other promises of riches and honour are absolute, but this of long life conditional, depending upon his holy walk and conversation; and hence, because he failed in this the Jews observe he did not attain to long life, dying, as they suppose, at fifty two years of age; which is grounded on a wrong hypothesis, that he was but twelve years of age when he he began to reign, and he reigned forty years, as before observed.

1 Kings 3:15

Ver. 15. And Solomon awoke, and, behold, [it was] a dream,.... Not that it was nothing but a dream, a natural one, a vain and empty one, but a divine and supernatural one, a dream of prophecy, as the Jews call it, or a prophetic dream; a true one, which had its fall accomplishment in him, the truth of which he perceived as soon as he awoke; for he found himself possessed of such a measure of wisdom and knowledge he never had before, which occasioned the thanksgiving and joy next expressed:

and he came to Jerusalem; from Gibeon, accompanied by his nobles and servants:

and stood before the ark of the covenant the Lord; which was in a tent David had pitched for it there, **2Sa 6:17**; here he stood with holy reverence, as in the presence of the Lord, and as a servant of his, to minister to him, and as a worshipper of him, with a heart full of gratitude for the great things he had done for him, and promised to him:

and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings; by way of thankfulness for his quiet settlement in the for the Lord's appearance to him at Gibeon, and what he had already given, and promised to give:

and made a feast to all his servants; in a way of joy and gladness for the above layouts; this feast was either the part of the peace offerings he offered, which belonged to the offerer to eat with his friends, or this was a special feast made at his own palace for his courtiers.

1 Kings 3:16

Ver. 16. Then came there two women [that] were harlots unto the king,.... The same day, as Abarbinel thinks, the night before which the Lord had appeared to Solomon; this came to pass through the providence of God, that there should be immediately an instance and proof of the wisdom and understanding the Lord had given to Solomon; these women, according to the Targum, were victuallers or inn keepers; and so Ben Gersom thinks they were sellers of food, as Rahab; though he observes it is possible they might, prostitute themselves: this may be said in their favour, that common prostitutes do not usually bear children, or, when they do, take no care of them, have no affection for them, and much less are fond of them, as these seem to be; but, on the other hand, no mention being made of their husbands, and living together in one house, and alone, and being impudent, brawling, and litigious, give great suspicion of the truth of the character they bear in our version and others:

and stood before him; to lay their case before him, and each plead their own cause; it may be, it had been tried in another court before, and could not be determined, and so was brought to the king; and, if so, the wisdom of Solomon was the more conspicuous, in deciding it in the manner he did.

1 Kings 3:17

Ver. 17. And the one woman said,.... Who was the plaintiff:

O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; pointing to the defendant, who stood by her:

and I was delivered of a child with her in the house; she being present at the delivery, and she only, as it should seem.

1 Kings 3:18

Ver. 18. And it came to pass, the third day after I was delivered,.... Of a child, as before expressed:

that this woman was delivered also; of another child; and being both of the same sex, both sons, as afterwards appears; and being so nearly of an age, it was difficult to distinguish them;

and we [were] together; [there was] no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house; so that in this trial no evidences could be produced on either side.

1 Kings 3:19

Ver. 19. And this woman's child died in the night,.... Whether the same night following the day it was born is not certain;

because she overlaid it; or laid upon it, being heavy through sleep, and not knowing what she did, turned herself upon it, and smothered it; because it had no previous illness, or any marks of any disease it could be thought to die of, and perhaps there might be some of its being overlaid.

1 Kings 3:20

Ver. 20. And she arose at midnight,.... Perceiving what she had done, that she had overlaid her child, and it was dead; either through fear of punishment inflicted on persons thus negligent, or because of the disgrace of it, taking no more care of her child, she made use of the following stratagem:

and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept; this served to puzzle the cause, for how could she know what she did when she was asleep? this she could not prove, it was only conjecture:

and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom; where she found it in the morning; but still what proof was there that it was the other woman's, and not her own, that lay dead in her bosom?

1 Kings 3:21

Ver. 21. And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck,.... As she used to do:

behold, it was dead; her own child, as she thought at first:

but when I had considered it in the morning; it was towards morning, or just at break of day, when she arose to suckle it, and found it dead: but when it was broad day, and the light of the morning was increased, she more narrowly viewed it, and by its features, or some marks she had observed;

behold, it was not my son which I did bear: she was fully satisfied it was not her own child, but another.

1 Kings 3:22

Ver. 22. And the other woman said,.... The defendant:

nay, but the living [is] my son, and the dead [is] thy son; she denied what the other said, but offered nothing in proof of it:

and this said; she who was the plaintiff replied in the same language:

no: but the dead [is] thy son, and the living [is] my son; without being able to add anything in confirmation of what she had deposed:

thus they spake before the king; several times, over and over again, what is before expressed, having nothing to produce on either side in proof of their assertions; so that it was very difficult to determine to whom the living child belonged.

1 Kings 3:23

Ver. 23. Then said the king,.... As judge, summing up what had been said on both sides, which were only bare assertions without proof; the one affirming what the other denied, and the other denying what the other affirmed:

the one saith, this [is] my son that liveth, and thy son [is] the dead;
and the other saith nay; but thy son [is] the dead, and my son [is] the living; this he repeated to show to all present that no determination could be made by what had been said on each side, and that some other method must be taken.

1 Kings 3:24

Ver. 24. And the king said, bring me a sword,.... The design of which might not at first appear to the court, and it might be thought strange, and greatly wondered at: what should be the meaning of it:

and they brought a sword before the king; his commands were obeyed.

1 Kings 3:25

Ver. 25. And the king said,.... To one of his officers:

divide the living child in two; not that he meant it should be actually done, though it might at first be thought he really intended it, and so strike the minds of some with horror, as it did, however, the mother; but he ordered this, to try the affections of the women, and thereby come to the true knowledge of the affair; though, some think he knew it before by their countenances and manner of speech, but that he was desirous all present might see it, and be satisfied of it:

and give half to the one, and half to the other; since both claimed it.

1 Kings 3:26

Ver. 26. Then spake the woman, whose the living child [was], unto the king,.... In haste, and with great vehemency, lest the executioner should at once dispatch it:

(for her bowels yearned upon her son); not being able to bear to see his life taken away:

and she said, O my lord: or, "on me {q}, my lord"; let the sin, the lie that I have told, be on me, and the punishment of it; she rather chose to be reckoned a liar, and to endure any punishment such an offence deserved, than that her child should be cut asunder:

give her the living child, and in no wise slay it; being willing to part with her interest in it, rather than it should be put to death:

but the other said, let it be neither mine nor thine, [but] divide [it]; for as she knew it was not her own, she had no affection for it, nor desire to have it; chose rather to be clear of the expense of keeping and nursing it, and would, by its being put to death, be avenged of her adversary, who had brought this cause before the king.

{q} yb "in me", Montanus; so Abarbinel.

1 Kings 3:27

Ver. 27. Then the king answered and said, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it,.... That is, to her who desired it might not be slain, but rather be given to her who had no right to it:

she [is] the mother thereof; which might be strongly concluded from her compassion for it, her eagerness and earnestness to have its life spared, and from the indifference of the other, yea, from her cruelty and barbarity in moving to have it divided.

1 Kings 3:28

Ver. 28. And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged,.... In the above case; the decision of it was divulged throughout the land, and the fame of it was spread everywhere:

and they feared the king; reverenced him as a wise, judicious, and faithful king, and feared to do anything of a criminal nature, as perceiving that he was so sagacious and penetrating, that he would discover it quickly, and bring them to shame and punishment:

for they saw that the wisdom of God [was] in him to do judgment; that God had put more than ordinary wisdom into him, to make a right judgment in causes that came before him, and finish them in the most just and equitable manner.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST KINGS 4

As in the preceding chapter we have a proof of the wisdom and understanding which the Lord gave to Solomon, as promised, so in this an account is given of the riches and honour he was possessed of; of him, as king over all Israel, and of his princes, **1Ki 4:1**; of the providers of food for his household in the several parts of the land, **1Ki 4:7**; of the largeness and extent of his dominions, and of the peace and prosperity thereof, **1Ki 4:20**; of his daily provisions for his household and for his cattle, **1Ki 4:22**; and of his superior wisdom and knowledge to all others in all nations, which brought some out of all to hear it, **1Ki 4:29**.

Ver. 1. So King Solomon was king over all Israel. As David his father was not at first, only over Judah, and as Solomon's successors were not, after the division of the kingdom under his son Rehoboam; though this seems to have a particular respect to what is related in the preceding chapter concerning the wisdom of Solomon, for which he was so famous, that he reigned by the consent of all, and in the hearts of all the people of Israel.

1 Kings 4:2

Ver. 2. And these [were] the princes which he had,.... That were in office about him, in the highest posts of honour and trust:

Azariah the son of Zadok the priest: or rather his grandson, since Ahimaaz was the son of Zadok, and Azariah the son of Ahimaaz, **1Ch 6:8**; though another Zadok may be meant, and his son not a priest but a prince, as the word may be rendered, and was Solomon's prime minister of state, and the rather, since he is mentioned first.

1 Kings 4:3

Ver. 3. Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes,.... Their father Shisha, the same with Sheva, was scribe only in David's time; and he being dead very probably, both his sons were continued in the office as secretaries of state, Solomon having more business for such an office, see 2Sa 20:25;

Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder; who was in the same office in the times of David, and now held it under Solomon, **2Sa 8:16**.

1 Kings 4:4

Ver. 4. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada [was] over the host,.... General of the army in the room of Joab, **1Ki 2:35**;

and Zadok and Abiathar [were] the priests; so they were when Solomon came to the throne; but Abiathar was deposed by him after some time, though he might retain the name afterwards, and be employed, as Ben Gersom thinks, in case of necessity, in the room of Zadok, or, however, be employed as a common priest at Jerusalem, upon a reconciliation with Solomon; though Kimchi thinks another Abiathar is meant, which is not so likely.

1 Kings 4:5

Ver. 5. And Azariah the son of Nathan [was] over the officers,.... The twelve officers who provided food for Solomon's household after mentioned:

and Zabud the son of Nathan; another of the sons of Nathan the prophet: for he being a principal instrument of settling Solomon on the throne, had interest enough to promote his sons to the chief places of honour and trust: and this here

[was] principal officer, [and] the king's friend; a chief minister about him, very intimate with him, that kept him company, privately conversed with him, was in his secrets, and admitted to great privacy and nearness to him.

1 Kings 4:6

Ver. 6. And Abiathar [was] over the household,.... Steward of the household:

and Adoniram the son of Abda [was] over the tribute, over those that collected the tribute, as the Targum, whether from the people of Israel or other nations, or both; this man was in the same post in David's time, 2Sa 20:24.

1 Kings 4:7

Ver. 7. And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel,.... Not with respect to the twelve tribes of Israel, for it does not appear that they had each of them a tribe under them, but some particular places in a tribe; but with respect to the twelve months of the year, in which each took his turn:

which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision; furnished food of all sorts out of the country in which they presided for the space of one month in a year; by which means there was always a plenty of provisions at court for the king's family, and for all strangers that came and went, and no one part of the land was burdened or drained, nor the price of provisions raised; these seem to be the twelve "phylarchi", or governors of tribes, Eupolemus {r}, an Heathen writer, speaks of, before whom, and the high priest, David delivered the kingdom to Solomon; though in that he was mistaken, that they were in being then, since these were officers of Solomon's creating.

{r} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30.

1 Kings 4:8

Ver. 8. And these [are] their names,.... Or rather the names of their fathers; for of many of them not their own names but their fathers' names are given, as being well known:

the son of Hur, in Mount Ephraim; a fruitful country in the tribe of Ephraim, from whence this officer was to furnish the king with provisions for one month in the year.

1 Kings 4:9

Ver. 9. The son of Dekar in Makaz,.... A place in the tribe of Dan, on the borders of it:

and in Shaalbim, and Bethshemesh, and Elonbethhanan; all in the same tribe, see Jos 19:41.

1 Kings 4:10

Ver. 10. The son of Hesed in Aruboth,.... Which seems to have been in the tribe of Judah by the places that follow:

to him [pertained] Sochoh; there were two places of this name in that tribe, Jos 15:35;

and all the land of Hepher: there was an Hepher in the land of Canaan, which was a royal city in the times of the Canaanites, Jos 12:17; and there was an Hepher, the name of a man, a descendant of Judah, to whom, very probably, this land belonged, **1Ch 4:6**; unless it can be thought to be the portion of land given to the daughters of Hepher, Jos 17:3.

1 Kings 4:11

Ver. 11. The son of Abinadab in all the region of Dor,.... The same with Dor and her towns, belonged to the half tribe of Manasseh, on this side Jordan, Jos 17:11;

which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife; not when he was first put into this office, when, in all probability, Solomon had not a daughter marriageable; but behaving well in it, in process of time he bestowed a daughter of his on him.

1 Kings 4:12

Ver. 12. Baana the son of Ahilud, [to him pertained] Taanach and Megiddo, and all Bethshean,.... All which were places in the tribe of Manasseh, Jos 17:11;

which [is] by Zartanah beneath Jezreel; so described, to distinguish it, as is thought, from Zaretan in **Jos 3:16**; and the country this officer presided over reached also

from Bethshean to Abelmeholah, [even] unto [the place that is] beyond Jokneam; the two first of these were in the tribe of Manasseh, and the last in the tribe of Zebulun, Jos 19:11.

1 Kings 4:13

Ver. 13. The son of Geber in Ramothgilead,.... A city in the tribe of Gad, and was a city of refuge, Jos 20:8;

to him [pertained] the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which [are] in Gilead; of which see Nu 32:41;

to him [also pertained] the region of Argob, which [is] in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls, and brasen bars; called by Josephus {s} Ragaba, beyond Jordan; See Gill on "De 3:4".

{s} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 15. sect. 5.

1 Kings 4:14

Ver. 14. Ahinadab the son of Iddo [had] Mahanaim. Another city on the other side Jordan, where both Ishbosheth and David sometimes dwelt, **2Sa 2:8**; this and the places adjacent must be very fruitful, since this officer was to furnish the king with provisions for a month once a year from hence,

1 Kings 4:15

Ver. 15. Ahimaaz [was] in Naphtali,.... Out of that tribe he made a monthly provision annually:

he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife; another daughter of Solomon's, in course of time; See Gill on "1Ki 4:11".

1 Kings 4:16

Ver. 16. Baanah the son of Hushai [was] in Asher,.... In the tribe of Asher; a very plentiful tribe, particularly for oil; this officer was perhaps the son of Hushai, the Archite, David's friend, and, it may be, promoted for his sake:

and in Aloth; which signifies ascensions, mountains went upon by steps; near to this place was an high mountain, called the ladder of Tyre {t}; perhaps that and the parts adjacent may be meant here.

{t} Vid. Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 10. sect. 2.

1 Kings 4:17

Ver. 17. Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah in Issachar. In the tribe of Issachar; he had the whole tribe at his command to make a monthly provision out of for the king once a year, as had the preceding officer and the following one.

1 Kings 4:18

Ver. 18. Shimei the son of Elah in Benjamin. So described, to distinguish him from that Shimei that cursed David, who was of the same tribe; See Gill on "2Sa 16:5".

1 Kings 4:19

Ver. 19. Geber the son of Uri [was] in the country of Gilead,.... Which was beyond Jordan, and inhabited by the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh; this must be understood of all the country, excepting what was under the jurisdiction of the son of Geber, **1Ki 4:13**; and which had been

the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; until it was taken from them by Moses, Nu 21:25;

and [he was] the only officer which [was] in the land; which is not true of Geber; for there was another officer in the land of Gilead besides him, the son of Geber before observed, unless it should be rendered "in that land", in that part of the land he had; but then the same might have been observed of all the rest of the officers: the words may be rendered best, "and there was one officer in the land"; which some understand of one officer over all the rest, Azariah the son of Nathan, **1Ki 4:5**; but it seems best what other Jewish writers say {u}, that this was another officer appointed for the intercalated month; when there were thirteen months in the year, there was an officer in the land fixed for that month to make provision out of the land; perhaps any where, where he pleased, being not limited to any certain place. These twelve providers for Solomon's family were emblems of the twelve apostles of Christ, appointed to provide food for his family, the church; and if you add to them the Apostle Paul, it will make thirteen, as this officer did.

{u} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 12. 1.

1 Kings 4:20

Ver. 20. Judah and Israel [were] many, as the sand which [is] by the sea in multitude,.... Being blessed with great fruitfulness in their families, and having no pestilential disease among them, nor wars to lessen their number, and so the promise to Abraham was fulfilled, Ge 22:17; and which was an emblem of Christ's spiritual subjects, especially in the latter day, whom Solomon was a type of, see **Ho 1:10**;

eating, and drinking, and making merry; having a large increase of the fruits of the earth, and in no fear of any enemies; expressive of the spiritual joy of believers in the kingdom of Christ, and under the word and ordinances, **So 2:3**.

1 Kings 4:21

Ver. 21. And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms,.... Not only over Judah and Israel, but all people round about him, they standing in fear of him; or who brought him presents, or paid tribute to him, which was an acknowledgment of superiority over them, and doing homage to him:

from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt; that is, from the river Euphrates, as the Targum, which was the border of his proper domains to the east, to Palestine, inhabited by the Philistines, which lay to the west, and as far as the border of Egypt, which was the southern boundary; a like and larger extent of Christ's kingdom is given, Ps 72:8;

and they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life; this explains in what sense other kingdoms besides were ruled by Solomon, and subject to him; of Christ his antitype, see Ps 72:10.

1 Kings 4:22

Ver. 22. And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour,.... The measure here used was the "corus", or "cor", the same with the homer, which was equal to ten ephahs, and, according to Bishop Cumberland {w}, held seventy five wine gallons and five pints, and somewhat more; by which may be known how many gallons of fine flour these thirty measures held, which were all consumed in one day:

and threescore measures of meal: sixty measures of a coarser sort, for the servants, not so finely dressed; the same measure is here used as before; and it is observed by some, that one cor is equivalent to six hundred forty eight Roman pounds, and allowing to one man two pounds a day for his food, there would be food enough for 29,160 men out of 90 times 648, or 58,320 pounds {x}. Others exaggerate the account; Vilalpandus says it would have sufficed 48,600 persons; Seth Calvisius 54,000, and Salianus 70,000 {y}; the Jews say {z} that he had 60,000 that ate at his table; that is, who were maintained at his court.

{w} Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 3. p. 86. {x} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. p. 516. {y} Vid. Witsii Miscellan. tom. 2. exercit. 10. sect. 26. {z} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 8. 2.

1 Kings 4:23

Ver. 23. Ten fat oxen,.... Such as were kept up in the stall and fatted:

and twenty oxen out of the pastures; which were killed as they were taken from thence, and not put up to be fed:

and an hundred sheep; out of the folds:

beside harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer; which were clean creatures, according to the Levitical law, De 14:5; these were hunted in fields, or taken out of the park, or were presents from other countries; so that here was plenty of beef, mutton, and venison: for the spiritual application of this to the antitypical Solomon, and his provisions, see Mt 22:4;

and fatted fowl; such as we call capons {a}; some Jewish writers {b}, because of the likeness of sound in the word here used, take them to be Barbary fowls, or such as were brought from that country: there is a sort of birds called barbaroi, which were without a voice, that neither heard men, nor knew their voice {c}.

{a} So David de Pomis, Tzemach David, fol. 12. 3. and some in Kimchi in loc. {b} Baal Aruch & R. Elias Levit. Tishbi, in voce rbrb. {c} Scholia in Aristoph. Aves, p. 550.

1 Kings 4:24

Ver. 24. For he had dominion over all [the region] on this side the river,.... Or beyond the river Euphrates, in the sense before given, **1Ki 4:21**; which accounts for the plenty of provisions he had, and the revenue with which he supported such a table he kept:

from Tiphsah even to Azzah; or Gaza, one of the five principalities of the Philistines. Tiphsah is thought to be the Thapsacus of Pliny {d} which both he and Ptolemy {e} place near the river Euphrates, since called Amphipolis; the former places it in Syria, the latter in Arabia Deserta; and which Strabo {f}, from Eratosthenes, describes as 4800 furlongs or six hundred miles from Babylon, and from the place where Mesopotamia begins not less than two thousand furlongs or two hundred and fifty miles:

over all the kings on this side the river; the river Euphrates, or beyond it, in the sense before explained, as the kings of Syria, Arabia, &c.

and he had peace on all sides round about him; in which he was a type of Christ, the Prince of peace.

{d} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 24. {e} Geograph. l. 5. c. 19. {f} Geograph. l. 16. p. 514.

1 Kings 4:25

Ver. 25. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely,.... Without fear of any injury done to their persons or properties by any enemy; which is, and will be, more abundantly fulfilled in Christ, the antitype of Solomon, Jer 23:5;

every man under his vine, and under his fig tree; which were principal trees in the land of Judea, put for all the rest; and the phrase denotes the happy, safe, quiet, full, and peaceable enjoyment of all outward blessings, and is used of the times of the Messiah, **Mic 4:4**;

from Dan even to Beersheba; which were the two extremities of the land of Israel, north and south:

all the days of Solomon; so long this peace and safety continued, there being no wars in his time.

1 Kings 4:26

Ver. 26. And Solomon had forty thousand stalls for horses,.... In **2Ch 9:25**; it is only four thousand; and therefore some think that here is a mistake of the copier, of "arbaim", forty, for "arbah", four; which it is thought might be through divine permission, in such lesser matters, without any prejudice to the authority of the Scriptures in matters of faith and practice; but without supposing this, a reconciliation may be made, by observing, that here the writer, as Ben Gersom notes, gives the number of the horses that were in the stables, which were forty thousand, there the stables themselves, which were four thousand, ten horses in a stable; or here he numbers the stalls, which were forty thousand, and there the stables, which were four thousand, there being ten stalls in each; and the word there has the letter "yod" in it more than here, which is the numerical letter for "ten", and may point thereunto; or here the writer speaks of all the stalls for horses Solomon had throughout the kingdom, there of those only he had in Jerusalem. Benjamin of Tudela {g} affirms, that these stalls, or stables, which Solomon built very strong of large stones, are still in being in Jerusalem, and that there is no building to be seen like it any where; but no other writer speaks of them; nor is it at all probable that they should remain:

for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; some of the said stalls of horses were for his chariots, to draw in them for various uses, of which had 1400, 1Ki 10:26; and others to mount twelve thousand horsemen, who were placed in various parts, to defend kingdom.

{g} Itinerar. p. 43.

1 Kings 4:27

Ver. 27. And these officers provided victuals for King Solomon,.... The twelve before mentioned; and this is repeated here, after the account of his horses, to observe, that they provided for them also, as well as for the sake of what follows; that the large provision made by them was not only for Solomon's family and domestic servants, but for strangers from different arts, who came upon messages to him, or to visit him, and to behold the splendour of his court:

and for all that came to Solomon's table; which was an open table for all comers, as there were some from all parts of the earth, **1Ki 4:34**;

every man in his month; each of the twelve officers provided food in the month assigned to him:

they lacked nothing; they always had enough to supply the king with, and they failed not in the performance of their duty, nor came short of their salaries, being fully and punctually paid them.

1 Kings 4:28

Ver. 28. Barley also, and straw for the horses and dromedaries,.... Or rather mules, by comparing the passage with **2Ch 9:24**; the particular kind of creatures meant is not agreed on; though all take them to be a swifter sort of creatures than horses; or the swifter of horses, as race horses or posts horses: barley was for their provender, that being the common food of horses in those times and countries, and in others, as Bochart {h} has shown from various writers; and in the Misnah {i} it is called the food of beasts; and Solomon is said to have every day his own horses two hundred thousand Neapolitan measures of called "tomboli" {k}; so the Roman soldiers, the horse were allowed a certain quantity of barley for their horses every morning, and sometimes they had money instead of it, which they therefore called "hordiarium" {l} and the "straw" was for the litter of them: these

brought they unto the place; where the officers were; not where the king was, as the Vulgate Latin version; where Solomon was, as the Arabic version, that is, in Jerusalem; nor

where [the officers] were; in their respective jurisdictions, as our version supplies it, which would be bringing them to themselves; but to the place where the beasts were, whether in Jerusalem, or in any, other parts of the kingdom:

every man according to his charge: which he was monthly to perform.

{h} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 9. col. 158, 159. Vid. Homer. Iliad. 4. ver. 196. and Iliad. 8. ver. 560. {i} Sotah, c. 2. sect. 1. {k} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 10. 2. {l} Vid. Valtrinum de re Militar. Roman. l. 3. c. 15. p. 236.

1 Kings 4:29

Ver. 29. And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much,.... In things natural, moral, divine, and spiritual, and that not slight and superficial, but exceeding deep, and large beyond expression; and this he had not from the acuteness of his genius merely, nor from his industry and diligence; but by the gift of God, as whatsoever solid wisdom and understanding is in any man, it is from the liberal hand of God, the fountain of wisdom, **Jas 1:5**;

and largeness of heart, even as sand that [is] on the seashore; he had a genius and capacity to receive anything; his knowledge was vast and comprehensive; it reached to and included things innumerable, as the sand of the sea; there was scarce anything under the heavens, or on the earth, and in the sea, but came within the compass of it, as what are later mentioned show.

1 Kings 4:30

Ver. 30. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east,.... The Arabians, and Persians, famous for wisdom, and who lay to the east of the land of Judea; whose wisdom lay in the knowledge of the stars, in divination by birds, and soothsaying {m}:

and all the wisdom of Egypt; which it was eminent for in the times of Moses, and in which he was learned and well-skilled, **Ac 7:22**; and hence in later times the philosophers of the Gentiles travelled to get knowledge, as Pherecydes, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Plato, and others to Egypt, said to be the mother of arts and sciences {n}.

{m} Midrash Kohelet. fol. 76. 3. {n} Macrob. in Som. Scip. c. 19. 21. & Saturnal l. 1. c. 15.

1 Kings 4:31

Ver. 31. For he was wiser than all men,.... Not only that lived in his time, but in ages past since the fall of Adam, and in times to come, especially in natural wisdom and knowledge, in all the branches of it; for though some men excel in some part of knowledge, yet not in all, as Solomon did:

than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; men of the same names are said to be sons of Zerah, grandson of Judah, **1Ch 2:6**; wherefore these are either other men, or their father had two names; or Mahol here may be an appellative, and describe the character of these then, and point at what they were famous for, as that they were sons of music, piping, and dancing, as Mahol may signify; the Jews have a tradition {o}, that Ethan is Abraham, and Heman Moses, and Chalcol Joseph:

and his fame was in all nations round about; not for his riches and grandeur only, but chiefly for his wisdom.

{o} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 80. 1.

1 Kings 4:32

Ver. 32. And he spake three thousand proverbs,.... Wise sayings, short and pithy sentences, instructive in morality and civil life; these were not written as the book of Proverbs, but spoken only, and were taken from his lips, and spread by those that heard them for the use of others, but in process of time were lost; whereas the above book, being written under divine inspiration, is preserved: and

his songs were a thousand and five; some things that were useful to improve the minds and morals of men he delivered in verse, to make them more pleasant and agreeable, that they might be the more easily received and retained in memory; but of all his songs, the most: excellent is the book of Canticles, called "the Song of Songs", being divine and spiritual, and dictated by the inspiration of the Spirit of God: he was both a moral philosopher and poet, as well as a botanist and naturalist, and well-skilled in medicine, as the following words suggest, **1Ki 4:33**.

1 Kings 4:33

Ver. 33. And he spake of trees,.... Of all trees, herbs, and plants, of the nature, virtues, and use them:

from the cedar tree that [is] in Lebanon: a mountain on the northern border of Judea, famous for cedars, the tallest and largest of trees:

even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; which grew about Jerusalem, and in the mountains of it, as an Arabic writes testifies {p}, the lowest and least herb; so that what is between the cedar and hyssop include trees and plants of every kind and sort: whether the same herb we call hyssop is meant, is not certain; some take it to be mint; others marjoram; some houseleek; others the wallflower; Levinus Lemnius {q} supposes it to be Adiantum, or maiden hair: the Targum interprets it allegorically, that he prophesied of the kings of the house of David in this world, and in the world to come of the Messiah:

he spake also of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes; he understood the nature of all sorts of animals in the earth, air, and sea, and discoursed of their names, kinds, qualities, and use, with the greatest ease and perspicuity; the Jews fancy that Aristotle's History of Animals is his, which that philosopher came upon, and published it in his own name. Suidas {r} says it was reported that Solomon wrote a book of medicines for all diseases, which was fixed to the entrance of the temple, which Hezekiah took away, because sick people applied to that for cure of their disorders, and neglected to pray to God.

{p} Isaac Ben Omram apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 50. col. 590. {q} Herb. Bibl. Explicat. c. 26. {r} In voce ezekiav.

1 Kings 4:34

Ver. 34. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth,.... Who sent their ambassadors to his court to know the truth of what was reported, and bring them some proofs and specimens, by which they might judge of the truth of the relations that had been told them; which perhaps might seem to them to be beyond all belief:

which had heard of his wisdom; for the fame of it was spread everywhere by merchants and travellers, and such sort of persons, who had been at Jerusalem, and were masters of various anecdotes relating to Solomon; which they industriously spread in the several parts of the world they had dealings in.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST KINGS 5

This chapter relates Solomon's preparation for building the temple: on Hiram, king of Tyre, sending a congratulatory letter to him, he returned another to him, signifying his intention to build an house for God, and requesting him to supply him with timber, and men to work it, **1Ki 5:1**; to which Hiram readily agreed, and sent him cedar and fir, and Solomon in return sent him food for his household; and things went on very amicably between them, **1Ki 5:7**; the chapter concludes with an account of Solomon's workmen, where, how, and in what they were employed, **1Ki 5:13**.

Ver. 1. And Hiram king of Tyre sent servants unto Solomon,.... His ambassadors, to condole him on the death of his father, and congratulate him on his accession to the throne; this king is called by the Phoenician historians {s} Hirom, and by Eupolemus {t} Suron, as he is Huram in **2Ch 2:3**; and by Theophilus of Antioch {u} Hierom the son of Abelmalus, in the twelfth year of whose reign the temple was built:

for he had heard that they had anointed him, king in the room of his father; that the Israelites had anointed him king:

for Hiram was ever a lover of David; a friend and ally of his; and we never read of the Tyrians being at war with him, or assisting any of his enemies.

{s} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 17, 18. {t} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 33, 34. {u} Ad Antolyc. l. 3. p. 131, 132.

1 Kings 5:2

Ver. 2. And Solomon sent to Hiram,.... A letter, either by the hand of his ambassadors when they returned, as Kimchi thinks, or by ambassadors Solomon sent on purpose. Josephus {w} appeals to the Tyrian archives for the genuineness of these letters that passed between Hiram and Solomon; and Eupolemus, an Heathen writer {x} has both this which Solomon sent to Hiram, and that which Hiram sent in answer to it, which agree with those in the sacred records:

saying: as follows.

{w} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 2. sect. 8. {x} Ut Supra. (Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l.

9. c. 32, 34.)

1 Kings 5:3

Ver. 3. Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the Lord his God,.... As he designed, and was desirous of; and which Hiram might know not only by common fame, but from David himself, between whom there was an intercourse, and that in relation to cedars for building, which David had of Hiram, **2Ch 2:3**;

for the wars which were about him on every side; or warriors, as the Targum, the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, and Syrians:

until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet; made them subject and tributary to him, as he did at length, see **2Sa 7:1**, &c. so the "Cetib", or textual reading, is; but the "Keri", or marginal reading, is, "under the soles of my feet"; that is, Solomon's, which agrees with what follows; it was true of both.

1 Kings 5:4

Ver. 4. But now the Lord my God hath given me rest on every side,.... From foreign enemies; for Solomon had no wars with any:

[so that there is] neither adversary; or Satan, no internal enemy in his kingdom, as well as no external ones, Adonijah, Joab, and other ill-designing persons, being cut off:

nor evil occurrent; nothing that rose up, and met him, to discourage or hinder the prosecution of the good work he had in view.

1 Kings 5:5

Ver. 5. And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God,.... For his worship, and for his honour and glory:

as the Lord spake unto David my father; by the prophet Nathan, **2Sa 7:12**;

saying, thy son whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name; which was no small encouragement to Solomon to go about this work; in which he was a type of Christ, the builder of his temple, the church, see **Zec 6:12**.

1 Kings 5:6

Ver. 6. Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedars out of Lebanon,.... That is, order his servants to cut them down there for him. Some think that Lebanon belonged to the land of Israel, and therefore Solomon did not ask for the cedars upon it, but for his servants to hew them for him; but as it lay upon the borders of Israel, part of it might belong to them, and another part to Hiram, and on which the best cedars might grow, and so he furnished Solomon both with trees, and men to cut them, as it seems from **1Ki 5:10**; see also **2Ch 2:3**;

and my servants shall be with thy servants: to assist them, and to carry the timber from place to place, and to learn how to hew timber:

and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants, according to all that thou shalt appoint; pay them for their work and service, as Hiram himself should judge fit and reasonable for them; no mention being made of paying for the timber, seems to countenance the notion that the trees were Solomon's; but when the quantity of provisions sent yearly to Hiram for his household, besides what the servants had, is observed, it seems to have been sent as an equivalent to the timber received by Solomon, see **1Ki 5:10**;

for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians; it is not said Tyrians, the Sidonians, perhaps, being more skilful in this than they were; and the Sidonians are said by Homer {y} to be poludaidaloi, very ingenious: and they were both under the jurisdiction and at the command of Hiram; so Eupolemus {z} makes the inscription of Solomon's letter to him to run thus, to Suron (that is, Hiram) king of Tyre, Sidon, and Phoenicia. The Jews being chiefly employed in husbandry, and in feeding cattle, were very unskilful in mechanic arts, and in this of cutting down trees, and hewing timber; for there is skill to be exercised therein; the proper time of cutting down trees should be observed, the part in which they are to be cut, and the position in which they are to be put when cut down, as Vitruvius {a} directs, with other things, and Pliny {b} observes the same.

{y} Iliad. 23. ver. 743. {z} Ut supra. (Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c.

32, 34.) {a} De Architectura, l. 2. c. 9. {b} Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 39.

1 Kings 5:7

Ver. 7. And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon,.... The letter read he sent him:

that he rejoiced greatly; that the friendship which had subsisted between him and David was like to be continued between him and his successor, but chiefly for what follows:

saying, blessed [be] the Lord this day; or Jehovah, by which he seems to have some knowledge of the true God, the God of Israel, and might worship him, though along with him other deities, as some Heathen princes did:

which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people; which he perceived by the letter he sent him, and by his solicitous concern to build an house for the worship and honour of God, and by various other things which his ambassadors reported to him they had seen and heard in Solomon's court.

1 Kings 5:8

Ver. 8. And Hiram sent to Solomon,.... A letter to him, to the following purpose:

saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for; whether he could, and whether it was fitting he should grant his request; which was acting like a wise and prudent prince:

[and] I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir; or of cypress, as in Josephus's copy of this letter, and which grew on Lebanon {c}; these were odorous, sound, and durable timber, especially the cedar, and therefore chosen by Solomon for building.

{c} Diodor. Sic. l. 19. p. 700.

1 Kings 5:9

Ver. 9. My servants shall bring [them] down from Lebanon unto the sea,.... The Mediterranean sea, on which Tyre stood:

and I will convey them by sea in floats; which were either a sort of carriage for the timber the Tyrians and Sidonians had, being furnished with various navigable vessels; or these were the timber itself, and the planks of it, which being fastened together, were set afloat under the direction of some boats with oars, of which they had plenty:

unto the place that thou shalt appoint me; which was Joppa, as appears from **2Ch 2:16**; belonging to the land of Israel, in the same sea:

and will cause them to be discharged there; either to be unloaded from the vessels, or to be unloosed and taken up separately:

and thou shalt receive [them]; by his servants appointed there to bring them to Jerusalem, which was forty miles from Joppa:

and thou shalt accomplish my desire in giving food for my household; signifying, that all that he desired in return was, that he would supply him with corn or wheat, which he stood in need of, and his letter in Josephus {d} expresses; and we find in later times this place was supplied with bread corn from Judea, see **Ezr 3:7**
Ac 12:20.

{d} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 8. c. 2. sect. 8.)

1 Kings 5:10

Ver. 10. So Hiram, gave Solomon cedar trees, and fir trees,.... Ordered his servants to cut them down from Lebanon, and sent them to him in floats, which he received:

[according to] all his desire; he had as many as he requested, and what he wanted.

1 Kings 5:11

Ver. 11. And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat [for] food to his household,.... This measure was the Hebrew measure "cor", or "corus", and, according to Bishop Cumberland {e}, its contents were 17,477 solid inches; it was equal to ten ephahs, each of which held two gallons and an half, and the cor held seventy five wine gallons five pints, and somewhat more; according to some {f}, what it held was equal to six hundred forty eight Roman pounds; so that twenty thousand of them contained 12,960,000 pounds of wheat:

and twenty measures of pure oil; squeezed out of the olives without breaking them; the same kind of measure is here expressed as before, and the quantity answered to 12,960 Roman pounds; another writer {g} reckons a cor to contain 1080 Roman pounds; so that Hiram had every year 21,600 pounds of oil. In **2Ch 2:10**, it is twenty thousand baths of oil now not to take notice that the measures are different, a bath was but the tenth part of a cor, reference is had to different things; here the writer relates what was given to Hiram for his own family, there what was given to the workmen, where several other things are mentioned besides these:

thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year: so long as the building lasted, and the workmen were employed; but Abarbinel thinks that he gave it to him as long as he lived, out of his great munificence and liberality.

{e} Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 3. p. 86. {f} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. p. 517. {g} Van Till in Cantic. Mosis, p. 54.

1 Kings 5:12

Ver. 12. And the Lord gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him,.... Which, among other things, appeared in his preparations for building the temple, and in his agreements with Hiram for timber and workmen for that purpose and by continuing and confirming friendship between himself and Hiram, who was so serviceable to him:

and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and they two made a league together; in order to continue and establish peace and friendship between them, which Solomon might lawfully do, the Tyrians being no part of the seven nations with whom alliances were forbidden.

1 Kings 5:13

Ver. 13. And King Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel,.... Not of money, but of men, as follows:

and the levy was thirty thousand men; for what purpose, and how they were employed, **1Ki 5:14** shows.

1 Kings 5:14

Ver. 14. And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses,.... In their turns; these are the servants of his he proposed to be with Hiram's servants, assisting in cutting down the trees, and squaring the timber in Lebanon, **1Ki 5:6**;

a month they were in Lebanon, [and] two months at home; that they might not be overworked; for they wrought but four months in the year in the hard service in Lebanon, the rest of their time was spent in managing their domestic affairs; these were Israelites:

and Adoniram [was] over the levy: the same that was over the tribute or the collectors of the tax, **1Ki 4:6**; and, according to the Targum, these were such persons.

1 Kings 5:15

Ver. 15. And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens,.... Seventy thousand to carry the stones from the mountains out of which they were dug, and which were near Jerusalem, to the city; these were strangers in Israel, as were those that follow:

and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains: eighty thousand that dug the stones out of the quarries, and squared them; these, with the others, made 150,000, see **2Ch 2:17**; according to Jacob Leon {g}, the number of workmen at the temple for seven years was 163,600, and some make them more.

{g} Relation of Memorable Things in the Temple, ch. 3. p. 14.

1 Kings 5:16

Ver. 16. Besides the chief of Solomon's officers which [were] over the work,.... Over the whole work, preparatory for the building of the temple; though it seems chiefly to have respect to that of hewing the stones, and bringing them to the city:

three thousand and three hundred which ruled over the people that wrought in the work; to keep them to their work, and to see that they performed it well: in **2Ch 2:18**; they are said to be 3600, which is three hundred more than here; those three hundred are the chief officers mentioned in the former part of this verse, which were over the whole work, and even over the 3600 overseers, and with them made up the sum of 3600; so Jacob Leon {h} observes there were 3300 master workmen, and three hundred commanders over them all.

{h} Relation of Memorable Things in the Temple, ch. 3. p. 14.

1 Kings 5:17

Ver. 17. And the king commanded, and they brought great stones,.... Not in quality, but in quantity, large stones, fit to lay in the foundation; strong, and durable against all the injuries of time, as Josephus says {i}:

costly stones; not what are commonly called precious stones, as gems, pearls, &c. but stones of value, as marble, porphyry, &c.

[and] hewed stones; not rough as they were taken out of the quarry, but hewed, and made smooth:

to lay the foundation of the house; which, though out of sight, was to be laid with goodly stones for the magnificence of the building; so the church of Christ, its foundation is said to be laid even with sapphires and other precious stones, see Isa 54:11.

{i} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 3. sect. 2.

1 Kings 5:18

Ver. 18. And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew [them],.... The stones; for it seems Solomon had not only hewers of wood, but of stone, from

Hiram:

and the stonesquarers; or rather the Giblites, the men of Gebal, which were under the jurisdiction of Tyre, and were skilful in this sort of work, as some of them were in others, see Eze 27:9;

so they prepared timber and stones to build the house; both Solomon's and Hiram's builders, and the large number of workmen, both Israelites and strangers; which latter were an emblem of the Gentiles concerned in the building of the spiritual temple, the church of Christ, **Zec 6:15**; and whereas the number of strangers that wrought for the building was far greater than that of the Israelites, it may denote the greater number of Gentiles in the Gospel church state mentioned besides these: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year: so long as the building lasted, and the workmen were employed; but Abarbinel thinks that he gave it to him as long as he lived, out of his great munificence and liberality.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST KINGS 6

This chapter gives an account of the building of the temple, for which preparations were before made and begins with the time of its building, **1Ki 6:1**; gives the dimensions of it and the porch before it, **1Ki 6:2**; observes the windows in it and chambers about it, **1Ki 6:4**; and while it was building, Solomon had a word from the Lord relative to it, **1Ki 6:11**; and then the account goes on concerning the walls of the house, and the flooring of it, **1Ki 6:15**; and the oracle in it, and the cherubim in that, **1Ki 6:19**; and the doors into it, and the carved work of them, **1Ki 6:31**; and the chapter is concluded with observing the time when it was begun and finished **1Ki 6:37**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt,.... The Tyrian writers {k} make it five hundred sixty years from hence; but this no doubt is tightest, which Junius reckons thus; forty years Israel were in the wilderness, seventeen under Joshua, two hundred ninety nine under the judges, eighty under Eli, Samuel, and Saul, forty under David, add to which the four years of Solomon, and they make four hundred eighty {l}; they are somewhat differently reckoned by others {m} from the coming out of Egypt to Joshua forty years, from thence to the first servitude under Cushan twenty five, from thence to the death of Abimelech two hundred fifty six, under Thola twenty three, from thence to the Ammonitish servitude four, under that eighteen, under the judges, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, thirty one, Samuel and Saul forty, David forty, and Solomon three, in all four hundred eighty;

in the, fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel; when he was clear of all disturbers of his government, and had got all things ready for the building of the temple, and had gathered together gold and silver enough of his own to defray the expenses; for, as for what David gave him, he put that into the treasury of the Lord's house, see **1Ki 7:51**;

in the month Zif, which [is] the second month; and so must be Jiar, for Abib or Nisan was the first, and Jiar was the second, which answered to part of our April and part of May; called Zif either from the splendour of the sun, being now higher, and so the greater; or from the trees and flowers of the field being in all their glory; and so the Targum here calls it, the month of splendour of flowers: and it was on the second day of it,

that he began to build the house of the Lord: and a very fit and proper season of the year it was to begin it in, see **2Ch 3:2**.

{k} Apud Theophil. ad Autolyc. l. 3. p. 131. {l} So Gerard. Voss. Chron. Sacr. Isagoge, dissert. 8. c. 7. p. 128. {m} Vid. Vitring. Hypotypos. Hist. Sacr. p. 43.

1 Kings 6:2

Ver. 2. And the house which King Solomon built for the Lord,.... For his worship, honour, and glory:

the length thereof [was] threescore cubits; sixty cubits from east to west, including the holy place and the most holy place; the holy place was forty cubits, and the most holy place twenty; the same measure, as to length, Eupolemus, an Heathen writer {n}, gives of the temple, but is mistaken in the other measures:

and the breadth thereof twenty [cubits]; from north to south:

and the height thereof thirty cubits; this must be understood of the holy place, for the oracle or most holy place was but twenty cubits high, **1Ki 6:20**; though the holy place, with the chambers that were over it, which were ninety cubits, three stories high, was in all an hundred twenty cubits, **2Ch 3:4**; some restrain it to the porch only, which stood at the end, like one of our high steeples, as they think.

{n} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 34.

1 Kings 6:3

Ver. 3. And the porch before the temple of the house,.... Which stood at the east end of it:

twenty cubits [was] the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; which was from north to south, and of the same dimension, so that they exactly answered each other:

[and] ten cubits [was] the breadth thereof before the house; which being added to it, make the whole of the building, most holy place, holy place, and porch, seventy cubits; the height of the porch is not here given, but in **2Ch 3:4**; where it is said to be an hundred twenty cubits high, equal to the height of the house, with the chambers over it; but there the breadth of the porch is not given, as it is here; by these dimensions we may observe the difference between the tabernacle and the temple; the temple was twice as long, and as broad, and thrice as high as that, see Ex 26:8. This fabric was an emblem of the church of God, sometimes called an holy temple, and the temple of the living God, **2Co 6:16**.

1 Kings 6:4

Ver. 4. And for the house he made windows of narrow lights. Or "open, shut" {o}, which could be both, having shutters to them, to open or shut at pleasure; windows which they could open, and look through at them, or shut when they pleased; the Targum is,

"open within, and shut without;"

or, as others understand it, they were wide within, and narrow without; by being narrow without, the house was preserved from bad weather, as well as could not so easily be looked into by those without; and by being broader

within, the light that was let in spread itself within the house; which some interpret only of the holy place, the most holy place having, as they suppose, no windows in it, which yet is not certain: now these windows may denote the word and ordinances of the church of God, whereby light is communicated to men; which in the present state is but narrow or small, in comparison of the new Jerusalem church state, and the ultimate glory; and especially so it was under the legal dispensation, which was very obscure; see **So 2:9**
Isa 55:8.

{o} Mypqv Mymja "apertas clausas", Vatablus; "perspectui accommodas, clausas", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

1 Kings 6:5

Ver. 5. And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about,.... Or near it, as Jarchi interprets it, for the beams of them were not fastened in in it, **1Ki 6:6**; or rather "upon" it {p}; and when they are said to be round about the house, it must be understood of the two sides, north and south, and of the west end only, for at the east end, where the porch was, there were none:

[against] the walls of the house round about, [both] of the temple and of the oracle; that is, both of the holy and the most holy place:

and he made chambers round about; the said buildings; which is repeated that it might be observed; how many chambers there were, is not said; Josephus says {q} there were thirty of them, and over them others of the same measure and number, and over them others also; so that there were three stories of them, and in all ninety; and which is countenanced by what follows in **1Ki 6:6**, and agrees with
Eze 41:6; the Jewish doctors say {r}, there were thirty eight of them, fifteen on the north, fifteen on the south, and eight on the west; they that were to the north and south were five upon five, and five over them; and they that were to the west were three upon three, and two over them; upper rooms or chambers were rare in Heathen temples {s}: these chambers were for the priests, where they lodged and laid up their garments, and ate their holy things; and were emblems of congregated churches, where the true members thereof, who are priests to God, have communion with him, and partake of divine things.

{p} ryq le "super parietem", V. L. Montanus. {q} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 3. sect. 2. {r} Misn. Middot, c. 4. sect. 3. {s} Pausan. Laconic. sive. l. 3. p. 190.

1 Kings 6:6

Ver. 6. And the nethermost chamber [was] five cubits broad,.... The nethermost row of them, which were upon the first floor:

and the middle [was] six cubits broad, and the third [was] seven cubits broad; so that the middlemost was a cubit larger than the lowest, and the highest a cubit larger than that: the reason of which was,

for without [in the wall] of the house he made narrowed rests round about; or rebatements; the thickness of the wall, as it was raised, became narrower at the height of every five cubits; thus the wall being supposed to be six cubits broad, as in Eze 41:5; when it came to be five cubits high, it was narrowed a cubit, which left a projection, rebatement, or bench for the beams of the first chambers to be laid upon, which made the second row of chambers broader by a cubit; and the same being observed in the next story, made the highest a cubit broader than the middlemost: and this was done,

that [the beams] should not be fastened in the walls of the house; or be inserted into them, which could not be done without making holes in it; and these holes could not be made without an iron instrument, and which was not to be used, as the next words show; whereas by the above method the beams of the chambers could be laid upon the buttresses, benches, or rebatements left, without the use of any: the gradual enlargement of these chambers, as they rose higher, may denote the enlargement of the church of God, both as to numbers, gifts, and grace, the nearer it comes to the heavenly state, as in the spiritual and personal reign of Christ.

1 Kings 6:7

Ver. 7. And the house, when it was in building,.... And all the while it was building:

was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither; being hewn or squared by the builders and stonesquarers of Solomon and Hiram, **1Ki 5:18**; wherefore the builders had nothing more to do than to lay them in their proper places in the building; it was built with these stones quite up to the ceiling, as Josephus says {t}; and these so admirably polished, and so artificially joined together, that not the least sign of an axe, or of any working tool, could be discerned in them:

so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, [nor] any tool of iron, heard in the house while it was in building; the first of these observations shows, that none are to be laid in the spiritual building of the church, but such as are first hewed and squared by the Spirit, grace, and word of God: or who have an experience of the grace of God, are sound in the faith, and of becoming lives and good conduct; and the other denotes, that such as are therein, whether ministers or members, should do all they do for the edification of the church in a quiet and peaceable manner, without clamour, contention, fights, and tumults.

{t} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 3. sect. 2.

1 Kings 6:8

Ver. 8. The door of the middle chamber [was] in the right side of the house,.... The south side of it:

and they went up with winding stairs into the middle [chamber]; which were outside the chambers, and which winded about for the sake of taking up less room, and which led up to the door of the middle chamber, on the south of which they went into it; according to the Vulgate Latin and Tigurine versions, they went up in the forth of a cockle, or the shell of a snail; in like manner as was the ascent of the temple of Pan at Alexandria, as Strabo {u} relates:

and out of the middle into the third; the third chamber, and by winding stairs up to that; and the like might be on the north side, though not expressed, and on the west: the Jews say {w}, that in the second temple, these winding stairs went from the northeast to the northwest, whereby they went up to the roof of the chambers, and so to the south and west; with this compare Eze 41:7; and which may represent the windings and turnings of God's people in this present state, their many afflictions and tribulations, through which they pass from one state to another.

{u} Geograph. l. 17. p. 547. {w} Misn. Middot, c. 4. sect. 5. See Lightfoot's Prospect of the Temple, &c. c. 12. p. 1071.

1 Kings 6:9

Ver. 9. So he built the house, and finished it,.... The body of it, the walls of the holy and most holy place, with the chambers on the sides of them, and the porch at the end that led into them:

and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar; with hollow boards, as the Targum, which formed an arch ceiling to it, and made it look very grand and beautiful; and then over them were laid beams and planks of cedar, not properly as a flat roof to it, but rather as a flooring for other buildings; for upon this, as in **1Ki 6:10**, there were chambers built.

1 Kings 6:10

Ver. 10. And [then] he built chambers against all the house five cubits high,.... Which some understand of the same chambers in **1Ki 6:5**; here made mention of again for the sake of giving the height of them, not before given; but they were built against, or upon the wall of the house, these against, or rather upon the whole house itself; and are the chambers referred to, See Gill on "1Ki 6:2"; which consisting of three stories of ninety cubits, raised the whole house to an equal height with the porch, **2Ch 3:4**; as is there intended {x}; these are the upper chambers in **2Ch 3:9**; and they rested on the house [with] timber of cedar; or on the timber of cedar, the beams of cedar, with which the house was covered, as in **1Ki 6:9**; on these the chambers rested, being built upon them; and in one of these chambers the disciples might be after Christ's ascension, **Ac 1:13**.

{x} Vid. Joseph. Antiqu. ut supra. (l. 8. c. 3. sect. 2.)

1 Kings 6:11

Ver. 11. And the word of the Lord came to Solomon,.... The word of prophecy, as the Targum, foretelling what would be the case of this building, according to the obedience or disobedience of him and the people of Israel; which was brought to him either by an impulse of the Spirit of God upon him; or by the hand of a prophet, as Kimchi thinks; and some of the Jewish writers {y}, as he particularly, name Ahijah the Shilonite as the prophet that was sent with this message to him:

saying, as follows.

{y} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 53.

1 Kings 6:12

Ver. 12. [Concerning] this house which thou art in building,.... Or with respect to that, these things are to be said as from the Lord:

if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; even all the laws of God, moral, ceremonial, and judicial; and this respects not only Solomon personally, but his successors, and even all the people of Israel:

then will I perform my covenant with thee, which I spake unto David thy father; by Nathan the prophet; not only that he should build an house for God, which should be a settled dwelling place, but that his own house and kingdom should be established for a long time to come, and his posterity should enjoy the presence of God in this house, provided regard was had to the precepts and ordinances of the Lord, **2Sa 7:12**.

1 Kings 6:13

Ver. 13. And I will dwell among the children of Israel,.... In this house now building, and which was in the middle of the land, and where he would meet with them, and accept their sacrifices, not only of slain beasts, but of prayer and praise:

and will not forsake my people Israel; and leave them to the mercy of their enemies, and to be carried captive by them, but protect and defend them.

1 Kings 6:14

Ver. 14. So Solomon built the house, and finished it. He went on with it until he had completed it, animated and encouraged by the promise of the divine Presence in it, provided a proper regard was had to the will and ways of God. Abarbinel thinks the above message was sent him in the midst of his work, to strengthen and caution him from a dependence on the continuance of the fabric, because of the strength of it; since its perpetuity depended on his, his successors', and the people's conduct and behaviour; wherefore conscious to himself of his own integrity, and hoping well of posterity, he was not discouraged, but proceeded in his undertaking until he had brought it to perfection.

1 Kings 6:15

Ver. 15. And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar,.... For as yet he had only built the stone walls of it without, but now he wainscotted it with cedar boards: and not only them, but

both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling; or from "the floor of the house unto the walls of the ceiling"; that is, from the floor, including that, to the walls on each side, reaching up to the ceiling,

he covered [them] on the inside with wood: of one sort or another, cedar or fir, or both: particularly he

covered the floor of the house with planks of fir: which Hiram sent him, **1Ki 5:8**; which is differently interpreted; by Josephus cypress; by others, as the Tigurine version, pine tree wood; it is very probable it was of the cedar kind, and not the floor only, but the ceiling also, **2Ch 3:5**.

1 Kings 6:16

Ver. 16. And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house,.... At the end or extremity of it, as the Targum; that is, he built the most holy place, which was twenty two cubits long, at the end of the holy place, which he wainscotted as the other:

both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar; or from the floor, including that, to the walls on each side, from wall to wall, and taking in them, they were all lined with cedar wood:

he even built [them] for it within, [even] for the oracle, [even] for the most holy [place]; which explains what building is spoken of, and that the inside of that was covered with cedar from bottom to top.

1 Kings 6:17

Ver. 17. And the house, that [is], the temple before it,.... The holy place, which was before the of holies:

was forty cubits [long]; and which, with the most holy place, being twenty cubits, as in the preceding verse, made the length of the whole house sixty cubits, as in **1Ki 6:2**.

1 Kings 6:18

Ver. 18. And the cedar of the house within,.... With which the inside of the place was lined:

[was] carved with knops; of an oval form; so the Targum says, they had the appearance of eggs; and Ben Gersom likewise, that they were in the form of eggs:

and open flowers; not in the figure of buds, but flowers blown, and open, as lilies and others; so the Targum:

all [was] cedar; the wainscotting of the house, the sides of it at least, if not the floor, and the carved work of it; and this was done, that the gold might be laid upon it, which could not be done on stone as on wood: and all was so covered, that

there was no stone seen; of which the outward walls were built: all this denotes the inward beauty of the church, and the curious workmanship of the Spirit of God in the hearts of his people, whereby they become all glorious within, adorned with the graces of the blessed Spirit, their stony hearts being kept out of sight, yea, taken away.

1 Kings 6:19

Ver. 19. And the oracle he prepared in the house within,.... In the innermost part of the house he fitted up the oracle, or speaking place, from whence the Lord spake and gave answer, to receive what was to be put into it: particularly

to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord; even the very same that Moses made, Ex 37:1, for which David had pitched a tent in Zion, 1Ch 15:1, and where it now was; for Solomon made no new ark.

1 Kings 6:20

Ver. 20. And the oracle in the forepart,.... Which stood in the forepart of the temple, before a man's face as he entered into it, and went on; or the forepart of the holy of holies, next to the holy place, was of the dimensions as follows, when the back part of it might be higher at least, and be equal to the holy place, even thirty feet; the forepart being lower, and left open to let in the light of the candlesticks, and the smoke of the incense, out of the holy place: this

[was] twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and was a perfect square, and as the most holy place may be an emblem of the church triumphant, it may denote the perfection of its heavenly state; so the new Jerusalem is a foursquare, Re 21:16;

and he overlaid it with pure gold; make it rich, glorious, and magnificent, and may denote the glory of the heavenly state, Re 21:21; and so Florus {z}, the Roman historian, calls it the golden heaven, as it were, into which Pompey went, and saw the great secret of the Jewish nation, the ark:

and [so] covered the altar [which was of] cedar; the altar of incense, which is here mentioned, because it was near the most holy place, **1Ki 6:22**; this altar by Moses was made of shittim wood, but Solomon's was of cedar it seems; unless, as the words will bear to be rendered, "he covered the altar with cedar" {a}; though made of shittim wood, it had a covering of cedar over it; or if of stone, such a covering was on it, that it might better receive the gold which was afterwards put upon it.

{z} De Gest. Roman. l. 3. c. 5. {a} zra Puy "operuit cedro", Montanus.

1 Kings 6:21

Ver. 21. So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold,.... The inside of the holy of holies with fine gold, which gold amounted to six hundred talents, **2Ch 3:8**; and these to 7,332,000 ducats of gold, or 3,045,000 pounds sterling:

and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; between the holy and the most holy, and were instead of a vail in the tabernacle of Moses between them; here was also a vail beside the partition made by chains of gold across the oracle; for the partition was a wall of the thickness of a cubit, as Maimonides {b} says; and in **2Ch 3:14** express mention is made of a vail of blue, &c. and in imitation of this had the Heathens their deities within vails {c}:

and he overlaid it with gold; the partition wall.

{b} Hilchot Beth Habechirah, c. 4. sect. 2. {c} Apulei Metamorph. l. xi. p. 176.

1 Kings 6:22

Ver. 22. And the whole house he overlaid with gold,.... Both the holy place, and the most holy place:

until he had finished all the house; in this splendid and glorious manner:

also the whole altar that [was] by the oracle; the altar of incense, which stood just before the entrance into the oracle, or most holy place:

he overlaid with gold; he overlaid it all over with gold; hence it is called the golden altar, and was an emblem of the excellent and effectual mediation and intercession of Christ, **Re 8:3**. Agreeably to this account Eupolemus, an Heathen writer {d} testifies, that the whole house, from the floor to the tool, was covered with gold, as well as with cedar and cypress wood, that the stonework might not appear; and so the capitol at Rome, perhaps in imitation of this temple, its roofs and tiles were glided with gold {e}; a magnificent temple, like this, was at Upsal in Switzerland, as Olaus Magnus relates {f}.

{d} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 34. p. 450. {e} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 3. Vid. Rycquium de Capitol. Roman. c. 16. {f} De Ritu Gent. Septent. l. 3. c. 5.

1 Kings 6:23

Ver. 23. And within the oracle he made two cherubim [of] olive tree,.... Or of the oil tree, as in Isa 41:19; see **Ne 8:15**; for there are other trees besides olives, out of which oil is pressed, as pine trees, cypress trees, &c. and which some think are here meant; though the Targum interprets it of the olive tree: these cherubim are different from those made by Moses, and were besides them; these were larger than they; these were made of olive wood, they of gold; these stood on the floor of the house, they at the two ends of the mercy seat, and were made out of it, and were with it in this holy place in Solomon's temple: these two cherubim may be emblems of the angels in their greatness and glory, who are always in the presence of God, behold his face, and wait to do his will; or it may be rather of the two witnesses, said to be the two olive trees standing before the God of the whole earth, Re 11:3; who have boldness to enter into the holiest of all, and have sight and knowledge of the mysteries of the ark and mercy seat; have their commission from heaven, and speak according to the oracles of God; these are said to be of image work, **2Ch 3:10**; that is, of various forms, as the thee of a man, a lion, an ox, and eagle, **Eze 1:10**. Dr. Lightfoot thinks {g} they resembled the two Testaments, which in their beginning and end reach the two sides of the world, the creation and the last judgment, and in the middle do sweetly join the one to the other:

[each] ten cubits high; half as high as the most holy place; emblems either of the high angels, those thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, or of men of uncommon size as to their gifts and grace.

{g} Prospect of the Temple, c. 15. sect. 4.

1 Kings 6:24

Ver. 24. And five cubits [was] the one wing of the cherub,.... When stretched out on one side:

and five cubits the other wing of the cherub; on the other side him:

from the uttermost part of the one wing, to the uttermost part of the other wing, [were] ten cubits; half the breadth of the house.

1 Kings 6:25

Ver. 25. And the other cherub [was] ten cubits,.... That is, its wings stretched out measured so many cubits, as did those of the other:

both the cherubim [were] of one measure, and of one size; of the same height and stature, of the same breadth of their wings, and of the same bulk of their bodies; they were of "image work"; **2Ch 3:10**; very probably in the form of men: and this uniformity may denote the perfect agreement of angels; or else the consent of the true faithful witnesses of Christ in all ages, who have all agreed in the person, office, and grace of Christ, as represented by the mercy seat and ark, which these cherubim covered with their wings.

1 Kings 6:26

Ver. 26. The height of the one cherub [was] ten cubits, and so [was it] of the other cherub. Which is repeated from **1Ki 6:23**; that it might be observed, being of an extraordinary size.

1 Kings 6:27

Ver. 27. And he set the cherubim within the inner house,.... The holy of holies:

and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims; the carvers that framed them, they wrought them in that form; or impersonally, the wings of the cherubim were stretched out; this was the position of them, they overshadowed and covered the mercy seat and ark, and even the other two cherubim that were at the ends of the mercy seat:

so that the wing of the one touched the one wall; the southern wall:

and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; the northern wall; they reached from wall to wall, even the whole breadth of the house, which was twenty cubits, as their wings thus spread were, **1Ki 6:24**;

and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house; which was ten cubits, and that was the spread of the wings of each of them; so that the wing of the right side of the one, stretched out, touched the wing of the left side of the other fit the same position; in **2Ch 3:13**; their faces are said to be "inward", or "toward the house"; either toward the holy place, and so faced those that came into that and saw them; or towards the inner part of the holy of holies, their backs being to the holy place, or their faces were inward, and looked obliquely to each other.

1 Kings 6:28

Ver. 28. And he overlaid the cherubim with gold. Which may denote the purity and excellency of angels; or the precious gifts and graces of the Spirit, with which the witnesses of Christ are adorned.

1 Kings 6:29

Ver. 29. And he carved all the walls of the house about with carved figures of cherubim, and palm trees, and open flowers,.... That is, of palm trees, those in full blow: if the cherubim are an emblem of angels, the palm trees fitly enough represent just and upright men, who both appear in the church of God below, and in heaven above; in both which are to be seen the open and full-blown flowers of divine grace, especially in the latter state:

within and without; on the walls of the most holy place, both within and without; and so upon the walls of the holy place, in each of which were these sculptures, which were very ornamental, and were emblematical; see Eze 41:17.

1 Kings 6:30

Ver. 30. And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold within and without. Both the floor of the holy place, and of the holy of holies; so the street of the new Jerusalem is said to be pure gold, Re 21:21; this expresses the purity and magnificence of it, particularly the holy conversation of them that dwell in the church, in heaven, signified hereby.

1 Kings 6:31

Ver. 31. And for the entering of the oracle he made doors [of] olive tree,.... The door of the holy of holies was a two leaved or folding door, made of olive wood; typical of Christ, the door into the church above and below, the way to heaven and eternal life, the true olive tree:

the lintel [and] side posts [were] a fifth part [of the wall]; four cubits, twenty cubits being the breadth of the oracle; or the lintel was four cubits, twenty being the height of it also, **1Ki 6:20**.

1 Kings 6:32

Ver. 32. The two doors also [were of] olive tree,.... The two leaves of the door, as before observed, repeated for the sake of the ornament of them, as follows:

and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims, and palm trees, and open flowers; as upon the walls, **1Ki 6:29**;

and overlaid [them] with gold; the two doors:

and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees; thin plates of gold.

1 Kings 6:33

Ver. 33. So also made he for the door of the temple,.... The holy place:

posts [of] olive tree, a fourth part [of the wall]; which was five cubits, its breadth being twenty, **1Ki 6:20**; this door was a cubit wider than that into the most holy place, **1Ki 6:31**, more entering into the one than into the other; as more go into the church on earth than into the heavenly glory.

1 Kings 6:34

Ver. 34. And the two doors [were of] fir tree,.... the posts were of olive, but the doors of fir, and they were both folding doors, as appears by what follows:

the two leaves of the one door [were] folding, and the two leaves of the other door [were] folding; which, taking up less room, made the passage wider, see Eze 41:24.

1 Kings 6:35

Ver. 35. And he carved [thereon] cherubims, and palm trees, and open flowers,.... As upon the doors of the most holy place, **1Ki 6:32**; see Eze 41:25;

and covered [them] with gold, fitted upon the carved work; plates of gold were fitted, as to the dimensions of them, to the cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers.

1 Kings 6:36

Ver. 36. And he built the inner court,.... The court of the priests, **2Ch 4:9**; so called to distinguish it from the outer court, where the people assembled: this was built

with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams; the rows of stones were one upon another, topped with a row of cedar beams; or rather the cedar was a lining to the stones; and the whole is supposed to be about three cubits high, and was so low, that the people in the outward court might see priests ministering for them, and could converse with them; under the second temple, as Maimonides {h} says, the court of the priests was higher than that of the court of Israel two cubits and an half, called the great court, for which doors were made, and those overlaid with brass, **2Ch 4:9**.

{h} Hilchot Beth Habechirah, c. 6. sect. 3.

1 Kings 6:37

Ver. 37. In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the Lord laid,.... The fourth year of Solomon's reign:

in the month Zif; See Gill on "1Ki 6:1".

1 Kings 6:38

Ver. 38. In the eleventh year,.... That is, of the reign of Solomon:

in the month Bul, [which is] the eighth month; from the month Abib or Nisan; this month answers to part of our October, and part of November; it is the same month sometimes called Marchesvan; it had the name of Bul, because of the rains which usually fell in this month, as Kimchi thinks, like a flood; and Noah's flood is called Mabbul, from the same root {i}, and when all the fruits were withered, and the leaves were fallen from the trees; or, as Jarchi supposes, because the grass was consumed in the field, and they were obliged to mix provender for cattle, deriving the word from another root {k}: in this month

was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof; the porch, the holy place, and holy of holies, with all the chambers and courts belonging to it:

and according to all the fashion of it; which David had given to Solomon, to frame it by:

so he was seven years in building it; and six months, which are not mentioned, only the round number is given, as appears by comparing it with **1Ki 6:1**.

{i} lbn "concidit", Buxtorf. {k} hlb "consumpsit, vel" llb "miscuit", ib.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 7

This chapter gives an account of some buildings of Solomon for himself, **1Ki 7:1**; and of other things for the use of the temple; of two pillars of brass, **1Ki 7:13**; of the molten sea, **1Ki 7:23**; and of ten bases, and ten layers on them, **1Ki 7:27**; with other utensils and ornaments, **1Ki 7:40**.

Ver. 1. But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years,.... He made more haste with the house of God than with his own, for that was but seven years in building; which showed greater regard to the honour of God then to his own glory, or even convenience; nor was this built till after that:

and finished all his house; or houses he undertook to build, the singular for the plural; even the house of God, his own palace, and that for the daughter of Pharaoh, and that which is next mentioned, which were in all twenty years building, **1Ki 9:10**.

1 Kings 7:2

Ver. 2. He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon,.... Besides the temple,

his own palace, and the queen's; so called, not because it was built on Mount Lebanon, which lay at the northern border of the land, at a great distance from Jerusalem, whereas this was both a magazine of arms, and a court of judicature, **1Ki 7:7**; see
1Ki 10:17; neither of which can be supposed to be far from Jerusalem; but because not only it was built of the cedars of Lebanon, but in a situation, and among groves of trees which resembled it; it seems to have been a summer house; and so the Targum calls it, a royal house of refreshment:

the length thereof [was] an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty and the height thereof thirty cubits; so that it was in every measure larger than the temple; and, there was good reason for it, since into that only the priests entered; whereas into this went not only Solomon's family but his courtiers and nobles, and all foreign ambassadors, and whoever had any business with him, which required various rooms to receive them in:

upon four rows of cedar pillars; or piazzas:

with cedar beams upon the pillars; which laid the floor for the second story.

1 Kings 7:3

Ver. 3. And it was covered with cedar above the beams, that lay on forty five pillars, fifteen in a row. On the second floor were three rows of pillars, fifteen in a row, which made forty five, that stood to east, north, and south; and upon these pillars beams, which were the floor of the third story, over which was a roof of cedar wood.

1 Kings 7:4

Ver. 4. And there were windows in three rows,.... Both in the second and third stories, east, north, and south, there being none in the west, where the porch stood:

and light was against light in three ranks; or the windows, through which light was let, answered to each other.

1 Kings 7:5

Ver. 5. And all the doors and posts were square with the windows,.... The doors into the several stories and apartments, and the posts and lintel of them, and the windows over them, were all square:

and light was against light in three ranks; they answered one another as before.

1 Kings 7:6

Ver. 6. And he made a porch of pillars,.... At the west end of the house:

and the length thereof was fifty cubits; answerable to the breadth of the house:

and the breadth thereof thirty cubits: which, added to the length of the house, made it one hundred and thirty:

and the porch was before them; the four rows of cedar pillars of the house, **1Ki 7:2** this porch was either for his guards to keep watch in; or for his courtiers to walk in, sheltered from rain or the like; or perhaps only for grandeur and magnificence:

and the other pillars and the thick beam were before them; the pillars of the porch, on which were laid beams of cedar for a storey over them, and so on; these were before and right against, and answered to the pillars of the house.

1 Kings 7:7

Ver. 7. Then he made a porch for the throne,.... The ivory throne on which he sat to hear and try causes, 1Ki 10:18,

where he might judge, even the porch of judgment: which had its name from thence; this was either in his house in the forest of Lebanon, or in his palace at Jerusalem; the former seems best:

and it was covered with cedar from one side of the floor unto the other; that is, the whole floor.

1 Kings 7:8

Ver. 8. And his house where he dwelt,.... Which was properly his dwellingplace, that part of the house where he usually resided:

[had] another court within the porch, which [was] of the like work; a court between that and the porch, called the inner court, 2Ki 20:4.

Solomon made also a house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife; see **1Ki 3:1**,

like unto this porch: being built of the same sort of materials, though in a different form.

1 Kings 7:9

Ver. 9. All these were of costly stones,.... Marble, porphyry, &c.

according to the measure of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without; they were all hewed, and squared, and polished, and so they appeared both on the inside of the building, and without:

even from the foundation unto the coping; from the bottom to the top:

and so on the outside toward the great court: where the people used to assemble when they had causes to be tried, and was adjoining to the king's house.

1 Kings 7:10

Ver. 10. And the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones,.... Of a great price, and very large:

stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits some of one measure, and some of another; not so many cubits square, but of solid measure; they were so many in length.

1 Kings 7:11

Ver. 11. And above were costly stones,.... Above the foundation, from thence to the top of the buildings; the whole walls were made of such right up to the ceiling:

after the measure of hewed stones; which, according to the Rabbins, as Kimchi says, were five hands breadth:

and cedars; beams of cedars over them, or these, both the foundation and the walls, were lined with them.

1 Kings 7:12

Ver. 12. And the great court round about,.... Which surrounded Solomon's house:

[was] with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams; these rows were one upon another, and were a wall to the court, which were either topped with a row of cedar wood, or that was a lining to the stones

for the inner court of the house of the Lord; or rather as, or like to that, as appears from **1Ki 6:36**,

and for the porch of the house; not the temple, but Solomon's house.

1 Kings 7:13

Ver. 13. And King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. Not the king of Tyre, but an artificer in it, after described, whom Solomon had heard and upon his request Huram sent him to him, **2Ch 2:13** his name is called Hyperon by Clemens of Alexandria {l}.

{l} Stromat. l. 1. p. 332.

1 Kings 7:14

Ver. 14. He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali,.... In **2Ch 2:14**, his mother is said to be of the daughters of Dan, as she might be, and yet her son of the tribe of Naphtali; for either she was of the city of Dan, which is placed in the tribe of Naphtali {m}, or her mother was of the tribe of Dan; and therefore she is said to be of the daughters of Dan, when her father was of the tribe of Naphtali, as it is expressed by the Targum on **2Ch 2:14**, and in which way most of the Jewish commentators reconcile this; or she was of Dan, and her husband of Naphtali besides, if there was any mistake, it must be ascribed, not to the sacred historians, but to the king of Tyre, whose words they are in the above place, and who might not be so well acquainted with the tribe this man and his parents were of:

and his father was a man of Tyre; not a Tyrian by birth, but one who had dwelt there a while, and therefore so called, as Obededom, for a like reason, is called the Gittite:

a worker in brass; and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass; which might be true both of the father and of the son, and especially of the son, who had improved upon his father's knowledge and instructions; and who was skilful to work in other things besides brass, as gold, silver, iron, stone, timber, purple, blue and fine linen, crimson, and all sorts of engraving, and every device that could be put to him by the most ingenious workmen that either David or Solomon had, **2Ch 2:14**, but this is only mentioned, because it was in such work he was only employed by Solomon; and it seems, by the mode of expression, that, besides his natural genius, and his diligence and industry, he was filled with wisdom from God more immediately for this service, as Bezaleel and Aholiab were for the service of the tabernacle:

and he came to King Solomon, and wrought all his work; in brass, as follows.

{m} Vid. Adrichom. Theat. T. S. p. 105. Fuller's Pisgah-Sight, 107.

1 Kings 7:15

Ver. 15. For he cast two pillars of brass, eighteen cubits high apiece,.... In **2Ch 3:15** they are said to be thirty five cubits high, which must be understood of the length or height of them both; and whereas that would allow but seventeen cubits and a half to a pillar, either the round number of eighteen is used, or half a cubit in each may be allowed, either for the base or pedestal into which they were put; or the chapiter at the top of them, into which they might go such a length, and so only what was seen is described:

and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about; that was the circumference of them, and therefore their diameter must be four cubits. Eupolemus, an Heathen writer {n} speaks of these pillars, but he makes the circuit of them to be but ten cubits; and says they were equal in height with the temple, and stood on the right and left, and were made of brass, and covered with gold, the thickness of a finger.

{n} Apud Euseb, Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 34. p. 450.

1 Kings 7:16

Ver. 16. And he made two chapiters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars,.... These were large ovals in the form of a crown, as the word signifies; or like two crowns joined together, as Ben Gersom; or bowls, as they are called, **1Ki 7:41**,

the height of the one chapiter was five cubits, and the height of the other chapiter was five cubits; in 2Ki 25:17 they are said to be but three cubits high; but that is to be understood only of the ornamented part of them, the wreathen work and pomegranates on them, as there expressed; here it includes, with that, the part below unornamented.

1 Kings 7:17

Ver. 17. And nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars,.... These were the ornaments of the chapiters; the former being like thick branches of trees, with their boughs and leaves curiously wrought, as the word signifies, and the latter like fringes, such as the Jews wore at the skirt of their garments:

seven for the one chapiter, and seven for the other chapiter; perhaps with four rows of checker work, and three of chain work.

1 Kings 7:18

Ver. 18. And he made the pillars,.... Or adorned them in this manner:

and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that were upon the top, with pomegranates; that is, there were two rows of figures like pomegranates upon the net or branch work that covered the chapiters that were on the top of the pillars; and Kimchi owns, that some copies so read, on the top of the pillars, instead of pomegranates, though he thinks it a mistake:

and so did he for the other chapiter; put two rows about that also.

1 Kings 7:19

Ver. 19. And the chapiters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch,.... Or such as was in the porch of the temple; the work was like that wrought in the form of the flower of lilies open:

four cubits; of the five cubits of which the chapiters consisted, four of them were of lily work, the two rows of pomegranates taking up the other; though Dr. Lightfoot {o} thinks, that at the head of the pillar was a border or circle of lily work, that stood out four cubits under the chapiter, into and along the porch; a four cubit circle, after the manner of a spread lily.

{o} Prospect of the Temple, c. 13. sect. 2. p. 1075.

1 Kings 7:20

Ver. 20. And the chapiters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network,.... The supplement is needless, according to Dr. Lightfoot; the sense being only, that the chapiters were above the lily work, which wrought out as far as the belly of the chapiters, or the middle cubit of them, which the pomegranates filled up:

and the pomegranates were two hundred, in rows round about upon the other chapiter: there were so many in each, which in all made four hundred, as in **1Ki 7:42**. In Jer 52:23, it is said there were ninety six on a side, and yet one hundred round about; the meaning of which is, either that there were twenty four to every wind, as the word there is, and four on the four angles, and so in all one hundred; or, as the above learned writer, when the pillars were set to the wall, only ninety six appeared in sight in a row, the other four being hid behind them.

1 Kings 7:21

Ver. 21. And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple,.... Not at the door or entrance into the temple, as Jarchi, but at the entrance into the porch:

and he set up the right pillar; or the pillar on the right hand as you went in, which was on the north, the front being east:

and called the name thereof Jachin; which signifies "he will establish", i.e. the house to which here was an entrance, so long as the pure worship of God should continue in it:

and he set up the left pillar; or the pillar on the left hand, which was to the south, unless the position of them was as you come out:

and called the name thereof Boaz; which signifies "in him", or "it is strength", namely, in the Lord that dwelt there; for this has no respect to Boaz, a prince of the house of Judah, from whom all its kings sprung, as the Targum, in **2Ch 3:17** suggests. These names were given them not by Hiram the artificer, but by Solomon, and which were very expressive; not so much of the nobility of the kingdom of the house of David, as the Targum intimates; or of the church of God, the pillar and ground of truth; as of Christ himself, and the two natures in him, and of his royal dignity, signified by the crowns or chapiters on them, decorated as they were, whose legs are as pillars of marble, and in whom are righteousness and strength; which is no small encouragement to those who are entering into the church of God the temple was a type of; who, should they fear, being feeble and weak, that they should totter and fall, here stands Jachin, to let them know the Lord will establish and settle them; or that they should never hold out to the end, here is Boaz to direct them to Christ, in whom their strength lies, see **So 4:15**. Allusion is had to these, **Re 3:12**.

1 Kings 7:22

Ver. 22. And upon the top of the pillars was lily work,.... Which seems to be repeated from **1Ki 7:19** and confirms that:

and so was the work of the pillars finished; in the manner described.

1 Kings 7:23

Ver. 23. And he made a molten sea,.... A large vessel made of molten brass, which, because of the great quantity of water it held, is called a sea; as it was usual with the Jews to call a large collection of waters a sea, as the sea of Tiberius and Galilee. This was made by the man of Tyre, as the pillars, by the order of Solomon, and answered to the brasen laver in the tabernacle, only larger than that; and was not only for the priests to wash their hands and feet in, but to dip upon occasion, and by the Jews {p} is expressly said to be a dipping place for the priests, see **2Ch 4:6**,

ten cubits from the one brim to the other: which was the diameter of it: it was round all about; spherical or circular; not as an hemisphere, as Josephus {q}, and Procopius Gazaeus, but rather cylindrical:

and his height was five cubits; from the bottom of it, not including the pedestal of oxen on which it stood:

and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about; this was the circumference of it; which answers to the diameter of ten cubits, or near it, a round number being given not strictly mathematical.

(Sceptics have ridiculed the Bible for saying that the mathematical constant p is 3 instead of the more precise 3.14159. (This number is an "irrational number" and needs an infinite number digits to specify it exactly.) Two explanations for the apparent lack of precision in the measurement are given.

1) The circumference given may be for the inside circumference and the diameter may be the diameter including the thickness of the rim. This would yield a very accurate mathematical result for the inside circumference of thirty cubits. The outside circumference would be about 31.4 cubits giving a rim thickness of four inches or an hand breadth agreeing with **1Ki 7:26**.

2) In **1Ki 7:26** we read the vessel "was wrought like the brim of a cup." That is the brim on the top of the vessel was wider than the main part of the vessel. The diameter would be given for the brim. If the brim or lip extended about four inches past the main body of the vessel then the outside circumference of the main part of the vessel would be exactly thirty cubits.

In each case the mathematical ratio for circumference of the circle is pd, where "d" is the diameter and p is the number 3.14159 ..... For a more complete discussion on this see the article by Russel Grigg. {r}. Editor.)

{p} T. Hieros, Yema, fol. 41. 1 {q} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 3. sect 5. {r} "Does the Bible say pi equals 3.0?", Russell Greg, page 24, "Ex Nihil", March-May Issue, Vol. 17. No. 2., Creation Science Foundation Ltd. Brisbane, Australia.

1 Kings 7:24

Ver. 24. And under the brim of it round about there were knops compassing it,.... Of an oval form, and therefore the Targum calls them figures of eggs; in **2Ch 4:3** they are said to have the similitude of oxen, being like the heads of oxen, and the other parts oval; or these were in the form of gourds, as sometimes the word is rendered, **2Ki 4:39** which had on them the figures of the heads of oxen, and might serve as cocks to let out the water:

ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about it; and as the circumference was thirty cubits, there must be three hundred of these in the circuit:

the knops were cast in two rows when it was cast; for these were cast together with the sea, and being in two rows, there must be in all six hundred of them.

1 Kings 7:25

Ver. 25. It stood upon twelve oxen,.... Figures of them in brass, of full proportion:

three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east; and so turned to the four quarters of the world:

and the sea was set above upon them; as it were on the backs of them, and their mouths served as spouts or cocks, to let water out of it on all sides:

and all their hinder parts were inward; that they might not be seen, and which met in a centre; they that were north came against those that were south, and they in the east met with those to the west. The brass of the sea, according to Jacob Leon {r}, weighed 1,800 arobas, and, with twelve oxen under, 33,500; each aroba being twenty five pounds weight.

{r} Relation of Memorable Things in the Temple, ch. 4. p. 21.

1 Kings 7:26

Ver. 26. And it was an hand breadth thick,.... Or four fingers, as in Jer 52:21

and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies, embroidered and engraven on it for ornament sake:

it contained 2,000 baths; which is reckoned about five hundred barrels of water; it was filled by the Gibeonites; in **2Ch 4:5**, it is said to receive and hold 3,000 baths, which the Jewish writers {s} thus reconcile; they suppose here it means so many baths of liquid, as the Targum expresses, there of dry measure, which might be heaped up, and so contain more; but as this was a vessel for water, and this distinction seems to answer no purpose, it may be better to observe, that in common, for the use of the priests, whether for washing their hands and feet, or dipping their bodies, it had no more than 2,000 baths in it, but, if filled up to the brim, it would hold 3,000. How a vessel of such dimensions should hold so much is difficult to account for; the Rabbins say {t}, that in the two upper cubits of it it was circular, and in the three lower cubits square, by which they imagine it would hold more, and the position of it on the oxen seems to countenance this; but very probably it was wider, and bellied out in the lower part of it, and so more capacious; but of the contents of this, according to mathematical rules, see a treatise of Bishop Cumberland's {u}. It is said {w} of a temple of Neptune's, in the fore part of it were two signs of him, and another of Amphitrite, and that was a brasen sea. This brasen sea of Solomon was typical of Christ, the fountain opened to wash in for uncleanness, by all that are made priests unto God; and this being larger than the laver in the tabernacle, may denote the greater efficacy of Christ's blood than in anything in the law of Moses to cleanse from sin; and the larger provision made for it, not only for Israel, but for all the people of God in the several nations of the world, in the four quarters of it; being published, and proclaimed, and directed to by the twelve apostles of Christ, and by all Gospel ministers since, signified by oxen for their laboriousness and strength. In the second temple there were no sea, nor bases, after mentioned, nor lavers, but one, which stood between the porch and the altar, which was for the priests to wash their hands and feet at {x}.

{s} Shilte Hagibborim, c. 27. fol. 23. 4. {t} T. Bab. Eruvin, fol. 14. 2. {u} Of Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 3. p. 93, &c. {w} Pausaniae Corinthiaca, sive, l. 2. p. 87. {x} Shilte Hagibborim, c. 27. fol. 24. 2.

1 Kings 7:27

Ver. 27. And he made ten bases of brass,.... Seats, stands, or settles for the ten lavers after mentioned:

four cubits was the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof; as broad as it was long, and so a square, that the laver might stand firm upon it:

and three cubits the height of it; from the ground plates to the surface, that the priests might be able to reach the layers, and wash their sacrifices.

1 Kings 7:28

Ver. 28. And the work of the bases was on this manner,.... The following was the form in which they were made:

they had borders; plates of brass all around them, which enclosed them:

and the borders were between the ledges; which were short staves or bars of brass, that stood upright all around, like the staves of a cart on each side, or the rails of a balcony, only in double rows; and between these were the borders or plates of brass.

1 Kings 7:29

Ver. 29. And on the borders that were between the ledges were lions, oxen, and cherubims,.... The figures of them, for ornament sake; the cherubim, being distinguished from lions and oxen might be figures of men, or else of eagles, as Josephus {y}, see **Eze 1:10**

and upon the ledges there was a base above; a flat piece of brass laid upon the top of the staves or bars:

and beneath the lions and oxen were certain additions made of thin work; these, according to Dr. Lightfoot {z}, whom I chiefly follow in this account, were shelving plates of brass at the bottom of the borders and bars, where the priests washed the sacrifice; the filth of which ran off the easier, through the angle of them.

{y} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 8. c. 3. sect. 5.) {z} Prospect of the Temple, ch. 38. sect. 2.

1 Kings 7:30

Ver. 30. And every base had four brasen wheels, and plates of brass,.... Flat pieces or planks of brass, on which the wheels stood, and not on the bare floor; so that these wheels seem only to serve as supporters, not to carry the laver from place to place, as is usually said; for they were not like chariot wheels, on two sides of the carriage, but set one at each square; and besides, when the lavers were placed upon them, they were fixed in a certain place, **1Ki 7:39**

and the four corners thereof had undersetters; or "shoulders {a}", or pillars, which were placed on the plates of brass the wheels were; and served with them to support the lavers when laid upon the bases, and so were of the same use as men's shoulders, to bear burdens on them:

under the layer were undersetters molten; cast as, and when and where, the bases were, and the plates on which they stood; this explains the use they were of, being under the laver; these pillars stood at the four corners of the base:

at the side of every addition; made of thin work, **1Ki 7:29** they stood by the side of, or within side, the sloping shelves.

{a} tptk "humeri", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

1 Kings 7:31

Ver. 31. And the mouth of it within the chapiter, and above, was a cubit,.... On the lid of the base rose up a lesser base, called the chapiter, which was circular, like a coronet, as the word signifies, the inside of which was hollow, for the lower part of the layer to rest in; this ascended straight up half a cubit, and then widening, went up half a cubit more, and so in its whole height, as here a cubit; the circuit or circumference of which is called the mouth of the base, into which the feet of the layer were set, the measure of which is next given:

but the mouth thereof was round, after the work of the base, a cubit and an half; which was either the circumference or the diameter of it; one should think the latter:

and also upon the mouth of it were gravings, with their borders, four square, not round; though the mouth was round, the border of it was four square, which had figures engraved thereon, perhaps the same as on the other borders, lions, oxen, and cherubim.

1 Kings 7:32

Ver. 32. And under the borders were four wheels,.... Not under the borders last mentioned, but those in **1Ki 7:29**,

and the axle trees of the wheels [were] joined to the base; to the four sides of it:

and the height of a wheel was a cubit and half a cubit; that is, from the plate of brass on which it stood, to the axis or semicircle of it; so that the highest part of the ring being also a cubit and an half, reached to the top of the base, it being but three cubits high, **1Ki 7:27**.

1 Kings 7:33

Ver. 33. And the work of the wheels was like the work of a chariot wheel,.... In the same form and fashion as one of them; the Targum is,

"like a chariot of glory;"

a splendid one, curiously wrought; unless reference is had in it to the chariot of Ezekiel's vision:

their axle trees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, were all molten; cast together when the base was.

1 Kings 7:34

Ver. 34. And there were four undersetters to the four corners of one base,.... Or pillars, as in **1Ki 7:30**

and the undersetters were of the base itself; they were cast together, and of the same piece of metal with it.

1 Kings 7:35

Ver. 35. And in the top of the base was there a round compass of half a cubit high,.... The same with the chapiter, **1Ki 7:31** which rose up straight half a cubit, and widening upwards half a cubit more, here called the round compass of it:

and on the top of the base, the ledges thereof and the borders thereof, were of the same; of the same piece of brass with the base, all being cast together.

1 Kings 7:36

Ver. 36. For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof,.... In this, and the preceding verse, a different word is used, translated "ledges", from that in **1Ki 7:28**, the Targum renders it axle trees; as if the axle trees of the wheels, and the borders, circumferences, and rings of them, were meant, in which were the following engravings: it literally signifies hands or handles; and Procopius Gazaeus says, that the bases had, in the upper part of them, forms of hands holding a circle like a crown:

he graved cherubims, lions, and palm trees, according to the proportion of everyone; these figures were made as large as the plates of the ledges, and the borders, would allow room for:

and the addition round about; which were sloping shelves of brass around the base, **1Ki 7:29** these were ornamented in like manner.

1 Kings 7:37

Ver. 37. After this manner he made the ten bases,.... This was the form and fashion of them as above described:

all of them had one casting, one measure, and one size; they were all cast into the same mould, and were exactly alike in their form, figures, and size, and each weighed 2000 talents, and the weight of a talent was ninety three pounds and upwards, according to Jacob Leon {b}.

{b} Relation of Memorable Things in the Temple, c. 4. p. 21.

1 Kings 7:38

Ver. 38. Then made he ten lavers of brass,.... There was but one in the tabernacle of Moses, and what became of that is not known: some Jewish writers {c} say it was placed in Solomon's temple, and these lavers, five on the right and five on the left of it; however, here were enough provided for the purpose for the priests to wash their burnt offerings in, **2Ch 4:6** and were typical of the large provision made in the blood of Christ for the cleansing of his people; whose works, services, and sacrifices, as well as persons and garments, need continual washing in that blood; see Ro 12:1,

one laver contained forty baths; and a bath, according to Bishop Cumberland {d} held seven wine gallons, and two quarts and half a pint:

and every laver was four cubits: that is, square; this was the diameter of it:

and upon every of the ten bases one laver; for which they were made, even to set the lavers on, and were exactly of the same measure.

{c} Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, in 2 Chron. iv. 6. {d} Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 3. p. 70, 71.

1 Kings 7:39

Ver. 39. And he put five bases on the right side of the house,.... On the south side, which is commonly understood; that is, of the courts of the priests, where they were placed for their use: and five on the left side of the house; on the north, as it must be, if the south is on the right; though as the entrance into the temple was at the east, when a man went in, the north must be on the right, and the south on the left; and this seems to be the position by what follows:

and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward, over against the south; and therefore the right side must be the north, which is opposite to the south; the sea seems to have stood northeast, which was for the priests to wash in before they entered on divine service, See Gill on "Ex 30:20" hence it became customary with the Heathens to wash before they performed any religious worship {e}, particularly the hands and feet {f}.

{e} Vid. Virgil. Bucolic. Eclog. 8. "affer aquam", &c. Aeneid. 2. "attrectare nefas", &c. Macrob. Saturnal. l. 3. c. l. {f} Vid. Sperling de Bapt. Ethnic. p. 88, 89, 101.

1 Kings 7:40

Ver. 40. And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basins,.... The lavers are not the ten before mentioned, of the make of which an account is before given; but these, according to Jarchi and Ben Gersom, are the same with the pots, **1Ki 7:45** and so they are called in **2Ch 4:11** the use of which, as they say, was to put the ashes of the altar into; as the "shovels", next mentioned, were a sort of besoms to sweep them off, and the "basins" were to receive the blood of the sacrifices, and sprinkle it; no mention is here made of the altar of brass he made, but is in **2Ch 4:11**, nor of the fleshhooks to take the flesh out of the pots, as in **2Ch 4:16**,

so Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made King Solomon for the house of the Lord; what he undertook, and was employed in, he finished, which were all works of brass; of which a recapitulation is made in the following verses to the end of the forty fifth, where they are said to be made of "bright brass", free of all dross and rust; "good", as the Targum, even the best brass they were made of; the brass David took from Hadarezer, 1Ch 18:8 which Josephus {g} too much magnifies, when he says it was better than gold.

{g} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5. sect. 3.

1 Kings 7:41

Ver. 41. See Gill on "1Ki 7:40"

1 Kings 7:42

Ver. 42. See Gill on "1Ki 7:40"

1 Kings 7:43

Ver. 43. See Gill on "1Ki 7:40"

1 Kings 7:44

Ver. 44. See Gill on "1Ki 7:40"

1 Kings 7:45

Ver. 45. See Gill on "1Ki 7:40"

1 Kings 7:46

Ver. 46. In the plain of Jericho did the king cast them in the clay ground,.... Which being thick, as the word signifies, and stiff and close, was fit for such a purpose as casting brass; of such clay, furnaces of earth used to be made to melt metals in; but here were large things to be cast, as the two pillars, the sea, the ten lavers, &c. moulds were made in the ground, and so the melted brass was poured into them, which gave it its different forms; this, no doubt, was done by Hiram, though said to be done by the king, because done by his orders: the place where it was done was a part of the plain of Jericho, which lay

between Succoth and Zarthan; Succoth was in the tribe of Gad, on the other side Jordan; Zarthan was near it on this side, in the tribe of Manasseh, the same that is called Zartanah, **1Ki 4:12** and Zaretan, **Jos 3:16** and Zeredathah, **2Ch 4:17**. The first casters of brass are said {h} to be Theodorus and Rhaecus, both Samians.

{h} Pausau. Arcadica, sive, l. 8. p. 479. & Boeotica, sive, l. 9. p. 607.

1 Kings 7:47

Ver. 47. And Solomon left all the vessels [unweighed], because they were exceeding many,.... The vessels of brass before mentioned, being so large, at least some of them, and so numerous; the Targum is, he laid them up, or placed them; he brought them from whence they were cast, and put them in the sanctuary without weighing them:

neither was the weight of the brass found out; or "searched" {i}; it never was inquired into; or, as the Targum, there was no end of it, it was so much.

{i} rqxn al "nec invesigari potuerit", Tigurine version: "non pervestigatum est", Junius, Tremellius, Piscator.

1 Kings 7:48

Ver. 48. And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the Lord,.... That is, he ordered them to be made, even all that were in the tabernacle of Moses; all were newly made, excepting the ark, mercy seat, and cherubim:

the altar of gold; the altar of incense, which was made of cedar, covered with gold, **1Ki 6:20**, hence called the golden altar, **Re 8:3**

and the table of gold, whereupon the shewbread was; this includes all the tables, for there were ten of them, **2Ch 4:8** where they are said to be placed, five on the right hand, and five on the left; which, according to the Jews {k}, were not on the right and left of the temple, but on the right and left of the table of Moses, and which being placed on the north side, these must be also, Ex 40:22 there being more tables in the temple than in the tabernacle may denote the greater provision of spiritual food in the word and ordinances of the Gospel church, of which the temple was a figure, than under the legal dispensation.

{k} T. Bab. Meuachot, fol. 98. Kimchi in loc. Targum in 2 Chron. iv. 8.

1 Kings 7:49

Ver. 49. And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle,.... These stood in the holy place, where the shewbread tables did, right before the holy of holies; there were ten of these as of them, which were placed, as the same Jewish writers say, not on the right and left of the temple, but on the right and left of Moses's candlestick, which stood on the south side, Ex 40:24, these may denote the greater degree of spiritual light in the church of Christ under the Gospel dispensation than under the law:

with the flowers; the figures of flowers, such as were wrought on the candlestick of Moses:

and the lamps; which were seven to each candlestick, and so must be in all seventy; which may put us in mind of the seventy disciples of Christ, some of the first lights of the Gospel church:

and the tongues of gold; which were used to take the wicks out of the oil, and put into the lamps.

1 Kings 7:50

Ver. 50. And the bowls,.... To keep the oil in:

and the snuffers; to trim the lamps with; though some interpret the word of musical instruments, as the Targum, of psalteries:

and the basins; which were to receive the blood of the sacrifices; and, Ben Gersom thinks, particularly the blood of those that were brought into the sanctuary, see Heb 13:11, there were an hundred of them, **2Ch 4:8**

and the spoons; which held the incense:

and the censers of pure gold; with which the coals were carried from one altar to another, on which the incense was burnt; not only those but all the other vessels were of pure gold:

and the hinges of gold, [both] for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, to wit,

of the temple; the holy of holies and the holy place, the hinges of the doors of each, on which they were hung, and turned, were of gold; so grand and magnificent was this edifice, and so liberal Solomon in the building of it.

1 Kings 7:51

Ver. 51. So was ended all the work that King Solomon made for the house of the Lord,.... Which he ordered to be made to be put into it, either for the ornament of it, or for the use and service of it; all was completely finished in the space of seven years:

and Solomon had brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; had laid up for, and devoted to the building of the temple, and for the service of it; not all, but what was left; what was over and above there was a need of; though the Jews commonly say, that he made use of none of his father's, but built it and furnished it at his own expense; for which reason he did not begin to build as soon as he came to the throne, they suppose, but waited four years, until he had laid up a sufficiency of his own to defray the expense of it; but it is certain he made use of the brass his father reserved for this work, see 1Ch 18:8 and which, perhaps it may be said, is the reason it is not mentioned here as laid up: even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord; he did not convert them to his own use, but laid them up in the treasury of the sanctuary, for the purchase of sacrifices, the repair of the house in future times, &c.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 8

This chapter gives an account of the introduction of the ark into the temple, **1Ki 8:1** of the glory of the Lord filling it, **1Ki 8:10** of a speech Solomon made to the people concerning the building of the temple, and how he came to be engaged in it, **1Ki 8:12**, of a prayer of his he put up on this occasion, requesting, that what supplications soever were made at any time, or on any account, by Israelites or strangers, might be accepted by the Lord, **1Ki 8:22**, and of his blessing the people of Israel at the close of it, with some useful exhortations, **1Ki 8:54**, and of the great number of sacrifices offered up by him, and the feast he made for the people, upon which he dismissed them, **1Ki 8:62**.

Ver. 1. Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel,.... The judges in the several cities, or senators of the great sanhedrim, as others; though it is a question whether as yet there was such a court:

and all the heads of the tribes; the princes of the twelve tribes:

the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel; the principal men of the ancient families in every tribe:

unto King Solomon in Jerusalem; these he summoned together to himself there where the temple was built:

that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion; whither David brought it, when he had taken that fort, so called, and dwelt in it; and from this mountain Solomon proposed to bring it up to the temple, on a higher mountain, Moriah, not far from one another.

1 Kings 8:2

Ver. 2. And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto King Solomon at the feast,.... Not of tabernacles, as the Targum on **2Ch 5:3** and so Jarchi; though that was in the same month next mentioned, and began on the fifteenth of it, and held seven days; wherefore this must be the feast of the dedication of the temple, and which was kept before that; since both lasted fourteen days, and the people were dismissed on the twenty third of the month; now not only the above principal persons convened, but a vast number of the common people came to see the solemnity of removing the ark, and of dedicating the temple, and to attend the feast of it, and the more, since in a few days was the time for all the males in Israel to appear there:

in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month; it was, as the Targum says, originally the first month; but upon the children of Israel coming out of Egypt in Ab or Nisan, that became the first month, and this was the seventh from that; and is the same with Tisri, which answers to part of September, and part of October, here called Ethanim; which some render the month of the ancients, others of strong ones; either because of the many feasts that were in it, as some say; or because it was the time of ingathering all the increase and fruits of the earth, which strengthen and support man's life; or rather of "never failing", i.e. waters, showers falling in this month, and the rivers full of water {l}; so September is "septimus imber", according to Isidore {m}, and the three following months are alike derived; this, by the Egyptians, was called Theuth, and was with them the first month in the year {n}; so Porphyry says {o}, with the Egyptians the beginning of the year was not Aquarius, as with the Romans, but Cancer; and so the month of September was the first with the Ethiopians {p}, and with most people {q}; though with the Chinese about the middle of Aquarius {r}. Now, though the temple was finished in the eighth month, **1Ki 6:38**, it was not dedicated until the seventh in the following year; it required time to finish the utensils and vessels, and put them in their proper place, and for the drying of the walls, &c.

{l} Vid. Hackman. Praecidan. Sacr. p. 130, 131. {m} Origin. l. 5. c. 33. {n} Lactant. de Fals. Felig. l. 1. c. 6. {o} De Antro Nymph. prope finem. {p} Ludolf. Lexic. Ethiopic. p. 65. & Hist. Ethiop. l. 3. c. 6. {q} Julian. Opera, par. 1. orat. 4. p. 290, 291. {r} Martin. Sinic. Hist. l. 1. p. 22.

1 Kings 8:3

Ver. 3. And all the elders of Israel came,.... To Zion, the city of David:

and the priests took up the ark; from thence; in **2Ch 5:4** it is said the Levites did it, whose business it was, De 31:25, and so the priests might be called; for every priest was a Levite, though every Levite was not a priest, and the priests did at all times bear the ark; see **Jos 3:15**.

1 Kings 8:4

Ver. 4. And they brought up the ark of the Lord,.... From the city of David to the temple:

and the tabernacle of the congregation; not the tent David made for the ark, though that might be brought also, but the tabernacle of Moses, which had been many years at Gibeon; but now removed to Zion, and from thence to the temple, where it was laid up, as having been a sacred thing; that it might not be put to common or superstitious uses, and to prevent the being of more places than one for worship:

and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle; as the candlestick, shewbread table, incense altar, &c.

even those did the priests and the Levites bring up; some brought one, and some another; the priests brought the ark, and the Levites the vessels.

1 Kings 8:5

Ver. 5. And King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled together,.... On this solemn occasion:

were with him before the ark; while it was in the court of the priests, before it was carried into the most holy place:

sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude; the phrase seems to be hyperbolical, and designed to denote a great number.

1 Kings 8:6

Ver. 6. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place,.... Destined for it, the like to which it had in the tabernacle:

into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place; that part of the house where the divine oracle was, the holy of holies; for though into it none but the high priest might enter, and he but once a year; yet in case of necessity, as for the repair of it, which the Jews {s} gather from hence, other priests might enter, as was the case now; an high priest could not carry in the ark himself, and therefore it was necessary to employ others; and besides, as yet the divine Majesty had not taken up his residence in it:

even under the wings of the cherubim; the large ones which Solomon had made, **1Ki 6:23** not those of Moses.

{s} Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Beth Habechirah, c. 7. sect. 23.

1 Kings 8:7

Ver. 7. For the cherubim spread forth [their] two wings over the place of the ark,.... The most holy place where the ark stood, even from wall to wall:

and the cherubim covered the ark, and the staves thereof above; so that neither could be seen.

1 Kings 8:8

Ver. 8. And they drew out the staves,.... Not made them larger, as Ben Gersom, than those in the tabernacle of Moses, this place being larger than that; nor did they draw them wholly out, and lay them up in the sanctuary, there being no further use for them, the ark having now a fixed place, and not to be removed; which would have been contrary to
Ex 25:15 but they drew them out some little way:

that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle; not in that part of the temple commonly called the holy place, in distinction from the most holy, for that seems to be denied in the next clause; nor could they be seen there, since there was a wall and a vail between them; though some think they might be seen when the door was opened, and the vail turned aside; and these also pushing against the vail, might be seen prominent, like the breasts of a woman under a covering, as the Jews express it; but the sense is, that the ends of these were seen out of the ark from under the wings of the cherubim, being a little drawn, in that part of the most holy place which is before the oracle or mercy seat:

and they were not seen without; neither quite out of the ark, nor without the most holy place, nor in the holy place; but were only seen by the high priest when he went in on the day of atonement, and served as a direction to him to go between them before the ark, and there perform his work {t}; which, through the darkness of the place, and the ark being covered with the wings of the cherubim, he could not otherwise discern the exact place where it stood:

and there they are unto this day: when the writer of this book lived, even in the same situation.

{t} Vid. Misn. Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1.

1 Kings 8:9

Ver. 9. There was nothing in the ark, save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb,.... That is, there were no other writings; or, as Ben Gersom says, no other part of the law, but the decalogue otherwise he observes there were in it Aaron's rod and the pot of manna, according to **Heb 9:4** though the particle there may be rendered "at", or "with", or "by", See Gill on "Heb 9:4" and so they might be not within it, but in some place on the sides of it, see

De 31:26,

when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt; about two months after.

1 Kings 8:10

Ver. 10. And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place,.... The most holy place, having set up the ark of the Lord there, who were all sanctified that were there, and did not wait by course as at other times, see **2Ch 5:11**, where in **2Ch 5:12** it is said, that at this time, the Levites, who were singers of the families of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, arrayed in fine linen, with their musical instruments in their hands, stood at the east end of the altar of burnt offering, and one hundred and twenty priests, blowing their trumpets, praised the Lord together with one sound, declaring his goodness and his mercy, which endure for ever: and then it was

that the cloud filled the house of the Lord; the whole temple, both the holy of holies and the holy place, and the court of the priests; so that it was visible to all, and was a token of the divine presence of God, of his taking possession of his house, and of his taking up his residence in it.

1 Kings 8:11

Ver. 11. So that the priests could not stand to minister, because of the cloud,.... Either through the darkness it first caused, or through the light that broke out of it, which was dazzling to them, or through the terror it struck their minds with; they could neither minister in the holy place, by offering incense there; and as for the most holy place, none but the high priest could minister there, and that on one day only; nor in the court of the priests, at the altar of burnt offerings:

for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord; a bright and glorious stream came forth from the cloud, and spread itself all over the house, and then took up its abode in the most holy place as in the tabernacle, Ex 40:34.

1 Kings 8:12

Ver. 12. And then spake Solomon,.... Perceiving by this symbol that the Lord was come into his house, to take up his dwelling in it, and seeing the priests and people in consternation at it, spake the following words to their comfort:

the Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness; and now was fulfilling his promise, and therefore to be considered not as a token of his displeasure, but of his gracious presence; this was done for the greater awe of the divine Majesty, and to denote the darkness of the former dispensation; reference may be had to Le 16:2 or rather this was now said by the Lord, that is, it appeared to be his resolution and determination to dwell in this manner; the Targum is,

"the Lord is pleased to cause his Shechinah or divine Majesty to dwell in Jerusalem,"

in the temple there. This was imitated by the Heathens; hence the Lacedemonians had a temple dedicated to Jupiter Scotitas, or the dark, as Pausanias {u} relates; and the Indian Pagans to this day affect darkness in their temples, and are very careful that no light enter into them but by the door, which is commonly strait and low, and by little crevices in the windows {w}.

{u} Laconica, sive, I. 3. p. 178. {w} Agreement of Customs between the East-Indians and Jews, art. 5. p. 35.

1 Kings 8:13

Ver. 13. I have surely built thee an house to dwell in,.... Turning himself from the priests and people, he quieted with a few words, he addressed the Lord; having built an house for him, for his worship and glory, with this view, that he might dwell in it, he was now, by the above token, fully assured it would be an habitation for him:

a settled place for thee to abide in for ever; which is observed in distinction from the tabernacle of Moses, which was often removed from place to place, otherwise this did not continue for ever; though Solomon might hope it would, at least unto the times of the Messiah; and indeed such a building on this spot, for such use, did continue so long, excepting the interval of the seventy years' captivity in Babylon.

1 Kings 8:14

Ver. 14. And the king turned his face about,.... He was before the altar, **1Ki 8:22**, with his face to that first, and looking towards the holy and the most holy place, filled with the cloud and glory; and now he turned himself and stood with the altar behind him, and looking to the court of the people:

and blessed all the congregation of Israel; either blessed the Lord before them, or prayed for blessings for them, or congratulated them upon the Lord's taking up his residence in the temple, which was so great an honour and favour to them:

and all the congregation of Israel stood: ready to receive the king's blessing, and in honour of him, and reverence to the divine Being. The Jews say, none might sit in the court but the kings of the house of David.

1 Kings 8:15

Ver. 15. And he said, blessed be the Lord God of Israel,.... All praise and glory, honour and blessing, be ascribed to the Lord; who had afresh shown himself to be Israel's covenant God, by taking up his residence among them in the temple he had filled with his glory:

which spake with his mouth to David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it; who graciously promised him he should have a son that should build an house for him, and which he had by his power and providence faithfully performed; or rather which spake concerning David, so Noldius {x}; for God did not speak with his mouth to David, but to Nathan, of him: saying; as follows.

{x} Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 117. No. 596. So Sept.

1 Kings 8:16

Ver. 16. Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt,.... Which was now about four hundred and eighty eight years ago; see **1Ki 6:1**.

I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that my name might be therein; he had chosen one in his mind from all eternity; but he had not made known this choice, nor the place he had chosen; he gave hints by

Moses, that there was a place which he should choose, or declare he had chosen to put his name in, but did not express it, De 12:5 but now it was a clear case that he had chosen Jerusalem, and that was the city he always had in view, see **2Ch 6:6**,

but I chose David to be over my people Israel; to be their king, and to him he gave the first hint of the place where the temple was to be built, 1Ch 22:1, and he chose no man, and his family with him, before him, to rule over Israel, and be concerned in such a work, see **2Ch 6:5**.

1 Kings 8:17

Ver. 17. And it was in the heart of David my father,.... His mind was disposed to it, his heart was set upon it, he had taken up a resolution:

to build an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel; for his worship and service, for his honour and glory, **2Sa 7:3**.

1 Kings 8:18

Ver. 18. And the Lord said unto David my father,.... By Nathan the prophet:

whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart; his design was good, and so far it was acceptable to the Lord, that he thought of such a thing, though it was not his pleasure that should do it, as follows.

1 Kings 8:19

Ver. 19. Nevertheless, thou shall not build the house,.... Which is implied in the question in **2Sa 7:5**

but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name; which is expressed in **2Sa 7:12**.

1 Kings 8:20

Ver. 20. And the Lord hath performed his word that he spake,.... To David, concerning his son's building the temple:

and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised; succeeded him in the kingdom:

and have built an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel; the temple he had now finished; and thus the promise to David was punctually fulfilled, that he should have a son that should succeed him in the throne, and build the house of the Lord.

1 Kings 8:21

Ver. 21. And I have set there a place for the ark,.... The most holy place:

wherein is the covenant of the Lord; the two tables of stone, on which were the covenant of the Lord, as the Targum:

which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt; as in **1Ki 8:9**.

1 Kings 8:22

Ver. 22. And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord,.... The altar of the burnt offering in the court of the priests, where he prayed the following prayer; and which altar was typical of Christ, who is always to be in sight in prayer, and through whom all sacrifices of prayer and praise become acceptable to God. In **2Ch 6:13** he is said to stand upon a scaffold of brass, five cubits long, five broad, and three high, which stood in the midst of the court; it was a sort of a pulpit, round, as a laver, for which the word is sometimes used, and on which he kneeled:

in the presence of all the congregation of Israel; who stood in the great court before him, called the court of Israel:

and spread forth his hands toward heaven; and hence it appears, that though Solomon stood before the altar, he did not lay hold on it with his hands, as the Heathens did when they prayed; for they say {y}, that prayer alone does not appease the Deity, unless he that prays also lays hold on the altar with his hands; hence altars, at first, as we are told {z}, were called "ansae"; and lifting up or spreading the hands towards heaven was a proper gesture with the Greeks and Romans {a}.

{y} Macrob. Saturnal. l. 3. c. 2. Vid. Sperling. de Baptism. Ethiac, c. 6. p. 103. {z} Varro Rer. Divin. l. 5. apud ib. {a} Homer. Iliad. 3. ver. 275. & 6. ver. 301. Vid. Barth. Animadv. ad Claudian. in Rufin. l. 2. ver. 205.

1 Kings 8:23

Ver. 23. And he said, Lord God of Israel,.... Their covenant God and Father, whereby he was distinguished from all the gods of the Gentiles:

there is no god like thee; in heaven above or on earth beneath; none among the angels in heaven, nor among kings and civil magistrates on earth, who both are sometimes called "Elohim" gods; but only in a figurative sense, and not to be compared with the one only true God, for the perfection of his nature, or the works of his hands:

who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart; performs his promises, by which he both declares his mercy or goodness and his faithfulness to such who walk before him, in his ways, and according to his word, in the sincerity and uprightness of their hearts.

1 Kings 8:24

Ver. 24. Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him..... Concerning a son, his successor, and the builder of the temple:

thou, spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day; the temple being now finished by him, see **1Ki 8:15**.

1 Kings 8:25

Ver. 25. Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him,.... That as he had fulfilled one part of his promise respecting himself, his immediate successor, so that he would fulfil the other respecting his more remote offspring:

saying, there shall not fail thee a man in my sight, to sit on the throne of Israel; one of David's posterity to inherit his throne and kingdom, but with this proviso:

so that thy children takes heed to their way; in what way they walk, and how they walk in it:

that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me; meaning as David walked, see Ps 132:11.

1 Kings 8:26

Ver. 26. And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified,.... Truly made good, and punctually performed:

which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father; the same request in other words, repeated to show his ardent and vehement desire to have it fulfilled.

1 Kings 8:27

Ver. 27. But will God indeed dwell on the earth?.... Is it true? Can any credit be given to it? Who could ever have thought it, that so great and glorious a Being, who inhabits eternity, dwells in the highest heavens, should ever condescend to dwell on earth? Such was the amazing condescension of Christ, the Son of God, to tabernacle in human nature with men on earth, to which Solomon perhaps might have respect; his temple being the figure of his body, in which the Godhead dwells, **Joh 2:19**

behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; not, only the visible heavens, but the third heaven, where the throne of God is, and is the habitation of angels and saints; though there God makes the most glorious displays of himself yet he is so immense and infinite, that he is not to be comprehended and circumscribed in any place whatever:

how much less this house that I have builded? Though temples built for idols contain them, and are large enough, yet Solomon had no notion, when he built his temple, though it was for the name of God, that he was restrained to it, but dwelt everywhere, filling heaven and earth with his presence.

1 Kings 8:28

Ver. 28. Yet have thou respect to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God,.... Meaning himself, who, though a king acknowledged himself, and esteemed it an honour to be the servant of the Lord, and who was also an humble suppliant of his, and desired his prayers and supplications might be attended to:

to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee this day; the particulars of which follow.

1 Kings 8:29

Ver. 29. That thine eyes may be open towards this house night and day,.... That is, to the people that pray in it, as they are to his righteous ones, Ps 33:14 even towards the place of which thou hast my name shall be there; there should be some displays of his presence, power, and providence, of goodness, grace, and mercy:

that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make towards this place; not only to what he should make in it, but to what he should make in his own house, with his face directed towards this, as would be, and was the practice of good people in later times, yea, even when the temple lay in ruins; see **Da 6:10** figuring the respect gracious souls have to Christ by faith in their prayers, in whom the Godhead dwells bodily, see **Jon 2:4** and it is observable, according to a Jewish canon {b}, one at a distance, in another land, was not only to turn his face to the land of Israel, but direct his heart to Jerusalem, and the temple, and the holy of holies; and if in the land, to Jerusalem, &c. and if in Jerusalem, not only to the temple, and holy of holies, but if behind the mercy seat, he was to turn his face to it; which was a symbol of Christ, the propitiatory and throne of grace, to be looked unto by faith, **Ro 3:25**.

{b} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 94. sect. 1.

1 Kings 8:30

Ver. 30. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people

Israel, when they shall pray towards this place,.... Not only he desires his prayers might be heard, but those of the people of Israel, then, and at all times in succeeding ages, whenever they should look towards the temple, and to him that was typified by it; to whose blood, righteousness, sacrifice and mediation, the acceptance of prayers with God is to be ascribed:

and hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace; for though he condescended to take up his residence in the temple, yet his more proper and more glorious dwelling was in heaven, and from whence, notwithstanding the distance of it, he could hear the prayers of his people, and does:

and when thou hearest, forgive; manifest and apply pardoning grace and mercy on account of sins confessed, and repented of; or remove calamities and distresses on account of sin, which sometimes is meant, and frequently in this prayer, by the forgiveness of sin.

1 Kings 8:31

Ver. 31. If any man trespass against his neighbour,.... By being unfaithful in a trust committed to him, or the like:

and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear; he denying that ever anything was committed to his trust, and there being no witnesses of it, the judge obliges him to take an oath he never had any:

and the oath come before thine altar in this house; where it was taken, as in the presence of God, and as appealing to him: hence in corrupt times they came to swear by the altar, Mt 23:20 and so the Heathens used to take their oaths in the temples of their gods, and at their altars, as the instances of Callicrates {c} and Hannibal {d} show, and others Grotius refers to; yea, they also laid hold on the altar, at least touched it when they swore {e} to give the greater sanction to the oath.

{c} Cornel. Nep. Vit. Dion. l. 10. c. 8. {d} Ib. Hannibal. l. 23. c. 2. {e} Vid. Lydii Dissert de Jurament. c. 4. sect. 7.

1 Kings 8:32

Ver. 32. Then hear thou in heaven,.... When the injured person makes supplication to have justice done him:

and do, and judge thy servants; contending with one another, the one affirming, the other denying

condemning the wicked, by bringing his way upon his head: inflicting upon him the punishment imprecated by him in his oath:

and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness; by making it appear that his cause is just.

1 Kings 8:33

Ver. 33. When thy people Israel shall be smitten down before the enemy,.... Beaten and routed, many slain, and others carried captive; which had been their case, and might be again, and was, though now a time of peace:

because they have sinned against thee; which always was the reason of their being given up into the hands of their enemies:

and shall turn again to thee; to thy worship, as the Targum, having fallen into idolatry, which was generally the case when they fell before their enemies:

and confess thy name; own him to be the true God, acknowledge his justice in their punishment, confess their sin, repent of it, and give him glory:

and pray and make supplication unto thee in this house; not the captives, unless it should be rendered, as it may, "toward this house" {f}; but those that escaped, or their brethren that went not out to battle, who should pray for them here.

{f} So Pool and Patrick.

1 Kings 8:34

Ver. 34. Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel,.... It being not personal, but public sins, which would be the cause of such a calamity:

and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers; as had been often their case in the time of the judges.

1 Kings 8:35

Ver. 35. When heaven is shut up,.... As it may be said to be when the air is quite serene, and not a cloud in it:

and there is no rain; in its season, neither the former nor the latter, as it was in the times of Elijah:

because they have sinned against thee; want of rain was threatened in case of sin, and was always the effect of it, Le 26:19,

if they pray towards this place; in any part of the country where they were; for it sometimes rained on one city, and not on another, **Am 4:7**

and confess thy name; own his power and his providence, and the justness of his dealings with them:

and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them; their affliction being made useful, to bring them to a sense of their sin, and to repentance for it, and reformation from it; or, "when thou hearest" or "answerest them" {g}; so the Targum, receives their prayer; thus the goodness of God leads to repentance.

{g} Mnet yk "cum exaudieris eos", Vatablus.

1 Kings 8:36

Ver. 36. Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel,.... By removing the judgment of drought upon them:

that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk; the way of worship and duty prescribed by the Lord which was good in itself, and good for them, good things being enjoyed by them that walk therein; and this the Lord sometimes teaches by afflictions, as well as by his word; but whenever he does it, it is by his Spirit, and then afflictions are blessings, Ps 104:19 where the same phrase is differently rendered:

and give rain upon the land which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance; as he did at the prayer of Elijah, **Jas 5:18**.

1 Kings 8:37

Ver. 37 If there be in the land famine,.... Through want of rain, or any other cause, as there had been a three years' famine in the time of David, and it is supposed it might be again, though Canaan was a land flowing with milk and honey:

if there be pestilence; as there had been, for David's numbering the people:

blasting; or blights, occasioned by the east wind:

mildew; a kind of clammy dew, which falling on plants, corn, &c. corrupts and destroys them, see **Am 4:9**,

locust, or

if there be caterpillar; creatures very pernicious to the fruits of the earth, and cause a scarcity of them, see **Joe 1:4**,

if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; so that they cannot go out to gather the increase of the earth, or till their land:

whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be; whatever stroke from the hand of God, or what judgment or calamity soever befalls.

1 Kings 8:38

Ver. 38. What prayer and supplication soever,.... On account of any of the above things, or any other:

be [made] by any man, or by all the people Israel; by a private man, for such an one might go to the temple and pray by himself; see Lu 18:10 or by the public congregation:

which shall know every man the plague of his own heart; be sensible of his sin as the cause of his distress, and own it, though ever so privately committed, which none knows but God and his own heart; and which may be only an heart sin, not actually committed; as all sin is originally in the heart, and springs from it, that is the source of all wickedness; it may respect the corruption of nature, indwelling sin, which truly deserves this name, and which every good man is led to observe, confess, and bewail, Ps 51:4. In **2Ch 6:29** it is,

shall know his own sore and his own grief; what particularly affects him, and gives him pain and sorrow, as every man best knows his own affliction and trouble, and so can best represent his own case to the Lord:

and spread forth his hands towards this house; pray with his face towards it, and his hands spread out, a prayer gesture, and what was now used by Solomon, **1Ki 8:22**.

1 Kings 8:39

Ver. 39. Then hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace,.... Which was more properly so than this Solomon had built, and the Lord had taken possession of:

and forgive; remove the calamity and distress, be it what it may:

and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest: that his prayer is cordial and sincere, his confession and repentance genuine, and that he is truly sensible of his sin, and sorry for it, and is pure in his intentions and resolutions, through divine grace, to depart from it for the future:

(for thou, [even] thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men;) he knows all men, the hearts of them all, what is in them, what comes out of them, and is according to them; omniscience belongs only to God; it is his prerogative to know the heart and search the reins, see Jer 17:9.

1 Kings 8:40

Ver. 40. That they may fear thee,.... For his goodness sake in hearing their prayer, removing their affliction, and bestowing his blessings on them, particularly in forgiving their sins, see Ps 130:4

all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers; not only for the present, while the mercy is fresh, but all the days of their lives; to which they were the more obliged by the good land they possessed as a divine gift, and which they held by the tenure of their obedience, **Isa 1:19**.

1 Kings 8:41

Ver. 41. Moreover, concerning a stranger that is not of thy people Israel,.... One of another country, not belonging to any of the tribes of Israel, yet having some knowledge of, and disposition to, the true worship of God:

but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; as the Ethiopian eunuch did, to pray to him, worship him, and offer such sacrifices as were allowed a Gentile to do, Le 22:18 led thereunto by the fame of him, as follows.

1 Kings 8:42

Ver. 42. (For they shall hear of thy great name,.... Of his great name, Jehovah; of him as the eternal, immutable, and self-existent Being; of the perfections of his nature, as displayed in his mighty works:

and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm); which had done formerly such mighty works in Egypt, at the Red sea, in the wilderness, in the land of Canaan, in the times of David, and still under the reign of Solomon, and even in future ages, besides the works of creation and providence in general:

when he shall come and pray towards this house; not being admitted into it, only into a court, which in later times was called the court of the Gentiles, see Ac 21:19.

1 Kings 8:43

Ver. 43. Hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace,.... The prayer of the stranger:

and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; which were consistent with the will of God and his glory, and for the good of the stranger; this is more absolutely and unconditionally expressed than the requests for the Israelites; it is not desired that he would do by them according to their ways, and if they turned from their sins, or knew the plague of their hearts; the reason of which is supposed to be, because the Israelites knew the will of God, when the strangers did not; and therefore it is desired that, notwithstanding their ignorance, and their non-compliance with the divine will, through that, they might be heard and answered:

that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; might know him to be a God, hearing and answering prayer, forgiving sin, and bestowing favours, which might lead them to fear him and his goodness, as Israel did:

and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name; that he dwelt in it, granted his presence, heard and received the supplications of men, answered their requests, and accepted of their sacrifices here. Solomon seems to have had knowledge of the calling of the Gentiles, and to desire it.

1 Kings 8:44

Ver. 44. If thy people go out to battle against their enemy,.... In a foreign country, threatening to invade them, or having trespassed on their borders, or some way or other infringed on their liberties and privileges, and so given them just occasion to go to war with them:

whithersoever thou shalt send them; this case supposes their asking counsel of God, or having a direction and commission from him by a prophet, or some other way, to engage in war with the enemy:

and shall pray unto the Lord toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house I have built for thy name: for, notwithstanding the justness of their cause, and having a warrant from God to go to war, yet they were to pray to him for success when at a distance, even in a foreign land, and about to engage the enemy; and this they were to do, turning their faces towards the city of Jerusalem, and the temple there; declaring thereby that their dependence was upon the Lord that dwelt there, and their expectation of victory was only from him.

1 Kings 8:45

Ver. 45. Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication,.... For success:

and maintain their cause; do them justice, and avenge their injuries, as the Targum; let it appear that their cause is right, by giving them victory.

1 Kings 8:46

Ver. 46. If they sin against thee,.... The same persons when they were gone forth to battle, not observing the divine commands as they should:

for there is no man that sinneth not; such are the depravity of human nature, the treachery of the heart, and the temptations of Satan, of which Solomon had early notice, and was afterwards still more confirmed in the truth of, **Ec 7:20**

and thou be angry with them; for their sins, and resent their conduct:

so as to deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive unto the land of the enemy, far or near; as into Assyria or Babylon, whither they were carried.

1 Kings 8:47

Ver. 47. Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives,.... Or, "return to their heart" {a}; remember their sins, the cause of their captivity, and reflect upon them:

and repent of them, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives; though and while they are in such a state:

saying, we have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; which phrases include all their sins, with all the aggravated circumstances of them, and their sense of them, and contrition for them.

{a} Nbl la wbyvhw "et reversi fuerint ad cor suum", Pagninas, Montanus, Vatablus.

1 Kings 8:48

Ver. 48. And so return unto thee, with all their heart, and with all their soul,.... In the most sincere and cordial manner, with great ingenuity and uprightness; the Targum is,

"return unto thy worship;"

relinquishing false worship they had given into, and serve the Lord in the best manner they could:

in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive; and so at a distance from that temple, and the service of it, which

1 Kings 8:49

Ver. 49. Then hear thou their prayers, and their supplication, in heaven thy dwellingplace,.... For their deliverance out of captivity: and maintain their cause; plead it, and do them justice, avenge their injuries, and deliver them.

1 Kings 8:50

Ver. 50. And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee,.... By returning them to their own land; by which it would appear that the Lord had forgiven their trespasses, as well as by what follows:

and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them; for it is in the power of God to work upon the affections of men, and dispose their minds to use his people well, and to pity them under their distresses, as the Chaldeans did the Jews in Babylon, Ps 106:46.

1 Kings 8:51

Ver. 51. For they be thy people, and thine inheritance,.... Whom the Lord had chosen above all people, to be a special people to him, and to be his portion and possession; see **De 7:6**

which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron; hard and cruel bondage in Egypt: See Gill on "De 4:20".

1 Kings 8:52

Ver. 52. That thine eyes may be open to the supplication of thy servant,.... That is, attentive to it, meaning himself and his present supplication; or any other he should hereafter put up in this place:

and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call unto thee: at any time, and upon any account; so far as may be agreeable to his will, make for his glory, and their good; see **De 4:7**.

1 Kings 8:53

Ver. 53. For thou didst separate them from among all people of the earth to be thine inheritance,.... By his choice of them in his own mind, by the redemption of them out of Egypt, by the peculiar laws he gave them, and by the special blessings he conferred upon them:

as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord our God; it was he that spake this to Moses, and by him to the people, Ex 19:5 and it was he that did it, namely, separate them from all nations, to be his people and peculiar treasure: in this and the two preceding verses Solomon makes use of arguments taken from what the people of Israel were to the Lord, and he had done for them, to engage him to hearken to their supplications, and here ends his long prayer; in **2Ch 6:1** some things are added at the close of it, and some omitted.

1 Kings 8:54

Ver. 54. And it was so, that, when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the Lord,.... In which he was a type of Christ, praying and interceding for his people before the golden attar, **Re 8:3**,

he arose from before the altar of the Lord; the altar of burnt offering, over against which he was:

from kneeling on his knees; upon the brasen scaffold; see **2Ch 6:13**, in which posture he was during this long prayer:

with his hands spread up to heaven; which gesture he had used in his prayer, and now continued in blessing the people.

1 Kings 8:55

Ver. 55. And he stood and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice,.... Turning himself the altar, and his face to the people, giving them his benediction, not only as the father of his people, but as preacher in Jerusalem, closing it with a word of exhortation to them:

saying: as follows.

1 Kings 8:56

Ver. 56. Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according, to all that he promised.... A land of rest, and rest in the land from all enemies; see De 12:9,

there hath not failed one word of all his good promises, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant: so Joshua observed a little before his death, Jos 23:14 to which Solomon seems to have respect; and who lived to see a greater accomplishment of the gracious promises of God, and his faithfulness therein, both in the times of his father David, and his own.

1 Kings 8:57

Ver. 57. The Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers,.... Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and those that came out of Egypt, and especially that entered into the land of Canaan under Joshua, and subdued it; as the Lord had been with them to guide and direct them, protect and defend them, succeed and prosper them, so Solomon desires he might be with them: nothing is more desirable than the presence of God; Solomon could not have prayed for a greater blessing for himself and his people; the Targum is,

"let the Word of the Lord our God be for our help, as he was for the help of our fathers:"

let him not leave us, nor forsake us: this was no doubt a prayer of faith, founded upon a divine promise, **Jos 1:5**.

1 Kings 8:58

Ver. 58. That he may incline our hearts unto him,.... By his Spirit, to love, fear, and serve him; to attend to his worship, word, and ordinances:

to walk in all his ways; he has prescribed and directed to:

and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers; all his laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

1 Kings 8:59

Ver. 59. And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord,.... At this time:

be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night; be continually remembered and regarded by him, that so gracious answers might always be returned to those who supplicated in this place:

that he maintain the cause of his servant; of himself and his successors in the throne, that they may continue to possess it in peace, to the glory of God, and the good of the people:

and the cause of his people Israel at all times: that their rights and privileges might be continued, and they supported in them; and both his cause and theirs be regarded:

as the matter shall require; as they should stand in need of assistance, direction, and protection.

1 Kings 8:60

Ver. 60. That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God,.... By chastising the people of Israel when they sinned; by bearing and answering their prayers when they prayed unto him; by forgiving their sins, and delivering them out of their troubles; by maintaining their cause, and protecting them in the enjoyment of their blessings: and that there is "none else"; no God besides him; all being else fictitious deities, or nominal ones; he only is the one living and true God.

1 Kings 8:61

Ver. 61. Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord your God,.... Sincere in their love to him, united in their worship of him, and constant in their obedience to him:

to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day: as they did that day, neither king nor people having as yet fallen into idolatry, but showing by their then present appearance a zeal for God, his house, and worship.

1 Kings 8:62

Ver. 62. And the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifice before the Lord. For burnt offerings, which having been laid upon the altar, as soon as the king had done praying to God, and blessing the people, and exhorting them, fire came down from heaven, and consumed them; which showed the Lord's acceptance of the sacrifices, and was another confirmation, besides the cloud, of the Lord's well pleasedness with the temple, and of his taking possession of it to reside in it; upon which the people bowed and worshipped, and praised the Lord for his goodness and mercy, **2Ch 7:1**.

1 Kings 8:63

Ver. 63. And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the Lord,.... Part of which belonged to the offerer, and with those Solomon feasted the people all the days of the feast of the dedication, if not of tabernacles also; for the number was exceeding large, as follows:

22,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep; which, as suggested, might be the number for all the fourteen days; nor need it seem incredible, since, as Josephus {b} says, at a passover celebrated in the times of Cestius the Roman governor, at the evening of the passover, in two hours time 256,500 lambs were slain; however, this was a very munificent sacrifice of Solomon's, in which he greatly exceeded the Heathens, whose highest number of sacrifices were hecatombs, or by hundreds, but his by thousands:

so the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord; devoted it to divine and religious worship by these sacrifices: hence in imitation of this sprung the dedication of temples with the Heathens; the first of which among the Romans was that in the capitol at Rome {c} by Romulus; the rites and ceremonies used therein by them may be read in Cicero, Livy, Tacitus, and others {d}.

{b} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 3. {c} Vid. Liv. Hist. Decad. 1. l. 1. p. s. & l. 2. p. 33. {d} Vid. Hospinian. de Templis, l. 4. c. 2. p. 451. & Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 14.

1 Kings 8:64

Ver. 64. The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord,.... The court of the priests that was before the holy place, adjoining to it, in which was the altar of burnt offering; this, or, however, the middle part of it, he sanctified for present use, to offer sacrifices on, for a reason hereafter given:

for there he offered burnt offerings and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings; which was the reason why the middle of the great court was for this time set apart for this service.

1 Kings 8:65

Ver. 65. And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him,.... Partaking of the parts of the peace offerings which belonged to him, and were offered by way of thanksgiving on the occasion, together with whatsoever he might as a liberal prince provide for this entertainment:

for it was for a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt; consisting of a number of people, gathered together from Hamath, which was on the northern border of the land of Israel, to the river of Egypt; either the Nile, or Rhinoculura, a branch of it, which lay on the southern border of the land: and this was kept

before the Lord; as in his presence, with thankfulness to him, and with a view to his glory:

seven days and seven days, even fourteen days; seven days for the dedication of the house, and seven days for the feast of tabernacles, as the Targum; which agrees with **2Ch 7:9**, the feast of dedication was first, and began perhaps on the seventh day of the month, as the feast of tabernacles did on the fifteenth: within this time, namely, on the tenth, was a fast day, the day of atonement; which was either observed between the two feasts, or was omitted, which is not likely; or they did not eat and drink until the evening of that day. The Septuagint version, according to the Vatican copy, reads "seven days" only once; see **2Ch 7:8**.

1 Kings 8:66

Ver. 66. On the eighth day he sent the people away,.... That is, of the feast of tabernacles, the eighth from the first of that, which was a solemn day, and fell on the twenty second of the month; at the close of which the dismission was made, or they had leave to go, but they did not until the twenty third, according to **2Ch 7:10**

and they blessed the king; returned him thanks for his care, and charge, and pains, in building the temple; for prayers for them, and the feast he had now made, and wished all health and happiness to him:

and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart; or to their cities, as the Targum, to their several habitations; being greatly delighted with what they had seen and heard, and partook of especially:

for all the goodness the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people; in **2Ch 7:10**, it is added, "unto Solomon"; for David, in giving him such a son and successor, who according to promise had built the house of the Lord; and for Solomon, in raising him up to such dignity, and enabling him to build such a temple for the worship of God and his glory; and for the people of Israel, in giving them such a king to rule over them, under whom they enjoyed so much peace and prosperity, and the full and free exercise of the true religion, with such accommodations, and in such a splendid manner as now.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 9

This chapter relates a second vision Solomon had at Gibeon, in which he received an answer to his prayer in the preceding chapter, **1Ki 9:1** that passed between him and Hiram king of Tyre, **1Ki 9:10**, the places that Solomon built or repaired, **1Ki 9:15**, the Canaanitish people that became bondmen to him, and the officers he had among the children of Israel, **1Ki 9:20** the removal of Pharaoh's daughter to the house built for her, **1Ki 9:24**. Solomon's attention to religious services, **1Ki 9:25** and the navy of ships he employed, which brought him in great riches, **1Ki 9:26**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord,.... Which was done in seven years, **1Ki 6:38**.

and the king's house; his own palace, which was finished in thirteen years, **1Ki 7:1**,

and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do; all his other buildings, the house for Pharaoh's daughter, the house of the forest of Lebanon, and may include his vineyards, gardens, orchards, and pools of water, made for his pleasure, **Ec 2:4** in which he succeeded and prospered, **2Ch 7:11**.

1 Kings 9:2

Ver. 2. That the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time,.... Junius and Tremellius read this verse with the following, to the end of the ninth, in a parenthesis, and render this clause, "for the Lord had appeared", &c. and Piscator translates it, "moreover the Lord appeared", &c. as beginning a distinct narrative from the former; and indeed if the words are to be connected with the preceding, as in our version, this appearance must be thirteen years after the building of the temple, which is not probable; but rather it was the night after the dedication of it, when an answer was returned to Solomon's prayer in the preceding chapter; for that it should be deferred twelve or thirteen years is not reasonable to suppose; and this appearance was the second of the kind and manner:

as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon; in a dream and a vision, and by night, **1Ki 3:5**, see **2Ch 7:12**.

1 Kings 9:3

Ver. 3. And the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me,.... With delight and pleasure, and had accepted it; meaning the prayer recorded in the preceding chapter:

I have hallowed this house which thou hast built; by the cloud of glory filling it, and by fire descending from heaven, and consuming the sacrifices offered in it, **2Ch 7:1**

to put my name there for ever; there to grant his presence, so long as his pure worship should be continued in it; so the Targum adds,

"and my Shechinah or divine Majesty shall abide in it, if my will is done there continually:"

and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually; his eyes of Providence should be upon it, to watch over it, and protect it, and his worshippers in it; and he should have a cordial regard to the sacrifices there offered, and to the persons of the offerers, so long as they offered them in a right way, and to right ends and purposes.

1 Kings 9:4

Ver. 4. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness..... Who, though guilty of many sins and failings in life, yet was sincere and upright in the worship of God, never apostatized from it, or fell into idolatry, which is what is chiefly respected:

to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments; observe all the laws of God, moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

1 Kings 9:5

Ver. 5. Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever,.... In a succession in his posterity, until the coming of the Messiah:

as I promised unto David thy father, saying, there shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel; not fail one of his posterity to sit upon it; see **2Sa 7:12**.

1 Kings 9:6

Ver. 6. But if you shall at all turn from following me, you or your children,.... From my worship, as the Targum; either Solomon or his successors, or the people of Israel and their posterity; should they turn their backs on God and his worship, meaning not in a single instance, or in some small degree; but as in the original, "if in turning ye turn" {e}, that is, utterly, and entirely, or wholly turn from him and his worship to other gods, as follows:

and will not keep my commandments and my statutes, which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: neglecting the will and worship of God, go into idolatrous practices, as Solomon himself did.

{e} Nwbvt bwv Ma "si avertendo aversi fueritis", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

1 Kings 9:7

Ver. 7. Then will I cut off Israel out of the land I have given them,.... Suffer them to be carried captive into other lands, as the ten tribes were into Assyria, and the two tribes to Babylon; which is called a plucking them up by the roots in **2Ch 7:20**

and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight: as it was when burnt by Nebuchadnezzar:

and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people; both for their sins and for their miseries; see De 28:37: in **2Ch 7:20** the house or temple is said to be made a proverb of.

1 Kings 9:8

Ver. 8. And at this house which is high,.... The house of the most High, as some render it, and in high esteem, fame, and glory, as well as it was built on an high hill, and was itself one hundred and twenty cubits high, **2Ch 3:4**, the Targum is,

"and this house which was high shall be destroyed:"

everyone that passeth by it shall be astonished; at the ruins of the temple, and of the city of Jerusalem, which had been so magnificent:

and shall hiss; in scorn and derision of the people of Israel, rejoicing in their ruin:

and they shall say, why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and to this house? or suffered it to be done, to lie thus in waste and ruins; a land in which it had been said he delighted, and looked unto from one end of the year to the other, and a house he had taken up his dwelling in; surely something more than ordinary, they suggest, must be the cause of all this.

1 Kings 9:9

Ver. 9. And they shall answer,.... Who were left in the land when others were carried captive, as were some by Nebuchadnezzar, and who were capable of making the following answer:

because they forsook the Lord; the worship of the Lord their God, as the Targum:

who brought forth their fathers out of the land Egypt; which is observed as an aggravation of their sin:

and have taken hold upon other gods: the gods of the people, as the Targum; of the Gentiles, who knew not the true God:

and have worshipped them, and served them: even idols of gold and silver, wood and stone; an instance of judicial blindness they were left unto, who had been favoured with a revelation from God:

therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil; their idolatry was the cause of it, than which nothing is more provoking to God.

1 Kings 9:10

Ver. 10. And it came to pass at the end of twenty years,.... From the time Solomon first began to build: when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord, and the king's house; the first was seven years in building, and the other thirteen; in all twenty.

1 Kings 9:11

Ver. 11. (Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees,.... For the building of both his houses; see **1Ki 5:8**,

and with gold, according to all his desire): which is not before mentioned, and accounts for it from whence Solomon had his gold; if he made no use, as some think he did not, of what his father left him; see **1Ki 7:51** with which he covered several parts of the temple, and made several vessels in it. Hiram traded to Ophir, and had it from thence; and he could supply Solomon with it, and did, before he sent a navy thither:

that then Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee; that is, by or near it, for they were not in the land of Canaan; for then Solomon could not have disposed of them, being allotted and belonging to one of the tribes of Israel, and part of the Lord's inheritance; but they were upon the borders, particularly on the borders of Asher, if Cabul in Jos 19:27, can be thought to be the same with these; though some think that Solomon did not give Hiram the possession of these cities, but the royalties and revenues of them, their produce until the debt was paid: but they rather seem to be a gratuity, and a full grant of them, and might be cities which David had conquered, and taken out of the hands of the ancient inhabitants of them; and so Solomon had a right to dispose of them, being left him by his father; for it is plain as yet they were not inhabited by Israelites; see **2Ch 8:2**. They are by a Jewish writer {f} said to be twenty two, very wrongly.

{f} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 54. 1.

1 Kings 9:12

Ver. 12. And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him,.... For these cities, being in or near Galilee, were not far from Tyre:

and they pleased him not; being either out of repair, as some think; see **2Ch 8:2** or the ground barren, and unfruitful; which is not likely, being in a very fruitful country, as the tribes on which they bordered were: but they were not agreeable to him, they did not suit with the disposition of him and his people, who were given not to husbandry, but to merchandise; and the land about these would require a good deal of pains and labour to till, which they were not used to.

1 Kings 9:13

Ver. 13. And he said,.... By letter to him:

what cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? so he called him, being not only his neighbour, but his ally, in friendship and covenant with him; and this he said of them not by way of complaint, or contempt, as unworthy of his acceptance; for so munificent a prince as Solomon would never offer to a king to whom he was so much obliged anything mean and contemptible; but as being unsuitable to him, however valuable they might be in themselves, or of advantage to others:

and he called them the land of Cabul unto this day; or rather the words should be rendered impersonally, "they were called so"; for Hiram could not call them by this name to the times of the writer of this book; nor is there any reason to think he would give them any name at all, and much less a contemptible one, as this is thought to be, when he did not choose to accept of them. Some interpret {g} the word shut up, or unfruitful, sandy, dirty, clayey; so in the Talmud {h} it is said to be a sandy land, and called Cabul, because a man's foot was plunged in it up to his ankles, and is represented as unfruitful. Josephus {i} says, in the Phoenician tongue it signifies "not pleasing", which agrees with what Hiram says, **1Ki 9:12**. Hillerus {k} interprets it "as nothing", they being as nothing to Hiram, of no use to him, whatever they might be to others; and therefore he restored them to Solomon, **2Ch 8:2**, which seems to be the best sense of the word. They are the same with Decapolis, **Mt 4:25** so called from ten cities therein {l}.

{g} David de Pomis, Lexic fol. 58. 2. {h} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 54. 1. {i} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 5. sect. 3. {k} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 435. {l} Vid. Castel Lex

Heptaglot. col. 1669. & Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 18.

1 Kings 9:14

Ver. 14. And Hiram sent to the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold. Not after the cities had been given him, but before; and it may be rendered "had sent" {m}, and is the sum of the gold he furnished him with for the temple, **1Ki 9:11** which, according to Brerewood {n}, was 540,000 pounds of our money; and, according to another {o} writer, it amounted to 1,466,400 ducats of gold, taking a talent at 12,220 ducats.

{m} xlvy "miserat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {n} De Ponderibus & Pretiis, Vet. Num. c. 5. {o} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 571.

1 Kings 9:15

Ver. 15. And this is the reason of the levy which King Solomon raised,.... Both of men to work, **1Ki 5:13**, and of money to defray the expense:

it was for to build the house of the Lord; the temple:

and his own house; or palace:

and Millo; which he repaired: See Gill on "1Sa 5:9".

and the wall of Jerusalem; which, as Abarbinel says, was a large building, there being three walls one within another:

and Hazor; a city in the tribe of Naphtali, and which had been a royal city with the Canaanites; see Jos 11:1

and Megiddo; which was in the tribe of Manasseh, Jos 17:11

and Gezer; which was in the tribe of Ephraim, and formerly a royal city of the Canaanites, Jos 10:33.

1 Kings 9:16

Ver. 16. For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire,.... Egypt lay lower than Canaan, and therefore Pharaoh is said to go up to it; what moved him to it is not certain; whether he went of himself provoked, or was moved to it by Solomon, who had married his daughter; however, so he did, and took the place, and burnt it:

and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city: for though it was given to the tribe of Ephraim, yet they could not drive the Canaanites out of it, who seem to have remained in it to this time; see
Jos 16:10

and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife; not as a dowry with her, but as a present to her; perhaps some time after marriage.

1 Kings 9:17

Ver. 17. And Solomon built Gezer,.... Rebuilt it, it having been burnt, at least great part of it, by Pharaoh when he took it:

and Bethhoron the nether; and the upper also, **2Ch 8:5**, which belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, and were on the borders of it, between that and Benjamin, Jos 16:3.

1 Kings 9:18

Ver. 18. And Baalath,.... A city in the tribe of Dan, Jos 19:44

and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land; or "Tamar", as in the Cetib, or Scriptural reading; for we go according to the marginal reading, and so Thamato in Ptolemy {p}; and is thought by some to be the same with Tamar in Eze 47:19, which Jerom there says is Palmyra. Tamar signifies a palm tree, from whence this city had its name Palmyra, the situation of which place agrees with this; hence we read both in Ptolemy {q} and Pliny {r} of the Palmyrene deserts: the ruins of it are to be seen to this day, and of it this account is given; that it is enclosed on three sides with long ridges of mountains, which open towards the east gradually, to the distance of about an hour's riding; but to the south stretches a vast plain, beyond the reach of the eye; the air is good, but the soil exceeding barren; nothing green to be seen therein, save some few palm trees in the gardens, and here and there about the town; and from these trees, I conceive, says my author, it obtained its name both in Hebrew and in Latin: it appears to have been of a large extent, by the space now taken up by the ruins; but there are no footsteps of any wall remaining, nor is it possible to judge of the ancient figure of the place. The present inhabitants, as they are poor, miserable, dirty people, so they have shut themselves up, to the number of about thirty or forty families, in little huts made of dirt, within the walls of a spacious court, which enclosed a most magnificent Heathen temple {s}. Benjamin of Tudela says {t}, it is situated in a wilderness, far from any habitable place, and is four days' journey from Baalath before mentioned; which place he takes to be the same with Baalbek, in the valley of Lebanon, built by Solomon for Pharaoh's daughter; which, according to the Arabic geographer {u}, was situated at the foot of Mount Lebanon; and Tadmor seems to be in the land of Hamathzobah, **2Ch 8:3**.

{p} Geograph. l. 5. c. 16. {q} Ib. c. 15. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 26. & 6. 28. {s} Halifax apud Philosphic. Transact. vol. 3. p. 504. {t} Itinerar. p. 57, 58. {u} Geograph. Nub. par. 5. clim. 3. p. 117.

1 Kings 9:19

Ver. 19. And all the cities of store that Solomon had,.... In which were his magazines of corn, arms, and ammunition; and these were built in Hamath, **2Ch 8:4**

and cities for his chariots; chariots of war, iron chariots, which were kept in times of peace, in case of necessity, of which Solomon had 1400, 1Ki 10:26,

and cities for his horsemen; of which he had 12,000, a standing cavalry:

and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem; besides the temple and his own palace before mentioned; see **Ec 2:4**,

and in Lebanon; the house of the forest of Lebanon, which Junius on **1Ki 7:2** thinks he built after he had taken Hamathzobah, a royal city of Lebanon; see **2Ch 8:3** or fortresses on Mount Lebanon, which was the northern border of his kingdom:

and in all the land of his dominions; where he might repair or fortify cities, or erect new forts for the safety of his kingdom; now for the doing of all this was the levy both of men and money raised, and of whom next follows.

[1 Kings 9:20]

Ver. 20. And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites,.... Who were not destroyed in the times of Joshua, or since, but dwelt in several cities of the land of Israel from those times; see **Jud 1:1**, which were not of the children of Israel; not natives of the land of Israel, though they might be proselytes, at least some of them.

1 Kings 9:21

Ver. 21. Their children that were left after them in the land,.... The posterity of those left unsubdued in the times of Joshua:

whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy; in later times, though now it is thought by some it was not for want of power, but because they had made a covenant with them, as the Gibeonites did, and therefore they could not, because it would have been a breach of covenant to have destroyed them; see **2Ch 8:8**,

upon these did Solomon levy a tribute of bond service unto this day; not a tribute of money, which being poor they were not able to pay, but of service, and which being once laid on was continued, and even to the time of the writing of this book.

1 Kings 9:22

Ver. 22. But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen,.... For that was contrary to the law; they might be hired servants, but not bond servants, Le 25:39

but they were men of war; which he kept in pay, a standing army, maintained even in time of peace, in case of necessity, should an enemy attempt to invade or surprise them:

and his servants; in his family and court, who had offices and employments there:

and his princes; ministers of state, counsellors, governors of cities, &c.

and his captains; officers in his army:

and rulers of his chariots and his horsemen; war chariots and troopers; see **1Ki 9:19**.

1 Kings 9:23

Ver. 23. These were the chief of the officers over Solomon's work,.... In building the above houses and cities:

five hundred and fifty which bore rule over the people that wrought in the work; in **2Ch 8:10** they are said to be but two hundred and fifty; now it may be observed, as is by the Jewish writers, that there were three sorts of those rulers; the lowest rank and order of them consisted of 3300, the next of three hundred which were over the 3300, and being numbered with them made 3600, **2Ch 2:18** and the highest rank of them were two hundred and fifty, and the middlemost and highest being joined together, as they are here, made five hundred and fifty. Abarbinel reconciles the places thus, the two hundred and fifty were only over those that wrought in the temple; and the five hundred and fifty here were those that were over such that were employed in the various parts of the kingdom.

1 Kings 9:24

Ver. 24. But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David,.... Where he placed her when he first married her, until he had finished his buildings, **1Ki 3:1**, which being done he brought her from thence unto her house, which Solomon had built for her; the reason of which is given, not only because it was the house of David, but because it was holy by the ark being there for some time; and therefore he did not judge it proper that his wife, an Egyptian woman, and sometimes in her impurity, should dwell there; see **2Ch 8:11**,

then did he build Millo: this being particularly repeated from **1Ki 9:15**, and following upon what is said of Pharaoh's daughter, has led many Jewish writers to conclude her house was built at Millo; and indeed, without supposing this, it is hard to conceive why it should be observed here; the Targum on **2Ch 8:11** calls her name Bithiah.

1 Kings 9:25

Ver. 25. And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the Lord,.... The brasen altar, the altar of burnt offering, which stood in the court of the priests, and by whom he offered. The three times were the feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, as explained in **2Ch 8:13**, not that these were the only offerings, or these the only times he offered; for he offered all other sacrifices, and at all other times commanded in the law of Moses, as on sabbaths and new moons, as expressed in the above place:

and he burnt incense upon the altar that was before the Lord; the altar of incense, which stood in the holy place, right beside the most holy, in which was the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence; not that Solomon burnt incense in person, but by the priests, whom he furnished with incense; for no king might offer incense, as the case of Uzziah shows:

so he finished the house; which respects not the building of it, that had been observed before, but the service of it; as he had provided all vessels and utensils for the furniture of it, and all things to be used in them; as sacrifices for the altar of burnt offering, incense for the altar of incense, bread for the shewbread table, and oil for the lamps; so he appointed the courses of the priests, Levites, and porters, to do their duty, who went through every part of service assigned them, and completed the whole; see **2Ch 8:14**.

1 Kings 9:26

Ver. 26. And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Eziongeber,.... Which was one of the stations of the Israelites, near the wilderness of Sin, or Paran, Nu 33:35, it signifies the backbone of a man; and it is said {w} the ridge of rocks before this port were in that form, covered by the sea at high water, and sticking up with various points in a line when it was low. Josephus says {x} in his time it was called Berenice, which is placed by Mela {y} between the Heroopolitic bay, and the promontory Strobilus, or Pharan. It is thought probable {z} to be the same with that which is called by the Arabs Meenah-el-Dsahab, the port of gold, called Dizahab, **De 1:1**, which stands upon the shore of the Arabic gulf, about two or three days' distance from Mount Sinai; though by others {a} thought to be the same the Arabs call Calzem, where was a great quantity of wood fit for building ships. It is further described,

which is beside Elath, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom; and when Edom was subdued by David, this port fell into his hands, and so was in the possession of Solomon; and there being plenty of timber in the parts adjacent, and this being a port in the Red sea, Solomon chose it as proper place to build ships in. Elath, near to which was, is the same the Elanitic bay had its name from; or which
See Gill on "De 2:8". Trajan, the Roman emperor, formed a navy in the Red sea {b}, that by it he might ravage and waste the borders of India; and here it seems Solomon's navy went; see **1Ki 9:28**.

{w} Harris's Voyages, vol. 1. B. 1. ch. 2. sect. 3. p. 377. {x} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 4. {y} De Situ Orbis, l. 3. c. 8. {z} Clayton's Chronology, &c. p. 407. {a} Vossius in Melam ut supra, (Harris's Voyages, vol. 1. B. 1. ch. 2. sect. 3.) p. 386. {b} Eutrop. Rom. Hist. l. 8. Ruti Fest. Breviar.

1 Kings 9:27

Ver. 27. And Hiram sent in his navy his servants,.... And, according to **2Ch 8:18**, ships also but how he could send them from Tyre, which lay in the Mediterranean sea, to the above ports in the Red sea, without going a great way round, is not easy to conceive. Perhaps, as Gussetins conjectures {c}, Hiram had a port in the Red sea for building and sending out ships, for the sake of his eastern navigation, and from thence he sent them to Solomon's ports in the same sea; but if what R. Japhet {d} observes is true, that the Red sea is mixed with the sea of Joppa by means of the river Rhinocurura, as is remarked by a learned man {e} and who approves of the observation, and thinks it does not deserve the censure Dr. Lightfoot {f} passes on it. If this, I say, can be supported, the difficulty is removed: so Abarbinel asserts {g}, that a branch of the Nile flows into the Red sea: and another, passing through Alexandria, runs into the Mediterranean sea. This is the first navy of ships we read of; in the construction of which, as well as in the art of navigation, the Tyrians no doubt were greatly assisting to Solomon's servants, and which appears by what follows; and they are said {h} to be the first that made use of ships; and the invention of ships of burden, or merchant ships, such as these were, is by Pliny {i} ascribed to Hippus the Tyrian: and the Tyrians were famous for merchandise, which they could not carry on with foreign nations without shipping; see Isa 23:8, the servants Hiram sent in Solomon's navy were shipmen that had knowledge of the sea; of sea coasts and ports, of the manner of guiding and managing ships at sea, and of the whole art of navigation, so far as then known, for which the Tyrians were famous; see Eze 27:3,

with the servants of Solomon; to instruct and assist them in naval affairs, they not having been used thereunto.

{c} Ebr. Comment p. 628. {d} In Aben Ezra in Jon. ii. 5. {e} Texelii Phoenix, l. 3. c. 6. p. 243, 244. {f} Miscellanies, c. 18. vol. 1. p. 1002, 1003. {g} Apud Manasseh, Spes Israelis, sect. 2. p. 20. {h} "Prima ratem ventis credere docta Tyros", Catullus. {i} Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56.

1 Kings 9:28

Ver. 28. And they came to Ophir,.... About which place there are various opinions; some take it to be the little island of Zocatora, on the eastern coast of Africa, at a small distance from the straits of Babelmandel; others the island of Ceylon; others Sofala in Africa; some {k} Peru in America; Vatablus the island of Hispaniola in the West Indies, discovered by Columbus, and who thought {l} himself that he had found the land of Ophir, because of the quantity of gold in it; others the southern part of Arabia; but the most reasonable opinion is, says my author {m}, that it is a rich country in Malacca, which is a peninsula in the true Red sea (that part of the ocean which divides Asia from Africa), known by the name of the "golden Chersonese", and which agrees with Josephus {n}; and at twelve leagues from Malacca there is a very high mountain, which by the natives is called Ophir, and is reported to be, or to have been, very rich in gold, though at present only some tin mines are worked there; and Kircher {o} says the word Ophir is a Coptic or Egyptian word, by which the ancient Egyptians used to call that India which contains the kingdoms of Malabar, Zeilan, the golden Chersonese, and, the islands belonging to it, Sumatra, Molucca, Java, and other neighbouring golden islands. So Varrerius {p} thinks that all that coast in which are contained Pegu, Malaca, and Somatra, is Ophir; which places, besides gold, abound with elephants, apes, and parrots. In the island of Sumatra gold is now found, especially in Achin, in great plenty; in which is a mountain, called the "golden mountain", near the mines {q} Reland {r} takes Ophir to be the country round about a city called Oupara or Suphara, in the East Indies, where now stands Goa, the most famous mart in all India at this day for many of those things Solomon traded thither for. Though after all perhaps there was no such place originally as Ophir in India; only the gold brought from thence was like that of Ophir in Arabia, and therefore they called the place so from whence it was had; see Job 22:24

and fetched from thence gold four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon; which according to Brerewood {s} amounted to 1,890,000 pounds of our money; and according to another writer {t} 5,132,400 ducats of gold. Abarbinel says a talent of gold was equal to 12,300 Venetian ducats; in **2Ch 8:18** it is said, that four hundred and fifty talents of gold were brought to Solomon; perhaps thirty might be expended in the voyage, or paid to Hiram's servants for their wages, as some Jewish writers observe; or in the bulk or ore it might be four hundred and fifty talents, but when purified only four hundred and twenty, as Grotius remarks; either way removes the difficulty; though some think different voyages are respected here and there; of the gold of Ophir frequent mention is made in Scripture.

{k} Erasm. Schmid. de America, orat. ad Cale. Pindar. p. 261. So some Jewish writers say it is the new world, Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 10. 1. {l} P. Martyr Decad. 1. l. 1. {m} Harris's Voyages, ut supra. (vol. 1. B. 1. ch. 2. sect. 3. p. 377.) {n} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 4.) {o} China Illustrat. cum Monument. p. 58. & Prodrom. Copt. c. 4. p. 119. {p} Comment. de Ophyra. {q} Dampier's Voyages, vol. 2. ch. 7. {r} Dissert. de Ophir, sect. 6, 7. {s} De Ponder. & Pret. c. 5. {t} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 572.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 10

This chapter contains an account of the queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon to her great satisfaction, 1Ki 10:1, of Solomon's merchandise and riches, and the magnificence of his court, 1Ki 10:14, of the rich presents sent to him, and of the purchase of chariots and horses, and other things, he made, 1Ki 10:24.

Ver. 1. And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon,.... Josephus {u} calls her a queen of Egypt and Ethiopia; but Sheba was in the southern part of Arabia Felix; her name with the Ethiopians is Maqueda {w}, and with the Arabic geographer {x} Belequis. Some {y} think that Sheba, or Saba, is not the name of a country, but of the queen herself; and that she is the same with Sabbe the sibyl mentioned by Pausanias {z}; but no doubt Sheba or Saba, the metropolis of Arabia Felix, as Philostorgius {a} calls it, is here meant; which Benjamin of Tudela says {b} is called the country of Al Yeman, or the south; and the name of Queen Teiman, given to this queen by an Arabic writer {c}, seems to be the same as the queen of the south, See Gill on "Mt 12:42". The fame of Solomon's greatness and goodness, of his wealth and riches, and especially of his wisdom, had reached her ears; perhaps by means of the ambassadors of princes that had been at Solomon's court, and attended her's. According to an Ethiopic writer {d} it was by Tamerinus, a merchant of her's, she came to hear of him: particularly she heard of his fame

concerning the name of the Lord; his knowledge of the true God, the favour he was in with him, the excellent wisdom he had received from him, and what he had done for his honour and glory:

she came to prove him with hard questions; in things natural, civil, and divine; to try whether he had such a share of knowledge and wisdom it was said he had, she posed him with enigmas, riddles, dark and intricate sayings, to unravel and tell the meaning of. She might be an emblem of the Gentiles, seeking unto Christ, having heard of him, Isa 11:10. In Mt 12:42 she is said to come from the "uttermost parts of the earth"; wherefore some fetch her from Sumatra in the East Indies, where in an old map no other name is put but Sheba {e}.

{u} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 2, 5. {w} Ludolf. Ethiop. Hist. l. 2. c. 3. {x} Clim 1. par. 6. {y} Vid. Coryli Disser. de Reg. Austral. c. l. sect. 1, 2. {z} Phocica, sive, l. 10. p. 631. {a} Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 4. {b} Itinerar. p. 82. {c} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 3. p. 54. {d} Tellezius apud Ludolf. Ethiop. Hist. l. 2. c. 3. {e} Dampier's Voyages, vol. 2. p. 139.

1 Kings 10:2

Ver. 2. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train,.... With many of her courtiers and principal men, as well as with a large retinue of servants:

with camels that bare spices; her country abounded both with camels and spices; See Gill on "Isa 60:6",
See Gill on "Jer 6:20", and as Pliny {f} observes, who says their spices used to be carried on camels, particularly frankincense, for which Sheba was famous, and is therefore called by him "regio thurifera", the frankincense country {g},

being to be had nowhere else; and Strabo {h} speaks of "cinamon, cassia", and other spices here in such plenty, that the inhabitants burnt the wood of them for fuel; and Diodorus Siculus {i} represents this country as exceeding odoriferous, and as having besides the above spices, balsam, myrrh, calamus, costus, and others, in such abundance that they heated their ovens with them:

and very much gold; see 1Ki 10:10, the gold of Sheba is spoken of in Ps 72:15 and Pliny {k} observes, that the Sabeans are exceeding rich, as in other things, so in gold; and Diodorus Siculus {l} and Strabo {m} speak of gold found here in large lumps, very pure, and of a fine colour:

and precious stones; as crystals, emeralds, beryls, and chrysolites, mentioned by Diodorus {n} as in those parts; and a late traveller says {o}, that Arabia Felix abounds with balsam, myrrh, cassia, manna, dates, gold, frankincense, and pearl:

and when she was come to Solomon; unto his palace, and admitted into his presence:

she communed with him of all that was in her heart; which she had in her mind to discourse with him about, and which she had laid up in her memory for that purpose; and some things which she had kept to herself, and had never imparted to any before, as some think; all which she had full liberty from Solomon to propound unto him.

{f} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 14. {g} Ibid. "----Molles sua thura Sabaei", Virg. Georg l. 1. v. 57. & l. 2. v. 117. Thurilegos Arabes, Ovid. Fast. l. 4. Vid. Plant. Trinum. Act. 4. Sc. 2. v. 89. {h} Geograph. l. 16. p. 535. {i} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 132. {k} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {l} Ut supra, (Bibliothec. l. 2.) p. 133. l. 3. p. 181. {m} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 16. p. 535.) {n} Ut supra, (Bibliothec. l. 2.) p. 134. & l. 3. p. 181. {o} Ovington's Voyage to Surat, p. 421.

1 Kings 10:3

Ver. 3. And Solomon told her all her questions,.... Answered them, told her the meaning of everything she inquired about, expounded her riddles, solved her objections, and gave her satisfaction in all things she proposed unto him:

there was not anything hid from the king, which he told her not; there was not anything, though ever so abstruse and difficult, but what he understood, and gave her a clear and plain solution of.

1 Kings 10:4

Ver. 4. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom,.... Which she perceived by his answers to things relative to all sorts of science, natural, civil, and divine:

and the house that he had built; the singular for the plural, "house for houses"; the house of the Lord, his own house, that for Pharaoh's daughter, and the house of the forest of Lebanon; in all which there appeared not only surprising grandeur and magnificence, but exquisite art and skill; there was a great display of his wisdom in the form and contrivance of them. Josephus {p} says, what exceedingly surprised her, and raised her admiration, was the house of the forest of Lebanon.

{p} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 5.

1 Kings 10:5

Ver. 5. And the meat of his table,.... The various sorts of it, the different dishes, and the multitude of them; see **1Ki 4:22**

and the sitting of his servants; at table, either with him, or at tables by themselves, yet in his presence; for these were his nobles and courtiers, who were placed in order, according to their rank and degree, which showed wisdom:

and the attendance of his ministers; or the "standing" {q} of those that waited, both at the king's table, and the tables of the lords, who each had their proper place and business assigned; so that the utmost decorum was observed, and no confusion or disorder to be seen:

and their apparel: their several liveries, which were distinct according to the posts and offices in which they were, and which no doubt were rich and splendid, as well as various:

and his cup bearers; to serve him and his nobles with wine when called for; though the word signifies liquors {r}, and may design the various sorts of wines, and other drinkables, used by him, of which there was great plenty:

and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; the steps which he had made to go up from his palace to the temple; which were so curiously devised, and so artificially wrought, that it gave the queen, among other things, a sensible proof of his great wisdom, as well as of his religion and piety. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and some others, render the words, "and the burnt offerings which he offered in the house of the Lord"; and so Josephus {s} understood them; she was shown the service of the house of the Lord, as much as could be admitted, and perhaps was told the meaning of it; all which she saw, both in his own house, and in the house of God, and greatly surprised her:

so that there was no more spirit in her; she was quite astonished; like one in an ecstasy, she had no power for a time to speak, what she saw and heard so affected her.

{q} Kmem "statum", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius; "stationem", Piscator. {r} wyqvm "et potum ejus", Tig. vers. so Abarbinel {s} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 5.)

1 Kings 10:6

Ver. 6. And she said to the king,.... When she was a little come to herself:

it was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom; which she was ready to call in question when she first heard it; at least she thought it was greatly exaggerated, but now she found it was strictly true.

1 Kings 10:7

Ver. 7. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it,.... That is, she did not believe the whole of what was related to her; somewhat of it she credited, and supposed there was something grand and extraordinary in it, or she would never have taken such a journey; but she did not believe that all could be true; she thought things were too much magnified:

and, behold, the half was not told me; of what she now saw and heard:

thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard; the inward endowments of his mind, and the outward magnificence of his court, exceeded the relation of them to her; they were beyond expression, they were so great that reporters could not hyperbolize upon them, nor even come up to them in their account of them, and in which yet men are apt to exceed.

1 Kings 10:8

Ver. 8. Happy are thy men,.... The men of Israel, that had a king over them so wise, so great, so good:

happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom; who were now present, and to whom she pointed, and may respect not his nobles and courtiers only, but his menial servants, who had an opportunity of often hearing the wise sayings which dropped from his lips; and which no doubt were means of greatly improving their knowledge and understanding in things natural and divine.

1 Kings 10:9

Ver. 9. Blessed be the Lord thy God,.... Of whom she might have better notions than when she came out of her own country:

which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel; loved him with a love of complacency and delight, was Jedidiah, as he called him, beloved of the Lord, and therefore he chose him and preferred him to be king before his elder brother:

because the Lord loved Israel for ever; to establish them as a kingdom for ever as they were, so long as obedient to him; see **2Ch 9:8**,

therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice; not merely for the sake of honour and glory, much less to indulge to pleasure and luxury, and still less to oppression and tyranny; but to administer justice and judgment to the people, which is the principal end of government; see Ps 72:1.

1 Kings 10:10

Ver. 10. And she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold,.... The same sum that Hiram sent him, See Gill on "1Ki 9:14" this fulfilled the prophecy, so far as it respected Solomon, Ps 72:15

and of spices very great store, and precious stones; see 1Ki 10:2 there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon; that is, into Judea. Josephus reports {t}, that some say that the balsamic plant, which Judea was afterwards so famous for, was brought by this queen, and a gift of hers to Solomon; and Diodorus Siculus {u} speaks of it as in Arabia, and not to be found in any other part of the world.

{t} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6.) sect. 6. {u} Bibliotec. l. 2. p. 132.

1 Kings 10:11

Ver. 11. And the navy also of Hiram that brought gold from Ophir,.... This perhaps was before Solomon was concerned with Hiram in navigation and merchandise; though in **2Ch 9:10** both their servants are said to bring it; and it is here inserted perhaps to show that Solomon had not his gold, at least all of it, from the queen of Sheba; but much from Hiram, who fetched it from Ophir; and as this was in India, as observed on **1Ki 9:28**, many writers make mention of gold in that part of the world, as Diodorus Siculus {w}, Strabo {x}, Dionysius {y}, Curtius {z}, Pliny {a}, and others: and this navy also

brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees: or algum trees, by transposition of letters, **2Ch 9:10**, which some of the Jewish writers {b} take to be coral, which is not likely; others Brasil, rather ebony, which was peculiar to India, as both Solinus {c} and Virgil {d} say; Strabo {e} makes mention of strange trees in India:

and precious stones; of which there is great variety and plenty in that country, as related by Dionysius {f}, as diamonds, beryls, jaspers, topazes, and amethysts, and by Curtius {g}, Solinus {h}, and others.

{w} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 121. {x} Geograph l. 15. p. 481. {y} Perieg. v. 1144. {z} Hist. l. 8. sect. 9. {a} Nat. Hist. 1. 6. c. 19, 20. {b} Daved de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 70. 3. {c} Polyhistor. c. 64. {d} "Sola India nigrum fert ebenum." Georgie. l. 2. ver. 116, 117. {e} Geograph. l. 15. p. 477. {f} Perieget, ver. 1119, &c. {g} Hist. l. 8. c. 9. {h} Polyhistor. c. 65.

1 Kings 10:12

Ver. 12. And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the Lord, and for the king's house,.... Or terraces, as in **2Ch 9:11**, causeways; and means the ascent or causeway he made from his own house to the temple; the pavement of which, as Jarchi interprets the word here, was made of the wood of these trees; or the supports of it, or rather the rails on each side, on which men might stay themselves as they passed along, as Ben Gersom; and since this ascent was admired by the queen of Sheba, it is particularly observed what wood it was made of, and from whence it came:

harps also, and psalteries for singers; these musical instruments were made of the same wood; Josephus {i} says of amber, and that their number was 400,000:

there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day; not in the land of Israel, neither before nor since, see **2Ch 9:11**.

{i} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 3. sect. 8.

1 Kings 10:13

Ver. 13. And King Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked,.... Some curious things she saw, and was desirous of, she asked for, and had them:

besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty; of his own good will and pleasure, without asking:

so she turned and went to her own country: the country of Sheba in Arabia Felix:

she and her sergeants: the train or retinue she brought with her, which was large, 1Ki 10:2.

1 Kings 10:14

Ver. 14. Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and sixty and six talents of gold. From Ophir and Tarshish, and wherever he traded; which was of our money, according to Berewood {k}, 2,997,000 pounds; or as another learned man {l}, who makes it equal to 5,138,520 ducats of gold.

{k} De Ponder. & Pret. c. 5. {l} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 580.

1 Kings 10:15

Ver. 15. Besides that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffic of the spice merchants,.... What they paid him as a duty or custom for the importation of their goods:

and of all the kings of Arabia; who were subject to him, and paid him a yearly tribute, or at least made presents, see **1Ki 4:21**

and of the governors of the country; who were viceroys or deputy governors of countries conquered by his father, and who collected tribute from the people, and paid it to him.

1 Kings 10:16

Ver. 16. And King Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold,.... Which were a larger sort of shields, which covered the whole body; and these were made of gold beaten with the hammer, or drawn into plates, being melted like wax; so the Poeni or Carthaginians made shields of gold {m}:

six hundred shekels of gold went to one target; which is to be understood not of the weight, but of the price or value of them, which amounted to four hundred and fifty pounds of our money; so Brerewood {n}.

{m} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 35. 3. {n} Ut supra. (De Ponder. & Pret. c. 5.)

1 Kings 10:17

Ver. 17. And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold,.... Which were a lesser sort:

three pounds of gold went to one shield; or three hundred shekels, as in **2Ch 9:16** a hundred shekels made one pound; so that these were but half the value of the former, and one of them was worth but two hundred and twenty five pounds: Eupolemus {o}, an Heathen writer, makes mention of those golden shields Solomon made, and which were made for show, and not for war, as follows:

and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon; one part of which was made an armoury of, see **So 4:4**.

{o} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 34.

1 Kings 10:18

Ver. 18. Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory,.... To sit on and judge his people; and ivory being white, may denote the purity, justice, and equity with which he judged; the white throne in Re 20:11 may be an allusion to this; the ivory he had from Tarshish, 1Ki 10:22

and overlaid it with the best gold; for the greater splendour and majesty of it; not that he covered it all over, for then the ivory would not be seen, but interlined it, or studded it with it, whereby it appeared the more beautiful and magnificent. Such a throne of gold and ivory was decreed to Caesar by the Romans {p}.

{p} Appian. Alex. l. 2.

1 Kings 10:19

Ver. 19. The throne had six steps,.... Up to the footstool of the throne, which was of gold, **2Ch 9:18** and was high, that everyone in court might see him, and the better hear the sentence he gave:

and the top of the throne was round behind; had a semicircle at the top of it, like an alcove:

and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat; or "hands" {q}, such as the arms of a chair, to lean and rest upon:

and two lions stood beside the stays; which were not only ornamental, and for support of the stays, but expressive of majesty, and of undaunted courage and resolution to do justice, and of the danger such expose themselves to, who oppose magistrates in the discharge of their office; and in which Solomon was a type of Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah; and for the same reasons were the like portraits on the steps, as follows.

{q} tdy "manus", V. L. Montanus, &c. agkwnev "brachiola", Sept. in 2 Chron. ix. 18.

1 Kings 10:20

Ver. 20. And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps,.... There was a lion on each side of every step, a symbol of royal power, as before observed; so the Egyptians placed lions under the throne of Orus {r}:

there was not the like made in any kingdom; for the matter and form of it, for its grandeur and magnificence; there was none at least at that time, whatever has been since; for this is the first throne of ivory we read of.

{r} Hori Apoll. Hieroglyph, l. 1. c. 17.

1 Kings 10:21

Ver. 21. And all King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold,.... Such quantities of it were brought to him from Ophir, and paid to him in tribute, and given him as presents:

and all the vessels of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; not only what were used in his palace at Jerusalem, but in his country house at some little distance:

none were of silver; it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon; to make plate of; or silver plate was but little esteemed, and scarce any use of it made in Solomon's palace, if at all: though doubtless it was elsewhere, and especially silver as money.

1 Kings 10:22

Ver. 22. For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish, with the navy of Hiram,.... Tharshish was not the place the navy went from, but whither it went to, as appears from **2Ch 9:21** and designs not Tarsus in Cilicia; nor Tartessus in Spain, or Gades, or which was however near it; though it appears from Strabo {s} and Mela {t} that the Phoenicians were acquainted with those parts, and were possessed of them; and particularly, according to Velleius Paterculus {u}, the navy of Tyre traded thither before the days of Solomen; and Vitringa {w} is clear in it, that these were ships that traded to Tartessus, with the ships of Tyre; and it is more likely that that place is meant than Carthage, now called Tunis, in Africa; though the Targum here calls it the navy, the navy of Africa; but as Tharshish is sometimes used for the sea in general, here it may signify a particular sea, so called: and which Josephus {x} names the Tarsic sea, the same with the Indian sea; and points to the same country where Ophir was, which was washed by it, and to which the two fleets joined were bound. This is observed, to account for it how Solomon came by so much gold:

once in three years came the navy of Tharshish; it returned in such a space of time; navigation not being improved as now, and sailing by coasts, and what with their stay abroad to sell and purchase goods, and to refit their ships, as well as sometimes contrary winds, they were so long in performing this voyage, which is now done in a few months:

bringing gold and silver; so that silver was accounted of, and used for some purposes, though not for the king's plate:

ivory, and apes, and peacocks; ivory is the elephant's tooth, as the word signifies; some of those are of an almost incredible size; some are said to be of ninety, others one hundred and twenty five pounds weight; Vartomannus {y} says, he saw in Sumatra, where some place Ophir, one that weighed three hundred and thirty pounds; though, according to the Ethiopians {z} the ivory is from the horns; and so say {a} Pausanias and others, see Eze 27:15 but it is commonly supposed to be of the two teeth in the upper jaw that stands out; and whether they are called horns or teeth, they are the same of which ivory is: of elephants there were large numbers in India, bigger and stronger than those in Africa; which latter were afraid of the former, as Diodorus Siculus {b}, Curtius {c}, and Pliny {d} relate; so Virgil {e} speaks of ivory as fetched from India and Horace {f} also, which must be East India, for there are no ivory nor apes in the West Indies {g}: "apes" or "monkeys" were then, as now, brought

from those parts. Strabo {h} reports, that when the Macedonians under Alexander were there, such a vast number of them came out of the woods, and placed themselves on the open hills, that they took them for an army of men set in battle array to fight them. Vartomannus {i} speaks of monkeys in the country of Calecut, of a very small price: near Surat apes are in great esteem, nor will they suffer them to be killed on any account {k}. There are various sorts of apes, some more like to goats, others to dogs, others to lions, and some to other animals, as Philostorgius {l} relates; and who also says the sphinx is one sort of them, and which he describes on his own sight of it as resembling mankind in many things, and as a very subtle animal; and so Solinus {m} reckons such among apes; but what come nearest in name and sound to the "kuphim" of Solomon here are those Pliny {n} calls "cephi", whose fore feet he says are like the hands of men, and their hinder feet like the feet and thighs of men; and Strabo {o} describes a creature found in Ethiopia, called by him "ceipus" or "cepus", which has a face like a satyr, and the rest of it is between a dog and a bear. There is a creature called "cebus" by Aristotle {p}, and is described as having a tail, and all the rest like a man; according to Ludolf {q}, "cephus" is the "orangoutang" of the Indians. The word for peacocks should rather be rendered "parrots", so Junius; which are well known to come from India {r}, and from thence only, according to Pausanias {s}; Vartomannus {t} says, that at Calecut there are parrots of sundry colours, as green and purple, and others of mixed colours, and such a multitude of them, that men are appointed to keep them from the rice in the fields, as we keep crows from corn; and that they are of a small price, one is sold for two pence, or half a souse; and the number of them may be accounted for, because the Brachmans, the priests, reckon them sacred, and therefore the Indians eat them not {u}. Curtius {w} designs these, when he says, in India are birds, which are taught to imitate man's voice; and Solinus {x} says, that India only produces the green parrot, that is, the East Indies, the West Indies not being then discovered; though some {y} think they were, and that it was thither Solomon's navy went: certain it is there are parrots of various colours in the West Indies, which P. Martyr of Angleria frequently makes mention of in his Decades. Huetius {z} derives the Hebrew word here used from hkt, which he says signifies to "join" or "adhere" to anything, as these birds will; cling to, and hang by their bills and nails on a branch of a tree, &c. so that they are not easily separated from it; the word is used in
De 33:3 and, according to some, in this sense. But, after all, if it should be insisted on, as it is by many, that "peacocks" are meant, these also are found in India. Alexander the great first saw them in this country, which so amazed him, that he threatened to punish those severely that should kill any of them {a}. Vartomannus {b} makes mention of them as in great numbers in some

parts of India; and they are caught and sold at an easy rate at Surat {c}, and make part both of their game, and of their grand entertainments {d}; Aeianus {e} often speaks of them as in India in great numbers, and in great esteem.

{s} Geograph. l. 3. p. 104. {t} De Situ Orbis, l. 2. c. 6. {u} Hist. l. 1. in principio. {w} Comment. in Jesaiam, c. 23. 1. {x} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. sect. 2. {y} Navigat. l. 6. c. 22. {z} Ludolf. Ethiop. Hist. l. 1. c. 10. {a} Eliac. 1. p. 308, 309. Vid. Plin. l. 8. c. 3. Aelian. Hist. Animal. l. 4. c. 21. & 7. 2. & 11. 37. & 14. 5. Varro apud Schindler. Lexic Pentaglott. col. 1905. {b} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 121. So Polybius, Hist. l. 5. {c} Hist. l. 8. c. 9. {d} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 9. {e} "India mittit ebur". Georgic. l. 1. ver. 57. {f} "---Non aurum et ebur Indicum". Carmin. l. 1. Ode 31. indogenouv
elefantov Manetho. Apotelesm. ver. 297. & l. 4. ver. 149. Philo. de Praemiis, p. 924. {g} Manasseh Spes Israelis, sect. 2. p. 21. Ortel. Thesaur. Geograh. Varrerius de Ophyra. {h} Geograph. l. 15. p. 480. {i} Navigat. l. 5. c. 20. {k} Ovington's Voyage to Sarat, p. 360, 361, 596. {l} Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 11. {m} Polyhist. c. 40. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 19. {o} Ut supra, (Geograph.) l. 17. p. 559. {p} Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 8, 9. {q} Ethiop. Hist. l. 1. c. 10. {r} Aelian. de Animal. l. 16. c. 2. "Psittacus eois ales mihi missus ab India". Ovid. Amor. l. 2. Eleg. 6. {s} Corinthiaca, sive, l. 2. p. 136. {t} Ut supra. (Navigat. l. 5. c. 20.) {u} Aelian de Animal. l. 13. c. 18. {w} Ut supra. (Hist. l. 8. c. 9.) {x} Polyhistor. c. 65. {y} Erasm. Schmid. de America Orat. ad. Calc. Pindari, p. 261. Vatablus in loc. & in c. 9. 28. Hornius de Gent. Americ. l. 2. c. 6, 7, 8. {z} De Navigat. Solomon. c. 7. sect. 6. {a} Aelian. ut supra, (de Animal. l. 16. c. 2.) & l. 5. c. 21. Curtii Hist. l. 9. c. 1. {b} Navigat. l. 6. c. 7. {c} Ovington's Voyage to Surat, p. 268, 269. {d} Ibid. p. 398. {e} De Animal. l. 11. c. 33. & l. 13, 18. & l. 16. c. 2.

1 Kings 10:23

Ver. 23. So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. In which he was an eminent type of Christ; see **Eph 3:8**.

1 Kings 10:24

Ver. 24. And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. For it was all of God, a peculiar gift of his; by "all the earth" is meant the inhabitants of it, and only them, and those the more principal; who came from the several parts of it, hearing the fame of his wisdom, to know the truth of it, and to improve themselves by it.

1 Kings 10:25

Ver. 25. And they brought every man his present,.... To recommend them, and introduce them into his presence:

vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, and horses, and mules, a rate year by year; everyone brought according to the commodities of his country; and they did yearly, out of great respect to him, and in veneration of him for his wisdom, and for the advantages they received by his wise counsels and instructions; besides, it was the custom of the eastern countries not to pay a visit, especially to great personages, without carrying a present.

1 Kings 10:26

Ver. 26. And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen,.... Both for war; for though it was a time of peace, he provided against the worst, lest an enemy should come upon him suddenly, and when unprepared:

and he had one thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; of the latter See Gill on "1Ki 4:26"

whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem; some of the horsemen were quartered in the cities where the chariots were placed, and some of them in Jerusalem, to be near the king's person, and to be a guard to him on occasion. Josephus {f} says, half of them were in Jerusalem about the king, and the rest were dispersed through the king's villages.

{f} Antiqu l. 8. c. 2. sect. 4.

1 Kings 10:27

Ver. 27. And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones,.... By the vast quantity he received from Tarshish; this is an hyperbolical expression:

and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are the vale for abundance;

not by the growth of them, but by the importation of them from the dominion of Hiram; this is said in the same figurative way; of the sycamore trees, Rauwolff says {g}, they are what the Moors and Arabians calls "mumeitz"; which he describes to be as large and as high as white mulberry trees, and having almost the same leaves, but rounder, and their fruit not unlike our figs, only sweeter, and no little seeds within, and not so good; and are therefore not esteemed, and are commonly sold to the poorer sort, and that they grow in all fields and grounds; of which See Gill on "Am 7:14".

{g} Travels, par. 1. c. 4. p. 37.

1 Kings 10:28

Ver. 28. And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt,.... To mount his horsemen with, and draw his chariots; which seems contrary to the command in De 17:16

and linen yarn; the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price; or rather linen itself; or linen garments, as Ben Gersom; linen being the staple commodity of Egypt, see Isa 19:9, but no mention is made of yarn in **2Ch 9:28**, and the word rendered "linen yarn" signifies a confluence or collection of waters and other things; and the words may be rendered, "as for the collection, the king's merchants received the collection at a price"; that is, the collection of horses, a large number of them got together for sale; these they took at a price set upon them {h}, which is as follows.

{h} Vid. Braunium de Vest. Sacerdot. Heb. l. 1. c. 8. sect. 9, 10, 11.

1 Kings 10:29

Ver. 29. And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver,.... Which, reckoning at two shillings and six pence a shekel, amounted to seventy five pounds; but a shekel was not worth more than two shillings and four pence farthing:

and an horse for one hundred and fifty; and this being the fourth part of the above sum, the Jews gather from hence that there were four horses in a chariot; the horses must be reckoned one with another, the whole collection of them, or otherwise no doubt but one horse was better than another; and it was a pretty large price to give for a horse in those times; which, taking a shekel at the lowest rate, must be upwards of ten pounds; and which is too great a sum still for a custom or tribute to be paid for them, whether to Pharaoh or Solomon, as some understand it:

and so for all the kings of the Hittites; perhaps the same with the kings of Arabia, 1Ki 10:15 and for the kings of Syria; those of Damascus, Zobah, &c.

did they bring them out by their means; that is, by the means of Solomon's merchants, who bought them out of Egypt, and sold them to these kings.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 11

This chapter relates the false steps Solomon took, notwithstanding all his wisdom, in marrying strange wives, and worshipping other gods, 1Ki 11:1 upon which the Lord threatens him to rend the kingdom in his son's time, 1Ki 11:9 and he raised up adversaries against him, Hadad, Rezon, and Jeroboam, 1Ki 11:14 of which last an account is given, and of his being assured by Ahijah the prophet of his having ten of the tribes of Israel given to him; which Solomon having notice of sought to slay him, 1Ki 11:27 and the chapter is concluded with an account of Solomon's death and burial, 1Ki 11:41.

Ver. 1. But King Solomon loved many strange women,.... His love was a lustful and not a lawful one, and of women who were not only of foreign countries, but not his lawful wives, and these many:

together with the daughter of Pharaoh; besides her, or as he loved her, and perhaps more; his sin was not that he loved her who was his lawful wife, but others with her; it is very probable she was a proselytess, and had no hand in turning him to idolatry, since we read not of any high place built for an Egyptian idol:

women of the Moabites, Anmonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; all of the neighbouring nations. Some think he did this with political views, to get intelligence of the state of those countries, or to abate and extinguish their enmity; but it rather seems to be the fruit of lust or pride.

1 Kings 11:2

Ver. 2. Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you,.... That is, they should not intermarry with one another; this is to be understood of the last mentioned, the Hittites, who were one of the seven nations this law respected, **De 7:1**

for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods; which is the reason given for the making the above law, and was sadly verified in Solomon:

Solomon clave unto these in love; he not only took them, but kept them, and expressed a strong affection for them.

1 Kings 11:3

Ver. 3. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines,.... In all 1000, a prodigious number; though these might not be all for use, but for state after the manner of the eastern monarchs; these were a far greater number than are alluded to in **So 6:8**, unless the virgins without number there, were such of these as were not defiled by him; but the number here seems plainly referred to in **Ec 7:28**,

and his wives turned away his heart; both from his duty to his God, and from attendance to his business as a king, especially the former, as follows.

1 Kings 11:4

Ver. 4. And it came to pass, when Solomon was old,.... Toward the latter end of his reign, when he might be near sixty years of age; for Rehoboam his son and successor was forty one when he began to reign, 1Ki 14:21 which is observed either as an aggravation of the sin of Solomon, that in his old age, when by long experience he might have been thought to be still wiser, and less lustful: and yet

that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; or as pointing at the advantage his wives took of his age:

and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father; who, though guilty of many sins, never inclined to idolatry; his heart was always right in that point, and sincere in his worship, see Ps 18:20.

1 Kings 11:5

Ver. 5. And Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians,.... Enticed by the Zidonian women, or woman, he had, 1Ki 11:1. According to the Phoenician histories {i}, Solomon married a daughter of Hiram, king of Tyre and Zidon; so Clemens of Alexandria says {k}, that Hiram gave his daughter to Solomon; Ashtoreth is Astarte, the same with the Venus of the Greeks, so Suidas {l}; and Lucian {m} expressly says, the Sidonians had a temple, said by them to belong to Astarte, which he takes to be the moon; and both Venus and Juno signify the same planet; See Gill on "Jud 2:13"

and after Milcom the abomination of the Amnonites; the same with Molech, 1Ki 11:7.
See Gill on "Le 18:21".
See Gill on "Am 1:13". After this he was drawn by his Ammonitish wife, or wives, 1Ki 11:1, though the Jewish writers think he did not worship these idols, but suffered his wives to do it, and connived at it, which was his sin; so Ben Gersom and Abarbinel.

{i} Apud Tatian. contr. Graecos, p. 171. {k} Stromat. l. 1. p. 325. {l} In voce Astarth. {m} De Dea Syria.

1 Kings 11:6

Ver. 6. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord,.... As idolatry is, nothing more provoking to him:

and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father; for though he did not relinquish the worship of the true God, and the service of the temple, yet inasmuch as he worshipped other gods besides, or connived at the worship of them, he did not wholly, and constantly, and solely serve the Lord, as his father did.

1 Kings 11:7

Ver. 7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Mesh,.... Of this idol, See Gill on "Jer 48:7", an high place for which he ordered to be built, or at least suffered it to be built, at the instigation of his Moabitish woman or women, 1Ki 11:1, this was built in the hill that is before Jerusalem; on the mount of Olives, as Jarchi, called from hence afterwards the mount of corruption, 2Ki 23:15 and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon, 1Ki 11:5.

1 Kings 11:8

Ver. 8. And likewise did he for all his strange wives,.... That is, built high places for their idols, or suffered them to be built; for when he had done it for one, he could not refuse it to another, without greatly disobliging them; even for as many of them,

which burnt incense, and sacrificed unto their gods; the gods of the countries from whence they came, and in the worship of which they had been brought up: this shows that the best and wisest of men, when left to themselves, may do the worst and most foolish of all things; as nothing can be more so than the worship of such wretched deities.

1 Kings 11:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel,.... Or from the fear of him, as the Targum, which must in a great measure be cast off, or he could not have given in to idolatry in any shape as he did; for it was for that the Lord was displeased, the which nothing is more provoking to him, as may be often observed:

which had appeared unto him twice; once at Gibeon, and again after his prayer at the dedication of the temple, **1Ki 3:5**, which is mentioned here as an aggravation of his sin, that he should fall into it, when the Lord had condescended to appear to him so graciously.

1 Kings 11:10

Ver. 10. And had commanded him concerning this thing that he should not go after other gods,.... Which is another aggravation of his sin that it was against an express command of God, and was particularly given him, and he was warned to observe it, and threatened with evil should he break it:

but he kept not that which the Lord commanded: see **1Ki 9:5**.

1 Kings 11:11

Ver. 11. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon,.... Not in a vision, as before, but by a prophet; the Jews say {n}, Ahijah the Shilonite, which is probable, see 1Ki 11:29

forasmuch as this is done of thee, that thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes which I have commanded thee; but broke them by his idolatry:

I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and I will give it to thy servant; meaning Jeroboam, who was not only a subject, but in office under him, 1Ki 11:26.

{n} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 53. Kimchi in loc.

1 Kings 11:12

Ver. 12. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake,.... Not for the merits of David, but the promises made to him, **2Sa 7:12**,

but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son; and immediate successor, Rehoboam.

1 Kings 11:13

Ver. 13. Howbeit, I will not rend away all the kingdom,.... The whole kingdom of Israel:

but will give one tribe to thy son; but it seems he had both Benjamin and Judah, and only ten tribes were rent from him; the reason of this mode of expression may be, either because he gave him one of the tribes of Israel, besides that of Judah, which was his own tribe; or only the tribe of Judah is meant, the whole tribe of Benjamin not being his, since Bethel, and some other places in that tribe, were in the possession of Jeroboam; or rather both these are called but one, because their inheritances lay together, and were mixed with one another; and particularly both had a share in the city of Jerusalem, and the kingdom always after the division went by the name of Judah only: and this tribe was given

for David my servant's sake; because of the promise to him, that there should not want one of his seed to sit on his throne, **1Ki 9:5**

and for Jerusalem's sake, whom I have chosen; to have the house of his sanctuary and worship in, and therefore thought fit to have one rule there, that, would have a regard to his service in it.

1 Kings 11:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite,.... Though he did not take his kingdom from him for his sin, he chastised him with the rod of men, as he said he would; suffering one, and then another, to rise up and disturb his peace in his old age, see **2Sa 7:14**

he was of the king's seed in Edom; of the blood royal.

1 Kings 11:15

Ver. 15. For it came to pass, when David was in Edom,.... Fighting with the Edomites, and subduing them, and putting garrisons in the land, **2Sa 8:14**

and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain: the Israelites that fell in battle, or whom the Edomites afterwards, through stratagem and surprise, fell upon in their garrisons and destroyed, and which caused Joab to go thither to bury them, and take vengeance on the Edomites for it; or these were the Edomites slain by David and Joab; and it has been always reckoned a piece of humanity to bury the dead of an enemy, and is to the honour of the conqueror, see
Eze 39:12 or to suffer the enemy to bury them themselves: it is said {o}, that Hercules was the first that brought up this practice, and that before they were left on the field, to be devoured by dogs; so they were in the times of the Trojan war, as appears by the writings of Homer; but burying them, in later

times, was used by the Romans {p} and Greeks; and Josephus {q} delivers it as a law of Moses to bury enemies, and not suffer any dead to lie without partaking of the earth, nor to pass by or overlook any unburied; but from whence he took it, or grounds it upon, is not very evident; this is the first mention of it; though the Targum is,

"to strip the slain:"

after he had smitten every male in Edom; as he thought, intending to root out the name of them; being enraged at their falling upon the garrisons, if that was the case.

{o} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 27. {p} Liv. Hist. l. 39. c. 21. Vid. Kirchman. Append. ad. lib. de Funer. Roman. c. 3, 4, & 5. {q} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 24. contr. Apion. l. 2. c. 29.

1 Kings 11:16

Ver. 16. For six months did Joab remain with all Israel,.... With the whole army:

until he had cut off every male in Edom; as he supposed; for it was not fact, since after this they increased again, and became a powerful people, and had a king over them, and revolted from Judah, 2Ki 8:20.

1 Kings 11:17

Ver. 17. That Hadad fled,.... While Joab was burying the slain:

he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him; who either was a king, and these some of his officers and courtiers; or however was of the royal family, and had an equipage, and these some of them:

to go into Egypt; that was their view at first setting out, where they might hope for help, at least shelter:

Hadad being yet a little child; whom his father's servants hid, while Joab was making the slaughter he did, and took the opportunity of fleeing with him while he was burying the dead.

1 Kings 11:18

Ver. 18. And they arose out of Midian,.... A country which lay in their way to Egypt, and where it seems they made some stay, and then departed:

and came to Paran; near to which was a wilderness of the same name, in which the Israelites wandered when they came out of Egypt, and which lay between Edom and Egypt:

and they took men with them out of Paran; either as guides and guards through the wilderness, or to make the better appearance before Pharaoh, and that they might meet with the better reception:

and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; and told their case, and informed him who Hadad was: who, pitying an unfortunate young prince,

gave him an house; for him and his servants to dwell in:

and appointed him victuals; a daily provision for him and his men:

and gave him land; for his servants to cultivate, and from thence to raise a revenue for his support; the Jewish writers say he gave him cities to rule over; but as he was but a little child when he came, it cannot be thought that was done, at least directly.

1 Kings 11:19

Ver. 19. And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh,.... Perhaps for his comely personage, princely qualities, and good behaviour, as he grew up:

so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen; it seems the kings of Egypt used to marry their favourites to great personages; see Ge 41:45.

1 Kings 11:20

Ver. 20. And the sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath his son,.... Which signifies "stealth", and the name might be given in memory of himself being carried away by stealth from his own land:

whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house: who was so fond of the child, that she took it, and weaned it for her in the king's palace:

and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh; brought up among them, as if he was one of them.

1 Kings 11:21

Ver. 21. And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers,.... Was dead and buried, as the death of princes is soon known in other countries, and especially a king of such fame as David:

and that Joab the captain of the host was dead: whose name might be terrible to Hadad, because of the slaughter of men he had made in his country:

Hadad said unto Pharaoh, let me depart, that I may go to mine own country; with a view and an hope to recover it, now David and Joab were dead.

1 Kings 11:22

Ver. 22. Then Pharaoh said unto him, but what hast thou lacked with me,.... Either of an equipage suitable to his birth and marriage, or of provisions for his household, or of honour and respect, or of any favour from him:

that, behold, thou seekest to go into thine own country? as if not well used where he was, or would be better provided for there:

and he answered, nothing; he wanted nothing at all, had all he could wish for:

howbeit, let me go in any wise: he had such an extreme desire to go, that he begged it might not be denied him on any account; whether he acquainted Pharaoh with his view in this request is not said, but it is probable he did, and it is certain Pharaoh gave him leave to go, see
1Ki 11:25.

1 Kings 11:23

Ver. 23. And God stirred him up another adversary,.... One from the north, as the other was from the south:

Rezon, the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah: when David fought with him; and this man seeing the battle go against his master, and that he was like to be worsted, deserted him and fled, see **2Sa 8:3**.

1 Kings 11:24

Ver. 24. And he gathered men unto him,.... Perhaps some of the scattered forces of his master:

and became captain over a band, when David slew them of Zobah; some that escaped enlisted under this man, and lived by plunder the remainder of David's reign, and so in the reign of Solomon unto his old age, when his heart was turned away from God to idols, by his wives:

and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus; Rezon and his men went thither, not in David's time, for he put a garrison there, **2Sa 8:6** but towards the close of Solomon's days, and when Hadad set up in Edom, which gave him the hint to do the same at Damascus, of which he became king, and was the founder of that kingdom; after him there was a long race of kings there.

1 Kings 11:25

Ver. 25. And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon,.... Not all the days of his life, see **1Ki 5:4**, but all his days, from his first going into idolatry, to the end of his life:

beside the mischief that Hadad did; and which, whatever it was, was not done till this time; for either, when he got leave from Pharaoh to go into his country, he lay hid there, waiting an opportunity to seize upon it; or by means of Pharaoh he got himself to be king of it, through the permission of Solomon, paying a tribute to him; but when Solomon was grown old, he revolted and refused to pay it, and rebelled against him, and gave him much trouble:

and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria; not Hadad, but Rezon; he had an aversion to them, was a thorn in their side, and gave them much trouble, as well as had them in contempt, and bid them defiance, having made himself not only master of Damascus, but of all Syria.

1 Kings 11:26

Ver. 26. And Jeroboam the son of Nebat,.... According to some Jewish writers {r}, this was Sheba the son of Bichri; but, as Kimchi observes, he was of the tribe of Benjamin, this of Ephraim; and besides, his head was cut off, and thrown over the wall to Joab, 2Sa 20:1,

an Ephrathite of Zereda; some where in the tribe of Ephraim, but nowhere else mentioned. There was a famous Jewish doctor, before the times of Christ, of this place, as it seems, who was called Jose ben Joezer, a man of Zereda {s}:

Solomon's servant; not only his subject, but one that had been advanced by him to an office, and served under him, 1Ki 11:28,

whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman; who very probably was supported by this her son, an industrious and ingenious man:

even he lifted up his hand against the king; either against Solomon, by reproaching and reproving him for some things he did; or rather against Rehoboam his son, which was very ungrateful.

{r} Shalshalet Hakabala, p. 11. {s} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 4.

1 Kings 11:27

Ver. 27. And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king,.... The occasion of it, his being advanced to some posts under Solomon, which elated him, and what passed between him and the prophet Ahijah, after related:

Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father: in the oversight of which, it is supposed by the Jews, he employed this man, who reproached him for doing these works; building an house in Millo for Pharaoh's daughter, and stopping up the passage to the city of David, and the people's access thither upon occasion.

1 Kings 11:28

Ver. 28. And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour,.... A man of great strength of body, and fortitude of mind:

and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious; in what he was set about in the above buildings and repairs:

he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph; the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, to be a prince or a deputy governor of them; or rather to collect the king's tax from them, or the revenues of that part of the country, see Pro 22:29.

1 Kings 11:29

Ver. 29. And it came to pass at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem,.... Either to enter upon his new office: or having been with Solomon to pay in the revenues, and to make up his accounts with him was going back to the country to do the duty of his office:

that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; not accidentally, but purposely was in the way to meet him, and converse with him; this prophet was of the city of Shiloh, and where was now his abode, see 1Ki 14:2

and he had clad himself with a new garment; not Jeroboam, but the prophet, and that by the direction of the Lord, for the following purpose:

and they two were alone in the field: it is possible Jeroboam might have some servants with him; but Ahijah desiring some private conversation with him, he sent them onwards, or bid them stay at some distance; who yet might be capable of observing what was done, though not of hearing what was said; or otherwise how should Solomon come to the knowledge of it? 1Ki 11:40.

1 Kings 11:30

Ver. 30. And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him,.... This looks as if it was Jeroboam's garment, having got a new one to appear before the king in; though the sense may be this, that the prophet took hold of his own garment that was upon himself:

and rent it in twelve pieces; as symbolical of the twelve tribes of Israel.

1 Kings 11:31

Ver. 31. And he said to Jeroboam, take thee ten pieces,.... Of the twelve, an emblem of the ten tribes he was to have:

for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon; that is, out of his family:

and will give ten tribes unto thee; to rule over.

1 Kings 11:32

Ver. 32. But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake,....
See Gill on "1Ki 11:13".

1 Kings 11:33

Ver. 33. Because that they have forsaken me,.... My worship, as the Targum; both Solomon and the children of Israel following his example; which is not to be wondered at, considering how prone they always were to idolatry:

and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon; of which deities, See Gill on "1Ki 11:5" see Gill on "1Ki 11:7".

and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as [did] David his father; the several laws of God relating to religious worship especially, which David was a strict observer of; and therefore Solomon, having such a pattern before him, was the more blameworthy.

1 Kings 11:34

Ver. 34. Howbeit, I will not take the kingdom out of his hand,.... Not any part of it, 1Ki 11:12,

but I will make him prince all the days of his life; that is, he shall continue to hold the government of all the tribes so long as he lives:

for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes; see 1Ki 11:12, or was well pleased with, as the Targum; for keeping the commands of God from right principles, and with right views, is well pleasing to him.

1 Kings 11:35

Ver. 35. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand,.... All but the tribes of Judah and Benjamin:

and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes: signified by ten pieces of the rent garment he had given him, 1Ki 11:31.

1 Kings 11:36

Ver. 36. And unto his son will I give one tribe,.... Judah and Benjamin reckoned as one; See Gill on "1Ki 11:13", that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there; or a kingdom, as the Targum; or an illustrious prince, a successor, shining in royal majesty and glory, to guide and direct, cheer and comfort, the people of Israel; be an honour to David's family, and a means of continuing the pure worship of God in the temple at Jerusalem; see 2Sa 21:17.

1 Kings 11:37

Ver. 37. And I will take thee,.... From the low estate in which he was, to be king:

and thou shall reign according to all that thy soul desireth; he being ambitious of the kingdom, and having already formed in his mind some designs upon it:

and shall be king over Israel; the ten tribes.

1 Kings 11:38

Ver. 38. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee,.... And be obedient thereunto:

and wilt walk in my ways; directed to in the law of Moses:

and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes, and my commandments; those particularly respecting divine worship:

as David my servant did; who very diligently and constantly attended to the ordinances of religion:

that I will be with thee; to guide and direct, protect and defend, prosper and succeed:

and build thee a sure house, as I built for David; continue the succession of the kingdom in his posterity:

and will give Israel unto thee; to rule over them.

1 Kings 11:39

Ver. 39. And I will for this afflict the seed of David,.... For the idolatry Solomon had been guilty of, and connived at:

but not for ever; for when the ten tribes were carried captive, the kingdom of Judah flourished under Hezekiah, Josiah, &c. and though the tribe of Judah was carried captive, yet it returned after seventy years captivity, and had rulers over it of the seed of David; and especially to the Messiah has God given the throne of his father David, of whose kingdom there will he no end, **Lu 1:32**, and Jarchi's note on the text is,

"for in the days of the Messiah the kingdom shall return to it,"

the seed of David; and Abarbinel says, of a truth, at the coming of our Messiah, this prophecy will be fulfilled; but the true Messiah is come already, in whom it is fulfilled; see Kimchi and Abendana, who refer to Eze 37:19.

1 Kings 11:40

Ver. 40. Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam,.... Which is another instance of his folly, to seek to detest the counsel of God, when he himself was assured by the Lord the kingdom should be rent, and given to his servant, 1Ki 11:11 and especially if he was informed of what passed between Ahijah and Jeroboam, as it should seem by this he was; either through Ahijah's making no secret of it, or through Jeroboam not being able to keep his own counsel, or through the report of the servants what they saw done, 1Ki 11:29, which Solomon would easily understand:

and Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt; the common sanctuary of persons in distress in those days:

unto Shishak king of Egypt; either the father in law or the brother in law of Solomon, or one of another family, on whom the kingdom devolved; and who might not have any good respect for Solomon, and therefore Jeroboam thought himself safe with him: this is the only king of Egypt, in Scripture, that is called by his own name, and not Pharaoh; he is generally supposed to be the same with the Sesostris of Herodotus {t}, and the Vexoris or Vexosis of Justin {u}; and the rather he may be meant, since, according to Herodotus {w}, he was the only king of Egypt that ruled over the Ethiopians: and Strabo says {x} he was the first that subdued Ethiopia and the country of the Troglodytes; also Diodorus Siculus affirms {y}, that he fought with the Ethiopians dwelling to the south, and obliged them to pay tribute; out of which countries Shishak brought many with him in his expedition against Jerusalem, 2Ch 12:2

and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon; not daring to return till that time, and then he did.

{t} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 102. {u} E Trogo, l. 1. c. 1. {w} Ut supra, (Euterpe, sive, l. 2.) c. 110. {x} Geograph. l. 16. p. 529. {y} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 50.

1 Kings 11:41

Ver. 41. And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?] Either written by himself, as Kimchi suggests, though not in being; or by some chronologer or historiographer employed by him in writing the most memorable things that happened in his reign; or by several prophets, as in **2Ch 9:29** out of which the inspired writer of this book took what he was directed to by the Lord to be transmitted to future ages.

1 Kings 11:42

Ver. 42. And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem, over all Israel, was forty years. The same says Eupolemus {z}, an Heathen writer, who makes him to live but fifty two years; which is the common tradition of the Jews, who suppose he was but twelve years of age when he began to reign; which is to be confuted from the age of his son Rehoboam, see 1Ki 14:21. Josephus {a}, on the other hand, makes him to live to too great an age, who says that he reigned eighty years, and lived to ninety four.

{z} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 34. {a} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. sect. 8.

1 Kings 11:43

Ver. 43. And Solomon slept with his fathers,.... Died as they did:

and was buried in the city of David his father; not in Bethlehem, but Zion, **1Ki 2:10**

and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead; of whom more in the following chapter. Though nothing is said of Solomon's repentance, there is no doubt but he was a good man, repented of his sins, and was saved; as may be concluded from the commendations of him after his death, 2Ch 11:17 from the promise of God that he made, that his mercy should not depart from him, though he chastised him, **2Sa 7:14** from his being an inspired writer, who were all holy men, **2Pe 1:20**, and especially from his writing the book of Ecclesiastes after his fall, which contains a full acknowledgment of all his evils, a recantation of them, and repentance for them. Abulpharagius {b}, an Arabic writer, rashly asserts that he died without repentance.

{b} Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 3. p. 55.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 12

This chapter relates Rehoboam's going to Shechem to be made king, and Jeroboam's return from Egypt, 1Ki 12:1, the people's request to Rehoboam to be eased of their taxes, as the condition of making him king, 1Ki 12:3, his answer to them, after three days, having had the advice both of the old and young men, which latter he followed, and gave in a rough answer, 1Ki 12:5, upon which ten tribes revolted from him, and two abode by him, 1Ki 12:16, wherefore he meditated a war against the ten tribes, but was forbid by the Lord to engage in it, 1Ki 12:21 and Jeroboam, in order to establish his kingdom, and preserve the people from a revolt to the house of David, because of the temple worship at Jerusalem, devised a scheme of idolatrous worship in his own territories, 1Ki 12:25.

Ver. 1. And Rehoboam went to Shechem,.... After the death and internment of his father:

for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king: as was pretended, though in reality it was to seek occasion against him, and make Jeroboam king; it is very probable they knew of the prophecy of Ahijah, and therefore would not go to Jerusalem, but to Shechem, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, of which Jeroboam was, and where he had sowed the seeds of sedition when ruler there; and this place they chose, partly because they could more freely speak what they had in their minds, and partly for the safety of Jeroboam they had sent for on this occasion; so that Rehoboam went thither not of choice, but of necessity. The Jews {c} observe that this place was very ominous; here Dinah was ravished, Joseph was sold, Abimelech exercised tyranny, and here now the kingdom was divided.

{c} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 102. 1.

1 Kings 12:2

Ver. 2. And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it,.... Of the death of Solomon, and of the meeting of the Israelites at Shechem:

(for he was fled from the presence of King Solomon; see 1Ki 11:40

and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;) until the death of Solomon; some render the words, "Jeroboam, returned out of Egypt" {d}, which agrees with 2Ch 10:2, this he did on hearing the above news, and on being sent for by some of his friends, as follows.

{d} Myrumb-bvyw "reversus est de Aegypto", V. L. Ex Egypto, b pro Nm, Vatablus.

1 Kings 12:3

Ver. 3. That they sent and called him,.... That is, the people of Israel, some of the principal of them, especially of the tribe of Ephraim, sent messengers to him, and gave him an invitation to come to them at Shechem; or, they had sent {e}, as Kimchi interprets it, which was the reason of his returning from Egypt, at least one of them:

and Jeroboam, and all the congregation of Israel, came; the chief men of them, the heads of the people; these, with Jeroboam at the head of them, who was come out of Egypt, came to Shechem, where Rehoboam was, and they had appointed to meet him:

and spake unto Rehoboam; one in the name of them all, perhaps Jeroboam:

saying; as follows.

{e} So Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Kings 12:4

Ver. 4. Thy father made our yoke grievous,.... Laid heavy taxes upon them, for the finishing of his buildings, for the maintenance of his household, for keeping such a large number of horses and chariots, and for the salaries of his officers, and for the support of his magnificent court; though they had very little reason to complain, since this was for the honour and grandeur of their nation, and they enjoyed their liberty, and lived in peace, plenty, and safety all his days; and such an abundance of riches was brought unto them by him that silver was as the stones of the street; though perhaps the taxes might be increased in the latter part of his life, for the support of his vast number of wives, and of their idolatrous worship, and for the defence of himself and kingdom against the attempts of Hadad and Rezon; but, as most interpreters observe, what they find most reason to complain of, they take no notice of, even the idolatry he had set up among them:

now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us lighter; that is, ease them of their taxes, or lessen them:

and we will serve thee; acknowledge him as their king, give him homage, and yield obedience to him.

1 Kings 12:5

Ver. 5. And he said unto them, depart yet for three days, then come again to me,.... Suggesting that he would consider of their proposal and inquire into the merits of it and as things should appear to him he would give them an answer in three days time; which at first sight may seem a point of prudence in him, to take time for deliberation and counsel in this affair, but in his case and circumstance it was very imprudent; for he might easily see there was discontent among the people, and a faction forming against him, and, by taking time to himself, he gave them time to take their measures, and hasten and ripen them for a revolt; for, by giving them such an answer, they might plainly perceive he was not inclined to give them satisfaction; it would have been the most advisable in him to have promised them at once that he would make them easy:

and the people departed; to their quarters, and there remained to the third day.

1 Kings 12:6

Ver. 6. And King Rehoboam consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon his father, while he yet lived,.... Which was very prudently done; for as these were men in years, and had been his father's counsellors, from whom, do doubt, they had learnt much wisdom, being often in cabinet council with him, they were capable of giving him the best advice:

and said, how do you advise, that I may answer this people? what answer would you advise me to give to them, and in what manner?

1 Kings 12:7

Ver. 7. And they spake unto him, saying,.... They gave their advice as follows:

if thou wilt be servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them; condescend to them, behave in an humble manner towards them, for this day however, and gratify and oblige them; though indeed a king is but a servant to his people, and his administration of government a doing service to them; hence Antigonus {f}, a king, mild, humble, and gentle, perceiving his son to behave in a fierce and violent manner towards his subjects, said to him, my son, dost thou not know that our glorious kingdom is a servitude?

and answer them, and speak good words unto them; give them a soft answer, and speak kindly and gently to them, and make them fair promises, and give them reason to expect that their requests will be granted:

then they will be thy servants for ever; such conduct would so win upon them, and make such an impressions upon them, that they would for ever after entertain high opinion of him, and be strongly affected and attached to him, and readily serve him.

{f} Apud Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 20.

1 Kings 12:8

Ver. 8. But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him,.... He did not rightly relish it, nor cordially receive it; it did not suit with his haughty temper, he could not brook it, to stoop to his people; he thought it a lessening of his dignity to do anything that looked like courting their favour; and therefore determined not to take the advice given him by the old men, but to seek for other:

and consulted with the men, that were grown up with him, and which stood before him; the sons of nobles, with whom he had his education, and who were his companions from his youth upwards, and who were now officers in his court, and of his privy council, being his favourites, and those he consulted on this occasion; and though they are called young men, as they were in comparison of the old men, yet since they were contemporary with Rehoboam, who was now forty one years of age, they must be about forty, or not much under, and at an age to be wiser than they appeared to be.

1 Kings 12:9

Ver. 9. And he said unto them, what counsel give ye, that we may answer this people, saying,.... See Gill on "1Ki 12:4".

1 Kings 12:10

Ver. 10. And the young men that were grown up with him, spake unto him, saying,.... Gave him the following advice:

thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying; as is said, 1Ki 12:4

thus shall thou say unto them, my little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins; or, "is thicker" {g} signifying that he had more strength and power than his father had, and that he would make them know it, and they should feel the weight of it, and instead of lessening he would increase their taxes; for also hereby was intimated, that his glory, grandeur, and magnificence, was greater than his father's, especially when he first came to the kingdom, and therefore required the same taxes, or greater, to support it; and perhaps reference may be had to the difference of their age, Solomon being a child, or a very young man, when he came to the throne; whereas Rehoboam was upwards of forty years of age, and capable of judging what was fit to be done, and not to be talked to and treated after this manner, nor to receive the kingdom upon a condition of the people's prescribing.

{g} hbe "grossior est", V. L. Pagninus; "densior est", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

1 Kings 12:11

Ver. 11. And now, whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke,.... Which was putting words into his mouth, owning the charge and accusation brought against his father, as he did, 1Ki 12:14, which was very unbecoming, if true; unless this is said according to the sense of the people:

I will add to your yoke; make it heavier, lay more taxes on them:

my father hath chastised you with whips; which was putting a lie into his mouth, and which he uttered, 1Ki 12:14 for no instance of severity exercised on the people in general can be given during the whole reign of Solomon:

but I will chastise you with scorpions; treat them more roughly, and with greater rigour: whips may mean smaller ones, these horse whips, as in the Targum; which gave an acute pain, like the sting of scorpions, or made a wound like one. Ben Gersom says, these were rods with thorns on them, which pierced and gave much pain. Weemse {h} thinks these are alluded to by thorns in the sides, Nu 33:55, for whipping with them was about the sides, and not along the back. Abarbinel calls them iron thorns, rods that had iron prongs or rowels to them, which tore the flesh extremely. Isidore {i} says, a rod that is smooth is called a rod, but, if knotty and prickled, it is rightly called a scorpion, because it makes a wound in the body arched or crooked. Pliny {k} ascribes the invention of this sort of scorpions to the Cretians.

{h} Christian Synagogue, paragraph 6. diatrib. 2. p. 190. {i} Origin. l. 5. c. 27. p. 39. {k} Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56.

1 Kings 12:12

Ver. 12. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day,.... Jeroboam came to him at the head of the people, being the head of the faction, and designed for their king:

as the king had appointed, saying, come to me again the third day; see 1Ki 12:5.

1 Kings 12:13

Ver. 13. And the king answered the people roughly,.... In a blustering manner, gave them hard words and severe menaces, being worked up to such a spirit by his young counsellors:

and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him: to give them good words and kind promises.

1 Kings 12:14

Ver. 14. And spake to them after the counsel of the young men,.... And in the very language in which they gave it:

saying, my father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions, See Gill on "1Ki 12:11".

1 Kings 12:15

Ver. 15. Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people,.... To lessen their taxes, and ease them of their burdens, as they desired:

for the cause was from the Lord; it was according to his will and appointment; the defection of the people was willed by the Lord, and various things in Providence turned up to alienate their minds from Rehoboam, and dispose them to a revolt from him in favour of Jeroboam; and the Lord suffered the counsellors of Rehoboam to give him the advice they did, and gave him up to the folly of his own heart to take it:

that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake to Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat; see 1Ki 11:29.

1 Kings 12:16

Ver. 16. So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them,.... To grant their requests:

the people answered the king, saying, what portion have we in David? or in his posterity, which are not of our tribes, nor are we obliged to have a king of that family; nor can we expect any benefit or advantage from thence, as may be easily concluded from the rough answer of Rehoboam:

neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse; so they called David by way of contempt; which was great ingratitude, when he had done such great things for them, and he and his son Solomon had raised them to the pitch of wealth and glory they now enjoyed; these were seditious expressions, and seem to be borrowed from a seditious person in the times of David, 2Sa 20:1

to your tents, O Israel; signifying it was high time to depart from Rehoboam, and to have nothing to say to him, or do with him, but retire to their habitations, to consider whom to set as king over them:

now see to thine own house, David; thou son or grandson of David; not his own house and family, and mind his domestic affairs, nor the house of the sanctuary in his tribe, as many of the Jewish writers interpret it; but rather the tribe of Judah, of which he was, and would have him consider to what a narrow compass his kingdom would be brought, who was just now blustering and boasting of his grandeur as a king:

so Israel departed unto their tents; to their cities, as the Targum, and their habitations there, without recognizing Rehoboam as their king, or swearing allegiance, or giving homage to him as such.

1 Kings 12:17

Ver. 17. But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah,.... Either such Israelites of the ten tribes that had before dwelt, or now upon this removed, for the sake of worship, to dwell in the tribe of Judah; or else that part of Israel, the tribe of Judah, which dwelt in the cities belonging to it:

Rehoboam reigned over them; they owned him to be their king, and submitted to his government.

1 Kings 12:18

Ver. 18. Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute,.... There was one of this name in this office in the time of David, 2Sa 20:24, this is the same with Adoniram, as Jarchi thinks, see **1Ki 4:6**, him he sent either to collect the tribute of the Ephraimites, to show his authority; or rather to call the people back to have some further discourse with them, and endeavour to soften things, and bring them to a compliance, so Josephus {l}; but it was too late, and he employed a very improper person; the heavy taxes were their complaint, and a tax gatherer, and especially one that was at the head of the tribute, must be of all men the most disagreeable to them; this is another instance of the folly and false steps of Rehoboam:

and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died; the populace fell upon him at once, and stoned him to death; and which, though contrary to law and justice, was approved of and applauded by their principal men and all the people; so irritated and provoked were they by Rehoboam's answer to them. Hottinger {m} says, this man was buried in Shechem, which is very probable; but it is not expressed here, as he suggests it is; however, a grave stone, found A. D. 1480, in Spain, with this inscription, is not genuine,

"this is the grave of Adoniram, a servant of King Solomon, who came to collect tribute, and died such a day:"

therefore King Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem; from Shechem, fearing they would treat him in the same manner in their rage and fury; his courage was now cooled, and his haughty and hectoring spirit was now brought down, and he was glad to make use of his chariot for flight; this is the first time we read of a king of Israel riding in a chariot; though before of Sisera, a Canaanitish captain, and that only in a chariot of war.

{l} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 8. sect. 3. {m} Praefat. ad Cipp. Hebr. p. 4. Vid. Walton. in Bibl. Polyglott. Prolegom. 3. sect. 35. p. 22.

1 Kings 12:19

Ver. 19. So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. In which the writer of this book lived, and so continued until their captivity by the king of Assyria. Their revolt is called a rebellion; for though it was according to the purpose and will of God, yet the people had no command or order from God for it, and was done without consulting him, and was a rejection of their lawful prince.

1 Kings 12:20

Ver. 20. And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again,.... Out of Egypt; the chief men knew of it before, for he had headed them in their approach and address to Rehoboam; but the people in common had not, and especially those of the various tribes besides that of Ephraim:

that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel; they sent for him from his tent or house, which probably was in Shechem, and gave him an invitation to come to their assembly, met together to deliberate about a king; when they unanimously chose him to be king over Israel, that is, over the ten tribes, and inaugurated him into his office:

there was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only; in which Benjamin was included, as appears from the following verse; that being joined to it, and mixed with it, and both having a part in Jerusalem, and so ever after the kingdom was denominated the kingdom of Judah.

1 Kings 12:21

Ver. 21. And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, &e.] From Shechem, which was forty miles {n} from Jerusalem:

he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon; which not only shows courage reassumed by Rehoboam, now safely home, but the hearty attachment of Judah and Benjamin to him, who raised presently so numerous an army in his favour; and had it not been that the Lord was against their going to battle with Israel, in all probability they might have gained their point, Jeroboam being scarcely settled in his kingdom, and having no forces raised.

{n} Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 1007.

1 Kings 12:22

Ver. 22. But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God,.... A prophet in those days, see 2Ch 12:15 and the word that came to him, as in the Targum, is called the word of prophecy:

saying; as follows.

1 Kings 12:23

Ver. 23. Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon king of Judah,.... He is called king before, but of what tribe or tribes is not expressly said, only it is implied in 1Ki 12:17 and he is only acknowledged king of Judah by the Lord himself:

and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin; which made but one house, as before but one tribe, 1Ki 11:36

and to the remnant of the people; of the other tribes that might dwell among them at Jerusalem, and especially Simeon, whose inheritance was within the tribe of Judah, Jos 19:1

saying: as follows.

1 Kings 12:24

Ver. 24. Thus saith the Lord,.... A common preface the prophets used when they spoke in the name of the Lord:

ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel; and that because they were their brethren; though that is not the only reason, another follows:

return every man to his house, for this thing is from me; it was according to the will of God, as Josephus rightly says {o}; it was by his ordination and appointment, though Jeroboam and the people sinned in the way and manner in which they brought it about; and therefore to fight against Israel, in order to regain the kingdom, would be fighting against God, and so to no purpose:

they hearkened therefore to the word of the Lord, and returned to depart according to the word of the Lord; they knew Shemaiah was a prophet of the Lord, and they believed the message he brought came from him, and therefore hearkened and were obedient to it; and with the consent of Rehoboam were disbanded, and returned to their habitations, being satisfied with, and submissive to, the will of God, both king and people.

{o} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 8. c. 8. sect. 3.)

1 Kings 12:25

Ver. 25. Then Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein,.... Not that this city had lain in ruins from the times of Abimelech, **Jud 9:45** for then it would not have been a proper place for the convention of the people, 1Ki 12:1 but he repaired the walls of it, and fortified it, and built a palace in it for his residence:

and went out from thence, and built Penuel; a place on the other side Jordan, the tower of which was beaten down by Gideon, **Jud 8:17** and might be now rebuilt, or at least the city was repaired by him, and anew fortified, perhaps for the better security of his dominions on that side Jordan; though Fortunatus Scacchus {p} is of opinion that this was an altar, the same as at Carmel, 1Ki 18:30, which Jeroboam built, and called by this name in testimony of the common religion of the Israelites and Jews.

{p} Elaeochrism. Myrothec. l. 2. c. 58. col. 593.

1 Kings 12:26

Ver. 26. And Jeroboam said in his heart, &c,] As he was musing about the state of his kingdom and the affairs of it:

now shall the kingdom return to the house of David; such were his fears, unless some method could be taken to prevent it, particularly with respect to religion, which was what his thoughts were employed about.

1 Kings 12:27

Ver. 27. If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem,.... In the temple there, three times in the year, which all the males were obliged to, besides other times, when they had occasion to offer sacrifice, which they might do nowhere else:

then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their Lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah; being drawn by the magnificence of the temple, the beauty and order of worship in it, the holiness of the place, and the grandeur of the royal court, and the persuasions of the priests and prophets of the Lord, both to keep to the service of the Lord, and to obey their lawful sovereign; and besides, they might be in fear they should be taken up and punished as traitors, and therefore would choose to submit to Rehoboam, that they might have the liberty of sacrificing without fear; Jeroboam seems conscious himself that Rehoboam was their liege lord and lawful king:

and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah; his fears ran so high, that he should not only lose his kingdom, but his life, unless some step was taken to make an alteration in religious worship.

1 Kings 12:28

Ver. 28. Whereupon the king took counsel,.... Of some of his principal men, that had as little religion as himself, and were only concerned for the civil state; and the result of their consultation was as follows:

and made two calves of gold; in imitation of that which was made by Aaron, and encouraged by his example and success; and having been in Egypt some time, he might have learned the calf or ox worship there, and might take his pattern from thence, and have two as they had; the one they called Apis, which was worshipped at Memphis, and another called Mnevis, worshipped at Hierapolis, as many learned men have observed; these were she calves, according to the Septuagint and Josephus {q}:

and said unto them; not his counsellors, but the people of the land:

it is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; pretending he sought their ease, by contriving a method to prevent their long fatiguing journeys, to go up with their sacrifices, firstfruits, &c. and the Jews {r} say the firstfruits ceased from going up to Jerusalem on the twenty third of Sivan, which answers to part of May and part of June, on which day they kept a fast on that account:

behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt; using the same words Aaron did on a like occasion; not that he thought these were really gods, and had divinity in them; nor could he hope or expect that the people would believe they had; but that these were representations of the true God, who had brought them out of Egypt; and that it might as well be supposed that God would cause his Shechinah to dwell in them as between the cherubim over the ark.

{q} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 8. c. 8.) sect. 4. {r} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.

1 Kings 12:29

Ver. 29. And he set the one in Bethel,.... In the southern part of the land, on the border of Ephraim and Benjamin; and the rather he chose this place, because its name signifies the house of God, and had been a sacred place, where Jacob more than once enjoyed the divine Presence:

and the other put he in Dan: in the northern part of the land, for the convenience of the inhabitants of those parts; and the rather, since it had been a place resorted to in former times, because of the teraphim of Micah there.

1 Kings 12:30

Ver. 30. And this thing became a sin,.... The cause and occasion of the sin of idolatry; it led them by degrees to leave off the worship of God, and to worship these calves as gods:

for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan; which was the furthest off, such was their great zeal for idolatrous worship; or they went thither before that at Bethel was set up; and even they at Bethel would go as far as Dan to worship, such was their veneration for both the calves. Abarbinel is of opinion that these calves were not made by Jeroboam for idolatrous uses, only the altar later mentioned; and that he never worshipped before them, nor sacrificed to them, nor even built the altar before them; but that these were set up as signs, and in memory of his kingdom, like the pillars in Solomon's temple; that he chose the calf or ox as emblems of his family, the family of Joseph, De 33:17 two to represent Ephraim and Manasseh; golden ones, to denote the majesty and perpetuity of his kingdom; and he set these, the one at Bethel, at the entrance of it, and the other at Dan, at the further borders of it; and that he did not call those gods, but the only true God, as he that brought Israel out of Egypt; only signified by that expression, that he was everywhere, there as well as at Jerusalem; but that the Israelites, who were taken with sensible objects, on visiting these out of curiosity, it became a snare to them, and they fell into the worship of them; just as Gideon's ephod, and Moses' brasen serpent, were unto them.

1 Kings 12:31

Ver. 31. And he made an house of high places,.... Or "altars" {s}, built a temple at Dan, and set up several altars in it for sacrifice, both for burnt offerings, and for incense, as at Jerusalem:

and made priests of the lowest of the people; this clause seems not so well rendered; for this would have been very unpopular, and brought his new form of worship into contempt, to make the dregs of the people priests, which was not only a very sacred office, but of great honour; it was usual in some nations for kings to be priests also {t}, and Jeroboam himself exercised this office, 1Ki 12:33 and therefore would never put the meanest of the people into it, but rather those of higher rank: the words may be literally rendered, "from the extremities" or "ends of the people" {u}; meaning not merely from the extremist parts of his country, but rather out of the whole of the people; out of all sorts of them, out of any of them, without any distinction of tribe: for so it follows,

which were not of the sons of Levi; and as by this means he enriched himself, by taking the cities that belonged to the priests and Levites, which they were obliged to leave, and from whence he drove them, 2Ch 11:14 so he pleased the people by laying open the priesthood common to them, and freeing them from the payment of tithes, and the like.

{s} twmb "altarium", Vatablus. {t} Rex Anius, &c. Virgil. l. 3. Vid. Servium in ib. {u} Meh twuqm "de extremitatibus populi", Vatablus, Piscator.

1 Kings 12:32

Ver. 32. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah,.... The feast of tabernacles, which was on the fifteenth day of the seventh month; this was done chiefly for the sake of an alteration; though Abarbinel thinks, because the fruits of the land were not so soon ripe nor so soon gathered, in the northern parts of the land, as nearer Jerusalem, he judged this month the fittest for the feast of ingathering the fruits; and he might hope to get more people to come to his feast, when all were gathered in:

and he offered upon the altar (so he did in Bethel), sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: this he did by his priests, or rather he himself did it, see 1Ki 13:4, this shows that Jeroboam made these calves for worship, and did sacrifice to them, at least as representations of God. Abarbinel, to make this agree with his hypothesis, gives this sense of the clause, that he did not sacrifice to the calves, but to God, because of them, that his kingdom, which they were a sign of, might be continued; and there being but one calf in a place, he could not be said to sacrifice to them both, but to God, because of both; or else he thinks this must be done after the people had turned aside to them, and not when Jeroboam made them. The clause in the parenthesis, "so he did in Bethel", intimates that he did the same in Bethel as in Dan, of which what is said before is spoken; that is, that he made an house of high places in Bethel also, made priests out of all the people, such as were not of the tribe of Levi, appointed the feast of the fifteenth day of the eighth month to be observed there also, and he himself offered on the altar there:

and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made: to officiate there.

1 Kings 12:33

Ver. 33. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month,.... As he had done in Dan:

even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; the feast of tabernacles was of God's appointing, but the time of keeping he had devised himself, changing it from the seventh month, or Tisri, which answers to our September and October, to the eighth month, or Marchesvan, which answers to part of October and part of November:

and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel; to be observed by them as the feast of tabernacles was by the priests of Judah and Benjamin:

and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense; which none but the priests should do; perhaps the reason why the same resentment was not shown as to Uzziah was, because this was not at the altar of the Lord: whether he burnt incense after the manner of the Jewish priests, or as the priests of Egypt did to the sun, where he had been for some time, is not certain; the former burnt incense only twice a day, morning and evening, the latter three times; at sunrising they burnt rosin, about noon myrrh, and about sun setting "kuphi", which was a compound of sixteen sorts {w}.

{w} Plutarch de lside & Osiride.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 13

In this chapter is an account of a man of God being sent to exclaim against Jeroboam's altar, and threaten its destruction, of which he gave a sign, which was accomplished, and with it the withering of the king's hand, which was healed upon the prophet's prayer for him, 1Ki 13:1, who would have entertained him at his house, but he refused the offer, and departed, 1Ki 13:8, but an old prophet in Bethel hearing of him, rode after him, and fetched him back to eat bread with him, through a lie he told him, 1Ki 13:11 upon which the word came to the old prophet, threatening the man of God with death for disobeying his command, and which was accordingly executed by a lion that met him in the way, and slew him, 1Ki 13:20, of which the old prophet being informed, went and took up his carcass, and buried it in his own sepulchre, where he charged his sons to bury him also when dead, believing that all the man of God had said would be fulfilled, 1Ki 13:25 and the chapter is closed with observing the continuance of Jeroboam in his idolatry, 1Ki 13:33.

Ver. 1. And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah,.... Whom Josephus {x} calls Jadon, perhaps the same with Iddo, who is by the Jewish writers {y} generally thought to be this man of God, and which may seem to be countenanced by **2Ch 9:29** but cannot be, because this man was quickly slain, whereas Iddo lived after Rehoboam, and wrote his acts, first and last, nay, after Ahijah his son, 2Ch 13:22 and for the same reason Shemaiah cannot be the man of God, 1Ki 12:22, though Tertullian {z} calls him Sameas, and designs Shemaiah: but, whoever he was, he came

by the word of the Lord to Bethel: that is, by his command:

and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense; at the time he came, 1Ki 12:33.

{x} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 8. c. 8. sect. 3.) {y} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 11. 1. Jarch & Kimchi in loc. {z} De Jejuniis, c. 16.

1 Kings 13:2

Ver. 2. And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord,.... By his order and command:

and said, O altar, altar; addressing himself not to Jeroboam, but the altar, thereby reproving his stupidity, the altar being as ready to hear as he; and because that was what moved the indignation of the Lord; and the word is repeated, to show the vehemency of the prophet's spirit, and his zeal against it; though the Jews commonly say it respects both altars, that at Dan, as well as this at Bethel:

thus saith the Lord, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; who was not born until three hundred years after this, according to the Jewish writers {a}: but it is generally reckoned to be more, even three hundred and fifty or three hundred and sixty years; this is a clear proof of the prescience, predetermination, and providence of God with respect to future events, contingent ones, such as depend upon the will of men; for what more so than giving a name to a child?

upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee; all which was fulfilled by Josiah, 2Ki 23:15, it may be read, "the bones of a man", which the Jews understand of Jeroboam; but may only signify that, instead of the bones of beasts, which were burnt on it, the bones of men should be burnt, and even of the priests themselves; a glaring proof this of the truth of prophecy, and of divine revelation.

{a} Pirke Eliezer, c. 17.

1 Kings 13:3

Ver. 3. And he gave a sign the same day, saying, this is the sign which the Lord hath spoken,.... As a confirmation of the truth of what the prophet had said, and for the proof of his being a true prophet of the Lord:

behold, the altar shall be rent; of itself, by an invisible hand, by the power of God:

and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out; signifying it should be entirely demolished, not only shaken but destroyed, so as not to be capable of retaining the ashes on it; this was an emblem of the utter abolition of idolatry here in future times.

1 Kings 13:4

Ver. 4. And it came to pass, when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who had cried against the altar in Bethel,.... He was highly provoked: so that he put forth his hand from the altar; on which he was burning incense:

saying, lay hold on him; he put forth his hand, and either shook it at the prophet, threatening what he would do to him; or as beckoning to the people to seize him, and which he also expressed:

and his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him; he could not move it one way nor another, but it remained in the same position, the nerves and muscles being shrunk; which was a further confirmation of the prophet's mission from God, being one of those concerning whom he says, "do my prophets no harm", and a fresh token of the certain performance of what he had said.

1 Kings 13:5

Ver. 5. The altar also was rent,.... Split into two parts perhaps, and one fell one way, and the other another;

and the ashes poured out from the altar; the ashes of the burnt offering, these were spilled on the ground; all which was done without any outward force, or any visible means thereof:

according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord; by his direction and order.

1 Kings 13:6

Ver. 6. And the king answered and said unto the man of God,.... In another tone than when he bid the people lay hold on him; not in a haughty, but humble manner; not as threatening, but supplicating:

entreat now the face of the Lord thy God; he does not say "my God", for he had apostatized from him, and served other gods, but "thy" God, whose prophet he was, and who had an interest in him, as clearly appeared by what he had said and done by him;

and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again; not that the anger of God might be turned away from him, and he enjoy the divine favour, and have an application of pardoning grace made to him, only to have this outward mercy, this temporal favour restored to him, the use of his hand:

and the man of God besought the Lord; not rendering evil for evil; but being of a forgiving spirit, though the king had stretched out his hand against him, he lifted up his hands to heaven for him:

and the king's hand was restored again, and became as it was before; which was another instance of divine power, and a further proof of the prophet's divine mission; from whence it might be concluded, that what he had prophesied of would be fulfilled, and was an instance also of divine goodness to the king, which should have led him to repentance, but did not.

1 Kings 13:7

Ver. 7. And the king said unto the man of God, come home with me, and refresh thyself,.... By eating a meal with him, after such a journey he had taken, and delivered his prophecies, and put up his prayers for the king:

and I will give thee a reward; for his prayers, by means of which his hand was restored to him; but takes no notice of the Lord, the author of this miraculous cure, nor expresses the least degree of thankfulness and gratitude to him.

1 Kings 13:8

Ver. 8. And the man of God said unto the king,.... In answer to his civility to him, to assure him it was not out of contempt to him, or ill will to him, or slight of his favour, but in obedience to the will of God:

if thou wilt give half of thine house; of the riches in it, and even of his kingdom:

I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place; this idolatrous place; the reason follows.

1 Kings 13:9

Ver. 9. For so it was charged me by the word of the Lord,.... The command of the Lord, by which he came to Bethel, and cried against the altar there, 1Ki 13:1

saying, eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest: signifying that no communion was to be had with idolaters, nor any example to be set and followed; but the way to them, and to their idolatry, was to be shunned and avoided.

1 Kings 13:10

Ver. 10. So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel. Neither ate nor drank with the king, though that is not expressed; nor did he go back the same way he came; but in each particular observed the divine command, and was obedient to it.

1 Kings 13:11

Ver. 11. Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel,.... The Targum is, a false prophet, so Josephus {b}; it is hard to say what he was, a good man or a bad man; if a good man, he was guilty of many things which are not in his favour, as dwelling in such an idolatrous place suffering his sons to attend idolatrous worship, and telling the man of God a premeditated lie; and yet there are several things which seem contrary to his being a bad man, and of an ill character, since he is called an old prophet, did not attend idolatrous worship, showed great respect to the man of God, had the word of God sent unto him concerning him, believed that what he had prophesied should come to pass, buried the man of God in his own grave, and desired his sons to bury him with him. In some copies his name is said to be Micah, as Kimchi observes, and other Jewish writers {c} say the same; though some take him to be Amaziah the priest of Bethel, and others Gersom the son of Moses {d}, but without any foundation; though he now dwelt at Bethel, he was originally of Samaria, 2Ki 23:18,

and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; that the altar was rent, and the ashes poured out, as he had said, and that Jeroboam's hand withered, and was restored upon his prayer to God:

the words which he had spoken unto the king; that one should be born of the family of David, Josiah by name, that should offer the idolatrous priests, and burn the bones of men upon that altar, and that that should be rent, and its ashes poured forth, which was done:

them they told also their father; gave him a particular account of his actions and words.

{b} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 9. sect. 1. {c} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 104. 1. {d} Shalshalet Hakabala, ut supra. (fol. 11. 1.) Shirhalbirim Rabba, fol. 10. 2.

1 Kings 13:12

Ver. 12. And their father said unto them, what way went he?.... Having a strong inclination to see him, and converse with him:

for his sons had seen what way the man of God went which came from Judah; they took notice of it; and, as the Targum, they showed it to their father.

1 Kings 13:13

Ver. 13. And he said unto his sons, saddle me the ass,.... Which he used to ride on; intimating he had a mind to ride after him, and overtake him, as he might reasonably think he might, since the man of God was on foot:

so they saddled him the ass, and he rode thereon; after the man of God, taking the way his sons directed.

1 Kings 13:14

Ver. 14. And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak,.... To shelter him from the heat, and being faint, hungry, and thirsty; so the ancients of old made use of oaks for a covering, before houses were invented {e}; thus Abraham pitched his tent in the plain, or under the oak, of Mamre, Ge 13:18

and he said unto him, art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? which he might guess at from his habit, and from the description his sons had given of him:

and he said, I am; owned himself to be the person he inquired after.

{e} Suidas in voce dendruazein.

1 Kings 13:15

Ver. 15. Then said he unto him, come home with me, and eat bread. In which invitation no doubt he was hearty, and might have no ill design in it, only to have some conversation with him, as being a good man, and a prophet of the Lord, especially upon the subject of his prophecies at Bethel.

1 Kings 13:16

Ver. 16. And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee,.... Into the city, and into his house in it, being such an idolatrous place, and especially being forbidden of God:

neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place; he was resolute and determined to abide by the commandment of the Lord, though there is reason to believe that he was now both hungry and thirsty.

1 Kings 13:17

Ver. 17. For it was said to me by the word of the Lord,.... By the angel that was sent to him, who gave him his message and instructions; which he was persuaded came from the Lord himself, and therefore looked upon himself under obligation to regard them as such:

thou shall eat no bread, &c. the same that he observed to the king, 1Ki 13:9.

1 Kings 13:18

Ver. 18. And he said unto him,.... That is, the old prophet said to the man of God:

I am a prophet also as thou art; meaning, that he was a prophet of the true God, and not of any idol deity; that he not only believed in him, and was a worshipper of him, but had revelations from him, and of the same things this man of God had, and that he believed that what he had prophesied of would certainly come to pass:

and an angel spoke unto me by the word of the Lord; was sent and dispatched by the order of the Lord with the following message:

saying, bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water; and so be refreshed, and be fit to proceed on in his journey:

[but] he lied unto him; no messenger nor message being sent to him by the Lord, but was wholly a device and stratagem of his own to persuade the man of God to return with him, that he might have his company and conversation.

1 Kings 13:19

Ver. 19. So he went back with him,.... In which he sinned; for as he had most certainly the command of God not to eat and drink in that place, he ought to have had the countermand from the Lord, and not trusted to another person. There are some things indeed which may be said in his favour, and be an apology for him, as that this man was an ancient prophet of the Lord, as he appeared to him; and that though he was forbid to eat and drink with idolaters, yet he thought he might with a prophet of the Lord, and especially as he affirmed he had the direction of an angel of the Lord for it; nor could he conceive that the prophet had any interest to serve by it, but rather it might be chargeable and burdensome to him; and he might think the Lord, out of compassion on him, had countermanded his former orders, and the circumstances he was in might the more incline him to listen to these plausible pretences; but, after all, he ought to have taken no directions but from the Lord himself; in this he failed:

and did eat bread in his house, and drink water; contrary to the express command of God.

1 Kings 13:20

Ver. 20. And it came to pass, as they sat at the table,.... The old prophet, with his sons, and the man of God; the Arabic version adds, "and did eat", there being a pause in the Hebrew text, as if something was wanting, and to be understood and supplied:

that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back; that is, to the old prophet, who was the means of bringing back the man of God; the word did not come to him who had transgressed the command of the Lord, but to him who was the occasion of it; though Abarbinel is of opinion that the word came to the latter, and so some versions, both ancient and modern, render the clause, "to the prophet whom he had brought back" {f} and which is countenanced by what is said, 1Ki 13:26,

according to the word of the Lord which he spoke unto him: but the former sense best agrees with what follows.

{f} Syr. Ar. Junius & Tremellius.

1 Kings 13:21

Ver. 21. And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah,.... His mind being greatly affected with the word brought to him, partly on his own account, who, by a lie his conscience must accuse him of, had been the means of seducing the man of God, and partly on his account, who was threatened with death for complying with him:

saying, thus saith the Lord; being obliged to deliver, in the name of the Lord, what was said unto him:

forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord; the order that came out of his mouth, as follows:

and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee; not to eat nor drink in Bethel.

1 Kings 13:22

Ver. 22. But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the Lord did say to thee, eat no bread, nor drink no water,.... Which command he observed when first there, though invited by the king; and yet, after he had got out of the place, was prevailed upon to return and transgress the command:

thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers; signifying that he should die before he came to the land of Judah, and he should be buried in another place, and which was verified.

1 Kings 13:23

Ver. 23. And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk,.... That is, had finished the meal; for he had begun to eat and drink before the word came, which came while they were eating and drinking; and it seems this did not hinder their proceeding to make an end of their meal, which one would have thought would have spoiled their appetite:

that he saddled for him the ass, [to wit], for the prophet whom he had brought back; he ordered his sons to get it ready for him, that he might not walk on foot as he had; though it does not appear that either he or any of his servants accompanied him, but the contrary.

1 Kings 13:24

Ver. 24. And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him,.... Perhaps not far from Bethel; and this lion might come out of the same wood the she bears did, that devoured the children that mocked the prophet, as Bishop Patrick conjectures, **2Ki 2:23**

and his carcass was cast in the way; in the high road, where it seems the lion seized him, and he fell:

and the ass stood by it; disregarded and unhurt by the lion, though the prophet was pulled off of the back of him:

the lion also stood by the carcass: not offering to tear it in pieces and devour it, but rather, as if he was the guard of it, to keep off all others from meddling with it; these circumstances are very surprising, and show the thing to be of God; for when the lion had done what he had a commission to do, which was to kill the prophet, he was to do no more.

1 Kings 13:25

Ver. 25. And, behold, men passed by,.... Travellers on the road; nor did the lion offer to seize on them, nor desert the carcass upon their approach:

and saw the carcass cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcass; as before described:

and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt; which was Bethel, by which means he came to have knowledge of it.

1 Kings 13:26

Ver. 26. And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof,.... The old prophet, that had deceived him, by telling him a lie:

he said, it is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord; but not a syllable does he say of his own sin in deceiving him; though one would think his own conscience must smite him for it:

therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake unto him; and that by himself, 1Ki 13:21.

1 Kings 13:27

Ver. 27. And he spoke to his sons, saying, saddle me the ass,.... For it seems he had more than one, for he had sent away the man of God with one before: and they saddled him; the ass he commonly rode on.

1 Kings 13:28

Ver. 28. And he went and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass,.... As before described:

the lion had not eaten the carcass, nor torn the ass; both which were very marvellous; as also that the ass should stand so quietly, and without fear, by the carcass along with the lion and not run away; but here both stayed till the prophet came to take care of the carcass, which shows the singular providence of God in this affair; and that though he chastised the man of God with a temporal judgment for his offence, yet he was dear to him, and even his carcass precious in his sight.

1 Kings 13:29

Ver. 29. And the prophet took up the carcass of the man of God,.... The lion perhaps made off as soon as he came, or, if he stayed, the prophet was not afraid of him, seeing he did not attempt to devour the carcass, nor touch the ass, nor do any hurt to those that passed by:

and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back; to his own city:

and the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him; to perform the funeral rites, according to the custom of the place.

1 Kings 13:30

Ver. 30. And he laid his carcass in his own grave,.... Which he had prepared for himself; for, as he came from Samaria, it could not be the sepulchre of his fathers; and this was showing all the respect, and doing all the honour to him, he well could:

and they mourned over him; the prophet and his sons: saying,

alas, my brother; which was an usual form of lamentation at funerals in later times, see Jer 22:18.

1 Kings 13:31

Ver. 31. And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying,.... He gave them the following charge:

when I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; as it was his own, it might be reasonably thought they would bury him in it without such a charge; but, lest they should not, he gives it:

lay my bones beside his bones; his view in this was, that when Josiah came to burn the bones of the priests, he would spare the bones of this man of God; and so his, lying by them, and mingled with them, would be spared also, and so it proved, 2Ki 23:18.

1 Kings 13:32

Ver. 32. For the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel,.... That the priests should be offered on it, and men's bones be burnt upon it; for as for its being rent, and the ashes of it poured out, that had been done already:

and against all the houses of the high places which are in Samaria, shall surely come to pass: by which it appears that there were temples, and high places, and altars built in other parts of the kingdom besides Dan and Bethel, of the destruction of which the man of God prophesied, though not before mentioned; all which the old prophet gave credit to, and firmly believed would be accomplished. The kingdom of Israel, in later times, had the name of Samaria, from the chief city of it, **Isa 7:9**, here spoken of by anticipation, for as yet it was not in being, see 1Ki 16:24 and either it has its name here by way of prophecy, or else given by the writer of this book, as what it went by in his time.

1 Kings 13:33

Ver. 33. After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way,.... From the idolatrous practices he had started, and was establishing; though he had seen his altar rent, and the ashes poured out as the man of God predicted, his own hand withered, and that restored again upon the prayer of the prophet; and though he had heard of the death he died for his disobedience to the command of God, and the several marvellous things that attended it; these were so far from reforming him, that he seemed to be the more hardened thereby:

but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: and officiated there, and indeed those of the tribe of Levi would not serve there, and therefore were expelled their cities; see 2Ch 11:14.

1 Kings 13:34

Ver. 34. And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam,.... All the above things were sins in themselves, as building high places, and putting priests in them, whoever would; but the sense is, that these were the causes of punishment, or of evil things being inflicted on Jeroboam's family; sin is put for the punishment of sin, as it often is:

even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth; so that it become utterly extinct; and the next thing we hear of is the sickness and death of his son.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 14

This chapter relates the sickness of Jeroboam's son, the application of his wife, at his instance, to the prophet Ahijah, in the child's favour, 1Ki 14:1, the prophecy of the prophet concerning the ruin of Jeroboam's house, and the death of the child, which came to pass, 1Ki 14:7, an account of the years of Jeroboam's reign, and also of Rehoboam's, 1Ki 14:19, and of the evil things done and suffered by the latter in his kingdom, and the calamities that came upon him for it, 1Ki 14:22 and the conclusion of his reign, 1Ki 14:29.

Ver. 1. At that time Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, fell sick. Being smitten of God with some disease, as a punishment of Jeroboam's sin; how long this was after the above things were done cannot be said.

1 Kings 14:2

Ver. 2. And Jeroboam said to his wife,.... Who she was is not known:

arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself; put off her royal apparel, and clothe herself like a common person, mimic the dress and language of a country woman:

that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam: by any that should see her on the road, or at the city she was to go to, or by the prophet to whom she would be sent:

and get thee to Shiloh; which, according to Bunting {g}, was twenty four miles, from Tirzah, where Jeroboam now lived, see 1Ki 14:17

behold, there is Ahijah the prophet: called from thence the Shilonite, 1Ki 11:29,

which told me that I should be king over this people: and this coming to pass, proved him to be a true prophet, and to be credited in what he should say concerning their child. Jeroboam desired his wife to go on this errand, because he did not care it should be known that he applied to any of the prophets of the Lord; nor did he choose it should be known whose child was inquired about, which another must have told, whereas his wife could speak of it as her own; and she was the fittest person to give an account of the child's illness, and would ask the most proper and pertinent questions, and bring him back a faithful report; and he would have her be disguised, lest the prophet, who bore no good will to him because of his apostasy, should refuse to give any answer at all, or else give a very rough and disagreeable one.

{g} Travels, &c. p. 161.

1 Kings 14:3

Ver. 3. And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him,.... It being usual to carry a present to a prophet when he was inquired of on any account, see **1Sa 9:7** and this being a plain present, and of such things as the country afforded, she might be taken for a plain countrywoman, and not for such a personage as she was: the ten loaves could not be large for a woman to carry, most probably made of wheat; the cracknels, according to the Greek version in Drusius, were for the prophet's children; they very likely were spiced, or were sweetened with honey, and might be somewhat like our simnels; they seem to have their name in Hebrew from having points and pricks in them for the sake of ornament; such as Plautus {h} calls "scribilitae", because as Turnebus {i} says, they were marked and pricked, and seemed as if they were written:

he shall tell thee what shall become of the child; whether it should live or die, for that was all he wanted to know; he did not desire to know what should be done to the child for its recovery, nor to request the prophet's prayers for it.

{h} Prolog. Poenulo, ver. 43. {i} Adversar. l. 23. c. 10.

1 Kings 14:4

Ver. 4. And Jeroboam's wife did so, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Abijah,.... Disguised herself, and took this long journey, and found the prophet's house; which she did partly in obedience to her husband, and partly from affection to her child: but Abijah could not see; her or anybody else that came into the room to him:

for his eyes were set by reason of his age; or "stood" fixed and immovable, as the eyes of blind men are; or the nerves and muscles of his eyes stood within the holes thereof, so that he could not see objects.

1 Kings 14:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord said unto Abijah,.... Either in a dream, or by an impulse upon his mind, before Jeroboam's wife came in:

behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son, for he is sick; to know whether he will recover or not:

thus and thus shall thou say unto her; as after expressed in some following verses:

for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself another woman; to the people that let her in, and introduce her to the prophet, and to the prophet himself; pretend herself to be a countrywoman come to ask a question of the prophet concerning her son that was ill of a disease.

1 Kings 14:6

Ver. 6. And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door,.... Of the room where the prophet was:

that he said, come in, thou wife of Jeroboam, why feignest thou thyself to be another? which must greatly surprise and confound her, as well as lay open to her the folly of her and her husband to imagine that she could be secreted from God, and a prophet of his; or that a prophet could tell her what was future, and yet not know her that was present; and this might serve to assure her, and so her husband, that what the prophet after delivered would certainly come to pass:

for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings; or hard things, such as would be very disagreeable to her and her husband.

1 Kings 14:7

Ver. 7. Go tell Jeroboam,.... Thy husband:

thus saith the Lord God of Israel; so he continued to be, though they had revolted from him:

forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people; the common people, from a low estate in which he was:

and made thee prince over my people Israel; so they were when he made them king over them; and there were some among them still that loved the Lord, served and feared him, of which the prophet himself, now speaking, was an instance.

1 Kings 14:8

Ver. 8. And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee,.... Even ten parts out of twelve:

and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes; who never was guilty of idolatry, but always constantly and cordially attended the pure worship of God, and was careful to do everything in that according to the will of God, whatever else he might be deficient in.

1 Kings 14:9

Ver. 9. But hast done evil above all that were before thee,.... Not only above David, but above Saul, who never gave into idolatry, yea, even above Solomon, who, though he connived at idolatry, and might be guilty of it in some instances, yet did not attempt to draw his people into it; and if this was the latter end of Jeroboam's reign, which is probable, Rehoboam and Abijam might be both dead; and though they were blameworthy in some things, yet not so bad as Jeroboam; though perhaps this may respect only such who had been kings of Israel before him:

for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger; the two calves of gold; for however he might colour things over, and pretend he did not look upon these as gods, but as representations of God, and that he did not worship them, but God by them, yet the Lord considered it as idolatry, than which nothing is more provoking to him:

and hast cast me behind thy back; as unworthy of his regard; or my worship, as the Targum, which he neglected, and showed no concern for.

1 Kings 14:10

Ver. 10. Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam,.... Calamities, destruction, and ruin:

and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall; not leave a dog of his, or rather a male, see 1Sa 25:22

and him that is shut up and left in Israel; in garrisons or in prisons, in cities or in fields, or in whatsoever situation or circumstances they may be. Some interpret it of wealth and substance; it signifies an entire destruction it may be of men and goods, see De 32:36

and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone; signifying that Jeroboam's family was as loathsome and abominable to the Lord as dung is to men; and that he would make as clean a riddance of them as men do of dung when they sweep it out, and will not leave the least scrap behind.

1 Kings 14:11

Ver. 11. Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat, and him that dieth in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat,.... The meaning is, that they should have no burial:

for the Lord hath spoken it; and therefore shall be fulfilled, for what he hath said he will do, Nu 23:19.

1 Kings 14:12

Ver. 12. Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house,.... With all haste, as soon as she could:

and when thy feet enter the city; the city of Tirzah, very probably the king's palace stood at the entry of it, see 1Ki 14:17,

the child shall die; this is an answer to the question she was to ask, and at the same time a token of the sure and certain fulfilment of all the prophet had spoken in the name of the Lord.

1 Kings 14:13

Ver. 13. And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him,.... Give him an honourable interment, and follow him to the grave with lamentation, because he was the heir apparent to the throne, and an hopeful prince, of whom they had raised expectations; that when he came to the throne things would take a different turn, especially in matters of religion, and they might fear, he being removed, things would grow worse instead of better:

for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave; or be buried, the rest should be devoured by dogs or fowls:

because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam; the principles of grace were implanted, and seeds of piety and religion sown in his heart; and there appeared a disposition of mind, and desires in him to the name of God, and the remembrance of it; or to his pure worship and service; it might be discerned that he had a dislike of idolatry, and a desire to have true religion restored. The Jews say {k} that this good thing in him was, that he was the means of removing the watch or guards that were placed in the way to hinder the Israelites from going up to the feasts of the Lord.

{k} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 28. 2.

1 Kings 14:14

Ver. 14. Moreover the Lord shall raise up a king over Israel,.... Baasha is meant, 1Ki 15:29

who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day; immediately, as soon as on the throne, he should destroy his whole family, as he did, 1Ki 15:29,

but what? even now; shall it be that day? yes; even at that very time, and which will be very quickly from this time; for as it may be supposed this was said at the latter end of Jeroboam's reign, and his son and successor reigned but two years ere this prophecy was accomplished. The Targum is,

"who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam, him that is living today, and shall be from henceforward."

1 Kings 14:15

Ver. 15. And the Lord shall smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water,.... Either by the wind or by the stream; and may signify the fluctuating and uncertain condition Israel should be in future reigns, through civil wars, and the translation of the kingdom into different families; so that there was continually disquietude and uneasiness, and no settled peace and tranquillity:

and he shall root up Israel out this good land he gave to their fathers; which was brought about, first by Tiglathpileser, and then by Shalmaneser, kings of Assyria, that carried them captives from hence:

and shall scatter them beyond the river; the river Euphrates, as the Targum: or, as others, the river Gozan, 2Ki 17:6

because they have made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger: in which groves they placed idols, and worshipped them, which was highly provoking to the Lord, and the cause of their dispersion.

1 Kings 14:16

Ver. 16. And he shall give Israel up,.... Into the hands of their enemies:

because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin; by his devices and stratagems, by his example and edicts, and by the methods he took to prevent Israel from worshipping in the manner and place he directed to.

1 Kings 14:17

Ver. 17. And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, &e.] Upon this speech of the prophet's to her:

and came to Tirzah; where Jeroboam now had his court, and where their son now was; it was a royal city in the time of the Canaanites, and is commonly placed in the tribe of Manasseh, and was a very pleasant one, as its name signifies, to which there is an allusion, **So 6:4**,
See Gill on "Jos 12:24",

and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died: just as she was about to step over the threshold of the royal palace, which seems to have been at the entering of the city of Tirzah, 1Ki 14:12.

1 Kings 14:18

Ver. 18. And they buried him,.... In an honourable manner, suitable to his rank and pedigree:

and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet, 1Ki 14:13.

1 Kings 14:19

Ver. 19. And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred,.... As he did with Rehoboam, 1Ki 14:30, and with Abijam his son, who was an more than a match for him, see 2Ch 13:1

and how he reigned; over the people of Israel, whether wisely, and justly, and in clemency, or not:

behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel; not in that canonical book of Scripture, so called, for in that there is very little account of the reign of Jeroboam; but in the annals and diaries of the kings of Israel, written by persons appointed for that purpose, and out of which it is generally thought that inspired writers, by divine direction, took what was thought proper to be transmitted to future times. So with the Romans, from their very beginning to the times of Mutius, all the events of every year were committed to writing by the order of the Pontifex Maximus, and lay open to be read by the people in common; and these, as Tully {l} says, were what are called annals.

{l} De Oratore, l. 2. c. 34.

1 Kings 14:20

Ver. 20. And the days which Jeroboam reigned were twenty two years,.... So that he outlived Rehoboam five years, and lived to the second year of the reign of his grandson Asa:

and he slept with his fathers; or died as they did:

and Nadab his son reigned in his stead; who perhaps was younger than Abijah, whose sickness and death are before related.

1 Kings 14:21

Ver. 21. And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah,.... Over the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, when Jeroboam reigned over the other ten:

Rehoboam [was] forty one years old when he began to reign; being born one year before his father Solomon began to reign, and so it might have been expected he would have begun his reign more wisely than he did:

and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem; not half so long as his father and grandfather, being neither so wise nor so good a prince as either of them:

the city which the Lord did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there; to have a temple built for him, and his worship carried on in it; which was an aggravation of the sin of Rehoboam, that he should reign in such a place, and yet be guilty of the crimes he was; the three first years he reigned well, but afterwards forsook the law of the Lord, 2Ch 11:17

and his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess; and which is observed again, 1Ki 14:31, she being the instrument of drawing him into idolatry, which it is very probable she practised in the days of Solomon, 1Ki 11:5.

1 Kings 14:22

Ver. 22. And Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord,.... At the end of three years, from the beginning of the reign of Rehoboam:

and they provoked him to jealousy, with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done; that is, with their idolatries; for they were the sins which moved the Lord to jealousy, and provoked the eyes of his glory; in which they had outdone not the ten tribes, but their fathers, in the times of Moses, Joshua, and the judges, and of their kings before their separation, Saul, David, and Solomon.

1 Kings 14:23

Ver. 23. For they also built them high places,.... Which, though allowed of, or at least connived at, before the temple was built, and when the tabernacle was unfixed, yet afterwards unlawful; and the tribe of Judah could have no excuse for them, who had the temple in their tribe:

and images; contrary to the express command of God, Ex 20:4, and groves on every high hill, and under every green tree; that is, set up idols, and temples for idols, amidst groves of trees, and under all green trees; as was the custom of the Heathens, who sacrificed on the heights of hills and tops of mountains, as was particularly the custom of the Persians, as both Herodotus {m} and Xenophon {n} relate; and with the Getae, a people in Thrace, was a mountain they reckoned sacred {o}.

{m} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 131. {n} Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 45. {o} Strabo Geograph. l. 7. p. 206.

1 Kings 14:24

Ver. 24. And there were also Sodomites in the land, &e.] Such as were addicted to unnatural lusts between men and men, which the men of Sodom were guilty of, from whence they had their name: Jarchi interprets the word adultery and some versions render it whoremongers; and filthy actions of this nature, both by men and women, usually attended idolatrous practices among the heathens; in their temples and groves such wickednesses were privately perpetrated:

[and] they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel; the Canaanites, of whose uncleannesses, incests, and bestialities, see Le 18:1.

1 Kings 14:25

Ver. 25. And it came to pass in the fifth year of King Rehoboam,.... Two years after he and his people fell into the above wicked practices:

that Shishak, king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem; of whom see 1Ki 11:40, this was suffered as a chastisement from the Lord for their abominations.

1 Kings 14:26

Ver. 26. And he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord,.... Which perhaps Jeroboam had informed him of, and for the sake of which he came, as well as to make a diversion in favour of Jeroboam, who had contracted an intimacy with him when in Egypt; and who might have no regard for Rehoboam, who was not a son of Pharaoh's daughter, and so no relation to him: these were the treasures which David had left to his son Solomon, and had dedicated for the temple, even gold, silver, and vessels, which he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord, and perhaps added to them, **1Ki 7:51**, and the treasures of the king's house; the riches, gold, silver, and jewels, whatever of worth and value he had in his chests and cabinets:

he even took away all: that he could find and come at; for that there were some left is plain from 1Ki 15:18,

and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made; and which were put in the house of the forest of Lebanon, 1Ki 10:16.

1 Kings 14:27

Ver. 27. And King Rehoboam made in their stead brazen shields,.... For the king of Egypt had so stripped him of his gold, that he was not able to replace golden ones:

and committed them into the hands of the chief of the guard; or "runners" {p}, that went before the king, or attended him as his bodyguard when he went abroad:

which kept the door of the king's house; which kept guard night and day in their turns.

{p} Myurh "cursorum", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

1 Kings 14:28

Ver. 28. And it was so, when the king went into the house of the Lord,.... The temple; for though he had fallen into idolatry, he had not wholly forsaken the worship of God in the temple, and perhaps by the late humbling providence he might be stirred up to attend there more frequently:

that the guard bare them: before him, partly for pomp and grandeur, and partly to keep in awe such as were inclined to mutiny and sedition:

and brought them back into the guard chamber; when the king returned, the place where the guard lodged and slept by turns.

1 Kings 14:29

Ver. 29. Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam and all that he did,.... In the course of his reign, that was memorable:

are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? who had annalists or historiographers to write for them, as the kings of Israel had, 1Ki 14:19, in the writing of which, especially with respect to genealogies, Shemaiah the prophet, and Iddo the seer, were concerned, 2Ch 12:15.

1 Kings 14:30

Ver. 30. And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. For though Rehoboam did not enter into an offensive war, and attack the children of Israel, being dissuaded from it by Shemaiah the prophet in the name of the Lord, yet he might maintain a defensive war; and though there were no pitched battles between them as afterwards, in his son's time, yet there might be skirmishes and bickerings on the borders of their countries.

1 Kings 14:31

Ver. 31. And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David,.... Where David and Solomon were buried, **1Ki 2:10** and his mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess; which is repeated, that it might be observed as what was the leading step to his idolatry, and the means of his continuing in it:

and Abijam his son reigned in his stead; of whom there is a further account in the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 15

In this chapter we have a short history of the reign of Abijam, 1Ki 15:1 and of Asa, 1Ki 14:9, both kings of Judah; and of the reigns of Nadab the son of Jeroboam, and of Baasha, who destroyed his family, both kings of Israel, 1Ki 15:25.

Ver. 1. Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah. That is, began to reign; and by this it appears that Rehoboam was in the eighteenth year of his reign when he died, for he and Jeroboam began their reign at the same time.

1 Kings 15:2

Ver. 2. Three years reigned he in Jerusalem,.... And three only; his reign was short, and indeed not three full years, only one whole year and part of two others; for Asa his son began to reign in the twentieth of Jeroboam, 1Ki 15:9 so that he reigned part of his eighteenth, this whole nineteenth, and part of his twentieth:

and his mother's name was Maachah the daughter of Abishalom; called Absalom, 2Ch 11:20, generally supposed by the Jews to be Absalom the son of David, and which may seem not improbable, since his other two wives were of his father's family, 2Ch 11:18. Josephus says {q} she was the daughter of Tamar the daughter of Absalom, and so his granddaughter; and which may account for her being called Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah, 2Ch 13:2 since the difference between Maachah and Michaiah is not very great; and Uriel might he the name of Tamar's husband; though it is most likely that both father and daughter had two names; she seems to be mentioned here, to observe that she was the cause and means of her son's disagreeable walk, as follows, see
1Ki 15:13.

{q} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 10. sect. 1.

1 Kings 15:3

Ver. 3. And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him,.... Having such bad examples as both parents to copy after; it chiefly respects idolatrous practices, see 1Ki 14:23, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God; he did profess the true God, and worshipped him, but not wholly, and only, and sincerely; he worshipped other gods besides him: and so his heart was not

as the heart of David his father; who was a sole and sincere worshipper of God, never departed from him and his service.

1 Kings 15:4

Ver. 4. Nevertheless, for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem,.... A kingdom there, as the Targum, splendid and glorious, to be continued in his posterity: to set up his son after him; in it:

and to establish Jerusalem: to continue that in which the temple was, for the sake of which, and the worship of God in it, there was a succession of David's posterity on the throne of Judah.

1 Kings 15:5

Ver. 5. Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord,.... With respect to worship: and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life; especially in matters of religion, nor even in his moral walk and conversation, deliberately, studiously, and with design:

save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite; the killing of him, and other sins which led on to it, and were in connection with it; Abarbinel thinks, because the affair of Bathsheba is not mentioned, that was not reckoned to David as a sin; but no doubt it was, and is included here.

1 Kings 15:6

Ver. 6. And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. Not the days of Rehoboam, though that was true, and is observed, 1Ki 14:30, but all the days of Abijam, before he came to the throne, and in which, when a young man, he was concerned, and which still continued between him and Jeroboam; though some think he is called by his father's name, as Rehoboam is called David, 1Ki 12:16.

1 Kings 15:7

Ver. 7. Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?.... Which seem to be written by Iddo the prophet, see 2Ch 13:22,

and there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam; and a famous pitched battle between them we read of in 2Ch 13:3.

1 Kings 15:8

Ver. 8. And Abijam slept with his fathers,.... That is, died as they did:

and they buried him in the city of David, in the sepulchre of his royal ancestors, David, Solomon, and Rehoboam:

and Asa his son reigned in his stead; who perhaps was the eldest of his twenty two sons, 2Ch 13:21.

1 Kings 15:9

Ver. 9. And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah. How this is to be accounted for
See Gill on "1Ki 15:2".

1 Kings 15:10

Ver. 10. And forty one years reigned he in Jerusalem,.... Being a good king, had the blessing of a long reign, and reached, and even exceeded, the years of the reigns of David and Solomon:

and his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom; that is the name of his grandmother, see 1Ki 15:2 she is called his mother, not because she brought him forth, but because she brought him up; and this is observed to his commendation, that though he was educated by an idolatrous woman, yet was not corrupted by her as his father was.

1 Kings 15:11

Ver. 11. And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father. In his personal walk and conversation, in his government of the nation, and especially in the matters of his God, and of religion, he made David his pattern and example to copy after.

1 Kings 15:12

Ver. 12. And he took away the Sodomites out of the land,.... Which were in the times of Rehoboam, 1Ki 14:24, and continued in his father's reign; those he took away, either by driving them out of the land, or by putting them to death according to the law of God, Le 20:13 even as many of them as he had knowledge of, for some remained, see 1Ki 22:46,

and removed all the idols that his fathers had made; or suffered to be made, as Solomon, Rehoboam, and Abijam, see 1Ki 11:7.

1 Kings 15:13

Ver. 13. And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen,.... From the kingdom, as the Targum; from having any share in the government, as she might have had during his minority, his mother being dead, as some conjecture; and not only took away her power and authority, but all the ensigns of it, and perhaps forbid her the court: or he removed her from the queen, his own wife, that she might not be corrupted by her; or rather it was from presiding over the rites of the idol next mentioned, and the worshipping of it:

because she had made an idol in a grove; which had its name from horror and trembling; either because it was of a terrible aspect, or injected horror into its worshippers, or brought terrible calamities and judgments upon them: according to some Jewish writers {r}, it was a Priapus, of an obscene figure; and so others {s}, who suppose she presided over the sacred rites of this impure deity, the same with Baalpeor; and the Heathens used to place Priapus in their gardens {t}, to fright away birds, See Gill on "Jer 49:16", others take it to be Pan, from whence the word "Panic", used for any great fright:

and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron: and cast the ashes of it into it, that none might have any profit by it, the gold and silver on it, and in indignation to it, see Ex 32:20.

{r} T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 44. 1. {s} Vid. D. Herbert de Cherbury de Relig. Gent. c. 4. p. 34. Lyram in loc. {t} "----custos es pauperis horti", Virgil. Bucol. Ecl. 7. ver. 34. & Georgic. l. 4. ver. 110. "----furum aviumque maxima formido", Horat. Sermon. l. 1. ode 8.

1 Kings 15:14

Ver. 14. But the high places were not removed,.... That is, such as had been used for the worship of God, before the temple was built, which yet now should have been removed, since sacrifice was now only to be offered there; but he might think they were still lawful, or the people had such an opinion of them, that it was difficult and dangerous to attempt to remove them; otherwise high places for idolatry were removed by him, 2Ch 14:3,

nevertheless, Asa's heart was perfect all his days; he was sincere in the worship of God, and did everything to the best of his knowledge and capacity for restoring true religion, and destroying idolatry.

1 Kings 15:15

Ver. 15. And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated,.... The spoils he had taken in war from Jeroboam, and which he had devoted to religious uses, but lived not to perform his vows, which his son now did for him; so that it seems, notwithstanding the sins he fell into, he had some regard to God and his worship, see
2Ch 13:19

and the things which himself had dedicated; out of the spoils taken from the Ethiopians, 2Ch 14:13, these he brought into the house of the Lord, silver, and gold, and vessels; of various sorts.

1 Kings 15:16

Ver. 16. And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days:] That is as long as they lived together; for Baasha died many years before Asa, and this must be reckoned from the time the war began between them. Baasha did not begin his reign until the third year of Asa, 1Ki 15:25 and in the first ten years of Asa's reign the land was quiet and free from war, 2Ch 14:1 of which there must be seven in the reign of Baasha, who is here made mention of out of course, for Nadab reigned before him, 1Ki 15:25, the reason of which Abarbinel thinks is, that the historian, having given an account of the good deeds of Asa, relates his failings before he proceeds to the other part of his history.

1 Kings 15:17

Ver. 17. And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah,.... Which, in 2Ch 16:1 is said to be in the thirty sixth year of Asa's reign, or rather of his kingdom; for it can never mean the year of his reign, for Baasha was dead many years before that, since his reign began in the third of Asa, and he reigned but twenty four years, and therefore must die in the twenty seventh of Asa; but it is to be understood of the kingdom of Judah, when it was divided from Israel; from that time to this were thirty six years, seventeen under Rehoboam, three under Abijam, so that this year must be the sixteenth of Asa; thus it is calculated in the Jewish chronology {u}, and which is followed by many of the best of our chronologers:

and built Ramah; a city in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:25, but taken by the king of Israel, which he rebuilt or fortified:

that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah; that his people might not go to and from Jerusalem, and worship at the temple there; this garrison lying on the borders of both kingdoms, he thought hereby to cut off all communication between them.

{u} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 16.

1 Kings 15:18

Ver. 18. Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house,.... What was left untaken away by Shishak king of Egypt, 1Ki 14:26, or what he had put there dedicated by his father and himself, 1Ki 15:15 and be they either, they were not to be taken, especially the treasures of the house of the Lord, and put to profane use, and particularly to such bad purposes as these were:

and delivered them into the hands of his servants: to be disposed of as next directed:

and King Asa sent them to Benhadad the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus; according to some chronologers {w}, Hezion, the grandfather of this Benhadad, is the same with Rezon the first king of Damascus, 1Ki 11:23, who was succeeded by Tabrimon, and he by Benhadad:

saying: as follows.

{w} Usher. Annal. A. M. 3064. Marsham. Canon. Chron. Seculum 13. p. 346.

1 Kings 15:19

Ver. 19. There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father,.... For though Hezion, if he is the same with Rezon, was an adversary to Israel in the days of Solomon, 1Ki 11:25, yet it seems his son was not, but was a confederate with the kings of Israel and Judah:

behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; taken out of the treasury of the temple and his own treasury:

come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me; it was sinful in him to take the money out of the temple, to which it was dedicated; it was more so to make use of it to bribe an Heathen to break his covenant and alliance with another, in order to serve him; in which he betrayed great distrust of the Lord, and of his power to help him; which was the more aggravated, when he had had such a wonderful appearance of God for him against the Ethiopians, see 2Ch 16:7.

1 Kings 15:20

Ver. 20. So Benhadad hearkened unto King Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel,.... He broke off his alliance with the king of Israel; and as he had a standing army, with proper officers, he sent them directly to take the cities of Israel:

and he smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelbethmaachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali; places which lay on the northern part of Israel, the nearest to Syria. Ijon some place in the tribe of Naphtali, others in Asher; it seems to be on the extreme border of the land northward, as Dan also was; hence the phrase from Dan to Beersheba, i.e. from north to south. Abelbethmaachah is the same with Abelmaim, 2Ch 16:4 which perhaps is the same with that Abela, placed by Jerome {x} between Damascus and Paneas, supposed to be the Enhydra of Pliny {y}. Cinneroth is the same with Gennesaret, a fruitful country in Galilee, from which is a sea or lake of that name, mentioned in the New Testament, and was in the tribe of Naphtali, the land of which was seized upon at this time.

{x} De loc. Heb. fol. 83. K. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.

1 Kings 15:21

Ver. 21. And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof,.... What was doing in the northern part of his kingdom:

that he left off building of Ramah; which was the thing designed to be answered by this diversion:

and dwelt in Tirzah; in the tribe of Manasseh, nearer at hand, to observe and stop the motions of the Syrian king.

1 Kings 15:22

Ver. 22. Then King Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah,.... Summoned men of all sorts, ranks, and degrees:

(none was exempted;) the Jews {z} say, not so much as a newly married man, whom the law excused from war the first year, nor the disciples of the wise men:

and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; or fortified the place; these; the men of Judah, whom Asa summoned, carried off:

and King Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah; which were both in the tribe of Benjamin, and which he fortified, Jos 18:24.

{z} Jarchi & Kimchi in loc.

1 Kings 15:23

Ver. 23. The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?.... Some of which are to be met with in the canonical book of that name, 2Ch 14:1, and others in the annals of the kings, out of which the Scripture account was taken:

nevertheless, in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet; seized with the gout, as the Jews say {a}, and which was two years before his death, see 2Ch 16:12.

{a} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 48. 2. So Clemens of Alexandria, Stromat. l. 1. p. 326.

1 Kings 15:24

Ver. 24. And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father,.... In a sepulchre there he himself had made, and in great pomp and solemnity, being laid on a bed filled with sweet odours and spices, prepared according to art, and which were burned for him, 2Ch 16:14,

and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead; a very pious and worthy prince.

1 Kings 15:25

Ver. 25. And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah,.... Before Baasha did:

and reigned over Israel two years, not two whole years; for he began in the second of Asa, and in the third of that king's reign Baasha slew him, and reigned in his stead, 1Ki 15:28.

1 Kings 15:26

Ver. 26. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord,.... Committed idolatry, than which nothing is a greater evil in his sight:

and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin: in making and worshipping of golden calves.

1 Kings 15:27

Ver. 27. And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar,.... A man of that tribe; but who he was, or his father, is nowhere else said, very probably an officer in Nadab's army:

conspired against him; laid a scheme to take away his life, and seize the kingdom:

and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon; a city in the tribe of Dan, Jos 19:44

which belongeth to the Philistines; it was a city given to the Levites, Jos 21:23 and they being driven from it by Jeroboam, the Philistines seized on it, or had heretofore made a conquest of it; and Nadab was desirous of getting it out of their hands, and therefore besieged it, as follows:

for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon; and while he was besieging it, Baasha took the opportunity to slay him, where his carcass lay exposed to dogs, or fowls of the air, and had no burial, as Ahijah predicted, 1Ki 14:11.

1 Kings 15:28

Ver. 28. Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead. Which seems to be his only or chief view in slaying him, to get possession of his kingdom.

1 Kings 15:29

Ver. 29. And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam,.... That he might have no rival, or any that could pretend any title to the crown:

he left not Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite; not that his intention in destroying Jeroboam's family was to fulfil that prophecy, but so it was eventually; see
1Ki 14:10.

1 Kings 15:30

Ver. 30. Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the Lord God of Israel. Not that Baasha destroyed the family of Jeroboam because of his sins, which did so much mischief to Israel, and were so provoking to the Lord, from any dislike or hatred of them, for he walked in the same, 1Ki 15:34, but the Lord threatened this by his prophet, and suffered it to be done because of his abominations.

1 Kings 15:31

Ver. 31. Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did,.... In his short reign, which yet were more than here related:

are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? in which those of his father Jeroboam were written, 1Ki 14:19.

1 Kings 15:32

Ver. 32. And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. For being a wicked man, and an idolater, Asa had no respect for him, though he had slain the family of Jeroboam; nor had Baasha any regard to Judah, nor to the worship of God at Jerusalem, so that there was no good understanding between them, but frequent acts of hostility, see 1Ki 15:16.

1 Kings 15:33

Ver. 33. In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah,.... Which is repeated, partly to observe that the whole kingdom submitted to him, though an usurper and murderer, and the place where he kept his court, as also the time of his reign, as follows:

twenty four years; which were as long as both Jeroboam and his son reigned.

1 Kings 15:34

Ver. 34. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord,.... As Nadab did, whom he slew:

and walked in the way of Jeroboam; whose family he destroyed:

and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin; in worshipping the golden calves; so that it was not out of dislike to idolatry, but out of malice and ambition, that he slew the family of Jeroboam.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 16

This chapter contains a prophecy of the ruin of the family of Baasha, and an account of his death, 1Ki 16:1, and of his son's reigning in his stead two years, who was slain by Zimri one of his captains, 1Ki 16:8, and who reigned but seven days, 1Ki 16:15, and the people being divided between Tibni and Omri, the party for the latter prevailed, and he was made king, and reigned twelve years, 1Ki 16:21, and was succeeded by his son Ahab, a very wicked prince, 1Ki 16:29, and the chapter is concluded with the rebuilding of Jericho, 1Ki 16:34.

Ver. 1. Then the word of the Lord came to Jehu the son of Hanani,.... The seer that reproved Asa, 2Ch 16:7, so that this man was the son of a prophet then living, and was a young man; for we hear of him several years after reproving Jehoshaphat, 2Ch 19:2, and as a writer of history, 2Ch 20:34, the prophecy that came to him from the Lord was against Baasha; king of Israel:

saying; as follows.

1 Kings 16:2

Ver. 2. Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust,.... From a very low estate, and mean family:

and made thee prince over my people Israel; as they were of right, and ought to have been; and though Baasha got the kingdom by treachery and murder, yet the translation of the kingdom to him was according to the appointment of God, and by his overruling providence; and even his act of killing Nadab was a fulfilment of a prophecy of his; and had he done it in obedience to the will of God, and in vengeance for his sin, would not have been blameworthy, since then he would have been an executioner of the, justice of God:

and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins; committing and encouraging the same idolatrous practices, so very provoking to God.

1 Kings 16:3

Ver. 3. Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house,.... By death, there shall be none of his family remaining in any branch of it:

and I will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat; execute the same judgment on it, and in the same manner, their sins being alike.

1 Kings 16:4

Ver. 4. Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat, and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat. They should not have burial, which is just the same that was threatened to and executed on Jeroboam's family, 1Ki 14:11.

1 Kings 16:5

Ver. 5. Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?] As those of Jeroboam and Nadab were, 1Ki 14:19.

1 Kings 16:6

Ver. 6. So Baasha slept with his fathers,.... Or died, not a violent, but natural, death:

and was buried in Tirzah; where was the royal palace of the kings of Israel:

and Elah his son reigned in his stead; yet but a short time.

1 Kings 16:7

Ver. 7. And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani, came the word of the Lord against Baasha, and against his house,.... Which is here repeated, as Abarbinel thinks, because in the former prophecy the threatening was on account not of his own sin, but because he made Israel to sin; but here it is because of his own evil works, as it follows:

even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the Lord, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam: worshipping the golden calves as they did:

and because he killed him; either Jeroboam; for, according to Dr. Lightfoot {b}, he was alive this year; rather Nadab the son of Jeroboam, who it is certain was slain by Baasha; though it may refer, as Abarbinel thinks, to the whole house of Jeroboam; though it was agreeable to the will of God, yet was not done by Baasha with any regard to it, but to gratify his malice and ambition, and therefore punishable for it.

{b} Works, vol. 1. p. 79.

1 Kings 16:8

Ver. 8. In the twenty sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years. Not complete, for he died in the twenty seventh of Asa, 1Ki 16:10 he reigned just the time that Nadab the son of Jeroboam did, 1Ki 15:25.

1 Kings 16:9

Ver. 9. And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots,.... His military chariots; there were two captains of them, and this was one of them; so the Targum,

"one of the two masters or captains of the chariots:"

conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of his house in Tirzah; who had the charge of his wine and other liquors, to which he was addicted beyond measure; and this was a fit opportunity for Zimri to fall upon him, and slay him, when he was drunk, and off his guard, and his army at the same time was besieging Gibbethon, 1Ki 16:15 so that there was a very great likeness in what befell the family of Baasha, to that of the family of Jeroboam; for as the son of the one, and of the other, reigned but two years, so they were both slain by their servants, and both at a time when Gibbethon was besieged; the Targum takes this Arza to be the temple of an idol so called, near the royal palace.

1 Kings 16:10

Ver. 10. And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him,.... When in his drunken fit: and this was

in the twenty seventh year of Asa; when Elah had not reigned two full years:

and reigned in his stead; that is, Zimri; his reign was short indeed, but seven days, 1Ki 16:15.

1 Kings 16:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne,.... Perhaps the very first day,

that he slew all the house of Baasha; his whole family, all the children that he had, that there might be none to make pretensions to the throne:

he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither of his kinsfolks nor of his friends; not any that might avenge the blood of his family, that might have a right or inclination to do it.

1 Kings 16:12

Ver. 12. Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet. That not only his posterity, but all any way related to him, should be cut off; yea, it seems to have been carried further, even to all that were in any connection with him in point of friendship, see 1Ki 16:3.

1 Kings 16:13

Ver. 13. For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son,.... By which it appears that the son trod in the steps of his father, and was therefore cut off:

by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities; their idols, which had nothing in them, and cannot be of any service to their worshippers; and to serve such, and neglect the worship of the true God, and draw others into the same iniquity, must be very provoking to the most High.

1 Kings 16:14

Ver. 14. Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?] See 1Ki 16:5.

1 Kings 16:15

Ver. 15. In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah, &c] Until the army under Omri came and took the palace, and destroyed him:

and the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belongeth to the Philistines; it was besieged in Nadab's time, but upon his death, by Baasha, the siege was raised; or however, if then taken, it was recovered by the Philistines, and now besieged again by the Israelites, see 1Ki 15:27.

1 Kings 16:16

Ver. 16. And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king,.... Tidings came to the army of what he had done, which was displeasing to them:

wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp; that is, all Israel that were in the army proclaimed Omri, their general, king; just as the Roman army declared Vespasian, their general, emperor of Rome, and as several of the emperors were chosen.

1 Kings 16:17

Ver. 17. And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him,.... He, and the army under him, broke up the siege of that place, and marched to Tirzah; which, according, to Bunting {c} were thirty six miles distant from each other: and they besieged Tirzah; the royal city, in which Zimri was.

{c} Travels, &c. p. 162.

1 Kings 16:18

Ver. 18. And it came to pass, that when Zimri saw that the city was taken,.... That Omri, and the army with him, had got into it, being a place not much fortified, and Zimri not having force enough to defend it against such an army:

that he went into the palace of the king's house; into the innermost and most splendid, as well as the strongest part of it:

and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and he died; that he might not fall into the hands of his rival, who he might fear would use him ill, and that he might not enjoy the royal palace; though Kimchi thinks that Omri set fire to the palace, and burnt it over the head of Zimri, in which he perished; and this sense the text will bear.

1 Kings 16:19

Ver. 19. For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord,.... In the former part of his life, as well as now:

in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did to make Israel sin; worshipping the golden calves, which he might do while a captain of the chariots, and also since he usurped the crown, sacrificing to them by way of thanksgiving, for being in possession of the kingdom; and though his reign was so short, he might give plain and strong intimations that he should continue the worship of idols.

1 Kings 16:20

Ver. 20. Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the kings of Israel?] What he did both before and after his usurpation, during the seven days he was king, and the manner of his conspiracy, and success in it.

1 Kings 16:21

Ver. 21. Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts,.... About the succession in the kingdom:

half the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king: these were the friends of Zimri, or however such who did not like that the army should impose a king upon them; who this Tibni was is not said:

and half followed Omri; the general of the army, perhaps the whole of that.

1 Kings 16:22

Ver. 22. But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath,.... Very probably they had a battle, in which the latter were worsted:

so Tibni died; in the battle:

and Omri reigned; took possession of the throne, his rival being slain.

1 Kings 16:23

Ver. 23. In the thirty first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel twelve years,.... Which are to be reckoned not from the thirty first of Asa; for Ahab the son of Omri began to reign in his thirty eighth year, and so his reign would be but seven or eight years; but they are reckoned from the twenty seventh of Asa, the beginning of it, when Elah was slain by Zimri, and he died, which to the end of the thirty eight of Asa make twelve years; for the division, according to the Jewish chronology {d}, lasted four years; Jarchi says five {e}; and from the beginning of that his reign is reckoned, though he did not reign over all Israel, or completely, until the thirty first of Asa, when Tibni died:

six years reigned he in Tirzah; the royal city of the kings of Israel, from Jeroboam to this time, and the other six he reigned in Samaria, built by him, as in the next verse.

{d} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 17. p. 45. {e} So Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 11. 2.

1 Kings 16:24

Ver. 24. And he bought the hill of Samaria of Shemer, for two talents of silver,.... A talent of silver, according to Brerewood {f}, was of our money three hundred and seventy five pounds, so that this hill was purchased at seven hundred and fifty pounds:

and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria; its name from him was Shomeron, which is the Hebrew name for Samaria; which, according to Bunting {g} was six miles from Tirzah, and ever after the royal seat of the kings of Israel.

{f} De Ponder. & Pret. c. 4. {g} Ut supra, (Travels, &c.) p. 163.

1 Kings 16:25

Ver. 25. But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord,.... Openly and publicly, as if it were in defiance of him:

and did worse than all that were before him; taking no warning by the judgments inflicted on them, which aggravated his sins; and besides, he not only worshipped the calves, as the rest, and drew Israel by his example into the same, as they did, but he published edicts and decrees, obliging them to worship them, and forbidding them to go to Jerusalem, called "the statutes of Omri", **Mic 6:16**.

1 Kings 16:26

Ver. 26. For he walked in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin,.... Worshipping the calves;

to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities; these, and whatsoever idols else were worshipped by him, see 1Ki 16:13.

1 Kings 16:27

Ver. 27. Now the rest of the acts of Omri, which he did, and his might which he showed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?] Where those of the preceding kings were written, see 1Ki 14:19.

1 Kings 16:28

Ver. 28. So Omri slept with his fathers,.... Died a natural death:

and was buried in Samaria; the city he had built, and now the royal seat and metropolis of the kingdom:

and Ahab his son reigned in his stead; of whom much is said in the following history.

1 Kings 16:29

Ver. 29. And in the thirty fifth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel,.... At the latter end of it, the same year his father died, see 1Ki 16:23

and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty two years; the same number of years Jeroboam did, 1Ki 14:20.

1 Kings 16:30

Ver. 30. And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him. Adding other idols to the calves, and those more abominable than they; since the other kings pretended to worship God in them, but he worshipped other gods besides him, as the following verses show.

1 Kings 16:31

Ver. 31. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,.... To worship the golden calves he set up:

that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians; who is called Ithobalus and Itobalus king of the Tyrians, by Heathen historians {h}; and, by Theophilus of Antioch {i}, Juthobalus, priest of Astarte; for Tyre and Zidon were under one king. This woman was not only of another nation, and an idolater, but a very filthy woman, and is made the emblem of the whore of Rome, **Re 2:20**

and went and served Baal, and worshipped him that is, went to Zidon and Tyre, and worshipped his wife's gods, which were either Jupiter Thalassius, the god of the Zidoaians, or Hercules, whom the Tyrians worshipped.

{h} Menander apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 8. c. 13. sect. 1, 2. & contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 21. Diodor. Sicul. apud Junium in loc. {i} Ad Autolye. l. 3. p. 132.

1 Kings 16:32

Ver. 32. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. That he might not go so far as Tyre or Zidon; and for his wife's convenience also he built a temple in Samaria for Baal, and erected an altar there to offer sacrifices upon it unto him; so open and daring was he in his idolatrous practices.

1 Kings 16:33

Ver. 33. And Ahab made a grove,.... About the temple of Baal, or elsewhere, in which he placed an idol, and where all manner of filthiness was secretly committed; or rather "Asherah", rendered "grove", is Astarte, the goddess of the Zidonians, an image of which Ahab made:

and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him: his idolatries being more open and barefaced, and without any excuse, presence, or colour, as well as more numerous.

1 Kings 16:34

Ver. 34. And in his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho,.... Which was forbidden by Joshua under an anathema; but this man, either ignorant of that adjuration of Joshua, or in contempt and defiance of it, and knowing it might please the king and queen, set about the rebuilding of it; and it being done by the leave and under the authority of Ahab, is mentioned together with his wicked actions:

he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn: that is, his firstborn died as soon as he laid the foundation of the city, but this did not deter him from going on with it:

and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub; all the rest of his children died as he was rebuilding the city, until only his youngest son was left, and he was taken off by death just as he had finished it, signified by setting up the gates of it: all which was

according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun: between four hundred and five hundred years ago. It was after this a place of great note, and so continued many hundreds of years;
See Gill on "Jos 6:26" but is now, as Mr. Maundrell says {k}, a poor nasty village of the Arabs.

{k} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 81.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 17

This chapter begins with a prophecy of Elijah, that there should be want of rain for some years to come, and he is directed to go first to the brook Cherith, where he should be fed by ravens, 1Ki 17:1, and afterwards he is sent to a widow at Zarephath, where he, she, and her son, were supported for a considerable time with a handful of meal, and a little oil in a cruse miraculously increased, 1Ki 17:8, whose son falling sick and dying, he restored to life, 1Ki 17:17.

Ver. 1. And Elijah the Tishbite, [who] was of the inhabitants of Gilead,.... Which belonged partly to the Reubenites and Gadites, and partly to the half-tribe of Manasseh on the other side Jordan, where this prophet dwelt; but why he is called the Tishbite is not easy to say; what Kimchi observes seems right, that he was at first of a city called Toshab, and afterward's dwelt at Gilead; which city perhaps is the same with Thisbe, in the tribe of Naphtali, the native place of Tobit,

"Who in the time of Enemessar king of the Assyrians was led captive out of Thisbe, which is at the right hand of that city, which is called properly Nephthali in Galilee above Aser." (Tobit 1:2)

and, if so, is an instance of a prophet, even the prince of prophets, as Abarbinel calls him, coming out of Galilee, contrary to the suggestions of the Jews, **Joh 7:52**. R. Elias Levita {l} observes, that after the affair of Gibeah an order was given to smite the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead, Jud 21:8, and that as it is reasonable to suppose some might escape, he thinks Elijah was one of them; and that when this began to be inhabited again, they that returned were called the inhabitants of Gilead, of whom Elijah was, who lived in those times, being, as the Jews suppose, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron, see Jud 20:28, but that he should be Elijah, and live to the times of Ahab, is beyond belief. By Origen {m} he is said to be in Thesbon of Gilead; and by Epiphanius {n} to be of Thesbis, of the land of the Arabians, Gilead bordering upon it: the same

said unto Ahab; who perhaps had been with him before, and reproved him for idolatry, warned him of the evil consequences of it, but to no purpose, and therefore now threatened in a very solemn manner:

as the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand; he swears by the living God, in whose presence he was, and to whom he appeals as the omniscient God, whose minister and prophet he was, and in whose name he came and spoke, and to whom he prayed; for standing was a prayer gesture, and sometimes put for it, See Gill on "Mt 6:5" and it was at the prayer of Elijah that rain was withheld, as follows, see **Jas 5:17**

there shall not be dew nor rain these years; for some years to come, even three years and a half:

but according to my word; in prayer, or as he should predict, in the name of the Lord.

{l} In Tishbi, p. 275. Vid. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 11. 1. & David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 235. 4. {m} Comment. in Matth. p. 224. Ed. Huet. {n} De Prophet. Vit. c. 6.

1 Kings 17:2

Ver. 2. And the word of the Lord came to him,.... The word of prophecy, as the Targum; this shows that by word, in the former verse, he means the word of the Lord by him:

saying; as follows.

1 Kings 17:3

Ver. 3. Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward,.... From the place where he was, being in danger from Ahab and Jezebel, provoked by his reproofs, threatenings, and prophecies:

and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan; in some wood or cave near it, or among the reeds and rushes that grew on the banks of it; and Bochart {o} takes it to be the same with the river Kanah, on the borders of Ephraim, which has its name from reeds, Jos 16:8, and Cherith by anticipation, from the prophet's being fed there; and Adrichomius {p} places this brook in the tribe of Ephraim; though Fuller {q} in the half tribe of Manasseh, beyond Jordan; but Bunting says {r} it runs from Mount Ephraim between Bethel and Jericho, eight miles from Jerusalem towards the north, and so, passing along towards the east, falls into Jordan.

{o} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 13. col. 216. {p} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 26. {q} Pisgah-Sight, &c. B. 2. c. 3. p. 97. {r} Travels, &c. p. 205.

1 Kings 17:4

Ver. 4. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook,.... The water of that was to be his drink:

and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there; whereby he should be provided with food to eat; by whom are meant not angels in the form of ravens, as some; nor, as others, Arabians, for there were none of that people near him; nor, as others, merchants, the word being sometimes used of them, for this was not a likely method for privacy; nor, as others, the inhabitants of a place called Oreb, or Orbo; so the Arabic version calls them Orabimi; but we read of no such place near Jordan; the Jews {s} speak of a city of this name near Bethshean, from whence these Orebim came; and some of them {t} think they had their name from Oreb, in **Jud 7:25** it seems better to interpret them of ravens, as we do, these creatures delighting to be in solitary places, in valleys, and by brooks; nor need it be any objection that they were unclean creatures by the law, since Elijah did not feed upon them, but was fed by them; and supposing any uncleanness by touch, the ceremonial law might be dispensed with in an extraordinary case, as it sometimes was; though it is very remarkable that such creatures should be employed in this way, which are birds of prey, seize on anything they can, live on carrion, and neglect their own young, and yet feed a prophet of the Lord; which shows the power and providence of God in it. Something like this Jerom {u} relates, of a raven bringing a whole loaf of bread, and laying it before the saints, Paulus and Antonius.

{s} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 33. fol. 29. 1. {t} T. Bab. Cholin. fol. 5. 1. Menasseh Ben Israel Conciliat. in Lev. quaest. 3. {u} In Vita Paul Erem. fol. 82. C.

1 Kings 17:5

Ver. 5. So he went, and did according to the word of the Lord,.... Took his journey eastward, and hid himself in the place directed to:

for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan,
See Gill on "1Ki 17:3".

1 Kings 17:6

Ver. 6. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening,.... For his breakfast and supper, the two principal meals then in use; and as there were several employed, they could bring a sufficiency in a short time for each meal; and these provisions were ready prepared, the bread made and baked, and the flesh boiled, broiled, or roasted; from whence they had it need not be inquired after; the Jews say {w} they were fetched from Ahab's table, and others from Jehoshaphat's, and others, as probable as any, from the tables of the 7000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal:

and he drank of the brook; at his meals.

{w} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 113. 1. Cholin, fol. 5. 1. Tanchuma apud Abarbinel in loc.

1 Kings 17:7

Ver. 7. And it came to pass after a while,.... Or "at the end of days" {x}, perhaps a year, which sometimes is the sense of this phrase, see
Ex 13:10,

that the brook dried up; through the excessive heat, and for want of supplies from the springs and fountains with which it was fed, and for the following reason:

because there had been no rain in the land; from the time Elijah prayed and prophesied; of this drought mention is made in profane history: Menander, a Phoenician writer, speaks {y} of a drought in the times of Ithobalus (the same with Ethbaal the father of Jezebel), which lasted a whole year, and upon prayer being made there were thunder, &c.

{x} Mymy Uqm "in, vel a, fine dierum", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {y} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 8. c. 13. sect. 2.

1 Kings 17:8

Ver. 8. And the word of the Lord came unto him,.... As before, after he had been a year at the brook, and that was dried up:

saying; as follows.

1 Kings 17:9

Ver. 9. Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there,.... This might be a trial of the prophet's faith, to be sent to dwell in a place belonging to the Zidonians, among whom Jezebel had an interest, being the daughter of their king, 1Ki 16:31, the place is so called, to distinguish it from another Zarephath, **Ob 1:20**, Kimchi interprets it, near to Zidon, yet not as belonging to it, but of the land of Israel; though it rather seems to be a Gentile city; it is called, in **Lu 4:26** Sarepta of Sidon; and also by Pliny {z}; according to Josephus {a}, it was not far either from Sidon or Tyre, and lay between them; it was three quarters of a mile from Sidon; and so Mr. Maundrell {b} speaks of it as in the way from Sidon to Tyre, and which is now called Sarphan; of which he says, the place shown us for this city consisted only of a few houses, on the tops of the mountains, within about half a mile from the sea; but it is more probable the principal part of the city stood below in the space between the hills and the sea, there being ruins still to be seen in that place of a considerable extent; and a traveller into those parts many years before him says {c}, that he saw nothing of any building on the shore, but some small houses in the place where formerly the town of Sarepta did stand; and Bunting says {d}, there are at this time but eight houses in all the town, though by the ruins it seems to have been in times past a very fair city; and another {e} observes, that it is about three miles from Berytus:

behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee; not that this was declared to the woman, or that she had any orders from the Lord to support him; but that he had determined it in his mind, and would take care in his providence that he should be supplied by her: this was another trial of the prophet's faith, that he should be sent to a poor widow woman for his support, and she a Gentile; but he that had been so long fed by ravens, could have no reason to doubt of his being provided for in this way.

{z} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19. {a} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 8. c. 13. sect. 2.) {b} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 48. {c} Rauwolff's Travels, par. 3. ch. 22. p. 326. {d} Ut supra. (Travels, &c. p. 205.) {e} Baumgarten. Peregrinatio, l. 3. c. 9. p. 126.

1 Kings 17:10

Ver. 10. So he arose, and went to Zarephath,.... Which, according to Bunting {f}, was one hundred miles from the brook Cherith:

and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering sticks: perhaps out of an hedge just without the city this shows her to be a poor woman, who had no other way of coming at fuel but this, and no servant to fetch it for her: Bunting tells us, that now before the gate of the city there is showed a certain chapel, where they say Elias first spoke with the widow:

and he called to her, and said, fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink; being thirsty through travelling, and supposing this to be the woman he was directed to, made trial of her this way; some render it, "in this vessel" {g}, which he had with him, and made use of at the brook Cherith.

{f} Ut supra, (Travels, &c.) p. 203. {g} ylkb "in hoc vase", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

1 Kings 17:11

Ver. 11. And as she was going to fetch it,.... For she made no difficulty of granting his request, but immediately set out to fetch him some water from the city, or some spring close by, or her own house; being very ready to do an hospitable act to a stranger, and especially to a good man, and a prophet, as she might perceive by his habit he was, as it seems by what follows:

and said, bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand; to eat before he drank; this he said still further to try her whether she was the person that was to sustain him, as well as in order to lead on to more discourse with her.

1 Kings 17:12

Ver. 12. And she said, as the Lord thy God liveth,.... Which shows her to be a good woman, swearing by the living God, and him only, and that she took Elijah to be a good man, and a prophet of the Lord:

I have not a cake; greater or less, not a morsel of bread in the house:

but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; these separate and unmixed, and not made into a cake, and dressed as she intended to do with them:

and, behold, I am gathering two sticks; or a few, which would be sufficient to bake such a quantity as her meal and oil would make; she speaks by the figure "meiosis", which expresses less than what is meant, as Ben Melech observes:

that I may go in and dress it for me, and my son, that we may eat it, and die; having nothing more left, and no expectation of any elsewhere, and the famine strong in the land; so that she could look for nothing but death after this was eaten.

1 Kings 17:13

Ver. 13. And Elijah said unto her, fear not,.... That she and her son should die, it would not be the case:

go and do as thou hast said: mix her meal and her oil, and make a cake thereof, and bake it:

but make thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son: which was not said from a selfish spirit of the prophet, but to try the faith of the woman; and besides, as Abarbinel observes, the prophet was not only hungry and thirsty through his journey, and so required to be served first, but it was for the sake of his sustenance, that the Lord would command a blessing on the meal and oil; wherefore, if she dressed it for herself and her son first, there would have been none left for the divine blessing to descend upon.

1 Kings 17:14

Ver. 14. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel,.... Whom the prophet perceived she had knowledge of, and faith in:

the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail; that is, the meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruse, by an hypallage, or change of words:

until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth; which was assuring her the rain would be sent, and that the Lord, who had the sole command of it, would send it; and that, until that time it should be sent, she would have no lack of provisions, and therefore need not scruple dressing for the prophet first.

1 Kings 17:15

Ver. 15. And she went, and did according to the saying of Elijah,..... Made a cake for him first, and brought it to him, which showed great faith in the word of the Lord by him:

and she, and he, and her house, did eat; many days, a year at least, if not two years, see 1Ki 17:7 the widow, the prophet, and her family, lived upon the meal and oil so long; we read but of one son, but she might have more.

1 Kings 17:16

Ver. 16. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah. There being a continual increase and supply of both, through the mighty power of God working a continued miracle; just as the loaves and fishes were increased while the disciples were eating, Mt 14:19.

1 Kings 17:17

Ver. 17. And it came to pass after these things,.... Not only after the conversation that passed between the prophet, and the widow, but after they had lived together many days, a year or years, upon the miraculous provision made for them:

that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; that is, the son of the widow woman in whose house the prophet dwelt; the Jews say {h} this woman was the mother of Jonah, and that he was this son of her's:

and his sickness was so sore that there was no breath left in him: it was a sickness unto death, it issued in it; for that he was really dead appears from all that follows.

{h} Pirke Eliezer, c. 33.

1 Kings 17:18

Ver. 18. And she said unto Elijah, what have I to do with thee, O thou man of God!.... As if she should say, it would have been well for me if I had never seen thy face, or had any conversation with thee; this she said rashly, and in her passion and agony, being extremely affected with the death of her child, which made her forget and overlook all the benefits she had received through the prophet's being with her:

art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? to punish her for her former sins, she was conscious she had been guilty of; for she supposed, that as it was by his prayer that the drought and famine were come upon the land, so it was in the same way that her son's death came, namely, through the prayer of the prophet.

1 Kings 17:19

Ver. 19. And he said unto her, give me thy son, and he took him out of her bosom,.... Where she had laid him, mourning over him; from thence the prophet took him with her leave:

and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed;

an upper room, which was his bedchamber; hither he carried him, that he might be alone, and use the greater freedom both in his expressions and gestures.

1 Kings 17:20

Ver. 20. And he cried unto the Lord,.... Or prayed unto him, as the Targum, with great vehemence and importunity:

and said, O Lord, my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow, with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? he pleads his interest in the Lord, and makes use of it as an argument with him to hear his prayer; he observes the character and condition of the woman, a widow, such as the Lord has a compassionate regard for; and he urges the kindness of her to him, with whom he had sojourned so long; and seems to represent the case as an additional evil or affliction to him, as well as to the widow.

1 Kings 17:21

Ver. 21. And he stretched himself upon the child three times,.... Or "measured himself" {i} on it, or put himself into a posture in some respects equal to the child; putting his mouth on its mouth, his eyes on its eyes, his hands on its hands, as Elisha afterwards did in a like case, perhaps in imitation of him, **2Ki 4:34**, thereby showing his great affection to the child, and in order to increase it the more, and to make him the more fervent and importunate in his prayers for its life; and hereby signifying also that he would if he could infuse his breath and life into it, and warm it with his own heat:

and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again: which shows that the child was really dead; and a proof this that the soul dies not with the body, but exists in a separate state without it.

{i} ddmtyw "et mensus est se", Pagninus, Montanus; "admensus se", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

1 Kings 17:22

Ver. 22. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah,.... In prayer, and answered it:

and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived; this is the first instance of anyone being raised from the dead; this Satan has imitated; hence the many fabulous stories with the Heathens of persons being raised to life after death {k}.

{k} Vid. Huet. Alnetan. Quaest. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 30.

1 Kings 17:23

Ver. 23. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house,.... Being come to life, he took it off of the bed in his bedchamber, and brought it down to the lower part of the house, where the woman was:

and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, see, thy son liveth; which no doubt was to her great surprise, and was a wonderful instance of divine power and goodness, and to which the apostle may have respect, Heb 11:35, Bunting {l} says, the inhabitants of this place now take upon them to show the chamber wherein the prophet Elias lived, when he raised the widow's child to life.

{l} Travels, &c. p. 205.

1 Kings 17:24

Ver. 24. And the woman said to Elijah, now by this I know that thou art a man of God,.... She took him to be one at his first coming to her; she was in a great measure confirmed in it by the miracle of the barrel of meal and cruse of oil; but upon the death of her son, which she was ready to impute to the prophet, she was staggered at it; but now, by his resurrection from the dead, was fully assured of it:

and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth; she had known before that what he said concerning the meal and oil not failing was true; but now she was more and more convinced and assured that the God, whose prophet he was, was the true God, and that the religion he professed was the true religion, and he a true prophet, and that all his prophecies would be exactly fulfilled.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 18

In this chapter Elijah has an order from the Lord to show himself to Ahab, who, going first, and meeting with a servant of his, Obadiah, charges him to tell his master where he was, that he might meet him, 1Ki 18:1, and, upon meeting him, desires that all Israel, and the prophets of Baal, might be convened, which was accordingly done, 1Ki 18:17, when he expostulated with the people of Israel for their idolatry, mocked and confounded the prophets of Baal, and gave the strongest proofs, to the conviction of the people, that Jehovah is the true God, 1Ki 18:21, on which all the prophets of Baal were slain, 1Ki 18:40, and rain in great abundance was given at the prayer of the prophet, 1Ki 18:41.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass after many days,.... When two years and more were gone from the time the drought and famine began; or rather from the time of the prophets departure to the brook Cherith, which might be six months after the famine began:

that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year; of his absence from Ahab:

saying, go show thyself unto Ahab; whom he had not seen so long, and who had been seeking for him, but to no purpose:

and I will send rain upon the earth; the term of three years and six months being almost expired, see **Jas 5:17**.

1 Kings 18:2

Ver. 2. And Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab,.... Which showed his cheerful and ready obedience to the will of God, and his great courage and magnanimity, to face a king enraged against him, and that sought his life:

and there was a sore famine in Samaria; the metropolis of the kingdom, where

Ahab kept his court, and therefore must be sensible of it, and bore the greater indignation against the prophet who had foretold it.

1 Kings 18:3

Ver. 3. And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house,.... Perhaps his steward: the Jews {m} take him to be Obadiah the prophet, who wrote the small prophecy that goes by his name:

(now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly:) who, though he did not go up to Jerusalem to worship, which ceremonial service was dispensed with in him, yet he did not worship the calves, nor Baal, but served the Lord in a spiritual manner.

{m} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 39. 2.

1 Kings 18:4

Ver. 4. For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord,.... Or slew them, as the Targum; put them to death some way or another; such as were brought up in the schools of the prophets, trained up in religious exercises, and instructed others therein:

that Obadiah took one hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave; fifty in one cave and fifty in another; for there were large caves in the land of Israel capable of holding such a number, and many more, see 1Sa 22:1 and fed them with bread and water; which in this time of famine were very acceptable; though these may be put for all the necessaries of life.

1 Kings 18:5

Ver. 5. And Ahab said unto Obadiah, go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks,.... To observe in what condition they were, and the places adjoining to them, the meadows and valleys:

peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive; particularly those which belonged to the king's stables, to find provisions for which it was found difficult:

that we lose not all the beasts; many of them, doubtless, were lost through the drought already, and there was great danger of the rest, and so, in time, of there being none to procreate and preserve their species, and to prevent which Ahab proposed to take this method.

1 Kings 18:6

Ver. 6. So they divided the land between them, to pass through it,.... And one took one part, and the other the other part:

Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself; Ahab not caring to trust any but Obadiah, who he knew was a faithful man, lest they should be bribed by those that had grass not to discover it.

1 Kings 18:7

Ver. 7. And as Obadiah was in the way,.... In his district, making his observations:

behold, Elijah met him: where is not said; but he was, no doubt, upon the road from Zarephath to Samaria:

and he knew him that is, Obadiah knew Elijah, having seen him at Ahab's court before he absconded:

and fell on his face, and said, art thou that my lord Elijah? thus doing him honour and reverence both by words and gesture, as being an extraordinary prophet of the Lord.

1 Kings 18:8

Ver. 8. And he answered him, I am,.... He did not desire to be concealed, his orders were to show and make himself known to Ahab, and Obadiah was one of his domestic servants:

go tell thy lord, behold, Elijah is here; in such a place, ready to face him at any time. Elijah, by calling Ahab the lord of Obadiah, as he tacitly reproves him for calling him lord, shows reverence to Ahab as a king, and yet that he was fearless of him, as he was the prophet and ambassador of the Lord of hosts to him.

1 Kings 18:9

Ver. 9. And he said, what have I sinned,.... Or in what have I offended God or his prophet, that revenge should be taken on me in this way:

that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab to slay me? for that he supposed would be the consequence of it, as he argues and more plainly expresses his sense in the following words.

1 Kings 18:10

Ver. 10. As the Lord thy God liveth,.... Which is the form of an oath he thought fit to make, to ascertain the truth of what he was about to say:

there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee; which is either an hyperbolical expression, signifying he had sought for him in many places, and in every place he could think of; or it must be understood either of the ten tribes, which were as so many nations and kingdoms as they had been; or were more in the times of the Canaanites; or of the nations round about, that were in alliance with or tributary to the king of Israel:

and when they said, he is not there, he took an oath of the kingdom and nation that they found thee not; which he might exact of his own subjects, but could not of other nations, unless they were free to it of themselves; or he might take it of their ambassadors or merchants that came into his land, of whom he inquired, and adjured them to tell him the truth.

1 Kings 18:11

Ver. 11. And now thou sayest, go tell thy lord, behold, Elijah is here. Which, if I should not be able to make good, would be of fatal consequence to me; and that it is plain he feared, by what he next says.

1 Kings 18:12

Ver. 12. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not,.... This he supposed might possibly, and very probably, be the case, since small raptures might have been already, and known to Obadiah, as there were afterwards, see **2Ki 2:16**, and then he should not know where he was, nor be able to direct his master where to find him:

and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me; for telling him a lie, and deceiving and mocking him; or for not seizing on Elijah, and bringing him, when he knew he was so desirous of getting him into his hands:

but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth; and therefore did not deserve to be treated after this manner, having been an early and conscientious worshipper of the true God.

1 Kings 18:13

Ver. 13. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord? how I hid one hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?]
See Gill on "1Ki 18:4", this he said not in a way of ostentation, but to show that it would be very ungenerous and ungrateful, as well as impolitic, to sacrifice such a friend at court to the Lord's prophets as he had been, and might still continue to be.

1 Kings 18:14

Ver. 14. And now thou sayest, go tell my lord, behold, Elijah [is here]: and he shall slay me. That is, should he carry such a message to him, and Elijah should be removed elsewhere, and not to be found.

1 Kings 18:15

Ver. 15. And Elijah said, as the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand,.... In whose presence he was, and whose prophet and minister he was; he takes this oath, to assure Obadiah that he would certainly be upon the spot, or to be found, and not expose him to any danger:

I will surely show myself unto him today; he was determined at all events to present himself to him that day.

1 Kings 18:16

Ver. 16. So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him,.... That Elijah was in such a place, and had desired him to inform him of it, and was ready to appear before him that day wherever he pleased; for upon the prophet's oath Obadiah was entirely satisfied, and was in no fear of delivering the message:

and Ahab went to meet Elijah; though perhaps the bold message of the prophet might make him fear he had something to say to him not very agreeable.

1 Kings 18:17

Ver. 17. And it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah,.... As soon as he came up to him, and knew who he was; Abarbinel thinks, because his hair was grown so long that Ahab did not know him certainly, and therefore put the following question:

that Ahab said unto him, art thou he that troubleth Israel? by opposing the religion of Baal, which prevailed among them; but chiefly rain being withheld from them according to his word, and at his prayer.

1 Kings 18:18

Ver. 18. And he answered,.... That is, Elijah, with great boldness and undaunted courage, not fearing the face of the king, being sent to show himself to him in the name of the King of kings:

I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house; they, by their sins, were the cause of all the troubles, those sore evil and sad calamities that were upon them:

in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord: to have no other gods before him, and not to make images, and worship them, which they had done:

and thou hast followed Baalim; the several Baals, the Sun, moon, and stars, the whole host of heaven, worshipped under this name; or, not content with the Phoenician Baal, or Baal of the Zidonians, followed others, see **Jud 2:11**.

1 Kings 18:19

Ver. 19. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel..... No doubt but more discourse passed between Ahab and Elijah, though not recorded, before he made this motion to him; it is very probable, that after some dispute between them, who was the true God, and about idolatry, as the cause of want of rain, Elijah proposed to the king what he afterwards did to the people, to which he could not object; and being desirous of gratifying his curiosity, and especially of having rain, which the prophet might promise him in the issue of this affair, he agreed unto it; and therefore Elijah desired that all Israel might be convened, that it might be openly and publicly done, and to the conviction and reformation of them, which was what was chiefly designed; and he chose Carmel, a mountain in the tribe of Issachar, well situated for the people that came from all parts; and the rather this than Samaria, that he might meet with no obstruction from Jezebel, and from whence: he might be able to see the rain when coming, as he did. Of this mountain, See Gill on "Jer 46:18", to which may be added, the description of it by Mr. Sandys {n}.

"Mount Carmel stretcheth from east to west, and hath its uttermost basis washed with the sea; steepest towards the north, and of an indifferent altitude; rich in vines and olives when farmed, and abounding with several sorts of fruits and herbs, both medicinal and fragrant, though now much overgrown with woods and shrubs of sweet savour."

From the following solemn transaction at it, it seems in later times, to have become sacred, and was very venerable with the Heathens; from this mountain, a deity with them had the name of Carmel, and was worshipped here, without an image or a temple, only had an altar erected for it, in imitation of the God of Israel, worshipped here in like manner; here Vespasian sacrificed to this deity, assisted by the priest of it, Basilides, as Tacitus {o} relates; Suetonius {p} also makes mention of this deity, and of Vespasian's consulting its oracle, which gave him hopes of obtaining the empire; and from hence, in Popish times, there were an order of friars called Carmelites, instituted in the year 1180, pretending to be the successors of the children of the prophets Elijah left there:

and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty; who are supposed to be dispersed in the various parts of the kingdom, to teach and practise the worship of Baal, and encourage and spread it in the nation:

and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table; for it seems there were now more groves than that one Ahab first made, 1Ki 16:33, for which such numbers were appointed to attend, and which, perhaps, were near Samaria, since they ate at Jezebel's table, and were a sort of domestic chaplains of her's. "Asheroth", we render "groves", the learned Selden {q} takes to be Ashtoreth, or Ashtareth, or Astarte, the goddess of the Zidonians, for whom, and so for these prophets, Jezebel might have a peculiar respect, see 1Ki 11:5.

{n} Travels, l. 3. p. 158. Ed. 5. {o} Hist. l. 2. c. 78. {p} Vit. Vespasian. c. 5.
{q} De Dis Syris Syntagm. 2. c. 2. p. 232, &c.

1 Kings 18:20

Ver. 20. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel,.... By messengers, requiring their attendance at Mount Carmel at such a time, at least their chief and principal men:

and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel; the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, but not the four hundred prophets of the groves; for of them we have no account afterwards, only of the former; it may be they were not at the command of Ahab, only of Jezebel, at whose table they ate, who would not suffer them to go.

1 Kings 18:21

Ver. 21. And Elijah came unto all the people,.... Assembled at Mount Carmel:

and said, how long halt ye between two opinions? sometimes inclining to the one, and sometimes to the other: as a lame man in walking, his body moves sometimes to one side, and sometimes to another; or "leap ye upon two branches" {r}, like a bird that leaps or hops from one branch to another, and never settles long; or rather it denotes the confusion of their thoughts, being like branches of trees twisted and implicated; thus upbraiding them with their inconstancy and fickleness; what their two opinions were, may be learnt from the next clause:

if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him; for there is but one God, one infinite, immense, and incomprehensible being; one that is omnipotent, all sufficient, good, and perfect; there cannot be more, and therefore but one to be followed, served, and worshipped:

and the people answered him not a word: through conviction and confusion, his reasoning being unanswerable; or not knowing which to choose at present; or fearing they should be drawn into a snare, should they name any; either incur the displeasure of the king, who was for Baal, or of the prophet, who was for the Lord, at whose word rain was withheld, and might be given, which they were desirous of.

{r} Mypeoh ytv le Myxop "transilietis super duos ramoe, Malvenda; vos transilientes super ambos ramos", Piscator.

1 Kings 18:22

Ver. 22. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only remain a prophet of the Lord,.... At least as he thought, all the rest being slain, as he supposed; however there were none present but himself:

but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men; which were very great odds he had to contend with.

1 Kings 18:23

Ver. 23. Let them therefore give us two bullocks,.... Who, being so many, were better able to be at the expense of them, and having the king on their party too; though perhaps no more is meant than that two bullocks should be brought thither, and presented before them:

and let them choose one bullock for themselves; which of the two they would, if they thought one was any ways preferable to the other, it was at their option to take it:

and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood; as sacrifices usually were:

and put no fire under; which was wont to be done for burnt offerings, as this was designed to be:

and I will dress the other bullock; by slaying and cutting it in pieces;

and lay it on wood: as for a burnt offering:

and put no fire under; to consume it.

1 Kings 18:24

Ver. 24. And call ye on the name of your gods,.... The Baalim, the many lords and gods they served:

and I will call on the name of the Lord; the one true Jehovah and God of Israel, whom I serve:

and the God that answereth by fire; by causing fire to come down upon the sacrifice, and consume it:

let him be God; accounted, owned, and acknowledged as the true God, and so afterwards worshipped as such:

and all the people answered and said, it is well spoken; they thought it a very reasonable proposal, a very good method to determine the controversy, and come at the truth, and know who was the true God, and who not.

1 Kings 18:25

Ver. 25. And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal,.... Who agreed to this proposal, though not expressed; or they signified it by their silence. Ben Gersom thinks they agreed to it, because that, according to their belief, Baal was Mars, and in the sign of Aries, one of the fiery planets, and therefore fancied he could send down fire on their sacrifice; but Abarbinel is of opinion that it was the sun they worshipped, under the name of Baal, the great luminary which presides over the element of fire, and therefore had power to cause it to descend; and if not, they agreed to it, he thinks, for three reasons;

one was necessity, they could not refuse, after the people had approved of it, lest they should rise upon them, and stone them; and another was, that Elijah proposed to offer without the temple, contrary to the law of his God, and therefore concluded he would not answer him by fire, and so they should be upon a par with him; and the third was, that they thought they should offer their bullocks together, so that, if fire descended, it would come upon them both, and then the dispute would be, whether his God, or their god, sent it; and so no proof could be made who was God, nor the matter in controversy decided:

choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; therefore in civility to them gave the choice of the bullock and the altar first, he being one and they many:

and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under; under the wood on which was the sacrifice cut in pieces; and when they had so done, then they were to call on their gods to cause fire to descend upon it.

1 Kings 18:26

Ver. 26. And they took the bullock which was given them,.... By such of them as made the choice:

and they dressed it; slew it, and cut it in pieces, and laid it on the wood, but put no fire under it:

and called on the name of Baal, from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us; and send fire down on the sacrifice; and if the sun was their Baal, they might hope, as the heat he gradually diffused was at its height at noon, that some flashes of fire would proceed from it to consume their sacrifice; but after, their hope was turned into despair, they became and acted like madmen:

but there was no voice, nor any that answered; by word, or by sending down fire as they desired:

and they leapt upon the altar which was made; not by Elijah, but by themselves, either now or heretofore, and where they had formerly sacrificed; and they danced about it, and leaped on it, either according to a custom used by them; such as the Salii, the priests of Mars, used, so called from their leaping, because they did their sacred things leaping, and went about their altars capering and leaping {s}; or rather they were mad on it, as the Targum renders it, and acted like madmen, as if they were agitated by a prophetic fury and frenzy.

{s} Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 8. "tum Salii ad cantus", &c. Vid. Gutberleth. de Salii, c. 2. p. 9.

1 Kings 18:27

Ver. 27. And it came to pass at noon,.... When they had been from the time of the morning sacrifice until now invoking their deity to no purpose:

that Elijah mocked them; he jeered and bantered them:

and said, cry aloud; your god does not hear you; perhaps, if you raise your voice higher, he may;

for he is a god; according to your esteem of him, and, if so, he surely may hear you: unless

either he is talking; with others about matters of moment and importance, who are waiting on him with their applications to him; or he is in meditation; in a deep study upon some things difficult to be resolved:

or he is pursuing; his studies, or his pleasures, or his enemies, to overtake them; or he is employed on business {t}:

or he is in a journey; gone to visit his friends, or some parts of his dominions; so Homer {u} represents Jupiter gone to pay a visit to the Ethiopians, and as yesterday gone to a feast, and all the gods following him, from whence he would not return until twelve days; and in like manner Lucian {w} speaks of the gods, mocking at them:

or, peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked; with a loud crying to him: it being now noon, Abarbinel thinks this refers to a custom of sleeping after dinner; Homer {x} also speaks of the sleep of the gods, and which used to be at noon; and therefore the worshippers of Baal ceased then to call upon him; and it is said {y}, the Heathens feared to go into the temples of their gods at noon, lest they should disturb them; but such is not the true God, the God of Israel, he neither slumbers nor sleeps, Ps 121:4.

{t} David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 211. 1. {u} Iliad. ver. 1. 423. {w} Jupiter Tragoedus. {x} Ut supra, (Iliad. ver. 1. 423.) in fine, & Iliad. 2. ver. 1, 2. {y} Meurs. Auctuar. Philol. c. 6. apud Quistorp. in loc.

1 Kings 18:28

Ver. 28. And they cried aloud,.... Trying to make him hear, if possible:

and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them; so the priests of Heathen deities used to slash themselves on their shoulders, arms, and thighs, in their devotions to them, as many writers observe {z}, fancying their gods were delighted with human blood; particularly the priests of Bellona {a}, and the worshippers of the Syrian goddess {b}, and of the Egyptian Isis {c}.

{z} Vid. Kipping. Antiqu. Roman. l. 1. c. 10. p. 202. {a} Tertul Apolog. c. 9. Lactant. Institut. l. 1. c. 21. {b} Apulei Metamorph. l. 8. {c} Herodot. Euterpe, c. 61. Manetho. Apotelesm. l. 1. ver. 243, 244. Seneca de vita beata, c. 27.

1 Kings 18:29

Ver. 29. And it came to pass when midday was past,.... And nothing done, no fire descended:

and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice; continued praying to Baal, and singing his praises, but all to no purpose; or they behaved like madmen, as the Targum; thus they went on until it was time to offer the evening sacrifice; so that they had no interruption in their service, and had all the time they could desire to have to importune their god to do the favour for them they requested:

that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded; no voice was heard that returned them any answer; nor was any answer made by fire, nor any regard shown to their mad gestures, and barbarous actions; and very likely the people also, by this time, paid no regard unto them, perceiving they were not able, by all their cries and methods they took, to obtain an answer.

1 Kings 18:30

Ver. 30. And Elijah said unto all the people, come near unto me,.... And observe what I do, and what will be done at my request:

and all the people came near unto him; left the prophets of Baal to themselves, and took no more notice of them, but attended to what the prophet should say and do:

and he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down; which had been set up when high places and altars were allowed of, while the tabernacle was unsettled, and the temple not built; this is supposed to have been erected in the times of the judges; though, according to a tradition of the Jews {d}, it was built by Saul, see 1Sa 15:12 but had been thrown down by the idolatrous Israelites, who demolished such as were erected to the name of the Lord everywhere, and built new ones for their idols, 1Ki 19:10. Benjamin of Tudela {e} says, that on the top of Mount Carmel is now to be seen the place of the altar Elijah repaired, which is four cubits round.

{d} Jarchi & Kimchi in loc. {e} ltinerar. p. 37.

1 Kings 18:31

Ver. 31. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob,.... Which he might very easily come at from the mountain:

unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name, which signifies one that has power with God, as Jacob had, when the word came to him to make a change in his name at Penuel, Ge 32:28, and as Elijah hoped and believed he should have at this time, being a prophet, and a worshipper of Israel's God.

1 Kings 18:32

Ver. 32. And with the stones he built an altar in the same of the Lord,.... Whom the twelve tribes had formerly worshipped; and though now divided in their civil state, yet ought to be united in the worship of God:

and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed; or two seahs, one of which was the third part of an ephah, and two of them were more than half a bushel; and this trench or ditch round the altar was as broad as such a measure of seed would sow.

1 Kings 18:33

Ver. 33. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood,.... Just in such manner as sacrifices usually were:

and said, fill four barrels with water; either from the brook Kishon, or, if that was dried up, from the sea; for both were near this mountain, and so to be had, though a time of drought:

and pour it on the burnt sacrifice; that which was intended to be one:

and upon the wood: wherewith it was to be burnt, and so made unfit for it; and which would make the miracle appear the greater, when fire came down and consumed it.

1 Kings 18:34

Ver. 34. And he said, do it the second time, and they did it the second time,.... That is, poured four barrels of water more upon the wood:

and he said, do it the third time, and they did it the third time; so that there were in all twelve barrels of water poured on the wood, agreeably to the number of the twelve stones the altar was built with, and may have respect to the same as they.

1 Kings 18:35

Ver. 35. And the water ran round about the altar,.... There being such a large effusion of it on it;

and he filled the trench also with water; which surrounded the altar, so that it seemed impracticable that any fire should kindle upon it; and this gave full proof and demonstration there could be no collusion in this matter.

1 Kings 18:36

Ver. 36. And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice,.... Which the people of God at Jerusalem were now attending to:

that Elijah the prophet came near; to the altar he had built, and on which he had laid the sacrifice:

and said; in prayer to God:

Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the covenant God of the ancestors of his people, though they had now so fully departed from him:

let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel; and that there is no other:

and that I am thy servant; a true worshipper of him, and his faithful prophet and minister:

and that I have done all these things at thy word; restrained rain from the earth for some years past, and now had convened Israel, and the false prophets, together, that by a visible sign from heaven it might be known who was the true God; all which he did not of himself, but by the impulse, direction, and, commandment of the Lord.

1 Kings 18:37

Ver. 37. Hear me, O Lord, hear me;.... Which repetition is made to express his importunity, and the vehement earnest desire of his soul to be heard in such a case, which so much concerned the glory of God; the Targum is,

"receive my prayer, O Lord, concerning the fire, receive my prayer concerning the rain;"

as if the one respected the sending down the fire on the sacrifice, and the other sending rain on the earth; and which sense is followed by other Jewish writers:

that this people may know that thou art the Lord God; and not Baal, or any other idol:

and that thou hast turned their heart back again; from idolatry, to the worship of the true God; though some understand this of God's giving them up to a spirit of error, and suffering them to fall into idolatry, and hardening their hearts, as he did Pharaoh's; but the former sense is best.

1 Kings 18:38

Ver. 38. Then the fire of the Lord fell,.... An extraordinary fire from God out of heaven, as the effects of it show:

and consumed the burnt sacrifice; as it had done in former instances, **Le 9:24**, and besides this, which is still more extraordinary,

and the wood, and the stones, and the dust; of the altar, thereby signifying that even such were not to be used any more:

and licked up the water that was in the trench; around the altar, see 1Ki 18:32.

1 Kings 18:39

Ver. 39. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces,.... In reverence of God, astonished at the miracle wrought, ashamed of themselves and their sins, particularly their idolatry, that they should turn their backs on the true God, and follow idols:

and they said, the Lord, he is the God, the Lord, he is the God; which acknowledgment of God, as the true God, in opposition to Baal, is repeated, to show their firm belief and strong assurance of it.

1 Kings 18:40

Ver. 40. And Elijah said unto them, take the prophets of Baal,.... The four hundred and fifty that were upon the spot; for the number of the people of Israel, now gathered together, were equal to it; nor was it in Ahab's power to hinder it, and he might himself be so far surprised and convicted as not in the least to object to it:

let not one of them escape: that there might be none of them left to seduce the people any more:

and they took them; laid hold on them, everyone of them:

and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon; which ran by the side, and at the bottom of Mount Carmel, into the sea;
See Gill on "Jud 4:7" see Gill on "Jud 5:21".

and slew them there; intimating, that it was owing to the idolatry they led the people into that rain had been withheld, and the brooks were dried up, as this might be; or, as Ben Gersom thinks, that the land might not be defiled with their blood, but be carried down the river after it: these he slew not with his own hand, but by others he gave orders to do it; and this not as a private person, but as an extraordinary minister of God, to execute justice according to his law, De 13:1 by which law such false prophets were to die; and the rather he was raised up and spirited for this service, as the supreme magistrate was addicted to idolatry himself.

1 Kings 18:41

Ver. 41. And Elijah said unto Ahab, get thee up,.... From the brook and valley where the execution of the prophets had been made; either up to his chariot, or to the tent or pavilion erected on the side of the mount, where the whole scene of things was transacted;

eat and drink; which he had no leisure for all the day, from the time of the morning sacrifice to the evening sacrifice, which was taken up in attending to the issue of the several sacrifices; but now he is bid to eat and refresh himself, and that in token of joy and gladness, as became him, both for the honour of the true God, which had been abundantly confirmed, and for the near approach of rain, of which he assures him:

for there is a sound of abundance of rain; the wind perhaps began to rise, and blow pretty briskly, which was a sign of it {f}; besides, according to the Tyrian annals {g}, there were loud claps of thunder at this time, at least when the heavens became very black, as in
1Ki 18:45.

{f} "Fit fragor, hinc densi----nimbi", Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 8. v. 269.
{g} Apud Joseph, Antiqu. l. 8. c. 13. sect. 2.

1 Kings 18:42

Ver. 42. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink,.... Up to his chariot, as some think, or rather to some place higher than that in which he now was:

and Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; higher still, where he both might be alone, and have the opportunity of observing the clouds gathering, and the rain coming:

and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees; expressive of his humility, and of his earnestness, and vehement desire, and continued importunity, that rain might fall; for this was a posture of prayer he put himself into, and continued in; and it is certain that it was through his prayer that rain came, **Jas 5:18** and from hence came the fable of the Grecians concerning Aeacus praying for rain in a time of drought, when it came {h}. So the Chinese writers {i} report that at the prayers of their emperor Tangus, after a seven years' drought, great rains fell.

{h} Pausan. Attica, sive, l. 1. prope finem. Isocrat. Evagoras, p. 373. {i} Martin. Sinic. Hist. l. 3. p. 60.

1 Kings 18:43

Ver. 43. And said to his servant,.... Whom some take to be the son of the widow of Sarepta, but he must be too young to be employed in such service as this was:

go up now; still higher on Mount Carmel; than where he was, even to the highest point of it:

look towards the sea: or the west, as the Targum, the Mediterranean sea, which lay to the west of the land of Israel:

and he went up and looked, and he said, there is nothing; there was nothing in the sky, or arising out of the sea, that looked like or foreboded rain:

and he said, go again seven times; till he should see something.

1 Kings 18:44

Ver. 44. And it came to pass at the seventh time that he said, behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand,.... Either about the size or in the form of it; rain water comes out of the sea, and, being strained through the clouds and air, becomes fresh:

and he said, go up: the meaning seems to be, that he should first go down from the mount, and then go up to that part of it where Ahab was:

say unto Ahab, prepare thy chariot; bind or fasten the horses to it, as the phrase seems to signify:

and get thee down; from the mountain where he was, to go to Jezreel, which lay low in a valley:

that the rain stop thee not; on the road, that might be made impassable by it, signifying that such abundance should fall as would make it so.

1 Kings 18:45

Ver. 45. And it came to pass in the mean while,.... That the servant was gone with the message to Ahab, and Ahab was getting ready his chariot:

that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain; which all sprung from the cloud like a man's hand; and so we are told {k}, that sometimes a little cloud called the ox's eye is seen on a mount of the Cape of Good Hope, called Tafesbery, when the sky is most serene, and the sea quiet; which is at first scarce so big as a barley corn, and then as a walnut; and presently it extends itself over the whole surface of the mountain:

and Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel; as fast as he could.

{k} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacra, vol. 3. p. 591.

1 Kings 18:46

Ver. 46. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah,.... Giving him more than common strength of body, as well as courage and fortitude of mind; so the Targum, the spirit of strength from the Lord was with him:

and he girded up his loins; gathered up his long loose garment, and girt it about him, that he might be more fit for travelling:

and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel; reckoned about sixteen miles from Carmel {l}; this showed his humility, that he was not elated with the wonderful things God had done by him, and that he bore no ill will to Ahab, but was ready to show him all honour and respect due to him as a king; and that it were his sins, and not his person, he had an aversion to; and that he was not afraid of Jezebel, and her prophets, but entered into the city where she was, to instruct the people, and warn them against her idolatries; though some think he went no further than the gate of the city, prudently avoiding falling into her hands.

{l} Bunting's Travels, &c. p. 204.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 19

This chapter gives us a further account of Elijah, of his being obliged to flee for his life through the threats of Jezebel, 1Ki 19:1, of the care the Lord took of him, providing food for him, in the strength of which he went to Horeb, 1Ki 19:5, of the Lord's appearance to him there, and conversation with him, 1Ki 19:9, of some instructions he gave him to anoint a king over Syria, another over Israel, and a prophet in his room, 1Ki 19:15, and of his finding Elisha, and throwing his mantle over him, who left his secular employment, and followed him, and became his servant, 1Ki 19:19.

Ver. 1. And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done,.... What miracles he had wrought, how that not only fire came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice, but even the stones and dust of the altar, and licked up great quantities of water in the trench around it; and that it was at his prayer that rain came down from heaven in such abundance, of which she was sensible; by all which he got the people on his side, so that it was not in his power to seize him and slay him; and this he said to clear himself, and make her easy:

and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword; the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal he had gathered to Carmel; the Targum calls them false prophets, but Ahab would scarcely use that epithet to Jezebel; as for the four hundred prophets of the grove, they were not present, and so not included. Jezebel knew they were safe, being with her, she not suffering them to go to Carmel.

1 Kings 19:2

Ver. 2. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah,.... In Jezreel, or near it, to frighten him away; not caring to seize him, and dispatch him, for fear of the people, in whom he had now a great interest; or otherwise it is not easy to account for it that she should give him notice of it; unless she scorned to do it privately, as some think, and was determined to make a public example of him; but being not as yet prepared for it, sends him word what he must expect, imagining that as he had the courage to appear, he would not flee; no doubt there was an hand of Providence in it, be it which it will, that he might have time to make his escape:

saying, so let the gods do to me, and more also; the gods she served, Baal and Ashtaroth, and by whom she swore:

if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time; as one of the prophets Elijah had slain; she swore by her gods, and wished the greatest evils might befall her, if she did not lodge him in the state of the dead where they were in the space of twenty four hours; though Abarbinel thinks it is not an oath, but that the words and meaning of them are, so the gods do; it is their usual way, and they will go on to do so for the future, because of the holiness of their name; and therefore do not boast of slaying the prophets, or make use of that as an argument of their falsehood, for they will do the same by thee by tomorrow this time.

1 Kings 19:3

Ver. 3. And when he saw that,.... That her design and resolution were to take away his life; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions read, "and he was afraid"; or frightened; he that had such courage as not to be afraid to meet

Ahab, and contend with four hundred and fifty priests of Baal, and in the face of all Israel, who at first were not inclined to take his part, is now terrified at the threats of a single woman; which shows that the spirit and courage he had before were of the Lord, and not of himself; and that those who have the greatest zeal and courage for religion, for God, and his worship, his truths and ordinances, if left to themselves, become weak and timorous; and whether this is the true reading, or not, it was certainly his case by what follows:

he arose and went for his life; fled to save his life, at a time when he was much wanted to encourage and increase the reformation from idolatry, and to preserve the people from relapsing who were converted; and through the miracles that had been wrought by him, and for him, he had great reason to trust in the Lord: or "he went unto", or "according to his own soul" {m}; according to his own mind and will, not taking counsel of God, or any direction from him; and so Abarbinel interprets it:

and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah; to the tribe of Judah; for though it was in the inheritance of Simeon, yet that was within the tribe of Judah, Jos 19:1, or to the kingdom of Judah, over which Jehoshaphat reigned, and so might think himself safe, being out of the dominions of Ahab, and reach of Jezebel; but yet he did not think so, his fears ran so high that he imagined she would send some after him to search for him, and slay him privately, or make interest with Jehoshaphat to deliver him up, there being friendship between him and Ahab; for though this place was eighty four miles from Jezreel, as Bunting {n} computes it, he left it:

and left his servant there; he took him not with him, either lest he should betray him, or rather out of compassion to him, that he might not share in the miseries of life that were like to come upon him.

{m} wvpn la kata thn quchn autou, Sept. "secundum animam suam", Vatablus, Pagninus. {n} Travels, ut supra. (p. 204.)

1 Kings 19:4

Ver. 4. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness,.... Of Paran, which began near Beersheba, and was the wilderness of Arabia, in which the Israelites were near forty years; this day's journey carried him about twenty miles from Beersheba southward, as the above writer reckons:

and came and sat down under a juniper tree; Abarbinel supposes that Elijah chose to sit under this tree, to preserve him from venomous creatures, which naturalists say will not come near it; and Pliny {o} indeed observes, that it being burnt will drive away serpents, and that some persons anoint themselves with the oil of it, for fear of them; and yet Virgil {p} represents the shade of a juniper tree as noxious; hence some interpreters take this to be a piece of carelessness and indifference of the prophet's, where he sat:

and he requested for himself that he might die; for though he fled from Jezebel to preserve his life, not choosing to die by her hands, which would cause her prophets to exult and triumph, yet was now desirous of dying by the hand of the Lord, and in a place where his death would not be known:

[it is] enough, now, O Lord, take away my life; intimating that he had lived long enough, even as long as he desired; and he had done as much work for God as he thought he had to do; he supposed his service and usefulness were at an end, and therefore desired his dismission:

for [I am not] better than my fathers that he should not die, or live longer than they; but this desire was not like that of the Apostle Paul's, but like that of Job and of Jonah; not so much to be with God and Christ, as to be rid of the troubles of life.

{o} Nat. Hist. l. 24. c. 8. {p} "Juniperi gravis umbra----" Bucol. Eclog. 10. ver. 76.

1 Kings 19:5

Ver. 5. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree,.... Being weary and fatigued with his journey, the same under which he sat; for there was but one, as that is said to be in the preceding verse:

behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, arise, and eat; so far was the Lord from granting his request to take away his life, that he made provision to preserve it; so careful was he of him, as to give an angel charge to get food ready for him, and then awake him to eat of it.

1 Kings 19:6

Ver. 6. And he looked, and, behold, [there was] a cake baked on the coals,.... Just took off the coals, quite hot. Bochart {q} thinks it should be rendered, "baked on hot stones"; and such was the way of baking cakes in some of the eastern countries, See Gill on "Ge 18:6", the stones hereabout might be heated by a supernatural power, and the cake baked on them by an angel; these sort of cakes are in Hebrew called "huggoth", as some pronounce the word, and are said to be now common in Bulgaria, where they are called "hugaces" {r}:

and a cruse of water at his head; to drink of in eating the cake; which cruse or pot a learned man {s} thinks was Elijah's, not brought by the angel, only water put into it by him; see 1Sa 26:11, and he did eat and drink; but not all that was set before him:

and laid him down again; to take some more sleep for his greater refreshment.

{q} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 33. col. 528. {r} Busbequius apud Calmet on the word "Bread". {s} Schacchi Elaeochrism. Myrothec. l. 1. c. 44. col. 224.

1 Kings 19:7

Ver. 7. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him,.... In order to awake him out of sleep:

and said unto him, arise, and eat, because the journey is too great for thee; which he had to go to Horeb, without eating more than he had; and there were no provisions to be had in a common way and manner in his road thither.

1 Kings 19:8

Ver. 8. And he arose, and did eat and drink,.... Of what was left of the cake and cruse of water, before provided for him:

and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God; for so long he was going to that place, though it might have been gone in three or four days; but he went in byways, and wandered about in the wilderness, as the Israelites did, and that for the space of forty days, as they did near forty years; and all this while he had no other sustenance than what he had taken under the juniper tree, from whence he set out, which must be supernatural; for it is said {t}, a man cannot live without food beyond seven days, See Gill on "Ex 24:18" the food either staying in his stomach all this while, or however the nutritive virtue of it, by which he was supported, and held out till he came to Horeb or Sinai; called the mount of the Lord, because here he had appeared to Moses in the bush, and from hence gave the law to the children of Israel. Abarbinel is of opinion that this term of forty days was consumed in his whole journey to Horeb, his stay there, and return to the land of Israel.

{t} Macrob. in Soma Scipion. l. 1. c. 6.

1 Kings 19:9

Ver. 9. And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there,.... This cave, some travellers say {u}, is to be seen at this day, not far from a church dedicated to the prophet Elijah, and that the cave itself has the appearance of a chapel; but a more particular account of it is given in a journal {w} lately published, which says, this cave exists to this very day, and is situated at the foot of Mount Sinai, and is now enclosed in a church built of red and white granite marble, the entrance into which is from the west; the dimensions of this cave are in length five feet, in depth four feet, and in height four and a half. The Jewish writers are of opinion that this was the cleft of the rock in which Moses was put, when the Lord passed before him; but, if so, there would have been no need of Elijah to have gone forth to and stand upon the mount when the Lord passed by, 1Ki 19:11,

and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him; an articulate voice was heard by him:

and he said unto him, what dost thou here, Elijah? this is not a proper place for a prophet to be in, in a wilderness, in a mountain, in a cave in it: what work could he do for God? or what service to his people? in the land of Israel he might bear his testimony against idolatry, and so be a means of reclaiming backsliders, and of establishing those that were in the true religion; but of what usefulness could he be here? Abarbinel takes it to be a reproof of Elijah, for going into a place so holy as it was, and in which Moses, the chief of the prophets, had been, and that it did not become such a man as he was to be in such a place.

{u} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 2. p. 166. {w} Journal from Cairo to Mount Sinai in 1722, p. 26. Ed. 2.

1 Kings 19:10

Ver. 10. And he said, I have been jealous for the Lord God of hosts,.... Through zeal for the glory of God he had slain four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and this had stirred up the malice and revenge of Jezebel against him, who sought his life, and which had obliged him to flee, and come to this place for shelter; this is the first part of his answer, others follow:

for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant; the law, especially the two first commandments delivered in this very place; and therefore he could hope for no protection from them, but was forced to leave his country:

thrown down thy altars: which had been built in times past for the worship of God, to sacrifice thereon to him, but were now demolished, that those that would not bow the knee to Baal, and could not go to Jerusalem, might make no use of them:

and slain thy prophets with the sword; which was done by Jezebel, the Israelites conniving at it, and consenting to it, and not daring to oppose her; slain all she had knowledge of, or even were known by the prophet: hence it follows,

and I, [even] I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away: all this Elijah said, as it seems, not only to excuse himself for fleeing, and taking up his abode where he was, but to stir up the indignation of God against Israel for their idolatries and murders, and to put him upon inflicting his judgments on them for the same.

1 Kings 19:11

Ver. 11. And he said, go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord,.... Who would appear there as he had to Moses formerly, though not in the same manner:

and, behold, the Lord passed by; or was about to pass, for as yet he had not; his messengers first went before him:

and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; strong enough to do all this, and so it might:

but the Lord was not in the wind; as he sometimes is, **Na 1:3**, he spake to Job out of a whirlwind, Job 38:1,

and after the wind an earthquake; that shook the earth all around, and the mountain also, as it did when the law was given on it, Ps 68:8

but the Lord was not in the earthquake; as he was when it trembled in the times of Moses, Ex 19:18.

1 Kings 19:12

Ver. 12. And after the earthquake a fire, [but] the Lord was not in the fire,.... As he was when he descended on this mount, and spake to Moses, Ex 19:1, the Targum, and so Jarchi, interpret all these appearances of angels, and not amiss; the wind, of an host of angels of wind; the earthquake, of an host of angels of commotion; the fire, of an host of angels of fire; see Ps 104:4, these ministers of the Lord went before him, to prepare the way of his glorious Majesty; which emblems may represent the power of God, the terribleness of his majesty, and the fury of his wrath, which he could display, if he would, to the destruction of his enemies; and could as easily destroy the idolatrous kingdom of Israel, which Elijah seems to be solicitous of, as the wind rent the mountains, and broke the rocks, and the earthquake shook the earth, and the fire consumed all in its way; but he chose not to do it now, but to use lenity, and show mercy, signified by the next emblem:

and after the fire a still small voice: not rough, but gentle, more like whispering than roaring; something soft, easy, and musical; the Targum is, the voice of those that praise God in silence; and all this may be considered as showing the difference between the two dispensations of law and Gospel; the law is a voice of terrible words, and was given amidst a tempest of wind, thunder, and lightning, attended with an earthquake, Heb 12:18, but the Gospel is a gentle voice of love, grace, and mercy, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; and may also point at the order and manner of the Lord's dealings with the souls of men, who usually by the law breaks the rocky hearts of men in pieces, shakes their consciences, and fills their minds with a sense of fiery wrath and indignation they deserve, and then speaks comfortably to them, speaks peace and pardon through the ministration of the Gospel by his Spirit; blessed are the people that hear this still, small, gentle voice, the joyful sound, Ps 89:15.

1 Kings 19:13

Ver. 13. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle,.... Through reverence of the divine Majesty he perceived was there, and through shame and confusion under a sense of his impurity, imperfections, and unworthiness, as the seraphim in **Isa 6:2**, and as Moses, **Ex 3:6**, and went out and stood in the entering in of the cave; he attempted to come forth out of the cave upon the divine order, 1Ki 19:11, but was stopped by the terrible appearances of the wind, earthquake, and fire, a little within it; but now he came quite out, and stood at the mouth of it, to hear what the Lord would say unto him:

and, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, what dost thou here, Elijah? the same question is here put as in 1Ki 19:9, though there by an angel, here by the Lord himself.

1 Kings 19:14

Ver. 14. And he said,.... Elijah, in answer to the question put, and he says the same as before:

I have been very jealous,.... which the question was designed to draw from him, in order to give him some instructions and directions; which would suggest to him, that though he should not deal severely with Israel, nor with Ahab and his house, yet he would hereafter by the kings he should anoint over Syria and Israel, and by the prophet he should anoint in his room, as instruments of his vengeance.

1 Kings 19:15

Ver. 15. And the Lord said unto him, go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus,.... He is bid to go back the way he came, through the wilderness of Arabia, which was part of his way to Damascus, near to which was another wilderness, which took its name from thence; though Fortunatus Schacchus {x} thinks no other is meant by this phrase than returning to his former course and custom of preach the law of God, and reclaiming men from the error of their ways:

and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; it is nowhere related that Elijah did go to Damascus, and anoint Hazael, though it may be he did; however he acquainted Elisha with it, and he declared it to Hazael, that he should be king of Syria, and which perhaps is all that is meant by anointing; that is, that he should be made king, and which was declared by both these prophets, see **2Ki 8:13**.

{x} Elaeochrism. Myrothec. l. 1. c. 39. col. 198.

1 Kings 19:16

Ver. 16. And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel,.... This was a son of Jehoshaphat, and a grandson of Nimshi; nor does he appear to have been anointed by Elijah, but by Elisha; and being done by his order and direction was the same as if it was done by himself, unless he was twice anointed, see **2Ki 9:1**

and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room; which was in the half tribe of Manasseh, on this side Jordan; See Gill on "Jud 7:22".

1 Kings 19:17

Ver. 17. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay,.... Which suggests that many should be slain in Israel by them both, as were by Hazael, 2Ki 10:32 and by Jehu, **2Ki 9:24**,

and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay; which may be understood either literally of the forty two children cursed by him, in consequence of which they were destroyed by bears, **2Ki 2:24** or rather figuratively by his prophecies, see **Ho 6:5** who foretold the slaughters made by Hazael and Jehu, as well as others, see **2Ki 8:12**, these several things were not done in the order in which they are here put; for what Elisha did was before Hazael and Jehu, and Jehu before Hazael; these words therefore do not respect the exact order of time in which they should be done, only that each should do the part appointed and assigned unto him, and what could not be so well done by the other; thus Hazael was to destroy those that came out to war; and Jehu

Ahab's family that did not; and Elisha the children of idolatrous parents at Bethel, that came not within the reach of either; though it may be observed, that Hazael began to distress Israel before Jehu appeared, **2Ki 8:28** and the prophecies of Elisha might not have their full accomplishment until after Hazael and Jehu had done what was appointed for them.

1 Kings 19:18

Ver. 18. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel,.... From perishing by the sword of either of them:

all the knees which have not bowed to Baal; that is, had not worshipped him, which was signified by this gesture:

and every mouth which hath not kissed him; either the image of Baal itself, or the hand, in reverence of him; which rites, one or other, or both, were used by his worshippers; See Gill on "Ho 13:2". This either refers, as some think, to the present time, and so is an answer to Elijah, who thought he was the only worshipper left with which seems to agree Ro 11:2, or to the times to come, when destruction should be made by the above persons, and when God would have some faithful worshippers, and would take care of them; so some render the words, "I will reserve", &c. {y}.

{y} ytravhw "reservabo vel servabo", Vatablus; so V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.

1 Kings 19:19

Ver. 19. So he departed thence,.... From Mount Horeb, and came to Abelmeholah, which Bunting computes {z} at one hundred and fifty six miles:

and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth; which may be understood either of twelve couple of oxen drawing one plough; which was a large number, but will not seem strange when it is observed, that Abelmeholah, where Elisha was ploughing, lay in the vale of Jordan, which was a clayey stiff ground, and required such a number of oxen to plough it up, especially at the first tilling of it, as this might be {a}; compare **1Ki 4:12** A late traveller {b} observes, that at Damegraed, in upper Egypt on the Nile, six oxen yoked to plough had a great deal of difficulty to turn up the ground; or else, as the Jewish writers generally understand it, there were twelve ploughs, and a yoke of oxen to each, and a ploughman to attend everyone, and Elisha attended the twelfth; or was with one of the twelve, as the Targum, and might have the oversight of them all; Kimchi thinks, and so Abarbiuel after him, that this signified that he should be leader of the twelve tribes of Israel:

and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him; the skirts of it.

{z} Travels, &c. p. 204. {a} See Fuller's Pisgah-Sight, &c. B. 2. ch. 8. p. 175. {b} Norden's Travels in Egypt and Arabia, vol. 2. p. 85.

1 Kings 19:20

Ver. 20. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah,.... His heart being touched by the Lord at the same time, and his mind enlightened to understand what was meant by that action:

and said, let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother; take his leave of them in this way, which was what was used by friends at parting, see **Ru 1:9**

and then I will follow thee; which he understood was meant by his casting his mantle over him:

and he said unto him, go back again; to his plough:

for what have I done to thee? he had only cast the skirts of his mantle over him, and had said nothing to him; this he said to try him, and get out of him what was in his heart, and how it had been touched by the Spirit of God; and if so, then he suggests it was not what he had done, but what the Lord had impressed upon him, that would oblige him to return, and follow him, after he had taken his leave of his parents.

1 Kings 19:21

Ver. 21. And he returned back from him,.... To his father's house, and took his leave, and then came back into the field, perhaps with others accompanying him:

and took a yoke of oxen and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen: their yokes, and the plough, with an addition of other things sufficient to boil them:

and gave unto the people, and they did eat; the ploughmen and others that came together on this occasion; he made a feast for them, to express his joy at being called to such service he was:

then he arose and went after Elijah; left his worldly employment, the riches he was heir to, his parents, and his friends, and followed the prophet:

and ministered unto him; became his servant, whereby he attained to great knowledge and understanding of divine things, and was trained up to the prophetic office, which he was invested with upon the removal of Elijah; see **Mt 8:21**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 20

This chapter relates the siege of Samaria by the king of Syria, and his insolent demand of Ahab's wives, children, and riches, 1Ki 20:1, the sally made out upon him, at the direction of the prophet, and the route made of the Syrian army, 1Ki 20:13, the return of the Syrian army the next year, when there was a pitched battle between them and Israel, in which the former were entirely defeated, 1Ki 20:22, the peace Ahab made with the king of Syria, 1Ki 20:31, and the reproof one of the sons of the prophets gave him for it, which made him very uneasy, 1Ki 20:35.

Ver. 1. And Benhadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together,.... This was Benhadad the second, the son of that Benhadad, to whom Asa sent to help him against Baasha, 1Ki 15:18

and there were thirty and two kings with him; these were heads of families, so called, and at most governors of cities under Benhadad; petty princes, such as were in the land of Canaan in Joshua's time:

and horses and chariots; how many is not said:

and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it; he went up with such an intent, but had not as yet done it in form; what moved him to it cannot be said precisely, whether an ambitious view of enlarging his dominions, or because the king of Israel paid not the tribute his father had imposed upon him, see 1Ki 20:34, however, so it was, through the providence of God, as a scourge to Ahab for his impiety.

1 Kings 20:2

Ver. 2. And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel, into the city,.... Who there remained, and attempted not to go forth and meet him, and stop his progress, though he must have passed great part of his dominions to come to Samaria:

and said unto him, thus saith Benhadad; by them, his messengers, as follows.

1 Kings 20:3

Ver. 3. Thy silver and thy gold is mine,.... Not of right, but reckoning it as good as in his hands, Ahab not being able to resist him:

and thy wives also; for it seems he had more than Jezebel:

and thy children; which were many, for he had no less than seventy sons, 2Ki 10:1,

even the goodliest are mine: some aggravate this, as if his view was to commit the unnatural sin with his male children, when in his possession.

1 Kings 20:4

Ver. 4. And the king of Israel answered and said, my lord, O king,.... So he said to Benhadad's messengers, representing him, as acknowledging his sovereignty over him:

according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have: which he understood of holding all that he had of him, by giving him homage, and paying him tribute; not that he was to deliver all his substance, and especially his wives and children, into his hands.

1 Kings 20:5

Ver. 5. And the messengers came again,.... From Benhadad:

and said, thus speaketh Benhadad, saying, although I have sent unto thee, saying: at the first message:

thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children; into his possession, and not as Ahab understood it, that he should be his vassal, and pay a yearly tribute for his quiet enjoyment of them; yet even this he would not now abide by, growing still more haughty upon the mean submission of Ahab, as by what follows.

1 Kings 20:6

Ver. 6. Yet I will send my servants unto thee tomorrow about this time,.... He gave him twenty four hours to consider of it:

and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; the royal palace, and the houses of the noblemen, and even of every of his subjects in Samaria:

and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant (or desirable) in thine eyes, they shall put it in, their hand, and take it away; not be content with what should be given, but search for more; and if any in particular was more desirable to the possessor than anything else, that should be sure to be taken away; which was vastly insolent and aggravating.

1 Kings 20:7

Ver. 7. Then the King of Israel called all the elders of the land,.... His poor sneaking spirit was a little aroused with the last message, and therefore called a council of the elders of the people upon it, which was a piece of wisdom in him:

and said, mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief; nothing less than the entire ruin of the nation:

for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold, and I denied him not; in the sense he understood him, which was, that he was to be a vassal, and tributary to him, for the sake of holding these, which yet was very mean; but he wanted to have these in hand, and not them only, but the pillaging of all his subjects.

1 Kings 20:8

Ver. 8. And all the elders and all the people said unto him,.... They were unanimous in their advice:

hearken not [unto him], nor consent; promising, no doubt, that they would stand by him.

1 Kings 20:9

Ver. 9. Wherefore he sent unto the messengers of Benhadad,.... Upon the advice the elders had given him, and encouraged thereby, though in a poor sneaking manner after all:

tell my lord the king, all that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do; owning him as his lord, and himself as his servant, and promising to grant his first demand, though so insolent, in the sense he understood him, of paying tribute to him for it:

but this thing I may not do; to have not only all put into his hands, but his and his servant's houses to be searched and pillaged, because the elders of his people would not agree; and yet he seems to speak as if he himself would have submitted to it, but was restrained by his council:

and the messengers departed, and brought him word again; reported to Benhadad the answer they received from Ahab.

1 Kings 20:10

Ver. 10. And Benhadad sent unto him, and said,.... That is, to Ahab:

the gods do so unto me, and more also; bring greater evils upon me than I can think or express:

if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me, signifying that he made no doubt of it of reducing it to dust by numbers of men he should bring with him, which would be so many, that if each was to take an handful of dust of the ruins of Samaria, there would not enough for them all; which was an hectoring and parabolical speech, uttered in his wrath and fury.

1 Kings 20:11

Ver. 11 And the king of Israel answered and said,.... Very mildly and very wisely:

tell him, let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off; that is, he that prepares for the battle as he that has got the victory; the sense is, let no man triumph before the battle is over and the victory won; the events of war are uncertain; the battle is not always to the strong.

1 Kings 20:12

Ver. 12. And it came to pass, when Benhadad heard this message (as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions),.... Though it was at noon, or before, 1Ki 20:16, which shows that he and they were addicted to intemperance:

that he said unto his servants; some of the principal officers of his army:

set yourselves in array; prepare for battle, betake yourselves to your arms, invest the city at once, and place the engines against it to batter it down:

and they set themselves in array against the city; besieged it in form, at least prepared for it; for it seems after all that it was not properly done.

1 Kings 20:13

Ver. 13. And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel,.... Supposed by the Jewish writers to be Micaiah the son of Imlah, 1Ki 22:9 one of those perhaps that Obadiah hid in the cave, and now is sent out publicly on an errand to Ahab:

saying, thus saith the Lord, hast thou seen all this great multitude? considered what a vast number Benhadad's army consisted of:

behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; as great as it is:

and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; and not Baal, who can save by few as well as by many, and from a great multitude.

1 Kings 20:14

Ver. 14. And Ahab said, by whom?.... Knowing he had no army with him sufficient to go out with against the Syrian army:

and he said, thus saith the Lord, even by the young men of the princes of the provinces; either such, as Kimchi thinks, who were brought up with him; or, as others, the sons of governors of provinces, who were kept as hostages, that their fathers might not rebel; neither of which is likely: but rather the servants of such princes who waited on them, and lived delicately and at ease, and were not trained up to military exercise, even by these should the victory be obtained:

then he said, who shall order the battle? begin the attack, we or they? or who shall conduct it, or be the general of the army, go before it, and lead them on? Ahab might think, being an idolater, that the Lord would not make use of him, or otherwise who could be thought of but himself?

and he answered, thou; thou must be the commander, go forth with the army, and make the attack upon the enemy.

1 Kings 20:15

Ver. 15. Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two,.... A very small number to go forth against so great an army as the host of the Syrians, and these raw unexperienced young men:

and after them he numbered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand; which could never be the number of all the people in the land, nor even in the city of Samaria, who were able to bear arms; but it must mean such who were willing to go out to war on this occasion: and the number being just the same as of those that bowed not the knee to Baal, has led the Jewish commentators to conclude that these were the men that were numbered for war; but it is not likely that they were all in Samaria, or that none but those would go to war, though it must be owned the number is remarkable.

1 Kings 20:16

Ver. 16. And they went out at noon,.... From Samaria, the two hundred and thirty two young men, and the 7000 Israelites, openly, with great spirit and courage, fearless and undaunted; but it is not said that Ahab went out at the head of them; it seems as if he did not by what is said, 1Ki 20:21,

but Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions (or booths, or tents), he, and the kings, the thirty two kings that helped him; who either were his subjects, or his tributaries, or confederates; being secure, and having nothing to fear from Ahab, he and they gave themselves up to carousing and drinking, even at noon, and so destruction came upon them unawares, as on Belshazzar.

1 Kings 20:17

Ver. 17. And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first,.... From Samaria, before the 7000 did:

and Benhadad sent out; of his pavilion, a messenger or messengers to his sentinels, to know what news, and how matters stood, whether Ahab had sent any message, signifying his compliance with his terms:

and they told him, saying, there are men come out of Samaria; but upon what account they could not say.

1 Kings 20:18

Ver. 18. And he said, whether they be come out for peace,.... To propose terms of peace:

take them alive; make them prisoners, which was contrary to the laws of nations:

or whether they be come out for war, take them alive; he made no doubt of their being easily taken; but he would not have them be put to death, that he might examine them, and know the state of things in Samaria, and what Ahab intended to do, that he might take his measures accordingly.

1 Kings 20:19

Ver. 19. So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city,.... First, as before observed, and marched forwards towards the Syrian camp:

and the army which followed them; consisting of 7000 men.

1 Kings 20:20

Ver. 20. And they slew everyone his man,.... The Syrian army, or at least a body of men detached from them, met them, opposed them, and fought them, and they slew of them 7232 men; as many as they themselves were:

and the Syrians fled; not expecting such a rebuff:

and Israel pursued them; to make some further advantage of their victory:

and Benhadad the king of Syria escaped on an horse, with the horsemen; with two couple of horsemen, as the Targum; with these to guard him he galloped away as fast as he could for his life.

1 Kings 20:21

Ver. 21. And the king of Israel went out,.... Of Samaria; when he saw the Syrians fleeing, and his army pursuing, he went forth, perhaps, with more forces, who were now willing to join with him; Josephus {c} says, Ahab had another army within the walls:

and smote the horses and chariots; that is, the men that rode on horses; and in chariots, the Syrian cavalry:

and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter; how many were slain is not said; but the Jewish historian {d} says they plundered the camp, in which were much riches, and great plenty of gold and silver, and took their chariots and horses, and returned to the city of Samaria.

{c} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 14. sect. 2. {d} Ibid.

1 Kings 20:22

Ver. 22. And the prophet came to the king of Israel,.... The same that came to him before:

and said unto him, go, strengthen thyself; exhorted him to fortify his cities, especially Samaria, and increase his army, that he might be able to oppose the king of Syria:

and mark, and see what thou doest: observe his moral and religious actions, and take heed that he did not offend the Lord by them, as well as make military preparations:

for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee; about the same time in the next year, at the spring of the year, when kings go out to war, see 2Sa 11:1.

1 Kings 20:23

Ver. 23. And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him,.... His ministers of state, his privy counsellors:

their gods are gods of the hills, therefore they were stronger than we; and beat them in the last battle; this notion they might receive from what they had heard of Jehovah delivering the law on Mount Sinai to Moses, and of the miraculous things done lately on Mount Carmel, as well as of their worship being in high places, especially at Jerusalem, the temple there being built on an hill, as was Samaria itself, near to which they had their last defeat; and this notion of topical deities very much obtained among the Heathens in later times, some of which they supposed presided over rivers, others over woods, and others over hills and mountains {e}: so Nemestinus the god of woods, Collina the goddess of hills, and Vallina of valleys {f}; and Arnobins {g} makes mention of the god Montinus, and Livy {h} of the god Peninus, who had his name from a part of the Alps, so called where he was worshipped; and there also the goddess Penina was worshipped; and Lactantius {i} speaks of the gods of the mountains the mother of Maximilian was a worshipper of; and even Jupiter had names from mountains, as Olympius, Capitolinus, &c. and such was the great god Pan, called mountainous Pan {k}:

but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they; and prevail over them, and conquer them.

{e} "Dii fumus agrestes, et qui dominemur in altis montibus.----" Ovid. Fast. l. 3. {f} Vid. D. Herbert de Cherbury de Relig. Gent. c. 12. p. 198, 112. {g} Adv. Gentes, l. 4. {h} Hist. l. 21. c. 38. {i} De Mort. Persecutor. c. 11. p. 22. Vid. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 8. ver. 320. "Et numina montis adorant". See Ep. 4. ver. 171. {k} Sophoclis Oedipus Tyr. ver. 1110.

1 Kings 20:24

Ver. 24. And do this thing,.... Also take this further piece of advice:

take the kings away, every man out of his place: for being brought up delicately, they were not inured to war, nor expert in the art of it; and being addicted to pleasure, gave themselves to that, and drew the king into it, which they observed was the case before, though they did not care to mention it; and if they were tributaries or allies, they would not fight as men do for their own country:

and put captains in their rooms; of his own people, men of skill and courage, and who would fight both for their own honour, and for the good of their country.

1 Kings 20:25

Ver. 25. And number thee an army like the army that thou hast lost,.... Raise an army of an equal number, which they supposed he was able to do:

horse for horse and chariot for chariot; as many horses and chariots as he had before:

and we will fight against them in the plain; where they could make use of their horses and chariots to greater advantage than on hills and mountains, see **Jud 1:19**

and surely we shall be stronger than they; and beat them:

and he hearkened unto their voice, and did so; took their counsel, and prepared an army, and placed captains in it instead of kings.

1 Kings 20:26

Ver. 26. And it came to pass at the return of the year,.... In the spring, or autumn, as some think, See Gill on "2Sa 11:1"

that Benhadad numbered the Syrians; took a muster of his army, to see if he had got the number he had before:

and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel; not that in Judah, Jos 15:53, rather that in Asher, Jos 19:30, but it seems to be that which Adrichomius {l} places in Issachar, near to the famous camp of Esdraelon, or valley of Jezreel, where it is probable the king of Syria intended to have fought; the battle; and some travellers, as he observes, say {m}, the ruins of that city are still shown in that great camp or plain, not far from Gilboa, to the east of Mount Carmel, and five miles from Tabor; according to Bunting {n}, it was fourteen miles from Samaria; but it may be Aphaca near Mount Lebanon, and the river Adonis {o}, is meant.

{l} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 35. {m} Brocard. & Breidenbach. in ib. {n} Travels, &c. p. 164. {o} Vid. Sozomen. Hist. l. 2. c. 5.

1 Kings 20:27

Ver. 27. And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present,....

The same as before; the two hundred and thirty two young men of the princes of the provinces, and 7000 of the people, not one was missing:

and went against them; out of Samaria, towards Aphek:

and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids: being few and weak, the two hundred and thirty two young men in one body, and the 7000 in another:

but the Syrians filled the country: with their men, their horses, and their chariots.

1 Kings 20:28

Ver. 28. And there came a man of God,.... The same as before, 1Ki 20:13 or had come {p} before the little army went out to meet the Syrians; though he might go to Ahab when encamped, for his encouragement:

and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, thus saith the Lord, because the Syrians have said, the Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys; See Gill on "1Ki 20:23".

therefore will I deliver, all this great multitude into thine hand; not for Ahab's sake would the Lord do this, who does not appear thankful to God for the former victory, nor to be reformed from his idolatry, and the better for it, but for the honour of his own name, which had been blasphemed by the Syrians:

and ye shall know that I am the Lord; both of hills and valleys, the omnipotent Jehovah, the only true God.

{p} vgyw "accesserat", Vatablus.

1 Kings 20:29

Ver. 29. And they pitched one over against the other seven days,.... Very probably the Israelites pitched upon an hill, and the Syrians waited till they changed their position, not caring to fall upon them, though so very supernumerary to them, for the reason before given:

and so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined; or they that made war drew nigh, as the Targum, and both sides engaged in battle:

and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians 100,000 footmen in one day; which was a prodigious slaughter to be made by so small an army; the hand of the Lord was visible in it.

1 Kings 20:30

Ver. 30. But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city,.... Which perhaps was in the hands of the Syrians, and was designed for a retreat for them, should they be beaten:

and there a wall fell upon twenty seven thousand of the men that were left; not slain in the battle; here again the Lord might be seen, who, as Abarbinel observes, fought from heaven, and either by a violent wind, or an earthquake, threw down the wall upon them just as they had got under it for shelter:

and Benhadad fled, and came into the city into an inner chamber; or, "into a chamber within a chamber" {q}, for greater secrecy.

{q} rdxb rdx "cubiculo in cubiculum", Pagninus, Montanus.

1 Kings 20:31

Ver. 31. And his servants said unto him,.... Being reduced to the utmost extremity; for if he attempted to go out of the city, he would fall into the hands of the Israelites, and there was no safety in it, the wall of it being fallen down; and it could not be thought he could be concealed long in the chamber where he was, wherefore his servants advised as follows:

behold, now, we have heard that the kings of the Israel are merciful kings; not only the best of them as David and Solomon, but even the worst of them, in comparison of Heathen princes, were kind and humane to those that fell into their hands, and became their captives:

let us, I pray thee; so said one in the name of the rest:

put sack cloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads; and so coming in such a mean and humble manner, and not with their armour on, they might the rather hope to have admittance; so, the Syracusans sent ambassadors to Athens, in filthy garments, with the hair of their heads and beards long, and all in slovenly habits, to move their pity {r};

and go out to the king of Israel: and be humble supplicants to him:

peradventure he will save thy life; upon a petition to him from him; to which the king agreed, and sent it by them.

{r} Justin e Trogo, l. 4. c. 4.

1 Kings 20:32

Ver. 32. So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads,.... Signifying they came to surrender themselves to him as his captives and prisoners, and he might do with them as seemed good to him, hang them up if he pleased, for which they brought ropes with them, as a token that they deserved it, see Isa 20:2,

and came to the king of Israel, and said, thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee let me live: he that a little while ago insolently demanded his wives, and children, and silver, and gold, as his property, now is his humble servant, and begs, not for his crown and kingdom, but for his life:

and he said, is he yet alive? he is my brother; which was intimating at once, that not only they might expect he would spare his life, who seemed to be so glad that he was alive, but that he would show him more favour, having a great affection for him as his brother; this was a very foolish expression from a king in his circumstances, with respect to one who had given him so much trouble and distress, and had behaved with so much haughtiness and contempt towards him.

1 Kings 20:33

Ver. 33. Now the men did diligently observe whether anything would come from him,.... That would be a good omen to them, and encourage them to hope for success; they observed him as diligently by his words and behaviour as soothsayers do when they look out for a lucky sign; for the word is sometimes used of divining {s}:

and did hastily catch it; as soon as it was out of his mouth, and laid hold on it to improve it to advantage, being wiser than him:

and they said, thy brother Benhadad; him whom thou callest thy brother; he is thy brother, and is alive; this they caught, and expressed it, to observe whether it was a slip of his tongue, and whether he spoke it heartily, and would abide by it, or whether he would retract it:

then he said, go ye, bring him; meaning from the city to the place where he was:

then Benhadad came forth to him; out of his chamber, upon the report of his servants:

and he caused him to come up into the chariot; to sit and converse with him there.

{s} wvxny "augurati sunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus.

1 Kings 20:34

Ver. 34. And [Benhadad] said unto him,.... The word Benhadad is not in the original text, and some, as Osiander and others, have thought they are the words of Ahab last spoken of; which seems most likely, who not only took Benhadad into his chariot, but in his great and superabundant kindness, though the conqueror, said to him what follows:

the cities which my father took from thy father I will restore; that is, those cities which Omri, the father of Ahab, had taken from the father of Benhadad; for as Omri was a prince of might and valour, 1Ki 16:16, it is more probable that he took cities from the king of Syria, than that the king of Syria should take any from him, and which Ahab in his circumstances weakly promises to restore:

and thou shall make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria; which confirms it that it is Ahab, and not Benhadad, that is speaking; for Benhadad's father never had any power nor residence in Samaria, whereas Omri, the father of Ahab, had, he built it, and made it his royal seat; and, in like manner, Ahab promises Benhadad that he should have his palace at Damascus, the metropolis of Syria, and exercise power there, and over all Syria; whereby Ahab renounced all right he had to the kingdom, and any of the cities of it: for by "streets" are not meant those literally so called, for the making of which there was no reason; nor markets to take a toll from, as some, supposing them to be the words of Benhadad; nor courts of judicature, to oblige them to pay it who refused it, as others; nor fortresses to keep them in awe; but a royal palace, as a learned critic {t} has observed, for Benhadad to reside in; this Ahab gave him power to erect, and added:

and I will send thee away with this covenant; or promise now made:

so he made a covenant with him; confirmed the above promises:

and sent him away; free, to enjoy his crown and kingdom, for which folly and weakness Ahab is reproved by a prophet, 1Ki 20:42.

{t} Vallandi Dissert. ad 1. Reg. xx. 33, 34. Subsect. 2. sect. 4.

1 Kings 20:35

Ver. 35. And a certain man of the sons of the prophets,.... Which the Jews take to be Micaiah, and so Josephus {u}, which is probable; the same that had been with Ahab more than once; and, whoever he was, it is not unlikely that he was the same, since Ahab knew him when his disguise was off, 1Ki 20:41,

said unto his neighbour, in the word of the Lord, smite me, I pray thee; told his neighbour, that by the command of God he was ordered to bid him smite him, so as to wound him:

and the man refused to smite him; being his neighbour, and perhaps a fellow prophet, and having an affection for him.

{u} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 14. sect, 5.

1 Kings 20:36

Ver. 36. Then said he unto him, because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord,.... In not smiting him; which, if he was a prophet, he must know how great an evil it was to disregard or disobey what was said by a prophet in his name; he must be inexcusable:

behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee.
And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him; which may seem severe, yet being an act of disobedience to the command of God, by a prophet of his, was punishable with death.

1 Kings 20:37

Ver. 37. Then he found another man, and said, smite me, I pray thee,.... This is not said to be his neighbour, nor one of the sons of the prophets, but a rustic man, and so stuck not to take him at his word:

and the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded him; in his face; made some incision in his flesh, broke the skin, and fetched blood of him; perhaps somewhere about his eyes, by what follows: this he got done to him, that he might look like a wounded soldier, and thereby get the more easily to the speech of Ahab.

1 Kings 20:38

Ver. 38. So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way,.... As he went from Aphek, the place where the battle had been fought, to Samaria, his royal seat:

and disguised himself with ashes upon his face; the Targum is, he covered his eyes with a vail, or piece of cloth, which he wrapped about his head, as men do when they have got a wound or bruise in such a part, which seems very probable; for had he besmeared his face with ashes, clay, or dust, or any such thing, he could not so easily have got it off, as in 1Ki 20:41.

1 Kings 20:39

Ver. 39. And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king,.... With a loud voice, signifying he had something to say unto him, at which he stopped:

and he said, thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; this was not real, but fictitious, an apologue, fable, or parable, by which he would represent to Ahab his own case, and bring him under conviction of his folly, just as Nathan dealt with David:

and, behold, a man turned aside; a superior officer in the army:

and brought a man unto me; he had made a prisoner of:

and said, keep this man; do not let him escape:

if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver; if he let him go willingly, or by any means he should get out of his hands, then he should either die for it, or be fined a talent of silver, which of our money is three hundred and seventy five pounds; and to this it seems he agreed.

1 Kings 20:40

Ver. 40. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone,.... Employed in one thing or another relative to the battle, his prisoner committed to his care made his escape:

and the king of Israel said unto him, so shall thy judgment be, thyself hast decided it; the sentence was plain and open against him, that either he must die or pay the money, for he himself had agreed to it.

1 Kings 20:41

Ver. 41. And he hasted, and took away the ashes from his face,.... Took off the linen cloth from his eyes, unveiled or unmasked himself:

and the king of Israel discerned him, that he was of the prophets; he knew him again, having seen him once or twice before; otherwise there could be nothing in his face that could discover him to be a prophet, rather he was to be known by his habit.

1 Kings 20:42

Ver. 42. And he said unto him, thus saith the Lord,.... He spake not his own sense, and in his own words, but in the name of the Lord, for which he had authority, that it might have the greater weight with Ahab:

because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction; meaning Benhadad; or "the man of my anathema or curse" {w}; cursed of God for his blasphemy of him, and devoted by him to ruin on that account; or "of my net" {x}, being by his providence brought into a net or noose at Aphek, out of which he could not have escaped, had not Ahab let him go:

therefore thy life shall go for his life; as it shortly did, and that by the hand of a Syrian soldier, 1Ki 22:34,

and thy people for his people; which was fulfilled by Hazael king of Syria, the sins of Israel rendering them deserving of the calamities they endured by his means, see **2Ki 8:12**.

{w} ymrx vya "vir anathematis mei", Montanus, Piscator. {x} "Vir retis mei"; so some in Vatablus.

1 Kings 20:43

Ver. 43. And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased,.... With the prophet for what he had said, and with himself for what he had done in letting Benhadad go; the Targum is, he was

"troubled and grieved,"

not so much for the sin he had committed, as for the punishment of it on him and his people:

and came to Samaria; with a heavy heart, for the message of the prophet had spoiled the joy of his victory.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 21

In this chapter we have an account of Ahab's design to have Naboth's vineyard, for which he offered him another, or the value of that, but Naboth refusing to part with it, Ahab fell sick, 1Ki 21:1, the reason of which being found out by Jezebel, she devised means to get Naboth put to death under the colour of justice for blasphemy, 1Ki 21:5, and then bid Ahab go and take possession of the vineyard, where he was met by Elijah, who denounced the judgments of God upon him, and Jezebel, and all his family, for his injustice, 1Ki 21:15, but he humbling himself, the evil threatened was deferred to the days of his son, 1Ki 21:27.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, after these things,.... After the two battles with the king of Syria, in which Ahab was victorious, and after he had let Benhadad, a blasphemer, and injurious to him, go free:

[that] Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel; of which place See Gill on "Ho 1:5" or "who was in Jezreel"; that is Naboth, for the vineyard was in Samaria, 1Ki 21:18

hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria; that being the metropolis of the kingdom of Israel, is put for it, who, besides his palace in Samaria, had another in Jezreel; which, according to Bunting {y}, were sixteen miles distant from each other.

{y} Travels, &c. p. 164.

1 Kings 21:2

Ver. 2. And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs,.... For a kitchen garden to produce eatables of the vegetable kind for his household, or for a flower garden; and perhaps for both, as Kimchi observes, it being customary to have such in court yards, or behind the house; perhaps he might take his notion of an herb garden from his neighbours the Syrians, who were very diligent and laborious in cultivating their gardens, as Pliny {z}; hence

"multa Syrorum olera",

the many herbs of the Syrians, became a proverb with the Greeks:

because it is near unto mine house; lay very convenient for him:

and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seemeth good unto thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money; which seems very well spoken, that he would either give him a better in exchange, or purchase it at its full value; he did not pretend to take it by usurpation, by force, against his will, as it was represented by Samuel kings would do, **1Sa 8:14** as yet such oppression and tyranny was not exercised.

{z} Nat Hist. l. 20. c. 5.

1 Kings 21:3

Ver. 3. And Naboth said to Ahab, the Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. The inheritances of families were not to be alienated to another family, or tribe, nor even to be sold, unless in extreme poverty, and then to return at the year of jubilee, Le 25:23. Now Naboth was a man in good circumstances, and under no necessity of selling his vineyard; and, if he sold it, he might reasonably conclude, it becoming a part of the royal demesnes, would never revert to his family; and therefore, both out of regard to the law of God, and the good of his family, would not part with it at any rate: this shows that he was a conscientious man, and therefore is thought to be one of those that would not bow his knee to Baal, and against whom Ahab had a grudge, and sought an opportunity against him.

1 Kings 21:4

Ver. 4. And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased,.... Just in the same humour he was after the prophet had delivered his message to him, 1Ki 20:43, where the same words are used as here:

because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him, for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers, neither by way of exchange nor of purchase: and such a denial he could not bear, since it looked like treating him with contempt, and taxing him with imprudence at least, if not with injustice, or both:

and he laid him down upon his bed; or couch, which might be not in his bedchamber, but in one of his halls, where his courtiers were:

and turned away his face; to the wall, not choosing to have conversation with any of his nobles:

and would eat no bread; the vexation took away his stomach, and he became melancholy, at least sullen.

1 Kings 21:5

Ver. 5. But Jezebel his wife came unto him, and said, why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?] She perceived he was low spirited, and supposed he had met with something that had ruffled him, and made him so uneasy that he could not eat his food; and she desired to know what it was, that she might relieve him if possible.

1 Kings 21:6

Ver. 6. And he said, because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, give me thy vineyard for money,.... Sell it him at his own price:

or else, if it please thee; if he liked it better:

I will give thee another vineyard for it; as good, or better; and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard; he represents this answer as surly and ill natured, and as the effect of obstinacy, concealing the reason Naboth alleged for his denial.

1 Kings 21:7

Ver. 7. And Jezebel his wife said unto him, dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?.... Art thou not king of Israel? canst thou not do as thou pleasest? hast thou not power to oblige a subject to obey thy commands, and especially in such a trifling matter as parting with a vineyard, and that upon the most reasonable terms? thou hast too much demeaned thyself as a king; thou oughtest to have exerted thy kingly power and authority, and demanded it from him; the Targum is,

"thou now shalt prosper in thy kingdom over Israel;"

thy reign now is prosperous, and like to continue so, having obtained two such victories over thine enemies, and therefore should not be dejected with such a trifling thing as this:

arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: the kingdom being in such a flourishing state; and let not this affair give thee any trouble or uneasiness; I will take care of that, leave it with me:

I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite: without paying any money, or giving another vineyard in exchange for it.

1 Kings 21:8

Ver. 8. So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal,.... He giving her leave, no doubt, to take his seal; though she might not communicate her scheme to him, lest he should object to it:

and sent the letters unto the elders, and to the nobles that were in his city dwelling with Naboth: to the chief magistrates of the city of Jezreel, where Naboth dwelt.

1 Kings 21:9

Ver. 9. And she wrote in the letters, saying, proclaim a fast,.... Pretending fears of some dreadful calamity coming upon the nation, and therefore fasting and humiliation were necessary to avert it, and it would be right to inquire what crimes were committed by men among them, and punish them for them; and intimated to them that Naboth should be chosen as the great offender, and be accused, condemned, and put to death, R. Joseph Kimchi {a} thinks the phrase signifies "call an assembly or congregation"; convene a court of judicature, from the use of the word in the Talmudic language {b}; and so it is thought it is used in Jer 36:6 and indeed it can hardly be thought that Jezebel should have much notion of fasting; and besides, if it was a public fast, why should it be proclaimed only in Jezreel, and not throughout the kingdom?

and set Naboth on high among the people; the court being set, bring him to the bar and arraign him; perhaps in their courts of judicature there was a high place above the heads of the people, where criminals accused used to stand when they took their trials, that they might be seen and heard by all in court.

{a} Apud David. Kimchium in loc. {b} Vid. Buxtorf. Talmud. Lexic. in rad tou

1 Kings 21:10

Ver. 10. And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him,.... Worthless wretches, that have cast off the yoke of the law, as Belial signifies, lawless abandoned creatures, that have no conscience of anything; "knights of the post", as we call them, that will swear anything; these were to be set before Naboth, right against him to confront him, and accuse him to his face, and charge him with crimes next mentioned:

saying, thou didst blaspheme God and the king: and so was guilty of death for the former, if not for both, and of confiscation of estate for the latter, which was the thing aimed at; and Jezebel was willing to make sure work of it, and therefore would have him accused of both:

and then carry him out, and stone him, that he die; immediately, without requiring the witnesses to give proof of their charge, and without giving Naboth leave to answer for himself.

1 Kings 21:11

Ver. 11. And the men of the city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them,.... That Jezebel should contrive so execrable a scheme, and that there should be such sons of Belial among the common people to swear to such falsehoods, need not seem strange; but that the elders and nobles of the city, the chief magistrates thereof, should be so sadly and universally depraved as to execute such a piece of villany, is really surprising. Idolatry, when it prevails, takes away all sense of humanity and justice:

[and] as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them; they punctually, exactly, obeyed the orders in them, as follows.

1 Kings 21:12

Ver. 12. They proclaimed a fast,.... Or called a court,
See Gill on "1Ki 21:9".

and set Naboth on high among the people; placed him at the bar as a criminal, See Gill on "1Ki 21:9", though Josephus {c} thinks he was set on an high place in the court, because he was of an illustrious birth.

{c} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 13. sect. 8.

1 Kings 21:13

Ver. 13. And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him,.... Which position showed that they were his accusers, and had a charge against him; it being usual for the accusers and accused to be set face to face, as it was the manner of the Romans in later times, Ac 25:16. Josephus says {d} there were "three" men to accuse him; but the Targum, and all the ancient versions, have only "two":

and the men of Belial witnessed against him, [even] against Naboth, in the presence of the people; both before the judges of the court, and before all the people that filled it, who came to hear the trial; so bold and impudent were they:

saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king; or "bless", an euphemism; the phrase of cursing God being shocking to the ear, and therefore such a word is used to express it, see **Job 1:5**,

then they carried him forth out of the city; without any further process of examining witnesses, and of hearing what the accused had to say in his defence; but immediately they carried him out of court, and out of the city, to put him to death, malefactors being executed always without the city:

and stoned him with stones, that he died; which was the death blasphemers were put to, Le 24:14, of the manner of which,
See Gill on "Ac 7:58", it seems from **2Ki 9:26**, that his sons were stoned with him.

{d} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 13. sect. 8.

1 Kings 21:14

Ver. 14. Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead. Not only stoned, but stoned to death. This message was sent to her from the magistrates of Jezreel; for though the letters came in Ahab's name, they might be privately informed that this was a scheme of Jezebel's; besides, they knew she had the sway at court, and especially that the news of this man's death would be acceptable to her, and the more if he was of the 7000 that would not bow the knee to Baal.

1 Kings 21:15

Ver. 15. And it came to pass when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab,.... To whom she communicated the news as soon as possible:

arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money, for Naboth is not alive, but dead; some think that Naboth was a near relation to Ahab, his father's brother's son {e}; which they endeavour to support from his estate lying next to Ahab's, and from his being ordered to be set in an high place among the people; and Josephus, as before observed, says he was of illustrious descent; and so Ahab upon his death, his sons being also put to death with him, was next heir to his estate; and therefore Jezebel bid him enter on the possession of it, he being dead, and his sons also, and therefore there was nothing in his way to obstruct him: but rather her meaning is, that Naboth was dead, not of a natural but violent death, by the hand of the civil magistrate; as for blasphemy against God, so for treason against the king, in virtue of which his estate was forfeited to the crown, and that Ahab had a right to possess it; and so it was certainly condemned in later times however among the Jews, that if a man was condemned to die by the sanhedrim, his goods came to his heirs, but if for treason against the king, they ceded to him {f}.

{e} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 48. 2. {f} Sanhed. ib.

1 Kings 21:16

Ver. 16. And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead,.... Of which he was informed by Jezebel:

that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it; if it was in Jezreel, that was sixteen miles from Samaria, and lay lower than that, in a valley, and therefore he is said to go down to it; and which he did very likely in great state and pomp, many of his nobles and captains accompanying him, as we read that Jehu and Bidkar did ride after him at this time, **2Ki 9:25**.

1 Kings 21:17

Ver. 17. And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the prophet,.... Where he now was, when this word came to him, is not certain; nor what he had been employed in for some time past, since we hear nothing of him since the unction of Elisha, other prophets of lesser note being employed in messages to Ahab from time to time; perhaps Elijah, while Ahab was engaged in war with the king of Syria, spent his time in founding or reviving the schools of the prophets, and instructing and training up those that were in them for public usefulness, since we afterwards hear of them; the word that came to him is, by the Targum, called the word of prophecy, as indeed it was, foretelling the destruction of Ahab and his house: saying; as follows.

1 Kings 21:18

Ver. 18. Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria,.... Whose seat was there, his palace where he dwelt; and Benjamin of Tudela says {g}, that in his time might be discerned in Samaria the palace of Ahab king of Israel, that is, some traces of it; some connect the last clause with Israel, as if the sense was, that Ahab was king over those tribes of Israel, of which Samaria was the head:

behold, [he is] in the vineyard of Naboth: or "will be" by the time thou gettest thither; though the Arabic version is, he is "now" in the vineyard of Naboth:

whither he is gone down to possess it; as if it was his legal inheritance.

{g} Itinerar. p. 38.

1 Kings 21:19

Ver. 19. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, thus saith the Lord, hast thou killed, and also taken possession?.... Killed in order to possess, and now taken possession upon the murder; some versions, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic, read without an interrogation, "thou hast killed and hath taken possession", so Joseph Kimchi and Ben Melech; charging him with the murder of Naboth, and the unjust possession of his vineyard; the murder is ascribed to him, because his covetousness was the cause of it; and it was done by the contrivance of his wife; and it is highly probable Ahab knew more of it, and connived at it, and consented to it, than what is recorded, and however, by taking possession upon it, he abetted the fact:

and thou shalt speak unto him, saying, in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine; which was fulfilled in his sons, who were his flesh and blood, **2Ki 9:26**, for the punishment was respited in his days, and transferred to his sons, see
1Ki 21:29, though dogs did lick his blood, even his blood also, according to this prophecy, though not in the same place, see
1Ki 22:38, wherefore some take these words not to be expressive of the place where, but of the cause or reason for which this should be done, and read the words, "inasmuch", or "because dogs have licked" {h}, &c.

{h} rva Mwqmb "pro eo quod", Junius & Tremellius; "propierea quod", Grotius; so some in Vatablus.

1 Kings 21:20

Ver. 20. And Ahab said to Elijah, hast thou found me, O mine enemy?.... So he reckoned him, because he dealt faithfully with him, and reproved him for his sins, and denounced the judgments of God upon him for them:

and he answered, I have found thee; as a thief, a robber and plunderer, in another's vineyard; he had found out his sin in murdering Naboth, and unjustly possessing his vineyard, which was revealed to him by the Lord; and now was come as his enemy, as he called him, as being against him, his adversary, not that he hated his person, but his ways and works:

because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord; had given up himself wholly to his lusts, was abandoned to them, and as much under the

power of them as a man is that has sold himself to another to be his slave; and which he served openly, publicly in the sight of the omniscient God, and in defiance of him. Abarbinel gives another sense of the word we render "sold thyself", that he "made himself strange", as if he was ignorant, and did not know what Jezebel had done; whereas he knew fully the whole truth of the matter, and that Naboth was killed through her contrivance, and by her management purposely; and so he did evil in the sight of that God that knows all things, pretending he was ignorant when he was not, and this Elijah found out by divine revelation; so the word is used in
Ge 42:6, but the former sense is best, as appears from
1Ki 21:25.

1 Kings 21:21

Ver. 21. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee,.... Upon his own person, by cutting him off with a violent death, though his family was so numerous, having no less than seventy sons:

and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left Israel; See Gill on "1Ki 14:10".

1 Kings 21:22

Ver. 22. And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah,.... Two of his predecessors, whose families were utterly destroyed, 1Ki 15:29,

for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin: not only by his worship of the calves, but of the idols of the Zidonians, particularly Baal, and also of the Amorites, 1Ki 21:26.

1 Kings 21:23

Ver. 23. And of Jezebel also spake the Lord,.... To Elijah, and by him:

saying, the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel or in the inheritance or portion of Jezreel, as the Targum; Jarchi interprets it, the valley of Jezreel; the fulfilment of this see in **2Ki 9:30**.

1 Kings 21:24

Ver. 24. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat, and him that dieth in the field the fowls of the air shall eat. That is, they shall have no burial, see 1Ki 14:11 hitherto are the words of the Lord by Elijah; next follow the remarks of the historian.

1 Kings 21:25

Ver. 25. But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord,.... Not of any of his predecessors, even those whose families had been destroyed, as his would be, 1Ki 21:21.
See Gill on "1Ki 21:20".

whom Jezebel his wife stirred up; to idolatry, revenge, and murder, and to whose will he was a slave, and is one instance of his being a captive to sin, and giving up himself to the power of it.

1 Kings 21:26

Ver. 26. And he did very abominably in following idols,.... Which were abominable to the Lord; "dunghill gods", as the Tigurine version:

according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel; meaning the seven nations that formerly inhabited Canaan, but were driven out for their sins, to make way for the children of Israel, of which the Amorites were one, and here put for all the rest.

1 Kings 21:27

Ver. 27 And it came to pass when Ahab heard these words,.... Delivered in 1Ki 21:21,

that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon, his flesh, tore off his clothes, and stripped himself of all, even of his very shirt, and put sackcloth on his bare flesh, a coarse cloth made of hair, and such as sacks are made with:

and fasted, how long it is not said:

and lay in sackcloth; in the night on his bed, would have no linen on him day nor night:

and went softly: step by step, as persons mourning, grieving, and pensive, do; the Targum renders it "barefoot", and so Jarchi.

1 Kings 21:28

Ver. 28. And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite,.... After he was gone from Ahab, and Ahab had been some time in this humble posture; the Targum calls it the word of prophecy, and so it was, as the next verse shows: saying: as follows.

1 Kings 21:29

Ver. 29. Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me?.... Which yet was but an external humiliation, to be seen only with bodily eyes, as were all his actions and postures, before observed. Some Jewish writers {i} think his repentance was true and perfect, and his conversion thorough and real: they tell us {k}, that he was in fasting and prayer morning and evening before the Lord, and was studying in the law all his days, and returned not to his evil works any more, and his repentance was accepted: but the contrary appears manifest; we never read that he reproved Jezebel for the murder of Naboth, nor restored the vineyard to his family, which he would have done had he been a true penitent; nor did he leave his idols; we quickly hear of his consulting with the four hundred prophets of the groves, and expressing his hatred of a true prophet of the Lord, 1Ki 22:6, his humiliation arose from dread of punishment, and not from the true fear of God; however, it was such as was never seen in any of his wicked predecessors, and is taken notice of by the Lord. Luther {l} from these words concluded, and was persuaded, that he was saved:

because he humbled himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house; this was not a pardon, only a reprieve; the sentence pronounced on him and his family was not taken off, nor countermanded, only the execution of it prolonged; it is promised that the destruction of his family should not be in his lifetime, but after his death, in his son's days, otherwise he himself died a violent death, and the dogs licked his blood, as were foretold; however, this may be an encouragement to those who are truly humbled for their sins, and really repent of them, that they shall receive forgiveness at the hand of God, since he showed so much regard to an outward humiliation and repentance.

{i} Bereshit Rabba in Abarbinel in loc. {k} Pirke Eliezer, c. 43. {l} Mensal. Colloqu. c. 32. p. 360.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Kings 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 22

This chapter relates, that after three years' peace with the king of Syria, Ahab was inclined to go to war with him, to take Ramothgilead out of his hands; and he drew in Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to join him in it, 1Ki 22:1, but before they went into it, they took advice, Ahab of his four hundred prophets, which Jehoshaphat not being satisfied with, a true prophet of the Lord, Micahah, was sent for, 1Ki 22:5 who, when he came, jeered Ahab with what his prophets had said to him; intimated that he should be killed, and explained it to him how he came to be deceived by his prophets, 1Ki 22:15 upon which he was smitten on the cheek by Zedekiah, one of the false prophets, and imprisoned by the order of Ahab, 1Ki 22:24, after which the two kings went to the battle, and Jehoshaphat was in great danger of his life; but Ahab was wounded, and died, 1Ki 22:29, and the chapter is concluded with an account of the reign of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, 1Ki 22:41, and of Ahaziah king of Israel, 1Ki 22:51.

Ver. 1. And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel. From the time that Benhadad made a covenant with Ahab; not three full years, but part of them: it was threatened by Elijah from the Lord, that Ahab's life should go for Benhadad's, because he had let him, go, 1Ki 22:42, but because of his humiliation, as is thought by Ben Gersom and others, it was respited for those three years; and now an opportunity and occasion would be given for the fulfilment of what was threatened.

1 Kings 22:2

Ver. 2. And it came to pass in the third year,.... Of the peace, before it was expired:

that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel; to Ahab, from Jerusalem to Samaria, reckoned thirty two miles {m}; either to make peace with him, and put an end to the wars which subsisted between Israel and Judah since the division of the kingdom, 1Ki 22:44 or to contract an affinity with him, by marrying his son to a daughter of Ahab, **2Ki 8:18** or rather after peace was made, and that strengthened by the marriage; and so he went merely to pay a visit, as he judged he might then with great safety; and he and all his retinue were entertained by Ahab in a very sumptuous and liberal manner, 2Ch 18:1.

{m} Bunting's Travels, &c. p. 178. near 40, Rainold. Praelect. 31. col. 266.

1 Kings 22:3

Ver. 3. (And the king of Israel said unto his servants,.... His nobles, those of his privy council, his ministers of state; or "had said" {n}, some little time before Jehoshaphat came:

know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours a city of refuge beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, and so of course must belong to the kingdom of Israel, of which see Jos 20:8

and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?) neither demand it, nor take any measures to oblige him to deliver it up; representing it as a great omission, and as a piece of negligence and slothfulness, or cowardice.

{n} rmayw "et dixerat", Junius & Tremellius.

1 Kings 22:4

Ver. 4 And he said unto Jehoshaphat, wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramothgilead?.... This affair being lately canvassed at the council board, and very much on Ahab's mind, he puts this question to Jehoshaphat, his visitor, relation, and ally; wisely considering that his own forces were small, and that to have such an auxiliary might be of great advantage to him:

and Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses; meaning, that he and his soldiers, foot and horse, were at his service.

1 Kings 22:5

Ver. 5. And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord today. Being a pious and religious prince, he did not choose to go into a war at once, without consulting the Lord by his prophets, whether it was his will and pleasure they should engage in it, and should prosper; and he was desirous of having this done immediately, before they proceeded any further.

1 Kings 22:6

Ver. 6. Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men,.... False prophets, as the Targum and Arabic version; and they are called Ahab's prophets, and not the Lord's, 1Ki 22:23 perhaps these were the prophets of the groves, that ate at Jezebel's table, and were preserved when the prophets of Baal were destroyed, since the number agrees with them, see 1Ki 18:19

and said unto them, shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? which would you advise to? signifying he should take their advice:

and they said, go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king: which words are very ambiguous, like the oracles of the Heathens; for they do not express who or what should be delivered up, for the word it is a supplement, nor to what king the delivery should be made; whether the Syrians, and the place they held should be given up to king Ahab, which they would have understood; or whether the Israelites should be delivered up to king Benhadad; so that, whichever had been the case, the credit of their prophecy would be secured. They used the word "Lord", and not Baal, in complaisance to Jehoshaphat, and perhaps as directed by Ahab.

1 Kings 22:7

Ver. 7. And Jehoshaphat said, is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?] He suspected these to be false prophets, though he would not call them so; nor suggest that they were not the prophets of the Lord, because he would not affront Ahab, who had an opinion of them; and therefore asks, if there were no other that went under the character of a prophet of the Lord, that he might inquire of him for his further satisfaction.

1 Kings 22:8

Ver. 8. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, there is yet one man (Micaiah the son of Imlah), by whom we may inquire of the Lord,.... And but one in Samaria; Elijah and Elisha were elsewhere:

but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy of good concerning me, but evil; who is thought to be the same that was several times with him when engaged in the war with the king of Syria, 1Ki 20:13 and each time, excepting the last, he brought him good tidings; but because, in his last message, he told him, that, since he had let Benhadad go, his life should go for his life, and his people for his people, for that he hated him:

and Jehoshaphat said, let not the king say so; which was very modestly, though perhaps too gently, said; suggesting that the prophets of the Lord should be heard, respected, and honoured, let their message be as it would, since they spake not of their own mind and will, but what they were moved unto by the Spirit of God.

1 Kings 22:9

Ver. 9. Then the king of Israel called an officer,.... An eunuch, as the word is sometimes used, one of pages:

and said, hasten hither Micaiah the son of Imlah; who, as it seems from 1Ki 22:26 was in prison, where perhaps Ahab had cast him for his last prophecy to him, and where he had lain ever since; and this gives a reason why he could so readily send for him, knowing where he was.

1 Kings 22:10

Ver. 10. And the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, sat each on his throne,.... In great state and majesty:

having put on their robes; their royal robes, which they wore when they appeared in pomp and grandeur:

in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; where courts of judicature were held, and there was an open void space for the people to assemble in to hear; the word has the signification of a corn floor, and the Jews suppose they and their attendants sat in a semicircle like the half of a corn floor, after the same manner in which they say the sanhedrim at Jerusalem sat {o}:

and all the prophets prophesied before them; concerning this affair of going to Ramothgilead.

{o} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 5. 1. Vid. Kimchium in loc.

1 Kings 22:11

Ver. 11. And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron,.... Horns are emblems of power and might, and iron ones of greater strength still; the prophets sometimes made use of visible signs, to represent the things they prophesied of should come to pass, see Isa 20:2, and the same method this prophet took:

and he saith, thus saith the Lord; imitating the true prophets: with these shall thou push the Syrians until thou hast consumed them: Abarbinel thinks he had in view the blessing of Joseph by Moses, De 33:17 where he is compared to a bullock with horns; and these said to be the ten thousands of Ephraim, and the thousands of Manasseh; and Ahab being of the tribe of Joseph, and ruling in Ephraim and Manasseh, the prophet chose to make use of this emblem for his encouragement.

1 Kings 22:12

Ver. 12. And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, go up to Ramothgilead, and prosper,.... All encouraged the king to go up against this place, and prophesied of victory, as Zedekiah did:

for the Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand,
See Gill on "1Ki 22:6".

1 Kings 22:13

Ver. 13. And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him,.... By the way, as they came along together, as Josephus {p} observes:

behold, now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth; they are unanimous that he shall prosper in his undertaking against the Syrians:

let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good; which, as an ignorant man, he might advise to from good will to the prophet, that he might not be branded with singularity, and a spirit of contradiction, and that he might have the favour of the king, and be released from prison, pitying his miserable condition in which he found him.

{p} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 15. sect. 4.

1 Kings 22:14

Ver. 14. And Micaiah said, as the Lord liveth,.... He swore by the living God, for the confirmation of what he was about to say:

what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak; truly and faithfully, keeping nothing back, nor adding anything, whether it be good or evil, pleasing or displeasing; it looks as if as yet he had no instruction from the Lord what to say, and yet the vision he later declares seems to have been had by him before, 1Ki 22:17.

1 Kings 22:15

Ver. 15. So he came to the king,.... Being introduced by the officer:

and the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go up against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear? the same question in the same words that was put to the other prophets, 1Ki 22:6, only there he uses the singular number, here the plural, including Jehoshaphat with him:

and he answered him, go, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver [it] into the hand of the king; he answered not in the name of the Lord, saying, "thus saith the Lord", nor did he speak his own sense and in his own words, nor seriously, but by way of derision; he took up the words of the prophets, and bantered them; it is as if he should say, the prophets bid you go, and tell you that you shall "prosper", and that the city will be delivered into the king's hand; do as they direct you, and see what the issue will be, no doubt it will be good, since they are all agreed; but he delivered the above words with such gestures, and such a tone, and with a contemptuous smile in his countenance, which showed that he spoke not seriously, but sarcastically; and this the king plainly discovered, as appears by what follows.

1 Kings 22:16

Ver. 16. And the king said unto him, how many times shall I adjure thee,.... Not that he had as yet adjured him at all, or not till now; but he asks him how often he must be obliged to do it; and now he adjures him once for all, that he might not be forced to repeat it:

that thou tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord? for he observed he did not speak in the name of the Lord before, and what he said was not in a serious but ludicrous manner, and not to be regarded as truth.

1 Kings 22:17

Ver. 17. And he said,.... The prophet, in a serious and solemn manner, being adjured by the king:

I saw all Israel scattered on the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd; the armies of Israel routed, dispersed, and fleeing, some one way and some another, on the mountains of Gilead near Ramoth, weak and helpless, not knowing where to go for safety, having none to direct them; and this was either now instantly represented to his mind, or what had been before in a dream or vision:

and the Lord said, these have no master; these sheep have no shepherd this army hath no general,

[Israel] has [lost its king]: let them return every man to his house in peace, very few slain, Jarchi thinks Ahab only, see 1Ki 22:31 that part of the threatening, 1Ki 20:42 was now to he accomplished, "thy life shall go for his life", but the other part, "and thy people for his people", was to be deferred to another time.

1 Kings 22:18

Ver. 18. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat,.... Plainly perceiving that the prophet foretold that he should fall in battle:

did not I tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? intimating that this proceeded from spite and malice, from ill will to him and hatred of him, and was not from the Lord, and therefore not to be regarded; he had told him three years ago his life should go for letting Benhadad go; but it had not proved true, and no more would this; and Jehoshaphat being an easy man, and too credulous, believed what Ahab said of the character of this prophet, or otherwise it is not to be accounted for that he should go with him to war after such a declaration made.

1 Kings 22:19

Ver. 19. And he saith, hear thou therefore the word of the Lord,.... Since he had represented what he had said as proceeding from hatred to him, he would make it clear and plain that what he had said was the word of the Lord, and according to his mind; and that what the other prophets had said was owing to a lying spirit in them, which the Lord suffered for his ruin; all which are represented as in a vision, in which things are brought down to the capacities of men, and not as really transacted:

I saw the Lord sitting on his throne; so it was represented to his mind, as if he had seen with his bodily eyes the divine Being in a glorious form, as a king sitting on his throne, to do justice and judgment; as Ahab and Jehoshaphat were now sitting on their thrones, only as a far greater King, even the King of kings, and in a more splendid manner:

and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left the ministering angels ready to do his will.

1 Kings 22:20

Ver. 20. And the Lord said, who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead?.... Not that it can be supposed that the Lord entered into a consultation with the angels upon this subject; only that it was the decree of God that he should go thither, and fall by the hand of the man whom he had let go, as a just punishment of him:

and one said on this manner, and another said on that manner; not that there was such an altercation among them; it only signifies, that there are various ways and means, by which the purposes and decrees of God may be and are brought about.

1 Kings 22:21

Ver. 21. And there came forth a spirit,.... Not from the heavenly host on the right hand or the left, for they are pure and holy spirits, and impeccable, and cannot lie or deceive; but the evil spirit, Satan, the father of lies, the old deceiver, who came forth from his own place and his own company:

and stood before the Lord presented himself before him, as Satan did, **Job 1:6**,

and said, I will persuade him; or prevail upon him; evil spirits love to be employed in doing harm to men, they go about seeking whom they may devour. This could not be the spirit of Naboth, as the Jews say {q}, seeking revenge on Ahab; that was in a state of happiness, could not move from thence, and be capable of sinning.

{q} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 89. 1. & 102. 2. Targum in 2 Chron. xviii. 20.

1 Kings 22:22

Ver. 22. And the Lord said unto him, wherewith?.... What way and method did he propose, to persuade Ahab to go up to Ramoth? the Lord is introduced in this visionary narrative as asking this question, not as ignorant of the scheme of the evil spirit, but in order to bring it out, and lead on to the following account:

and he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets; put them on encouraging Ahab to go up, and promising him success, as he had in former battles with the king of Syria, and which might both encourage them to give forth such a prediction, and him to believe it to be true; this proposal was quite agreeable to the character of the devil, as the father of lies:

and he said, thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also; not only make use of this artifice to persuade, but succeed also; the Lord knew that what he should suggest to the prophets, and they should deliver to Ahab, would be agreeable to his inclination, nor would he do anything in the course of his providence to hinder its taking effect:

go forth, and do so; which was giving leave to try his skill in the art of persuasion, in which he knew he would succeed, and bring on the righteous judgment of God upon Ahab; with this compare Joh 13:27.

1 Kings 22:23

Ver. 23. Now therefore behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these thy prophets,.... That is, suffered the lying spirit to suggest a lie to them, and sent them strong delusions to believe that lie, whose minds were disposed at any rate to flatter Ahab, to whom they told it; which was the way designed to bring him to the ruin appointed for him:

and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee: he had decreed it in himself, declared it by Micaiah his prophet, and suffered all those steps to be taken by Satan and the false prophets, to bring him to it.

1 Kings 22:24

Ver. 24. But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near,.... Stepped in haste and passion from the place where he was:

and smote Micaiah on the cheek; in contempt of him, and to show his indignation at what he said; this he did in open court, before two kings; one he believed would favour and screen him in this lawless action, and the other, out of his own jurisdiction, had not courage and presence of mind to resent it:

and said, which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee? hereby boasting that he had the Spirit of the Lord, and was directed by him in what he said, and still remained with him, and could not possibly go to Micaiah, and suggest the very reverse; and therefore pertly asks him which way the spirit went, intimating that it was impossible he could steer a course contrary to himself.

1 Kings 22:25

Ver. 25. And Micaiah said, behold, thou shalt see in the day when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself. Who would either accompany Ahab to the battle, and, upon his being wounded, flee to the first place of secrecy for safety; or, upon the news of his defeat brought to Samaria, would betake himself to a private chamber for security, fearing the enemy would pursue to the very place; or else through fear of the populace, who would attribute the death of the king to the advice of him and the other prophets.

1 Kings 22:26

Ver. 26. And the king of Israel said,.... To some of his officers:

take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city: the chief magistrate under the king; a sort of sheriff, who had the care of malefactors, and of all committed to prison, from whom he was received by the messenger, and now sent back to him:

and to Joash the king's son; who might be over his household, as sometimes the king's son was, 2Ch 26:21 or might be viceroy while the king was without the city, and at the gate of it, and about to go to war.

1 Kings 22:27

Ver. 27. And say, thus saith the king, put this fellow in prison,.... In the common prison of the city, where he had been before, as it seems; and might be now ordered into a more confined place in it, and what might be called "little ease":

and feed him with bread of affliction, and with water of affliction; with bad bread and foul water, and but little of either; just enough to keep alive, and to continue starving:

until I come in peace; which he seemed confident of, and intimates that then he would punish him more severely, even with death, as a false prophet.

1 Kings 22:28

Ver. 28. And Micaiah said, if thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me,.... I am content to be reckoned a false prophet, and to be punished as such:

and, he said, hearken, O people, everyone of you; he called aloud unto them to observe what he had predicted, and mark the issue of it, and to bear testimony for him, or against him, as things should be.

1 Kings 22:29

Ver. 29. So the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, went up to Ramothgilead. Which, according to Bunting {r}, was twenty four miles from Samaria. That Ahab went is no wonder, it was his own motion first, his inclination led to it, his prophets encouraged him, and, in bravado to the prophet of the Lord, was determined upon it; but it may seem much more strange that Jehoshaphat should, after such an account as Micaiah had given, and who, doubtless, could observe a great difference between him and the prophets of Ahab; and yet there is much to be said which might incline him to go, as that there were four hundred prophets all agreed, and who made use of the name of the Lord, and pretended to be true prophets; and though he might suspect them, he could not confute them; and Micaiah, he prophesied evil of Ahab only, and therefore Jehoshaphat might think himself safe in going; and besides, he had given his word to Ahab, and he did not choose to go from it; to which may be added, that Ahab's cause was just, to recover a part of his own dominions.

{r} Travels, &c. p. 178.

1 Kings 22:30

Ver. 30. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle,.... Change his clothes, his royal robes, and put on others, perhaps the habit of a common soldier; having, it may be, been informed by some deserters or spies, of the design of Benhadad against him. Abarbinel thinks the meaning is, that he would clothe himself with a coat of mail, and take to him the each of the instruments of war, and so go into the battle secure; this seems probable from 1Ki 22:34 and this he might do to elude the prophecy of Micaiah:

but put thou on thy robes; his royal robes, or rather keep them on, that he might appear to be the chief commander of the army. There seems to be a good deal of insincerity and treachery in this conduct of Ahab's, whatever honour he might pretend to Jehoshaphat, or safety he might promise him in such a situation; his view seems to be to save himself at the hazard of the life of Jehoshaphat, especially if the Septuagint version could be established, "and put on my clothes"; which is natural enough, but would have been too barefaced:

and the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle; as if he had been a common soldier.

1 Kings 22:31

Ver. 31. But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had the rule over his chariots,.... This was the number of his kings in the first battle with Israel, and of his captains in the second, 1Ki 20:1, and the same number he had now, being very probably not only the number of his chariots, but the division of his army was into so many battalions, under the command of these captains of chariots:

saying, fight neither with small nor great; of those that belonged to Jehoshaphat:

save only with the king of Israel; and his men; for it can hardly be thought that his orders were to fight with none, nor kill any in the battle but Ahab personally; though it is very probable he might give them directions to aim at him chiefly, knowing that, if he was killed or taken, his army would flee or surrender; and he might be desirous of getting him into his hands, as he had been in his; and the rather his spite was against him, as he was the mover of the war.

1 Kings 22:32

Ver. 32. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat,.... In his royal robes:

that they said, surely it is the king of Israel; for they might not know the persons either of Ahab or him, but judged by his habit:

and they turned aside to fight against him; pressed upon him with all their force, either to take him or slay him:

and Jehoshaphat cried out; with a loud voice, either to the captains to let them know who he was, or to his men to come to his assistance, or rather to God to help and deliver him; since it is said in 2Ch 18:31 that the Lord helped him, and moved or inclined the hearts of the captains to depart from him, as it follows here.

1 Kings 22:33

Ver. 33. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel,.... Against whom only their orders were to fight:

that they turned back from pursuing him; for upon so great a force coming upon him he could not withstand, he fled.

1 Kings 22:34

Ver. 34. And a certain man drew a bow at a venture,.... Not aiming at the king of Israel, or knowing whereabout he was. In the Targum on 2Ch 18:33, this man is said to be Naaman, the general of the army of the king of Syria, and so Jarchi here; but though he did this in his simplicity, as the word signifies, without any intention to smite any particular person; yet God directed the arrow to the man he had marked for destruction, and neither his disguise, nor coat of mail, could secure from that:

and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: of which the pieces of armour on him were joined together, the higher and lower parts of it, the breastplate, and what covered the belly; and though these were joined as close as they were capable of joining them in those times, yet the arrow, guided by divine Providence, found its way into his body:

wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, turn thine hand; or hands, with which he held the reins, and turn the horses on one side:

and carry me out of the host; where the battle was hottest, to a place more remote and private, that he might have the wound examined, and the blood stopped, and return again, as it seems he did:

for I am wounded; or rather "I am sick" {s}, or ill, as the Targum; somewhat out of order, and therefore chose to retire a little while; not caring it should be known that he was smitten and wounded, lest his soldiers should be disheartened.

{s} ytylxh "aegrotare factus sum", Vatablus; "aegrotus factus sum", Junius & Tremellius.

1 Kings 22:35

Ver. 35. And the battle increased that day,.... It went on, and did not stop upon Ahab's going out of the host, but was very hot, and both sides fought furiously:

and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians: the Targum is,

"he strengthened himself, and stood;"

he exerted himself to the uttermost, and stood as long as he could, or could be supported, fighting against the Syrians, to animate his army, and that the Syrians might not have any notion of his being wounded:

and died at even: in his chariot:

and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot; or "bosom" {t} of it, the hollow part of it.

{t} qyx la "ad sinum", Montanus; "in sinum", Vatablus.

1 Kings 22:36

Ver. 36. And there went a proclamation throughout the host, about the going down of the sun,.... Much about the time that Ahab died; and this proclamation by an herald might be made by his order, as he was dying, or by Jehoshaphat, when he understood he was dead:

saying, every man to his city, and every man to his own country; the order was to cease fighting, and make the best of their way as fast as they could to their own homes, since their shepherd and master was dead, which fulfilled the vision of Micaiah, 1Ki 22:17. It seems to have been a drawn battle, at least there is no account of the advantage on either side.

1 Kings 22:37

Ver. 37. So the king died, and they brought him to Samaria,.... In the chariot he died in:

and they buried the king in Samaria; where his father Omri was buried, 1Ki 16:28.

1 Kings 22:38

Ver. 38. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria,.... After the body was taken out, very likely the chariot driver, who drove it into the pool, and plunged it into it, as the word signifies, to cleanse it from the blood of his master:

and the dogs licked up his blood; mixed with the water of the pool; the Septuagint adds, "the swine", which is not probable, such creatures not being bred in the land of Israel:

and they washed his armour; his coat of mail, through the joints of which the blood issued, and ran upon it. The word is sometimes used for whores, and is so translated here in the Greek version, and by Munster and Castalio; and both Ben Gersom and Abarbinel say, that women, who were harlots, washed here in his blood, mixed with water; and so Josephus {u} writes, that afterwards it was a custom for whores to wash in this pool; though some say {w} two whores were painted on Ahab's chariot, by the order of Jezebel, to inflame his lust, and these were what were washed; but the word signifies armour, or rather ornaments, clothes, jewels, &c.

and now all this was according to the word of the Lord which he spake; both by Elijah, that as the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, so they should his, as they now did, though not in the same place; nor was it necessary to fulfil the prophecy, See Gill on "1Ki 21:19", though some have thought {x} that his blood, mixed with the water of the pool of Samaria, was carried in a stream down to Jezreel, and there licked by the dogs, where Naboth's was; but chiefly what was spoken by Micaiah is here respected, that thus Ahab fell at Ramothgilead, as he had prophesied, 1Ki 22:17 and his life went for the life of Benhadad, as he had before declared, 1Ki 20:42.

{u} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 15. sect. 6. {w} See Jarchi & Kimchi in loc. {x} Kimchi in loc.

1 Kings 22:39

Ver. 39. Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made,.... Which, being a very curious and extraordinary thing, is particularly mentioned; though perhaps it might not be made wholly of ivory, but inlaid with it; we read of ivory houses in **Am 3:15**,

and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? in which the acts of his predecessors were recorded, see 1Ki 14:19 not the Scripture book of Chronicles, for there none of these things are related.

1 Kings 22:40

Ver. 40. So Ahab slept with his fathers, and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead,] Of whom more is said in the latter part of this chapter, and in the following book.

1 Kings 22:41

Ver. 41. And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. And as Ahab reigned twenty two years, 1Ki 16:29, Jehoshaphat must reign about eighteen years with him, and seven years after him.

1 Kings 22:42

Ver. 42. Jehoshaphat was thirty five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem,.... So that he must be sixty years of age when he died:

and his mother's name was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi; but of what family they were is not said.

1 Kings 22:43

Ver. 43. And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father,.... Who was a good prince:

he turned not aside from doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord; in his moral conversation, religious worship, and civil government:

nevertheless, the high places were not taken away, for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places; he took away the high places and groves for idolatrous worship, 2Ch 17:6, but not the high places in which sacrifices were offered to the Lord, which ought to have been, especially since the temple was built; and those in the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were altogether inexcusable, being near to the temple, and under no restraint, as those of the ten tribes were; but the people were fond of them, because of their antiquity, and it was difficult for religious princes to remove them, if inclined.

1 Kings 22:44

Ver. 44. And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. First with Ahab, with whom he contracted an affinity, and joined with him in his expedition to Ramothgilead, and with Ahaziah his successor.

1 Kings 22:45

Ver. 45. And all the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and all his might that he showed, and all his wars, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?] Many of them are recorded in the canonical book of Scripture, which bears the name of Chronicles; and more might be in this referred to, out of which might be taken what God has thought fit to transmit to future times; see 2Ch 17:1.

1 Kings 22:46

Ver. 46. And the remnant of the Sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land. His father Asa removed many of these filthy creatures, but not all; as many, no doubt, as came within his knowledge, but some remained, whom this his son removed, being of the same disposition with his father, see 1Ki 15:12.

1 Kings 22:47

Ver. 47. There was then no king in Edom, a deputy was king. Which had been the case from the times of David, who subdued Edom, and placed garrisons in it, and governors over it, **2Sa 8:14** and continued through the reign of Jehoshaphat, unto the times of his son, under whom the Edomites revolted, and set up a king of their own, **2Ki 8:20**, with a view to which this is observed, as also to account for it how Jehoshaphat could build ships in Eziongeber, which was in the land of Edom, of which in the next verse, because the whole country was governed by a viceroy, or deputy, under him.

1 Kings 22:48

Ver. 48. Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish,.... Ships to go to sea, particularly the Indian sea, 1Ki 10:22. Tarshish is used for the sea in general, Ps 48:7, in the Cetib, or text, it is "ten"; in the Keri, or margin, it is "made", which we follow, and may be put together, as in the Tigurine version, and read, "he made ten ships to go by sea":

even to go to Ophir for gold; as Solomon did; of which place see **1Ki 9:28**,

but they went not, for the ships were broken at Eziongeber; the port where they

were built: as soon as they were launched, or sailed, they were broken to pieces against the rocks near the harbour, which stood up like a man's backbone, whence the port had its name;
See Gill on "1Ki 9:26", and if this was Calzem, as there observed, near to it was a dangerous place for ships, and where many were lost, and is supposed to be the place where Pharaoh and his host were drowned {y}; the reason of this shipwreck was, because Jehoshaphat joined himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, for which he was reproved by the prophet Eliezer, and this was his punishment, 2Ch 20:35.

{y} Vid. Geograph. Nub. Climat. 3. par. 3. in fine.

1 Kings 22:49

Ver. 49. Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat,.... Who very probably had built some more ships on his own, having broke off his partnership with Ahaziah:

let my servants go with thy servants in the ships; since he was refused a part in the ships themselves, he desires leave to send men aboard them to traffic for him abroad:

but Jehoshaphat would not; having been reproved by a prophet of the Lord, and had suffered the loss of his ships by joining with him already.

1 Kings 22:50

Ver. 50. And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father,.... In the city of Sion, where David, Rehoboam, Abijam, and Asa, were buried:

and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead; who was now thirty two years of age, and he reigned ten years.

1 Kings 22:51

Ver. 51. Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah,.... It is observed, that

Jehoshaphat began to reign in the fourth year of Ahab, and Ahab reigned twenty two years, see 1Ki 22:41, and therefore Ahab's son must begin to reign in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat; but perhaps he was made king in his father's lifetime, before he went on his expedition to Ramothgilead, or Ahab's reign was not twenty two years complete:

and reigned two years over Israel; not complete, as appears from **2Ki 3:1**.

1 Kings 22:52

Ver. 52 And he did evil in the sight of the Lord,.... Which evil was idolatry:

and walked in the way of his father; his father Ahab, who worshipped Baal:

and in the way of his mother; his mother Jezebel, who was still living, and served Baal and Astarte, the deities of her country:

and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat; who set up and worshipped the golden calves:

who made Israel to sin; by the worship of the same, into which he drew them by his example and authority.

1 Kings 22:53

Ver. 53. For he served Baal, and worshipped him,.... That is, Ahaziah served him, as his father had done, and his mother still did:

and provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel, according to all that his father had done; of which there is an instance in the first chapter of the following book; for falling through a lattice, and becoming sick upon it, he quickly died, having sent messengers to inquire of the god of Ekron whether he should die or not.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS COMMONLY

CALLED THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE KINGS

This, and the preceding book, are properly but one book divided into two parts, because of the size of it, as the book of Samuel; it is a continuation of the history of the kings of Israel and Judah; and for a further account of it the reader is referred to the title of the preceding book.

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 1

This chapter begins with the rebellion of Moab against Israel, **2Ki 1:1**, relates a fall of the king of Israel in his house, which brought on him a sickness, about which he sent messengers to inquire of the god of Ekron, who were stopped by Elijah, and bid to return, as they did; and upon the king's examination of them about the cause of their return, he perceived it was Elijah that forbad them, **2Ki 1:2**, upon which the king sent to him two captains, with fifty men each, one after another, to bring him to him, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, **2Ki 1:9**, but a third with fifty men sent to him were spared, and he is bid to go along with them with a message to the king, as he did, **2Ki 1:13** and the chapter is closed with the death of Ahaziah, **2Ki 1:17**.

Ver. 1. Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. Which had been in subjection to them from the times of David, **2Sa 8:2** refusing to pay a tribute as they had done; taking advantage of Ahab's ill success with the king of Syria, and of his death, and the condition and circumstances of his successor.

2 Kings 1:2

Ver. 2. And Ahaziah fell down a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria,.... Which was either a window or lattice in the form of network, to let in light; or rather were the rails of a balcony or battlement on the roof of his palace, in this form, on which leaning, it broke down, and he fell into the garden or court yard; or walking on the roof of his house, and treading unawares on a sky light, which let in light into a room underneath, he fell through it into it:

and was sick; the fall perhaps threw him into a fever, and which seemed threatening, being violent:

and he sent messengers, and said unto them, go inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover of this disease; not to heal him of it, but to know the issue of it; a vain curiosity this! Ekron was one of the principalities of the Philistines, and this idol was the god they worshipped, which signifies a master fly: which some think was a large metallic fly; made under a planet that rules over flies; and the Heathens had deities they called Myiodes, Myagros, and apomuiov, which signifies a driver away of flies; as Jupiter and Hercules were called by the Eleans and Romans, and worshipped and sacrificed to by them on that account {a}; and so the Cyreneans, a people of Lybia, worshipped the god Achor, which seems to be a corruption of the word Ekron, because he freed them from flies, after they had been infested with a pestilence through them {b}; and Ekron being a place near the sea, and both hot and moist, might be much infested with those creatures. Within the haven of Ptolemais, or Acco, was formerly a temple of Baalzebub, called in later times "the tower of flies", and used as a Pharus {c}.

{a} Pausan. Eliac. 1. sive, l. 5. p. 313. & Arcadica, sive, l. 8. p. 491. Clement. Alex. Admon. ad Gentes, p. 24. {b} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 27. Vid. Chartarii Imagines Deorum, p. 151. & Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 26. {c} Adrichom. Theatrum Ter. Sanct. fol. 6. 1.

2 Kings 1:3

Ver. 3. But the angel of the Lord said unto Elijah,.... One of the ministering spirits sent by the Lord to him:

arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria: that is, the king of Israel, whose capital city was Samaria:

is it not because there is not a God in Israel; known, acknowledged, and worshipped there, of whom there had been sufficient proof of his deity and divine perfections, as omniscience, omnipotence, &c.

that ye go to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? about future things, when they had God nigh unto them, fully acquainted with them, as this message shows.

2 Kings 1:4

Ver. 4. Now therefore thus saith the Lord,.... Jehovah, the only true God:

thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shall surely die; this sickness should be unto death, and the bed he had betaken himself to should be his deathbed. The phrases of going up to bed, and coming down, are used with great propriety; for in the eastern countries, in their bedchambers, they had a gallery raised four or five feet above the floor, with a balustrade on the front {d}, and steps leading up to it; or ladders, which had more or fewer rounds, according as the beds were higher or lower {e}:

and Elijah departed; having met the messengers, and delivered his message from the Lord unto them.

{d} See Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 209. Ed. 2. {e} Vid. Isidor. Origin. l. 20. c. 11. & Alstorph. de Lect. Vet. c. 2.

2 Kings 1:5

Ver. 5. And when the messengers turned back unto him,.... To Ahaziah king of Israel, as they did as soon as Elijah was gone from them; concluding from his habit, his gravity, and the authority with which he spoke, that he was a prophet of the Lord, and especially from his knowledge of them, and of what they were sent about:

he said unto them, why are ye now turned back? for, by the time they had been gone, he knew they could never have been at Ekron and returned.

2 Kings 1:6

Ver. 6. And they said unto him, there came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, go, turn again unto the king that sent you,.... King Ahaziah:

and say unto him; and then they repeated all that is said by the angel to Elijah, and he had delivered to them, 2Ki 1:3 and which was a sufficient reason for their turning back, since they got a full answer from a man of God, of what they were to inquire of at Ekron; which was, whether the king would recover of this disease or not.

2 Kings 1:7

Ver. 7. And he said unto them, what manner of man was he,.... What appearance or figure did he make? what his habit or clothing?

which came up to meet you, and told you these words? they had related to him.

2 Kings 1:8

Ver. 8. And they answered him, he was an hairy man,.... Either the hair of his head and beard were grown very long, having been much neglected for a great while; or he had an hairy garment on, either of goats' hair, such as the Chinese wear {f}, whose women spin it, see Ex 35:26 and of which garments are made; or of camels' hair, such as John the Baptist wore, who came in his spirit and power, and imitated him in his dress, being also, as Elijah here,

girt with a girdle of leather about his loins: for more expeditious travelling, not for warmth, the climate being hot:

and he said, it is Elijah the Tishbite; for he had seen him formerly in his father's court in this dress.

{f} Semedo's History of China, part 1. ch. 3.

2 Kings 1:9

Ver. 9. Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty,.... Not in honour to him, but to bring him by force if he refused to come willingly:

and he went up to him, and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill; generally supposed to be Mount Carmel;

and he spake unto him; at the bottom of the hill, so loud that he might hear him:

thou man of God; or the prophet of the Lord, as the Targum, as thou callest thyself; for this was said in a sneering, flouting, manner:

the king hath said, come down; and in the king's name he ordered him to come down, signifying, if he would not, he would send his men to fetch him down.

2 Kings 1:10

Ver. 10. And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, if I be a man of God,.... As I am, and thou shalt know it by the following token, though thou callest me so jeeringly:

then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty; this he said not in a passion, and from a private spirit of revenge, but for the vindication of the honour and glory of God, and under the impulse of his spirit, who was abused through the insult on him as his prophet:

and there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty; a flash of lightning, which destroyed them at once; the Lord hearkening to the voice of his prophet, in vindication of him in his office, and of his own glory.

2 Kings 1:11

Ver. 11. Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty,.... The king, not being at all terrified with the awful judgment upon the former, sends another:

and he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, come down quickly; he flouts the prophet in the same manner as the former, and in the king's name commands him to come down, and that immediately; which the king added to his orders, or he himself, signifying he would not be trifled with, if he did not come down directly, he would force him.

2 Kings 1:12

Ver. 12. And Elijah answered and said unto them,.... The same as he had to the first captain, and made the same request of fire from heaven; which accordingly came down, and destroyed this captain and his fifty also.

2 Kings 1:13

Ver. 13. And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty,.... Which was most daring and insolent, and showed him to be dreadfully hardened, to persist in his messages after such rebuffs: and the third captain of fifty went up; instead of calling to the prophet at the bottom of the hill as the other did, he went up to the top of it:

and came and fell on his knees before Elijah: in reverence of him as a prophet of the Lord, and under a dread of the power he was possessed of, of calling for fire from heaven on him and his men, as the former instances showed:

and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight: he owns their lives lay at his mercy; he begs they might be spared, since it was not in contempt of him, and through ill will to him as the prophet of the Lord, but in obedience to the king's command, that they were come to him.

2 Kings 1:14

Ver. 14. Behold, there came fire down from heaven and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties,.... He owns the facts, and ascribes the death of them to the true cause, and appears to have an awful sense of the judgment of God on them, fearing the same would befall him and his:

therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight; by sparing it, what is precious and valuable being spared.

2 Kings 1:15

Ver. 15. And the angel of the Lord said unto Elijah, &e.] The same as in **2Ki 1:3** or "had said" {g}, as some render it, before this captain came:

go down with him; the captain and his men:

and be not afraid of him; of King Ahaziah, whom he might fear, because of the message he had sent him, that he should die of that sickness, and for turning back his messengers to the god of Ekron, and for destroying his two captains and their fifties; nor of his mother Jezebel, who had threatened his life for killing her prophets:

and he arose, and went down with him unto the king; boldly and courageously, not fearing his wrath; so that the captain not only had his life and the life of his men spared, but answered the end of his message also.

{g} rbdyw "edixerat autem", Junius & Tremellius.

2 Kings 1:16

Ver. 16. And he said unto him,.... Elijah to King Ahaziah when introduced into his chamber; and after some discourse passed between them, he confirmed what he had said to his messengers, and expressed it in the same language as in **2Ki 1:3**
See Gill on "2Ki 1:3" see Gill on "2Ki 1:4"

2 Kings 1:17

Ver. 17. So he died, according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken,.... How long or how soon after this is not said; however, he died of the sickness, and on the bed to which he went up, as he said:

and Jehoram reigned in his stead: who was another son of Ahab, and brother of Ahaziah, **2Ki 3:1**, in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; but as he must begin his reign in the nineteenth, or in the latter end of the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, see 1Ki 22:51 and Jehoshaphat reigned in all twenty five years, 1Ki 22:42, he must live and reign after this six or seven years; this therefore is to be reconciled by observing, that this son of Jehoshaphat was made viceroy, or was taken into partnership in the throne by his father when he went with Ahab to Ramothgilead; and it was in the second year of this his reign with his father that the other Jehoram began his:

because he had no son; that is, Ahaziah, wherefore his brother reigned in his stead.

2 Kings 1:18

Ver. 18. Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did,.... During his two years' reign, which yet were imperfect, and his acts must be but few:

are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? in which were written his father Ahab's also, and his predecessors', see 1Ki 22:39.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 2

This chapter relates, how that Elisha accompanied Elijah to several places, and on the other side Jordan Elijah was taken up from him to heaven, which occasioned great lamentation in him, **2Ki 2:1**, but having the mantle of Elijah, he divided the waters of Jordan, and passed over, **2Ki 2:13**, and the sons of the prophets at Jericho, perceiving the spirit of Elijah on him, showed him great respect, and proposed sending men to seek his master, which they did in vain, **2Ki 2:15**, when he healed the waters at Jericho, at the request of the men of it, **2Ki 2:19**, and the chapter is concluded with the destruction of forty two children at Bethel by bears, who mocked him, **2Ki 2:23**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind,.... Thereby lifting him up from the earth, and which, as it was the purpose and will of God, Elijah had notice of, as appears by his motions to different places, under a divine direction:

that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal, where it seems they met, a place where the Israelites first pitched when they came over Jordan, and where the tabernacle was for some time, and was famous for religious services, see **Jos 4:19**.

2 Kings 2:2

Ver. 2. And Elijah said unto Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee,.... Seemingly unwilling he should go with him, and be present at his assumption; which was either out of modesty, not affecting the spread of the honour and glory to be conferred upon him; or to prevent the grief of Elisha at his departure, or to try whether Elisha knew any thing of it, and what affection he had for him:

for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel; to give some comfort and some instruction and advice to the college of prophets there:

and Elisha said unto him, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee; being determined to see the last of him, and to have the benefit of his company and conversation, his heavenly discourse, and instruction from him as long as he could, and in hope of receiving a blessing from him at parting:

so they went down to Bethel; together, which, according to Bunting {h}, was six miles.

{h} Travels, &c. p. 205.

2 Kings 2:3

Ver. 3. And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel,.... Or the disciples of them, as the Targum; here, though a place where one of Jeroboam's calves was set up, was a school of the prophets, perhaps founded by Elijah as a nursery for religion, and a check upon the idolatry of the times:

came forth to Elisha; out of their college: and said unto him, knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head today? who was, as Abarbinel observes, the crown and glory of his head; or else this is said, as generally thought, in allusion to disciples sitting at the feet of their masters, and so they at the head of them; the rapture of Elijah was by a spirit of prophecy revealed unto them:

and he said, yea, I know it; being revealed to him in the same way:

hold your peace: not caring to continue any discourse with them on the subject, that his thoughts, which were intent upon it, might not be interrupted, and that his master might not know that he knew of it, and lest he should be snatched away from him, and he not see him, while discoursing with them.

2 Kings 2:4

Ver. 4. And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee,.... At Bethel:

for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho; to the school of the prophets there, to strengthen, encourage, and advise them:

and he said, as the lord liveth, &c; using the same form of oath as before:

so they came to Jericho; together, which, as the above writer says {i}, was four miles from Bethel.

{i} Travels, &c. p. 205.

2 Kings 2:5

Ver. 5. And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho,.... For though this place was lately rebuilt under a curse to the builder, yet was blessed with a school of the prophets: whose disciples came to Elisha, and said unto him; as in **2Ki 2:3** and to whom he made the same reply.

2 Kings 2:6

Ver. 6. And Elijah said unto him, tarry, I pray thee, here,.... At Jericho, seemingly very desirous to get rid of him, that he might not see his assumption:

for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan: where passing that he was to be taken up:

and he said, &c; Elisha swore, as before, he would not leave him:

and they two went on; to Jordan, which was six miles from Jericho {k}.

{k} Travels, &c. p. 205.

2 Kings 2:7

Ver. 7. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off,.... To have a view, if they could, of the assumption of Elijah to heaven, and be witnesses of it:

and they two stood by Jordan; on the banks of it, even Elijah and Elisha.

2 Kings 2:8

Ver. 8. And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together,.... Folded it up close together, in a position to smite with it; this is thought to be not his hairy garment, but a shorter robe, that was worn upon his shoulders; but the Greek version renders it by "melotes", and so in **2Ki 2:14**, which, according to Isidore {l}, was a goat's skin, hanging down from the neck, and girt at the loins; and being thus clothed, perhaps, may be the reason of his being called an hairy man, **2Ki 1:8**,

and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither; just as Moses lifted up his rod, and the waters of the sea were divided for the Israelites:

so that they two went over on dry ground; in like manner as the Israelites did through the sea.

{l} Origin. l. 19. c. 24.

2 Kings 2:9

Ver. 9. And it came to pass, when they were gone over,.... Had got on the other side Jordan:

that Elijah said unto Elisha, ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken from thee; for, having followed him so closely, he now made no more a secret of his assumption, and having had full trial of his attachment to him, and affection for him:

and Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me; the two parts of the gifts of the spirit he had, that of prophecy, and that of doing miracles, as some think; or two parts out of three of what Elijah was possessed of; or rather double as much, and which he might desire, not from a spirit of vanity and ambition to be greater than his master, but from an eagerness to promote the glory of God, and the interest of religion, to reclaim the Israelites from their idolatry, and establish the true religion, which he might observe Elijah was not able to do with that measure of grace and gifts he had; or however this phrase denotes an abundance, a large portion or measure, as it everywhere does. Many, after Ben Gersom, have thought it refers to the double portion of the firstborn, and that Elisha does not mean a double portion with respect to Elijah, but with respect to the junior prophets, with whom he might be considered as a firstborn, and so desired a double or greater portion than they, and which may be most correct {m}; and when he asked this, he did not suppose it was in Elijah's power to give him it, only that he would pray to God, at parting with him, that he would bestow it on him.

{m} See Weemse of the Moral Law, l. 2. c. 7. p. 41.

2 Kings 2:10

Ver. 10. And he said, thou hast asked a hard thing,.... Not a common privilege, but what is rarely enjoyed, and difficult to obtain, few are so favoured of God:

nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee, but if not, it shall not be so; meaning, that if his rapture was visible to Elisha, and he was favoured with a sight of his assumption, and be an eyewitness of it, this would be a token both to Elijah that it was agreeable to the Lord to ask of him this favour for him, and to Elisha to expect it, otherwise not.

2 Kings 2:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked,.... About the donation of the gifts of the Spirit requested, about the state of religion in Israel, and about the training up of prophets in the colleges, and about Elisha's succession as a prophet in his room, and his discharge of that office, and such like things, as may be supposed, in which he gave him instruction and advice:

that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire; either angels in this form, see Ps 104:4, in which they appeared for the glory and honour of the prophet, and as emblems of his flaming love and zeal for the purity of religion, and that his assumption might be conspicuous to Elisha; and perhaps by this means might be seen by the fifty men on the other side Jordan: this chariot, drawn with these horses, was not seen in the heaven, but as running on the earth, and came between the two prophets, and separated them from each other, taking up Elijah into it by means of a wind whirling about him, and which was no other than the ministry of angels; or these might be a conflux of exhalations or clouds, formed in this likeness by a supernatural power, and, by the solar rays striking on them, might appear fiery or red; and so his assumption was much in such like manner as our Lord was taken up in a cloud, **Ac 1:9**,

and Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven; body and soul; such a change passing on him, as he went through the region of the air, which divested him of his mortality and corruption, and fitted him for the invisible world.

2 Kings 2:12

Ver. 12. And Elisha saw it,.... The ascension of Elijah to heaven, the manner of it, and all relative to it, as the disciples saw the ascension of Christ, between which and this there is a great agreement, see **Ac 1:9**, and so Elisha had the token by which he might expect to have the double portion, as the disciples after the ascension of Christ had an extraordinary effusion of the Spirit and gifts upon them:

and he cried, my father, my father; or my master, my master, as the Targum; Elijah being a father to Elisha, and the rest of the prophets, in the same sense as disciples of the prophets are called sons:

the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof; who was a greater defence to Israel, and was of more service to them by his instructions and prayers, than an army consisting of chariots and horsemen; so the Targum,

"he was better to Israel by his prayers than chariots and horsemen:"

and he saw him no more; he was carried up in the above manner into the heaven of heavens, out of the sight of mortals, and never seen more, but at the transfiguration of Christ on the mount:

and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces; not on account of Elijah's case and circumstances, who was now in a most happy and glorious state and condition, but as lamenting his own loss, and the loss of the public.

2 Kings 2:13

Ver. 13. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him,.... Which he had now no further need of, and Elisha had, having rent his clothes in two; and this falling into his hands was a token of his succeeding him in his office, and that he should have the double portion of his spirit:

and he went back, and stood by the brook of Jordan; at the place where he and Elijah had passed over together.

2 Kings 2:14

Ver. 14. And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters,.... He wrapped it together, as Elijah had done, and smote the waters in like manner, to make trial whether he had the same spirit and power conferred on him:

and said, where is the Lord God of Elijah? let him appear now, and show his power as he did by him; he knew the mantle would not do without the Lord, and the exertion of his might:

and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither; as when Elijah smote them. The words "aph-hu", rendered "he also", is left untranslated by the Septuagint, and is interpreted by Theodoret {n} "hidden". They stand immediately after "the God of Elijah", and may be rendered, "yea he", even he himself; meaning not Elijah, as if he was inquired after, or was present and smote the waters; but rather, as we and others, Elisha, even he also smote the waters; though some take it to be the name of God, as "Hu" was, and is with the Arabs to this day, See Gill on "Isa 43:13". Athanasius {o} interprets it of God, "Appho"; and so Elisha calls him by his title and attribute, "Aph-hu": but the words may be an answer to the prophet's question, "where is the Lord God of Elijah?" here he is, even he himself, in the faith of which the water, being smitten, parted; and with this agrees Abarbinel's note on the text; the meaning is, though we are deprived of Elijah, yet not of the providence of God; and though the servant is wanting, the Lord or master is not; for even he, the blessed God, is in his room, and his excellency is as it was before; which sense is approved of by Frischmuth {p}

and Elisha went over; the river Jordan, as on dry land.

{n} Apud Flamin. Nobil. in loc. So Suidas in voce apfw. {o} De Commun. Essent. Patris, &c. vol. 1. p. 374. See Weemse of the Moral Law, l. 1. c. 7. p. 162. {p} Dissert. de Eliae Nomine, &c. sect. 11, 12.

2 Kings 2:15

Ver. 15. And when the sons of the prophets, which were to view at Jericho, saw him,.... Who went out from thence towards Jordan, to have a sight if they could of the assumption of Elijah; these, when they saw Elisha come over Jordan, the waters being parted by him:

they said, the spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha; or he has the same power and spirit to work miracles as he had, which they discerned by his dividing the waters of Jordan with his mantle:

and they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him; in reverence of him as their master, in the room of Elijah.

2 Kings 2:16

Ver. 16. And they said unto him, behold, now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men,.... Perhaps meaning themselves, **2Ki 2:7** who were young, stout, and strong, and able to travel for days together:

let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master; for though they knew he was to be taken away, yet knew not for what time, and imagined he might be found again:

lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up; as it seems he was wont to do, see 1Ki 18:12

and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley; where he sometimes had his abode; or they might fancy, if he was taken up to heaven, yet in his soul only, and that, when that was separated, his dead body would be left on a mountain, or in a valley; and therefore they were desirous of seeking and finding it, that it might not be exposed to birds and beasts of prey, but that they might bury it in a decent and honourable manner:

and he said, ye shall not send; he knew it was to no purpose, since he was translated to heaven, body and soul, and which he was an eyewitness of.

2 Kings 2:17

Ver. 17. And when they urged him until he was ashamed,.... To deny them any longer, being so very pressing and importunate:

he said, send; lest they should think he had not the respect for his master he should have had; or was so fond of his office, that he did not choose he should be found alive if he could, and return and reassume it:

they sent therefore fifty men; some one way, and some another:

and they sought three days, but found him not; and then returned.

2 Kings 2:18

Ver. 18. And when they came again to him, for he tarried at Jericho,.... Waiting their return to hear the report they made: which when they had,

he said unto them, did I not say unto you, go not? assuring them it would be fruitless, and to no purpose; though this search of theirs served both to confirm the assumption of Elijah, and the truth of Elisha being a prophet of the Lord.

2 Kings 2:19

Ver. 19. And the men of the city said unto Elisha,.... The inhabitants of Jericho, perceiving him to be a prophet, and endowed with a power of working miracles:

behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth; in a plain, surrounded with gardens and orchards, with vineyards, oliveyards, and groves of palm trees, and other odoriferous ones:

but the water is naught, and the ground barren; that is, that part of it where this water was, or ran, for from thence it became barren; or "caused to miscarry", as the word signifies {q}; not only trees cast their fruit, which it watered, but women became abortive that drank of it, as Josephus says {r}, and so cattle. Abarbinel thinks it was so from the times of Joshua, being cursed by him; but, if so, it would not have been inhabited again; rather this was owing to a new curse, upon its being rebuilt; though this might affect only a small part of the ground, not the whole, as before observed.

{q} tlkvm "orbans", Montanus, Vatablus; "facit abortum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {r} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 3.

2 Kings 2:20

Ver. 20. And he said, bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein,.... One that had never been used, that it might not be thought that the virtue was owing to anything that had been, or was, put into it:

and they brought it to him; the pot with the salt in it.

2 Kings 2:21

Ver. 21. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters,.... The fountain from whence they flowed, the head of them:

and cast the salt in there; which was an unlikely means of making bad water good, since that makes it brackish, and not so drinkable, and what makes ground barren; but this method, contrary to nature, was taken, that the miracle might appear the greater; or, as the Jews express it, be a miracle within a miracle:

and said, thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; he did not pretend to heal them in his own name, and by his own power, but in the name and by the power of the Lord, to whom he would have it ascribed:

there shall not be from thence any more death, or barren land; or miscarrying; no more noxious and mortal diseases should be got by drinking them, nor any abortions occasioned by them in women, cattle, and fruit trees, as had been.

2 Kings 2:22

Ver. 22. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake. In the name of the Lord; and not only they remained so unto the time of the writer of this history, but to the times of Josephus, as he testifies {s}, and even to ours; for there is a spring now called Elisha's spring or fountain, of which Mr. Maundrell says {t}, "its waters are at present received in a basin about nine or ten paces long, and five or six broad; and from thence issuing out in good plenty, divide themselves into several small streams, dispersing their refreshment to all the field between this and Jericho, and rendering it exceeding fruitful."

So some other travellers {u} say of it, that the water is very clear and cool, and issues in a copious steam. Pliny {w} gives it the name of "Calirroe", the beautiful stream, and speaks of it as hot, wholesome, and medicinal, and of great note.

{s} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 3. {t} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 80. {u} Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 331. {w} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 16.

2 Kings 2:23

Ver. 23. And he went up from thence unto Bethel,.... From Jericho, which lay in a plain, to Bethel, situated on an hill, and therefore is said to go up to it; hither he went, to acquaint the sons of the prophets with the assumption of Elijah, to condole their loss of him, and to comfort and encourage them, and confirm his own authority among them as a prophet in his stead:

and as he was going up by the way; the ascent to the city:

there came forth little children out of the city; the word for "children" is used of persons of thirty or forty years of age; and though these are said to be "little", they were so well grown as to be able to go forth out of the city of themselves, without any to guide them, or to take care of them; and were of an age capable not only of taking notice of Elijah's baldness, but knew him to be a prophet, and were able to distinguish between good and evil; and, from a malignant spirit in them, mocked at him as such, and at the assumption of Elijah; which they had knowledge of, and to whom, taught by their idolatrous parents, they had an aversion: some Jewish writers {x} say, they were called "Naarim", which we render "children", because shaken from the commandments, or had shaken off the yoke of the commands; and "little", because they were of little faith:

and mocked him, and said unto him, go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head; meaning not up the hill to Bethel, where his coming was not desirable to the greater part in it, being idolaters; and perhaps these children were sent out to intimidate him with their flouts and jeers from entering there; but having heard of Elijah going up to heaven, as was said, they jeeringly bid him go up to heaven after him, and then they should have a good riddance of them both; thus at the same time mocking at him for his baldness, and making a jest of the wondrous work of God, the assumption of Elijah; which, with behaving so irreverently to an hoary head, a prophet of the Lord, was very heinous and wicked, and therefore what befell them need not be wondered at.

{x} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 46. 2.

2 Kings 2:24

Ver. 24. And he turned back, and looked on them,.... With a stern countenance, thereby reproving them, and in order to intimidate them, and make them ashamed, and cause them to leave off, but to no purpose; they repeated their mockeries with great vehemence:

and cursed them in the name of the Lord; moved thereunto, not from passion and a spirit of revenge, but by an impulse of the Spirit of God:

and there came forth two she bears out of the wood; which are fiercest, and especially when bereaved of their whelps, as these might be; the wood seems to be near to Bethel, perhaps in the wilderness of Bethel, of which see **Jos 8:15**, and Reland {y} thinks it is the same with the wood of Ephraim, 2Sa 18:6, though the Jews, to increase the miracle, say {z} there was no wood at all, and, if there was, that there were no bears in it; but though those creatures are mostly in northern countries, yet there were of them in Judea, see 1Sa 17:34

and tare forty and two children of them; it seems there were more than these; but such a number of them they tore to pieces and destroyed; which was very extraordinary, and was an awful punishment for their wickedness, which they knowingly and willingly committed, and of their parents in them, who had trained them up in such impiety, and put them upon it, and sent them out to do it.

{y} Palestin. Illustrat. p. 378. {z} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 47. 1.

2 Kings 2:25

Ver. 25. And he went from thence to Mount Carmel,.... Where Elijah used to frequent, and where also there might be a school of the prophets; this, according to Bunting {a}, was fifty six miles from Bethel:

and from thence he returned to Samaria; the capital of the kingdom of Israel; there to bear his testimony against idolatry, to reprove for it, and reclaim from it; this, as the same writer says {b}, was thirty two miles from Carmel.

{a} Travels, &c. p. 206. {b} Ibid.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 3

This chapter gives the character of Jehoram king of Israel, **2Ki 3:1**, relates the rebellion of the king of Moab against him, **2Ki 3:4**, the war that he and his allies entered into on that account, **2Ki 3:6** the distress the combined army were in for want of water, their application upon this to Elisha, who promised them water, and they had it in a wonderful manner, **2Ki 3:10** and the chapter is concluded with the rout of the Moabites, and the barbarity of their king to his eldest son, **2Ki 3:21**.

Ver. 1. Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah,.... So that the two years of the reign of his brother Ahaziah were not complete, only part of the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth of Jehoshaphat, since he began to reign in his seventeenth year, at the beginning of that, and died towards the close of the eighteenth, when Jehoram succeeded him, see 1Ki 22:51, and reigned twelve years.

2 Kings 3:2

Ver. 2. And he wrought evil in the sight of the Lord,.... Was guilty of idolatry:

but not like his father, and like his mother; his father Ahab, and his mother Jezebel:

for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made; he did not destroy it, only removed it from the temple of Baal where it was set, that it might not be worshipped, at least publicly, see 1Ki 16:31 this he did, either moved to it by his own conscience, observing the sudden deaths of his father and brother, which he might suppose was for their idolatry; or in order to obtain success in his war with Moab he was entering into; or being instigated by Jehoshaphat to do it, or otherwise he might refuse to join him.

2 Kings 3:3

Ver. 3. Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin,.... He closely adhered to the worship of the calves set up by him:

he departed not therefrom: that being a piece of state policy, to keep up the division of the two kingdoms.

2 Kings 3:4

Ver. 4. And Mesha king of Moab was a sheep master,.... With which his country abounded; he kept great numbers of them, and shepherds to take care of them; he traded in them, and got great riches by them; his substance chiefly consisted in them:

and rendered unto the king of Israel: either as a present, or as an annual tribute:

an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool; that is, upon them, unshorn, and so the more valuable; and it was usual for tributary nations to pay their tribute to those to whom they were subject in such commodities which they most abounded with; so the Cappadocians, as Strabo {c} relates, used to pay, as a tribute to the Persians, every year, 1500 horses and 2000 mules, and five myriads of sheep, or 50,000; and formerly, Pliny {d} says, the only tribute was from the pastures.

{c} Geograph. l. 11. p. 362. {d} Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 3.

2 Kings 3:5

Ver. 5. But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. Who then was Ahaziah; but either through the pusillanimity of his temper, or the sickness that attended him, or the shortness of his reign, he took no steps to the reduction of him, or to oblige him to pay his tribute, which he neglected to do, and is meant by his rebellion.

2 Kings 3:6

Ver. 6. And King Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, &e.] As soon as he came to the throne:

and numbered all Israel; who were fit to bear arms, got them together at some certain place, and mustered them, and prepared for a war with Moab, to reduce them.

2 Kings 3:7

Ver. 7. And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, the king of Moab hath rebelled against me,.... By refusing to pay him tribute:

wilt thou go up with me against Moab to battle? and he said, I will go up; which he agreed to, partly to encourage in the reformation of religion which he had begun, and partly to chastise the Moabites for their invasion of his country, 2Ch 20:1.

I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses; the same answer he returned to Ahab, See Gill on "1Ki 22:4".

2 Kings 3:8

Ver. 8. And he said, which way shall we go up.... That is, Jehoram said so to Jehoshaphat, consulting with him which was the best way to take to the land of Moab, whether the shortest way, over Jordan; or some other:

and he answered, the way through the wilderness of Edom; which bordered upon it, and the same through which the Israelites passed; for Kadesh was on the extreme border of Edom, whither they came, Nu 20:1 and this Jehoshaphat proposed, partly that they might come upon Moab unawares, and attack them where they were weakest, and not on their guard; and partly, to take the king of Edom with them, who was no other than Jehoshaphat's deputy, and so be assisting to them, and prevent him from revolting, which otherwise he might take this opportunity of doing.

2 Kings 3:9

Ver. 9. So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah,.... The way of the wilderness of Edom, proposed by the latter:

and the king of Edom; whom they took with them in their way, who was not properly a king, but a viceroy or deputy, see 1Ki 22:47

and they fetched a compass of seven days journey; they went round the Dead Sea, and through the wilderness of Edom, and so to the borders of Moab:

and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them; neither for the soldiers in the army, nor the cattle that drew the carriages, being in a wilderness.

2 Kings 3:10

Ver. 10. And the king of Israel said, alas!.... Lamenting their sad case, as being desperate; and the rather he was the more concerned, as he was the principal who had drawn the other kings into this affair, though he throws it upon the Lord and his providence:

that the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hands of Moab; into whose hands they must inevitably fall, if they could have no water to refresh them; since they would be so weak as not to be able to stand a battle with them, and be dispersed here and there in search of water, and so fall into their hands. Extreme thirst is intolerable. It is reported {e} of Lysimachus, that he delivered himself and his army into the hands of the enemy for a draught of water. Leo Africanus {f} relates, that in the desert of Azaoad stand two marble pillars, testifying that a rich merchant bought of a carrier of wares a cup of water at the price of 10,000 ducats; but there not being water sufficient neither for the one nor the other, they were both died with thirst.

{e} Plutarch. in Apothegm. {f} Descriptio Africae, l. 1. p. 75.

2 Kings 3:11

Ver. 11. But Jehoshaphat said, is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?.... This the good king should have done before be set out, but had neglected it; however, it was not too late:

and one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said; who might be one that feared the Lord, and was intimate with Elisha, or however had knowledge of him, as appears by what follows:

here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah; or ministered to him, as the Targum; was his menial servant, waited on him, and assisted him when he washed his hands {g}; some Jewish writers understand it of his pouring water on the hand of Elijah at Carmel, when the altar and trench were filled with it, and when a miracle was wrought, as they fancy, and the fingers of Elijah became as fountains of water.

{g} See the like phrase of the business of a servant in Homer, Iliad. 3. ver. 270, & Iliad. 9. ver. 174. Odyss. 1. ver. 147. & Odyss. 3. ver. 388. & Odyss. 4. ver. 258, 261. & passim.

2 Kings 3:12

Ver. 12. And Jehoshaphat said, the word of the Lord is with him,.... To give them an answer, which he concluded from his being a servant and disciple of Elijah, whom he succeeded in his office, and of whom he had, doubtless, heard; and from his following the camp, and being in it, which he easily imagined was not to fight, but to assist by his advice and counsel, and by his prophecies, as there might be occasion for them:

so the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him; descended from their chariots, and went to the tent in the camp where he was; they did not send for him to come to them, but, in honour of him, went to him themselves.

2 Kings 3:13

Ver. 13. And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, what have I to do with thee?.... An idolater; I can hold no discourse nor have any conversation with thee, nor give thee any advice or assistance:

get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother; the prophets of Baal, and of the groves:

and the king of Israel said unto him, nay; meaning, he would not apply to them, who he was sensible could give him no relief, only to the Lord God, from whom this affliction was, and therefore begs he would pray to him to have mercy on them; so the Targum,

"I beseech thee remember not the sins of that wickedness, pray for mercy for us:"

for the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab; signifying, that he should not perish alone, but the other two kings with him, who had no connection with the prophets of his father and mother in their idolatry, and therefore hoped for their sakes mercy would be shown.

2 Kings 3:14

Ver. 14. Elisha said, as the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand,.... Whose minster and prophet he was, to whom he prayed, and whose service he was ready to perform:

surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah; revere him not only as a king, but as a pious prince, and a worshipper of the true God:

I would not look toward thee, nor see thee; give him no countenance at all, pay no regard to his request, not so much as to look at him in a civil way; but turn away his face from him with contempt and disdain, as unworthy to be conversed with by a prophet of the Lord.

2 Kings 3:15

Ver. 15. But now bring me a minstrel,.... A piper, a man that knows how to play upon the harp, as the Targum; according to Procopius Gazaeus, this was one of the Levites he ordered to be fetched, who was used to the spiritual melody of David, and could play on musical instruments as he directed. This he did to allay his passion, and compose his spirits, ruffled at the sight of Jehoram, and to fit him to receive prophetic inspiration, which sometimes came upon the Lord's prophets when thus employed, see 1Sa 10:5. Some think {h} the music the prophet called for is that sort the Greeks call "harmony", which is the gravest and saddest, and settles the affections:

and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him; the spirit of prophecy, as the Targum, which came by the power of God, and as a gift from his hand.

{h} Weemse's Christ. Synagog. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4. p. 143.

2 Kings 3:16

Ver. 16. And he said, thus saith the Lord, make this valley full of ditches. In which the allied army lay encamped, that they might be ready to receive large quantities of water, sufficient for the whole army and cattle, when it came.

2 Kings 3:17

Ver. 17. For thus saith the Lord, ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see the rain,.... Neither perceive the south wind blow, which usually brings rain, nor clouds gathering in the heavens, as portending it, nor any filling from thence:

yet that valley shall be filled with water; and all the ditches dug in it:

that ye may drink, both ye and your cattle, and all your beasts; there would be such a quantity as would be enough for them all, the soldiers, the horses they rode on, and the beasts that drew their wagons.

2 Kings 3:18

Ver. 18. And this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord,.... To give them such a plenty of water in such an extraordinary manner: he would do for them what was greater, not only save them from falling into the hand of Moab, which they feared,

but he wilt deliver the Moabites into your hands; which was more than was asked for, or expected.

2 Kings 3:19

Ver. 19. And ye shall smite every fenced city and every choice city,.... That is, the inhabitants of them with the sword, and demolish them also, **2Ki 3:25**, and shall fell every good tree; which seems contrary to the law in De 20:19, but that may respect trees belonging to a city when besieged only, or only to Canaanitish cities; or the law was now dispensed with, and that for this time only, to make the punishment of Moab the greater, for their rebellion and other sins:

and stop all wells of water; which must be very distressing to those that survived the calamity of the sword:

and mar every good piece of land with stones; as that it could not be ploughed and sowed, nor anything spring up and grow upon it.

2 Kings 3:20

Ver. 20. And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered,.... At Jerusalem; which always went along with the daily burnt offering of the lamb, which might not indeed be offered before break of day, yet quickly after; for no sacrifice could be offered before that, See Gill on "Ex 29:39",

that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom; not from the heavens, but it may be out of some rock, rolling along on the earth from the hills and mountains, down into the valleys, where the armies were:

and the country was filled with water; all round about them. Who has not heard of the "thundering" legion, as it was called by the Emperor M. Aurelius, who, when the army under him was about to engage with the Germans and Sarmatians, and sadly distressed with thirst, fell down on their knees and prayed, upon which a large shower of rain came down to the refreshment of the army, and thunder bolts, which annoyed and put the enemy to flight {i}? at the battle of the Romans with Jugurtha, a sudden and unexpected shower of rain fell, to the refreshment of the Romans, in intolerable thirst {k}.

{i} Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 5. c. 5. Orosii Hist. l. 7. c. 15. p. 120. {k} Orosii Hist. l. 5. c. 15. p. 77.

2 Kings 3:21

Ver. 21. And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them,.... The kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom:

they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward; that were of an age capable of that, and all who were more grown; or "girt on a girdle" {l}, a military one, with which the sword was girt, who were at age to wear and knew how to wield a sword: and stood in the border; of their land, between Edom and them, to defend themselves and their country against these invaders.

{l} hrgx rgx "eingente cingulo", Montanus.

2 Kings 3:22

Ver. 22. And they rose up early in the morning,.... To watch the motions of their enemies, and be upon their guard against them:

and the sun shone upon the water; with which the valley was filled:

and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood; so it appeared through the rays of the sun reflected on it.

2 Kings 3:23

Ver. 23. And they said, this is blood,.... They were very confident of it, having no notion of water, there having been no rain for some time; and perhaps it was not usual to see water at any time in this place:

the kings are surely slain; they and their forces:

and they have smitten one another; having quarrelled either about their religion, or about want of water, and the distress they were come into through it, laying the blame of their coming out to war, or of their coming that way, on one another; and the Moabites might rather think something of this kind had happened, from what had lately been done among themselves, and their allies, 2Ch 20:23

now therefore, Moab, to the spoil; having no occasion to fight, or prepare for it; all they had to do was to march directly to the enemy's camp, and plunder it.

2 Kings 3:24

Ver. 24. And when they came to the camp of Israel,.... Not in an orderly regular manner, in rank and file, as an army should march, but in a confused manner, everyone striving who should get thither first, and have the largest share of the booty:

the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them; being prepared for them, they fell upon them sword in hand, and soon obliged them to flee:

but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country; they pursued them closely, and slew them as they fled, and followed them not only to their borders, but into their own country: though Schultens {m}, from the use of the word hbn in the Arabic language, renders the passage, "and they blunted their swords in it (in that slaughter), even by smiting the Moabites".

{m} De Defect. Hod. Ling. Heb. sect. 26.

2 Kings 3:25

Ver. 25. And they beat down the cities,.... Demolished the walls of them, and houses in them, wherever they came:

and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; which they had taken out of the walls and houses they pulled down; or which they picked up in the highway, as they passed along, being a stony country; or which being laid in heaps, gathered out of the fields, they took and scattered them all over them:

and they stopped all the wells of water; with stones and dirt:

and felled all the good trees; fruit bearing ones;
See Gill on "2Ki 3:19",

only in Kirharaseth left they the stones thereof; not able to demolish it, it being a strong fortified city, the principal of the kingdom, and into which the king of Moab had thrown himself, and the remains of his forces; of which see Isa 16:7,

howbeit, the slingers went about it, and smote it; smote the soldiers that appeared upon the walls of it; though Kimchi, and other Jewish writers, understand it of engineers, who cast out large stones from a sort of machines then in use, to batter down and break through the walls of cities.

2 Kings 3:26

Ver. 26. And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him,.... The siege was so close, the slingers or engineers did so much execution, that he saw the city would soon be taken, and he be obliged to deliver it up:

he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords; men expert in war, bold and daring:

to break through even unto the king of Edom; through his quarters, and so escape, he lying nearest to the city, and perhaps the weakest body of men with him; or he might think he was not so hearty in the cause of the kings, and would make but a feeble resistance, and let him pass:

but they could not; break through they met with a greater opposition than was expected perhaps the Edomites remembered how they had lately used them, which made them fight more desperately against them, see
2Ch 20:23.

2 Kings 3:27

Ver. 27. Then he took his eldest son, that should have reigned in his stead,.... Not the eldest son of the king of Edom, whom the king of Moab had in his hands before, which made the king of Edom the more willing to join in this expedition for the recovery of his son, as Joseph Kimchi thinks; or whom he took now in his sally out upon him, as Moses Kimchi and Ben Gersom, proceeding upon a mistaken sense of **Am 2:1** for the king of Edom could have no son that had a right, or was designed to succeed him, since he was but a deputy king himself; and besides, the sacrificing of him was not the way to cause the kings to raise the siege, but rather to provoke them to press it the more closely: it was the king of Moab that took his son and heir to the crown,

and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall; that it might be seen by the camp of Israel, and move their compassion; or rather this was done as a religious action, to appease the deity by an human sacrifice so dear and precious, to give success, and cause the enemy to break up the siege; and was either offered to the true God, the God of Israel, in imitation of Abraham, as some Jewish writers fancy {n}, or to his idol Chemosh, the sun; and Jarchi observes, out of an exposition of theirs, that "vau" is wanting in the word for wall, and so may be interpreted of the sun, towards which this burnt offering was offered; and it is observed, from various Heathen authors, that it was usual with the Heathens, when in calamity and distress, to offer up to their gods what was most dear and valuable to them; and particularly the Phoenicians {o}, and from them the Carthaginians had this custom, who at one time offered up two hundred sons of their nobility, to appease their gods {p}:

and there was great indignation against Israel; not of the king of Edom against them, for not rescuing his son, or because they were the means of this disaster which befell him; but of the king of Moab, who was quite desperate, and determined to hold out the siege to the utmost extremity: and they departed, and returned to their own land; the three kings, the one to Edom, the other to Israel, and the third to Judah; when they saw the Moabites would sell their lives so dear, and hold out to the last man, they thought fit to break up the siege; and perhaps were greatly affected with the barbarous shocking sight they had seen, and might fear, should they stay, something else of the like kind would be done.

{n} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 39. 2. Pesikta in Abarbinel in loc. {o} Vid. Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. c. 10. p. 40. l. 4. c. 16. p. 156. Porphyr. de Abstinentia, l. 2. sect. 56. Vid. Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 28. {p} Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 20. p. 756.

2 Kings 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 4

This chapter treats of the miracles of Elisha, of his multiplying a poor widow's pot of oil for the payment of her husband's debts, **2Ki 4:1** of obtaining a son for a Shunamitish woman, who had been very hospitable to him, **2Ki 4:8**, of his raising up her son to life when dead, **2Ki 4:18**, of his curing the deadly pottage made of wild gourds, **2Ki 4:38**, and of his feeding one hundred men with twenty barley loaves, **2Ki 4:42**.

Ver. 1. Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha,.... This, according to the Targum, was the wife of Obadiah, who had hid the prophets by fifty in a cave in the times of Ahab; and so Josephus {q}, and it is the commonly received notion of the Jewish writers; though it does not appear that he was a prophet, or the son of a prophet, but the governor or steward of Ahab's house; she was more likely to be the wife of a meaner person; and from hence it is clear that the prophets and their disciples married:

saying, thy servant my husband is dead; which is the lot of prophets, as well as others, **Zec 1:5**

and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord; her husband was well known to the prophet, and known to be a good man, one of the 7000 who bowed not the knee to Baal, for the truth of which she appeals to Elisha; and this character she gives of her husband, lest it should be thought that his poverty, and leaving her in debt, were owing to any ill practices of his:

and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen; which it seems were allowed of when men became poor and insolvent, and died so, to which the allusion is in **Isa 1:1**,
See Gill on "Mt 18:25". Josephus {r} suggests, that the insolvency of this man was owing to his borrowing money to feed the prophets hid in the cave; and it is a common notion of the Jews that this creditor was Jehoram the son of Ahab; and in later times it was a law with the Athenians {s}, that if a father had not paid what he was fined in court, the son was obliged to pay it, and in the mean while to lie in bonds, as was the case of Cimon {t}, and others.

{q} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 4. sect. 2. {r} Ibid. {s} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 10. {t} Cornel. Nep. in Vita Cimon. l. 5. c. 1.

2 Kings 4:2

Ver. 2. And Elisha said unto her, what shall I do for thee?.... Or can I do, being poor himself, and unable to relieve her out of his substance, and not knowing where to get anything for her; and so what could she expect from him? signifying, that he pitied her case, but all that he could do was to give her his best advice, and pray for her:

tell me what thou hast in thy house? that she could part with and dispose of, in order to pay her debt; and satisfy her creditor:

and she said, thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil; that is, nothing of any value; she might have some things, some sort of household goods, though perhaps she had parted with most of them in her poverty; this was the most valuable thing she had.

2 Kings 4:3

Ver. 3. Then he said, go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours,.... For he perceived that she had none:

even empty vessels; which they might more readily lend her:

borrow not a few; but as many as she could get; the prophet, under a divine impulse, was directed to say this to her, foreseeing, by a spirit of prophecy, that a large quantity of oil would be given her.

2 Kings 4:4

Ver. 4. And when thou art come in,.... Into her house:

thou shall shut the door upon thee, and upon thy sons; that they might be alone in the house while the miracle was working; that they might not be interrupted in what they were to do, by the creditor coming in upon them, or by neighbours, who would be for getting the oil from them in the vessels they had lent them: and that the miracle might appear the plainer, no oil being brought into the house by any:

and shalt pour out into all these vessels; out of the single pot of oil into all they borrowed:

and thou shalt set aside that which is full; by itself, and fill the rest of the empty ones.

2 Kings 4:5

Ver. 5. So she went from him,.... And did as he advised her, borrowed many empty vessels of her neighbours, having faith in what the prophet had said to her:

and shut the door upon her, and upon her sons; and then went to work as she was directed, with her sons:

who brought the vessels to her; the empty ones she had borrowed: and she poured out; the oil out of her pot into them.

2 Kings 4:6

Ver. 6. And it came to pass when the vessels were full,.... For the oil being miraculously increased as it was poured forth, there was enough to fill all the vessels; Ben Gersom and Abarbinel say, that when the pot was emptied, all the air that entered it was turned into oil:

that she said to her son, bring me yet a vessel; as she had two sons, one it is probable was employed in setting aside the full vessels, as she poured into them, and the other in bringing to her the empty vessels, and to whom she thus speaks:

and he said unto her, there is not a vessel more; not an empty one, they were all filled:

and the oil stayed; it ran no longer, it was no more multiplied; there was no necessity of continuing the miracle: this oil may be an emblem of the grace that flows from the fulness of it in Christ, to which it is compared, which will be always flowing, as long as there is a vessel of salvation, or faith in any to receive it; see Mt 25:3 **1Jo 2:20**.

2 Kings 4:7

Ver. 7. Then she came and told the man of God,.... Elisha the prophet, what had been done, what a quantity of oil she had, and advised with him what was to be done with it:

and he said, go, sell thy oil, and pay thy debt; what was thus miraculously produced was no doubt very good and excellent, and would fetch a good price; and she is therefore bid to turn it into money, and pay her debts with it; she was not to keep it all for her own use, and indulge to luxury with it, but first pay her just debt, as everyone ought to do that is able:

and live thou and thy children of the rest; so that it seems there was enough to pay her debt with it, rid her of her troubles, and somewhat remaining for the support of herself and children.

2 Kings 4:8

Ver. 8. And it fell on a day,.... Or so it was at a certain time:

that Elisha passed to Shunem; a city in the tribe of Issachar; of which see Jos 19:18,

where was a great woman; of great wealth and riches, of great benevolence and hospitality, and of great grace and piety; that feared sin, as the Targum paraphrases it; a woman of great credit and reputation on all accounts. The Jews say {u} she was the sister of Abishag the Shunammite, and the mother of Iddo the prophet:

and she constrained him to eat bread; she had observed him at all times pass that way, and guessed by his habit and deportment that he was a religious man, and therefore took an opportunity to invite him into her house, and take a dinner with her; but he being modest and shy, she was obliged to use some pressing language, and be importunate with him, that he would accept of her invitation, which he did:

and so it was, that, as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread; being made very welcome, and encouraged by the free and kind entertainment he met with, as often as he had occasion to come that way, he called and took a meal with her; and this it seems was pretty often, for Shunem was not far from Carmel, which he frequented, and lay in the way to Samaria, Bethel, and Jericho, places he often visited, the schools of the prophets being there.

{u} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 57. 2.

2 Kings 4:9

Ver. 9. And she said unto her husband,.... Not being willing to do any thing without his leave and consent:

behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God which passeth by us continually: and calls here frequently: this she perceived by his discourse and conversation; and by his carriage and behaviour he appeared to be a prophet, and one very eminent for holiness and religion.

2 Kings 4:10

Ver. 10. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall,.... Either of the city, to which their house might join, or of their garden, a little distance from the house; though the Jewish writers commonly understand it of a little edifice built up of walls of stone or bricks, and not one with reeds, or stud and mud:

let us set for him there a bed; that he may stay all night when he pleases:

and a table; not only to eat his food, but to write on, and lay his books on he reads. Of the table of a scholar of the wise men, in later times, we are told {t}, that two thirds of it were covered with a cloth, and the other third was uncovered, on which stood the plates and the herbs:

and a stool; to sit upon at table:

and a candlestick; with a candle in it, to light him in the night to read by, and the like:

and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither; where he would be free from the noise of the house, and be more retired for prayer, reading, meditation, and study, and not be disturbed with the servants of the family, and be mixed with them; all this she contrived, both for his honour, and for his quietness and peace.

{t} Pirke Eliezer, c. 33.

2 Kings 4:11

Ver. 11. And it fell on a day that he came thither,.... As he had been wont to do:

and he turned into the chamber; built for him, and to which he was directed:

and lay there; all night, and which no doubt was frequently repeated by him, he accepting of the kindness of his host.

2 Kings 4:12

Ver. 12. And he said to Gehazi his servant,.... Who attended him wherever he went, and ministered to him, and lay very probably in the same chamber with him; he might be one of the sons of the prophets:

call this Shunammite; tell her I desire to speak with her:

and when he had called her, she stood before him; at the door of the chamber, in great reverence of him, and with much humility, waiting to hear what he had to say to her: this must be understood after what had further passed between Elisha and Gehazi, and between Gehazi and the woman, who returned to his master, and acquainted him with what she had said to him, upon which he was sent to call her, and she came.

2 Kings 4:13

Ver. 13. And he said unto him,...., To Gehazi, before he went to call her:

say now unto her, behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; in building a chamber, and furnishing it with proper household goods, and providing food for them from time to time:

what is to be done for thee? can anything be thought of by thee that will be acceptable, and in my masters power to do for thee, or thy husband?

wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? that her husband might be promoted to some post in the court, or in the camp; intimating, that if either of these was agreeable, Elisha would speak on his behalf, having interest in both through his services in Edom:

and she answered, I will dwell among my own people she was content and satisfied with her present state of life, and the situation she was in, and with her friends and neighbours she lived among, and did not care to remove, though it was to a higher rank of life, and to greater dignity and honour; and she had no suit to make to the king or general, nothing to complain of; and she had friends enough to speak for her, should she want any assistance.

2 Kings 4:14

Ver. 14. And he said,.... That is, Elisha to Gehazi, when he returned to him, and told him what the Shunammite said:

what then is to be done for her? something he thought should be done in gratitude, the favours they had received, and advises with his servant what could be thought of, he being one about the house:

and Gehazi answered, verily she hath no child, and her husband is old; and so not likely to have any by him; as children were always very desirable by women, and especially in those days, the servant suggests, that no doubt to have one would be very acceptable to her.

2 Kings 4:15

Ver. 15. And he said, call her,.... Perhaps finding an impulse on his own mind, from the Spirit of God, that this was the thing to be done for her:

and when he had called her, she stood in the door; of his chamber:
See Gill on "2Ki 4:12".

2 Kings 4:16

Ver. 16. And he said, about this season,.... In the next year:

according to the time of life; the usual time women go with child:

thou shalt embrace a son; in thine arms, that shall be born of thee, which she should have in her lap, and in her bosom:

and she said, nay, my lord, do not lie unto thine handmaid; or speak unto her what was not truth; it was so great, and so unaccountable, how it could be in her circumstances, that she could not believe it to be true, though she wished it might; or do not deceive me with vain and false words, or flatter me, jest with me, which would be unbecoming his character as a man of God, and prophet of the Lord; according to the Targum, she wished it might prove true, and she not deceived; see **2Ki 4:28**.

2 Kings 4:17

Ver. 17. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at the season that Elisha said unto her,.... Quickly after this she conceived, and became pregnant, and by that time the year came round, she was brought to bed of a son:

according to the time of life: when she had gone her full time to have a son born alive, and live.

2 Kings 4:18

Ver. 18. And when the child was grown,.... Perhaps was six or seven years of age, or more:

it fell on a day that he went out to his father to the reapers; it was harvest time, and the men were reaping the corn in the fields; and his father, though a wealthy man, was with them to direct them, and see they did their business well, as Boaz formerly; and the child went out from the house to the field, to see his father and the reapers, for his recreation and diversion.

2 Kings 4:19

Ver. 19. And he said unto his father, my head, my head,.... After he had been some time with him, he complained of a pain in his head, which might be owing, as Abarbinel thinks, to the sun's beating upon it, being harvest time, and hot weather; and the pain being exceeding great and vehement, he repeated his complaint, see **Jer 4:19**

and he said to a lad, carry him home to his mother; his father gave orders to a lad that attended the reapers to have him home to his mother, that she might give him something to ease him of his pain.

2 Kings 4:20

Ver. 20. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother,.... The lad led him home, and delivered him to his mother:

he sat on her knees till noon, and then died; out of her great affection, she took him on her knees, and laid his head in her bosom to sooth the pain, and in this posture he continued until the middle of the day, and then expired; by which it appears it was in the morning when he went into the field, and when the sun was pretty high, and beat strongly on him; which, it may be, produced a fever, and which issued in his death.

2 Kings 4:21

Ver. 21. And she went up,.... Into the little chamber built for the prophet:

and laid him on the bed of the man of God; not from any imagination of any virtue in it to bring her child to life; though she might think of the prophet, and have faith that he could raise it to life, as Elijah raised the widow of Zarephath's son laid on his bed, of which she might have heard; but this being a private room, and into which none went, she laid it here to conceal its death from her husband and family, and to prevent grief, and that they might not bury it until she returned:

and shut the door upon him; that no creature might enter, and, do any damage to his corpse:

and went out; not out of the chamber, that she did before she shut the door, but out of the house.

2 Kings 4:22

Ver. 22. And she called unto her husband,.... In the field, who might be within call, or by a messenger she sent to him:

and said, send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again; intimating that she should not be long gone, but should return again presently; saying not a word of the death of the child, or of the occasion of her going.

2 Kings 4:23

Ver. 23. And he said, wherefore wilt thou go to him today?.... What reason is there for it? what is the meaning of it?

it is neither new moon nor sabbath; neither the first day of the month, nor the seventh day of the week, times which were religiously observed; so with the Heathens the new moon and the seventh of the week, and so the fourth, were sacred {u}; which notions they borrowed from the Jews,
See Gill on "1Sa 20:5" and when, it seems, it was usual to frequent the house of the prophet, to hear the word of God read and explained, and other religious exercises performed, as praying and singing praise, and receiving some good instructions and advice. Joseph Kimchi gives a different sense of these words:

"there is not a month past, no, not a week, since thou sawest him;"

why therefore shouldest thou be in such haste to go to him? so the words for new moon and sabbath may signify:

and she said, it shall be well; it was right for her to go, and it would be well for him and her, and the family; or, "peace" {w}, be easy and quiet, farewell: it is much he had no mistrust of the death of the child, or that it was worse, since it went from him ill.

{u} Hesiod. Opera & Dies, l. 2. {w} Mwlv "pax", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

2 Kings 4:24

Ver. 24. Then she saddled an ass,.... Her servant did it by her order:

and said to her servant, drive, and go forward; make all the haste he could:

slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee; do not be afraid of riding too fast for me; if thou dost, I will tell thee; till then, keep on a good pace: Abarbinel says she walked afoot all the way, and ordered the man not to slacken his pace in riding for her, unless she called to him; and the Targum seems to favour this sense,

"do not press me to ride unless I call to thee;"

so that the ass was for Elijah to ride on; but one would think, that, as she was in haste, quicker dispatch would be made by her riding than by walking, see **2Ki 4:22**.

2 Kings 4:25

Ver. 25. So she went and came unto the man of God at Mount Carmel,.... Where Elijah used to be, and where, perhaps, was a school of the prophets; this, according to Bunting {x}, was sixteen miles from Shunem:

and it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off; as he might from the eminence of the mountain:

that he said to Gehazi his servant, behold, yonder is that Shunammite; that has so often and so hospitably entertained us at her house.

{x} Travels, &c. p. 207.

2 Kings 4:26

Ver. 26. Run now, I pray thee, to meet her,.... In respect to her, and to know the occasion of her coming; something is the cause of it:

and say unto her, is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? has any disaster befallen thee, thy husband, or the child? are all in good health? or does any disorder attend any of them?

and she answered, it is well; as in general they were, the greatest part, she and her husband; and though the child was dead, yet, if gone to heaven, as she might hope, it was well too; and it is right to judge and say, that all that the Lord does is well: she gives a short answer to the servant, not being willing to be detained, and being desirous of telling her case to the prophet himself.

2 Kings 4:27

Ver. 27. And when she came to the man of God to the hill,.... To the top of it:

she caught him by the feet; in reverence to him, and as a supplicant, she prostrated herself at his feet, and, out of affection to him, caught hold on them, and held them fast, and determined not to leave him until he had promised to go with her, see Mt 28:9. It was usual with the Jews to lay hold on and kiss the feet or knees of those to whom they did homage, or made supplication, see Mt 28:9.
See Gill on "Lu 7:38", and so with the Greeks, as may be observed in various passages in Homer {y} and others:

but Gehazi came near to thrust her away; as being troublesome and disagreeable to his master, and not for her honour and credit:

and the man of God said, let her alone, for her soul is vexed within her; or "is bitter" {z}, full of trouble and distress, and knows not what to do, nor very well what she does:

and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me: what is the cause of this her trouble; for prophets did not know things of themselves, nor had they the vision of prophecy at their will and pleasure, but according to the will of God.

{y} Vid. Barthium ad Claudian. de Raptu Proserpin. l. 1. ver. 50. {z} hrm "amara", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

2 Kings 4:28

Ver. 28. Then she said, did I desire a son of my lord?.... It was not at her request she had one, at least the first motion was not from her; the prophet first told her, and assured her she should have one, without her asking for it; she might be pleased with it, and desire the promise might be fulfilled; but it was not an inordinate, importunate, desire of one, in which she had exceeded, that so the taking it away from her might be a correction of her for it:

did I not say, do not deceive me; by giving hopes of a child, and yet have none; and now it was equally the same, or worse, to have one, and then to have it taken away again as soon as had almost; so the Targum,

"did I not say unto thee, if a child is given me, let it live, if not, do not trouble or grieve me;"

and then, no doubt, she told him plainly the child was dead, and where she had laid it, though not recorded.

2 Kings 4:29

Ver. 29. Then he said to Gehazi, gird up thy loins,.... His loose and long garments about him, that he might make quicker dispatch in travelling:

and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way; not for the sake of travelling with it, but for an end after mentioned:

if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again; that so no time may be lost:

and lay my staff upon the face of the child; he not intending when he said this to go himself, but at the time, as near as he could, when this action was performed, would pray to God to restore life to the child; for he could not imagine that by this bare action it could be done.

2 Kings 4:30

Ver. 30. And the mother of the child said,.... Having no faith in what the servant was to do, or could do:

as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee; signifying she would not go with his servant, but insisted upon it that he himself went with her, or she would not depart:

and he arose, and followed her; influenced by her importunity, and a sense of favours he had received from her, and more especially by the Spirit of God.

2 Kings 4:31

Ver. 31. And Gehazi passed on before them,.... The prophet and the Shunammite:

and laid the staff upon the face of the child; as he was ordered:

but there was neither voice nor hearing: it seems as if he spoke when he laid the staff on the child, but it heard and answered him not, so that there was no sign of life in it:

wherefore he went again to meet him; upon the road between Carmel and Shunem:

and told him, saying, the child is not awaked; by which he expresses its being dead; or, if he knew nothing of its death, he supposed it fast asleep, which was the reason of its not hearing and answering, though the former seems best.

2 Kings 4:32

Ver. 32. And when Elisha was come into the house,.... Of the Shunamite, and into the chamber built for him:

behold, the child was dead, and laid upon the bed; upon his bed, and where he found it really dead.

2 Kings 4:33

Ver. 33. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain,.... Himself and the dead child; that nobody might come in and interrupt him in his prayers for the restoration of it to life, nor see the motions and gestures he used, and the postures he put himself in:

and prayed unto the Lord; that he would restore the child to life.

2 Kings 4:34

Ver. 34. And he went up,.... To the bed, which was on an ascent in the chamber, See Gill on "2Ki 1:4" and lay upon the child; as Elijah did on the widow's son of Zarephath, 1Ki 17:21

and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and stretched himself upon the child; that is, he did each of these one after another, since the disproportion of their bodies would not admit of their being done together:

and the flesh of the child waxed warm; not from any virtue imparted to it by these motions and actions of the prophet, but from life being infused into it by the Lord, which caused an heat in the several parts of the body.

2 Kings 4:35

Ver. 35. Then he returned and walked in the house to and fro,.... Left the chamber, and came down to the house where the family chiefly resided, and walked to and fro in deep thought and meditation, and, no doubt, in fervent ejaculations for the wished for blessing to be completed:

and went up; to the chamber again, and up to the bed in it:

and stretched himself upon him; as before:

and the child sneezed seven times; which was a sign of life, and even of health; and hereby his head was cleared, as some observe, of those humours that had caused the pains in it {a}, and had issued in death:

and the child opened his eyes; upon the prophet, another sign of life.

{a} Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 28. c. 6. Aristot. Problem. sect. 33. qu. 9.

2 Kings 4:36

Ver. 36. And he called Gehazi, and said, call this Shunammite,.... To come up to the chamber to him:

so he called her: and when she was come in unto him, he said, take up thy son; from off the bed, alive, safe, and sound.

2 Kings 4:37

Ver. 37. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground,.... In reverence of him, and with the most profound gratitude and thankfulness for the mercy received:

and took up her son, and went out; of the chamber into her house, with great joy and gladness.

2 Kings 4:38

Ver. 38. And Elisha came again to Gilgal,.... Where he was with Elijah a little before his assumption to heaven, **2Ki 2:1** and whither he went, there being a school of the prophets, as he did to all places where there were any, and where he had been before with Elijah; partly to instruct, encourage, and strengthen them, and partly to confirm his office as a prophet by miracles, which he did in several places he came to:

and there was a dearth in the land; a famine through drought:

and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: as disciples before their master, see Ac 22:3

and he said unto his servant; very probably Gehazi:

set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets; who seemed to have lived together in one house or college, and to be to the number of one hundred, see **2Ki 4:43** and therefore required to have a large pot set on to boil pottage for them all.

2 Kings 4:39

Ver. 39. And one went out into the fields to gather herbs,.... To put into the pottage, the gardens affording none in this time of dearth; or, however, being scarce, were at too great a price for the sons of the prophets to purchase them; and therefore one of them went out into the field to gather what common herbs he could:

and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full; thought to be the same with coloquintida, the leaves of which are very like to a vine, of a very bitter taste, and a very violent purgative, which, if not remedied, will produce ulcerations in the bowels, and issue in death; some think the white brier or white vine is meant, the colour of whose berries is very inviting to look at, but very bitter and ungrateful, and it vehemently purges {b}; the Arabs call a sort of mushroom that is white and soft by this name {c}, but cannot be meant here, because it has no likeness to a wild vine:

and came and shred them into the pot of pottage; cut or chopped them small, and put them into the pot:

for they knew them not; what they were, the nature and virtue of them, being unskilful in botany.

{b} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 605, 859. {c} Golius, col. 1817.

2 Kings 4:40

Ver. 40. So they poured out for the men to eat,.... When the pottage was boiled, they poured it out into dishes or basins, for the sons of the prophets to eat:

and it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot; poison, the cause of death; the pottage was so exceeding bitter, that they concluded there must be some poisonous herb in it; and coloquintida is so bitter, that it is called "the gall of the earth":

and they could not eat thereof: they stopped eating, it being so very disagreeable, and, as they supposed, dangerous.

2 Kings 4:41

Ver. 41. But he said, then bring meal: and he cast it into the pot,.... And stirred it about in it:

and he said, pour out for the people, that they may eat; as they now might freely, and without any danger, as he intimated:

and there was no harm in the pot; or anything that could do any harm or mischief to the health of men: this was not owing to the natural virtue of meal, but to a miraculous power attending it, whereby the pottage was cured of its malignity, as the bad waters of Jericho were by salt, in a preceding miracle.

2 Kings 4:42

Ver. 42. And there came a man from Baalshalisha,.... Of which place See Gill on "1Sa 9:4", the Targum is, from the south country:

and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley; so that it was now barley harvest, and this the first fruits of it, which, according to the law, Le 23:10, was to be brought to the priest; but being forbid in the land of Israel going up to Jerusalem, religious men brought their firstfruits to the prophets, and here to Elisha, the father of them; believing it would be dispensed with, and acceptable, since they were not allowed to carry them to the proper person; and in this time of famine was very agreeable to the man of God, supposing it only a present:

and full ears of corn in the husk thereof; these were green ears of corn, which they used to parch; but might not be eaten until the firstfruits were offered, and then they might, Le 23:14, the Targum renders it, "in his garment", in the skirt of his clothes; and to the same purpose are the Syriac and Arabic versions; and so Jarchi interprets it; and Ben Gersom says, it signifies some vessel in which he brought them:

and he said, give unto the people, that they may eat; Elisha did not reserve this offering or present for himself, but, as he had freely received, he freely gave.

2 Kings 4:43

Ver. 43. And his servitor said,.... His servant Gehazi very probably:

what, should I set this before one hundred men? for so many, it seems, the sons of the prophets were in this place; and these loaves being very small, no more, it is thought by some, than one man could eat, and the ears of corn but few, the servant suggests they would be nothing comparatively to such a company of men:

he said again, give the people, that they may eat; he insisted upon it that his orders should be obeyed:

for thus saith the Lord, they shall eat, and shall leave thereof; it was suggested to him by a spirit of prophecy, there would be enough for them, and to spare.

2 Kings 4:44

Ver. 44. So he set it before them,.... The twenty barley loaves, and the full ears of corn:

and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord; as the disciples did at the miracle of the loaves and fishes; though that must be allowed to be a greater miracle than this, Mt 14:17.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 5

This chapter gives an account of the leprosy of Naaman the Syrian, and of the cure of it by Elisha; how he came to hear of him, and the recommendation he had from the king of Syria to the king of Israel, **2Ki 5:1**, who, coming to Elisha's house, was ordered to dip himself seven times in Jordan, which made him depart in wrath; but one of his servants persuaded him to do it, and he did, and was cured, **2Ki 5:9**, upon which he returned to Elisha, and offered him a present, which he refused, **2Ki 5:15** but Gehazi, his servant, ran after him with a lie in his mouth, and obtained it, and returned to his master with another, for which he was smitten with the leprosy of Naaman, **2Ki 5:20**.

Ver. 1. Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria,.... The general of Benhadad's army; for he was now king of Syria, though some think Hazael his successor was:

was a great man with his master; high in his favour and esteem:

and honourable; not only acceptable to the king, and loaded with honours by him, but greatly respected by all ranks and degrees among the people:

because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria; out of the hands of their enemies, and victory over them, and particularly in the last battle with Israel, in which Ahab was slain, and, as the Jews suppose, by the hands of Naaman, See Gill on "1Ki 22:34" however, when any salvation was wrought, or victory obtained, even by Heathens, and by them over Israel, the people of God, it was of the Lord:

he was also a mighty man in valour; a very courageous valiant man:

but he was a leper; was stricken with the leprosy, which had deformed and disgraced his person, and weakened his strength, and dispirited him; all his grandeur and honour could not protect him from this loathsome disease.

2 Kings 5:2

Ver. 2. And the Syrians had gone out by companies,.... Not regular troops, but a sort of banditti of robbers, which made excursions into the land of Israel, to plunder and carry off what booty they could:

and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; for boys and girls were a part of the booty of such robbers, whom they could sell for money, see **Joe 3:1**. Jarchi and Kimchi say she was a girl of Naaron, a city so called:

and she waited on Naaman's wife; being either made a present of to the general by those plunderers, or was bought by him of them for his wife's service.

2 Kings 5:3

Ver. 3. And she said unto her mistress,.... As she was waiting upon her at a certain time, and perhaps her mistress was lamenting the case of her husband as desperate and incurable:

would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria; meaning Elisha, who, though sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another, yet often at Samaria, and it seems was there when this girl was taken captive:

for he would recover him of his leprosy; the maid had heard of the miracles wrought by Elisha, and doubted not that at the request of her lord he would be willing, as she believed he was able, to cure him of this disease.

2 Kings 5:4

Ver. 4. And one went in and told his lord,.... What the girl had said to her mistress; one of the servants of the house that overheard it; or rather, Naaman went and told his lord the king of Syria; for as this was said to his wife, no doubt she told it to her husband, and not a servant; and the following words require this sense, and is the sense of most Jewish commentators:

saying, thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel; who for her wit and beauty might be well known at court by the name of the Israelitish girl.

2 Kings 5:5

Ver. 5. And the king of Syria said, go to, go,.... On what Naaman related to him from what the maid had said, he urged him by all means to go directly to Samaria:

and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel; recommending him to use his interest in his behalf; this was Jehoram the son of Ahab:

and he departed; set out on his journey immediately, as soon as he could conveniently:

and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold; partly for the expenses of his journey, and partly to make presents to the king of Israel's servants, and especially to the prophet; a talent of silver, according to Brerewood {d}, was three hundred and seventy five pounds of our money; but, according to Bishop Cumberland's {e} exact calculation, it was three hundred and fifty and three pounds eleven shillings and ten and an half pence the pieces of gold are, by the Targum, called golden pence, and a golden penny, according to the first of the above writers {f}, was of the value of our money fifteen shillings; so that these amounted to 4500 pounds sterling:

and ten changes of raiment; both for his own use, and presents.

{d} De Ponder. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 4. {e} Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 4. p. 120. {f} Ut supra, (De Ponder. & Pret. Vet. Num.) c. 3.

2 Kings 5:6

Ver. 6. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying,.... The contents of which were, so far as it concerned Naaman and his case, which are only observed, these:

now when this letter is come unto thee; was received by him:

behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant unto thee; the bearer of it:

that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy; meaning not he himself, but that he would recommend him to the care of a proper person, his prophet, and enjoin him to do the best he could for him; but the king of Israel mistook his meaning, as appears by what follows.

2 Kings 5:7

Ver. 7. And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes,.... As one in great distress, being thrown into perplexity of mind by it, not knowing what to do; or, as some think, at the blasphemy he supposed to be in it, requiring that of him which only God could do:

and said, am I God, to kill and to make alive; or have the power of life and death, which only belongs to the Supreme Being:

that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy; for a leper was reckoned as one dead, his disease incurable, his flesh upon him being mortified by it, see Nu 12:12 and therefore not supposed to be in the power of man, only of God, to cure; and therefore, in Israel, none had anything to do with the leper but the priest, in the name of God:

wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me;

to pick a quarrel with him, in order to go to war with him as he supposed. This seems to have been spoken to his lords and courtiers about him.

2 Kings 5:8

Ver. 8. And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes,.... And upon what account:

that he sent to the king, saying, wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? and thereby expressed so much concern and distress:

let him come now to me: meaning Naaman the Syrian leper:

and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel; able in the name of the Lord to work miracles, which he should be sensible of and acknowledge, to the glory of the God of Israel, by the cure that should be wrought upon him; and hereby he taxed the king of Israel with ignorance or neglect of him as a prophet.

2 Kings 5:9

Ver. 9. So Naaman came with his horses, and with his chariot,.... In his chariot drawn by horses; or "with horsemen and chariots", a great retinue, both for his own grandeur, and for the honour of the prophet, and to make him the more respectable by him:

and stood at the door of the house of Elisha; who now dwelt at Gilgal, as is probable, see **2Ki 4:38**, hither Naaman was directed, and here he stopped; and having sent a messenger to Elisha to acquaint him who he was, and what was his business, he stayed waiting for an answer.

2 Kings 5:10

Ver. 10. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him,.... Or returned an answer by Naaman's messenger; he did not go out to him, choosing to be retired, as he commonly did; and being perhaps employed in prayer for the cure; and it may be also to show his contempt of or little regard he had to worldly grandeur and honour, as well as to mortify the pride of Naaman:

saying, go and wash in Jordan seven times; so, according to the law of the cleansing the leper, he was to be sprinkled seven times, and on the seventh day his flesh was to be bathed or dipped all over in water, which is meant by washing here, Le 14:7

and thy flesh shall come again to thee; which was eaten and consumed by the disease on him:

and thou shalt be clean; freed from this pollution, or filthy disease, with which he was defiled; for a leper was reckoned unclean, Le 13:3.

2 Kings 5:11

Ver. 11. But Naaman was wroth with him,.... On more accounts than one:

and went away; not to Jordan, but from the prophet's house, with an intention to return to his own country:

behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me this he said within himself, making no doubt of it but that he would show him so much respect and civility as to come out of his house to him, and converse with him, or invite him into it and not doing this was one thing made him wroth: and stand; he supposed that he would not only come out, but stand before him, as inferiors before their superiors in reverence, but instead of that he remained sitting within doors:

and call on the name of the Lord his God: he expected, that as he was a prophet of the Lord, that he would have prayed to him for the cure of him:

and strike his hand over the place; wave his hand to and fro, as the word signifies, over the place of the leprosy, as the Targum, over the place affected with it; or towards the place where he worshipped the Lord, as Ben Gersom, toward the temple at Jerusalem; or towards Jordan, the place where he bid him go and wash, as Abarbinel; but the first sense seems best: "and recover the leper"; meaning himself, heal him by the use of such means and rites.

2 Kings 5:12

Ver. 12. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?.... Abana is, in the marginal reading, called Amana, and so the Targum; perhaps from the Mount Amana, from whence it sprung, a mountain in Syria {g}, mentioned with Lebanon, **So 4:8**. This river is thought to be the Chrysorrhoas of Pliny {h}, and other writers; there are no traces of its name, or of the following, to be met with now; the only river by Damascus is called Barrady, which supplies Damascus and its gardens, and makes them so fruitful and pleasant as they be; it pours down from the mountains, as Mr. Maundrell {i} describes it, and is divided into three streams, of which the middlemost and biggest runs directly to Damascus, through a large field, called the field of Damascus; and the other two are drawn round, the one to the right hand, and the other to the left, on the borders of the gardens. Pharpar is thought {k} to be the river Orontes, which runs close to the walls of Antioch, and courses through its large and spacious plain, being numbered among the rivers of Syria; it takes its rise from Lebanon, and, sliding through the said plain, falls into the Syrian sea. Benjamin of Tudela {l} speaks of these rivers under their Scripture names; Abana or Amana as he says, passes through the city and supplies the houses of great men with water through wooden pipes; and Pharpar is without the city and runs among the gardens and orchards, and waters them. Farfar is also the name of a river in Italy {m}:

may I not wash in them, and be clean? as well as in Jordan; or rather, since they are better waters, and so not have been at this trouble and expense to come hither; or have I not washed in them every day? I have, and am I clean? I am not; which is the sense the several Jewish writers give {n}:

so he turned, and went away in a rage; in a great passion, swearing and cursing perhaps, ordering his chariot driver to turn and be gone at once.

{g} Tacit. Annal. l. 2. c. 83. {h} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 18. {i} Journey from Aleppo, p. 122, 123. {k} Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 7, 8. Hiller. Onomast. Sacr. p. 908. {l} Itinerar. p. 55. {m} Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 7. p. 1243. {n} Ben Gersom in loc. & R. Joseph Kimchi, & R. Jonah in Ben Melech in. loc.

2 Kings 5:13

Ver. 13. And his servant came near, and spake unto him, and said, my father,.... Or my lord, as the Targum; this being not a familiar and affectionate expression, but a term of honour, reverence, and submission:

if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? something that was hard and difficult to done, or painful to bear, to go through some severe operation, or disagreeable course of physic:

how much rather then when he saith to thee, wash, and be clean? which is so easy to be done; though Abarbinel observes it may be interpreted, the prophet has bid thee do a great thing, and which is wonderful; for though he has said, wash and be clean, consider it a great thing, and which is a wonderful mystery, and therefore do not despise his cure.

2 Kings 5:14

Ver. 14. Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God,.... He listened to the reasoning of his servant, and his passion subsided, and did as the prophet ordered him:

and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child; clear and fresh, soft and tender as an infant, quite new flesh:

and he was clean; from the leprosy, and all the filthy symptoms of it.

2 Kings 5:15

Ver. 15. And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company,.... To give him thanks for the advice he had given him, and by him to give thanks to God for the cure he had received; for he was sensible it was from the Lord, his words show:

and came and stood before him; for being admitted into the prophet's house, instead of the prophet standing before him, as he before expected, he now stood before the prophet in veneration of him, and sensible of his obligation to him:

behold, now I know there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel; though he did not before, but his cure fully convinced him of it:

I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant; not a wish of health and happiness, which the prophet would not have refused, but a present; the Targum calls it an offering.

2 Kings 5:16

Ver. 16. But he said, as the Lord liveth, before whom I stand,.... Whose minister and prophet he was, and by whom he swears:

I will receive none: to let him know that this cure was not to be attributed to him, but the Lord only; and that what concern he had in it was not for the sake of money, but for the glory of the God of Israel:

and he urged him to take it, but he refused it; Naaman was very pressing upon him to receive a gift from him, but he could not be prevailed upon to accept it.

2 Kings 5:17

Ver. 17. And Naaman said, shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth..... Not that he desired of Elisha that he would suffer his servant Gehazi to receive a present as much as two mules could carry; but inasmuch as the prophet refused a present from him, his servant, he asks a favour of him, that he would permit him to take with him, out of the land of Israel, as much earth two mules could carry, that is, to make an altar of earth, as the next words indicate: but as he might have this any where without the prophet's leave, some Jewish writers {o} think he requested it from his own house, and from the place his feet trod on, as conceiving in a superstitious way that there was a sort of holiness in it; or however, that wheresoever he had it, if with the prophet's leave, a blessing would go with it, or that would be a sort of a consecration of it; and having an altar made of the earth of this land, would show that he was in the faith of the same God, and performed the same worship to him Israel did:

for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord: hence the Jews say, he became a proselyte of righteousness {p}, embraced the true religion, and the worship of the true God, according to the laws given to Israel; and the following words, rightly understood, confirm the same.

{o} Ben Gersom & Abarbinel in loc. {p} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 11. 2.

2 Kings 5:18

Ver. 18. In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant,.... Which he next mentions, and on account of which he desires the prayers of Elisha for him, as the Vulgate Latin version; or it may be, this is a prayer of his own, put up at this time to the true Jehovah, in whom he believed:

that when my master: meaning the king of Syria:

goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon; the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing; the house of Rimmon was a temple of an idol of that name; what idol it was is not easy to say; the Septuagint version calls it Remman, thought by some to be the same with Remphan, **Ac 7:43**, a name of Saturn, said to be given him from a Greek word, which signifies to "wander" {q}, he being placed among the wandering stars in the supreme heavens; which is not likely, for the word is certainly of a Syriac signification, and comes either from Mwr, which signifies "high", and so the same with Elioun, the Phoenician deity, called the most high {r}; or, as "Rimmon" is used for a pomegranate, this is thought to design the Syrian goddess, to whom this sort of fruit was sacred; or Juno, whose statue, in her temple at Mycenas {s}, had a pomegranate in one hand; or rather this Rimmon was Jupiter Cassius, so called from Mount Cassius, which divided Syria from Egypt, who is painted with his hand stretched out, and a pomegranate in it {t}; and may be the same with Caphtor, the father of the Caphtorim, Ge 10:14 who might be deified after his death, their names, Rimmon and Caphtor, being of the same signification {u}. But be this deity as it may, it was worshipped by the Syrians; and when the king of Syria went in to worship, he used to lean upon the hand of one of his officers, either being lame, or for state sake, in which office Naaman was; and his request to the prophet, or to the Lord, is, not for pardon for a sin to be committed; nor to be indulged in his continuance of it; not to worship the idol along with his master; nor to dissemble the worship of it, when he really worshipped it not; nor to be excused any evil in the discharge of his post and office; but for the pardon of the sin of idolatry he had been guilty of, of which he was truly sensible, now sincerely acknowledges, and desires forgiveness of; and so Dr. Lightfoot {w}, and some others {x}, interpret it; and to this sense the words may be rendered,

when my master went in to the house of Rimmon to worship there; which was his usual custom; and he leaned on my hand, which was the common form in which he was introduced into it:

and I worshipped in the house of Rimmon, as his master did, for the same word is used here as before;

in as much, or seeing I have worshipped in the house of Rimmon, have been guilty of such gross idolatry:

the Lord, I pray, forgive thy servant in this thing; the language of a true penitent.

{q} A rembesyai "vagari", Hesychius. {r} Vid. Selden. de Dis Syris Syntagm. 2. c. 10. {s} Pausan. Corinthiac. sive, l. 2. p. 114. {t} Achilles Tatius, l. 3. Vid. Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 934. {u} See Clayton's Origin of Hieroglyphics, p. 113. {w} Works, vol. 1. p. 86. {x} Vid. Quenstedt. Dissert. de. Petit. Naaman. sect. 21, 22.

2 Kings 5:19

Ver. 19. And he said unto him,.... That is, the prophet said to Naaman:

go in peace: in peace of mind; be assured that God has pardoned this and all other transgressions:

so he departed from him a little way; about a mile, as the Targum, and so other Jewish writers; of this phrase, See Gill on "Ge 35:16", some say a land's length, that is, about one hundred and twenty feet; rather it was a thousand cubits, or half a mile.

2 Kings 5:20

Ver. 20. But Gehazi the servant of Elisha the man of God said,.... Within himself, observing what had passed:

behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: he speaks contemptibly of Naaman, as an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and reproaches his master for letting him go free, without paying for his cure; when he thought he should have taken what he brought and offered, and given it to needy Israelites, and especially to the sons of the prophets, that wanted it; and perhaps it mostly disturbed him, that he had no share of it himself:

but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him; the word for "somewhat", wanting a letter usually in it, is what is sometimes used for a blot; and Jarchi observes, that Gehazi taking something from Naaman, was a blot unto him, and indeed such an one that he could not wipe off.

2 Kings 5:21

Ver. 21. So Gehazi followed after Naaman,.... As fast as he could:

and when Naaman saw him running after him; which he might observe, looking back, or be informed of by some of his servants:

he lighted down from the chariot to meet him; in honour to the prophet, whose servant he was:

and said, is all well? fearing something ill had befallen Elisha; or he himself had done something wrong, which occasioned the servant to run after him.

2 Kings 5:22

Ver. 22. And he said, all is well,.... He need give himself no uneasiness at the coming and sight of him:

my master hath sent me, saying, behold, even now there be come to me; just then, since he departed from him:

from Mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: where perhaps was a school of them:

give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments: which, as it was a downright lie, so highly improbable that Elisha should ask so large a sum of money, with two changes of raiment, for two young scholars, see **2Ki 5:5** and which Naaman, with a little reflection, might have seen through; but his heart was so filled with gratitude for the benefit received, that he was glad of an opportunity, at any rate, of showing respect to the prophet.

2 Kings 5:23

Ver. 23. And Naaman said, be content,.... Or be pleased; do not object to it:

take two talents: a talent for each young man, which amounted to between three hundred and four hundred pounds apiece:

and he urged; pressed him hard, insisted upon his taking them, who might pretend a great deal of modesty, and a strict regard to his master's orders:

and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments; for each young man:

and laid them upon two of his servants, the servants of Naaman, not choosing to burden Elisha's servant with them; for such a quantity of money and clothes was pretty heavy:

and they bare [them] before him; both for his ease, and for his honour.

2 Kings 5:24

Ver. 24. And when he came to the tower,.... Of Samaria, or which was near it; a fortified place, and where was a watch, to whom he could safely commit the money and clothes:

he took them from their hand; not willing they should go any further with him, lest the affair should be discovered to his master:

and bestowed [them] in the house; deposited them there in the hands of some person whom he could trust; or laid them out, or ordered them to be laid out, in the purchase of houses, lands, vineyards, &c. see 2Ki 5:26

and he let the men go, and they departed; to their master.

2 Kings 5:25

Ver. 25. But he went in, and stood before his master,.... To know his will, and minister to him, as he had used to do, and as if he had never been from the house:

and Elisha said unto him, whence comest thou, Gehazi? where had he been, and where was he last?

and he said, thy servant went no whither; he pretended he had never been out of doors, which was another impudent lie; one would have thought that he who had lived so long with the prophet, and had seen the miracles wrought by him, and knew with what a spirit of prophecy he was endowed, would never have ventured to tell such an untruth, since he might expect to be detected; but covetousness had blinded his eyes and hardened his heart.

2 Kings 5:26

Ver. 26. And he said unto him, went not mine heart with thee?.... Did my heart or knowledge go from me, that what thou hast done should be hid from me? so Ben Gersom and others; or my heart did not go with thee, it was contrary to my mind and will what thou didst; so Abendana; or rather, as the Targum, by a spirit of prophecy it was shown unto me, &c. I knew full well what thou wentest for, and hast done; and so Maimonides {y}; was not I employed in my thoughts? or, did I not think that so it was as thou hast done? I did:

when the man turned again from chariot to meet thee? meaning Naaman the Syrian:

is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments: as Gehazi had now done:

and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? that is, to purchase those with the two talents of silver he had received, as he thought in his heart, or intended to do, as the Targum; or had given orders to purchase such for him to the persons to whom he had committed the care of them in the tower; this was not a proper time, when the honour of the prophet, and the credit of religion, and the good of this man, as a new proselyte, were in danger thereby.

{y} Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 39.

2 Kings 5:27

Ver. 27. The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever,.... As long as any of his race remained; as through his covetousness he had his money, so for his punishment he should have his disease:

and he went out from his presence; as one ashamed and confounded, and discharged from his master's service:

a leper [as white] as snow; a leprosy of which colour is the worst, and is incurable.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 6

In this chapter are recorded other wonders of Elisha, as causing iron to swim, **2Ki 6:1** having knowledge of the secret counsels of the king of Syria, which he disclosed to the king of Israel, **2Ki 6:8** smiting the Syrian army with blindness sent to take him, and which he led into the midst of Samaria, **2Ki 6:13**, and the chapter is closed with an account of the siege of Samaria, and a sore famine in it, **2Ki 6:24**.

Ver. 1. And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha,.... Or the disciples of the prophets, as the Targum:

behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us: their numbers were so increased, that there was not room enough for them in the house they dwelt in with the prophet; which increase was owing, the Jews {z} say, to the departure of Gehazi last mentioned, who was a bad man, and used the disciples so ill, that they could not stay in the college; but, when he was gone, they flocked in great numbers; but rather it was owing to the very instructive ministry and wonderful miracles of Elisha: the place where the prophet and his disciples now dwelt seems to be Gilgal, **2Ki 4:38**.

{z} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 107. 2.

2 Kings 6:2

Ver. 2. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan,.... Which, according to Josephus {a}, was fifty furlongs, or upwards of six miles, distant from Gilgal:

and take thence every man a beam; by cutting down the trees that grew there; for Mr. Maundrell says {b}, the banks of Jordan are beset with bushes and trees, which are an harbour for wild beasts; and another traveller {c} observes, that it is shadowed on both sides with poplars, alders, &c. and who speaks of their cutting down boughs from the trees when there:

and let us make us a place there where we may dwell: near the banks of Jordan, which they might choose for the seclusion and pleasantness of the situation, or because Elijah was taken up to heaven near it, as Abarbinel thinks; from whence it appears that these scholars were far from living an idle life; for they were not only trained up in useful learning, but were employed in trades and manufactures, to which they had been brought up, and knew how to fell timber, and build houses:

and he answered, go ye; he gave them leave, without which they did not choose to do anything.

{a} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 4. {b} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 82, 83. {c} Sandys's Travels, l. 3. p. 110.

2 Kings 6:3

Ver. 3. And one said, be content, I pray thee, and with thy servants,.... Or be pleased to go with us; he begged it as a favour, that, being awed by his presence, they might preserve peace and order, and have his advice as to the spot of ground to erect their edifice on, and might be protected by him from harm and mischief by men or wild beasts:

and he answered, I will go; he consented to it, knowing perhaps before hand that he should have an opportunity of working a miracle there, as he did.

2 Kings 6:4

Ver. 4. So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. Trees which grew upon the banks of it, to build their house with, at least for the rafters and flooring of it, supposing the walls to be built of stone.

2 Kings 6:5

Ver. 5. But as one was felling a beam,.... Cutting down a tree, or a branch of it:

the axe head fell into the water: into the waters of Jordan; or "the iron" {d}, the iron part of it, with which the wood was cut; that flew off from the helve into the water:

and he cried, and said, alas, master! for it was borrowed: it grieved him to lose his axe, because he could do no more work, and the more because it was not his own, but he had borrowed it of his neighbour; and still more, because, as it seems, he was poor, and not able to pay for it, which, being of an honest disposition, gave him distress.

{d} lzrbh "ferrum", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

2 Kings 6:6

Ver. 6. And the man of God said, where fell it?.... For though endowed with a spirit of prophecy, he did not know all things, and at all times; and if he did know where it fell, he might ask this question to lead on to the performance of the miracle:

and he showed him the place; the exact place in the river into which it fell:

and he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; he did not take the old helve and throw in, but a new stick he cut off of a tree; some think he made of this another helve or handle, of the same size and measure with the other, and that this being cast in was miraculously directed and fixed in the hole of the iron at the bottom of the water, and brought it up with it; but, as Abarbinel observes, there is no need to suppose this; the wood was cast into the precise place where the iron fell, and was sent as it were to call it up to it:

and the iron did swim; it came up and appeared, and was bore on the surface of the waters; or, "and made the iron to swim" {e}; which some understand of the wood cast in, as if it had some peculiar virtue in it to draw up the iron; but it was not any particular chosen wood, but what first occurred to the prophet {f}; and the meaning is, that Elisha caused it to float, contrary to the nature of iron.

{e} Puy "fecit supernatare", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {f} Vid. Friese, Dissert. de Ferro Natante, sect. 7.

2 Kings 6:7

Ver. 7. Therefore said he, take it up to thee,.... This the prophet said to the man that had lost it:

and he put out his hand, and took it; it being on the top of the water within his reach.

2 Kings 6:8

Ver. 8. Then the king of Syria warred against Israel,.... Proclaimed war against him; on what account, or how long it was after Naaman his general came with a letter of recommendation from him to the king of Israel, and had his cure, is not said:

and took counsel with his servants; his privy counsellors, or the general officers of his army:

saying, in such and such a place shall be my camp; in some covered hidden place, as the Targum; where he would lie encamped waiting in ambush, to fall upon the king of Israel unawares, as he and his forces should pass that way; the place, no doubt, was named by the king of Syria, though not recorded by the historian; or, as the words may be rendered,

the place of such and such a man; for, as Ben Melech observes, "peloni almoni" are used of persons whose names are either unknown or concealed.

2 Kings 6:9

Ver. 9. And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel,.... That is, Elisha sent to him: saying,

beware that thou pass not such a place: not go to it, but avoid it, and pass another way:

for thither the Syrians are come down: are hidden, as the Targum; lie covered at the bottom of the hill, so as not to be seen.

2 Kings 6:10

Ver. 10. And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him, and warned him of,.... Sent spies thither to see whether the Syrians were there or not, and whether it was truth the man of God told him; for he had no hearty respect for the prophet, though he had been so serviceable to him:

and saved himself there, not once, nor twice; escaped the snares the king of Syria laid for him, not once, nor twice only, but many times.

2 Kings 6:11

Ver. 11. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing,.... There was as it were a storm in his breast, as the word signifies; he was like a troubled sea, tossed with tempests, exceeding uneasy in his mind, fretting at the disappointment he met with time after time:

and he called his servants, and said unto them, will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel? he suspected that some one of his counsellors was in the interest of the king of Israel, and betrayed his secrets to him, which was the cause of his disappointments.

2 Kings 6:12

Ver. 12. And one of his servants said, none, my lord, O king,.... He believed everyone of his counsellors were true and faithful to him:

but Elisha the prophet, that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber; what is said in the most private place, and in the most secret manner: this man had heard much of Elisha, by Naaman, very probably; or perhaps he had attended him in his journey to Israel for a cure, and so might have personal knowledge of Elisha, and be acquainted with the affair of Gehazi; from whence he concluded, that he, who had the thoughts of men revealed to him, had knowledge of their words and counsels, though ever so secret; see Ec 10:20.

2 Kings 6:13

Ver. 13. And he said, go, and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him,.... But how could he expect to take him, who could give the king of Israel such intelligence of his designs against him, that he might escape his snares?

and it was told him, saying, behold, he is in Dothan; a city in the tribe of Manasseh, not far from Shechem; see Ge 37:17.

2 Kings 6:14

Ver. 14. Therefore sent he thither horses and chariots, and a great host,.... To terrify the inhabitants from attempting to defend the prophet, but deliver him up at once:

and they came by night; that they might come upon them unawares, and their design not be discovered, so as to have timely help from Samaria, which was not far off:

and compassed the city about; that the prophet might not make his escape out of it.

2 Kings 6:15

Ver. 15. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth,.... Either out of his master's house, or out of the city upon some business to be done early in the morning; this was not Gehazi, but a new servant:

behold, an host compassed the city, both with horses and chariots; which he could see at the door of his master's house, the city being built upon an eminence; or which he perceived, as soon as he came out of the gates of the city, or was about so to do:

and his servant said unto him; Elisha being with him; or else he returned to his master on the sight of such an army, and not being able to go forward:

alas, my master! how shall we do? to get out of the city, and through this host, and proceed on our intended journey; and if he understood that the intention of this formidable host was to take his master, his concern might be the greater; and the more as he was a new servant, and not so well acquainted with his master's being possessed of a power of doing miracles.

2 Kings 6:16

Ver. 16. And he answered, fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. Meaning the legions of angels that encamped around them.

2 Kings 6:17

Ver. 17. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see,.... Not the eyes of his body, which were not shut nor blinded, but the eyes of his mind; or, in other words, grant him a vision, represented in so strong a light, as to remove his fears:

and the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; he had a vision of angels:

and, behold, the mountain; on which the city was built, or one near it:

was full of horses and chariots of fire; angels in this form, as in **2Ki 2:11**, and these were

round about Elisha; being round about the city where he was; or rather so in the vision it was represented to the young man, he saw his master surrounded with horses and chariots of fire, in the utmost safety.

2 Kings 6:18

Ver. 18. And when they came down to him,.... The Syrian army, from the hill on which they were first seen, who came down from thence to the bottom of the hill on which the city stood; and whither Elisha came out, in order both to meet them, and proceed on his journey to Samaria:

Elisha prayed unto the Lord, and said, smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness; or "blindnesses" {g}; with great blindness, such as the men of Sodom were smitten with; the same word is here used as of them, Ge 19:11

and he smote them with blindness, according to the word of Elisha; not in such manner that they could discern no object, for then they could not have followed Elisha; but their sight was so altered, that they knew not the objects they saw; they appeared quite otherwise to them than they were; they saw the city, but knew it not to be the same, and Elisha, but knew him not to be the man of God, though they might have some in the host that knew him personally.

{g} Myrwnob "in caecitatibus", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

2 Kings 6:19

Ver. 19. And Elisha said unto them, this is not the way, neither is this the city,.... Which is an answer to some questions of the Syrians; as, whether this was the way to find the prophet Elisha, and this the city in which he was to be found? and he answers most truly, though ambiguously, that the way they were in, and in which should they proceed, was not the way, nor this the city, in which he was to be found, because he was come out of it, and was going to Samaria:

follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek; as he did: but he led them to Samaria: whither he was going, they being still under that sort of blindness with which they were smitten; otherwise they would have known the country better than to have been led thither.

2 Kings 6:20

Ver. 20. And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see,.... So as to know where they were:

and the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw, and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria; the gates being thrown open for them, and they led into the very heart of the city; for, no doubt, Elisha sent his servant before, to acquaint the king of Israel with what he was doing; who got a sufficient number of armed men to enclose them, and fall upon them, when put into his hands, as appears by what follows.

2 Kings 6:21

Ver. 21. And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them,.... The Syrian army thus in his hands:

my father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them? he speaks with great reverence and respect to the prophet, whom at other times he neglected and despised; and the repetition of his words shows the eagerness of his mind to fall upon his enemy when they where at a disadvantage.

2 Kings 6:22

Ver. 22. And he answered, thou shalt not smite them,.... For they were not his, but the prophet's captives, or rather the Lord's:

wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? when soldiers are made prisoners of war, it is contrary to humanity, to the laws of nature and nations, to kill them in cold blood, and much more those who were taken not by his sword and bow, but by the power and providence of God:

set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master; the king of Syria, and report the miracles wrought, and the good usage they met with, when in the hand of an enemy, fed and let go; which would be more to the glory of the God of Israel, and more agreeable to the character of a king of Israel, reckoned merciful, and more serviceable to the civil good of the land of Israel, as well as more to the honour of the prophet and true religion, see Ro 12:20.

2 Kings 6:23

Ver. 23. And he prepared great provision for them,.... Or a great feast, as the Targum; so obedient was he to the prophet's orders:

and when they had eaten and drank; and refreshed themselves, which they needed, having marched all night and that morning from place to place:

he sent them away; that is, the king of Israel dismissed them:

and they went to their master; the king of Syria, but without the prophet Elisha they were sent to fetch:

so the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel; not as yet, or for some time; or rather the sense is, that the Syrians came not any more in small bodies, as troops of robbers making excursions, and carrying off booty in a private manner, and by surprise; but afterwards came with a large army in an open hostile manner, as follows.

2 Kings 6:24

Ver. 24. And it came to pass after this, that Benhadad king of Syria gathered all his host,.... Still retaining a grudge and enmity against Israel, and not at all softened by the kind and humane treatment his forces had met with, when in the hands of Israel; and finding he could do nothing in a secret way, by ambush, mustered all his forces together, to try what he could by open war:

and went up, and besieged Samaria; Jehoram king of Israel not being able to stop him till he came to his capital, which he laid close siege to.

2 Kings 6:25

Ver. 25. And there was a great famine in Samaria,.... No care, perhaps, having been taken to lay up stores against a siege:

and, behold, they besieged it until an ass's head was [sold] for fourscore [pieces] of silver; shekels, as the Targum explains the word in the next clause, which amounted to about nine or ten pounds of our money; a great price for the head of such a creature, by law unclean, its flesh disagreeable, and of that but very little, as is on an head:

and the fourth part of a cab of doves' dung for five pieces of silver; some of the Jewish writers say {h}, this was bought for fuel, which was scarce: Josephus says {i}, for salt, and so Procopious Gazaeus, and Theodoret; others, for dunging the lands, which is the use of it in Persia {k} for melons; neither of which are probable; most certainly it was for food; but as doves' dung must be not only disagreeable, but scarce affording any nourishment, something else must be meant; some have thought that the grains found in their crops, or in their excrements, undigested, and picked out, are meant; and others, their crops or craws themselves, or entrails; but Bochart {l} is of opinion, that a sort of pulse is meant, as lentiles or vetches, much the same with the kali or parched corn used in Israel, see 1Sa 17:17 and a recent traveller {m} observes, that the leblebby of the Arabs is very probably the kali, or parched pulse, of the Scriptures, and has been taken for the pigeons' dung mentioned at the siege of Samaria; and indeed as the "cicer" (a sort of peas or pulse) is pointed at one end, and acquires an ash colour by parching, the first of which circumstances answers to the figure, the other to the usual colour of pigeons' dung, the supposition is by no means to be disregarded: a "cab" was a measure with the Jews, which held the quantity of twenty four egg shells; according to Godwin {n}, it answered to our quart, so that a fourth part was half a pint; and half a pint of these lentiles, or vetches, or parched pulse, was sold for eleven or twelve shillings.

{h} R. Jonah in Ben Melech, Kimchi & Abarbinel in loc. {i} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 4. sect. 4. {k} Universal History, vol. 5. p. 90. {l} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 7. col. 44, &c. {m} Shaw's Travels, p. 140. {n} Moses & Aaron, B. 6. c. 9.

2 Kings 6:26

Ver. 26. And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, &c. To spy out the motion and situation of the enemy, and to give orders for the annoyance of them, and to see that his soldiers did their duty:

there cried a woman to him, saying, help, my lord, O king; desired his assistance and help in a cause depending between her and another woman.

2 Kings 6:27

Ver. 27. And he said, if the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?.... Mistaking her meaning, as if she prayed him to relieve her hunger; the margin of our Bible is, "let not the Lord save thee"; and so some understand it as a wish that she might perish; and so Josephus {o}, that being wroth, he cursed her in the name of God:

out of the barn floor, or out of the winepress? when neither of them afforded anything; no corn was to be had from the one, nor wine from the other, no, not for his own use, and therefore how could he help her out of either?

{o} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 9. c. 4. sect. 4.)

2 Kings 6:28

Ver. 28. And the king said unto her, what aileth thee?.... His passion subsiding, or pitying her as in distress, and supposing that there might be something particular and pressing in her case:

and she answered,

this woman said unto me; who was now with her, and to whom she pointed:

give thy son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow; and this was agreed to between them, that first one should be eaten, and then the other, and that they should feed upon one as long as it would last, and then on the other; for it is not to be limited precisely to a day and tomorrow.

2 Kings 6:29

Ver. 29. So we boiled my son, and did eat him,.... Thus what was predicted, by way of threatening, began to be accomplished, De 28:53,
See Gill on "De 28:53", and of which there were other instances of a like kind at the siege of Jerusalem, both by Nebuchadnezzar and Vespasian:

and I said unto her on the next day; after her child had been wholly ate up:

give thy son, that we may eat him; according to agreement:

and she hath hid her son; either to save him alive, or to eat him herself alone.

2 Kings 6:30

Ver. 30. And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes,.... At the horror of the fact reported, and through grief that his people were brought into such distress through famine:

and he passed by upon the wall; returning to his palace:

and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth upon his flesh; which, in token of humiliation for averting the calamities he was under, he had put there before, and now was seen through the rending of his clothes.

2 Kings 6:31

Ver. 31. Then he said, God do so and more also to me,.... He swore and made dreadful imprecations:

if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day; imputing the sore famine to him, because he had foretold it, and did not pray for the removal of it, as he might; and perhaps had advised and encouraged the king to hold out the siege, which had brought them to this extremity, and therefore was enraged at him.

2 Kings 6:32

Ver. 32. And Elisha sat in his house,.... In Samaria:

and the elders sat with him; not the elders of the city, or the magistrates thereof, but his disciples, as Josephus says {p}, the eldest of them, whom he admitted to greater familiarity and converse with him:

and the king sent a man from before him; to execute what he had sworn should be done that day to the prophet:

but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, see ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? which he knew by a spirit of prophecy, and spoke of it before the executioner came; he calls Joram the son of a murderer, because of his mother Jezebel, who killed Naboth, and the prophets of the Lord, and to which his father Ahab also consented, and therefore might be so called too; and he intimates hereby that he was of the same temper and disposition, and as the above oath, and his orders, showed:

look when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door; and not suffer him to come in:

is not the sound of his master's feet behind him? that is, of Joram king of Israel, who followed the messenger, either to listen and hear what the prophet would say unto him; or repenting of his order, as Josephus {q} thinks, he followed him to prevent the execution.

{p} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 9. c. 4. sect. 4.) {q} Ibid.

2 Kings 6:33

Ver. 33. And while he yet talked with them,.... Elisha with the elders:

behold, the messenger came down unto him; sent by the king:

and he said; either the messenger in the king's name, or rather the king, who was at his heels, and came to the door before the messenger was let in, who was detained; and therefore it is most probable the king went in first; for that was the intention of Elisha in holding the messenger, not to save his own life, but that the king, who was following, might hear what he had to say; and whom he advised to wait for the Lord, and his appearance, for deliverance: in answer to which he said,

behold, this evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer? this calamity is from him, and he is determined upon the ruin of my people, and there is no hope; this he said as despairing, and so resolving to hold out the siege no longer.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 7

This chapter begins with a prophecy of great plenty in Samaria on the morrow, and of the death of an unbelieving lord, **2Ki 7:1**, relates the case of four lepers, who that night went into the Syrian camp, which was deserted, occasioned by the noise of chariots, horses, and a host, which they fancied they heard, **2Ki 7:3**, the report which the lepers made to the king's household of this affair, and the method the king's servants took to know the truth of it, **2Ki 7:10** which, when confirmed, the people went out and spoiled the tents of the Syrians, whereby the prophecy of plenty was fulfilled, **2Ki 7:16**, and the unbelieving lord having post at the gate of the city assigned him, was trod to death, and so the prediction concerning him had its accomplishment also, **2Ki 7:17**.

Ver. 1. Then Elisha said, hear the word of the Lord,.... This he said to the king and those that were with him:

thus saith the Lord, tomorrow, about this time; which very probably was the forenoon:

shall a measure of fine flour [be sold] for a shekel; "a seah", the measure here spoken of, or "saturn", according to some {r}, was a gallon and an half; but Bishop Cumberland {s} makes it two wine gallons and an half; and a shekel, according to his accurate computation, was two shillings and four pence farthing, and near the eighth part of one {t}:

and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria; where the market was kept; the same sort of measure and of money is here used as before; and we learn from hence that a measure of wheat was equal to two of barley.

{r} Godwin, ut supra. (Moses & Aaron, B. 6. c. 9.) {s} Of Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 3. p. 86. {t} lb. c. 4. p. 104, 105.

2 Kings 7:2

Ver. 2. Then a lord, on whose hand the king leaned,.... Not figuratively, in whom the king confided, but literally, on whose hand he rested, and by whom he was supported, being a form and matter of state, while he and Elisha were talking together, or on whom he leaned as he came to him; this was a principal lord, the third to the king, as his title seems to denote; the word by which the Septuagint renders it is by Suidas {u} interpreted of such that held three spears in the hand together; and this was an honourable post, for a king to lean on him; such state was used by the king of Syria, **2Ki 5:18** and by the kings and queens of Persia; so Gorionides {w} says of Esther, that on the third day; she put on her beautiful garments and glorious ornaments, and took two of her maidens with her, and put her right hand on one of them, and leaned upon her in a royal manner, or as was the manner of kings: the same

answered the man of God; the prophet of the Lord, as the Targum:

and said, behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? it is impossible it should be, if he was to open the windows of heaven as at the flood, and let down showers of wheat and barley, in like manner as he rained manna in the wilderness:

and he said; the prophet in reply to him:

behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof; wheat and barley sold at the above price, but should not taste of it, as a punishment of his unbelief.

{u} In voce tristatai. {w} Heb. Hist. l. 2. c. 4.

2 Kings 7:3

Ver. 3. And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate,.... Of the city of Samaria; lepers, according to the law, being obliged to be without the city and camp, Le 13:46 these might have a dwelling assigned them near the gate; or they might get as near to it as they could, partly to obtain relief from the city, and partly for fear of the Syrians; these, the Jews say {x}, were Gehazi and his three sons, see **2Ki 5:27**

and they said one to another, why sit we here until we die? being ready to perish with hunger.

{x} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 47. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 107. 2.

2 Kings 7:4

Ver. 4. If we say we will enter into the city,.... Contrary to the law which forbid them:

then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; not being able to obtain food to preserve life:

and if we sit here, we die also; having nothing to eat to support nature:

now therefore let us come, and fall unto the host of the Syrians; put ourselves into their hands, and lie at their mercy:

if they save us alive, we shall live; if they do not put us to death, but give us bread to eat, our lives will be preserved:

and if they kill us, we shall but die; which we must inevitably do, whether we stay here, or go into the city.

2 Kings 7:5

Ver. 5. And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians,...., The dusk of the evening, or the evening twilight, as appears from **2Ki 7:9**,

and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria; not the further part of it, but the edge or border of it nearest to them:

behold, there was no man there; no sentinel or guard, which they expected, and to whom they would have surrendered themselves.

2 Kings 7:6

Ver. 6. For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host,.... Or of many armies, as the Targum; either in the air by the ministry of angels; or the Lord so wrought upon their imagination, that they fancied they heard such noises; or he caused such noises in their ears:

and they said one to another, lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites; one of the nations of the Canaanites, and may be here put for the whole of those that remained, and who lived upon the borders of the land of Israel; though Josephus {y} has it, the kings of the isles; that is, of Chittim, see **Jer 2:10**

and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us; Egypt being now divided into petty kingdoms; or else the governors of the several nomes or districts of it are here meant: for the king of Israel to hire these kings was very unlikely in his present circumstances; but those unreasonable things, in their panic, their imaginations suggested to them.

{y} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 9. c. 4.) sect. 5.

2 Kings 7:7

Ver. 7. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight,.... Or in the dark, as the Targum; when the twilight was going off; so that the lepers came very quickly after they were gone, **2Ki 7:5**

and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses; such was their fright, that they could not stay to loose their cattle, with which they might have made greater speed, but ran away on foot: and they left

even the camp as it was; took nothing away with them, either money or provisions:

and fled for their life; which they imagined to be in great danger.

2 Kings 7:8

Ver. 8. And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent,.... The first they came to:

and did eat and drink; which was the first thing they did, being hungry, and almost starved:

and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; in a place without the camp, where they thought it would be safe, and where they could come at it again:

and came again and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it; this, Josephus says {z}, they did four times.

{z} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 9. c. 4.) sect. 5.

2 Kings 7:9

Ver. 9. Then they said one to another, we do not well,.... This is not right, to take this booty to ourselves; it is not doing justice to our brethren, and it may not prove well to ourselves in the issue:

this day is a day of good tidings; to be delivered from the enemy, and have such plenty of provisions thrown into their hands; it would be joyful tidings to the inhabitants of the city, did they know it:

and we hold our peace; and do not publish this good tidings, that others may share the benefit of it:

if we tarry till the morning light; when it will in course be discovered:

some mischief will come upon us; either from the Syrians, who they might fear would return by that time, or some of them lurking about would fall upon them and destroy them; or the king of Israel, when he came to know it, would be so incensed as to inflict some punishment on them; or they might expect some evil from the immediate hand of God:

now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household; acquaint some of his servants with what had happened.

2 Kings 7:10

Ver. 10. So they came and called to the porter of the city,.... The chief of those that had the care of the gate of it; for there were more than one, as follows:

and they told them; the porter, and the watchmen with him:

we came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man; not one to be seen or heard:

but horses tied, and asses tied; to their mangers; the latter, as well as the former, were used for war, not only to carry burdens, but to fight upon, as Aelianus {a} relates of some people; and especially when there was a want of horses, as Strabo {b}; and both observe that this creature was sacrificed to Mars:

and the tents as they were; none of them struck, nor anything taken out of them.

{a} De Animal. l. 12. c. 34. {b} Geograph. l. 15. p. 500.

2 Kings 7:11

Ver. 11. And he called the porters,.... The porter of the city called to the porters of the king's palace:

and they told it to the king's house within; to some of his domestic servants within the palace, and they reported it to the king.

2 Kings 7:12

Ver. 12. And the king arose in the night,.... Upon the report made to him:

and he said unto his servants, I will now show you what the Syrians have done to us; taking it to be a stratagem of theirs to decoy them:

they know that we be hungry; and would be glad to come out of the city to get some food:

therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field; to make us believe that they have broke up the siege, and have deserted the camp, and are gone, when they only lie in ambush:

saying, when they come out of the city; which they supposed they would do through hunger:

we shall catch them alive; take them captive at once:

and get into the city; being open to let them out, and receive them on their return.

2 Kings 7:13

Ver. 13. And one of his servants answered and said, let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city,.... Not having died through the famine as the rest:

behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; behold, I say, they are even as the multitude of Israel that are consumed; signifying, there was a like consumption among the horses as among the people, and they that remained were starving as they were; so that should those horses, and the men, fall into the hands of the Syrians, and perish, it would be no great matter; the loss would not be much, since they must perish if they continue in the city: according to the Vulgate Latin version, these five horses were all that were left:

and let us send and see; whether the report of the lepers is true or not.

2 Kings 7:14

Ver. 14. They took therefore two chariot horses,.... Not five, but two only, and those the best, that drew in the king's chariot perhaps, and so were better fed, and fitter for this expedition:

and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, go and see; whether they are fled or not.

2 Kings 7:15

Ver. 15. And they went after them unto Jordan,.... Not finding them in the camp, and knowing the rout they would take to their own land, they went as far as Jordan, over which they must pass:

and, lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels which the Syrians had cast away in their haste; in their fright and flight, such of their clothes as hindered them in running; and their armour, as Josephus {c} seems rightly to understand the word used, these they threw away for quicker dispatch:

and the messengers returned and told the king: that it was as the lepers said, and what they themselves had seen.

{c} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 9. c. 4. sect. 5.)

2 Kings 7:16

Ver. 16. And the people went out and spoiled the tents of the Syrians,.... Of their riches, and of their provisions; of which there was such a plenty, not only for present use, but for sale,

so that a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, &c.

according to the word of the Lord; by Elisha, **2Ki 7:1**.

2 Kings 7:17

Ver. 17. And the king appointed the lord, on whose hand he leaned, to have the charge of the gate,.... Not to keep out the enemy, of which there was no danger; but to prevent disorders and tumults among the people, and that they might go out in an orderly and regular manner:

and the people trod upon him in the gate; being eager to get out for food; and he endeavouring to keep order among them, they pressed upon him, and threw him down, and trampled him under foot; or he was placed here to regulate the market, that everyone might be supplied in course, but through the people's pressing to get provisions, he was overborne, and trod upon:

and died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him; so that he saw the plenty, but partook not of it, as he said, see **2Ki 7:2**.

2 Kings 7:18

Ver. 18. And it came to pass, as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying,.... As in **2Ki 7:1**, and what he said to the king there, and to the lord, in **2Ki 7:2**, are repeated in this and the next verse, that it might be observed how exactly the prophecies were fulfilled.

2 Kings 7:19

Ver. 19. And that lord answered the man of God, and said,.... As in **2Ki 7:2**

and he said; that is, Elisha, as in the same place.

2 Kings 7:20

Ver. 20. And so it fell out unto him,.... As the prophet predicted:

for the people trod upon him in the gate, and he died;
See Gill on "2Ki 7:17".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 8

This chapter gives an account of some advice Elisha had formerly given to the Shunammite woman, and of the success of it, **2Ki 8:1** and of the sickness of the king of Syria, who sent to Elisha, then being at Damascus, by Hazael, to know whether he should recover; by whom a message was returned, and Hazael was told by the prophet he should be king of Syria, and exercise great cruelty in Israel, **2Ki 8:7** and of the bad reign of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, over Judah, **2Ki 8:16** and of the reign of his son Ahaziah, **2Ki 8:25**.

Ver. 1. Then spoke Elisha unto the woman (whose son he had restored to life),.... His hostess at Shunem, **2Ki 4:8** the following he said to her, not after the famine in Samaria, but before it, as some circumstances show:

saying, arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn; with the greatest safety to her person and property, and with the least danger to her moral and religious character:

for the Lord hath called for a famine, and it shall also come upon the land seven years: which Jarchi says was the famine that was in the days of Joel; it was, undoubtedly, on account of the idolatry of Israel, and was double the time of that in the days of Elijah.

2 Kings 8:2

Ver. 2. And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God,.... Whose words she had reason to believe; she having a son given to her according to his word, and this restored to life, when dead, through his intercession:

and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines; which was not far from her native place, and where there was plenty of food, and she could have as free an exercise of her religion as in the idolatrous kingdom of Israel.

2 Kings 8:3

Ver. 3. And it came to pass, at the seven years end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines,.... Either hearing that the famine was over, or believing that it was, the time being expired the prophet fixed for it:

and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house, and for her land; which her nearest relations in her absence had seized upon, as heirs to them; or those in whose hands she had intrusted them refused, upon her return, to deliver them to her; or the king's officers had seized upon them for him, as forfeited to the crown by her going out of the land without leave; and now she needed a friend to speak for her to the king, which, in time past, she had no occasion for, and thought she never should, see **2Ki 4:13**.

2 Kings 8:4

Ver. 4. And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God,.... Elisha's servant, just at the same time the woman made her application to him; so that this was before he was dismissed from the service of the prophet, and consequently before the affair of Naaman's cure, and so before the siege of Samaria:

saying, tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done; the miracles he wrought, as the dividing of the waters of Jordan, and healing those near Jericho; the affair of procuring water for the armies of the three kings in Edom he needed not to relate, since Jehoram was an eyewitness thereof; the next was the multiplying the widow's cruse of oil, when he in course came to those that were done for the Shunammite woman.

2 Kings 8:5

Ver. 5. And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life,.... Which was the Shunammite's son:

that, behold, the woman whose son he had restored to life cried to the king for her house, and for her land; came and presented her petition to the king at that very instant:

and Gehazi said, my lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life; the very person I am speaking of.

2 Kings 8:6

Ver. 6. And when the king asked the woman, she told him,.... The whole affair; how that she had a son according to the word of Elisha, when she had been barren, and her husband old; that this child was struck with sickness, and died; and that the prophet, through his prayers, restored it to life:

so the king appointed unto her a certain officer; the word signifies an "eunuch": him he ordered to attend upon her, and assist her, and see to it that she was put into the possession of her house and land:

saying, restore all that was her's, and all the fruits of the field, since the day that she left the land, even till now; not only her house and land, but all the rent, profits, and dues arising from thence during the time of her absence: the Jews except the rent of her house.

2 Kings 8:7

Ver. 7. And Elisha came to Damascus,.... On what account, and when, is not certain, whether to convert Gehazi, as say the Jews {d}; or to confirm Naaman in the true religion he professed, for which he might be dismissed from his office, since another man was made general of the Syrian army; or on account of the famine; or rather it may be to anoint, or, however, to declare that Hazael would be king of Syria; see 1Ki 19:15,

and Benhadad the king of Syria was sick; at the time he came thither, where his palace was, and now a Mahometan temple; a very extraordinary building, according to Benjamin the Jew {e}:

and it was told him, saying, the man of God is come hither; the famous prophet in Israel, Elisha, through whom Naaman his general had been cured of his leprosy, of whom he had heard so much.

{d} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 47. 1. {e} Itinerar. p. 55.

2 Kings 8:8

Ver. 8. And the king said to Hazael,.... The captain general of his army:

take a present in thine hand, and go and meet the man of God, who, perhaps, was not as yet come into the city, only into the region of Damascus: or rather "with thee"; so the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions; and which Noldius {f} approves of, since a burden of forty camels, **2Ki 8:9** could not be carried in the hand:

and inquire of the Lord by him, saying, shall I recover of this disease? he did not desire him to pray the Lord that he might recover, only was curious to know whether he should or not, see **2Ki 1:2**.

{f} Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 189. No. 362.

2 Kings 8:9

Ver. 9. So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him,.... As was usual when a prophet or seer was consulted, see **1Sa 9:7**

even of every good thing of Damascus; which was a very fruitful place, and had abundance of gardens and orchards in it, which yielded excellent fruit, and of such it is probable the present consisted, and which was large:

even forty camels' burden: which, as they are strong creatures, will bear a great deal. Abarbinel thinks, bread, flesh, and wine, and fowls, were in the present, but not gold, silver, and raiment, which the prophet had refused to take of Naaman; the Jews have a fable, that there was a precious stone in it, worth all the good things of Damascus:

and came and stood before him, and said, thy son Benhadad, king of Syria, hath sent me to thee, saying, shall I recover of this disease? he calls him his son, in veneration of the prophet as a father, as such men were called.

2 Kings 8:10

Ver. 10. And Elisha said unto him, go, say unto him, thou mayest certainly recover,.... That is, of the disease; and there was not only a probability that he might recover of it, it not being a mortal one, but a certainty that he should not die of it, as he did not, but die a violent death, which the prophet predicts in the next clause; though some take these words not as a command, what he should say, but as a prediction of what he would say; that he would go and tell him he should certainly recover, because he would not discourage him, though the prophet assures him in the next clause that he should die: there is a various reading of these words; we follow the marginal reading, but the textual reading is, "say, thou shall not certainly recover", or "in living live"; which agrees with what follows:

howbeit or "for"

the Lord hath showed me, that he shall surely die; though not of that sickness, nor a natural death, but a violent one, and that by the hand of this his servant, though he does not express it.

2 Kings 8:11

Ver. 11. And he settled his countenance steadfastly,.... Refrained himself as much as possible, that he might not weep, as some Jewish writers interpret it; or, as others, he turned his face on one side, and covered it with his hands, that Hazael might not see him weep; or rather he set his face on Hazael, and looked at him so wistly:

until he was ashamed; that is, Hazael; the prophet looked him out of countenance:

and the man of God wept; at the thought of what calamities the man before him, he looked on, would be the cause of in Israel, as the following words show.

2 Kings 8:12

Ver. 12. And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord?.... Imagining it was for the death of Benhadad he had predicted, for which he could see no reason; of the title, "my lord", see 1Ki 18:7

and he answered, because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel; which he foresaw by a spirit of prophecy; and Israel being his own people, he sympathized in their calamities before they came:

their strong holds wilt thou set on fire; which should be taken by him, see 2Ki 10:32

and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword; in battle:

and wilt dash their children; against rocks and stones, or stone walls, or upon the ground, floor, or pavement, as was usual in war {g}, see Ps 137:9,

and rip up their women with child: which was the height of barbarity and cruelty. Ben Gersom and Ben Melech interpret this of breaking down the walls of fortified cities, built strong, like hills and mountains; but this is supposed in the first clause.

{g} Vid. Homer. Iliad. 22. ver. 63, 64.

2 Kings 8:13

Ver. 13. And Hazael said, but what, [is] thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?.... What dost thou take me to be, a vile, impudent, fierce, and cruel creature, as a dog, to be guilty of so great inhumanity and barbarity as this? or what is thy servant? a dog, a mean abject creature, of no power and authority, incapable of doing such great things spoken of? to which sense not only what is predicted of him, said to be great, inclines, but what follows:

and Elisha answered, the Lord hath showed me that thou shall be king over Syria; and that thou shalt have power enough to do this; this declaration, according to Ben Gersom, was the anointing of him, predicted 1Ki 19:15.

2 Kings 8:14

Ver. 14. So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master,.... Benhadad king of Syria:

who said to him, what said Elisha to thee? concerning his recovery, which was the thing uppermost in his mind, and he was eagerly desirous to know how it would be:

and he answered, he told me that thou shouldest surely recover; which was false; for he only said that he "might", and not that he should; and he concealed what he also declared, that though he might recover of his disease, yet that he should surely die in another way.

2 Kings 8:15

Ver. 15. And it came to pass on the morrow,.... In such haste was Hazael to be king, as the prophet said he would be:

that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died; not that Benhadad took or ordered such a cloth to be dipped and laid on his own face, to allay the violent heat in him; but Hazael did this, and perhaps under such a pretence; but his real design was to strike in the heat, or suffocate him; for such a thick cloth, one of the bedclothes, made of goats' hair, as is supposed, being dipped in water, would suck in a great deal; and being laid on his face, would press hard, and he not able to throw it off, it would let in much water into his mouth and nostrils, and suffocate him, without leaving any marks of violence, which might render his death suspicious:

and Hazael reigned in his stead; having an interest in the army, of which he was general, and perhaps had done some exploits which had recommended him to the regard of the people.

2 Kings 8:16

Ver. 16. And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel,.... Who began his reign in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, **2Ki 3:1**.

Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah; as he continued to be two years more; for this must be in the twenty third year of his reign, and he reigned twenty five years, 1Ki 22:42.

Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign; according to Dr. Lightfoot {h}, there were three beginnings of his reign; "first", when his father went with Ahab to Ramothgilead, when be was left viceroy, and afterwards his father reassumed the kingdom; the "second" time was, when Jehoshaphat went with the kings of Israel and Edom against Moab; and this is the time here respected, which was in the fifth of Joram king of Israel; and the "third" time was, at the death of his father; but knew his father was living.

{h} Works, vol. 1. p. 84.

2 Kings 8:17

Ver. 17. Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign,.... The second time, in the lifetime of his father:

and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem; which ended in the twelfth year of Joram king of Israel, **2Ki 8:25**.

2 Kings 8:18

Ver. 18. And he walked in the way of the king's of Israel, as did the house of Ahab,.... Imitated them in idolatry:

for the daughter of Ahab was his wife; whose name was Athaliah, **2Ki 8:26**, and by her he was drawn into idolatrous practices; of such bad consequence are marriages with idolaters; it is very much that so good a king as Jehoshaphat his father was should contract such an affinity; he suffered for it in more instances than one:

and he did evil in the sight of the Lord; was guilty of idolatry, than which nothing was more displeasing to the Lord; for he made high places, and compelled his subjects to commit idolatry, 2Ch 21:11.

2 Kings 8:19

Ver. 19. Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake,.... Not for his merits, but for the mercy he assured him of:

as he promised him to give to him always a light, [and] to his children; or a kingdom, as the Targum; therefore he would not utterly destroy the tribe, nor suffer the sceptre or government to depart from it till the Messiah came, see Ps 132:11.

2 Kings 8:20

Ver. 20. In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah,.... Who had been tributary to Judah ever since the times of David, for the space of one hundred and fifty years:

and made a king over themselves; for though they are said to have kings, those were only deputy kings, as in 1Ki 22:47 and now the prediction of Isaac began to be accomplished, Ge 27:40.

2 Kings 8:21

Ver. 21. So Joram went over to Zair,.... A city in Edom, the same with the Zaara of Ptolemy {i}; some take it to be the same with Seir, the mountain or country of that name:

and all the chariots with him; all the chariots of war he had:

and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about; who came out of their cities in great numbers, and surrounded him, he having entered into their country in an hostile way, to subdue them:

and the captains of the chariots: which belonged to the Edomites; those he smote, 2Ch 21:9

and the people fled into their tents; the army being routed.

{i} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17.

2 Kings 8:22

Ver. 22. Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day,....

Joram not pursuing the enemy, and taking the advantage of the victory, but returning to his own land, the reason of which follows:

then Libnah revolted at the same time; a considerable city in his own kingdom, a Levitical one; this revolt was occasioned, perhaps, by his idolatrous practices, and which he compelled his subjects to; of this city, see Jos 10:29.

2 Kings 8:23

Ver. 23. And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?] Not in the canonical book of Chronicles, though some of his acts are recorded there, see 2Ch 21:1 but in the annals of the kings of Judah, written by persons appointed for that purpose.

2 Kings 8:24

Ver. 24. And Joram slept with his fathers,.... Died as they did:

and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; but not in the sepulchres of the kings, and without any funeral pomp, and without any mourning and lamentation for him, he being not beloved, and his life not at all desirable, 2Ch 21:19,

and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead; of whom more is said in the following verses.

2 Kings 8:25

Ver. 25. In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign. He is called Jehoahaz, and said to be the youngest son of Jehoram, 2Ch 21:17.

2 Kings 8:26

Ver. 26. Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign,.... In 2Ch 22:2 he is said to be forty two years of age; for the solution of that difficulty See Gill on "2Ch 22:2":

and he reigned one year in Jerusalem; which was the whole of his reign:

and his mother's name was Athaliah the daughter of Omri king of Israel; that is, his granddaughter; for she was the daughter of Ahab the son of Omri, **2Ki 8:18**, it was usual for grandchildren to be called children, sons and daughters, and perhaps she might be educated in the family of Omri.

2 Kings 8:27

Ver. 27. And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the Lord, as [did] the house of Ahab,.... Worshipping the calves, and Baal also:

for he was the son in law of the house of Ahab; he was the son of Jehoram, who was son-in-law to Ahab, having married his daughter, which accounts for his being guilty of the same idolatrous practices.

2 Kings 8:28

Ver. 28. And he went with Joram the son of Ahab,.... His mother's brother, and so his uncle:

to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramothgilead; which he went to recover out of the hands of the king of Syria, as his father Ahab had attempted in his time; in which he was assisted by Jehoshaphat, as now Joram was by a grandson of his:

and the Syrians wounded Joram; as they did his father Ahab at the same place, though his wound was not mortal, as his father's was.

2 Kings 8:29

Ver. 29 And King Joram went back,.... From Ramoth, having taken it, and left his army there:

to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at

Ramah; the same with Ramothgilead:

when he fought against Hazael king of Syria; for Benhadad being dead, he was now king in his room, **2Ki 8:15**

and Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick; of the wounds which he had received, which might occasion a feverish disorder; and so it was brought about in Providence that Ahaziah should here meet with the destruction appointed for him, of which in the following chapter. See
2Ch 22:7.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 9

In this chapter we are told that one of the sons of the prophets was sent by Elisha to anoint Jehu king of Israel, and to order him to smite and destroy the whole house of Ahab, **2Ki 9:1**, which being done unto him, and the order received by Jehu, he acquainted his captains with it, **2Ki 9:11**, who set out with him immediately to Jezreel, **2Ki 9:16**, where he slew Joram king of Israel, **2Ki 9:22**, and Ahaziah king of Judah, **2Ki 9:27**, and Jezebel, the widow of Ahab, and mother of Joram, **2Ki 9:30**.

Ver. 1. And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets,.... Who the Jews generally say {k} was Jonah the son of Amittai:

and said, gird up thy loins; his loose and long garments about his loins, for quicker dispatch in travelling:

and take this box of oil in thine hand; for an use after directed to:

and go to Ramothgilead; where Joram had left his army with his captains, to keep the city from the Syrians.

{k} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 18. p. 47.

2 Kings 9:2

Ver. 2. And when thou comest thither,.... To Ramothgilead; but from whence he went is uncertain, doubtless where there was a school of the prophets, perhaps that which was erected near Jordan, on the other side of which lay Ramothgilead, **2Ki 6:1**,

look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi; the same that Elijah was ordered to anoint, but it was deferred till now, a reprieve being granted to Ahab upon his humiliation, 1Ki 19:16,

and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren; the captains of the army:

and carry him into an inner chamber; a chamber within a chamber, as in the original; this he was to do for secrecy, that it might not be seen what he did to Jehu; and lest he should be prevented doing it by the captains, or be exposed to danger for doing it; since that might be deemed treason to do what he was to do, and did, as follows.

2 Kings 9:3

Ver. 3. Then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head,.... When in the chamber together alone:

and say, thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel; which was done, not with the anointing oil in the temple, which could not be come by; and with which, as Kimchi from their Rabbins says, only the kings of the house of David were anointed, and they only when there was a division, or the crown was translated to another family, as was the case now; but with common oil, or the oil of balsam, such as the prophet had in his house:

then open the door and flee, and tarry not; lest he should be examined by the captains, and come into danger; though before he went out he was to say what is recorded in **2Ki 9:7**.

2 Kings 9:4

Ver. 4. So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramothgilead. It is repeated, that it might be observed that it was a young man that went, who was more fit for this service than Elisha, partly because of his age, and partly because he would be less known; as also his age is remarked, this being a bold and daring action in a young man to anoint a new king, as well as it was honourable; and moreover, he was not only one of the sons of the prophets, but was a prophet himself, though young, and still a more fit person for such a service; though the Targum is, a young man, a disciple of the prophets.

2 Kings 9:5

Ver. 5. And when he came, behold, the captains of the host were sitting,.... Either at a table, being at dinner, or at a council of war:

and he said, I have an errand unto thee, O captain; looking and directing his speech to Jehu; or, "I have a word to thee" {l}; something to say to thee, intimating that he desired to speak to him alone:

and Jehu said, unto which of all us? not perhaps at first thoroughly understanding who he meant; or however was willing to have it repeated and explained, that it might be manifest to the whole company that he was intended:

and he said, to thee, O captain; and to him only.

{l} Kyla yl rbd "verbum mihi ad te", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

2 Kings 9:6

Ver. 6. And he arose, and went into the house,.... Into the inner chamber in it:

and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord, even over Israel; for though they were fallen into idolatry, and from the pure worship of God, yet the Lord had still a right unto them, and as yet he had not wrote a "Loammi" **Ho 1:9** upon them; and there were many among them which had not bowed the knee to Baal.

2 Kings 9:7

Ver. 7. And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master,.... For Jehu was one of Ahab's captains, as he was now one of his son's, as appears from **2Ki 9:25**, but this was to be no objection with him to the destroying of his house, as being an act of high treason, since he had an order for it from the King of kings, and Lord of lords; which otherwise would have seemed unlawful and criminal, and what follows will sufficiently vindicate the justice of God in it:

that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel; who killed the prophets of the Lord, and caused to be put to death Naboth the servant of the Lord, and now their blood was to be avenged on her and her son Joram, and all her family.

2 Kings 9:8

Ver. 8. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish,.... Be cut off by death, and that in a violent manner, not one should escape:

and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel; of these phrases,
See Gill on "1Ki 14:10" see Gill on "1Ki 21:21"

2 Kings 9:9

Ver. 9. And I will make the house of Ahab, The same is threatened,
See Gill on "1Ki 21:22".

2 Kings 9:10

Ver. 10. And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel,.... Or in the field of Jezreel; the Targum is, the inheritance of Jezreel; this is also threatened, 1Ki 21:23

and [there shall be] none to bury her; or nothing of her to bury, as Kimchi, all being eaten up but her skull, feet, and the palms of her hands, see **2Ki 9:35**

and he opened the door, and fled; that is, the young man of the sons of the prophets, as soon as he had said the above words, as he was ordered, lest he should be taken up for a traitor.

2 Kings 9:11

Ver. 11. Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord,.... The rest of the captains of the army, who served under Joram as he did:

and one said unto him, is all well? one of the captains, the greatest of them, as Kimchi; he inquired whether he brought any ill news, since he came and went in such haste:

wherefore came this mad fellow to thee? so profane men, especially the worshippers of Baal, as those captains might be, were wont to call the prophets of the Lord, because of their habit, their manner of living, and the gestures they sometimes used in prophesying, and especially because of the things they prophesied of; and even prophets were sometimes called so, because, in the time of their prophesying, they appeared as madmen {m}, and in a frenzy:

and he said unto them, ye know the man, and his communication; you saw by his habit of what profession he is, and you may easily guess what he talked of, as such men usually do, about religion, and one whimsical thing or another, reproving men for their sins, and telling them what they ought to do; and such like things you may well imagine he has been talking of to me; you rightly call him a mad fellow, and you may well suppose his discourse was agreeably to his character, and not worth relating and hearing; this he said, to put them off inquiring any further.

{m} David de Pomis, Lexic. p. 204. 3.

2 Kings 9:12

Ver. 12. And they said, [it is] false, tell us now,.... They did not believe he spoke truth, but concealed from them the real matter; which they concluded to be of some importance, by the hastiness of the messenger, the privacy between them, the countenance of Jehu, which discovered thoughtfulness and concern, and the trifling answer he sought to put them off with; all which increased their curiosity, and made them urgent and importunate to know the truth of the matter: and he said, thus and thus spake he to me; such and such words as above: and particularly

saying, thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel; and no doubt told them that he poured oil on his head, and anointed him, and he might show them the oil.

2 Kings 9:13

Ver. 13. Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs,.... That is, under Jehu, that he might be raised higher, and put on an eminence above them, agreeably to the high rank and dignity he was raised unto, and which they hereby acknowledged; and that he might be conspicuous to others: and this was done upon the top of the stairs, the first and highest of them, which led up either to an upper room, or to a scaffold erected for this purpose; the Targum is, on the degree of hours, a sun dial, a stone on which were engraven the twelve hours of the day, and which, by the sun's shadow on it, it might be known what hour it was; and at, or upon this stone, they laid their clothes, for Jehu to sit upon; not their wearing apparel, but carpets, or pieces of tapestry, or such like things:

and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king; and they might come the more easily into such an acknowledgment of him as such, though he was anointed by one whom they had just called a mad fellow; being not so well affected to Ahab's family, and having a great respect for Jehu, the chief commander of the army, and especially being under a particular influence of the divine Providence, which moved them to take such a step.

2 Kings 9:14

Ver. 14. So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram,.... He and the captains with him entered into a confederacy to depose Joram, and set him up as king:

now Joram had kept Ramothgilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria; having taken it, he left his army in it, under the command of his captains, of which Jehu was the chief, to keep it from the king of Syria; which gave Jehu a fairer opportunity, having the army at his command, and at a distance from Joram, of forming a conspiracy against him.

2 Kings 9:15

Ver. 15. But King Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel,.... As is recorded, 2Ki 8:29 and here repeated for the reason above given:

and Jehu said, if it be your minds; to engage one and all, and heartily, in this conspiracy, and to make me king:

then let none go forth nor escape out of the city, to go to tell it in Jezreel; that so Joram might be surprised unawares, and have no opportunity either of fleeing or of preparing for his defence.

2 Kings 9:16

Ver. 16. So Jehu rode in a chariot,.... In great pomp and majesty as a king:

and went to Jezreel: set forward on a march thither with his captains, and part of his army at least, from Ramothgilead; which, according to Bunting {n}, was twenty four miles:

for Jordan lay there; to be cured of his wounds, as before observed:

and Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram; see 2Ki 8:29.

{n} Travels, &c. p. 166.

2 Kings 9:17

Ver. 17. And there stood a watchman on the tower of Jezreel,.... Who could see afar off when an enemy was coming, and his business was to give notice of it; and especially he was now on his watch tower, because the king was there, and this was necessary for his safety:

and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company; a troop of soldiers, though he did not know who they were, and to whom they belonged, whether they were Syrians or Israelites; which was reported to the king:

and Joram said, take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, is it peace? he might fear some ill had befallen his army at Ramothgilead, and the Syrians had got the advantage of them; or they had made an irruption into his country, and were coming to attack him at Jezreel; or there was an insurrection among his own people.

2 Kings 9:18

Ver. 18. So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, thus saith the king, is it peace?.... Are things well in the army, or any disturbance in the kingdom? are you come as friends or enemies?

and Jehu said, what hast thou to do with peace? or to ask such a question:

turn thee behind me; which he was obliged to do, Jehu having such a company of soldiers with him; and this he did, that he might carry no tidings to Joram, that he might not know as yet who he and his company were:

and the watchman told, saying, the messenger came to them, but he cometh not again; of this he sent word to the king what he had observed.

2 Kings 9:19

Ver. 19. Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said,.... The same as the first messenger did, and had the same answer, and was bid to do the same as in the preceding verse.

2 Kings 9:20

Ver. 20. And the watchman told, saying, he came even unto them, and cometh not again,.... Was detained, as the other was:

and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for, coming nearer, the watchman could discern the manner of his driving:

for he driveth furiously; in great haste, making much speed, being a man of a very warm and active spirit; and now being eager to come up with Joram, and seize him unprepared, and ascend the throne; the Targum is the reverse, "for he driveth quietly or slowly,"

being desirous of drawing Joram out of the city, and get him into his hands, and slay him, that he might not have the trouble of besieging the place, which was able to hold out some time against him; and besides, he remembered the prophecy of Elisha, that Naboth's blood would be requited in the field of Jezreel, **2Ki 9:26**, and therefore was desirous of drawing him out of the city, in order to slay him there.

2 Kings 9:21

Ver. 21. And Joram said, make ready,.... The chariot, put to the horses; bind them, as the word signifies, to the chariot:

and his chariot was made ready; by his servants immediately:

and Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot; not both in the same chariot, but each in his own, for the sake of greater magnificence:

and they went out against Jehu; not in an hostile manner, for they had no notion of him as an enemy; though it is much they had no suspicion of him by his detaining the messengers; but Joram perhaps thought he was desirous of delivering his message himself; and in honour to him, and also being eager to know what it was, went out to meet him:

and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite; which had been his, and where, or near it, he was stoned, and his blood shed; a very inauspicious place to meet him in.

2 Kings 9:22

Ver. 22. And it came to pass, when Joram saw, Jehu, that he said, is it peace, Jehu?.... Have things gone well at Ramothgilead? art thou come in triumph from thence? or obliged to fly from the Syrians? or art thou come in a peaceable, or in an hostile manner to me?

and he answered, what peace; canst thou expect at home or abroad, from me or others:

so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many? which may be understood both literally of corporeal whoredom, and diabolical arts she was addicted to, and figuratively of idolatry, often called whoredom in Scripture, and of the wicked arts and methods she made use of to inveigle and entice persons into it; and both these very often went together; see **Na 3:4** and of which Joram was guilty, at least in part; he connived at all in her, and did not attempt to restrain her, and therefore had no claim to peace, protection, and safety.

2 Kings 9:23

Ver. 23. And Joram turned his hand, and fled,.... Taking hold of the horses' reins with it to turn them, or by the motion of it directing the charioteer to turn them back towards Jezreel, whither he fled:

and said to Ahaziah, there is treachery, O Ahaziah; a conspiracy formed, and rebellion raised by the captains, at the head of which he supposed Jehu was.

2 Kings 9:24

Ver. 24. And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength,.... To give the arrow all the force he could;

and smote Jehoram between his arms; that is, between his shoulders, his back being turned to him, and the chariot an open one:

and the arrow went out at his heart: quite through him:

and he sunk down in his chariot; and died immediately.

2 Kings 9:25

Ver. 25. Then said [Jehu] to Bidkar his captain,.... Not Joram's, but Jehu's captain, though he had been the former's, and his father Ahab's also:

take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; near to which they were:

for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father; either in the same chariot, or on horseback side by side, his guards or retinue following him two and two:

the Lord laid this burden upon him; this heavy denunciation of vengeance by Elijah the prophet; and they being together, and pretty near, heard it, as he might remember, which follows.

2 Kings 9:26

Ver. 26. Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth,.... These are the words of the Lord to Elijah the day after Naboth was put to death:

and the blood of his sons, said the Lord; who were put to death with him, that there might be no heirs to the estate:

and I will requite thee in this place: take vengeance here, as he now did on his son:

now therefore take [and] cast him into the plat [of ground], according to the word of the Lord; whereby it would be fulfilled, see 1Ki 21:19, more is here recited than there, which Jehu well remembered.

2 Kings 9:27

Ver. 27. But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this,.... That Joram was slain:

he fled by the way of the garden house, which perhaps stood upon the spot where Naboth's vineyard was, turned into a garden by Ahab:

and Jehu followed after him; as far as Samaria, where he was hid, 2Ch 22:9,

and said, smite him also in the chariot; this order he gave to his soldiers, to do to him as he had done to Joram: and they did so,

at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam; a city in the tribe of Manasseh, Jos

17:11,

and he fled to Megiddo; after he was wounded; another city in the same tribe, Jos 17:11,

and died there; at Megiddo; though some think that from thence he was had by his servants to Samaria, and there hid, and, being found, was brought from thence to Jezreel, where he was slain, and died. Jehu was ordered to destroy the whole house of Ahab, and Ahaziah was of that house by his mother's side, and walked in the way of it, and was in conjunction with it, and perished therewith; this, though here recorded, was after the death of Jezebel, and of the seventy sons of Ahab, and of the brethren of Ahaziah.

2 Kings 9:28

Ver. 28. And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem,.... With the leave of Jehu, because he was the grandson of Jehoshaphat, a sincere worshipper of God, 2Ch 22:9,

and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David; see 1Ki 22:50.

2 Kings 9:29

Ver. 29. And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah. In **2Ki 8:25**, it is said to be in the twelfth year of his reign; it was at the close of the eleventh, and the beginning of the twelfth; or he began to reign with his father in the eleventh as here, and in the twelfth as there, when his father was dead.

2 Kings 9:30

Ver. 30. And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it,.... And of what he had done to Joram:

and she painted her face; or put "stibium" on her eyes; a sort of paint, to make them look beautiful perhaps the same with powder of lead ore, the Moors now use to tinge their eyebrows with, and make them look black, which they reckon graceful, See Gill on "Eze 23:40", this custom now obtains among the white Indians, who, to heighten the lustre of their complexion, and render their eyes more languishing, put a little black about them {n}:

and tired her head; dressed her head in the most elegant manner; not with a view to tempt Jehu, which she could not expect, being an aged woman; but for grandeur and majesty, and in the pride and haughtiness of her spirit, which she retained to the last, and resolved to keep up and show in her extremity and calamity:

and looked out at a window; in a bravado, as fearless of Jehu, and to dash him out of countenance if she could; or she might hope, by such a graceful and majestic appearance she made, that he would be moved to spare her life; though this does not so well agree with what follows as the former.

{n} Agreement of Customs between East Indians and Jews, art. 15. p. 65.

2 Kings 9:31

Ver. 31. And as Jehu entered in at the gate,.... Either of the city of Jezreel, or of the king's palace:

she said, [had] Zimri peace, who slew his master? Elah the son of Baasha king of Israel; no, he had not; he reigned but seven days, and, being besieged, burnt the king's house over him, and died, 1Ki 16:10, suggesting that the like would be his fate, who had slain his master Joram; or the words may be rendered, "O Zimri, the slayer of his master"; calling Jehu so, because of his likeness to Zimri.

2 Kings 9:32

Ver. 32. And he lifted up his face to the window,.... On hearing the above words;

and said, who is on my side, who? and will assist in taking vengeance on this haughty, imperious, and abusive woman:

and there looked out to him two or three eunuchs; who used to wait on her, as such did on women of quality, and attend them in their bedchambers; these, by their looks, signified they were ready to do any thing Jehu should direct them, Jezebel having been, perhaps, a very cruel mistress to them, and so was hated by them; and they might hope, by pleasing Jehu, to be continued at court in their office.

2 Kings 9:33

Ver. 33. And he said, throw her down,.... Out of the window upon the ground:

so they threw her down; took her up, and cast her headlong, as they were bid:

and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall; of the palace where she was:

and on the horses; which drew the chariot of Jehu:

and he trod her underfoot; with his horses; according to Kimchi, her sentence, and so her death, was stoning, as a retaliation of Naboth; for stoning was done two ways, both by casting down persons on stones, and by casting stones upon them, See Gill on "Ac 7:58".

2 Kings 9:34

Ver. 34. And when he was come in,.... To the palace:

he did eat and drink; to refresh himself after so long a march, and doing such execution:

and said, go see now this cursed woman; who had been the means of bringing a curse on Israel through her idolatry, and upon Ahab and his family, and upon herself, body and soul, being cursed of God and of men:

and bury her; forgetting the prophecy concerning her, though afterwards he remembered it:

for she is a king's daughter: the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, 1Ki 16:31 and therefore, in honour to royal dignity, though a cursed woman, he ordered the interment of her; or "though" she is the daughter of one of the kings of the nations of the world, as Kimchi, yet honour must be given to whom it is due.

2 Kings 9:35

Ver. 35. And they went to bury her,.... The servants of Jehu, according to his orders and instructions;

but they found no more of her than the scull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands; the flesh, and even all the rest of her bones, being devoured by dogs, so that there was scarce anything of her to be buried, as in **2Ki 9:10**, something similar to this happened to Ascletarion, a mathematician, as related by Suetonius {o}.

{o} In Vita Domitian. c. 15.

2 Kings 9:36

Ver. 36. Wherefore they came again, and told him,.... How things were, and what only could be found of Jezebel:

and he said, this is the word of the Lord; or the fulfilment of it:

which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying; as in
1Ki 21:23.

2 Kings 9:37

Ver. 37. And the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel,.... For upon this spot her carcass fell when thrown out of the window of the king's palace, and here it was left; for the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which was in the portion of Jezreel, was next to the palace, 1Ki 21:1, there seems to be some allusion to her name Jezebel, which signifies "where is dung?"

so that they shall not say, this is Jezebel; there being nothing left of her to be seen or pointed to, nor any grave nor monument over it on which was such an inscription, here lies Jezebel; or that might lead posterity to say, this is Jezebel's grave. Now though the words of this verse are not recorded elsewhere, as the words of the Lord, by Elijah, yet as Jehu was present when they were spoken, and within the hearing of them, he now remembered them, and could repeat them, these circumstances bringing them fresh to his mind.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 10

This chapter gives a further account of the destruction of the house of Ahab by Jehu, or his orders, even of all his sons and relations, 2Ki 10:1, and also of the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, 2Ki 10:12, of his taking up Jehonadab the son of Rechab into his chariot, to be a witness of his zeal for the Lord, 2Ki 10:15, and of his gathering together the prophets, priests, and worshippers of Baal, and slaying them, 2Ki 10:18 and of his extirpation of the idolatry of Baal, 2Ki 10:26, nevertheless he continued the worship of the calves, 2Ki 10:29 wherefore Israel was distressed by the king of Syria, 2Ki 10:32 and the chapter is concluded with the reign and death of Jehu, 2Ki 10:34.

Ver. 1. And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria,.... These might not be all his immediate sons, but some of them his grandsons, as such are sometimes called in Scripture:

and Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel; who fled thither, perhaps on Jehu's coming to Jezreel, having slain Joram, being the metropolis of the kingdom, to consult about a successor, or how to oppose Jehu, and to frustrate his designs: but the Septuagint version is, "to the rulers of Samaria", which seems most likely to be the true reading:

to the elders; the civil magistrates of the city of Samaria:

and to them that brought up Ahab's children: who had the care of their education; who either always dwelt at Samaria, being the royal city, or were sent with their charge thither, when Joram went to Ramothgilead, for safety, supposing he should be worsted by the Syrians; or they fled thither with them upon the death of Joram:

saying; as follows.

2 Kings 10:2

Ver. 2. Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons are with you,.... Sons of Ahab, and some of Joram, and all either the sons or grandsons of Ahab:

and there are with you chariots and horses; military ones:

a fenced city also: as Samaria was, well walled and fortified, and able to hold out a long siege:

and armour; of all sorts, to arm themselves and people with in their defence.

2 Kings 10:3

Ver. 3. Look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons,.... Most fit for government, whether on account of age or proper qualifications, and wisdom, courage, &c.

and set him on his father's throne; proclaim him king:

and fight for your master's house; that the crown may continue in his family; all which he did not desire might be, but in this sarcastic and sneering manner dares them to do it.

2 Kings 10:4

Ver. 4. But they were exceedingly afraid,.... They were intimidated at once; for they saw the purport of those letters, that should they attempt anything of this kind, he would come upon them with his forces:

and said, behold, two kings stood not before him; the kings of Israel and Judah, Joram and Ahaziah; but they were unarmed, and therefore how should they stand before an armed body of men Jehu had with him? this shows the pusillanimity of these men to make use of such an argument as this:

how then shall we stand? that is, before Jehu; but they were in much better circumstances than the two kings, as they are truly represented in 2Ki 10:2.

2 Kings 10:5

Ver. 5. And he that was over the house,.... The king's palace in Samaria, who had the custody, care, and government of it:

and he that was over the city; the commander and governor of it, that had the highest post in it under the king;

the elders also all other subordinate officers and magistrates:

and the bringers up of the children; who had the education of the king's sons committed to them:

sent to Jehu, saying, we are thy servants, and will do all that thou shall bid us. They were ready to do homage, and swear allegiance to him as their king, and obey all his commands as faithful subjects:

we will not make any king; or set up any on the throne, no, not any of the sons or grandsons of Ahab:

do thou that which is good in thine eyes, we will never oppose thee.

2 Kings 10:6

Ver. 6. Then he wrote a letter the second time to them,.... Having gained his point by the former:

saying, if ye be mine, acknowledge yourselves my subjects and servants;

and if ye will hearken to my voice; obey my commands:

take ye the heads of the men your master's sons; that is, take off their heads:

and come to me to Jezreel by tomorrow this time meaning with the heads along with them:

(now the king's sons, being seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, which brought them up;) they were in their houses, and under their tuition, and so had an authority over them, and could dispose of them at pleasure; they were not ordinary persons to whose care they were committed, but the principal men of the city.

2 Kings 10:7

Ver. 7. And it came to pass, when the letter came to them,.... They did not in the least hesitate, but immediately complied with the contents of it:

that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons; which was the whole number of them:

and put their heads in baskets, and sent them to Jezreel; as a present to Jehu, just as they carried the firstfruits, as Abarbinel observes.

2 Kings 10:8

Ver. 8. And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, they have brought the heads of the king's sons,.... Perhaps this messenger to Jehu came from the great men of Samaria themselves, to let him know that they had obeyed his orders:

and he said, lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning; very probably it was towards or at the evening they were brought; and he ordered them to be taken out of the baskets, and laid in two heaps at the entering of the gate of the city, that they might be taken notice of, and publicly viewed by the people that passed and repassed the gate; and where they met in great numbers, either on account of the market there, or court of judicature there held, especially in mornings; and here they were to remain till the morning, though not without a guard, that they might still be more exposed to view; Noldius {p} renders it, "without the door of the gate", for they were brought at night, when the gate was shut.

{p} Ebr. Conc. Part. p. 68. No. 340.

2 Kings 10:9

Ver. 9. And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people,.... Who were gathered together to this shocking sight, or on the above accounts:

ye be righteous; having had no concern in taking off the heads of those men:

behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him; I own it, and some may blame me for it, and charge me with treason and murder:

but who slew all these? not he, but the chief men of Samaria, and therefore must be more guilty than he, having shed the blood of so many persons, who had not offended against God and man to so great a degree as Joram; this he said to lessen his own sin, and wipe off the reproach of it, that his character might appear fairer in the eyes of the people, concealing, at the same time, his orders for the slaying of them.

2 Kings 10:10

Ver. 10. Know now, that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spake concerning the house of Ahab,.... He would have them observe, that all this, and what else should follow of the same kind, were and would be brought about by the providence of God, according to divine predictions, and as just punishments on Ahab's family for their sins; and therefore neither he nor others were to be blamed for what was done, since they were only instruments made use of by the Lord, who both foretold all this, and gave orders for the execution of it:

for the Lord hath done that which he spake by his servant Elijah; see 1Ki 21:21.

2 Kings 10:11

Ver. 11. So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel,.... Which to do, and to justify himself in so doing, was the design of what he said in the preceding verses:

and his great men; his ministers of state and counsellors, that advised him to, and abetted him in his idolatrous practices, and so justly suffered for the same; and perhaps some of them at least were those very men that cut off the heads of his sons in complaisance to Jehu:

and his kinsfolks: more distantly related to him or his acquaintance and familiars, his associates in sin and wickedness:

and his priests: who officiated for him and offered his sacrifices to Baal; the priests he kept in his palace, and ate at his table:

until he left him none remaining; either of his kindred or his priests, that is, that were at Jezreel; for there were others at Samaria, 2Ki 10:17.

2 Kings 10:12

Ver. 12 And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria,.... To make a clear riddance there of all that belonged to Ahab, as at Jezreel, and abolish idolatry there:

and as he was at the shearing house in the way; or, "the house of the binding of the shepherds", who, in shearing their sheep, bind their legs together; the Targum is,

"the house of the gathering of the shepherds;"

where they used to meet and converse together; with some it is the proper name of a place, Betheked, a country village between Jezreel and Samaria. Jerom speaks {q} of a village of this name, situated in a large plain, about fifteen miles from a place called Legion, which village he takes to be this here.

{q} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. K.

2 Kings 10:13

Ver. 13. Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah,.... At the above place; these were the sons of his brethren, called his brethren, as Lot was called Abraham's brother, being his brother's son; for as for his brethren, they had been slain by the Arabians before he was made king, 2Ch 22:1,

and said, who are ye? though perhaps he knew who they were:

and they answered, we are the brethren of Ahaziah; the sons of his brethren:

and we go down to salute the children of the king, and the children of the queen; meaning either the children of Ahab and Jezebel, or of Joram and his queen; for they knew nothing of the death of Joram and Jezebel, and the revolution made in the kingdom, and therefore with great simplicity tell who they were, and where they were going, and on what account.

2 Kings 10:14

Ver. 14. And he said, take them alive,.... Gave orders to his guards to seize them, and make them captives:

and they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house; where they washed the sheep when they sheered them;

[even] forty and two men, neither left he any of them; they being, by their grandmother's side, of the house of Ahab, and so within the commission of Jehu to slay them, at least as he thought; though his chief view might be, lest they should make any pretensions to the crown, being descended from that house, or should hereafter attempt to avenge the death of their relations; but by the judgment of God they were cut off as idolaters.

2 Kings 10:15

Ver. 15. And when he was departed thence,.... From Betheked, or the shearing house:

he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him; a Kenite, a descendant of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, a wise and good man, as appears by the laws and rules he gave to his posterity, who continued to the times of Jeremiah, and were then observant of them, Jer 35:6 this good man hearing of Jehu's coming to the throne, and of his destruction of the idolatrous family of Ahab, and of his zeal for the worship of God, and against idolatry, came forth from his tent to meet him, and congratulate him upon it:

and he saluted him; Jonadab saluted Jehu, according to Abarbinel; or "blessed him" {r}, wished him all happiness in his kingdom, and success in the reformation of it; though most understand it of Jehu's saluting Jonadab, which seems best to agree with the following:

and said to him, is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? that is, hast thou the same cordial affection and sincere respect for me as I have for thee?

and Jehonadab answered, it is: to which some join the next clause, and read, "and it is"; which is doubling the answer, for the confirmation of it, as Kimchi says; though he also observes, that the latter may be interpreted as the answer of Jehu, by way of interrogation, "is it?",

then give me thine hand; and to the same purpose is our version,

if it be, and he gave [him] his hand; Jonadab gave Jehu his hand as a token of sincere friendship {s}, and cordial respect, and for the confirmation of the covenant between them, as Ben Melech; who also observes, that Jehu might bid him give him his hand to help him up into the chariot, since it follows,

and he took him up to him into the chariot; to ride with him to Samaria; the company of such a man, so famous for wisdom and goodness, he knew would give him much countenance among the people, and sanction to what he did.

{r} whkrbyw "et benedixit ei", V. L. Montanus. {s} "Ipse pater dextram Anchises", &c. Virgil. Aeneid. l. 3. prope finem. Vid. Servium in ib. Vid. Cornel. Nepot. Vit. Themistocl. l. 2. c. 8. & Datam. l. 14. c. 10.

2 Kings 10:16

Ver. 16. And he said, come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord of hosts,.... In destroying idolaters and idolatry, with an intent to do which he was going to Samaria; this seems to savour very much of vain glory, hypocrisy, and a pharisaical spirit:

so they made him ride in his chariot; the servants of Jehu by his order opened the chariot door, and assisted Jonadab in getting into it.

2 Kings 10:17

Ver. 17. And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria,.... All that were in any connection with him, as related to his family, or as ministers of his in civil or religious things:

till he had destroyed him; his whole house, as he was ordered:

according to the word of the Lord, which he spake to Elijah; which is observed, to show the exact fulfilment of prophecy, see 1Ki 21:21.

2 Kings 10:18

Ver. 18. And Jehu gathered all the people together,.... The people of Samaria, at least the principal of them:

and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little, [but] Jehu shall serve him much; which some understand as spoken ironically; but the words seem to be spoken with a design to deceive the idolatrous inhabitants of Samaria, making them to believe that he was hearty in the worship of Baal, and should show a greater respect to it, and more constantly attend it, than Ahab had done; and this he said with a view to draw them to the temple of Baal, and there destroy them, as the sequel shows; and in which he is not to be justified, however good his intention was; for evil is not to be done that good may come.

2 Kings 10:19

Ver. 19 Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests, let none be wanting,.... All that were employed in the several parts of religious worship given him, and in performing any rite and ceremony belonging to it; in invocation of him, and singing praises to him, as the prophets; in offering sacrifices to him, as the priests; or in assisting them in their service, who may be meant by his servants or ministers:

for I have a great sacrifice [to do] to Baal; by which, though he might mean a sacrifice of his prophets, priests, servants, and worshippers, he would have it otherwise understood, and his design was to deceive, which cannot be justified:

whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live: but be put to death; this he said, pretending his great zeal for Baal, when his view was by this threatening to get all his worshippers together to destroy them, that none might escape as follows:

but Jehu did it in subtlety, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal: the Targum renders it, "with wisdom"; but Jarchi and Ben Gersom much better, "in deceit"; the word signifies supplantation, such as Esau charged Jacob with.

2 Kings 10:20

Ver. 20. And Jehu said, proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal,.... Such as with the Jews was an holy convocation, when they were forbidden and restrained from doing any work on that day; and such a day Jehu would have appointed and proclaimed for Baal, that the people might be at leisure to attend:

and they proclaimed it; according to his order, in Samaria.

2 Kings 10:21

Ver. 21. And Jehu sent through all Israel,.... Persons to proclaim this solemn assembly:

and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not; some no doubt came cheerfully, having no suspicion of him, and the rather, as he might have been a worshipper of Baal in the times of Ahab; and as for what he had done to Baal's priests, they might consider that only as they were in connection with Ahab's family, whom to destroy was his political interest; and they were glad at heart their new king was so affected to Baal, and fond to see such a grand solemnity as they expected this to be; and others that might be suspicious of him, yet as they must die if they did not appear, and there was a possibility they might live, chose therefore to come:

and they came into the house of Baal; the temple which Ahab had built for him in Samaria, 1Ki 16:32

and the house of Baal was full from one end to the other; not only the body of the temple, but all the outward court, every mouth, or corner, as in the original text: and this single house might be sufficient for all in the land; since the number of them might be greatly lessened by the ministry of Elijah and Elisha, as well as by the destruction the former made of the prophets of Baal; and by the schools of the prophets set up in various places, from whence prophets were sent out to instruct the people; and by Joram's putting away the image of Baal, which no doubt lessened the number of his worshippers.

2 Kings 10:22

Ver. 22. And he said unto him that was over the vestry,.... That had the care of the garments, in which the priests of Baal ministered:

bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal; not for the priests only, but for all that worshipped; and this he ordered for the greater solemnity of this service, as he would have it thought; but, in truth, that the worshippers of Baal might be separated, and distinguished from the worshippers of the Lord, that not one of them might be among them:

and he brought them forth vestments; out of the chamber or wardrobe in which they were, and they put them on.

2 Kings 10:23

Ver. 23. And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal,.... Who no doubt was led into the secret, and knew the design of Jehu, or he would not have gone into such an idolatrous place:

and said unto the worshippers of Baal, search and look, that there be here with you none of the servants of the Lord, but the worshippers of Baal only; pretending a great regard to the purity of their worship and sacrifices, that they might not be profaned {t} by the company of such who were not worshippers of Baal, but of Jehovah; whereas his view was to prevent any of the worshippers of God perishing with them, who might out of curiosity go in among them, to behold the manner of their service.

{t} "----procul, o procul este profani". Virgil. Aeneid. 6. ver. 258.

2 Kings 10:24

Ver. 24. And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings,.... To Baal, all things being ready for them:

Jehu appointed eighty men without; without the temple of Baal, at the several doors and avenues of it:

and said, if any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him; should be put to death for it in his room; the life of a watchman set to guard should go for the life of one that escaped.

2 Kings 10:25

Ver. 25. And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering,.... The chief of the priests of Baal, whose office it was to do this service:

that Jehu said to the guard, and to the captains, go in and slay them, let none come forth; this he said to the eighty men set to guard the temple, and the officers over them; and perhaps they might also have a reinforcement, since such a number seems scarcely sufficient to destroy so many as were here; though indeed it must be considered they were armed men:

and they smote them with the edge of the sword; put them all to death:

and the guard and the captains cast them out; those that were slain, as the Targum, their dead bodies; but it can hardly be thought they would be at the trouble of casting them out, when the house was to be pulled down, and made a jakes (a common sewer or dung house) of, as follows; rather therefore it should be rendered, "they cast" or "flung themselves" {u} with great force, and in great haste, as Kimchi, and rushed out of the temple, being eager to do as follows:

and went to the city of the house of Baal; to pull it down; to some city near Samaria where was a temple of Baal; or rather this may design the buildings about the temple of Baal, in which the priests and their families lived, and were so large that they might be called a city of themselves.

{u} yklvyw "et proripuerunt se", De Dicu.

2 Kings 10:26

Ver. 26. And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burnt them. Lesser images, the images of other deities, or what were placed as decorations of the temple.

2 Kings 10:27

Ver. 27. And they broke down the temple of Baal,.... Which some take to be Belus, others Saturn, others the sun, which seems most probable:

and broke down the house of Baal; his temple, demolished it:

and made it a draught house until this day; a common sewer, a jakes; a fit place for dunghill gods to be thrown into, and an idol temple to be turned into.

2 Kings 10:28

Ver. 28. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel. His images and temples being served thus in all places, throughout the land of Israel, where there were any.

2 Kings 10:29

Ver. 29. Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin,.... Which is the common character given of that king, a blot never to be wiped off:

Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan: he did not abstain from the worship of them, partly because he might not think it idolatry, because God was worshipped in them; hence he calls the worshippers of the calves the servants of the Lord, 2Ki 10:23, and partly that he might not displease the princes of the people of Israel, who generally gave in to the worship of them; but chiefly lest the kingdom of Israel should return to the house of David, the worship of the calves being a piece of state policy, to keep them from going to Jerusalem to worship, lest thereby they should be drawn off from their allegiance to the king of Israel.

2 Kings 10:30

Ver. 30. And the Lord said unto Jehu,.... By a prophet, he not being one himself; and this is generally supposed, by the Jews {w}, to be Jonah the son of Amittai:

because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes: in rooting out the idolatry of Baal, which was right in the sight of God, and was materially a good work, though it might not be done from a good principle, nor every step taken in doing it justifiable:

and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart: that he had decreed within himself should be done, and had foretold by his prophets would be done, the doing of which was acceptable and well pleasing to him:

thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel; as they did, namely, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam, and Zachariah, though the last reigned but six months, just enough to fulfil this promise.

{w} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 19.

2 Kings 10:31

Ver. 31. But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart,.... As to his moral conversation, he was not careful that it was according to the law of God, and what he did agreeable to it, it was not sincerely, and from the right principle:

for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin; which he would, if he had had a cordial respect to all the commandments of the law.

2 Kings 10:32

Ver. 32. In those days the Lord began to cut Israel short,.... To bring their dominions into a narrower compass; this was done in the days of Jehu, though he was so active and courageous, wherefore the hand of God was the more seen in it:

and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel; which bordered on his country, when he did what Elisha foretold he would, **2Ki 8:12**.

2 Kings 10:33

Ver. 33. From Jordan eastward,.... This was principally the coast on which Hazael smote them, to the east of the land of Canaan:

all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Moabites; the country on the other side Jordan, given to these tribes by Moses, at their request, which were before the kingdoms of Sihon and of Og:

from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan: countries which the Israelites first conquered, and were the first they lost.

2 Kings 10:34

Ver. 34. Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?] Of the preceding kings from the times of Jeroboam, in which their several acts were recorded, and his also.

2 Kings 10:35

Ver. 35. And Jehu slept with his fathers,.... Died as they did:

and they buried him in Samaria; where Omri and Ahab, his predecessors, were buried, 1Ki 16:28

and Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead; who reigned seventeen years, 2Ki 13:1.

2 Kings 10:36

Ver. 36. And the time that Jehu reigned was twenty and eight years. Which was longer than any king of Israel had reigned.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 11

This chapter relates how that Joash the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, being hid and preserved, when his grandmother murdered all the seed royal, after six years was produced, 2Ki 11:1, when Jehoiada the priest set a sufficient guard about him, and the king's house, and anointed him king, 2Ki 11:4, and Athaliah his grandmother, who had reigned six years, was put to death by the order of the priest, 2Ki 10:13, and then a covenant was made between the Lord, and the king, and the people, and between the king and the people; and he was placed on the throne, to the satisfaction of the people, and the quiet thereof, 2Ki 10:17.

Ver. 1. And when Athaiah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead,.... Who was the daughter of Ahab, and granddaughter of Omri **2Ki 8:18**, she arose,

and destroyed all the seed royal; that were left, for many had been slain already; the sons of Jehoshaphat, the brothers of Joram, were slain by him, 2Ch 21:4 and all Joram's sons, excepting Ahaziah, were slain by the Arabians, 2Ch 22:1, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah were slain by Jehu, 2Ki 11:8, these therefore seem to be the children of Ahaziah, the grandchildren of this brutish woman, whom she massacred out of her ambition of rule and government, which perhaps she was intrusted with while her son went to visit Joram king of Israel; other reasons are by some assigned, but this seems to be the chief. For the same reason Laodice, who had six sons by Ariarathes king of the Cappadocians, poisoned five of them; the youngest escaping her hands, was murdered by the people {x}, as this woman also was.

{x} Justin. e Trogo, l. 37. c. 1.

2 Kings 11:2

Ver. 2. But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram,.... Not by Athaliah, but another woman; for an high priest, as her husband was, would not have married the daughter of such an idolatrous woman, nor would she have married her to him:

sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain: among whom he lay; either being cast there by the murderer, or her associates, supposed to be dead, or by his nurse, that he might be thought to be so, who acquainting his aunt with it, went and privately took him away:

and they hid him, even him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain; that is, Jehosheba and her husband hid him and his nurse in a bedchamber; or "chamber of beds" {y}, in which there were more beds than one; one of the chambers of the priests and Levites in the temple, that is, which were adjoining to it; for into the sanctuary itself it was not usual to bring beds {z}; wherefore

the house of the Lord, in the next verse, must be understood largely as including all the appendages of it.

{y} twjmh rdxb "in cubiculo lectorum", Pagninus, Montanus. So Sept. &c. {z} T. Bab. Tamid, c. 1. fol. 26. 2.

2 Kings 11:3

Ver. 3. And he was with her hid in the house of the Lord six years,.... In the temple; not in the holy of holies, as Jarchi, but in a chamber of the priests and Levites, of which there were several in a temple, as Kimchi, and others; and the husband of Jehosheba, being high priest, had one of them for his own use; and here the child was hid six years, so that he was but a year old when he was first taken and preserved, for he was made king when seven years of age, 2Ki 11:21,

and Athaliah did reign over the land; the only instance we hear of a woman reigning in Israel, and this was not by right, but by usurpation; and so, according to the Jewish canons, a woman might not rule; which thus runs {a}, they do not set a woman in the kingdom, as it is said, De 17:15, "a king over them", not a queen; and so, in all places of power and authority in Israel, they put in them none but a man.

{a} Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 1. sect. 5.

2 Kings 11:4

Ver. 4. And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard,.... This was the husband of

Jehosheba, who was high priest, 2Ch 22:11 these

rulers over hundreds were not those appointed over the people for civil affairs, as by the advice of Jethro, but over the priests and Levites in their courses; five of whom are mentioned by name, and were employed in gathering together the Levites, and the chief of the fathers, throughout all the cities of Judah, 2Ch 23:1, and the "captains" here are the heads of the fathers there, who were the heads of the courses they were sent to gather; and the "guard", those of the late king, whom Athaliah had turned out of their post, and took in others in their room, unless rather the temple guard is meant:

and brought them to him into the house of the Lord; the temple, that part of it where was the court of the priests and Levites:

and made a covenant with them; to join with him, assist him, and stand by him in the restoration of the king, and the reformation of the kingdom:

and took an oath of them in the house of the Lord; to keep secrecy, and be faithful to him:

and showed them the king's son; for the truth of which he could produce his wife, the sister of the late king, and also the nurse of this child with him.

2 Kings 11:5

Ver. 5. And he commanded them, saying, this is the thing that ye shall do,.... These were the rulers over hundreds among the priests and Levites, and which he, as high priest, could command, and whom he could convene without suspicion, being such as he had a connection with, and were unarmed men: and for the better understanding of what follows, it should be observed, that the priests, in the times of David, were divided into twenty four courses, which were by turns to serve a week in the temple; the course that came in entered when the sabbath began, and that which went out went out when it ended, and each course consisted of a thousand men: now with respect to both these courses, both that which went in and that which went out, Jehoiada gave them the following charge:

a third part of you that enter in on the sabbath; on the beginning of it, to do duty in the temple the week following:

shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house, which, according to some, was that part of the temple where the king was hid and brought up, supposed to be the north part of it: or rather these were set at the north gate of the temple, which led to the royal palace, lest any should rush out of that, and kill the king.

2 Kings 11:6

Ver. 6. And a third part shall be at the gate of Sur,.... Generally thought by the Jews to be the eastern gate, so called, as they say, because such as were defiled were bid to depart, or go back, as this word signifies, and not enter the temple; it is called "the gate of the foundation", 2Ch 23:5 because, according to Ben Gersom, here the foundation of the sanctuary was first laid; it is said {b} to have five other names besides these:

and a third part at the gate behind the guard; the temple guard, which had a captain of them, **Ac 4:1** this gate is supposed to be the same with "sippim", or the threshold gate, 2Ch 23:4 and to be the southern one:

so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down; guard the temple, that none break or rush into it, of Athaliah's party.

{b} T. Hieros. Yoma apud Beckium in Targ. in 2 Chron. xxiii. 5.

2 Kings 11:7

Ver. 7. And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath,.... The course that went out of service at the end of the sabbath; these were not suffered, not any of them, to go into the country, but were detained for the present purpose, and divided into two parts:

even they shall keep the watch of the house of the Lord about the king, these were placed in the temple where the king was, or where he should be brought forth, and be a guard on his right and left; this interpretation seems to be agreeably to the order of the text here, and is the sense of Jarchi; but there is this objection to it, that, by such a distribution of both courses, no provision is made for the services of the temple; wherefore Dr. Lightfoot {c} divides them into six parts, each into three, one third of the course that came in for service, the other to keep the watch at the king's house, and the other third at the gate

Sur; and the course that went out, one third of them was placed at the gate behind the guard, and the other two to keep the watch of the house for the king's safety; but according to the account in 2Ch 23:4, there were but three ranks or orders of them in all; wherefore the sense of Kimchi, Ben Gersom, and Abarbinel, seems most agreeable, that the first consisted of those that went in on the sabbath, not of all, but half of them, the other half being employed in the service of the sanctuary; and the other two of the course that went out, even all of them, they being entirely at leisure, who were divided into two parts, and disposed of as above.

{c} Prospect of the Temple, c. 20.

2 Kings 11:8

Ver. 8. And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand,.... Afterwards given them, 2Ki 11:10,

and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain; any strange man that was not of them, that came into the ranks in which they were formed, was to be put to death as a spy, who might go and inform the queen what was doing; according to Jarchi, the word for "ranges" signifies the place through which the king went from his own house to the house of God {d}; and here it seems the guards were placed:

and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in when brought forth to be crowned and anointed, and returned again.

{d} Vid. David. de Pomis Lexic. fol. 205. 3.

2 Kings 11:9

Ver. 9. And the captains over the hundreds did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest commanded,.... Of whom see 2Ki 11:4

and they took every man his men; everyone his hundred:

that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath; both the courses, of which see 2Ki 11:5

and came to Jehoiada the priest; with the said courses, at least as many of them as were to be employed in the present service.

2 Kings 11:10

Ver. 10. And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give King David's spears and shields, that were in the temple of the Lord. Such as he had taken in war from his enemies, and had dedicated for the service of the temple, to defend it on occasion, and laid up there; those the priests gave to the captains, to arm their men with, who came unarmed, and so unsuspected, and in this way might be armed without being seen and known.

2 Kings 11:11

Ver. 11. And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king,.... As ordered, 2Ki 11:8

from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple from the northeast to the southeast:

along by the altar and the temple: the altar of burnt offering, which stood in the court.

2 Kings 11:12

Ver. 12. And he brought forth the king's son,.... Out of the apartment in the temple where he had been brought up:

and put the crown upon him; the crown royal, which seems to have been kept in the temple:

and gave him the testimony; the book of the law, which he was to read in all his days, and according to it govern the people; and which was a testimony of the will of God both to him and them: Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it of royal garments put upon him:

and they made him king, and anointed him; proclaimed and declared him king, and anointed him, for the confirmation of it, because of the pretension Athaliah made to the kingdom; otherwise, as the Jewish writers say, the son of a king was not anointed; and hence, they say, it was, that Solomon was anointed, because of the claim of Adonijah:

and they clapped their hands; in token of joy:

and said, God save the king; or, "let the king live"; or, "may he prosper", as the Targum; may health and prosperity attend him in his government. In 2Ch 23:11, it is said; "Jehoiada and his sons anointed him", and said those words; among whom must be Zechariah, whom this king afterwards slew, which was an instance of great ingratitude, 2Ch 24:20.

2 Kings 11:13

Ver. 13. And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard, and of the people,.... Their acclamations and shouts at the coronation of the king; for by this time the people had some knowledge of the affair, and ran, and came flocking to see the new king, and express their joy on this occasion, and whom they greatly praised, 2Ch 23:12

she came to the people into the temple of the Lord; the outward court, where the people were assembled; and she seems to come alone, unattended, in great surprise and consternation, and was admitted to pass the guards, being the queen, and alone, and perhaps by the particular order of Jehoiada, though contrary to the general orders he gave, 2Ki 11:8.

2 Kings 11:14

Ver. 14. And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was,.... Of kings, when they came into the temple on any occasion, civil or religious, therefore it is called his pillar, 2Ch 23:13, some think this was the brazen scaffold erected by Solomon, **2Ch 6:13**, though Vitringa {e} and Bishop Patrick suppose it to be the post of the east gate of the inner court, from
Eze 46:2, according to Jacob Leo {f}, this was the royal throne in the court of the Israelites, near the high or upper gate, on a marble pillar, where the kings of the house of David sat, when they came into the sanctuary to see the Lord in the second temple; this throne was like an high tower, standing upon two pillars, each twenty cubits high, and their circumference twelve; here sat Joash,

and Hezekiah, and Josiah; however, Athaliah saw Jehoash with the crown on his head, and in the place where kings used to sit or stand:

and the princes and the trumpeters by the king; the rulers of the courses of the priests, and the Levites, blowing the trumpets:

and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets; it is added, in 2Ch 23:13 that the singers played also on musical instruments; that were then and there assembled:

and Athaliah rent her clothes; through grief, and as one almost distracted:

and cried, treason, treason! to try if she could get any to take her part, and seize on the new king, and those that set him up.

{e} Proleghom. de Synagog. Vet. c. 4. p. 32. {f} Apud Wagenseil. Sotah, p. 680.

2 Kings 11:15

Ver. 15. But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host,.... Of the priests and Levites:

and said unto them, have her forth without the ranges; the ranks of the guards, which were at the gate leading to the palace, or rather "within" them {g}; the meaning is, that he ordered her to be had out of the court of the temple, and be put within their ranks, and enclosed by them, that her blood might not be shed in the temple, and yet not escape them:

and him that followeth her, kill with the sword: that takes her part, and offers to help and assist her, passing through the ranks after her, dispatch him at once:

for the priest had said, let her not be slain in the house of the Lord: that it might not be defiled with her blood; by which it appears that the guards had orders concerning her before, should she come to the temple, see 2Ki 11:13.

{g} trdvl tybm "intra ordines", Munster, Junius, Tremellius, Piscator, Noldius, p. 79. No. 365. So Jarchi, Kimchi, Ben Gersom, & Ben Melech.

2 Kings 11:16

Ver. 16. And they laid hands on her,.... Or rather,

"set a place for her",

as the Targum; so Jarchi and Kimchi; made a space, opened a way for her to come out of the temple into their ranks, that she might be there taken and slain, and not in the temple:

and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house; either the high road in which the horses and carriages went to the palace, or the way to the king's stables near the palace: and there was she slain; they let her go so far, which was far enough from the temple, and then they slew her.

2 Kings 11:17

Ver. 17. And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people,.... Renewed the covenant between the Lord on the one part, and the king and the people on the other; assuring them, that as God had declared that he would be their God, he would yet be their God to bless and protect them, they continuing in obedience to him; and obliging them to promise that they would serve the Lord their God, and him only, and root out all idolatry from the land, and restore, and continue in, the pure worship of God:

between the king also and the people; he promising, on his part, that he would govern them according to the law of God, and protect them in their rights and properties, privileges and liberties; and they, on their part, that they would honour and obey him, and be his faithful subjects. In 2Ch 23:16 Jehoiada is said to make this covenant between him, &c. which may be understood of the Lord; or if of himself, the meaning is, that it was made between him, the king and people, and the Lord.

2 Kings 11:18

Ver. 18. And all the people of the land,.... That were at Jerusalem, and the parts adjacent, that came from the country, hearing what was done: went into the house of Baal; a temple of his Athaliah had built, either in Jerusalem, or near it; perhaps on the mount of Olives, called the mount of corruption, 2Ki 23:13 from the idolatry there committed:

and brake it down, his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly; made an entire destruction of them all, temple, altars, the images of Baal and other deities:

and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altar; either as he was sacrificing, or that he might be a sacrifice, or where he had fled for refuge:

and the priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord; priests to offer sacrifices, Levites to sing the praises of God, porters at the door of the temple, and watches in it, and restored the courses of the priests, and everything to its proper order, which had been neglected, or had ceased, during the usurpation of Athaliah; see 2Ch 23:18.

2 Kings 11:19

Ver. 19. And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard,.... Of which 2Ki 11:4 and all the people of the land; as many as were assembled together on this occasion:

and they brought down the king from the house of the Lord; the temple, which was built on an eminence:

and came by the way of the gate to the king's house; the gate of the royal palace, where the king's guards were placed, and did their duty: and he sat on the throne of the kings: where the kings of Judah used to sit, and this finished the formality of his being made king.

2 Kings 11:20

Ver. 20. And all the people of the land rejoiced,.... That one of the house of David was set upon the throne, which they might fear was extinct, as it very near was; the lamp of David was almost quenched, only this single life left, from whom a line of kings proceeded, and the King Messiah; the promise of God cannot fail see Ps 132:11, this occasioned great joy:

and the city was quiet: was very easy at, yea, pleased with, the dethroning and death of Athaliah; there was no tumult on account thereof, nor such disturbances as she occasioned in her life:

and they slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king's house; as related in 2Ki 11:16 where she was buried, or what became of her carcass, is not said; some have thought she was cast into the brook Kidron, because Josephus says {h} Jehoiada ordered her to be had into that valley, and there slain.

{h} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 7. sect. 3.

2 Kings 11:21

Ver. 21. Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign. Being a year old when his father was killed and having been hid six years in the temple.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 12

In this chapter some account is given of the reign of Jehoash, that it was long, and the beginning of it good, during the life of Jehoiada, 2Ki 12:1 how urgent he was to have the temple repaired, and what methods were taken for that purpose, 2Ki 12:4, how meanly, as well as impiously, he behaved, when the king of Syria was about to come up to Jerusalem and besiege it, 2Ki 12:17, and the chapter is closed with an account of his death, and the manner of it, 2Ki 12:19.

Ver. 1. In the seventh year of Jehu Jehoash began to reign,.... So that he reigned twenty one or twenty two years contemporary with Jehu's reign, for Jehu reigned twenty eight years:

and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem; the same number of years David and Solomon reigned:

and his mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba; a city in the tribe of Simeon, in the extreme part of the land of Canaan southward; her name in the Chaldee dialect is Tabitha, the same with Dorcas in Greek, **Ac 9:36**.

2 Kings 12:2

Ver. 2. And Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all his days,.... Worshipping the only true God, and ruling and walking according to the law of God:

wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him; and so long as he observed his instructions, and as long as that priest lived, he reigned well; for to that period "all his days must be limited"; for after his death he was seduced by the princes of Judah to idolatry, and lived scandalously, and died ignominiously; see 2Ch 24:2.

2 Kings 12:3

Ver. 3. But the high places were not taken away,.... Used before the temple was built, or set up in Rehoboam's time, 1Ki 14:23 contrary to the law of God, which required that sacrifices should only be offered in the place the Lord chose to dwell in, De 12:4 the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places; as they had done in the times of Athaliah, and though the pure worship of God was restored at Jerusalem; and indeed this they did in all preceding reigns; nor was it in the power of the best of kings, at least they did not think it safe to attempt to remove them till Hezekiah's time; so fond were the people of them because of their antiquity and supposed sanctity, and for the sake of ease.

2 Kings 12:4

Ver. 4. And Jehoash said to the priests,.... Being minded or having it in his heart, to repair the temple, as in 2Ch 24:4 not only because it was the sanctuary of the Lord, though that chiefly, but because it had been a sanctuary to him, where he was hid and preserved six years:

all the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the Lord: or rather, "that is to be brought", as De Dieu, and others render it, the particulars of which follow:

even the money of everyone that passeth [the account]; or that passeth among them that are numbered, as in Ex 30:13 that were upwards of twenty years of age, and bound to pay the half shekel for the ransom of their souls; and it is called the collection or burden Moses laid on them in the wilderness, 2Ch 24:6

the money that every man is set at; the price the priest set upon or estimated a man at, or whomsoever that belonged to him, that he devoted to the Lord, which by the law he was bound to pay for his redemption, and, till that was done, he and they were not his, but the Lord's, of which see Le 27:1 and here the Targum calls it, the money of the redemption of souls, which is the gift of a man for the redemption of his soul:

and all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the Lord: vows and freewill offerings made of their own accord.

2 Kings 12:5

Ver. 5. Let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance,.... Of those that were most known by them; for the priests had cities assigned them in several parts of the land, and they that dwelt with them in them, or in the parts adjacent to them, were best known by them; and they were sent into all the cities, some to one and some to another, where they were most acquainted, to collect money, both what was due by law, and what the people should freely give, see 2Ch 24:5

and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found: that is, of the temple, which, according to the Jewish chronology {i}, had been built but one hundred and fifty five years; and being built very strong, would have needed no considerable repairs as yet, but that it had been broken up and misused by Athaliah and her sons, 2Ch 24:7.

{i} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 18.

2 Kings 12:6

Ver. 6. But it was so, that in the twenty and third year of King Jehoash, the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house. Either the people being backward to pay in the money, or the priests converted it to their own use: or, however, were negligent of doing the work enjoined them by the king, either in collecting the money, or in using it as they were directed.

2 Kings 12:7

Ver. 7. Then King Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the other priests,.... The common priests, Jehoiada being high priest:

and said unto them, why repair ye not the breaches of the house? in which they appeared to him very dilatory; the reason might be, the people were not forward to pay in their money, and they might not choose to begin the repairs until they had got it all in, or at least what was sufficient to carry them through them:

now therefore receive no more money of your acquaintance; suspecting that what they had received they kept for their own use:

but deliver it for the breaches of the house; into other hands for that use, and so dismissed them at once from collecting the money, and being concerned in the repairs of the temple.

2 Kings 12:8

Ver. 8. And the priests consented to receive no [more] money of the people,.... And delivered up what they had:

neither to repair the breaches of the house; being very willing to be stop both services, and especially since they seemed to be suspected.

2 Kings 12:9

Ver. 9. But Jehoiada the priest took a chest,.... By the commandment of the king, 2Ch 24:8, to put the money collected into, to prevent any fraud, or suspicion of any:

and bored a hole in the lid of it; to drop the money into, by which means it could not be taken out without taking off the lid:

and set it beside the altar; the altar of burnt offering, in the court:

on the right side, as one cometh into the house of the Lord; that is, on the north; for the entrance into the temple was at the east: in 2Ch 24:8, it is said to be set without at the gate of the house; which Dr. Lightfoot {k} thinks respects another time, and that either another chest was made, or the same that was first placed by the altar, in the court of the priests, and so in their hands, and the money not coming in apace, was removed without the court at the entrance of it, whither the people brought it readily:

and the priests that kept the door; the door of the outward court, the levites, the porters, or rather, as the Targum, the priests, the treasurers, who were appointed to this service in the room of the others dismissed; and so Kimchi and other Jewish commentators interpret this of the keepers of the vessels of the sanctuary, and not of the doors of it:

these put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the Lord; by the people from the several parts of the country, who, by proclamation, were required so to do, and very readily did, 2Ch 24:9.

{k} Prospect of the Temple, ch. 30. p. 20, 22.

2 Kings 12:10

Ver. 10. And it was so, when they saw that there was much money in the chest,.... Which might easily be guessed at by the number of the people which contributed:

that the king's and the high priest came up; to the temple; the high priest did not choose to come alone, lest he should be suspected, but to have the king's secretary with him, that the money might be taken out of the chest, and told in the presence of them both: in 2Ch 24:11 instead of the "high priest", it is the "high priest's officer", which the Targum there calls the Sagan of the high priest, or his deputy, who, perhaps, attended when the high priest could not:

and they put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the Lord; that is, they poured the money out of the chest, or emptied it, as in 2Ch 24:11 and counted it, and very likely set down the sum in writing, and put it up in bags, very probably sealed.

2 Kings 12:11

Ver. 11. And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the Lord,.... Who were appointed overseers of the workmen employed in the repairs of the temple; which overseers were laymen, and not priests, they being discharged from any concern in the repairs: this money "told", Kimchi interprets of its being coined; he supposes money coined and uncoined to be brought, which was put in separate bags; and that, which was not coined, they coined it before they delivered it to the overseers to pay the workmen with:

and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders that wrought upon the house of the Lord; paid them with it, some that wrought in cutting the timber, and others in building with it.

2 Kings 12:12

Ver. 12. And to masons, and hewers of stone,.... Which they cut out of the mountain, and the masons repaired the stone walls with:

and to buy timber; felled in Lebanon:

and hewed stone; fitted for building with:

to repair the breaches of the house of the Lord; where both timber and stone were wanting:

and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it; in whatsoever else it needed, as iron and brass to mend it, 2Ch 24:12.

2 Kings 12:13

Ver. 13. Howbeit there were not made for the house of the Lord, bowls of silver,.... Either to hold the blood of the sacrifices, or the drink offerings of wine:

snuffers; to trim the lamps; or, as Jarchi and other writers, both Jewish and Christian, musical instruments:

basins; vessels to sprinkle the blood with, as the word signifies:

trumpets; silver ones, to call the assembly, blow over the sacrifices, &c.

any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver; for any other use: these were not made

of the money that was brought into the house of the Lord; yet, in 2Ch 24:14, it is said they were, which is to be reconciled thus; they did not make any of those things at first, until the house was repaired, and the charges of it defrayed; and then of what remained they made vessels for the house, which were wanting, that Athaliah had bestowed on Baalim, 2Ch 24:7.

2 Kings 12:14

Ver. 14. But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the Lord. They took care that the workmen should first be paid for the repairs of the temple.

2 Kings 12:15

Ver. 15. Moreover, they reckoned not with the men into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on the workmen,.... That is, the king's secretary and the high priest, or his officer, never called to account the overseers of the workmen, to whom they committed the money to pay them with; never examined how they laid it out, and for what:

for they dealt faithfully; they saw they acted such an honest and upright part, and such an high opinion had they of them, that they never examined their accounts, or called for their bills.

2 Kings 12:16

Ver. 16. The trespass money and sin money was not brought into the house of the Lord,.... Which was the money persons at a distance sent for their trespass and sin offerings instead of cattle, with which the sacrifices were bought; and what remained of the money was not brought into the temple, and made use of in the above manner:

it was the priest's; the overplus of it, and such of the sacrifices which by the law were appropriated to them.

2 Kings 12:17

Ver. 17. Then Hazael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath, and took it,.... When Jehoiada was dead, and Jehoash was become an apostate, the Lord suffered the king of Syria to be a scourge to him; who first attacked Gath, and took it, which was formerly one of the principalities of the Philistines, but was subdued by David, and had been in the hands of the Israelites ever since; the king of Syria began with this, as nearest to him, to open the way for what he had further in view:

and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem; he made such preparations, and took such measures, as plainly indicated what his design was.

2 Kings 12:18

Ver. 18. And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated,.... To sacred uses, and had laid up in the temple:

and his own hallowed things: which he had devoted to the same uses:

and all the gold [that was] found in the treasures of the house of the Lord: which were gifts and presents from divers persons for sacred services:

and sent it to Hazael king of Syria, and he went away from Jerusalem; to bribe him, that he might desist from his purpose; which showed a meanness of spirit, and was the effect of his idolatry and apostasy, having forsaken the Lord, and being forsaken by him; in whom should have been his trust and confidence, and then he need not have been afraid to meet the king of Syria.

2 Kings 12:19

Ver. 19. And the rest of the acts of Jehoash, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?] In the registers and annals of those princes; some of them are to be met with in 2Ch 24:1.

2 Kings 12:20

Ver. 20. And his servants arose,.... This was after he had slain Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, who reproved him for his idolatry; and after a second expedition of the king of Syria, who came to Jerusalem, and spoiled it, and left Jehoash diseased, as is recorded in 2Ch 24:23,

and made a conspiracy; not to get the kingdom into their hands, for his son succeeded him, but to avenge the death of Zechariah;

and slew Jehoash in the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla; these are both names of places; perhaps the latter is mentioned, to distinguish this Bethmillo from Millo in Zion; or rather that itself is meant, and described by the descent from it to a causeway, as Silla may signify, which led to the royal palace.

2 Kings 12:21

Ver. 21. For Jozachar the son of Shimeath,.... Said to be an Ammonitess, and this man's name Zabad, 2Ch 24:26,

and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants; who is said in the same place to be the son of Shimrith a Moabitess:

these smote him, and he died; justly did he fall by the hands of such persons for his idolatry:

and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David; but not in the sepulchres of the kings, because of his idolatry and murder of a priest of the Lord:

and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead; the conspirators not seeking the kingdom, but vengeance on him for his sins, which, whether right in them to do, was suffered by the Lord.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 13

This chapter gives an account of the wicked reign of Jehoahaz son of Jehu king of Israel, and of the low estate he was brought into by the Syrians, 2Ki 13:1, and of the reign of his son Joash, 2Ki 13:10, and of the sickness and death of Elisha; of the visit Joash made him in his sickness; and of his prediction of the king's success against the Syrians; and of the reviving of a dead man cast into the prophet's sepulchre, 2Ki 13:14 and of the success of Joash against the Syrians, according to the prediction of the prophet, 2Ki 13:22.

Ver. 1. In the twenty and third year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah,.... The same year he was so zealous and busy in repairing the temple, 2Ki 12:6,

Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria; whereas Joash began to reign in the seventh year of Jehu, and Jehu reigned but twenty eight years, 2Ki 10:36, and 2Ki 12:1, this could be but the twenty first of Joash; to reconcile which it must be observed, that it was at the beginning of the seventh year of Jehu that Joash began to reign, and at the beginning of the twenty third of Joash that Jehoahaz began to reign, as the Jewish commentators observe:

and reigned seventeen years; the two last of which were in common with his son, as Junius, see 2Ki 13:10

2 Kings 13:2

Ver. 2. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,.... Committed idolatry:

and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; worshipping the golden calves:

he departed not therefrom; from the worship of them.

2 Kings 13:3

Ver. 3. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel,.... They doing as their kings did:

and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael, all [their] days; the word "their" should not be supplied, since it was not true that Israel was delivered into the hands of both those kings of Syria as long as they lived; for they were delivered out of the hands of Benhadad, 2Ki 13:25, but the word "his" should be inserted for it as to be understood of the days of Jehoahaz, see 2Ki 13:22.

2 Kings 13:4

Ver. 4. And Jehoahaz besought the Lord, and the Lord hearkened unto him,.... He did not apply in his distress to the calves he worshipped, but to the Lord; who had a regard to his prayer, not for his sake, or any righteousness of his, or even his repentance and humiliation, which were only external; but for the sake of Israel, and because they were oppressed, who were his people, and he their God, though they had sadly departed from him:

for he saw the oppression of Israel; not only with his eye of omniscience, but with an eye of mercy and compassion:

because the king of Syria oppressed them; by his incursions upon them, and wars with them.

2 Kings 13:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord gave Israel a saviour,.... Not an angel sent by him, nor a captain raised up among them, nor the prophet Elisha, who predicted their deliverance, nor Jehoahaz himself, but his son Joash, 2Ki 13:25

so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians; were not in subjection to them, nor harassed by them, nor in fear of them:

and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as before time; in peace and safety.

2 Kings 13:6

Ver. 6. Nevertheless, they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, but walked therein,.... Continued to worship the calves still, which was an instance of great ingratitude; the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "he departed not"; Jehoahaz the king:

and there remained the grove in Samaria; which Ahab made there, 1Ki 16:33, neither Jehu nor his son had it cut down, though Baal was destroyed.

2 Kings 13:7

Ver. 7. Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen,.... This is to be connected with 2Ki 13:4, the verses
2Ki 12:5, being to be read in a parenthesis, as in our version, and to be understood of the king of Syria, who left no more to the king of Israel, not of the people of the land, but of his army, than fifty horsemen, all the rest being either taken and carried captive by him, or slain:

and ten chariots; military chariots, with the men they carried:

and ten thousand footmen; foot soldiers; to so small a number was his army reduced through wars with the Syrians:

for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing: as corn or chaff may be reduced to dust by too much threshing; or as mire and clay by treading on it.

2 Kings 13:8

Ver. 8. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might,.... Which he exerted against the Syrians, being a man of courage, though not successful, because the Lord was not with him, but against him:

are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? where their acts, and the events of their reigns, were recorded.

2 Kings 13:9

Ver. 9. And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers,.... Died, as they did:

and they buried him in Samaria; where Omri, and all the kings of Israel, that descended from him, were buried:

and Joash his son reigned in his stead; of whom a short account is given in the following verses.

2 Kings 13:10

Ver. 10. In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah, began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria,.... But inasmuch as his father began to reign in the twenty third of Joash, and reigned seventeen years, 2Ki 13:1 this king must begin to reign in the thirty ninth or fortieth of Joash; for the reconciling of which it may be observed, that two of the years of his reign may be supposed to be imperfect; or rather that his son reigned two or three years in his lifetime, being raised up before his father's death to be a saviour of Israel from the Syrians; and so his father lived to see his prayer answered, 2Ki 13:4,

and reigned sixteen years.

2 Kings 13:11

Ver. 11. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,.... As his father did, and his character is described in the same words, see 2Ki 13:2.

2 Kings 13:12

Ver. 12. And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did,.... Though none of his acts as yet are recorded, but his sinful ones:

and his might; or valiant actions in war with the Syrians, 2Ki 13:25,

and wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah; of which there is an account in the following chapter:

are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? in the history of the transactions of their reigns.

2 Kings 13:13

Ver. 13. And Joash slept with his fathers,.... Or died:

and Jeroboam sat upon his throne; who was his son; it is not said that he began to sit on it, or to reign, nor to reign in his father's stead; hence it is concluded, as by Kimchi and others, that his father set him on his throne in his lifetime; and the Jewish chronology {l} expressly asserts that he reigned with him one year:

and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; see 2Ki 13:9, the history of his life and actions does not cease here, but, after an account of the sickness and death of Elisha, it is reassumed, which was necessary to interpose to lead on to it.

{l} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 19.

2 Kings 13:14

Ver. 14. Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died,.... The prophets do not live for ever; this sickness was unto death; Elisha died, and was not translated as Elijah was:

and Joash the king came down unto him; from his palace to the prophet's house, to visit him in his sickness; which was an instance of great condescension and respect, and especially in a wicked prince that could not be reformed by him:

and wept over his face; held his head over him, and wept, perceiving he was near his end, and sensible that his death would be a public loss; the nation having often reaped the benefit of his prayers, though his counsel and advice were neglected and despised:

and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof; the same words Elisha said to Elijah, as he went up to heaven, which very probably Joash had heard of;
See Gill on "2Ki 2:12", and here, as there, the Targum is,

"my master, my master, who was better to Israel by his prayers than chariots and horsemen."

2 Kings 13:15

Ver. 15. And Elisha said unto him, take bow and arrows,.... The usual instruments of war in those days: and he took unto him bow and arrows; which though they might not be had in the house of the prophet, he could have some from his guards that attended him.

2 Kings 13:16

Ver. 16. And he said unto the king of Israel, put thine hand upon the bow, and he put his hand upon it,.... His left hand:

and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands; on both his hands, which were put, the one on the bow, the other on the arrow {m}; hereby signifying, that though the king would draw the bow in battle, the Lord, whom the prophet represented, would give the success; and that it would be by his help, and through his blessing on his arms, that he would obtain victory over his enemies.

{m} See Virgil. Aeneid. 11. ver. 831, 862.

2 Kings 13:17

Ver. 17. And he said, open the window eastward,.... Syria lying east of the land of Israel, as the Jewish commentators in general observe, and for which they quote **Isa 9:12**, but it lay northeast, or rather more to the north; wherefore this may respect the eastward part of the land of Israel, which the Syrians had got possession of, and should be recovered, as this sign showed, see 2Ki 10:33,

and he opened it: then Elisha said, shoot, and he shot; the arrow, out of the window, being opened:

and he said, the arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; meaning, that that arrow was a sign of the Lord's deliverance of Israel from the Syrians, by whom they had been sadly oppressed, and reduced very low:

for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek till thou hast consumed them; not the whole nation, but that army they should bring thither; which was a city in the land of Israel, where the Syrians were routed in Ahab's time; 100,000 were slain near it on one day, and 27,000 by the fall of the wall of it, 1Ki 20:26 hence some read the words here, "as in Aphek."

2 Kings 13:18

Ver. 18. And he said, take the arrows, and he took them,.... The rest of them:

and he said unto the king of Israel, smite upon the ground; the floor of the room in which the prophet lay:

and he smote thrice, and stayed; made a stop, ceased smiting; he might think this action trifling, and beneath him, only was willing to please the prophet, but did not do it with a good will, and therefore smote no more; though this was an emblem of his smiting the Syrians, which he might not understand.

2 Kings 13:19

Ver. 19. And the man of God was wroth with him,.... Because he ceased smiting, and smote no oftener; for it was revealed to the prophet, by an impulse upon his mind, that by the number of times he smote on the ground, it would be known how often he should get the victory over his enemies; but this was to be left to the king's own will, how often he would smite, and thereby the prophet would know also with what spirit he would pursue his victories, and the advantages he would gain:

and said, thou shouldest have smitten five or six times, then hadst thou smitten Syria until thou hadst consumed it; as a nation, as well as routed their several armies:

whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice; beat them only three times in battle, according to the number of his smitings on the ground.

2 Kings 13:20

Ver. 20. And Elisha died, and they buried him,.... In Samaria. Epiphanius says {n}, in Sebastopolis of Samaria, Samaria itself was called Sebaste in later times; though the Jews say {o} he was buried in Mount Carmel, in the cave of Elijah; according to the Jewish chronology {p}, he died in the tenth year of Joash, and he prophesied more than sixty years; sixty six, as Abarbinel, since he began to prophesy in the nineteenth year of Jehoshaphat; and, according to Clemens {q} of Alexandria, when he was forty years of age; but it seems rather, as Kimchi observes, that he died in the beginning of the reign of Joash, and even before his father's death, when he was a partner with him in the throne, and before any salvation or deliverance from the Syrians was wrought:

and the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year; at the spring of the year, when there was fruit on the earth, those troops of robbers came to plunder and spoil; several of the Jewish writers observe, that in the word for "coming", h is instead of
a, and so may be rendered "in that year", in that selfsame year that Elisha died; and so read the Syriac, Arabic, and the Vulgate Latin versions.

{n} De Vitis Prophet. c. 6. {o} Cippi Heb. p. 46. {p} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 19. {q} Stromat. l. 1. p. 326.

2 Kings 13:21

Ver. 21. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man,.... That is, as they were going to bury him; for as yet they were not come to the place they designed to bury him at, as appears by what follows:

that, behold, they spied a band of men; one of the bands of the Moabites, which came to rob and plunder, and which was about the place where they intended to bury the man; or they supposed would be there by that time they got to it, or at least before they could bury him, and therefore being frightened stopped:

and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha; that being nearest, they opened it, or rather rolled away the stone from it, and threw the body in great haste:

and when the man was let down, and touched the bone's of Elisha; or "went and touched" {r}; that is, as Kimchi interprets it, being cast in, he rolled till he came to the body of the prophet, and touched it:

he revived, and stood upon his feet; which might serve to confirm the faith of Joash in the predictions of the prophet concerning his victories; is a proof of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal life, and an emblem of our being quickened through the death of Christ. The Jews say {s} this man was Shallum the son of Tikvah, and husband of Huldah the prophetess, and was a good man, much given to alms, for which he was rewarded; and they further say, he went to his own house, and lived many years, and begat children, and particularly Hananeel, mentioned in Jer 32:7, which is not likely; though others say {t} he was a wicked man, Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah, 1Ki 22:24 and therefore not suffered to continue in the prophet's grave; but the former is more probable; and, according to Josephus {u}, it was the band of robbers that left this man, whom they had murdered, in the grave of Elisha. This grave seems to have been in the field, where the Jews of old, and in later times, buried, as in the field of Hebron, the potter's field, &c. so the Greeks, as Pausanias relates {w}, and the Romans also {x}, buried by the wayside.

{r} egyw Klyw "abit et tetigit", Pagninus, Montanus. {s} Pirke Eliezer, c. 33. {t} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol, 47. 1. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 11. 2. {u} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 8. sect. 6. {w} Corinthiac. sive, l. 2. p. 97. {x} Vid. Kirchman. Funer. Roman. l. 2. c. 22.

2 Kings 13:22

Ver. 22. But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. That he reigned alone, at least, before he took his son Joash to reign with him.

2 Kings 13:23

Ver. 23. And the Lord was gracious to them,.... To Israel, notwithstanding their apostasy from him, and the idolatry of the calves they were guilty of:

and had compassion on them; being in oppression and distress:

and had respect unto them; looked upon them with an eye of pity and mercy:

because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; made so long ago he still remembered:

and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet; or suffered them to be carried captive into another land, as he afterwards did in the times of Hoshea.

2 Kings 13:24

Ver. 24. So Hazael the king of Syria died, and Benhadad his son reigned in his stead. This was Benhadad the third; the first of this name was of the Damascene kings; but though the kingdom was now in another family, yet this name, being respectable with the Syrians, was retained in it.

2 Kings 13:25

Ver. 25. And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael the cities which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war,.... Which were in the countries of Gilead and Bashan, and belonged to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, 2Ki 10:33,

three times did Joash beat him: in so many pitched battles, but where is not said, no doubt one of them was in Aphek, at least, 2Ki 13:17, and perhaps the other two on the other side Jordan; this agrees with the three times he smote the ground, significant thereof, 2Ki 13:18

and recovered the cities of Israel; those before mentioned; otherwise, if those had not been recovered, not ten tribes, only seven and a half, would have been carried captive by the king of Assyria; whereas Josephus {y} says expressly, the ten tribes were carried captive.

{y} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 14. sect. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 14

In this chapter we have the good reign of Amaziah king of Judah, his victories over the Edomites, and war with Jehoash king of Israel, by whom he was taken, who died quickly after, 2Ki 14:1, but Amaziah lived fifteen years afterwards, and was slain by a conspiracy against him, and Azariah his son reigned in his stead, 2Ki 14:17, and a short account is given of the reign of Jeroboam the second, king of Israel, 2Ki 14:23.

Ver. 1. In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah. As Joash king of Israel began to reign in the thirty seventh of Joash king of Judah, 2Ki 13:10, who reigned forty years, Amaziah must therefore begin his reign in the fourth of Joash king of Israel; this therefore must be understood of his second year after he reigned alone, for he reigned two or three years in his father's lifetime.

2 Kings 14:2

Ver. 2. He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem,.... Fourteen years contemporary with Joash king of Israel, who reigned sixteen years, 2Ki 13:10 and fifteen after him, 2Ki 14:17,

and his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem; of whom we nowhere else read,

2 Kings 14:3

Ver. 3. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,..... At least externally, and at the beginning of his reign:

yet not like David his father; not with a perfect heart, with that sincerity and uprightness as he did, see 2Ch 25:2,

he did according to all things as Joash his father did; who at first reigned well, and then fell into idolatry, as this his son did.

2 Kings 14:4

Ver. 4. Howbeit the high places were not taken away,.... Though he first did that which was right before God; nor did his father take them away; see 2Ki 12:3.

2 Kings 14:5

Ver. 5. And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was strengthened in his hand,.... That he was well settled on the throne, and had a share in the affection of the people, and the idolatry and murder his father had committed were worn off of the minds of the people, and the friends of the conspirators against him were become few or none:

that he slew his servants that had slain the king his father; charged them with the murder in a court of judicature, obtained a sentence against them, and had them executed.

2 Kings 14:6

Ver. 6. But the children of the murderers he slew not,.... Which is an instance of his clemency and goodness, and of his strict regard to justice, and to the law of God; though he might fear, these, being spared, would one time or other revenge their fathers' deaths;

according to that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, see De 24:16,

wherein the Lord commanded, saying, the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children, &c. to which command Amaziah was obedient.

2 Kings 14:7

Ver. 7. He slew of Edom in the valley of Salt ten thousand,.... Of which valley, See Gill on "2Sa 8:13", the Edomites having revolted from Judah in the days of Joram, **2Ki 8:20**. Amaziah undertook to reduce them with an army of 300,000 choice men; and, besides these, hired also of Israel 100,000 valiant men, for one hundred talents of silver; but at the instance of a prophet of the Lord he dismissed the latter, and went against Edom only with his men, and slew of the Edomites 10,000, besides other 10,000 he took alive, and cast headlong from a rock, which came into his hands, see 2Ch 25:5,

and took Selah by war; which signifies a rock, the same with Petra, the metropolis of Arabia Petraea, the country of the Edomites. The city itself was not a rock, nor built on one, but was situated in a plain, surrounded with rocks and mountains, as Strabo {z} and Pliny {a} relate, from whence it seems to have its name; and by the Syrians called Recem, where Rocan a king of Midian reigned {b}, called in the Greek version of Nu 31:8, Recon; though Vitringa {c} is of opinion, that not Petra, the metropolis of Edom, is meant, but Maalehakrabbim, Jos 15:3, which lay on the south border of Judea, near the salt sea:

and called the name of it Joktheel; which signifies "the obedience of God"; in memory of his obedience to the prophet of the Lord, in consequence of which he obtained this victory: and the name continued unto this day: the time of the writing this book.

{z} Geograph. l. 16. p. 536. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {b} Hieron. de loc. Heb. fol. 93. M. & 94. A. Vid. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 4. c. 7. sect. 1. {c} Comment. in Jesaiam, c. 16. 1.

2 Kings 14:8

Ver. 8. Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz the son of Jehu king of Israel,.... The occasion of it was this, when Amaziah dismissed the hired soldiers of Israel they were displeased, and fell upon the cities of Judea from Samaria to Bethhoron, slew 3000 men, and took much spoil, 2Ch 25:13, wherefore, when Amaziah returned from the slaughter of the Edomites, being elated with his victories, he sent the following message to the king of Israel, in order to revenge the injuries his soldiers had done; and perhaps retaining an old grudge for what Jehu, the grandfather of the king of Israel, had done to his ancestors, and it may be in hope of reducing the ten tribes to obedience to the house of David:

saying, come, let us look one another in the face; that is, in battle, as the Targum adds; it was a challenge to meet him in the field of battle, and fight with him, and try each other's courage, and see who was the best man.

2 Kings 14:9

Ver. 9. And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah the king of Judah,.... By the return of his messengers:

saying, the thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon;

intending by this proverbial way of speaking to humble the pride of Amaziah; comparing him to a thistle or thorn, a low, mean, abject, weak, prickly, and troublesome shrub, and himself to a cedar, a tree high and lofty, strong, large, and spreading:

saying, give thy daughter to my son to wife; signifying, that if in a peaceable manner he had desired to contract affinity with him, and so establish mutual friendship, he should have despised him as being as much below him as the thistle is below a cedar; and therefore should still more despise and defy him, who addressed him in an hostile manner, and in such haughty language:

and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle; and so there was an end put at once to its pride and ambition, and to its treaty with the cedar; intimating hereby, that his soldiers would as easily vanquish and destroy the army of Amaziah as a wild beast can destroy a thistle.

2 Kings 14:10

Ver. 10. Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up,.... Swelled him with pride and vanity on account of the victory he had obtained over the Edomites; which pride was at the bottom of his message to him, and that goes before a fall: Pr 16:18

glory of this, and tarry at home; be content with the glory of it, and boast of it at home, but do not swagger abroad, and insult thy neighbours:

for why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee? suggesting to him, that he had better be quiet, since it would be to the harm, if not the ruin, of him and his kingdom.

2 Kings 14:11

Ver. 11. But Amaziah would not hear,.... Being given up to a judicial hardness of heart through pride; for this was of God, and by his overruling providence, that he might be punished for his idolatry, in setting up the gods of Edom to be his gods, and offering to them, 2Ch 25:14

therefore Jehoash king Israel went up; from Samaria to the land of Judah, which was higher ground:

and he and Amaziah looked one another in the face; in the field of battle:

at Bethshemesh, which belongeth to Judah; which is observed, not merely to distinguish it from another Bethshemesh in Naphtali, but to observe, that the king of Israel waited not for him to give him the challenge, but met his adversary in his own country, whither he carried the war, not suffering him to come into his.

2 Kings 14:12

Ver. 12. And Judah was put to the worse before Israel,.... Could not face them; but, as Josephus {d} says, a sudden fear and consternation seized them, and before they joined battle with the Israelites, turned their backs:

and they fled every man to their tents; to their cities, as the Targum, and left their king alone.

{d} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 9. sect. 3.

2 Kings 14:13

Ver. 13. And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Bethshemesh,.... And then they looked one another in the face indeed, but Amaziah must look very silly:

and came to Jerusalem; the metropolis of Judah, with his royal prisoner:

and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; in at the breach of which he went with his chariot, as Josephus says {e}, in triumph:

from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits; the gate of Ephraim was to the north of the city, towards the tribe of Ephraim, from whence it had its name; and the corner gate was that which joined the northern and western walls together, or rather the northern and eastern walls; for Rauwolff says {f}, there is still the corner gate in its old place, where the north and east walls meet on large and high rocks, and is still called by some the gate of Naphtali.

{e} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 9. sect. 3. {f} Travels, par. 3. ch. 3. p. 228. by Ray.

2 Kings 14:14

Ver. 14. And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the Lord,.... In 2Ch 25:24 it is added, "with Obededom", who, and his family, had the care of them by lot, see 1Ch 26:15

and in the treasures of the king's house; which were also spoiled and plundered:

and hostages; either such as the king of Judah had taken from Edom, as pledges of their fidelity, that they might not rebel; or which the king of Israel took of Judah, even sons of the princes, as the Targum, for security, that they would give him no more trouble:

and returned to Samaria; without attempting to bring the kingdom of Judah into subjection to him, which he might suppose he could not hold, and having enough to do with the Syrians, his avowed enemies.

2 Kings 14:15

Ver. 15. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might,.... His valiant and mighty acts which he did in his wars with the Syrians, 2Ki 13:25,

and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah; a short account of which is given in the preceding verses:

are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? a book very often mentioned and referred to, as containing the history of the events and transactions of every reign.

2 Kings 14:16

Ver. 16. And Jehoash slept with his fathers,.... Died as they died:

and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; where they were:

and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead; which was Jeroboam the second.

2 Kings 14:17

Ver. 17. And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years. Which, with the fourteen he reigned contemporary with him, made the twenty nine years he reigned, 2Ki 14:2. The Vulgate Latin version is, "twenty five years".

2 Kings 14:18

Ver. 18. And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?] Not in the canonical book of Chronicles; though there are some things of him recorded there, which are not here; but in the annals of each reign, written by the king's historian appointed for that purpose.

2 Kings 14:19

Ver. 19. Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem,.... Against Amaziah; the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the principal men of it; perhaps those whose sons the king of Israel had carried away as hostages, which they imputed to the ill conduct of Amaziah, as well as the breaking of the wall of Jerusalem, and the pillaging of the temple, and the king's palace:

and he fled to Lachish; a fortified city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:39 but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there; in a private manner, as Josephus {g} relates.

{g} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 9. c. 9. sect. 3.)

2 Kings 14:20

Ver. 20. And they brought him on horses,.... That is, in a chariot or hearse drawn by horses; though the Jews {h} suppose he was carried on horses, and that because he worshipped the gods of the Edomites, who were themselves carried on horses; and he was not carried on the shoulders of men, because he neglected to serve the God of Israel, whose mysteries were carried on the shoulders of men:

and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David; and very probably in the sepulchre of the kings, though his father was not.

{h} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. paralip. fol. 85. L.

2 Kings 14:21

Ver. 21. And all the people of Judah took Azariah,.... Called Uzziah in the next chapter, and so in the book of Chronicles; both names signifying much the same, the one "the help of the Lord", the other "the strength of the Lord":

(which was sixteen years old;) yet as he began to reign in the twenty seventh year of Jeroboam, 2Ki 15:1 and Jeroboam began to reign in the fifteenth yaer of Amaziah, 2Ki 14:23, he could be but four years of age, for the solution of which, See Gill on "2Ki 15:1":

and made him king instead of his father Amaziah; which was after his death, and not when he fled to Lachish, as Kimchi thinks.

2 Kings 14:22

Ver. 22. He built Elath,.... A port which belonged to Edom, **De 2:8** which very probably David took from them when he made them tributary, and which they retook when they revolted, and Amaziah got again when he defeated them; and this his son rebuilt and fortified:

and restored it to Judah; annexed it to the kingdom of Judah, as in the days of David and Solomon:

after that the king slept with his fathers; after the death of his father Amaziah.

2 Kings 14:23

Ver. 23. In the fifteenth year of Amaziah, the son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria,.... So that he reigned fourteen or fifteen years contemporary with him; for Amaziah reigned twenty nine years:

[and reigned] forty and one years; Josephus says {i} forty, giving only the round number.

{i} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 9.) c. 10. sect. 1.

2 Kings 14:24

Ver. 24. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,.... Was guilty of idolatry:

he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin; the worship of the calves is especially meant; he was in all respects of the same cast with his ancestor of the same name, from whom he had it, in veneration of him.

2 Kings 14:25

Ver. 25. He restored the coast of Israel,.... The cities upon it, which had been taken away from them by their enemies:

from the entering of Hamath; which was the northern border of the land of Canaan, the entrance into it from Syria, see Nu 34:8,

unto the sea of the plain: of Jordan, called sometimes the salt sea and the Dead Sea; the lake Asphaltites, as Josephus {k}, where formerly stood Sodom and Gomorrah:

according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah the son of Amittai; the same with him whose prophecy among the small prophets bears this name; and though his prophecy concerning Jeroboam's success and victories is not there, nor anywhere else, recorded at length, yet needed not to be doubted of; this is the first of the prophets spoken of whose books are extant:

which was of Gathhepher; a city in the tribe of Zebulun, Jos 19:13, which contradicts a notion of the Jews, that no prophet came out of Galilee, when the very first of those that were the penmen of the books of prophecies was from thence, see **Joh 7:52**.

{k} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 9.) c. 10. sect. 1.

2 Kings 14:26

Ver. 26. For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter,.... Being sorely oppressed by their enemies, especially the Syrians; and he was moved to have compassion upon them, and show mercy to them: for, there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel: they were in the most forlorn and helpless condition;
See Gill on "De 32:36".

2 Kings 14:27

Ver. 27. And the Lord said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven,.... Had not as yet declared it by any of his prophets, that he would do it, as he afterwards did by Hosea, **Ho 1:4**, and was fulfilled in the reign of Hoshea king of Israel, 2Ki 17:1.

but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash; the instrument of their deliverance from the hands of their enemies, and of recovering their borders as afore time.

2 Kings 14:28

Ver. 28. Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred,.... His valiant acts and warlike exploits:

and how he recovered Damascus and Hamath, which belonged to Judah, for Israel; which cities, in the times of David and Solomon, were tributary to Judah, but afterwards fell into the hands of the Syrians, from whom Jeroboam recovered them, and annexed them to the kingdom of Israel; or, as Kimchi, though Jeroboam was king of Israel, yet, having taken them, he restored them to the king of Judah, to whom they belonged:

are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? where all events of any moment were registered.

2 Kings 14:29

Ver. 29. And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel,.... Died, and was buried with them:

and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead: who was of the fourth generation from Jehu, as was promised to him, 2Ki 10:30.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 15

This chapter begins with the reign of Azariah king of Judah, 2Ki 15:1, and then gives a short account of the several kings of Israel, to the last of them; of Zachariah, 2Ki 15:8, of Shallum, 2Ki 15:13 of Menahem, 2Ki 15:16 of Pekahiah, 2Ki 15:23, of Pekah, succeeded by Hoshea, the last of them, 2Ki 15:27, and is included with the reign of Jotham king of Judah, 2Ki 15:32.

Ver. 1. In the twenty amd seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah the son on Amaziah king of Judah to reign. Now Amaziah lived only to the fifteenth year of Jeroboam, 2Ki 14:2 in which year, and not in his twenty seventh, it might be thought Azariah his son began to reign. There are various ways taken to remove this difficulty, not to take notice of a corruption of numbers, "twenty seven for seventeen", which some insist on. Ben Gersom and Abarbinel are of opinion, that those twenty seven years of Jeroboam's reign are not to be understood of what were past, but of what were to come before the family of Jehu was extinct; and that he reigned twenty six years, and his son six months, which made twenty seven imperfect years. Others suppose that Jeroboam reigned with his father eleven or twelve years before his death; and, reckoning from the different periods of his reign, this was either the twenty seventh year, or the fifteenth or sixteenth: and others, that the reign of Azariah may be differently reckoned, either from the time his father fled to Lachish, where he might remain eleven or twelve years, or from his death, and so may be said to begin to reign either in the fifteenth or twenty seventh of Jeroboam; or there was an interregnum of eleven or twelve years after the death of his father, he being a minor of about four years of age, which was the fifteenth of Jeroboam, during which time the government was in the hands of the princes and great men of the nation; and it was not till Azariah was sixteen years of age, and when it was the twenty seventh of Jeroboam's reign, that the people agreed to make him king, see 2Ki 14:21 and which seems to be the best way of accounting for it.

2 Kings 15:2

Ver. 2. Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign,.... By the consent of the people and princes of Judah, 2Ki 14:21

and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem: exclusive of the eleven or twelve years of his minority, from his father's death:

and his mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem; of whom there is no further account any where.

2 Kings 15:3

Ver. 3. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,.... At the beginning of his reign, and in an external way:

according to all that his father Amaziah had done; who did not do what he did as David, sincerely and cordially, 2Ki 14:3.

2 Kings 15:4

Ver. 4. Save that the high places were not removed,.... That is, he did right, excepting in that instance, and which was the case of his father and other kings before him, and others afterwards, till Hezekiah came:

the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places; see 2Ki 12:3.

2 Kings 15:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord smote the king,.... With leprosy; the reason of it was, because he intruded into the priest's office, and went into the temple to burn incense on the altar of incense, 2Ch 26:19,

so that he was a leper unto the day of his death; but how long it was to it from his being smitten cannot be said with certainty; Dr. Lightfoot {l} thinks he died the same year he was smitten:

and dwelt in a several house: without Jerusalem, as the Targum; for lepers, according to the law, were to dwell separate without the camp or city, Le 13:46 the word for "several" signifies "free" {m}; here he lived alone, free from the company and conversation of men, free from the business of government, his son doing that for him, and in the country, where he might freely walk about, as lepers did, and take the air; the Jews say {n}, his house was among the graves, where he was free among the dead, as the phrase is, Ps 88:5, but not likely; much better is what Abendana observes from R. Jonah, that the word, in the Arabic {o} language, signifies a little house, and so this might be in which he dwelt out of the city, in comparison of his palace:

and Jotham the king's son was over the house; had the direction of the palace, and the management of all affairs in it:

judging the people of the land; administering justice in all cases, for which they came to him, and so filled up his father's place; he did not depose his father, nor take upon him to be king, only did the business of one.

{l} Works, vol. 1. p. 99. {m} tyvpxh tybb "in domo libero", V. L. Tigurine version, &c. {n} T. Hieros. apud Jarchium in loc. {o} "in exiqua domo resedit assidue", Castel. Lexic. col. 1345.

2 Kings 15:6

Ver. 6. And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?] In the history of the reigns of those kings; some of them are recorded in the canonical book of the Chronicles, 2Ch 26:1 and some were written by the prophet Isaiah, 2Ch 26:22.

2 Kings 15:7

Ver. 7. So Azariah slept with his fathers,.... Or died, when he had reigned fifty two years:

and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David; but not in the sepulchres of the kings, but in the field of the burial, or the burying ground which belonged to them, because he was a leper, 2Ch 26:23. Benjamin of Tudela {p} places his grave near the pillar of Absalom, and the fountain of Siloah, near the brook Kidron:

and Jotham his son reigned in his stead; who reigned sixteen years; a further account of him, and his reign, we have in the latter part of this chapter, after the reigns of several of the kings of Israel.

{p} Itinerar. p. 43.

2 Kings 15:8

Ver. 8. In the thirty eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months. Since Azariah began to reign in the twenty seventh of Jeroboam, 2Ki 15:1, and Jeroboam reigned forty one years, 2Ki 14:23, his last year must be the fifteenth or sixteenth of Azariah, in which year Zachariah must have begun to reign, had he immediately succeeded his father in the throne; there must be therefore an interregnum of twenty two years at least, which might be owing to the dissensions among the princes and people about the succession, and a dislike to Zachariah on some account; however, after all, he must reign, though but six months, to fulfil the word of the Lord, see
2Ki 15:12.

2 Kings 15:9

Ver. 9 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his fathers had done,.... Even all his predecessors, from the time of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, from whose sin, in worshipping the calves, they departed not.

2 Kings 15:10

Ver. 10. And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him,.... A friend of his, as Josephus {q} calls him, encouraged by the dissatisfaction of the people to him:

and smote him before the people, and slew him; in a public manner, the people consenting to it, and approving of it, not liking Zachariah to be their king;

and reigned in his stead; though but a very short time.

{q} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 11. sect. 1.

2 Kings 15:11

Ver. 11. And the rest of the acts of Zachariah,.... During his six months' reign, and what he might do before in the interregnum:

behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel: for be they more or fewer, good or bad, they were all recorded there which were of any moment.

2 Kings 15:12

Ver. 12. This was the word of the Lord which he spake unto Jehu,.... Which was now fulfilled in the short reign of Zachariah:

saying, thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation; see 2Ki 10:30, and so it came to pass; as every word of the Lord does, not one fails; for after Jehu reigned Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam the second, and Zachariah, all descendants of Jehu.

2 Kings 15:13

Ver. 13. Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah,.... The same with Azariah: he is sometimes called by one name, and sometimes by the other, see
2Ki 14:21,

and he reigned a full month in Samaria: and no longer; so soon were the conspiracy against his sovereign, and the murder of him, punished.

2 Kings 15:14

Ver. 14. For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah,.... A city in the tribe of Manasseh, the royal city of the kings of Israel before Omri, of which See Gill on "Jos 12:24", whether Menahem was of this city, or was now besieging it with an army he had the command of, as Josephus {r} suggests, is not certain; however, hearing what had befallen Zachariah, he came from hence: and came to Samaria; which, according to Bunting {s}, was six miles from Tirzah:

and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead; judging he had as good a right to the throne as Shallum had.

{r} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 9. c. 11. sect. 1.) {s} Travels, &c. p. 169.

2 Kings 15:15

Ver. 15. And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. In which, no doubt, an account of the cause of the conspiracy, and of the persons assisting to him in it, was given, with other things done in his short reign.

2 Kings 15:16

Ver. 16. Then Menahem smote Tiphsah, and all that were therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah,.... The Jewish writers commonly take this Tiphsah to be without the land of Israel, the same with that in **1Ki 4:24** on the borders of Syria, and near the Euphrates; but it seems to be some place nearer Samaria, and Tirzah; according to Bunting {t}, it was but six miles from Samaria:

because they opened not to him, therefore he smote it; they refused to open the gates of their city to him, and receive him, and acknowledge him as their king; therefore he exercised severity on the inhabitants of it, and the parts adjacent, as far as Tirzah, putting them to the sword:

and all the women therein that were with child he ripped up: which was a most shocking instance of barbarity, and which he did, to terrify others from following their example. Ben Gersom interprets it of strong towers built on mountains, which he demolished, deriving "haroth", which we render "women with child", from rh, "a mountain".

{t} Travels, &c. p. 169.

2 Kings 15:17

Ver. 17. In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel,.... Shallum reigning but one month, both their reigns began the same year.

2 Kings 15:18

Ver. 18. And he did that which was evil,.... The same character is given of him as of those before him, 2Ki 15:9.

2 Kings 15:19

Ver. 19. And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land,.... The land of Israel, he invaded it; a Jewish chronologer {u} calls him Pulbelicho; and he is generally thought to be the same with Belochus or Belesis, governor of Babylon, who, with Arbaces the Mede, slew Sardanapalus, said to be the last of the Assyrian kings, and translated the empire to the Chaldeans; he ruling over Babylon and Nineveh, and Arbaces over the Medes and Persians; but Pul was not a Babylonian, but an Assyrian {w}, and the first king of the Assyrians, at least, the Scriptures speak of: we read no more of him; but one Metasthenes, a Persian historian, feigned and published by Annius, and so named by him instead of Megasthenes, calls him Phulbelochus, and says {x} he reigned forty eight years:

and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver; and a talent of silver, according to Brerewood {y} was three hundred and seventy five pounds; but Bishop Cumberland {z} calculates it at three hundred and fifty three pounds eleven shillings and ten pence half penny; 1,000 of them made a large sum of money, according to the former 375,000 pounds; and this he gave to him, not only to desist from the invasion of his land, but

that his hand might be with him; and not against him:

and to confirm the kingdom in his hand; which being got by usurpation, and supported by cruelty, was but tottering.

{u} David Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 5. 2. {w} See the Universal History, vol. 4. B. 1. ch. 8. sect. 5. {x} De Judicio Temp. & Annal. Pers. fol. 221. 2. {y} De Ponder & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 4. {z} Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 4. p. 120.

2 Kings 15:20

Ver. 20. And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth,.... Who were most able to pay it, by which means he eased the poor, and might thereby attach them to him:

of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria: that is, he required them to pay fifty shekels apiece to make up the above sum as a present to Pul; though the words in the original text lie more naturally thus, "to give to the king of Assyria fifty shekels of silver for one man"; that is, for every man in his army; which amounted to about six pounds a man:

so the king of Assyria turned back; to his own country:

and stayed not there in the land; in the land of Israel, neither to distress nor to help Menahem, for which he gave him the money.

2 Kings 15:21

Ver. 21. And the rest of the acts of Menahem,.... We are referred to the same book of chronicles for them as for those of the rest of the kings, which seems to be a form the historian uses of them all.

2 Kings 15:22

Ver. 22. And Menahem slept with his fathers,.... Died a natural death, and in peace, though an usurper and a tyrant:

and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead; the kingdom he had usurped continued in his family.

2 Kings 15:23

Ver. 23. In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria,.... As it was in the thirty ninth of Azariah that his father began his reign, and he reigned ten years, they must end in the forty ninth of Azariah, and therefore there must be an interregnum of a year; perhaps the title of Pekahiah might be disputed, and it was a year before he could get settled on the throne:

and reigned two years; being slain by one of his captains, as after related.

2 Kings 15:24

Ver. 24. And he did that which was evil,.... Besides other sins, he cleaved to that of worshipping the calves, a piece of state policy all the kings of Israel gave into.

2 Kings 15:25

Ver. 25. But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his,.... The word signifies a "third" man, the third to the king, as some think; Josephus {a} calls him a "chiliarch", one that had the command of a thousand men:

conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house; Josephus {b} says it was at a banquet:

with Argob, and Arieh; whom, according to Abarbinel, Pekah slew with the king, being mighty men, who were always about him; but they seem rather to be conspirators with Pekah, and assisting to him in smiting the king; the former of these, Ben Gersom thinks, was governor of Argob, a country on the other side Jordan, and the latter had his name from his fortitude, which signifies a lion:

and with him fifty men of the Gileadites; which may seem to strengthen the above notion concerning Argob, since the Gileadites were of the same side of Jordan, and were near Argob, see **De 3:13**

and he killed him, and reigned in his room, as his father killed Shallum, and reigned in his stead.

{a} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 9. c. 11. sect. 1.) {b} Ibid.

2 Kings 15:26

Ver. 26. And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah,.... The same form of expression is used as before, 2Ki 15:21, of all the kings.

2 Kings 15:27

Ver. 27. In the fifty second year of Azariah king of Judah Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria,.... Which was the last year of the reign of Azariah:

and reigned twenty years; which was a long reign for an usurper and murderer.

2 Kings 15:28

Ver. 28. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,.... Not only in committing the above crimes of usurpation and murder, but idolatry, and particularly the worshipping of the calves, hinted at in the text.

2 Kings 15:29

Ver. 29. In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglathpileser king of Assyria,.... Into the land of Israel; he is called by a Jewish chronologer {c}, Pul-Asir; so Phul-Assar by Metasthenes {d}, who says he reigned twenty five years; he very probably was the son of Pul the Assyrian king, mentioned 2Ki 15:19, and is thought to be the same that Aelianus {e} calls Tilgamos; some think he had the first part of his name from Diglath, or Diglito, by which the river Tigris is called in Pliny {f}, with which Assyria was washed; and that Pil, or Pul, is Baal, Bel, Jupiter, and Azar is Mars {g}; of all which his name is composed:

and took Ijon, and Abelbethmaachah; of which see 1Ki 15:20,

and Janoah; a city in the tribe of Ephraim, Jos 16:6

and Kedesh, and Hazor; cities in Naphtali: Jos 19:36

and Gilead; a country beyond Jordan, which belonged to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh:

and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; that is, upper Galilee, which lay in Naphtali:

and carried them captive to Assyria; which was the first captivity of Israel in which half their tribes were carried away.

{c} David Ganz. Ut supra. (Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 3. 2.) {d} Ut supra. (De Judicio Temp. & Annal. Pers. fol. 221. 2.) {e} De Animal. l. 12. c. 21. {f} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 27. {g} Hyde Hist. Relig. Pers. p. 65, 66.

2 Kings 15:30

Ver. 30. And Hoshea the son or Elab made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead,.... Did by him as he had done by Pekahiah, 2Ki 15:28, this was measure for measure, as the Jews say: and this he did

in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah; and yet Jotham is said to reign but sixteen years, 2Ki 15:33, this must be reckoned therefore either from the time of his being viceroy, and judging Israel in his father's lifetime, 2Ki 15:5 or this was the fourth year of Ahaz, and the twentieth year, reckoning from the time Jotham began to reign, who is the rather mentioned, because as yet the historian had taken no notice of Ahaz.

2 Kings 15:31

Ver. 31. And the rest of the acts of Pekah,.... Not recorded here, were to be read in the book of chronicles of the kings so often referred to.

2 Kings 15:32

Ver. 32. In the second year of Pekah, the son of Remaliah king of Israel, began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign. Pekah began to reign in the fifty second year of Azariah, or Uzziah, which was his last year, 2Ki 15:27, and which was the first of Pekah; Uzziah reigned full fifty two, and then Jotham succeeded, which was the beginning of the second of Pekah.

2 Kings 15:33

Ver. 33. Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign,.... Alone, after the death of his father:

and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and his reign, upon the whole, was a good reign:

and his mother's name was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok; a person well known in those times; Dr. Lightfoot {h} thinks he was high priest.

{h} Works, vol. 1. p. 100.

2 Kings 15:34

Ver. 34. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,.... Jarchi, in 2Ch 27:2, observes, from a writer of theirs, that in all the kings of Judah before him, even in the best, some sins were found; but in Jotham there was nothing scandalous and reproachful; and it is a high character Josephus {i} gives of him, that there was no virtue wanting in him; he was pious towards God, just towards men, and careful of the public good; but the inspired historian chiefly respects matters of religious worship; he did not give into idolatry:

he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done; that is, according to what was well done by him; he did not imitate him in going into the temple to burn incense, which is particularly excepted.
2Ch 27:2.

{i} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 11. sect. 2.

2 Kings 15:35

Ver. 35. Howbeit the high places were not removed,.... As they were not by his father, and the same is observed of the best of kings before:

the people sacrificed and burnt incense still in the high places; from which they could not be brought off by prophets or kings:

he built the higher gate of the house of the Lord; which was between the temple and the king's palace, which led to it; this he repaired and beautified, or added something to it; or otherwise it was built by Solomon, and therefore called the new gate, Jer 26:10 it is the same that was afterwards called the gate of Nicanor; the east gate, as say the Jewish writers {k}.

{k} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 7. 1. Gloss. in ib. Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 6.

2 Kings 15:36

Ver. 36. Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?] Of which mention is often made by the inspired historians; some of Jotham's other acts are recorded in the canonical book of Chronicles, 2Ch 27:1.

2 Kings 15:37

Ver. 37. In those days,.... At the end of the days of Jotham, or after his death, things might be in design, and preparations made before, but nothing of what follows came to pass in his life, but in the times of his son;

the Lord began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah: to make war with them as a scourge to Ahaz for his sins; of which is in the following chapter.

2 Kings 15:38

Ver. 38. And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father,.... Died, and was buried with the kings of Judah in their sepulchres:

and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead; an account of whose reign we have in the next chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 16

This chapter contains the reign of Ahaz only, relates his idolatry, 2Ki 16:1 his hiring the king of Assyria with the treasure of the temple, and his own, to assist him against the kings of Israel and Syria, who besieged him, 2Ki 16:5, his seeing the altar of an idol at Damascus, the fashion of which he took, and ordered one like it to be built at Jerusalem, 2Ki 16:10, his defacing and removing some things in the temple, 2Ki 16:17, and the chapter is concluded with his death and burial, 2Ki 16:19.

Ver. 1. In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign. Jotham began to reign in the second of Pekah, and he reigned sixteen years, and therefore his last year would fall in the eighteenth of Pekah; but as his first year might be at the beginning of the second of Pekah, his last was towards the end of the seventeenth of Pekah's, as here; see 2Ki 15:32.

2 Kings 16:2

Ver. 2. Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem,.... The same number of years his father did:

and did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord God, like David his father; his more remote progenitor, nor even like his more immediate father, from whom he received such good instructions, and of whom he had so good an example; but grace is neither propagated by blood, nor obtained through the force of education.

2 Kings 16:3

Ver. 3. But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel..... Worshipping the calves as they did; which, as it was contrary to the religious sentiments in which he was educated, so against his political interest, which was the only, or at least the principal thing, which swayed with the kings of Israel to continue that idolatry:

yea, and made his son to pass through the fire; between two fires to Molech, by way of lustration; which might be true of Hezekiah his son, and others of his sons, for he had more he burnt with fire, as appears from 2Ch 28:3, both ways were used in that sort of idolatry,
See Gill on "Le 18:21",

according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel; the old Canaanites; so the Carthaginians, a colony of the Phoenicians, used in time of calamity to offer human sacrifices, and even their children, to appease their deities {l}. Theodoret says, he had seen in some cities, in his time, piles kindled once a year, over which not only boys, but men, would leap, and infants were carried by their mothers through the flames; which seemed to be an expiation or purgation, and which he takes to be the same with the sin of Ahaz.

{l} Justin. e Trogo, Hist. l. 18. c. 6. Curt. Hist. l. 4. c. 3. Pescennius Festus apud Lactant. de fals. Relig. l. 1. c. 21.

2 Kings 16:4

Ver. 4. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills,.... Which none of the kings of Judah before him ever did; for though they connived at this practice in the people, they never encouraged it by their own example; and very probably he offered sacrifices there to idols, see 2Ch 28:25 whereas the people sacrificed to the true God, though at a wrong place:

and under every green tree; and which is never said of the people, and seems to confirm it, that Ahaz sacrificed to other gods, since the Heathens used to place idols under green trees, and worship them, whom the Jews imitated, **Jer 2:2**.

2 Kings 16:5

Ver. 5. Then Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to war,.... To fight with Ahaz, moved to it by the Lord, to chastise Ahaz for his idolatry, 2Ki 15:37

but could not overcome him; so as to take Jerusalem, and set up another king there, as their scheme was, **Isa 7:5** though they had both at other times got great advantages over him, and slew many of his people, and carried them captive, see 2Ch 28:5.

2 Kings 16:6

Ver. 6. At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria,.... A port on the Red sea, that formerly belonged to Edom, taken from them by David, retaken by them when they revolted in Joram's time, and perhaps taken by Amaziah again, since his son Azariah rebuilt it, and restored it to Judah, 2Ki 14:22 and it seems by this that it had been in the hands of the Syrians, who now recovered it; unless instead of Aram, rendered Syrians, we could substitute Edom, which Le Clerc has ventured to do without any authority:

and drave the Jews from Elath; who were in possession of it. This is the first time that the inhabitants of the kingdom of Judah are called Jews, from the name of their original patriarch, and principal tribe; though some think {m} they had this name from the time this tribe went up first against the Canaanites, **Jud 1:1**, however, it is a mistake of R. Elias Levita {n}, that it is never found in the Bible they were called Jews, but from the time the ten tribes were carried captive, and not before; and a greater mistake still it is of Tacitus {o}, that they were called Jews or Judaeans, as if they were Idaeans from Mount Ida in Crete, from whence he supposes they came:

and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day; the marginal reading is Edomites; and so read the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; and Kimchi observes that it is written "Aramim", Syrians, because the king of Syria took it, and by his means the Edomites returned to it, but is read "Edomim", Edomites, because it belonged to the children of Edom; and it is certain the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, 2Ch 28:17.

{m} Polydor. Virgil. de Invent. l. 4. c. 1. {n} Tishbi, p. 143. So David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 83. 4. {o} Hist. l. 5. sect. 2.

2 Kings 16:7

Ver. 7. So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglathpileser king of Assyria,.... Of whom see 2Ki 15:29

saying, [I am] thy servant, and thy son; signifying, that he would be his vassal, and become tributary to him, and serve him as a servant to his master, or a son his father, on condition he would come to his assistance, and so he became his servant; hence his son Hezekiah is said to rebel against the king of Assyria, 2Ki 18:1

come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king off Israel, which rise up against me; which assistance he had no reason to call in, since the Lord had promised him deliverance from both those kings, and gave him a sign of it, **Isa 7:4**.

2 Kings 16:8

Ver. 8. And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord,.... Which Uzziah and Jotham had put there; for all that was found there in the times of Amaziah was taken away by Jehoash king of Israel, 2Ki 14:14

and in the treasures of the king's house; whatever gold and silver he had of his own:

and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria; to obtain his help and assistance.

2 Kings 16:9

Ver. 9. And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him,.... Complied with his request:

for the king of Syria went up against Damascus, and took it; the metropolis of the kingdom of Syria, and so made a powerful diversion in favour of the king of Judah:

and carried the people of it captive to Kir; not Cyrene, as the Vulgate Latin version, a country belonging to Egypt, which the king of Assyria had no power over; but a place in upper Media, as Josephus {p} relates, which belonged to the Assyrian king; see Isa 22:6, compared with 2Ki 21:2, of this captivity Amos had prophesied some time before, **Am 1:5**

and slew Rezin; the king of Syria, which also was foretold in the same prophecy.

{p} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 12. sect. 3.

2 Kings 16:10

Ver. 10. And King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglathpileser king of Assyria,.... When he heard he was come thither, and had taken it, to congratulate him on the victory, and to give him thanks for his assistance; which place from Jerusalem was one hundred and sixty miles, according to Bunting {q}

and saw an altar that was at Damascus; where, in all probability, he attended at the sacrifice on it along with the king of Assyria:

and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof; not only the size and form of it, but all the decorations and figures on it, with which it was wrought. This Urijah was very probably the high priest, for it can scarcely be thought that Ahaz would write to any other, or that any other priest would or could have complied with his request; and he seems to be the same Isaiah took to be a witness in a certain affair, though he now degenerated from the character he gives of him, **Isa 8:2**.

{q} Travels, &c. p. 185.

2 Kings 16:11

Ver. 11. And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus,.... Exactly according to the size, form, figure, and carved work of it, though expressly contrary to the command of God; which fixed both the form and matter of the altar of God, with everything appertaining to it, which he, being high priest, could not be ignorant of, Ex 27:1, &c. but he was a timeserver, and sought to curry favour with his prince:

so Urijah the priest made it against King Ahaz came from Damascus; both king and priest were in haste to have this altar made. Ahaz could not stay till he came home, but sent directions about it from Damascus, and the priest was so expeditious in observing his commands, that he got it done before he came thence to Jerusalem.

2 Kings 16:12

Ver. 12. And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar,.... Looked at it, and liked it, being exactly according to the pattern he had sent:

and the king approached the altar, and offered thereon; either by a priest, or it may be in his own person, having no regard to the laws and appointments of God, and especially as his sacrifices were not offered to him, but to the gods of Damascus and Syria, 2Ch 28:23.

2 Kings 16:13

Ver. 13. And he burnt his burnt offering, and his meat offering,.... Which went together according to the law of God, and was imitated by the Heathens:

and poured his drink offering; a libation of wine, as probably it was, like what they used according to the Levitical law:

and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings upon the altar; as used according to the same law; for all sorts of sacrifices were offered by idolaters, as by the people of God, in imitation of them.

2 Kings 16:14

Ver. 14. And he brought also the brasen altar which was before the Lord,.... That which Solomon made, **2Ch 4:1**, which stood in the court by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord, **Le 1:5** from the forefront of the house; the frontispiece of the temple, which was at the eastern gate of it:

from between the altar and the house of the Lord for it seems Urijah had placed the new altar behind the old one, more out of sight; the brasen altar standing between that and the eastern gate, or entrance into the temple; wherefore he removed the brasen altar, and put his new one in the room of it:

and put it; that is, the brasen altar of Solomon:

on the north side of the altar; of the new altar, at the right hand as they went into the temple; where it was as in a corner, in greater obscurity, and the new altar more in view as they came into the temple.

2 Kings 16:15

Ver. 15. And King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying,.... Who was not to be commanded by the king in matters of worship, but to attend to the laws and institutions of God:

saying, upon the great altar; meaning the new one, which either was of a larger size than the altar of God, or was greater in the esteem of Ahaz:

burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering; the daily sacrifice, morning and evening:

and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; such as were offered up at any time on the account of the rulers of the land in particular, or of the whole congregation of Israel, see **Le 4:1**

and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice; as it used to be sprinkled upon the altar of the Lord:

and the brasen altar shall be for me to inquire by; to search, inquire, and consider what was to be done with it; for altars were never inquired by as oracles; the meaning is, that it was never to be made use of but by him, and when he pleased.

2 Kings 16:16

Ver. 16. Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that King Ahaz commanded. Not only concerning the structure of the altar, but the sacrifices to be offered on it; like king like priest, both apostates and idolaters.

2 Kings 16:17

Ver. 17. And King Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them,.... In the temple there were ten lavers for the priests to wash in, which are here meant, the singular being put for the plural; and these had bases of brass, on which they were set; and about these bases were borders, which had on them figures of various creatures, lions, oxen, and cherubim; and these Ahaz cut off, either to deface them, in contempt of them, or to convert the brass to other uses, as he might also the bases themselves, since he removed the lavers from off of them, see **1Ki 7:27**

and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen [that were] under it; the molten sea Solomon made, which he set upon twelve oxen made of brass; this Ahaz took down from thence, either to abate its magnificence, and render it despicable, or for the sake of the brass, of which the oxen were made, see **1Ki 7:23**

and put it upon a pavement of stones; not upon the floor of the temple, for that was of wood, fir, or cedar, but on rows of stones, placed instead of bases for it to stand upon.

2 Kings 16:18

Ver. 18. And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house,.... Used on the sabbath day, either for the people to sit under to hear the law explained by the priests; or for the course of the priests to be in, that went out that day, to give way to the course that entered, which yet did not depart from the temple till evening; or rather for the king himself to sit under, while attending the temple service of that day, and might be the cover of the scaffold, **2Ch 6:13** and be very rich cloth of gold; and therefore he took it away for the king of Assyria, or to signify that he should not frequent the place any more: and hence it follows,

and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the Lord; the way which led from the king's palace to it, he turned it a round about way, that it might not be discerned there was a way from the one to the other: and this he did

for the king of Assyria; to gratify him, that he might from hence conclude that he had wholly relinquished the worship of God in the temple, and should cleave to the gods of Damascus and Syria; or for fear of him, that he might not see the way into the temple, and take away the vessels; or find him, should he be obliged to hide himself there, when in danger by him.

2 Kings 16:19

Ver. 19. Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?] Some others are written in the canonical book of Chronicles, 2Ch 28:1 and were, it is highly probable, in the annals of the kings of Judah, now lost.

2 Kings 16:20

Ver. 20. And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David,.... But not in the sepulchres of the kings of Israel, as David and Solomon, he being such a wicked prince, 2Ch 28:27

and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead; of whom much is said in the following part of this history.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 17

This chapter relates the captivity of the ten tribes of Israel, and how it came about, 2Ki 17:1, the cause of it, their idolatry, which they persisted in, notwithstanding the remonstrances made against it, 2Ki 17:7, in whose stead were placed people from different parts, who exercised a mixed religion, partly Heathenish, and partly Israelitish, 2Ki 17:24.

Ver. 1. In the tenth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. In this account there is some difficulty, since it was in the twentieth of Jotham, that is, the fourth of Ahaz, that Hosea conspired against Pekah king of Israel, and slew him, when it might be reasonably thought he began his reign: now either there was an interregnum until the twelfth of Ahaz, or Hoshea however was not generally received and acknowledged as king till then, as others think; he being a tributary to the king of Assyria, and a kind of viceroy, is not said to reign until he rebelled against him; after which he reigned nine years, four in the times of Ahaz, and five in the reign of Hezekiah, 2Ki 18:9, in this way the author of the Jewish chronology goes {r}, in which he is followed by other Jewish writers; and this bids as fair as any to remove the difficulty, unless these nine years refer to the time of his reign before the twelfth of Ahaz; and the sense be, that in the twelfth of Ahaz he had reigned nine year's; but it is said he "began" to reign then.

{r} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 22.

2 Kings 17:2

Ver. 2. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. He did not worship Baal, as some of them had done; and he could not worship the calves, as all of them had, for they were carried away by the Assyrians in the former captivities, as the Jews {s} say; and who also observe {t}, that he removed the garrisons set on the borders of the land to watch the Israelites, that they might not go up to Jerusalem; and this being done on the fifteenth of Ab, that day was afterwards observed as a festival on that account; and they further remark {u}, that the captivity of the ten tribes was in the reign of this king, who was better than the rest, to show that it was not barely the sins of the kings on whom the Israelites would cast the blame, that they were carried captives, but their own, according to **Ho 5:3**.

{s} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 22. {t} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 88. Kimchi in loc. {u} Seder Olam Raba, ut supra. (c. 22.)

2 Kings 17:3

Ver. 3. Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria,.... Which some take to be the same with Tiglathpileser, see **1Ch 5:26** but he rather seems to be his son; his name was to be found, as Josephus {w} relates, in the archives of the Tyrians, against whom he had an expedition; his name is Salmanassar in

Metasthenes {x}, who says he reigned seventeen years:

and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents, to depart from him; he became tributary to him, and agreed to pay him a yearly tax.

{w} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 14. sect. 2. {x} De Judicio Temp. fol. 221. 2.

2 Kings 17:4

Ver. 4. And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea,.... That he was forming a scheme to rebel against him, and cast off his yoke; of this he had intelligence by spies he sent, and placed to observe him very probably:

for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt; to treat with him, and enter into alliance with him, to help him against, and free him from, the king of Assyria. This king of Egypt is supposed to be Sabacon the Ethiopian, who reigned in Egypt ninety years; of whom Herodotus {y} and Diodorus Siculus {z} make mention; by Theodoret he is called Adramelech the Ethiopian, who dwelt in Egypt:

and brought no presents to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year; did not pay him his yearly tribute:

therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison; that is, after he took Samaria, the siege of which is next related; unless it can be thought that he met with him somewhere out of the capital, and seized him, and made him his prisoner, and after that besieged his city; which is not so likely.

{y} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 137. {z} Bibliothec l. 1. p. 59.

2 Kings 17:5

Ver. 5. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land,.... Of Israel, there being none to oppose his march; Hoshea not daring to come out, and meet him and fight him:

and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years; so long the city held out against him, see 2Ki 18:9.

2 Kings 17:6

Ver. 6. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria,..... Which was the last year of his reign, and to be reckoned either from the time of his reigning in full power and authority, or from his first casting off the Assyrian yoke; See Gill on "2Ki 17:1"

and carried Israel away into Assyria; not only the inhabitants of Samaria, but all the ten tribes inhabiting the several parts of the kingdom, for which Josephus is express {a}

and placed them in Halah, and in Habor, by the river of Gozan; some of them he placed here, which were in Assyria. Halah is the Calachena of Ptolemy, at the north of Assyria, and Habor is the mount Chobaras of the same; from which mountain, as you go to the Caspian sea, about midway, is the city Gauzania, the same with Gozan, which might give name to this river {b}. The Jews say {c}, this is the river Sambation, which runs so swiftly, that there is no passing except on the sabbath day; and which then the Jews cannot pass because of the profanation of the sabbath; and is the reason they give why the ten tribes are there detained; and Manasseh ben Israel {d} fancies Habor to be Tabor, a province in Tartary, where some Jews are:

and in the cities of the Medes; others of them he placed there, under his jurisdiction, the same with Hara, **1Ch 5:26**, which with the Greeks is called Aria; and Herodotus says {e}, these Medes formerly were called by all Arii. It appears from hence that the kingdom of Media was now subject to the king of Assyria: some {f} take Halach to be Colchi, and Habor to be Iberia, and Hara to be Armenia, and Gauzani to be Media, which all bounded the north of Assyria.

{a} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 1. {b} Vid. Witsium de 10 Trib. Israel. c. 4. sect. 2. {c} Rambam apud Eliam in Tishbi, p. 134. {d} Spes Israelis, sect. 17. p. 55. {e} Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 60. So Pausanias Corinthiac. sive, l. 2. p. 91. Vid. Vossium in Melam, de Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 2. p. 13. {f} See Bierwood's Inquiries, p. 104.

2 Kings 17:7

Ver. 7. For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God,.... By committing idolatry, which is the sin enlarged upon in the following discourse, as the cause of their being carried captive:

which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; which is observed to show their ingratitude, and to aggravate their sin of idolatry:

and had feared other gods; which could do them neither good nor hurt, wherefore it must be great stupidity to fear them.

2 Kings 17:8

Ver. 8. And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel,.... Meaning the Canaanites, in whose idolatrous ways they walked, and whom they imitated; though their ejection out of the land should have been a warning to them, and they were the more inexcusable, as they were particularly cautioned against walking in them, Le 18:3

and of the kings of Israel, which they had made; their laws and statutes, to worship the golden calves, and not go up to Jerusalem to worship.

2 Kings 17:9

Ver. 9. And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God,.... As being partly conscious to themselves that they were not right, and ashamed to commit them openly; and partly as foolishly imagining, that, being done privately, they were not seen and observed of God, having imbibed some atheistical notions of him, that he was not omniscient, or saw not, and had forsaken the earth; or they "covered" {g} these actions of theirs under reigned and plausible pretences, that what they did they were obliged to by their kings, and with political views, and that they worshipped the true God in the calves; but these were coverings too thin not to be seen through:

and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city; not content with those built in former times, they built new ones; and these not in their metropolis only, but in all the cities of the kingdom; and not in large cities only, but in every town and village between one fortified city and another; even wherever there was a watch tower erected, either for shepherds to watch their flocks, or for keepers of gardens, orchards, and vineyards, to watch the fruits of them, that they were not taken away.

{g} wapxy "occultaverunt", Montanus, Vatablus, Grotius; "palliaverunt", Piscator.

2 Kings 17:10

Ver. 10. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree. That is, statues and idols; for groves of trees could not be set under green trees; but they placed idols of stone, and of wood, as the latter were, in such places as Heathens were wont to do; see **Jer 3:6**
See Gill on "1Ki 14:23", so the Indians to this day have idols dispersed here and there in the fields, placed in little groves, or at the foot of some hill that casts a shadow {h}.

{h} Agreement of Customs between the East Indians and Jews, art. 5. p. 34.

2 Kings 17:11

Ver. 11. And there they burnt incense in all the high places,.... As even the tribe of Judah did, which is observed in all the preceding reigns:

as did the Heathen whom the Lord carried away before them: the Canaanites, and therefore they might justly expect to be carried captive also:

and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger: by their several immoralities, but especially their idolatries.

2 Kings 17:12

Ver. 12. For they served idols,.... Baalim, as the Targum; dunghill gods, as the word signifies, as they are often called in Scripture; and Sterculius was one of the names of Saturn, an Heathen deity, which he had, as is supposed, by his finding out the method of making land fruitful with dung {i}:

whereof the Lord said unto them, ye shall not do this thing; see Ex 20:3.

{i} Vid. Macrob. l. 1. c. 7. Lactant. de fals. Relig. l. 1. c. 20.

2 Kings 17:13

Ver. 13. Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, [and by] all the seers,.... Against their sins, reproving them for them, dehorting them from them, exhorting them to repent and leave them; as in all preceding reigns, by Ahijah the Shilonite, by Elijah and Elisha, by Hosea, Amos, and Micah, and others:

saying, turn ye from your ways; repent of them, and reform from them, worship of the calves particularly:

and keep my commandments, and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers; which was given them and enjoined them at Mount Sinai:

and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets; by whom he put them in mind of them, explained them, and urged obedience to them.

2 Kings 17:14

Ver. 14. Notwithstanding, they would not hear,.... Their instructions, advice, and admonitions, and obey them:

but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God: as Terah and Nahor, who were idolaters; or rather, their fathers in the wilderness, that made and served the calf, and those that rebelled against Moses and Aaron; it is a metaphor taken from oxen, that will not submit their necks to the yoke, but draw back from it, or cast it off, see **Ac 7:51**.

2 Kings 17:15

Ver. 15. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers,.... At Sinai and Horeb, see Ex 24:8,

and his testimonies which he testified against them; calling heaven and earth to witness what he would do to them if they broke his laws, **De 4:26**, and which were so many testifications of his mind and will what they should do, or otherwise what should be done to them; Ben Gersom also interprets this of the feasts of the passover and tabernacles, which were witnesses of Israel's coming out of Egypt, and of the sanctification and redemption of the firstborn, a testimony of the slaying the firstborn in Egypt:

and they followed vanity; idols, which are vain things for help, can neither hear, see, speak, &c.

and became vain; as sottish and stupid as the idols they worshipped; which is the usual fruit and effect of idolatry, see **Ro 1:21**

and went after the heathen that were round about them: imitated them in their idolatrous practices, as the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, &c. concerning

whom the Lord had charged them, that they should not do like them; of this charge see **De 6:13**.

2 Kings 17:16

Ver. 16. And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God,.... Which their idolatry led them to; and indeed he that offends in one point is guilty of them all, **Jas 2:10**

and made them molten images, [even] two calves; which they set up at Dan and Bethel, in the times of their first king Jeroboam, 1Ki 13:28

and made a grove; as Ahab, another of their kings, did, 1Ki 16:33

and worshipped all the host of heaven: not the angels, sometimes so called, but, besides the sun and moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Venus:

and served Baal; which was service to the sun, as Abarbinel interprets it; this was the god of the Zidonians Ahab worshipped, having married a princess of that people, 1Ki 16:31.

2 Kings 17:17

Ver. 17. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire,.... To Baal or Moloch, which were the same, and represented the sun, which, as the above writer observes, presides in the element of fire; this was done either by way of lustration, or so as to be burnt, see 2Ki 16:3

and used divination and enchantments: to get knowledge of what was to be done at present, or of things to come, neglecting the word of God and his prophets, and acting against the express law of God, De 18:10

and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger; as Ahab their king did, see 1Ki 21:20, they were as much the servants of sin as if they had sold themselves to be slaves to it.

2 Kings 17:18

Ver. 18. Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel,.... Nothing being more provoking to him than idolatry:

and removed them out of his sight; not out of the reach of his all seeing eye, but from all tokens of his favour, from the good land he had given them, and all the benefits and privileges of it:

there was none left but the tribe of Judah only; and part of Benjamin, which was annexed to it, and incorporated in it, and made one kingdom, and maintained the same worship; and there was the lot of Simeon, which was within the tribe of Judah; and the priests and the Levites, and various individuals of the several tribes, that came and settled among them for the sake of worship; but no perfect, distinct, tribe besides.

2 Kings 17:19

Ver. 19. Also Judah kept not the commandments of the Lord their God,.... But were infected with the idolatry of the ten tribes, and drawn into it by their example, and persisted therein, notwithstanding what befell the ten tribes; which are aggravations of the sins of them both, see **Jer 3:7**, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made; worshipping the calves as they did, particularly in the times of Ahaz, he setting the example, see 2Ki 16:3.

2 Kings 17:20

Ver. 20. And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel,.... The ten tribes, with loathing and contempt, and wrote a "loammi" on them, rejected them from being his people, gave them a bill of divorce, and declared them no more under his care and patronage:

and afflicted them; as he did before he utterly cast them off, as by famine, drought, and pestilence, **Am 4:6**

and delivered them into the hands of spoilers; as, first, into the hands of Hazael and Benhadad, kings of Syria, and then of Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, 2Ki 13:3,

until he had cast them out of his sight; by suffering them, as now, to be carried captive by Shalmaneser, 2Ki 17:6.

2 Kings 17:21

Ver. 21. For he rent Israel from the house of David,.... In the times of Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when ten tribes revolted from him, signified by the rending of a garment in twelve pieces, ten of which were given to Jeroboam; and it is here ascribed to the Lord, being according to his purpose and decree, and which was brought about by his providence, agreeably to a prophecy of his, see 1Ki 11:30

and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king; of themselves, without consulting the Lord and his prophets; and which was resented by him, though it was his will, and he had foretold it, that Jeroboam should be king, see **Ho 8:4**

and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the Lord; forbidding them to go up to Jerusalem to worship; the Targum is,

"made them to err:"

and made them sin a great sin; obliging them to worship the calves he set up.

2 Kings 17:22

Ver. 22. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did,.... They observed his injunction, not to go to Jerusalem to worship, and they worshipped the calves he did:

they departed not from them: in all succeeding reigns, until the time of their captivity.

2 Kings 17:23

Ver. 23. Until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight,.... Suffered them to be carried captive into the land of Assyria:

as he had said by all his servants the prophets; by Hosea, Amos, Micah, and others; see their prophecies, and also 1Ki 13:32,

so was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria, unto this day; the time of the writing this book; nor have they returned unto our days, nearly 2,800 years later.

2 Kings 17:24

Ver. 24. And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon,.... Which was at this time under the dominion of the king of Assyria; though in a little time after this it revolted, and had a king of its own, 2Ki 20:12, this king of Assyria was either Shalmaneser, who carried Israel captive, or it may be rather his son Esarhaddon, see **Ezr 4:2**,

and from Cuthah; which, according to Josephus {k}, was a city in Persia, where was a river of the same name; but it was rather a place in Erech, in the country of Babylon, See Gill on "Ge 10:10",

and from Ava; the same with Ivah, Isa 37:13, where perhaps a colony of the Avim had settled, **De 2:23** and from Hamath; a city of Syria, which lay on the northern borders of the land of Canaan, Nu 34:8

and from Sepharvaim; thought by some to be the Sippara of Ptolemy, or the Sippareni of Abydenus, in Mesopotamia; though Vitringa takes it to be a city in Syro-Phoenicia, See Gill on "Isa 36:19",

and placed them in the cities of Samaria, instead of the children of Israel; not in Samaria, which was now destroyed, according to the prophecy in **Mic 1:6** as Abarbinel and other Jewish writers note:

and they possessed Samaria; as an inheritance; sowed it with corn, and planted vineyards there:

and dwelt in the cities thereof; in the several parts of the kingdom.

{k} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 14. sect. 1.

2 Kings 17:25

Ver. 25. And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the Lord,.... Did not serve him in any manner, but their idols only, which they brought with them; whereas it was usual with Heathens to serve the gods of the country, as they reputed them, where they came, along with their own; but even this those men did not do:

therefore the Lord sent lions among them; even into their cities, into which lions sometimes came {l}, especially when old, out of the thickets of Jordan and other places where they haunted, see Jer 49:19

which slew some of them; this the Lord did to assert his sovereignty, authority, and mighty power, and to let them know that he could as easily clear the land of them, as they, by his permission, had cleared the land of the Israelites, Josephus {m} calls this a plague that was sent among them.

{l} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 44. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16. {m} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 9. c. 14. sect. 1.)

2 Kings 17:26

Ver. 26. Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria,.... In letters, or by messengers they sent unto him:

saying, the nations which thou hast removed; from different places before mentioned:

and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land; taking Jehovah the God of Israel to be a topical deity, limited peculiarly to the land of Israel, whereas he was the God of the whole earth; a like notion obtained among the Syrians, see 1Ki 20:28 now they say they know not his "manner" or "judgment" {n}, the laws, statutes, ordinances, and judgments, according to which he was worshipped by the people of Israel:

therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them; they perceived it was not a common case, nor could they impute it to any second cause, as want of food with the lions, &c. but the hand of a superior Being was in it: and they could think of no other reason, but

because they know not the manner of the God of the land; how he was to be worshipped; and because they did not worship him, and knew not how to do it, it was resented in this manner by him.

{n} jpvm "judicium", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

2 Kings 17:27

Ver. 27. Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying,.... Gave the following orders and directions:

carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; for they carried away all the people of every class, civil and religious:

and let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land; it is in the plural number, "let them go", &c. {o}; there might be more priests than one ordered, or, however, others, to attend and assist him in his work; the Jews say {p}, two were sent to circumcise them, and teach them the book of the law; and they give their names, Dosthai, or Dositheaus, and Zachariah; and Josephus {q} says, the people desired that priests might be sent to them of the captives.

{o} wbvyw wkly "eant et sedeant", Montanus. {p} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. {q} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 14. sect. 3.

2 Kings 17:28

Ver. 28. Then one of the priests whom, they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel,.... According to an Arabic writer {r}, his name was Uzziah; but Epiphanius {s} says his name was Esdras; but he wrongly makes him to be sent by Nebuchadnezzar, thirty years after the captivity of the Jews in Babylon: this priest was, doubtless, one of the priests of the calves; for there were none else in the kingdom of Israel carried captive, and as seems also by his choosing to dwell in Bethel, where probably he formerly dwelt, and officiated in the service of the calf there, and by teaching to make priests of the lowest order of the people, as Jeroboam's priests were, 2Ki 17:32

and taught them how they should fear the Lord; serve and worship him; he might not teach them the worship of the calves, that being a political business, and now no end to be answered by it; and besides, they were now carried out of the land. This priest taught, no doubt, according to the law of Moses, but was not the author of the Pentateuch; which ridiculous conceit of Le Clerc is sufficiently exposed by Witsius {t}.

{r} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 3. p. 65. {s} Contr. Haeres. l. 1. Haer. 8. {t} Miscellan. tom. 1. l. 1. c. 14. sect. 7. 28.

2 Kings 17:29

Ver. 29. Howbeit, every nation made gods of their own,.... Served and worshipped those they brought with them, and which were the work of their own hands, even the nations, or those out of the nations, mentioned 2Ki 17:24 these, notwithstanding the instructions they had about the worship of the God of Israel, retained and served their own deities: and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt; as the Israelites had built high places everywhere for idolatry, and put images in them, 2Ki 17:9 these Heathens placed their gods there in the room of them, which were as follow.

2 Kings 17:30

Ver. 30. And the men of Babylon made Succothbenoth,.... That is, those that came from Babylon made and served an idol of this name, which, according to the Jewish writers {u}, were the figures of an hen and chickens; but others suppose them to be the Pleiades, or seven stars, the stars being had in great veneration by the Babylonians; though others rather think those Succothbenoth, "tabernacles", or "booths of the daughters", as the words may be rendered, have respect to the apartments in the temple of Venus, or Mylitta with the Babylonians and Assyrians, in which women once in their lives prostituted themselves to whomsoever asked them, in honour of Venus; of which filthy practice of theirs Herodotus {w} makes mention; and Valerius Maximus speaks {x} of a temple of Sicca Venus, which is near in sound to this, where the like impurities were committed:

and the men of Cuth made Nergal; which, according to the Jews, was in the likeness of a cock; but others, because the first part of the word signifies a lamp, suppose fire is meant, worshipped by the Persians, from whom it is thought these men came; but rather the word signifies, as Hillerus {y} observes, the fountain of light, and denotes the sun, worshipped by the Babylonians, Cuth being a province of theirs; from hence one of the princes of Babylon had part of his name, Jer 39:3

and the men of Hamath made Ashima; which, the Jews say, was in the form of a goat, without any wool on it, or an ape {z}; but according to Hillerus {a}, with the Arabs, Ashima is the name of a lion, a symbol of the sun, under which form it might be worshipped; unless Ashima is the same with Shamaim, the heavens, worshipped by the Heathens; we read of the Ashemath of Samaria, by which they swore, **Am 8:14**, though that was before these men came thither.

{u} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 63. 2. {w} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 199. {x} L. 2. c. 6. sect. 15. {y} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 601. {z} David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 17. 2. {a} Onomast. Sacr. p. 609.

2 Kings 17:31

Ver. 31. And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak,.... The former of which is represented by the Jews in the shape of a dog, deriving the word from "nabach", to bark, as if it was the same with the Anubis Latrator of Virgil {b}, an Egyptian deity; though that is said {c} to have its name from NOeb, which in the Egyptian language signifies "gold", the statutes of it being made of gold; and the latter in the form of an ass, for what reason I cannot say; but the first word, according to Hillerus {d}, signifies, "the remote one seeth", that is, the sun, which beholds all things; and Tartak is a chain, and may denote the fixed stars chained as it were in their places; or the satellites of the planets, chained to their orbs:

and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and to Anammelech the gods of Sepharvaim; which were the same with Moloch; which may be concluded, partly from the worship paid them, and partly from the signification of their names; both end with "melech", king, which Moloch also signifies; the first may be interpreted the mighty king, and the latter the king that answers in an oracular way; from the first, one of the sons of Sennacherib king of Assyria had his name, Isa 37:36, though the Jews, according to their fancy, represent the one in the likeness of a mule, and the other in the likeness of a horse; and some make the one to be a peacock, and the other a pheasant {e}; the Septuagint version puts the article before them in the feminine gender, excepting the two last, taking them for she deities, or leaving the word eikona, "images", to be understood.

{b} Aeneid. l. 6. So Ovid. Metamorph. l. 9. Fab. 12. ver. 689. {c} Jablonski apud Michael. Obs. Sacr. Exercit. 4. p. 66, 67. {d} Ut supra, (Onomast. Sacr.) p. 859. {e} Vid. Kimchium in loc.

2 Kings 17:32

Ver. 32. So they feared the Lord,.... Worshipped the God of Israel in the manner they were taught:

and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places; these were made after the manner of Jeroboam's priests, 1Ki 12:31, and were to sacrifice to the God of Israel in the high places, and temples built there; for otherwise they had, no doubt, priests of their own to sacrifice to their gods, and which they brought with them.

2 Kings 17:33

Ver. 33. They feared the Lord, and served their own gods,.... Worshipped both:

after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence; the Israelites, whom they had carried captive from Samaria; they worshipped the Lord in their idols, as they did, who pretended to worship God in the calves; so they worshipped the supreme God in and by their idols, and made use of them as mediators with him.

2 Kings 17:34

Ver. 34. Unto this day they do after the former manners,.... Which may be understood either of the new colonies in Samaria doing after the former customs in their own land, or after the customs of the idolatrous Israelites; or of the Israelites in captivity continuing in their idolatry, not being in the least reformed by their troubles; or of such of them as were left in the land, who repented not of their idolatries, nor reformed from them:

they fear not the Lord; did not worship him, at least not alone, and much less in a spiritual manner, with reverence and godly fear:

neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the Lord commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel; that is, they did not observe the statutes and ordinances of the law given on Mount Sinai respecting religious worship, to act according to them.

2 Kings 17:35

Ver. 35. With whom the Lord had made a covenant,.... As he did at Sinai, 2Ki 17:15

and charged them, saying, ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them; all which is contained in the first and second commandments of the law.

2 Kings 17:36

Ver. 36. But the Lord, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt, with a great power, and a stretched out arm,.... Which is observed, to show the obligations they lay under, in point of gratitude, to serve the Lord:

him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice: and him only, and not other gods; none but he being the object of religious fear and divine worship, and to whom sacrifices should be offered.

2 Kings 17:37

Ver. 37. And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment which he wrote for you,.... On the two tables of stone:

ye shall observe to do for evermore; those commands relating to religious worship, especially the object of it, and to moral duties, being of eternal obligation; and all other statutes and ordinances of a ceremonial kind he ordered to be written for them, being such that they were to regard until the Messiah came, and a new world began:

and ye shall not fear other gods; which is repeated, that it might be observed, as it also afterwards is.

2 Kings 17:38

Ver. 38. And the covenant that I have made with you, ye shall not forget,.... The law given at Mount Sinai; the first table of which chiefly concerned the worship of the one true and living God, and forbid the worship of any other, as follows:

neither shall ye fear other gods; or make them the object of worship.

2 Kings 17:39

Ver. 39. But the Lord your God ye shall fear,.... Or worship him, both internally and externally, according to his revealed will; for the fear of God includes both internal and external worship:

and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies; that is, provided they feared and served him as he required, and it became them to do.

2 Kings 17:40

Ver. 40. Howbeit, they did not hearken, but did after their former manner. They did not repent of their idolatries, but persisted in them, and even when they were in captivity in Assyria, or such of them as were left in the land.

2 Kings 17:41

Ver. 41. So these nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images,.... Just in like manner as the Israelites had done, who served the Lord and the calves, and worshipped God and Baal:

both their children, and their children's children; that is, the children and children's children of the Samaritans:

as did their fathers, so do they unto this day; to the writing of this book, which some ascribe to Jeremiah, to whose times, and even longer, they continued this mixed and mongrel worship, for the space of three hundred years, to the times of Alexander the great, of whom Sanballat, governor of Samaria, got leave to build a temple, on Gerizim, for his son-in-law Manasseh, of which he became priest; and the Samaritans were prevailed upon to relinquish their idolatry, and to worship only the God of Israel; and yet it seems but ignorantly, and not without superstition, to the times of Christ, **Joh 4:22**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 18

This chapter begins with the good reign of Hezekiah king of Judah, the reformation he made in the kingdom, and the prosperity that attended him when Israel was carried captive, 2Ki 18:1 and gives an account of the siege of Jerusalem by the king of Assyria, and of the distress Hezekiah was in, and the hard measures he was obliged to submit unto, 2Ki 18:13 and of the reviling and blasphemous speech of Rabshakeh, one of the generals of the king of Assyria, urging the Jews to a revolt from their king, 2Ki 18:19.

Ver. 1. Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel,.... That is, in the third year of his rebelling against the king of Assyria, when he shook off his yoke, and refused to be tributary to him any longer, see 2Ki 17:1,

[that] Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign; having finished the account of the kingdom of Israel, and the captivity of the people, the historian returns to the kingdom of Judah, and the things of it.

2 Kings 18:2

Ver. 2. Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign,.... Now as Ahaz his father began to reign at twenty, and reigned sixteen, he must die at thirty six; so that this son of his must be born to him when at eleven years of age, for only so many years there be between twenty five and thirty six, which may seem wonderful; but, as Grotius observes, Hezekiah had now entered into the twenty fifth year, and he might be just turned of twenty four, and so his father might be twelve years of age at his birth: besides, as it is usual for the divine historian to take away or add the incomplete years of kings, Ahaz might be near twenty one when he began to reign, and might reign almost seventeen, which makes the age of Ahaz to be about thirty eight; and Hezekiah being but little more than twenty four, at his death there were thirteen or near fourteen years difference in their age, and which was an age that need not be thought incredible for begetting of children. Bochart {f} and others {g} have given many instances of children begotten by persons under that age, even at ten years of age {h}: four years after his birth, the famous city of Rome began to be founded {i}, A. M. 3256, and before Christ 748, as commonly received, though it is highly probable it was of a more early date; according to Dionysius Halicarnassensis, it was founded in the first year of the seventh Olympaid, in the times of Ahaz, A. M. 3118 {k}:

and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem; so that he reigned twenty three years or more after the captivity of the ten tribes:

his mother's name also was Abi the daughter of Zachariah; perhaps the daughter of the same that was taken by Isaiah for a witness, **Isa 8:3** who very probably was a very good woman, and took care to give her son a religious education, though he had so wicked a father.

{f} Ep. Carbonell. tom. 1. oper. p. 920. {g} Vid. Hieronymi Opera, tam. 3. Ep.

Vital. fol. 25. C. {h} T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 44. 1. {i} Usser. Annal. p. 86, 87. {k} Vid. Breithaupt. Not. in Hist. Gorion. Heb. l. 5. c. 1.

2 Kings 18:3

Ver. 3. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did. Some of the kings of Judah, that were better than some others, are said to do that which was right, but not like David; or they did as he did, but not according to all that he did, as is here said of Hezekiah.

2 Kings 18:4

Ver. 4. He removed the high places,.... Which the best of the kings of Judah never attempted, and which is observed of them to their discredit:

and broke the images, and cut down the groves; the idols his father set up and served, 2Ki 16:4, groves and idols in them, were early instances of idolatry; See Gill on "Jud 3:7", and their use for temples are still continued, not only among some Indian nations {l}, but among some Christians in the northern parts of Europe {m};

and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made; which he made in the wilderness, and which was brought by the children of Israel with them into the land of Canaan, and was kept as a memorial of the miracle wrought by looking to it, being laid up in some proper place where it had been preserved to this day:

for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it not from the time it was brought into Canaan, nor even in later times, in the days of Asa and Jehoshaphat, who would never have suffered it; very probably this piece of idolatry began in the times of Ahaz, who encouraged everything of that kind: for this serpent they had a great veneration, being made by Moses, and a means in his time of healing the Israelites; and they imagined it might be of some service to them, in a way of mediation to God; and worthy of worship, having some degree of divinity, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom; but Laniado {n} excuses them from all show of idolatry, and supposes what they did was for the honour of God only; hence sprung the heresy of the Ophites, according to Theodoret:

and he called it Nehushtan; perceiving they were ensnared by it, and drawn into idolatry to it, by way of contempt he called it by this name, which signifies "brass"; suggesting that it was only a mere piece of brass, had no divinity in it, and could be of no service to them in divine things; and, that it might no longer be a snare to them, he broke it into pieces; and, as the Jews {o} say, ground it to powder, and scattered it to every wind, that there might be no remains of it.

{l} See Dampier's Voyage, vol. 1. p. 411. {m} Vid. Fabritii Bibliograph. Antiqu. c. 9. sect. 11. {n} Cli Yaker, fol. 538. 2. {o} T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 44. 1.

2 Kings 18:5

Ver. 5. He trusted in the Lord God of Israel,.... To be his protector and defender, and had no dependence on idols as an arm of flesh; the Targum is, he trusted in the Word of the Lord God; not in Nehushtan, but in him the brasen serpent was a type of, even in the Word and Son of God, his alone Saviour and Redeemer:

so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah: for though Josiah was like him in some things, yet not in all:

nor any that were before him; from the times of the division of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah; and Ben Gersom and Abarbinel think that David and Solomon are not to be excepted; David sinning in the case of Uriah, and Solomon falling into idolatry, crimes that Hezekiah was not guilty of.

2 Kings 18:6

Ver. 6. For he clave to the Lord,.... To his worship and service; to the fear of the Lord, as the Targum:

and departed not from following him; from his worship, as the same paraphrase:

but kept his commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses; both moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

2 Kings 18:7

Ver. 7. And the Lord was with him,.... The Word of the Lord was for his help, as the Targum:

and he prospered whithersoever he went forth; that is, to war:

and he rebelled against the king of Assyria: which is explained in the next clause:

and served him not; he refused to be his servant, as his father Ahaz had been, 2Ki 16:7, to which he was not obliged by any agreement of his; and, if it was in his power, might lawfully shake off his yoke, which is all that is meant by rebelling against him; he refused to be tributary to him.

2 Kings 18:8

Ver. 8. He smote the Philistines even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof,.... Who in his father's time had invaded Judah, and taken many cities and towns in it, which Hezekiah now recovered, and drove them to their own territories, of which Gaza was one; see 2Ch 28:18

from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city; that is, places both great and small, cities, towns, and villages; of this phrase, see 2Ki 17:9.

2 Kings 18:9

Ver. 9. And it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah,.... In the beginning of it:

which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel: the beginning of his seventh:

that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it; see 2Ki 17:5.

2 Kings 18:10

Ver. 10. And at the end of three years they took it,.... That is, at the first end of them, at the beginning, in which sense the phrase is taken in De 15:1, even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is, the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken: see
2Ki 17:6.

2 Kings 18:11

Ver. 11. And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria,.... Of the places he disposed of them in, after mentioned,
See Gill on "2Ki 17:6".

2 Kings 18:12

Ver. 12. Because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord,.... In his law, and by his prophets:

but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded; which evils are at large insisted on in the preceding chapter as the cause of their captivity:

and would not hear them, nor do them; contrary to the agreement of their fathers at Sinai, who promised to do both, Ex 24:3.

2 Kings 18:13

Ver. 13. Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah,.... Eight years after the captivity of Israel:

did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them; many of them, the frontier towns, and proceeded as far as Lachish; ambitious of enlarging his dominions, his father having subdued the kingdom of Israel, and being also provoked by Hezekiah's refusing to pay him tribute. Mention is made of this king by name, by Herodotus and other Heathen writers, see the note on Isa 36:1 in the Apocryha:

"Now when Enemessar was dead, Sennacherib his son reigned in his stead; whose estate was troubled, that I could not go into Media." (Tobit 1:15)

he is called Sennacherib, and is said to be son of Enemassat, that is, Shalmaneser; however, he succeeded him in his kingdom; though some {o} take him to be the same with Shalmaneser: he is said by Metasthenes {p} to reign seven years, and was succeeded by Assaradon, who, according to him, reigned ten years.

{o} Lud. Vives in Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 18. c. 24. {p} De Judicio Temp. fol. 221. 2.

2 Kings 18:14

Ver. 14. And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish,.... A city in the tribe of Judah, about twenty miles from Jerusalem, towards the southwest {q}; which the king of Assyria was now besieging, 2Ch 32:9 at first Hezekiah made provision to defend himself, and encouraged his people not to be afraid of the king of Assyria, 2Ch 32:1, but understanding he had taken his fortified cities, and made such progress with his arms, he was disheartened, and sent an embassy to him to sue for peace; judging it more advisable to buy it than to expose his capital to a siege; in which he betrayed much weakness and distrust of the power and providence of God:

saying, I have offended; not the Lord, but the king of Assyria by rebelling against him, or refusing to pay the yearly tribute to him; he owned he had acted imprudently, and had given him, just occasion to invade his land:

return from me; from his land, from proceeding to Jerusalem, which he seemed to have a design upon, and go back to his own country with his army, and make no further conquests:

that which thou puttest on me I will bear; what mulct or fine he should lay upon him, or tribute he should impose upon him, or whatever he should demand of him, he would submit to:

and the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold; to be paid to him directly; which, according to Brerewood {r}, amounted to 247,500 pounds.

{q} Bunting's Travels, &c. p. 99. {r} De Ponder. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 5.

2 Kings 18:15

Ver. 15. And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house. To make up the three hundred talents of silver, for which purpose he exhausted both, which had been done more than once before by the kings of Judah; these were their resources in times of distress; see 2Ki 12:18.

2 Kings 18:16

Ver. 16. At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord,.... The plates of gold with which they were covered; or scraped off the gold from them, as the Targum interprets it:

and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid: or the posts, as the Targum, the lintel or side posts of the doors of the temple; which though covered in Solomon's time, the gold was worn off, or had been taken off by Ahaz, but was renewed by Hezekiah; and who, in this time of distress, thought he might take it off again, no doubt with a full purpose to replace it, when he should be able. This is one of the three things the Talmudic writers {s} disapprove of in Hezekiah:

and gave it to the king of Assyria; to make up the thirty talents of gold he demanded.

{s} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 10. 2.

2 Kings 18:17

Ver. 17. And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris, and Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem,.... Notwithstanding he took the above large sum of money of him, so false and deceitful was he: these were three generals of his army, whom he sent to besiege Jerusalem, while he continued the siege of Lachish; only Rabshakeh is mentioned in Isa 36:2 he being perhaps chief general, and the principal speaker; whose speech, to the end of this chapter, intended to intimidate

Hezekiah, and dishearten his people, with some circumstances which attended it, are recorded word for word in Isa 36:1 throughout;
See Gill on "Isa 36:1" and notes on that chapter.

2 Kings 18:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

2 Kings 18:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "2Ki 18:17"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 19

This chapter relates that King Hezekiah, on a report made to him of Rabshakeh's speech, sent a message to the prophet Isaiah to pray for him, who returned him a comfortable and encouraging answer, 2Ki 19:1 and that upon Rabshakeh's return to the king of Assyria, he sent to Hezekiah a terrifying letter, 2Ki 19:8, which Hezekiah spread before the Lord, and prayed unto him to save him and his people out of the hands of the king of Assyria, 2Ki 19:14, to which he had a gracious answer sent him by the prophet Isaiah, promising him deliverance from the Assyrian army, 2Ki 19:20, which accordingly was destroyed by an angel in one night, and Sennacherib fleeing to Nineveh, was slain by his two sons, 2Ki 19:35.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when King Hezekiah heard it,.... The report of Rabshakeh's speech, recorded in the preceding chapter, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth; rent his clothes because of the blasphemy in the speech; and he put on sackcloth, in token of mourning, for the calamities he feared were coming on him and his people: and he went into the house of the Lord; the temple, to pray unto him. The message he sent to Isaiah, with his answer, and the threatening letter of the king of Assyria, Hezekiah's prayer upon it, and the encouraging answer he had from the Lord, with the account of the destruction of the Assyrian army, and the death of Sennacherib, are the same "verbatim" as in Isa 37:1 throughout; and therefore the reader is referred thither for the exposition of them; only would add what Rauwolff {t} observes, that still to this day (1575) there are two great holes to be seen, wherein they flung the dead bodies (of the Assyrian army), one whereof is close by the road towards Bethlehem, the other towards the right hand against old Bethel.

{t} Travels, par. 3. ch. 22. p. 317.

2 Kings 19:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

2 Kings 19:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "2Ki 19:1"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 20

In this chapter is an account of Hezekiah's sickness, and of the means of his recovery, and of the sign given of it, 2Ki 20:1 of the king of Babylon's congratulatory letter to him upon it, when he showed to the messengers that brought it his treasures, in the pride and vanity of his heart, 2Ki 20:12 for which he was reproved by the prophet Isaiah, and was humbled, and submitted to the sentence pronounced on his house, 2Ki 20:14, and the chapter is concluded with his reign and death, 2Ki 20:20.

Ver. 1-3. In these days was Hezekiah sick unto death,.... Of this sickness of Hezekiah, the message of the prophet Isaiah to him, and his prayer upon it,
See Gill on "Isa 38:1",
See Gill on "Isa 38:2",
See Gill on "Isa 38:3".

2 Kings 20:2

Ver. 2 See Gill on "2Ki 20:1"

2 Kings 20:3

Ver. 3 See Gill on "2Ki 20:1"

2 Kings 20:4

Ver. 4. And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court,.... Of the king's palace, which is called the other court within the porch, **1Ki 7:8** so it is according to the marginal reading, which we follow; but the textual reading is, "the middle city"; Jerusalem was divided into three parts, and this was the middle part Isaiah was entering into: but before he did, so it was,

[that] the word of the Lord came to him, saying; as follows.

2 Kings 20:5

Ver. 5. Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people,.... The king of them, as the Targum:

thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; See Gill on "Isa 38:5" behold, I will heal thee; instantly, miraculously; and none but God could heal him, his disease being in its kind mortal, and he had been told from the Lord that he should die:

on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord: the temple, to give thanks for his recovery; and this he should do on the third day from thence; so soon should he be well, which would show the cure to be miraculous.

2 Kings 20:6

Ver. 6. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years,....
See Gill on "Isa 38:5"

and I will deliver thee, and this city, out of the hand of the king of Assyria; by which it appears that this sickness and recovery were before the destruction of the Assyrian army:

and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake: for the sake of his honour and glory in the temple, and the service of it, that were in Jerusalem, and for the sake of his promise to David and his seed.

2 Kings 20:7

Ver. 7. And Isaiah said, take a lump of figs,.... Not moist figs, but a cake of dried figs, as the word used signifies, and so the less likely to have any effect in curing the boil:

and they took, and laid it on the boil, and he recovered; made a plaster of it, and laid it on the ulcer, and it was healed. Physicians observe {u}, that as such like inflammations consist in a painful extension of the fibres by the hinderance of the circulation of the blood, through the extreme little arteries, which may be mitigated, or dissipated, or ripened, by such things as are emollient and loosening, so consequently by figs; and, in a time of pestilence, figs beaten together with butter and treacle have been applied to plague of boils with great success; yet these figs being only a cake of dry figs, and, the boil not only malignant, but deadly, and the cure so suddenly performed, show that this was done not in a natural, but in a supernatural way, though means were directed to be made use of.

{u} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 620. Vid. Levin. Lemnii Herb. Bibl. Explicat. c. 19. p. 60.

2 Kings 20:8

Ver. 8. And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah,.... Or "had said", {w} before the plaster of figs was directed to, or, however, laid on, and as soon as he was told he should be healed:

what shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day? not that he disbelieved the promise of God, or doubted of a cure, but this he requested for the confirmation of his faith; which good men sometimes asked, when they doubted not, as Gideon; and Ahaz, Hezekiah's father, was bid to ask a sign for the like purpose, and it was resented in him that he did not, see **Jud 6:17**.

{w} rmayw "dixerat autem", V. L. Vatablus.

2 Kings 20:9

Ver. 9. And Isaiah said, this sign shalt thou have of the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that he hath spoken,.... Cure him of his disorder, so that he should be able to go to the temple on the third day:

shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? that is, the shadow of the sun on a dial plate; it was left to his option to choose which he would, as the confirming sign of his recovery.

2 Kings 20:10

Ver. 10. And Hezekiah answered, it is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees,.... That is, it was comparatively so, otherwise to go down ten degrees at once would be extraordinary and miraculous; but that was more agreeable to the nature and course of it to go forward, and so the miracle would be less apparent:

nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees; which was directly contrary to its natural order and course, whereby the miracle would appear more clear and manifest: these degrees are by some said {x} to be half hours, and not full ones, since it is observed the sun shines not twenty full hours on any dial, unless under the pole; the sun is supposed to have been now at the fifth full hour; the sun was brought back five whole hours, then came forward five, then came forward two degrees, or one hour, to the sixth hour; which made sixteen; then it was six hours to sunset; so that day was prolonged twenty two hours: the Chinese {y} relate, that, in the time of Kingcungus, the planet Mars, for sake of the king, went back three degrees.

{x} Weemse's Christ. Synagog. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 6. p. 167. See his Exposition of the Judicial Laws, c. 25. p. 90. &c. {y} Martin. Sinic. Hist. l. 4. p. 138.

2 Kings 20:11

Ver. 11. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord,.... Or prayed, as the Targum; and was very earnest in prayer, that what Hezekiah had desired might be granted:

and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz; Ben Gersom understands it not of the sun itself, but of the shadow of it only; See Gill on "Isa 38:8".

2 Kings 20:12

Ver. 12. At that time Berodachbaladan,.... He is called Merodachbaladan, Isa 39:1, so here in the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; See Gill on "Isa 39:1"; and by Metasthenes {z} his father is called Merodach, and he Ben Merodach, who reigned twenty one years, and his father fifty two; from hence to the end of 2Ki 20:12 the same account is given in the same words as in Isa 39:1 throughout, except in 2Ki 20:13, where it is, "hearkened unto them", and there, "glad of them"; heard the letter the ambassadors brought with pleasure; see the notes there. See Gill on "Isa 39:1" and following.

{z} Ut supra. (De Judicio Temp. fol. 221. 2.)

2 Kings 20:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "2Ki 20:12"

2 Kings 20:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "2Ki 20:12"

2 Kings 20:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "2Ki 20:12"

2 Kings 20:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "2Ki 20:12"

2 Kings 20:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "2Ki 20:12"

2 Kings 20:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "2Ki 20:12"

2 Kings 20:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "2Ki 20:12"

2 Kings 20:20

Ver. 20. And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might,.... Which he exerted in his wars with his enemies, and in the reformation of religion, and abolition of idolatry:

and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city; at the

same time that he cut it off from the enemy without, see
2Ch 32:3,

are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? a book often referred to in this history, but since lost; many of his acts are recorded in the canonical book of Chronicles, 2Ch 29:1.

2 Kings 20:21

Ver. 21. And Hezekiah slept with his fathers,.... Died, as they did; no mention is here made of the place of his burial, but there is in
2Ch 32:33 where he is said to be buried in the principal part of the sepulchres of the sons of David, and to have honour done him at his death by the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, by the vast concourse of people attending his interment, and by burning spices for him, and making a public mourning on his account a certain stated time:

and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead; of whose wicked reign an account is given in the next chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 21

In this chapter a short history is given of the two wicked reigns of Manasseh and Amon; Manasseh is charged with great idolatry, with enchantments and witchcrafts, and seducing the children of Israel, 2Ki 21:1 and a prophecy is given out of the destruction of Jerusalem for his sins, 2Ki 21:10, and an account is given of his death and burial, 2Ki 21:17, and of his son and successor Amon, and the evils committed by him, 2Ki 21:19 and of the conspiracy against his life, which succeeded, and Josiah his son reigned in his stead, 2Ki 21:23.

Ver. 1. Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign,.... So that he was born three years after Hezekiah's recovery from his sickness, and in the seventeenth year of his reign:

and reigned fifty five years in Jerusalem: among which must be reckoned the time of his captivity in Babylon; his reign was the longest of any of the kings of Judah: and his mother's name was Hephzibah; the name the church goes by, and signifies, "my delight or pleasure is in her", Isa 62:4, no doubt she was a good woman, or Hezekiah would not have made choice of her for a wife; it is a tradition of the Jews {a}, that she was the daughter of Isaiah, whose name, they say, is not mentioned, because so wicked a king was unworthy of such a grandfather.

{a} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Paralipom. fol. 86. F.

2 Kings 21:2

Ver. 2. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,.... Was guilty of idolatry:

after the abomination of the Heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel: the old Canaanites; he committed idolatry in imitation of them, and as the Phoenicians now did before the children of Israel: the old Canaanites; he committed idolatry in imitation of them, and as the Phoenicians now did.

2 Kings 21:3

Ver. 3. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed,.... The temples and altars upon them, see
2Ki 18:4,

and he reared up altars for Baal; in the high places he rebuilt:

and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel: which was either an idol itself, or a shade of trees where idols were placed; or rather Asherah, rendered "a grove", is the same with Astarte, the goddess of the Zidonians, the figure of which he made and worshipped; for groves were not so soon and easily planted, raised, and made; so the same in
1Ki 16:33

and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them: the sun, moon, and stars, particularly the planets Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, and Venus.

2 Kings 21:4

Ver. 4. And he built altars in the house of the Lord,.... In the holy place, as distinct from the courts in the next verse; and these were sacred to the idols of the Gentiles:

of which the Lord said, in Jerusalem will I put my name; in the temple there, devoted to his service, called by his name, and where his name was called upon, see De 12:5 and to erect altars to idols here must be very abominable to him.

2 Kings 21:5

Ver. 5. And he built altars for all the host of heaven,.... Sun, moon, and stars:

in the two courts of the house of the Lord; in the court of the priests, and in the court of the people; and all this must be supposed to be done, not as soon as he began to reign, but when he was grown up to man's estate, and had children, as the next verse shows; unless it can be thought that those nobles in Judah, who liked not the reformation made by Hezekiah, took the advantage of his youth, and advised him to these idolatries.

2 Kings 21:6

Ver. 6. And he made his son pass through the fire,.... To Molech, after the manner of the old Canaanites and Phoenicians; his son Amon, that succeeded him, and other children, as appears from 2Ch 33:6, where mention is made of the place where it was done, the valley of the son of Hinnom:

and observed times; lucky or unlucky, which was judged of by omens, and by the position of the stars:

and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards; to get knowledge of things to come; all which are forbid and condemned by the law of Moses; see De 18:10,

he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger; in all those evils before mentioned, which were very abominable in the sight of

God.

2 Kings 21:7

Ver. 7 And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house,.... Which was either an image that had been placed in a grove planted by him, and now removed into the house or temple of the Lord; or, as some think, this was a representation of a grove, a carved grove of gold or silver, in the midst of which an image was placed in the temple; though what Selden observes {b}, seems best of all, that this was an image of Asherah, as in the original text; that is, of Astarte or Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, 1Ki 11:5, the same the Phoenicians are said to call Astroarche, and affirm it to be the moon {c}: in 2Ch 33:7 it is called a carved image the idol he had made; and an Arabic writer {d} says, it had four faces, which seems to be a figure of the cherubim; but, according to Suidas {e}, it was the statue of Jupiter, who also says it had four faces:

of which the Lord said to David, and to Solomon his son: that is, of which house or temple:

in this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name forever; see **1Ki 8:29**
See Gill on "2Ki 21:3".

{b} De Dis Syris, Syntagm. 2. c. 2. p. 233. {c} Herodian. l. 5. c. 15. {d} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 3. p. 66. {e} In voce manasshva.

2 Kings 21:8

Ver. 8. Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers,.... Or suffer them to be carried captive into another land, as in the times of the judges; that is, on the following condition:

only if they will observe to do according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them by obedience to which they had the tenure of the land of Canaan, **Isa 1:19**.

2 Kings 21:9

Ver. 9. But they hearkened not,.... To the voice of God in his law by Moses, and were not obedient to it:

and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel: he set up more idols, and drew the people into more and greater idolatries, than the old Canaanites; and these were the more aggravated by having a law given to them, and prophets sent to instruct them in it, and by the benefits and blessings bestowed upon them by the lawgiver, which laid them under greater obligations to him; see **Jer 2:11**.

2 Kings 21:10

Ver. 10. And the Lord spake by his servants the prophets,.... Who prophesied in the days of Manasseh; and were, according to the Jewish chronology {f}, Joel, Nahum, and Habakkuk:

saying: as follows.

{f} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 55.

2 Kings 21:11

Ver. 11. Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations,.... Before named, 2Ki 21:3,

and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did that were before him; one of the seven nations of Canaan, a principal of them, and which is put for all the rest:

and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: the worship of them, as the Targum; which he did both by his edicts, and by his example.

2 Kings 21:12

Ver. 12. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel,.... Who, though kind and gracious to Israel as their covenant God, is yet just and righteous, as well as he is a sovereign Being and Lord of all:

behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle; it will make such a noise in the world, and be so horrible and terrible; and if, he report of it would be so dreadful as to make a man's ears tingle, and his heart tremble, what must it be to endure it! Eze 22:14.

2 Kings 21:13

Ver. 13. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria,.... The Targum is, the line of destruction; and the sense is, that the same measure should be measured to Jerusalem as was to Samaria; that is, the same lot and portion should befall one as the other, that is, be utterly destroyed:

and the plummet of the house of Ahab; the Targum is, the weight or plummet of tribulation; signifying, that the same calamities should come upon the families of Jerusalem, and especially on the family of Manasseh as came upon the family of Ahab. It is a metaphor from builders that take down as well as raise up buildings by rule and measure, see **2Sa 8:2**

and I will wipe Jerusalem, as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down; as when one takes a dish or cup that has broth in it, or any liquid, as oil; and the Septuagint render it alabaster, in which ointment used to be put; and wipes it clean, that nothing may appear in it; and then turns it with its mouth downward, that, if any thing should remain, it might drain out; signifying hereby the emptying o Jerusalem of its palaces and houses, wealth and riches and of all its inhabitants; and yet the empty dish being preserved, seems to denote the restoration of Jerusalem after the seventy years' captivity. According to the Vulgate Latin version, the metaphor is taken from the blotting out of writing tables, and turning and rubbing the style upon them till the writing is no more seen.

2 Kings 21:14

Ver. 14. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance,.... The whole land of Canaan was the Lord's inheritance; ten tribes in it were already removed, only Judah with Benjamin was left, and the Lord threatens to forsake that remnant:

and deliver them into the hands of their enemies, and they shall become a prey and spoil to all their enemies; which was fulfilled in their captivity in Babylon.

2 Kings 21:15

Ver. 15. Because they have done that which was evil in my sight,.... Committed idolatry:

and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even to this day; being always prone to idolatry, so provoking to God, and which they were guilty of quickly after they came out of Egypt, in the worship of the golden calf, and had ever since at times been criminal this way; and now the measure of their iniquity being almost up, would be reckoned for together.

2 Kings 21:16

Ver. 16. Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood very much,.... Putting to death the prophets that reproved him and his people for their idolatries, and such who would not comply therewith; and it is commonly said, both by Jewish and Christian writers, that Isaiah was slain, and even sawn asunder by him, See Gill on "Heb 11:37",

till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; a metaphor taken from filling a vessel brimful:

beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; the sin of idolatry he drew them into, and even obliged them to commit.

2 Kings 21:17

Ver. 17. Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh and all that he did,.... Both good and bad, for he repented, and was humbled, and did many good things afterwards, though not recorded in this book:

and his sin that he sinned; his idolatry:

are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? in which were recorded the most memorable events of their reigns; and in the canonical book of Chronicles are many things concerning Manasseh, which are not written here; see 2Ch 33:11.

2 Kings 21:18

Ver. 18. And Manasseh slept with his fathers,....] Or died, after a reign of fifty five years, and a life of sixty seven:

and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza; whether the burial of him here was his own choice, judging himself unworthy to lie with the kings of Judah, who had been guilty of such great sins, or whether the will of others, on the same account, is not certain; and as much at a loss are we for the reason of this garden being called the garden of Uzza, whether from Uzzah that died for touching the ark, **2Sa 6:6** or from King Uzziah, 2Ki 15:7. The Jews buried in gardens in the times of Christ, who himself was buried in one, Joh 19:41. The Romans had sometimes sepulchres in their gardens {g}, Galba the emperor was buried in his gardens {h}; and so had other nations. Cyrus king of Persia was buried in a garden {i}:

and Amon his son reigned in his stead; of whom we have the following account.

{g} Vid. Kirchman. de Funer. Romas. l. 2. c. 22. p. 274. {h} Eutrop. Hist. Roman. l. 7. Sueton. Vit. Galb. c. 20. Tacit. Hist. l. 1. c. 49. {i} Strabo. Geograph l. 15. p. 502.

2 Kings 21:19

Ver. 19. And Amon was twenty two years old when he began to reign,.... Being born in the forty fifth of his father's life, and in the thirty third of his reign:

and he reigned two years in Jerusalem; which, as Abarbinel observes, was the usual time the sons of wicked kings reigned, and instances in the son of Jeroboam, Baasha, and Ahab, 1Ki 15:25. An Arabic writer {k} says, he reigned twelve years, but according to the Jews only two:

and his mother's name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah; there was a place called Jotbath, which was one of the stations of the children of Israel in the wilderness, Nu 33:33 but it can scarcely be thought to be the same place.

{k} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 3. p. 67.

2 Kings 21:20

Ver. 20. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,.... Committed idolatry:

as his father Manasseh did: he imitated him in that, but not in his repentance and humiliation, 2Ch 33:23.

2 Kings 21:21

Ver. 21. And he walked in all the ways that his father walked in,.... In his wicked way, his idolatry, witchcraft, and murders;

and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them; Baal, Ashtoreth, and all the host of heaven, and all the carved images his father made, which it seems he only removed, but did not break in pieces, 2Ch 33:22.

2 Kings 21:22

Ver. 22. And he forsook the Lord God of his fathers,.... Of David, Solomon, &c.

and walked not in the way of the Lord; prescribed by him in his law for the worship of him.

2 Kings 21:23

Ver. 23. And the servants of Amon conspired against him,.... Some of his domestic servants, and perhaps his courtiers, not on account of his idolatry, but for some ill usage of them:

and slew the king in his own house: which they had an opportunity to do, being his servants.

2 Kings 21:24

Ver. 24. And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against King Amon,.... On occasion of his death, there seems to have been an insurrection of the people in a body, to avenge the death of their king, who might be beloved on account of his idolatry, so depraved was the nation; or it may be only to avenge his death because he was their king, whose life these men ought not to have taken away: and the rather this may be thought to be the reason by what follows,

and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead; who had been prophesied of by name above three hundred years before, see
1Ki 13:2.

2 Kings 21:25

Ver. 25. Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?]
See Gill on "2Ki 21:17".

2 Kings 21:26

Ver. 26. And he was buried in his sepulchre, in the garden of Uzza,.... Where his father Manasseh was buried, 2Ki 21:18,

and Josiah his son reigned in his stead; of whom many things are said in the two following chapters.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 22

This chapter begins with the age and character of Josiah king of Judah, 2Ki 22:1, relates his orders for repairing the temple, 2Ki 22:3, his attention to the book of the law, which was found, and read to him, and the effect it had upon him, 2Ki 22:8, the command he gave to certain persons to inquire of the Lord about it, who applied to Huldah the prophetess, 2Ki 22:12, who returned an answer by them to the king, foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, and giving the reason of it, and at the same time assuring the king it should not be in his days, 2Ki 22:15.

Ver. 1. Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign,.... And must be born when his father was but sixteen, for Amon lived but twenty four years, 2Ki 21:19,

and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem; and so must die at thirty nine years of age:

and his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath; a city of the tribe of Judah, See Gill on "Jos 15:39".

2 Kings 22:2

Ver. 2. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,.... In the affair of religious worship especially, as well as in other things:

and walked in all the ways of David his father; in his religious ways, in which he never departed from his God:

and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; but kept an even, constant, path of worship and duty, according to the law of God.

2 Kings 22:3

Ver. 3. And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of King Josiah,.... Not of his age, but of his reign, as appears from 2Ch 34:8 nor is what follows the first remarkable act he did in a religious way; for elsewhere we read of what he did in the eighth and twelfth years of his reign, 2Ch 34:3,

that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam the scribe, to the house of the Lord; the king's secretary; the Septuagint version is, the scribe of the house of the Lord, and so the Vulgate Latin version; that kept the account of the expenses of the temple; with him two others were sent, 2Ch 34:8,

saying: as follows.

2 Kings 22:4

Ver. 4. Go up to Hilkiah the high priest,.... Who had an apartment in the temple; there was an Hilkiah, a priest, in those times, who was the father of Jeremiah the prophet, **Jer 1:1**, whom an Arabic writer {l} takes to be the same with this; but it is not likely:

that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the Lord which the people voluntarily offered for the repairing of it; this he would have the priest take an account of, that the sum total might be known; his meaning is, that he should take it out of the chest in which it was put, and count it, that it might be known what it amounted to; see 2Ki 12:9, some understand this of melting and coining the silver thus given

which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people: who were Levites, 2Ch 34:9, either porters of the door, or rather the treasurers, as the Targum; the keepers of the vessels of the sanctuary, that had the care of them, as the Jewish commentators generally interpret it.

{l} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 68.

2 Kings 22:5

Ver. 5. And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the Lord,.... That were overseers of the workmen, whose names are mentioned, 2Ch 34:12 into their hands the money was to be delivered by the high priest, when he had taken the account of it, and perhaps along with the king's scribe, see 2Ki 12:10,

and let them give it to the doers of the work, which is in the house of the Lord, to repair the breaches of the house as their wages for their work; it seems it had not been repaired from the times of Jehoash, a space of two hundred and eighteen years, according to the Jewish chronology {m}; but Kimchi and

Abarbinel make it two hundred and twenty four.

{m} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 24. p. 67.

2 Kings 22:6

Ver. 6. Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons,.... Who were employed, some in mending the woodwork, and others in repairing the stone walls

and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house; not only money was to be given them for their workmanship, but to buy timber and stone to work with.

2 Kings 22:7

Ver. 7. Howbeit, there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand,.... No account was kept between the high priest, and the king's scribe who delivered the money and the overseers of the workmen, who received it from them the latter were not called to any account by the former, nor any audit made of their accounts:

because they dealt faithfully: they were persons of such known honour and integrity, that their fidelity was not in the least called in question, but were trusted without examining their accounts, and how they disposed of the money committed to them, see 2Ki 12:15.

2 Kings 22:8

Ver. 8. And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe,.... Not at the first time of his message to him, but afterwards that he attended on him upon the same business; after the high priest had examined the temple to know what repairs it wanted, and where:

I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord; some think this was only the book of Deuteronomy, and some only some part of that; rather the whole Pentateuch, and that not a copy of it, but the very autograph of Moses, written with his own hand, as it seems from 2Ch 34:14. Some say he found it in the holy of holies, on the side of the ark; there it was put originally; but, indeed, had it been there, he might have found it before, and must have seen it, since, as high priest, he entered there once every year; more probably some pious predecessor of his had taken it from thence in a time of general corruption, as in the reign of Manasseh, and hid it in some private place, under a lay of stones, as Jarchi, in some hole in the wall, which upon search about repairs was found there:

and Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it; and though there might be some copies of it in private hands, yet scarce; and perhaps Shaphan had never seen one, at least a perfect one, or however had never read it through, as now he did.

2 Kings 22:9

Ver. 9. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again,.... Of the delivery of his message to the high priest, and of what had been done upon it:

and said, thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house; meaning Hilkiah and himself, who had examined the chest in the temple, into which the money was put for the repairs of it, and had taken it out, and told it:

and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the Lord; according to the king's orders.

2 Kings 22:10

Ver. 10. And Shaphan showed the king,.... Further related to him what follows:

saying, Hilkiah the high priest hath delivered me a book; but did not say what book it was:

and Shaphan read it before the king; part of it; and it is thought by Kimchi and Ben Gersom that he particularly read the reproofs and threatenings in the book of Deuteronomy; they suppose that Hilkiah read those to Shaphan, and directed him to read them to the king, that he might take into consideration a further reformation.

2 Kings 22:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law,.... From whence it appears that he had never wrote out a copy of it, as the kings of Israel were ordered to do, when they came to the throne, De 17:18 nor had read it, at least not the whole of it; and yet it seems strange that he should be twenty six years of age, as he now was, and had proceeded far in the reformation of worship, and yet be without the book of the law, and the high priest also; it looks as if it was, as some have thought, that they had till now only some abstracts of the law, and not the whole: and perhaps the reformation hitherto carried on chiefly lay in abolishing idolatry, and not so much in restoring the ordinances of worship to their purity; for it was after this that the ordinance of the passover was ordered to be kept; and when the king observed, on hearing the law read, that it had not been kept as it should, that such severe threatenings were denounced against the transgressors of it;

that he rent his clothes; as expressive of the rending of his heart, and of his humiliation and sorrow for the sins he and his people were guilty of.

2 Kings 22:12

Ver. 12. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest,.... The high priest, as he is called, 2Ki 22:4

and Ahikam the son of Shaphan; whether the same with Shaphan the scribe, before mentioned, or another of the same name, is not certain:

and Achbor the son of Michaiah; who is called Abdon, the son of Micah, 2Ch 34:20

and Shaphan the scribe; who brought and read the book to the king:

and Asahiah, a servant of the king's; that waited on him constantly:

saying; as follows.

2 Kings 22:13

Ver. 13. Go ye, inquire of the Lord,.... Of some of his prophets, as Jeremiah, who began to prophesy in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, and had been a prophet five years, **Jer 1:1**,

for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found; for he observed that this book threatened and foretold not only the captivity of the ten tribes, but of Judah, and of their king; and Jarchi thinks, he had a particular respect to that passage,

the Lord shall bring thee and thy king, &c. De 28:36 and therefore was desirous of knowing what he and his people must do to avert those judgments:

for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us; which he concluded from the threatenings denounced:

because that our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according to all which is written concerning us: he clearly saw that his ancestors more remote and immediate had been very deficient in observing the laws, commands, and ordinances enjoined them in that book; and therefore feared that what was threatened would fall upon him and his people, who, he was sensible, came short of doing their duty.

2 Kings 22:14

Ver. 14. So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went down to Huldah the prophetess,.... Such as were Miriam and Deborah; in imitation of those Satan had very early his women prophetesses, the Sibyls, so called from their being the council and oracle of God, and consulted as such on occasion, as Huldah now was; and the first of the Sibyls, according to Suidas {n}, was a Chaldean or a Persian; and some say an Hebrew; and Pausanias expressly says {o}, that with the Hebrews above Palestine was a woman prophetess, whose name was Sabba, whom some called the Babylonian, others the Egyptian Sibyl. Aelian relates {p} that one of them was a Jewess:

the wife of Shallum, the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; but whether the king's wardrobe in the palace, or the priest's in the temple, is not certain; he is called Hasrah, 2Ch 34:22 who is here called Harhas:

now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college; in the college of the prophets; in the house of instruction, as the Targum; the school where the young prophets were instructed and trained up; though Jarchi observes, that some interpret this "within the two walls"; Jerusalem it seems had three walls, and within the second this woman lived; there were gates in the temple, as he also observes, called the gates of Huldah {q}, but whether from her cannot be said: this place of her dwelling seems to be mentioned as a reason why these messengers went to her, because she was near, as well as well known for her prophetic spirit, prudence, and faithfulness, and not to Jeremiah, who in all probability was at Anathoth; and so also is the reason why they went not to Zephaniah, if he as yet had begun to prophesy, because he might be at a distance also: and they communed with her; upon the subject the king sent them about.

{n} In voce sibulla. {o} Phocica, sive, l. 10. p. 631. {p} Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 35. {q} Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 3.

2 Kings 22:15

Ver. 15. And she said unto them,.... The king's messengers:

thus saith the Lord God of Israel; being immediately inspired by him, she spake in his name, as prophets did:

tell the man that sent you to me; which may seem somewhat rude and unmannerly to say of a king; but when it is considered she spake not of herself, but representing the King of kings and Lord of lords, it will be seen and judged of in another light.

2 Kings 22:16

Ver. 16. Thus saith the Lord, behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of it,.... Destruction to the place, and captivity to the inhabitants of it:

even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read; particularly what is contained in Le 26:14, even all the curses in it, as in 2Ch 34:24.

2 Kings 22:17

Ver. 17. Because they have forsaken me,.... My worship, as the Targum; his word and ordinances:

and have burnt incense unto other gods; to Baal, to the host of heaven, and other Heathen deities:

that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands: their idols of wood, stone, gold, and silver, which their hands had made, to worship; than which nothing was more provoking to God:

therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched; the decree for the destruction of Jerusalem was gone forth, and not to be called back; the execution of it could not be stopped or hindered by cries, prayers, entreaties, or otherwise; this wrath of God was an emblem of the unquenchable fire of hell, **Mt 3:12**.

2 Kings 22:18

Ver. 18. But to the king of Judah, which sent you to inquire of the Lord,.... That is, with respect to him, or what may concern him:

thus shall ye say unto him; carry back this message to him as from the Lord he desired to inquire of:

thus saith the Lord God of Israel, as touching the words which thou hast heard: read out of the law, concerning the destruction of the land, and its inhabitants therein threatened.

2 Kings 22:19

Ver. 19. Because thine heart was tender,.... Soft like wax, and susceptible of impressions; or was "moved", or "trembled", as the Targum; for God has respect to such as are of contrite hearts, and tremble at his word, Isa 66:2,

and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord; external humiliation, such as in Ahab, was regarded by the Lord, much more internal and cordial humiliation is regarded by him, see 1Ki 21:29,

when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse; as in Le 26:1

and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; as expressive of the inward contrition, sorrow, and grief of his heart:

I also have heard thee, saith the Lord: his cries and prayers.

2 Kings 22:20

Ver. 20. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers,.... To his godly ancestors, to share with them in eternal life and happiness; otherwise it could be no peculiar favour to die in common, as his fathers did, and be buried in their sepulchres:

and thou shall be gathered into thy grave in peace; in a time of public peace and tranquillity; for though he was slain in battle with the king of Egypt, yet it was what he was personally concerned in, and it was not a public war between the two kingdoms, and his body was carried off by his servants, and was peaceably interred in the sepulchre of his ancestors, 2Ki 23:29, as well as he died in spiritual peace, and entered into eternal peace, which is the end of the perfect and upright man, as he was, Ps 37:37 but this chiefly regards his not living to be distressed with the calamities of his nation and people, as follows:

and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place: he being removed first, though it came upon it in the days of his sons:

and they brought the king word again; of what Huldah the prophetess had said unto them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 23

This chapter treats of Josiah's reading the book of the law, and of him and the people renewing the covenant with God, 2Ki 23:1, and of his removing idols and idolatry in every shape, and witchcraft, out of the land, which he did in the sincerity of his heart, 2Ki 23:4, yet the wrath of God was still determined upon the land, 2Ki 23:26 and Josiah was taken away by an untimely death, 2Ki

23:29 and was succeeded by two sons of his, one after another, whose reigns were wicked, 2Ki 23:31.

Ver. 1. And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. Josiah sent messengers throughout the land, and convened all the principal men in it at Jerusalem.

2 Kings 23:2

Ver. 2. And the king went up into the house of the Lord,.... To the temple, from his palace:

and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him: they met him there:

and the priests, and the prophets; the prophets Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Uriah, who, though they might not be at Jerusalem when the book of the law was found, yet, upon this message of the king's, might come up thither from the countries where they were; the Targum interprets the word "scribes": and some take them to be the sons of the prophets, their disciples; in 2Ch 34:30 they are called Levites:

and all the people, both small and great; a very numerous assembly:

and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord: that is, he caused it to be read by others, and perhaps by more than one, the congregation being so large.

2 Kings 23:3

Ver. 3. And the king stood by a pillar,.... As the manner of kings was, 2Ki 11:14 and is thought to be the brasen scaffold erected by Solomon, on which he stood at the dedication of the temple, and now Josiah at the reading of the law, **2Ch 6:13**, it is said to be his place, 2Ch 34:31,
See Gill on "2Ki 11:14"

and made a covenant before the Lord: agreed and promised in the presence of God, both he and his people:

to walk after the Lord: the worship of the Lord, as the Targum; closely to attend to that:

and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes: all the laws of God, moral, civil, and ceremonial:

with all their heart, and all their soul: cordially and sincerely:

to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book: lately found, and now read unto them:

and all the people stood to the covenant: agreed to it, and promised to keep it; so the Targum,

"all the people took upon them the covenant,"

engaged to observe it.

2 Kings 23:4

Ver. 4. And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order,.... Or the second course of the priests; the course of Jedaiah, 1Ch 24:7 as some think; or rather, the two chief priests next to the high priest, who were of the line both of Eleazar and Ithamar; though the Targum interprets it of the Sagan of the priests, a deputy of the high priest, such as in later times the high priest had always appointed for him on the day of atonement {r}:

and the keepers of the door: the porters at the door and gates of the temple; or rather the treasurers, as the Targum; such as were appointed over the vessels of the sanctuary, as the Jewish writers generally interpret it, and which best agrees with what follows:

to bring forth out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels that were made for Baal: used in burning incense, or offering sacrifices to him:

and for the grove: the idol of the grove, or Asherah, that is, Ashtoreth, or Astarte, the same with Venus, or the moon, as Baal was the sun, the one the husband, and the other the wife, according to the Jews {s}:

and for all the host of heaven: the stars:

and he burnt them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron; or plain of Kidron, as the Targum; through which the brook Kidron ran:

and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel; where one of Jeroboam's calves was set, and was the source of idolatry; and this he did in contempt of that place; and, to show his detestation of the idolatry there, he made it a dunghill of ashes of things used in idolatrous service; this he could do, that place being in the hands of the kings of Judah from the times of Ahijah, 2Ch 13:19.

{r} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1. {s} Zohar in Gen. fol. 34. 3.

2 Kings 23:5

Ver. 5. And he put down the idolatrous priests,.... The Cemarim, so called, because they wore black clothes, as Kimchi and others, whereas the priests of the Lord were clothed in white linen,
See Gill on "Zep 1:4".

whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places, in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; for though those high places were destroyed by Hezekiah, they were rebuilt by Manasseh his son, and priests put in them to officiate there, whom Josiah now deposed, 2Ki 21:3,

them also that burnt incense unto Baal; in the same high places; these were the priests, and the others in the preceding clause are thought to be ministers unto them:

to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets; the five planets besides the sun and moon, as Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, and Venus; or to the twelve celestial signs in the firmament, as some {t}; though Theodoret takes it to be a single star, the evening star:

and to all the host of heaven; or even to the host of heaven, all the stars thereof: this part of worship,

burning incense, which was peculiar to the most high God, yet was frequently made by idolaters to their deities; and from the word {u} by which it is here and elsewhere expressed may "nectar" be derived, so much spoken of by the

Heathen poets as of a sweet smell {w}, and as delicious to their gods; and so Porphyry {x} represents the gods as living on smoke, vapours, and perfumes; and frankincense is said, by Diodorus Siculus {y}, to be most grateful to them, and beloved by them; this therefore is a much better derivation of the word "nectar" than what Suidas {z} gives, that is, as if it was "nectar", because it makes those young that drink it; or than the account Athenaeus {a} gives of it, that it is a wine in Babylon so called.

{t} David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 77. 3. {u} rjq "suffitum fecit. Et diis acceptus--" Nidor. Ovid. Metamorph. 1. 12, fab. 4. {w} Theocrit. Idyll. xvii. ver. 29. {x} De Abstinentia, l. 2. c. 42. Celsus apud Origen. l. 8. p. 417. {y} Biblioth. l. 2. p. 132. {z} In voce nektareou. {a} Deipnosophist. l. 1.

2 Kings 23:6

Ver. 6. And he brought out the grove from the house of the Lord,.... Not a real grove of trees, but a carved one, as some think; or rather the image of the grove, 2Ki 21:7 that is, the idol Ashtoreth, or Astarte, which was set up there; so Theodoret says; some interpreters call it Astoreth, the name of Venus, whom they call Astarte: this Josiah ordered to be brought

without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burnt it at the brook Kidron; the black brook, where the filth of the sacrifices was carried:

and stamped it small to powder; as Moses did the golden calf:

and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people; the common people, see Jer 26:23 or rather on the graves of the worshippers of idols, as it seems from 2Ch 34:4 the Targum is,

"on the graves of the children of Galia,"

which, Kimchi says, is the name of an idol; this was done partly in contempt of the idol, groves being, according to law, impure; and partly to the reproach of the deceased, and the memory of them, for their idolatry, and to deter from it those that survived them.

2 Kings 23:7

Ver. 7. And he brake down the houses of the Sodomites that were by the house of the Lord,.... Near the temple were apartments, in which men, the worshippers of idols, prostituted their bodies to each other; committing that unnatural sin with one another, which has its name from Sodom, and from which those are so called, and which sin they committed in honour of the idols they worshipped; to such vile affections were they, in a judicial manner, delivered up, because of their idolatry; see **Ro 1:27** the word signifies "Holy Ones", they being called so by an antiphrasis; though Abarbinel thinks these were the idolatrous priests, whom the worshippers of idols reckoned "holy", and so built houses for them near the temple to lodge in; the Targum is,

"and broke down the houses of things consecrated to idols,"

where they were put; and Theodoret on the place observes, that by an homonymy, they called the demons or idols themselves "Holy Ones"; and it is not likely, indeed, that the Sodomites should be

where the women wove hangings for the grove; that is, for Astarte, as the same writer observes: or "curtains", as the Jewish writers generally interpret it, in which either the idol was enclosed, or these made apartments for the idolaters to commit their abominable wickedness privately; though the Syriac and Arabic versions are,

"they wove garments for the idols that were there;"

and so the Septuagint version, of the Complutensian edition; that is, they wove garments for the goddess Astarte, which they dressed her with: the word signifies "houses", and may mean the shrines of the idol made of woven work.

2 Kings 23:8

Ver. 8. And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah,.... Who were of the sons of Aaron, and had served in the high places there:

and defiled the high places where the priests had burnt incense; by casting dead carcasses, or the bones of dead men, or dung, or anything that was unclean, into them, by way of contempt:

from Geba to Beersheba; which were the northern and southern boundaries of the land of Judah:

and brake down the high places of the gates: of the cities where some think tutelar gods were placed to be worshipped by persons as they went in or out of them: and particularly that

which were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city; of the city of Jerusalem, where this Joshua was chief magistrate under the king; at whose door stood an high place, which, Kimchi thinks, might he greater than the rest, and therefore mentioned alone, yet was not spared on account of its greatness, or of the person to whom it belonged.

2 Kings 23:9

Ver. 9. Nevertheless, the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the Lord at Jerusalem,.... To sacrifice there, as the Targum; though they were removed from the high places, they were not admitted to officiate at the altar of the Lord, having offered in forbidden places:

but they did eat of the unleavened bread with their brethren; the priests that were pure, as the sons of Zadok; though they might not offer sacrifices, they were allowed to partake of the holy things with the priests, as the meat offerings made of flour unleavened, **Le 2:4** which are here meant, and put for all the rest on which the priests lived, see Eze 44:10.

2 Kings 23:10

Ver. 10. And he defiled Topheth,.... A place so called, as is generally thought, from the beating of drums or timbrels in it, that the shrieks of the infants sacrificed here to Molech might not be heard by their parents, and they repent of delivering them to him, and take them away. So the Indians in India now, at the burning of wives with their deceased husbands, attend them with drums and trumpets; and at such time as the fire is put to the wood, the drums and trumpets make a terrible noise for fear their cries should be heard {b};
See Gill on "Isa 30:33" see Gill on "Jer 7:31" this he defiled by casting any sort of filth or unclean thing into it, in contempt of the idolatry there committed, and to alienate the minds of men from it:

which is the valley of the children of Hinnom; a valley that belonged to the posterity of a man of this name, near to Jerusalem, see Jos 15:8, hence the Greek word "geenna" for hell, in the New Testament:

that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech; which piece of idolatry used to be committed in this place.

{b} Agreement of Customs between the East Indians and Jews, art. 25. p. 85, 86.

2 Kings 23:11

Ver. 11. And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun,.... Consecrated to it; these were not images of horses, as some have thought, but real living ones; and the kings that gave them for the service of the sun, and for sacrifice to it, very probably were Manasseh and Amon: that horses were sacred to the sun with many Heathen nations, as the Massagetae, a people in Scythia, and the Persians, and Babylonians, and Ethiopians, is affirmed by various writers {c}: and from them the Jews received this notion. According to the Jewish commentators, these were horses provided for the worshippers of the sun to ride upon, and meet the sun in the morning at its rising, and pay their homage to it; but certain it is that the Heathen nations before mentioned slew the horses, and sacrificed them as burnt offerings to the sun, as is asserted by Herodotus {d}, Xenophon {e}, Strabo {f}, Pausanias {g}, Philostratus {h}, and other writers {i}; and so the Indians of India {k} sacrificed them to Apollo, the same with the sun; these being the swiftest of creatures, they offered them to the swiftest of their gods, as Herodotus and Heliodorus observe, in the places before referred to. The stables in which these horses were kept were

at the entering of the house of the Lord, by the chamber of Nathanmelech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs; so that they reached from the temple to the suburbs of Jerusalem, to that part of them where this officer had a chamber, or lodgings, being in some place of power and authority there; though, according to L'Empereur {l}, it is the same with Parbar, 1Ch 26:18 and should not be rendered "suburbs", it being between the compass or wall of the temple, and the court:

and burnt the chariots of the sun with fire; these were either chariots, in which the king and his nobles rode, when they went to meet and worship the rising sun; or rather such as were sacred to the sun, as well as the horses, or Josiah would not have burnt them; they seem to be such in which the images of the sun were carried. Herodotus {m} makes mention as of sacred horses, so of a sacred chariot. Xenophon {n} speaks of the chariot of the sun as being of a white colour, and drawn in procession at the worship of the sun; as does also Pausanias {o} of a chariot, in which were the sun, Jupiter, and Juno, and near them other deities; which notion of sacred chariots the Heathens might take from the chariot of the cherubim Jehovah sat and rode in, 1Ch 28:18.

{c} Justin e Trogo, l. 1. c. 10. Curt. Hist. l. 3. c. 3. Ovid. Fast. l. 1. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 26. Heliodor. Ethiop. l. 10. c. 6. 28. {d} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 216. {e} Cyropaed. l. 8. c. 23, 24. {f} Geograph. l. 11. p. 353. {g} Laconica, sive, l. 3. p. 201. {h} Vit. Apollon. l. 1. c. 20. {i} Vid. Lactant. de fals. Relig. l. 1. c. 21. {k} Laon. Chalcondyl. de Rebus Turc. l. 3. p. 108. {l} Not. in Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 3. No. 3. So Boehart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 10. col. 177. {m} Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 55. {n} Ut supra, (Cyropaed. l. 8.) c. 23. {o} Eliac. 1. sive, l. 5. p, 307.

2 Kings 23:12

Ver. 12. And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made,.... Which were on the roof of the royal palace; the roofs of houses in Judah being flat, De 21:8 altars might be built upon them; so, in Arabia, altars were built on the tops of houses to offer incense thereon daily to the sun {p}; as here by Manasseh and Amon very probably, which might be chosen because nearer the heavens; for which reason the Heathens made use of high places to worship in, see Jer 19:13

and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord; 2Ki 21:5

did the king beat down; ordered to be demolished:

and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron; that there might be no remains of them to be put to any superstitious use.

{p} Strabo, Geograph l. 16. p. 539.

2 Kings 23:13

Ver. 13. And the high places that were before Jerusalem,.... Not only that were within the city, and at the gates of it, but what were without it:

which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption: the mount of Olives, so called from the idolatry and corrupt worship performed in it, by way of reproach, with a small alteration of the letters of the word tyxvm for hxvm; at the right hand, or south of this mountain, as the Targum; though others say {q}, on the north side of the mount of Olives, four furlongs or half a mile from Jerusalem, were high places:

which Solomon king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon; of which
See Gill on "1Ki 11:5" See Gill on "1Ki 11:7"

did the king defile; by casting unclean things into them. Rauwolff {r} says,

"before Mount Zion toward the south, at the other side of the rivulet Kidron, lies the mount of transgression, called Mashith, 2Ki 23:13, this is higher and steeper than any hereabout; there you still see some old walls of habitations, wherein the concubines of Solomon did live;"

and Mr. Maundrell {s} observes, that below the hill stands now a village called Siloe, where it is said he kept them.

{q} Vid Adrichom. Theatrum T. S. p. 171. {r} Travels, par. 3. c. 4. p. 233. {s} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 102.

2 Kings 23:14

Ver. 14. And he brake in pieces the images,.... Of Ashtoreth, Chemosh, and Milcom, in the above high places; which as these high places had been rebuilt by Manasseh or Amon, so new images of these deities were placed there:

and cut down the groves; in which they were set:

and filled their places with the bones of men; of idolatrous priests and worshippers, buried in parts adjacent; these he dug up and scattered in the high places and groves to defile them, bones of the dead being by law unclean, Nu

19:15.

2 Kings 23:15

Ver. 15. Moreover, the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made. For the worship of the calf there:

both that altar, and the high place, he brake down; according to an ancient prophecy of the man of God, 1Ki 13:3 and of Amos in later times, **Am 9:1**

and burnt the high place, and stamped it small to powder; that there might be no remains of it:

and burnt the grove; either the grove of trees on it, or the idol that was in it.

2 Kings 23:16

Ver. 16. And as Josiah turned himself,.... From the high place, and the altar at Bethel; for he not only gave orders for the destroying of idolatrous places and idols, but he saw them executed himself:

he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount; the graves of idolatrous priests and worshippers, who chose to be buried near those places of idolatry; nor was it unusual for persons to be buried on hills and mountains, see Jos 24:30 and this was a custom in other nations formerly {t}, particularly among the Indians {u} now, who in many things agree with the Jews:

and sent and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burnt them upon the altar; where they had sacrificed to idols:

and polluted it; with their bones, which, according to the law, were defiling, and which was done in contempt of their idolatrous worship there:

according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words; or things; foretold that such a king by name would arise, and burn men's bones upon the altar, and which had been foretold more than three hundred and fifty years before this time.

{t} Vid. Servium in Virgil. Aeneid. 11. ver 849. "fuit ingens monte sub alto".
{u} Manasseh ben Israel Spes Israelis. sect 6. p. 29.

2 Kings 23:17

Ver. 17. Then he said, what title is that that I see?.... A high and large monument over a grave, with an inscription on it, more remarkable than any of the rest, which made Josiah take notice of it; and the Jews have a tradition, as Kimchi observes, that on one side of the grave grew nettles and thistles, and on the other side odoriferous herbs; which is not to be depended on; but what he further observes may be right, that the old prophet, as he gave orders to his sons to lay his body in the same grave with the man of God, believing his words would be fulfilled, so he likewise gave orders to have a distinguished monument or pillar erected over the grave; and which people in later times took care to support, in memory of the man of God, that thereby it might be known; by which means not only the bones of the man of God were preserved from being burnt, but those of the old prophet also, buried with him:

and the men of the city told him, it is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel; see 1Ki 13:1.

2 Kings 23:18

Ver. 18. And he said, let him alone, let no man move his bones,.... Not take them out of the grave, as they had done the rest:

so they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria; the old prophet, whereby his end was answered in being buried with him, 1Ki 13:31.

2 Kings 23:19

Ver. 19. And all the houses also of the high places,.... The temples of the idols there, and the houses for the priests to dwell in:

that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the Lord to anger, Josiah took away; particularly in the cities of

Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, unto Naphtali, 2Ch 34:6 the Israelites that remained there acknowledging Josiah as their king; and perhaps, after the defeat of Sennacherib, many of the cities of Israel might put themselves under the protection of Hezekiah, and especially upon the destruction of the Assyrian empire; and Manasseh, with his liberty, might have his kingdom enlarged by the king of Babylon; and which being continued and increased in the times of Josiah, might be the reason of his opposing the king of Egypt in favour of the king of Babylon:

and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel; defiled them, and broke down the altars in them.

2 Kings 23:20

Ver. 20. And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there,.... The idolatrous priests who sacrificed to Baal, and other Heathen deities; for as for others that burnt incense in high places, yet to the true God, those he spared, though they were not suffered to officiate at the altar of God: the others he slew

upon the altars; where they sacrificed:

and burnt men's bones upon them: the bones of the priests, and worshippers of idols, as he had done at Bethel:

and returned to Jerusalem; after he had gone through the land, both of Judah and Israel, and abolished idolatrous worship everywhere.

2 Kings 23:21

Ver. 21. And the king commanded all the people,.... Not at Jerusalem only, but throughout the whole kingdom: saying,

keep the passover unto the Lord your God, as it is written in this book of the covenant; which had been lately found and read, and they had agreed to observe, and in which this ordinance was strictly enjoined, and was a commemoration of their deliverance out of Egypt, and a direction of their faith to the Messiah, the antitype of the passover.

2 Kings 23:22

Ver. 22. Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel,.... As the king commanded; the people obeyed and kept the passover, according to the law of the Lord; the manner of its being kept is not here recorded, but is at large in
2Ch 35:1 where it is observed there had not been such an one from the days of Samuel, the last of the judges; so that the days of the judges here mean the last days of them:

nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; since the division of the kingdoms; for as for the kings of Israel, they kept it not; and though it was observed in the times of Hezekiah king of Judah, yet not universally, and by some in their uncleanness; for it is a mistake of Clemens of Alexandria {w}, that it was not kept in the times between Samuel and Josiah; in the days of David and Solomon it might be kept by greater numbers, but not with such purity, and with such cheerfulness and joy of heart, or with so many other sacrifices attending it, or so exactly agreeable to the law of God, and with such munificence and liberality; the king, and the chief of the priests and Levites, providing out of their own substance for the people and their brethren.

{w} Stromat. l. 1. p. 328.

2 Kings 23:23

Ver. 23. But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the Lord in Jerusalem. This shows that Josiah must begin the reformation very early that year, since he did all that is before recorded in this and the preceding chapter by the fourteenth of Nisan, the day on which the passover was kept, which month answers to part of our March and part of April, see 2Ki 22:3 and was the same year the repairs of the temple were finished.

2 Kings 23:24

Ver. 24. Moreover, the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards,.... Who were not to be allowed among the Israelites, De 18:10

and the images; or teraphim: and the idols, and all the abominations; which were worshipped by the Heathens, and introduced among the Jews, and forbidden by the word of God:

that were spied in the land of Judah, and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away; for which, it seems, diligent search was made, and wherever they were discovered were removed:

that he might perform the words of the law, which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord; both with respect to witchcraft and idolatry, see Le 20:27.

2 Kings 23:25

Ver. 25. And like unto him was there no king before him,.... The same is said of Hezekiah, 2Ki 18:5, Hezekiah might excel him in some things, as Josiah might excel Hezekiah in others:

that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might; with such sincerity, heartiness, zeal, and constancy:

according to all the law of Moses; having respect to every commandment, especially relative to worship, with the greatest precision and exactness:

neither after him arose there any like him; for all to the captivity were wicked princes.

2 Kings 23:26

Ver. 26. Notwithstanding, the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah,.... Notwithstanding the great reformation wrought among them; for though Josiah was a sincere reformer, and did what he did heartily, as to the Lord, according to his will, and for his glory; yet the people were not sincere in their compliance, they turned to the Lord not with their whole heart, but feignedly, **Jer 3:10**

because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal; by shedding innocent blood and committing idolatry, which the people consented to and approved of, and even now privately committed idolatry, as the prophecies of Jeremiah and Zephaniah show; and it may easily be concluded that their hearts were after their idols, by their openly returning to them in the days of the sons of Josiah.

2 Kings 23:27

Ver. 27. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel. Not from his all seeing eye, but from being the object of his special care and protection; the meaning is, that he would suffer them to he carried out of their land into captivity as Israel was; this he had said in his heart, was determined upon; the decree was gone forth, and it was irrevocable:

and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen: for the place of his worship, the people having forsaken his worship there, and followed after idols:

and the house of which I said, my name shall be there; the temple, called after his name, and where his name was to be, and had been, called upon.

2 Kings 23:28

Ver. 28. Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did,.... For abolishing idolatry, and restoring the true worship of God:

are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? and also of Israel, in which an account was kept of the transactions of their reign; many other of the acts of Josiah are recorded in the canonical book of Chronicles, 2Ch 34:1.

2 Kings 23:29

Ver. 29. In his days Pharaohnechoh king of Egypt,.... Who is called in the Targum Pharaoh the lame, because he was lame in his feet, perhaps gouty; Herodotus {x} also calls him Necos the son of Psammiticus; now it was in the last days of Josiah this king reigned in Egypt, or however that the following event was:

[that] he went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates; to

Carchemish, a city situated upon it; see 2Ch 35:26, the king he went against was the king of Babylon, who had conquered the Assyrian monarchy, and therefore called king of it; some take him to be Nabopolassar; according to Marsham {y}, he was Chyniladanus;

and King Josiah went against him; to stop him, that he might not pass through his country, and attack the king of Babylon, whose ally, perhaps, Josiah was; or, however, thought himself obliged to him by the privileges, power, and authority he allowed him to exercise in the land of Israel:

and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him; as soon as they came face to face, and engaged in battle, see 2Ki 14:8 that is Pharaoh slew Josiah at the first onset. Megiddo was a city in the tribe of Manasseh, Jos 17:11. Herodotus {z} calls it Magdolus, which seems to be a city on the borders of Egypt, the same with Migdol, Jer 44:1 where he says Pharoahnechoh conquered the Syrians; in Josephus {a} it is called Mendes very wrongly. Josiah seems to have engaged in this action without consulting the Lord and his prophets.

{x} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 158. {y} Chronic. Secul. 18. p. 568. {z} Ibid. c. 159. {a} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 5. sect. 1.

2 Kings 23:30

Ver. 30. And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo,.... They took him out of the chariot in which he was wounded, and put him into another, where he died of his wounds by the way; being mortally wounded, he is said to be dead, or a dead man, see 2Ch 35:24

and brought him to Jerusalem; which, according to Bunting {b}, was forty four miles from Megiddo:

and buried him in his own sepulchre; which either he had provided for himself in his lifetime, or which in common belonged to the kings of Judah, see 2Ch 35:24

and the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead; though he was not the eldest son, Jehoiakim, who was afterwards placed in his room, being two years older, as appears from 2Ki 23:31 and this is the reason, as the Jewish commentators in general agree, that he was anointed; which they say was never done to the son of a king, unless there was a competitor, or some objection to, or dispute about, the succession, as in the case of Solomon and others.

{b} Travels, &c. p. 188.

2 Kings 23:31

Ver. 31. Jehoahaz was twenty three years old when he began to reign,.... Who seems to be the same with Shallum, Jer 22:11

and he reigned three months in Jerusalem; a short reign, being deposed by the king of Egypt, as after related:

and his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah; a city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 10:29.

2 Kings 23:32

Ver. 32. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,.... Committed idolatry:

according to all that his fathers had done; his grand father and great grandfather, Amon and Manasseh; so soon after Josiah's death was the revolt to idolatry.

2 Kings 23:33

Ver. 33. And Pharaohnechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath,.... Places in Syria; Hamath was formerly a kingdom in Syria, and Riblah is said by Jerom {c} to be Antioch of Syria, near to which was the fountain of Daphne; and in the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem on Nu 34:11. Daphne is put for Riblah; and Josephus {d} says Antioch was by Daphne of Syria; and in the Apocrypha:

"Which when Onias knew of a surety, he reproved him, and withdrew himself into a sanctuary at Daphne, that lieth by Antiochia." (2 Maccabees 4:33)

Daphne is said to be by Antioch; with which place Pompey was greatly delighted, because of the pleasantness of it, and the abundance of waters about it {e}: hither, it is probable, Jehoahaz went with an army to avenge his father's death on the king of Egypt, or to assist the king of Babylon, or both; and here Pharaoh met with him, and took him, and bound him; he seems to be of a martial spirit, from Eze 19:3

that he might not reign in Jerusalem; whither afterwards the king of Egypt came, and took it; and so Herodotus {f} says that after he had conquered the Syrians at Migdol, he took Cadytis, a great city of Syria, which seems to be Jerusalem, the holy city;

and put the land to a tribute of one hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold; the land of Judah; and one hundred talents, according to Bunting {g}, amounted to 37,500 pounds of our money; and a talent of gold, according to Brerewood {h}, was 4,500 pounds; but Bishop Cumberland {i} makes it 5,067 pounds, three shillings, and ten pence; a talent of gold could not be so large in Homer's time, since he speaks of seven of them given at once in a way of hospitality {k}.

{c} Comment. in Ezekiel. xlvii. fol. 261. C. {d} Antiqu. l. 17. c. 2. sect. 3. {e} Rufi Fest. Breviar. Eutrop. Hist. Rom. l. 6. {f} Ut supra. (Chronic. Secil. 18. p. 568.) {g} Ut supra, (Travels, &c.) p. 288. {h} De Ponder & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 4. {i} Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 4. p. 21. {k} Odyss. 9. ver. 258. & Odyss. 24. ver. 321.

2 Kings 23:34

Ver. 34. And Pharaohnechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father,.... Not in the room of Jehoahaz; for he did not allow him to be a king, and to have any lawful right to the throne; but, deposing him, set up his elder brother:

and turned his name to Jehoiakim; to show his subjection to him, and that he held his government by him:

and took Jehoahaz away: with him, from Jerusalem, when he departed thence:

and he came to Egypt, and died there: and never returned to Jerusalem, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, Jer 22:11.

2 Kings 23:35

Ver. 35. And Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh,.... The one hundred talents of silver and the talent of gold, which he imposed as a tribute upon the land:

but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh; he did not take it out of his own treasures nor the treasures of the house of the Lord, which perhaps might be exhausted, but levied it of the people of the land:

he exacted the silver and gold of the people of the land, required them to pay it in:

of everyone according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaohnechoh: everyone was taxed according to his abilities, in proportion to what he was worth, or to the estate he was possessed of.

2 Kings 23:36

Ver. 36. Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign,.... And therefore must be two years older than his brother Jehoahaz, who was deposed:

and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; and therefore must die at the age of thirty and six:

and his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah; which Josephus {l} calls Abuma; but he speaks of a village in Galilee called Ruma {m}; but whether the same with this is not certain.

{l} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 5. sect. 2. {m} De Bello Jud l. 3. c. 6. sect. 21.

2 Kings 23:37

Ver. 37. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done. Amon and Manasseh; see

2Ki 23:32.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 24

This chapter relates the rebellion of Jehoiakim against the king of Babylon, which prepared the way for the ruin of the kingdom of Judah, according to the decree of God, and also the death of Jehoiakim, and the conquest the king of Babylon made of part of the land of the king of Egypt, 2Ki 24:1 and the short and wicked reign of Jehoiachin his son, when he and the royal family, with great numbers of the inhabitants of the land, were carried captive to Babylon, 2Ki 24:8, and his uncle was made king in his room, 2Ki 24:17.

Ver. 1. In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up,.... Against Jerusalem; this was in the latter end of the third, or the beginning of the fourth of Jehoiakim's reign, and the first of Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 25:1, when Jehoiakim was taken, but restored upon promise of subjection and obedience, and hostages given, at which time Daniel and his companions were carried captive, with some of the vessels of the temple; See Gill on "Da 1:1" see Gill on "Da 1:2"

and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: which were the fifth, sixth, and seventh years of his reign:

then he turned and rebelled against him; being encouraged by the king of Egypt, who promised to assist him against the king of Babylon; Nebuchadnezzar is the Nabocolasser in Ptolemy's canon; and Berosus {n} testifies, that seventy years before the Persian monarchy he made war against the Phoenicians and Jews, and it is from this time the seventy years' captivity is to be dated.

{n} Apud Clement. Alex. Stromat. 1. p. 329.

2 Kings 24:2

Ver. 2. And the Lord sent against him,.... By Nebuchadnezzar, against whom he rebelled:

bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon; who were all subject to the king of Babylon, or were voluntary troops in his service, and bore an hatred to the Jews: according to Eupolemus {o}, this army consisted of Medes and Babylonians, and, besides 10,000 chariots, there were in it 180,000 foot, and 120,000 horse:

and sent them against Judah to destroy it; this was not until the eleventh of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar being diverted by the siege of Tyre, or other important business, from chastising the king of Judah until this time:

according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Huldah the prophetess.

{o} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 39. p. 454.

2 Kings 24:3

Ver. 3. Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight,.... It was the sure and certain decree of God they should be carried captive, and therefore he stirred up the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar, and gave him orders to go against it:

for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; which were still continued among the Jews, and committed by them, though repented of by Manasseh, and he returned from them.

2 Kings 24:4

Ver. 4. And also for the innocent blood that he shed, for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood,.... See 2Ki 21:16 which cruel usage of the prophets, and servants of the Lord, was still continued; see
Jer 26:21,

which the Lord would not pardon; he pardoned the sins of Manasseh, who repented, but not the sins of those persons who imitated him, but repented not; or though he personally pardoned the sins of Manasseh, so that he was saved everlastingly, yet the temporal punishment of the nation for those sins, in which they were involved with him, was not averted.

2 Kings 24:5

Ver. 5. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim,.... In 2Ch 36:8, it is added, "his abominations, and that which was found in him": which besides his rebellion against the king of Babylon, and his shedding innocent blood, is interpreted of marks made in his body for superstitious and idolatrous purposes; so Lyra.

2 Kings 24:6

Ver. 6. So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers,.... He died as they did, but was not buried with them, and indeed had no burial at all, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, Jer 22:18 for, falling into the hands of the king of Babylon, he was bound in chains, in order to be carried to Babylon, but died as soon as he came out of Jerusalem, at the gates of which he was cast, and had no burial, 2Ch 36:6. At this time also some of the vessels of the temple were carried away, and put in the idol's temple at Babylon, 2Ch 36:7, and Eupolemus {p} says, that whatever gold, silver, and brass, were in the temple, were carried away:

and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead; called sometimes Jeconiah, and by contempt Coniah, Jer 22:24.

{p} Ut supra. (Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 39. p. 454.)

2 Kings 24:7

Ver. 7. And the king of Egypt came not any more out of his land,.... To receive the tribute he imposed on the land of Judah, or to help the kings there of, Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin; not till the times of Zedekiah, and then was obliged to retire, without giving any assistance, Jer 37:7 the reason follows,

for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates, all that pertained to the king of Egypt; all that lay between the river Nile, or the Rhinocolura, and the river Euphrates so that he could not stir out of his dominions, which lay beyond.

2 Kings 24:8

Ver. 8. Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign,.... In 2Ch 36:9 he is said to be but eight years old; which may be reconciled by observing, that he might be made and declared king by his father, in the first year of his reign, who reigned eleven years, so that he was eight years old when he began to reign with him, and eighteen when he began to reign alone {q}. Dr. Lightfoot {r} gives another solution of this difficulty, that properly speaking he was eighteen years old when he began to reign, but, in an improper sense, the son of eight years, or the eighth year, as the Hebrew phrase is; that is, he fell in the lot of the eighth year of the captivity of Judah, which was in the latter end of the third, or the beginning of the fourth of his father's reign, and the first of Nebuchadnezzar's, and it was now in the eighth of Nebuchadnezzar that he was king, see
2Ki 24:12, but very probably in 2Ch 36:9 there is a mistake in the copyist of eight for eighteen, since in the Arabic and Syriac versions it is there eighteen, as here:

he reigned in Jerusalem three months; the ten days besides are here omitted for shortness, 2Ch 36:9

and his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem; a person no doubt well known in those times.

{q} So in Seder Olam Rabba, c. 25. {r} Works, vol. 1. p. 122.

2 Kings 24:9

Ver. 9. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done. Being partner with him in his throne, he was in his sins, and continued therein, see
2Ki 23:37.

2 Kings 24:10

Ver. 10. At that time,.... When Jehoiachin reigned:

when the year was expired; so it is in 2Ch 36:10 or at the revolution of the year; which some take to be autumn, the beginning of the civil year with the

Jews; but rather it was the spring, the time when kings went out to battle, 2Sa 11:1

the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem; that is, his army, under proper generals and officers, and by his orders:

and the city was besieged; in form by the Chaldean army.

2 Kings 24:11

Ver. 11. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city,.... He came in person, following his army:

and his servants did besiege it; very closely.

2 Kings 24:12

Ver. 12. And Jehoiachin king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon,.... Not to fight with him, but to submit to him, and to surrender the city to him, and be at his mercy:

he and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers; the royal family, courtiers, and nobles:

and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign; Of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, and which was the eighth of the first captivity, and from whence the seventy years' captivity were reckoned.

2 Kings 24:13

Ver. 13. And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house,.... The gates of the city being thrown open to him, he entered and plundered the temple, and the royal palace, and took from thence all the riches thereof:

and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said;
2Ki 20:17 and so the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled. No more is said of these

vessels in 2Ch 36:10 than that they were brought to Babylon; and so Piscator renders the word here, "took", or "carried them away"; and certain it is that they were carried whole to Babylon, **Da 5:2** but as Hezekiah is said to cut off the doors of the temple, that is, strip or scrape off the gold of them, 2Ki 18:16 so Nebuchadnezzar cut off from the temple, or stripped it of the golden vessels in it; of great part of them, the greater part thereof; for that there were some left is plain from Jer 27:18.

2 Kings 24:14

Ver. 14. And he carried away all Jerusalem,.... The inhabitants of it; not every individual of them, but the chief of them, the more honourable, rich, and useful; for the poorer sort were left, as afterwards expressed:

and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives; which was the number of them in the whole; the particulars are after delivered:

and all the craftsmen and smiths; besides the nobles and the soldiers, he took all the artificers that exercised any handicraft trade or business; carpenters and blacksmiths, as some interpret these two words; so that there were none left to make arms for them; the last word may be rendered "enclosers", and are by some interpreted of enclosers of jewels in metals, as gold and silver:

none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land; who were left to till it, and to dress the vines; see 2Ki 25:12.

2 Kings 24:15

Ver. 15. And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon,.... Where he continued at least thirty seven years, 2Ki 25:27

and the king's mother; whose name was Nehushta, 2Ki 24:8

and the king's wives; for though he was so young, it seems he had many wives, as was the custom of those times; or his "women", who were either his concubines, or servants in his family:

and his officers; in his court: and the mighty of the land; the princes and nobles thereof; or "the fools of the land", as the word is written; so the people generally were:

those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon; which, according to Bunting {s}, were six hundred and eighty miles distant from each other.

{s} Travels, &c. p. 198.

2 Kings 24:16

Ver. 16. And all the men of might, even seven thousand,.... The particulars of the 10,000 carried captive are here given; 7000 of which were the principal men of the land:

and craftsmen and smiths one thousand; which made 8000:

all that were strong, and apt for war; of these consisted the other 2000; so Abarbinel reckons them; but, according to the Jewish chronologer {t}, which Jarchi and other Jewish commentators follow, the 7000 were out of the tribe of Benjamin and the rest of the tribes, and the 3000 out of the tribe of Judah, which are supposed to be those Jeremiah speaks of, Jer 52:28,

even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon; among these were Ezekiel the prophet, and Mordecai, the uncle of Esther.

{t} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 25.

2 Kings 24:17

Ver. 17. And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead,.... The third son of Josiah, **1Ch 3:15**

and changed his name to Zedekiah; for the same reason the king of Egypt changed the name of Eliakim, 2Ki 23:34 to signify his subjection to him; though some think it was to put him in mind of the justice of God, as the name signifies, that would overtake him, should he be treacherous to him, and rebel against him; so the Jewish Midrash.

2 Kings 24:18

Ver. 18-20. Zedekiah was twenty years old when he began to reign,.... So that he was but between nine and ten years of age when his father Josiah died; for Jehoahaz reigned three months, Jehoiakim eleven years, and his son three months and ten days:

and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah; by which it appears that he was the brother of Jehoahaz by father and mother's side, 2Ki 23:31. This and the two following verses are expressed in the same words as in Jer 52:1,
See Gill on "Jer 52:1",
See Gill on "Jer 52:2",
See Gill on "Jer 52:3", in 2Ch 36:10, besides what is here said, is written, that he humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet of the Lord, that spoke in his name, but opposed him; and rebelling against the king of Babylon, broke his oath, and hardened his neck and heart against the Lord, and was obstinate, stubborn, and self-willed.

2 Kings 24:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "2Ki 24:18".

2 Kings 24:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "2Ki 24:18".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Kings 25:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 KINGS 25

In this chapter is an account of the siege, taking, and burning of the city of Jerusalem, and of the carrying captive the king and the inhabitants to Babylon, 2Ki 25:1, as also of the pillars and vessels of the temple brought thither, 2Ki 25:13 and of the putting to death several of the principal persons of the land, 2Ki 25:18, and of the miserable condition of the rest under Gedaliah, whom Ishmael slew, 2Ki 25:23, and the chapter, and so the history, is concluded with the kindness Jehoiachin met with from the king of Babylon, after thirty seven years' captivity, 2Ki 25:27.

Ver. 1-7. And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign,.... Of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah. From hence to the end of 2Ki 25:7, the account exactly agrees with Jer 52:4.

2 Kings 25:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ki 25:1"

2 Kings 25:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "2Ki 25:1"

2 Kings 25:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "2Ki 25:1"

2 Kings 25:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "2Ki 25:1"

2 Kings 25:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "2Ki 25:1"

2 Kings 25:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "2Ki 25:1"

2 Kings 25:8

Ver. 8-12. And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month,.... In Jer

52:12 it is the tenth day of the month; which, how to be reconciled, See Gill on "Jer 52:12"

which is the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar; who, according to Ptolemy's canon, reigned forty three years; Metasthenes {u} says forty five; and from hence, to the end of 2Ki 25:12 facts are related as in Jer 52:12 whither the reader is referred.

{u} De Judicio Temp. & Annal. Pers. fol. 221. 2.

2 Kings 25:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ki 25:8"

2 Kings 25:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ki 25:8"

2 Kings 25:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Ki 25:8"

2 Kings 25:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "2Ki 25:8"

2 Kings 25:13

Ver. 13-17. And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the Lord,.... The two pillars in the temple, Jachin and Boaz. Benjamin of Tudela says {w}, that in the church of St. Stephen in Rome these pillars now are with the name of Solomon engraved on each; and the Jews at Rome told him, when there, (in the twelfth century,) that on the ninth of Ab (the day the temple was destroyed) every year sweat was found upon them like water; the one, I suppose, will equally be believed as the other, since it is here expressly said that the Chaldeans broke them in pieces. From hence, to the end of 2Ki 25:17 is the

same with
Jer 52:7, where it is rather more largely and fully expressed; only there is this difference here in 2Ki 25:17 the height of the chapiter of a pillar is said to be three cubits, there five cubits; for the reconciliation of which, See Gill on "Jer 52:22".

{w} Itinerar. p. 13.

2 Kings 25:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "2Ki 25:13"

2 Kings 25:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "2Ki 25:13"

2 Kings 25:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "2Ki 25:13"

2 Kings 25:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "2Ki 25:13"

2 Kings 25:18

Ver. 18-21. And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest,.... The sagan, or deputy priest, who officiated for the high priest, when by any means he was rendered unfit and incapable; so Joseph, the son of Ellem, as Josephus {x} relates, officiated for Matthias, when defiled with a nocturnal pollution; and seven days before the day of atonement they always substituted one under the high priest, lest anything of this kind should happen to him {y}. From hence, to the end of 2Ki 25:21 the account is the same as in Jer 52:25, only here in 2Ki 25:19 it is said, that five men that were in the king's presence were taken, there seven men; to account for which, See Gill on "Jer 52:25".

{x} Antiqu. l. 17. c. 6. sect. 4. {y} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1.

2 Kings 25:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "2Ki 25:18"

2 Kings 25:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "2Ki 25:18"

2 Kings 25:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "2Ki 25:18"

2 Kings 25:22

Ver. 22-24. And as for the people that remained,.... That were left in the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen; over these the king of Babylon made Gedaliah governor, to whom the captains, with their scattered troops, came, and submitted for a time; of whom,
See Gill on "Jer 40:7",
See Gill on "Jer 40:8",
See Gill on "Jer 40:9".

2 Kings 25:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "2Ki 25:22"

2 Kings 25:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "2Ki 25:22"

2 Kings 25:25

Ver. 25. And it came to pass in the seventh month,.... Not of Gedaliah's government, but of the year, the month Tisri or September, near two months after the destruction of Jerusalem; the Jews say fifty two days after it; of the death of Gedaliah, and the man that slew him, as here related, See Gill on "Jer 41:1" see Gill on "Jer 41:2" see Gill on "Jer 41:3".

2 Kings 25:26

Ver. 26. And all the people, both small and great,.... High and low, rich and poor, among whom were the king's daughters, committed to the care of Gedaliah, and also the prophets Jeremiah and Baruch, see
Jer 41:16

and the captains of the armies rose, and came to Egypt; contrary to the express command of God; these were Johanan, and the captain of the forces with him,
Jer 43:4

for they were afraid of the Chaldees; lest they should come and avenge the death of Gedaliah, appointed governor of Judea, see Jer 41:17.

2 Kings 25:27

Ver. 27-30. And it came to pass in the thirty and seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah,.... Who must then be fifty five years of age:

in the twelfth month, on the twenty and seventh day of the month; in
Jer 52:31 it is said to be the twenty fifth day; of the reason of which difference, See Gill on "Jer 52:31":

that Evilmerodach king of Babylon; who is supposed, by some {z}", to be the same with Belshazzar, and his successor Neriglissar, the same with Darius the Mede in Daniel. From hence, to the end of the chapter, the same account is given of the kindness of this king to Jehoiachin, as in Jer 52:31.
See Gill on "Jer 52:31",
See Gill on "Jer 52:32",
See Gill on "Jer 52:33",
See Gill on "Jer 52:34".

Metasthenes {a} calls him Amilinus Evilmerodach, and says he reigned thirty years, and makes Belshazzar, or Baltassar, as he calls him, his third son.

{z} Vid. Lampe, Eccles. Hist. l. 1. c. 7. sect. 18. {a} Ut supra. (De Judicio Temp. & Annal. Pers. fol. 221. 2.)

2 Kings 25:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "2Ki 25:27"

2 Kings 25:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "2Ki 25:27"

2 Kings 25:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "2Ki 25:27"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES

This and the following book were reckoned by the Jews as one book, as appears by the Masoretic note at the end of the second book, and as is affirmed by Origen {a} and Jerom {b}; and they were by the ancients {c} called Chronicles, as they are by us; but they are different from the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah, so often mentioned in the preceding books, seeing several things there referred to, as in them, are not to be found here; though no doubt many things here recorded were taken from thence under a divine direction. In the Greek version, and so in the Vulgate Latin version after that, they are called "Paralipomena", that is, things passed over or omitted, because they contain several anecdotes which are not to be found in the books of Samuel and Kings. The Hebrew title of them is, "Dibre Hayamim", words of days, day books or diaries, and what the Greeks call "Ephemerides"; though, as "yamim" sometimes signifies years, they may be named "annals"; and so the Arabic inscription is, "the Books of Annals;"

and because they chiefly respect the kings of Judah, the Syriac inscription is,

"the Book of the Things that were done in the Times of the Kings of Judah."

The Targum is,

"the Book of Genealogies, the Words of Days, which were from the Days of the World;"

because the first ten chapters consist of genealogies beginning from Adam. The inspired penman of these books must live after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, since he carries down the genealogy of the kings and princes of Judah beyond that time, **1Ch 3:17**. It is generally thought by the Jews and Christians that Ezra was the writer of them, with which agrees the age in which he lived; and as it may seem, from the last of these books ending with the same words with which that under his name begins: so the Talmudists {d} say, that Ezra wrote his own book, and the genealogy of the chronicles unto his own, or unto Velo, "and he had brethren", 2Ch 21:2 and Jarchi affirms that he wrote them by the hand or means of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, inspired prophets; though some Jewish writers {e} suppose they were written partly by him, and partly by Nehemiah; that all to 2Ch 21:2 were written by Ezra, and the rest by Nehemiah. Kimchi thinks that Ezra was not the first author and writer of these books, but that the books of Chronicles and Annals of the kings of Judah, and of the kings of Israel, were separately written before him; but that he only revised them, and with the men of the great synagogue added the genealogies, and put them into the canon of the Scriptures {f}. Spinosa {g} fancies they were written after Judas Maccabaeus had restored the temple, since the historian tells what families dwelt in Jerusalem in the times of Ezra, **1Ch 9:1** and speaks of the porters, **1Ch 9:17** two of which are mentioned, Ne 11:19 as if Ezra could not describe the families that lived when he did, or name the porters of the temple, since it was finished and dedicated in his time, **Ezr 6:15**, but however there is no doubt to be made of the authenticity of these books, since not only they have always been acknowledged by the Jews as a part of the canonical Scripture, and by ancient Christians, as appears by the catalogues of Melito {h} and Origen {i}; but there are plain references to them in the New Testament. The genealogy of Christ, by the evangelists, is formed out of them; the doxology in **Re 5:12** as some have observed, comes very near to what is used by David, 1Ch 29:11 and the passages in **Ac 7:48** contain the sense of what is expressed in **2Ch 2:5**. The use and design of these books are chiefly to give a larger account of the kingdom of Judah, especially after the division of it from the ten tribes, and of the kings thereof, than what is given in the preceding books, as in the last of these books; and particularly they ascertain the genealogy of Christ, that it might be clear and plain of what tribe and family the Messiah came, that he descended from the tribe of Judah, and from the kings of the house of David, as in this first book. They both contain an history from Adam, to the deliverance of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon. The first of these books reaches, according to Hottinger {k}, to A. M. 2985, and the latter is an history of four hundred and seventy two years. According to Bishop Usher {l} the former contains a course of 2990 years, and the latter of four hundred and seventy eight.

{a} Apud Eusch. Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 25. {b} Ad Dominionem, tom. 3. fol. 7. C. {c} Hieron. Praefat. in lib. Reg. tom. 3. fol. 6. B. {d} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. {e} Shalssalet Hakabala, Abarbinel in Josuam, fol. 3. 3. {f} Vid. Buxtorf. de Punct. Antiqu. par. 1. p. 182. {g} Tract. Theolog. Politic. c. 10. p. 184. {h} Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 26. {i} Apud ib. l. 6. c. 25. {k} Thesaur. Philolog. l. 2. c. 1. p. 514, 515. {l} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 56. {m} Tiberias, c. 14.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 1

This chapter gives us the genealogy of the patriarchs from Adam to Noah, **1Ch 1:1** of the sons of Noah, and their posterity, to Abraham, **1Ch 1:5** of the sons of Abraham and their posterity, **1Ch 1:28** and of the sons of Esau, **1Ch 1:35** and of the kings and dukes that reigned in Edom, **1Ch 1:43**.

Ver. 1-4. Adam, Seth,.... These first four verses exactly agree with the account of the antediluvian patriarchs in **Ge 5:1**, the first letter in Adam is larger than usual, as a memorial, as Buxtorf {m} observes, of the first and only man, from whence mankind had their beginning, and whose history the author had undertaken to write.

1 Chronicles 1:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "1Ch 1:1"

1 Chronicles 1:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "1Ch 1:1"

1 Chronicles 1:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "1Ch 1:1"

1 Chronicles 1:5

Ver. 5-27. The sons of Japheth, Gomer,.... Here begins the genealogy of the sons of Noah after the flood; of the sons of Japheth the elder, in this and the two following verses; next of the sons of Ham, the younger brother, **1Ch 1:8**, then of Shem, whose posterity are mentioned last, because from him, in the line of Heber, sprang Abraham, the ancestor of the Jewish nation, of whom the Messiah was to come, for whose sake this genealogy is given, **1Ch 1:17**. The whole is the same with the account in Ge 10:1

1 Chronicles 1:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5"

1 Chronicles 1:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5"

1 Chronicles 1:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5"

1 Chronicles 1:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5"

1 Chronicles 1:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5"

1 Chronicles 1:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5"

1 Chronicles 1:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5"

1 Chronicles 1:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "1Ch 1:5".

1 Chronicles 1:28

Ver. 28-34. The sons of Abraham,.... The famous and well known ancestor of the Jews; of Ishmael his firstborn, and his posterity; of his sons by Keturah; and of Isaac and his sons, an account is given from hence to the end of **1Ch 1:34** entirely agreeing with that in
Ge 25:1.

1 Chronicles 1:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "1Ch 1:28".

1 Chronicles 1:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "1Ch 1:28".

1 Chronicles 1:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "1Ch 1:28".

1 Chronicles 1:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "1Ch 1:28".

1 Chronicles 1:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "1Ch 1:28".

1 Chronicles 1:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "1Ch 1:28".

1 Chronicles 1:35

Ver. 35-37. The sons of Esau,.... The firstborn of Isaac; his posterity are named in this and the two following verses, as in
Ge 36:1 only it should be observed, that Timna, **1Ch 1:36** is not the name of a man, but was the concubine of Eliphaz, the eldest son of Esau, and the mother of Amalek, Ge 36:12, and so in the Arabic version it is read,

"and Timna, which was the concubine of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, bare him Amalek;"

and so the Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint.

1 Chronicles 1:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "1Ch 1:35".

1 Chronicles 1:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "1Ch 1:35".

1 Chronicles 1:38

Ver. 38-42. And the sons of Seir,.... This man and his posterity were not of the race of Esau, but are mentioned because they were a family into which Esau, and a son of his, married, and whose possessions he and his obtained. The account from hence, to the end of **1Ch 1:42** is the same with Ge 36:20, with some little variation of names.

1 Chronicles 1:39

Ver. 39. See Gill on "1Ch 1:38".

1 Chronicles 1:40

Ver. 40. See Gill on "1Ch 1:38".

1 Chronicles 1:41

Ver. 41. See Gill on "1Ch 1:38".

1 Chronicles 1:42

Ver. 42. See Gill on "1Ch 1:38".

1 Chronicles 1:43

Ver. 43-54. Now these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom,.... Which had its name from Esau, who was so called, Ge 25:30. From hence, to the end of the chapter, an account is given of the kings and dukes of Edom, in the same order as in Ge 30:31.

1 Chronicles 1:44

Ver. 44. See Gill on "1Ch 1:43".

1 Chronicles 1:45

Ver. 45. See Gill on "1Ch 1:43".

1 Chronicles 1:46

Ver. 46. See Gill on "1Ch 1:43".

1 Chronicles 1:47

Ver. 47. See Gill on "1Ch 1:43".

1 Chronicles 1:48

Ver. 48. See Gill on "1Ch 1:43".

1 Chronicles 1:49

Ver. 49. See Gill on "1Ch 1:43".

1 Chronicles 1:50

Ver. 50. See Gill on "1Ch 1:43".

1 Chronicles 1:51

Ver. 51. See Gill on "1Ch 1:43".

1 Chronicles 1:52

Ver. 52. See Gill on "1Ch 1:43".

1 Chronicles 1:53

Ver. 53. See Gill on "1Ch 1:43".

1 Chronicles 1:54

Ver. 54. See Gill on "1Ch 1:43".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 2

This chapter begins with the twelve sons of Israel or Jacob, **1Ch 2:1**, then reckons the sons of Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, **1Ch 2:3**, then the posterity of Pharez and Zerah, sons of Judah, **1Ch 2:5**, next the sons of Hezron, a son of Pharez, **1Ch 2:9**, particularly the posterity of Ram, a son of Hezron, from whom sprung Jesse and his family, **1Ch 2:10**, then of Caleb: another son of Hezron, **1Ch 2:18**, and next of Jerahmeel, the firstborn of Hezron, **1Ch 1:25** and particularly the posterity of Sheshan, a descendant of his, **1Ch 1:34** and then other sons of Caleb, with their posterity, are reckoned, **1Ch 1:42** and the chapter is closed with the families of the Scribes in Jabesh, the same with the Kenites, **1Ch 2:55**.

Ver. 1,2 These are the sons of Israel,.... Or Jacob, the other son of Isaac, who had the name of Israel given him, because of his power with God, Ge 32:28, whose twelve sons are here mentioned by name; the first four according to their birth of Leah, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; then the two sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, Issachar and Zebulun; and between Dan and Naphtali, the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, are placed Joseph and Benjamin, the sons of Rachel.

1 Chronicles 2:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "1Ch 2:1".

1 Chronicles 2:3

Ver. 3. The sons of Judah,.... The genealogy begins with him, though the fourth son of Jacob; because, as Kimchi says, this book treats chiefly of the kings of Judah; but rather not only because Jesse and David sprang from him, but also the King Messiah:

Er, and Onan, and Shelah, which three were born unto him of the daughter of Shua the Canaanitess; see Ge 38:2, and Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the sight of the Lord; because he did that which was evil:

and he slew him; he died by the immediate hand of God, and so his brother Onan, being wicked also, Ge 38:7.

1 Chronicles 2:4

Ver. 4. And Tamar his daughter in law bare him Pharez and Zerah,.... Through incest; they were twins, Ge 38:27 all the sons of Judah were five; who are before mentioned by name.

1 Chronicles 2:5

Ver. 5. The sons of Pharez,.... One of the above twins, born to Judah:

Hezron and Hamul; see Ge 46:12.

1 Chronicles 2:6

Ver. 6. And the sons of Zerah,.... The other twin of Judah:

Zimri, and Ethan, and Heman, and Calcol, and Dara: five of them in all; the Targum calls them governors, and adds, on whom the spirit of prophecy dwelt; and in the Jewish chronology {n} they are said to prophesy in Egypt; and the four last are supposed to be the same with those in **1Ki 4:31**.
See Gill on "1Ki 4:31".

{n} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 52.

1 Chronicles 2:7

Ver. 7. And the sons of Carmi,.... The Targum adds, this is Zimri; but in **Jos 7:1** Carmi is said to be the son of Zabdi, who seems to be the same with Zimri; and some supply the word here, and read {o} the sons of Zimri, Carmi, Achar, who was the grandson of Zimri; his proper name was Achan, **Jos 7:1**, but called Achar here by way of reproach, as Jarchi and others observe; being, as it

follows,

the troubler of Israel, as Achar signifies: "who transgressed in the thing accursed"; devoted to the Lord, by taking it away for his own use, see **Jos 6:17**, hence the valley in which he was put to death was called Achor, **Jos 6:26**.

{o} So Junius & Tremellius, & Piscator.

1 Chronicles 2:8

Ver. 8. And the sons of Ethan; Azariah. Including his posterity, see Ge 46:23, the posterity of the other three sons of Zerah are not mentioned, either because the writer could not find the genealogy of them, as Kimchi; or rather, as he thinks, he cuts short the genealogy of Zerah, because the kingdom did not proceed from him, and returns to the genealogy of Hezron, from whence it did, or perhaps they had no children.

1 Chronicles 2:9

Ver. 9. The sons also of Hezron, that were born unto him,.... The Targum adds, in Timnath; but most likely in Egypt:

Jerahmeel, and Ram, and Chelubai; afterwards called Caleb.

1 Chronicles 2:10

Ver. 10-12. And Ram begat Amminadab,.... Ram is the same with Aram, **Mt 1:3** the genealogy is carried down from him to Jesse in the same order as there, and in **Ru 4:19** only here Nahshon the son of Amminadab is called

the prince of the children of Judah; which Kimchi and Jarchi say is written for the honour of David, who descended from him; and Salmon his son is here called Salma.

1 Chronicles 2:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "1Ch 2:10".

1 Chronicles 2:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "1Ch 2:10".

1 Chronicles 2:13

Ver. 13-15. And Jesse begat his firstborn Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and Shimma the third, Nathanael the fourth, Raddai the fifth, Ozem the sixth, David the seventh. But Jesse had eight sons, 1Sa 16:10, one of them therefore is not reckoned, either because he was by another woman, and the writer only mentions those that were of the same mother with David; this is the opinion of Aben Ezra and Kimchi; some say he was dead before David came to the kingdom; Kimchi mentions a Midrash, or exposition of theirs, according to which his name was Elihu, and was younger than David, who is mentioned in 1Ch 27:18, and Jarchi observes, that the writer, having found the pearl (David), reckons not the eighth son Elihu, though the Syriac and Arabic versions have inserted him in this order, "Elihu the seventh, David the eighth"; some take the eighth to be a grandson of Jesse, Jonathan the son of Shimea, 2Sa 21:21 the third son of Jesse, here called Shimma, as he is Shammah, 1Sa 16:9.

1 Chronicles 2:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "1Ch 2:13"

1 Chronicles 2:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "1Ch 2:13"

1 Chronicles 2:16

Ver. 16. Whose sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail..... That is, sisters of David:

and the sons of Zeruiah; Abishai, and Joab, and Asahel, three; all valiant men and captains in David's army; their father's name is nowhere mentioned.

1 Chronicles 2:17

Ver. 17. And Abigail bare Amasa,.... Who was Absalom's general, afterwards reconciled to David, and designed to be made general of his army, but was slain by Joab, see 2Sa 17:25,

and the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmaelite; he is called an Israelite, 2Sa 17:25, and so in the Targum here, he being either a proselyte, or else he was an Israelite by birth, but called an Ishmaelite, because he had dwelt among the Ishmaelites some time, as Obededom is called the Gittite for the like reason; so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it.

1 Chronicles 2:18

Ver. 18. And Caleb the son of Hezron,.... The same that is called Chelubai, **1Ch 2:9** but not the same with Caleb the son of Jephunneh, made mention of in the books of Numbers, Joshua, and Judges:

he begat children of Azubah his wife, and of Jerioth; who were both his wives; or it may be rather, since Azubah is so particularly called his wife, Jerioth might be a concubine: or of Azubah he begat Jerioth; so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; though it seems best with Hillerus {p} to interpret these names of the same person, and render the last clause, "that is, of Jerioth", of her whose name also was Jerioth, Azubah having two names; and the rather, since only the children of one are mentioned, as follows:

her sons are these; Jesher, and Shobab, and Ardon of whom we read nowhere else; the Targum says, Azubah was so called, because she was barren and despised, which this clause contradicts.

{p} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 568.

1 Chronicles 2:19

Ver. 19. And when Azubah was dead, Caleb took unto him Ephrath,.... The Targum is, "Miriam, who was called Ephrath"; but, according to Josephus {q}, it was his son Hur that was the husband of Miriam the sister of Moses:

which bare him Hur; See Gill on "Ex 17:10".

{q} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 2.

1 Chronicles 2:20

Ver. 20. And Hur begat Uri, and Uri begat Bezaleel. Who yet is not thought to be the same Bezaleel we read of in Ex 31:2 though the fathers and grandfathers of both have the same names, and were of the same tribe.

1 Chronicles 2:21

Ver. 21. And afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead,.... Which Machir was the son of Manasseh, and Gilead was his grandson, Nu 26:29 the Targum is,

"but he enticed a virgin, the daughter of Machir;"

which suggests, that he committed fornication with her, though he afterwards married her; her name is not mentioned; to me it seems to be Abiah, **1Ch 2:24** and whom the Targum there calls the daughter of Machir:

whom he married when he was sixty years old; the Targum is sixty six; this seems to be his last wife:

and she bare him Segub; the same name with the youngest son of Hiel, who rebuilt Jericho, 1Ki 16:34.

1 Chronicles 2:22

Ver. 22. And Segub begat Jair, who had twenty three cities in the land of Gilead. Which, according to Kimchi, he inherited in right of his wife, which, he says, he took out of the land of Gilead; but they seem to be rather what he took by force of arms from the former inhabitants; see Nu 32:41.

1 Chronicles 2:23

Ver. 23. And he took Geshur, and Aram, with the towns of Jair, from them,.... Cities or countries which the Geshurites and Aramaeans, or Syrians, before inhabited; and which he took from them, together with other towns, which, being taken by him, were called after his name; the Targum is, the Geshurites and Aramaeans took the villages of Jair from them; that is, from the sons of Jair in later times; see
Jos 12:5

with Kenath, and the towns thereof; which Jair took by Nobah his general, and called it after his name, Nu 32:42, even sixty cities; see **De 3:4**

all these belonged to the sons of Machir the father of Gilead: being given him by Moses, Nu 32:40.

1 Chronicles 2:24

Ver. 24. And after that Hezron was dead in Calebephratah,.... Supposed to be the same with Bethlehem; and was so called, both from Caleb the son of Hezron, and Ephrath his wife, **1Ch 2:19**,

then Abiah, Hezron's wife, bare him Ashur the father of Tekoa; being left with child by him at his death; the whole verse is paraphrased thus in the Targum,

"and after Hezron died in the house of Caleb his son in Ephrath, the wife of Hezron the daughter of Machir was left with child, and she bare to him after his death Ashur the prince of the Tekoites;"

whose son gave name very probably to the city of Tekoa, 2Sa 14:2.

1 Chronicles 2:25

Ver. 25. And the sons of Jerahmeel, the firstborn of Hezron, were Ram the firstborn,.... So called by his father after the name of his brother, see **1Ch 2:9**

and Bunah, and Oren, and Ozem, and Ahijah; or "of Ahijah", as some {r} render it, this being the name of his wife, who bare him the sons before named, since mention is made of another wife in the next verse.

{r} Junius, Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

1 Chronicles 2:26

Ver. 26. Jerahmeel had also another wife, whose name was Atarah,.... Distinct from his wife before named; or "another woman", which is a phrase for an harlot or concubine, Jud 11:2 which she might be, as Kimchi observes; though the former seems best:

she was the mother of Onam; and perhaps was the only son she bore to Jerahmeel, of whose sons see **1Ch 2:28**.

1 Chronicles 2:27

Ver. 27. And the sons of Ram the firstborn of Jerahmeel,.... By his first wife:

were Maaz, and Jamin, and Eker; of whom no other notice is taken; perhaps they left no children.

1 Chronicles 2:28

Ver. 28. And the sons of Onam,.... The son of Jerahmeel by his other wife:

were Shammai and Jada. And the sons of Shammai; Nadab, and Abishur; whose posterity are mentioned in the two following verses.

1 Chronicles 2:29

Ver. 29. And the name of the wife of Abishur was Abihail,.... Of the same name was a wife of Rehoboam, a daughter of his grandfather David's eldest brother, Eliab, 2Ch 11:18

and she bare him Ahban, and Molid; which are no more mentioned, they perhaps leaving no posterity.

1 Chronicles 2:30

Ver. 30. And the sons of Nadab,.... The eldest son of Shammai, **1Ch 2:28**,

Seled and Appaim; but Seled died without children; and therefore we hear no more of him.

1 Chronicles 2:31

Ver. 31. And the sons of Appaim; Ishi. And the sons of Ishi: Sheshan,.... Though they had each of them but one son, yet the plural number is used, their posterity being included, as in **1Ch 2:8** and so in the next clause:

and the children of Sheshan; Ahlai; who, from **1Ch 2:34** appears to be a daughter.

1 Chronicles 2:32

Ver. 32. And the sons of Jada the brother of Shammai,.... **1Ch 2:28**,

Jether and Jonathan: and Jether died without children; the posterity of Jonathan are given the next verse.

1 Chronicles 2:33

Ver. 33. And the sons of Jonathan; Peleth and Zaza,.... Of whom no mention is made elsewhere:

these were the sons of Jerahmeel; not only his immediate sons, but their posterity, called from him Jerahmeelites, 1Sa 27:10.

1 Chronicles 2:34

Ver. 34. Now Sheshan had no sons, but daughters,.... And but one of that sort, whose name was Ahlai, **1Ch 2:31** the plural being put here for the singular; or, if that is the name of a son, as some think, he died in his father's lifetime, and left no issue; so that there only remained daughters, and it seems but one by the next verse:

and Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name was Jarha; one born in his house, and brought up by him, and a proselyte, such an one as Eliezer in Abraham's family.

1 Chronicles 2:35

Ver. 35. And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant to wife,.... Having first given him his freedom, as the Targum premises; this daughter seems to be Ahlai, **1Ch 2:31** which receives confirmation from Zabad, one of the descendants of this man, **1Ch 2:36**, being said to be the son of Ahlai, 1Ch 11:41, that is, great-grandson:

and she bare him Attai; the genealogy of whose descendants is given to the end of **1Ch 2:41**, of whom no mention is made elsewhere, but of Zabad, as before observed; and, according to the Jews, it is given for the sake of Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, the last person mentioned in this genealogy; which Ishmael slew Gedaliah governor of Jerusalem, and is said to be of the seed royal, Jer 41:1.

1 Chronicles 2:36

Ver. 36 See Gill on "1Ch 2:35".

1 Chronicles 2:37

Ver. 37 See Gill on "1Ch 2:35".

1 Chronicles 2:38

Ver. 38 See Gill on "1Ch 2:35".

1 Chronicles 2:39

Ver. 39 See Gill on "1Ch 2:35".

1 Chronicles 2:40

Ver. 40 See Gill on "1Ch 2:35".

1 Chronicles 2:41

Ver. 41 See Gill on "1Ch 2:35".

1 Chronicles 2:42

Ver. 42. Now the sons of Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel,.... Called Chelubai, **1Ch 2:9** and is the same Caleb spoken of in **1Ch 2:18** and his sons next reckoned were by a third wife, Azubah, Ephrath being dead, **1Ch 2:19** and these sons were

Mesha his firstborn, which was the father of Ziph; who gave name to the city of Ziph; there were two of this name in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:24 or this is the title of Mesha, governor of the city of Ziph; so the Targum calls him, prince of the Ziphites:

and the sons of Mareshah the father of Hebron; according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, the words are to be supplied thus, "and the sons of Ziph were Mareshah the father of Hebron"; which, though sometimes the name of a city in the tribe of Judah, is here the name of a man, from whom, perhaps, the city had its name, since Hebron is said to have sons in the next verse; Jarchi makes Mesha to be the prince of Ziph, and prince of the children of Mareshah, and prince of Hebron.

1 Chronicles 2:43

Ver. 43. And the sons of Hebron: Korah, and Tappuah, and Rekem, and Shema. One of these, Tappuah, is the name of a city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:34 and there is also Bethtappuah in the same tribe, **1Ch 2:53** which one, or both, might have their name from this man; and Shema also, **1Ch 2:26**.

1 Chronicles 2:44

Ver. 44. And Shema begat Raham, the father of Jorkoam,.... Which Hillerus {s} takes to be the name of a city in the tribe of Judah; and Jarchi's note is, that wherever the word "father" is here used, it is to be understood of the prince of a city that follows:

and Rekem begat Shammai; there is a descendant of Jerahmeel, the brother of Caleb, of this name, **1Ch 2:28**.

{s} Onomast. Sacr. p. 329.

1 Chronicles 2:45

Ver. 45. And the son of Shammai was Maon,.... Who gave name to a city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:55 see 1Sa 23:24

and Maon was the father of Bethzur; prince of a very strong fortified city of this name in the same tribe, Jos 15:58, unless this was a son of Maon's, from whom the city had its name.

1 Chronicles 2:46

Ver. 46. And Ephah Caleb's concubine bare Haran, and Moza, and Gazez,.... An half-wife, or secondary wife; for though this man seems not to have had more wives than one at a time, yet he had concubines with them; we read of another after this, if not a third:

and Haran begat Gazez; whom he so named after his brother.

1 Chronicles 2:47

Ver. 47. And the sons of Jahdai,.... Who is not mentioned by this name before; perhaps the same with Moza, who might have two names, though, according to Hillerus {t}, he was the son of Moza; some take it to be the name of another of Caleb's concubines, by whom he had the six following sons:

Regem, and Jotham, and Geshan, and Pelet, and Ephah, and Shaaph; one of these, Pelet perhaps, gave name to Bethpalet in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:27.

{t} Onomast. Sacr. p. 841.

1 Chronicles 2:48

Ver. 48. Maachah, Caleb's concubine,.... Another concubine of his:

bare Sheber, and Tirhanah; or of whom Caleb begot those two; for the verb is masculine; so Kimchi.

1 Chronicles 2:49

Ver. 49. She bare also Shaaph the father of Madmannah,.... Prince of a place so called, in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:31

Sheva the father of Machbenah, and the father of Gibeah; prince of two cities of those names in the same tribe; of the latter see Jos 15:57,

and the daughter of Caleb was Achsah; Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, had a daughter of this name, but neither he nor she are here meant, Jos 15:16 but by whom Caleb, the son of Hezron, had this daughter, is not said; perhaps by Maachah his concubine last mentioned.

1 Chronicles 2:50

Ver. 50. These were the sons of Caleb the son of Hur, the firstborn of Ephratah,.... This is another Caleb, the grandson of Caleb the son of Hezron, called after his name; he was the son of Hur, the firstborn of his wife Ephratah, **1Ch 2:19**.

Shobal the father of Kirjathjearim: of the inhabitants of that place; they sprung from him; or, as the Targum, he was prince of Kirjathjearim, a city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:60.

1 Chronicles 2:51

Ver. 51. Salma the father of Bethlehem,.... Or prince of Bethlehem, as the Targum; not the same as in **1Ch 2:11** he was the son of Nahshon, this of the younger Caleb:

Hareph, the father of Bethgader; prince of a place of that name called Gedor, **1Ch 4:4**, and where this man's name is Penuel; Gedor was in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:58.

1 Chronicles 2:52

Ver. 52. And Shobal, the father of Kirjathjearim had sons,.... Which shows that Kirjathjearim is not the name of a man, or of any of Shobal's sons, who are next mentioned, but of a place of which he was prince: the first is

Haroeh, who is called Reaiah, **1Ch 4:2** a word of the same signification:

and half of the Manahethites; which Kimchi takes to be the proper name of a man called Chatzihamanaheth, another son of Shobal's; but Jarchi interprets it of the name of a place or province called Manahath, **1Ch 8:6** over half of which Haroeh was governor.

1 Chronicles 2:53

Ver. 53. And the families of Kirjathjearim,.... That dwelt there, of which Shobal was prince, and who sprung from him, are as follow:

the Ithrite, and the Puhites, and the Shumathites, and the Mishraites; who had their names from Jether, Putha, Shumath, and Mishra, descendants of Shobal:

of them came the Zareathites, and the Eshtaulites; that is, from the Mishraites sprung the inhabitants of Zeroth and Eshtaol, places in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:33.

1 Chronicles 2:54

Ver. 54. The sons of Salma,.... Another son of the younger Caleb, **1Ch 2:50** whose sons were Bethlehem, the inhabitants of the place, at least many of them, of which he was prince, **1Ch 2:51** and the Netophathite; the inhabitants of Netophah, a place in the tribe of Judah, mentioned along with Bethlehem, **Ne 7:26** these sprung from Salma:

Ataroth, the house of Joab; Ataroth seems to be the name of a place in the tribe of Judah, where the family of Joab lived, the inhabitants of which were the descendants of Salma:

and half of the Manahethites; the other half of the inhabitants of Manahath, see **1Ch 2:52**,

the Zorites; part also of them, called Zareathites, **1Ch 2:53**.

1 Chronicles 2:55

Ver. 55. And the families of the scribes which dwelt at Jabez,.... A city in Judah, the founder of which, perhaps, was Jabez, mentioned in **1Ch 4:9** in which learned men dwelt:

the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and Suchathites; who sprung from men whose names were Tira, Shimea, and Sucha; and if they were not the posterity of Salma, yet dwelt among his, and so are reckoned with them; perhaps the latter might have their name from dwelling in tents; the former clause may be rendered, "that dwelt with Jabez", who was their master, and they his scholars; in the Vulgate Latin version the words are rendered as appellatives, "singing and resounding, and dwelling in tents": Conrad Pellican, on the place, goes a middle way, and interprets these families as dwelling with Jabez their master, and they his scholars, and that they were called by their progenitors Tirathites, because learned and ingenious, and praecentors of the divine oracles; Shimeathites, because they diligently hearkened to the sacred songs, and the doctrines of the law of God; and Suchathites, because they dwelt not in cities, but in tents, despisers of all worldly things, that they might freely attend to learn:

these are the Kenites; that is, the Suchathites are the Kenites, who, it is well known, dwelt in tents, and not in cities; though Jarchi takes these Kenites to be the inhabitants of Cain, a city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:57 but they seem rather to be the Kenites that sprung from Jethro, here made mention of, because some of them dwelt in the tribe of Judah, and among the posterity of Salma, see **Jud 1:16** that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab; the prince of that family, and who from Rechab were called Rechabites, Jer 35:2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 3

This chapter gives an account of the sons of David, born to him both in Hebron and in Jerusalem, **1Ch 3:1**, and of his successors in the kingdom, to the Babylonish captivity, **1Ch 3:10**, and of his family, to the coming of the Messiah, **1Ch 3:17**.

Ver. 1-4 Now these were the sons of David,.... The six following born in Hebron, who are reckoned in the same order as in **2Sa 3:2**, only here the second son is called Daniel, who there goes by the name of Chileab; he had two names, the reason of which see there; and here David's wife, Eglah, is said in the Targum to be Michal, Saul's daughter, See Gill on "2Sa 3:5", to which is added an account of his reign both in Hebron and Jerusalem, agreeably to **2Sa 5:5**.

1 Chronicles 3:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "1Ch 3:1".

1 Chronicles 3:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "1Ch 3:1".

1 Chronicles 3:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "1Ch 3:1".

1 Chronicles 3:5

Ver. 5-8. And these were born unto him in Jerusalem,.... Whose names follow,

in all nine; there are but seven mentioned in **2Sa 5:14** the reason of which see in the notes there;
See Gill on "2Sa 5:14".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:15".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:16". it may be observed that Bathsheba is here called Bathshua, and her father Ammiel, whose name is Eliam in 2Sa 11:3, names of much the same signification.

1 Chronicles 3:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "1Ch 3:5".

1 Chronicles 3:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "1Ch 3:5".

1 Chronicles 3:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "1Ch 3:5"

1 Chronicles 3:9

Ver. 9. These were all the sons of David,.... By his wives:

beside the sons of the concubines; who are not reckoned, and how many they were is not known; he had ten concubines at least, 2Sa 15:16 and 2Sa 20:3.

And Tamar their sister; not the sister of the sons of the concubines, but of his other sons, and only of Absalom by the mother's side, of whom see 2Sa 13:1.

1 Chronicles 3:10

Ver. 10-14. And Solomon's son was Rehoboam,.... From hence to the end of the fourteenth verse, David's successors are reckoned, according to the order of their reign, unto Josiah and his sons:

Solomon, Rehoboam, Abia, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, in all sixteen.

1 Chronicles 3:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "1Ch 3:10".

1 Chronicles 3:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "1Ch 3:10".

1 Chronicles 3:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "1Ch 3:10".

1 Chronicles 3:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "1Ch 3:10".

1 Chronicles 3:15

Ver. 15. And the sons of Josiah were, the firstborn Johanan,.... Of whom we nowhere else read; he probably died before his father Josiah:

the second Jehoiakim: whose name was Eliakim, changed for the former by the king of Egypt, when, he deposed his younger brother, and set him on the throne, 2Ki 23:24

the third Zedekiah; whose name was Mattaniah, but changed by the king of Babylon, when he placed him on the throne in the room of his brother's son, 2Ki 24:17,

the fourth Shallum: the same with Jehoahaz, who was first made king in the room of his father; but reigning so short a time, and making so mean a figure, is mentioned last, see Jer 22:11.

1 Chronicles 3:16

Ver. 16. And the sons of Jehoiakim; Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son. This is not the Zedekiah mentioned in the preceding verse; for he was not the son but the uncle of Jeconiah, unless he should be called his son because he succeeded him in the kingdom; but he seems to be another of that name, nowhere else mentioned, and not the son of Jeconiah in any sense; he is not reckoned among them in the following verses, but of Jehoiakim.

1 Chronicles 3:17

Ver. 17. And the sons of Jeconiah,.... For though he was pronounced childless, Jer 22:30, that respects not his having no children in any sense, but none to succeed him in the kingdom:

Assir; which signifies bound, or a prisoner, because, as Kimchi thinks, he was born in a prison, his father then being a captive in Babylon; but rather it refers to Jeconiah himself, and is an appellation of him, and to be rendered,

the sons of Jeconiah the captive: which agrees best with the Hebrew accents:

Salathiel his son; the same that is called Shealtiel, **Hag 1:1** who was both the proper son of Jeconiah, and who succeeded him, as some think, in the honour and dignity the king of Babylon raised him to.

1 Chronicles 3:18

Ver. 18. Malchiram also,.... That is, was a son of Jeconiah as well as Salathiel, and so the rest that follow:

and Pedaiah, and Shenazar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah; Kimchi says these were the sons of Salathiel; but I rather think they were the sons of Jeconiah, and brethren of Salathiel, because of what follows.

1 Chronicles 3:19

Ver. 19-24. And the sons of Pedaiah were, Zerubbabel and Shimei,.... Here arises a difficulty, since elsewhere Zerubbabel is said to be the son of Shealtiel, **Hag 1:1** some think this is not the same Zerubbabel here as there; so Grotius {u}; but I see no reason for that; but this difficulty may be removed by observing, that if Pedaiah was a son of Salathiel, as Kimchi thinks, then Zerubbabel, being his grandson, may be called his son, as grandsons are sometimes called sons in Scripture; or rather, Salathiel, having no children, adopted Zerubbabel, his brother's son, and made him successor in the government; so that he was the son of Pedaiah by birth, and of Salathiel by adoption; or else Salathiel dying without children, his brother Pedaiah, according to the law, married his widow, and by her had Zerubbabel, who was the proper son of Pedaiah, and the legal son of Salathiel:

and the sons of Zerubbabel; Meshullam: who is called Abiud, **Mt 1:13** another son of his, with their father, is mentioned in this verse, and five more in the next. From hence to the end of the chapter, the genealogy is carried on from the captivity of Babylon, out of which Zerubbabel came, to the coming of Christ; and if Ezra was the writer of this book, as is generally thought, who was contemporary with Zerubbabel, this account must be written by another hand: and it may be observed, that it is carried on in the same number of generations as in Matthew; and here it stands thus:

Zerubbabel, Hananiah, Jesaiah, Rephaiah, Arnan, Obadiah, Shecaniah, Shemaiah, Neariah, Elioenai, Anani; in Matthew thus, "Zerubbabel, Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Sadoc, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, Jacob, Joseph"; the difference in names may be accounted for by their having two names; and it is remarkable that the Targum makes Anani to be the King Messiah, who was to be revealed; which, though it makes one generation less to his time, yet plainly shows that the Jews expected the Messiah to come at the end of this genealogy, and about the time Jesus the true Messiah did. Anani is reckoned by other Jews a name of the Messiah, who is said to come in the clouds of heaven, which "Anani" signifies, See Gill on "Da 7:13".

{u} In Luc. 3.

1 Chronicles 3:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "1Ch 3:19".

1 Chronicles 3:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "1Ch 3:19".

1 Chronicles 3:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "1Ch 3:19".

1 Chronicles 3:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "1Ch 3:19".

1 Chronicles 3:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "1Ch 3:19".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 4

In this chapter is a further account of the tribe of Judah, and of some principal families in it, **1Ch 4:1** and of the tribe of Simeon, their families, cities, and villages, **1Ch 4:24** and of the enlargement of their borders, and conquest of the Amalekites, **1Ch 4:39**.

Ver. 1. The sons of Judah: Pharez,.... The posterity of Judah in the line of Pharez, for he only is mentioned:

Hezron, and Carmi, and Hur, and Shobal. Hezron was the son of Pharez, and Carmi is supposed to be Chelubai, or Caleb, the son of Hezron; and Hur the son of Caleb; and Shobal was the son of the second Caleb the son of Hur; see **1Ch 2:5**.

1 Chronicles 4:2

Ver. 2. And Reaiah the son of Shobal begat Jahath,.... Reaiah is the same with Haroeh, **1Ch 2:52** the names are of the same signification:

and Jahath begat Ahumai, and Lahad. These are the families of the Zorathites; who inhabited Zoreah, as the Targum, at least part of it; see **1Ch 2:53**.

1 Chronicles 4:3

Ver. 3. And these were of the father of Etam,.... Or of the prince of Etam: or, as the Targum, these are princes that dwelt in Etam, a place not far from Zorah, Jud 15:8 and is mentioned with Bethlehem and Tekoa in the tribe of Judah, 2Ch 11:6, namely, which follow:

Jezreel, and Ishma, and Idbash; these were the sons of the governor of Etam:

and the name of their sister was Hazelelponi; who, perhaps, was a person of great note in those days, though now unknown; indeed, a Jewish chronologer {w} tells us, that the mother of Samson was Hazalelponith, of the tribe of Judah.

{w} Juchasin, fol. 10. 2.

1 Chronicles 4:4

Ver. 4. And Penuel the father of Gedor,.... The prince of that place, according to some, and the same with Hareph, **1Ch 2:51**,

and Ezer the father of Hushah: thought to be the same with Shuah, **1Ch 4:11**,

these are the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephratah: Caleb's wife, **1Ch 2:19** the Targum adds, the same with Miriam; and so other Jewish writers {x} say, Miriam had two names, and one was Ephratah; though Josephus makes {y} Hur to be her husband, and not her son, as here:

who was the father of Bethlehem; of the inhabitants of that city, at least part of them, or prince of that place, as his grandson Salma also was, **1Ch 2:51**.

{x} Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 90. 4. Yalkut in 1 Chron. ii. 19. {y} Antiqu. l.

3. c. 2.

1 Chronicles 4:5

Ver. 5. And Ashur the father of Tekoa,.... A son of Hezron by Abiah, **1Ch 2:24**

had two wives, Helah and Naarah; as Lamech had, polygamy not being reckoned unlawful in those times.

1 Chronicles 4:6

Ver. 6. And Naarah bare him Ahuzam, and Hepher, and Temeni, and Haahashtari,.... Of whom we have no account elsewhere:

these were the sons of Naarah; the second wife of Ashur.

1 Chronicles 4:7

Ver. 7. And the sons of Helah,....] The other wife:

were Zereth, and Zoar, and Ethnan: nowhere else mentioned.

1 Chronicles 4:8

Ver. 8. And Coz,.... Another son of Helah, and brother of the before mentioned:

begat Anub, and Zobebah; of whom we nowhere else read:

and the families of Aharhel, the son of Harum; these were of the posterity of Coz; the Targum is,

"and the family of Aharhel, this is Hur, the firstborn of Miriam;"

which is not at all probable.

1 Chronicles 4:9

Ver. 9. And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren,.... The Targum adds,

"and wiser in the law than his brethren;"

or he might be a man of great wealth and riches, or of great strength and courage, all which make a man honourable; or he may be so called, because a praying man, as follows, a man of devotion and religion, a man of God, see **1Sa 9:6**, but who he was is not easy to say, probably a son or brother of Harum, or however that belonged to one of the families of Aharhel, mentioned in the preceding verse; for that he was Othniel, as say the Targumist and other Jewish writers {z}, is not probable, and besides is after spoken of distinct from him, **1Ch 4:13**

and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, because I bare him with sorrow; either with sorrow for her husband, being dead, or by reason of very sharp pains she endured at the birth of him; he was another Benoni.

{z} T. Bab. Temurah, fol. 16. 1.

1 Chronicles 4:10

Ver. 10. And Jabez called on the God of Israel,.... Or prayed to him, as the Targum; though some understand it as a vow, promising what he would do if God would do thus and thus for him; the Syriac and Arabic versions read in the third person, taking it to be what others, his parents and friends, wished for him,

let him bless thee,.... but they are doubtless his own words, and a supplication of his to the Lord:

saying, oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed; the Targum adds, with children; but he no doubt prayed for greater blessings than any outward or temporal ones are, even spiritual blessings, covenant blessings, the sure mercies of David, which are solid, substantial, durable, and irreversible:

and enlarge my coast; the Targum is,

"multiply my borders with disciples."

It may be understood of an enlargement of the borders of his country, by expelling the Canaanites that might dwell in it, and of an increase of his worldly substance for good ends and purposes; or rather of a spiritual enlargement by deliverance from spiritual enemies, and of grace as to exercise; and particularly of spiritual light and knowledge, and of the affections and desires of the soul after divine things, see **Ps 4:1**

and that thine hand might be with me; the Targum adds, in business, prospering and succeeding him; the sense may be, that his hand of providence might be with him to protect him, of grace and love to comfort and help him in every time of need, of wisdom to direct him, and of power to keep him:

and that thou wouldest keep me from evil; from the evil of affliction, and especially from the evil of sin, and from the evil one, Satan, and from all evil men and evil company; the Targum is,

"and make me companions such as I am:"

that it may not grieve me; alluding to his name Jabez, which he had from the sorrow and grief of his mother; and nothing is more grieving to a good man than the evil of sin, so contrary to the nature and will of God, being committed against a God of infinite love, grace, and mercy, whereby the name, ways, and truths of Christ are dishonoured, and the Spirit of God grieved, and saints are bereaved of much comfort; and therefore desire to be kept from it, knowing they cannot keep themselves, but the Lord can and will, at least from the tyranny of it, and destruction by it: the Targum is,

"lest the evil figment (or corruption of nature) should move or provoke me:"

and God granted him that which he requested; as he does whatever is asked in faith, according to his will, and will make for his glory, and the good of his people; see **1Jo 5:14**.

1 Chronicles 4:11

Ver. 11. And Chelub the brother of Shuah begat Mehir,.... If Shuah is the same with Hushah, **1Ch 4:4**, then Chelub was the son of Ezer:

which was the father of Eshton; not the prince of a place called Eshton, as Vatablus; for it is the name of a man, the son of Mehir, and who in the next verse is said to beget sons.

1 Chronicles 4:12

Ver. 12. And Eshton begat Bethrapha,.... Or the family of Rapha:

and Paseah, and Tehinnah the father of Irnahash; or the city of Nahash; Tehinnah seems to have been the prince or governor of a city, so called:

these are the men of Rechah; these sons of Eshton dwelt in a place called Rechah; the Targum, without any reason, says, these are the men of the great sanhedrim.

1 Chronicles 4:13

Ver. 13. And the sons of Kenaz,.... Who was either the son of Chelub, or of Eshton:

Othniel, and Seraiah; the first of these is he who is mentioned, Jos 15:17 and was the first judge in Israel:

and the son of Othniel, Hathath; and the next mentioned.

1 Chronicles 4:14

Ver. 14. And Meonothai,.... Another son of Othniel:

begat Ophrah; and Seraiah, the brother of Othniel, begat Joab; not David's general, but another of the same name, who lived long before him, see **1Ch 2:54**

the father of the valley of Charashim: of the inhabitants of the valley, or the prince of them, called the valley of craftsmen, Ne 11:35 the reason of which is here given:

for they were craftsmen; that dwelt in it, carpenters and smiths, both which the word signifies, men that wrought in stone, wood, and iron.

1 Chronicles 4:15

Ver. 15. And the sons of Caleb the son of Jephunneh,.... Jephunneh is not the same with Hezron, as the Targum, but another son of Kenaz, hence called the Kenezite, Jos 14:6 and brother of Othniel; and Caleb his son is the same that was sent one of the spies of the land of Canaan by Moses, see Nu 13:6

his sons were Iru, Elah, and Naam; of whom we nowhere else read:

and the sons of Elah, even Kenaz; another Kenaz, or rather it should be read Uknaz; so Jarchi and Kimchi.

1 Chronicles 4:16

Ver. 16. And the sons of Jehaleleel,.... Who probably was the son of Uknaz:

Ziph, and Ziphah, Tiria, and Asareel; there were two cities in the tribe of Judah of the name of Ziph, Jos 15:24, which might be called from these men, or from Ziph in **1Ch 2:42**.

1 Chronicles 4:17

Ver. 17. And the sons of Ezra,.... Who was perhaps the son of Asareel, last mentioned:

Jether, and Mered, and Epher, and Jalon; only one of them, Mered, is after mentioned:

and she bare Miriam; which is not the name of a woman, but of a man, as Kimchi observes; and, according to him, his mother was the wife of Mered, which he gathers from the next verse; though she seems to be the wife of Ezra, who bare him other sons:

and Shammai, and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa; a prince of a city in the tribe of Judah, so called, Jos 15:50.

1 Chronicles 4:18

Ver. 18. And his wife Jehudijah,.... Another wife of Ezra; or, according to Kimchi, of Mered; a Jewess, as the word is by some rendered, to distinguish her from another wife, an Egyptian, in the latter part of the verse:

bare Jered the father of Gedor, and Heber the father of Socho, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah; who were princes, as Jarchi seems rightly to observe; of several cities of these names in the tribe of Judah, as of Gedor, see Jos 15:58, of Socoh, Jos 15:35, of Zanoah, Jos 15:34, the Targum interprets the names of all these men of Moses, whom Pharaoh's daughter brought up; and so other Jewish writers {a}, into which mistake they were led by what follows:

and these are the sons of Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh, which Mered took; that is, to wife; this Mered was one of the sons of Ezra, **1Ch 4:17** the Targum, and other Jewish writers {b}, say this was Caleb, called Mered, because he rebelled against the counsel of the spies; but this contradicts their other notion of Jehudijah, or Bithiah, Pharaoh's daughter, whom he married, the one who brought up Moses, since Moses was elder than Caleb; but Bithiah, whom Mered married, was not a daughter of Pharaoh king of Egypt, but of an Israelite of this name; her sons are supposed to be those in the latter part of **1Ch 4:17**.

{a} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 13. 1. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 146. 3. {b} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 2. & Megillah, fol. 13. 1.

1 Chronicles 4:19

Ver. 19. And the sons of his wife Hodiah,.... Another wife of Mered. Hillerus {c} takes her to be the same with Jehudijah, **1Ch 4:18**, though some {d} take Hodiah to be the name of a man, and read the words, "and the sons of the wife of Hodiah"; which wife of Hodiah was

the sister of Naham; or rather Achotnaham, we render the sister of Naham, is the name of the first son of Hodiah, as some think {e}:

the father of Keilah the Garmite; prince of the city of Keilah, in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:44 who sprung from the family of Garmi:

and Eshtemoa the Maachathite; the father or prince of the inhabitants of Eshtemoa, another city in the same tribe, see **1Ch 4:17** who sprung from Maachah, see **1Ch 2:48**.

{c} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 836. {d} Michaelis in loc. {e} Beckii Not. in Targ. 1 Chron. iv. 19.

1 Chronicles 4:20

Ver. 20. And the sons of Shimon,.... Perhaps another son of Mered by his last wife, or the same with Shammai, **1Ch 4:17** were

Amnon, and Rinnah, Benhanan, and Tilon; nowhere else mentioned:

and the sons of Ishi: who it may be was the brother of Shimon or Tilon: were

Zoheth, and Benzoheth; of whom we know no more than their names.

1 Chronicles 4:21

Ver. 21. The sons of Shelah, the son of Judah, were,.... The genealogy of the posterity of Judah, in the lines of Pharez and Zerah, being given, and very largely in that of the former, because of the honour of David, and his kingdom, which sprang from thence, as Jarchi observes, and also the King Messiah, the writer returns to give an account of his posterity by Shelah, a son he had by the daughter of Shuah, Ge 38:2 and the only one that had children: which were as follow,

Er the father of Lecah: prince of a city of this name in the tribe of Judah; Shelah gave him the name of Er, in memory of his brother, Ge 38:3,

and Laadah the father of Mareshah; prince of a city of this name in the same tribe, Jos 15:44

and the families of the house of them that wrought fine linen, of the house of Ashbea; which last clause explains what house these families were of, which sprang from Shelah, and were employed in making fine linen; the Targum adds, for the garments of kings and priests, or for the curtains of the tabernacle, as Jarchi; for not with the Egyptians and Greeks only fine linen was made, but among the Hebrews, as Pausanias {f} testifies.

{f} Eliac. 1. sive, l. 5. p. 294.

1 Chronicles 4:22

Ver. 22. And Jokim,.... The Vulgate Latin version is,

and he that made the sun to stand: as if Joshua was meant; and in the Talmud it is {g} said Jokim, this is Joshua, who confirmed the oath to the Gibeonites; and the Targum here is,

"and the prophets of the scribes that sprang from the posterity of Joshua;"

but Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim, and not of Judah; though some interpret it of Elimelech, as Lyra observes {h}, of whom the fable is, that the sun stood still at his prayers, as it did in Joshua's time, to convert the men of Bethlehem; but Jokim is no doubt the proper name of some famous man or family that descended from Shelah:

and the men of Chozeba: which signifies a lie; and the Targum interprets it of the Gibeonites, who lied to Joshua; but those were Canaanites, and not of the posterity of Shelah, and tribe of Judah; Chezib, or Achzib, a city in the tribe of Judah, very probably is meant, as Kimchi, the very place where Shelah was born, Ge 38:5 and where dwelt some of his posterity:

and Joash and Saraph, who had the dominion in Moab; some render the word, "which married in Moab"; and so the Targum interprets it of Mahlon and Chilion, who took wives of the daughters of Moab; but rather it is to be understood of some who were governors in Moab in the times of David, when Moab was subdued by him, **2Sa 8:2** or however were such, who, at one time or another, made war with Moab, and overcame them:

and Jashubilehem: which the Targumist understands of Boaz, prince of the wise men of the school of Bethlehem, and the Talmudists {i} of Ruth, that dwelt in Bethlehem; and may be interpreted of some of the inhabitants of that place which sprang from Shelah; or rather is the name of a single man, famous in his time, though not now known:

and these are ancient things; an account of persons that lived in ancient times, and which the writer of this book gives not on his own knowledge, but by tradition, or rather by inspiration.

{g} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 2. {h} So Heb. in Hieron. Trad. Heb. in Paralip. fol. 81. M. {i} Ut supra. (T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 2.)

1 Chronicles 4:23

Ver. 23. These were the potters,.... Or are the potters; the posterity of those men, who were so famous in their day, are now of mean employments: some of them made earthen pots; and some of them

dwelt among plants and hedges; or were employed in planting gardens and orchards, and making fences for them; or, as others think, "dwelt in Netaim and Gadara", cities in the tribe of Judah:

there they dwelt with the king for his work; to make pots, plant gardens, and set hedges for him; either for the king of Judah, or it may be for the king of Babylon, where they were carried captive, and now chose to remain, doing those servile works for the king, without the city, in the fields.

1 Chronicles 4:24

Ver. 24. The sons of Simeon,.... The account of whom, next to the tribe of Judah, is given before Reuben, because its inheritance lay in the tribe of Judah, Jos 19:1 his sons were Nemuel, the same with Jemuel, Ge 46:10

and Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, and Shaul; who, in the place referred to, is said to be the son of a Canaanitish woman; and Jarib and Zerah are the same with Jachin and Zohar there: and Obed is here omitted, it may be because he died without issue; see Nu 26:12.

1 Chronicles 4:25

Ver. 25. Shallum his son,.... The son of Shaul, and Mibsam was the son of Shallum, and Mishma the son of Mibsam.

1 Chronicles 4:26

Ver. 26. And the sons of Mishma,.... These were Hamuel, Zacchur, and Shimei.

1 Chronicles 4:27

Ver. 27. And Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters,.... None of which are mentioned by name:

but his brethren had not many children: Hamuel and Zacchur:

neither did all their family multiply like to the children of Judah: to show the fruitfulness and great increase of which tribe, the genealogical account of it, in this and the two preceding chapters, is given.

1 Chronicles 4:28

Ver. 28. And they dwelt at Beersheba,.... posterity of Simeon; and this and the other places of their habitation are mentioned in the same order, and with very little variation of names to the end of **1Ch 4:31**, as in Jos 19:2 and here, at **1Ch 4:31** it is added,

these were their cities unto the reign of David; when, according to Kimchi, and other Jewish writers, he expelled them from thence, and restored them to the tribe of Judah.

1 Chronicles 4:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "1Ch 4:28"

1 Chronicles 4:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "1Ch 4:28"

1 Chronicles 4:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "1Ch 4:28"

1 Chronicles 4:32

Ver. 32. And their villages were Etam, and Ain, Rimmon, and Tochen, and Ashan, five cities. There are but four mentioned in Jos 19:7 one might be added since, or new built, namely, Tochen; these, according to Kimchi, were all that remained for them to dwell in, in the times of David; and therefore they were obliged to seek out for new settlements for themselves and flocks, as in **1Ch 4:39**, &c.

1 Chronicles 4:33

Ver. 33. And all their villages that were round about the same cities, unto Baal,.... The same with Baalathbeer, Jos 19:8

these were their habitations, and their genealogy; as before described, until the times of David.

1 Chronicles 4:34

Ver. 34-37. And Meshobab, and Jamlech,.... These, with those that follow to the end of **1Ch 4:37** were famous men in the tribe of Simeon, of rank and dignity, and eminent for courage and valour, as the latter part of the chapter testifies, though they are nowhere else taken notice of. Jamlech, as Fabritius {k} observes, is not very different from Jamblichus, the name of a famous Platonic philosopher.

{k} Bibliothec. Gr. l. 4. c. 28. p. 294.

1 Chronicles 4:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "1Ch 4:34".

1 Chronicles 4:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "1Ch 4:34".

1 Chronicles 4:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "1Ch 4:34".

1 Chronicles 4:38

Ver. 38. These mentioned by [their] names [were] princes in their families,.... The principal men of them, heads of their fathers' houses:

and the house of their fathers increased greatly; by them, so that they were obliged to seek out for new habitations, as follows.

1 Chronicles 4:39

Ver. 39. And they went to the entrance of Gedor,.... There was a city of this name in the tribe of Judah, **1Ch 4:18** but this seems to be further off, and perhaps is the same with Gedaris, mentioned by Strabo {l} along with Azotus and Askelon, cities that belonged to the Philistines; since it was inhabited by the posterity of Ham, of whom the Philistines were, as in the following verse:

even unto the east side of the valley; which was near to Gedor, and a suitable place:

to seek pasture for their flocks; their sheep and goats.

{l} Geograph. l. 16. p. 522.

1 Chronicles 4:40

Ver. 40. And they found fat pasture and good,.... In or near the valley of Gedor:

and the land was wide, and quiet, and peaceable; there was room enough for them and their flocks, and they had no enemies on either side to disturb them:

for [they] of Ham had dwelt there of old; either the Canaanites who descended from Canaan the son of Ham, and had never been expelled from thence; or the Philistines, who were a colony of the Egyptians, the posterity of Ham; and these inhabitants being of this cursed race, the Simeonites scrupled not to dispossess them.

1 Chronicles 4:41

Ver. 41. And these written by name,.... Before in **1Ch 4:34**,

came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; as Dr. Lightfoot {m} thinks, not within the first fourteen years of his reign, when the Syrian army was abroad, and none dost peep out, but in his last fifteen years, when the army was destroyed and gone:

and smote their tents; the tents of those who dwelt there for the sake of feeding their flocks, and whose pasturage the Simeonites wanted:

and the habitations that were found there; or the Meunaim or Maonites, which the Septuagint Version here calls Mineans, a people sometimes mentioned along with the Philistines, and others: see
Jud 10:11

and destroyed them utterly unto this day: to the writing of this book; they had not then recovered their possessions:

and dwelt in their room, because there was pasture there for their flocks; which was the thing they were in search of.

{m} Works, vol. 1. p. 111.

1 Chronicles 4:42

Ver. 42. And some of them, even of the sons of Simeon, five hundred men went to Mount Seir,.... In the land of Edom:

having for their captains Pelatiah, and Neariah, and Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi; these four captains are said, by the ancient Rabbins, to be of the tribe of Manasseh, as Kimchi observes; see **1Ch 5:24** but as the five hundred they were at the head of were of the sons of Simeon, the captains, no doubt, were of the same race.

1 Chronicles 4:43

Ver. 43. And they smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped,.... That escaped the sword of Saul; though, according to the Jews {n}, 100,000 of them were slain by him in one day; and of the sword of David, though he is said not to leave man or woman alive, 1Sa 27:8

and dwelt there unto this day; in the cities of the Amalekites, even of the posterity of the above; who were some of the remnant of Israel, that were not carried away by the king of Assyria, and who dwelt here after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, even in the times of Ezra, the writer of this book; see 2Ch 34:9.

{n} Midrash Esther, fol. 93. 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 5

This chapter relates the genealogy of the tribes that lived on the other side Jordan; of the Reubenites, **1Ch 5:1**, of the Gadites, **1Ch 5:11** of the half tribe of Manasseh, **1Ch 5:23** and of their war with the Hagarites, in conjunction with each other, and their conquest of them, **1Ch 5:18** and who for their sins were all carried captive by the king of Assyria, **1Ch 5:25**.

Ver. 1. Now the sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel,.... Are as follow in **1Ch 5:3** where the account begins; for what comes between this and that is in a parenthesis:

for he was the firstborn; of Jacob by his wife Leah; that must be owned, and Jacob allows it, Ge 49:3 and yet the genealogy in this book begins not with him, as might on that account be expected; the reason follows:

but forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed: by lying with Bilhah his concubine:

his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; his beloved son by his beloved wife Rachel and so had a double portion given him; his two sons being equally ranked with the other sons of Jacob, and became distinct tribes, and each had their lot in the land of Canaan, see Ge 48:5 compared with De 21:17

and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright; or, "but the genealogy", &c. {o}; neither after the birthright of Reuben, which he had by nature, being Jacob's firstborn; nor after the birthright of Joseph, which be had by his father's gift, as it might be thought it should; the reason of which follows.

{o} "Nee tamen", Tigurine version.

1 Chronicles 5:2

Ver. 2. For Judah prevailed above his brethren,.... That is, the tribe of Judah prevailed above the rest in number, in valour, and courage, and in dignity; wherefore the genealogy is not reckoned according to birthright, but dignity and dominion; hence this genealogical account began with Judah,

[because] of him [came] the chief ruler; David and the kings of Judah, his successors; and above all, from him the Prince Messiah was to spring, and did, according to Ge 49:10 so both the Syriac and Arabic versions read,

"out of Judah should go forth the King Messiah:"

but the birthright [was] Joseph's or "though" {p} it was; yet Judah having the dominion and dignity, that tribe is first genealogized.

{p} Licet, ibid. (Tigurine version)

1 Chronicles 5:3

Ver. 3. The sons, [I say], of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, were, Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. As in Ge 46:9.

1 Chronicles 5:4

Ver. 4,5. The sons of Joel,.... Who was either the son of Carmi last mentioned, or rather of Hanoch, Reuben's firstborn, since the descendants of him were the princes of the tribe: his posterity in succession were, Shemaiah, Cog, Shimei, Micah, Reaia, Baal, Beerah; of whom we know no more than their names, and by these the descent is carried down to the captivity by Tiglathpileser, as follows.

1 Chronicles 5:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "1Ch 5:4".

1 Chronicles 5:6

Ver. 6. Beerah his son,.... The last of Joel's posterity, who, according to the Targum and other Jewish writers {q} was a prophet, and the father of Hosea, see **Ho 1:1** but neither the name, title, time, nor tribe, agree:

whom Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria carried away captive; the same with Tiglathpileser by a transposition of letters, 2Ki 15:29 and is read the same here in the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic versions:

he [was] prince of the Reubenites; at that time; that is, Beerah was.

{q} Aben Ezra in Hos. i. 1. Pesikta apud Abarbinel. in ib.

1 Chronicles 5:7

Ver. 7. And his brethren by their families,.... Either the brethren of Beerah, or the rest of the posterity of Reuben:

(when the genealogy of their generations was reckoned;) either in the times of Jotham and Jeroboam, **1Ch 5:17** or at the time of their captivity, as in the preceding verse:

[were] the chief, Jehiel, and Zechariah; these were the principals or heads of their families.

1 Chronicles 5:8

Ver. 8. And Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel,.... The pedigree of Bela, another principal man in the tribe of Reuben, is traced up to Joel the father of Shema; the same with Shemaiah, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, **1Ch 5:4**

who dwelt in Aroer; which belonged to the tribe of Gad, and was rebuilt by them, Nu 32:34 wherefore Kimchi observes, it may be interpreted, either from Aroer, or on the border of it, Bela dwelt:

even unto Nebo, and Baalmeon; of which See Gill on "Nu 32:38".

1 Chronicles 5:9

Ver. 9. And eastward he inhabited,.... Either Bela, or the tribe of Reuben:

unto the entering in of the wilderness; the wilderness of Kedemoth, which was near to Sihon king of Heshbon, whose land the Reubenites inhabited, **De 2:26**

from the river Euphrates; a learned man {r} thinks that this river Phrat was different from the Euphrates near Babylon, which was northward, since this was to the east or southeast:

because their cattle were multiplied in the land of Gilead; therefore their habitation was extended further, even to the river Euphrates, as in the days of David and Solomon, **2Sa 8:3**.

{r} Texelii Phoenix, l. 3. c. 7. p. 272.

1 Chronicles 5:10

Ver. 10. And in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagarites,.... Not with the Hungarians, as the Targum, a people not then in being; but the Ishmaelites, so called because they descended from Hagar {s}, Sarah's maid; the same that are placed by Pliny {t} and Ptolemy {u} in Arabia, near the Batanaeans, or inhabitants of Bashan; with those the Reubenites made war, in conjunction with the Gadites and half tribe of Manasseh, **1Ch 5:18**, perhaps this war might be much about the time Saul relieved Jabeshgilead, and beat the Ammonites, 1Sa 11:1 by which the tribes on that side Jordan might be encouraged to it:

who fell by their hand; were worsted and conquered by them:

and they dwelt in their tents; in which the Arabians used to dwell, because of their flocks; hence some of them were called Scenites:

throughout all the east [land] of Gilead; or rather throughout all the land of the Hagarites, which lay to the east of Gilead, as the Vulgate Latin version; or otherwise the land of Gilead itself was their original possession.

{s} So David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 45. 4. {t} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {u} Geograph. l. 5. c. 19.

1 Chronicles 5:11

Ver. 11. And the children of Gad dwelt over against them,.... Or by them, the Reubenites; and one part of Gilead was given them between them, and the other to the half tribe of Manasseh:

in the land of Bashan, unto Salcah; for though all Bashan is said to be given to the half tribe of Manasseh, **De 3:13** yet that is to be understood of the greater part of it; all of that which belonged to Og, but what did not, the Gadites, either from the first, or in later times, inhabited even as far as Salcah, which was one of the cities of Og, **De 3:10** and which Benjamin of Tudela {w} makes mention of, being called by the same name in his days.

{w} Itinerar. p. 57.

1 Chronicles 5:12

Ver. 12. Joel the chief,.... In this and the following verse are reckoned up the principal men in the tribe of Gad, and the chief of all was Joel, another from him in the tribe of Reuben, **1Ch 5:4** and Shapham the next; the second chief man, from whom, Reland {x} conjectures, Shophan, a city in the tribe of Gad, had its name, Nu 32:35

and Jaanai; from whom Danjaan might be called, as Michaelis intimates, 2Sa 24:6

and Shaphat in Bashan; not Shaphat the father of Elisha, according to a tradition of the Jews, mentioned by Kimchi; which is not at all probable.

{x} Palestin. Illustrat. par. 2. p. 602.

1 Chronicles 5:13

Ver. 13. And their brethren of the house of their fathers,.... Who were also men of eminence and note in them:

were, Michael, and Meshullam, and Shebai, and Jorai, and Jachan, and Zia, and Heber, seven; so they are as here mentioned by name.

1 Chronicles 5:14

Ver. 14. These are the children of Abihail the son of Huri,.... That is, the seven before mentioned; they were the posterity of Abihail, whose pedigree is traced from his father Huri to Buz, the intermediate progenitors being Jaroah, Gilead, Michael, Jeshishai, Jahdo.

1 Chronicles 5:15

Ver. 15. Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, chief of the house of their fathers. Which Ahi was a principal man in the families the seven above men belonged to; besides them, or those three, were everyone of them heads of families.

1 Chronicles 5:16

Ver. 16. And they dwelt in Gilead,.... In that part of it which belonged to the tribe of Gad:

in Bashan, and in her towns; See Gill on "1Ch 5:11",

and in all the suburbs of Sharon, upon their borders; there were two Sharons, one to the west of the land of Israel near the Mediterranean sea, which is mentioned in **Ac 9:35** as near Lydda and Joppa; and the other to the east or northeast, beyond Jordan, which is here meant.

1 Chronicles 5:17

Ver. 17. All these were reckoned by genealogies,.... All before mentioned:

in the days of Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel; not that those two kings reigned at the same time, and one and the same reckoning is meant; but, as Dr. Lightfoot {y} observes, there were two reckonings; his words are,

"in the days of Jotham there was an account taken of the families of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh, **1Ch 5:17** and so had there been in the days of Jeroboam the second; then at their restoring by Jeroboam out of the hands of Hamath and Syria, and now at their arming against the Assyrian, under whom they fell in the time of Pekah, and are never again restored to Israel."

{y} Works, vol. 1. p. 100.

1 Chronicles 5:18

Ver. 18. The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh,.... These all joined together, living together on the one side of Jordan:

of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war; strong able bodied men; and not only able to bear and carry arms, sword in one hand, and shield in another; but were men of valour and courage, and had military skill, and knew how to handle their arms to advantage:

[were] four and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore, that went out to the war: that used to go out when there was occasion, and did at this time.

1 Chronicles 5:19

Ver. 19. And they made war with the Hagarites,.... Before mentioned, **1Ch 5:19**

with Jetur, and Nephish: with the posterity of these men, who were sons of Ishmael, Ge 25:15 and so was Nodab; perhaps the same with Kedemah, mentioned along with the other two there; so Hillerus {z} thinks.

{z} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 554.

1 Chronicles 5:20

Ver. 20. And they were helped against them,.... The Israelites were helped against the Ishmaelites, to fight with them, and overcome them; either by their brethren of the house of Israel, as the Targum, those on this side Jordan; or rather by the Lord, to whom they cried, and who was entreated by them as follows:

and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that [were] with them; they and their confederates and auxiliaries, the Ituraeans, &c.

for they cried to God in the battle; which at first seems to have gone against them; and they prayed to God, as the Targum, while they were fighting, that he would appear for them, and give them victory:

and he was entreated of them; he received their prayer, as the same paraphrase; he heard them, and answered them:

because they put their trust in him; in his power and providence, and not in their own strength, courage, and military skill; the Targum is,

"because they trusted in his word."

1 Chronicles 5:21

Ver. 21. And they took away their cattle,.... Which they brought with them, and they found in their camp when they fled, or in their fields:

of their camels fifty thousand; with which Arabia abounded, and were fit to travel with in those hot and desert countries, being strong to carry burdens, and able to bear much thirst. The Arabians, as Diodorus Siculus {a} reports, brought up camels, for almost all the uses of life; as for the sake of their milk and flesh to feed upon, as well as for carrying burdens in common; and which in time of war they loaded with provisions for the army, and fought upon, one of them carrying two archers with their backs to each other, the one to meet the enemy in front, the other to annoy those that pursued them; and so the Parthians made use of camels both to fight on, and to carry provisions for their soldiers {b}:

and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand; which these Hagarites kept both for food and clothing, and some of them might be now taken with them to supply their army; the Spartans carried sheep with them in their expeditions, as sacrifices to their gods {c}; but it need not be supposed that these creatures, and those that follow, were in such large numbers with the Hagarites in the battle, but were afterwards found, partly in their camp, and partly in the places inhabited by them:

and of asses two thousand; used to ride on, and carry loads, and also to plough with; and in all these lay the wealth of men in those times and countries, see **Job 1:1**

and of men one hundred thousand; so that they took captive above as many more as their army consisted of.

{a} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 137. & l. 3. p. 178. Vid. Plin. l. 8. c. 18. {b} Tacit. Annal. l. 15. c. 12. Herodian. l. 4. c. 28, 30. {c} Pausan. Boeotica, sive, l. 9. p. 561.

1 Chronicles 5:22

Ver. 22. For there fell down many slain,.... Many were killed in the battle, besides the great number of prisoners made, so that the army the Ishmaelites brought into the field was very great:

because the war was of God; or from the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; he stirred up the Israelites to it, directed, assisted, and succeeded them, that vengeance might be taken on this wicked and idolatrous people:

and they dwelt in their stead until the captivity; the Targum adds, of Sennacherib king of Assyria; but this captivity of the tribes referred to was not by him, but by Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, **1Ch 5:26** and they dwelt not in the country of the Arab-hagarites, or Ishmaelites in their stead there, but in Gilead, as in **1Ch 5:10** which belonged to the Gadites and Reubenites originally, but had been dispossessed of it, or however distressed in it by these Hagarites, which they now drove out, and dwelt in their stead; for as for the Scenite-arabs or Ishmaelites, they never were conquered and brought into subjection by any people, but always maintained their independency {d}; and lived upon the plunder of their neighbours, pitching their tents here and there for their convenience, which in these parts were at this time spoiled.

{d} See the notes on Gen. xvi. 12. and Dan. xi. 41. and a dissertation upon the independency of the Arabs, at the end of the Universal History, vol. 20. See Gill on "Ge 16:12".
See Gill on "Da 11:41".

1 Chronicles 5:23

Ver. 23. And the children of the half tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land,.... Not in the land of the Hagarites, but in the land of Gilead and Bashan beyond Jordan, given them by Moses. The writer, having reckoned the genealogies of some of the principal men of Reuben and Gad, proceeds to give a short account of some principal men in this half tribe:

they increased from Bashan; where they first settled, and extended their possessions:

unto Baalhermon and Senir, and unto Mount Hermon; mountains which lay to the north of the land of Canaan, and are what geographers call Antilibanus.

1 Chronicles 5:24

Ver. 24. And these were the heads of the house of their fathers,.... Some of the principal men of this half tribe:

even Epher, and Ishi, and Eliel, and Azriel, and Jeremiah, and Hodaviah, and

Jahdiel; but of none of these we read elsewhere, excepting Hepher and Azriel, Nu 26:31

mighty men of valour, famous men, and heads of the house of their fathers; men that obtained a name for their strength, courage, and valour, and military exploits, and were the chiefs of the families in this half tribe, and by whom they were denominated; so from Hepher were the family of the Hepherites, and from Azriel the family of the Azrielites, as in the place before quoted.

1 Chronicles 5:25

Ver. 25. And they transgressed against the God their fathers,.... Against his law, will, word, and ordinances, not only the half tribe of Manasseh, hut the Reubenites and Gadites also:

and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them; that is, committed idolatry, which is spiritual fornication or whoredom; worshipped the idols either of the Amorites, who were destroyed by the Lord to make way for their first settlement; or of the Ishmaelites, whom they conquered, and whose land they dwelt in to the captivity.

1 Chronicles 5:26

Ver. 26. And the God of Israel,.... The Targum is,

"the word of the God of Israel:"

stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria: in the times of Menahem king of Israel:

and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser; in the times of Pekah king of Israel, to invade the land, and make war in it:

and he carried them away: not the former, but the latter:

even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh; these entirely together, with some other parts of the land, see
2Ki 15:29

and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan; to the very same places where afterwards Salmaneser carried the ten tribes, or what remained of them, see 2Ki 17:6

unto this day; the times of Ezra, the writer of this book, after the tribe of Judah returned from the captivity of Babylon; but the ten tribes remained where they were carried, and have not returned even to this day.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 6

This chapter begins with the fathers and heads of the tribe of Levi, **1Ch 6:1**, and reckons up the high priests in the line of Eleazar, to the Babylonish captivity, **1Ch 6:4** gives an account of the families of the sons of Levi, **1Ch 6:16** and of those Levites that were employed as singers, and in other ministrations in the sanctuary in the times of David and Solomon, **1Ch 6:31**, then follows a repetition of the sons of Aaron in the line of Eleazar, to the said times, **1Ch 6:50**, and a recital of the dwelling places of the Levites in the several tribes, **1Ch 6:54**.

Ver. 1. The sons of Levi,.... After an account of the chief of the tribes of Judah and Simeon, of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, follows that of Levi, and his posterity; the kingdom being given to Judah, the birthright to Joseph, and the priesthood to Levi: the immediate sons of Levi were

Gershon, Kohath, and Merari; as in Ge 46:11, from these sprung the three families of the Levites.

1 Chronicles 6:2

Ver. 2. And the sons of Kohath; Amram, Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel,.... Given in the same order as in **Ex 6:18**,
See Gill on "Ex 6:18".

1 Chronicles 6:3

Ver. 3. And the children of Amram, Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam,.... Very memorable persons: Aaron was the high priest, Moses the prophet and lawgiver, and Miriam a prophetess, see **Mic 6:4**,

the sons also of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar; the two first were destroyed by fire from heaven for offering strange fire, Le 10:1 and the third succeeded his father in the high priesthood; the line of which is drawn from Aaron through him unto the Babylonish captivity, from hence to the end of the fifteenth verse, where it ends: Jehozadak is the same with Josedech, **Hag 1:1** who went young into Babylon, and whose son Joshua, born in the captivity, came out of it on the proclamation of Cyrus, **Ezr 2:2**. According to Josephus {e}, and other Jewish writers {f}, in the times of Uzzi, **1Ch 6:6** the priesthood was translated into the family of Ithamar, of which Eli was the first high priest; where it continued to the times of Solomon, when it was restored to Zadok, of the line of Eleazar. It is particularly observed of Azariah, **1Ch 6:10** that he it was that executed the priest's office in the temple built by Solomon; not that he was the first that officiated in it, that was Zadok; but this seems to be Azariah, who was the high priest in the times of Uzziah, who opposed him when he would have offered incense in the temple, 2Ch 26:17, which may be the reason why he is so particularly taken notice of here; though some think this is to be understood of Johanan, the father of Azariah, supposed to the same with Jehoiada, who, in the times of Athaliah, was the instrument of preserving both church and state, 2Ki 11:4, the temple in which he ministered is described as built by Solomon, because at the time of the writing of this there was another temple built, or building, by Zerubbabel.

{e} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 11. sect. 5. {f} Juchasin, fol. 136. 1.

1 Chronicles 6:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "1Ch 6:3".

1 Chronicles 6:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "1Ch 6:3".

1 Chronicles 6:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "1Ch 6:3".

1 Chronicles 6:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "1Ch 6:3".

1 Chronicles 6:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "1Ch 6:3".

1 Chronicles 6:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "1Ch 6:3".

1 Chronicles 6:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "1Ch 6:3".

1 Chronicles 6:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "1Ch 6:3".

1 Chronicles 6:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "1Ch 6:3".

1 Chronicles 6:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "1Ch 6:3".

1 Chronicles 6:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "1Ch 6:3".

1 Chronicles 6:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "1Ch 6:3".

1 Chronicles 6:16

Ver. 16. The sons of Levi, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Which is repeated from **1Ch 6:1** for the sake of their posterity, whose names are given in the three following verses, in the same manner as in **Ex 6:17**.

1 Chronicles 6:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "1Ch 6:16"

1 Chronicles 6:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "1Ch 6:16"

1 Chronicles 6:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "1Ch 6:16"

1 Chronicles 6:20

Ver. 20,21. Of Gershon, Libni his son,.... Whose genealogy runs thus, Jahath, called Jehiel, 1Ch 23:8. Zimmah, between whom was Shimei, **1Ch 6:42**. Joah, the same with Ethan, **1Ch 6:42**. Iddo, called Adaiah, **1Ch 6:41**. Zerah, Jeaterai, whose name was also Ethni, **1Ch 6:41**, the posterity of Shimei, the brother of Libni, are omitted.

1 Chronicles 6:21

Ver. 21 See Gill on "1Ch 6:20".

1 Chronicles 6:22

Ver. 22-28. The sons of Kohath, Amminadab,.... The same with Izhar, **1Ch 6:2** the posterity of his brethren, Amram, Hebron, and Uzziel, are omitted; and his genealogy is carried to a considerable length, for the sake of Samuel the prophet, who sprang from him: it stands thus, Korah, Assir, Elkanah, Ebiasaph, Assir, Tahath, Uriel, called Zephaniah, **1Ch 6:36** Uzziah, the same with Azariah, **1Ch 6:36**. Shaul, whose name is Joel, **1Ch 6:36** then through the sons of Elkanah, before mentioned, Amasai, Ahimoth, called Mahath, **1Ch 6:35** another Elkanah, Zophai, or Zuph, **1Ch 6:35**. Nahath, the same with Toah, **1Ch 6:34** and Tohu, **1Sa 1:1**, Eliab, called Eliel, **1Ch 6:34**, and Elihu, **1Sa 1:1**, Jeroham, another Elkanah, the father of Samuel the prophet, whose firstborn was Vashni, and whose name also was Joel, **1Ch 6:33** and so here it is read in the Syriac and Arabic versions:

and his second son Abiah.

1 Chronicles 6:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "1Ch 6:22".

1 Chronicles 6:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "1Ch 6:22".

1 Chronicles 6:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "1Ch 6:22".

1 Chronicles 6:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "1Ch 6:22".

1 Chronicles 6:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "1Ch 6:22".

1 Chronicles 6:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "1Ch 6:22".

1 Chronicles 6:29

Ver. 29,30. The sons of Merari; Mahli,.... The posterity of his brother Mushi are omitted; his genealogy is drawn thus, Libni, Shimei, Uzza, Shimea, Haggiah, Asaiah.

1 Chronicles 6:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "1Ch 6:29".

1 Chronicles 6:31

Ver. 31. And these are they,.... Who follow; the account of whom begins **1Ch 6:33**,

whom David set over the service of the song in the house of the Lord: whom he appointed chief musicians, and masters of the chorus, to manage and conduct that part of divine service in the sanctuary, singing the praises of God, both with vocal and instrumental music:

after the ark had rest; which was when it was brought from the house of Obededom to the city of David, and was placed in a tabernacle he provided for it, **2Sa 6:12**, where it remained until the temple was built, when and which was the only time it was removed, whereas before it had been removed from place to place, and so till now had no rest; though some understand this of the ceasing or silence of the oracle over the ark, which was neither consulted by Solomon and his successors, nor any of the high priests afterwards {g}.

{g} Vid. Marsham. Canon. Chron. Setul. 14. p. 365.

1 Chronicles 6:32

Ver. 32. And they ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacles of the congregation with singing,.... Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; this service they performed before the ark, which was in a tent or tabernacle David pitched for it; and which the Targum here calls the tabernacle of time, or a temporary tabernacle:

until Solomon had built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem; the temple there:

and then they waited on their office according to their order; performed it in the manner prescribed by David, see 1Ch 25:1.

1 Chronicles 6:33

Ver. 33-38. And these are they that waited with their children,.... They and their posterity, who officiated in the service of singing psalms in the sanctuary: the three heads of them were of the three families of the Levites, as follow:

of the sons of the Kohathites, Heman a singer; the chief of the singers, and who composed psalms and hymns, which are in the book of Psalms:

the son of Joel, the son of Shemuel; or Samuel. This Heman was grandson of Samuel the prophet; for whose sake his genealogy is traced up to Jacob or Israel in the following verses, and stands thus; after Samuel, Elkanah, Jeroham, Eliel, Toah, Zuph, Elkanah, Mahath, Amasai, Elkanah, Joel, Azariah, Zephaniah, Tahath, Assir, Ebiasaph, Korah, Izhar, Kohath, Levi, Israel.

1 Chronicles 6:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "1Ch 6:33".

1 Chronicles 6:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "1Ch 6:33".

1 Chronicles 6:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "1Ch 6:33".

1 Chronicles 6:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "1Ch 6:33".

1 Chronicles 6:38

Ver. 38. See Gill on "1Ch 6:33".

1 Chronicles 6:39

Ver. 39-43. And his brother Asaph,.... That is, Heman's brother; so Asaph was, as he was a descendant from the same original ancestor Levi, yet in the line of Gershon; and as being of the same office, a precentor, or chief singer:

who stood on his right hand; he was next to Heman; Heman stood in the middle, which was the most honourable {h}, and Asaph on his right hand, and Ethan, after mentioned, on his left; even Asaph, whose name is often met with in the book of Psalms; and his genealogy here stands thus, as traced up to Levi, viz. Berechiah, Shimea, Michael, Baaseiah, Malchiah, Ethni, Zerah, Adaiah, Ethan, Zimmah, Shimei, Jahath, Gershon, Levi.

{h} "Alecto stetit in mediis----", Claudian in Rufin. l. 1. ver. 41. Vid. Barthii Animadv. in ib.

1 Chronicles 6:40

Ver. 40. See Gill on "1Ch 6:39".

1 Chronicles 6:41

Ver. 41. See Gill on "1Ch 6:39".

1 Chronicles 6:42

Ver. 42. See Gill on "1Ch 6:39".

1 Chronicles 6:43

Ver. 43. See Gill on "1Ch 6:39".

1 Chronicles 6:44

Ver. 44-47. And their brethren, the sons of Merari,.... Who were the brethren of the Kohathites and Gershonites, descending from the same ancestor Levi: stood

on the left hand; that is, of Heman, see **1Ch 6:39**, the chief of whom was Ethan, sometimes called Jeduthun, 1Ch 16:41 and often in the book of Psalms; his genealogy is traced up to Levi thus; Kishi, called Kushaiah, 1Ch 15:17 Abdi, Malluch, Hashabiah, Amaziah, Hilkiah, Amzi, Bani, Shamer, Mahli, Mushi, Merari, Levi.

1 Chronicles 6:45

Ver. 45. See Gill on "1Ch 6:44".

1 Chronicles 6:46

Ver. 46. See Gill on "1Ch 6:44".

1 Chronicles 6:47

Ver. 47. See Gill on "1Ch 6:44".

1 Chronicles 6:48

Ver. 48. Their brethren also the Levites,.... Who were not skilled in singing, and employed in that service, even the rest of the Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites:

were appointed unto all manner of service of the tabernacle of the house of God; some were porters at the gates; others had the care of the vessels; others slew the beasts for sacrifices, flayed them, and cut them up, and brought the pieces to the altar of burnt offerings, for the priests to offer.

1 Chronicles 6:49

Ver. 49-53. But Aaron and his sons,.... Those that descended from him, though of the same tribe of Levi were all priests:

and they offered upon the altar of burnt offerings; the daily sacrifice, and all the offerings of the people brought to them:

and on the altar of incense; they burnt incense night and morning: and were appointed

for all the work of the place most holy; such as were high priests of the line of Eleazar, whose work it was to go into the most holy place once a year:

to make atonement for all Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God commanded; in Le 16:1 which see; and on mention of this, a list of the high priests from Aaron, in the line of Eleazar, is given, to the times of Solomon, in the four following verses, just in the same order as in **1Ch 6:4**.

1 Chronicles 6:50

Ver. 50. See Gill on "1Ch 6:49".

1 Chronicles 6:51

Ver. 51. See Gill on "1Ch 6:49".

1 Chronicles 6:52

Ver. 52. See Gill on "1Ch 6:49".

1 Chronicles 6:53

Ver. 53. See Gill on "1Ch 6:49".

1 Chronicles 6:54

Ver. 54-81. Now these are their dwelling places,.... The dwelling places of the priests and Levites, assigned and given to them in the several tribes of Israel; and the account of them agrees with that in Jos 21:1 with some few variations of names of places, which have been there observed: see the notes there; only in **1Ch 6:57** two cities are omitted, Juttah and Gibeon, through want of care in transcribing, since they are said to be "thirteen", as they should be, whereas eleven only are mentioned. The Jews say {h}, the cities of the suburbs (those here mentioned) ceased from the time the first temple was destroyed; and yet Ezra, who lived after the captivity, and the building the second temple, here gives a very particular account of them; the suburbs belonging to every city, which he particularly mentions, were 2000 cubits, both to the cities of refuge, and the rest, Nu 35:5 Hebron, the first city mentioned in the next verse, was a city of refuge, and had suburbs of such a space; and it is remarkable, that some of the temples with the Heathens, which were asylums, or places of refuge, had the space of 2000 paces assigned them for the same sanctity and privilege {i}.

{h} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 48. 2. {i} Tacit. Annal. l. 3. c. 62.

1 Chronicles 6:55

Ver. 55. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:56

Ver. 56. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:57

Ver. 57. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:58

Ver. 58. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:59

Ver. 59. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:60

Ver. 60. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:61

Ver. 61. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:62

Ver. 62. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:63

Ver. 63. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:64

Ver. 64. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:65

Ver. 65. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:66

Ver. 66. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:67

Ver. 67. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:68

Ver. 68. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:69

Ver. 69. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:70

Ver. 70. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:71

Ver. 71. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:72

Ver. 72. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:73

Ver. 73. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:74

Ver. 74. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:75

Ver. 75. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:76

Ver. 76. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:77

Ver. 77. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:78

Ver. 78. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:79

Ver. 79. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:80

Ver. 80. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

1 Chronicles 6:81

Ver. 81. See Gill on "1Ch 6:54".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 7

In this chapter are given the genealogies of the tribes of Issachar, **1Ch 7:1** of Benjamin, **1Ch 7:6** Naphtali, **1Ch 7:13**, of Manasseh, **1Ch 7:14** of Ephraim, **1Ch 7:20** and of Asher, **1Ch 7:30**, even of the chief men of them; and their numbers are reckoned as in the times of David. The tribes of Dan and Zebulun are omitted.

Ver. 1. Now the sons of Issachar were Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron, four. The same number is given, Ge 46:13 with a small variation of two of their names, there called Phuvah and Job, from whence so many families sprang, mentioned Nu 26:23, where the names are the same as here.

1 Chronicles 7:2

Ver. 2. And the sons of Tola,.... The eldest son of Issachar, whose posterity are only reckoned by name:

Uzzi, and Rephaiah, and Jeriel, and Jahmai, and Jibsam, and Shemuel, heads of their father's house, to wit, of Tola; the principal man of his family:

[they] were valiant men of might in their generations, famous for their courage and military exploits, though they sprang from Tola, whose name signifies "a worm"; and which name Bochart {k} conjectures was given him by his parents, because he was so weakly that they had no hopes of raising him; and yet from him sprung such mighty men, and from them such a numerous race, as follows:

whose number was, in the days of David, two and twenty thousand and six hundred; besides those of the posterity of Uzzi, after mentioned. This was at the time Joab took the number of Israel, by the order of David, 1Ch 21:5.

{k} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 21. col. 630.

1 Chronicles 7:3

Ver. 3. And the sons of Uzzi; Izrahiah,.... Including his posterity:

and the sons of Izrahiah; Michael, and Obadiah, and Joel, Ishiah, five; together with their father, all reckoned the sons of Uzzi:

all of them chief men; in their father's house, heads of families.

1 Chronicles 7:4

Ver. 4. And with them, by their generations, after the house of their fathers, were bands of soldiers for war,.... Companies of men of military courage and skill, who could and did go out to war upon occasion:

six and thirty thousand [men]; besides the 22,600 Tolaites, **1Ch 7:2**,

for they had many wives and sons; having many wives, they had many sons; polygamy was the cause of their large numbers; and that they gave into for the sake of the multiplication of Abraham's seed, according to the divine promise.

1 Chronicles 7:5

Ver. 5. And their brethren among all the families of Issachar,.... As those of Puah, Jashub, and Shimron, **1Ch 7:1**

were men of might; valiant and courageous:

reckoned in all, by their genealogies, fourscore and seven thousand; that is, including with these those of Tola and Uzzi before given.

1 Chronicles 7:6

Ver. 6. The sons of Benjamin; Bela, and Becher, and Jediael, three. Benjamin had ten sons, but three only are mentioned first; the latter of these seems to be the same with Ashbel, Ge 46:21.

1 Chronicles 7:7

Ver. 7. And the sons of Bela; Ezbon, and Uzzi, and Uzziel, and Jerimoth, and Iri, five,.... These are thought by some to be the grandsons of Bela, because of the different names in **1Ch 8:3**,

heads of the house of their fathers, mighty men of valour; principal men in their tribe and families, and of great courage:

and were reckoned by their genealogies twenty and two thousand and thirty and four; who sprung from these men.

1 Chronicles 7:8

Ver. 8. And the sons of Becher,.... Another son of Benjamin, **1Ch 7:6**,

Zemira, and Joash, and Eliezer and Elioenai, and Omri, and Jerimoth, and Abiah, and Anathoth, and Alameth; the two last of these, according to Kimchi, gave names to two cities in Benjamin, built by them; Anathoth, the native place of Jeremiah the prophet, and Alameth, the same with Bahurim, 2Sa 16:5

all these are the sons of Becher; before named.

1 Chronicles 7:9

Ver. 9. And the number of them,.... Of the posterity of the sons of Becher:

after their genealogy by their generations, heads of the house of their fathers, mighty men of valour; as they increased in succeeding ages, and at the time of David:

was twenty thousand and two hundred.

1 Chronicles 7:10

Ver. 10. The sons also of Jediael,.... The third son of Benjamin before mentioned, **1Ch 7:6**. Bilhan, including his posterity, as follows:

and the sons of Bilhan; Jeush, and Benjamin; called so after his great grandfather:

and Ehud; who was the second judge in Israel, **Jud 3:15**

and Chenaanah, and Zethan, and Tharshish, and Ahishahar; of whom we nowhere else read.

1 Chronicles 7:11

Ver. 11. All these the sons of Jediael, by the heads of their fathers, mighty men of valour, [were] seventeen thousand and two hundred [soldiers], fit to go out for war and battle. Which, with the above sums put together, make of the tribe of Benjamin, besides what follow, 59,430; who, if numbered by Joab, the account was not given in by him, 1Ch 21:6.

1 Chronicles 7:12

Ver. 12. Shuppim also, and Huppim, the children of Ir,.... The same with Iri, **1Ch 7:7** so that these were not sons of Benjamin, as they seem to be, if they are the same with Muppim and Huppim in Ge 46:21 but his great-grandchildren, and are the same with Shupham and Hupham, from whom families of the tribe of Benjamin sprung, Nu 26:39 the Targum calls them the inhabitants of a city, but of what is not said, unless Geba should be meant, **1Ch 8:6** and

Hushim, the sons of Aher: either the same with Aharah, the third son of Benjamin, **1Ch 8:1** or Ahiram, Nu 26:38, though some read the words, "the sons of another"; whom they suppose to be Dan, who otherwise is omitted; and Hushim is the only son of Dan, Ge 46:23, where the same plural word is used as here; who, they think, is called another, by way of detestation, that tribe being guilty of gross idolatry; but he rather seems to belong to Benjamin.

1 Chronicles 7:13

Ver. 13. The sons of Naphtali: Jahziel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shallum,.... Called Shillem, Ge 46:24, the sons of Bilhah; Jacob's concubine; her grandsons; for Naphtali, the father of them, was her son; from these sprung so many families, after their names, Nu 26:48.

1 Chronicles 7:14

Ver. 14. The sons of Manasseh; Ashriel, whom she bare,.... The wife of Manasseh, as distinguished from his concubine in the next clause; though the Targum reads, in connection with that,

"whom his Aramitess (or Syrian) concubine bare;"

and then adds,

who also bare Machir the father of Gilead; so that Ashriel and Machir were brethren; from which Ashriel sprung the family of the Ashrielites, Nu 26:29 as from Machir the Machirites, Nu 26:29.

1 Chronicles 7:15

Ver. 15. And Machir took to wife the sister of Huppim and Shuppim, whose sister's name was Maachah,.... He married into the tribe of Benjamin, a sister of the persons mentioned, **1Ch 7:12** whose name was Maachah:

and the name of the second was Zelophehad; the second son of Manasseh, or of his posterity mentioned; for he was not his immediate son; for he was the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, Nu 27:1

and Zelophehad had daughters; but no sons, the names of his daughters are given, Nu 26:33.

1 Chronicles 7:16

Ver. 16. And Maachah the wife of Machir bare a son, and she called his name Peresh; and the name of his brother was Sheresh,.... He had both these sons by her:

and his sons were Ulam and Rakem, that is, either the sons of Peresh or Sheresh, the nearest, as Kimchi observes.

1 Chronicles 7:17

Ver. 17. And the sons of Ulam: Bedan,.... See 1Sa 12:11

these were the sons of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh; that is, were of his posterity, or belonged to his family; for Ulam and Rakem were sons of a brother of Gilead, **1Ch 7:16**.

1 Chronicles 7:18

Ver. 18. And his sister Hammoleketh,.... The sister of Gilead so named; though the Targum renders it "that reigned"; and so Kimchi, that reigned in some part of Gilead; and the Vulgate Latin version translates it, "a queen bare Ishod, and Abiezer, and Mahalah"; Abiezer is the same with Jeezer, from whom a family sprung of that name, Nu 26:30, of which Gideon was, **Jud 6:11**.

1 Chronicles 7:19

Ver. 19. And the sons of Shemida,.... Another son of Gilead's sister, unless the same with Ishod; from him sprung the family of the Shemidaites, Nu 26:30

were, Ahian, and Shechem, and Likhi, and Aniam; from Shechem came the family of the Shethemites, as from Likhi, if he is the same with Helek, as probably he may be, was the family of the Helekites, Nu 26:30.

1 Chronicles 7:20

Ver. 20. And the sons of Ephraim,.... A son of Joseph, and father of a tribe of this name, whose genealogy through five generations follows: Shuthelah, Bered, Tahath, Eladah, Tahath; the second.

1 Chronicles 7:21

Ver. 21. And Zabad his son,.... Not the son of Tahath the second last mentioned, but the son of Ephraim, a second son of his:

and Shuthelah; his son, the son of Zabad, called after his uncle's name, **1Ch 7:20**

and Ezer, and Elead; two other sons of Zabad:

whom the men of Gath that were born in that land slew: that is, Zabad and his three sons; these the men of Gath slew, who were Philistines that dwelt there, and were originally of Egypt, and were born in that land, but had removed into Palestine, which had its name from them, of which Gath was one of its cities; and this bordering upon the land of Goshen, or being near it, where the Israelites dwelt, they made inroads upon them, and plundered them:

because they came down to take away their cattle; and the sons, the grandsons of Ephraim, resisted them, and so were slain: and that the aggressors were not the Ephraimites, who went out of Egypt before their time, and fell upon the men of Gath, born in the land of the Philistines, in order to dispossess them of their land and substance, and were slain by them, which is the sense of the Targum and other writers, both Jewish and Christian; but the men of Gath, as is clear from this circumstance, that they

came down, as men did when they went from Palestine to Egypt, not when they went from Egypt to Palestine, then they "went up"; which would have been the phrase used, if this had been an expedition of the Ephraimites into Palestine; besides, it is not reasonable to think, that the Ephraimites, addicted to husbandry and cattle, and not used to war, should engage in such an enterprise; but rather the men of Gath, or the Philistines, who were a warlike people, and given to spoil and plunder; this, according to a learned chronologer {l}, was seventy four years after Jacob went down to Egypt, and one hundred and forty years before the children of Israel came from thence.

{l} Nic. Abrami Pharus, l. 9. c. 21. p. 242.

1 Chronicles 7:22

Ver. 22. And Ephraim their father mourned many days,.... For the loss of his son and grandchildren for the above fact was done while the Israelites were in

Egypt, and Ephraim the patriarch yet alive; nor is there any need to suppose another Ephraim, different from him:

and his brethren came to comfort him; some of the heads of the other tribes of Israel, particularly Manasseh, with some of his family.

1 Chronicles 7:23

Ver. 23. And when he went in to his wife,.... After his grief and sorrow in part at least had subsided:

she conceived and bare a son; which in some measure made up for the loss he had sustained:

and he called his name Beriah; which signifies being "in evil" or calamity, he being born in an evil time:

because it went evil with his house; or evil was in his house, as Noldius {m}, in his family; a great calamity had befallen it.

{m} Ebr. Concord. Part. No. 750. p. 165.

1 Chronicles 7:24

Ver. 24. And his daughter was Sherah,.... That is, the daughter of Beriah; not an immediate daughter, but a descendant of his, otherwise she could not have reached the times of Joshua, as she did by what follows:

who built Bethhoron the nether, and the upper; which were cities on the border of the tribe of Ephraim; which the Israelites having taken from the Canaanites, and destroyed, she rebuilt, see Jos 16:3

and Uzzensherah; which was called after her own name, and to distinguish it from another place called Uzzen; though of neither of them do we read elsewhere.

1 Chronicles 7:25

Ver. 25-27. And Rephah was his son,.... The son of Beriah, whose genealogy from him is traced down to Joshua in this and the two following verses, and stands thus: after Rephah, Resheph, Telah, Tahan, Laadan, Ammihud, Elishama, who was prince of the tribe of Ephraim in the wilderness, **Nu 1:10**, then Non or Nun, whose son was Jehoshua or Joshua.

1 Chronicles 7:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "1Ch 7:25"

1 Chronicles 7:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "1Ch 7:25"

1 Chronicles 7:28

Ver. 28. And their possessions and habitations,.... That is, of the sons of Ephraim, when come into the land of Canaan:

were Bethel, and the towns thereof; the villages belonging to it, which was formerly called Luz, and was the border of Ephraim, Jos 16:7

and eastward Naaran: the same with Naarath, Jos 16:7

and westward Gezer, with the towns thereof; of which see
Jos 16:3,

and Shechem also, and the towns thereof; which was a city of refuge in Mount Ephraim, Jos 20:7

unto Gaza, and the towns thereof; not Gaza, a city of the Philistines, for the tribe of Ephraim did not reach so far; the Targum calls it Aiah; it may be read Adaza, as in the margin of our Bibles.

1 Chronicles 7:29

Ver. 29. And by the borders of the children of Manasseh,.... Of the half tribe of

Manasseh on this side Jordan: near to them the Ephraimites dwelt, even near to

Bethshean and her towns, Taanach and her towns, Megiddo and her towns, Dor and her towns; of all which places see Jos 17:11,

in these dwelt the children of Joseph the son of Israel; the Ephraimites, in those mentioned in **1Ch 7:28**, and the Manassites, in those that are here mentioned; who were both the children or posterity of Joseph, the beloved son of Israel.

1 Chronicles 7:30

Ver. 30,31. The son of Asher,.... Which, and his two grandsons born before Jacob went down to Egypt, are here reckoned as in Ge 46:17 only it is here added Malchiel his second grandson,

who is the father of Birzavith; which Jarchi interprets, prince of a city of this name, which signifies pure oil; which it might have from the abundance of olives about it, Asher being a tribe which abounded with them, see De 33:24 though some of the Rabbins take it to be the name of a man, whose daughters, they say, as Jarchi observes, were very beautiful, having much oil to anoint with, and were married to kings and priests anointed with oil.

1 Chronicles 7:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "1Ch 7:30".

1 Chronicles 7:32

Ver. 32. And Heber,.... The other grandson of Asher; and son of Beriah;

begat Japhlet, and Shomer, and Hotham, and Shuah their sister; a place on the borders of Ephraim is called the coast of Japhleti; but whether from this Japhlet is uncertain.

1 Chronicles 7:33

Ver. 33. And the sons of Japhlet; Pasach, and Bimhal, and Ashvath; these are the children of Japhlet. Of whom we read not elsewhere,

1 Chronicles 7:34

Ver. 34. And the sons of Shamer,.... Or Shomer, the brother of Japhlet, **1Ch 7:32**.

Ahi, and Rohgah, Jehubbah, and Aram; of whom nothing is known but their names.

1 Chronicles 7:35

Ver. 35. And the sons of his brother Helem,.... Or Helem his brother, that is, the brother of Shomer, who, according to Hillerus {n}, is Hotham, **1Ch 7:32**.

Zophah, and Imna, and Shelesh, and Aram; nowhere else mentioned.

{n} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 551.

1 Chronicles 7:36

Ver. 36,37. And the sons of Zophah,.... The eldest of the sons of Helem:

Suah, and Harnepher, and Shual, and Beri, and Imrah, Bezer; and Hod, and Shamma, and Shilshah, and Ithran, and Beera; in all eleven.

1 Chronicles 7:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "1Ch 7:36".

1 Chronicles 7:38

Ver. 38. And the sons of Jether,.... The same with Ithran, the last of Zophah's sons but one, **1Ch 7:37**, Jephunneh, and Pispah, and Ara; not Jephunneh the father of Caleb; he was not of the tribe of Asher, but of Judah.

1 Chronicles 7:39

Ver. 39. And the sons of Ulla,.... Who either was the son of Ara, last mentioned, or another son of Jether:

Arah, and Haniel, and Rezia; here ends the genealogy of Asher; the last of the tribes; Dan and Zebulun not being reckoned at all.

1 Chronicles 7:40

Ver. 40. All these were the children of Asher, heads of their father's house,.... Principal men in their tribe, and respective families:

choice and mighty men of valour; these were some selected from others, being eminent for their courage and valour:

chief of the princes; or chief princes; the Vulgate Latin version is, dukes of dukes, they were heads of their fathers' families:

[and] the number throughout the genealogy that were apt to war, and to battle, [was] twenty and six thousand [men]; that is, in the days of David, **1Ch 7:4**, this was the number, not of their chief men, nor of all the people in the tribe, but of their militia.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 8

In this chapter the genealogy of the tribe of Benjamin is reconsidered, and several of the principal men and families in it are taken notice of, which were not before; or a further account is given of them, as of the sons and grandsons of Benjamin, **1Ch 8:1**, of Ehud, **1Ch 8:5**, of Shaharaim, **1Ch 8:8**, of Elpaal and Beriah, **1Ch 8:12** of Shimhi, **1Ch 8:19**, of Shashak, **1Ch 8:22**, of Jeroham, **1Ch 8:26**, of Jehiel the father of Gibeon, **1Ch 8:28**, of Ner, and particularly Saul, **1Ch 8:33** and of Jonathan, and his posterity, **1Ch 8:34**.

Ver. 1. Now Benjamin begat Bela his firstborn,.... See **1Ch 7:6**. The genealogy of the tribe of Benjamin is reviewed, because it joined and kept close with Judah in the worship of God, went into captivity, and returned out of it with it; and this review is made chiefly for the sake of Saul, and his posterity, the first king of Israel, who was of it, and in whose posterity this genealogy ends:

Ashbel the second; supposed to be the same with Jediael, **1Ch 7:6**, see Ge 46:21

and Aharah the third; the same with Aher, **1Ch 7:13**, and with Ahiram, Nu 26:38.

1 Chronicles 8:2

Ver. 2. Nohah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth. Nohah is supposed by some to be the same with Becher, **1Ch 7:6** and by others with Naaman, Ge 46:21, as Rapha, the same with Rosh there.

1 Chronicles 8:3

Ver. 3. The sons of Bela were Addar, and Gera, and Abihud. The first of these is thought to be the same with Ard, mentioned among the sons of Benjamin, Ge 46:21 but was one of his grandsons, see Nu 26:40 as Gera also was.

1 Chronicles 8:4

Ver. 4,5. And Abishua, and Naaman, and Ahoah, and Gera, and Shephuphan, and Huram. These were all the sons of Bela; one of the name of Naaman is reckoned among the sons of Benjamin, Ge 46:21 and from this grandson the family of the Naamanites are named, Nu 26:40, and Ahoah is by some thought to be the same with Ehi, mentioned in Ge 46:21 as one of Benjamin's sons. Some take the three last to be the sons of Ehud, spoken of in the next verse; but Shephuphan and Huram seem to be the same with Shupham and Hupham, Nu 26:39.

1 Chronicles 8:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "1Ch 8:4".

1 Chronicles 8:6

Ver. 6. And these are the sons of Ehud,.... Not he that was a judge in Israel, **Jud 3:15** but perhaps a son of Huram the last mentioned; for not the three last are his sons, as some think, but the three following in the next verse; what follows being to be read in a parenthesis:

(these are the heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Geba;) a city in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:24 namely, those sons of Ehud, after mentioned, were principal men in that tribe, and chief of the inhabitants of the city of Geba:

and they removed them to Manahath; the name of a country referred to in **1Ch 2:52** according to Jarchi, which was in the tribe of Judah; Geba being too small, either the inhabitants of Geba removed them, or they removed themselves, or their fathers removed them, **1Ch 8:7**, or it may be read impersonally, they were removed thither for the sake of a better habitation; the Targum adds,

"to the land of the house of Esau,"

to Edom; which is not likely.

1 Chronicles 8:7

Ver. 7. And Naaman, and Ahiah, and Gera,.... Or, to wit, Naaman, &c. so the words are to be connected with

these are the sons or Ehud, in the preceding verse:

he removed them; to the above place, that is, either Gera, or rather Ehud, he advised them, directed and enjoined them to go thither, as being most convenient for them:

and he begat Uzza and Ahihud; after he had removed his other sons.

1 Chronicles 8:8

Ver. 8. And Shaharaim,.... Who was either a son of Ahihud, or rather a brother of his, another son of Ehud:

begat children in the country of Moab; whither he might go on account of the famine, as Elimelech did, **Ru 1:1**, after he had sent them away; which some understand of those that were removed from Geba to Manahath, **1Ch 8:6**, but a different word is here used; and besides Shaharaim seems to be one of those that were removed. Kimchi takes Shilhootham, we render "had sent them away", to be the name of his first wife, of whom he begat children in Moab; but it seems best to render and interpret the words in connection with what follows: he begat children in Moab,

after he had sent them away; even Hushim and Baara his wives; after he had divorced them, for some reasons he had, he begat children of another wife, later mentioned.

1 Chronicles 8:9

Ver. 9,10. And he begat of Hodesh his wife,.... That is, he, I say, begat, namely, Shaharaim; the Targum makes this Hodesh to be the same with Baara, called so because she was newly espoused; but wrongly: the sons begotten of her were the seven following;

Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcham, Jeuz, Shachia, and Mirma. These were his sons; the sons of Shaharaim by his wife Hodesh:

heads of the fathers; of the houses or families of their father.

1 Chronicles 8:10

Ver. 10 See Gill on "1Ch 8:9".

1 Chronicles 8:11

Ver. 11. And of Hushim he begat Abitub, and Elpaal. Before he sent her away, or divorced her, **1Ch 8:8**.

1 Chronicles 8:12

Ver. 12. The sons of Elpaal; Eber, and Misham, and Shamed,.... Besides those in **1Ch 8:14**

who built Ono, and Lod, with the towns thereof; not Shamed, but Elpaal his father, so the Targum; and the Talmudists say {o}, these were walled cities from the days of Joshua the son of Nun, and were destroyed in the days of the concubine in Gibea, and Elpaal came and rebuilt them; they were inhabited by the Benjaminites, upon their return from the Babylonish captivity, Ne 11:35 they were near to each other; according to a Jewish chronologer {p}, it was three miles from the one to the other; Lod is the same with Lydda, in **Ac 9:32**.

{o} T. Hieros. Megillah, fol. 70. 1. & T. Bab Megillah, fol. 4. 1. So the Targum. {p} Juchasin, fol. 39. 2.

1 Chronicles 8:13

Ver. 13. Beriah also, and Shema,.... These were sons of Elpaal:

who were heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Aijalon; which, though in the tribe of Dan, Jos 19:42 might afterwards come into the possession of Benjamin; or this may be another place of the same name in Benjamin; or, however, might be inhabited by Benjaminites, upon the return from captivity, who descended from those men:

who drove away the inhabitants of Gath; dispossessed them of their city, in revenge for what they had done to the Ephraimites, **1Ch 7:21**.

1 Chronicles 8:14

Ver. 14. And Ahio, Shashak, and Jerimoth. These were also sons of Elpaal.

1 Chronicles 8:15

Ver. 15,16. And Zebadiah,.... And all that follow in this and the next verse were the sons of Beriah the son of Elpaal; namely,

Arad, Ader, Michael, Ispah, and Joha.

1 Chronicles 8:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "1Ch 8:15"

1 Chronicles 8:17

Ver. 17,18. And Zebadiah, and Meshullam,.... These, with those that follow,

Hezeki, Heber, Ishmerai, Jezliah, and Jobab, were the sons of Elpaal

1 Chronicles 8:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "1Ch 8:17".

1 Chronicles 8:19

Ver. 19-21. And Jakim,.... With all the rest in these verses, namely,

Zichri, Zabdi, Elienai, Zilthai, Eliel, Adaiah, Beraiah, and Shimrath, were the sons of Shimhi, the same with Shema brother of Beriah, and son of Elpaal, 1Ch 8:13.

1 Chronicles 8:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "1Ch 8:19".

1 Chronicles 8:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "1Ch 8:19".

1 Chronicles 8:22

Ver. 22-25. And Ishpan, and Heber,.... And all that follow to the end of these verses,

Eliel, Abdon, Zichri, Hanan, Hananiah, Elam, Antothijah, Iphedeiah, and Penuel, were the sons of Shashak, another son of Elpaal, **1Ch 8:14**.

1 Chronicles 8:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "1Ch 8:22".

1 Chronicles 8:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "1Ch 8:22".

1 Chronicles 8:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "1Ch 8:22".

1 Chronicles 8:26

Ver. 26,27. And Shamsherai,.... Who, with those next mentioned,

Shehariah, Athaliah, Jaresiah, Eliah, and Zichri, [were the sons of] Jeroham, who perhaps is the same with Jerimoth, another son of Elpaal, **1Ch 8:14** who makes a considerable figure in this genealogy. Kimchi observes that it is a tradition {q} that this Eliah is Elijah the prophet, who was of the seed of Rachel.

{q} Shemoth Rabba, sect. 40. fol. 138. 4.

1 Chronicles 8:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "1Ch 8:26".

1 Chronicles 8:28

Ver. 28. These were heads of the fathers, by their generations, chief [men],.... All from **1Ch 8:14**, the sons of Elpaal and their sons:

these dwelt in Jerusalem; part of which always belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, see Jos 15:63.

1 Chronicles 8:29

Ver. 29. And at Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon,.... The builder of the city, and prince of the inhabitants of it, which was in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:25 whose name was Jehiel, **1Ch 9:35**,

(whose wife's name was Maachah;) of which name were many, see **1Ch 2:48**.

1 Chronicles 8:30

Ver. 30,31. And his firstborn son Abdon,.... That is, Jehiel's, the father or prince of Gibeon; other sons follow:

Zur, Kish, Baal, Nadab, Gedor, Ahio, and Zacher; called Zechariah, **1Ch 9:37** and between Baal and Nadab, Ner is placed, **1Ch 9:36** and another son is added at the end of **1Ch 9:37**, Mikloth next mentioned.

1 Chronicles 8:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "1Ch 8:30".

1 Chronicles 8:32

Ver. 32. And Mikloth begat Shimeah,.... Called Shimeam, **1Ch 9:38**

and these also dwelt with their brethren in Jerusalem, over against them; in another part of the city, right beside them.

1 Chronicles 8:33

Ver. 33. And Ner begat Kish,.... Who also is called Abiel, as the Targum here adds; for Ner had two names, as other Jewish writers likewise say {r}, see **1Sa 9:1**,

and Kish begat Saul; the first king of Israel, for whose sake chiefly the genealogy of Benjamin is revised and enlarged in this chapter:

and Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchishua, and Abinadab, and Eshbaal, see 1Sa 31:2. Abinadab is called Ishui, 1Sa 14:49 and Eshbaal is the same with Ishbosheth, **2Sa 2:8**, so Baal and Bosheth are used of the same idol of which they are names, **Ho 9:10**.

{r} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 152. 4.

1 Chronicles 8:34

Ver. 34. And the son of Jonathan was Meribbaal,.... The same with Mephibosheth, **2Sa 4:4** so Jerubbaal is called Jerubbesheth, **Jud 6:32**

and Meribbaal begat Micah; called his young son in David's time, **2Sa 9:12**.

1 Chronicles 8:35

Ver. 35. And the sons of Micah were, Pithon, and Melech, and Tarea, and Ahaz. The last but one is called Tahrea, **1Ch 9:41**, where Ahaz is left out, though supplied in our version.

1 Chronicles 8:36

Ver. 36. And Ahaz begat Jehoadah,.... Called Jarah, **1Ch 9:42**

and Jehoadah begat Alemeth, and Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begat Moza; the same account is given, **1Ch 9:42**.

1 Chronicles 8:37

Ver. 37. And Moza begat Binea; Rapha was his son,.... Called Rephaiah, **1Ch 9:43**.

Elasah his son; whose name is Eleasah, **1Ch 9:43**.

Azel his son.

1 Chronicles 8:38

Ver. 38. And Azel had six sons, whose names are these, Azrikam, Bochim, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan,.... Which make the said number:

all these were the sons of Azel; his family was large.

1 Chronicles 8:39

Ver. 39. And the sons of Eshek his brother,.... The brother of Azel; who he was is not known, unless he is the same with Elasah, as is conjectured:

[were] Ulam his firstborn, Jehush the second, and Eliphelet the third.

1 Chronicles 8:40

Ver. 40. And the sons of Ulam were mighty men of valour,.... Men of great fortitude and courage, though their names are not expressed:

archers; skilful in the use of the bow and arrows, as the Benjaminites formerly were famous for slinging stones:

and had many sons, and sons' sons, an hundred and fifty; so that the posterity of Jonathan, whose genealogy is drawn down from **1Ch 8:34** hither, were very great; and greater still, according to the Vulgate Latin version, in which the number is 150,000 in the edition of Sixtus the fifth, and so in most MSS of that version {s} all these are of the sons of Benjamin; his posterity, whose names are given in this chapter.

{s} See James of the Contrariety of the Popish Bibles, p. 294.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 9

The genealogies of the several tribes being given, according as they were written in the books of the kings of Israel, **1Ch 9:1**, an account follows of those who first settled in Jerusalem after their return from the Babylonish captivity; of the Israelites, **1Ch 9:2**, of the priests, **1Ch 9:10** of the Levites, and of the charge and offices of several of the priests and Levites, **1Ch 9:14**, and the chapter is concluded with a repetition of the genealogy of the ancestors and posterity of Saul king of Israel, **1Ch 9:35**.

Ver. 1. So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies,.... Not now by the writer of this book in the preceding chapters; for two of the tribes are not reckoned at all, and the rest but in part; but there had been kept an exact account of them:

and, behold, they were written in the book of the kings of Israel; not in the canonical book or books of Kings, but in the annals, journals, and diaries, which each king took care to be kept with some exactness, often referred to in the preceding books; out of which this writer, under a divine direction, had taken what was proper to be continued, and had carried the genealogy down to the captivity of the ten tribes; but the genealogy being lost with them, he could proceed no further, nor say anything more concerning them:

but Judah; for so the word should be stopped, and read according to the Hebrew accents:

[who] were carried away to Babylon for their transgression; their idolatry, and were now returned again; of them the writer proposes to give a further account.

1 Chronicles 9:2

Ver. 2. Now the first inhabitants that dwelt in their possessions in their cities,.... Who first returned from Babylon upon the proclamation of Cyrus, and enjoyed their former possessions, and dwelt in the cities they had before, or in such as were allotted them, or they chose:

[were], the Israelites, the priests, Levites, and the Nethinims; the whole body that returned were divided into four classes, as they had been before the captivity; the Israelites were the common people in general, the body politic; the priests, the ecclesiastics, who officiated in sacred things; the Levites, who ministered to them; and the Nethinims were such persons as were "given", as the word signifies, to do servile work for the sanctuary, as, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water; such were the Gibeonites, **Jos 9:27**, and such as were appointed by David for such work, see **Ezr 8:20**.

1 Chronicles 9:3

Ver. 3. And in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin,.... Of which tribes were the largest number that went into, and returned out of, captivity:

and of the children of Ephraim and Manasseh; such of those tribes who had joined the others when Jeroboam introduced his idolatry, or had fled to them when Samaria was besieged and taken by Shalmaneser, and so went into captivity with Judah, and now returned; and as many of them as took the advantage of the proclamation of Cyrus, who were carried captive with the ten tribes.

1 Chronicles 9:4

Ver. 4. Uthai, the son of Ammihud,.... Called Athaiah, Ne 11:4 though his ancestors there are differently reckoned here; his genealogy here is traced from his father Ammihud, through Omri, Imri, Bani, Pharez, to Judah.

1 Chronicles 9:5

Ver. 5. And of the Shilonites,.... Not called so from the city of Shiloh, which was in Ephraim; whereas these here intended were of the tribe of Judah, and were either the descendants of a man whose name was Shiloni, Ne 11:5 or rather these are the same with the Shelanites, Nu 26:20 so called from Shelah the son of Judah; and so the Targum here is,

"and of the tribe of Shelah:"

Asaiah the firstborn, and his sons; the same with Maaseiah, Ne 11:5.

1 Chronicles 9:6

Ver. 6. And of the sons of Zerah,.... Another son of Judah:

Jeuel, and their brethren; six hundred and ninety; or their kinsmen; for this number includes all of the posterity of Pharez, Shelah and Zerah mentioned.

1 Chronicles 9:7

Ver. 7. And of the sons of Benjamin,.... Who were of the tribe of Benjamin, and went with Judah into captivity, and returned with them, and such of them as dwelt in Jerusalem before that:

Sallu the son of Meshullam; whose pedigree is differently given, Ne 11:7,

the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hassenaah; perhaps these men had two names, there called Joel and Pedaiah.

1 Chronicles 9:8

Ver. 8. And Ibneiah the son of Jeroham,.... Who with two more, Elah and Meshullam, whose ancestors are given, of whom we have no mention elsewhere, were all of the tribe of Benjamin, said to settle at Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 9:9

Ver. 9. And their brethren, according to their generations, nine hundred amd fifty and six,.... Which was the number of the Benjaminites there resident put together, and which greatly exceeded that of Judah, **1Ch 9:6**

all these men were chief of the fathers, in the house of their fathers; principal men in the families of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, even all the seven before mentioned.

1 Chronicles 9:10

Ver. 10. And of the priests,.... Who returned and dwelt at Jerusalem:

Jedaiah, and Jehoiarib, and Jachin; Jedaiah was the son of Jehoiarib, and Jachin is called Jachin, Ne 11:10.

1 Chronicles 9:11

Ver. 11. And Azariah the son of Hilkiah,.... That is, the son of Azariah, whose name was Seraiah, see **1Ch 6:13**, whose pedigree is traced up from Hilkiah through Meshullam, called Shallum, **1Ch 6:12**. Zadok, Meraioth, to Ahitub,

the ruler of the house of God; high priest in it; which is to be understood of Ahitub, and not of Azariah or Seraiah in the time of Ezra; for Joshua was then high priest.

1 Chronicles 9:12

Ver. 12. And Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pashur,.... In this genealogy, between Jeroham and Pashur, were three more here omitted, Pelaliah, Amzi, Zechariah, Ne 11:12, and then Pashur the son of Malchijah, as here:

and Maasiai the son of Adiel; whose pedigree is traced up from hence, through Jahzerah, Meshullam, Meshillemith, to Immer; one of the five heads of the courses settled by David, 1Ch 24:14. The names of this man, and of his ancestors, are given, with some variation, in Ne 11:13.

1 Chronicles 9:13

Ver. 13. And their brethren, heads of the house of their fathers, one thousand and seven hundred and threescore. These, with other priests, made up this number, which was greater than those of Judah and Benjamin, that dwelt in Jerusalem, put together:

very able men for the work of the service of the house of God: men that had not only strength of body, which some part of the work of the priests required; but had courage and fortitude of mind to set about the service of God with cheerfulness, and to preserve it from corruption.

1 Chronicles 9:14

Ver. 14. And of the Levites,.... Having given an account of the two first classes of the people, the Israelites and priests, the author of the book now proceeds to the Levites, the third class; and the first mentioned is Shemaiah, whose ancestors, Hashub, Azrikam, and Hashabiah,

[were] of the sons of Merari; the third son of Levi.

1 Chronicles 9:15

Ver. 15. And Bakbakkar, Heresh, and Galal, and Mattaniah,.... Four more of the chief of the Levites, the pedigree of the last of which is traced up by Micah and Zichri to Asaph, the singer in the times of David, a descendant of Gershon, the first son of Levi; the first of these is thought by Hillerus {t} to be the same with Bakbukiah, Ne 11:17.

{t} Onamastic. Sacr. p. 401, 548.

1 Chronicles 9:16

Ver. 16. And Obadiah the son of Shemaiah,.... Called Abda the son of Shammua, Ne 11:17

the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun; who was Ethan, another of the singers in the time of David:

and Berechiah the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, that dwelt in the villages of the Netophathites; the villages about Netophah, which was in the tribe of Judah, **1Ch 2:54**, **Ne 7:26** which may be understood either of Elkanah, the ancestor of Berechiah, whose dwelling was there; or of Berechiah, and must be rendered,

who had dwelt there; for now he dwelt at Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 9:17

Ver. 17. And the porters,.... Or keepers of the gates of the tabernacle:

were Shallum, and Akkub, and Talmon, and Ahiman, and their brethren; Shallum was the chief; of these four porters, and their brethren.

1 Chronicles 9:18

Ver. 18. Who hitherto waited in the king's gate eastward,.... At the gate through which the king went into the temple, and was at the east of it; and here these porters were placed in the same order after the captivity, and their return from it, as before:

they were porters in the companies of the children of Levi; or in the camp of Levi, which was placed around the tabernacle, as in the wilderness: the Septuagint version is, "these are the gates of the camp of the children of Levi"; at which these porters were placed.

1 Chronicles 9:19

Ver. 19. And Shallum the son of Kore,.... The same as in **1Ch 9:17** whose pedigree is traced up to Ebiasaph the son of Korah, see **Ex 6:24**

and his brethren, of the house of his father, the Korahites; so called, because they descended from Korah:

[were over] the work of the service, keepers of the gates of the tabernacle; until the temple was built:

and their fathers being over the host of the Lord; the Levites, who were the Lord's army, and whose service is represented as a warfare, **Nu 4:5**

[were] keepers of the entry; into the tabernacle, that none might enter that were impure; or into the court of the priests, excepting priests; or into the holiest of all, as Kimchi suggests.

1 Chronicles 9:20

Ver. 20. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar was the ruler over them in time past,.... Over the host, over the Levites, and the chief of them; which is to be understood of Phinehas the son of Eleazar, in the time of Moses, who succeeded his father in that post, see **Nu 3:32** though some think, as Kimchi observes, that this was not Phinehas the priest, but a certain Levite of this name in this post; but since he is said to be in time past, it may very well be understood of him: and it also is observed,

and the Lord was with him; inspiring him with zeal for his honour and glory, assisting and strengthening him to do his will and work, as particularly in the affair of Zimri, Nu 25:7, the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord was for his help;"

this may be said for the encouragement of him that was in the same office now.

1 Chronicles 9:21

Ver. 21. And Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah,.... Some think this refers to one that was in the times of David; but it seems rather to respect one that was after the Babylonish captivity, see 1Ch 26:1 though he and his brethren were in an office established in the times of David, and the order of which was now, as then, observed:

was porter of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: who was the chief porter, and kept the door; either that led into the outer court, and kept out all unclean persons from entering there; or that which led into the court of the priests, that none but priests might enter there.

1 Chronicles 9:22

Ver. 22. All those that were chosen to be porters in the gates were two hundred and twelve,.... As fixed in the days of David, and might not be fewer:

these were reckoned by their genealogies in their villages; where they dwelt:

whom David and Samuel the seer did ordain in their set office; the scheme was first drawn by Samuel the prophet, and communicated to David, who put it into execution, to be constantly and perpetually observed.

1 Chronicles 9:23

Ver. 23. So they and their children had the oversight of the gates of the house of the Lord,.... They that were appointed in David's time to watch the gates of the temple, their posterity succeeded them in that office; for it was hereditary:

namely, the house of the tabernacle, by wards; that which was at Gibeon in David's time, and now one was erected until the temple was built.

1 Chronicles 9:24

Ver. 24. In four quarters were the porters,.... For, according to the Targum on **1Ch 9:22** there were twenty four wards:

towards the east, west, north, and south; and, as the same paraphrase has it, six wards to the east, six to the west, six to the north, and six to the south.

1 Chronicles 9:25

Ver. 25. And their brethren, which were in their villages,.... Assigned them to dwell in:

were to come after seven days from time to time with them; there was a new course of them every week; the old ones went off of duty, and another course succeeded, which came out of the villages where they dwelt, and the old course retired to theirs.

1 Chronicles 9:26

Ver. 26. For these Levites, the four chief porters, were in their set office,.... The four chief porters who were over all the two hundred and twelve, and had one over them, **1Ch 9:17**, these were never changed, nor went into the country villages; but were always upon the spot, and in their office, superintending the rest:

and were over the chambers and treasuries of the house of God; see 1Ch 26:20.

1 Chronicles 9:27

Ver. 27. And they lodged round about the house of God,.... In chambers on the outward wall about it, that they might be near to do their office:

because the charge was upon them; to guard the house:

and the opening thereof every morning pertained to them; that is, the opening of the doors of the mountain of the house, and the court of women; for as for others, that appertained to the priests, as Dr. Lightfoot {u} observes; under the second temple, it is said {w}, Ben Geber was over the shutting of the gates in the evening, and so of opening in the morning.

{u} Temple-Service, c. 7. sect. 1. {w} Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1.

1 Chronicles 9:28

Ver. 28. And certain of them had the charge of the ministering vessels, that they should bring them in and out by tale. Which the priests used in sacrificing, and which the Levites brought to them, and returned again to their proper places.

1 Chronicles 9:29

Ver. 29. Some of them also were appointed to oversee the vessels, and all the instruments of the sanctuary,.... They were committed to their care; they delivered them out on occasion, and their business was to see that they were returned when they had done their use and service:

and the fine flour, and the wine, and the oil, and the frankincense, and the spices; which were used in meat offerings, drink offerings, &c. see 1Ch 26:20 under the second temple, Ahiah was over the libations or drink offerings {x}.

{x} Ibid. (Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1.)

1 Chronicles 9:30

Ver. 30. And some of the sons of the priests made the ointment of the spices. For though the Levites had the care of the spices, they might not make the ointment with them, only the priests, see Ex 30:23.

1 Chronicles 9:31

Ver. 31. And Mattithiah, one of the Levites, who was the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite,.... Of whom see **1Ch 9:19**,

had the set office over the things that were made in the pans; the meat offerings that were made in pans; and so had the care of the fine flour, oil, and frankincense used in them, which he delivered to the priests when necessary, see **Le 2:5**, the Septuagint version is,

"over the works of the sacrifice of the pan of the high priest;"

as if it respected peculiarly his meat offering, **Le 6:20**, we read in the Misnah {y} of the offerings of the high priest, as expressed by this word, which it signifies, and not pans, but what was fried in them {z}; and Ben Melech on the place says, this man was an high priest who offered every day the tenth part of an ephah in a pan, half of it in the morning, and half of it in the evening, according to **Le 6:20**, but that cannot be, for certain it is he was a Levite, as the text expresses it.

{y} Menachot, c. 11. sect. 3. & Tamid, c. 1. sect. 3. {z} Vid. Sheringham. in Misn. Yoma, c. 2. sect. 3. p. 16.

1 Chronicles 9:32

Ver. 32. And other of their brethren, of the sons of the Kohathites, were over the shewbread, to prepare it every sabbath,.... Twelve loaves of which were set every week before the ark upon the shewbread table, and the old ones taken away: now the work of these Levites was to make this shewbread, and get it ready every week to be set upon the table, and which was done not by them, but by priests; under the second temple, the family of Garmu was set over this work {a}.

{a} Misn. Shekalim, ut supra. (c. 5. sect. 1.)

1 Chronicles 9:33

Ver. 33. And these are the singers, chief of the fathers of the Levites,.... Others of them were employed in singing, and were masters of the song, and presided in that service, see **1Ch 6:31** who remaining

in the chambers were free; from all other work and service; and there they abode, even in the chambers of the temple, that they might be near to perform their work, and not be defiled, and made unfit for it:

for they were employed in that work day and night; some or other of them, either in composing or singing psalms and hymns, or teaching others how to sing them.

1 Chronicles 9:34

Ver. 34. These chief fathers of the Levites were chief throughout their generations,.... Even all before made mention of in this chapter:

these dwelt at Jerusalem; always resided there, and did not in turns go into the country villages, as the inferior Levites did; their office requiring them to be constantly there, being chief of the porters, singers, &c. who had the superintendency and direction of the rest.

1 Chronicles 9:35

Ver. 35-44. And in Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon,.... Whose name is here mentioned, which is not in **1Ch 8:29**. Jehiel, whose wife's name was Maachah; as there, but here called his sister, as a wife sometimes is, Ge 20:2. From hence to the end of the chapter is a repetition of the ancestors and posterity of Saul king of Israel; which is made to lead on to and connect the following history of the kings of Judah, begun in this book, and carried on in the next unto the Babylonish captivity, see **1Ch 8:29**, and the notes there.

1 Chronicles 9:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "1Ch 9:35".

1 Chronicles 9:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "1Ch 9:35".

1 Chronicles 9:38

Ver. 38. See Gill on "1Ch 9:35".

1 Chronicles 9:39

Ver. 39. See Gill on "1Ch 9:35".

1 Chronicles 9:40

Ver. 40. See Gill on "1Ch 9:35".

1 Chronicles 9:41

Ver. 41. See Gill on "1Ch 9:35".

1 Chronicles 9:42

Ver. 42. See Gill on "1Ch 9:35".

1 Chronicles 9:43

Ver. 43. See Gill on "1Ch 9:35".

1 Chronicles 9:44

Ver. 44. See Gill on "1Ch 9:35".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 10

This part, 1Ch 10:1 which gives an account of the last battle of Saul with the Philistines, and of his death and burial, is the same with 1Sa 31:1 see the notes there; the cause of his death follows in 1Ch 10:13.

Ver. 1. See Gill on "1Sa 31:1"

1 Chronicles 10:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "1Sa 31:2"

1 Chronicles 10:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "1Sa 31:3"

1 Chronicles 10:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "1Sa 31:4"

1 Chronicles 10:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "1Sa 31:5"

1 Chronicles 10:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "1Sa 31:6"

1 Chronicles 10:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "1Sa 31:7"

1 Chronicles 10:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "1Sa 31:8"

1 Chronicles 10:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "1Sa 31:9"

1 Chronicles 10:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "1Sa 31:10"

1 Chronicles 10:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "1Sa 31:11"

1 Chronicles 10:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "1Sa 31:12"

1 Chronicles 10:13

Ver. 13. So Saul died for his transgression,....
See Gill on "1Sa 31:13" A violent and dishonourable death, which was suffered on account of the sins he was guilty of:

one was, which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not; both in not staying for Samuel the time appointed, and by sparing the Amalekites whom he was bid to destroy, 1Sa 13:13

and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it; what he should do with respect to engaging in battle with the Philistines, 1Sa 28:8 which to do was contrary to an express command of God, Le 19:31.

1 Chronicles 10:14

Ver. 14. And inquired not of the Lord,.... For though he did inquire in some sense in an external, careless, and hypocritical manner, yet not done seriously, sincerely, and heartily, nor with constancy; it was accounted as if he inquired not at all, 1Sa 28:6 the Targum adds another reason of his death, because he killed the priests of Nob; but that is not in the text:

therefore he slew him; or suffered him to be slain:

and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse; translated the kingdom of Israel out of Saul's family, upon his death, into Jesse's, even unto David; for the sake of which observation this short account is given of the last end of Saul.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 11

This chapter treats of David's being anointed king by all Israel, 1Ch 11:1, which agrees with **2Sa 5:1**
See Gill on "2Sa 5:1" See Gill on "2Sa 5:2" See Gill on "2Sa 5:3" and of his taking Jerusalem from the Jebusites, 1Ch 11:4 the account of which we have **2Sa 5:6**.
See Gill on "2Sa 5:6" See Gill on "2Sa 5:7" See Gill on "2Sa 5:8" See Gill on "2Sa 5:9" See Gill on "2Sa 5:10" only here we are told, that it was Joab that

smote the Jebusites first, and so was made chief captain according to David's promise; and that he also repaired the rest of the city David built round about; perhaps the fortifications demolished in taking it, 1Ch 11:6 or rather, as others give the sense, he "saved alive" {b} those that remained in the city, after he had slain the lame and the blind; though a learned {c} writer conjectures it should be read, "and Joab hyhy was made
rv the governor of the city"; and the Targum is,

"Joab governed the rest of the city."

And then follows an account of David's mighty men and worthies, 1Ch 11:10 of whom see the notes on
See Gill on "2Sa 23:8" See Gill on "2Sa 23:9" See Gill on "2Sa 23:10" See Gill on "2Sa 23:11" See Gill on "2Sa 23:12" See Gill on "2Sa 23:13" See Gill on "2Sa 23:14" See Gill on "2Sa 23:15" See Gill on "2Sa 23:16" See Gill on "2Sa 23:17" See Gill on "2Sa 23:18" See Gill on "2Sa 23:19" See Gill on "2Sa 23:20" See Gill on "2Sa 23:21" See Gill on "2Sa 23:22" See Gill on "2Sa 23:23" See Gill on "2Sa 23:24" See Gill on "2Sa 23:25" See Gill on "2Sa 23:26" See Gill on "2Sa 23:27" See Gill on "2Sa 23:28" See Gill on "2Sa 23:29" See Gill on "2Sa 23:30" See Gill on "2Sa 23:31" See Gill on "2Sa 23:32" See Gill on "2Sa 23:33" See Gill on "2Sa 23:34" See Gill on "2Sa 23:35" See Gill on "2Sa 23:36" See Gill on "2Sa 23:37" See Gill on "2Sa 23:38" See Gill on "2Sa 23:39" and others are added here, 1Ch 11:42 of whom we know no more than their names.

{b} rav ta hyxy "vivas conservavit urbis reliquias", Junius & Tremellius; Strigelius in Poli Synops. in loc. {c} Dr. Kennicot's State of the Hebrew Text, dissert. 1. p. 54.

1 Chronicles 11:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:38

Ver. 38. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:39

Ver. 39. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:40

Ver. 40. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:41

Ver. 41. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:42

Ver. 42. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:43

Ver. 43. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:44

Ver. 44. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:45

Ver. 45. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:46

Ver. 46. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

1 Chronicles 11:47

Ver. 47. See Gill on "1Ch 11:1"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 12

This chapter gives an account of those that came to David at different times, and joined and assisted him both before the death of Saul, and when persecuted by him, and after he was made king of Judah in Hebron, and before he was king of all Israel, in order to it; of the Benjaminites that came to him when at Ziklag, 1Ch 12:1 of the Gadites that came to him when in the hold, 1Ch 12:8 of some of Judah and Benjamin, who came to him in the same place, 1Ch 12:16, and of the Manassites at the time he came with the Philistines against Saul, 1Ch 12:19 and the number of the several tribes are given, that came to him at Hebron to make him king over all Israel, 1Ch 12:23.

Ver. 1. Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag,.... Given him by Achish to live in, when he fled from Saul, 1Sa 27:6

while he yet kept himself close, because of Saul the son of Kish; when he was an exile from his own country, and obliged to live retired in a foreign one, because of Saul's persecution of him, and seeking to take away his life:

and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war; not against Saul, with whom David had none, but with the Amalekites, and others, 1Sa 27:8.

1 Chronicles 12:2

Ver. 2. They were armed with bows,.... Much used in war in those times:

and could use both the right hand and the left, in hurling stones, and shooting arrows out of a bow; they were ambidextrous; who could sling stones, or shoot arrows, with either, which was no small advantage to them:

even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin; they were of the tribe of Benjamin, of which Saul was, and so his brethren; and they might be, at least some of them, his relations and kinsmen; who observing the unreasonableness of Saul's enmity to David, and detesting his cruelty, and sensible of the innocence of David, and of the service he had done his country; and perhaps not being ignorant of his divine right and title to the kingdom, went over to him, to comfort, strengthen, and assist him.

1 Chronicles 12:3

Ver. 3. The chief was Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite,.... Who was of Gibeah, in the tribe of Benjamin, sometimes called Gibeah of Benjamin, and of Saul, it being his birthplace, see 1Sa 11:4 and so these might be some of his kindred:

and Jeziel, and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth; there is one of this name in the posterity of Jonathan, **1Ch 8:36** who might be so called after some of his relations:

and Berachah, and Jehu the Antothite; or Anethothite, as the Vulgate Latin version, who was of Anathoth, a city in the tribe of Benjamin, the native place of Jeremiah the prophet.

1 Chronicles 12:4

Ver. 4. And Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty,.... That came with him, and he had the command of; this man was of Gibeon, another city in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:25

and Jeremiah, and Jahaziel, and Johanan, and Josabad, the Gederathite; one of

Gederah, a city in the tribe of Judah, perhaps on the borders of that and Benjamin; Joram speaks of it as belonging to the country of the city Aelia or Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 12:5

Ver. 5. Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite. A native of Haruph or Hariph, see **Ne 7:24**.

1 Chronicles 12:6

Ver. 6. Elkanah, and Jesiah, and Azareel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korhites. Not Korahites, descendants of Levi, **1Ch 9:19**, but the posterity of Korah a Benjaminite.

1 Chronicles 12:7

Ver. 7. And Joelah, and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor. A city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:58 and might now belong to Benjamin; or this was another city of the same name in that tribe.

1 Chronicles 12:8

Ver. 8. And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David, into the hold to the wilderness,.... Men of the tribe of Gad, who lived on the other side Jordan; these separated themselves from the rest of their tribe, from their families and dwellings, and from the government of Saul, and came over to David, and joined him either when he was in some strong hold in the wilderness of Ziph, or Maon, 1Sa 23:14, or, as some think, when he was at Ziklag, in the hold there, said to be in the wilderness of Judah:

men of might, and men of war, fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler; warlike, valiant, and courageous men, well skilled in military discipline: whose faces were like the face of lions; bold, stern, and fierce. The philosopher observes {d}, that of all creatures the lion most resembles a man, having a great mouth, a square face and forehead, large eye brows, &c.

and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains; which are remarkable for their swiftness on the mountains, see **So 2:17**. Aelianus {e} speaks of one sort of them that run as swift as a tempest. These Gadites, as with their undaunted looks and courage, intimidated their enemies, and put them to flight, so they were swift to pursue them, and overtake them.

{d} Aristot. Physiognom. c. 5. {e} De Animal. l. 14. c. 14.

1 Chronicles 12:9

Ver. 9-13. Ezer the first,.... This, and those that follow, are the names of the Gadites given, according to their age, or merit, or order in coming to David: Obadiah, Eliab, Mishmannah, Jeremiah, Attai, Eliel, Johanan, Elzabad, Jeremiah, Machbanai; in all eleven.

1 Chronicles 12:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "1Ch 12:9".

1 Chronicles 12:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "1Ch 12:9".

1 Chronicles 12:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "1Ch 12:9".

1 Chronicles 12:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "1Ch 12:9".

1 Chronicles 12:14

Ver. 14. These were of the sons of Gad, captains of the host,.... Of the militia in their own country, and of the men they brought with them; or they were such afterwards in David's army:

one of the least was over one hundred, and the greatest over thousand; not that they were so when they came, or brought over such a number of men with them under their command; but they were promoted by David, when he came to the throne, to be centurions and chiliarchs; according to Jarchi, the sense is, that the least of them would put to flight and pursue one hundred, and the greatest of them 1000, and so fulfilled the passage in Le 26:8.

1 Chronicles 12:15

Ver. 15. These are they that went over Jordan in the first month,.... The month Nisan or Ab; as they must come over Jordan to come to David, since they dwelt on the other side of it:

when it had overflown all its banks; as it did at this time of the year, see **Jos 3:15** which is observed to show both the time of the year when they came over, and their zeal and ardour to assist David, and their boldness and intrepidity; fearless of danger, they threw themselves into Jordan, and swam over it, in all probability when the waters of it were so deep they could not ford it, and so rapid that they were in danger of being carried away with them:

and they put to flight all them of the valleys, both towards the east, and towards the west; who dwelt in the valleys, or plains of Jordan east and west; who seeing a number of men come over, took them for enemies, and fled, so Kimchi; or, as others think, these were the Philistines, who, on the defeat of Saul, took possession of the cities of Israel, in the valleys forsaken by them, 1Sa 31:7 or rather these were the Moabites or Arabs, who made incursions into the land of Israel for prey, the Gadites met with, when they came over Jordan.

1 Chronicles 12:16

Ver. 16. And there came of the men of Benjamin, and of Judah,.... Besides those before mentioned, 1Ch 12:2,

to the hold unto David; the same as in 1Ch 12:8.

1 Chronicles 12:17

Ver. 17. And David went out to meet them,.... Out of the hold where he was; either out of respect and deference to them, some of them being persons of eminence; or it may be out of suspicion, fearing they were not his friends, being, it may be, chiefly of the tribe of Benjamin, and therefore was desirous of sounding them before he admitted them:

and said unto them, if ye be come peaceably unto me to help me; if they were come with a good will to him, and intention to help him against his enemy, and protect him:

mine heart shall be knit unto you; they should have such a share in his affections, that their hearts would be as one, as his and Jonathan's were, 1Sa 18:1,

but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies; into the hands of Saul, and his courtiers, that sought his life:

seeing there is no wrong in mine hands; no injury done by him to Saul, or to them, or to any other:

the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it; he that sees all things, let him revenge it; and it is not only a wish that he would, but a prayer of faith that so it would be.

1 Chronicles 12:18

Ver. 18. Then the spirit came upon Amasai,.... Or "clothed" {f} him; a spirit of fortitude, as the Targum, of strength, courage, and presence of mind, with which he was endowed, covered, and clothed as with a garment; this was a sister's son of David's, see 2Sa 17:25

who was chief of the captains; of them that came at this time with him to David; he was afterwards Absalom's general, and designed to be David's, but was murdered by Joab:

and he said, thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse; which being spoken in this short and concise manner, as the supplement shows, denotes the vehemency with which he spake, and is expressive of their cordial fidelity to him, and their resolution to abide by him at all events:

peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; wishing all prosperity, temporal and spiritual, to him and all his confederates and auxiliaries, among whom they reckoned themselves:

for thy God helpeth thee; which they perceived by the remarkable deliverances of him out of the hand of Saul, when in imminent danger; the Targum is,

"for the Word of the Lord is for thy help:"

then David received them; into the hold, and admitted them as his friends:

and made them the captains of the band; they brought with them; or in later times, when he came to the throne.

{f} hvbl "induit", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

1 Chronicles 12:19

Ver. 19. And there fell some of Manasseh to David,.... Of the tribe of Manasseh; they took his part, and on his side, and joined him:

when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle; which was a strong proof of their cordial attachment to him:

but they helped them not: the Philistines; neither David nor his men, nor the Manassites that joined them:

for the lords of the Philistines, upon advisement; counsel taken among themselves: sent him away; that is, David and his men:

saying, he will fall to his master Saul, to the jeopardy of our heads; meaning, that he would go off with his troops to Saul, and betray them into his hands, and with their heads make his peace with him, see 1Sa 29:4.

1 Chronicles 12:20

Ver. 20. As he went to Ziklag, there fell to him of Manasseh,.... Others besides the former, who joined him when he went with the Philistines; these joined him when he was dismissed from them, and was returning to Ziklag: namely,

Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jediael, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zilthai, captains of the thousands that were of Manasseh; that tribe being, as the rest were, divided into hundreds and thousands; these were captains over the thousands of the militia of the tribe.

1 Chronicles 12:21

Ver. 21. And they helped David against the band of the rovers,.... The Amalekites, who, while he was gone with the Philistines, had seized on Ziklag, and burnt it, and carried the women captive, with what spoil they could make; these coming to David thus opportunely, assisted him in his pursuit and defeat of them:

for they were all mighty men of valour, and were captains in the host; or army of David.

1 Chronicles 12:22

Ver. 22. For at that time, day by day, there came to David to help him,.... Particularly after the defeat of Saul by the Philistines, unto the time that David came to Hebron:

until it was a great host, like the host of God; the heavenly host, the angels; so the Targum.

1 Chronicles 12:23

Ver. 23-37. And these are the numbers of the bands that were ready armed to the war,.... That were trained up to it, and accounted for it:

and came to David to Hebron; after the death of Ishbosheth and Abner, and when David had reigned seven years in Hebron:

to turn the kingdom of Saul to him; to transfer it to him and his family:

according to the word of the Lord; by Samuel, which they were acquainted with; and the number of those of the children of Judah, who made him their king already, and so there was the less need of a numerous appearance of them, were 6800 armed men, 1Ch 12:24, of the tribe of Simeon, valiant men, 7100, 1Ch 12:25, of the children of Levi 4600, 1Ch 12:26, of the Aaronites or priests, with Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, according to Jarchi and Kimchi, at the head of them, 3700, 1Ch 12:27, besides Zadok, a young man of the line of Eleazar, who was made high priest in the time of Solomon, who brought with him twenty two captains, 1Ch 12:28 the heads of the courses of the priests, which were afterwards twenty four, 1Ch 24:4 of the tribe of Benjamin, the kindred of Saul, the greatest part of whom had been sticklers for the continuance of the kingdom in the family of Saul, 3000, 1Ch 12:29, of the tribe of Ephraim, valiant men, 20,800, 1Ch 12:30, of the half tribe of Manasseh on this side Jordan, whose names were pricked down, being given, to make David king, 18,000, 1Ch 12:31, and of the tribe of Issachar, two hundred of the heads of them; men of knowledge and understanding, either in chronology or astrology, or in the proper seasons for husbandry, or for the fixing the beginning of years and months, and the intercalation of them, for keeping the several festivals; or rather were men of prudence and wisdom, and knew that this was the proper time for making David king, Ishbosheth and Abner his general being dead; and as they were men in high esteem for their parts and abilities, their brethren were at their beck and command, 1Ch 12:30, and of the tribe of Zebulun, warlike men, skilful in war, and well armed, 50,000 men; and their numerous appearance showed that they were hearty and sincere, being the greatest number of all the tribes, 1Ch 12:33, and of the tribe of Naphtali, 1000 captains, and with them armed men, 37,000, 1Ch 12:34 and of the tribe of Dan, men skilled in war, 28,600, 1Ch 12:35 and of the tribe of Asher, warlike men, 40,000, 1Ch 12:36 and of the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan, military men, well armed, 120,000, 1Ch 12:37, which in all made 348,800 men, and upwards.

1 Chronicles 12:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "1Ch 12:23".

1 Chronicles 12:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "1Ch 12:23".

1 Chronicles 12:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "1Ch 12:23".

1 Chronicles 12:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "1Ch 12:23".

1 Chronicles 12:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "1Ch 12:23".

1 Chronicles 12:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "1Ch 12:23".

1 Chronicles 12:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "1Ch 12:23".

1 Chronicles 12:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "1Ch 12:23".

1 Chronicles 12:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "1Ch 12:23".

1 Chronicles 12:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "1Ch 12:23".

1 Chronicles 12:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "1Ch 12:23".

1 Chronicles 12:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "1Ch 12:23".

1 Chronicles 12:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "1Ch 12:23".

1 Chronicles 12:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "1Ch 12:23".

1 Chronicles 12:38

Ver. 38. All these men of war that could keep rank,.... Well disciplined men:

came with a perfect heart to Hebron to make David king over Israel; they were all of one mind, and quite hearty and sincere in fixing David on the throne of all Israel:

and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart also to make David king; those who came not were of the same mind; it was the unanimous voice of the people that he should be their king.

1 Chronicles 12:39

Ver. 39. And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking,.... Keeping a festival, to testify their joy on this occasion:

for their brethren had prepared for them; not the inhabitants of Hebron only, but all the country round about, brought in provisions on this joyful occasion; otherwise the men of Hebron would not have been able to have provided what was sufficient for such a vast number, as appears by what follows.

1 Chronicles 12:40

Ver. 40. Moreover, they that were nigh,.... To Hebron, or bordered on the tribe of Judah:

even unto Issachar, and Zebulun, and Naphtali; as far as to those tribes, and including them:

brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules; all which were creatures used to carry burdens:

and on oxen; who, though commonly employed in ploughing, yet, on this occasion, might be made use of either in drawing wagons laden with provisions, such as follow, or in carrying loads on their backs; though, as Tully {g} observes, their backs show they were not formed to receive and carry burdens:

and meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly, that is, food made of flour, pastries, besides bread, before mentioned, with dried figs, pressed and made into cakes, and clusters of grapes dried, and of liquids, wine and oil, which make cheerful, and beef and mutton in great plenty:

for there was joy in Israel; that their civil wars were ended; that they were united into one kingdom again; and had a king over them according to their hearts' desire, the darling of the people, of whom they had raised expectations; being a valiant, prudent, and good man, who studied the good both of church and state, and, above all, was one of God's choosing, appointing, and anointing: greater joy there will be, when David's son and antitype, Zion's King, reigns, when he shall be King over all the earth, and there will be one Lord, and his name one, Ps 97:1.

{g} De Natura Deorum, l. 2. prope finem.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 13

The contents of this chapter are the same with **2Sa 6:1**, only David's consultation with the principal men of Israel concerning the affair herein transacted is premised in the first four verses of this.

Ver. 1. And David consulted with the captains of thousands, and hundreds, and with every leader. With the chiliarchs and centurions, and every officer in that large body of armed men in every tribe, who met to make and crown him king: for at that time was this consultation had, and therefore is connected with it; though the affair advised about was not yet done, as Dr. Lightfoot {h} observes, and was not done until some considerable time afterwards. Advice being taken, the several officers went with their men to their respective countries, to meet again at a certain time and place to put the thing projected into execution; and between this and that time were Hiram's message to David on his accession to the throne, the taking of Jerusalem, and the two battles with the Philistines, as the same writer notes; most of which are recorded before this in the book of Samuel, and follow here.

{h} Works, vol. 1. p. 61, 62.

1 Chronicles 13:2

Ver. 2. And David said unto all the congregation of Israel,.... To the above persons, as representatives of it:

if it seem good unto you, and that it be of the Lord our God; if it could be thought by them a good and useful thing, and agreeable to the will of God, and would make for his glory:

let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere that are left in all the land of Israel; that were not then present with them, even all the common people; whom David, though king, owns as his brethren; nor is his antitype ashamed to own this relation between him and his people, **Heb 2:11**

and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs: given to them in the several tribes to dwell in, see **1Ch 6:54**,

that they may gather themselves unto us; at a certain time and place appointed.

1 Chronicles 13:3

Ver. 3. And let us bring again the ark of our God to us,.... The symbol of the divine Presence, than which nothing was more desirable to David, and he chose to begin his reign overall Israel with it:

for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul; he being indifferent to religion, and careless about it, and the enjoyment of the presence of God, and having direction from him; and the people also content with worship at the tabernacle at Gibeah, though the token of the divine Presence was absent.

1 Chronicles 13:4

Ver. 4. And all the congregation said that they would do so,.... They unanimously agreed to the motion:

for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people; they saw the propriety, necessity, and usefulness of it.

1 Chronicles 13:5

Ver. 5. So David gathered all Israel together,.... The principal of them, even 30,000 select men, **2Sa 6:1**

from Shihor of Egypt; or the Nile of Egypt, as the Targum and other Jewish writers, called Shihor from the blackness of its water, see **Jer 2:18** though some think the river Rhinocurura is meant, which both lay to the south of the land of Israel:

even unto the entering of Hamath; which the Targum interprets of Antiochia, which lay to the north of the land; so that this collection of the people was made from south to north, the extreme borders of the land:

to bring the ark of God from Kirjathjearim; where it then was, and had been a long time, see **1Sa 7:1**, from hence to the end of the chapter the account is the same with **2Sa 6:1**, see the notes there; what little variations there are, are there observed.
See Gill on "2Sa 6:1" See Gill on "2Sa 6:2" See Gill on "2Sa 6:3" See Gill on

"2Sa 6:4" See Gill on "2Sa 6:5" See Gill on "2Sa 6:6" See Gill on "2Sa 6:7" See Gill on "2Sa 6:8" See Gill on "2Sa 6:9" See Gill on "2Sa 6:10" See Gill on "2Sa 6:11"

1 Chronicles 13:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "1Ch 13:5".

1 Chronicles 13:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "1Ch 13:5".

1 Chronicles 13:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "1Ch 13:5".

1 Chronicles 13:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "1Ch 13:5".

1 Chronicles 13:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "1Ch 13:5".

1 Chronicles 13:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "1Ch 13:5".

1 Chronicles 13:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "1Ch 13:5".

1 Chronicles 13:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "1Ch 13:5".

1 Chronicles 13:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "1Ch 13:5".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 14

This chapter gives an account of the message of Hiram king of Tyre to David, and of David's taking him more wives, with the names of his children by them; and of two battles he fought with the Philistines, in which he had the victory over them; the same are recorded in **2Sa 5:11** see the notes there;
See Gill on "2Sa 5:11".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:12".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:13".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:14".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:15".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:16".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:17".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:18".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:19".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:20".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:21".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:22".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:23".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:24".
See Gill on "2Sa 5:25", and the chapter is concluded with observing, that the fame of David, on account of his victories, was spread in all countries, and they were struck with a panic from the Lord, and were in dread of him.

1 Chronicles 14:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

1 Chronicles 14:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "1Ch 14:1".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 15

David, having prepared a place for the ark of God, gathered the Israelites, Levites, and priests, to assist in the bringing of it up thereunto, 1Ch 15:1 and which was done in a very honourable and joyful manner, 1Ch 15:24, though David, for his behaviour, was despised by Michal his wife in her heart, 1Ch 15:29.

Ver. 1. And David made him houses in the city of David,.... With the help of the masons and carpenters Hiram sent him, 1Ch 14:1, the royal palace is meant, with all the apartments in it, which were many and large, as so great a family he had required, and with all the out houses to it necessary for his servants, and their offices:

and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent; see **2Sa 6:17**.

1 Chronicles 15:2

Ver. 2. Then David said,.... Either within himself, or to his ministers and courtiers about him:

none ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites; he saw his former mistake in employing those that were not Levites in bringing up the ark from Kirjathjearim, and bringing it in a cart, and not on the shoulders of the Levites, and so miscarried in his attempt, **2Sa 6:1** and, perhaps, had since more diligently consulted the law of God about this matter:

for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever; as long as the Levitical dispensation lasted, as appears from **Nu 1:50**.

1 Chronicles 15:3

Ver. 3. And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem,.... The chief and heads of the people:

to bring up the ark of the Lord; from the house of Obededom, where it had been three months, and for the sake of which his house was blessed, and which David heard of; and this encouraged him to take this step to fetch it from thence: unto his place, which he had prepared for it;
1Ch 15:1.

1 Chronicles 15:4

Ver. 4-10. And David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites. Whose business it was to bear the ark when there was any occasion for it: and from hence to the end of 1Ch 15:10 an account is given of the Levites, and their number employed in this affair:

of the sons of Kohath; a son of Levi, that is, of his posterity; for his immediate sons, and so those of the rest after mentioned, had been dead ages ago; the principal of those, at this present time, was Uriel, and his kindred, or those of the same family with him, were one hundred and twenty: of those of Merari, another son of Levi, the chief was Asaiah, with two hundred and twenty of his relations: of those of Gershon, another son of Levi, was Joel, and his brethren were one hundred and thirty: of the posterity of Elizaphan, a grandson of Kohath, **Ex 5:18**, the most noted was Shemaiah, who had two hundred of his family with him: and of those of Hebron, the son of Kohath, **Ex 6:18**, Eliel was the most famous, and he had eighty of his kindred with him: and of those of Uzziel, another son of Kohath in a different line from Elizaphan, who also was a son of Uzziel, was Amminadab the chief, who had one hundred and twelve of his kindred with him: the number of Levites, in all, gathered together, were eight hundred and sixty two, besides their chiefs.

1 Chronicles 15:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "1Ch 15:4".

1 Chronicles 15:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "1Ch 15:4".

1 Chronicles 15:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "1Ch 15:4".

1 Chronicles 15:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "1Ch 15:4".

1 Chronicles 15:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "1Ch 15:4".

1 Chronicles 15:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "1Ch 15:4".

1 Chronicles 15:11

Ver. 11. And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests,.... See **2Sa 8:17**

and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab; the six chiefs before mentioned.

1 Chronicles 15:12

Ver. 12. And he said unto them, ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites,.... Of the families of the Levites, heads of their fathers' houses:

sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren; respectively under each, whose numbers are before given, by washing their bodies and clothes, and abstaining from their wives:

that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it; **2Sa 6:17**.

1 Chronicles 15:13

Ver. 13. For because ye did it not at the first,.... Did not sanctify themselves, as the supplement in our version directs; but rather the sense is, ye were not there at first, when the ark was brought from Kirjathjearim as far as the house of Obededom, as they should have been; they were not then employed, as was their business, and therefore the Lord our God made a breach upon us; by smiting Uzzah with death, who was no Levite, and touched the ark, which is called his "error", and for which God smote him, **2Sa 6:7** on which place Lud. Capellus observes, the word "shal", we there render "error", signifies a "disease" in the Arabic language, and might formerly design a sudden one with the Hebrew; as an apoplexy; and so the sense be, that God smote Uzzah with an apoplexy, of which he suddenly died:

for that we sought him not after the due order; but, instead of employing the Levites to carry the ark on their shoulders, it was put upon a cart.

1 Chronicles 15:14

Ver. 14. So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves,.... As they were ordered, and in the manner they should:

to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel; for though it was chiefly the work of the Levites, yet the priests might do it, and sometimes did, see **Jos 3:13**.

1 Chronicles 15:15

Ver. 15. And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders, with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded, according to the word of the Lord. Not only bare it on their shoulders, but with the staves in it, which rested on their shoulders, see **Nu 7:9**, the reason of this command, that the ark should be carried on men's shoulders, and not in any carriage, according to Maimonides {h}, was both for the honour of it, and lest its form and structure should be any ways damaged.

{h} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 45. p. 479.

1 Chronicles 15:16

Ver. 16. And David spake to the chief of the Levites,.... The six before mentioned, 1Ch 15:11

to appoint their brethren to be the singers; before the ark, as they brought it up:

with instruments of music, psalteries, and harps, and cymbals; which were used in those times, see **2Sa 6:5**

sounding by lifting up the voice with joy; the instrumental music was to be attended with vocal music, and that very sonorous and loud, and performed with all tokens of inward joy and gladness, as the occasion required.

1 Chronicles 15:17

Ver. 17. So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel,.... The grandson of Samuel the prophet, **1Ch 6:33**

and of his brethren, Asaph the son of Berechiah; a famous singer, often mentioned in the Psalms, **1Ch 6:39**

and of the sons of Merari their brethren, Ethan the son of Kushaiah; the same with the son of Kishi, **1Ch 6:44**, these were the chief of the singers.

1 Chronicles 15:18

Ver. 18. And with them their brethren of the second degree,.... Who were next unto them, both in office and skill in singing:

the fourteen following, Zechariah, Ben, and Jaaziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, Eliab, and Benaiah, and Maaseiah, and Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obededom, and Jeiel, the porters; who, when they were not employed in singing, were doorkeepers of the sanctuary; either they had been porters at the tabernacle in Gibeon, or were so after the ark was placed in the tabernacle David prepared for it.

1 Chronicles 15:19

Ver. 19. So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan,.... The three principal of them: these were appointed

to sound with cymbals of brass; for as there were three sorts of musical instruments, 1Ch 15:16 these three chief singers had one of those instruments appropriated to them, one of which were the cymbals of brass, to which the apostle alludes, 1Co 13:1.

1 Chronicles 15:20

Ver. 20. And Zechariah, and Aziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, and Eliab, and Maaseiah, and Benaiah,.... Who were eight of the second degree; Aziel is the same with Jaaziel, 1Ch 15:18 and Ben is left out, in whose room Azaziah, in the next verse, seems to be put; Ben is thought to be sick or dead before they came to execute their office, and whom the father of Kimchi takes to be the same with him who is expressed in the title of **Ps 9:1** which title is, "on Muthlabben", or the death of Ben: these were appointed to sound

with psalteries on Alamoth; psalteries were another kind of instruments of music; and Alamoth was either the beginning of a song, to the tune of which those instruments played, or the tune itself, and the note of it; either the treble or counter tenor, a shrill sound, like that of organs, which this word sometimes signifies, see Ps 46:1.

1 Chronicles 15:21

Ver. 21. And Mattithiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obededom, and Jeiel, and Azaziah,.... These six were appointed to sound:

with harps on the Sheminith to excel; which Sheminith some take to be an harp with eight strings, or the beginning of a song, or a musical tone, the bass; see the title of **Ps 6:1**.

1 Chronicles 15:22

Ver. 22. And Chenaniah chief of the Levites was for song,.... But the chief for the song were Heman, Asaph, and Ethan; rather

for the burden, as the Targum; for the lifting up and bearing the ark:

he instructed about the song; or about the taking up and bearing the burden, the ark; directing when to take it up, and how far to go with it, and then rest:

because he was skilful; a wise and prudent man in all things, and so proper to direct in this business.

1 Chronicles 15:23

Ver. 23. And Berechiah, and Elkanah, were doorkeepers for the ark,.... Either while it was at Kirjathjearim, and at Obededom's house; or rather after it was put in the tabernacle David had prepared for it; though it may be best of all to understand it, that those, as it was carrying, went before it, to keep the people from pressing to it, and gazing on it.

1 Chronicles 15:24

Ver. 24. And Shebaniah, and Jehoshaphat, and Nethaneel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, did blow with the trumpets before the ark of God,.... With the silver trumpets; one use of which was to blow with when the camps and ark of the Lord moved, Nu 10:5.

and Obededom and Jehiah were doorkeepers for the ark; they went behind it, as the others before it, for the same purpose, as it was bringing up.

1 Chronicles 15:25

Ver. 25. So David and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands,.... He and the principal men of the nation, and the officers of the army or militia:

went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the house of Obededom with joy; with all demonstrations of it; for which purpose such a band of music was prepared, as before described.

1 Chronicles 15:26

Ver. 26. And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord,.... Not merely granted them bodily strength to carry it, which did not require a great deal; but helped them to carry it with cheerfulness, and without fear, and so as to commit no error, nor in any respect provoke his displeasure, as when it was brought before from Kirjathjearim:

that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams; by way of thanksgiving, besides what David offered; and this was done by the way, see **2Sa 6:13**.

1 Chronicles 15:27

Ver. 27. And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen,.... For though a king, he, being among the singers, was clothed as they; for so it follows:

and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song; or of those that bore the burden, the ark, as the Targum:

with the singers; all were clothed in robes of fine linen:

David also had upon him an ephod of linen; which he had besides his linen robe, and was over it; and being a shorter and tighter garment, it bound the other closer to him; though some think this is explanative of the former, and designs the same, and is what others, besides priests, were, on occasion, allowed to wear, see **1Sa 2:18**.

1 Chronicles 15:28

Ver. 28. Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting,.... See **2Sa 6:15**.

1 Chronicles 15:29

Ver. 29. And it came to pass, as the ark of the covenant of the Lord came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul, looking out at a window,.... Of the palace, to see the procession, see **2Sa 6:16** where not only this circumstance is related, and the inward contempt she had David in, because of his behaviour, but also what she said, and what David returned in answer to it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 16

This chapter relates that David offered sacrifices when the ark was brought into his city, 1Ch 16:1 who were the singers he appointed to sing before it continually, 1Ch 16:4 and the song he that day composed and delivered to them to sing, 1Ch 16:7 and that he appointed not only proper persons to minister before the ark, but also before the tabernacle at Gibeon, 1Ch 16:37.

Ver. 1-3. So they brought the ark of God,.... What is contained in these three verses is the same with **2Sa 6:17**, see the notes there. See Gill on "2Sa 6:17". See Gill on "2Sa 6:18".
See Gill on "2Sa 6:19".

1 Chronicles 16:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "1Ch 16:1".

1 Chronicles 16:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "1Ch 16:1".

1 Chronicles 16:4

Ver. 4. And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord,.... By singing the praises of God:

and to record; or bring to remembrance; to commemorate in a song the great and good things God had done for Israel as a people:

and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel; for all his benefits, and the blessings of his goodness bestowed on them.

1 Chronicles 16:5

Ver. 5. Asaph the chief,.... Of those that were now appointed: otherwise, of the three principal singers, Heman was the chief, and Asaph next, **1Ch 6:33** and next to him Zechariah, Jeiel, Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obededom, and Jeiel, with psalteries, and with harps; to play upon them before the ark at the same time the psalms and songs were vocally sung; the above persons are such as are named before, 1Ch 15:18,

but Asaph made a sound with cymbals; he struck and played upon them, see 1Ch 15:19.

1 Chronicles 16:6

Ver. 6. Benaiah also and Jahaziel the priests,.... These were appointed to blow

with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; morning and evening.

1 Chronicles 16:7

Ver. 7-34. Then on that day,.... The ark was brought to Zion, and the above persons appointed to minister before it:

David delivered first this psalm to thank the Lord into the hand of Asaph and his brethren to be sung by them now, and on every proper occasion; and this seems to be the first that was delivered to them; afterwards there were many more, as the titles of the psalms show; the following is composed of part of two others, as they now stand in the book of Psalms. From hence, to the end of 1Ch 16:22 is the same with
Ps 105:1, with a little variation, see the notes there; and from thence to the end of 1Ch 16:33 is Ps 96:1 which see; and
1Ch 16:34 is the same with Ps 106:1, see the notes there.
See Gill on "Ps 106:1" See Gill on "Ps 107:1" See Gill on "Ps 105:1" See Gill on "Ps 105:2" See Gill on "Ps 105:3" See Gill on "Ps 105:4" See Gill on "Ps 105:5" See Gill on "Ps 105:6" See Gill on "Ps 105:7" See Gill on "Ps 105:8" See Gill on "Ps 105:9" See Gill on "Ps 105:10" See Gill on "Ps 105:11" See Gill on "Ps 105:12" See Gill on "Ps 105:13" See Gill on "Ps 105:14" See Gill on "Ps 105:15"

1 Chronicles 16:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "1Ch 16:7"

1 Chronicles 16:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "Ps 95:1"

1 Chronicles 16:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "Ps 95:2"

1 Chronicles 16:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "Ps 95:3"

1 Chronicles 16:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "Ps 95:4"

1 Chronicles 16:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "Ps 95:5"

1 Chronicles 16:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "Ps 95:6"

1 Chronicles 16:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "Ps 95:7"

1 Chronicles 16:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "Ps 95:8"

1 Chronicles 16:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "Ps 95:9"

1 Chronicles 16:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "Ps 95:10"

1 Chronicles 16:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "Ps 95:11" See Gill on "Ps 95:12" See Gill on "Ps 95:13"

1 Chronicles 16:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "Ps 96:1" See Gill on "Ps 107:1"

1 Chronicles 16:35

Ver. 35,36. And say ye, save us, O God of our salvation,.... The author of temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation; the words are a direction to the singers, and those that sung with them, to express the prayer and doxology in the next verse, which both are the same with Ps 106:47.
See Gill on "Ps 106:47" See Gill on "Ps 106:48"; which David directed by a spirit of prophecy, foreseeing the people of Israel would be in captivity among the Heathens; though some think these were added by Ezra; for though there was in his time a return from the captivity, yet many still remained in it.

1 Chronicles 16:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "1Ch 16:35"

1 Chronicles 16:37

Ver. 37. So he left there, before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, Asaph and his brethren,.... Whom he, that is, David, had appointed for the service of it:

to minister before the ark continually; in singing the praises of God:

as every day's work required; at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it.

1 Chronicles 16:38

Ver. 38 And Obededom, with their brethren, threescore and eight,.... The

Levites, the brethren of Asaph and Obededom, these were left before the ark to minister there:

Obededom also the son of Jeduthun; or Ethan, which some take to be another Obededom; but the w, "vau" may be explanative, "even Obededom":

and Hosah to be porters; these he left to be doorkeepers of the ark.

1 Chronicles 16:39

Ver. 39. And Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests,.... These he left, having appointed them

to be before the tabernacle of the Lord, in the high place that was at Gibeon; namely, the tabernacle of Moses, which was removed from Nob thither in the days of Saul, and continued there to the times of Solomon, 1Ch 21:28.

1 Chronicles 16:40

Ver. 40. To offer burnt offerings unto the Lord,.... Which was the work of the priests only to do:

upon the altar of burnt offering continually morning and evening; the lambs of the daily sacrifice, which were a burnt offering, and only to be offered on the brasen altar at the tabernacle:

and to do according to all that is written in the law of the Lord, which he commanded Israel; with regard to them, and all other sacrifices, see Ex 29:38.

1 Chronicles 16:41

Ver. 41. And with them,.... That is, with Zadok, and the priests with him at Gibeon:

he left Heman and Jeduthun: or Ethan, two principal singers:

and the rest that were chosen, who were expressed by name; see 1Ch 16:18

to give thanks to the Lord, because his mercy endureth for ever; to praise him for his benefits, flowing from his grace and mercy continually.

1 Chronicles 16:42

Ver. 42. And with them Heman and Jeduthun, with trumpets and cymbals,.... Or with them were the trumpets and cymbals, as Kimchi; or, as Piscator supplies it, with them he "left" the trumpets and cymbals:

for those that should make a sound; by striking upon them:

and with musical instruments of God; sacred ones, such as were devoted to his service, as psalteries and harps; the Syriac and Arabic versions carry the sense of the words quite differently, that these men did not sing with those musical instruments, but with a pleasant voice, and with pure and acceptable prayers, in humility and uprightness, glorified God:

and the sons of Jeduthun were porters; at the tabernacle in Gibeon.

1 Chronicles 16:43

Ver. 43. And all the people departed, every man to his house,.... Having accompanied the ark to its place, and having praised the Lord for it, and been refreshed with food, see 2Sa 6:19

and David returned to bless his house; his family; the Targum is,

"to bless the people;"

see 2Sa 6:20.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 17

This chapter contains an account of David's intention to build an house for

God, which, he signified to Nathan the prophet, who first encouraged him to it; but afterwards was sent by the Lord to him with an order to desist from it, assuring him, at the same time, that his son should build it, and that his own house and kingdom should be established for ever; for which David expressed great thankfulness, the whole of which is related in **2Sa 7:1** with some little variation, see the notes there; only one thing has since occurred, which I would just take notice of, that here, 1Ch 17:5 as there also, it is said by the Lord, that he had "not dwelt in an house since the day he brought up Israel out of Egypt"; which seems to suggest that he had dwelt in one before, as has been hinted on **2Sa 7:6** even while the people of Israel were in Egypt, though it is nowhere mentioned by Moses, or any other writer; yet it is not unreasonable to suppose it; for as the ancestors of the Israelites, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when only travellers from place to place, built altars for God wherever they came; so their posterity, it is highly probable, not only did the same, but when they found themselves settled in Egypt, in the land of Goshen, might build places of worship; and when we consider the wealth of Joseph, and his family, and indeed of all Israel, who enjoyed for many years great plenty, prosperity, and liberty, before their servitude, the vast numbers they increased to and the long continuance of them in Egypt, more than two hundred years; it will not seem strange that they should build houses for religious worship, and even one grand and splendid for public service, to which also they might be led by the example of the Egyptians; who, as Herodotus says {i}, were the first that erected altars, images, and temples to the gods, and who in the times of Joseph had one at On, where his father-in-law officiated as priest, Ge 41:45 or rather to this they might be directed by some hints and instructions of their father Jacob before his death, who it is certain had a notion of a Bethel, an house for the public worship of God, Ge 28:17 and I find a learned man {k} of our own nation of this opinion, and which he founds upon this passage; and he supposes the house God dwelt in, in Egypt, was not a tent of goats' hair, as in the wilderness, but a structure of stones or bricks, a firm and stable house, such an one as Abraham built at Damascus when settled there; which continued to the times of Augustus Caesar, as related by Nicholas of Damascus {l}. See **2Sa 7:1**.

{i} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 4. {k} Dickinson. Physic. vet. & vera, c. 19. sect. 24. {l} Apud. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 1. c. 7. sect. 2.

1 Chronicles 17:2

Ver. 2. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:3

Ver. 3. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:4

Ver. 4. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:5

Ver. 5. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:6

Ver. 6. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:7

Ver. 7. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:8

Ver. 8. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:9

Ver. 9. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:10

Ver. 10. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:11

Ver. 11. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:12

Ver. 12. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:13

Ver. 13. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:14

Ver. 14. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:15

Ver. 15. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:16

Ver. 16. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:17

Ver. 17. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:18

Ver. 18. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:19

Ver. 19. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:20

Ver. 20. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:21

Ver. 21. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:22

Ver. 22. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:23

Ver. 23. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:24

Ver. 24. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:25

Ver. 25. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:26

Ver. 26. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

1 Chronicles 17:27

Ver. 27. See Gill "1Ch 17:1".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 18

The eighteenth and nineteenth chapters are the same with **2Sa 8:1** with very little variations, which are observed in the notes on them, to which the reader is referred.

1 Chronicles 18:2

Ver. 2. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:3

Ver. 3. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:4

Ver. 4. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:5

Ver. 5. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:6

Ver. 6. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:7

Ver. 7. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:8

Ver. 8. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:9

Ver. 9. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:10

Ver. 10. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:11

Ver. 11. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:12

Ver. 12. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:13

Ver. 13. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:14

Ver. 14. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:15

Ver. 15. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:16

Ver. 16. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

1 Chronicles 18:17

Ver. 17. See Gill "1Ch 18:1".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 19

The eighteenth and nineteenth chapters are the same with **2Sa 8:1** with very little variations, which are observed in the notes on them, to which the reader is referred.

1 Chronicles 19:2

Ver. 2. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:3

Ver. 3. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:4

Ver. 4. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:5

Ver. 5. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:6

Ver. 6. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:7

Ver. 7. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:8

Ver. 8. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:9

Ver. 9. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:10

Ver. 10. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:11

Ver. 11. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:12

Ver. 12. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:13

Ver. 13. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:14

Ver. 14. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:15

Ver. 15. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:16

Ver. 16. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:17

Ver. 17. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:18

Ver. 18. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 19:19

Ver. 19. See Gill "1Ch 19:1".

1 Chronicles 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 20

Agrees with various passages in the second book of Samuel; 1Ch 20:1 with 2Sa 11:1 and 1Ch 20:2 with 2Sa 12:30 and the rest, to the end of it, with 2Sa 21:15. What differences there are, are observed in the notes on those passages, which see. Also see 1Ch 21:1.

1 Chronicles 20:2

Ver. 2. See Gill "1Ch 20:1".

1 Chronicles 20:3

Ver. 3. See Gill "1Ch 20:1".

1 Chronicles 20:4

Ver. 4. See Gill "1Ch 20:1".

1 Chronicles 20:5

Ver. 5. See Gill "1Ch 20:1".

1 Chronicles 20:6

Ver. 6. See Gill "1Ch 20:1".

1 Chronicles 20:7

Ver. 7. See Gill "1Ch 20:1".

1 Chronicles 20:8

Ver. 8. See Gill "1Ch 20:1".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 21

Excepting the three last verses, is contained in 2Sa 24:1 with some few variations, which are there observed; see the notes there.

1 Chronicles 21:2

Ver. 2. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:3

Ver. 3. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:4

Ver. 4. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:5

Ver. 5. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:6

Ver. 6. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:7

Ver. 7. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:8

Ver. 8. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:9

Ver. 9. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:10

Ver. 10. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:11

Ver. 11. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:12

Ver. 12. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:13

Ver. 13. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:14

Ver. 14. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:15

Ver. 15. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:16

Ver. 16. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:17

Ver. 17. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:18

Ver. 18. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:19

Ver. 19. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:20

Ver. 20. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:21

Ver. 21. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:22

Ver. 22. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:23

Ver. 23. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:24

Ver. 24. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:25

Ver. 25. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:26

Ver. 26. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:27

Ver. 27. See Gill "1Ch 21:1".

1 Chronicles 21:28

Ver. 28. At that time when David saw that the Lord had answered him in the threshing floor Of Ornan the Jebusite,.... The same with Araunah, 2Sa 24:16, with some small variation of the letters, and are of the same signification; both signifying the "ornus", as Hillerus {m} observes, the pine tree or ash; see Isa 44:14, in whose threshingfloor David now was, and where he had been praying and sacrificing; and God had accepted his prayer, as the Targum, and had answered him, by causing fire to come down on the sacrifice and consume it, and by ordering the angel to put up his sword in its sheath:

then he sacrificed there; again by the priests, and continued to do so, for he had sacrificed there before, 1Ch 21:26 and finding his sacrifices in that place were acceptable, he repeated them, and did not go to Gibeon, as follows.

{m} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 529, 530.

1 Chronicles 21:29

Ver. 29. For the tabernacle of the Lord, which Moses made,.... Or ordered to be made by the command of God, and according to his direction:

and the altar of burnt offerings, were at that season in the high place at Gibeon; which was four or five miles from Jerusalem, and too far for David to go in that time of extremity; though he must have gone thither to sacrifice, had not the Lord bid him build an altar on the threshingfloor; for there was the altar of burnt offering, on which only, according to the law of Moses, sacrifices were to be offered: this high place is, in the Targum, called the sanctuary, it including, as Kimchi observes, the whole house, the tabernacle, and the altar in it; which had been here, and at Nob, fifty seven years, as the Jewish writers say {n}.

{n} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Zebachim, c. 14. sect. 7.

1 Chronicles 21:30

Ver. 30. But David could not go before it to inquire of God,.... Which yet was the proper place to seek the Lord in: the reason follows,

for he was afraid, because of the sword of the angel of the Lord; which had so terrified him, that he was so weak that he could not go; and he feared that, should he attempt to go, while he was going thither, at such a distance, the angel would make a terrible slaughter in Jerusalem, and therefore he durst not go and leave it; and besides, as the Lord had commanded him to build an altar there, he might fear it would displease him, should he depart from it; and the rather, as hereby he pointed out to him the place where the temple should be built, and sacrifices offered, as appears from what he says in the beginning of the next chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 22

In this chapter we read of the place David pitched upon by divine direction for building the temple on, 1Ch 22:1, the preparation he made of artificers to build it, and of matter to build it of, as iron, brass, and wood, 1Ch 22:2, the charge and instructions he gave to Solomon to set about it, 1Ch 22:6 and to the princes of Israel to assist him in it, 1Ch 22:7.

Ver. 1. Then David said,.... Within himself, or to some principal persons about him:

this is the house of the Lord God; the place where the temple was to be built, hinted at in De 12:5 and elsewhere; the meaning is, here, or in "this" place, shall be the house of God, so Noldius {o}, for as yet there were none; but it was now made known to David that here it should be built, and so the words in **2Ch 3:1** should be rendered, then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, which was shown to David his father, which he prepared in the place of David, that which he bought in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite: and this is the altar for the burnt offering for Israel; not which he had built here; but this is the place where one should be built for the people of Israel to bring their offerings to, and to be here offered for them by the priests: this he said by a divine impulse upon his mind, or which he concluded from the acceptance of his sacrifice here, signified by fire that came down from heaven and consumed it; and this being in the threshingfloor of the Jebusites, might prefigure the church of God to be built up among the Gentiles.

{o} Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 352. No. 1257.

1 Chronicles 22:2

Ver. 2. And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel,.... The proselytes, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; that is, proselytes of the gate, who submitted to the seven precepts of Noah, were admitted to dwell in the Cities of Israel, see **Ge 9:4** and these were ordered to be got together to be employed in building the temple, and making preparations for it; and that partly because they were better artificers than the Israelites, who were chiefly employed in husbandry and cattle, and partly that the Israelites, who were freemen, might not be put to hard service; but chiefly this was for the sake of a mystery in it, denoting that the Gentiles would be concerned in building the spiritual house and church of God, the temple was a type and figure of, see **Zec 6:15**

and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God; to dig them out of the quarries, and fit them for the building.

1 Chronicles 22:3

Ver. 3. And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings,.... Great plenty of iron to make nails of for joining the boards together, of which the doors and gates were to be made, and for the fastening of the hinges of them:

and brass in abundance without weight; for making the altar of brass, and the laver of brass, and other vessels. Brass was much used by the Heathens in sacred things, as Macrobius {p} observes.

{p} Saturnal. l. 5. c. 19.

1 Chronicles 22:4

Ver. 4. Also cedar trees in abundance,.... To be sawed into boards and planks for the cieling, wainscotting, and flooring of the temple, and other things:

for the Zidonians, and they of Tyre, brought much cedar wood to David; from Mount Lebanon, which was chiefly in their possession; and which they did either of themselves as a free gift and present to him, or at his request, for which he paid them; and this is another thing prefiguring the help of the Gentiles in building up the church of Christ in Gospel times.

1 Chronicles 22:5

Ver. 5. And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender,.... Jarchi supposes he was about twelve years of age, though he observes that the same word is used of Joshua when forty two years of age; it is probable Solomon might be now about twenty:

and the house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: and such was the temple built by Solomon; it was renowned throughout the whole earth; never was there a temple equal to it, no, not the famous temple of Diana at Ephesus, built by the assistance of many kings, and at the expense of all Asia, and was two hundred years in building:

I will therefore now, make preparation for it; seeing his son was so young, and this building to be so magnificent, though he himself was not admitted to build it:

so David prepared abundantly before his death; of which we have an after account in this chapter, and more largely in 1Ch 28:1.

1 Chronicles 22:6

Ver. 6. Then he called for Solomon his son,.... To be brought before him:

and charged him to build an house for the Lord God of Israel; which charge was given a little before his death, after he had made great preparations for this work, as appears from 1Ch 22:5.

1 Chronicles 22:7

Ver. 7. And David said to Solomon,.... When brought into his presence:

my son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God; he was disposed and inclined to it, and was once determined upon it, see **2Sa 7:2**.

1 Chronicles 22:8

Ver. 8. But the word of the Lord came to me,.... The word of prophecy, as the Targum, by the mouth of Nathan the prophet:

saying; as follows, which though not expressed in the book of Samuel before referred to, is here recorded by divine inspiration:

thou hast shed blood abundantly; Kimchi thinks this refers to the blood of Uriah, and those gallant men that were slain with him, and to the priests slain by the order of Saul, which David was the occasion of, or accidental cause of, 1Sa 22:22 and to many good men among the Gentiles; though it was the intention of the Lord to consume the wicked among them, that they might not prevail over Israel:

and hast made great wars: with the Philistines, Moabites, &c.

thou shall not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight; an intimation this, that the church of God, of which this house was a type, was to be built by Christ, the Prince of peace, and to be supported and maintained not by force of arms, and by spilling of blood, as the religion of Mahomet, but by the preaching of the Gospel of peace.

1 Chronicles 22:9

Ver. 9. Behold, a son shall be born to thee,.... For this was said to David before the birth of Solomon, see **2Sa 7:12**

who shall be a man of rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: and so should be at leisure for such a work, and his people enjoy great prosperity and riches, and so be capable of contributing largely and liberally to it:

for his name shall be Solomon; which signifies peace, and is one of the six persons that had their names given them before they were born, as the Jews observe {q}:

and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days; and so a proper time to begin and carry on such a work; of the fulfilment of this prophecy, see **1Ki 4:24**.

{q} Pirke Eliezer, c. 32.

1 Chronicles 22:10

Ver. 10. He shall build an house for my name,.... For the worship of God, and for his honour and glory:

and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; see **2Sa 7:13** and which is applied to Christ, **Heb 1:5**

and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever; that is, for a long time in his posterity; and which will have its fulfilment in Christ, his antitype, in the utmost sense of the expression, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his throne for ever and ever, **Lu 1:32**.

1 Chronicles 22:11

Ver. 11. Now, my son, the Lord be with thee, &c. Or "shall be with thee" {r}, as some; and if it be as a prayer, it was no doubt a prayer of faith; the Targum is,

"may the Word of the Lord be thine help:"

and prosper thee; may success attend thee:

and build the house of the Lord thy God, as he hath said of thee; foretold he should, and therefore would assist him to do it, which was an encouragement to go about it.

{r} yhy "erit", Pagninus, Montanus; "futurus est", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

1 Chronicles 22:12

Ver. 12. Only the Lord give thee wisdom and understanding,.... To manage and conduct an affair of such importance, as well as to govern the people, as follows:

and give thee charge concerning Israel; or, when he gives, commits the charge of them to thee, sets thee king over them:

that thou mayest keep the law of the Lord thy God; have wisdom and understanding to do that, and make that the rule of all thine actions, private and public, in thine own house, in the house of God, and in all things relative to that, and in the government of the nation.

1 Chronicles 22:13

Ver. 13. Then shall thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes,.... See **1Ki 2:2** where the same things are said as here: which shows that this was spoken by David a little before his death.

1 Chronicles 22:14

Ver. 14. Now, behold, in my trouble,.... Or affliction, which had attended him, through the greater part of his reign, partly through wars abroad, and partly through rebellions and insurrections at home: or,

in my poverty {a}; living in a frugal way, as if he had been a poor man, in order to lay up money for this purpose:

I have prepared for the house of the Lord; for the building of it, and for things to be used in it:

an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; a prodigious sum, be it reckoned as it will; the gold, according to Scheuchzer {b} was answerable to 1,222,000,000 ducats of gold; according to Waserus {c} the talents of gold made six hundred millions of Hungarian pieces of gold, or 6000 tons of gold; our Brerewood {d} makes them to amount to 450,000,000 pounds; but this being a sum so excessive large as what exceeds the riches of any monarch read of in history, he thinks {e} the word "kikkar" signifies a mass or cake of gold of an uncertain value; or that this talent was of a lesser value than the Mosaic one, as there were small talents in the times of Homer {f}, as he observes, and some of different worth in various countries. The silver, taking gold to be in proportion to silver as ten to one, as it formerly was, is just of the same value with the gold; but Brerewood, who takes it to be as twelve to one, computes it at 375,000,000 pounds; but the proportion of gold to silver is now grown, as Bishop Cumberland observes {g}, to above fourteen to one. According to Scheuchzer the silver talents amounted to 4,500,000,000 imperials or rix dollars; according to Witsius {h} the gold and silver both amounted to 3000 and nine hundred millions of pieces of gold; but Josephus {i} has reduced these sums very much, making them to be 10,000 talents of gold, and 100,000 of silver. Dr. Prideaux {k} says that what is said to be given by David here, and in 1Ch 29:3 and by his princes, 1Ch 29:6 if valued by the Mosaic talent, exceeded the value of eight hundred million of our money, which was enough to have built the whole temple of solid silver:

and of brass and iron without weight, for it is in abundance; there was so much of both, that it was too much trouble to take the weight and value of them:

timber also and stone have I prepared; see 1Ch 22:2

and thou mayest add thereunto; which might easily be obtained, there being not a sufficiency of either of them prepared for the work.

{a} yyneb "in paupertate mea", V. L. {b} Physica Sacra, vol. 4. p. 631. {c} De Antiqu. Num. Heb. l. 2. c. 13. {d} De Pond. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 5. {e} De Pond. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 6. {f} Vid. Suidam in voce talanton. {g} Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 4. p. 121. {h} Miscell. Sacr. 2. Exercit. 10. sect. 17. {i} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 14. sect. 2. {k} Connection, part 1. p. 6.

1 Chronicles 22:15

Ver. 15. Moreover, there are workmen with thee in abundance,.... All the strangers in the land being gathered by the order of David, 1Ch 22:2 who were skilled in all manner of work, as follows:

hewers and workers of stone and timber; masons and carpenters:

and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work; joiners, carvers, &c.

1 Chronicles 22:16

Ver. 16. Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron,.... That is, the cunning artificers were skilful to work in each of these, some in gold and silver, others in brass and iron:

there is no number; either of the workmen, or of these materials; which yet must be restrained to the brass and iron, for the gold and silver are numbered, but not the brass and iron, 1Ch 22:14,

arise therefore, and be doing: not that he should set about and begin the building the temple directly; but as soon as he could after he came to the throne, and not neglect and delay it:

and the Lord be with thee; as in 1Ch 22:11 and here, as there, the Targum is,

"may the Word of the Lord be thy help."

1 Chronicles 22:17

Ver. 17. David also commanded all the princes of Israel,.... His courtiers and nobles that were about him:

to help Solomon his son; by their advice, and with their purses, should he need them, and by overlooking the workmen, directing and encouraging them:

saying; as follows.

1 Chronicles 22:18

Ver. 18. Is not the Lord your God with you?.... Blessing them with wealth and riches:

and hath he not given you rest on every side? from all enemies within and without; so that they had peace and quietness, and leisure to attend the service he recommended to them:

for he hath given the inhabitants of the land into my hand; meaning the rest of the Canaanites, who before were unsubdued, as even the Jebusites in Jerusalem:

and the land is subdued before the Lord, and before his people; and the extent of it carried to its utmost bounds, as God had promised.

1 Chronicles 22:19

Ver. 19. Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God,.... His honour and glory, most sincerely and cordially, and to the utmost of their power:

arise ye, and build ye the sanctuary of the Lord God; assist therein, and encourage the work as much as they were able, without delay:

to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord; which was now in a tent of David's erecting and pitching:

and the holy vessels of God: which were in the tabernacle at Gibeon: into the house that is to be built to the name of the Lord: that so they might be together, and made use of; which in times past had been separated, and much neglected.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 23

In this chapter David makes Solomon king, 1Ch 23:1, calls together the princes, priests, and Levites, numbers the latter, and assigns them their proper work, 1Ch 23:2, divides them into three classes, 1Ch 23:6, when the number of them was taken from twenty years of age, and upwards; the reasons of which are given, partly from the rest the land enjoyed, and partly from the several branches of their work and office in the temple, 1Ch 23:24.

Ver. 1. So when David was old and full of days,.... Perhaps was now in the last year of his age, about seventy years old, though before he was bedridden; see 1Ch 28:2,

he made Solomon his son king over Israel; declared him to be his successor; this was before the affair of Adonijah, for then he ordered him to be anointed king, and placed on the throne; and this aggravated the rebellion of Adonijah, that it was against the declared and known will of his father.

1 Chronicles 23:2

Ver. 2. And he gathered together all the princes of Israel,.... Ordered them to be assembled, partly to acquaint them with his will and pleasure, that Solomon should succeed him in the kingdom; and partly to settle the order of the work and service of the temple; and therefore these were convened

with the priests and Levites; to assign to them their respective places and offices.

1 Chronicles 23:3

Ver. 3. Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years, and upward,.... So they were numbered in the days of Moses, and by his order, and so they were now at first; though afterwards there was a new reckoning of them, 1Ch 23:24

and their number by their posts; or, according to their heads:

man by man, was thirty and eight thousand; which vastly exceeds the number in the times of Moses; see **Nu 4:47**, but then those above fifty years of age were not numbered, as they now might; since their work in the temple would be much more easy, no burdens to carry, as the ark, the vessels, &c.

1 Chronicles 23:4

Ver. 4. Of which twenty and four thousand were to set forward the work of the house of the Lord,.... To prepare for the work of the priests by slaying the sacrifices, flaying them, cutting them in pieces, and washing them, and bringing them to the altar; 1000 of these served weekly in their turns:

and six thousand were officers and judges: that acted as justices of the peace in the several parts of the country, heard causes and administered justice to the people, being trained up in and acquainted with the laws of God, civil as well as ecclesiastic; some were more properly judges, and others executioners of their sentence; see
De 16:18.

1 Chronicles 23:5

Ver. 5. Moreover four thousand were porters,.... At the east, north, and south gates of the temple, in their turns;

and four thousand praised the Lord with the instruments; were singers in the temple, which in all made up 38,000:

which I made, said David, to praise therewith; which instruments he devised and ordered to be made to praise the Lord with; see
2Ch 29:26.

1 Chronicles 23:6

Ver. 6. And David divided them into courses among the sons of Levi,.... Into three classes, according to the number of them, which follow: namely,

Gershon, Kohath, and Merari; see **Ex 6:16**.

1 Chronicles 23:7

Ver. 7. Of the Gershonites were Laadan and Shimei. These two were the immediate posterity of Gershon; are the same with Libni and Shimhi, and heads of families, **Ex 6:17**.

1 Chronicles 23:8

Ver. 8. The sons of Laadan; the chief was Jehiah, and Zetham, and Joel. Not his immediate sons, but some that descended from him.

1 Chronicles 23:9

Ver. 9. The sons of Shimei,.... Not him that was the son of Gershon, but a descendant of Laadan, his son, as Kimchi observes:

Shelomith, and Haziel, and Haran, these were the chief of the fathers of Laadan; of the families that sprang from him.

1 Chronicles 23:10

Ver. 10. And the sons of Shimei,.... The son of Gershon, and brother of Laadan, according to Kimchi, which seems right:

were Jahath, Zina, and Jeush, and Beriah; these four were the sons of Shimei; descendants of his in the times of David.

1 Chronicles 23:11

Ver. 11. And Jahath was the chief,.... The prince and head of a family:

and Ziza the second; the same with Zina in 1Ch 23:10, and is there read Ziza in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions:

but Jeush and Beriah had not many sons; so as to constitute distinct families:

therefore they were in one reckoning, according to their father's house; made one family with their brethren.

1 Chronicles 23:12

Ver. 12. The sons of Kohath,.... The second son of Levi:

Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four; see **Ex 6:18**.

1 Chronicles 23:13

Ver. 13. The sons of Amram; Aaron and Moses,.... A son of Kohath, 1Ch 23:2

and Aaron was separated; from the children of Israel, Ex 28:1,

that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons for ever; by an holy use of them, and keeping them from all unholy and profane uses; and this they were to do as long as the Aaronic priesthood lasted:

to burn incense before the Lord; in the holy place, on the altar of incense; which none but priests descended from Aaron might do:

to minister unto him; both at the altar of burnt offering and of incense; and the high priest in the holy of holies:

and to bless his name for ever, or "in his name"; that is, the people in his name; see **Nu 6:23**.

1 Chronicles 23:14

Ver. 14. Now concerning Moses the man of God,.... Raised up by him as a prophet, admitted to great familiarity with him, a lawgiver from him, and the ruler and guide of Israel under him through the wilderness:

his sons were named of the tribe of Levi; were only common Levites; Moses had no ambition to gratify; he sought no honour for his posterity; the civil government was left to Joshua, and the priesthood to Aaron.

1 Chronicles 23:15

Ver. 15. The sons of Moses were Gershom and Eliezer. See Ex 18:3.

1 Chronicles 23:16

Ver. 16. Of the sons of Gershom, Shebuel was the chief. Of the posterity of Gershom in the times of David, called Shubael, 1Ch 24:20, the Targum makes him to be the same with Jonathan, Jud 18:30. {l}

{l} So in Hieron. Trad. Heb. in Paralipom. fol. 84. c.

1 Chronicles 23:17

Ver. 17. And the sons of Eliezer were Rehabiah the chief,.... The first and only begotten, as it follows:

and Eliezer had none other sons; before nor after him:

but the sons of Rehabiah were very many; or greatly multiplied; not, as the Targum says, above 600,000; the number of Israel, as the Jewish writers {m} fancy; which they gather from **Ex 1:7**, and that though Moses deprecated the multiplication of his seed, God fulfilled it.

{m} T. Bab Beracot, fol. 7. 1, 2, Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 16. fol. 220. 4.

1 Chronicles 23:18

Ver. 18. Of the sons of Izhar,.... Another son of Kohath, the son of Levi, 1Ch 23:12.

Shelomith the chief; the principal descendant of Izhar at this time.

1 Chronicles 23:19

Ver. 19-21. Of the sons of Hebron,.... A third son of Kohath, 1Ch 23:12,

Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth: of the sons of Uzziel; another son of Kohath, 1Ch 23:12, Micah the first, Jesiah the second: the sons of Merari, Mahli and Mushi, **Ex 6:19**,

the sons of Mahli, Eleazar and Kish: of whom see 1Ch 24:28.

1 Chronicles 23:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "1Ch 23:19".

1 Chronicles 23:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "1Ch 23:19".

1 Chronicles 23:22

Ver. 22. And Eleazar died, and had no sons, but daughters,.... And so none to succeed him in his office and service:

and their brethren the sons of Kish took them; married them, their uncle's sons, their own cousins.

1 Chronicles 23:23

Ver. 23. And the sons of Mushi,.... The other son of Merari:

Mahli; so called from his uncle, his father's brother:

and Eder and Jerimoth, three; mentioned again 1Ch 24:30.

1 Chronicles 23:24

Ver. 24. These were the sons of Levi, after the house of their fathers,.... According to the three classes of them, as descending from the three sons of Levi:

[even] the chief of the fathers; or heads of families:

as they were counted by number of names by their polls; or according to their heads, one by one:

that did the work for the service of the house of the Lord; the particulars of which are in 1Ch 23:28

from the age of twenty years, and upwards; they were first numbered thirty and upwards, 1Ch 23:3, but David before his death ordered they should be numbered from twenty and upwards, 1Ch 23:27, because the Israelites being increased, there would be more work for the priests in the temple, which would require the assistance of more Levites. The reasons follow.

1 Chronicles 23:25

Ver. 25. For David said,.... As a reason why he ordered a new account to be taken:

the Lord God of Israel hath given rest unto his people: from all their enemies round about, and settled rest in the land, so that there was no danger of being carried captive, as they were time after time in the days of the Judges, and whereby they became more numerous:

that they may dwell in Jerusalem for ever; where the temple would always continue, and not be removed, as the ark and tabernacle had been, and where all Israel would appear three times in the year continually.

1 Chronicles 23:26

Ver. 26. And also unto the Levites,.... Or with respect to them:

they shall no more carry the tabernacle: on their shoulders, from place to place, as they had done:

nor any vessels of it for the service thereof; and so the service of it did not require men at their full strength, but such as were but twenty years of age might be employed in it.

1 Chronicles 23:27

Ver. 27. For by the last words of David,.... Or therefore by the last orders he gave before his death:

the Levites were numbered from twenty years old and above; as able and sufficient to do the work of their office.

1 Chronicles 23:28

Ver. 28. Because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron,.... The priests:

for the service of the house of the Lord; to assist them therein, and not to bear burdens as in times past; the Targum is,

"wherefore the place of their habitations was by the side of the sons of Aaron, for the worship of the sanctuary of the Lord:"

in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God; to keep the house, and all the apartments in it, courts and chambers, clean, by sweeping and washing them, and carrying out all the filth thereof made by the sacrifices, and otherwise.

1 Chronicles 23:29

Ver. 29. Both for the shewbread,.... Also to make and get that ready every week for the priests to set on the shewbread table, when they took off the other that had stood a week, see **1Ch 9:32**

and for the fine flour for meat offering, and for the unleavened cakes, and for that which is baked in the pan, and for that which is fried; to deliver out the flour of which these several things were made, see **1Ch 9:31**, and **Le 2:1**,

and for all manner of measures and size; as the hin and the ephah, and the several parts of them for things both liquid and dry, which were in their keeping, and according to which they gave out the proper quantity of oil, and wine, and fine flour, upon occasion.

1 Chronicles 23:30

Ver. 30. And to stand every morning to thank and praise the Lord,.... The office of others of them was to sing the praises of God, both vocally and with instruments of music, at the time of the morning sacrifice:

and likewise at even; at the time of the evening sacrifice, by way of thankfulness for the mercies of the night and of the day.

1 Chronicles 23:31

Ver. 31. And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the Lord,.... This was the work of the priests to offer such sacrifices, and not the Levites; but the meaning is, according to the Targum, and so Kimchi, that these not only sung the praises of God morning and evening, but at all times when burnt offerings were offered to the Lord; besides, some of them helped the priests at such times in slaying the sacrifices, and bringing them to the altar: and especially their service was requisite

in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number; because, besides the daily sacrifices, there were additional offerings at those times:

according to the order commanded unto them continually before the Lord; see Nu 28:1.

1 Chronicles 23:32

Ver. 32. And that they should keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation,.... That no unclean persons entered into it, and that none of the vessels were carried out of it; this was the business of the porters:

and the charge of the holy place; of things that belonged unto it, the vessels in it, and what was requisite for it, and used there: and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren; the priests, whatever they should command them to do: in the service of the house of the Lord; in any part and branch of it before specified.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 24

This chapter relates the distribution David made of the priests into twenty four classes or courses, and which were observed by lot, and each course had an head or principal man over it, 1Ch 24:1 and of a like distribution of the Levites into the same number of courses, to attend the priests in theirs, 1Ch 24:20.

Ver. 1. Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron,.... Into the classes or courses following:

the sons of Aaron; Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar; **1Ch 6:3**, these were the immediate sons of Aaron; but the division or distribution of them into classes are of their posterity in the times of David, who descended from the two latter.

1 Chronicles 24:2

Ver. 2. But Nadab and Abihu died before their father,.... While he was living, see Le 10:1

and had no children, therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priests' office: otherwise, as Jarchi observes, had their brethren left children, they would have come into the office before them.

1 Chronicles 24:3

Ver. 3. And David distributed them,.... The posterities of Eleazar and Ithamar into certain classes or courses:

both Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar; these were the two principal men of the respective families, the one was high priest, and the other "sagan" or deputy; or they both officiated as high priests alternately, until the one was removed in Solomon's time, and the other established alone. And now their brethren the priests, who were under each of these, are the persons David divided into classes:

according to their offices in their service: to perform their office as priests in the service of the temple in their turns.

1 Chronicles 24:4

Ver. 4. And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar,.... Or heads of men, heads of their fathers' houses and families:

and thus were they divided; among the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen chief men of the house of their fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar, according to the house of their fathers; in all twenty four, and into so many classes or courses did David divide them; Jarchi says at first when the tabernacle was at Shiloh, there were but sixteen courses, eight from Eleazar, and eight from Ithamar, as is explained in the treatise of fasting {n}; but when David saw that there were more heads of men, or chief men of Eleazar's, he divided the courses of Eleazar into two parts, and fixed sixteen courses; and the courses of Ithamar he established as at first, eight courses; left them as they were, which he thinks appears from 1Ch 24:6 but of the former number of courses, and when and by whom fixed, the Jews are divided {o};
See Gill on "Lu 1:5". Perhaps there were none before David's time.

{n} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 27. 1. {o} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 27. 1.

1 Chronicles 24:5

Ver. 5. Thus were they divided by lot, one sort with another,.... Which course should serve first, and which next, and so on; and who should be the chief to each course; which course was to serve a week, and then go out; and this method was taken to prevent envy, strife, and contention about precedence:

for the governors of the sanctuary; or of the holy things, or who presided in things ecclesiastical:

and governors of the house of God: or rather "governors of God", appointed by him judges in civil things:

were of the sons of Eleazar, and of the sons of Ithamar: there were, of both families, some employed both in sacred and civil things, and who presided in each.

1 Chronicles 24:6

Ver. 6. And Shemaiah the son of Nethaneel the scribe,.... The Targum is, Moses the chief scribe, so called: one

of the Levites wrote them: the lots, and the names upon them, put into the urn, and as they came out, which was first, second, &c. and this was done

before the king, and the princes, and Zadok the priest, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and before the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites; and in this public manner, before such great personages, and in the presence of those that were interested in the affair, that it might appear plainly no fraudulent methods were taken, and that there might be no suspicion of any:

one principal household being taken for Eleazar, and one for Ithamar; the sense of Jarchi as above, and other Jewish writers, is, that one was added to each family of Eleazar, and so made sixteen, and Ithamar's were retained, and left as at first, eight: but the sense is, that first one family of Eleazar was taken, and then one of Ithamar's family, and then one of Eleazar's again, and so on until sixteen were gone through; and then the other eight were divided under so many heads of the family of Eleazar.

1 Chronicles 24:7

Ver. 7-18. Now the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib,.... And the other twenty three to the following persons in order:

Jedaiah, Harim, Seorim, Malchijah, Mijamin, Hakkoz, Abijah, Jeshua, Shecaniah, Eliashib, Jakim, Huppah, Jeshebeab, Bilgah, Immer, Hezir, Aphses, Pethahiah, Jehezekel, Jachin, Gamul, Delaiah, and Maaziah; of all which courses we know little more than their names, though they continued in some form or other both under the first and second temple, to the destruction of it; the Jews say only four of these courses returned from the Babylonish captivity, which were those of Jedaiah, Harim, Pashur, and Immer; though Pashur is not among these here; yet they say each of these four had six lots, and that the names and the order of the other courses were retained and continued under them, and supplied by them: hence we read of Mattithiah, from whom sprung the Maccabees, as of the course of Jehoiarib, "In those days arose Mattathias the son of John, the son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, from Jerusalem, and dwelt in Modin." (1 Maccabees 2:1)

which was the first course, and the most honourable; wherefore Josephus {p}, who was of it, valued himself upon it, that he was not only of the priestly order, but of the first class or course of the twenty four; and we also read of the course of Abijah, the eighth course, of which was Zechariah the father of John the Baptist, **Lu 1:5** of these courses, See Gill on "Lu 1:5".

{p} Vita ejus, sect. 1.

1 Chronicles 24:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "2Ch 24:7"

1 Chronicles 24:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ch 24:7"

1 Chronicles 24:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ch 24:7"

1 Chronicles 24:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Ch 24:7"

1 Chronicles 24:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "2Ch 24:7"

1 Chronicles 24:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "2Ch 24:7"

1 Chronicles 24:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "2Ch 24:7"

1 Chronicles 24:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "2Ch 24:7"

1 Chronicles 24:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "2Ch 24:7"

1 Chronicles 24:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "2Ch 24:7"

1 Chronicles 24:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "2Ch 24:7"

1 Chronicles 24:19

Ver. 19. These were the orderings of them,.... Their classes or courses into which they were divided:

in their service to come into the house of the Lord; to perform their service in the temple, according to their turns, and in course as fixed by lot; one class or course served one week, and then went out, and another came in, each consisting of 1000 men, see 1Ch 23:4

according to their manner; law, right, custom, here prescribed for them: under Aaron their father; that is, him who was high priest for the time being; who bore this name because his successor and representative, under whose inspection, direction, and authority, all the rest of the priests were, and whom they were to obey in all things:

as the Lord God of Israel had commanded him; to take care they should be done.

1 Chronicles 24:20

Ver. 20-30. And the rest of the sons of Levi were these,.... Who were not priests, only Levites; and from hence, to 1Ch 24:30 their names are given; of the sons of Amram, Shubael, and his son Jehdeiah; Rehabiah the son of Eleazar, and Isshiah the son of Rehabiah; of the Izharites, so called from Izhar, the brother of Amram, Shelomoth, and his son Jahath; and of the sons of Hebron, another brother of Amram, Jeriah, Amariah, Jahaziel, and Jekameam; of the sons of Uzziel, another brother of Amram, Michah, and his son Shamir; Isshiah the brother of Michah, and his son Zechariah: the sons of Merari, Mahli and Mushi, his immediate sons; from whom sprung by Jaaziah, Beno, Shoham, Zaccur and Ibri; of Mahli sprung Eleazar, who had no sons; and Kish, whose son was Jerahmeel; the sons of Mushi, another son of Merari, Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth; most of these names are the same with those in 1Ch 23:16,

these were the sons of the Levites, after the house of their fathers; some of the principal of them.

1 Chronicles 24:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "2Ch 24:20"

1 Chronicles 24:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "2Ch 24:20"

1 Chronicles 24:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "2Ch 24:20"

1 Chronicles 24:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "2Ch 24:20"

1 Chronicles 24:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "2Ch 24:20"

1 Chronicles 24:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "2Ch 24:20"

1 Chronicles 24:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "2Ch 24:20"

1 Chronicles 24:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "2Ch 24:20"

1 Chronicles 24:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "2Ch 24:20"

1 Chronicles 24:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "2Ch 24:20"

1 Chronicles 24:31

Ver. 31. These likewise cast lots over against their brethren, the sons of Aaron,.... These, being divided into twenty four classes also, cast lots, which class should answer to, attend upon, and serve the first course of the priests, and which the second, and so on. And this they did in the same solemn and public manner as the priests had done:

in the presence of David the king, and Zadok, and Ahimelech, and the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites; as in 1Ch 24:6

even the principal fathers over against their younger brethren; the sense is, either that the one stood over against the other, to be distributed by lot, the one as well as the other; or they were chosen by lot, let it fall as it would, without any regard to age or dignity, to the seniority or largeness of houses and families; but as they were chosen, be they younger or elder, richer or poorer, their families more or less numerous and ancient, so they took their places.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 25:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 25

This chapter relates the appointment of the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, to be singers in the temple, 1Ch 25:1 the distribution of them by lot into twenty four classes, twelve in each class, 1Ch 25:8.

Ver. 1. Moreover, David and the captains of the host separated to the service,.... Of singing the praises of God; this was done by the princes of the people, and the chief of the priests, who were gathered together, and before whom the lots were cast, both for priests and Levites, and now here for the singers, see
1Ch 22:2 and those that were separated were

of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun; or Ethan, the three precentors, or chief of the singers:

who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals; sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, endited by the Holy Spirit of God; which contained in them prophecies concerning things to come, particularly relating to the Messiah, of which there are many in the book of Psalms; and to the tunes of these they played on the above instruments of music:

and the number of the workmen, according to their service, was; as follows.

1 Chronicles 25:2

Ver. 2. Of the sons of Asaph,.... Who were separated, and by lot appointed, to the service of singers in the temple:

Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asarelah; called Jesharelah, 1Ch 25:14, these had the third fourth, fifth, and seventh lots, 1Ch 25:9,

under the hands of Asaph; under his instruction and authority:

which prophesied according to the order of the king; which Asaph composed psalms under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, and was ordered by King David to sing them, and by whose command they were inserted in the book of Psalms, where they now stand with his name to them.

1 Chronicles 25:3

Ver. 3. Of Jeduthun,.... Or Ethan, the sons of Jeduthun:

Gedaliah and Zeri; called Izri, 1Ch 25:11,

and Jeshaiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six; whereas five only are mentioned; it may be thought that Shimei, 1Ch 25:17 is the sixth, he not being mentioned elsewhere; it is a tradition of the Jews, that his mother was now with child of him, and it being foreseen by the Holy Spirit that he would be the chief of a course, the number six is given, as Jarchi observes; but rather, as Kimchi, he was young, and not fit to sing, yet was chosen the head of a course, until he was grown up and fit for it; to these six came up the second, fourth, eighth, twelfth, fourteenth, and tenth lots, 1Ch 25:9 and these

[were] under the hands of their father Jeduthun; to instruct and direct them, and appoint their service to them:

who prophesied with a harp; or sung a prophetic psalm or hymn on that:

to give thanks, and to praise the Lord; for what he had done and promised, and foretold he would do for his people.

1 Chronicles 25:4

Ver. 4. Of Heman: the sons of Heman,.... The third chief singer:

Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel; the same with Azareel, 1Ch 25:18

Shebuel; called Shubael, 1Ch 25:20

and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamtiezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth; in all fourteen, to whom came the sixth, ninth, eleventh, fifteenth, sixteenth, eighteenth, twentieth, twenty second, twenty fourth, seventeenth, nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty third lots, 1Ch 25:13.

1 Chronicles 25:5

Ver. 5. All these were the sons of Heman, the king's seer,.... The prophet of the king, as the Targum, who was frequently with him, assisting him

in the words of God: in divine things:

to lift up the horn; to blow with the hornpipe or trumpet, and to magnify and set forth the greatness of the kingdom of Israel, and especially of the King Messiah, the horn of salvation, that would be raised up in the house of David:

and God gave to Heman fourteen sons; whose names are before mentioned:

and three daughters; of whom we have no more account, only may observe, that both are the gifts of God, and an heritage from him, Ps 127:3.

1 Chronicles 25:6

Ver. 6. All these were under the hands of their father, for song in the house of the Lord,.... Instructed and directed by him in the performance of the service in the temple:

with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God; which were the three principal instruments of music used in the temple service:

according to the king's order, to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman; who ordered and directed them what to sing, what tunes to make use of, and what instruments to play upon to those tunes.

1 Chronicles 25:7

Ver. 7. So the number of them, with their brethren,.... Who each of them had twelve with them, as after reckoned:

that were instructed in the songs of the Lord; taught how to sing them:

[even] all that were cunning; expert and well skilled in the science of singing:

was two hundred and eighty eight; for there being twenty four classes answerable to those of the priests, and twelve in each class, twelve times twenty four makes two hundred and eighty eight.

1 Chronicles 25:8

Ver. 8. And they cast lots, ward against ward,.... That is, which ward or course of the singers should answer to and attend on the first ward or course of the priests in their weekly service, and which the second, and so on:

as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar; no regard was had to the age of a person, his being the firstborn or a younger brother, or to his office and station, whether as a teacher or a learner in the science of singing; he was made the head of a course, as the lot came up; and it may easily be observed, by comparing the lots in the following verses with the sons of the chief singers, according to the order of them in 1Ch 25:2 that the younger are often preferred in the courses by lot to the elder, of which even the first lot is an instance.

1 Chronicles 25:9

Ver. 9. Now the first lot came forth for Asaph to Joseph,.... His second son to the preference of the firstborn, 1Ch 25:2,

the second to Gedaliah, who with his brethren and sons were twelve: and which must also be understood of Joseph, and supplied to him; for those being both in one verse, as Jarchi observes, it is but once mentioned, but must be supplied, or otherwise the number of two hundred and eighty eight could not be made up; the same is observed of all the other lots and courses to the end of the chapter as here, and therefore need no more remarks.

1 Chronicles 25:10

Ver. 10 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:11

Ver. 11 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:12

Ver. 12 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:13

Ver. 13 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:14

Ver. 14 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:15

Ver. 15 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:16

Ver. 16 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:17

Ver. 17 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:18

Ver. 18 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:19

Ver. 19 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:20

Ver. 20 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:21

Ver. 21 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:22

Ver. 22 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:23

Ver. 23 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:24

Ver. 24 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:25

Ver. 25 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:26

Ver. 26 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:27

Ver. 27 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:28

Ver. 28 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:29

Ver. 29 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:30

Ver. 30 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

1 Chronicles 25:31

Ver. 31 See Gill on "1Ch 25:9"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 26:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 26

In this chapter we have a further account of the disposition and distribution of the Levites, to serve in other offices, as of porters at the several gates of the temple, for which they cast lots, 1Ch 26:1 of others, as over the treasures of the house of the Lord, 1Ch 26:20, and of others that were appointed judges in the land, to administer justice to the people, 1Ch 26:29.

Ver. 1. Concerning the divisions of the porters,.... Or doorkeepers, whose business it was to open and shut the doors of the temple, to keep all impure and improper persons from entering into it, or any of the vessels being carried out of it, and to prevent tumults and riots about it; these, as it seems, David divided into a like number of classes, as the singers, to take their turns in waiting:

of the Korhites was Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph; not Asaph the singer, who was a Gershonite, but the same with Eliasaph, **1Ch 6:23** a Korhite.

1 Chronicles 26:2

Ver. 2,3. And the sons of Meshelemiah were, Zechariah the firstborn,.... And six more, who are mentioned in their order:

Jediael, Zebadiah, and Jathniel, Elam, Jehohanan, and Elioenai.

1 Chronicles 26:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "1Ch 26:3"

1 Chronicles 26:4

Ver. 4,5. Moreover, the sons of Obededom,.... The same at whose house the ark was, before it was brought by David to Zion; his sons were porters also, as himself, 1Ch 15:24, mention is made of eight sons of his, according to their birth:

Shemaiah, Jehozabad, Joah, Sacar, Nethaneel, Ammiel, Issachar, Peulthai; for God blessed him; as with wealth and riches, so with a numerous offspring, and that because of his entertainment of the ark at his house; the great increase of his family is aggravated by the Jews {q} beyond all credit, that all in his family brought eight at a birth; the Targum here makes them eighty two in all.

{q} Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2. Reg. fol. 77. M.

1 Chronicles 26:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "1Ch 26:4".

1 Chronicles 26:6

Ver. 6. Also unto Shemaiah his son,.... His firstborn, 1Ch 26:4

were sons born, that ruled throughout the house of their father; were heads of families, eminent and principal men:

for they were mighty men of valour; which their office sometimes required them to be, to guard the temple at night as well as day from thieves and robbers, and to hinder resolute men entering in, unfit for it, and seize on rioters, and quell tumults raised.

1 Chronicles 26:7

Ver. 7. The sons of Shemaiah,.... The same before mentioned, the firstborn of Obededom:

Othni, and Rephael, and Obed, and Elzabad, whose brethren were strong men; Elihu and Semachiah; which may rather denote their valour and courage, as before, though strength of body was needful, particularly to open and shut the doors of the temple, which, Josephus {r} says, required the assistance of twenty men.

{r} Contr. Apion. l. 2. sect. 9.

1 Chronicles 26:8

Ver. 8. All these of the sons of Obededom,.... And grandsons:

they and their sons and their brethren, able men for strength for the service; men of fortitude of mind and strength of body, as before observed: were sixty two of Obededom: that sprung from him, which the Jews {s} account for in an extravagant manner, as the effect of miraculous births.

{s} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 63. 2. & 64. 1.

1 Chronicles 26:9

Ver. 9. And Meshelemiah had sons and brethren, strong men, eighteen,.... He had seven sons, 1Ch 26:1 and therefore must have eleven brethren or kinsmen.

1 Chronicles 26:10

Ver. 10. Also Hosah, of the children of Merari, had sons,.... Who was a fellow porter of Obededom's at the ark, 1Ch 16:38.

Simri the chief (for though he was not the firstborn, yet his father made him the chief); the firstborn being unfit for service, either through want of an intellectual capacity, or of strength of body, or through some defect or another; according to the Syriac version, he was dead; so some understand the words, he, the father, had no firstborn remaining or living.

1 Chronicles 26:11

Ver. 11. Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth; all the sons and brethren of Hosah were thirteen. Four sons, and nine brethren or kinsmen.

1 Chronicles 26:12

Ver. 12. Among these were the divisions of the porters, even among the chief men,.... These before named were the principal men of the porters, among which was a division or distribution of them into classes or courses, in which they served weekly in turn:

having wards one against another, to minister in the house of the Lord; meaning either to watch in, as on the north against the south, and the east against the west, and "vice versa". The Jews say {t}, the priests kept ward in three places in the house of the sanctuary; in the house of Abtines, in the house of Nitzotz, and in the house of Moked; and the Levites in twenty one places, five at the five gates of the mountain of the house, four at the four corners of it within, five at the five gates of the court, four at the four corners of it without, one at the chamber of the offering, one at the chamber of the vail, and another behind the house of atonement, the holy of holies; but rather the sense is, that they had wards or courses answerable to those of the priests, and the other Levites, the singers, and were distributed into twenty four classes or courses as they, which are thus reckoned by Kimchi; at the east six, at the north four, at the south four, at Asuppim two and two, which were four, at the west four, and at Parbar two; lo, twenty four; see 1Ch 26:17.

{t} Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 1.

1 Chronicles 26:13

Ver. 13. And they cast lots,.... To determine at which gate each should stand, who at this gate, and who at the other, &c.

as well the small as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for every gate; meaning, not little ones and grown persons in a family, but the smaller and poorer families, and the larger and richer ones, had their places assigned them at the several gates, as the lot directed; they did not go according to the dignity and precedence of their families, but according to lot.

1 Chronicles 26:14

Ver. 14. And the lot eastward fell to Shelemiah,.... The same with Meshelemiah, 1Ch 26:1 he by lot was placed at the eastern gate, called afterwards the gate Shushan, the city Shushan being portrayed upon it {u}:

then for Zechariah his son (a wise counsellor); and who was his firstborn, 1Ch 26:2 a man of great parts and learning: for they were not mean persons that were employed in this office, nor was the office a mean one, like that of our porters; but men of considerable rank and figure, and of knowledge and learning, were in it; some of them were judges, 1Ch 26:29 and their places were places of great trust, they had much treasure committed to them, as appears by 1Ch 26:20, they cast lots, and his lot came out northward; where was a gate in later times, called Teri or Tedi, which differed from other gates in this, that it had no threshold, only one stone was laid upon another, and was not commonly used {w}.

{u} Ib. (Misn. Middot, c. 1.), sect. 3. {w} Misn. Middot, ib. (c. 1. sect. 3.) & c. 2. sect. 3.

1 Chronicles 26:15

Ver. 15. To Obededom southward,.... Where were two gates in later times, called the gates of Huldah {x}:

and to his sons, the house of Asuppim; the word has the signification of gathering, hence some take it to be a council house, where the sanhedrim or elders gathered together, and sat; and others, rather a treasure house, where things of value were collected and laid up, since Obededom had the charge of gold and silver, and the vessels of the house, 2Ch 25:24, but Dr. Lightfoot {y} is of opinion, that

"Asuppim were two gates in the western wall, which stood most south, or nearest to Jerusalem; "and the house of Asuppim" was a large piece of building that ran between them, which was a treasury, or various rooms for treasuring or laying up something for the use of the temple;"

though L'Empereur thinks {z} it was the chamber Korban, which is not so probable.

{x} Ib. (Misn. Middot), c. 1. sect. 3. {y} Prospect of the Temple, ch. 5. sect. 3. {z} Not. in Middot, c. 1. sect. 1. No. 5.

1 Chronicles 26:16

Ver. 16. To Shuppim and Hosah the lot came forth westward,.... Of Shuppim no mention is before made; of Hosah, see 1Ch 26:10 their lot was to be placed at the gates on the western wall, where were four; the two more southward being assigned to the sons of Obededom, whose lot also was southward, are taken notice of under the division in the preceding verse; Parbar was another, 1Ch 26:18, and another follows here:

with the gate Shallecheth, by the causeway of the going up; this gate was in later times called Coponius, from the name of a Roman commander, in the times of Herod, who might give it this name on his account; it might have the name of Shallecheth either from "sending out", or carrying out the filth of the temple through it; or rather from "casting up the causeway", as here expressed, which was the going up, or ascent, Solomon made, by which he went up to the temple, 1Ki 20:5 and which agrees with the description Josephus {a} gives of one of the gates on the western wall, that it led to the royal palace, the valley between being filled up for the passage; on each side of which causeway, it is said, grew oaks and teil trees, see **Isa 6:13** which served both to keep up the causeway, and to make a fine, pleasant, shady walk for the king to pass through to the temple; all which are observed by Dr. Lightfoot {b}:

ward against ward; for as the gates answered one another, so the wards or watches at them.

{a} Antiqu. l. 15. c. 11. sect. 5. {b} Ut supra, (Prospect of the Temple), c. 5. sect. 1.

1 Chronicles 26:17

Ver. 17. Eastward were six Levites,.... The eastern gate, being the way of entrance into the temple, required more porters:

northward four a day; in the daytime, or every day, where was the gate Teri or Tedi, 1Ch 26:14, southward four a day: at the two gates of Huldah, 1Ch 26:15 and toward Asuppim two and two; which were two gates, two at each gate, 1Ch 26:15.

1 Chronicles 26:18

Ver. 18. At Parbar westward,.... A gate at the western wall; the Jewish writers generally interpret it an outward place, but Dr. Lightfoot {c} thinks it is the same with Parvar, which signifies suburbs, 2Ki 23:11, and which agrees with the description Josephus {d} gives of one of the western gates, that it led to the suburbs:

four at the causeway; by which was the gate Shallecheth, 1Ch 26:16

and two at Parbar; the gate before mentioned.

{c} Ib. (Prospect of the Temple, ch. 5.) sect. 2. {d} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 15. c. 11. sect. 5.)

1 Chronicles 26:19

Ver. 19. These are the divisions of the porters among the sons of Kore, and among the sons of Merari. For among those Levites which descended from Kore, a grandson of Kohath, and which sprung from Merar, a brother of Kohath, the porters only wore; see 1Ch 26:1.

1 Chronicles 26:20

Ver. 20. And of the Levites,.... The rest of the Levites, as the Gershonites, Amramites, Izharites, and Hebronites, 1Ch 26:21.

Ahijah was over the treasures of the house of God; as the tithes, vessels, vestments, wine, and oil, and other things; such an one was Phinehas at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Vespasian, who being taken, showed and delivered the priests' garments, and many other precious things and sacred ornaments under his care {e}: and over the treasures of the dedicated things; voluntarily devoted for sacrifices and repairs of the temple; and this Ahijah had the care of each of those at first, which afterwards were divided, and put under the care of different persons.

{e} Joseph. de Bell. Jud. l. 6. c. 8. sect. 3.

1 Chronicles 26:21

Ver. 21. As concerning the sons of Laadan,.... The same with Libni, see 1Ch 23:7

the sons of the Gershonite Laadan; so called, to distinguish him from another Laadan, as Kimchi thinks:

chief fathers, even of Laadan the Gershonite; that sprung from him: were Jehieli; and his sons next mentioned.

1 Chronicles 26:22

Ver. 22. The sons of Jehieli: Zetham, and Joel his brother,.... Both sons of Jehieli: which were

over the treasures of the house of the Lord; that part of the trust which before was committed to Ahijah, which concerned provisions for sacred uses, before observed.

1 Chronicles 26:23

Ver. 23. Of the Amramites and the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzielites. Who sprang from the four sons of Kohath, Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, **Ex 6:18** with respect to the concerns they severally had in the trust of the treasures, the account follows, all but the Uzzielites, who are not after mentioned.

1 Chronicles 26:24

Ver. 24. And Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was ruler of the treasures. This is the first time that any of the posterity of Moses are taken notice of, as being in any office of honour, authority, and trust; by the Targum he is said to be Jonathan, spoken of in Jud 18:30 but very wrongly; this man, according to Jarchi and Kimchi, had all the treasures and treasurers under him.

1 Chronicles 26:25

Ver. 25. And his brethren by Eliezer,.... His kinsmen that descended from Eliezer, the brother of Gershom, the ancestor of Shebuel, whose descent from him in succession were

Rehabiah, Jeshaiah, Joram, Zichri, and Shelomith.

1 Chronicles 26:26

Ver. 26. Which Shelomith,.... The last mentioned in the lineage from Eliezer, the younger son of Moses:

and his brethren; or kinsmen:

were over all the treasures of the dedicated things; which had been devoted for the service of God, and of the temple particularly:

which David the king had dedicated; out of the spoils he took in war, see **2Sa 8:11**,

the chief fathers; princes of tribes, and heads of families:

the captains over thousands and hundreds; in the several tribes of the kingdom, and were concerned in the administration of justice to the people:

and the captains of the host, had dedicated; of the army, out of the spoils in victory that came to their share, see Nu 31:48 as follows.

1 Chronicles 26:27

Ver. 27. Out of the spoils won in battle did they dedicate to maintain the house of the Lord. When it should be built; for as yet it was not; both to repair it when necessary, and to provide sacrifices for it; or to confirm, strengthen, and animate the heart of the king to build it, so some, and put it into the power of his hands to do it; so the Romans dedicated the best of their spoil, and laid it up in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius, after the example of Romulus, their first king {f}; yea, sometimes out of the spoil they erected temples, as Tarquinius Superbus {g} did; or repaired and ornamented them, as the temple at Delphos, and others {h}.

{f} Vid. Valtrinum de re militar. Roman. l. 7. c. 21. {g} Flori Hist. l. 1. c. 7.
{h} Vid. Strabo, Geograph. l. 6. p. 190. Liv. Hist. l. 10. c. 46.

1 Chronicles 26:28

Ver. 28. And all that Samuel the seer,.... Or prophet, won in battle with the Philistines:

and Saul the son of Kish; in his wars with the Moabites, Edomites, Amalekites, and Philistines:

and Abner the son of Ner: the general of his army, who as such had his share in the spoils:

and Joab the son of Zeruiah; the general of David's army, who fought with the Ammonites, Syrians, and others; all of whom

had dedicated more or less towards the building of the temple, and the support of it, it being known by them all that God would have a place to put his name in:

[and] whosoever had dedicated anything, it was under the hand of Shelomith, and of his brethren: this man had a great trust committed to him, with his brethren; some, before mentioned, are said to be over the treasures, some over one part, and some over another; but this man was over all of them, he had the superintendency of the whole.

1 Chronicles 26:29

Ver. 29. Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons were

for the outward business over Israel,.... Which was done out of the temple, and out of Jerusalem, in the several parts of the country:

for officers and judges; to administer justice and judgment, and to take care that the laws of God were observed, both with respect to things civil and religious, and delinquents punished; which is a better sense than what Jarchi and Kimchi put upon this,

outward business, as if it lay in taking care to have timber cut down in the forest, and stones dug and hewed in the mountains, for the building of the temple; and that the lands were ploughed, and the vineyards, gardens, and orchards, dressed, which were devoted to sacred uses.

1 Chronicles 26:30

Ver. 30. And of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, men of valour, a thousand and seven hundred,.... And supposing the Izharites in the preceding verse to be 1600, these, with those on the other side Jordan, 2700, 1Ch 26:32 make up just the 6000 officers and judges, 1Ch 23:4 these

were officers among them of Israel on this side Jordan westward: in those parts of the land which were on this side Jordan, to the west of it, yet nearer to it than those meant by Israel in the preceding verse; it may respect those that dwelt more remote from Jordan, though on this side also, towards the Mediterranean sea:

in all business of the Lord, and in the service of the king; in things divine and civil, what appertained to the worship of God, and the support of civil government, and to take care that all the laws were observed, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, and that both the Lord was feared, and the king honoured, and both had what was due unto them.

1 Chronicles 26:31

Ver. 31. Among the Hebronites was Jerijah the chief, even among the Hebronites,.... The posterity of Hebron, the son of Kohath:

according to the generations of his fathers; a principal man in the families that descended from his ancestors:

in the fortieth year of the reign of David; which was the last year of his reign, in which year all the above things were done; the distribution of the priests into their classes and courses, and so of the Levites, singers, and porters; as well as the appointment of those several judges and officers employed in divers parts of the land: and particularly in this year those

Hebronites were sought for, and there were found among them mighty men of valour, at Jazer of Gilead; a city on the other side Jordan, which belonged to the tribe of Gad, see Nu 21:32.

1 Chronicles 26:32

Ver. 32. And his brethren, men of valour, were two thousand and seven hundred chief fathers,.... That is, the brethren or kinsmen of Jerijah the Hebronite were so many principal men in their families, and men of fortitude and courage:

whom King David made rulers over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh; all which lay on the other side Jordan; and being so remote from the seat of civil government, and of the worship of God, they were in greater danger of revolting, both from their obedience to their king, and duty to their God; land therefore so large a number was appointed over them, to instruct them and keep them in their duty to both, as follows:

for every matter pertaining to God, and affairs of the king; to see that they kept close to the pure worship and service of God; and were faithful and loyal subjects of the king.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 27:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 27

In this chapter we have an account of twelve military courses, or twelve legions of soldiers, with the captains of them, that served David monthly in their turns, 1Ch 27:1 and of the princes of the several tribes, 1Ch 27:16 and of his economical rulers, 1Ch 27:25, and of his counsellors and general, 1Ch 27:32.

Ver. 1. Now the children of Israel after their number,.... Not the whole body of the people, but the militia of the nation; for after the account of the division of the priests and Levites into courses, follows an account of the militia of the nation, being divided also into monthly courses; which, though done in the beginning of David's reign, as Kimchi and Jarchi observe, yet is here related; and that it was so soon is clear from the instance of Asahel, who was killed while David was king in Hebron, 1Ch 27:7 to wit,

the chief fathers; the chief men in the tribes, the princes of them, not the natural fathers of the soldiers in each course, as a learned man suggests {i}: since it can never be thought that such a number sprung from those as made a course of 24,000; for they are distinct from the captains and officers after mentioned, under which the soldiers were; besides, why should they be called "chief fathers?" these, no doubt, were the general officers or princes, under which the captains and inferior officers were:

and captains of thousands and hundreds; in the several tribes:

and their officers; that were under them:

that served the king in any matter of the courses, which came in and went out month by month, throughout all the months of the year; by which it appears that the militia of the kingdom was divided into twelve courses, which served each month by turns; when one went out another came in; by which means the king was well supported and guarded, and had an army at once at command upon any insurrection or war that might arise; and each course serving but one month in a year, it was no great burden upon them, even if they maintained themselves, since they were at leisure, the other eleven months, to attend to their business; and especially if it was, as Jarchi observes, that not the poor but the rich were selected for this service:

of every course were twenty and four thousand; so that the twelve courses amounted to 288,000 men.

{i} Delaney's Life of King David, vol. 1. p. 319.

1 Chronicles 27:2

Ver. 2-15. Over the first course for the first month,.... The month Nisan, sometimes called Abib, which was March:

was Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel; the first and chief of David's worthies, 1Ch 11:11

and in his course were twenty and four; and so in all the following ones; this man was of the posterity of Perez, or Pharez, a son of Judah, and so had the preference and command of all the captains of the army for that month:

Dodai an Ahohite; the same with Dodo, 1Ch 11:12 was over the course of the second month, the month Ziv, sometimes called Jiar, or April; and his lieutenant or successor was Mikloth:

Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, a chief priest; or rather a prince, a principal officer, was general of the army for the third month, Sivan, or May; the same was mighty among the thirty, and even above them, for he was among the three mighty, 1Ch 11:22 and Ammizabad his son succeeded him, or was his deputy, when other ways employed: though led by our version here, and following the Jewish writers, I have called Benaiah a priest, See Gill on "1Ki 2:31", yet I am now rather of opinion that he was not one; for though priests might bear arms on some occasions, yet it is not likely that one should be in a constant military office, and especially general of an army; and besides, this man was of Kabzeel, a city in the tribe of Judah, which is not mentioned among the Levitical cities, see 2Sa 23:20. Asahel the brother of Joab was over the course for the fourth month, Tammuz, or June, and who being slain by Abner, his son Zebadiah succeeded him: Shamhuth, the same with Shammah, 2Sa 23:11 and Shammoth, 1Ch 11:27 was captain for the fifth month, Ab, or July: Ira the son of Ikkesh, the Tekoite, was over the course of the sixth month, Elul, or August, see 1Ch 11:28. Helez the Pelonite was captain for the seventh month, Tisri, or September, see 1Ch 11:27, the captain for the eighth month, Marchesvan, sometimes called Bul, or October, was Sibbecai the Hushathite, of the Zarbites, of the posterity of Zerah, a son of Judah in the line of Hushah, **1Ch 4:4**, the captain of the course for the ninth month, Cisleu, or November was Abiezer, of Anethoth, in the tribe of Benjamin, see 1Ch 11:28, Maharai, of Netophah, in the tribe of Judah, and of the posterity of Zerah, was over the course for the tenth month, Tebet, or December, see 1Ch 11:30 and the captain for the eleventh month, Sheber, or January, was Benaiah, of Pirathon, in the tribe of Ephraim, see 1Ch 11:31 and over the course for the twelfth month, Adar, or February, was Heldai the Netophathite, the same with Heled, 1Ch 11:30 and who was of the posterity of Othniel, the first judge in Israel, **Jud 1:13**.

1 Chronicles 27:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "1Ch 27:2"

1 Chronicles 27:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "1Ch 27:2"

1 Chronicles 27:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "1Ch 27:2"

1 Chronicles 27:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "1Ch 27:2"

1 Chronicles 27:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "1Ch 27:2"

1 Chronicles 27:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "1Ch 27:2"

1 Chronicles 27:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "1Ch 27:2"

1 Chronicles 27:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "1Ch 27:2"

1 Chronicles 27:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "1Ch 27:2"

1 Chronicles 27:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "1Ch 27:2"

1 Chronicles 27:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "1Ch 27:2"

1 Chronicles 27:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "1Ch 27:2"

1 Chronicles 27:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "1Ch 27:2"

1 Chronicles 27:16

Ver. 16-22. Furthermore, over the cities of Israel,.... Were the following rulers or princes; the captains over the militia before named were of David's appointment; but these ruled over their respective tribes in their own right, or by the choice of their tribes: the ruler of the tribe of Reuben was Eliezer, the son of Zichri: of the tribe of Simeon, Shephatiah the son of Maachah; whether this was his father's or mother's name is not certain, it being the name both of a man and woman: of the tribe of Levi, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel: of the Aaronites, who were of the same tribe, but, being priests, are thus distinguished from the Levites, Zadok, who was made high priest in the times of Solomon: of the tribe of Judah, Elihu, a brother of David's, the same with Eliab, 1Sa 16:6, of the tribe of Issachar, Omri the son of Michael: of the tribe of Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah: of the tribe of Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel: of the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah: of the half tribe of Manasseh, on this side Jordan westward, Joel the son of Pedaiah: of the half tribe of Manasseh, in Gilead, on the other side Jordan eastward, Iddo the son of Zechariah: of the tribe of Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner, the famous general on the side of Ishbosheth; of the tribe of Dan, Azareel the son of Jeroham:

these were the princes of the tribes of Israel; of all excepting Gad and Asher, who are omitted; perhaps he that was prince of the tribe of Reuben, or else of the half tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan, was ruler of Gad and Asher; these lying between Zebulun and Naphtali, might be under the prince of one of them.

1 Chronicles 27:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "1Ch 27:16".

1 Chronicles 27:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "1Ch 27:16".

1 Chronicles 27:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "1Ch 27:16".

1 Chronicles 27:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "1Ch 27:16".

1 Chronicles 27:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "1Ch 27:16".

1 Chronicles 27:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "1Ch 27:16".

1 Chronicles 27:23

Ver. 23. But David took not the number of them from twenty years old and under,.... Only those that were twenty years and upwards; but, according to Cornelius Bertram {k}, he numbered them that were under twenty, though but sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, or nineteen years of age, provided they were of robust bodies, and of a tall stature, and able to bear arms; which he takes to be the sin of David, in numbering the people, being contrary to the law of God; yet though he had ordered them to be numbered, and they were, yet he would not take them and put them into the account of his chronicles, as in the next verse, that his sin might not be known, see 2Sa 24:9

because the Lord had said, he would increase Israel like to the stars in the heavens; which are not to be numbered, and therefore David sinned in attempting to number the people.

{k} Lucubrat. Franktall, c. 2.

1 Chronicles 27:24

Ver. 24. Joab the son of Zeruiah began to number,.... By the order of David, but entirely against his own will, see 1Ch 21:2,

but he finished not; the two tribes of Benjamin and Levi not being counted by him, 1Ch 21:6

because there fell wrath for it against Israel; the plague being broke forth before he had done numbering, which put a stop to it, 1Ch 21:14

neither was the number put in the account of the chronicles of David; that which was brought in by Joab, though imperfect, was not entered into the diary, journal, or annals which David ordered to be written of all memorable events and transactions in his reign; and which were afterwards carried on by the kings of Judah, often referred to in the preceding books; and this was done, not because of the imperfection of the account, but because David did not choose this sin of his should be transmitted to posterity, though it has been, notwithstanding this precaution of his.

1 Chronicles 27:25

Ver. 25-32. And over the king's treasures was Azmaveth the son of Adiel,.... The historian here proceeds to relate who were employed in the economical and civil affairs of David; and the first mentioned is the lord of his treasury, who had the care of his gold and silver brought into his exchequer, either by a levy on his own people, or by the tribute of others: Jehonathan the son of Uzziah had the care of the storehouses, in which were laid up what the fields, cities, villages, and castles that belonged to the king produced, whether by fruits gathered in, or by rents collected: Ezri the son of Chelub looked after his workmen in the fields, employed in the tillage of the ground: Shimei of Ramath, in the tribe of Benjamin, had the care of the vineyards, to see that they were dressed and pruned, and kept in good order: Zabdi of Shepham, Nu 34:10

had the charge of the wine squeezed out of the grapes, both in the presses and in the cellars: Baalhanan of Gedor, in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:36 was over the olive and sycamore trees, to see that they were well taken care of: and Joash was entrusted with the cellars where the oil was deposited: Shitrai the Sharonite had the herds of cattle fed in Sharon committed to his trust; whether in Sharon beyond Jordan, or that about Lydda and Joppa, near the Mediterranean sea, both affording fruitful pastures for herds; and this man, being of Sharon, was a fit man to be employed in such service: and Shaphat the son of Adlai was over those herds that were in the valleys, where were good pastures for them; such officers Pharaoh king of Egypt had, Ge 47:6 and as early as the times of Ninus king of Assyria, one named Simma was master of the king's cattle {l}, as Faustulus was to Amulius king of the Latines {m}; and so Tyrrhus in Virgil {n} had the command of all the king's cattle; and Cicero mentions another in the same office {o}: Obil the Ishmaelite (an Arab, as the Targum) had the care of the camels; and a very proper person he was, who must know the nature of them, and how to manage them, Arabia, or the land of the Ishmaelites, abounding with them. This man was so called, either because he was an Ishmaelite by birth, and was proselyted to the Jewish religion; or he was an Israelite that had dwelt some time in the land of Ishmael, and therefore so called. Bochart {p} thinks he had his name of Obil from his office, the word in the Arabic language signifying a keeper of camels. Jehdeiah the Meronothite was over the asses, which were employed in ploughing and carrying burdens; and Jaziz the Hagarite was over the flocks of sheep, the chief shepherd, who had the command of all the under shepherds, and a very proper person, being an Hagarite, or Arab; for such dwelt in tents for the sake of pasturage for their flocks, as Jarchi notes: these were the principal men that had the care of David's personal substance; so, in later times, the Roman Caesars {q} had such sort of servants to take care of their farms, fields, fruit, cattle, &c. the rest that follow were David's courtiers. Jonathan, or to whom David was uncle, the son of Shimea, his brother being a wise and learned man, was his counsellor, see 2Sa 21:21 and Jehiel the Hachmonite was preceptor, or tutor to the king's sons, that brought them up, and took care of their education; Ahithophel was his counsellor until the conspiracy and rebellion of Absalom; and Hushai the Archite was his companion, friend, and favourite, with whom he conversed at leisure hours. After the death of Ahithophel, Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar, were his counsellors, and Joab the general of his army.

{l} Diodor. Sicul. l. 2. p. 93. {m} Liv. Hist. Decad. 1. l. 1. p. 5. {n} Aeneid. l. 7. Tyrrhusque pater, &c. ver. 485. {o} Apud Servium, in ib. {p} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. col. 77. {q} Vid. Pignorium de Servis, p. 548.

1 Chronicles 27:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "1Ch 27:25".

1 Chronicles 27:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "1Ch 27:25".

1 Chronicles 27:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "1Ch 27:25".

1 Chronicles 27:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "1Ch 27:25".

1 Chronicles 27:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "1Ch 27:25".

1 Chronicles 27:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "1Ch 27:25".

1 Chronicles 27:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "1Ch 27:25".

1 Chronicles 27:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "1Ch 27:25".

1 Chronicles 27:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "1Ch 27:25".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 28:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 28

David, having convened the principal men of the nation, declared Solomon his successor, whom God had chosen both to be king, and to build the temple, 1Ch 28:1, and exhorted both them and him to serve the Lord, and build an house for him, 1Ch 28:8, then gave Solomon the pattern of it, and an account of the materials he had prepared for it, 1Ch 28:11, and encouraged him to go about the work with alacrity and intrepidity, 1Ch 28:20.

Ver. 1. And David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes,.... Whose names are given in 1Ch 27:16

and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course; monthly, each having 24,000 men under him, whose names are expressed, 1Ch 27:2

and the captains over the thousands; of which there were twenty four in a course, at the head of each 1000, under the chief captain:

and captains over the hundreds: centurions under the second captains:

and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king, and of his sons; whose names may be read in 1Ch 27:25

with the officers: the courtiers:

and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men; both men of valour, and of wealth and riches: these David

assembled unto Jerusalem; the metropolis of the kingdoms and where his court and palace were.

1 Chronicles 28:2

Ver. 2. Then David the king stood up upon his feet,.... Rose from the bed or couch on which he lay, as Kimchi thinks, being somewhat recovered of his paralytic disorder, and being willing to exert himself on this occasion; or he rose up from the seat or throne, on which he before sat, in honour to this august assembly before him, and that he might be the more easily heard; for which reason we are told {r} it was a custom with the ancients even for kings to stand up when they had a number of people about them they spoke to; and if anyone sat it was reckoned a new and strange thing; so Agamemnon, when wounded, did not speak sitting, until he had made an excuse for it:

and said, hear me, my brethren, and my people; having something of moment and importance to say unto them, and which required their diligent attention; and though they were his subjects, he calls them his brethren, being of the same nation and religion, and to show his modesty and humility; in which he was a type of Christ, the King of kings, see **Heb 2:11**

as for me, I had it in my heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord; where it might abide, and not be removed from place to place; the same he had told Solomon, 1Ch 22:7

and for the footstool of our God; or "even for it", for the ark is meant, which is so called, Ps 99:5 for as the Lord sat between the cherubim over the mercy seat, the lid of the ark, it was, speaking after the manner of men, a footstool to him:

and had made ready for the building; prepared materials for it; see 1Ch 22:4.

{r} Eustathius in Homer. Iliald. 1. p. 46. Vid, Iliad. 19. ver. 77, 79.

1 Chronicles 28:3

Ver. 3. But God said unto me, thou shalt not build an house for my name,.... This he said by Nathan the prophet, **2Sa 7:5**

because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood: see 1Ch 22:8.

1 Chronicles 28:4

Ver. 4. Howbeit, the Lord God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever,.... Passing by all his brethren who were elder than he, he pitched upon him, and ordered him to be anointed king of Israel, see 1Sa 16:10, and that for ever, for a long time, as long as he lived; or rather in his posterity for many years to come, and best of all in his antitype Christ, the son of David, see **Lu 1:32**

for he hath chosen Judah to be the ruler; the tribe of Judah to be the seat of government, and one out of that tribe to be the chief ruler, see **1Ch 5:2**

and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; out of that tribe he chose his father's family, to take from thence one to be king of Israel:

and among the sons of my father he liked me to make me king over all Israel; though the youngest of them, 1Sa 16:11, this was his will and pleasure.

1 Chronicles 28:5

Ver. 5. And of all my sons, for the Lord hath given me many sons,.... Whose names, and the order of their birth, may be read in **1Ch 3:1**

he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel; to be his successor in it: this he says to observe to them, that this was not merely his own will and choice, nor the fruit and effect of a fond affection to Solomon; nor was it barely in pursuance of a promise made to Bathsheba, she had obtained of him; but it was according to the will and appointment of God, and therefore to be the more regarded.

1 Chronicles 28:6

Ver. 6. And he said unto me, Solomon that son, he shall build my house,.... See **2Sa 7:13**

and my courts; in the house or temple:

for I have chosen him to be my son; predestinated him to the adoption of children, **Eph 1:5**

and I will be his father; see **2Sa 7:14**.

1 Chronicles 28:7

Ver. 7. Moreover, I will establish his kingdom for ever,.... The same is said in **2Sa 7:13**

if he be constant to do my commandments, and my judgments, as at this day; if he continued in the observance of them, as he had begun, and went on in until that day; this is added here, and was not spoken by Nathan, when what goes before was; for Solomon was not then born, but must be suggested to David since, and as it should seem at this time.

1 Chronicles 28:8

Ver. 8. Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord,.... Whom this assembly represented:

and in the audience of our God; before him, as Jarchi, in whose presence they were, and who heard and saw all that passed, and to whom David appeals as a witness; the Targum is,

"before the Word of the Lord."

before whom all things are naked and open, **Heb 4:12**

keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God; seek to know them, search for them in the word of God, and endeavour to keep them:

that ye may possess this good land; continue in the possession of it, for by their obedience they held it, **Isa 1:19**

and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever; that so they might not be removed from it, and carried captive into other lands, as they were for their disobedience.

1 Chronicles 28:9

Ver. 9. And thou, Solomon my son,.... Who was present in this assembly, and presented to them by David as his successor, and their future king: and having addressed them, he turns himself to him, and exhorts him, saying,

know thou the God of thy father; who was his Father and covenant God, and whom he served and worshipped, and who had bestowed upon him many favours, both temporal and spiritual; and having had such an experience of his goodness, he exhorts his son to seek to know more and more of him, and to own and acknowledge him as his God, and to love and fear him:

serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; cordially and sincerely, cheerfully and freely, neither in an hypocritical manner, nor through force and constraint, nor with loathing and weariness:

for the Lord searcheth all hearts; the hearts of all men, even of kings, and knows from what principles and with what views and in what manor they serve him:

and understandeth all the imaginations of the thought; not only the thoughts of the heart, when regularly formed and ranged in order, hut even the very beginning of them, the first motions of the mind, and before they are well formed, see **Ge 6:5**

if thou seek him; by prayer and supplication in his house and ordinances:

he will be found of thee; grant his presence and bestow his favours, see **Isa 4:6**

but if thou forsake him: his word, his ways, his worship:

he will cast thee off for ever; from being king, or enjoying that peace, prosperity, and happiness, which otherwise would be enjoyed.

1 Chronicles 28:10

Ver. 10. Take heed now,.... Of offending God by forsaking him; or see, consider, and observe now what he was further about to say to him, concerning the building of the temple, as follows:

for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary; a temple for the ark, called the sanctuary, **Nu 7:9** the Targum is, the Word of the Lord hath chosen thee, &c.

be strong, and do it, be of a good heart and courage, and set about it with vigour and resolution.

1 Chronicles 28:11

Ver. 11. Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch,.... The breadth, and length, and height of it, which was to be placed at the east end of the temple, and was the entrance into it:

and, of the houses thereof; the holy place, and the most holy, which latter is called the greater house, **2Ch 3:5**,

and of the treasures; where things belonging to the temple were laid up, the priests' vestments, and other things:

and of the upper chambers; where the priests lay or met for conversation, Jer 35:2.

and of the inner parlours thereof; where the priests ate of the holy things; all these seem to he buildings against the wall of the temple round about, **1Ki 6:5**

and of the place of the mercy seat: the holy of holies, where that, with the cherubim over it, and the ark under it, were placed.

1 Chronicles 28:12

Ver. 12 And the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit,.... By the Spirit of God, who gave him the whole form of the temple, and all things relative to it; just as God showed to Moses the pattern of the tabernacle in the mount; the Targum is, by the spirit of prophecy that was with him. The Jews suppose that Samuel the prophet was first made acquainted with it, and he made it known to David:

of the courts of the house of the Lord: the outward court, the court of the priests, &c.

and of all the chambers round about: see **1Ki 6:5**

of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things; of the difference of which, see 1Ch 26:20.

1 Chronicles 28:13

Ver. 13. And also for the courses of the priests and Levites,.... Where they should serve, of which, as fixed and ordered by David, see
1Ch 24:1

and for all the work of the service of the house of the Lord; they should be employed in:

and for all the vessels of service in the house of the Lord; which they should use therein.

1 Chronicles 28:14

Ver. 14. He gave of gold by weight for things of gold, for all instruments of all manner of service,.... Whatever was to be made of gold, David was directed by the Spirit of God what weight or quantity of gold should be made use of in making it, as appears from some following instances: silver also

for all instruments of silver by weight, for all instruments of every kind of service; so likewise whatever instruments or vessels, for the service of the temple, were to be made of silver, he had a direction from the Spirit of God what weight each was to be of, or what quantity of silver was to be used in it, and this he gave; according to Jacob Jehudah Leon {s}, the vessels of gold were 340,000, the vessels of silver 470,000, in all 810,000.

{s} Relation of Memorable Things in the Tabernacle and Temple, ch. 4. p. 19.

1 Chronicles 28:15

Ver. 15. Even the weight for the candlesticks of gold, and for their lamps of gold, by weight for every candlestick, and for the lamps thereof,.... These candlesticks were ten, and each had seven lamps, and were placed five on one side the Mosaic candlestick, and five on the other, as say the Jews, see **1Ki 7:49**, and the weight of gold for each candlestick, according to the above writer {t}, was one hundred pounds; and for both candlesticks and lamps, David, by the Spirit of God, was directed to give:

and for the candlesticks of silver, by weight, both for the candlestick, and also for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick; the weight of silver for them was fixed; of these nowhere else read. Kimchi thinks these were for the chambers of the priests, to give them light when they ate and lay there.

{t} Ibid. (Relation of Memorial Things in the Tabernacle and the Temple, ch. 4.) p. 20.

1 Chronicles 28:16

Ver. 16. And by weight he gave gold for the tables of shewbread, for every table,.... For though there were but one table for the shewbread in the tabernacle of Moses, there were ten in the temple of Solomon, **2Ch 4:8** and each of them contained one hundred pounds in weight {u}:

and likewise silver for the tables of silver; these were placed in the court, as Jarchi thinks, on which they flayed the sacrifices; or, as Kimchi, on which they slew them, and laid the flesh of the burnt offerings on them, which he gathers from Eze 40:39.

{u} Jacob Leon, ibid. (Relation of Memorable Things in the Tabernacle and Temple, ch. 4. p. 20.)

1 Chronicles 28:17

Ver. 17. Also pure gold for the flesh hooks,.... To take the pieces of flesh out of the pots, in which they were boiled:

and the bowls and the cups; and for the golden basins he gave gold by weight for every basin; which were vessels made use of for the receiving and sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices: likewise silver

by weight for every basin of silver; for it seems some of them were of silver, as others were of gold.

1 Chronicles 28:18

Ver. 18. And for the altar of incense refined gold by weight,.... This was also one hundred pounds weight in gold, with which it was to be overlaid {w}:

and gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubim; which were two large ones, besides those which Moses made; and these were not made of gold, as they were, but overlaid with it, see **1Ki 6:23** which with them made four; and to which the four living creatures in Ezekiel's vision allude, and make the "mercavah", or chariot, the Jews so much speak of, perhaps from this and other like phrases; and the Lord sitting here as in a chariot, not only denotes the glory and splendour of the Shechinah, or divine Majesty; but, as some observe, his readiness to ride off and depart, when displeased and provoked, see Eze 10:18,

that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of the Lord; not that spread their wings over the ark, and covered it, that the Mosaic cherubim did; but these spread their wings before it from wall to wall, so that it could not be seen by any that turned aside the vail, and even by the high priest when he entered into the holy of holies: the ark, with the cherubim, which were on that, weighed two hundred pounds of pure gold, according to the Jacob Leon {x}.

{w} Ibid. (Relation of Memorable Things in the Tabernacle and Temple, ch. 4. p. 20.) {x} Ibid.

1 Chronicles 28:19

Ver. 19. All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me,.... Either by an impulse of his Spirit on him, whereby it was as it were written on his mind, and as clearly represented to him, as if he had it in writing before him; though the Jews think that all was first made known to Samuel, or some other prophet, who delivered it to David in writing, as from the Lord: but I see not why it may not be understood that David had the pattern of the temple, and all things relative to it, by an handwriting from the Lord himself, through the ministry of angels, as Moses received the two tables, the handwriting of the Lord, from himself; for the words, as they lie in order in the

Hebrew text, are, the whole of this "in writing from the hand of the Lord, unto me, he made me to understand: even all the works of this pattern"; the particulars of which are given before.

1 Chronicles 28:20

Ver. 20. And David said to Solomon his son, be strong, and of good courage, and do it,.... See Gill on "1Ch 28:10"

fear not, nor be dismayed; that thou shalt meet with any opposition in the work, or not be able to finish it for want of materials and workmen, or money to pay them:

for the Lord God, [even] my God, will be with thee; to guide and direct, prosper and succeed; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord God, my God, will be thy help:"

he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee; a promise made to Joshua, and is applicable to every good man in whatsoever good work he is concerned, **Jos 1:5**,

until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord; built the temple, and all the apartments of it, and courts belonging to it, and made and provided all the utensils and vessels necessary for the service and worship of God.

1 Chronicles 28:21

Ver. 21. And, behold, all the courses of the priests and the Levites,.... Which David had lately fixed to take their turns in the temple, when built: even they shall be with thee

for all the service of the house of God; to advise and assist him in everything relating to the service of the sanctuary, which they might be supposed best to understand:

and there shall be with thee, for all manner of workmanship, every willing skilful man for any manner of service; men that were not only well skilled in all manner of curious work that was necessary for the service of the house, but were willing to employ their skill to the uttermost for it, and such David had provided, 1Ch 22:15,

also the princes and all the people will be wholly at thy commandment: to do whatever he should order, whether to overlook the workmen, or to contribute to the expenses of the work.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Chronicles 29:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CHRONICLES 29

This chapter relates how largely and liberally David, besides what he had before done, and his princes, offered towards defraying the expenses of building the temple, 1Ch 29:1 and the joy and thankfulness that he and his people expressed on that account, attended with prayers for Solomon, and offering sacrifices unto the Lord, 1Ch 29:9 and the chapter is closed, and so the book, with an account of the second unction of Solomon, the placing him on the throne, and the submission of all ranks of men unto him, and of the death of David, 1Ch 29:22.

Ver. 1. Furthermore, David the king said unto all the congregation,.... Having finished what he had to say to Solomon, he addressed the congregation again:

Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen; both to be king, and to build the temple

is yet young and tender; see 1Ch 22:5

and the work is great; both of governing so great a people, and of building so magnificent a temple, especially the latter is meant:

for the palace is not for man; for any mortal king, though ever so great:

but for the Lord God; the Targum is,

"but for the Word of the Lord God,"

who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and therefore is to be built as with the greatest exactness, according to the pattern he himself has given, so with the greatest splendour and magnificence.

1 Chronicles 29:2

Ver. 2. Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God,.... According to the utmost of his ability for the building and decorating of it:

the gold for the things to be made of gold; as the candlesticks, shewbread tables, &c.

and the silver for [things] of silver; as for basins, &c.

and the brass for [things] of brass; as the brasen altar, brasen laver,

and iron for [things] of iron; for nails, hinges, &c.

and wood for [things] of wood; for rafters, ceilings, floors, &c.

onyx stones; the Targum, stones of beryl: and stones to be set; other precious stones to be set in gold and silver:

glistering stones; the Targum, emeralds; the word is used for stibium, or black lead, with which women painted their eyes; and so may signify black stones, like black lead; as white marble is after mentioned, perhaps black is here meant, or such stones Solomon paved the ways with leading to Jerusalem {y}: but as such stones are not very glistering, there seems to be no reason for such an epithet; unless the stone "phengites" should be meant, which was a clear bright stone, and served for looking glasses. Domitian the Roman emperor, when under suspicion of being murdered by persons he had offended, garnished the porticos of his palace with this stone, which was of such brightness, that by the images formed in it he could see what was behind him {z}; and so Lucian speaks {a} of Astarte having a splendid stone about her, called lucniv, which in the night gave much light to the temple, but shone weakly in the day time, and looked like fire:

and of divers colours; that is, stones of various colours, as jaspers, amethysts, &c. Kimchi interprets it of embroidered clothes, and garments of needlework, and in these precious stones were sometimes inserted:

and all manner of precious stones; as pearls, diamonds, &c. it is hard to say what all these precious stones were for; Jarchi and Kimchi think they were to decorate the walls overlaid with gold, in which they were set; it is certain they were for garnishing and beautifying the house, see **2Ch 3:6**

and marble stones in abundance; for pillars, tables, and pavement, as Jarchi; this was Parian marble, according to the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; the whitest of marble {b}, found the island of Paros, and which agrees with the word here used.

{y} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. sect. 4. {z} Sueton. Vit. Domitian. c. 14. Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 22. Isidor. Origin. l. 16. c. 4. {a} De Dea Syria. {b} "----Pario marmore purius." Horat. Carmin. l. 1. ode 19.

1 Chronicles 29:3

Ver. 3. Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God,.... Had a good will to it, and was earnestly desirous of having it built, and that in a grand manner:

I have of my own proper good; which he had treasured up for his own use:

of gold and silver, [even that] I have given to the house of my God; to build or ornament it, or make vessels for it:

over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house; for the building of the temple, which is made mention of in the preceding chapter.

1 Chronicles 29:4

Ver. 4. Even three thousand talents of gold,.... Which, according to Scheuchzer {c}, amount to 36,660,000 ducats of gold; and, according to Brerewood {d}, to 13,500,000 pounds of our money:

of the gold of Ophir; which was reckoned the best gold; not Ophir in India, which was not known till Solomon's time, but in Arabia, as Bochart {e} has shown; so Eupolemus {f}, an Heathen writer, says, that David having built ships at Achan, a city of Arabia, sent miners to Urphe (supposed to be the same with Ophir) in the island of the Red sea, abounding with gold, and from thence fetched it, See Gill on 1Ki 9:28, and that he was able to give so great a sum out of his own substance, Dr. Prideaux {g} thinks, can only be accounted for by his great returns from this traffic; since these 3000 talents, according to him, amounted to 21,600,000 pounds sterling:

and seven thousand talents of refined silver; amounting, according to Scheuchzer {h}, to 31,500,000 imperials, or rix dollars; and, according to Brerewood {i}, to 2,625,000 pounds of our money:

to overlay the walls of the houses withal; the gold was to overlay the walls of the holy and most holy place, the silver to overlay the walls of the chambers built around the temple.

{c} Physica Sacra, vol. 4. p. 631. {d} De Ponder. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 5. {e} Phaleg. l. 2. c. 27. col. 140. {f} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 30. p. 447. {g} Connection, par. 1. p. 5, 6. {h} Ut supra. (Physica Sacra, vol. 4. p. 631.) {i} Ut supra. (De Ponder. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 5.)

1 Chronicles 29:5

Ver. 5. The gold for things of gold, the silver for things of silver,.... The one for what was to be overlaid with gold, the other for what was to be overlaid with silver:

and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers; what remained was to be made use of in employing artificers in making vessels for the temple that were needful:

and who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord; or fill his hand? {k} and give largely and liberally towards building an house for the service and worship, honour and glory, of God; and David, having set so good an example, could with the better grace recommend the good work to his nobles and people, and which had its desired effect, as follows.

{k} wdy twalml "impleat manum suam", V. L. "ut impleat manum suam", Vatablus, Piscator.

1 Chronicles 29:6

Ver. 6. Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel,.... The princes of the twelve tribes:

and the captains of thousands, and of hundreds, with the rulers over the king's work; who were now assembled, 1Ch 28:1

offered willingly; and cheerfully; needed no more arguments to press them to it, but at once readily communicated.

1 Chronicles 29:7

Ver. 7. And gave for the service of the house of God,.... For building and adorning it, and providing proper utensils for it:

of gold five thousand talents; which, according to Scheuchzer {l}, came to 61,100,000 ducats of gold: and these, with "the 10,000 drachms"; make of our money, according to Brerewood {m}, 22,507,500 pounds; some reckon a drachm at two ducats and a half, and somewhat more {n}:

and of silver ten thousand talents; which, according to the former writer, amounted to 450,000,000 imperials, or rix dollars; and, according to the latter, they made of our money 3,750,000 pounds:

and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron; the weight of each of which were so much.

{l} Ut supra. (Physica Sacra, vol. 4. p. 631.) {m} Ut supra. (Physica Sacra, vol. 4. p. 631.) {n} Eisenschmidius apud Scheuchzer. ib. p. 635.

1 Chronicles 29:8

Ver. 8. And they with whom precious stones were found,.... Such as are mentioned 1Ch 29:2

gave them to the treasure of the house of the Lord; to be laid up there:

by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite; who, and his sons, had the care of that treasury, 1Ch 27:21.

1 Chronicles 29:9

Ver. 9. Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly,.... They were not only glad that they had it to offer, but that they had hearts to do it; they found themselves quite free to do the work, and saw it was so with others, which gave them extreme pleasure:

because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord; not grudgingly, but cheerfully; not pressed and urged to it; not by constraint, but freely, and that with a pure view to the honour and glory of God:

and David the king also rejoiced with great joy; it made his heart glad exceedingly, now he was old, and just going out of the world, to see this good work in such forwardness, on which his heart had been so much set; it gave him reason to believe it would be set about in good earnest, be carried on with vigour, and brought to perfection.

1 Chronicles 29:10

Ver. 10. Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation,.... To whose goodness he ascribed both the ability and willingness of him, and his people, to offer after such a manner; he knew it was God that wrought in them both to will and to do, and therefore gave him the glory of it:

and David said, blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever; the phrase, "our father", does not belong to the God of Israel, their father by covenant and adoption, but to Israel, or Jacob, the ancestor of the Jewish nation; who is made mention of on this occasion, he being the first that spoke of building an house for God, as some Jewish writers, Jarchi and Kimchi, observe, see Ge 28:22.

1 Chronicles 29:11

Ver. 11. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty,.... That is, either God is possessed of all greatness and immensity, of dignity of nature, and of all perfections; of almighty power, of excellent glory, of superiority to all beings and of honour, and majesty, and all that grandeur, might, and honour in men, and victory over others; the majestic appearance they make, and exaltation above others they have, are all of God:

for all that is in the heaven and in the earth [is thine]; they are both made by him, and all that is in them, and therefore he has the sole right unto them:

thine is the kingdom, O Lord; of nature and Providence; he has the sole dominion over all creatures, and the sovereign disposal of all things:

and thou art exalted as head above all; men on earth, and angels in heaven.

1 Chronicles 29:12

Ver. 12. Both riches and honour come of thee,.... Whatever of either the children of men have is not owing to their merits, nor to their diligence and industry, and wise conduct, but to the providence of God, **Ec 9:11** so the gods with the Heathens are said {o} to be givers of riches:

and thou reignest over all; govern the world by wisdom, and dispose all things in it for the best:

in thine hand is power and might; to do whatsoever he pleaseth:

and in thine hand it is to make great; in worldly things, and so in spiritual:

and to give strength unto all; against their enemies, and to do the will and work of God; of all which David had had an experience.

{o} ploutodotai, Hesiod. Opera, ver. 124. see ver. 316.

1 Chronicles 29:13

Ver. 13. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. That he that was so great, and so much above them, should take notice of them, and bestow so many great and good things on them.

1 Chronicles 29:14

Ver. 14. But who am I,.... Originally dust and ashes, a sinful creature, unworthy to receive anything from God, and of having the honour of doing anything for him:

and what is my people: subject to him, the least of all people, separated from the nations round about them, and despised by them:

that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? that they, who were a poor people, some years ago brought out of Egyptian bondage, should now be possessed of such an affluence, and have such a generous heart and liberal spirit given them, as to contribute in so large and liberal a manner as they had done; all was owing to the goodness of God to them, and the efficacy of his grace upon them:

for all things come of thee; all good things, temporal and spiritual; the Lord is the fountain of goodness, and Father of mercies:

and of thine own have we given thee; for there is nothing a man has but he has received from the Lord, and therefore can give nothing to him but his own, see Ro 11:35.

1 Chronicles 29:15

Ver. 15. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers,.... For though they were in possession of the land of Canaan, yet they held it not in their own right, but as the Lord's,

who said, the land is mine, Le 25:23, they were but tenants in it, and were not to abide long here; they belonged to another city and country; the consideration of which might tend to set them loose to worldly things, and the more easily to part with them for the service of God, and the honour of his name:

our days on the earth are as a shadow; man's life is expressed by days, not months and years, being so short; and by days on earth, in distinction from the days of heaven, or eternity; and these said to be as a shadow, of a short continuance, empty, mutable, and uncertain, dark and obscure, quickly gone, like the shadow of the sun; and not only like that, or of a mountain, tree or wall; but, as the Targum, of a bird that is flying, which passes away at once:

and [there is] none abiding; not long, much less always, being but sojourners as before; so Cato in Cicero {p} is represented as saying,

"I depart out of this life as from an inn, and not an house; for nature has given us an inn to sojourn, not a place to dwell in:"

or "there is no hope or expectation" {q}; of living long, of recalling time, and of avoiding death.

{p} De Senectute, c. 23. {q} hwqm Nya "non est expectatio sive spes", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis.

1 Chronicles 29:16

Ver. 16. O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared,.... Of gold, silver, &c. that he and his people had provided and contributed: the gold, according to Jacob Leon {r}, amounted to 59,766 tons of gold, and 46,123 gilders, each ton to be reckoned at least 1000 pounds sterling; the silver, reduced to the value of gold, made 46,337 tons, and two hundred and fifty gilders; but both, according to Witsius {s}, amounted to 20,585 tons of gold; and if the talents were talents of the sanctuary, and they double the common talents, as some say they were, it was as much more, and may well be expressed by

all this store, besides the brass, iron, &c.

to build thee an house for thine holy name; to perform holy and religious worship in it, for the glory of his name: cometh of

thine hand, and [is] all thine own: this he repeats, that God might have all the glory of all they had and did.

{r} Relation of Memorable Things in the Tabernacle and Temple, ch. 3. p. 14, 15. {s} Miscellan. tom. 2. p. 258.

1 Chronicles 29:17

Ver. 17. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart,.... Searchest it, and knowest it perfectly, whether what is done is from it:

and hast pleasure in uprightness; in what is done in sincerity and uprightness of heart:

as for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things; for the truth of which he could appeal to the heart searching God:

and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee; he judged by what they did, and their manner of doing it, that it was done in the uprightness of their hearts also, as his were, which gave him sensible joy and pleasure.

1 Chronicles 29:18

Ver. 18. O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, &c:] The ancestors of the Jewish nation, whose covenant God the Lord was, and who had ever been mindful of his promise to them, with respect to them their seed:

keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people; let the same disposition of mind always continue in them to serve the Lord their God:

and prepare their heart unto thee; incline and dispose their minds always to fear the Lord, and obey his will.

1 Chronicles 29:19

Ver. 19. And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes,.... All the laws of God, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, even to observe them cordially and sincerely:

and to do all those things; he had suggested to him particularly:

and to build the palace for the which I have made provision; as before declared.

1 Chronicles 29:20

Ver. 20. And David said to all the congregation,.... Consisting of princes, captains, and officers, 1Ch 28:1

now bless the Lord your God; as he had done, for putting it into the power of their hands, and into their hearts, to do what they had:

and all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers; some one as the mouth of the rest put up a thanksgiving to God, as David directed, to which they all assented, and in which they all joined:

and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord and the king; the one with religious worship, the other with civil; the Syriac and Arabic versions more plainly distinguish, "they worshipped the Lord, and blessed David the king"; though some think Solomon, now made king, is meant.

1 Chronicles 29:21

Ver. 21. And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the Lord,.... David and the congregation:

and offered burnt offerings unto the Lord on the morrow after that day; not having time enough on that day to perform, at least not all of them; and these they offered on the altar David had erected in the threshingfloor of Araunah, by the order of God, where afterwards the temple was built:

[even] a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their burnt offerings; and meat offerings also, both which always went along with them:

and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel; whom they represented; these last were peace offerings, part of which the offerers had for themselves and friends to feast on, as these did, as follows.

1 Chronicles 29:22

Ver. 22. And they did eat and drink before the Lord on that day with great gladness,.... Before the ark of the Lord, which was in the tabernacle David had pitched for it:

and they made Solomon the son of David king the second time; the first was upon Adonijah's rebellion, and was done in the presence only of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; but this was done by and in the presence of all the great personages in the land:

and anointed him unto the Lord to be the chief governor; under his father during his lifetime, and then to reign in his own right:

and Zadok to be priest; high priest; which office yet he did not exercise till after the death of David, when Abiathar was thrust out by Solomon.

1 Chronicles 29:23

Ver. 23. Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord,.... Who had given it to him, and established him on it, and whose vicegerent he was, and over whose people he ruled:

as king instead of David; he was viceroy to him in his life time, and succeeded him at his death, when he had the full power of government:

and prospered; his reign was happy and peaceable:

and all Israel obeyed him; at once; whereas it was some time, even years, before all Israel obeyed David.

1 Chronicles 29:24

Ver. 24. And all the princes and the mighty men,.... The princes of the tribes, and the officers of the army:

and all the sons likewise of King David; as many as were living: and though they were elder than Solomon,

[they] submitted to Solomon the king; or "gave the hand under" {t} him, promised obedience, and swore allegiance to him, see Ge 24:2.

{t} txt dy Mvyw "dederunt manum sub Selomoh", Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis.

1 Chronicles 29:25

Ver. 25. And the Lord magnified Solomon exceedingly before all Israel,.... By giving him such a large share of wisdom and understanding in government:

and bestowed upon him such royal majesty; not only such wealth and riches, but such honour and reverence,

as had not been on any king before him in Israel; not on Saul, nor even on David.

1 Chronicles 29:26

Ver. 26. Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. As before related in this book, and in the second book of Samuel; his reign being long and glorious.

1 Chronicles 29:27

Ver. 27. And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years,.... See **1Ki 2:11**.

1 Chronicles 29:28

Ver. 28. And he died in a good old age,.... Being seventy years of age:

full of days, riches, and honour; had as much of either of them as he could wish for; and having enough, he sought after, and was taken to the possession of, eternal life, durable riches, and honours, and glory, that fade not away:

and Solomon his son reigned in his stead; in full power and authority.

1 Chronicles 29:29

Ver. 29. Now the acts of David the king, first and last,.... All that he did that was memorable, both before he was king, and when king in Hebron, and then in Jerusalem:

behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer; which were journals of his life and actions, begun by Samuel, and carried on by Nathan and Gad; out of which what is recorded in canonical Scripture was taken by divine direction, and preserved, while other writings are lost; or rather the book of Samuel designs the first book of Samuel, and the books of Nathan and Gad the second book of Samuel, by whom it was written.

1 Chronicles 29:30

Ver. 30. With all his reign and his might,.... The whole of it, and the mighty valiant acts done by him, the battles he fought, and the victories he obtained:

and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and all the kingdoms of the countries; things that were done in his time in Israel, and in the nations round about subdued by him, as Moab, Ammon, Syria, and Philistia.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND CHRONICLES

This, and the preceding, were but one book originally, but divided into two because of the size of it, so that this is only a continuation of the former history; that ends at the death of David; this begins with the reign of Solomon, goes through that, and the reigns of all the kings of the house of David; of the kings of Judah only, after the separation of the ten tribes, quite down to the captivity of Judah in Babylon, and reaches to the deliverance of the Jews from thence by Cyrus, and contains an history of four hundred and seventy nine years. It treats not at all of the kings of Israel, after the separation, only of the kings of Judah, through whom the line of the Messiah was drawn; and though it omits several things recorded of them in the book of Kings, yet it gives abundance of anecdotes not to be met with there, which are of great use and advantage in history to know.

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 1

This chapter relates, how that Solomon being confirmed in his kingdom, went to Gibeon to sacrifice **2Ch 1:1**, that the Lord appeared there to him, and what passed between them, **2Ch 1:7** and that when he returned from thence to Jerusalem, he increased in splendour, wealth, and riches, **2Ch 1:13**.

Ver. 1. And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom,.... Well settled and established on the throne of his father, after the death of some persons, from whom he might expect trouble, see **1Ki 2:46**

and the Lord God was with him; directing and instructing him, prospering and succeeding him: the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord was his help:"

and magnified him exceedingly; see 1Ch 29:25.

2 Chronicles 1:2

Ver. 2. Then Solomon spake unto all Israel,.... To their representatives about going to Gibeon to sacrifice, as the next words show: so Jarchi and Kimchi observe:

to the captains of thousands, and of hundreds, to the judges, and to every governor in all Israel, the chief of the fathers; whom he had convened on this occasion; though some think this is the same congregation gathered by his father, by whom he was anointed and made king, and that he spoke of this to them before they broke up, 1Ch 28:1 which seems not so probable, since it was after the death of his father, after he had been king some time, and even after his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, that what follows was done, see **1Ki 3:1**.

2 Chronicles 1:3

Ver. 3. So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon,.... They agreed to his motion, and went with him thither, see **1Ki 3:4**

for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the Lord had made in the wilderness: by the Lord's direction; where was also the altar of the Lord, and so most proper to offer sacrifice on, which was what Solomon went thither to do; see

1Ch 21:29.

2 Chronicles 1:4

Ver. 4. But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjathjearim,.... See **2Sa 6:2**.

2 Chronicles 1:5

Ver. 5. Moreover, the brasen altar that Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made,.... According to the pattern given by Moses, at the direction of God, Ex 38:1,

he put before the tabernacle of the congregation; either David, or rather Solomon; though it seems best to read the words as in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, "and there it was before the tabernacle"; for it was always there:

and Solomon and the congregation sought unto it; to sacrifice unto it; or rather sought "unto him", the Lord, before whose tabernacle the altar was, so Gussetins {a}.

{a} Comment. Ebr. p. 197.

2 Chronicles 1:6

Ver. 6. And Solomon went up thither,.... To the high place at Gibeon:

to the brasen altar before the lord; where he used to be, and accept the sacrifices of his people, though the ark, the symbol of his presence, was not there:

which was at the tabernacle of the congregation; that is, which altar was there; or rather "who", that is, God, was there, as Osiander, hearing the prayers of his people, and accepting their offerings:

and offered a thousand offerings upon it; by the priests, see **1Ki 3:4**.

2 Chronicles 1:7

Ver. 7. In that night did God appear unto Solomon,.... From hence to the end of **2Ch 1:12** it is the same with **1Ki 3:5**.
See Gill on "1Ki 3:5" See Gill on "1Ki 3:6" See Gill on "1Ki 3:7" See Gill on "1Ki 3:8" See Gill on "1Ki 3:9" See Gill on "1Ki 3:10" See Gill on "1Ki 3:11" See Gill on "1Ki 3:12" See Gill on "1Ki 3:13" See Gill on "1Ki 3:14" See Gill on "1Ki 3:15"

2 Chronicles 1:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "2Ch 1:7"

2 Chronicles 1:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ch 1:7"

2 Chronicles 1:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ch 1:7"

2 Chronicles 1:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Ch 1:7"

2 Chronicles 1:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "2Ch 1:7"

2 Chronicles 1:13

Ver. 13. Then Solomon came from his journey to the high place that was at Gibeon,.... Or rather without the supplement, the words may be read as in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, Solomon came from the high places; having sacrificed there, so Vatablus; l being put for m, as R. Jonah observes {b}; but the Targum agrees with us, he

"came to the high place which is in Gibeon, and from thence to Jerusalem;"

and to the same purpose Kimchi; having been there, he came to Jerusalem:

from before the tabernacle of the congregation; which was at Gibeon, where he had been sacrificing:

and reigned over Israel in great splendour and prosperity. From hence, to the end of the chapter, the same things are said as in
1Ki 10:26.
See Gill on "1Ki 10:26" See Gill on "1Ki 10:27" See Gill on "1Ki 10:28" See Gill on "1Ki 10:29"

{b} Apud Kimchium. in loc.

2 Chronicles 1:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "2Ch 1:13"

2 Chronicles 1:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "2Ch 1:13"

2 Chronicles 1:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "2Ch 1:13"

2 Chronicles 1:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "2Ch 1:13"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 2

Solomon intending to build a temple for God, and a palace for himself, sent to Hiram, king of Tyre, to furnish him with materials and workmen, **2Ch 2:1**, to which Hiram returned an agreeable answer, **2Ch 2:11**, and for this service Solomon numbered all the strangers in Israel, **2Ch 2:17**.

Ver. 1. And Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the Lord,.... For the worship and service of God, and for his honour and glory, being directed, enjoined, and encouraged to it by his father David:

and an house for his kingdom; for a royal palace for him, and his successors, first the one, and then the other; and in this order they were built.

2 Chronicles 2:2

Ver. 2. And Solomon told out threescore and ten thousand men,.... Of whom, and the difference of the last number in this text from **1Ki 5:15**, see the notes there.
See Gill on "1Ki 5:15".
See Gill on "1Ki 5:16".

2 Chronicles 2:3

Ver. 3. And Solomon sent to Huram king of Tyre,.... The same with Hiram, **1Ki 5:1** and from whence it appears, that Huram first sent a letter to Solomon to congratulate him on his accession to the throne, which is not taken notice of here:

as thou didst deal with my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein; see 1Ch 14:1, even so deal with me; which words are a supplement.

2 Chronicles 2:4

Ver. 4. Behold, I build an house to the name of the Lord my God,.... Am about to do it, and determined upon it, see **2Ch 2:1**,

to dedicate it to him; to set it apart for sacred service to him:

and to burn before him sweet incense; on the altar of incense:

and for the continual shewbread; the loaves of shewbread, which were continually on the shewbread table; which, and the altar of incense, both were set in the holy place in the tabernacle, and so to be in the temple:

and for the burnt offerings morning and evening; the daily sacrifice: on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the Lord our God: at which seasons, besides the daily sacrifice, additional burnt offerings were offered, and all on the brasen altar in the court: this is an ordinance

for ever unto Israel: to offer the above sacrifices, even for a long time to come, until the Messiah comes; and therefore Solomon suggests, as Jarchi and Kimchi think, that a good strong house ought to be built.

2 Chronicles 2:5

Ver. 5. And the house which I build is great,.... Not so very large, though that, with all apartments and courts belonging to it, he intended to build, was so; but because magnificent in its structure and decorations:

for great is our God above all gods; and therefore ought to have a temple to exceed all others, as the temple at Jerusalem did.

2 Chronicles 2:6

Ver. 6. But who is able to build him an house,.... Suitable to the greatness of his majesty, especially as he dwells not in temples made with hands:

seeing the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain him? see **1Ki 8:27**,

who am I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him? since God was an immense and infinite Being, be would have Hiram to understand that he had no thought of building an house, in which he could be circumscribed and contained, only a place in which he might be worshipped, and sacrifices offered to him.

2 Chronicles 2:7

Ver. 7. Send now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron,.... There being many things relating to the temple about to be built, and vessels to be put into it, which were to be made of those metals:

and in purple, and crimson, and blue; used in making the vails for it, hung up in different places:

and that can skill to grave; in wood or stone:

with the cunning men that are with me in Judah and Jerusalem, whom my father David did provide; see 1Ch 22:15.

2 Chronicles 2:8

Ver. 8. Send me also cedar trees, fir trees, and algum trees, out of Lebanon,.... Of the two first of these, and which Hiram sent, see **1Ki 5:10**. The algum trees are the same with the almug trees, 1Ki 10:11 by a transposition of letters; these could not be coral, as some Jewish writers think, which grows in the sea, for these were in Lebanon; nor Brazil, as Kimchi, so called from a place of this name, which at this time was not known; though there were trees of almug afterwards brought from Ophir in India, as appears from the above quoted place, as well as from Arabia; and it seems, as Beckius {c} observes, to be an Arabic word, by the article "al" prefixed to it:

for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon; better than his:

and, behold, my servants shall be with thy servants; to help and assist them in what they can, and to learn of them, see **1Ki 5:6**.

{c} In Targum in loc.

2 Chronicles 2:9

Ver. 9. Even to prepare me timber in abundance,.... Since he would want a large quantity for raftering, cieling, wainscoting, and flooring the temple:

for the house which I am about to build shall be wonderful great; as to its structure and ornaments.

2 Chronicles 2:10

Ver. 10. Behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat,.... Meaning, not what was beaten out of the husk with the flail, as some; nor bruised or half broke for pottage, as others; but ground into flour, as R. Jonah {d} interprets it; or rather, perhaps, it should be rendered "food" {e} that is, for his household, as in **1Ki 5:11**, and the hire of these servants is proposed to be given in this way, because wheat was scarce with the Tyrians, and they were obliged to have it from the Jews, Ac 12:20,

and twenty thousand measures of barley; the measures of both these were the cor, of which see **1Ki 5:11**,

and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil; which measure was the tenth part of a "cor". According to the Ethiopians, a man might consume four of these measures in the space of a month {f}.

{d} Apud Kimchium in loc. {e} So Kimchi, tkm "pro" tlkm "ineuria librariorum", Schindler, Lex. Pentaglott. col. 73. {f} Ludolf. Lexic. Ethiop. p. 197.

2 Chronicles 2:11

Ver. 11. Then Huram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon,.... In which letter he told him he had considered the contents of his, and would grant him all that he desired, see **1Ki 5:8**

because the Lord hath loved his people; he hath made thee king over them; which are much the same words the queen of Sheba said to Solomon,
See Gill on "1Ki 10:9".

2 Chronicles 2:12

Ver. 12. Huram said, moreover, blessed be the Lord God of Israel, that made heaven and earth,.... Huram seems to have had some good notions of the divine Being, not only as the God of the people of Israel, in a peculiar sense, but as the Former and Maker of all things:

who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding; see **1Ki 5:7**

that might build an house for the Lord, and for his kingdom; as in **2Ch 2:1**.

2 Chronicles 2:13

Ver. 13. And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding,.... In such things as Solomon required he should, **2Ch 2:7**

of Huram my father's; a workman of his, whom he employed, and so might be depended upon as a good artificer; though rather Huram is the artificer's name,

and Abi, we render "my father", his surname, that is, "Huram Abi"; and this is the opinion of several learned men {g}, and is very probable; for certain it is, that his name was Huram or Hiram, **1Ki 7:13**, and so he is called "Huram his father, or Huram Abif", **2Ch 4:16**.

{g} Luther. Emanuel Sa, Piscator, Schmidt, Beckius in Targum in loc.

2 Chronicles 2:14

Ver. 14. The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan,.... Here follows an account of the descent of the artificer, and of his skill in working; of what seeming disagreement there may be in this account, with that in **1Ki 7:14**, See Gill on "1Ki 7:14".

2 Chronicles 2:15

Ver. 15. Now therefore, the wheat, and the barley, the oil, and the wine, which my lord hath spoken of,.... In his letter to him, **2Ch 2:10** as for the phrase "my lord", which some think is used, because Hiram was tributary to Solomon, it may only be a respectful way of speaking:

let him send unto his servants; Hiram accepted thereof as a proper reward for the work of his servants.

2 Chronicles 2:16

Ver. 16. And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shall need,.... Both cedar and fir, **1Ki 5:8**,

and we will bring it to thee in floats by sea to Joppa; a port in the Mediterranean sea, the same that Jonah went down to,
See Gill on "1Ki 5:9",

and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem; in land carriages, about forty miles off.

2 Chronicles 2:17

Ver. 17. And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel,.... Which, according to Kimchi, were the remains of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, and Jebusites, see **2Ch 8:8**, yet not idolaters, or they would not have been suffered by David and Solomon to have dwelt in the land, but were such as were become proselytes of the gate:

after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; not at the time Israel was numbered by him, but in order to provide workmen for the building of the temple, 1Ch 22:2,

and they were found an hundred and fifty thousand and six hundred; men able to bear burdens, and hew timber.

2 Chronicles 2:18

Ver. 18. And he set threescore and ten thousand of them,.... Which is repeated from **2Ch 2:2**, to show how the above number of strangers were disposed of; 70,000 of them bearers of burdens, 80,000 of them hewers of wood, and 3,600 overseers of the workmen, in all 153,600; an emblem of the Gentiles employed in building the spiritual temple, the church, **Zec 6:15**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 3 & 4

These two chapters give an account of the building of the temple, of the materials, parts, and form of it, and of things belonging to it, and which agrees with **1Ki 6:1** see the notes there; only here, **1Ch 3:1**, mention is made of the particular place where it was built, Mount Moriah; of which see the notes on Ge 22:2. The dimensions of the house, as the Targum rightly explains, **2Ch 3:3**, are said to be after the first measure, either of that of the tabernacle by Moses, or rather of that of the pattern David gave to Solomon, 1Ch 28:11, though some understand it of the greater cubit: the holy place is called the greater house, **2Ch 3:5**, being twice as long as the holy of holies; in **2Ch 3:6**, we are informed what the precious stones were for, which David and his princes gave for the temple, 1Ch 29:2, that they were to decorate the house; and also what sort of gold was used in overlaying it, gold of Parvaim, which some interpret of Peru {h}, in America; but it is a question whether that was then known, or, if it was, must go by another name, since Peru is a late name given by the Spaniards, at their conquest of it. Bochart {i} takes it to be Taprobane, an island in the Indian sea, as if it was Taph Parvan or Provan, the shore of Parvan. Kircher {k} is of opinion it is the same with Javaim, the isles of Java in the same sea, from whence was gold, which is not very likely. Waserus {l} thinks Parvaim is the name of a town which is by Pliny {m} corruptly called Parbacia, which was in the land of Havilah, or the kingdom of the Charazenes, where was the best gold, **Ge 2:11** though others suppose it to be the same with Ophir, by removing the first letter of the word, to which Pfeiffer {n} inclines, and is as probable as any; and much more probable than what the Jews {o} say, that this gold was so called, because it was red like the blood of "parim", oxen: in **2Ch 3:8**, the quantity of gold, with which the most holy place was overlaid, is given, six hundred talents: of which See Gill on "1Ki 6:21", In **2Ch 3:9** we read of the nails with which the plates of gold were fastened to the boards, nowhere else mentioned, except in the Vulgate Latin version of **1Ki 6:21**, "he fastened the plates with golden nails"; which version perhaps is most correct; the weight of which were fifty shekels of gold; that is, according to the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, each nail weighed so much, which amounted to seventy five pounds of our money {p}. Eupolemus, an Heathen writer {q} speaks of these nails, which he makes to be silver ones;

and says they were of the weight of a talent, in the form of a woman's breast, and in number four, with which the plates of gold were fastened, which were of five cubits; I suppose he means there were four of these nails in every plate of five cubits: in **2Ch 4:1** an account is given of an "altar of brass", made by Solomon, we have not elsewhere, only referred to **1Ki 8:64** whether this was only covered with brass, as that made by Moses was, as some {r} think; or whether of massy brass, as Dr. Lightfoot {s} because not to be removed as that was, is not certain; the altar of the second temple was of stones unpolished, according to the Misnah {t}, with which agrees

"46 And laid up the stones in the mountain of the temple in a convenient place, until there should come a prophet to shew what should be done with them. 47 Then they took whole stones according to the law, and built a new altar according to the former;" (1 Maccabees 4)

and so Philo {u}: "twenty cubits was the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof, and ten cubits the height thereof"; it was four times as big in its square as that of Moses, and three times higher, and a cubit over, See Gill on "Ex 27:1". Hecataeus {w}, an Heathen writer, speaks of this altar as four square, and made of whole and unpolished stones, each side of which was twenty cubits, but the height of it he makes to be twelve cubits, in which he mistakes. It weighed, according to Jacob Leon {x} 7000 arobas of brass, each aroba containing twenty five pounds. The rest of the chapter agrees with the account in the book of Kings.

See Gill on "1Ki 6:1" See Gill on "1Ki 6:2" See Gill on "1Ki 6:3" See Gill on "1Ki 6:4" See Gill on "1Ki 6:5" See Gill on "1Ki 6:6" See Gill on "1Ki 6:7" See Gill on "1Ki 6:8" See Gill on "1Ki 6:9" See Gill on "1Ki 6:10" See Gill on "1Ki 6:11" See Gill on "1Ki 6:12" See Gill on "1Ki 6:13" See Gill on "1Ki 6:14" See Gill on "1Ki 6:15" See Gill on "1Ki 6:16" See Gill on "1Ki 6:17" See Gill on "1Ki 6:18" See Gill on "1Ki 6:19" See Gill on "1Ki 6:20" See Gill on "1Ki 6:21" See Gill on "1Ki 6:22" See Gill on "1Ki 6:23" See Gill on "1Ki 6:24" See Gill on "1Ki 6:25" See Gill on "1Ki 6:26" See Gill on "1Ki 6:27" See Gill on "1Ki 6:28" See Gill on "1Ki 6:29" See Gill on "1Ki 6:30" See Gill on "1Ki 6:31" See Gill on "1Ki 6:32" See Gill on "1Ki 6:33" See Gill on "1Ki 6:34" See Gill on "1Ki 6:35" See Gill on "1Ki 6:36" See Gill on "1Ki 6:37" See Gill on "1Ki 6:38" See Gill on "1Ki 7:1" See Gill on "1Ki 7:2" See Gill on "1Ki 7:3" See Gill on "1Ki 7:4" See Gill on "1Ki 7:5" See Gill on "1Ki 7:6" See Gill on "1Ki 7:7" See Gill on "1Ki 7:8" See Gill on "1Ki 7:9" See Gill on "1Ki 7:10" See Gill on "1Ki 7:11" See Gill on "1Ki 7:12" See Gill on "1Ki 7:13" See Gill on "1Ki 7:14" See Gill on "1Ki 7:15" See Gill on "1Ki 7:16"

See Gill on "1Ki 7:17" See Gill on "1Ki 7:18" See Gill on "1Ki 7:19" See Gill on "1Ki 7:20" See Gill on "1Ki 7:21" See Gill on "1Ki 7:22" See Gill on "1Ki 7:23" See Gill on "1Ki 7:24" See Gill on "1Ki 7:25" See Gill on "1Ki 7:26" See Gill on "1Ki 7:27" See Gill on "1Ki 7:28" See Gill on "1Ki 7:29" See Gill on "1Ki 7:30" See Gill on "1Ki 7:31" See Gill on "1Ki 7:32" See Gill on "1Ki 7:33" See Gill on "1Ki 7:34" See Gill on "1Ki 7:35" See Gill on "1Ki 7:36" See Gill on "1Ki 7:37" See Gill on "1Ki 7:38" See Gill on "1Ki 7:39" See Gill on "1Ki 7:40" See Gill on "1Ki 7:41" See Gill on "1Ki 7:42" See Gill on "1Ki 7:43" See Gill on "1Ki 7:44" See Gill on "1Ki 7:45" See Gill on "1Ki 7:46" See Gill on "1Ki 7:47" See Gill on "1Ki 7:48" See Gill on "1Ki 7:49" See Gill on "1Ki 7:50" See Gill on "1Ki 7:51"

{h} Erasm. Schmid. de America Orat. ad Calc. Pindar. p. 261. Montani Phaleg. in Calc. Jac. Capellus in loc. {i} Phaleg. l. 2. c. 27. & Canaan, l. 1. c. 46. col. 692. Braunius de Vest. Sacred. Heb. p. 221. {k} Prodrom. Copt. c. 4. p. 119. {l} De Antiqu. Num. Heb. l. 1. c. 6. {m} Nat. Hist l. 6. c. 28. {n} Difficil. Script. Sacr. cent. 3. loc. 16. p. 247. {o} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 45. 1. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 41. 4. Shemot Rabba, sect. 39. fol. 136. 4. {p} Brerewood de Ponder. &c. c. 5. {q} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 34. p. 450. {r} Cunaeus de Rep. Heb. l. 2. c. 5. {s} Prospect of the Temple, ch. 34. p. 2029. So Villalpandus. {t} Middot, c. 3. sect. 4. {u} De Victimis, p. 850. {w} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 4. p. 408. {x} Relation of Memorable Things in the Temple, ch. 4. p. 20.

2 Chronicles 3:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 3:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 4:1

Ver. 1. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

2 Chronicles 4:22

Ver. 22 See Gill on "2Ch 3:1".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 5 & 6

The words with which chapter five begins are the same with **1Ki 7:51**, and what is contained in that and chapter six is much the same with **1Ki 8:1** on which see the notes; the blessing of Solomon on the people of Israel, which is there, is here omitted, and two verses are here added, much the same with Ps 132:8.

See Gill on "1Ki 8:1".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:2".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:3".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:4".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:5".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:6".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:7".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:8".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:9".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:10".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:11".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:12".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:13".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:14".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:15".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:16".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:17".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:18".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:19".

See Gill on "1Ki 8:20".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:21".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:22".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:23".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:24".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:25".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:26".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:27".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:28".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:29".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:30".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:31".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:32".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:33".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:34".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:35".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:36".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:37".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:38".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:39".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:40".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:41".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:42".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:43".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:44".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:45".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:46".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:47".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:48".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:49".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:50".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:51".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:52".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:53".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:54".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:55".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:56".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:57".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:58".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:59".
See Gill on "1Ki 8:60".

See Gill on "1Ki 8:61".
See Gill on "Ps 132:8" See Gill on "Ps 132:9".
See Gill on "Ps 132:10".

2 Chronicles 5:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 5:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 5:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 5:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 5:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 5:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 5:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 5:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 5:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 5:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 5:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 5:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 5:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 6:1

Ver. 1. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:38

Ver. 38. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:39

Ver. 39. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:40

Ver. 40. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:41

Ver. 41. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1".

2 Chronicles 6:42

Ver. 42. See Gill on "2Ch 5:1"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 7

In this chapter is an account of the Lord's acceptance of the sacrifices offered at the dedication of the temple by fire, to the great surprise and encouragement of the people, **2Ch 7:1**, and of the feast kept on that account, and the feast of tabernacles, **2Ch 7:8**, and of the Lord's appearance to Solomon, giving an answer to his prayer, **2Ch 7:13**.

Ver. 1. Now when Solomon had made an end of praying,.... The prayer recorded in the preceding chapter:

the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; which was the token God gave of his acceptance of them, of which there had been several instances before, **Le 9:24**, 1Ki 18:38,

and the glory of the Lord filled the house; the glory of the Shechinah of the Lord, as the Targum, see **1Ki 8:11**.

2 Chronicles 7:2

Ver. 2. And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord,.... They went in to carry the ark thither, but not being able to stand to minister, they came out, and could not reenter:

because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house; both the holy place, and the holy of holies, see **1Ki 8:10**.

2 Chronicles 7:3

Ver. 3. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down,.... From heaven upon the sacrifice, and consumed it, which was all visible to the eye; or it may be this was a distinct fire from the former, since it seems to have come down upon the house, and so may denote a bright, shining, glorious light; the same with what follows:

and the glory of the Lord upon the house; for not only the house was filled with the glory, but there was a bright stream of light and glory over it, very dazzling and surprising:

they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement; of the great court, where they were assembled:

and worshipped and praised the Lord: worshipped him by praising him:

saying, for he is good; in his nature, promises, and blessings; is good, and does good:

for his mercy endureth for ever; this was the close of their song of praise.

2 Chronicles 7:4

Ver. 4,5. Then the king and all the people,.... Of these two verses,
See Gill on "1Ki 8:62",
See Gill on "1Ki 8:63".

2 Chronicles 7:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "2Ch 7:4".

2 Chronicles 7:6

Ver. 6. And the priests waited on their offices,.... Performed them, some in offering sacrifices, others in blowing trumpets, as it may be explained from the latter part of the verse:

the Levites also with instruments of music of the Lord, which David the king had made to praise the Lord; under a divine direction, on which the Levites played to the songs of praise offered to the Lord, and by which they made music sacred to him:

because his mercy endureth for ever; which, as it was the close of their songs of praise, was the cause of them:

when David praised by their ministry; the songs sung being composed by him, and the instruments they played upon being of his invention, and used by his order:

and the priests sounded trumpets before them; or rather over against them, that is, over against the Levites, as they were singing and playing on the instruments of music:

and all Israel stood; while this sacred and delightful service was performing, they both stood up, and stood by the priests and Levites, and joined with them in praising the Lord.

2 Chronicles 7:7

Ver. 7-10. Moreover, Solomon hallowed the middle of the court,.... From hence, to the end of **2Ch 7:10** is the same with **1Ki 8:64**.
See Gill on "1Ki 8:64",
See Gill on "1Ki 8:65",
See Gill on "1Ki 8:66", only mention is made in **2Ch 7:9** of the dedication of the altar, as if distinct from the dedication of the house, and hallowing the middle of the court, see **Nu 7:10** in imitation of which the Heathens dedicated their altars, in which they used ashes and water, as Pausanias {y} relates, and had also feasts, as here, at the dedication of their temples {z}, in which they have been imitated by Christians; and many of our country feasts, as they are called, were first kept at the dedication of churches to such and such a saint.

{y} Eliac, 1. sive, l. 5. p. 312. {z} Plin. Ep. l. 4. ep. 1.

2 Chronicles 7:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "2Ch 7:7"

2 Chronicles 7:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ch 7:7"

2 Chronicles 7:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ch 7:7"

2 Chronicles 7:11

Ver. 11. Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord,.... With which begins

1Ki 11:1,
See Gill on "1Ki 11:1".

2 Chronicles 7:12

Ver. 12-22. And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night,.... From hence, to the end of the chapter, much the same things are related as in **1Ki 9:2**,
See Gill on "1Ki 9:2",
See Gill on "1Ki 9:3",
See Gill on "1Ki 9:4",
See Gill on "1Ki 9:5",
See Gill on "1Ki 9:6",
See Gill on "1Ki 9:7",
See Gill on "1Ki 9:8",
See Gill on "1Ki 9:9", excepting **2Ch 7:13** which contain an answer to the particular requests made by Solomon in case of a famine or pestilence, that when the people of Israel should humble themselves in prayer and supplication, the Lord would be attentive to them, and forgive them, **2Ch 6:26** and which is given as a specimen, and as encouragement to expect the same treatment in all other cases mentioned in Solomon's prayer, they so behaving.

2 Chronicles 7:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "2Ch 7:12".

2 Chronicles 7:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "2Ch 7:12".

2 Chronicles 7:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "2Ch 7:12".

2 Chronicles 7:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "2Ch 7:12".

2 Chronicles 7:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "2Ch 7:12".

2 Chronicles 7:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "2Ch 7:12".

2 Chronicles 7:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "2Ch 7:12".

2 Chronicles 7:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "2Ch 7:12".

2 Chronicles 7:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "2Ch 7:12".

2 Chronicles 7:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "2Ch 7:12".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 8

This chapter contains much the same, with a little variation, as what is related in **1Ki 9:10**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass at the end of twenty years,....

See Gill on "1Ki 9:10".

2 Chronicles 8:2

Ver. 2. That the cities which Huram had restored to Solomon,.... Which Solomon first gave to him, but he not liking them, returned them to him, **1Ki 9:12**,

Solomon built them; or rebuilt them, being very much out of repair, which might be one reason of Huram's not accepting them:

and caused the children of Israel to dwell there; they being inhabited by others, the remains of the Canaanitcs perhaps; see **2Ch 8:7**.

2 Chronicles 8:3

Ver. 3. And Solomon went to Hamathzobah,.... In an hostile manner, which is the only instance of any warlike expedition of Solomon's. This was Coelesyria, which though subdued in the times of David, perhaps rebelled, and now Solomon went forth to reduce it:

and prevailed against it; took it.

2 Chronicles 8:4

Ver. 4. And built Tadmor in the wilderness,.... Of which
See Gill on "1Ki 9:18"

and all the storehouses which he built in Hamath; a country in Syria, which he made himself master of, and where he laid up store of provision and ammunition to keep it, should any attempt be made to rescue it out of his hands. According to an Arabic writer {a}, Solomon in the twenty fourth year of his reign having demolished Antioch, built seven cities, of which Tadmor was one.

{a} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. dyn. 3. p. 53.

2 Chronicles 8:5

Ver. 5. Also he built Bethhoron the upper, and Bethhoron the nether,.... Only mention is made of the latter in **1Ki 9:17**,

fenced cities, with walls, gates, and bars; fortified cities in the tribe of Ephraim.

2 Chronicles 8:6

Ver. 6-12. And Baalath,.... See **1Ki 9:18**. From hence, to the end of **2Ch 8:11**, it is the same with **1Ki 9:19**.
See Gill on "1Ki 9:19".
See Gill on "1Ki 9:20".
See Gill on "1Ki 9:21".
See Gill on "1Ki 9:22".
See Gill on "1Ki 9:23".
See Gill on "1Ki 9:24".

2 Chronicles 8:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "2Ch 8:6".

2 Chronicles 8:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "2Ch 8:6".

2 Chronicles 8:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ch 8:6".

2 Chronicles 8:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ch 8:6".

2 Chronicles 8:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Ch 8:6".

2 Chronicles 8:12

Ver. 12. Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to the Lord,.... Meaning not barely at the time he rebuilt the above cities, for it was his constant practice:

on the altar of the Lord, which he had built before the porch; the brasen altar, which was at the entrance into the temple, within the court; of which see **2Ch 4:1**.

2 Chronicles 8:13

Ver. 13. Even after a certain rate every day, according to the commandment of Moses,.... The daily sacrifice, morning and evening, Ex 29:38,

on the sabbaths, and on the new moons; when there were additional sacrifices, Nu 28:9, &c.

and on the solemn feasts three times in the year, [even] in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; which serves to explain the three times in **1Ki 9:25**.

2 Chronicles 8:14

Ver. 14. And he appointed, according to the order of David his father, the courses of the priests to their service,.... The twenty four courses which served weekly in their turns, 1Ch 24:1

and the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as duty of every day required; who also had their courses by lot, to sing the praises of God, when the priests sacrificed, or blew the trumpets, 1Ch 25:1,

the porters also by their courses at every gate; from hence Dr. Lightfoot concludes that these were divided into twenty four classes, as the priests and Levite singers were:

for so had David the man of God commanded, 1Ch 26:1, who in all these affairs acted as a prophet, under the inspiration and direction of the Holy Spirit of God.

2 Chronicles 8:15

Ver. 15. And they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites,.... The priests and Levites departed not from it, not from the commandment of Solomon, according to the order of David, but in all things obeyed it:

concerning any matter; which related to the office of either of them, sacrificers, singers, or porters:

or concerning the treasures; such of the Levites as had the care of them were faithful to their trust, see 1Ch 26:20, &c.

2 Chronicles 8:16

Ver. 16. Now all the work of Solomon was prepared unto the day of the foundation of the house of the Lord, and until it was finished,.... The materials were prepared, and the money for the expenses; and even the very stones and timber were made fit for the building, so that there was nothing to retard the completion of it:

so the house of God was perfected; in the space of seven years, in all the parts, and according to the form and pattern of it, see **1Ki 6:38**.

2 Chronicles 8:17

Ver. 17-18. Then went Solomon to Eziongeber,.... Being now at leisure to look after his navy, to carry on merchandise; and of this, and the following verse, and the reconciliation of them with **1Ki 9:26**,
See Gill on "1Ki 9:26",
See Gill on "1Ki 9:27",
See Gill on "1Ki 9:28".

2 Chronicles 8:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "2Ch 8:17".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 9 & 10

The ninth chapter is the same with 1Ki 10:1 excepting **2Ch 9:26**, which agrees with **1Ki 4:21**, the same with
1Ki 11:41, only in **2Ch 9:29** it is more largely expressed that the acts of Solomon's reign were written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer, against Jeroboam the son of Nebat; or rather "concerning Jeroboam", as the Septuagint and some other versions {b}, in which Iddo is called Joel; and by Theodoret said to be the same that prophesied of Jeroboam and his altar, See Gill on "1Ki 13:1"; the books mentioned are since lost.

{b} le peri Sept. de, Junius & Tremellias, Piscator.

2 Chronicles 9:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "1Ki 10:1".

2 Chronicles 9:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "1Ki 10:2".

2 Chronicles 9:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "1Ki 10:3".

2 Chronicles 9:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "1Ki 10:4".

2 Chronicles 9:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "1Ki 10:5".

2 Chronicles 9:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "1Ki 10:6".

2 Chronicles 9:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "1Ki 10:7".

2 Chronicles 9:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "1Ki 10:8".

2 Chronicles 9:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "1Ki 10:11".

2 Chronicles 9:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "1Ki 10:12".

2 Chronicles 9:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "1Ki 10:13".

2 Chronicles 9:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "1Ki 10:14".

2 Chronicles 9:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "1Ki 10:15".

2 Chronicles 9:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "1Ki 10:16".

2 Chronicles 9:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "1Ki 10:17".

2 Chronicles 9:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "1Ki 10:18".

2 Chronicles 9:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "1Ki 10:19".

2 Chronicles 9:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "1Ki 10:20".

2 Chronicles 9:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "1Ki 10:21".

2 Chronicles 9:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "1Ki 10:22".

2 Chronicles 9:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "1Ki 10:23".

2 Chronicles 9:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "1Ki 10:24".

2 Chronicles 9:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "1Ki 10:25".

2 Chronicles 9:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "1Ki 10:26".

2 Chronicles 9:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "1Ki 4:21".

2 Chronicles 9:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "1Ki 10:27".

2 Chronicles 9:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "1Ki 10:28".

2 Chronicles 9:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "1Ki 11:41"

2 Chronicles 9:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "1Ki 11:42"

2 Chronicles 9:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "1Ki 11:43"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 10

This chapter is not only in sense the same, but is expressed almost in the selfsame words as First Kings chapter twelve, verses one through nineteen, so there needs not anything to be added to the notes there, which the reader is referred to.

Ver. 1. See Gill on "1Ki 12:1".

2 Chronicles 10:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "1Ki 12:2".

2 Chronicles 10:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "1Ki 12:3".

2 Chronicles 10:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "1Ki 12:4".

2 Chronicles 10:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "1Ki 12:5".

2 Chronicles 10:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "1Ki 12:6".

2 Chronicles 10:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "1Ki 12:7".

2 Chronicles 10:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "1Ki 12:8".

2 Chronicles 10:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "1Ki 12:9".

2 Chronicles 10:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "1Ki 12:10".

2 Chronicles 10:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "1Ki 12:11".

2 Chronicles 10:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "1Ki 12:12".

2 Chronicles 10:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "1Ki 12:13".

2 Chronicles 10:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "1Ki 12:14".

2 Chronicles 10:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "1Ki 12:15".

2 Chronicles 10:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "1Ki 12:16".

2 Chronicles 10:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "1Ki 12:17".

2 Chronicles 10:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "1Ki 12:18".

2 Chronicles 10:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "1Ki 12:19".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 11

In this chapter are related the preparations Rehoboam made to regain the ten tribes that revolted from him, but was forbid making the attempt by a prophet of the Lord, which he paid a regard unto, 2Ch 11:1, the fortification of several cities in Judah and Benjamin for his defence, 2Ch 11:5, the resort of several priests and Levites to him from Jeroboam, which served to strengthen his kingdom, 2Ch 11:13, and an account of his wives, and of his children, and of his disposal of them, 2Ch 11:18.

Ver. 1-4. And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem,.... After he had been at Shechem, and had given his answer to the request of the men of Israel, upon which they revolted from him: this and the three following verses are the same with 1Ki 12:21.
See Gill on "1Ki 12:21".

2 Chronicles 11:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "1Ki 12:22".

2 Chronicles 11:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "1Ki 12:23".

2 Chronicles 11:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "1Ki 12:24".

2 Chronicles 11:5

Ver. 5. And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem,.... The metropolis of Judah, and the capital city of his kingdom:

and built cities for defence in Judah; that is, rebuilt, enlarged, and fortified them; for otherwise they were built before, though neglected before the revolt of the ten tribes; but now it became necessary to make them more capacious and strong, to protect his people, and defend himself against Israel; for though he was forbid to act offensively, and therefore contented himself to abide in Jerusalem, and not go forth to war; yet he might lawfully put himself into a condition of defence.

2 Chronicles 11:6

Ver. 6. He built even Bethlehem,.... The place of our Lord's birth, about six miles from Jerusalem:

and Etam; another city in the tribe of Judah; see **1Ch 4:32**, there was a rock of this name, Jud 15:8 and a fountain from whence waters were conveyed into the pool at Jerusalem, spoken of in Jewish writings {b}:

and Tekoah; of which place Amos the prophet was, and which was about twelve miles from Jerusalem. Rauwolff {c} speaks of it as a fortified place now; he says it has a strong and mighty castle, built on a great and high hill.

{b} Cippi Heb. p. 10. {c} Travels, par. 3. c. 22. p. 321. Ed. Ray.

2 Chronicles 11:7

Ver. 7. And Bethzur, and Shocho, and Adullam. All in the tribe of Judah, of which see Jos 15:35.

2 Chronicles 11:8

Ver. 8. And Gath,.... Which cannot be that Gath which was one of the principalities of the Philistines, but a city in the tribe of Judah; though of it we nowhere else read; unless this is the same with Moreshethgath, **Mic 1:14**, which is probable, since it follows:

and Mareshah; the birth place of Micah the prophet, **Mic 1:1**,

and Ziph; there were two cities of this name in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:24.

2 Chronicles 11:9

Ver. 9. And Adoraim,.... Called by Josephus {d} Adora, which he mentions along with Mareshah, or Marissa:

and Lachish: a royal city in the time of the Canaanites, and which fell to the lot of Judah, Jos 12:11,

and Azekah; a city situated in the plain of Judah, Jos 10:10.

{d} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 9. sect. 1.

2 Chronicles 11:10

Ver. 10. And Zorah,.... The same with Zoreah, Jos 15:33,

and Aijalon; there was a city of the tribe of Dan of this name, in the valley of which the moon stood still in the times of Joshua, Jos 10:12, but whether the same with this, and now belonging to Judah, or another of the same name, is not certain:

and Hebron; a city in the mountainous part of Judah, and a city of refuge, about twenty miles from Jerusalem, Jos 15:54,

which are in Judah and in Benjamin fenced cities; as they were now made by Rehoboam.

2 Chronicles 11:11

Ver. 11. And he fortified the strong holds,.... Of these and other cities:

and put captains in them; garrisons of soldiers, with captains over them to defend them:

and store of victual, and of oil and wine; that they might be able to hold out a siege, should they be attacked.

2 Chronicles 11:12

Ver. 12. And in every several city he put shields and spears,.... Furnished them with these and perhaps other pieces of armour, these being put for all, to defend themselves with against an enemy, and to annoy them:

and made them exceeding strong; so that they could not be easily taken:

having Judah and Benjamin on his side: which tribes cleaved to one another, and to Rehoboam, and to the kings of the house of David, in later times, as well as to the true religion.

2 Chronicles 11:13

Ver. 13. And the priests and the Levites, that were in all Israel,.... In the ten tribes, in the cities assigned to them therein:

resorted to him out of all their coasts; as to their rightful sovereign, and chiefly for the sake of the service of the sanctuary at Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 11:14

Ver. 14. For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession,.... The cities and the fields adjacent to them, which were given them in the several tribes, and were in all forty eight; see Jos 21:1 and came to Judah and Jerusalem; to the cities of Judah, which belonged to the Levites; and to Jerusalem, where they exercised their functions:

for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from exercising the priest's office unto the Lord; neither suffering them to go to Jerusalem in their courses, as they used to do by turns, nor to perform their office in their own dwellings, according to the law of God, in teaching and instructing the people.

2 Chronicles 11:15

Ver. 15. And he ordained him priests for the high places,.... Of such who were not of the tribe of Levi, and family of Aaron; see 1Ki 12:31

and for the devils; demons in the shape of goats, as this word signifies, in which form many of the Heathen deities were worshipped; idols of whatsoever kind are so called; for whosoever worships them worships not God, but devils, 1Co 10:21 the images which Jeroboam set up may be meant, and the next clause may be rendered as explanative of them:

even for the calves which he had made; one of which he set up at Dan, and the other at Bethel, 1Ki 12:28.

2 Chronicles 11:16

Ver. 16. And after them out of all the tribes of Israel,.... Besides the priests and Levites, and after their example, many of the common people, out of all the ten tribes:

such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel; to seek his face and favour, where he was to be found; to worship him according to his revealed will, and to receive doctrine or instruction from him, as the Targum:

came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord God of their fathers; to sacrifice where only sacrifices were to be offered up, and by the priests of the Lord, who were gone thither, and to their fathers' God, whom the ten tribes had revolted from.

2 Chronicles 11:17

Ver. 17. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah,.... Made it more numerous, and in a better condition to defend itself:

and made Rehoboam son of Solomon strong three years; established him on the throne, strengthened the government in his hands, and were the means of preserving him in the pure worship of God for the space of time mentioned, the reason of which follows:

for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon; in their good ways, which were according to the rule of the divine word; and which, as they refer to the whole of David's life and reign, some particular actions excepted, so to the former part of Solomon's reign, before he fell into idolatry, and to the latter part of it after his repentance; for that he did repent is by some concluded from hence, and may be more strongly from the book of Ecclesiastes, written by him in his old age. This is to be understood both of Rehoboam and his people, who after three years forsook the law of the Lord, 2Ch 12:1.

2 Chronicles 11:18

Ver. 18. And Rehoboam took him Mahalath, the daughter of Jerimoth, the son of David, to wife,.... Of which son of David we nowhere else read; perhaps he might be the son of one of his concubines, or he might have two names:

and Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse; who was David's eldest brother. 1Sa 17:13. She must be a granddaughter or great-granddaughter of his.

2 Chronicles 11:19

Ver. 19. Which bare him children,.... Or, "and she bore him" {d}; for it is said only of one of them, the other perhaps died without children; this may refer to the last mentioned, Abihail, whose children were

Jeush, and Shamariah, and Zaham; who perhaps all died in their father's lifetime, since the firstborn of a later wife succeeded him.

{d} dltw "peperit", Pagninus, Montanus.

2 Chronicles 11:20

Ver. 20. And after he took Maacah the daughter of Absalom,.... Thought by some to be Absalom the son of David, his father's brother, and his uncle, and so married his cousin; but Absalom seems to have had but one daughter, whose name was Tamar, 2Sa 14:27, and the name of this man is different from his; he is called Abishalom, 1Ki 15:2

and Uriel of Gibeah; 2Ch 13:2, of the tribe of Benjamin, whereas Absalom was of the tribe of Judah:

which bare him Abijah, and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith: Abijah the firstborn, and who was successor in the kingdom, is the same with Abijam, 1Ki 14:31 of the rest we nowhere else read.

2 Chronicles 11:21

Ver. 21. And Rehoboam loved Maacah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines, &c] Who is called Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel, 2Ch 13:2,

for he took eighteen wives and sixty concubines; led thereunto by the example of his father Solomon, contrary to the command of God, De 17:17

and begat twenty eight sons and sixty daughters; to have many children was reckoned a great blessing, but it was not honourable to have them in such a way.

2 Chronicles 11:22

Ver. 22. And Rehoboam made Abijah the son of Maacah the chief,.... The chief of all his sons, head over them, being the son of his most beloved wife, and her firstborn however, and perhaps might be of a greater capacity than the rest of his children:

to be ruler among his brethren; or over them; gave him greater authority, and intrusted him with more power, set him above them, and treated him as heir apparent to the crown: for he thought

to make him king; either to take him into partnership in the throne with him in his lifetime, or to appoint and declare him to be his successor.

2 Chronicles 11:23

Ver. 23. And he dealt wisely,.... Acted a prudent part, in order to execute his scheme, and particularly by disposing of his other sons in different parts of his kingdom, as follows: or "he made him his son Abijah to understand" {e}; he taught and instructed him in the art of government, took a particular care of his education, that he might be fitted for it; and he might instruct him how to behave towards his brethren, for the present and hereafter, as well as towards all the people in general: or "he (Abijah) understood" {f}; had more understanding and wisdom than all the children of Rehoboam; though it seems best to interpret it of Rehoboam himself, since it follows:

and disposed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city; to be governors thereof, in whose hands he could better trust them than in any other; or else, by thus separating them, they would not be able to enter into combination against Abijah; but then he must at the same time appoint some persons to watch and observe them; or otherwise, having such, strong places in their possession, they might rebel against him; the Targum is, "he built and repaired the cities, and appointed of all his children throughout all the countries of the house of Judah, to all the fortified cities;"

that is, to have the command of them:

and he gave them victual in abundance; that they might have no reason to complain, and might be able to hold out a siege against an enemy, should they be attacked:

and he desired many wives; either for himself, or rather for his son, since he himself had many; or "Abijah desired, or asked {g} many wives" of their parents, or of those who had the dispose of them, in imitation of his father.

{e} Nbtw "erudire faciebat", Pagninus, Grotius; "docuit", Vatablus. {f} "lntellexit", Piscator. {g} lavy "petivit", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "postulavit", Piscator.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 12

Rehoboam and his people forsaking the law of the Lord, Shishak king of Egypt is allowed by God to invade his land, and take his fenced cities, 2Ch 12:1, upon which a prophet of the Lord was sent to him and his princes, to show them the reason of it; whereupon they humbled themselves, and the Lord was pleased not to allow the enemy utterly to destroy them, yet to reduce them to servitude, and take away their riches, 2Ch 12:5, and the chapter is closed with an account of the reign and death of Rehoboam, 2Ch 12:13.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom,.... Or when the kingdom of Rehoboam was established; the tribes of Judah and Benjamin being firmly attached to him, and great numbers from the other tribes coming over to him, and things going on peaceably and prosperously during the three years that he and his people abode by the pure worship of God:

and had strengthened himself; built fortified cities for the defence of himself and kingdom, 2Ch 11:5, he forsook the law of the Lord; after he had reigned three years, and was become strong, and thought himself safe and secure on the throne, trusting to his strength:

and all Israel with him; the greater part of them following the example of their king; of this defection, and the sins they fell into, see
1Ki 14:22.

2 Chronicles 12:2

Ver. 2. And it came to pass in the fifth year of Rehoboam,.... In the fourth year, the apostasy of him and his people began; and, in the year following, what is next related happened, as a punishment of it:

Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem; of whom see
1Ki 11:40,

because they transgressed against the Lord; transgressed the law of the Lord by falling into idolatry and other abominable evils; the Targum is,

"against the Word of the Lord."

2 Chronicles 12:3

Ver. 3. With twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen; and the people were without number,.... The foot soldiers; their number, according to Josephus {h} was 400,000:

that came with him out of Egypt; the above numerous army came from thence with him, which was famous for horses and chariots of war, see
Ex 14:7, what follow seem to have joined him after he came out of Egypt, or whom he subdued in his way; the Lubim or Lybians, inhabitants of Libya, a country near Egypt the same with the Lehabim; of whom see
Ge 10:13,

the Sukkiims; who were either the Scenite Arabs, who dwelt in tents, as this word signifies; or the Troglodytes, according to the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, who dwelt in dens and caves, in which sense the word "Succah" is sometimes used, Job 38:40 and in their country was a town called Suchae, mentioned by Pliny {i}; they inhabited near the Red sea; and if Shishak is the same with Sesostris, as is thought, these people were subdued by him, as Herodotus {k} and Strabo {l} testify:

and the Ethiopians; some think these were the Cushite Arabs, and that Sesostris came into Arabia is testified by the above writers; though rather the proper Ethiopians are meant, since they are joined with the Lubim or Africans; and since, as Herodotus {m} says, he ruled over Ethiopia; and Diodorus Siculus {n} says he fought with them, and obliged them to pay him tribute.

{h} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 10. sect. 2. {i} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 29. {k} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 102. {l} Geograph. l. 16. p. 529. {m} Ut supra, (Euterpe, sive, l. 2.) c. 110. {n} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 50.

2 Chronicles 12:4

Ver. 4. And he took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah,.... Which Rehoboam had lately built, and placed his sons in them, 2Ch 11:5, these he took without any opposition:

and came to Jerusalem; there being no army to oppose him; and so Sesostris took many countries without fighting, and among the rest Phoenicia, as Manetho {o} relates, in which Judea may be included.

{o} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 15.

2 Chronicles 12:5

Ver. 5. Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam,.... The same as in 2Ch 11:2, there called the man of God:

and to the princes of Judah that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak; through fear of him, and for safety and protection from him, and to consult what was to be done at this critical juncture, whether to fight him, or make peace with him on the best terms they could:

and said unto them, thus saith the Lord, ye have forsaken me; his law, his word, worship, and ordinances, 2Ch 12:1,

and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak; suffered him to invade their land, take their fenced cities, and come up to Jerusalem without any opposition, as a punishment of their apostasy; and to explain this providence to them, and call them to repentance, was the prophet sent.

2 Chronicles 12:6

Ver. 6. Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves,.... Both by words acknowledging their sins, and the justice of God, and by deeds, perhaps putting on sackcloth, as was usual on such occasions, and betaking themselves to fasting and prayer:

and they said, the Lord is righteous; in giving them up into the hand of their enemies, seeing they had forsaken him, and sinned against him.

2 Chronicles 12:7

Ver. 7. And when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves,.... Though but externally; the Lord takes notice of external humiliation, as he did of Ahab's, 1Ki 21:29,

the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, they have humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them; not now, at least not altogether, 2Ch 12:12,

but I will grant them some deliverance; yet not a complete one, for they were brought into servitude by Shishak, 2Ch 12:8, or only for a short time:

and my wrath shall not be poured out against Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak; that is, to the uttermost; that was reserved to another time, and to be done by another hand, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

2 Chronicles 12:8

Ver. 8. Nevertheless, they shall be his servants,.... tributaries to the king of Egypt:

that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries; the difference between them, how easy the one, which they might perform without taxes and tributes, and how hard and heavy the other, through the exactions and exorbitant demands of those to whom they became subjects.

2 Chronicles 12:9

Ver. 9-11. So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem,.... The Vulgate Latin version is,

"departed from Jerusalem,"

as he did, having taken it, and spoiled it of its riches, and settled a yearly tax on the inhabitants of the land; of this, and the two following verses, See Gill on "1Ki 14:26".
See Gill on "1Ki 14:27".
See Gill on "1Ki 14:28".

2 Chronicles 12:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ch 12:9".

2 Chronicles 12:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Ch 12:9".

2 Chronicles 12:12

Ver. 12. And when he humbled himself,.... That is, Rehoboam; or broke his heart, as the Targum, was of a contrite spirit seemingly, for it was merely external:

the wrath of the Lord turned from him; which appeared by the departure of Shishak's army:

that he would not destroy him altogether; or make an utter destruction of him and his people:

and also in Judah things went well; prospered and succeeded after this affair of Shishak was over: or "in Judah there were good things" {p}; there were some good men, priests, Levites, and many of the common people, that did good things, kept up and abode by the pure worship and service of God; and which was another reason why the Lord would not destroy them altogether now, see Ge 18:31.

{p} Mybwj Myrbd "opera bona", V. L. "res bonae", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Rambachius.

2 Chronicles 12:13

Ver. 13. So Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem,.... Fortified that yet more for the defence of himself, after Shishak departed:

and reigned; twelve years more, for he reigned in all seventeen, and this was in his fifth year; of what follows in this verse,
See Gill on "1Ki 14:21".

2 Chronicles 12:14

Ver. 14. And he did evil,.... Committed idolatry, relapsed into that, his humiliation not being hearty and sincere:

because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord; by prayer and supplication, and by an attendance on the service and worship of God; for though he did these things outwardly, yet not sincerely and heartily; he did not engage in them seriously and in good earnest, with affection and fervour.

2 Chronicles 12:15

Ver. 15,16. Now the acts of Rehoboam,.... Of these two verses,
See Gill on "1Ki 14:29".
See Gill on "1Ki 14:30".
See Gill on "1Ki 14:31".

2 Chronicles 12:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "2Ch 12:15".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 13

This chapter begins with the reign of Abijah, 2Ch 13:1, gives an account of a battle between him and Jeroboam, previous to which Abijah made a speech to Jeroboam and his army, to vindicate his own cause, encourage his own soldiers, and intimidate the enemy, and dissuade them from fighting, 2Ch 13:3 and in the mean while Jeroboam laid an ambush for him, which greatly distressed him, 2Ch 13:13, nevertheless he obtained a complete victory over him, 2Ch 13:15, and the chapter is concluded with some account of his family and reign, 2Ch 13:21.

Ver. 1. Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah. See Gill on "1Ki 15:1".

2 Chronicles 13:2

Ver. 2. He reigned three years in Jerusalem,....
See Gill on "1Ki 15:2",

his mother's name also was Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah; see 2Ch 11:20,
See Gill on "1Ki 15:2".

and there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam; and in this chapter is an account of a battle fought between them, not recorded in the book of Kings.

2 Chronicles 13:3

Ver. 3. And Abijah set the battle in array, with an army of valiant man of war, even four hundred thousand chosen men,.... Collected such an army of select men, led them into his enemy's country, and set them in order of battle:

and Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him, with eight hundred thousand chosen men, being mighty men of valour; double the number of Abijah s army, he having ten tribes to collect out of, and Abijah but two.

2 Chronicles 13:4

Ver. 4. And Abijah stood upon Mount Zemaraim, which is in Mount Ephraim,.... Which might have its name from a city of Benjamin of this name, to which it was near, though within the borders of Ephraim, Jos 18:22 formerly inhabited by the Zemarites, from whence it might have its name, Ge 10:18 here Abijah stood, that he might be the better heard by the armies pitched in the valley; and very probably he desired a parley, and it was granted, otherwise he would not have been safe in the position in which he was;

and said, hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel; as many as were now gathered together, and which were a great number.

2 Chronicles 13:5

Ver. 5. Ought you not to know,.... They did know what he afterwards says, but he would have them consider and acknowledge it:

that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever; to him and his seed, particularly to the Messiah, that should spring from him; but whether Abijah had this in view is a question, see **2Sa 7:13**

even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt? that is, a perpetual one, which was inviolable, and never to be made void; called so, because salt preserves from corruption and putrefaction, and because made use of in sacrifices offered when covenants were made; the Targum is,

"as salt waters, which never lose their saltness."

2 Chronicles 13:6

Ver. 6. Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, is risen up,.... Notwithstanding it was well known the kingdom was entailed on the posterity of David by an everlasting covenant; Abijah calls Jeroboam Solomon's servant, by way of great contempt, as Jarchi observes, he being the general receiver of his tax in the tribe of Ephraim, 1Ki 11:28

and hath rebelled against his lord; his rightful king and sovereign; the charge is no less than high treason.

2 Chronicles 13:7

Ver. 7. And there are gathered unto him vain men,.... Void of the fear of God, and all that is good:

the children of Belial: men unprofitable, good for nothing, or that had cast off the yoke of the law of God, were lawless and abandoned persons:

And have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon: rejected his government of them; went into a strong opposition to him, and set up another king over them:

when Rehoboam was young and tender hearted, and could not withstand them; not that he was young in years, for he was forty one years of age when he began to reign; though Joshua is called a young man when he is supposed to be between fifty and sixty years of age Ex 33:11, and though "adolescentia" and "juventus" are both used in Latin writers for "youth", yet Varro {q} distinguishes them, and makes the former to begin at the year fifteen, and continue to the year thirty, and the latter to begin at thirty, and end at forty five; so that, according to this, Rehoboam was then in his stage of youth; but perhaps the meaning here is, that he was young in the kingdom, scarcely settled on his throne, and the advantage of that was taken; not was he cowardly and fearful; and if Abijah meant that by "tender heartedness", he not only reproached but belied his father; for he would have fought with Israel in order to have reduced them to obedience, but was forbidden by the Lord; if by "tender hearted", he means that he had a tender regard to the command of God, it is true; but that seems not to be his sense, but the former.

{q} Apud Stockim in voce ren, p. 688.

2 Chronicles 13:8

Ver. 8. And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord in the hand of the sons of David,.... To oppose them, prevail over them, and get it out of their hands, which is delivered to them by the Lord, as the Targum:

and ye be a great multitude; of which they boasted, and in which they trusted, being ten tribes to two, and in this army two to one:

and [there are] with you golden calves which Jeroboam made you for gods; or, "but {r} there are with you", &c. which Abijah suggests would be so far from helping them, that they would be their ruin, they having, by the worship of them, provoked the Lord against them.

{r} So Grotious, Schnidt, and others.

2 Chronicles 13:9

Ver. 9. Have ye not cast out the priests of the Lord the sons of Aaron, and the Levites,.... Because they would not sacrifice to his idols, and that they might not instruct the people in the pure worship of God, and that he and his people might be free from the payment of tithes, firstfruits, &c. and their cities fall into his hands:

and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of [other] lands? after the manner of the Gentiles, without any regard to any particular tribe, which God had appointed those to be taken from:

so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams; which were five more than what were required by the law of Moses for the consecration of a priest, Ex 29:1, the same

may be a priest of [them that are] no gods; by nature, only nominal and fictitious deities, as the calves were, which had no divinity in them, see 1Ki 13:31.

2 Chronicles 13:10

Ver. 10. But as for us, the Lord [is] our God,.... The Word of the Lord, as the Targum; we know and acknowledge no other; not the calves at Dan and Bethel, nor any other idols, only the one living and true God:

and we have not forsaken him; his laws, statutes, ordinances, and worship; for though Abijah was not a religious man, yet it seems the form of religion was kept up, and temple service was observed, in his days:

and the priests which minister unto the Lord; by offering sacrifices, and burning incense:

are the sons of Aaron; and they only:

and the Levites wait upon their business; some in singing songs of praise, vocally and instrumentally, others in keeping the doors of the temple and the treasures of the house of God, and others in assisting the priests at the altar.

2 Chronicles 13:11

Ver. 11. And they burn unto the Lord, every morning and every evening, burnt sacrifices and sweet incense,.... That is, the priests; the one they did on the altar of burnt offering, and the other on the altar of incense, and both every day, morning and evening:

the shewbread also set they in order upon the pure table; the shewbread table, every sabbath day, when they took the old bread off, which had stood there a week:

and the candlestick of gold, with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening; these were lighted every evening, and dressed every morning; and though there were ten tables and ten candlesticks in Solomon's temple, yet only one of each was used at a time; and therefore from hence it is not to be concluded that all the rest were taken away by Shishak:

for we keep the charge of the Lord our God; observe all the rites and ceremonies, laws, and ordinances enjoined by him; the Targum is,

"the charge of the Word of the Lord our God:"

but ye have forsaken him; his fear or worship, as the same paraphrase.

2 Chronicles 13:12

Ver. 12. And, behold, God himself is with us for our Captain,.... To go before our armies, and fight our battles for us:

and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you; which was one use of the trumpets, that the people might be remembered by the Lord, and saved from their enemies, Nu 10:9, so that this circumstance was against Jeroboam and his army, and for Abijah and his:

O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; for fighting against his people, that retained the pure worship of him, was fighting against him:

for you shall not prosper; he seems to be assured of victory.

2 Chronicles 13:13

Ver. 13. But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them,.... While Abijah was making his oration, he detached a party from his army, which got about, and lay in ambush, behind the army of Abijah:

so they were before Judah; Jeroboam and the greater part of his army:

and the ambushment was behind them; which Jeroboam had sent thither.

2 Chronicles 13:14

Ver. 14. And when Judah looked back,.... On hearing a noise behind them:

behold, the battle was before and behind; men were set in battle array, and the battle was begun, and an attack made upon them both ways:

and they cried unto the Lord; for help against their enemies, and to deliver them out of their hands:

and the priests sounded with the trumpets; to inspire them with cheerfulness, and to suggest to them that God was with them and they need not be afraid.

2 Chronicles 13:15

Ver. 15. Then the men of Judah gave a shout,.... Taking heart at the sound of the trumpets, and in order to encourage one another, and intimidate the enemy; See Gill on "1Sa 17:20",

and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah; possessed them with a panic, so that they fled at once, as follows.

2 Chronicles 13:16

Ver. 16. And the children of Israel fled before Judah,.... Were in such a fright and consternation, that they could not stand their ground, or engage at all; but took to flight immediately:

and God delivered them into their hand; to be taken and slain by them.

2 Chronicles 13:17

Ver. 17. And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter,.... As they fled, pursuing them:

so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men; such a slaughter as is not to be met with in any history, as Josephus {s} observes; though Abarbinel wonders he should say so, and affirms that he had read of larger numbers slain at once; but he is the only man that ever pretended to it; Jerom {t} makes the number but 50,000, and some copies of the Vulgate Latin {u}, and Josephus Ben Gorion, as Abarbinel {w} relates; but the true Josephus, the Targum, and all the ancient versions, agree with the Hebrew text; more than half Jeroboam's army was cut off, and 100,000 more than Abijah had in his.

{s} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 11. sect. 3. {t} Trad. Heb. fol. 84. M. {u} So that of Sixtus V. in James's Corruption of the Fathers, p. 294. {w} Comment in 1. Reg. xv. 6. fol. 250. 3.

2 Chronicles 13:18

Ver. 18. Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time,.... Humbled and weakened, but not reduced to the government of the house of David:

and the children of Judah prevailed; or grew strong:

because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers; trusted in him, and not in an arm of flesh; the Targum is,

"in the Word of the Lord God of their fathers."

2 Chronicles 13:19

Ver. 19. And Abijah pursued after Jeroboam,.... As he and his army fled:

and took cities from him; the following ones:

Bethel with the towns thereof; the villages adjoining to it; here one of the calves was set up, which either Jeroboam took care to remove before this place fell into the hands of Abijah, or Abijah let it remain, and did not destroy it:

and Jeshanah with the towns thereof; which Reland {x} thinks is the same that is called by Jerom {y} Jethaba:

and Ephraim with the towns thereof; a city so called, thought to be the same that is mentioned in the passage, See Gill on "Joh 11:54"; it is here called, in the Targum, Ephron; so Jerom {z} calls it, and says it was Sichem.

{x} Palestin. Illustrat. p. 861. {y} De loc. Heb. fol. 92. L. {z} Trad. Heb. fol. 85. A.

2 Chronicles 13:20

Ver. 20. Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah,.... So as to bring an army into the field against him, and fight him:

and the Lord struck him; by some Jewish writers {a}, this is interpreted of Abijah; and the reason of his being stricken, they say, was because he did not destroy the calf when he took Bethel; but it is best to understand it of

Jeroboam, since Abijah is afterwards said to wax mighty:

and he died; not immediately, for he lived two years after Abijah, 1Ki 14:20, but continued under a lingering disease he was smitten with, and which issued in his death.

{a} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 65. fol. 58. 8. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 16.

2 Chronicles 13:21

Ver. 21. But Abijah waxed mighty,.... In his kingdom, increasing in riches and numbers, power and authority, and in his family:

and married fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons and sixteen daughters; not after the above battle, nor since he began to reign; for he reigned but three years; but he, no doubt, married wives and had children before he came to the throne, as he might have others after.

2 Chronicles 13:22

Ver. 22. And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings,.... Not only his warlike actions, and his course of life, but some remarkable sayings of his, he being a man of wisdom and eloquence, as his above speech shows;

are written in the story of the prophet Iddo; who might write the history of his own times; see 1Ki 15:7.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 14

This chapter relates the death of Abijah, and the succession of Asa in his stead, 2Ch 14:1, gives a good character of the latter for his reformation in religion, and for the care he took for the safety and protection of his subjects, 2Ch 14:2, and an account is given of a large army of Ethiopians that came against him, over whom he crying to the Lord, and trusting in him, by his help obtained a complete victory, 2Ch 14:9.

Ver. 1. So Abijah slept with his fathers, 1Ki 15:8

and Asa his son reigned in his stead; in his days the land was quiet ten years; the Targum is, the land of Israel; but much better the Septuagint, the land of Judah; these ten years, in which it had rest from war, were the first three years of Asa's reign, and the first seven of Baasha's, according to Jarchi, and which seems right; after which there was war between them all their days, see 1Ki 15:32.

2 Chronicles 14:2

Ver. 2. And Asa did that which was good and right,.... See 1Ki 15:11.

2 Chronicles 14:3

Ver. 3. For he took away the altars of the strange gods,.... Or of a strange people, of the Zidonians, Ammonites, and Moabites, which had remained from the times of Solomon, and which he built for his wives, 1Ki 11:7

and the high places; built for idols; for as for those on which the true God was worshipped, they were not removed in his days, 1Ki 15:14

and brake down the images: or statues, or pillars, erected to the honour of idols, and on which the images of them were placed:

and cut down the groves; in the midst of which they stood.

2 Chronicles 14:4

Ver. 4. And commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers,.... To pray to him, and him only, and attend his worship and service; this he did by a public edict:

and to do the law and the commandment: to observe all the laws of God, moral, ceremonial, and civil.

2 Chronicles 14:5

Ver. 5. Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images,.... Perhaps the high places in 2Ch 14:3 design only the high places and altars in Jerusalem, and near it; these in all the rest of the cities of the land; the "images were", as the word signifies, "sun images", either made in the form of the sun, or dedicated to it, or temples for it; See Gill on "Le 26:30",

and the kingdom was quiet before him; he had no foreign enemy to molest him, and so took that opportunity to reform divine worship, and in that he met with no opposition from his people.

2 Chronicles 14:6

Ver. 6. And he built fenced cities in Judah,.... For his defence against the kingdom of Israel and other nations, as Rehoboam had done before him; and which might have been demolished by Shishak king of Egypt, when he took them, 2Ch 11:5

for the land had rest; according to the Targum, the land of Israel rested, and gave no disturbance to the kingdom of Judah, not having recovered the blow given them by Abijah; but it is rather to be understood of the land of Judah, which, as it did not attempt the reduction of the ten tribes, so it was neither attacked by them, nor any other enemy: and he had no war in those years; in the ten years mentioned, 2Ch 14:1, neither with Israel nor any other nation: because the Lord had given him rest; that he might be at leisure to do the above things; all rest is from the Lord, civil, spiritual, and eternal.

2 Chronicles 14:7

Ver. 7. Therefore he said unto Judah,.... To the nobles and principal men of the kingdom:

let us build these cities; which he, no doubt, particularly mentioned by name, and pointed at; that is, repair and fortify them, and put them into a better condition of defence:

and make about them walls and towers, gates and bars; which are always made to fortified places, to protect the inhabitants, and keep out an enemy:

while the land is yet before us; in our power, no enemy in it, nor any to hinder or molest:

because we have sought the Lord our God, we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side; had set up his pure worship, reformed abuses in it, and removed idolatry from it, and closely attended to the service of the sanctuary, which was well pleasing to God; the happy effect of which they experienced, rest from all their enemies round about them:

so that they built, and prospered; they began, and went on, and finished, there being nothing to hinder them.

2 Chronicles 14:8

Ver. 8. And Asa had an army of men that bare targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand,.... These were armed with a large sort of shield, to protect them, and with spears, to push at an enemy when they came near them, and to close quarters with them:

and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand; these had also a lesser sort of shields, to defend their bodies, and bows and arrows, to annoy an enemy at a distance:

all these were mighty men of valour; able bodied men, valiant and courageous; perhaps Asa gathered these together, on hearing that the Ethiopians were preparing to attack him, as follows.

2 Chronicles 14:9

Ver. 9. And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian, with an host of thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots,.... According to Josephus {b}, this army consisted of 900,000 foot, and 100,000 horsemen, and certain it is there were horsemen among them, 2Ch 16:8 some say these were not the Ethiopians in Africa, beyond Egypt, being, as is said, too far off for such an army to travel, and it would be hard to say what should induce them to it; and besides it is urged, the king of Egypt would never have suffered them to pass through his dominions, as they must to come to Judea; but that they were the Cushite Arabs, that inhabited Midian, part of Arabia Petraea, and Arabia Felix, near Judaea, See Gill on "Nu 12:1", but since this great host consisted of Lubim or Libyans, inhabitants of Africa, as well as of Ethiopians, 2Ch 16:8, these Ethiopians seem to be rather those in Africa, who were masters of Egypt and Libya, as well as Ethiopia, quickly after the death of Shishak, or Sesostris, see 2Ch 12:2, which accounts for the size of this army, and their passage through Egypt: that there were two sorts of Ethiopians, the western and eastern ones, the one that dwelt in Africa, the other in Asia, appears clearly from Homer {c}, Herodotus {d}, and Heliodorus {e}, the former of which seem here meant; nor need this army be thought incredible, especially since they were joined by the Lubim or Libyans, and assisted by the Philistines, as appears by what follows; besides, the two armies of Israel and Judah we read of in the preceding chapter, when put together, exceed this; see also 2Ch 17:14, so the armies of Tamerlane and Bajazet, that of the former being 1,600,000, and that of the latter 1,400,000 {f}:

and came unto Mareshah; a city in the tribe of Judah, on the borders of it, 2Ch 11:8.

{b} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 12. sect. 1. {c} Odyss. 1. ver. 23, 24. {d} Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 69, 70. {e} Ethiopic. l. 9. c. 6. {f} Laonic. Chalcocond. de rebus Turc. l. 3. p. 98, 102.

2 Chronicles 14:10

Ver. 10. Then Asa went out against him,.... Notwithstanding he brought so great an army with him:

and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah; where the Ethiopians were; he did not stay till they got further into his country, but marched against them when on the frontiers of it, and chose the valley to pitch in, as being more to the advantage of his smaller army; see **Jud 1:17**.

2 Chronicles 14:11

Ver. 11. And Asa cried unto the Lord his God,.... Or prayed, as the Targum, with vehemence, being in distress; this he did before the battle began, at the head of his army, and for the encouragement of it:

and said, Lord, [it is] nothing with thee to help; nothing can hinder from helping, his power being superior to all others, and even infinite, and none besides him could:

whether with many, or with them that have no power; numbers make no difference with him, nor the condition they are in; whether numerous and mighty, or few and feeble; he can as easily help the one as the other, see 1Sa 14:6,

help us, O Lord our God; who are few and weak in comparison of the enemy:

for we rest on thee; trust in thee, and rely upon thee for help; the Targum is,

"on thy Word we lean:"

and in thy name we go against this multitude; expressing faith in him, expecting help from him, encouraging and strengthening themselves in him, going forth not in their own name and strength, but in his; the Targum is,

"in the name of the Word of the Lord:"

O Lord, thou [art] our God: and thou only we know, and serve no other, and we are thy people, called by thy name:
let not man prevail against thee; for should this enemy prevail against them, it would be interpreted prevailing against their God.

2 Chronicles 14:12

Ver. 12. So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah,.... With consternation and terror; they were thrown into a panic:

and the Ethiopians fled; before them, just as Jeroboam and Israel had, as related in the preceding chapter, 2Ch 13:15.

2 Chronicles 14:13

Ver. 13. And Asa, and the people that [were] with him, pursued them unto Gerar,.... A city of the Philistines, Ge 20:1, and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; they were thrown into such a fright, and into so much confusion, that they could not put themselves in order, and rally again; or there fell such a vast number of them, that there were scarce any remaining alive, which seems to be the sense of the words used:

for they were destroyed before the Lord, and before his host; the army of Israel, which the Lord was, as it were, the Commander of, fought for, and led them in the pursuit, and gave them victory; or it may mean an host of angels, employed in destroying this great army; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions of 2Ch 14:12 read,

"the angel of the Lord smote the Ethiopians:"

and they carried away very much spoil; which they found in their camp, and with their slain; even much gold and silver, as Josephus {g} says.

{g} Ut supra, (Antiq. l. 8. c. 12.) sect. 2.

2 Chronicles 14:14

Ver. 14. And they smote all the cities round about Gerar,.... The cities of the Philistines, who were auxiliaries and confederates with these Ethiopians, and colonies from them, according to Theodoret, and who says, about Eleutheropolis was a place, called, in his time, Geraron Saton:

for the fear of the Lord came upon them; so that they had no power to defend themselves, and oppose the men of Judah:

and they spoiled all the cities; of the goods and substance that were in them:

for there was exceeding much spoil in them; great wealth and riches of one kind or another.

2 Chronicles 14:15

Ver. 15. They smote also the tents of cattle,.... The people that dwelt in tents for the sake of the pasturage of their cattle; the Scenite Arabs, so called from dwelling in tents:

and carried away sheep; which those Arabs were feeding in Palestine, and which this great army brought with them for their support:

and camels in abundance; which is another circumstance proving them to be Arabs, who abounded with camels:

and returned to Jerusalem; with their spoil, and with great joy.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 15

Asa returning from the battle, and with the spoil of the enemy, was met by a prophet of the Lord, who encouraged him to go on with the work of reformation, promising the presence and help of God with him, 2Ch 15:1, which inspired him with fresh courage, and he went about the work with great alacrity; and having offered sacrifices, he and his people entered into a solemn covenant with the Lord, to serve him, 2Ch 15:8 upon which he destroyed his mother's idol, brought the dedicated things into the house of God, and the effect of this was peace for a long time, 2Ch 15:16.

Ver. 1. And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded,.... The same with Iddo, as Hillerus {h} thinks; and some suppose this to be the name of the son as well as the father, but called Azariah, to distinguish him from him, see 2Ch 15:8 on whom came, as the Targum, the spirit of prophecy, instructing him what to say to Asa; and the Jews say {i} he is the same with Iddo, and he the same that was sent to Jeroboam, to reprove him for the altar he built.

{h} Onomastic, Sacr. p. 458. {i} In Hieron. Trad. Heb. in Paralipom. fol. 84. L. & 85. A.

2 Chronicles 15:2

Ver. 2. And he went out to meet Asa,.... From Jerusalem, as Asa was coming to it:

and said unto him, hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; the principal inhabitants of which tribes had been collected, and went to this war, and were now returning:

the Lord is with you, while ye be with him; it was a clear case he had been with them, in giving them the victory over the Ethiopians; and as long as they continued in the service of God, and abode by his pure worship, they might expect he would yet be with them, otherwise not:

and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; you will see his face, and enjoy his favour, and have his presence, and help from him in every time of need, when they sought him by prayer and supplication, as Asa had, and attended his worship and ordinances:

but if ye forsake him; his laws and his service:

he will forsake you; and leave you to fall into the hands of your enemies.

2 Chronicles 15:3

Ver. 3. Now for a long season Israel [hath been] without the true God,.... The fear, worship, and service of him being greatly neglected by them for a long time; what period of time is referred to is not expressed, whether past, present, or to come, but left to be supplied; the Targum refers this to the time of the separation of the ten tribes, and the days of Jeroboam, when the calves were worshipped, and not the true God, and the teaching priests of the Lord were cast out, and the law of the Lord, especially with respect to worship, was not regarded, in which it is followed by many interpreters; others think it refers to time to come, and to what would be the case, should they forsake the Lord; and was fulfilled in the Babylonish captivity, see **Ho 3:4** and the Jews {k} say, that

"Oded prophesied that the days should come, when Israel would be "without the true God", since judgment should not be done in the world: and "without a teaching priest"; since the high priesthood should cease, (see **Heb 7:12**) "and without the law"; since the sanhedrim should cease;"

but according to our supplement, and which seems most correct, it refers to time past; not to the case of the ten tribes from the times of Jeroboam; nor to the case of Judah from the times of Rehoboam; but to times more remote, even the times of the judges, when they worshipped Baal and Ashtaroth, and not the true God, **Jud 2:10**, yet at the same time suggesting, that should the present inhabitants of Judah go into the same practices, their case would be like theirs, described in the following verses:

and without a teaching priest: as they were under the judges, from the times of Phinehas to those of Eli, which was a long space of time:

and without law; every man doing as he pleased, there being no king in Israel, nor any regard paid to the law of God, moral or ceremonial, Jud 17:6.

{k} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 160. 4.

2 Chronicles 15:4

Ver. 4. But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel,.... When being carried captive by neighbouring nations, and oppressed; and they cried unto the Lord, and repented of their sins, and turned from them to him:

and sought him; by prayer and supplication:

he was found of them; and appeared for their help and deliverance, of which there are many instances in the book of Judges.

2 Chronicles 15:5

Ver. 5. And in those times there was no peace to him that went out nor to him that came in,.... There was no safety in going abroad for travellers from one part to another on account of trade and business, the highways being infested with thieves and robbers:

but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries; of the country villages, which were deserted, because of the plunders and depredations of them, **Jud 5:6**.

2 Chronicles 15:6

Ver. 6. And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city,.... Or one tribe of another; as the Ephraimites by the Gileadites, and the tribe of Benjamin by the other tribes; and Shechem by Abimelech, **Jud 9:45**,

for God did vex them with all adversity; both with foreign enemies and civil wars; and now it is intimated that this would be their case again, should they not keep close to the Lord their God.

2 Chronicles 15:7

Ver. 7. Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak,.... Be hearty, earnest, and vigorous, and not languid and remiss in reforming the worship of God, which Asa had begun:

for your work shall be rewarded; with peace and prosperity at home, and success against enemies abroad, of which they had had a recent instance.

2 Chronicles 15:8

Ver. 8. And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet,.... Some think that besides the above words of Azariah the son of Oded, a prophecy of Oded his father was related by him, though not recorded; but rather Oded here is the same with the son of Oded; and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read Azariah the son of Oded; and so does the Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint version:

he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin; which were abominable to God, and all good men; besides the images and statues he had broken before, he removed other idols that remained, being animated and emboldened by the speech of the prophet:

and out of the cities which he had taken from Mount Ephraim: the same which his father Abijah had taken from Jeroboam, 2Ch 13:19 and which perhaps, upon the approach of the Ethiopians, revolted from Asa, or were restored by them to Jeroboam, and Which Asa retook upon his conquest of them:

and renewed the altar of the Lord before the porch of the Lord; the altar of burnt offering, which had never been repaired since it was made by Solomon; perhaps he anew overlaid it with brass that being worn out, or become very thin in some places.

2 Chronicles 15:9

Ver. 9. And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them,.... The proselytes of the gate:

out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: out of all the places in those tribes that had come off to him, or had been taken by him; for otherwise these belonged to the ten tribes under the government of Jeroboam, and his successors, and the next clause explains it:

for they fell to him out of Israel abundance, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him; as was clear by the victory he gave him over the Ethiopians; after that time many in the above tribes came over to him; the Targum is,

"when they saw the Word of the Lord his God was his help."

2 Chronicles 15:10

Ver. 10. So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem,.... By the order of Asa, 2Ch 15:9,

in the third month; of the ecclesiastical year, the month Sivan, in which month was the day of Pentecost; and that very probably was the time of their gathering:

in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa; and which seems to be the year in which he fought the Ethiopians.

2 Chronicles 15:11

Ver. 11. And they offered unto the Lord the same time,.... The Targum adds, on the feast of weeks, or Pentecost: of the spoil which they had brought; from the camp of the Ethiopians, and the cities of the Philistines:

seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep; partly for burnt offerings, and partly for peace offerings, by way of thankfulness to the Lord for the victory he had given them, and for a feast at the making of the following covenant with him.

2 Chronicles 15:12

Ver. 12. And they entered into a covenant,.... Asa and all his people; that is, as Piscator remarks, they went between the pieces of the calf cut asunder, for the confirmation of the covenant, see Jer 34:18,

to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their heart, and with all their soul; to serve and worship him most truly, sincerely, and cordially.

2 Chronicles 15:13

Ver. 13. That whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death,.... That obstinately refused to worship him, and served other gods, which by the law was deserving of death, De 17:2,

whether small or great, whether man or woman; without any regard to rank or dignity, age or sex.

2 Chronicles 15:14

Ver. 14. And they sware unto the Lord with a loud voice,.... As not being ashamed of the oath they took, and that there might be witnesses of it, and that it might be clear they did not equivocate in but expressed themselves in plain words:

and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets; showing that the oath was not extorted from them unwillingly, but that they took it with the utmost cheerfulness, and with all the demonstrations of joy and gladness imaginable.

2 Chronicles 15:15

Ver. 15. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath,.... The greater part of them; for some there might be who were dissemblers:

for they had sworn with all their heart; in the sincerity and uprightness of their souls:

and sought him with their whole desire; none being more or so desirable as he:

and he was found of them: and favoured them with his presence:

and the Lord gave them rest round about; from all their enemies.

2 Chronicles 15:16

Ver. 16-18. And also concerning Maachah the mother of Asa the king,.... Or rather his grandmother, 1Ki 15:10,

he removed her from being queen; the Septuagint version is, "that she should not minister to Astarte"; which was the goddess of the Zidonians; of this and the two next verses, See Gill on "1Ki 15:13",
See Gill on "1Ki 15:14",
See Gill on "1Ki 15:15".

2 Chronicles 15:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "2Ch 15:16".

2 Chronicles 15:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "2Ch 15:16".

2 Chronicles 15:19

Ver. 19. And there was no more war unto the thirty fifth year of the reign of Asa. That is, from the Ethiopian war to that time; after that there was no war with any foreign enemy; there were animosities and discords, bickerings and hostilities of some sort continually between Asa and Baasha king of Israel, as long as he lived, see 1Ki 15:16.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 16

Baasha coming up against Judah, and building Ramah, Asa made a league with the king of Syria, and hired him to make a diversion in his favour, and cause Baasha to leave off building, which succeeded, 2Ch 16:1, for which he was reproved by a prophet of the Lord, with whom he was so angry for it as to put him in prison, and oppress others, 2Ch 16:7, and the chapter is closed with an account of his disease and conduct under it, and of his death and burial, 2Ch 16:11.

Ver. 1. In the thirty and sixth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah,.... How this is to be reconciled with the reign of Baasha, which was but twenty four years, and was begun in the third of Asa, and therefore must have been dead nearly ten years before this year of Asa's reign, See Gill on "1Ki 15:17" where, and in the following verses, are the same things related as here, to the end of the sixth verse; the explanation of which the reader is referred to.

2 Chronicles 16:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ch 16:1".

2 Chronicles 16:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "2Ch 16:1".

2 Chronicles 16:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "2Ch 16:1".

2 Chronicles 16:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "2Ch 16:1".

2 Chronicles 16:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "2Ch 16:1".

2 Chronicles 16:7

Ver. 7. And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah,.... Being sent by the Lord to reprove him:

and said unto him, because thou hast relied on the king of Syria; on the covenant he made with him, on the promises the Syrian king made to him upon receiving his money, and so trusted to an arm of flesh, and even an Heathen king:

and not relied on the Lord thy God; his promises, power, and providence, which he had reason to believe would have been engaged on his behalf, had he placed his confidence in him as he ought to have done: the Targum is,

"and not relied on the Word of the Lord thy God:"

therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand; which otherwise would have fallen into it, had he left him to continue in league with the king of Israel, and not solicited him to break it; for then he would have come with him against Asa, and the Lord would have delivered him to him.

2 Chronicles 16:8

Ver. 8. Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen?.... They were no less than 1,000,000 men, and three hundred chariots, 2Ch 14:9, the Lubim were the Libyans, a people near Egypt, that dwelt in Africa; according to an Arabic writer {l}, they were the Nubians:

yet, because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand; and with equal ease could and would have delivered the Syrian army unto him, had he as then trusted in the Lord.

{l} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. dyn. 3. p. 57.

2 Chronicles 16:9

Ver. 9. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth,.... The eyes of his omniscience are everywhere, and the eyes of his mercy and goodness, of his care and providence, are here and there, and in every place throughout the whole world at once, see **Zec 4:10**,

to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him; or, as in the margin, "strongly to hold" with such, to be on their side, take their part, strengthen them, support and supply them, and to protect and defend them who are sincere and upright in heart; whose graces are sincere and unfeigned, though not complete, nor they free from sin, and who, with the heart, sincerely believe in God, in which Asa at this time failed, though otherwise his heart is said to be perfect, 1Ki 15:4, it was so in the general bent of it, and especially with respect to the worship of God, though there was something lacking in his faith at this time, as there often is in the best of men:

herein thou hast done foolishly; to trust in man, and not in the Lord, to part with his money, and lose the opportunity of having the whole Syrian army fall into his hands:

therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars; which, though we read not of, was doubtless his case; some interpret it of his posterity.

2 Chronicles 16:10

Ver. 10. Then Asa was wroth with the seer,.... For this faithful reproof of him, which was another instance of his sin and folly:

and put him in a prison house; in a very strait place, in which he could not turn himself, what we call "little ease"; some say it was the stocks, others a pillory he put him into:

for he was in a rage with him because of this thing; his passion rose very high, and to which he gave way, and was his infirmity:

and Asa oppressed some of the people the same time; by fines and imprisonments, such as perhaps expressed their disapprobation of his league with the king of Syria, and of his ill usage of the prophet.

2 Chronicles 16:11

Ver. 11. And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last,....
See Gill on "1Ki 15:23".

2 Chronicles 16:12

Ver. 12. And Asa in the thirty ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet,.... This was about two years before his death, and his disease is generally thought to be the gout in his feet, and a just retaliation for putting the prophet's feet into the stocks:

until his disease was exceeding great; it increased upon him, and became very severe and intolerable, and the fits were frequent, as well as the pain sharper; though the sense of the Hebrew {m} phrase may be, that his disease got upwards, into a superior part of his body, head, or stomach, which, when the gout does, it is dangerous. A very learned physician {n} is of opinion, that not the gout, but what he calls an "aedematous" swelling of the feet, is meant, which insensibly gets up into the bowels, and is successively attended with greater inconveniences; a tension of the abdomen, difficulty of breathing, very troublesome to the patient, and issues in a dropsy, and death itself:

yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord; his seeking to physicians for help in his disease, perhaps, would not have been observed to his reproach, had he also sought unto the Lord, whom he ought to have sought in the first place; and when he applied to the physicians, he should have implored the blessing of God on their prescriptions; but he so much forgot himself as to forget the Lord: this is the first time we read of physicians among the Jews, and some think these were Heathens, and a sort of enchanters: the Jews entertained a very ill opinion of physicians; the best of them, they say {o}, deserve hell, and they advise {p} men not to live in a city where the chief man is a physician; but the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus gives a great encomium of them, and exhorts to honour and esteem them,

"1 Honour a physician with the honour due unto him for the uses which ye may have of him: for the Lord hath created him. 2 For of the most High cometh healing, and he shall receive honour of the king. 3 The skill of the physician shall lift up his head: and in the sight of great men he shall be in admiration. 4 The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth; and he that is wise will not abhor them. 5 Was not the water made sweet with wood, that the virtue thereof might be known? 6 And he hath given men skill, that he might be honoured in his marvellous works. 7 With such doth he heal [men], and taketh away their pains. 8 Of such doth the apothecary make a confection; and of his works there is no end; and from him is peace over all the earth," (Sirach 38)

Julian {q} the emperor greatly honoured them, and observes, that it is justly said by the philosophers, that the art of medicine fell from heaven.

{m} hleml de "usque ad supra", Montanus; "usque ad summum", Vatablus; "usque ad sursum", Piscator. {n} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 645. {o} T. Bab. Kiddashin, fol. 32. 1. Gloss. in ib. {p} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 113. 1. {q} Opera, par. 2. p. 154.

2 Chronicles 16:13

Ver. 13. And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the forty first year of his reign. See 1Ki 15:10.

2 Chronicles 16:14

Ver. 14. And they buried him in his own sepulchres which he had made for himself in the city of David,.... Where was the burying place of the kings of Judah; here Asa had ordered a vault to be made for himself and his family, and therefore called sepulchres, because of the several cells therein to put separate bodies in:

and laid him in the bed; not only laid him out, as we express it, but laid him on a bed of state, where he lay in great pomp; or the funeral bed, which, with other nations {r}, used to be strowed with sweet smelling flowers and herbs, as follows:

which was filled with sweet odours, and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries art; or rather confectioner or druggist; for it is a question whether there were then any such we call apothecaries; this bed was strowed with spices, myrrh, aloes, cassia, cinnamon, &c. and which perhaps might be made up into a liquid, which was sprinkled over the bed and shroud in which he lay:

and they made a very great burning for him; not that they made a great fire, and burned his body; for burning was not used with the Jews; but they burnt spices and other things in great quantity, in honour of him:
See Gill on "Jer 34:5", and this custom continued to the times of Herod, at whose funeral there were five hundred of his domestics and freed men bearing spices {s}.

{r} Herodian. Hist. l. 4. c. 3. Vid. Kirchman. de Funer. Roman. l. 1. c. 11. & Alstorph. de Lect. Vet. c. 19. p. 151, 152. {s} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 33. sect. 9.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 17

This chapter relates the accession of Jehoshaphat to the throne, his settlement on it, his piety, and reformation in religion, 2Ch 17:1, his care to instruct the people in the law of God, 2Ch 17:7, the respect shown him by neighbouring nations, 2Ch 17:10, the fortified places of his kingdom, his numerous forces and mighty men at the head of them, 2Ch 17:12.

Ver. 1. And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead,.... In the stead of Asa his father:

and strengthened himself against Israel; the ten tribes, by fortifying his cities, building castles, raising and keeping a large standing army, as the latter part of this chapter shows, and the next verse.

2 Chronicles 17:2

Ver. 2. And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah,.... A considerable number of soldiers, to defend them should they be attacked:

and set garrisons in the land of Judah: on the frontiers and borders of it, to protect it:

and in the cities of Ephraim; soldiers to keep garrison there:

which Asa his father had taken; see 2Ch 15:8.

2 Chronicles 17:3

Ver. 3. And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat,.... Guiding and directing, prospering and succeeding him in all things; he had, no doubt, his gracious presence in spiritual things, as well as his powerful and directing presence in things civil; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord was for his help;"

because he walked in the first ways of his father David; which were his best; some of his last ways not being good, as in the affair of Uriah and Bathsheba, and his numbering of the people; Jehoshaphat followed him in the one, but not in the other: or, "in the ways of David and his father, the first"; the first of them both; for the latter ways of his father Asa were not so good as his first, as the preceding chapter shows; and the Septuagint version leaves out the word "David", and so restrains it to his own father:

and sought not unto Baalim; as did Ahab king of Israel, who now reigned there; 1Ki 15:24.

2 Chronicles 17:4

Ver. 4. But sought to the Lord God of his fathers,.... Prayed to him, worshipped and served him:

and walked in his commandments; observed and kept them, moral, ceremonial, and judicial:

and not after the doings of Israel: who worshipped the golden calves at Dan and Bethel.

2 Chronicles 17:5

Ver. 5. Therefore the Lord stablished the kingdom in his hand,.... Piety is the best prop of government; the throne is best supported and established by truth, righteousness, and mercy; by the exercise of these Jehoshaphat was settled in his kingdom, and had a place in the hearts of his people:

and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; being well affected to him, as well as it was usual so to do at a prince's accession to the throne, see 1Sa 10:27

and he had riches and honour in abundance; through the presents his subjects brought him, and the respect they showed him.

2 Chronicles 17:6

Ver. 6. And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord,.... It was engaged in them, was bent and set upon them; he walked in them with great pleasure and cheerfulness, being inspired with zeal and courage; he was fearless and intrepid, and regarded not any opposition he might have, or expect to have, in the work of reformation in which he was concerned:

moreover, he took away the high places; such as were dedicated to idols, but not those in which the true God was worshipped, 2Ch 20:33

and groves out of Judah; where idols were placed; for though these had been removed by Asa, yet had been renewed in the latter part of his days, when more negligent of religion.

2 Chronicles 17:7

Ver. 7. Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes,.... That dwelt in the several parts of the kingdom; or he sent them, being with him, some of the principal men of his court; for l may be a sign of the accusative case, as it sometimes is:

even to Benhail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah; to see that they were taught, and oblige them to attend to the instructions that should be given them, and not mutiny and rebel against their teachers; and to let them know what was the king's pleasure on this head, and to back with their authority the priests and Levites, whose proper work it was to instruct, and who therefore were sent with them, as follows.

2 Chronicles 17:8

Ver. 8. And with them he sent Levites,.... With the five princes he sent nine Levites:

even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tobadonijah, Levites; of whom we nowhere else read; no doubt they were principal persons, and fit for the work they were sent about:

and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests; whose lips were to keep knowledge, and at whose mouth the law was to be sought, **Mal 2:7**.

2 Chronicles 17:9

Ver. 9. And they taught in Judah,.... The people their duty to God and man:

and had the book of the law of the Lord with them; as the rule of their instruction, and the people's obedience; out of this they taught them, and by it confirmed what they taught, and enforced it with the divine authority:

and went about throughout all the cities of Judah; not only their own cities, the Levitical ones, but all others:

and taught the people; the law of the Lord, the fear and worship of God.

2 Chronicles 17:10

Ver. 10. And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah,.... Upon the ten tribes, and on foreign nations about them, as Moabites, Edomites, Syrians, Egyptians, Arabs, and Philistines; this fear, as it came from the Lord, so might be raised and increased by observing, that religion was revived in them; for they might perceive, by former observations made, that the more religious these people were, the more prosperous and formidable they were:

so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat; to interrupt him in the work of reformation he was so intent upon.

2 Chronicles 17:11

Ver. 11. Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and tribute silver,.... Perhaps those of Gerar, and the parts adjacent, Asa took and spoiled, and made tributary, 2Ch 14:14,

and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he goats; with which their country abounded; and these might be the Scenite Arabs, who fearing lest Jehoshaphat should fall upon them, and take away their flocks as his father had done, 2Ch 14:15, brought these presents to him.

2 Chronicles 17:12

Ver. 12. And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly,.... In wealth and riches, power and authority, in his forces and fortifications:

and he built in Judah castles, and cities of stores; castles for the defence of his kingdom, and store cities to lay up corn, and wine, and all provisions, in case of an invasion, or against a time of war.

2 Chronicles 17:13

Ver. 13. And he had much business in the cities of Judah,.... Partly in fortifying them, and partly in reforming the inhabitants of them:

and the men of war, mighty men of valour, were in Jerusalem; or by or near unto it, so the particle is rendered, **Jos 5:13**, they encamped in places adjacent to it; for such a number of men as follows, even 1,160,000, could never be contained in Jerusalem, but must be disposed of in the territories of it; nor did they wait on the king together; but in course, see 2Ch 17:19, by which it appears there is no need to suppose any mistake of the transcriber, in any or all of the following sums, as has been suggested {q}.

{q} See Maitland's History of London, B. 3. ch. 2. p. 543.

2 Chronicles 17:14

Ver. 14. And these are the numbers of them, according to the house of their fathers,.... Both of the tribe of Judah and of Benjamin: and first

of Judah, the captains of thousands; some had 1000 men under them, and some one hundred:

Adnah the chief; he was the principal commander or general of them:

and with him mighty men of valour, three hundred thousand; such a number was under his command.

2 Chronicles 17:15

Ver. 15. And next to him was Jehohanan the captain,.... Being of the same rank as to office, but having a lesser number of men under him; and it may respect not any kind of subordination, only nearness of place, as the Targum,

"he that encamped next to him"

and with him two hundred and fourscore thousand; which number was but 20,000 less than the former.

2 Chronicles 17:16

Ver. 16. And next him was Amasiah the son of Zichri,.... He encamped next to him, as the Targum:

who willingly offered himself unto the Lord; to fight the Lord's battles, and without any stipend, as some think; or, as Kimchi, he offered gold and silver to the treasures of the house of the Lord:

and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valour; the number was 80,000 less than the former; the whole of Judah amounted to 780,000 men.

2 Chronicles 17:17

Ver. 17. And of Benjamin, Eliada, a mighty man of valour,.... Was the chief commander:

and with armed men with bow and shield two hundred thousand; which were the armour of the tribe of Benjamin they were best skilled in, 2Ch 14:8.

2 Chronicles 17:18

Ver. 18. And next to him, was Jehozabad,.... According to the Targum he encamped next him:

and with him one hundred and fourscore thousand ready prepared for war; being able bodied men, well disciplined, valiant, and well armed; these numbers of Judah and Benjamin put together amount to 1,160,000 men, whereas Asa only brought into the field 580,000; but it should be considered there had been a long time of peace, many had come off from the ten tribes to Judah, and the promise of multiplying the seed of Abraham was eminently fulfilled.

2 Chronicles 17:19

Ver. 19. These waited on the king,.... Not this vast number of men at one time, but in course, as David's military men waited on him, 1Ch 27:1 or each of these captains, with a proper number of men under them detached from the body; and they were all ready to obey the king's orders whenever he should have occasion for them:

besides those whom the king put into the fenced cities throughout Judah; and all together, the militia of the kingdom was very numerous and formidable.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 18

Ver. 1. Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance,.... Still more and more, see 2Ch 17:5, and which moved Ahab to desire friendship and affinity with him, to which Jehoshaphat agreed:

and joined affinity with Ahab; king of Israel, married his son Joram to Athaliah, a daughter of Ahab by Jezebel of Zidon; which marriage proved of bad consequence to Jehoshaphat and his family.

2 Chronicles 18:2

Ver. 2. And after certain years,.... Two years, according to the Syriac and Arabic versions, or in the third year after the affinity was contracted, see 1Ki 22:2,

he went down to Ahab to Samaria; to pay him a visit upon the alliance, civil and matrimonial, contracted between them:

and Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that he had with him; entertained him and his retinue in a very grand and liberal manner:

and persuaded him to go up with him to Ramothgilead; from hence, to the end of the chapter, it is the same with 1Ki 22:4.
See Gill on "1Ki 22:4".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:5".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:6".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:7".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:8".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:9".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:10".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:11".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:12".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:13".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:14".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:15".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:16".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:17".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:18".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:19".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:20".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:21".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:22".

See Gill on "1Ki 22:23".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:24".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:25".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:26".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:27".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:28".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:29".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:30".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:31".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:32".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:33".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:34".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:35".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:36".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:37".

2 Chronicles 18:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2"

2 Chronicles 18:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

2 Chronicles 18:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "2Ch 18:2".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 19

Jehoshaphat returning from the battle at Ramothgilead, was met by a prophet, who reproved him for helping the ungodly, 2Ch 19:1, which quickened him to a greater regard for the reformation of his kingdom, 2Ch 19:4, and he set judges in all the cities of Judah, and exhorted them to do justice, 2Ch 19:5, and in the city of Jerusalem he appointed priests and Levites for the same purpose, and gave them a strict charge, and animated and encouraged them to perform their office faithfully, 2Ch 19:8.

Ver. 1. And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned,.... From Ramothgilead, after Ahab was slain:

to his house in peace in Jerusalem; to his palace there in safety, having narrowly escaped losing his life in the battle.

2 Chronicles 19:2

Ver. 2. And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer,.... The son of him that reproved Asa, for which he put him in prison, 2Ch 17:7, but that did not deter this his son from reproving Jehoshaphat:

went out to meet him; as he was returning:

and said to King Jehoshaphat, shouldest thou help the ungodly; such an one as Ahab, an idolater, murderer, and persecutor:

and love them that hate the Lord? his laws, worship, and ordinances, as he had; intimating, that he had done wrong, by entering into alliance and affinity with him, by showing him friendship, and assisting him in his war against the Syrians:

therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord; which appeared in the war of the Ammonites and Moabites with him, related in the next chapter, and in the calamities that came upon his family, his sons being slain by Jehoram that succeeded him, and his grandsons by Jehu.

2 Chronicles 19:3

Ver. 3. Nevertheless, there are good things found in thee,.... Principles of grace, righteousness, and holiness, faith, love, zeal, and other graces, true and genuine, from whence sprung many good works done by him:

in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land; cut down the groves of trees, and destroyed the idols and images in them:

and hast prepared thine heart to seek God; through the grace of God his heart was disposed to serve and worship the Lord, and to seek his honour and glory.

2 Chronicles 19:4

Ver. 4. And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem,.... And went out no more to Samaria, nor concerned himself about the affairs of Israel, but attended to his own:

and he went out again through the people; took a tour throughout his dominions now, in his own person, as before by his princes, with the priests and Levites:

from Beersheba to Mount Ephraim; Beersheba was the southern boundary of the land of Judah, and Mount Ephraim lay to the north, and was the northern boundary of it since the division of the kingdom:

and brought them back to the Lord God of their fathers; from idolatry to the pure worship of God, such who had relapsed since the first reformation, or had not been influenced by it.

2 Chronicles 19:5

Ver. 5. And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city,.... Inferior judges in lesser courts of judicature than that at Jerusalem, and that in every city, that judgment and justice might be executed everywhere; such were appointed by David, but had been neglected, and now restored, see 1Ch 26:29.

2 Chronicles 19:6

Ver. 6. And said to the judges, take heed what you do,.... In judgment, that they judged righteous judgment according to the law of God, without partiality and respect of persons:

for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord; not for man only, but for the Lord; and not so much for man as for the Lord, whom they represented in judgment; whose law was the rule of their judgment, and whose glory their end, and to whom they were accountable:

who is with you in the judgment: as to guide and direct you, so to observe how they behaved, and be a witness for or against them; the Targum is,

"ye judge not before men, but before the Word of the Lord, whose Shechinah dwells with you in the affair of judgment."

2 Chronicles 19:7

Ver. 7. Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you,.... And act as having that before your eyes, and on your hearts:

take heed and do it; do the commands enjoined them by him, and do judgment according to the law of God:

for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God; none in his nature, nor in his law; none commanded nor approved of by him, and therefore none should be done by his representatives in judgment:

nor respect of persons; whether high or low, rich or poor:

nor taking of gifts; he accepts not the faces of men, nor receives bribes, nor should his judges; this is forbidden by him, De 16:19.

2 Chronicles 19:8

Ver. 8. Moreover, in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites, and of the priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel,.... This was the great court of judicature, consisting of princes, priests, and Levites, of ecclesiastics and political persons; for causes of both sorts were brought thither:

for the judgment of the Lord; in things sacred, which related to the worship of God, and the support of it:

and for controversies; of a civil kind between man and man, whether pecuniary or capital, of a more private or public kind:

when they returned to Jerusalem; that is, this court was set up at Jerusalem, when Jehoshaphat, the priests, Levites, and chief men that went with him, returned thither.

2 Chronicles 19:9

Ver. 9. And he charged them,.... The members of the court at Jerusalem:

saying, thus shall ye do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect heart; judge righteously and impartially, as men fearing God, true to the trust reposed in them, and sincere and upright in heart and actions, having nothing else in view but the glory of God, and the good of men.

2 Chronicles 19:10

Ver. 10. And what cause soever shall come unto you of your brethren that dwell in their cities,.... Whether sacred or civil, that should come before them by way of appeal from, inferior courts in the country, where they could not be determined:

between blood and blood; one relation and another, or with respect to shedding of blood, whether ignorantly or purposely:

between law and commandment, statutes and judgments; not rightly understood, and so pleaded on both sides:

ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the Lord; the persons engaged in controversy, that they take no false oath, nor bear false testimony, and act not stubbornly against any of the laws, when explained in court unto them:

and so wrath come upon you and your children; upon judges for the neglect of their duty in giving due warning, and upon the people for not taking it when given:

this do, and ye shall not trespass; if the above charge in all its parts is strictly attended to.

2 Chronicles 19:11

Ver. 11. And, behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the Lord,.... He being high priest, presided in this court in all things sacred, or which respected the worship of God; and was present to give his advice, and direct in the determination of all such matters that should come before them, according to the laws and statutes provided in such cases; though it may be he was only a common priest that was chief over them, or the president of this court:

and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah; the prince of the tribe of Judah:

for all the king's matters; such as related to civil government, and which were not so clearly determined by positive laws:

also the Levites shall be officers before you; to execute the sentences that should be passed by them:

deal courageously; fear not the faces of any, but judge righteously and faithfully:

and the Lord shall be with the good; with good men that do good, to bestow all needful good upon them, to protect and defend them; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord shall be for your help, who is good."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 20

Jehoshaphat having notice of a numerous army coming against him, 2Ch 20:1, betakes himself to fasting and prayer with his people, 2Ch 20:3, when they were immediately assured of victory by a prophet, which filled them with joy and thankfulness, 2Ch 20:14, and accordingly their enemies destroyed one another, and Jehoshaphat and his people returned to Jerusalem rejoicing and praising God, 2Ch 20:22, and the chapter is closed with an account of the latter part of Jehoshaphat's reign, 2Ch 20:31.

Ver. 1. It came to pass after this also,.... After Jehoshaphat's return from Ramothgilead, and putting the civil and religious affairs of his people on a better footing, when he might have expected much peace and prosperity:

that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon; both the descendants of Lot, see Ps 83:8,

and with them other besides the Ammonites; a great company of Arabians, according to Josephus {r}; or "with the Meamonites", which the Targum understands of the Idumaeans or Edomites; and so do other interpreters, and which they conclude from 2Ch 20:10. Jarchi thinks the Amalekites are meant, who were of the race of Edom; but the notion of Kimchi seems best, that these are the people that are so called from the name of a place, Meon, and, by an inversion of letters, the same with the Meunim or Maonites, mentioned along with the Zidonians and Amalekites, Jud 10:12 and whom the Septuagint version here calls Minaeans; some {s} take them to be such who counterfeited the Ammonites in their apparel and gestures:

these came against Jehoshaphat in battle; being instigated perhaps by the

Syrians, who owed him ill will for assisting Ahab against them at Ramothgilead; for from that quarter they came, as the following verse shows.

{r} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 1. sect. 2. {s} Weemse of the Moral Law, l. 2. c. 6. p. 161.

2 Chronicles 20:2

Ver. 2. Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat,.... Deserters or spies, or some of the inhabitants of those parts where they had entered, who rode post haste to acquaint him with it:

saying, there cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; that is, beyond the Dead or Salt sea, the sea of Sodom; the Targum is,

"beyond the west of Syria,"

that sea being the western boundary of it:

and, behold, they be in Hazazontamar, which is Engedi;
See Gill on "Ge 14:7".

2 Chronicles 20:3

Ver. 3. And Jehoshaphat feared,.... Exceedingly, as the Targum adds, not merely because of the number of his enemies, for he had forces enough to go forth against them, see 2Ch 17:14, but chiefly because the Lord had told him that wrath was upon him from him, 2Ch 19:2 and he might fear that this was the time for the execution of it:

and set himself to seek the Lord; by prayer and supplication, with all seriousness, fervour, and constancy:

and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah; a day of humiliation and mourning for sin before the Lord; when they were ordered to abstain from bodily food and labour, that they might be fit and more at leisure for spiritual exercises.

2 Chronicles 20:4

Ver. 4. And Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord,.... To implore his assistance against their enemies, and his protection of them; and they met not in their several cities, but at Jerusalem, as appears by what follows:

even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord; at the temple, where was the ark, the symbol of his presence.

2 Chronicles 20:5

Ver. 5. And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord,.... In the temple, in the court of the people, where the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem were assembled, in the midst of which he stood very probably on the brasen scaffold erected by Solomon, **2Ch 6:13**,

before the new court: which must be the court of the priests, for he stood in the great court, or court of the people, and before this, which might be so called, because renewed or repaired when the altar was by Asa, 2Ch 15:8. Dr. Lightfoot {t} thinks it was the court of the women; but it is a question whether there was any such court in the first temple; or that the great court was then divided into two, one for the men, the other for the women.

{t} Prospect of the Temple, ch 18. p. 1090.

2 Chronicles 20:6

Ver. 6. And said, O Lord God of our fathers,.... Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose covenant God he was:

art not thou God in heaven? that dwellest and rulest there, and dost whatever thou pleasest in the armies of it:

and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the Heathens? being King of kings, and Lord of lords, all the world over:

and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? his power being infinite, unlimited, and uncontrollable, and so not resistible by finite creatures, at least not so as to be stopped and overcome.

2 Chronicles 20:7

Ver. 7. Art not thou our God,.... In a peculiar sense, not merely as the Creator and Governor of men, but in a covenant relation their covenant God and Father:

who didst drive out the inhabitants of the land before thy people Israel; the seven nations of Canaan, to make way and room for Israel:

and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? made a deed of gift of it to them, and settled it on them till the coming of the Messiah, and that as an instance of love and friendship to Abraham; and wilt thou therefore suffer it to be taken from his seed?

2 Chronicles 20:8

Ver. 8. And they dwelt therein,.... From ages past, hitherto, since it was first given them, and they were put into the possession of it:

and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name; a temple for his worship, honour, and glory, and for him to dwell in; and is a reason why it might be hoped he would protect them, especially when they prayed to him:

saying; and he promised to hear and help them, as follows.

2 Chronicles 20:9

Ver. 9. If when evil cometh upon us,.... Any calamity,

as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, God's four sore judgments, if by "judgment" is meant wild beasts:

we stand before this house; in the court before the holy place, and holy of holies:

and in thy presence, for thy name is in this house; called upon in it, and it was called by his name, and in which he dwelt:

and cry unto thee in our affliction; as Solomon prayed at the dedication of it:

then thou wilt hear and help; as the Lord promised, see **1Ki 8:33**.

2 Chronicles 20:10

Ver. 10. And now, behold, the children of Ammon, and Moab, and Mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt,.... Charging them not to meddle with them, nor take any of their lands from them, **De 2:5**,

but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; in obedience to the divine command, when it was in their power to have done it.

2 Chronicles 20:11

Ver. 11. Behold, I say, how they reward us,.... Evil for good:

to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit; the land of Canaan was their inheritance, an inheritance given them by God, their covenant God and Father, who had a right to dispose of it; and yet so given, that it was still his possession, he was the Lord and Proprietor, they but tenants under him; all which, as they were so many aggravations of the guilt of their enemies, so they were so many arguments with the Lord to protect them.

2 Chronicles 20:12

Ver. 12. O our God wilt thou not judge them?.... Bring them to thy bar, examine these facts alleged against them, convict them of injustice, and condemn and punish them for it:

for we have no might against the great company that cometh against us; for though the militia of the kingdom of Judah was very numerous, as described 2Ch 17:14 yet on a sudden it might not be easy to gather it together; besides, it was nothing to put trust and confidence in; and if the Lord was not with them, their strength would be weakness, and they not able to withstand this numerous army:

neither know we what to do; whether to attempt to muster the militia, and go out to meet them, or to shut up themselves in Jerusalem, and make the best defence they could:

but our eyes are upon thee; for advice and direction, for help and protection; the eyes of their bodies were lifted up in prayer to him, and the eyes of their souls, of faith, hope, expectation, and desire, were fastened on him.

2 Chronicles 20:13

Ver. 13. And all Judah stood before the Lord,.... Looking towards the most holy place, where the ark of his presence was, in an humble and submissive posture; waiting what would be the issue of things, what answer they should have from the Lord:

with their little ones, their wives, and their children: they and their wives, with their children, both small and grown up, which they brought with them, that as the sight of them, now in the utmost danger, might affect them, and make them the more fervent in their supplications to God, so they might hope the Lord would have pity and compassion on them, and save them.

2 Chronicles 20:14

Ver. 14. Then upon Jahaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jehiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite, of the sons of Asaph,.... Being a man of some note, though a Levite, his genealogy is given:

came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation; the spirit of prophecy from the Lord, as the Targum, as it was; for he foretold the victory that should be obtained over the enemy, and that without fighting, yea, the particular place where they should meet them; and this came upon him suddenly, while he was in the midst of the congregation, while he and they were waiting upon the Lord, and perhaps had never prophesied before; or if he had, prophecy did not come according to the will of man, but by the will of God; the Spirit of God in that, as in other instances, is like the wind that blows when and where it listeth.

2 Chronicles 20:15

Ver. 15. And he said, hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou King Jehoshaphat,.... There is a climax or gradation in these words rising from the lowest to the highest; from the people of the cities in the country, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem the metropolis, and from thence to the king the supreme governor:

thus saith the Lord unto you, be not afraid, nor dismayed, by reason of this great multitude; whose numbers were discouraging to the king, and he had taken notice of them, which this respects:

for the battle is not your's, but God's: the cause was his, and he would espouse and maintain it; not they, but he, would fight the battle, and therefore they had nothing to fear.

2 Chronicles 20:16

Ver. 16. Tomorrow go ye down against them,.... This was the fast day, and so not proper to march out in, but on the morrow they might go out with great confidence and intrepidity; and as Jerusalem was situated on an eminence, they are directed to go down:

behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; a steep hill, so called from the flowers upon it:

and ye shall find them at the end of the brook; on the bank of Kidron, according to Beckius, which seems not likely to be meant, since they went as far as the wilderness of Tekoa, 2Ch 20:20,

before the wilderness of Jeruel; the same with that of Tekoa, or near it.

2 Chronicles 20:17

Ver. 17. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle,.... Since the Lord would fight for them:

set yourselves, stand ye still; present themselves they might, as if ready to engage; and keep their ground, not giving way in the least, but would have no need to strike a stroke:

and see the salvation of the Lord with you; which he would work for them, see Ex 14:13,

and Judah, and Jerusalem, fear not, nor be dismayed; which is repeated for the confirmation of them:

tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord will be with you; to protect them, fight for them, and give them victory; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord shall be your help."

2 Chronicles 20:18

Ver. 18. And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground,.... Not only in reverence of God, and his prophet, but as a token of his belief of what was said, and his thankfulness for it:

and all Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, fell before the Lord, worshipping him; adoring his goodness to them, in imitation of their king.

2 Chronicles 20:19

Ver. 19. And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites,.... Who were of the posterity of Kohath, in the line of Korah:

stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high; in high notes; they being the course in turn at this time for this service.

2 Chronicles 20:20

Ver. 20. And they rose early in the morning,.... Being confident of success, animated by what the prophet said to them:

and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa; which, according to Jerom {u}, was six miles from Bethlehem, and nine from Jerusalem, some say twelve, beyond which was nothing but a desert; it was part of the wilderness of Judah:

and as they went forth; out of Jerusalem, through one of the gates of it:

Jehoshaphat stood and said, believe in the Lord your God; in the promises he had made, particularly with respect to the victory over their present enemies; the Targum is,

"in the Word of the Lord your God:"

so shall you be established; have courage and firmness of mind, as well as be safe and secure:

believe his prophets; sent by him, and that speak in his name, particularly Jahaziel, who had predicted victory to them:

so shall ye prosper; things will succeed to your wishes, and beyond your expectations.

{u} Prooem. in Amos, and Comment. in ch. i. 1.

2 Chronicles 20:21

Ver. 21. And when he had consulted with the people,.... His principal officers, in what order they should march, and in what manner they should form themselves, when they met the enemy, and how they should conduct as if they were to engage:

he appointed singers unto the Lord; to sing his praise, and give him glory, as if the victory was already completed, it being so sure:

and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army; that is, praise God, who is glorious in holiness, whose beauty lies in his holiness, and who is holy in all his ways and works:

and to say, praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever; with which they were to conclude their songs of praise, as David did, and whose songs they might sing; see Ps 136:1.

2 Chronicles 20:22

Ver. 22. And when they began to sing and to praise,.... They sung more or less all the way they went, from the time they set out, but when they came nearer the enemy, they sung louder and louder:

the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which came against Judah; some take them to be their own ambushments, which they set for the destruction of Judah; but the Lord turned them against their own confederates, mistaking them for Jews; so the Vulgate Latin version,

"the Lord turned their ambushments against themselves;"

or rather these were angels, who appeared in the form of the Edomites, and so fell upon the Ammonites and Moabites:

and they were smitten; by them, many of them were destroyed; hence it follows,

2 Chronicles 20:23

Ver. 23. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir,.... Supposing that they had acted a treacherous part by them, and took on the side of their enemies:

utterly to slay and destroy them; as they did:

and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir; so that there were none left of them:

everyone helped to destroy one another; in their confusion mistook one another, either for Edomites or Jews, like the Midianites in the times of Gideon.

2 Chronicles 20:24

Ver. 24. When Judah came towards the watch tower in the wilderness,.... Which might stand upon the hill or cliff of Ziz, for the sake of the direction of travellers, and the preservation of them from thieves and robbers:

they looked unto the multitude; which they could take a view of from the top of the hill:

and behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped; all to a man slain, there was not one to be seen standing on his feet.

2 Chronicles 20:25

Ver. 25. And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take the spoil of them,.... Which was all they had to do; they had no need to fight, as they were told, the Lord had fought for them:

they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies; rich garments on them, and gold and silver on them:

and precious jewels, which they stripped of for themselves; with which their clothes, or some part of their bodies, were ornamented:

more than they could carry away; they were so many, that they made too great a burden for them:

and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much; it took up so much time to strip the bodies, to search for their money and jewels, rings, chains, and such like things of value, worn by them.

2 Chronicles 20:26

Ver. 26. And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah,.... As it was afterwards called from what they did there, as follows, which was the reason of its name:

for there they blessed the Lord; returned thanks to him for this wonderful appearance on their behalf, and gave him the glory of it; no doubt but they had given him praise before in some sort and manner, but now in a set, solemn, and public manner, with one heart and voice they united in ascribing honour, blessing, and glory to him:

therefore the name of the same place was called the valley of Berachah unto this day; the valley of Blessing; this name it bore in the times of Ezra, the writer of this book, even after the Jews returned from the Babylonish captivity; it is thought to be the same that is called by Jerom {w} Cepharbarucha, which he speaks of as not far from Engedi, see 2Ch 20:2, others will have it to be the same with the valley of Jehoshaphat, but not so likely, that seems to be nearer Jerusalem.

{w} Epitaph. Paulae.

2 Chronicles 20:27

Ver. 27. Then they returned, every man of Judah and of Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat at the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy,.... There to praise the Lord in the temple, as they had done in the valley:

for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies; by giving them a complete victory, and making them masters of so much wealth and riches.

2 Chronicles 20:28

Ver. 28. And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries, and harps, and trumpets,.... The three principal instruments of music used in singing the praises of God; these they played upon as they came to the city, and entered it, and passed through it:

unto the house of the Lord; the temple, there to offer praise and thanksgiving again.

2 Chronicles 20:29

Ver. 29. And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of these countries,.... Whose armies were slain, and all other neighbouring ones; for the word these is supplied:

when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel; and they were afraid to invade their land, or make war with them; nor did the Edomites dare to revolt in the times of Jehoshaphat.

2 Chronicles 20:30

Ver. 30. So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet,.... Both within and without; they were at peace among themselves, and none from abroad dared to molest them:

for his God gave him rest round about; from all his enemies; the Targum has it, the Word of his God; and so, in the preceding verse, the Word of the Lord fought; and in 2Ch 20:28 the Word of the Lord made them rejoice.

2 Chronicles 20:31

Ver. 31,32. And Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah,.... Of these two verses, See Gill on "1Ki 22:42".
See Gill on "1Ki 22:43".

2 Chronicles 20:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "2Ch 20:31".

2 Chronicles 20:33

Ver. 33. Howbeit, the high places were not taken away,.... The high places, where idols were worshipped, were taken away, 2Ch 17:6, but not those where sacrifices were offered to the true God:

for as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers; to seek and serve him wholly, according to his will, to offer sacrifices to him only at Jerusalem, as the law required, De 12:5, they could not as yet be prevailed upon to relinquish the high places, built and made use of before the temple was; partly because they were nearer to some of them than that, and partly out of veneration for them, as being of a long time used.

2 Chronicles 20:34

Ver. 34. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last,.... Those that were done at the beginning, and those that were done at the latter end of his reign:

behold, they are written in the book of Jehu, the son of Hanani, who is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel; see 1Ki 16:1, the same that reproved Jehoshaphat, 2Ch 19:2. He wrote a book of his own times, and which was so much esteemed, according to Kimchi, that it was written with, or put along with, the book of the kings of Israel, for so he interprets the phrase; but the Targum understands it of Jehu being the king's historiographer, who had the care and oversight of the diary, journal, or annals of the kings of Israel.

2 Chronicles 20:35

Ver. 35. And after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel,.... Meaning, not after the invasion of the Moabites, &c. and the slaughter of them, but after Jehoshaphat returned from Ramothgilead, when he was reproved by a prophet for helping the ungodly, 2Ch 19:1 so that it was a great aggravation of his folly and weakness, that after that, and quickly after that, he should join himself to a wicked prince, though not in war, but in trade; for so it must be, since Ahaziah reigned but two years, and those not complete, see 1Ki 22:51, but is here related, that Jehoshaphat's weaknesses and blemishes might be laid together:

who did very wickedly; that is, Ahaziah, who walked in the ways of Ahab his father, and of Jezebel his mother, and of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, 1Ki 22:52.

2 Chronicles 20:36

Ver. 36. And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish,.... Of which, See Gill on "1Ki 22:48", and though it is there said, 1Ki 22:49, that Jehoshaphat refused letting the servants of Ahaziah go with his, that was after he had been reproved for joining with him, and after the ships were broken:

and they made the ships in Eziongeber; of which
See Gill on "1Ki 9:26".

2 Chronicles 20:37

Ver. 37. Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah,.... A city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:44

prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah; an idolatrous prince, with whom he ought to have had no fellowship, even in civil things, it being both a countenancing him, and exposing himself and people to danger:

the Lord hath broken thy works; the ships built at the joint expense of the two kings, that is, the Lord had determined to break them, and now foretold that he would; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord hath destroyed thy works:"

and the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish;
See Gill on "1Ki 22:48".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 21

This chapter relates Jehoram's succession to the throne of Judah, and the murders and idolatries committed by him, 2Ch 21:1, the revolt of the Edomites from him, and some of his own people, 2Ch 21:8, a writing of Elijah to him, threatening a great plague to him and his family, 2Ch 21:12, the raising up of several enemies against him, 2Ch 21:16, his sickness, death, and burial, 2Ch 21:18.

Ver. 1. Now Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers,....
See Gill on "1Ki 22:50".

2 Chronicles 21:2

Ver. 2. And he had brethren, the sons of Jehoshaphat,.... That is, Jehoram had, who succeeded him: their names follow,

Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah; two of them were of the same name; though it may be observed, that in the

Hebrew text they are somewhat distinguished, the latter is called Azariah; Jehiel is said, by the Jews {x}, to be the same with Hiel that rebuilt Jericho; indeed it was rebuilt in the times of Jehoshaphat, and was a city of the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:21 which was under his jurisdiction; but it can never be thought that he would ever suffer a son of his to rebuild it; besides, he is expressly said to be a Bethelite, 1Ki 16:34,

all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel; which generally, since the division of the kingdom, designs the ten tribes, but cannot be the meaning here, because Jehoshaphat was only king of two tribes, Judah and Benjamin; they were tribes of Israel indeed, and so he was king of a part of Israel; and besides, many out of the ten tribes came and settled in his kingdom, and were under his government; though some think he is so called, because he concerned himself so much for the kingdom of Israel, and more than for his own; but the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, all read king of Judah; wherefore some are of opinion that Israel is a mistake of the transcriber; but this need not be supposed, since he was of right king of Israel, and was in fact king of two tribes that belonged to Israel.

{x} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 4.

2 Chronicles 21:3

Ver. 3. And their father gave them great gifts of silver, and of gold, and of precious things,.... As jewels and precious stones; or precious garments, as the Targum, in like manner as Abraham gave to his sons, when he sent them from Isaac:

with fenced cities in Judah; not as their own property, but he appointed them governors in them, to defend them against an enemy, and as a mark of honour to them:

but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram, because he was the firstborn; strictly observing the law in De 21:16, which was not always done; though it was reckoned by the Heathens contrary to the law of nations to give the kingdom to the younger {y}.

{y} Justin. e Trogo, l. 16. c. 2.

2 Chronicles 21:4

Ver. 4. Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father,.... Succeeded him in it, and reigned alone, for he had reigned with his father some years before his death; See Gill on "2Ki 8:16",

he strengthened himself; in the kingdom, by some means or another closely attaching the greater part of the princes, and people of the land, unto him, when he thought himself well settled and established on the throne; though some understand it of making strong, or hardening his heart to do what is next mentioned:

and slew all his brethren with the sword; either to get their riches into his hands, or lest, being religious princes, they should oppose his restoring idolatry, and for that reason the people should depose him, and set up one of them; and therefore he dispatched them out of the way to secure himself, and carry his point:

and [divers] also of the princes of Israel; such who had removed out of the ten tribes, for the sake of religion, and therefore would never agree to the introduction of idolatry among them, for which reason Jehoram slew them; and perhaps they might express their disapprobation and abhorrence of his murder of his brethren.

2 Chronicles 21:5

Ver. 5-10. Jehoram was thirty two years old,.... Of these verses,
See Gill on "2Ki 8:17" See Gill on "2Ki 8:18" See Gill on "2Ki 8:19" See Gill on "2Ki 8:20" See Gill on "2Ki 8:21" See Gill on "2Ki 8:22"

2 Chronicles 21:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "2Ch 21:5".

2 Chronicles 21:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "2Ch 21:5".

2 Chronicles 21:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "2Ch 21:5".

2 Chronicles 21:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ch 21:5".

2 Chronicles 21:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ch 21:5".

2 Chronicles 21:11

Ver. 11. Moreover, he made high places in the mountains of Judah,.... Temples and altars for idols, which, being built on mountains, had the name of high places; and these Jehoram made or rebuilt were those which had been pulled down by Asa and Jehoshaphat:

and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication; that is, idolatry, drawing them by his own example to worship Baal, for he did what Ahab and his family did, 2Ch 21:6, and compelled Judah thereto; the inhabitants of Jerusalem falling into the same idolatrous practice with him, he forced the inhabitants of the cities, and in the country, to do the same, who it seems were not so willing and ready to comply therewith.

2 Chronicles 21:12

Ver. 12. And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet,.... Not what was written by him after his ascension to heaven, and from thence came to Jehoram, even seven years after that, as say some Jewish writers {z}; nor was it a writing from another person of the same name in those times, since of such an one we nowhere read; nor from Elisha bearing the name of Elijah, having a double portion of his spirit on him, since he is never so called; but this was a writing of Elijah's before his ascension, who, foreseeing by a spirit of prophecy what Jehoram would be guilty of, wrote this, and gave it to one of the prophets, as Kimchi suggests, and most probably to Elisha, to communicate it to him at a proper time; and who might, as the above writer intimates, think it came immediately from heaven:

saying, thus saith the Lord God of David thy father; and from whose God he had departed, and to which ancestor of his he was so much unlike:

because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah; neither trod in the steps of his father nor grandfather.

{z} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 17. Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 12. 1. A. M. 3050.

2 Chronicles 21:13

Ver. 13. And hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel,.... Worshipping the calves, and even Baal, with other idols, as they did:

and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab; meaning spiritual whoredoms or idolatries:

and hast also slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself; more religious, more humane, more prudent, and fitter for government.

2 Chronicles 21:14

Ver. 14. Behold, with a great plague will the Lord smite thy people,.... They going into the same idolatry with himself willingly, at least great part of them, and therefore deserved to be smitten, and which would be a punishment to him:

and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods; which should be carried captive, as the event shows.

2 Chronicles 21:15

Ver. 15. And thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels,.... Which was a just retaliation to him, for having no bowels of compassion on his brethren whom he slew:

until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day; that continuing day after day, and even year after year, the space of two years, as appears from 2Ch 21:19.

2 Chronicles 21:16

Ver. 16. Moreover, the Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines,.... Which had been depressed in the times of Jehoshaphat, to whom they brought their presents and tribute willingly, 2Ch 17:11

and of the Arabians that were near the Ethiopians; not the Ethiopians of Africa, as the Targum, for the Arabians were not near them, but the Chusaean Arabs or Midianites, see Nu 12:1. The Targum is, the Word of the Lord did this.

2 Chronicles 21:17

Ver. 17. And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, &c. l In an hostile manner:

and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, his gold, silver, and precious things, the rich furniture of his palace; no mention is made of any other plunder in the city, or the country; so that they seem to have had their principal eye to the king's palace, and the spoil of that; being so directed by the providence of God, who had stirred them up to do this as a punishment of Jehoram:

and his sons also, and his wives; these they also carried away, all but Athaliah, who hid herself; he through his disease not being able to make any opposition, or to get any forces together to withstand them:

so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons; the same that is called Ahaziah and Azariah, 2Ch 22:1 so the prophecy in 2Ch 21:14 was fulfilled.

2 Chronicles 21:18

Ver. 18. After all this the Lord smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease. What it was is not agreed upon; some take it be an "hernia", or rupture; others, the falling of the "anus", or a fistula in it; others, the colic, or iliac passion; but generally it is thought to be a dysentery, or bloody flux; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord broke him."

2 Chronicles 21:19

Ver. 19. And it came to pass that in process of time, after the end of two years,.... So long he was afflicted and tortured with the above disease:

his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness; either in like manner as Judas's did, **Ac 1:18** or as in the manner the bowels of Arius are said to do, while sitting on the seat of the vault {a}; or perhaps only what was contained in the bowels is meant, if it was the colic:

so he died of sore diseases; he seems to have had a complication of them, and these very painful and distressing:

and the people made no burning for him, like the burnings of his fathers; as they did for his grandfather Asa, 2Ch 16:14, they did not burn spices or odoriferous wood, as the Targum; though his body, because of the stench of it, needed it, as Jarchi observes.

{a} Sozomen. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 29, 30.

2 Chronicles 21:20

Ver. 20. Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years,.... See **2Ki 8:17**,

and departed without being desired; to live, either by himself, being weary of life through the pain he endured; or by his people, he being so wicked a prince, and so ill beloved by them, that nobody wished to have him live, but were glad to hear of his death; the meaning is, he died unlamented; his death is expressed by a departing out of this world into another, a phrase more than once used for death in the New Testament, see Joh 13:1,

howbeit, they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings; they showed him some respect for the sake of his father, by burying him in the city of David, but denied him the honour of lying in the royal sepulchres, see **2Ki 8:24**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 22

In this chapter we have an account of the wicked reign of Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, 2Ch 22:1 of his death, the occasion and manner of it, 2Ch 22:5 and of his mother Athaliah destroying all the royal seed, excepting one, who was hid by the king's sister, and assuming the government to herself, 2Ch 22:10.

Ver. 1. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his stead,.... He being the only surviving one of the sons of Jehoram, the same with Jehoahaz, 2Ch 21:17 who was saved when the rest were taken captive and slain, by his mother Athaliah, and he made his escape, and that she also escaped is clear from
2Ch 22:10

for the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp; that is, of the Philistines, 2Ch 21:16, which band seems to be a band or company of thieves and robbers, as the Septuagint, cruel and barbarous, as the action ascribed to them shows:

[for they] had slain all the eldest; sons of Jehoram; the Philistines and Arabians only carried them away captives, but those slew them in cold blood:

so Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah reigned; being declared his successor by the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 22:2

Ver. 2. Forty two and years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign,.... In **2Ki**

8:26, he is said to be but twenty two years old at his accession to the throne, which is undoubtedly most correct; for this makes him to be two years older than his father when he died, who was thirty two when he began to reign, and reigned eight years, 2Ch 21:20, different ways are taken to solve this difficulty; some refer this to Jehoram, that he was forty two when Ahaziah began to reign, but he was but forty when he died; others to the age of Athaliah his mother, as if he was the son of one that was forty two, when he himself was but twenty two; but no instance is given of any such way of writing, nor any just reason for it; others make these forty two years reach to the twentieth of his son Joash, his age twenty two, his reign one, Athaliah six, and Joash thirteen; but the two principal solutions which seem most to satisfy learned men are, the one, that he was twenty two when he began to reign in his father's lifetime, and forty two when he began to reign in his own right; but then he must reign twenty years with his father, whereas his father reigned but eight years: to make this clear they observe {b}, as Kimchi and Abarbinel, from whom this solution is taken, that he reigned eight years very happily when his son was twenty two, and taken on the throne with him, after which he reigned twenty more ingloriously, and died, when his son was forty two; this has been greedily received by many, but without any proof: the other is, that these forty two years are not the date of the age of Ahaziah, but of the reign of the family of Omri king of Israel; so the Jewish chronology {c}; but how impertinent must the use of such a date be in the account of the reign of a king of Judah? all that can be said is, his mother was of that family, which is a trifling reason for such an unusual method of reckoning: it seems best to acknowledge a mistake of the copier, which might easily be made through a similarity of the numeral letters, bm, forty two, for bk, twenty two {d}; and the rather since some copies of the Septuagint, and the Syriac and Arabic versions, read twenty two, as in Kings; particularly the Syriac version, used in the church of Antioch from the most early times; a copy of which Bishop Usher obtained at a very great price, and in which the number is twenty two, as he assures us; and that the difficulty here is owing to the carelessness of the transcribers is owned by Glassius {e}, a warm advocate for the integrity of the Hebrew text, and so by Vitringa {f}: and indeed it is more to the honour of the sacred Scriptures to acknowledge here and there a mistake in the copiers, especially in the historical books, where there is sometimes a strange difference of names and numbers, than to give in to wild and distorted interpretations of them, in order to reconcile them, where there is no danger with respect to any article of faith or manners; and, as a learned man {g} has observed of the New Testament,

"it is an invincible reason for the Scripture's part, that other escapes should be so purposely and infinitely let pass, and yet no saving and substantial part at all scarce moved out of its place; to say the truth, these varieties of readings, in a few by-places, do the same office to the main Scriptures, as the variation of the compass to the whole magnet of the earth, the mariner knows so much the better for these how to steer his course;"

and, with respect to some various readings in the Old Testament, Dr. Owen {h} observes, God has suffered this lesser variety to fall out, in or among the copies we have, for the quickening and exercising of our diligence in our search of his word:

he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also [was] Athaliah, the daughter of Omri, see **2Ki 8:26**.

{b} In Hieron. Trad. Heb. in Paralip. fol. 85. E. {c} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 17. So Ben Gersom. {d} See Kennicott's Dissert. 1. p. 98. {e} Philolog. Sacr. p. 114. {f} Hypotypol Hist. Sacr. p. 67. {g} J. Gregory's Preface to his Works. {h} Divine Original of the Scripture, p. 14.

2 Chronicles 22:3

Ver. 3. He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab,.... As his father Jehoram had, 2Ch 21:6

for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly; to commit idolatry, who was of that idolatrous house.

2 Chronicles 22:4

Ver. 4. Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the Lord, like the house of Ahab,.... See **2Ki 8:27**

for they were his counsellors, after the death of his father, to his destruction; both of soul and body; for they gave him bad advice, both in religious and civil things; these were some of the family or court of the king of Israel, that his mother sent for after his father's death to be of his council.

2 Chronicles 22:5

Ver. 5,6. He walked also after their counsel,.... Did as they advised him, as in matters of religion, so in political things, of which there is an instance in this and the next verse; of which
See Gill on "2Ki 8:28".
See Gill on "2Ki 8:29".

2 Chronicles 22:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "2Ch 22:5".

2 Chronicles 22:7

Ver. 7. And the destruction of Ahaziah was of God by coming to Joram,.... Of his appointing; it was according to his purpose and decree, and was brought about by his overruling Providence, ordering the occasion and manner of it very justly for his sins:

for when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi; see **2Ki 9:21**,

whom the Lord had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab; raised up to be king of Israel for that purpose, **2Ki 9:6**, the Targum is,

"whom Elijah anointed by the command of the Word of the Lord;"

but it was not Elijah, but a prophet by the order of Elisha, that anointed him, **2Ki 9:1**, and this being done by direction of the Lord, is ascribed to him.

2 Chronicles 22:8

Ver. 8. And it came to pass, that when Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab,.... On Joram, his son, and seventy more sons, his kinsfolks, courtiers, and priests:

and found the princes of Judah, and or even the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah; whose number was forty two:

that ministered to Ahaziah; had offices in his court, or in obedience to his will, went to visit the children of the king and queen of Israel:

and he slew them; Jehu did; of the occasion, time, and place of his meeting with them, and slaying them, see 2Ki 10:12.

2 Chronicles 22:9

Ver. 9-11. And he sought Ahaziah,.... Who fled on Joram's being wounded by Jehu:

and they caught him; the soldiers of Jehu, who were sent after him, and bid to smite him:

for he was hid in Samaria; either in some part of the kingdom of Samaria, or in the city itself, whither he fled:

and brought him to Jehu: who was at Jezreel,
See Gill on "2Ki 9:27",

and when they had slain him they buried him; not at Jezreel, but delivered him to his servants to carry him to Jerusalem, and there bury him in the sepulchres of his fathers, **2Ki 9:28**,

because, said they, he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the Lord with all his heart; a grandson of his, and therefore out of respect to the memory of his name, these being religious men, ordered his burial there:

so the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom; his brethren and their sons being slain, and his own children being young fell into the hands of Athaliah, who murdered them all, but one, hid by his aunt, and so got the government into her own hands, as may be observed in the following verses, 2Ch 22:10.

2 Chronicles 22:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ch 22:9".

2 Chronicles 22:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Ch 22:9".

2 Chronicles 22:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "2Ch 22:9".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 23

The contents of this chapter are the same with 2Ki 11:4 and need no other explanation than what may be found in the notes there, to which the reader is referred.

See Gill on "2Ki 11:4".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:5".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:6".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:7".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:8".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:9".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:10".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:11".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:12".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:13".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:14".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:15".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:16".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:17".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:18".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:19".
See Gill on "2Ki 11:20".

2 Chronicles 23:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

2 Chronicles 23:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "2Ch 23:1".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 24

This chapter begins with the reign of Joash king of Judah, son of Ahaziah, 2Ch 24:1, relates his concern and care to repair the temple, 2Ch 24:4, the death of Jehoiada the priest, during whose life he reigned well, but after his death sadly apostatized, 2Ch 24:15, for which, being reproved by Zechariah, he was so wroth with him as to order him to be stoned, 2Ch 24:20, wherefore for these evils enemies were raised up against him; he was smitten with diseases, and his servants conspired against him and slew him, and would not bury him among the kings, 2Ch 24:23.

Ver. 1,2. Joash was seven years old when he began to reign,.... This, and the following verse, are the same with 2Ki 11:21.
See Gill on "2Ki 12:1".
See Gill on "2Ki 12:2".

2 Chronicles 24:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ch 24:1".

2 Chronicles 24:3

Ver. 3. And Jehoiada took for him two wives,.... Not for himself; he had a wife who was aunt to King Joash, and he had sons who were concerned with him in anointing him, 2Ch 22:11 and was now upwards of one hundred years of age; but for the king, when he was at an age fit for marriage, he advised him to marry, and proposed wives to him, whom he thought would be agreeable; for, observing what mischief was done both in church and state through Jehoram's marrying Athaliah, he was desirous of preventing any such disagreeable marriage; and as the young king was in all things guided and directed by him, so he was in this; and no doubt they were good women he pitched upon, and proposed to the king; one of them was Jehoadan, 2Ch 25:1, but the name of the other we know not:

and he begat sons and daughters; how many is not said, nor do we read of the names of any of them, but of Amaziah who succeeded him.

2 Chronicles 24:4

Ver. 4. And it came to pass after this,.... After his marriage, when he was about twenty or twenty one years of age, perhaps:

that Joash was minded to repair the house of the Lord; which in some places might be fallen to decay, having been built one hundred and fifty years or more, and in others defaced by Athaliah, and needed ornamenting, see 2Ki 12:4.

2 Chronicles 24:5

Ver. 5. And he gathered together the priests and Levites,.... To communicate his mind unto, and give them a charge and instructions:

and said unto them, go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year; what money he means is more fully explained in 2Ki 12:4,

and see that ye haste the matter; for he was very desirous of having this work accomplished, it being the place of the worship of God, and where he had been preserved in his infancy:

howbeit, the Levites hastened it not; either through negligence in them to collect the money, or backwardness in the people to give, or through an avaricious disposition to keep it, and use it for themselves; so that it was delayed unto the twenty third year of his reign 2Ki 12:6.

2 Chronicles 24:6

Ver. 6. And the king called for Jehoiada the chief,.... Who was either the high priest, or the head of his course, or, however, the chief of the priests and Levites concerned in this affair, and, indeed, was the chief or prime minister of state:

and said unto him, why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah, and out of Jerusalem, the collection; the money to repair the house they were ordered to collect, 2Ch 25:6 according to the commandment

of Moses the servant of the Lord and of the congregation of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness? for the repair of it, such as Moses required, and the people used to pay, referring to the half shekel; or to a freewill offering of the people, Moses enjoined or directed to.

2 Chronicles 24:7

Ver. 7. For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman,.... Not Ahaziah and his brethren, in the lifetime of Jehoram, but sons of Athaliah by another man, as Kimchi suggests:

had broken up the house of God; not that they had made ruptures in it, or broke down the walls of it, but had defaced it by taking off the gold and silver upon it:

and also all the dedicated things of the house of the Lord did they bestow upon Baalim; not strictly all, but a great many of them, as this word in many instances is used, as Kimchi observes, and with them furnished, beautified, and adorned the temple of Baal.

2 Chronicles 24:8

Ver. 8. And at the king's commandment they made a chest,....

See Gill on "2Ki 12:9".

2 Chronicles 24:9

Ver. 9. And they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem,.... By heralds appointed for the purpose:

to bring in to the Lord; into the house of the Lord, and for the reparation of it; and so for his service, honour, and glory:

the collection that Moses the servant of the Lord laid upon Israel in the wilderness; not to bring in the tabernacle of Moses, as the Targum here and in 2Ch 24:6, but such a voluntary gift as Moses moved the children of Israel to bring, when in the wilderness, for the service of the tabernacle.

2 Chronicles 24:10

Ver. 10. And all the princes and all the people rejoiced,.... When they heard the proclamation, and understood for what use the money was to be given, and in what manner; all was agreeable and pleasing to them:

and brought in, and cast into the chest; through the hole that was in the lid of it, 2Ki 12:9,

until they had made an end: everyone had given as much as he could, or thought fit to give.

2 Chronicles 24:11

Ver. 11. Now it came to pass, that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites,.... The place where his officer or officers met, appointed for this service; very probably in one of the chambers of the temple,

and when they saw that there was much money: see 2Ki 12:10,

the king's scribe; or secretary:

and the high priest's officer; his "sagan", or deputy priest:

came and emptied the chest; poured out the money, and told it, and put it up in bags, 2Ki 12:10 and took it, and carried it to its place again, 2Ch 24:8, by the hands of the Levites that brought it;

and thus they did day by day; as often as the chest was full, or they perceived there was much in it:

and gathered money in abundance; enough to repair the house, ornament it, and furnish it with vessels that were wanting.

2 Chronicles 24:12

Ver. 12. And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the Lord,.... That is, they gave it to those who were overseers of them, to pay them with it, 2Ki 12:11

and hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the Lord see 2Ki 12:12

and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the Lord; where it required any work of that kind.

2 Chronicles 24:13

Ver. 13. So the workmen wrought,.... The masons, carpenters, blacksmiths, and brasiers:

and the work was perfected by them; the business of repairs was completely finished:

and they set the house of God in his state; as it was at first:

and strengthened it; so that it seemed as firm and stable as when first built.

2 Chronicles 24:14

Ver. 14. And when they had finished it,.... The repairs of the house, all that were necessary:

they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada: that is, the overseers, when they had paid the workmen, brought what was left of the money collected to the king and the priest, to dispose of as they should think fit:

whereof were made vessels for the house of the Lord; in the room of such that Athaliah and her sons had taken away, and converted to the use of Baal; for though it is said, 2Ki 12:13, that none were made of this money, the meaning is, that none were made of it until the work was finished, and the workmen paid:

even vessels to minister and offer withal; which, according to Jarchi, were pestles and mortars to beat spices with; but Kimchi thinks they were small vessels with which they drew wine out of the bin for drink offerings: and spoons and vessels of gold and silver: see 2Ki 12:13,

and they offered burnt offerings in the house of the Lord continually all the days of Jehoiada; the daily sacrifice, morning and evening.

2 Chronicles 24:15

Ver. 15. But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died,.... A very old man; few at this time arrived to such an age; he was a rare instance:

One hundred and thirty years old was he when he died; the oldest man we read of from the times of Moses, and older than he by ten years.

2 Chronicles 24:16

Ver. 16. And they buried him in the city of David among the kings,.... In honour to him, he having been the preserver of the king, and of the kingdom, and being by marriage a relation of the present king, uncle to him:

because he had done good in Israel; in that part of it which belonged to the kingdom of the house of David:

both towards God, and towards his house; both for the restoring the pure worship of God, and the repairs of the temple.

2 Chronicles 24:17

Ver. 17. Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah,.... Who had been secretly inclined to idolatry, but durst not discover it during the life of Jehoiada; whose influence at court was too great for them to counterwork, but when dead they came to court:

and made obeisance to the king; bowed in a very lowly manner, fawned upon him, and flattered him. Some Jewish writers, as Kimchi observes, understand this of religious adoration, that they made a god of him, and worshipped him, pretending, as a foundation for it, his being hid six months in the temple, and preserved; but it designs no more than civil worship and homage:

then the king hearkened unto them; coursing with him about divine worship, which the business they came about; desiring that they might, not be obliged to come to Jerusalem to worship, but might make use of the high places, and by that means worship what idol they pleased, which he granted to them; the Targum is,

"he received their idols from them."

2 Chronicles 24:18

Ver. 18. And they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers,.... Came no more to the temple at Jerusalem, forsook the worship and service of it:

and served groves and idols; worshipped idols in groves, which were upon high places:

and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass: their idolatry, and particularly on these princes, the Syrian army coming against them, and destroying them, 2Ch 24:23.

2 Chronicles 24:19

Ver. 19. Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the Lord,.... To reprove them for their sin, to warn them of their danger, to exhort them to their duty, and endeavour to restore them, and reduce them to the obedience and worship, of God; such was his clemency, goodness, and condescension to them, before he executed his wrath upon them:

and they testified against them; against their sins, and declared what would befall them, and called heaven and earth to witness for God and against them:

but they would not give ear: to their reproofs, admonitions, cautions, and exhortations, but went on in their own ways.

2 Chronicles 24:20

Ver. 20. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest,.... The spirit of prophecy, as the Targum; he was moved and influenced by it to speak what is after related:

which stood above the people; in a desk, or sort of pulpit, in which the priests stood when they taught the people, that they might be the better heard, like that which Ezra used, **Ne 8:4**

and said unto them, thus saith God; being moved and directed by his Spirit, he spake in his name:

why transgress ye the command of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? by committing idolatry, than which nothing could more hinder prosperity, both in things spiritual and temporal, in soul and body:

because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you; because they had forsaken the worship of God, as the Targum, God had forsaken them, and was about to give them up into the hand of their enemies.

2 Chronicles 24:21

Ver. 21. And they conspired against him,.... Consulted together to take away his life, and got the order of the king to do it:

and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the

house of the Lord; where he had stood and reproved them; this they did before he went out, while in the temple; and if he is the same Zechariah, as some think, our Lord speaks of, he was slain between the temple porch and the altar, Mt 23:35,
See Gill on "Mt 23:35".

2 Chronicles 24:22

Ver. 22. Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him,.... In preserving him in his infancy, and nourishing him; in settling him on the throne, and assisting him with his advice and counsel:

but slew his son; who also assisted at his coronation, and with his father and brethren anointed him king, as is probable, 2Ch 23:11,

and when he died, he said, the Lord look upon it, and requite it; meaning his blood; this he said, not from a private spirit of revenge, but with a view to the glory of divine justice, and which he delivered not as a wish, or by way of imprecation, that so it might be, but as a prophecy that so it would be.

2 Chronicles 24:23

Ver. 23. And it came to pass at the end of the year,.... After the death of Zechariah; so soon had his prophecy its accomplishment:

that the host of Syria came up against him; against Joash, king of Judah, under Hazael king of Syria, or however sent by him; for some think this is a different expedition from that in 2Ki 12:17 though others take it to be the same:

and they came to Judah and Jerusalem; not only came into the land of Judah, but as far as Jerusalem, the forces of Joash not being able to stop them:

and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people; the idolatrous princes of Judah, 2Ch 24:17, which is very remarkable that they should be distinguished from the people in their destruction, who had been the chief cause of the wrath of God coming upon them:

and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus; all the riches that were taken from them were sent to the king of Syria at Damascus; this looks as if Hazael was not with this army.

2 Chronicles 24:24

Ver. 24. For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men,.... It consisted but of few:

and the Lord delivered a very great host into their hand; which the king of Judah and his princes had got together to oppose them:

because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers; therefore the Lord forsook them, and gave them up into the hand of their enemies:

so they executed judgment against Joash; were the instruments God made use of to execute his vengeance on him for his idolatry and murder.

2 Chronicles 24:25

Ver. 25. And when they were departed from him,.... Having got what wealth and spoil they could:

for they left him in great diseases; through the wounds they gave him, and the distress they brought him into:

his own servants conspired against him, for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest; for perhaps more than one was slain at the same time; the rest vindicating the cause of their brother, shared the same fate; or the plural is put for the singular:

and slew him on his bed; in the house of Millo, where he lay ill of his wounds, and sick of his diseases, and could not defend himself:

and he died: of the wounds his servants gave him:

and they buried him in the city of David, but they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings; see 2Ki 12:21.

2 Chronicles 24:26

Ver. 26. And these are they that conspired against him, Zabad the son of Shimeah an Ammonitess,.... Called Jozachar, the son of Shimeah, 2Ki 12:21,

and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith a Moabitess; called in the same place the son of Shomer.

2 Chronicles 24:27

Ver. 27. Now concerning his sons,.... The sons of Joash; how many they were, and what their names:

and the greatness of the burdens laid upon him; which some understand of the hard and heavy prophecies of the Lord against him; and others of the heavy taxes and tribute imposed on him by the king of Syria; and others of the collection for the repairs of the temple, 2Ch 24:6, where the word used signifies a burden; and it follows,

and the repairing of the house of the Lord; the whole history of that:

behold, they are written in the story of the book of the kings; not in the canonical book so called, but in the history, commentaries, or annals of the kings of Judah now lost:

and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead; see 2Ki 12:21.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 25:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 25

This chapter begins with the reign of Amaziah, and some of the first acts of it, slaying those that killed his father, 2Ch 25:1, raising a large army in his own kingdom, to which he added 100,000 more he hired out of Israel, whom yet he sent home by the advice of a prophet, 2Ch 25:5, and with his own army marched against the Edomites, and obtained a victory over them, 2Ch 25:11, but the Israelites being displeased with him for dismissing them, fell on some of his cities, and slew many in them, 2Ch 25:13, and such was his stupidity, as to worship the gods of the Edomites he had conquered, for which he was reproved by a prophet, 2Ch 25:14 and being elated with his victory, he sent a challenge to the king of Israel, who accepting of it, a battle ensued, in which Judah was worsted, their king taken, and treasuries spoiled, 2Ch 25:17, and the chapter is closed with the death and burial of Amaziah, 2Ch 25:25.

Ver. 1-4. Amaziah was twenty five years old when he began to reign,.... Of these verses,
See Gill on "2Ki 14:2".
See Gill on "2Ki 14:3".
See Gill on "2Ki 14:5".
See Gill on "2Ki 14:6".

2 Chronicles 25:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ch 25:1"

2 Chronicles 25:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "2Ch 25:1"

2 Chronicles 25:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "2Ch 25:1"

2 Chronicles 25:5

Ver. 5. Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together,.... The inhabitants thereof:

and made them captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of their fathers, throughout all Judah and Benjamin; he divided the people, according to their families throughout his kingdom, into thousands and hundreds, and out of their respective families appointed captains over them:

and he numbered them from twenty years old and above; the usual age men were numbered at for war, to the fiftieth, according to Josephus; the Roman law {a} obliged none to be soldiers after fifty, nor might any be dismissed before {b}; the age of military men with the Romans was from seventeen to forty six, or, as some, forty five; but with the Persians from twenty as here to fifty {c}:

and found them three hundred thousand choice men, able to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield; which shows that their number was greatly decreased since the times of Jehoshaphat, 2Ch 17:14, occasioned by the wars under Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Joash; some copies of the Vulgate Latin {d} have only 30,000.

{a} Seneca de Brevitate Vitae, c. 20. {b} Liv. Hist. l. 42. c. 33. {c} Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 20. {d} Ed. of Sixtus V. the Lovain and MSS. in James's Corruption of the Fathers, p. 295.

2 Chronicles 25:6

Ver. 6. He hired also one hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel,.... The ten tribes, judging his own army not sufficient for his expedition against the Edomites he was meditating:

for one hundred talents of silver; which amounted to 35,300 pounds sterling, and according to Beckius {e} were about five florins and a half to each soldier.

{e} Not. in Targum in loc.

2 Chronicles 25:7

Ver. 7. But there came a man of God to him,.... Who the Jews say {f} was the brother of the king, Amos, the father of Isaiah, but without foundation:

saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; to war against Edom; meaning the 100,000 men he had hired, and suggesting that to have them with him would not be to his advantage, but his detriment, for the following reason:

for the Lord is not with Israel, to wit,

with all the children of Ephraim; they being idolaters, worshippers of the calves; and as they had forsaken the Lord, he had forsaken them; therefore no help could be expected from them; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord is not their help."

{f} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 11. 2.

2 Chronicles 25:8

Ver. 8. But if thou wilt go, do it, be strong for the battle,.... An ironical expression; if thou wilt not be advised, take them with thee, and try what thou canst do; exert all thy courage, and use thy military skill, and mark the issue:

God shall make thee fall before the enemy; notwithstanding the number of thy troops, and those of thy auxiliaries; though some take them to be spoken seriously, and read the words, "but go thou"; that is, alone, without the hired troops, and fight boldly and courageously; or otherwise "God shall make thee fall", &c.

for God hath power to help and to cast down; to help with a few, and to cast down with many; to help without the hired Israelites, and to cast down with them.

2 Chronicles 25:9

Ver. 9. And Amaziah said to the man of God, but what shall we do for the one hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel?.... They will be lost, there is no demanding them back again; this he spake with some concern, as loath to lose so much money:

and the man of God answered, the Lord is able to give thee much more than this; whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof, the gold and silver, and all the riches of it; and therefore he had no need to trouble himself about the loss of his money, which, if obedient to the will of God, he might expect it would be abundantly repaid him.

2 Chronicles 25:10

Ver. 10. Then Amaziah separated them,.... From his army, among whom they were incorporated and ranked, to wit,

the army that was come to him out of Ephraim; which he had hired of the ten tribes, these he singled out:

to go home again; to their own country:

wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in great anger; it being a great slight put upon them, and a reproach to them, to be thus dismissed, as they thought; and especially if they understood that it was because they were idolaters; and the rather as they might have hoped to have had their share in the plunder of the Edomites.

2 Chronicles 25:11

Ver. 11. And Amaziah strengthened himself, and led forth his people,.... To go to war with the Edomites; not discouraged by the dismission of the hired troops, but trusting in the promise and power of God, he went forth with boldness and intrepidity:

and went to the valley of salt, and smote of the children of Seir, ten thousand; the Edomites; so called, not because they were the posterity of Seir, but because they dwelt in Seir, from whence they drove the descendants of Seir, and dwelt in their stead; see 2Ki 14:7.

2 Chronicles 25:12

Ver. 12. And other ten thousand left alive did the children of Judah carry away captive,.... The rest of the army of the Edomites, which amounted to the same number, fell into their hands, and they took them, and carried them off:

and brought them unto the top of the rock; very probably the same on which the city Petra, the metropolis of Edom, was built, called also Selah, 2Ki 14:7 both which names signify a rock. Josephus {g} calls it the great rock in Arabia; that is, Arabia Petraea:

and cast them down from the top of the rock, that they were broken all in pieces; burst asunder, bones broken, and limb from limb separated. This sort of punishment was inflicted by the Romans on various malefactors, by casting them down from the Tarpeian rock {h}; and in Greece, according to the Delphian law, such as were guilty of sacrilege were led to a rock, and cast down headlong from thence {i}: and now in Turkey, at a place called Constantine, a town situated on the top of a great rock, the usual way of executing great criminals is by pushing them from off the cliff {k}; see **Lu 4:29**, but to use captives taken in war after this manner seems cruel and barbarous; and what should be the reason of such treatment of them is not easy to say.

{g} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 9. sect. 1. {h} Liv. Hist. l. 6. c. 20. Patercul. Hist. Roman. l. 2. Aurel. Victor. de Vir. Illustr. c. 27, 70. Vid, Rycquium de Capitol. Roman. c. 4. p. 45, &c. {i} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 11. c. 5. {k} Pitt's Account of the Mahometans, ch. 1. p. 10.

2 Chronicles 25:13

Ver. 13. But the soldiers of the army which Amaziah sent back, that they should not go with him to battle, &e.] The 100,000 men hired out of Israel, whom he dismissed before he went against Edom:

fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Bethhoron; which, though it formerly belonged to Ephraim, had been taken by the men of Judah; they did not fall on these as they returned home, for then it would have been said from Bethhoron to Samaria: but after they had returned home, they meditated this piece of revenge for the ill treatment of them, as they reckoned it:

and smote three thousand of them; of the inhabitants of the cities, who rose up and opposed them:

and took much spoil; out of them, and went their way with it.

2 Chronicles 25:14

Ver. 14. Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites,.... Instead of returning thanks to God for the victory obtained, and giving him the glory of it:

that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods;

what were the gods of the Edomites is nowhere said in Scripture; only Josephus {l} speaks of the priests of Coze, which he says was a god of the Idumaeans:

and bowed himself before them, and burned incense unto them; which was the greatest piece of sottishhess and stupidity imaginable, to worship the gods of a nation conquered by him; for since they could not save them, what help could he expect from them?

{l} Antiqu. l. l5. c. 7. sect. 9.

2 Chronicles 25:15

Ver. 15. Wherefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Amaziah,.... Idolatry being always highly displeasing to the Lord; and this was a most provoking instance of it, that when the Lord had given him victory over his enemies, that he should forsake him, and worship their gods:

and he sent unto him a prophet; whether the same as before, is not certain:

which said unto him, why hast thou sought after the gods of the people which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand? and therefore it was madness in him to seek after them, and worship them.

2 Chronicles 25:16

Ver. 16. And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that the king said unto him, art thou made of the king's council?.... He was not indeed one of his privy council, made so by him, but he was appointed a counsellor to him by the Lord, the King of kings, to expostulate with him about his idolatry, and to advise him to relinquish it, to whose counsel he ought to have hearkened:

forbear, why shouldest thou be smitten? bidding him hold his peace, and threatening him, that if he did not, he must expect to be smitten; that is, with death, as Zechariah the prophet was by the order of his father:

then the prophet forbore; left off speaking, only added this at parting:

and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee; being given up to hardness of heart, so as to pay no regard to the Lord and his prophets, which was a sure presage of destruction:

because thou hast done this; committed such idolatry, and persisted in it:

and hast not hearkened to my counsel; to reform from it.

2 Chronicles 25:17

Ver. 17-19. Then Amaziah king of Judah took advice,.... Not of God, nor of his prophets, but of some of his nobles like himself:

and sent to Joash--king of Israel; of his message to him here, and his answer in the two following verses, see the following notes:
See Gill on "2Ki 14:8".
See Gill on "2Ki 14:9".
See Gill on "2Ki 14:10".

2 Chronicles 25:18

Ver. 18 See Gill on "2Ch 25:17"

2 Chronicles 25:19

Ver. 19 See Gill on "2Ch 25:18"

2 Chronicles 25:20

Ver. 20-28. But Amaziah would not hear,.... What the king of Israel advised him to, not to meddle to his hurt;

for it came of God, that he might deliver them into the hand [of their enemies]; Amaziah and his army into the hands of Joash and his; this was the will of God, and was brought about by his providence; and that it might be, Amaziah was given up to blindness and hardness of heart, as a punishment of his idolatry:

because they sought after the gods of Edom; he and his nobles, and many of the people following his example; from hence to the end of the chapter the same things are recorded as in 2Ki 14:11, see the notes there, See Gill on "2Ki 14:11" See Gill on "2Ki 14:12" See Gill on "2Ki 14:13" See Gill on "2Ki 14:14" See Gill on "2Ki 14:15" See Gill on "2Ki 14:16" See Gill on "2Ki 14:17" See Gill on "2Ki 14:18" See Gill on "2Ki 14:19" See Gill on "2Ki 14:20"

2 Chronicles 25:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "2Ch 25:20"

2 Chronicles 25:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "2Ch 25:20"

2 Chronicles 25:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "2Ch 25:20"

2 Chronicles 25:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "2Ch 25:20"

2 Chronicles 25:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "2Ch 25:20"

2 Chronicles 25:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "2Ch 25:20"

2 Chronicles 25:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "2Ch 25:20"

2 Chronicles 25:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "2Ch 25:20"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 26:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 26

This chapter relates the good reign of Uzziah, 2Ch 26:1, his wars and victories, his buildings, the number of his soldiers, and his military stores, 2Ch 26:6, his invasion of the priest's office, in attempting to offer incense, for which he was smitten with a leprosy, which continued to his death, 2Ch 26:16.

Ver. 1-4. Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah,.... Of this and the three following verses, see the notes on 2Ki 14:21 where Uzziah is called Azariah. See Gill on "2Ki 14:21" See Gill on "2Ki 14:22" See Gill on "2Ki 15:2" See Gill on "2Ki 15:3"

2 Chronicles 26:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ch 26:1".

2 Chronicles 26:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "2Ch 26:1".

2 Chronicles 26:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "2Ch 26:1".

2 Chronicles 26:5

Ver. 5. And he sought God in the days of Zechariah,.... Not that Zechariah, the last of the prophets save one, he lived three hundred years after this; nor he that Joash slew; but, as it may seem, a son of his, perhaps the same with him in **Isa 8:2**,

who had understanding in the visions of God: who either had prophetic visions granted to him, or had divine wisdom to interpret such that others had; or, as others think, had a gift of interpreting the prophecies of others, the writings of Moses and David, &c. to which the Targum seems to agree; which paraphrases it,

"who taught in the fear of the Lord;"

with which agree the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; some copies read "in the fear of God"; as an ancient manuscript mentioned by Junius, and so the Talmud {l}:

and, as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper; in his kingdom, and against his enemies; even so long as he abode by the word, worship, and ordinances of God, of which instances are given, as follow.

{l} Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. in rad. har.

2 Chronicles 26:6

Ver. 6. And he went forth, and warred against the Philistines,.... Who in the times of Jehoram broke in upon Judah, and distressed them, 2Ch 21:16

and brake down the wall of Gath; which was one of the five principalities of the Philistines:

and the wall of Jabneh; nowhere else mentioned in Scripture, but frequent in the Jewish writings; where the sanhedrim sometimes sat, and where was a famous university, and from whence sprung many of the Jewish rabbins; it is the same which in some writers is called Jamnia, and was a port near to Joppa; and belonged to the tribe of Dan, as Josephus {m} writes:

and the wall of Ashdod: another of the principalities of the Philistines, the same with the Azotus of the New Testament; he dismantled all these places:

and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines; where he placed garrisons to keep them in awe; see **Am 1:8**.

{m} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 22.

2 Chronicles 26:7

Ver. 7. And God helped him against the Philistines,.... He did not do all before related of himself, and by his own strength, but by the help of God; the Targum is

"the Word of the Lord helped him:"

and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal; the same with Gerar, according to the Targum; which also belonged to the Philistines, and had a king in Abraham's time, Ge 20:1, the same with Askelon, another of the five principalities of the Philistines:

and the Mehunims; or the Minaeans, as the Septuagint, and whom Pliny {n} makes mention of among the Arabians; they seem to be the Scenite Arabs; see 2Ch 20:1, or rather, as the Targum, those that dwelt in the plain of Maon, which was in Arabia Petraea.

{n} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28.

2 Chronicles 26:8

Ver. 8. And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah,.... As tributaries to him, or; however, as desirous to live in friendship with him:

and his name spread abroad, even to the entering in of Egypt; so far he carried his arms, and conquered the countries that lay between Palestine and Egypt:

for he strengthened himself exceedingly; his kingdom and its coasts from the force of enemies.

2 Chronicles 26:9

Ver. 9. Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate,.... Which was broken down by the king of Israel in his father's time, 2Ch 25:23 and which he not only repaired, but strengthened, by building a tower upon it:

and at the valley gate; which led to the valley, **Ne 2:13**, called the valley of the dead bodies, in which they were cast, and in which the brook Kidron ran, Jer 31:40

and at the turning of the wall; at each of those places he built towers, which Josephus {o} says were one hundred and fifty cubits high: and fortified them; put garrisons of soldiers into them.

{o} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 3.

2 Chronicles 26:10

Ver. 10. Also he built towers in the desert,.... In the desert of Arabia, to protect travellers from thieves and robbers, and particularly shepherds and their flocks, as appears by what follows; which a certain writer {p} thinks are the same which the Indians call pagodas; not such as served for temples, but were buildings encompassed with good walls, where flocks were gathered together in case of any alarm:

and digged many wells; for the watering of the flocks, which in those hot and desert places were of great use:

for he had much cattle, both in the low country and in the plains; both flocks and herds:

husbandmen also, and vinedressers in the mountains; husbandmen to take care of the corn, and manure the land for that, and gather it when ripe; and vinedressers to prune the vines, and look after them; which were very often planted on mountains, and on which also corn grew, Ps 72:16

and in Carmel; a place in the tribe of Judah, where Nabal dwelt, 1Sa 25:2 or it may be put for any fruitful field:

for he loved husbandry; not only the profit, but the exercise of it at times; and it was usual with great personages in the eastern countries to employ themselves in some such way; Saul after he was king attended the herd, 1Sa

11:5, Mesha king of Moab was a sheep master, **2Ki 3:4**, among the Romans, Quinctius Cincinnatus and Cato Major {q} were great lovers of husbandry; and we read of one of the Chinese emperors that gave himself to husbandry, held the plough himself, broke the clods, and cast in the seed, to set an example to the whole empire {r}. Another of their emperors gave himself wholly to husbandry {s}; an other chose an husbandman for his successor, and who also encouraged husbandry {t}.

{p} Agreement of Customs between the East Indians and Jews, art. 13. p. 61. {q} In Cicero de Senectute. {r} Martin. Sinic. Hist. l. 8. p. 326. {s} Ib. l. 4. p. 92. {t} Ib. l. 1. p. 29, 32.

2 Chronicles 26:11

Ver. 11. Moreover, Uzziah had an host of fighting men,.... A standing army:

that went out to war by bands; to annoy his enemies, and to scour the country from thieves and robbers, that came in troops to plunder:

according to the number of their account, by the hand of Jeiel the scribe; the secretary of war, who ordered these bands, settled their number, and directed their destination:

and Maaseiah the ruler; or officer over them, a lieutenant:

under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains; that had the command of them, or at least of one of them.

2 Chronicles 26:12

Ver. 12. The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour were two thousand six hundred. Who were the commanders and principal officers of his army; and such a number supposed a large army, as follows.

2 Chronicles 26:13

Ver. 13. And under their hand was an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred,.... Which was larger than that in his father's time by 7500, 2Ch 25:5 besides officers:

that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy; they were ready to fight, and fight valiantly, whenever the king had any occasion for them, or the land was invaded.

2 Chronicles 26:14

Ver. 14. And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host,.... For every soldier in the army:

shields and spears; defensive and offensive weapons, the one to cover and protect their bodies, the other to push and pierce their enemies:

and helmets, and habergeons; the first of these were a covering for the head in the day of battle, and the other coats of mail, to defend the body:

and bows; to shoot arrows out of:

and slings to cast stones; at which the Benjaminites formerly were very expert.

2 Chronicles 26:15

Ver. 15. And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers, and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal,.... Such as with the Romans were called "catapultae", "ballistae" {u}, "scorpiones" {w}, &c. and by this it appears that these were not first invented in Greece and Rome, but in Judea. It is said {x}, that the Romans received the machine to batter cities from the Greeks, and that the Trojan horse was no other than a battering ram; but if they did, the invention of them must be ascribed, not to them, but rather to the Syrians and Phoenicians, according to Pliny {y}; though others {z} suppose the Carthaginians, who were a colony of theirs, to be the inventors of them; yet, after all, they seem to be the device of some skilful men among the Jews, in the times of Uzziah; according to Diodorus Siculus {a}, they were not found out when Nineveh was besieged in the times of Sardanapalus:

and his name spread far abroad; in distant countries, for his warlike dispositions and preparations, which made them stand in fear of him:

for he was helped until he was strong; he was wonderfully helped by the Lord to build fortified places, raise a numerous army, and provide all sorts of armour for them, and invent such machines as would greatly annoy the enemy, whereby he became very potent, and injected dread round about him.

{u} Cicero. Tusculan. Quaest. l. 2. Tacit. Hist. l. 3. c. 23. {w} Ammian. Marcellin. l. 23. {x} Vid. Valtrinum de re militari Roman. l. 5. c. 6. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56. {z} Vitruvius de Architectura, l. 10. c. 19. Tertullian. de Pallio, c. 1. & Salmasius in ib. Vid. Turnebi Adversaria, l. 29. c. 18. {a} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 113.

2 Chronicles 26:16

Ver. 16. When he was strong,.... Became great and powerful, through his victories, the enlargement of his dominions, and having a numerous army, and these well accoutred, and many fortified cities and towers:

his heart was lifted up to his destruction; he grew vain and proud, elated with his flourishing circumstances, which issued in his ruin:

for he transgressed against the Lord his God; who had helped him, and made him so great, and had bestowed so many favours upon him; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord his God;"

what his transgression was, follows:

and went into the temple of the Lord; the holy place, into which none but the priests might enter:

to burn incense upon the altar of incense; which stood there.

2 Chronicles 26:17

Ver. 17. And Azariah the priest went in after him,.... To hinder him from doing it, and to persuade him to go out. This was the high priest, as appears from 2Ch 26:20 and is thought to be the same that is spoken of in **1Ch 6:10** and with him eighty priests of the Lord, that were valiant men; not only able bodied men, but men of spirit and courage, and zealous for the honour of God.

2 Chronicles 26:18

Ver. 18. And they withstood Uzziah the king,.... They not only stood against him, but stood about him, surrounded him, so as to hinder him from approaching the altar of incense:

and said unto him, it appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord; it did not belong to his office as a king, it was no part of it

but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense; and to them only; for even the Levites might not do it, only those of the tribe of Levi, that descended from Aaron, see Nu 16:35,

go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed; by going into that:

neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God; but to his hurt, and be a brand of infamy upon him; for more is designed than is expressed, and as the event showed.

2 Chronicles 26:19

Ver. 19. Then Uzziah was wroth,.... With the priests, and, as Josephus {b} says, threatened to kill them:

and had a censer in his hand to burn incense; ready to do it, and resolved upon it:

and while he was wroth with the priests; and expressing his indignation, and do what he would do to them, if they continued to oppose him:

the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar; which seems not only to describe the position of the priests, being beside the altar of incense, to keep the king from it, when the leprosy was seen by them in his forehead, but the quarter from whence the stroke invisibly came. Josephus {c} says, there was earthquake at the same time, and a mountain was rent.

{b} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 4. {c} Ibid.

2 Chronicles 26:20

Ver. 20. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead,.... He was leprous all over his body, no doubt, but it appeared in his forehead very remarkably, and was seen by them all, who, without doubt, informed him of his case, and of which he soon became sensible:

and they thrust him out from thence; the holy place, he being now unfit to be in a common dwelling house, or his own palace, and much less to be in the house of God:

yea, himself also hasted to go out, because the Lord had smitten him; fearing, should he continue there, that something worse would befall him; the Targum is, the Word of the Lord. The leprosy was a disease sent immediately from God, as the case of Miriam, and this of Uzziah, show; and so the Persians {d} had a notion, that those had it who sinned against the sun, and for that reason, and which they accounted and worshipped as God.

{d} Herodot. Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 138.

2 Chronicles 26:21

Ver. 21. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper,....
See Gill on "2Ki 15:5",

for he was cut off from the house of the Lord; not, suffered to enter into that, because of his uncleanness:

and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land; see 2Ki 15:5.

2 Chronicles 26:22

Ver. 22. Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last,.... What were done by him, both in the beginning and latter end of his reign:

did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write: not in his own prophecy, but in the history of his own times, which was usual for every prophet to write, though now lost, see 2Ki 15:6.

2 Chronicles 26:23

Ver. 23. So Uzziah slept with his fathers,.... Died as they did, the same year, according to Dr. Lightfoot {e}, in which he was smitten with the leprosy; and in the year of his death it was Isaiah had the vision related in **Isa 6:1**, &c.

and they buried him with his fathers; See Gill on "2Ki 15:7".

{e} Works, vol. 1. p. 99.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 27:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 27

This chapter treats of the reign of Jotham, which was a good one, 2Ch 27:1, of his buildings and wars, 2Ch 27:3, and of his death and burial, 2Ch 27:7.

Ver. 1. Jotham was twenty five years old,....
See Gill on "2Ki 15:33".

2 Chronicles 27:2

Ver. 2. And he did that which was right,....
See Gill on "2Ki 15:34",

howbeit, he entered not into the temple of the Lord; to burn incense, as his father did; he did according to his good ways, but not his evil ones:

and the people did yet corruptly; in sacrificing and burning incense in the high places, 2Ki 15:35 which some think Joash himself did, and is meant in the preceding clause; but the sense given is best.

2 Chronicles 27:3

Ver. 3. He built the high gate in the house of the Lord,.... See the note on 2Ki 15:35

and on the wall of Ophel he built much; which Kimchi interprets an high place; it was the eastern part of Mount Zion. Josephus {f} calls it Ophlas, and says it joined to the eastern porch of the temple; and some have thought the porch of the temple is meant; the Targum renders it a palace; it is a tradition of the Jews that it was the holy of holies {g}.

{f} De Bell. Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2. {g} Vid. Hieron Trad. Heb. in lib. Paralipom. fol. 86. A. F. G.

2 Chronicles 27:4

Ver. 4. Moreover, he built cities in the mountains of Judah,.... In the mountainous part of it, the hill country of Judea, **Lu 1:65**,

and in the forests he built castles and towers; for the safety of travellers, and of shepherds and their flocks, see 2Ch 26:10.

2 Chronicles 27:5

Ver. 5. He fought also with the king of the Ammonites, and prevailed against them,.... These were brought into subjection by David; but in later times endeavoured to cast off the yoke, and even invaded the land of Judah, as in the days of Jehoshaphat, and now in the reign of Jotham, but succeeded not, see **Am 1:13**

and the children of Ammon gave him the same year one hundred talents of silver; he obliged them to pay this tribute annually, and which they began to pay in the present year, and amounted to 35,330 pounds,

and ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of barley; the measure here is the "cor", the same with the "homer"; which, according to Godwin {h}, held forty five gallons, or five bushels and five gallons, so that there must be upwards of 50,000 bushels of each of these paid to Jotham; according to Bishop Cumberland {i}, a "cor", or "homer", held seventy five wine gallons, and upwards of five pints:

so much did the children of Ammon pay both the second year and the third; the two following years as well as the present one; why this tribute was not continued to be paid cannot be said with certainty, whether the Ammonites refused and revolted, and could not be obliged, or whether the agreement was only for three years.

{h} Moses & Aaron, l. 6. c. 9. {i} Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 3. p. 86.

2 Chronicles 27:6

Ver. 6. So Jotham became mighty,.... Having built towers and castles, and fortified cities, and conquered his enemies:

because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God; ordered, directed, and guided them according to the word and will of God, and walked as in the sight of God, having the fear of him continually before him.

2 Chronicles 27:7

Ver. 7. Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars,.... Not only with the Ammonites, but with the Syrians, and ten tribes, see
2Ki 15:37

and his ways, lo, they are written in the books of the kings of Israel and Judah; not in the canonical books of Kings, but in the Chronicles of the kings of both nations, see 2Ki 15:36.

2 Chronicles 27:8

Ver. 8. He was twenty five years old,.... The same is repeated here as in 2Ch 27:1.

2 Chronicles 27:9

Ver. 9 See Gill on "2Ki 15:38".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 28:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 28

This chapter contains the reign of Ahaz, and gives an account of the idolatry he was guilty of, 2Ch 28:1, what calamities came upon him and his people, being delivered up into the hands of the kings of Syria and Israel, who slew many, and carried others captives, 2Ch 28:5, though they that were taken captive by Israel, at the admonition of a prophet, were sent back again, 2Ch 28:9, how also he was distressed by the Edomites and Philistines, and not helped by the king of Assyria, he sent for and made presents to, 2Ch 28:16 and yet went into more and greater idolatries, 2Ch 28:22, and the chapter is concluded with his death and burial, 2Ch 28:26.

Ver. 1-4. Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign,.... These verses are much the same with 2Ki 16:2, only in 2Ch 28:2 it is said,

he made also molten images for Baalim; the several Baals or idols of the nations round about, as well as served Jeroboam's calves; see **Jud 2:11**, and he is said in 2Ch 28:3,

to burn incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom; to Molech, the god of the Ammonites, who was worshipped there.
See Gill on "2Ki 16:2" See Gill on "2Ki 16:3" See Gill on "2Ki 16:4"

2 Chronicles 28:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ch 28:1"

2 Chronicles 28:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "2Ch 28:1"

2 Chronicles 28:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "2Ch 28:1"

2 Chronicles 28:5

Ver. 5. Wherefore the Lord his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria,.... Whose name was Rezin, 2Ki 16:5, though that is an after expedition to this, which is there related. The Lord is called the God of Ahaz, because he was so of right; he had dominion over him, and ought to have been worshipped by him; and, besides, he was so by virtue of the national covenant between God and the people Ahaz was king of; and moreover, Ahaz professed he was his God, though in an hypocritical manner, and he forsook the true worship of him:

and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus; whereas in a later expedition, related in 2Ki 16:5, they did not succeed:

and he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel; whose name was Pekah:

who smote him with a great slaughter; as is next related.

2 Chronicles 28:6

Ver. 6. For Pekah son of Remaliah,.... Who was at this time king of Israel:

slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all

valiant men; a great slaughter to be made at one time, and of valiant men, but not so great as that in 2Ch 13:17,

because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers; this was not a reason with Pekah for slaying them, he himself being an idolater, but why the Lord suffered them to be slain by him.

2 Chronicles 28:7

Ver. 7. And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son,.... Who therefore must have escaped being burnt in the valley of Hinnom, or only was caused to pass through the fire there, 2Ch 28:3,

and Azrikam the governor of the house; steward or treasurer in the king's house, in the same office as Sheban was, Isa 22:15

and Elkanah that was next to the king: prime minister of state.

2 Chronicles 28:8

Ver. 8. And the children of Israel carried captive of their brethren two hundred thousand women, sons and daughters,.... Which was a very large and unusual number to be carried captive; but having made such a slaughter of the men, and the rest being intimidated thereby, it was the more easily done:

and took away also much spoil from them; wealth and riches out of their cities, and even from Jerusalem; for by the preceding verse it seems as if they came thither:

and brought the spoils to Samaria; or rather "towards Samaria" {k}, as some render the word; for they were not as yet come to it, nor did they bring it and their captives thither, see **2Ch 9:15**.

{k} Nwrmvl "versus Samariam", Piscator, Rambachius.

2 Chronicles 28:9

Ver. 9. But a prophet of the Lord was there, whose name was Oded,.... Not the same that was in the time of Asa, 2Ch 15:1,

and he went out before the host that came to Samaria; that was coming thither; he went out of Samaria to meet them:

and said unto them, behold, because the Lord God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand; he let them know it was not owing to their wisdom and conduct, their prowess and courage, that they had got the victory over them, but because the Lord was displeased with them for their sins, and therefore gave them up into their hands:

and ye have slain them in a rage that reaches up unto heaven; that is, with an exceeding great rage and fury, and the cry of which reached to heaven also, and was displeasing to God; he suggests to them, that they had exceeded all bounds, and had not shown that compassion to their brethren, when fallen into their hands, they ought to have done, and which therefore was resented by the God of heaven, see **Zec 1:15**.

2 Chronicles 28:10

Ver. 10. And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you,.... As seemed by taking and bringing captive such a number of them, contrary to the law, Le 25:39

but are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God? for which they deserved to be chastised as well as their brethren the men of Judah, and might expect it, and especially if they used them in a barbarous manner, and contrary to the will of God.

2 Chronicles 28:11

Ver. 11. Now hear me therefore,.... And not only hear, but be obedient:

and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken of your brethren; their women, sons and daughters, even all of them, the whole 200,000:

for the fierce wrath of God is upon you; hangs over your heads, and will fall upon you, unless you do this.

2 Chronicles 28:12

Ver. 12. Then certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim,.... Of the principal men of the ten tribes, whose names follow:

Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against them that came from the war; who were bringing the captives and spoils to Samaria; but these princes, being influenced by what the prophet said, hindered their proceeding any further.

2 Chronicles 28:13

Ver. 13. And said unto them, ye shall not bring in the captives hither,.... That is, into Samaria, near which it seems they now were:

for whereas we have offended against the Lord already; by exceeding in their cruelty against their brethren of Judah, as well as by worshipping the calves:

ye intend to add more to our sins and to our trespass: by making slaves of those they had taken captives, which was against the express law of God:

for your trespass is great; which they had committed already, by their idolatrous practices:

and there is fierce wrath against Israel; which they perceived by what the prophet had said.

2 Chronicles 28:14

Ver. 14. So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and the congregation. Which were come out of Samaria to meet them; such an effect had the word's of the prophet, and the princes, upon them, that they not only left the captives with them, but the spoil, to dispose of, as they thought fit.

2 Chronicles 28:15

Ver. 15. And the men that were expressed by name rose up,.... Either those before named, 2Ch 28:12 as Jarchi, and so the Vulgate Latin version; or such as they pitched upon, nominated, and appointed:

and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them; put clothes on their backs, and shoes on their feet, who either were taken or carried away before they could put on their garments, or had been stripped of them:

and gave them to eat, and drink, and anointed them; not only fed them, being hungry and thirsty, but anointed them for refreshment after travelling; the Targum is, "washed them", from dirt and filth contracted by travelling:

and carried all the feeble of them on asses; women and children that were not able to walk afoot so far back again:

and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brethren; a city on the borders both of Judah and Israel, and famous for the number of palm trees near it, see **Jud 1:16** in all which these inhabitants of Samaria acted the part of the good Samaritan, Lu 10:33,

then they returned to Samaria: the prophet, with the princes, and the army, and the whole congregation.

2 Chronicles 28:16

Ver. 16. At that time did King Ahaz send to the kings of Assyria to help him. To Tiglathpileser, and his son, see 2Ki 16:7, and the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read in the singular, and so the Targum.

2 Chronicles 28:17

Ver. 17. For again the Edomites had come,.... As in the days of Jehoshaphat, 2Ch 20:10,

and smitten Judah, and carried away captives; taking the advantage of the weak and low condition Ahaz was in, and which was the reason of his sending to the king of Assyria.

2 Chronicles 28:18

Ver. 18. The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country,.... Which lay nearest to them, as Sharon, Lydda, Joppa, &c. in revenge of what Uzziah had done to them, 2Ch 26:6, and of the south of Judah; they penetrated as far as that, from the west to the south of the land:

and had taken Bethshemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederoth, and Shocho, with the villages thereof and Timnah with the villages thereof; of which see Jos 15:10

and Gimzo also, and the villages thereof; which though nowhere else mentioned in Scripture, yet we frequently read in Jewish writings {l} of Nahum, a man of Ganizu, which perhaps is the same place with this:

and they dwelt there; kept them in their hands, and inhabited them.

{l} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 21. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 108. 2, &c.

2 Chronicles 28:19

Ver. 19. For the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel,.... Because of his impieties and idolatries, which the people by his example went into; he is called king of Israel, because he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and because he ruled over two of the tribes of Israel, and of right was king over all Israel, as David and Solomon his ancestors were; though the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, and Syriac versions, read, king of Judah; and so the Targum: "for he made Judah naked"; stripped them of their religion, and the worship of God, and so of the divine protection, whereby they were exposed to their enemies, see Ex 32:25 the Targum is,

"for the house of Judah ceased from the worship of the Lord;"

transgressed sore against the Lord; by committing gross idolatry the same Targum is,

"they dealt falsely with the Word of the Lord."

2 Chronicles 28:20

Ver. 20. And Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria came unto him,.... Not to Jerusalem, but to Damascus, where he made a diversion in his favour, and took that city, and where Ahaz met him, 2Ki 16:9

and distressed him, but strengthened him not; exhausted his treasures, and laid a tribute upon him, but did not help him against the Edomites and Philistines, or recover for him the cities they had taken from him; and, in taking Damascus, he served himself more than Ahaz, and paved the way for seizing upon the ten tribes.

2 Chronicles 28:21

Ver. 21. For Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of the Lord, and out of the house of the king, and of the princes,.... A part out of the treasures of the temple, and a part out of his own treasures, and another which he levied upon his nobles:

and gave it unto the king of Assyria; sent it to him as a present, to engage him on his side, and assist him against his enemies, 2Ki 16:10

but he helped him not; See Gill on "2Ch 28:20".

2 Chronicles 28:22

Ver. 22. And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord,.... By increasing his idolatries, as appears by what he did, in imitation of what he saw at Damascus, where he had an interview with the king of Assyria, 2Ki 16:10

this is that King Ahaz; that monster of iniquity, than whom there was none worse, nor any so bad, of all the kings of Judah.

2 Chronicles 28:23

Ver. 23. For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him,.... As he foolishly imagined, that they might do him no more hurt; as it is said of the Indians, that they worship the devil, that he may not hurt them; but that a king of Judah should do this is monstrous stupidity; rather therefore the meaning may be, that he worshipped the gods of those that smote him, those of the men or soldiers of Damascus {m} see 2Ch 28:5 for the Spirit of God would never ascribe the smiting of him to idols, though he himself might;

and he said, because the gods of the kings of Syria help them; which looks as if this was before Damascus was taken by the king of Assyria, and when Rezin king of Syria prevailed over Ahaz:

therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me; against the Edomites and Philistines; wherefore rather to this, his idolatry, respect is had in 2Ch 28:22,

but they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel; the worship of them was the cause of all the calamities that came upon that part of Israel of which he was king.

{m} So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

2 Chronicles 28:24

Ver. 24. And gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God,.... And converted them to his own use, sold them, or melted the gold and silver, of which they were, and made money of them, his treasures being exhausted:

and shut up the doors of the house of the Lord: that the people might not come and worship there, but on the high places he made:

and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem; that the priests might sacrifice there, and not in the temple.

2 Chronicles 28:25

Ver. 25. And in every city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto the gods,.... The gods of Damascus, and other idols; this he did to prevent their coming to Jerusalem to worship.

2 Chronicles 28:26

Ver. 26,27. Now the rest of his acts,.... Of these two verses,
See Gill on "2Ki 16:19",
See Gill on "2Ki 16:20".

2 Chronicles 28:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "2Ch 28:26"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 29:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 29

This chapter begins with the good reign of Hezekiah, who upon his accession to the throne opened the doors of the temple, 2Ch 29:1, summoned the priests and Levites, and exhorted them to purge the temple, and restore the worship of it, 2Ch 29:4, who accordingly set about the work immediately, and cleansed the temple, and, when they had done, reported it to the king, 2Ch 29:12 upon which he, with the princes, went into the temple and offered sacrifices, 2Ch 29:20 and ordered singers to sing at the offering of burnt offerings, 2Ch 29:25 when he and his people offered burnt offerings and peace offerings in great abundance, 2Ch 29:31.

Ver. 1,2. Hezekiah began to reign,.... Of these two verses,
See Gill on "2Ki 18:2",
See Gill on "2Ki 18:3".

2 Chronicles 29:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ch 29:1"

2 Chronicles 29:3

Ver. 3. He in the first year of his reign, in the first month,.... And, as appears from 2Ch 29:17, on the first day of the month:

opened the doors of the house of the Lord; which his father had shut, 2Ch 28:24

and repaired them; or strengthened them, the hinges, and other parts of them, being loosened and weakened; and ornamented them by overlaying them with gold, the plates of which very probably his father had taken off; for, certain it is, Hezekiah overlaid them, and very probably at this time, see 2Ki 18:16.

2 Chronicles 29:4

Ver. 4. And he brought in the priests and Levites,.... The persons that officiated in the service of the temple:

and gathered them together into the east street; which led to the eastern gate of the temple.

2 Chronicles 29:5

Ver. 5. And said unto them, hear me, ye Levites; sanctify yourselves,.... By washing their bodies and their garments, that no pollution might attend them in their service, see Isa 52:11

and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers; by carrying out of it all manner of uncleanness, as they did, 2Ch 29:16,

and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place; or the abomination; the altar, like that at Damascus, which Ahaz, removing the altar of the Lord, had placed in the court of the priests; or, as Kimchi thinks, an idol, which he had set upon that altar.

2 Chronicles 29:6

Ver. 6. For our fathers have transgressed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord our God,.... Meaning their more immediate ancestors, his father and theirs, who had committed idolatry; which is a great trespass, and than which there is not a greater evil in the sight of God, nor more provoking to him:

and have forsaken him; his word, worship, and ordinances:

and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord; the temple, by neglecting that, and the service of it, and attending the high places: and turned their backs; upon it; though some think this refers to a rite or custom, introduced by Ahaz before he shut up the temple, that instead of looking to the west, when they worshipped, where was the ark of the Lord, he ordered them to turn their faces to the east, where his altar stood.

2 Chronicles 29:7

Ver. 7. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch,.... So that there was no entering into the temple, 2Ch 28:24

and put out the lamps; for the priests not being able to go in morning and evening to light them, and dress them, they in course went out; the Jews say {n}, that on the eighteenth of Ab, which answers to part of July and August, the western lamp was extinct in the days of Ahaz, for which a fast was kept on that day:

and have not burnt incense, nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place unto the God of Israel; but had done these in the high places to idols, 2Ch 28:3.

{n} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.

2 Chronicles 29:8

Ver. 8. Wherefore the wrath of the Lord was upon. Judah and Jerusalem,.... As appeared, by suffering the Syrians, and Israelites, and Edomites, and Philistines, to come upon them, and distress them, as the history of the preceding chapter shows:

and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes; such desolation and destruction were made among them, as not only threw them into a stupor, that they knew not what to do, but were amazing to all their neighbours, and caused them to hiss at them, which they could not but be sensible of.

2 Chronicles 29:9

Ver. 9. For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword,.... Of the kings of Syria and Israel, even great numbers of them, 2Ch 28:5

and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this; for this idolatry; or they were, though afterwards dismissed, 2Ch 28:8 and some of them were still in captivity, perhaps such as were carried captive by the Edomites, 2Ch 28:17.

2 Chronicles 29:10

Ver. 10. Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel,.... To renew one, as Asa and Jehoiada had done, promising to serve the Lord, and worship him according to his will:

that his fierce wrath might be turned from us; under the tokens of which they still continued, and might expect it to break forth in other instances, unless a reformation was made.

2 Chronicles 29:11

Ver. 11. My sons,.... So, as the father of his people, he speaks of them in the most tender and affectionate manner:

be not now negligent; backward to this good work, slothful, sluggish, and remiss in it; according to Jarchi and Kimchi, the word has the signification of error, and the sense may be, do not continue in the error in which you have been, in neglecting the service of God:

for the Lord hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense; on the altar of incense, which was the work of the priests, and for which they were selected from the rest of their brethren; and Hezekiah's discourse was directed to them, as well as to the Levites, 2Ch 29:4.

2 Chronicles 29:12

Ver. 12-14. Then the Levites arose,.... Whose names are mentioned; of the Kohathites two, Mahath the son of Amashai, and Joel the son of Azariah; of the Merarites two, Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehalelel; of the Gershonites two, Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Joah; and of the family of Elizaphan, a Kohathite, two, Shimri and Jehiel; and of the family of Asaph, one of the chief singers in the times of David, two, Zechariah and Mattaniah; and of the family of Heman, another principal singer in the same times, two, Jehiel and Shimei; and of the family of Jeduthun, the third principal singer, the same with Ethan, two, Shemaiah and Uzziel, in all fourteen.

2 Chronicles 29:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "2Ch 29:12"

2 Chronicles 29:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "2Ch 29:13"

2 Chronicles 29:15

Ver. 15. And they gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves,.... As they were bid, see 2Ch 29:5,

and came, according to the commandment of the king, by the word of the Lord, to cleanse the house of the Lord; for this, which the king commanded, was by the Lord, and they came to do this work, in obedience to both.

2 Chronicles 29:16

Ver. 16. And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord, to cleanse it,.... Into the holy place, where the candlesticks and shewbread tables stood, into which none but priests might enter, but not into the most holy place, the innermost of all; for none but the high priest might go into that, and only on the day of atonement; though in case of necessity, as for repairs, others might go into it, and so perhaps now to cleanse it, if any pollution was there:

and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the Lord into the court of the house of the Lord; into the court of the priests, where the Levites might be, and were:

and the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron; which ran through the valley of the son of Hinnom, into which all unclean things, and the filth of the temple and sacrifices, were usually carried and cast, see 2Ki 18:12.

2 Chronicles 29:17

Ver. 17. Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify,.... Either of the reign of King Hezekiah, or rather of the year; the month Ab or Nisan, as the Targum expresses it:

and on the eighth of the month came they to the porch of the Lord; they seem to have begun cleansing the inner part of the temple first, and so came forward until they came to the porch which led into it:

so they sanctified the house of the Lord in eight days; the holy place, and it may be the most holy place, and the court of the priests:

and on the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end; it took them eight days more to cleanse the outward porch, and the buildings and chambers belonging to the temple; according to Jarchi, it required so much time, because Ahaz had framed pictures of idols upon the walls of the temple, which could not be defaced sooner.

2 Chronicles 29:18

Ver. 18. Then they went in to Hezekiah the king,.... In his palace:

and said, we have cleansed all the house of the Lord; the several parts of it, and apartments belonging to it:

and the altar of burnt offering, with all the vessels thereof; which they cleansed and scoured, and put in their proper place, and which Ahaz had removed:

and the shewbread table, with all the vessels thereof; which had lain neglected and profaned, but were now put in order.

2 Chronicles 29:19

Ver. 19. Moreover, all the vessels which King Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression,.... Not that he threw them away, being valuable, as made of gold and silver; but, as Kimchi interprets it, he removed them, and converted them to idolatrous uses; or, as the Targum, he defiled or profaned them, and made them abominable by strange idols:

have we prepared and sanctified, and, behold, they are before the altar of the Lord; they had cleaned them, and fitted them for service, and had put them where they were ready for use; though the Targum is,

"we have laid them aside, and hid them, and prepared others in their room,"

as unfit for divine service; and which is the sense of other Jewish writers {o}.

{o} T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 54. 2.

2 Chronicles 29:20

Ver. 20. Then Hezekiah the king rose early,.... Took the first opportunity to attend the worship of God, and set an example to his people:

and gathered the rulers of the city; the elders of the people, the chief magistrates in Jerusalem:

and went up to the house of the Lord; the temple, to worship there.

2 Chronicles 29:21

Ver. 21. And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he goats, for a sin offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah,.... To make atonement in a typical way, having respect to the sacrifice of the Messiah, for the sins of the king, his family and court, among whom idolatry had prevailed in the times of his father; and for the cleansing of the temple, which had been polluted by the idolatries of Ahaz; and for the expiation of the whole land; seven of each sort are ordered, though only one goat was required for a sin offering by the law, because of the multitude of transgressions that had been committed, and because of the length of time in which sacrifices had been neglected:

and he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer them on the altar of the Lord: the altar of burnt offerings, whose business it was to do it.

2 Chronicles 29:22

Ver. 22. So they killed the bullocks,.... The seven bullocks, that is, the priests killed them:

and the priests received the blood; into basins provided for that purpose:

and sprinkled it on the altar; according to the law of Moses, **Le 1:5** and so they did with the rams and lambs.

2 Chronicles 29:23

Ver. 23. And they brought forth the he goats for the sin offering before the king and the congregation,.... Which were to make atonement for the sins of both:

and they laid their hands on them; signifying thereby that they were vicarious sacrifices to be offered up in their own room and stead, and that they deserved to die, as these creatures would: transferring as it were hereby their sins unto them, for which they were to be sacrificed, and to make atonement, as an emblem of the imputation of the sins of the Lord's people to Christ, sacrificed in their stead.

2 Chronicles 29:24

Ver. 24. And the priests killed them,.... The seven he goats; for of the killing of the bullocks, rams, and lambs, mention is made before, 2Ch 29:2

and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make atonement for all Israel; typical of the reconciliation and atonement made for the whole spiritual Israel of God by the sacrifice of Christ:

for the king commanded that the burnt offering, and the sin offering, should be made

for all Israel; not only for the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and for as many of

the rest of the tribes as were come over to them, and dwelt among them; but even for the ten tribes also, sadly guilty of idolatry, and for whose reformation and good this pious prince was concerned, see
2Ch 30:1.

2 Chronicles 29:25

Ver. 25. And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps,.... To play upon, which were the three principal instruments of music used in religious worship, and what had been disused in the times of Ahaz:

according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; this sort of music was not commanded by the law of Moses, but was directed to by David under a divine influence, and was approved of by the prophets of the Lord here mentioned:

for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets; the Targum is,

"for by the Word of the Lord was the commandment by the hand of the prophets."

2 Chronicles 29:26

Ver. 26. And the Levites stood with the instruments of David,.... Which were invented, directed, and ordered to be used by him, and are the same as in the preceding verse:

and the priests with the trumpets; which were made by the direction of Moses, according to the order of God, Nu 10:2.

2 Chronicles 29:27

Ver. 27. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar,.... Which was wholly devoted to the Lord, and was an acknowledgment of his sovereignty over them, and of his goodness to them:

and when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel; and this was done at the time of the pouring out of the drink offering, which always attended the burnt offering; for this is a rule with the Jews, that they do not say the song but over the drink offering {o}.

{o} T. Bab. Eracin, fol. 12. 1.

2 Chronicles 29:28

Ver. 28. And all the congregation worshipped,.... Bowed their heads as a token of divine adoration:

and the singers sang; both with vocal and instrumental music, who were the Levites:

and the trumpeters sounded; their silver trumpets; these were the priests: and all this continued

until the burnt offering was finished; with all appertaining to it, the meat and drink offerings.

2 Chronicles 29:29

Ver. 29. And when they had made an end of offering,.... Both the sin offering and the burnt offering:

the king and all that were with him bowed themselves and worshipped; towards the place where the ark was, giving thanks for the purging of the temple, and restoring the worship of it.

2 Chronicles 29:30

Ver. 30. Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord, with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer,.... Making use of psalms composed by the one and the other; Jarchi takes it to be the one hundred and fifth psalm, which begins, "O give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name"; as in
1Ch 16:7

and they sang praises with gladness; the king and all the people:

and they bowed their heads and worshipped; made another adoration of the Divine Being, as deeply impressed with a sense of his greatness and goodness.

2 Chronicles 29:31

Ver. 31. Then Hezekiah answered and said,.... Or proceeded to say, as follows:

now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord; having entered anew on the performance of their office, filling their hands with sacrifices, as the words signify:

come near, and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the Lord; which the people were to put into their hands to offer for them:

and the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; peace offerings, part of which the offerers had to feast on with their friends so expressing their joy and thankfulness on this occasion:

and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings; of which they had no share, but were wholly the Lord's; and which was a greater proof of their liberality, and so of their sincere and cordial thankfulness.

2 Chronicles 29:32

Ver. 32. And the number of the burnt offerings which the congregation brought were seventy bullocks, one hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; all these were for a burnt offering to the Lord. Of which they had no part to feast but were wholly devoted to the Lord, by way of thankfulness to him.

2 Chronicles 29:33

Ver. 33. And the consecrated things,.... Which were devoted for peace offerings, of which the owners had a part: were six hundred oxen, and three thousand sheep; which was a much lesser number than what were offered upon occasion in the times of David and Solomon, the nation being poorer; and besides, these were only the oblation of two tribes, they of all Israel.

2 Chronicles 29:34

Ver. 34. But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings,.... Take off the skins of them, which used to be done by the priests, Le 1:6,

wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them till the work was ended; assisted in the flaying of the sacrifices, until they had gone through the service of this time, and the skins of all the sacrifices were flayed off:

and until the other priests had sanctified themselves; who had been negligent of it, or had defiled themselves by idolatry:

for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests; were more ready to do it, and did it with greater cheerfulness and good will; were not backward to do it, but did it at once.

2 Chronicles 29:35

Ver. 35. And also the burnt offerings were in abundance, with the fat of the peace offerings, and the drink offerings, for every burnt offering,.... Besides the abundance of burnt offerings, whose skins were to be taken off, there were meat offerings and drink offerings to each, which required many hands to prepare them; and also the fat of the peace offerings was to be burnt; which, all together, occasioned a great deal of business:

so the service of the house of the Lord was set in order: both for sacrifice and singing; a good beginning was made, and there was a good foundation laid to proceed on.

2 Chronicles 29:36

Ver. 36. And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people,.... To see things go on so well, which foreboded good unto them: and particularly

that God had prepared the people; disposed and directed their hearts in such a manner as to yield such a cheerful obedience to the will of God, and show such a hearty regard to his worship and service, and the restoration of it:

for the thing was done suddenly; whereby it the more appeared that they were under a divine influence, which so quickly and powerfully wrought upon them to engage in this work, and needed not arguments and persuasions to bring them to it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 30:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 30

Hezekiah having consulted his nobles about keeping the passover the second month, and determined upon it, sent messengers throughout Israel and Judah, to acquaint them with it, at which some mocked, and others seriously attended to it, 2Ch 30:1 so it was celebrated in a solemn manner, though some were not qualified for it according to the law, and for whose pardon Hezekiah prayed, and it was granted, 2Ch 30:13, also the feast of unleavened bread was kept seven days, and a festival of seven days more was likewise observed with great joy and gladness, 2Ch 30:21.

Ver. 1. And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah,.... Sent messengers to them, not only to the subjects of his own kingdom, Judah, but to all the Israelites that dwelt in it, who were come thither for the sake of religion, and the worship of God:

and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh; which are put for all the ten tribes, as appears from 2Ch 30:10 and are distinguished from Israel in the preceding clause:

that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem; not that he laid his commands upon them to come, they not being his subjects, namely, those of the ten tribes; but he hereby admonished them of their duty, and gave them a kind invitation, signifying the doors of the temple were open for them, and they were welcome to come thither:

to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel; to the glory of his name, who was the common Lord of them all, and whose command it was to keep the passover, and that at Jerusalem, and nowhere else, see

De 16:1.

2 Chronicles 30:2

Ver. 2. For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem,.... He and his nobles, and the great sanhedrim or senate of the nation, had consulted together:

to keep the passover in the second month; in the month Ijar, as the Targum, because they could not keep it in the first month, as it should have been kept, according to the law of God, for the reasons following.

2 Chronicles 30:3

Ver. 3. For they could not keep it at the time,.... In the month Nisan, as the Targum adds, on the fourteenth day of the month, as the law enjoined, because the cleansing of the temple was not finished until the sixteenth day, see 2Ch 29:17 and, besides this, two other reasons follow:

because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently; that is, a sufficient number of them were not sanctified, to slay all the passover lambs the people that came to the feast would want:

neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem; they had no notice of it, nor summons for it; and it was required that, at such a time, all the males in the land should appear at Jerusalem; but this custom having been long disused, it required time to acquaint them of the revival of it.

2 Chronicles 30:4

Ver. 4. And the thing pleased the king, and all the congregation. They all unanimously agreed to it, and determined it should be done.

2 Chronicles 30:5

Ver. 5. So they established a decree, to make proclamation throughout all Israel,.... Passed a vote, that heralds should be appointed and sent to proclaim it throughout the land, that all might know it, and none plead ignorance:

from Beersheba even to Dan; the one being the southern and the other the northern boundary of the whole land of Israel:

that they should come to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem: the only proper place where it was to be kept:

for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written; as prescribed in the law those of the ten tribes had not observed it from the time of the schism of Jeroboam, and many in the kingdom of Judah had neglected it, at least had not kept it as the law required; for the phrase which we render "of a long time" rather respects a multitude of persons than length of time, who had been very deficient in their observance of this ordinance; the Targum is, that

"many had not done it in its time, in Nisan,"

and suggests that it was kept twice this year, first in Nisan by a few, and now again in the second month Ijar, and which is the sense of some Talmudic writers {p}, but has no foundation in the text.

{p} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 12. 2.

2 Chronicles 30:6

Ver. 6. So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah,.... Both through the kingdoms of the ten tribes of Israel, and the kingdom of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin:

and according to the commandment of the king, saying; so they were ordered by the king to say, when they delivered the letters which by the king's commandment they carried; or this was the purport of them, as follows, especially of those that were sent to the ten tribes:

ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; from whom they had revolted, and from whose worship they had departed, by setting up and serving the calves at Dan and Bethel:

and he will return to the remnant of you that are escaped out of the hand of the king of Assyria; Pul and Tiglathpileser, who had both invaded their land, and the latter had taken many of their cities, and carried the inhabitants captive, 2Ki 15:19.

2 Chronicles 30:7

Ver. 7. And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers,.... By worshipping the calves, and neglecting the service of God in the temple at Jerusalem; the Targum is,

"which acted deceitfully with the Word of the Lord their God:"

who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see; some part of the land of Israel being already made desolate by the kings of Assyria, which was very visible.

2 Chronicles 30:8

Ver. 8. Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were,.... Obstinate and refractory, like heifers unaccustomed to the yoke, which draw back from it, and will not submit to it:

but yield yourselves unto the Lord; be subject unto him, or "give the hand" {q} to him, as a token of subjection and homage, or of entering into covenant with him, promising for the future to serve and obey him:

and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever; set apart for worship and service, until the Messiah should come:

and serve the Lord your God; there, in the temple, according to his prescribed will:

that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you; which had already broke out, in suffering the Assyrians to invade their land, and distress them.

{q} dy wnt "date manum", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

2 Chronicles 30:9

Ver. 9. For if ye turn again unto the Lord,.... To the fear or worship of the Lord, as the Targum:

your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land; who had been carried away by Tiglathpileser, see Ps 106:46,

for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful; so he had proclaimed his name, as they must know, Ex 34:6,

and will not turn away his face from you; in wrath and anger; or withdraw his Shecaniah from you, as the Targum; his gracious and glorious presence:

if ye return unto him; his fear and worship, as the same paraphrase.

2 Chronicles 30:10

Ver. 10. So the posts passed from city to city, through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even unto Zebulun,.... Through all the ten tribes, not being hindered or forbid by Hoshea king of Israel, who was one of the best of their kings, and was very willing his people should go and worship at Jerusalem if they thought fit; so that they had no excuse to make, as before, that they were forbid by their king going thither; and which it is very probable Hezekiah knew, and therefore took the freedom to send posts throughout his kingdom:

but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them; the messengers that brought the letters, the contents of which they despised, and paid no regard to; this was the behaviour of many, and probably of the greater part, but not of all, as follows.

2 Chronicles 30:11

Ver. 11. Nevertheless, divers of Asher, and Manasseh, and of Zebulun, humbled themselves,.... Confessed their idolatries and impieties, and expressed sorrow and repentance for them, and were willing to obey the commands of God, and attend his worship and ordinances:

and came to Jerusalem; to keep the passover.

2 Chronicles 30:12

Ver. 12. Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart,.... To make them unanimous in this service, hearty and willing to it, to a man, which was owing to the power and efficacy of divine grace:

to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the Lord; to keep the passover, which they did not only in obedience to their superiors, and their orders, but considering these as agreeable to the word and will of God.

2 Chronicles 30:13

Ver. 13. And there assembled at Jerusalem much people,.... Out of the several tribes:

to keep the feast of unleavened bread: the passover, which was eaten with unleavened bread:

in the second month: the month Ijar:

a very great congregation; such as had not been seen on such an occasion for many years.

2 Chronicles 30:14

Ver. 14. And they arose,.... Before they slew and ate the passover:

and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem; which Ahaz had set up in every corner of Jerusalem, to offer sacrifices upon, 2Ch 28:24

and all the altars for incense took they away; for as there were some to offer sacrifices on, there were others to burn incense upon, not to the Lord, but to idols, as the Targum adds:

and cast them into the brook Kidron; having reduced them to dust and ashes, see 2Ch 29:16.

2 Chronicles 30:15

Ver. 15. Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month,.... For though they could not keep it in the month in which it should have been kept, for the reasons before given, yet they kept it on the day of the month in which it was observed:

and the priests and the Levites were ashamed; of their negligence and backwardness to service, and to fit themselves for it, when they saw the people so forward and ready to attend to it:

and they sanctified themselves; by washing their bodies and their garments:

and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the Lord; to be offered up on the altar of burnt offerings, to expiate their own sins, and the sins of the people; though some take these to be the passover offerings; but they were not offered until the fifteenth day, and besides were peace offerings, mentioned 2Ch 30:22, rather these were the daily sacrifices.

2 Chronicles 30:16

Ver. 16. And they stood in their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God,.... The priests in their place, and the Levites in theirs, in which they were ordered to stand when they offered sacrifice:

the priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites; the blood either of the burnt offerings before mentioned, or of the passover lambs, which the Levites slew, and received the blood of them in basins; and which the priests took of them, and sprinkled, not on the door posts of houses, as in Egypt, but on the altar round about, and which none but priests might do, **Le 1:5**.

2 Chronicles 30:17

Ver. 17. For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified,.... Or purified from uncleanness, contracted either by idolatry, or through such things which, according to the ceremonial law, made them unclean, and from which they had not now time to cleanse themselves according to the law:

therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for everyone that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the Lord; this they did for the masters of families, who were ceremonially unclean, who otherwise might have killed their passover lambs themselves, see Ex 12:6, but now the Levites did it for them, that their passovers might be sanctified and consecrated to the Lord; for, as Philo the Jew says {r}, one day in a year the whole sacrificed, everyone acted as a priest, and brought and slew his own sacrifice, meaning at the passover.

{r} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 686. & de Decalogo, p. 766.

2 Chronicles 30:18

Ver. 18. For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun,.... All which were of the ten tribes, where idolatry had prevailed for a long time:

had not cleansed themselves; from impurity contracted by idolatry and other things:

yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written; because they ate it in their uncleanness, which was not according to the law, that required that such should be clean that ate of any holy things, see Joh 18:28 but since these people came a great way off, and there was no deferring it to another month, the king chose rather they should be admitted to eat of it, though in their uncleanness:

but Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, the good Lord pardon everyone; God, who is gracious and merciful, and of his goodness, grace, and mercy, forgive such who, though ceremonially unclean, ate of the passover, and especially since they were sincere and cordial in their services; and therefore he hoped that this breach of the ceremonial law would not be laid to their charge. Goodness is such a well known attribute of God, that the very Heathens ascribe it to their deities; hence we read of a temple of the "good god", the gods being the givers of good things to men; Jupiter, or Jove, the supreme god, is supposed to be meant {s}.

{s} Pausan. Arcadica, sive, l. 8. p. 513. Vid. Ciceronem de Nat. Deor. l. 3.

prope finem.

2 Chronicles 30:19

Ver. 19. That prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers,.... Who was heartily desirous of worshipping God, and observing his ordinances, which had been enjoined their fathers, and they had kept; though Aben Ezra, as Kimchi observes, refers this to Hezekiah,

whose whole heart he directed, or prepared to seek the Lord, &c. by prayer and supplication for everyone of the said persons:

though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary: according to the ceremonial law, which the service of the temple required; since, though they were attended with a ceremonial impurity, had a moral purity, and their hearts were right with God.

2 Chronicles 30:20

Ver. 20. And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah,.... Heard his prayer, and accepted of it, and granted what he desired:

and healed his people; that is, forgave their sins, as Kimchi interprets it; forgiveness being expressed by healing, for which he refers to Ps 41:4 to which may be added Ps 103:3 and which was known either by a prophet sent to declare it, or by not punishing them for their offence.

2 Chronicles 30:21

Ver. 21. And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness,.... Which, according to the law of Moses, were always to follow the passover, Ex 12:18

and the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord; or instruments of strength {t}; so called not from the matter of them, or manner in which they were made, but either from the sound of them, as our version, or from the strength and power of God, which they set forth in praise; the Targum is, "with instruments of praise,"

and so the word is sometimes used, see **Ps 8:2** compared with Mt 21:16, the priests blew with trumpets, and the Levites played on harps, psalteries, &c. and this they did every day when the sacrifices were offered, during the seven days of unleavened bread.

{t} ze ylkb "cum instrumentis fortitudinis", Vatablus.

2 Chronicles 30:22

Ver. 22. And Hezekiah spake comfortably to all the Levites,.... Or "to the heart" {u} of them, such things as were very encouraging to them to go on in the work and worship of God, commending their singing, exhorting them to diligence in instructing the people, promising them his favour and protection:

even those that taught the good knowledge of the Lord; who instructed the people well in his word, worship, and ordinances; though some restrain this to their skill in singing the praises of God, both vocally and instrumentally, and their abilities and diligence in teaching others:

and they did eat throughout the feast: or did eat the feast; that is, the sacrifices of it; not the Levites only, but the king, and all the congregation:

offering peace offerings; part of which belonged to the Lord, another part to the priests, and a third to the offerers, on which they feasted with their friends; and this they did throughout all the seven days of the feast:

and making confession to the Lord God of their fathers; confessing their sins of omission and commission they had been guilty of; owning the goodness, grace, and mercy of God towards them; blessing and praising his name for the restoration of his worship and ordinances among them.

{u} bl le "ad cor", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

2 Chronicles 30:23

Ver. 23. And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days,....

They consulted among themselves, and with the king and his nobles about it, who all agreed to it:

and they kept other seven days with gladness; not altogether in the same manner they had kept the preceding seven days; they did not slay and eat passover lambs, nor did they eat unleavened bread, but offered peace offerings, and feasted upon them; and sung the praises of God, and attended to the instructions of the priests and Levites, being in a very agreeable frame of mind for religious exercises.

2 Chronicles 30:24

Ver. 24. For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congregation one thousand bullocks, and seven thousand sheep,.... He separated them, as Kimchi interprets it, from his own herds and flocks; or out of his own substance, at his own expense purchased them; or lifted them up, as the word signifies, as heave offerings to the Lord; and gave them to the people for thank offerings to feast upon:

and the princes gave to the congregation one thousand bullocks, and ten thousand sheep: for the same purposes, following the king's example:

and a great number of priests sanctified themselves; besides those who had before, that they might be fit to offer this great number of sacrifices.

2 Chronicles 30:25

Ver. 25. And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and Levites,.... The people that were gathered together out of the several cities of Judah, which no doubt was the largest congregation, with whom the priests and Levites are joined, as being of that kingdom, and dwellers in Jerusalem, where their office lay:

and all the congregation that came out of Israel; out of the ten tribes, particularly Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, 2Ch 30:18, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced; the proselytes, even such as were circumcised, who ate of the passover, and kept the feast of unleavened bread, as well as the other days of rejoicing, the former of which none might partake of but circumcised persons; and it can

hardly be thought that any other would come out of Israel on such an occasion, see
Ex 12:48.

2 Chronicles 30:26

Ver. 26. So there was great joy in Jerusalem,.... Not merely carnal, expressed in eating and drinking, and making merry with one another, but spiritual, on account of the restoration of temple service, and the feasts of the Lord:

for since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, there was not the like in Jerusalem; not the like joy, so spiritual, sincere, and hearty; nor such a number of persons rejoicing together on such an occasion; nor for so many days together, which were as many as at the dedication of the temple by Solomon.

2 Chronicles 30:27

Ver. 27. Then the priests the Levites arose,.... The priests who were of the tribe of Levi; for there were some in Israel that were not, but were made of any of the people, as in the times of Jeroboam; though some supply the copulative "and"; so the Targum: "and blessed the people"; which was the proper work and business of the priests to do; though, while they were blessing, the Levites might be singing:

and their voice was heard; meaning not by the people, though undoubtedly it was, but by the Lord; the Targum is,

"their prayer was heard or received;"

for the blessing was delivered in a petitionary way, **Nu 6:24**, and was no other than a request that God would bless them, which he did:

and their prayer came up to his holy dwellingplace, even unto heaven; see **Ps 3:4** by what means it was known their prayer was heard and accepted cannot be said; there might be some visible token of it, as the people were dismissed, and departed.

2 Chronicles 31:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 31

This chapter begins with the destruction of idolatrous worship, the appointment of the courses of the priests and Levites, and the royal bounty for sacrifices, 2Ch 31:1, next follows the order Hezekiah gave, that the people at Jerusalem, and throughout the land, should make the proper provision for the priests and Levites, as the law directed; and which was cheerfully complied with, and the firstfruits and tithes were brought in, in great abundance, insomuch that there was enough, and plenty left, 2Ch 31:4, wherefore chambers were prepared in the temple to lay it up in, and persons appointed to be the overseers of it, and to distribute it faithfully to their brethren and their families, to small and great, 2Ch 31:11, and the chapter is closed in praise of the works of Hezekiah, and the success that attended him, 2Ch 31:20.

Ver. 1. Now when all this was finished,.... The temple cleansed, the priests and Levites sanctified, the passover and feast of unleavened bread observed, and other seven days of rejoicing kept:

all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin; which had been erected by Ahaz, 2Ch 28:2 at or about this time also the brasen serpent was broke to pieces, 2Ki 18:4,

in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all; which must be understood of such cities in those tribes that had been taken in former times by the kings of Judah from the kings of Israel; or such as were now in the hands of the Assyrians, who might not concern themselves in matters of religion; or this might be done at the connivance of Hoshea king of Israel, who had no regard to any other idolatry than the worship of the calves; and besides, having met with trouble from the Assyrians, and fearing more, might be willing to have his kingdom cleared of idolatry, in hope the divine displeasure would be removed:

then all the children of Israel returned every man to his possession into their own cities; and not till then, when all monuments of idolatry were removed.

2 Chronicles 31:2

Ver. 2. And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests, and the Levites after their courses,.... As they were fixed by David, and were in the times of Jehoshaphat, and had been since interrupted, and which Hezekiah now restored, and placed them in their regular order:

every man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings, and for peace offerings, to minister and to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the tents of the Lord; or camp of the Lord, where they were posted, and lay as an host encamped, to keep the watch of the house of the Lord; the priests, they were appointed to offer the sacrifices of every sort; the Levites to minister to them in what they needed and required of them, and others of them to be singers in time of service, and others to be porters at the gate.

2 Chronicles 31:3

Ver. 3. He appointed also the king's portion of his substance,.... Out of his own treasury, of his royal bounty, over and above what was usual for kings to give for their own sacrifices, the treasury of the temple being exhausted, and the people being brought into low circumstances in the last reign:

for the burnt offerings, [to wit], for the morning and evening burnt offerings; the daily sacrifice offered morning and evening, which had been neglected, but now revived:

and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts; when beside the daily sacrifice there were additional ones: as it is written in the law of the Lord; in
Nu 28:9.

2 Chronicles 31:4

Ver. 4. Moreover, he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites,.... What was assigned unto them by the law of God by tithes, firstfruits, &c.

that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord; in the study of it; that they might gain greater knowledge of it themselves, and be better able to instruct the people, which of late had been much neglected; and that they might be more at leisure for such service, and be free from all worldly business, care, and distraction of mind, was the design of this edict.

2 Chronicles 31:5

Ver. 5. And as soon as the commandment came abroad,.... Not only was published in the city of Jerusalem, but the report of it, or rather that itself, was spread throughout the cities of Judah:

the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey; the three first of these are expressed in the law, De 18:4 but not honey; wherefore the Targum here, and the Jewish writers in general, interpret it of the "dubsa" of the palm tree, as they call it, the fruit and liquor of that, which is of a sweet taste, and which the Scenite Arabs called "dabusa", as Pliny {w} from Juba relates; for so it should be read, and not "dabulan" or "dablan", as in some copies: but though honey was forbid to be used in sacrifice, it was not forbidden to be eaten; and as the land of Judea abounded with honey, properly so called, the priests might have the firstfruits of that as of other liquors; See Gill on "De 8:8",

and of all the increase of the field; of the trees of it, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, &c. as Kimchi;

and the tithe of all things; even of herbs, as the same writer, and so the Talmud {x}, which were free from tithes by the law, see Mt 23:23,

brought they in abundantly; even of all that their vineyards, oliveyards, and fields produced.

{w} Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 4. {x} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 55. 1.

2 Chronicles 31:6

Ver. 6. And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah,.... As for the supplement "concerning", I see no need of it; the sense is, that when the king's edict was known by the inhabitants of the cities in the country, as well as at Jerusalem:

they also brought in the tithes of oxen, and sheep; according to the law in Le 27:32

and the tithe of holy things, which were consecrated unto the Lord their God; which Jarchi understands of the second tithe the Levites were to give to the priests; but Kimchi of things consecrated to sacred uses, and no longer for their own, and which were even free from tithing:

and laid them by heaps: heaps upon heaps, such large quantities were brought in.

2 Chronicles 31:7

Ver. 7. In the third month they began to lay the foundation of the heaps..... The month Sivan, as the Targum, in which month was the feast of Pentecost, called the feast of the harvest, Ex 23:16, for then barley harvest was ended, and wheat harvest began, and the firstfruits were brought:

and finished them in the seventh month; the month Tisri, as the Targum, in which was the feast of tabernacles, sometimes called the feast of ingathering, of the fruits of the earth, the wine, oil, &c. and so a proper time for bringing the tithes of all.

2 Chronicles 31:8

Ver. 8. And when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps,.... Of the tithes and firstfruits:

they blessed the Lord; for the great increase of the fruits of the earth, and for making the people so willing to bring in the dues to the priests and Levites:

and his people Israel; wished all happiness and prosperity to them, being found in the way of their duty.

2 Chronicles 31:9

Ver. 9. Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. How they came to be so large, or why they let them lie where they did.

2 Chronicles 31:10

Ver. 10. And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him,.... Who was the high priest of the family of Eleazar, in the line of Zadok, made high priest in Solomon's time, when Abiathar was thrust out; Jarchi takes him to be the same Azariah that was in the days of Uzziah, 2Ch 26:17,

and said, since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty; which were now four mouths since; and the priests and Levites, and their families, had partaken of them, and eat to satiety, and yet there was great plenty remaining:

for the Lord hath blessed his people: the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord has blessed them,"

given them large crops this year, and a ready willing mind to bring in what is due for the service of the temple:

and that which is left is this great store; the heaps the king and princes saw, and inquired about; or what is left is for the great multitude of the priests and Levites, and their families, both at Jerusalem, and in the cities in the country; so Kimchi interprets it.

2 Chronicles 31:11

Ver. 11. Then Hezekiah commanded to prepare chambers in the house of the Lord,.... Either to build new ones, or fit up those that were built:

and they prepared [them]; got them ready to lay up the stores in.

2 Chronicles 31:12

Ver. 12. And brought in the offerings, and the tithes, and the dedicated things, faithfully,.... Kept nothing back for their own private use, but faithfully delivered in and laid up the whole that was brought which remained; this was done by the priests and Levites, in whose hands and care they were:

over which Cononiah the Levite was ruler, and Shimei his brother was the next; these two had the charge and care of the whole, the one as deputy to the other.

2 Chronicles 31:13

Ver. 13. And Jehiel, and Azaziah, and Nahath, and Asahel, and Jerimoth, and Jozabad, and Eliel, and Ismachiah, and Mahath, and Benaiah, were overseers under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother,.... These ten were assistants to the other two, were under them, and at their command, and were to be ready at hand to do what they should order and direct them:

at the commandment of Hezekiah the king, and Azariah the ruler of the house of God; these were fixed in their post under the other two by the king and the high priest, to whom also the other two were accountable.

2 Chronicles 31:14

Ver. 14. And Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the porter towards the east,.... At the east gate of the temple; see 1Ch 26:17

was over the freewill offerings of God, to distribute the oblations of the Lord; to the priests and Levites, for whose use they were; or to deliver out the fine flour, oil, and wine, and frankincense, for the meat and drink offerings:

and the most holy things; which belonged to the priests only to eat of, as the remainder of the meat offerings, the sin and trespass offerings, and the shewbread.

2 Chronicles 31:15

Ver. 15. And next to him were Eden and Mijamin, and Jeshua, and Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah,.... As Kore was the principal, and his business lay chiefly with the priests in the temple, and in Jerusalem, these men under him were employed in distributing to the priests, in the cities of the priests; in the several parts of the country:

in their set office; or faithfully:

to give to their brethren by courses, as well to the great as to the small; to communicate of the stores under their hands, according to their several courses, both priests and Levites, and to all in their families, small and great.

2 Chronicles 31:16

Ver. 16. Beside their genealogy of males, from three years old and upwards,.... Their office was not only to give to the priests, but to those of their males in their genealogy, who were three years old and upwards; for under that age, according to Kimchi, they were not fit to come into the temple; nor have they knowledge to keep what is put into their hands; nor fit to handle offerings, lest they should defile them; but at that age they might be taught how to hold them, and be used to it; but as for females, he says, they were not admitted at any age:

even unto everyone that entereth into the house of the Lord; of the said age, and in the genealogy and register of the priests:

his daily portion for their service in their charges, according to their courses; food for every day, in consideration of their service in their several wards, according to their courses in turn.

2 Chronicles 31:17

Ver. 17. Both to the genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers,.... As to the priests registered according to their families from the age before observed, a portion was given: so to the Levites,

from twenty years old and upward, in their charges, by their courses; for though originally they were not admitted into the tabernacle till twenty five years of age, nor to officiate till thirty, but in David's time they were allowed at twenty years of age and upwards, 1Ch 23:24.

2 Chronicles 31:18

Ver. 18. And to the genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, through all the congregation,.... These were all genealogized and registered, wives and children, sons and daughters, whether small or grown up; and a portion was distributed to them according to their number, greater or lesser:

for in their set office they sanctified themselves in holiness; which is to be understood either of the overseers, who, in their set office, faithfully distributed the holy things to the persons before described; or else to the priests, and Levites, to whom, and to whose families, the distribution was made, because they wholly devoted themselves to the holy service of God.

2 Chronicles 31:19

Ver. 19. Also of the sons of Aaron the priests, which were in the fields of the suburbs of their cities, in every several city,.... Which were allowed to them out of the several tribes, and where they dwelt, when it was not the turn of their course to officiate in the temple; now to these, as well as to those in Jerusalem, a portion was distributed for the support of them and their families:

the men that were expressed by name; before mentioned, 2Ch 31:13, though some understand it of such as were nominated and appointed by them, and to act under them in the country:

to give portions to all the males among the priests, and to all that were reckoned by genealogies among the Levites: as before declared.

2 Chronicles 31:20

Ver. 20. And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah,.... Settled the courses of the priests and Levites, and made a provision for them and their families:

and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the Lord his God: or did that which was truly right and good, according to the law and will of God, in the sincerity and uprightness of his soul, and as in the presence of the omniscient God, he approving and accepting it for Christ's sake.

2 Chronicles 31:21

Ver. 21. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God,.... In cleansing the temple, providing sacrifices, placing the priests and Levites order, taking care of the maintenance of them,

and in the law and in the commandments; in the observation of all the laws, statutes, and judgments of God, moral, ceremonial, and judicial:

to seek his God; and serve and worship him, and therein his honour and glory:

he did it with all his heart; in the most cordial, sincere, and upright manner:

and prospered; he succeeded in all he undertook, God being with him, and blessing him in his civil and religious concerns.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 32:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 32

This chapter relates Sennacherib's invasion of the land of Judah, the preparations Hezekiah made to resist him, and the encouragement he gave his people to trust in the Lord, 2Ch 32:1 the messages and letters Sennacherib sent to Hezekiah and his subjects, full of arrogance and blasphemy, to solicit them to deliver up Jerusalem to him, 2Ch 32:9 the destruction of his army by an angel, and the deliverance of the Jews at the prayers of Hezekiah and Isaiah, 2Ch 32:20 the sin Hezekiah fell into after this, and his recovery from a fit of illness; but, upon his humiliation for it, wrath was averted, 2Ch 32:24 and the chapter is concluded with an account of his honours, riches, and exploits, and of his death and burial, 2Ch 32:27.

Ver. 1. After these things, and the establishment thereof,.... What are recorded in the preceding chapters, when matters were well settled, especially with respect to religion and temple service, and when Hezekiah was well established in the throne of his kingdom, had fought with and defeated the Philistines, and cast off the Assyrian yoke, and was in very prosperous circumstances; for it was in the fourteenth year of his reign that what follows was done:

Sennacherib king of Assyria came and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself; or to break them, or into them; or through them {y} to break down the walls to take them, and join them to himself, as the Targum, and he did take them, see 2Ki 18:13.

{y} Meqbl "ad perrumpendum eas", Montanus; "diffindere illas", Piscator; "abscindere", Schmidt.

2 Chronicles 32:2

Ver. 2. And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come,.... Into the land of Judah, which he perceived and understood by reports brought to him: and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem; to besiege it and take it, if possible; this he saw was his design, by taking the fenced cities in his way, and coming forward with his forces.

2 Chronicles 32:3

Ver. 3. He took counsel with his princes, and his mighty men,.... With his nobles, and the officers of his army, what steps should be taken to resist, retard, and distress the enemy, and among the rest what follows was proposed:

to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city; that so the Assyrian army would find it difficult to supply themselves with water, which was an article of great importance:

and they did help him; to stop the fountains, not only with their advice how to do it, but with their men, their servants, who assisted those that Hezekiah employed in this work.

2 Chronicles 32:4

Ver. 4. So there was gathered much people together,.... At the instance of Hezekiah, his nobles and officers:

who stopped all the fountains; perhaps by laying planks over them, and earth upon them, so that it could not be discerned there were any fountains there:

and the brook that ran through the midst of the land; which, according to Kimchi, was Gihon, 2Ch 32:30, which was near Jerusalem; the stream of this very probably they turned into channels under ground, whereby it was brought into the city into reservoirs there provided, that that might have a supply during the siege, while the enemy was distressed for want of it:

saying, why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water? by which means they would be able to carry on the siege to a great length, when otherwise they would be obliged to raise it quickly: mention is made of kings of Assyria, though there was but one, with whom there might be petty kings, or tributary ones; and, besides, as he boasted, his princes were altogether kings, Isa 10:8.

2 Chronicles 32:5

Ver. 5. Also he strengthened himself,.... In the Lord his God, and fortified his city, and put it in the best manner of defence he could:

and built up all the wall that was broken; which was broken from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate by Joash king of Israel; and though it might have been repaired by Uzziah, it might again be broken down in the times of Ahaz, by Pekah, king of Israel, or some other enemy, see
2Ch 25:3

and raised it up to the towers; from the corner tower to the tower of the gate of Ephraim, which, as before observed, had been broken down:

and another wall without; a second wall, either all around the city, or at such a part of it which was weakest; Josephus {z} says the city of Jerusalem had three walls about it:

and repaired Millo in the city of David; a wall on the north side of the city:

and made darts and shields in abundance; darts to cast from the walls of the city, to annoy the enemy with, and shields to defend them from those of the enemy.

{z} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 3.

2 Chronicles 32:6

Ver. 6. And he set captains of war over the people,.... To teach them the exercises of war, to lead them on against the enemy, to direct them where to stand, and what to do in defence of the city:

and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city; the street which led to the gate, and was large and commodious to assemble the people in:

and spake comfortably to them; to animate and encourage them to hold out the siege, and do all they could to repel the enemy;

saying; as follows.

2 Chronicles 32:7

Ver. 7. Be strong and courageous,.... Be of good heart and spirit, and quit yourselves like men:

be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; which was very large; for no less than 185,000 were slain of them by an angel in one night, 2Ki 19:35

for there be more with us than with him; though not in number, yet in power and might; and if angels are meant, they are more in number; but it seems, by what follows, that Hezekiah had only the Lord his God in his thoughts and view.

2 Chronicles 32:8

Ver. 8. With him is an arm of flesh,.... Only weak, frail, mortal men, not at all to be feared; nothing in comparison of the Lord:

but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles; who is the Lord God Almighty, who has the host of heaven at his command, and with whom all the inhabitants of the earth are as nothing; the Targum is, "the Word of the Lord our God is for us to help us, and fight our battles:"

and the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah; not upon his bare words, but on what was contained in them, on the strength and power of the Lord God he assured them was on their side; they believed what he said to be true, and trusted in the Lord that he would save them.

2 Chronicles 32:9

Ver. 9. After this did Sennacherib king of Assyria send his servants to Jerusalem,.... Who are mentioned by name, 2Ki 18:17 this was after Hezekiah had given him a large quantity of silver and gold to depart, and he did depart from him, 2Ki 18:14

but he himself laid siege against Lachish, and all his power with him; one of the cities of Judah, see Isa 36:2, from hence he dispatched them

unto Hezekiah king of Judah, and unto all Judah that were at Jerusalem; who had retired thither for safety, upon the invasion of their country by the king of Assyria.

2 Chronicles 32:10

Ver. 10. Thus saith Sennacherib king of Assyria, whereon do ye trust,.... On what power in heaven or on earth?

that ye abide in the siege in Jerusalem? hold out against the siege of it, and do not deliver it up.

2 Chronicles 32:11

Ver. 11. Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give over yourselves to die by famine, and by thirst,.... Suggesting that would be their case if they did not surrender:

saying, the Lord our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria? See Gill on "Isa 36:15".

2 Chronicles 32:12

Ver. 12-15. Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away his high places,.... For the sense of this and the three following verses, see the notes on
See Gill on "Isa 36:17" See Gill on "Isa 36:18" See Gill on "Isa 36:19" See Gill on "Isa 36:20"

2 Chronicles 32:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "2Ch 32:12"

2 Chronicles 32:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "2Ch 32:12"

2 Chronicles 32:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "2Ch 32:12"

2 Chronicles 32:16

Ver. 16. And his servants spake yet more against the Lord God, and against his servant Hezekiah. Than what is here recorded, as may be read in 2Ki 18:1, and Isa 36:1.

2 Chronicles 32:17

Ver. 17. He wrote also letters to rail on the Lord God of Israel,.... See 2Ki 19:9.

2 Chronicles 32:18

Ver. 18. Then they cried with a loud voice in the Jews' speech unto the people of Jerusalem that were on the wall,.... The messengers of Sennacherib, particularly Rabshakeh the chief speaker; though they were desired to speak in the Syrian language, Isa 36:11,

but this they did to affright them, and to trouble them, that they might take the city; to throw them into terror and confusion, that they might prevail upon them to deliver up the city to them.

2 Chronicles 32:19

Ver. 19. And they spake against the God of Jerusalem,.... The only living and true God, whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem professed to be their God, and who was worshipped by them in the temple there:

as against the gods of the people of the earth, which were the work of the hands of man; they made no difference between the one and the other, but spoke as freely and as contemptibly of the one as of the other, see Isa 36:19.

2 Chronicles 32:20

Ver. 20. And for this cause Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven. To God in heaven; of the prayer of Hezekiah on this account, see Isa 37:15, and the notes there; See Gill on "Isa 37:15" See Gill on "Isa 37:16" See Gill on "Isa 37:17" See Gill on "Isa 37:18" See Gill on "Isa 37:19" See Gill on "Isa 37:20"

and though we read not of the prayer of Isaiah, no doubt he made one, as Hezekiah desired, and since he received a message from the Lord, which he sent to Hezekiah, Isa 37:4.

2 Chronicles 32:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord sent an angel,.... The Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord sent Gabriel;"

Josephus {a} takes this angel, or messenger sent of God, to be the pestilence; and others suppose it to be a hot pestilential wind, common in the eastern countries, called "Samiel", or the poison wind, by which multitudes are

sometimes destroyed at once; of which Thevenot and other travellers make mention, See Gill on "Job 27:21",
See Gill on "Ps 91:6", but be it as it may, it was sent of God, was under his direction, and by his power and providence did the execution according to his prediction:

which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria; the generals and officers of his army, with the common soldiers, to the number of 185,000, Isa 36:1, among these, no doubt, were the three generals sent with railing letters to Hezekiah, particularly Rabshakeh,
See Gill on "Isa 37:36"

so he returned with shame of face to his own land; Assyria, particularly to Nineveh, the metropolis of it, Isa 37:37

and when he was come into the house of his god; the temple of his idol, whose name was Nisroch:

they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword; his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer, Isa 37:38.

{a} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 1. sect. 5.

2 Chronicles 32:22

Ver. 22. Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria,.... As most clearly appeared; for no stroke was struck but by him:

and from the hand of all other; the Arabic version adds,

"who were round about them;"

who by this defeat were deterred from attacking them:

and guided them on every side: and guarded them all around, as a shepherd leads his flock, where they may be secure from all dangers.

2 Chronicles 32:23

Ver. 23. And many brought gifts unto the Lord to Jerusalem,.... Even out of neighbouring nations, things which they devoted to the service of God in the temple, being convinced that this wonderful deliverance was wrought by the Lord God of Israel, and by him only:

and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah; being desirous of living in friendship with him, who appeared to be the favourite of the God of heaven:

so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth; from the time of the destruction of the Assyrian army in such a wonderful manner, he was highly esteemed, and his name and fame spread abroad among all the neighbouring nations round about him.

2 Chronicles 32:24

Ver. 24. In those days Hezekiah was sick,.... Of which sickness, and of his prayer, and of the sign given him, see Isa 38:1 and the notes there.

2 Chronicles 32:25

Ver. 25. But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him,.... Both in the deliverance of him and his people from the king of Assyria, and the recovery of him from his sickness:

for his heart was lifted up; with pride, because of the wonderful defeat of the Assyrian army in his favour, the miracle wrought at his recovery from illness, the riches and honour conferred upon him, the presents brought him from his neighbours, and especially the embassy of the king of Babylon to him:

therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem; who, in imitation of him, fell into the same sin of pride, with many others; and therefore both he and they were threatened with some tokens of the divine displeasure.

2 Chronicles 32:26

Ver. 26. Notwithstanding, Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem,.... In what manner is not said; perhaps by putting on sackcloth, and by fasting and prayer, and making confession of sin, and declaring repentance for it:

so that the wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah; but in the days of his son's sons, Isa 39:7.

2 Chronicles 32:27

Ver. 27. And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches,.... Increased by the spoil of the Assyrian camp, and the presents sent him after that by neighbouring nations, 2Ch 32:21

and honour; both from his subjects, and the nations around him:

and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels: which were houses both for rich and curious things, and for armour, he showed to the ambassadors of Babylon,
See Gill on "Isa 39:2".

2 Chronicles 32:28

Ver. 28. Storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil,.... The produce of his fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, such as David had, with persons over them, see 1Ch 27:25

and stands for all manner of beasts; as oxen, horses, camels, and asses, see **2Ch 9:25**

and cotes for flocks; folds for sheep.

2 Chronicles 32:29

Ver. 29. Moreover, he provided him cities,.... Where he had the above storehouses and stalls, and convenient dwellings for those that looked after them, and were over his cattle, small and great, as follows; the Vulgate Latin version reads six cities in some copies {b}:

and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; in which the riches of men, and even of kings, lay in those times:

for God had given him substance very much; for all was owing to his disposing providence, let it come which way it might.

{b} So the Edition of Sixtus V. Lovain, and MSS. in James's Contrariety of the Popish Bibles, p. 295.

2 Chronicles 32:30

Ver. 30. This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper water course of Gihon,.... Which Procopius Gazeus says was the same with Siloam, and which it seems had two streams, and this was the upper one; Mr. Maundrell says {c}, the pool of Gihon

"lies about two furlongs without Bethlehem gate westward; it is a stately pool, one hundred and six paces long, and sixty seven broad, and lined with wall and plaster, and was, when we were there, well stored with water:"

and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David; through canals under the plain of the city of David; as the Targum, by a subterraneous passage; and Siloam, as Dr. Lightfoot {d} observes from Josephus, was behind the west wall, not far from the corner that pointed toward the southwest:

and Hezekiah prospered in all his works; natural, civil, and religious, 2Ch 31:21.

{c} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 108. {d} Chorograph. in John, c. 5. sect. 2.

2 Chronicles 32:31

Ver. 31. Howbeit, [in the business of] the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire the wonder that was [done] in the land,.... Not to see the two tables of stone which were in the ark, with the other two that were broken because of the sin of the calf, as the Targum; nor to ask about the destruction of the Assyrian army, and the manner of it, as Grotius;

but to be informed of the miracle of the sun's going back ten degrees, when Hezekiah was recovered from his sickness; the Chaldeans being a people much given to astrology, and curious in their observations of that kind:

God left him to try him; by showing him all his treasures:

that he might know all that was in his heart; not that God might know, who knows all things, unless spoken of him after the manner of men; but rather that Hezekiah might know the pride lurking in his heart, and other sins which escaped his notice, Jer 17:9 or that it might be known by others; that the children of men might know it, as Kimchi; and take warning by it, and observe the frailty and infirmity of the best of men.

2 Chronicles 32:32

Ver. 32. Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness,.... His acts of piety and liberality:

behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz; in the prophecy of Isaiah, Isa 36:1, whose book is called the Vision of Isaiah, **Isa 1:1**

and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel; in
2Ki 18:1.

2 Chronicles 32:33

Ver. 33. And Hezekiah slept with his fathers,.... Died, as they did:

and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David; in the more honourable and principal of them; there are still to be seen, on the north of Jerusalem, some grottos, called the sepulchres of the kings, though it is certain none of the kings of Israel or Judah were buried there; unless it may be thought, as Mr. Maundrell {e} conjectures, that Hezekiah was here inferred, and that these are the sepulchres of the sons of David here mentioned; however, he observes, whoever was buried here, this is certain, that the place itself discovers so great an expense both of labour and treasure, that we may well suppose it to be the work of kings:

and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death; by attending his funeral in great numbers, by burning spices for him, and by mourning for him many days:

and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead; of whom a further account is given in the next chapter.

{e} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 76.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 33:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 33

This chapter gives an account of the reign of Manasseh, of his idolatries and impieties, 2Ch 33:1, of his captivity, humiliation, repentance, and reformation, 2Ch 33:11 of his last end, death, and burial, 2Ch 33:18 and of the wicked reign of Amon his son, and of his death by his servants, 2Ch 33:21.

Ver. 1. Manasseh was twelve years old,.... From hence to the end of 2Ch 33:9 the same things are recorded, almost word for word, as in 2Ki 21:1, see the notes there.
See Gill on "2Ki 21:1".

2 Chronicles 33:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ki 21:2"

2 Chronicles 33:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "2Ki 21:3"

2 Chronicles 33:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "2Ki 21:4"

2 Chronicles 33:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "2Ki 21:5"

2 Chronicles 33:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "2Ki 21:6"

2 Chronicles 33:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "2Ki 21:7"

2 Chronicles 33:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "2Ki 21:8"

2 Chronicles 33:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ki 21:9"

2 Chronicles 33:10

Ver. 10. And the Lord spake to Manasseh, and to his people,.... By his servants the prophets, see 2Ki 21:10, where what was said to them is recorded:

but they would not hearken; to what was said, to reproofs, admonitions, and exhortations to repent and reform.

2 Chronicles 33:11

Ver. 11. Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria,.... Who was Esarhaddon, the son and successor of Sennacherib; this, according to the Jewish chronology {f}, was in the twenty second year of Manasseh's reign:

which took Manasseh among the thorns; in a thicket of briers and thorns, where, upon his defeat, he had hid himself; a fit emblem of the afflictions and troubles his sins brought him into:

and bound him with fetters; hands and feet; with chains of brass, as the Targum, such as Zedekiah was bound with, 2Ki 25:7, not chains of gold, with which Mark Antony bound a king of Armenia, for the sake of honour {g}:

and carried him to Babylon; for now the king of Assyria was become master of that city, and added it to his monarchy, and made it the seat of his residence; at least some times that and sometimes Nineveh, Merodachbaladan being dead, or conquered; though, according to Suidas {h}, it was he that took Manasseh; and by an Arabic writer {i}, he is said to be carried to Nineveh.

{f} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 24. p. 67. {g} Vell. Patercul. Hist. Roman. l. 2. {h} In voce manasshv. {i} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 3. p. 67. So Suidas, ib.

2 Chronicles 33:12

Ver. 12. And when he was in affliction,.... In prison; however, in fetters; according to the Targum, the Chaldeans made an instrument of brass with holes in it, and put him in it, and fire about it, something like the brasen bull of Perillus; and the above Arabian writer {k} calls it a tower of brass:

he besought the Lord his God; by prayer and supplication:

and humbled himself greatly before the Lord God of his fathers; confessing his sins, expressing great sorrow and repentance for them.

{k} Abulph. & Suidas, ib. (Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 3. p. 67.)

2 Chronicles 33:13

Ver. 13. And prayed unto him,.... To have mercy on him, and forgive him his sins:

and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication; and granted his request, showed favour to him, and forgave him his sins:

and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom; so wrought upon the heart of the king of Assyria, as to give him his liberty, and restore him to his dominions; it is very probable his captivity was not long; for, being soon brought by his affliction to a sense and confession of his sins, by the overruling providence of God, he was quickly released:

then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God; and not the idols he had served; that he was a holy God, and hated sin, and a just God in afflicting him for it, and gracious and merciful in forgiving his sins, and bringing him out of his troubles.

2 Chronicles 33:14

Ver. 14. Now after this he built a wall without the city of David,.... Which perhaps had been broken down by the Assyrian army, when it came and took him; Vitringa {l} thinks this is the wall of the pool of Siloah, **Ne 3:15** which seems to be the first and oldest wall, as Josephus {m}; for that turning to the north bent towards the pool of Siloam; an Arabic writer {n} calls it the southern wall:

on the west side of Gihon; on the west side of the city, towards Gihon; for that was to the west of it, 2Ch 32:30,

in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate; through which the fish were brought from Joppa, and where, according to the Targum, they were sold:

and compassed about Ophel; the eastern part of Mount Zion; some say it was the holy of holies, 2Ch 27:3,

and raised it up a very great height; built the wall very high there:

and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah; this he did to put his kingdom in a posture of defence, should it be attacked by the Assyrian army again.

{l} Comment. in Jesaiam, c. 22. 9. {m} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 9. {n} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 3. p. 67.

2 Chronicles 33:15

Ver. 15. And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the Lord,.... Which he had set there, 2Ch 33:7

and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord, and in Jerusalem; see 2Ch 33:4,

and cast them out of the city; perhaps into the brook Kidron; all this he did to show the sincerity of his repentance for his idolatry, and his abhorrence of it.

2 Chronicles 33:16

Ver. 16. And he repaired the altar of the Lord,.... Which was fallen to ruin, being neglected and disused in his times of idolatry: or, according to the Keri, or marginal reading, and so the Targum, "he built it"; which perhaps he had before pulled down and destroyed:

and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings; to the Lord, for bringing him out of captivity, and restoring him to his kingdom; and especially for converting him from his idolatries, giving him repentance for them, and forgiveness of sins:

and commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel; and him only; another instance of the truth of his repentance, in endeavouring to reform those whom he had misled, and restore the true worship of God among them, and bring them back to that.

2 Chronicles 33:17

Ver. 17. Nevertheless, the people did sacrifice still in the high places,.... Not in those that were built for idols, at least did not sacrifice to them; for it follows:

yet unto the Lord their God only; the Targum is,

"to the name of the Word of the Lord their God."

2 Chronicles 33:18

Ver. 18. Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh,.... Good and bad, what were done by him both before and after his conversion:

and his prayer unto his God; which it seems was taken and recorded, but now lost; for as for that which is among the apocryphal writings, there is no reason to believe it to be his, though it is thought to be so by many {o}:

and the words of the seers; or the prophets, as the Targum; and the prophets in his days, according to the Jewish chronology {p}, were Joel, Nahum, and Habakkuk:

that spake to him in the name of the Lord God of Israel; words of admonition and reproof before his humiliation, and words of comfort, advice, and instruction, after it; the Targum is,

"that spake to him in the name of the Word of the Lord God of Israel:"

behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel; not in the canonical book so called, where none of the above things, namely, his prayer, and the speeches of the prophets, are to be found, at least not all; but in the annals of the kings of Israel, now lost.

{o} Vid. Fabritii Bibliothec. Graec. l. 3. c. 31. p. 738, 739. {p} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20.

2 Chronicles 33:19

Ver. 19. His prayer also,.... Was not only recorded in the above annals, but in the writings of another person after mentioned:

and how God was entreated of him; heard his prayer, and showed him favour both in a temporal and spiritual way; for though the Jews would not allow that he was saved, or had a part in the world to come, eternal life {q}, yet there appears no just reason why it should be so thought:

and all his sin, and his trespass; his impieties, idolatries, and murders: and the places wherein he built high places; see 2Ch 33:3

and set up groves; statues in groves:

and graven images, before he was humbled; see 2Ch 33:7,

behold, they are written among the sayings of the seers; or of Hosea, the name of a prophet who wrote the history of his own times; so the Targrim and Vulgate Latin version; and, according to the Jewish chronology {r}, there was a prophet of this name in the times of Amon the son of Manasseh.

{q} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 2. {r} Seder Olam Zuta, p. 105. Ed. Meyer.

2 Chronicles 33:20

Ver. 20-25. So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house,.... That is, in the garden of his house,
See Gill on "2Ki 21:18"; there; to which may be added, that the Jews {s} in later times buried in a garden; though it was the custom of the ancients, both Greeks {t} and Romans {u}, to bury the dead in their own houses; hence sprung the worship of the Lares and Penates, the household gods: from hence to the end of the chapter is the same with
2Ki 21:18.

See Gill on "2Ki 21:18" See Gill on "2Ki 21:19" See Gill on "2Ki 21:20" See Gill on "2Ki 21:21" See Gill on "2Ki 21:22" See Gill on "2Ki 21:23" See Gill on "2Ki 21:24" See Gill on "2Ki 21:25" See Gill on "2Ki 21:26"

{s} Cippi Heb. p. 43. {t} Plato in Minoe. {u} Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. 5. "praeterea si nova", & in l. 6. "sedibus hunc refer", &c.

2 Chronicles 33:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "2Ch 33:20"

2 Chronicles 33:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "2Ch 33:20"

2 Chronicles 33:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "2Ch 33:20"

2 Chronicles 33:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "2Ch 33:20"

2 Chronicles 33:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "2Ch 33:20"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 34:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 34

This chapter begins with the good reign of Josiah, the reformation he made in the land, purging it from idolatry, 2Ch 34:1, relates the orders he gave to repair the house of the Lord, which was accordingly done, 2Ch 34:8, when the book of the law was found and brought to him, which greatly affected him, 2Ch 34:12, upon which he deputed some persons to inquire of the Lord, who did of Huldah the prophetess, to whom she gave an answer, which they returned to the king, 2Ch 34:20 and the chapter is concluded with an account of reading the book in the ears of all the people, and of the king, and then making a covenant with the Lord to serve him, 2Ch 34:27.

Ver. 1,2. Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign,.... Of these two verses, See Gill on "2Ki 22:1",
See Gill on "2Ki 22:2".

2 Chronicles 34:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ch 34:1"

2 Chronicles 34:3

Ver. 3. For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young,.... Being in the sixteenth year of his age; though Kimchi thinks it was the very year he began to reign, which was the eighth of his age; and Jarchi observes, it may be interpreted, "though he was young, he began to seek after the God of David his father"; to pray unto him, to seek after the knowledge of him, and the true manner of worshipping him, what were his will, commands, and ordinances; the Targum is,

"to seek instruction or doctrine of the Lord God of David his father,"

to be taught his ways, such as David his great ancestor walked in, and whom he chose to follow:

and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves and the carved images, and the molten images; which were made in the times of Manasseh; and though removed by him when humbled, were restored in the reign of Amon. Now Josiah purged the land from these, by putting them down, and destroying them; and this he did when he was twenty years of age, having now more authority, being out of his minority, and from under guardians, and one year before Jeremiah began to prophesy, **Jer 1:1**.

2 Chronicles 34:4

Ver. 4. And they broke down the altars of Baalim in his presence,.... He not only ordered them to be broke down, but he went in person, and saw it done; these were the altars Manasseh had reared up to the idols; and though upon his humiliation he cast them out, they were rebuilt by Amon his son, see 2Ch 33:3,

and the images that were above them he cut down; sun images, as the word signifies; these Chamanim might be representatives of Cham or Ham, the son of Noah, the same with Jupiter Ammon; and there was another Heathen deity, Amanus, Strabo {w} speaks of, supposed to be the sun,
See Gill on "Le 26:30", these, as Jarchi says, were in the form of the sun, and were set above the altars, over against the sun, to whom worship was paid; though some think this respects not place, but time, and that these were images in times past; in the preceding age, as the Tigurine version:

and the groves, and the carved images and the molten images, he brake in pieces; ordered them to be broken; the groves were statues, or images in groves, and thereby distinguished from those made of wood, and were carved, and from those that were of molten metal, and were placed elsewhere:

and made dust of them, and strewed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them, see 2Ki 23:6.

{w} Geograph l. 11. p. 352.

2 Chronicles 34:5

Ver. 5. And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars,.... On which they sacrificed, in detestation of their idolatry, and to deter from it; and this he did according to the prophecy of him, above three hundred and fifty years before:

and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem; from idolatry, and all the monuments of it.

2 Chronicles 34:6

Ver. 6. And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali,.... Which though they belonged to the ten tribes, yet these being carried captive by the king of Assyria, they that were left became subject to the kings of Judah,
See Gill on "2Ki 23:19",

with their mattocks round about; or hammers or mauls, as Kimchi, or pick axes, such sort of instruments as were used in demolishing altars and images: the Targum is,

"in the house of their desolation;"

and so other versions, "in their desolate places" {x}, which were become such, the inhabitants being carried captive, and few left behind.

{x} Mhytbrtb "in desolatis locis suis, [vel] eorum", Montanus, Tigurine version, Rambachius.

2 Chronicles 34:7

Ver. 7. And when he had broken down the altars and the groves,.... The statues or images in them:

and had beaten the graven images into powder; and strewed it on the graves of the idolaters:

and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel; the sun images as in 2Ch 34:4,

he returned to Jerusalem; this tour of his throughout the whole land, and the things done by him, which are represented as done before the repairs of the temple were made, and the book of the law found and read, and the covenant he and his people made with the Lord, are spoken of in 2Ki 23:4, as if done after.

2 Chronicles 34:8

Ver. 8. Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the house,.... The temple; this was in the twenty sixth year of his age, six years this work had been doing before it was finished:

he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah: who only is mentioned in 2Ki 22:3 two more are added here, as follow:

and Maaseiah the governor of the city; the city of Jerusalem, a deputy governor under the king, a sort of mayor or provost:

and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder; who was over the book of memorials, as the Targum; the word may be rendered "the remembrances"; and, according to Jarchi, as every king of Judah had a scribe to write down the memorable things that happened in his reign, good or bad, so the scribe had one by him, to put him in mind of every transaction, from whom he wrote it down:

to repair the house of the Lord his God; that is, to give orders for the doing of it, to prepare for it, provide workmen, and appoint overseers of them: it had not been repaired since the times of Joash, which, according to the Jewish chronology {y}, was a space of two hundred and eighteen years.

{y} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 24.

2 Chronicles 34:9

Ver. 9. And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest,.... To whom they were sent to advise with about the repair of the temple:

they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God; that is, the high priest, and the Levites the doorkeepers, gave it to the king's ministers; which money was either brought to the temple voluntarily, as the free gifts of the people, for the repairs; or rather what was collected by the Levites, sent throughout the land for that purpose, or it may be both:

which the Levites that kept the doors; of the temple; and received the money as the people brought it:

and also had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah, and Benjamin; they went throughout all the land of Israel and Judah, and collected money for the above purpose:

and they returned to Jerusalem; with it, which the high priest took the sum of, see 2Ki 22:4 of whom the king's ministers now received it.

2 Chronicles 34:10

Ver. 10. And they put it,.... The king's ministers did:

in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the Lord; whose business it was to inspect the temple, and see what repairs were necessary, and to overlook the workmen in making those repairs; the names of these overseers are in 2Ch 34:12,

and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the Lord, to repair and mend the house; that is, the overseers gave the money they received to the labourers, as the hire of their labour, and the reward of their work, and to buy materials with, as follows.

2 Chronicles 34:11

Ver. 11. Even to the artificers and builders gave they it,.... To the masons and carpenters:

to buy hewn stone; to put in the room of that which was decayed or fallen down:

and timber for couplings; of boards, beams, and rafters:

and to floor the houses; the chambers, the apartments in the temple, which belonged to the priests and Levites:

which the kings of Judah had destroyed; the idolatrous ones, who had let them go to decay and ruin, taking no care of them.

2 Chronicles 34:12

Ver. 12. And the men did that work faithfully,.... The labouring men, as also their inspectors, see 2Ki 22:7

and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; the third son of Levi:

and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites; who had their name from Kohath, the second son of Levi:

to set it forward; to urge and animate the men to their work, to keep them constant to it, and see that they did it well:

and other of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of music; these, when they were not employed in singing in the temple, attended this service, to look after the workmen at the repairs of it; and perhaps they might play, as some think, on their instruments of music, while the men were at work, that they might go on in it the more pleasantly and cheerfully.

2 Chronicles 34:13

Ver. 13. Also they were over the bearers of burdens,.... Who carried the timber and stones to the workmen, to look after them, that they were not dilatory, and that the workmen might not stand still for want of materials being brought to them to work with:

and were overseers over all that wrought in any manner of service; whether in the way of masonry, or in that of carpenters, or of such that served them, or in whatsoever way:

and of the Levites there were scribes, and officers, and porters; some to take the account of the money carried in and paid, who were the

scribes, according to Jarchi; and others who looked after the men, and kept them to work, who were the

officers; and others that let them in and out, called

porters.

2 Chronicles 34:14

Ver. 14. And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord,.... The Levites, who brought it out of the country into the temple, and from thence brought it to the high priest, who delivering it to the king's ministers, and they to the overseers, the repairs were begun:

and then Hilkiah the high priest found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses house of the Lord,.... The Levites, who brought it out of the country into the temple, and from thence brought it to the high priest, who delivering it to the king's ministers, and they to the overseers, the repairs were begun: See Gill on "2Ki 22:8". From hence, to the end of 2Ch 34:28, is the same as 2Ki 22:8.
See Gill on "2Ki 22:9" See Gill on "2Ki 22:10" See Gill on "2Ki 22:11" See Gill on "2Ki 22:12" See Gill on "2Ki 22:13" See Gill on "2Ki 22:14" See Gill on "2Ki 22:15" See Gill on "2Ki 22:16" See Gill on "2Ki 22:16" See Gill on "2Ki 22:17" See Gill on "2Ki 22:18" See Gill on "2Ki 22:19" See Gill on "2Ki 22:20"

2 Chronicles 34:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "2Ch 34:14"

2 Chronicles 34:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "2Ch 34:14"

2 Chronicles 34:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "2Ch 34:14"

2 Chronicles 34:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "2Ch 34:14"

2 Chronicles 34:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "2Ch 34:14"

2 Chronicles 34:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "2Ch 34:14"

2 Chronicles 34:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "2Ch 34:14"

2 Chronicles 34:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "2Ch 34:14"

2 Chronicles 34:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "2Ch 34:14"

2 Chronicles 34:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "2Ch 34:14"

2 Chronicles 34:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "2Ch 34:14"

2 Chronicles 34:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "2Ch 34:14"

2 Chronicles 34:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "2Ch 34:14"

2 Chronicles 34:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "2Ch 34:14"

2 Chronicles 34:29

Ver. 29-32. Then the king sent and gathered,.... From hence, to the end of 2Ch 34:32, the same account is given of the reading of the law to the people, and of the covenant the king and they made to serve the Lord, as in 2Ki 23:1.

2 Chronicles 34:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "2Ch 34:29".

2 Chronicles 34:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "2Ch 34:29".

2 Chronicles 34:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "2Ch 34:29".

2 Chronicles 34:33

Ver. 33. And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that [pertained] to the children of Israel,.... All their idols, as related in 2Ki 23:4, &c.

and made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the Lord their God; by his edicts, and by his example:

and all his days they departed not from following the Lord God of their fathers; not publicly and universally; otherwise there were great declensions and corruptions among them, as the prophecies of Jeremiah and Zephaniah show.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 35:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 35

In this chapter we have an account of the keeping of the passover and its preparation, for which the priests and Levites were ordered to prepare, and to which Josiah, and his princes, gave liberally, and such an one was kept as had not been for ages past, 2Ch 35:1, and of Josiah's rash engagement in battle with the king of Egypt, in which he was slain, 2Ch 35:20 and of the great lamentations that were made for him, 2Ch 35:24.

Ver. 1. Moreover, Josiah kept a passover unto the Lord in Jerusalem,.... Where only it was to be kept:

and they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month; the month Nisan, as the Targum, which was the exact time of killing the passover lamb, according to the law of Moses, Ex 12:6, in the Vulgate Latin version of the Apocrypha in:

"And Josias held the feast of the passover in Jerusalem unto his Lord, and offered the passover the fourteenth day of the first month;" (1 Esdras 1:1)

it is called the fourteenth moon of the first month; a phrase often used in ecclesiastical writers, when speaking of the time of the passover; and so we now call one of the days of the week "dies lunae", Monday.

2 Chronicles 35:2

Ver. 2. And he set the priests in their charges,.... In their offices, and in their proper places, to execute them:

and encouraged them to the service of the house of the Lord; to attend it with cheerfulness and constancy, and do it according to the will of God, promising his favour and protection.

2 Chronicles 35:3

Ver. 3. And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel,.... Whose business it was to go through the several tribes, and instruct them in the knowledge of God, his word and worship, statutes and ordinances. In an ancient MS. mentioned by Junius, it is read, "who prepared for all Israel the holy things", &c.

which were holy unto the Lord; who were consecrated to the name of the Lord, as the Targum, dedicated to his worship and service; or it may signify the holy things they taught or prepared:

these put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; which some think was removed from thence by Amon, and an idol put in its room, which is the greater trespass he is said to be guilty of, 2Ch 33:23 others, that it was privately removed by the high priest in idolatrous times, and laid up in some secret place for the preservation of it; but rather the truth is, that it had been removed by the order of Josiah, for the sake of the repairs of the most holy place; and this being done, he orders it to be replaced; and though the Levites might not go into the holy of holies, yet they could carry it to the entrance of the holy place, and the priests from thence to the door of the most holy place, where the high priest could receive it, and fix it in its proper place:

it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders; it was not now to be carried from place to place, having a fixed abode in the most holy place, and therefore they were at leisure to attend other service:

serve now the Lord your God, and his people Israel; by singing the praises of God, and slaying the passover lambs for the people.

2 Chronicles 35:4

Ver. 4. And prepare yourselves,.... To do their work in this service of the sanctuary, the passover; that they be ready to do it, and diligent in it, and perform it according to the law of God:

by the houses of your fathers, after your courses; such of them whose turn in course it was to officiate:

according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son; who had given in writing directions in what manner their courses should be observed, see 1Ch 23:1.

2 Chronicles 35:5

Ver. 5. And stand in the holy place,.... The court of the priests, where their ministrations were:

according to the divisions of the families of your brethren the people; of the other tribes, who were according to their families to provide a lamb for the passover:

and after the division of the families of the Levites; who were obliged to observe the same ordinance in their respective families, and for whom, as well as for the other families of Israel, they were to slay the lamb.

2 Chronicles 35:6

Ver. 6. So kill the passover,.... In the manner, time, and place, and for the persons it should be killed:

and sanctify yourselves: by washing themselves and garments, that they might be fit for this service:

and prepare your brethren; prepare a lamb for your brethren, or instruct them how to perform their office that needed instruction:

that they may do according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses; celebrate the ordinance of the passover in all its rites, according to the law of Moses, at least in every rite in which they were more peculiarly concerned.

2 Chronicles 35:7

Ver. 7. And Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover offerings,.... Which be either lambs or kids of the goats, Ex 12:5, for all that were present, to the number of 30,000; that is, 30,000 lambs or kids, which would serve 30,000 families:

and three thousand bullocks; these were for the "chagigah" or feast, kept on the day following the passover:

these were of the king's substance; taken out of his flocks and herds, or bought with his money, and liberally given to the people, to such poor families as could not afford well to be at the expense of such a festival.

2 Chronicles 35:8

Ver. 8. And his princes gave willingly to the people, to the priests and the Levites,.... Besides, to some other families, they gave also to poor priests and Levites, which the king's bounty did not extend to; and these princes were not secular, but ecclesiastical princes, as follows:

Hilkiah, and Zechariah, and Jehiel, rulers of the house; of the temple; Hilkiah was high priest, and the other two were chief priests, the one of the line of Eleazar, and the other of the line of Ithamar:

these gave unto the priests for the passover lambs; 2600 small cattle; which were lambs, or kids, or both:

and three hundred oxen; for peace offerings on the seven days of unleavened bread, to feast upon.

2 Chronicles 35:9

Ver. 9. Cononiah also, and Shemaiah and Nathaneel his brethren,.... See 2Ch 31:12

and Hashabiah, and Jehiel, and Jozabad, chief of the Levites; men of considerable substance, and in good posts and offices:

gave unto the Levites; their poor brethren of that order:

for passover offerings five thousand small cattle; lambs, or kids, or both:

and five hundred oxen; for the feast that followed the passover.

2 Chronicles 35:10

Ver. 10. So the service was prepared,.... Every thing was got ready both for the passover and the feast of unleavened bread, for all sorts of people, rich and poor:

and the priests stood in their place; in their court near the altar, to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifices about it, as in the following verse:

and the Levites in their courses; whose turn it was to officiate:

according to the king's commandment, 2Ch 35:4.

2 Chronicles 35:11

Ver. 11. And they killed the passover,.... The lambs for the passover, which was done by the Levites:

and the priests sprinkled [the blood] from their hands; which they received from the Levites, see 2Ch 30:16.

and the Levites flayed them; the passover lambs, took off their skins.

2 Chronicles 35:12

Ver. 12. And they removed the burnt offerings,.... Either such of the lambs and kids as were designed for burnt offerings for the people; these they separated from those that were for the passover; or they removed from them what was to be burnt, the fat of the inwards, of the kidneys, and the caul on the liver:

that they might give; the rest for the passover:

according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the Lord; according to the number of them:

as it is written in the book of Moses; see **Le 3:3**,

and so did they with the oxen; such of them as were appointed for burnt offerings were set apart by themselves, and such as were for peace offerings; what of them were to be burnt, as those before mentioned, were taken from them.

2 Chronicles 35:13

Ver. 13. And they roasted the passover with fire, according to the ordinance,.... Of the Lord by Moses, Ex 12:8

but the other holy offerings; which were the peace offerings:

sod they in pots, and in cauldrons, and pans; which was forbid to be done with the passover lamb, but might with the other sacrifices, which were to be eaten, Ex 12:9

and divided them speedily among all the people; the parts which belonged to the offerer, who was the king; but he gave his part to the people, and therefore the Levites delivered them to them as soon as they could.

2 Chronicles 35:14

Ver. 14. And afterwards they made ready for themselves, and for the priests,....

The passover lambs, and such parts of the peace offerings that belonged to them:

because the priests the sons of Aaron were busied in offering burnt offerings; such as are before said to be removed or separated for that purpose:

and the fat; of the peace offerings that was to be burnt: and this employed them

until night; so that they could not prepare the passover for themselves:

and therefore the Levites prepared, not only for themselves, [but] and [also] for the priests the sons of Aaron; who were otherwise engaged in the service of the day.

2 Chronicles 35:15

Ver. 15. And the singers the sons of Asaph were in their place,.... In the court of the priests, singing and playing on their instruments while the sacrifices were offering:

according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; the same with Ethan; and everyone were seers, as Jarchi interprets it, that is, the three last:

and the porters waited at every gate; such of the Levites as were in, that post and office:

they might not depart from their service; to let people in and out, that came for their passover lamb, and share in their other offerings:

for their brethren the Levites prepared for them; because they were not at leisure to prepare for themselves.

2 Chronicles 35:16

Ver. 16. So all the service of the Lord was prepared the same day,.... With every sacrifice, and for all sorts of persons:

to keep the passover, and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the Lord;

which were required to be done on that day:

according to the commandment of King Josiah; which was, that every thing be provided, prepared, and done, as the law required.

2 Chronicles 35:17

Ver. 17. And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time,.... In its proper time, on the fourteenth day of Nisan:

and the feast of unleavened bread seven days; the seven days following the passover, as the Lord by Moses appointed.

2 Chronicles 35:18

Ver. 18-19. And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel,.... So exactly according to the law, so universally by Israel and Judah, and with such liberality shown by the king, and the chief of the priests and Levites; of this, and the following verse, See Gill on "2Ki 23:22",
See Gill on "2Ki 23:23"

2 Chronicles 35:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "2Ch 35:18"

2 Chronicles 35:20

Ver. 20. After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple,.... Purified it, and cleansed it from the filth in it, and from all idolatry, and had repaired it, and put the service of it in good order, and on a good footing, after which great prosperity in church and state might have been expected:

Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates; now called Querquisia, supposed by some to be the same with the Cadytis of Herodotus, which that historian calls a great city of Syria, whither he says Necho went after the battle with the Syrians {x}; of which
See Gill on "Isa 10:9" and of this king of Egypt,

See Gill on "2Ki 23:29" See Gill on "Jer 46:2"

and Josiah went out against him; or to meet him, and stop him from going through his land, which lay between Egypt and Syria; Egypt being on the south of Israel, and Euphrates on the north of it, as Jarchi observes.

{x} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 159. & Galei not. in ib.

2 Chronicles 35:21

Ver. 21. But he sent ambassadors to him,.... That is, Necho sent to Josiah:

saying, what have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? signifying he had no quarrel with him, he did not come to fight with him, and he had no business to intermeddle between him and another prince:

I come not against thee this day; in an hostile manner:

but against the house wherewith I have war; the king of Assyria:

for God commanded me to make haste; and oppose his enemy: according to the Targum, it was his idol; and which is the sense of other Jewish writers {y}; but the true God might have appeared to him in a dream, or sent a prophet to him; or at least he might pretend this, that it might have the greater effect on Josiah; and indeed it seems to be real from the following verse:

forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not; he concluded God was with him, and would succeed him, because he had put him upon this enterprise, and hastened him to it; therefore Josiah, in opposing him, might expect to be resisted by him, and fall.

{y} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 22. 2.

2 Chronicles 35:22

Ver. 22. Nevertheless, Josiah would not turn his face from him,.... Or withdraw his forces, and go back:

but disguised himself that he might fight with him; without being personally known, and aimed at, see 1Ki 22:30

and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God: not believing that what he said came from the Lord, though it might; and his infirmity was, that he did not inquire of the Lord about it:

and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo; which was in the tribe of Manasseh, thought to be the Magdolum of Herodotus, where he says Necho fought the battle {z}; See Gill on "2Ki 23:29".

{z} Gale in Herodot. ut supra. (Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 159. & Galei not. in ib.)

2 Chronicles 35:23

Ver. 23. And the archers shot at King Josiah,.... For, though disguised, he appeared to be a general officer, and indeed chief commander, and therefore aimed at him, and pressed him hard:

and the king said to his servants, have me away, for I am wounded; as Ahab said, when in the like case, 1Ki 22:34.

2 Chronicles 35:24

Ver. 24. And his servants therefore took him out of that chariot,.... Dead, and had him to Jerusalem, and buried him;
See Gill on "2Ki 23:30",

and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah; he having been so good a king, so tender of them, and such an happy instrument in restoring the true religion, and the service of God; this was the sense of the generality of them, who were sincere in their mourning; but it is not improbable that those who were inclined to idolatry were secretly glad, though they dissembled mourning with the rest.

2 Chronicles 35:25

Ver. 25. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah,.... Composed a lamentation for him, which is now lost; for what is said in **La 4:20** respects Zedekiah, and not

Josiah:

and all the singing men, and all the singing women, spake of Josiah in their lamentations unto this day; who were made use of on mournful occasions, as the "preficae" among the Romans, see **Jer 9:17** these in their mournful ditties used to make mention of his name, and the disaster that befell him:

and made them an ordinance in Israel; an annual constitution, as the Targum calls it, appointing a solemn mourning for him once a year, which Jarchi says was on the ninth of Ab or July:

and, behold, they are written in the lamentations; not of Jeremiah; though the Targum is,

"lo, they are written in the book which Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah, concerning the lamentations,"

but respect a collection of lamentations on various subjects then in being, but since lost.

2 Chronicles 35:26

Ver. 26,27 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness,.... His piety towards God, and liberality to the people; of these two verses,
See Gill on "2Ki 23:28".

2 Chronicles 35:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "2Ch 35:26"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Chronicles 36:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 36

This chapter records the reigns of the four kings of Judah, and the captivity of the Jews, the short reign of Jehoahaz, deposed by the king of Egypt, and his brother Eliakim or Jehoiakim set up in his room, 2Ch 36:1, the reign of

Jehoiakim, who was bound and carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, 2Ch 36:5, the reign of Jehoiachin his son, who also in a short time was taken and carried to Babylon by the same king, 2Ch 36:9, the reign of Zedekiah, who also rebelled against the king of Babylon, and he and his people were taken and carried captive by him for his sins, which are here mentioned, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, and where the Jews continued until the reign of the kingdom of Persia, 2Ch 36:11 and the chapter is concluded with the proclamation of Cyrus king of Persia, and with which also the next book begins, 2Ch 36:22.

Ver. 1-13. Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah,.... Of whose reign, and of the three following, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, and the account of them, from hence to the end of 2Ch 36:13, what needs explanation or reconciliation,
See Gill on "2Ki 23:31" See Gill on "2Ki 23:32" See Gill on "2Ki 23:33" See Gill on "2Ki 23:34" See Gill on "2Ki 23:35" See Gill on "2Ki 23:36" See Gill on "2Ki 23:37" See Gill on "2Ki 24:5" See Gill on "2Ki 24:6" See Gill on "2Ki 24:8" See Gill on "2Ki 24:10" See Gill on "2Ki 24:17" See Gill on "2Ki 24:18"

2 Chronicles 36:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "2Ch 36:1"

2 Chronicles 36:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "2Ch 36:1"

2 Chronicles 36:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "2Ch 36:1"

2 Chronicles 36:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "2Ch 36:1"

2 Chronicles 36:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "2Ch 36:1"

2 Chronicles 36:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "2Ch 36:1"

2 Chronicles 36:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "2Ch 36:1"

2 Chronicles 36:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "2Ch 36:1"

2 Chronicles 36:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "2Ch 36:1"

2 Chronicles 36:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Ch 36:1"

2 Chronicles 36:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "2Ch 36:1"

2 Chronicles 36:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "2Ch 36:1"

2 Chronicles 36:14

Ver. 14. Moreover, the chief of the priests, and of the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the Heathens,.... The priests, and even the chief of them, who should have instructed the people in the duties of religion, and retained them in the pure worship of God, these were the ringleaders of idolatry, who led the people to commit all the idolatries of the Heathens round about them; and of the people, all ranks and degrees of them were corrupted with them; this was their case in several of the preceding reigns, and now a little before the destruction of them:

and polluted the house of the Lord, which he had hallowed in Jerusalem; the temple dedicated to his worship there; this they defiled, by setting up idols in it.

2 Chronicles 36:15

Ver. 15. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers,.... The prophets of the Lord, to admonish them of their idolatries, and to reprove them for them, to warn them of the wrath of God that would come upon them on that account, unless they repented and reformed; these were at the beginning of their apostasy, and were successively continued unto this time, as Ahijah, Elijah, and others, in the first times of it; Amos, Isaiah, and others, in the middle of it; and Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Ezekiel, towards the close of it:

rising up betimes, and sending; which is either to be understood of the Lord, and as expressive of his care and diligence, like the master of a family, solicitous for the good of it; or of the messengers, the prophets, who made haste to go or send their prophecies and instructions to reclaim the people; the phrase is often to be met with in the prophecy of Jeremiah, See Gill on "Jer 11:7":

because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwellingplace; being unwilling they should come to ruin, and perish, and their city and temple be destroyed where they dwelt.

2 Chronicles 36:16

Ver. 16. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words,.... Which was the treatment Jeremiah and Ezekiel frequently met with:

and misused his prophets; imprisoned them, as Micaiah and Jeremiah were:

until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people; which burned like fire in his breast, and broke out to the consumption of them:

till there was no remedy; or healing of them; there was no reclaiming or recovering of them, no bringing them to repentance, and no pardon for them.

2 Chronicles 36:17

Ver. 17. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees,.... Nebuchadnezzar; and though it was the rebellion of Zedekiah which was the cause and occasion of his coming against them, yet it was the Lord that moved him to it, and gave him success:

who slew their young men with the sword, in the house of the sanctuary; in the temple, where they took sanctuary, imagining that sacred place would protect them from the rage of the enemy, but it did not:

and had no compassion on young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age; spared none on account of age or sex, but put them all to the sword, or carried them captive:

he gave them into his hand; that is, the Lord delivered them into the hand of the king of Babylon, for their sins.

2 Chronicles 36:18

Ver. 18. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small,.... All that were left; for some had been carried away in both the reigns preceding:

and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of his princes; which became the spoil and booty of the soldiers:

all these he brought to Babylon; the vessels were laid up there, and restored when Cyrus took it; but the treasures were no doubt in part taken for his own use, and the rest divided in the army.

2 Chronicles 36:19

Ver. 19. And they burnt the house of the Lord,.... The temple; of which, and what follows in this verse, See Gill on "Jer 52:13",
See Gill on "Jer 52:14".

2 Chronicles 36:20

Ver. 20. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away captive,.... The king of Babylon, or his general by his orders, excepting some poor persons left to till the land, see Jer 52:15,

where they were servants to him and his sons; his son Evilmerodach, and his grandson Belshazzar, See Gill on "Jer 27:7":

until the reign of the kingdom of Persia; until that monarchy began, as it did upon the taking of Babylon by Cyrus king of Persia. This is the first place we meet with this name of Persia in Scripture. The Arabic writers differ about the origin of it; some derive it from Pars the son of Arsham (Arphaxad), the son of Shem; others from Pars the son of Amur, the son of Japheth; and others say Pars was the son of Elam, the son of Shem, the son of Noah {a}; but Bochart {b}, seems to be most correct in the derivation of the word, who observes, from Xenophon {c}, horses were very rare in this country; and very few could ride them before the times of Cyrus, who taught his foot soldiers to ride horses; and hence it became common, so that none of the best men of the land cared to be seen on foot; yea, he made a law, that it should be reckoned infamous if any of those he had taught the art of riding were seen to go on foot, though ever so little a way; from this sudden change made in his time the people were called Persians, and the country Persia; in the Arabic language, "pharas" signifying a horse, and "pharis" a horseman; and the same writer observes, that hence it is that no mention is made of this country, in the name of Persia, by Isaiah and Jeremiah; but by Ezekiel and Daniel, who were contemporary with Cyrus; and in this book and the following historical ones, which were wrote after the Babylonish captivity, as their history shows; and that this book was, is clear from the preceding clause, as well as from the three last verses.

{a} Hyde, Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers. c. 35. p. 418, 419. {b} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 10. col. 224. {c} Cyropaedia, l. 1. c. 11. & l. 4. c. 17, 18.

2 Chronicles 36:21

Ver. 21. To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah,.... That is, the Jews were so long servants in Babylon, as in the preceding verse, to accomplish Jeremiah's prophecy of it, 2Ch 25:12

until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths; the sabbatical years, or seventh year sabbaths, which, according to the law of the land, was to rest from being tilled, Le 25:4, which law had been neglected by the Jews, and now, whether they would or not, the land should have rest for want of persons to till it:

for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years; as threatened in Le 26:34 on which text Jarchi observes, that at the destruction of the first temple the law concerning the sabbath, or rest of the land had been neglected four hundred and thirty years, in which space were sixty nine sabbatical years; and, according to Maimonides {d}, it was at the end of a sabbatic year that the city and temple were destroyed, and so just seventy years had been neglected, and the land was tilled in them as in other years, and now it had rest that exact number of years; but of this we cannot be certain, though it is probable.

{d} Hilchot Shemitah Veyobel, c. 10. sect. 3.

2 Chronicles 36:22

Ver. 22,23. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia,.... These two verses are the same with which the next book, the book of Ezra, begins, where they will be explained; and these two books, the one ending and the other beginning with the same words, is a strong presumption, that one and the same person, Ezra, is the writer of them both; or rather, as a learned {e} writer conjectures, these two verses are added by some transcriber, who, having finished the book of Chronicles at verse twenty one went on with the book of Ezra, without any stop; but, perceiving his mistake, broke off abruptly; for so it is plain these verses conclude; however, this shows, as the same writer observes, that the book of Ezra followed that of the Chronicles, in the Hebrew copies, though it now does not.

{e} Dr. Kennicott's Dissert. 1. p. 492, &c.

2 Chronicles 36:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "2Ch 36:22".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezra 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF EZRA

This book, in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, is called the "First" Book of Ezra, Nehemiah being reckoned the "second"; but with the Jews both were accounted but one book {a}; in the Syriac version, it is called the Writing or Book of Ezra the Prophet; and this title is given him, both by Jews {b} and Christians {c}; in the Arabic version, it is called the First Book of Ezra the Priest, skilful in the Law; and that he was a priest is clear, since he was the son of Seraiah the high priest, who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar, and the younger brother of Josedech, who succeeded his father as high priest, and uncle to Joshua that succeeded him; and he was also a ready scribe in the law of Moses, see **Ezr 7:1**. That Ezra was the writer of this book is believed by the Jews {d}, and by the generality of Christians; only Huetius {e} thinks that the six first chapters were written by another hand, but his reasons are not satisfactory; and it has been universally received as canonical by all; it agrees with the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, and serves to illustrate them; it is of use for the continuation of the sacred history, to point at the fulfilment of prophecies concerning the return of the Jews from captivity, and the rebuilding of the temple; and to give us an account of the state of the church in those times, the troubles and difficulties it met with, and what care was taken to keep the tribes and families distinct, that it might be known from whom the Messiah sprung; this book contains an history of seventy years, according to the calculation of Bishop Usher {f}, from A. M. 3468, to A. M. 3538.

{a} Origen apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 6. c. 25. Hieron. Opera, tom. 3. Epist. ad Paulin. fol. 6. B. & ad Domnion. & Rogat. fol. 7. G. {b} Seder Olam Zuta, p. 108. {c} Lactant. Institut. l. 4. c. 11. {d} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. {e} Demonstr. Evangel. prop. 4. p. 208, 209. {f} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 146, 193.

INTRODUCTION TO EZRA 1

This chapter informs us of the proclamation of Cyrus king of Persia, for the

Jews to return to their own country, and rebuild their temple, **Ezr 1:1**, and that, upon it, the chief of them rose up for that purpose, whose hands were strengthened and supplied by those about them, **Ezr 1:5** and particularly by Cyrus, who gave orders that the vessels belonging to the temple should be delivered to them, **Ezr 1:7**.

Ver. 1. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia,.... Not in the first of his reign over Persia, for he had been many years king over that, and now had all the kingdoms of the earth given him, **Ezr 1:2**, but over Babylon, and the dominions belonging to it, which commenced with Darius upon the taking of Babylon; he reigned in all thirty years, as Cicero {g} from a Persian writer relates; or twenty nine, according to Herodotus {h}; but in what year this was is not certain; Africanus {i}, has proved, from various historians, that it was the first year of the fifty fifth Olympiad, perhaps about the twentieth of Cyrus's Persian government {k}; See Gill on "Da 10:1",

that the word of the Lord, by the mouth of Jeremiah, might be fulfilled; which foretold that the Jews should return from their captivity at the end of seventy years, which fell on the first of Cyrus, reckoning from the fourth of Jehoiakim, and the first of Nebuchadnezzar, see Jer 25:1.

The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia; who has the hearts of all men in his hands, and even of the kings of the earth, and can turn them as he pleases; he wrought upon him, put it into his heart, enlightened his mind, showed him what was right, and his duty to do, and pressed him to the performance of it; so that he could not be easy until he had done it, and he was made thoroughly willing, and even eager to do it:

that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing; gave it in writing to his heralds to read and proclaim throughout all his dominions:

saying; as follows.

{g} De Divinatione, l. 1. {h} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 214. {i} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 10. c. 10. p. 488. {k} Nic. Abrami Pharus, p. 303.

Ezra 1:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia,.... Of whom, and this edict of his,

Isaiah prophesied two hundred years before he was born,
Isa 44:28

the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; many he had conquered before he took Babylon, and then the whole Babylonian monarchy fell into his hands. Herodotus {l} says, he ruled over all Asia; Xenophon {m} reckons up many nations that were under his government, Medes and Hyrcanians, Syrians, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappadocians, both the Phrygians, Carians, Phoenicians, Babylonians, Bactrians, Indians, Cilicians, Sacae or Scythians, Paphlagonians, Megadinians, and many other nations, the Greeks inhabiting Asia, and the Cyprians, and Egyptians; and elsewhere he says {n}, the borders of his kingdom were, to the east the Red sea, to the north the Euxine Pontus, to the west Cyprus and Egypt, and to the south Ethiopia. And the possession of these kingdoms Cyrus ascribes, not to his own martial courage and skill, but to the providence and disposal of the God of heaven, which he seems to have had some notion of:

and he hath charged me to build an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah; in the prophecy of Isaiah, which, according to Josephus {o}, he had seen and read, and believed it to be a charge upon him, and a command unto him to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem; however, to give leave for the rebuilding of it, and to encourage to it, and assist in it; an Arabic writer says {p}, that Cyrus married a sister of Zerubbabel, and that it was at her request that the Jews had leave to return; which is merely fabulous.

{l} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 130. So Sallust, Bell. Catalin. p. 2. {m} Cyropaedia, l. 1. in principio. {n} L. 8. c. 48. {o} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 1. sect. 1, 2. {p} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 5. p. 82.

Ezra 1:3

Ver. 3. Who is there among you of all his people?.... The people of God, the Israelites, as well of the ten tribes, as of the two of Judah and Benjamin; for this edict was published throughout all his dominions, where were the one as well as the other:

his God be with him; to incline his heart to go, to protect him in his journey, and succeed and prosper him in what he goes about:

and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the

Lord God of Israel, he is the God; the one only living and true God:

which is in Jerusalem; who has been in former times, and is to be worshipped there; though Aben Ezra says, this is to be connected with "the house of the Lord"; as if the sense was, to build the house, that was in Jerusalem, or to be built there; and so our version connects them, putting those words into a parenthesis, "he is God"; but this is contrary to the accents.

Ezra 1:4

Ver. 4. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth,.... Is left behind, and cannot go up through poverty, not having a sufficiency to bear his charges in his journey to Jerusalem:

let the men of his place keep him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts; with money to bear the expenses of his journey, with goods to furnish his house, or trade with, when he came to Judea, and with cattle to carry him, and his goods, and to till the ground with, when he came thither; and the men exhorted to this are either the Gentiles that dwelt in the cities where these poor Jews were, or the richer Jews, who chose as yet not to go up until they saw how things would succeed; and are therefore called upon to assist their brethren who had a will, but not ability:

besides the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem: which they freely gave, and sent by them for the rebuilding of the temple.

Ezra 1:5

Ver. 5. Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin,.... Princes of these tribes, and heads of families in them, and of some other tribes too, though chiefly of these, as appears from **1Ch 9:3**,

and the priests and the Levites: whose presence was necessary both to direct in the building of the temple, and to animate to it, and to set the vessels in their proper places; and particularly to assist in the setting up of the altar, and to offer sacrifices on it, which was the first thing done when come to Jerusalem, **Ezr 3:2**

with all them whose spirit God raised to go up, to build the house of the Lord, which is in Jerusalem; God, who "works" in men "both to will and to do", wrought powerfully by his Spirit on their hearts, inclined their minds, and made them willing to go up, and set about this work; and such a divine, powerful, and efficacious operation upon them, was necessary to engage them in it, since the embarrassments, difficulties, discouragements, and objections, were many: some of them were well settled, and had contracted a pleasing acquaintance with many of their neighbours, and indeed to most of them it was their native place; and as for Judea and Jerusalem, they knew nothing of but what their fathers had told them; the way to it unknown, long, and dangerous, at least fatiguing and troublesome to their wives and children; and Judea and Jerusalem desolate and in ruins, and in the hands of enemies, from whom they had reason to expect trouble.

Ezra 1:6

Ver. 6. And all they that were about them,.... Their neighbours, the Chaldeans:

strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things; which they either did of themselves at their own motion, or by the direction and example of Cyrus, **Ezr 1:4** and perhaps many of them to ingratiate themselves into the favour of their new monarch:

besides all that was willingly offered: by the rich Jews, who thought fit, at least for the present, to remain in Babylon.

Ezra 1:7

Ver. 7. And Cyrus brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord,.... Or ordered them to be brought forth:

which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem; out of the temple there, when he took it and burnt it:

and had put them in the house of his gods; in the temple of Belus at Babylon, see 2Ch 36:7, by which means they were providentially preserved.

Ezra 1:8

Ver. 8. Even these did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer,.... Or Mithridates, a name common with the Persians, from their god Mithras, the sun they worshipped:

and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar prince of Judah; delivered them by tale to him; who, according to the Jewish rabbins, as Jarchi says, was Daniel, who was so called, because he stood in six tribulations; but it does not appear that Daniel went up to Jerusalem with the captivity, as this man did, but remained at Babylon; rather, with Aben Ezra, it is best by him to understand Zerubbabel, who did go up, and was the prince of Judah; and Cyrus, in his letter {q} to the governors of Syria, expressly says, that he delivered the vessels to Zerubbabel, the prince of the Jews. He had two names, Sheshbazzar, which signifies he rejoiced in tribulation, and Zerubbabel, which signifies either the seed of Babylon, being born there, or dispersed, or a stranger there, as others.

{q} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 11. c. 1. sect. 3.

Ezra 1:9

Ver. 9. And this is the number of them,.... Of the vessels delivered, as follows:

thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver; these, according to Ben Melech, were vessels in which water was put to wash hands in; but rather they were, as Aben Ezra observes from the Jerusalem Talmud {r}, vessels in which they gathered the blood of lambs and bullocks slain for sacrifices:

nine and twenty knives; which, because the handles of them were of gold or silver, were valuable, and might be very large knives, and what the priests used in slaying and cutting up the sacrifices.

{r} T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 41. 1.

Ezra 1:10

Ver. 10. Thirty basins of gold,.... Cups or dishes with covers, as the word seems to signify; but, according to Jarchi and Aben Ezra, they were vessels in which the blood of sacrifices was received, and out of which it was sprinkled on the altar:

silver basins of a second sort four hundred and ten; perhaps lesser than the other, however not so valuable, being of silver; in the Apocrypha:

"And this was the number of them; A thousand golden cups, and a thousand of silver, censers of silver twenty nine, vials of gold thirty, and of silver two thousand four hundred and ten, and a thousand other vessels." (1 Esdras 2:13)

the number is 2410; and in the letter of Cyrus, before referred to, it is 2400:

and other vessels a thousand; which are not particularly mentioned; Junius and Tremellius render the words,

other vessels by thousands, there being near 3000 that are not described.

Ezra 1:11

Ver. 11. All the vessels of gold, and of silver, were five thousand and four hundred,.... Those that are mentioned make no more than 2499, which Aben Ezra thinks were the larger vessels; but this general sum takes in great and small, as in 2Ch 36:18 in the letter of Cyrus, before mentioned, these vessels are more particularly described, and their several numbers given, which together amount to the exact number in the text, 5400; the apocryphal Ezra makes them 5469:

all these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity, that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem: of whom there is a large and particular account in the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezra 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZRA 2

This chapter contains a list of those that went up from Babylon to Jerusalem, of their leaders, their chief men, princes and priests, **Ezr 2:1** of the people, described by their families, towns, and cities, and number of persons, **Ezr 2:3**, of the priests, Levites, and Nethinims, **Ezr 2:36**, and of those that could not make out their genealogy, people and priests, **Ezr 2:59**, and then the sum total of the whole congregation is given, **Ezr 2:64**, besides men and maidservants, singing men and women, and cattle of divers sorts, **Ezr 2:65**, and the chapter is closed with an account of the freewill offerings of the principal men towards the building of the temple, and of the settlement of the people in their respective cities, **Ezr 2:68**.

Ver. 1. Now these are the children of the province,.... Either of the province of Babylon, as Aben Ezra, where they were either born, or had dwelt for many years; or else rather, according to Jarchi, of the province of Judea, as it is called, **Ezr 5:8** once a flourishing kingdom, but reduced to a province of the Babylonian monarchy, now in the hands of the Medes and Persians, of which province they and their fathers originally were:

that went out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon; who either in person, or in their parents, were carried captive by him, and who were the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; and they are only mentioned, because they were the principal that returned, though there were some of the other tribes that also came up with them:

and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, everyone unto his city; that he dwelt in before, or was now assigned to him by lot, see Ne 11:1, &c.

Ezra 2:2

Ver. 2. Which came with Zerubbabel,.... The head of them, the prince of Judah; and the chief that came with him are the ten following; Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah; the first of these, Jeshua, was Joshua the high priest, the son of Josedech, **Hag 1:1**. Dr. Lightfoot {s} thinks that Nehemiah is the same, whose name the following book bears; and that Mordecai is he who was uncle to Esther, so Aben Ezra; but, if so, they must both return again; for that Nehemiah came to Jerusalem in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, **Ne 1:1**, and that Mordecai brought up his niece in the city of Shushan, in the times of Ahasuerus, is certain; and this, with respect to both, is denied by others {t}, who take them to be different men of the same name; and the same writer is of opinion that Seraiah, and who is called Azariah, **Ne 7:7** is the same with Ezra, who therefore must and did return, since he went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, **Ezr 7:1**, as for the others, we know nothing more of them than their names:

the number of the men of the people of Israel; either of the principal of them before named, or of the common people, which next follows.

{s} Works, vol. 1. p. 127. So Broughton, Works, p. 258. {t} Vid. Rainold. de Libr. Apocryph. Praelect. 111, 117, 148.

Ezra 2:3

Ver. 3-35. The children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred and seventy two. From hence, to the end of **Ezr 2:35**, a list is given of the captives that returned, described by the families they were of, their ancestors from whence they sprung, or the towns and cities to which they originally belonged, and by their numbers; otherwise nothing more of them is known.

Ezra 2:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:36

Ver. 36-39. The priests,.... An account of them is given in this and the three following verses, and only four families are mentioned, those of Jedaiah, Immer, Pashur, and Harim, and the number of them amounted to 4289; these, according to the Jews, were heads of four courses, which were all that returned from Babylon {u}.

{u} T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 68. 1.

Ezra 2:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "Ezr 2:36".

Ezra 2:38

Ver. 38. See Gill on "Ezr 2:36".

Ezra 2:39

Ver. 39. See Gill on "Ezr 2:36".

Ezra 2:40

Ver. 40-42. The Levites,.... Singers and porters, who are reckoned in this, and the two following verses, whose numbers were no more than three hundred and forty one; whereas, in the times of David, they were 38,000, 1Ch 23:3.

Ezra 2:41

Ver. 41. See Gill on "Ezr 2:40".

Ezra 2:42

Ver. 42. See Gill on "Ezr 2:41".

Ezra 2:43

Ver. 43-58. The Nethinims,.... Supposed by Aben Ezra and Jarchi to be the Gibeonites, who were "given" by Joshua, as the word Nethinims signifies, to the congregation, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water; but rather were those that were given by David to assist the Levites; of these is an account from hence to the end of **Ezr 2:58**, together with those who descended from Solomon's servants, who seem to be the remains of the Canaanites in the land, whom Solomon made bondservants of, **1Ki 9:20**, who, and their posterity, became proselytes; or those sprung from men that were domestic servants of Solomon's, and valued themselves on that account; the number of the Nethinims and these together were three hundred ninety and two.

Ezra 2:44

Ver. 44. See Gill on "Ezr 2:43".

Ezra 2:45

Ver. 45. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:46

Ver. 46. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:47

Ver. 47. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:48

Ver. 48. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:49

Ver. 49. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:50

Ver. 50. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:51

Ver. 51. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:52

Ver. 52. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:53

Ver. 53. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:54

Ver. 54. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:55

Ver. 55. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:56

Ver. 56. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:57

Ver. 57. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:58

Ver. 58. See Gill on "Ezr 2:3".

Ezra 2:59

Ver. 59. And these were they that went up from Telmelah, Telharsa,.... Places in the land of Babylon, see Isa 37:12.

Cherub, Addan, and Immer; but they could not show their father's house, and their seed, whether they were of Israel; these were such that professed the Jewish religion, and went for Jews in Babylon, but could not trace their pedigree, and tell what family they were of, who their ancestors, and where they had lived in Judea; they had lost their genealogical tables, if they ever had any, and could not make it out, whether their parents were Israelites or proselyted Gentiles; or they were such who had been exposed, and taken out of the streets, and their parents unknown.

Ezra 2:60

Ver. 60. The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, and the children of Nekoda, six hundred fifty and two. These, though their immediate parents were known, yet by their being mentioned here, it seems as if they could not carry their genealogy further, and make it clearly appear what was the house of their fathers, or what their family.

Ezra 2:61

Ver. 61. And of the children of the priests,.... Who could not make out their pedigree, for those that could are mentioned before:

the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai; how the latter came by this name follows:

which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name; this man married a woman that descended from the famous Barzillai the Gileadite, in the times of David; and the priesthood being in disuse, and mean and despicable, in Babylon, he chose to take the name of his wife's family, and pass for a descendant from that, and perhaps destroyed, or at least neglected, to take care of the genealogy of his own family.

Ezra 2:62

Ver. 62. These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy,.... To find their names written and registered there; for the Jews kept public registers of their priests, their descent, marriages, and offspring, that it might be known who were fit, and who not, to officiate as such:

but they were not found; their names were not there, nor any account taken of them:

therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood; were not suffered to attend at the altar, and offer sacrifice, and enjoy the privileges belonging to that office.

Ezra 2:63

Ver. 63. And the Tirshatha said unto them,.... By whom Jarchi understands Nehemiah, and observes, that their rabbins say he was so called, because the wise men allowed him to drink the wine of the Gentiles, he being cupbearer to the king; but Aben Ezra, with greater probability, takes it to be a name of honour and grandeur in the Chaldee language, as a prince or governor; and no doubt Zerubbabel is meant, the prince of the Jews, the same with Sheshbazzar, **Ezr 1:8** according to Gussetius {w}, this office was the same with that of the king's commissary in a province, delegated to carry his orders, make them known, and see them put in execution; and that this name Tirshatha is the same with Tithraustes in Aelian {x}; but that seems to be not the title of an office, but the personal name of a man that was a chiliarch:

that they should not eat of the most holy things; as of the shewbread, and those parts of the sin offerings, and of the peace offerings and meat offerings, which belonged to the priests, which the governor forbid these to eat of, who were rejected from the priesthood:

till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim; as yet there was not any priest that had them; they were not to be found at the return from Babylon; the governor might hope they would be found, and a priest appear clothed with them, when it might be inquired of the Lord by them, whether such priests, before described, might eat of the holy things or not; but since the Jews {y} acknowledge that these were one of the five things wanting in the second temple; it is all one, as the Talmudists {z} express it, as if it had been said, until the dead rise, or the Messiah comes; and who is come, the true High Priest, and with whom are the true Urim and Thummim, lights and perfections to the highest degree, being full of grace and truth; of the Urim and Thummim, See Gill on "Ex 28:30".

{w} Ebr. Comment. p. 809. {x} Var. Hist. l. 1. c. 21. Vid. Corn. Nep. Vit. Conon. l. 9. c. 3. {y} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21. 2. {z} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 48. 2. & Gloss. in Kiddushin, fol. 60. 2.

Ezra 2:64

Ver. 64. The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred [and] threescore. But the sums before given make no more, with Zerubbabel, and the ten principal men, than 29,829, so that there are more than 12,000 wanting; wherefore, in answer to the question, where are the 12,000? the Jews say in their chronology {a} these are they of the other tribes, who set up the altar on its bases, and gave money to the masons, &c. **Ezr 3:1**, this was a much larger number than were carried captive; see 2Ki 24:14, but not to be compared with the number that came out of Egypt, Ex 12:37. An Arabic writer {b} makes them 50,000, but wrongly.

{a} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 29. p. 86. {b} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 5. p. 82.

Ezra 2:65

Ver. 65. Besides their servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven,.... This shows that the greater part of those that returned were of the poorer sort, since there were so few servants that belonged unto them; these came not into the above account:

and there were among them two hundred singing men and singing women; among the servants, who were kept by persons of figure for their pleasure and recreation, see **Ec 2:8**, for that these were such as were employed in sacred service is not so clear, especially the latter, though some conclude it from 1Ch 25:5, but rather they were such as were employed at marriages, festivals, and funerals; though Jarchi thinks they were employed by the returning captives, to make them cheerful as they travelled along, See Gill on "Isa 55:12".

Ezra 2:66

Ver. 66,67 Their horses were seven hundred thirty and six, their mules two hundred forty and five, their camels four hundred thirty and five, [their] asses six thousand seven hundred and twenty. So that the far greatest part of them must walk on foot, since these can be thought to be little more than sufficient to carry their goods or baggage; some copies of the Vulgate Latin read six hundred and thirty six horses {c}.

{c} Ed. of Sixtus V. and the Lovain in James's Contrariety of Popish Bibles, p. 295.

Ezra 2:67

Ver. 67. See Gill on "Ezr 2:66".

Ezra 2:68

Ver. 68. And some of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the house of the Lord that is at Jerusalem,.... That is, when they came to the place where it formerly stood, and where were still the ruins of it:

offered freely for the house of God, to set it up in its place; to rebuild it upon the spot where it formerly stood; this they did besides the freewill offerings they brought with them from Babylon.

Ezra 2:69

Ver. 69. They gave after their ability unto the treasure of the world threescore and one thousand drachms of gold,.... These "darcemons or darics" were a Persian coin; one of which, according to Brerewood {k}, was of the value of fifteen shillings of our money, and so this quantity of them amounted to 45,750 pounds; but according to Bishop Cumberland {l} they were of the value of twenty shillings and four pence of our money, and so came to upwards of 61,000 pounds; these everyone, according to his ability, put into the common stock or treasury for the work of building the temple; the Vulgate Latin {m} reads 40,000:

and five thousand pounds of silver; and an Hebrew "mina", or pound, being of our money seven pounds, ten shillings, according to Brerewood {n}, amounted to 31,250 pounds: but others {o}, reckoning a drachm of gold at ten shillings, and a mina or pound of silver at nine pounds, make the whole to amount only to 75,500 pounds of our money:

and one hundred priests' garments; which, as they were laid up among treasures, so were necessary for the service of the temple.

{k} De Pret. & Ponder. Vet. Num. ch. iii. v. {l} Scripture Weights & Measures, ch. 4. p. 115. {m} Sixtus V. Lovain & MSS. in James ut supra. (Contrariety of Popish Bibles, p. 295) {n} Ut supra, (De Pret. & Ponder. Vet. Num.) ch. iv. v. {o} Universal History, vol. 10. p. 183, marg.

Ezra 2:70

Ver. 70. So the priests and the Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the Nethinims, dwelt in their cities,.... Which were assigned to them out of the several tribes, and in which they or their forefathers had dwelt before the captivity:

and all Israel in their cities; as those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, so of the other ten, as many as returned and joined those who were left in the land.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezra 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZRA 3

This chapter relates how that the people of Israel returned from captivity, gathered to Jerusalem, and set up the altar, where sacrifices were offered, **Ezr 3:1**, and kept the feast of tabernacles, and offered the sacrifices of that, besides the daily sacrifice, and of other festivals; and contributed to the workmen that prepared for the building of the temple, **Ezr 3:4** and began it by laying the foundation of it; which to some was matter of joy, to others of grief, on different accounts, **Ezr 3:8**.

Ver. 1. And when the seventh month was come,.... The month Tisri, which answers to part of September and October; or when it "was approaching" {p}, for before it was actually come some following things were done, the people met, and an altar was built; for on the first day of it sacrifices were offered, **Ezr 3:6**,

and the children of Israel were in the cities; their respective cities, settling their domestic affairs:

the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem; the thing was universal, and done with as much dispatch as if only one man was concerned; and it seems to denote as if they were under a divine impulse, and came together without any consultation, or knowledge of each other's designs, and without summons.

{p} egyw "cum appropinquaret", Piscator.

Ezra 3:2

Ver. 2. Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak,.... Who was the high priest, and the proper person to give the lead in the following work:

and his brethren the priests; the common priests, very fit to join him, and assist him in it:

and Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel; the prince and governor of Judah, whose presence was necessary to give countenance to the work, and animate to it:

and his brethren; the princes and heads of the people, particularly those mentioned **Ezr 2:2**

and builded the altar of the God of Israel; the altar of burnt offering, gave orders for the building of it, and directions about it:

to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God; or prophet of God, as the Syriac version; see **Le 1:1**.

Ezra 3:3

Ver. 3. And they set the altar upon his bases,.... Which might remain of the old altar; or the meaning is, that it was fixed and settled on the same spot where it stood before:

for fear was upon them, because of the people of those countries; and therefore they hastened to erect an altar, and offer sacrifices to the Lord, in hope that he would appear for them, and help them against their enemies; or rather, as some render the words {q} "though fear was upon them", &c. yet they were not deterred from the work, worship, and service of God:

and they offered burnt offerings unto the Lord, even burnt offerings, morning and evening; the daily sacrifice, as directed to
Ex 29:38.

{q} yk "quamvis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Patrick.

Ezra 3:4

Ver. 4. They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written,.... According to the rules prescribed for the observation of it in
Le 23:34 this began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month:

and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required; for on all the eight days of the feast there was a certain number of sacrifices fixed for every day; and exactly according to the law concerning them did they offer them at this time; see Nu 29:12.

Ezra 3:5

Ver. 5. And afterwards offered the continual burnt offering,.... Not after the feast of tabernacles, as if they then began to offer the daily sacrifice; for that they did as soon as the altar was set up, and on the first day of the month, **Ezr 3:3**, rather the sense is, that after the daily burnt offering of the morning, they offered the other sacrifices peculiar to the several days of the feast of tabernacles; they never neglected that, yea, always began with it; all the rest were after it, and so on other festivals:

both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the Lord that were consecrated; to the service of the Lord, and the honour of his name, as every first day of the month, and every other appointed festival, they offered the sacrifices appropriate to each; but not to the neglect of that sacrifice, and always after it:

and of everyone that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the Lord; these they were careful also to offer in their proper time.

Ezra 3:6

Ver. 6. From the first of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the Lord,.... And which day was not only a new moon, but a grand festival, the feast of blowing of trumpets,
Le 23:24, and no doubt but they observed the tenth day of this month, with all the rites of it, which was the day of atonement,
Le 23:27,

but the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid; they began first with sacrifices, that having thereby given thanks to God for their return to their own land, and for all the benefits they enjoyed, and made atonement for their sins in a typical way, they might be the more prepared and fit for the work of building the temple; or, "though the foundation" of it was not laid {z}, yet they offered the above sacrifices.

{z} Etsi, Michaelis.

Ezra 3:7

Ver. 7. They gave money also to the masons, and to the carpenters,.... To buy stone and timber with for the building of the temple:

and meat and drink and oil unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre; which were more agreeable to them than money, because there was not plenty of such things in their country, as in the land of Israel:

to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa; as they did at the first building of the temple by Solomon; they cut down cedars at Lebanon, which belonged to them, and sent them by sea to Joppa, the nearest seaport to Jerusalem, about forty miles from it: see **2Ch 2:16**,

according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia; for Tyre and Zidon being under his dominion as well as Judea, he not only gave leave to the Jews to get cedar wood from Lebanon, but gave orders to the Zidonians and Tyrians to furnish them with it, paying a valuable consideration for it; and so some {a} render the word, "according to the commandment of Cyrus".

{a} Nwyvrk "juxta praeceptum", Vatablus; "juxta quod praeceperat", V. L. So Ben Melech.

Ezra 3:8

Ver. 8. Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem,.... The place where it formerly stood; the Jews seem to have set out from Babylon, in the spring of the preceding year, as it was now of this; which to Jerusalem was a journey of about four months, as Ezra performed it, **Ezr 7:9**, but might take up longer time for such a body of people to do it in, being larger than that with him; wherefore, after they had visited their respective cities, and settled their affairs there, they came to Jerusalem on the seventh month, or September, and kept the feast of tabernacles, and then they returned to their cities again, the winter season being an improper time to begin the building of the temple; having given money to workmen to purchase materials with, and no doubt left a sufficient number to clear away the rubbish, and get things ready by the returning spring to set about the work:

in the second month; the mouth Ijar, as Jarchi observes, answering to part of April and May, having, as may be supposed, kept the passover the month before:

began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak: the prince, and the high priest:

and the remnant of their brethren, the priests and Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; whose names and numbers are given in the preceding chapter:

and appointed the Levites from twenty years old and upwards to set forward the work of the house of the Lord; to put men to work upon it, and direct them what to do, and urge them to attend closely to it; ever since David's time the Levites were employed at twenty years of age, when before not till thirty, or twenty five; see 1Ch 23:24.

Ezra 3:9

Ver. 9. Then stood Jeshua, with his sons,.... Not Jeshua the high priest before mentioned, but Jeshua the Levite, **Ezr 2:40**,

and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together; the same with Hodaviah, **Ezr 2:40**

to set forward the workmen in the house of God; to give them orders to begin and lay the foundation, and hasten and animate them to it:

the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites: two of this man's sons are mentioned in **Ne 3:18**.

Ezra 3:10

Ver. 10. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord,.... The masons, whose work it was, **Ezr 3:7** they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets; these were set in a proper place by the prince and the high priest, in their priestly garments, with trumpets in their hands to blow with, as the foundation was laying:

and the Levites the sons of Asaph, with cymbals to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel; these were instruments of brass, and made a tinkling sound, and were by the order of David; and the persons that made use of them; and the songs of praise they were played upon unto; all by his appointment, as well as harps and psalteries, which might now be used, though not expressed; see 1Ch 15:16. So the Messenians, when the walls of their city were raised by Epaminondas, and their houses and temples erected, attended it with sacrifices and prayer, and with piping and singing {b}.

{b} Pausan. Messenica, sive, l. 4. p. 368.

Ezra 3:11

Ver. 11. And they sang together by course,.... They sang by turns in responses, and answered one another, as the word signifies; when one company had performed their part, another took theirs:

in praising and giving thanks to the Lord; for returning them to their own land, and giving them opportunity, ability, and will, to set about the rebuilding of the temple of the Lord, and restoring the pure worship of God;

because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever towards Israel; which words are often repeated in Ps 136:1 and which might be the psalm the Levites now sung by responses:

and all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord; to express their joy, in the best manner they could, on this solemn occasion:

because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid; which gave them hope the temple in due time would be rebuilt, and the service of it restored; see Job 38:6.

Ezra 3:12

Ver. 12. But many of the priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men,.... Seventy or eighty years of age:

that had seen the first house; the temple built by Solomon, as they very well might, since then it had been destroyed but fifty two years; for the seventy years captivity are to be reckoned from the fourth of Jehoiakim, when it began, and which was eighteen years before the destruction of the temple; the beginning of the next clause,

when in the foundation, according to the Hebrew accents, is to be connected with this,

that had seen the first house; not when first founded, for that was five hundred years ago, but in "its foundation"; they saw it standing upon its foundation, in all its glory, and so the Septuagint version; and we may read on, when

this house was before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; seeing what it was like to be by the foundation now laid, and was in their sight as nothing in comparison of the former; see **Hag 2:3** but Aben Ezra connects this clause as we do,

when the foundation of this house was laid; not but that the dimensions of this house strictly taken were as large as the former: see **Ezr 6:3**, but not the courts and appendages to it: besides, what might affect them, there was no likelihood of its being so richly decorated with gold and silver as the former temple, and many things would be wanting in it, as the Urim and Thummim, &c.

and many shouted aloud for joy; of the younger sort, who had never seen the grandeur of the first temple, and were highly delighted with the beginning of this, and the hope of seeing it finished.

Ezra 3:13

Ver. 13. So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people,.... That is, not clearly and distinctly, they were so mixed and confounded together, and made such a jarring and discord:

for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off; the shouting being of young people, whose voice was strongest, and they the most numerous, the noise of shouting prevailed over the noise of weeping; and it was heard further, and at a distance appeared more distinctly to be the noise of shouting, that of weeping not reaching so far; though Jarchi is of opinion that the noise of weeping was heard further than the noise of shouting, which is not likely.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezra 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZRA 4

The contents of this chapter are the offer the Samaritans made to the Jews, to assist them in building the temple, which having refused, they gave them all the trouble they could, **Ezr 4:1** and a letter of theirs to Artaxerxes, king of Persia, full of accusations of them, **Ezr 4:7** and the answer of Artaxerxes to it, giving orders to command the Jews to cease building the temple, **Ezr 4:17** which orders were accordingly executed, and the work ceased till the second year of Darius, **Ezr 4:23**.

Ver. 1. Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin,.... The Samaritans, as appears from **Ezr 4:2**,

heard that the children of the captivity; the Jews, who had been in captivity seventy years, and were just come out of it, and still were not quite free, but under the jurisdiction and control of the king of Persia:

builded the temple unto the Lord God of Israel; that they were going about it, and had laid the foundation of it, which might soon come to their ears, the distance not being very great. Josephus {c} says they heard the sound of the trumpets, and came to know the meaning of it.

{c} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 4. sect. 3.

Ezra 4:2

Ver. 2. Then they came to Zerubbabel, and the chief of the fathers,.... These they addressed, as knowing that if they could not prevail with them, they could never succeed in their design; and these were no doubt the principal of the Samaritans that applied:

and said unto them, let us build with you; that is, the temple, they proposed to join with them, and assist them in it; which proposal at first sight might seem very agreeable and welcome, and would have been so had they been sincere, but they were not; they hoped, by getting among them, to have sown discord among them, and disunited them; and so by these or other means to have retarded the building; or if it went forward, that they might have a claim to it as theirs, at least as to set up their own idols in a part of it; the reasons they gave follow:

for we seek your God as ye do; which was false, for they did not worship him alone, but with idols, nor in the same manner as the Jews did:

and we do sacrifice unto him; but even that could not recommend them to the Jews, since they ought not to sacrifice, even to the Lord himself, but at Jerusalem: there is a various reading here; the textual reading is, "we do not sacrifice"; that is, to idols; the marginal reading is, "we sacrifice to him", which we follow; Aben Ezra takes in both, perhaps most rightly; "we do not sacrifice to any other, but to him"; which was also false:

since the days of Esarhaddon, king of Assur, who brought us up hither; to Samaria, from Babylon, and other places; see 2Ki 17:24.

Ezra 4:3

Ver. 3. But Zerubbabel, and Joshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers, said unto them,.... The prince and high priest, and chief of the people:

you have nothing to do with us to build an house to our God; being neither of the same nation, nor of the same religion:

but we ourselves together will build to the Lord God of Israel; we and we only, who are together as one man, united in one body of people, and in the same religious sentiments, being Israelites; we separately, without admitting strangers among us, will build a temple to the God of Israel:

as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, hath commanded us; thereby letting them know that they acted by his authority, and the commission they had from him only concerned themselves, and not others.

Ezra 4:4

Ver. 4. Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building. By threatening them, or by dissuading the workmen from going on, by endeavouring to hinder their having materials from the Tyrians and Zidonians, or money out of the king's revenues to bear the expenses as ordered; see **Ezr 6:4**.

Ezra 4:5

Ver. 5. And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose,.... Either to advise and persuade the king of Persia's officers in those parts not to supply them with money, or to influence the great men at his court to get the edict revoked: and this they did

all the days of Cyrus king of Persia; who, though the hearty friend and patron of the Jews, yet being engaged in wars abroad with the Lydians and Scythians, and leaving his son as viceroy in his absence, who was no friend unto them, the work went on but slowly, attended with interruptions and discouragements:

even until the reign of Darius king of Persia; who was Darius Hystaspis, between whom and Cyrus were Cambyses the son of Cyrus, and Smerdis the impostor, who pretended to be Smerdis, the brother of Cambyses; a space of about fifteen years.

Ezra 4:6

Ver. 6. And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign,.... According to Jarchi, this was Ahasuerus the husband of Esther; but, as most think {d}, was Cambyses, the son and successor of Cyrus; so Josephus {e}; who was an enemy to the Egyptians; and, fearing the Jews might take part with them, was no friend to them; their enemies therefore took the advantage of the death of Cyrus, and the first opportunity after Cambyses reigned in his own right:

and wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem; full of hatred and enmity, spite and malice, charging them as a turbulent, disobedient, and rebellious people.

{d} Spanhem. Introduct. Chron. ad Hist. Eccl. p. 54. & Universal History, Vol. 5. p. 203. Prideaux, p. 175. {e} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 11. c. 4.) sect. 4, 6. Vid. R. David Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 8. 2. So Dr. Lightfoot, Works, vol. 1. p. 139.

Ezra 4:7

Ver. 7. And in the days of Artaxerxes,.... The same with Ahasuerus, in the preceding verse; and who also is Cambyses, which is his name in Heathen authors, Artaxerxes being a common name to the kings of Persia; though some {f} think this was Smerdis, the magician and impostor, who was between Cambyses and Darius; but as he reigned but seven months, it is not very likely that he should be wrote unto, and an answer received from him; besides he sent to every nation he ruled over {g}, and so to the Jews, and proclaimed to them freedom from tribute and the militia for three years, to ingratiate himself to them:

wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions; or his company; for Jarchi thinks only one person is meant; that Mithredath Tabeel is the name of one of the adversaries of Judah; and that Bishlam is an appellative, and signifies that he wrote in peace, or in a way of salutation and greeting; but they seem to be the names of governors in the cities of Samaria under the king of Persia: these wrote

to Artaxerxes king of Persia; instigated by the Samaritans:

and the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue; or Chaldee, of which Ezra gives a copy in the Chaldee language; the meaning either is, that it was written both in Syriac letters, and in the Syriac language; for sometimes words are written in one language and in the character of another, as the Syriac is sometimes written in, Hebrew characters, and the Hebrew in Roman; or else there was a postscript added to this letter, explaining some things in it, which also was written in the same language: some take {h} the word "nishtevan", rendered "written", to be the name of a province on the borders of the country beyond Euphrates, whose figure and characters were in high esteem, and fit to write in to kings; but the words and language were Syrian, and needed interpretation.

{f} Prideaux's Connect. par. 1. p. 175. Authors of the Universal History, vol. 5. p. 199, 203. So Vitringa, Hypotypos. Hist. Sacr. p. 108. {g} Herodot. Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 67. Justin. l. 1. c. 9. {h} Praefat. Arugas Habbosem apud Buxtorf. de liter. Heb. add.

Ezra 4:8

Ver. 8. Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king in this sort. This means the same letter as before; which, according to Jarchi, was sent in the name of Mithredath Tabeel and his company, was endited by Rehum, master of words or sense, and written by Shimshai the scribe, whom he makes to be a son of Haman {i}; but it was written rather in all their names.

{i} So Midrash Esther, fol. 85. 3.

Ezra 4:9

Ver. 9. Then wrote Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions,.... who all signed the letter; namely, the governors of the following nations;

the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, and the Elamites; which were colonies from several parts of Chaldea, Media, and Persia, and were settled in the several cities of Samaria, as several of their names plainly show, as from Persia, Erech, Babylon, Shushan, and Elimais; some account for them all, but with uncertainty; according to R. Jose {k} these were the Samaritans who first were sent out of five nations, to whom the king of Assyria added four more, which together make the nine here mentioned, see 2Ki 17:24.

{k} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38.

Ezra 4:10

Ver. 10. And the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnappar brought over,.... The river Euphrates:

and set in the cities of Samaria; placed there in the room of the Israelites carried captive; this Asnappar was, according to Jarchi and others {l} Sennacherib; but, with Grotius, Shalmaneser; rather he was Esarhaddon, the son of the former, and grandson of the latter; so Dr. Prideaux {m}; though he might be only some commander of the Assyrian monarch, who carried them over by his orders:

and the rest that are on this side the river; the river Euphrates:

and at such a time; which may respect the date of the letter, which, no doubt, was expressed, though not here given; or this, as some think, was the same with our &c. something following, unto King Artaxerxes greeting, or something like that; though David de Pomis {n} takes it to be the general name of the people beyond the river.

{l} Kimchi Sepher Shorash. fol. 166. 2. & Vajikra Rabba in ib. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1. {m} Connexion, &c. vol. 1. p. 30. {n} Tzemach David, fol. 63. 3.

Ezra 4:11

Ver. 11. This is the copy of the letter they sent unto him, even unto Artaxerxes the king,.... Which Ezra brought with him from Babylon, and is contained in the five following verses:

thy servants the men on this side the river, and at such a time; this was the inscription of the letter, or the beginning of it.

Ezra 4:12

Ver. 12. Be it known unto the king,.... The intent of this letter was, that it might be known to the king what follows:

that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem; this they observe partly out of contempt of the Jews, having been lately captive in Babylon, and partly to insinuate what ingratitude they were guilty of; that having got their liberty, and come to Jerusalem, they made use of it to the king's detriment:

building the rebellious and the bad city; as they suggest it had been to kings, even his predecessors, in former times, Ezr 4:15

and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations; which was a falsehood; for the most they had done was setting up the walls of their houses in Jerusalem, and laying the foundation of the temple; as for the walls of the city, they had not as yet done anything unto them.

Ezra 4:13

Ver. 13. Be it known now unto the king,.... And let it be seriously and thoroughly considered by him and his counsellors:

that if this city be builded, and its walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom; being able to defend themselves against the king's forces, sent to reduce them to their obedience; these three words take in all sorts of taxes and levies on persons, goods, and merchandise:

and so thou shall endamage the revenue of the kings; not only his own, but his successors';

this they thought would be a very striking and powerful argument with him.

Ezra 4:14

Ver. 14. Now because we have maintenance from the king's palace,.... Have posts under the king, to which salaries were annexed, by which they were supported, and which they had from the king's exchequer; or "salt" {o}, as in the original, some places of honour and trust formerly being paid in salt; hence, as Pliny {p} observes, such honours and rewards were called "salaries":

and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour; to see any thing done injurious to his crown and dignity, to his honour and revenues, when we are supported by him; this would be ungrateful as well as unjust:

therefore have we sent and certified the king; of the truth of what is before related; and, for the further confirmation of it, refer him to the ancient records of the kingdom, as follows.

{o} xlm "salem vel sale", Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 31.

c. 7.

Ezra 4:15

Ver. 15. That search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers,.... That is, his predecessors in the Babylonian monarchy; though, as the Medes and Persians were included in that, and joined the Babylonians in their wars with others, and particularly with the Jews, the records of the Medes and Persians might also be applied to:

so shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time; against the king of Babylon, particularly in the times of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah:

for which cause was this city destroyed; as it was by Nebuchadnezzar; see 2Ki 24:1.

Ezra 4:16

Ver. 16. We certify the king, that if this city be builded again, and the walls thereof set up,.... As it formerly was, and now attempted, as they suggest:

by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river; the river Euphrates; intimating that the Jews would not only shake off his yoke, and refuse to pay tribute themselves, but would seize on all his dominions on that side the river, and annex them to their own.

Ezra 4:17

Ver. 17. Then sent the king an answer unto Rehum the chancellor, and to Shimshai the scribe,.... This affair, upon examination, being found to be of importance, the king of Persia thought fit to send an answer to the above letter, which was doing them an honour, and gave them the power and authority they wished to have:

and to the rest of their companions that dwelt in Samaria; in the kingdom, province, and cities of Samaria:

and unto the rest beyond the river; the river Euphrates, the rest of the nations before mentioned, **Ezr 4:9**.

Peace, and at such a time: that is, all health and prosperity, &c.

Ezra 4:18

Ver. 18. The letter which ye sent unto us,.... The plural number is used, being now become courtly for kings thus to speak of themselves:

hath been plainly before me; by such that understood both the Syrian and Persian languages; the letter was written in the Syrian language, and the king being a Persian, it was necessary it should be interpreted and explained to him.

Ezra 4:19

Ver. 19. And I commanded, and search hath been made,.... In the records of his predecessors, whether Chaldeans or Persians:

and it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and that rebellion and sedition have been made therein: and yet this could not be carried higher than to the times of Zedekiah and Jehoiakim, as before observed, which was not one hundred years ago, unless the rebellion of Hezekiah against the king of Assyria could be thought to be in these records, 2Ki 18:7, and yet from hence it is concluded as if in ages past they had been guilty of rebellion and sedition, and even always.

Ezra 4:20

Ver. 20. There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all countries beyond the river,.... As David and Solomon; and the account of these they had in their records, see **2Sa 8:1**

and toll, tribute, and custom, was paid unto them; as appears from the places referred to; and this served to strengthen the insinuation made to the king, that if these people were suffered to go on building, he would lose his tribute and taxes in those parts.

Ezra 4:21

Ver. 21. Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease,.... From building:

and that this city be not builded until another commandment shall be given from me; he might suspect that this case, in all its circumstances, was not truly stated, and that hereafter he might see reason to recede from the present orders he gave; and the rather, as by searching, and perhaps on his own knowledge, must have observed, that his father Cyrus had shown favour to the Jews, and had not only set them at liberty, but had encouraged them to rebuild their temple; which might be what they were about, and was the case, and nothing else, except their houses to dwell in.

Ezra 4:22

Ver. 22. Take heed now that ye fail not to do this,.... To put his orders into execution, and at once, without any loss of time, oblige the Jews to desist from rebuilding the walls of their city, which he was told they were doing, though a great falsehood:

why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings? of him and his successors, to be deprived of their toll, tribute, and customs, and to have insurrections, mutinies, and rebellions, in the dominions belonging to them.

Ezra 4:23

Ver. 23. Now when the copy of King Artaxerxes letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions,.... By him or them to whom it was particularly directed:

they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews; not only in obedience to the king's command, but from an eagerness of spirit to put a stop to the proceedings of the Jews, to whom they had an aversion, instigated by the Samaritans:

and made them to cease by force and power; from going on with the building of the temple, which they reckoned a part of the city, and within their commission; this they did by showing the power and authority they had under the king's hand, and by the forces they brought with them to compel them to it, should they refuse to obey; or, however, they threatened them highly what they would do, if they did not desist.

Ezra 4:24

Ver. 24. Then ceased the work of the house of God, which is at Jerusalem,.... How far they had proceeded is not said, whether any further than laying the foundation of it; though probably, by this time, it might be carried to some little height; however, upon this it was discontinued:

so it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia; not Darius Nothun, as some think, for from the first of Cyrus to the sixth of his reign, when the temple was finished, was upwards of one hundred years; yea, according to some, about one hundred and forty; which would carry the age of Zerubbabel, who both laid the foundation of the temple, and finished it, and the age of those who saw the first temple, to a length that is not probable; but this was Darius Hystaspis, who succeeded Cambyses the son of Cyrus, there being only, between, the short usurpation of Smerdis for seven months.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezra 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZRA 5

This chapter relates, how that the people of the Jews were stirred up by the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah to set about the building of the temple again, notwithstanding the orders to the contrary from the deputy governors of the king of Persia; nor could the present ones cause them to cease from it; though it must be owned they behaved towards them in a better manner than the former ones did, **Ezr 5:1**, and who, upon the answers received from the Jews, wrote a letter to Darius, to know the truth of things; and in which they seem to state fairly the case of the Jews, as they had it from them, so far as they understood it, **Ezr 5:6**.

Ver. 1. Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo,.... The grandson of Iddo; for he was the son of Berechiah, **Zec 1:1**, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel; this they both did in the second year of Darius; the one began in the sixth month, and the other in the eighth month of the year, **Hag 1:1**, even "unto them"; or "against them", as De Dieu; reproving them for their sloth and neglect of building the temple, when they were careful enough to raise up goodly houses for themselves to dwell in; and for being intimidated by the command of the king of Persia, which only forbid the building of the city, that is, the walls of it, but not the temple any more than their own houses; and besides, there was now a new king, from whom they had not so much to fear.

Ezra 5:2

Ver. 2. Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak,.... Whose spirits were stirred up and quickened by the ministry of the prophets, the Lord accompanying it by his Spirit, **Hag 1:12**,

and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem; to go on with the building of it; for they had laid the foundation before, and perhaps had carried it up to some little height, at least, before they ceased from it, **Ezr 3:10**

and with them were the prophets of God helping them; with words of counsel, comfort, and exhortation, directing and encouraging them, and promising them protection and success: these are the prophets before named.

Ezra 5:3

Ver. 3. At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shetharboznai, and their companions,.... These were new governors and officers under the king of Persia in those parts, the old ones, Rehum, Shimshai, &c. being either dead, or removed upon this new king coming to the throne: these came to the Jews,

and said thus unto them, who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall? for it seems by this time they had raised up the walls of the temple from its foundation to some height; for of these it must be understood, see **Ezr 4:8** for it can hardly be thought they were as yet enclosing it with a wall round about it; now they asked them by what authority they did this? who set them to work? and what were their names? for that this question was asked, though not here expressed, is clear from **Ezr 4:10** and to which an answer is given in the next verse.

Ezra 5:4

Ver. 4. Then said we unto them after this manner,.... In answer to their questions; namely, Ezra and other Jews replied; for though Ezra is said after this to come from Babylon in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, he might go thither on some business, and then return again at that time; some indeed think these are the words of Tatnai and those with him; so Ben Melech, which seems to be favoured by **Ezr 4:10**, and by reading the words with an interrogation, as we do; Aben Ezra says they are either the words of the builders, or of the scribes, the secretaries that came to question them; but they are the words of the former, as order requires, or otherwise no answer would be returned, at least as expressed; and the next clause may be read without an interrogation, and the sense be, that they told them not only that they acted according to an edict of Cyrus king of Persia, for this was said, as appears from **Ezr 5:13**, but they declared

what were the names of the men that did make this building; or employed them in it, namely, Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the chief men of the Jews; they made no scruple of telling them who they were; neither ashamed of their masters nor of their work, nor afraid of any ill consequences following hereafter.

Ezra 5:5

Ver. 5. But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews,.... He in his providence looked favourably at them, smiled upon them, encouraged them in the work by his good Spirit, and by the prophets, and gave them success, and protected and defended them, see
2Ch 16:9,

that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius; they were not intimidated by what the governor and those with him said to them, but went on in their work; nor did the governor attempt to interrupt them, they having referred him and their cause to Darius for the truth of what they had said, and for further information from him:

and then they returned answer by letter concerning this matter; that is, Tatnai and those with him sent a letter to Darius about this affair, to which they had an answer, which are both related in this and the following chapters.

Ezra 5:6

Ver. 6. The copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shetharboznai, and his companions the Apharsachites, which were on this side the river,.... Which is thought by some to be one of the nations mentioned, **Ezr 4:9** the name being pretty near alike to two of them; but perhaps might be a distinct colony in those parts Tatnai was governor of:

these sent unto Darius the king; and is as follows.

Ezra 5:7

Ver. 7. They sent a letter unto him, wherein was written thus,.... Or this was the inscription of it:

unto Darius the king, all peace; wishing him all kind of happiness and prosperity.

Ezra 5:8

Ver. 8. Be it known unto the king,.... This seems to have been the usual form of beginning a letter to a king in those days, **Ezr 4:12** that we went into the province of Judea; which from a kingdom was reduced to a province, and was become a part of the Babylonian, now Persian, monarchy, see **Ezr 2:1** to the house of the great God; as the Jews called the Lord their God; and even the Heathens had a notion that there was one supreme God, though they worshipped inferior ones; and some had a notion that Jehovah the God of the Jews was he:

which is builded with great stones; marble stones; as Jarchi {q}, stones of rolling, as it may be rendered; which, according to Aben Ezra, were so large and heavy, that they could not be carried, but were obliged to roll them:

and timber is laid in the walls, cedar wood, as Aben Ezra interprets it, for beams, for flooring and raftering; or rather, is put upon the walls, for the lining and wainscoting of them, which was done with cedar wood:

and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands; and, unless timely prevented, will soon be finished.

{q} So David de Pomis, Tzemach David, fol. 15. 3.

Ezra 5:9

Ver. 9. Then asked we those elders,.... The elders of the province of Judea; the chief men of it:

who commanded you to build this house, and to make up these walls? see **Ezr 5:3**.

Ezra 5:10

Ver. 10. We asked their names also,.... The names of the elders, those that set men about this work:

to certify that we might write the names of the men that were the chief of them; take the names of them in writing, that they might with certainty acquaint the king who they were, and that if it was necessary they might be called to an account for what they were doing.

Ezra 5:11

Ver. 11. And thus they returned us answer,.... To the purpose and in the manner following:

saying, we are the servants of the God of heaven and earth; signifying that they were doing his work, in obedience to his will, and to whom they were accountable:

and build the house that was builded these many years ago; even five hundred years ago, or thereabout; so that they were not erecting a building where there was none before, but were rebuilding what was in ruins:

which a great king of Israel builded and set up; King Solomon, who was a great king for wisdom, honour, riches, peace, prosperity, and extent of his kingdom.

Ezra 5:12

Ver. 12. But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath,.... By their idolatries; which accounts for it how it was that they who were the servants of the great God of heaven and earth, and this temple built for the honour of his name, were not preserved by him; but they were carried captive, and this house left desolate: it was for their sins for which

he (God) gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon; see 2Ch 36:19.

Ezra 5:13

Ver. 13. But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon,.... That is, the first year he was king of Babylon, having taken it, otherwise he was king of Persia many years before:

the same King Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God; see **Ezr 1:1**.

Ezra 5:14

Ver. 14,15 And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God,.... Of which, and of what is said concerning them, and particularly of the delivery of them to Sheshbazzar, whom Cyrus made governor of Judah, and ordered him to carry them to Jerusalem, and build the temple there, and put them in it, see **Ezr 1:7**.

Ezra 5:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "Ezr 5:14".

Ezra 5:16

Ver. 16. Then came the same Sheshbazzar, and laid the foundation of the house of God which is in Jerusalem,.... Which makes it clear, that by Sheshbazzar is meant Zerubbabel; for he it was that laid the foundation of the temple, or at least by whose order it was laid, see **Zec 4:9**

and since that time even until now; from the first of Cyrus to the second of Darius, a space of about eighteen years, and just seventy from the destruction of the temple:

hath it been in building, and yet it is not finished; the work going on slowly, not without interruption and intermission, through the enmity of the Samaritans unto them, who had made false representations of them; but these men, Tatnai and those with him, as the Jews gave them a very particular account of things, as above, so they fairly and fully related them in this their letter to the king.

Ezra 5:17

Ver. 17. Now therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon,.... Where were the archives of the kingdom, where the laws, decrees, edicts, and proclamations, and other things relating to the state, were laid up, that recourse might be had to them upon occasion:

whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem; which the Jews affirmed was made by him, and upon which they proceeded:

and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter; whether the Jews should be allowed to go on with the building of their temple, and finish it, or whether they should be restrained from it; signifying they were ready to do his will and pleasure either way, as he thought fit.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezra 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZRA 6

Darius, on receiving the letter from his officers in Samaria, searched for the decree of Cyrus, and found it, and which he confirmed, **Ezr 6:1** and made a fresh decree, and ordered expenses to be given out of his tribute for the building of the temple, and for the sacrifices of it; and that whosoever altered it should be hanged on the timber of his own house, and imprecated a curse on those that should destroy the house of God, **Ezr 6:8** upon which the building went on, and was finished, **Ezr 6:13** and the temple was dedicated to God in a solemn manner, **Ezr 6:16**, and the passover was kept by all the people, **Ezr 6:19**.

Ver. 1. Then Darius the king made a decree,.... To make inquiry after the edict of Cyrus, to search the public records for it:

and search was made in the house of the rolls; or "books" {r}, in a public library or museum:

where the treasures were laid up in Babylon; where things of worth and value were reposited; not only gold, silver, jewels, and precious stones, and things rare and curious, but all sorts of writings relating to the monarchy, and the dominions belonging to it; but it seems it could not be found here, and therefore the king ordered search to be made elsewhere.

{r} ayrpo tybb, en taiv biblioyhkaiv, Sept. "in bibliotheca", V. L. "in bibliotheca librorum", Tigurine version; "in domo librorum", Pagninus, Montanus.

Ezra 6:2

Ver. 2. And there was found at Achmetha,.... Which Jarchi and Aben Ezra take to be the name of a vessel in which letters and writings were put for safety; but it was no doubt the name of a place; the Vulgate Latin version has it Ecbatana; and so Josephus {s}; which was the name of a city in Media, where the kings of that country had their residence in the summer time {t}; for it has its name from heat {u}; the Persian kings dwelt at Shushan in the winter, and at Ecbatana in the summer {w}; hence they are compared by Aelian {x} to cranes, birds of passage, because of their going to and from the above places:

in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, here was found a roll; which was the decree of Cyrus, which perhaps he took with him when he went thither:

and therein was a record thus written; as follows.

{s} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 4. sect. 6. {t} Curtius, l. 5. c. 8. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 6. {u} Hiller. Onomastic. Sacr. p. 618. {w} Athen. Deipnosophist, l. 12. c. 1. {x} De Animal. l. 3. c. 13.

Ezra 6:3

Ver. 3. In the first year of Cyrus the king; the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, let the house be builded,.... See **Ezr 1:1**,

the place where they offered sacrifices; to God in times past, ever since it was built by Solomon:

and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; so as to bear and support the building erected on them, as the word signifies:

the height thereof sixty cubits; which were thirty more than the height of Solomon's temple, **1Ki 6:2** though sixty less than the height of the porch, which was one hundred and twenty, **2Ch 3:4** and which some take to be the height of the whole house; and hence it may be observed what Herod said {y}, that the temple then in being wanted sixty cubits in height of that of Solomon's:

and the breadth thereof sixty cubits; whereas the breadth of Solomon's temple was but twenty, **1Ki 6:2**, but since it cannot reasonably be thought that the breadth should be equal to the height, and so very disproportionate to Solomon's temple; many learned men understand this of the extension of it as to length, which exactly agrees with the length of the former temple, **1Ki 6:2**.

{y} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 15. c. 11. sect. 1.

Ezra 6:4

Ver. 4. With three rows of great stones,.... Which Jarchi interprets of the walls of it, and these stones of marble; and so Ben Melech:

and a row of new timber; of cedar wood upon the rows of stone, see **1Ki 6:36** or for the lining and wainscoting the walls:

and let the expenses be given out of the king's house; treasury, or exchequer; but it does not appear that this part of the decree was observed, at least hitherto; but the Jews built at their own expense, and perhaps did not exactly observe the directions given as to the dimensions of the house.

Ezra 6:5

Ver. 5. And also let the golden and silver vessels,.... See **Ezr 1:7** and which confirms what the Jews said to Tatnai, **Ezr 5:14**.

Ezra 6:6

Ver. 6. Now therefore Tatnai, governor beyond the river,.... The river Euphrates, that side of it towards the land of Israel; Josephus {z} calls this man master of the horse:

Shetharboznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which are beyond the river, be ye far from thence; keep at a distance from the Jews, and give them no disturbance, nor interrupt them in their work of building of the temple, but mind your own business and government.

{z} Ibid. (Antiqu.) l. 11. c. 4. sect. 7.

Ezra 6:7

Ver. 7. Let the work of this house of God alone,.... Suffer them to go on with it, and do not hinder them; it looks, by these expressions, as if he had some suspicion or hint given him that they were inclined to molest them, or that there were some that stirred them up to it, and were desirous of it:

let the governor of the Jews, and the elders of the Jews, build this house of God in his place; where it formerly stood; that is, go on with the building of it.

Ezra 6:8

Ver. 8. Moreover, I make a decree, what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews, for the building of this house of God,.... This must be considered as an additional decree of Darius, which was peculiarly made by him, in which more was granted in favour of the Jews, and as an encouragement to them to go on with the building of the temple; though Josephus {a} says this is no other than a confirmation of the decree of Cyrus; for, according to him, all that is here granted to them, or threatened to others, from hence to the end of **Ezr 6:10**, was contained in the decree:

that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river; what was collected out of his dominions on that side the river Euphrates, towards the land of Israel: according to Herodotus {b}, this Darius was the first of the kings of Persia that exacted tribute; under Cyrus and Cambyses only presents were brought; but he imposed a tribute, and was therefore called kaphlov, an huckster, as Cambyses had the name of lord, and Cyrus that of father: the same writer gives an account of the several nations he received it from, and the particular sums, which in all amounted to 14,560 Euboic talents of gold; among whom are mentioned all Phoenicia and Syria, called Palestine, the tribute of which parts is the tribute beyond the river he referred to: and this king was well disposed to the Jewish nation, temple, and worship, before he was king, if what Josephus {c} says is true, that, while a private man, he vowed to God that, if he should be king, he would send all the sacred vessels that were in Babylon to the temple at Jerusalem: and out of the above tribute it is ordered,

that forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered; from going on with the building, for want of money to buy materials, and pay the workmen.

{a} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 4. sect. 6. {b} Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 89-95. {c} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 3. sect. 1.

Ezra 6:9

Ver. 9. And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven,.... All which were used for burnt offerings, see **Le 1:2** wheat, salt, wine, and oil; "wheat", or "fine flour", for the "minchah" or meat offering; "salt", for every offering; "wine", for the drink offerings; and "oil", to be put upon the meat offerings, see **Le 2:1**,

according to the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail; for the daily sacrifice, and the meat and drink offerings which attended it, Ex 29:38.

Ezra 6:10

Ver. 10. That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven,.... Such as will be acceptable to him, **Ge 8:21**

and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons; prayer being wont to be made at the time of the morning and evening incense; and the Jews used to pray for other people besides themselves, and especially when desired, and particularly for kings and civil magistrates, to whom they were subject, see Jer 29:7, the sons of Darius Hystaspis, for whose life, as well as his own, he would have prayer made, were, according to Herodotus {d}, three by his first wife, the daughter of Gobryas, before he began to reign, the eldest of which was Artobazanes; which sons must be here meant, since this was towards the beginning of his reign; he had afterwards four more by Atossa the daughter of Cyrus, the eldest of which was Xerxes, who succeeded him: many of the Heathens had an high opinion of the God of the Jews, and of their prayers to him for them; even the Emperor Julian {e} styles him the best of all the gods, and desired the Jews to pray to him for the welfare of his kingdom; nor need it seem strange that Darius should desire the same, since he was a devout prince; his father Hystaspes is supposed by some to be the same that was one of the most famous among the Persian Magi, or ministers in sacred things; and Darius himself had so great a veneration for the men of that sacred order, that he commanded that it should be put upon his sepulchral monument, that he was master of the Magi {f}; and by his familiarity with the priests of Egypt, and learning their divinity, had the honour, while alive, to have deity ascribed to him {g}.

{d} Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 2. {e} Opera, par. 2. ep. 25. p. 153. {f} Porphyr. de abstinentia, l. 4, c. 16. {g} Diodor. Sic. l. 1. p. 85.

Ezra 6:11

Ver. 11. Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word,.... Act contrary to this command, will not obey it, but as much as in him lies changes and revokes it:

let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him, be hanged thereon; that is, let a beam be taken from it, and a gallows or gibbet made of it, and hang him on it:

and let his house be made a dunghill for this; be pulled down, and never rebuilt more, See Gill on "Da 2:2",
See Gill on "Da 2:9".

Ezra 6:12

Ver. 12. And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there,.... Whose name is not only called upon there, and that called by his name; but who grants his presence, and causes his Shechinah, or divine Majesty, to dwell there, as in Solomon's temple, which Darius had some knowledge of:

destroy all kings and people; let them be who they will, high or low:

that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God, which is at Jerusalem; this he said to deter from hindering the building of it now, and from attempting to destroy it hereafter:

I Darius have made a decree, let it be done with speed; be carried immediately into execution, especially with respect to the disbursement for the building of the temple, and for the sacrifices of it.

Ezra 6:13

Ver. 13. Then Tatnai, governor on this side the river, Shetharboznai, and their companions,.... Having received and read the above letter:

according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily; acquainted the Jews with what the king had written; were so far from hindering the work going forward, that they encouraged it; and made disbursements to them out of the king's tribute, and furnished them with everything necessary for sacrifice: and this they did immediately, without delay.

Ezra 6:14

Ver. 14. And the elders of the Jews builded,.... Went on with the building of the temple:

and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo; or grandson, as before; being animated and encouraged by them; and as they foretold and promised it would, be, so it was; they had success in their work, the Lord overruling the heart of Darius the king and his council in their favour:

and they builded and finished it; that is, the temple:

according to the commandment of the God of Israel; by the above prophets, who spoke to them, and prophesied in his name:

and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia; the commandment of Cyrus is in **Ezr 1:1** that of Darius in this, **Ezr 6:8**, but who Artaxerxes is, and his commandment, is not easy to say; he cannot be the Artaxerxes between Cyrus and Darius, but one that followed the latter; besides, he was a hinderer of the building, **Ezr 4:21**, some think this was Xerxes the son and successor of Darius, and who might be partner with his father in the empire at this time, and so is joined with him in this commandment; which is more probable than that he should be his grandson Artaxerxes Longimamus, in whose reign the temple, it is supposed, was beautified and ornamented, though the exterior building of it was before finished; and so he is spoken of by anticipation; and still more plausible than that he should be, with others, Artaxerxes Mnemon, the son of Darius Nothus; but, after all, I am most inclined to think, with Aben Ezra, that he is Darius himself; and the words to be read, Darius, that is, Artaxerxes, king of Persia; Artaxerxes being, as he observes, a common name of the kings of Persia, as Pharaoh was of the kings of Egypt; though this is by some rejected {h}; and who goes by this name in the continuance of this history, in whose seventh year, the year after this, Ezra went up to Jerusalem, and, in the twentieth of his reign, Nehemiah, **Ezr 7:1**, and I find Dr. Lightfoot {i} was of the same mind; and, according to Diodorus Siculus {k}, the kings of Persia were called by the name of Artaxerxes after Mnemon; and so they might before; Cambyses is so called in Ezr 4:7. Herodotus {l} says the name signifies "a mighty warrior".

{h} Vid. Rainold de Lib. Apocryph. praelect. 31. p. 271. {i} Works, vol. 1. p. 139. {k} Bibliothec. l. 15. p. 400. {l} Erato, sive, l. 6. c. 98.

Ezra 6:15

Ver. 15. And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar,.... The twelfth month of the year with the Jews, and answers to part of our February and part of March:

which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king; four years after the decree came forth.

Ezra 6:16

Ver. 16. And the children of Israel,.... Those of the ten tribes that remained after the body of the people were carried captive, or came with the Jews at their return:

the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity; those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin:

kept the dedication of this house of God with joy; they set it apart for sacred use and service, with feasting and other expressions of joy and gladness, as follows.

Ezra 6:17

Ver. 17. And offered, at the dedication of this house of God, an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs,.... Hecatombs of various sorts, which were always reckoned grand sacrifices, even among Heathens, of which Homer sometimes speaks; some of these were for burnt offerings, and others peace offerings, by way of thankfulness to God for the finishing of the temple; part of which belonging to the offerers, they feasted upon it with great gladness of heart:

and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel; for though the ten tribes were carried captive by Shalmaneser, yet, as before observed, there were some of them that remained in the land, and others that went and returned with the two tribes; and therefore a sin offering was made for them all, for the typical expiation of guilt contracted since they had been in an Heathen land, and, temple service had ceased.

Ezra 6:18

Ver. 18. And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God which is at Jerusalem,.... All in their proper classes and courses, to do the work of the temple at Jerusalem in their turns:

as it is written in the book of Moses; see **Nu 3:6**, from hence it is plain the Pentateuch was not written by Ezra, as suspected by Spinosa {m}, but by Moses; see the argument of the book of Genesis. See Gill on "Ge 1:1".

{m} Tract. Theolog. Polit. c. 8. p. 163.

Ezra 6:19

Ver. 19. And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month. The month Nisan or Abib, which was the month following that in which the temple was finished, **Ezr 6:15**, this passover was kept at the exact time the law commanded, Ex 12:2.

Ezra 6:20

Ver. 20. For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure,.... They were all to a man pure, and all purified as one man; all were of one mind to purify themselves, and took care to do it, and did it with as much dispatch as if only one man was purified; so that they were more generally prepared for service now than in the times of Hezekiah, 2Ch 29:34

and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests and for themselves; which seems to have been done by the Levites, for themselves and for the priests, and for all the people, who were not so pure as the priests and Levites; or otherwise they might have killed it themselves, Ex 12:6, as Bochart {n} thinks.

{n} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 50. col. 576.

Ezra 6:21

Ver. 21. And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity,.... The tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with some of the ten tribes mixed with them:

and all such as had separated themselves unto them, from the filthiness of the Heathen of the land, to seek the Lord God of Israel, did eat; such of the Gentiles in the dominions of Babylon, and came with the Jews from thence, who were enlightened into the knowledge and worship of the true God, and not only renounced their idolatry, here called filthiness, but were circumcised, and embraced the religion of the Jews, and so were proselytes of righteousness, as they call them; or otherwise they would not have been allowed to eat of the passover, as they did, Ex 12:48.

Ezra 6:22

Ver. 22. And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy,.... Which immediately followed upon the passover, Ex 12:18,

for the Lord had made them joyful; the building of the temple being finished, and the service of it restored to its original purity;

and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel; by giving them leave to go on in building the temple, and by encouraging and assisting them in it till they had finished it; this was Darius Artaxerxes, who, though called king of Persia, was also king of Assyria, being possessed of the Assyrian monarchy, as his predecessors were upon the taking of Babylon, and the same is therefore called also the king of Babylon, Ne 13:6. God, the God of Israel, who has the hearts of all men in his hands, and so the hearts of kings, and can turn them at his pleasure, inclined his heart to do them good, which was matter of joy unto them, see **Ezr 7:27**.

Ezra 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZRA 7

In this chapter we have the lineage and character of Ezra described, **Ezr 7:1**, his expedition to Jerusalem, and of many others with him, **Ezr 7:7**, a copy of the commission King Artaxerxes gave him to execute, **Ezr 7:11**, and his thankfulness, **Ezr 7:27**.

Ver. 1-5. Now after these things,.... The finishing of the temple, and the dedication of it, and keeping the passover:

in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia; in the seventh year of his reign, **Ezr 7:7**, who is the same with Darius in the preceding chapter; so Jarchi and Aben Ezra; See Gill on "Ezr 6:14".

Ezra the son of Seraiah; the high priest slain by Nebuchadnezzar Jer 52:24, this Ezra was a younger son of his, brother to Josedech, and uncle to Joshua, who were high priests in succession; his pedigree is carried in the ascending line up to Aaron, in this and the four following verses; only six generations, for brevity sake, are omitted, between Azariah and Meraioth, which may be supplied from **1Ch 6:7**,
See Gill on "1Ch 6:3.

Ezra 7:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "Ezr 7:1".

Ezra 7:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "Ezr 7:1".

Ezra 7:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "Ezr 7:1"

Ezra 7:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "Ezr 7:1"

Ezra 7:6

Ver. 6. This Ezra went up from Babylon,.... A second time; for that he went up with Zerubbabel is clear from Ne 12:1, and is plainly intimated, **Ezr 5:4**,

and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given; the meaning is, not that he had a quick hand in writing out copies of it, but was well versed in the knowledge of it; had studied it thoroughly, well instructed in it, and was abundantly qualified to teach it others; he was an eminent doctor of the law; so scribes, in the New Testament, who are the same with the lawyers, were such as were teachers of the law; the word here used in the Arabic language signifies to be expert, as Jarchi {o} learned from one of their doctors:

and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him; either upon Ezra, giving him favour with the king, and so success and prosperity; or it may denote the divine influence of the God of Ezra upon the heart of the king, moving him to grant what he asked of him, even everything he desired: he seems to have been sent upon an embassy to the king from the chief men at Jerusalem; perhaps the governors of Syria had not so fully made the disbursements the king in his decree had required them to make, since the following commission chiefly respects such things; and he was sent on that errand to acquaint the king with it, as well as to persuade those that remained to return, and to obtain leave for it.

{o} Comment. in Psal. xlv. 1. "acutus ingenio et solers fuit", Golius, col. 2272. "in re exercitatus fuit et excultus", Castel. col. 2008. Ethiop. "docuit, erudivit", ib. col. 2007.

Ezra 7:7

Ver. 7. And there went up some of the children of Israel,.... Perhaps some of the ten tribes, as well as others of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; who, notwithstanding the edict of Cyrus, chose to remain in Babylon, and in the countries of it, until they saw how things would go in Judea; and hearing that the temple was finished, and that those that had returned had built them houses in their several cities, and prospered, thought fit to return also:

and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem; to take their places, and execute their offices in the temple now built; for of the Levites especially, some of which were singers, and others porters, and of the Nethinims, there were but few that went up with Zerubbabel: now this journey of theirs was taken

in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king; that is, of Darius Artaxerxes, and this was the year after the temple was finished: though it is thought by many learned men, and not without some show of reason, that Artaxerxes Longimanus is meant.

Ezra 7:8

Ver. 8. And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month,.... With the above company; this was the month Abib, answering to part of July and part of August: which was in the seventh year of the king; as in the preceding verse.

Ezra 7:9

Ver. 9. For upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon,.... The month Nisan, answering to part of March and part of April; this was New Year's day:

and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem; the first of the month Ab, as in the preceding verse; so that he was just four months on his journey:

according to the good hand of his God upon him; his power and providence, which gave him and his company health and strength, supplied them with everything necessary, directed, protected, and defended them, and brought them in safety to their journey's end.

Ezra 7:10

Ver. 10. For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord,.... To attain to the knowledge of it, that he might be master of it, and expert in it, and know what was not to be done, and what to be done; he had set his heart upon this, bent his studies this way, and taken a great deal of pains in searching into it, in reading of it, and meditating on it;

and to do it; he was not only concerned to get the theory of it, but to put it in practice, to exercise himself in it, that it might be habitual to him; and the rather, as his view and intentions were not merely for the sake of himself, but

to teach in Israel statutes and judgments: and therefore it was not only necessary that he should have a large and competent knowledge of the laws, moral, ceremonial, and civil, but that he should act according to them himself, that so by his example, as well as by his instructions, he might teach the people.

Ezra 7:11

Ver. 11. Now this is the copy of the letter that the King Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest,.... This title relating to his office is justly given him, since he was the son of an high priest, and lineally descended from Aaron, as the above account of his pedigree shows:

the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel; the doubling of the word "scribe" shows that he was very wise and learned in the law, in the commandments and statutes of it the Lord gave to Israel; not only in the language of it in which it was written, but in the matter and substance of it, in the things contained in it; for yrbd "dibre", signfiies "things" as well as words.

Ezra 7:12

Ver. 12. Artaxerxes, king of kings,.... Having many kings and kingdoms subject and tributary to him; for this was not merely a proud haughty title which the eastern kings {p} assumed, particularly the Persians; for after Cyrus they were so in fact, who took this title also, and had it put on his sepulchral monument,

"Here I lie, Cyrus, king of kings {q};"

this title was given to Grecian kings, particularly Agamemnon is called king of kings {r}, he being general at the siege of Troy, under whom the rest of the kings fought; if this was Darius Hystaspis, of him Cyrus dreamed that he had wings on his shoulders, with one he covered Asia, and with the other Europe {s}:

unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven; of which titles see **Ezr 7:11**:

perfect [peace], and at such a time; the word "perfect" belongs to Ezra's title as a scribe, signifying that he was a most learned and complete scribe or teacher of the law of God; "peace" is not in the text, and the phrase "at such a time" respects the date of the letter, though not expressed, or is only an "et cetera", See Gill on "Ezr 4:10".

{p} See the Universal History, vol. 5. p. 16, 137. & vol. 11. p. 7, 8. margin, & p. 66. {q} Strabo, Geograph. l. 15. p. 502. {r} Vell. Patercul. Hist. Roman. l. 1. in initio. {s} Herodot. Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 209.

Ezra 7:13

Ver. 13. I make a decree,.... Which, according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, when signed, might not be changed, **Da 6:8**,

that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm; who remained there, and took not the benefit of the edict of Cyrus, which gave them leave to go; but neglecting the opportunity, it seems as if they could not now go out of the realm without a fresh grant, which is hereby given:

which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee; this decree did not oblige them to go whether they would or not; for they might, notwithstanding this, continue if they pleased; it only gave them leave to make use of the present opportunity of going along with Ezra, if they chose it.

Ezra 7:14

Ver. 14. Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counsellors,.... Such a number the kings of Persia used to have from the times of Darius Hystaspis, who was chosen out of seven nobles to be king, and ever after the Persian kings had seven counsellors privileged, as those nobles were, **Es 1:14**, and Ezra had the honour to be sent with a commission from this king and his seven counsellors,

to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem; the inhabitants thereof, whether they had knowledge of and behaved

according to the law of thy God which is in thine hand; a copy of which he had with him, and was very expert in and conversant with, and could readily and at once pass judgment whether they acted according to it or not.

Ezra 7:15

Ver. 15. And to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem. In the temple built there; for the service of which, either for purchasing and procuring vessels that were wanting in it, or for sacrifices to be offered in it, the king and his nobles had made a voluntary contribution, and intrusted and sent Ezra with it.

Ezra 7:16

Ver. 16. And all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon,.... Not that he might take it wherever he found it, whether the owners of it were willing he should have it or not; but whatever was freely offered by them, as Jarchi, that he was allowed to take, whatever he could get in that way:

with the freewill offering of the people; of the people of the Jews, who thought fit to continue in the province:

and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem; those freewill offerings, whether of the natives of Babylon, or of any of the Jewish nation, for the service of the temple at Jerusalem, he had leave and a commission to carry with him.

Ezra 7:17

Ver. 17. That thou mayest buy speedily with this money,.... Thus freely contributed by one and another:

bullocks, rams, lambs; which were for burnt offerings:

with their meat offerings, and their drink offerings; which always went along with the burnt offerings, according to the law of Moses; and which the king seemed to have a right knowledge of, being, no doubt, instructed by Ezra, or some other Jew in his court:

and offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem; the altar of burnt offering in the temple there.

Ezra 7:18

Ver. 18. And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren,.... The priests, that he should think fit to take in to his assistance in this work:

to do with the rest of the silver and gold; which should be left after the sacrifices were offered up:

that do after the will of your God; as they should be directed by him, or was prescribed by him in the law.

Ezra 7:19

Ver. 19. The vessels also that were given thee for the service of the house of thy God,.... These were vessels of silver, basins of gold, and vessels of fine copper; not what formerly belonged to the temple, they were delivered by Cyrus to Sheshbazzar; but what the present king and his counsellors freely offered at this time, see **Ezr 8:25**, those

deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem; perfect and complete, the full number of them, as the word signifies {t}; meaning not to be delivered before him, or in his presence, as a witness thereof, but that they should be dedicated and devoted to his service, who was worshipped in the temple at Jerusalem, and by the inhabitants of it; he seems as if he thought him a topical deity, the God of that particular place, which was the notion of the Heathens, see

1Ki 20:23, though he also speaks of him as the God of heaven.

{t} Mlvh "integra et pleno numero redde", Michaelis.

Ezra 7:20

Ver. 20. And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shall have occasion to bestow,.... For the beautifying and ornamenting the temple, **Ezr 7:27**,

bestow it out of the king's treasure house; where the money collected by tribute, tax, and custom, was deposited; his exchequer, as it may be called, see **Ezr 6:8**.

Ezra 7:21

Ver. 21. And I, even I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which are beyond the river,.... The receivers of his tribute, tax, and custom, beyond the river Euphrates, on the side towards the land of Israel:

that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven; see **Ezr 7:12**,

shall require of you, it be done speedily; which seems at first a grant at large for whatsoever he should want or demand, but is limited and restrained by what follows.

Ezra 7:22

Ver. 22. Unto one hundred talents of silver,.... Which amounted to 35,300 pounds sterling; these, according to Jarchi, were to buy the offerings or sacrifices with:

and an hundred measures of wheat; or corn, the same measure with the homer, each of which held ten ephahs, or seventy five wine gallons, five pints, and upwards; these, according to the same writer, were for meat offerings, made of fine flour, or rather bread offerings, as they may be called:

and to an hundred baths of wine; which was the same measure in liquids as the ephah in things dry, a tenth part of the cor or homer, and held seven wine gallons, five pints, and upwards {u}; these were for the drink offerings:

and to an hundred baths of oil; the same measure as before; these were to mix in the meat offerings:

and salt without prescribing how much; because it was used in all offerings, and was cheap, and therefore no measure is fixed, but as much as was wanting was to be given, see **Le 2:1**.

{u} See Cumberland's Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 4. p. 137.

Ezra 7:23

Ver. 23. Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven,.... In the law given by Moses to the people of Israel:

let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven; for the service of it, particularly sacrifices:

for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? through the neglect of the service of God in the temple, and by reason of the default of the king's treasurers.

Ezra 7:24

Ver. 24. Also we certify you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God,.... The king had a right and perfect knowledge of the distinct offices and services of those persons, see **Ezr 7:7**,

it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them; that they might be the less encumbered with the affairs of life, and be more at leisure to attend divine service, and do it the more readily and freely; it was usual with the Heathens to except ecclesiastics from taxes, tributes, and imposts; so the priests in Egypt {w}, and the Druids here in Britain {x}.

{w} Diodor. Sicul. l. 1. p. 66. {x} Caesar. Comment. de Bello Gall. l. 6. c. 13.

Ezra 7:25

Ver. 25. And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand,.... Which he had a large share of from the Lord, and could readily make use of to good purpose; and this may be meant of the law of God made with the highest wisdom, and to know and observe which is an instance of wisdom in men, **De 4:6**,

set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; such as God, in his great wisdom, directed to in his wise law to be appointed over the people, to judge righteous judgment; to inform them in all matters of controversy that might arise among them, and decide them according to it; and lead them into a greater and better knowledge of it,
De 16:18. Jarchi takes the word for "set" to be a comparative, and the sense to be, that the wisdom of Ezra was greater than the judges that judged the people, than them that knew the law:

and teach ye them that know them not; such people that were ignorant thereof; though the above writer interprets this of ignorant judges,

"the judge that knows not to judge, make him know judgment to do it."

Ezra 7:26

Ver. 26. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king,.... Either the judge who delays judgment, or does not execute it according to the law of God, and of the king; or the people, that do not obey the law of God in matters of religion, and the law of the king in civil things, Judea being now a province of the Persian empire; though some think the law of the king only refers to this law or decree of the king, which gave the Jews power to execute their own laws:

let judgment be executed speedily upon him; immediately, without delay, according to the nature of his crime:

whether it be unto death; if guilty of a capital crime, deserving death, let him be put to death:

or to banishment; from his native country to a foreign distant land;

or to rooting out {y}, as the word signifies; an utter extirpation of him and his family, a destroying him root and branch; or, as Jarchi expresses it, a rooting him out of the world, his seed and family:

or to confiscation of goods; to payment of mulcts and fines:

or to imprisonment; for such a term of time; all according to the breach of what law he may be guilty of; thus far the king's decree.

{y} wvrvl "ad eradicationem ejus", Pagninus, Montanus; "ad eradicationem", Tigurine version, Vatablus, De Dieu, Michaelis.

Ezra 7:27

Ver. 27. Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers,.... This is Ezra's thanksgiving to God for the above decree:

which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart; which he rightly took to be of God, who wrought in him to will and to do:

to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem; to provide for the ornamenting of it, for vessels in it, as well as for sacrifices; for as for the building of it, that was finished.

Ezra 7:28

Ver. 28. And hath extended mercy unto me, before the king and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes,.... Before Artaxerxes, his seven counsellors, **Ezr 7:14** and the nobles of his realm, in being appointed by them to carry their freewill offerings to Jerusalem, and the king's commands to his treasurers, with leave to take as many of the Jews with him as were willing to go:

and I was strengthened as the hand of the Lord my God was upon me; animated to undertake this work, and execute this commission, being under the influence of divine favour and protection:

and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me; he went about in the several parts where Israelites dwelt, and persuaded some of the principal men among them to go along with him to Jerusalem, showing them the king's decree, which gave them leave; and their names and numbers are described in the next chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezra 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZRA 8

In this chapter we are told who and how many went up with Ezra to Jerusalem, **Ezr 8:1**, the gathering of them together at a river, from whence he sent to Babylon for Levites to come to him, who did, **Ezr 8:15**, the proclaiming a fast for a safe and prosperous journey, **Ezr 8:21**, the delivery of the vessels and money given him into the hands of priests, to take the care and charge thereof, **Ezr 8:24**, their safe arrival at Jerusalem, where they deposited the gifts in the temple, offered sacrifices to God, and delivered the king's commissions to his lieutenants and governors, **Ezr 8:31**.

Ver. 1. These are now the chief of their fathers, and this is the genealogy of them,.... Which follows from hence to the end of **Ezr 8:14**,

that went up with me from Babylon; with Ezra the priest and scribe, the writer of this book:

in the reign of Artaxerxes the king; that is, Darius Hystaspis, in the seventh year of his reign, see **Ezr 7:1**, though many think Artaxerxes Longimanus is meant.

Ezra 8:2

Ver. 2. Of the sons of Phinehas; Gershom: of the sons of Ithamar; Daniel,.... Not Daniel the prophet, he was of the royal blood, and of the tribe of Judah; this was a priest, a descendant of Ithamar, as Gershom was of Eleazar in the line of Phinehas:

of the sons of David; Hattush; perhaps the same with him in **1Ch 3:22**, who was a descendant of David the king; these three men seem to have come alone without any of their families, at least they are not mentioned, nor their numbers given, as the rest that follow be.

Ezra 8:3

Ver. 3-14. Of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of Pharosh,.... Who is so described, to distinguish him from another Shechaniah, **Ezr 8:5**,

Zechariah: and with him were reckoned by genealogy, of the males an hundred and fifty; males only were reckoned, not women and children; though that there were such that went up is clear from **Ezr 8:21**, from hence to the end of **Ezr 8:14** an account is given of the number of the males that went up with Ezra, who were chiefly, if not altogether, sons of those that went up with Zerubbabel; such of them as were left there behind, and now returned, at least a great number of them, see **Ezr 2:1**, it is particularly remarked of the sons of Adonikam, **Ezr 8:13**, that they were the last of them; not that they were the last that came in to go with Ezra, or were backward and dilatory, but the last with respect to the first of his sons that were gone before, and seem with them to be the whole of his family; the number of all that went up under their respective heads amounts to 1496.

Ezra 8:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "Ezr 7:3".

Ezra 8:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "Ezr 7:3".

Ezra 8:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "Ezr 7:3".

Ezra 8:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "Ezr 7:3".

Ezra 8:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "Ezr 7:3".

Ezra 8:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "Ezr 7:3".

Ezra 8:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "Ezr 7:3".

Ezra 8:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "Ezr 7:3".

Ezra 8:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "Ezr 7:3".

Ezra 8:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "Ezr 7:3".

Ezra 8:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "Ezr 7:3".

Ezra 8:15

Ver. 15. And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava,....

From whence also the river bore the same name; or that from the river, see Ezr 8:21, and may be the same with Adiabene, a country in Assyria, which had its name from the river Adiava:

and there abode we in tents three days; or pitched their camp; this was the place of their rendezvous:

and I viewed the people and the priests; mustered them, took the number of them, and what tribe and families they were of:

and found there none of the sons of Levi; excepting the priests.

Ezra 8:16

Ver. 16. Then sent I for Eliezer, for Ariel, for Shemaiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and for Elnathan, and for Nathan, and for Zechariah, and for Meshullam, chief men; also for Joiarib, and for Elnathan, men of understanding. These were all in the camp, in some part of it, to whom Ezra sent messengers to come unto him; three of them are of the same name; the first nine were men of chief note, rank, and dignity in their family, and the other two were noted for men of good sense, and that could speak to a case well, and so fit to be sent on such an affair as they were.

Ezra 8:17

Ver. 17. And I sent them with commandment unto Iddo the chief, at the place Casiphia,.... Not a place by the Caspian sea, and near the Caspian mountains, as Munster, which was too far off to go and return in the time they must, see Ezr 7:9, but, as Jarchi, a place in Babylon so called, a village near it, or a parish or street in it, where Ezra knew lived many of the Levites and Nethinims, and where Iddo was the chief of the Levites, and over them both:

and I told them what they should say unto Iddo, and to his brethren the Nethinims, at the place Casiphia; but Iddo was not one of the Nethinims; for he was chief of the Levites, and by his authority many of them were sent as well as of the Nethinims; but none of the latter were over the Levites, for they were servants to them, Ezr 8:20, but, according to Jarchi, the Nethinims are not at all intended in this clause, who reads the words, to Iddo and Achim, (the name of a man with him; perhaps it may be better rendered, "to Iddo and his brother",)

who were appointed, or settled, in the place Casiphia; and with him De Dieu agrees, and so the Syriac version,

who dwelt in Casiphia: that they should bring unto us ministers for the house of our God; both Levites to be singers and porters there, and the Nethinims to wait on them.

Ezra 8:18

Ver. 18. And by the good hand of our God upon us,.... Favouring their designs and orders, protecting those that were sent, and inclining those they were sent to use their interest and authority with those that were under them, and making them willing also to agree to what was proposed to them:

they brought us a man of understanding of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; an Israelite, of the tribe of Levi, in the line of Mahli a son of Merari, the third son of Levi:

and Sherebiah; or rather "even Sherebiah"; so Aben Ezra; for he is the understanding man that is meant, and described by his pedigree:

with his sons and his brethren, eighteen; all together made this number.

Ezra 8:19

Ver. 19. And Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari,.... These were of the same division of Levites as Sherebiah:

his brethren and their sons, twenty; these thirty eight, with those they came with, were all Levites; the Nethinims follow.

Ezra 8:20

Ver. 20. Also of the Nethinims, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites,.... To wait upon them, and minister to them, as they did to the priests; some think those were the same with the Gibeonites, whom Joshua gave to the service of the sanctuary, and David confirmed; but others are of opinion these were different from them, and an addition to them:

two hundred and twenty Nethinims: all of them were expressed by name; in the history that Iddo sent of them to Ezra; and so the names of the Levites, though not here expressed, only the names of those they came with.

Ezra 8:21

Ver. 21. Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava,.... After the messengers to Iddo were returned with those they brought with them:

that we might afflict ourselves before our God; humble themselves before him for their sins, confess them, and declare their repentance of them, and ask forgiveness for them:

to seek of him a right way for us; to take from thence towards Jerusalem, to be directed by him in it: either by a prophet, or by a vision in a dream, as Eben Ezra; or rather by the guidance of his providence; this they sought in prayer by the river side, where it had been usual with them, and since has been, to perform religious exercises, see **Eze 1:1**, hence Tertullian {z} calls the prayers of the Jews "orationes littorales"; they sought not so much which was the shortest and easiest way for them to travel in, as which was the safest:

and for our little ones and for all our substance; for the safe conveyance of them; this shows, that though males only are numbered, as before, yet they had their wives and children with them; for little ones cannot be supposed without women to take care of them.

{z} Ad nationes, l. 1. c. 13. Vid. lib. de jejuniis, c. 16.

Ezra 8:22

Ver. 22. For I was ashamed to require of the kings band of soldiers and horsemen,.... Which he might have had, only asking for them; so great was the interest he had in the king's favour:

to help us against the enemy in the way; the Arabs, Samaritans, and others, that might lie in wait for them, to rob them of their substance:

because we had spoken unto the king: of the special favour of God to them, his singular providence in the protection of them:

saying, the hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; that pray unto him, serve and worship him; his hand is open to them to bestow all needful good upon them, temporal and spiritual, and his power and providence are over them, to protect and defend them from all evil:

but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him; his word, his ways and worship; his powerful wrath, or the strength and force of it, is exerted against them and they are sure to feel the weight and dreadful effects of it: and now all this being said to the king, after this, to desire a guard to protect them, it would look as if they had not that favour in the sight of God, and did not believe what they had said, but distrusted his power and providence towards them; therefore, rather than reflect any dishonour on God, they chose to expose themselves to danger, seeking his face and favour, and relying on his goodness and power.

Ezra 8:23

Ver. 23. So we fasted, and besought our God for this,.... Sought the Lord by fasting and prayer for a good journey, and preservation in it:

and he was entreated of us; accepted their prayer, as Jarchi, so that they came safe to Jerusalem.

Ezra 8:24

Ver. 24. Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests,.... That were in company with him; so that it seems there were more than the two mentioned, **Ezr 8:2**, very probably their families, or some of their brethren, were with them:

Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them; these men named were Levites, and not priests, **Ezr 8:18** and therefore the copulative "and" must be supplied:

and Sherebiah, &c. or with the twelve priests, Sherebiah, &c. and ten Levites more with them; so that the number of priests and Levites were equal, and in all twenty four.

Ezra 8:25

Ver. 25. And I weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels,.... When he delivered them to them; this he did as a proof of his own integrity and faithfulness, and as a security against any charge or accusation of embezzling any part of them, and to set them an example, and also that they might be under no temptation of acting such a part, and might be vindicated should they be charged with it: even

the offering of the house of our God; what was freely offered for the service of it:

which the king and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel there present, had offered; as freewill offerings, see **Ezr 7:15**.

Ezra 8:26

Ver. 26. I even weighed unto their hand six hundred fifty talents of silver,.... Which, according to Scheuchzer {a} amount to 975,000 imperials, and, of our money, 2,229,450 pounds sterling: and silver vessels one hundred talents; which came to 35,300 pounds, or 50,000 imperials; according to Jarchi, there were one hundred vessels, and every vessel weighed a talent, and so Aben Ezra, which, with Brerewood {b}, was three hundred and seventy five pounds:

and of gold one hundred talents; which, according to Scheuchzer {c}, were equal to 1,222,000 ducats of gold; the value of gold now is above 14 and a 3d to the value of silver, by which may be judged the difference between one hundred talents of gold and one hundred talents of silver; according to David de Pomis {d}, there were two sorts of talents; common talents, which weighed sixty pounds, and the talent of the sanctuary, which weighed double to that.

{a} Physica Sacra, vol. 4. p. 651. {b} De Pond. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 4. {c} Ut supra. (Physica Sacra, vol. 4. p. 651.) {d} Tzemach David, fol. 57. 3.

Ezra 8:27

Ver. 27. Also twenty basins of gold, of a thousand drams,.... Which were upwards of 1000 pounds of our money; for Bishop Cumberland says {e}, the Persian "daric", "drachma", or "drachm", weighed twenty shillings and four pence; and, according to Dr. Bernard, it exceeded one of our guineas by two grains, See Gill on "1Ch 29:7"

and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold; which perhaps is the same with the Indian or Persian brass Aristotle {f} speaks of, which is so bright and pure, and free from rust, that it cannot be known by its colour from gold, and that there are among the cups of Darius such as cannot be discerned whether they are brass or gold but by the smell: the Syriac version interprets it by Corinthian brass, which was a mixture of gold, silver, and copper, made when Corinth was burnt, and which is exceeding valuable; of which Pliny {g} makes three sorts, very precious, and of which he says, it is in value next to, and even before silver, and almost before gold; but this sort of brass was not as yet in being: Kimchi {h} interprets the word here of its colour, being next to the colour of gold.

{e} Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 4. p. 115. {f} De Mirabilibus, p. 704, vol. 1. {g} Nat. Hist. l. 34. c. 1, 2. {h} Sepher Shorash. rad. bhu.

Ezra 8:28

Ver. 28. And I said unto them, ye are holy unto the Lord, the vessels are holy also,.... As they were dedicated and set apart to holy service, so the vessels were sacred to holy uses, and therefore not to be converted to any other:

and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering unto the Lord God of your fathers: and therefore not to be made use of but in his service.

Ezra 8:29

Ver. 29. Watch ye, and keep them,.... The vessels, the gold, and the silver, that they be not hurt and diminished:

until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the Lord: that is, until they had delivered them in full weight, as they had received them, in the presence of those persons as witnesses, and into their hands, in order to be laid up in the chambers and treasuries of the temple.

Ezra 8:30

Ver. 30. So took the priests and the Levites,.... The twelve priests and twelve Levites, mentioned in Ezr 8:24,

the weight of the silver and the gold, and the vessels, to bring them to Jerusalem unto the house of our God; this they undertook to do, and did.

Ezra 8:31

Ver. 31. Then we departed from the river of Ahava, on the twelfth day of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem,.... The month Nisan, answering to part of March and part of April; this was two days before the passover began:

and the hand of our God was upon us; guiding, directing, and protecting them by his providence:

and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way; either by intimidating them, that they dared not attack them, or by directing them to take a different road, whereby they escaped them, see Ezr 8:22.

Ezra 8:32

Ver. 32. And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days. Before they went about any business, delivered what was committed to them for the use of the temple, and the commissions to the king's officers; as it was but proper they should have some rest after such a fatiguing journey.

Ezra 8:33

Ver. 33. Now on the fourth day,.... After their arrival at Jerusalem:

was the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, weighed in the house of our God; the temple, that it might be seen and known that the exact weight which had been deposited with them was now faithfully delivered:

this was done by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest, and with him was Eleazar the son of Phinehas; these were priests:

and with them was Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of Binnui, Levites; two priests and two Levites; for since there were of both that were charged with the above things, it was proper there should be some of both, when weighed, that they might be witnesses of their fidelity.

Ezra 8:34

Ver. 34. By number and by weight of everyone,.... They were delivered in by tale and weight, which exactly agreed to the number and weight in which they received them:

and all the weight was written at that time; an account was taken in writing, and laid up, that it might not only be known hereafter what freewill offerings had been made in Babylon, but that it might be a voucher for the fidelity and integrity of those that brought them, should it ever be called in question.

Ezra 8:35

Ver. 35. Also the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity,.... Namely, those that now came along with Ezra:

offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel; by way of thankfulness for their deliverance from captivity, and for their safe journey:

twelve bullocks for all Israel: according to the number of the tribes; and there might be some of every tribe that now came up:

ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs; these and the bullocks were burnt offerings:

twelve he goats for a sin offering; according to the number of the twelve tribes, also to make atonement for sins they had been guilty of:

all this was a burnt offering unto the Lord; excepting the twelve he goats, which were a sin offering.

Ezra 8:36

Ver. 36. And they delivered the king's commissions unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors on this side the river,.... The governors of the provinces of Syria, Palestine, and Judea, which were on that side of Euphrates the land of Israel was:

and they furthered the people, and the house of God; or "lifted them up" {i}, eased them of all burdens, and freed them from all impediments, and assisted them and furnished them with everything, as the decree of Artaxerxes enjoined them; and provided everything as they required for ornamenting the temple, and for the sacrifices of it; all which is to be understood of the king's lieutenants and governors, who obeyed his commands.

{i} wavnw "elevaverunt", V. L. Piscator; "exaltaverunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "sublevarunt", Junius & Tremellius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezra 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZRA 9

Ezra being informed, by some of the princes who complained unto him, of the marriages of many of the Israelites with the people of the land, the Canaanites and others, was greatly grieved and distressed, **Ezr 9:1**, upon which he made a confession of their sins to God, with great shame, sorrow, and contrition, and deprecated the evils which they deserved, **Ezr 9:6**.

Ver. 1. Now when these things were done,.... When the captives with Ezra had refreshed themselves, and weighed the money and vessels they brought, and put them into the hands of proper persons, and offered sacrifices, and delivered the king's commissions to his lieutenants and governors, and shown his own:

the princes came to me; some of the nobles of Israel, the most religious of them, who were concerned at the corruptions that were among them, though not a sufficient number to reform them:

saying the people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the land: but joined with them, though not in idolatrous practices, yet by marrying with them, which might lead them into them:

doing according to their abominations; not serving idols as they did, but imitating them in their marriages: even

of the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites; affinity with many of these was forbidden by an express law, **De 7:1** all but the Moabites, Ammonites, and Egyptians, and from these for the same reason they were to abstain; namely, lest they should be drawn into idolatry; that the priests and Levites should do this, who ought to have known the law, and instructed the people better, was very sad and shocking.

Ezra 9:2

Ver. 2. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sorts,.... Some that were widowers not only took wives to themselves of the above nations, either when they were of Babylon, where many of these nations also were, or rather since their return; but they took for their sons also; yea, some that had wives took Heathenish ones to them, see **Mal 2:13**,

so that the holy seed; such as the Lord had separated from other nations, chosen them to be an holy people above all others, and devoted them to his service and worship:

have mingled themselves with the people of those lands; before mentioned, by marrying with them:

yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass; they were the first that went into it, were ringleaders of it, who should by their authority and example have restrained others; or they were

in this first trespass {i}; which was the first gross and capital one the people fell into after their return from the captivity.

{i} hnavr hzh lemb "in praevaricatione ista prima", Pagninus, Montanus.

Ezra 9:3

Ver. 3. And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle,.... Both inward and outward garments, that which was close to his body, and that which was thrown loose over it; and this he did in token of sorrow and mourning, as if something very dreadful and distressing, see **Job 1:20**

and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard; did not shave them, and so transgressed not the law in Le 19:27 but plucked off the hair of them, to show his extreme sorrow for what was told him: which has frequently been done by mourners on sorrowful occasions in various nations, see Isa 15:2. So in the apocryphal "addition" to Esther,

"And laid away her glorious apparel, and put on the garments of anguish and mourning: and instead of precious ointments, she covered her head with ashes and dung, and she humbled her body greatly, and all the places of her joy she filled with her torn hair." (Esther 14:2)

she is said to fill every place of joy with the tearing of her hair; and Lavinia in Virgil {k}; several passages from Homer {l}, and other writers, both Greek and Latin, are mentioned by Bochart {m} as instances of it:

and sat down astonished; quite amazed at the ingratitude of the people, that after such favours shown them, in returning them from captivity unto their own land, and settling them there, they should give into practices so contrary to the will of God.

{k} Aeneid. 12. prope finem. Vid. Ciceron. Tusc. Quaest. l. 3. {l} Vid. Iliad. 10. ver. 15. & Iliad. 22. ver. 77, 78, 406. & Iliad. 24. ver. 711. {m} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 45. col. 481.

Ezra 9:4

Ver. 4. There were assembled unto me everyone that trembled at the words of the God of Israel,.... That had a reverence for the word of God, and the things contained in it; feared to break the laws of God, and trembled at his judgments, which they might apprehend would come upon transgressors, see Isa 46:2, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; into Babylon, and were now returned, and which was an aggravation of their transgression:

and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice: or until the ninth hour, as the Syriac version, which was about our three o'clock in the afternoon, at which time the evening sacrifice was offered; perhaps it was in the morning when Ezra first received his information from the princes.

Ezra 9:5

Ver. 5. And at the evening sacrifice I rose up from my heaviness,.... The signs and tokens of it, particularly sitting on the ground; or "from my fasting" {n}, having eaten nothing that day, it being early in the morning when he was told the above case:

and having rent my garment and my mantle; which he had done before, and still kept them on him in the same case:

fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God; in the posture and with the gesture of an humble supplicant.

{n} ytynetm "jejunio meo", Michaelis; so Jarchi.

Ezra 9:6

Ver. 6. And said, O my God,.... Here begins the prayer of Ezra, and that with faith in God as covenant God, even when he was about to make confession of sin, and repentance for it; that prayer is right which is put up in faith, and that repentance genuine which is accompanied with faith, and flows from it:

I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God; a true sight and sense of sin causes shame and blushing, and never more than when a man is sensible of his covenant interest in God, and of his grace and favour to him, particularly in the forgiveness of his sin, see Eze 16:61

for our iniquities are increased over our head; arisen and swelled like mighty waters, which seemed to threaten an overwhelming of them:

and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens; being done in an open, public, and insolent manner, and in such numbers, that they were, as it were, piled up in heaps, reaching to heaven, and calling down vengeance from thence. Ezra includes himself as being one of the same nation; and these sins being so common were become national ones, which involved all the individuals, and exposed them to the divine resentment.

Ezra 9:7

Ver. 7. Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day,.... The sins they were guilty of had been long continued in, which was an aggravation of them:

and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands; the ten tribes and their king into the hand of the king of Assyria, the kings of Judah, Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah, into the hands of the king of Babylon, with the priests and people:

to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil; some were slain with the sword, others carried captive, and the houses of them all plundered and spoiled:

and to confusion of face, as it is this day; being filled with shame when they reflected on their sins, the cause of those evils; and besides, the captivity of the ten tribes continued, and of many others, which exposed them to shame among their neighbours.

Ezra 9:8

Ver. 8. And now, for a little space, grace hath been showed from the Lord our God,.... It was but a small time since the Lord first began to show favour to them, so that they soon after began to revolt from him; which argued the strange propensity of their minds to that which is evil, and from which they could not be restrained by the recent goodness of God unto them:

to leave us a remnant to escape; out of captivity, from whence a small number were graciously and safely returned to their own land:

and to give us a nail in his holy place; a fixed settlement in the land of Judea, the holy land the Lord had chosen, and in the temple, the holy place sacred to his worship; or a prince of their own, Zerubbabel, to be the governor of them, under whom they might enjoy settled happiness and prosperity, see Isa 22:23,

that our God may lighten our eyes; refresh our spirits, cheer our souls, and give us light and gladness, see 1Sa 14:27

and give us a little reviving in our bondage; for they were still in some degree of bondage, being in subjection, and tributaries to the kings of Persia; but yet being returned to their own land, it was as life from the dead unto them, at least it was giving them a little life, liberty, and joy.

Ezra 9:9

Ver. 9. For we were bondmen,.... To the Chaldeans when in Babylon, which was more than the Jews in the times of Christ would own, **Joh 8:33**,

yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage; had not left them to continue in it always:

but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia; moved them to have pity and compassion on them, and release them:

to give us a reviving; while in captivity, they were as in their graves, and like the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision, but revived upon the proclamation of Cyrus, and the encouragement he gave them to return to their own land:

to set up the house of our God, and repair the desolations thereof; both to rebuild the temple, and to restore the worship of it:

and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem; not to set up the walls of Jerusalem, and of other cities, which as yet was not done; but rather the walls of their houses, which they had rebuilt; they had walled houses given them in Judah and Jerusalem; though the word signifies an hedge or fence, such as is about gardens and vineyards, and may denote the protection of the kings of Persia, which was a fence to them against the Samaritans and others; and especially the hedge of divine Providence about them, which guarded and defended them, see **Job 1:10**.

Ezra 9:10

Ver. 10. And now, O our God, what shall we say after this?.... What apology or excuse can be made for such ingratitude? what can be said in favour of such a people? what kindness can be expected to be shown to a people who had behaved in so base a manner?

for we have forsaken thy commandments: particularly those which related to marriages with people of other nations.

Ezra 9:11

Ver. 11. Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets,.... Moses, and Joshua, and others, see **De 7:3**

saying, the land, unto which ye go to possess it; meaning the land of Canaan:

is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness; which is to be understood not of their idolatries only, but of their incestuous marriages, and impure copulations, on which account the Lord spewed out the old inhabitants of it; for which reason the Jews ought to have been careful not to have defiled it again by similar practices; see Le 18:1.

Ezra 9:12

Ver. 12. Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons,.... That is, in marriage, see **De 7:3**, where the prohibition is expressed in the same language:

nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever; that is, as long as they continue in their idolatries and impurities, see De 23:6,

that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever; that they might be strengthened and established in the land into which they were brought, and enjoy all the good things it produced, and leave their children in the possession of it, to hold at least until the Messiah came, see **Isa 1:19**.

Ezra 9:13

Ver. 13. And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass,.... As famine, sword, pestilence, and captivity, for their idolatries and other heinous sins:

seeing that our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve; for they deserved eternal punishment, whereas it was temporal punishment that was inflicted, and this moderate, and now stopped; the sense is, according to Aben Ezra,

"thou hast refrained from writing some of our sins in the book of remembrance, and thou hast let them down below in the earth, according to the sense of thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea;"

but Jarchi better,

"thou hast refrained thyself from exacting of us all our sins, and hast exacted of us beneath our sins (or less than they deserve), and hast not taken vengeance on us according to all our sins:"

and hast given us such deliverance as this; from captivity, which they now enjoyed.

Ezra 9:14

Ver. 14. Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations?.... That are guilty of abominable idolatries, and of all uncleanness:

wouldest thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us; it might be justly expected:

so that there should be no remnant nor escaping? any left or suffered to escape the wrath of but all consumed by it.

Ezra 9:15

Ver. 15. O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous,.... And would appear to be so, should Israel be entirely cut off, and utterly consumed for their iniquities:

for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day; that they remained yet escaped out of captivity, and escaped the wrath and vengeance of God, was not owing to any deserts of theirs, but to the grace and mercy of God, who had not stirred up all his wrath, as their sins deserved:

behold, we are before thee in our trespasses; to do with us as seems good in thy sight; we have nothing to plead on our behalf, but cast ourselves at thy feet, if so be unmerited favour may be shown us:

for we cannot stand before thee because of this; this evil of contracting affinity with the nations; we cannot defend ourselves; we cannot plead ignorance of the divine commands; we have nothing to say for ourselves why judgment should not be passed upon us; we leave ourselves in thine hands, and at thy mercy.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezra 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZRA 10

Upon Ezra's prayer and confession, it was proposed by Shechaniah, that those who had married strange wives should put them away with their children, which they swore to do, Ezr 10:1, and proclamation was made throughout the land for all to meet at Jerusalem in three days' time, and accordingly they did, Ezr 10:6 when, at the exhortation of Ezra, all agreed to it, and persons were appointed to see it done, and the work was finished in the space of three months, Ezr 10:10 and a list of the names of those is given who had married such wives, and now put them away; of the priests, Ezr 10:18, of the Levites, Ezr 10:23, of the other Israelites, Ezr 10:24.

Ver. 1. Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping,.... Had confessed the sins of the people in prayer and supplication, with many tears:

and casting himself down before the house of God; in the outward court before the temple, his face turned towards it, where he lay prostrate:

there assembled to him out of Israel a very great congregation of men, and women, and children; it was quickly spread abroad, both in Jerusalem and places adjacent, that such a great man, a commissioner from the king of Persia, and a priest of the Jews, was in the utmost distress, rending his garments, and plucking off his hair, and was crying and praying in a vehement manner; which brought a great concourse of people, who concluded some great sins were committed, and sore judgments were coming upon them:

for the people wept very sore; being affected with his confessions, cries, and tears, and fearing wrath would come upon them for their sins.

Ezra 10:2

Ver. 2. And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra,.... This man seems to be one of those that now came with Ezra from Babylon, see **Ezr 8:3**,

we have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land; not that he had taken any himself, being but just come into the land, nor is his name in the list of those that had; but inasmuch as many of the nation, of which he was a part, and his own father, and several of his uncles had, Ezr 10:26, he expresses himself in this manner:

yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing; of a reformation of this evil, and of pardon for it.

Ezra 10:3

Ver. 3. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God,.... Renew our covenant with him, and lay ourselves under fresh obligation by promise and oath, and unanimously agree

to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them; he means all the strange wives, such marriages being unlawful; and such wives might the more easily be put away, since bills of divorce were in frequent use with the Jews, and the children of such also being illegitimate; and the rather they were to be put away, lest they should corrupt other children, or get into the affections of their fathers, which might lead on to receive their mothers again, and especially this was to be done as a punishment of their sin: though no doubt but a provision was to be made, and was made, for the maintenance both of wives and children:

according to the counsel of my Lord; either of Ezra, whom he honours with this title, being a ruler under the king of Persia; or of the Lord God, according to his will declared in his words, which is his counsel:

and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; feared to break it, and dreaded the effect of such a breach; and who no doubt would follow the counsel of the Lord, and join in their advice to act according to the proposal made:

and let it be done according to the law; as that directs in such cases.

Ezra 10:4

Ver. 4. Arise,.... From the ground, where he lay prostrate:

for this matter belongeth unto thee; as a priest and scribe of the law, well versed in it, and therefore could direct what was to be done according to it; and as a ruler under the king of Persia, and a commissioner of his, to inquire whether the law of God was observed by the Jews, **Ezr 7:14** and so had authority to put the law in execution:

we also will be with thee; to help and assist in the reformation of this evil:

be of good courage, and do it; do not despair of going through it, though there may be some opposition to it; begin, and doubt not of succeeding.

Ezra 10:5

Ver. 5. Then arose Ezra,.... From the ground where he lay:

and made the chief priests, and the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word: he took an oath of all that were present to do what was proposed, namely, to put away strange wives and their children:

and they sware; by means of which they were kept to their word of promise, an oath being a solemn, sacred, thing.

Ezra 10:6

Ver. 6. Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God,.... Departed from thence:

and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib; who was of the family of the high priest. Eliashib was grandson of Joshua the high priest, and succeeded his father Joiakim as such; but though Johanan was never high priest, being a younger son, however he was a person of note, and had a chamber in the temple, whither Ezra went, either to advise with the princes and elders in it, Ezr 10:8 or to refresh himself with food:

and when he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water; or rather "not yet had he ate bread" {o}, as some render it; that is, not till he came thither, from the time he first heard of the evil the people had committed; which very probably was early in the morning, and it was now evening:

for he mourned for the transgression of them that had been carried away; into captivity, but were now returned from it, and it grieved him the more, that, after such kindness shown them, they should be guilty of such an evil.

{o} lka al "nondum comederat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Ezra 10:7

Ver. 7. And they made proclamation,.... By the voice of an herald:

throughout Judah and Jerusalem, unto all the children of the captivity; who were returned from it:

that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem; within a time after mentioned.

Ezra 10:8

Ver. 8. And that whosoever would not come within three days,.... Or at the end of three days, as Jarchi, this was the space of time allowed, and which was decided upon for the quick dispatch of this affair, to prevent any schemes that might be formed to obstruct it, and lest those who had agreed to it, and promised to assist in it, should repent and go from their word:

according to the counsel of the princes, and of the elders; for though Ezra had a commission at large from the king of Persia, to inquire into and reform all abuses, he chose not to act of himself, but to have the opinion and consent of the senate of the nation; this he prudently did to avoid their envy, and that he might have less opposition, and better success:

his substance should be forfeited; or "devoted" {p} to sacred uses, to be put into the treasury of the temple, and used in the service of it, and therefore never to be returned:

and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away; into captivity, but now returned from it; that is, should be excommunicated from them as a church, and be no more reckoned of the body politic, or a freeman of Israel, and so deprived of all privileges both in church and state.

{p} Mrxy "anathema erit [vel] fore", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "devoveretur", Michaelis.

Ezra 10:9

Ver. 9. Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin,.... And such of the ten tribes that returned and dwelt among them:

gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days; the time fixed: which they were the more careful to observe, since it was enjoined by the authority of princes and elders, and the punishment in case of disobedience very severe:

it was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month; the month Chisleu, which answers to part of November and part of December, so that the twentieth day must be in the beginning of December; this was almost five months after Ezra came to Jerusalem:

and all the people sat in the street of the house of God: the street which led to the temple, the east street, 2Ch 29:4 though some think this was the court of the people, called a street, because it lay open, not yet walled in; and, according to Josephus {q}, it was in an upper room of the temple in which Ezra was, perhaps the same with the chamber of Johanan, Ezr 10:6,

trembling because of this matter; they were met about; some that were guilty, not knowing what punishment would be inflicted on them, and others that were not, yet dreaded the wrath of God, lest that should break out upon the whole congregation for it:

and for the great rain; which now fell, and which they interpreted as a token of the divine displeasure: for though it was in winter time, yet not with them a time of rain, for the former rain had fallen a month before; so that this being unusual and unexpected, they understood it as betokening evil to them.

{q} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 5. sect. 4.

Ezra 10:10

Ver. 10. And Ezra the priest stood up,.... In the midst of the assembly to make his speech, acquainting them with the reason of their meeting together:

and said unto them, ye have transgressed; the law of God in the following instance:

and have taken strange wives; of the people of the land and others, idolatrous persons:

to increase the trespass of Israel; to add to former iniquities, which had been the cause of the captivity.

Ezra 10:11

Ver. 11. Now therefore make confession to the Lord God of your fathers,.... Of their sin, and express their detestation of it, and repentance for it:

and do his pleasure; obey his will, and particularly in this case:

and separate yourselves from the people of the land; the Canaanites, &c. have no fellowship with them, make no covenants, contracts, and alliances with them for the future;

and from the strange wives; they had taken; put them away.

Ezra 10:12

Ver. 12. Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice,.... That they might be heard, and to show that they were willing and ready to comply with what was proposed:

as thou host said, so must we do; being convinced of their sin, they saw it was a duty incumbent on them to put away their strange wives, and that there was a necessity of it, to avert the wrath of God from them.

Ezra 10:13

Ver. 13. But the people are many,.... Who have been guilty of this evil:

and it is a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without: in the street, because of the rain:

neither is this a work of one day or two; to inquire into this affair, who they are that have taken strange wives, and to persuade or oblige them to put them away:

for we are many that have transgressed in this thing; in marrying strange wives.

Ezra 10:14

Ver. 14. Let now our rulers of all the congregations stand,.... Let the great sanhedrim, or court of judicature at Jerusalem, be fixed and continued, and others:

and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times; to the court at Jerusalem, at certain and fixed known times of their sittings there for this purpose:

and with the elders of every city and the judges thereof; the principal magistrates of it, who were to testify that upon search and inquiry those were the men and all the men in their city, that had taken strange wives, and that they had put them away according to the order of the princes and elders; and this they proposed to be done in every city, and the account to be brought to the sanhedrim at Jerusalem, who were to sit at certain times till this affair was finished:

until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us: which it seems had broke out in some instances, and they feared would do yet more, unless this step was taken, whereby they hoped it would be averted.

Ezra 10:15

Ver. 15. Only Jonathan the son of Asahel, and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah, were employed about the matter,.... To see that this affair was conducted in the manner proposed; that the magistrates of every city brought the persons that had been delinquents, in their turns, of which they gave them notice, and took the account of them as they came:

and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them; assisted them in this work; the other two perhaps were priests, and both these Levites; and these four were the only persons appointed over this matter, as the phrase in the preceding clause may signify; though Jarchi interprets it to a quite contrary sense, that they were the only persons that opposed and objected to it; and so Dr. Lightfoot {r} understands it, and renders it, "stood against this matter"; in which they were seconded by the two Levites, and the sense is very probable.

{r} Works, vol. 1. p. 144.

Ezra 10:16

Ver. 16. And the children of the captivity did so,.... Put away their strange wives:

and Ezra the priest, with certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by their names, were separated; from all their other business, and gave themselves up to attend to this wholly:

and sat down in the first day of the tenth month; the month Tebeth, which answers to part of December and January; this was ten days after the assembly of all the people met and broke up: these took their places in the great court, and there sat

to examine the matter; the accounts brought in from the several cities by the magistrates thereof, and recorded them.

Ezra 10:17

Ver. 17. And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives,.... Finished their inquiry and examination of them:

by the first day of the first month; the month Nisan, answering to part of March and April; so that they were three months about this work.

Ezra 10:18

Ver. 18. And among the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives,.... So that it need not be wondered at that this evil should spread among the people, when those who understood the law, and should have instructed the people in it, set such an example: namely,

of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak; who was the high priest; and perhaps for this fault of his, in not restraining his sons from such unlawful marriages, is he represented in filthy garments, **Zec 3:3**,

and his brethren, Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah; these were the brethren of Jeshua.

Ezra 10:19

Ver. 19-43. And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives,.... They proposed to do it, and actually did it:

and being guilty; of which they were fully convinced:

they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass; to make atonement for it, and thereby set an example to others to do the like. Aben Ezra observes, that we do not find that the trespass offering was a mulct to such who married strange wives, and conjectures, that it was the advice of the chief men to do it. From hence, to the end of Ezr 10:43, is a list of the men that had married strange wives, and put them away; those in Ezr 10:20, were priests; in Ezr 10:23, Levites, and those of them who were singers or porters; the rest were Israelites: and it is a very common distinction, in rabbinical writers, to distinguish the Jews into priests, Levites, and Israelites; of these we know no more than their names; some of the heads of the families may be observed in **Ezr 2:1**.

Ezra 10:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:38

Ver. 38. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:39

Ver. 39. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:40

Ver. 40. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:41

Ver. 41. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:42

Ver. 42. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:43

Ver. 43. See Gill on "Ezr 10:19".

Ezra 10:44

Ver. 44. All these had taken strange wives,.... In all about one hundred and thirteen:

and some of them had wives by whom they had children; and yet they put them away, which made it the more difficult for them to do; and those that had none, it is thought to be a mark of God's displeasure at such marriages. No mention being made of the children being put away, as Shechaniah proposed, Ezr 10:3, it may be concluded they were not, but were taken care of, to be educated in the true religion, and entered proselytes at a proper time; and the rather, as Ezra gave no orders about their putting away, Ezr 10:11.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Nehemiah 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

This book is, by the authors of the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, called the "Second" Book of Ezra, it being a continuation of the same history, and was by the Jews reckoned as one book with Ezra; Kimchi on **Isa 9:7**, calls it Ezra, so the Talmud {a}; and it has been quoted by Christian writers under his name; see the argument of the book of Ezra; but not as if it was written by him; for it is a clear case it was written by Nehemiah, whose name it bears, as appears from **Ne 1:1** and throughout Nehemiah speaks of himself under the first person; and the style also is very different from that of Ezra, being plainer and easier than his. It has always had a place in the canon of Scriptures, both with Jews and Christians; and is of use to show the fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah, and especially of Daniel concerning the building of the wall of Jerusalem in troublesome times; to carry on the history of the Jews, and describe the state of the church in those times, what opposition was made to it, and what enemies it had, and what must be expected when any work of God is set about; it is the last of the historical books that was written, as is thought, and contains an history of the space of about twelve years, from the twentieth of Artaxerxes to the thirty second of his reign, see **Ne 1:1**.

{a} T. Bab. Succah, fol. 37. 1. & Gloss. in ib. fol. 12. 1.

INTRODUCTION NEHEMIAH 1

This chapter relates how that Nehemiah, being at Shushan in Persia, and meeting with some Jews, inquired of the state of Jerusalem, of which having a melancholy account, he betook to mourning, fasting, and prayer, **Ne 1:1**, and his prayer is recorded, **Ne 1:5**.

Ver. 1. The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah,.... Or his transactions and deeds; for yrbd "dibre" signifies things done, as well as words spoken; who Hachaliah his father was is not known; the Arabic version adds, the high priest, without any foundation; though some have thought that Nehemiah was a priest, from a passage in

"Therefore whereas we are now purposed to keep the purification of the temple upon the five and twentieth day of the month Chisleu, we thought it necessary to certify you thereof, that ye also might keep it, as the feast of the tabernacles, and of the fire, which was given us when Neemias offered sacrifice, after that he had builded the temple and the altar." (2 Maccabees 1:18)

and from signing and sealing the covenant at the head of priests, Ne 10:1, but he rather seems to be of the tribe of Judah, see **Ne 2:3**, and Nehemiah may be the same that went up with Zerubbabel, and returned again, and then became the king's cupbearer; though some are of another opinion, See Gill on "Ezr 2:2",

and it came to pass in the month Chisleu; the ninth month, as the Arabic version; of which see Ezr 10:9,

in the twentieth year; not of Nehemiah's age, for, if he went up with Zerubbabel, he must be many years older; but in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, **Ne 1:1**,

as I was in Shushan the palace; a city in Persia, the royal seat of the kings of it; as Ecbatana was in the summer time, this in the spring, as Cyrus made it, according to Xenophon {b}; but others say {c} it was their seat in winter, and this was the season now when Nehemiah was with the king there; for Chisleu was a winter month, answering to part of November and of December; of Shushan, See Gill on "Da 8:2", to which may be added what a traveller of the last century says {d} of it,

"we rested at Valdac, once the great city Susa, but now very ruinous; it was first built by Tythonus, and his son Memnon, but enlarged by Darius the son of Hystaspes; in the building whereof Memnon was so exceeding prodigal, that, as Cassiodorus writeth, he joined the stones together with gold--such was the beauty and delectableness of it for situation, that they called it "Susa", which in the Persian tongue signified a "lily", but now it is called Valdac, because of the poverty of the place;"

and it is generally supposed to have its name from the abundance of lilies about it; but Dr. Hyde {e} gives another signification of its name, he says the Persians called it , "Sus", which signifies "liquorice", but for what reasons he says not. There is a city now called Shustera, and is thought by some travellers to be built at least very near where Shushan formerly stood {f}.

{b} Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 44. {c} Athenaeus, l. 12. c. 1. {d} Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 87, 88. {e} Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers. c. 35. p. 414. {f} Tavernier, tom. 1. l. 4. c. 1.

Nehemiah 1:2

Ver. 2. That Hanani, one of my brethren,.... Either in natural relation, Ne 7:2, or being a Jew of the same nation and religion; so Jarchi interprets it, one of my companions or acquaintance:

he and certain men of Judah; who came from thence to Shushan on some account or another:

and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity; who were returned from it to their own land; he inquired of their health and prosperity, in what circumstances they were, whether prosperous or adverse, whether they flourished, or were in distress:

and concerning Jerusalem; whether it was rebuilt, the houses and walls of it, and in what condition it was.

Nehemiah 1:3

Ver. 3. And they said unto me, the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province,.... In Judea, now reduced to a province of the Persian empire:

are in great affliction and reproach; harassed and distressed, calumniated and vilified, by their enemies the Samaritans:

the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire; that is, its wall and gates were in the same condition in which Nebuchadnezzar had left them, for since his times as yet they had never been set up; for this is not to be understood of what was lately done by their adversaries, which is not at all probable.

Nehemiah 1:4

Ver. 4. And it came to pass, when I heard these words,.... This sad and melancholy account of things:

that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days; sat down upon the ground in dust and ashes, after the manner of mourners, and wept bitterly, and mourned in a most sorrowful manner, see **Job 2:8**,

and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven; that made it, and dwells in it.

Nehemiah 1:5

Ver. 5. And said, I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven,.... He prayed not to the host of heaven, the sun in it, as the Persians, but to the God of it, in an humble supplicant manner:

the great and terrible God; who is to be feared, and had in reverence of all his creatures, because of his greatness and glory, being God over all, blessed for ever, and his name holy and reverend:

that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him, and observe his commandments; who keep them from a principle of love to him; to those he has made gracious promises in his covenant, which he truly and faithfully performs; and the consideration of these perfections in God animates and encourages good men in prayer to him.

Nehemiah 1:6

Ver. 6. Let thine ear be now attentive,.... To his prayer, as in **Ne 1:11**,

and thine eyes open; to behold with pity and compassion the distressed case of Jerusalem, and the Jews in it:

I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants; this he had continued to do ever since he heard of their trouble and calamity:

and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned; he considered sin as the cause of all this evil that had befallen his people, and confesses it with sorrow and humiliation, and not their sins only, but his own personal and family sins.

Nehemiah 1:7

Ver. 7. We have dealt very corruptly against thee,.... Corrupted his covenant, laws, and precepts, as well as themselves, ways, and works; all which were against the Lord, contrary to his nature, mind, and will:

and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses; the laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

Nehemiah 1:8

Ver. 8. Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses,.... To publish and declare to the children of Israel, De 28:64,

saying, if ye transgress; the law of God:

I will scatter you abroad among the nations; as now they had been among the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Medes, and Persians.

Nehemiah 1:9

Ver. 9. But if ye return unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them,.... Return by repentance, and, as a proof of the genuineness of it, yield obedience to the commands of God, and continue therein:

though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven; that is, the uttermost parts of the earth, the most distant regions; so called, because at the extreme parts of the horizon, according to our apprehension, the heavens and earth touch each other; so that what is the uttermost part of the one is supposed to be of the other:

yet will I gather them from thence and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there; that is to Jerusalem where the temple was built, and his name was called upon.

Nehemiah 1:10

Ver. 10. Now these are thy servants, and thy people,.... Meaning those that were in Jerusalem and Judah, gathered out of several countries, and returned to Jerusalem:

whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand; touching and moving the heart of Cyrus to proclaim liberty to them.

Nehemiah 1:11

Ver. 11. O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant,.... To the prayer of Nehemiah, put up at this time:

and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name; the prayer of the Jews in Judea, whose desire was to worship the Lord in his temple, according to his will:

and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day; meaning himself, who was to wait on the king of Persia that day, and, if he had opportunity, intended to lay the case of the Jews before him, and therefore entreats he might meet with success:

and grant him mercy in the sight of this man; King Artaxerxes, who was but a man, and whose heart was in the hands of God, and he could easily move him to pity and compassion towards his poor people the Jews:

for I was the king's cupbearer; in the execution of which office he was often in the king's presence, and hoped to have an opportunity of speaking to him in the behalf of the Jews; this with the Persians was reckoned a very honourable office {g}. A son of Prexaspes, a very honourable man, was made cupbearer to Cambyses; and so it was with the Greeks and Romans {h}; and the poets not only make Ganymedes to be Jupiter's cupbearer {i}, but even Vulcan himself is put into this office {k}.

{g} Herodot. Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 34. Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 5. c. 36. {h} Vid. Athenaei Deipnosophist. l. 10. {i} Homer. Iliad. 21. ver. 234. {k} Homer. Iliad. 1. prope finem.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Nehemiah 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 2

Nehemiah being sorrowful in the king's presence, the reason of it was asked by the king, which he declared, and then took the opportunity to request of the king that he might be sent to Jerusalem to rebuild it, which was granted him, Ne 2:1, upon which he set out, and came to Jerusalem, to the great grief of the enemies of Israel, Ne 2:9 and after he had been three days in Jerusalem, he privately took a survey of it, to see what condition it was in, unknown to the rulers there, Ne 2:12, whom he afterwards exhorted to rise up and build the wall of the city, which they immediately set about, Ne 2:17 not regarding the scoffs and taunts of their enemies, Ne 2:19.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass in the month Nisan; in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes,.... It was still but in the twentieth year of his reign; for though Nisan or March was the first month of the year with the Jews, and from whence the reigns of their kings were dated {l}; yet, with other nations, Tisri or September was the beginning of the reigns of their kings {m}; so that Chisleu or November being since, see Ne 1:1, it was no more in Nisan or March than the twentieth of the said king's reign, and was three or four months after Nehemiah had first heard of the distress of his people; which time he either purposely spent in fasting and prayer on that account, or until now his turn did not come about to exercise his office, in waiting upon the king as his cupbearer: but now it was

that wine was before him; the king; it was brought and set in a proper place, from whence it might be taken for his use:

and I took up the wine, and gave it to the king; according to Xenophon {n}, the cupbearer with the Persians and Medes used to take the wine out of the vessels into the cup, and pour some of it into their left hand, and sup it up, that, if there was any poison in it, the king might not be harmed, and then he delivered it to him upon three fingers {o}:

now I had not been before time sad in his presence; but always pleasant and cheerful, so that the sadness of his countenance was the more taken notice of.

{l} Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 3. {m} T. Bab. Rashhashanah, fol. 3. 1. {n} Cyropaedia, l. 1. c. 11. {o} Vid. Heliodor. Ethiopic. l. 7. c. 27.

Nehemiah 2:2

Ver. 2. Wherefore the king said unto me, why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick?.... He had no disorder upon him to change his countenance and make him sorrowful, and therefore asks what should be the reason of it:

this is nothing else but sorrow of heart; this is not owing to any bodily disease or pain, but some inward trouble of mind; or "wickedness of heart" {p}, some ill design in his mind, which being conscious of, and thoughtful about, was discovered in his countenance; he suspected, as Jarchi intimates, a design to kill him, by putting poison into his cup:

then I was very sore afraid; lest the king should have suspicion of an ill design on him; or lest, since he must be obliged to give the true reason, he should not succeed in his request, it being so large, and perhaps many about the king were no friends to the Jews.

{p} bl er ponhria kardiav, Sept. "malum nescio quod in corde tuo est", V. L.

Nehemiah 2:3

Ver. 3. And I said unto the king, let the king live for ever,.... Which some think he said to take off the king's suspicion of his having a design upon his life, though it seems to be a common salutation of the kings in those times, see **Da 6:6**,

why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, [lieth] waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? a man's native place, and where his ancestors lie interred, being always reckoned near and dear, the king and his nobles could not object to his being concerned for the desolations thereof.

Nehemiah 2:4

Ver. 4. Then the king said unto me, for what dost thou make request?.... The king supposed that there was a meaning in those looks and words of his, that he had a favour to ask of him, and therefore encourages him to it; or the king of himself moved this, as being desirous of doing anything for him he would propose, to make him easy:

so I prayed to the God of heaven; secretly, in an ejaculatory way, giving him thanks for thus disposing the king's heart towards him, and entreating he might be directed what to ask, and in a proper manner, and that he might succeed.

Nehemiah 2:5

Ver. 5. And I said unto the king; if it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight,.... He submits what he had to say wholly to the pleasure of the king, and puts it upon his unmerited favour, and not on any desert of his own:

that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it; the wall of it, and the houses in it; the favour was, that he might have leave to go thither, and set about such a work, for which he was so much concerned.

Nehemiah 2:6

Ver. 6. And the king said unto me, the queen also sitting by him,.... Which it seems was not very common for the queens of Persia to dine with the kings their husbands; though this may be observed, not so much for the singularity of it, as for the providence of God in it, that so it should be, she having a good respect for Nehemiah, and the Jewish nation, and forwarded the king in his grant to him: if this king was Darius Hystaspis, this his queen was Atossa, daughter of Cyrus {q}, who might be the more friendly to the Jews, on account of her father's great regard unto them:

for how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? what time would he ask to do this business in? this shows the king had a great respect for him, and was loath to part with him, at least for any great length of time:

so it pleased the king to send me, when he promised to return unto him, not in twelve years, which was the time of his government in Judea, but in a lesser space, perhaps a year at most, since in less than two months the wall of Jerusalem was finished; and it may be that he then returned to the king of Persia, who sent him again under the character of a governor, finding it was for his interest to have such a man in those parts.

{q} Herodot. Polymnia, sive l. 7. c. 1.

Nehemiah 2:7

Ver. 7. Moreover, I said unto the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river,.... The river of Euphrates, on that side of it towards the land of Judea:

that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; furnish him with provisions, and a guard to protect him.

Nehemiah 2:8

Ver. 8. And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest,.... The forest or mountain of Lebanon, which, because of its odoriferous and fruit bearing trees, was more like an orchard or paradise, as this word signifies, and so it is translated in **Ec 2:5** and at the extreme part of it, it seems, there was a city called Paradisus {r}; such an officer as here was among the Romans, called Saltuarius {s}, and is now among us:

that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertaineth to the house; not the king's palace near the temple, for that might have occasioned suspicion in the king, that his view was to set up himself as king in Judea; but for the gates of the courts adjoining to the temple, and of the wall of the outward court, and of the wall which was to encompass the mountain of the house, the whole circumference of it:

and for the wall of the city; to make gates of in various places for that, where they stood before:

and for the house which I shall enter into; and dwell in during his stay at Jerusalem:

and the king granted me; all the above favours:

according to the good hand of my God upon me; the kind providence of God, which wrought on the heart of the king, and disposed it towards him, and overruled all things for good.

{r} Ptolem. Geograph. l. 5. c. 15. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 23. {s} Vid. Servium in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 2. ver. 485.

Nehemiah 2:9

Ver. 9. Then I came to the governors beyond the river,.... Who these governors were, whether the same who were in the second year of this king's reign eighteen years ago, Tatnai and Shetharboznai, is not certain:

now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me; both to do him honour, and for his safety; and coming thus attended, must serve to recommend him to the governor, who received him from them at the river Euphrates, and conducted him to Judah.

Nehemiah 2:10

Ver. 10. When Sanballat the Horonite,.... Who either presided at Horonaim, or sprung from thence, a city of Moab, Isa 15:5

and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite; who was formerly a slave, but now raised, from a low mean estate, to be governor in the land of Ammon, though still a vassal of the king of Persia:

heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there came a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel; to which the Moabites and Ammonites were always averse, and ever bore an hatred to Israel, and envied everything that tended to their happiness.

Nehemiah 2:11

Ver. 11. So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. Before he entered on any business, resting himself from the fatigue of the journey, and receiving the visits of his friends, as Ezra before him did, **Ezr 8:32**.

Nehemiah 2:12

Ver. 12. And I arose in the might, I and some few men with me,.... Both the season of the night, and the small number of men to accompany him, were chosen for greater secrecy, that the business he came upon might not as yet be known, and so no schemes formed to obstruct or discourage:

neither told I any man what God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; he was satisfied that what he had in view was from the Lord, who had stirred him up to it, but thought it prudent for the present to conceal it, until things were prepared to put it in execution:

neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon; he only rode perhaps on a mule, being not yet recovered quite from the fatigue of his journey, and for the sake of honour; the rest went on foot, that there might be no noise made, and so pass on unheard and unobserved.

Nehemiah 2:13

Ver. 13. And I went out by night, by the gate of the valley,.... Where that formerly stood, for the gates had been burnt, and were not as yet rebuilt; this was the gate that led to the valley of Jehoshaphat, according to some; or rather to the valley of dead bodies, through which the brook Kidron ran, see 2Ch 26:9

it is the gate through which Christ went to Calvary; it led to Shiloh, Bethhoron, and Golan:

even before the dragon well; so called from its winding about, just as a crooked winding river is called serpentine; though some think here stood an image of a dragon, either in wood, or stone, or brass, out of the mouth of which the water flowed from the well; and others, that since the desolations of Jerusalem, serpents or dragons had their abode here:

and to the dung port; by which they used to carry the dung out of the city, and by which they went to Joppa, the sea, and all the western parts:

and viewed the walls of Jerusalem: in what condition they were, what was necessary to be wholly taken down, and where to begin to build: it must have been a moonlight night or he could not have taken a view; for to have carried torches or lamps with them would have discovered them:

and the gates thereof were consumed with fire; nothing of them remained.

Nehemiah 2:14

Ver. 14. Then I went on to the pool of the fountain, and to the king's pool..... That led to the fountain Siloah or Gihon, so called; it was the way to the potter's field, to Bethlehem, Hebron, Gaza, and Egypt. Rauwolff says {t} there is still standing on the outside of the valley Tyropaeum (which distinguishes the two mountains Zion and Moriah) the gate of the fountain, which hath its name, because it leadeth towards the fountain of Siloah, called the king's pool:

but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass; because of the heaps of rubbish that lay there.

{t} Travels, par. 3. c. 3. p. 227.

Nehemiah 2:15

Ver. 15. Then went I up in the night by the brook,.... The brook Kidron:

and viewed the wall; that was on that side:

and turned back; did not go quite round the wall, the way perhaps being obstructed with rubbish, and was unpassable or he had not time to do it:

and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned; into the city, the same way he went out of it, Ne 2:13.

Nehemiah 2:16

Ver. 16. And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did..... The rulers of the city of Jerusalem, who seem to be officers of the king of Persia, since they are distinguished from Jewish rulers in the next clause:

neither had I as yet told it to the Jews; what he came about and designed to do:

nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers; the principal men among the Jews, both ecclesiastical and civil:

nor to the rest that did the work; of building and repairing; neither those that were employed in it, nor those that overlooked it.

Nehemiah 2:17

Ver. 17. Then said I unto them,.... The priests and princes of the Jews:

you see the distress that we are in; lie open to our enemies, and exposed to their insults:

how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire, Ne 1:3,

come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem that we be no more a reproach; to their neighbours about them, who scoffed at them as a defenceless people and frequently came in upon them, and spoiled and plundered them of their goods and substance.

Nehemiah 2:18

Ver. 18. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me..... Of the kind providence of God in exalting him in the court of the king of

Persia, in giving him an opportunity of laying the sad case of Jerusalem before him, and in inclining his heart to show favour to him, and grant his request:

as also the king's words that he had spoken to me; what passed between them on this subject, the commission he gave him, and the letters he sent by him to his governors on this side the river:

and they said, let us rise up and build; encouraged by this account of things, they proposed to set about the work immediately:

so they strengthened their hands for this good work; animated and encouraged one another to proceed to it at once with cheerfulness, and to go on in it with spirit and resolution.

Nehemiah 2:19

Ver. 19. But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian,.... This third man might be both an Arabian by birth, and governor of some part of Arabia near Judea:

heard it; of their beginning to build:

they laughed us to scorn, and despised us; as very silly people, that undertook what they could never perform:

and said; adding threatenings to their scoffs:

what is this thing that ye do? do ye know what ye are about? have ye any authority to do it? it is unlawful, you will certainly suffer for it:

will ye rebel against the king? the king of Persia; it will be deemed rebellion and treason, and you will be taken up and treated as rebels and traitors; take care what you do, be it at your peril if you proceed.

Nehemiah 2:20

Ver. 20. Then answered I them, and said unto them,.... With much spirit and boldness, not at all intimidated by their scoffs or threats:

the God of heaven, he will prosper us; whom we serve, and under whose protection we are, who will supply us with everything we want, and succeed this undertaking, in whose name we engage in it, and on whom we depend, and we care not what man can do to us:

therefore we his servants will arise and build; in spite of all opposition, difficulties, and discouragements:

but you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem; no part of the city belonged to them; they had no jurisdiction there; they had no name there, nor their ancestors, in times past; nor had they done anything to perpetuate their memory in it: in short, they had nothing to do with them, neither in religious nor in civil things; and it was best for them to mind their own affairs where they presided, and not trouble themselves about theirs.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Nehemiah 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 3

This chapter contains the names of the builders of the wall of Jerusalem, the order in which they worked, where they began, and where they ended, which was the sheep gate, **Ne 3:1**.

Ver. 1. Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests,.... This was the grandson of Jeshua or Joshua the high priest, his father's name was Joiakim, Ne 12:10, being high priest, and rising first, he set a good example both to the priests and to the people, and served no doubt greatly to animate and encourage them:

and they built the sheep gate; so called, because the sheep were led through it to the temple, and near it was the sheep market, where they were sold, and the sheep pool, where the sacrifices were washed; and this being near the temple, and for the service of it, the priests undertook that; not that they laboured with their hands at it, though it is possible some of them might; but they were at the expense of it, employed labourers, and paid them, and directed them, and had the oversight of them: this gate was to the south of the city; and Rauwolff {u} says, it was still standing by Moriah, the mountain of the temple, which the Turks have taken to themselves, and built on it a Turkish mosque or temple. Near the gate you see still, he says, the sheep pond, which is large and deep, wherein the Nethinims used to wash the beasts, and then gave them to the priests; it is said {w} to lead to the mount of Olives, to Bethany, to Jericho, the desert, and all the east country to Jordan:

they sanctified it; this being for sacred use, and they sacred persons; and this the first part of the building, they prayed for a blessing on it, and in it on the whole work undertaken, of which this was the firstfruits:

and set up the doors of it; and so finished it:

even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel; so far they built, and what they built they sanctified. The tower of Meah, or a "hundred", as the word signifies, might be so called, either because it was one hundred cubits from the sheep gate on one side, and as many from the tower of Hananeel on the other side, standing between both; or because it was one hundred cubits high: these two towers, perhaps, were firm and strong, and needed no repair, since no mention is made of any; though they seem to me to be one and the same tower; see Jer 31:38.

{u} Travels, par. 3. c. 3. p. 226, 228. {w} Vid. Quistorp. in loc.

Nehemiah 3:2

Ver. 2. And next unto him builded the men of Jericho,.... The posterity of those that formerly inhabited that city; these began where Eliashib and the priests ended, and went on from thence:

and next to them; or rather "to him", the high priest:

builded Zaccur the son of Imri; who probably was the chief of the men of Jericho.

Nehemiah 3:3

Ver. 3. But the fish gate did the sons of Hassenaah build,.... So called, because fish was brought from the sea coasts through it, and near it was the fish market; this also was southward, according to Dr. Lightfoot {x}; others say northward; some say it led to the sea of Galilee, Jordan, and all the east and north country: but it is most likely to be westward towards the Mediterranean sea, Tyre, and Joppa, from whence fish were brought; and Rauwolff says {y} it is still standing towards the west, behind Mount Sion, and over against Mount Gihon, see 2Ch 33:14 he also says, this gate was called the gate of Hebron, because the road of Hebron went through it, which is about seven or eight hours' walking distant from it:

who also laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof; completely finished it.

{x} Chorograph. Cent. of the Land of Israel, c. 26. p. 27. vol. 2. {y} Ut supra, (Travels, par. 3. c. 3.) p. 226, 227.

Nehemiah 3:4

Ver. 4. And next unto them repaired Meremoth, the son of Uriah, the son of Koz,.... And the men under him; see **Ezr 8:33**, this part of the wall on which they worked was not wholly demolished, only weakened, and therefore did not rebuild it, but repaired and strengthened it, and this phrase is used all along afterwards:

and next unto them repaired Meshullam, the sort of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel: and next unto them repaired Zadok, the son of Baana; but who they were cannot be said.

Nehemiah 3:5

Ver. 5. And next unto them the Tekoites repaired,.... The inhabitants of Tekoa, a city in the tribe of Judah; see **Am 1:1**

but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord; either of Nehemiah, as some, or rather of the lord and prince appointed over their families, as Aben Ezra, to whom they would not be subject; though it seems best, with Jarchi, to understand it of the Lord their God, by whose command this work was begun; but they refused to give any assistance to it with their purses or presence, but withdrew from it, as refractory oxen withdraw their necks from the yoke. This is observed to their disgrace, when the common people of their city were ready to work, and did.

Nehemiah 3:6

Ver. 6. Moreover, the old gate repaired Jehoiada, the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah,.... Which some think was so called because it led to the old city Salem. Dr. Lightfoot {a} thinks it is the same with the second or third gate, **Zep 1:10**. According to Vatablus, it was the gate of the old pool, Isa 22:11, or rather, perhaps, it was the gate of the old wall Josephus speaks of {b}; it led to the north of the land:

they laid the beams thereof; as in **Ne 3:3**.

{a} Ut supra. (Chorograph. Cent. of the Land of Israel, c. 26. p. 27. vol. 2.)
{b} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2, 3.

Nehemiah 3:7

Ver. 7. And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah,.... Which places were both in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:25 and one of these men was of the one place, and the other of the other:

unto the throne of the governor on this side the river; where the governor of those parts under the king of Persia had his seat, and now Nehemiah; but, according to Aben Ezra, Cisse, rendered "throne", is the name of a man who was the governor.

Nehemiah 3:8

Ver. 8. Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths,.... Or Tzorephim, which, according to Jarchi, was the name of a family so called from their trade and business:

next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of one of the apothecaries; or confectioners, which also might be the name of a family so called for the same reason:

and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall; which reached from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, which was broken down by Joash, king of Israel, but was rebuilt so strong by Uzziah, king of Judah, that it stood firm to this time; wherefore these men repaired up to it, but left that as they found it; see 2Ch 25:23, and were not careful to repair it, it not wanting any repair.

Nehemiah 3:9

Ver. 9. And next unto them repaired Rephaiah, the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem. That city belonging partly to the tribe of Judah, and partly to the tribe of Benjamin; one part of it was under a governor that was of the tribe of Judah, as this man seems to be; and the other part under one of the tribe of Benjamin; see **Ne 3:12**.

Nehemiah 3:10

Ver. 10. And next unto him repaired Jedaiah, the son of Harumaph, over against his house,.... That part of the wall which stood right against his house; and to take this part he could not well object to it, and it might be reasonably thought he would take care to repair it well, and make it strong for his own safety:

and next unto him repaired Hattush, the son of Hashabniah; but who he was is not known.

Nehemiah 3:11

Ver. 11. Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahathmoab,.... The fathers of these were heads of families that came out of captivity with Zerubbabel, **Ezr 2:6**

repaired the other piece: or second piece, below and next to that which Hattush repaired, the last builder mentioned:

and the tower of the furnaces; near to which were furnaces for the baking of bread, or of bricks.

Nehemiah 3:12

Ver. 12. And next unto him repaired Shallum, the son of Hallohesh,.... So called, as Ben Melech says, from his being an enchanter of serpents, or a wise prudent counsellor:

the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem; of the other half; see **Ne 3:9**

he and his daughters; who were rich widows or heiresses, and employed men to build at their own expense; he seems to have had no sons.

Nehemiah 3:13

Ver. 13. The valley gate repaired Hanun,.... Of which see **Ne 2:13**,

and the inhabitants of Zanoah; a city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:34,

they built it, and set up the doors thereof, &c. see **Ne 3:3**,

and a thousand cubits on the wall to the dung gate; that is, they repaired the wall to such a length from the valley gate to the dung gate; see **Ne 2:13**.

Nehemiah 3:14

Ver. 14. But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab,.... If this was one of the Rechabites, they were forbid to build houses, Jer 35:7 but, perhaps, though they might not build private houses for themselves to dwell in, they might be employed in building walls and fortresses for public security; though it is more probable that this man was not of that family:

the ruler of part of Bethhaccerem; or of the tract of Bethhaccerem, a place between Tekoah and Jerusalem; see **Jer 6:1**,

he built it, and set up the doors thereof; &c. as in **Ne 3:3**.

Nehemiah 3:15

Ver. 15. But the gate of the fountain,.... Of which see **Ne 2:14** repaired Shallum, the son of Colhozeh, the ruler of part of Mizpah; of a tract, district, town, or city so called; perhaps that in the tribe of Benjamin; see **Ne 3:7**,

he built it, and covered it; roofed it, which is not said of any of the other gates, whether because of the fountain at it:

and set up the doors thereof, &c. finished it completely:

and the wall of the pool of Siloah, by the king's garden; which was formerly without the wall, on the west, but afterwards taken in by Manasseh, who built it; see 2Ch 33:14, and from hence the king's garden was watered:

and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David: Zion, which was built on an eminence, from which they went down by steps into the lower city Acra.

Nehemiah 3:16

Ver. 16. After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half part of Bethzur. A strong fortified place in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:58,

unto the place over against the sepulchres of David; where he and his family, and the kings of his race, were buried, which remained to this time untouched by the Babylonians, and to many ages after; see **Ac 2:29**

and to the pool that was made; not a natural, but an artificial one, which was made by Hezekiah, 2Ki 20:20,

and unto the house of the mighty; where was a garrison of soldiers in former time for defence.

Nehemiah 3:17

Ver. 17. After him repaired the Levites, Rehum the son of Bani,.... Who was one of them, as he that follows was another:

next unto him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the half part of Keilah: a city of the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:4

in his part; either with the men of that part of Keilah under his jurisdiction, or at the expense of that part of it.

Nehemiah 3:18

Ver. 18. After him repaired their brethren,.... Either the brethren of the two before named particularly, or the Levites their brethren in general, as Jarchi:

Bavai, the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part of Keilah; the other half of that place.

Nehemiah 3:19

Ver. 19. And next to him repaired Ezer, the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah,.... Either of another Mizpah, or of the other half of Mizpah, **Ne 3:15**

another piece; or a second piece; one of the two pieces; for another is mentioned in the next verse:

over against the going up to the armoury, at the turning [of the wall]; the western wall towards the south, near to which was a place where armour was laid up; perhaps the same with the tower of David, to which there is an allusion in **So 4:4**.

Nehemiah 3:20

Ver. 20. After him Baruch the son of Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece,.... Towards and next to that Ezer the last builder mentioned had repaired; and this he did "earnestly", or in anger as the word signifies, being angry with himself or others that there was any backwardness shown to the work; and therefore, with all haste and eagerness imaginable, attended to it:

from the turning of the wall; see the preceding verse:

unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest; of whom see **Ne 3:1**, now either his house was upon the wall, or that part of the wall that was right against the door of his house is here meant.

Nehemiah 3:21

Ver. 21. After him repaired Meremoth the son of Uriah, the son of Koz, another piece,.... He had wrought before in another part, **Ne 3:4**, but having finished that, he sets his hand a second time to the work:

from the door of the house of Eliashib, even to the end of the house of Eliashib; the door of his house seems to have been at one end of it, and from that end to the other was a considerable length; he being a great man, the high priest, had a large house.

Nehemiah 3:22

Ver. 22. And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain. Either of the plain of Jericho, where, in later times at least, there was a station of the priests, or of the plain about Jerusalem; those also assisted in the repairs of the wall.

Nehemiah 3:23

Ver. 23. After him,.... The last of the priests before mentioned:

repaired Benjamin, and Hashub, over against their house; as much of the wall as the length of their house, or houses, were:

after him repaired Azariah the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, by his house: as far as that reached.

Nehemiah 3:24

Ver. 24. After him repaired Binnui the son of Henadad, another piece..... Beginning where Azariah ended:

unto the turning of the wall, even unto the corner; the corner where the wall turned from the south to the east.

Nehemiah 3:25

Ver. 25. Palal the son of Uzai, over against the turning of the wall,.... Who dwelt there, and so repaired what was right against him:

and the tower which lieth out from the king's high house: which might be built for prospect, or his upper house:

that was by the court of the prison; and we often read in Jeremiah of the court of the prison being in or near the king's house, see
Jer 32:2,

after him Pedaiah the son of Parosh; went on from hence with the repair.

Nehemiah 3:26

Ver. 26. Moreover, the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel,.... An high tower upon the wait, in this part of it, see 2Ch 27:3, these were servants to the Levites, and repaired here, where their dwellings were:

unto the place over against the water gate toward the east: and as one part of their work was to fetch water for the temple, they were here very properly situated; it led to the king's garden, the valley of Jehoshaphat, and from thence a plain way to Bethany:

and the tower that lieth out; from the wall.

Nehemiah 3:27

Ver. 27. After them the Tekoites repaired another piece,.... Having finished what they undertook in another part of the wall, **Ne 3:5**, they engage in this part of it; which shows their great zeal and diligence, when their nobles were so backward to it, and withdrew from it:

over against the great tower that lieth out; the same as in the preceding verse:

even unto the wall of Ophel; from right against the great tower unto the wall the Tekoites repaired.

Nehemiah 3:28

Ver. 28. From above the horse gate repaired the priests,.... So called, either because near it were stables for horses; or through it horses were led to be watered at the brook of Kidron, to which it was near; or to be exercised in the valley; Josephus {c} speaks of the "hippie", or horse tower, which might be near it:

everyone over against his house; for it seems there was a row of houses in which the priests dwelt, and each of them repaired as much of the wall as was right against his house.

{c} Ut supra. (De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2, 3.)

Nehemiah 3:29

Ver. 29. After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer, over against his house,.... After the last of the priests, this begun where they ended, and repaired as far as his house reached; and being, perhaps, a person of some note, his house might be a large one:

after him repaired also Shemaiah, the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate; that is, of the temple; for the gates of the city having been burnt so long, it cannot be thought there should be a keeper of any of them.

Nehemiah 3:30

Ver. 30. After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece,.... This last man had six sons; but only his youngest son wrought at this work, which is observed to his great commendation:

after him repaired Shelemiah the son of Berechiah, over against his chamber; the same as in **Ne 3:4** who having finished what he engaged in there, took his part where his chamber was, and repaired over against that.

Nehemiah 3:31

Ver. 31. After him repaired Malchiah, the goldsmith's son,.... Or the son of Tzoreph, as some, so called from his business:

unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants; he repaired up to the place where these dwelt:

over against the gate Miphkad; where some think was an house of visitation or correction; and others, where the sanhedrim sat, tried causes, and exercised justice:

and to the going up of the corner; from the east to the north.

Nehemiah 3:32

Ver. 32. And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate,.... Where the building first began and where it now ended:

repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants; or druggists; which was done at their expense; and so the wall all round, with the gates of it, were rebuilt and repaired, which was all done in fifty two days, **Ne 6:15**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Nehemiah 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 4

This chapter relates, how the Jews, while building, were mocked by their enemies, to which no answer was returned but by prayer to God, and they went on notwithstanding in their work, **Ne 4:1** and how that their enemies conspired against them, to hinder them by force of arms, **Ne 4:7** to oppose which, both spiritual and temporal weapons were made use of, so that the work was still carried on, **Ne 4:13**.

Ver. 1. But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall,.... Or were building it; for as yet it was not finished, see **Ne 4:6**,

he was wroth, and took great indignation; inwardly, though outwardly he pretended to treat the work with contempt, as if it never would be accomplished, which yet he feared:

and mocked the Jews; as a set of foolish builders, and unable to finish what they had begun.

Nehemiah 4:2

Ver. 2. And he spake before his brethren,.... Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, and perhaps some other governors of the king of Persia in those parts:

and before the army of Samaria: which, and the inhabitants of it, were implacable enemies of the Jews:

and said, what do these feeble Jews? what do they pretend to do, or what can they do?

will they fortify themselves? by building a wall about their city; can they think they shall ever be able to do this, or that it will be allowed?

will they sacrifice? meaning not their daily sacrifice, as Jarchi, that they had done a long time, but for the dedication of their building, as Aben Ezra:

will they make an end in a day? they seem to be in as great a hurry and haste as if they meant it; and indeed, unless they can do it very quickly, they never will: they will soon be stopped:

will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burnt? where will they find materials? do they imagine that they can make burnt stones firm and strong again, or harden the dust and rubbish into stones, or make that, which is as if dead, alive? to do this is the same as to revive a dead man, and they may as well think of doing the one as the other; burnt stones being reckoned as dead, as Eben Ezra observes.

Nehemiah 4:3

Ver. 3. Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him,.... Who was one of his brethren he spake before, **Ne 4:2**, and he said; in the like contemptuous and scoffing manner;

even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall break down their stone wall; signifying not only that it was so low that a fox could easily get up to it, or leap over it; but that the materials were so bad, and the work so poorly done, that the weight of a fox would break it down; of which creatures many were thereabout, since Jerusalem was desolate, see **Lam 5:18**.

Nehemiah 4:4

Ver. 4. Hear, O our God, for we are despised,.... Here begins the prayer of Nehemiah, who had been informed of what these men said in contempt of him, and his builders, and to whom he sent no answer, but applied to God:

and turn their reproach upon their own head; as they have despised and reproached us, let them be despised and reproached by their neighbours:

give them for a prey in the land of captivity; let them be carried captive, as we have been, and become a prey and booty to their enemies.

Nehemiah 4:5

Ver. 5. And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee,.... Let it not go unpunished, and even let it not be pardoned; which is spoken, not from a private spirit of revenge, but from a public spirit for the glory of God, and his justice; and not as a mere imprecation, but as a prophecy of what would be the case, in like manner as many of David's petitions in the Psalms; and for this there was a good foundation, since God had threatened the Moabites and Ammonites with utter destruction:

for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders; by despising his people, and mocking at the work the Lord had called them to; and this they did publicly, and on purpose to discourage the workmen.

Nehemiah 4:6

Ver. 6. So built we the wall,.... Went on in building it, notwithstanding their scoffs and threats:

and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof; it was carried all round the city to half the height of it:

for the people had a mind to work; their heart was in it, they had a good will to it, and they made haste to finish it.

Nehemiah 4:7

Ver. 7. And it came to pass that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians,.... Who were under and influenced by Geshem the Arabian:

and the Ammonites; over whom Tobiah was governor:

and the Ashdodites; who were of Ashdod or Azotus, one of the principalities of the Philistines, who were always enemies to the Jews:

heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up; or "the length of them went up" {d}; that is, the height of them; that they rose up high apace, and were got up to, or almost to their proper height:

and that the breaches began to be stopped; for the walls were not all thrown down by the Chaldeans, but breaches made here and there, which were now repaired:

then they were very wroth; and could not avoid showing it; before they mocked them, as attempting what they could not go through with; but now, perceiving the work went on with great success, they were enraged.

{d} hkwra htle "ascendisset longitudo", Montanus; so Coeceius in rad. Kra.

Nehemiah 4:8

Ver. 8. And conspired all of them together,.... All the above men and people entered into a confederacy and combination:

to come and to fight against Jerusalem; to bring an army with them, and by force cause the Jews to desist; the Jews {e} pretend they came to war, and brought with them an army of 180,000 men, which is not probable:

and to hinder it; the building of the walls of it; or "to make a wandering for him" {f}; for Nehemiah, or the people, or both, to, cause them to stray from their work, to frighten them from it, that they might become like men at their wits end, not knowing what to do, where to turn themselves, or what course to steer, but to wander about as persons out of their senses; so Aben Ezra. De Dieu joins this clause to the next verse, to cause everyone of them to wander, we prayed, &c.

{e} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. {f} hewt wl twvel "ad faciendum ei errorem", Montanus; "ei aberrationem", Genevenses; "vagationem et palationem", alii apud De Dieu.

Nehemiah 4:9

Ver. 9. Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto our God,.... Spread their case before him in prayer, entreating direction and help from him:

and set a watch against them day and night, because of them; to give notice of their approach, that they might prepare to defend themselves; though they prayed to God, and trusted in him for deliverance, they did not neglect the use of means.

Nehemiah 4:10

Ver. 10. And Judah said,.... Several of the men of Judah:

the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed; through much labour, in carrying heavy loads of stone and timber to the builders, and yet more through fear of the enemy:

and there is much rubbish; which ought to be removed, but that the labourers were so weak that they could not do it:

so that we are not able to build the wall; to finish it before the enemy comes to attack us.

Nehemiah 4:11

Ver. 11. And our adversaries said, they shall not know,.... Our designs upon them:

neither see; or perceive what we are about to do:

till we come in the midst of them; with an army suddenly, at an unawares, and unexpected:

and slay them; they being unarmed, and not prepared to defend themselves:

and cause the work to cease; as it must in course, the builders being slain.

Nehemiah 4:12

Ver. 12 And it came to pass, when the Jews that dwelt by them,.... Near Samaria, Arabia, and Ashdod, and had intelligence of their designs:

came, they said to us ten times; that is, they came to them at Jerusalem, and often told them, as this phrase "ten times" signifies,
See Gill on "Ge 31:7",

from all places whence ye shall return unto us: they will be upon you, come which way you will, so that ye are in the utmost danger: or "from all places"; where you are repairing and rebuilding:

return to us; that ye may enjoy peace and prosperity with us under Sanballat, &c. and escape the wrath and fury you are now exposed to; or "from all places we come, that ye may return to us"; so De Dieu; these Jews, though they pretended to be friends, to their brethren, yet seemed to be in friendship with their enemies, and sought to discourage them, and weaken their minds, and cause them to cease building.

Nehemiah 4:13

Ver. 13. Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall,.... Where the wall was lowest, and the enemy could more easily break it down, or get over it:

and on the higher places; where the wall was higher; or rather on the towers upon the walls, as the word signifies the tops of rocks, which are dry and smooth, see Eze 24:2.

I even set the people after their families; according to their rank, number, strength, and valour:

with their swords, their spears, and their bows; with weapons they could use both near, and at a distance.

Nehemiah 4:14

Ver. 14. And I looked,.... Took a view of the people, and observed that they were in their proper place, and sufficiently armed, and also whether the enemy was coming:

and rose up and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people; who were under their nobles and rulers, as their captains and commanders:

be not ye afraid of them; of their enemies, their numbers, and their threats:

remember the Lord, which is great and terrible; who is greater than they, and is to be feared and trusted in by his people, and is terrible even to the kings of the earth:

and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses; intimating, that they were in danger of losing all that was near and dear, valuable and precious to them, if they did not fight for them; and therefore it became them to quit themselves like men, and be strong.

Nehemiah 4:15

Ver. 15. And it came to pass, when our enemies heard it was known unto us,.... What they intended, as might be reported to them from the preparations made by the Jews to receive them, and defend themselves:

and God had brought their counsel to naught; which was to come upon them secretly and unawares; but being discovered, they dropped their design, and their scheme came to nothing:

so that we returned all of us to the wall, every man to his work; to that part of it where he wrought, in order to finish it.

Nehemiah 4:16

Ver. 16. And it came to pass from that time forth,.... That they were thus alarmed of danger from their enemies:

that the half of my servants wrought in the work; of building the wall; his domestic servants, his guards, or mighty men, as Jarchi, men of war, the soldiers:

and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows; some offensive, others defensive weapons; some to fight with at a distance, others near at hand:

and the habergeons; coats of mail, which they took and clothed themselves with:

and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah; the Jews that were working at the wall, to animate and encourage them, protect and defend them.

Nehemiah 4:17

Ver. 17 They which builded on the wall,.... That laid the mortar and stones upon it, and timber where it was necessary:

and they that bore burdens; that carried the mortar, stones, and timber to the builders, and served them:

with those that laded; which prepared the above for them, and laid them on their shoulders:

everyone with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon; which is not to be understood strictly and literally, for without both hands they could not well perform either of the above works; but proverbially, signifying that they were intent on both working and fighting, and were ready and prepared to do the latter, as well as the former, having weapons lying by them, or girt about them, as is explained in the following verse.

Nehemiah 4:18

Ver. 18. For the builders had everyone his sword girded by his side, and so builded,.... Thus accoutred he wrought, and was prepared for either service:

and he that sounded the trumpet was by me; to give the alarm of war, that everyone might lay aside his work, and prepare for the battle: this officer stood by Nehemiah, that when he found it necessary, might give him orders to sound his trumpet, for the men to gather to him.

Nehemiah 4:19

Ver. 19. And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people,.... See Gill on "Ne 4:14",

the work is great and large; the building of the wall all around the city of Jerusalem:

and we are separated upon the wall one far from another; some at work on one part of it, and some at another, so that the distance between one another, at least in the further part, was very considerable.

Nehemiah 4:20

Ver. 20. In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet,.... Be it what part of the wall soever they were at work, even the most distant:

resort ye thither to us; to Nehemiah, and the half of his servants armed, where the trumpet was blown; that was to be the place of rendezvous:

our God shall fight for us; and give us victory over our enemies; none have any reason to be intimidated, when they shall hear the sound of the trumpet.

Nehemiah 4:21

Ver. 21. So we laboured in the work,.... Of building the wall: and half of them held the spears; and other weapons before mentioned, **Ne 4:16**

from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared; that is, from morning to evening, the space of time the builders and labourers worked.

Nehemiah 4:22

Ver. 22. Likewise at the same time said I unto the people,.... That were at work upon the wall:

let everyone with his servant lodge within Jerusalem; every builder had a servant, or a lad, as the word signifies, to wait upon him, to bring mortar or stone, or what he wanted; and some of these builders, with their lads, came out of the country towns and villages in the morning, and returned at night; now Nehemiah proposed, for the safety of the city and its walls, that for the present they would lodge in Jerusalem:

that in the night they may be a guard unto us, and labour on the day; might help to protect them in the night, should they be surprised with the enemy, and be ready for their work in the daytime.

Nehemiah 4:23

Ver. 23. So neither I, nor my brethren,.... The nobles and rulers:

nor my servants; his domestic servants that waited upon him:

nor the men of the guard which followed me; his bodyguard, which attended him as a commissioner of the king of Persia for state and grandeur:

none of us put off our clothes; at night when they laid themselves down to sleep, but laid in, them, that they might be ready upon an alarm made:

saving that everyone put them off for washing; not for common washing, because dirty, but for washing on account of ceremonial uncleanness, which required washing both of bodies and garments, see Le 15:5, &c. and the

Vulgate Latin version expresses it by baptism, as the apostle calls such ceremonial ablutions in **Heb 6:2**. It is in the margin of our Bibles, "everyone went with his weapon for water"; when he went to Siloam, or any other place, for water, he took a weapon with him to defend himself upon occasion; which is no bad sense of the words. Noldius {g} renders the words, "everyone with his weapon (and) water"; both were at his bolster, ready, if wanted, see 1Sa 26:11.

{g} Ebr. Concord. Partic. p. 322.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Nehemiah 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZRA 5

In this chapter is a complaint of the poor against the rich for oppression of them, **Ne 5:1** for which Nehemiah being angry, reproved them, and made them promise, and swear to it, to make restitution, **Ne 5:6** and set them an example himself, taking nothing of them during his twelve years' government, supporting himself and his at his own expenses, **Ne 5:14**.

Ver. 1. And there was a great cry of the people, and of their wives,.... Those of the poorer sort:

against their brethren the Jews; the rich that oppressed them; and this cry or complaint was made to Nehemiah for redress.

Nehemiah 5:2

Ver. 2. For there were that said, we, our sons, and our daughters, are many,.... Not that they complained of the number of their children, for a numerous offspring was always reckoned a blessing with the Jews; but this they observed to show that their families, being large, required a considerable quantity of food to support them:

therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat and live; that is, they were obliged to take it at an exorbitant price, which is the thing complained of; or otherwise they must starve, the rich taking the advantage of their poverty and present dearth.

Nehemiah 5:3

Ver. 3. Some also there were that said, we have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses,.... Made them over to others, put them into their hands as pledges for money received of them:

that we may buy corn; for the support of their families:

because of the dearth; or famine; which might be occasioned by their enemies lying in wait and intercepting all provisions that might be brought to them; for this seems not to be the famine spoken of in **Hag 1:10** for that was some years before this, and for a reason which now was not.

Nehemiah 5:4

Ver. 4. There were also that said,.... Who though they were able to buy corn for their families without mortgaging their estates: yet, say they,

we have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards; for though the priests, Levites, and Nethinims, were exempted from it, yet not the people in common; and some of these were so poor, that they could not pay it without borrowing upon their estates, and paying large usury for it, see **Ezr 6:8**

Nehemiah 5:5

Ver. 5. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren,.... We are of the same nature, nation, stock, and religion: our children as their children; are circumcised as they, and have a right to the same privileges in church and state:

and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and daughters to be servants; shall be obliged to it, unless relieved:

and some of our daughters are brought into bondage already; sold to be servants, as they might in case of the poverty of parents, Ex 21:7, and some were sometimes taken to be bondmen in payment of their parents' debts, **2Ki**

4:1

neither is it in our power to redeem them, for other men have our lands and vineyards; as pledges for money borrowed.

Nehemiah 5:6

Ver. 6. And I was very angry when I heard their cry, and these words. Their complaint expressed in this manner; it not only raised pity and compassion in his breast towards these poor distressed people, but indignation at the rich that oppressed them.

Nehemiah 5:7

Ver. 7. Then I consulted with myself,.... What was to be done, what method to be taken to redress such grievances:

and I rebuked the nobles and the rulers; who were the men that monopolized the corn in this dear season, and sold it at an extravagant price, and had got the lands, vineyards, and houses of the poor mortgaged to them, and to whom they had lent money on usury:

and said unto them, you exact usury everyone of his brother; which was contrary to the express law of God, Ex 22:25 and which even the Indians {h} strictly observed, who neither let out money, nor took any upon usury:

and I set a great assembly against them; either of the poor that were oppressed, who brought in their accusations and complaints against them, or a large body of the people, who were not guilty, to hear them, that the delinquents might be put to public shame; or he called a large court of judicature, and set them to examine these allegations, and to do justice.

{h} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 4. c. 1.

Nehemiah 5:8

Ver. 8. And I said unto them,.... The nobles, and rulers, and other rich persons that exacted usury of the poor:

we after our ability; speaking of himself in the plural number, which now obtained in the court of Persia; or of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and others, who, according as their worldly circumstances, having been captives, would admit of:

have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the Heathen; not that they had given a ransom for them to Cyrus, or any other king of Persia, which would be contrary to the prophecies concerning their redemption, Isa 45:13 but such who had sold themselves to particular persons in Babylon, who, without being redeemed, could not take the advantage of the liberty granted by Cyrus, and his successors; and it may be there were others also in the like circumstances, in other neighbouring nations, that had been redeemed this way. The Jewish canon {i} now is, he that sells himself, and his children, to Gentiles, they do not redeem; but they redeem the children after their father's death; which the commentators {k} explain of the third time that he sells himself:

and will you even sell your brethren? their lands and vineyards mortgaged to them, and even their persons:

or shall they be sold unto us? must we be obliged to buy them, and to redeem them:

then they held their peace, and found nothing to answer; being convinced they had done wrong, by the arguments used, to which they could make no reply.

{i} Misn. Gittin, c. 4. sect. 9. {k} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Nehemiah 5:9

Ver. 9. Also I said, it is not good that ye do,.... The meaning is, that it was very bad; it is a "meiosis", by which more is intended than is expressed:

ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God; in reverence of him and his law, and according to that:

because of the reproach of the Heathen our enemies? whose mouths will be open to reproach the true religion, and the good ways of God; and say, these are the men that pretend to fear God, and serve him, and yet break his law, and use their brethren ill, see **Ro 2:24**.

Nehemiah 5:10

Ver. 10. I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn,.... For our maintenance, in consideration of the services done by us, which would appear but reasonable, but this we decline for the sake of easing our poor brethren:

I pray you let us leave off this usury; and not exact it, as has been too much and too long used.

Nehemiah 5:11

Ver. 11. Restore, I pray you, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses,.... Which they had made over to them for corn they had had, or money they borrowed of them; it is entreated that an immediate restitution be made, and the rather, if what Aben Ezra observes is true, that this was the year of release, when debts were not to be exacted, but forgiven, De 15:1,

also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them; the hundredth part of the money might be what they took for usury, as the Romans did in later times, even so much a month; so that if the loan was one hundred pounds, a pound was given every month for it, and so one hundred and twelve pounds in the year; and the hundredth part of the corn, wine, and oil, might be the hundredth part of those fruits of the earth which the rulers demanded for their salary, see **Ne 5:15**.

Nehemiah 5:12

Ver. 12. Then said they, we will restore them,.... The lands, vineyards, oliveyards, and houses:

and will require nothing of them; not the hundredth part of the fruits of the earth by way of salary:

so will we do as thou sayest; they approved of his proposal, and readily agreed to it:

then I called the priests, and took an oath of them that they should do according to this promise; not that the priests were delinquents, they were not charged with anything of this kind, nor were they the men that promised restitution; but the priests were called to administer the oath to the nobles, and rulers, and rich men, to oblige them the more to keep their word; an oath being sacred, priests in an holy office were made use of to give it, that it might be the more solemn, and the more strictly regarded.

Nehemiah 5:13

Ver. 13. Also I shook my lap,.... The fore skirts of his garment, shaking the dust out of them, as a symbol of what follows; a like rite was used in the case of peace and war, the choice of either, by the Romans, as proposed by their ambassadors to the Carthaginians, as having either in their bosom to shake out {l}:

and said, so God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour; what he has got by his labour:

that performeth not his promise; confirmed by an oath:

even thus be he shaken out, and emptied; of all that he has in the world, and out of the world too, as Jarchi adds:

and all the congregation said, Amen; so let it be, even those that had taken pledges and usury, as well as others:

and praised the Lord; that had given them such a governor to direct, advise, and exhort them to their duty, and had inclined their hearts to attend thereunto:

and the people did according to this promise; they punctually kept it, and the oath they had sworn.

{l} Florus, l. 2. c. 6. Liv. l. 21. c. l8.

Nehemiah 5:14

Ver. 14. Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah,.... That is, by the king of Persia, which was not done when he was first sent into Judea; but very probably when he had finished the wall in fifty two days, he returned to Persia, and gave the king an account of his success, and how things stood in those parts, when he judged it necessary to send him again in the character of a governor, and which was still within the same year, as follows: from the twentieth year, even unto the thirty second year of Artaxerxes, that is, twelve years; see Ne 13:6.

I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor; which was fit and proper for him, and used to be given him; neither he, nor those that assisted him in the government, the principal men he brought along with him, and put into posts and places under him.

Nehemiah 5:15

Ver. 15. But the former governors, that had been before me, were chargeable to the people,.... Between him and Zerubbabel, for Ezra was no governor; according to the Jewish chronology {m}, when Ezra came to Jerusalem, Zerubbabel returned to Babylon, and there died, and his son Methullam was in his stead, and after him succeeded Hananiah his son:

and had taken of them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver; which amounted to between four and five pounds, and this they had every day:

yea, even their servants bare rule over the people; required a salary, or at least perquisites of them, which the governors connived at:

but so did not I, because of the fear of God; neither took anything himself of the people, nor suffered his servants; because the fear of God was upon his heart, and before his eyes, and therefore could not allow himself to oppress the poor.

{m} Seder Olam Zuta, p. 108, 109.

Nehemiah 5:16

Ver. 16. Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall,.... Of building the wall of Jerusalem; here he gave his constant attendance to direct and encourage the workmen, and see that they kept to their work, and did it well:

neither bought we any land; neither he nor the principal men with him, though they could have bought it cheap, but they chose not to take the advantage of the poverty of the people:

and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work: all were employed in it, taking no wages for their work, being maintained at his expense.

Nehemiah 5:17

Ver. 17. Moreover, there were at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers,.... Every day at his own cost, which must be considerable to provide for such a number, and of such rank:

besides those that came unto us from among the Heathen that are about us; who were proselytes, and came thither to worship, or on a civil account, to give intelligence, and take directions.

Nehemiah 5:18

Ver. 18. Now that which was prepared for me daily was one ox and six choice sheep,.... Or fat ones; of beef and mutton a considerable quantity, abundantly sufficient for his guests and servants, and shows what a good table he kept:

also fowls were prepared for me; what number is not said:

and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine; the country afforded; that is, either once in ten days his stock of wine was renewed, or a more liberal entertainment was made, a banquet of wine, **Es 5:6**,

yet for all this required not I the bread of the governor; the salary that used to be given him, but did this at his own expense, out of his own estate in Judea; or what he had got by his office as cupbearer to the king of Persia, the salary of which perhaps was continued:

because the bondage was heavy upon the people; the tribute of the king of Persia, and their labour and expense in building the walls of the city.

Nehemiah 5:19

Ver. 19. Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people. He expected not any recompence from the people, but from the Lord; and from him not in a way of merit, but of grace and good will, who forgets not what is done for his name's sake, **Heb 6:10**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Nehemiah 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 6

Sanballat and his brethren, hearing the wall was finished, sent to Nehemiah, to have a meeting with him at a place named, which he refused, **Ne 6:1**, then they sent him a terrifying letter, suggesting that he, and the Jews with him, would be treated as rebels, since their intention, as reported, was to make him king, which letter he regarded not, **Ne 6:3**, then they employed some that pretended to be prophets to advise him to flee to the temple for safety, which he rejected, **Ne 6:10** and so the work went on and was finished, though there was a secret correspondence carried on between their enemies and some false brethren among themselves, **Ne 6:15**.

Ver. 1. Now it came to pass, when Sanballat and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall,.... Quite finished it:

and that there was no breach left therein; but all was made up firm and strong:

though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates; not upon all of them, though some might by the particular builders of them; and they all of them might be ready made, though not as yet put upon the hinges.

Nehemiah 6:2

Ver. 2. Then Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me,.... Messengers:

saying, come, let us meet together in some one of the villages; in Cephirim, which Jarchi takes to be the name of a place, perhaps the same with Cephirah, a city in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:26

in the plain of Ono; which was in the same tribe, see **1Ch 8:12**, they might pretend a friendly meeting, to accommodate differences between them, or to converse together about the general interest of the king of Persia in those parts:

but they thought to do me mischief; to kill him, or at least to confine him; this he either conjectured from their general character and behaviour, or he had intelligence of their design.

Nehemiah 6:3

Ver. 3. And I sent messengers unto them,.... He did not show any open contempt of them, nor did he even return answer by the messenger that came from them, but sent some of his own people to them:

saying, I am doing a great work; was about an affair of great importance, very busy, and not at leisure to give them a meeting:

so that I cannot come down; Jerusalem being built on an eminence, and the place proposed to meet at in a plain, going thither is expressed by coming down:

why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come down to you? signifying that it would cease if he left it; and it being of greater consequence than anything they could have to converse about, he argues it would be wrong to relinquish it on such an account; this was the reason he thought fit to give, but was not the only, nor the principal reason, which is suggested in the preceding verse.

Nehemiah 6:4

Ver. 4. Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort,.... Being very desirous of getting him into their hands, and therefore were very pressing and importunate:

and I answered them after the same manner; every time as before, he being as much bent on finishing the work as they were to divert him from it.

Nehemiah 6:5

Ver. 5. Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time,.... In his own name, neither Tobiah nor Geshem joining with him, he being more solicitous and anxious to get him into his hands than any of them; and it may be, as some think, pretending more friendship for him than the rest, and therefore writes alone, as if they knew nothing of his writing:

with an open letter in his hand: which having in it an intimation of Nehemiah being guilty of treason, anyone that would might read it, and so spread the defamation.

Nehemiah 6:6

Ver. 6. Wherein was written, it is reported among, the Heathen,.... Among the several neighbouring nations; it was an affair that was not whispered about among a few only; it was common talk, it was in every body's mouth in divers nations:

and Gashmu saith it; the same with Geshem the Arabian; he affirms it, and will abide by his assertion, and engages to make good what he says; he mentions him by name, who he knew would not be offended with him for making use of it, and who doubtless agreed that he should; that Nehemiah might not think this was the talk of some of the lower rank of the people, but even was averred by no less than the king's governor in Arabia:

that thou and the Jews think to rebel; that they had formed a scheme, and were taking measures to raise a rebellion against the king of Persia, and revolt from him:

for which cause thou buildest the wall; the wall of Jerusalem, for their security against any force that might be sent to quell them:

that thou mayest be their king, according to these words; written in this epistle, and reported among the Heathens.

Nehemiah 6:7

Ver. 7. And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem,.... This he said to cover what he and Tobiah had been doing, tampering with, corrupting, and hiring the prophets to discourage him, and put him upon methods, whereby the work would cease:

saying, there is a king in Judah; besides Artaxerxes, whose yoke they were casting off, having got a king of their own, and among them:

and now shall it be reported to the king, according to these words; such a report as this, and in those very words, will soon reach the ears of the king of Persia:

come now, therefore, and let us take counsel together; contrive the best method to put a stop to this report, if a false one, and to wipe off the reproach that is upon thee, and may affect us; and thus partly terrifying him, and partly pretending friendship to him, hoped to get him into his hands.

Nehemiah 6:8

Ver. 8. Then I sent unto him,.... Whether a letter, or a messenger, is not said:

saying there are no such things done as thou sayest; that there was any scheme formed to rebel, and make him king, or that prophets were appointed to declare him such:

but thou feignest them out of thine own heart; in short, that they were no other than lies of his own inventing.

Nehemiah 6:9

Ver. 9. For they all made us afraid,.... Or you all, as Aben Ezra interprets it; or all the Heathen nations, as Jarchi; this was the design of all those scandalous reports, to intimidate them, and with this they pleased themselves, as follows:

their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done; this they hoped would be the effect of those reports sent to them:

now, therefore, O God, strengthen my hands; and let them not have what they will, and hope for; according to Aben Ezra, these words are directed to

Sanballat, that if he was a friend, as he pretended, that instead of weakening, he would strengthen his hands by a sincere reconciliation; so Vatablus; but they are an address to God, such short ejaculations being usual with Nehemiah.

Nehemiah 6:10

Ver. 10. Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabeel, who was shut up,.... Either in his own house, or in a chamber in the temple, as if he had given himself up to meditation, fasting, and prayer; or, as he might suggest to Nehemiah, for his safety, and so designed it as an example to him; this man might be a priest of the course of Delaiah, 1Ch 24:18 or however he was a person Nehemiah had a good opinion of, and came to him on the letters sent to him by his enemies, to consult with him, and the rest, since they had suggested that he had appointed prophets to speak of him as a king:

and he said let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple; this looks as if he was in his own house, or if in a chamber of the temple, that he thought that was not secret and safe enough, and therefore proposed going within the temple, into the holy place, where none but priests might go:

for they will come to slay thee; meaning his enemies, Sanballat and his companions:

yea, in the night they will come to slay thee; that very night, and therefore no time should be lost in providing for his safety.

Nehemiah 6:11

Ver. 11. And I said, should such a man as I flee?.... The king's commissioner, who had the conducting and management of the whole affair of building the wall of Jerusalem, on whom it wholly depended; for, should he absent himself, the people would depart and leave their work, and the city and wall be left defenceless, which was what was hoped for from this scheme; and who had expressed such confidence in God, and had had such success:

and who is there, that, being as I am; in such a post, and in such circumstances, and on whom so much depended:

would go into the temple to save his life? or where there was little reason to believe it would be preserved long, should he take such a step as that:

I will not go in; as being neither lawful, nor honourable, nor safe.

Nehemiah 6:12

Ver. 12. And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him,.... Because he advised to that which was against the cause of God and true religion:

but that he pronounced the prophecy against me; for by fleeing, as he advised, it would seem that he was guilty of the crimes of rebellion and treason he was charged with; and leaving the people, as they would in course break up, he himself could not be long in safety, no, not in the temple:

for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him; this he found out afterwards, on purpose to intimidate him, and take such measures as that thereby he would lose his character and his influence.

Nehemiah 6:13

Ver. 13. Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin,.... By distrusting the power and providence of God to protect him, and by going into such a part of the temple, which he, being no priest, had no right to go into:

and that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me; as a rebel and traitor against the king, which had been reported of him, and which would be strengthened by such a step.

Nehemiah 6:14

Ver. 14. My God, think thou on Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works,.... Their wicked counsels and schemes, and not only confound and disappoint them, but reward them as they deserve:

and on the prophetess Noadiah: whom Aben Ezra takes to be the same with

Shemaiah, because he said, dewn, "let us meet", &c. **Ne 6:10**, but no doubt it is the name of a woman, a false prophetess, and was hired, and in the same scheme with Shemaiah:

and the rest of the prophets that would have put me in fear; and so put him on leaving the people, and the work he was engaged in, and flee for his safety; it seems there were more than are by name mentioned, who sought to discourage and intimidate him.

Nehemiah 6:15

Ver. 15. So the wall was finished in the twenty fifth day of the month Elul,.... The sixth month, answering to part of August and part of September:

in fifty and two days; which Aben Ezra reckons from the time that Sanballat sent his letter to Nehemiah, when no more were wanting than to set the doors upon the gates, **Ne 6:1**, but rather these, with Jarchi, must be reckoned from the time the building was begun; which, reckoning back from the twenty fifth of Elul, it will appear it was begun the third day of the fifth month Ab; nor need this be thought incredible, considering the number of workmen, their ardour and diligence in building, and that the walls were not wholly built all around, only repaired, and breaches made up, and much of the old materials were made use of, which were at hand, and stone unhewed, and especially being attended with the blessing of God, which succeeded the undertaking: nor are there wanting examples similar to this; and as it is observed by many from Curtius {x}, the walls of new Alexandria, which were sixty furlongs in length, or more than seven miles, were finished in seventeen days; if Nicephorus {y} is to be credited, the high walls which surrounded Constantinople, and were twenty miles in circumference, were finished in two months time. Josephus is not to be regarded, who, contrary to the Scriptures says {z}, this wall of Jerusalem was two years and four months in building.

{x} Hist. l. 7. c. 6. Justin e Trogo, l. 12. c. 5. {y} Hist. l. 14. c. 1. {z} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 5. sect. 8.

Nehemiah 6:16

Ver. 16. And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof,.... That the wall was finished:

and all the Heathen that were about us saw these things; the neighbouring nations, who not only heard with their ears, but saw with their eyes what was done:

they were much cast down in their own eyes; through shame and confusion, because of their own scoffs and jeers; through grief and vexation at the unexpected success of the Jews, and through the fear of them that was fallen upon them, as Jarchi notes:

for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God; his special providence and blessing attending it, as appeared by its being so soon effected.

Nehemiah 6:17

Ver. 17. Moreover, in those days,.... While the wall was building:

the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them; letters passed between them frequently, they informing him how things went on at Jerusalem, and he advising them to what was detrimental to the true interest of their nation; such false friends had Nehemiah about him, and yet the work succeeded under him; which showed it the more to be of God.

Nehemiah 6:18

Ver. 18. For there were many in Judah sworn unto him,.... To Tobiah, who not only in a private manner corresponded with him by letters, but bound themselves by an oath to him to be true to his interest, and do as he should advise them:

because he was the son in law of Shechaniah, the son of Arah; of a family that came up with Zerubbabel from the captivity, **Ezr 2:5** and very probably of considerable note:

and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah; a very eminent person, concerned in building the wall, **Ne 3:4**.

Nehemiah 6:19

Ver. 19. Also they reported his good deeds before me,.... Recommended him as a very worthy man, deserving of respect and notice by Nehemiah, and to be taken into his friendship, and admitted to conversation with him, whose counsel and advice might be of service:

and uttered my words to him; reported both what he said and did; for the word used signifies both words and actions:

and Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear; perceiving, by the intelligence of his friends, that Nehemiah would have nothing to say to him, nor to do with him, he threatened him.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Nehemiah 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 7

Nehemiah having built the wall, and set up the doors, appointed two persons to take the charge of the city, and set watches for the safety of it, and to take special care about opening and shutting the gates of it, Ne 7:1, and concerned he was for the peopling of it, and having found a register of the first comers to it, gives their names, Ne 7:4 and some account of the freewill offerings made for the work they came about, Ne 7:70.

Ver. 1. Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors,.... Which was not done when Sanballat sent his first letter, but now was, Ne 6:1,

and the porters and the singers, and the Levites were appointed; not to attend the doors of the gates of the wall, but to return to their service in the temple, who had been employed in one thing or another, while the wall and gates were building and repairing; see Ne 3:17.

Nehemiah 7:2

Ver. 2. That I gave my brother Hanani,.... Who first brought him the melancholy account of the state of Jerusalem, Ne 1:2, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace; the king's palace, in which the viceroy of the king of Persia dwelt, and now Nehemiah; to these two men he gave

charge over Jerusalem; committed it to their care during his absence, who may be supposed now to return to Persia, as he had promised, **Ne 2:6**,

for he was a faithful man; this is said of Hananiah, and given as a reason why such a trust was committed to him; Hanani's character was well known, and his journey from Jerusalem to Shushan was a full proof of his hearty concern for the interest of it:

and feared God above many; Hananiah was exemplary in his fear of God, few were equal to him, and none exceeded him; or of many days, as Jarchi; of a long time he had feared the Lord, and served him many years.

Nehemiah 7:3

Ver. 3. And I said unto them, let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot,.... Or until the heat of the day, or near noon; at least not till the sun had been up some time, and shone out clearly, and caused much heat; that if any enemies were near, or lying in wait, they might be discovered, and the inhabitants also up and ready to defend themselves:

and while they stand by; according to Aben Ezra, Hanani and Hananiah were to be present at the opening and shutting of the gates, and so Grotius; but these being the chief rulers, it is not likely; but rather those whom they appointed to look after them, these were to stand by while their servants did it; they were not to leave it wholly to them, but to see it done themselves:

let them shut the doors, and bar them; or "lay hold" {a} on them, handle them to see whether they are shut fast or not:

and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, everyone in his watch, and everyone to be over against his house; no foreigners were to be of the watch, only inhabitants, and those everyone in their turn, and to be placed over against where they dwelt; and so it might be thought would be the more careful and diligent in their watch.

{a} wzxaw "et tractate", Junius & Tremellius; "contrectate eas", Piscator.

Nehemiah 7:4

Ver. 4. Now the city was large and great,.... The circumference of it, all within the wall; for that was built on its old foundation, and enclosed as much ground as ever it did: Hecataeus {b}, an Heathen writer, says the circumference of Jerusalem was fifty furlongs, which was more than six miles; but Josephus {c} makes the circuit of it but thirty three furlongs or about six miles:

but the people were few therein; in comparison of the largeness of the place; for though there were 42,360 that came up at first with Zerubbabel, and many more with Ezra, yet a great number chose to settle in the towns and cities in the country, Jerusalem being in such a desolate condition:

and the houses were not builded; some were, but they were but few, many of them still lay in ruins.

{b} Apud Euseb. Praepar. par. Evangel. l. 9. c. 4. p. 408. & apud Joseph. contr. Apion, l. 1. c. 22. {c} De Bell. Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 3.

Nehemiah 7:5

Ver. 5. And my God put into mine heart,.... Every good motion in him, and whatever he thought of that was conducive to the good and welfare of Jerusalem, Nehemiah always ascribed it to God; see **2Co 3:5**

to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy; that their number might be known, and of what families they were, and in what cities they formerly dwelt; and this was not only of use for the present purpose of Nehemiah, but was of service hereafter to show the pedigree of families, and that it might be clearly known from whence the Messiah sprung:

and I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first; from Babylon to Jerusalem, along with Zerubbabel, as appears from **Ne 7:7**, and this was of great use to him, whereby he would know not only their names and number, but to what city they belonged, and who to the city of Jerusalem, that they might be called upon to come, and rebuild their houses, and take up their residence there:

and found written therein; the names of the persons and families after mentioned.

Nehemiah 7:6

Ver. 6. These are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity,.... Who were of the province of Judea, as it was now reduced, and came up out of the captivity of Babylon through the edict of Cyrus; see **Ezr 2:1**, where the same preface is given to the list of names as here; and from hence to the end of **Ne 7:69** the same account is given of persons and families as there, with some little difference of numbers and names; in some instances there are more in this list, in others fewer, which may be thus accounted for; that list was made in Babylon, when, upon the edict of Cyrus, the Jews, who intended to go up with Zerubbabel, gave in their names, and they were registered; but this was made when they came to Jerusalem; now some of those that gave in their names changed their minds, and tarried in Babylon, and some might die by the way, which makes the numbers fewer in some instances; and others who did not give in their names at first, but, being better disposed towards their own country, followed after and joined those which were returning, and increased the number of others; to which may be added what Abendana observes, that in Ezra an account is given of those that came out of the captivity by the companies, in which they came not genealogized, and had a mixture of persons of other families in them, and some that had no genealogy; but afterwards, when they were genealogized according to their families, a register of their genealogies was made, and is what Nehemiah now found, and here gives; and, as for difference of names, that may be owing to the carelessness of copiers, or to the different pronunciation of names, or some men might have two names; the matter is of no great moment.

Nehemiah 7:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:38

Ver. 38. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:39

Ver. 39. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:40

Ver. 40. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:41

Ver. 41. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:42

Ver. 42. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:43

Ver. 43. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:44

Ver. 44. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:45

Ver. 45. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:46

Ver. 46. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:47

Ver. 47. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:48

Ver. 48. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:49

Ver. 49. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:50

Ver. 50. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:51

Ver. 51. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:52

Ver. 52. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:53

Ver. 53. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:54

Ver. 54. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:55

Ver. 55. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:56

Ver. 56. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:57

Ver. 57. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:58

Ver. 58. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:59

Ver. 59. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:60

Ver. 60. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:61

Ver. 61. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:62

Ver. 62. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:63

Ver. 63. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:64

Ver. 64. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:65

Ver. 65. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:66

Ver. 66. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:67

Ver. 67. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:68

Ver. 68. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:69

Ver. 69. See Gill on "Ne 7:6".

Nehemiah 7:70

Ver. 70. And some of the chief of the fathers gave unto the work,.... Of building the city and the temple, and for that service, **Ezr 2:68**,

the Tirshatha gave to the treasure a thousand drachms of gold; each of which was one pound sterling, and so amounted to so many pounds: of these "dracmons", or "darics", a Persian coin, mention is made in **Ezr 2:69**, they were golden staters, or shekels and had their name as is said, not from Darius, the father of Xerxes, though it is certain, from Herodotus {d}, that he coined golden money; but from some other king of the same name, more ancient {e}, which must be Darius the Mede; and if they are the same with the Adarcon in **Ezr 8:27** as they seem to be, then those in 1Ch 29:7 were pieces of money not so called in the times of David, but of Ezra, the writer of that book: whether this Tirshatha was Zerubbabel, or Nehemiah, is not easy to say, since this donation is not the same with that in Ezra, not made at the same time nor are the gifts the same, nor the persons that gave them. Zerubbabel was Tirshatha when the Jews came out of Babylon, and Nehemiah now:

fifty basins; which were vessels, in the which the blood of the sacrifices was received and out of which it was sprinkled:

five hundred and thirty priests' garments; which were laid up in the wardrobe, and used on occasion.

{d} Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 166. {e} Scholiast. in Aristoph. Eccles. p. 741, 742. So Harpocration. Lexic. in voce dardikov, and Suidas on the same word.

Nehemiah 7:71

Ver. 71. And some of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the work,.... To be put into the treasure, out of which the expenses of the temple, and service of it were defrayed:

twenty thousand drachms of gold; which were so many pounds of our money, and somewhat more: for, according to Bishop Cumberland {f}, a drachm of gold was of the value of twenty shillings and four pence: and 2200 pounds of silver; "the maneh", or pound, with the Jews, was of the value of sixty shekels, Eze 45:12 and so is reckoned by our Brerewood {g} to be of our money seven pounds and ten shillings; he reckoning a shekel at half a crown, whereas it was little more than two shillings and four pence; and so sixty of them, or a "maneh", came to about seven pounds; wherefore this sum here was seven times so many pounds of silver.

{f} Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 4. p. 115. {g} De Ponder & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 4.

Nehemiah 7:72

Ver. 72. And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand drachms of gold,.... Worth as many pounds of our money, and somewhat more:

and two thousand pound of silver; of which See Gill on "Ne 7:71":

and threescore and seven priests' garments; having been so long in Babylon, and no use of sacrifices, and so not of garments to minister in, no care was taken to provide any; which seems to be the reason why so many were given, when they returned to their own land, and sacrificed.

Nehemiah 7:73

Ver. 73. So the priests and the Levites, and the porters, and the singers, and some of the people, and the Nethinims, and all Israel, dwelt in their cities,.... The same is said in **Ezr 2:70**,
See Gill on "Ezr 2:70",

and, when the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities; the month Tisri, answering to part of September, in which month was the feast of tabernacles; at this time of the year they were in their cities when they came forth out of Babylon, and so they were now; see **Ezr 3:1**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Nehemiah 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 8

Ezra being desired to bring forth the book of the law, read it to the people and others, expounded it to them, **Ne 8:1** and Nehemiah exhorted the people to express joy and gladness on this occasion, which they did, **Ne 8:9** and observing the feast of tabernacles was in the law commanded to be observed, they kept it very strictly and joyfully, **Ne 8:13**.

Ver. 1. And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the watergate,.... A large and commodious street for such a company of people, which led to the water gate, of which see **Ne 3:26** hither the people gathered with great unanimity, zeal, and affection:

and they spoke unto Ezra the scribe; the same who is called Ezra the priest, and scribe of the law of God, and said to be a ready one, **Ezr 7:6**, who came to Jerusalem thirteen years before this time; but very probably returned to Babylon again, and was lately come from thence:

to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel; to observe what was commanded in it, and which he had ordered to be read, particularly every seventh year, at the feast of tabernacles,
De 31:10 which was now drawing near, though this was not the precise time of reading it; hence some have thought this year was the sabbatical year; see **Ne 5:11**.

Nehemiah 8:2

Ver. 2. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation,.... Having a perfect copy of it, which the people knew, and therefore desired him to bring it; he brought it either out of his own case or chest, or out of the temple where it was laid up; some restrain this to the book of Deuteronomy; this he produced in sight of the whole assembly:

both of men and women; adult persons of each sex, who met promiscuously; though Grotius thinks the women had a separate place:

and all that could hear with understanding; all under age, who yet were capable of hearing the law read to some advantage to them:

upon the first day of the seventh month; the month Tisri, answering to part of September and October; this was a high day, for not only the first of every month was a festival, but the first of the seventh month was the feast of blowing of trumpets, Le 23:24, and besides, this was New Year's day, the first day of their civil year, as the first of Nisan was of their ecclesiastical year, and was of greater antiquity than that; and so Jarchi says, this was the first day of the year; to which may be added, that this was the day on which the altar was first set up, on the Jews' return from captivity, **Ezr 3:6**.

Nehemiah 8:3

Ver. 3. And he read therein,.... Some passages in it, here and there, which it was necessary the people should have knowledge of; for it can hardly be thought be began and read on just in the order in which it was: this he did

before the street; at the top of it, at one end of it:

that was before the water gate; which looked directly to that:

from the morning until midday; from the rising of the sun to noon, so that he must read six hours; but very probably was relieved at times by the men with him, after mentioned:

before the men and the women, and those that could understand; see **Ne 8:2**,

and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law; to the hearing of it read, and to the things contained in it; hence Maimonides {h} gathers, that as soon as the reader begins the reading of the law, it is not lawful to speak about anything, not even the constitutions of the law, but silently to attend to what is read.

{h} Hilchot Tephillah, c. 12. sect. 9.

Nehemiah 8:4

Ver. 4. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose,.... Or to speak out of, as the Syriac and Arabic versions; this, in the Hebrew text, is called a "tower" {i}, partly because of its height, and partly because in the form of one; and also for its largeness, considering the use it was for; for it was so large as to hold fourteen men, as appears by what follows: a pulpit of wood was made for the king in the court, to read the law from {k}; though, according to Jacob Leo, it was a throne like an high tower, See Gill on "2Ki 11:14", the pulpits, in the Jewish synagogues, made after the same manner, as Aben Ezra observes, are called by the same {l} name:

and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah; and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam; in all thirteen; there were six on his right, and seven on his left, who stood here, not merely in honour to him, and as approvers and supporters of the truth of what he read, but to relieve him when weary.

{i} Ue ldgm le "super turrem ligni", Montanus; so Dionysius is said, "concionari ex turri alta", Ciceron. Tuscul. Quaest. l. 5. {k} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 141. sect. 7. {l} Misn. Sotah, c. 7. sect. 8.

Nehemiah 8:5

Ver. 5. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people),.... So plainly seen by them, and what he did, and the more easily heard, for which purpose the pulpit was made for him to stand in:

and, when he opened it, all the people stood up; that they might the better hear the law read, as well as in honour and reverence of it; the Jews say {m}, that from the times of Moses to Rabban Gamaliel, they learned the law only standing; but after his death a disease came into the world, and they learned it sitting; and now it is a canon with them, that it is not necessary to stand at the reading of the law {n}.

{m} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 21. 1. {n} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. Orach Chayim, c. 146. sect. 4.

Nehemiah 8:6

Ver. 6. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God,.... Before he began to read in the book of the law, he addressed himself to God in a short prayer, wholly in the benedictory way; ascribing blessing, honour, and glory to him, celebrating his being and perfections, setting forth his greatness and his excellency, who was the author and giver of the law he was about to read; and this he the rather did, that what he read might be the more carefully attended to, and come with the greater authority, weight, and influence on those that heard it; and so, Maimonides {o} says, it is the custom with the Jews, in their synagogues, for the reader, after he has opened the book, and looked out the place he reads, to say this blessing,

"Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the world, who hath chosen us out of all people, and hath given us his law; blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast given us the law; and all the people answer, Amen;"

as they now did, as follows:

and all the people answered, Amen, Amen: repeating the word, to declare their hearty assent to what Ezra had expressed; the Jews have many rules concerning pronouncing the "Amen", that it must not be too quick, curt, and short, nor with too high a voice {p}:

with lifting up their hands; a prayer gesture, to which the apostle refers, **1Ti 2:8**,

and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground; expressing hereby the awful sense they had of the Divine Being, and their profound adoration of him.

{o} Hilchot Tephillah, c. 12. sect. 5. {p} Schulchan Aruch, ut supra, (par. 1.) c. 124. sect. 12.

Nehemiah 8:7

Ver. 7. Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites,.... That is, others of them besides those named; for they seem all to be Levites, unless they can be thought to be priests, and so the Levites are distinguished from them; but the former seems evident from **Ne 9:4** these also

caused the people to understand the law; as well as Ezra; from whence it is plain that he did not only read the law, but gave the sense of it, especially where there was any seeming difficulty, and these men were assisting in the same work: and the people stood in their place; to hear the law read and explained; they did not move from their first station, but continued in it from morning to noon; they were both attentive and constant.

Nehemiah 8:8

Ver. 8. So they read in the book,.... Ezra and those with him; he first began to read and expound, and when weary they relieved him, and did the same:

in the law of God distinctly; which was the book they read in, and which they read plainly and intelligibly, so as to be heard and understood; this seems to respect the clear and distinct pronunciation of the words of it, and not the explanation or meaning of it, which is after expressed; some think the sense is, that they first read it in Hebrew, and then translated it into Chaldee, that the people might better understand it, being just come out of Babylon, where they had been used to the Chaldee language; but though this was a practice in later times, it does not seem to have obtained so early, or that there was a necessity of it:

and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading; not hereby how to read it, but chiefly to understand what was read, that they might clearly know their duty to God and men: the Talmudists {q} give the meaning of the text thus; "by the law of God" they understand the Scripture; by the phrase "distinctly", the Targum or translation of it into Chaldee; by "the sense", the verses or the accents; and by "the reading", the distinction of the accents: some think from hence came the practice of reading the law in the synagogues every sabbath day,

Ac 13:15.

{q} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37. 2. & Megillah, fol. 3. 1. & Hieros. Megillah, fol. 74. 4.

Nehemiah 8:9

Ver. 9. And Nehemiah which is the Tirshatha,.... Or governor, as Zerubbabel had been, and now Nehemiah, see **Ezr 2:63**

and Ezra the priest and scribe; see **Ne 8:1**,

and the Levites that taught the people; see **Ne 8:7**

said unto all the people, this day is holy unto the Lord your God; being both the new moon and the feast of blowing of trumpets:

mourn not, nor weep; which was unsuitable to a festival, and especially such an one as this, in which trumpets were to be blown, and gladness to be shown, Nu 10:10

for all the people wept when they heard the words of the law; perceiving they had not kept it, but had broke it in many instances, and so liable to the wrath and judgment of God in case of disobedience.

Nehemiah 8:10

Ver. 10. Then he said unto them,.... Nehemiah the Tirshatha or governor:

go your way; to their own houses, and refresh themselves; it being noon, and they had stood many hours attentive to the reading and expounding of the law:

eat the fat, and drink the sweet: not a common meal, but a feast, consisting of the richest provisions, the best of food and liquors

and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for the poor, who had no food at home provided for them; the widow, fatherless, and stranger, who at festivals were to partake of the entertainment,
De 16:11

for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be you sorry; confirming what the Levites had said and exhorted to, **Ne 8:9**

for the joy of the Lord is your strength; to rejoice, as the Lord commanded them on such days as these, was a means both of increasing their bodily strength and their inward strength, and of fitting them the more to perform their duty to God and men with cheerfulness, which sorrow and heaviness made unfit for; and the joy which has the Lord for its object, and comes from him, is the cause of renewing spiritual strength, so as to run and not be weary, walk and not faint, in the ways of God.

Nehemiah 8:11

Ver. 11. So the Levites stilled all the people,.... Made them quiet and easy, being backed by the governor:

saying, hold your peace; refrain from weeping and mourning:

for the day is holy; a festival, set apart for joy and gladness:

neither be ye grieved; inwardly; as they were not to show any signs of sorrow outwardly, so they were not to cherish grief inwardly.

Nehemiah 8:12

Ver. 12. And all the people went their way to eat and to drink,.... Freely and cheerfully:

and to send portions; to the poor, who had nothing to eat and drink:

and to make great mirth; with music, vocal and instrumental:

because they had understood the words that were declared unto them; the meaning of the several laws read and explained unto them, whereby they better understood their duty, and in what instances and in what manner it was to be performed; how much more reason is there for joy and gladness, when the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are clearly known and understood? Ps 89:15.

Nehemiah 8:13

Ver. 13. And on the second day were gathered together,.... The second day of the month, and of the new year, the day after the feast of blowing of trumpets, and after the law had been read and explained:

the chief of the fathers of all the people: heads of tribes and families: the priests and the Levites; who, though they were instructors of others, needed to be taught themselves, of which they were sensible: and therefore came

unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law; some things in it, which, upon reading the day before, they observed had some difficulty in them, and which they did not clearly and thoroughly understand; and therefore applied to Ezra, a ready scribe in the law, for better information, and that they might be better able to teach the people; which was highly commendable in them.

Nehemiah 8:14

Ver. 14. And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses,.... The children of Israel, to be observed by them; either by hearing it read the day before, or by conversation with Ezra, they perceived it was enjoined in the law, particularly in
Le 23:39

that the children of Israel should dwell in booths, in the feast of the seventh month: which was the same month, and this the second day of it, and therefore the time drew near for keeping it; for it was to begin the fifteenth.

Nehemiah 8:15

Ver. 15. And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem,.... That is, as Jarchi interprets it, by supplying it thus,

and they commanded that they should publish, &c. Ezra and those with him gave orders that heralds should proclaim in all cities where the Jews dwelt that the feast of tabernacles would be kept, and they should prepare for it; and which seems to be the true sense, since it is not written in the law that such a proclamation should be made; but this was an order of their own, thereby to give notice of it, that all might be provided:

go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written; in Le 23:40, where the first three of these seem to be called boughs of goodly trees; though the Jews {r} commonly understand them of pomecitrons, of which the Syriac version here interprets the myrtle branches; and by them are meant the citron branches, with the leaves and fruit, and which the Jews make absolutely necessary to the keeping of the feast, and for beautiful ones will give a large price; some of them go every year to Spain, and buy as many as they can, and dispose of them wherever Jews live {s}: and those branches were to be fetched, not properly speaking to make the booths of, which were made of boards and planks, but for the decoration of them; and it was not necessary, according to Aben Ezra, that some of each of these should be gathered for that purpose, but of any sort of them; for he interprets the words disjunctively olive branches, or pine branches, or myrtle branches, &c. these, according to the common notion of the Jews, were tied up in little bundles, and carried in the hand, which they call "lulabs"; and they observe {t}, the thick branches were for them, which included the rest; now these they were to fetch from the mount of Olives, and other mountains about Jerusalem; near to which also there was a place called Motza {u}; whither they went, and gathered the willows of the brook mentioned in Le 23:39.

{r} T. Bab. Succah, fol. 35. 1. {s} Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 21. p. 454. {t} Succah, fol. 12. 1. {u} Misn. Saccah, c. 4. sect. 5.

Nehemiah 8:16

Ver. 16. So the people went forth, and brought them,.... Went out of Jerusalem to the mountains adjacent, and fetched in branches of the said trees, one or another:

and made themselves booths, everyone upon the roof of his house; which were flat, De 22:8, and they might be made anywhere, so be it they were open to the air:

and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God; the common people in the courtyards belonging to their houses, and the priests and Levites in the courts of the temple, the yards or open places adjoining to them:

and in the street of the watergate; which led to that, and seems to have been a very large street, in which many booths might be built, **Ne 3:26**

and in the street of the gate of Ephraim; which led to the gate through which the road lay to the tribe of Ephraim, see 2Ki 14:13, none were erected without the walls of the city, for fear of the enemy.

Nehemiah 8:17

Ver. 17. And all the congregation of them that were come again out of captivity made booths,.... These came to Jerusalem, and made them booths there; for there only was this feast kept, see **Joh 7:2**,

and sat under the booths; there they dwelt during the seven days of it, in commemoration of their ancestors dwelling in booths in the wilderness, see Le 23:42

for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so; Joshua observed it, when be had brought and settled the people of Israel in the land of Canaan; and it had been observed since, before this time, as appears from **1Ki 8:2** **Ezr 3:4**; but not so, with such exactness, with such zeal and affection, with such a regard to the law of God, as to read it every day of the feast, as in the next verse, and with such joy and gladness; wherefore there is no reason to suspect a corruption in the text, as a learned man {w} does, who supposes that Joshua is put for Josiah:

and there was very great gladness; that they were restored unto and settled in their land, had the book of the law, and the knowledge of it, and were directed and enabled to observe it.

{w} Delancy's Life of King David, vol. 1. p. 395. marg.

Nehemiah 8:18

Ver. 18. Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God,.... That is, Ezra; this was done by him every day during the feast, whereas only the first and last days were the holy convocations on which it seems to have been read:

and they kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according to the manner; prescribed in Le 23:39.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Nehemiah 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 9

In this chapter we have an account of a fast kept by the Jews, which was observed, as by outward acts of humiliation, so by confession of sin, reading the law, and worshipping the Lord, **Ne 9:1** and of a long prayer that the Levites made, in which they celebrate the divine perfections, take notice of various instances of the goodness of God to the people of Israel, acknowledge their manifold transgressions, observe the Lord's correction of them for them, in which they own he was righteous, **Ne 9:4**.

Ver. 1. Now in the twenty fourth day of this month,.... The seventh month, the month Tisri or September, two days after the feast of tabernacles was ended:

the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them; which were all outward tokens of mourning and humiliation, see **Joe 1:8** which they could not show during the festival; but that being over, they return to it, see **Ne 8:9**.

Nehemiah 9:2

Ver. 2. And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers,.... Such as were genuine Israelites, of the seed of Abraham, who had married wives of the Gentiles, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, either before the reformation by Ezra, not being then discovered, or had fallen into this evil since; but now, on the reading of the law, were convinced of it, and so separated themselves from such wives, which was a proof of the truth of their repentance:

and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers: particularly their taking of strange wives, which their fathers had also done, and set them a bad example, which they had followed; of standing and confessing, see Lu 18:13.

Nehemiah 9:3

Ver. 3. And they stood up in their place,.... In the outward court of the temple, where men used to stand when they prayed and confessed their sins: and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God; that they might the better know the mind and will of God, and do their duty: this they did

one fourth part of the day; the space of three hours, from sun rising, or six o'clock in the morning, to the time of the morning sacrifice, which was about nine o'clock:

and another fourth part they confessed; the goodness of God to them, and the sins they had been guilty of:

and worshipped the Lord their God; bowed down before him in prayer and supplication, and so spent three hours more, which reached to noon or twelve o'clock; and from thence to three o'clock, about the time of the evening sacrifice, and from thence to sun setting, or six o'clock, and so spent the whole day in the above exercises alternately.

Nehemiah 9:4

Ver. 4. Then stood up upon the stairs of the Levites,.... On an ascent; an elevated place where the Levites used to stand when they sang at the time of sacrifice, and where they might be seen and heard by the people:

Jeshua and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani; who seem to be all Levites, see **Ne 8:7**,

and cried with a loud voice unto the Lord their God; praying with great fervency, and making bitter lamentation for the sins of the people and their own.

Nehemiah 9:5

Ver. 5. Then the Levites, Jeshua,.... Or, then the Levites, even Jeshua:

and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah; the same as before, with a little variation of their names, and perhaps some of them might have two names:

and said; to the men that stood and confessed their sins, **Ne 9:2**

stand up; for though they are before said to stand, yet, through shame and confusion of face, and awe of the Divine Majesty, might be fallen on their faces to the ground:

and bless the Lord your God for ever and ever; for all the great and good things he had done for them, notwithstanding their sins; and particularly for his pardoning grace and mercy they had reason to hope for:

and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise: the glory of which name, nature, and perfections of his, cannot be set forth by the highest praises of men, and the largest ascriptions of blessing and honour to him.

Nehemiah 9:6

Ver. 6. Thou, even thou art Lord alone,.... Whose name alone is Jehovah, the one only true and living God:

thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host; the airy and starry heavens, and the sun, moon, and stars in them, and the third heaven, the seat of God, angels, and saints:

the earth, and all things that are therein; men, beasts, trees, metals, minerals, &c.

the seas, and all that is therein; fishes, sea plants, &c. see **Ac 4:24**,

and thou preservest them all; they consist in thee, and are upheld in their being by thee, **Heb 1:3**

and the host of heaven worshipped thee; not the sun, moon, and stars, only in their way, Ps 148:2 but the angels chiefly, **Heb 1:6**.

Nehemiah 9:7

Ver. 7. Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram,.... From among the Chaldeans, and out of his father's family:

and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees; by calling him from thence, of which see Ge 11:28, to which may be added what Amama {x} on that place observes; that some think that the sacred fire, which the Chaldeans worshipped, was kept in this city, from whence it was called Ur, that being worshipped by them and by the Assyrians under the name of Ur {y}:

and gavest him the name of Abraham; which was changed when the covenant of circumcision was given him, Ge 17:5.

{x} Anti-barbar. Biblic. l. 3. p. 652. {y} Fortunati Schaech. Elaeochrism. Myrothec. l. 1. c. 9. col. 44.

Nehemiah 9:8

Ver. 8. And foundest his heart faithful before thee,.... A true believer in his word and promises, Ge 15:6 and closely attached to the fear of him, and observance of his commands, as abundantly appeared in the trial of him, in offering up his son, Ge 22:1,

and madest a covenant with him, to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, [I say], to his seed; not to him personally, but to his posterity, at least including and chiefly designing them; of which covenant see Ge 15:18,

and hast performed thy words, for thou art righteous; in all his ways and works, faithful to his promise, a covenant keeping God, and who kept and fulfilled this covenant, assisting Joshua to conquer the land of Canaan, and put Israel into the possession of it.

Nehemiah 9:9

Ver. 9. And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt,.... The hard bondage in which their lives were made bitter; and was not a mere spectator of it, but looked upon them in it with pity and compassion, and sent them a deliverer, **Ex 2:23**

and heardest their cry by the Red sea; which was before them, and the rocks on both sides of them, and the host of Pharaoh behind, pressing upon them, when he heard them, and wrought salvation for them,
Ex 14:10.

Nehemiah 9:10

Ver. 10. And shewedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land,.... By inflicting the ten plagues upon them:

for thou knowest that they dealt proudly against them; behaved haughtily to them, and despised them, see Ex 18:11

so didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day; displayed his power on Pharaoh, and his goodness to Israel, the fame of which reached all over the world, and continued to that day, see **Ex 9:16**.

Nehemiah 9:11

Ver. 11. And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land,.... That is, the Israelites, see Ex 14:21,

and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps; with great ease, and with indignation, meaning the Egyptians, that pursued hotly after them, and were thrown into the sea:

as a stone into the mighty waters; where they sunk and perished, see
Ex 15:4.

Nehemiah 9:12

Ver. 12. Moreover, thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar,.... The Israelites, to shelter them from the heat of the sun in a dry and barren wilderness:

and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go; through a trackless desert, see
Ex 13:21.

Nehemiah 9:13

Ver. 13. Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai,.... By some visible tokens of his presence, as a cloud, fire, smoke, &c. which must be understood consistent with his omniscience, see Ex 19:18,

and spakest with them from heaven; the decalogue or ten commandments, Ex 20:1,

and gavest them right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments; both judicial and ceremonial, which were of excellent use to them in their civil and ecclesiastical polity; these were not spoken to Israel, but given to Moses on the mount, to be delivered to them.

Nehemiah 9:14

Ver. 14. And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath,.... Which was not made known to others, and was peculiar to the Jewish nation, and a privilege granted to them, to have rest corporeal and spiritual, typical of the rest in Christ:

and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant; moral, ceremonial, and judicial, such as other nations had not, **De 4:8**.

Nehemiah 9:15

Ver. 15. And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger,.... To satisfy that, meaning the manna, Ex 16:3

and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock, for their thirst; to quench it; this was done both quickly after they came out of the land of Egypt, and a little before their entrance into the land of Canaan, see Ex 17:6

and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them; which oath was made to them and to their fathers also, see Nu 14:30.

Nehemiah 9:16

Ver. 16. But they and our fathers dealt proudly,.... Behaved in a haughty manner towards God, their kind benefactor:

and hardened their necks; refused to take the yoke of his law, as refractory oxen, that withdraw their necks from the yoke:

and hearkened not to thy commandments; to do them, though they promised they would, Ex 24:7.

Nehemiah 9:17

Ver. 17. And refused to obey,.... Though exhorted, admonished, and threatened, such was their obstinacy:

neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; in delivering them at the Red sea, in raining manna about them, and giving them water out of the rock:

but hardened their necks; see the preceding verse:

and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage; they not only proposed it, but determined upon it, which is reckoned the same as if they had done it, see Nu 14:4,

but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; as he had proclaimed his name before Moses, and as the whole of his conduct towards the people of Israel abundantly shewed, see Ex 34:6

and forsookest them not; when in the wilderness, where otherwise they must have perished, but still fed and protected them, notwithstanding their provocations.

Nehemiah 9:18

Ver. 18. Yea, when they had made them a molten calf,.... In imitation of the Apis, or ox of the Egyptians:

and said, this is thy god that brought thee out of Egypt; or the image of thy god, as the Arabic version, see Ex 32:4,

and had wrought great provocations; of all which nothing was greater than idolatry.

Nehemiah 9:19

Ver. 19. Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness,.... Where no supply could be had, if he had cast them off, see **Ne 9:17**,

the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; which, if it had, they would have been scorched by the heat of the sun:

neither the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way wherein they should go; or otherwise they would have lost their way, and not have known which way to have gone.

Nehemiah 9:20

Ver. 20. Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them,.... In the knowledge of the laws delivered to them; the spirit of prophecy, according to Ben Melech, and which Aben Ezra interprets of the spirit put upon the seventy elders, Nu 11:17,

and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth; all the while they were in the wilderness, until they came to Canaan's land; called the Lord's manna, because prepared by him, and given by him to them; a part or portion and gift from the Lord, as Ben Melech, from whence it had its name, see Ex 16:15

and gavest them water for their thirst; which seems to have respect to the last rock stricken for them, after their many provocations in the wilderness, Nu

20:11.

Nehemiah 9:21

Ver. 21. Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing,.... As not for food, so neither for raiment, as follows:

their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not; of which see **De 8:4**.

Nehemiah 9:22

Ver. 22. Moreover, thou gavest them kingdoms and nations,.... The two kingdoms of Sihon and Og, and the seven nations of Canaan:

and didst divide them into corners; or "corner"; into every corner of the land of Canaan, so that they possessed the whole of it, a few cities excepted; Jarchi interprets it of one corner, that they might not be mixed with the people of the land, but be all together in one place; but Aben Ezra understands it of the Canaanites, of their being divided and scattered into corners, when they fled from the Israelites; but the former sense seems best:

so they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon; or "eren", or "namely" {z}, "the land of the king of Heshbon"; for Sihon was king of Heshbon, and so the land the same:

and the land of Og king of Bashan; those lands both lay on the other side Jordan, and were possessed by the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh.

{z} So Piscator, Patrick, Rambachius.

Nehemiah 9:23

Ver. 23. Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven,.... Fulfilling the promise made to Abraham, Ge 15:5 their number when they came out of Egypt, and just before they entered into the land of Canaan, being upwards of 600,000 men, besides women and children, Ex 12:37

and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it; the land of Canaan, promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed, into which the Lord brought them by Joshua; he was the instrument, but the thing was of God.

Nehemiah 9:24

Ver. 24. So the children went in and possessed the land,.... Not the fathers of the Israelites that came out of Egypt, they died in the wilderness, all excepting two, but their children, which seems to be the reason of this manner of expression, see Nu 14:30

and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites; by means of Joshua, the general of the armies of Israel; there is an elegant paronomania in the word for "subdue", and the Canaanites, which cannot be expressed in our language:

and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would; no less than thirty one kings, see Jos 12:9.

Nehemiah 9:25

Ver. 25. And they took strong cities,.... Such as, in an hyperbolical way, are said to be walled up to heaven, **De 1:28**

and a fat land; of a good and fruitful soil, abounding with all good things, **De 8:7**

and possessed houses full of all goods; ready built and furnished for them, both with good provisions and good furniture:

wells digged; to supply them with water:

vineyards, and olive yards, and fruit trees in abundance; which they planted not:

and they did eat, and were filled, and became fat; in body, though in mind became wanton and wicked; they made their hearts fat, or stupid, as Aben Ezra interprets it, see De 32:15

and delighted themselves in thy great goodness; not in praising the Lord for it, and using it to his honour and glory, but indulged themselves to luxury and intemperance; though it may be understood of a lawful pleasure in the enjoyment of the great affluence they were brought into, which last agrees with what follows.

Nehemiah 9:26

Ver. 26. Nevertheless, they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee,.... Notwithstanding all these favours and mercies bestowed upon them, which was great ingratitude:

and cast thy law behind their backs; as of no account, and unworthy of their regard; that which they should have had continually before their eyes, as the rule and guide of their actions, they cast behind them, not caring to look into it, and read it:

and slew thy prophets, which testified against them to turn them to thee; the prophets that bore a testimony against their sins, admonished them of them, called heaven and earth to record against them should they continue in them, and all to turn them from them by repentance to the Lord; those they were so wroth with on this account as to slay them, see Mt 23:37,

and they wrought great provocations; serving Baalim and Ashtaroth, and other gods of the nations, than which nothing was more provoking to the Lord.

Nehemiah 9:27

Ver. 27. Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them,.... As the kings of Mesopotamia, Moab, Canaan, and others:

and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee; as they usually did, **Jud 3:9**,

thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hands of their enemies; such were judges, Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Gideon, &c. and this was, done for them, not on account of their merits, but the abundant unmerited mercy of the Lord towards them.

Nehemiah 9:28

Ver. 28. But after they had rest,.... From their enemies, enjoyed their liberty, and were in prosperity:

they did evil again before thee; relapsed into idolatry:

therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them; as the Philistines had for the space of forty years, Jud 13:1,

yet when they returned and cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven, and many times didst thou deliver them, according to thy mercies; this was their case frequently in the times of the judges; they sinned and fell into the hands of their enemies, then they repented, and cried to God for help, and he had compassion upon them, and saved them.

Nehemiah 9:29

Ver. 29. And testifiedst against them,.... By sending prophets to them, to admonish them of their sins, and remind them of their duty:

that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law; to regard it, and walk according it:

yet they dealt proudly; with an haughty air rejected the counsel of God:

and hearkened not unto thy commandments; yielded not obedience to them:

but sinned against thy judgments; transgressed his laws, which were so just, righteous, reasonable, and equitable:

which if a man do, he shall live in them; or by them, in the land of Canaan, see Le 18:5,

and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear; like oxen, that wriggle and struggle, and draw back, and will not admit the yoke upon them.

Nehemiah 9:30

Ver. 30. Yet many years didst thou forbear them,.... Throughout the reigns of several kings, such was God's longsuffering towards them: or, "thou didst draw upon them"; that is, his mercy, as Jarchi interprets it; he drew it out of his heart, and prolonged it towards them:

and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets; who reproved and admonished them, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of God in them, who spoke in his name, and what he suggested to them:

yet they would not give ear; to what the prophets said, and the Spirit of God in them:

therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands: people that were lords of many countries, as the Assyrians and Chaldeans.

Nehemiah 9:31

Ver. 31. Nevertheless, for thy great mercies' sake, For the displaying of that, and the glorifying of it, which is so large and exceeding abundant:

thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; some were left in the land, and those that were carried captive found favour in the eyes of those that carried them away, and were suffered to live, and many of them now had returned to their own land:

for thou art a gracious and merciful God; of which they had abundant proof and evidence.

Nehemiah 9:32

Ver. 32. Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy,.... The same titles Nehemiah gives to the Lord, **Ne 1:5** and it may be reasonably thought the whole prayer is his composure, which was delivered by him to the Levites:

let not all the trouble seem little before thee; as if it was not enough; let it be judged sufficient, and no more be added, but mercy shown; Aben Ezra thinks the word "little" is not to be connected with "trouble", but with the nearest antecedent "mercy", and so Gussetius {z}; as if the sense was, let not thy mercy be small with thee, but let it be largely extended along with all the trouble, or at the time when trouble of every kind

comes upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the times of the kings of Assyria unto this day; but this sense is not clear, and makes it have respect to times to come; whereas it relates to time past, and to all the trouble and affliction they had met with from the Assyrian kings, from the time they invaded their land, and carried them captive, until this very time.

{z} Ebr. Comment. p. 937.

Nehemiah 9:33

Ver. 33. Howbeit, thou art just in all that is brought upon us,.... They own the justice of God, could not complain of any wrong done them; and had he shown them no mercy at all, it was but what they deserved:

for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly; he had done according to the truth of his word of promise, he had faithfully kept it, but they had transgressed his righteous law.

Nehemiah 9:34

Ver. 34. Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law,.... All ranks of men, from the highest to the lowest, had shown no regard, nor yielded obedience to the holy law of God:

nor hearkened unto thy commandments, and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them; moral and ceremonial, which were a testification of the will of God to them, and a testimony against them if they observed them not.

Nehemiah 9:35

Ver. 35. For they have not served thee in their kingdom,.... When in it, whether of Israel or of Judah, and when in the most flourishing circumstances:

and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them; amidst all the prosperity and affluence of good things they enjoyed, which was an obligation upon them to serve the Lord;

and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them; the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk, which lay open for them, their enemies being driven out before them, see **Ne 9:25**,

neither turned they from their wicked works; their idolatries more especially.

Nehemiah 9:36

Ver. 36. Behold, we are servants this day,.... For though they had leave to return to their land, and rebuild their city and temple, yet they were still in subjection to the kings of Persia:

and for the land thou gavest unto our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it; though the rightful owners and proprietors of it by the gift of God to their ancestors, to hold it and enjoy the good of it, and yet were obliged to pay tribute for it to the kings of Persia, all excepting priests and Levites; see **Ezr 6:8**.

Nehemiah 9:37

Ver. 37. And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us, because of our sins,.... Though a very fruitful land, and brought forth much, yet not for them, but for foreign kings, that had the sovereignty over them, and enacted much toll, tribute, and custom from them, which greatly lessened the profit of the earth to them:

also they have dominion over our bodies; and could oblige them to work for them, and do any service they should command:

and over our cattle, at their pleasure; to carry burdens for them, or ride post with them:

and we are in great distress; being servants and tributaries to a foreign power.

Nehemiah 9:38

Ver. 38. And because of all this,.... Of all this distress, and that it might be removed, and be clear of it; or "in all this distress and evil", as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, in the midst of it all:

we make a sure covenant; or faithfully promise to observe the law of God, and particularly put away strange wives, and not intermarry with the people of the land:

and write it; that it may remain and be a testimony against them should they break it, being their own handwriting:

and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it; as witnesses of it, and thereby binding themselves to observe the same things; their names that sealed are given in the next chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Nehemiah 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 10

In this chapter we have the names of the persons that signed and sealed the covenant mentioned in the last chapter, Ne 10:1, and the things they agreed unto and promised to perform; in general to observe the law of God, in particular not to marry with the people of the land, to keep the sabbaths weekly and yearly, to pay annually the third part of the shekel for the service of the temple, to bring into it the wood offerings, first fruits, firstborn, and tithes, Ne 10:28.

Ver. 1. Now those that sealed were,.... That sealed the covenant, made **Ne 9:38**.

Nehemiah the Tirshatha, the son of Hachaliah; the governor of the Jews:

and Zidkijah; who seems also to have been a prince, since, without, it could not be said it was sealed by their princes, **Ne 9:38** though some think both these were priests, and then the princes must be supposed to be among the chief of the people, Ne 10:14, from hence to the end of the twenty seventh their names follow; the names of the priests,
Ne 10:2, who were in all twenty one; no mention is made either of Eliashib the high priest, nor of Ezra the priest and scribe; some think the former had not behaved well in his office, and that the latter was either sick, or returned to Babylon, or however hindered by some providence or another, since we hear of him both a little before and after, **Ne 8:2** then the names of the Levites, Ne 10:9, in all seventeen, most of which we have met with in this book before; next follow the names of the chief of the people, Ne 10:14, their number in all forty four; and their names may be observed in the list of those that came out of Babylon with Zerubbabel; the whole number of those that sealed, princes, priests, Levites, and chief of the people, were eighty four.

Nehemiah 10:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:22

Ver. 22. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:23

Ver. 23. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:24

Ver. 24. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:25

Ver. 25. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "Ne 10:1".

Nehemiah 10:28

Ver. 28. And the rest of the people,.... That did not sign and seal:

the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims; the porters and singers were Levites; but those so called were such as waited upon the priests, as the Nethinims were persons that waited on them:

and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God; proselytes, who had renounced Heathenism, and embraced the true religion, had received the law of God, and professed to walk according to it;

their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone having knowledge, and having understanding; of the nature of the covenant, and the things contained in it, of what was required of them, and of what they promised, of the nature of an oath they entered into, and of the sin of perjury.

Nehemiah 10:29

Ver. 29. They clave to their brethren, their nobles,.... Who had signed and sealed the covenant, they declared their approbation of it, attended to it, and ratified what they had done in their name:

and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God; they bound themselves with an oath that they would keep the law of God, and added a curse or imprecation on themselves to it should they break it; or, according to Piscator, they went into the space between the two pieces of the calf, which they cut asunder for the confirmation of the covenant, and so they cursed themselves if they should break it, see Jer 34:18

and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our God, and his judgments and his statutes; all the laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial; this they engaged to do in general; some particulars follow.

Nehemiah 10:30

Ver. 30. And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons,.... Intermarry with them as they had done, and were prone to do, and even did after this,
Ne 13:23.

Nehemiah 10:31

Ver. 31. And if the people of the land bring ware,.... Any thing to be sold, any sort of goods, that being sold might be taken away, as the word signifies;

or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell; anything to make food of; wheat or barley, as Aben Ezra interprets it; the same word is rendered corn, See Gill on "Ge 42:1"; to sell which was not lawful on the sabbath day, see **Am 8:5**

that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day; any festival, as the feast of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles:

and that we would leave the seventh year: the ground untilled in that year, the vines unpruned, and the fruits of the earth, which sprung of themselves, for the poor to gather, Le 25:4,

and the exaction of every debt; that they would not demand the payment of any debt on the seventh year, as the law required they should not,
De 15:2.

Nehemiah 10:32

Ver. 32. Also we made ordinance, for us,.... Laws among themselves, binding them to that which the laws of God did not:

to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel, for the service of the house of our God; the particulars of which follow in the next verse; for the defraying of which there used to be a treasury in the temple; but now there was none, and therefore they took this method to assess themselves; and being poor, instead of the half shekel, which in some cases was required, they only charged themselves with the third part of one; though Aben Ezra thinks this was added to the half shekel, and was paid over and above that; according to Brerewood {a}, it was of the value of ten pence of our money: Waserus {b} has given us the figure of one of these coins, with this inscription, a "third" part of a shekel of Israel.

{a} De Pond. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 1. {b} De Antiqu. Num. Heb. l. 2.

Nehemiah 10:33

Ver. 33. For the shewbread,.... To defray the expenses of the twelve loaves, which every week were set on the table of shewbread,
Le 24:5,

and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering; for the daily sacrifice, morning and evening, which always had a meat offering along with it, Ex 29:38,

of the sabbaths, and of the new moons; on which were additional sacrifices,
Nu 28:9,

and for the set feasts; of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; in which also were offered other sacrifices, besides the daily one,
Nu 28:16,

and for the holy things: which were both by way of thanksgiving to God, and that they might feast and rejoice together:

and for the sin offerings, to make an atonement for Israel; for the whole body of the people, and so were made at the public expense:

and for all the work of the house of our God; whatever else was necessary that is not mentioned.

Nehemiah 10:34

Ver. 34. And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people,.... The priests and Levites were in one lot, and the people in another, as Aben Ezra:

for the wood offering; for providing wood to burn upon the altar continually, concerning which Maimonides {c} thus writes:

"what is the wood offering? there was a time fixed for families to go out unto the forests, and bring in wood of disposition (to be laid in order on the altar); and the day when it came to the turn of a family to bring the wood, they offered up freewill burnt offerings, which were called a wood offering; and it was to them as a good day (or festival), and they were forbid to mourn, fast, or do any work on it;"

and he observes, that if a single person brought wood of his own free will, he was obliged to the same; and Josephus {d} speaks of a feast called culoforia, when it was customary for all to bring wood to the altar, to keep alive the sacred fire, that it might not go out, which, according to him, was on the fourteenth of the month Lois, or August; but this was not the business of all the people, lots were cast, as here said, who should do it, and when:

to bring it into the house of our God; the temple, where there was a place called the "wood room", into which the wood was brought after it had been wormed by the priests {e} after the houses of our fathers; or families on whom the lot fell to do it: some render it,

into the house of our fathers, meaning the same as before; the temple so called, because they built it, and worshipped God in it; so Jarchi and Aben Ezra:

at times appointed, year by year; as the lot directed; these, according to the Jewish doctors {f}, were nine times in the year; on the first of Nisan (or March), the sons of Arach, of the tribe of Judah, brought the wood; on the twentieth of Tammuz (or June), the posterity of David, of the tribe of Judah; on the fifth of Ab (or July), the children of Parosh, of the tribe of Judah; on the seventh of the same month, the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab; on the tenth of the same month, the posterity of Senaah, of the tribe of Benjamin; on the fifteenth of the same month, the children of Zattu, and with them the priests and Levites, and all who were of an uncertain tribe, &c. on the twentieth of the same month, the posterity of Pahathmoab, of the tribe of Judah; on the twentieth of Elul (or August), the children of Adin, of the tribe of Judah; on the first of Tebeth (or December), the posterity of Parosh again brought the wood:

to burn upon the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the law; the wood should be burnt upon it, and fire kept on it continually, **Le 6:12**, for this refers only to that, the wood offering is nowhere spoken of in the law.

{c} Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 6. sect. 9, 10. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 5. {d} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 17. sect. 6. {e} See Lightfoot's Prospect of the Temple, ch. 25. {f} Misn. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 5.

Nehemiah 10:35

Ver. 35. And to bring the firstfruits of our ground,.... Not that they cast lots to do this, but they bound themselves with an oath, according to the law, to do it; this is the first of all the fruits of the earth, Ex 23:19, though Aben Ezra restrains it to the sheaf of the firstfruits, and to the two wave loaves, Le 23:10,

and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees; which, as Aben Ezra observes, their wise men restrain to the seven kinds only mentioned in **De 8:8**.

Nehemiah 10:36

Ver. 36. Also the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle,.... Such as were unclean, as Aben Ezra notes, as the ass, &c. and are distinguished from clean ones mentioned in the following clause; now both these, their sons, and this sort of cattle, were to be redeemed by a price paid to the priests: as it is written in the law,
Ex 13:2,

and the firstlings of our herds, and of our flocks; clean cattle, which were to be offered, Nu 18:17,

to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God; a price for the one sort, and the other for sacrifice.

Nehemiah 10:37

Ver. 37. And that we should bring the first fruits of our dough,.... According to the law in Nu 15:20

and our offerings; their heave offerings, Nu 18:8

and the fruit of all manner of trees; bore by them on the fourth year after their planting, Le 19:23

of wine and oil; to which Aben Ezra restrains the fruit of the trees, see Nu 18:12, all these they were to bring

unto the priests, to the chambers the house of our God; there to be laid up for the use of it; and oil and wine were frequently used in sacrifices:

and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our village; the tenth part of the produce of their agriculture everywhere throughout the land, see
Nu 18:21.

Nehemiah 10:38

Ver. 38. And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the

Levites take tithes,.... There was always to be a priest with the Levites at such times, to take notice what quantity they received, that they might not be under any temptation, or lie under any suspicion of defrauding the priests of their due, who were to have a part in the tithes, as follows:

and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house: which were in the court of the priests for that purpose; for out of the tithes of the Levites there was another tithe or tenth part taken, and given to the priests, see Nu 18:26.

Nehemiah 10:39

Ver. 39. For the children of Israel, and the children of Levi, shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers,.... In the temple:

where are the vessels of the sanctuary; to put the said things into, that they might be ready at hand when wanted, as they often were for the meat and drink offerings:

and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers; who dwelt there when in their ministrations, and were supported by the above tithes and gifts:

and we will not forsake the house of our God; neither forsake the assembling themselves there for worship, nor neglect to make the necessary provisions for the service of it, as they had too much done, but now resolve for the future to behave better.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Nehemiah 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 11

This chapter treats of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who settled there by lot, or of their own accord, their names and numbers, Ne 11:1, and of the priests and Levites who dwelt there, Ne 11:10, and of the rest of the people, priests, and Levites, that dwelt in the other cities and villages of Judah and Benjamin, Ne 11:20.

Ver. 1. And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem,.... Where it was proper they should, being the metropolis of the nation, both for the performance of their offices, and to protect and defend it, as well as to set an example to the people, and encourage them to dwell there also:

the rest of the people also cast lots to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city; so called, because of the temple and the worship of God in it; and so it is called by Julian the emperor {g}; and some {h} have thought that the Cadytis of Herodotus {i} is the same with Jerusalem, which had its name from hvdq, "holy", and is now called by the Turks "cuds", that is, "holy" {k}: now, though it was the chief city, and the place of public worship, yet the people were not forward of settling in it, partly because of the rage of the enemy, which this city was the butt of, and partly because it was more to their worldly advantage to dwell in the country, and where they could have better supplies; they consulted their own ease, safety, and profit; wherefore this method was taken to oblige some to dwell in it, by taking one out of ten by lot, that there might be a sufficient number to rebuild the houses of it, repopulate and defend it:

and nine parts to dwell in other cities; to which they belonged, or where they pleased, any where in the land of Israel.

{g} Ep. 25. p. 154. {h} Prideaux's Connection, par. 1. p. 56, 57. {i} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 159. & Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 5. {k} Sandys's Travels, l. 5. p. 121. Ed. 5.

Nehemiah 11:2

Ver. 2. And the people blessed all the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem. Who were not taken by lot, but of their own accord settled at Jerusalem; they praised them for it, and wished them all happiness and prosperity, since they denied themselves of ease and profit for the sake of the public good; and it is this which makes the difference between the list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in **1Ch 9:2** &c. and this here, that takes in all that settled there, whether voluntarily or by lot; this only such as were fixed by the lot, and of them only those who were of greatest note and esteem, as Jarchi observes, and so it follows.

Nehemiah 11:3

Ver. 3. Now these are the chief of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem,.... That is, of Judea, reduced to a province by the king of Babylon, and now a province of the Persian monarchy:

but in the cities of Judah dwelt everyone in his possession in their cities; in which they or their ancestors had formerly dwelt: to wit, Israel: the people in general of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and such of the other tribes that returned with them:

the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants; of whom see **Ezr 2:55**.

Nehemiah 11:4

Ver. 4. And at Jerusalem dwelt certain of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin,.... It belonging partly to one tribe and partly to the other, and so inhabited by both, as it originally was,
Jos 15:63

of the children of Judah; Athaiah; called Uthai, **1Ch 9:4** whose lineage is traced through Uzziah, Zechariah, Amariah, Shephatiah, Mahalaleel,

of the children of Perez; a son of Judah, see **1Ch 9:4**.

Nehemiah 11:5

Ver. 5. And Maaseiah,.... Who seems to be the same with Asaiah, **1Ch 9:5** and whose genealogy is carried up through Baruch, Colhozeh, Hazaiah, Adaiah, Joiarib, Zechariah, to Shiloni; perhaps the same with Shelah, another son of Judah, see **1Ch 9:5**.

Nehemiah 11:6

Ver. 6. All the sons of Perez that dwelt at Jerusalem were four hundred threescore and eight valiant men. And so well qualified to defend the city against its enemies.

Nehemiah 11:7

Ver. 7. And these are the sons of Benjamin,.... That were of that tribe, and inhabited Jerusalem, namely, that follow:

Sallu the son of Meshullam; who from him is traced up through Joed, Pedaiah, Kolaiah, Maaseiah, Ithiel, to Jesaiah.

Nehemiah 11:8

Ver. 8. And after him,.... That is, Sallu: were Gabbai and Sallai; in all nine hundred and twenty eight; there were more of the tribe of Benjamin than of the tribe of Judah, they having perhaps a greater share in the city, or were better disposed to dwell in it.

Nehemiah 11:9

Ver. 9. And Joel the son of Zichri was their overseer,.... Or chief governor of the city:

and Judah the son of Senuah was second over the city; or the deputy governor of it; so Pitholaus is called an under governor in Jerusalem by Josephus {l}

{l} Antiqu. l. 14. c. 6. sect. 1.

Nehemiah 11:10

Ver. 10,11 Of the priests,.... Who dwelt in Jerusalem, of whom the same account is given in these two verses as in **1Ch 9:10**, only Seraiah here is called Azariah there.

Nehemiah 11:11

Ver. 11 See Gill on "Ne 11:10".

Nehemiah 11:12

Ver. 12. And their brethren that did the work of the house were eight hundred twenty and two,.... That offered the sacrifices, burnt incense, set on the shewbread, lighted the lamps, &c.

and Adaiah the son of Jeroham; see 1Ch 9:12 whose genealogy is traced here through Pelaliah, Amzi, Zechariah, Pashur, to Malchiah.

Nehemiah 11:13

Ver. 13. And his brethren, chief of the fathers, two hundred forty and two,.... That is, the brethren or relations of Adaiah:

and Amashai; called Maasiai, 1Ch 9:12, whose lineage is traced here through Azareel, Ahasai, Meshillemoth, to Immer.

Nehemiah 11:14

Ver. 14. And their brethren, mighty men of valour, an hundred twenty and eight,.... The brethren of Adaiah and Amashai, who were able men to do the work of their office as priests, and men of courage to fight the enemy, and defend the city upon occasion:

and their overseer was Zabdiel, the son of one of the great men; or the son of Hagedolim, or Gedolim, as some, who take it to be the proper name of a man.

Nehemiah 11:15

Ver. 15. Also of the Levites,.... Who dwelt in Jerusalem:

Shemaiah the son of Hashub: traced from him through Azrikam and Hashabiah to Bunni; these were of the sons of Merari, the third son of Levi, see 1Ch 9:14.

Nehemiah 11:16

Ver. 16. And Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief of the Levites,.... Along with Shemaiah; these had

the oversight of the outward business of the house of God: who had the care of the repairs of the temple, and of getting in the wood for the altar, as Jarchi, and collecting the third part of the shekel, to purchase things with for the use of the temple.

Nehemiah 11:17

Ver. 17. And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph,.... Zabdi is called Zichri in **1Ch 9:15**

was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer: he was the precentor, or led the song at the time of the daily sacrifice, in which prayer was also made, as in many of the songs, hymns, and psalms of David:

and Bakbukiah the second among his brethren; he was the next singer, or deputy to Mattaniah; perhaps the same that is called Bakbakkar, **1Ch 9:15**

and Abda the son of Shammua; called Obadiah the son of Shemaiah, **1Ch 9:16**

the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun: one of the three principal singers.

Nehemiah 11:18

Ver. 18. All the Levites in the holy city were two hundred fourscore and four. Who had their residence there, Ne 11:1.

Nehemiah 11:19

Ver. 19. Moreover, the porters, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept the gates, were one hundred and seventy two. Of whom see **1Ch 9:17**.

Nehemiah 11:20

Ver. 20. And the residue of Israel, of the priests and the Levites,..... All of them, besides those that dwelt at Jerusalem: were in all the cities of Judah, everyone in his inheritance; the Israelites in the cities, houses, and estates enjoyed by their ancestors, and the priests and Levites in the cities given out of the several tribes.

Nehemiah 11:21

Ver. 21. But the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel,.... An high place or tower on the wall of Jerusalem, see 2Ch 27:3,

and Ziha, and Gispa, were over the Nethinims; had the oversight of them, and took care that they did their work; they were such themselves, but the principal of them, see **Ezr 2:43**.

Nehemiah 11:22

Ver. 22. The overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem was Uzzi, the son of Bani,.... He was the supervisor of them, that looked after them that they did their work in ministering to the priests, as they had occasion for them; this man's genealogy is further traced through Hashabiah and Mattaniah, to Micha the son of Asaph, Ne 11:17,

of the sons of Asaph, the singers were over the business of the house of God; which, according to Jarchi, was to take care of the repairs of the temple and other things; but one would think rather that part of the service of the house which lay in singing the songs of it is respected.

Nehemiah 11:23

Ver. 23. For it was the king's commandment concerning them,.... Either of King David as some, see Ne 12:24 or rather of the king of Persia:

that a certain portion should be for the singers, due for every day; he settled a daily salary for them, to be paid out of his treasury; having perhaps a peculiar respect for such sort of men, being a lover of music, by means of which they had a settled habitation in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 11:24

Ver. 24. And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of Zerah, the son of Judah,.... The twin brother of Pharez,
Ge 38:30 was

at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people; to speak for them to the king, as Jarchi; when they had a favour to ask of him, a petition to present to him, he delivered it for them, and by him the king returned the answer.

Nehemiah 11:25

Ver. 25. And for the villages, with their fields,.... The cities and villages in the country, an account of the inhabitants of them next follows:

some of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjatharba, and in the villages thereof; the same with Hebron, Jos 15:54

and at Dibon; the same with Dimonah, Jos 15:22

and at Jekabzeel, and in the villages thereof; the same with Kabzeel, one of the uttermost cities of the tribe of Judah southward,
Jos 15:21, of which city was Benaiah, one of David's worthies,
2Sa 23:20, from hence to the end of Ne 11:30 mention is made of various cities and towns, in the tribe of Judah, inhabited by the men of it, which are to be met with in Jos 15:1 excepting Jeshua and Mekonah, Ne 11:26, of which we nowhere else read.

Nehemiah 11:26

Ver. 26. See Gill on "Ne 11:25"

Nehemiah 11:27

Ver. 27. See Gill on "Ne 11:25"

Nehemiah 11:28

Ver. 28. See Gill on "Ne 11:25"

Nehemiah 11:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "Ne 11:25"

Nehemiah 11:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "Ne 11:25"

Nehemiah 11:31

Ver. 31. The children also of Benjamin, from Geba, dwelt at Michmash,.... Geba was a city on the southern border of Benjamin, Jos 18:24 and Michmash on the northern, of which see 1Sa 13:2 in this and the four following verses are the names of several cities in the tribe of Benjamin, inhabited by the men of that tribe, as Alia, the same with Ai, that lay on the east of Bethel, here also mentioned, see **Jos 7:2** Anathoth, the birth place of Jeremiah the prophet, **Jer 1:1**. Nob, a city of the priests, 1Sa 21:1. Ananiah is nowhere else mentioned; Hazor is to be distinguished from another of this name in the tribe of Naphtali, Jos 19:36. Ramah, a place well known in Benjamin, Jos 18:25. Gittaim, of which see **2Sa 4:3**. Hadid, the same with Adida, which lay in a plain,

"Simon also set up Adida in Sephela, and made it strong with gates and bars." (1 Maccabees 12:38)

Zeboim, a valley of this name, is read in 1Sa 13:18. Neballat we read of nowhere else; of Lod and Ono, see **1Ch 8:12** and the valley of craftsmen, or Chorasin, **1Ch 4:14**.

Nehemiah 11:32

Ver. 32. See Gill on "Ne 11:31".

Nehemiah 11:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "Ne 11:31".

Nehemiah 11:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "Ne 11:31".

Nehemiah 11:35

Ver. 35. See Gill on "Ne 10:31".

Nehemiah 11:36

Ver. 36. And of the Levites were divisions in Judah, and in Benjamin. They were scattered about, some here and some there, in both these tribes, for the better instruction of the people.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Nehemiah 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 12

This chapter gives an account of the chief of the priests and Levites in the days of Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Joiakim, Eliashib, and Nehemiah, Ne 12:1, of the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, and of the joy expressed on that occasion, Ne 12:27, and of the appointment of some persons over the treasuries for the priests, Levites, singers, and porters, Ne 12:44.

Ver. 1. Now these are the priests and the Levites that went up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua,.... Who went up from the captivity in Babylon to Jerusalem with them; the one was the prince, the other the high priest, the same with Joshua the high priest, **Zec 3:1**, the names of the priests are given in this and the six following verses:

Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra; not Jeremiah the prophet, who cannot be thought to live so long as through the captivity; but Ezra may be Ezra the priest and scribe, who might come up with Zerubbabel to Jerusalem, and return to

Babylon again, and from thence come again as he did, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, **Ezr 7:1**, though this by some {m} is not thought very probable.

{m} Vid. Rainold de Lib. Apocryph. praelect. 153. p. 402, &c.

Nehemiah 12:2

Ver. 2-7. Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,.... Whose names are among the sealers of the covenant, Ne 10:3. Malluch is afterwards called Melicu, Ne 12:14,

Shechaniah, called Shebaniah, Ne 12:14 and so in Ne 10:4

Rehum, who, by transposition of letters, is Harim, Ne 12:15, and so in Ne 10:5.

Meremoth, called Meraioth, Ne 12:15,

Iddo, Ginnetho, read Ginnethon, Ne 12:16 so in Ne 10:6.

Abijah; there was a course of a priest of this name, of which Zechariah the father of John the Baptist was, **Lu 1:5**.

Miamin, Maadiah, Bilgah; the first two are called Miniamin and Moadiah, Ne 12:17.

Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah, Sallu; called Sallai, Ne 12:20.

Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah these were the chief of the priests, and of their brethren, in the days of Jeshua; heads of courses; or, however, priests of the greatest note in the times of Jeshua the high priest.

Nehemiah 12:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "Ne 12:2".

Nehemiah 12:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "Ne 12:2".

Nehemiah 12:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "Ne 12:2".

Nehemiah 12:6

Ver. 6. See Gill on "Ne 12:2".

Nehemiah 12:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "Ne 12:2"

Nehemiah 12:8

Ver. 8. Moreover the Levites,.... Who lived in the same times: were

Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah; most of these are made mention of in **Ne 8:7**, the last of them is said to be

over the thanksgiving, he and his brethren; he was the precentor, or had the directing and conducting of the songs of the temple, particularly the thanksgiving song at the daily sacrifices; Jarchi takes the word here used to be the name of a musical instrument.

Nehemiah 12:9

Ver. 9. Also Bakbukiah and Unni,.... Two other Levites; the first is mentioned in Ne 11:17,

their brethren, were over against them in the watches; the Levites were divided into twenty four wards, and these were placed one against another, 1Ch 23:6.

Nehemiah 12:10

Ver. 10,11. And Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also begat Eliashib, and Eliashib begot Joiada, and Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begot Jaddua. This is an account of the high priests in succession in the second temple, the first six of them; and if Jaddua, the last mentioned, is the same with Jaddus, as Josephus {n} supposes, who went forth in his pontifical robes to meet Alexander the great returning from his conquests of Tyre and Gaza, from whom he obtained many favours, and whom he had into the temple, and showed him the prophecy of Daniel concerning himself; this paragraph must be written by another hand, and not Nehemiah, since it can hardly be thought he should live so long; and as to his times, this account of him, or the history of his own times, seems not to have gone through the priesthood of Eliashib, the third of those high priests, see Ne 13:28, and to reach no further than to the thirty second of Darius Hystaspis, Ne 13:6 this fragment therefore might be inserted by some godly man under a divine direction in later times, as we have several insertions in the books of Moses and Joshua of the like kind; and particularly in **1Ch 3:19** where the genealogy of Zerubbabel is carried down beyond the times of the Maccabees, and so could not be placed there by Ezra.

{n} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 8. sect. 5.

Nehemiah 12:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "Ne 12:10".

Nehemiah 12:12

Ver. 12-21. And in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers,.... This was the son and successor of Jeshua, or Joshua, the first high priest of the second temple; the principal men of the priesthood in his time were as follow, and who were the sons, or however the descendants of the priests in the time of his father before mentioned: these were Meraiah, Hananiah, Meshullam, Jehohanan, Jonathan, Joseph, Adna, Helkai, Zechariah, (the prophet of that name,) Meshullam, Zichri, Piltai, Shammua, Jehonathan, Mattenai, Uzzi, Kallai, Eber, Hashabiah, Nethaneel; in all twenty, whereas there are twenty two named, as in his father's days, there being no sons or descendants from two of them, namely, Hattush and Miamin.

Nehemiah 12:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "Ne 12:12"

Nehemiah 12:14

Ver. 14. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

Nehemiah 12:15

Ver. 15. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

Nehemiah 12:16

Ver. 16. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

Nehemiah 12:17

Ver. 17. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

Nehemiah 12:18

Ver. 18. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

Nehemiah 12:19

Ver. 19. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

Nehemiah 12:20

Ver. 20. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

Nehemiah 12:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Ne 12:12".

Nehemiah 12:22

Ver. 22. The Levites, in the days of Eliashib,.... The third priest of the second temple:

Joiada; he was the son of Eliashib, and the fourth high priest:

and Johanan; the same with Jonathan, Ne 12:11 and whom Josephus {o} also calls Joannes:

and Jaddua; the same as in Ne 12:10 in the days of each of these were

recorded chief of the fathers; the principal men among the Levites:

also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian; thought to be Darius Codomannus, the last king of the Persian monarchy, whom Alexander conquered; and if so, this verse must be inserted after the death of Nehemiah, and as the next verse also seems to be; for these two verses interrupt the natural order of the relation: an account is given of the priests in the times of Joiakim, Ne 12:12, these verses being inserted, the account goes on, Ne 12:24, &c. of the chief of the Levites in the times of Joiakim only.

{o} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 7. sect. 1.

Nehemiah 12:23

Ver. 23. The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, were written in the book of the chronicles,.... Some think this refers to **1Ch 9:14**, &c.

until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib; from whence Dr. Lightfoot {p} concludes, that the Chronicles were written by Ezra in the times of this Johanan.

{p} Works, vol. 1. p. 146.

Nehemiah 12:24

Ver. 24. And the chief of the Levites,.... Here the thread of the history of Nehemiah, interrupted by the insertion of the two preceding verses, is carried from the priests to the Levites in the times of the third high priest:

Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel; these were singers, since it follows:

with their brethren over against them, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, ward over against ward; which office of theirs they performed by turns in courses, as David under a divine direction ordered, see
1Ch 23:5.

Nehemiah 12:25

Ver. 25. Mattaniah, and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub, were porters,.... At the gates of the temple, see **1Ch 9:15**,

keeping the ward, at the thresholds of the gates; of the temple, where they stood and watched; or "at the collection of the gates", meaning either where the people were gathered together, or where money gathered was laid up; and so some render it, "the treasuries of the gates": unless a place called Asuppim should be meant, 1Ch 26:15.

Nehemiah 12:26

Ver. 26. These were in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak,.... Who was high priest in Babylon, and whose grandson was now high priest in the time referred to:

and in the days of Nehemiah the governor; the writer of this book:

and of Ezra the priest, the scribe; who was contemporary with him.

Nehemiah 12:27

Ver. 27. And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem,.... In which many priests and Levites assisted, and seems to be the reason of the above account of them; the dedication of the wall takes in the whole city, gates, and houses, Ne 12:30, and if a new house was to be dedicated, much more a new city, and especially the holy city, in which stood the temple of the Lord, see De 20:5, this dedication was made by prayer and songs of praise, as follow, and no doubt by sacrifices, and was kept as a festival; and indeed, according to the Jewish writers {q}, it was annually observed on the seventh of Elul, or August; it was on the twenty fifth of that month that the wall was finished, **Ne 6:15**, but the gates were not set up, and all things for the dedication were not ready till Elul, or August, following; and then all being finished, they made and served the seventh of that month as a festival:

they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness; to assist in the solemnity of the day both with vocal and instrumental music, as follows:

both with thanksgiving and with singing; with songs of praise and thankfulness vocally, that they had been able, notwithstanding all the malice of their enemies, to build the wall in so short a time; or with a song, perhaps the thirtieth psalm was sung on this occasion:

with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps; some playing on one, and some on another, which were the three principal instruments of music used by them, see 1Ch 15:16.

{q} Megillath Thainith, c. 3. apud Selden. de Synedr. l. 3. c. 13. sect. 12.

Nehemiah 12:28

Ver. 28. And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together,.... Such of the Levites that were singers, and their sons that were trained up as such:

both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem the plain of Jordan by Jericho, and the plain of Saron and Lydda:

and from the villages of Netophathi: see **1Ch 9:16**, here they dwelt, when not in their courses, to minister in the temple; but on this public occasion were summoned together.

Nehemiah 12:29

Ver. 29. Also from the house of Gilgal,.... Which likewise was in a champaign country in the plains of Jericho, De 11:30,

and out of the fields of Geba; which was a Levitical city in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 21:17

and Azmaveth; the same with Bethazmaveth, **Ne 7:28** where it follows Anathoth and Netophah, as it does in **Ezr 2:24**, and was very probably in the tribe of Benjamin:

for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem; that they might be near it, to do their duty when required; by which it appears that the said places were near Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 12:30

Ver. 30. And the priests and the Levites purified themselves,.... By washing their bodies and their clothes, perhaps by sprinkling the water of purification on them, see **Nu 8:6**.

Nehemiah 12:31

Ver. 31. Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall,.... Which was so broad as to walk upon it, and there was a procession of the princes on it at its dedication, and here is described the manner of it; the princes of Benjamin must be included here:

and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks; he divided the people who were met together to praise God on this occasion into two companies: whereof

one went on the right hand upon the wall; that is, on the southern part of it:

towards the dung gate; of which see **Ne 2:13** some Jewish writers, as Jarchi and Ben Melech, give a different sense of twdwt ytv, which we render "two companies", and take them to be two eucharistical loaves of leavened bread, with which a rite or ceremony was performed at the enlargement of a court or city; at the utmost boundary of which those were carried, and one was eaten and the other burnt {r}; which rite is thus described by Maimonides {s},

"how do they add to a city? the sanhedrim make two eucharistical sacrifices, and they take the leavened bread in them, and the sanhedrim go after the two eucharistical sacrifices, which follow one another, and they stand with harps, and psalteries, and cymbals, at every corner and at every stone in Jerusalem, and say, I will extol thee, for thou hast lifted up, &c. (#Ps 30:1) until they come to the end of the place they consecrate, there they stand and eat the thanksgiving loaf, one of the two, and the other is burnt."

{r} Miss. Shebuot, c. 2. sect. 2. & Maimon, & Bartenora in ib. {s} Hilchot, Beth-habechirah, c. 6. sect. 12. Vid. Selden. de Synedr. l. 3. c. 13. sect. 6.

Nehemiah 12:32

Ver. 32. And after them went Hoshaiah, and half of the princes of Judah. The other half of them, with Hoshaiah at the head of them.

Nehemiah 12:33

Ver. 33. And Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam. Not Ezra the priest and the scribe, for he has another place assigned him in this procession, Ne 12:36, but this seems to be one of the princes.

Nehemiah 12:34

Ver. 34. Judah and Benjamin,.... Not the tribes, but the names of the two princes, as Jarchi:

and Shemaiah and Jeremiah; who were two others.

Nehemiah 12:35

Ver. 35. And certain of the priests' sons with trumpets,.... To blow with on this occasion; for these the priests sounded: namely, Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph; not the Levite, but a priest of this name.

Nehemiah 12:36

Ver. 36. And his brethren,.... The brethren of Zechariah, the priest's son, and such are those that follow:

Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God; which were invented by him, and ordered by him to be used in religious service, under the divine direction:

and Ezra the scribe before them; for he being a priest also, and a man of great eminence, was placed at the head of them in this procession.

Nehemiah 12:37

Ver. 37. And at the fountain gate, which was over against them,.... Of which see **Ne 2:14** and which was to the south of the dung gate:

they went up; that is, one of the two companies, that which took to the right on the wall, Ne 12:31 with which these words are to be connected:

by the stairs of the city of David; which went up to the city of Zion, built on an eminence:

at the going up of the wall, above the house of David; where the wall was higher, and there was an ascent to it:

even unto the water gate eastward; of which see **Ne 3:26** turning from the south to the east, and so drew nigh the temple.

Nehemiah 12:38

Ver. 38. And the other company of them that gave thanks went over against them,.... On the left hand, on the northern part of the wall:

and I after them; Nehemiah, he brought up the rear of his company, as Ezra led the van of his:

and the half of the people upon the wall; the chief of them, for all could not walk upon it:

from beyond the tower of the furnaces; where they baked their bread, or their bricks, see **Ne 3:11**,

even unto the broad wall; where the wall was broader than common, for some reason or another, see **Ne 3:8**.

Nehemiah 12:39

Ver. 39. And from above the gate of Ephraim,.... The gate which led to the tribe of Ephraim, where that tribe formerly dwelt, see **Ne 8:16**

and above the old gate; of which mention is made, **Ne 3:6**

and above the fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate; of all which see **Ne 3:1**, and they stood still in the prison gate; which was not a gate of the city, but of the court of the prison, **Ne 3:25**, which was near both the king's palace and the temple, see Jer 20:1.

Nehemiah 12:40

Ver. 40. So stood the two companies of them that gave thanks in the house of God,.... Having made their procession on the wall in different ways, they met in the temple, that is, in the great court of it, for no other would hold them:

and I, and the half of the rulers with me; Nehemiah, and the other half with Hoshaiah, Ne 12:32.

Nehemiah 12:41

Ver. 41. And the priests,.... They stood there also, whose names follow:

Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; to sound on this occasion.

Nehemiah 12:42

Ver. 42. And Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer,.... These seem to be all priests that blew the trumpets:

and the singers sang loud, with Jezrahiah their overseer; these were the Levites, that sung the songs of praise vocally, and raised their voices very high, Jezrahiah being precentor, who led the tune, as well as played on instruments.

Nehemiah 12:43

Ver. 43. Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced,.... Or many sacrifices, as Ben Melech interprets it; and these perhaps of the larger sort of cattle, oxen; and which, at least many of them, being peace offerings, the people feasted on them, so that it was a festival day:

for God had made them rejoice with great joy; on account of the wall being set up all around, and so were in greater safety from their enemies:

the wives also and the children rejoiced; while the priests blew the trumpets, and the singers sung and played on their instruments, the women and children gave loud shouts for joy:

so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off; as at the laying of the foundation of the temple, **Ezr 3:13**.

Nehemiah 12:44

Ver. 44. And at that time were some appointed over the chamber for the treasuries,.... On the selfsame day the dedication was; while the people were in a good disposition, and a suitable frame for such service, certain persons from among the priests were appointed to be overseers of the chambers fixed upon for treasuries, to lay up safe in them the following things, and take care of them, that they were put to the use for which they were designed:

for the offerings, for the first fruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites; what by the law of God were assigned them for their maintenance, and which the people had lately bound themselves to bring in, Ne 10:35,

for Judah rejoiced for the priests, and for the Levites that waited; at the temple, and performed their services there; they were so pleased with their ministrations that day, that they were determined to take care of them, and provide well for them, and that nothing should be wanting to them, enjoined by the law of God, and that they might not be obliged to dwell in fields and villages for the sake of their living,
Ne 12:28.

Nehemiah 12:45

Ver. 45. And both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and the ward of their purification,.... The singers kept their turns in course in the temple, and were not wanting to officiate on all occasions, besides morning and evening services; and the porters they diligently kept the gates of the temple, that no impure person or thing in a ceremonial sense entered:

according to the commandment of David, and Solomon his son; who made very good rules and orders relative to the better and more regular performance of service by them; see 1Ch 25:1.

Nehemiah 12:46

Ver. 46. For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers,.... Persons appointed over the rest to instruct them, and see that they did their work aright, as besides Asaph, Haman, and Jeduthun, and their sons, 1Ch 25:2

and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God; such were made by them, some under divine inspiration, which bear the names of David and Asaph, as may be observed in the book of Psalms.

Nehemiah 12:47

Ver. 47. And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters every day his portion,.... While these two men governed they did their duty, and punctually paid the Levites their dues at the proper season:

and they sanctified holy things unto the Levites; set them apart for their use, and brought them to them, their offerings, firstfruits, and tithes: and the Levites sanctified them unto the children of Aaron; the Levites set apart the tenth part of the tithes, and delivered them to the priests, and so each had what belonged to them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Nehemiah 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO NEHEMIAH 13

This chapter relates the reformation of various abuses crept in among the Jews by Nehemiah, who removed the Moabites and Ammonites, mixed with them, Ne 13:1, threw the household goods of Tobiah out of a chamber of the temple, and restored it to its former use, Ne 13:4, took care that the Levites had their portion given them which had been kept from them, Ne 13:10 prevented the profanation of the sabbath by selling goods on that day, Ne 13:15, and put a stop to the marrying of strange wives, which had prevailed again among them, Ne 13:23.

Ver. 1. On that day,.... Not when the wall of the city was dedicated, nor quickly after; for it cannot be thought that people should be so corrupted so soon as this chapter shows; but when Nehemiah had governed them twelve years, and had been at Babylon, and was returned again, as appears from Ne 13:6, compared with **Ne 2:1**,

they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; for from the time of the reading of the law by Ezra, **Ne 8:1** it became a custom to read the law publicly:

and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of the Lord; that is, be admitted to marry with any of the people of Israel; See Gill on "De 23:3".

Nehemiah 13:2

Ver. 2. Because they met not the children of Israel with bread,.... The same reason is given, and what follows in this verse is observed in
De 23:4;
See Gill on "De 23:4" See Gill on "De 23:5".

Nehemiah 13:3

Ver. 3. Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law,.... Or the law concerning the Ammonite and the Moabite, and which included other nations also, and forbad marriage with them:

that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude; all of these, and other nations, they had contracted affinity with.

Nehemiah 13:4

Ver. 4. And before this,.... Before the above law was read, and observed and acted upon:

Eliashib the priest; whom some take to be a common priest; so Bishop Usher {a}; but he seems rather to be the high priest, by comparing it with Ne 13:28,

having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God; which has led some to the notion of his being a common priest; but chamber may be put for chambers, and those for the whole house or temple, which the high priest had the greatest concern in, and oversight of:

was allied to Tobiah; the servant and Ammonite, an inveterate enemy of the Jews, **Ne 2:10**, having married a daughter of Shecaniah, and his son a daughter of Meshullam, who were both priests, and so as it seems related to Eliashib, **Ne 6:18**.

{a} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 200.

Nehemiah 13:5

Ver. 5. And he had prepared for him a great chamber,.... In the temple, by throwing together several chambers, as Piscator observes:

where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and to the singers, and the porters, and the offerings of the priests; see Ne 10:37.

Nehemiah 13:6

Ver. 6. But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem,.... Nehemiah, who was absent all the while these things were done by Eliashib, or otherwise they would not have been suffered:

for in the thirty second year of Artaxerxes, king of Babylon, came I unto the king from Jerusalem; after he had governed there twelve years, to whom he came to give an account of affairs there; this was not Xerxes, as some {b} have thought, for he reigned but twenty one years; but Darius Hystaspis, who reigned thirty six years, according to Ptolemy's canon, and with which Herodotus {c} agrees; he is called king of Babylon, because that, with the whole empire, was in the hands of the king of Persia, as it had been from the times of Cyrus:

and after certain days obtained I leave of the king; to return to Jerusalem again; not after five years, as Dr. Prideaux {d} thinks; for it is not likely that Nehemiah would stay so long ere he asked leave of the king to return to Jerusalem, which was so much his care, and on whose prosperity his heart was so much set; rather at most it was but a full year he stayed ere he got leave to return, as Vatablus and Piscator interpret it; in which sense the phrase of certain days is used in Le 25:29, and in other places quoted by the last mentioned interpreter.

{b} Apud Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 8. 2. {c} Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 1. {d} Connect. par. 1. p. 397.

Nehemiah 13:7

Ver. 7. And I came to Jerusalem,.... Through the king's leave, and with a commission from him:

and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah; was informed of the mal-administration of his office:

in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God; whereby it was profaned and polluted.

Nehemiah 13:8

Ver. 8. And it grieved me sore,.... That such a sacred place should be converted to common use, and to that of an Heathen, and of an enemy to the Jews and their religion:

therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber; as being chief magistrate, and acting by commission under the king of Persia, and to regulate everything amiss, according to the Jewish laws, as well as those of the king, his power being, no doubt, as large as Ezra's, **Ezr 7:25**, by "household stuff" is meant what is movable in the house, as chairs, tables, vessels for dressing, caring, drinking, &c. there are various opinions about this with the ancients {e}.

{e} Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 19.

Nehemiah 13:9

Ver. 9. Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers,.... By which it appears there were more than one, or that several were thrown into one; which was done not only by washing them, but as this was a ceremonial uncleanness, contracted by the habitation of an Heathen in them, their purification might be by the water of separation, Nu 19:9

and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense; replaced them where they were before.

Nehemiah 13:10

Ver. 10. And I perceived that the portion of the Levites had not been given them,.... The tithes, being removed to some other place, might be converted to another use; or the people, seeing what was done by Eliashib, neglected to bring them in, as judging they would not be properly disposed of; and besides, the Levites had deserted their station upon this:

for the Levites and the singers that did the work were fled everyone to his field; to look after their country farms, or to get their living by agriculture, since there was no care taken of them at Jerusalem; see Ne 12:28.

Nehemiah 13:11

Ver. 11. Then I contended with the rulers;.... The ecclesiastical rulers, the priests that were appointed over those chambers, Ne 12:44, he expostulated with them warmly, and chode them severely for their conduct:

and said, why is the house of God forsaken? no care being taken of the maintenance of the ministers of it, contrary to the promise made Ne 10:37,

and I gathered them together; the Levites and singers that were dispersed in the countries round about:

and set them in their place; in the temple, and in the course of their ministry there.

Nehemiah 13:12

Ver. 12. Then brought all Judah the tithe of corn, and the new wine, and the oil, into the treasuries. When they saw a reformation made, and things were going in their proper channel, and a right use would be made of their tithes, these given to proper persons, who were now reinstated in their office.

Nehemiah 13:13

Ver. 13. And I made treasurers over the treasuries,.... New ones, since the others appointed were either dead or unfaithful to their trust, Ne 12:44, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe; who also was a priest, as Ezra was both priest and scribe; one that besides his office as a priest was expert in the law, and capable of instructing others:

and of the Levites, Pedaiah, and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah, for they were counted faithful; had a good report of all that knew them, for men of fidelity and uprightness, and so fit for such a trust:

and their office was to distribute unto their brethren; to deliver to them their share in the tithes, first fruits, &c.

Nehemiah 13:14

Ver. 14. Remember me, O my God, concerning this,.... Not in a way of strict justice, as if he thought he merited anything at the hand of God for what he had done; but in a way of grace and mercy, that he would graciously accept thereof, as done for the honour of his name, and overlook all failings and infirmities therein, see Ne 13:22

and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof; for the support of the worship of God in the temple, and for the regulating of the wards and courses in it, both priests and Levites, and for the maintenance of them; which being done from a right principle, love to God, and with a right view, the glory of his name, might be truly reckoned good works: and which he desires might not be wiped or blotted out of the book of his remembrance, see **Ho 6:10**.

Nehemiah 13:15

Ver. 15. In those days saw I in Judah some treading winepresses on the sabbath,.... Which was not a work of necessity, and so did not drive away the sabbath, as the Jews express themselves, but might have been deferred to another day:

and bringing in sheaves; of wheat, it being the time of wheat harvest:

and lading asses; with goods to be carried from place to place, and sold on that day; this was contrary to the express law, for the ass was to rest, **De 5:14**, as also wine, grapes, and figs: it being the time of ingathering the fruits of the earth:

and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day; besides those borne on asses, others were carried on men's shoulders; this was contrary to the law of the sabbath, which required that both men and beasts should have rest:

and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals; that is, the sabbath day; and if it was not lawful to sell food, then not anything else; so far from it, that according to the Jewish canons {f}, such that were in partnership might not discourse together of what they should sell or buy on the morrow, the day after the sabbath; and so far from gathering and carrying grapes and figs, that a man might not go into his gardens and fields to see what were wanting, or how the fruits were: now Nehemiah admonished the Jews of these evils they committed, and testified against them as breakers of the law, and called heaven and earth to testify against them, should they go on to violate it.

{f} Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 24. sect. 1, 2.

Nehemiah 13:16

Ver. 16. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish,.... From Tyre and Zidon, and the parts adjacent: these they brought from Joppa, and from thence to Jerusalem, and had houses or lodgings near the fish gate or fish market, where they sold them:

and all manner of ware; or merchandise, which, being a trading city, they had from all nations:

and sold on the sabbath day unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem; or even in Jerusalem, the holy city, where stood the temple, and where the worship of God was kept, and where the magistrates lived, who should have been terrors to evildoers: indeed, the law of the sabbath was not binding on these Tyrians, but then they tempted the Jews to break it, by bringing their ware to sell.

Nehemiah 13:17

Ver. 17. Then I contended with the nobles,.... The rulers of the city, the civil magistrates, sharply reproved them for their neglect of duty:

and said unto them, what evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? by suffering servile works to be done in it, and things sold on it.

Nehemiah 13:18

Ver. 18. Did not your fathers thus,.... Profane the sabbath in like manner:

and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon our city? suffered them to be carried captive into a strange land, and their city destroyed for their sins, and for this of sabbath breaking among the rest, see Jer 17:21,

yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath; additional judgments to those that had been already upon them for the same evil with others.

Nehemiah 13:19

Ver. 19. And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath,.... Or "were shaded" {g}; that is, as Jarchi interprets it, when the shadows of the eve of the sabbath were stretched out upon the gates; the sabbath did not begin till sun setting, and the stars appeared; but before that, as the sun was declining, the shadows through the houses in Jerusalem, and mountains about it, spread themselves over the gates: and when it was near dusk, and as soon as it was so,

I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath; until sun setting the next day:

and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should be burden brought in on the sabbath day; the porters being not to be trusted, being liable to be bribed and corrupted, which he knew his servants were not; and therefore, since it might be necessary on a few occasions to open the gates to let some persons in and out, and especially such who dwelt near, and came to worship, he placed his servants there, to take care that none were admitted that had any burdens upon them.

{g} wllu "obumbratae", Pagninus, Montanus; "obumbrarentur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Rambachius; "incidentibus umbris", Tigurine version.

Nehemiah 13:20

Ver. 20. For the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware,.... The Tyrians particularly, Ne 13:16 lodged without Jerusalem once or twice; one sabbath day or two, not being able to get into the city, such strict watch and care being taken to keep the gates shut; this they did, hoping the Jews would come out to them and buy their goods, though they were not admitted to bring them within the city.

Nehemiah 13:21

Ver. 21. Then I testified against them,.... Against their continuance there, and threatened them, and called heaven and earth to witness what he would do to them, if they did not depart:

why lodge ye about the wall? of the city, waiting an opportunity to get in, and tempting the Jews to come out and buy their ware:

if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you; beat them, or slay them, at least imprison them:

from that time forth came they no more on the sabbath; finding there was no likelihood of getting into the city, and that they were liable to be taken up and punished.

Nehemiah 13:22

Ver. 22. And I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves,.... From all ceremonial uncleanness, that they might be fit in a ceremonial sense to perform the duties of the office on the sabbath day:

and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day; not the gates of the city, his servants were placed there, nor was this the work of the Levites, and much less did this require a particular purification to fit for it;

but the gates of the temple, that no impure person might enter there; and on that day it required the greater diligence, because of the number of people that came to worship:

remember me, O my God, concerning this also; with respect to his care to have the sabbath kept holy, as well as his concern for the honour of the house of God, and the maintenance of his ministers, Ne 13:14,

and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy; he desired to be dealt with, not according to any merits of his own, but according to the abundant mercy of God; that he would kindly and graciously vouchsafe to accept any good that he had done for his mercy sake, and forgive whatever was amiss in him.

Nehemiah 13:23

Ver. 23. In those days also I saw Jews that married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab. Ashdod, or Azotus, as it is called in **Ac 8:40**, was one of the five cities of the Philistines; which, though none of the seven nations with whom marriage was forbid, yet it was very unfit and improper to marry with them, Jud 14:3. This place was a mart of the Arabians {h}, where they sold their goods, to which the Jews might resort, and thereby be ensnared into such marriages; and which with the Ammonites and Moabites were unlawful, Ne 13:1.

{h} Mela de Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 10.

Nehemiah 13:24

Ver. 24. And their children spoke half in the speech of Ashdod,.... Which they learned of their mothers, so that it was a mixed language they spoke, partly Jewish and partly Philistine; but some refer this not to their speech, but to the number of their children; that half of them, which Jarchi interprets many of them, spoke in the language of Ashdod, even as many as were most with their mothers, and chiefly brought up by them:

and could not speak in the Jews' language; not at all, or so much as to be understood well, which inclines to the last sense:

but according to the language of each people; their mothers were of, whether of Ashdod, or of Ammon, or of Moab.

Nehemiah 13:25

Ver. 25. And I contended with them,.... Argued with them, faithfully admonished them, and sharply reproved them:

and cursed them; assuring them that the curse of God would come upon them, unless they repented. Aben Ezra interprets it of excommunicating them, either with "Cherem" or "Niddui", which were two sorts of excommunication among the Jews; but it is a question whether as yet those were used by them:

and smote certain of them; ordered them to be beaten with rods or scourges, as transgressors of the law:

and plucked off their hair; or ordered it to be plucked off by the executioner that smote them; which sort of punishment, as it was painful, it was disgraceful and ignominious, see **Isa 1:6**,

and made them swear by God, saying, ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves; not intermarry with them; this they had sworn to before,
Ne 10:29.

Nehemiah 13:26

Ver. 26. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things?.... By marrying strange wives, by whom he was drawn into idolatry,
1Ki 11:3,

yet among many nations was there no king like him; as not for grandeur and riches, so not for wisdom, and yet was ensnared by his idolatrous wives:

who was beloved of God; alluding to his name Jedidiah, which signifies beloved of the Lord, 2Sa 12:24

and God made him king over all Israel; which was a proof of his love to him, and so he was under the greater obligation to serve him, and him only, and yet his heart, through his wives, was turned after other gods:

even him did outlandish women cause to sin; and if so great and wise a man was enticed by them to idolatry, much more may you, and therefore it was very dangerous to marry with them.

Nehemiah 13:27

Ver. 27. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil,.... To suffer it to be done, and connive at it, and not punish for it:

to transgress against our God; his law, his mind, and will:

in marrying strange wives? forbidden by him, **De 7:1**.

Nehemiah 13:28

Ver. 28. And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest,.... A grandson of the high priest; for the high priest here is Eliashib, according to our version, and not Joiada his son, according to Dr. Prideaux {i}; the person designed, Josephus {k} makes to be Manasseh, the brother of Jaddua the high priest: was

son in law to Sanballat the Horonite; married a daughter of his, who was the avowed enemy of the Jewish nation; and for whom, according to the same writer, Sanballat obtained leave of Alexander to build a temple on Mount Gerizim; but this is to protract the age of Nehemiah and Sanballat to too great a length; besides, Eliashib seems to have been now high priest, and not even his son Joiada, and much less Jaddua, a grandson of Joiada:

therefore I chased him from me; drove him from his court, suffered him not to minister at the altar; banished him from the city, as Jarchi, and even from the land of Judea.

{i} Connect. par. 1. p. 412. {k} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 8. sect. 2, 4.

Nehemiah 13:29

Ver. 29. Remember them, O my God,.... The priests, and punish them: because they have defiled the priesthood; by marrying strange wives, and rendering themselves unfit to officiate in it:

and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites; made with Levi, Aaron, and Phinehas, see Nu 24:11, of the corruption of which, complaint is made, **Mal 2:4**.

Nehemiah 13:30

Ver. 30. Thus cleansed I them from all strangers,.... Both people and priests from strange wives, obliging them to put them away, or flee their country:

and appointing the wards of the priests and the Levites, everyone in his business: to do the work of their office in their courses and turns.

Nehemiah 13:31

Ver. 31. And for the wood offering, at times appointed,.... Of which see Ne 10:34. Levites were appointed to receive the wood that was brought at the times and by the persons fixed, and lay it up in its proper place, and carry it to the altar when wanted:

and for the first fruits; to receive and take care of them, and distribute them to the persons to whom they belonged:

remember me, O my God, for good; to bless him with all good things, temporal and spiritual, to keep him faithful, to make him useful in church and state, and protect him from all his enemies: or rather this may respect what goes before, that as to the wood offering and the firstfruits, that God would graciously remember him as to them, since the one was as necessary to the altar as the other was to those that minister at it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Esther 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ESTHER

This book has its name from the person who is the principal subject of it; it is by Clemens of Alexandria {a} called the Book of Mordecai also; it is commonly called, in the Hebrew copies, "Megillah Esther", the Volume of Esther; and sometimes in the Jewish writings only "Megillah", by way of eminency, "the Volume". It was written, according to the Talmudists {b}, by the men of the great synagogue, composed by Ezra; and some think it was written by Ezra himself {c}; but Aben Ezra is of opinion it was written by Mordecai, since he was concerned in, and had perfect knowledge of, all things related in it; which is rejected by Spinosa {d}, who conceits that this, and the books of Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, were written by one and the same historian long after the times of Judas Maccabaeus: as to the canonical authority of it, it has been generally received by Jews and Christians; our wise men, says Maimonides {e}, openly and plainly affirm of the book of Esther, that it was dictated by the Holy Spirit; so Aben Ezra on **Es 6:6**, and he himself {f} affirms, that

"all the books of the prophets, and all the Hagiographa (or holy writings), shall cease in the days of the Messiah, except the volume of Esther; and, lo, that shall be as stable as the Pentateuch, and as the constitutions of the oral law, which shall never cease."

Though the versions of other books of Scripture might not be read in the synagogues, versions of this book might to those who did not understand Hebrew {g}; and so Luther {h} says, the Jews more esteem the book of Esther than any of the prophets. Whence Mr. Baxter {i} had that notion, I can not devise, that the Jews used to cast to the ground the book of Esther before they read it, because the name of God was not in it: nor is that any objection to its authenticity, since the hand and providence of God may be most clearly seen in it; in raising Esther to such grandeur, and that for the deliverance of the people of the Jews, and in counter working and bringing to nought the plots of their enemies, and in saving them: nor that it is not quoted in the New Testament; it is sufficient there is no disagreement between them, yea, an entire agreement, particularly in the account of the captivity of Jeconiah, which is expressed almost in the same words in **Es 2:6** as in **Mt 1:11**. It stands in Origen's catalogue {k} of the books of the Old Testament; nor is it any material objection that it appears not in the catalogue of Melito {l}, since in that list is comprehended under Ezra not Nehemiah only, but Esther also, which Jerom {m} mentions along with it. This book is not only of use to the Jews, as it shows the original and foundation of a feast of theirs, still kept up by them, the feast of Purim, and makes for the glory of their nation, and therefore it is no wonder it should be so highly esteemed by them; but serves to show the singular providence of God in taking care of his people in adversity, in humbling the proud, and exalting the lowly, and saving those that pray to him, and trust in him; it furnishes out various instructions in the conduct of the several persons herein mentioned; it is a history but of ten or eleven years at most, from the third of Ahasuerus, to the twelfth of his reign, **Es 1:3**.

{a} Stromat. l. 1. p. 329. {b} T. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. {c} August. de Civ. Dei, l. 18. c. 36. Isidor. Origin. l. 6. c. 2. {d} Tract. Theolog. Politic. c. 10. p. 189, &c. {e} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 45. {f} Hilchot Megillah, c. 2. sect. 18. {g} Misn. Megillah, c. 2. sect. 1. T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 18. 1. {h} Mensal. Colloqu. c. 31. p. 358. {i} The Saints Everlasting Rest, part 4. c. 3. sect. 1. {k} Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 25. {l} Apud ib. l. 4. c. 26. {m} Ad Domnion. & Rogat. tom. 3. fol. 7. F.

INTRODUCTION TO ESTHER 1

This chapter relates, how that Ahasuerus, a great king of Persia, made a feast, first for the grandees of his kingdom, and then for his people, as his queen did for the women, **Es 1:1**, who being sent for by him, and she refusing to come, was, by the advice of one of his counsellors, divorced from him, and an order made and published throughout his dominions, that every man should bear rule in his own house, **Es 1:10**.

Ver. 1. Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus,.... Who he was is not easy to say; almost all the kings of Persia are so named by one or another writer. He cannot be the Ahasuerus in **Da 9:1**, he was Astyages, the father of Cyaxares or Darius the Mede; but this must be one who had his royal palace in Shushan, which was never the royal city of the Medes, but of the Persians only; nor does he seem to be the Ahasuerus in **Ezr 4:6**, who is thought to be Cambyses, the son and successor of Cyrus; since, according to the canon of Ptolemy, he reigned but eight years, whereas this Ahasuerus at least reigned twelve, **Es 3:7**, though indeed some account for it by his reigning in his father's lifetime; besides, Cambyses was always an enemy to the Jews, as this was not; and yet this way go many of the Jewish writers {n} and so a very learned man, Nicolaus Abram {o}; according to Bishop Usher {p}, this was Darius Hystaspis, who certainly was a friend to the Jewish nation; but he is rather the Artaxerxes of Ezra and Nehemiah; and so says the Midrash {q}. Dr. Prideaux {r} thinks Ahasuerus was Artaxerxes Longimanus, which is the sense of Josephus {s}, and who is thought by many to be the Artaxerxes in the foresaid books. Capellus {t} is of opinion, that Darius Ochus is meant, to which Bishop Patrick inclines; but I rather think, with Vitringa {u} and others {w}, that Xerxes is the Ahasuerus that was the husband of Esther here spoken of; so the Arabic writers {x}; and as he was the son and successor of Darius Hystaspis, if he is meant by Artaxerxes in the preceding books, the history of which is carried to the thirty second year of his reign, Ne 13:6 and who reigned but four years more; this book of Esther stands in right order of time to carry on the history of the Jewish affairs in the Persian monarchy; and Mr. Broughton {y} owns, that the name of Xerxes, in Greek, agrees with Achasuerus in Hebrew; and in Es 10:1 his name is Achashresh, which, with the Greeks, is Axeres or Xerxes {z}:

this is Ahasuerus, which reigned from India even unto Ethiopia; properly so called; the Ethiopians had been subdued by Cambyses the son and successor of Cyrus {a}, and the Indians by Darius Hystaspis the father of Xerxes {b}; and both, with other great nations, were retained in subjection to him {c}; and many of both, as well as of other nations, were with him in his expedition into Greece {d}:

over an hundred and twenty and seven provinces; there were now seven provinces more under his jurisdiction than were in the times of Darius the Mede, **Da 6:1**.

{n} Targum & Jarchi in loc. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 29. Zuta, p. 108. {o} Pharus Vet. Test. l. 11. c. 12. p. 305. {p} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 160. so Broughton, Works, p. 38, 259, 581. {q} Midrash Esther, fol. 86. 2. {r} Connection, &c. par. 1. B. 4. p. 252, &c. {s} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 6. sect. 1. and so Suidas in voce esyhr. {t} Chronolog. Sacr. p. 294. {u} Hypotypos. Hist. Sacr. p. 110. {w} Schichart. de Festo Purim. Rainold. Praelect. 144. p. 231. Alsted. Chronolog. p. 126, 181. {x} In Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 87. {y} Ut supra. (Broughton, Works, p. 38, 259, 581.) {z} Vid. Hiller. Arcan. Keri & Ketib, p. 87. & Onomastic. Sacr. p. 639. {a} Herodot. Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 97. {b} lb. Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 44. {c} lb. Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 9. {d} lb. c. 65, 69, 70.

Esther 1:2

Ver. 2. That in those days, when the King Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom,.... Not only was placed upon it, but settled in it; after Xerxes had subdued Egypt, in the second year of his reign {e}, and enjoyed great peace and tranquillity:

which was in Shushan the palace; that is, the throne of his kingdom was in Shushan, the royal city of the kings of Persia; of which
See Gill on "Ne 1:1" See Gill on "Da 8:2".

{e} Herodot. ib. (Thalia, sive, l. 3.) c. 7.

Esther 1:3

Ver. 3. In the third year of his reign he made a feast unto all his princes, and his servants,.... The nobles and officers in his court; on what account this was cannot be said with certainty, whether the first day of it was his birthday, or the day of his coming to the throne, on which day Xerxes used to make a feast annually, as Herodotus relates {f}:

the power of Persia and Media; the mighty men therein, the potentates thereof; or the "army", the principal officers of it:

the nobles and princes of the provinces being with him. The first word Aben Ezra declares his ignorance of, whether it is Hebrew or Persian; Jarchi interprets it governors; and the persons intended by both seem to be the deputy governors of the one hundred and twenty seven provinces who were present at this feast. Xerxes, having reduced Egypt, meditated a war with Greece, to which he was pressed by Mardonius, a relation of his; upon which he summoned the chief men of his kingdom, to have their advice about it {g}, which perhaps was taken at this time; for it was in the third year of his reign he resolved upon the war, and began to make preparations for it; and it was usual, at banquets and feasts, that the Persians debated their most important affairs {h}.

{f} lb. (Herodot.) Calliope, sive, l. 9. c. 109. {g} Ib. l. 7. c. 8. {h} lb. Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 133.

Esther 1:4

Ver. 4. When he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom,.... Xerxes was the fourth king of the Persian monarchy, and was "far richer than all" that went before him, all their riches coming into his hands,
Da 11:2, and now that prophecy began to be fulfilled, "that by his strength,

through his riches, he should stir up all against the realm of Grecia"; which he began to do in the third year of his reign, and for which these his nobles might be called together, as to have their advice, so to animate them to come in the more readily into the expedition, by showing them the riches he was possessed of; for to none of the kings of Persia does this largeness of riches better belong than to Xerxes:

and the honour of his excellent majesty; the grandeur he lived in, the pomp and splendour of his court; he was the most grand and magnificent of all the kings of the Medes and Persians {i}:

and this he did many days, even an hundred and fourscore days; to which seven more being added, as in the following verse, it made one hundred and eighty seven, the space of full six months; though some think the feast did not last so long, only seven days, and that the one hundred and eighty days were spent in preparing for it; but the Persian feasts were very long, large, and sumptuous. Dr. Frye {k} says, this custom of keeping an annual feast one hundred and eighty days still continues in Persia. Cheus {l}, a Chinese emperor, used frequently to make a feast which lasted one hundred and twenty days; though it cannot be well thought that the same individual persons here were feasted so long, but, when one company was sufficiently treated, they removed and made way for another; and so it continued successively such a number of days as here related, which was six months, or half a year; a year then in use consisting of three hundred and sixty days, as was common with the Jews, and other nations, and so the Persians {m}.

{i} Pausan. Laconica, sive, l. 3. p. 165. {k} Travels, p. 348. apud Patrick in loc. {l} In Martin. Sinic. Hist. l. 3. p. 78. {m} Prideaux's Connect. par. 1. p. 197.

Esther 1:5

Ver. 5. And when these days were ended,.... The one hundred and eighty, in which the nobles, princes, and great men of the kingdom were feasted:

the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small; of every age, rank, state and condition of life; these were the common people, whether inhabitants of the city or country people there on business, whether natives or foreigners; according to the Targum, there were Israelites there, but not Mordecai and his family; yea, it is said in the Midrash {n}, that they were all Jews, and that their number was 18,500; but this is not probable; it is very likely there were some Jews among them, as there were many in the army of Xerxes, when he made his expedition into Greece, according to the poet Choerilus {o}; which is not to be wondered at, since there were so many of them in his dominions, and they men of valour and fidelity, and to whose nation he was so kind and favourable: and this feast was kept

seven days in the court of the garden of the king's palace; which no doubt was very large, and sufficient to hold such a number as was assembled together on this occasion, when there was not room enough for them in the palace. There is in history an account of a Persian king that supped with 15,000 men, and in the supper spent forty talents {p}.

{n} Midrash Esther, fol. 94. 1. {o} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 22. {p} Ctesias & Dinon in Athenaei Deipnosoph. l. 4.

Esther 1:6

Ver. 6. Where were white, green, and blue hangings,.... Or curtains of fine linen, as the Targum, which were of these several colours; the first letter of the word for "white" is larger than usual, to denote the exceeding whiteness of them. The next word is "carpas", which Ben Melech observes is a dyed colour, said to be green. Pausanias {q} makes mention of Carpasian linen, and which may be here meant; the last word used signifies blue, sky coloured, or hyacinth:

fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings, and pillars of marble; these pillars are said, in the Targum, to be of divers colours, red, green, and shining yellow and white, on which the silver rings were fixed, and into them were put linen strings of purple colour, which fastened the hangings to them, and so made an enclosure, within which the guests sat at the feast:

the beds were of gold and silver; the couches on which they sat, or rather reclined at eating, as was the manner of the eastern nations; these, according to the Targum, were of lambs' wool, the finest, and the softest, and the posts of them were of gold, and their feet of silver. Such luxury obtained among the Romans in later times {r}:

these were placed in a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble; which, according to some, are the porphyrite, Parian, alabaster, and marble of various colours; the marble of the Persians is of four colours, white, black, red and black, and white and black {s}; but others take them to be precious stones, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; the first is by the Targum interpreted crystal, by others the emerald, one of which Theophrastus {t} speaks of as four cubits long, and three broad, which might be laid in a pavement; the third is, by Bochart {u}, supposed to be the pearl; and in the Talmud {w} it is said to be of such a nature, that if placed in the middle of a dining room, will give light in it as at noonday, which seems to be what is called lychnites; to which Lucian {x} ascribes a like property: nor need all this seem strange, since great was the luxury of the eastern nations. Philostratus {y} speaks of a temple in India paved with pearls, and which he says all the Barbarians use in their temples; particularly it is said {z}, that the roofs of the palaces of Shushan and Ecbatana, the palaces of the kings of Persia, shone with gold and silver, ivory, and amber; no wonder then that their pavements were of very valuable and precious stones: and from hence it appears, that the "lithostrata", the word here used by the Septuagint, or tesserated pavements, were in use four hundred years before the times of Sylla, where the beginning of them is placed by Pliny {a}; there was a "lithostraton" in the second temple at Jerusalem, by us rendered the pavement, Joh 19:13, perhaps the same with the room Gazith, so called from its being laid with hewn stone. Aristeas {b}, who lived in the times of Ptolemy Philadelphus, testifies that the whole floor of the temple was a "lithostraton", or was paved with stone: it is most likely therefore that these had their original in the eastern country, and not in Greece, as Pliny {c} supposed.

{q} Attica, sive, l. 1. p. 48. {r} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 11. Sueton. Vit. Caesar. c. 49. {s} Universal History, vol. 5. p. 87. {t} Apud Plin. l. 37. c. 5. {u} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 8. {w} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 12. 1. {x} De Dea Syria. {y} Vit. Apollon. l. 2. c. 11. {z} Aristot. de Mundo, c. 6. Apuleius de Mundo. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 25. {b} De 70 Interpret. p. 32. {c} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 25.)

Esther 1:7

Ver. 7. They gave them drink in vessels of gold, the vessels being divers one from another,.... In the pattern and workmanship of them, though of the same metal, which diversity made the festival the more grand; earthen cups, with the Persians, were reckoned very mean; when a king would disgrace a man, he obliged him to use earthen cups {d}. The Targum represents these vessels to be the golden vessels of the temple at Jerusalem Nebuchadnezzar carried away; which could not be, since they had been delivered by Cyrus to Zerubbabel, **Ezr 1:7**,

and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king; such as the king was able to give, the best he had, and that in great plenty; the wine the kings of Persia used to drink, as Strabo {e} relates, was Chalybonian wine, or wine of Helbon, as it is called, Eze 27:18,
See Gill on "Eze 27:18", but by the wine of the kingdom, as it may be rendered, is meant wine of the country; the wine of Schiras is reckoned the best in Persia {f}.

{d} Ctesias in Athenaei Deipnosoph. l. 11. {e} Geograph. l. 15. p. 505. {f} Universal History, vol. 5. p. 85.

Esther 1:8

Ver. 8. And the drinking was according to the law, none did compel,.... According to the law Ahasuerus gave to his officers next mentioned, which was not to oblige any man to drink more than he chose; the Targum is,

`according to the custom of his body;'

that is, as a man is able to bear it, so they drank: some {f} read it, "the drinking according to the law, let none exact"; or require it to be, according to the custom then in use in Persia; for they were degenerated from their former manners, and indulged to intemperance, as Xenophon {g} suggests: the law formerly was, not to carry large vessels into feasts; but now, says he, they drink so much, that they themselves must be carried out, because they cannot go upright: and so it became a law with the Greeks, at their festivals, that either a man must drink or go out {h}; so the master of a feast, at which Empedocles was, ordered either that he should drink, or the wine be poured on his head {i}; but such force or compulsion Ahasuerus forbad: and thus with the Chinese now, they force none to drink, but modestly invite them {k}:

for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure; to let them have what wine they would, but not force them to drink more than was agreeable to them.

{f} Vid. Drusium in loc. {g} Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 51. {h} Cicero. Tusculan.

Quaest. l. 5. {i} Laert. in Vit. ejus, l. 8. p. 608. {k} Semedo's History of China, par. 1. c. 13.

Esther 1:9

Ver. 9. Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women.... For it was not customary with the Persians, nor other eastern nations, to admit of women to their festivals {m}, but they feasted by themselves. Who Vashti was is not known with any certainty. Bishop Usher, who takes Ahasuerus to be Darius Hystaspis, thinks Vashti was Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, whom he married. The Targumist says, she was the daughter of Evilmerodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar. Her name seems to be the same with Vesta, a deity worshipped by the Persians, as Xenophon {n}, and signifies vehement fire, which was in great veneration with them; and therefore this queen is most likely to be of Persian original: she kept her feast

in the royal house which belonged to Ahasuerus; her guests not being so many, there was room enough in the king's palace for them, and where it was more decent for them to be than in the open air in the garden, and exposed to the sight of men.

{m} Justin c Trogo, l. 41. c. 3. {n} Cyropaedia, l. 1. c. 23.

Esther 1:10

Ver. 10. On the seventh day,.... Of the feast, the last day of it, which the Rabbins, as Jarchi observes, say was the sabbath day, and so the Targum:

when the heart of the king was merry with wine; when he was intoxicated with it, and knew not well what he said or did; and the discourse at table ran upon the beauty of women, as the latter Targum; when the king asserted there were no women so beautiful as those of Babylon, and, as a proof of it, ordered his queen to be brought in:

he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains, that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king; or "eunuchs", as the word is sometimes rendered; and such persons were made use of in the eastern countries to, wait upon women, and so were proper to be sent on the king's errand to the queen.

Esther 1:11

Ver. 11. To bring Vashti the queen before the king,.... Not against her will, or by force; but they were sent to let her know it was the king's pleasure that she should come to him immediately:

with the crown royal; that is, upon her head, to make her look the more grand and majestic:

to show the people and the princes her beauty; for she was fair to look upon; which was not wisely done, neither was it comely nor safe.

Esther 1:12

Ver. 12. But the queen refused to came at the king's commandment by his chamberlains,.... Even though he sent by them again, as the Targum; and so says Josephus {o}; which might not purely arise from pride in her, and contempt of him, but because she might conclude he was drunk, and knew not well what he did; and therefore had she come at his command, when he was himself and sober, he might blame her for coming, nay, use her ill for it, and especially if she was to come naked, as say the Jews {p}; and besides, it was contrary to the law of the Persians, as not only Josephus {q}, but Plutarch {r} observes, which suffered not women to be seen in public; and particularly did not allow their wives to be with them at feasts, only their concubines and harlots, with whom they could behave with more indecency; as for their wives, they were kept out of sight, at home {s}; and therefore Vashti might think it an indignity to be treated as an harlot or concubine:

therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him; which was the more fierce, as he was inflamed with wine.

{o} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 6. sect. 1. {p} Targum in loc. Midrash Esther, fol. 90. 1. {q} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 6. sect. 1. {r} In Themistoele. {s} Macrob. Saturnal. l. 7. c. 1.

Esther 1:13

Ver. 13. Then the king said to the wise men that knew the times,.... Astrologers, as Aben Ezra, that knew the fit time for doing anything; or that had knowledge of ancient times, historians, well read in history, and knew things that had happened similar to this:

for so was the king's manner towards all that knew law and judgment; it was customary with him in any case of difficulty to have the opinion and advice of those that were expert in the law, and well understood right and wrong. These are called by Herodotus {t} the king's judges.

{t} Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 14, 31. so in Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 1. c. 34.

Esther 1:14

Ver. 14. And the next unto him,.... That sat next to the king, and was the chief in dignity and authority under him:

was Carshena; and so everyone in their rank and order, as next mentioned:

Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan; who, according to the latter Targum, were of different countries; the first of Africa, the second of India, the third of Idumea, the fourth of Egypt, the fifth of Resen, Ge 10:12 which is framed out of Marsena, who is dropped, and the last of Jerusalem, said to be Daniel; though the former Targum makes him to be Haman:

the seven powers of Persia and Media; which custom of having seven counsellors with the kings of Persia arose from the seven princes that slew Smerdis the pretender, and made Darius Hystaspis king, the father of Xerxes:

which saw the king's face; were intimate and familiar with him, often in his presence; yea, might go into it when they pleased, without the ceremony of being introduced; which privilege the above persons reserved to themselves, when they placed Darius on the throne, as Herodotus relates {u}:

and which sat the first in the kingdom; next to the king, and were assisting to him in the administration of government, see **Ezr 7:14**.

{u} Ib. (Thalia, sive, l. 3.) c. 84, 118.

Esther 1:15

Ver. 15. What shall we do unto the Queen Vashti, according to law,.... The king desired to know what law was provided in such a case as her's, and what to be done according to it:

because she hath not performed the commandment of the king by the chamberlains? as this was the crime, disobedience to his commands, he would have those who had knowledge of the law consider what punishment was to be inflicted on her for it, according to former laws, usages, and customs, or as reason and justice required; and it being a festival, and they heated with wine, was no objection to a consultation on this head; for it was the manner of the Persians at festivals, and when inflamed with wine, to consult and determine about matters of the greatest moment {w}; yea, reckoned their counsels and decrees firmer than when made when they were sober {x}; so the ancient Germans {y}.

{w} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 133. {x} Strabo. Geograph. l. 15. p. 505. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 11. & l. 5. c. 21. {y} Tacitus de Mor. German. c. 22.

Esther 1:16

Ver. 16. And Memucan answered before the king and the princes,.... Who was the last, and perhaps the least and the youngest of the counsellors; it being appointed by the king, according to the latter Targum that when his counsellors sat, the least should give their counsel first; just as puisne judges, and the youngest peers with us, give their opinion in a case first:

Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the King Ahasuerus; he means, by setting a bad example to their wives, as after explained; it is an exaggeration of her crime, and made with a design to incense the king the more against her.

Esther 1:17

Ver. 17. For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women,.... It will soon be spread all over the king's dominions, and reach the ears of the wives of all his subjects, and become their general talk everywhere:

so that they shall despise their husbands in their eyes: make light of their authority, refuse subjection to them, slight their commands, and neglect to yield obedience to them, and so not give them the honour that is due unto them:

when it shall be reported, the King Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, and she came not; was disobedient to his commands, refused to go along with the chamberlains sent by the king to fetch her.

Esther 1:18

Ver. 18. Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen,.... From henceforward they will give a like answer to their husbands, when they lay their commands upon them, as Vashti has to the king; they will tell them to their faces they will not obey their orders:

thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath; there will be in wives a general contempt of their husbands, which will cause discord and strife, quarrels, wrath and anger; contempt on one part, wrath on the other, and contention between both.

Esther 1:19

Ver. 19. If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him,.... Not only a proclamation made, but a law enacted and published by royal authority:

and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and Medes that it be not altered; for so it was, that when a law was made, and signed, and sealed, and registered among the laws of the kingdom, it remained unalterable, **Da 6:8**, this precaution Memucan took for his own safety; for had the king acted upon his advice, without passing it into a law in such form, he might change his mind, and recall Vashti, who would not fail of venting her wrath upon the counsellor, and so he be in danger of losing his life for it:

that Vashti come no more before King Ahasuerus; but be entirely divorced, never to be received any more:

and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she; or "to her companions" {z}; that was with her in the house of the women in the seraglio; one that was fairer, as the Targum, or of a better disposition than her; let her be made queen, and enjoy all the honour, and dignity, and marks of royalty Vashti did; her throne, her crown, and royal apparel, as it is interpreted in an ancient Jewish writing {a}.

{z} htwerl "sodali ejus", Montanus; "sociae ejus", Tigurine version, Drusius, Rambachius. {a} Tikkune Zohar, correct. 21. fol. 59. 2.

Esther 1:20

Ver. 20. And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire,.... As it was proper it should, since the report of the queen's deed would be made everywhere:

for it is great; the empire consisting of one hundred and twenty seven provinces, **Es 1:1**, Aben Ezra and Abendana interpret it, "though" it is great, yet the decree should be published throughout; the latter observes, that this may respect the king's decree; and so the Targum is,

"for his decree is great;"

it respecting a matter of great importance, and relating to a great personage, and would have great effect on the minds of persons, when it was observed that one so great was treated in this manner: and therefore

all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small; speaking respectfully to them, yielding a ready and cheerful obedience to all their commands; which would be done to princes and peasants, to high and low, to every rank of men.

Esther 1:21

Ver. 21. And the saying pleased the king and the princes,.... The king, and the other six princes and counsellors, approved of the proposal, and unanimously agreed to it:

and the king did according to the word of Memucan; passed a law according to his advice, and signed and sealed it, and registered it among the laws of the kingdom, not to be revoked.

Esther 1:22

Ver. 22. For he sent letters unto all the king's provinces,.... The one hundred and twenty seven provinces, **Es 1:1**, which, according to the Targum, were written and sealed with his own seal; which is very probable:

into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; that is, these letters were written in the language, and in the characters in which that language was written, used in each of the provinces to which these letters were sent, that they might be easily read and understood by all: the sum of which was,

that every man should bear rule in his own house; be prince, lord, and master there, and his commands obeyed, not only by his children and servants, but by his wife also:

and that it should be published according to the language of every people; but as this is expressed, or at least implied, in the first clause of this verse, it should rather be rendered, "and that he should speak according to the language of his people"; and so is the latter Targum; it seems as if a man, who had married a woman in another country, in complaisance to her had neglected his own native tongue, and used hers in the family, by which means he lost, or seemed to lose, his authority in it: now, to guard against this, this part of the law was made; and, according to Jarchi, the husband was to compel his wife to learn and speak his language, if she was a foreigner; to which agrees the first Targum, which paraphrases the whole thus,

"that a man rule over his wife, and oblige her to speak according to the language of her husband, and the speech of his people;"

and, in later times, Bahram Gaur forbid any other language, besides the Persian, to be used within his port, either in speaking or writing {b}.

{b} Vid. Castel. Lexic. Persic. col. 266.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Esther 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO ESTHER 2

By the advice of the ministers of King Ahasuerus, fair virgins were sought for throughout his dominions, and brought to his chamberlain, the keeper of the women, among whom was Esther, a Jewish virgin, Es 2:1, who found favour with the chamberlain, and afterwards with the king, who made her queen instead of Vashti, and a feast on that account, Es 2:9. Mordecai, to whom Esther was related, and according to whose advice she acted, sitting in the king's gate, discovered a conspiracy against the king, which he now made known to Esther, Es 2:19.

Ver. 1. After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus was appeased,.... Which went off with his wine, and so was quickly after, a few days at most, unless this can be understood as after the expedition of Xerxes into Greece, from whence he returned to Shushan, in the seventh year of his reign; and if he is the Ahasuerus here meant, he married Esther that year, Es 2:16 and it seems certain, that after his expedition he gave himself up to his amours, and in his way to Sardis he fell in love with his brother's wife, and then with his daughter {b}:

he remembered Vashti; her beauty, and was grieved, as Jarchi observes, that she was removed from him; and so Josephus says {c}, that he passionately loved her, and could not bear parting with her, and therefore was grieved that he had brought himself into such difficulties: the Targumists carry it further, and say that he was wroth with those that advised him to it, and ordered them to be put to death, and that they were:

and what she had done; that it was a trivial thing, and not deserving of such a sentence as he had passed upon her; that it was not done from contempt of him, but from modesty, and a strict regard to the laws of the Persians:

and what was decreed against her; that she should come no more before him, but be divorced from him; the thought of which gave him great pain and uneasiness.

{b} Herodot. Calliope, sive, l. 9. c. 107. {c} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 6. sect. 2.

Esther 2:2

Ver. 2. Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him,.... Fearing that, if Vashti should be restored, vengeance would be taken on them; or however to remove the grief and melancholy of the king, they gave the following advice:

let there be fair young virgins sought for the king; that he might enjoy them, and choose one of them, the most agreeable to him, and put her in the room of Vashti.

Esther 2:3

Ver. 3. And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom,.... Who best knew where beautiful virgins might be found in their respective provinces, in which they dwelt:

that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace; the metropolis of the kingdom, where was the royal palace:

to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women; in which house it seems were two apartments, one for the virgins before they were introduced to the king, the other for them when they were become his concubines, which had a keeper also; but this Hege seems to have been over the whole house, **Es 2:14**. It was not only usual with the eastern people, as with the Turks now, for great personages to have keepers of their wives and concubines, but with the Romans also {d}:

and let their things for purification be given them; such as oil of myrrh, spices, &c. to remove all impurity and ill scent from them, and make them look smooth and beautiful.

{d} "Pone seram, cohibe", &c. Juvenal. Satyr. 6. ver. 346, 347.

Esther 2:4

Ver. 4. And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti,.... Have the royal estate, that was taken from Vashti, given to her, the crown royal set on her head, &c.

and the thing pleased the king, and he did so; appointed officers in all his provinces to seek out the most beautiful virgins, and bring them to his palace; so with the Chinese now, the king never marries with any of his kindred, though ever so remote; but there is sought throughout his kingdom a damsel of twelve or fourteen years, of perfect beauty, good natural parts, and well inclined to virtue; whence, for the most part, the queen is the daughter of some artisan; and in their history {e}, mention is made of one that was the daughter of a mason.

{e} Semedo's History of China, part 1. ch. 23.

Esther 2:5

Ver. 5. Now in Shushan the palace was a certain Jew,.... Not one of the tribe of Judah, for he was afterwards called a Benjaminite; but was so called, because he was of the kingdom of Judah, which consisted of both tribes. Jarchi says, all that were carried captive with the kings of Judah were called Jews among the nations, though of another tribe:

whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite; who was among those that came with Zerubbabel from Babylon to Jerusalem, and returned to Persia again, **Ezr 2:2**, though some think this was another Mordecai; See Gill on "Ezr 2:2", who descended not from Kish, the father of Saul, but a later and more obscure person.

Esther 2:6

Ver. 6. Who had been carried away from Jerusalem,.... Which, according to some {f}, is to be connected, not with Mordecai, but with Kish, his great-grandfather; and indeed otherwise Mordecai must be now a very old man, and Esther his first cousin, they being brothers' children, must be at an age, one would think, not to be reckoned among young virgins, and not be so amiable as she is represented; and indeed, according to the former Targum, she was seventy five years of age, which is not credible; and yet this, and more she must be, to be equal to Mordecai, if he was carried captive, as follows:

with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away; which was eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem, for so long Zedekiah reigned after that captivity of Jeconiah: hence Sir John Marsham {g} makes this affair of Esther to be within the time of the Babylonish captivity, and places Ahasuerus her husband between Darius the Mede and Cyrus, contrary to history and Scripture, see **Da 6:28**

{f} Vid. Rainold. de Lib. Apocryph. Praelect. 113, 117, 146. {g} Chronicon. see. 18. p. 609, 621.

Esther 2:7

Ver. 7. And he brought up Hadassah (that is Esther) his uncle's daughter,.... Her Hebrew name was Hadassah, which signifies a myrtle, to which the Israelites, and good men among them, are sometimes compared, **Zec 1:8**. Her Persian name was Esther, which some derive from "satar", to hide, because hidden in the house of Mordecai, so the former Targum, and by his advice concealed her kindred: or rather she was so called by Ahasuerus, when married to him, this word signifying in the Persian language a "star" {h} and so the latter Targum says she was called by the name of the star of Venus, which in Greek is asthr; though it is said {i}, that the myrtle, which is called "hadassah" in Hebrew, is in the Syriac language "esta"; so "asa" in the Talmud {k} signifies a myrtle; and, according to Hillerus {l}, "esther" signifies the black myrtle, which is reckoned the most excellent; and so "amestris", according to him, signifies the sole myrtle, the incomparable one. Xerxes had a wife, whose name was Amestris, which Scaliger thinks is as if it was rtoa Mh, and the same with Esther; but to this are objected, that her father's name was Otanes, and her cruelty in the mutilation of the wife of Masistis, her husband's brother, and burning alive fourteen children of the best families of the Persians, as a sacrifice to the infernal gods; and besides, Xerxes had a son by her marriageable, in the seventh year of this reign {m}, the year of Ahasuerus, in which he married Esther: but it is observed by some, that these things are confounded with the destruction of Haman's family, or told by the Persians to obliterate the memory of Esther, from whom they passed to the Greek historians:

for she had neither father nor mother; according to the former Targum, her father died and left her mother with child of her, and her mother died as soon as she was delivered of her:

and the maid was fair and beautiful; which was both the reason why she was taken and brought into the king's house, and why Mordecai took so much care of her:

whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter; loved her, and brought her up as if she had been his daughter, and called her so, as the Targum. The Rabbins, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe, say, he took her in order to make her his wife; and so the Septuagint render it; though perhaps no more may be intended by that version than that he brought her up to woman's estate. Josephus {n} calls him her uncle; and so the Vulgate Latin version, his brother's daughter; but both are mistaken.

{h} Castell. Lex. Persic. Latin. col. 329. Vid. Pfeiffer. difficil. Script. cent. 3. loc. 28. {i} Caphtor Uperah, fol. 60. 2. {k} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 44. 1. {l} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 621, 622. {m} Herodot. Calliope, sive, l. 9. c. 107. 111. & Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 61. 114. {n} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 11. c. 6. sect. 2.)

Esther 2:8

Ver. 8. So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and decree was heard,.... In the several provinces of his kingdom:

and when many maidens were gathered unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai; Josephus {o} says, there were gathered to the number of four hundred:

that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, the keeper of the women: by force, as Aben Ezra and the former Targum, and so the word is sometimes used.

{o} Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 11. c. 6. sect. 2.)

Esther 2:9

Ver. 9. And the maiden pleased him,.... Not the king, into whose presence she was not yet introduced, but the chamberlain; her beauty and her behaviour recommended her to him, and he concluded within himself that she was the person that of all would be acceptable to the king:

and she obtained kindness of him: had favours shown others had not:

and he speedily gave her things for purification; as oil, spices, &c. that she might be the sooner fitted to be had into the king's presence:

with such things as belonged to her; food and drink from the king's table; the Targum interprets it gifts, as chains and royal apparel:

and seven maidens, which were given her, out of the king's house; to wait upon her the seven days of the week, as the same Targum:

and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women; removed her and them to it, which was the most splendid, had large, airy, and pleasant rooms.

Esther 2:10

Ver. 10. Esther had not showed her people nor her kindred,.... What nation or family she was of; it not being asked, she was under no obligation to declare it; and being born in Shushan, as very probable, she was taken to be a Persian:

for Mordecai had charged her that she should not show it; lest she should be despised and ill treated on that account; fearing, if the king knew it, he would not marry her, as Aben Ezra; or rather, as the same writer thinks, that she might keep the law of God privately, observe the sabbath, &c.

Esther 2:11

Ver. 11. And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house,.... Being one of the court, and in an high post, as Aben Ezra thinks, he might walk there without being examined, and called to an account for it:

to know how Esther did; to inquire of her health and prosperity, or peace, the word here used signifies, even all sorts of it:

and what should become of her; or was done to her, whether she was well used, or as yet introduced to the king, how it fared with her, and what befell her.

Esther 2:12

Ver. 12. Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to King Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of women,.... That were prepared in the house of the women to be presented to the king for his liking; for it seems that these virgins came in turns to him, according to the time they had been in the house; as did the wives of the kings of Persia, as Herodotus relates {p}:

for so were the days of their purifications accomplished; that is, in the space of twelve months, which were thus divided: to wit,

six months with oil of myrrh; which Ben Melech interprets of musk:

and six month's with sweet odours; the former was used to make the skin smooth and soft, and these to remove all ill scents through sweat, or any other cause:

and with other things for the purifying of women: by bathing, rubbing, &c. and such a space of time was observed not only for the thorough purification of them, but partly was of state and grandeur, and partly that it might be a clear case they were not with child by another, before they came to the king.

{p} Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 69.

Esther 2:13

Ver. 13. Then thus came every virgin unto the king,.... When her twelve months were up, and she was purified in the manner before observed:

whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house; whatever she commanded the chamberlain was obliged to furnish her with, or grant it to her, whether for ornament, as jewels, rich apparel, &c. or for attendance; whatever prince or peer she required to accompany her to the king, was to be obtained for her, as the Targum: and everything for mirth, all kinds of songs, or instruments of music, as Jarchi.

Esther 2:14

Ver. 14. In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women,.... Or the other apartment of the house of the women, where were kept those the king had made his concubines or secondary wives. Aben Ezra interprets it the second time, and so the Targum by "again":

to the custody of Shaashgaz the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines; of which the kings of Persia had a great number; Darius, whom Alexander conquered, had three hundred and sixty {q}:

she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she was called by name; but remained shut up in the house, and might not lie with, nor be married to, another man.

{q} Curt. Hist. l. 3. c. 3.

Esther 2:15

Ver. 15. Now when the turn of Esther the daughter of Abihail,.... For this was her father's name, and not Aminadab, as the Septuagint version:

the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter; which makes it quite clear that Mordecai was not Esther's uncle, as Josephus, but her own cousin: now when her turn

was come to go in unto the king; which the virgins under purification took by turns, **Es 2:14**,

she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed; what he ordered her to have, or to do, she submitted to, being in his hands, and so obeyed his orders; but more she asked not, either for ornament or attendance, being not at all solicitous whether the king liked her or not; for it was not of choice, but by constraint, she went unto him; nor needed she anything to recommend her, her virtue, modesty, and beauty, were sufficient:

and Esther obtained favour of all them that looked upon her: when she came to court, the eyes of all were attracted to her; all admired her beauty, her innocent and modest look, and her graceful mien and deportment.

Esther 2:16

Ver. 16. So Esther was taken unto King Ahasuerus, into his house royal,.... Did not return on the morrow to the house of the women, as those who only became the king's concubines did, **Es 2:14**, but she was taken to be his wife, and designed for his queen, and so was retained in his palace, and placed in an apartment suitable to the dignity she was about to be advanced unto:

and this was done in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth; and answers to part of December and part of January; not the twelfth month Adar, as the Septuagint version, and so Josephus {q}, contrary to the original text: either that law had not obtained among the Persians, or the king thought himself not bound by it, which forbid marriage at any other time than the beginning of the vernal equinox {r}:

in the seventh year of his reign; and the divorce of Vashti being in the third year of his reign, it was four years before Esther was taken by him; who, if Xerxes, it may be accounted for by his preparation for, and engagement in, a war with Greece, which took him up all this time; and from whence he returned in the seventh year of his reign, at the beginning of it, and married Esther at the close of it, see **Es 2:1** as may be suggested.

{q} Ut supra (Antiqu. l. 11. c.6. sect. 2.) {r} Strabo. Geograph. l. 1. p. 504.

Esther 2:17

Ver. 17. And the king loved Esther above all the women,.... The virgins he made his concubines, as next explained; though Jarchi interprets it of married women, for such he supposes were gathered and brought to him, as well as virgins:

and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; who had been purified, and in their turns brought to him:

so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti; declared her queen, and gave her all the ensigns of royalty: so it was usual with the eastern kings to put a crown or diadem on the heads of their wives at the time of marriage, and declare them queens {s}.

{s} Vid. Paschalium de Coronis, l. 10. c. 8. p. 689.

Esther 2:18

Ver. 18. Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and servants, even Esther's feast,.... A feast to all his nobles, courtiers, and ministers of state, on account of his marriage with Esther; which, according to the Greek version, was held seven days; but, according to Josephus, it lasted a whole month {t}:

and he made a release to the provinces; of taxes and tribute due to him, as was the custom of the kings of Persia when they came to the throne, as Herodotus {u} relates; so Smerdis the magus, that mounted the throne after Cambyses, pretending to be his brother, released them for three years to come {w}; and Grotius says kings used to do it at their marriage, but gives no instance of it:

and gave gifts: according to the latter Targum, to the provinces, all of them, that he might be sure that the people of Esther shared his favours, who were as yet unknown; but rather these gifts were given to his nobles, or it may be to Esther; so the former Targum,

"he gave to her a gift and portion:"

according to the state of the king; his royal ability and munificence, and suitable to his grandeur; and it was usual with the Persian kings to give to their wives whole cities for one thing or another, as for necklaces, hair laces, shoes, &c. {x}; Socrates {y} speaks of a whole country in Persia called the "Queen's girdle", and another her "Headdress".

{t} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 11. c. 6. sect. 2.) {u} Erato, sive, l. 6. c. 59. {w} Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 67. {x} Herodot. Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 98. Cicero in Verrem, l. 3. Orat. 8. {y} In Plat. Alcibiad.

Esther 2:19

Ver. 19. And when the virgins were gathered together the second time,.... Some think this second collection is that which was made when Esther was taken and brought to the keeper of the women, called the second, in reference to a former collection of them, made when Vashti was taken and made queen; but as there is no proof of any such collection then made, rather the case was this, such was the lust of the king, though he had a queen he loved, and a multitude of concubine's, yet a second collection of virgins was made for his gratification:

then Mordecai sat in the king's gate; or court, being an officer in it, promoted by the interest of Esther, though not as yet known to be a relation of her's: so yura in Xenophon {z} is used of the court of the king of Persia, as the Ottoman or Turkish court is now called the "Porte".

{z} Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 2, 5, 11, 40.

Esther 2:20

Ver. 20. Esther had not showed her kindred nor her people, as Mordecai had charged her,.... As not before, so neither since she was made queen, see Es 2:10, though, according to the Targums, she was urged to it by the king himself:

for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him: which showed great humility in her, notwithstanding her advancement, great respect to him, and a sense of gratitude for the kindness he had shown; and this charge to her was still continued by Mordecai, partly that she might not fall into contempt, and partly to prevent hatred and envy to the Jewish nation, through her promotion; but chiefly so it was ordered in Providence, the proper time being not yet come.

Esther 2:21

Ver. 21. In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate,.... Being, as before observed, an officer at court:

two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those that kept the door; of the inner court, as Aben Ezra, of the doors of his bedchamber; perhaps they were the chief of his bodyguards, as the Septuagint version; in later times, such officers were about the chambers of great personages as their guards {a}:

these were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the King Ahasuerus; to poison him, as Jarchi and both the Targums; however, to take away his life by some means or another. Gorionides {b} says their design was, while the king was asleep, to cut off his head, and carry it to the king of Greece; there being at that time great wars between the kingdom of Greece and the kingdom of Persia, which exactly agrees with the times of Xerxes, and with this part of his reign, about the seventh year of it, what was the occasion of this wrath is not said, it is thought to be either the divorce of Vashti, whose creatures they were, or the marriage of Esther, and particularly the promotion of Mordecai, fearing they should be turned out of their places; so the former Targum.

{a} Vid. Pignorium de Servis, p. 408, &c. & Popma de Servis, p. 33. & Alstorph. de Lectis Vet. c. 12. {b} Hist. Heb. l. 2. c. 1. p. 72.

Esther 2:22

Ver. 22. And the thing was known to Mordecai,.... But by what means does not appear; the Jewish writers say {c}, these two men were Tarsians, and spoke in the Tarsian language, which they thought Mordecai did not understand; but he, being skilled in languages, overheard them, and understood what they said; but, according to Josephus {d}, it was discovered to him by Barnabazus, a servant of one of the chamberlains; the latter Targum says, it was showed unto him by the Holy Ghost:

who told it unto Esther, and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name; whose name she mentioned, partly as a voucher of the truth of what she reported, and partly to ingratiate Mordecai to the king, that he might be still yet more promoted in due time.

{c} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 13. 2. Targum prius & Jarchi in loc. {d} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 6. sect. 4.

Esther 2:23

Ver. 23. And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out,.... That these two men had entered into a conspiracy to take away the king's life; full proof and evidence were given of it:

therefore they were both hanged on a tree; Josephus {e} says they were crucified; but hanging was frequent among the Persians, as Grotius observes, and better agrees with the word here used:

and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king; in a diary kept by the king's order, in which memorable events were set down, and might be done in the presence of the king, as well as the book lay open before him to read at any time; and this is observed to agree with the manner of Xerxes, who is reported {f} to sit on a throne of gold to behold a sea fight between the Grecians and Persians, and had several scribes by him to take down whatever was done in the fight.

{e} Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 11. c. 6. sect. 4.) {f} Plutarch. in Themistocle.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Esther 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO ESTHER 3

This chapter gives an account of the promotion of Haman, and of the mortification of him by Mordecai, who refused to bow to him, upon which he vowed revenge on him, and on all his people the Jews, **Es 3:1**, for which purpose, through a false representation of them, he obtained letters of the king, and sent to the deputies of all the provinces to destroy them all on a certain day fixed, **Es 3:7**.

Ver. 1. After these things,.... After the marriage of Esther, and the discovery of the conspiracy to take away the king's life, five years after, as Aben Ezra observe, at least more than four years, for so it appears from **Es 3:7**

did King Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite; whom both the Targums make to descend from Amalek, and to be of the stock or family of Agag, the common name of the kings of Amalek; and so Josephus {g}; but this is not clear and certain; in the apocryphal Esther he is said to be a Macedonian; and Sulpitius the historian says {h} he was a Persian, which is not improbable; and Agag might be the name of a family or city in Persia, of which he was; and Aben Ezra observes, that some say he is the same with Memucan, see **Es 1:14**,

and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him; erected a throne for him, higher than the rest, either of his own princes and nobles, or such as were his captives, see 2Ki 25:28. It was the custom of the kings of Persia, which it is probable was derived from Cyrus, to advance those to the highest seats they thought best deserved it: says he to his nobles, let there be seats with you as with me, and let the best be honoured before others;-

-and again, let all the best of those present be honoured with seats above others {i}.

{g} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 11. c. 6.) sect. 5. {h} Hist. Sacr. l. 2. p. 78. {i} Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 41.

Esther 3:2

Ver. 2. And the king's servants that were in the king's gate,.... Or court, all his courtiers; for it cannot be thought they were all porters, or such only that

bowed and reverenced Haman; gave him divine honours, as to a deity; for such were given to the kings of Persia {k}, and might be given to their favourites, and seems to be the case; for, though Haman might not erect a statue of himself, or have images painted on his clothes, as the Targum and Aben Ezra, for the Persians did not allow of statues and images {l}; yet he might make himself a god, as Jarchi, and require divine worship, with leave of the king, which he had, yea, an order for it:

for the king had so commanded concerning him; which shows that it was not mere civil honour and respect, for that in course would have been given him as the king's favourite and prime minister by all his servants, without an express order for it; this, therefore, must be something uncommon and extraordinary:

but Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence; which is a further proof that it was not mere civil honour that was required and given; for that the Jews did not refuse to give, and that in the most humble and prostrate manner, and was admitted by them, 1Sa 24:8 **1Ki 1:16**, nor can it be thought that Mordecai would refuse to give it from pride and sullenness, and thereby risk the king's displeasure, the loss of his office, and the ruin of his nation; but it was such kind of reverence to a man, and worship of him, which was contrary to his conscience, and the law of his God.

{k} Vid. Salden. Otia Theolog. l. 3. Exercitat. 1. sec. 4, 5. {l} Laert. Prooem. ad Vit. Philosoph. p. 5, 6.

Esther 3:3

Ver. 3. Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate,.... Observing the behaviour of Mordecai towards Haman from time to time:

said unto Mordecai, why transgressest thou the king's commandment? of giving reverence to Haman, which they knew he could not be ignorant of.

Esther 3:4

Ver. 4. Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him,.... Putting him in mind of his duty to obey the king's command, suggesting to him the danger he exposed himself to, pressing him to give the reasons of his conduct:

and he hearkened not unto them; regarded not what they said, and continued disobedient to the king's order, and disrespectful to Haman

that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand; they informed Haman that Mordecai refused to give him reverence as the king had ordered; this they did to try whether such a conduct would be suffered and bore with, and whether Mordecai would persevere in it when taken notice of:

for he had told them that he was a Jew; which was all the reason he gave why he would not reverence Haman; and a reason sufficient, because, by a fundamental law of his religion, he was not to worship mere man, but God only: and this confirms what has been before observed; for this would have been no reason for refusing civil respect and honour, but was a strong one for denying religious worship and reverence; and no wonder that the Jews should refuse it, when even the Grecians, though Heathens, refused to give the Persian kings the divine honours they required {m}; yea, the Athenians put Timagoras to death for prostrating himself in such a manner to Darius {n}; for the Persian kings were, as Aristotle says {o}, called Lord and God, and said to hear and see all things.

{m} Herodot. Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 136. Justin e Trogo. l. 6. c. 2. Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 1. 21. {n} Plutarch. in Artaxerxe, Valer. Maxim. l. 6. c. 3. {o} De Mundo, c. 6.

Esther 3:5

Ver. 5. And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence,.... For, after the information given him, he observed and watched him, to see whether he bowed and did him reverence or not:

then was Haman full of wrath; exceedingly displeased and angry; it was such a mortification to him he could not bear.

Esther 3:6

Ver. 6. And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone,.... That would not be a sufficient gratification of his revenge; he was too low and mean a person only to wreak his vengeance on; nothing short of his whole nation would satisfy him:

for they had showed him the people of Mordecai; that they were the Jews; for Mordecai had told the king's servants, that talked with him on the subject, that he was a Jew, and gave that as a reason why he could not and would not reverence Haman:

wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus; even the people of Mordecai; and that not merely to be revenged on Mordecai, but because he plainly saw, that both by his example, and upon the same principle with him; they would all to a man refuse to give him reverence; and therefore he was resolved to root them out of the whole empire, that he might not be mortified by them.

Esther 3:7

Ver. 7. In the first month, that is the month Nisan,.... Which was the first month of the sacred year of the Jews, by divine appointment, Ex 12:2, and there called Abib, and answers to part of February and part of March; from hence it is clear this book was written by a Jew, and very probably by Mordecai:

in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus; four years and near two months after his marriage of Esther, **Es 2:16**,

they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman; being a Persian word, it is explained in Hebrew a lot, the word signifying "steel" in the Persian language. Reland {p} conjectures that this was that sort of lot called "sideromantia". Who cast this lot is not said; whether Haman himself, or one of his servants:

perhaps a diviner. The latter Targum calls him Shimshai the scribe:

from day today, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is the month Adar; which answers to part of January and part of February; so that the lot was cast for every month and every day of the month throughout the year, to find out which was the most lucky month, and which the most lucky day in that month, to destroy the Jews in and none could be found till they came to the last month, and the thirteenth day of that month, **Es 3:13**, the providence of God so overruling the lot, that there might be time enough for the Jews, through the mediation of Esther to the king, to prevent their destruction; so in other nations the Heathens had their lucky and unlucky days {q}.

{p} Antiqu. Heb. par. 4. c. 12. sect. 1. {q} Vid. Macrob. Saturnal l. 1. c. 16. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 20.

Esther 3:8

Ver. 8. And Haman said unto King Ahasuerus, Or "had said" {r}, as some choose to render it; nor indeed is it likely that Haman should cast lots to know when would be a proper time to destroy the Jews, until he had got leave of the king to do it:

there is a certain people scattered abroad, and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; for, though many of the Jews returned to their own land, on the proclamation of Cyrus, yet others remained, being well settled as to worldly things, and not having that zeal for God and his worship as became them, and not caring to be at the trouble and expense of such a journey, and especially those of the ten tribes; now Haman, through contempt of them, mentions them not by name, only describes them as a scattered insignificant people:

and their laws are different from all people; concerning their diet and observation of days, and other things; so Empedocles, an Heathen, observes {s} of the Jews, that they were a separate people from all others in those things; for he says,

"they separated not only from the Romans, but even from all men; for, having found out an unmixed way of living, they have nothing common with men, neither table nor libations, nor prayers, nor sacrifices, but are more separate from us than the Susians or Bactrians, or the more remote Indians:"

neither keep they the king's laws; and, no doubt, he had a special respect to the non-observance of the king's command to give him reverence; and in like manner the Jews are represented by Heathen writers, as by Tacitus {t}, Juvenal {u}, and others:

therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them; that is, to dwell in his dominions; he got nothing by them, and they might be prejudicial to his subjects, and poison them with their notions; and since they were not obedient to the laws of the kingdom, it was not fit and equitable that they should be continued in it.

{r} rmayw "dixerat enim", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, so Patrick. {s} Apud Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 5. c. 11. {t} Hist. l. 5. c. 4. {u} "Romanas antem soliti", &c. Satyr. 14. ver. 99.

Esther 3:9

Ver. 9. If it please the king, let it be written, that they may be destroyed,.... That is, a law made, signed and sealed, for their destruction, and letters written and sent everywhere, ordering it to be put in execution:

and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those who have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasury; this he proposed, to prevent any objection that might be made from the loss of tribute paid by this people to the king; and this was a very large sum for him to pay out of his own estate, it being near four millions of our money; it is computed by Brerewood {x} at 3,750,000 pounds; for as to what is suggested by some, that he intended to repay himself out of the spoil of the Jews, it may be observed, that, according to the king's letter, they that were employed in destroying the Jews were to have the spoil for a prey or booty to themselves, Es 3:13. Now this sum of money he proposed not to put into the hands of them that should slay the Jews, but into the hands of the king's receivers of the dues, that they might lay it up in the king's treasury or exchequer.

{x} De Pret. & Ponder. Vet. Num. c. 5.

Esther 3:10

Ver. 10. And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. As a token of his affection for him, and a mark of honour to him; with the Persians {w} for a king to give a ring to anyone was a token and bond of the greatest love and friendship imaginable; and it may be this was given to Haman, to seal with it the letters that were or should be written, giving order for the destruction of the Jews. It seems as if as yet Esther had not acquainted the king who her kindred and people were; or it can hardly be thought he would have so easily come into such a scheme, or so highly favoured an enemy of her people.

{w} Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 26. & l. 2. c. 19.

Esther 3:11

Ver. 11. And the king said unto Haman, the silver is given unto thee,.... The 10,000 talents of silver Haman proposed to pay into the treasury were returned to him, or the king out of his great munificence refused to take them:

the people also, to do with them as seemeth good unto thee; that is, the people of the Jews; he gave him full power to do with them as he thought fit, and who breathing revenge upon them, would not spare them.

Esther 3:12

Ver. 12. Then were the king's scribes called, on the thirteenth day of the first month,.... The month Nisan, **Es 3:7**, after Haman had leave and power from the king to destroy the Jews, and his ring given him in token of it; the king's scribes or secretaries of state were called together on that day, to write the letters for that purpose:

and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded; whatever he would have done; he had an unlimited power to do what he pleased, and he made use of it, and directed the scribes what they should write:

unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province; the deputy governors of the one hundred and twenty seven provinces, **Es 1:1**

and to the rulers of every people of every province; it seems there were different people in every province, which had their rulers; and these were sent to:

according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; and letters were written in the language, and character of the language, each people spoke, that they might be understood by them:

in the name of King Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring. All this Haman took care to have done so early as the thirteenth of Nisan, though the execution was not to be until the thirteenth of Adar, eleven months after; partly that there might be time enough to send the letters everywhere, even to the most distant parts; and chiefly lest Ahasuerus should change his mind, and be prevailed upon to revoke his grant; and, it may be, either to keep the Jews in continual dread, or cause them to flee.

Esther 3:13

Ver. 13. And the letters were sent by post into all the king's provinces,.... Or by the runners {x}; by which it seems as if these letters were carried by running footmen, men swift of foot; or rather they were running horses, on which men rode post with letters, and which the Persians called Angari; a scheme invented by Cyrus, for the quick dispatch of letters from place to place, by fixing horses and men to ride them at a proper distance, to receive letters one from another, and who rode night and day {y}, as our mail men do now; and nothing could be swifter, or done with greater speed; neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor night, could stop their course, we are told {z}: the purport of these letters was,

to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar; see Es 3:7. The orders were to destroy, by any means whatsoever, all the Jews, of every age and sex, all in one day, in all the provinces which are here named, that they might be cut off with one blow: and to take the spoil of them for a prey; to be their own booty; which was proposed to engage them in this barbarous work, to encourage them in it to use the greater severity and dispatch.

{x} Myurh dyb "in manu cursorum", Montanus; so the Tigurine version, Drusius, V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {y} Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 43. {z} Herodot. Urania, sive, l. 8. c. 98.

Esther 3:14

Ver. 14. The copy of the writing, for a commandment to be given in every province, was published unto all people,.... Not only letters were sent to the governors, but a copy, or the sum of the contents of them, was published by heralds, or stuck up as with us, in various places, that it might be publicly known by the common people everywhere:

that they should be ready against that day; and fall upon the people of the Jews, and slay them, and seize on their goods as a prey.

Esther 3:15

Ver. 15. The post went out, being hastened by the king's command,.... Both to set out and make as much dispatch as possible:

and the decree was given in Shushan the palace; by the king, and with the advice of his courtiers:

and the king and Haman sat down to drink; at a banquet which perhaps Haman had prepared, in gratitude to the king for what he had granted him, both being highly delighted with what had been done:

but the city Shushan was perplexed; the court was agreed, but the city was divided, as the former Targum says, with the joy of strange nations, and the weeping of the people of Israel, there being many Jews in the city; with whom no doubt there were many in connection, through affinity or friendship, or commerce, that were concerned for them; or, however, were shocked at such a barbarous scheme; and which they knew not where it would end, and how far they themselves might be involved in it, when once a mob had such a power granted to them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Esther 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO ESTHER 4

This chapter relates the mourning of Mordecai, and of the Jews in every province, on account of the edict to destroy them, Es 4:1, the information

Esther had of it, and what passed between her and Mordecai, through Hatach, a chamberlain, by whom he put her upon making a request to the king in their favour, **Es 4:4**, to which she at first objected, because of a law in Persia which forbids any to come to the king unless called, **Es 4:9**, but being pressed to it by Mordecai, she agreed, and ordered a general fast among the Jews, **Es 4:13**.

Ver. 1. When Mordecai perceived all that was done,.... By the king, at the instigation of Haman, against the Jews; which he came to the knowledge of, either by some of the conflicts or by common fame, or on the sight of the edicts which were published in Shushan; though the Jews think it was made known to him in a supernatural way, either by Elijah, as the former Targum {x}, or by the Holy Ghost, as the latter:

Mordecai rent his clothes: both behind and before, according to the same Targum; and this was a custom used in mourning, not only with the Jews, but with the Persians also, as Herodotus {y} relates:

and put on sackcloth with ashes; upon his head, as the former Targum; which was usual in mourning, even both; **Job 2:12**

and went out into the midst of the city; not Elam the province, as Aben Ezra, but the city Shushan:

and cried with a loud and bitter cry; that all the Jews in the city might be alarmed by it, and inquire the reason of it, and be affected with it; and a clamorous mournful noise was used among the Persians, as well as others, on sad occasions {z}.

{x} So Midrash Esther, fol. 94. 1. {y} Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. ----. Urania, sive, l. 8. c. 99. {z} Calliope, sive, l. 9. c. 24.

Esther 4:2

Ver. 2. And came even before the king's gate,.... Or court, that Esther might if possible be made acquainted with this dreadful calamity coming upon her people:

for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth: or appear in such a dress at court, where nothing was admitted to damp the pleasures of it.

Esther 4:3

Ver. 3. And in every province whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came,.... For destroying the Jews on such a day, in every place where they were to be found:

there was great mourning among the Jews, and weeping, and wailing; which continued all day:

and many lay in sackcloth and ashes: all night; made use of no other bed to lie on, nor clothes to cover them with.

Esther 4:4

Ver. 4. So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her,.... Her maids of honour and eunuchs that attended her, which they might tell her merely as a piece of news, there being something shocking in it to tender minds; or perhaps nothing more than that Mordecai was in sackcloth; and they might have observed, by some incident or another, that there was some connection between Mordecai and Esther, and that she had a peculiar respect for him:

then was the queen exceedingly grieved; even though she might not know the whole of the matter; but perceiving whatever it was it greatly affected Mordecai, with whom she sympathized:

and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him; that so he might appear at court, and she get better intelligence of the cause of all this:

but he received it not; refusing to be comforted, or appear cheerful under such melancholy circumstances.

Esther 4:5

Ver. 5. Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her,.... Which, according to the Targum, was Daniel {a}; but it is not likely that Daniel should have lived to this time;

however, this officer was not only intrusted with the care of the queen by the king, but she had also an high opinion of him, and therefore employed him in this affair:

and gave a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was; what was the reason of his appearing in sackcloth, and why he did not receive the clothes she sent him.

{a} So Midrash Esther, fol. 94. 3. & Jarchi in Dan. iv. 5.

Esther 4:6

Ver. 6. So Hatach went forth to Mordecai, unto the street of the city,.... Where he was, in a public manner, expressing his grief and sorrow:

which was before the king's gate: that led to the royal palace.

Esther 4:7

Ver. 7. And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him,.... How that, for refusing to reverence Haman, he was incensed against him, and against all the Jews for his sake; and had vowed revenge on them, and had formed a scheme for the ruin of them:

and of the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them the 10,000 talents of silver he proposed to pay into the king's exchequer in lieu of the Jews' tribute; which Mordecai observes, to show how bent he was upon the destruction of the Jews, and cared not what it cost him to gain his point; and perhaps Mordecai as yet might not know that the king had remitted it.

Esther 4:8

Ver. 8. Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them,.... Which had now been published in the city; by which means Mordecai had had a sight of it, and had transcribed it; see **Es 3:14** to show it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her; what Haman intended against the people of the Jews; as the Targum adds:

and to charge her; in his name; whose charges she had always regarded, both before and since she was queen; or in the name of God:

that she should go in unto the king to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people; signifying there was a necessity of doing it speedily, and of urging her request with great earnestness and importunity, since it was not the life of a single person, but the lives of a body of people, and her own, that lay at stake.

Esther 4:9

Ver. 9. And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai. Both the case of the Jews, and the cause of it, and what he would have her do at this critical juncture.

Esther 4:10

Ver. 10. Again Esther spake unto Hatach,.... For there was no other way of corresponding and conversing but by an eunuch; the wives of kings being altogether under their watch and care:

and gave him commandment unto Mordecai; to go unto him, and what he should say to him from her, which is as follows.

Esther 4:11

Ver. 11. All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces do know,.... Not only the princes and courtiers, but all the king's subjects, the meanest of them; there is scarce a person throughout the whole empire, to whom the following law is not known; this is said, to show how notorious it was:

that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death; according to the former Targum, Human got this law to be made now, to prevent any application to the king about this affair; but then it would not have been so universally known as before declared; and it appears that there was such a law among the Medes, made by Dejoces, that none should go into the king's presence, but all should be done by messengers {b}; and this was altered among the Persians, for the seven princes that slew Smerdis made an agreement, that whoever of them was chosen king, the rest should have the liberty of going unto him when they pleased, without a messenger to introduce them {c}; it seems by this account it was death to go into the inner parlour, where the king usually was, without leave, or being called; this was made both for the king's safety, and for awe and reverence of his majesty, and to prevent any insinuations into him by ill-designing persons:

except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live; which, whether he would or not, was very precarious; so that a person ran a great risk to go in uncalled:

but I have not been called to go in unto the king these thirty days; which looked as if the king had not that fond affection for her he formerly had; and therefore there was greater danger in going in to him uncalled, and the less hope of success.

{b} Herodot. Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 99. {c} Herodot. Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 84.

Esther 4:12

Ver. 12. And they told to Mordecai Esther's, words. The messengers she sent to him.

Esther 4:13

Ver. 13. Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther,.... Gave in charge to the messengers what they should say to Esther from him, by way of reply:

think not with thyself that thou shall escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews; signifying that her being queen, and in the king's palace, would be no protection to her; and she would be no safer there than the Jews elsewhere, since they had no greater enemies any where than in the king's court; and it was or would be known of what nation she was, and therefore must not expect to escape the fury of the enemy.

Esther 4:14

Ver. 14. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time,.... And will not speak to the king in favour of the Jews, because of the danger she would be exposed to in doing it:

then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; Mordecai seemed confident of it, that by some means or another the Jews would be delivered; if not through the intercession of Esther, yet from some other quarter, or by some other hand:

but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed; for such neglect of the people of God when in distress, want of pity to them, and not exerting herself as she might in their behalf; so that seeing she and her family must perish, it was better to perish in a good cause than in a bad one:

and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this? he intimates that he believed that the providence of God had raised her to that dignity, that she might be an instrument of saving his people in the time of their distress; and this he said to encourage her to make the experiment.

Esther 4:15

Ver. 15. Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer. Which follows, and was sent by the messengers she sent the above to him.

Esther 4:16

Ver. 16. Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan,.... To acquaint them with what follows; but not to continue in a body together, which might cause suspicion of an ill design in them; according to the latter Targum, 12,000 chosen priests were found in it; but that must be an exaggeration of their number; it can hardly be thought there were so many Jews in all there:

and fast ye for me; that is, pray for her, that she might have courage to go in to the king, and meet with success; for prayer was the principal thing, fasting only an accessory to it, and as fitting for it, and expressive of affliction and humiliation of soul:

and neither eat nor drink three days, night nor day; it was to be a continued fast unto the third day; as Aben Ezra interprets it, they were not to eat at evening, but fast two whole days, and two whole nights, until the third day came, on which Esther went in to the king, **Es 5:1**.

I also and my maidens will fast likewise; in the same manner and as long; these maids of honour were either proselytes, perhaps of her making, or Jewish ladies, she being allowed by the king to choose whom she pleased:

and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; or "afterwards", or "and then" {d} when they, and she and her maids, had fasted and prayed so long, then she was determined in the strength of the Lord to go into the king's presence with her petition, though it was contrary to law:

and if I perish, I perish; signifying, that she readily and cheerfully risked her life for the good of her people; and if such was the pleasure of God, that she should lose it, she was content, and acquiesced in his will, leaving herself entirely in his hands, to dispose of her as he thought fit.

{d} Nkbw "et postea", Noldius, p. 198. No. 899. so the Targum, kai tote, Sept. "et tune", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "tum", Tigurine version.

Esther 4:17

Ver. 17. So Mordecai went his way,.... About the business he was directed to; the word used having sometimes the signification of passing over or transgressing, Jarchi interprets it of Mordecai's transgressing the command, by fasting on a festival; the letter being written on the thirteenth of Nisan, **Es 3:12**, the next day was the passover, on which he supposes the fast began; and the three days were, the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth of the month, and belonged to the feast of the passover and of unleavened bread; so the Targum:

and did according to all that Esther had commanded him; got the Jews together, and kept a fast three days; according to the Midrash {e} they were the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth of Nisan.

{e} Midrash Esther, fol. 94. 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Esther 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO ESTHER 5

This chapter gives an account of Esther's going in to the king, and of his holding out the golden sceptre to her, on which she invited him and Haman to a banquet of wine that day, and to another the next day, **Es 5:1**, which highly delighted Haman; and he went to his house and family with great joy, and yet chagrined at Mordecai's not bowing to him; wherefore, at the advice of his wife and friends, he erected a gallows to hang him upon, proposing to get a grant for it from the king the next day, **Es 5:9**.

Ver. 1. Now it came to pass on the third day,.... Of the fast; though the former Targum paraphrases it the third day of the passover, the sixteenth of Nisan, See Gill on "Es 4:17", though it is probable this was nearer the time fixed for the destruction of the Jews, see **Es 8:9**, yet the Jews have fixed the fast of Esther on that very day, the thirteenth of Adar {f}:

that Esther put on her royal apparel; in order to go in to the king, and appear before him; which to do in a mournful habit, such as she had on when fasting, was not proper; for then she put off her royal crown, as is intimated in the additions to the book of Esther,

And upon the third day, when she had ended her prayers, she laid away her mourning garments, and put on her glorious apparel. (Esther 15:1)

and as was usual for princes to do in times of mourning {g}; but now she put it on, as both Ben Gorion {h} and the latter Targum affirm:

and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house; into which none might go but such as were called; yet Esther being queen, the keepers of the door could not forbid her, as Aben Ezra observes:

and the king sat upon his royal throne, in the royal house, over against the gate of the house; so that he could see whoever came in at it, into the inner court.

{f} Vid Reland. Antiqu. Heb. par. 4. c. 13. sect. 5. {g} Vid. Paschalium de Coronis, l. 10. c. 11. p. 699. {h} Hist. Heb. Jud. l. 2. c. 4.

Esther 5:2

Ver. 2. And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight,.... Which no doubt was of God, who has the hearts of kings in his hand, and turns them as he pleases; the king had not called her for thirty days past, or more, which showed coolness of affection to her, and now she transgressed a law by coming uncalled for, which might have provoked his wrath; and for a lesser matter than this was Vashti divorced; but yet his mind was inclined to her, and she appeared very amiable and pleasing to him:

and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand; as a token of his well pleasedness in her, and acceptance of her; and that no harm should come to her for transgressing the law:

so Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre; as acknowledging his kindness, and her thankfulness for it, as well as subjection and obedience to him.

Esther 5:3

Ver. 3. Then said the king unto her, what wilt thou, Queen Esther?.... He supposed she had some business with him, some suit to make to him, by her coming in this manner:

and what is thy request? signifying he was ready to grant it, be it what it would:

it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom; as it was usual with the Persian kings to give their wives cities for certain purposes,
See Gill on "Es 2:18", here Ahasuerus, out of his great affection to Esther, offers half of his dominions, his one hundred and twenty seven provinces; meaning that he would grant her anything, and everything that was reasonable, and even magnificent; it is an hyperbolical and courtly way of speaking, and which has been used in later times, and in other countries; see **Mr 6:23**.

Esther 5:4

Ver. 4. And Esther answered, if it seem good unto the king,.... She humbly submits it to his pleasure, suggesting it would be exceeding grateful to her, could it be granted:

let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him; for the king; and supposing it would be acceptable to him, and the rather engage him to come to it, she invited his favourite; and chiefly, that she might have an opportunity of accusing him before the king to his face, and when alone.

Esther 5:5

Ver. 5. Then the king said, cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said,.... That is, he ordered some of his servants to make haste and acquaint Haman with the queen's invitation, and to press him to make haste to comply with it:

so the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared; which was wisely done, to prepare for what she had to say to the king, when cheerful with wine, and when she had her adversary with him alone.

Esther 5:6

Ver. 6. And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine,.... For such it seems the banquet was she prepared; it was not properly a meal, neither dinner nor supper, but a drinking bout; or, however, it was at that part of the banquet in which wine was drank that the king accosted Esther, when he began to be cheerful with it. The Persians at their meals had two courses: the first consisted of meats, &c. at which they drank water, the other of fruits, when they drank wine; Aelianus {i} says, the Persians, after they are filled with food, indulge themselves in drinking wine:

what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed; by which it appears he retained the same affection for Esther, and the same disposition to show her kindness. See **Es 5:3**.

{i} Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 1.

Esther 5:7

Ver. 7. Then answered Esther and said, my petition and my request is. What she should for the present make; the principal one she had to ask, for wise reasons, she still deferred.

Esther 5:8

Ver. 8. If I have found favour in the sight of the king,.... Or, seeing she had; for it was a clear case she had, both by his holding out the golden sceptre to her, and by accepting her invitation to her banquet:

and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request; as he had been so gracious as to promise in such a large and liberal manner as before expressed:

let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them; the Targum says, in the evening; but from **Es 5:12**, it appears to be on the morrow; and which agrees with what follows:

and I will do tomorrow as the king hath said; make her petition and request to him; which she had deferred, partly in hope of still increasing his affection to her, and partly to prepare him to expect something of moment and importance to be asked of him. Jarchi restrains this to what he supposes the king had often importuned her to tell, namely, who were her people and her kindred.

Esther 5:9

Ver. 9. Then went Haman forth that day, joyful, and with a glad heart,.... From court to his own house

but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him; did not show him the least degree even of civil respect; which he refused to do, partly lest it should be interpreted an adoration of him, and partly because it was well known to him he had formed a scheme for the destruction of him and all his people; and the rather he refused it to him, as Esther was about to make intercession with the king to revoke his decree, of the success of which he had no doubt; and therefore had nothing to fear from him, but treated him with the utmost contempt, as he deserved:

he was full of wrath against Mordecai; it was a sad mortification to him, and a great allay of that joy and elation of mind on account of the favour he was in; not with the king only, but the queen also, as he imagined.

Esther 5:10

Ver. 10. Nevertheless Haman refrained himself,.... From showing any outward resentment to Mordecai, from laying hands upon him or taking revenge on him, as being too much below him to avenge himself on a single person, when the whole body of the people Mordecai belonged to would shortly feel the power of his hand for such insolent treatment of him:

and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife; who, the Targum says, was the daughter of Tatnai, the governor on the other side the river, **Ezr 5:3**.

Esther 5:11

Ver. 11. And Haman told them of the glory of his riches,.... Of the multitude of them; which he did partly in a way of ostentation, and partly, if he could, to make his mind easy under the mortification he received from Mordecai; and, it may be, chiefly to aggravate his rudeness and ill behaviour towards him, a man of so much wealth: and the multitude of his children; he had ten, as we learn from **Es 9:10**, but the former Targum enlarges them, beyond credit, to the number of two hundred and eight, besides his ten sons, and Shimshai the scribe; such were had in great esteem with the Persians who had many children; to such the king used to send gifts annually {k}:

and all the things wherein the king had promoted him; the high offices of honour and trust he had put him into:

and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. See **Es 3:1**.

{k} Herodot, Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 136. Strabo. Geograph. l. 15. p. 504.

Esther 5:12

Ver. 12. Haman said, moreover,.... To all which he added, and what seemed to delight him most of all, or however was a new additional honour done him:

yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; which he judged was doing him singular honour; and, by the joint affection of the king and queen to him, he thought himself established in his dignity and grandeur:

and tomorrow am I invited unto her also with the king; had been invited, not by a messenger, but by the queen herself, which was a double honour.

Esther 5:13

Ver. 13. Yet all this availeth me nothing,.... Is not equal or sufficient for me; it gives me no satisfaction and contentment:

so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate: not rising up to bow unto him; this single circumstance spoiled all his joy and pleasure.

Esther 5:14

Ver. 14. Then said Zeresh his wife, and all his friends, unto him,.... His wife very probably first moved it, and all his friends present approved of it and united in it:

let a gallows be made, of fifty cubits, high; that the person hanged thereon might be seen at a distance, and so be a greater reproach to him, and a terror to others, to take care they were not guilty of the same offence: Cartalo was ordered by his father to be fixed to the highest cross in the sight of the city {l}; and it was usual for crosses to be erected very high {m} both for that purpose, and for greater infamy and disgrace {n}:

and tomorrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon; get a grant from him for it; of which they made no doubt, since Haman had such an interest in him, and had already obtained an order to destroy all Jews in his dominions:

then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet; eased of the burden of his mind, and honoured to be a guest with the royal pair:

and the thing pleased Haman, and he caused the gallows to be made; but it was for himself, as it proved in the issue. See Es 7:10.

{l} Justin e Trogo, l. 18. c. 7. Vid. l. 22. c. 7. {m} Vid. Lipsium de Cruce, l. 3. c. 13. {n} Suetonius in Galba, c. 9.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Esther 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO ESTHER 6

Ahasuerus, not being able to sleep in the night, ordered the book of records to be brought and read to him, where a fact of Mordecai's was registered, and, upon inquiry, it appeared that nothing had been done to him for it, Es 6:1 and Haman being in the outward court, was ordered in, with whom the king consulted what should be done to the man the king delighted to honour; to which Haman gave answer, and was bid to do as he said, Es 6:4, which he did, but went home after it confounded and sorrowful, and told his mournful case to his wife and friends, who plainly foresaw his downfall, Es 6:11.

Ver. 1. On that night could not the king sleep,.... The night after he had been at Esther's banquet, which it might be thought would rather have caused sleep; and therefore Jarchi calls it a miracle; and no doubt it was owing to the overruling providence of God, and not to anxious thoughts about his neglect of Esther so long, nor what should be her request to him, nor jealousy of any amorous intrigue with Haman, nor of any conspiracy of theirs against his life:

and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; the diaries or journal, in which memorable facts were recorded; this he did to divert himself, and pass away time; though here also the providence of God was specially concerned; for otherwise he might have sent for any of his wives and concubines, or singing men and women, to have diverted him:

and they were read before the king; until the morning, until it was time to rise, as appears by what follows.

Esther 6:2

Ver. 2. And it was found written,.... Upon reading, and in which there was also a peculiar hand of Providence, directing to the reading of that part of them in which the affair of Mordecai was registered: and if what the latter Targum says is true, it was the more remarkable, that when Shimshai the scribe, who was ordered to bring the book and read, and who, according to the former Targum, was Haman's son, seeing what was recorded of Mordecai, turned over the leaves of the book, being unwilling to read it; but the leaves rolled back again, and he was obliged to read it:

that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the King Ahasuerus; see **Es 2:21**, and it was usual in such diaries to record the names of persons, who, by any actions, had deserved well of the king, that they might be rewarded as there was an opportunity for it; and such, in the Persian language, were called Orosangae, as Herodotus relates {o}.

{o} Urania, sive, l. 8. c. 85.

Esther 6:3

Ver. 3. And the king said, what honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?.... He judged it an action worthy of regard, and what ought to be rewarded, as it was the saving of his life; but had forgot whether any royal favour had been shown to the person for it:

then said the king's servants that ministered unto him; the lords of his bedchamber then in waiting:

there is nothing done for him; not on that account, nothing more than what he had; he had an office at court before, but was not advanced to anything higher on this account.

Esther 6:4

Ver. 4. And the king said, who is in the court?.... Being in haste to confer some honour on Mordecai for what he had done:

now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house; though it was early in the morning, being eager to get to the speech of the king before he was engaged in any business, to obtain a grant from him:

to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him; of which he made no doubt of having, and therefore had prepared for it.

Esther 6:5

Ver. 5. And the king's servants said unto him, behold, Haman standeth in the court,.... In the outward court; for into the inward court none might enter without being called, for which he was waiting:

and the king said, let him come in; into his bedchamber; and it was of God, no doubt, that Haman should be on the spot at this very time, when the king was in the humour to do honour to Mordecai, and by him.

Esther 6:6

Ver. 6. So Haman came in,.... But was prevented speaking to the king about the business he came upon by the following speech of the king:

what shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? he mentions not the name of any man, that he might the more freely, and unbiasedly, and disinterestedly give his advice; nor might the king know of any resentment of Haman to Mordecai:

(now Haman thought in his heart, to whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?) who had been advanced above all the princes and nobles of the realm, and was now in such high honour both with the king and queen, with whom he was to be at a banquet that day; and he might conclude, that by putting this question to him, he could have in view none but himself: Aben Ezra observes, that some from hence gather, that this book was written by the spirit of prophecy, because none could know the thoughts of the heart but God; but though he believes it to be written by the Holy Ghost, yet, as he observes, Haman might disclose this thought of his heart to his friends afterwards.

Esther 6:7

Ver. 7. And Haman answered the king,.... At once, being very prompt to suggest the honours he hoped to have done to himself:

for the man whom the king delighteth to honour; let the following things be done.

Esther 6:8

Ver. 8. Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear,.... Not a whole suit of clothes, but a single garment; the purple robe, as both the Targums, such as kings wore; that which Cyrus appeared in public in was half purple, and half white, and no other person besides might wear such an one {p}; it was a capital crime with the Persians to wear any of the king's apparel; Trebazus, an intimate of Artaxerxes, having begged an old gown of him, it was granted, on condition that he would not wear it, it being contrary to the laws of Persia; but he, regardless of the order, appeared in it at court; which affront to the king was so resented by the Persians, that they were for punishing him rigorously, according to the law, had not Artaxerxes declared, that he had ordered him to appear in that dress as his fool {q}; hence Artabanus, though uncle to Xerxes, was very unwilling to obey his orders, to put on his royal robes, sit on his throne, and sleep on his bed {r}; so that this was a daring proposal in Haman, which he would never have ventured to have made, had it not been for the great confidence he had in the king's favour;

and the horse that the king rideth upon: the kings of Persia, as Herodotus {s} relates, had horses peculiar to them, and those were Nisaean horses, which were brought from Armenia, as Strabo says {t}, and were remarkable for their beauty {u}; and if the same law obtained in Persia as did in Judea, no man might ride on the king's horse any more than sit on his throne, or hold his sceptre {w} and perhaps this horse here was not proposed for the person to ride on, but to be led in state before him; and though it is afterwards said that Mordecai rode on horseback, yet it might not be on the king's horse, which might be only led; and what follows seems to confirm it:

and the crown royal which is set upon his head; or, "let it be set", &c. not the head of the man, but on the head of the horse; and so Aben Ezra; and which sense is countenanced by the Targum, and by the Syriac version, and is approved of by Vatablus and De Dieu; and which the order of the words requires, the horse being the immediate antecedent; and no mention is made of the crown afterwards, as set on the head of Mordecai; nor would Haman have dared to advise to that, nor could it be granted; but this was what was wont to be done, to put the royal crown on the head of a horse led in state; and this we are assured was a custom in Persia {x}, as it is with the Ethiopians to this day {y}; and so, with the Romans, horses drawing triumphal chariots were crowned {z} which Tertullian calls {a} public horses with their crowns.

{p} Xenophon Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 23. {q} Plutarch. in Artaxerxe. {r} Herodot. Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 15, 16. {s} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 192. {t} Geograph. l. 11. p. 365. {u} Julian. Opera, par. 1. Orat. 2. p. 94. {w} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 5. {x} Brisson. apud Castell. Lexic. col. 4008. {y} Alvarez Hist. Ethiop. c. 105. apud ib. col. 3869. {z} Paschal. de Coronis, l. 8. c. 5. p. 536. {a} De Corona Militis, c. 13.

Esther 6:9

Ver. 9. And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes,.... The one,

that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour; and the other to be led in state before him:

and bring him on horseback through the street of the city; on another horse, that all might see what honour was done him:

and proclaim before him; as before Joseph, when advanced next to Pharaoh, Ge 41:43 this was not to be done by an herald, but by a nobleman, to whom the apparel and horse were to be delivered, and was done by Haman, **Es 6:11**,

thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour; these were the words said in the proclamation, signifying this was the man the king delighted to honour, and this the manner in which he would have it done.

Esther 6:10

Ver. 10. Then the king said to Haman, make haste,.... And without delay go into the royal treasury, or wardrobe, as the Targum adds: "and take the apparel"; the royal robe, the purple one, or one of the precious purple robes;

and then, as the same Targum, go to the king's stable, and take thence the king's "horse", that stands in the chief place in the stable, whose name is "Shiphregaz"; but how the Targumist came by the name of it, I know not; however it was not unusual for kings to give a name to their favourite horse, as Alexander the great did to his called Bucephalus and even for all kings of Persia, as Darius Hystaspis {b}:

as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate; the person he meant this honour for he describes by name, by nation, and by office, that there might be no mistake:

let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken; the king objected not to anything that had been proposed, and insisted on it that every thing be done punctually by Haman as he had advised, and from which he could not with honour recede; though nothing could be more mortifying to him to do, to a man he came to court to get a grant to hang on a gallows he had prepared.

{b} Herodot. Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 88.

Esther 6:11

Ver. 11. Then took Haman the apparel, and the horse,.... The one out of the wardrobe, the other out of the stable, and the crown also no doubt, though no mention is made of it, since the king made no objection to it, yea, commanded that nothing fail of what had been spoken; but this was included in the pomp and state of the led horse: and brought him on horseback through the street of the city; the most grand and public part of it, thus arrayed, and in this state: and proclaimed before him, thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour; See Gill on "Es 6:9".

Esther 6:12

Ver. 12. And Mordecai came again to the king's gate,.... To attend his post and office at court; which confirms what has been already hinted, that he was in some office in the court, which this phrase is expressive of, and not a porter at the gate; for it is not probable he should return to such a station, after so much honour had been done him; and much less that he returned to his sackcloth and fasting, as Jarchi and the former Targum; since he might reasonably conclude things were taking a turn in his favour, and that of his people; though as yet he knew not what success Esther had had, to wait for which he returned to court:

but Haman hasted to his house; pushed forward as fast as he could:

mourning; at his sad disappointment:

and having his head covered; through grief and sorrow, confusion and shame; so Demosthenes, being hissed, went home with his head covered {c}, as confounded and ashamed to be seen {d}.

{c} Plutarch in Demosthene. {d} See more instances in Lively's Chronology of the Persian monarchy, p. 18, 19.

Esther 6:13

Ver. 13. And Haman told Zeresh his wife, and all his friends, every thing that had befallen him,.... How he was prevented speaking to the king on this errand he went; instead of which, he had the mortification of being obliged to do the honour to Mordecai which he thought would never have been given to any but himself, and so related the whole affair as above:

then said his wise men; before called his friends; perhaps they were magicians and soothsayers he kept in his house, to advise with about the proper methods and times of advancing himself, and destroying his enemies:

and Zeresh his wife unto him; who joined with the wise men in giving her opinion, and who set up for a knowing woman, and of whom Haman thought highly:

if Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews; as it was said he was; and therefore Haman had vowed and plotted revenge on the people of the Jews for his sake:

before whom thou hast begun to fall; as he did, by being obliged to execute the king's will in doing him so much honour:

thou shall not prevail against him; to get him hanged, or his people destroyed, though he had prepared a gallows for the one, and had got an edict for the other:

but shall surely fall before him: which might be concluded from his being set above him, who would not fail of using his power and interest to crush him, who had showed himself to be such an implacable enemy to him; or they might have some knowledge of the history of the Jews, and of what wonderful things God often did for them, in defeating the designs of their enemies, and in raising them up from a low to an high estate.

Esther 6:14

Ver. 14. And while they were yet talking with him,.... About these things, and giving their opinion of the issue of them, upon the present appearance of them:

came the king's chamberlains, and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared; the time appointed for it being very near, or quite up, and Haman being backward and dilatory, having no stomach to go to it, and perhaps fearing worse things were coming upon him he should hear of there.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Esther 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO ESTHER 7

Esther, being solicited by the king to tell him her petition, asks for her life and the lives of her people, who were sold to be destroyed, **Es 7:1**, the king, amazed at her request, inquires who was the person that dared to do so vile a thing; and was told by her it was Haman there present, **Es 7:5** on which the king went out into the garden in wrath, and, returning, found Haman on Esther's bed, which still more incensed him; and being told that Haman had prepared a gallows for Mordecai, the king ordered that he himself should be hanged upon it, which was done accordingly, **Es 7:7**.

Ver. 1. So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen. Or, "to drink with her" {e}, that is, wine; for in the next verse it is called a banquet of wine; so they did according to the invitation the queen had given them, **Es 5:8**.

{e} twtvl "ut biberent", V. L. Tigurine version; "ad bibendum", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Vatablus.

Esther 7:2

Ver. 2. And the king said again to Esther on the second day, at the banquet of wine,.... This was the third time he put the following question to her, being very desirous of knowing what she had to ask of him; and it was of God that this was kept upon his mind, and he was moved to solicit her petition, or otherwise it would not have been so easy for her to have introduced it:

what is thy petition, Queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of my kingdom; see **Es 5:3**.

Esther 7:3

Ver. 3. Then Esther the queen answered and said,.... Not rolling herself at the king's knees, as Severus {f} writes; but rather, as the former Targum, lifting up her eyes to heaven, and perhaps putting up a secret ejaculation for direction and success:

if I have found favour in thy sight, O king; as she certainly had heretofore, and even now:

and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition; not riches, nor honour, nor any place or post at court, or in any of the king's dominions for any friend of her's, was her petition; but for her own life, that that might not be taken away, which was included in the grant the king had made to Haman, though ignorantly, to slay all the Jews, she being one of them:

and my people at my request; that is, the lives of her people also, that was her request; her own life and her people's were all she had to ask.

{f} Hist. Sacr. l. 2.

Esther 7:4

Ver. 4. For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish,.... She makes use of these several words, to express the utter destruction of her and her people, without any exception; not only the more to impress the king's mind with it, but she has respect to the precise words of the decree, **Es 3:13** as she has also to the 10,000 talents of silver Haman offered to pay the king for the grant of it, when she says, "we are sold", or delivered to be destroyed:

but if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue: should never have asked for deliverance from bondage, but have patiently submitted to it, however unreasonable, unjust, and afflictive it would have been; because it might have been borne, and there might be hope of deliverance from it at one time or another; though it is said, slaves with the Persians were never made free {g}; but that being the case would not have been so great a loss to the king, who would have reaped some advantage by their servitude; whereas, by the death of them, he must sustain a loss which the enemy was not equal to, and which he could not compensate with all his riches; which, according to Ben Melech, is the sense of the next clause:

although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage; or, "for the enemy cannot", &c. the 10,000 talents offered by him, and all the riches that he has, are not an equivalent to the loss the king would sustain by the death of such a multitude of people, from whom he received so large a tribute; but this the enemy regarded not; and so Jarchi interprets it, the enemy took no care of, or was concerned about the king's damage; but there is another sense, which Aben Ezra mentions, and is followed by some learned men, who take the word for "enemy" to signify "distress", trouble, and anguish, as in **Ps 4:1** and read the words, "for this distress would not be reckoned the king's damage" {h}, or loss; though it would have been a distress to the Jews to have been sold for slaves, yet the loss to the king would not be so great as their death, since he would receive benefit by their service.

{g} Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 20. {h} ruh "adversitas", Drusius, De Dieu; "angustia", Cocc. Lexic. in rad. hwv.

Esther 7:5

Ver. 5. Then the King Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen,.... The words in the original text lie thus, "and the King Ahasuerus said, and he said to Esther the queen"; which doubling of the word does not signify, as Jarchi suggests, that before he spoke to her by a messenger, or middle person, but, now he knew she was of a royal family, he spoke to her himself; but it is expressive of the ruffle of his mind, and the wrath and fury he was in, that he said it again and again, with a stern countenance and great vehemence of speech:

who is he? and where is he? who is the man? and where does he live?

that durst presume in his heart to do so; that has boldness, impudence, and courage enough to perpetrate so vile an action: or "that has filled his heart" {i}; the devil no doubt filled his heart to do it, see **Ac 5:3**, but the king had either forgot the decree he had granted, and the countenance he had given him to execute it; or, if he remembered it, he was now enraged that he should be drawn in to such an action by him; and perhaps till now was ignorant of Esther's descent, and knew not that she would be involved in the decree.

{i} wbl walm rva "qui replevit cor suum", Drusius; "implevit", De Dieu.

Esther 7:6

Ver. 6. And Esther said, the adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman,.... Who was not only an enemy to her and her people, but an adversary to the king, by advising and persuading him to that which was to the loss of his revenues, as well as of his reputation; also, she pointed at him, and gave him his just character; her charge of wickedness upon him, as it was true, it was honourably made to his face before the king, of which, if he could, he had the opportunity of exculpating himself:

then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen; gave visible signs of his confusion, consternation, and trouble of mind, by the fall of his countenance, his pale looks, his trembling limbs, and quivering lips, being struck dumb, and not able to speak one word for himself.

Esther 7:7

Ver. 7. And the king, arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath, went into the palace garden,.... Not being able to bear the sight of Haman, who had done such an injury both to himself and to the queen; as also that his wrath might subside, and he become more composed and sedate, and be able coolly to deliberate what was fitting to be done in the present case:

and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; hoping that her tender heart might be wrought upon to show mercy to him, and be prevailed on to entreat the king to spare his life; and this request he made in the most submissive manner:

for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king; he perceived it both by the king's countenance, by the rage he went out in, and by the threatening words which he very probably uttered as he went out.

Esther 7:8

Ver. 8. Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine,.... Being a little cooler, and more composed in his mind, see See Gill on "Es 1:5"

and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was; not the bed she lay on to sleep in the night, (for it cannot be thought that it was a bedchamber in which the banquet was,) but on the bed or couch on which she sat or reclined at the banquet, as was the custom in the eastern countries; now, "by", or "near" this, as the word may be rendered, Haman fell down, even at the feet of the queen, begging for mercy; and some think he might embrace her feet or knees, as was the custom of the Greeks and Romans as they were supplicating {k}; and so it seems to have been with the Jews, see **2Ki 4:27**, and being in this posture, it might appear the more indecent, and give the king an opportunity to say as follows:

then said the king, will he force the queen also before me in the house?, that is, ravish her; not that he really thought so; it was not a time nor place for such an action; nor can it be thought that Haman, in such terror and confusion he was in, could be so disposed; and besides there were others present, as the next clause shows: but this he said, putting the worst construction on his actions, and plainly declaring his opinion of him, that he thought him a man capable of committing the vilest of crimes, and that his supplications were not to be regarded:

as the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face; the servants present, as a man unworthy to see the light; and they took what the king said to amount to a sentence of condemnation, and that it was his will he should die; and they covered his face, as condemned malefactors used to be; which was a custom among the Greeks and Romans, of which many instances may be given {l}; though Aben Ezra says it was the custom of the kings of Persia, that their servants covered the face of him the king was angry with, that he might not see his face any more, which was well known in the Persian writings.

{k} "Genibusque suas", &c. Claudian. de Raptu Proserpin l. 1. ver. 50. & Barthius in ib. Vid. Homer. Iliad. 21. l. 75. Plin. l. 1. Ep. 18. {l} "Caput obnubito", &c. Ciceron. Orat. 18. "pro Rabirio", Liv. Hist. l. 1. p. 15. Curt. Hist. l. 6. c. 11. Vid. Solerium de Pileo, sect. 2. p. 20. & Lipsii not. in lib. 1. c. 1. de Cruce, p. 203, 204.

Esther 7:9

Ver. 9. And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king,.... One of the seven chamberlains, see **Es 1:10**, his name, with Josephus {y}, is Sabouchadas.

Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. This man, perhaps, had seen it there, when he went with others to fetch Haman to the banquet, **Es 6:14**. The sin of Haman is aggravated by preparing a gallows for a man before he was accused to the king, or condemned, or had a grant for his execution, and for a man that had well deserved of the king for discovering a conspiracy against him, and whom now the king had delighted to honour:

then the king said, hang him thereon; immediately, being ready prepared, the king's word was enough, being a sovereign and tyrannical prince.

{y} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 6. sect. 11.

Esther 7:10

Ver. 10. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai,.... Not within his house, **Es 7:9**, but more probably in his courtyard, in the sight of his family and friends; or, it may be, the gallows was taken from thence, and set up without the city, where he was hanged: for so it is said in the additions of the book of Esther,

"For he that was the worker of these things, is hanged at the gates of Susa with all his family: God, who ruleth all things, speedily rendering vengeance to him according to his deserts." (Esther 16:18) that he was hanged without the gates of Shushan; see **Ps 7:15**,

then was the king's wrath pacified; having inflicted punishment on such a wicked counsellor of his, and the contriver of such mischief.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Esther 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO ESTHER 8

This chapter relates the gifts Ahasuerus gave to Esther and Mordecai, **Es 8:1**, the suit Esther made to him to reverse the letters for the destruction of the Jews, **Es 8:3**, which, though it could not be formally granted, was in effect done by letters sent to the Jews, giving them power to rise in their own defence, and slay their enemies, **Es 8:7**, the consequence of which, and the advancement of Mordecai, were matter of great joy to the Jews, **Es 8:15**.

Ver. 1. On that day did the King, Ahasuerus, give the house of Haman, the Jews' enemy, unto Esther the queen,.... That, and all the goods in it, and estate belonging to it; which being confiscated to the king, he gave to Esther, who would have been the sufferer, had his scheme taken place; so the Targum adds,

"and the men of his house, and all his treasures, and all his riches:"

and Mordecai came before the king; was introduced into his presence, became one of his privy counsellors, one of those that saw the king's face, and sat first in the kingdom, **Es 1:14**

for Esther had told what he was unto her; what relation he stood in to her; her uncle, according to the Vulgate Latin version, and so Aben Ezra and Josephus, but wrongly, for she was his uncle's daughter; so that they were brother's children, or own cousins, see **Es 2:7**.

Esther 8:2

Ver. 2. And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai,.... which, with the Persians, was a token of the strongest affection and strictest friendship {z}; the Targum calls it his signatory ring, that with which he signed laws, edicts, letters, patents, &c. and so hereby made him keeper of the seals:

and Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman; appointed him her steward of the estate of Haman, the king had given her.

{z} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 26. & l. 2. c. 19.

Esther 8:3

Ver. 3. And Esther spake yet again before the king,.... Went into his presence, without being called for as before, with a new petition:

and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears; the more to work upon his affections, and move him to grant her request; which she might be the more encouraged to hope for, through the success she already had:

to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews; to revoke, abolish, and make void a mischievous scheme Haman had devised against the Jews, to root out the whole nation of them in the Persian empire.

Esther 8:4

Ver. 4. Then the king held out the golden sceptre towards Esther,.... As a token that she had not incurred his displeasure by coming into his presence without leave, and that she was admitted to speak and make her request; see **Es 5:3**

so Esther arose and stood before the king; she rose from the ground on which she lay prostrate, and stood upon her feet, in an humble manner, to make her speech, and present her petition to the king.

Esther 8:5

Ver. 5. And said, if it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes,.... This heap of phrases, which signify much the same thing, are used to work upon the king's affections, and to show how submissive she was to his will:

let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces. She wisely takes no notice of any concern the king had in them, but suggests as that she looked upon them as forged by Haman, who put the king's name and seal to them, without his knowledge and consent.

Esther 8:6

Ver. 6. For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people?.... I cannot bear it; it will break my heart; I shall die to see all my people massacred throughout the realm; the thought of it is shocking and shuddering; to see it, intolerable: or "how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?" the same thing in different words, and somewhat more express and explanative. She explains the evil coming upon her people of the utter destruction of them, not barely an oppression, but an extermination of them; and she makes use of a word expressive of their relation to her, as more endearing, being her kindred; she and they being, as it were, of the same family, and with whom she could not but sympathize in distress.

Esther 8:7

Ver. 7. Then the King Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen, and to Mordecai the Jew,.... Who was present at the same time, either at the desire of Esther, or by virtue of his office, being now one of those that saw the king's face, **Es 8:1**,

behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman;
See Gill on "Es 8:1",

and him they have hanged upon the gallows; which he had prepared for Mordecai, **Es 7:10**

because he laid his hand upon the Jews; intended to do so, and had prepared for it, and wrote letters, ordering their destruction on such a day. Now as the king had shown favour to Esther and Mordecai, and had punished Haman for contriving mischief against them and the Jews, which was publicly known, the people would be fearful of doing anything against them, lest they should incur the king's displeasure, and therefore might make themselves easy about this matter; but, however, to give them all the satisfaction he could, he directs them to do as follows.

Esther 8:8

Ver. 8. Write ye also for the Jews as it liketh you,.... Whatever may be thought fit and proper for their safety and security:

in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring; as the former letters were:

for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse; which is a reason both for the writing and sealing of the present letters in this manner, and why the former could not be reversed; nor does it appear that they were, but that, in virtue of them, the people had power to rise and kill the Jews on the day appointed, if they dared, or were so disposed; and these empowered the Jews to rise in their own defence, and kill all that made any attempts upon them, for which they had the royal authority; and these letters coming after the other, though they did not formally reverse them, which might not be done, yet rendered them ineffectual.

Esther 8:9

Ver. 9. Then were the king's scribes called at that time,.... As they were to write the former letter, **Es 3:12**,

in the third month, that is the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof; which answers to part of May, and part of June. This was two months and ten days after the writing of the former letters; so long the Jews had been in distress by reason of them, and was a just rebuke upon them for not returning to their own land when they might, as well as for other sins:

and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded to the Jews. Mordecai dictated to the scribes, and ordered what they should write; and which were sent to the Jews in the first place, partly to ease them of their present distress, and partly that they might prepare against that time for their defence, for which they had sufficient time, it being now more than nine months to it:

and to the lieutenants, and the deputies, and the rulers of the provinces, which are from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces. The letters were directed to the same magistrates in the several provinces as the former, giving orders to them, that, notwithstanding them, they were to suffer the Jews to defend themselves, and not punish them for what should be done by them in self-defence; see **Es 1:1**,

unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language; some provinces spoke the Persian language, and used the character of it, others Chaldee, others Syriac, &c. and wrote in the usual characters, as the Jews did in Hebrew, and in the characters of that language; and now these letters were written in the language and character of the people of the several provinces they were sent to, that they might be easily read and understood.

Esther 8:10

Ver. 10. And he wrote in the King Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring,.... Which gave the letters authority, and made them irreversible, and for this Mordecai had the king's order, **Es 8:8**

and sent letters by post; by runners or couriers:

on horseback; that rode on horses that were racers, that ran swiftly:

and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries; which were all different creatures, and swift ones, according to our version, especially the latter; see **Jer 2:23** which were a kind of camels, but swifter, and would go more than one hundred miles a day {a}; and, as Diodorus Siculus says {b}, not less than 1500 furlongs or about two hundred miles: though it may be only one sort are meant, namely, "mules", for the next word, "ahashteranim", in the Persian language signifies mules {c}, and so Aben Ezra interprets it, and likewise Kimchi and Ben Melech; and the last words may be rendered "sons of mares", so David de Pomis; that is, such mules as are gendered by he asses and mares: and so the same writer observes, that the word in the Arabic language signifies "mares"; and such mules that come from them he says are stronger than those that come from she asses; so that the whole may be rendered to this sense, "riders on mules", (which in the Persian language are called "ahashteranim",) namely, such as are "sons of mares"; and which according to Aelianus {d} and Pliny {e} are the swiftest; though the Persians had camels swifter than are common elsewhere, called "revatrie", the "goer", which trot as fast as an horse can gallop {f}.

{a} Isidor. Origin. l. 12. c. 1. Vid. Strabo Geograph. l. 15. p. 498. {b} Bibliothec. l. 19. p. 683. {c} Castell. Dictionar. Persic. col. 29. Hottinger. Smegma Oriental l. 1. c. 5. p. 75. {d} De Animal. l. 16. c. 9. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 44. {f} Universal History, vol. 5. p. 88.

Esther 8:11

Ver. 11. Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together,.... In some part of the city they should choose, and remain in a body, being sufficiently armed:

and to stand for their life; to defend themselves, and fight for their life, should any attack them, or attempt to take it away; in such case they might act offensively,

so as to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them; every army of them, or as many as should join in a body to attack them, any mighty or powerful mob; and not men only,

but both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey; the same words are used, and the same power is given them as were to their enemies, **Es 3:13**, not that they made use of it to the utmost extremity, it is certain they did not in one point, in taking the spoil, **Es 9:10**, and, since they spared that, it is highly probable they spared women and children.

Esther 8:12

Ver. 12. Upon one day, in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. The day appointed and fixed in the former letters for the destruction of the Jews, **Es 3:13**.

Esther 8:13

Ver. 13. The copy of the writing, for a commandment to be given in every province, was published to all people,.... A copy of the letters sent to the governors of provinces; the sum and substance of them was published by an herald, or fixed in public places, that all might know the contents thereof; and take care not to assault the Jews, as it would be to their peril:

and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies; Abendana thinks this is to be restrained to those that were of the seed of Amalek, who were their principal enemies; but no doubt it includes all that should rise up against them.

Esther 8:14

Ver. 14. So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out,.... Or on the mules, which in the Persian language were called "ahashteranim";
See Gill on "Es 8:10",

being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment; who gave them a special order to make what haste they could, that the Jews might have time to prepare for their defence, and their enemies be the more intimidated:

and the decree was given at Shushan the palace; the king's counsellors agreeing to it, and perhaps signing it, as they did the former; see **Es 3:15**.

Esther 8:15

Ver. 15. And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king,.... And walked or rode about in the city to show himself to his friends:

in royal apparel of blue and white; such as the Persian kings wore, and were not allowed to any other, as Xenophon writes {g}:

and with a great crown of gold; a coronet, such as princes and nobles wear; the latter Targum calls it a great golden chain, and such the eastern kings used to give to their favourites; see **Da 5:29**,

and with a garment of fine linen and purple; this must be an inner garment, since it is distinct from the royal robe before mentioned; though as the word signifies a wrap, or roll, it may design a turban, which was a roll of linen wrapped about the head; and such was the Persian diadem, according to Curtius {h}, which was of a purple colour, mixed with white; and so the Septuagint version is, "and a diadem of fine linen, of a purple colour"; and if so, the crown of gold was not worn on his head, nor is it likely it should be allowed, but was carried before him, See Gill on "Es 6:8",

and the city of Shushan rejoiced, and was glad; not only the Jews in it, but the native inhabitants of it, that had any sense of humanity, expressed their joy at the sight of Mordecai thus arrayed; that so good a man was advanced at court, and so bad a man as Haman was displaced and put to death; see Pr 29:2.

{g} Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 23. {h} Hist. l. 3. c. 3. & l. 6. c. 6. Vid. Solerium de Pileo, sect. 9.

Esther 8:16

Ver. 16. And the Jews had light,.... Prosperity, as opposed to the darkness of adversity in which they had been, see **Isa 8:22**, or lightsomeness and cheerfulness of spirit, as explained by the two next words:

and gladness and joy; at the good news of their deliverance, so unexpected by them; thus light is explained by gladness, Ps 97:11

and honour: among men; from their neighbours, who before were held in contempt, as a people doomed to destruction.

Esther 8:17

Ver. 17. And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came,.... As they did to every province in the realm, and to every city in the province, where there were any Jews:

the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day; they expressed their joy on this occasion by keeping a festival, which in their language is called a good day; and such an one is annually kept by them unto this day, on account of their deliverance; of which see **Es 9:27**

and many of the people of the land became Jews; or were proselyted, as both the Targums and Jarchi interpret it; they embraced the Jewish religion, and submitted to the rites and ceremonies of it; were circumcised, as in the Septuagint version, and so were proselytes of righteousness; and indeed no other could they be, dwelling in their own land; many of them very probably were serious in it, observing the wonderful manner in which the Jews were delivered; wherein manifestly appeared to them the providence of God, the hand of the Supreme Being, and from hence concluded their God must be the true God, and they his favourite people, and their religion most correct; though others might only do it to gain the favour of Esther and Mordecai, who had now such great power and influence at court:

for the fear of the Jews fell upon them; lest they should be slain by them, in virtue of this new edict.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Esther 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO ESTHER 9

In this chapter we have an account of the Jews gathering together, on the day fixed for their destruction, to defend themselves, which they did in all the provinces, and smote their enemies; **Es 9:1**. In Shushan the palace they slew the ten sons of Haman and five hundred men on that day, **Es 9:6** and at the request of the queen they were allowed the next day to hang up his sons, when they slew three hundred men more, **Es 9:12**, in the provinces they slew 75,000 and those in one day only, and the following days they kept as a festival, but they in Shushan kept the two days following, **Es 9:16**, and which two days were established by Esther and Mordecai as festivals, to be observed as such in future ages, by the name of the days of Purim, **Es 9:20**.

Ver. 1. Now in the twelfth month, that is the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same,.... Of which see **Es 3:13**,

when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution; even both his commandments and decrees, the one empowering the enemies of the Jews on that day to destroy them, and the other empowering the Jews to act both defensively and offensively against their enemies:

in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them; by virtue of the first decree of the king; and notwithstanding the second, they might hope to have it because of their superior numbers:

though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them; it proved the reverse, partly through the second decree in favour of the Jews, and partly through the fear of them that fell upon their enemies; because the court was on their side, and the officers everywhere, and especially their God filled them with courage, and their enemies with terror.

Esther 9:2

Ver. 2. The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities, throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus,.... Wherever they lived:

to lay hand on such as sought their hurt; who not only threatened them what they would do on this day, but were risen up in arms in quest of them:

and no man could withstand them, for the fear of them fell upon all people; when they understood that Haman was hanged, and Mordecai the Jew advanced, and that the queen herself was a Jew, and that the Jews had the royal grant to act both defensively and offensively; and no doubt but the panic was of God.

Esther 9:3

Ver. 3. And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, blessed the Jews,.... Countenanced them and encouraged them, and gave them all assistance in their power; extolled them, as the word signifies, lifted them up, and spoke well of them, or praised them, as the Targum:

because the fear of Mordecai was upon them; he being now chief minister, they might fear, if they took part with the enemies of the Jews against them, they might be turned out of their places.

Esther 9:4

Ver. 4. For Mordecai was great in the king's house,.... Not only over Esther's affairs, but was one of the king's counsellors, and was the chief minister of state:

and his fame went out throughout all the provinces; what a favourite he was of the king, as well as a relation of the queen, and how wise and just his administrations were:

for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater, was more and more in the king's favour, and had offices of honour and trust heaped upon him, and increased both in wealth and power.

Esther 9:5

Ver. 5. Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction,.... Some with swords, and others with clubs, and staves; as the Targum; and such like slaughtering weapons of destruction:

and did what they would unto those that hated them; being then entirely at their will, and under their power.

Esther 9:6

Ver. 6. And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men. Not in the royal palace, where it cannot be thought the Jews had so many enemies, or such a bloody slaughter of them should be made there; but in the city, where the palace was: and this may seem somewhat wonderful, that there should so many rise there against the Jews, so near the court, now altogether in the interest of the Jews; but these were men no doubt of Haman's faction, and enraged at his disgrace and death, and headed by his ten sons, who took the advantage of the decree to avenge his death; the Targum says, these were princes of the house of Amalek.

Esther 9:7

Ver. 7-10. And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha, and Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha, and Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vajezatha, the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they,.... Along with the five hundred men, at the head of which they were:

but on the spoil laid they not their hands; though they were allowed by the edict to do it, **Es 8:11**, but this they did not, that it might appear that they did not take away their lives from a covetous desire of their estates, but purely in self-defence; and they might do this, the more to ingratiate themselves to the king, to whom the goods and estates of those men would be confiscated.

Esther 9:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "Es 9:7".

Esther 9:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "Es 9:7".

Esther 9:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "Es 9:7".

Esther 9:11

Ver. 11. On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace was brought before the king. Either by order of the king, that he might know how many enemies the Jews had in the city, and how many of subjects had been slain; or officiously by others, with an intention to irritate the king against the Jews.

Esther 9:12

Ver. 12. And the king said unto Esther the queen,.... After the account had been brought in to him:

the Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace; the Targum adds, of the seed of Amalek:

and the ten sons of Haman: which very probably were all he had; though the Targum, in **Es 9:14**, makes mention of seventy sons that Zeresh his wife fled with:

what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? that could not be said; but it might be concluded, that if so many were slain in Shushan, the number must be great in all the provinces:

now what is thy petition and it shall be granted thee: or "what is thy request further? and it shall be done"; if this was not sufficient and satisfactory, whatever else she should ask for should be granted.

Esther 9:13

Ver. 13. Then said Esther, if it please the king,.... For she was all submission to his will:

let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan; for no further did she desire the grant to be extended:

to do tomorrow also according to this days decree; one Targum makes the request only that they might keep the morrow as a festival, but the other, more rightly, to do according to the decree of this day; which was, to slay as many of their enemies as rose up against them; and whereas many might flee and hide themselves, who were implacable enemies of the Jews, Esther moves for a grant that the decree might be continued for the next day, that these might be found out and slain; in which she sought the glory of divine justice, in their righteous destruction, and the peace of the people of God, and not private revenge, or to indulge malice:

and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows; on which their father was; this was deferred, though they were already slain, for their greater reproach, and for a terror to others not to injure the people of God; and it was usual with the Persians to hang persons on a gallows, or fix them to a cross, after they were dead; as Polycrates was by Oroites {i}, and Bagspates by Parysatis {k}.

{i} Herodot. Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 125. {k} Ctesias in Persicis, c. 58.

Esther 9:14

Ver. 14. And the king commanded it so to be done: and the decree was given at Shushan,.... That the Jews might have leave to seek out and slay the rest of their enemies in Shushan, on the fourteenth day, in like manner as they had on the thirteenth:

and they hanged Haman's ten sons; on the same gallows very probably their father was hanged; the Targum gives us the distance between each person hanged thereon.

Esther 9:15

Ver. 15. For the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar,.... As they had on the thirteenth:

and slew three hundred men at Shushan; the Targum adds, of the family of Amalek: but there is no reason to confine it to them; it respects all such as were the enemies of the Jews, and rose up against them; so that the whole number slain in Shushan were eight hundred persons, besides the sons of Human:

but on the prey they laid not their hand; See Gill on "Es 9:7".

Esther 9:16

Ver. 16. But the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together,.... In a body, in their respective provinces and cities:

and stood for their lives; defended themselves against those that attacked them:

and had rest from their enemies; that selfsame day; all being destroyed by them, and none daring to appear against them:

and slew of their foes 75,000 men; that is, in all the provinces put together:

but they laid not their hands on the prey; See Gill on "Es 9:7".

Esther 9:17

Ver. 17. On the thirteenth day of the month Adar,.... This belongs to the preceding verse; and the meaning is, that on this day the Jews gathered together and slew so many thousand of their enemies as before related:

and on the fourteenth day of the same rested they, and made it a feast of gladness: rejoicing that they were delivered out of the hand of their enemies, who hoped and expected on that day to have made an utter end of them; according to the Jewish canons {l}, mourning and fasting on this day were forbidden, but feasting and gladness were to be multiplied.

{l} Lebush, c. 697. Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 697.

Esther 9:18

Ver. 18. But the Jews that were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day thereof, and on the fourteenth day thereof,.... Of the month Adar; that is, they gathered together to defend themselves, and destroy their enemies, on both these days, having the decree renewed for the fourteenth as they had for the thirteenth:

and on the fifteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness; as the Jews in the provinces did on the fourteenth.

Esther 9:19

Ver. 19. Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwalled towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting,.... Jarchi observes that those in the villages, who are they that do not dwell in walled towns, observed the fourteenth, and they in towns surrounded with walls the fifteenth, as Shushan; and this circumvallation, he says, must be what was from the days of Joshua; according to the Jewish canons, every place that was walled from the days of Joshua the son of Nun, whether in the land of Israel or out of it, though not now walled they read (i.e. the book of Esther) on the fifteenth of Adar, and this is called a walled town; but a place which was not walled in the days of Joshua, though now walled, they read in the fourteenth, and this is called a city; but the city Shushan, though it was not walled in the days of Joshua, they read on the fifteenth, because in it was done a miracle {m} and each of these was kept as a day of public rejoicing for their great deliverance and freedom from their enemies:

and a good day: as the Jews usually call the several days of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles:

and of sending portions one to another: expressive of mutual joy, and congratulating one another upon the happiness they shared in; see Re 11:10, and particularly this may respect sending gifts to the poor, who had not that to rejoice and make merry with others had; see **Ne 8:10**, though these seem to be distinct from them, **Es 9:22**.

{m} Maimon. Hilchot. Megillah, c. 1. sect. 4. 5. T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 2. 2.

Esther 9:20

Ver. 20. And Mordecai wrote these things,.... The transactions of those two days, and the causes of them, as well as the following letter; some conclude from hence that he was the penman of the book; and so he might be, but it does not necessarily follow from hence:

and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the King Ahasuerus, both nigh and far; such as were near the city Shushan, and those that were at the greatest distance from it; these were more especially the things he wrote.

Esther 9:21

Ver. 21. To stablish this among them,.... That it might be a settled thing, and annually observed in all future generations, what they had now done:

that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly; as the former had been observed by the Jews in the provinces, and both by those in Shushan, **Es 9:17**

as festivals in commemoration of their great deliverance; hence the fourteenth of Adar is called the day of Mordecai, being established by him;

"And they ordained all with a common decree in no case to let that day pass without solemnity, but to celebrate the thirtieth day of the twelfth month, which in the Syrian tongue is called Adar, the day before Mardocheus' day." (2 Maccabees 15:36)

Esther 9:22

Ver. 22. As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies,.... Having slain all those that rose up against them, and assaulted them:

and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning unto a good day; for in this month Adar, on the thirteenth day of it, they expected to have been all destroyed, which had occasioned great sorrow and mourning in them; but beyond their expectation, in the same month, and on the selfsame day of the month, they had deliverance and freedom from their enemies; which was matter of joy, and made this day a good day to them:

that they should make them days of feasting and joy; keep both the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month as festivals, eating and drinking, and making all tokens of joy and gladness, though not in the Bacchanalian way in which they now observe them; for they say {n}, a man is bound at the feast of Purim to exhilarate or inebriate himself until he does not know the difference between `cursed be Haman' and `blessed be Mordecai:'

and of sending portions one to another; and these now consist of eatables and drinkables; and according to the Jewish canons {o}, a man must send two gifts to his friend, at least; and they that multiply them are most commendable; and those are sent by men to men, and by women to women, and not on the contrary:

and gifts to the poor; alms money, as the Targum, to purchase food and drink with, nor may they use it to any other purpose; though some say they may do what they will with it {p}; and a man must not give less than two gifts to the poor; these are called the monies of Purim {q}.

{n} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 7. 2. Lebush, par. 1. c. 695. sect. 2. Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 695. sect. 2. {o} Lebush & Schulchan, ib. sect. 4. {p} Ib. c. 694. sect. 1. 2. {q} Ib. sect. 2. 3.

Esther 9:23

Ver. 23. And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them. They engaged to keep these two days as festivals annually, as they had at this time done; not in a religious but in a civil way, not as parts of religious worship, and as additions to and innovations of the law, but by way of commemoration of a civil benefit which they had received; and yet we find in later times that this was scrupled by some as an innovation; for we are told {r} that there were eighty five elders, and more than thirty of them prophets, who were distressed about this matter, fearing it was an innovation.

{r} T. Hieros. Megillah. fol. 70. 4.

Esther 9:24

Ver. 24. Because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them,.... Had formed a design to exterminate them from the whole Persian empire in one day:

and had cast Pur, (that is, the lot,) to consume them, and to destroy them; had cast lots to find out what would be the most lucky day in the year for him to do it on, and the most unlucky and unfortunate to the Jews; and, according to the lot, the thirteenth of Adar was pitched upon; this and the following verse give the reasons for observing the above two days as festivals.

Esther 9:25

Ver. 25. But when Esther came before the king,.... To request of him her life, and the life of her people:

he commanded by letters, that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head; that whereas his wicked scheme was to destroy all the Jews, the king, by his second letter, gave orders that the Jews should have liberty to defend themselves, and destroy their enemies which rose up against them; and the friends and party of Haman were entirely cut off:

and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows; which he had prepared for Mordecai; not that they were ordered to be hanged together, nor were they; Haman was hanged before on the twenty third day of the month, but his sons not till the fourteenth day of the twelfth month; **Es 7:10**.

Esther 9:26

Ver. 26. Wherefore they called these days Purim, after the name of Pur,.... The lot; because of the lots cast by Haman; see **Es 3:7**, therefore for all the words of this letter; in obedience to what Mordecai wrote in his letter to the Jews, and because of the things contained in it:

and of that which they had seen concerning this matter; with their own eyes, in the several provinces where their enemies rose up to assault them, but were destroyed by them:

and what had come unto them: by report; as the fall of Haman, and advancement of Mordecai, and the favours shown to Esther and her people; all this belongs to the following verse, containing the reasons of the Jews' appointment and engagement to observe the days of Purim.

Esther 9:27

Ver. 27. The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such that joined themselves unto them,.... Who became proselytes to their religion; that is, they appointed the above two days as festivals, and engaged for themselves, for their children, and all proselytes, to observe them as such; and one of their canons {s} runs thus,

"all are obliged to read the Megillah (the book of Esther, which they always read on those days), priests, Levites, Nethinims, Israelites, men, women, and proselytes, and servants made free, and they train up little ones to read it:"

so as it should not fail; of being observed, so as no man should transgress it, or pass it over:

that they should keep these two days; the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar or February:

according to their writing; in this book, the book of Esther, which was to be read, as Aben Ezra; written in the Hebrew character, as the Targum; that is, in the Assyrian character, as Jarchi; the square character, as they call it:

and according to their appointed time every year; whether simple or intercalated, as Aben Ezra observes: in an intercalary year the Jews have two Adars, and, though they keep the feast of Purim on the fourteenth of the first Adar, yet not with so much mirth, and call it the lesser Purim; but in the second Adar they observe it with all its ceremonies {t}; so, in their canon, they do not keep Purim but in Adar that is next to Nisan or March, that redemption might be near redemption; the redemption of Mordecai near the redemption of Moses {u}.

{s} Lebush & Schulchan, ib. (par. 1.) c. 689. sect. 1. {t} Vid. Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 29. p. 563. {u} Lebush, par. 1. c. 6, 7. sect. 1.

Esther 9:28

Ver. 28. And that these days should be remembered, and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city,.... And accordingly these days are commemorated by them now, and by all their families, and all in their families capable of it; and these words, "every province", and "every city", are used, as Aben Ezra observes, lest a man should think he was not bound to keep this feast where there were no Jews; for, let him be where he may, he is obliged to keep it:

and that these days of Purim should not fail among the Jews; or the observance of them be neglected and cease:

nor the memorial of them perish from their seed; neither the memorial of them, nor of the reason of keeping them; wherefore on those days they read the whole book of Esther, fairly written on a roll of parchment, and are careful that none omit the reading of it; rather, they say {w}, the reading and learning the law should be omitted, and all commands and service, than the reading this volume, that so all might be acquainted with this wonderful deliverance, and keep it in mind.

{w} Lebush & Schulchan, ib. (par. 1.) c. 687. sect. 2.

Esther 9:29

Ver. 29. Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority,.... Strongly pressing the observance of this festival; before, Mordecai only recommended it, but now the queen gave a sanction to it, and laid her obligation on the Jews to observe it; perhaps some of the Jews were backward to it, or neglected to observe it, and therefore Esther and Mordecai joined in a letter to them, to press them to it; the Jewish chronologer {x} says, this was written the year following; the former Targum is, they wrote this whole volume, and the strength of the miracle, or set the miraculous deliverance in the strongest light, with this view,

to confirm this second letter of Purim; that it might have its weight and influence upon them, to engage them to keep it, as the latter Targum adds; that when it was an intercalary year, they might not read the Megillah (or book of Esther) in the first Adar, but in the second Adar.

{x} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 29. p. 87.

Esther 9:30

Ver. 30. And he sent letters unto all the Jews,.... That is, Mordecai did, signed in the queen's name, and his own:

to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus; among which was Judea, that was become a province, first of the Chaldean, now of the Persian empire, see **Ezr 5:8** to whom also these letters were sent, directing and ordering the Jews there to observe these days, who were also concerned in the deliverance wrought:

with words of peace and truth exhorting them to live in peace with one another, and their neighbours, and to constancy in the true religion; or wishing them all peace and prosperity in the most loving and sincere manner.

Esther 9:31

Ver. 31. To confirm these days of Purim in their times appointed,.... The fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar:

according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them; in the letters written and signed by them both:

and as they had decreed for themselves, and for their seed; see **Es 9:27**,

the matters of their fastings and their cry; in commemoration of their deliverance from those distresses and calamities which occasioned fastings and prayers during the time of them; and to this sense is the former Targum; though it is certain the Jews observe the thirteenth day, the day before the two days, as a fast, and which they call the fast of Esther {y}, and have prayers on the festival days peculiar to them; but the sense Aben Ezra gives seems best, that as the Jews had decreed to keep the fasts, mentioned in **Zec 7:5**, so they now decreed to rejoice in the days of Purim.

{y} Lebush & Schulchan, ut supra, (par. 1.) c. 686. sect. 1.

Esther 9:32

Ver. 32. And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim,.... As a festival to be observed by the Jews in future generations:

and it was written in the book; either in this book of Esther; or in the public acts and chronicles of the kings of Persia; or in a book by itself, now lost, as Aben Ezra thinks, as many others are we read of in Scripture, as the books of the chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah, &c.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Esther 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO ESTHER 10

This chapter is very short, and just makes mention of a tribute Ahasuerus laid on his realm, Es 10:1, refers to the Persian chronicles, both for the greatness of him, and of Mordecai, and is closed with the character of the latter, Es 10:2.

Ver. 1. And the King Ahasuerus laid a tribute on the land, and upon the isles of the sea. Which include all his dominions, both on the continent, and on the sea, the Aegean sea; though Aben Ezra thinks it regards such as were not under his government, but stood in fear of him, of whom he demanded tribute. If Ahasuerus was Xerxes, perhaps his exchequer might be drained by his wars with the Grecians, which put him upon this; though some understand this of his renewing the taxes and tribute, which he remitted upon his marriage with Esther, **Es 2:18**.

Esther 10:2

Ver. 2. And all the acts of his power, and of his might,.... As Xerxes was a very mighty and powerful prince:

and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him; the history of that, and which tended not a little to the greatness, dignity and prosperity of the king himself, and his whole kingdom:

are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? to which the reader is referred by the writer of this book, the which were in being in his times, but now lost: had they been preserved, they might have been of great use to lead into the history of the Medes and Persians, which for want of them is very dark and intricate; the writer of this book having nothing further to do with it, than as it related to the affairs of the Jews.

Esther 10:3

Ver. 3. For Mordecai the Jew was next unto Ahasuerus,.... The second man in the kingdom, the principal of the counsellors, and prime minister of state:

and great among the Jews; highly respected by them, in great honour and esteem with them, for which there was great reason:

and accepted of the multitude of his brethren; or of many, of most, of the greatest part of them; for, let a man be ever so deserving, there are some that will envy his greatness, cavil at everything done by him, and speak evil of him without any just reason:

seeking the wealth of his people; their good, their welfare and happiness, temporal and spiritual:

and speaking peace to all his seed; not only to his family, but to all the Jews who were of the same seed with him, the seed of Abraham; either speaking to them in an humble and condescending manner, being very humane, affable, and courteous; or speaking for them to the king, asking of him for them what might conduce to their peace, prosperity, and happiness. No mention is made in this history of the death and burial either of Mordecai or Esther; but the author of Cippi Hebraici says {z}, that Mordecai was buried in the city of Shushan, and that all the Jews in those parts assemble at his grave on the day of Purim, and sing songs, playing on tabrets and pipes, rejoicing that there was a miracle wrought; and the same writer says {a}, they do the like at that time at the grave of Esther, half a mile from Tzephat, read this book that bears her name, eat, drink, and rejoice. Benjamin of Tudela says {b}, they were both buried before a synagogue, at a place called Hamdan.

{z} P. 70. Ed. Hottinger. {a} Ib. p. 64. {b} Itinerar. p. 96.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JOB

This book, in the Hebrew copies, generally goes by this name, from Job, who is however the subject, if not the writer of it. In the Vulgate Latin version it is called "the Book of Job"; in the Syriac version, the Writing of Job; and in the Arabic, the Writing or Book of Job the Just. In some Hebrew Bibles it stands between the Book of Proverbs and the Song of Solomon; but, according to the Talmudists {a}, it should stand between the Psalms of David and the Proverbs of Solomon. Some have made a question of it, whether there ever was such a man as Job, and suppose this book not to be a real history, or to contain matters of fact, but to be written under fictitious names, and to be parabolical, and that it is designed to set forth an example of patience in suffering affliction; and some of the Jewish writers {b} affirm, that Job never was in being, and that this book is a parable, apologue, or fable; and to this Maimonides {c} himself inclines; but this opinion is justly rejected by Aben Ezra, Peritsol, and others; for that there was such a man is as certain as that there were such men as Noah and Daniel, with whom he is mentioned by the Prophet Ezekiel, Eze 14:14 and the testimony of the Apostle James is full to this purpose, who speaks of him as a person well known, and not to be doubted of; of whom, and of whose patience, the Jews he writes to had heard much, **Jas 5:11** besides, the names of the countries where he and his friends lived, the account given of his family, and of his substance, both before and after his afflictions, show it to be a real history. Learned men are not agreed about the signification of his name; according to Jerom {d}, it signifies a magician, taking it to be the same with bwa, "ob": and some Jewish writers {e} place him with Balaam and Jethro, as the counsellors of Pharaoh against the Israelites, for which he was afflicted: the same ancient fathers render the word grieving and howling; others, as Spanheim {f}, derive it from bay, to "love" or "desire", and so it signifies desire or delight, and is the same with Desiderius or Erasmus; hence Job is called by Suidas {g}
tripoyhtov, exceeding desirable; but Hillerus {h}, deriving it from the same

root, makes it to signify just the reverse, "without desire"; or not desirable; and supposes it to be a compound of
bway, "desire", and ya, "not"; but the generality of writers derive it from bya, "to be at enmity", and so it signifies one that is exposed to the hatred and enmity of men, or one that is a hater and enemy of wicked men; or, as Schmidtt {i} interprets it, a man zealous for God, and showing hatred to wickedness and wicked men on his account. Who Job was, it is not easy to say; not the same with Jobab, of the race of Esau, as some, Ge 36:33. Aristeas {k} says he was a son of Esau himself, by his wife Bessare, and was first called Jobam; nor the same with Job a son of Issachar, Ge 46:13, nor was he a descendant of Abraham by Keturah; but rather sprung from Uz, the firstborn of Nahor, brother of Abraham, Ge 22:21, who gave name to the country where Job lived, as Buz his brother did to that of which Elihu was, and as Chesed, another brother of Uz, did to the Chasdim or Chaldeans, who were both near to Job. It is also not agreed in what time Job lived; Maimonides {l} says, of their writers some place him in the times of the patriarchs, some in the times of Moses, others in the times of David, and others say that he was of the wise men of Babylon; and some add, that he was of them that came out of the captivity there, and had a school at Tiberias, as say the Talmudists {m} who give very different accounts of him: some say he was in the times of the judges; others in the times of the queen of Sheba; and others in the times of Ahasuerus; but the more general opinion is, and indeed the more probable, that he was born when the Israelites went down into Egypt, and that he was dead when they came from thence {n}: in short, they place him almost in all the ages from Abraham to the Babylonish captivity, and after it; and even Luther {o} was of opinion that he lived in the times of Solomon, for which there is no more reason than for the rest: it seems most probable that he lived before Moses {p}, at least before the giving of the law to him, since no mention is made of it in this book, nor any reference to it; whereas there is to things more ancient, as the general deluge, the burning of Sodom, &c. the law concerning sacrifices only to be offered by priests was not as yet given; for Job offered sacrifices as being the head of his family, and so did his three friends, **Job 1:5**. The length of his life best agrees with the times before Moses, for in his time the age of man was reduced to seventy years; whereas Job must live two hundred years or more, since he lived one hundred and forty after his restoration: add to this, that this book seems to have been written before any idolatry was in the world but the worship of the sun and moon,
Job 31:25 and before there were any writings divinely inspired, since there is no appeal to any in the whole controversy between Job and his friends; but the appeal is made to men of years and wisdom, and to traditions of former times, **Job 5:1**. According to Dr. Owen {q} Job lived three hundred and fifty years

after the dispersion at Babel, about A. M. 2100. It is also greatly controverted who was the writer of this book; some ascribe the writing of it to Isaiah the prophet; others to Solomon, as Luther {r}; others to one of the prophets who was an Idumaean; but most to Moses, so the Jews {s} say, that he wrote his own book, the section of Balaam, and Job. Some think that he wrote it when in Midian, for the comfort and encouragement of the Hebrews afflicted in Egypt at that time, and who might hope to be delivered out of their afflictions, as this good man was delivered out of his; and this, it is supposed, accounts for the use of many Arabic words in it; Midian being in Arabia, where Moses, having lived some years, had mixed their language with his own. Some are of opinion that he met with this book when in those parts, which he found either in the Arabic or Syriac language, and translated it into Hebrew {t} for the use of the Israelites; and others think it was written by Job's friends, and particularly by Elihu, which is concluded from Job 32:15, but it is most probable that it was written by Job himself, or at least compiled from his diary or "adversaria" kept by him, or from those of his friends, or from both, and that it was written in the language it is now in: but be it written by whom it may, there is no doubt to be made of the divine authority of it; as appears from the sublimity of the style, the subject matter of it, its agreement with other parts of the sacred writings, and particularly from a quotation of a passage out of **Job 5:13** by the Apostle Paul, **1Co 3:19** see also **Job 5:17**, compared with Heb 12:5. The design of it is not only in general to assert and explain the doctrine of Providence, as Maimonides observes; but in particular to show, that, though good men are afflicted, yet sooner or later they are delivered out of their afflictions; and that it becomes them to bear them patiently, and not murmur at them; nor complain of God on account of them, whose ways and works are unsearchable, and who gives no account of his matters to men, but is sovereign, wise, and just, in all he does; and whatsoever is done by him issues in the good of his people, as well as in his own glory, as the event shows. This book may be considered either as an history of the life of Job, in which an account is given of him in his prosperity; of his afflictions, and how they came upon him; of a visit paid him by his friends, and of the discourses that pass between him and them, and of his restoration to greater affluence than he enjoyed before: or as a drama or dialogue consisting of divers parts, and in which various speakers are introduced, as God, Satan, Job, his wife, and friends; or as a dispute, in which Job's three friends are the opponents, himself the respondent, Elihu the moderator, and God the umpire, who settled and determined the point in question. It contains many useful things in it concerning the Divine Being, and the perfections of his nature, his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and sovereignty; concerning the works of creation and providence; concerning original sin, and the corruption of mankind; concerning redemption by Christ, and good works to be done by men; and concerning the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. Some think Job was a type of Christ in his afflictions and sufferings; in his patience under them, and deliverance out of them; in his exaltation to an high pitch of happiness and prosperity; and in his intercession for his friends. He is in many things worthy of imitation, though in others to be blamed, and not followed; and, on the whole, this book of his may be read with great pleasure and profit.

{a} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. {b} Ibid. fol. 15. 1. {c} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 22. {d} Prooem. in Job, Quaest. Heb. in Lib. Paralipom. fol. 82. {e} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 11. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 1. {f} Hist. Job, p. 61. {g} In voce iwb. {h} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 293, 852. {i} Comment. in Job, i. 1. p. 6. {k} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 25. p. 430. {l} Ut supra. (Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 22.) {m} T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 20. 3, 4. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 2. {n} T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 20. 3, 4. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 57. fol. 50. 4. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 3. p. 8. Juchasin, fol. 9. 2. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 1. {o} Mensal. Colloqu. c. 32. p. 361. {p} Origen contr. Cels. l. 6. p. 305. {q} Theologoumen. l. 3. c. 4. p. 188. {r} Ut supra, (Mensal. Colloqu.) c. 31. p. 359. {s} T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 20. 4. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. & 15. 1. Jarchi in Job, 31. 35. {t} Vid. Origen. in Job, fol. 1. & Dickinson. Physic. vet. & vera, c. 19. sect. 27. p. 303.

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 1

In this chapter, Job, the subject of the whole book, is described by his native country, by his name, by his religious character, and by his family and his substance, **Job 1:1** a particular relation is given of his children feasting together, and of Job's conduct during that time, **Job 1:4** of a discourse which passed between God and Satan concerning him, the issue of which was that Satan obtained leave of God to afflict Job in his outward affairs, **Job 1:6** then follows an account of his several losses, of his oxen, sheep, camels, asses, and servants, by the Sabeans, Chaldeans, and fire from heaven, and of his sons and daughters by the fall of the house in which they were through a violent wind, **Job 1:13**, and the chapter is concluded with the agreeable behaviour of Job in the midst of all this, **Job 1:20**.

Ver. 1. There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job,.... Of the signification of his name, see the introduction to the book. The place where he dwelt had its name not from Uz, a descendant of Shem, Ge 10:23 but from Uz, a son of Nahor, brother to Abraham, Ge 22:21 unless it can be thought to be so called from Uz, of the children of Seir, in the land of Edom; since we read of the land of Uz along with Edom, or rather of Edom as in the land of Uz, or on the borders of it, **Lam 4:21**, the Targum calls it the land of Armenia, but rather it is Arabia; and very probably it was one of the Arabias Job lived in, either Petraea or Deserta, probably the latter; of which Uz or Ausitis, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin version read it, was a part; the same with the Aesitae of Ptolemy {u}; and it is said to be near the land of Canaan {w}, for in Arabia Felix the Sabeans lived; and certain it is that this country was near to the Sabeans and Chaldeans, and to the land of Edom, from whence Eliphaz the Temanite came: and as this very probably was a wicked and an idolatrous place, it was an instance of the distinguishing grace of God, to call Job by his grace in the land of Uz, as it was to call Abraham in Ur of the Chaldeans; and though it might be distressing and afflicting to the good man to live in such a country, as it was to Lot to live in Sodom, yet it was an honour to him, or rather it was to the glory of the grace of God that he was religious here, and continued to be so, see **Re 2:13** and gives an early proof of what the Apostle Peter observed, "that God is no respecter of persons, but, in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him"; that is, through Christ, Ac 10:34. Job, as he is described by his name and country, so by his sex, "a man"; and this is not so much to distinguish his sex, nor to express the reality of his existence as a man, but to denote his greatness; he was a very considerable, and indeed an extraordinary man; he was a man not only of wealth and riches, but of great power and authority, so the mean and great man are distinguished in **Isa 2:9** see the account he gives of himself in Job 29:7, by which it appears he was in great honour and esteem with men of all ranks and degrees, as well as he was a man of great grace, as follows:

and the man was perfect; in the same sense as Noah, Abraham, and Jacob were; not with respect to sanctification, unless as considered in Christ, who is made sanctification to his people; or with regard to the truth, sincerity, and genuineness of it; or in a comparative sense, in comparison of what he once was, and others are; but not so as to be free from sin, neither from the being of it, which no man is clear of in this life, nor from the actings of it in thought, word, and deed, see **Job 9:20** or so as to be perfect in grace; for though all grace is seminally implanted at once in regeneration, it opens and increases gradually; there is a perfection of parts, but not of degrees; there is the whole new man, but that is not arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; there are all and every grace, but not one perfect, not knowledge, nor faith, nor hope, nor love, nor patience, nor any other: but then, as to justification, every good man is perfect; Christ has completely redeemed his people from all their sins; he has perfectly fulfilled the law in their room and stead; he has fully expiated all their transgressions, he has procured the full remission of them, and brought in a righteousness which justifies them from them all; so that they are free from the guilt of sin, and condemnation by it, and are in the sight of God unblamable, unreproveable, without fault, all fair and perfectly comely; and this was Job's case:

and upright; to whom was shown the uprightness of Christ, or to whom the righteousness of Christ was revealed from faith to faith, and which was put upon him, and he walked in by faith, see Job 33:23, moreover, Job was upright in heart, a right spirit was renewed in him; and though he was not of the nation of Israel, yet he was, in a spiritual sense, an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile, the truth of grace and the root of the matter being in him, Job 19:28, and he was upright in his walk and conversation before God, and also before men; upright in all his dealings and concerns with them, in every relation he stood, in every office and character he bore:

and one that feared God; not as the devils, who believe and tremble; nor as carnal men, when the judgments of God are in the earth, hide themselves in fear of him; nor as hypocrites, whose fear or devotion is only outward, and is taught by the precept of men; but as children affectionately reverence their parents: Job feared God with a filial and godly fear, which sprung from the grace of God, and was encouraged and increased by his goodness to him, and through a sense of it; it was attended with faith and confidence of interest in him, with an holy boldness and spiritual joy, and true humility; and comprehended the whole of religious worship, both public and private, internal and external:

and eschewed evil, or "departed from it" {x}; and that with hatred and loathing of it, and indignation at it, which the fear of God engages unto, **Pro 8:13**, he hated it as every good man does, as being contrary to the nature and will of God, abominable in itself, and bad in its effects and consequences; and he departed from it, not only from the grosser acts of it, but abstained from all appearance of it, and studiously shunned and avoided everything that led unto it; so far was he from indulging to a sinful course of life and conversation, which is inconsistent with the grace and fear of God.

{u} Geograph. l. 5. c. 19. {w} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 75. 2. {x} ro apecomenov, Sept. "recedens a malo", V. L. Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

Job 1:2

Ver. 2. And there were born unto him,.... By his wife, in lawful wedlock, who was now living, and after mentioned:

seven sons and three daughters; next to his religious character, his graces, and spiritual blessings, and as the chief of his outward mercies and enjoyments, his children are mentioned; and which are indeed blessings from the Lord, and such as good men, and those that fear the Lord, are sometimes blessed with, see Ps 127:3 and to have a numerous offspring was always esteemed a very great favour and blessing, and as such was reckoned by Job; who, having so many sons, might hope to have his name perpetuated by them, as well as his substance shared among them; and having so many daughters, he might please himself with the thought of marrying them into families, which would strengthen his friendship and alliance with them; just the same number of sons and daughters had Bacchaeus, the third king of Corinth {y}.

{y} Heraclides de Politiis ad calcem Aelian. Var. Hist. p. 439.

Job 1:3

Ver. 3. His substance also was seven thousand sheep,.... For which he must have a large pasturage to feed them on, as well as these would produce much wool for clothing, and flesh for food; this part of his substance or possessions is mentioned first, as being the largest, and most useful and profitable:

and three thousand camels; creatures fit to carry burdens, and travel with, and were greatly valued on that account, especially in the deserts of Arabia, near to which Job lived; and that not only because they were strong for this purpose, but because they could endure much thirst and want of water for a long time; See Gill on "Le 11:4", it seems by this that Job carried on a commerce, and traded in distant parts, whither he sent the produce of his lands and cattle, and trafficked with them: these camels might not only be he, but she camels also, according to the Septuagint version, which might be kept for breeding, and for their milk: Aristotle observes {z}, some of the inhabitants of the upper Asia used to have camels, to the number of 3000, the exact number here mentioned; and by the number of these creatures the Arabians estimated their riches and possessions {a}; and so sheep are by the Greeks called
mhla, as it is thought, from the Arabic word "mala", to be rich {b}; the riches of other people, and of particular persons, as of Geryon, Atlas, and Polyphemus, are represented as chiefly consisting of their flocks, and also of

their herds {c}, as follows:

and five hundred yoke of oxen; to plough his land with, of which he must have a large quantity to employ such a number in, see 1Ki 19:19

and five hundred she asses; which must be chiefly for their milk; and no doubt but he had a considerable number of he asses also, though not mentioned, which, as well as the others, were used to ride on, and also to plough with, in those countries; it may be rendered only asses as by some, and so may include both: Aristaeus, Philo, and Polyhistor {d} give the same account of Job's substance in the several articles as here:

and a very great household: this must be understood of his servants only, since his children are before taken notice of; and the same phrase is rendered "great store of servants", Ge 26:14 and in the margin, "husbandry" or "tillage", large fields and farms; and the sense comes to much the same, whether it is taken the one way or the other; if great store of servants, he must have large farms and many fields to employ them in; and if a large husbandry, and much ground for tillage, he must have many servants to manure and cultivate them: now these several articles are mentioned, because, in those times and countries, as has been observed, the substance of men chiefly lay in them, and according to them they were reckoned more or less rich; not but that they had gold and silver also, as Abraham had, Ge 13:1, and so had Job, Job 31:24, but these were the principal things:

so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east; that lived in Arabia, Chaldea, and other eastern countries; that is, he was a man of the greatest wealth and riches, and of the greatest power and authority, and was had in the greatest honour and esteem: now these temporal blessings are observed, to show that grace and earthly riches are compatible, that they may, and sometimes do, meet in the same person; as also to point at the goodness of God, in bestowing such blessings on this good man, thereby fulfilling the promise made to godliness and godly men, which respects this life, and that which is to come; and they are mentioned chiefly for the sake of the loss of these things after related, whereby the greatness of his loss and of his afflictions would be the more easily perceived, and his patience in bearing them appear the more illustrious; for by how much the greater was his substance, by so much the greater were his losses and trials, and the more remarkable his patience under them.

{z} Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 50. {a} Leo African. Descript. Africae, l. 9. p. 745.

{b} Hinckelman. Praefat. ad Alkoran. {c} Vid. Homer. Odyss. 14. ver. 100, &c. Virgil. Aeneid. l. 7. ver. 537. Justin e Trogo, l. 44. c. 4. Theocrit. Idyll. 11. ver. 34. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 4. Fab. 17. & l. 13. Fab. 8. {d} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 25. p. 430.

Job 1:4

Ver. 4. And his sons went and feasted in their houses, everyone his day,.... It appears by this that Job's sons were grown up to men's estate, that they were from him, and were for themselves, and carried on a separate business on their own accounts, and had houses of their own, and, perhaps, were married; and being at some distance from each other, they met by appointment at certain times in their own houses, and had friendly and family entertainments in turn; for such were their feasts, not designed for intemperance, luxury, and wantonness, for then they would not have been encouraged, nor even connived at, by Job; but to cherish love and affection, and maintain harmony and unity among themselves, which must be very pleasing to their parent; for a pleasant thing it is for any, and especially for parents, to behold brethren dwelling together in unity, Ps 133:1, besides, these feasts were kept, not in public houses, much less in houses of ill fame, but in their own houses, among themselves, at certain seasons, which they took in turn; and these were either at their time of sheep shearing, which was a time of feasting, 1Sa 25:2, or at the weaning of a child, Ge 21:8, or rather on each of their birthdays, which in those early times were observed, especially those of persons of figure, Ge 40:20, and the rather, as Job's birthday is called his day, as here, **Job 3:1**,

and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them; not to make a feast in their turn, but to partake of their entertainment; which, as is commonly observed, showed humanity, kindness, tenderness, and affection in them to their sisters, to invite them to take part with them in their innocent and social recreations, and modesty in their sisters not to thrust themselves into their company, or go without an invitation; these very probably were with Job, and went to the feasts with his leave, being very likely unmarried, or otherwise their husbands would have been invited also.

Job 1:5

Ver. 5. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about,.... When they had been at each other's houses in turn; when the rotation was ended: something like this is practised by the Chinese, who have their co-fraternities, which they call "the brotherhood of the month"; this consists of thirty, according to the number of days therein, and in a circle they go every day to eat at one another's house by turns; if one man has not convenience to receive the fraternity in his own house, he may provide it at another man's, and there are many public houses very well furnished for this purpose {e}: Job's sons probably began at the elder brother's house, and so went on according to their age, and ended with the younger brother; so when they had gone through the circuit, as the word {f} signifies, and the revolution was over, and they had done feasting for that season, or that year:

that Job sent and sanctified them; not that he did or could make them holy, by imparting grace, or infusing holiness into them; at most he could only pray for their sanctification, and give them rules, precepts, and instructions about holiness, and exhortations to it; but here it signifies, that being at some distance from them he sent messengers or letters to them to sanctify and prepare themselves for the sacrifices he was about to offer for them; either by some rites and ceremonies, as by washing themselves, and abstinence from their wives, which were sometimes used as preparatory to divine service, Ge 35:2, or by fasting and prayer; or, perhaps, no more is intended by it than an invitation of them to come and attend the solemn sacrifice which he, as the head of the family, would offer for them; so, to sanctify people, is sometimes to invite, to call and gather them to holy service, see **Joe 2:15** and so the Targum renders it. "Job sent and invited them:"

and rose up early in the morning of the last of the days of feasting; he took the first opportunity, and that as early as he could; which shows the eagerness of his spirit for the glory of God, and the good of his children, losing no time for his devotion to God, and regard for his family; this being also the fittest time for religious worship and service, see **Ps 5:3**, and was used for sacrifice, Ex 29:39,

and offered burnt offering according to the number of them all either of his ten children, or only his seven sons, since they only are next mentioned, and were the masters of the feast: this was before the law of the priesthood was in being, which restrained the offering of sacrifice to those in the office of priests, when, before, every head of a family had a right unto it; and this custom of offering sacrifice was before the law of Moses, it was of divine institution, and in use from the time of the fall of man, **Ge 3:21**, and was by tradition handed down from one to another, and so Job had it; and which was typical of the sacrifice of Christ, to be offered up in the fulness of time for the expiation of sin; and

Job, no doubt, by faith in Christ, offered up those burnt offerings for his sons, and one for each of them, thereby signifying, that everyone stood in need of the whole sacrifice of Christ for the atonement of sin, as every sinner does:

for Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned; not merely as in common, or daily sins of infirmity; for Job so full well knew the corruption of human nature, that a day could not pass without sin in thought, word, or deed; but some more notorious or scandalous sin; that, in the midst of their feasting and mirth, they had used some filthy, or frothy, and unsavoury and unbecoming language; had dropped some impure words, or impious jests, or done some actions which would reflect dishonour on God and true religion, and bring an odium on themselves and families: now Job was not certain of this, he had had no instruction or intelligence of it; he only surmised and conjectured it might be so; he was fearful and jealous lest it should: this shows his care and concern, as for the glory of God, so for the spiritual welfare of his children, though they were grown up and gone from him, and is to be considered in favour of his sons; for by this it is evident they were not addicted to any sin, or did not live a vicious course of life; but that they were religious and godly persons; or, otherwise Job would have had no doubt in his mind about their conduct and behaviour: the particular sin he feared they might have been guilty of follows:

and cursed God in their hearts; not in the grossest sense of the expression, so as to deny the being of God, and wish there was none, and conceive blasphemy in their hearts, and utter it with their lips; but whereas to bless God is to think and speak well of him, and ascribe that to him which is his due; so to curse him is to think and speak irreverently of him, and not to attribute to him what belongs unto him; and thus Job might fear that his sons, amidst their feasting, might boast of their plenty, and of the increase of their substance, and attribute it to their own diligence and industry, and not to the providence of God, of which he feared they might speak slightingly and unbecomingly, as persons in such circumstances sometimes do, see
De 32:15. Mr. Broughton renders it, "and little blessed God in their hearts" not blessing him as they should was interpretatively cursing him; the Hebrew word used properly and primarily signifies to bless {g}, and then the meaning is, either that his sons had sinned, but took no notice of it, nor were humbled for it, but blessed God, being prosperous and successful, as if they had never sinned at all, see Zec 13:1, Sanctius adds the negative particle "not", as if the meaning was, that they sinned, and did not bless God for their mercies as they should, **De 8:10**, but this is too daring and venturous to make such an addition; though this is favoured by the Targum, as in some copies, which paraphrases

it,

"and have not prayed in the name of the Lord in their hearts:"

and because the word is used at parting, and taking a farewell of friends, Cocceius thinks it may be so used here, and the sense to be, that they sinned, and took their leave of God, and departed from him; but rather, as the word Elohim is used of strange gods, of false deities, Ex 18:11. Job's fears might be, lest his sons should have been guilty of any idolatrous action, at least of blessing the gods of the Gentiles in their hearts, since feasting sometimes leads to idolatry, Ex 32:6, but the first sense seems best, with which the Septuagint version agrees,

"it may be my sons in their mind have thought evil things against the Lord:"

thus did Job continually; or "all those days" {h}; that is, after every such circuit and rotation of feasting, or after every feast day kept by them, he offered sacrifices for them; or every year {i}, as some interpret the phrase, the feasts, and so the sacrifices, being annual; all this is observed, partly further to describe the piety of Job, his affection for his family, and concern for their spiritual good, and the glory of God, and partly as a leading step to an later event, **Job 1:18**.

{e} Semedo's History of China, par. 1. c. 13. {f} wpyqh "cum circulssent, vel circulum fecissent", Vatablus; "circulum absolverent", Bolducius. {g} Myhla wkrb "benedixerint Deo", V. L. Piscator. {h} Mymyh lk "cunctis diebus", Pagninus, Montanus; "singulis diebus illis", Junius & Tremellius; "omnibus diebus illis", Piscator, Cocceius. {i} "Singulis annis", Schmidt, Schultens; see 1 Sam. xx. 7.

Job 1:6

Ver. 6. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord,.... This is generally understood of the angels, as in Job 38:7 who may be thought to be so called, because of their creation by the father of spirits, and their likeness to God in holiness, knowledge, and wisdom, and being affectionate and obedient to him; as also on account of the grace of election, and confirmation in Christ bestowed upon them, as well as because, in their embassies and messages to men, they represent God, and so may be called gods, and children of the Most High, for a like reason the civil

magistrates are,
Ps 82:6 to which may be added, their constituting with the saints the family of God in heaven and earth: these, as they stand before God, and at his right hand and left, as the host of heaven, in which posture Micaiah saw them in vision, 1Ki 22:19, so they may be said to go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth into the several parts of all the world, to do the will and work of God assigned them, **Zec 6:5** and then, having done their work, return again, and present themselves before the Lord, to give an account of what they have done, and to receive fresh orders from him, being ready to do his pleasure in everything he shall command them, which is what is here supposed; though some think these were only the company or band of angels which were set as a guard about Job, his person, family, and substance, who now appeared before the Lord, to give an account of him, his affairs, and circumstances, as required of them:

and Satan came also among them; which word signifies an "adversary", as in 1Ki 11:14 but does not design here a man adversary, as there, or one that envied Job's prosperity, as Saadiah Gaon thinks, but an evil spirit, the old serpent, the devil, as in Re 12:9 who is an implacable and bitter enemy to men, especially to Christ and his people; and so has this name from his hatred of them, and opposition to them: Origen {k} observes, that this word, translated into the Greek language, is
antikeimenov, an "adversary"; but R. Levi {l} derives it from hjv, "to decline" or "turn aside"; and so Suidas says {m}, Satan, in the Hebrew language, is an apostate; and Theodoret {n} mentions both, that it signifies either an adversary or an apostate; the first derivation is best: knowing the end of the above meeting, that it was with respect to Job, and therefore he came with an intent to contradict what they should say of him, and to accuse him before God; he came among them as one of them, transforming himself into an angel of light, as he sometimes does; or he came, being sent for, and obliged to come to give an account of himself, and of what he had been doing in the world, in order to be reproved and punished: but though the stream of interpreters run this way, I cannot say I am satisfied with it; for, setting aside the passages in this book in question, angels are nowhere called "the sons of God"; for besides, this being denied of them in the sense that Christ is, they are represented as servants, yea, as servants to the sons of God, ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation; they call themselves the fellow servants of the saints, and of their brethren, but do not say that they are sons of the same family, or fellow heirs, or their brethren, **Heb 1:5**, moreover, they always stand in the presence of God, and behold his face, be they where they will, Mt 18:10 nor is there any particular day assigned them for the service of God; for though they are under the moral law, so far as

it is suitable to their nature, yet not under the ceremonial law, to which the observance of days belonged; and besides, they have no rest night nor day, but continually serve God, and glorify him, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty: and if this presentation of themselves to God is supposed to be in heaven, as where else should it be? it is not possible that Satan could come among them; he is fallen from heaven, being cast down from thence, nor can he, nor ever will he, be able to find a place any more there, see Lu 10:18 it seems better therefore to understand this of the people of God, of professors of religion, who, earlier than the times of Job, were distinguished from the men of the world by this character, "the sons of God", **Ge 6:2**, such that were truly godly being so by adopting grace, and which was made manifest by their regeneration by the Spirit of God, and by their faith in Christ, and all were so by profession: now these assembled themselves together, to present themselves, their bodies and souls, before the Lord, which was but their reasonable service; as to pray unto him, and praise him, to offer sacrifice, and perform every religious exercise enjoined in those times; the apostle uses the like phrase of the saints' social worship, Ro 12:1 now for this there was a "day"; though I very much question whether any sabbath, or much less a seventh day sabbath, was as yet instituted; but inasmuch as men agreed together to call on the name of the Lord, or to worship him in a social way, **Ge 4:26** as it was necessary that a place should be appointed to meet at, so a time fixed by consent and agreement; even as now, the seventh day sabbath being abrogated, Christians agree to meet on the first day of the week, called the Lord's day, in imitation of the apostles of Christ; and on one of these days thus fixed and agreed on was the above meeting, at which Satan came among them, as he frequently does in the assembly of the saints, to do what mischief he can; by snatching away the word from inattentive hearers, and by directing the eye to such objects, and putting such things into the mind, as divert from the service of God; or by suggesting to the saints themselves, that what is attended to does not belong to them, with many other things of the like kind: the Targum interprets this day of the day of judgment, at the beginning of the year, and the sons of God of angels, as do other Jewish writers.

{k} Contr. Cels. l. 6. {l} In Ioc. {m} In voce satanav. {n} In 2 Reg. Quaest. 37.

Job 1:7

Ver. 7. And the Lord said unto Satan, whence comest thou?.... This question is put, not as ignorant of the place from whence he came; for the omniscient God knows all persons and things, men and angels, and these good and bad, where they are, from whence they come, and what they do, see **Ge 3:9** but it is put either as being angry with him, and resenting his coming among the sons of God, and chiding him for it, as having no proper business there, like the question in Mt 22:12, or rather in order to lead on to another, and to bring out from him what he intended to have expressed by him, of what he had seen and taken notice of in the place from whence he came, and particularly concerning Job: how God and spirits converse together we are not able to say; but no doubt there is a way in which God talks with spirits, even with evil ones, as well as good ones, and in which they speak to him; and so this does not at all affect the reality of this narrative:

then Satan answered the Lord and said, from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it; this he said as swaggering and boasting, as if he was indeed the God of the whole world, the Prince and King of it, and had and exercised a sovereign dominion over it, and as such had been making a tour through it, and taking a survey of it, see **Mt 4:8**, and as if he was at full liberty to go where he pleased, and was under no control, when he was in chains of darkness, and could go nowhere, nor do anything, without divine permission; could not touch Job, nor his substance, nor, as in the days of Christ, so much as enter into a herd of swine without leave: likewise this may denote the disquietude and restlessness of this evil spirit, who could not abide long in a place, but moving to and fro, seeking rest, but finding none, Mt 12:43, as also his diligence and indefatigableness in doing and seeking to do mischief, going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, taking all opportunities of doing injury, sowing his tares while men are asleep and off their guard, **1Pe 5:8**, and so the first word here used signifies a diligent search, and is rendered by some, and particularly by Mr. Broughton, "from searching about the earth" {o}, "and from walking in it"; and so the Targum,

"from going about in the earth, to search the works of the children of men, and from walking in it;"

and it points at the place of Satan's abode, the earth, with the circumambient air, **Eph 2:2** and the extent of his influence, which reaches not to heaven, and to the saints there, out of which he is cast, and can never reenter, but to the earth only, and men on it; and here no place is free from him; he and his angels are roving about everywhere, city and country; public and private places, men's own houses, or the house of God, are not exempt from them; and therefore all here need to watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation, Mt 26:41. Schultens interprets the word of Satan going through the earth with great force and violence, whipping and scourging miserable mortals.

{o} So Rambam and Ben Melech.

Job 1:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job,.... Or, "hast thou put thine heart on my servant" {p}; not in a way of love and affection to him, to do him any good or service, there being an original and implacable enmity in this old serpent to the seed of the woman; but rather his heart was set upon him in a way of desire to have him in his hands, to do him all the mischief he could, as the desire of his heart was toward Peter, Lu 22:31 but the sense of the question is, since thou sayest thou hast been walking up and down in the earth, hast thou not taken notice of Job, and cast an eye upon him, and wished in thine heart to have him in thine hands to do him hurt? I know that thou hast; hast thou not contrived in thine heart how to attack him, tempt him, and draw him from my service, and into sins and snares, in order to reproach and accuse him? thou hast, but all in vain; and so it is a sarcasm upon Satan, as well as an expression of indignation at him for such an attempt upon him, and as anticipating his accusation of Job; for it is as if he should further say, I know he is in thine eye, and upon thine heart, now thou art come with a full intent to accuse and charge him; so Jarchi, "lest thou set thine heart", &c. so as "to have a good will to accuse him" he had, but the Lord prevents him, by giving a high character of him, in these and the following words: here he calls him "my servant"; not a servant of men, living according to the lusts and will of men, and their customs and forays of worship, superstition, and idolatry; nor a servant of sin and the lusts of the flesh; nor of Satan, who boasted of the whole earth being his; but the Lord's servant, not only by creation, but by special choice, by redemption, by efficacious grace, and the voluntary surrender of himself to the Lord under the influence of it; and by his cheerful and constant obedience he answered this character; and the Lord here claims his property in him, acknowledges him as his servant, calls him by name, and gives an high and honourable account of him:

that there is none like him in the earth; or "in the land"; in the land of Uz, so Obadiah Sephorno; whatever there were in other countries, there were none in this, being in general idolaters; or in the land of the people of the Heathen nations, as the Targum; or rather in the whole earth, where Satan had been walking: and, very probably, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were now dead; Job being, as it should seem, between them and the times of Moses; and though there might be many godly persons then living, who were like to him in quality, being partakers of the same divine nature, having the same image of God upon them, and the same graces in them, and a similar experience of divine things, yet not upon an equality with him; he exceeded them all in grace and holiness; and particularly, none came up to him for his patience in suffering affliction, though this was often tried; as Moses excelled others in meekness, and Solomon in wisdom; Job was an eminent saint and servant of the Lord, a father in his family, a pillar in his house, like Saul among the people, taller in grace and the exercise of it; and this is a reason why he could not but be taken notice of by Satan, who has his eye more especially on the most eminent saints, and envies them, and strikes at them; and so the words are by some rendered, "for there is none like him" {q}; or rather they may be rendered, "but there is none like him" {r}: and so are opposed to the accusations and charges Satan was come with against him:

a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?
See Gill on "Job 1:1" here the character there given is confirmed by the Lord in the express words of it.

{p} ydbe le Kbl tmvh "nunquid posuisti cor tuum super servum meum", Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius, Schmidt. {q} yk "nam", Piscator. {r} "Atqui", Schmidt.

Job 1:9

Ver. 9. Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, doth Job fear God for nought.
Satan does not deny any part of Job's character, nor directly charge him with anyone sin; which shows what a holy man Job was, how exact in his life and conversation, that the devil could not allege any one thing against him; nor does he deny that he feared the Lord; nay, he owns it, only suggests there was a private reason for it; and this he dares not affirm, only puts it by way of question, giving an innuendo, which is a wretched way of slander many of his children have learnt from him: he insinuates that Job's fear of God, and serving him, was not "for nought", or "freely" {s}, it was not out of love to him, or with any regard to his will, or his honour and glory, but from selfish principles, with mercenary views, and for worldly ends and purposes: indeed no man fears and serves the Lord for nought and in vain, he is well paid for it; and godliness has a great gain along with it, the Lord bestows everything, both in a temporal and spiritual way, on them that fear him; so that eventually, and in

the issue, they are great gainers by it; and they may lawfully look to these things, in order to encourage them in the service and worship of God, even as Moses had respect to the recompence of reward; when they do not make these, but the will and glory of God, the sole and chief cause and end thereof: but the intimation of Satan is, that Job's fear was merely outward and hypocritical, nor cordial, hearty, and disinterested, but was entirely for his own sake, and for what he got by it; and this he said as if he knew better than God himself, the searcher of hearts, who had before given such an honourable character of him. Sephorno observes, that he supposes that his fear was not a fear of the greatness of God, a reverence of his divine Majesty, but a fear of punishment; or what we call a servile fear, and not a filial one.

{s} Mnx "gratis", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius Piscator, Schmidt, Schultens.

Job 1:10

Ver. 10. Hast not thou made an hedge about him,.... A fence, a wall of protection all around him? he had; he encompassed him about with his love as with a shield, a hedge which could not be broken down by men or devils; he surrounded him with his almighty power, that none could hurt him; he guarded him by his providence, he caused his angels to encamp about him; yea, he himself was a wall of fire around him; the Targum interprets it the word of God: so thick was the hedge, so strong the fence, that Satan could not find the least gap to get in at, to do him any injury to his body or mind, without the divine permission; which he envied and was vexed at, and maliciously suggests that this was the motive of Job's fear of the Lord; and indeed it was an obligation upon him to fear him, but not the sole cause of it:

and about his house; not the house in which he dwelt; though Satan could have gladly pulled down that about his ears, as well as that in which his children were; but it designs his family, who were also by Providence protected in their persons and estates, and preserved from the temptations of Satan, at least from being overcome by them, and even at the times of their feasting before mentioned; this fence was about his servants also, so that Satan could not come at and hurt any one that belonged to him, which was a great grief and vexation of mind to him:

and about all that he hath on every side? his sheep, his camels, his oxen, and his asses; for otherwise these would not have escaped the malice and fury of this evil spirit they afterwards felt; but as these were the gifts of the providence of God to Job, they were guarded by his power, that Satan could not hurt them without leave:

thou hast blessed the work of his hands; not only what he himself personally wrought with his own hands, but was done by his servants through his direction, and by his order; the culture of his fields, the feeding and keeping of his flocks and herds; all succeeded well; whatever he did, or was concerned in, prospered:

and his substance is increased in the land; or "broke out" {t}; like a breach of waters; see **2Sa 5:20**; exceeded all bounds; his riches broke forth on the right hand and on the left, and flowed in, so that there were scarce any limits to be set to them; he abounded in them; his sheep brought forth thousands; his oxen, camels, and asses, stood well, and were strong to labour; and his wealth poured in upon him in great plenty; all which was an eyesore to Satan, and therefore would insinuate that this was the sole spring and source of Job's religion, devotion, and obedience.

{t} Urp "erupit", Montanus, Piscator; "eruperit", Junius & Tremellius; "prorupit", Schultens,

Job 1:11

Ver. 11. But put forth thine hand now,.... With draw thine hand of providence, power, and protection, with which thou hast covered and screened him; and, instead of that, "send" {u} forth thine afflicting hand, not barely in a way of chastisement and correction, but in wrath and vengeance, consuming and destroying all he had; and this he desires might be done now, immediately, without delay, while Job was in the midst of his prosperity; for Satan was in haste to have mischief done to him, being an object of his great hatred and enmity: some, instead of "now", render it, "I pray thee" {w}, as being an entreaty of Satan, and an importunate one, and which he was eagerly desirous of obtaining; well knowing that no hurt could be done to Job without leave from God, or his doing it himself: the Vulgate Latin version is, "put forth thine hand a little", as if its being exerted but a little, or a small touch of it, would be sufficient to discover Job's hypocrisy; but Satan doubtless knew Job better than this suggests, and that such was his integrity, that a small trial would not affect him; and besides, he immediately adds:

and touch all that he hath; which was not a slight touch, but an heavy one, reaching to all his family and substance, and to his person too, and the health of it at least; as appears by the proviso or saving clause put in by the Lord afterwards, when he gave leave to smite him:

and he will curse thee to thy face; or, if he does not curse thee to thy face {x}; then, let it be so and so with me, worse than it now is; let me have my full damnation; for the words are an imprecation of the devil, wishing the worst of evils to himself, if Job, in such circumstances, did not "curse" God to his "face"; that is, not only openly and publicly, but impudently; signifying that he would fly in his face, like a man passionate, furious, and enraged, and like those wicked persons, hungry and hardly bestead, that would fret and curse their king and their God, **Isa 8:21** or like those men, who, under their pains and sores, blasphemed him that had power over them, Re 16:10, or like those carnal professors, whose words were stout against God, **Mal 3:13** in suchlike passionate expressions Satan insinuates Job would break out against God, murmuring at and complaining of his providence, arraigning his wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, in his dealings with him: or, if "he does not bless thee to thy face" {y}, as it may be rendered; that is, either he "will bid thee farewell" {z}, and apostatize from thee, See Gill on "Job 1:5" as sometimes nominal professors do, when affliction and tribulation come upon them, they are offended, and drop their profession, Mt 13:21 or, as others, "if he hath not blessed thee to thy face" {a}; then let it be thus with me, that is, it will be then a clear case, that Job in times past had only blessed God to his face, or outwardly; he had only honoured him with his lips, but his heart was far from him, and his fear towards him taught by the precept of men, as is the character of hypocrites,
Isa 29:13 this Satan wickedly insinuates; one of the Targums is,

"if he does not provoke thee to the face of thy Word;"

Ben Melech interprets wynp le "by thy life", and takes it to be the form of an oath.

{u} xlv "mitte", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Schmidt. {w} an "quaeso", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Bolducius. {x} al Ma "si non", Schultens. {y} "Nisi in faciem tuam benedicet tibi", Piscator, Schmidt. {z} "Si non in faciem tuam valere te jussurus sit", Schultens. {a} "Si non super facies tuas benedixerit tibi", Montanus.

Job 1:12

Ver. 12. And the Lord said unto Satan, behold, all that he hath is in thy power,.... This he said not as angry and displeased with Job, or as entertaining any ill opinion of him through the suggestions of Satan, nor as gratifying that evil spirit; but in order to convince and confound him, and to try the grace of Job, that he might shine the brighter; and it may be observed, that the Lord alone had the sovereign dispose of all that Job had, and that Satan could have no power over him or his, but what was given him:

only upon himself put not forth thine hand; thus the Lord restrained Satan, who could do nothing without his leave, and limits and bounds the present affliction of his servant to his family and estate; reserving his person and the health of it for another temptation and trial:

so Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord; the Targum adds, "with power", authority, liberty of acting; not from his general presence, which is everywhere, from whence there is no going; nor from his gracious presence, in which he had not been; and much less his glorious presence in heaven, from whence he had been cast long ago; but from the place where the sons and people of God worshipped, and where he granted his presence to them, and from conversing with God there: as soon as Satan had got leave, he at once went forth to execute what he had permission to do, glad at heart he had so far succeeded; and eager upon doing all the mischief he could to a man that was the butt of his malice, and the object of his envy and hatred; the sad effects and consequences of which follow.

Job 1:13

Ver. 13. And there was a day,.... Which according to the Targum was the first day of the week, but this is not certain, nor material; nor can it be said whether it was the day following that, Satan had leave to do what he would with Job's substance, nor how long this was after that; for though Satan was no doubt eager upon it, and in haste to do mischief; yet besides its requiring some time to get the Sabeans and Chaldeans to march out of their own country into Job's, so he would contrive and fix upon the most proper time to answer his ends and purposes, which was

when his (Job's) sons and daughters were eating, and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house; it should rather be rendered, "in the house of their

brother, the firstborn"; that is, of Job; for rwkb relates not to brethren, but to parents, as Gussetins observes {b}: this was either the beginning of a new turn, or rotation of their feasting with each other, which might begin with the elder brother; or this was his birthday; see **Job 1:4** and this was the day Satan pitched upon to bring all the following calamities and distresses upon Job; partly that they might fall with the greater weight upon him, and more sensibly affect him, coming upon him while his family was feasting; and while he was pleasing himself with the thoughts of having brought up his children to men's and women's estate, and of the affluent circumstances they were in; and of the unity, harmony, and love that subsisted amongst them, of which their present feasting to gether was a proof; and partly that these afflictions might the more look like the judgments of God upon him, just as the men of the old world were eating and drinking when the flood came and destroyed them all, Lu 17:27 and for the same reasons these were all brought upon him in one day, to crush him the more; and that it might be thought the hand of God was in it, in a way of wrath and vengeance, and so irritate him to curse him to his face, which was what Satan aimed at; see
Isa 47:8.

{b} Ebr. Comment. p. 127.

Job 1:14

Ver. 14. And there came a messenger unto Job,.... Not a messenger of Satan, as Jarchi, or one of his angels, or evil spirits; though this is a sense which is embraced not only by some Jewish Rabbins, but by several of the ancient Christian writers, as Sanctius on the place observes; and such they suppose the other messengers after mentioned were; but both this and they were servants of Job, who escaped the calamity that came upon the rest of their fellow servants:

and said, the oxen were ploughing: the five hundred yoke of oxen Job had, **Job 1:3**, which were all out in the fields, and employed in ploughing them; and to plough with such was usual in those times and countries, as it now is in some places; see 1Ki 19:19

and the asses feeding beside them; beside the oxen, where they were ploughing, in pasture ground, adjoining to the arable land; and beside the servants that were ploughing with the oxen: "at their hands" {b}; as it may be literally rendered, just by them, under their eye and care; or "in their places" {c}; where they should be, and where they used to feed {d}; these were the five hundred asses, male and female, reckoned among Job's substance, **Job 1:3**, which were brought hither to feed, and some for the servants to ride on; this ploughed land being at some distance from Job's house; and others to carry the seed that was was to be sown here: now the situation and employment of these creatures are particularly mentioned, to show that they were in their proper places, and at their proper work; and that what befell them was not owing to the want of care of them, or to the indolence and negligence of the servants.

{b} Mhydy le "ad manus eorum", Mercerus. {c} "Suis locis", Vatablus, Schmidt; so Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Bar Tzemach. {d} "More solito", Schultens.

Job 1:15

Ver. 15. And the Sabeans fell upon them,.... Or, "Sheba fell" {e}; that is, as Aben Ezra and Simeon Bar Tzemach supply it, an host of the Sabeans, or a company of them; these were not the descendants of that Sheba that sprung from Ham, Ge 10:7 nor of him that came from Shem, Ge 10:28, but from Sheba, the son of Jokshan, a son of Abraham by Keturah, who with the rest of her sons were sent into the east country, the country of Job; and these Sabeans, who descended from the same, were his near neighbours, Ge 25:3, they were the inhabitants of one of the Arabias, it is generally said Arabia Felix; but that is not likely, since it was a very plentiful country, the inhabitants of which had no need to rob and plunder others; and besides was at a great distance from the place of Job's habitation, and lay to the south, and not the east; though Strabo {f} indeed says, that the Sabeans inhabited Arabia Felix, and made excursions into Syria, which agrees with these Sabeans; but rather Arabia Deserta, as Spanheim {g} has abundantly proved, a barren place; hence we read of Sabeans from the wilderness, Eze 23:42, the inhabitants of which lived upon the plunder of others; and these being naturally given to spoil and rapine, were fit persons for Satan to work upon, as he does in the children of disobedience; into whose hearts he put it to make such a descent on Job's fields, and carry off his cattle, as they did; they fell upon his oxen and asses at once and unawares, in a body, in an hostile and furious manner:

and took them away; as a booty; they did not kill them, but drove them off the ground, and led them into their own country for their use and service:

yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; who were ploughing with the oxen, and looking after the asses, and who might make an opposition, though in vain; this was an addition to affliction, that not only his cattle were carried off, but his servants were slain, who were born in his house, or bought with his money:

and I only am escaped alone to tell thee; this single servant was preserved, either by the special providence of God, in kindness to Job, that he might know of a certainty, and exactly, and what had befallen him, and how it came to pass, which men are naturally desirous of; or else, as it is generally thought, through the malice and cunning of Satan, that the tidings might the sooner be brought to him, and more readily be believed by him, and strike him with the greater surprise, a servant of his own running with it, whom he knew, and could believe; and he appearing with the utmost concern of mind, and horror in his countenance.

{e} abv lptw "et delapsa est Seba", Montanus, Bolducius; "et irruit Sheba", Schmidt, Cocceius. {f} Geograph. l. 16. p. 536. {g} Histor. Jobi, c. 3. sect. 12. p. 44, &c.

Job 1:16

Ver. 16. While he was yet speaking, there came also another,.... Another messenger, one of Job's servants, from another part of his fields where his sheep were grazing, and was one of those that kept them; he came with another piece of bad news, even before the other had finished his whole account; and the same is observed of all the other messengers that follow: so Satan ordered it, that all Job's afflictions should come upon him at once, and the news of them be brought him as thick and as fast as they could, to surprise him the more into some rash expressions against God; that he might have no intermission, no breathing time; no time for prayer to God to support him under the affliction, and sanctify it unto him; no time for meditation upon, or recollection of, past experiences of divine goodness, or of promises that might have been useful to him; but they came one upon the back of another, to hurry him into some indecent carriage and behaviour towards God, being considered by him as his judgments upon him:

and said, the fire of God is fallen from heaven; which the servant thought, or Satan put it into his mind to say, that it came immediately from God, like that which destroyed Nadab and Abihu and the murmurers in the camp of Israel, Le

10:2 or, as it is commonly thought, is so called, because a most vehement one, as a vehement flame is called the flame of the Lord, **So 8:6** this being such a fire as was never known, since the fire that came down from heaven and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain. I am inclined to think it was a prodigious flash or flashes of lightning; for as thunder is the voice of God, so lightning, which accompanies it, may be called the fire of God; and this agrees with the phraseology of the passage; it comes from heaven, or the air, and falls upon the earth, and strikes creatures and things in it; and which, as it is the effect of natural causes, Satan might be permitted to join them together and effect it; and this was done, and the news of it expressed in such language as to make Job believe that God was against him, and become his enemy, and that the artillery of heaven was employed to his harm, and to the ruin of his substance:

and hath burnt up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; as the fire or lightning which came down from heaven and consumed the captains, and their fifties, in Elijah's time, **2Ki 1:10** and such like effects of lightning are often to be observed, both with respect to men and cattle; these were the 7000 sheep Job was possessed of, **Job 1:3** and which were all destroyed at once, with the servants that kept them, excepting one; creatures very productive and very useful both for food and clothing, and also used for sacrifice; and it is thought that Satan's end in the destruction of these was, that Job might conclude from hence that his sacrifices were not acceptable to God, and therefore it was in vain to serve him; which he hoped by this means to bring him to express in a passionate manner to God:

and I only am escaped alone to tell thee; See Gill on "Job 1:15".

Job 1:17

Ver. 17. While he was yet speaking, there came also another,.... Another messenger from another part of Job's possessions, where his camels were, and this before the last messenger had told his story out:

and said, the Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away; these were the 3000 camels, as in **Job 1:3** and perhaps they were in three separate companies and places, 1000 in each, and therefore the Chaldeans divided themselves into three bands; or "appointed three heads" {f}, as it may be rendered; there were three bodies of them under so many leaders and commanders, and this was done, that they might the more easily take them; and they "diffused or spread themselves" {g}, as the word signifies, upon or about the camels; they surrounded them on all sides, or otherwise, these being swift creatures, would have run away from them: these Chaldeans or Chasdim were the descendants of Chesed, a son of Nahor, who was brother to Abraham, Ge 22:20, who settled in the east country, not far from Job: and this agrees with the character that Xenophon {h} gives of the Chaldeans, at least some of them, in later times; that they lived upon robbing and plundering others, having no knowledge of agriculture, but got their bread by force of arms; and such as these Satan could easily instigate to come and carry off Job's camels:

yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee; See Gill on "Job 1:15".

{f} Myvar hvlv wmv "posuerunt tria capita", Montanus, Bolducius, Schmidt; "duces", Pagninus, Vatablus. {g} wjvpyw "et diffuderunt se", Mercerus, Schmidt "effuderunt se", Cocceius. {h} Cyropaedia, l. 3. c. 11.

Job 1:18

Ver. 18. While he was yet speaking, there came another,.... A servant of one of Job's sons, who was in waiting at the feast before mentioned, and here again repeated:

and said, thy sons and thy daughters were eating, and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house; See Gill on "Job 1:13".

Job 1:19

Ver. 19. And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness,.... Most probably from the wilderness of Arabia, winds from such places being generally very strong, **Jer 4:11** as this was, and is called a "great one", a very strong and blustering one; and being so, and because of the effects of it, and being an uncommon and extraordinary one, as what follows shows, a "behold" is prefixed to the account, exciting attention and wonder:

and smote the four corners of the house; which shows it to be an unusual wind, it blowing from all parts and on all sides; and was either a whirlwind, which whirled about this house; or Satan, with his posse of devils with him, took the advantage of the sweep of it, as it came by this house, and with all their force and strength, might and main, whirled it about it; otherwise Satan has no power to raise winds, and allay them at pleasure; God only creates them, holds them in his fists, and brings them out of his treasures; and this wind blowing from the desert, the devil and his angels took the opportunity, and with such violence whirled it about the house that it fell, as follows:

and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; not upon Job's sons only, but upon his daughters also, the word used takes in both; and Mr. Broughton renders it, "and it fell upon the young folk"; this was the sorest affliction of all, and which Satan reserved to the last, that if the others did not succeed to his wish, this might; and a very trying, grievous one it was, to lose all his children at once in such a manner, and at such a time; his children, which were parts of himself, whom he had taken so much care of in their education, who had been as olive plants about his table, and now brought up to men's and women's estates, comfortably settled in the world, and living in great peace and harmony among themselves, and not one of them left to comfort him under his other afflictions; and these taken away not by any distemper of body, which would have prepared him for the stroke, but by a violent death; and which had the appearance of the hand and judgment, wrath and vengeance of God; and while they were feasting together in mirth and gaiety, however innocent, and not in a serious frame of spirit, or having any serious turn upon their minds for death and eternity, of which they had no thought; had they been in the house of God attending religious worship, or though in their own houses, yet either in their closets praying, or else conversing about spiritual things, with one another, it would have greatly taken off of the affliction; but to be snatched into eternity at once, and in this manner, must be cutting to Job; though there is no reason to think that this was for any sin of theirs, or through any displeasure of God to them, but was permitted purely on Job's account, for the trial of his faith, patience, sincerity, and integrity; and here, as in the former instances, only one servant was spared to bring the sad tidings:

and I only am escaped alone to tell thee; so that all the servants in the house, excepting this, perished in the ruins of it, as well as Job's sons and daughters, See Gill on "Job 1:15". It is a notion of some Jewish writers, as Simeon bar Tzemach observes, that each of these messengers, as soon as they had delivered their message, died, and so all that Job had was delivered into the hands of Satan, and nothing left; but this seems contrary to Job 19:16. It may be observed that Aristeas, an Heathen writer, as quoted by Alexander Polyhistor {i}, another Heathen writer, gives an account of each of these calamities of Job, just in the same order in which they are here. It may be observed from all this, that no character ever so great and high can secure persons from afflictions, even grievous ones; Job had an high and honourable character given and confirmed by God himself, yet so sorely afflicted; and let men be the beloved of God, his chosen and precious, his covenant people, the redeemed of the Lamb, righteous and godly persons, the sons and heirs of God, yet neither nor all of these exempt them from afflictions; and those that befall them are many, frequent, and continued, and come from different quarters, from men good and bad, and from devils, and all by the permission and according to the will of God. And this shows us the uncertainty of all outward enjoyments, gold, silver, cattle, houses, lands, children, friends and relations, all perishing, and sometimes suddenly taken away: and it may be observed, among all Job's losses, he did not lose anything of a spiritual nature, not one spiritual blessing; though he lost all his outward mercies, yet not the God of his mercies; not his covenant interest in him, nor his share in his love, favour, and acceptance, which all still continued; he did not lose his interest in a living Redeemer; his children were all dead, but his Redeemer lived, and he knew it; he did not lose the principle of grace in him, the root of the matter was still with him; nor anyone particular grace, not his faith and confidence in God, nor his hope of eternal life, nor his love and affection to God, and desire after him; nor his patience and humility; nor his integrity, faithfulness, and honesty, which he retained and held fast; nor any of his spiritual riches, which are durable; he had riches in heaven, where thieves cannot break through and steal, a better and a more enduring substance there, an inheritance incorruptible, reserved in the heavens his conduct under all this follows.

{i} Apud. Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 25. p. 431.

Job 1:20

Ver. 20. Then Job arose,.... Either from table, being at dinner, as some think, in his own house; it being the time that his children were feasting in their eldest brother's house; or from the business in which he was employed, which he stopped on hearing this news; or from his seat, or chair of state in which he sat; or rather the phrase only signifies, that he at once, with strength of body, and rigour of mind, which were not lost, as often they are in such cases, went about the following things with great composure and sedateness. It is indeed generally observed, that there is an emphasis to be put on the word "then", which may be as well rendered "and", as if Job sat and heard very sedately, without any perturbation of mind, the loss of his substance; but when tidings were brought him of the death of his children, "then" he arose, as being greatly moved and distressed; but it should be observed till now there was no stop or intermission in the messengers, but before one had done speaking, another came and began to tell his story, and so there was no opportunity, as well as not the occasion, of arising and doing what follows; and which he did, not through the violence of his passion, or excess of grief, but as common and ordinary things, which were used to be done in that country for the loss of relations, and in token of mourning for them:

and rent his mantle; or "cloak" {k}, as Mr. Broughton; but whether this was an outward garment, as each of these seem to be, if the same with ours, or an interior one, as some think, it is not very material to know; both were rent by Ezra upon a mournful occasion, **Ezr 9:3**, and it was usual to rend garments for deceased relations, or when they were thought to be so, see Ge 37:29, though some think that this was on the account of the blasphemous thoughts the devil now suggested into his mind, being solicitous to gain his point, and work upon him to curse God; upon which he rent his garment to show his resentment and indignation at the thought of it, as the Jews used to rend their garments at hearing of blasphemy; but the first sense is best:

and shaved his beard; either he himself, or his servant by his orders; and which was done among the eastern nations as a sign of mourning, see Isa 15:2 and among the Greeks, as appears from Homer {l}; nor was this contrary to the law in De 14:1, where another baldness, not of the head, but between the eyes, is forbidden for the dead; besides this was before that law was in being, and, had it been, Job was not bound by it, being not of the Israelitish nation: some, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and other Jewish writers, interpret this of his plucking or tearing off the hair of his head; but this neither agrees with the sense of the word here used, which has the signification of shearing or mowing, rather than of tearing or plucking, nor with the firmness and composure of Job's mind, who betrayed not any effeminacy or weakness; and though he showed a natural affection for the loss of his substance, and children, as a man, and did not affect a stoical apathy, and brutal insensibility, yet did not give any extraordinary vent to his passion: he behaved both like a man, and a religious man; he mourned for his dead, but not to excess; he sorrowed not as those without hope, and used the common tokens of it, and rites attending it; which shows that mourning for deceased relations, if done in moderation, is not unlawful, nor complying with the rites and customs of a country, in such cases, provided they are not sinful in themselves, nor contrary to the revealed and declared will of God:

and fell down upon the ground; in veneration of God, of his holiness and justice, and as sensible of his awful hand upon him, and as being humbled under it, and patiently submitting to it; he did not stand up, and curse God to his face, as Satan said he would, but fell upon his face to the ground; he did not curse his King and his God, and look upwards, see **Isa 8:21** but prostrated himself to the earth in great humility before him; besides, this may be considered as a prayer gesture, since it follows:

and worshipped; that is, God, for who else should he worship? he worshipped him internally in the exercise of faith, hope, love, humility, patience, &c. and he worshipped him externally by praising him, and praying to him, expressing himself as in the next verse: afflictions, when sanctified, humble good men, cause them to lie low in the dust, and bring them near to God, to the throne of his grace, and instead of arraigning his providence, and finding fault with his dealings, they adore his majesty, and celebrate his perfections.

{k} zlem ta "pallium suum", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens; "tunicam suam", Munster, Cocceius, Schmidt, Jo. Henric. Michaelis. {l} keirasyai te komhn, &c. Odyss. 4. ver. 198. & Odyss. 24. ver. 46.

Job 1:21

Ver. 21. And said, naked came I out of my mother's womb,.... Either literally, where he was conceived and lay, and from whence he came into the world, though he afterwards wishes he never had, or had died as soon as he did, **Job 3:10**, and so it is expressive of his birth, and the circumstance of it; or figuratively, his mother earth, from whence the first man sprang, and so all his posterity with him, being as he of the earth, earthly, see Ec 12:7, which sense is mentioned by Jarchi and Aben Ezra; but the first sense seems best: the nakedness referred to is not of the mind or soul, being destitute of righteousness and holiness, with which the following clause will by no means agree, but nakedness of body; and therefore as soon as a child is born, one of the first things done to it is to wrap it in clothes provided for it, see Eze 16:4 and also a being without the things of this life; the apostle's words are a proper comment on these, and explain them, and perhaps these are referred to by him, "we brought nothing into this world", **1Ti 6:7**, this shows the necessity of the early care of Providence over us, and what reason we have to be thankful for unknown mercies at the time of birth, and in the state of infancy,
Ps 22:9 and what obligations children lie under to parents, and what benefits

they receive from them at their first entrance into the world, and which they should religiously requite when through old age they stand in need of their assistance, **1Ti 5:4**, and this may also serve to abate the pride of man, who will have no reason to boast of his riches, nor of his fine clothes, when he considers his original nakedness; and more especially the use of it may be, and which seems to be the use Job made of it, to make the mind easy under the greatest losses. Job considered he did not bring his substance, his servants, and his children into the world with him; and now they were taken from him, he was but as he was when he came into the world, and not at all the worse; he knew how to be abased, and to abound, and in both was content:

and naked shall I return thither; not into his mother's womb in a literal sense, which was impossible, **Joh 3:4**, but to the earth, and to the dust of it, **Ge 3:19**, pointing to it with his finger, on which he now lay; meaning that he should go to the place appointed for him, the grave, the house of all living, Job 30:23, and so the Targum here has it,

"to the house of the grave,"

where he should lie unseen, as in his mother's womb, till the resurrection morn; which would be a kind of a regeneration of him, when he should be delivered up from thence, and enjoy a state of happiness and glory: he should descend into the grave as naked as he was born, respecting not so much the nakedness of his body, as being stripped of all worldly enjoyments, see **Ec 5:15** and he says this in his present view of things; he thought once he should have died in his nest,
Job 29:18, in the midst of all his prosperity, and left a large substance to his children; but now all was taken away, and for the present had no hope or expectation of a restoration, as afterwards was; but whereas he was now naked and bare of all, he expected he should continue and die so: or this is said with respect to the common case of men, who it is certain cannot carry anything out of the world with them, either riches or honour, but must leave all behind them, **1Ti 6:7** which may serve to loosen the minds of men from worldly things, not to set their eyes and hearts upon them, nor to put their trust and confidence in them; and good men may part with them, especially at death with pleasure, since they will have no further use of them, and will have a better and a more enduring substance in their stead:

the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; all outward enjoyments, all the good things of this world, are the Lord's, and at his dispose; the earth, and the fulness of it; kingdoms, nations, countries, houses and lands, the beasts of the field, and cattle on a thousand hills; the gold and silver, and all the riches of the earth: and these are the gifts of his providence to the sons of men; nor have they anything but in a way of giving and receiving; and even what they enjoy, through diligence and industry, is owing to the blessing of God; and who gives not in such sort as that he loses his property in what is given; this he still retains, these are talents which he puts into the hands of men to use for themselves and others, and for which they are accountable to him; and they are but stewards, with whom he will hereafter reckon, and therefore has a right to take away when he pleases; and both Job ascribes to God, not only the giving, but the taking away: he does not attribute his losses to second causes, to the Sabeans and Chaldeans, to the fire from heaven, and the wind from the desert, but to God, whose sovereign will and overruling hand were in all; these were but the instruments of Satan, and he had no power but what was given from God; and therefore to the counsel of his will, who suffered it, Job refers it, and for that reason sits down satisfied and quiet. This is all to be understood of temporal things only; for of spiritual things it cannot be said that God gives and takes away; such gifts are without repentance, and are irreversible, Ro 11:29, the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord hath given, and the Word of the Lord and the house of his judgment hath taken away;"

the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions add,

"as it pleased the Lord, so it is done:"

blessed be the name of the Lord; for all his blessings and mercies; for all the gifts of nature and providence that had been bestowed, which could not be claimed, and of which he knew himself unworthy; and for the continuance of them so long with goodness and mercy had followed him all the days or his life hitherto, and still he had mercies to bless God for; his wife was still with him, he had some servants left, his own life was spared; he continued as yet in health of body, and therefore could sing of mercy as well as judgment; nor is there any state on earth a man can be in, but there is something to bless God for; wherefore the apostle's exhortation will always hold good, "in everything give thanks": **1Th 5:18**; besides the name, the nature, the perfections, of God are always the same, and therefore always to be celebrated, and blessing, honour, and glory, are to be ascribed to him continually, in every state and condition of life; wherefore the Arabic version adds, "from henceforth, and for ever"; which agrees with
Ps 72:19; and thus Job, instead of cursing God, blesses him, and proves the

devil to be a liar, as he was from the beginning; and shows his superiority over him through the power of divine grace; this evil one could not touch him, he was overcome by him, and his designs defeated.

Job 1:22

Ver. 22. In all this Job sinned not,.... Not that he was without sin, he was conscious to himself of it, and owns it, **Job 9:20**; but in all the above things he did or said he sinned not; not in his rending his garments, in shaving his head, and laying himself prostrate on the ground, which were done as common usages in such cases, and not through excess of passion; nor in anything that dropped from his lips, which were ill-becoming the character he bore as a religious man; and though he might be guilty of some failings and imperfections, as the best of men are, even in doing the best of things, yet he sinned not that sin the devil said he would, that is, curse God to his face; there was nothing of this, nor like it, but the reverse of it in all he said and did:

nor charged God foolishly: or "gave not folly to [him]" {m}; did not ascribe it to him, did not arraign his wisdom, nor charge him with folly; though there might be some things he could not account for, or see into the reasons of them, he knew the Lord could; he considered that he was a God of knowledge, the only and all wise God, and did all things after the counsel of his will, and to answer the best ends and purposes, and therefore he submitted all to his wisdom; nor did he himself speak foolishly of him, arraigning his justice and holiness, as if he had done wrong to him; he knew there was no unrighteousness in God, nor in any of his ways and works, and that he had a right to do what he would with his own, to give and take it away at his pleasure: he spoke nothing that was "unsavoury" {n}, as the word signifies; nothing contrary to right reason and true religion; nothing unsuitable unto, or unbecoming him as a man, as a religious man, as in connection with God, a servant of his, and one that feared him. The Arabic version is, "nor blasphemed God"; and the Targum,

"neither did he set in order words of blasphemy before God;"

he did not curse God, as Satan said he would, neither in heart and thought, nor in words; this is a testimony of him given by the Lord himself, the searcher of hearts, and who only could give such a testimony of him; and which, as Cocceius observes, is a proof of the divine authority of this book.

{m} hlpt Ntn alw kai ouk edwken afrosunhn, Sept. "nec attribuit insulsitatem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius. {n} hlpt "insulsum", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Bolducius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 2

This chapter gives an account of a second trial of Job's constancy and integrity, the time and occasion of it, **Job 2:1**; the motion made for it by Satan, which being granted, he smote him from head to foot with sore boils, which he endured very patiently, **Job 2:4**; during which sad affliction he is urged by his wife to give up his integrity, which he bravely resisted, **Job 2:9**; and the chapter is concluded with an account of a visit of three of Job's friends, and of their conduct and behaviour towards him, **Job 2:11**.

Ver. 1. Again, there was a day, when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord,.... When good men, professors of religion, met together by agreement to worship the Lord; the Targum calls them companies of angels, interpreting the words of them, and of their standing before the Lord, as most interpreters do; how long this time of their meeting was from the former cannot be said, probably but a few days, a week or fortnight at most; the Targum says, it was on the day of the great judgment, and which, as in **Job 1:6**; was at the beginning of the year; so that according to this, and other Jewish writers, there was a whole year between this and the former meeting, and so between the first and second trial of Job; but this is not likely, since Satan would never give him so much breathing time; nor can it be thought that Job's friends should stay so long before they paid him a visit, which was not till after this day:

and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord; being either obliged to it upon a summons to appear before God, and give an account of what he had been doing on the earth, and especially to Job; or rather he came willingly, seeking an opportunity to continue his charge against Job, and to accuse him afresh, and get his commission enlarged to do him more mischief, which he could not do without a fresh grant.

Job 2:2

Ver. 2. And the Lord said unto Satan, whence camest thou?.... The same question is put to him, and the same answer is returned by him;
See Gill on "Job 1:7".

Job 2:3

Ver. 3. And the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job, that [there is] none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?.... The same with this is also before put unto Satan, and the same character given of Job, which is here continued and confirmed, with an addition to it; for Job was no loser, but a gainer in his character by his afflictions and trials:

and still he holdeth fast his integrity. The first man Adam was made upright, but by sinning he lost his integrity, and since the fall there is none in man naturally; it is only to be found in regenerate and renewed persons, who have right spirits renewed in them; by which principle of grace wrought in them they become upright in heart, and walk uprightly. The word used signifies "perfection" {o}, which Job had not in himself, but in Christ; though it may denote the truth and sincerity of his grace, and the uprightness of his walk, and the simplicity of his conversation, the bias of his mind, and the tenor of his conduct and behaviour towards God and men; this principle he retained, this frame and disposition of soul continued with him, and he acted up to it in all things; he held fast his faith and confidence in the Lord his God, and he professed his cordial love and sincere affection for God, and his filial fear and reverence of him; and this he did still, notwithstanding all the assaults and temptations of Satan, and all the sore afflictions and trials he met with; an instance this of persevering grace, and of the truth of what Job after expresses, Job 17:9; and this he did, even says the Lord to Satan,

although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause; not that Satan could work upon God as he does upon men, both good and bad, especially the latter; nor could he so work upon him as to cause him to change his mind and will, who is unchangeable in his nature and purposes; but the sense is, he made a motion to him, he proposed it, requested and entreated, and did not barely propose it, but urged it with importunity, was very solicitous to have it done; and he prevailed and succeeded according to God's own determinate counsel and will, though only in part; for he moved him to "destroy him", himself, his body, if not his soul; for this roaring lion seeks to devour men, even the sheep and lambs of Christ's flock: or "to swallow him up" {p}, as the word signifies; that he might be delivered to him, who would make but one morsel of him, swallow him up alive, as a lion any creature, or any other beast of prey. Mr. Broughton renders it, "to undo him"; and we say of a man, when he has lost his substance, that he is undone; and in this sense Job was destroyed or undone, for he had lost his all: and this motion was made "without cause", there was no just reason for it; what Satan suggested, and the calumny he cast upon Job, was not supported by him, he could give no proof nor evidence of it; and it was in the issue and event "in vain", as the word {q} may be rendered; for he did not appear, notwithstanding all that was done to him, to be the man Satan said he was, nor to do the things, or say the words, Satan said he would.

{o} wtmt tou teleiothtov, Polychronius in Drusius; "perfectionem suam", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus. {p} welbl "ad deglutiendum eum", Montanus; "ad illum absorbendum", Schultens; "ut absorberem eum", Michaelis. {q} Mnx diakenhv, Sept. "frustra", V. L. Junius & Tremellius,

Job 2:4

Ver. 4. And Satan answered the Lord, and said,.... Satan would not as yet own that Job was the man the Lord had described; but still would suggest, that he was a selfish and mercenary man, and that what had been done to him was not a sufficient trial of his integrity; the thing had not been pushed far and close enough to discover him; he had lost indeed his substance, and most of his servants, and all his children, but still he had not only his own life, but his health and ease; and so long as he enjoyed these he would serve God, though only for the sake of them: and therefore, says he, as it is usually and proverbially said,

skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life; the Targum is,

"member for member;"

which the Jewish commentators, many of them, explain thus, that if a man's head or his eyes are in danger, he will lift up his hand or his arm, and expose that in order to save the other; but the word is generally used of the skin, and so it may in this sense; and mean the skin of his hand, as a shield for the skin of his head or eye, as Gussetius observes {r}: some understand it of the skins of others for his own skin, which he will part with, that he may keep that; nay, he will give all that he is possessed of for the preservation of his life, so dear is that unto him; meaning either the skins of beasts, in whom the principal substance of men consisted in those times and countries, and whose skins slain for food, and in sacrifice, might be of worth and value, and used in traffic; or, as others think, money cut out of leather made of skins is meant, which a man would part with, even all such money he had in the world, and even his "suppellex", or all the goods of his house, for to save his life: or the sense is, that Job would not only give the skins of his beasts, even of all that he had, for his own skin, but the skins of his servants, nay, of his own children, provided he could but keep his own skin; and hereby Satan suggests, that Job did not regard the loss his cattle, nor of his servants, nor even of his children, so long as he had his own life and health; and thus represents him as a lover of himself, and as cruel and hardhearted, and without natural affections to his children; the contrary to which is very manifest from **Job 1:5**; or rather this designs his own skin, and may be rendered, "skin upon skin", or "skin even unto skin", or "skin within skin" {s}; for man has two skins, an inward and an outward one, called the "cutis" and "cuticula", "derma" and "epidermis"; the latter is of a whitish colour, and is properly the covering of the skin, is very thin, and void of sensation {t}, which may be raised up by a blister, and taken off without pain; but the other is reddish, and very sensible of pain, and cannot be taken off without putting a man to the most exquisite misery; and yet a man will part with both skins, and if he had ever so many, or he willing to be put to the greatest torment, rather than part with his life: and to this one point all the above senses, and others given by interpreters, tend, namely, to observe how precious the life of man is to him; and if this was all that Satan meant, it is very trite; but he seems to insinuate something more, and that is, that any man, and so Job though reckoned a good man, would not only part with all the skins he had, and the substance he was possessed of, to save his life, but he would part with his God, and his religion, and the profession of it, for the sake of it, which is false; for there is something more valuable than life to good men; they reckon the loving kindness of God better than life, and would sooner lose their lives than risk the danger of losing their interest in it; and are willing to part with their lives for the sake of God and true religion, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, and for his cause and interest, as many have done.

{r} Ebr. Comment. p. 582. {s} rwe deb rwe "cutim super cute", Schultens. {t} Vid Bartholin. Anatomia Reform. l. 1. c. 1. & 9.

Job 2:5

Ver. 5. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh,.... That is, his body, which consisted of flesh and bones; these are the constituent parts of the body, and which distinguish it from spirit, Lu 24:39; this is the motion made by Satan for a second trial of Job's integrity; he moves that God would take off his hand of providence over him, which secured his health unto him, and stretch his hand of power upon him, and fill his flesh with diseases, and his bones with rottenness; or break them, and touch him to the quick, to the marrow, which gives exquisite pain; or by his bone may be meant him himself {u}:

and he will curse thee to thy face; he will fly in thy face, arraign thy providence, and call in question thy wisdom, justice, truth, and faithfulness: or he will "bless thee" {w}, and take his farewell of thee {x}, and have nothing more to do with thee or religion; if he does not do this, for something is to be understood, the words being an imprecation, let me be in a worse condition than I am at present; let me not have the liberty of ranging about in the earth, to do the mischief I delight in; let me bound, and cast into the bottomless pit before my time, or be thrown into the lake burning with fire and brimstone, where I know I must be forever.

{u} So Gussetius and Genevenses, in ib. p. 630. {w} Kkrby "benedicet tibi", Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt. {x} "Te valere jubebit", Schultens.

Job 2:6

Ver. 6. And the Lord said unto Satan, behold, he [is] in thine hand,.... Well may a behold be prefixed to this, it being matter of wonder and astonishment that a saint and servant of God should be permitted to be in the hand of Satan; which yet must not be so understood; as if he was off of, and no more upon the heart of God; or as if he was out of the hands of God, and out of the hands of Christ; or as if he was become Satan's property, and a child of his; for neither of these can be true of a good man: nothing can separate him from the love of God; not Satan and all his principalities and powers; nor can men or devils pluck them out of his hands, nor out of the hands of his son; nor can those who are the children of God be any more the servants of sin, or the vassals of Satan; or in other words, nor can any of them be a child of God one day, and a child of the devil the next, which is the divinity of some men: nor is the sense of this passage, that Satan had leave to do with Job as he pleased, for then he would have utterly destroyed him; but the power granted him was a limited one, as follows:

but save his life: or "soul" {y}; which some understand of his rational soul, that which remains after death, and which, Maimonides {z} observes, Satan has no power over; and according to some the meaning is, do not disturb his mind to distraction, so as to deprive him of his senses, and of the exercise of his rational powers, which through the influence of Satan men have sometimes lost; see **Mr 5:4**; this is barred against in the permission granted; for otherwise it would not have been a proper trial of Job's integrity; for, should he have been deprived of his reason, and uttered ever such bad things, it would have been no proof of his insincerity; as may be observed in good men in a delirium, they will utter bad words, and do or attempt to do bad things, which is not to be ascribed to their want of grace, but to their want of reason: but rather "life" is meant; not Job's spiritual life, for that was in no danger of being lost; all the devils in hell cannot deprive a truly good man of his spiritual life; grace in him is a well of living water, springing: up to eternal life; he can never die the second death; his life is hid with Christ in God, and is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord his God, who so is out of the reach of Satan; but corporeal life, which the devil by permission may take away, and is said to have the power of death, which by leave he exercised over men, but here he is restrained from it: Job's life must be spared, that it might fully appear he got the victory over Satan, and stood in his integrity; and that he might still glorify God in a course of afflictions he was yet to endure, in the exercise of his faith, hope, love, patience, humility, submission, and resignation of his will to God; and besides, his appointed time was not come, he had many more days, months, and years, the number of which were with God, to live in the world, as he accordingly did.

{y} wvpn ta "animum ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocccius, Schmidt, Schultens. {z} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 22. p. 398.

Job 2:7

Ver. 7. So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord,.... With leave and license, with power and authority, as the Targum; having got his commission enlarged, on a fresh grant, to do more mischief to Job, he departed directly and immediately, being eager to put in execution what he had a permission to do; See Gill on "Job 1:12";

and smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown: with hot and burning ulcers, such as were inflicted on the Egyptians in the plague of the boils and blains, called the botch of Egypt, see **Ex 9:10**; it is in the original text "with a bad boil", or "the worst" {a}; it was as it were but one boil; they stood so thick and close together, that they were as one, reaching from head to foot, and spreading all over his body, so that there was no part free; he was full of sores; as Lazarus, and to him may be applied what is said in a figurative sense of the Jews, **Isa 1:6**; and this boil or boils were of the worst sort, and most hot and angry, and gave the most exquisite pain, and what Job was "smitten" with at once; they did not rise up in pimples and pustules at the first, and gradually gathered and came to an head, but he was at once covered with burning ulcers at their height, and with running sores; this was done by Satan, through divine permission; who, when he has leave, can inflict diseases on the bodies of men, as he did in the days of Christ on earth, see Mt 17:15; some Jewish writers, as R. Simeon, say, that the devil heated the air, and thereby caused inflammation in Job's blood, which broke out in boils; but then this would have affected others besides him: many are the conjectures of learned men {b} about this disease of Job's, some taking it to be the leprosy {c}, others the scurvy, others an erysipelas, &c. Bolducius reckons up no less than fourteen diseases that are attributed to him, collected from his own words, **Job 7:5**; a late learned writer {d} thinks it was the smallpox.

{a} er Nyxvb "nicere malo", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Schmidt; "maligno", Cocceius, Michaelis, "pessimo", Junius & Tremellius, Schultens. {b} Vid. Reiskii dissert. de Morbo Jobi, in Thesaur. Dissert. Philolog. par. 1. p. 556. {c} Origen contr. Cels. l. 6. p. 305. So Michaelis in Lowth. Praelect. de Sacr. Poes. Heb. p. 182, 201, 202. {d} Delaney's Life of King David, vol. 2. p. 147.

Job 2:8

Ver. 8. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal,.... His mouth was shut, his lips were silent, not one murmuring and repining word came from him, amidst all this anguish and misery he must be in; much less anything that looked like cursing God and blaspheming him, as some are said to do, because of their pains and their sores, Re 16:11; but Job bore his with the utmost patience; he took a piece of a broken pot, which perhaps lay in the ashes among which he sat, and scraped himself with it; either as some think to allay the itching, or rather to remove the purulent matter that ran from his boils; which he used instead of linen rags to wipe them with, having no surgeon to come near him, to mollify his ulcers with ointment, to supple them with oil, and lay healing plasters upon them;

there were none to do any of these things for him; his maids and his servants, and even his wife, stood at some distance from him; the smell of him might be so nauseous, that it was intolerable, he was obliged to do what was done himself, which is here mentioned; though it seems something strange and unnatural, considering his case; Schmidt thinks that this scraping was done by him as a rite and ceremony used by mourners in those times and countries, and which Job would not omit though his body was full of sores:

and he sat down among the ashes; which was often done in cases of mourning and humiliation, see **Jon 3:6**; and which Job did to humble himself under the mighty hand of God upon him; whether these ashes were outside or inside the house is not certain; some think they were outside, and that he had no house to dwell in, nor bed to lie on, nor couch to sit upon, and therefore was obliged to do as he did; but the contrary is evident from **Job 7:13**; others say, that his disease being the leprosy, he was obliged to sit alone and outside; but it is not certain that that was his disease; and besides, the law concerning lepers did not as yet exist; and had it, it would not have been binding on Job, who was not of the Israelitish nation: the vulgar notion that Job sat upon a dunghill outside the city has no other foundation than the Septuagint version of this passage, which is a wrong one; for his sitting in ashes, there might be a reason in nature, and it might be chosen on account of his disease; for ashes are a drier, and an abstersive of ulcers, and Galen {f} says they are used in fresh wounds to stop the flow of the blood.

{f} De simpl. Med. ad Paternian. apud Schenchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 661.

Job 2:9

Ver. 9. Then said his wife to him,.... The Jews {g}, who affect to know everything, say, that Job's wife was Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, as the Targum, but this is not very likely; however, we may observe that polygamy had not obtained in these early times; Job had but one wife, and very probably she is the same that after all this bore him ten children more; since we never read of her death, nor of his having any other wife, and might be a good woman for anything that appears to the contrary; and Job himself seems to intimate the same, though she was in the dark about this providence, and under a sore temptation on that account; and therefore says to her husband,

dost thou still retain thine integrity? not as blaming him for insisting and leaning on his integrity, and justifying, and not humbling himself before God, when he should rather confess his sins and prepare for death; for this is contrary to the sense of the phrase used, **Job 2:3**; where Job is applauded by the Lord himself for holding fast his integrity; nor will Job's answer comport with this sense of her words; nor did she speak as wondering that he should still retain it among so many sore temptations and afflictions; though indeed persevering grace is a marvellous thing; but then he would never have blamed her for such an expression: nor said she this as upbraiding and reproaching him for his religion and continuance in it, and mocking at him, and despising him on that account, as Michal did David; but as suggesting to him there was nothing in religion, and advising him to throw up the profession of it; for he might easily see, by his own case and circumstances, that God had no more regard to good men than to bad men, and therefore it was in vain to serve him; the temptation she laboured under was the same with that good man's, Asaph, Ps 73:11;

curse God, and die: which is usually interpreted, curse God and then destroy thyself; or utter some such blasphemous words, as will either provoke him to destroy thee, or will make thee liable to be taken notice of by the civil magistrate and put to death for it; or do this in revenge for his hand upon thee, and then die; or, though thou diest; but these are all too harsh and wicked to be said by one that had been trained up in a religious manner, and had been so many years the consort of so holy and good a man: the words may be rendered, "bless God and die" {h}; and may be understood either sarcastically, go on blessing God till thou diest; if thou hast not had enough of it, take thy fill of it, and see what will be the issue of it; nothing but death; wilt thou still continue "blessing God and dying?" so some {i} render the words, referring to what he had said in **Job 1:21**; or else really and sincerely, as advising him to humble himself before God, confess his sins, and "pray" {k} unto him that he would take him out of this world, and free him from all his pains and sorrow; or rather the sense is, "bless God": take thy farewell of him {l}; bid adieu to him and all religion, and so die; for there is no good to be hoped for on the score of that, here or hereafter; or at least not in this life: and so it amounts to much the same as before; and this sense is confirmed by Job's answer, which follows.

{g} T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 20. 3. {h} Myhla Krb "benedic Deo", Montanus, Piscator, Schmidt, Michaelis. {i} "Benedicendo et moriendo", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Broughton. {k} "Supplica Deo", Tigurine version; so some in Munster. {l} "Valere jubeas numen et morere", Schultens; "valedic Deo", so some in Mercer.

Job 2:10

Ver. 10. But he said unto her, thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh,.... The wicked and profane women of that age; he does not say she was one of them, but spake like them; which intimates that she was a good woman, and had always been thought to be so; but now spake not like herself, and one of her profession, but like carnal persons: Sanctius thinks Job refers to the Idumean women, who, like other Heathens, when their god did not please them, or they could not obtain of them what they desired, would reproach them, and cast them away from there, throw them into the fire, or into the water, as the Persians are said to do; and so Job's wife, because of the present afflictive providence, was for casting off God and all religion; in this she spake and acted like those wicked people later observed,
Job 21:14; and like those carnal professors among the Jews in later times, **Mal 3:14**; this was talking foolishly, and Job's wife spake after this foolish manner, which he resented:

what? this he said as being angry with her, and having indignation at what she said; and therefore, in this quick, short, and abrupt manner, reproves her for her folly:

shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? as all good things temporal and spiritual, the blessings of Providence; and all natural, though not moral evil things, even all afflictions which seem, or are thought to be evil, come from the mouth of God, and are according to his purpose, counsel, and will; so they are all dispensed by the hand of God, and should be kindly, cheerfully, readily, and willingly received, the one as well as the other; see **La 3:38**. Job suggests that he and his wife had received many good things from the Lord, many temporal good things, as appears from **Job 1:2**; they had their beings in him, and from him; they had been preserved in them by him; they had had an habitation to dwell in, and still had; God had given them food and raiment, wherewith it became them to be content; they had had a comfortable family of children until this time, and much health of body, Job till now, and his wife still, for ought appears; of their former happy circumstances, see Job 29:1; and besides these outward mercies, they had received God as their covenant God, their portion, shield, and exceeding great reward; they had received Christ as their living Redeemer; they had received the Spirit, and his grace, the root of the matter was in them; they had received justifying, pardoning, and adopting: grace, and a right unto and meetness for eternal life, which all good men receive of God; and therefore such must expect to receive evil things, or to partake of afflictions, since God has appointed these for them, and has told them of them, that they shall befall them; and beside they are for their profit and advantage; and the consideration of the good things that have been received, and are now enjoyed, as well as what they have reason to believe they shall enjoy in heaven to all eternity, should make them ready and willing to bear evil things quietly and patiently; see Heb 11:26; so Achilles in Homer {m} represents Jove as having two vessels full of gifts, one of good things, the other of evil, and sometimes he takes and gives the one, and sometimes the other:

in all this did not Job sin with his lips; not in what he said to his wife, it was all right and good; nor under the whole of his affliction hitherto, he had not uttered one impatient, murmuring, and repining word at the hand of God; the tongue, though an unruly member, and under such providences apt to speak unadvisedly, was bridled and restrained by Job from uttering anything indecent and unbecoming: the Targum, and many of the Jewish writers, observe that he sinned in his heart, but not with his lips; but this is not to be concluded from what is here said; though it is possible there might be some risings of corruptions in his heart, which, by the grace of God that prevailed in him, were kept under and restrained from breaking out.

{m} Iliad 24. ver. 527-530.

Job 2:11

Ver. 11. Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him,.... Of the loss of his substance, servants, and children, and of his own health; the news of which soon spread in the adjacent countries, Job being a person of great note, and his calamity so very extraordinary and uncommon: who these three friends were is after observed; they living at some distance from him, held a correspondence with him, and he with them, being good men; and now act the friendly part in paying him a visit under such circumstances; Pr 17:17;

they came everyone from his own place; from the country, city, town, or habitations where they lived; whether they walked or rode is not said, their names are as follow:

Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite; the first of these, Eliphaz, was either from Teman, a city in Edom, on the borders

of Arabia Deserta, as the Targum; or a descendant of Teman, a grandson of Esau; not Eliphaz the son of Esau,
Gen 36:11 as the Targum on that place says; for he was the father of Teman, from whom this Eliphaz sprang: the second, Bildad, was a descendant from Shuah, a son of Abraham, by Keturah, Ge 25:2; whose posterity with geographers are called Sauchites, Sauchaeans, Sacceans, and settled in Arabia Deserta, from whence Bildad came: the third, Zophar the Naamathite, who he was, and why so called, is not certain; there is nothing but conjectures concerning him; it is most probable that he lived in Arabia Deserta, or on the borders of it, near to Job's country and that of his other two friends {n}; there was a Naamath in the land of Uz, which was Job's country according to Fretelius {o}: the Septuagint version calls Eliphaz the king of the Temanites, and Bildad the tyrannus, or governor, of the Sauchaens, and Zophar king of the Minaeans {p}:

for they had made an appointment together; upon hearing of Job's trouble, they got together, and fixed upon a time and place to meet together and proceed on in their journey to Job's house:

to come to mourn with him, and to comfort him; the first word signifies to "move to him" {q} not as Sephorno explains it, to go with him from place to place, that he might not lay hands on himself; but rather, as the Latin interpreter of the Targum, to move their heads at him; as persons, to show their concern for, and sympathy with, the afflicted, shake their heads at them: the meaning is, that they came to condole his misfortunes, and to speak a word of comfort to him under them; and no doubt but they came with a real and sincere intent to do this, though they proved miserable comforters of him; Job 16:2.

{n} Vid. Spanhem. Hist. Jobi, c. 11. sect. 3. &c. {o} Apud Adrichom. Theatrum. T. S. p. 21. {p} So Aristeas, Philo and Polyhistor apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 25. p. 431. {q} wl dwnl "verbum" dwn "migrare, et sese movere significat", Mercerus, so Ben Melech.

Job 2:12

Ver. 12. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off,.... Either when at some distance from Job's house, and he being without in the open air, as some think; or as they entered his house, he being at the further part of the room, or in another further on, which they could see into:

and knew him not; at first sight; until they came nearer to him, his garments being rent, and his head shaved, and his body covered all over with boils; so that he was so deformed and disfigured that they could not know him at first, and could scarcely believe him to be the same person:

they lifted up their voice and wept: they wept and cried aloud, being greatly affected with the sight of him, and their hearts sympathizing with him under his afflictions, being his cordial friends, and of that disposition, to weep with those that weep:

and they rent everyone his mantle, or "cloak"; in token of mourning, as Job had done before, See Gill on "Job 1:20";

and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven; that is, they took up handfuls of dust from off the ground, and threw it up in the air over their heads, which fell upon them and covered them; which was another rite or ceremony used by mourners, as Jarchi observes, and showed the vehemence of their affections and passions, and the confusion they were in at seeing their friend in such a miserable condition; see **Jos 7:6**.

Job 2:13

Ver. 13. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights,.... Which was the usual time of mourning, Ge 50:10; not that they were in this posture all this time, without sleeping, eating, or drinking, and other necessaries of life; but they came and sat with him every day and night for seven days and nights running, and sat the far greater part of them with him, conforming themselves to him and sympathizing with him:

and none spake a word unto him; concerning his affliction and the cause of it, and what they thought about it; partly through the loss they were at concerning it, hesitating in their minds, and having some suspicion of evil in Job; and partly through the grief of their own hearts, and the vehemence of their passions, but chiefly because of the case and circumstances Job was in, as follows:

for they saw that [his] grief was very great; and they knew not well what comfort to administer, and were fearful lest they should add grief to grief; or they saw that his "grief increased exceedingly" {r}; his boils, during these seven days, grew sorer and sorer, and his pain became more intolerable, that there was no speaking to him until he was a little at ease, and more composed and capable of attending to what might be said; they waited a proper opportunity, and which they quickly had, by what Job said in the following chapter: this account is given of his three friends in this place, because the greater part of the book that follows is taken up in giving an account of a dispute which passed between him and them, occasioned by what he delivered in the next chapter.

{r} dam bakh ldg yk "quod creverat dolor valde", Pagninus, Montanus; so Mercerus Schultens, Michaelis, and the Targum.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 3

In this chapter we have an account of Job's cursing the day of his birth, and the night of his conception; **Job 3:1**; first the day, to which he wishes the most extreme darkness, **Job 3:4**; then the night, to which he wishes the same and that it might be destitute of all joy, and be cursed by others as well as by himself, **Job 3:6**; The reasons follow, because it did not prevent his coming into the world, and because he died not on it, **Job 3:10**; which would, as he judged, have been an happiness to him; and this he illustrates by the still and quiet state of the dead, the company they are with, and their freedom from all trouble, oppression, and bondage, **Job 3:13**; but however, since it was otherwise with him, he desires his life might not be prolonged, and expostulates about the continuance of it, **Job 3:20**; and this by reason of his present troubles, which were many and great, and came upon him as he feared they would, and which had made him uneasy in his prosperity, **Job 3:24**.

Ver. 1. After this opened Job his mouth,.... order to speak, and began to speak of his troubles and afflictions, and the sense he had of them; for though, this phrase may sometimes signify to speak aloud, clearly and distinctly, and with great freedom and boldness, yet here it seems to design no more than beginning to speak, or breaking silence after it had been long kept: be spake after his first trial and blessed the name of the Lord, and upon his second, and reproved his wife for her foolish speaking; but upon the visit of his three friends, and during the space of seven days, a profound silence was kept by him and them; and when he perceived that they chose not to speak to him, and perhaps his distemper also decreased, and his pain somewhat abated, he broke out into the following expressions:

and cursed his day: he did not curse his God, as Satan said he would, and his wife advised him to: nor did he curse his fellow creatures, or his friends, as wicked men in passion are apt to do, nor did he curse himself, as profane persons often do, when any evil befalls them; but he cursed his day; not the day on which his troubles came upon him, for there were more than one, and they were still continued, but the day of his birth, as appears from **Job 3:3**; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions add here, "in which he was born"; and what is meant by cursing it may be learnt from his own words in the following verses, the substance of which is, that he wished either it had never been, or he had never been born; but since that was impossible, that it might be forgotten, and never observed or had in esteem, but be buried oblivion and obscurity, and be branded with a black mark, as an unhappy day, for ever: the word {s} signifies, he made light of it, and spoke slightly and contemptibly of it; he disesteemed it, yea, detested it, and could not bear to think of it, and desired that it might be disrespected by God and men; so that there is no need of such questions, whether it is in the power of man to curse? and whether it is lawful to curse the creature? and whether a day is capable of a curse? The frame of mind in which Job was when he uttered these words is differently represented; some of the Jewish writers will have it that he denied the providence of God, and thought that all things depended upon the stars, or planets which rule on the day a man is born, and therefore cursed his stars; whereas nothing is more evident than that Job ascribes all that befell him to the purpose and providence of God, Job 23:14; some say he was in the utmost despair, and had no hope of eternal life and salvation, but the contrary to this is clear from Job 13:15; and many think he had lost all patience, for which he was so famous; but if he had, he would not have been so highly spoken of as he is in **Jas 5:11**; it is true indeed there may be a mixture of weakness with respect to the exercise of that grace at this time, and which may appear in some after expressions of his; yet were it not for these and the like, as we could not have such an idea of his sorrows and afflictions, and of that quick sense and perception he had of them, so neither of his exceeding great patience in enduring them as he did; and, besides, what impatience he was guilty of was not only graciously forgiven, but he through the grace of God was enabled to conquer; and patience had its perfect work in him, and he persevered therein to the end; though after all he is not to be excused of weakness and infirmity, since he is blamed not only by Elihu, but by the Lord himself; yea, Job himself owned his sin and folly, and repented of it,
Job 40:4.

{s} "Opponitur verbum" llq "verbo" dbk; "significat se pronunciasse diem inglorium", Codurcus.

Job 3:2

Ver. 2. And Job spake, and said. Or "answered and said" {t}, though not a word was spoken to him by his friends; he answered to his own calamity, and to their silence, as Schmidt observes; and this word is sometimes used when nothing goes before, to which the answer is, as many Jewish writers observe, as in Ex 32:27; Jarchi interprets it, "he cried", and so some others {u} render it: from henceforwards to Job 42:6, this book is written in a poetical style, in Hebrew metre as is thought, which at present is pretty much unknown, even to the Jews themselves; some have been of opinion, that the following discourses between Job and his friends were not originally delivered in metre, but were put into this form by the penman or writer of the book; but of this we cannot be certain; in the Targum in the king of Spain's Bible it is, "and Job sung and said".

{t} Neyw "et respondit", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt, Schultens, Michaelis.
{u} "Clamavitquo", Mercerus; "nam proloquens", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Job 3:3

Ver. 3. Let the day perish wherein I was born,.... Here begins Job's form of cursing his day, and which explains what is meant by it; and it may be understood either of the identical day of his birth, and then the sense is, that he wished that had never been, or, in other words, that he had never been born; and though these were impossible, and Job knew it, and therefore such wishes may seem to be in vain, yet Job had a design herein, which was to show the greatness of his afflictions, and the sense he had of them: or else of his birthday, as it returned year after year; and then his meaning is, let it not be kept and observed with any solemnity, with feasting and other expressions of joy, as the birthdays of great personages especially were, and his own very probably had been, since his children's were, **Job 1:4**; but now he desires it might not be so for the future, but be entirely disregarded; he would have it perish out of his own memory, and out of the memory of others, and even be struck out of the calendar, and not be reckoned with the days of the month and year, **Job 3:6**; both may be intended, both the very day on which he was born, and the yearly return of it:

and the night [in which] it was said, there is a man child conceived; that is, let that night perish also; he wishes it had not been, or he had not been conceived, or for the future be never mentioned, but eternally forgotten: Job goes back to his conception, as being the spring of his sorrows; for this he knew as well as David, that he was shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin, see Job 14:4; but rather, since the particular night or time of conception is not ordinarily, easily, and exactly known by women themselves, and much less by men; and more especially it could not be told what sex it was, whether male or female that was conceived, and the tidings of it could not be brought by any; it seems better with Aben Ezra to render the word {w}, "there is a man child brought forth", which used to be an occasion of joy, Joh 16:21; and so the word is used to bear or bring forth, **1Ch 4:17**; see Jer 20:15; and, according to him, it was a doubt whether Job was born in the day or in the night; but be it which it will, if he was born in the day, he desires it might perish; and if in the night, he wishes the same to that; though the words may be rendered in a beautiful and elegant manner nearer the original, "and the night [which] said, a man child is conceived" {x}; representing, by a prosopopoeia, the night as a person conscious of the conception, as an eyewitness of it, and exulting at it, as Schultens observes.

{w} rbg hrh "in lucem editus est vir", Mercerus; "creatus, progenitus", Drusius, so the Targum; "conceptus et natus est vir, vel mas", Michaelis; so Ben Melech. {x} rma hlylhw "et nox quae dixit", Mercerus, Gussetius, Schultens.

Job 3:4

Ver. 4. Let that day be darkness,.... Not only dark, but darkness itself, extremely dark; and which is to be understood not figuratively of the darkness of affliction and calamity; this Job would not wish for, either for himself, who had enough of that, or for others; but literally of gross natural darkness, that was horrible and dreadful, as some {x} render it: this was the reverse of what God said at the creation, "let there be light", **Ge 1:3**, and there was, and he called it day; but Job wishes his day might be darkness, as the night; either that it had been always dark, and never become day, or in its return be remarkably dark and gloomy:

let not God regard it, from above; that is, either God who is above, and on

high, the High and Holy One, the Most High God, and who is higher than the highest, and so this is a descriptive character of him; or else this respects the place where he is, the highest heaven, where is his throne, and from whence he looks and takes notice of the sons of men, and of all things done below: and this wish must be understood consistent with his omniscience, who sees and knows all persons and things, even what are done in the dark, and in the darkest days; for the darkness and the light are alike to him; and as consistent with his providence, which is continually exercised about persons and things on earth without any intermission, even on every day in the year; and was it to cease one day, hour, or moment, all would be dissolved, and be thrown into the utmost confusion and disorder: but Job means the smiles of his providence, which he wishes might be restrained on this day; that he would not cause his sun in the heavens to shine out upon it, nor send down gentle and refreshing showers of rain on it; in which sense he is said to care for and regard the land of Canaan,
De 11:11; where the same word is used as here; or the sense is, let it be so expunged from the days of the year, the when it is sought for, and if even it should be by God himself, let it not be found; or let him not "seek" {y} after it, to do any good upon it:

neither let the light shine upon it; the light of the sun, or the morning light, as the Targum, much less the light at noonday; even not the diurnal light, as Schmidt interprets it, in any part of the day: light is God's creature, and very delightful and desirable; the best things, and the most comfortable enjoyments, whether temporal, spiritual, or eternal, are expressed by it; and, on the other hand, a state of darkness is the most uncomfortable, and therefore the worst and most dismal things and states are signified by it.

{x} Kvx "horrens", Caligo, Schultens. {y} whvrdy la "ne requirat", Montanus, &c.

Job 3:5

Ver. 5. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it,.... Let there be such darkness on it as on persons when dying, or in the state of the dead; hence the sorest afflictions, and the state of man in unregeneracy, are compared unto it, Ps 23:4; let there be nothing but foul weather, dirt, and darkness in it, which may make it very uncomfortable and undesirable; some render the word, "let darkness and [the] shadow of death redeem it" {z}, challenge and claim it as their own, and let light have no share or property in it:

let a cloud dwell upon it; as on Mount Sinai when the law was given; a thick dark cloud, even an assemblage of clouds, so thick and close together, that they seem but one cloud which cover the whole heavens, and obscure them, and hinder the light of the sun from shining on the earth; and this is wished to abide not for an hour or two, but to continue all the day:

let the blackness of the day terrify it; let it be frightful to itself; or rather, let the blackness be such, or the darkness of it such gross darkness, like that as was felt by the Egyptians; that the inhabitants of the earth may be terrified with it, as Moses and the Israelites were at Mount Sinai, at the blackness, tempest, thunders, and lightnings, there seen and heard: as some understand this of black vapours exhaled by the sun, with which the heavens might be filled, so others of sultry weather and scorching heat, which is intolerable: others render the words, "let them terrify it as the bitternesses of the day" {a}; either with bitter cursings on it, or through bitter calamities in it; or, "as those [who have] a bitter {b} day", as in the margin of our Bibles, and in others.

{z} whlagy "vindicassent", Junius & Tremellius; "vendicent", Cocceius; "vindicent", Schultens. {a} Mwy yryrmk "tanquam amaritudines dici", Schmidt, Michaelis; "velut amarulenta diei", Schultens; so the Targum. {b} "Velut amari diei", Mercerus; "tanquam amari diei", Montanus.

Job 3:6

Ver. 6. As [for] that night,.... The night of conception; Job imprecated evils on the day he was born, now on the night he was conceived in, the returns of it:

let darkness seize upon it; let it not only he deprived of the light of the moon and stars, but let an horrible darkness seize upon it, that it may be an uncommon and a terrible one:

let it not be joined unto the days of the year; the solar year, and make one of them; or, "let it not be one among them" {c}, let it come into no account, and when it is sought for, let it not appear, but be found wanting; "or let it not joy" or "rejoice among the days of the year" {d}, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and others interpret it, or be a joyful one, or anything joyful done or enjoyed in it:

let it not come into the number of the months; meaning not the intercalated months, as Sephorno, nor the feasts of the new moon, as others, but let it not serve to make up a month, which consists of so many days and nights, according to the course of the moon; the sense both of this and the former clause is, let it be struck out of the calendar.

{c} dxy la "non sit una inter dies", Pagninus; "ne adunatur in diebus", Montanus. {d} "Ne fuisset gavisa", Junius & Tremellius; "ne gaudeat", Vatablus, Beza, Mercerus, Piscator, Drusius, Broughton, Cocceius, Schmidt, Schultens, Michaelis.

Job 3:7

Ver. 7. Lo, let that night be solitary,.... Let there be no company for journeys, or doing any business; no meetings of friends, neighbours, or relations on it, for refreshment, pleasure, and recreation, after the business of the day is over, as is frequently done; let there be no associations of this kind, or any other: in the night it was usual to have feasts on various accounts, and especially on account of marriage; but now let there be none, let there be as profound a silence as if all creatures, men and beasts, were dead, and removed from off the face of the earth, and nothing to be heard and seen on it: or, "let it be barren" or "desolate" {e}, so R. Simeon bar Tzemach interprets it, and refers to Isa 49:21; that is, let no children be born in it, and so no occasion for any joy on that account, as follows; let it be as barren as a flint {f}:

let no joyful voice come therein; which some even carry to the nocturnal singing of saints in private or in public assemblies, and to the songs of angels, those morning stars in heaven; but it seems rather to design natural or civil joy, or singing on civil accounts; as on account of marriage, and particularly on account of the birth of a child, and especially his own birth, and even any expressions of joy on any account; and that there might not be so much as the crowing of a cock heard, as the Targum has it.

{e} dwmlg "orba", Syr. "desolata", Ar. "vasta", Schmidt. {f} "Sterilis", Schultens; "effoetus", apud Arab. in ib. See Hottinger. Smegma Orientale, l. 1. c. 7. p. 136.

Job 3:8

Ver. 8. Let them curse it that curse the day,.... Their own day, either their birthday, or any day on which evil befalls them; and now such as are used to this, Job would have them, while they were cursing their own day, to throw some curses upon his; or that curse the daylight in general, as adulterers and murderers, who are said to rebel against the light, see Job 24:13; and as some Ethiopians, who lived near Arabia, and so known to Job, who supposed there was no God, and used to curse the sun when it rose and set, as various writers relate {g}, called by others {h} Atlantes; or it may design such persons who were hired at funerals, to mourn for the dead, and who, in their doleful ditties and dirges, used to curse the day on which the person was born whom they lamented; or it may be rather the day on which he died; hence it follows:

who are ready to raise up their mourning; who were expert at the business, and who could raise up a howl, as the Irish now do, or make a lamentation for the dead when they pleased; such were the mourning women in **Jer 9:17**; and those that were skilful of lamentation, **Am 5:16**; some render the words, "who are ready to raise up Leviathan" {i}, and interpret it either of the whale, which, when raised up by the fishermen, they are in danger of their vessels being overturned, and their lives lost, and then they curse the day that ever they entered into such service, and exposed themselves to such danger; or of fish in general, and of fishermen cursing and swearing when they are unsuccessful: some understand this of astrologers, magicians, and enchanters, raising spirits, and particularly the devil, who they think is meant by Leviathan; but it seems best with a little alteration from Gussetius, and Schultens after him, to render the words thus,

"let the cursers of the day fix a name upon it; let those that are ready "to anything, call it" the raiser up of Leviathan;"

that is, let such who either of themselves are used to curse days, or are employed by others to do it, brand this night with some mark of infamy; let them ascribe all dreadful calamities and dismal things unto it, as the source and spring of them; which may be signified by Leviathan, that being a creature most formidable and terrible, of which an account is given in the latter part of this book; but many Jewish writers {k} render it "mourning", as we do.

{g} Diodor. Sic. l. 3. p. 148. Strabo, Geograph. l. 17. P. 565. {h} Herodot. Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 184. Mela de Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 8. Solin. Polyhistor, c. 44. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 8. {i} Ntywl "Leviathanem", Schmidt, Michaelis. Mr. Broughton renders the words, "who hunt Leviathan." {k} Vid. Aben Ezram & Gersom in loc. R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 1. 1. Aruch in voce tywl. So the word is used, T. Hieros. Moed Katon, fol. 80. 4.

Job 3:9

Ver. 9. Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark,.... Either of the morning or evening twilight; both may be meant, rather the latter, because of the following clause; the sense is, let not these appear to adorn the heavens, and to relieve the darkness of the night, and make it more pleasant and delightful, as well as to be useful to travellers and sailors:

let it look for light, but [have] none; that is, either for the light of the moon and stars, to shine in the night till daybreak, or for the light of the sun at the time when it arises; but let it have neither; let the whole time, from sun setting to sunrising, from one twilight to another, be one continued gross and horrible darkness; here, by a strong and beautiful figure, looking is ascribed to the night:

neither let it see the dawning of the day; or, "let it not see the eyelids of the morning" {l}, or what we call "peep of day"; here, in very elegant language, the dawn of morning light is expressed, which is like the opening of an eye and its lids, quick and vibrating, when light is let in and perceived; or this may be interpreted of the sun, the eye of the morning and of light, and of its rays, which, when first darted, are like the opening of the eyelids.

{l} rxv ypepe "palpebras aurorae", Montanus, Mercerus, &c.

Job 3:10

Ver. 10. Because it shut not up the doors of my [mother's] womb,.... Or "of my belly" {m}, or "womb"; which Aben Ezra interprets of the navel, by which the infant receives its food and nourishment before it is born, and which, if closed, he must have died in embryo; but rather it is to be understood of his mother's womb, called his, because he was conceived and bore in it, and was brought forth from it; and the sense is, that he complains of the night, either that it did not close his mother's womb, and hinder the conception of him, as Gersom, Sephorno, Bar Tzemach, and others, and is the usual sense of the phrase of closing the womb, and which is commonly ascribed to God, Ge 20:17 **1Sa 1:5**; which Job here attributes to the night, purposely avoiding to make mention of the name of God, that he might not seem to complain of him, or directly point at him; or else the blame laid on that night is, that it did not so shut up the doors of his mother's womb, that he might not have come out from thence into the world, wishing that had been his grave, and his mother always big with him, as Jarchi, and which sense is favoured by Jer 20:17; a wish cruel to his mother, as well as unnatural to himself:

nor hid sorrow from mine eyes; which it would have done, had it done that which is complained of it did not; had it he could not have perceived it experimentally, endured the sorrows and afflictions he did from the Chaldeans and Sabeans, from Satan, his wife, and friends; and had never known the trouble of loss of substance, children, and health, and felt those pains of body and anguish of mind he did; these are the reasons of his cursing the day of his birth, and the night of his conception.

{m} ynjb "ventris mei", Mercerus, Piscator, Schmidt, Schuitens, Michaelis; "uteri mei", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius.

Job 3:11

Ver. 11. Why died I not from the womb?.... That is, as soon as he came out of it; or rather, as soon as he was in it, or from the time that he was in it; or however, while he was in it, that so he might not have come alive out of it; which sense seems best to agree both with what goes before and follows after

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 4

Job's sore afflictions, and his behaviour under them, laid the foundation of a dispute between him and his three friends, which begins in this chapter, and is carried on to the end of the thirty first; when Elihu starts up as a moderator between them, and the controversy is at last decided by God himself. Eliphaz first enters the list with Job, **Job 4:1**; introduces what he had to say in a preface, with some show of tenderness, friendship, and respect, **Job 4:2**; observes his former conduct in his prosperity, by instructing many, strengthening weak hands and feeble knees, and supporting stumbling and falling ones, **Job 4:3**; with what view all this is observed may be easily seen, since he immediately takes notice of his present behaviour, so different from the former, **Job 4:5**; and insults his profession of faith and hope in God, and fear of him, **Job 4:6**; and suggests that he was a bad man, and an hypocrite; and which he grounds upon this supposition, that no good man was ever destroyed by the Lord; for the truth of which he appeals to Job himself, **Job 4:7**; and confirms it by his own experience and observation, **Job 4:8**; and strengthens it by a vision he had in the night, in which the holiness and justice of God, and the mean and low condition of men, are declared, **Job 4:12**; and therefore it was wrong in Job to insinuate any injustice in God or in his providence, and a piece of weakness and folly to contend with him.

Ver. 1. Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said. When Job was done cursing his day, and had finished his doleful ditty on that subject, then Eliphaz took the opportunity of speaking, not being able to bear any longer with Job and his behaviour under his afflictions; Eliphaz was one of Job's three friends that came to visit him, **Job 2:11**; very probably he might be the senior man, or a man of the greatest authority and power; a most respectable person, had in great esteem and reverence among men, and by these his friends, and therefore takes upon him to speak first; or it may be it was agreed among themselves that he should begin the dispute with Job; and we find, that in the close of this controversy the Lord speaks to him by name, and to him only, Job 42:7; he "answered"; not that Job directed his discourse to him, but he took occasion, from Job's afflictions and his passionate expressions, to say what he did; and he "said" not anything by way of condolence or consolation, not pitying Job's case, nor comforting him in his afflicted circumstances, as they required both; but reproaching him as a wicked and hypocritical man, not acting like himself formerly, or according to his profession and principles, but just the reverse: this was a new trial to Job, and some think the sorest of all; it was as a sword in his bones, which was very cutting to him; as oil cast into a fiery furnace in which he now was, which increased the force and fury of it; and as to vinegar an opened and bleeding wound, which makes it smart the more.

Job 4:2

Ver. 2. [If] we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?.... Eliphaz speaks in the name of himself and his two friends, who had doubtless consulted together, and compared their sentiments of Job; which appearing to be the same, they formed a plan and scheme in which they should attack him, and the part which each should take, and the order in which they should proceed: these words are said, either as seemingly doubting whether they should speak or be silent; for they may be rendered, "shall we try", or attempt, to drop or speak a "word to thee"; to enter into a conversation with thee? or, "shall we take up a discourse", and carry it on with thee, "who art grieved" already? or art weary and heavy laden, and bore down with the burden of affliction, with sorrows and troubles; or art impatient {h} under them; we fear, should we, that thou wilt be more grieved and burdened, and become more impatient; and therefore know not well what to do: or else, as supposing and taking it for granted that he would be grieved and burdened, and made more restless and uneasy, impatient and outrageous, yet they had determined to enter into a debate with him; for so the words are by some rendered, "should we speak a word unto thee"; or, "against thee" {i}; even should the least word be spoken against thee, thou wilt be weary {k}, or burdened, or grieved, or take it ill: we know thou wilt; yet, nevertheless, we must not, we cannot, we will not forbear speaking: or else interrogatively, as our version and others, "wilt thou be grieved?" we desire thou wouldest not, nor take it ill from us, but all in good part; we mean no hurt, we design no ill, but thy good, and beg thou wilt hear us patiently: this shows how great a man Job had been, and in what reverence and respect he was had, that his friends bespeak him after this manner in his low estate; however, this was artifice in them, to introduce the discourse, and bring on the debate after this sort:

but who can withhold himself from speaking? be it as it will; Eliphaz suggests, though Job was already and greatly burdened, and would be more so, and break out into greater impatience, yet there was a necessity of speaking, it could not be forborne; no man could refrain himself from speaking, nor ought in such a case, when the providence of God was reflected upon, and he was blasphemed and evil spoken of, and charged with injustice, as was supposed; in such circumstances, no good, no faithful man, could or ought to keep silence; indeed, when the glory of God, the honour of the Redeemer, and the good of souls require it, and a man's own reputation with respect to his faithfulness lies at stake, silence should not be kept, let the consequence be as it may; but how far this was the case may be considered.

{h} halt Kyla rbd honh "num suscipiemus verbum ad te, qui impatiens es?" Schmidt; "qui jam dum lassatus", Michaelis. {i} "Contra te", Piscator. {k} "Forsitan moleste accipies", V. L. "fatisces", Schultens.

Job 4:3

Ver. 3. Behold, thou hast instructed many,.... This is introduced with a "behold", either as a note of admiration, that such a man, who had instructed others, should act the part he now does; or as a note of attention to Job himself, and all others that should hear and read this, to observe it, and well consider it, and make the proper use of it; or as a note of asseveration, affirming it to be true and certain, notorious and unquestionable, as no doubt it was: Job was the instructor, a great man, and yet condescended to teach and instruct men in the best things, as did also Abraham, David, Solomon, and others; and a good man, and so fit to teach good things, as every good man is, and who, according to his ability, the gift and measure of grace received should instruct others; and a man of great gift he was, both in things natural, civil, and religious; one that could speak well, and to the purpose, and so was apt and able to teach; and such should not disuse and hide their talents: the persons he instructed were not only his own family, his children and servants, as Abraham before him did; but others who attended him, and waited for his counsel and advice, his words and doctrine, as for the rain, and latter rain, and which dropped and distilled as such, see Job 29:15; and these were "many"; his many ignorant neighbours about him, or many professors of religion, as there might be, and it seems there were in this idolatrous country; and many afflicted ones among these, which is usually the case: Job had many scholars in his school, of different sorts, that attended on him; and these he instructed in the knowledge of the true God, his nature, perfections, and works; and of the living Redeemer, his person, office, grace, and righteousness; and of themselves, the impurity of their nature through original sin, he was acquainted with; their impotency and inability to purge themselves, to atone for sin, and to justify and make themselves acceptable to God; as well as he instructed them in the worship of God, and the manner of it, their duty to him and to one another, and to all their fellow creatures: some render it, "thou hast corrected", or "reproved many" {l}; he had taught the afflicted to be patient under their afflictions, and had reproved them for their impatience; and the design of Eliphaz is to upbraid him with it, as in **Ro 2:21**; thou that didst correct others for their unbecoming behaviour under afflictions, art thyself guilty of the same: "turpe est doctori, cure culpa redarguit ipsum":

and thou hast strengthened the weak hands; either such as hung down through want of food, by giving it to them, both corporeal and spiritual, which strengthens men's hearts, and so their hands; or through sluggishness, by exhorting and stirring them up to be active and diligent; or through fear of enemies, especially spiritual ones, as sin, Satan, and the world; by reason of whose numbers and strength good men are apt to be dispirited, and ready to castaway their spiritual armour, particularly the shield of faith and confidence in God, as faint hearted soldiers in war, to which the allusion is: and these were strengthened by telling them that all their enemies were conquered, and they were more than conquerors over them; that the victory was certain, and their warfare accomplished, or would quickly be: or else, whose hands were weak through a sense of sin and danger, and being in expectation of the wrath, and vengeance of God; and who were strengthened by observing to them that there was a Saviour appointed and expected, a living Redeemer, who would stand upon the earth in the latter day, and save them from their sins, and from wrath to come; see
Isa 35:3; or rather, such whose hearts and hands were, weak through sore and heavy afflictions, whom Job strengthened by showing them that their afflictions were of God; not by chance, but by appointment, and according to the sovereign will of God; that they were for their good, either temporal, spiritual, or eternal; and that they would not continue always, but have an end; and therefore should be patiently bore, see 1Co 12:11.

{l} troy, "corripuisti", Mercerus, Michaelis; "castigasti", Codurcus, Drusius, Schmidt, Schultens.

Job 4:4

Ver. 4. Thy words have up, holden him that was falling,.... Or "stumbling" {m}; that was stumbling at the providence of God in suffering good men to be afflicted, and wicked men to prosper; which has been the stumbling block of God's people in all ages; see
Ps 73:2; or that was stumbling and falling off from the true religion by reason of the revilings and reproaches of men, and their persecutions for it; which is sometimes the case, not only of nominal professors, Mt 13:21; but of true believers, though they do not so stumble and fall as to perish: or else being under afflictions themselves, were ready to sink under them, their strength being small; now Job was helped to speak such words of comfort and advice to persons in any and every of these circumstances as to support them and preserve them from failing, and to enable them to keep their place and station among the people of God. The Targum interprets it of such as were falling into sin; the words of good men to stumbling and falling professors, whether into sin, or into affliction by it, are often very seasonable, and very useful, when attended with the power and Spirit of God:

and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees; that were tottering and trembling, and bending, and not able to bear up under the weight of sin, which lay as an heavy burden, too heavy to bear; or of afflictions very grievous and intolerable; to such persons Job had often spoken words that had been useful to alleviate their troubles, and support them under them. It may be observed, that the cases and circumstances of good men in early times were much the same as they are now; that there is no temptation or affliction that befalls the saints but what has been common; and that Job was a man of great gifts, grace, and experience, and had the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to every weary soul, in whatsoever condition they were: and all this, so very laudable in him, is not observed to his commendation, but to his reproach; to show that he was not a man of real virtue, that he contradicted himself, and did not act according to his profession and principles, and the doctrines he taught others, and was an hypocrite at heart; though no such conclusion follows, supposing he had not acted according to his principles and former conduct; for it is a difficult thing for any good man to act entirely according to them, or to behave the same in prosperity as in adversity, or to take that advice themselves in affliction, and follow it, they have given to others, and yet not be chargeable with hypocrisy. It would have been much better in Eliphaz and his friends to have made another use of Job's former conduct and behaviour, namely, to have imitated it, and endeavoured to have strengthened, and upheld him in his present distressed circumstances; instead of that, he insults him, as follows.

{m} lvwk "offendentem", Cocceius; "impingentem", Drusius, Schmidt, Schultens, Michaelis.

Job 4:5

Ver. 5. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest,.... The affliction and evil that he feared, **Job 3:25**; or rather the same trials and afflictions were come upon him as had been on those whom he had instructed and reproved, and whose hands and hearts he had strengthened and comforted; and yet now thou thyself "faintest", or "art weary" {z}, or art bore down and sinkest under the burden, and bearest it very impatiently {a}, quite contrary to the advice given to others; and therefore it was concluded he could not be a virtuous, honest, and upright man at heart, only in show and appearance. Bolducius renders the words, "God cometh unto thee", or "thy God cometh"; very wrongly, though the sense may be the same; God cometh and visits thee by laying his afflicting hand upon thee:

it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled; suggesting that it was but a touch, a slight one, a light affliction; thereby lessening Job's calamity and distress, or making little and light of it, and aggravating his impatience under it, that for such a trial as this he should be so excessively troubled, his passions should be so violently moved, and he be thrown into so much disorder and confusion, and be impatient beyond measure; no bounds being set to his grief, and the expressions of it; yea, even to be in the utmost consternation and amazement, as the word {b} signifies.

{z} Defatigaris, Cocceius. {a} alt aegre tulisti, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus; "impatienter fers", Schmidt, Michaelis, Piscator. {b} lhbt "consternaris", Mercerus, Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 4:6

Ver. 6. [Is] not [this] thy fear,.... The fear of God, that which is of him, comes from him, is a grace of his implanted in the hearts of his people at conversion, and is increased and encouraged, and drawn forth into fresh exercise through the grace and goodness of God displayed; for a slavish fear, or a fear of punishment, of wrath and damnation, is not the true grace of fear, which maybe in unregenerate men, and even in the devils; but this lies in a reverential affection for God on account of his goodness, and in a carefulness not to offend him on that account; in an hatred of sin, and a departure from it; in an attendance on the worship of God, and is sometimes put for the whole of it; and is accompanied with faith in God, joy in the Holy Ghost, humility of soul, and holiness of heart and life: now Job professed to have this fear of God in his heart, and was thought to have it; this was his general character, **Job 1:1**; but, in his present case and circumstances, Eliphaz asks what was become of it, where it was now, and in what it appeared? and jeers him about it, as if he should say, does it lie in this, in fainting and sinking under afflictions, in being troubled and terrified, and thrown into a consternation by them, and in breaking out into such rash expressions of God and his providence? is it come to this at last, or rather to nothing at all? for he suggests either that Job never had the true grace of fear in him, contrary to the character given of him, and confirmed by God himself, **Job 1:1**; or that he had cast it off and it was gone from him, and left, Job 15:4; which can never be, where it once is, it being the great security against a final and total apostasy from God, Jer 32:40; or that what he had was merely hypocritical, like that which is taught by the precept of men, was only in appearance, and not in reality, as his conduct now showed; for had he had the true fear of God before his eyes, and on his heart, he could never have cursed the day of his birth, nor arraigned the providence of God, and charged him with injustice, as he supposed he did; whereby his fear, his piety, his religion he had professed, appeared to be just nothing at all {c}: it follows,

thy confidence; that is, in God; for Job professed none in any other, in any creature or creature enjoyment, Job 31:24; this when right is a strong act of faith and trust in the Lord, a thorough persuasion and full assurance of interest in him as a covenant God, and in his love and favour, and in Christ as the living Redeemer, and of the truth of the work of grace upon the heart, and of the certainty of the performance of it; also a holy boldness in prayer to God, and a firm and assured belief of being heard and answered; as well as an open and courageous profession of him before men, without any fear of them; for all this Job had been famous, and now he is asked, where it all was? and what was become of it? how it appeared now? and intimates he never had any, or had cast it away, and that it was come to nothing; as was concluded from the rash expressions of his lips, and from the sinkings of his spirit under his present afflictions; but Job's trust and confidence in God and in Christ still continued; see Job 13:15;

thy hope; which also is a grace wrought in the heart, in regeneration; is of things unseen and future, yet to be enjoyed either here or hereafter; and that which is right has Christ for its object, ground, and foundation, and is of singular use to keep up the spirits of men under afflictive providences: and Eliphaz observing Job to be very impatient under them, inquires about his hope; and intimates that what he had professed to have was the hope of the hypocrite, and not real, and was now come to nothing; hope that is true, though it may become low, it cannot be lost; nor was Job's, especially with respect to spiritual and eternal things; see Job 14:7;

and the uprightness of thy ways? before God and men, walking uprightly in the ways of God, according to the revelation of his will made unto him, and acting the just and upright part in all his dealings with men; and for which he was celebrated, and is a part of the character before given of him, **Job 1:1**; but it is insinuated by Eliphaz that there was nothing in it; it was only in show, in appearance, it was not from the heart; or it would not be thus with him as it was, nor would he behave in the manner he now did: some read the words as in the margin, and in some copies of our Bible, "is not thy fear thy confidence? and the uprightness of thy ways thy hope?" and with some little variation Mr. Broughton; "is not thy religion thy hope, and thy right ways thy confidence?" that is, didst thou not hope and expect, and even wert thou not confident of it, that because of thy fear of God, and of the uprightness of thy ways before men, that thou shouldest not only be increased in thy worldly substance, but be preserved and protected in the enjoyment of it? and were not these the reasons which induced thee to be religious, and make such a show of it? suggesting, that he was only religions from mercenary views and selfish principles, and so tacitly charges him with what the devil himself did, **Job 1:9**; and this way go many Jewish and Christian interpreters {d}: some render the words much in the same way, but to a better sense, and more in favour of Job, and by way of instruction and comfort to him: "should not thy fear be thy confidence, and thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?" {e} shouldest thou not take encouragement from thy fear of God, and the uprightness of thine heart and ways, to expect deliverance and salvation, and not faint and sink as thou dost? or is not this the cause of all thine impatience, thy fear of God, trust and hope in him, and thine integrity? concluding thou shouldest have been dealt with after another manner for the sake of these things, and therefore art ready to think thou art hardly dealt with by God, having deserved better treatment; thus making Job to think highly of himself, and to entertain wrong notions of God; so Schmidt; but the first sense I have given of the words seems best.

{c} Ktary alh "adeone nihil pietas tua?" Schultens. {d} Montanus, Mercerus, Piscator, some in Vatablus; so Ben Gersom and Bar Tzemach. {e} So some in Michaelis.

Job 4:7

Ver. 7. Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent?.... Here Eliphaz appeals to Job himself, and desires him to recollect if ever anyone instance had fallen under his observation, in the whole course of his life, or it had ever been told him by

credible persons, that an "innocent" man, by whom he means not one entirely free from sin original or actual, for he knew there was no such persons in the world, since the fall of Adam, but a truly good and gracious man, who was not guilty of any notorious and capital crime, or did not live a vicious course of life; if he ever knew or heard of any such persons that "perished", which cannot be understood of eternal ruin and destruction, which would be at once granted, that such as these described can never perish in such a sense, but have everlasting life; nor of a corporeal death, which is sometimes the sense of perishing, since it is notorious that innocent and righteous persons so perish or die, see **Ec 7:15**
Isa 57:1; and could it be meant of a violent death, an answer might have been returned; and Eliphaz perhaps was not acquainted with it himself, that that innocent and righteous person Abel thus perished by the hands of his brother: but this is rather to be understood of perishing by afflictions, sore and heavy ones, not ordinary but extraordinary ones; and which are, or look like, the judgments of God on men, whereby they lose their all, their substance, their servants, their children, as well as their own health, which was Job's case; and therefore if no parallel instance of an innocent person ever being in the like case, it is insinuated that Job could not be an innocent man:

or where were the righteous cut off? such as are truly righteous in the sight of God, as well as before men, who have the gift of righteousness bestowed on them, and live soberly, righteously, and godly; in what age or country was it ever known that such persons, in their family and substance, were cut off by the hand and providence of God, and abandoned and forsaken by him, and reduced to such circumstances that there could be no hope of their ever being in prosperous ones again? and Job now being in such a forlorn and miserable case and condition, it is suggested, that he could not be a righteous man: but admitting that no such instance could be produced, Eliphaz was too hasty and premature in his conclusion; seeing, as it later appeared, Job was not so cut off, abandoned, and forsaken by God, as not to rise any more; for his latter end was greater than his beginning: and besides, innocent and righteous persons are often involved in the same calamities as wicked men are, and their afflictions are the same; only with this difference, to the one they are the proper punishment of sin, to the other they are fatherly chastisements and trials of their grace, and issue in their good; the Targum explains it of such persons, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, none such as they perishing, or being cut off.

Job 4:8

Ver. 8. Even as I have seen,.... Here he goes about to prove, by his own experience, the destruction of wicked men; and would intimate, that Job was such an one, because of the ruin he was fallen into:

they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same; figurative expressions, denoting that such who devise iniquity in their hearts, form and plan schemes of it in their minds, signified by "plowing iniquity", and who were studious and diligent to put into practice what they devised; who took a great deal of pains to commit sin, and were constant at it, expressed by "sowing wickedness": these sooner or later eat the fruit of their doings, are punished in proportion to their crimes, even in this life, as well as hereafter, see **Ho 8:7** **Ga 6:7**; though a Jewish commentator {b} observes, that the thought of sin is designed by the first phrase; the endeavour to bring it into action by the second; and the finishing of the work, or the actual commission of the evil, by the third; the punishment thereof being what is expressed in **Job 4:9**; the Targum applies this to the generation of the flood.

{b} R. Simeon Bar Tzemach.

Job 4:9

Ver. 9. By the blast of God they perish,.... They and their works, the ploughers, sowers, and reapers of iniquity; the allusion is to the blasting of corn by the east wind, or by mildew, &c. having used the figures of ploughing and sowing before; and which is as soon and as easily done as corn, or anything else, is blasted in the above manner; and denotes the sudden and easy destruction of wicked men by the power of God, stirred up by his wrath and indignation, because of their sins; who when he blows a blast on their persons, substance, and families, they perish at once:

and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed; meaning his wrath and anger, which is like a stream of brimstone, and kindles a fire on the wicked, which are as fuel to it, and are soon consumed by it; the allusion is to breath in a man's nostrils, and the heat of his wrath and fury discovered thereby: some think this refers to Job's children being destroyed by the wind, see Isa 11:4.

Job 4:10

Ver. 10. The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion,.... Which Aben Ezra interprets of God himself, who is compared to a lion; who not only by his voice terrifies, but in his wrath tears the wicked in pieces, and destroys them, and so is a continuation of the preceding account; and others, as R. Moses and R. Jonah, whom he mentions, take this to be a continuation of the means and methods by which God destroys wicked men sometimes, namely, by beasts of prey; this being one of his sore judgments he threatens men with, and inflicts upon men, see Le 26:22; and in this they are followed by some Christian interpreters, who render the words "at" or "by the roaring of the lion, and by the voice of the fierce lion, by the teeth of the young lions" {c}, they the wicked "are broken", ground to pieces, and utterly destroyed; but it is better, with Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and others, to understand it of kings and princes, of the mighty ones of the earth, tyrannical and oppressive rulers and governors; comparable to lions of different ages; because of their grandeur and greatness, their power and might, their cruelty and oppression in each of their different capacities; signifying, that these do not escape the righteous judgments of God: the Targum interprets the roaring of the lion of Esau, and the voice of the fierce lion of Edom; and another Jewish writer {d} of Nimrod, the first tyrant and oppressor, the mighty hunter before the Lord; but these are too particular; wicked men in power and authority in general are here, and in the following clauses, intended, see **Jer 4:7** **2Ti 4:17**; and the sense is, that such ploughers and sowers of iniquity as are like to fierce and roaring lions are easily and quickly destroyed by the Lord:

and the teeth of the young lions are broken: the power of such mighty ones to do mischief is taken away from them, and they and their families are brought to ruin; the teeth of lions are very strong in both jaws; they have fourteen teeth, four incisors or cutters, four canine or dog teeth, six molars or grinders.

{c} "Rugitu leonis et voce ferocis leonis", &c. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so some in R. Someon Bar Tzemach. {d} R. Obadiah Sephorno.

Job 4:11

Ver. 11. The old lion perisheth for lack of prey,.... Or rather "the stout" and "strong lion" {e}, that is most able to take the prey, and most skilful at it, yet such shall perish for want of it; not so much for want of finding it, or of power to seize it, as of keeping it when got, it being taken away from him; signifying, that God oftentimes in his providence takes away from cruel oppressors what they have got by oppression, and so they are brought into starving and famishing circumstances. The Septuagint render the word by "myrmecoleon", or the "ant lion", which Isidore {f} thus describes;

"it is a little animal, very troublesome to ants, which hides itself in the dust, and kills the ants as they carry their corn; hence it is called both a lion and an ant, because to other animals is as an ant, and to the ants as a lion,"

and therefore cannot be the lion here spoken of; though Strabo {g} and Aelianus {h} speak of lions in Arabia and Babylon called ants, which seem to be a species of lions, and being in those countries, might be known to Eliphaz. Megasthenes {i} speaks of ants in India as big as foxes, of great swiftness, and get their living by hunting:

and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad; or "the whelps of the lioness" {k}, these are scattered from the lion and lioness, and from one another, to seek for food, but in vain; the Targum applies this to Ishmael, and his posterity; Jarchi, and others, to the builders of Babel, said to be scattered, Ge 11:8; rather reference may be had to the giants, the men of the old world, who filled the earth with violence, which was the cause of the flood being brought upon the world of the ungodly. Some think that Eliphaz has a regard to Job in all this, and that by the "fierce lion" he designs and describes Job as an oppressor and tyrant, and by the "lioness" his wife, and by the "young lions" and "lion's whelps" his children; and indeed, though he may not directly design him, yet he may obliquely point at him, and suggest that he was like to the men he had in view, and compares to these creatures, and therefore his calamities righteously came upon him.

{e} vyl "leo major", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Schmidt; "leo strenuns et fortis", Michaelis; "robustior leo", Schultens. {f} Origin. l. 12. c. 3. {g} Geograph. l. 16. p. 533. {h} De Animal. l. 7. c. 47. & l. 17. c. 42. {i} Apud Strabo, l. 15. p. 485. {k} aybl ynb "filii leaenae", Bochart, Schultens.

Job 4:12

Ver. 12. Now a thing was secretly brought to me,.... From reason and experience, Eliphaz proceeds to a vision and revelation he had from God, showing the purity and holiness of God, and the frailty, weakness, folly, and sinfulness of men, by which it appears that men cannot be just in the sight of God, and therefore it must be wrong in Job to insist upon his innocence and integrity. Some indeed have thought that this was a mere fiction of Eliphaz, and not a real vision; yea, some have gone so far as to pronounce it a diabolical one, but without any just foundation; for there is nothing in the manner or matter of it but what is agreeable to a divine vision or to a revelation from God; besides, though Eliphaz was a mistaken man in the case of Job, yet was a good man, as may be concluded from the acceptance of a sacrifice for him by the Lord, which was offered for him by Job, according to the order of God, and therefore could never be guilty of such an imposture; nor does Job ever charge him with any falsehood in this matter, who doubtless would have been able to have traversed and exposed him; add to all this, that in his discourse annexed to and continued along with this account, stands a passage, which the apostle has quoted as of divine inspiration, **1Co 3:19**; from **Job 5:13**. When Eliphaz had this vision, whether within the seven days of his visit to Job, or before, some time ago, which he might call to mind on this occasion, and judging it appropiate to the present case, thought fit to relate it, is not certain, nor very material to know: it is introduced after this manner, "a thing" or "word", a word of prophecy, a word from the Lord, a revelation of his mind and will, which was hidden and secret, and what before he was not so well acquainted with; this was "brought" unto him by the Spirit of God, or by a messenger from the Lord, sent on this occasion, and for this purpose; and the manner in which it was brought was "secretly" or "by stealth", as Mr. Broughton and others {l} render it; it was "stolen" unto him, or "secretly" brought, as the Targum, and we, and others {m}; it was in a private way or manner; or "suddenly", as some others {n}, at unawares, when it was not expected by him: it may have respect to the still and silent manner in which it was revealed to him, "there was silence, and he heard a voice"; a still one, a secret whisper; or to the almost invisible person that revealed it, whose image he saw, but could not discern his form and likeness; or it may be to the distinguishing favour he enjoyed, in having this revelation particularly made to him, and not to others; he heard this word, as it were, behind the curtain, or vail, as the Jews {o} say, explaining this passage:

mine ear received a little of it; this revelation was made, not by an impulse upon his spirits, but vocally, a voice was heard, as after declared, and Eliphaz was attentive to it; he listened to what was said, and heard, and took it in with much delight and pleasure, though but a small part of it, as his capacity was able to retain it; or it was but a small part of the will of God, an hint of his only, as some interpret it {p}. Schultens has shown, from the use of a word near this in the Arabic language, that it signifies "a string of pearls"; and so may design a set of evangelic truths, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones, and which are indeed more desirable than them, and preferable to them; what they are will be observed hereafter.

{l} bngy "furtive", V. L. Montanus, Cocceius, Drusius; "furtivum verbum venit", Schultens. {m} "Clanculum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "clam", Beza. {n} "Subito", Schmidt, Michaelis. {o} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 89. 2. {p} In David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 217. 3.

Job 4:13

Ver. 13. In thoughts from the visions of the night,.... While Eliphaz was thinking of and meditating upon divine things, or while he was revolving in his mind some night visions he had, before this was made unto him, see **Da 2:29**; in meditation the Lord is often pleased to make known more of his mind and will to his people; and this is one way in which he was wont to do it in former times, in a vision either in the day, as sometimes, or in the night, as at others, and as here, see
Nu 12:6;

when deep sleep falleth on men; on sorrowful men, as Mr. Broughton renders it; such who have been laborious all the day, and getting their bread with sorrow and trouble, and are weary; who as soon as they lie down fall asleep, and sleep falls on them, and to such it is sweet, as the wise man says, **Ec 5:12**; now it was at such a time when men ordinarily and commonly are asleep that this vision was had.

Job 4:14

Ver. 14. Fear came upon me, and trembling,.... Not only a dread of mind, but trembling of body; which was often the case even with good men, whenever there was any unusual appearance of God unto them by a voice, or by any representation, or by an angel; as with Abraham in the vision of the pieces, and with Moses on Mount Sinai, and with Daniel in some of his visions, and with Zechariah, when an angel appeared and brought him the tidings of a son to be born to him; which arises from the frailty and weakness of human nature, a consciousness of guilt, a sense of the awful majesty of God, and an uneasy apprehension of what may be the consequences of it:

which made all my bones to shake; not only there was inward fear and outward tremor of body, but to such a degree, that not one joint in him was still; all the members of his body shook, and every bone was as if it was loosed, which are the more firm and solid parts, as is common many considerable tremor.

Job 4:15

Ver. 15. Then a spirit passed before my face,.... Which some interpret of a wind {q}, a blustering wind, that blew strong in his face; and so the Targum renders it, a stormy wind, such an one as Elijah perceived when the Lord spoke to him, though he was not in that, 1Ki 19:11; or such a whirlwind, out of which the Lord spake to Job, Job 38:1; or rather, as Jarchi, an angel, an immaterial spirit, one of Jehovah's ministering spirits, clothed in an human form, and which passed and repassed before Eliphaz, that he might take notice of it:

the hair of my flesh stood up; erect, through surprise and dread; which is sometimes the case, when anything astonishing and terrible is beheld; the blood at such times making its way to the heart, for the preservation of that, leaves the external members of the body cold, and the skin of the flesh, in which the hair is, being contracted by the impetuous influx of the nervous fluid, causes the hair to stand upright, particularly the hair of the head, like the prickles or hedgehogs {r}; which has been usual at the sight of an apparition {s}.

{q} xwr "ventus", Vatablus, Cocceius, Schmidt, Broughton. {r} "Obstupui, steteruntque comae----". Virgil. Aeneid. l. 2. ver. 774. & l. 3. ver. 48. "arrectaeque horrore comae". Aeneid. 4. ver. 286. & l. 12. ver. 888. {s} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. p. 665.

Job 4:16

Ver. 16. It stood still,.... That is, the spirit, or the angel in a visible form; it was before going to and fro, but now it stood still right against Eliphaz, as if it had something to say to him, and so preparing him to attend to it; which he might do the better, it standing before him while speaking to him, that he might have the opportunity of taking more notice of it:

but, notwithstanding this advantageous position of it,

I could not discern the form thereof; what it was, whether human or any other:

an image [was] before mine eyes; he saw something, some appearance and likeness, but could not tell what it was; perhaps the fear and surprise he was in hindered him from taking in any distinct idea of it, or that particular notice of it, so as to be able to form in his own mind any suitable notion of it, or to describe it to others:

[there was] silence both in the spirit or image, which, standing still, made no rushing noise, and in Eliphaz himself, who kept in his breath, and listened with all the attention he could to it; or a small low voice, as Ben Melech interprets it: so it follows,

and I heard a voice; a distinct articulate voice or sound of words, very audibly delivered by the spirit or image that stood before him:

[saying]; as follows.

Job 4:17

Ver. 17. Shall mortal man be more just than God?.... Poor, weak, frail, dying man, and so sinful, as his mortality shows, which is the effect of sin; how should such a man be more righteous than God? who is so originally and essentially of himself, completely, perfectly, yea, infinitely righteous in his nature, and in his works, both of providence and grace; in chastising his people, punishing the wicked, and bestowing favours upon his friends, even in their election, redemption, justification, pardon, and eternal happiness: yea, not only profane wicked sinners can make no pretensions to anything of this kind, but even the best of men, none being without sin, no, not man in his best estate; for the righteousness he had then was of God, and therefore he could not be more just than he that made him upright. This comparative sense, which our version leads to, is more generally received; but it seems not to be the sense of the passage, since this is a truth clear from reason, and needed no vision or revelation to discover it; nor can it be thought that God would send an angelic spirit in such an awful and pompous manner, to declare that which every one knew, and no man would contradict; even the most self-righteous and self-sufficient man would never be so daring and insolent as to say he was more righteous than God; but the words should be rather rendered, "shall mortal man be justified by God, or be just from God?" or "with" him, or "before" him {t}, in his sight, by any righteousness in him, or done by him? shall he enter into his presence, stand at his bar, and be examined there, and go away from thence, in the sight and account of God, as a righteous person of himself? no, he cannot; now this is a doctrine opposed to carnal reasoning and the common sentiments of men, a doctrine of divine revelation, a precious truth: this is the string of pearls Eliphaz received, see **Job 4:12**; that mortal man is of himself an unrighteous creature; that he cannot be justified by his own righteousness in the sight of God; and that he must look and seek out for a better righteousness than his own, to justify him before God; and this agrees with Eliphaz's interpretation of the vision, Job 15:14; with the sentiments of his friend Bildad, who seems to have some respect to it, Job 25:4; and also of Job himself, **Job 9:2**; and in like manner are we to understand the following clause:

shall a man be more pure than his Maker? even the greatest and best of men, since what purity was in Adam, in a state of innocence, was from God; and what good men have, in a state of grace, is from the grace of God and blood of Christ, without which no man is pure at all, and therefore cannot be purer than him from whom they have it: or rather "be pure from", or "with", or "before his Maker" {u}, or be so accounted by him; every man is impure by his first birth, and in his nature state, and therefore cannot stand before a pure and holy God, who of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; or go away his presence, and be reckoned by him a pure and holy creature of himself; nor can any thing that he can do, in a moral or ceremonial manner, cleanse him from his impurity; and therefore it is necessary he should apply to the grace of God, and blood of Christ, for his purification.

{t} qduy hwlam vwnah "an mortalis a Deo justificabitur?" Codurcus' Bolducius, Deodatus, Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 709. "Num mortalis a numine justus erit?" Schultens; so Mr. Broughton, "can the sorrowful man be holden just before the Puissant?" {u} rbg rhjy whvem "an quisquam vir a factore suo mundus habebitur?" Codurcus; "an a conditore suo purus erit vir?" Schultens; so Mr. Broughton, "can the human being be clear before him that was his Maker?"

Job 4:18

Ver. 18. Behold, he put no trust in his servants,.... Some think the divine oracle or revelation ends in **Job 4:17**, and that here Eliphaz makes some use and improvement of it, and addresses Job, and argues with him upon it, with a view to his case and circumstances; but rather the account of what the oracle said, or was delivered by revelation, is continued to the end of the chapter, there being nothing unworthy of God, either in the matter or manner of it: and here Eliphaz himself is addressed, and this address ushered in with a "behold", as a note of admiration, asseveration, and attention; it being somewhat wonderful and of importance, sure and certain, and which deserved to be listened to, that God, the Maker of men and angels, did not, and does not, "put" any "trust" or confidence "in his servants"; meaning not the prophets in particular, as the Targum, though they are in an eminent sense the servants of God; nor righteous men in general, as Jarchi and others, who though heretofore servants of sin, yet through grace become servants of righteousness, and of God; but as men who dwelt in houses of clay are opposed to them, and distinguished from them, in **Job 4:19**, they must be understood of angels, as the following clause explains it; who always stand before God, ministering unto him, ready to do his will, and to do it in the most perfect manner creatures are capable of; they go forth at his command into each of the parts of the world, and execute his orders; they worship him, and celebrate his perfections, ascribing honour and glory, wisdom, power, and blessing to him; and this they do cheerfully, constantly, and incessantly. Now though God has intrusted these servants of his with many messages of importance, both under the Old and New Testament dispensation, yet he has not trusted them with the salvation of men, to which they are not equal, but has put it into the hands of his Son; nor indeed did he trust them with the secret of it, so as to make them his counsellors about it; no, Christ only was the wonderful Counsellor in this affair; the counsel of peace, or that respecting the peace and reconciliation of men, was only between him and his Father; God was only in and with Christ, and not angels reconciling men, or drawing the plan of their reconciliation; and when this secret, being concluded on and settled, was revealed to angels, it is thought by some to be the reason of so many of them apostatizing from God; they choosing rather to have nothing to do with him, than to be under the Son of God in human nature: but, besides this, there are many other things God has not trusted the angels with, as his purposes and decrees within himself, and the knowledge of the times and seasons of the accomplishment of them, particularly the day and hour of judgment; though the sense here rather seems to be this, that God does not and did not trust them with themselves; he knew their natural weakness, frailty, mutability, how liable they were to sin and fall from him, and therefore he chose them in Christ, put them into his hands, and made him head over them, and so confirmed and established them in him; and, as it may be rendered, "did not put stability or firmness" {w} in them, so as to stand of themselves; or "perfection" in them, as some render it {x}, which cannot be in a creature as it is in God:

and his angels he charged with folly; that is, comparatively, with respect to himself, in comparison of whom all creatures are foolish, be they ever so wise; for he is all wise, and only wise; angels are very knowing and intelligent in things natural and evangelical, but their knowledge is but imperfect, particularly in the latter; as appears by their being desirous of looking into those things which respect the salvation of men, and by learning of the church the manifold wisdom of God, **1Pe 1:2**; or by "folly" is meant vanity, weakness, and imperfection {y}, a liableness to fall, which God observed in them; and which are in every creature in its best estate, and were in Adam in his state of innocence, and so in the angels that fell not, especially previous to their confirmation by Christ, see Ps 39:5; and so the sense is the same with the preceding clause: some render it by repeating the negative from that, "and he putteth not glorying" or "boasting in his angels" {z}; he makes no account of their duties and services, so as to glory in them; it is an humbling himself to regard them; or he puts nothing in them that they can boast of, since they have nothing of themselves, all from him, and therefore cannot glory as though they had received it not. Others observe, that the word has the signification of light, and differently render the passage; some, "though he putteth light in his angels" {a}, makes them angels of light, comparable to morning stars, yet he puts no trust in them; and what they have is from him, and therefore not to be compared with him, nor can they glory in themselves; or, "he putteth not light", or "not clear light into [them]" {b}; that which is perfect, and fire from all manner of darkness; such only is in himself the Father of lights, with whom it dwells in perfection, and there is no shadow of turning in him: some would have this understood of the evil angels, whom God charged with folly; but this is too low a term, a phrase not strong enough to express their sin and wickedness, who are not chargeable only with imprudence, but with rebellion and treason against God; nor does this sense agree with parallel places, Job 15:14; and besides, the beauty of the comparison of them with men would be lost, and the strength of the argument with respect to them would be sadly weakened, which we have in **Job 4:19**.

{w} Nymay al "non posuit stabilitatem", Mercerus, Vatablus; "firmitatem", Junius & Tremellius. {x} So Mr. Broughton. {y} hlht "vanitatem", Codurcus; "omissionem, lapsationemve", Schultens. {z} "Gloriationem", Montanus. {a} Sic Beza & Belg. nov. vers. {b} "Lumen", Pagninus, Mercerus; "lucem", Junius & Tremellius; so R. Levi Ben Gersom, Sephorno, and others; "lucem exactissimam", Vatablus; "clear light", Broughton.

Job 4:19

Ver. 19. How much less [on] them that dwell in houses of clay,.... Meaning men, but not as dwelling in houses, in a proper sense, made of clay dried by the sun, as were common in the eastern countries; nor in mean cottages, as distinguished from cedar, and ceiled houses, in which great personages dwelt, for this respects men in common; nor as being in the houses of the grave, as the Targum, Jarchi, and others, which are no other than dust, dirt, and clay; for this regards not the dead, but the living; but the bodies of men are meant; in which their souls dwell; which shows the superior excellency of the soul to the body, and its independency of it, being capable of existing without it, as it does in the separate state before the resurrection; so bodies are called tabernacles, and earthen vessels, and earthly houses, **2Pe 1:13** **2Co 4:7**; and bodies of clay, Job 13:12; so the body is by Epictetus {c} called clay elegantly wrought; and another Heathen writer {d} calls it clay steeped in, or macerated and mixed with blood: being of clay denotes the original of bodies, the dust of the earth; and the frailty of them, like brittle clay, and the pollution of them, all the members thereof being defiled with sin, and so called vile bodies, and will remain such till changed by Christ, **Php 3:21**; now the argument stands thus, if God put no trust in angels, then much less in poor, frail, mortal, sinful men; he has no dependence on their services, whose weakness, unprofitableness, and unfaithfulness, he well knows; he puts no trust in their purposes, and resolutions, and vows, which often come to nothing; nor does he trust his own people with their salvation and justification, or put these things upon the foot of their works, but trusts them and the salvation and justification of them with his Son, and puts them upon the foot of his own grace and mercy: and if he charges the holy angels with folly, then much more (for so it may be also rendered) will he charge mortal sinful men with it, who are born like the wild ass's colt, and are foolish as well as disobedient, even his chosen ones, especially before conversion; or thus if so stands the case of angels, then much less can man be just before him, and pure in his sight: the weakness, frailty, and pollution of the bodies of men, are further enlarged on in some following clauses:

whose foundation [is] in the dust; meaning not the lower parts of the body, as the feet, which support and bear it up; rather the soul, which is the basis of it, referring to its corruption and depravity by sin; though it seems chiefly to respect the original of the body, which is the dust of the earth, of which it consists, and to which it will return again, this being but a poor foundation to stand upon, **Ge 2:7**; for the sense is, whose foundation is dust, mere dust, the particle b being redundant, or rather an Arabism:

[which] are crushed before the moth? that is, which bodies of men, or houses of clay founded in the dust; or, "they crush them"; or "which" or "whom [they] crush" {e}; either God, Father, Son, and Spirit, as some; or the angels, as others; or distresses, calamities, and afflictions, which sense seems best, by which they are crushed "before the moth" or "worm" {f}; that is, before they die, and come to be the repast of worms, Job 19:26; or before a moth is destroyed, as soon, or sooner {g}, than it is; so a man may be crushed to death, or his life taken from him, as soon as a moth's; either by the immediate hand of God, as Ananias and Sapphira, **Ac 5:5**; or by the sword of man, as Amasa by Joab, 2Sa 20:10; or rather, "like a moth" {h}, as easily and as quickly as a moth is crushed between a man's fingers, or by his foot: some, as Saadiah Gaon, and others, render it, "before Arcturus" {i}, a constellation in the heavens, **Job 9:9**; and take the phrase to be the same as that, "before the sun"; Ps 72:17; and to denote the perpetuity and duration of their being crushed, which would be as long as the sun or Arcturus continued, that is, for ever; but either of the above senses is best, especially the last of

them.

{c} Arrian. Epictet. l. 1. c. 1. {d} Theodor. Gadareus, apud Sueton. Vit. Tiber. c. 57. {e} Mwakdy "conterent eos", Montanus, Mercerus, Michaelis, Schultens; "sub trinitas personarum", Schmidt; "angeli", Mercerus; so Sephorno and R. Simeon Bar Tzemach; "calamitates", Vatablus; so some in Bar Tzemach. {f} ve ynpl "conam verme", Coceius; so the Targum and Bar Tzemach. {g} "Antequam tinea", Junius & Tremellius; "citius quam tinea", Piscator. {h} shtov tropon, Sept. "instar tineae", Noldius, Schmidt; so Aben Ezra and Broughton. {i} "Donec fuerit Arcturus", Pagninus, Vatablus; so some in Aben Ezra, Ben Melech.

Job 4:20

Ver. 20. They are destroyed from morning to evening,.... That is, those that dwell in houses of clay, before described; the meaning is, that they are always exposed to death, and liable to it every day they live; not only such who are persecuted for the sake of religion, but all men in common, for of such are both the text and context; who have always the seeds of mortality and death in them, that is continually working in them; and every day, even from morning to evening, are innumerable instances of the power of death over men; and not only some there are, whose sun rises in the morning and sets at evening, who are like grass in the morning, gay, and green, and by evening cut down and withered, live but a day, and some not that, but even it is true of all men, comparatively speaking, they begin to die the day they begin to live; so that the wise man takes no notice of any intermediate time between a time to be born and a time to die, **Ec 3:2**; so frail and short is the life of man; his days are but as an hand's breadth,
Ps 39:5;

they perish for ever: which is not to be understood of the second or eternal death which some die; for this is not the case of all; those that believe in Christ shall not perish for ever, but have everlasting life; but this respects not only the long continuance of men under the power of death until the resurrection, which is not contradicted by thus expression; but it signifies that the dead never return to this mortal life again, at least the instances are very rare; their families, friends, and houses, that knew them, know them no more; they return no more to their worldly business or enjoyments, see **Job 7:9**;

without any regarding [it]; their death; neither they themselves nor others, expecting it so soon, and using no means to prevent it, and which, if made use of, would not have availed, their appointed time being come; or "without putting" {k}, either without putting light into them, as Sephorno, which can only be true of some; or with out putting the hand, either their own or another's, to destroy them, being done by the hand of God, by a distemper of his sending, or by one providence or another; or without putting the heart to it, which comes to the sense of our version; though death is so frequent every day, yet it is not taken notice of; men do not lay it to heart, so as to consider of their latter end, and repent of their sins, and reform from them, that they may not be their ruin; and this is and would be the case of all men, were it not for the grace of God.

{k} Myvm ylbm "propter non ponentem", Montanus; "sub. manum", Codurcus; "cor", R. Levi, Jarchi, Mercerus, Piscator, Michaelis.

Job 4:21

Ver. 21. Doth not their excellency [which is] in them go away?.... Either the soul which is in them, and is the most excellent part of them; this, though it dies not, yet it goes away and departs from the body at death; and so do all the powers and faculties of it, the thoughts, the affections, the mind, and memory, yea, all the endowments of the mind, wisdom, learning, knowledge of languages, arts, and sciences, all fail at death, 1Co 13:8; and so likewise all that is excellent in the body, the strength and beauty of it depart, its strength is weakened in the way, and its comeliness turned into corruption: or, as it may be rendered, "which is with them" {l}; and so may likewise denote all outward enjoyments, as wealth and riches, glory and honour, which a man cannot carry with him, do not descend into the grave with him, but then go away: a learned man {m} renders the words, "is not their excellency removed [which was] in them?" and thinks it refers to the corruption of nature, the loss of original righteousness, and of the image of God in man, which formerly was his excellency in his state of innocence, but now, through sin and the fall, is removed from him; and this, indeed, is the cause, the source and spring, of his frailty, mortality, and death; hence it follows:

they die even without wisdom; that dies with them, or whatsoever of that they have goes away from them at death; wise men die as well as fools, yea, they die as fools do, and multitudes without true wisdom, not being wise enough to consider their latter end; they die without the wisdom which some are made to know, in the hidden part, without the fear of God, which is real wisdom, or without the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ, which is the beginning, earnest, and pledge of life eternal. Now then since man is such a frail, mortal, foolish, and sinful creature, how can he be just before God, or pure in the sight of his Maker? which, is the thing designed to be proved and illustrated by all this; and here ends the divine oracle, or the revelation made to Eliphaz, when he had the vision before related.

{l} Mb "cum ipsis", Piscator; so some in Mercerus and Drusius, and Mr. Broughton.
{m} Schmidt; "quae fuerat", Beza.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 5

In this chapter Eliphaz goes on to prove, and further confirm and establish, what he had before asserted, that not good men, but wicked men only, are afflicted of God, at least greatly, so as to have their substance wholly destroyed and perish, which was Job's case; and this partly from the case, state, and sentiments of all the saints, **Job 5:1**; and from his own observation and experience, **Job 5:3**; and then he proceeds to give some advice; and seeing afflictions do not come by chance, but are of God, it is right in such circumstances for a man to seek to the Lord for pardon and salvation, and commit his cause unto him, **Job 5:6**; who does many great things in a providential way to the good of man in general, and to the disappointment of wicked crafty men, and to the serving of the poor in particular, **Job 5:9**; so that it is best patiently to bear the afflicting hand of God, and it is an happiness to be corrected by him, since he delivers such out of all their troubles, and preserves them from many evils, and bestows many good things on them; which would be Job's case particularly, if he behaved according to the advice given, and which is left with him to consider of, **Job 5:17**.

Ver. 1. Call now, if there be any that will answer thee,.... That is, call upon God, which, if seriously, and not ironically spoken, was good advice; God is to be called upon, and especially in times of trouble; and invocation is to be made in faith, in sincerity, and with fervency, and to be accompanied with confession of sin, and repentance for it; and sooner or later God hears and answers those that call upon him; but Eliphaz suggests, that if Job did call upon him, it would be in vain, he would not hear him, he going upon the same maxim that the Jews did in Christ's time, "God heareth not sinners": **Joh 9:31**; or call upon him to give him an oracle from heaven, to favour him with a vision and revelation, and see if he could get anything that would confront and confute what he had delivered as coming that way; which, if it could be done by him, would appear to be a falsehood and an imposture, since one revelation from God is not contradicted by another: or else the sense is, "call" over the catalogue and list of good men that have been from the beginning of the world, and see if there be any that "answers to thee" {n}, whose case, character, and behaviour, correspond with thee; if ever any of them was afflicted as thou art, or ever behaved with so much indecency, impatience, murmuring, and blasphemy against God, as thou hast done; that ever opened his mouth, and cursed the day of his birth, and reflected upon the providence and justice of God as thou hast, as if thou wert unrighteously dealt with: or rather, "call now", and summon all creatures together, angels and men, and get anyone of them to be thy patron, to defend thy cause, and plead for thee, to give a reply to what has been said, from reason, experience, and revelation: and shouldest thou obtain this, which is not likely, "lo, there is one that can answer thee" {o}, as some render the words, meaning either God or himself; thus Eliphaz insults Job, and triumphs over him, as being entirely baffled and conquered by him, by what he had related as an oracle and revelation from heaven:

and to which of the saints wilt thou turn? or "look", or "have respect" {p}, that will be of any service to thee? meaning either the Divine Persons in the Godhead, sometimes called Holy Ones, as in Jos 24:19; **Pr 9:10**; the Holy Father, the Holy Son, and the Holy Spirit, who may and should be turned and looked unto; God the Father, as the God of providence and grace for all good things; Jesus Christ his Son, as the Redeemer and Saviour for righteousness and eternal life; the blessed Spirit, as a sanctifier to carry on and finish the work of grace; but it is suggested, it would be in vain for Job to turn and look to any of these, since he would be rejected by them as a wicked man, nor would any of them plead his cause: or else the holy angels, as the Septuagint express it, and who are called saints and Holy Ones, De 33:2; and it is asked, which of those he could turn or look to, and could expect relief and protection from? signifying, that none of these would vouchsafe to converse with him, nor take him under their care, nor undertake to plead his cause: or rather holy men, such as are sanctified or set apart by God the Father, to whom Christ is made sanctification, and in whose hearts the Holy Spirit has wrought principles of grace and holiness, and who live holy lives and conversations; and it is insinuated, that should he turn and took to these, he would find none of them like him, nor in the same circumstances, nor of the same sentiments, or that would take his part and plead for him; but that all to a man would appear of the same mind with Eliphaz, that none but wicked men were afflicted by God as he was, and that he was such an one, and that for the reason following: the Papists very absurdly produce this passage in favour of praying to departed saints, when not dead but living ones are meant, and even turning to them is discouraged; and besides, this would contradict another tenet of the Papists, that the Old Testament saints, until the coming of Christ, were in a sort of purgatory, called Limbus Patrum, and therefore incapable of helping saints on earth that should apply unto them.

{n} Knwe vyh "si est correspondens tibi", Bolducius. {o} "Ecce est qui respondeat tibi", Schultens. {p} hnpt oqh, Sept. "obtueberis", Montanus; "respicies", Vatablus, Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis.

Job 5:2

Ver. 2. For wrath killeth the foolish man,.... Not one that is an idiot, and destitute of common sense, and has no understanding in things natural and civil; but a wicked man, who has no knowledge of things divine and spiritual, and so foolish; which is the character of every natural man, and of God's people before conversion; and even of some professors, who are foolish virgins, and carry the lamp of a religious profession without the oil of grace; and such an one Eliphaz took Job to be, whom sooner or later the wrath of the Lord, as the Targum interprets it, which is revealed from heaven, and comes down upon the children of disobedience, would consume like devouring fire: or this may be understood of the wrath and passion of such men themselves, which sometimes rises in them to such an height, as that they die in a fit of it; or do those things which bring them to death, either by the hand of God, or by the civil magistrate:

and envy slayeth the silly one; one that is simple and void of understanding, and is easily persuaded and drawn into sin, either by his own heart, or by evil men, or by the temptations of Satan; and in whose heart envy at the prosperity of others dwells, and which insensibly preys upon him, eats up his own spirits, and is rottenness to his bones, and crumbles them into dust, Pr 14:30; or the word may be rendered "jealousy", or "zeal" {q}, as it sometimes is, and may signify the jealousy of the Lord, zeal for his own glory, which he sometimes stirs up as a man of war, and which smokes against wicked men, and consumes them as fire, see Isa 42:13; Eliphaz by all this would represent and insinuate that Job was such a man, hot, passionate, and angry with God and his providence, and envious at the prosperity of others, particularly his friends; and so was a foolish and silly man, in whose breast wrath and envy rested, and would be his ruin and destruction, as he was already under slaying and killing providences.

{q} hanq "zelus", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 5:3

Ver. 3. I have seen the foolish taking root,.... Such foolish wicked men as before described; those Eliphaz had observed to prosper in the world, and increase in riches, and even to have attained to a seeming stability and firmness, as if they would ever continue in such happy circumstances, see Jer 12:2; by this he would obviate an objection that here might be raised and made against the assertion he was proving, that wicked men are afflicted and punished of God for their sins; whereas it is notorious that they are not in trouble as other men, but in very prosperous and flourishing circumstances; this he grants is their case for a while, as he had observed, but in a short time they pass away, they and their substance disappear, and are no more seen, as follows:

but suddenly I cursed his habitation; not that he wished ill to him, or imprecated evils upon him; for cursing and bitterness only fit the mouths of wicked men, and not good men, among whom Eliphaz must be allowed to be; but he immediately thought within himself, as soon as he saw the flourishing state of the wicked, that the curse of the Lord was in their houses, as in **Pr 3:33**; that they and all they had were under a curse, and that God find given them what they had with a curse, and had cursed all their blessings; which makes the difference between a good man and a wicked man; the one has what he has, his cottage and his small substance, with a blessing; the other his pleasant habitation, as the word {r} here used signifies, his stately palace, rich furniture, and large estates, with a curse; or he prognosticated, he foresaw, and could foretell, and that without pretending to an extraordinary spirit of prophecy, that in a short time the curse of God would light upon him, and upon his house, see **Zec 5:3**.

{r} wxwn "pulchritudini ejus", V. L. "commodam ejus", Cocceius; "amoenam", Schultens.

Job 5:4

Ver. 4. His children are far from safety,.... From outward safety, from evils and dangers, to which they are liable and exposed, not only from men, who hate them for their father's sake, who have been oppressors of them, or from God, who visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children; and from spiritual and eternal safety or "salvation", or from salvation in the world to come, as the Targum, they treading in their fathers steps, and imitating their actions:

and they are crushed in the gate; or openly, publicly, as Aben Ezra and others; or in the courts of judicature whither they are brought by those their parents had oppressed, and where they are cast, and have no favour shown them; or literally by the falling of the gate upon them; and perhaps some reference is had to Job's children being crushed in the gate or door of the house, through which they endeavoured to get when it fell upon them and destroyed them; the Targum is, "and are crushed in the gates of hell, in the day of the great judgment:"

neither [is there] any to deliver [them]; neither God nor man, they having no interest in either, or favour with, partly on account of their father's ill behaviour, and partly on account of their own; and sad is the case of men when it is such, see Ps 50:21.

Job 5:5

Ver. 5. Whose harvest the hungry eateth up,.... This is to be understood of the foolish rich man before described, as taking root and flourishing; though he sows, and reaps and gathers in his harvest, and fancies he has goods laid up for many years, to be enjoyed by him, yet he is taken away by death, and another eats what he has gathered; either his hungry heirs, that he has kept bare, and without the proper necessaries of life; or the poor whom he has oppressed, who, driven by hunger, seize upon his harvest, and eat it up, whether he be alive or dead: Sephorno interprets this of the wicked man himself, who should eat up his own harvest, and not have enough to satisfy him, the curse of God being upon his land; and another learned interpreter {s} thinks the sense is, that such should be the curse of God on the fields of wicked men, that they should produce no more than what was usually left to the poor, and therefore should have no need to gather it:

and taketh it even out of the thorns; that is, either the hungry man takes the harvest out of the thorns, among which it grows, see Mt 13:7; or which he had gotten "through the thorns", as Mr. Broughton renders it; that is, the owner, through many difficulties; and hunger will break through many to get at it; or though his harvest being got in, is enclosed with a thorn hedge, the hungry man gets through it, and takes it out from it, surrounded by it; the above mentioned Jewish writer understands this also of the wicked man, who takes his own harvest out from among the thorns, so that there is nothing left for the poor and his friends, as it is meet there should: the word {t} for "thorns" has also the signification of armour, particularly of shields; hence the Targum is,

"and armed men with warlike arms shall take it away;"

to which agrees the Vulgate Latin version,

"and the armed men shall take it away;"

that is, soldiers should forage, spoil, and destroy it:

and the robber swalloweth up their substance; the house robber, who breaks in and devours all at once, and makes a clear riddance of it; some render it "the hairy man" {u} either that neglects his hair, as beggars, or such that live in desert places, as robbers, that they may appear the more terrible; or that take care of it, and nourish it, and tie it up in locks, and behind their heads, as Bar Tzemach and Ben Melech observe they do in Turkey; others translate it "the thirsty" {w}, and so it answers to the hungry in the preceding clause, and designs such who thirst, and gape after, and covet the substance of others, and greedily catch at it, and swallow it up at once, at one draught, as a thirsty man does a large quantity of liquor, see **Pr 1:12**; this may have some respect to the Sabeans and Chaldeans, that swallowed up Job's substance, and took away his cattle from him at once, and were no other than bands of robbers; and the use of the word for a thief or a robber, as we take it, is confirmed by a learned man {x}, who derives it from the Arabic word which signifies to smite with a club or stone.

{s} Schmidt. {t} Mynum "de lanceis", Bolducius. hnu "est et elypeus, umbo", Codurcus. {u} Mymu "comatus", Cocceius, Schmidt; "horridus", Junius & Tremellius. {w} Sitientes, V. L. "sitibundi", Montanus, Bolducius; so Simeon Bar Tzemach. {x} Hinckelman. Praefat. ad Alcoran. p. 28, 29.

Job 5:6

Ver. 6. Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust,.... Or rather, "for" or "indeed" {y}, this being a reason showing that wicked men are justly afflicted and punished; seeing their afflictions come not from the creatures, though they may be instruments, but from God for the sins of men: the word for affliction also signifies iniquity or sin, the cause of affliction, as well as affliction the fruit of sin; and so does the word in the following clause; and Aben Ezra understands both, not of natural but moral evil, and so do others {z}; both senses may be taken in: sin does not come from God, the Maker of the dust of the earth, he is not the author of sin, nor does this spring out of the dust which he has made; good things, as Schmidt observes, come out of the earth for the use of man as well as beasts, bread, and wine, and oil, and all the necessaries of life; the precious things produced by the influence of the sun and moon, the precious things of the everlasting hills, and of the earth, and the fulness of it; indeed, the earth was cursed for the sin of men, but this is taken off; and, however, it is not owing to the soil, or to the air and climate in which a man lives, that he is sinful; for though there may be national vices or some sins peculiar to or more predominant in one nation than in another, yet this is not to be attributed to such causes; for all sin is from a man's self, and proceeds out of his own evil heart, which is desperately wicked and evil continually, and from whence all the impure streams of sin flow, see Mt 15:19; and so afflictions are not to be ascribed to second causes, such as the things before mentioned, or Job's losses by the Sabeans and Chaldeans; nor did he place them to that account, but to the hand of God; nor to chance and fortune, or to be reckoned fortuitous events, as if they were chance productions, spontaneous things that spring up of themselves, and not under the direction of an all wise Providence; but they are to be considered as of God, and as of his appointment, and directed by his sovereign will and pleasure, and overruled for his glory; who has fixed what they shall be, of what kind and sort, what the measure of them, to what pitch they shall rise, and how long they shall last:

neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; the same thing as before in different words, neither sin, the cause of trouble, the effect of sin; sin may very fitly be expressed by a word {a} which signifies trouble, because it is both troublesome, wearisome, and offensive to God, and brings trouble to the bodies and souls of men here and hereafter. Here Eliphaz begins to lower the tone of his voice, and to speak to Job in a seemingly more kind and friendly manner, observing to him the spring of afflictions, and giving him advice how to behave under them.

{y} yk "quia", Pagninus, Montanus; "etenim", Beza, Mercerus; "nam", Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens; so Broughton; "sane", Bolducius. {z} Nwa "iniquitas", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Bolducius, Schmidt, Michaelis; "improbitas", Codurcus. {a} lme "perversitas", Pagninus; "improbitas", Schultens.

Job 5:7

Ver. 7. Yet man is born unto trouble,.... Or but {b}, after the negative follows the positive part of the assertion; before we have what is denied as the cause of affliction, here what it is affirmed to be, or what it is to be ascribed unto, even to the appointment of God for sin: to be born to it is to be appointed to it, as all men are appointed to death, and to everything previous and that leads on to it; and it signifies that affliction or trouble springs from the birth sin of man, from original sin, the sin of the first parent, and of his nature; as all sins arise from hence, and are streams from this fountain of pollution, so all disorders and diseases of body, all distresses and anguish of mind, and death in every sense, corporeal, spiritual, and eternal; and these are the lot and portion, the estate and inheritance, of the sons of men by nature, what they are born unto, and are full of, see Job 14:1; the same word is here used as in **Job 5:6**, and signifies labour, mischief, the mischief of sin, improbity, wickedness, moral evil; and man may be said to be born to sin, inasmuch as he is conceived, shapen, and born in it; and as he is born at once into a sinful state, and sins as soon as born, goes astray from the womb, is a transgressor from thence, and the imagination of his heart evil from his infancy and youth upwards, he becomes a slave to sin, and is a homeborn one; not that he is laid under a necessity of force to sin, or his will compelled to it; for he sins most freely, is a voluntary slave to it; he serves various lusts as pleasures, and gives himself up to work all iniquity with greediness; but there is such a connection between his birth, the circumstances of it, and sin, that sin is the certain consequence of it, and immediately, naturally, and necessarily follows upon it; that is, by a necessity of consequence, though not of coaction or force; it is as natural for man to sin as it is for a thirsty man to covet and drink water; or as for an Ethiopian to be born black, and a leopard with spots; or, as it follows,

as the sparks fly upward; which they do naturally and necessarily when coals are blown, and which are here called "the sons of coals" {c}; and to these, troubles and afflictions, the fruits and effects of sin, may be aptly compared; not only for the necessity of them, it is if needs be they are, but for the nature of them, being fiery and troublesome, hence called fiery trials, and signified by fires and flames of fire, **1Pe 4:12**; and also for the number of them, being many, and very grievous: some interpret this of flying fowls, of young vultures, as the Septuagint; of young eagles, as others; Aben Ezra makes mention of this sense, as if it was, as a fowl is born to fly, so man is born to labour; to labour in the law, according to the Targum; or to labour for his bread; or rather, to labour and sorrow; that is, to affliction and trouble: a learned man {d} thinks the phrase, according to the use of it in the Arabic language, designs the more rapid cast of a dart, of the vibration of it, which is very quick.

{b} yk "sed", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius Schmidt, so Broughton. {c} Pvr ynb, "tilii prunae", Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator, Cocceius, Bolducius, Schmidt. {d} Hinckelman. Praefat. ad Alcoran. p. 29. So Schultens renders it, "tela corusea".

Job 5:8

Ver. 8. I would seek unto God,.... Or "truly" {e}, "certainly, doubtless, I do seek unto God", verily I do so; for so the words are introduced in the original text, and express what Eliphaz had done when under afflictions himself; for he was not without them, though he had not them to such a degree as Job had; and when he was under them, this was the course he took; he sought unto God by prayer to support him under them, to sanctify them to him, and to deliver him out of them; and this he proposes for Job's imitation, and suggests, that if he was in his case, this would be the first step he should take; and good advice this is, nothing more proper for a man, especially a saint, than, when afflicted of God, to seek unto him, to seek his face and his favour, to entreat his gracious presence, and the discoveries of his love, that he may see that it is not in wrath, but in love, he afflicts him; to submit unto him, humble himself before him, acknowledge his sins, and implore his pardoning grace and mercy; to entreat him to help him, in this time of need, to exercise the graces of faith and patience, and every other; to desire counsel and advice how to behave under the present trial, and to be made acquainted with the reasons, ends, and uses of the dispensation, as well as to beg for strength to bear up under it, and in his own time to grant deliverance from it:

and unto God would I commit my cause; or "direct my word or speech" {f} to him; that is, in prayer, as Sephorno adds; I would, as if he should say, make known my case to him, tell him the whole of it, and pour out my soul before him; and then I would leave it with him, and not wrangle, quarrel, and contend with him, but say, "here am I, let him do what seemeth good unto him": some render the words, "truly", or "indeed I shall discourse concerning God, and order my speech about Deity" {g}; I shall no longer insist on this subject, but drop it, and hereafter treat of God, his nature, being, and perfections, and particularly his works; though these are rather observed in the following verses, as so many arguments to engage Job to seek the Lord, and leave his case and cause to him.

{e} Mlwa "profecto", Junius & Tremellius; "enimvero", Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens; "certe", Mercerus, Vatablus, Beza; "verum, enimvero", Schmidt, Michaelis; so Broughton. {f} ytrbd Myva "ponam eloquium meum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "deponerem verba mea, i.e. dirigerem", Vatablus; "dirigerem sermonem meum", Beza, Michaelis; "dispose my talk unto God", Broughton. {g} "Enucleatius disseram de Deo, et de Numine instruam sermocinationem meam", Schultens.

Job 5:9

Ver. 9. Which doeth great things,.... The things of creation are great things, the making of the heavens and the earth, and all therein, by the word of the Almighty, out of nothing, and which is a display of great power, wisdom, and goodness; the things of Providence are great things, which God is always doing; as the upholding all things in being by the word of his power, governing the whole universe, ordering all things in it, supplying and feeding all creatures, men and beasts; and especially the things of grace are great things, the covenant of grace, and its blessings, redemption by Jesus Christ, the work of grace upon the heart, the quickening and enlightening dead and dark sinners, taking away their hearts of stone and giving them hearts of flesh, and constantly supplying them with his grace for the finishing of it; the consideration of all which is a great encouragement to seek the Lord in time of need, as well as of what follows concerning them:

and unsearchable; the things of nature; many of them are such as puzzle the greatest philosophers, who are not able, with all their sagacity and penetration, to find out the causes and reasons of them; and in providence the way of God is often in the deep, and is not to be tracked and followed; and the dispensations of his grace to the sons of men are so sovereign and distinguishing, that it made the apostle say, speaking of them, "O the depth", &c. Ro 11:33; and there are some things not to be inquired into, nor can they be searched out; secret things belong to God, as his purposes relating to the eternal state of particular persons, and the times and seasons of various future events, as the day of judgment, &c.

marvellous things; in nature, as the formation of man and all creatures; in providence, and it may be respect may be had to the wonders done in Egypt, and the marvellous things in the field of Zoan, the plagues of Egypt, and the deliverance of Israel, and their passage through the Red sea; which were things done much about this time, or before it, as some think, and of which Eliphaz might have heard, and were fresh in his memory; and wonderful things are done in grace, as the effects of marvellous loving kindness: and those

without number; the works of God are manifold, and not to be counted; the stars of heaven, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and cattle on a thousand hills, the fishes of the sea, small and great, see Ps 104:25; to which may be added, those animalcules, of which a billion do not exceed the size of a small grain of sand, as they may be seen through a microscope {h}; the various things done every day in providence, the special blessings of goodness, and the kind thoughts of the heart of God, which, if one attempt to reckon up, they are more than can be numbered, Ps 40:5.

{h} Leuwenhoeck apud Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 667.

Job 5:10

Ver. 10. Who giveth rain upon the earth,.... Not upon the land of Israel only, as the Targum and Jarchi, see De 11:11; but upon the whole earth; this is particularly mentioned as being of God, and which none of the vanities of the Gentiles can give; and it is a free gift of his, which tarries not for the desert of men, and is bestowed on the godly and ungodly; and is a great blessing of goodness, which enriches the earth, makes it fruitful, and through it, it produces plenty of good things for man and beast:

and sendeth water upon the fields; or "out places" {i}; places outside of cities and towns, such as gardens, fields, and deserts, where showers of rain are sent of God to water them, many of which are not under the care of man, but are under the providence of God; the Targum and Jarchi interpret this of Gentile lands, as distinct from the land of Israel, to whom God "gives" rain, and to the other "sends" it; some render it, "upon the streets" {k}, that is, upon persons that lie in the streets, and have no houses to dwell in, and to whom rain in hot and dry countries was welcome.

{i} twuwx "in geuere significat loca quae sunt foris", Piscator; "exteriora", Mercerus; "open fields", Broughton; "faciem viarum", Beza. {k} "Super faciem platearum", Pagninus, Mercerus, Boldueius, Cocceius, Schultens; "super facies platearum", Montanus, Schmidt; "super plateas", Vatablus, Michaelis.

Job 5:11

Ver. 11. To set up on high those that be low,.... Not the low plants, which, through rain, are made to run up on high, though there is a truth in that; but husbandmen and gardeners, and such like persons, in low circumstances, who, by means of showers of rain, which make their gardens, fields, and lands fruitful, are raised to enjoy good estates, and large possessions:

that those which mourn may be exalted to safety; or "are black" {l}, that are clothed in black, as a token of mourning; or whose faces are black with famine, see **La 4:8**; or are in very distressed circumstances, and black through poverty, as the Targum, and mourn over and grieve at their sad and deplorable case; those, through rain and fruitful seasons, are brought out of such an uncomfortable situation, and put into a better condition of life, where they are as in a fortress, out of the reach of such sad calamities: some connect the words with the following, that in order to do this, to raise up the humble and exalt mourners, "he disappoints the devices of the crafty", &c. **Job 5:12**.

{l} Myrdq "denigrati", Montanus, Bolducius; "atrati", Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis; "pullati", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Beza; "sordidati", Schultens.

Job 5:12

Ver. 12. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty,.... Or, "it disappointeth"; that is, the rain, as some Jewish commentators {m} interpret it, and the whole paragraph to this sense; the rain coming upon the earth makes it fruitful, and causes it to produce a plentiful crop, whereby the schemes of crafty men are disappointed, who in a time of drought withhold the corn, and enhance the price of it, and distress the poor; and this in order to make a penny of them, according to **Am 8:4**; but through the rain falling are not able to gain their end, but are obliged to bring out their corn, and sell it at a low price, and so are taken in their own craftiness; their counsel becomes brutish, and they are brought into bad circumstances themselves, and the poor saved from being ground and oppressed by them, and have hope for the future of plenty of provisions, to the confusion and astonishment of their oppressors: but the Targum interprets this of the Egyptians cunningly devising mischief against the Israelites, without success; and not amiss, since that affair might be well known to Eliphaz, and he might have it in view: the fact was this, a new king of Egypt, after the death of Joseph, observing the great increase of the people of Israel in his dominions, and fearing, in case of a war, they should join the enemy, and get out of the land by such an opportunity, calls his nobles, courtiers, and counsellors together, to form some wise schemes how to diminish them, **Ex 1:8**; and the first was to set taskmasters over them, and afflict them with hard bondage, but this succeeded not, **Ex 1:11**; for the more they were afflicted the more they multiplied and grew; another decree was, to order the midwives to kill the male children of the Israelites, and save alive the females, **Ex 1:15**; but the midwives, fearing God, obeyed not the order, and the people still multiplied, **Ex 1:17**; and then a third project was formed, to cast every son born to the Israelites into the river, and drown them, **Ex 1:22**; but notwithstanding this they were preserved, as Moses, **Ex 2:10**, and doubtless many others; the people increased so, that they went out of Egypt six hundred thousand men, Ex 12:37; this was a recent thing, it may be in the times of Eliphaz, and which he might easily call to mind: and he might also have respect to a more remote case, that of the builders of Babel, who devised a scheme to build a tower, whose top should reach to heaven, and secure them from a dispersion of them throughout the earth, Ge 11:1; when God descended in the display of his power and providence, confounded their language, so that they were obliged to desist from their enterprise, and were scattered throughout the earth, which by their scheme they thought to have prevented: this may be applied to wicked crafty men in common, who devise schemes to commit sin, and gratify their lusts, to get for themselves riches and honour, and to do mischief to others, which God in his providence breaks, frustrates, and makes of none effect; and to false teachers, that walk in craftiness, lie in wait to deceive, and make use of cunningly devised fables, coin new doctrines, invent new forms of worship, and appoint new ordinances, and contrive different ways and methods of salvation; all which is foolishness with God, and to such persons **Job 5:13** is applied by the Apostle Paul, **1Co 3:19**: and this may likewise respect wicked princes and potentates, with their counsellors and wise politicians, who in former, as well as in later times, have formed designs against their neighbours, and to the hurt of the interest of true religion particularly; but have been baffled and confounded by Divine Providence, of which, as there were many instances in Israel of old, so in our British Isles of late:

so that their hands cannot perform [their] enterprise; what their heads have contrived, what they have resolved and determined upon, and what they have began to effect, but could not go on with; or, "bring it soundly to pass", as Mr. Broughton renders it; that is, could not complete it, or bring it to perfection; and indeed not able to do "any thing" {n}, as some translate the word, not anything of what they devised and contrived: it signifies "that which is", which has a being and substance, and solidity in it {o}, but nothing of this kind could be done; it is sometimes rendered "wisdom", and "sound wisdom", **Pr 2:7**; and so it is here by some {p}, and may signify, that though their counsels were deeply laid, and wisely formed, according to the best rules of wisdom and prudence, they yet are not able to bring them to pass; which shows the infinitely superior wisdom of God, and his overruling providence, and which therefore must be a great encouragement to seek unto him, and leave every cause and case with him.

{m} Aben Ezra, Jarchi, & R. Simeon Bar Tzemach. {n} hyvt "quicquam", Pagninus, Vatablus, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "quicquam rei", Cocceius, Michaelis; so Kimchi in Sepher Shorash, rad. vy. {o} "Consistentiam", Montanus; "nihil solidi", Tigurine version. {p} "Sapientiam", Schmidt; so Aben Ezra & Syr. ver. "astu", Codurcus.

Job 5:13

Ver. 13. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness,.... As beasts are taken in a pit, or birds in a snare or net, or with birdlime; so these crafty men, who are wise in their own opinion, and really so in things natural, civil, and worldly, or however, to do evil are entangled and taken in their own schemes; they fall into the pit they have digged for others, and are snared in the works of their own hands, as Haman and his sons were hanged on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai, **Es 7:10**; or, "by their own craftiness" {q}, by the crafty schemes they themselves have formed: so sometimes those very things crafty men design to prevent, are brought about by the very means they make use of; thus Joseph's brethren designed to prevent the accomplishment of his dreams, which portended their subjection to him, Ge 37:9, by selling him to the Ishmaelites, who carried him to Egypt, where, in process of time, he was made governor of the land, and where his brethren became obedient to him, Ge 42:6; with which fact Eliphaz might be acquainted, it being not long before his time: so the Jews, to prevent the Romans taking away their city and nation, contrived to put Christ to death, and did, whereby they brought the wrath of God upon them, executed by those very persons; the same they did also, to prevent the spread of his fame and glory in the world, and that he might not be believed on as the Saviour of men, whereas, hereby he became the Saviour of them; and he a crucified Christ, being preached to the world by his ministers, the savour of his knowledge has been diffused in every place, his glory great in all the earth, and will be more so: the Targum applies this to the wise men of Pharaoh, and the Apostle Paul to the Jewish doctors and wise philosophers of the Gentiles, **1Co 3:19**; which quotation proves the authority of this book:

and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong: that is, the counsel or well contrived schemes of the crafty and wise before mentioned, who twist and wind about, as the word {r} here used signifies, that there is no tracing their measures, and finding out the spring of them, nor the ends they have in view; yet these are sometimes carried on to execution in a rash and precipitate manner, and so miscarry; and like a man that is had to a precipice, and is thrown down from thence, and is destroyed at once, so are their counsels and schemes dashed to pieces by the providence of God: or, "is hastened" {s}; too much haste is made to accomplish it, and so it comes to nought, through an over eagerness to have it done at once; not waiting a fit opportunity for the accomplishment of it.

{q} Mmreb "per suam ipsorum astutiam", Schultens. {r} Myltpn "intorquentium", Schmidt; "tortuosorum", Schultens. {s} hrhmn "festinata, ab origine festinandi", Schultens.

Job 5:14

Ver. 14. They meet with darkness in the daytime,.... Which may denote their infatuation in things the most plain and clear, and which are obvious to everyone's view, even to such as are of much meaner capacities the themselves; and so it sometimes is, that the greatest politicians, men of the greatest sagacity and penetration, capable of forming and conducting the wisest counsels, yet blunder in things plain and easy to everyone; which must be imputed to their being given up to a judicial blindness of mind by the Lord, who destroys the wisdom of the wise, and brings to nothing the understanding of the prudent; or this may signify the defeat of their counsels, when they are in the highest pitch of esteem among men, as Ahithophel's counsel was as the oracle of God; or the destruction of such persons and their schemes when they are in the meridian of their glory, who being in high and slippery places, come to desolation in a moment:

and grope in the noon day as in the night; which intends the same as before; this was threatened to the Jews in case of disobedience, and was fulfilled in them, De 28:29; a learned man renders it, "as the night they grope", or "feel, at noon day" {t}; as the Egyptians felt darkness when it was noon, and when light was in all the dwellings of the Israelites, Ex 10:22; this may be applied to the case of many in a land of Gospel light, who are in darkness, walk in darkness, and are darkness itself; though the light of the glorious Gospel shines all around them on others, and know no more of divine and spiritual things than the Gentiles, but grope or feel about like persons blind, and in the dark as much as they, Ac 17:27; nay, they not only have the great things of the Gospel hid from them, and Satan blinds their minds lest this light should shine into them, but "they run into darkness" {u}, as the words of the first clause may be rendered; those "lucifugae", such as the Jews were, and the Deists now are run from the light of divine revelation, and love darkness, and which is the aggravation of their condemnation, **Joh 3:19**.

{t} wvvmy hlylk "tanquam noctum palpant", Schultens. {u} wvnpy "incurrent", V. L. "incurrunt", Vatablus, Mercerus.

Job 5:15

Ver. 15. But he saveth the poor,.... Who are so in a literal sense, and whom the Lord saves with a temporal salvation; these being the butt of the crafty, wise, and cunning, on whom their eyes are, for whom they lay snares, and lie in wait to draw them in; and these being helpless and without friends, God takes notice of them, appears for them, and arises for their help, and saves them:

from the sword; of their enemies, drawn against them and ready to be sheathed in them:

from their mouth; from their reproaches, calumnies, detraction, and evil speaking; or "from the sword, their mouth" {w}, as some; or "from the sword of their mouth" {x}, as others; or which comes out of it; whose mouths and tongues are as sharp swords, which destroy their credit and reputation, and threaten them with ruin; the Targum is,

"from the slaughter of their mouth:"

and from the hand of the mighty; their mighty enemies, that, are mightier than they; the Targum is,

"from the hand of a mighty king;"

such an one as Pharaoh, which the same paraphrase makes mention of in **Job 5:14**, and from whom the poor Israelites were delivered: this may be applied to the poor in a spiritual sense, who are poor in spirit, and are sensible of their spiritual poverty, whom the Lord looks unto, has a regard for, and saves them from "the sword" of avenging justice; that being awaked against the man, his fellow, and so warded off from them, and from the mouth of a cursing and condemning law, and from Satan the accuser of the brethren; and of wicked men, whose tongue rising up in judgment against them, he condemns; and from the "hand" of Satan the strong man armed, and who is stronger than they; and of all their spiritual enemies.

{w} So some in Michaelis. {x} "A gladio oris eorum", V. L. "a gladio qui ex ore eorum", De Dieu, Schultens.

Job 5:16

Ver. 16. So the poor hath hope,.... Who observing this and that and the other poor man crying to the Lord and saved, hopes that he may be saved by him also; and having had experience of salvation out of one trouble or more, even out of six troubles, as in **Job 5:19**, entertains a comfortable hope he shall be saved out of the seventh, or whatsoever he is in: the word {y} used signifies one that is weak and feeble, attenuated, and exhausted of his strength, wealth, and substance; and may be applied to one spiritually poor, and in a very destitute and forlorn condition in himself; and yet, through the revelation of the grace and mercy of God to him, has hope of safety in Christ, the strong hold and hope set before him to flee unto; and of salvation by him, it being in him, and for the chief of sinners, and altogether free; and of eternal life through him, as being promised of God, that cannot lie: the free gift of God through Christ, and in his hands to dispose of:

and iniquity stoppeth her mouth: that is, iniquitous men: very wicked men, who are iniquity and wickedness itself; these shall stop their mouths, through shame at what they have said concerning the poor that God saves, see **Mic 7:9**; and through admiration at the goodness of God in saving them, Isa 52:15; having nothing to say against the ways and dispensations of Divine Providence, they are apt to quarrel with,
Ps 107:40; and especially at the last day such shall have their mouths stopped, and shall not be able to open them against the Lord or his people, being convinced of their hard speeches which they have spoken against them, **Jude 1:15**; and will be like the man at the feast without a wedding garment, speechless, or muzzled, and his mouth stopped, Mt 22:12.

{y} ldl "tenai", Montanus, Vatablus, Junius, Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Job 5:17

Ver. 17. Behold, happy [is] the man whom God correcteth,.... Reproves, rebukes, convinces by his word, which is profitable for correction of men's minds and manners; and by his messengers, the prophets and ministers, who are sent as reprovers of the people, and to rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in their principles, and sober in their conversation; and by his Spirit, which makes the correction of the word and ministers effectual, and who reproves and convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and sometimes this is done by afflictive providences, by blows as well as words, which are the rod of correction God makes use of with his children; for this is not the correction of a judge reproving, condemning, and chastising malefactors and criminals, but of a father correcting his children, in love, in judgment, and in measure, for faults committed; **Pr 3:12**; so God's corrections are for sin, to bring his people to a sense of it, to humiliation and repentance for it, and to an acknowledgment of it; and often for remissness in duty, private or public, and when they set too high a value on the creature, and creature enjoyments, trust in them, and glory of them, to the neglect of the best things: now such persons are happy who are corrected by God in this manner; for these corrections are fruits and evidences of the love of God to them, and of their relation to God as children; he grants them his presence in them, he sympathizes with them, supplies and supports them under them, and delivers out of them; he makes them work for their good, spiritual and eternal; by these he prevents and purges sin, tries and brightens their graces; makes them more partakers of his holiness; weans them from this world, and fits them for another: and this account is introduced with a "behold", as a note of attention, exciting it in Job and others; thereby suggesting that it was worthy of notice and regard, and a matter of moment and importance; and as a note of admiration, it being a wonderful thing, a mere paradox with natural men especially, and contrary to all their notions and things, that an afflicted man should be a happy man, who generally reckon good men to be unhappy men, because of their afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions; and as a note of asseveration, affirming the truth and certainty of the assertion, and which is confirmed by after testimonies, and by the experience of the saints, Ps 94:19; the Targum restrains this to Abraham; but it is true of every good man whom God afflicts in a fatherly way:

therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty; who is able to save and to destroy to take off his hand, or lay it heavier it not regarded, to bear up his people under all their afflictions, or to deliver them out of them; or of Shaddai {z}, God all sufficient, who has a sufficiency in himself, and needs not anything from his creatures; whose grace is sufficient for his people, to supply them in all their straits and difficulties; or of him who is all nourishing, who has breasts of consolation to draw out to his people in distress, the word {a} used coming from one that signifies a pap, or breast, as some think; hence mention is made of the blessings of the breast, when he is spoken of under this character, Ge 49:25; now this chastising of his is not to be understood of

chastisement in a way of vindictive wrath and justice, and as a proper punishment for sin, for this is laid on Christ, the surety of his people, Isa 53:5; and to inflict this on them would be a depreciating the satisfaction of Christ, be contrary to the justice of God, and to his everlasting and unchangeable love; but this is the chastening of a father, and in love, and for the good of his people, in when he deals with them as with children: the word signifies "instruction" {b}; affliction is a school of instruction, in which the saints learn much of the mind and will of God, and more of his love, grace, and kindness to them; and are enriched with a larger experience of divine and spiritual things: and therefore such chastening should not be "despised" or rejected as nauseous and loathsome, as the word signifies: indeed no affliction is joyous; the bread of affliction, and water of adversity, are not palatable or grateful to flesh and blood; yea, are even a bitter and disagreeable potion, as the cup of sorrow was to the human nature of Christ; but yet should not be rejected, but drank, for the same reason he gives, it being the cup given by his heavenly Father, John 18:11; nor should it be despised as useless and unprofitable, as the word is used in
Ps 118:22; seeing afflictions are of great use for humiliation for sin, for the increase of grace and holiness; the chastening of the Father of spirits is for profit now, and works a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, Heb 12:10; this passage seems to be referred to by Solomon, **Pr 3:11**; and is quoted by the apostle, in Heb 12:5; where he uses a word {c} by which he translates this, which signifies to "make little of"; and as on the one hand afflictions should not be magnified too much, as if there were none, nor ever had been any but them; so, on the other hand, they should not be slighted and overlooked, and no notice taken of them, as if they were trifling and insignificant, and answered no end or purpose; the hand of God should be observed in them, and acknowledged; and men should humble themselves under his mighty hand, and quietly and patiently bear it; and, instead of despising, should bless him for it, it being for their good, and many salutary ends being answered by it.

{z} ydv saddai, Symmachus; Saddai, Montanus, Drusius; "omnisufficientis", Cocceius. {a} "Alii a mamma deducunt quae" dv, Ebraeis, "q. mammosum dieas, quod omnia alat", Drusius. {b} rowm nouyethma, Sept. "eruditionem", Cocceius. {c} oligwrei.

Job 5:18

Ver. 18. For he maketh sore, and bindeth up,.... Or, "though he maketh sore, yet he bindeth up" {d}; as a surgeon, who makes a wound the sorer by probing and opening it, to let out the matter and make way for his medicine, and then lays on the plaster, and binds it up: so God causes grief and puts his people to pain, by diseases of body, or by making breaches in, their families and estates, and such like cutting providences; and then he binds up their breach, and heals the stroke of their wound, and in the issue makes all whole again: so in spiritual things; he cuts and wounds, and gives pain and uneasiness, by the sharp twoedged sword of the word, and by his Spirit making use of it; and lays open all the corruption of nature, and brings to repentance and humiliation for all transgressions; and then pours in the oil and wine of pardoning grace and mercy, and binds up the wounds that are made:

he woundeth, and his hands make whole; or "heal" {e}; the same thing is meant, expressed by different words; and the whole suggests, that every afflicted man, and particularly Job, should he behave well, and as he ought, under the afflicting hand of God, would be healed, and become sound and whole again, in body, mind, family, and estate; for, though God for the present caused grief, yet he would have compassion, since he did not willingly grieve the children of men; did not do it for his own pleasure, but for their good; as a skilful surgeon cuts and wounds in order to heal; see De 32:39.

{d} Assembly's Annotations. {e} hnyprt "sanabunt", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Job 5:19

Ver. 19. He shall deliver thee in six troubles,.... Behaving as before directed; seeking unto God, committing his cause and case to him, and leaving it with him; and not despising the chastening of the Lord, but receiving and bearing it with reverence, patience, and submission: and then the sense is, that God would deliver out of whatsoever troubles he was or should be in, though they were ever so many; a certain number being put for an uncertain one, Ps 34:19;

yea, seven there shall no evil touch thee; which is a number expressive of multitude and of perfection, and so may denote the multitude and fulness of afflictions: the tribulations of God's people are many, through which they pass to heaven, and there is a measure of them to be filled up; and when they are come to the height, and the measure is fully up, then the Lord puts a stop to them, and delivers out of all their troubles; and in the midst of them all, so preserves them, that "no evil" shall so much as "touch" them; not the evil of punishment; for, though those troubles and afflictions that attend them are evil things, in a natural or civil sense, they are disagreeable and distressing, yet they are not the effect of vindictive justice; there is not a drop wrath and vengeance in them; and though they do come upon them and unto them, upon their persons and families; yet not so as to do any real hurt, or as to destroy them; see Ps 91:10; some think that seven particular troubles are meant, hereafter mentioned, as Jarchi; as famine, war, an evil tongue, destruction, dearness of provision, the beasts of the earth, and the stones of the field.

Job 5:20

Ver. 20. In famine he shall redeem thee from death,.... In a time of extreme want of provisions, God so cares for his own dear people, that they shall not be starved to death by the famine; so in the famine in Egypt, which the Targum takes notice of, in the times of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, and the patriarchs, there was food provided for them, so that they and their families were sustained, and perished not for lack of the necessaries of life: God sometimes goes out of his ordinary way, and works wonders for his poor and needy in distress, when they cry unto him; see Isa 41:17;

and in war from the power of the sword; or, "from the hands of the sword" {f}: from swords in hand, when drawn, and men are ready to push with them with all their force; as he delivered and preserved Abraham from the sword of the four kings, when he waged war with them, Ge 14:20; and the Israelites, in the war of Amalek, in the times of Moses, Ex 17:8, which the Targum here refers to; and David from the harmful sword of Goliath, 1Sa 17:46, and others with whom he was concerned in war: and so the Lord covers the heads of his people in the day of battle oftentimes, when multitudes fall on their right hand and on their left.

{f} brx ydym "de manu gladii", V. L. "e manibus gladii", Pagninus & Montanus, &c.

Job 5:21

Ver. 21. Thou shall be hid from the scourge of the tongue,.... Of Satan, as Jarchi, the accuser of the brethren; or rather from the evil tongue of wicked men, their slanders, calumnies, and reproaches; the tongue is a small weapon, but it is a cutting one; it is like a scourge or whip, with which wicked men strike hard: the enemies of Jeremiah encouraged one another to smite him with their tongue, Jer 18:18; and a sad thing it is to be under the lash of some men's tongues, and a great mercy it is to be delivered from them: God does sometimes hide his people, and keeps them secretly, as in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues; Ps 31:20; he either restrains the tongues of men, lays an embargo on them, and will not suffer them to say that evil of his people which Satan and their wicked hearts prompt them to; or, if they are suffered to defame and speak evil of good men, yet they do it in such a romantic way, and so overcharge and load it, that it is not credited by any what they say, even by those of their own party; so that the characters of God's people suffer not by their lies and calumnies: some render it, "when the tongue wanders about" {g}; walks through the earth, and spares none, all ranks and degrees of men; God hides his people from being hurt by it, see Ps 73:9; Aben Ezra interprets the word rendered "tongue" of a nation or people; and so it may be understood of one nation entering into another, passing through it, and making desolations in it; as the Scythians, Gauls, Goths, Huns, and Vandals, have done in different ages; and that, in such a time of calamity, God has his hiding places in Providence for the protection and safety of his people: but the Targum interprets it of an evil tongue, and particularly of the tongue of Balaam:

neither shall thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh: meaning either of pestilence, which is the destruction that wastes at noonday, Ps 91:6; which, when it comes into a nation or neighbourhood, shall not come nigh the good man, and infect him; or if it does, shall not carry him off; and if it does that, it carries him home to heaven and happiness, and therefore he has no reason to be afraid of it: or of a general calamity; as when there is a complication of judgments in a nation, or in the world in general, as war, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, &c. as if all were just falling to pieces and into ruin; and yet even then the saints have no cause to fear; see Ps 46:1; or the destruction of the whole world at the last day, when the heavens and earth, and all therein, shall be burnt up: for then good and righteous men will be safe with Christ, and dwell with him in the new heavens and the new earth, which shall be prepared for them; see **2Pe 3:10**; the Targum refers this to the destruction of the Midianites.

{g} jwvb "dum pervagabitur", Vatablus; "quum grassatur", Cocceius, Godurcus; "grassabitur", Grotius; so Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom, and R. Jonah, in Ben Melech.

Job 5:22

Ver. 22. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh,.... Not deride and despise them, and make a jest of them; for good men have a reverence and awe of the righteous judgments of God upon them, when they are in the world, Ps 119:120; but the sense is, that such shall reckon themselves safe and secure amidst such calamities, provision being made for their protection and sustenance; and be cheerful and comfortable, putting their trust and confidence in the Lord, as Habakkuk was, in a time of great distress, when all the necessaries of life were cut off from the stall, the herds, the flocks, and the fields; **Hab 3:17**; just as a man that is in a good harbour, or has a good house over his head, laughs at blustering storms and winds {h}, or thinks himself secure, and so is cheerful and pleasant amidst all the noise that is about him, see **Hab 1:10**;

neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth; either, literally taken, beasts of prey, that wander about in the earth, noisome and pernicious ones; which are one of God's sore judgments which he threatens the disobedient with, and promises the obedient he will rid them of; and therefore they have no reason to be afraid of them, see Eze 14:21; some think serpents are particularly designed, which creep upon the earth, and whose, food is the dust of the earth, with all other poisonous animals, between which and men there is an antipathy; and yet good men need not be afraid of these; see Mr 16:18; or figuratively, cruel and barbarous men, thieves and robbers, as Jarchi; or rather fierce and furious persecutors, and particularly the beasts of Rome, Pagan and Papal; though the literal sense is to be preferred; the Targum interprets this of the camp of Og, comparable to the beasts of the earth.

{h} "Ridebis ventos hoc munere teetus et imbres", Martial.

Job 5:23

Ver. 23. For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field,.... So as to receive no hurt from them, by walking among them, and even barefoot, which was usual in the eastern countries, see Ps 91:12; or by their being in the field, so as to hinder the increase of them; but on the contrary, even from such fields as were stony ground, a large crop has been produced, and so rather receive benefit by them, as men do from those with whom they are in league; and may therefore likewise signify, that these stones should be useful in being boundaries or fences about their fields, and landmarks in them, which should not be removed: many interpreters take notice of a sense that Pineda gives of these words, and which Cocceius calls an ingenious one, that it refers to a custom in Arabia, which may be called Scopelism, and was this; a man's enemies would lay stones in his field, and these signified, that if any attempted to till and manure those grounds where they were laid, some evil would befall him by the means of those persons who laid the stones there; and which stones were thought to be ominous and formidable; something like it is in **2Ki 3:19**; and so the sense is, that a good man had nothing to fear from such stones, he being in league with them; and this malicious practice is thought to have had its origin in Arabia Petraea {i}; but the first sense seems best:

and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee; a covenant being made with them, as in **Ho 2:18**; meaning either literally, the beasts of the field; and these either the same as before, wild beasts, or beasts of prey; or rather, in distinction from them, tame beasts, as cows and horses, which should be so far from doing any harm, as sometimes is done by these tame creatures, that they should be very serviceable in tilling fields and drawing carriages, and the like: or else figuratively, men comparable to such creatures; and so the sense may be, that when a man's ways please the Lord, and he behaves according to his mind and will, particularly under afflictions, even his enemies are made to be at peace with him; Pr 16:7; the Targum interprets this of the Canaanites, comparable to the beasts of the field.

{i} See Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 2. p. 156.

Job 5:24

Ver. 24. And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle [shall be] in peace,.... Not a place of religious worship, though the Targum renders it an house of doctrine or instruction; for we read not of any such but the tabernacle of Moses, erected in the wilderness, and which was indeed about, or little after, the times of Job; but it cannot be reasonably thought he did or could attend there; nor the tabernacle of his body, now in great pain and anguish, in which there were no rest nor soundness, being filled with sore boils and burning ulcers; but his dwelling house, which was built as a tent or tabernacle: such were the houses of the eastern people, made to move from place to place, for the sake of pasturage for their flocks and herds, in which their wealth consisted; so Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, dwelt in tabernacles; and hence in later times more firm, fixed, and stable dwellings, were so called; David calls his palace the tabernacle of his house, Ps 132:3; though this also includes all that dwelt in his house, his family; and the meaning is, that should he behave aright under the

afflicting hand of God, his family should live in concord, harmony, and love; there should be no discord, animosity, and contention among them, but they should be at peace and in unity among themselves; as indeed Job's children were while he had them, and before this calamity came upon him; and that also they should be secure from enemies, and dwell unmolested by them; and be in the utmost safety, enjoying all kind of prosperity, inward and outward, temporal and spiritual; which the word peace includes, as used in eastern countries, whose common salutation was, "peace be with thee"; thereby wishing all kind of happiness: or the words may be rendered, "peace [shall be] thy tabernacle" {i} as is a good man's tabernacle: he dwells in God, who is all love, all peace, in whom there is no wrath or fury; he dwells by faith in Christ, who is his peace, his peace maker, and peace giver; and in whom he has peace amidst all the tribulation he meets with in the world; the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keeps and guards him in Christ, as in a garrison, safe and secure; and he enjoys much peace, as the fruit of the Spirit, arising from a view of interest in the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and when he dies he enters into peace, and dwells and abides in it as his everlasting mansion,
Isa 57:2; now all this, Eliphaz says, Job, behaving well, should know; that is, have an experience of it; should really enjoy it, and find it in fact true what he asserted:

and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin; meaning not his wife, as some interpreters, Jewish and Christian, understand it; and so in the Talmud {k}, the word being rendered "she that tarried at home",
Ps 68:12; which is a description of a good housewife, that keeps at home and minds the affairs of her family; but rather it designs the same as his tabernacle in the preceding clause, his dwelling house, and signifies a fine, fair, and beautiful one; a spacious and goodly building, and well stored with rich household goods; and including his family also: and to "visit" this is to take care of his family, rule and govern them well, protect and defend them, and provide all things necessary for them; as well as to inspect into the affairs of his house, inquire, examine, and see how things are managed; to know the state, condition, and circumstances it is in; which is looking well to the ways of his household: and this he should do, and "not sin"; not that a man, even a good man, can so conduct himself always in his family as not to be guilty of any sin at all, but not of sin in common, or continually; at least not any gross and notorious ones: the sense is, that he should not sin himself, while making such a visit and inquiry, by an undue heat, excessive anger, by rash and passionate expressions, things not being entirely to his mind; or be the cause of sin in others, by provoking his children to wrath, by threatening and menacing

his servants in a severe, boisterous, and blustering manner; but reproving both, as there may be occasion, in a mild and gentle way; or else not sin by conniving at it and not correcting for it, which was the fault of Eli: Ben Gersom thinks Eliphaz tacitly suggests, and strikes at, Job's indulgence to his children; and so Sephorno: the word used having the signification of wandering and straying, some take the sense to be this; that he should have a sure and certain dwelling place to come into, and abide in, and should not wander about {l}, or be as a stroller and vagabond in the earth: though this has sometimes been the case of good men; as of the godly in the times of the Maccabees, who wandered in deserts and mountains, in caves and dens of the earth; and even of the disciples of Christ, who had no certain dwelling place; yea, of Christ himself, who had not where to lay his head: rather, since the word signifies to miss the mark, and so be disappointed; in which sense it is used in Jud 20:16; the sense may be, that when he visited his habitation he should find nothing amiss or wanting, but everything should answer his expectations and wishes, so Aben Ezra; and Mr. Broughton renders it, "shalt not misprosper"; and others, "shalt no be frustrated" {m}; balked, disappointed of thine ends and views, designs, hopes, and wishes.

{i} Klha Mwlv yk "quod pax tentorium tuum", Montanus, Bolducius; so Cocceius, Schmidt, Schultens. {k} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 34. 1. Yebamot, fol. 62. 2. & 63. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 76. 2. {l} ajxt al "non errabis, i.e. non eris erro et palans", Codurcus; "non aberrabis", Beza, Piscator, Cocceius. {m} "Nec votis frustrabere", Schultens.

Job 5:25

Ver. 25. Thou shalt know also that thy seed [shall be] great,.... Not his seed sown in the earth, and the increase of that, but his children, as the next clause explains it, as Bar Tzemach well observes; and designs either their greatness in worldly things, in wealth and riches, in honour and dignity, in power and authority, or else their numbers; for the word may be rendered "much" or "many" {n}, a multitude of children being reckoned a great temporal blessing; but this seems rather intended in the following words:

and thine offspring as the grass of the earth; as numerous as the spires of grass, which can no more be told than the stars of the heavens, or the sand of the sea, by which the same thing, a numerous progeny, is sometimes illustrated: this is to be understood not of his immediate offspring, but his descendants in successive ages and generations, and which should be as beautiful as the grass of the earth when in its verdure; pointing at the comeliness of their persons, their honour and dignity raised unto, the largeness of their substance, the greatness of their prosperity, and flourishing circumstances they should be in; though it may also denote the original of them, amidst all, being of the earth and earthy, and their frailty and fading condition; for which reason all flesh is said to be as grass, and men are frequently compared unto it, see Ps 90:5.

{n} br "multum", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Piscator, Schmidt, Michaelis.

Job 5:26

Ver. 26. Thou shalt come to [thy] grave in a full age,.... Or, "go into thy grave" {o}, which is represented as a house to enter into and dwell in; and so the wise man calls it man's long home, and Job his house, and which is appointed for all living, Ec 12:5; for all men must die, and so come to the grave, good men as well as bad, the righteous and the wicked: this is not to be understood literally, for the dead cannot go or come to their graves, but are carried thither, as Stephen was, and all are; but it denotes their willingness to die, who choose to be absent from the body, that they may be present with the Lord, and are desirous to depart this world, and be with him, as the Apostle Paul was; and therefore cheerfully give up the ghost, and resign their souls into the hands of Christ, desiring him to receive them; and rejoice when they observe the grave is near, and ready for them; while others have their souls demanded and required of them, and are forced to death and the grave against their wills, and are driven away in their wickedness: now this, with respect to good men, is said to be "in a full age", not "in abundance", as the Vulgate Latin version, in an abundance or fulness of wealth and honour, and with great pomp and splendour, which is not the case of all good men, but of very few; nor in the full time which God has determined and appointed men should live, which may be called "the fulness of time"; for in this every man comes to the grave, good and bad, young and old; no man dies before or lives beyond it, see Job 14:5 but in the full age of men or the common term of man's life; the highest which he usually attains unto, which is threescore years and ten, and at most fourscore,
Ps 90:10; and such who die before this are said to die before their time, the usual term of life; who die before the midst of this, are said not to live out half their days, **Ec 7:17**; but he that arrives to this dies in a good old age, and has filled up his days, which men, at most, ordinarily live: Mr. Broughton renders it, "in lusty old age", enjoying great health, strength, and vigour; and so

Nachmanides takes the word to be compounded of k, "as", and xl, "moist", lively, strong, and lusty; as if the sense was, that Job should die indeed in old age, but, when old, be as hearty as a young man in his full strength, and whose bones are moistened with marrow; as was the case of Moses, whose eyes were not dim, nor his natural force or radical moisture abated, De 34:7; but the word denotes extreme decrepit old age {p}, coming from the root in the Arabic language, which signifies to be of an austere, rugged, wrinkled, contracted countenance {q}, which is usually the case of old men: now this is to be understood, not as if every good than arrives to such an age, or that none but good men do; for certain it is, that some good persons, as Abijah, die in their youth, and many wicked men live to a great age, see **Ec 7:15**; but Eliphaz here speaks suitably to the legal dispensation under which he was, in which temporal blessings were promised to good men, as shadows of spiritual things, and this of long life was a principal one, see Ps 91:16; this is illustrated by the following simile:

like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season; there is a very great resemblance between ripe corn and old age; corn, when it is in its full ear, and ripe, its ears will hang down; the stalks, being dry and withered, are weak, and not able to bear the weight of them; so old men stoop, their knees bend, the strong men bow themselves, being unable to bear the weight of the body; fields of corn, ripe for the harvest, look white, and so the hairs of a man's head in old age; the almond tree flourishes, which, when in full bloom, is a lively emblem of the hoary head: and there is a great likeness between ripe corn, and shocks and sheaves of it, and a good old man; a good man is comparable to a corn of wheat that falls into the ground, to which Christ compares himself, Joh 12:24; and to wheat the compares his saints, Mt 13:30; for their choiceness, excellency, purity, and solidity; and these, like a corn of wheat, grow up gradually in grace, in spiritual light, knowledge, faith, and experience, and at length come to maturity; the good work is performed and perfected in them, and they come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and then they are cut down with the scythe or sickle of death, which is the proper time, like corn "in his season"; which, if cut before it is ripe, would not be fit for use, and, if it stood longer, would shed and come to nothing: and then, as corn, when cut down and reaped, is put up in shocks and sheaves, which are lifted up from the earth, and made to "ascend", as the word {r} signifies, and are laid in carts and wagons, and carried home with expressions of joy, (hence we read of the joy of harvest,) and are laid up in the barn or granary; so the saints are carried by angels, the reapers, into Abraham's bosom, as Lazarus was, into heaven, and as all the elect will be gathered by the angels at the harvest, the end of the world; attended with their shouts and acclamations, and with expressions of joy from Gospel ministers, who now go forth bearing the precious seed of the word, and sow it in tears, but then shall return with joy, bringing their sheaves with them, see Mt 13:30.

{o} rbq yla-awbt "ingredieris in sepulchrum", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Drusius, Michaelis; "intrabis ad tumulum", Schultens. {p} xlkb "in summa senectute", Michaelis; "in decrepita senectue", Schultens. {q} p. 232. "austero et tetrico (corrugato) vultu fuit", Golius, col. 2057. Castell. col. 1733. So Hinckelman. Praefat. ad Alcoran. p. 29. Hottinger. Smegina Oriental. l. 1. c. 7. p. 162. Thesaur. Philolog. l. 2. c. 1. p. 507, 508. {r} twlek "sicut ascendere", Montanus, Bolducius, Schmidt, Michaelis; "sicut ascendit", Pagninus, Mercerus.

Job 5:27

Ver. 27. Lo this, we have searched it,.... This is the concluding part of Eliphaz's first oration or speech to Job; and in order to engage his attention to it, observes, that what he had said was not his own single opinion, but the sentiment of the rest of his friends; and that it was the result of laborious and diligent investigation; that they had searched the records of former times, and inquired of ancient people, as well as had made the strictest observations on things during their course of life;

so it [is]; and the sum and amount of all was what he had declared, and which they had found to be sure and certain, the truth of the matter; that it is an undoubted truth, which should not be disputed and called in question, but to be held as a first principle, which was this; that wicked men are punished for their sins, and that good men are never greatly afflicted, at least not to such a degree as to be stripped of all the necessaries of life, and to be in a most desolate and perishing condition; and since this had been so thoroughly investigated by them, and such "a probatum est" was written upon it, he exhorts Job to

hear it; agree to it, believe it, receive it, and make a proper use of it, as he hoped he would:

and know thou [it] for thy good; or "for thyself" {s}; take it to thyself, as belonging to thee, as suitable to thy case; apply it to thyself, learn some lessons from it, and make good use of it; which is what is proposed by all that has been said.

{s} Kl ed "scito tibi", Montanus, Mercerus, &c.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 6

This and the following chapter contain Job's answer to the speech of Eliphaz in the two foregoing; he first excuses his impatience by the greatness of his afflictions, which, if weighed by good and impartial hands, would be found to be heavier than the sand of the sea, and which words were wanting to express, **Job 6:1**; and the reason why they were so heavy is given, they being the arrows and terrors of the Almighty, **Job 6:4**; and by various similes he shows that his moans and complaints under them need not seem strange and unreasonable, **Job 6:5**; and what had been said not being convincing to him, he continues in the same sentiment and disposition of mind, and wishes to be removed by death out of his miserable condition, and gives his reasons for it, **Job 6:8**; and though his case was such as required pity from his friends, yet this he had not from them, but represents them as deceitful, and as having sadly disappointed him, and therefore he neither hoped nor asked for anything of them, **Job 6:14**; and observes that their words and arguments were of no force and weight with him, but harmful and pernicious, **Job 6:24**; and in his turn gives them some exhortations and instructions, and signifies that he was as capable of discerning between right and wrong as they, with which this chapter is concluded, **Job 6:28**.

Ver. 1. But Job answered and said. Though Eliphaz thought his speech was unanswerable, being, as he and his friends judged, unquestionably true, and the fruit of strict, laborious, and diligent search and inquiry; or, "then Job answered" {t}, as the same particle is rendered, **Job 4:1**; after he had heard Eliphaz out; he waited with patience until he had finished his discourse, without giving him any interruption, though there were many things that were very provoking, particularly in **Job 4:5**; and when he had done, then he made his reply; and this was no other than what every man has a right unto, to answer for himself when any charge or accusation is brought against him; when his character is attacked, or his good name, which is better the precious ointment, is taken from him; and is what all reasonable men, and the laws of all civilized nations, allow of.

{t} Neyw "tunc respondit", Drusius.

Job 6:2

Ver. 2. Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed,.... Or, "in weighing weighed" {u}, most nicely and exactly weighed; that is, his grievous affliction, which caused so much grief of heart, and which had been shown in words and gestures; or his "wrath" and "anger" {w}, as others render it: not his anger against Eliphaz, as Sephorno, but as before, meaning the same thing, his affliction; which either, as he understood, was the fruit and effect of the wrath and anger of God, who treated him as an enemy; or rather, that wrath, anger, and resentment raised in his own mind by those afflictive providences, and which broke out in hot and passionate expressions, and for which he was blamed as a foolish man, **Job 5:2**; or else the "complaint" {x}, the groans and moans he made under them; or the "impatience" {y} he was charged with in bearing of them; and now he wishes, and suggests, that if they were well weighed and considered by kind and judicious persons, men of moderation and temper, a great allowance would be made for them, and they would easily be excused; that is, if, together with his expressions of grief, anger, and impatience, his great afflictions, the cause of them, were but looked into, and carefully examined, as follows:

and my calamity laid in the balances together! that is, his affliction, which had a being, as the word signifies, as Aben Ezra observes, was not through the prepossessions of fear as before, nor merely in fancy as in many, or as exaggerated, and made greater than it is, which is often the case; but what was real and true, and matter of fact; it was what befell him, had happened to him, not by chance, but by the appointment and providence of God; and includes all his misfortunes, the loss of his cattle, servants, and children, and of his own health; and now to be added to them, the unkindness of his friends; and his desire is, that these might be taken up, and put together in the scales, and being put there, that the balances might be lifted up at once, and the true weight of them taken; and the meaning is, either that all his excessive grief, and passionate words, and extravagant and unwarrantable impatience, as they were judged, might be put into one scale, and all his afflictions in another, and then it would be seen which were heaviest, and what reason there was for the former, and what little reason there was to blame him on that account; or however, he might be excused, and not be bore hard upon, as he was; to this sense his words incline in Job 23:2; or else by his grief and calamity he means the same thing, his grievous afflictions, which he would have put together in a pair of balances, and weighed against anything that was ever so heavy, and then they would appear to be as is expressed in **Job 6:3**; Job by all this seems desirous to have his case thoroughly canvassed, and his conduct thoroughly examined into, and to be well weighed and pondered in the scale of right reason and sound judgment, by men of equal and impartial characters; but he tacitly suggests that his friends were not such, and therefore wishes that some third person, or other persons, would undertake this affair.

{u} lqvy lwqv "librando, libraretur", Cocceius, Schultens. {w} yvek "ira mea", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Schmidt, &c. so the Targum and Sept. {x} "Querela mea", Vatablus, Mercerus. {y} "Impatientia", Belgae, Castalio.

Job 6:3

Ver. 3. For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea,.... Or "seas" {z}; all sand is heavy in its own nature, Pr 27:3; especially the sand of the sea, that which is immediately taken out of it; for that on the shore is lighter, being dried by the winds and heat of the sun, but the other is heavier, through the additional weight of water; and much more especially how heavy must all the sand of the sea be, and of all the seas that are in the world: yet Job suggests by this hyperbolical expression, exaggerating his case, that his affliction was heavier than it all, a most intolerable and insupportable burden; the afflictions of God's people are but light when compared with what their sins deserve, with the torments of the damned in hell, with the sufferings of Christ in their room and stead, and with everlasting, happiness, the eternal weight of glory, **2Co 4:17**; but in themselves they are heavy, and press hard; they are so to flesh and blood, and especially unless everlasting arms are put under men, and they are supported and upheld with the right hand of God's righteousness; they are heavy when attended with the hidings of God's face, and a sense of his wrath and displeasure, which was Job's case, see Job 13:24; some render "it more copious", or "numerous" {a}, and indeed the word has this signification, as in Nu 20:20; and the metaphor is more frequently used to express a multitude, even what is innumerable, **Ho 1:10**; yet the notion of heaviness best agrees with the preceding figure of weighing in balances, and therefore at least is not to be excluded some learned men take in both, as the sense of the word, the number of afflictions, and the bulk and weight of them:

therefore my words are swallowed up; either by his friends, as Kimchi, who heard them, and put a wrong construction on them, without thoroughly examining the true sense of them; as men that swallow down their food greedily, do not chew it, nor take the true taste of it, and so are no judges whether it is good or bad; but this sense seems to have no connection with what goes before; rather they were swallowed up by himself, and the meaning either is, that such was the weight and pressure of his afflictions, that he wanted words to express it; his words "failed" him, as the Targum: or they "come short", as Mr. Broughton renders it; they were not sufficient to set forth and declare the greatness of his troubles; or he faltered in his speech, he could not speak out plainly and distinctly, because of his grief and sorrow, see Ps 77:4; what he had said was delivered amidst sighs and sobs, through the heaviness of the calamity on him; they were but half words, attended with groanings that could not be uttered; by which he would signify, that though his friends had charged him with speaking too much and too freely, he had not spoken enough, nor could he, by reason of the greatness of his affliction; and also to excuse his present answer, if it was not delivered with that politeness and fulness of expression, with that eloquence and strength of reasoning and discoursing he at other times was capable of: or rather the words may be rendered, "therefore my words break out with heat" {b}; in a vehement manner, in a hot and passionate way I am blamed for; but this is to be imputed to the burden of affliction and sorrow upon me, which, if considered, some allowances would be made, and the charge be alleviated.

{z} Mymy "marium", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens. {a} dbky "copiosior et gravior est", Michaelis; so Schultens. {b} wel yrbd Nk-le "propterea verba mea aestuantia sunt", Schultens.

Job 6:4

Ver. 4. For the arrows of the Almighty [are] within me,.... Which are a reason proving the weight and heaviness of his affliction, and also of his hot and passionate expressions he broke out into; which designs not so much outward calamities, as famine, pestilence, thunder and lightning, which are called the arrows of God, De 32:23; all which had attended Job, and were his case; being reduced to extreme poverty, had malignant and pestilential ulcers upon him, and his sheep destroyed by thunder and lightning; and which were like arrows, that came upon him suddenly, secretly, and at unawares, and very swiftly; these arrows flew thick and first about, him, and stuck in him, and were sharp and painful, and wounded and slew him; for he was now under slaying circumstances of Providence; but rather these mean, together with his afflictions, the inward distresses, grief, and anguish of his mind arising from them, being attended with a keen sense of the divine displeasure, which was the case of David, and is expressed in much the same language, Ps 38:1; Job here considers his afflictions as coming from God, as arrows shot from his bow; and as coming from him, not as a father, in a way of paternal chastisement, and love, dealing with him as a child of his, but accounting him as an enemy, and setting him up as a mark or butt to shoot at, see **Job 7:20**; yea, not only as the arrows of a strong and mighty man, expert in archery, who shoots his arrows with great strength and skill, so that they miss not, and return not in vain, see Ps 120:4; but as being the arrows of the Almighty, which come with force irresistible, with the stretching and lighting down of his arm, and with the indignation of his anger intolerable:

the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; alluding to the custom of some people, that used to dip their arrows in poison, or besmear them with it; so the Persians, as Jarchi observes, and Heliodorus {c} reports of the Ethiopians, that they dipped their arrows in the poison of dragons, and which made them inflammatory, and raised such an heat, and such burning pains, as were intolerable; and now, as such poison presently infected the blood, and penetrated into and seized the animal spirits, and inflamed and soon exhausted them; so the heat of divine wrath, and a sense of it, which attended the arrows of God, his afflictions on Job, so affected him, as not only to take away his breath, that he could not speak, as in **Job 6:3**, or rather, as to cause those warm and hot expressions to break out from him, but even to eat up his vital spirits, and leave him spiritless and lifeless; which was Heman's case, and similar to Job's, Ps 88:3;

the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me; the Lord is sometimes compared to a man of war in arms, stirring up his wrath and jealousy, Ex 15:3; and in this light he was viewed by Job, and so he apprehended him, as coming forth against him, and which was terrible; and his terrors were like an army of soldiers set in battle array, in rank and file, ready to discharge, or discharging their artillery upon him; and which sometimes design the inward terrors of mind, of a guilty conscience, the terrors of God's judgment here, or of a future judgment hereafter, of death and hell, and eternal damnation, through the menaces and curses of the law of God transgressed and broken; but here afflictive providences, or terrible things in righteousness, which surrounded him, attacked him in great numbers, and in a hostile military way, with great order and regularity, and which were frightful to behold; perhaps regard may be also had to those scaring dreams and terrifying visions he sometimes had, see **Job 7:14**.

{c} Ethiopic. l. 9. c. 19.

Job 6:5

Ver. 5. Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?] No, they neither of them do, when the one is in a good pasture, and the other has a sufficiency of provender; but when they are in want of food, the one will bray, and the other will low, which are tones peculiar to those creatures, and express their mournful complaints; wherefore Job suggests, that should he make no moan and complaint in his sorrowful circumstances, he should be more stupid and senseless than those brute creatures: and he may have some respect to the different circumstances of himself and his friends; he himself, when he was in prosperity, made no complaints, as the wild ass brays not, and the ox lows not, when they have both food enough; but now, being in distress, he could not but utter his sorrow and trouble, as those creatures when in lack of food; and this may serve as an answer to his different conduct now and formerly, objected to him, **Job 4:3**; and so his friends; they lived in great tranquillity and prosperity, as Aben Ezra observes, and roared and grieved not, which doubtless they would, were they in the same circumstances he was; though it became them, as things were, to have uttered words of condolence to their friend in distress, instead of sharp reproofs and hard censures.

Job 6:6

Ver. 6. Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt?.... As any sort of pulse, peas, beans, lentiles, &c. which have no savoury and agreeable taste unless salted, and so many other things; and are disagreeable to men, and not relished by them, and more especially things bitter and unpleasant; and therefore Job intimates, it need not seem strange that the wormwood and water of gall, or the bread of adversity and water of affliction, he was fed with, should be so distasteful to him, and he should show such a nausea of it, and an aversion to it, and complain thereof as he did: though some apply this to the words and speeches of Eliphaz, and his friends he represented, which with Job were insipid and foolish talk, and very unsuitable and disagreeable to him, yea, loathed and abhorred by him, not being seasoned with the salt of prudence, grace, and goodness, see **Col 4:6**;

or is there [any] taste in the white of an egg? none at all. The same things are designed by this as the former. Mr. Broughton renders it, "the white of the yolk"; and Kimchi says {d} it signifies, in the language of the Rabbins, the red part of the yolk, the innermost part; but others, from the use of the word in the

Arabic language, interpret it of the froth of milk {e}, which is very tasteless and insipid: but the first of the words we render "white" always signifies "spittle"; and some of the Jewish writers {f} call it the spittle of soundness, or a sound man, which has no taste, in distinction from that of a sick man, which has; and the latter word comes from one which signifies to dream; and Jarchi observes, that some so understand it here; and the whole is by some rendered, "is there any taste" or "savour in the spittle of a dream" or "drowsiness" {g}? such as flows from a person asleep, or in a dream; and so may fitly express the vain and empty words, as the Septuagint translate the phrase, of Job's friends, in his esteem, which to him were no than the words of some idle and dreaming person, or were like the dribble of a fool or madman, as David mimicked, 1Sa 21:13; and it is observed {h}, that the word "spittle" is very emphatically used, since it useless in judging of different tastes, and mixed with food, goes into nourishment, as the white of an egg.

{d} Sepher Shorash, rad. Mlx; so Ben Melech. {e} Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 7. p. 152. Hinckeman. Praefat. ad Alcoran. p. 29. {f} R. Issac in Kimchi ibid. Ben Melech & Ben Gersom in loc; so some in Bar Tzemach; "saliva sanitatis", Gussetius, p. 260. {g} twmlx ryrb "in saliva somnolentiae", Schultens. {h} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 670.

Job 6:7

Ver. 7. The things [that] my soul refused to touch [are] as my sorrowful meat. Meaning either the above things, that which is unsavoury, and the white of an egg, of any other food, which in the time of his prosperity he would not touch with his fingers, much less eat, but now was glad of, and were his constant food in his present sorrowful circumstances; the sense given by some Jewish writers {i} is, that what he disdained to touch or wipe his hands with formerly, he was glad to make use of as a tablecloth to eat his bread of sorrow upon; but it rather intends the insipid and disagreeable words of his friends, their doctrines, instructions, and exhortations they gave him, but were refused and rejected by him; and which he before compares to unsavoury food, the white of an egg, or the spittle of a dreaming man, or the dribble of a fool; and which were as much loathed and nauseated by him, as his food that was "loathed" by him {k}, either because of his want of appetite, or because of the badness of it, such as were corrupt and "rotten", and even as the "excrements" of food {l}; those he refused to receive with as much indignation as he could such sort of food offered him; and therefore we find, that notwithstanding all that had been said to him, he continued in the same sentiment and disposition of mind, to desire death rather than life, as follows.

{i} Jarchi & R. Mesallem in ib. {k} ymxl ywdk "ut fastidia pannis mei", Cocceius. {l} "Velut excrement um panis", Neuman. apud Michael.

Job 6:8

Ver. 8. And that I might have my request,.... Or that it "might come" {m}; that it might go up to heaven, enter there, and come into the ears of the Lord, be attended to, admitted, and received by him, see Ps 18:6; or come to Job, be returned into his bosom, be answered and fulfilled; the same with the desire that "cometh", which is, when the thing desired is enjoyed, Pr 13:12; or that what he had requested would come, namely, death, which is sometimes represented as a person that looks in at the windows, and comes into the houses of men, and seizes on them, **Jer 9:21**; and this is what Job wishes for; this was his sole request; this was the thing, the one thing, that lay uppermost in his mind, and he was most importunately solicitous for:

and that God would grant [me] the thing that I long for! death, as the following words explain it; this is not desirable by nature, but contrary to it; it is itself a penal evil, the sanction and curse of the law; it is an enemy, and a very formidable one, the king of terrors; and, though a very formidable, one, is desired by good men from a principle of grace, and with right views, to be rid of sin, and to be with Christ; yet it often is done by persons in melancholy, sullen, and humorous fits, when they cannot have what they would, as in Rachel, Elijah, and Jonah, Ge 30:1; and because of sore troubles and afflictions, which was the present case of Job; though it must be said that it was not, as is frequently the case with wicked men, through the horrors of a guilty conscience, which he was free of; and he had faith, and hope of comfort in another world, and in some degree he submitted to the will and pleasure of God; though pressed with too much eagerness, importunity, and passion: and it may be observed, that Job did not make request to men, to his servants, or friends about him, to dispatch him, as Abimelech and Saul did; nor did he lay hands on himself, or attempt to do it, as Saul, Ahithophel, and Judas: the wretched philosophy of the stoics was not known in Job's time, which not only makes suicide lawful, but commends it as an heroic action; no, Job makes his, request to the God of his life, who had given it to him, and had maintained it hitherto, and who only had a right to dispose of it; he asks it as a favour, he desires it as a gift, he had nothing else to ask, nothing was more or so desirable to him as death.

{m} awbt "ut veniat", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt, Michaelis; "utinam veniret", Schultens.

Job 6:9

Ver. 9. Even that it would please God to destroy me,.... Not with an everlasting destruction of body and soul; for destruction from the Almighty was a terror to him, Job 31:23; but with the destruction of the body only; not with an annihilation of it, but with the dissolution of it, or of that union there was between his soul and body: the word {n} used signifies to bruise and beat to pieces; his meaning is, that his body, his house of clay in which he dwelt, might be crushed to pieces, and beat to powder, and crumbled into dust; and perhaps he may have regard to his original, the dust of the earth, and his return to it, according to the divine threatening, **Ge 3:19**; a phrase expressive of death; and so Mr. Broughton renders it, "to bring me to the dust", to "the dust of death", Ps 22:15;

that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off! he had let loose his hand in some degree already; he had given his substance and his body into the hand of Satan; his own hand had touched him, but he had only gone skin deep, as it were; he had smote him in his estate, in his family, and in the outward parts of his body; but now he desires that he would stretch out his hand further, and lift it up, and give a heavier stroke, and pierce him more deeply; strike through his heart and liver, and "make an end" of him, as Mr. Broughton translates the word, and dispatch him at once; cut him off like the flower of the field by the scythe, or like a tree cut down to its root by the axe, or cut off the thread of his life, Isa 38:12.

{n} ynakdy "me conterat", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Schmidt; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 6:10

Ver. 10. Then should I yet have comfort,.... Either before death, and in the midst of all his pains and sorrows, being in view of it as near at hand, and sure and certain; could he but be assured of its near approach, he could exult in his afflictions; it would be an alleviation of his trouble, that he should be soon out of it; and he would sit and sing upon the brink of eternity, and say, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory?" 1Co 15:55; his sufferings being just at an end, and being comfortably persuaded of a happy future state, and a glorious resurrection, see Job 19:25; or after death, when destroyed and cut off by it; and he hereby signifies as if he expected no comfort on this side death and the grave; that is, no temporal comfort, his comforts were gone, his substance, his children, and health, and he had no hope of the restoration of them, Eliphaz had suggested; but he believed, that though he now had his evil things, as Lazarus since, yet after death should be comforted with the presence of God, in which is fulness of joy; with the discoveries of his love, as a broad river to swish in; with a glory that should be on him, and revealed in him, with which "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared", **Ro 8:18**; and with the company of angels, and glorified saints, as well as be freed from all bodily disorders and pains, and death itself, from all sin, and sorrow, from Satan's temptations, divine desertions, doubts, and fears:

yea, I would harden myself in sorrow; meaning either upon the first news of death's being near at hand, he would harden himself against all pains and pangs of death; when those should beset him around, and he should find trouble and sorrow through them, he would not regard them, but most cheerfully and patiently bear them, and most courageously go through them, not at all intimidated by them, or by death, and the most terrible agonies of it: or "though I should be hot, burn", or "be burnt in sorrow" or "pain" {o}, as some render it; or parched with pain, as Mr. Broughton; though I should be still more and more inflamed with these burning ulcers upon me, or be dried up with a burning fever, or my body cast into a fire, and be scorched and burnt in the flames of it, I should not value it; I could bear the most excruciating pains, and sharpest torments, could I but be assured I should die. Some observe, that the word signifies to "leap" {p}; and so the Septuagint render it; and then the sense is, that he should leap for joy, as men do when they are elevated at good news, or possess what is exceeding grateful to them, was it certain to him he should die quickly; and so the Targum interprets it of exultation. The word in the Arabic language, as a good judge {q} of it observes, is used of the prancing and pawing of a horse, which makes the ground to shake; he strikes with his foot, and which as done in the midst of a battle, mocking at fear, at the rattling quiver, and glittering spear and shield, is most beautifully described in Job 39:21 in like manner, Job suggests, he should rejoice in the view of death, and mock at the fear of it: or this may respect the happiness he should enjoy after death; for in the Syriac and Arabic versions the words are rendered, "and I shall be perfected in virtue"; and the word used has the signification of solidity, confirmation, stability, and perfection; and to this sense it is rendered by some {r}, though to different purposes; and after this suffering state is over, the saints will be established, settled and perfected in all virtue, in knowledge, holiness, and happiness: therefore

let him not spare; laying on his blows thicker and heavier, till he has beaten me to pieces, and utterly destroyed me, a petition the reverse of David's, Ps 39:13; his desire is to have it done quickly and thoroughly, neither to spare him any longer, nor abate in measure, but strike him immediately, and that effectually, so as to dispatch him at once:

for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One; that is, of God, as some {t} supply it, whose name is holy, who is holy in his nature, and in all his works, and is eminently glorious in the perfection of his holiness; for though there are holy men and holy angels, there are none holy as the Lord: his "words" are the doctrines delivered out by him concerning Christ the promised seed, and salvation by him, which were spoken of by the mouth of all the prophets from the beginning of the world, of which Job had knowledge, Job 19:25; see **Ge 3:15** **Lu 1:70**; and the duties of religion enjoined men in those early times; which Sephorno refers to the laws and commandments given to the sons of Noah; of which See Gill on "Ge 9:4"; Here everything is included, both with respect to doctrine and practice, then revealed unto the sons of men, all which Job had a special regard unto: he embraced, professed, and practised them; he did not hide them from himself, or shut his eyes to the evidence of them, and smother within him the light he had; nor did he conceal them from others, but communicated the knowledge of them among his neighbours, as far as he could reach; he was not ashamed to profess the true religion of God; he held fast, and did not deny the faith in the midst of a dark and Heathenish country, and he lived up to his profession and principles in his life and conversation: now having a testimony of a good conscience within him, that he, through the grace of God, had acted a sincere and upright part in the affair of religion, and having knowledge of a living Redeemer, and faith in him, and in his justifying righteousness, he was not afraid of death, come when it would, and in whatsoever shape: and whereas his friends had suggested that he was a hypocrite and a wicked man, his conscience bore witness to the contrary; and to let them know they were mistaken in him, he signifies, he was not afraid to die, yea, he desired it; he cared not how soon he left the world, and appeared before God, the Judge of all, since the truth of grace was in him, and the righteousness of Christ upon him, and he had not, through the course of his profession of religion, departed wickedly from his God, his truths and ordinances. Some {u} read this in connection with the first clause, putting the rest in a parenthesis: "this is yet my comfort (though or when I am burned or parched with pain, and he spares not), that I have not concealed the words of the Holy One".

{o} hdloaw "calefaciam", Pagninus, Bolducius; "flagrem", Vatablus; "exaestuo", Junius & Tremellius; "urar", Drusius, Mercerus; so Gersom, Kimchi, Peritsol, & Ben Melech. {p} hllomhn, Sept. "saltarem prae gaudio"; so some in Munster. {q} "Et pede terram quatium cum exultatione", Schultens. {r} "Consolidescam", Montanus; "corroboror", Beza; so Aben Ezra. {t} Vatablus, Tigurine version, Michaelis. {u} So Vatablus, Mercerus, Codurcus, Cocceius.

Job 6:11

Ver. 11. What [is] my strength, that I should hope?.... For a perfect restoration of health, suggested by Eliphaz; since it was so sadly weakened by the present affliction, which made death more desirable than life lengthened out in so much weakness, pain, and sorrow; or "that I should bear" {w}, such a weight and heavy load that lay upon him, and crushed him, and to which his strength was not equal; or continue and endure {x};

what [is] mine end, that I should prolong my life? what end can be answered by living, or desiring a long life? His children were gone, and none left to take care of and provide for; his substance was taken away from him, so that he had not to support himself, nor to be useful to others, to the poor; he had lost all power, authority, and influence, among men, and could be no more serviceable by his counsel and advice, and by the administration of justice and equity as a civil magistrate; and as to religious matters, he was reckoned an hypocrite and a wicked man by his friends, and had lost his character and interest as a good man; and so for him to live could answer no valuable end, and, therefore, he desires to die; for what is here, and in **Job 6:12** said, contain reasons of his above request.

{w} lxya yk oti upomenw, Sept. "ut sustineam", V. L. {x} "Ut durem", Junius & Tremellius.

Job 6:12

Ver. 12. [Is] my strength the strength of stones?.... Is it like such especially which are foundation and corner stones that support a building? or like a stone pillar, that will bear a prodigious weight? no, it is not:

or [is] my flesh of brass? is it made of brass? or is it like to brass for hardness, or for sustaining any weight laid on it? it is not; and, therefore, it cannot bear up under the ponderous load of afflictions on it, but must sink and fail; it is but flesh and blood, and that flesh like grass, weak and feeble; and, therefore, death is better than life laden with such an insupportable burden.

Job 6:13

Ver. 13. [Is] my help in me?.... Or "my defence" {y}, as some; is it not in my power to defend myself against the calumnies and reproaches cast upon me? it is; and, though one have no help in myself to bear my burdens, or extricate myself out of my difficulties, yet I have the testimony of a good conscience within me, that supports me; and I have the strength and force of reason and argument on my side, to defend me against all objectors:

and is wisdom driven from me? either sound doctrine, the law {z}, or, rather, the Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, revealed in the words of the Holy One before mentioned; or wisdom in the hidden part, the fear of God, which is wisdom, true grace in the heart, which, when once implanted, can never be driven out; or natural reason and understanding, of which he was not bereaved; for, though his body was thus sorely afflicted, he retained his reasoning and intellectual faculties. The words, in connection with the former, may be read, "what, if help is not with me, is wisdom also driven quite from me?" {a} does it follow, because I am not able to help myself out of this afflicted and distressed condition in which I am, that I am deprived of my reason? or be it that I am such a weak impotent creature, and even distracted, as you take me to be, should I not then rather be pitied than insulted? so some {b} connect the words following.

{y} yb ytrze "defensio mea penes me", Junius et Tremellius, Piscator. {z} hyvwt "lex", Mercerus; so Peritsol. {a} So Cocceius and Schultens. {b} So De Dieu.

Job 6:14

Ver. 14. To him that is afflicted pity [should be showed] from his friend,.... An "afflicted" man is an object of pity, one that is afflicted of God; either inwardly with a wounded spirit, with a sense of God's displeasure, with divine desertions, with the arrows of the Almighty sticking in him, the poison thereof drinking up his spirits; or outwardly with diseases of body, with want of the necessaries of life, with loss of near relations, as well as substance, which was Job's case; or afflicted by Satan, shot at, sifted and buffered by him, distressed by his temptations, suggestions, and solicitations; or afflicted by men, reproached and persecuted for righteousness sake: in all such cases and circumstances "pity" should be showed; which is an inward affection of the mind, a sympathy of spirit, a sensible feeling of the afflictions of others, and which is expressed by gestures, motions, and actions, as by visiting them in their affliction, speaking comfortably to them, and relieving their necessities according to ability, and as the case requires: and this may be expected from a "friend", and what the law of friendship requires, whether it be in a natural and civil sense, or in a religious and spiritual one; the union between friends being so near and close, that they are, as it were, one soul, as David and Jonathan were; and as the people of God, members of the same body are, so that if one suffers, all the rest do, or should suffer and sympathize with it: and though this duty is not always performed, at least as it should be, by natural and spiritual friends, yet this grace is always shown by God, our best of friends, who pities his children and by Christ, who is a friend that loves at all times, a brother born for adversity, and that sticks closer than any brother, and cannot but be touched with the feeling of the infirmities of his friends. The words may be rendered, "to him that is melted" {c}; afflictions are like a furnace or refining pot for the melting of metals, and are called the furnace of afflictions: and saints are the metal, which are put into it; and afflictions also are the fire, of fiery trials, which heat and melt, and by which means the dross of sin and corruption is removed, and the graces of the spirit are tried and made the brighter; though here it rather signifies the melting of the heart like wax or water through the affliction, and denotes the anguish and distress, the trembling and fears, a person is in through it, being overwhelmed and borne down by it, which was Job's case: or "he that melts pity", or "whose pity melts", or "melts in pity to his friend, he forsakes" {d}, &c. that is, he that fails in pity, is destitute of compassion, and shuts up the bowels of it to his friend in distress, has not the fear of God before his eyes; and this sense makes Job himself to be the friend in affliction, and Eliphaz, and those with him, the persons that are deficient in their mercy, pity, and compassion. Some render the words {e}, "should reproach [be cast] on him that is afflicted, as that he forsakes the fear of the Almighty?" the word for pity is so used in Pr 14:34; and the reproach on Job was, that he had cast off the fear of God, **Job 4:6**. This grieved him most of all, and added to his affliction, and of which he complains as very cruel usage; and very cutting it was that he should be reckoned a man destitute of the fear of God, and that because he was afflicted by him; though rather the following words,

but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty, are a charge upon his friend Eliphaz for not showing pity to him in his affliction, which was tacitly forsaking the fear of God. Job here recriminates and retorts the charge of want of the fear of God on Eliphaz himself; for to show mercy to an afflicted friend is a religious act, a part of pure and undefiled religion, a branch of the fear of God; and he that neglects it is so far wanting in it, and acts contrary to his profession of God, of fear of him, and love to him; see **Jas 1:26**; or "otherwise he forsakes", &c. {f}.

{c} oml "liquefacto", Vatablus, Mercerus, Beza; so Ben Gersom. {d} "Cujus liquescit benignitas", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, "qui misericordia erga amicum contabescit", Schultens. {e} Mercerus, Vatablus, so Ben Gersom. Some interpret it as a charge that he forsakes both mercy and the fear of the Lord; so R. Simeon Bar Tzemach, Sephorno, and Ben Melech. {f} So Pagninus & Beza.

Job 6:15

Ver. 15. My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook,.... Meaning his three friends, represented by Eliphaz, who were of the same sentiments with him, and behaved towards Job as he did: these were his brethren not by birth by blood nor by country, but by the profession of the same religion of the one true and living God in opposition to the idolatrous people among whom they dwelt; and this their relation to him is an aggravation of their perfidy and treachery, unfaithfulness and deceit, by which is meant their balking and disappointing him in his expectations; when they came to visit him as friends, he might reasonably expect they came to condole and sympathize with him, and comfort him; but, instead of this they reproached him and grieved him, and were miserable comforters of him; and this he illustrates by the simile of a "brook", which he enlarges upon in the following verses: these friends and brethren of his he compares to a "brook", not that was fed by a spring which continues, but filled with falls of water and melting snows from the hills, with which it is swelled, and looks like a large river for a while, but when these fail it is soon gone; hereby representing his friends in his state of prosperity, who looked big, and promised long and lasting friendship, but proved, in time of adversity, unfaithful and deceitful; and so it denotes the fickleness and inconstancy of their friendship:

[and] as the stream of brooks they pass away: or, "pass by" {g}, as a stream of water, fed by many brooks, or flows of water like unto many brooks, which run with great rapidity and force, and are quickly gone and seen no more; thus his friends, as such, passed by him, and were of no use to him any more than the priest and Levite were to the man that fell among thieves, Lu 10:30.

{g} wrbey "praetereunt", Mercerus, Schmidt; "transeunt", Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Job 6:16

Ver. 16. Which are blackish by reason of the ice,.... When frozen over, they look of a blackish colour, and is what is called a black frost; and these either describe Job and his domestics, as some {h} think whom Eliphaz and his two friends compared to the above streams water passed away from, or passed by and neglected, and showed no friendship to; who were in black, mournful and rueful circumstances, through the severe hand of God upon them. The word is rendered, "those which mourn", **Job 5:11**; or rather the friends of Job compared to foul and troubled waters frozen over which cannot be so well discerned, or which were black through being frozen, and which describes the inward frame of their minds the foulness of their spirits the blackness of their hearts, though they outwardly appeared otherwise, as follows:

[and] wherein the snow is hid; or "on whom the snow" falling, and lying on heaps, "hides" {i}, or covers; so Job's friends, according to this account, were, though black within as a black frost yet white without as snow; they appeared, in their looks and words at first as candid, kind, and generous, but proved the reverse.

{h} So Michaelis. {i} glv Mlety wmyle "super quibus accumulatur nix", Beza, "tegit se, q. d. multa nive teguntur", Drusius; "the frost is hidden by the snow", so Sephorno; or rather "the black and frozen waters".

Job 6:17

Ver. 17. What time they wax warm they vanish,.... The ice and the snow, which, when the weather becomes warm, they melt away and disappear; and in like manner, he suggests his friends ceased to be friends to him in a time of adversity; the sun of affliction having looked upon him, they deserted him, at least did not administer comfort to him:

when it is hot they are consumed out of their place; when it is hot weather, and the sun has great strength then the waters, which swelled through the floods and fall of rain and snow, and which when frozen, looked black and big as if they had great depth in them, were quickly dried up, and no more to be seen in the place where they were; which still expresses the short duration of friendship among men, which Job had a sorrowful experience of.

Job 6:18

Ver. 18. The paths of their way are turned aside,.... That is, the waters, when melted by the heat of the sun, and the warmth of the weather, run, some one way, and some another in little streams and windings, till they are quite lost and the tracks of them are no more to be seen; denoting that all appearance of friendship was quite gone, and no traces of it to be found:

they go to nothing, and perish: some of them are lost in little meanders and windings about, and others are exhaled by the heat of the sun, and go into "Tohu", as the word is, into empty air; so vain and empty, and perishing, were all the comforts he hoped for from his friends; though some understand this of the paths of travellers in the deserts being covered in the sand, and not to be seen and found; of which see Pliny {z}.

{z} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 29.

Job 6:19

Ver. 19. The troops of Tema looked,.... A city in Arabia, so called from Tema a son of Ishmael, Ge 25:15; these troops or companies were travelling ones, either that travelled to Tema, or that went from thence to other places for merchandise, see Isa 21:13; these, as they passed along in their caravans, as the Turks their successors now do, looked at those places where in the wintertime they observed large waters frozen over, and covered with snow, and expected to have been supplied from thence in the summer season, for the extinguishing of their thirst:

the companies of Sheba waited for them: another people in Arabia, which went in companies through the deserts, where being in great want of water for their refreshment, waited patiently till they came to those places, where they hoped to find water to relieve them, which they had before marked in the wintertime.

Job 6:20

Ver. 20. And they were confounded because they had hoped,.... When they came to the places where they hoped to find water, finding none were ashamed of their vain hope, and reflected upon themselves for being so foolish as to raise their expectations upon such a groundless surmise:

they came thither, and were ashamed; which is the same thing expressed in different words; and aptly enough describes Job's disappointment in not meeting with that relief and comfort he expected from his friends, to whom he makes application of all this in the following words.

Job 6:21

Ver. 21. For now ye are nothing,.... Once they seemed to be something to him; he thought them men wise, good, and religious, kind, bountiful, and tenderhearted; but now he found them otherwise, they were nothing to him as friends or as comforters in his distress; the "Cetib", or Scripture, is, as we read, and is followed by many; but the marginal reading is, "now ye are to it" {a}; that is, ye are like to it, the brook whose waters he had been describing; so Jarchi interprets it; Mr. Broughton very agreeably takes in both, "so now ye are become like that, even nothing"; as that deceitful brook is no more, nor of any use to travellers fainting through thirst; so ye are like that, of no use and advantage to me in my affliction:

ye see [my] casting down; from a state of prosperity to a state of adversity; from a pinnacle of honour, from being the greatest man in the east, a civil magistrate, and the head of a flourishing family, to the lowest degree of disgrace and dishonour; from wealth and riches to want and poverty; as well as saw the inward dejection of his mind, through the poisoned arrows of the Almighty within him:

and ye are afraid; of the righteous judgments of God, taking these calamities to be such, and fearing the same or the like should fall on them, should they keep him company; or however should they patronize and defend him; and afraid also of being too near him, lest his breath, and the smell of him, should be infectious, and they should catch a distemper from him; or lest he should be expensive and troublesome to them.

{a} wl Mtyyh hte yk "certe nunc fuistis illi", Bolducius; so Michaelis; "certe nunc estis similes illi", Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercerus.

Job 6:22

Ver. 22. Did I say, bring unto me?.... Or, "give unto me" {b}; did I invite you to come to me, and bring in your hands presents for me, to support me under my necessitous circumstances?

or give a reward for me of your substance? did I ever ask anything of you? if I had, it would have been but your duty to have given freely to me in my deplorable circumstances; and it might have been expected you would have given without asking, seeing my necessities so great: or did I desire you to communicate out of the great wealth and abundant riches you are possessed of to others on my behalf, to plead my cause among men, and to get a favourable sentence upon me, that I might not be traduced as a wicked man by censorious tongues? had I ever been troublesome to you in any respect, you might have been provoked to use me ill; but since nothing of this kind has ever been requested of you, you might have forborne ill language and hard words; which are often given to beggars; for when a man is fallen to decay, and becomes troublesome by his importunity, twenty things are raked up by his friends against his character; as that he has been lazy and indolent, or lavish and extravagant, &c. to save their money, and excuse them from acts of charity; but this was not the case here.

{b} yl wbh "date mihi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Job 6:23

Ver. 23. Or, deliver me from the enemies' hand?.... Or, "out of the hand of straitness" {c}; out of tribulation and difficulties with which he was pressed on every side:

or redeem me from the hand of the mighty? fetch back his cattle out of the hands of the Sabeans and Chaldeans, either by force of arms, as Abraham brought back Lot, and all his goods, when taken and carried away by the four king's, or by giving a ransom price for them. Job had asked no such favour of them; he had not troubled them with any such suits, and therefore they had no reason to use him in the manner they did, as he apprehended; it would be soon enough to flout and fling at him when he applied to them for any relief.

{c} ru dym "e manu tribulatoris, vel tribulationis", Vatablus.

Job 6:24

Ver. 24. Teach me, and I will hold my tongue,.... Job having made his defence, and which he thought a sufficient one to acquit him of the charge against him; yet to show that he was not stubborn and flexible, but was open to conviction, and ready to attend and hearken to what might be further said, desires to be taught and instructed in the way of his duty; suggesting that, upon being convinced of his mistakes, he should ingenuously acknowledge them: good men are desirous of being taught both of God and men; they are not above instruction, or think themselves wiser than their teachers; they are willing to receive knowledge, not only from their superiors, but from their equals, and even from those that are inferior to them, as Job from his friends, though they had been unkind to him, and bore very hard upon him; and he promises that while they were speaking he would be silent, and not noisy, and clamorous, nor interrupt nor contradict them; but would patiently and attentively listen to what they said, and seriously consider it, and weigh it well in his mind; and, should he be convinced thereby, would no longer continue his complaints unto God, nor murmur at his providences; and would cease reflecting on them his friends, and no more charge them with deceit, perfidy, and unkindness; and by his silence would acknowledge his guilt, and not pertinaciously stand in an evil matter, but lay his hand on his mouth; hold his tongue, as our English phrase is, a Graecism {z}; that is, be silent, as in Hebrew; and even take shame to himself, and in this way confess his iniquity, and do so no more:

and cause me to understand wherein I have erred; not that he allowed that he was in an error; for all that he says, both before and after, shows that he thought himself free from any; only, that whereas there was a possibility that he might be in one, he should be glad to have it pointed out; for he would not willingly and obstinately continue therein: error is common to human nature; the best of men are liable to mistakes; and those are so frequent and numerous, that many of them escape notice; "who can understand his errors?" Ps 19:12; wherefore wise and good men will esteem it a favour to have their errors pointed out to them, and their mistakes rectified; and it becomes men of capacity and ability to take some pains to do this, since he that converts one that has erred, whether in principle or practice, saves a soul from death, and covers a multitude of sins; **Jas 5:19**; Job is desirous, that if he had imbibed or uttered any error in principle, any thing unbecoming the Divine Being, contrary to his perfections, or to the holy religion which he professed, or was guilty of any in practice, in his conduct and behaviour, especially under the present providence, that it might be clearly made out unto him, and he should at once frankly and freely own it, retract and relinquish it.

{z} kratwn thv glwsshv, Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 2.

Job 6:25

Ver. 25. How forcible are right words!.... That are according to right reason; such as may be called strong reasons, or bony arguments, as in Isa 41:21; there are strength and weight in such words, reasonings, and arguments; they bring evidence and conviction with them, and are very powerful to persuade the mind to an assent unto them, and have great influence to engage to a profession or practice of what they are used for; such are more especially the words of God, the Scriptures of truth, the doctrines of the Gospel; these are right words, see **Pr 8:6**; they are not contrary to right reason, although above it; and are agreeably to sanctified reason, and received by it; they are according to the perfections of God, even his righteousness and holiness, and according to the law of God, and in no wise repugnant to it, which is the rule of righteousness; and they are doctrines according to godliness, and are far from encouraging licentiousness; and they are all strictly true, and must be right: and there is a force and strength in those words; they come with weight, especially when they come in demonstration of the Spirit and power of God; they are mighty, through God, for the pulling down the strong holds of sin, Satan, and self, and for the bringing of men to the obedience of Christ; to the quickening dead sinners, enlightening dark minds, softening hard hearts; renewing, changing, and transforming men into quite another temper and disposition of mind they formerly had; for the comforting and relieving souls in distress, and saints under affliction; and have so very wonderful an influence on the lives and conversations of those to whom they come, not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost, as to teach them to deny all sin and ungodliness, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly: or, "how forcible are the words of an upright man!" {a} that is, sincere, impartial, and faithful; which Job suggests his friends were not: some think Job has respect to his own words, and render the clause, "what hardness", or "harshness", have "right words!" {b} Such as he believed his own were, and in which there were nothing hard and harsh, sharp and severe, or which might give just offence; such as his cursing the day in which he was born, or charging his friends with treachery and deceit: but rather he tacitly reflects upon the words and arguments of his friends; intimating, that though there is force and strength in right words, theirs were neither right nor forcible, but partial and unjust, and weak and impotent; which had no strength of reasoning in them, nor carried any conviction with them, as follows:

but what doth your arguing reprove? their arguments they had used with him had no strength in them; they were of no avail; they did not reprove or convince of any evil he had been guilty of, or any mistake he had made; they were weak, impertinent, and useless, and fell with no weight upon him, nor wrought any conviction in him.

{a} So Aquila apud Drusium. {b} wurxn hm "quid duritiei habent verba rectitudinis", Schmidt; so Luther.

Job 6:26

Ver. 26. Do ye imagine to reprove words,.... Or with words; with bare words, without any force of reasoning and argument in them? put a parcel of words together without any sense or meaning, or however without any cogency in them, and think to run me down with them? or is your scheme and device only, and which you pursue, to catch at and lay hold on some words of mine uttered in my distress, and make me an offender for a word, or for a few words, supposing they have been rashly and passionately spoken? have ye no facts to charge me with, before or since these calamities befell me? is the charge of hypocrisy and want of the fear of God to be supported by producing some hasty expressions, without pointing at one single action in my life and conversation?

and the speeches of one that is desperate, [which are] as wind? that is, do ye imagine to reprove them? or, are; your thoughts wholly and solely intent on them? are these only the strong reasons you have to produce to fix the sin of hypocrisy upon me? for by him that is "desperate" he means himself; not that he despaired of his everlasting salvation; he was far from despair; he was a strong believer, and determined that, though he was slain, he would trust in the Lord; he was well assured he should be justified, both here and hereafter; and full well knew that his Redeemer lived, and that though he died, he should rise again and be happy in the vision of God for ever: but he despaired of a restoration to outward happiness, which Eliphaz had suggested, should he behave well; but, alas! his condition was forlorn and miserable, and there was no hope with him of being better; his children were dead, his substance in the hands of robbers, his health so extremely bad that he had no expectation of a recovery to his former state; and therefore it was very unkind and ungenerous to lay hold upon and aggravate the speeches of such an one, and improve them against him; and especially as they were only "for refreshment" {c}, as some choose to render the words, see Job 32:20; they were uttered to give vent to his sorrow and grief, and not with any ill design against God or men; or the sense of the whole is, that they imagined that their words were right and fit to reprove with, and that there were force and strength in them, and had a tendency to work conviction and bring to confession; but as for the words of Job, they treated them "as wind"; as idle, vain, and empty, and useless and fruitless as the wind.

{c} xwrl "ad respirium", Schultens.

Job 6:27

Ver. 27. Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless,.... Meaning himself; who was like a fatherless child, stripped of all his mercies, of his children, his substance, and his health; and was in a most miserable, helpless, and forlorn condition; and, moreover, deprived of the gracious presence and visible protection of his heavenly Father, being given up for a while into the hands of Satan; and now it was unkind and barbarous to overwhelm such a man, who was overwhelmed with overmuch sorrow already: or, "ye cause to fall upon the fatherless"; either their wrath and anger, as the Targum and many others {d} instead of doing him justice; or a wall, or any such thing, to crush him, as Aben Ezra; or a lot, as Simeon bar Tzemach; see **Joe 3:3**; or rather a net, or a snare to entrap him in, seeking to entangle him in talk, so Mr. Broughton, which agrees with what follows:

and ye dig [a pit] for your friend; contrive mischief against him; sought to bring him to ruin; and which is aggravated by his having been their old friend, with whom they lived in strict friendship, and had professed much unto, and still pretended to have respect for; the allusion is to digging of pits for the catching of wild beasts: some render it, "ye feast upon your friend" {e}; so the word is used in **2Ki 6:23**; this sense is taken notice of by Aben Ezra and Bar

Tzemach; and then the meaning is, you rejoice at the misery of your friend; you mock him and that, and insult him in his distress, with which the Septuagint version agrees; which was cruel usage.

{d} Pa "iram", Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceius; so Jarchi and Sephorno. {e} wrkt "epulamini", Piscator; so Beza, Gussetius.

Job 6:28

Ver. 28. Now therefore be content,.... Or, "may it now please you" {f}; Job addresses them in a respectful manner, and entreats them they would be so kind as to look favourably on him, and entertain better thoughts of him; and give a fresh and friendly hearing of his case, when he doubted not he should be acquitted by them of the charge of iniquity, and that his cause would appear to be a righteous one:

look upon me: upon my countenance; and see if you can find any traces of fear and falsehood, of dishonesty and hypocrisy, of shame and blushing; and observe if there is not all the appearance of an honest mind, of a good conscience within, that has nothing to fear from the strictest examination; or look upon my body, covered all over with boils and ulcers, and see if there is not occasion for those expressions of grief, and those heavy complaints that I have made; or rather, look upon me with an eye of pity and compassion, with affection, favour, and benevolence, and not bear so hard upon me:

for [it is] evident unto you if I lie; or, it is "before your faces" {g}; should I attempt to deceive you by telling you a parcel of lies, you would soon discern the falsehood in my countenance; you would easily find it out in my words, which would issue in my shame and confusion; I could not expect to go undetected by men of such sagacity and penetration; but I am not afraid of the most diligent scrutiny that can be made into my words and actions.

{f} wlyawh htew "sed nunc placeat vebis", Schmidt. {g} Mkynp le "coram facie vestra", Bolducius, Schultens; Ben Melech interprets it, "by your life if I lie", as being an oath.

Job 6:29

Ver. 29. Return, I pray you,.... From the ill opinion you have of me, and from your hard censures, and entertain other sentiments concerning me: or it may be, upon these words of Job his friends might be rising up as usual to take their leave of him, and break off conversation with him; and therefore he entreats they would return to their seats, and resume the debate, and give a friendly hearing of his case:

let it not be iniquity; either let it not be reckoned an iniquity to return and go on hearing his case; or he entreats that they would take care not to sin in their anger and resentment against him, nor go on to charge him with iniquity: or it may be rendered, "there is no iniquity" {h}; that is, it should be found that there was no such iniquity in him as he was charged with; not that he was free from all sin, which no man is, but from that which his friends judged he was guilty of, hypocrisy:

yea, return again; he most earnestly importunes them to return and patiently hear him out:

my righteousness [is] in it; in the whole of this affair before them, and which was the matter of controversy between them; meaning, not his justifying righteousness before God, but the righteousness of his cause before men; he doubted not but, when things were thoroughly searched into, that his righteousness would be as clear as the light, and his judgment as the noonday; that he should appear to be a righteous man, and his cause a just one; and should stand acquitted and free from all charges and imputations.

{h} hlwe yht la "non erit iniquitas", Beza, Mercerus; "nulla", Schultens.

Job 6:30

Ver. 30. Is there iniquity in my tongue?.... Meaning in his words; either those which he uttered when he cursed the day on which he was born, or in charging his friends with unkindness and falsehood; otherwise the tongue is a world of iniquity, and the best of men are apt to offend both God and men in word:

cannot my taste discern perverse things? which is to be understood not of his natural taste, which very probably through his disease might be greatly vitiated, and incapable of relishing his food as in time of health, and of distinguishing good from bad; but of his intellectual taste, or of his sense and reason, his rational and spiritual taste; he had his senses exercised to discern good and evil; he could distinguish between right and wrong that was said or done, either by himself or others; be had the use of his rational powers and faculties, and therefore not to be treated as a mad or distracted man, but as one capable of carrying on a conversation, of opening his true case, and defending himself; see Job 12:11.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 7

In this chapter Job goes on to defend himself in an address to God; as that he had reason to complain of his extraordinary afflictions, and wish for death; by observing the common case of mankind, which he illustrates by that of an hireling, **Job 7:1**; and justifies his eager desire of death by the servant and hireling; the one earnestly desiring the shadow, and the other the reward of his work, **Job 7:2**; by representing his present state as exceeding deplorable, even worse than that of the servant and hireling, since they had rest at night, when he had none, and were free from pain, whereas he was not, **Job 7:3**; by taking notice of the swiftness and shortness of his days, in which he had no hope of enjoying any good, **Job 7:6**; and so thought his case hard; and the rather, since after death he could enjoy no temporal good: and therefore to be deprived of it while living gave him just reason of complaint, **Job 7:8**; and then he expostulates with God for setting such a strict watch upon him; giving him no ease night nor day, but terrifying him with dreams and visions, which made life disagreeable to him, and death more eligible than that, **Job 7:12**; and represents man as unworthy of the divine regard, and below his notice to bestow favours on him, or to chastise him for doing amiss, **Job 7:17**; and admitting that he himself had sinned, yet he should forgive his iniquity, and not bear so hard upon him, and follow him with one affliction after another without intermission, and make him the butt of his arrows; but should spare him and let him alone, or however take him out of the world, **Job 7:19**.

Ver. 1. [Is there] not an appointed time to man upon earth?.... There is a set time for his coming into the world, for his continuance in it, and for his going out of it; this is to man "on earth", with respect to his being and abode here, not in the other world or future state: not in heaven; there is no certain limited time for man there, but an eternity; the life he will enter into is everlasting; the habitation, mansion, and house he will dwell in, are eternal; saints will be for ever with Christ, in whose presence are pleasures for evermore: nor in hell; the punishment there will be eternal, the fire will be unquenchable and everlasting, the smoke of the torments of the damned will ascend for ever and ever; but men's days and time on earth are but as a shadow, and soon gone; they are of the earth, earthly, and return unto it at a fixed appointed time, time, the bounds of which cannot be passed over: this is true of mankind in general, and of Job in particular; see Job 14:1; the word "Enosh" {i}, here used, signifies, as is commonly observed, a frail, feeble, mortal man; Mr. Broughton renders it "sorrowful man"; as every man more or less is; even a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, is attended with them, has an experience of them: this is the common lot of mankind; and if anything more than ordinary is inflicted upon them, they are not able to bear it; and these sorrows death at the appointed time puts an end to, which makes it desirable; now, seeing there is a set time for every man's life on earth, and there was for Job's, of which he was well assured; and, by all appearance of things, and by the symptoms upon him, this time was near at hand; therefore it should not be thought a criminal thing in him, considering his extraordinary afflictions, and which were intolerable, that he should so earnestly wish the time was come; though in his more serious thoughts he determined to wait for it: some render the words, "is [there] not a warfare are for men on earth?" {k} the word being so rendered elsewhere, particularly in Isa 40:2; every man's state on earth is a state of warfare; this is frequently said by the stoic philosophers {l}; even so is that of natural and unregenerate men, who are often engaged in war with one another, which arise from the lusts which war in their members; and especially with the people of God, the seed of the woman, between whom and the seed of the serpent there has been an enmity from the beginning; and with themselves, with the troubles of life, diseases of body, and various afflictions they have to conflict and grapple with: and more especially the life of good men here is a state of warfare, not only of the ministers of the word, or persons in public office, but of private believers; who are good soldiers of Christ, enter volunteers into his service, fight under his banners, and themselves like men; these have many enemies to combat with; some within, the corruptions of hearts, which war against the spirit and law of their minds, which form a company of two armies in militating against each other; and others without, as Satan and his principalities and powers, the men the world, false teachers, and the like: and these are properly accoutred for such service, having the whole armour of God provided for them; and have great encouragement to behave manfully, since they may be sure of victory, and of having the crown of righteousness, when they have fought the good fight of even though they are but frail, feeble, mortal, sinful men, but flesh and blood, and so not of themselves a match for their enemies; but they are more than so through the Lord being on their side, Christ being the Captain of their salvation, and the Spirit of God being in them greater than he that is in the world; and besides, it is only on earth this warfare is, and will soon be accomplished, the last enemy being death that shall be destroyed: now this being the common case of man, to be annoyed with enemies, and always at war with them, if, besides this, uncommon afflictions befall him, as was Job's case, this must make life burdensome, and death, which is a deliverance from them, desirable; this is his argument: some choose to render the words, "is [there] not a servile condition for men on earth" {m} the word being used of the ministry and service of the Levites, **Nu 4:3**; all men by creation are or ought to be the servants of God; good men are so by the grace of God, and willingly and cheerfully serve him; and though the great work of salvation is wrought out by Christ for them, and the work of grace is wrought by the Spirit of Christ in them, yet they have work to do in their day and generation in the world, in their families, and in the house of God; and which, though weak and feeble in themselves, they are capable of doing, through Christ, his Spirit, power, and grace: and this is only on earth; in the grave there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge; when the night of death comes, no man can work; his service, especially his toilsome service, is at an end; and as it is natural for servants to wish for the night, when their labours end, Job thought it not unlawful in him to wish for death, which would put an end to his toils and labours, and when he should have rest from them:

[are not] his days also like the days plan hireling? the time for which a servant is hired, whether it be for a day or for a year, or more, it is a set time; it is fixed, settled, and determined in the agreement, and so are the days of man's life on earth; and the of an hireling are few at most, the time for which he is hired is but and as the days of an hireling are days of toil, and labour, and sorrow, so are the days of men evil as well as few; his few days are full of trouble,
Ge 47:9; all this and what follows is spoken to God, and not to his friends, as appears from **Job 7:7**.

{i} vwnal "mortali", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "misero et aerumnoso homini", Michaelis. {k} abu "militia", Montanus, Tigurine version, Schultens; so V. L. Targum. {l} Vid. Gataker. Anotat. in M. Antonin. de seipso, p. 77, 78. {m} "Conditio servilis", Schmidt.

Job 7:2

Ver. 2. As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow,.... Either the shadow of some great rock, tree, or hedge, or any shady place to shelter him from the heat of the sun in the middle of the day, which in those eastern countries is hot and scorching; and very burdensome and fatiguing it is for servants and labourers to work in fields and vineyards, or in keeping herds and flocks in such countries, and at such a time of the day; to which the allusion is in **So 1:7** Isa 25:4. Wherefore they "gape" for, or "pant" after some shady place for refreshment, as the word {n} used signifies; or for the shadow of the evening, or the sun setting, when the longest shadow is cast, **Jer 6:4**; and when the work of a servant is ended, and he retires to his house for refreshment and rest: and since now such a shadow in either sense is desirable, and not unlawful to wish for, Job suggests it ought not to be charged as a crime in him, that he should importunately desire to be in the shadow of death, or in the grave, where the weary are at rest; or to have the night come on him, when he should cease from all his toil and labour, sorrows and pains:

and as an hireling looketh for [the reward of] his work; or "for his work" {o}; either for new work, what was set him being done, or rather for the finishing of it, that he might have rest from it; or for the reward, the hire due to him upon its being done; so Job intimates he desired death with the same view, that he might cease from his works, which should follow him, and when he should have the reward of the inheritance, not in a way of debt, but of grace: nor indeed is it sinful to look or have respect unto the recompence of reward, in order to engage to go through service more cheerfully, or to endure sufferings more patiently, see Heb 11:26; for though the hireling is an emblem of a self-righteous person, that works for life, and expects it as the reward of his work, and of false teachers and bad shepherds, that take the care of the flock for filthy lucre's sake, see Lu 15:19; yet hiring is sometimes used, in a good sense, of good men, that are hired and allured by gracious promises and divine encouragements to labour in the Lord's vineyard, and may expect their reward; see Mt 20:1.

{n} Pavy "anhelabit", Montanus, Bolducius; "anhelat", Beza, Tigurine version, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt, Schultens. {o} wlep "opus suum", Beza Montanus, Bolducius, Schmidt, Schultens.

Job 7:3

Ver. 3. So am I made to possess months of vanity,.... This is not a reddition or application of the above similes of the servant and hireling, **Job 7:1**; for that is to be understood, and to be supplied at the end of **Job 7:2**; that as those looked for the shadow and payment of hire, so Job looked for and earnestly desired death, or to be removed out of the world; besides, the things here instanced in do not answer; for Job, instead of having the refreshing shadow, had months of vanity, and instead of rest from his labours had nothing but wearisome nights, and continual tossings to and fro; whereas the sleep of a labouring man is sweet to him; and having laboured hard all day, the night is a time of rest to him; but so it was not with Job; wherefore this "so" refers to the common state and condition of mankind, in which Job was, with an addition of extraordinary afflictions upon him: the time of his afflictions, though but short, seemed long, and therefore is expressed by months; and some months might have passed from the time his calamities began to the present; since it must be some time before his friends heard of them, and more still before they could meet together and agree upon their coming, and were actually come to him; as also some time was spent in silence, and now in conversation with him; the Jews {p} make them to be twelve months: and these months were "months of vanity", or "empty" {q} ones; such as winter months, empty of all joy, and peace, and comfort; times in which he had no pleasure, no ease of body or of mind; destitute of the good things of life, and of the presence of God and communion with him; and full of trouble, sorrow, and distress: and these were "given him for an inheritance" {r}; were his lot and portion, which he received as an inheritance from his parents, in consequence of original sin, the source of all the troubles and miseries of human life, in common with other men; and which were allotted him by his heavenly Father, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, as all the afflictions of the Lord's people are the inheritance bequeathed them by their Father, and the legacy of their Redeemer:

and wearisome nights are appointed to me; one after another, in succession; in which he could have no sleep nor rest, through pain of body and distress of mind; and so became the more weary, through long lying down and tossings to and fro, through groans and tears, and much watching; and these were prepared for him in the purposes of God, and appointed to him in his counsels and decrees; see Job 23:14; or they "prepared" or "appointed" {s}; that is, "Elohim", the three Divine Persons.

{p} Vid. Misn. Ediot, c. 2. sect. 10. & R. Simeon Bar Tzemach, in loc. {q} awv yxry "menses vacuos", V. L. so Tigurine version, Michaelis. {r} ytlxnh "accepi hereditate", Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius; so Cocceius, Schmidt, Schultens. {s} yl wnm "constituerunt mihi", Pagninus, Bolducius; "mihi paraverunt", Mercerus; so Schmidt, Cocceius, Schultens.

Job 7:4

Ver. 4. When I lie down, I say, when shall I arise,.... Or, "then I say", &c. {t}; that is, as soon as he laid himself down in his bed, and endeavoured to compose himself to sleep, in order to get rest and refreshment; then he said within himself, or with an articulate voice, to those about him, that sat up with him; oh that it was time to rise; when will it be morning, that I may rise from my bed, which is of no manner of service to me, but rather increases weariness?

and the night be gone? and the day dawn and break; or "night" or "evening be measured", as in the margin, or "measures itself" {u}; or that "he", that is, God, or "it", my heart, "measures the evening" {w}, or "night"; lengthens it out to its full time: to a discomposed person, that cannot sleep, the night seems long; such count every hour, tell every clock that strikes, and long to see peep of day; these are they that watch for the morning, Ps 130:6;

and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day; or, "unto the twilight"; the morning twilight; though some understand it of the twilight or evening of the next day, see 1Sa 30:17; and interpret "the tossings to and fro" of the toils and labours of the day, and of the sorrows and miseries of it, lengthened out to the eve of the following day; but rather they are to be understood either of the tosses of his mind, his distressed and perplexed thoughts within him he was full of; or of the tosses of his body, his frequent turning himself upon his bed, from side to side, to ease him; and with these he was "filled", or "satiated" {x}; he had enough and too much of them; he was glutted and sated with them, as a man is with overmuch eating, as the word signifies.

{t} ytrmaw "tum dixi", Beza, Piscator, Mercerus. {u} So Saadiah Gaon. {w} bre ddmw "tum admensus est versperam", Schmidt; "extendit", Schultens; "et cor", Mercerus; so Aben Ezra, Ben Gersom, and Bar Tzemach. {x} ytebv "satior", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens.

Job 7:5

Ver. 5. My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust,.... Not as it would be at death, and in the grave, as Schmidt interprets it, when it would be eaten with worms and reduced to dust; but as it then was, his ulcers breeding worms, or lice, as some {y}; these spread themselves over his body: some think it was the vermicular or pedicular disease that was upon him, and the scabs of them, which were all over him like one continued crust, were as a garment to him; or those sores of his, running with purulent matter, and he sitting and rolling himself in dust and ashes, and this moisture mingling therewith, and clotted together, formed clods of dust, which covered him all over; a dismal spectacle to look upon! a precious saint in a vile body!

my skin is broken: with the boils and ulcers in all parts, and was parched and cleft with the heat and breaking of them:

and become loathsome; to himself and others; exceeding nauseous, and extremely disagreeable both to sight and smell: or "liquefied" {z}; moistened with corrupt matter flowing from the ulcers in all parts of his body; the word in Arabic signifies a large, broad, and open wound, as a learned man {a} has observed; and it is as if he should say, whoever observes all this, this long time of distress, night and day, and what a shocking figure he was, as here represented, could blame him for wishing for death in the most passionate manner?

{y} So Sephorno and Bar Tzemach. {z} oamy "liquefit", Junius & Tremellius; "colliquefacta est", Piscator, Mercerus. {a} Hinckelman. Praefat. ad Alcoran. p. 30.

Job 7:6

Ver. 6. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,.... Which moves very swiftly, being thrown quick and fast to and fro; some versions render it "a racer" {b} one that runs a race on foot, or rides on horseback, agreeably to **Job 9:25**; where, and in **Job 7:7**; to it, other similes are used, to set forth the swiftness and fleetness of man's days; as they also are elsewhere represented, as swift as a tale told, a word expressed, or a thought conceived, Ps 90:9; and so here, by the Septuagint, are said to be "swifter than speech", though wrongly translated: this is to be understood, not of his days of affliction, distress, and sorrow; for these in his apprehension moved but slowly, and he could have been, glad that they had gone on faster; but either his days in common, or particularly his days of prosperity and pleasure, these were soon over with him; and which he sometimes wished for again, see Job 29:1;

and are spent without hope; not without hope of happiness in another world, but without hope of being restored to his outward felicity in this; which Eliphaz had given him some him of, but he had no hope concerning it; see **Job 5:24**.

{b} dromewv, Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion in Drusius.

Job 7:7

Ver. 7. O remember that my life [is] wind,.... Or, "breath" {c}; man's life is in his breath, and that breath is in his nostrils, and therefore not to be accounted of, or depended on; man appears by this to be a poor frail creature, whose life, with respect to himself, is very precarious and uncertain; it is but as a "vapour", an air bubble, full of wind, easily broken and dissipated, and soon vanishes away; it is like the "wind", noisy and blusterous, full of stir and tumult, and, like that, swiftly passes and sweeps away, and returns not again: this is an address to God; and so some {d} supply it, "O God", or "O Lord, remember", &c. not that forgetfulness is in God, or that he needs to be reminded of anything; but he may seem to forget the frailty of man when he lays his hand heavy on him; and may be said to be mindful of it when he mercifully takes it off: what Job here prays for, the Lord often does, as he did with respect to the Israelites, Ps 78:39;

mine eye shall no more see good: meaning not spiritual and eternal good, here and hereafter; he knew he should, after this life, see his living Redeemer even with the eyes of his body, when raised again; that he should see him as he is, not through a glass, darkly, but face to face, in all his glory; and that for himself, and not another, and even see and enjoy things he had never seen before: but his sense is, that he should see or enjoy no more temporal good; either in this world, being without hope of any, or in the grave, whither he was going and would shortly be; and therefore entreats that some mercy might be shown him while he lived; to which sense the following words incline.

{c} xwr "hali us", Cocceius, Michaelis. {d} So Beza, Vatablus, Drusius, Michaelis.

Job 7:8

Ver. 8. The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no [more],.... Or "the eye of sight" {e}; the seeing eye, the most acute and quick sighted eye; so Mr. Broughton renders it, "the quick eye" {f}: this is to be understood as "after" {g} death, that then the sharpest eye should not see him, he would be out of the reach of it; which must be taken with a limitation; for men after death are seen by the eyes of the omniscient God, their souls, be they in heaven or in hell, and their bodies in the grave; and as for good men, such as Job, they are at once with him in his immediate presence, beholding and beheld by him; and they are seen by angels, whose care and charge their souls become immediately upon death, and are carried by them into heaven, where they are fellow worshippers with them; and they are seen by glorified saints, to whose company they are joined; for if the rich man in hell could see Abraham, and Lazarus in his bosom, Lu 16:23, then much more do the saints see one another: but the meaning is, that when a man is dead, he is seen no more by men on earth, by his relations, friends, and acquaintance; the consideration of which is a cutting stroke at parting, see Ac 20:25; the state of the dead is an invisible state, and therefore called in the Greek tongue "Hades", "unseen"; so the dead will remain, with respect to the inhabitants of this world, till the resurrection, and then they shall see and be seen again in the same bodies they now have; for this is no denial of the resurrection of the dead, as some Jewish writers charge Job with, and infer from this and some following passages:

thine eyes [are] upon me, and I [am] not; am a dead man, a phrase expressive of death, and of being in the state of the dead, or however of being no more in this world, see **Ge 5:24**; not that the dead are nonentities, or are reduced to nothing; this is not true of them, either with respect to soul or body; their souls are immaterial and immoral, and exist in a separate state after death, and their bodies, though reduced to dust, are not annihilated; they return to earth and dust, from whence they came; but still they are something, they are earth and dust, unless these can be thought to be nothing; and this dust is taken care of and preserved, and will be gathered together, and moulded, and framed, and fashioned into bodies again, which will endure for ever: nor is the meaning, that they are nowhere; the spirits of just men made perfect are in heaven, in paradise, in a state of life, immortality, and bliss; and the souls of the wicked are in their own place, in the prison of hell, reserved with devils, to the judgment of the great day; and the bodies of both are in the graves till the day of the resurrection; but they are not, and no more, in the land of the living, in their houses and families, in their shops and business, and places of trade and merchandise, or in the house of God serving him there, according to their different stations. And this Job ascribes to God, "thine eyes [are] upon me": meaning not his eyes of love, favour, and kindness, which had respect unto him; and yet, notwithstanding this, as it did not secure him from afflictions, so neither would it from death itself; for "though [his] eyes [were] upon [him]" in such sense, yet he "would not be" {a}, or should die; but rather his angry eyes, the frowns of his countenance, which were now upon him, and might be discerned in the dispensations of his providence towards him, by reason of which he "was not" as he was before; not fit for anything, as Sephorno understands it; or should he frown upon him, one angry look would sink him into the state of the dead, and he should be no more, who "looks on the earth, and it trembles", Ps 104:32. Mr. Broughton renders it as a petition, "let thine eyes be upon me, that I be no more"; that is, let me die, the same request he made in **Job 6:8**; but it seems best to interpret it or the eyes of God's omnipresence and providence, which are on men in every state and place; and the sense be, either as granting, that though the eyes of men should not see him after death, yet the eyes of God would be upon him when he was not, or in the state of the fiend; or else, that should he long defer doing him good, it would be too late, he should soon die, and then, though he should look after him, and seek for him, he should not be in the land of the living, according to **Job 7:21**; or this may denote the suddenness of death, which comes to a man in a moment, as Bar Tzemach observes, in the twinkling of an eye; nay, as soon as the eye of God is upon a man, that is, as soon almost as a man appears in the world, and the eye of Divine Providence is upon him, he is out of it again, and is no more; see **Ec 3:2**.

{e} yar Nye Heb. "oculus visus", Drusius, Piscator; "aspectus", Mercerus; so Simeon Bar Tzemach. {f} "Ocuium perspicacissimum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {g} Posthac, Tigurine version. {a} "Etiam oculis tuis ad me respicientibus, me non fore amplius", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Job 7:9

Ver. 9. [As] the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away,.... Which being dispersed by the wind, or broke up by the sun, is never seen, or returns more; for though the wise man speaks of clouds returning after the rain, this is not to be understood of the same clouds, but of succeeding ones, Ec 12:2; so pardon of sin is expressed by the same metaphor, to show that sin thereby is no more, no more to be seen or remembered, Isa 43:25; the Targum renders it "as smoke", by which the shortness and consumption of men's days are expressed, Ps 102:3; but by the simile of a cloud here is not so much designed the sudden disappearance of life as the irrevocableness of it when gone, as the reddition or application following shows:

so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no [more]; the grave is the house or long home that all must go to, it being the appointment of God that all should die, or be in the state of the dead; which is meant by the grave, since all are not interred in the earth; and this, as here, is frequently expressed, as if it was man's act being hither brought; and when it designs an interment in the earth, it is with great propriety called a going down; and however that be, yet the state of the dead is a state of humiliation, a coming down from all the grandeur, honour, and glory of the present state, which are all laid in the dust; and when this is man's case, he comes up no more from it, that is, of himself, by his own power; none but Christ, who is God over all, ever did this; or none naturally, or by the laws of nature, for noticing short of almighty power can effect this; it must be done in an extraordinary way, and is no less than a miraculous operation; nor will this be done until the general resurrection of the just and unjust, when all that are in their graves shall come forth, the one to the resurrection of life, and the other to the resurrection of damnation; excepting in some few instances, as the Shunammite's son, **2Ki 4:32**; the man that touched the bones of the prophet Elisha, 2Ki 13:21; the daughter of Jairus, **Mr 5:41**; the widow of Nain's son, **Lu 7:14**; Lazarus, Joh 11:43; and those that rose at our Lord's resurrection, Mt 27:53; this is further explained in **Job 7:10**.

Job 7:10

Ver. 10. He shall return no more to his house,.... In a literal sense, built or hired by him, or however in which he dwelt; and if a good man, he will have no desire to return to that any more, having a better house, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; or in a figurative sense, either his body, the earthly house of his tabernacle, an house of clay, which has its foundation in the dust; to this he shall not return until the resurrection, when it will be rebuilt, and fitted up for the better reception and accommodation of him; or else his family, to whom he shall not come back again, to have any concern with them in domestic affairs, or in part of the business of life, as David said of his child when dead, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me", 2Sa 12:23;

neither shall his place know him any more; the place of his office, or rather of his habitation; his dwelling house, his farms and his fields, his estates and possessions, shall no more know, own, and acknowledge him as their master, proprietor, and possessor, these, coming at his death into other hands, who now are regarded as such; or the inhabitants of the place, country, city, town, village, and house in which he lived, shall know him no more; no more being seen among them, he will soon be forgotten; out of sight, out of mind {b}.

{b} "Linquenda tellus et domus", &c. Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode 14.

Job 7:11

Ver. 11. Therefore I will not refrain my mouth,.... From speaking and complaining; seeing, besides the common lot of mankind, which is a state of warfare, sorrow, and trouble, and is as much as a man can well grapple with, extraordinary afflictions are laid upon me, which make life insupportable; and seeing I enjoy no good in this present life, and am shortly going where no temporal good is to be expected, and shall never return to this world any more to enjoy any; therefore I will not be silent, and forbear speaking my mind freely, and uttering my just complaint, for which I think I have sufficient reason: or "I also will not refrain my mouth" {c}; in turn, as a just retaliation, so Jarchi; since God will not refrain his hand from me, I will not refrain my mouth from speaking concerning him; since he shows no mercy to me, I shall utter my miserable complaints, and not keep them to myself; this was Job's infirmity when he should have held his peace, as Aaron, and been dumb and silent as David, and been still, and have known, owned, and acknowledged the sovereignty of God, and not vented himself in passion as he did:

I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; or "in the straitness" {d} of it; he was surrounded on all sides with distress, the sorrows of death compassed him about, and the pains of hell got hold upon him; he was like one pent up in a narrow place, in a close confinement, that he could not get out of, and come forth from; and he felt not only exquisite pains of body from his boils and sores, but great anguish of soul; and therefore he determines to speak in and "of" {e} all this, to give vent to his grief and sorrow, his passion and resentment:

I will complain in the bitterness of my soul; his afflictions were like the waters of Marah, bitter ones, very grievous and disagreeable to flesh and blood, and by which his life and soul were embittered to him; and in and of {f} this he determines to complain, or to utter in a complaining way what he had been meditating on, as the word {g} signifies; so that this was not an hasty and precipitate action, but what upon deliberation he resolved to do; to pour out his complaint before God, and leave it with him, in a submissive way, would not have been amiss, but if he complained of God and his providence, it was wrong: "why should a living man complain?" not even a wicked man, of "the punishment of his sin", and much less a good man of fatherly chastisements? We see what the will of man is, what a stubborn and obstinate thing it is, "I will, I will, I will", even of a good man when left to himself, and not in the exercise of grace, and under the influence of it; the complaint follows, by way of expostulation.

{c} yna Mg "etiam ego", Vatablus, Beza, Piscator, Bolducius, Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens; "vicissim", Noldius, p. 222. {d} rub "in angustia", Junius & Tremellius, Schmidt; "in arcto", Cocceius; "in angusto", Schultens. {e} "De angustia", Vatablus, Drusius, Mercerus, Piscator. {f} rmb "de amaritudine", Drusius, Piscator, Mercerus. {g} hxyva "meditabor et eloquar", Michaelis.

Job 7:12

Ver. 12. [Am] I a sea, or a whale,.... Like the restless sea, to which very wicked, profligate, and abandoned sinners are compared, that are continually casting up the mire and dirt of sin and wickedness; am I such an one? or like the raging sea, its proud waters and foaming waves, to which fierce and furious persecutors and tyrannical oppressors are compared; did I behave in such a manner to the poor and distressed in the time of prosperity? nay, was I not the reverse of all this, kind and gentle to them, took their part, and rescued them out of the hands of those that oppressed them? see Job 29:12; or like its tossing waves, which attempt to pass the bounds that are set to them; am I such an one, that have transgressed the laws of God and then, which are set as boundaries to restrain the worst of men? and am I a whale, or like any great fish in the ocean, the dragon in the sea, the leviathan, the piercing and crooked serpent? an emblem of cruel princes, as the kings of Egypt and Assyria, or antichrist, Isa 27:1; see Ps 74:13. The Targum is,

"as the Egyptians were condemned to be drowned in the Red sea, am I condemned? or as Pharaoh, who was suffocated in the midst of it for his sin, since thou settest a watch over me?"

or, as another Targum,

"am I as the great sea, which is moved to extreme parts, or the leviathan, which is ready to be taken?"

or else the sense is, have I the strength of the sea, which subsists, notwithstanding its waves are continually heating, and which carries such mighty vessels upon it, and would bear down all before it, if not restrained? or of a whale, the leviathan, whose flakes of flesh are joined together, and his heart as firm as a stone, and as hard as a piece of the nether millstone, and laughs at the spear, the sword, and the dart? no, I have not; I am a poor, weak, feeble creature, whose strength is quite exhausted, and not able to bear the weight of the chains and fetters of afflictions upon me; or rather the principal thing complained of, and which he illustrates by these metaphors, is, that he was bound with the cords of afflictions, and compassed with gall and travail, and hedged in hereby, that he could not get out, as the church says, **La 3:5**; or could not get released from his sorrows by death, or otherwise; just as the sea is shut up with bars and doors, that its waves can come hitherto, and no further; and as the whale is confined to the ocean, or surrounded with vessels and armed men in them, when about to be taken; and thus it was with Job, and of this he complains:

that thou settest a watch over me? which Jarchi and others understand of Satan; and though in his hands, he was not suffered to take away his life; but besides him may be meant all his afflictions, calamities, and distresses, in which he lay fettered and bound, in which he was shut up as in a prison, and by which he was watched over and guarded; and from which he could make no escape, nor get a release.

Job 7:13

Ver. 13. When I say, my bed shall comfort me,.... When he thought within himself that he would lie down upon his bed and try if he could get a little sleep, which might comfort and refresh him, and which he promised himself he should obtain by this means, as he had formerly had an experience of:

my couch shall ease my complaint; he concluded, that by lying down upon his couch, and falling asleep, it would give some ease of body and mind; that his body would, at least, for some time be free from pain, and his mind composed, and should cease from complaining for a while; which interval would be a relief to him, and of considerable service. Some render it, "my couch shall burn" {h}; be all on fire, and torture me instead of giving ease; and so may have respect to his burning ulcers.

{h} avy "ardebit", Pagninus; so Kimchi in Sepher Shorash. & Ben Melech in loc.

Job 7:14

Ver. 14. Then thou scarest me with dreams,.... Not with dreams and visions being told him, as were by Eliphaz, **Job 4:13**; but with dreams he himself dreamed; and which might arise from the force of his distemper, and the pain of his body, whereby his sleep was broken, his imagination disturbed, and his fancy roving, which led him to objects as seemed to him very terrible and dreadful; or from a melancholy disposition his afflictions had brought upon him; and hence in his dreams he had dismal apprehensions of things very distressing and terrifying; or from Satan, in whose hands he was, and who was permitted to distress and disturb him at such seasons; all which he ascribes to God, because he suffered it so to be: and now these dreams not only hindered sound sleep, and getting that ease and refreshment he hoped for from thence, but even they were frightful and scaring to him, so that instead of being the better for his bed and his couch, he was the worse; these dreams added to his afflictions, and in them he suffered much, as Pilate's wife is said to do, Mt 27:19;

and terrifiest me through visions; spectres, apparitions, and such like things, being presented to his fancy, while sleeping and dreaming, which filled him with terror, and sorely distressed him, so that he could receive no benefit hereby, but rather was more fatigued and weakened.

Job 7:15

Ver. 15. So that my soul chooseth strangling,.... Not to strangle himself, as Ahithophel did, or to be strangled by others, this being a kind of death inflicted on capital offenders; but rather, as Mr. Broughton renders it, "to be choked to death" by any distemper and disease, as some are of a suffocating nature, as a catarrh, quinsy, &c. and kill in that way; and indeed death in whatsoever way is the stopping of a man's breath; and it was death that Job chose, let it be in what way it would, whether natural or violent; so weary was he of life through his sore and heavy afflictions:

[and] death rather than my life; or, "than my bones" {i}; which are the more solid parts of the body, and the support of it, and are put for the whole and the life thereof; or than these bones of his, which were full of strong pain, and which had nothing but skin upon them, and that was broken and covered with worms, rottenness, and dust; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "and my bones death"; that is, desired and chose death, being so full of pain, see Ps 35:10.

{i} ytwmuem "prae ossibus meis", Montanus, Tigurine version, Bolducius, Cocceius, Schmidt, Schultens; so Mercerus, Piscator, Michaelis.

Job 7:16

Ver. 16. I loathe [it],.... Or "them" {k}, either his life, which was a weariness to him, or his bones, which were so painful and nauseous; or rather, "I am become loathsome", to himself, to his servants, and to his friends, and even his breath was strange to his wife; or "being ulcerated, I pine and waste away" {l}, and must in course be quickly gone:

I would not live always; no man can or will; there is no man that lives but what shall see death, Ps 89:48; Job knew this, nor did he expect or desire it; and this was not his meaning, but that he desired that he might not live long, or to the full term of man's life, yea, that he might die quickly; and indeed to a good man to die is gain; and to depart out of the world, and be with Christ, is far better than to continue in it. And had Job expressed himself without passion, and with submission to the divine will, what he says would not have been amiss:

let me alone; or "cease from me" {m}; from afflicting him any more, having as great a weight upon him as he could bear, or greater than he could well stand up under; or from supporting him in life, he wishes that either God would withdraw his afflicting hand from him, or his preserving hand; either abate the affliction, or dismiss him from the world:

for my days [are] vanity; a "breath" {n} or puff of wind; a "vapour", as Mr. Broughton renders it, that soon vanishes away; days empty of all that is good, delightful, and pleasant, and full of evil, trouble, and sorrow, as well as fleeting, transitory, and soon gone, are as nothing, yea, less than nothing, and vanity.

{k} "Aspernor vitam", Piscator; so Jarchi & Ben Gersom. {l} ytoam "tabui", Cocceius; "ulceratus tabesco", Schultens. {m} ynmm ldx "cessa a me", Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius, Schmidt. {n} lbh "halitus", Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 7:17

Ver. 17. What [is] man, that thou shouldest magnify him?.... Man in his best estate, in his original state, was but of the earth, earthly; a mutable creature, and altogether vanity; so that it was wonderful God should magnify him as be did, raise him to such honour and dignity, as to set him over all the works of his hands, and bestow peculiar marks of his favour upon him in Eden's garden; but man in his low and fallen estate, being, as the word here used is generally observed to signify, a frail, feeble, weak, and mortal creature; yea, a sinful one; it is much more marvellous that God should magnify him, or make him great, that is, any of the human race, as he has some, so as "to set his heart upon them", as Jarchi connects this with the following clause; to think of them and provide for them in his purposes and decrees, in his council and covenant, to choose any of them to grace here, and glory hereafter: he has magnified them, by espousing them to his Son, whereby they share with him in his glory, and in all the blessings of his goodness; through the incarnation of Christ, by means of which the human nature is greatly advanced and honoured; and by their redemption through Christ, whereby they are raised to an higher dignity, and restored to a greater estate than they lost by the fall; by clothing them with the rich robe of Christ's righteousness, comparable to the gold of Ophir, and raiment of needlework; and by adorning them with the graces of the blessed Spirit; and, in a word, by taking them into his family, making them his children and his heirs, rich in grace, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven, and kings and priests unto him; taking them as beggars from the dunghill, to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory. The words may be understood in a different sense, and more agreeably to the context, and to the scope of Job's discourse, as they are by some {o}, of God's magnifying men by afflicting them; according to which, man is represented as a poor, weak, strengthless creature, a worm and clod of the earth; and the Lord as the mighty God, as of great and infinite power and strength, between whom there is no manner of proportion; God is not a man, that they should come together, or as if on equal foot; nor man a match for God; to wrestle with principalities and powers, which are not flesh and blood, is too much for men of themselves, and how much less able are they to contend with God? Now Job by this suggests, that his thought and sentiment of the matter was, and in which he has a particular view to himself, and his own case; that as on the one hand it was a demeaning the might and majesty of God, by making himself a combatant with man; so on the other hand it was doing man too much honour, as if he was one of more importance and consequence, and more mighty and powerful than he is; whereas he is unworthy of the divine notice in any respect, either to bestow his favours, or lay his afflicting hand upon him; compare with this 1Sa 24:14. Hence a late learned writer {p}, agreeably to the use of the word in the Arabic language, renders it, "what is mortal man, that thou shouldest wrestle with him?" strive and contend with him as if he was thy match, when thou couldest at one blow, and even at a touch, dispatch him at once?

and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? have an affection for him, love him, delight in him, highly value and esteem him; it is wonderful that God should have such a regard to any of the sons of men; and yet it is certain that he has, as appears by the good things he has provided and laid up for them in covenant, by sending his Son to die for them, by calling and quickening them by his Spirit and grace, and drawing them with loving kindness to himself; by taking continual care of them, and keeping them as the apple of his eye: though these words may be interpreted agreeably to the other sense, "that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?" or towards him, to afflict him and chastise him with afflictions, so Bar Tzemach; or to stir up himself against him, as Sephorno: and the above late learned writer chooses to render them, "that thou shouldest set thine heart against him?" {q} and so the Hebrew {r} particle is used in many other places; see Eze 13:2; compare with this Job 34:14, where R. Simeon Bar Tzemach {s} thinks Elihu has respect to this passage of Job, and reproves him for it.

{o} So Simeon Bar Tzemach, Sephorno, Mercerus, Diodati, Schultens. {p} Schultens. {q} Kbl wyla tyvt ykw "et quod intendas cor tuum". {r} "Adversus eum". ibid. {s} Vid. Noldii Ebr. Partic. Concord. p. 57.

Job 7:18

Ver. 18. And [that] thou shouldest visit him every morning,.... That is, "daily", continually, as Aben Ezra interprets it; either in a way of love, grace, and mercy; so God has visited men, by raising up and sending his Son to be a Redeemer of them; the Son of God has visited them, as the dayspring from on high, by his incarnation and appearance in this world; see **Lu 1:68**; and the Lord visits them, by calling them by his grace, see Ac 15:14; by communing and conversing with them in a free and friendly manner; by helping right early, and by renewing his mercies to them every morning, all which is matter of admiration: or else the word may be taken in a different sense, as it sometimes is, either for punishing man for sin, as in Ex 20:5; or for chastising the Lord's people, which is a visiting them, though in a fatherly way, and in love, and which is often and frequently done, even every morning, see Ps 89:32; and so the sense agrees with the former, though by some given with this difference thus, "what is man, that thou shouldest magnify him?" or make him great both in things temporal and spiritual, as he had made Job in the time of his prosperity, which he may have respect unto; having been the greatest man in all the east, with respect to both characters, whereby it was plain he had interest in the love and affections of the heart of God; and "yet, notwithstanding, nevertheless, thou visitest him" {t}, with afflictions and chastisements continually; which may seem strange, and look like a contradiction, that thou shouldest:

[and] try him every moment? by afflictive providences; in this way the Lord often tries the faith and patience, the fear and love, the hope and humility of his people, and all other graces, whereby they appear and shine the brighter, which was Job's case, see Job 23:10; and which he doubtless had in view in all he had said, and more particularly expostulates about in the following verses.

{t} wndqptw "et tamen, nihilominus visitas eum", Michaelis.

Job 7:19

Ver. 19. How long wilt thou not depart from me,.... From wrestling and contending with him, and afflicting of him; the Lord was too hard a combatant for job, and therefore he chose to be rid of him, and was impatient of it; or "look off from me" {u}; so Mr. Broughton renders it, "how long wilt thou not look from me?" this is to be understood not of a look of love, which Job would never have desired to have averted from him; but a frowning and angry look, such as the Lord put on in this dispensation of his providence towards him; the allusion may be to that sharp and constant look, which antagonists in wrestling have upon each other while conflicting together, and so the metaphor before used is still carried on:

nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle? some think Job has reference to his disease which affected his throat, that being so dried up, or having a quinsy in it, that he could not swallow his spittle, or it was with great difficulty he did it; or rather it is a proverbial expression, signifying that his afflictions were incessant, that he had no respite nor intermission, had not space enough given him to swallow down his spittle, or take his breath, as in **Job 9:18**; so Schultens observes, that with the Arabians this was a proverbial form of speech, when they required time for anything, "give me time to swallow my spittle"; or when they had not proper time, or any intermission, used to say, "you will not give me time to swallow my spittle"; and one being asked a multitude of questions, replied, "suffer me to swallow my spittle", that is, give me time to make an answer: or the sense is, that his antagonist in wrestling with him held him so fast, and kept him so close to it, and so twisted him about, and gave him fall upon fall, so that he had no time to swallow his spittle; or he so collared him, and gripped him, and almost throttled him, that he could not swallow it down; all which intends how closely and incessantly Job was followed with one affliction upon another, and how severe and distressing they were to him.

{u} ynmm hevt "respicis a me?" Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis; "avertis oculum a me?" Schultens.

Job 7:20

Ver. 20. I have sinned,.... Some render it, "if I have sinned" {w}; be it so that I have, as my friends say, yet since there is forgiveness with thee, why should I be so afflicted as I am? but there is no need of such a supplement, the words are an affirmation, I have sinned, or I am a sinner; not that he owned that he had been guilty of any notorious sin, or had lived a sinful course of life, on account of which his afflictions came upon him, as his friends suggested; but that he was not without sin, was daily guilty of it, as men, even the best of men, ordinarily are; and being a sinner was not a match for a holy God; he could not contend with him, nor answer him for one sin of a thousand committed by him in thought, word, or deed; and therefore desires him to desist and depart from him, see **Lu 5:8**;

what shall I do unto thee? this he said, not as one in distress of mind on account of sin, and under the load of the guilt of it, inquiring what he must do to make satisfaction for it, how and what way he could be saved from it; for he knew that nothing done by him in a ceremonial way by sacrifices, nor in a moral way by the performance of duties, could take away sin, or atone for it, or save him from it; he knew this was only by his living Redeemer, and whom he knew and determined should be his salvation, and he only; see **Job 9:30**; but rather as it may be rendered, "what can or ought I do unto thee?" {x} that is, more than I have done, namely, to confess my sin unto thee; what more dost thou require of me? or what more can be done by me, than to repent of my sin, acknowledge it, and beg pardon for it? as he does in **Job 7:21**: or "what can I do unto thee?" thou art all over match for me, I cannot struggle and contend with thee, a sinful man with an holy God:

O thou preserver of men? as he is in a providential way, the supporter of men in their lives and beings; or, "O thou keeper of men" {y}, as he is, not only of

Israel, but of all others, and that night and day; perhaps Job may refer to his setting and keeping a watch over him, **Job 7:12**; and enclosing and hedging him all around with afflictions, so that he could not get out of the world as he desired; or, "O thou observer of men" {z}, of their words, ways, works, and actions, and who kept such a strict eye upon him while wrestling with him, and therefore what could he do? or, "O thou Saviour of men" {a}, by whom only I can be saved from the sins I have been and am daily guilty of:

why hast thou set me as a mark against thee? as a butt to shoot thine arrows at, one affliction after another, thick and fast, see Job 16:12 **La 3:12**; the words I think may be rendered, "why hast thou appointed me to meet thee", or "for a meeting with thee?" {b} as one man challenge, another to meet him in such a place and fight him: alas! I am not equal to thee, I am a mere worm, not able to contend with thee the mighty God, or to meet thee in the way of thy judgments, and to endure the heavy strokes of thy angry hand; and so Bar Tzemach paraphrases it,

"thou hast hated me, and not loved me; that thou hast set, or appointed me to meet thee, as a man meets his enemy in the time of his wrath, and he stirs up against him all his fury:"

and to the same sense, and much in the same words, Jarchi interprets it:

so that I am a burden to myself? weary of his life, through the many pressing and heavy afflictions upon him, as Rebekah was of hers, because of the daughters of Heth, Ge 27:46. The reading which we follow, and is followed by the Targum, and by most interpreters, Jewish and Christian, is a correction of the scribes, and one of the eighteen places corrected by them; which is no argument of the corruption of the Hebrew text, but of the contrary; since this was only placed in the margin of the Bible, as the Masorites afterwards did with their various readings, showing only what was their sense of this, and the like passages; and as an instruction how in their opinion to understand them, still retaining the other reading or writing; and which, according to Aben Ezra, may be rightly interpreted, and is, "so that I am a burden to thee" {c}; and which is followed by some, signifying, as Job thought at least, that he was so offensive to him that he could not bear him, but treated him as an enemy; was weary of him, as God is said to be of sinners and their sins, and of the services and duties of carnal professors, see **Isa 1:14**; so Abendana interprets it,

"thou hast set me for a mark unto thee, as if I was a burden to thee."

{w} Vatablus, Drusius, Schmidt; so Sept. Syr. & Ar. {x} Kl lepa hm "quid faciam aut facere possum tibi", Michaelis; "debeam", Schmidt. {y} Mdah run "custos hominum". V. L. Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus. {z} "Observator", Schultens. {a} "Sospitatur", Codurcus; "servator", Drusius, Schmidt, Michaelis. Vid. Witsii Oeconom. Foeder. l. 4. c. 3. sect. 30. {b} Kl enpml "in occursum tibi", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Drusius. {c} Kyle epi soi, Sept. "et tibi", Beza, Grotius.

Job 7:21

Ver. 21. And why dost thou not pardon my transgression,.... Or "lift [it] up" {d}; every sin is a transgression of the law of God, and the guilt of it upon the conscience is a burden too heavy to bear, and the punishment of it is intolerable; pardon lifts up and takes away all manner of sin, and all that is in sin; it takes off the load of sin from the conscience, and eases it, and loosens from obligation to punishment for it, which comes to pass in this manner: Jehovah has taken lifted up sin from his people, and has put and laid it, or caused it to meet on his Son, by the imputation of it to him; and he has voluntarily taken it on himself, and has bore it, and has taken it away by his blood and sacrifice, which being applied to the conscience of a sinner, lifts it up and takes it from thence, and speaks peace and pardon to him; it wholly and entirely removes it from him, even as far as the east is from the west; and for such an application Job postulates with God, with whom there was forgiveness, and who had proclaimed himself a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; and which he does when he both removes the guilt of it from the conscience, and takes away all the effects of it, such as afflictions and the like; in which latter sense Job may well be understood, as agreeing with his case and circumstances:

and take away mine iniquity? or "cause it to pass away" {e} from him, by applying his pardoning grace and mercy to his conscience, and by removing his afflicting hand from him:

for now shall I sleep in the dust; having sin pardoned, and the hand of God removed; I shall depart out of the world in peace, lie down in the grave, and rest quietly till the resurrection; there being in the bed of dust no tossings to and fro as now, nor a being scared with dreams and terrified with night visions. Mr. Broughton renders it, "whereas I lie now in the dust"; as if it referred to his present case, sitting as a mourner in dust and ashes, and his flesh clothed with clods of dust; or, in a figurative sense, lying in the dust of self-abhorrence; but the former sense seems best:

and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I [shall] not [be]; meaning not in the morning of the resurrection, for then he will be found; but it is a figurative way of speaking, as Bar Tzemach observes, just as one goes to visit a sick man in a morning, and he finds him dead, and he is not any more in the land of the living: many interpreters understand this as Job's sense, that he should quickly die; he could not be a long time in the circumstances he was; and therefore if the Lord had a mind to bestow any good thing on him in the present life, he must make haste to do it, since in a short time he should be gone, and then, if he sought for him, it would be too late, he should be no more; but the sense is this, that when he lay down in the dust, in the grave, he should be seen no more on earth by any man, nay, not by the eye of God himself, should the most early and the most diligent search be made for him. Mr. Broughton takes it to be a petition and request to die, rendering the words,

"why dost thou not quickly seek me out, that I should be no more?"

and to which others {f} agree.

{d} avt "tolles", Montanus, Beza, Drusius, Mercerus, Michaelis. {e} rybet "transire facies", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius. {f} So Junius & Tremellius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 8

In this chapter Bildad enters the discussion with Job; proceeding upon the same lines as Eliphaz, he reproves him for his long and loud talk, **Job 8:1**; asserts the justice of God in his providence, of which the taking away of Job's children by death for their transgression was an instance and proof, **Job 8:3**; and suggests, that if Job, who had not sinned so heinously as they had, and therefore was spared, would make his submission to God, and ask forgiveness of him, and behave for the future with purity and uprightness, he need not doubt but God would immediately appear and exert himself on his behalf, and bless him and his with prosperity and plenty, **Job 8:5**; for this was his ordinary way of dealing with the children of men, for the truth of which he refers him to the records of former times, and to the sentiments of ancient men, who lived longer, and were more knowing than he and his friends, on whose opinion he does not desire him to rely, **Job 8:8**; and then by various similes used by the ancients, or taken from them by Bildad, or which were of his own inventing and framing, are set forth the short lived enjoyments, and vain hope and confidence, of hypocrites and wicked men; as by the sudden withering of rushes and flags of themselves, that grow in mire and water, even in their greenness, before they are cut down, or cropped by any hand, **Job 8:11**; and by the spider's web, which cannot stand and endure when leaned upon and held, **Job 8:14**; and by a flourishing tree destroyed, and seen no more, **Job 8:16**; and the chapter is concluded with an observation and maxim, that he and the rest of his friends set out upon, and were tenacious of; that God did not afflict good men in any severe manner, but filled them with joy and gladness; and that he would not long help and prosper wicked men, but bring them and their dwelling place to nought; and this being the case of Job, he suggests that he was such an one, **Job 8:20**.

Ver. 1. Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said. This was the second of Job's friends that came to visit him, **Job 2:11**; and is mentioned next to Eliphaz there, and takes his turn in this controversy in the same side; which no doubt was agreed upon among themselves, as well as the part each should bear, and the general sentiment they should pursue, which was the same in them all. Some have observed, that Job's friends were like the messengers that brought him the tidings of his losses, before one had done speaking another came; and so as soon as one of his friends had delivered his discourse, and before Job could well finish his reply, up starts another to charge him afresh, as here Bildad did, who said as follows.

Job 8:2

Ver. 2. How long wilt thou speak these [things]?.... Either what he had delivered in the "third" chapter in cursing the day of his birth, and wishing for death, in which sentiments he still continued, and resolutely defended; or those expressed in the "two" preceding chapters, in answer to Eliphaz; this he said, as wondering that he should be able to continue his discourse to such a length, and to express himself with such vehemence, when his spirits might be thought to be so greatly depressed by his afflictions, and his body enfeebled by diseases; or as angry with him for his blasphemy against God, as he was ready to term it, his bold and daring speeches of him, and charge of unrighteousness on him, and for his disregard to what Eliphaz had said, his contempt of in and opposition to it; or as impatient at his long reply, wanting him to cease speaking, that he might return an answer, and therefore breaks in upon him

before he had well done, see
Job 18:2; or as despising what he had said, representing it as idle talk, and as mere trifling; and so some render the words, "how long wilt thou trifle after this sort?" {g} or throw out such nonsense and fabulous stuff as this?

and [how long shall] the words of thy mouth [be like] a strong wind? blustering, boisterous, and noisy, to which passionate words, expressed in a loud and sonorous manner, may be compared; and so we say of a man in a passion and rage, that he "storms". Bildad thought that his speeches were hard and rough, and stout against God, and very indecent and unbecoming a creature to his Maker, and not kind and civil to them his friends; and yet they were like wind, vain and empty, great swelling words, but words of vanity; they were spoken, and seemed big, but had nothing solid and substantial in them, as Bildad thought.

{g} hla llmt "nugaberis haec", Cocceius; "talia", Tigurine version; "talk after this sort?" Broughton.

Job 8:3

Ver. 3. Doth God pervert judgment?.... In his dealings with men in the way of his providence; no, he does not; here Bildad opposes himself to Job, who he thought had charged God with injustice in dealing with him, and his children, in the manner he had done: the same thing is intended in the following question,

or doth the Almighty pervert justice? for judgment and justice are the same, and often go together in Scripture, as being done either by God or men, when righteousness is executed by them, and this is never perverted by the Lord; there is no unrighteousness in him, neither in his nature, nor in his ways and works, either of providence or of grace; he is the Judge of all the earth, that does and will do right; to subvert a man in his cause, he approves not of in others, and will never do it himself; to justify the wicked, and condemn the just, are both an abomination to him, and therefore neither of these can ever be thought to be done by him; for though he justifies the ungodly, he does not justify their ungodliness, nor them in it, but from it, and that by the perfect righteousness of his Son; whereby the law is fulfilled, and justice satisfied, and so he is just while he is the justifier of him that believes in Jesus; though he is gracious and merciful, he is also righteous, and will not clear the guilty, or pardon sin without satisfaction to his justice; and such as are truly just or righteous, he never condemns here or hereafter; he may afflict them, but he delivers them out of their afflictions, nor are they ever forsaken by him; and, on the contrary, he punishes wicked men in this world, and in that to come, as he has the angels that sinned, the old world, Sodom and Gomorrah, and many others, and all wicked men will be punished with everlasting destruction; yea, even so strict is his punitive justice, that the sins of his own people being laid and found on his Son as their surety, he has most severely punished him for them; he awoke the sword of justice against him, spared him not, but delivered him to death for us all; and though he forgives the iniquities of his children, he takes vengeance on their inventions, and chastises them for their sins, that they may not be condemned with the world; and, on the other hand, he is not unrighteous to forget their work and labour of love, which he rewards in a way of grace, as well as it is a righteous thing with him to render tribulation to them that trouble them: the righteousness of God is known by the judgments he executes on wicked men, and especially will be manifest in his judgments on antichrist; and though the justice of God in the course of his providence, in some instances, may not now be so clear, his judgments will be made manifest, and especially at the great day of judgment, when everything shall be brought to account, and God will judge the world in righteousness; all which, we may be assured of, is and will be executed by him, from the consideration of his nature and perfections, and particularly from the name he goes by in this passage, being El, the mighty God, who is able to save and to destroy, to save the righteous, and destroy the wicked; and is Shaddai, all sufficient, stands in need of nothing; nor can he receive anything that is not his own, and therefore incapable of being bribed to the perversion of justice and judgment.

Job 8:4

Ver. 4. If thy children have sinned against him,.... As no doubt they had, and, as Bildad thought, in a very notorious manner, and therefore were righteously punished for them; this instance is produced as a proof of God's not perverting, but doing justice, and the rather, because it was on account of this that it was supposed that Job charged, or was ready to charge, God with injustice; this was so far from it, that it was a righteous thing to do it, "if" or "seeing" his children had sinned; or "because" they have sinned, or "though" they have sinned, as the words {h} are by some differently rendered; and either way shows that God did not pervert justice, but acted agreeably to it. Mr. Broughton renders them, "as thy children have sinned against him, so hath he sent them into the hand of their trespass"; as a righteous retaliation for it: that Job's children had sinned, there is no question to be made of it; they were born in sin, though born of godly parents; and though they had a religious education, yet no doubt were guilty of sin in their younger years, as well as when grown up; and even though good men, as there may be reason to conclude they were, yet daily sinning, for there are none without sin; and also it is true, that all sin is against God, contrary to his nature and will, a breach and transgression of his law, and an act of hostility against himself, and a trampling under foot, or at least a neglect, of his legislative power and authority, which is an aggravation of it; yet it does not appear that Job's children were guilty of any notorious sins or atrocious crimes, or lived a sinful course of life, for which the judgments of God came upon them; nor is it a clear case that they were taken away by death in the manner they were on account of their sins, but rather purely for the trial of Job's integrity, faith, and patience:

and he have cast them away for their transgression; or "by the hand of it" {i}; by means of it, because of it, being provoked with it. Bildad represents them as abandoned sinners, as castaways and reprobates, rejected of God with abhorrence, and utterly ruined. Some render it, "hath sent them into the hand of their transgression" {k}, or trespass; that is, delivered them up to the power and dominion of sin, gave them up to their hearts' lusts, and to vile affections, to do things not convenient, and which they pursued to their ruin; the Targum is,

"he sent them into the place of their transgression {l};"

into hell, which their transgressions deserved, and for which they were fitted by them. Some a little more mildly render the words, "he sent them away" {m}; that is, dismissed them out of the world, took them out of it by death; which dismission is sometimes in peace, as good old Simeon prayed for, and sometimes in wrath, as Saul was taken away, see **Lu 2:29**; the latter is the meaning here.

{h} Ma "quandoquidem", Michaelis; "quia", Vatablus; "etiamsi", V. L. {i} Mevp dyb "in manu iniquitatis suae", V. L. so Montanus, Cocceius. {k} "In manum transgressionis ipsorum", Piscator, Beza, Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens; "in potestatem defectionis ipsorum", Junius & Tremellius. {l} So Munster {m} mxlvyw "et dimisit eos", Drusius; "e mundo", Pagninus, Vatablus; so Gersom.

Job 8:5

Ver. 5. If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes,.... Here Bildad seems to think more mildly, and speak more kindly to Job, that though he had sinned, yet not in so gross a manner as his children, since he was spared, and they were not; and therefore if he would apply himself to God, and supplicate his grace and mercy, and live a godly life, it might yet be well with him, and he be restored to his former or to better circumstances; his sense is, that he would advise him, as Eliphaz had done before, **Job 5:8**; to seek unto God "by prayer", as the Targum adds, and of which it is explained in the next clause, and that he would do this "betimes", or "in the morning" {n}; which is a proper time for prayer, and was one of the seasons good men in former times made use of for that purpose; see **Ps 5:3**; or that he would seek him in the first place, and above all things, take the first opportunity to do it, without any procrastination of it, and that with eagerness and earnestness, with his whole heart and soul; for God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and those that seek him early shall find him:

and make thy supplication to the Almighty: not pleading any merit of his own, as deserving of any blessing on account of what he had done; but ask what he should as a favour, as a free gift, in a way of grace and mercy, as the word {o} signifies; call for the pity of the Almighty, as Broughton renders it.

{n} rxvt "mane quaesieris", Pagninus, Piscator, Mercerus. {o} So Schmidt in loc.

Job 8:6

Ver. 6. If thou [wert] pure and upright,.... By which he tacitly intimates that he was neither; though the character given of him is, that he was perfect and upright, feared God and eschewed evil, and which is confirmed by God himself, and even after he had been tried by sore afflictions. Bildad's meaning is, if he was pure in heart, and upright in his life and conversation, then things would be well with him. Men's hearts are naturally impure; no man is pure of himself, or can make his heart pure; nor is there any good man that is so pure as to be entirely free from sin; but such are pure in heart, who have clean hearts created, and right spirits renewed in them; or have new hearts and new spirits given them; have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and so keep the faith in a pure conscience; having their hearts purified by faith in the blood of Christ, whose blood cleanses from all sin; and in this sense Job was pure, having an interest in a living Redeemer, and in his blood, and a partaker of his grace; and that he was upright is before testified of him, though now called in question, an if being put upon it, as well as on the former, having in the course of his life walked uprightly, according to the will of God revealed unto him:

surely now; directly at once, without delay, as Sephorno interprets it; it need not be doubted of, verily so it would be:

he would awake for thee; who though he neither slumbers nor sleeps, yet seems to be asleep when he suffers his people to be afflicted, distressed, and oppressed, and therefore they cry unto him to awake to their judgment, and their cause; see **Ps 7:8**; the sense is, that he would stir up and exert himself, and show himself strong on his behalf, and appear to be on his side, and work deliverance and salvation for him; or awake his mercy, grace, and goodness, as some Jewish commentators {p} interpret it; that is, bestow his favours upon him:

and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous; which some understand of his body, the earthly house of his tabernacle, which if his soul was pure and upright that dwelt in it, might be called the habitation of righteousness; which, were this the case, would become healthful that was now covered with worms, and clods of dust: others interpret it of the soul, as Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom, the seat of righteousness, and of all the graces of the Spirit; which is in a prosperous condition when these graces are in lively exercise, and the presence of God, and the light of his countenance, and communion with him, are enjoyed; but rather his dwelling house in a literal sense, and all his domestic affairs, are here meant; and it is signified that all would be again in peace and prosperity, and he should enjoy great plenty of good things should he behave well; and here is a tacit intimation as if his habitation had not been an habitation of righteousness, but had been filled with the mammon of unrighteousness, with goods ill gotten, such as were obtained by rapine and oppression, and neither he nor his family righteous; a very unjust and iniquitous insinuation: the Targum paraphrases it, "and, shall make the beauty of thy righteousness perfect" {q}; but Job had a more beautiful righteousness than his own; his was but as rags, and neither pure nor perfect; even the righteousness of Christ, which is perfect and beautiful, and makes such so, that are arrayed with it; see Ps 50:2.

{p} Gersom, Simeon Bar Tzemach, Sephorno. {q} Kqdu twn "pulchritudinent justitiae tuae", Bolducius.

Job 8:7

Ver. 7. Though thy beginning was small,.... When, he first set out in the world; and which though it greatly increased, and he was the greatest man in all the east, yet Bildad suggests, should he behave well, that was comparatively small to what it would be with him hereafter; and which was fact, for he had double of what he before enjoyed; so Mr. Broughton renders the words, "and thy former state should be little to thy latter": or rather the sense and meaning is, "though thy beginning should be small" {r}; be it so that it is; or rather that though he should begin again in the world with very little, as indeed at present he had nothing to begin with, and when he did it was but with little; one gave him a piece of money, and another an earring of gold:

yet thy latter end should greatly increase; as it did, for the Lord blessed his latter end, and he had more than at the beginning, even double to what he had in his most flourishing circumstances; see Job 42:11, &c. Bildad seems to have spoken under a spirit of prophecy, without being sensible of it, and not imagining in the least that so it would be in fact; for he only affirms it on supposition of Job's good behaviour for the future, putting it entirely upon that condition, which he had no great expectation of it ever being performed.

{r} hyhw "etsi fuerit", so some in Michaelis.

Job 8:8

Ver. 8. For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age,.... With respect to the truth of what he had said, or should say; he does not desire Job to take his word for it, but inquire how it was in former times; by which it would appear, that when good men have been in affliction and trouble, and have behaved well under it, as became them, they have been delivered out of it, and have been afterwards in more flourishing and comfortable circumstances, as Noah, Abraham, Lot, and others; and that wicked men and hypocrites, though they have flourished for a while, yet destruction has sooner or later come upon them, and they have utterly perished, as the descendants of Cain, the builders of Babel, and the men of Sodom, and others; whereas good and upright men are never cast away by the Lord, no instance can be given of it; all which would appear, if inquiry was made into what had happened in the "former age" not the "first age", as the Septuagint version, the age or generation in which the first man and woman lived; for who were "their fathers", mentioned in the next clause? but the age or generation preceding that in which Job and his friends lived; and the knowledge of things done in that might with some application and diligence be more easily obtained:

and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers; of the fathers of the men of the former age, who lived in the age preceding that, and from whom their posterity had received the knowledge of many things by tradition, as they had received from their fathers that lived before them and so upwards; things being handed down in a traditionary way from father to son; and though these fathers were dead, yet, by their traditions that were preserved, they were capable of teaching and instructing men; and their sayings and sentiments deserved regard, and were had in much esteem; but yet being uninspired and fallible men, were not to be received without examination; for though truth is of the greatest antiquity, and to be revered on that account, yet error is almost as old as that; and therefore great care is to be taken how any thing is received purely upon the score of antiquity; and great pains, diligence, and circumspection, are necessary to a due search of the fathers, and coming at their sense and sentiments; and so as to distinguish between truth and error, and get a true knowledge of facts done in ancient times; such a search is to be made in like manner as one would search for gold and silver, and hidden treasures.

Job 8:9

Ver. 9. For we [are but of] yesterday {s},.... Which is not to be understood strictly of the day last past, but of a short space of time backward; and especially when compared with the antediluvian fathers, who lived the far greater part of them upwards of nine hundred years; otherwise Bildad and his two friends were men in years; Eliphaz says, that with them were the gray headed and very aged men, much older than the father of Job, and Elihu speaks of himself as a young man, and of them as very old; see Job 15:10;

and know nothing; which is not to be taken in an absolute sense, for they knew much of the things of nature, providence, and grace; they were men of great understanding in things natural, civil, and religious, as appears by their discourses; but in a comparative sense, or when compared with the long lived patriarchs, who through the length of their days had much time and opportunity to make their observations on things, to learn the arts and sciences, and improve themselves in all useful knowledge, human and divine; for which reason Job is sent to inquire of them; whereas they had been but a little while

in the world, and knew but little, to whom might be applied that saying, as now to men since, "ars longa, vita brevis"; and they knew nothing as it is to be known, or perfectly, or in comparison of the saints in heaven; for they that know most here know but in part, see through a glass darkly; but in the other world they see face to face, and know as they are known. Moreover, Bildad might say this of himself and his friends, in a modest manner, having learned to know themselves, their weakness, and their folly; and the first and great lesson of wisdom is to become fools in men's own apprehension, in order to be truly wise, having the like sense of themselves as Agur had, Pr 30:2; see **1Co 3:18**; or rather this might be said as being the sense of Job concerning them, who had a very mean and indifferent opinion of them; see
Job 12:2; and therefore Bildad would not have him take their sense of things, but inquire of persons older and wiser:

because our days upon earth [are] a shadow; man's time is rather measured by days than by months and years, being so short; and these are called "days" on earth, to distinguish them from the days of heaven, which are one everlasting day, in which there is no night of darkness, either in a literal or figurative sense, and which will never end; but the days of this life are like a "shadow", dark and obscure; full of the darkness of adversity and trouble, as well as greatly deficient in the light of knowledge; there is nothing in them solid and substantial; the greatest and best things of this life are but a vain show; in heaven there is a better and more enduring substance: every thing is mutable and uncertain here; man is subject to a variety of changes in his mind and body, in family and outward estate and circumstances: and life itself is but a vapour, which appears a while and soon vanishes away; or rather like a shadow, that declines, is fleeting, and quickly gone; see 1Ch 29:15.

{s} epameroi, Pindar. Pythia, Ode 8.

Job 8:10

Ver. 10. Shall not they teach thee, [and] tell thee,.... That is, the men of the former age, and their fathers before them, Job is directed to inquire of, and to prepare for a search into their records and traditions; from whom he might reasonably expect to be taught and told things that would be very instructive and useful to him in his present circumstances:

and utter words out of their heart? such as were the effect of mature judgment and long observation, and which they had laid up in their hearts, and brought out from their treasure there; and, with the greatest faithfulness and sincerity, had either committed them to writing, or delivered them in a traditionary way to their posterity, to be communicated to theirs; and which might be depended upon as true and genuine, being men of probity, uprightness, and singleness of heart; who declared sincerely what they knew, and spoke not with a double heart, having no intention to deceive, as it cannot be thought they would impose upon their own children; and therefore Job might safely receive what they uttered, and depend upon it as truth and fact; and what they said, as Jarchi observes, is as follows; or what follows Bildad collected from them, and so might Job, and think he heard them "saying", as Piscator supplies the text, what is expressed in the following verses, if not in their words, yet as their sense.

Job 8:11

Ver. 11. Can the rush grow up without mire?.... No, at least not long, or so as to lift up his head on high, as the word signifies {a}; the rush or bulrush, which seems to be meant, delights in watery places, and has its name in Hebrew from its absorbing or drinking up water; it grows in moist and watery clay, or in marshy places, which Jarchi says is the sense of the word here used; the Septuagint understands it of the "paper reed", which, as Pliny {b} observes, grows in the marshy places of Egypt, and by the still waters of the river Nile:

can the flag grow without water? or "the sedge" {c}; which usually grows in moist places, and on the banks of rivers; this unless in such places, or if without water, cannot grow long, or make any very large increase, or come to maturity; so some {d} render it, "if the rush should grow up without", &c. then it would be with it as follows.

{a} hagyh "an attollit se", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "an superbiet", so some; Beza, Schultens. {b} Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 11. {c} wxa "carectum", V. L. "ulva", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens. {d} Sic Bar Tzemach & Belgae.

Job 8:12

Ver. 12. Whilst it [is] yet in its greenness,.... Before it is come to its full height, or to a proper ripeness; when as yet it has not flowered, or is about it; before the time usual for it to turn and change; it being without moisture, water, or watery clay, will change;

[and] not cut down; by the scythe, or cropped by the hand of man,

it withereth before any [other] herb; of itself; rather sooner than such that do not require so much moisture; or in the sight and presence of them, they looking on as it were, and deriding it; a poetical representation, as Schultens observes: next follows the accommodation of these similes to wicked and hypocritical men.

Job 8:13

Ver. 13. So [are] the paths of all that forget God,.... Who forget that there is a God; he is not in all, and scarce in any of their thoughts, and they live without him in the world; who forget the works of God, of creation and providence, in which there is a glorious display of his being and perfections; who forget the benefits and blessings of his goodness they are every day partakers of, and are not thankful for them; and who forget the word, worship, and ordinances of God, and follow after and observe lying vanities, idols, and the works of men's hands, and worship them, being unmindful of the rock of their salvation: now such men, as well as the hypocrites in the next clause, are like bulrushes and flags, or sedge, being unfruitful, useless, and unprofitable; and, for their sensuality and worldly mindedness, standing in the mire and clay of an unregenerate state, and of carnal and worldly lusts; and though, especially the latter, may carry their heads high in a profession of religion, and make a fair show in the flesh while it is a time of outward prosperity with them, but when tribulation arises on the account of religion, they are presently offended, and apostatize; being destitute of the true grace of God, and having the root of the matter in them, they wither of themselves; they soon drop their profession in the view of all good men, comparable to herbs and green grass, which abide in their verdure, when the other are gone and are seen no more:

and the hypocrite's hope shall perish; who are either the same with those before described, who, being in prosperous circumstances, forget the God of their mercies they make a profession of, like Jeshurun of old, or different persons, as Bar Tzemach thinks, the former designing open profane sinners, these secret ones, under the appearance of good men: an "hypocrite" is one whose inside is not as his outside, as the Jews say; who is outwardly righteous, but inwardly wicked; has a form of godliness, but not the power of it; a name to live, but dead; that makes a show of religion and devotion, attending the worship and ordinances of God in an external way, as if he had great delight in him and them, when his heart is removed far from him: and such have their "hope", for the present, of being in the favour of God, and of future happiness, which is founded on their outward prosperity their esteem among men, and more especially their external righteousness, and profession of religion; but this will "perish", even both the ground of their hope, the riches and righteousness, which come to nothing, and the hope that is built thereupon sinks into despair; if not in life, as it sometimes does, yet always at death, see Job 11:20; Bildad seems to have Job in view here, whom he esteemed an hypocrite.

Job 8:14

Ver. 14. Whose hope shall be cut off,.... The same thing as before, expressed in different words, and repeated for the certainty of it; signifying that it should be of no manner of use, should be wholly lost, and issue in black despair: the word has the signification of loathing, and is differently rendered, either, "whom his hope shall loathe" {e} or, "who shall loathe his hope" {f}; he shall fret and tease, and vex himself that he should be such a fool to entertain such a vain hope, or to place hope and confidence in such vain things, finding himself most sadly disappointed:

and whose trust [shall be] a spider's web; or "a spider's house" {g}; and such its web is to it; having made it, it encloses itself in it, and dwells securely: very fitly is the hope and confidence of an hypocrite compared to a spider's web, which is a very nice and curious piece of workmanship, as are the outward works of righteousness, done by hypocrites they are wrought out and set off to the best advantage, to be seen of men; yet very slight and thin, and will bear no weight; such are the best works of carnal professors; they make a fine appearance, but have no substance, do not flow from principles of grace, nor are done in the strength of Christ, or to the glory of God; are but "splendida peccata", as one calls them, and fall infinitely short of bearing the weight of the salvation of the soul: as the spider's web is spun out of its own bowels, so the works of such persons are wholly of themselves; they are their own, done without the grace of God and spirit of Christ; and such webs are not fit for garments, are too thin to cover naked souls; insufficient to shelter from divine wrath and vengeance; cannot bear the besom of justice, one stroke of which will sweep them all away; and though they may think themselves safe enclosed in them as in a house, they will find themselves in the issue wretchedly mistaken; for there is no shelter, safety, and security, in such cobwebs; there is none but in Christ and his righteousness.

{e} zlok jwqy rva "quem abominabitur spes ejus", Montanus; "fastidit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "cum taedio rejectabit", Schultens. {f} "Quippe abominabitur spem suam", Schmidt. {g} vybke tyb "domus araneae, vel aranei"; Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Job 8:15

Ver. 15. He shall lean upon his house,.... Either the spider or the hypocrite, or the hypocrite as the spider; that is, that which is the ground of his confidence, which is as the spider's house, on that he shall depend, either on his riches and outward prosperity, which he promises himself a long continuance of, and from whence he concludes himself to be high in the favour and good will of God; or on his works of righteousness, his outward profession of religion, attendance on external worship, and a round of duties performed by him; in these he trusts, on these he depends, in such webs he enwraps himself, in such a house he dwells, and imagines himself safe; which is only making flesh his arm, leaning upon a broken reed, and building an house upon the sand: the Septuagint version is, "if he prop up his house", by repeated outward acts of religion:

but it shall not stand: whether it be riches, these are uncertain things, of no continuance; there are no riches durable but the unsearchable riches of Christ and his grace; or whether it be a man's own righteousness, which he endeavours to establish, or "make to stand", as the phrase is in Ro 10:3; but in vain; it is but a sandy foundation to build on; or the hope and confidence laid upon it is like a house built on the sand, and, when rain falls, floods come, and winds beat upon it, it falls; and great is the fall of it, **Mt 7:26**;

he shall hold it fast; as the worldling does his wealth, his gold and his silver; but it is snatched out of his hand by one providence or another, or however at last death obliges him to part with it; and the self-righteous man holds fast his righteousness, it is his own, he is fond of, an house of his own building, and cannot bear to have it demolished; an idol of his own setting up, and to take it away is to take away his gods; and what has he more? wherefore he holds it as fast as he can, and will not let it go till he can hold it no longer; or, "he shall fortify himself in it" {h}, as in a castle or strong hold, which he thinks impregnable, yet will soon and easily be battered down by divine justice:

but it shall not endure; gold perishes, riches come to nought, wealth is no enduring substance, nor is a man's righteousness lasting; only Christ's righteousness is everlasting; true grace endures to eternal and issues in it; but external gifts, speculative and rational knowledge, and a mere profession of religion, fail, cease, and vanish away.

{h} qyzxy "roborabit in eam", Montanus, Bolducius; "firmat se", Vatablus; so the Targum and Ben Gersom.

Job 8:16

Ver. 16. He [is] green before the sun,.... Which some understand of the rush or flag, of which a further account is given, as setting forth more fully the case of wicked men and hypocrites; but to either of these do not agree the situation of it in a garden, the shooting forth of its branches, and the height of it, and its striking its roots deep in stony places: Cocceius interprets it of the "herb" or grass before which the flag withers, **Job 8:12**; but the same objections, or most of them, lie against that also; rather, from the description of it, a tall large tree is designed, to which hypocrites in their most flourishing circumstances are compared, and yet come to nothing, Ps 37:35; that is "green" in its leaves, and looks beautiful, so they in a profession of religion, which is like green leaves without fruit; they make in it a fair show in the flesh, take up and him the lamp of a profession, and retain it bright and fair for a time; or, like a tree full of sap, or "juicy" {i}; or, as Mr. Broughton renders it, "juiceful"; denoting, not a fulness of the spirit and his grace, or of faith, hope, love, &c. and of righteousness and goodness, but of, outward prosperity, having as much as heart could wish, and great plenty of good things laid up for many years: and this tree is said to be green and juicy "before the sun"; either in the presence and through the influence of it, as hypocrites flourish, even in a religious way, while the sun of prosperity shines upon them, and no longer; or openly and publicly, in the sight of all men, as this phrase is used, 2Sa 12:11; and as such men do, in the view of all men, professors and profane, doing all they do to be seen of men, and before whom they are outwardly righteous, and reckoned good men; or, "before the sun" rises, as the Targum and Aben Ezra, so hypocrites flourish, before the sun of persecution arises and smites them, because of their profession, and then they drop it; see Mt 13:6;

and his branch shooteth forth in his garden; or "over" {k} it; and branch may be put branches, which in a flourishing tree spread themselves to cover a considerable piece of ground: Mr. Broughton renders it, "and his suckers sprout over his orchard"; all which may denote the increase of a wicked man, in his family, in his wealth and substance, and particularly in his posterity, which are as branches and suckers from him; and Bildad, if these are his own words, may have respect to Job, and to his large substance and number of children he had in his prosperity, when he had an hedge set about him, and was enclosed as in a garden: and whereas the church of God is sometimes compared to a garden, **So 4:12**; it agrees very well with hypocrites, who have a place there, and are called hypocrites in Sion, where they have a name, and flourish for a while: many interpreters, both Jewish {l} and Christian {m}, interpret this, and what follows, of truly righteous and good men under afflictive providences, who notwithstanding continue, and are not the worse, but the better for them; their leaf of profession is always green, and withers not; and that "before the sun", even of adversity and affliction; and though that beats upon them, and smites them severely, they are like green olive trees, or the cedars of God, full of sap, full of the grace of God, and continually supplied with it; and so patiently endure temptation and affliction, bear the heat and burden of the day, and are not careful in the year of drought; see **So 1:6**; such are planted in the garden and house of the Lord by himself and shall never be rooted up; where their branches spread, and they grow in grace, and in the knowledge of all divine things, and are filled with the fruits of righteousness.

{i} bwjr "succosus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens; "viridis quidem et succi plenus", Michaelis. {k} le "supra", Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Codurcus; "super", Montanus, Piscator, Schmidt, Schultens. {l} Saadiah Caon, R. Levi, Ben Gersom. {m} Vatablus, Beza, Diodati, Cocceius, Gussetius, p. 247.

Job 8:17

Ver. 17. His roots are wrapped about the heap,.... The heap of stones where the tree stands; it strikes its roots among them, and implicates and twists them about them, and secures itself and grows up notwithstanding them: and this expresses the seeming stable state and condition of hypocrites for a season, who not only flourish, but seem to take root; and who maintain their ground amidst some difficulties; this fitly agrees with and describes such hearers of the word, and professors of religion, comparable to the seed sown on stony ground,
Mt 13:5;

[and] seeth the place of stones; or, "the house of stones" {n}; a house built of stones, high and stately; yet this tree rises higher than that, overtops and overlooks it; and is represented as viewing it thoroughly, or looking down upon it, and all around it, being so high and so spreading; the Targum renders it, implicateth the house of stones; "platteth", as Mr. Broughton, or twists about them, and so many of the Jewish writers; but this seems to be designed in the former clause: all this suits very well with good men, whose "roots are wrapped about the fountain" {o}; as the words may be rendered; about the love of God, in which they are rooted and grounded, and are like trees planted by rivers of water, the river of divine love, which refreshes, revives, and makes them fruitful; and about Christ, the fountain of gardens and well of living waters; in whom they are rooted and built up, increase, flourish, and are established; and though they are among stones, and attended with many difficulties, yet they abide and surmount all; believe in hope against hope, and see and enjoy, yea, even dwell in the house of stones, the church of God, built on a rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.

{n} Mynba tyb "domum lapidum", Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens; so Tigurine version, Codurcus, Junius & Tremellius. {o} lg le "juxta fontem", Pagninus, Mercerus; so Vatablus, Piscator, Gersom, and Bar Tzemach.

Job 8:18

Ver. 18. If he destroy him from his place,.... If the sun when he is risen strikes the tree with such vehement heat that it withers and utterly perishes from the place where it grew; or roots it up, so the Targum and Nachmanides; or, if God destroys the hypocrite from his place, or he is by one means or another removed out of the garden, the church, being detested and rejected by good men; or from all his worldly enjoyments, his honour, credit, and esteem with men, which are all precarious, fickle, and inconstant; or out of the world, being cut down as a cumber ground:

then [it] shall deny him, [saying], I have not seen thee; that is, either the tree shall deny that it ever was planted in such a place, or rather the place shall deny that the tree ever was planted there; the sense is, that it shall be so utterly destroyed, that neither root nor branch shall be left, nor anything to show that it ever grew there; its place shall know it no more, see **Job 7:10**; or God shall deny the hypocrite, and say he never saw him nor knew him; he never belonged to him, nor was under his care; he never looked upon him with a look of love, grace, and mercy; he never had any delight and pleasure in him, nor regarded him as one of his; he was no tree of his planting, watering, and keeping, see **Mt 7:23**; this seems most difficult to accommodate to a good man, and those who carry it that way seem to be most puzzled with this; some render it, "shall he be swallowed?" or, "shall anyone in, allow him up?" {p} destroy or root him out of his place? none shall: the root of the righteous cannot be moved, nor they from that; not from the everlasting love of God, in which they are rooted, nor from Christ, in whom they are fixed: others understand this of the digging up of a tree, and transplanting it to another place, where it grows as well, or better; and so the people of God, though they have many stripping providences, and are removed from place to place, and from one condition to another, so that their former state and place know them no more; yet all things work together for their good.

{p} znelby Ma "num absorbebitur a loco suo?" Beza; "num absorbebit cum quisquam e loco suo", Diodatus.

Job 8:19

Ver. 19. Behold, this [is] the joy of his way,.... Of the state and condition of the hypocrite, who, while he is in outward prosperity, exults and rejoices, but his joy is but short, it is but for a moment,
Job 20:5; and this is what it comes to at last, and issues in, even entire destruction from his place; which, because it may seem strange and wonderful, and is worthy of notice and consideration, as well as to express a certainty of it, the word "behold" is prefixed; though this also is understood, by some, of good men who have much spiritual joy in their present state and condition, be it what it will; they have joy and peace in believing, even joy unspeakable, and full of glory; they have joy in the Lord, and in his ways in which they walk, when they have trouble in the world; they rejoice and even glory in tribulation, and are cheerful be they where they will, though removed from their native place and country; and especially this will be their case when they are transplanted from earth to heaven, the better and heavenly country:

and out of the earth shall others grow; in their room and stead; where the tall flourishing tree once stood, but now utterly destroyed, other trees should grow; signifying, either the children of the hypocrites and wicked men, that should spring up in their place and imitate them, and come to the same end; or rather such as were strangers to them, that should inherit their substance and estates; and it may be good men that should succeed them, and come into the possession of all their wealth, even such as were before in mean circumstances, and so may be said to come "out of the earth": it may be rendered, "out of another dust" or "earth shall they grow" {q}; signifying, that the wicked should be utterly destroyed, they and theirs; and that such as were of another family, and as it were of another earth and country, should stand in their place; see Job 27:16; this may be interpreted of good men, who, though they die, others are raised up in their stead; God will have a seed to serve him as long as the sun and moon endure; though they are forced to fly from their native place, being persecuted, to strange cities, or removed into the heavenly regions, yet God raises up others to till up their places, and oftentimes out of other families, even of the ungodly, to support his cause and interest; and understanding the whole of truly righteous persons seems best to connect the sense with the following words.

{q} rxa rpem "de pulvere alio", Montanus, Bolducius, Cocceius; so the Targum; "de terra alia", Pagninus, Mercerus.

Job 8:20

Ver. 20. Behold, God will not cast away a perfect [man],.... A sincere, upright, good man; one that is truly gracious; who, though he is not "perfect" in himself, yet in Christ; and though not with respect to sanctification, which is as yet imperfect in him, yet with respect to justification, being perfectly justified by the righteousness of Christ, and all his sins pardoned for his sake: such an one God will never "cast away"; not out of his sight, being engraven on the palms of his hands, nor out of his heart's love; or will not "loath" {r} him, as the Targum, or reject him with abhorrence and contempt; he will not cast him out of his covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure; nor out of the hands of his son, where he has put him, and from whence none can pluck; nor out of his family, where the son abides for ever; or so as to perish eternally, this would be contrary to his love, to his foreknowledge, and to his covenant; so far is he from it, that he has the greatest regard for such, delights in them, admits thereto nearness to himself, sets them as a seal on his heart, keeps them as the apple of his eye, and preserves them safe to his kingdom and glory:

neither will he help the evil doers; meaning, not everyone that does evil, or sins, but such who live in sin, make a trade of sinning, are frequent and constant in the commission of it; such God will not help, or "take by the hand" {s}, in order to deliver from evil, as Gersom observes; to help them out of mischief and trouble their sins have brought upon them; or to strengthen them, support and uphold them, in their present circumstances, and much less so as to admit them to fellowship and communion with him: these words, with what follow, are Bildad's conclusion upon the sayings and sentiments of the ancients, which may be supposed, and are thought by some, to end at the preceding **Job 8:19**.

{r} oamy "abominatur", Vatablus; "aversatur", Beza, Mercerus, Drusius, Piscator. {s} dyb qyzxy al "nec apprehendit manum", Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Job 8:21

Ver. 21. Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing. Directing himself to Job; and suggesting, that if he was a perfect, sincere, and upright man. God would not cast him away utterly, but help him out of his present circumstances, and restore him to prosperity; and not leave him until he had filled his heart with so much joy, that his mouth and lips, being also full of it, should break forth in strong expressions of it, and in the most exulting strains, as if it was a time of jubilee with him; see Ps 126:2; but Bildad tacitly insinuates that Job was not a perfect and good man but an evil doer, whom God had cast away and would not help; and this he concluded from the distressed circumstances he was now in; which was no rule of judgment, and a very unfair way of reasoning, since love and hatred are not to be known by outward prosperity and adversity, **Ec 9:1**. Bar Tzemach interprets "laughing" as at his own goodness, and "rejoicing" as at the evil of the wicked.

Job 8:22

Ver. 22. They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame,.... The Chaldeans and Sabeans, who had plundered him of his substance, when they should see him restored to his former prosperity, beyond all hope and expectation, and themselves liable to his resentment, and under the displeasure of Providence: the phrase denotes utter confusion, and such as is visible as the clothes upon a man's back; see Ps 132:18;

and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to naught; or, "shall not be" {t}; shall be no more; be utterly destroyed, and no more built up again; even such dwelling places they fancied would continue for ever, and perpetuate their names to the latest posterity; but the curse of God being in them, and upon them, they come to nothing, and are no more: thus ends Bildad's speech; Job's answer to it follows.

{t} wnnya "non erit", Pagninus, Mercerus, Drusius, Michaelis.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 9

This and the following chapter contain Job's answer to Bildad, and in this he asserts the strict justice at God; which is such, that no man can be just in his sight, not being able to answer to one charge, or for one sin, of a thousand he is guilty of, **Job 9:1**; and that such are his wisdom and power, that the most daring man cannot expect to succeed in an opposition to him, **Job 9:4**; instances are given of his power in the works of nature and providence, **Job 9:5**; notice is taken of the imperceptibleness of his actions and motions, and of his sovereignty in all his ways, **Job 9:11**; and of his fierce wrath and anger, which is such as obliges the proudest of men to stoop under him; and therefore Job chose not to contend in a judicial way with him, but in a suppliant manner would entreat him, since his hand was so heavy upon him, **Job 9:13**; he affirms, in direct opposition to Bildad and his friends, and insists upon it, that God afflicts both the righteous and the wicked; yea, gives the earth to the latter when he slays the former, **Job 9:22**; he then observes the shortness of his days, and complains of his heavy afflictions, **Job 9:25**; and concludes, that it was in vain for him to expect his cause to be heard before God, there being no daysman between them; and wishes that the dread of the Divine Majesty might be taken from him, and then he would freely and without fear speak unto him, **Job 9:29**.

Ver. 1. Then Job answered and said. Without taking notice of Bildad's harsh expressions and severe censures, or his unfriendliness to him; he enters directly into the argument, grants some things, confutes others, and defends himself and his conduct.

Job 9:2

Ver. 2. I know [it is] so of a truth,.... That is, that God is just, and does not pervert justice and judgment, as Bildad had observed, **Job 8:3**; Job was a man of great natural parts and capacity; he had a large share of knowledge of things, natural, civil, and moral; and he was a good man, in whom the true light of grace shined; and being, enlightened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of divine things, he knew much of God, of his being and perfections, and of the methods of his grace, especially in the justification of men, as appears by various passages in this chapter; he knew that God was just and holy in all his ways and works, whether of providence or grace; and this he kept in sight amidst all his afflictions, and was ready to acknowledge it: he knew this "of a truth"; that is, most certainly; for there are some truths that are so plain and evident that a man may be assured of, and this was such an one with Job; he had no need to be instructed in this article; he was as knowing in this point, as well as in others, as Bildad or any of his friends; nor did he need to be sent to the ancients to inquire of them, or to prepare himself for the search of the fathers, in order to acquire the knowledge of this, to which Bildad had advised; yet, though this was so clear a point, about which there was no room for further contest; but then the matter is,

how should man be just with God? if not angels, if not man in his best estate, in which he was vanity when compared with God; then much less frail, feeble, mortal, sinful men, even the best of men, considered in themselves, and with respect to their own righteousness: for, to "be just" is not to be so through an infusion of righteousness and holiness into men, which in the best of men is their sanctification and not their justification; but this is a legal term, and stands opposed to condemnation, and signifies a man's being condemned and pronounced righteous in a judiciary way; so a man cannot be adjudged, reckoned, or accounted by God upon the foot of works of righteousness done by him; since his best works are imperfect, not answerable to the law, but very defective, and so not justifying; are opposite to the grace of God, by which, in an evangelic sense, men are justified; these would encourage boasting, which is excluded in God's way of justifying sinners; and could justification be by them, the death of Christ would be in vain, and there would have been no need of him and his justifying righteousness: especially, it is a certain thing, that a man can never be "just", or "justified with God", in such a way, or through any righteousness wrought out by him; that is, either he is not and cannot be just in comparison of God; for, if the inhabitants of the heavens are not pure in his sight, the holy angels; and if man, at his best estate, was altogether vanity when compared with him, what must sinful mortals be? or not be just at his bar; should he mark their iniquities, enter into judgment with them, or an action against them, summon them before him to answer to charges he has to exhibit; they could not stand before him, or go off acquitted or discharged: or in his account; for his judgment is according to truth; he can never reckon that a perfect righteousness which is an imperfect one: or in his sight; for, though men may be just in comparison of others, or at an human bar, in an human court of judicature, and in the account of men, and in their sight, to whom they may appear outwardly righteous, as well as in their own sight; yet not in the sight of God, who sees all things, the heart and all in it, every action, and the spring of it; see Ps 143:2 **Ro 3:20**; in this sense, a man can only be just with God through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, accounting that to him, putting it upon him, and clothing him with it, and so reckoning and pronouncing him righteous through it; and which is entirely consistent with the justice of God, since by it the law is fulfilled, magnified, and made honourable, and justice satisfied; so that God is just, while he is the justifier of him that believes in Jesus, **Ro 3:26**.

Job 9:3

Ver. 3. If he will contend with him,.... If God will contend with man, so Sephorno; enter into a controversy with him, litigate and dispute the point in law, whether he is just or not, man cannot answer to the allegations he will produce; or if man should contend with God, a potsherd strive with its maker, to what purpose would it be? he could never avail himself by such a procedure; the match is unequal, there is no striving or contending with God in a judicial, way:

he cannot answer him one of a thousand; which some understand, that God will not answer men; he will not vouchsafe to give an answer to such that plead with him, or talk with him of his judgments in providence, or pretend to vindicate themselves, their ways, and their works, before him; but this sense seems contrary to Jer 12:1; but the meaning is, that man cannot answer God; either not one man out of a thousand, that is, none at all; unless, by one of a thousand, is meant the interpreter, one among a thousand, even the Messiah, the chiefest among ten thousand; the one man of a thousand Solomon found upon search; see Job 33:23; he indeed has made himself responsible for his people, as their surety, and was able to answer for them; and he has answered for them, and made satisfaction for their sins; it was exacted, or required, that is, a full payment of their debts, or a plenary satisfaction for their sins, "and he answered", according to Isa 53:7; but rather the sense is, that a man cannot answer, either one time of a thousand {u}, or one argument to one article exhibited, or to one objection or charge of a thousand brought against him by the law or justice of God; that is, for one sin of a thousand he has committed; so Mr. Broughton renders it, "to one thing of a thousand" {w}; this suggests that the sins of men are numerous; their debts are many, they are more than ten thousand talents, which they are not able to answer to, or pay off, no, not one of them; their iniquities are more than the hairs of their head, they cannot be understood or reckoned: and now a man cannot answer for one of a thousand, or the millions of sins he is guilty of; he cannot deny them, he cannot excuse them, he cannot make satisfaction for anyone of them; they are committed against an infinite Being, and require an infinite satisfaction, which man cannot give; they are violations of a law, and injuries to divine justice, that no man is able to atone for; whatever obedience he is capable of, or does perform, God has a prior right unto it, and therefore can never answer for former transgressions; this being the case, sinful man cannot be just with God upon the foot of his works, which is the thing this observation is made to illustrate: man's obedience is so short, and God's commandment or law so very broad, that these two can never be brought to meet, agree together, or answer to one another; and therefore it may be strongly concluded that a man is justified, if ever he is justified at all, in the sight of God, by faith in Christ and his righteousness, without the deeds of the law, **Ro 3:28**.

{u} Pla ynm txa "una vice ex millibus", Schmidt. {w} "Ad rem unam ex mille", Beza; "ad unum argumentum ex mille argumentis", Vatablus; so Castalio, Bar Tzemach.

Job 9:4

Ver. 4. [He is] wise in heart,.... Originally, essentially, truly, really, and perfectly so; he is the only, and the all wise God; his understanding is infinite; he is able to traverse all the schemes of men, in things civil or religious, and disappoint all their devices; for though there be ever so many of them, or be ever so deeply laid, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand; for there is no wisdom, understanding, or counsel against him; and therefore it is in vain to contend with him: he is so wise and knowing, that he sees and knows all that is in man, or is done by him, whether in public or in private; there is not a thought in his heart, nor a word on his tongue, nor an action in his life and conversation, but what he is thoroughly acquainted with; and everyone of these he will bring into judgment: how therefore is it possible that sinful men should be just in the sight of such a wise and holy Being, upon the score of his own righteousness?

and mighty in strength; he is the most mighty; he is the Almighty; he has a mighty arm and strong hand; and unless a man had a strong arm like him, his own right hand can never save him, or his own righteousness justify him; wherefore, to what purpose is it for a feeble man to contend and strive with him? and since he is not a man, as he is, how should they come together in judgment? and what a vain thing must it he to set a time for it, since, if we speak of strength, lo, he is strong? see **Job 9:19**;

who hath hardened [himself] against him, and hath prospered? either by behaving proudly and insolently to him, as Pharaoh, Sennacherib, and others, by speaking hard words against him, as the Jews in the times of Malachi; and such hard speeches ungodly sinners utter against God, Christ, his Gospel, ordinances, people, ways, and worship, of which they will be convinced, and for which they will be condemned at the last judgment; and by bold and daring acts of sin, running upon the thick bosses of his buckler, giving themselves up to commit all uncleanness with greediness, and making a covenant with hell and an agreement with death, and so think themselves safe and secure at all events; but such never prospered and succeeded as they promised themselves, but came to ruin and destruction: or "had peace" {x}, or "found quietness", as Mr. Broughton: there is no peace to wicked men, true, solid peace, either here or hereafter; when they cry "Peace", or promise themselves much of it, destruction comes; and if God sets home the guilt of sin upon their consciences, the lead of it is intolerable; it sinks them into despair, and what then will be the worm that dieth not?

{x} Mlvyw "et pacem habuit", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius; "et pace frueretur", Cocceius.

Job 9:5

Ver. 5. Which removeth the mountains,.... This and what follow are instances of the power of God, and are full proofs of his being mighty in strength; and may be understood, either literally, not only of what God is able to do if he will, but of what he has done; and history {y} furnishes us with instances of mountains being removed from one place to another; and Scheuchzer {z} makes mention of a village in Helvetia, called Plurium, which, in 1618, was covered with the sudden fall of a mountain, and swallowed up in the earth, with 1800 inhabitants, and not the least trace of it to be seen any more; and in the sacred Scriptures is a prediction of the mount of Olives being removed from its place, one half to the north and the other to the south, Zec 14:4; and Josephus {a} gives a relation much like it, as in fact; besides, Job may have respect to what had been done in his times, or before them, and particularly at the universal deluge, which covered the tops of the highest mountains and hills, and very probably washed away some from their places: or else it may be understood proverbially, of the Lord's doing things marvellous and surprising, and which are impossible and impracticable with men; see Mt 17:20; or rather figuratively, of kingdoms and mighty kings, as the Targum, comparable to mountains for their height and strength, who yet are removed by God at his pleasure; see **Zec 4:7**;

and they know not; when they are removed, and how it is done; it is imperceptible; either the mountains are not sensible of it, or the inhabitants of the mountains, as Bar Tzemach; or men, the common sort of men, the multitude, as Gersom: R. Saadiah Gaon interprets it of removing the men of the mountains, and they know it not:

which overturneth them in his anger; for the sins or men, which was the case of the old world: Mr. Broughton renders it, "that men cannot mark how he hath removed them out of their place in his anger".

{y} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 83. Wernerus, Palmerius, Theophanes "a aurus", in Bolduc. in loc. {z} Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 673. {a} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 4.

Job 9:6

Ver. 6. Which shaketh the earth out of her place,.... Can do it, and will do it at the last day, when it shall be utterly broken down, clean dissolved, and reel to and fro like a drunkard, and be removed as a cottage, and which John in a vision saw flee away from the presence of him that sat upon the throne, Isa 24:19; for this cannot be understood of earthquakes in common, which are only partial, and do not remove the earth out of its place, only shake some parts of it; and this may also refer to the time of the flood, when the earth received some change and alteration in its situation, as Mr. Burnet in his Theory of the Earth observes; and the Apostle Peter suggests something of this kind, when he distinguishes the present earth from the former, which he says stood out of the water and in it, but the present earth not so, but is reserved for fire, **2Pe 3:5**;

and the pillars thereof tremble; the centre or lower parts of it, see Ps 75:3.

Job 9:7

Ver. 7. Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not,.... Either he could do it if he would, by a word speaking, as he ordered it to stand still in the times of Joshua, Jos 10:13, and caused the shadow to return ten degrees it had gone back in the dial of Ahaz, in the times of Hezekiah, 2Ki 20:11; or else the sense is, it rises not at any other time and place but when and where he commands it; or he commands it not to rise in the same place at one time of the year as at another, and it rises not; or this may be understood of eclipses, or of its being covered with clouds in tempestuous weather for a considerable time together, when it seems as if it was not risen: some think this respects the three days' darkness in Egypt, when the Israelites were there, Ex 10:22, which was a little before, or about the time of Job; or rather it refers to the general flood, in the times of Noah, when it rained forty days and forty nights, **Ge 7:12**, during which time the sun appeared not, and so seemed as if it was not risen; see **Am 8:9**; Herodotus {b} relates, from the memoirs of the Egyptians, that the sun rose four times out of its usual course; twice it rose where it now sets, and twice it set where it now rises:

and sealeth up the stars: either by the light of the sun in the daytime, which hides them that they are not visible, or by dark clouds and tempestuous weather in the night; such a season as that was in which the Apostle Paul and the mariners with him were, when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, Ac 27:20, and so the Targum paraphrases it, and

"sealeth up the stars with clouds;"

this may also refer to the time of the flood, during the rain of forty days and nights, **Ge 7:4**; or to the annual motion of the sun through the ecliptic, which makes the point of the sun's rising and setting vary, and is the reason why some stars appear in summer and are sealed up in winter, and others that are seen in winter are not visible in summer; and so Cocceius interprets it.

{b} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 149.

Job 9:8

Ver. 8. Which alone spreadeth out the heavens,.... The expanse, or what we commonly translate "firmament"; but has its name in the Hebrew language from its being expanded, spread, and stretched out, over the earth and all around it; and seems chiefly to design the ether or atmosphere, which is a fine thin matter and substance spread around us, and which is sometimes spread with clouds; this is said to be stretched out like a curtain and a tent to dwell in, tents being made of curtains spread out, Isa 40:21; and the allusion may be to a military tent, the pavilion of a general of an army, as Pineda observes, from whence Jehovah plays his artillery upon his enemies, thunder, lightning, hailstones, and coals of fire; see Ps 18:11; this respects not so much the first creation, or spreading of the air or the heavens, as the continuance thereof; God continues to spread them, or to keep them spread, that they may not be rolled up as a scroll; or folded up as a garment, as they will be, **Heb 1:12**; and this he does alone, without the help of any creature, angels or men; any piece of tapestry or carpet, that is large, is not easily spread alone; but what power must the vast expanse of the heavens require, to be spread alone and continued so? nothing less than infinite; see Isa 44:24; some render it, "which boweth the heavens" {c}, as the same word is rendered in Ps 18:9; which he does when he fills them with clouds, so that they seem to hang low, and to be inclined towards the earth:

and treadeth upon the waves of the sea {d}; which he did at the first creation, when the waters that covered the face of the earth were, by his order, collected into one place, and there shut up, and restrained from overflowing the earth; and which restraint, as it is an act of power over them, is designed by treading upon them, and a continued act may be the rather meant here; see **Ge 1:8**; and when the waves of it are lifted up as high as they sometimes are, by strong and stormy winds, the Lord on high is mightier than they, he treads upon them and represses them; he rules their raging, stills their noise, and makes them smooth, calm, and quiet, Ps 65:7; this none but God can do: the Egyptian hieroglyphic of doing a thing impossible was a man's walking upon water {e}; the Heathens chose not to describe even their god of the sea, Neptune, by walking on it, as being too great for him, but by swimming {f}; of Christ's walking upon the sea, see Mt 14:25; it may be rendered, "the high places of the sea": the waves of it, when mounted to a great height by the wind; so Mr. Broughton, "the high waves of the sea", see Ps 107:25; there is a copy, as the lesser Massorah observes, which reads, "upon the high places of the cloud" {g}, see Isa 14:14; and Gersom interprets these high places, of the heavens, and of God's giving rain from thence.

{c} Mymv hjn "inclinat coelum", Piscator. {d} My ytmb le "super excelsa maris", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. "summitates maris", Tigurine version; "celsos vertices maris", Schultens. {e} Orus Apollo, apud Bolduc. {f} Cicero de Natura Deorum, l. 2. {g} "Legitur et" be "pro" My i.e. "super excelsas nubes", Vatablus.

Job 9:9

Ver. 9. Which maketh Arcturus,.... By which is meant not a single star, but a collection of stars, as Bar Tzemach and Ben Melech, a constellation; hence we read of Arcturus and his sons, Job 38:32. Aben Ezra understands it of the seven stars, but these are thought to be meant by the Pleiades, later mentioned; this constellation is about the Arctic or northern pole, in the tail of the Bear, appears in the beginning of September, and brings stormy weather, when winter is at hand {h}:

Orion and Pleiades; the former of these also is not a single star, but a constellation; by the help of a telescope no less than two thousand are numbered, and in Hebrew it is called "Cesil"; hence the month "Cisleu" has its name, which answers to part of November and part of December, at which time this constellation is seen, and is attended with stormy weather; hence Virgil calls it Nimbosus Orion {i}: and the latter are what we call the Seven Stars, sometimes by writers called Vergiliae, because they appear in the spring; and have their name of Pleiades from sailing, because at this time of year mariners go out with their ships; though some say this constellation is not favourable to them, causing rains and tempests {k}; these three divide the whole year:

and the chambers of the south: the stars in the southern hemisphere, about the Antarctic, or southern pole; and called "chambers", as Aben Ezra observes, because hidden, and are not seen by those in the other hemisphere, as if they were in a chamber: now the making of these is rightly ascribed to God, who made all the stars, **Ge 1:16**; though this may rather regard the continuance of them in their being, who calls them by name, brings out their host by number, directs their course, keeps them in their orbs, and preserves their influence.

{h} Sophoclis Oedipus, Tyran. ver. 1147. {i} Aeneid. l. 1. Vid. Horat. Carmin. l. 3. Ode 27. Epod. 15. {k} "----pleiadum choro Scindente nubes". Horat. Carmin. l. 4. Ode 14.

Job 9:10

Ver. 10. Which doth great things past finding out,.... In heaven and earth; great as to quantity and quality, not to be thoroughly searched out so as to tell their numbers, nor explain and express the nature of them to the full; even what he has done, and does in creation, providence, and grace:

yea, and wonders without number; such as are amazing to men, who cannot account for them, and so many that they cannot number them. The same things are said by Eliphaz, See Gill on "Job 5:9"; and which Job here repeats, to show that he agreed with him, and was ready to own what was truth, whenever expressed by him or his friends, and especially such as made for the glory of the Divine Being.

Job 9:11

Ver. 11. Lo, he goeth by me, and I see [him] not,.... This is expressive of the invisibility of God; for though the angels in heaven always behold his face, and men, in the works of creation, may see his eternal power and Godhead, and other perfections of it displayed therein; and saints by faith have a comfortable and delightful view of him, of his countenance, his love, grace and mercy in his word and ordinances, and especially in the face and person of Christ, the image of the invisible God, and will in heaven most clearly see him as he is, in the greater display of his glory and his grace; yet his essence is invisible, not only not to be seen with corporeal eyes, but not to be comprehended in the mind:

he passeth on also, but I perceive him not; this "going [and] passing on", as, ascribed to God, must be understood in consistence with his omnipresence; he cannot be thought to move from place to place who is everywhere, who fills heaven and earth with his presence, and there is no going from it: local motion cannot be said of him; but this respects the operations of his providence; he is continually working all around us, by supporting us in being, and supplying us with what we want, and so is near us, and yet we see him not: Job experienced the bounties of his providence, as well as the blessings of his grace, in the time of his prosperity, and now he felt the weight of his afflicting hand upon him; but yet, as to his essence, he could not see him; he was sensible that he was nigh him, and find a concern in all that befell him, but he could neither see nor comprehend him, nor account for his dealings with him: he had "passed by" him in his state of nature, and had looked graciously on him, and had said unto him, Live; he had "passed on" from him, and hid his face so that he could not see him, nor find him backward nor forward, on the right hand, nor on the left, where he used to work, see Job 23:3.

Job 9:12

Ver. 12. Behold, he taketh away,.... There are some things God never takes away from his people; he never takes away his love from them, he always rests in that towards them, let them be in what condition they will; he never takes away his grace from them, when once bestowed on them, or wrought in them; he never takes away his special gifts of grace, particularly the unspeakable gift of his son Christ Jesus, which is that good part, when chosen, which shall not be taken away; nor any of the spiritual blessings wherewith they are blessed in Christ; these are irreversible and irrevocable: but temporal blessings he takes away at pleasure; so he had taken away the children, the servants of Job, his substance, wealth, and riches, and also his bodily health, to which he may have a particular respect; yea, when it pleases him, he takes a man out of the world, as the Targum and Gersom interpret it:

who can hinder him? he does what he pleases in heaven and earth; his will is irresistible, his power is uncontrollable; there is no turning his mind, nor staying his hand, nor turning it back; when he works, none can let or hinder. Mr. Broughton translates it, "who shall make him restore?" {l} if a man takes away what he has no right to, he may be obliged by law to restore it; but whatever God takes away he has a right unto, be it relations and friends, health or wealth; if he pleases he can restore, and does; and as he did to Job, to whom he after gave twice as much as he had before; but then he is not obliged to do it, none can force him to it:

who will say unto him, what doest thou? not one that knows what God is, or that knows himself a creature of his; no person will choose or dare to ask what God does, or why he does this and not another thing, or why this in the manner he does it; for he gives no account of his matters to the sons of men, nor is he obliged to it, and it would be insolent in them to require it, see Job 33:13; this expresses his sovereignty.

{l} So Beza, Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius.

Job 9:13

Ver. 13. [If] God will not withdraw his anger,.... Or "God will not withdraw his anger" {m}; he is angry, or at least seems to be angry with his own people, in their apprehension, when he afflicts them and hides his face from them, or does not immediately appear to their relief and assistance; but this does not always last, he does not retain or keep anger for ever; but shows great mercies to them, and with everlasting kindness has mercy on them, by discovering his love to them, applying his pardoning grace and mercy, and comforting them with the consolations of his spirit; but then he is angry with the wicked every day, for their continual transgressions; and he never withdraws his anger from them, neither here nor hereafter, but punishes them with everlasting destruction, and casts them into everlasting fire, to which his wrath and anger are compared: the consequence of which is,

the proud helpers do stoop under him; or "the helpers of pride" {n}, or helpers of proud men; proud, wicked, and ungodly men, who combine together and help one another against God, his people, cause and interest; men of power, rule and government, as Aben Ezra explains it; civil magistrates, men in authority, who, instead of being terrors to evil doers, encourage them, and help them forward in their wickedness; but though both those that help, and those that are helped, may continue for a while, and be supported, yet they shall sooner or later fall under the mighty hand of God, his power and wrath, and be crushed by it. Some regard may be had either to the giants, the men of the old world, who filled the earth with violence, and were swept away with the flood, **Ge 6:13**; or rather to the builders of Babel, who helped one another to build a tower to make them a name, and secure themselves, and in opposition to God; but he being angry with them, made them desist, and they bowed under him, Ge 11:4. Some render it, "the helpers of Rahab"; that is, of Egypt {o}, Rahab being a name of Egypt,
Ps 87:4. The devils are meant, whose sin was pride, and by which they fell, and which they have endeavoured to promote and cherish among men; but these proud spirits are cast out of heaven and into hell, where they are reserved in chains of darkness to the great judgment, **Jude 1:6**; and are obliged, whether they will or not, to stoop to the Lord, and even to the son of God in human nature, which their proud stomachs cannot well bear; but are forced to it, the anger of God lying upon them, and his wrath, which will never be withdrawn from them.

{m} wpa byvy al hwla "Deus non revocabit furorem suum", Pagninus, Beza.
{n} bhr yrze "adjutores superbiae", Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Schmidt, Michaelis. {o} So Jarchi.

Job 9:14

Ver. 14. How much less shall I answer him,.... Who is wise in heart, and mighty in strength, and has done and does the many things before related; who is invisible, passes by, and onwards insensibly; so that there is no knowing where to speak to him, or how to guard against him, since he can come on on every side, at an unawares, and unseen; and who is a sovereign Being, who can do, and does, whatever he pleases; and therefore there is no such thing as disputing any point with him, or calling him to an account for anything done by him: and if the great men of the earth, proud and haughty tyrants, and those prouder spirits, if possible, the infernal principalities and powers, are obliged to bend and stoop to him; how should such a poor, weak, feeble creature as Job was, enter the lists with him, contend with God, and argue with him about his dispensations, or answer to any argument, objection, charge, or article exhibited against him? here Job speaks humbly and meanly of himself, as he in the whole context before speaks highly of God, between whom there was no comparison:

[and] choose out my words [to reason] with him? suggesting, that should he pick out words the most fit and proper to be used, and put them together in the most exact order, and which had the greatest force of persuasion and strength of reasoning in them, yet they would be of no avail with God; these could have no influence upon him to turn his mind, or alter either his purposes or his providences; and therefore concluded it was best for him to be silent and make no reply; but if he said anything, to do it in a supplicating way, as follows.

Job 9:15

Ver. 15. Whom, though I were righteous, [yet] would I not answer,.... This is not to be understood of the righteousness of his cause, that Job made no supposition of, but strongly asserted and determined to hold it fast as long as he lived; nor of his evangelic righteousness, the righteousness of faith he was acquainted with, even the righteousness of his living Redeemer, by which he knew he was, and should be, justified; and by which righteousness he could and did answer God, as every believer may, who, making mention of this righteousness, and of this only, such an one may plead the righteousness of Christ with God as his justifying one, and hold it up against all charges brought against him; yea, by presenting this to God by faith, he answers all the demands of the law of God, both with respect to the precepts and penalty of it, it being magnified and made honourable hereby, and all that the justice of God can require, and with which it is entirely satisfied; yea, this righteousness will answer to God for him in a time to come, in the last judgment: but Job speaks of his own legal and civil righteousness, as a good man, and a good magistrate; as the latter, he put on righteousness, and it clothed him; as the former, having grace, the root of the matter, in him, as he calls it, it taught him to live soberly, righteously, and godly; he was a man that feared God, and eschewed evil; and his sense is, that though he should so well behave in every respect, and so order his conversation aright before men that they could have nothing to lay to his charge, yet he would not bring such a righteousness before God, and pretend to answer him with it; for he knew that such a righteousness is no righteousness in the sight of God, in the eye of his law, and in the account of divine justice, being not only imperfect, but impure; not only rags, but filthy ones, attended with many sins, as well as imperfections; wherefore no good man will put his cause before God on such an issue, however he may before men; nay, Job seems to carry this point yet further, that though he had a sinless righteousness of his own, and were as righteous as Adam before his fall, or the holy angels in heaven, yet he would not insist upon such a righteousness before God, or pretend to answer him with it; for he knew that the inhabitants of the heavens, and so man in his paradise on earth, in his best estate, were not pure in his sight, but chargeable with folly and imperfection, in comparison of him: and when he says he could not "answer" him, his meaning is not that he would not answer to a question that was asked him, but that he would not answer him in a judicial way; that, if he should prefer a bill against him, he would not put in at answer to it, though he knew nothing by himself, and could not charge himself with anything wrong in thought, word, or deed; yet if God charged him with it, he would not reply against him, he would not contradict him, he would not answer again, or litigate the point with him, but give it up; because, though he might not know he had done any thing amiss, or there was imperfection in him, yet God, who was greater than his heart, and knows all things, is the heart searching and rein trying God, he knew better than he did, and therefore was determined to submit to him, and be set down by him what he was:

[but] I would make supplication to my Judge: that is, to God, the Judge of the whole earth; and who is particularly the Judge of his own people, their Patron and Defender, their Judge and Lawgiver, who will save them; for though he is a just God, and a righteous Judge, yet a Saviour; and it is one of the privileges of his people that they can come to him, not only as the God of all grace, and as their God and Father in Christ, but to him as to God the Judge of all, Heb 12:23; and lay their case before him, and entreat his protection; and this Job chose to do rather than contend with him; for by "supplication" prayer is meant, as it frequently is in both Testaments; and it signifies such prayer as

consists of petitions for grace and mercy, or for things to be bestowed in a way of grace and mercy; not according to merit, but mercy; not for works of righteousness done, but through the favour and good will of God; and which prayer is put up in an humble supplicant manner, acknowledging a man's unworthiness, that he is not deserving of the least of mercies, nor expects any on account of any worth or worthiness in him, or his services; and in such a way a man prevails more with God, and is most likely to succeed, than by contending with him in a judicial way. Jacob had power with God and prevailed, but it was by weeping and supplication, see Ho 12:4; so Mr. Broughton reads the words,

"my would crave pity of my Judge."

Some render it, "my adversary" {p}, the opposite party in a court of judicature, whom he would not contest with, but supplicate, and in the way make up matters with him. Job seems resolved to take such a method Christ advises to in civil cases, **Mt 5:24**.

{p} yjpvml "in jus me vocanti", Cocceius; "ei qui mecum judicatur", i.e. "parti meae adversae", Gussetius, p. 880.

Job 9:16

Ver. 16. If I had called, and he had answered me,.... Mr. Broughton reads the words, "if I cry, will he answer me?" as if Job had some doubt upon his mind whether God would vouchsafe to answer him, though he should make his supplication to him, as he proposed; seeing he had so sorely afflicted him, and still continued his hand upon him; or the words may be rendered, "though I have called, and he has answered" {q}, in times past. Job was a praying person, he had often prayed to God in his closet, and in his family, for himself, and for his children, and for his friends, and he had found God to be a God hearing and answering prayer, but seems to question whether he would answer him now, if he did pray to him:

[yet] would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice, or "would hearken" {r}, at this time, and under the present circumstances; or should he, the mercy would be so great, that he could hardly believe it; so sometimes through joy men cannot believe what they hear and see, as the apostles, when Christ appeared to them after his resurrection; or as it was with the Jews returned from Babylon, they were like them that dream, they could scarcely

tell whether their deliverance was a real fact, or whether they only dreamed of it, see Lu 24:41; so Job intimates, that should he pray to God, and be heard and delivered, it would be so astonishing and transporting, that at first he should not be able to give credit to it; or, however, he should not believe that it was for his prayers and supplications, for any worth and value, virtue and efficacy, there was in them, that he was heard; but it must be purely for his mercy's sake, for the sake of the mediation of Christ, and because these prayers were the breathings of his own spirit: or else the sense is, that though he had heard and answered him formerly, when he prayed in a supplicating way, yet if he should contend with him in a judicial way, and insist upon his own righteousness, and present his supplication to God on that account, he could never expect to be heard; and, indeed, he could not believe he should be heard on any account, so long as his present sufferings lasted; which seems to be the sense of what follows, where he gives his reasons for such belief, or rather unbelief.

{q} ynneyw ytarq Ma "etiamsi clamavi et respondit mihi", Schmidt. {r} Nyzay yk "quod exauditurus esset", Schmidt.

Job 9:17

Ver. 17. For he breaketh me with a tempest,.... Which rises suddenly, comes powerfully, and carries all before it irresistibly; hereby signifying the nature of his present sore afflictions, which came upon him at once, pressed him down, and utterly destroyed him, against which there was no standing: perhaps he may have some reference to the storm of wind that blew down the house, by which his children were destroyed. Schultens renders it, "a burning tempest" {s}, such as is common in the eastern countries, which Thevenot {t} often makes mention of; which kills a man at once, and his flesh becomes as black as a coal, and comes off of his bones, and is plucked off by the hand that would lift him up; with which a man is broken to pieces indeed, to which Job may allude:

and multiplieth my wounds without cause; referring, it may be, to the many boils and ulcers upon his body; though it may also respect the multiplicity of ways in which he had wounded or afflicted him, in his person, in his family, and in his substance, and which he says was done "without cause"; not without a cause or reason in God, who does nothing without one, though it may not be known to men; particularly in afflicting men, it is not without cause or reason; it he punishes men, it is for sin; if he rebukes and chastises his people, it is for their transgressions; to bring them to a sense of them, to humble them for them, to bring them off from them, or to prevent them, or purge them away, and to try their graces, wean them from the world, and fit them for himself: but Job's afflictions were without any such cause intimated by his friends; it was not hypocrisy, nor any notorious sin or sins he had been guilty of, and secretly lived and indulged himself in, as they imagined. Job here suggests his innocence, which he always insisted upon, and refers his afflictions to the sovereign will of God, and to some hidden cause in his own breast, unknown to himself and others: however, so long as he dealt with him after this manner, he could not believe his prayers were heard by him.

{s} hrevb "in turbine ardenti", Schultens. {t} Travels, par. 2. B. 1. c. 12. p. 54. B. 3. c. 5. p. 135.

Job 9:18

Ver. 18. He will not suffer me to take my breath,.... Which some think refers to Job's disease, which was either an asthma, or a quinsy in his throat, which occasioned great difficulty in breathing: I should rather think the allusion is to the hot burning winds in those countries before mentioned, which sometimes blew so strongly as almost to take away a man's breath; so the above traveller {u} reports, that between Suez and Cairo (in Egypt) they had for a day's time and more so hot a wind, that they were forced to turn their backs to it, to take a little breath. The design of Job is to show, that his afflictions were continued, and were without any intervals; they were repeated so fast, and came so thick upon him, one after another, that he had no breathing time; the import of the phrase is the same with that in **Job 7:19**;

but filleth me with bitterness; to the full, to satiety, to loathing, as a man may be with a bitter potion, with wormwood drink, and water of gall, with bitter afflictions comparable to such, whereby Job's life was embittered to him, see **Jer 9:15**.

{u} Travels. par. 1. B. 2. c. 34. p. 177.

Job 9:19

Ver. 19. If [I speak] of strength, lo, [he is] strong,.... Or think of it, or betake myself to that, and propose to carry my point by mere force, as some men do by dint of power and authority they are possessed of; alas! there is nothing to be done this way; I am a poor, weak, feeble creature in body, mind, and estate; I am not able to contend with so powerful an antagonist on any account, in any way: God is strong, he is the "most strong" {w}, as some render it; he is mighty, is the Almighty; the weakness of God is stronger than men; there is no disputing with God upon the foot of strength:

and if of judgment, who shall set me a time [to plead]? If I think and propose to put things upon the foot of justice, to have the cause between us issued in that way, I cannot expect to succeed by right, any more than by might; he is so strictly just and holy, that no righteousness and holiness of, mine can stand before him; he is God, and I a man, and therefore not fit to come together in judgment; and he a pure and holy Being, just and true, and without iniquity, and I a sinful polluted creature; and besides, there is none superior to him, that I can appeal unto, none that can appoint a place, or fix a time, for the hearing of the cause between us, or that can preside in judgment and determine the matter in controversy; nay, there is not one among the creatures that can be a daysman, an arbiter or umpire; yea not one that can be so much as employed as council, that can take the cause in hand, and plead it, and be a patron for me, and defender of me; so that, let me take what course I will, I am sure to be nonsuited and worsted, see Jer 49:19.

{w} Uyma "robustissimus est", V. L.

Job 9:20

Ver. 20. If I justify myself,.... Seek for justification by his own righteousness, trust in himself that he was righteous, say that he was so, and pronounce himself a righteous man, what would it signify?

mine own mouth shall condemn me; the words of it being sinful, vain, idle, and frothy; and if a man is to be justified, and condemned by his words, he may be sure of the latter: indeed, "if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man", **Jas 3:2**; but let a man be as careful as he can, and keep ever such a guard upon his lips, such is the imperfection of human nature, that, though a Moses, he will speak unadvisedly with his lips, at one time or another, and in many things will offend; which would be his condemnation, if there was no other way to secure from it; nay, for a sinful man to justify himself, or to say that he is a righteous man by his own righteousness, and insist upon this before God, if he is tried upon it he must be condemned; yea, saying he is so is a falsehood, abominable to God, and enough to condemn him; and besides, a man that knows himself, as Job did, must be conscious of much sin within him, however externally righteous he may be before men; so that, should he say he was righteous, his conscience would speak, or cause his mouth to speak and contradict and condemn him:

[if I say], I [am] perfect; not in an evangelical sense, as he was; but in a legal sense, so as to be free from sin, which no man that is perfect in a Gospel sense is; as Noah, Jacob, David, and others, who were so, yet not without sin; if therefore a man should assert this, he would not say that which was right, but what was perverse, as might be proved:

it shall also prove me perverse; to be a wicked man; either he, God, shall prove, or it, his mouth, as in the preceding clause; for to say this is to tell a lie, which to do is perverseness, see **1Jo 1:8**.

Job 9:21

Ver. 21. [Though] I [were] perfect,.... Really and truly so, not conscious of any sin in thought, word, or deed; this is only a case supposed:

[yet] would I not know my soul; I would not own myself to be so before God; I would not insist upon such perfection in his presence, as what would justify me before him; since I am sensible the highest perfection of a creature is imperfection when compared with him: or the sense may be, should I say I were "perfect, I should not know my own soul"; I should plainly appear to be ignorant of myself, as all perfectionists are; they do not know their own souls, the plague of their hearts, the evil of their thoughts, the vanity of their minds; they do not take notice of these things, or do not look upon them as sinful; they know not the nature of sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of it:

I would despise my life; even if ever so innocent, perfect, and just; his meaning is, that he would not insist upon the continuance of it on that account; he had no such value for it, such a love of life as to contend with God upon the foot of justice about it; nor did he think it worth asking for, so mean an opinion had he entertained of it, see **Job 7:16**.

Job 9:22

Ver. 22. This [is] one [thing],.... Or "one thing [there] is" {x} in the world, as Jarchi adds; or "one measure", as the Targum, to good and bad men; one event alike to the righteous, and to the wicked, **Ec 9:2**; so that, as others render it, "it is all one" {y}, whether a man righteous and perfect, or whether he is not, he is equally liable to be afflicted and distressed: and "this is one thing, [very] singular" {z}, amazing and astonishing, and very unaccountable; but so it is, and which he differed from his three friends about; as to the justice of God, he agreed with them in that; yea, he believed he was righteous in whatever he did, and even in this, which was so strange and surprising, though he could not account for it: and "this is uniform", as Mr. Broughton translates it; either God acts uniformly in what he does, treating all men alike, good and bad men; or Job was uniform in his sentiments, he was all of a piece, steady and constant, retaining the same sense of things, from which he had not departed, nor could he depart:

therefore I said [it]; with the greatest confidence and assurance, because he believed it, and would say it again, seeing no reason at all to alter his judgment; the thing was quite clear to him, of which he had, at least as he thought, unquestionable evidence; and the thing he has respect to is as follows:

he destroyeth the perfect and the wicked; this is thought by some to be a very bad expression, bordering on blasphemy, and contrary to the nature and perfections of God, and to the methods of his providence, Ge 18:23; and that Job speaks in the person of one destitute of the grace of God: but nothing is more certain than that this was the real sentiment of his mind, his firm belief, nor could he be persuaded to the contrary; indeed it may be understood in a good sense: by a "perfect" man we are to understand a truly good man, one that has received the grace of God in truth, and is perfectly justified and pardoned through the blood and righteousness of Christ; and by a "wicked" man one that is under the influence of his lusts, is abandoned to them, and never easy but while he is serving them, which he is continually doing. Now the destruction of these is not to be interpreted of everlasting destruction; this indeed will be the case of wicked men, but not of perfect and good men: God by his grace has made a difference between them in this world, and so he will in the next; the one will go into everlasting punishment, the other into everlasting life, and will never come together in the same place or state; nor will the perfect man be destroyed at all in such sense; the grace of God within him, and the righteousness of Christ upon him, will eternally secure him from everlasting wrath and ruin: but it is meant of temporal destruction; sometimes indeed a remarkable distinction is made between the one and the other in a time of general calamity, as Noah, a perfect man, was saved, when the world of the ungodly were destroyed by water, **Ge 7:23**; and Lot, a righteous man, when Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire, Ge 19:29; but frequently they fall together in the same common distress; good and bad men, among the Jews were alike carried captive into Babylon, signified by Jeremiah's good and bad figs, Jer 24:2; of good men, Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, are instances; though indeed it is on different accounts, and with different views, that the one and the other are destroyed with a temporal destruction, in their persons, their health, their families, or in their estates; such calamities upon good men are not as punishments for their sins, as on the wicked; but as fatherly chastisements, and for the trial of their graces, for their spiritual and eternal good, and that they might not be condemned with the world. Job's view in saying this is to observe, that a man's state God-ward is not to be judged of by his outward circumstances, whether he is a good man or a bad man, since they may both be in the same afflictions and distress, and which he opposes to the sentiments and sayings of Eliphaz and Bildad, **Job 4:7**.

{x} ayh txa "unum est", Munster, Mercerus, Schmidt. {y} "Perinde est", Cocceius. {z} "Singulare enimvero id!", Schultens.

Job 9:23

Ver. 23. If the scourge slay suddenly,.... Not Satan, as Jarchi and Bar Tzemach; but any sore calamity which surrounds a man, lashes, cuts, and distresses him, as a whip or scourge; such as any of God's sore judgments, the sword, famine, pestilence, or evil beasts, which sometimes come suddenly, unawares, unthought of, and unexpected; and are sometimes only chastisements in love, the scourgings of a father, though generally in wrath and hot displeasure, and are an overflowing scourge, which carry all before them; and therefore some restrain it to wicked men, as the Septuagint version; and some understand it as if they were more mildly and gently dealt with, by being suddenly and at once slain with such a scourge, in their persons, families, and substance, while others have their afflictions protracted, and linger long under them, as in the next clause:

he will laugh at the trial of the innocent; not that are free from sin entirely; for there are none such, no, not newborn infants; though they may be comparatively so, yet they are not in an absolute sense, being conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity: besides, here it means adult persons, good men, that are truly gracious, sincere, upright, harmless in their lives and conversations, whose afflictions are "trials" of their faith and patience, and other graces; and when God is said to "laugh" at them, who seems to be designed here, this must be understood consistent with his pity to his people, his sympathy with them under all their afflictions, he not willingly afflicting or grieving the children of men; nor can it be thought that he has them in derision and contempt, or laughs at their calamities, or in reality, as he does at wicked men; but that he carries it so oftentimes, in the dispensations of his providence, as if he made no difference between them, but mocked at the one as well as the other; seemingly giving no heed to their cries; not hastening to their help and deliverance, but lengthening out their troubles for the trial of their graces; and so indeed is greatly delighted with the exercise of them under them, and with seeing them bear them with so much patience, courage, and greatness of mind and submission to his will. Some interpret this of a wicked man laughing at the calamities of the righteous, as the Ammonites and Edomites rejoiced at the destruction of the Jews; the church's enemy at her fall, and as the Papists will at the witnesses being slain; but the former sense seems best; rather the scourge itself laughs at the trial of the innocent; so Schultens.

Job 9:24

Ver. 24. The earth is given into the hands of the wicked,.... Either the wicked one, Satan, as Jarchi and Bar Tzemach, who is the god of this world; or some wicked tyrant, as Nimrod, or some other known by Job in his time, to whom he may have respect; or wicked men in general, who for the most part have the greatest share of the earth, and earthly things, and of power, dominion, and authority in it; and this they have of God, the powers that be are ordained by him, and therefore to be obeyed; and what any have of the earth, and the fulness of it, they have it from him, whose it is, and who has a right to dispose of it, and therefore being given by him, they have a proper right unto it; but then it is only the things of this world which are given them; they have their portion here, and that is their all; wherefore, as the giving of these is no proof of a man's goodness, so the taking of them away is no evidence of his wickedness; love or hatred are not to be known by these things; this is Job's scope and drift in this and **Job 9:23**:

he covereth the face of the judges thereof; not Satan, who blinds the minds of such, that they should not understand justice, and do it, as the above Jewish writers interpret it; nor the wicked man that is possessed of riches and wealth, power and authority, who by his substance bribes the judges, and blinds their eyes, or by his power and authority awes them, keeps them from executing true judgment, or discourages persons fit for such an office, and will not advance them, but lets them lie in, and covers them with, obscurity; or such who are honest and faithful, and are not to be bribed and browbeaten, these he either removes from their post, and covers their faces with shame, or takes them away by death, condemns and executes them as malefactors; it being usual in former times, as well as in ours, to cover the faces of such as are executed: but rather this is to be understood of God, who delivers the earth into the hands of the wicked, suffers them to have the rule over it, and permits such things to be done, as already observed; and besides, gives up the judges of the earth to judicial blindness, so that they cannot discern what is right and just, and do it, see Isa 29:10;

if not, where [and] who [is] he? if it is not so as I say, where is the man, and who is he, that can disprove me, and make me a liar? as Aben Ezra; let him come forth and appear, and confute me, and teach me otherwise if he can; or name the place of his abode, and say who he is; or if God does not do this, give the earth into the hands of wicked men, and cover the faces of the judges of it, and suffer wicked men to prevail, and the causes of good men to be subverted, the one to flourish, and the other to be crushed; who does do it? where is the man that has done or can do it? certain it is, that it is done; and who but that God that superintends all things, sits in the heavens, and does whatsoever he pleases, can do such things as these? or could they be done without his will and permission? by such mediums Job proves his assertion, that God destroys the perfect and the wicked; and therefore, by the face of things in providence, no judgment is to be had of a man's character, good or bad, and then instances in himself in the following verses.

Job 9:25

Ver. 25. Now my days are swifter than a post,.... Or "than a runner" {a} in a race, in order to obtain the prize; or than one that rides post, or runs on foot to carry a message, such as were Cushi and Ahimaaz; and such are generally swift of foot, or ride on swift horses, who are so employed; and yet Job says his days are swifter, or passed away more swiftly thorn such; meaning either his days in general; or rather particularly his prosperous days, as Mr. Broughton interprets it; these no sooner came but they were gone:

they flee away; like a shadow, or a dream, or a tale that is told:

they see no good; or he saw, perceived, or enjoyed no good in them; not but that he did see and enjoy much good, even much temporal good, which is what is intended; but this was no sooner had than it was taken away, that it was as if it had never been; the evil days of trouble and sorrow, in which he had no pleasure, came so quick upon him.

{a} Ur-ynm "cursore", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Job 9:26

Ver. 26. They are passed away as the swift ships,.... Those that are lightest built, and run swiftest. Bar Tzemach thinks such vessels as are rowed with oars are meant, which may be called "ships of will or desire" {b}, as the words may be rendered, because they may be rowed at pleasure, and be carried to any place where and when a man thinks fit; whereas those that are not depend upon the wind, and that must be waited for; or they design such ships that are so swift in their motion, that they arrive to the haven as soon as men can well wish for and desire. Some render it "pirate ships", or "ships of enmity" {c}; such as are designed for spoil and plunder, and which are light ones, not loaded with goods, and therefore move swiftly: the Targum is,

"ships burdened with precious fruits;"

and the Vulgate Latin version is,

"ships carrying apples:"

now ships loaded with such sort of goods, with perishing commodities, are obliged to make their port as soon as possible. Some leave the word untranslated, and call them "ships of Ebeh" {d}; which, according to Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and others, is either the name of a place, or of a river in Arabia, which ran with a rapid stream, and in which ships were carried with great celerity. Bolducius relates from a traveller of his acquaintance, who finished his travels in 1584, that he saw such a river about Damascus, not far from the sepulchre of Job; but that must be the river Chrysorrhoas, now called Barrady; but there were two rivers of this name Ebeh; one near Cufa, and another in Wasith, a country of Babylon, as Golius observes {e}. Others take the word to have the signification of reed or papyrus, which grew on the banks of the Nile, and of which ships were made, See Gill on "Isa 18:1"; and render the words "ships of reeds" or "of papyrus" {f}, and which, being light, were very swift:

as the eagle [that] hasteth to the prey; the eagle is the swiftest of birds, and therefore persons and things exceeding swift are compared unto them, see **Hab 1:8**; and it flies the most swiftly when being hungry, and in sight of its prey, and is nearest to it, and flaps upon it, which is the thing referred to, and so may be rendered, "that flies upon the prey" {g}. Job uses these metaphors, which are the most appropriate, to show how fleeting his days of prosperity were, and how soon gone: and a climax may be observed in the words; a runner, though he runs swiftly, a ship moves faster than he, and an eagle, just about to seize its prey, flies swifter than that.

{b} hba twyna "navibus desiderii", Mercerus, Drusius, Schmidt; so Ben Gersom. {c} "Naves inimicitiarum, i.e. "piraticae, vel hostiles"; as some in Drusius; so Broughton. {d} "Navibus Ebeh", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Bolducius, Codurcus. {e} Lexic. Arab. p. 2. {f} "Naves arundinis", Michaelis, "navibus papyraceis", Schultens, Ikenius, in ib. {g} lka le vwjy "involans in escam", Junius & Tremellius; "involat in escam", Piscator, Schultens.

Job 9:27

Ver. 27. If I say, I will forget my complaint,.... The cause of it, the loss of his children, servants, substance, and health, and endeavour to think no more of these things, and cease complaining about them, and attempt to bury them in oblivion, and change his note:

I will leave off my heaviness; his melancholy thoughts, words, airs, and looks; or "forsake my face" {h}, put on another countenance, a more pleasent and cheerful one; the Jewish commentators generally interpret it, "my anger", either at the dispensations of Providence, or at his friends:

and comfort [myself]; that things were not worse with him than they were; or strengthen {i} himself, as the word is rendered in **Am 5:9**; against his fears, and troubles, and dejection of mind, determining to take heart, and be of good courage, and not sink, and succumb, and faint under his burdens: none but God, Father, Son, and Spirit, can give comfort to distressed ones, whether on temporal or spiritual accounts; but good men may make use of means for comfort, such as hearing the word, reading the Scriptures, prayer, meditation, and conversation with good men.

{h} ynp hbzea "relinquam facies meas", Montanus, Bolducius, Schmidt. {i} hgylba "confirmabo vel roborabo cor meum", Mercerus; so R. R.

Job 9:28

Ver. 28. I am afraid of all my sorrows,.... That they would return upon him, and surround him, and overwhelm him, so that he should not be able to stand up against them, or under them; that they would increase and continue with him, and so he should never be released from them:

I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent: a sudden apostrophe to God as near him; the meaning is not, that he was confident that God would not justify him but condemn him in a spiritual sense; Job did not despair of his everlasting salvation, he knew and believed in his living Redeemer; he knew he should be acquitted and justified by his righteousness, and not be condemned with the world; but he was certain of this, as he thought that God would neither "cleanse" {k} him, as some render the word, from the worms his flesh was clad with, and from the filthy boils and ulcers he was covered with; nor clear him so as that he should appear to be innocent in the sight and judgment of his friends; but go on to treat him as if he was a guilty person, by continuing his afflictions on him, even unto death; he had no hope of being freed from them, and so of being cleared from the imputation of his friends, who judged of him by his outward circumstances.

{k} ynqnt al yk "quod non mundabis me", Montanus, Bolducius, Beza.

Job 9:29

Ver. 29. [If] I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?] If he was that wicked person, that hypocrite, Bildad and his other friends took him to be, it was in vain for him to make his supplications to God, as they advised him; so Gersom gives the sense of the words; since God hears not sinners, such as live in sin, regard iniquity in their hearts, and practise it in their lives, at least secretly, as it was suggested Job did; if he was such an one, it must be all lost labour to pray to God to show favour to him, and deliver him out of his troubles, since he might reasonably expect he would shut his eyes and stop his ears at such a man, and regard not his cries; seeking to him must be in vain; prayer may be fitly enough expressed by labour, it is a striving and wrestling with God, and especially when it is constant, importunate, and fervent: but rather the sense is, that if he was a wicked man in the account of God, or was dealt with as one; if

God would not hold him innocent, as he asserts in the latter part of **Job 9:28**; then it was a vain thing to labour the point in the vindication of himself; since he could never think of succeeding against God, so wise and powerful, so holy, just, and pure. The word "if" is not in the original text, and may be left out, and the words be rendered, "I am wicked" {l}; not in any notorious manner, as having lived a scandalous life, or been guilty of some gross enormities, as his friends insinuated, but in common with other men; he was born a sinner, had been a transgressor from the womb, and though he was renewed and sanctified by the spirit of God, yet sin dwelt in him, and through the infirmity of the flesh he was daily sinning in thought, word, or deed; nor did he expect it would be otherwise with him while in this world; yea, it was impossible for him to be without sin, as Bar Tzemach observes to be the sense of the phrase; and therefore if God would not clear him, or hold him innocent, unless he was entirely free from sin, as it was labouring in vain to attain to such perfection, so it must be to no purpose, and is what he chiefly intends, to attempt to vindicate himself before God: or "I shall be wicked", or "ungodly" {m}; I shall be treated as such not only by his friends, who would reckon him a very wicked man so long as those afflictions continued on him, let him say what he would; but by the Lord himself, who he believed would never release him from them as long as he lived, which in the eye of men would be a tacit condemnation of him; so the Targum,

"I shall be condemned,"

and therefore it was labour in vain, striving against the stream, to go about to vindicate himself; nor was it possible that he could make himself out so clear and pure and perfect, that such an holy Being as God was could find no fault in him, in whose sight the heavens, and the inhabitants of them, were not clean; this is further evinced in the following words.

{l} evra ykna "impius sum", V. L. Pagninus; so Schmidt. {m} "Ego impius ero", Montanus, Mercerus, Bolducius; "ego reus ero", Codurcus; "equidem improbus ero", Schultens.

Job 9:30

Ver. 30. If I wash myself with snow water,.... As it came from heaven, or flowed from the mountains covered with snow, as Lebanon, see Jer 18:14; or was kept in vessels for such use, as being judged the best for such a purpose; so it was used by the ancients {n}, as being what whitens the skin, and strengthens the parts by contracting the pores, and hindering perspiration; it signifies, in a figurative sense, that let him take what methods he would to cleanse himself from sin, they were all in vain, his iniquity would be seen, and remain marked before God; and indeed there is nothing that a man can do that will make him pure and clean in the sight of an holy God; this is not to be done by ceremonial ablutions, such as might be in use in Job's time, before the law of Moses was given, and to which he may have some reference; these only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, or only externally, but could not purify the heart, so as to have no more conscience of sin; nor by moral duties, not by repentance, as Sephorno; a fountain, a flood, an ocean of tears of humiliation and repentance, would not wash away sin; if, instead of ten thousand rivers of oil, so many rivers of brinish tears could be produced, they would be of no avail to cleanse the sinner; nor any works of righteousness done by man, for these themselves need washing in the blood of the Lamb; for nothing short of the blood of Christ, and the grace of God, can do it:

and make my hands never so clean; the hands are what men work with, **Ec 9:10**; and so may design good works, which are sometimes called clean hands; see Ps 24:4; compared with Ps 15:1; and may be said to be so when they are done well, from a pare heart, and faith unfeigned, without selfish and sordid views, with a single eye to the glory of God; which is doing them as well, and making the hands as clean, as well can be; yet these are of no avail with respect to justification before God, and acceptance with him, or with regard to salvation, which is all of grace, and not of works, be they what they will; some render the words, "and cleanse my hands with soap" {o}, which cleanses them best of anything, see **Jer 2:22**.

{n} "Discubuimus, pueris aquam nivalem in manus infundentibus", Petronius in Satyr. {o} rbb Smegmate, Codurcus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt; so the Targum, and Mr. Broughton.

Job 9:31

Ver. 31. Yet shall thou plunge me in the ditch,.... In the filthy ditch of sin, the pit wherein is no water, the horrible pit, the mire and clay, in which all unregenerate men are, and to which hypocrites return, as the swine to its wallowing in the mire; and in which impurity self-righteous persons are, and are sooner or later made to appear, notwithstanding all their outward righteousness, holiness, purity, and perfection they boast of; and though Job was neither of these, not an unregenerate man, nor an hypocrite, nor a self-righteous person; yet he knew that, in comparison of the perfect purity and holiness of God, he should appear exceedingly impure; and that God would treat him as such, and hold him out to the view of others as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things, by continuing his afflictions, from whence it would be concluded that he was the most impure person; and indeed by the ditch may be meant the ditch of afflictions, as Sephorno, either his present ones continued, his filthy ulcers and scabs, with which his body was covered all over, or new afflictions he would bring him into, where he would sink in deep mire, there being no standing, Ps 69:2; some understand this of the grave, the ditch or pit of corruption, into which he should be cast, and there putrefy and rot: but the other senses seem best:

and mine own clothes shall abhor me; not his clothes in a literal sense; either while living, his filthy ulcers being such, that were his clothes sensible of them, they would loathe and abhor to touch him, and cover him; or when dead, his sepulchre garments, his shroud, or winding sheet, would disdain to cover such a filthy body, overspread with worms and dust; or as Vatablus paraphrases it, clothes do not become a dead body; or as Mr. Broughton,

"when I go naked to the grave, as though my clothes loathed me:"

but the words are rather to be understood figuratively, either of some of his friends that were as near and as close to him as his clothes, or had been, but now were estranged from him, and loathed and abhorred him, see Job 19:13; or better, of his best works of righteousness, which he put on as a robe, Job 29:14; and which are a covering to the saints before men, and are ornamental to them, though not justifying in the sight of God; and indeed in themselves, and compared with the holy law, and holy nature of God, are imperfect and impure; and if God was to enter into judgment with men, they would be so far from justifying them in his sight, or rendering them acceptable to him, that they would cause them to be abhorred by him, as all self-righteousness and self-righteous persons are, see Pr 21:27; yea, even the best works of men are but dung in the judgment of a good man himself, what then must they be in the account of God? **Php 3:8**; Job here, and in **Job 9:30**, has most exalted ideas of the purity, holiness, and majesty of God, so that no creature, nor creature holiness, be they ever so perfect, can stand before him, or be pure in his sight.

Job 9:32

Ver. 32. For [he is] not a man, as I [am],.... For though the parts and members of an human body are sometimes ascribed to him, yet these are to be understood by an anthropopathy, speaking after the manner of men, there being something in him, which in a figurative sense answers to these; otherwise we are not to conceive of any corporeal shape in him, or that there is any likeness to which he is to be compared: he is a spirit infinite, immortal, immense, invisible, pure and holy, just and true, and without iniquity; whereas Job was but a man, a finite, feeble, mortal creature, and a sinful one; and therefore there being such a vast disparity between them, it was in vain to litigate a point with him, to plead his cause before him, or attempt to vindicate his innocence; the potsherds may strive and contend with the potsherds of the earth their equals, but not with God their Creator, who is more than a match for them; he sees impurity where man sees it not, and can bring a charge against him, and support it, where he thought there was none, and therefore it is a vain thing to enter the lists with him:

[that] I should answer him; not to questions put by him, but in a judicial way to charges and accusations he should exhibit; no man in this sense can answer him, for one of a thousand he may bring, and men are chargeable with; wherefore Job once and again determines he would not pretend to answer him, as he knew he could not, see **Job 9:3**;

[and] we should come together in judgment; in any court of judicature, before any judge, to have the cause between us heard, and tried, and determined; for in what court of judicature can he be convened into? or what judge is there above him, before whom he can be summoned? or is capable of judging and determining the cause between us? there is the high court of heaven, where we must all appear, and the judgment seat of Christ, before which we must all stand; and God is the judge of all, to whom we must come, and by whose sentence we must be determined; but there is no court, no judge, no judgment superior to him and his; there is no annulling his sentence, or making an appeal from him to another; there is no coming together at all, and much less "alike" {p}, as some render it, or upon equal terms; the difference between him and his creatures being so vastly great.

{p} wdxy "pariter", Junius & Tremellius, Drusius.

Job 9:33

Ver. 33. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us,.... Or "one that reproves" {q}; who upon hearing a cause reproves him that is found guilty, or is blameworthy, or has done injury to another; but there is no such person to be found, among angels or men, capable of this, supposing, as if Job should say, I should appear to be the injured person; or there is no "umpire" or "arbitrator" {r}, to whom the case between us can be referred; for, as Bar Tzemach observes, he that stands in such a character between two parties must be both more wise and more mighty than they; but there is none among all beings wiser and mightier than God:

[that] might lay his hand upon us both; and restrain them from using any violence to one another, as contending persons are apt to do; and compromise matters, settle and adjust things in difference between them, so as to do justice to both, and make both parties easy, and make peace between them. Herodotus {s} makes mention of a custom among the Arabians,

"when they enter into covenants and agreements with each other, another man stands in the midst of them both, and with a sharp stone cuts the inside of the hands of the covenanters near the larger fingers; and then takes a piece out of each of their garments, and anoints with the blood seven stones that lie between them; and while he is doing this calls upon a deity, and when finished the covenant maker goes with his friends to an host or citizen, if the affair is transacted with a citizen; and the friends reckon it a righteous thing to keep the covenant."

To which, or some such custom, Job may be thought to allude. Now, whereas Christ is the daysman, umpire and mediator between God and men, who has interposed between them, and has undertaken to manage affairs relating to both; in things pertaining to God, the glory of his justice, and the honour of his law, and to made reconciliation for the sins of men, and to make peace for them with God by the blood of his cross; which he has completely done, being every way qualified for it, inasmuch as he partakes of both natures, and is God and man in one person, and so could put his hand on both, and make both one; or bring them who were at variance to an entire agreement with each other, upon such a bottom, as even the strict justice of God cannot object unto. Now, I say, Job must not be understood as if he was ignorant of this, for he had knowledge of Christ as a Redeemer and Saviour, and so as the Mediator and Peacemaker; the Septuagint version renders it as a wish, "O that there was a mediator between us!" and so it may be considered as a prayer for Christ's incarnation, and that he would appear and do the work of a mediator he was appointed to, which Job plainly saw there was great need of; or, as others {t}, "there is no daysman yet"; there will be one, but as yet he is not come; in due time he will, which Job had faith in and full assurance of: but there is no need of such versions and glosses: Job is here not speaking of the affair of salvation, about which he had no doubt, he knew his state was safe, and he had an interest in the living Redeemer and blessed Mediator; but of the present dispensation of Providence, and of the clearing of that up to the satisfaction of his friends, so that he might appear to be an innocent person; and since God did not think fit to change the scene, there was none to interpose on his behalf, and it was in vain for him to contend with God.

{q} xykwm "arguens", Montanus, Bolducius, Drusius; "redarguens", Vatablus, Mercerus. {r} "Arbiter", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens. {s} Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 8. {t} So some in Caryll.

Job 9:34

Ver. 34. Let him take his rod away from me,.... Not his government over him, of which the rod or sceptre is an ensign, Job did not want to be freed from that; but, his rod of affliction, or stroke, as the Targum, the stroke of his hand, which, though a fatherly chastisement, lay heavy upon him, and depressed his spirits; so that he could not, while it was on him, reason so freely about things as he thought he could if it was removed, and for which he here prays:

and let not his fear terrify me; not the fear of him as a father, which is not terrifying, but the fear of him as a judge; the terror of his majesty, the dread of his wrath and vengeance, the fearful apprehensions he had of him as a God of strict justice; that would by no means clear the guilty, yea, would not hold him innocent, though he was with respect to the charge of his friends; being now without those views of him as a God gracious and merciful; to these words Elihu seeks to have respect, Job 33:6.

Job 9:35

Ver. 35. [Then] would I speak, and not fear him,.... With a servile fear, though with reverence and godly fear; meaning either at the throne of grace, having liberty of access, boldness of spirit, and freedom of speech through Christ the Mediator, and in the view of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; for when the rod of his law and the terror of his justice are removed, and his grace and favour in Christ shown, a believer can speak boldly and freely to God, and not be afraid before him: but rather Job's sense is, that were the rod of his anger taken off and the dread of his majesty, which so awed him that he could not tell his case as it was, and use the arguments he might to advantage; he should speak without fear, and so as to defend himself, and make his cause to appear to be just; to this the Lord seems to refer in Job 38:3; being bold and daring expressions, which Job blushed when made sensible of it, Job 42:5;

but [it is] not so with me; there was no daysman between the Lord and him; the rod was not taken off his back, nor the dread and terror of the Almighty removed from him; and so could not speak in his own defence, as otherwise he might: or it was not so with him as his friends thought of him; he was not the wicked hypocritical man they took him to be, or as the afflictive dispensations of God made him to appear to be, according to their judgment of them: or the words may be rendered, "I am not so with myself" {u}; that is, he was not conscious to himself that he was such a person they judged him; or such were the troubles and afflictions that were upon him, that he was not himself, he was not "compos mentis", and so not capable on that account, as well as others, of pleading his own cause: or "I am not right in" or "with myself" {w}; not in his right mind, being distracted with the terrors of God, and the arrows of the Almighty that stuck in him; or he was not righteous in himself; for though he was clear of hypocrisy he was charged with, he did not pretend to be without sin, or to have such a righteousness as would justify him before God; and therefore desires things might be put upon the foot of grace, and not of strict justice.

{u} ydme ykna Nk al "non sic ego apud me", Pagninus, Montanus, Beza, Vatablus, Mercerus, Schmidt, Schultens. {w} "Quia non probus ego apud me", Bolducius; "quod non sim rectus apud me", Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 10

Job here declares the greatness of his afflictions, which made him weary of his life, and could not help complaining; entreats the Lord not to condemn him but show him the reason of his thus dealing with him, Job 10:1; and expostulates with him about it, and suggests as if it was severe, and not easily reconciled to his perfections, when he knew he was not a wicked man, Job 10:3; he puts him in mind of his formation and preservation of him, and after all destroyed him, Job 10:8; and represents his case as very distressed; whether he was wicked or righteous it mattered not, his afflictions were increasing upon him, Job 10:13;

and all this he observes, in order to justify his eager desire after death, which he renews,
Job 10:18; and entreats, since his days he had to live were but few, that God would give him some respite before he went into another state, which he describes, Job 10:20.

Ver. 1. My soul is weary of my life,.... And yet nothing of a temporal blessing is more desirable than life; every man, generally speaking, is desirous of life, and of a long life too; soul and body are near and intimate companions, and are usually loath to part; but Job was weary of his life, willing to part with it, and longed to be rid of it; he "loathed" it, and so it may be here rendered {x}, he would not live always, **Job 7:15**; his "soul" was uneasy to dwell any longer in the earthly tabernacle of his body, it being so full of pains and sores; for this weariness was not through the guilt of sin pressing him sore, or through the horror of conscience arising from it, so that he could not bear to live, as Cain and Judas; nor through indwelling sin being a burden to him, and a longing desire to be rid of it, and to be perfectly holy, to be with Christ in heaven, as the Apostle Paul, and other saints, at certain times; or through uneasiness at the sins of others, as Isaac and Rebekah, Lot, David, Isaiah, and others; nor on the account of the temptations of Satan, his fiery darts, his buffetings and siftings, which are very distressing; but on account of his outward afflictions, which were so very hard and pressing, and the apprehension he had of the anger and wrath of God, he treating him, as he thought, very severely, and as his enemy, together with the ill usage of his friends. The Targum renders it,

"my soul is cut off in my life;"

or I am dying while I live; I live a dying life, being in such pain of body, and distress of mind; and so other versions {y}:

I will leave my complaint upon myself: not that he would leave complaining, or lay it aside, though some {z} render it to this sense; rather give a loose to it, and indulge it, than attempt to ease himself, and give vent to his grief and sorrow by it; but it should be "upon himself", a burden he would take upon himself, and not trouble others with it; he would not burden their ears with his complaints, but privately and secretly utter them to himself; for the word {a} used signifies "meditation", private discourse with himself, a secret and inward "bemoaning" of his case; but he did not continue long in this mind, as appears by the following clause: or since I can do no other but complain; if there is any blame in it, I will take it wholly upon myself; complain I must, let what will be the consequence of it; see

Job 13:13; though the phrase may be rendered, as it is sometimes, "within myself", see Ho 11:8; {b}; and then the sense may be, shall I leave my inward moan within myself, and no longer contain? I will give myself vent; and though I have been blamed for saying so much as I have, I will say yet more:

I will speak in the bitterness of my soul: as one whose life is made bitter, against whom God had wrote and said bitter things, and had brought bitter afflictions upon him, which had occasioned bitter complaints in him, as well as he had been bitterly used by his friends; and amidst all this bitterness he is determined to speak out his mind freely and fully; or to speak "of the bitterness" {c} of his soul, and declare, by words, what he in his mind and body endured.

{x} yyxb yvpn hjqn "fastidit anima mea vitam meam", Beza, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {y} "Excisa est anima mea in vita mea", Pagninus, Vatablus; so Ben Gersom & Ben Melech. {z} So Junius & Tremellius. {a} yxyv "meditationem meam", Schindler, col. 1823. "my sighing", Broughton. {b} yle "intra me". Vid. Noldium, p. 701. {c} rmb "in vel de a maritudine", Mercerus.

Job 10:2

Ver. 2. I will say unto God, do not condemn me,.... Not that he feared eternal condemnation; there is none to them that are in Christ, and believe in him as Job did; Christ's undertakings, sufferings, and death, secure his people from the condemnation of law and justice; nor, indeed, are the afflictions of God's people a condemnation of them, but a fatherly chastisement, and are in order to prevent their being condemned with the world; yet they may look as if they were, in the eyes of the men of the world, and they as very wicked persons; and so the word may be rendered, "do not account me wicked" {d}, or treat me as a wicked man, by continuing thine afflicting hand upon the; which, as long as it was on him, his friends would not believe but that he was a wicked man; wherefore, as God knew he was not such an one as they took him to be, he begs that he would not use him as such, that so the censure he lay under might be removed; and though he was condemned by them, he entreats that God would make it appear he was not condemned by him: and whereas he was not conscious to himself of any notorious wickedness done by him, which deserved such usage, he further prays,

show me wherefore thou contendest with me. Afflictions are the Lord's controversy with his people, a striving, a contending with them; which are sometimes so sharp, that were they continued long, the spirits would fail before him, and the souls that he has made: now there is always a cause or reason for them, which God has in his own breast, though it is not always known to man, at least not at first, or as soon as the controversy or contention is begun; when God afflicts, it is either for sin, to prevent it, or purge from it, or to bring his people to a sense of it, to repent of it, and forsake it, or to try their graces, and make them more partakers of his holiness; and when good men, as Job, are at a loss about this, not being conscious of any gross iniquity committed, or a course of sin continued in, it is lawful, and right, and commendable, to inquire the reason of it, and learn, if possible, the end, design, and use of such dispensations.

{d} yneyvrt la "neque judices me improbum", Vatablus; so Schultens.

Job 10:3

Ver. 3. [Is it] good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress?.... This God does not approve of in others; he dehorts men from it; he threatens to punish those that do so, and to be a swift witness against them; he promises to arise to the help of the oppressed, and to be a refuge for them, and therefore will never do the same himself; it can never be pleasant to him, nor right and just in his sight, nor is it of any advantage to him. Job here suggests that his afflictions were an oppression to him; and, indeed, no affliction is joyous, but grievous, and sometimes the hand of God presses hard and sore, but then there is no injury nor any injustice done, as the word {e} here used signifies; and he intimates also, as if God took some seeming delight and pleasure in thus oppressing him, and therefore expostulates with him about it, as if such conduct was not fit and becoming him, not agreeable to his perfections, and could afford neither pleasure nor profit. This, and what follows in this verse, are expostulations too bold and daring, and in which Job uses too much freedom with the Almighty, and in which he is not so modest as in Job 10:2:

that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands? which he tacitly insinuates he did. Job means himself, who, as to his body, and the several members of it, were the work of God's hands, curiously and wonderfully made by him, as is afterwards expressed; and as to his soul, and the powers and faculties of it, they were his make, who is the Father of spirits; and moreover, as a new man, he was made by him, was the workmanship of God, and a curious piece indeed, created after his image in righteousness and true holiness; and he was in every sense the work of his hands, or "the labour of his hands" {f}; wrought with great care and labour, even with the "palms of his hands", as is the word {g} used; and could Job think that God "despised" such a work? he who, upon a survey of his works, said they were all very good; who forsakes not the work of his hands, nor despises the day of small things, could never do this; nor are afflictions to be interpreted in such a manner, as if God was indifferent unto, slighted and thought meanly of, what he himself has wrought; since these are so far from having such a meaning, that they flow from that great respect he has for his own work, and are for the good of it:

and shine upon the counsel of the wicked? either the counsel of the wicked one, Satan, who moved God to afflict him in the manner he had, or of the Sabeans and Chaldeans, who thrived and prospered, notwithstanding the injury they had done him; or of his friends, who consulted to brand his character with hypocrisy; or, rather, of wicked men in general, on whose counsel God may be thought to "shine", when it succeeds, and God seems to smile upon them in his providence, and they are in prosperous circumstances, and have what heart can wish, when good men are greatly afflicted; which sometimes has been a temptation, and greatly distressing, to the latter; see Ps 73:2; but this is not always the case; the counsel of the froward is sometimes carried headlong, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is made brutish, and that of Ahithophel was defeated by him; and whenever he seems to countenance it, it is to answer some ends of his glory.

{e} qvet "est opprimere vim injustam alicui facere", Schmidt. {f} eygy "laborem", Pagninus, Montanus, Schultens, Michaelis. {g} Kypk "volarum tuarum", Montanus, Bolducius.

Job 10:4

Ver. 4. Hast thou eyes of flesh?.... God has eyes, but not fleshly ones; he has eyes of love, grace, and mercy, which are always upon his people for good, and are never withdrawn from them; and he has eyes of displeasure and wrath on sinful men, to destroy them; these are not made of flesh, or like the eyes of flesh and blood, or of men; fleshy eyes cannot see at any great distance, and only in one place at a time, and only one object after another; they cannot see in the dark, and what they are, and only outward objects; and in these they are sometimes deceived, and at length fail: but the eyes of God see all things, at the greatest distance; he looks down from heaven, and beholds all the children of men on earth, and all their actions; his eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good; he can see in the dark as well as in the light, the darkness and the light are both alike to him; he beholds not only outward actions and visible objects, but the hearts of men, and all that is in them; nor is he ever deceived, nor will his sight ever fail: though Job, perhaps, may mean carnal eyes; that is, evil ones, as especially envious ones are: "is thine eye evil?" Mt 20:15; that is, envious; and it is as if Job should say, dost thou envy me my former prosperity and peace, that thou searchest so narrowly into my conduct to find iniquity in me, and take advantage against me?

or seest thou as man seeth? look with hatred and envy, as one man does upon another: so seemed the dispensations of God towards Job, as if he did, as he suggests.

Job 10:5

Ver. 5. [Are] thy days as the days of man?.... No, they are not: not so few; the days of the years of man's life in common are threescore years and ten, Ps 90:10; but a thousand years with the Lord are but as one day, **2Pe 3:8**; his days are days not of time, but of eternity: nor so mutable, or he so mutable in them; man is of one mind today, and of another tomorrow; but the Lord is in one mind one day as another; he is the Lord that changes not, **Mal 3:6**; immutable in his nature, purposes, promises, and affections: but Job suggests as if his dispensations towards him showed the contrary; one day smiling upon him, and heaping his favours on him, and the next frowning on him, and stripping him of all: but this was a wrong way of judging; for, though God may change the dispensations of his providence towards men, and particularly his own people, his nature changes not, nor does he change his will, his purposes, and designs, nor his love and affection:

[are] thy years as man's days? as few as they, or fail like them? no, he is the same, and his years fail not, and has the same good will to his people in adverse as well as in prosperous dispensations of his providence. Some understand all this in such sense, in connection with what follows, as if Job had observed, that since God was omniscient, and knew and saw all persons and things, his eyes not being like men's eyes, eyes of flesh; and since he was eternal, and wanted not for time, there was no need for him to take such methods as he did with him, through afflictive providences, to find out his sin; since, if he was guilty, it was at once known to him; nor need he be in such haste to do it, since his time was not short, as it is with an envious and ill natured man, who is for losing no time to find out and take an advantage of

him he bears an ill will unto.

Job 10:6

Ver. 6. That thou enquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin?] Narrowly examined every action of his life, to find something amiss in them; and took notice of every weakness and infirmity, and aggravated it, to make it appear as sinful as it could be, and watched every halting and failing, that he might have something against him as a reason why he afflicted him; dealing with him as if there was no Messiah, no Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour, provided, appointed, and promised; and as if there was no forgiveness of sin, through him, for him: sin pardoned for his sake is covered, that when it is sought for it shall not be found; so that when it is not pardoned, or not thought to be so, it lies open, and upon inquiry to be found, charged, and punished for; see **Job 7:21**; this search and inquiry seems to have been made by afflictions; at least Job imagined that the design of God in them was to put him upon the rack, and bring him to a confession of sin, find in this way find an occasion against him: now such a method as this, Job thought, was unbecoming the greatness, majesty, and perfections of God; and was quite needless, since his eyes were not human nor shortsighted, that obliged him to pore and pry into things, but were omniscient, and could see at once whether there was any evil way in him or not; nor was he as men, short lived, which obliged him to make use of his time while he had it, to get an advantage of another; and besides, such a method of acting seemed to him very extraordinary, when he full well knew he was an innocent person, as follows.

Job 10:7

Ver. 7. Thou knowest that I am not wicked,.... Or "in", or "upon thy knowledge {a} [it is] that I am not wicked"; it is a thing well known, quite clear, and manifest, without making such a search and inquiry: not that he thought himself without sin, and could appeal to the omniscience of God for the truth of that; for he had confessed before that he was a sinner, and wicked, as to his nature and birth, and the many infirmities of life; see **Job 7:20**; but that he was not that wicked person, and an hypocrite, as his friends took him to be, and as might be concluded from the sore afflictions that were upon him; he did not live in sin, nor indulge himself in a vicious course of life; sin had not the dominion over him, and he had not secretly cherished any reigning iniquity, and lived in the commission of it: and for the truth of this he could appeal to the searcher of hearts; and yet he so closely pursued, and so strictly examined him, as if he suspected he was thus guilty:

and [there is] none that can deliver out of thine hand; that is, out of his afflicting hand, until he please to release him from it himself; for this is not to be understood of deliverance from the avenging hand of justice, from hell and wrath, and everlasting destruction; for there is one that can and does deliver his people from sin and Satan; from the world, the law, its curses and condemnation, and from wrath to come; and from the hands of justice, having made full satisfaction to it: but what Job observes that God knew was, that neither he himself, nor any angel, nor man, nor any creature, could take him out of his hand in which be was; and therefore suggests, not only that his condition was extremely bad, distressed, and miserable, but that there was no necessity for God to he so quick upon him, and so strict in his inquiry into him; nor of enclosing him about on all hands with afflictions, since, there was no danger of his escaping from him, or of others assisting him in and facilitating such an attempt: and this he full well knew; for so the words are connection with the preceding: "and thou knowest [that] there is none", &c. {b}, as well as with what follows, as some think.

{a} Kted le "in notitia tua est", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Beza; so Michaelis. {b} So Bolducius, Drusius, Schmidt, Michaelis, and Bar Tzemach.

Job 10:8

Ver. 8. Thine hands have made me, and fashioned together round about,.... This and what follow are an illustration of and an enlargement upon, the work of God's hands, made mention of in Job 10:3; and suggest reasons why it should not be despised by him, as well as confirm what was just now said, that none could deliver him out of his hands; since his hands had made him, and therefore had such power over him as none else had: and the whole seems designed to move to pity and compassion of him; for not he himself, nor his parents, but God only had made him; he was his workmanship only, and a curious piece it was, which his hands of power and wisdom had nicely formed; for, though the Son and Spirit of God are not to be excluded from the formation of man, yet it seems a too great strain of the words to interpret "hands" of them, as some do; and much less are they to be understood literally of the hands of the Son of God appearing in an human form at the creation of man, since such an appearance is not certain; nor is Job speaking of the formation of the first man, but of himself: the first word {c}, rendered "made", has the signification of labour, trouble, grief, and care; and is used of God after the manner of men, who, when things are done well by them, take a great deal of pains, and are very solicitous and careful in doing them; and from hence is a word which is sometimes used for an idol, as Gersom observes, because much labour and skill are exercised to form it in the most curious and pleasing manner; many interpreters, as Aben Ezra observes, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, explain it of God's creating the body of man with nerves, by which it is bound, compacted, and strengthened {d}; and the latter word denotes the form and configuration of it, the beautiful order and proportion in which every part is set; and the whole is intended to observe the perfection of the human body, and the exquisite skill of the author of it; and what pity is it that it should be so marred and spoiled! and this is said to be made and fashioned "together", or all at once; the several parts of it being in the seed, in the embryo, all together, though gradually formed or brought into order; or rather this denotes the unity and compactness of the several members of the body, which are set in their proper place, and joined and fitted together, by joints and bands, and by that which every joint supplieth: and this is done "round about", on all sides, in every part; or, as Mr. Broughton renders it, "in every point"; the whole of it, and every member, even the most extreme and minute, are curiously formed and fashioned by the Lord; or rather, thine hands are together round about me; embracing, sustaining, and preserving him ever since he was made:

yet thou dost destroy me; this body, so extremely well wrought, by boils or ulcers; or "swallow me" {e}, as a lion, to which he compares him, Job 10:16; or any other ravenous and large creature, see **La 2:2**; some connect the words more agreeably to the accents, "yet thou dost destroy me together round about" {f}; or on every side, as in
Job 19:10; having smitten him with boils from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet, and stripped him of his substance and his family all at once; and so it denotes utter destruction: some read the words interrogatively, "and wilt thou destroy or swallow me?" {g} after thou hast taken so much pains, and been at such labour and trouble, speaking after the manner of men, to make such a curious piece of work, and yet with one stroke destroy it and dash it in pieces, or swallow it up as a morsel at once.

{c} ynwbue "elaboraverunt me", Tigurine version, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Codurcus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis. {d} "Nervis colligarunt", Schultens. {e} ynelbtw "et degluties me", Montanus, Bolducius; "et tamen absorbeas me", Schmidt; "absorbes me", Schultens, Michaelis. {f} So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius. {g} "Absorbes me?" Beza, Mariana.

Job 10:9

Ver. 9. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay,.... Not of the clay, though man was made originally of the dust of the earth, and the bodies of men are houses of clay, earthen vessels, and earthly tabernacles, but "as the clay"; either as the clay is wrought in the hand of the potter, and worked into what form, and made into what vessel he pleases, so are men in the hand of God, made by him in what form, and for what use and end he thinks fit; or rather this denotes not the likeness of the operation, but the likeness of the matter of the human body to clay: not for the impurity of it; for though man is in a state and condition comparable to the mire and clay, this he has brought himself into by sin, and not the Lord; he made man upright, but man has made himself sinful and polluted; but for the brittleness of it; as a vessel made of clay is brittle and easily broke to pieces, and cannot bear much weight, or any heavy stroke; so the body of man is weak and frail, and feeble; its strength is not the strength of stones, and its flesh brass, but clay: and this Job humbly entreats the Lord would "remember", and that "now" {h}; immediately; and deal mildly and mercifully with him, since he was not able to bear the weight of his hand, which would soon, crush him and break him to pieces; not that God forgets this, for he remembers man's frame and composition, that he is but dust; that he is flesh, and a wind or vapour that passes away: but he may seem to do so, when he sorely afflicts, and his hand lies heavy, and he does not remove it, but continues it, and rather in creases the affliction; and therefore, as the Lord allows his people to put him in remembrance, Job here desires that he would show himself, in his providential dealings with him, that he was mindful of his natural frailty and infirmity; see **Job 7:12**
Ps 78:3;

and wilt thou bring me into dust again? to the dust of death; to the original of which he was made; and that so soon, and at once; or, "and unto dust will return me?" as Mr. Broughton and others {i}, according to the original sentence, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return", **Ge 3:19**; and which Job expected, and will be the case of all men, Ec 12:7; and therefore he thought that this might suffice, that it was enough that he should die in a little while through the course of nature, and therefore desires he might have some respite and ease while he did live; he could not see there was any occasion to press him so hard, and follow him so close with afflictions one after another, or be so rough with him and quick upon him; since in a short time his brittle clay would break of itself, and he should drop into the dust and lie decaying there, as it was of old decreed he should.

{h} an "nunc", Drusius; so the Targum. {i} ynbyvt "reducturus", Schmidt, Schultens; "reduces me?" V. L. Beza, Michaelis; "redire facies me?" Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius.

Job 10:10

Ver. 10. Hast thou not poured me out as milk,.... Expressing, in modest terms, his conception from the seed of his parents, comparable to milk, from being a liquid, and for its colour:

and curdled me like cheese? that of the female being mixed with, and heated by the male, is hardened like the curd of which a cheese is made, and begins to receive a form as that, and becomes an embryo: and naturalists {k} make use of the same expressions when speaking of these things; and in this way most interpreters carry the sense of the words; but Schultens observes that milk is an emblem of purity and holiness, see **La 4:7**; and so this may respect the original pure formation of man, who came out of his Maker's hands a pure, holy and upright creature, made after his image and in his likeness, created in righteousness and holiness, and so, like milk, pure and white; or rather the regeneration and sanctification of Job personally, and which might be very early, as in Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and others; or however, he was filled and adorned with the gifts and graces of the spirit of God, was washed and cleansed, and sanctified and justified; and had his conversation in the world in all simplicity and godly sincerity, being preserved from gross enormities in life; was a man that feared God and eschewed evil, and had not only the form of godliness, but the power of it; and was established and confirmed in and by the grace of God, and was strong in the exercise of it; and from hence he argues with God, should such a vessel of grace, whom he had made so pure and holy, and had so consolidated and strengthened in a spiritual and religious way, be crushed and destroyed at once?

{k} "Sic semen maris dicitur" pitua, Aristot. de Gen. Animal. l. 1. c. 20. "coagulum". Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 15. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 3. c. 16.

Job 10:11

Ver. 11. Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh,.... The bones with flesh, which is the under garment, and the flesh with skin, which is the upper; which is artificially composed of intricate little arteries, veins, nerves, and glands, through which the blood continually circulates, and through innumerable pores, and transpires, of which pores 125,000 may be covered with a small grain of sand {l}, amazing! Timaeus Locrus {m} calls them invisible little mouths; see Eze 37:6; the order of generation seems to be observed; after the semen is hardened and consolidated, the inward parts are formed, and then the outward parts, the flesh and skin, to protect and defend them; and so are compared to clothes which are outside a man, and put about him; Porphyry {n} calls the body the clothing of the soul; see **2Co 5:4**; the spiritual clothing of Job was the righteousness of his living Redeemer, who was to partake of the same flesh and blood with him, and stand on the earth in the fulness of time, and work out and bring in a righteousness for him, consisting of his obedience in life in the days of his flesh, and of his sufferings and death, or blood, by which he and every believer are justified before God; and with which being clothed, shall not be found naked:

and hast fenced me with bones and sinews; the bones are said by philosophers {o} to be the fences of the marrow, and the flesh the covering of them; the bones are the strength and stability of the human body; the sinews or nerves bind and hold the several parts of it together, and are of great use for its strength and motion: the bones, some of them are as pillars to support it, as those of the legs and thighs; and others are of use to act for it, offensively and defensively, as those of the hands and arms; and others are a cover and fence of the inward parts, as the ribs: Gussetius {p} seems inclined, could he have found an instance of the word being used for making a tent, which it has the signification of, to have rendered the words,

"with bones and sinews, thou hast given ate the form of a tabernacle; or, thou hast made me to be a tent;"

so the human body is called a tabernacle, **2Co 5:1**; the skin and flesh being like veils or curtains, which cover; the bones are in the room of stakes, and the nerves instead of cords, the breast and belly a cavity: in a spiritual sense, a believer's strength lies in the grace of Christ, in the Lord, and in the power of his might; his defence is the whole armour of God provided for him, particularly the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, and the breastplate of righteousness, with which he is fenced and protected from every spiritual enemy; and will God suffer such an one to be destroyed, whom he hath taken such care of, both in a natural and spiritual manner?

{l} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 681. {m} De Anima Mundi, p. 18. {n} De Antro Nymph. {o} Timaeus Locrus, ib. p. 15. {p} Ebr. Comment. p. 555, 556.

Job 10:12

Ver. 12. Thou hast granted me life and favour,.... Or "lives" {q}; natural life; both in the womb, where and when he was quickened, and at his birth, when he was brought into the world, and began to live in it; the rational soul may be intended, by which he lived; which, when created and infused into man, and united to his body, he becomes a living man; it is the presence of that which causes life, and the absence or removal of that which causes death; and this is a "grant" or gift from God, who gives to all his creatures life and breath, and all things; see Job 33:4; and is a "favour" also; a mercy, the chief of mercies; it is more than meat; yea, all a man has he will give for his life: besides this, Job had a spiritual life, a principle of it implanted in him; God had quickened him when dead in trespasses and sins; the spirit of life from Christ had entered into him, and he was become a living spiritual man: this likewise was a "grant" from God, a free grace gift of his; it is he that gives the living water, and gives it freely, or it would not be grace; for it is a "favour" which flows from the free grace and good will of God; it is owing to the great love wherewith he loves men that he quickens them; his time is a time of love, and so of life; and eternal life is the consequent of this, and is inseparably connected with it; and Job had an interest in it, a right unto it, and a meetness for it; he bad knowledge of it, faith in it, and hope of enjoying it, and knew that after death he should live this life; see Job 19:26; and this is a gift of God through Christ, owing to his good pleasure, the fruit of his favour and loving kindness: though by "favour" may be meant something distinct from life; either the care of him in the womb, and the taking of him out from thence, which are sometimes observed as singular mercies and favours; see Ps 22:9; or the beauty and comeliness of his body, such as was on Moses, David, and others; see Pr 31:30; or rather it intends in general all the temporal blessings of life, food and raiment, every thing necessary for the comfort and support of life; and which are all mercies and favours, and what men are undeserving of; and especially spiritual blessings, or the blessings of grace; and the word here used is often used for grace and mercy, and may signify the several graces of the Spirit bestowed in regeneration, as faith, hope, love, &c. which are all the gifts of God, and the effects of his favour and good will; as also the blessings of, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace; all which Job was favoured with, as well as with supplies of grace from time to time, and the fresh discoveries of the favour and loving kindness of God to him, which is better than life:

and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit; kept him alive, in a natural sense, while in the womb, as Jarchi, where he was in a wonderful manner nourished; and when he came out from thence, exposed to many difficulties and dangers, and during his helpless and infant state, and amidst a variety of troubles throughout the whole of his life hitherto; and which was owing to God's visitation of him in a way of mercy every morning; and which was no other than his providence or daily care of him, and concern for him; and so Mr. Broughton renders it "thy providence" {r}, and so some others: likewise he preserved his soul or spirit in a spiritual sense, in Christ Jesus, in whose bands he put him; he hid his life in him, and bound it up in the bundle of life with him; he kept him by his power as in a garrison, and preserved him safe to his kingdom and glory; and this is to be ascribed to his visitation of him in a way of grace, through the redemption of Christ, and the effectual calling of the blessed Spirit, and the constant supplies of grace vouchsafed from time to time: the Targum is, "thy remembrance": for it is owing to God's remembrance of his people that he visits them, either in providence or grace; and when he visits them with his providence, or with his gracious presence and protection, it is plain he remembers them: now since God had favoured him with such blessings of nature, providence, and grace, he reasons with him about his present circumstances; that, after all this, surely he would not destroy him and cut him off; at least he knew not how well to reconcile past favours with such hard and severe usage as he thought he met with from him.

{q} Myyx "vitas", Montanus, Bolducius. {r} Ktdqp "providentia tua", Tigurine version, Munster, Michaelis.

Job 10:13

Ver. 13. And these [things] thou hast hid in thine heart,.... Meaning, either the mercies and favours he had indulged him with; these he seemed to conceal and suppress the memory of, as if they had never been, by a different conduct and behaviour; or rather, these he had laid up in his mind and memory, and had full knowledge and remembrance of; though he dealt with him in the manner he did, he could not forget his former favours to him, which, when compared with his present dealings, were very unlike: or, it may be best to understand these things of his afflictions and troubles, which, notwithstanding his being the work of his hand so curiously formed, and notwithstanding all his temporal and spiritual mercies, he had in his heart purposed, and decreed in his mind, and laid up in his treasures, in order to be brought forth in due time, and to exercise him with; these were the things he had appointed for him, and many such things were with him, as it follows:

I know that this [is] with thee; either that he was not ignorant and forgetful of what he had done in a kind way; or rather, that he had this in his mind, and it was an eternal purpose of his to afflict him in the manner he had done: some connect these words with Job 10:14, as if the sense was, these are what thou hast hid in thine heart, and this is what I know is with thee, "if I sin", &c. {s}.

{s} So Coceeius, Schmidt.

Job 10:14

Ver. 14. If I sin, then thou markest me,.... Or "observest me" {t}; that is, he took notice of his sins, strictly inquired into them and all the circumstances of them, watched the motions and progress of them, and carefully laid them up, in order to bring them out against him another day, and afflict or punish him for them; or he set a watch about him, "kept [him] in" {u}, and enclosed him on every side with affliction, as if he was in a watch or prison, as Gersom; or, "wilt thou keep me" {w}? that is, in such close confinement: Gussetius {x} renders it, "if I have offered a sacrifice for sin", as the word is sometimes used; signifying, that though he should, as no doubt he did, offer sacrifice for himself, as it is certain he did for his children, yet even that was not regarded by the Lord; he still marked and observed him and his sins, and would not forgive him, or absolve him from his sins, as follows; see **Job 7:12**;

and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity; clear him of it, and discharge him from it; pronounce him innocent, or pardon him; but, on the contrary, hold him guilty, and deal with him as such in a rigorous way; or wilt not "cleanse" or purify me, as the Targum and others {y}, but let me continue, or treat me as an impure person, not fit for communion or converse.

{t} yntrmv "observasti me", Beza, Mercerus; "tum observas me", Schmidt. {u} "Custodisti me", Drusius. {w} "Custodies me", Vatablus. {x} Ebr. Comment. p. 923. {y} ynqnt "mundabis", Mercerus; "mundes", Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius; "purges me", Junius & Tremellius.

Job 10:15

Ver. 15. If I be wicked, woe is me,.... In this world, and to all eternity; afflictions will abide me here, and everlasting wrath hereafter: these are the woes that belong to a wicked man; that is, a profane and abandoned sinner, that lives in sin, and gives up himself to all manner of wickedness; the Targum is,

"destruction to me from the great judgment;"

utter ruin is my portion, as it is of all wicked and unrighteous persons, **Isa 3:11**;

and [if] I be righteous, [yet] will I not lift up my head; live a holy life and conversation, be righteous in the sight of men, and behave so as not to know anything by himself, nor to be conscious of living in any known sin; yet he could not take any comfort from it, or have any pleasure in it, or speak peace to himself on account of it, or glory in it and make his boast of it; or lift up his head before God with boldness and confidence, who is so pure and holy, and his eyes so quick in discerning the sins of men: a good man derives his peace and comfort, not from his own righteousness, but from the righteousness of Christ, and puts his confidence in that only; he blushes, and is ashamed of his own; and cannot, nay, "dare not lift up his head", as Mr. Broughton, the Tigurine version, and others render it, through shame, being sensible that nothing of his own can stand before an holy God, or give him joy, peace, and pleasure there; the Targum adds, "before the ungodly"; but this a man may do before men, when he cannot before God:

[I am] full of confusion; being in such a dilemma; let him be what he would, he was sure to have affliction, sorrow, and distress, so that he knew not what to say or do; or "reproach" {z}, which he was loaded with by his friends, and was occasioned by his afflictions, they judging from thence that he was a wicked man, and justly punished for his sins; the word used signifies a burning heat, such as a than feels in his breast, and which flushes in his face, when he is filled with anger or with shame:

therefore see thou mine affliction; not with his eye of omniscience, that he knew he did, but with an eye of pity and compassion, and deliver him from it; or, "I am full with seeing mine affliction", as Jarchi; or, "[I am one] that sees affliction" {a}; that has an experience of it; sees it all around me, and nothing else, **La 3:1**; am a "spectator" {b} of it, as some render it; but not a mere spectator, but one that has a sensible feeling of it: some take this and the former clause both to be an address to God, and render them, "be satisfied with confusion, and behold my affliction", as Broughton and others {c}; let the present calamity and confusion I am in be sufficient; let no more be laid upon me; be content with what has been done, and pity me, and do not lay thine hand heavier upon me, and add to my afflictions, as he thought he did, by what follows.

{z} zwlq "contumeliis", Tigurine version; "ignominia", Pagninus, Montanus, Beza, Vatablus, Mercerus, Piscator, Michaelis. {a} yyne harw "et videns afflictionem", Beza, Vatablus, Mercerus, Piscator. {b} "Et spectator adflictionis meae", Schultens. {c} "Satiare ignominia", Junius & Tremellius.

Job 10:16

Ver. 16. For it increaseth,.... That is, the affliction increaseth; which is a reason why pity should be shown him, seeing his troubles instead of abating were growing upon him; he had as much, or more, than he could well bear, and yet more was added to it; so that he was an object of compassion: or, "it lifteth itself up" {c}; these proud waves of affliction rise, swell, and lift themselves on high, and threaten to overwhelm and utterly destroy; some render it as a "wish, oh, that it increased" {d}; that it would come to its height, and quickly and at once put an end to this miserable life of mine: Job's affliction was a lingering one, it proceeded slowly; he wished it would make more haste, and become stronger, and soon dispatch him; see **Job 6:9**;

thou huntest me as a fierce lion; as the ramping shakal, as Mr. Broughton; the lion rampant, that is hungry, fierce, and ravenous, that pursues its prey with great eagerness, and never leaves till it comes up to it, when it seizes and devours it at once; or it, the affliction, hunteth me, pursues me closely, and will not leave, but threatens destruction to me; or rather, thou, that is God, who is often in Scripture compared to a lion, particularly when afflicting, or about to afflict the sons of men; see Isa 38:13; some {e} interpret the words, as if Job was compared to a lion hunted by men, at which darts were cast, for which nets were prepared, and pits were dug: according to this sense Job was dealt with as if, in the time of his prosperity, he had been like a fierce and cruel lion, preying upon and oppressing others; now the Lord was taking methods with him, both to restrain him from hurting others, and to chastise him for what he had done to them: but it would be much better to consider this in a light more agreeable to Job's character as a good man, a righteous one, who is as bold as a lion, and fears nothing, Pr 28:1; and such an one was Job; and in his prosperity lifted up his head and walked boldly, and consequently not fearing the frowns of men, nor the malice of Satan; but now this lion was hunted by the Lord himself, and compassed with his net, Job 19:6; and to this sense is the version of Schultens, connecting the words with the preceding clause, "him therefore, who walked high as a lion, thou humblest"; he who before carried his head high, being afraid of none, is now hunted down, and lies low enough, prostrate and distressed:

and again thou showest thyself marvellous upon me; or, "thou returnest {f} and showest", &c. after he had afflicted him in one way, he returned and afflicted him in another; and he not only repeated his afflictions, but devised new ways of afflicting him, uncommon ones, such as raised admiration in all beholders, as things rare and uncommon do: Job's afflictions were surprising ones; to be stripped at once of his substance, servants, children, and health; and it might be more wonderful to some, that God, so gracious and merciful as he is, should afflict in such a severe and rigorous manner; and especially that he should afflict so good a man, one so just and upright as Job was, in such a way: and it was even marvellous to Job himself, who was at a loss to account for it, not being conscious to himself of any gross enormity he had committed, or of a sinful course of life, or of anyone sin he had indulged to, wherefore God should come forth "against" {g} him as an enemy, in so terrible a manner: so some render the particle.

{c} hagyw "attollit sese", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Mercerus. {d} So Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Bolducius. {e} So Jarchi and Nachmanides; to which sense the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions incline. {f} bvtw "et reverteris", Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius, Vatablus, Mercerus; so Beza. {g} yb "adversum me", Beza; "contra me", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius.

Job 10:17

Ver. 17. Thou renewest thy witnesses against me,.... Not the devils, as some, nor Job's friends, as others; but rather afflictions, which were daily renewed, and frequently repeated, new troubles coming continually one upon another; which were brought as fresh witnesses against him, which made the suit tiresome to him, the trial to last the longer, which he wished was at end, that the decisive sentence might be pronounced and executed, and he be dispatched at once; but instead of that the affair was protracted by bringing in one witness after another, or one affliction upon the back of another, which were brought as witnesses "before him" {a}, as some render it; either to accuse him, and convince of sin, or as proofs of God's indignation against him, as in the next clause; or they were witnesses against him with the profane world, and even with his friends, who from hence concluded he must have been, and was, a wicked man, that had so many and such great afflictions laid upon him, and these continued and repeated; of which they judged these were full and sufficient proofs and testimonies. Schultens renders it, "thy incursions", and interprets it of instruments of hunting, as nets and the like, to which afflictions may be compared:

and increasest thine indignation upon me; the tokens of it, by increasing afflictions, and the sense of it in his mind; for from his afflictions, and the increase of them, he judged of the indignation of God upon him, or "against him" {b}, and the increase of it; as these were daily renewed, and were greater and greater, so was the sense he had of the wrath and displeasure of God against him; see **Job 6:4**;

changes and war [are] against me; or "with me", or "upon me" {c}; by changes are meant the various afflictive providences which attended him, which were repeated, or succeeded one another in their turns; great changes he had undergone in his estate and substance, from the greatest man in the east now become the poorest; in his family, his servants and children being destroyed; in his body, being covered with boils; and in his mind, being filled with a sense of God's displeasure, and under the hidings of his face: and "war" was against him on every side, not only the law in his members was warring against the law of his mind, his corruptions working powerfully under his afflictions; and he was conflicting with Satan, and his principalities and powers; but even his friends were at war with him, yea, God himself, in his opinion, counted and treated him as an enemy. Job was in a warfare state, and his afflictions came upon him like troops, and charged him one after another; or his afflictions were like an "army" {d} as the word may be rendered, many and numerous; and these were either repeated, or new ones succeeded others; different afflictions in their turns came upon him, and particularly an army of worms were continually running to and fro upon him; see **Job 7:5**; the word is rendered an "appointed time", **Job 7:1**; and so some take it here, and may signify that all the changes and vicissitudes in life he passed through, the various afflictions that came upon him, were at the set and appointed time, as well as there was an appointed time for him on earth, until his last change came.

{a} ydgn "coram me", Pagninus, Montanus, Beza, Mercerus, Schmidt, Schultens. {b} ydme "adversus me", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens; so Vatablus. {c} yme "mecum", Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius, Morcerus, Schmidt; "apud me", Beza, Piscator, Cocceius. {d} abu "militia", Montanus, Bolducius; "exercitus", Beza, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Schmidt, Schultens.

Job 10:18

Ver. 18. Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb?.... Into this world; this act is rightly ascribed by Job to the Lord, as it is by David, Ps 22:9; which kind act of God Job complains of, and wishes it had never been, seeing his life was now so miserable and uncomfortable; here he returns to his former complaints, wishes, and expostulations, expressed with so much vehemence and passion in
Job 10:3; and for which his friends blamed him, and endeavoured to convince him of his error in so doing; but it does not appear that their arguments carried any force in them with him, or had any effect upon him; he still continues in the same mind, and by repeating justifies what he had said; and thought he had sufficient reason to wish he had never been born, that he had died in the womb, since his afflictions were so very great and increasing, and since God pursued him as a fierce lion; and, according to his sense of things, his indignation against him appeared more and more, and his life was a continued succession of trouble and distress:

and that I had given up the ghost; that is, in the womb, and had never been brought out of it, at least alive; or it may be rendered not as a wish, but as an affirmation, "I should have given up the ghost"; or, "so or then I should have expired" {e}; if such care had not been taken of me, if God had not been so officious to me as to take me out of my mother's womb at the proper time, I should have died in it, and that would have been my grave; and which would have been more eligible than to come into the world, and live such a miserable life as I now live:

and no eye had seen me! no eye would have seen him, had he not been taken out of the womb; or however if he had died directly, would not have seen him alive; and an abortive or stillborn child few see, or care to see; and had he been such an one, he had never been seen in the circumstances he now was; and by this he suggests, that he was now such a shocking sight as was not fit to be seen by men, and which would have been prevented had he died in the womb.

{e} ewga "expirabo", Montanus; "expirassem", Mercerus, Cocceius, Schmidt, Schultens.

Job 10:19

Ver. 19. I should have been as though I had not been,.... For though it cannot be said absolutely of such an one, an abortive or untimely birth, that it is a nonentity, or never existed; yet comparatively it is as if it never had a being; it being seen by none or very few, it having had no name, nor any conversation among men; but at once buried, and buried in forgetfulness, as if no such one had ever been; see **Ec 6:3**. This Job wished for, for so some render it, "oh, that I had been as though I had never been" {f}; and then he would have never been involved in such troubles he was, he would have been free from all his afflictions and distresses, and never have had any experience of the sorrows that now surrounded him:

I should have been carried from the womb to the grave; if he had not been brought out of it, the womb had been his grave, as in Jer 20:17; or if he had died in it, and had been stillborn, he would quickly have been carried to his grave; he would have seen and known nothing of life and of the world, and the things in it; and particularly of the troubles that attend mortals here: his passage in it and through it would have been very short, or none at all, no longer than from the womb to the grave; and so should never have known what sorrow was, or such afflictions he now endured; such an one being in his esteem happier than he; see **Ec 4:3**.

{f} So Vatablus, Piscator, and some in Mercerus.

Job 10:20

Ver. 20. [Are] not my days few?.... They are so, the days of every man are but few; see Job 14:1; the remainder of Job's days were but few; considering the course of nature, and especially the sore afflictions he had on him, it could not be thought his days on earth were many; in all likelihood, according to human probability, he had but a few days to live: or "are not my days a small little thing" {g}? it is as an hand's breadth, as nothing before God, Ps 39:5;

cease [then]; that is, from afflicting him; since he had so short a time to live, he requests there might be some intermission of his trouble; that he might have some intervals of comfort and refreshment, that not all his days, which were so few, should be spent in grief and sorrow: some connect this with the preceding clause, and which is most agreeable to the accents, "shall not the fewness of my days cease" {h}? I have but a few days, and these few days will soon cease; therefore give me some respite from my afflictions; and so the Targum,

"are not my days swift and ceasing?"

[and] let me alone; do not follow me with afflictions, or disturb and distress me with them; but take off thine hand, that I may have some rest and ease; see **Job 7:10**; or "put from me"; thine anger, as Kimchi, or thine army, as Junius and Tremellius; or thy camp, as Cocceius; that is, decamp from me, remove thy troops, the changes and war that are against me, by which I am besieged, surrounded, and straitened; let me be delivered from them:

that I may take comfort a little; that he might have some breathing time, some respite from his troubles, some refreshment to his spirit, some reviving to his fainting soul, some renewing of strength, before he departed this life; see Ps 39:13; so Aben Ezra and Gersom render it: "that I may be strengthened"; or that his heart might gather strength.

{g} ymy jem alh "nonne parum dies mei?" Montanus, Bolducius, Schmidt; "paucum quid", Vatablus, Beza, Mercerus. {h} "An non param, vel paucitas dierum meorum cessabit?" Cocceius; "annon pauxillulum dierum meorum deficiet?" Schultens.

Job 10:21

Ver. 21. Before I go [whence] I shall not return,.... Before he went out of the world, the way of all flesh, to the grave, his long home, from whence there is no return to this world, and to the business and affairs of it; to a man's house, his family and his friends, to converse with them as before, there will be no return until the resurrection, which Job does not here deny, as some have thought; it was a doctrine he well understood, and strongly asserts in Job 19:26; but this must be understood in the same sense as in **Job 7:9**;

[even] to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death; which describes not the state of the damned, as some Popish interpreters, carry it; for Job had no thought nor fear of such a state; but the grave, which is called "a land", or

country, it being large and spacious, and full of inhabitants; a land of "darkness", a very dark one, where the body separated from the soul is deprived of all light; where the sun, moon, and stars, are never seen; nor is there the least crevice that light can enter in at, or be seen by those that dwell in those shades, which are "the shadow of death" itself; deadly shades, thick and gross ones, the darkest shades, where death itself is, or dead men are, destitute of light and life; where no pleasure, comfort, and conversation, can be had; and therefore a land in itself most undesirable.

Job 10:22

Ver. 22. A land of darkness, as darkness [itself],.... Not merely like it, but truly so; as gross thick darkness, like that of Egypt, that might be felt; even blackness of darkness, which is as dark as it possibly can be; not only dark, but darkness, extremely dark:

[and] of the shadow of death; which is repeated for the illustration and confirmation of it, as having in it all kind of darkness, and that to the greatest degree:

without any order, or "orders" {i}; or vicissitudes and successions of day and night, summer and winter, heat and cold, wet and dry; or revolutions of sun, moon, and stars, or of the constellations, as Aben Ezra; and whither persons go without any order, either of age, sex, or station; sometimes a young man, sometimes an old man, and the one before the other; sometimes a man, sometimes a woman; sometimes a king, prince, and nobleman, and sometimes a peasant; sometimes a rich man, and sometimes a poor man; no order is observed, but as death seizes them they are brought and laid in the grave, and there is no order there; the bones and dust of one and the other in a short time are mixed together, and, there is no knowing to whom they belong, only by the omniscient God:

and [where] the light [is] as darkness; were there anything in the grave that could with any propriety be called light, even that is nothing but darkness; darkness and light are the same thing there: or when "it shineth it is darkness" {k}; that is, when the sun shines brightest here, as at noon day, it is entire darkness in the grave; no light is discerned there, the rays of the sun cannot penetrate there; and could they, there is no visive faculty in the dead to receive them; all darkness is in those secret places.

{i} Myrdo alw "et non ordines", Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius, Mercerus; "sine ordinibus", Cocceius, Schmidt. {k} eptw "splendet", Beza, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 11

In this chapter Zophar the Naamathite, Job's third friend, attacks him, and the with great acrimony and severity, and with much indecency; he charges him not only with loquacity, and vain babbling, but with lying, and with scoffing at God, and good men, Job 11:1; which he attempts to support by some things Job had said, misrepresented by him,
Job 11:4; and wishes that God would take him in hand, and convince him of the wisdom of the divine proceedings with him, and of his lenity and mercy to him, Job 11:5; and then discourses of the unsearchableness of God in his counsels, and conduct; of his sovereignty, and of his power, and of the vanity and folly of men,
Job 11:7; and as his friends before him, having insinuated that Job was guilty of some heinous sin, or sins, and especially of hypocrisy, advises him to repentance and reformation, and then it would be well with him; and he should enjoy much comfort, peace, and safety, even to old age, Job 11:13; and concludes it should go ill with the wicked man and the hypocrite, such as he suggests Job was,
Job 11:20.

Ver. 1. Then answered Zophar the Naamathite,.... The third of Job's friends, that came to visit him, See Gill on "Job 2:11"; and who perhaps might be the youngest, since his turn was to speak last; and he appears to have less modesty and prudence, and more fire and heat in him; than his other friends; though he might be the more irritated by observing, that their arguments were baffled by Job, and had no manner of effect on him, to cause him to recede from his first sentiments and conduct:

and said; as follows.

Job 11:2

Ver. 2. Should not the multitude of words be answered?.... Zophar insinuates, that Job was a mere babbler, a talkative man, that had words, but no matter; said a great deal, but there was nothing in what he said; that his words were but wind, yea, in effect that he was a fool, who is commonly full of words, and is known by the multitude of them; and whereas he might think to bear down all before him in this way, and to discourage persons from giving him an answer; this Zophar suggests should not be the case, nor would he be deterred hereby from giving one, which he now undertook: some supply it, as Bar Tzemach, "should not a man of a multitude of words" {s}, &c. a verbose man, a dealer in many words, and nothing else, should not he be "answered?" if he uses nothing but words, and there is no argument in them, they seem not to deserve an answer, unless it be to show the emptiness of them, expose a man's folly, and pull down his pride and vanity:

and should a man full of talk be justified? or "a man of lips" {t}, an eloquent man, or one that affects to be so; a man of a fine speech, who artfully colours things, and makes a show of wisdom and truth, when there are neither in what he says; is such a man to be justified? he would seem to be in his own eyes at least, if not in the eyes of others, if not answered; he would be thought to have carried his point, to have had the better of the argument, and to have got the victory by dint of words and power of oratory; for this is not to be understood of justification before God; for as no man is heard and accepted by him for his "much speaking", as was the opinion of the Heathens, so neither are any justified on account of their many words, any more than their many works; since, in a multitude of words there are often not only much folly and weakness, but vanities and sins, Pr 10:19; there is indeed a sense in which a man is justified by his words, Mt 12:37; when he confesses Christ, and professes to be justified by his righteousness, and believes in that, and pleads it as his justifying righteousness; he is justified by that righteousness; which is contained in the confession and profession of his faith; but this is not here meant.

{s} Myrbd brh "an abundans verbis", Beza; "an multus verbis", Mercerus, so Kimchi & Ben Melech; and most Hebrew writers take
br for an adjective. {t} Mytpv vya "vir labiorum", Montanus, Beza, Drusius, Vatablus, Mercerus, Bolducius, Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis.

Job 11:3

Ver. 3. Should thy lies make men hold their peace?.... By which he means, either lies in common, untruths wilfully told, which are sins of a scandalous nature, which good men will not dare to commit knowingly; and to give a man, especially such a man, the lie, is very indecent; and to charge a man falsely with it is very injurious: or else doctrinal ones, errors in judgment, falsehoods concerning God and things divine; which not only are not of the truth, for no lie is of the truth, but are against it; and indeed where the case is notorious in either sense, men should not be silent, or be as men deaf and dumb, as the word {u} signifies, as if they did not hear the lies told them, or were unconcerned about them, or connived at them: David would not suffer a liar to be near him, nor dwell in his house, Ps 101:7; a common liar ought to be reproved and rejected; and doctrinal liars and lies should be opposed and resisted; truth should be contended for, and nothing be done against it, but everything for it: it is criminal to be silent at either sort of lies; nor should the bold and blustering manner in which they are told frighten men from a detection of them, which perhaps is what may be hinted at here {w}; some render the words {x}, "should thine iniquity frighten men?" they are not so strong and nervous as to appear unanswerable, and deter men from undertaking a reply unto them:

and, when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed? here Job is represented as a mocker of God, which is inferred from Job 10:3; and at his friends, and the arguments they used, and the advice they gave, which is concluded from his words in **Job 6:25**; and as one hardened, who was not, and could not be made ashamed of what he had said against either, by anything that had been offered for his reproof and conviction: to make a mock of God, or a jest of divine things, or scoff at good men, is very bad; indeed it is the character of the worst of men; and such should be made ashamed, if possible, by exposing their sin and folly; and if not here, they will be covered with shame hereafter, when they shall appear before God, the Judge of all, who will not be mocked, and shall see the saints at the right hand of Christ, whom they have jeered and scoffed at: but this was not Job's true character; he was no mocker of God nor of good men; in this he was wronged and injured, and had nothing of this sort to be made ashamed of.

{u} So Ben Melech. {w} Kydb "jactantias tuas", Cocceius. {x} "Tuane argumenta mortales consternabunt?" Codurcus.

Job 11:4

Ver. 4. For thou hast said,.... What follows is produced to support the charge, especially of lying, which seems to be founded on what he had said in **Job 6:10**;

my doctrine [is] pure; free from error, unadulterated, unmixed, not blended with Heathenish principles and human doctrines; but tending to purity of heart and life, as every word of God, and doctrine that comes from him, is pure, yea, very pure, like silver purified seven times; and such was Job's doctrine which he "received" from God, "took" {y} up and professed, taught and delivered to others, so far as was agreeable to the will of God, and the revelation he had then made: and it appears that Job had very clear and sublime notions of God, of his being and perfections, of his works of nature, providence, and grace; of Christ his living Redeemer, of redemption and justification by him, and of the resurrection of the dead; and had purer and better notions of divine things than his friends had, and spoke better things of God than they did, God himself being witness, Job 42:7; some interpret this of the purity of his life and conversation: he is further charged with saying:

and I am clean in thine eyes: speaking to God, as Jarchi observes; and indeed so he was, and every believer is, in an evangelic sense; as to the new man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness, is without sin, and cannot commit it; and as washed from all sin in the blood of Christ, and as clothed with his righteousness, in which the saints are faultless before the throne, and are unblamable and irreprovable in the sight of God: but Zophar's meaning is, that Job had asserted that he was entirely free from sin in himself, was wholly without it, and did not commit any; and had appealed to God, as knowing it to be true; and which he seems to have grounded on what he had said, Job 10:7; through a mistake of his sense; which was not that he was free from sin entirely, but from any gross notorious sin, or from a wicked course of living, and particularly from the sin of hypocrisy, his friends suggested he was guilty of; otherwise he confesses himself a sinner, and prays for the pardon of his sins, and disclaims perfection in himself; see **Job 7:20**; and indeed there is no creature in itself clean in the sight of God, either angels or men; every man is naturally unclean; no good man is without sin, without the being, indwelling, and commission of it; nor will any truly gracious man say he is; he knows otherwise, and acknowledges it; he that says he is must be an ignorant man, or a vain and pharisaical man; yea, must not say the truth: some have suspected the first part of the words to be Job's, "and I am clean": and the other Zophar's explaining them; that is, "in thine eyes" {z}; in his own apprehension, as if he had a high and conceited opinion of himself.

{y} yxql "doctrina aut oratio mea et sententia mente accepta", Michaelis; so

Cocceius; "id quid ab aliis acceptum", Drusius. {z} Vid. Schultens in loc.

Job 11:5

Ver. 5. But O that God would speak,.... To Job, and stop his mouth, so full of words; convict him of his lies, reprove him for his mocks and scoffs, and make him ashamed of them; refute his false doctrine and oppose it, and show him his folly and vanity in imagining it to be pure, and in conceit thinking himself to be free from sin, and even in the sight of God himself: Zophar seems by this wish to suggest, that what his friends had as yet spoke had had no effect upon Job, and signified nothing; and that he despaired of bringing him to any true sense of himself and his case, but that God only could do it; and therefore he entreats he would take him in hand, and speak unto him; as he had by his providences in afflicting him, so by his spirit in teaching and instructing him; and he adds:

and open his lips against thee; or rather, "with thee", or "to thee" {a}; converse with thee; speak out his mind freely; disclose the secrets of his wisdom, as in Job 11:6, and that for thy good; fully convince thee of thy sins, mistakes, and follies: for, notwithstanding all the heat and warmth of Zophar's spirit, yet, being a good man, as it cannot be thought he should wilfully and knowingly slander Job, and put a false gloss on his words, so neither could he desire any hurt or injury to be done him, or that God would deal with him as an enemy; only convince and reprove him for his sin, and justify himself and his own conduct, which he imagined Job had arraigned.

{a} Kme meta sou, Sept. "tecum", Pagninus, Montanus, Beza, Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis; "tibi", V. L. "ad te", Piscator.

Job 11:6

Ver. 6. And that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom,.... Either of sound doctrine, in opposition to his own doctrine he had such a vain opinion of; and then he would see, as he thought, that it was not so pure as he imagined it to be: the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are the wisdom of God, the produce of it, and in which it is displayed; as in the doctrines of election to grace and glory, of redemption by Christ, of justification by his righteousness, and pardon by his blood; by which all the divine perfections are glorified, the justice and holiness of God, as well as his grace and mercy: and there are "secrets" or mysteries in this wisdom of God, **1Co 2:6**; of mysterious doctrines, which, though revealed, yet the "modus", or manner of them, is not to be searched out and understood; such is the trinity of Persons in the Godhead, the union of the two natures in Christ, the saint's union to God and communion with him, the resurrection of the dead, &c. and these and such like them are only shown by the Lord; men cannot come at them of themselves, by their own natural reason and understanding; it is God that reveals them, in his word, and by his spirit, and gives his people an increasing knowledge of them, **1Co 2:9**; or it may be rather the secrets of the wisdom of Divine Providence, in the government of the world, and the ordering of all things in it according to the counsel of God, may be here meant; there is a great display of the wisdom of God in Providence, and there are secrets in it undiscoverable by creatures; his ways are past finding out, they are in the deep waters, and his footsteps are not known, nor to be traced; though sometimes he makes his judgments manifest, and his mind in them; and what he does now, which men know not, he shows them hereafter; especially his own people, and particularly when in the sanctuary of the Lord, and in the way of their duty, when everything appears right and beautiful they before were ready to complain of; see Ro 11:33; and then it is seen:

that [they are] double to that which is! or to "wisdom" {b}; as the word is rendered in **Pr 2:7**; that is, to human wisdom; and then the sense is, that the secrets of divine wisdom displayed, whether in the doctrines of grace or in the methods of Providence, being shown and made manifest, would appear to be "double"; that is, vastly, yea, infinitely to exceed the wisdom of men; and that these, which men are apt to arraign as weak and wrong, are the effects of the highest wisdom, or they then appear so "to a man of wisdom" {c}; so the supply may be made, as is in **Mic 6:9**; or else the sense is, were Job let in to the secret wisdom of God more, and into the purity and holiness of his law, which some understand by "that which is", or "wisdom", and render it "according to the law" {d} and see what that requires, and how much short he comes of it, and what and how many were his transgressions and violations of it; it then would be plain to him, that the punishment that God, in wisdom, and according to his righteous law, might inflict upon him, would be double; or, greatly, yea, infinitely exceed those afflictions he was now exercised with, and therefore he had no reason to complain; to which agrees what follows:

know therefore that God exacteth of thee [less] than thine iniquities [deserve]; or punishes, afflicts, or chastises, less than the deserts of sin; see **Ezr 9:13**; some render it, "God exacteth of thee [something] of thine iniquity"; so Junius and Tremellius; according to which version the sense is, that sins are debts, and these many; and that payment of part of the debt of punishment for them is only required, which is not truth; for, though there is a debt of punishment due to justice for sin, yet it is not part of it only that is required of the sinner, but the whole, if any; for indeed no part of it is exacted of God's people, since the whole has been exacted of Christ, and he has answered and paid the whole debt, and blotted out the handwriting against them; wherefore the word used has rather the signification of forgetfulness, and may be rendered, either "God hath caused", or "suffered thee to forget [part] of thine iniquity" {e}; or thou couldest never say that thou wert clean in his eye, and free from sin; or, "God himself has forgot part of thine iniquity" {f}; in that he has afflicted thee so mildly, and with so much lenity; or, "hath forgotten thee for thine iniquity" {g}; forsook him, hid his face from him, laid his hand on him, and sorely chastised him, so that he seemed to be forgotten by him, or he to forget to be gracious to him; all which were owing to his sins, these were the causes of it; or, "will condemn thee for thine iniquity" {h}.

{b} hyvwtl "sapientiae", de Dieu, Schmidt, Michaelis; so the Targum. {c} "Viro sapientiae", Drusius. {d} "Secundum legem vel ordinationem", Vatablus. {e} Knwem hwla Kl hvy yk "oblivisci facit te Deus, aliquid de iniquitate tua", some in Mercer so Gersom & Ben Melech, & Gussetius, p. 510. {f} "Quod obliviscatur tibi Deus ab iniquitate tua", Piscator; Vid. Gusset ib. {g} "Quod oblitus tui est propter iniquitatem tuam", Pagninus, Mercerus. {h} So some in Ben Melech.

Job 11:7

Ver. 7. Canst thou by searching find out God?.... God is not to be found out by human search; that there is a God may be found out by inquiring into the book of nature, by considering the creatures that are made, who all proclaim some first cause or maker of them, who is God; but then it cannot be found out what God is, his nature, being, and perfections: an Heathen philosopher {i}, being asked by a certain king what God was, required a day to give in his answer; when that was up he desired a second, and still went on asking more; and being demanded the reason of his dilatoriness, replied, the more he had considered the question, the more obscure it was to him: the world by wisdom, or the wiser part of the Heathen world, knew not God; though they knew there was one, they knew not who and what he was; and therefore in some places altars were erected to the unknown God,
Ac 17:23: and though some of the perfections of God may be investigated from the works of nature, such as the power, wisdom, and goodness of God,

Ro 1:19; yet not all his perfections, such as his grace, mercy, &c. proclaimed and displayed in Christ; nor indeed his counsels, purposes, and decrees, which lie in his eternal mind, are the thoughts of his heart, the deep things of God, which none but the Spirit of God searches, knows, and reveals; and since Zophar's request was, that God should show to Job "the secrets of wisdom", these may be meant here, either evangelical wisdom, the wisdom of God in a mystery hid in his heart from everlasting, and the mysterious truths and doctrines or it, things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of; these are not to be found out by human search, but are by the revelation of God; or else the reasons of the proceedings of God in Providence, which are out of the reach of men, dark, intricate, mysterious, unsearchable, and past finding out:

canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? to the uttermost of his nature and perfections; all his attributes, the last of them, and the extremity thereof: that God is perfect and entire, wanting nothing, and is possessed of all perfections, may be found out, or otherwise he would not be God; but his essence and attributes, being infinite, can never be traced and comprehended by finite minds; there are some perfections of God we have no idea of, but are lost in confusion and amazement as soon as we think of them and reason about them, as his eternity and immensity particularly; for, when we have rolled over in our minds millions and millions of ages, we are as far off from eternity as when we began; and when we have pervaded all worlds, and every space and place, we have got no further into immensity than at first; we are confounded when we think of a Being without beginning and without bounds, unoriginated, and unlimited; yea, even it is but a small part of the works of God in creation that is known by men, or of God in and by them; nay, by divine revelation, which gives the clearest and most enlarged view of him, whereby he has proclaimed his name, a God gracious and merciful, &c. yet it is only his back parts that are shown, not his face; it is only through a glass, darkly, we now see; indeed, in the other world, we shall see him face to face, and as he is, yet then never comprehend his essence: and, after all, it is only in Christ that God is to be found, to saving purposes; in him is the most glorious display of him; being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; and not only all his perfections are in him, as a divine Person, but they are glorified by him as Mediator; every step in salvation is taken in Christ, and every blessing of grace comes through him; what of the divine Presence and communion with God is enjoyed is by him; and he will be the medium of the enjoyment of God, and of all the glory and happiness of the saints in the world to come.

{i} Simonides, apud Cicero, de Nat. Deor. l. 1.

Job 11:8

Ver. 8. [It is] as high as heaven; what canst thou do?.... Or, "is higher than the heavens" {i}; either the wisdom of God and the secrets of it; the perfection of his wisdom, by which he has made the heavens; or evangelical wisdom, hid in his heart, and which the highest of creatures, the angels, come at the knowledge of only by revelation; and therefore, what can man do to find it out, unless God reveals it? or wisdom displayed in dark providences, which can never be accounted for until the judgments of God are made manifest: or else, "he [that is] God", as the Vulgate Latin version, is "higher than the heavens"; the heaven is his throne on which he sits, and therefore he must be higher than that; the heavens, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain him; he fills up the infinite space beyond them; how is it possible therefore to find him out, to comprehend him?

deeper than hell; what canst thou know? meaning, neither the grave nor the place of the damned, for both which "Sheol" is sometimes used, but the centre or lowest part of the earth; there is a depth in God, in his essence, in his thoughts, in his wisdom, displayed in nature, providence, and grace, that is unfathomable; we can know nothing of it but what he is pleased to make known; see Ps 92:5; the Targum of the verse is,

"in the height of heaven, what canst thou do? in the law, which is deeper than hell, what canst thou know?"

{i} Mymv yhbg "altior est altissimis coelis", Junius & Tremellius.

Job 11:9

Ver. 9. The measure thereof [is] longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. Length is generally ascribed to the earth, and width to the sea; the ends of the earth are used for a great distance, and the sea is called the great and wide sea; see {k} Ps 72:1; but God and his perfections, particularly his wisdom and understanding, are infinite, Ps 147:5; and will admit of no dimensions; as his love, so his wisdom, has an height which cannot be reached, a depth that cannot be fathomed, and a length and breadth immeasurable; see **Eph 3:18**; from hence it appears that God is omniscient, omnipresent, and incomprehensible; and since he is to be found in Christ, and in him only, it is in vain for us to seek for him elsewhere: next the sovereignty of God is discoursed of.

{k} "Quid oceano longius inveriri potest", Cicero. Orat. 36.

Job 11:10

Ver. 10. If he cut off,.... The horns, power, dominion, and authority of the wicked; or the spirits of princes, or kingdoms and states, whole nations, as he did the seven nations of Canaan; or families, as Job's, his servants, and his children; or particular persons, by diseases, or by judgments, by famine, sword, and pestilence; there is none can hinder him; he will do what he pleases: or, as others render it, "if he changes" {l}; if he makes revolutions in governments, changes in families, and in the estates of men, as in Job's; or changes men's countenances by death, and sends them out of time into eternity, there is no opposing him: or, "if he passes through" {m}, as the word is sometimes used; see **Isa 8:8**; if he comes out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth, and goes through a kingdom and nation, making or suffering to be made devastations everywhere, as he went through the land of Egypt and smote all the firstborn in it, there is no stopping him: or, "if he passes on" {n}, or "from" hence, or goes away; see 1Sa 11:3; or departs from a people or particular person, even his own people, and hides his face from them, and is long, at least as they think, before he returns; who can behold him, or find him out, or cause him to show himself? see Job 23:3; or, "if he subverts" {o} and overturns things, or should reduce the world and all things in it to a chaos, as at the deluge, or as he overturned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, or should set on fire the whole course of nature, and burn up the whole world and all in it, and reduce it to ashes, as he will; there is none can stay his hand, and obstruct him in his designs and measures:

and shut up; should he do so; shut up in a civil sense, either in a prison, as Gersom, or in the hands of an enemy, by giving them unto them, to be enclosed and straitened by them, there is none can deliver;
Ps 31:8; or to shut them up as he did Noah in the ark, by protecting them by his power and providence, and so appear to be on their side, and for them; who then can be against them? or what does it signify if any are, if the Lord shuts them up and keeps them close? or in a spiritual sense, if he concludes men in sin, and shuts them up in unbelief, and under the law; who but himself can set them free? or, if good men are shut up in their frames, and straitened in their

souls, that they cannot come forth in the lively exercise of grace, and free discharge of duty; there is no opening for them till he pleases, Ps 88:8;

or gather together, then who can hinder him? either gathers them into one place, in a civil sense; or in a gracious manner, with great mercies and everlasting kindness to himself, to have communion with him; to his son, to participate of the blessings of his grace, and to his church and people, to enjoy all spiritual privileges with them; or, gathers men at and by death; see Job 34:14; and as he will gather them at the last day, even all nations, before him, the tares, and burn them and his wheat, and put them into his garner; and when he does any and every of these things, who can hinder him or turn him back from doing what he pleases: Job says much the same in **Job 9:12**; the Targum is,

"if he passes through and shuts up the heavens with clouds, and gathers armies, who can turn him back?"

{l} Pwlxy Ma "si permutet proprie", Mercerus, Heb. "si mutabit locum", Piscator. {m} "Si transmeabit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "si pervadat", Cocceius; "si transiverit", Michaelis. {n} "Si abierit", Schmidt. {o} "Si subverterit omnia", V. L.

Job 11:11

Ver. 11. For he knoweth vain men,.... Or, "men of vanity" {p}, as all men are; men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree a lie, and they are both lighter than vanity, Ps 62:9; and the Lord knows them, and knows them to be so; he knows all men, and all that is in them; he knows the vanity of their minds, and the vain thoughts that are in them; all their vain and idle words, and their vain lives and conversations; and therefore it is no wonder he does the above things at his pleasure:

he seeth wickedness also; the wickedness of their hearts and lives, their secret and open wickedness, their wicked thoughts, words, and actions; or, "men of wickedness"; even wicked men; they are all seen by him; nothing is or can be hid from him; he is God omniscient, the searcher of the hearts and trier of the reins of the children of men:

will he not then consider [it]? so as to punish or correct for it? he will: or, "he does not consider" {q}; he seems as if he did not; as if he took no notice of wicked men, and of their wickedness, because he does not immediately punish or correct for it; or, he has no need to take any time to consider thereof, he sees and knows at once what it is, and what men are: Gersom reads this clause in connection with the former; "he sees [the men] of wickedness", and him who does "not consider" the ways of the Lord; or, the man does not consider that God sees him; so Ben Melech.

{p} awv ytm "homines vanitatis", Vatablus, Drusius, Bolducius, Mercerus, Schmidt, Michaelis. {q} Knwbty alw "et non cousiderat", Cocceius; "et non advertit", Schmidt.

Job 11:12

Ver. 12. For vain man would be wise,.... Or "hollow" {r}, empty man; empty of all that is good, though full of all unrighteousness; without God, the knowledge, love, and fear of him; without Christ, the knowledge of him, faith in him, and love to him; destitute of the Spirit, and of his grace, having no good thing in him: yet such a man "would be wise"; not desirous of true wisdom, but would be thought to be wise; he in conceit thinks himself that he is very wise, and he would fain have others think so of him; or is, or "may", or "will be wise" {s}; may be made wise by the chastisements of God through afflictions, being sanctified to him by the grace of God; though he is a vain man, and also is what is after said of him; afflicting dispensations are sometimes teaching ones, and in the school of afflictions many useful lessons are learnt, whereby men become wiser; see Ps 94:12; though some understand the word in a very different sense, and interpret it bold, audacious, proud, and haughty; man takes heart {t}, and lifts up himself against God, stretches his hand, and hardens his heart against him:

though man be born [like] a wild ass's colt; foolish and stupid, without understanding of divine and spiritual things; given to lust and wantonness, to serve divers lusts and pleasures; not subject to the yoke of the law of God, stubborn, refractory, and untameable, but by the grace of God; the ass, and especially the wild ass, and the colt of one, being a very stupid creature, and a very lustful and wanton one, chooses to be free, will not bear the yoke, but ranges about in desert places; see Job 39:5; some render the words, "and a wild ass's colt is", or "may be born a man" {u}; that is, one that is by his first birth, and by his life and conversation, like a wild ass's colt, is or may be born again, and be made a new man, as Jarchi also interprets it, and so become a wise, knowing, and good man, which is a great truth; but whether the truth in this text, is not so clear: the Targum seems to incline this way;

"a refractory, youth that grows wise shall become a great man."

{r} bwbn "concavus", Montanus; "cavus", Drusius; "vacuus", Pagninus, Beza, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis. {s} bbly "fiat vel fit cordatus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Broughton, Beza. {t} "In superbiam erigitur", V. L. "audaciam sumit", Schmidt. {u} "Pullus onager homo nascitur", Cocceius, Schmidt; "nascatur", Schultens.

Job 11:13

Ver. 13. If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards him. In this and the following verses Zophar proceeds to give some advice to Job; which, if taken, would issue in his future happiness, but otherwise it would be ill with him; he advises him to pray to God with an heart prepared for such service; so some render the last clause in the imperative, "stretch out thine hands {w} towards him"; that is, towards God; for, though not expressed, is implied, whose immensity, sovereignty, and omniscience, Zophar had been discoursing of; and, though stretching out the hands is sometimes a gesture of persons in distress and mournful circumstances, thereby signifying their grief and sorrow, and of others in great danger, in order to lay up anything for safety; and of conquered persons resigning themselves up into the hands of the conqueror; and of such who are desirous of being in friendship, alliance, and association with others; yet it is also sometimes used as for the whole of religious worship, Ps 44:20; so particularly for prayer, Ps 88:9; and this was what all Job's friends advised him to, to humble himself before God, to pray for the forgiveness of his sins, and for the removal of his afflictions and deliverance from them; see **Job 5:8**; in order to which it is proper the "heart [should be] prepared"; as it is requisite it should be to every good work by the grace of God so to this: and then may it be said to be prepared for such service, when the spirit of God is given as a spirit of grace and supplication, whereby the heart is impressed with a sense of its wants, and so knows what to pray for; and arguments and fit words are put into the mind and mouth, and it knows how to pray as it should; and is enabled to approach the throne of grace with sincerity, fervency, and in the exercise of faith, being sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Jesus, and resigned to the divine will, in all its petitions it is directed to make: now this is the work of God, to prepare the heart; the preparation of the heart, as well as the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord; he is prayed to for it, and it is affirmed he will do it, Pr 16:1; but it is here represented as if it was man's act, which is said not to suggest any power in man to do it of himself; at least this is not the evangelic sense of such phrases; for Zophar might be of a more legal spirit, and not so thoroughly acquainted with the evangelic style; but this might be said, to show the necessity of such a preparation, and to stir up to a concern for it, and to expect and look for it from and by the grace of God.

{w} "Expande ad eum manus tuas", De Dieu.

Job 11:14

Ver. 14. If iniquity [be] in thine hand,.... For, as the heart must be prepared for the stretching out of the hand in prayer to God, so it is not any hand that is to be stretched out or lifted up unto God; not hands full of blood, or defiled with sin, but holy hands; see **Isa 1:15** **1Ti 2:8**; it is not said, if iniquity be in thine heart, or on thy conscience,

put it far away; for sin cannot be put away out of the heart, it will have a place there as long as we live; though it should not be regarded, cherished, and nourished there; if so, God will not hear prayer, Ps 66:18; and nothing can put away or remove afar off guilt from the conscience but the blood of Jesus; which, being sprinkled, purifies the heart and purges the conscience from dead works; but it is said, if it is in thine hand, which is the instrument of action, and may signify the commission of sin, and a series and course of sinning, which Job's friends suspected he was privately guilty of; and therefore advise him to leave off such a sinful course, and abstain from all appearance of evil, and live a holy and godly conversation:

and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles; in any room or apartment of his house; some restrain this, and iniquity in the former clause, to ill gotten goods, obtained by rapine and oppression, which he is advised to restore to those that had been injured by him; but there is no need to limit it to any sin: besides, wickedness may be put for wicked men, and the sense be, that, as he should not indulge to any iniquity himself, so neither should he suffer wicked men to dwell in his house, but make a general reformation in himself and in his family.

Job 11:15

Ver. 15. For then shall thou lift up thy face without spot,.... Either before men, being in all good conscience, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless, exercising a conscience void of offence towards God and men; and so be able to say as Samuel did, "whose ass have I taken?" &c. 1Sa 12:3; or rather before God, as in Job 21:26; using an holy boldness and an humble confidence with him at the throne of grace, in the view of the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of his living Redeemer he had knowledge of, as every true believer may; who, though he is not without spot in himself, yet, being washed in the blood of Christ, and clothed in his righteousness, he is all fair, and without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and may stand before the throne without fault, and appear before God, and in his sight, unblamable and irreprovable:

yea, thou shalt be steadfast: firm and solid, rooted and grounded in the love of God; having a firm persuasion of interest in it, and that nothing shall separate from it; being built on the foundation of Christ, and established in the exercise of faith on him; the affections being steady towards him, and fixedly set on divine and heavenly things; continuing steadfast in the doctrines of grace, and not carried about with strange doctrines, or every wind of doctrine; as well as constant and immovable in the work of the Lord, always employed in his service, and doing his will, from which nothing can move; not reproach, affliction, and persecution; and to be thus steady and fixed is a great privilege:

and shalt not fear; evil tidings of evil times; of wars and rumours of wars, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, and other judgments; of changes and revolutions in kingdoms and states, or of what is coming upon the world, according to promise and prophecy, the heart being fixed and well established, trusting in the Lord; nor be afraid of evil men or devils, or any enemies whatever, nor of death, the king of terrors, that being one of the believer's blessings, and a friend of his; nor of hell and damnation, or the second death, or wrath to come; from all which the saints are secure.

Job 11:16

Ver. 16. Because thou shall forget [thy] misery,.... Former afflictions and distresses; having an abundance of prosperity and happiness, and long continued; and so, in process of time, the miseries and distresses before endured are forgotten; thus it was with Joseph in his advanced state, and therefore he called one of his sons Manasseh, Ge 41:51; and as it is with convinced and converted persons and believers in Christ, who, under first convictions and awakenings, are filled with sorrow and distress, on a view of their miserable estate by nature; but when Christ is revealed to them as their Saviour and Redeemer, and the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts, and they have faith and hope in Jesus, and a comfortable view of heaven and happiness, and eternal life, by him, they forget their spiritual poverty, and remember their misery no more, unless it be to magnify the riches of the grace of God; see Pr 31:6;

[and] remember [it] as waters [that] pass away; either the waters of the stream in a river, which, when gone, are seen and remembered no more or as waters occasioned by floods in the winter season, which when over, and summer is come, are gone and are no more discerned; and as they pass from the places where they were, so from the minds of men: or it may be respect is had to the waters of Noah's flood, which, according to the divine promise and oath, should no more go over the earth, **Ge 9:15**; and being past and gone, and no fear or danger of their returning, are forgotten.

Job 11:17

Ver. 17. And [thine] age shall be clearer than the noonday,.... That is, the remainder of his days; the latter part of his life, which was yet to come, should be no more attended with the darkness of adversity; but the light of prosperity should shine upon him, and exceed the light of the sun at noonday: the phrase is expressive of the wonderful change there should be in his state and circumstances; see Isa 58:10;

thou shall shine forth; like the rising sun, or as when it breaks forth out of a cloud; in a temporal sense, it may be understood of his enjoying health, wealth, and friends, the candle of the Lord shining upon him, as in days past; and in a spiritual sense, of his being favoured with the light of God's countenance, the Sun of righteousness rising upon him, with healing in his wings; the graces of the Spirit being brightened, and in lively exercise, and a large share of spiritual light and knowledge being given: the word used has a contrary sense, and signifies darkness and obscurity, and may be rendered "although thou art", or hast been, or mayest "be dark" {x}; under dark and afflictive providences, as he had been, and still was and in darkness of soul, under the hidings of God's face: yet

thou shall be as the morning; whose light breaks forth suddenly, and makes everything gay and cheerful; especially a morning without clouds, when it is bright and clear, and is increasing more and more: by this metaphor is signified, that Job would at once emerge out of his darkness, afflictions, and trouble, and have abundance of joy and comfort, which would be increasing in every sense; see **Pr 4:18**.

{x} hpet "tenebresces", Montanus, Drusius, Mercerus; to the same sense, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Schmidt, Schultens; so Ben Melech.

Job 11:18

Ver. 18. And thou shall be secure,.... From coming into like darkness, difficulties, and distress again, and from every evil and enemy; nothing shall come nigh to disturb and hurt, nothing to be feared from any quarter, all around: or "shalt be confident" {y}; have a strong faith and full assurance of it, in the love of God, in the living Redeemer, and in the promises which respect the life that now is, and that which is to come:

because there is hope; of the mercy of God, of salvation by Christ, and of eternal glory and happiness, as well as of a continuance of outward prosperity; faith and hope mutually assist each other; faith is the substance of things hoped for, and hope of better and future things on a good foundation encourages faith and confidence:

yea, thou shalt dig [about thee]; to let in stakes for the pitching and fixing of tents to dwell in, and for more commodious pasturage; or for wells of water, for the supply both of the family and the flocks; or rather, for ditches and trenches to secure from thieves and robbers, or for drains to carry off floods of water:

[and] thou shalt take thy rest in safety; lie down on the bed and sleep in the night season in peace and quietness, having nothing to fear; being well entrenched, and secure from depredations and inundations; and, more especially being hedged about and protected by the power and providence of God; see **Ps 3:5**; the Targum is,

"thou shall prepare a grave, and lie down, and sleep secure."

{y} txjbw "et confides", Mercerus, Piscator, Schmidt; "et habebis fiduciam", V. L.

Job 11:19

Ver. 19. Also thou shall lie down, and none shall make [thee] afraid,.... Either lie down on his bed, as before, or by his flocks, and where they lie down, and none should disturb him or them; not thieves and robbers, such as the Chaldeans and Sabeans had been to him, nor lions, bears, and wolves;

yea, many shall make suit unto thee; make their supplications, present their requests and petitions for relief under necessitous circumstances, or for protection from the injuries and insults of others; as the poor and needy, the widow and fatherless, had done to him in times past, when in his prosperity, and when he was a friend unto them, and the father of them; see Pr 19:6; or, "the great ones {z} shall make suit to thee"; to have his favour and friendship, his counsel and advice, his company and conversation; he should be applied unto and courted by men of all sorts, which would be no small honour to him; see Ps 45:12.

{z} Mybr "magnates", Vatablus, Bolducius.

Job 11:20

Ver. 20. But the eyes of the wicked shall fail,.... Either through grief and envy at Job's prosperity, and with looking for his fall into troubles again; or rather through expectation of good things for themselves, and for deliverance out of trouble, but all in vain; see **La 4:17**;

and they shall not escape; afflictions and calamities in this life, nor the righteous judgment, nor wrath to come: or, "refuge shall perish from them" {a}; there will be none to betake themselves unto for safety; in vain will they seek it from men; refuge will fail them, and no man care for them; and in vain will they fly to rocks and mountains to fall upon them:

and their hope [shall be as] the giving up of the ghost; it is with them as when a man is just expiring, and it is all over with him, and there is no hope of his reviving; so the hope of wicked men is a dying hope, a lost hope; it is not hope, but despair; their hope is gone, and they are lost and undone; and if they retain their hope in life, when they come to die they have none; though the righteous has hope in his death, their hope dies with them, if not before them:

or, "their hope is the giving up of the ghost" {b}; all they have to hope and wish for is death, to relieve them from their present troubles and agonies they are in; and sometimes are left amidst their guilt, despair, and horror, to destroy themselves: now Zophar by all this would suggest, that should not Job take his advice, he would appear to be such a wicked man, whose eyes would fail for his own help, and would not escape the judgments of God here and hereafter, and would die without hope, in black despair; or at least without any hope that would be of any avail.

{a} Mhnm dba ownmw "et refugium peribit ab eis", Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius; "perfugium", Junius & Tremellius; "effugium", Mercerus, Cocceius, Schmidt, Schultens. {b} "Spes vel expectatio eorum est, vel erit efflatio animae", Mercerus, Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 12

In this and the two following chapter Job makes answer to Zophar's discourse in the former; who having represented him as an ignorant man, he resents it, and begins his defence with a biting sarcasm on him and his friends, as being self-conceited, and having an high opinion of their own wisdom, as if none had any but themselves, Job 12:1; and puts in his claim for a share with them, as being not at all inferior to them, Job 12:3; and then refutes their notions, that it always goes well with good men, and ill with bad men; whereas the reverse is the truth, Job 12:4; and which they might learn from the brute creatures; or he sends them to them, to observe to them, that the best things they had knowledge of concerning God and his providence, and of his wisdom therein, were common notions that everyone had, and might be learned from beasts, birds, and fishes; particularly, that all things in the whole universe are made by God, and sustained by him, and are under his direction, and at his disposal, Job 12:7; and such things might as easily be searched, examined, and judged of, as sounds are tried by the ear, and food by the mouth, Job 12:11; and seeing it is usual among men, at least it may be expected that men in years should have a considerable share of wisdom and knowledge, it might be strongly inferred from thence, without any difficulty, that the most perfect and consummate wisdom was in God, Job 12:12; whence he passes on to discourse most admirably and excellently of the wisdom and power of God in the dispensations of his providence, in a variety of instances; which shows his knowledge of his perfections, ways, and works, was not inferior to that of his friends, Job 12:14.

Ver. 1. And Job answered and said. In reply to Zophar, and in defence of himself; what is recorded in this and the two following chapters.

Job 12:2

Ver. 2. No doubt but ye [are] the people,.... Which is said not seriously, meaning that they were but of the common people, that are generally ignorant, and have but little knowledge, at least of things sublime, especially in matters of religion; wherefore, though they took upon them to be his teachers and dictators to him, and censors of him, they were not above the rank, but in the class of people of low and mean understandings; see **Joh 7:49**; this sense indeed agrees with what is after said, "who knoweth not such things as these?" but since Job compares himself with them, and asserts he is not inferior to them, it supposes them to have a degree of knowledge and understanding of things somewhat above the common people; wherefore these words are to be taken ironically, exposing their vanity and self-conceit: "ye are the people"; the only, and all the people in the world of importance and consequence for good sense and wisdom; the only wise and knowing folk, the men of reason and understanding; all the rest are but fools and asses, or like the wild ass's colt, as Zophar had said, and which Job took as pointing to him; so the word in the Arabic language {c} signifies the more excellent and better sort of people; or, ye are the only people of God, his covenant people, his servants; that are made acquainted with the secrets of wisdom, as none else are:

and wisdom shall die with you; you have all the wisdom of the world, and when you die it will be all gone; there will be none left in the world: thus he represents them as monopolizers and engrossers of wisdom and knowledge, full of it in their conceit, allowing none to have any share with them: and by all this he not only upbraids them with their vanity and self-conceit, but puts them in mind, that, as wise as they were, they must die; and that, though their wisdom with respect to them, or any use they could make of it in the grave, where there is none, would die too; or that their wisdom was but the wisdom of the world, which comes to nought; yet there would be wisdom still in the world, and that which is true, which God makes known to men, even the wisdom of God in a mystery, the wisdom hid in himself; and who has the residue of the Spirit and his gifts to instruct men in it, and qualify them to be teachers of others; by which means, though men, even the best of men, die, yet the word of God, the means of true wisdom and knowledge, will always abide.

{c} Golii Lex. Ar. Col. 1743. Vid. Lud. Capell. in loc.

Job 12:3

Ver. 3. But I have understanding as well as you,.... A natural understanding, or an understanding of natural things, which distinguishes a man from a brute; and a spiritual understanding, an understanding enlightened by the spirit of God, which is naturally dark as to divine things; but he had an understanding given him, to know himself, his state and condition by nature; to know God, his love and grace to men, and, as his covenant God, to know Christ his living Redeemer, who should stand on the earth in the latter day, both to be his Redeemer and his Judge; to know his interest in him, and in the blessings of grace and glory by him: or, "I have an heart as well as you" {d}; a wise and an understanding one; a new heart, and a right spirit; an heart to fear and serve the Lord, a sincere and upright one, and devoid of hypocrisy and deceit; and as good an one as theirs:

I [am] not inferior unto you: he was indeed as to estate and substance, being now reduced; though he had been, in that sense, the greatest man in all the east; but in wisdom and knowledge, in gifts and grace: thus a modest man, when oppressed and insulted by the speeches of overbearing men, may be obliged and see it necessary to say some things of himself, in his own vindication, which he otherwise would not; see
2Co 11:15; or, "I am not falling before you"; or "by you" {e}; as one intimidated, conquered, and yielding; I stand my ground, and will not gave way or submit to you, or allow you to have the superiority of me: or, "I am falling [no more] than you"; they took him for an apostate from God, and the fear of him, and the true religion he had professed, which Job denies; he held fast his integrity; and though he was fallen into calamities and afflictions, he was not fallen from God; from his fear of him, faith in him, and love and obedience to him; he was a holy, good man, a persevering saint; and though he had slips and falls in common with good men, yet fell not finally and totally, or was an apostate from the faith:

yea, who knoweth not such things as these? or, "with whom are not as these" {f}? the things you have been discoursing of, which you would fain have pass for the secrets of wisdom, deep and mysterious things, hid from vulgar eyes, which none have and know but yourselves, are common things, what everyone is possessed of, and understands as well as you; that there is a God that has made the world, and governs it; that he himself is unsearchable, infinite and incomprehensible; a sovereign Being that does according to his will and pleasure, and sees and knows all things, and does all things well and wisely, and according to the counsel of his will: though some think Job has reference not to what Zophar had been discoursing concerning the infinity and wisdom of God, but to the thing or things in dispute between them, or to the assertions of his friends; that it is always well with good men, and ill with bad men, or that wicked men only are punished and afflicted, and particularly what Zophar concluded his speech with, Job 11:20. Now these were vulgar notions, which the common people had taken up, and were vulgar errors, as he proves in the following verses, by giving instances of good men, being afflicted, and of bad men being in prosperity.

{d} Mkwmk bbl yl Mg "etiam mihi cor sicut vobis", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens; so Broughton. {e} Mkm ykna lpn al "non cadens ego a vobis", Montanus, Vatablus, Bolducius, Beza, Mercerus, Michaelis; "prae vobis", Schmidt. {f} hla wmk Nya ym taw "et cum quo non sicut haec?" Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius, Mercerus; and to the same sense Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens.

Job 12:4

Ver. 4. I am [as] one mocked of his neighbour,.... That is, according to Sephorno, if I knew not, or denied those things you have been speaking of concerning God, his immensity, sovereignty, and wisdom, I should be derided by all my friends and acquaintance; but rather the sense is, Job instances in himself as a proof that good men are afflicted by God in this life; he was once in a very prosperous condition, when he was caressed by all, but now was fallen into such low and miserable circumstances as to be the scorn and contempt of his friends and neighbours; and even his being mocked was no small part of his afflictions; to endure cruel mockings has been the common lot of good men in all ages, and is reckoned one part of their distresses and sufferings for righteousness sake, Heb 11:36; and to be mocked by a neighbour, or a "friend" {g}, as it may be rendered, greatly aggravates the affliction, see Ps 55:12; which was Job's case; his friends that came to comfort him mocked at him, at least so he understood them, and interpreted what they said unto him, see Job 16:20; and what made it still the heavier to bear, he was mocked by such a neighbour or friend, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him; he was mocked at not by profane men only, but by a professor of religion, one that made it his constant business to pray to God, and by the prosperity he was in, and the good things he enjoyed, he seems to be answered; or rather Job means himself who was mocked, and so this is introduced to aggravate the sin of his friends, as well as to prove his point, and also to throw off a charge that had been brought against him. It was an aggravation of their sin in mocking him, that he was a praying man; one that made a conscience of daily calling upon God for the constant supplies of life, for his gracious presence, for help in time of need, for discoveries of pardoning grace and mercy, and for deliverance out of his troubles; and who had in many instances received answers of prayer from God; and this being his character, and this the constant work and business of his life, and being heard and answered of God in times past, showed him to be a good man, and yet an afflicted one; and this also served to wipe off the reproach, and remove the charge which they tacitly insinuated, and sometimes spoke out, that he restrained prayer before God; but he was so far from it, that the scornful usage of his friends made him ply the throne of grace the more frequently, see Job 18:20; and from this single instance of himself he passes on to consider it as a general case, as what usually befalls good and gracious men:

the just upright [man is] laughed to scorn; or "the just perfect man" {h}; that is, perfectly just; no man is so of himself; none of Adam's posterity, are righteous, no, not one; nor is any man truly just, perfectly righteous in himself, but in Christ; and even such a man does not do good without sinning; only the man Christ Jesus is righteous in such sense; but then all that are made righteous, by the imputation of his righteousness to them, are perfectly justified from all things, and are become the spirits of just men made perfect and complete in him: the character here designs such who are really righteous, truly gracious, are upright in heart, sincere souls, who have the truth of grace in them, and walk uprightly; these become a prey, a laughing stock to wicked men, as Noah, Lot, and others, before the times of Job, had been, which he may have respect unto.

{g} wherl "amico suo", Pagninus, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Broughton. {h} Mymt qydu "justus perfectus", Pagninus, Montanus; "justus absolutus", Mercerus; so Broughton.

Job 12:5

Ver. 5. He that is ready to slip with [his] feet,.... Not into sin, though this is often the case of good men, but into calamities and afflictions; and Job means himself, and every just upright man in the like circumstances: or he that is "prepared" or "destined" to be among them, that "totter" and stagger in their "feet" {i}; that cannot stand upon their feet, but fall to the ground; which may describe man in declining and distressing circumstances; or that is appointed to be the laughing stock of such as are unstable in the word and ways of God; double minded men, hypocrites, and formal professors, that totter and stagger at everything they meet with disagreeable to the flesh: with such, a poor afflicted saint is laughed to scorn; he

[is as] a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease; who are in affluent circumstances, enjoy great prosperity, live in plenty, and are not in trouble as others; their hearts are at ease: now with such, poor good men are had in great contempt; they are despised at heart, in the thoughts of such persons, if they do not in words express it; they are like a lamp just going out, which is neglected, and looked upon as useless; or like a torch burnt to the end, when it is thrown away; and thus it is with men, while the lamp of prosperity burns clear and bright, they are valued and had in esteem, but when their lamp becomes dim, and is almost, or quite extinguished, they are despised, see Ps 123:3; some apply this to Christ, who was a lamp or light, a great one, but despised of men, and even as a light; they loved darkness rather than light; and especially by the Pharisees, who were at ease, settled on their lees, that trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others; and this is true of Gospel ministers, though bright and burning lights, and even of every good man, in whom the true light of grace, and of the Gospel, shines, and especially when under afflictive circumstances. Some, instead of a "lamp despised", read, "for" or "because of calamity despised" {k}; so Aben Ezra, which conveys the same sense, that an afflicted man is despised for his affliction; and this being the case of good men confutes the notion of Job's friends, that it always goes well with such; and their other notion of its going ill with bad men is refuted in Job 12:6.

{i} lgr ydewml Nwkn "destinatus vacillantibus pede", Schmidt; so Michaelis.
{k} zwb dypl "ad calamitatem contumelia", Cocceius; "ad infortunium vilis habetur", Gussetius, p. 674.

Job 12:6

Ver. 6. The tabernacles of robbers prosper,.... Such as the Chaldeans and Sabeans, who had robbed Job of his substance, and filled their houses with the spoils of others, and lived in the greatest fulness and prosperity, and whom he might have in his view; and the like is what has been since observed by good men, and has been a trial and temptation to them, not knowing well how to reconcile this to the justice and wisdom of God in providence, yet so it is, a fact that cannot be denied, see Ps 73:2;

and they that provoke God are secure; all sin is abominable to God, contrary to his nature, will, and law, and so provoking; yet there are some sins that are more provoking than others, as idolatry, blasphemy, murder, theft, robbery, rapine, and oppression, and the like, as well as attended with more aggravating circumstances; and yet many who are guilty of such enormous crimes, and God provoking iniquities, are "secure", live in the greatest tranquillity and safety, free from the incursions, invasions, and insults of others: "their houses", as Job elsewhere says, "are safe from fear", Job 21:9;

into whose hand God bringeth [abundantly]; an abundance of the good things of this world, who have as much or more than heart can wish; whose belly is filled with hid treasure, whose grounds and fields bring forth plentifully, that they have no room to bestow their fruits; this, as it is an aggravation of their sin in provoking the God of their mercies, who is so liberal and bountiful to them, so it is the more full and express for the point in hand Job is confuting. Some, as Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom, understand this of idol makers and idol worshippers, and render the words, "who makes a god with his hand", or "carries a god in his hand" {l}, and worships it; which others interpret of his doing what he will with God, having him, as it were, in his hand, or reckoning his hands his god, and thinks to do what he pleases {m}.

{l} wdyb hwla aybh "quique deum portant [vel] portat in manu sua", Tigurine version, Munster; so Bolducius, De Dieu, Schultens. {m} Schmidt, &c.

Job 12:7

Ver. 7. But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee,.... And so the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, in this and Job 12:8; from those instructions may be learned, of instances taken, and examples given, which may illustrate and confirm the same things that had been treated of: either what had been just now confuted, that it is always well with good men, and ill with bad men; the reverse of which had been affirmed and proved, that good men are afflicted, and wicked men prosper; something like to which may be seen in the creatures, and learned of them; thus those creatures that are the most harmless and innocent, and most useful and beneficial, are a prey to others, as sheep and lambs to lions, wolves, and bears, while they range about forests, fields, and plains, fearless and unmolested; and doves and turtles to hawks and vultures; and the lesser fish to the greater, by whom they are devoured, see **Hab 1:13**; and moreover, these creatures which are most useful and profitable, or are for pleasure and delight, fall more to the share of wicked men than good men; when droves of cattle and flocks of sheep are observed, and the question is put, to whom do they belong? the answer for the most part must be given, to such and such wicked men; and if the gold and silver, and other valuable things the earth produces, should be inquired about whose they are, it must be said, that they are, generally speaking, the property of the men of the world, the profane part of it; or if the fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea, could speak, when asked the question, whose food they commonly were? the answer would be, of the carnal, sensual, and voluptuous men: or rather this may refer to what Job first takes notice of in this answer of his, that his friends represented what they said as uncommon things, deep mysteries, and out of the reach of the vulgar, and which did not fall under common observation; whereas Job suggests he was as well acquainted with them as they were, yea, they were such that almost everybody knew; nay, they might be learnt from the creatures, to which Job here sends them for instruction; the beasts, birds, and fishes, all proclaim that they did not make themselves, nor did their fellow creatures, but some first cause, who is God: that they are sustained, supported, and provided for by him, and are governed, directed, and disposed of as he pleases, and so furnishes out documents of his sovereignty, wisdom, power, and providence:

and the fowls of the air, and they will tell thee: the same things; that God made them, and that they are dependent on him, and are fed and cared for by him, see **Mt 6:26**.

Job 12:8

Ver. 8. Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee,.... Or ask "a sprig of the earth" {n}, any shrub, or tree, or whatsoever grows out of it, and they will all unite in this doctrine, that they are raised and preserved by the power of God, and are so many instances of his wisdom, power, and goodness:

and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee; as mute as they are, they will proclaim this truth, that God is the mighty Maker and wise Disposer of them.

{n} Ural xyv "virgultum terrae", Pagninus, Schmidt; so Drusius and Michaelis.

Job 12:9

Ver. 9. Who knoweth not in all these,.... Or "by" or "from all these" {o} creatures; what man is there so stupid and senseless, that does not discern, or cannot learn, even from irrational creatures, the above things, even what Zophar had discoursed concerning God and his perfections, his power, wisdom and providence? for, by the things that are made, the invisible things of God are clearly seen and understood, even his eternal power and Godhead, **Ro 1:20**; particularly it may be known by these, and who is it that does not know thereby,

that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? made this visible world, and all things in it, to which Job then pointed as it were with his finger, meaning the heavens, earth, and sea, and all that in them are, which were all created by him: hence he is called the Former and Maker of all things; and which are all the works of his hand, that is, of his power, which is meant by his hand, that being the instrument of action. This is the only place where the word "Jehovah" is used in this book by the disputants.

{o} hla lkb "ex omnibus istis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt, Schultens, Michaelis; "per omnia haec", Cocceius; so Broughton.

Job 12:10

Ver. 10. In whose hand [is] the soul of every living thing,.... Of every animal, of every brute creature, as distinct from man, in the next clause: the life of everyone of them is from him, and it is continued by him as long as he pleases, nor can it be taken away without his leave; two sparrows, which are not worth more than a farthing, not one of them falls to the ground, or dies without the knowledge and will of God, Mt 10:29; of the soul or spirit of beasts, see **Ec 3:21**;

and the breath of all mankind; the breath of man is originally from God, he at first breathed into man the breath of life; and though this is in his nostrils, which makes him of little account, yet it would not continue there long, was it not in the hand, and under the care and providence of God; the breath of a king, as well as the heart of a king, is in the hand of the Lord: the breath of that great monarch Belshazzar, king of Babylon, was in the hand of God, **Da 5:23**; and so is the breath of every peasant; and as when he takes away the breath of other creatures, they die and return to the dust; such is the case of man when God takes away his breath; all our times are in his hand, to be born, to live and die, all is at his dispose: or "the spirit of all the flesh of men" {p}, or of all men's flesh; his rational soul, as distinguished from his flesh or body, this is from God, supported in its being by him, and ever will be, being immortal, and will never die.

{p} vya rvb lk xwr "spiritus omnis carnis viri?" Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt, Schultens, Michaelis.

Job 12:11

Ver. 11. Doth not the ear try words?.... Articulate sounds; and the mind by them judges whether what is expressed and designed by them is right or wrong, true or false, to be received or rejected; so such that have spiritual ears to hear, try the words of God and men, the wholesome words of Christ, and those of false teachers, which eat as a canker; and by their spiritual judgment can distinguish between the one and the other, discern those that differ, and approve those that are excellent, by bringing them to the standard of the word, the balance of the sanctuary, the Scriptures of truth:

and the mouth taste his meat? and judge of it, whether good or bad, or savoury or unsavoury, and so receive or reject it: thus such who have their taste changed, and relish spiritual things, can distinguish between the meat that perishes, and that which endures to everlasting life, even Christ, whose flesh is meat indeed; and those that have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and to whose taste the fruits of Christ and the doctrines of grace are sweet; these will desire the sincere milk of the word, and that strong meat in it, which belongs to discerning and experienced souls; and will feed by faith upon the pure word of the Gospel, and mix it with it, and reject all others. Job by this would signify, that the things his friends had been discoursing of, and which they thought were such deep and wonderful things, were as easy to be searched and found out, tried and judged of, as sounds by the ear, or food by the taste; and it may be also that hereby he suggests, that his doctrine, if it was impartially examined and tried by proper judges, it would appear as plain as anything tried by the ear, or tasted by the mouth. Some think that Job intends by this, that from the senses of hearing and tasting in men might be inferred the omniscience of God, his knowledge of all things, and his quick discernment of men, and their actions, since "he that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall not he see?" Ps 94:9. Some versions read the whole, "doth not the ear try words, as the mouth tastes his meat" {q}? as in Job 34:3. Saadiah Gaon connects these words "as the ear tries words", &c. with Job 12:12, "so with the ancient is wisdom".

{q} Vatablus, Drusius, Junius et Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schultens; so Broughton.

Job 12:12

Ver. 12. With the ancient [is] wisdom,.... Meaning not himself, who was not very ancient; though some think Eliphaz so understood him; hence those words of his, in Job 15:9; rather, as others, Job tacitly wishes that some ancient man, with whom wisdom was, would undertake to examine the affair between him and his friends, and judge of it, and decide the point; or, as others, he has respect to Bildad's advice to search the fathers, and learn their sentiments, and be determined by them; to which he replies, that though it will be allowed that wisdom is with them, for the most part, yet their judgment of things is no further to be regarded than as it agrees with the wisdom of God, and the revelation he has made of his will; though it seems best of all to consider these words as an adage or proverbial sentence generally agreed to, that it often is, as it might be expected it should, though it is not always, that men well advanced in years are wise; that as they have lived long in the world, they have learned much by observation and experience, and have attained to a considerable share of wisdom and knowledge in things, natural, civil, and religious:

and in length of days is understanding; the understandings of men are improved and enriched, and well stored with useful science, having had the opportunity of much reading, hearing, and conversation; by this Job would suggest, that if his friends had more knowledge of hidden and recondite things, beyond common people, which yet they had not, it was not so wonderful, since they were aged men, and had lived long in the world; or rather it may be that this is mentioned, to observe that from hence, seeing it is so among men, that ancient men have, or it may be expected they should have, a considerable share of wisdom and understanding; it may be most easily and strongly concluded, that God, who is the Ancient of days, has the most perfect and consummate wisdom and knowledge, which is asserted in Job 12:13.

Job 12:13

Ver. 13. With him [is] wisdom and strength,.... Not with the ancient and long lived man, but with God, who has made the whole universe, and in whose hand and at whose dispose all creatures are, Job 12:9; with him wisdom is originally, essentially, and inderivatively, as the fountain and fulness of it; he is the only and all wise God; his wisdom is displayed in making the world, and all things in it, in the beautiful manner they are set, and in their subserviency to each other; in all the dispensations of his providence, having all a "bathos", a depth of wisdom and knowledge in them, being all according to the counsel of his will; and in the work of redemption and salvation by Christ, in which he has abounded in all wisdom and prudence; in finding out and appointing a Redeemer, mighty and strong, equal to the work; in contriving and bringing it about, in such a manner as to glorify all his perfections; hence the Gospel, which is the publication of this grace, is called the wisdom of God: and with him is wisdom to communicate to his people, to direct them how to behave under every providence, in every station of life, in the church, and in the world, see **Jas 1:5**; and he has "strength", which he has shown in making the world out of nothing, in upholding it, and all things in it in being, in executing his designs, decrees, and purposes, in fulfilling his promises, and in supporting and strengthening his people, under all their trials and exercises, to withstand every enemy, and perform every duty; ancient men, though they may increase in wisdom, they decline in strength, but God has both, in infinite perfection:

he hath counsel and understanding; his decrees and purposes, wisely formed within himself, are his counsels of old, and which are truly and punctually performed in time; his plan of peace, reconciliation, and salvation by Christ, may, with propriety, be called the counsel of peace between them both; and the Gospel, and the various doctrines of it, are the whole counsel of God, and so are the ordinances of it; and besides these, by which he counsels and advises his people, he has counsel with him, and which he gives unto them by his spirit, for which they bless his name; and so even did Christ as man and Mediator,
Ps 16:7; he has counsel to give, and does give in things temporal, relating to the common affairs of life, and in things concerning the good and welfare of immortal souls; all which comes from him who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working", Isa 28:29; and he has an "understanding" that is infinite and unsearchable; he has an understanding of himself, his nature, perfections, and persons of all his creatures, and of all things past, present, and to come; the same things are said of Christ, the wisdom of God, **Pr 8:14**. Job, having observed these things of God, passes on to discourse most admirably and

excellently of the power and wisdom of God in various instances, especially in the dispensations of his providence, by which he appears to have known the secrets of wisdom, and not so ignorant as represented by Zophar.

Job 12:14

Ver. 14. Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again,.... Which some restrain to the tower of Babel; but though the builders of it were obliged to desist from building, it does not appear that it was broken down, but seems to have continued many ages after: others more probably refer it to the destruction of Sodom, as Sephorno, which was an utter destruction, a perpetual desolation, and that city never was rebuilt to this day; and the same may be observed of many other cities that have had their foundations razed up, and have never been rebuilt, Thebes, Tyre, &c. and as will be the case of Rome, or the great city of Babylon, when once destroyed; yea, this has been true of kingdoms and states, such as Jeremiah was to root out, pull down, and destroy; that is, by prophesying of their destruction, as the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and others, whose names and nations are no more, see **Jer 1:10**; and the four monarchies broken down and destroyed, and made as the chaff of the summer threshing floor, by the kingdom of Christ, **Da 2:35**; and may be exemplified in particular persons and families; in Job and his family, the Lord broke him with breach upon breach; he broke him in his estate and substance; he broke down the hedge about him, and exposed him to thieves and robbers that plundered him of his substance; he broke down his family, that had been so largely and happily built up, by taking away his children by death; and he broke his constitution by diseases, afflictions, and sorrows, to which Job may have here respect, when he at this time never expected to have his losses in his substance, and in his family, and in his health, repaired, as they were; nor could it have been done without the will and pleasure of God; and oftentimes, when such breaches are made, there is no reparation; a man's wealth, and health, and family, are never built up again:

he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening; if he shut up a man in a prison, there is no opening the doors of it to let out unless he pleases; whether it be the prison of sin, in which all are concluded, in the fetters and with the cords of which they are held, and will continue, unless those shackles are broken off by powerful and efficacious grace, and the Lord proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, and gives it; or whether it be the prison of the law, in which sinners are shut up, and held as condemned malefactors; there is no deliverance from it but by Christ, who

has redeemed his people from the curse and condemnation of it; and by his Spirit, as a spirit of adoption, who delivers them from the bondage of it, and makes them free indeed; or whether it be the prison of afflictions, straits, and difficulties in life, with which even good men are surrounded, being bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction; there is no opening for them, or getting out of them, unless the Lord breaks their bands asunder, and brings them out of darkness and distress, as out of prison houses, and so opens and makes a way for their escape; or whether he shuts them up, and they are so straitened in their souls that they cannot come forth in the free exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, as it was with Heman, when he said, "I am shut up, and I cannot come forth", Ps 88:8; and as it was with David, when he prayed, "bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name", Ps 142:7; there is no opening for them till the spirit of the Lord opens their hearts and their graces, and brings them forth into exercise; and "where he is there is liberty", **2Co 3:17**; or if he shuts up a man in the grave, as the Targum paraphrases it, brings him to the house appointed for all living, and locks him up in it; there can be no opening for him till the resurrection morn, when Christ, who has the keys of hell and death, will unlock the graves, and the dead shall come forth, as Lazarus did at his call, Joh 11:43: or if "he shuts upon a man" {r}, as the words may be rendered; shuts the gates of heaven upon a man, as the door into the marriage chamber of the Lamb will be shut upon and against the foolish virgins, as well as profane sinners, there can be no opening, cry as long as they will; see
Mt 25:10; and as God shut the door of Eden, or the earthly paradise, against Adam, when he drove him out, **Ge 3:23**, to which Sephorno refers this passage; or if the Lord shuts up a man in hell, there is no opening, no way of escape from thence. We read of "spirits in prison", **1Pe 3:19**, which is to be understood not of the limbus or purgatory of the Papists, but of hell; and these "spirits" are the disobedient in the times of Noah, who dying, or being swept away with the flood, were cast into hell, where they have lain ever since, and will lie unto the judgment of the great day; between the place of the damned, and of the happy, in Abraham's bosom, is a great gulf, that there is no passing from one to the other, which is the immutable and unalterable decree of God, which has fixed the everlasting states of men, Lu 16:26.

{r} vya le "super virum", Montanus, Mercerus, Bolducius; "super viro", Schmidt, Michaelis.

Job 12:15

Ver. 15. Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up,.... Or "lays a restraint in" or "on the waters" {s}; either in the ocean, as he did at the creation, when he gathered the waters that were upon the face of the earth into one place, and restrained them there, even in the decreed place he broke up for them, called the sea, and set bars and doors to keep them within bounds, whereby the places they left became dry and the dry land appeared called earth; and so at the time of the flood, when the waters which covered the earth and drowned the world were called off again, the face of it was dry, and so it remains, the waters of the great ocean being restrained from overflowing it; and also when God rebukes the see, and smites the waves of it, or withholds the ebbing and flowing of the tides brooks and rivers of water dry up; see **Na 1:4**; or else this may be understood of God's withholding and restraining the waters in the clouds, and not suffering them to let down rain on the earth; when not only brooks dry up, as the brook Cherith did, where Elijah abode for sometime, but the fruits of the earth, trees, plants, and herbs dry up, wither and die; see
1Ki 17:7; and this is an emblem in a spiritual sense of God's withholding the word and ordinances, the waters of the sanctuary the means of grace, and of fruitfulness; which when he does, the consequence of it is barrenness and unfruitfulness in kingdoms, cities, towns, families, sad particular persons; and of his withholding the communications of his grace, often compared to water in Scripture, even from his people; the effect of which is, that they are in, withering circumstances, the things that revive seem ready to die, though they shall not; love waxes cold, faith is ready to fail, and hope and strength seem perishing from the Lord:

also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth; as at the time of the flood, when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and such vast quantities of water issued out as overflowed the whole world, by which it was overturned; and as the Apostle Peter says, "perished", **2Pe 3:5**; though this is also true of inundations that may have been since, which though not universal as that, yet so far as they have reached have overturned all in their way, and carried off the fruits of the earth, the habitations of men, and men themselves; whole countries, cities and towns, have been carried away by the waters of the sea, or sunk into it, particularly all that space. Where now is the Atlantic sea, as Pliny {t}, from Plato, relates. It is well when the grace of God flows, and overflows, and superabounds abounding sin, and overpowers and overcomes carnal, earthly, and sensual lusts, and reigns where sin did, and teaches to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to mortify the members on the earth.

{s} Mymb ruey "detinebit in aquis", Montanus, Bolducius; "si contineat, vel cohibeat, q. d. imperium exerceat in aquas", Michaelis. {t} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 90, 92.

Job 12:16

Ver. 16. With him [is] strength and wisdom,.... Which is repeated from Job 12:13; though different words are used but expressive of the same things; of the greatest strength might, and power of God, as the above instances show and of his most consummate, solid and substantial wisdom, as appears by what follows:

the deceived and the deceiver [are] his: the wisdom, knowledge, sagacity and penetration into affairs, which the one has not, and the other has are from him; he withholds them from the one, who are simple and void of understanding, and so are easily imposed upon and deceived, and he given them to others, who make as ill use of them, deceive their fellow creatures some are deceivers in civil things, in the business and affairs of life, who circumvent, trick, cheat, and defraud their neighbours in buying and selling, using deceitful weights and measures, and by many other artful methods; others are deceivers in religious affairs, such are false teachers, deceitful workers, that lie in wait deceive; their intention into deceive, they do it knowingly, and on purpose; they walk in craftiness, and handle the word of God deceitfully; there were many of these in the times of the apostles that had then entered into the world, but never more than now; the great impostor and deceiver of all is. Satan, to whom Jarchi restrains the words, who beguiled Eve, and indeed deceives the whole world, Re 12:9. Multitudes are deceived by him, as well as by, his emissaries, false teachers, and by their own hearts lusts; and even God's elect themselves, while in a state of unregeneracy, bear this character of "deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures", **Tit 3:3**. Now these are "his", the Lord's; which Mr. Broughton interprets, "from him", "by him", and "for him"; the wit, wisdom, subtlety, and sagacity of deceivers, are from him; gifts of nature, in themselves good, bestowed on them by him; the ill use they make of it is from themselves, and owing to the vitiosity of their nature; nay, it is not only by his permission, but according to his ordination and will, that there are such persons in the world: in some cases they appear not only to have leave or permission, but an order to seduce, as to the, lying spirit sent forth to seduce Ahab, 1Ki 22:20; yea, the princes of Noph being deceived, and they seducing Egypt, it is ascribed to the Lord's mingling a perverse spirit in the midst thereof, Isa 19:13; nay, when a prophet is deceived, God himself is said to deceive that prophet, Eze 14:9; so much is there of the permissive and efficacious will of God in this matter; not that he is the author of error and deceit, or infuses these into men, only the orderer, disposer, and, overruler of these things to some purposes orb is; he has power over them, and counterworks them, when he pleases; he can and does restrain them, and stops them, that they shall proceed no further, than he wills; false teachers would, if possible, deceive the very elect, Mt 24:24, but they cannot, and the reason is, God hinders them; Satan can go on no longer deceiving the world than it is the pleasure of God; a notorious instance of, hindering and, restraining him may be seen in Re 20:3; and all the deceptions that are suffered to be among men they are all, wisely ordered, and overruled to good purposes, so as to issue well; the deception of our first parents was suffered and willed, that the grace of God might be displayed in the salvation of, men; errors and heresies are and must be for the trial and discovery of sound believers that they which are approved might be manifest; and men that like not to retain God in their knowledge reject both the light of nature and revelation, are left in righteous judgment to a reprobate mind, to give heed to seducing spirits, and are given up to strong delusions to believe a lie, that they might be damned, see 1Co 11:19 **Ro 1:28**. Now all this shows the infinite and consummate wisdom of God; it is brought to prove, not only that he "knows" deceivers, and all their arts and tricks, through which men are deceived by them, as Aben Ezra interprets it, and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it; but he is the fountain of all that wisdom and knowledge in them, superior to others, which they abuse, nor can they use it without his leave; and he can and does counterwork them, and restrains them as he pleases, and makes all to work for and issue in his own glory.

Job 12:17

Ver. 17. He leadeth counsellors away spoiled,.... Such who have the greatest share of knowledge and wisdom in civil things, and are capable of giving advice to others, and are very useful in commonwealths, in cities, towns, and neighbourhoods; wherefore it is a judgment on a people when such are removed, **Isa 3:3**; these God can spoil at once of all their wisdom and knowledge, and render them unfit to give advice and counsel to others; or he can confound their schemes, disappoint their devices, carry their counsel headlong, and make it of none effect, and so spoil them of their ends and views, and of their fame, credit, and reputation:

and maketh the judges fools; men of great parts, abilities, and capacities, whereby they are qualified to sit upon the bench, preside in courts of judicature, and judge in all matters of controversy that come before them; and it is a happiness to a country to have such persons, as it is a judgment to have them removed, see **Isa 3:2**; yet God can take away the wisdom of such men, deprive them of their natural abilities, and so infatuate them, that they shall not be able to understand a cause, but pass a foolish sentence, to their own shame and disgrace, as well as to the injury of others; see Isa 40:23.

Job 12:18

Ver. 18. He looseth the bonds of kings,.... Not with which they themselves may be bound, being taken prisoners, or being so before made kings, and brought from thence to reign, as in **Ec 4:14**; but that which they bind on their subjects, a yoke of bondage, tyranny, and oppression; so that to loose their bond is to loose their subjects from it, and free them from their arbitrary and despotic power, and from the burdens they lay upon them: unless rather it should be understood of loosing their waistbands, as an emblem of their government, ungirding them, or unkinging them, stripping them of their royal power and authority, called a "loosing of their loins", Isa 45:1; and this power God has over such great personages, as to set up kings, and remove them at his pleasure, **Da 2:21**; which shows that strength and power, as well as wisdom, are with him; this may respect Chedorlaomer casting off the yoke of Nimrod, and the kings of Canaan casting off the yoke of Chedorlaomer, and being loosed from it, Ge 14:1;

and girdeth their loins with a girdle; not with a royal waistband, as an ensign of government; see Isa 11:5; which he looses, and strips them of, but another instead of that; he girds them with the girdle of a servant or traveller; the allusion being to the custom in those eastern countries, where they wore long garments, for servants to gird them up, when they waited on their masters, or when men went long journeys, see Lu 17:7; and so may signify that kings sometimes become servants, or go into captivity, and there be used as such, as they sometimes are; the Vulgate Latin version is, "he girds their reins with a rope".

Job 12:19

Ver. 19. He leadeth princes away spoiled,.... Of their principalities and dominions, of their wealth and riches, and of their honour and glory; or "priests" {u}, as some choose to render the word, against whom God has indignation for their sins, and leads them into captivity with others; so the Septuagint version, "he leads the priests captives"; for no office, ever so sacred, can protect wicked men, see **La 2:6**; and from these sometimes the law perishes, and they are spoiled of their wisdom and knowledge, and made unfit to instruct the people, and so of their credit and reputation among them. Sephorno interprets it of the priests spoiled of their prophesying, they prophesying false things to kings:

and overthroweth the mighty; the mighty angels from heaven when they sinned, and mighty men on earth, kings and princes, whom he puts down from their seats of majesty and grandeur. Sephorno interprets this of kings, whose ways are perverted, by being led by false prophets, as Ahab was. Some {w} understand this of ecclesiastical men, mighty in word and doctrine, well grounded in theology, yet their wisdom being taken away from them, they turn aside into wicked paths, practices, and principles, and fall from their steadfastness in truth and holiness.

{u} Mynhk "sacerdotes", V. L. Montanus, Tigurine version, Bolducius, Cocceius, Schmidt, Schultens. {w} Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 12:20

Ver. 20. He removeth away the speech of the trusty,.... Speech is proper to mankind, and a benefit unto them, whereby they can converse together, and communicate their minds to each other; this is the gift of God, he gives to men in common the faculty of speaking; to some the tongue of the learned to speak various tongues, either in an ordinary or in an extraordinary manner; and he that gives can take away; he that made man's mouth or lip can make it speechless, as he does at death; when he takes away man's breath, he takes away his speech; the state of the dead is a state of silence; and sometimes he does it while living, by striking dumb, as he did Zechariah the father of John the Baptist; and even without so doing, as in the builders of Babel, he took away the speech they had, and gave them another; and sometimes he suffers not men to speak what they would, but what is contrary to their inclinations and desires, as in Balaam, who would willingly have cursed Israel, but could not. Now that God should take away by any means the speech of liars, and faithless persons, as Ananias and Sapphira, by striking them dead, **Ac 5:1**; and of false teachers, deceivers, and bold blasphemers of God, and of his Son, and of the blessed Spirit, whose mouths ought to be stopped, is no wonder; but it seems strange that he should remove the speech of "trusty" or "faithful" {x} men, that speak the truth, and are to be credited and believed; and as the preceding words are understood of ecclesiastic persons, these may be continued concerning them; and the character agrees with ministers of the word, who are in trusted with the rich treasure of it; that is put in earthen vessels, and committed to the trust of faithful men; who appear to be such when they speak the word faithfully, declare the whole counsel of God, and keep back nothing profitable to men; when they speak plainly, without ambiguity, and sincerely, without mixing or adulterating it; and are faithful as to God, who has appointed them, and put them into the ministry, so to the souls of men under their care: now God sometimes takes away the speech of these, not by changing their voice, or ordering them, instead of the gracious promises of the Gospel, to deliver out the menaces and threatenings of the law; but either by commanding them to be dumb and silent, and speak no more to an incorrigible and rebellious people; as Ezekiel was bid to prophesy no more to the house of Israel, and the apostles to preach no more to the Jews; or by suffering them to be silenced by the edicts of wicked princes, and their violent persecutions of them, so that the teachers of men are removed into corners, and not to be seen or heard; and also by death, when their faces are no more seen, and their speech no more heard. Some, both Jewish and Christian interpreters, derive the word here used from the root Man, "to speak", and render it "speakers" or "orators" {y}; so Mr. Broughton translates the words, "he bereaveth the orators of lip"; he takes away their eloquence from them, deprives them of their speaking well, and strips them of their natural and acquired abilities, by which they have become good speakers; and such who use their talents well in this way are beneficial to a commonwealth, and it is a loss when they are removed, or their speech removed from them, see **Isa 3:3**;

and taketh away the understanding of the aged; or "elders" {z}, as Mr. Broughton, either in age or office; elders in age, with whom understanding, reason, judgment, counsel, and wisdom, by all which the word is interpreted, may be thought to be, and it is expected they should, and oftentimes are, though not always; yet all this God can take away, and does when he pleases, and they become like children in understanding; through the infirmities of old age their memories fail them, their reason is impaired, their understanding and judgment are weakened, and they become unfit to give advice themselves, and are easily imposed on, and drawn aside by others, as may be observed in Solomon, the wisest of men, when he was grown old. This is to be understood of the natural understanding in things natural and civil, but not of the spiritual understanding, which is never taken away, but rather increased in old age; the true light of grace shines more and more unto the perfect day; it is a gift of God without repentance, which he never revokes and removes: it may intend

the natural "taste" {a}, as the word may be rendered; this is often and generally taken away from the aged, as in old Barzillai, who could not taste what he ate and drank, as to distinguish and relish it, 2Sa 19:35; but not the spiritual taste, of the Lord as gracious, of the good word of God, and the fruits of divine grace; the taste and savour of which remain with the people of God in old age; or this may design men in office, either civil magistrates, called senators, the elders of the people, judges, and counsellors, who instead of being taught more wisdom, which their offices require, sometimes become infatuated, their understanding of civil things is taken away from them, their wise counsels become brutish, and they like children; or ecclesiastic persons, elders of churches, who, having talents for public usefulness, either neglect them, or make an ill use of them, and therefore are taken away from them; their right arm is dried up, and their right eye darkened,
Mt 25:28.

{x} Mynmanl "veracibus", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Schultens; "fidis", Mercerus, Piscator; "fidelibus", Bolducius. {y} "Dicendi peritis", Beza; eloquentibus, Junius & Tremellius; so Kimchi, Ramban, Ben Gersom, Ben Melech, Sephorno. {z} Mynqz "seniorum", Cocceius, Michaelis; "senatorum", Schultens. {a} Mej "gustum", Drusius, Schultens.

Job 12:21

Ver. 21. He poureth contempt upon princes,.... Not on good princes, such as rule in righteousness, and decree judgment and govern their subjects according to good laws, in a mild and gentle manner, and answer to their name of free, liberal, beneficent and munificent. These, as there is an honour due unto them, it is the will of God they should have it; much less are princes, in a figurative sense, meant, good men, the children of God, who are born of him the King of kings, and so princes in all the earth; but, in a literal sense, bad princes, that oppress their subjects, and rule them with rigour, and persecute good men; such as rose up against Christ, as Herod and Pontius Pilate; persecutors of the saints, as the Roman emperors, and the antichristian princes in the papacy; these God sometimes brings into contempt with their subjects, deposes them from their government, reduces them to a mean, abject, and servile state; or they die a shameful death, as Herod was eaten with worms, and many of the Heathen emperors died miserable deaths; and the vials of God's wrath will be poured out upon all the antichristian states, and their princes: pouring denotes the abundance of shame they are put to, as if they were clothed and covered with it, it being plentifully poured out like water, or as water was poured upon them, which is sometimes done by way of contempt, see Ps 107:40;

and weakeneth the strength of the mighty; the strength of men, hale and robust, by sending one disease or another upon them, which takes it away from them; or by "the mighty" are meant men in power and authority; kings, as the Targum paraphrases it, mighty monarchs, whose strength lies in their wealth and riches, in their fortresses and powerful armies; all which God can deprive them of in an instant, and make them as weak as other men. Some render it, "and looseneth the girdle of the mighty" {b}, the same as loosening the loins of kings,
Isa 14:1; ungirding them, and taking away their power and authority from them, rendering them unfit for business, or unable to keep their posts and defend their kingdom.

{b} hpr Myqypa xyzmw "et zonam potentium laxat", Tigurine version, Piscator, Beza, Schmidt; so Jarchi, Ben Gersom, Bar Tzemach, & Ben Melech.

Job 12:22

Ver. 22. He discovereth deep things out of darkness,.... The deep things of God, his own deep things which lie in his heart, wrapped up in darkness impenetrable to creatures, and which could never be known unless he had discovered them; such as the thoughts of his heart, which are very deep, Ps 92:5; the deep things of God, which the Spirit of God only knows, searches, and reveals, **1Co 2:10**; even his thoughts of peace, and good things for his people, which are many and precious, are known to himself, and made known to them, or otherwise must have remained in darkness, and out of their reach, being as high as the heavens are from the earth; the decrees and purposes of God, which he hath purposed in himself, are deep things in his own breast, and lie concealed in darkness there, until discovered by the accomplishment of them; such as his decrees of election in Christ, redemption by him, and the effectual calling by his grace; all which are revealed and made known by the execution of them: the love of God to his people, which lay hid in his heart from everlasting; this is discovered by the gift and mission of his Son; in the regeneration and quickening of his people, and of which he makes still larger discoveries to them in the course of their lives: likewise the mysteries of the Gospel, unknown to natural men, even the wise and prudent, only known to such to whom it is given to know them, to whom they are revealed by the Father of Christ, and by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; respecting the persons in the Godhead, the grace of each person, the incarnation of Christ, the union of the two natures in him, redemption and justification by him, regeneration by the Spirit of God, union to Christ, and communion with him, and conformity to him in soul and body, now and hereafter: likewise the secrets of his providence, in which there is a great depth of his wisdom and knowledge, and is in great obscurity; his path is in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known; his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out, but before long they will be made manifest, and lie open to view. There are also the deep things of others, which he discovers, as the depth of sin in the deceitful heart of man, which none knows as himself; and which lie hid there until they are discovered in the light of the divine Spirit, who convinces of them, enlightens the understanding to behold those swarms of lusts and corruptions it never discerned before; and then a man comes to see and know the plague of his own heart, he was before a stranger to; also the depths of Satan, his deep laid schemes, his wiles and stratagems, to draw into sin, and so to ruin; these are unknown to natural men, but saints are made acquainted with them, so that they are not altogether ignorant of his devices, **Re 2:24**; likewise the secret plots, counsels, and combinations of wicked men, which they lay deep, and seek to hide from the Lord, being formed in the dark; but he sees and knows them, discovers and confounds them: to which may be added all the wicked actions of men done in the dark, but cannot be hid from God, with whom the darkness and the light are both alike; and who, sooner or later, brings them to light, even the hidden things of darkness, and makes manifest the counsels of the heart, as he will do more especially at the day of judgment, to which every secret thing will be brought:

and bringeth but to light the shadow of death; not only life and immortality, as by the Gospel, but death, and the shadow of it, even deadly darkness, the grossest of darkness; such who are darkness itself he makes light, and out of the darkness in them commands light to shine, as in the first creation; to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, he causes a great light to arise, the light of the Gospel, and the light of grace, yea, Christ himself, the light of the world; he calls and brings them out of it into marvellous light, out of the dark dungeon and prison of sin and unbelief, to the enjoyment of spiritual light and life here, and to everlasting light and glory hereafter.

Job 12:23

Ver. 23. He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them,.... As he did before the flood, when the earth was tilled, and all over peopled with them, but at the flood he destroyed them at once. Sephorno interprets it of the seven nations in the land of Canaan, which were increased in it, and destroyed, to make way for the Israelites to inhabit it; and this has since been verified in other kingdoms, large and populous, and brought to destruction, particularly in the four monarchies, Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman, and will be in the antichristian states and nations of the world:

he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them [again]; or "stretcheth" or "spreadeth out the nations" {c}, as he did all over the earth before the deluge, and then most remarkably straitened them, when they were reduced to so small a number as to be contained in a single ark: "or leads them" {d}; that is, "governs them", as Mr. Broughton renders the word, rules and overrules them, as large as they are; or leads them into captivity, as some Jewish writers {e}, as the Israelites; though they have been enlarged, and became numerous, as it was promised they should, yet have been led into captivity, first the ten tribes by the Assyrians, and then the two tribes by the Chaldeans; the Targum is, "he spreadeth out a net for the nations, and leadeth them", that is, into it, so that they are taken in it, see Eze 12:13.

{c} xjv "extendit", Tigurine version, Drusius, Mercerus; "expandit", Beza, Junius & Tremellus, Piscator, Schmidt; "expandens", Schultens. {d} Mxnyw "et ducit eas", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schmidt. {e} Kimchi, Ben Melech, Bar Tzemach.

Job 12:24

Ver. 24. He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth,.... The people of the earth are the common people; the "chief" or "heads" {f} of them, as it may be rendered, are kings, princes and generals of armies; whose "hearts" may be said to be "taken away" when they are dispirited, and deprived both of courage and conduct; have neither valour nor wisdom, neither fortitude of mind, nor military skill to defend themselves and their people against their enemies. Sephorno interprets this of Sihon and Og, whose spirits the Lord hardened, and made their hearts obstinate to war with Israel, **De 2:30**; but it may be better understood of the Israelites, and the heads of them, when they were discomfited by the Amalekites, quickly after their coming out of Egypt, see Nu 14:45; about which time Job lived: and the rather, since it follows,

and caused them to wander in a wilderness [where there is] no way: no track, no beaten path to follow, to be a guide to them, and direct their way; in such a wilderness the Israelites wandered near forty years, see Ps 107:40.

{f} yvar "capitum", Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 12:25

Ver. 25. They grope in the dark without light,.... Like blind men, as the men of Sodom, when they were struck with blindness; or "they grope", or "feel the dark, and not light" {g}, as the Targum; as the Egyptian, did when such gross darkness was upon them as might be felt:

and he maketh them to stagger like [a] drunken [man]; that has lost his sight, his senses, and his feet, and knows not where he is, which way to go, nor how to keep on his legs, but reels to and fro, and is at the utmost loss what to do; all this is said of the heads or chief of the people, in consequence of their hearts being taken away, and so left destitute of wisdom and strength.

{g} rwa alw Kvx wvvmy "palpant tenebras et non lucem", Vatablus, Mercerus, Drusius, Schultens.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 13

Job begins this chapter by observing the extensiveness of his knowledge, as appeared from his preceding discourse, by which it was evident he was not less knowing than his friends, Job 13:1; and therefore would have nothing to do with them as judges in his cause, but would appeal to God, and debate the matter before him, and leave it to his decision, since he could expect no good from them, Job 13:3; and all the favour he entreats of them is, that they would for the future be no longer speakers, but hearers, Job 13:5; he expostulates with them about their wicked and deceitful way of pleading for God, and against him, Job 13:7; and in order to strike an awe upon them, suggests to them, that they were liable to the divine scrutiny; that God was not to be mocked by them, that he would surely reprove them for their respect of persons, and desires them to consider his dreadful majesty, and what frail creatures they were, Job 13:9; then he expresses his confidence in God, that he should be saved by him, notwithstanding the afflictive circumstances he was

in,
Job 13:14; and doubted not he should be able so to plead his cause, as that he should be justified, if God would but withdraw his hand, and take off his dread from him, Job 13:18; he desires to know what his sins were, that he should hide his face from him, and treat him with so much severity, who was but a poor, weak, feeble creature, Job 13:24; and concludes with a complaint of the bitterness and sharpness of his afflictions, with which he was consumed, Job 13:26.

Ver. 1. Lo, mine eye hath seen all [this],.... Or "all those things" {h} he had been discoursing of, concerning the wisdom and power of God, and his friends also; some of these he had seen instances of, he had been an eyewitness of them, and could give an ocular testimony to them; and others he had discerned with the eyes of his understanding, being opened and enlightened, and had a clear and distinct view of them, so that he had seen and knew as much of these things as any of them had. Some {i} interpret it "all" other things, pertaining to the same subject; by what he had said, it might be concluded he knew more; this was but a sample or specimen of his knowledge, which, when observed, it might be perceived what an understanding he had in such divine things: the words are indeed absolute, "my eye hath seen all things" {k}, which must not be taken in the largest and comprehensive sense of all things to be seen, heard, and understood; for though Job's knowledge was very great, yet it did not take so great a compass as this; many things in nature his eye had not seen, others in providence he could not discern, and but a small portion of God, of his nature, perfections, ways, and works, was known by him, as he himself confesses elsewhere, Job 26:14; this therefore must be limited and restrained to the subject matter in hand, and to what he and his friends had been treating of:

mine ear hath heard; some things he had knowledge of by the report of others, from his forefathers, his ancestors, men of capacity and probity, that could be credited, and safely depended on, and even some things by revelation from God; for if Eliphaz his friend had an heavenly vision, and a divine revelation, which his ear received a little of, why may it not be thought that Job also was sometimes favoured with visions and revelations from God, whereby he became more intimately acquainted with divine and spiritual things?

and understood it; that is, what he had seen and heard; some things may be seen, and yet not known what they are; and other things may be heard, and not understood; but Job had an understanding of what he had seen with his own eyes, or had received by revelation, human or divine: and all this is introduced with a "lo" or "behold"; not as a note of admiration at his knowledge, though the things known by him were wonderful, but as a note of attention to them, and to his remark on them, and as expressive of the certainty of his sight, hearing, and understanding of these things.

{h} hla lk "omnia haec", V. L. Tigurine version, Beza, Michaelis; so Vatablus, Mercerus, Piscator, Codurcus. {i} "Alia omnia", Schmidt. {k} "Omnia", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Bolducius, Cocceius, Schultens.

Job 13:2

Ver. 2. What ye know, [the same] do I know also,.... Concerning God and his perfections, his sovereignty, holiness, justice, wisdom, power, goodness, &c. and concerning his providences, and his dealings with men in an ordinary or in an extraordinary way:

I [am] not inferior unto you; as might be deduced from the preceding discourse; See Gill on "Job 12:3".

Job 13:3

Ver. 3. Surely I would speak to the Almighty,.... Or "therefore I would speak" {l}, since he knew as much as his friends, and they knew no more than he, if so much, he would have no more to do with them, they should not be his judges; nor would he be determined by them, but would appeal to God, and plead his own cause before him, by whom he doubted not he should be candidly heard; he knew that he was the Judge of all the earth, and would do right; and that he sat on a throne judging righteously, and would maintain his right and his cause; that he would judge him according to his righteousness and integrity, of which he was conscious, and would pass a just decisive sentence in his favour, and give the cause for him against his friends, as he afterwards did; for this is not to be understood of speaking to him in prayer, though that is a speech either of the heart or of the tongue, or of both, to God; and which he allows of, yea, delights in, and which is a wonderful condescension; and therefore it may be used with boldness and freedom, and which gracious souls are desirous of; and the consideration of God being "almighty", or "all sufficient", is an argument, motive, and inducement to them to speak or pray unto him, since he is able to do all things for them they want or desire of him; but here it is to be understood of speaking to him, or before him, in a judicial way, at his bar, before his tribunal, he sitting as a Judge to hear the cause, and decide the controversy between Job and his friends. So, he render it, "I would speak for the Almighty, and desire to reason for God" {m}; seeing he knew so much of him; not speak against him, as his friends suggested he had, but for him, on behalf of his sovereignty, justice, holiness, wisdom, and strength, as he had done, and would do yet more; by which he would have it known, that as he had as much knowledge as they, he was as zealous as any of them to plead for God, and defend him, and promote his honour and glory to the uttermost; but the other sense is best:

and I desire to reason with God: not at the bar of his justice, with respect to the justification of his person by his own righteousness; so no man can reason with God, as to approve himself just with him; nor will any sensible man desire to enter into judgment with him on that foot; a poor sensible sinner may reason with God at the throne of grace, and plead for pardoning mercy and justifying grace through the blood and righteousness of Christ, and from the declarations, proclamations, and promises of grace through him; but of neither of these sorts of reasoning, are the words to be understood, but of debating the matter in controversy between Job and his friends before God, that he might hear it, and decide it; this was what Job was desirous of, of having the cause brought before him, the case stated and pleaded, and reasoned on in his presence; this he signifies would be a pleasure to him; he "should delight" to have it so, as the word {n} here used may be interpreted.

{l} Mlwa "ideo, propterea", Pineda. {m} ydv la "pro Omnipotente--pro Deo", Junius & Tremellius. {n} Upxa "lubet", Schultens.

Job 13:4

Ver. 4. But ye [are] forgers of lies,.... This is a hard and very harsh saying; Job was now in a passion, provoked by his friends, and retorts upon them what they had charged him with, Job 11:3; so often in controversies and disputes between good men undue heats arise, and unbecoming words drop from their lips and pens; to tell lies is a bad thing, but to forge them, to tell a studied premeditated lie, is dreadfully shocking, contrary to the grace of God, and which good men cannot allow themselves in, it is the character of bad men, see Isa 63:8; but it may be Job may not design lies in a strict and proper sense, but falsehoods and untruths; for though no lie is of the truth, yet every untruth is not a lie; because a man may deliver an untruth, not knowing it to be so, but taking it for a truth, speaks it, without any design to impose upon and deceive others. Doctrinal lies may be intended, such as the false prophets told, whereby they made the hearts of the righteous sad, and were the untempered mortar they daubed with, Eze 13:10; and the word here used has the same signification, and may be rendered, "daubers of lies" {o}; that colour over things, and make falsehoods look like truths, and deliver them for such, and like others speak lies in hypocrisy: now those here referred to were these, that God did not afflict good men, at least in any very severe manner, and that Job, being thus afflicted, was a bad man, and an hypocrite; both these Job charges as lies:

ye [are] all physicians of no value; or "idol physicians" {p}; not that pretended to the cure of idols, but were no better than idols themselves, and understood no more how to cure than they, than an Heathen deity, the god of physic Aesculapius, or anyone that might be reckoned such; but was no other than an image of wood or stone, and so could not be possessed of the faculty of healing, and such were Job's friends; an idol is nothing, and is good for nothing, and such were they as physicians, they were idol physicians, like the "idol shepherd", Zec 11:17; of no value at all: the Rabbins {q} say, the word used signifies a nerve or sinew of the neck, which when broken is incurable; and such physicians were they, that could do him no service, no more than cure a broken neck; this is to be understood of them, not as physicians of his body, that they pretended not to be; he was greatly diseased from head to foot, and had no hope of a recovery of his health, nor did they pretend to prescribe for him, nor does he reproach them on that account; but as physicians of his soul, afflicted and distressed, they came to administer comfort to him under his afflictions, but they were miserable comforters, as he elsewhere calls them, Job 16:2; instead of acting the part of the good Samaritan, and pouring in oil and wine into his wounds, Lu 10:34, they poured in vinegar, and made them bleed and smart the more, and added affliction to his affliction; instead of healing, they wounded him yet more and more; and, instead of binding up his wounds, opened them wider, and gave him sensible pain; instead of giving him the cordials of the Gospel, they gave him the corrosives the law; and instead of pointing out unto him the gracious promises of God, for the support of his afflicted soul, they loaded him with charges of sin, and set him to work by repentance and reformation to obtain the forgiveness of them: they said many good things, but misapplied them, being ignorant of the case, and so were physicians of no value; as such are who are ignorant of the nature and causes of a disease, and therefore make wrong prescriptions, though the medicines they prescribe may in themselves be good: indeed, in the cases of souls, or for the healing of the diseases of the soul, which are natural and hereditary, epidemical and universal, nauseous and loathsome, and of themselves mortal, all physicians are of no value; but Jesus Christ, who is the only physician of souls, the able, skilful, and infallible one, that cures all fully freely that apply unto him; bodily physicians are no use in such cases, nor merry companions, nor legal preachers, who direct to supple the wounds with tears of repentance, and bind them up with rags of a man's own righteousness; Christ is the only Saviour, his blood the balsam that heals every wound, and his righteousness that affords peace, joy, and comfort to afflicted minds, and delivers from those weights and pressures of mind with which they are bowed down.

{o} rqv ylpj "incrustatores fuci", Schultens. {p} lla yapr "curatores idoli", Bolducius; so Ramban; "medici idoli", Pineda; so some in Drusius. {q} Jarchi & Bar Tzemach.

Job 13:5

Ver. 5. And that ye would altogether hold your peace,.... Since what they said of him was not true, nor anything to the purpose, or that tended to the comfort of his afflicted soul, but the reverse; and therefore he could have wished they had never broke silence, but continued as they were the first seven days of their visit; and now, since they had spoken, and had done no good by speaking, but hurt, he desires for the future they would be silent, and say no more:

and it should be your wisdom: it would be the greatest evidence of it they could give; they had shown none by speaking; it would be a proof of some in them, should they hold their peace; a very biting expression this see Pr 17:28.

Job 13:6

Ver. 6. Hear now my reasoning,.... Job entreats his friends that they would be no longer speakers, but hearers; that they would vouchsafe to sit still, and hear what he had to say; though he was greatly afflicted, he had not lost his reason, wisdom was not driven out from him, **Job 6:13**; he had still with him his reasoning powers, which he was capable of making use of, and even before God, and desires that they would attend to what he had to say on his own behalf:

and hearken to the pleadings of my lips; he was capable of pleading his own cause, and he was desirous of doing it before God as his Judge; and begs the favour of his friends to be silent, and hear him out, and then let judgment be given, not by them, but by God himself.

Job 13:7

Ver. 7. Will you speak wickedly for God?.... As he suggests they did; they spoke for God, and pleaded for the honour of his justice, by asserting he did not afflict good men, which they thought was contrary to his justice; but: then, at the same time, they spoke wickedly of Job, that he being afflicted of God was a bad man, and an hypocrite; and this was speaking wickedly for God, to vindicate his justice at the expense of his character, which there was no need to do; and showed that they were poor advocates for God, since they might have vindicated the honour of his justice, and yet allowed that he afflicted good men, and that Job was such an one:

and talk deceitfully for him? or tell lies for him, namely, those just mentioned, that only wicked men, and not good men, were afflicted by him, and that Job was a bad man, and an hypocrite.

Job 13:8

Ver. 8. Will ye accept his person?.... Accepting persons ought not to be done in judgment by earthly judges; which is done when they give a cause to one through favour and affection to his person, because rich, or their friend, and against another, because otherwise; and something like this Job intimates his friends did in the present case; they only considered what God was, holy, just, wise, and good in all he did, and so far they were right, and too much respect cannot be given him; but the fault was, that they only attended to this, and did not look into the cause of Job itself, but wholly neglected it, and gave it against him, he being poor, abject, and miserable, on the above consideration of the perfections of God; which looked like what is called among men acceptation, or respect of persons:

will ye contend for God? it is right to contend for God, for the being of God against atheists, for the perfections of God, his sovereignty, his omniscience, omnipresence, &c. against those that deny them, for his truths and doctrines, word, worship, and ordinances, against the corrupters of them; but then he and those are not to be contended for in a foolish and imprudent manner, or with a zeal, not according to knowledge, much less with an hypocritical one, as was Jehu's,
2Ki 10:28; God needs no such advocates, he can plead his own cause, or make

use of persons that can do it in a better manner, and to better purpose.

Job 13:9

Ver. 9. Is it good that he should search you out?.... That is, God; searching is ascribed to him after the manner of men; not that he is ignorant of persons or things he searches after, or exercises that application, diligence, and industry, and takes those pains which are necessary in men to find out anything; when he makes search, it is not on his own account, but others; at least it is only to show his knowledge of persons and things, and to make men known to others, or things to them themselves; and is here to be understood in a judicial sense, as it frequently is the case, so it was here, a man that is "first in his own cause", as the wise man says, Pr 18:17, "seemeth just"; to himself and others; it looks upon the representation he makes of things as if he was in the right: "but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him"; traverses his arguments in his own vindication, and shows the fallacy of them; so Job's friends, making the worst of his cause, and the best of their own, seemed right in their own eyes; but God, who is the searcher of hearts, and who knows all things, could see through their coverings of things, and could not be deceived by them, but would find them out, and expose them; as he did afterwards, when he gave judgment against them, and declared they had not said that which was right, as his servant Job had, Job 42:7; and therefore it was not to their profit and advantage, and to their honour and credit, to be searched out by him, or to run the risk of it, as they did, which is the amount of this question:

or as one mocketh another, do ye [so] mock him? men may be mocked by their fellow creatures, either by words or gestures, as good men usually are in all ages, especially the prophets of the Lord, and the ministers of his word; or they may he deceived and imposed upon by the false glosses and colourings of artful men, as simple men are deceived by the fair speeches of false teachers, which is no other than an illusion of them, or mocking them: in the first sense God may be mocked, though he should not; there have been and will be such bold and daring creatures as to mock at his promises and his providence, to mock at his word, ordinances, and ministers, which is interpreted by him a mocking and despising himself; but in the latter sense he cannot be mocked, and it is a vain thing to attempt it; "be not deceived, God is not mocked", **Ga 6:7**; he sees through all the fallacious reasonings of men; he judges not according to outward appearance; he sees and knows the heart, and all the views and designs of men, and can detect all their sophisms and false glosses; he is not to be deceived by specious pretences of doing such and such actions for his glory, as casting out good men, and their names, or traducing their characters that he may be glorified, or killing them to do him service, Isa 66:5; he is not to be flattered as one man may flatter another; to do this with him, is to mock him, he is not to be mocked in this way.

Job 13:10

Ver. 10. He will surely reprove you,.... Or "in reproving he will reprove you" {r}; he will certainly do it, it may be depended upon, and be expected; he will never suffer sin to go unreproved and uncorrected; he will do it to the purpose, with sharpness and severity, as the nature of the crime requires; he reproves by his spirit, and it is well for men when he thoroughly, and in a spiritual and saving way, reproves them by him, and convinces them of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and he reproves by his word, which is written for reproof and correction; and by his ministers, one part of whose work it is to rebuke and reprove men for bad practices, and bad principles; and in some cases they are to use sharpness, and which when submitted to, and kindly taken, it is well; and sometimes he reproves by his providences, by afflictive dispensations, and that either in love, as he rebukes his own children, or in wrath and hot displeasure, as others, which is here designed; and as it is always for sin he rebukes men, so particularly he rebukes for the following, as might be expected:

if ye do secretly accept persons; acceptance of persons in judgment is prohibited by God, and is highly resented by him; yea, even the acceptance of his own person to the prejudice of the character of an innocent man; which seems to be what Job has respect unto, as appears from Job 13:8; and some versions render it, "if ye accept his face" {a}; and though this may be done no openly and publicly, but in a covert and secret manner, under disguise, and with specious pretences to the honour and glory of God.

{r} xykwy xkwh "arguiendo arguet", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Bolducius, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schmidt; "redarguendo redarguet", Michaelis.
{a} Mynp "faciem ejus", V. L. Munster, Piscator; "personam ipsius", Beza, so the Targum.

Job 13:11

Ver. 11. Shall not his excellency make you afraid,.... To commit sin, any sin, and particularly that just mentioned, which they might expect to be reproved for; there is an excellency in the name of God, which is fearful and dreadful, and in the nature and perfections of God, his power, justice, and holiness, in which he is glorious and tremendous, and should deter men from sinning against him; and there is an excellency in his works of nature and providence, which are wondrous, and show him to be near at hand, and can at once, if he pleases, take vengeance for sin: or "shall not his height" {b}, &c. his sublimity, his superiority to all beings; he is the most high God, higher than the highest among men, he is above all gods, all that are so called; and therefore all the inhabitants of the earth should stand in awe of him, and not sin: or "shall not his lifting up" {c}? &c. on a throne of judgment, as the Targum adds; he is the Judge of the whole earth, and will judge his people, and right their wrongs; he sits on a throne high, and lifted up, judging righteously; and will maintain the cause of the innocent, and avenge himself on those that injure them, and therefore it must be a fearful thing to fall into his hands: some render it, "shall not his burning" {d}; or flaming fire, &c. as Jarchi observes, and apply it to hell fire, and the everlasting burnings of the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; and which are very terrible, and may well frighten men from sinning against God; but the first sense seems to be best:

and his dread fall upon you? the dread of men, of powerful and victorious enemies, is very terrible, as was the dread of the Israelites which fell upon the inhabitants of Canaan, **Jos 2:9**; but how awful must be the terror of the great and dreadful God, when that falls upon men, or his terrible wrath and vengeance are revealed from heaven, and threaten every moment to fall upon the transgressors of his law, upon those that mock him and injure his people.

{b} wtav "celsitudo ejus", Montanus, Vatablus, Bolducius; "sublimitas ejus", Beza, Mercerus. {c} "Elevatio, erectio", Drusius. {d} So some in Jarchi & Bar Tzemach.

Job 13:12

Ver. 12. Your remembrances [are] like unto ashes,.... Either of things they put Job in remembrance of, the mementos which they had suggested to him; see **Job 4:7**; or the things which they had brought forth out of their memories, the instances they had given of what had been in the world, the arguments, objections, and reasonings, they had made use of in this controversy; their "memorable sentences" {e}, as some render it, were of no more moment and importance than ashes, and easily blown away like them; or whatsoever was

memorable in them, or they thought would perpetuate their memory hereafter, as their houses and lands, and towns and cities, called by their names, these memorials should perish,
Ps 49:11; or their wealth and riches, their honour and glory, their learning, wisdom, and knowledge, all should fade, and come to nothing; the memory of the just indeed is blessed, the righteous are had in everlasting remembrance, because of their everlasting righteousness; but as anything else, that may be thought to be a remembrance of man, it is but as ashes, of little worth, gone, and often trampled upon; and men should remember that they are but dust and ashes, as Aben Ezra {f} observes, even in their best estate, in comparison of the excellency of God, before spoken of; and as Abraham confessed in the presence of God, Ge 18:27;

your bodies to bodies of clay; that is, are like to bodies of clay, to such as are made of clay after the similitude of human bodies; and such are the bodies of men themselves, they are of the earth, earthly, they are houses of clay, which have their foundation in the dust; earthen vessels, and earthly houses of this tabernacle, poor, mean, frail, brittle things, are crushed before the moth, and much more before the Almighty; the word is by some rendered "eminencies", the most eminent men; what is most eminent in them are like to "eminences of clay" {g}, or heaps of dirt: some interpret this, as the former expression, of their words, reasonings, arguments, and objections; which though great swelling words, were vain and empty, mere bubbles, and though reckoned strong reasonings, unanswerable arguments, and objections, had no strength in them, but were to be easily thrown down like hillocks of clay; and though thought to be like shields, or high and strong fortresses, as some {h} take the word to signify, yet are but clayey ones.

{e} Mkynwdz "sententiae vestrae memorabiles", Schultens. {f} So the Tigurine version, "meminisse oportebat vos similea esse cineri". {g} Mkybg rmx ybgl "eminentiae vestrae, eminentiae luteae", Beza; so Bolducius. {h} So Cocceius, Beza.

Job 13:13

Ver. 13. Hold your peace, let me alone,.... Or, cease "from me" {i}: from speaking to me, or hindering me from speaking. Job might perceive, by some motions of his friends, that they were about to interrupt him; and therefore he desires they would be silent, and let him go on:

that I may speak; or, "and I will speak",

and let come on me what [will]; either from men, or from God himself; a good man, when he knows his cause is good, and he has truth on his side, is not careful or concerned what reproach may be cast upon him, or what censures from men he may undergo; or what persecutions from them he may endure; none of these things move him from his duty, or can stop his mouth from speaking the truth; let him be threatened with what he will, he cannot but speak the things which he has seen and heard, and knows to be true; as for what may come upon him from God, that he is not solicitous about; he knows he will lay nothing upon him but what is common to men, will support him under it, or deliver him from it in his own time and way, or however make all things work together for his good: some render it, "and let something pass by me", or "from me" {k}; that is, somewhat of his grief and sorrow, while he was speaking and pouring out his complaints before God; but the former sense seems best.

{i} yngm "desistite a me", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {k} hm yle rbeyw "ut transeat praeter me aliquid, vel a me", Schmidt.

Job 13:14

Ver. 14. Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth,.... Or bite my lips, to keep in my words, and refrain from speaking? I will not do it:

and put my life in my hand? or, expose it to danger by a forced silence; when I am ready to burst, and must if I do not speak; I will not thus endanger my life; it is unreasonable I should, I will speak my mind freely and fully, that I may be refreshed; so Sephorno interprets it of Job's putting his hand to his mouth, that he might be silent; and of putting a forcible restraint upon himself, that he might not declare what was upon his mind; see Job 13:19; but others, as Bar Tzemach, take the sense to be, what is the sin I have committed, that such sore afflictions are laid upon me; that through the pain and distress I am in, I am ready to tear off my flesh with my teeth, and my life is in the utmost danger? and some think he was under a temptation to tear his own flesh, and destroy himself; and therefore argues why he should be thus hardly dealt with, as to be exposed to such a temptation, and thrown in such despair, which yet he laboured against; but rather the meaning is, in connection with the preceding verse, let whatsoever will come upon me, "at all events, I will take my flesh in my teeth, and I will put my life in my hand" {l}; I will expose myself to the greatest dangers which is the sense of the last phrase in Jud 12:3; come life, come death, I will not fear; I am determined to speak out my mind let what will be the consequence; and with this bold and heroic spirit agrees what follows.

{l} "Super quocunque eventu", Schultens.

Job 13:15

Ver. 15. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,.... There is a double reading of these words; the "Keri", or marginal reading, is wl, "in him", which we follow; the "Cetib", or textual reading, is al, "not", which many follow, and render the words, "lo, he will slay me, I shall not hope"; or, "I have no hope", or "do not expect" {m} that is, any other than to be slain or die; and this agrees with various expressions of his elsewhere, that he had no hope of any long continuance of life, or of restoration to health and outward happiness again, but expected to die quickly; see **Job 6:11**;

but I will maintain mine own ways before him; or "to his face" {n}; though I die on the spot instantly, I will stand by it, and make it appear that the ways I have walked in are right, that I have behaved as a sincere upright man, a man fearing God, and eschewing evil; a character which God himself has given of me, and I have not forfeited it: "I will argue" or "prove" {o} it before him, as it may be rendered; that my life and conversation has been agreeable to my profession of him; that my ways have been according to his revealed will, and my walk as becoming the character I bear; and this I will maintain and support as long as I live; I will never depart from this sentiment, or let go my integrity to my latest breath; see Job 27:5; but the marginal reading seems best, "yet will I trust in him" {p}? verily I will, though I am under cutting and slaying providences, under sore afflictions, which may be called killing and slaying, or death itself; though there is an addition of them, one affliction upon another, and sorrow upon sorrow; though I am killed continually, all the day long, or die by inches; yea, though in the article of death itself, yet even then "will I trust" and hope: God only is the object of trust and confidence, and not a creature, or any creature enjoyment, or creature act; and great encouragement there is to trust in him, seeing in him is everlasting strength, to fulfil his promises, to help in time of need, and to save with an everlasting salvation; he is to be trusted in at all times, in times of affliction, temptation, desertion, and death itself: it may be rendered {q}, "I will hope in him", since there is mercy and plenteous redemption with him, and he delights in those that hope in his mercy; his eye is upon them, and his heart is towards them: or "I will wait for him", or "expect him" {r}; wait for deliverance by him, wait all the days of his appointed time, till his change come; wait for the hope of righteousness by faith, expect all needful grace from him now, and eternal glory and happiness hereafter: "but" notwithstanding his trust was alone in God for time and eternity, yet, says he, "I will maintain mine own ways before him"; that I am not an hypocrite, or have behaved as a bad man; but have acted under the influence of grace, according to his mind and will revealed.

{m} "Non sperabo", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus. So Cocceius, Schultens, Gussetius, p. 420. {n} wynp-la "ad facies ejus", Montanus, Bolducius; so Vatablus, Schultens. {o} xwkwa "arguam", Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius, Schmidt, Schultens; "probabo", Piscator. {p} "An non sperem in eum?" so some in Munster; so Junius & Tremellius, Beza, Codurcus. {q} "In eo tamen sperabo", Schmidt, Piscator, Michaelis. {r} "Ipsum expectabo", Drusius.

Job 13:16

Ver. 16. He also [shall be] my salvation,.... Job, though he asserted the integrity of his heart and life, yet did not depend on his ways and works for salvation, but only on the Lord himself; this is to be understood not of temporal salvation, though God is the author of that, and it is only to be had of him, yet Job had no hope concerning that; but of spiritual and eternal salvation, which God the Father has contrived, determined, and resolved on, and sent his Son to effect; which Christ being sent is the author of by his obedience, sufferings, and death; and in him, and in his name alone, is salvation; and every soul, sensible of the insufficiency of himself and others to save him, will resolve, as Job here, that he, and he only, shall be his Saviour, who is an able, willing, and complete one; see Ho 14:3; and the words are expressive of faith of interest in him. Job knew him to be his Saviour, and living Redeemer, and would acknowledge no other; but claim his interest in him, now and hereafter, and which was his greatest support under all his troubles; see Job 19:26;

for an hypocrite shall not come before him; a hypocrite may come into the house of God, and worship him externally, and seem to be very devout and religious; and he shall come before the tribunal of God, and stand at his bar, to be tried and judged; but he shall not continue in the presence of God, nor enjoy his favour, or he shall not be able to make his cause good before him; and indeed he does not care to have himself examined by him, nor shall he be saved everlastingly, but undergo the most severe punishment, Mt 24:51. Job here either has respect to his friends, whom he censures as hypocrites, and retorts the charge upon they brought on him; or he has reference to that charge, and by this means clears himself of it, since there was nothing he was more desirous of than to refer his case to the decision of the omniscient God, and righteous Judge; which if he was an hypocrite he would never have done, since such can never stand so strict and severe an examination.

Job 13:17

Ver. 17. Hear diligently my speech,.... Or, "in hearing hear" {s}; meaning, not only that his friends would attentively hear him, but continue to hear him; that they would hear him out what he had to say further: upon his expressing himself with so much faith and confidence in God, they might rise up from their seats and be preparing to be gone, as not having patience to hear a man talk so confidently, who they thought was a bad man and an hypocrite; or they might attempt to interrupt him while speaking, and therefore he desires they would be still, and patiently and diligently hear what he had more to say:

and my declaration with your ears; that is, that they would listen to it attentively, when he doubted not but he should make his case as clear as the sun, and set it in such a point of view, as that it would appear most plainly to be right, and he to be a just man.

{s} ewmv wemv "audite audiendo", Pagninus, Montanus, Beza, &c.

Job 13:18

Ver. 18. Behold now, I have ordered [my] cause,.... Or "judgment" {t}; that is, he had looked over his cause afresh, had reviewed the state of his case, had considered it in every light, had drawn a plan of it, had digested it in a proper manner, and had arranged his reasons and arguments in vindication of himself in a regular form; and had them at hand, and could readily and easily come at them on occasion, to vindicate himself; and upon the whole could say, in the strongest, manner, and could draw this conclusion,

I know that I shall be justified; which, though it may primarily respect the case in dispute between him and his friends, and the charge of wickedness and hypocrisy brought against him by them, from which he doubted not he should upon a fair hearing be acquitted by God himself, yet it may include his whole state of justification, God-ward, in which he was and should continue; and so may respect, not only the justification of his cause before men, as it was ordered and managed by him, but also the justification of his person before God, of which he had a full assurance; having ordered his cause aright, settled matters well, and proceeded upon a good plan and foundation; which to do is not to put justification upon the foot of purity of nature at first birth, and a sober life and conversation from youth upward, and a perfection of good works arrived unto, as imagined; nor upon a comparative righteousness with respect to other men, even profane and ungodly persons; nor, upon repentance, and sincere though imperfect obedience; nor upon an external belief of evangelic truths, and a submission to Gospel ordinances: but such order their cause well, and rightly conclude their justification, who see and own themselves to be transgressors of the law of God, behold and acknowledge their own righteousness to be insufficient to justify them, view the righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel, in its glory, excellency, and suitableness, and lay hold upon it as their justifying righteousness; and observing that the word of God declares, that those that believe in Christ are and shall be justified, and finding in themselves that they do with the heart believe in Christ for righteousness, hence they most comfortably and most sensibly conclude that they are justified persons; for this knowledge is of faith, and this faith the faith of assurance; it is not barely for a man to know that there is righteousness in Christ, and justification by it, but that there is righteousness in him for himself, and that he is the Lord his righteousness; for the words may be rendered, "I know that I am righteous"; or, "am justified" {u}; justification is a past act in the mind of God; it is present, as it terminates on the conscience of a believer; it is future, as it will be notified at the day of judgment before angels and men; see Isa 45:25.

{t} jpvm "judicium", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {u} qdua yna yk "quod ego justus sum", Schmidt; "me justum esse, vel fore", Schultens.

Job 13:19

Ver. 19. Who [is] he [that] will plead with me,.... Enter the lists with him; dispute the point, and try the strength of his arguments he had to plead for his own justification: thus Christ, the head of the church, and the surety of his people, is represented as speaking when he had by his obedience and sufferings made satisfaction for them, by bringing in an everlasting righteousness, and was, as their public and federal head, justified and acquitted, **Isa 1:4**; and much the same words are put into the mouth of a believer in him, and are expressed by him, **Ro 8:33**; who stands acquitted from all charges that men or devils, friends or foes, the law or justice of God, the devil and his own unbelieving heart, at any time, can bring against him. Job, well knowing the uprightness of his heart and life, the justness of his cause depending between him and his friends, boldly challenges them to come forth, and try it with him; or rather he seems desirous that God himself would take the case in hand, and plead with him; he was ready to engage with him, and in the presence of his friends, and in their hearing; and doubted not of being acquitted before God, and at his bar; so satisfied was he of his own innocence as to the things charged upon him:

for now, if I hold my peace, I shall give up the ghost; his sense seems to be, that if he was not allowed to speak for himself, and plead his cause, and have a hearing of it out, he could not live, he could not contain himself, he must burst and die; nor could he live under such charges and calumnies, he must die under the weight and pressure of them; though some think that this not only expresses his eagerness and impatience to have his cause tried fairly before God, but contains in it an argument to hasten it, taken from the near approach of his death: "for now", in a little time, "I shall be silent" {w}; be in the silent grave: "I shall expire"; or die; and then it will be too late; therefore if any will plead with me, let them do it immediately, or I shall be soon gone, and then it will be all over: or rather the sense is, I challenge anyone to reason the matter, and dispute the point with me; and I promise that, if the cause goes against me, "now will I be silent"; I will not say one word more in my vindication: "I will die"; or submit to any death, or any sort of punishment, that shall be pronounced upon me; I shall patiently endure it, and not complain of it, or object to the execution of it; so Sephorno.

{w} ewgaw vyrxa hte yk "nune enim silebo et expirabo", Cocceius; so Schmidt, Schultens.

Job 13:20

Ver. 20. Only do not two [things] unto me,.... This is an address not to Zophar as in the place of God, as to me, but to God himself; by this it appears, that though in modesty he does not mention him, yet he it is he has the chief, if not the sole regard unto in Job 13:19; for his desire was to speak to the Almighty, and reason with God, and have nothing more to do with his friends, Job 13:3; but before any pleadings begin on either side, he is desirous of settling and fixing the terms and conditions of the dispute; he requests that two things might be granted him, which are mentioned in Job 13:21:

then will I not hide myself from thee; through fear or shame, but boldly appear before God, and come up even to his seat, and plead with him face to face.

Job 13:21

Ver. 21. Withdraw thine hand far from me,.... His afflicting hand, which pressed him; this he desires might be removed, or otherwise he could not have the command of himself, make use of his reasoning faculties, recollect his arguments, and give them in their due force and strength; for afflictions of body affect the soul and memory, understanding and judgment; this is one of the things he would have agreed unto before the dispute was entered on; the other follows:

and let not thy dread make me afraid; the terrors of his law, or the dreadful apprehensions of his wrath; he desires to be freed from all slavish fear of God, that now possessed his mind through the severity of his dispensations towards him, behaving as if he was his enemy; or he deprecates his appearance in any external visible way and manner, which might be frightening to him, and so hinder freedom of speech in his own defence; these two things are before requested, **Job 9:34**; which should they be granted, he proposes as follows.

Job 13:22

Ver. 22. Then call thou, and I will answer,.... Either call him by name in open court, and he would answer to it; or arraign him at the bar, and exhibit charges against him, and he would make answer to them and clear himself; his sense is, that if God would take upon him to be plaintiff, and accuse and charge him with what he had to object to him, then he would be defendant, and plead his own cause, and show that they did not of right belong unto him:

or let me speak, and answer thou me: or he would be plaintiff, and put queries concerning the afflictions he was exercised with, or the severity of them, and the reason of such usage, and God be the defendant, and give him an answer to them, that he might be no longer at a loss as he was for such behaviour towards him: this is very boldly said indeed, and seems to savour of irreverence towards God; and may be one of those speeches for which he was blamed by Elihu, and by the Lord himself; though no doubt he designed not to cast any contempt upon God, nor to behave ill towards him; but in the agonies of his spirit, and under the weight of his affliction, and to show the great sense he had of his innocence, and his assurance of it, he speaks in this manner; not doubting but, let him have what part he would in the debate, whether that of plaintiff or defendant, he should carry the cause, and it would go in his favour; and though he proposes it to God to be at his option to choose which he would take, Job stays not for an answer, but takes upon him to be plaintiff, as in the following words.

Job 13:23

Ver. 23. How many [are] mine iniquities and sins?] Whether of ignorance or presumption, through mistake or wilfulness, voluntary or involuntary, sins of omission or commission, secret or open, or of heart, lip, or life; for by this heap of words he uses in this and the next clause he means all sorts of sins, be they what they would; he desires to know what they were, both with respect to quality and quantity, how great {i} they were, what heinous and capital crimes he had been guilty of, that such sore afflictions were laid upon him; and how many they were, as they were suggested to be by his friends, and who indeed call them infinite, Job 22:5; and as they might seem to be from the many afflictions endured by him, which were supposed to be for sins; though, as Schultens observes, such an interrogation as the force of a diminution and negation, as that of the Psalmist; "how many are the days of thy servant?" Ps 119:84; that is, how few are they? or rather none at all; namely, of light and joy, of pleasure and comfort; so Job represents by this his sins to be but few {k} in comparison of what his friends surmised, or might be concluded from his afflictions; and indeed none at all of a capital nature, and such as were of a deep die, atrocious and enormous crimes; only such as were common to good men, who all have their frailties, infirmities, and imperfections, there being not a just man that does good and sins not: Job did not pretend to be without sin, but he was not sensible of any notorious sin he could be charged with, nor was he conscious of allowing himself in any known sin, or of living and walking therein, which is inconsistent with the grace of God; moreover, as he knew his interest in his living Redeemer and surety, to whom, and not to himself, his sins and transgressions were imputed; he might ask, "how many iniquities and sins are to me" {l}? as the words may be literally rendered; that is, which are to be reckoned to me, to be placed to my account? none at all; see **2Co 5:19**;

make me to know my transgression and my sin; not that he was ignorant of sin, of the nature and demerit of it, as unregenerate men are, who know not the plague of their own hearts, indwelling sin, internal lusts, nor the exceeding sinfulness of sinful actions, nor the effect and consequences of sin, pollution, guilt, the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and eternal death; at least do not know it as to be affected with a sense of it, to have a godly sorrow for it, repent of it, confess it, and forsake it; such knowledge as this is from the spirit of God, and which Job had; but his meaning is, that if he could not be charged with many sins, as might seem to be the case, yet if there was but one that could be produced, and was the reason of his being afflicted after this manner, he desires to know what that was, that he might, upon conviction of it, acknowledge it, repent of it, relinquish it, and guard against it; he desires to have a copy of his indictment, that he might know what he stood charged with, for what he was arraigned, condemned, and punished, as it was thought he was; this he judged a reasonable request, and necessary to be granted, that he might answer for himself.

{i} hmk "vox pertinet ad mulitudinem et magnitudinem", Pineda. {k} So Ben Melech interprets these words. {l} yl "sunt mihi", Beza, Schmidt, Michaelis.

Job 13:24

Ver. 24. Wherefore hidest thou thy face,.... Not from his cry, because of his sore and grievous afflictions, as Bar Tzemach; nor from helping and saving him from his troubles, as Sephorno; nor from looking on his right ways, as Jarchi; but from his person, withdrawing the manifestation of his face and favour; withholding the discoveries of his love; and denying him the light of his countenance, and sensible communion with him, and enjoyment of him, he had been indulged with; Job formerly had seen the face of God, enjoyed his presence, and walked in fellowship with him; but now he had withdrawn himself from him, and he knew not where to find him; see Job 23:2; a greater blessing cannot be had than the gracious presence of God; nothing gives more pleasure when enjoyed, and nothing more grievous to good men when it is withheld; oftentimes sin is the cause of it, but not always, as in this instance of Job; the end of the Lord in all his afflictions, both inward and outward, was to try his patience, his integrity, and faithfulness; but as Job was for the present ignorant of it, he desires to know the reason of this the Lord's behaviour towards him; as it is what all good men should do in the like circumstances, nothing being more afflicting and distressing to them, and even intolerable; see Ps 10:11; some think here is an allusion to the behaviour of judges towards such as were condemned by them, they were prejudiced against, and would neither hear nor see them; or to a rite and custom in former times, as Pineda observes, when judges, at the time of pronouncing sentence on a malefactor, used to draw a curtain between them; or to the covering of the face of the criminal, see **Job 9:24**;

and holdest me for thine enemy? Job had been an enemy to God, as all men are in a state of nature, yea, enmity itself, as is shown by their wicked works; but he was now reconciled unto God, the enmity of his heart was slain, and he had laid down his weapons of rebellion, and ceased committing hostilities against God, and was become subject to him and to his law, through the power of efficacious grace; a principle of love, which is the fruit of the spirit in regeneration, was implanted in him; and he was a true and sincere lover of God, one that feared him, and trusted in him; whose faith worked by love, and so appeared to be of the right kind; and therefore, since he was conscious to himself that he loved God with all his heart, loved his word, his ways, and worship, his people and all that belonged to him, it was cutting and grievous to him to be thought and accounted, or deal with, as an enemy to him; for so he interpreted his conduct towards him; as he afflicted him, he took it to be in anger and fury, and hot displeasure; and as he hid his face from him, he supposed it was in great wrath, viewing him in this light as his enemy.

Job 13:25

Ver. 25. Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro?.... A leaf that falls from a tree in autumn, and withers and is rolled up, and driven about by the wind, which it cannot resist, to which Job here compares himself; but it is not to be understood of him with respect to his spiritual estate; for being a good man, and one that trusted in the Lord, and made him his hope, he was, as every good man is, like to a tree planted by rivers of water, whose leaf withers not, but is always green, and does not fall off, as is the case of carnal professors, who are compared to trees in autumn, which cast their leaves and rotten fruit; see **Ps 1:3**; but in respect to his outward estate, his frailty, weakness, and feebleness, especially as now under the afflicting hand of God; see Isa 64:6; so John the Baptist, on account of his being a frail mortal man, a weak feeble creature, compares himself to a reed shaken with the wind, Mt 11:7; now to break such an one was to add affliction to affliction, and which could not well be borne; and the like is signified by the next clause,

and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble? which cannot stand before the wind, or the force of devouring fire; this also respects not Job in his spiritual estate, with regard to which he was not like to dry stubble or chaff, to which wicked men are compared, **Ps 1:4**; but to standing corn and wheat in the full ear; and not only to green grass, which is flourishing, but to palm trees, and cedar trees of the Lord, which are full of sap, to which good men are like; but he describes him in his weak and afflicted state, tossed to and fro like dry stubble; and no more able to contend and grapple with an incensed God than dry stubble can withstand devouring flames; this he says, partly to suggest that it was below the Divine Being to set his strength against his weakness; as David said to Saul, "after whom is the king of Israel come out? after a dead dog, after a flea?" 1Sa 24:14; which words Bar Tzemach compares with these; and partly to move the divine pity and commiseration towards him, who uses not to "break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax", Isa 42:3.

Job 13:26

Ver. 26. For thou writest bitter things against me,.... Meaning not sins and rebellions, taken notice of by him, when his good deeds were omitted, as Jarchi; sin is indeed an evil and a bitter thing in its own nature, being exceeding sinful and abominable, and its effects and consequences; being what provokes God to anger most bitterly, and makes bitter work for repentance; as it did in Peter, who, when made sensible of it, wept bitterly, Mt 26:75; sooner or later, sin, though it is a sweet morsel rolled about in the mouth for a while, yet in the issue proves the gall of asps within, Job 20:14, bitter and distressing; and this God also puts down in the book of his remembrance, yea, writes it as with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond, Jer 17:1; but that cannot be meant here, since Job was inquiring after his sins, asking what and how many they were, and would not allow of any being committed by him that were heinous and notorious; wherefore afflictions are rather here intended, which are bitter and grievous, and not joyous, and especially such as Job was afflicted with; see **Ru 1:20**; and these were written by the Lord in the book of his eternal purposes and decrees, and were the things he performed, which were appointed for Job, as he full well knew, and as all the afflictions of God's people are; and besides they were written in a judiciary way, and so against him; they were, as he apprehended, the sentence of a judge written down, and read, and pronounced, and according to it inflicted, and that with great deliberation as things are written, and in order to continue, as what is written does; and so denotes that a severe decree was gone forth against him, with design, and was and would be continued:

and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth; which had been committed through weakness and ignorance; and which, it might have been

thought, would not have been taken notice of and animadverted on; or rather which Job concluded had been forgiven and forgotten, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, and would never have been brought into account any more; and yet these were not only remembered by the Lord, at least seemingly, by the afflictions that were endured; but they were by him brought to Job's remembrance, and the guilt of them charged upon him, and stared him in the face, and loaded his conscience, and filled him with reproach, and shame, as Ephraim,
Jer 31:19; and which is deprecated by the Psalmist, Ps 25:7; and what aggravated this case and made it the more distressing was, that in Job's apprehension it was to continue with him as an inheritance, as the word {m} signifies, which abides with men in their families for ever; and some respect may be had to the corruption of nature, which is hereditary, and remains with men from their youth upwards.

{m} ynvyrwt "haereditare me facis", Beza, Schmidt, Michaelis; so Junius and Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens; so the Targum and Ben Melech.

Job 13:27

Ver. 27. Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks,.... Which is one kind of punishment of offenders, and a preservation of them from making their escape; and is a security and reservation of them for further punishment sometimes; and so Job looked upon his afflictions as a punishment for he knew not what, and with which he was so surrounded and enclosed, that there was no getting out of them any more than a man can whose feet are set fast in the stocks; and that he was here kept for greater afflictions still, which he dreaded. Aben Ezra interprets it, "thou puttest my feet in lime"; and this is followed by others {n}, suggesting, as a man's steps in lime are marked and easily discerned, so were his by the Lord; but this seems to be foreign from the mind of Job, who would not make such a concession as this, as if his steps taken amiss were so visible:

and lookest narrowly into all my paths; so that there was no possibility of escaping out of his troubles and afflictions; so strict a watch was kept over him; see **Job 7:19**; according to Ben Gersom, this refers to the stocks, "it keeps all my ways", kept him within from going abroad about the business of life, and so may refer to the disease of his body, his boils and ulcers, which kept him at home, and suffered him not to stir out of doors; but the former sense is best:

thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet; either it, the stocks, made a mark upon his heels, with which they were pressed hard, as Gersom; or rather God set one upon them, afflicting him very sorely and putting him to an excruciating pain, such as is felt by criminals when heavy blows are laid upon the soles of their feet, to which the allusion may be; or else the sense is, that he followed him closely by the heels, that whenever he took a step, it was immediately marked, and observed by the Lord, as if he trod in his steps, and set his own foot in the mark that was left.

{n} "Calce tinxisti pedes meos", Gussetius, p. 550. so some in Ben Melech.

Job 13:28

Ver. 28. And he as a rotten thing consumeth,.... This by some Jewish writers {z} is referred to and connected with the driven leaf and dry stubble Job compares himself to, Job 13:25; and so the sense is, that his body, which, for its frailty and weakness, is compared to such things, is like any rotten thing, a rotten tree, as Ben Melech; or any thing else that is rotten, that is consuming and wasting away, as Job's body was, being clothed with worms and clods of dust:

as a garment that is moth eaten; a woollen garment, which gathers dust, out of which motifs arise; for dust, in wool and woollen garments produces moths, as Aristotle {a} and Pliny {b} observe; and a garment eaten by them, slowly, gradually, and insensibly, yet certainly, decays, falls to pieces, becomes useless, and not to be recovered; such was Job's body, labouring under the diseases it did, and was every day more and more decaying, crumbling into dust, and just ready to drop into the grave; so that there was no need, and it might seem cruel, to lay greater and heavier afflictions on it: some interpreters make this "he" to be God himself who sometimes is as rottenness and a moth to men, in their persons, families, and estates; see **Ho 5:12**.

{z} R. Levi, Ben Gersom, & Bar Tzemach. {a} Hist. Animal. l. 5. c. 32. {b} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 35.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 14

Job, having turned himself from his friends to God, continues his address to him in this chapter; wherein he discourses of the frailty of man, the shortness of his life, the troubles that are in it, the sinfulness of it, and its limited duration, beyond which it cannot continue; all which he makes use of with God, that he would not therefore deal rigorously with him, but have pity on him, and cease from severely afflicting him, till he came to the end of his days, which could not be long, Job 14:1; he observes of a tree, when it is cut down to the root, yea, when the root is become old, and the stock dies, it will, by means of being watered, bud and sprout again, and produce boughs and branches; but man, like the failing waters of the sea, and the decayed and dried up flood, when he dies, rises not, till the heavens be no more, Job 14:7; and then he wishes to be hid in the grave till that time, and expresses hope and belief of the resurrection of the dead, Job 14:13; and goes on to complain of the strict notice God took of his sins, of his severe dealings with men, destroying their hope in life, and removing them by death; so that they see and know not the case and circumstances of their children they leave behind, and while they live have continual pain and sorrow,
Job 14:16.

Ver. 1. Man [that is] born of a woman,.... Man, Adam; not the first man, so called, for he was made and created out of the dust of the earth, and not born of a woman; the woman was made out of him, and not he of her; "earthly man", as Mr. Broughton translates it, as every descendant of Adam is; as is the earth, such are they that are earthy, everyone of which is born of a woman; yet not as opposed unto and distinguished from the heavenly One, or the Lord from heaven, for he also as man was made and born of a woman: this, though a proper description of all mankind, there being none but what are born of a woman, see Mt 11:11; yet Job chiefly designs himself; for having spoken of his wasting circumstances in which he was, in Job 13:28, goes on in this to treat of his frailty and mortality, and to improve it into an argument with God for pity and mercy, as appears from
Job 14:3; where he speaks of himself in the first person, as here in the third, and all along: he may have respect in this clause to Eve, the mother of all living, from whom all descend, and of whom, in a sense, they may be said to be born; or else to his immediate parent, he and every man being born of a woman; no man, but the first, ever came into the world in any other way; there is one that came into the world without an earthly father, and that is our Lord Jesus Christ, but none without a mother; nor lie, who indeed was born of a virgin, and so in an extraordinary and miraculous manner; and this is observed, not so much on account of natural descent, or to denote that, as being reckoned

from the mother, she having so great a concern in the production of man, conceiving, bearing, and bringing him forth; nor to remark the sinfulness of nature, though one born of a sinful woman must needs be so too, since this is expressed clearly in Job 14:4; but the weakness and frailty of man; as is the creature that generates, such is that that is generated; creatures born of strong ones are strong, and of weak ones weak; a creature born of a lion is a strong one; and man, born of a woman, must be weak and feeble, and no wonder he is short lived, as follows:

[is] of few days; or "short of days" {c}; comes short of the days he might have lived, if man had never sinned, and comes short of the days the first man did live, and which those before the flood generally lived, who most of them lived upwards of nine hundred years; whereas now, and ever since the times of Moses, and about which Job lived, the days of the years of man are but threescore and ten; and such are shorter of days still, who live not more than half this time, who are cut off in the bloom and prime of life, the days of whose youth are shortened, who die in their youth, or in their childhood and infancy; and such especially are short of days who are carried from the womb to the grave, or die as soon as born; and those that live the longest, their days are but few, when compared with the days of eternity, or with those men shall live in another world, either good men in heaven, or wicked men in hell, which will be for ever; and especially with respect to God, with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, and therefore the days and age of man are as nothing before him. Job has here also a respect to himself, whose days in his own apprehension were very few, and just at an end, and therefore craves pity and compassion, see Job 10:20; and what aggravates the shortness of man's days is, as it follows:

and full of trouble; man is born to it, being born in sin; sin and trouble go together, where there is sin there is trouble; sin entered into the world, and death by it, with the numerous train of afflictions and miseries which issue in it: all men have their troubles, some of one sort, and some of another; wicked men are not indeed in trouble as other men, as good men are; they have not the same sort of trouble, yet are not exempt from all; they are "full of commotion" {d} disquietude and uneasiness, as the word signifies; they are restless, and ever in motion; they are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, but is continually casting up mire and dirt; some are of such tempers and dispositions, that they cannot sleep unless they do mischief; and though they are many of them prosperous in their worldly circumstances, there are others that are reduced to poverty and distress, are attended with diseases and disorders, pains and sores, and blaspheme that God that has power over them;

and these are of all men the most miserable, having no interest in God, in his loving kindness, nor any enjoyment of his presence, and so nothing to support them in, and carry them through their troubles; and though they are generally without any sense of sin or danger, have no remorse of conscience, and their hearts are hardened; yet at times they are "full of trembling" {e}, as some render the words; are seized with a panic through the judgments of God that are upon them, or are coming upon them, or when death is made the king of terrors to them: and good men they have their troubles; besides those in common with others, they have inward troubles arising from the vanity of their minds and thoughts, the impurity of their hearts, and the power of indwelling sin in them, and especially from the breaking forth of it in words and deeds; from the weakness of their graces, from the hidings of God's face, and the temptations of Satan: in short, Job's meaning is, that men in the ordinary course of things meet with so much trouble, that there is no need of any extraordinary afflictions to be laid on them, such as his were.

{c} Mymy ruq "brevis dierum", Montanus, Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens; so Beza, Vatablus, Drusius, Mercerus. {d} zgr ebv "satur commotione", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis. {e} "Saturus tremore", Montanus; "satur trepidi tumultus", Schultens.

Job 14:2

Ver. 2. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down,.... As the flower comes from the earth, so does man; as it comes out of the stalk, so man out of his mother's womb; as the flower flourishes for a while, and looks gay and beautiful, so man while in youth, in health and prosperity. Job, doubtless, has respect to his own case before his troubles came upon him, when he was possessed of all that substance, which made him the greatest man of the east; when his children were like olive plants around his table, and his servants at his command, and he in perfect health of body: and as a flower flourishes for a little while, and then withers; no sooner is it come to its full blow, but presently decays; such is the goodliness of man, it fades away whenever God blows a blast upon it; yea, he is easily and quickly cut down by death, like a beautiful flower cut with the knife, or cropped by the hand, or trampled upon by the foot, see Ps 103:15;

he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not; either as the shadow of the evening, which is lost when night comes on; or the shadow on a dial plate, which is continually moving on; or, as the Jewish Rabbins say, as the shadow of a bird flying, which stays not, whereas the shadow of a wall, or of a tree, continues: a shadow is an empty thing, without substance, dark and obscure, variable and uncertain, declining, fleeting, and passing away; and so fitly resembles the life of a man, which is but a vapour, a bubble, yea, as nothing with God; is full of darkness, of ignorance, and of adversity, very fickle, changeable, and inconstant, and at most but of a short continuance.

Job 14:3

Ver. 3. And dost thou open thine eyes on such an one,.... So frail and feeble, so short lived and sorrowful, so soon and easily cut down and destroyed: and by opening of his eyes is not meant his providential care of men; whose eyes indeed are everywhere, run to and fro throughout the earth, and are careful of and provident for all sorts of men, which is very wonderful, **Ps 8:4**; nor the displays of his special grace and favour towards his own peculiar people, on whom his eyes of love, grace, and mercy, are opened, and are never withdrawn from them, which is marvellous lovingkindness; but the exercise of rigorous justice in punishing, afflicting, and chastising with so much severity, as Job thought to be his own case; the eyes of God, as he thought, were set on him for evil, and not for good; he looked wistly on him, and in a very frowning manner; he sharpened his eye upon him, as the phrase is, Job 16:9; and as some render the word {f} here, looked narrowly into all his ways, and watched every motion and every step he took, and pursued him with great eagerness, and used him with great strictness in a way of justice, which he, a poor, weak creature, was not able to bear; which sense is confirmed by what follows:

and bringeth me into judgment with thee? by this it appears Job has a view to himself all along, and to the procedure of God against him, which he took to be in strict justice, and that was what he was not able to bear; he was not a match for God, being such a frail, weak, sinful, mortal creature; nor was God a man as he was, that they should come together in judgment, or be fit persons to contend together upon the foot of strict justice; sinful man can never be just with God upon this bottom, or be able to answer to one objection or charge of a thousand brought against him; and therefore, as every sensible man will deprecate God's entering into judgment with him, so Job here expostulates with God why he should bring him into judgment with him; when, as he fled to his grace and mercy, he should rather show that to him than in a rigorous manner deal with him.

{f} Kynye txqp "super illo acuis oculos tuos", Cocceius; "super hunc apertos vibras oculos", Schultens.

Job 14:4

Ver. 4. Who can bring a clean [thing] out of an clean?.... Either produce a clean person from an unclean one: it is not to be expected that one, perfectly free from sin, should be generated by, or brought out of, one that is defiled with it; which is the case of all men; the first man, though made upright, sinned, and by sinning defiled himself, and all human nature in him: and so those that immediately descended from him were polluted likewise, and so on in all generations, every man being conceived and shaped in iniquity; so that it is not possible that man that is born of a woman, sinful and unclean, should be clean himself, or be free from sin; by which it is manifest, that the sinfulness of human nature is unavoidable; it is natural and necessary, and cannot be otherwise, such being the case and circumstances of immediate parents, from whom men descend; and that this is the case of all men that come into the world by ordinary and natural generation; there is none righteous or pure from sin: no,

not one; and things being so, Job thought it hard that he should be singled out, and so severely chastised, when the sinfulness of nature was from and by his birth, and was natural and unavoidable, and when there was not a single person on earth free from it. There never was but one instance of one clean being brought out of an unclean person, and that was our Lord Jesus Christ of the Virgin Mary; which was not in the ordinary way of generation, but by a supernatural and extraordinary production of his human nature, through the power of the Holy Ghost, whereby it escaped the original contagion and pollution of mankind: or else, in consequence of this, the sense is, who can bring forth or produce a good work from an impure person? or how can it be expected that a man that is defiled with sin should do a good work perfectly pure? for there is not even a just and good man that doth good and sinneth not; and much less is it to be looked for, that men in a mere state of nature, that are as they come into the world, sinful and impure, should ever be able to perform good works; it may as well be thought that grapes are to be gathered of thorns, or figs of thistles; men must be born again, created in Christ Jesus, have faith in him, and the Spirit of God in them, before they can do that which is truly good from right principles, and with right views; and man at most and best must be an imperfect creature, and deficient in his duty, and cannot bear to be strictly examined, and rigorously prosecuted: or the meaning is, "who can make" {g} an unclean man a clean one? "no, not one"; a man cannot make himself clean by anything he can do, by his repentance and humiliation, by his good works, duties, and services; none can do this but God; and to this sense some render the words, "who can--is there one" {h}? there is, that is, God, he can do it, and he only: though men are exhorted to cleanse themselves, this does not suppose a power in them to do it; this is only designed to convince them of the necessity of being cleansed, and to awaken a concern for it; and such as are made sensible thereof will apply to God to purge them, and make them clean, and create a clean heart within them: and this God has promised to do, and does do; he sprinkles the clean water of his grace, and purifies the heart by faith in the blood of Jesus, which cleanses from all sin, and is the fountain opened to wash in for sin and uncleanness; the Targum is,

"who can give a clean thing out of a man that is defiled with sins, except God who is one, and can forgive him?"

none can pardon sin but God, or justify a sinner besides him; and he can do both in a way of justice, upon the foot of the blood and righteousness of Christ.

{g} Nty ym "quis potest facere?" V. L. "dabit", i.e. "faciet", Vatablus; "sistet aut efficiet", Michaelis; "quis efficiet?" Cocceius. {h} dxa al "nonne tu qui solus est?" V. L. "annon unus?" sc. Mediator, Cocceius.

Job 14:5

Ver. 5. Seeing his days [are] determined,.... Or "cut out" {i}, exactly and precisely, how many he shall live, and what shall befall him every day of his life; whose life, because of the shortness of it, is rather measured by days than vents:

the number of his months [are] with thee; before him, in his sight, in his account, and fixed and settled by him:

thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass; the boundaries of his life the period of his days, beyond which he cannot go; the term of man's life is so peremptorily fixed by God, that he cannot die sooner, nor live longer, than he has determined he should; as the time of a man's birth, so the time of his death is according to the purpose of God; and all intervening moments and articles of time, and all things that befall a man throughout the whole course of his life, all fall under the appointment of God, and are according to his determinate will; and when God requires of man his soul, no one has power over his spirit to retain it one moment; yet this hinders not the use of means for the preservation and comfort of life, since these are settled as well as the end, and are under the divine direction: the word for bounds signifies sometimes "statutes" {k}: though not to be understood of laws appointed by God, either of a moral or ceremonial nature; but here it signifies set, stated, appointed times {l} Seneca {m} says the same thing;

"there is a boundary fixed for every man, which always remains where it is set, nor can any move it forward by any means whatsoever."

{i} Myuwrx "exacte praefiniti sunt", Tigurine version. {k} wqx "statuta ejus", V. L. Mercerus, Schmidt. {l} "Stata tempora", Beza. {m} Consolat. ad Marciam, c. 20.

Job 14:6

Ver. 6. Turn from him, that he may rest,.... From this short lived afflicted man, whose days are limited, and will soon be at an end, meaning himself; not that he desires he would withdraw his gracious presence, nothing is more agreeable than this to a good man, and there is nothing he more deprecates than the withdrawing of it; besides, this was Job's case, and one part of his complaint, Job 13:24; nor to withhold his supporting presence, or his providential care of him, without which he could not subsist, but must die and drop into the dust; though some think this is the sense, and render the words, "turn from him, that he may cease" {n}; to be, or to live, and so a wish for death, that he might have rest in the grave from all his labours, pains, and sorrows; but rather the meaning is, that he would turn away from afflicting him in this extraordinary, manner; since, according to the ordinary course of things, he would meet with many troubles and afflictions, and had but a little time to live, and therefore entreats he would take off his hand which pressed him sorely, and grant him a little respite; or "look off from him" {o}; not turn away his eye of love, grace, and mercy, that is not reasonable to suppose; that was what he wanted, that God would look upon him, and have compassion on him under his affliction, and abate it; but that he would turn away his angry frowning countenance from him, which he could not bear; he had opened his eyes upon him, Job 14:3; and looked very sternly, and with great severity in his countenance, on him, and it was very distressing, and even intolerable to him; and therefore begs that he would take off his eye from him, that he might have rest from his adversity, that he might have some ease of body and mind, some intervals of peace and pleasure: or "that he might cease" {p} from murmuring, as Aben Ezra; or rather from affliction and trouble; not that he expected to be wholly free from it in this life, for man is born to it, as he full well knew; and the people of God have always their share of it, and which abides and waits for them while in this world; but he desires he might be rid of that very sore and heavy affliction now upon him; or "that it might cease" {q}, the affliction he laboured under, which would be the case if God would turn himself, remove his hand, or look another way, and not so sharply upon him:

till he shall accomplish as an hireling his day; an hireling, as if he should say, that is hired for any certain time, for a year, or more or less, he has some relaxation from his labours, time for eating and sleeping to refresh nature; or he has some time allowed him as a respite from them, commonly called holy days; or if he is hired only for a day, he has time for his meals; and if his master's eye is off of him, he slackens his hand, and gets some intermission from his labour; wherefore at least Job begs that God would let him have the advantage of an hireling. Moreover, to "accomplish his day", is either to do the work of it, or to get to the end of it; every man has work to do while in this world, in things natural, civil, and religious, and is the work of his day or generation, and what must be done while it is day; and a good man is desirous of finishing it; to which the recompence of reward, though it is not of debt, but of grace, is a great encouragement, as it is to the hireling: or "till as an hireling he shall will", or "desire with delight and pleasure {r} his day"; that is, his day to be at an end, which he wishes and longs for; and when it comes is very acceptable to him, because he then enjoys his rest, and receives his hire; so as there is a fixed time for the hireling, there is for man on earth; and as that time is short and laborious, so is the life of man; and at the close of it, the good and faithful servant of the Lord, like the hireling, in some sense rests from his labours, and receives the reward of the inheritance, having served the Lord Christ; which makes this day a grateful and acceptable one to him, what he desires, and with pleasure waits for, being better than the day of his birth; and especially when his life is worn out with trouble, and he is weary of it through old age, and the infirmities thereof, those days being come in which he has no pleasure. Job therefore entreats that God would give him some intermission from his extraordinary troubles, till his appointed time came, which then would be as welcome to him as the close of the day is to an hireling, see **Job 7:1**.

{n} ldxyw "donec desinat, sc. esse vel vivere", Piscator, Cocceius. {o} wylem hev "respice [aliorsum] ab eo", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis; so De Dieu, Schultens. {p} "Et cesset", Mercerus; "et desinat a malo suo", Pagninus. {q} "Et cesset afflictio", Drusius; so the

Targum. {r} hury "grato animo excipiet", Tigurine version; "velit", Montanus, Bolducius; "acceptum habeat", Piscator; De Dieu, Michaelis.

Job 14:7

Ver. 7. For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,.... That is, if it be cut down to the root, and only the stump of the root is left in the ground, as the tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, **Da 4:15**, yet the owner of it may entertain a hope that it is not utterly destroyed, but will bud out again; or "change" {s} its state and condition, and become flourishing again: or "renew" {t} itself; and its strength, and put out new shoots and branches; either it will rise up into a new body, as the laurel, as Pliny {u} relates, or produce new sprouts as the willow, alder tree, and others; for this is not true of every tree, though it may be of many; for it is {w} reported of the cypress tree, when cut down, it never sprouts out any more, unless in one place, in Aenaria; but since this is the case of some, it is sufficient to Job's purpose:

and that the tender branch thereof will not cease; from shooting out; or "its suckers will not cease" {x}; which may be observed frequently to grow out of the roots of trees, even of those that are cut down, such as above mentioned.

{s} Pylxy "mutabit se", Drusius; "conditionem suam", Piscator. {t} "Renovat se", Schmidt. {u} Nat. Hist. apud Pinedam in loc. {w} Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 3. p. 681. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 33. {x} wtqnwy "sugensque ejus surculus", Schultens.

Job 14:8

Ver. 8. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,.... Lies long there, and is become dry, and seems to be consumed, on which account there may be the less hope of its flourishing:

and the stock thereof die in the ground; which may make it still more improbable; for this is not to be understood with some interpreters {y} of the stock or trunk of the tree cut down, and lying along on the earth, and in the dust of it; though it may be observed, that even such a stock or trunk, separated from the root, and as it lies along, will sprout again, as particularly in elms: but it may rather mean, since it is said to be "in the ground", that part of the stock or stump left in the ground, from whence the roots part and spread in the earth;

and even though this dies, or at least so seems, yet there being still life and vigour in the roots, they send forth suckers.

{y} So Piscator and Cocceius.

Job 14:9

Ver. 9. [Yet] through the scent of water it will bud,.... As soon as it smells it, or perceives it, is sensible of it, or partakes of its efficacy; denoting both how speedily, and how easily, at once as it were, it buds forth through the virtue either of rain water that descends upon it, or river water by which it is planted, or by any means conveyed unto it; particularly this is true of the willow, which delights in watery places; and, when it is in the circumstances before described, will by the benefit of water bud out again, even when its stock has been seemingly dead:

and bring forth boughs like a plant; as if it was a new plant, or just planted; so the Vulgate Latin version, as "when it was first planted"; or as a plant that sends forth many branches: the design of this simile is to show that man's case is worse than that of trees, which when cut down sprout out again, and are in the place where they were before; but man, when he is cut down by death, rises up no more in the same place; he is seen no more in it, and the place that knew him knows him no more; where he falls he lies until the general resurrection; he rises not before without a miracle, and such instances are very rare, and never either before or at the resurrection, but by the omnipotence of God; whereas a tree, in the above circumstances, sprouts out of itself, according to its nature, and in virtue of a natural power which God has put into it; not so man {y}.

{y} "Mutat terra vices-----nos ubi decidimus", Horat. Carmin. l. 4. Ode 7.

Job 14:10

Ver. 10. But man dieth, and wasteth away,.... All men, every man, "Geber", the mighty man, the strong man; some die in their full strength; the wise man, notwithstanding all his wisdom and knowledge, and even skill in the art of medicine; the rich man, with all his riches, with which he cannot bribe death, nor keep it off; the great and the honourable, emperors, kings, princes, nobles, all die, and their honour is laid in the dust; yea, good men die, though Christ has died for them; even those that are the most useful and beneficial to men, the prophets of the Lord, and the ministers of his word; and it is no wonder that wicked men should die, though they put the evil day far from them, make an agreement with death, or bid it defiance, their wickedness shall not deliver from it; all men have sinned, and death passes on them, it is appointed for them to die; not their souls, which are immortal, but their bodies, which return to dust, and are only the mortal part; death is a disunion or separation of soul and body: and now when this is made, the body "wasteth away" in the grave, and becomes rottenness, dust, and worms, and does not by the strength of nature spring up again, as a tree does; though some understand, by an inversion of the phrases, a wasting before death through diseases, as if the words were to be read, "but man wasteth away and dieth" {z}; he is enervated by sickness, his strength is weakened in the way, and when he dies there is none left in him; he is cut off {a}, as some choose to render it, or cut down as a tree is; but then there is no force or natural strength in him to rise again, as in a tree:

yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where [is] he? not in the same place he was; not in his house and habitation where he lived; nor in his family, and among his friends, with whom he conversed, nor in the world, and on the earth where he did business; he is indeed somewhere, but where is he? his body is in the grave; his soul, where is that? if a good man, it is in the presence of God, where is fulness of joy; it is with Christ, which is far better than to be here; it is with the spirits of just men made perfect; it is in Abraham's bosom, feasting with him and other saints; it is in heaven, in paradise, in a state of endless joy and happiness: if a wicked man, his soul is in hell, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels, and other damned spirits; in a prison, from whence there is no release, and in the uttermost misery and distress, banished from the divine Presence, and under a continual sense of the wrath of God.

{z} So the Tigurine version, Vatablus, and some in Drusius; and some Hebrews in Ramban and Bar Tzemach. {a} vlxyw "exciditur", Beza, Piscator, Mercerus; so Kimchi & Ben Gersom.

Job 14:11

Ver. 11. [As] the waters fail from the sea,.... the words may be rendered either without the as, and denote dissimilitude, and the sense be, that the waters go from the sea and return again, as with the tide:

and the flood decays and dries up; and yet is supplied again with water: "but man lieth down, and riseth not again", Job 14:12; or else with the as, and express likeness; as the waters when they fail from the sea, or get out of lakes, and into another channel, never return more; and as a flood, occasioned by the waters of a river overflowing its banks, never return into it more; so man, when he dies, never returns to this world any more. The Targum restrains this to the Red sea, and the parting of that and the river Jordan, and the drying up of that before the ark of the Lord, and the return of both to their places again.

Job 14:12

Ver. 12. So man lieth down,.... Or "and", or "but man lieth down" {b}; in the grave when he dies, as on a bed, and takes his rest from all his labours, toil and troubles, and lies asleep, and continues so till the resurrection morn:

and riseth not; from off his bed, or comes not out of his grave into this world, to the place where he was, and to be engaged in the affairs of life he was before, and never by his own power; and whenever he will rise, it will be by the power of God, and this not till the last day, when Christ shall appear in person to judge the world; and then the dead in Christ will rise first, at the beginning of the thousand years, and the wicked at the end of them:

till the heavens [be] no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep; for so the words are to be read, not in connection with those that go before, but with the last clauses; though the sense is much the same either way, which is, that those who are fallen asleep by death, and lie sleeping in their graves, and on their beds, these shall neither awake of themselves, nor be awaked by others, "till the heavens be no more"; that is, never, so as to awake and arise of themselves, and to this natural life, and to be concerned in the business of it; which sometimes seems to be the sense of this phrase, see Ps 89:29 **Mt 5:18**; or, as some render it, "till the heavens are wore out", or "waxen old" {c}; as they will like a garment, and be folded up, and laid aside, as to their present use, Ps 102:26; or till they shall vanish away, and be no more, as to their present form, quality, and use, though they may exist as to substance; and when this will be the case, as it will be when the Judge shall appear, when Christ shall come a second time to judge the world; then the earth and heaven will flee away from his face, the earth and its works shall be burnt up, and the heavens shall pass away with great noise; and then, and not till then, will the dead, or those that are asleep in their graves, be awaked by the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and they shall be raised from their sleepy beds, awake and arise, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

{b} vyaw "et vir", Pagninus, Montanus, Beza, Schmidt; "at vir", Cocceius. {c} ytlb de "donec atteratur eoelum", V. L. so some in Bar Tzemach, though disapproved of by him as ungrammatical.

Job 14:13

Ver. 13. And that thou wouldest hide me in the grave,.... The house appointed for all living, which some understand by the "chambers" in Isa 26:20; The cemeteries or dormitories of the saints, where they lie and sleep until the indignation of God against a wicked world is over and past; or in Hades, the state of the dead, where they are insensible of what is done in this world, what calamities and judgments are on the inhabitants of it, and so are not affected and grieved with these things; or in some cavern of the earth, in the utmost recesses of it, in the very centre thereof, if possible; his wish is, to be buried alive, or to live in some subterraneous place, free from his present afflictions and misery, than to be upon earth with them:

that thou wouldest keep me secret; so that no eye should see him, that is, no human eye; for he did not expect to be hid from the sight of God, be he where he would, before whom hell and destruction, or the grave, are and have no covering; and not only be secret, but safe from all trials and troubles, oppressions and oppressors; especially as he may mean the grave where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest; the keys of which Christ keeps in his hands, and locks and unlocks, and none but him; and where he has laid up his jewels, the precious dust of his saints and where they and that will be preserved as hidden treasure:

until thy wrath be past; either with respect to others, an ungodly world, to punish whom God sometimes comes out of his place in great wrath and indignation; and to prevent his dear children and people from being involved in common and public calamities, he takes them away beforehand, and hides them in his chambers, Isa 26:19; or with respect to himself, as to his own apprehension of things, who imagined that the wrath of God was upon him, being severely afflicted by him; all the effects of which he supposed would not be removed until he was brought to the dust, from whence he came, and until his body was changed at the resurrection; till that time there are some appearances of the displeasure of against sin: and then follows another petition,

that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me; either for his going down to the grave, and being hid there, for which there is an appointed time; for as that is the place appointed for man, it is appointed for man to go unto it, and the time when, as appears from
Job 14:5; or his coming out of the grave, for his resurrection from thence, which also is fixed, even the last day, the day God has appointed to judge the world in righteousness by Christ at which time the dead will be raised; though of that day and hour no man knows: unless he should mean a time for deliverance from his afflictions which also is set; for God, as he settles the bounds of an affliction, how far it should go, and no farther, so likewise the time when it should end; and either of these Job might call a remembering of him, who thought himself in his present case, as a dead man, out of mind, as those that lie in the grave, remembered no more.

Job 14:14

Ver. 14. If a man die,.... This is said not as if it was a matter of doubt, he had before asserted it; as sure as men have sinned, so sure shall they die; nothing is more certain than death, it is appointed by God, and is sure; but taking it for granted, the experience of all men, and the instances of persons of every age, rank, and condition, testifying to it; the Targum restrains it to wicked men,

"if a wicked man die:"

shall he live [again]? no, he shall not live in this earth, and in the place where he was, doing the same business he once did; that is, he shall not live here; ordinarily speaking, the instances are very rare and few; two or three instances there have been under the Old Testament, and a few under the New; but this is far from being a general and usual case, and never through the strength of nature, or of a man's self, but by the mighty power of God: or it may be answered to affirmatively, he shall live again at the general resurrection, at the last day, when all shall come out of their graves, and there will be a general resurrection of the just, and of the unjust; some will live miserably, in inexpressible and eternal torments, and wish to die, but cannot, their life will be a kind of death, even the second death; others will live comfortably and happily an endless life of joy and pleasure with God; Father, Son and Spirit, angels and glorified saints: hence, in the faith of this is the following resolution,

all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come; there is an appointed time for man on earth when he shall be born, how long he shall live, and when he shall die, see **Job 7:1**; or "of my warfare" {d} for the life of man, especially of a good man, is a state of warfare with many enemies, sin, Satan, and the world; at the end of which there will be a "change"; for not a change of outward circumstances in this life is meant; for though there was such a change befell Job, yet he was, especially at this time, in no expectation of it; and though his friends suggested it to him, upon his repentance and reformation, he had no hope of it, but often expresses the contrary: but either a change at death is meant; the Targum calls it a change of life, a change of this life for another; death makes a great change in the body of a man, in his place here, in his relations and connections with men, in his company, condition, and circumstances: or else the change at the resurrection, when this vile body will be changed, and made like unto Christ's; when it will become an incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual body, which is now corruptible, dishonourable, weak, and natural; and, till one or other of these should come, Job is determined to wait, to live in the constant expectation of death, and to be in a readiness and preparation for it; in the mean while to bear afflictions patiently, and not show such marks of impatience as he had done, nor desire to die before God's time, but, whenever that should come, quietly and cheerfully resign himself into the hands of God; or this may respect the frame and business of the soul in a separate state after death, and before the resurrection, believing, hoping, and waiting for the resurrection of the body, and its union to it, see Ps 16:10.

{d} yabu "quibus nunc milito", V. L. "militiae maae", Montanus, Tigurine version, Drusius, Codurcus, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 14:15

Ver. 15. Thou shall call, and I will answer thee,.... Either at death, when the soul of than is required of him, and he is summoned out of time into eternity, and has sometimes previous notice of it; though not by a prophet, or express messenger from the Lord, as Hezekiah had, yet by some disease and distemper or another, which has a voice, a call in it to expect a remove shortly; and a good man that is prepared for it, he answers to this call readily and cheerfully; death is no king of terrors to him, he is not reluctant to it, yea, desirous of it; entreats his dismission in peace, and even longs for it, and rejoices and triumphs in the views of it: or else at the resurrection, when Christ shall call to the dead, as he did to Lazarus, and say, Come forth; and when they shall hear his voice, even the voice of the archangel, and shall answer to it, and come forth out of their graves, the sea, death, and the grave, being obliged to deliver up the dead that are therein; though some think this refers to God's call unto him in a judicial way, and his answers to it by way of defence, as in Job 13:22; but the other sense seems more agreeable to the context:

thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands; meaning his body, which is the workmanship of God, and a curious piece of workmanship it is, wonderfully and fearfully made, Ps 139:14, and curiously wrought; and though it may seem to be marred and spoiled by death, yet God will have a desire to the restoration of it at the resurrection to a better condition; even the bodies of his people, and that because they are vessels chosen by him, given to his Son, redeemed by his blood, united to his person, and sanctified by his Spirit, whose temples they are, and in whom he dwells: wherefore upon these considerations it may be reasonably supposed that Father, Son, and Spirit, have a desire to the resurrection of the bodies of the saints, and in which they will have a concern; and from which it may be concluded it will be certainly effected, since God is a rock, and his work is perfect, or will be, both upon the bodies and souls of his people; and the work of sanctification will not be properly completed on them until their vile bodies are changed, and made like to the glorious body of Christ; which must be very desirable to him, who has such a special love for them, and delight in them. Some render the words with an interrogation, "wilt thou desire [to destroy] the work of thine hands" {e}? surely thou wilt not; or, as Ben Gersom,

"is it fit that thou shouldest desire to destroy the work of thine hands?"

surely it is not becoming, it cannot be thought that thou wilt do it; but the former sense is best.

{e} Pokt "perdere desiderabis?" Pagninus, Vatablus.

Job 14:16

Ver. 16. For now thou numberest my steps,.... Or "but now" {g}, at this present time thou seemest to have no desire to me, or affection for me, but the reverse. Job was in a pretty good frame of mind a little before, having in view his last change, and the glorious resurrection; but on a sudden he returns to his former complaints of God, and here of the rigour and strictness of his justice in marking his steps, and correcting him for his sin; so very uncertain are the best of frames: the outward conversation of men, whether good or bad, is often in Scripture expressed by walking, and the actions of men, good or evil, are the steps taken therein; here they signify evil ones, irregular steps, steps out of the way of God's commandments, aberrations, strayings from thence, false steps; these Job supposed God not only had knowledge of, as he has of all the ways, paths, and goings of men, but took very exact notice of his wrong steps; looked very narrowly to his paths, as in Job 13:27; and strictly marked them; yea, told them one by one, that he might miss none, and make up a large account, which he put down in his book, in order to produce against him; in which Job was mistaken: he thought God dealt with him as he does with wicked men, whose evil actions are not only known and observed, but are counted and put down in the book of his remembrance, which will be opened at the last day, and produced against them; but God has blotted out of his book the sins of his people, and will remember them no more; he has a book of remembrance for their good works, words, and thoughts, but none for their evil ones:

dost thou not watch over my sin? of error, infirmity, and weakness; observe it, mark it in a strict and rigorous way, which, when God does, who can stand before him? or "watch for my sin?" **Da 9:14** as Jeremiah's enemies watched for his halting; so Job here represents God very wrongly, as if he watched for an opportunity against him, to take the advantage of it, and severely chastise him: or "thou dost not wait for my sin" {h}; that is, the punishment of it as many of the Jewish writers {i} carry the sense; which is, that God did not defer the punishment of sin, or give him any respite or breathing time, but as soon as ever he committed any offence, immediately, at once, he was rough with him, and used him with great severity. Aben Ezra inserts the word "only", as explanative of the meaning of the words, thus, "thou watchest only over my sin", or dost not mark and observe anything but my sins; not my good deeds, only my evil ones; which is a wrong charge, for God takes notice of the good works of his people, and rewards them in a way of grace, though not of debt, as well as of their evil works, and chastises for them in a fatherly way: others render the words to this sense, what is not, or of no moment or consequence, thou keepest for me in mind and memory, as sin {k}; that which is not sin, or at least not known to me to be sin, or however something very trifling, scarce to be called a sin, yet I am dealt with for it as if a very heinous one; or I am afflicted for I know not what, or, which is all one, for what is not known to me. Some take the words to be a petition, "do not observe my sin" {l}; or mark it strictly, or keep it in mind, or reserve it against another time, but hide thy face from it, and remember it no more, nor never against me.

{g} hte yk "at nunc", Piscator. {h} ytajx le rwmvt al "non differes punitionem meam", Pagninus, {i} Jarchi, Gersom, Bar Tzemach. {k} So Schultens. {l} "Nec serves, id est, observes peccatum meum"; some in Mercerus.

Job 14:17

Ver. 17. My transgression [is] sealed up in a bag,.... Denoting either the concealment of it, as in Ho 13:12; not from God; nor in such sense sealed up as sin is by the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ, who has thereby removed it out of the sight of divine justice; so that when it is sought for it shall not be found, nor any more seen, which is the sense of the phrase in **Da 9:24**; where the words, "to make an end of sin", may be rendered, to "seal [them] up"; but this Job would not have complained of; he means it was hid as in a bag from himself, or he knew not what it was; the transgression was sealed up from him, he was entirely ignorant of and unacquainted with what it was for which he was severely afflicted: or else his sense is, that God had taken strict notice of his transgressions, and had, as it were, put them up in a bag, and set a seal upon it, that none might be lost, but might be ready to be produced against him another day; in allusion, as it is thought, to bills of indictment put up in bags sealed, to be brought into courts of judicature at a proper time, for which they are reserved:

and thou sewest up mine iniquity; in the bag in which it is sealed; not only did he seal up the bag, but sewed a cloth over it thus sealed, for greater security: or "thou sewest to mine iniquity" {m}, or adds iniquity to iniquity, as in Ps 69:27; as arithmeticians do, who add one number to another until it becomes a great sum; thus God, according to Job, tacked and joined one sin to another, till it became one large heap and pile, reaching to the heavens, and calling for vengeance; or, as Sephorno interprets it, joined sins of ignorance to sins of presumption; or rather sewed or added the punishment of sin to sin, or punishment to punishment; the Targum is,

"my transgression is sealed up in a book of remembrances, and thou hast joined it to my iniquities."

{m} ynwe le lpjtw "assuis iniquitati meae", Piscator; "et adjungis ad iniquitatem meam", Beza.

Job 14:18

Ver. 18. And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought,.... Job here returns to his former subject of the irreparable state of man at death, which he illustrates by various other similes, as before; and first by a "mountain falling", which may be supposed, and has been fact, and when it does, it "comes to nought"; it crumbles into dust, and where it falls there it lies, and never rises up to a mountain, or to the height it had, any more; or it "withers" {n}, as some render it, the plants, herbs, and trees that grow upon it, wither away, see **Na 1:4**; or "it is dissolved", or "flows" {o}, and spreads itself over the face of the green earth it covers, and destroys with its dust and sand, which is never more gathered up to form a mountain again; so man, like unto a mountain, as kingdoms and states, and kings and princes, and great men are; the Targum instances in Lot; as a man may be said to be, that is in good health of body, and in prosperous circumstances in his family; when he falls, as he does by death, which is expressed by falling, **2Sa 3:38**; he comes to nought, he is not any more in the land of the living, nor in the place and circumstances in which he was before:

and the rock is removed out of his place; from the mountain, of which it was a part; or elsewhere, by earthquakes, by force of winds, or strength of waters; and which, when once removed, is never returned to its place any more; so man, who in his full strength seems like a rock immovable, when death comes, it shakes and moves him out of his place, and that never knows him any more.

{n} lwby "marceseit", Tigurine version, Mercerus; "emarcescit", Schultens.
{o} "Diffluit", Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis.

Job 14:19

Ver. 19. The waters wear the stones,.... Either by continual running in them, or constant dropping upon them {p}; and the excavations or hollow places they: make are never filled up again, these impressions are never effaced, nor the stones reduced to their ancient form; so man, though he may have the strength of stones, yet the waters of afflictions will gradually wear him away, and bring him to the dust of death, and where he must lie till the heavens be no more:

thou washest away the things which grow [out] of the dust of the earth; herbs, plants, and trees, which a violent inundation of water tears up by the roots, and carries away, and they are never restored to their places any more. The word hyxypo, which we render "the things which grow out", the spontaneous productions of the earth, as in Le 25:5. Aben Ezra interprets of floods of water; and so Schultens, from the use of the word {q} in the Arabic language, translates it, "their effusions"; that is, the effusions of waters before mentioned, the floods and inundations of them overflow, "and wash away the dust of the earth"; not only that which is on the surface of it, the soil of it; but, as the same learned man observes, they plough and tear up the earth itself, and carry it away, and it is never repaired; so men at death are carried away as with a flood, and are no more, see Ps 90:5;

and or "so" {r}

thou destroyest the hope of man, not the hope of a good man about his eternal state, and of enjoying eternal happiness; which is the gift of God's grace, which is without repentance, never revoked, called in, or taken away or destroyed; it is built upon the promise of God, who cannot lie; it is founded on the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and though it may be brought low, it is never lost; the hope of carnal men in an arm of flesh, in the creature and creature enjoyments, is indeed destroyed; and so is the hope of external professors of religion, that is formed on their own works of righteousness, and profession of religion; but of this Job is not speaking, but of the hope of man of living again in this world after death; for this is a reddition or application of the above similes used to illustrate this point, the irreparable state of man at death, so as that he shall never return to this life again, and to the same state and circumstances of things as before; and next follows a description of death, and the state of the dead.

{p} "Gutta cavat lapidem", Ovid. de Ponto, l. 4. {q} "effudit", Golius, col. 1182. Castel. col. 2590. {r} "Sic", Vatablus, Drusius, Mercerus, Schultens; "ita", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; it answers to Nk, Aben Ezra, Gersom.

Job 14:20

Ver. 20. Thou prevailest for ever against him,.... God is a more than a match for man, in anything, in everything; there is no contending with him, or standing against him, he is stronger than he, and always prevails; there is no withstanding any disease, and the force of it, when he sends it; it is a messenger and servant of his, it goes at his command, and does what he bids it do; and all the art and power of man cannot resist it, or hinder what God would have done by it; and so death itself is irresistible; what is stronger than death?

it is a king that reigns with a despotic power; it reigns irresistibly, victoriously, and triumphantly; it prevails over all men, in all ages, and will do to the end of the world; no man has power over his spirit to retain it one moment, when death comes to separate it from the body: and this prevalence of God by death over men will be for ever; the grave is man's long home, to which he is brought by death, and he will never return from it more, to come again into this world, and be about the business of it as now;

and he passeth; out of the world, and is seen no more in it; death is a going the way of all flesh, a departure out of this life, and to it man never usually returns more; he goes to Hades, to the invisible place, and makes his appearance no more here; see Ps 37:35;

thou changest his countenance; at death; the forerunners of death will change a man's countenance, pains, and diseases of body; by these God makes man's beauty to consume like the moth; the fear of death will change a man's countenance, as the handwriting on the wall did Belshazzar's, **Da 5:9**; even such who have out-braved death, and pretended to have made a covenant and agreement with it, yet when the king of terrors is presented to them, they are seized with a panic, their hearts ache, and their countenances turn pale; but oh! what a change is made by death itself, which for this reason is represented as riding on a pale horse; **Re 6:8**; when the rosy florid looks of man are gone, his comeliness turned into corruption, his countenance pale and meagre, his eyes hollow and sunk, his nose sharp pointed, his ears contracted, and jaws fallen, and his complexion altered, and still more when laid in the grave, and he is turned to rottenness, dust, and worms:

and sendeth him away; giveth him a dismission from this world; sendeth him out of it, from his house, his family, friends, and acquaintance: his birth is expressed often by his coming into the world, and his death by going out of it; for here he has no continuance, no abiding, no rest; and yet there is no departure till God gives him dismission by death, then he sends him away from hence; some in wrath, whom he sends to take up their abode with devils and damned spirits; others in love, to prevent their being involved in evils coming upon the earth, and to be in better company, with God and Christ, with angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect: Maimonides interprets this of Adam {r}, who, when he changed the object of his countenance, and looked on the forbidden fruit, was sent out of paradise.

{r} Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 2. p. 5.

Job 14:21

Ver. 21. His sons come to honour,.... Or "are multiplied" {s}, see **Na 3:15**; their families increase like a flock, become very numerous, which was reckoned a great blessing; or "become heavy" {t}; being loaded with gold and silver, with riches and honour, raised to great grandeur and dignity, and possessed of much wealth and large estates:

and he knoweth [it] not; the man whose countenance is changed and sent away into another world; for the dead know nothing of the affairs of this life; a good man indeed after death knows more of God and Christ, of the doctrines of grace, and mysteries of Providence; but he knows nothing of the affairs of his family he has left behind: some understand this of a man on his death bed while alive, who, when he is told of the promotion of his sons to honour, or of the increase of their worldly substance, takes no notice of it; either being deprived of his senses by the disease upon him; or through the greatness of his pains and agonies, or the intenseness of his thoughts about a future state, does not notice what is told him, nor rejoice at it; which in the time of health would have been pleasing to him: but the first sense seems best:

and they are brought low, that is, his sons; or "are diminished" {u}; lessened in their numbers, one taken off after another, and so his family decreases; or they come into low circumstances of life, are reduced in the world, and brought to straits and difficulties, to want and poverty:

but he perceiveth [it] not of them; he is not sensible of their troubles, and so not grieved at them; see Isa 63:16; or when he is told of them on his death bed, he does not take notice of them, or regard them, having enough to grapple with himself, and his mind intent on his everlasting state, or carried above them in the views of the love, grace, and covenant of God; see 2Sa 23:5.

{s} wdbky pollwn genomenwn, Sept. "multiplicabuntur", Vatablus, Bolducius. {t} "Multi vel graves sunt", Drusius; "graves erunt et onusti", Mercerus. {u} wreuy oligoi genwntai, Sept. "minuuntur, numero pauci sunt", Drusius.

Job 14:22

Ver. 22. But his flesh upon him shall have pain,.... Either he shall be chastened with strong pains on his sick and dying bed; which is the reason why he neither rejoices at the happiness of his family, nor is distressed at their misfortunes; having so much pain in his flesh and bones to endure himself; or, as Gussetius {x} renders it, "for this" his flesh and soul shall have pain and grief while he lives, because he cannot know how it will be with his family when he is dead; but rather this is to be understood of a man when dead; and so it is a continuation of the description of death, or of the state of the dead; thus Aben Ezra interprets it of his flesh upon him, that is, his body shall melt away, rot and corrupt, meaning in the grave; so the word is used of marring and destroying, in **2Ki 3:19**, to which the Targum inclines,

"but his flesh, because of worms upon him, shall grieve;"

and so Jarchi, troublesome is the worm to a dead man as a needle in quick flesh; pain and grief are by a prosopopoeia or personification attributed to a dead body; signifying, that could it be sensible of its case, it would be painful and grievous to it:

and his soul within him shall mourn; either while he lives, because of his afflictions and terrors, the days being come in which he has no pleasure, and the time of death drawing nigh; or his dead body, as the word is used in Ps 16:10; said to mourn by the same figure; or his soul, because of his body being dead; or rather his breath, which at death fails and pines away {y}.

{x} Ebr. Comment. p. 605. {y} lbat "emarcida luget", Schultens.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 15

Job's three friends having in their turns attacked him, and he having given answer respectively to them, Eliphaz, who began the attack, first enters the debate with him again, and proceeds upon the same plan as before, and endeavours to defend his former sentiments, falling upon Job with greater vehemence and severity; he charges him with vanity, imprudence, and unprofitableness in his talk, and acting a part unbecoming his character as a wise man; yea, with impiety and a neglect of religion, or at least as a discourager of it by his words and doctrines, of which his mouth and lips were witnesses against him,
Job 15:1; he charges him with arrogance and a high conceit of himself, as if he

was the first man that was made, nay, as if he was the eternal wisdom of God, and had been in his council; and, to check his vanity, retorts his own words upon him, or however the sense of them, Job 15:7; and also with slighting the consolations of God; upon which he warmly expostulates with him, Job 15:11; and in order to convince him of his self-righteousness, which he thought he was full of, he argues from the angels, the heavens, and the general case of man, Job 15:14; and then he declares from his own knowledge, and from the relation of wise and ancient men in former times, who made it their observation, that wicked men are afflicted all their days, attended with terror and despair, and liable to various calamities, Job 15:17; the reasons of which are their insolence to God, and hostilities committed against him, which they are encouraged in by their prosperous circumstances, Job 15:25; notwithstanding all, their estates, riches, and wealth, will come to nothing, Job 15:28; and the chapter is closed with an exhortation to such, not to feed themselves up with vain hopes, or trust in uncertain riches, since their destruction would be sure, sudden, and terrible, Job 15:31.

Ver. 1. Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite,.... Or, who was of Teman, as the Targum, the first of Job's friends and comforters, the oldest of them, who first began the dispute with him; which was carried on by his two other companions, who had spoken in their turns; and now in course it fell to him to answer a second time, as he here does,

and said, as follows.

Job 15:2

Ver. 2. Should a wise man utter vain knowledge,.... As Job had been thought to be, or as he himself thought he was, which he might say sarcastically; or as he really was, not worldly wise, nor merely wise in things natural, but in things divine; being one that had the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom, and wisdom itself; believed in Christ, and walked wisely and circumspectly before men; now it is not becoming such a man to utter vain knowledge, or such knowledge as is like the wind, or, as the Targum, windy knowledge; empty, not solid, nor satisfying, but swells and puffs up, and is knowledge falsely so called; but it does not appear that Job did utter such vain and fruitless things as deserved to be compared to the wind:

and fill his belly with the east wind; which is noisy and blusterous, rapid and forcible, bearing all before it, and very infectious in hot countries; and such notions Job, according to Eliphaz, satisfied himself with, and endeavoured to insinuate them into others; which were nothing but great swelling words of vanity, and tended to subvert the faith of men, and overthrow all religion, and were very unwholesome, infectious, and ruinous to the minds of men, as suggested.

Job 15:3

Ver. 3. Should he reason with unprofitable talk?.... That is, the wise man, such a man as Job; does it become him to talk such idle stuff? that which is false, and foolish, and frothy, that does not minister grace to the hearer, and is not for the use of edifying; as whatever is untrue, unwise, vain, and empty, must be useless and answer no good end; nothing is profitable but what tends to increase solid wisdom and spiritual knowledge, and to exercise grace, and influence an holy life; wherefore what are profitable to the souls of men are the doctrines of the word of God, and the experiences of the grace of God, communicated by his people one to another; and nothing but these, or what agrees with them, should come out of the mouth of a wise and good man; nor can such an one expect to convince men of their errors, or reprove them for their sins with success, who deals in words of no profit:

or with speeches wherewith he can do no good? but may do a great deal of hurt both to himself and others; but the same thing is here signified in different words,

Job 15:4

Ver. 4. Yea, thou castest off fear,.... Not of man; a slavish fear of man is to be cast off, because that brings a snare, deters men from their duty, and leads into sin; though there is a fear and reverence of men which ought to be given to them, "fear to whom fear", Ro 13:7; but here the fear of God is meant, which is to be understood of the grace of fear, of which Job was possessed; that could not be cast off, for this is not what is in a man naturally, or is by the light of nature, and arises from natural conviction, which may be cast off, as was by Pharaoh; but this is a blessing of the covenant of grace, sure and firm, and is one of the gifts of grace that are without repentance; it is a part of internal grace, which can never be lost; it is improved and increased by fresh discoveries of the grace and goodness of God, and is an antidote and preservative against apostasy: perhaps the whole worship of God may be

meant, external worship, or outward religion in the form of it, which is sometimes signified by the fear of God:
Ec 12:14; and it is cast off when it is neglected and not attended to, or when men become profane, after they have made a profession of religion; but as neither of these can be thought to be the case of Job, rather the meaning of Eliphaz may be, that Job did not show that reverence to God he should, as his words may seem, in
Job 13:20; or that by his way of talk and reasoning, and by the notions he had imbibed and gave out, and the assertions he laid down, all religion would be made void among men; for if, as he had said, God "destroys the perfect and the wicked, [and] the tabernacles of robbers prosper, [and] the just men are laughed to scorn", **Job 9:22**; who would fear God? it might be inferred from hence, that it is a vain thing to serve him, and there can be no profit got by keeping his ordinances, and walking before him; this is the way to put an end to all religion, as if Eliphaz should say, and discourage all regard unto it:

and restrainest prayer before God; prayer is to be made to God and to him only, it is a part of religious worship, directed to by the light of nature, and ought to be performed by every man; it is a special privilege of the saints, who have a covenant God on a throne of grace to go to, and can pray in a spiritual manner for spiritual things; and especially is to be observed in times of trouble, in which Job now was, and never to be disused; now this charge either respects Job himself, that he left off praying, which can hardly be supposed; or that he drew out prayer to a great length, as some understand the words {w}, like the tautologies of the Heathen; or he diminished prayer, as others {x}, lessened the times of prayer, and the petitions in it: or rather it may respect others; not that it can be thought he should lay his injunctions on those over whom he had any authority, forbidding his servants, or those about him, to pray; but that by his manner of reasoning he discouraged prayer, as Eliphaz thought, as an useless thing; for if God laughs at the trials and afflictions of the innocent, and suffers wicked men to prosper, who would pray to him, or serve him? see **Job 9:23**.

{w} ergt "tulisti", V. L. "traheres", Cocceius; "multiplicasti", so some in Bar Tzemach. {x} "Imminues", Montanus; "imminuisti", Bolducius; "diminuis", Schmidt; "minuis", Schultens.

Job 15:5

Ver. 5. For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity,.... Which was in his heart, and so was an evidence against him, and proved him perverse, and made good the above charges exhibited against him: or "thine iniquity teaches thy mouth" {y}; the wickedness that was in his heart prompted his mouth to speak the things he did, see Mt 12:34; and this, as it was an instance of his folly, Pr 15:2; so a proof of his casting off the fear of the Lord; for if that had been before his eyes, he would have bridled his lips, and not uttered all the wickedness of his heart: for he that "bridleth not his tongue, this man's religion is vain", **Jas 1:26**;

and thou choosest the tongue of the crafty; coloured over things under specious pretences of religion and godliness, so that the simple and ignorant took him for a holy good man, when he was at heart an hypocrite; in this light Eliphaz puts Job, as one that walked and talked in craftiness, and was a deceitful worker, and imposed upon men with false glosses and plausible pretences.

{y} Kyp Knwe Play "docuit iniquitas tua os tuum", V. L. Pagninus, Bolducius; "docebit", Montanus; "docet", Piscator, Cocceius; so Tigurine version.

Job 15:6

Ver. 6. Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I,.... Or shows thee to be a wicked person, guilty of things charged upon thee; out of thine own mouth thou art convicted, there needs no other evidence to be brought against thee, that is sufficient: and thou savest me, and any other, the trouble of passing the sentence of condemnation upon thee; thou hast done it thyself, thine own mouth is judge and jury, and brings in the verdict, and pronounces it, as well as is the witness, as follows, and is instead of a thousand witnesses, **Job 9:20**;

yea, thine own lips testify against thee; and therefore there were no need of producing any other testimony; what he had said showed that his talk was vain and unprofitable, unbecoming a wise man, and tending to make null and void the fear of God among men, to discourage all religious exercises, and particularly prayer before God.

Job 15:7

Ver. 7. [Art] thou the first man [that] was born?.... The first Adam, who was created in wisdom and knowledge, and had a large share of understanding in things natural, civil, and moral; knew much of God and his perfections, of the works of nature, and of the wisdom and power of God displayed in them; one instance of which is his giving names to the creatures; dost thou think thou art that selfsame individual person, the father of all mankind, who had such a stock and fund of knowledge, until, by seeking after more, and that unlawful, he lost much of what he had? dost thou imagine that thou hast lived ever since, and seen or known everything that was done in all ages from the beginning, and hast gathered a large share of knowledge from long experience, and by making strict observations on men and things in such a length of time? or, as the Targum,

"wast thou born with the first man, without father and mother?"

and hast thou existed ever since? or, "wast thou born before Adam?" before the first man {z}? Art thou the wisdom and son of God, who was before Abraham, before Adam, before any creature whatever, was in the beginning with God, and was God? What dost thou make thyself to be, Job? thou, a mere man, dost thou make thyself to be the eternal God? for to be before the first man, or to be the firstborn of every creature, or to be born before every creature, is expressive of eternity, as is the following phrase:

or wast thou made before the hills? or existed before they did? as is said of the son of God, **Pr 8:25**; what is before the hills and mountains is eternal; the eternal God and his eternity are thus described, Ps 90:2.

{z} So Mercerus, and some in Vatablus, Schmidt, Jarchi, & Bar Tzemach.

Job 15:8

Ver. 8. Hast thou heard the secret of God?.... Or, "in the secret of God" {a}, in his cabinet council, what was said and done there? hast thou stood in the council of God? hast thou been one of his privy council, or counsellors, and been let into all the secrets of God, of his purposes and providence, and into the reasons of all his administrations, that thou talkest so freely, and boldly, and confidently as thou dost? Indeed Christ, the son of God, was the Angel of the great council; the counsel of peace was between him and his Father; yea, he was in his bosom, and privy to all his thoughts, designs, and decrees, and knew everything, what would be, and the reasons thereof; as well as the nature of his Father, his perfections, mind, and will, which he has declared: but could Job pretend to this, or anything like it? no, surely. Indeed there are some secrets of God which he makes known to his people, and no doubt, in some measure, Job was acquainted with them; such as the secrets of God's love, and of the covenant of his grace, which are with them that fear him; and such an one Job was, and with whom, in times past at least, the secret of God was, even his everlasting love in the open manifestation of it to him; which is a secret in the heart of God, till revealed and shed abroad in the hearts of his people; and so the "mysteries" of God, as some render the word, the doctrines of the Gospel, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, the knowledge of them, is given to the sons of men; Job was acquainted with them, with the incarnation of Christ, redemption by him, and the resurrection of the dead; the secrets of Providence, though they may not always be known now, they will be hereafter; yea, God does nothing but he reveals his secrets to his servants the prophets **Am 3:7**, as he did to Abraham his friend; and as for the purposes of God, which are the secret things that belong to him, and can never be known unless revealed, and when fulfilled, even those, such as relate to the election of men, their redemption by Christ, and the effectual calling, are made known by God's saving and calling them according to them:

and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself? not keep it to himself without communicating it to others, which to do is to imprison the truth, and detain it in unrighteousness; as men have freely received, they should freely give; but he arrogated and ascribed wisdom to himself, monopolized it, and would allow no man to have any share of it but himself; he reckoned so highly of himself, as if he was the only wise man in the world; thus what he charged his friends with Eliphaz retorts upon himself, Job 12:2; as he does his own words in Job 15:9.

{a} hwla dwob "in secreto Dei", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius. Schultens.

Job 15:9

Ver. 9. What knowest thou that we know not?.... Which are pretty near the words of Job to his friends, Job 12:3; and to the same sense is what follows:

[what] understandest thou which [is] not in us? in our hearts, minds, and understanding; or among us, which one or other, or all of us, have not: yet all men have not knowledge alike; some that profess themselves to be wise, and to have a large share of knowledge, are fools; and such who think they know something extraordinary, and more than others, know nothing as they ought to know; and such who have gifts of real knowledge have them different one from another; even of the things known there is not a like degree of knowledge, and particularly in spiritual things; some are little children in understanding, some are young men and know more, and some are fathers, and

know most of all; an equality in knowledge belongs to another state, to the latter day glory, when the watchmen shall see eye to eye, and all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, and especially to the ultimate glory, when saints will know as they are known.

Job 15:10

Ver. 10. With us are both the grayheaded,.... The grayheaded man, or one that is so, it is in the singular number; gray hairs are a sign of old age, and an emblem of wisdom, see Job 12:12; to which words Eliphaz may be thought to refer; Job there suggesting as if wisdom was with him, being an ancient man:

and very aged men; or "man" rather; Mr. Broughton renders it, and "all gray", as if the other word only signifies one that has a mixture of gray hairs on him, but this one all whose hairs are turned gray:

much elder than thy father; or "greater", as the same learned man renders it; and so Aben Ezra and Bar Tzemach say in the Arabic language the word signifies, and may design a third person. Ben Gersom thinks that Eliphaz was older than Job, and that his other two friends were younger than he, or Zophar only was younger than he; one of the Targums paraphrases the words thus,

"but Eliphaz who is gray, and Bildad who is aged, are with us, and Zophar who is greater in days than thy father;"

it appears that they were very old men by what Elihu says, Job 32:6; though it may be Eliphaz may not barely have respect to themselves and their age, but to their ancestors, their fathers, from whom they had their knowledge, when they were but of yesterday, and knew little, and so pleads antiquity on their side; and it has been observed that Teman, from whence Eliphaz was, was famous for wisdom, and wise men in it, at least it was so in later times; and if so early, the observation would be more pertinent, and the sense might be thought to be, that we have at Teman men as ancient and as wise as at Uz, in the schools of the one as in the schools of the other, and so have the opportunity of gaining as much wisdom and knowledge as Job: or it may be the meaning only is this, that we have on our side the question as many ancient and learned men, or more, than Job can pretend to; and thus, as before, antiquity is pleaded; but is not a sure rule to go by, at least by trusting to it men may be led aside; for though truth is the good old way, and is the oldest way, yet error is almost as old as truth; it follows so close upon the heels of it, that it

is difficult, in some cases, to discern which is first, though truth always is: there is the old way which wicked men have trodden; and a pretence to antiquity, if not carefully observed, may lead into it, see **Jer 6:16**
Job 22:15.

Job 15:11

Ver. 11. [Are] the consolations of God small with thee?.... Meaning either those which Eliphaz and his friends had administered, when, upon his repentance and reformation, they promised him great and good things that should befall him and his family, and that his latter end should be greater than his beginning; which Job slighted, took no notice of, nor entertained any hope concerning it; and these they called the consolations of God, not only because great, as things excellent have the name of God added to them, to express their excellency, but because they were administered in the name of God, and were according to the word and will of God, at least as they thought: Ben Gersom renders it, "the consolations of these"; these were Bildad and Zophar; so Bar Tzemach; or, as others, "these consolations" {b} which I and my friends have suggested; but not human, rather divine consolations are meant; and this is a fresh charge against Job, that he made light of such, even the consolations of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, who are each of them comforters; saints may and should comfort one another, and ministers of the Gospel are Barnabases, sons of consolation; but God is the great Comforter, it is he only can speak and apply comfort to purpose; and his consolations are not to be accounted "small", if it be considered from whence they come, from the great God, the Creator, to creatures, dust and ashes, sinful ones, on whom they are bestowed, such as are undeserving of them, yea, deserving of the wrath of God, and the curses of his law; and also the nature of these comforts, as that they are strong consolations, and effectual through the power and grace of God, and are everlasting, the matter and foundation of them being so; and though they may be refused through unbelief, as being too great in the view of a sinful creature for himself yet they can never be accounted small, or slighted and despised by a gracious soul; nor can it be though they were by Job, since he was so distressed with the arrows of the Almighty, a sense of divine wrath, and was so desirous of the divine Presence, and even begged he might take comfort a little:

is there any secret thing with thee? any secret wisdom and knowledge which they were strangers to; or any secret way of conveying comfort to him they knew not of; or any secret sin in him, any Achan in the camp, **Jos 7:11**, that hindered him from receiving comfort, or put him upon slighting what was offered to him.

{b} la twmwxnt "consolationes istorum virorum", Vatablus; "consolationes istae", so some in Drusius.

Job 15:12

Ver. 12. Why doth thine heart carry thee away?.... To such conceit of thyself, and contempt of others, and even to slight the consolations of God; the heart, being deceitful and wicked, sometimes carries away good men to say and do those things which are unbecoming; and if, in any instance, this was Job's case, it was owing to his own heart, which carried him beyond due bounds; for whenever any man is "tempted" to do evil, "he is drawn away of his own lust", and enticed, **Jas 1:14**;

and what do thine eyes wink at; conniving at and shutting his eyes against his own sins and iniquities, unwilling to see them, and be convinced of them, and own them; or shutting them against the charges and reproofs of his friends, and all the light and evidence with which they came; or rather as carelessly attending to them, and scoffing and sneering at them: some render it, "what do thine eyes aim at" {c}? as men, when they take an aim at a mark, wink with or shut one eye; what are thy designs? what hast thou in view? what wouldest thou be at, talking and behaving in such a manner as thou dost?

{c} Nwmz "collimant", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; so Broughton.

Job 15:13

Ver. 13. That thou turnest thy spirit against God,.... Not against men, his friends only, but against God himself, being filled with wrath and indignation at him; showing the enmity of his heart unto him, and committing hostilities upon him, stretching out his hand, and strengthening himself against him, running upon him, on the thick bosses of his buckler, as after expressed:

and lettest [such] words go out of thy mouth? as in **Job 9:22**.

Job 15:14

Ver. 14. What [is] man, that he should be clean?.... Frail, feeble, mortal man, or woeful man, as Mr. Broughton renders it; since he is sinful, whereby he is become such a weak and dying creature: this question, as well as the following, is put by way of contempt, and as lessening man in a comparative sense, and in order to abate any high conceit of himself; who is not naturally clean, but the reverse, being conceived and born in sin; nor can he be so of himself, nor by any means he is capable of; and however clean he may be in his own eyes, or in the eyes of others, yet is not clean in the sight of God, and still less pure than him, his Maker, as in **Job 4:17**; and indeed cannot be clean at all, but through the grace of God, and blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin:

and [he which is] born of a woman; a periphrasis of man, Job 14:1;

that he should be righteous? as no man is naturally; there is none righteous, no, not one; though man originally was made righteous, yet sinning he lost his righteousness, and all his posterity are without any; nor can they become righteous of themselves, or by any works of righteousness done by them; and though they may trust in themselves that they are righteous, and may appear outwardly so before men, yet by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified or accounted righteous in the sight of God, and much less be more just than he, as in **Job 4:17**; nor can any of the sons of men be made or reckoned righteous but by the obedience of Christ, or by that justifying righteousness that is in him: what Eliphaz here says concerning the impurity, imperfection, and unrighteousness of men, are very great truths; but if he aims at Job, as he seems to do he misses his mark, and mistakes the man, and it is in vain with respect to him, or as a refutation of any notions of his; for Job asserts the corruption and depravity of human nature as strongly as it is expressed here, Job 14:4; nor does he ever claim, but disclaims, sinless perfection, **Job 9:20**; nor did he expect to be personally justified before God by any righteousness of his own, the imperfection of which he was sensible of, but by the righteousness of his living Redeemer, **Job 9:30**; but what he pleaded for was the integrity and uprightness of his heart in opposition to hypocrisy he was charged with; and the holiness and righteousness of his life and conversation, in opposition to a course of living in sin, or to his being guilty of some notorious sin or sins for which he was afflicted, as was insinuated. Eliphaz here recurs to his oracle, **Job 4:17**; and expresses it much to the same sense.

Job 15:15

Ver. 15. Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints,.... In holy men, set apart for himself by his grace, whose sins are expiated by the blood of his Son, and whose hearts are sanctified by his Spirit, and who live holy lives and conversations, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; these, though he trusts many of them with much, as the prophets of old with the messages of his grace and will, and the ministers of the word with treasure, in their earthen vessels, the sacred "depositum" of the glorious Gospel, with gifts of grace, fitting them for their work, and with the care of the souls of men; yet he trusts none of them with themselves, with the redemption and salvation of their souls, with the regeneration and sanctification of their hearts, and with their preservation to eternal glory; he has put those into the hands of his Son and Spirit, and keeps them by his power through faith unto salvation: the Targum renders it, in his saints above, in the saints in heaven, in glorified men; he is there their all in all; as their happiness, so their safety and protection; see an instance of his care and preservation of them after the resurrection, when in a perfect state, Re 20:8; or this may be understood of the angels, who sometimes are called saints, De 33:2; who though they have been trusted with many things to impart to the sons of men, yet not with the salvation of men, nor even with the secret of it; they were not of God's privy council when the affair was debated and settled; nor with other secrets, as the day and hour of the last judgment, the coming of the Son of Man: or the sense may be, "he putteth no perfection or stability" {d} in them, that is, perfection in comparison of his; for if theirs were equal to his, they would be gods, which it is impossible to be, or for God to make them such; and likewise such stability as to have been able to have stood of themselves, which it appears they had not, since many of them fell, and the rest needed confirming grace, which they have by Christ, the Head of all principalities and powers:

yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight; heaven born men, partakers of the heavenly calling, whose hearts and affections are set on heavenly things, and have their conversation in heaven; yet these, in the sight of a pure and holy God, and in comparison of him, are impure and unholy; or they of heaven, as Mr. Broughton renders it, the inhabitants of heaven; the angels on high, as the Targum paraphrases it; these are charged by him with folly, and they, conscious of their imperfection with respect to him, cover their faces with their wings, while they celebrate the perfection of his holiness, who is so glorious in it; though the natural heavens may be intended, at least not excluded, and the luminous bodies in them, as Bildad seems to explain it, Job 25:5; the stars are reckoned the more dense and thick part of the heavens, the moon has its spots, and by later discoveries it seems the sun is not without them, and the heavens are often covered with clouds and darkness, and the present ones will be purified with fire at the general conflagration, which supposes them unclean, and they shall pass away, and new ones succeed, which implies imperfection in the former, or there would be no need of others; this is the proof Eliphaz gives of what he had suggested in Job 15:14.

{d} Nymay al "non posuit stabilitatem", Pagninus; "immutabilitatem, sive perfectionem absolutam", Vatablus; "firmum opus non produxit", Tigurine version; "non crediturns esset firmitatem", Junius & Tremellius.

Job 15:16

Ver. 16. How much more abominable and filthy [is] man,.... In his natural, corrupt, and unregenerate estate; man, as a creature, was not abominable, but becoming sinful he is; he is so in himself, cast out to the loathing of his person, being full of wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores, yea, like a dead corrupted carcass, for he is dead in trespasses and sins, **Eph 2:1**; and he appears to be corrupt by the abominable works done by him, as all the works of the flesh are; yea, he is abominable to himself, when made sensible of his state and case; he then abhors himself, and repents of his sins, he loathes his sins, and himself for them; and must be much more so in the sight of God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, as man is nothing else than a mass of sin, and therefore must be "filthy"; for sin is of a defiling nature, it defiles the body and all its members, and the soul with all its powers and faculties: man is naturally and originally filthy, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; nor can a clean thing be brought out of an unclean; he is internally and universally unclean, his heart is a sink of sin, desperately wicked, and wickedness itself; his mind and conscience are defiled, and there is no place clean; and this appears outwardly in his actions, in his life and conversation, which is filthy also: for if the ploughing of the wicked is sin, and the righteousnesses of men are filthy rags, how impure must the immoral actions of wicked men be? man is so impure, that nothing but the blood of Christ can purify his heart, and purge his conscience from dead works, and make white his outward conversation garment:

which drinketh iniquity like water; it is as natural to him to commit iniquity as it is for a man to drink water when he is thirsty, and he does it with equal gust, delight, and pleasure; as cold water is delightful to a thirsty soul, so is sin to a sinner, a sweet morsel he holds in his mouth; various lusts are various pleasures, though these pleasures are but for a season: sin, like water, is easy to be come at, it is near at hand, it easily besets men, and is all around them, and they easily give into it; everyone turns to his wicked course as readily as the horse rushes into the battle; and the phrase may be expressive of the abundance of sin committed, like large draughts of water greedily taken down by a man athirst, and repeated again and again; moreover, as water drank enters into men, and is taken down as an harmless thing, yet often proves very hurtful and pernicious to them when drank while they are hot, and occasions disorders, which issue in death; so sin, though it may seem harmless, and be pleasing and refreshing, going down like water, yet it works like poison, and is the gall of asps within a man, and ends in eternal death, if grace prevents not. This is the conclusion and application of the whole to man, arguing from the greater to the lesser, and so proving the impurity and imperfection of man, and that he cannot be clean and righteous before God of himself.

Job 15:17

Ver. 17. I will show thee, hear me,.... Here Eliphaz proceeds to illustrate and make plain, to clear and defend, his former sentiment and proposition, and into which the rest of his friends came; that only wicked, and not righteous men, are afflicted of God, especially in such a manner as Job was; and he proposes to show things worthy of his regard, and not such vain and unprofitable things which Job had uttered; and, in order to stir up and engage his attention, he says what follows:

and that [which] I have seen I will declare; what he had been an eyewitness of himself; the same he had observed, **Job 4:8**; and such testimonies are most regarded, and reckoned most authentic and creditable, especially when they come from men of character; see **Lu 1:1**.

Job 15:18

Ver. 18. Which wise men have told from their fathers,.... Men wise in the best sense, not to do evil, but to do good; not worldly wise men, but such who have wisdom, sound wisdom in the inward parts; who are wise to salvation, and who are partakers of divine and spiritual wisdom; and such men, as they would never tell an untruth, so they would never report a false or a foolish thing they had heard, nor any thing but upon a good testimony, what they have received from their fathers, who were also wise and good men; and therefore such a testimony, though not ocular, but by tradition, deserves regard:

and have not hid [it]; their fathers did not hide it from them, and what they have received from their fathers they did not hide it from their children; and so it came to be handed down from one to another with great truth, exactness, and certainty, and to be depended upon, see Ps 44:1.

Job 15:19

Ver. 19. Unto whom alone the earth was given,.... Who were intrusted with the government of whole kingdoms and nations; and therefore not mean men, but persons of great consequence, and to be credited; being such as were appointed by God, and by him put into such an high office, for which they were qualified by him; and being observed to be such by men, were made choice of by them to take the government of them: this is not to be restrained to the land of Canaan, and to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom it was given, and to their posterity; and who it is very probable at this time did not yet enjoy it; but it respects more and larger tracts of land, and the rulers of them, and at a greater distance of time, and very likely Noah and his sons, to whom the whole earth was given, and by whom it was replenished, and among whom it was divided; this seems opposed to what Job had said, **Job 9:24**;

and no stranger passed among them; either there was no wicked man among them, a stranger to God and godliness; or an enemy that invaded them, passed through them, disturbed and dispossessed them of their power and substance; which shows how wise and good men are regarded by the Lord, and not distressed and afflicted as wicked men be; as well as serves to strengthen the credit of their character, and the report received and derived from them by tradition, and tacitly glances at Job's distress and disturbance by the Chaldeans and Sabeans; next follows the account of the things either seen by Eliphaz, or handed down from such credible persons now described.

Job 15:20

Ver. 20. The wicked man travaileth with pain all [his] days,.... Either to commit iniquity, which he is at great pains to do, and even to weariness; and, agreeably to the metaphor used, he conceives it in his heart, he travails with it in his mind, and he brings forth falsehood and a lie, what disappoints him, and which issues in death, eternal death, see **Ps 7:14**; or to get wealth and riches, in obtaining of which he pierces himself through with many sorrows; and these being like thorns, in using them he gets many a scratch, and has a good deal of trouble, pain, and uneasiness in keeping them, insomuch that he cannot sleep comfortably through fear of losing them; wherefore he does not enjoy that peace, comfort, and happiness, it may be thought he does; and, besides all this, he has many an inward pain and gripe of conscience for his many sins and transgressions, which lie at the door of conscience, and when it is opened rush in, and make sad work, and put him to great pain and distress; for otherwise this cannot be said of every wicked man, that they are in outward pain and distress, or in uncomfortable circumstances, at least in appearance; for of some it is said, "they are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men", Ps 73:5; they live wholly at ease, and are quiet, and die so, at least seemingly: some restrain this to some particular person whom Eliphaz might have in view; the Targum paraphrases it of wicked Esau, who it was expected would repent, but did not; others think that he had in his eye some notorious oppressor, that had lived formerly, or in his time, as Nimrod, the mighty hunter and tyrant, or Chedorlaomer, who held for some years several kings in subjection to him; but it is much if he does not design Job himself; however, he forms the description of the wicked man in such a manner, that it might as near as possible suit his case, and in many things he plainly refers to it: and this is a sad case indeed, for a wicked man to travail in pain all his days in this life, and in the world to come to suffer the pains of hell fire to all eternity; the pains of a woman, to which the allusion is, are but short at most, but those of the wicked man are for life, yea, for ever; and among the rest of his pains of mind, especially in this world, what follows is one, and which gives much uneasiness: and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor; Mr. Broughton renders it, soon numbered years; that is, few, as the years of man's life at most are but few, and those of the oppressor fewer still, since bloody and deceitful men do not live out half the days of the years of man's life, but are oftentimes cut off in the midst of their days; and be they more or fewer, they are all numbered and fixed, and the number of them is with God, and him only; they are fixed and settled by the decree of God, and laid up in his purposes, and reserved for the oppressor; but they are a secret to him, he does not know how long he shall live, or how soon he may die, and then there will be an end of his oppression and tyranny, and of his enjoyment of his wealth and riches unjustly got; and this frets him, and gives him pain, and makes him uneasy; whereas a good man is easy about it, he is willing to wait his appointed time, till his change comes; he is not so much concerned to know the time of his death as to be in a readiness for it. The Targum paraphrases this of Ishmael the mighty: the oppressor is the same with the wicked man in the preceding clause.

Job 15:21

Ver. 21. A dreadful sound [is] in his ears,.... Or "a voice", or "sound of fears" {t}, of what causes fears; and which are either imaginary; sometimes wicked men, fear when there is no cause or occasion for it; they fancy an enemy at their heels, and flee, when none pursues them; they are a "Magormissabib", or "terror on every side", a fear to themselves and all about them, Jer 20:3; like Cain, who fancied and feared that every man that met him would slay him **Ge 4:13**; such is the effect of a guilty conscience: or real; and these either extraordinary sounds, such as were made in the ears of the Syrian host, which caused them to flee, and leave their tents, and all their substance in them, **2Ki 7:6**; or ordinary, as the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war, wars and rumours which are very terrible, especially to some persons; or sounds of fears, reports of one calamity after another, which cause fears; and so may respect Job's troubles, and the dreadful sound of them in his ears, brought by one messenger of bad tidings after another: but there is a more dreadful sound than either of these, which is sometimes in the ears of wicked men; the terrors of the law of God broken by them, the menaces and curses of it, and a sound of hell and damnation, which continually rings in their ears, and fills the with horror and black despair; and so the Targum,

"the voice or sound of the fears in hell is in his ears;"

and among the rest of his fears what follows is one, and so some connect the words, that {u}

in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him; either God the lawgiver, whose law he has transgressed, and who is able, as to save his people, so to destroy the wicked, soul and body, in hell; and destruction from the Almighty, Job himself says, was a terror to him,
Job 31:23; or a destroying angel, such an one as went through the land of Egypt, and destroyed the firstborn, and into the camp of Israel, when they committed sin, and were destroyed of the destroyer; or some enemy, plunderer, and robber, such as the Sabeans and Chaldeans were, and to whom respect may be had; or even the devil himself, Apollyon, the destroyer of the souls of men, and who sometimes wicked men fear will come and carry them away, soul and body, to hell; or it may be death is meant, which kills and destroys all men; and wicked men are afraid that in the midst of all their peace and prosperity sudden destruction by death should come upon them, like a thief in the night, and remove them from all their enjoyments; and whether they are or no under any fearful apprehensions of this, it certainly will be their case.

{t} Mydxp lwq "sonitus timorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius; to the same sense Codurcus, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schmidt, Schultens. {u} "Vastatorem invasurum eum", Junius & Tremellius.

Job 15:22

Ver. 22. He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness,.... When he lies down at night he despairs of ever seeing the light of the morning, through fear of an enemy, a robber, a murderer, or of one disaster or another, De 28:66; or when he is in any affliction and calamity, which is often signified by darkness, he cannot persuade himself that he shall ever be delivered out of it, and restored to his former condition again: and here Eliphaz seems to glance at Job, who had no hope of his being brought into such a state of prosperity he had been in; whereas good men, when in darkness, believe they shall be brought again to the light, as the church in **Mic 7:8**; or the infidel, who knows he must be laid in the dark and silent grave; the Heathen man, such as were many of the neighbours of Eliphaz, the Idumeans, among whom he dwelt, who were without the hope of a glorious resurrection; and which is an article of pure revelation, and which the idolatrous Heathen were strangers to, and so believed it not, or any deliverance from the grave; or this may respect the blackness of darkness, the outer darkness, the darkness of hell, which when once a wicked man is cast into, and enveloped with, he despairs, as he well may, of ever being delivered out of it:

and he is waited for of the sword; or by them that kill with the sword, as the Targum, who lie in wait for him, to rob him, and kill him; or in his own apprehension he seems to have nothing but drawn swords about him, or a sword hanging over his head, or the judgments of God ready to fall upon him for his sins; for he, having killed others with the sword, must expect to be killed with it himself.

Job 15:23

Ver. 23. He wandereth abroad for bread,.... Either as a plunderer and robber, he roves about to increase his worldly power and substance; or rather, being reduced to poverty, wanders about from place to place, from door to door, to beg his bread; which is a curse imprecated on the posterity of wicked men, Ps 109:10;

[saying], where [is it]? where is bread to be had? where shall I go for it? where lives a liberal man that will give it freely and generously? by this question it seems as if it was difficult for such a man to get his bread by begging; he having been cruel and oppressive to others, unkind and ungenerous in his time of prosperity, now finds but few that care to relieve him; and indeed a man that has not shown mercy to the indigent, when in his power to have relieved them, cannot expect mercy will be shown to him; this he does, wanders about, seeking food, "wheresoever he is" {w}:

he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand; either that a day of affliction and adversity is coming upon him, perceiving his affairs to grow worse and worse, or to be immediately and already on him, which obliges him to wander about for bread; or that the day of death is at hand, which he is made sensible of by one symptom or another; or rather it may be the day of everlasting darkness in hell, the wrath of God to the uttermost he has deserved; he finds the day of judgment is at hand, and the Judge at the door, and in a short time he must receive the reward of eternal vengeance for the wicked deeds he has done; for so the words may be rendered, "that the day of darkness is prepared by his hand" {x}; by the evil works his hand has wrought, and so has treasured up to himself wrath against the day of wrath, and righteous judgment of God.

{w} So Noldius in Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 87. {x} wdyb "suis factis", Tigurine version; "per manum suam", Schmidt.

Job 15:24

Ver. 24. Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid,.... Either his present troubles shall frighten him, they being so very dismal, terrible, and distressing, and make him fear that others were coming on, more dreadful and formidable; or those troubles he fears will be his portion hereafter, these terrify him beyond measure, even that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, that shall come upon every soul of man that doeth evil, **Ro 2:8**;

they shall prevail against him as a king ready to the battle; that is, trouble and anguish shall prevail against him; he will be no more able to resist them than a very inferior force, or even a single man, is able to resist a warlike king, attended with a numerous army, and these set in battle array; such a man's troubles will come upon him as an armed man, against which he cannot stand;

the Targum is,

"they shall surround him as a king prepared for a footstool;"

who being taken by the enemy shall be used as a footstool to mount on horseback; and as the word has the signification of a globe or ball, see Isa 22:18; some think it has respect to the manner of kings, when taken captive, put into an iron cage, as Bajazet was by Tamerlane; or into an iron hoop, bound hand and foot, and hung up in chains; or, as Ben Gersom thinks, to the manner of drowning persons, who used to be tied hand and foot, as if rolled up in the form of a globe, and so cast into the water; but rather the reference is to an army, besieging a place all around in the form of a ball or globe, so that there is no escaping them; or rather it may be to a king drawing up his army in such a form, ready to engage in battle; or putting it in such a position when encamped or entrenched, waiting the motion of the enemy; see 1Sa 26:5; and such are the troubles that surround and prevail against a wicked man, see Isa 29:3; the reasons of the wicked man being brought into such a woeful condition follow.

Job 15:25

Ver. 25. For he stretched out his hand against God,.... Being an hater of him, an enemy to him, yea, enmity itself against him; an enemy in his mind, which appears by his wicked works, which are so many acts of hostility against God; all sins are against God, his nature, his will, his law, and all his remonstrances, exhortations, cautions, and instructions; but some are more daring and impudent than others, or are committed in a more open, bold, and audacious manner, as were those committed by the inhabitants of Sodom, and those who are similar to them; especially such as strike at the being of God and his perfections, his providence and government of the world; and such as deny these may most truly be said to stretch out their hands against God, and strike at him: and this may regard not only sins committed against the light of nature and the law of God, but against the evangelic revelation, the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; for such who deny the one, and reject the other, openly oppose themselves to God, and expose themselves to his wrath and vengeance; for of how much sorer punishment shall such be thought worthy, who trample Christ and his blood under foot, despise and disobey his Gospel:

and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty; by hardening his heart against him as Pharaoh did; by putting on a bold and brazen countenance, by setting his mouth against God in heaven, and suffering, his tongue to walk through the earth, fearing neither God nor man; by entering into a friendship with the world, and making alliances with the enemies of God, even by making a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell; all which is egregious folly and madness: for a sinful man to oppose himself to God is to set briers and thorns to a consuming fire; for a weak feeble creature to set himself against the Almighty, who can crush him in a moment, and send him down to hell, is the height of folly; let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth, but not man with his Maker; who ever strengthened or hardened himself against him, and prospered?

Job 15:26

Ver. 26. He runneth upon him, [even] on [his] neck,.... As a fierce and furious enemy runs upon another with great wrath and fury; as the he goat in Daniel's vision ran upon the ram, in the fury of his power, that is, Alexander upon Darius; which instance Bar Tzemach refers to; and as an adversary, who throws down his weapons, and goes in to closer quarters, and takes his antagonist by the throat, or round the neck, in order to throw him down to the ground; in such a bold and insolent manner does the wicked man encounter with God; he makes up to him, and flies in his face, and most audaciously attacks him: or he runs upon him "with [his] neck" {y}; with a stretched out neck, in the most haughty manner, with a neck like an iron sinew, and with a brow like brass:

upon the thick bosses of his bucklers; alluding to shields, embossed in the middle, where they are thicker than in the other parts, and used to have a spike of iron set in the middle; so that it was daring and dangerous to run upon them: these may design the perfections of God, denied by the wicked man; or his providential dispensations, despised by him; or his purposes and decrees ridiculed, replied unto, and disputed; or the flaming sword of justice, and the curses of a righteous law, in defiance of which wicked men go on in sin: or "with the bosses of his bucklers" {z}; with all his family, as Schmidt; or employing all his wealth and riches, his power and authority, against God, and the interest of religion in the world. Some understand this of God, meeting the wicked man, stretching out his hand, and strengthening himself against him, as if he, God, ran upon the wicked man, and upon his neck, and took him by it, and shook him; as in Job 16:12; and upon the thick bosses of his buckler, his bones and nerves, as Mr. Broughton; or on his power and wealth, which are not able to secure him from the vengeance of the Almighty; but the former sense seems best.

{y} rawub "erecto collo", V. L. Piscator; "duro collo", Drusius, Michaelis; "cum cervice", Cocceius, Schmidt, Schultens. {z} wyngm ybg ybeb "cum erassitie umbonum clypeorum suorum", Cocceius; so Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 15:27

Ver. 27. Because he covereth his face with his fatness,.... He has no fear of God, nor shame for his sin; he blushes not to rise up against God in the manner he does, because his eyes stand out with fatness; or rather his face is covered with it, that is, he abounds in riches, he enjoys great prosperity, a large affluence of all good things; and this makes him haughty and imperious, neither to fear God, nor regard man like Jeshurun, who, when he "waxed fat, [was] grown thick, and covered with fatness, kicked" against God, and his providences, sinned and rebelled against him; "forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation", De 32:15; and to the same purpose is the following clause:

and maketh collops of fat in [his] flanks; a description of a very fat man, and one that pampers the flesh, and indulges himself in eating and drinking; and, figuratively, of one that abounds in the good things of this world, and which make him vain and proud, and lead him on to commit sin in a bold and daring way, promising himself impunity in it, but without any just ground for it, as the following verses show; perhaps some respect may be had to Job's children feasting with one another in their prosperity, which led on to sin, and issued in their ruin, as Eliphaz would suggest.

Job 15:28

Ver. 28. And he dwelleth in desolate cities,.... This is either a continuation of the account of the wicked man's prosperity, which makes him haughty; such is his might and power, that he destroys cities and palaces, built and enjoyed by others, and then out of the ruins of them builds greater cities and more noble palaces, to perpetuate his name to posterity; which sense agrees with **Job 3:14**; and with the Targum, "and he makes tabernacles in desert cities, that he may dwelt in houses which were not inhabited;"

and so Ben Gersom: and hence because of his success among men, and the grandeur he lives in, his heart is lifted up, and his hand is stretched out against God; or else this may express the sinful course of life such a man lives, who chooses to dwell in desolate places, and deserts, to do harm to others, to seize upon travellers as they pass by, and rob and plunder them of their substance, sitting and waiting for them in such places, as the Arabians in the wilderness, **Jer 3:2**; which is the sense of some, as Aben Ezra observes; or rather this points at the punishment of the wicked man, who though for the present may be in great prosperity, possessed of large cities and stately palaces, "yet" or "but" {a}, for so the particle may be rendered, "he dwelleth in desolate cities"; in such as shall become desolate, being destroyed by a superior enemy, that shall come upon him; or through his subjects forsaking him, not being able to bear his tyranny and cruelty; or he shall be driven from his dominions by them, and be obliged to fly, and dwell in desert places; or he shall choose to dwell there, through the horrors of a guilty conscience; or, best of all, he shall be reduced to such distress and poverty, that he shall not have a house fit to dwell in; but "shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited", Jer 17:6; as follows:

[and] in houses which no man inhabiteth, which are ready to become heaps; such as have been deserted by their former inhabitants, because come to decay, and ready to fall down upon them, and become heaps of stones and rubbish.

{a} So the Annotator of the Assembly of Divines.

Job 15:29

Ver. 29. He shall not be rich,.... Though his heart is set upon it, he is determined at any rate to be rich; he labours for it with all his might and main, and yet shall not attain what he is so desirous of; many, who take a great deal of pains to be rich, and even in a lawful way, and are men of understanding in trade and business, and yet riches are not their portion; and some who got a great deal, yet do not grow rich; what they get, they put into a bag of holes, and it drops through as fast as they put in; what they get in one sinful way they consume in another, and so are always poor; and others, though they have amassed together a vast substance, yet still are but poor men, not using what they have either for their own good, or the good of others; and not being content with what they have, but always craving more, and so are even poor in their own account, not having what they would have: however, such a man is not rich towards God; for in godly and spiritual things he is destitute of the true riches of grace, and has no title to the riches of glory; and as for his earthly riches, these shall not endure; though he may be rich for the present, he will not be always so; And this sense the next clause confirms:

neither shall his substance continue; or "his strength" {b} his power and might, a rich man's wealth being his strong city, in which he places his trust and confidence; riches are called "substance", though their are but a shadow, yea, mere nonentities, things that are not, in comparison of heavenly things; see Pr 23:5; at least they are not an enduring substance; they are uncertain things, here today, and gone tomorrow; that make themselves wings, and fly away from the owners of them; or they are taken away front them, and are not like the riches of grace, which are durable riches; or like those of glory; but by one means or another are taken out of the hands of the possessors of them, and they are reduced to poverty: and this "their substance shall not rise"; or rather, "not rise again" {c}, as the word may be rendered; notwithstanding all the pains they may take, their substance shall not rise, grow, and increase; or not rise up to the former heights it did, but being fallen into poverty there they lie:

neither shall he prolong the perfection of it upon the earth; though, indeed, there is no perfection in the creature, nor in creature enjoyments, nor in outward riches and substance; such as have had the largest share of them, as David and Solomon, have declared they have seen an end of all perfection, and that all things, the highest enjoyments, are vanity and vexation of spirit; yet when men are got to the summit, and height, and perfection of outward happiness, as they or others may think, this is not prolonged, or continued long in the earth, or they continued in it; but often are suddenly cast down from the pinnacle of honour, wealth, and riches; hence some render the words, "and their prosperity shall not be fixed into the earth" {d}; shall not take root, though it may seem to do, Jer 12:2; and so shall not spread itself as a tree well rooted does; and as does the spiritual prosperity, perfection, and fullness of good men, which they have in and by Christ; being rooted in the love of God, in the grace of Christ, and having the root of the matter in them, they cast forth their roots as Lebanon, and their branches spread, and they are full of the fruits and blessings of grace, Ho 14:5.

{b} wlyx "ejus robur", Mercerus; "potentia ejus", Drusius. {c} Mwqy al "neque resurgent opes ejus", Schmidt. {d} Mlnm Ural hjy alw "nec mittet in terra radicem suam", V. L. "et non pangetur in terram prosperitas eorum", Schultens.

Job 15:30

Ver. 30. He shall not depart out of darkness,.... Out of the darkness of poverty, calamity, and distress he comes into, and, indeed, he despairs of it himself, as in Job 15:22; and in a spiritual sense he departs not out of the darkness of sin, out of the dark state of unregeneracy; nor will he depart out of the blackness and darkness reserved for him hereafter, when he is once come into it:

the flame shall dry up his branches; alluding either to a violent drought and heat, which dries up pastures, herbs, and trees, and the branches of them; or to a wind, as the Septuagint, a burning wind, in the eastern countries, which consumed all green things; or to a flash of lightning, which shatters, strips, and destroys branches of trees: here it may signify the wrath of God, like a flame of fire consuming the wealth and substance, and families, of wicked men; whose children particularly may be compared to branches, and so respect may be had to Job's children, who were suddenly destroyed by a violent wind, which threw down the house in which they were:

and by the breath of his mouth shall he go away; out of the world, a phrase expressive of death; either because of the breath of his own mouth, as some in Jarchi, because of his blasphemies against God and his people, because of his cursing and swearing his mouth is full of, and the many vain, foolish, and idle words which come out of it, and for which he will be condemned; or rather

"by the breath of the mouth of God,"

as the Targum; either according to his purpose and decree, and by his order, and the word that goes out of his mouth; the wicked man shall be obliged to depart out of the world at once, being struck dead by him, as Ananias and Sapphira were; or by his powerful wrath and vengeance, whose breath is as a stream of brimstone, and with which he will slay the wicked of the earth, and particularly will consume the wicked one, antichrist, even with the spirit of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming, Isa 11:4.

Job 15:31

Ver. 31. Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity,.... Every wicked man is deceived, either by Satan, who deceives the whole world, deceived our first parents, and deceives all their posterity, not only profane sinners, but many professors of religion also; or by their own hearts, which are deceitful and desperately wicked; or through the deceitfulness of sin, which promises profit, pleasure, and liberty, and issues in ruin, pain, and bondage; and through the deceitfulness of riches, which promise that satisfaction they do not give: and such as are deceived in this manner are prone to trust in vanity; in men, who in every state, high or low, are altogether vanity; and in creature enjoyments, in outward riches and wealth, which are all vanity and vexation of spirit; and in their own hearts, and the vanity of their minds, which to do is extreme folly; and in their righteousness and external privileges, which will be of no service to them, as to their acceptance with God, and eternal happiness; and therefore trust in whatsoever is vain and empty, and affords no solid satisfaction, real pleasure, and advantage, is here dehorted from; unless the words will be allowed to be justly rendered, as I think they may, "trust not in him that is deceived by vanity" {e}; by any of the above vain things, since he must himself be a vain man, and therefore not to be confided in; to which sense the Targum inclines;

"he will not (or should not) believe in a son of man (or in a man), who errs through falsehood;"

the reason dissuading from it follows:

for vanity shall be his recompence; all that a man gets by trusting in vanity, or by trusting in a man deceived, is nothing but emptiness and vanity; he gets nothing solid and substantial, that will be of any advantage to him here or hereafter; and yet this he will not easily believe; and so Beza reads the words, "he that is deceived by vanity will not believe that vanity shall be his recompence".

{e} hetn awvb "per vanitatem deceptus", Beza; so Tigurine version.

Job 15:32

Ver. 32. It shall be accomplished before his time, Either the recompence or reward of his trusting vanity, in vain persons or things, the punishment of such a trust, the sorrows and troubles following upon it; these shall come upon the wicked man "before his day" {f}, as it may be rendered; before the day of his death, even before his old age; before the evil days come in a course of nature, and those years in which he has no pleasure: or his life, and the days of his life, "shall be filled up" {g}; or be at an end before his time; not before the time fixed in the decree and purpose of God, Job 14:5; but before his own time, that he and his friends thought he might have lived, and as his healthful constitution promised; or before the then common term of human life; and so the phrase is expressive or an immature death:

and his branch shall not be green; but dried up and wither away; his wealth and riches, his children and family, be utterly extinct; instead of being like a branch, green and flourishing, shall be like a dry stick, useless and unprofitable, only fit for burning; see Job 15:30.

{f} wmwy alb "ante diem suam", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {g} almt "complebitur", Montanus; "implebitur", Schultens.

Job 15:33

Ver. 33. He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine,.... Either the wicked man himself shall shake off or lose his substance; or God shall shake off from him all that was dear and valuable to him; or he shall be shaken by one providence or another, just as a vine is shaken by a violent wind and tempest, and its unripe grapes are battered off by an hailstorm, or plucked off by the hand, or drop off through rottenness; so it is signified by this metaphor, that a wicked man should be stripped of his wealth and riches in a sudden manner; or his children should be snatched from him in their youth, before they were well grown up to maturity, and so like the unripe grape; perhaps respect is had to Job's case, both with regard to his substance and his family:

and shall cast off his flower, as the olive: which tree, when shaken in a violent manner, drops its flower, and so brings forth no fruit; it is observed by naturalists {h}, that these two trees, the vine and the olive, flourish much about the same time, and suffer much by storms and tempests, which destroy their fruits, and especially when rain falls in the time of their flowering; the some thing is intended in this clause as in the former.

{h} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 25. l. 17. c. 2. 24.

Job 15:34

Ver. 34. For the congregation of hypocrites [shall be] desolate,.... Hypocrites are such who seem to and would be thought to be, what they are not; they are outwardly righteous before men, but inwardly very wicked; have a form of godliness, but are destitute the power of it, **2Ti 3:5**; pretend to much religion, and to be worshippers of God, when it is only in outward appearances, and not in reality and sincerity: and such as these have been in the congregations of the righteous, in all ages; but here Eliphaz speaks of a congregation of them, a society, a family of them; and very probably has his eye upon Job's, and would represent hereby that he, the head of his family, and his children, when living, and his servants and associates, were all hypocrites, and now become desolate, reduced to want and poverty, and in distressed circumstances: or were "solitary" {i} and alone, as the word is rendered in **Job 3:7**; destitute of friends, and of the comforts of life; and perhaps reference may be had to the future state of such, when they shall aloud be bid to depart from God, have no society with angels and saints, but shall have their portion with those of the same character with them, hypocrites, in the highest degree of torment and misery, Mt 24:51;

and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery; either such tents, or houses, as were built with money taken as bribes; see **Hab 2:12**; or where such who received bribes dwelt; unjust judges, who took a gift that blinds the eyes, to pervert justice. Job is afterwards by Eliphaz represented as if he was an oppressor, a wicked magistrate, and guilty of such like crimes as here pointed at, Job 22:6; and the "fire" said to consume the dwelling places of such may be understood either of material fire, such as came down from heaven, and destroyed Job's sheep, **Job 1:16**; or figuratively, the wrath of God often compared to fire, which would appear in one way or another, to the utter ruin of such persons, their habitations, and those that dwelt in them.

{i} dwmlg "solitarium", Montanus; and to the same sense Vatablus, Beza, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Cocceius.

Job 15:35

Ver. 35. They conceive mischief,.... That is, such wicked persons as before described; they meditate sin in their minds, and contrive how to commit it, and form schemes within themselves to do mischief to others:

and bring forth vanity; or sin; for lust when it is conceived bringeth forth sin, and that is vanity, an empty thing, and neither yields profit nor pleasure in the issue, but that which is useless and unserviceable, yea, harmful and ruinous; for sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death, even death eternal, **Jas 1:14**;

and their belly prepareth deceit; their inward part frames and devises that which is designed to deceive others, and in the end proves deceitful to themselves: the allusion is to a pregnant woman, or rather to one who seems to be so, and whose conception proves abortive, and so deceives and disappoints herself and others; see **Ps 7:14**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 16

This chapter and the following contain Job's reply to the preceding discourse of Eliphaz, in which he complains of the conversation of his friends, as unprofitable, uncomfortable, vain, empty, and without any foundation, Job 16:1; and intimates that were they in his case and circumstances, tie should behave in another manner towards them, not mock at them, but comfort them, Job 16:4; though such was his unhappy case, that, whether he spoke or was silent, it was much the same; there was no alloy to his grief, Job 16:6; wherefore he turns himself to God, and speaks to him, and of what he had done to him, both to his family, and to himself; which things, as they proved the reality of his afflictions, were used by his friends as witnesses against him, Job 16:7; and then enters upon a detail of his troubles, both at the hands of God and man, in order to move the divine compassion, and the pity of his friends, Job 16:9; which occasioned him great sorrow and distress, Job 16:15; yet asserts his own innocence, and appeals to God for the truth of it, Job 16:17; and applies to him, and wishes his cause was pleaded with him, Job 16:20; and concludes with the sense he had of the shortness of his life, Job 16:22; which sentiment is enlarged upon in the following chapter.

Ver. 1. Then Job answered and said. As soon as Eliphaz had done speaking, Job stood up, and made the following reply.

Job 16:2

Ver. 2. I have heard many such things,.... As those Eliphaz has been discoursing of, concerning the punishment of wicked men; many instances of this kind had been reported to him from his preceptors, and from his parents, and which they had had from theirs, as well as Eliphaz had from his; and he had heard these things, or such like, told "many times" from one to another, as Ben Gersom interprets it; or "frequently", as the Vulgate Latin version, yea, he had heard them his friends say many things of this kind; so that there was nothing new delivered, nothing but what was "crambe millies cocta", the same thing over and over again; insomuch that it was not only needless and useless, but nauseous and disagreeable, and was far from carrying any conviction with it, or tracing weight and influence upon him; that he only gave it the hearing, and that was all, and scarce with any patience, it being altogether inapplicable to him: that wicked men were punished for their sins, he did not deny; and that good men were also afflicted, was a very plain case; and that neither good nor hatred, or an interest in the favour of God or not, were not known by these things; nor could any such conclusion be fairly drawn, that because Job was afflicted, that therefore he was a bad man:

miserable comforters [are] ye all; his friends came to comfort him, and no doubt were sincere in their intentions; they took methods, as they thought, proper to answer such an end; and were so sanguine as to think their consolations were the consolations of God, according to his will; and bore hard upon Job for seeming to slight them, Job 15:11; to which Job here may have respect; but they were so far from administering divine consolation, that they were none at all, and worse than none; instead of yielding comfort, what they said added to his trouble and affliction; they were, as it may be rendered, "comforters of trouble", or "troublesome comforters" {k}, which is what rhetoricians call an oxymoron; what they said, instead of relieving him, laid weights and heavy pressures upon him he could not bear; by suggesting his afflictions were for some enormous crime and secret sin that he lived in the commission of; and that he was no other than an hypocrite: and unless he repented and reformed, he could not expect it would be better with him; and this was the sentiment of them one and all: so to persons under a sense of sin, and distressed about the salvation of their souls, legal preachers are miserable comforters, who send them to a convicting, condemning, and cursing law, for relief; to their duties of obedience to it for peace, pardon, and acceptance with God; who decry the grace of God in man's salvation, and cry up the works of men; who lay aside the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, the consolation of Israel, and leave out the Spirit of God the Comforter in their discourses; and indeed all that can be said, or directed to, besides the consolation that springs from God by Christ, through the application of the Spirit, signifies nothing; for if any comfort could be had from any other, he would not be, as he is called, the God of all comfort; all the creatures and creature enjoyments, even the best are broken cisterns, and like the deceitful brooks Job compares his friends to, **Job 6:15**, that disappoint when any expectations of comfort are raised upon them.

{k} lme ymxnm "consolatores molestiae", Vatablus, Drusius, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis; "molesti", Beza, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Codurcus, Tigurine version; "molestissimi", Schultens.

Job 16:3

Ver. 3. Shall vain words have an end?.... Or "words of wind" {k}, vain empty words, great swelling words of vanity, mere bubbles that look big, and have nothing in them; here Job retorts what Eliphaz had insinuated concerning him and his words, Job 15:2; and he intimates such worthless discourses should have an end, and a speedy one, and not be carried on to any length, they not bearing it; and wishes they were at an end, that he might hear no more of them; and suggests that it was weak and foolish in them to continue them; that if they could speak to no better purpose, it would be best to be silent:

or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest? when men are engaged in a good cause, have truth on their side, and are furnished with arguments sufficient to defend it, this animates and emboldens them to stand up in the defence of it, and to answer their adversaries, and to reply when there is occasion; but Job could not imagine what should encourage and spirit up Eliphaz to answer again, when he had been sufficiently confuted; when his cause was bad, and he had no strong reasons to produce in the vindication of it; or "what has exasperated" or "provoked thee" {l} to make reply? here Job seems to have thought that he had said nothing that was irritating, though it is notorious he had, such were his grief and troubles; and so well assured he was of his being in the right, that the harsh and severe words and expressions he had used were not thought by him to have exceeded due bounds, such as Job 12:2.

{k} xwr yrbdl "verbis venti", Beza, Bolducius, Mercerus, Schmidt, Michaelis.
{l} Kuyrmy hm "quid exacerbat te", Junius & Tremellius; so Codureus, Schultens.

Job 16:4

Ver. 4. I also could speak as ye [do],.... As big words, with as high a tone, with as stiff a neck, and as haughtily and loftily; or "ought I to speak as you do" {m}? that I ought not, nor would you think I ought, if you were in my case; or, being so, "would I speak as you do" {n}? no, I would not, my conscience would not suffer me:

if your soul were in my soul's stead; in the same afflicted state and condition, in the same distressed case and circumstances; not that he wished it, as some render the words, for a good man will not wish hurt to another; only he supposes this, as it was a case supposable, and not impossible to be a fact, some time or another, in this state of uncertainty and change; however it is right to put ourselves in the case of others in our own imagination, that so it may be considered in the proper point of view, that we may better judge how we should choose to be treated ourselves in such circumstances, and so teach us to do that to others as we would have done to ourselves:

I could heap up words against you; talk as fast as you to me, and run you down with a great torrent of words; Job had a great fluency, he talked a great deal in his afflicted, state, too much as his friends thought, who represent him as dealing in a multitude of words, and as a very talkative man, **Job 8:2**; and what could he have done, had he his health, and in prosperous circumstances as formerly? he could have brought many charges and accusations against them, as they had against him; or "would I heap up words against you?" or "ought I?" &c. {o}; no, it would not be my duty, nor would I do it; humanity and good sense would never have allowed me to do it; but, on the contrary, I "would have joined [myself] with you", in a social, free, and familiar manner, in words {p}, in a friendly meeting with you, so the words may be read and paraphrased; I would have come and paid you a visit, and sat down by you, and entered into a kind and compassionate conversation with you about your case and condition, and done all I could to comfort you; I would have framed and composed (as the word used signifies) a set discourse on purpose; I would have sought out all the acceptable words, and put them together in the best manner I could for you {q}; had I the tongue of the learned, I would have made use of it, to have spoken a word in season to you:

and shake mine head at you; by way of scorn and derision, that is, he could have done it as well as they; shaking the head is used as a sign of contempt, Ps 22:8; or "would I", or "ought I to shake my head at you" {r} if in my case? no, I would not; as I ought not, I would have scorned to have done it; or the sense may be, "I would have shook my head at you", in a way of pity, bemoaning lamenting, and, condoling your case {s}; see Job 42:11.

{m} hrbda Mkk "sicut vos loqui deberem?" Schmidt. {n} "Etiam ego ut vos loquerer?" Cocceius; so Broughton. {o} Mylmb Mkyle hrybxa "nectere deberem nexus contra vos verbis?" Schmidt. {p} "Adjungerem me super vos in sermonibus", Montanus, Bolducius; so Vatablus, Cocceius. {q} "Vobis enim aptum sermonem accommodarem", Tigarine version; so Codurcus. {r} yvar-heyna "et caput meum quassarem super vobis", Cocceius; "movere deberem super vos caput meum?" Schmidt. {s} So Tigurine version and Bar Tzemach, kinhsav ra karh, Hom. Il. 17. v. 200.

Job 16:5

Ver. 5. [But] I would strengthen you with my mouth,.... Comfort them with the words of his mouth; so God strengthens his people with strength in their souls, when he answers them with good and comfortable words; an angel strengthened Christ as man when in an agony, comforting him, suggesting comfortable things to him; so one saint may strengthen and comfort another when in distress, whether of soul or body; see Ps 138:3; and thus Job had strengthened and comforted others, with his words in former times, as Eliphaz himself owns, **Job 4:3** and so he would again, were there a change in his circumstances, and objects presented:

and the moving of my lips should assuage [your grief]: words uttered by him, which are done by the moving of the lips, should be such as would have a tendency to allay grief, to stop, restrain, forbid, and lessen sorrow; at least that it might not break out in an extravagant way, and exceed bounds, and that his friends might not be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

Job 16:6

Ver. 6. Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged,.... Though he spoke to God in prayer, and entreated for some abatement of his sorrows, he got no relief; and though he spoke to himself in soliloquies, his sorrow was not repressed nor lessened; he could not administer comfort to himself in the present case, though he might to others in like circumstances, if his own were changed;

and [though] I forbear speaking, hold my peace, and say nothing,

what am I eased? or "what goes from me" {t}? not anything of my trouble or grief; sometimes a man speaking of his troubles to his friends gives vent to his grief, and he is somewhat eased; and on the other hand being silent about it, he forgets it, and it goes off; but in neither of those ways could Job be released: or it may be his sense is, that when he spake of his affliction, and attempted to vindicate his character, he was represented as an impatient and passionate man, if not as blasphemous, so that his grief was rather increased than assuaged; and if he was silent, that was interpreted a consciousness of his guilt; so that, let him take what course he would, it was much the same, he could get no ease nor comfort.

{t} Klxy ynm hm "quid a me abit", Junius & Tremellius, Schultens.

Job 16:7

Ver. 7. But now he hath made me weary,.... Or "it hath made me weary" {u}, that is, "my grief", as it may be supplied from Job 16:6; or rather God, as appears from the next clause, and from the following verse, where he is manifestly addressed; who by afflicting him had made him weary of the world, and all things in it, even of his very life, Job 10:1; his afflictions were so heavy upon him, and pressed him so hard, that his life was a burden to him; they were heavier than the sand of the sea, and his strength was not equal to them; he could scarcely drag along, was ready to sink and lie down under the weight of them:

thou hast made desolate all my company, or "congregation" {w}; the congregation of saints that met at his house for religious worship, as some think, which now through his affliction was broke up, whom Eliphaz had called a congregation of hypocrites, Job 15:34; which passage Job may have respect unto; or rather his family, his children, which were taken away from him: the Jews say {x}, ten persons in any place make a congregation; this was just the number of Job's children, seven sons and three daughters; or it may be he may have respect to his friends, that came to visit him, who were moved and stupefied as it were at the sight of him and his afflictions, as the word {y} is by some translated, and who were alienated from him; were not friendly to him, nor administered to him any comfort; so that they were as if he had none, or worse.

{u} "Dolor meus", V. L. so Aben Ezra & Cocceius. {w} ytde "meam congregationem", Pagninus; "conventum meum", Montanus, Bolducius. {x} Vid. Drusium in loc. {y} "Stupefe isti", Tigurine version; so Jarchi.

Job 16:8

Ver. 8. And thou hast filled me with wrinkles,.... Not through old age, but through affliction, which had sunk his flesh, and made furrows in him, so that he looked older than he was, and was made old thereby before his time; see **La 3:4**; for this is to be understood of his body, for as for his soul, that through the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ, was without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing:

[which] is a witness [against me]; as it was improved by his friends, who represented his afflictions as proofs and testimonies of his being a bad man; though these wrinkles were witnesses for him, as it may be as well supplied, that he really was an afflicted man:

and my leanness rising up in me; his bones standing up, and standing out, and having scarce anything on them but skin, the flesh being gone:

beareth witness to my face; openly, manifestly, to full conviction; not that he was a sinful man, but an afflicted man; Eliphaz had no reason to talk to Job of a wicked man's being covered with fatness, and of collops of fat on his flanks, Job 15:27;

Job 16:9

Ver. 9. He teareth [me] in his wrath, who hateth me,.... By whom is meant not Satan, as Jarchi, though he is an enemy to, and an hater of mankind, especially of good men; nor Eliphaz, as others, who had fallen upon Job with a great deal of wrath and fury, tearing his character in pieces, which Job attributed to his hatred of him; but it rather appears from the context that God himself is intended, of whom Job had now a mistaken notion and apprehension; taking him for his enemy, being treated by him, as he thought, as if he had an aversion to him, and an hatred of him; whereas God hates none of his creatures, being his offspring, and the objects of his tender care, and providential regard: indeed sin is hateful to him, and makes men odious in his sight, and he hates all the workers of iniquity, and those whom he passed by, when he chose others; though they are said to be hated by him as Esau was, yet not with a positive but a negative hatred; that is, are not loved by him; and considered as profane and ungodly persons, and as such foreordained to condemnation; for sin may be said to be hated, but good men never are; God's chosen ones, his children and special people, are the objects of his everlasting love; and though he may be angry with them, and show a little seeming wrath towards them, yet never hates them; hatred and love are as opposite as any two things can possibly be; and indeed, strictly and properly speaking, there is no wrath nor fury in God towards his people; though they deserve it, they are not appointed to it, but are delivered from it by Christ; and neither that nor any of the effects of it shall ever light on them; but Job concluded this from the providence he was under, in which God appeared terrible to him, like a lion or any such fierce and furious creature, to which he is sometimes compared, and compares himself, which seizes on its prey, and tears and rends it to pieces; Isa 38:13; thus God permitted Job's substance to be taken from him by the Chaldeans and Sabeans; his children by death, which was like tearing off his limbs; and his skin and his flesh to be rent and broken by boils and ulcers: Job was a type of Christ in his sorrows and sufferings; and though he was not now in the best frame of mind, the flesh prevailed, and corruptions worked, and he expressed himself in an unguarded manner, yet perhaps we shall not find, in any part of this book, things expressed, and the language in which they are expressed, more similar and to be accommodated to the case, and sorrows, and sufferings of Christ, than in this context; for though he was the son of God's love, his dear and well beloved son, yet as he was the surety of his people, and bore and suffered punishment in their stead, justice behaved towards him as though there was a resentment unto him, and an aversion of him; yea, he says, "thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine Anointed" or "Messiah", Ps 89:38; and indeed he did bear the wrath of God, the vengeance of justice or curse of the righteous law; and was suffered to be torn in every sense, his temples with a crown of thorns, his cheeks by those that plucked off the hair, his hands and feet by the nails driven in them, and his side by the spear; and his life was torn, snatched, and taken away from him in a violent manner:

he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; as men do when they are full of wrath and fury: this is one way of showing it, as the enemies of David, a type of Christ, and the slayers of Stephen, his protomartyr, did,
Ps 35:16; and as beasts of prey, such as the lion, wolf, do:

mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me; the Targum adds, as a razor. Here again Job considers God as his enemy, though he was not, misinterpreting his dealings with him; he represents him as looking out sharp after him, inspecting narrowly into all his ways, and works, and actions, strictly observing his failings and infirmities, calling him to an account, and afflicting him for them, and dealing rigidly and severely with him for any small offence: his eyes seemed to him to be like flames of fire, to sparkle with wrath and revenge; his thee, as he imagined, was set against him, and his eyes upon him to destroy him; and thus the eye of vindictive justice was upon Christ his antitype, when he was made sin and a curse for his people, and the sword of justice was awaked against him, and thrust in him.

Job 16:10

Ver. 10. They have gaped upon me with their mouth,.... Here Job speaks of the instruments which God suffered to use him ill; and he has respect to his friends who came with open mouth against him, loading him with calumnies and reproaches, laying charges to him he was not conscious of, and treating him with scorn and contempt, which such a gesture is sometimes a token of, **La 3:46**; and in which manner also Christ was used by men, on whom the reproach of them that reproached God and his people fell, and who exhibited false charges against him of various sorts; and he was the reproach of men and the contempt of the people, who laughed him to scorn, opened their mouths in derision; they shot out the lip and shook the head, and mocked and scoffed at him; yea, "they gaped upon him with their mouth as a ravening and a roaring lion", Ps 22:6; to which the allusion is here, when they cried out themselves and called upon others to join them, saying, "Crucify him, crucify him", Lu 23:21:

they have smitten me on the cheek reproachfully; to be smitten on the cheek is a reproach itself, and is a suffering not very patiently endured. Hence Christ, to teach his followers patience, advised when they were smitten on the one cheek to turn the other, that is, to take the blow patiently; and it is not the smart of the stroke that is so much regarded as the shame of it, the affront given, and the indignity offered; see 2Co 11:20; so that the phrase may be taken for reproaching him; and indeed it may be rendered, "they have smitten on the cheek with reproach" {a}; they reproached him, which was the same as if they had smitten him on the cheek; they smote him with their tongues, as Jeremiah's enemies smote him, Jer 18:18; they threw the dirt of scandal and calumny at him, and which is the common lot of God's people; and though since they are reproached for Christ's sake, for the Gospel's sake, and for righteousness sake, they should not be disturbed at that; but rather reckon themselves happy, as they are said to be, and bind these reproaches about their necks as chains of gold, and esteem them greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. This was literally true of Job's antitype, the Messiah, for as it was foretold of him that he should give his cheek to those that plucked off the hair, and they should smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon his cheek, Isa 50:6: so this was done unto him by the servants of the high priest in his hall, and by others, Mt 26:67;

they have gathered themselves together against me; Job's friends got together in order to visit him and comfort him, but it proved otherwise, and he viewed it in no other light than as a combination against him: the words may be rendered, "they filled themselves against me" {b}; their hearts with wrath and anger, as the Targum; their mouths with reproaches and calumnies, and their eyes with pleasure and delight, and satisfaction at his miseries and afflictions; and so the Vulgate Latin version,

"they are satiated with my punishments;"

though rather this may respect the high spirits they were in, the boldness and even impudence, as Job interpreted it, they showed in their conduct towards him, their hearts being swelled with pride and haughtiness and passion {c}; see **Es 7:5**; or else their numbers that came against him; so Mr. Broughton renders the words, "they came by full troops upon me"; Job's three friends, being great personages, very probably brought a large retinue and train of servants with them; who, observing their master's conduct, behaved in an indecent manner towards him themselves, to whom he may have respect, Job 30:1; this was verified in Christ his antitype, whom Judas, with a multitude of men, with swords and staves, even with a band of soldiers, came to apprehend in the garden; and when Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and people of Israel, were gathered against him to do what God had determined should be done, Mt 26:46.

{a} hprxb "cum opprobrio", Beza, Vatablus, Drusius; so Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens; "with reproaches", Broughton. {b} Nwalmty "impleverunt sese", De Dieu. {c} Vid. De Dieu in loc.

Job 16:11

Ver. 11. God hath delivered me up to the ungodly,.... The evil or wicked one, for it is in the singular number; and designs either Satan, into whose hands God had not only delivered his substance, but his person, excepting his life; though it may be, and which is an objection to this sense, Job as yet knew it not; or else Eliphaz, or, the singular number being put for the plural, as the next clause explains it, all his friends, whom he in turn calls evil and wicked

men, because of their treatment of him; or else the Sabeans and Chaldeans are intended, who were suffered to plunder him of his substance; the words are very applicable to Christ, who was delivered to the Gentiles, and into the hands of sinners and wicked men, and that by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, who with wicked hands took him, and crucified him, Mt 20:19; or God "shut [him] up", or "delivered [him] bound" {d}, as the word signifies; which was literally true of Christ, who was bound by the Jews, and delivered first to the high priest, and then to the Roman governor, in such circumstances,
Joh 18:12;

and turned me over into the hands of the wicked; signifying the same as before, unless it should be rendered, "and caused me to decline", or "come down by the hands of the wicked" {e} that is, from his former state of prosperity and happiness, into the low circumstances in which he was, and which he was brought into by the means of wicked men, God suffering it so to be.

{d} ynrygoy "vinctum me tradidit", Grotius, Michaelis, Schultens. {e} ynjry "divertere fecit a vita", Pagninus; "declinare me facit", Beza, Drusius, Mercerus.

Job 16:12

Ver. 12. I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder,.... He was in easy and affluent circumstances, abounding with the good things of this life, lay in his nest, as his expression is, Job 29:18; quietly and peaceably, where he expected he should have died; and he was easy in his mind, had peace of conscience, being a good man that feared God, and trusted in his living Redeemer, enjoying the presence of God, the light of his countenance, and the discoveries of his love, see
Job 39:2; but now he was broken to pieces, he was stripped of his worldly substance; his family was broken up, and not a child left him; his body broken, and full of ruptures through boils and ulcers; and his spirits were broken with his afflictions, and a sense of divine displeasure; the arrows of God's wrath, in his apprehension, stuck in him, and the poison thereof drank up his spirits. Mr. Broughton renders it, "I was wealthy, [and] he hath undone me"; though once so opulent, he was now broken, and become a bankrupt. It may be applied to Christ, his antitype, who, though rich, became poor to make his people rich, **2Co 8:9**; and whose body was broken for them; and he was wounded and

bruised for their transgressions, and whose heart was broken with reproach:

he hath also taken me by the neck, and shaken me to pieces; as a combatant in wrestling, who is stronger than his antagonist, uses him; or as a giant, who takes a dwarf by his neck or collar, and shakes him, as if he would shake him to pieces, limb from limb; or "hath dashed" or "broken me to pieces" {f}; or to shivers; as glass or earthen vessels dashed against a wall, or struck with a hammer, fly into a thousand pieces, can never be put together again; so Job reckoned of his state and condition as irrecoverable, that his health, his substance, his family, could never be restored as they had been:

and set me up for his mark; to shoot at, of which he complains **Job 7:20**; a like expression is used by the church in **La 3:12**; and a phrase similar to this is used of Christ, **Lu 2:34**; and in consequence of this are what follow.

{f} ynupupy "confregit me", V. L. Pagninus; "minutatim confregit me", Tigurine version; so Schultens, Jarchi, & Ben Gersom.

Job 16:13

Ver. 13. His archers compass me round about,.... Satan and his principalities and powers casting their fiery darts at him; or rather, his friends shooting their arrows, even bitter words, reproaches, and calumnies; or the various diseases of his body, his boils and ulcers, which were so many arrows shot into him, in every part of him all around, and gave him exquisite pain and anguish; besides the arrows of the Almighty, or that painful sensation he had of the wrath of God. This also is true of Christ, the antitype of Job and of Joseph; of the latter of which it is said, "the archers sorely grieved him, and shot at him, but his bow abode in strength", Ge 49:23; so Satan and his ministers threw their fiery darts at Christ when on the cross, and the scribes and priests, his emissaries, surrounded him there, and shot out their reproachful and blasphemous words at him, and the justice of God smote him, and the law of God cast its curses on him. Gussetius renders the words, "his great ones" {g}; and such Job's friends were, men of great substance, and lived in great credit and honour; some have supposed them to be kings, and such were those that opposed Christ, and distressed him, the rulers of the people, civil and ecclesiastic:

he cleaveth my reins asunder; by causing his arrows to enter into them, **La 3:13**; the consequence of which must be death; a man cannot live, at least long, after this is his case; though some think this is to be understood of the disorder of the stone in his reins or kidneys, which was very distressing to him:

and doth not spare; shows no mercy or pity, though in such sad circumstances and dreadful agonies; thus God spared not his own son, **Ro 8:32**;

he poureth out my gall upon the ground; which is done by piercing the gall bladder with the sword, or any such instrument, see Job 20:25; which must issue in death; and the design of both these clauses is to show, that Job looked upon his case irretrievable, and he here makes use of hyperbolical expressions to set it forth by.

{g} "Ejus magnates", Comment. Ebr. p. 773. wybr "ejus magni", Montanus.

Job 16:14

Ver. 14. He breaketh me with breach upon breach,.... Upon his substance, his family, and the health of his body, which came thick and fast, one after another; referring to the report of those things brought by one messenger upon the back of another, see **Eze 7:26**;

he runneth upon me like a giant; with great fury and fierceness, with great strength and courage, with great speed and swiftness, causing great terror and distress; he not being able to resist him, any more than a dwarf a giant, and no more, nor so much, a match for him; see Isa 42:13.

Job 16:15

Ver. 15. I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin,.... Which he very probably put on when he rent his mantle, or sat in ashes, **Job 1:20**; which actions were usually performed together in times of distress and sorrow, see Ge 37:34; and this was no doubt a voluntary action of his, like that of the king of Nineveh and his subjects **Jon 3:5**; though some have thought that Job was so reduced that he had no clothes to wear, and was obliged to put on such coarse raiment, which is not probable; and it seems that he put this next to his skin, which must be very uneasy to one that had been used to such soft apparel, as it seems did also the kings of Israel in time of mourning, 1Ki 21:27; it is not only observed by several Jewish writers, that the word here used in the Arabic language signifies "skin", as we render it, as Aben Ezra, Ben Melech, and others; but the skin of the wound, the thin skin which is drawn over a wound when it is healing, as Ben Gersom and Bar Tzemach; which, being tender, must be very unfit to bear such rough raiment upon it; nay, Schultens observes, that the Arabic word more properly signifies "torn skin" {h}, as Job's skin must be full of ruptures through the boils and ulcers upon him; he himself says, that his "skin [was] broken, and become loathsome", **Job 7:5**; now to have sackcloth put on such a skin must be intolerable; the phrase of sewing it to it is very unusual; though it may signify no more than an application of it, a putting it on him, and clothing himself with it; yet it seems to denote its sticking close to him, as if it was sewed to his skin, through the purulent matter of his boils clotting and cleaving to it; for he says in **Job 7:5** that his "flesh [was] clothed with worms and clods of dust"; and those running into one another were like one scab, and, as it were, a garment to him; his "disease bound [him] about as the collar of his coat", and his "skin [was as] black" as sackcloth itself, Job 30:18; the design of the expression is both to show the wretched and miserable condition he was in, and his great humiliation on account of his present circumstances; and that he was not that proud and haughty man, or behaved under his affliction in the insolent manner Eliphaz had suggested, Job 15:12; but was one that humbled himself under the mighty hand of God, which is further confirmed by the next clause:

and defiled my horn, in the dust: as he did when he sat in ashes, as he afterwards repented in dust and ashes; and it was usual in the times of mourning to put dust or ashes upon the head; which may be meant by his horn, the horn of a beast, to which the allusion is, being in the head; and this may be put for the whole body, which sometimes, on such occasions, was rolled in dust and ashes, see **Jos 7:6**; and the horn being an emblem of grandeur, power, and authority, may denote that Job now laid aside all the ensigns of it, and was content to have his honour laid in the dust, and lie low before God, and not lift up his horn unto him, and much less stretch out his hand against him; the Targum is,

"I sprinkled my glory in or with dust."

{h} ydlg yle "super laceram cutem", Schultens; "cutis eaque laesa et ulceribus percussa", Stockius, p. 188. dlg "cutim percusiit", Hottinger. Smegma Orient. p. 135. Stockius, ib.

Job 16:16

Ver. 16. My face is foul with weeping,.... On account of the loss of his substance, and especially of his children; at the unkindness of his friends, and over his own corruptions, which he felt working in him, and breaking forth in unbecoming language; and because of the hidings of the face of God from him: the word used in the Arabic language {i} has the, signification of redness in it, as Aben Ezra and others observe; of red wine, and, as Schultens adds, of the fermentation of it; and is fitly used to express a man's face in excessive weeping, which looks red, and swelled, and blubbered:

and on my eyelids [is] the shadow of death; which were become dim through weeping, so that he could scarcely see out of them, and, like a dying man, could hardly lift them up; and such was his sorrowful condition, that he never expected deliverance from it, but that it would issue in death; and which he supposed was very near, and that he had many symptoms of it, of which the decay of his eyesight was one; and he was so far from winking with his eyes in a wanton and ludicrous way, as Eliphaz had hinted, Job 15:12; that there was such a dead weight upon them, even the shadow of death itself, that he was not able to lift them up.

{i} hrmrmx "intumuit", V. L. Tigurine version; "fermentescit", Schultens.

Job 16:17

Ver. 17. Not for [any] injustice in my hands,.... Came all those afflictions and calamities upon him, which occasioned so much sorrow, weeping, mourning, and humiliation; he does not say there was no sin in him, not any in his heart, nor in his life, nor any iniquity done by him, he had acknowledged these things before, **Job 7:20**; but that there was nothing in his hands gotten in an unjust manner; he had taken away no man's property, nor injured him in the least in a private way; nor had he perverted justice as a public magistrate, by taking bribes or accepting persons, and could challenge any to prove he had, as Samuel did, 1Sa 12:3;

also my prayer [is] pure: he prayed, which disproves the calumny of Eliphaz, Job 15:4; and his prayer was pure too; not that it was free from failings and infirmities, which attend the best, but from hypocrisy and deceit; it came not out of feigned lips, but was put up in sincerity and truth; it sprang from an heart purified by the grace of God, and sprinkled from an evil conscience; it was put up in the faith of Christ, and as a pure offering through him; Job lifted up pure and holy hands, and with these a pure and holy heart, and for pure and holy things; so that it was not for want of doing justice to men, nor for want of devotion towards God, that be was thus afflicted by him; compare with this what is said of his antitype, Isa 53:9.

Job 16:18

Ver. 18. O earth, cover not thou my blood,.... This is an imprecation, wishing that if; he had been guilty of any capital crime, of such acts of injustice that he ought to be punished by the judge, and even to die for them, that his blood when spilt might not be received into the earth, but be licked up by dogs, or that he might have no burial or interment in the earth; and if he had committed such sins as might come under the name of blood, either the shedding of innocent blood, though that is so gross a crime that it can hardly be thought that Job's friends even suspected this of him; or rather other foul sins, as injustice and oppression of the poor; the Tigurine version is, "my capital sins", see **Isa 1:15**; then he wishes they might never be covered and concealed, but disclosed and spread abroad everywhere, that all might know them, and he suffer shame for them; even as the earth discloses the blood of the slain, when inquisition is made for it,
Isa 26:21;

and let my cry have no place; meaning if he was the wicked man and the hypocrite he was said to be, or if his prayer was not pure, sincere, and upright, as he said it was, then he desired that when he cried to God, or to man, in his distress, he might be regarded by neither; that his cry might not enter into the ears of the Lord of hosts, but that it might be shut out, and he cover himself with a cloud, that it might not pass through, and have any place with him; land that he might not meet with any pity and compassion from the heart, nor help and relief from the hand of any man.

Job 16:19

Ver. 19. Also now, behold, my witness [is] in heaven,.... That is, God, who dwells in the heavens, where his throne is, and which is the habitation of his holiness, and from whence he beholds all the sons of men, and their actions, is the all seeing and all knowing Being; and therefore Job appeals to him as his witness, if he was guilty of the things laid to his charge, to bear witness against him, but if not to be a witness for him, which he believed he would, and desired he might:

for my record [is] on high; or "my testimony"; that can testify for me; who is an "eyewitness" {k}, as some render it, before whom all things are naked and open; who has seen all my actions, even the very inmost recesses of my mind, all the thoughts of my heart, and all the principles of my actions, and him I desire to bear record of me; such appeals are lawful in some cases, which ought not to be common and trivial ones, but of moment and importance, and which cannot well be determined in any other way; such as was the charge of hypocrisy against Job, and suspicions of his having been guilty of some notorious crime, though it could not be pointed at and proved; see 1Sa 12:3 **2Co 1:13**.

{k} ydhv "oculatus meus testis", Schultens.

Job 16:20

Ver. 20. My friends scorn me,.... Not that they scoffed at his afflictions and calamities, and at his diseases and disorders, that would have been very brutish and inhuman, but at his words, the arguments and reasons he made use of to defend himself with, see
Job 12:4;

[but] mine eye poureth out [tears] unto God; in great plenty, because of his very great sorrows and distresses, both inward and outward; and it was his mercy, that when his friends slighted and neglected him, yea, bore hard upon him, and mocked at him, that he had a God to go to, and pour out not only his tears, but all his complaints, and even his very soul unto him, from whom he might hope for relief; and what he said, when he did this, is as follows.

Job 16:21

Ver. 21. Oh that one might plead for a man with God,.... That is, that one might be appointed and allowed to plead with God on his account; or that he be admitted to plead with God for himself; or however, that there might be a hearing of his case before God, and that he would decide the thing in controversy between him and his friends, when he doubted not but it would be given on his side:

as a man [pleadeth] for his neighbour; using great freedom, and powerful arguments, and having no dread of the judge, nor fear of carrying the cause for his neighbour; so Job wishes, that either one for him, or he himself, might be freed from the dread of the divine Majesty, and might be suffered to speak as freely to his case as a counsellor at the bar does for his client. The words will admit of a more evangelic sense by observing that God, to whom Job says his eye poured out tears, at the close of Job 16:20, is to be understood of the second Person in the Godhead, Jehovah, the Son of God, the Messiah; and then read these words that follow thus, "and he will plead for a man with God, and the Son of man for his friend"; which last clause perhaps may be better rendered, "even the Son of man", &c. and so they are expressive of Job's faith, that though his friends despised him, yet he to whom he poured out his tears, and committed his case, would plead his cause with God for him, and thoroughly plead it, when he should be acquitted. The appellation, "the Son of man", is a well known name for the Messiah in the New Testament, and is not altogether unknown in the Old, see Ps 80:17; and one part of his work and office is to be an advocate with the Father for his friends, whom he makes, reckons, and uses as such, even all the Father has given him, and he has redeemed by his blood; for these he pleads his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, to the satisfaction of the law, and justice of God, and against Satan, and all enemies whatever, and for every blessing they want; and for which work he is abundantly fit, because of the dignity of his person, his nearness to God his Father, and the interest he has in him. Gussetius {l} goes this way, and observes that this sense has not been taken notice of by interpreters, which he seems to wonder at; whereas our English annotator on the place had it long ago, and Mr. Caryll after him, though disapproved of by some modern interpreters.

{l} Ebr. Comment. p. 320, 321.

Job 16:22

Ver. 22. When a few years are come,.... As the years of man's life are but few at most, and Job's years, which were yet to come, still fewer in his apprehension; or "years of number" {m}, that are numbered by God, fixed and determined by him, Job 14:5; or being few are easily numbered:

then I shall go the way [whence] I shall not return; that is, go the way of all flesh, a long journey; death itself is meant, which is a going out of this world into another, from whence there is no return to this again, to the same place, condition, circumstances, estate, and employment as now; otherwise there will be a resurrection from the dead, the bodies will rise out of the earth, and souls will be brought again to be united with them, but not to be in the same situation here as now: this Job observes either as a kind of solace to him under all his afflictions on himself, and from his friends, that in a little time it would be all over with him; or as an argument to hasten the pleading of his cause, that his innocence might be cleared before he died; and if this was not done quickly, it would be too late.

{m} rpom twnv "anni numeri", Montanus, Vatablus, Bolducius; "numbered days", Broughton; so Tigurine version.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 17:1

INTRODUCTION JOB 17

In this chapter Job not only enlarges upon the reason given in the preceding chapter, why he was desirous of an advocate with God, and one to plead his cause with him for him, Job 17:1; but adds other reasons taken from the usage of his friends, from the impossibility of any but a divine Person being his surety; and of anyone being provided and appointed as such but by God himself; from the insufficiency of his friends to judge of his cause, and from the condition and circumstances he was in, Job 17:2; then he takes notice of the effects his present case would have on good men, that though they might be astonished at it, they would be filled with indignation against hypocrites, and would not be moved and stumbled by his afflictions to apostatize from and desert the good ways of God, Job 17:8; after which he addresses his friends, and either calls upon them to renew the dispute with him, or repent of their notions, and join with him in his sentiments, Job 17:10; and lastly describes his state and circumstances, according to his apprehension of things, observing the shortness of his life, and the darkness of the dispensation he was under, through one thing and another, Job 17:11; that he had nothing but the grave in view, which, and its attendants, he had made very familiar with him, Job 17:13; and that he had no hope of restoration to a better condition, as to his outward circumstances, and that he, and his hopes his friends would have him entertain, and they also, would go down together to the grave, and there should lie in the dust, and rest together till the morning of the resurrection, Job 17:15.

Ver. 1. My breath is corrupt,.... Through the force of his disease, which made it have an ill smell, so that it was strange and disagreeable to his wife, Job 19:17; passing through his lungs, or other parts, which were affected with some disorder, or as frequently is the case of dying persons, and so Job thought himself to be. The word {n} used has the signification of pain, even of the pains of a woman in travail; and so may signify, that Job drew his breath with great pain, as people troubled with an asthma do, or dying persons in the hiccups, or just fetching their last breath; or "my spirit" {o}, as it may be rendered, that is, his vital spirits which were exhausted and spent, there were scarce any left in him; or "my mind" {p}, or soul, which was overwhelmed with grief, and so disturbed, that he was not himself, but in a manner distracted with the terrors of God, and the severity of his hand upon him:

my days are extinct; here Job corrects himself; he had spoken of a few years before, but it is as if he should say now, why do I talk of a few years, when I have but a few days to live, and even those are as good as gone? meaning not only his days of prosperity, which were at an entire end, as he thought, but the days of his natural life; the lamp of life was almost burnt out, the oil was spent, the wick was just extinguished, it was like the snuff of a candle going out:

the graves [are ready] for me; the place of his fathers' sepulchres, the burial place of his ancestors, where many graves were; or he may have respect to various things into which the dead are put, as into so many graves; as besides their being rolled up in linen, as was the way of the eastern countries, there was the coffin, a sort of a grave, and which sometimes was made of stone; and then the place dug in the earth, more properly called the grave, and often over that a sepulchral monument was erected; so that there was grave upon grave. Job does not seem to have any respect to the usage of kings, and great personages, preparing stately monuments for themselves while living, such as the pyramids of Egypt, built by and for their kings, as is supposed; for the words "are ready" are not in the text, only supplied, though they are also by the Targum; they are very short and significant in the original text, "the graves for me", or they are mine; the grave is my property, my house, where I expect shortly to be, and there to abide and dwell until the resurrection, and which was desirable to him; "a grave to me"; that is all that I desire, or can expect; here he wished to be, as he did not doubt he quickly should be; and it is as if he should say, I am ready for that, and so Jarchi paraphrases it; and happy is the man that is ready for the grave, for death, and eternity, for the coming of his Lord, having the grace of God wrought in him, and the righteousness of his living Redeemer on him, which was Job's case; such an one shall go into the nuptial chamber at once, and be received into everlasting habitations.

{n} Pineda. {o} yxwr "spiritus meus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, &c. {p} "Anima mea", Piscator, Schmidt.

Job 17:2

Ver. 2. [Are there] not mockers with me?.... Meaning not irreligious persons, such as make a mock at sin, a jest of religion, a laugh at good men, sneer at the doctrines and ordinances of God, and scoff at things future, as the coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and a future judgment; with whom it is very uncomfortable to be, as well as with any sort of profane men, and such there were no doubt in Job's time; but he seems to design his friends, by whom be thought himself mocked, and who were, as he imagined, scorners of him, Job 12:4; and therefore for this reason entreats his case might be heard, and his cause pleaded:

and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation? or "lodge all night" {q}; his sense is, that they were continually provoking him with their words, their scoffs and jeers, their censures and calumnies, and the weak reasons and arguments they made use of to support their charges and suspicions; these dwelt upon his mind not only in the daytime but in the night, so that he could not get a wink of sleep for them; their words were so teasing and distressing, and they acted such a cruel part to him, and stuck so close to him, and hung upon his thoughts, that he could not get clear of them in the night season; but his mind ran upon them, which kept him waking, that he could not close his eyelids for thinking of them.

{q} Nlt "pernoctat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 17:3

Ver. 3. Lay down now,.... A pledge that thou wilt provide a surety, appoint and admit one to plead for me, and that thou wilt hear my cause, and determine it; or "put now", or "put, I pray thee" {r}, thy heart and mind to me and my case, to my petition and request, and grant it:

put me in a surety with thee; appoint, provide, and place a surety for me with thee, and let him appear to do his work and office: such an one Jesus Christ is; he is of God the Father's appointing to be the Mediator between God and men, and who himself voluntarily engaged and agreed to be the surety of the better testament; and this was known to the Old Testament saints, and to Job; and his prayer was the prayer of faith: and this work and office Christ performs; he was surety for his people from eternity, he drew nigh to God on their account, and struck hands with his Father, or covenanted and agreed with him about the salvation of his people, and the manner of it; he gave his word, his bond, to his Father for them, that he would save them; and upon that suretyship engagement of Christ all the Old Testament saints were pardoned, justified, and glorified; he promised and bound himself to pay all their debts, to satisfy for all their sins, to bring in an everlasting righteousness for them, and to bring them all safe to heaven and happiness; in order to which, he put himself in their room and stead, and laid down his life a ransom for them; upon which Job might say, and so may every believer, what follows,

who [is] he [that] will strike hands with me? that will enter the lists, litigate and dispute the point with me, or bring any charge or accusation against me, having such a surety to answer for me, such an advocate to plead my cause, such a Mediator between God and man, who has made reconciliation for sin, brought in everlasting righteousness, and satisfied law and justice, see **Ro 8:33**; or else the sense is, "who [is] he", besides him that is a surety of God's appointing and providing, "can strike bands with me?" or be a surety for me? there is no other Mediator, Saviour, or Redeemer, besides him; if he had not undertaken the cause of his people, and the redemption of them, it must have ceased for ever, no other was equal to such a work; so that here is another reason used with the Lord to provide a surety, since no other could to any purpose.

{r} an hmyv "pone nunc", Montanus; "poae quaeso", Pagninus, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schmidt; "sub cor tunm", Vatablus.

Job 17:4

Ver. 4. For thou hast hid their heart from understanding,.... That is, the hearts of his friends, and therefore they were unfit to undertake his cause, or be sureties for him, or be judges in it. It is the same thing as to hide understanding from their hearts, which God sometimes does in a natural sense; when men like not the knowledge of him, as attainable by the light of nature, he gives them up to reprobate minds, minds void of knowledge and judgment in things natural; and sometimes, in a spiritual sense, he hides men's hearts from the knowledge of things divine and evangelical, and even this he does from the wise and prudent of this world; yea, sometimes he hides the knowledge of his providential dealings with men from his own people, as he did from Asaph, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and others; and, as it seems, from Job's friends, who therefore mistook his case, and were very unfit and insufficient to determine it:

therefore shalt thou not exalt [them]; to such honour and dignity, to be umpires, arbitrators, or judges in the case of Job; this God had reserved for another, Elihu, or rather himself, who decided the controversy between Job and his friends, and declared in his favour, and that they had not spoken the thing that was right of him, as his servant Job had done, Job 42:7;

Job 17:5

Ver. 5. He that speaketh flattery to [his] friends,.... As Job's friends did to him when they promised great outward prosperity, and a restoration to his former state, and to a greater affluence upon his repentance and reformation; or when they spoke deceitfully for God, pretending great regard to the honour of his justice and holiness, and therefore insisted on it that he must be a wicked man and an hypocrite, that was afflicted by him, as Job was:

even the eyes of his children shall fail; so hateful are some sins to God, and particularly deceitful tongues, and flattering lips, that he will punish them in their posterity; the eyes of their children shall fail for want of sustenance, and while they are looking in vain for salvation and deliverance out of trouble, see Ex 20:4.

Job 17:6

Ver. 6. He hath made me also a byword of the people,.... Either Eliphaz, or God; for whatsoever befell him, whether more immediately by the hand of God, or by any instrument, the ascribes it to him, as being suffered in Providence to befall him; as when he became a byword or proverb to the people in common, to whom an example might be set by one or more of Job's friends. The name of Job is to this day a byword or proverb among men, both for his poverty and his patience; if a man is described as very poor, he is said to be as poor as Job; or if very patient under his afflictions, he is said to be as patient as Job; but as neither of these are to the disgrace of Job, something else seems rather intended here, even something to his reproach; as when a man was represented as a very wicked man, or an hypocrite, it used to be said, such an one is as wicked a creature, and as arrant an hypocrite, as Job:

and aforetime I was as a tabret; the delight of the people, who, when he appeared in the public streets, came out and went before him, singing, and dancing, and beating on tabrets, and such like musical instruments, to express their joy upon the sight of him; but now it was otherwise with him, and he whom they could not sufficiently extol and commend, now knew not well what to say bad enough of him; such a change in the sentiments and conduct of men must needs be very chagrining: or "aforetime I was as a lord", as Ben Gersom, from the use of the word in **Da 3:2**; as he supposes; he was like a lord or nobleman, or as one in some high office, and now as the offscouring of all things; or it denotes what he was "before them", the people, in their sight at present, and should be: the word used is "Tophet", which Aben Ezra takes to be the name of a place, and as it seems of that place where children were offered to Moloch, and which place was in being, and such practices used by the Canaanites in the times of Job; and this place, which was also called the valley of Hinnom, being afterwards used for hell, led the Targum to paraphrase the words thus, "and hell from within shall I be"; and so Sephorno, in appearance hell to all that see me; and in general it may signify that he was, or should be, avoided, as any unclean place, very ungrateful and disagreeable, as that place was; or as anything abominable, and to be loathed and rejected, and this way go several interpreters {s}; though some think respect is had to the punishment of tympanization, in which sufferers were beaten upon in several parts of their bodies, as if men were beating upon a tabret or drum, which gave great pain and torment, see Heb 11:35; and with such like cruelty and indignity Job suggests he was or should be used; and therefore begs for a surety, for one to interpose and plead on his behalf; let the carriage of men to him be what it will, that is here referred to; compare with this Ps 69:11.

{s} Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 17:7

Ver. 7. Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow,.... Through excessive weeping, and the abundance of tears he shed, so that he had almost lost his eyesight, or however it was greatly weakened and impaired by that means, which is often the case, see **Ps 6:7**;

and all my members [are] as a shadow; his flesh was consumed off his bones, there were nothing left scarcely but skin and bone; he was a mere anatomy, and as thin as a lath, as we commonly say of a man that is quite worn away, as it were; is a walking shadow, has scarce any substance in him, but is the mere shadow of a man; the Targum interprets it of his form, splendour, and countenance, which were like a shadow; some interpret it "my thoughts" {t}, and understand it of the formations of his mind, and not of his body, which were shadows, empty, fleeting, and having no consistence in them through that sorrow that possessed him.

{t} yruy "cogitationes meae", Pagninus, Bolducius, Codurcus, so Ben Gersom.

Job 17:8

Ver. 8. Upright men shall be astonished at this,.... Such as were upright in heart, and in their walk conversation, sincere and honourable in their profession of religion, these would be amazed at the afflictions of Job, and the unkindness of his friends; it is hereby suggested, that it would be then, and in ages to come, a matter of surprise to truly gracious persons, when they should hear of such sore afflictions laid upon so good a man, and he told what censures, calumnies, and reproaches, were cast upon him by his friends; this would be so astonishing, that they would not know how to believe it, and still more at a loss how to account for it, that such things should be permitted in Providence, there being reason to believe the truth of them:

and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite; that is, such, who though they are not free from sin, yet live holy and harmless lives and conversations among men, so that they are not chargeable with any gross iniquity, or what is scandalous and unbecoming their character; these shall rise up with indignation against such persons as pretend to a great deal of sanctify and devotion, and yet have no charity or love to an afflicted saint, but censure and reproach him, and add affliction to his affliction. Thus Job retorts the charge of hypocrisy his friends brought against him upon them; for he seems tacitly to design them, and delivers these words as a kind of solace to himself; that though he was thus used by them at that time, yet good men in future time would have different apprehensions of him, and rise up and vindicate his name and character.

Job 17:9

Ver. 9. The righteous also shall hold on his way,.... He that is righteous, not in appearance but really, not in a legal but in an evangelic sense; who is justified by the righteousness of Job's living Redeemer, who lives by faith on his righteousness, and in consequence of that in holiness of life and conversation; such an one being in Christ the way of righteousness and salvation, and walking in the paths of faith, holiness, and truth, and in all the tracks of religious worship, private and public, he will persevere therein, and will not on any account depart out of the right way into which he has been led and directed. This is opposed to a going back, as some do, and to a turning to the right hand or the left, as others, and to a standing still, being stumbled, offended, and discouraged; and it supposes a progress, a going forward in the way, so as not to be moved out of it by their own, or the afflictions of others, by the reproaches and persecutions of men, the temptations of Satan, the snares, riches, honours, and pleasures of the world, or through darkness, desertion, and unbelief; they may indeed have many slips and falls, and be almost, but not altogether, out of the way, and never finally or to perdition; which is owing not to their conduct and care, might and strength, but to the power of God, and the supplies of his grace, to Christ and his strength, and to the Spirit and his influence, guidance, and direction:

and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger; or "add strength" {u}; increase in it. This character is opposed to one of an immoral life and conversation, and describes one that is not guilty of any notorious crime, that does not live in any known sin, but in the general course of his life is upright and sincere, holy, harmless, and inoffensive; such a man as he is already a partaker of spiritual grace and strength, and so, as he wants more, it is given him; his spiritual strength is renewed, he goes from one degree of it to another, and even while walking in the way of God he finds an increase of it; yea, that itself is strength unto him; as his day is his strength is, to assist him in religious services, to enable him to resist his enemies, and endure afflictions, and continue in the good ways of God.

{u} Uma Pyoy "addet fortitudinem", Pagninus, Montanus.

Job 17:10

Ver. 10. But as for you all, do ye return, and come now,.... This is an address to his three friends, all and everyone of them, who he perceived were nettled with his reply, and were either departing, or preparing for a rejoinder; and being conscious of his innocence, and satisfied of the goodness of his cause, and having nothing to fear from them, boldly challenges them to go on with the dispute; for though they were three to one, he was a match for them all; or else he calls upon them to turn and repent of what they had said to him, to relinquish the bad notions and ill opinion they had of him, and to retract their hard speeches and unjust censures, and return to a friendly and amicable conversation; or however, that they would come and sit down quietly, and patiently hear what he had further to say to them for their information and instruction, which they stood in great need of:

for I cannot find [one] wise [man] among you; that took his case right, was capable of judging of it, and speaking pertinently to it, and of administering comfort to him in it; they were physicians, but not skilful ones; comforters, but miserable ones; had not the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season; disputants, but wranglers, and knew not where the pinch of the controversy lay; and their arguments were weak and worthless, and their judgment and sense of things not deserving any regard, see **1Co 6:5**.

Job 17:11

Ver. 11. My days are past,.... Or "passed away", or "passed over" {w}; not that they passed over the time fixed and appointed by God, for there is no passing the bound settled by him, Job 14:5; but either the common term of man's life was passed with Job, or he speaks of things in his own apprehension; he imagined his death was so near, that he had not a day longer to live; his days, as he before says, were extinct, were at an end, he should never enjoy another day; and therefore it was folly to flatter him with a promise of long life, or encourage him to expect it; which he may mention as a proof of there being not a wise man among them, since they all suggested this in case of repentance; or his meaning is, that his good days, or days of goodness, as Jarchi interprets it, were past; his days of prosperity were at an end, and evil days were come upon him, in which he had no pleasure; nor had he any reason to believe it would be otherwise with him:

my purposes are broken off; Job doubtless had formed in his mind great designs of good things, natural, civil; and religious, concerning the enlargement of his temporal estate, the settlement of his children in the world, making provision for the poor, supporting and enlarging the interest of true religion, the reformation of his Heathenish neighbours, and the spread of divine truths among them; but now they were all frustrated, he was not in a capacity of carrying them into execution, and was obliged to drop them, and think no more of them, nor was there with him any prospect of ever renewing them; they were "rooted up" {x}, or plucked up, as some render the word, so that there was no likelihood of their ever rising up again, and coming to any effect:

[even] the thoughts of my heart; or "the possessions" {y} of it, as the thoughts are; they are the things of a man, which especially belong to him; they are the inheritance of his mind, what none have a right unto, and a claim upon, but himself, nor can any know but himself, and to whom he discovers them: now the thread of these is broken off at death, they then cease; not that the mind or soul of man ceases to be, or ceases to be a thinking being, it still thinks; but only its thoughts are not employed about the same things in a future state, or in the state after death, as in this, see Ps 146:4.

{w} wrbe "transierunt", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {x} wqtn "evulsae sunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator; "radicitus evulsae sunt", Michaelis. {y} yvrwm "possessiones", Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt; "haereditariae possessiones", Schultens; so Drusius & Michaelis.

Job 17:12

Ver. 12. They change the night into day,.... Meaning either his friends, by what they had said unto him, or the thoughts of his heart, which comes to the same sense; these being in the night season employed about what had been said to him in the day, insomuch that he could get no sleep, the night was as broad day unto him; or they put the day before the night, contrary to the order of nature, as Noldius {z} observes, whereas the night is before the day, **Ge 1:5**; his friends promising him long days, and an age clearer than noon day, as bright as the morning, Job 11:17; when the night of death was coming on, and he was hastening to the dark and silent grave:

the light [is] short because of darkness; the morning light, or light of the day, when that comes continues but for a short time, because of the darkness of the evening, which quickly follows; or because of the darkness of fiction, which fills it up, and makes it uncomfortable; or the light of prosperity, could it be enjoyed, is but short, because of the darkness of adversity; or "the light is near" {a}, as in the original text; though Jarchi interprets the word "short" as we do; Noldius renders it, "the light is rather nearer than darkness" {b}; after the night has been spent without sleep, the morning light is nearer than darkness; that may soon be expected, and so an end to sleep and rest.

{z} Ebr. Part. Concord. No. 1931. {a} bwrq "propinquam", Pagninus, Montanus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c. {b} Ib. p. 642.

Job 17:13

Ver. 13. If I wait, the grave [is] mine house,.... Not that Job put an "if" upon, or made a doubt of waiting upon God in private or public; or of waiting for him, his gracious appearances to him, answers of prayer, performance of promises, and deliverance out of trouble; and especially of waiting his appointed time till his change came, and hoping and expecting eternal life and happiness; all which he determined to do, and did, see Job 13:15; but he says this with respect to the advice of his friends, which should it be taken, the issue of would be no other than what he here suggests; they had intimated, that if he repented and reformed, he might hope for and expect a peaceable tabernacle, and a prosperous habitation, a line house, and affluent circumstances, **Job 5:24**. Now, says he, should I listen to this, and endeavour to cherish some hope and expectation of small things, and put myself in a waiting posture for them, alas! how soon would it be over, for what other house can I rationally expect but the grave? and this is what I have upon; I think of no other house than that, which is man's long home, the house appointed for all living; there I shall dwell, and make my abode until the morning of the resurrection, and I look for no other; and if I should, I am well assured! should be disappointed:

I have made my bed in the darkness: in the dark grave, where the light of the body is extinct, and where the light of the sun comes not; in houses there are various apartments, some for work and business, as is the shop; others for eating and drinking, as the dining room; and others for sleep and rest, as the bedchamber; now in the house of the grave there is no mention of any but the latter; for there is no work and device in the grave, nor eating and drinking there; but it is a bed where the weary saint lies down and rests upon from all his toil and labour, until he awakes at the resurrection: now Job had settled the matter with himself, he had laid it out in his own mind, and taken a kind of pleasure in the prospect of it; that he had got a house to move into, when he was dislodged from the earthly house of his tabernacle, and where he had made himself, in his own thought, an easy bed, on which he should lay his weary limbs, and take his sleep and rest, until the heavens be no more.

Job 17:14

Ver. 14. I have said to corruption, thou [art] my father,.... Not to the corruptible seed, of which he was begotten; nor to the corruption or purulent matter of his boils and ulcers, and the worms his flesh was now clothed with, **Job 7:5**; but to that corruption his body would turn to in the grave, lying long enough to see it, which Christ's body did not, Ps 16:10; that is, "to the pit of corruption" {c}, as it may be rendered, meaning the grave, so called because in it dead bodies corrupt and putrefy: in houses are families consisting of various persons, of different relations, who dwell together in friendship and harmony, very lovingly and familiarly, as father and mother, brother and sister; so in the grave, the dwelling house of men, there are inhabitants that dwell together, as if they were familiar friends and acquaintance; and with these, Job claims kindred, such as corruption, rottenness, dust and worms, and these he speaks unto, not only very familiarly, but very respectfully; the note of Bar Tzemach is,

"I honour the grave as a son a father, that it may receive me quickly;"

yea, he speaks as not ashamed of the relation, but is fond of it; "I called" or "cried" {d} that is, aloud, with great vehemency and affection:

to the worm, [thou art] my mother and my sister; these are the rather mentioned, because the relation is near, and they are very loving and tender, and abide in the house, see **Pr 7:4**; he calls these his mother and sister, as the above Jewish commentator observes, because the might lie in their bosom; by all this Job would represent how familiar death and the grave were to him, and how little he dreaded them; yea, how desirable they were to him, since he should be at home, and among his relations and friends.

{c} txvl "foveam", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Drusius, &c. {d} ytarq "vocavi", Montanus; "clamavi", Mercerus.

Job 17:15

Ver. 15. And where [is] now my hope?.... Not the grace of hope, which was in his heart; and though it might sometimes be low in exercise, it could not be lost; it is an anchor, sure and steadfast, and is one of the graces that always abides, and never disappoints and makes ashamed; nor the object of hope, eternal glory and happiness in another world, that is laid up in heaven, and for which he was looking and waiting by faith; but his hope of outward happiness, and of being restored to his former state of prosperity, or a better, which his friends encouraged him to; this had no place in him, nor did he see any reason to cherish it; all ground and foundation of it was removed, as he apprehended; there was nothing on which he could build such an hope as that, see **Job 6:11**;

as for my hope, who shall see it? that is, which his friends would have him hope for, a line house, a large estate, a numerous family, honour and respect among men, long life, and an abundance of outward peace and happiness; this he was firmly persuaded he should never see, being just going into the grave, nor his friends that suggested these things to him, nor anybody else; though indeed what he himself truly hoped for might be rightly thus described, being things not seen by the eye of the body, nor by carnal sense and reason, but are the invisible glories and realities of another world, for "hope that is seen is not hope", &c. **Ro 8:24**; but Job does not design these, but the former.

Job 17:16

Ver. 16. They shall go down to the bars of the pit,.... He himself, and his friends, and the hopes they would have him entertain; these should all go down together to the grave, and there lie barred and locked up; these hopes, so as never to rise anymore, and the bodies of himself, and his friends, till loosed by him who has the keys of hell and death: or "the bars shall go down to the grave"; the members of his body, as Jarchi, which are the bars of it, as some in Bar Tzemach; the strength and support of it, as particularly the bones, these shall go down to the grave, and there turn to rottenness and dust; and therefore, as if he should say, as he elsewhere does, "what is my strength, that I should hope?" **Job 6:11**;

when [our] rest together [is] in the dust; which is man's original, and to which he returns, and in which the dead lie and sleep until the resurrection; and where they are at rest from all adversity and affliction of body, mind, and estate; from all the troubles and vexations occasioned by wicked men, and from all disputes, wranglings, contentions, and animosities among friends, which would be the case of Job, and his friends, when their heads were laid in the dust, and which he supposed would quickly be; and therefore it was in vain for them to feed him with hopes of outward happiness, and for him to entertain them; it best came them both to think of death and the grave as near at hand, where their controversies would be buried, and they would be good friends, and lie quietly together, and take their rest until they should awake and rise to everlasting life.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 18

In this chapter is Bildad's second reply to Job, in which he falls with great fury upon him, very sharply inveighs against him, and very highly charges him; the charges he brings against him are talkativeness and inattention to what was said to him, Job 18:1; contempt of his friends, impatience under his affliction, and pride and arrogance, as if the whole world, the course of nature and providence, and God himself all must give way to him, Job 18:3; nevertheless, he is assured of the miserable state of a wicked man, sooner or later, which is described by the extinction of his light of prosperity, Job 18:5; by the defeat of his counsels, being ensnared in a net laid for him, Job 18:7; by the terrible judgments of the sword, famine, and pestilence, by one or the other of which he is brought to death, the king of terrors, Job 18:11; by the destruction of his habitation and of his posterity, so that he has none to hear his name, or perpetuate his memory, Job 18:15; by his being driven out of the world, leaving no issue behind him, to the astonishment of all that knew him, Job 18:18; and the chapter is closed with this observation, that this is the common case of wicked and irreligious persons, Job 18:21.

Ver. 1. Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said. Who, next to Eliphaz, spoke before, and now in his turn attacks Job a second time, and more roughly and severely than before; now he gives him no advice or counsel, nor any instructions and exhortations for his good, nor suggests that it might be better times with him again, as he had done before; but only heaps up charges against him, and describes the miserable circumstances of a wicked man, as near to Job's as he could; thereby endeavouring to confirm his former position, that wicked men are punished of God, and to have this conclusion drawn from it, that Job must needs be a wicked man, since he was so greatly afflicted.

Job 18:2

Ver. 2. How long [will it be] ere ye make an end of words?.... Because these words are expressed the plural number, some think more persons than one are addressed, either Eliphaz and Job together, who are complained of as taking up all the time, and having all the talk to themselves, that another could scarce put in a word; Bildad could say this with a better grace, because his discourses were but short; or else all his friends, whom he blames for not stopping Job's mouth at once, and for lengthening out the dispute with him; as if he should say, why are you so complaisant to him, to wait till he has done speaking, before you reply? why do not you, without any ceremony, interrupt him, and not suffer him to go on with his prate, a man that is so insufferably rude as to reckon us all as beasts? and to what purpose is it to talk to such a man, that is so hardened and incorrigible, so proud and conceited? it is all labour in vain, and mere beating the air; it is high time to have done talking, and to put an end to the dispute, when things are such a pass with him as they are: or else the words are directed to Job, and his friends that were with him, who might now and then speak a word in his behalf, though their words are not recorded; or, however, by their looks or gestures might show their approbation of Job's defences: that there were others present besides Job and his three friends, it is probable; yea, it is certain that Elihu was present all the while, but he was not altogether of Job's mind; nor does it appear that he had any to take his part, for his brethren, acquaintance, kinsfolk, and familiar friends, stood at a distance from him, and his maids and menservants used him ill; and even his own wife was not very kind to him, as he declares in the following chapter; wherefore it seems best of all to understand these words as spoken to Job alone, the plural being used for the singular, according to the idiom of the tongue in which they were spoken, and so are a charge of loquacity against him for talking too much, and too long, unless it had been to better purpose; and in like manner Bildad begins his first reply to Job, **Job 8:2**; a late interpreter renders the words, "how long will you lay snares with words" {e}? use cautious words, set snares with words to catch, lie upon the catch, and lay hold upon a word, and improve it to disadvantage, which is imprudently or inadvertently dropped:

mark, and afterwards we will speak; or "let us speak" {f}; after we have well considered things, got a right understanding of them, and thoroughly digested them, and have well concerted things, and have thought very closely what reply to make to them; and so the words are a tacit reflection of Bildad's on his other two friends, that they spoke before they thought, and therefore some things impertinently, which Job took the advantage of against them; wherefore it would be right, for the future, to mark and consider things well beforehand, and then speak, as they then would with greater propriety, and more to the purpose: public speakers especially, or such who are engaged in public service, or in a public dispute, should meditate beforehand what to say, lest they deliver what is crude and undigested, and may be turned against them. Our Lord indeed directed his disciples, when called before kings and, governors for his sake, not to premeditate what they should answer; but that was an extraordinary case, and they were promised to have extraordinary assistance, whereby some great ends were to be answered, the confusion of their enemies, and the confirmation of the Christian religion. But the words seem rather directed to Job, and to carry in them a charge of inattention to what was said to him by his friends; and therefore Bildad exhorts him to mark and observe what they said to him, to listen attentively to that, and well consider it, and then it would be an encouragement to them to proceed in discoursing with him. Job is represented like some hearers, that stop their ears to the voice of the charmer charming ever so wisely; or that are careless and inattentive to what they hear, and let it pass, and never think of it more; whereas hearers of the word should be swift to hear, and listen with attention, and take care that they let not slip what they have heard, and that they meditate upon it in order to get instruction by it, and when they hear in such a manner it is? a encouragement to speak; or else the sense is, "act wisely" {g}, like an honest man, and show yourself to be a wise man, a man of understanding, that well weighs and considers things, and rightly takes them in, and receives instruction by them, and talks like a sensible man: "then afterwards we will speak"; or otherwise, if you go on to talk in the foolish manner you do, it is to no purpose to carry on the dispute; the best way is to put an end to it at once.

{e} Schultens. {f} rbdn rhaw "et postea loquamur", Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius. {g} wnybt "diserte agatis", Schultens.

Job 18:3

Ver. 3. Wherefore are we counted as beasts,.... This seems to refer to Job 12:7; where Job sends them to the beasts, to get knowledge and instruction; and therefore it was concluded he reckoned them as such, and put them on a level with them, yea, made them inferior to them; or to Job 17:4; where they are represented as destitute of wisdom and understanding, and therefore it is supposed were counted by Job no other than as beasts. Man, by the fall, is indeed become like them, and some are more brutish than they, and all are brutish as to spiritual knowledge and understanding; and those that are most sensible of themselves are ready to acknowledge their ignorance, that they are more brutish than any, and especially are as a beast before God; and particularly with respect to knowledge of the methods of Providence, in regard to his dealings with the righteous and wicked; see Ps 73:22; and which was the case in controversy between Job and his friends; but yet self-sufficient persons do not care to have their understandings in anything called in question, but like the Pharisees say, "are we blind also?" **Joh 9:40**; and take it very hard that they should be reckoned like beasts, void of understanding, when they are the people, and wisdom will die with them:

[and] reputed vile in your sight? as wicked and profligate persons, the most abandoned of mankind, such as are justly despised by good men, see Ps 15:4; or "unclean" {h}, filthy, polluted, and defiled, as all men are by nature, and as they are in all the powers and faculties of their souls; nor can they make themselves clean, their hearts or their hands; nothing short of the grace of God, and blood of Christ, can cleanse from sin; yet self-righteous persons think themselves clean and pure when they are not washed from their sins, and take it ill of others to be reputed unclean persons: or "shut" {i}, stopped up, as the hearts of men are from God and Christ, and the true knowledge of them, and divine things, until opened by him who has the key of the house of David, and opens, and no man shuts; or "hidden" {k}, referring to Job 17:4; having a covering over their hearts, and a vail over the eyes of their understandings, so that the things of Providence were hid from them, as sometimes the things of grace are from the wise and prudent; but to be thought that this was their case is resented by Bildad.

{h} wnymjn "immundi", Drusius, Piscator, Michaelis; so Broughton. {i} "Clausi sumu", Montanus; "obturati sumus", Hebraei, in Mercer. {k} So the Targum.

Job 18:4

Ver. 4. He teareth himself in his anger,.... Or "his soul" {l}, meaning Job, and referring to what he had said in Job 16:9; Now, says Bildad, it is neither God nor man that tears you, it is you yourself; representing Job as a madman, rending his clothes, tearing his flesh, and even his very soul; for by his passion which he expressed, whether to God or his friends, it did himself the most hurt, he broke his peace, and spoiled his comfort, and ruined his health, and made himself the most unhappy of mankind, by giving vent to his passion, to his wrath and anger, which slays and a man, **Job 5:2**; here a charge of impatience is suggested, contrary to the character even of Job, **Jas 5:11**;

shall the earth be forsaken for thee? through fear of thee, because of thy rage and fury; dost thou think that the inhabitants of the earth will flee before thee, at thy storming, rage, and wrath? before God none can stand when he is angry: there is no abiding his indignation when his fury is poured out like fire, and persons of the greatest rank will flee to the rocks and mountains to hide them from his face and fury; but what dost thou think, or make thyself to be, to be as

Deity, that the inhabitants of the earth should flee fore thee, and forsake it? or when thou diest, dost thou think that all the inhabitants of the earth will die with thee, and so it will be forsaken for thy sake? taking the hint from what Job had said, Job 17:16; or dost thou think thyself a man of so much importance and consequence in the earth that when thou diest there will not be a man left of any worth and notice, that all might as well die with thee? or will God drop the government of the world on thy account? will he no more employ his care and providence in concerning himself in the affairs of the world, but let all things go as they will, and so the earth, as to his providential regards to it, be forsaken for thy sake? will God neither do good to good men, nor punish bad men? which must be the case according to thy doctrine; but will God counteract this method of his providence, he has always taken in the earth, that thou mayest appear not to be an evil man, as might be concluded from thine afflictions, but a good man notwithstanding them?

and shall the rock be removed out of his place? which is not usual, nor can it be done by man; it may be done by God, who touches the mountains, and they smoke, and at whose presence they drop and move, as Sinai did, and as the mountains and hills will flee away at the presence of the Judge of all the earth, when he appears; but no such phenomenon can be expected upon the presence and sight of a man; much less can God himself, who is often called a Rock, and is immovable, unalterable, and unchangeable in his nature, perfections, purposes, and the counsels of his will, be made to act contrary to either of them,
De 32:4; nor will he do it for the sake of any man; he does all things after the counsel of his own will; he takes a constant course in Providence, in the government of the world, canst thou think that he will go out of his usual way for thy sake, in punishing wicked men, and rewarding good men? you may as soon imagine that a rock will be removed out of its place as the ordinary course of Providence will be altered on thy account; to suppose this is presumption, pride, and arrogance, which is what Bildad means to fasten upon Job.

{l} wvpn "animam suam", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Job 18:5

Ver. 5. Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out,.... Or "nevertheless" {m}; notwithstanding all this disregard and inattention to us, and contempt of us, and all the rage, and wrath, and pride, and haughtiness discovered, as if the laws of nature, and stated methods of Providence, must all give way to justify a man in such circumstances as show him to be wicked; this will certainly be his case, his "light shall be put out"; meaning not the light of his eyes, or his corporeal light, which sometimes has been the case of wicked men, as was of the Sodomites, since this, through accident, or old age, is common to good and bad then; but rather moral light, the light of nature, with which every man is enlightened that comes into the world; by which he can discern things natural and civil, and in some degree things moral and religious, though in a very dim manner; and which, when it is abused, may be taken away, and men be given up to judicial blindness, and to a reprobate mind, a mind void of sense and judgment. Cocceius thinks light of doctrine may be intended, speculative and notional light and knowledge of divine things, as of God, and his perfections, which may be more clearly discerned by revelation than by the light of nature; and of Christ, his person, offices, and grace; and of the Gospel, and each of the doctrines of it, which men may be enlightened into, and yet be wicked men, as Balsam, and others; which knowledge may be lost, and light put out, as in the man that had but one talent, and neglected it, and in the idle shepherd, Mt 25:29; to which may be added the light of joy, or a flash of natural affections that sometimes is to be observed in hypocritical persons, or notional professors, which in time is lost, and comes to nothing, as in Herod and the stony ground hearers, **Mr 6:20**; but as for the true spiritual light, and experimental knowledge, that can never be lost or put out, but shines more and more unto the perfect day: but it seems best by "light" here to understand outward prosperity, for as darkness is often put for adversity, so light for prosperity in civil things, see **Es 8:16**; but then, though this in wicked men is often put out, and they are reduced to distressed circumstances, yet not always; and it sometimes is the case of good men, and was the case of Job, which Bildad had his eye upon, see Job 29:2;

and the spark of his fire shall not shine; all his carnal reasonings, the effects of the light of nature, and all his schemes, especially religious ones built upon them, shall all come to nothing, and be of no effect or use unto him, see Isa 50:11; or the sense is, that he shall be reduced to so low a condition in things civil, that he shall have no light nor heat, nor joy and comfort, in this sense; no, not so much as a spark of outward happiness shall be left him.

{m} Mg "attamen, nihilominus", Cocceius, Schultens; so the Targum.

Job 18:6

Ver. 6. The light shall the dark in his tabernacle,.... Not the light of the eye, in the tabernacle of his body, rather the light of nature and reason in him; and when that "light [that is] in [a man becomes] darkness", as our Lord says, "how great [is] that darkness!" **Mt 6:23**; but best of all it designs the light of prosperity in his house and family, which should be quite obscured:

and his candle shall be put out with him; which sometimes signifies the spirit of man, his rational soul, called "the candle of the Lord", Pr 20:27; which, though it dies not when man dies, yet its light is extinct with respect to the things of this life, and all its thoughts and reasonings are no more about civil matters, and the affairs of this world; in that sense this light is put out, and those thoughts perish with him, Ps 146:4; but more frequently it is used for outward prosperity, which if it continues with a man as long as he lives, as it often does, yet, when he dies, it ceases and is no more; it does not descend with him into the grave, and he cannot carry it into another world, but it is put out in "obscure darkness"; see Job 21:17.

Job 18:7

Ver. 7. The steps of his strength shall be straitened,.... As a man in health can take large and strong steps, and travel in the greatness of his strength; so in prosperity he can and does take large steps in obtaining fame and reputation among men, in amassing substance to himself, and towards settling his family in the world; he is like one in a large place, and walks at liberty, goes in and out at pleasure, and none can control him; he walks in pride, and with an high and lifted up head, and with contempt of others, and his will is his law, and he does as he pleases; but in adversity, as his strength is weakened in the way, he cannot take the strides he did, his way is hedged up with thorns, he is pressed on every side, and surrounded with troubles, so that, let him turn himself which way he will, he can find no way to escape:

and his own counsel shall cast him down; as Ahithophel's and Haman's did, which issued in their ruin, 2Sa 17:23; what wicked men sometimes plot and devise, with a view to their own good, and the injury of others, proves the destruction of themselves; when they have contrived to raise themselves upon the ruins of others, it has been the means of casting them down from the state and condition they were in, instead of raising to an higher, even down to desolation, and into the most miserable circumstances.

Job 18:8

Ver. 8. For he is cast into a net by his own feet,.... He goes into it of himself, incautious and imprudent; the counsels, schemes, and methods he takes to hurt others, issue in his own ruin; the pit he digs for them, he falls and sinks into himself; and the net which he has spread and hid for others, in it is his own foot taken; and the ways and means he takes to do himself good, to amass riches and advance his family, being illicit ones, prove snares and nets unto him, those leading him into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which bring him to perdition, **Ps 9:15**; even the various sins and transgressions he commits are snares unto him, by which he is enticed and drawn in: for in "the transgression of an evil man there is a snare", Pr 29:6; these promise him peace, and pleasure, and liberty, but give neither; they are nets in which he is entangled, and cords by which he is held, **Ps 9:15**; into which his own feet carry him: some render it, "he goes with a net at his feet" {n}, or with his feet in a net; he cannot go where he would, or do as he pleases; he is restrained by the providence of God; as the devils are held in chains, so the feet of wicked men are entangled in a net, that they cannot move and act as they are desirous of:

and he walketh upon a snare: laid for him, and hidden to him, and therefore walks on boldly and unconcerned, not being apprehensive of any danger, though greatly exposed to it; he walks on as on firm and good ground, and in a broad road, but destruction and misery are in his ways; yet he walks on of himself willingly, and with all his strength, pleasing himself in the path he treads, not dreaming of the mischief that awaits him; or "upon a thicket" {o} of thorns and briers, his sins and iniquities with which he is entangled, and out of which he cannot extricate himself, or afflictive providences with which his way is hedged up; though the former sense seems best; Mr. Broughton renders it, "a platted gin".

{n} wylgrb tvrb xlv yk "nam it cum reti in pedibus suis", Cocceius. {o} hkbv le "in perplexo", Cocceius.

Job 18:9

Ver. 9. The gin shall take [him] by the heel,.... And hold him fast, so that he shall not be able to get away, especially out of such as are set by God himself; for God has his nets, and snares, and gins for wicked men, and such plenty of them, that he even is said to rain them on them; yea, he himself is a gin and a snare unto them, and out of his hands there is no escaping, wherefore it is a terrible thing to fall into them, see Eze 12:13;

[and] the robber shall prevail against him; either robbers literally taken, such as the Sabeans and Chaldeans, to whom Bildad may have reference, who prevailed against Job, and plundered him of his substance; and such as these, as the word signifies, are "thirsty ones" {p}, who thirst after the wealth and riches of men, and after their blood for the sake thereof, bloodthirsty ones; Mr. Broughton renders it, "the savage", barbarous, wild, and uncivilized, that lived in desert places, and were like wild beasts, let their hair grow long, to make them look more terrible and formidable, which some take to be the signification of the word, and render it "horrid" {q} or terrible,
See Gill on "Job 5:5"; or else the devil may be meant, who is like a roaring lion, terrible and frightful, and who, as he was a murderer from the beginning, so a thief and robber, that comes to kill and destroy, and whom God suffers to prevail over the children of disobedience, and in whom he works powerfully, being the strong man armed, that has possession of them and their goods, and keeps them in peace; and who has his snares, which he lays suited to the tempers and dispositions of men, and in which they are taken alive, as beasts of prey, and are detained by him at his pleasure, **2Ti 2:26**.

{p} Mymu "sitibundos", Montanus; "sitibundus", Tigurine version. {q} "Horridus", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Job 18:10

Ver. 10. The snare [is] laid for him in the ground,.... Or "hidden" {r} there; for, as Solomon says, "in vain the net is spread in sight of any bird", **Pr 1:17**; and in vain it is to lay a snare publicly in the sight or creature, it will not then come near it, but shun and avoid it; and therefore it is laid underground, or hid in the earth, or in some private place, where the creature it is designed for may be thought to come, or into which it is decoyed; or "the cord" {s}, that which is fastened to the snare or net, and which the fowler holds in his hand, and pulls with; as he finds occasion and opportunity offers; but this is hid as much as possible, that it may not be seen:

and a trap for him in the way; in which he is used to walk, by the roadside, or in it; Mr. Broughton renders it, "a pitfall on the wayside", such as is dug for beasts to fall into and be taken. The whole of this is designed to show how suddenly and secretly wicked men are taken in nets, and snares, and gins, either of their own or others laying, and, while they are crying "Peace, peace, sudden destruction comes upon them"; see **Ec 9:12**.

{r} Nwmj "absconditus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, &c.
{s} wlbx "funis ejus", Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Drusius, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Job 18:11

Ver. 11. Terrors shall make him afraid on every side,.... Make him a "Magormissabib", or "terror on every side", as Pashur was a terror to himself, Jer 20:3, and all his friends about him; these terrors may be either the terrors of the judges of the earth upon wicked men, who are, or should be, a terror to evildoers, and of whom wicked men are afraid, lest they should be taken and punished by them; to this sense is the note of Sephorno: or else the terrors of a guilty conscience, which drive a man to his wits' end, that he knows not what to do, nor whither to go; these terrify him night and day, and make an hell upon earth unto him; or the terrors of the righteous law of God broken by him, its menaces and curses threatening him with death and everlasting damnation; or the terrors of the judgments of God on earth, which by their forerunners appear to be coming on it, by reason of which men's hearts fail for fear of them; or terrible apprehensions of the wrath of God for sin, here and hereafter, together with the terrors of death, which fall upon them, and of an awful judgment yet to come. Now Bildad had observed, that Job had said some things concerning the terrors he was sometimes possessed of, **Job 6:4**; and therefore would suggest from hence that he must be a wicked man, since this is the case of such; but it is easy to observe that good men are sometimes surrounded with terrors as well as others, so that this is no proof of a man's character and state, see Ps 88:15;

and shall drive him to his feet; to take to his feet and run, in order to get rid of his terrors if possible, but in vain; these cause him not to run to God, to his feet, to the throne and footstool of his grace, but from him, to the rocks and mountains to hide him from his wrath, though there is no going from his spirit, nor fleeing from his presence; and terrors will also have such an effect upon wielded men as to cause them to flee from men, as in Cain, who not only went, from the presence of the Lord, but from the society of men, and became a fugitive and vagabond, and afraid of everyone he met with, lest he should kill him; and sometimes wicked men flee when none pursue, and even at the sound of shaking leaf, Pr 28:1; or "shall scatter him at his feet" {t}, either at the feet of the robber, or cause him to fall to the ground, in the place where his feet stood. Mr. Broughton renders it, "shall press him at his feet", shall follow at his heels, and keep close to him wherever he goes, and overtake and seize him.

{t} whuph "dispergent eum", Pagninus, Montanus, Beza, Mercerus, Piscator, Schmidt.

Job 18:12

Ver. 12. His strength shall be hungerbitten,.... Or "shall be famine" {u}, or hunger, that is, shall be weakened by it; famine is a sore evil, and greatly weakens thee natural strength of men; want of food will soon bring down the strength of the strongest man, when the stay and the staff, the sustenance and support of man's nature is taken from him: many of the Jewish writers, by "his strength", understand his children, who are, as Jacob said of Reuben, his might, and the beginning of his strength, Ge 49:3; and when grown up are his protection and defence; and for these to be distressed with hunger, or destroyed by famine, is a sore judgment; so the Targum paraphrases it, his firstborn son; Jarchi interprets it, his son; and Ben Gersom, his seed or offspring:

and destruction [shall be] ready at his side; or "to his rib" {w}; that is, his wife, as the Targum and Jarchi explain it, the Jews calling a man's wife his rib, because the woman was originally made out of one of the ribs of man; and if this could be thought to be the sense of the word here, and what is given by them of the former clause, both make up a complete account of the destruction of a wicked man's family, his wife and children: but rather it signifies some calamity, distress, and trouble at hand, ready prepared for wicked men, just going to be inflicted on them; for God has stores of vengeance for them, and has made ready his bow, and prepared instruments and arrows of death and destruction for them, as well as there is everlasting fire prepared, and blackness of darkness reserved for them in the world to come; for it can hardly be thought that this should be understood literally of any disease in the side, as the pleurisy, &c. which is threatening, or any mortal wound or stab there, such as Joab gave Amass under the fifth rib.

{u} ber "fames", Beza. {w} welul "costae ejus", Montanus, Vatablus, Grotius, Schultens.

Job 18:13

Ver. 13. It shall devour the strength of his skin,.... Or "the bars of his skin" {x}, the strength and support of his body, for which his skin may be put, as the bones; or "the branches of his skin" {y}, the veins, which like so many branches run under, and may be seen through the skin: now these, it, famine, or want of food, devours, and destroys the strength and beauty of the skin, cause it to be black like an oven, **La 4:8**; bring a man to a mere skeleton, to skin and bones, waste and consume the members of his body, his flesh, and blood, and bones; the Targum, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra, by "his bars" or "branches" understand his children, which are his bars, the strength of him, and are to him as branches to a tree, proceeding from him; and if we render it, as some do, he "shall devour" {z}, or "eat", that is, the wicked man, it points to us the most horrible scene in a famine, which is shocking and shuddering, and yet what has been, as in the sieges of Samaria and Jerusalem, a parent's eating and devouring his own children, **2Ki 6:28**; but rather the "it [is] the firstborn of death", in the next clause, which is to be supplied from thence here:

[even] the firstborn of death shall devour his strength; and so Mr. Broughton translates the whole verse,

"a strange death shall eat all the branches of his body, all its branches shall it eat;"

which the Targum interprets of the angel of death, him which has the power of death: but rather it signifies not what presides over death, but what death first produces, which are corruption and rottenness, dust and worms; these are the firstborn of death, or the firstfruits and effects of it, and which devour and destroy not the skin only, but the whole body and all its members: or "the firstborn death" {a}; death, which is a firstborn, it is the firstborn of sin; sin is its parent, last conceives sin, and that brings forth death; death is the child of sin, and is its firstborn, and sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and this is what devours and destroys the strength of men. Some understand by firstborn death a premature one, death before the usual time or common course of nature; wicked men do not live out half their days; and when they are taken off in their youth, in the prime of their days and strength, and amidst all their wealth, riches, and pleasures, this is the first, or firstborn death, as that is a secondary one which is late, in the time of old age. This is the ingenious thought of Pineda; but, perhaps, rather, as the firstborn is the chief and principal, so here may be meant the chiefest of deaths, the most hard, cruel, and severe; the first of those, that death has under it, which are principally the sword, famine, pestilence, and the noisome beast, see **Re 6:8**; it is commonly

thought that famine is intended, spoken of in the context; but why not rather some thing distinct from it, and particularly the pestilence? since that is emphatically called death by the Jews, and in the passage last referred to, and is the terror by night, and the arrow that flies by day, even the pestilence that walks in darkness, and the destruction that wastes at noonday; by means of which thousands and ten thousands of wicked men fall at the sides of good men, when it does not affect them: and so may be the evil particularly threatened to a wicked man here, see
Ps 91:5.

{x} wrwe ydb "vectes cutis suae", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens, Michaelis. {y} "Ramos cutis", Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Mercerus, Schmidt; "ramos corporis ipsius", Cocceius. {z} lkay "comedet", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus. {a} twm rwkb "primogenita mors", V. L.

Job 18:14

Ver. 14. His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle,.... That which his confidence was placed in, his wealth and riches, his family, particularly his children, in all which he placed his confidence of future prosperity and happiness; these should be all taken away from him, and his house cleared of them all; or his good, sound, and healthful constitution, on account of which he promised himself long life, this he should be deprived of, and it should be taken out of the tabernacle of his body; or his hope and confidence of eternal happiness in another world, this should perish, and be as the giving up of the ghost: or the words may be rendered, "he shall be rooted out of his tabernacle [which was] his confidence" {b}; that is, his soul shall be taken out of his body by death, in which it dwelt as in a tabernacle, and where he hoped to have had a long continuance; death is a rooting of a man out of it, and even out of the world, see
Ps 52:5;

and it shall bring him to the king of terrors; either famine, by which his strength is weakened, or destruction that is at his side, or the firstborn of death, or his vain confidence: or this may be the sense, "thou (O God) wilt bring him", or "cause him to go to the king of terrors" {c}; to death; all men are brought unto it, but not all unto it as a king of terrors; as good men, such as Simeon, the Apostle Paul, and others, but wicked men. Death is a king: it reigns, it has a large empire, even the whole world; its subjects are numerous, all, high and low, rich and poor, great and small; and the duration of its reign is long, it reigned from Adam to Moses, from Moses to the coming of Christ, and from thence to this day, and will to the end of the world, and it reigns with an irresistible power: and this king is a king of terrors to wicked men; it is, as Aristotle {d} calls it, the most terrible of terribles; it is terrible to nature, being a dissolution of it; and it must be terrible to mere natural men, who have nothing to support them under it, and no views beyond the grave to comfort them, and cause them to go cheerful through it; but, on the other hand, have not only the bitterness of death to endure, but have terrible apprehensions of a future judgment that comes after it. Some render it, "the king of darkness" {e}, extreme darkness, blackness of darkness, utter darkness, which wicked men at death are brought unto. Jarchi interprets it of the king of demons, the devil; and to be brought to him is to be brought to hell and eternal damnation: so some render it, "terrors shall bring him to his king" {f}, the devil; or rather "terrors shall come upon him like a king" {g}, in a very grand, powerful, and formidable manner.

{b} Michaelis. {c} De Dieu. {d} Ethic. l. 3. c. 9. {e} twhlb Klml "ad regem caliginum", Cocceius. {f} Schmidt. {g} "Instar regis", Schultens; "quasi rex", V. L.

Job 18:15

Ver. 15. It shall dwell in his tabernacle,.... What shall dwell in it is not said; there are various conjectures about it, and different supplements are made; the Targum is,

"his wife shall dwell in a tabernacle not his;"

and to the same purpose Jarchi; as if it was one part of the punishment of a wicked man, that he should leave a widow behind him, and no house of his own for her to dwell in; but this is the case of the widows of many good men, who themselves, in their lifetime, have no houses of their own, and some no certain dwelling places, yea, have lived in caves and dens of the earth; the mother of our Lord, who seems to have been a widow at his death, was taken by one of his disciples to his own home, which shows she had none of her own. The Vulgate Latin version is,

"his neighbours shall dwell in his tabernacle;"

which some understand of their coming into it after his death, to mourn and bewail him; but as such a visit of his family upon his decease cannot be called dwelling, so this is rather a benefit and favour to his family, than a distress: rather it may signify, that such neighbours whom he had oppressed, and who hated him for his tyranny and cruelty, now should dwell in his house; what he had built, strangers should inhabit, which is a punishment of sin and sinners, De 28:30. Aben Ezra supplies it thus, a strange or evil beast shall dwell in it, as they do in desolate places; and it is frequently given as a sign and token of desolation in countries, cities, and palaces, that they are become the habitations of wild and savage creatures, see
Isa 13:19; but it seems best to supply it from the context, either thus, famine, hunger, want of food, shall dwell in it; poverty and want shall come like an armed man into it, and take possession; there shall appear all the marks and signs of penury and distress; or destruction ready at his side shall take up its abode in it, and it shall be called the house of destruction, as a certain city is called the city of destruction, because devoted to it, Isa 19:18; or the firstborn of death, some deadly disease, as the pestilence; or death itself, the king of terrors, who is sometimes represented as a person coming up into the windows of a palace, and entering it, and cutting off great numbers; so that it goes ill with him that is left in a tabernacle, where he has his habitation, **Jer 9:21**; or terror, as Ben Gersom; everyone of the terrors before mentioned, so that no body will care to dwell in it, but forsake it as an haunted house: in short, from the whole it may be gathered, that the curse of God should alight upon it, and remain in it, as it does in the house of the wicked; the same with the flying roll in the vision of Zechariah, the curse of God's righteous law, which enters into the house of the thief and perjurer, and consumes it, **Pr 3:33**; the reason follows,

because [it is] none of his; not by right, being bought or built with mammon of unrighteousness, with money not honestly got, and therefore shall not prosper; or because it is no longer his, he being taken from it by death, the king of terrors, and that not knowing or owning him any more as its master or proprietor, and therefore strangers shall dwell in it; or because there is none that shall be after him, because he shall have none left, or he shall have no survivor {h}, all his family being taken away by death; and therefore nothing but desolation and destruction shall be seen in it, see **Am 6:9**;

brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation; that is, his house should be burnt down by lightning, which is often sulphurous, and sometimes very sensibly has the smell of brimstone in it {i}. Bildad may refer either to the fire of heaven that destroyed Job's sheep, which was of this kind; or rather to the

destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, by a shower of fire and brimstone from heaven, a fact well known in those times. Moreover, brimstone scattered upon the wicked man's dwelling place may denote the desolation of it, that it should lie in ruins, and be unfit to be inhabited; and the desolation of places is sometimes signified by their being salt, brimstone and burning pitch, De 29:23; yea, this may be carried further, and denote the eternal damnation of all in his house, seeing the burning of Sodom with brimstone was an example to ungodly men suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, **Jude 1:7**; and which is sometimes expressed by brimstone, and a lake burning with fire and brimstone,
Re 20:10. Some {k} think respect is had to the purifying of houses with sulphur, to drive away demons, and remove impurity, to make them fit to dwell in {l}; and others think it refers to the burning of sulphur in houses at funerals, to testify and exaggerate mourning {m}.

{h} So Syr. Ar & Schmidt. {i} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 35. c. 35. {k} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 709, 710. {l} Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 35. c. 15. Theocrit. Idyll. 25. ver. 95. Homer. Odyss. 22. prope finem. {m} Vid. Menochium de Repub. Heb. l. 8. c. 6. col. 792.

Job 18:16

Ver. 16. His roots shall be dried up beneath,.... Wicked men are sometimes compared to trees; to trees of the wood, barren, and unfruitful; to trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; and sometimes to green bay trees, very flourishing for a while, and which on a sudden perish, and come to nothing, see **So 2:3** **Jude 1:12**; and such a simile is here used; and by his roots may be meant his family, from whence he sprung, which now should be extinct with him, see Isa 11:1; or his substance, which being greatly increased, he seemed to take root in the earth, and not only to be in a prosperous, but in a stable settled condition; but now, like Ephraim, he should be smitten, and his root dried up; all his wealth, and all the resources of it, should be exhausted, be no more, see Jer 12:2;

and above shall his branch be cut off; his children that sprung from him, as branches from a tree, and were his glory and beauty, these should be cut off; referring no doubt in both clauses to Job's present circumstances, whose root in the time of his prosperity was spread out by the waters, but now dried up, and on whose branches the dew lay all night, but now cut off, Job 29:19; so the Targum, "his children shall be cut off out of the earth, and from heaven his destruction shall be decreed;"

both clauses signify the utter destruction of the family of the wicked man, root and branch, see **Mal 4:1**. It is a beautiful description of a tree struck with thunder and lightning, and burnt and shattered to pieces, and agrees with Job 18:15.

Job 18:17

Ver. 17. His remembrance shall perish from the earth,.... Not only are the wicked forgotten of God in heaven, and are as the slain he remembers no more, unless it be to pour out his wrath upon them, and punish them for their sins, for which great Babylon will come up in remembrance before him; but of men on earth, and in the very places where they were born, and lived all their days, **Ec 8:10**; yea, those places, houses and palaces, towns and cities, which they have built to perpetuate their memory among men, perish and come to nought, and their memorial with them, **Ps 9:5**;

and he shall have no name in the street; much less in the house of God, still less in heaven, in the Lamb's book of life; so far from it, that he shall have none on earth, no good name among men; if ever his name is mentioned after his death, it is with some brand of infamy upon him; he is not spoken of in public, in a court of judicature, nor in any place of commerce and trade, nor in any concourse of people, or public assembly of any note, especially with any credit or commendation; such is the difference between a good man and a wicked man, see Pr 11:7.

Job 18:18

Ver. 18. He shall be driven from light into darkness,.... Either from the light of outward prosperity, formerly enjoyed by him, into the darkness of adversity; or rather from the light of the living, the light of the present life, to the darkness of death, and the grave, the land of darkness, and of the shadow of death, Job 10:21; and even into utter darkness, blackness of darkness, the darkness of hell, eternal darkness; opposed to the light of the divine Presence, and the inheritance of the saints in light, possessed by them to all eternity; which the wicked man is deprived of, and will have no share in, but shall be driven from the presence of God, and by him; for so the words may be rendered, "they shall drive him" {n}, God, Father, Son, and Spirit; God by the east wind and storm of his wrath shall carry him away, and hurl him out of his place, and shall cast the fury of his wrath on him, and not spare, nor shall he flee out of his hands, though he fain would, Job 27:21; or the angels, good or bad, shall drive him into endless torments, or shall, by the divine order, take him and cast him into outward darkness, where are weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; thus are the wicked driven against their will, and must go whether they will or not, and, like beasts to the slaughter, are driven in their wickedness, in order to suffer the punishment due unto it, when the righteous hath hope in his death, Pr 14:32;

and chased out of the world; or cast out of it, as an unclean or excommunicated person, of which the word here is sometimes used {o}; and not only chased out of his own place, out of his own house, and out of his own country, but even out of the world, so as to have no place any more in it, see Job 20:8.

{n} hwpdhy "expellent eum", Pagninus, Montanus; so Tigurine version, Vatablus, Mercerus, Drusius, Schultens, Cocceius, Schmidt. {o} whdny "excommunicabunt cum", Schmidt, Michaelis; so Codurcus.

Job 18:19

Ver. 19. He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people,.... Neither son, nor son's son, or grandson; so the Targum, Jarchi, and Bar Tzemach; that is, he shall be childless, and have no heirs, successors, or survivors, to inherit his estate, bear and perpetuate his name among the people of his country, city, or neighbourhood. Bildad respects no doubt the present case of Job, who had lost all his children; but he was mistaken if he thought he should die so, for he had after this as many children as he had before:

nor any remaining in his dwellings; being all dead, or fled from them, through the terror, desolation, and destruction in them. Aben Ezra and Bar Tzemach interpret them places in which he was a sojourner or stranger; and Mr. Broughton, nor remnant in his pilgrimage.

Job 18:20

Ver. 20. They that come after [him] shall be astonished at his day,.... At the

day of his calamity and distress, ruin and destruction, see
Ps 37:13; it would be extremely amazing to them how it should be, that a man who was in such flourishing and prosperous circumstances, should be brought at once, he and his family, into such extreme poverty, and into such a distressed and forlorn condition; they should be, as it were, thunderstruck at it, not being able to account for it: by these are meant such as are younger than the wicked man, and that continue longer than he, yet upon the spot when his calamity befell; or else posterity in later times, who would be made acquainted with the whole affair, and be surprised at the relation of it:

as they that went before were affrighted; not that lived before the times of the wicked man, for they could not see his day, or be spectators of his ruin, and so be frightened at it; but his contemporaries, who are said to be those that went before, not with respect to the wicked man, but with respect to younger persons or posterity that were after; so Bar Tzemach interprets it, which were in his time, or his contemporaries; and Mr. Broughton,

"the present took an horror;"

a late learned commentator {p} renders the words, western and eastern; as if all people in the world, east and west, would be amazed and astonished at the sudden and utter destruction of this wicked man.

{p} Schultens.

Job 18:21

Ver. 21. Surely such [are] the dwellings of the wicked,.... As before described; as that the light should be dark in them; a wicked man's confidence should be rooted out of them; everything shocking and dreadful should dwell in them; brimstone should be scattered on them, they should be utterly consumed, and none remaining in them,
Job 18:6. The Targum represents these as the words of the persons astonished and frightened, who at the sight of such a dismal spectacle should utter them, prefacing them thus,

"and they shall say, but these are the dwellings, &c."

and this [is] the place [of him that] knoweth not God; the place that he shall be driven to when chased out of the world, even a place of darkness and misery, Job 18:18; or "this is the case of him that knoweth not the Omnipotent", as Mr. Broughton translates the words; that is, which is above described in the several particulars of it; this is sooner or later the case of every wicked man, as Bildad supposed it now was Job's case, at least in part, or would be hereafter: one "that knows not God", is the periphrasis of a wicked man, that has no knowledge of God, at least no practical knowledge of him, that lives without God in the world, or like an atheist; such shall be punished with everlasting destruction by him, see **2Th 1:8**; either one whom "God knows not" {q}, so some render the words; for though God by the perfection of his omniscience knows all men, good and bad, yet there are some he knows not so as to approve of, love, and delight in, see **Mt 7:23**; or rather that have no knowledge of God, who though they may know there is a God, yet do not worship and glorify him as God; and though they may profess to know him, yet in works they deny him, and however have no spiritual and experimental knowledge of him; do not know him in Christ, as the God of all grace, and as their God in him; they do not know him, so as to love him, fear, worship, and obey him.

{q} la edy al "quem non agnoscit Deus fortis", Junius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Job 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 19

This chapter contains Job's reply to Bildad's second speech, in which he complains of the ill usage of his friends, of their continuing to vex him, and to beat, and bruise, and break him in pieces with their hard words, and to reproach him, and carry it strange to him, Job 19:1; which he thought was very cruel, since, if he was mistaken, the mistake lay with himself, Job 19:4; and if they were determined to go on at this rate, he would have them observe, that his afflictions were of God, and therefore should take care to what they imputed them, since he could not get the reasons of them, or his cause to be heard, though he vehemently and importunately sought it, Job 19:5; and then gives an enumeration of the several particulars of his distress, all which he ascribes to God, Job 19:8; and he enlarges upon that part of his unhappy case, respecting the alienation of his nearest relations, most intimate acquaintance and friends, from him, and their contempt of him, and the like treatment he met with from his servants, and even young children, Job 19:13; all which, with other troubles, had such an effect upon him as to reduce

him to a mere skeleton, and which he mentions to move the pity of these his friends, now conversing with him, Job 19:20; and yet after all, and in the midst of it, and which was his great support under his trials, he expresses his strong faith in his living Redeemer, who should appear on the earth in the latter day, and be his Saviour, and in the resurrection of the dead through him, which he believed he should share in, and in all the happiness consequent on it; and he wishes this confession of his faith might be written and engraven, and be preserved on a rock for ever for the good of posterity, Job 19:23; and closes the chapter with an expostulation with his friends, dissuading them from persecuting him any longer, since there was no reason for it in himself, and it might be attended with bad consequences to them,
Job 19:28.

Ver. 1. Then Job answered and said. Having heard Bildad out, without giving him any interruption; and when he had finished his oration, he rose up in his own defence, and put in his answer as follows.

Job 19:2

Ver. 2. How long will ye vex my soul,.... Which of all vexation is the worst; not only his bones were vexed, but his soul also, as David's was, **Ps 6:2**. His body was vexed with boils from head to feet; but now his soul was vexed by his friends, and which denotes extreme vexation, a man's being vexed to his very heart: there are many things vexations to men, especially to good men; they are not only vexed with pains of the body, as others, and with loss of worldly substance; but even all things here below, and the highest enjoyment of them, as wealth, wisdom, honours, and pleasures, are all vanity and vexation of spirit, as they were to Solomon; but more especially truly good men are vexed with the corruptions of their hearts, which are as pricks in their eyes and thorns in their sides, and with the temptations of Satan, which are also thorns in the flesh and fiery darts, and with the conversation of wicked men, as was the soul of righteous Lot, and with the bad principles and practices of professors of religion; and sometimes, as Job was, they are vexed by their own friends, who should be their comforters, but prove miserable ones, as his did, and even vexations, and continued so to the wearing him out almost; and so some render the words, "how long will ye weary my soul" {c}? with repeating their insinuations that he was a wicked and hypocritical man, and therefore was afflicted of God in the manner he was; and which, knowing his own innocency, extremely vexed him:

and break me in pieces with words? not his body, but his spirit; which was broken, not by the word of God, which is like an hammer that breaks the rocky heart in pieces; for such a breaking is in mercy, and not an affliction to be complained of; and such as are thus broken are healed again, and bound up by the same hand that breaks; who has great, regard to broken spirits and contrite hearts; looks to them, and dwells with them, in order to revive and comfort them: but by the words of men; Job was smitten with the tongues of men; as Jeremiah was, and was beaten and bruised by them, as anything is beaten and bruised by a pestle in a mortar, as the word {d} signifies, and is sometimes rendered,
Isa 53:5; these must be not soft but hard words, not gentle reproofs, which being given and taken in love, will not break the head, but calumnies and reproaches falsely cast, and with great severity, and frequently, which break the heart. See Ps 69:20.

{c} Nwygt "defatigabitis", Schmidt, Michaelis. {d} ynnwakdt "obtundetis", Vatablus, Piscator, Schmidt; so Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 19:3

Ver. 3. These ten times have ye reproached me,.... Referring not to ten sections or paragraphs, in which they had done it, as Jarchi; or to the five speeches his friends, in which their reproaches were doubled; or to Job's words, and their answer, as Saadiah; for it does not denote an exact number of their reproaches, which Job was not so careful to count; but it signifies that he had been many times reproached by them; so Aben Ezra, and in which sense the phrase is often used, see Ge 31:7; it is the lot of good men in all ages to be reproached by carnal and profane sinners, on account of religion, and for righteousness' sake, as Christians are for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; and which Moses esteemed greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt; but to be reproached by friends, and that as an hypocrite and a wicked man, as Job was, must be very cutting; and this being often repeated, as it was an aggravation of the sin of his friends, so likewise of his affliction and patience:

ye are not ashamed, [so that] ye make yourselves strange to me; they looked shy at him; would not be free and friendly with him, but carried it strange to him, and seemed to have their affections alienated from him. There should not be a strangeness in good men one to another, since they are not aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, to the grace of God, and communion with him; since they are fellow citizens, and of the household of God; belong to the same city, share in the same privileges, are of the same family, children of the same father, and brethren one of another, members of the same body, heirs of the same grace and glory, and are to dwell together in heaven to all eternity; wherefore they should not make themselves strange to each other, but should speak often, kindly, and affectionately, one to another, and freely converse together about spiritual things; should pray with one another, and build up each other on their most holy faith, and by love serve one another, and do all good offices mutually that lie in their power, and bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law Christ: but, instead of this, Job's friends would scarcely look at him, much less speak one kind word to him; yea, they "hardened [themselves] against" him, as some {e} render the word; had no compassion on him or pity for him in his distressed circumstances, which their relation to him obliged unto, and was due unto him on the score of friendship; nay, they "mocked" at him, which is the sense of the word, according to Ben Gersom {f}; and of this he had complained before, Job 12:4; and with some {g} it has the signification of impudence and audaciousness, from the sense of the word in the Arabic language, see **Isa 3:9**; as if they behaved towards him in a very impudent manner: or, though they "knew" him, as the Targum paraphrases it, yet they were "not ashamed" to reproach him; though they knew that he was a man that feared God; they knew his character and conversation before his all afflictions came on, and yet traduced him as an hypocrite and a wicked man. Whatever is sinful, men should be ashamed of, and will be sooner or later; not to be ashamed thereof is an argument of great hardness and impenitence; and among other things it becomes saints to be ashamed of their making themselves strange to one another. Some render it interrogatively {h}, "are ye not ashamed?" &c. you may well be ashamed, if you are not; this is put in order to make them ashamed.

{e} yl wrkht "indurastis facies vestras contra me", Vatablus; so Broughton. {f} "Erubescitis subsannare me", Pagninus. {g} Drusius; so Schultens. {h} So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Job 19:4

Ver. 4. And be it indeed [that] I have erred,.... Which is a concession for argument's sake, but not an acknowledgment that he had erred; though it is possible he might have erred, and it is certain he did in some things, though not in that respect with which he was charged; "humanum est errare", all men are subject to mistakes, good men may err; they may err in judgment, or from the truth in some respect, and be carried away for a while and to some degree with the error the wicked, though they shall be turned from it again; they may err in practice, and wander from the way of God's commandments; and indeed their strayings and aberrations of this sort are so many, that David says, "who can understand his errors?" Ps 19:12; and they may err in words, or make a mistake in speech; but then no man should be made an offender for a word for he must be a perfect man that is free from mistakes of this kind: now Job argues that supposing this to be his case in any of the above instances; yet, says he,

mine error remaineth with myself; I only am chargeable with it, and answerable for it; it is nothing to you, and why should you trouble yourselves about it? it will not be imputed to you, nor will you suffer on account of it; or, admitting I have imbibed an error, I do not publish it abroad; I keep it to myself; it lies and lodges in my own breast, and nobody is the worse for it: or "let it remain", or "lodge with me" {k}; Why should my mistakes be published abroad, and all the world be made acquainted with them? or else this expresses his resolution to abide by what his friends called an error; and then the so is, if this is an error which I have asserted, that God afflicts both good and bad men, and that afflictions are no argument of a man's being an hypocrite and a wicked man, I am determined to continue in it; I will not give it up, I will hold it fast; it shall remain with me as a principle never to be departed from; or it may be rather his meaning is, that this notion he had imbibed would remain with him, and was likely to do so, for anything they had said, or could say to the contrary.

{k} Nylt yta "mecum maneat", Beza; to the same sense Mercerus, Schmidt, Junius and Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 19:5

Ver. 5. If indeed ye will magnify [yourselves] against me,.... Look and talk big, set up themselves for great folk, and resolve to run him down; open their mouths wide against him and speak great swelling words in a blustering manner; or magnify what they called an error in him, and set it out in the worst light they could:

and plead against me my reproach; his affliction which he was reproached with, and was pleaded against him as an argument of his being a wicked man; if therefore they were determined to go on after this manner, and insist on this kind of proof, then he would have them take what follows.

Job 19:6

Ver. 6. Know now that God hath overthrown me,.... He would have them take notice that all his afflictions were from the hand of God; and therefore should take care to what they imputed any acts of his, whose ways are unsearchable, and the reasons of them not to be found out; and therefore, if a wrong construction should be put upon them, which may be easily done by weak sighted men, it must be displeasing to him. Job had all along from the first ascribed his afflictions to God, and he still continued to do so; he saw his hand in them all; whoever were the instruments, it was God that had overthrown him, or cast him down from an high to a very low estate; that had taken away his substance, his children, and his wealth: or "hath perverted me" {l}; not that God had made him perverse, or was the cause or occasion of any perverseness in him, either in his words or in his actions, or had perverted his cause, and the judgment of it; Job could readily answer to those questions of Bildad, "doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?" and say, no, he doth not; but he is to be understood in the same sense as the church is, when she says, see **La 3:9**; "he hath made my path crooked"; where the same word is used as here; and both she and Job mean that God had brought them into cross, crooked, and afflictive dispensations:

and hath compassed me with his net; and which also designs affliction, which is God's net, which he has made, ordained, and makes use of; which he lays for his people, and takes them in, and draws them to himself, and prevents them committing sin, and causes to issue in their good; see **La 1:13**.

{l} yntwe "pervertit me", Montanus, Mercerus; so Vatablus, Drusius, Schultens.

Job 19:7

Ver. 7. Behold, I cry out of wrong,.... Or of "violence" {m}, or injury done him by the Sabeans and Chaldeans upon his substance, and by Satan upon his health; this he cried out and complained of in prayer to God, and of it as it were in open court, as a violation of justice, and as being dealt very unjustly with:

but I am not heard; his prayer was not heard; he could get no relief, nor any redress of his grievances, nor any knowledge of the reasons of his being thus used; see **Hab 1:2**;

I cry aloud, but [there is] no judgment; notwithstanding his vehement and importunate requests; and which were repeated time after time, that there might be a hearing of his cause; that it might be searched into and tried, that his innocence might be cleared, and justice done him, and vengeance taken on those that wronged him; but he could not obtain it; there was no time appointed for judgment, no court of judicature set, nor any to judge. Now seeing this was the case, that the hand of God was in all his afflictions; that he had complained to him of the injury done him; and that he had most earnestly desired his cause might be heard, and the reasons given why he was thus used, but could get no answer to all this; therefore it became them to be cautious and careful of what they said concerning the dealings of God with him, and to what account they placed them; of which he gives a particular enumeration in the following verses.

{m} omx "violentiam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c. "injuriam", Montanus.

Job 19:8

Ver. 8. He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass,.... A metaphor taken from travellers, who not only meet with obstacles and obstructions in their way, which make it difficult; but sometimes with such enclosures and fences, that they are at a full stop, and cannot pass on, and know not what course to steer: the people of God are not inhabitants of this world, but pilgrims, strangers, and sojourners in it, and travellers through it; they are bound for another country, and are travelling to it; and though their way for far most part is indeed troublesome, but generally passable, or made so; yet sometimes not only is their way hedged up with afflictions, and they hedged about with them, that they cannot easily get out, and get through and pass on; and it is with much difficulty, and with being much scratched and torn, they do brush through; but they also at other times find God has built up a wall against them, and enclosed them with hewn stones, and so fenced up their way that they cannot pass on; such difficulties present as seem insurmountable, and they are at a standstill, and know not what way to take; which was now Job's case, see **La 3:5**; and this may not only respect the way of his walk in this world, but his way to God, either to the throne of his grace, or the tribunal of his justice: the

way to God, as on a throne of grace, is only through Christ, the living way; which, though more clearly revealed under the Gospel dispensation, and therefore called a new way, yet was known under the former dispensation, and made use of; in which saints may have access to God with boldness and confidence: but sometimes this way seems by unbelief to be fenced up, though it is always open; and especially when God hides his face, and is not to be seen, nor is it known where to find him, and how to come up to his seat; and which also was Job's case,
Job 23:3; and whereas he was very desirous of having his cause heard and tried at the tribunal of God, his way was so shut up, that he could not obtain what he so much desired, and knew not therefore how to proceed, and what course to take:

and he hath set darkness in my paths; and was like a traveller in a very dark night, that cannot see his way, and knows not what step to take next; so good men, though they walk not in the ways of darkness, in a moral sense, as unregenerate men do; yet even while they are walking in the good ways of truth and holiness, and while they are passing through this world, God sometimes withdraws the light of his countenance from them, so that they walk in darkness, and have no light, which is very uncomfortable walking; and when God may be said to put darkness into their paths, he not granting them the light of grace and comfort they have sometimes enjoyed; and so it is with them when under such dark dispensations of Providence, as that they cannot see the end of God in leading them in such ways; and then their case is such as it now was Job's; that they cannot see any way of getting out of it; as the Israelites at the Red sea, and Paul and the mariners when in a storm, and all hope of being saved was gone.

Job 19:9

Ver. 9. He hath stripped me of my glory,.... The metaphor of a traveller may be still continued, who falling among thieves is stripped of his clothes, to which the allusion may be: Job was not stripped of his glory in a spiritual sense, not of the glorious robe of Christ's righteousness, nor of the graces of the Spirit, which makes saints all glorious within; but in a civil sense, and is to be understood not merely of his rich apparel, or of his robe, which he might wear as a civil magistrate, as an ensign of honour, and which made him look glorious; but either of his wealth, riches, and substance, which are a man's glory, and which he too often and too much glories in, though Job might not; see Ps 49:16; or of his children, **Ho 9:11** **Es 5:11**; and indeed of everything that made him look magnificent among men; as an abundance of this world's good, a numerous family, fine clothes, sumptuous living, and a stately palace; all which Job might have had, but was now stripped of all by one means or another; and whoever were the instruments, he ascribes it all to God, as being according to his sovereign will and pleasure; and these things are very properly and significantly expressed by clothes a man is stripped of, because they are outward things, as garments are, adorn and make externally glorious, as they do, and of which a man may be as soon and as easily deprived as to be stripped of his clothes by one or more of superior power to him:

and taken the crown [from] my head: meaning much the same as before, either his wealth and riches, which are the crown of a wise man, Pr 14:24; or his children, which are the crown of old then, Pr 17:6; or everything that gave him honour, reputation, and esteem with men; all was taken away from him, and his honour laid in the dust. Some from hence have wrongly concluded that Job was a king, and wore a royal diadem, of which he was now deprived, mistaking him for Jobab, a king of Edom, Ge 36:33; but he had and wore a better diadem, and which he did not lose, but held fast, even his righteousness, justice, and integrity, Job 29:14; and much less could the crown of life, righteousness, and glory, to which he was entitled, be taken from him.

Job 19:10

Ver. 10. He hath destroyed me on every side,.... To be "troubled on every side" is much, as the apostles were, **2Co 4:8**; but to be destroyed on every side, and all around, is more, and denotes utter destruction; it may have respect to the rein of his substance and family, which were all demolished at once; his oxen and asses, which were on one side, his camels on other, his sheep on another, and his children on another, and all destroyed in one day, and perhaps in a few hours; and also to his body, which God had made, and had fashioned together round about; but now he had suffered it to be smitten with ulcers from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet; and this earthly tabernacle of his was demolishing on every side, and just falling down; for the allusion is either to the demolition of a building, or to the rooting up of a tree, and so continued in the next clause; comparing himself to a tree, that is dug about on all sides, and its roots laid bare, and these and all their fibres cut off, so that it is utterly destroyed from growing any more, but becomes dead; and this Job thought to be his case:

and I am gone; or am a dead man, just going out of the world, the way of all flesh; and because of the certainty of it, and of its being very quickly, in a few minutes, as it were, he speaks of it as if it already was: wherefore it follows,

and my hope he hath removed like a tree; not like a tree that is cut down to its roots, which remain in the ground, and may sprout out again, Job 14:7; nor like a tree that is taken up with its roots, and removed to another place, and planted in another soil, where it may grow as well or better; but like a tree cut off from its roots, or pulled up by the roots, and laid upon the ground, when there can be no hope of its ever growing again; and so the hope of Job was like that; not his hope of salvation, of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal life, which was strong and firm, Job 13:15; nor can a good and well grounded hope be removed; not the grace of hope, which is an abiding one; nor the ground of hope, which is Christ and his righteousness, upon which hope, as an anchor, being cast, is sure and steadfast; nor the object of hope, eternal glory and happiness laid up in heaven: but this is to be interpreted of Job's hope of a restoration to outward happiness, which his friends would have had him entertain, in case of repentance and reformation; but Job, as he was not sensible of his need of the one, as his friends understood it, he had no hope of the other, see **Job 6:11**.

Job 19:11

Ver. 11. He hath also kindled his wrath against me,.... In this and some following verses the metaphor is taken from a state of warfare, in which enemies are engaged in an hostile way, Job 19:12; in which way Job apprehended God was come forth against him; he imagined that the wrath of God, which is comparable to fire for its force and fury, was kindled against him; that it began to appear, and was bursting out in a flame upon him, and all around him, to consume him; he thought his afflictions were in wrath, which is often the mistaken apprehension of good men, see Ps 38:1; and that the terrors of it were set in battle array against him, **Job 6:4**;

and he counted me unto him as [one of] his enemies; all men are by nature enemies to God, yea, enmity itself, and so are his own people while unregenerate, until the enmity of their hearts is slain, and they are reconciled to God by his spirit and grace; but as Job was truly a gracious man, and possessed of the fruits of the spirit, he must among the rest of his graces have the love of God in his heart; and he was sensible and conscious to himself that he was no enemy to God, and could appeal to him, as the searcher of hearts, that he knew he loved him; nay, he could not believe that God reckoned him his enemy, when he had given such a testimony of him, and of his fear of him, that there was none like him; and when Job so strongly trusted in him for salvation, and believed he should enjoy him for ever: but his sense is, that God treated him, by afflicting him in the manner he did, as if he was one of his enemies; had he really been one, he could not have used him, he thought, more roughly and severely; so that, judging according to the outward appearance of things, it might be concluded, as it seems it was by his friends, that he was a wicked man, an hypocrite, an enemy to God and godliness; but whereas Job thought that God dealt with him as with an enemy, he was mistaken; since when God afflicts his people, he deals with them as with sons, Heb 12:7.

Job 19:12

Ver. 12. His troops come together,.... Afflictions which are many, and of which it may be said, as was at the birth of God, who had his name from the word here used, "a troop cometh": Ge 30:11; and these sometimes come together, or follow so quick one upon another, that there is scarce any interval between them, as did Job's afflictions; and they are God's hosts, his troops, his soldiers, which are at his command; and he says to them, as the centurion did to his, to the one, Go, and he goes, and to another, Come, and it comes:

and raise up their way against me; as an army, when it comes against a place, throws up a bank to raise their artillery upon, that they may play it to greater advantage; or make a broad causeway, for the soldiers to march abreast against it; or an high cast up way, as the word {y} signifies, over a ditch or dirty place in a hollow, that they may the better pass over: some read it, "they raise up their way upon me" {z}; he opposing and standing in the way was crushed down by them, and trampled upon, and over whom they passed as on an highway, and in a beaten path; see Isa 51:23; but most render it, "against me"; for Job looked upon all his afflictions, as Jacob did Ge 42:36, to be against him, to militate against him, and threaten him with ruin, when they were all working for him, even for his good:

and encamp round about my tabernacle: as an army round about a city when besieging it. Job may have respect to the tabernacle of his body, as that is sometimes so called, **2Co 5:1**; and to the diseases of it; which being a complication, might be said to encamp about him, or surround him on all sides.

{y} wloyw "aggerant", Cocceius, Schultens; "straverunt", Montanus, Schmidt;

a hlom "via strata et elevata", Mercerus, Drusius. {z} yle "super me", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Schmidt, Michaelis.

Job 19:13

Ver. 13. He hath put my brethren far from me,.... As it is one part of business in war to cut off all communication between the enemy and their confederates and auxiliaries, and to hinder them of all the help and assistance from them they can; so Job here represents God dealing with him as with an enemy, and therefore keeps at a distance from him all such from whom he might expect comfort and succour, as particularly his brethren; by whom may be meant such who in a natural relation are strictly and properly brethren; for such Job had, as appears from
Job 42:11; who afterwards paid him a visit, and showed brotherly love to him; but for the present the affliction that God laid upon him had such an influence on theft, as to cause them to stand aloof off, and not come near him, and show any regard unto him; and as this was the effect of the afflicting hand of God, Job ascribes it to him, and which added to his affliction; see Ps 69:8;

and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me; such as knew him in the time of his prosperity, and frequently visited him, and conversed with him, and he with them; but now, things having taken a different turn in his outward circumstances, they carried it strange to him, as if they had never been acquainted with him: "si fueris felix", &c.

Job 19:14

Ver. 14. My kinsfolk have failed,.... Or "ceased" {a}, not to be, or that they were dead, which is sometimes the sense of the word; but they ceased from visiting him, or doing any good office for him; those that were "near" {b} him, as the word used signifies; that were near him in relation, and were often near him in place, in his own house, in company and conversation with him, now ceased to be near him in affection; or to come nigh him, to converse with him and comfort him, and sympathize with him, which might be expected from persons nearly related:

and my familiar friends have forgotten me; such as were well known to him, and he to them, and who not long ago were very loving and friendly to him, and very freely and familiarly conversed with him; but now they forgot him;

the friendship that subsisted between them, the friendliness with which they had visited him, and the favours they had received from him; they so slighted and neglected him, that it seemed as if he was forgotten, as a dead man, out of mind; or as if they did not remember that there ever was, or at least that there now was, such a man in the world as Job: these could not be true friends; for "a friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity", Pr 17:17; a real friend loves, and continues to love, in adversity as well as in prosperity; and such an one, who sometimes sticks closer to a man than a brother, is born and designed to be of service to him in a time of trouble; but so it was ordered by divine Providence, and according to the will of God, that Job should meet with such treatment from his brethren, relations, acquaintance, and familiar friends, for the trial of his faith and patience.

{a} wldx "desierunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Drusius, Piscator, Schmidt, Michaelis; "cessant", Schultens. {b} ybwrq "propinqui mei", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Job 19:15

Ver. 15. They that dwell in mine house,.... Not his neighbours, as the Septuagint; for though they dwelt near his house, they did not dwell in it; nor inmates and sojourners, lodgers with him, to whom he let out apartments in his house; this cannot be supposed to have been his case, who was the greatest man in all the east; nor even tenants, that hired houses and lands of him; for the phrase is not applicable to them; it designs such who were inhabitants in his house. Job amidst all his calamities had an house to dwell in; it is a tradition mentioned by Jerom {c}, that Job's house was in Carnea, a large village in his time, in a corner of Batanea, beyond the floods of Jordan; and he had people dwelling with him in it, who are distinct from his wife, children, and servants after mentioned; and are either "strangers" {d} as the word sometimes signifies, he had taken into his house in a way of hospitality, and had given them lodging, and food, and raiment, as the light of nature and law of God required, De 10:18; or else proselytes, of whom this word {e} is sometimes used, whom he had been the instrument of converting from idolatry, superstition, and profaneness, and of gaining them over to the true religion; and whom he had taken into his house, to instruct them more and more in the ways of God, such as were the trained servants in Abraham's family: these, says he,

and my maids, count me for a stranger; both the one and the other, the strangers he took out of the streets, and the travellers he opened his doors unto, and entertained in a very generous and hospitable manner; the proselytes he had made, and with whom he had taken so much pains, and to whom he had shown so much kindness and goodness, and been the means of saving their souls from death; and his maidens he had hired into his house, to do the business of it, and who ought to have been obedient and respectful to him, and whose cause he had not despised, but had treated them with great humanity and concern; the Targum wrongly renders the word, "my concubines"; yet these one and another looked upon him with an air of the utmost indifference, not as if he was the master of the house, but a stranger in it, as one that did not belong unto it, and they had scarce ever seen with their eyes before; which was very ungrateful, and disrespectful to the last degree; and if they reckoned him a stranger to God, to his grace, to true religion and godliness, this was worse still; and especially in the proselytes of his house, who owed their conversion, their light and knowledge in divine things, to him as an instrument:

I am an alien in their sight; as a foreigner, one of another kingdom and nation, of a different habit, speech, religion, and manners; they stared at him as if they had never seen him before, as some strange object to be looked at, an uncommon spectacle, that had something in him or about him unusual and frightful; at least contemptible and to be disdained, and not to be spoke to and familiarly conversed with, but to be shunned and despised.

{c} De loc. Heb. fol. 89. M. {d} yrg "peregrini", Schmidt, Schultens. {e} Apud Rabbinos, passim.

Job 19:16

Ver. 16. I called my servant,.... His manservant, whom he had hired into his house, and who waited upon his person, and had been his trusty and faithful servant, and was dear unto him, and he had shown him much respect and kindness in the time of his prosperity; him he called to him, to do this and that and the other thing for him as usual; and of whose assistance and service he might stand in more need, being so greatly afflicted in body as well as in other things; and who ought to have been obedient to his call in all things, and have served him with all readiness and cheerfulness, with all heartiness, sincerity, integrity, and faithfulness; and given him the same honour and reverence as before; but instead of all this, it is observed,

and he gave [me] no answer; whether he would or would not do what he ordered him to do; he took no notice of him, he turned a deaf ear to him, and his back upon him; he came not near him, but kept his place where he was, or walked off without showing any regard to what he said to him; he neither answered him by words, nor by deeds; neither signified his readiness to do what he was ordered, nor did it. In some cases it is criminal in servants to answer again, when they thwart and contradict their masters, or reply in a saucy, surly, and impudent manner; but when they are spoke to about their master's business, it becomes them to answer in a decent, humble, and respectable way, declaring their readiness to do their master's will and pleasure:

I entreated him with my mouth; which is an aggravation of his insolence and disobedience; such was the low condition Job was reduced unto, and such the humility of his mind under his present circumstances, that he laid aside the authority of a master, and only entreated his servant, and begged it as if it was a favour, to do this or the other for him; nor did he signify this by a look and cast of his eye, or by a nod of his head, or by the direction of his hand; but with his mouth he spake unto him, and let him know what he would have done; and this not in an authoritative, haughty, and imperious manner; but with good words, and in submissive language, as it was something he was beholden to his servant for, rather than obedience to be performed.

Job 19:17

Ver. 17. My breath is strange to my wife,.... Being corrupt and unsavoury, through some internal disorder; see Job 17:1; so that she could not bear to come nigh him, to do any kind deed for him; but if this was his case, and his natural breath was so foul, his friends would not have been able to have been so long in the same room with him, and carry on so long a conversation with him; rather therefore it may signify the words of his mouth, his speech along with his breath, which were very disagreeable to his wife; when upon her soliciting him to curse God and die, he told her she talked like one of the foolish women; and when he taught her to expect evil as well as good at the hand of God, and to bear afflictions patiently, or else the sense may be, "my spirit" {f}, his vital spirit, his life, was wearisome and loathsome to his wife; she was tired out with him, with hearing his continual groans and complaints, and wished to be rid of him, and that God would take away his life: or else, as some render it, "my spirit is strange [to me], because of my wife" {g}; and then the meaning is, that Job was weary of his own life, he loathed it, and could have been glad to have it taken from him, because of the scoffs and jeers of his wife at him, her brawls and quarrels with him, and solicitations of him to curse God and renounce religion:

though I entreated her for the children's [sake] of mine own body; this clause creates a difficulty with interpreters, since it is generally thought all Job's children were dead. Some think that only his elder children were destroyed at once, and that he had younger ones at home with him, which he here refers to; but this does not appear: others suppose these were children of his concubines; but this wants proof that he had any concubine; and besides an entreaty for the sake of such children could have no influence upon his proper wife: others take them for grandchildren, and who, indeed, are sometimes called children; but then they could not with strict propriety be called the children of his body; and for the same reason it cannot be meant of such that were brought up in his house, as if they were his children; nor such as were his disciples, or attended on him for instruction: but this may respect not any children then living, but those he had had; and the sense is, that Job entreated his wife, not for the use of the marriage bed, as some suggest {h}; for it can hardly be thought, that, in such circumstances in which he was, there should be any desire of this kind; but to do some kind deed for him, as the dressing of his ulcers, &c. or such things which none but a wife could do well for him; and this he entreated for the sake of the children he had had by her, those pledges of their conjugal affection; or rather, since the word has the signification of deploring, lamenting, and bemoaning, the clause may be thus rendered, "and I lamented the children of my body" {i}; he had none of those indeed to afflict him; and his affliction was, that they were taken away from him at once in such a violent manner; and therefore he puts in this among his family trials; or this may be an aggravation of his wife's want of tenderness and respect unto him; that his breath should be unsavoury, his talk disagreeable, and his sighs and moans be wearisome to her, when the burden of his song, the subject of his sorrowful complaints, was the loss of his children; in which it might have been thought she would have joined with him, being equally concerned therein.

{f} yxwr "spiritus meus", Junius & Tremellius, Vatablus, Schmidt, Schultens; "anima mea", Cocceius. {g} ytval "propter uxorem meam", Schmidt. {h} R. Levi Ben Gersom; so some in Vatablus. {i} ytwnxw "deploro", Cocceius; "et miserans lugeo", Schmidt; "et miseret me", Michaelis; "comploro", Schultens.

Job 19:18

Ver. 18. Yea, young children despised me,.... Having related what he met with within doors from those in his own house, the strangers and proselytes in it, his maidens and menservants, and even from his own wife, he proceeds to give an account of what befell him without; young children, who had learned of their parents, having observed them to treat him with contempt, mocked and scoffed at him, and said, there sits old Job, that nasty creature, with his boils and ulcers; or using some such contemptuous expression, as "wicked man"; so some translate the word {k}; he was scorned and condemned by profane persons, who might tease him with his religion, and ask, where was his God? and bid him observe the effect and issue of his piety and strict course of living, and see what it was all come to, or what were the fruits of it: the Vulgate Latin version renders it "fools", that is, not idiots, but such as are so in a moral sense, and so signifies as before; and as these make mock at sin, and a jest of religion, it is no wonder that they despised good men: the word is rendered by a learned man {l}, the "most needy clients", who were dependent on him, and were supported by him; but this coincides with Job 19:15;

I arose, and they spoke against me: he got up from his seat, either to go about his business, and do what he had to do; and they spoke against him as he went along, and followed him with their reproaches, as children will go after persons in a body they make sport of; or he rose up in a condescending manner to them, when they ought to have rose up to him, and reverenced and honoured him; and this he did to win upon them, and gain their good will and respect; or to admonish them, chastise and correct them, for their insolence and disrespect to him; but it signified nothing, they went on calling him names, and speaking evil against him, and loading him with scoffs and reproaches.

{k} Mylywe "iniqui", Pagninus, Montanus; "homines nequam", Tigurine version; so Ben Gersom. {l} "Clientes egentissimi", Schultens.

Job 19:19

Ver. 19. All my inward friends abhorred me,.... Or "the men of my secret" {m}; who were so very familiar with him, that he imparted the secrets of his heart, and the most private affairs of life, unto them, placing so much confidence in them, and treating them as his bosom friends; for this is always reckoned a great instance of friendship,
Job 15:15; and yet their minds were set against him; their affections were alienated from him; they abhorred the sight of him, and declined all conversation with him, even all of them; not one showed respect unto him:

and they whom I loved; or "this whom I loved" {n}; this and that and the other particular friend, that he loved more than others: though all men are to be loved as the creatures of God, and as fellow creatures, and especially good men, even all the saints; yet there are some that engross a greater share of love than others, among natural and spiritual relations; as Joseph was more loved by his father than the rest of his children; and, even by our Lord, John was loved more than the other disciples: and so Job, he had some particular friends that he loved above others; and yet these not only turned away from him in the time of his adversity, and turned their backs on him, and would have nothing to say to him for his comfort, nor afford him any relief of any kind in his distress, but

are turned against men; were turned against him, and became his enemies; and, as David says of some that he had a love for, for my love, "they are my adversaries", Ps 109:4.

{m} ydwo ytm "viri secreti mei", Montanus; "homines secreti mei", Cocceius, Schmidt; "viri arcani mei", Beza, Mercerus; "homines arcani mei consilii", Michaelis. {n} xzw "et quem", V. L. "et hie seu is quem", Mercerus, Drusius.

Job 19:20

Ver. 20. My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh,.... Or, "as to my flesh" {o}, as Mr. Broughton and others render the words; as his bones used to stick to his flesh, and were covered with it, now his flesh being consumed and wasted away with his disease, they stuck to his skin, and were seen through it; he was reduced to skin and bone, and was a mere skeleton, what with the force of his bodily disorder, and the grief of his mind through the treatment he met with from God and men, see **La 4:8**;

and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth; meaning not, as some understand it, his lips, which covered his teeth; for those cannot be properly called the skin of them; rather the fine polish of the teeth, which fortifies them against the hurt and damage they would receive by what is ate and drank; though it seems best to interpret it of the skin of the gums, in which the teeth are set; and the sense is, that Job had escaped with his life, but not with a whole skin, his skin was broken all over him, with the sores and ulcers upon him, see **Job 7:5**; only the skin of his teeth was preserved, and so Mr. Broughton renders it, "I am whole only in the skin of my teeth"; everywhere else his skin was broken; so the Targum, "I am left in the skin of my teeth."

Some have thought that Satan, when he smote Job from head to feet with ulcers, spared his mouth, lips, and teeth, the instruments of speech, that he might therewith curse God, which was the thing he aimed at, and proposed to bring him to, by getting a grant from God to afflict him in the manner he did.

{o} yrvbbw yrweb "cuti meae ut carni meae", Tremellius, in one edition of his version.

Job 19:21

Ver. 21. Have pity upon me, have pity upon me,.... Instead of calumny and censure, his case called for compassion; and the phrase is doubled, to denote the vehemence of his affliction, the ardency of his soul, the anguish of his spirits, the great distress he was in, and the earnest desire he had to have pity shown him; and in which he may be thought not only to make a request to his friends for it, but to give them a reproof for want of it:

O ye my friends; as they once showed themselves to be, and now professed they were; and since they did, pity might be reasonably expected from them; for even common humanity, and much more friendship, required it of them, that they should be pitiful and courteous, and put on bowels of mercy and kindness, and commiserate his sad estate, and give him all the succour, relief, and comfort they could, see **Job 6:14**;

for the hand of God has touched me; his afflicting hand, which is a mighty one; it lay hard and heavy upon him, and pressed him sore; for though it was but a touch of his hand, it was more than he could well bear; for it was the touch of the Almighty, who "toucheth the hills, and they smoke", Ps 104:32; and if he lays his hand ever so lightly on houses of clay, which have their foundation in the dust, they cannot support under the weight of it, since they are crushed before the moth, or as easily as a moth is crushed.

Job 19:22

Ver. 22. Why do ye persecute me as God,.... As if they were in his stead, or had the same power and authority over him, who is a sovereign Being, and does what he pleases with his creatures, and is not accountable to any for what he does; but this is not the case of men, nor are they to imitate God in all things; what he does is not in all things a warrant to do the like, or to be pleaded and followed as a precedent by them; they should be merciful as he is merciful, but they are not to afflict and distress his people because he does, and which he does for wise ends and reasons; for such a conduct is resented by him, see **Zec 1:15**. God persecuted or pursued and followed Job with one affliction after another, and hunted him as a fierce lion does his prey, Job 10:16; but this was not a reason why they should do the same. Some read the words, "why do ye persecute me as those?" {p} you that profess to be my friends, why do ye persecute me as those before mentioned, as those wicked men? or "with those", with such reproaches and calumnies; but the original will not bear it:

and are not satisfied with my flesh? It was not enough that he was afflicted in his body, and his flesh was ulcerated from head to feet, and was clothed with worms and clods of dust; they were not content that his children, which were his own flesh, were tore away from him, and destroyed; and that his substance, which is sometimes called the flesh of men, see **Mic 3:3**; was devoured, and he was spoiled and plundered of it; but they sought to afflict his mind, to wound his spirit, by their heavy charges and accusations, by their calumnies and reproaches, and hard censures of him; he suggests, that they dealt with him more cruelly than savage beasts, who, when they have got their prey, are satisfied with their flesh; but they, who would be thought to be his friends, were not satisfied with his.

{p} Ben Gersom.

Job 19:23

Ver. 23. O that my words were now written!.... Not his things {q}, as some render it, his affairs, the transactions of his life; that so it might appear with what uprightness and integrity he had lived, and was not the bad man he was thought to be; nor the words he had delivered already, the apologies and defences he had made for himself, the arguments he had used in his own vindication, and the doctrines respecting God and his providence which he had laid down and asserted; and was so far from being ashamed of them, or retracting them, that he wishes they had been taken down in writing, that posterity might read and judge of the controversy between him and his friends; but rather the words he was about to deliver in Job 19:25, expressing his faith in Christ, in the resurrection of the dead, and in a future state of happiness and glory; these he wishes were "written", that they might remain as a standing testimony of his faith and hope; for what is written abides, when that which is only spoken is soon forgot, and not easily recalled:

O that they were printed in a book! not written on loose sheets, which might be lost, but in a book bound up, or rolled up in a volume, as was the custom of ancient times; though this cannot be understood of printing properly taken, which has not been in use but little more than five hundred years, but of engrossing, as of statutes and decrees in public records; and the word for "statutes comes" from this that is here used.

{q} ylm "res meae", Polychronius apud Pinedam in loc.

Job 19:24

Ver. 24. That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!] Or "that they were written with an iron pen and lead, that they were cut or hewn out in a rock for ever"; not with both an iron and leaden pen, or pencil; for the marks of the latter are not durable, and much less could it be used on a rock according to our version; but the sense seems to be, that they might be written with an iron pen, which was used in writing, Jer 17:1; upon a sheet of lead, as the Vulgate Latin version; for it was usual in ancient times, as Pliny {q} and others relate, for books to be made of sheets of lead, and for public records to be engrossed, as in plates of brass, so sometimes in sheets of lead, for the perpetuity of them; or else it refers to the cutting out of letters on stones, as the law was on two tables of stone, and filling up the incisions or cuttings with lead poured into them, as Jarchi suggests: so Pliny, {r} speaks of stone pillars in Arabia and the parts adjacent, with unknown characters on them; also this may have respect to the manner of writing on mountains and rocks formerly, as the Israelites at or shortly after the times of Job did. There are now, in the wilderness through which the Israelites passed, hills called Gebel-el-mokatab, the written mountains, engraved with unknown ancient characters, out into the hard marble rock; supposed to be the ancient Hebrew, written by the Israelites for their diversion and improvement which are observed by some modern travellers {s}. In the last age, Petrus a Valle and Thomas a Novaria saw them; the latter of which transcribed some of them, some of which seemed to be like to the Hebrew letters now in use, and others to the Samaritans; and some agreed with neither {t}; and Cosmoss the Egyptian {u}, who wrote A. D. 535, declares on his own testimony, that all the mansions of the Hebrews in the wilderness were to be seen in stones with Hebrew letters engraved on them, which seemed to be an account of their journeys in it. The inscription on a stone at Horeb, brought from thence by the above mentioned Thomas a Novaria, and which Kircher {w} has explained thus,

"God shall make a virgin conceive, and she shall bring forth a son,"

is thought by learned men to be of a later date, and the explication of it is not approved of by them. {x} Job may have in view his sepulchre hewn out of a rock, as was usual, and as that was our Lord was laid in; and so his wish might be that the following words were his funeral epitaph, and that they might be cut out and inscribed upon his sepulchral monument, his rocky grave; that everyone that passed by might read his strong expressions of faith in a living Redeemer, and the good hope he had of a blessed resurrection.

{q} Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 11. Alex. ab Alex. l. 2. c. 30. Pausaniae Messenica, sive, l. 4. p. 266. & Boeotica, sive, l. 9. p. 588. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. & 29. {s} See a Journal from Cairo, &c. in 1722, p. 45, 46. and Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. ii. p. 171, 181. {t} Antiqu. Eccles. Orient. p. 147. {u} Apud Montfaucon, tom. 2. p. 205. {w} Prodrom. Copt. c. 8. p. 201, 207. {x} Vide Hottinger. Praefat. ad Cipp. Hebr. p. 6, 7, 8. Wagenseil Carmin. Lipman. Confut. p. 429, &c.

Job 19:25

Ver. 25. For I know,.... The particle w, which is sometimes rendered by the copulative "and", by an adversative "but", and sometimes as a causal particle "for", should not be rendered here by either; but as an explanative, "to wit", or "namely", as it is by Noldius {y}; in connection with the preceding words; in which Job wishes some words of his were written in a book, or engrossed on sheets of lead, or were cut out on some rock, and particularly were engraved on his tombstone; "namely", these following, "I know that my Redeemer liveth", &c. and to this agrees Broughton, "how that my Redeemer liveth"; let these be the words written, engraved, and cut out there: by my Redeemer, he means not any mere man that should rise up and vindicate him; for the account of his then living, and of his standing on the earth in the latter day, will not agree with such an one; nor God the Father, to whom the character of a Redeemer is seldom or ever given, nor did he ever appear or stand on earth, nor was his shape seen at any time, **Joh 5:37**; but the Son of God, the Lord

Jesus Christ, who is our "Goel", the word here used, our near kinsman, and so our Redeemer, to whom the right of redemption belonged; and who was spoken of by all the holy prophets, from the beginning of the world, as the Redeemer of his people, who should redeem them from all their sins; from the law, its curses and condemnation; from Satan, and his principalities and powers; from death and hell, and everlasting destruction; and that by giving himself a ransom for them; all which was known in the times of Job, Job 33:24; and known by him, who speaks of him as living; he then existed not only as a divine Person, as he did from all eternity, but in his office capacity as Mediator, and under the character of a Redeemer; for the virtue of his future redemption reached to all the ages before it, from the foundation of the world; besides, the epithet "living" points at him as the "living God", as he is, **Heb 3:12**; and so equal to the work of redemption, and able to redeem, and mighty to save; of whom it is said, not that he has lived, or shall live, but "liveth"; ever lives; and so an expression of the eternity of Christ, who is from everlasting to everlasting, the same today, yesterday, and for ever; and who, though he died in human nature, yet is alive, and lives for evermore; he has life in and of himself, as he is God over all blessed for ever; and has life in him for all his people, as Mediator; and is the author of spiritual life in them, and the donor of eternal life to them; and because he lives, they shall live also. Now Job had an interest in him as the living Redeemer, and knew he had, which is the greatest blessing that can be enjoyed; an interest in Christ is of infinitely more worth than the whole world, and the knowledge of it exceeds all others; this knowledge was not merely speculative, nor only approbational and fiducial, though such Job had, Job 13:15; but the knowledge of assurance of interest; to know Christ as a Redeemer of men, and not our Redeemer, is of no avail; the devils know him to be a Redeemer, but not theirs: men may have an interest in Christ, and as yet not know it; interest is before knowledge; it is neither knowledge nor faith that gives interest, but God of his grace gives both interest and knowledge: and such a knowledge as here expressed is a peculiar favour; it is owing to an understanding given to know him that is true, and that we are in him that is true; and to the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ, and to the testimony which he bears; and such knowledge will support under the greatest afflictions and sorest trials; under the ill usage of friends, and the loss of nearest and dearest relations, and in the views of death and eternity; all which was Job's case:

and [that] he shall stand at the latter [day] upon the earth; appear in the world in human nature; be the seed of the woman, and born of one, be made flesh, and dwell among men, and converse with them, as Jesus did; who stood upon the land of Judea, and walked through Galilee, and went about doing good to the bodies and souls of men; and this was in the last days, and at the end of the world, **Heb 1:1**; as a pledge of this there were frequent appearances of the son of God in an human form to the patriarchs; nor need it seem strange that Job, though not an Israelite, had knowledge of the incarnation of Christ, when it is said to {z} be the opinion of the Indian Brahmans that God often appeared in the form and habit of some great men, and conversed among men; and that Wistnavius, whom, they say, is the second Person of the triune God, had already assumed a body nine times, and sometimes also an human one; and that the same will once more be made by him; and Confucius, the Chinese philosopher {a}, left it in writing, that the Word would be made flesh, and foresaw the year when it would be: or, "he shall rise the last out of the earth" {b}; and so it may respect his resurrection from the dead; he was brought to the dust of death, and was laid in the grave, and buried, in the earth, and was raised out of it; and whose resurrection is of the greatest moment and importance, the justification, regeneration, and resurrection of his people depending on it: but this is not to be understood as if he was the last that should rise from the dead; for he is the firstfruits of them that sleep, and the firstborn from the dead, the first that rose to an immortal life; but that he who, as to his divine nature, is the first and the last; or that, in his state of humiliation, is the last, the meanest, and most abject of men {c}; or rather, who, as the public and federal head of his people, is "the last Adam", 1Co 15:45; and who did rise as such for their justification, which makes the article of his resurrection an unspeakable benefit: or, "he shall stand over the earth in the latter day" {d} in the last times of all, in the close of time, at the end of the world, at his appearing and kingdom, when he shall come to judge the quick and dead; those that will be alive, and those that will be raised from the dead, who will meet him in the air over the earth, and shall be for ever with him; and even then "he shall stand upon the earth"; for it is expressly said, that when he shall come, and all the saints with him, "his feet shall stand on the mount of Olives", Zec 14:4; or, "he shall stand against the earth at the latter days" {e}; in the resurrection morn, and shall exercise his authority over it, and command the earth and sea to give up their dead; and when at his all commanding voice the dead shall come out of their graves, as Lazarus came out of his, he shall stand then upon the dust of the earth, and tread upon it as a triumphant Conqueror, having subdued all his enemies, and now the last enemy, death, is destroyed by the resurrection of the dead: what a glorious and enlarged view had Job of the blessed Redeemer!

{y} ynaw "nempe ego", Nold. Ebr. Concord. Partic. p. 696. No. 1750. {z} Huet. Alnetan. Quaest. l. 2. c. 13. p. 234. {a} Martin. Sinic. Hist. l. 4. p. 131. {b} Mwqy rpe le Nwrxaw "qui postremus ex palvere (terra) surget", Nold. ib.

{c} "Novissimus", i.e. "miserrimus et abjectus", Bolducius; "sic ultimus miserorum", Ciceron. Orat. pro Flacco 24. {d} "Supra pulverem", Cocceius, Schultens. {e} "Adhibebit suam vim pulveri", Tigurine version.

Job 19:26

Ver. 26. And though after my skin [worms] destroy this [body],.... Meaning not, that after his skin was wholly consumed now, which was almost gone, there being scarce any left but the skin of his teeth, Job 19:20; the worms in his ulcers would consume what was left of his body, which scarce deserved the name of a body, and therefore he points to it, and calls it "this", without saying what it was; but that when he should be entirely stripped of his skin in the grave, then rottenness and worms would strip him also of all the rest of his flesh and his bones; by which he expresses the utter consumption of his body by death, and after it in the grave; and nevertheless, though so it would be, he was assured of his resurrection from the dead:

yet in my flesh shall I see God: he believed, that though he should die and moulder into dust in the grave, yet he should rise again, and that in true flesh, not in an aerial celestial body, but in a true body, consisting of flesh, blood, and bones, which spirits have not, and in the same flesh or body he then had, his own flesh and body, and not another's; and so with his fleshly or corporeal eyes see God, even his living Redeemer, in human nature; who, as he would stand upon the earth in that nature, in the fulness of time, and obtain redemption for him, so he would in the latter day appear again, raise him from the dead, and take him to himself, to behold his glory to all eternity: or "out of my flesh" {f}, out of my fleshly eyes; from thence and with those shall I behold God manifest in the flesh, my incarnate God; and if Job was one of those saints that rose when Christ did, as some say {g}, he saw him in the flesh and with his fleshly eyes.

{f} yrvbm "e carne mea", Tigurine version, Mercerus, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt, Schultens; so Gussetius, p. 446. {g} "Suidas in voce" iwb, & Sept. in ch. xlii. 17.

Job 19:27

Ver. 27. Whom I shall see for myself,.... For his pleasure and profit, to his great advantage and happiness, and to his inexpressible joy and satisfaction, see Ps 17:15;

and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; or "a stranger" {h}; these very selfsame eyes of mine I now see with will behold this glorious Person, God in my nature, and not the eyes of another, of a strange body, a body not my own; or as I have seen him with my spiritual eyes, with the eyes of faith and knowledge, as my living Redeemer, so shall I see him with my bodily eyes after the resurrection, and enjoy uninterrupted communion with him, which a stranger shall not; one that has never known anything of him, or ever intermeddled with the joy of saints here, such shall not see him hereafter, at least with pleasure; like Balaam, they may see him, but not nigh, may behold him, but afar off: though "my reins be consumed within me"; or "in my bosom";

[though]; this word may be left out, and be read,

my reins are consumed within me; or, "within my bosom" {i}; and both being the seat of the affections and desires, may signify his most earnest and eager desire after the state of the resurrection of the dead; after such a sight of God in his flesh, of the incarnate Redeemer, he believed he should have, insomuch that it ate up his spirits, as the Psalmist says, zeal for the house of God ate up his,
Ps 69:9; it was not the belief of restoration of health, and to his former outward happiness, and a deliverance from his troubles, and a desire after that, which is here expressed; for he had no faith in that, nor hope, nor expectation of it, as appears by various expressions of his; but much greater, more noble, more refined enjoyments, were experienced by him now, and still greater he expected hereafter; and his words concerning these were what he wished were written, and printed, and engraven; which, if they only respected outward happiness, he would never have desired; and though he had not his wish in his own way, yet his words are written and printed in a better book than he had in his view, and will outlast engravings with an iron pen on sheets of lead, or marble rocks. The Vulgate Latin version seems to incline to this sense,

"this here is laid up in my bosom,"

that is, of seeing God in my flesh; so the Tigurine version, rather as a paraphrase than a version, "which is my only desire".

{h} rz "alienus", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus; "extraneus", Drusius. {i} yqxb "in sinu meo", Pagninus, Montanus,

&c.

Job 19:28

Ver. 28. But ye should say,.... Here Job directs his friends what use they should make of this confession of his faith; they should upon this say within themselves, and to one another,

why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me? Why should we pursue him with hard words, and load him with censures and reproaches, as if he was an hypocrite, when it appears, by what he says, that he has truth in the inward parts, the true grace of God is in him; that he is rooted in the love of God, and in the person of the Redeemer; that he has the Spirit of God in him, and the divine seed which has taken root in him, and brings forth fruit: or that "the root of the word" {k} is in him; the word of God has a place in him, and is become the ingrafted word; the root doctrines, the principal and fundamental truths of religion, are believed and professed by him, such as respect the incarnation of the Messiah, his resurrection from the dead, and coming to judgment, the resurrection of all the dead in the same body, a future state of happiness, in which saints will enjoy the beatific vision; since these things are firmly believed by him, though he may differ from us in some points about the methods of divine Providence, let us cease from persecuting him any further; see
Ro 10:8.

{k} rbd vrv "radix verbi", Montanus, Mercerus, Schmidt, Michaelis; "radix sermonis", Cocceius; "fundamenta negotii salutis", Tigurine version.

Job 19:29

Ver. 29. Be ye afraid of the sword,.... Not of the civil magistrate, nor of a foreign enemy, but of the avenging sword of divine justice; lest God should whet the glittering sword of his justice, and his hand should take hold of judgment, in order to avenge the wrongs of the innocent; unless the other should also be considered as his instruments:

for wrath [bringeth] the punishments of the sword, or "sins of the sword" {l}: the sense is, either that the wrath of men, in persecuting the people of God, puts them upon the commission of such sins as deserve to be punished with the sword, either of the civil magistrate, or of a foreign enemy, or of divine justice; or else the wrath of God brings on more punishments for their sins by means of the sword; and to this sense is the Targum,

"when God is angry for iniquities, he sends those that slay with the sword:"

that ye may know [there is] a judgment; that is executed in the world by the Judge of all the earth, who will do right; and that there is a future judgment after death, unto which everything in this world will be brought, when God will judge the world in righteousness by Christ, whom he has ordained to be Judge of quick and dead; and which will be a righteous judgment, that none can escape; and when, Job suggests, the controversy between him and his friends would be determined; and it would be then seen who was in the right, and who in the wrong; and unto which time he seems willing to refer his cause, and to have no more said about it; but his friends did not choose to take his advice; for Zophar the Naamathite starts up directly; and makes a reply, which is contained in the following chapter.

{1} brx twnwe "iniquitates gladii", Montanus, Schmidt, Michaelis; so Cocceius, Schultens.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 20

Zophar and his friends, not satisfied with Job's confession of faith, he in his turn replies, and in his preface gives his reasons why he made any answer at all, and was so quick in it, Job 20:1; and appeals to Job for the truth of an old established maxim, that the prosperity of wicked men and hypocrites is very short lived,
Job 20:4; and the short enjoyment of their happiness is described by several elegant figures and similes, Job 20:6; such a wicked man being obliged, in his lifetime, to restore his ill gotten goods, and at death to lie down with the sins of his youth, Job 20:10; his sin in getting riches, the disquietude of his mind in retaining them, and his being forced to make restitution, are very beautifully expressed by the simile of a sweet morsel kept in the mouth, and turned to the gall of asps in the bowels, and then vomited up, Job 20:12; the disappointment he shall have, the indigent and strait circumstances he shall be brought into, and the restitution he shall be obliged to make for the oppression of the poor, and the uneasiness he shall feel in his own breast, are set forth in a very strong

light,
Job 20:17; and it is suggested, that not only the hand of wicked men should be upon him, but the wrath of God also, which should seize on him suddenly and secretly, and would be inevitable, he not being able to make his escape from it, and which would issue in the utter destruction of him and his in this world, and that to come,
Job 20:23. And the chapter is, concluded with this observation, that such as before described is the appointed portion and heritage of a wicked man from God, Job 20:29.

Ver. 1. Then answered Zophar the Naamathite,.... Notwithstanding the sad distressed condition Job was in, an account of which is given in the preceding chapter, enough to pierce a heart of stone, notwithstanding his earnest request to his friends to have pity on him, and notwithstanding the noble confession of his faith he had made, which showed him to be a good man, and the excellent advice he gave his friends to cease persecuting him, for their own good, as well as for his peace; yet, regardless of these things, Zophar starts up and makes a reply, and attacks him with as much heat and passion, wrath and anger, as ever, harping upon the same string, and still representing Job as a wicked man and an hypocrite;

and said, as follows.

Job 20:2

Ver. 2. Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer,.... Or "to return" {a} and appear upon the stage again, and enter the lists once more with his antagonist; he suggests as if he had intended to have said no more in this controversy, but observing what Job had said last, could not forbear replying: "therefore" because he had represented him and his friends as cruel persecutors of him, as men devoid of all humanity, pity, and compassion, and endeavoured to terrify them with the punishments of the sword, and the judgment of God to come; these occasioned many "thoughts" in him, and those thoughts obliged him to give an answer; they came in so thick and fast upon him, that out of the abundance, his heart suggested to him he could not but speak, he was full of matter, and the spirit within him, the impulse upon his mind, constrained him to make a reply; and he seems desirous of having it understood that his answer proceeded from thought; that he did not speak without thinking, but had well weighed things in his mind; and what he was about to say was the fruit of close thinking and mature deliberation:

and for [this] I make haste; because his thoughts crowded in upon him, he had a fulness of matter, an impulse of mind, promptitude and readiness to speak on this occasion, and for fear of losing what was suggested to him, he made haste to give in his answer, perhaps observing some other of his friends rising up before him. The Targum is,

"because my sense is in me;"

and so other Jewish writers {b}; be apprehended he had a right sense of things, and understood the matter in controversy full well, and therefore thought it incumbent on him to speak once more in it: Gussetius {c} renders it, "because of my disquietude"; the uneasiness of his mind raised by what Job had said, that he would have them know and consider there was a judgment; and he intimates he had considered it, and was fearful that should he be silent, and make no reply, God would condemn him in judgment for his silence; and therefore he was in a hurry to make answer, and could not be easy without it; and for his reasons for so doing he further explains himself in Job 20:3.

{a} ynwbyvy "reducunt me, q. d. in scenam"; Cocceius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius. {b} Ben Gersom, Bar Tzemach, Sephorno; and so Montanus. {c} Ebr. Comment. p. 246.

Job 20:3

Ver. 3. I have heard the check of my reproach,.... He took it that Job had reproached him and his friends, by representing them as hardhearted men, and persecuting him wrongly in a violent manner; and he had observed the "check" or reproof given for it, by bidding them beware of the sword, and lest the punishment of it should be inflicted on them; and if that should not be the case, yet there was a righteous judgment they could not escape. Now Zophar heard this, but could not hear it with patience; be could not bear that he and his friends should be insulted, as he thought, in this manner; and therefore it was he was in such baste to return an answer; though some {d} think he here pretends to a divine oracle, like that which Eliphaz makes mention of in the beginning of this dispute, **Job 4:12**, &c. which he had from God, and from which he had heard the "correction [of his] reproach" {e}, or a full confutation of the thing Job had reproached him with; and being thus divinely furnished, he thought it his duty to deliver it:

and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer; or his rational spirit, his natural understanding, furnished him at once with an answer; he had such a clear insight into the controversy on foot, and such a full view of it, that he thought himself capable of speaking very particularly to the matter in hand, and to the conviction and confusion of Job; nay, his conscience, or the spirit of his conscience, as Mr. Broughton renders it, not only readily dictated to him what he should say, but obliged him to it; though some think he meant the Holy Spirit of God, by which he would be thought to be inspired; that he "out [of his] understanding" {f}, enlightened by him, caused him to answer, or would answer for him, or supply him with matter sufficient to qualify him for it; and this he might observe to Job, in order to raise his attention to what he was about to say.

{d} Schmidt. {e} ytmlk rowm "correctionem ignominiae meae", Pagninus, Montanus; so Schmidt, Michaelis. {f} ytnybm "ex intelligentia mea", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Drusius, Schmidt, Michaelis.

Job 20:4

Ver. 4. Knowest thou [not] this of old,.... Or "from eternity" {g}, from the beginning of time, ever since the world was; as if he should say, if you are the knowing man you pretend to be, you must know this I am about to observe; and if you do not know it, you must be an ignorant man, since it is an ancient truth, confirmed by all experience from the creation; not that Job could know it so early, he was not the first man that was born, nor was he made before the hills, but was of yesterday, and comparatively knew nothing; but the sense is, that this about to be delivered was an old established maxim, of which there had been numerous instances,

since man, or "Adam",

was placed upon earth; referring to the putting of Adam in Eden to dress the garden, and keep it; and every man, ever since, is placed on earth by the ordination, and according to the will of God, where and for purposes he pleases: the instances Zophar might have in view are perhaps the expulsion of our first parents out of paradise, the vagabond state of Cain, the destruction of the old world by a flood, and of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven; which show that God, sooner or later, gives manifest tokens of his displeasure at sin and sinners, by his punishment of them for it. What he means is as follows.

{g} de ynm "ab aeterno", Junius & Tremellius, Drusius, Codurcus, Schmidt, Michaelis.

Job 20:5

Ver. 5. That the triumphing of the wicked [is] short,.... Their outward prosperity and felicity, of which they make their boast, and in which they glory and triumph for a while; at first Job's friends set out with this notion, that the wicked never flourished and prospered, but it always went ill with them in Providence; but being beat out of that, they own they may be for a small time in flourishing and prosperous circumstances, but it is but for a small time; which may be true in many instances, but it is not invariable and without exception the case: the sense is, it is but a little while that they are in so much mirth and jollity, and triumph over their neighbours, as being in more advantageous circumstances than they; this is said in the original text to be "from near" {h}; it is but a little while ago when it began; and; as the Targum paraphrases it, it will be quickly ended:

and the joy of the hypocrite [but] for a moment; the word "wicked", in the former clause, may signify the same person here called the "hypocrite"; but inasmuch as that signifies one restless and troublesome, one that is ungodly, and destitute of the fear of God, that has nothing in him but wickedness, who is continually committing it, and is abandoned to it; it might be thought not to apply to the character of Job, whom Zophar had in his view, and therefore this is added as descriptive of him: an hypocrite is one who seems to be that he is not, holy, righteous, good, and godly; who professes to have what he has not, the true grace of God, and pretends to worship God, but does not do it cordially, and from right principles; and who seeks himself in all he does, and not the glory of God: now there may be a joy in such sort of persons; they may hear ministers gladly, as Herod heard John, and receive the word with joy, as the stony ground hearers did, **Mr 6:20**; they may seem to delight in the ways and ordinances of God, and even have some tastes of the powers of the world to come, and some pleasing thoughts and hopes of heaven and happiness; as well as they triumph in and boast of their profession of religion and performance of duties, and rejoice in their boastings, which is evil; but then this is like the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, or like the crackling of thorns under a pot, which make a great noise and blaze, but soon over, **Ec 7:6**; and so their joy in civil as well as religious, things. It is possible Zophar might be so ill natured as to have reference to Job's triumph of faith, Job 19:25;

and by this would suggest, that his faith in a living Redeemer, and the joy of it he professed, would be soon over and no more; which shows what spirit he was of.

{h} bwrqm "de propinquo", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Job 20:6

Ver. 6. Though his excellency mount up to the heavens,.... Though, in worldly grandeur and glory, he should arrive to such a pitch as the Assyrian monarch was ambitious of, as to ascend into heaven, exalt his throne above the stars of God, and be like the Most High; or be comparable to such a tree, by which the greatness of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom is expressed, the height whereof reached unto heaven,
Isa 14:12;

and his head reach unto the clouds; being lifted up with pride, because of his greatness, and looking with contempt and scorn on others; the Septuagint version is, "if his gifts ascend up to heaven", &c. which well agrees with an hypocrite possessed of great gifts, and proud of them; as Capernaum was highly favoured with external things, as the presence of Christ, his ministry and miracles, and so said to be exalted unto heaven, yet, because of its impenitence and unbelief, should be brought down to hell, Mt 11:23.

Job 20:7

Ver. 7. [Yet] he shall perish for ever like his own dung,.... Not only in this world, but in the world to come, both in his outward substance here, and in his body in the grave, and in his soul to all eternity, and that in the most shameful and disgraceful manner; he shall perish in his own corruption, and like his own dung inevitably, which is never returned to its place again: dead bodies were reckoned by the ancients as dung, and the carcasses of men are rather to be cast out than dung {i}; and the Arabians used, to bury in dunghills even their kings {k}; to which some {l} think the allusion is:

they which have seen him shall say, where [is] he? such as formerly gazed at him, in his prosperity, with wonder and amazement at his grandeur and greatness, now being removed from his outward splendour, or from the world, by death, ask where he is, not being able to see him in his former lustre, nor in the land of the living; see Job 14:10.

{i} Heraclitus apud Strabo. Geograph. l. 16. p. 539. {k} Strabo, ib. {l} Pineda in loc.

Job 20:8

Ver. 8. He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found,.... Either as a dream which is forgotten, as Nebuchadnezzar's was, and cannot be recovered; or as the matter and substance of a dream, which, though remembered, is a mere illusion; as when a hungry or thirsty man dreams he eats or drinks, but, awaking, finds himself empty, and not at all refreshed; what he fancied is fled and gone {m}, and indeed never had any existence but in his imagination, Isa 29:8;

yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night; either the same as a nocturnal dream, or what a man fancies he sees in his dream; or like a mere spectre or apparition, which is a mere phantom, and, when followed and pursued, vanishes and disappears; so such a man before described is chased out of the world, and is seen in it no more, see
Job 18:18; the first clause, according to Sephorno, refers to the generation of the flood, and the second to the slaying of the firstborn of Egypt in the night.

{m} skiav onar anyrwpoi, Pindar. Pythia, Ode 8.

Job 20:9

Ver. 9. The eye also [which] saw him shall [see him] no more,.... In this world, concerned in the affairs of life, and busy in worldly employments, and especially in the grandeur he sometimes was, if not removed by death; but the former sense seems most agreeable by what follows,

neither shall his place any more behold him; the men of his place, as Ben Gersom, those that lived in the same place he did; or he shall not be seen, and known, and acknowledged any more as the master, owner, and proprietor of the house he formerly dwelt in; this seems to be taken from Job's own words in **Job 7:10**. The above Jewish commentator interprets this verse of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, whom Moses and the Israelites would see no more, Ex 10:29.

Job 20:10

Ver. 10. His children shall seek to please the poor,.... In this and some following verses the miserable state of a wicked man is described, and which begins with his children, who are often visited in wrath for their parents' sins, especially when they tread in their steps, and follow their example; and it is an affliction to parents to see their children in distress, and particularly on their account, and even to be threatened with it. According to our version, the sense of this clause is, that after a wicked man's death his children shall seek to gain the good will and favour of the poor who have been oppressed by him, that they may not reproach them, or take revenge on them, or apply to the civil magistrate to have justice done them; but Jarchi renders the words,

"the poor shall oppress or destroy his children;"

and so the margin of our Bible, who, being enraged with the ill usage of their parents, shall fall upon them in great wrath, and destroy them, Pr 28:3; and the same Jewish writer restrains the words to the men of Sodom, who were oppressive and cruel to the poor; or rather the sense is, that the children of the wicked man shall be reduced to such extreme poverty, that they shall even seek relief of the poor, and supplicate and entreat them to give them something out of their small pittance; with which others in a good measure agree, who render the words, "his children shall please, [being] poor" {n}; it shall be a pleasure and satisfaction to those they have been injurious to, to see their children begging their bread from door to door, see
Ps 109:5;

and his hands shall restore their goods: or "for his hands", &c. {o}; and so are a reason why his children shall be so reduced after his death as to need the relief of others, because their parent, in his lifetime, was obliged to make restitution of his ill gotten goods, so that in the end he had nothing to leave his children at his death; for this restitution spoken of is not voluntary, but forced. Sephorno thinks reference is had to the Egyptians lending jewels and other riches to the Israelites, whereby they were obliged to repay six hundred thousand men for their service.

{n} Myld wury wynb "filii ejus placabunt, mendici", Montanus. {o} So the English annotator.

Job 20:11

Ver. 11. His bones are full [of the sins] of his youth,.... Man is born in sin, and is a transgressor from the womb; and the youthful age is addicted to many sins, as pride, passion, lust, luxury, intemperance, and uncleanness; and these are sometimes brought to mind, and men are convinced of them, and corrected for them, when more advanced in years; and if not stopped in them, and reformed from them, they are continued in an old age; and the effects of them are seen in bodily diseases, which a debauched life brings upon them, not only to the rottenness and consumption of their flesh, but to the putrefaction of their bones; though this may be understood of the whole body, the bones, the principal and stronger parts, being put for the whole, and denote that general decay and waste which gluttony, drunkenness, and uncleanness, bring into, see **Pr 5:11**; Some interpret this of "secret" sins {p}, as the word is thought to signify, which, if not cleansed from and pardoned, will be found and charged on them, and be brought into judgment, and they punished for them, Ps 90:8;

which shall lie down with him in the dust: to be in the dust is to be in the state of the dead, to lie in the grave, where men lie down and sleep as on a bed; and this is common to good and bad men, all sleep in the dust of the earth, but with this difference, the sins of wicked men lie down with them; as they live in sin, they die in their sins; not that their sins die with them, and are no more, but they continue on them, and with them, and will rise with them, and will follow them to judgment, and remain with them after, and the guilt and remorse of which will be always on their consciences, and is that worm that never dies: of such it is said, that they "are gone down to hell with their weapons of war"; with the same enmity against God, against Christ, and his people, and all that is good, they had in their lifetime: and "they have laid their swords under their heads"; in the grave, and shall rise with the same revengeful spirit they ever had against the saints, see
Re 20:8; "but their iniquities shall be upon their bones"; both them, and the punishment of them, Eze 32:27. The Jewish commentator last mentioned interprets the whole verse of Balaam, who died at the age of thirty three, and whose prosperity died with him, he leaving nothing to his children; and so he interprets the following verses of the curse he was forced to hide, which he would gladly have pronounced, and of the riches he received from Balak falling into the hands of the Israelites.

{p} wymwle "ejus occultis", Montanus, Vatablus, Schmidt.

Job 20:12

Ver. 12. Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth,.... Which may respect some particular sin, and by the context it seems to be the sin of covetousness, or of getting riches in an unlawful way, which is very sweet and pleasing to wicked men, while they are in such pursuits that succeed; and so Mr. Broughton renders it by "wrong"; though it may be applied to sin in general, which is "wickedness", or an evil {q}, being contrary to the pure and holy nature, will, and law of God; and it is evil in its effects on men, it having deprived them of the image and glory of God, and exposed them to his wrath, to the curses of his law, and to eternal deaths. Now this is "sweet" to an unregenerate man, who minds and savours the things of the flesh, whose taste is not changed, but is as it was from his birth, and who calls sweet bitter, and bitter sweet; such a man has the same delight in sin as a man has in his food, drinks up iniquity like water, and commits sin with greediness; for it is natural to him, he is conceived, born, and brought up in it; besides, some sins are what are more particularly called constitution sins, which some are peculiarly addicted to, and in which they take a peculiar delight and pleasure; these are like the right hand or right eye, and they cannot be persuaded, at any rate, to part with them:

[though] he hide it under his tongue; not for the sake of concealing it, nor by denying, dissembling, or excusing it, but for the sake of enjoying more pleasure in it; as a gluttonous man, when he has got a sweet morsel in his mouth, do not let it go down his throat immediately, but rolls it under his tongue, that he may have all the pleasure of it he can; so a wicked man devises sin in his heart, keeps it on his mind, revolves it in his thoughts, and his meditation on it is sweet; and he is so far from hiding it from others, that he openly declares it, freely tells of it, and takes pleasure in so doing: "fools make a mock at sin"; it is their diversion and recreation.

{q} her "malum", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Job 20:13

Ver. 13. [Though] he spare it,.... Not that he feeds sparingly on it, for he eats of it freely and plentifully, with great eagerness and greediness; it designs the gratefulness of it to him; he does not spit it out as loathsome, having tasted of it, but retains it as sweet and pleasant; he spares it as Saul did Agag, and as a man spares his only son; sin being a child, a brat of a wicked man, and therefore it is dear unto him:

and forsake it not: as he never will, until he is fully convinced of the evil of it, and it becomes exceeding sinful to him, and so loathsome and disagreeable; and he is restrained from it by the grace of God, and enabled by it to desert it, for such an one only finds mercy, Pr 28:13;

but keep it still within his mouth; like an epicure, that will not suffer his food quickly to go down his throat into his stomach, that he may have the greater pleasure in tasting, palating, and relishing it; as Philoxenus, who wished his throat as long as a crane's, that he might be the longer in tasting the sweetness of what he ate and drank; so the wicked man keeps sin within his mouth, not by restraining his mouth from speaking evil, rather by a non-confession of it, but chiefly by continuing and persisting in it, that he might have all the pleasure and satisfaction he has promised himself in it.

Job 20:14

Ver. 14. [Yet] his meat in his bowels is turned,.... Or "his bread" {r}, to which sin is compared, being what the sinner lives in, and lives upon; what he strengthens himself in and with, and by which he is nourished unto the day of slaughter, and by means of which he grows and proceeds to more ungodliness, though in the issue he comes into starving and famishing circumstances; for this is bread of deceit, and proves to be ashes and gravel stones; it promises pleasure, profit, liberty, and impunity, but is all the reverse; as meat turns in a man's stomach when it does not digest in him, or rather his stomach turns against that, and instead of its being pleasant and agreeable to him, it distresses him and makes him uneasy; sin being compared to meat in the bowels, denotes the finishing of in after it has been conceived in the mind, and completed in the act:

[it is] the gall of asps within him; which is bitter, though not poison; which yet Pliny {s} suggests, but it seems {t} it is not fact. Sin is an evil and bitter thing, and produces bitter sorrow, and makes bitter work for repentance in good men, **Jer 2:19**; and fills with distress inexpressible and intolerable in wicked men, as in Cain and Judas in this world, and with black despair, weeping, and gnashing of teeth, and dreadful horrors of conscience, in the world to come, to all eternity; the effect of it is eternal death, the second death, inevitable and everlasting ruin and destruction.

{r} wmxl "panis ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Beza, Schmidt. {s} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 37. {t} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 711. Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 819.

Job 20:15

Ver. 15. He hath swallowed down riches,.... Not his own, but another's, which he has spoiled him of and devoured, with as much eagerness, pleasure, and delight, as a hungry man swallows down his food; having an excessive and immoderate love of riches, and an insatiable desire after them, which make him stop at nothing, though ever so illicit, to obtain them; and when he has got them into his possession, thinks them as safe as the food in his belly, and never once dreams of refunding them, which yet he must do, as follows:

and he shall vomit them up again; that is, make restoration of them, not freely, but forcedly, with great reluctance, much pain of mind, and gripes of conscience:

God shall cast them out of his belly; he shall oblige him to cast them up again, by working upon his heart, making his mind uneasy, loading his conscience with guilt, so that he shall have no rest nor peace until he has done it; though they are as meat in his belly within him, they shall not remain with him; though they are in his house, in his coffers, or in his barns, they shall be fetched out from thence.

Job 20:16

Ver. 16. He shall suck the poison of asps,.... Or "the head of asps" {u}; for their poison lies in their heads, particularly in their "teeth" {w}; or rather is a liquor in the gums, yellow like oil {x}; according to Pliny {y}, in copulation the male puts his head into the mouth of the female, which she sucks and gnaws off through the sweetness of the pleasure, then conceives her young, which eat out her belly; this is to be understood not of the man's sin, then it would have been expressed either in the past or present tense, as if that was sweet unto him in the commission of it, sucked in like milk from the breast, or honey from the honeycomb; such were his contrivances and artful methods, and the success of them in getting riches, but in the issue proved like the poison of asps, pernicious and deadly to him, which caused him to vomit them up again; for poison excites vomiting: but of the punishment of his sin; for putting men to death by the poison of asps was a punishment inflicted by some people upon malefactors; and however, it is certain death, and immediately and quickly dispatches, and without sense; so the wages of sin is death, and there is no avoiding it, and it comes insensibly on carnal men; they are not aware of it, and in no pain about it, until in hell they lift up their eyes as the rich man did:

the viper's tongue shall slay him; though it is with its teeth it bites, yet, when it is about to bite, it puts out its tongue, and to it its poison is sometimes ascribed; though it is said {z} to be quite harmless, and therefore not to be understood in a literal sense, but figuratively of the tongue of a detractor, a calumniator and false accuser, such an one as Doeg; but cannot be the sense here, since the fall of the person here described would not be by any such means; but the phrase, as before, denotes the certain and immediate death of such a wicked man; for the bite of a viper was always reckoned incurable, and issued in sudden death, see Ac 28:3.

{u} Myntp var "caput aspidum", V. L. Montanus. {w} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 37. Aelian. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 4. {x} Philosoph. Transact. ut supra. (abridged, vol. 2. p. 819.) {y} Ib. c. 62. {z} Scheuchzer, ut supra, (Physic. Sacr. vol. 4.) p. 712.

Job 20:17

Ver. 17. He shall not see the rivers,.... Of water, or meet with any to assuage his thirst, which poison excites, and so makes a man wish for water, and desire large quantities; but this shall not be granted the wicked man; this might be illustrated in the case of the rich man in hell, who desired a drop of cold water to cool his tongue, but could not have it, Lu 16:24; though rather plenty of good things is here intended, see Isa 48:18; as also the following expressions:

the floods, the brooks of honey and butter; or "cream"; which are hyperbolical expressions, denoting the great profusion and abundance of temporal blessings, which either the covetous rich man was ambitious of obtaining, and hoped to enjoy, seeking and promising great things to himself, which yet he should never attain unto; or else the sense is, though he had enjoyed such plenty, and been in such great prosperity as to have honey and butter, or all temporal good things, flowing about him like rivers, and floods, and brooks; yet he should "see [them] no more", so Broughton reads the words; and perhaps Zophar may have respect to the abundance Job once possessed, but

should no more, and which is by himself expressed by such like metaphors, Job 29:6; yea, even spiritual and eternal good things may be designed, and the plenty of them, as they often are in Scripture, by wine, and milk, and honey; such as the means of grace, the word and ordinances, the blessings of grace dispensed and communicated through them; spiritual peace and joy, called the rivers of pleasure; the love of God, and the streams of it, which make glad his people; yea, eternal glory and happiness, signified by new wine in the kingdom of God, and by a river of water of life, and a tree of life by it, see Isa 55:1; which are what carnal men and hypocrites shall never see or enjoy; and whereas Zophar took Job to be such a man, he may have a principal view to him, and object this to the beatific vision of God, and the enjoyment of eternal happiness he promised himself,
Job 19:26. Bar Tzemach observes, that these words are to be read by a transposition thus, "he shall not see rivers [of water], floods of honey, and brooks of butter".

Job 20:18

Ver. 18. That which he laboured for shall he restore,.... This explains what was before figuratively expressed by vomiting,
Job 20:15; and is to be interpreted either of that which another laboured for; so the Targum paraphrases it,

"another's labour;"

and Mr. Broughton renders it, "he shall restore what man's pain get": and then the sense is, that that which another got by his labour, coming by some means or another into the hand of this rapacious, covetous, wicked man, he shall be obliged to restore to him again; or the hire of the labourer being detained in his hands, he shall be forced to give it to him, as the Egyptians, by lending the Israelites their jewels of gold and silver, restored to them the wages due to them for all their labour among them for many years; or else this is to be understood of what the wicked man himself had laboured for, who with much toil and labour, as well as trick and artifice, had got the wealth of others into his hands; but should be obliged to make restoration of it again, and along with that also what he had laboured for, and had got even in an honest and lawful way, the marathon of unrighteousness corrupting and marring his whole substance:

and shall not swallow [it] down; or "not have time to devour it", as Mr.

Broughton; he shall be obliged so soon to restore it, that it shall be as if he had never had it; he shall have no enjoyment of it, at least no comfort, pleasure, and satisfaction in it:

according to [his] substance [shall] the restitution [be]; the law of Moses required, in some cases, fourfold, in others fivefold, and sometimes sevenfold was exacted; and if a man had not sufficient to pay, all his substance was to go towards payment, and by this means what he lawfully got went along with that which was obtained in an illicit way, as before, see Ex 22:1;

and he shall not rejoice [therein]; not in the restitution he is forced to make, it being greatly against his will; nor in his ill-gotten substance, at least but for a little while, as in Job 20:5; he shall neither enjoy it nor have delight and pleasure in it, nor glory of it, as men are apt to do; Mr. Broughton reads this in connection with the preceding clause thus,

"and never rejoice in the wealth for which he must make recompense."

Job 20:19

Ver. 19. Because he hath oppressed [and] hath forsaken the poor,.... Having oppressed, crushed, and broken the poor to pieces, he leaves them so without pity and compassion for them, and without giving them any relief; he first by oppression makes them poor, or however poorer still, and then leaves them in such circumstances; for this does not suppose that he once was a favourer of them, and afforded them assistance in their necessities, and afterwards forsook them; but rather, as Ben Gersom gives the sense, he does not leave the poor until he has oppressed and crushed them, and then he does; Mr. Broughton's reading of the words agrees with the former sense, "he oppresseth and leaveth poor":

[because] he hath violently taken away an house which he built not; an house which did not belong to him, he had no property in or right unto, which, as he had not bought, he had not built; and therefore could lay no rightful claim unto it, and yet this he took in a violent manner from the right owner of it, see **Mic 2:2**; or "and", or "but shall not build it" {a}, or "buildeth it not"; he took it away with an intention to pull it down, and build a stately palace in the room of it; but either his substance was taken from him, or he taken away by death before he could finish it, and so either through neglect, or want of opportunity, or of money, did not what he thought to have done.

{a} whnby alw "et non aedificabit eam", Pagninus, Montanus; "et non aedificat eam", Cocceius, Schultens; "non autem", Beza; "sed non", Schmidt, Michaelis.

Job 20:20

Ver. 20. Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly,.... Or happiness in his children, so some in Bar Tzemach; rather shall have no satisfaction in his substance; though his belly is filled with hid treasure, it shall give him no contentment; he shall be a stranger to that divine art, but ever have a restless craving after more, which is his sin; but rather punishment is here meant, and the sense is, that he shall have no quiet in his conscience, no peace of mind, because of his sin in getting riches in an unlawful way:

he shall not save of that which he desired; of his desirable things, his goods, his wealth, his riches, and even his children, all being gone, and none saved; respect may be had particularly to Job's case, who was stripped of everything, of all his substance and his children.

Job 20:21

Ver. 21. There shall none of his meat be left,.... Not in his belly, all shall be cast up; none of his substance left for himself or others; none of his riches for his children or heirs, all being consumed: or this may respect either the profuseness or niggardliness of his living, that he should live in great luxury himself, but take no care of the poor; or else keep so mean a table, that there would be nothing left for the poor, not so much as a few crumbs to fall from it; but the first sense seems best; though some render the words, "there shall be none left for his meat" {b}, or his substance; he shall leave no children, have no heirs, all his family shall be cut off, see
Job 18:19;

therefore shall no man look for his goods; for there shall be none to look for them; or rather there shall be none to look for, all being gone: a man in good circumstances of life, his heirs expect to enjoy much at his death, but when he is stripped of all, as Job was, his relations and friends are in no expectation of having anything at his death; and therefore do not think it worth their while to look out, or make an inquiry whether there is anything for them or not, see

Job 20:28.

{b} wlkal dyrv Nya "non erit superstes haeres qui ejus bonis fruetur"; so some in Mercer. Drusius.

Job 20:22

Ver. 22. In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits,.... For though he may not only have a sufficient competency to live upon, but even a fulness of temporal blessings, have as much as heart can wish, or more, even good things, and plenty of them laid up for many years; yet amidst it all shall be reduced to the utmost straits and difficulties, either through fear of losing what he has, insomuch that his abundance will not suffer him to sleep in the night, nor to enjoy an hour's pleasure in the day; or being so narrow spirited, notwithstanding his fulness, that he cannot allow himself to eat of the fruit of his labours, and rejoice therein; or fearing, notwithstanding all his plenty, that he shall come to want and poverty; or rather while he is in the most flourishing circumstances, and in the height of his prosperity, he is suddenly, as Nebuchadnezzar was, dispossessed of all, and reduced to the utmost extremity, **Da 4:31**; the Targum is,

"when his measure is filled, he shall take vengeance on him:"

every hand of the wicked shall come upon him: or of the labourer, as the Targum, the hire of whose labour he has detained, or has taken away from him that which he laboured for; and so Broughton,

"the hand of the injured or grieved;"

such as he had been injurious to, and had grieved by his oppressions of them; or rather every troublesome wicked man, the hand of every thief or robber; respect seems to be had to the hand of the Sabeans and Chaldeans, that had been on Job and his substance.

Job 20:23

Ver. 23. [When] he is about to fill his belly,.... Either in a literal sense, when he is about to take an ordinary meal to satisfy nature; or in a figurative sense, when he is seeking to increase his worldly riches, and his barns and coffers, and endeavouring to get satisfaction therein:

[God] shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him; or "send it out on him" {c}; out of the treasures of it, which are laid up with him, De 32:34; into his conscience, and fill him with a dreadful sense and apprehension of it, and that with great force and violence, and cast it, and pour it on him like fire, or any scalding liquor, which is very terrible and intolerable. This intends the indignation of God against sin, and his just punishment of it, according to the rigour of his justice; sometimes it is only a little wrath and displeasure he shows, he does not stir up all his wrath; but here it is threatened he will cast it, and pour it in great plenty, even "the fury" of it, in the most awful and terrible manner:

and shall rain it upon him while he is eating; signifying, that the wrath of God shall be revealed from heaven against him, from whence rain comes; that it shall fall on him from above, unseen, suddenly, and at an unawares, and come with a force and violence not to be resisted, and in great abundance and profusion. The allusion seems to be to the raining of fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah, the inhabitants of which were indulging themselves in gratifying the flesh, when that judgment came upon them, Lu 17:28; and so it was with the Israelites, when they sinned against God in the wilderness, Ps 78:30; perhaps Zophar may glance at Job's children being slain while they were eating and drinking in their elder brother's house, **Job 1:18**. Some render it, "upon his food" {d}; his meat, a curse going along with it, while he is eating it, his table becoming a snare unto him; or upon his wealth and riches, he is endeavouring to fill his belly or satisfy himself with; and others, "upon his flesh", as the Targum; or "into his flesh"; as Broughton, and so many of the Jewish commentators {e} meaning his body, filling it with diseases, so that there is no soundness in it, but is in pain, and wasting, and consuming; and Job's case may be referred to, his body being full of boils and ulcers.

{c} wb xlvy "mittet in eum", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt; so Mercerus, Piscator. {d} wmwxlb "in cibum illius", Tigurine version. {e} Aben Ezra, Ben Gersom, Bar Tzemach; "in carne ejus", Pagninus, Montanus; "super carnem ejus", Beza; "in carnem ejus", Drusius, Mercer, Schmidt.

Job 20:24

Ver. 24. He shall flee from the iron weapon,.... The sword, for fear of being thrust through with it; the flaming sword of justice God sometimes threatens to take, and whet, and make use of against ungodly men; the sword of God, as Bar Tzemach observes, is hereby figuratively expressed; fleeing from it, or an attempt to flee from it, shows guilt in the conscience, danger, and a sense of it, and a fear of falling into it, and yet there is no escaping the hand of God, or fleeing from his presence:

[and] the bow of steel shall strike him through; that is, an arrow out of a bow, made of steel or brass, of which bows were formerly made, and reckoned the strongest and most forcible, see Ps 18:34; signifying, that if he should escape the dint of a weapon, a sword or spear used near at hand, yet, as he fled, he would be reached by one that strikes at a distance, an arrow shot from a bow; the sense is, that, if a wicked man escapes one judgment, another will be sure to follow him, and overtake him and destroy him, see Isa 24:17.

Job 20:25

Ver. 25. It is drawn, and cometh out of the body,.... That is, the arrow with which a wicked man is stricken through; either it is drawn, and comes out of the quiver, as Broughton; or rather is drawn out of the body of a wicked man, being shot into it, and that in order that he may be cured of his wound if possible, but to no purpose, since it follows:

yea, the glittering sword cometh out of his gall; being thrust into it, which being pierced and poured out, is certain and immediate death, see Job 16:13. Some render it, yea, "the glittering [sword] out of his gall, he shall go away", or "is gone" {f}; that is, he shall die, or is a dead man, there is no hope of him, when the arrow has transfixed his body, and the sword has penetrated into his gall, and divided that:

terrors [are] upon him; the terrors of death, the plain symptoms of it being upon him; the terrors of an awful judgment, which follows after it; the terrors of the dreadful sentence of condemnation that will then be pronounced, "go, ye cursed", &c. and the terrors of hell and eternal death, signified by utter darkness, unquenchable fire, and the never ceasing torments of it. Some by them understand devils, those terrible spirits which haunt wicked men in their dying moments, and are ready to carry them to the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, where they are to be companions with them for ever. The word is sometimes used of gigantic persons, who are sometimes terrible to others; and since these are mentioned along with weapons of war, Bar Tzemach interprets them of men of strength and power, men of war or soldiers, whose fear falls on others.

{f} Klhy "abibit e vivis"; so some in Michaelis; "abit", Schultens.

Job 20:26

Ver. 26. All darkness [shall be] hid in his secret places,.... In such places of secrecy, where he may promise himself safety, he shall find more calamities of all sorts; or every kind of judgments shall find him out, and come upon him, sometimes signified by darkness, see **Isa 8:22**; or utter darkness, the blackness of darkness; everlasting wrath, ruin, and destruction, are laid up and reserved in God's secret places for him, and lie hid among his treasures of vengeance, which he in due time will bring forth from thence, and punish the guilty sinner with, **Jude 1:13**; or all this shall be because of secret sins, as Ben Gersom interprets it; and so Mr. Broughton renders the words, "for his store"; that is, for the store of his sins, as he explains it, which, however privately and secretly committed, shall be brought into judgment; and there the hidden things of darkness will be brought to light, and sentence pass upon men for them:

a fire not blown shall consume him; not blown by man, but by God himself; which some understand of thunder and lightning, such as fell on Job's sheep and servants, and consumed them, and which may be glanced at; and others of some fiery distemper, a burning fever, hot ulcers, carbuncles, &c. such as were at this time on Job's body; but the Targum, better, of the fire of hell; and so many of the Jewish commentators {g}, as well as Christian; the Septuagint version renders it, "unquenchable fire"; and so Mr. Broughton; and such the fire of hell is said to be, **Mt 3:12**, &c. and which is a fire kindled by the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, Isa 30:33;

it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle; not only it shall go ill with the wicked man himself, but with those he leaves behind him, that dwell in the house he formerly lived in, with his posterity; God sometimes punishing the iniquities of the fathers upon the children.

{g} Jarchi, Sephorno, and others.

Job 20:27

Ver. 27. The heaven shall reveal his iniquity,.... Either God the Maker and Possessor of heaven, who dwells there, and is sometimes so called, **Da 4:25**; who sees and knows all things, even those that are most secret, as well as more openly committed, and will make all manifest, sooner or later; or else the angels of heaven, the inhabitants of it, so the Targum; who in the last day will be employed in gathering out of Christ's kingdom all that offend, and do iniquity,
Mt 13:41; or the judgments of God descending from heaven, or appear there, and are owing to it; such as drowning the old world by opening the windows of heaven, **Ge 7:11**; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone from thence, Ge 19:24; and the destruction of persons by thunder, 2Sa 22:15, and lightning, **1Sa 2:10**, and the like; which judgments falling upon men, show them to be guilty of crimes deserving of the wrath of God, see **Ro 1:18**;

and the earth shall rise up against him; when that becomes barren for the sins of men, and nothing but things hurtful to man rise up out of it; when it discloses the blood of murdered persons, and will at last give up the wicked dead that are buried in it; the Targum is,

"the inhabitants of the earth;"

and may be interpreted of their enmity, opposition, and hostility.

Job 20:28

Ver. 28. The increase of his house shall depart,.... Either his children or his substance. Some interpret it, as Kimchi {h} observes, of the walls of his house, because of what follows, "they shall flow away", &c. as if he should say, the stones of his house shall fall down, and his habitation shall be destroyed, according to **Mic 1:6**; where a dilapidation is expressed by a flow, or pouring down of stones:

[and his goods] shall flow away in the day of his wrath; in the day of the wrath of God upon him, which will come upon him like water split on the ground, of no more use and service to him; the Targum interprets it of oil and wine, which shall flow away and cease, and so Mr. Broughton renders it, "fruits for his house"; all desirable and useful ones, see
Re 18:14.

{h} Sepher Shorash. rad. lby.

Job 20:29

Ver. 29. This [is] the portion of a wicked man from God,.... All before related, and which is very different from the portion of a good man, which is God himself, both here and hereafter; the wicked man has indeed his portion from God, which he has assigned him, but his portion is not himself; nor is it with him, nor with his people, but it is at most and best in this life, and but a worldly one, and hereafter will be with devils and damned spirits; and a dreadful portion it is to be banished from the presence of God to all eternity, and take up an everlasting abode with such company:

and the heritage appointed unto him by God; it is not only a portion allotted to him, but an inheritance to abide continually with him; and this by the irreversible decree and appointment of God, who has foreordained ungodly men to condemnation, and made, appointed, and reserved them to the day of wrath and destruction. Some choose to render the clause, "and the inheritance of his word or words {i} is unto him by God"; that is, punishment shall be inflicted upon him, and continue with him as an inheritance, because of his words, his indecent words, hard speeches and blasphemies uttered by him; referring, as it is thought, to the words which had dropped from the lips of Job.

{i} wrma tlxn "haereditas eloquii ejus", Pagninus, Montanus; "verborum ejus", V. L. "impie dictorum ejus", Codurcus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 21

This chapter contains Job's reply to Zophar's preceding discourse, in which, after a preface exciting attention to what he was about to say,
Job 21:1; he describes by various instances the prosperity of wicked men, even of the most impious and atheistical, and which continues with them as long as they live, contrary to what Zophar had asserted in
Job 20:5, Job 21:7; as for himself, he disapproved of such wicked men as much as any, and owns that destruction comes upon them sooner or later, and on their posterity also, Job 21:16; but as God is a God of knowledge, and

needs no instruction from any, and is a sovereign Being, he deals with men in different ways; some die in great ease, and peace, and prosperity, and others in bitterness and distress, but both are alike brought to the dust, Job 21:22; and whereas he was aware of their censures of him, and their objections to what he had said, he allows that the wicked are reserved to the day of destruction, which is future, and in the mean while lie in the grave, where all must follow; yet they are not repaid or rewarded in this life, that remains to be done in another world, Job 21:27; and concludes, that their consolation with respect to him was vain, and falsehood was in their answers, Job 21:34.

Ver. 1. But Job answered and said. In reply to what Zophar had asserted, concerning the prosperity of the wicked being only for a short time, Job 20:5; the contrary to which he most clearly proves, and that in many instances their prosperity continues as long as they live; that they die in it, and it is enjoyed by their posterity after them.

Job 21:2

Ver. 2. Hear diligently my speech,.... The following oration or discourse he was about to deliver concerning the prosperity of wicked men; to which he desires their closest attention, that they might the better understand the force of his reasoning, the evidences and proof of fasts he should give; whereby, if their minds were open to conviction, they would clearly see their mistake, and that truth lay on his side:

and let this be your consolations; or "this shall be your consolations" {k}; meaning, either that they would receive instruction and benefit by his discourse, which would yield them pleasure and comfort; and to an ingenuous mind, to be convinced of an error, to have mistakes rectified, and to get knowledge of the truth, it is a real satisfaction, and affords pleasure; or else, that whereas their end in paying him a visit was to comfort him, and they had taken methods, as they thought, in order to it, but in Job's opinion to very little purpose, yea, they were, as he says, miserable comforters; now he observes, that if they would but be silent, and attentively listen to what he had to say, that would be in the room of all comforts they could give unto him; it would be a consolation to him, and be reckoned by him, instead of all they could give, or could propose to him, if he might have but this favour, to be heard with candour, diligence, and attention.

{k} taz yhtw "et hoc erit consolationes vestrae", Beza, Mercerus; so Jarchi;

"idque pro consolatione vobis", Tigurine version; "pro consolationibus vestris", Schultens.

Job 21:3

Ver. 3. Suffer me that I may speak,.... To go on with his discourse, without any interruption, until he had finished it; as he before craves their attention, here he entreats their patience to hear him out, as well as to give him leave to begin; they might by their gestures seem as if they were breaking up and departing; or they raised a tumultuous clamour, to hinder his proceeding to reply; or he might fear, that if he was allowed to speak, they would break in upon him before he had done, as they had already; or "bear me", as several of the Jewish commentators explain the phrase; though what he was going to say might sit heavy upon their minds, and be very burdensome, grating, and uneasy to them; yet he entreats they would endure it patiently, until he had made an end of speaking:

and after that I have spoken, mock on; as they had already, Job 12:4; they had mocked not at his troubles and afflictions, but at his words and arguments in vindication of his innocence; and now all he entreats of them is, that they would admit him to speak once more, and to finish his discourse; and then if they thought fit, or if they could, to go on with their scoffs and derisions of him; if he could but obtain this favour, he should be easy, he should not regard their mockings, but bear them patiently; and he seems to intimate, that he thought he should be able to say such things to them, that would spoil their mocking, and prevent it for the future; so the Greek version renders it, "thou shalt not laugh"; and the words being singular have led many to think, that Zophar, who spoke last, is particularly intended, though it may respect everyone of his friends.

Job 21:4

Ver. 4. As for me, [is] my complaint to man?.... Job had been complaining, and still was, and continued to do so after this, but not to them, his friends, nor any other man; his complaint was made to God, and of him he thought he was hardly dealt with by him, he could not tell for what; he had desired to know the reason why he contended with him in such a manner, but could get no satisfaction; when his friends came first to visit him, they said nothing to him, nor he to them; and when he did speak, it was not to them, but to God, of whom he complains; and expostulates with him why he had ever been born, or had not died as soon as born, and not have lived to have seen such unhappy days, and endured so much affliction and trouble:

and if [it were so]; that he had made his complaint to man, since it would have been in vain, and to no purpose, he should have got no relief, nor obtained any satisfaction:

why should not my spirit be troubled? or "shortened" {l}; or, as the Targum, be straitened; for as comfort and joy enlarge the heart, trouble contracts and straitens it; or is "my prayer" or {m} "petition to men?" it was not, though he was reduced so low, and was in such a distressed condition; he had asked nothing of men, not of these his friends, neither to give him of their substance, nor to help him out of the hands of his enemies, **Job 6:21**; he had poured out his complaint before God, and had directed his prayer to the God of his life; he had desired to speak to none but the Almighty, and to reason only with him; he had petitioned him to take cognizance of his case, and to admit of a hearing of it before him, and to have it determined by him; he had complained of wrongs and injuries done him, and begged to be redressed and righted, but got no answer; God did not think fit to answer him, but hid himself from him, and continued so to do: "and if", if this be the case, as it really was, "why should not my spirit be troubled?" is there not reason for it? Some think Job's meaning is, is "my disputation", as the Vulgate Latin version, or is my discourse concerning human things, things within the compass of human knowledge and reasoning? or, to be attained to by the force of that, without divine revelation? no, it is concerning divine things; concerning the mysteries of Providence, with respect to good and bad men; concerning the living Redeemer, his incarnation, resurrection, &c. and faith in him; concerning the general resurrection, the final judgment, and a future state of happiness: or does my complaint, petition, or discourse, savour of that which is human, and is intermixed with human frailty? if it be so, it should be borne with, it should be considered I am but a man, and liable to err; and especially great allowances should be made in my present circumstances, being trader such sore afflictions; and it may be reasonably thought, that though the spirit may be willing to behave in a better manner, the flesh is weak, and much must be imputed unto that; and it will not seem so extravagant to indulge a troubled spirit so severely exercised; persons under afflictions generally think they do well to be troubled, and that there is reason enough for it, and ought to be borne with, and not to be reproached and rallied on that account.

{l} ruqt "abbreviabitur", Montanus, Vatablus, "abbreviaretur", Drusius, Cocceius, Michaelis. {m} yxyv "precatio mea", Drusius.

Job 21:5

Ver. 5. Mark me,.... Or "look at me" {n}; not at his person, which was no lovely sight to behold, being covered with boils from head to foot, his flesh clothed with worms and clods of dust, his skin broken, yea, scarce any left; however, he was become a mere skeleton, reduced to skin and bone; but at his sorrows, and sufferings, and consider and contemplate them in their minds, and see if there was any sorrow like his, or anyone that suffered as he did, and in such pitiful circumstances; or that they would have a regard to his words, and well weigh what he had said, or was about to say, concerning his own case, or concerning the providences of God with respect to good and bad men, and especially the latter:

and be astonished; at what had befallen him, at his afflictions, being an innocent man, and not chargeable with any crime for which it could be thought that these came upon him; and at the different methods of Providence towards good men and bad men, the one being afflicted, and the other in prosperous circumstances, see Job 17:8;

and lay [your] hand upon [your] mouth; and be silent, since such dispensations of Providence are unsearchable, and past finding out; and, as they are not to be accounted for, are not to be spoken against: and it would have been well if Job had taken the same advice himself, and had been still, and owned and acknowledged the sovereignty of God, and not opened his mouth in the manner he had done, and cursed the of his birth, and complained of hard treatment at the hand of God perhaps his sense may be, that he would have his friends be silent, and forbear drawing the characters of men from the outward dealings of God with them. This phrase is used of silence in Job 29:9; thus Harpocrates, the god of silence with the Heathens, is always pictured with his hand to his mouth.

{n} yla wnp "respicite ad me", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Job 21:6

Ver. 6. Even when I remember,.... Either the iniquities of his youth he was made to possess; or his former state of outward happiness and prosperity he had enjoyed, and reviewed his present miserable case and condition, and called to mind the evil tidings brought him thick and fast of the loss of his substance, servants, and children, which were so terrible and shocking; or when he reflected on the instances of Providence he was about to relate in the following verses:

I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh; which is sometimes the case of good men, both with respect to the judgments of God upon the wicked, and with respect to what befalls, or is coming upon, the people of God, Ps 119:120; and even the different treatment of good and bad men in this life, as that the one should be severely afflicted and distressed, and the other be in such prosperous and happy circumstances, is not only a sore temptation to them, but shocks their minds, and makes them shudder and stagger at it, and gives them great pain and uneasiness, Ps 73:2.

Job 21:7

Ver. 7. Wherefore do the wicked live,.... Which question is put either to God himself, as not knowing ow to account for it, or to reconcile it to his divine perfections; that he, a holy, just, and righteous Being, should suffer such wretches to live upon his earth, who had been, and still were, continually sinning against him, transgressing his law, and trampling under foot his power and authority; when he, a man that feared the Lord, as God himself had borne witness of him, laboured under such heavy affliction, that he seemed rather to die than live: or else it is put to his friends, to whom he appeals for the truth of it, as Zophar had to him, about the short time of the prosperity of the wicked, Job 10:4; and desires them to try how they could make such undeniable facts comport with their own principles, that wicked men are always and only afflicted to any great degree, and not holy and good men; but if so, it is asked, why do they "live", even live at all? why is not their breath stopped at once, that breathe out nothing but sin and wickedness? or why are they "lively?" as Mr. Broughton renders the word; that is, brisk, cheerful, and jocund, live merrily, having an abundance of this world's good things; call upon themselves to eat, drink, and be merry, and indulge themselves in all the gratifications of sensual pleasures and delights; live at ease, in peace and outward comfort, and are not in trouble as other men, having nothing to disturb, disquiet, and distress them; nay, not only live comfortably, but live long: while a righteous man perishes or dies in his righteousness, the wicked man prolongs his life in his wickedness, **Ec 7:15**, as it follows:

become old; live to a considerable old age, as Ishmael did, to whom he may have respect, as well as to some others within his knowledge; or are "durable" {n}, not only in age, as the sinner is supposed to die, and sometimes does die an hundred years old, or more, but in wealth and riches, in outward prosperity; for though spiritual riches are only durable riches, in opposition to temporal ones, yet these sometimes endure with a wicked man, and he endures with them as long as he lives, as may be seen in the instances of wicked rich men in Lu 12:16; with which agrees what follows:

yea, are mighty in power? are in great authority among men, being kings, princes, civil magistrates, see Ps 37:35; are advanced to great dignity and honour, as the twelve princes that sprung from Ishmael, and the race of kings and dukes that came from Esau. Mr. Broughton renders it, "be mighty in riches", greatly increase in them; and so the Targum, possess substance or riches.

{n} wqte "durant", Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis; "edurant", Schultens.

Job 21:8

Ver. 8. Their seed is established in their sight with them,.... Which is to be understood not of seed sown in the earth, and of the permanence and increase of that, but of their children; to have a numerous progeny, was reckoned a great temporal blessing, and to have them settled happily and comfortably in the world was an additional one; and what contributed still more to their felicity was, that they were well settled during their life, or they yet living, and with their eyes beholding their prosperous and stable condition; and also "with them"; near them, in the same neighbourhood, or at no great distance from them; or even in like circumstances with them, equally as well settled and as prosperous as themselves, as this phrase is sometimes used, see Ps 106:6;

and their offspring before their eyes; their children's children, as the Targum, and so the Vulgate Latin version; so that prosperity attends not only wicked men and their children, but also their grandchildren, and they live to see these grown up and settled in the world, and in thriving circumstances; all which must give them pleasure, and be matter of honour and glory to them, Pr 17:6. Now this is diametrically opposite to Zophar's notion of the short continuance of the prosperity of wicked men, and of the low and miserable condition of their children, Job 20:5.

Job 21:9

Ver. 9. Their houses [are] safe from fear,.... Of enemies besetting them, entering into them, and pillaging and plundering them; of thieves and robbers breaking into them, and carrying off their substance: or "their houses [are] peace" {o}; their families live in peace among themselves, or enjoy all prosperity, which the word peace frequently signifies; they have peace and prosperity within doors and are free "from fear", or devoid of fear, from anything without;

neither [is] the rod of God upon them; neither his rod of chastisement, which is upon his own people, and with which he scourges every son, though in love for their good, and which was now upon Job, **Job 9:34**; nor any sore judgment, as famine, plague, sword, or any other; no, not even the common afflictions and troubles that men are exercised with.

{o} Mwlv "pax", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Schultens.

Job 21:10

Ver. 10. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not,.... As the wicked man's prosperity is described before by the increase and comfortable settlement of his children and grandchildren, and by the peace and safety of all within doors; here it is further set forth by the increase of his cattle in the fields, one part being put for the whole, his oxen and asses, his camels and sheep, things in which the riches of men chiefly lay in those times and countries; and he was reckoned an happy man when these brought forth abundantly; see Ps 144:13;

their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf; both male and female succeed in propagating their species, and so in increasing the wealth of their owner; this is sometimes promised as a temporal blessing,
Ex 23:26.

Job 21:11

Ver. 11. They send forth their little ones like a flock,.... Of sheep, which are creatures very increasing, and become very numerous, Ps 144:13; to which a large increase of families may be compared, Ps 107:41, for this is not to be interpreted of their kine sending or bringing forth such numbers as to be like a flock of sheep; but of the families of wicked men being increased in like manner; and the sending them forth to be understood either of the birth of their children being sent out or proceeding from them as plants out of the earth, or branches from a tree; or of their being sent out not to school to be instructed in useful learning, but into the streets to play, and pipe, and dance; and it may denote, as their number, so their being left to themselves, and being at liberty to do as they please, being under no restriction, nor any care taken of their education; at least in such a manner as to have a tendency to make them sober, virtuous, and useful in life:

and their children dance; either in a natural way, skip and frisk, and play like calves and lambs, and so are very diverting to their parents, as well as shows them to be in good health; which adds to their parents happiness and pleasure: or in an artificial way, being taught to dance; and it should be observed, it is "their" children, the children of the wicked, and not of the godly, that are thus brought up; so Abraham did not train up his children, nor Job his; no instance can be given of the children of good men being trained up in this manner, or of their dancing in an irreligious way; however, this proves in what a jovial way, and in what outward prosperity and pleasure, wicked men and their families live; which is the thing Job has in view, and is endeavouring to prove and establish.

Job 21:12

Ver. 12. They take the timbrel and harp,.... Not the children, but the parents of them; these took these instruments of music into their hands, and played upon them while their children danced; thus merrily they spent their time: or, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, they lift up the voice with the tabret and harp; that is, while they played on these with their hands, they sung songs with their mouths; they used both vocal and instrumental music together, to make the greater harmony, and give the greater pleasure, like those in **Am 6:5**;

and rejoice at the sound of the organ; a musical instrument, very pleasant and entertaining, from whence it has its name in the Hebrew tongue; but of what form it was cannot be with certainty said; that which we now so call is of later invention, and unknown in those times: probably Job may have respect to Jubal, the inventor of this sort of music, and others of the posterity of Cain before the flood, who practised it, and were delighted in it; in which they were imitated and followed by wicked men after it, and in Job's time, **Ge 4:21**.

Job 21:13

Ver. 13. They spend their days in wealth,.... Or "in good" {p}; not in the performance of good works, or in the exercise of that which is spiritually good; or in seeking after spiritual good things, or eternal happiness; but in earthly good, in the enjoyment of the temporal good things of this life, and which to enjoy in a moderate and becoming manner is not criminal, but commendable; but these men, and such as they, seek no other good but worldly good; their language is, "who will show us any good?" **Ps 4:6**; any outward good; the way to get it, how to come at it, and be put in the possession of it: such place all their happiness in such sort of good, and spend all their time either in getting it, or in enjoying it, and in nothing else; not in spiritual exercises, in prayer, or praise, in their own houses, in private; nor in an attendance on the worship of God in public; it denotes also their continuance in prosperity unto the end of their days; for there is a various reading; we follow the Keri or margin, but the "Cetib", or writing, is, "they become old" {q}; in wealth, or good things, and which is followed by many; they live all their days in the midst of wealth and riches, and die in such circumstances, contrary to what Zophar had asserted in Job 20:5;

and in a moment go down to the grave; the house appointed for all living, man's long home, into which he is said to go down, because let down and interred in the earth; hither wicked men must come, after all their wealth, riches, prosperity, and pleasure; and hither they descend "in a moment"; suddenly, no previous change being made in their outward circumstances; and without any presage or forenotice of it, without any lingering disease and sickness leading on to it, there being no bands in their death, nothing to hinder and restrain from dying; but they drop at once into the grave, without sickness or pain: or "in rest", or "quietly" {r}; being wholly at ease and quiet, as in Job 21:23; not only free from acute pains and grievous distempers, as burning fevers, and violent tortures, and racks of the stone, and other distressing disorders; but without any distress of mind, ignorant of their state and condition, and unconcerned about it; as they are at ease from their youth, and settled on their lees, they remain so, and go out of the world in like manner; and as sheep are laid in the grave, die senseless and stupid, having no thought in their last moments what will become of them in another world: some render it, "they go down to hell" {s}; the state and place of the wicked after death; which, though true, seems not so agreeable to Job's scope and design, which is not to describe the punishment of the wicked, but their easy circumstances in life and in death; and so the Jewish commentators generally understand it. Aben Ezra's note is,

"in a moment, without afflictions;"

Jarchi,

"quietly, without chastisements;"

and Bar Tzemach,

"without evil diseases;"

having nothing to distress them in body or mind, when many a good man lies long on a bed of languishing, tortured with diseases, chastened with sore pain, and his life gradually draws near to the grave, and to the destroyers.

{p} bwjb "in bono", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, &c. {q} wlby "vetustate terent", Montanus; "veterascunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus; "vetusti fiunt", Cocceius; "ad senectam deterunt", Schultens. {r} egrb "quiete", Pagninus; "in quiete", Vatablus. {s} lwav "ad inferna", V. L. "ad infernum", Cocceius; "in infernum", Schmidt.

Job 21:14

Ver. 14. Therefore they say unto God,.... While in health and life, amidst all their outward prosperity, and because of it; for worldly riches have this tendency, to make men proud and insolent, and not only to behave ill to their fellow creatures, and to slight and despise them; but even to forsake God, and lightly esteem their Creator and benefactor; yea, even to kick against him, and oppose him, to set their mouths against him, and speak very contemptuously and blasphemously of him, as in the following words; which though not expressly uttered and pronounced, which yet may have been by some, however are conceived in the mind, and inwardly spoken; and by their lives and conversations outwardly declared and abundantly proclaimed:

depart from us; not as to his general presence, which cannot be, and without which they would not be able to subsist; God is everywhere, and near to everyone, and all live, and move, and have their being, in him; nor as to his spiritual presence, which wicked men know nothing of, and are unconcerned about; but they do not choose to have him so near them as that their minds should be conversant about him; they do not care to have him in their thoughts, they are desirous if possible of banishing him out of their minds; they would live without thinking of God, or thinking that there is a God in the world, for such a thought makes them uneasy; they do not love to have their consciences awakened by him, so as to check and accuse for what they do; they had rather have them cauterized or seared, as with a red hot iron, and be past feeling, that they may go on in their sinful courses without control: this is the just character of a worldling, who is afraid he shall be a loser by God and religion, should he attend thereunto; and therefore, as the Gergesenes for a like reason desired Christ to depart out of their coasts, so such desire God to depart from them, **Mt 8:28**; and of the epicure, whose God is his belly, and that only; and most righteously will it be said to such at the last day, "depart from me"; this will be a just retaliation:

for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways; the ways which God prescribes, directs, and enjoins men to walk in, even the ways of his commandments; these are unknown to men, until shown and taught them; but wicked men do not desire to be instructed in them; they have no pleasure and delight neither in them, nor in the knowledge of them; they fancy there is no pleasure to be had in them, and they think they have got into a much more pleasant way, which they have chosen, and their souls delight in; though destruction and misery are in it, and it leads into it: they wilfully affect ignorance of the ways of God; they do not care to come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved, their consciences be made uneasy, and they not able to go on so peaceably and quietly in their own ways.

Job 21:15

Ver. 15. What [is] the Almighty, that we should serve him?.... "Who is he" {t}? as some render it; or what is there in him, in his nature, in his excellencies and perfections, that should oblige us to serve him? One would think the attribute of "Almighty", they own and acknowledge, is sufficient to engage to it, since he is the lawgiver that is able to save and to destroy, even to destroy with an everlasting destruction, both body and soul in hell, who obey him not; but fulness of riches, power, and authority, swell the mind with pride, and put men on asking such questions, and running such lengths as these; see **Ex 5:2**. The question is full of atheism, and suggests there was nothing in God excellent or worthy of any regard, or on account of which he should be served and worshipped; as if he was a mere idol, which is nothing in the world; and that he was indeed nothing in it, neither did good nor evil, nor concerned himself with the affairs of men; had forsaken the earth, and took no notice of what was doing is it; at least, the question supposes that such think themselves under no obligations to serve him, and shows them to be sons of Belial, without a yoke; that they neither are nor can he subject to the law of God without his grace; they are not willing God should reign over them, nor to be obedient to his commands and ordinances; but are for freeing themselves from all obligations to him, and choose to serve various lusts and pleasures; be the vassals of sin and Satan, rather than be the worshippers of God:

and what profit should we have if we pray unto him? Prayer is one part of the service of God, and may be here put for the whole: this, as all the rest, is very disagreeable to a natural man, who, as he is biased entirely by profit and gain, thinks there is nothing to be got by religious exercises; he observing, that the worshippers of God, as to external things, fare worse than those who do not pray unto him, or do not serve and worship him; see **Mal 3:14**; though there is much profit, and many things, and those most excellent and valuable, got by prayer; for whatsoever good men ask in prayer, believing, they receive, **Mt 7:7**. The Targum is

"if we pray in his Word,"

in the name of the essential Word, the Son of God; whereas to ask or pray in his name is the only way of succeeding; and such, who do ask in faith in his name, have what they ask for, Joh 14:15.

{t} hm "quis est?" V. L.

Job 21:16

Ver. 16. Lo, their good [is] not in their hand,.... Though it is in their possession for the present, it is not in the power of their hands to keep, nor to carry it with them when they die; God, that gave it, can take it away when he pleases; and therefore it might be profitable to them to serve him and pray unto him: or "their good [is] not by their hand"; they do not obtain their happiness by their works, as in the Tigurine version; and to the same sense Mr. Broughton,

"lo, their wealth cometh not by their own power;"

it is not got by their own industry, diligence, care, and labour; by their own wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and cunning; for riches are not always to men of understanding, but come from God, who gives them to whom he pleases, and can take them away again if he thinks fit; and therefore men are dependent upon him for what they have, and should be thankful to him, and serve him, and pray for the continuance of good things to them. Jarchi reads the words by way of interrogation and admiration, lo! is "not their good in their hand?" verily it is, especially in their own opinion; their hands are full of it; they want nothing of God; they see no need of praying to him; hence the above words, which Job expresses his disapprobation of:

the counsel of the wicked is far from me; the counsels of their hearts; the thoughts of their mind; the words of their mouth; the above impious sayings were such as were detested and abhorred by him; their sense and judgment of things, their choice from deliberate consultation with themselves, preferring temporal good to spiritual good, and earthly things to heavenly ones, outward wealth and riches to the knowledge, service, and worship of God, and communion with him; these were what he disliked; their course of life, which was according to this world, and Satan the god of it, their company and conversation, were such as he carefully shunned and avoided; he chose not to come into their assembly, or to have any fellowship with them; to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, or stand in the way of sinners, these things were an abomination to him; see **Ps 1:1**. This Job says to exculpate himself, and wipe off any calumny that might be cast upon him, as if by what he had said, concerning the outward prosperity of the wicked, that he was a patron and defender of them, and an advocate for them.

Job 21:17

Ver. 17. How oft is the candle of the wicked put out?.... Job here returns, as Jarchi observes, to his former account of the constant and continued prosperity of wicked men; and puts questions tending to prove the same. Bildad had said, that the light and candle of the wicked would be put out, Job 18:5. Job, referring to this, asks how often this is the case; meaning, by the candle of the wicked, not his soul or spirit, which cannot be put out, or become extinct, as to be no more; nor the light of nature in his soul, though that may be put out in a great measure, and he be given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart; but either his natural life, which, like a candle, burns for a while, and then becomes extinct, or rather his outward prosperity and happiness: if the question relates to the former, to the natural life of wicked men, it is not whether they die, that is no question; all die, good and bad; but whether they die in common sooner than others, or whether the instances of the brevity of the life of wicked men were frequent, or but seldom; or, is this always the case? it is not, it is rare, and not common; they live as long as other men, and oftentimes longer; they live and become old, as Job before observes; they prolong their days in their wickedness; or, if this refers to the latter, the prosperity of the wicked, the question is, is that for the most part a short lived prosperity? it is not, it is but rarely so; wicked men generally spend all their days in wealth, as before observed; so Ramban interprets "how oft", that is, how seldom; and to the same sense Mr. Broughton,

"not so often is the candle of the wicked put out;"

and [how oft] cometh their destruction upon them? not eternal, but temporal destruction, calamities and distresses; these are threatened them, but they are not executed on them immediately; and therefore their hearts are set in them to do evil: generally speaking, they have their good things here; they are filled with hidden treasure, which they enjoy while they live, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes; they are not destroyed on every side, as Job was; their substance, their cattle, their servants, their children, and their own health. Job asks how often this is their case, as had been his; and his sense is, and what experience testifies, it is but rarely the, case of wicked men; he seems to refer to what is said, Job 18:12.

[God] distributeth sorrows in his anger; or rather, "how oft doth he distribute sorrows in his anger?" but seldom; he is angry with the wicked every day, and reserves wrath for them, and many sorrows shall be to them, but not for the present; those are future, and even such as of a woman in travail, as the word used signifies, and which shall come upon them suddenly and certainly, and there will be no avoiding them; see Ps 32:10; but does God frequently distribute or portion out sorrows to them now? he does not; they have their portion of good things in this life; does he usually give them sorrow of heart, his curse unto them? he does not; it is very seldom he does; they are not in trouble, nor plagued as other men; they are not men of sorrows and acquainted with griefs; they are generally strangers to them, and live merrily all their days, Job 21:12; respect seems to be had to the conclusion of Zophar's speech, Job 20:29.

Job 21:18

Ver. 18. They are as stubble before the wind,.... Or how oft "are they as stubble?" &c. or how oft does God do the above things, "so that they are", or "become, as stubble before the wind" {u},

and as chaff that the storm carrieth, or "steals away" {x}? hastily, suddenly, at an unawares like a thief: wicked men are comparable to stubble and chaff; for the vanity of their minds, their emptiness of all good things; for their lightness, the levity and inconstancy of their hearts, their principles and practices; for their uselessness and unprofitableness to God and men, to themselves and their fellow creatures; for their being fit fuel for everlasting burnings, their end like these being to be burned; and whose destruction is inevitable and irresistible, and can no more be withstood and prevented than stubble and chaff can stand before a strong wind and a stormy tempest: but is this their common case now? are they usually tossed to and fro with the wind of adversity, and the storms of desolating judgments? are they not, on the other hand, seen in great power, and spreading themselves like a green bay tree; taking root, increasing in outward prosperity, and bringing forth the fruit of it? see Ps 37:35.

{u} Nbtk wyhy "ut sint velut palea", Tigurine version; so Broughton, "quoties sunt", Junius & Tremellius; "quoties fiunt", Piscator, Michaelis. {x} wtbng "furatus est eam", Montanus; "suffuratur", Vatablus; "furatur", Drusius, Cocceius, Schultens.

Job 21:19

Ver. 19. God layeth up his iniquity for his children,.... This is a prevention of an objection which Job foresaw his friends would make, and therefore takes it up and answers to it; you will say, that, be it so, that the wicked are for the most part prosperous, and their prosperity continues; God does not punish them now for their sins in their own persons, yet he will punish them in their children, for whom he reserves the punishment of their iniquity: this way go many of the Jewish commentators {y}, in which they are followed by many Christian interpreters {z}; and, as it seems, very rightly; now this Job grants, that so it is, God takes notice of the iniquities of men, and lays them up in his mind, and puts them down in the book of his remembrance; he reserves the punishment of their iniquities for their children, iniquity being often put for the punishment of it; this is laid up among his stores of vengeance, and is treasured up against the day of wrath; and when they have filled up the measure of their father's sins by their own transgressions, the deserved punishment shall be inflicted, according to Ex 20:5; but this will not clear the case, nor support the notions and sentiments of Job's friends, who had all along given out, that wicked men are punished themselves as well as their children; and that, if they are at any time in prosperous circumstances, it is only for a little while; and therefore agreeably to such notions God should take other methods with them, not punish their children only, but themselves, as Job argues in answer to the objection in Job 21:18:

he rewarded him, and he shall know [it]; or "he should reward him, and he should know it" {a}; and so the word "should" is to be put instead of "shall" in Job 21:20, which directs to the true sense of these clauses: and the meaning of Job is, that according to the sentiments of his friends, God should reward a wicked man while he lives in his own body, and not in his posterity only; he should render to them a just recompence of reward of their evil works, the demerit of their sins; and in such a manner, that they should know it, be sensible of it, and feel it themselves, and perceive the evil of sin in the punishment of it; see **Ho 9:7**.

{y} Nachmanides, Jarchi, Ben Gersom, Bar Tzemach. {z} Beza, Cocceius, Schultens. {a} edyw wyla Mlvy "redderet illi, et (hoc) sciret", Beza; "retribueret ipsi potius, et sentiret", Cocceius.

Job 21:20

Ver. 20. His eyes shall see his destruction,.... Or "should see his destruction" {b}; calamities coming upon himself and upon his children; or otherwise it will not affect him: but when a man has a personal experience of affliction as punishments of his sin, or with his own eyes sees his children in distressed circumstances on his account, this must sensibly affect him, and be a sore punishment to him; as it was to Zedekiah to have his children slain before his eyes, Jer 52:10;

and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty; or "he should drink" {c} of it now, according to the principles of Job's friends, even he in person, and not his posterity only; the wrath of God is on account of sin, and dreadful to bear: if the wrath of a temporal king is as the roaring of a lion, what must be the wrath of the Almighty God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords? this is frequently in Scripture compared to a cup, and is called a cup of trembling, of wrath and fury: and of which all the wicked of the earth shall drink sooner or later, Ps 75:8; but this they should do now, according to the notions of Job's friends, whereas they do not; waters of a full cup, though not in wrath indeed, are wrung out to the people of God, and, as they apprehend, in wrath, when the wicked drink wine in bowls, and the cup of their prosperity overflows.

{b} wyrk wnye wary "videret ejus oculi exitium suum", Beza, Cocceius. {c} htvy "biberet", Beza, Cocceius.

Job 21:21

Ver. 21. For what pleasure [hath] he in his house after him,.... As, on the one hand, the prosperity of his children after his decease gives him no pleasure and delight, so, on the other hand, the calamities and distresses of his family for his sins and theirs give him no pain or uneasiness; he knows nothing that befalls them, and it is no part of his concern; and let what will befall them, he cares not for it; he feels it not, he is not sensible of it; and therefore to object that signifies nothing; see Job 14:21; or, "what business has he with his house after death?" the affairs {d} of his family do not at all concern him, one way or another; he is not affected with them; he can neither consider their happiness as a blessing nor their calamities as a punishment to him:

when the number of his months is cut off in the midst? the years, the months, and the days of the lives of men, are numbered and determined by the Lord, Job 14:5; which, when finished, the thread of life is cut off in the midst, from the rest of the months, which a man or his friends might have expected he would have lived; or rather, "when his number of the months is fully up" {e}; when the calculation of them is complete, and the full number of them is perfected; the sense is, what cares a wicked man for what befalls his family after his death, when he has lived out the full term of life in great outward happiness and prosperity; has lived to be full of days, of months, and years, to a full age, even to an age that may be truly called old age?

{d} So Schultens. {e} wuux "integro numero calculis ducti sunt", Cocceius; "cumulatam sortem habuerint", Schultens.

Job 21:22

Ver. 22. Shall [any] teach God knowledge?.... Who is a God of knowledge, and knows all things, that teaches men knowledge; will any one take upon him to teach him the path of judgment, and the way of understanding, how he shall govern the world, and dispose of men and things in it? see Isa 40:13. Will anyone be so bold and audacious as to pretend to direct and instruct him whom he shall afflict, and whom not, and when he shall do it, and in what manner? should not these things be left to him, who does all things after the counsel of his own will? shall his dealings with men in an outward way of providence be the criterions of the characters and estates of men, as if love and hatred were to be known by those things, and therefore God must be taught what he should do in order to fix them?

seeing he judgeth those that are high; not the high heavens, as the Targum, nor the angels in them, though he has judged them that sinned, and cast them down to hell; but the high ones on earth, kings, princes, and civil magistrates, such as are in high places, and are lifted up with pride above others: God is above them; he is higher than the highest, and judges them; he is the Judge of all the earth, that will do right, the Governor of the universe, and who overrules all things for his own glory and the good of his creatures; and therefore none should pretend to direct him what is fit and proper to be done by him, who is a Sovereign, and distinguishes men in his providence, in life, and at death, as follows; but their characters, as good or bad men, are not to be determined thereby.

Job 21:23

Ver. 23. One dieth in his full strength,.... Man is born a weak feeble creature, and it is by degrees, and through various stages of infancy, childhood, and youth, that he arrives to his full strength in manhood; and, when he does, sometimes so it is, that his strength is not weakened in the course of his life by a train of disorders and diseases, as it is in some; but death seizes and carries him off in the prime of his days, and in the fulness of his strength; for no strength of man, even the greatest, is a security against death: thousands die before they come to their full strength, and multitudes after it begins to decay; and when it is almost wasted, through the force of distempers, or the infirmities of old age, and others, as here, when their strength is in its highest rigour and utmost perfection, and all as God pleases: the words may be rendered "in the strength of his integrity", or "of his perfection" {f}; in the Targum and Ben Gersom, and so Mr. Broughton, "in his very perfection"; and the word is sometimes used, in a moral and spiritual sense, of the integrity of a man's heart, and the uprightness of his ways and walk, and of the perfection of his state God-ward; see **Job 1:1**; and such a man who is upright in heart and conversation, who is truly gracious, sincerely a good man, and perfect through the complete righteousness of Christ, he dies such, his integrity continues with him to the last; and his graces being brought to maturity, he comes to his grave like a shock of corn in its season, and is found in the perfect righteousness of his living Redeemer: but it seems best to take the words in a natural and literal sense, as before; or to interpret them of the fulness of outward felicity, which some men arrive unto, and die in the midst of, when they have got to the highest degree of honour and grandeur, and attained to the greatest degree of wealth and riches, it could well be supposed they would; and then, when in the perfection of it, have been taken away by death; both these senses may stand together: it follows,

being wholly at ease and quiet; in easy circumstances, having an affluence of all good things, and nothing to disturb them, nor are in trouble as others, or plagued as they be; having all that heart can wish, or more, and without any pains of body, at least any long and continued ones; while others are attended with them, days, and months, and years, before their death, Job 33:19; whereas these go down to the grave in a moment, feeling little or no pain, and are quiet and easy in their minds, thoughtless of a future state, and unconcerned how it will be with them in another world; having no sight nor sense of sin, of the evil nature and just demerit of it, feel not the weight and burden of it in their consciences; have no concern or grief of mind for sins of omission or commission, no godly sorrow for it, or repentance of it, nor any fears of wrath and ruin, hell and damnation; but as they are at ease from their youth, with respect to those things, so they live and so they die, secure, stupid, and senseless. Some interpret this of good men {g}; and it is not to be wondered at that a man that dies in his integrity, in the perfection of grace, holiness, and righteousness, should be at ease and quiet; who has an interest in the God of peace, whose peace is made by the blood of Christ, his Peacemaker, and who has a conscience peace arising from a comfortable view of the peace speaking blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of the Mediator; who knows his state is safe, being interested in everlasting love, in an unchangeable covenant in God, as his covenant God, in Jesus his living Redeemer; and knows where he is going, to heaven, to happiness and glory, to be with God, with Christ, with holy angels and glorified saints: but the former sense seems best, of a man dying in easy circumstances, without pain of booty, or distress of mind, whether we understand it of a good man or bad man, though the latter is rather meant.

{f} wmt Mueb "in fortitudine perfectionis suae", Pagninus; so Junius and Tremellius, Piscator; "in fortitudine integritatis suae", Montanus, Bolducius; so Drusius, Mercerus. {g} So Schmidt.

Job 21:24

Ver. 24. His breasts are full of milk,.... As this is not literally true of men, some versions read the words otherwise; his bowels or intestines are full of fat, as the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint; and others, his sides or ribs are full of fat, as the Syriac and Arabic; the words for "side" and "fat" being near in sound to those here used; and so it describes a man fit and plump, and fleshy, when death lays hold upon him, and not wasted with consumptions and pining sickness, as in the case of some, Job 33:21; the word for breasts is observed by some {h} to signify, in the Arabic language, "vessels", in which liquors are contained, and in the Misnic language such as they put oil in, out of which oil is squeezed; and so are thought here to intend such vessels as are milked into; and therefore render it by milk pails; so Mr. Broughton, "his pails are full of milk" {i}; which may denote the abundance of good things enjoyed by such persons, as rivers of honey and butter; contrary to Zophar's notion, Job 20:17; and a large increase of oil and wine, and all temporal worldly good; amidst the plenty of which such die:

and his bones are moistened with marrow; not dried up through a broken spirit, or with grief and trouble, and through the decays of old age; but, being full of marrow, are moist, and firm and strong; and so it intimates, that such, at the time when death seizes them, are of an hale, healthful, robust, and strong constitution; see Ps 73:4.

{h} See Kimchi, Sepher Shorash. rad. Nje, and Jarchi and Ben Melech in loc.
{i} wynyje "muletralia ejus", Montanus, Beza, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Bolducius, Drusius, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Job 21:25

Ver. 25. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul,.... Either another wicked man; for there is a difference among wicked men; some are outwardly happy in life, and in the circumstances of their death, as before described; and others are very unhappy in both; their life is a scene of afflictions which embitter life, and make death eligible; and in the midst of which they die, as well as oftentimes in bitter pains, and terrible agonies of body, as well as in great distress and horror of mind, and black despair, as Judas and others:

and never eateth with pleasure, or "of any good", or "any good thing" {y};

either he has it not to eat, or what he has is not good, but like husks which swine eat, of which the prodigal would fain have filled his belly, when in extreme poverty, such as those words may describe; or else having what is good, has not an heart to eat of it; and so they describe a miser, living and dying such; see **Ec 6:2**; or rather the case of a man, who, through distempers and diseases of body, has lost his appetite, and cannot with any pleasure taste of the richest dainties; see Job 33:20. Some {z} interpret this verse and Job 21:23 as what should be the case according to the sentiments of Job's friends, who objected, that God punished the iniquities of wicked men, not in their own persons, but in their children; according to which, a wicked man then should die in the perfection of happiness, without weakness or want, in all quietness, ease, peace, and prosperity; and not in poverty and distress: but as Job 21:23 respect a wicked man, and his case and circumstances at death, agreeably to the whole context; so this relates to those of a good man, whom the Lord often deals bitterly with in life, as he did with Naomi, and was now the case of Job; see **Ru 1:20**; and who die in very poor and distressed circumstances; so that nothing is to be concluded from such appearances, with respect to the characters of men, as good or bad, and especially since both are brought into a like condition by death, as follows.

{y} hbwj "bonum", Pagninus, Mercerus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator & Bar Tzemach; "de bono", Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens. {z} Bar Tzemach.

Job 21:26

Ver. 26. They shall lie down alike in the dust,.... Such as have lived and died in great outward prosperity, or in more unhappy circumstances; these are levelled by death, and brought into the same state and condition; are laid on dusty beds, where there is no difference between them, their rest together is in the dust; here they dwell, and here they lie and sleep until they are awaked in the morning of the resurrection:

and the worms shall cover them; these are the companions alike unto them, and sweetly feed on the one as on the other; the earth is their bed, and worms are their covering; even such who used to lie on beds of down, and were covered with coverings of silk, have now the same bed and covering as those who used to lie on beds of straw, and scarce any thing to cover them; worms are spread under them, and are spread upon them; they are both their bed and their covering, Isa 14:11.

Job 21:27

Ver. 27. Behold, I know your thoughts,.... God only truly, really, and in fact, knows the thoughts of men; this is his peculiar prerogative, he only is the searcher of the hearts and the trier of the reins of the children of men. Christ, the eternal Logos, or Word, by his being a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, appears to be truly God. No man knows the things of a than, or the thoughts of his heart, but himself, and such to whomsoever he reveals them; but a wise and understanding man, a careful observer of men and things, may make some shrewd guesses at the thoughts of others, by hints and half words, or sentences expressed by them; by the show of their countenance, which is the index of the mind, and by the gestures and motions of their bodies; by these they may in a good measure judge whether they like or dislike, approve or, disapprove, of what is said to them: and thus Job knew the thoughts of his friends, that they were different from his, that the sentiments of their minds did not agree with his; and though he had so clearly proved his point, yet he saw by their looks and gestures that what he had said was not satisfactory to them; that they did not think it a sufficient confutation of their arguments, and a full answer to their objections:

and the devices [which] ye wrongfully imagine against me; that he was an hypocrite, a wicked man, guilty of crimes, and which they were devising to produce against him, and charge and load him with, as Eliphaz does in the following chapter; he knew they meant him in all that they had said concerning wicked men, and their afflictions, and what would be their portion at death, and after it; and though they did not name his name, they might as well have done it, since he was the man they struck at in all, particularly it, Job 20:5.

Job 21:28

Ver. 28. For ye say,.... Or "have said", or "[I know] that ye say"; or "[that] ye are about to say" {a}; it is in your hearts and minds, and just ready to come out of your lips, and what you will say next:

where [is] the house of the prince? of the righteous man, as the Syriac and Arabic versions; or "of the good and liberal man", as others {b}; of such as are of a princely and ingenuous spirit, who are made willing, free, or princes, in the day of the power of the grace of God upon them; and are endowed and upheld with a free and princely spirit; where is the house, or what is the state and condition, of the families of such? are they the same with that of wicked men in the next clause? is there no difference between the one and the other? according to your way of reasoning, Job, there should not be any: or else this is to be understood rather of a wicked and tyrannical prince, who has built himself a stately palace, which he fancied would continue for ever; but where is it now? it lies in ruins; having respect perhaps to some noted prince of those times: or rather either to Job himself, who had been a prince, and the greatest man in all the east, but in what condition were his house and family now? or else to his eldest son, whose house was blown down with a violent wind:

and where [are] the dwelling places of the wicked? of the mighty men before the flood, which are now overthrown by it; or of the king and princes, and nobles, and great men of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven; or of Job, his tent or tabernacle, and the several apartments in it; or of the rest of his children and servants, respecting rather, as before observed, the state and condition of his family, than his material house: these questions are answered by putting others.

{a} wrmat yk "vos dicere", Junius & Tremellius; "nempe vos dicturos", Piscator; so Schmidt, Schultens. {b} bydn "liberalis", Montanus; "boni et liberalis hominis", Tigurine version; "ingenui", Schultens.

Job 21:29

Ver. 29. Have ye not asked them that go by the way?.... Did you not ask every traveller you met with on the road the above question? not which was the way to Job's house, which they knew very well, but in what condition that and his sons were? or what was the case of him and his family? and what was his character? or what was thought of him now since his unhappy circumstances?

and do ye not know their tokens? by which it might be known in what a plight he and his family were, and what were the marks, signs, and characters they gave of him: "have ye not asked?" &c. the sense seems to be this, that if they had not asked, they might and should have asked of travellers the above things relating to himself and family, and then they would not have needed to put the above question about his house and tabernacles; or, if they had inquired of his character of any travellers, they would have given them it, that he was a generous hospitable man, a man truly good, strictly just and upright, and not the wicked man and the hypocrite as they had traduced him; for Job's house had been open to strangers and travellers, and he was well known by them, and they were ready to give him a good character, see Job 31:32; or, if they had inquired of them concerning the stately houses and palaces of wicked men that had lived in times past, whether there were any of them standing; they could have told them they were, and where they were, and given them such signs and tokens, and such proof and evidence of them they could not deny; and indeed, if they had been inquired of about the thing in controversy between Job and his friends, concerning the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the godly, as they by travelling became acquainted with persons and things, and made their observations on them, they could have easily pointed out instances of wicked men living and dying in prosperous circumstances, and of good men being greatly afflicted and distressed, if not all their days, yet great part of them; and they could have given such plain signs and tokens, and such clear and manifest proofs of those things, as could not have been gainsaid: and this may be understood of travellers in a spiritual sense, and who are the best judges of such a case, and are travellers through the wilderness of this world, and pass through many tribulations in it; and, being bound for another and better country, an heavenly one, are pilgrims, strangers, and sojourners here; have no abiding, but are passing on in the paths of faith, truth, and holiness, till they come to the heavenly Canaan; if any of those who are yet on the road, and especially if such could be come at who have finished their travels, and the question be put to them, they would all unite in this doctrine, which Abraham, the spiritual traveller, is represented delivering to the rich wicked man in hell; that wicked men have their good things in this life, and good men their evil things, Lu 16:25; and particularly would agree in saying what follows.

Job 21:30

Ver. 30. That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction?.... That is, that they are spared, withheld, restrained, as the word {d} signifies, or kept and preserved from many calamities and distresses, which others are exposed unto; and so are reserved, either unto a time of greater destruction in this life or rather to eternal destruction in the world to come; which is the same with the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men, when they will be destroyed soul and body, in hell, with an everlasting destruction, as the just demerit of sin; or of that sinful course of life they live, being the broad way which leads to and issues in destruction, and for which there is a day appointed, when it will take place; and unto that day are the wicked reserved, in the purpose and decree of God, by which they are righteously destined to this day of evil, and by the power and providence of God, even the same chains of darkness, in which the angels are reserved unto the same time, being fitted and prepared for destruction by their own sins and transgressions, **2Pe 2:4**: and unto which they are kept, as condemned malefactors are in their cells, unto the day of execution, they being condemned already, though the sentence is not yet executed; in order to which

they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath; the wrath of God, which is very terrible and dreadful, and is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, and is here expressed in the plural number, "wraths" {e}, either as denoting both present and future wrath; or the vehemency of it, it being exceeding fierce and vehement; and the continuance and duration of it, there will be wrath upon wrath, even to the uttermost, and for ever; and for this a day is fixed, against which day wicked men are treasuring up wrath to themselves, and they shall be brought forth at the day of judgment, to have it poured forth upon them. This is the true state of the case with respect to them, that, though sometimes they are involved in general calamities, as the old world, and the men of Sodom and Gomorrah, **Ge 7:23**; and sometimes good men are delivered from them, as Noah and Lot were, **Ge 7:23**, or are taken away by death from the evil to come; yet for the most part, generally speaking, wicked men escape present calamities and distresses, and are not in trouble as other men, but live in ease and pleasure all their days; nevertheless, wrath and ruin, and everlasting destruction, will be their portion.

{d} dvxy "prohibebitur", Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius; so Beza, Vatablus, Mercerus; "subtrahitur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "subdueitur", Schultens. {e} twrbe "irarum", Pagninus, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Schultens.

Job 21:31

Ver. 31. Who shall declare his way to his face?.... Jarchi and Aben Ezra think that Job here returns to God, and speaks of him, as in
Job 21:22; signifying that no man can or ought to presume to charge the ways of God in his providence with inequality or injustice, in sparing the wicked now, and reserving them to wrath and destruction hereafter; since he is a sovereign Being, and does what he pleases, and none can hinder him, nor ought any to say to him, what dost thou? nor does he give an account of his matters to the children of men; but this respects the wicked man, and describes his state and condition in this life, as being possessed of such wealth and

riches, and living in such grandeur and splendour, and advanced to such places of honour and glory, as to be above the reproof of men; though his way, his course of life, is a very wicked one, and he ought to be told to his face the evil of his way, and the danger he is exposed to by it, and what will be the sad consequence of it; his relations and friends, his neighbours and acquaintance, should labour to convince him of his evil, and reprove him to his face, and endeavour to reclaim him from it; but how few are there that have courage and faithfulness enough to do this, since they are sure to incur his displeasure and hatred, and run the risk of their lives, as John the Baptist lost his for his faithfulness in reproving Herod to his face, for taking to him his brother Philip's wife? Mt 14:3;

and who shall repay him [what] he hath done? bring him to an account for his crimes, and to just punishment for them; who will venture to bring a charge against him, or enter an action at law, bring him before a court of judicature, and prosecute him, and get judgment passed upon him? as such a man is above all reproof for his sins, he is out of the reach of punishment for them; he lives with impunity, none can punish him but God; and being lifted up with his greatness, he neither fears God nor regards man.

Job 21:32

Ver. 32. Yet shall he be brought to the grave,.... Or "and", "or yea he shall be brought", &c. {a}; for the meaning is not, that though he is great in life he shall be brought low enough at death; for Job is still describing the grand figure wicked men make, even at death, as well as in life; for he is not only brought to the grave, as all men are, it being the house appointed for all living, and every man's long home; but the wicked rich man is brought thither in great funeral pomp, in great state, as the rich sinner was buried, **Ec 8:10**; or "to the graves" {b}, the place where many graves are, the place of the sepulchres of his ancestors; and in the chiefest and choicest of them he is interred, and has an honourable burial; not cast into a ditch, or buried with the burial of an ass, as Jehoiakim was, being cast forth beyond the gates of the city, Jer 22:19; and shall remain in the tomb; quiet and undisturbed, when it has been the lot of others to have their bones taken out of their grave, and spread before the sun, see **Jer 8:1**; and even some good men, who have had their graves dug up, their bones taken out and burnt, and their ashes scattered about, as was the case of that eminent man, John Wickliff, here in England. The word for "tomb" signifies an "heap" {c}, and is sometimes used for an heap of the fruits of the earth; which has led some to think of the place of this man's interment being in

the midst of a corn field; but the reason why a grave or tomb is so called is, because a grave, through a body or bodies being laid in it, rises up higher than the common ground; and if it has a tomb erected over it, that is no other than an heap of stones artificially put together; or it may be so called from the heaps of bodies one upon another in a grave, or vault, over which the tomb is, or where every part of the body is gathered and heaped {d}; from this sense of the word some have given this interpretation of the passage, that the wicked man shall be brought to his grave, and abide there, after he has heaped up a great deal of wealth and riches in this world; which, though a truth, seems not to be intended here, any more than others taken from the different signification of the word translated "remain". It is observed by some to signify to "hasten" {e}, from whence the almond tree, which hastens to put forth its bloom, has its name, **Jer 1:10**; and so give this as the sense, that such a man, being of full age, is ripe for death, and, comes to his grave, or heap, like a shock of corn in its season. Others observe, that it signifies to "watch"; and so in the margin of our Bibles the clause is put, "he shall watch in the heap" {f}, which is differently interpreted; by some, that he early and carefully provides himself a tomb, as Absalom in his lifetime set up a sepulchral pillar for himself, 2Sa 18:18; and Shebna the scribe, and Joseph of Arimathea, hewed themselves sepulchres out of the rock,
Isa 22:15; and others think the allusion is either to statues upon tombs, as are still in use in our days, where they are placed as if they were watching over the tombs; or to bodies embalmed, according to the custom of the eastern countries, especially the Egyptians, which were set up erect in their vaults, and seemed as if they were alive, and there set to watch the places they were in, rather than as if buried there; or, according to others, "he shall be watched", or "[the keeper] shall watch at", or "over the tomb" {g}, that the body is not disturbed or taken away; but the sense our version gives is best, and most agrees with the context, and the scope of it, and with what follows.

{a} awhw "et ipse", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {b} twrbql "ad sepulchra", V. L. Montamus, Vatablus, Drusius, Beza, Mercerus, Michaelis, Schultens; "in sepulchra", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {c} vydg le "super acervo", Montanus, Codurcus; so Bolducius, Mercerus. {d} Vid. David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 14. 3. {e} dwqvy "festinabit", Pagninus; so some in Vatablus, and Ben Melech. {f} "Vigilabit", V. L. Tigurine version, Montanus; "vigilat", Michaelis, Schultens; "erit tanquam vigil", Bolducius. {g} "Vigilabitur", Beza; "vigilatur", Cocceius; so Calovius.

Job 21:33

Ver. 33. The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him,.... Where he lies interred, alluding to places of interment at the bottom of hills, and mountains, and under rocks, in plains and vales, see
Ge 35:8; and by this strong figure is signified, that the dead wicked man, lying in the clods of the valley in his grave, is in great repose, and in the utmost ease and quiet, feels no pains of body, nor has any uneasiness of mind concerning what befalls his posterity after his death, Job 14:21;

and every man shall draw after him, as [there are] innumerable before him; which either respects the pomp at his funeral procession, vast numbers being drawn and gathered together to gaze at it, as is common at grand funerals; and particularly, it may describe the multitude that go before the corpse, as well as those that follow after it; but rather as he is before represented as brought to his grave, and laid there, this clause is added, to denote the universality of death, it being common to all; thousands and ten thousands, even a number which no man can number, have gone before him by death into another world, as every man that comes after him must; and so this may prevent an objection to the grandeur of a wicked man, that after all he dies; but then death is no other than what is common to all men, to the vast multitudes that have gone before, and will be the case of all that come after, to the end of the world.

Job 21:34

Ver. 34. How then comfort ye me in vain,.... This is the conclusion Job draws from the above observations: his friends came to comfort him, and they took methods for it, as they thought, but miserable comforters were they all; what they administered for comfort was in vain, and to no purpose; nor could any be expected from them, on the plan upon which they proceeded; they suggested he was a bad man, because of his afflictions, and they exhorted him to repentance and reformation, and then promised him happiness and prosperity upon it; which could not be expected, as appeared from the face of things in Providence; since, according to the above instances and proofs, wicked men enjoy prosperity, and good men had usually a great share of adversity:

seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood; all their replies to Job were filled with these intimations and suggestions, that wicked men were only and always afflicted; or if they were at any time in prosperity, it was but for a little while; that good men were seldom or never afflicted, at least as Job was, or but a little afflicted, and for a little while: now Job had proved the contrary to all this, and therefore no consolation could be hoped for from men that held such tenets; comfort only springs from truth, and not falsehood; a man that speaks the truths, or delivers out the truths of God's word, he speaks to comfort and edification; but he that brings nothing but error and falsehood can never be the means and instrument of true solid comfort to any. Job having thus fully proved his point, and confuted the notions of his friends, it might have been thought they would have sat down in silence, and made no further answer; but Eliphaz rises up a third time, and makes a reply, as follows.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 22

This chapter contains the third and last reply of Eliphaz to Job, in which he charges him with having too high an opinion of himself, of his holiness and righteousness, as if God was profited by it, and laid thereby under obligation to him, whereas he was not, Job 22:1; and as if he reproved and chastised him, because of his fear of him, whereas it was because of his sins, Job 22:4; an enumeration of which he gives, as of injustice, oppression, cruelty to the poor, and even of atheism and infidelity, for which snares and fears were around him, and various calamities, Job 22:6; and compares his way and course of life to that of the men of the old world, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and suggests that his end would be like theirs, unless he repented, Job 22:15; and then concludes with an exhortation to him to return to God by repentance, and to reform, when he should see happy times again, and enjoy much outward and inward prosperity, and be an instrument of doing much good to many,
Job 22:21.

Ver. 1. Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said. As Eliphaz was the first that entered the discussion with Job, being perhaps the oldest man, and might be reckoned the wisest, so he gives the lead in every course of disputation; and here, instead of replying to Job's arguments and instances, at which he was very angry, betakes himself to calumny and reproach, and to draw invidious consequences, instead of making use of solid reasons for conviction and confutation.

Job 22:2

Ver. 2. Can a man be profitable unto God?.... Eliphaz imagined that Job thought so, by his insisting so much on his integrity, and complaining of his afflictions; and that God was beholden to him for his holiness and righteousness, and that instead of afflicting him, should have heaped honours and happiness upon him; whereas there is not anything a man can do, or does, by which God can be profiled; which is a very great truth, though misapplied to Job through a wrong construction of his words and meaning. No man, even the best of men, and by the best things they can do, can be profitable to God; as for bad men, they are altogether unprofitable to themselves and to others, and still less profitable to God; and as for good men, their "goodness extendeth not" to the Lord, Ps 16:2; it comes from him, it is his own previously; it is of no avail and advantage to him, who is perfect and all sufficient; when they have done all that they are commanded, they are bid to say, and very truly, "we are unprofitable servants",
Lu 17:10; they do indeed glorify God, and are the means of others glorifying him by their good works; but then they add no glory to him, which he had not before; they only declare the glory of God by the light of their grace and works, as the heavens and luminaries in them do by their light and lustre; they worship God as they ought to do; but then he is not worshipped by them "as though he needed anything" of them, Ac 17:25; it is they, and not he, that get by worship; it is good for them, and they find their account in it, to draw near to him, and wait upon him, and worship him; what are all their prayers and praises to him? the benefit redounds to themselves: some men are very serviceable to promote the interest of religion, either by their purses, or by their gifts and talents, fitting for public usefulness; but then, what do they give to God but what is his own? "of thine own have we given thee", says David, 1Ch 29:14; or what do they do for him? it is for the good of themselves, and others, Ro 11:35. Some are useful in the conversion of men to God, either by the public ministry of the word, or in private life by discourse and conversation; but then the profit of all this is to men, and not unto God; there is nothing that a man can do, by which he can make God his debtor, or lay him under an obligation to him, which he would, if he could be profitable to him; but whatever he does, it is but his duty, and what God has a prior right unto; and therefore men can merit nothing at the hand of God, no, not the least mercy; it is by the grace of God a good man is what he is, and does what he does; the Targum paraphrases it, "can a man teach God?" and so Mr. Broughton; see Job 21:22;

as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? or "though", or "indeed, truly he that is wise", &c. {h}. A man that is worldly wise is profitable to himself and his family, by gathering wealth and riches; and a man that is wise, and has a large understanding of natural things, may be profitable to himself by enriching his mind with knowledge, increasing the pleasure of it, and getting credit and fame among men by it, and may be profitable to others by communicating his knowledge to them, see **Pr 9:12**; and one that is spiritually wise, or has the true grace of God, and wisdom in the hidden part, which is no other than real godliness, gets great gain; for godliness is that to him, and is profitable for all things, having the promise of the present and future life; and he that has an interest in Christ, the Wisdom of God, is a happy man indeed, since he has that, the merchandise of which is better than silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold; one that is wise unto salvation, and is a wise professor of religion, and walks wisely and circumspectly, has great advantages; he builds his salvation on the rock Christ, and is safe and sure; he is concerned to have the oil of grace, with the lamp of a profession, and so is always ready to meet the bridegroom; and being careful of his conversation, keeps his garments that his shame is not seen; and so a wise minister of the word, "[one that] instructs" {i}, or gives instructions to others, as the word here signifies; or one that causes to understand, or is the means of causing men to understand, such a man is profitable to himself and to others, see Da 12:3.

{h} yk "immo", Beza; "profecto", Schultens. {i} lykvm.

Job 22:3

Ver. 3. [Is it] any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous?.... It is not; the Lord indeed takes pleasure in his people, not as sinners, but as righteous; and as they are considered such in Christ, he is well pleased for his righteousness' sake, and with it, being agreeable to his nature, will, and law; and with his people in Christ, in whom they are accepted, having imputed the righteousness of his Son unto them, and so they stand before him unblamable and irreprovable, and he takes pleasure in the work of his own hands upon them, called the good pleasure of his will, in the new man formed after his image in righteousness and true holiness, in the graces of his Spirit, and in the exercise of them, faith, hope, love, humility, fear of God, &c. it is a pleasure to him to hear their prayers and praises, and to observe their ready and cheerful obedience to his will; but then all this gives him no new pleasure, or adds anything to the complacency of his mind; he would have had as much delight and pleasure within himself, if there had never been an holy angel in heaven, or a righteous man on earth; he has no such pleasure in either as to be made more happy thereby, or so as to receive any "gain" or profit from it, as the next clause explains it. Some render it, "that thou justifiest thyself" {k}, or "that thou art just", or "seemest to be righteous to thyself" {l}; a self-righteous person is not pleasing to God; it is no pleasure to him when a man seeks for justification by his own works, or reckons them his righteousness; the publican that confessed his sin was rather justified with God than the Pharisee that applauded his own righteousness; such that are conceited of their own righteousness, and despise others, are an offence to God, a "smoke in his nose", Isa 65:5; for the righteousness of such is not real righteousness in the account of God, and according to his law; it has only the shadow and appearance of one, but is not truly so; and besides, to seek righteousness this way is going contrary to the revealed will of God, to the Gospel scheme of justification by faith in Christ's righteousness, without the works of the law, and is a setting aside his righteousness, and frustrating and making null and void the death of Christ, and therefore can never be pleasing in the sight of God:

or [is it] gain [to him] that thou makest thy ways perfect? no man's ways are perfect before God, even the best of men have detects in their works, and failings in their walk and conversations: some men's ways are indeed clean in their own eyes, and perfect in their own conceit; and if Eliphaz thought Job such an one, he was mistaken, see **Job 9:20**; there are others, who are in a sense unblamable in their walk and conversation; that is, are not guilty of any notorious crime, but exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and man, walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; and yet this is no "gain" to God; for what does such a man give to him? or what does he receive of his hands? see Job 35:7. This was indeed Job's case and character.

{k} qdut yk "quod justifices te", Junius & Tremellius. {l} "Quum Justus es apud teipsum", Schmidt; "quod tibi justus esse videris", Michaelis.

Job 22:4

Ver. 4. Will he reprove thee for fear of thee?.... That is, chastise, correct, and afflict, for fear that hurt should be done unto him; no, he will not; for as the goodness of men does not profit him, the sinfulness of men does not hurt him, see Job 35:6. Kings and civil magistrates sometimes chastise offenders, not only to do justice to them, but through fear of them, lest, if spared or connived at, they should be hurtful to the state, and overturn it; but though sin is an act of hostility against God, and strikes at his being and government, yet he is in no fear of being ruined or dethroned, or of having his government taken out of his hands, and therefore does not chastise men on that account: or "for thy fear" {m}, for thy fear of God, thy piety; or "for thy religion", as Mr. Broughton translates the word. Job had often suggested that good men, such that truly feared God, are afflicted by him, and therefore his own afflictions were no objection to his character, as a man that feared God, and eschewed evil, **Job 1:1**; and in this sense Eliphaz uses the word, **Job 4:6**; and here he intimates, as if, according to the notion of Job, that God afflicted him, and other good men, because they feared him, and which he observes, as a great absurdity; whereas, on the contrary, he chastised him for his sins, as Job 22:5 shows; but though God does not afflict men for their goodness, but for sins, yet they are only such that fear him, and whom he loves, that he chastises in a fatherly way, see Heb 12:6;

will he enter with thee into judgment? that is, will he, in reverence to thee, out of respect to so great a person (speaking ironically), in condescension to one of so much consequence, will he regard thy request, so often made, as to come into judgment with thee, and to admit of thy cause being pleaded before him, and to give the hearing of it, and decide the affair in controversy? or rather, will he not plead against thee, and condemn thee for thy sins, as follow? in this sense it is to be deprecated, and not desired, see Ps 143:2.

{m} Ktarymh "an de religione tua", Junius & Tremellius; "ob timorem tuum", so some in Drusius; "num ob pietatem tuam", others in Michaelis.

Job 22:5

Ver. 5. Is not thy wickedness great?.... It must be owned it is, it cannot be denied. Indeed, the wickedness of every man's heart is great, it being desperately wicked, full of sin, abounding with it; out of it comes forth everything that is bad, and the wickedness of actions is very great: some sins are indeed greater than others, as those against God, and the first table of the law, are greater than those against men, or the second table; some are like crimson and scarlet, are beams in the eye, while others are comparatively as motes; yet all are great, as committed against God, and as they are breaches of his law; and especially they appear so to sensible sinners, to whom sin is made exceeding sinful; and they see and own themselves to be the chief of sinners, and as such entreat for pardon on that account, see Ps 25:11;

and thine iniquities infinite? strictly speaking, nothing is infinite but God; sins may be said in some sense to be infinite, because committed against an infinite God, and cannot be satisfied for by a finite creature, or by finite sufferings, only through the infinite value of the blood of Christ; here it signifies, that his iniquities were "innumerable" {n}, as some versions, they were not to be reckoned up, they were so many; or, more literally, there is "no end of thine iniquities" {o}, there is no summing of them up; and it may denote his continuance in them; Eliphaz suggests as if Job lived in sin, and allowed himself in it, and was going on in a course of iniquity without end, which was very uncharitable; here he charges him in a general way, and next he descends to particulars.

{n} anariymhtoi, Sept. {o} Kytwnwel Uq Nya "non est finis iniquitatibus tuis", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Job 22:6

Ver. 6. For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought,.... It can hardly be thought that it was for nothing at all, on no consideration whatever, or that nothing was lent, for which the pledge was taken; but that it was a small trifling sum, and comparatively nothing, not to be spoken of; or it was borrowed for so short a time, that there needed not any pledge it; and it was unkind to take it, especially of a brother, whether in nature, or in religion, whether a near kinsman, or friend, or neighbour. Some render the words, "thou hast taken thy brother", or "brothers, for a pledge" {p}; them themselves, their persons, as a security for what was lent, in order to sell them, and pay off the debt with the money, or detain them as bondmen till it was paid, **2Ki 4:1**. If Eliphaz said this, and what follows, only as conjectures, as some think, or upon supposition, concluding from his afflictions that those things, or something like them, had been done by him; it is contrary to that charity that thinks no ill, and hopes the best; and if they are positive assertions of matters of fact, as they rather seem to be, delivered upon hearsay, and slender proof, it shows a readiness to receive calumnies and false accusations against his friend, and can scarcely be excused from the charge of bearing false testimony against him, since Job does in the most solemn manner deny those things in Job 31:1;

and stripped the naked of their clothing; not such as were stark naked, because they have no clothes to be stripped of; but such that were poorly clothed, scarce sufficient to cover their nakedness, and preserve them from the inclemencies of weather; these were stripped of their clothing, and being stripped, were quite naked and exposed, which to do was very cruel and hardhearted; perhaps it may respect the same persons from whom the pledge was taken, and that pledge was their clothing, which was no uncommon thing, see Ex 22:26.

{p} Kyxa lbxt hnecurazev touv adelfouv sou, Sept. "capies in pignus fratres tuos", Montanus.

Job 22:7

Ver. 7. Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink,.... To a weary thirsty traveller, to whom in those hot countries cold water was very refreshing, and which in desert places was not to be had in common, or any where; rich men were possessed of their wells and fountains, and were kept for their own use, and it was a kindness and favour to obtain water of them; and yet a cup of cold water is one of the least favours to be given to a poor man, and to deny it him in distress was very inhuman, and was very far from Job's character:

and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry: bread, which strengthens man's heart, and is the staff of life, without which he cannot support; and this is not to be withheld from, but given even to an enemy when hungry; and to deny it to a poor neighbour in such circumstances is very cruel; the charge is, that Job would not give a poor hungry man a morsel of bread to eat; which must be false, being directly contrary to what he strongly asserts, Job 31:17.

Job 22:8

Ver. 8. But [as for] the mighty man, he had the earth,.... A large share and portion of it, which Job could not hinder him from the enjoyment of, because mightier than he, or otherwise he would have done it; or Job was content he should have what he had, and gave him more than what of right belonged to him; for when any cause came before him as a judge, or civil magistrate, between a rich man, and a poorer man, relating to a field, or piece of land he always gave the cause to the rich and mighty and so he had the land, as is suggested:

and the honourable man dwelt in it; peaceably, quietly, and undisturbed, though he had no just title to it; or "the man accepted of face" or "countenance" {q}, who was respected because of his outward circumstances, wealth and riches, power and authority; and so Job is tacitly charged with being a respecter of persons in judgment, which was not good; and in general these phrases denote partiality in him, that he was favourable to the mighty and powerful, and unkind and cruel to the poor and needy. Some {r} understand all this of Job himself, that because he was the mighty man, or "man of arms" {s}, he made use of his power and might, and stretched out his arm, and grasped and got into his possession, by force and violence, the houses, and lands, and estates of others, and became the greatest man in all the east, and the earth in a manner was his alone; and because he was respected for his greatness and riches, he was confirmed therein, and dwelt securely: or rather, taking the words in this sense, they may be considered as an aggravation of Job's sins, both before and after charged upon him; as that when he was the mighty and honourable man, and though he was such, and had it in the power of his hands to do a great deal of good to the poor and needy; yet took a pledge from his indigent brother, stripped those that were almost naked of their clothing, and would not give a poor weary traveller a cup of water, nor a morsel of bread to an hungry man; yea, abused his power and authority which he had, to the oppression of the widow and fatherless, as in Job 22:9.

{q} Mynp awvn "acceptus faciebus", Montanus; "vel facie", Vatablus, Beza, Junius & Tremellius, Drusius, Mercerus. {r} Jarchi, Ramban, Bar Tzemach, Sephorno. {s} ewrz vya "viro brachii", Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius, Vatablus, Drusius, &c.

Job 22:9

Ver. 9. Thou hast sent widows away empty,.... Either out of their own houses, which he spoiled, and devoured, and stripped, and cleared of all that were in them, as did the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time, Mt 23:14; or out of his own house, when they came to him, as a rich man, for charity; as they came to him wanting relief, they went away so; if without food and clothing, they were bid to depart without giving them anything to feed and clothe them with; or if they came to him as a civil magistrate to have justice done them, and to be delivered out of the hands of their oppressors, they could not obtain any, but were dismissed without it; how contrary is this to Job 29:13;

and the arms of the fatherless have been broken; not in a literal sense, as if when refusing to go out, when their mothers, the widows, had their houses spoiled, and they sent empty out of them; these laid hold on something within them, and would not depart, and so, had their arms broken by the mighty man, the man of arms; but, in a metaphorical and figurative sense, their substance, and goods, and possessions, left them by their fathers for their support, these were taken away from them, and so they were as impotent and helpless as if their arms had been broken; or their friends on whom they relied for their sustenance, these were either ruined, and so could not help them; or else their affections were alienated from them, and would not. This indeed is not expressly charged upon Job, but it is intimated that it was done with his knowledge and consent, good will, and approbation; at least that he connived at it, and suffered it to be done when it was in his power to have prevented it, and therefore to be ascribed unto him; but how foreign is all this to Job's true character, Job 29:12?

Job 22:10

Ver. 10. Therefore snares [are] round about thee,.... Not what occasion sin, draw into it, and issue in it, as inward corruptions, the temptations of Satan, and the things of this world, but punishments; because of the above sins charged upon Job, therefore evils, calamities, and distresses of various kinds, came upon, him, beset him, and encompassed him all around, so that there was no way left for him to escape; it may refer to the Sabeans and Chaldeans seizing on his cattle, and carrying them away; to the fire that fell from heaven upon his sheep, and consumed them; to the great wind that blew down the house in which his children were, and destroyed them; and to the boils and ulcers that were all over his body:

and sudden fear troubleth thee; those things, at least some of them, were what he feared, and they came suddenly upon him, and gave him great trouble and distress, **Job 3:25**; and present fear frequently, on a sudden, darted into his mind, and gave him fresh trouble; he was afraid of his present sorrows, and of further and future ones, **Job 9:28**; and perhaps Eliphaz might think he was afraid of hell and damnation, and of sudden destruction from the Almighty coming upon him,
Job 31:23; see Isa 24:17.

Job 22:11

Ver. 11. Or darkness, [that] thou canst not see,.... Or darkness is round about thee, thou art enveloped in it; meaning either judicial blindness, and darkness, and stupidity of mind, which must be his case, if he could not see the hand of

God upon him, or the snares that were about him, or was not troubled with sudden fear; or else the darkness of affliction and calamity, which is often signified hereby, see **Isa 8:22**; afflictive dispensations of Providence are sometimes so dark, that a man cannot see the cause and reason of them, or why it is he is brought into them; which was Job's case, and therefore desires God would show him wherefore he contended with him,
Job 10:9; nor can he see, perceive, or enjoy any light of comfort; he is in inward darkness of soul, deprived of the light of God's countenance, as well as he is in the outward darkness of adversity, which is a most uncomfortable case, as it was this good man's; nor can he see any end of the affliction, or any way to escape out of it, and which were the present circumstances Job was in:

and abundance of waters cover thee; afflictions, which are frequently compared to many waters, and floods of them, because of the multitude of them, their force and strength, the power and rapidity with which they come; and because overflowing, overbearing, and overwhelming, and threaten with utter ruin and destruction, unless stopped by the mighty hand of God, who only can resist and restrain them; Eliphaz represents Job like a man drowning, overflowed with a flood of water, and covered with its waves, and in the most desperate condition, see Ps 69:1.

Job 22:12

Ver. 12. [Is] not God in the height of heaven?.... The heaven is high, it has its name from its height, and is noted for it; some of the heavens are higher than others, as the heaven of heavens, the third heaven, the habitation of angels and glorified saints; and here God dwells, this is the habitation of his holiness, and the high and holy place he inhabits; his throne is in heaven, in the heaven of heavens is his throne, where he in an especial manner manifests his glory, and the lustre of it; he is not indeed continued here, the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, he is everywhere; yet this is his court and palace, where his residence and retinue is and angels behold his face, and wait upon him; and because this is the principal seat of his majesty, it becomes one of his names, **Da 4:26**; and the words here will bear to be rendered, "is not God the height of the heavens?" {t} or, as the Vulgate Latin version, "higher than the heavens"; he is above them, more exalted than they, being the Creator of them, see **Heb 7:26**;

and behold the height of the stars, how high they are; or "the head" or "top of the stars" {u}, which Ben Gersom interprets of the supreme orb, or that high and vast space in which the fixed stars are, or the highest of them, which are at the greatest distance; according to Mr. Huygens {w} a cannon ball discharged would be twenty five years in passing from the earth to the sun, from, Jupiter to the sun an hundred twenty five years, from Saturn two hundred fifty, and from the sun to the dog star {v} 691,600 years; and if therefore it would be so long going to the nearest of the fixed stars, how great must be the distance of them from our earth, which are so much higher than the dog star as that is from the sun? But, though these are so exceeding high, yet God is higher than they, see Isa 14:13; the truth contained in these words was what both Eliphaz and Job were agreed in, let them be spoken by which they will, some ascribing them to the One, and some to the other; from whence Eliphaz represents Job drawing an inference very impious, blasphemous, and atheistical.

{t} Mymv hbg "sublimitas coelorum", Bolducius; "altitudo coeli", Michaelis; "altitudo coelorum", Schultens. {u} Mybkwk var "capat stellarum", Montanus, Bolaucius, Mercerus, Cocceius; "verticem stellarum", V. L. Tigurine version, Michaelis, Schultens. {w} Cosmotheoros, l. 2. p. 125, 137. {v} (The Dog Star is the brighest star in the heavens when viewed from the earth. It has a visual magnitude of -1.4 and is 8.7 light years from the earth. It is in the constellation Sirius. The closest star to the earth is a Centaurus and has a visual magnitude of 0 and is 4.3 light years from the earth. It is several times fainter the the Dog Star but is still quite bright compared to neighbouring stars. 1969 Oberserver's Handbook, p. 74, 75. The Royal Astonomical Society of Canada, Toronto, Ontario. Editor)

Job 22:13

Ver. 13. And thou sayest, how doth God know?.... What is done on earth, the works of the children of men, their sinful actions, when he dwells at such a distance, and so remote from the earth, as the height of the stars, and highest heavens, be; not that Job said this expressly with his lips, but in his heart; Eliphaz imagined and supposed that such was the reasoning of his mind; it was an invidious consequence he had drawn from what Job had said concerning the afflictions of the godly, and the prosperity of the wicked; which he interpreted as a denial of the providence of God, as if he had no regard to human affairs, but things took place in a very disorderly and confused way, without any regard to right or wrong; and he concluded that Job was led into these sentiments by the consideration of the distance of God from the earth; that, dwelling in the highest heavens, he could not and did not see what was done here, and therefore men might commit all manner of sin with impunity; that their sins would never be taken notice of, or they be called to an account for them; which are the very language and sentiments of the most abandoned of men, see Ps 10:11;

can he judge through the dark clouds? if he cannot see and know what is done, he cannot judge of it, whether it is good or bad, and so can neither justify nor condemn an action. By "the dark cloud" is not meant the matter, or corporeal mass, with which man is covered, as a Jewish commentator {x} interprets it; rather the cloudy air, or atmosphere around us; or that thick darkness in which Jehovah dwells, clouds and darkness being around him, Ps 97:2; but all this hinders not his sight of things done here below; what is thick darkness to us is pure light to him, in which also he is said to dwell, and with which he covers himself as with a garment; and the darkness and the light are both alike to him, he can see and judge through the one as well as the other.

{x} Peritzol.

Job 22:14

Ver. 14. Thick clouds [are] a covering to him, that he seeth not,.... Thus Job is made to speak, or to reason as atheistical persons, or such who are inclined to atheism would, who take God to be altogether such an one as themselves; as that because thick clouds hide objects, as the sun, and moon, and stars, from their sight, therefore they must hide men and their actions from the sight of God; whereas there is nothing between God and man to hide them from him, let them be what they will, clouds as thick and as dark as can be imagined, yet his eyes are upon the ways of man, and see all his goings, nor is there any darkness that can hide from him, Job 34:21;

and he walketh in the circuit of heaven; within which he keeps himself, and never looks down upon the earth, or takes any notice of what is done there; quite contrary to Ps 14:3; as if he only took his walks through the spacious orb of heaven, and delighted himself in viewing the celestial mansions, and the furniture of them, but had no regard to anything below them; whereas, though he walks in the circuit of heaven, he also sits upon the circle of the earth, Isa 41:22; Eliphaz seems here to ascribe the sentiments perhaps of the Zabians in former times to Job, and since adopted by some philosophers; that God only regards the heavenly bodies, and supports them in their beings, and regulates and directs their motions, and leaves all things below to be governed and influenced by them, as judging it unworthy of him to be concerned with things on earth. Indeed the earth and the inhabitants of it are unworthy of his notice and care, and of his providential visits, but he does humble himself to look upon things on earth as well as in heaven, **Ps 8:4**; to make Job reason after this Epicurean manner was doing great injustice to his character, who most firmly believed both the being and providence of God, and that as extending to all things here below, see Job 12:13.

Job 22:15

Ver. 15. Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden?] The evil way that wicked men have walked in ever since man apostatized from God, the way of Cain and his descendants, who were of the wicked one, and lived wicked lives and conversations; "the way of the old world", as Mr. Broughton renders the phrase here, the imagination of the thoughts of whose hearts was evil, and that continually; who filled the earth with rapine and violence, and all flesh corrupted their way with all manner of impurity and wickedness, and indulged themselves in the gratification of their sensual lusts and pleasures; and were, as the Apostle Peter calls them, "the world of the ungodly"; and here, "men of wickedness", or "iniquity" {y}; such who gave themselves up to it, and were immersed in it; these trod the paths of sin, and made it a beaten road; they frequented this way, they walked continually in it; their life was a series and course of iniquity, in which they obstinately persisted, and proceeded from evil to evil, to more and more ungodliness. Now Job is asked if he had "marked" this their way and course of life; the evil of their way should have been marked, in order to avoid it; it being an old way should not recommend it; and the end of it, which was sudden ruin and destruction, should be marked to deter from it: but it is suggested that Job kept in this way, and observed it himself, and walked in it; for the words may be rendered, "truly thou keepest the old way", or "the way of the world" {z}; trod in the steps of wicked men, was a close follower of them, and companied with them; like manner is Job charged by Elihu, Job 34:7; and this sense agrees with what goes before.

{y} Nwa ytm "viri iniquitatis", Montanus, Mercerus; so Drusius, Michaelis.
{z} rwmvt Mlwe xrah "profecto viam seculi servas", Schultens.

Job 22:16

Ver. 16. Which were cut down out of time,.... Sent out of time into eternity, time being no more with men, and they no longer in time, when death seizes upon them; or "before time" {a}, before the common term of life, which, according to the course of nature, and human probability, they might have arrived unto: as this is spoken of the men of the old world that lived before the flood, when the lives of men were very long, it is highly probable there, were many that were destroyed by the general deluge, who, had it not for that, might have lived many hundreds of years, according to the usual course: or "without time" {b}, without any delay suddenly, at once, at an unawares; for, though they had notice of the flood, they did not regard it, but lived careless and secure; and it came upon them without any further warning, and swept them away, when they were "cut down", as trees by the axe laid to the root of them, to which wicked, men in great power and flourishing circumstances are sometimes compared, Ps 37:35; or like grass by the scythe, which it is not able to resist, and to which all men are like for their numbers and weaknesses, and who are cut down by death as easily as the grass is by the mower, see Ps 37:1. Some render it "wrinkled" {c}, as in Job 16:8; as bodies when dead are, and especially such as are drowned, and have been long floating in the water, as those that perished by the flood were, for to such the words have respect, as appears by what follows:

whose foundation was overflown with a flood; either of water, or of fire and brimstone, as Jarchi observes; the former is most likely to be meant; for by the flood, or universal deluge, all that was thought firm and permanent, and might be called a foundation, was overflown and carried away, as houses, goods, furniture, wealth, and riches, and everything that men had a dependence upon for the support and comfort of life; yea, the earth itself, on which they dwelt, and was reckoned "terra firma", this being founded upon, and over the waters; or, as the Apostle Peter describes it, "it standing out of the water and in the water", **2Pe 3:5**; or "their foundation [was] a flood poured out" {d}; what they thought were solid, and firm, and durable, and built their hopes of happiness upon, were like a flood of water, poured, dissipated, and scattered, and which disappeared and came to nothing: and such is every foundation that a man builds his hope, especially of eternal happiness, upon, short of Christ, the only sure foundation laid in Zion, his person, grace, blood, and righteousness; everything else, let it seem ever so firm, is as sand, yea, as water, as a flood of water that spreads itself, and quickly comes to nothing.

{a} te alw "ante tempus suum", V. L. Mercerus; "ante tempus", Cocceius, Schultens. {b} "Sine mora", Cocceius; "in momento", Codurcus. {c} wjmq "corrugati sunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Bolducius, Cocceius. {d} Mdyoy quwy rhn "fundamentum eorum ut flumen diffluxit", Tigurine version;

"fluvius effusus fundamentum eorum", Codurcus, Beza; to the same sense Drusius, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schultens.

Job 22:17

Ver. 17. Which said unto God, depart from us,.... Choosing not to be admonished of their sins, nor be exhorted to repentance for them, nor be instructed by him in the way of their duty, nor to attend the worship and ordinances of God, nor be under his rule and government; the same is observed by Job of wicked men, but to a different purpose; he makes this to be the language of such who were in very prosperous circumstances, and continued in them, notwithstanding their impiety; here by this Eliphaz describes such persons who were cut off, and destroyed for their wickedness, see Job 21:14;

and what can the Almighty do for them? that is, for us; for these are either the words of the wicked continued, being so self-sufficient, and full of good things, having as much, or more, than heart can wish, that they stood in no need of anything from God; nor could they imagine they should receive any profit and advantage from him, by listening to his instructions, or obeying his will; they had such low and mean thoughts of God, that he would neither do them good nor evil; they expected no good from him, and feared no ill at his hands; they ascribed all the good things they had to their own care, industry, and diligence; and when any ill befell them, they attributed it to chance, and second causes, thinking nothing of God: as these are the words of Eliphaz, they may be rendered, "what has the Almighty done to them", or "against them?" {e} what injury has he done them, or ill will has he shown them, that they should treat him in so contemptuous a manner? so far from it, that he has bestowed abundance of good things on them, as follows, see **Jer 2:5**.

{e} wml ydv lepy hmw "et quid fecerat omnipotens illis?" Piscator.

Job 22:18

Ver. 18. Yet he filled their houses with good [things],.... With temporal good things, with this world's good, with plenty of providential goodness; earthly enjoyments are good things in themselves, and in their effects, when rightly used, and these wicked men have their share of; this is their portion, they have their good things in this life, and a large abundance of them oftentimes; their hearts are filled with food, and should be with gladness and thankfulness; their

bellies are filled with hidden treasures; their barns with corn and wheat, and such like fruits of the earth; their shops with all manner of goods; their dwelling houses with gold and silver, with rich furniture, and all precious substance; and all this is from God, every good gift comes from him; the earth is full of his goodness; though these men say, "what can the Almighty do for them?"
Job 22:17; this shows, that what they have they are not deserving of; and what is bestowed upon them is not from any merit in them, but according to the sovereign will and pleasure of God; find this is an aggravation of their wickedness, that notwithstanding he has loaded them with his benefits, and indulged them with such a plenty of good things, yet they spurn at him, rebel against him, and bid him depart from them; which conduct of theirs Eliphaz expresses his abhorrence of:

but the counsel of the wicked is far from me; such impious reasonings, and wicked practices, he was far from justifying; he had them in the utmost detestation, and could not but abhor such vile ingratitude; he makes use of Job's words, Job 21:16; which he thought he could do to better purpose, and with greater sincerity.

Job 22:19

Ver. 19. The righteous see it, and are glad,.... Not the counsel of the wicked, nor their outward prosperity, but their ruin and destruction, which is sure and certain; though it may sometimes seem to linger, it is often public and visible to the view of every man, being made public examples, see Ps 91:8; and which is matter of joy and gladness to truly good and righteous men; who have the righteousness of Christ on them, his grace in them, and in consequence of that live soberly, righteously, and godly; these rejoice at the vengeance of God on wicked men, Ps 52:5; not that the misery of their fellow creatures is pleasing to them as such; this would be brutish and inhuman, as well as contrary to the grace of God, and to their character as good men, and also would be displeasing to God,
Pr 24:17; but partly because they themselves, through the grace and goodness of God, have been kept from such sins as bring to ruin and destruction; and partly because they are delivered out of the hands of these wicked men, who were distressing to them; and chiefly because of the glory of the divine perfections, particularly the holiness and justice of God displayed herein; for God is known and glorified by the judgments which he executeth, see **Ps 9:16**;

and the innocent laugh them to scorn; such as are upright and sincere, live holy and harmless lives and conversations, though not entirely free from sin; these deride them for their impieties, and observe to them the justness of the divine judgments upon them. The Jewish writers, many of them {f}, restrain these words to Noah and his sons, who saw with their eyes the flood that destroyed the world of the ungodly, and rejoiced at it, and in their turn had them in derision, who had made a mock at Noah's building of the ark, and at his exhortations to them; but though the characters of righteous and innocent agree with Noah, who was just and perfect in his generation, yet not with all his sons; and it is best to understand this of good men in general; though it must be observed and owned, that the destruction of the wicked by the flood is before spoken of, and their character described. The word "saying" is by some supplied at the close of this verse, and so the following words are what the righteous are represented as saying, upon sight of the destruction of the wicked.

{f} Aben Ezra, Ben Gersom, Sephorno, et alii.

Job 22:20

Ver. 20. Whereas our substance is not cut down,.... As yours is; Noah and his family were preserved in the ark, and the creatures with him, and sufficient sustenance was laid up for them all, when everything relating to the wicked was destroyed: but this may be thought too restrictive, as well as what follows too subtle, that this should respect the human species not being cut down and utterly destroyed in the flood, but preserved in and restored by Noah and his family; it may perhaps be thought better to interpret these words as the words of Eliphaz and his friends, joining with the righteous and the innocent, putting themselves in their number, and rejoicing with them at the destruction of the wicked, and as having a particular regard to Job's case, and the difference between him and them; his substance being cut down, and he stripped of all; whereas they were not deprived of theirs, but it continued with them, and they in the full possession of it; the reason of which difference was, he was a wicked man, and they righteous and innocent; but by others, who also take them to be the words of the righteous triumphing over the wicked, they are rendered thus; "is not he cut off that rose up against us?" {g} Our enemy and adversary, he is no more, he can do us no more hurt, and we are delivered out of his hand:

but the remnant of them the fire consumes; which Aben Ezra, Ben Gersom, and others, interpret of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities, by fire; which would have had some appearance of truth, if the destruction had been of the whole world, and as general as the flood was, or more so, and had cleared the world of the remnant of the ungodly, whereas it was only of a few cities: rather it may be Eliphaz glances at the case of Job, as different from him and his friends, that when their substance was untouched, the remnant of Job's was consumed by fire; what were left by the Chaldeans and Sabeans were destroyed by fire from heaven; though if it could be thought that Eliphaz had knowledge of the general conflagration at the last day, and had that in view, it would afford a better sense; but it may be he does not mean material, but metaphorical fire, the fire of divine wrath, which will consume the wicked, root and branch, and leave them nothing.

{g} wnmyq dxkn al Ma "annon exscinditur qui insurgit contra nos", Schmidt, Michaelis.

Job 22:21

Ver. 21. Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace,.... Not with the righteous and innocent, but with God, as Job 22:22 show: from severe charges and censures, Eliphaz proceeds to advice and exhortations, and seems to be in a better temper, and to talk in a more kind and gentle manner, only he goes upon a false supposition and mistaken notion, that Job was a bad man; had he had a proper object to have directed his discourse to, it would have been excellently said; and, as it is, is not without its use: this first exhortation supposes unacquaintance with God, and an estrangedness from him; which is the case of every man from the womb, and in a state of nature and unregeneracy. Acquaintance with God begins at conversion, when he is made known, not only as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of grace and peace in Christ; and it is carried on by prayer, which is a converse with God, and by attendance on his worship and ordinances, in which men walk before him, and have fellowship with him: this is sometimes interrupted and dropped for a while, through temptation or sin; when there arises on account thereof a shyness and backwardness to draw nigh unto God, until he calls and invites them to take with them words, and return unto him; an acquaintance with God is not kept up when prayer before him is restrained; which Eliphaz charges Job with, Job 15:4; and when saints forsake the assembling of themselves together, or neglect public worship, or grow indifferent to it; and it is renewed again by prayer, and a fresh attendance on the above things; in which frequent visits are made between God and his people, mutual secrets communicated, a holy freedom, familiarity, and boldness contracted, and communion with God enjoyed: men may also acquaint themselves with him yet more and more by the contemplation of his works, by reading and hearing his word, and by conversation with good men, ministers, and others. The Jewish commentators {h} generally interpret it, "use" or "accustom thyself with him", to walk in his ways, and observe his commands: "and be at peace"; not make his peace with God, which a creature cannot do; only Job's living Redeemer could do that, and he has done it; but be easy and still under the afflicting hand of God, quietly submit to it, and patiently endure it, and not murmur at it; or, as Aben Ezra interprets it, as a promise of God, "thou shalt be in peace", or "thou shalt have peace"; all outward prosperity and happiness, which is often signified by this word; or inward peace of mind, which comes from God, and through an acquaintance with him, and from Christ, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, by whom the acquaintance with God is opened and maintained; and it is had in a way of duty, in attendance on the ordinances of God, which are paths of peace; and also eternal peace hereafter, when acquaintance with God will be no more dropped, nor interrupted, but continue for ever:

thereby good shall come unto thee: temporal good things, necessary and convenient, the promise of which is annexed to godliness, or an acquaintance with God; spiritual good things, the blessings of grace, all things pertaining to life and godliness, and eternal good things; that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, which afflictions, peaceably and patiently borne, work for and bring unto.

{h} Aben Ezra, Ben Gersom, Bar Tzemach.

Job 22:22

Ver. 22. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth,.... Not the law of Moses; for it is a question whether that was as yet, or could come to the knowledge of Job; rather any doctrine, as the word signifies, any revelation of the mind and will of God, made unto the patriarchs in former times, and which was handed down from one to another, and was to be received as coming from the mouth of God, not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and as such to be received with meekness and reverence, with readiness, cheerfulness, and gladness; and not only to be attended to but obeyed:

and lay up his words in thine heart: as a rich treasure, very valuable, and preferable to gold, silver, and precious stones, laid up in chests and cabinets because of their value, and that they might not be lost, but be preserved safe and sure, and that they might be come at, and made use of on proper occasions; as the words of God and doctrines of the Scriptures may be, against the temptations of Satan, the lusts of the flesh, and for the instruction of ourselves and others; and therefore should be retained in our minds, hid in our hearts, and dwell richly in us; and, unless they are in the heart, and have a place there, they will be of little avail to have them in the head or on the tongue; but if they come with power into the heart, and have a place there, they work effectually, and influence the life and conversation: these Job had, and had a great value for them; see **Job 6:10**.

Job 22:23

Ver. 23. If thou return to the Almighty,.... Which supposes a departure from him; and that is by sinning against him, which should be repented of, confessed, and pardoning grace and mercy be implored, by all those that have backslidden, and return to God; to which they are encouraged by his being the "Almighty", who has power to forgive sins, also to cause all grace to abound, and to save to the uttermost; he is not a God that is prayed and returned to, that cannot save, or whose hand is shortened, or his ear heavy; the word is "shaddai", which signifies "[who is] sufficient", all sufficient; whose grace is sufficient to restore and receive backsliders, pardon their sins, accept their persons, supply their wants, and preserve them safe to his kingdom and glory:

thou shalt be built up; restored to his former happiness, have all his breaches repaired and made up; his body, which was like a building out of repair and dropping down, become hale and healthful; his family, which was in a ruinous condition, being deprived of his children as well as substance, be increasing again through a like number of children; by which means families are built up, **Ru 4:16**; and by having a large affluence of good things, abundantly greater than he had before; and also, in a spiritual sense, be edified and built up in his soul, through the light of God's countenance, the discoveries of his love, the comforts of his spirit, an application of precious promises, and divine truths, and a communication of grace, and the blessings of it:

thou shall put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle; not commit it himself, nor connive at it in others, nor suffer it in his family, suggesting as if he had so done in times past; or remove men of iniquity, wicked men, from his house, and not allow them to dwell there; though rather this seems to be spoken of by way of promise, and as an encouragement to return to the Almighty; upon which all evils and calamities, the effects of sin and iniquity, should be removed from his house, and the apartments of it, they were now full of.

Job 22:24

Ver. 24. Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust,.... Have such plenty of it, as not to be counted:

and the [gold] of Ophir as the stones of the brooks; which was reckoned the best, probably in Arabia; not in the East and West Indies, which were not known to Job; though some take this to be an exhortation to despise riches, and as a dissuasion from covetousness, rendering the words, "put gold upon the dust", or earth {i}, and trample upon it, as a thing not esteemed by thee, as Sephorno interprets it; make no more account of it than of the dust of the earth; let it be like dirt unto thee, "and among the stones of the brooks", Ophir {k}; that is, the gold of Ophir, reckon no more of it, though the choicest gold, than the stones of the brook; or thus, "put gold for dust, and the [gold] of Ophir for the flint of the brooks" {l}; esteem it no more than the dust of the earth, or as flint stones; the latter clause I should choose rather to render, "and for a flint the rivers of Ophir", or the golden rivers, from whence the gold of Ophir was; and it is notorious from historians, as Strabo {m} and others, that gold is taken out of rivers; and especially from the writers of the history of the West Indies {n}.

{i} rub rpe le tyvw "pone aurum super pulverem", Codurcus; "in pulvere aurum", Cocceius; "abjice humi aurum", Beza; so Grotius. {k} rypwa Mylxn ryubw "et inter saxa torrentium Ophir", Codurcus. {l} "Pro rupe aurum Ophirinum", Junius & Tremellius; so Schultens. {m} Geograph. l. 11. p. 344. {n} Pet. Martyr. Decad. 3. l. 4.

Job 22:25

Ver. 25. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence,.... In temporal things, secure the plenty of gold and silver possessed of; surround and protect by his providence, that there shall be no danger of the Sabeans and Chaldeans, or others, breaking in and stealing it away; and, in spirituals, preserve from all enemies, sin, Satan, and the world; be a wall of fire about him, his fortress, his tower, and place of defence; or keep him as in a garrison, through faith unto salvation; or, as others render the words, "and let the Almighty be", or "he shall be thy gold", or "golds" {o}; all thy gold, the same word being used as in Job 22:24; treat earthly riches, gold and silver, with contempt, and reckon God to be thy truest riches: esteem him as gold, and more precious than that, and put thy confidence in him; his grace is compared to gold, for its lustre, value, and duration, and is more precious than gold that perisheth, **Re 3:18**; the righteousness of Christ is, for its excellency, called the gold of Ophir, and clothing of wrought gold, Ps 45:9; and he himself is much more precious than the gold of Ophir, and the gain that comes by him than fine gold, **So 5:11**; the doctrines of the grace of God are comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; yea, to be preferred unto them, **1Co 3:12**. God is instead of all riches to his people; and they that have an interest in him share in the riches of grace, and are entitled to the riches of glory; all are theirs:

and thou shall have plenty of silver; or God shall be, or "let him be to thee silver of strength" {p}; or instead of silver, which is the strength of men, in which they confide for business or war; but God is to his people infinitely more than what silver or gold can be to them.

{o} Kyrub "lectissimum aurum tuum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Vatablus, Schmidt, Schultens; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 23. 2. {p} Kl twpewt Pokw "et argentum fortitudinum tibi", Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Job 22:26

Ver. 26. For then shall thou have thy delight in the Almighty,.... In the perfections of his nature, in the works of his hands, in his word and worship, in communion with him, and in the relation he stands in to his people as their covenant God and Father; this would be the case when Job should be more and better acquainted with God, and with the law or doctrine his month, and the words of his lips, and should return unto him with his whole heart; and when his affections should be taken off of all earthly riches; when he should look upon gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brook, and God should be to him his gold and his silver; then, and not till then, could he have true delight and complacency in God:

and shalt lift up thy face unto God; in prayer, as Sephorno interprets it, with an holy confidence, boldness, and cheerfulness; as a believer in Christ may, having on his righteousness, and having his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience by his blood; such an one can appear before God, and lift up his

face to him, as without spot, so without confusion, shame, and blushing, without a load of guilt upon him, without fear of wrath or punishment, and of being repulsed; see
Job 11:15.

Job 22:27

Ver. 27. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him,.... To God, and him only; for not a creature, angels, or men, are to be prayed to; and this is to be done in a supplicating, entreating way, as the word signifies; not pleading merit, but mercy, not presenting prayers and supplications for a man's own righteousness' sake, but for the Lord's mercy's sake, and for the sake of Christ and his righteousness; and prayer is to be made in this manner frequently, to be multiplied, as the word also signifies; prayer should be made always, and without ceasing; and this is not only a duty, but a privilege; and as such it is here observed, even as a benefit and blessing to be enjoyed; as it is when a man can come to God as his Father, through Christ the Mediator, with boldness and confidence, in the faith of him, and to God as on a throne of grace, where he may find grace and mercy to help him in time of need, and especially it is so when attended with the success following:

and he shall hear thee; as he does hear those that pray to him in the name of Christ, in the exercise of faith, and in the sincerity and uprightness of their hearts; and answers their requests, fulfils their desires, and gives them what they ask of him; for he is a God hearing prayer, and sooner or later, in his own time and way, grants the petitions of his people:

and thou shalt pay thy vows; the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving which he promised to offer up to God, should he grant him the desires of his heart; and these being granted, he would be laid under obligation to perform his promises; so that this also is to be considered as a benefit and blessing; for it does not so much regard the payment of vows, as it is designed to observe to him that he should have that done for him which would be a sufficient ground and reason for paying his vows, or making good what he promised in the time of his distress; since what he then requested, and was the condition of his vow, should now be granted; see Ps 56:12.

Job 22:28

Ver. 28. Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee,.... Strictly speaking, this is only true of God, whose decrees are unfrustrable, whose counsel shall stand, and the thoughts of his heart be established to all generations; and frequently so it is, according to an usual saying, man appoints, but God disappoints; this may be understood of Job, either as a civil magistrate, that he should decree a thing in a court of judicature with so much wisdom and equity, that it should stand firm and sure, and, though made on earth, should be ratified in heaven, as the decrees and doctrines of the apostles of Christ are said to be, Mt 16:19; see **Pr 8:15**; or, as a private man in civil affairs, signifying that he should be so guided by the Lord, and prospered and succeeded in all his ways and works, that what he determined to do, and formed a scheme for the execution of, it should be brought about and confirmed; he committing his ways to the Lord, his thoughts should be established, or his purposes and designs effected, see **Ps 1:3**; or rather as a praying man; and so it agrees with what goes before, that he should lift up his voice to God, and pray unto him with success, and have just occasion to praise him, or pay his vows to him, since he should have the desires of his heart; whatever was upon his mind, and he prayed in faith for, he should have it; as Elijah prayed, both that it might not rain, and that it might rain, and both were according to his word, or the decree of his lips in prayer: see 1Ki 17:1;

and the light shall shine upon thy ways; which is the reason of all things prospering and succeeding, and being established according to his wish and will; the light of grace shining in him, to put him upon and instruct him in denying and avoiding that which is sinful, and doing that which was just and good; and the light of the word without him, being a light unto his feet, and a lamp to his paths, to guide and direct him, and especially the light of God's favour and blessing on him, succeeding him in all his ways and works, and making them prosperous.

Job 22:29

Ver. 29. When [men] are cast down,.... Wicked men are brought down from a state of prosperity to a state of adversity, are in low circumstances, great straits and difficulties:

then thou shall say, [there is] lifting up; that is, for himself and his; when others are in adversity, he should be in prosperity; when others are cast down into a very low estate and distressed condition, he should be exalted to a very high estate, and be in affluent circumstances, see Ps 147:6; or else the sense is, when thou and thine, and what belong to thee, are humbled and brought low, then thou mayest promise thyself a restoration and change for the better; and boldly say, they will be lifted up, and raised up again, since God's usual method is to exalt the humble, and to abase the proud, Lu 14:11; or rather, this may respect the benefit and advantage that humble persons wound gain by Job, and his prayers for them, and may be rendered and interpreted thus: "when they have humbled" {q} themselves, and bowed themselves low at thy feet, and especially before God, "then thou shall say", pray unto God for them, that "there [may be a] lifting up", raising them up out of their low estate, and thou shall be heard:

and he shall save the humble person; that is, "low of eyes" {r}, humble in his eyes; who is so pressed with troubles and distress, that he hangs down his head, looks upon the ground, and will not lift up his eyes, but is of a dejected countenance; or that is low in his own eyes, has humble thoughts of himself, esteems others better than himself, and lies low before God under a sense of his sinfulness and unworthiness, and casts himself entirely upon the grace and mercy of God; such an one he saves, in a spiritual sense, out of his troubles and afflictions; he does not forget the cry of such humble ones, but remembers them, and grants their desires: and he saves the lowly and humble with a spiritual and eternal salvation; gives more grace unto them, and outfits them for glory, and at last gives glory itself; raises them on high to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory; the meek shall inherit the earth, the new heavens and earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, **Jas 4:6**.

{q} wlypvh yk "quum humiliaverint", Montanus, Cocceius, Michaelis. {r} Mynye xv "demissum oculis", Montanus, Beza, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "humilem oculis", Vatablus.

Job 22:30

Ver. 30. He shall deliver the island of the innocent,.... But where is there such an island, an island of innocent persons? it seems to be better rendered by others, "the innocent shall deliver the island" {s}: good men are sometimes, by their counsel and advice, and especially by their prayers, the means of delivering an island or country from ruin and destruction: but the word rendered "island" is a negative particle, as in **1Sa 4:21**; and signifies "not"; and so in the Targum; which is

"a man that is not innocent shall be delivered:"

in like manner Jarchi interprets it, and so do Noldius {t} and others {u}; and the sense is, that Job, for he is the person spoken of, as appears from the following clause, should not only be beneficial by his prayers, to humble and good men, but even to the wicked, such as were not innocent and free from fault and punishment, but guilty, and obnoxious to wrath and ruin; and yet such should escape it, at least for the present, through the prayers and intercession of Job; or God should do this for Job's sake and his prayers:

and it is, or "he is"

delivered by the pureness of thine hands; either by his good works, setting a good example, which, being followed, would be the means of the prevention of present ruin; or by his lifting up pure and holy hands in prayer to God for a sinful people; which God often attends to and hears, and so delivers them from destruction; as the Israelites were delivered through the prayer of Moses, when they had made the golden calf, and worshipped it; see Ps 106:19; though sometimes God will not admit of an intercessor for such persons, Eze 14:20.

{s} yqn ya jlmy "innocens insulam liberabit", Montanus; so Pagninus, Vatablus. {t} Concordant. Ebr. Part. p. 25. No. 135. {u} yqn ya "non innocentem", Drusius, Piscator, Michaelis; "non insontem", Schultens; to the same sense Beza, Mercerus, Codurcus, Junius, & Tremellius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 23

This and the following chapter contain Job's reply to the last oration of Eliphaz; in this he first declares his present sorrowful estate and condition, Job 23:1; wishes he knew where to find God, as a judge sitting on a throne, before whom he might lay his cause, and plead it, and have his judgment and final decision passed upon it; when he doubted not but he would deal favourably with him, and both admit him and strengthen him, to plead his own cause, and would acquit him for ever from the charges laid against him, Job 23:3; in order to which he sought for him everywhere, but could not find him, but contents himself with this, that God knew his way; and that, after trial of him, he should shine like pure gold, and appear to be no apostate from him, but one sincerely obedient to his commands, and a true lover of his word, Job 23:8; and as for

his afflictions, they were the result of the unalterable purposes and appointments of God: but what gave him the greatest uneasiness was, that there were more of that sort yet to come, which filled him with fears and faintings, with trouble and darkness,
Job 23:13.

Ver. 1. Then Job answered and said. In reply to Eliphaz; for though he does not direct his discourse to him, nor take any notice of his friends; yet, as a proof of his innocence, against his and their accusations and charges, he desires no other than to have his cause laid before God himself, by whom he had no doubt he should be acquitted; and, contrary to their notions, he shows in this chapter, that he, a righteous man, was afflicted by God, according to his unchangeable decrees; and, in the next, that wicked men greatly prosper; so that what he herein says may be considered as a sufficient answer to Eliphaz and his friends; and after which no more is said to him by them, excepting a few words dropped by Bildad.

Job 23:2

Ver. 2. Even today [is] my complaint bitter,.... Job's afflictions were continued on him long; he was made to possess months of vanity; and, as he had been complaining ever since they were upon him, he still continued to complain to that day, "even" after all the comforts his friends pretended to administer to him, as Jarchi observes: his complaints were concerning his afflictions, and his friends' ill usage of him under them; not of injustice in God in afflicting him, though he thought he dealt severely with him; but of the greatness of his afflictions, they being intolerable, and his strength unequal to them, and therefore death was more eligible to him than life; and he complained of God's hiding his face from him, and not hearing him, nor showing him wherefore he contended with him, nor admitting an hearing of his cause before him: and this complaint of his was "bitter": the things he complained of were such, bitter afflictions, like the waters of Marah the Israelites could not drink of, Ex 15:23; there was a great deal of wormwood and gall in his affliction and misery; and it was in a bitter way, in the bitterness of his soul, he made his complaint; and, what made his case still worse, he could not utter any complaint, so much as a sigh or a groan, but it was reckoned "provocation", or "stubbornness [and] rebellion", by his friends; so some render the word {x}, as Mr. Broughton does, "this day my sighing is holden a rebellion": there is indeed a great deal of rebellion oftentimes in the hearts, words and actions, conduct and behaviour, even of good men under afflictions, as were in the Israelites in the wilderness;

and a difficult thing it is to complain without being guilty of it; though complaints may be without it, yet repinings and murmurings are always attended with it:

and my stroke is heavier than my groaning; or "my hand" {y}, meaning either his own hand, which was heavy, and hung down, his spirits failing, his strength being exhausted, and so his hands weak, feeble, and remiss, that he could not hold them up through his afflictions, and his groanings under them, see Ps 102:5; or the hand of God upon him, his afflicting hand, which had touched him and pressed hard upon him, and lay heavy, and was heavier than his groanings showed; though he groaned much, he did not groan more, nor so much, as his afflictions called for; and therefore it was no wonder that his complaint was bitter, nor should it be reckoned rebellion and provocation; see **Job 6:2**.

{x} yrm "exacerbatio", Montanus, Vatablus, Schmidt; "exasperatio", Mercerus, Drusius; "pertinacia", Bolducius; "contumacia habetur", Cocceius; "rebellionem haberi", Junius & Tremellius; "rebellio est", Piscator, Codurcus.
{y} ydy "manus mea", Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Drusius, Michaelis.

Job 23:3

Ver. 3. O that I knew where I might find him,.... That is, God, who is understood, though not expressed, a relative without an antecedent, as in Ps 87:1; Jarchi supplies, and interprets it, "my Judge", from Job 23:7; and certain it is Job did desire to find God as a judge sitting on his throne, doing right, that he might have justice done to him: indeed he might be under the hidings of God's face, which added to his affliction, and made it the heavier; in which case, the people of God are at a loss to know where he is, and "how" to find him, as Mr. Broughton renders the words here; they know that he is everywhere, and fills heaven and earth with his presence; that their God is in the heavens, his throne is there, yea, the heaven is his throne; that he is in his church, and among his people, where they are gathered together in his name, to wait upon him, and to worship him; and that he is to be found in Christ, as a God gracious and merciful; all which Job knew, but might, as they in such circumstances are, be at a loss how to come at sensible communion with him; for, when he hides his face, who can behold him? yet they cannot content themselves without seeking after him, and making use of all means of finding him, as Job did, Job 23:8; see **So 3:1**;

[that] I might come [even] to his seat; either his mercy seat, from whence he communes with his people, the throne of his grace, where he sits as the God of grace, dispensing his grace to his people, to help them in time of need; the way to which is Christ, and in which all believers may come to it with boldness, in his name, through his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; they may come up even to it, in the exercise of faith and hope, though the distance is great, as between heaven and earth, yet by faith they can come into the holiest of all, and by hope enter within the vail; and though the difficulties and discouragements are many, arising from their sins and transgressions: or else his judgment seat, at which no man can appear and stand, without a righteousness, or without a better than his own, by which none can be justified in the sight of God; who, if strict to mark iniquity, the best of men cannot stand before him, at his bar of justice; indeed, in the righteousness of Christ, a believer may come up to the judgment seat of God, and to him as Judge of all, and not be afraid, but stand before him with confidence, since that is sufficient to answer for him, and fully acquit him: but Job here seems to have a peculiar respect to his case, in controversy between him and his friends, and is so fully assured of the justness of his cause, and relying on his innocence, he wishes for nothing more than that he could find God sitting on a throne of justice, before whom his cause might be brought and heard, not doubting in the least but that he should be acquitted; so far was he from hiding himself from God, or pleasing himself with the thoughts that God was in the height of heaven, and knew nothing of him and his conduct, and could not judge through the dark clouds, which were a covering to him, that he could not see him; that he was not afraid to appear before him, and come up even to his seat, if he knew but where and how he could; see Job 22:12.

Job 23:4

Ver. 4. I would order [my] cause before him,.... Either, as a praying person, direct his prayer to him, and set it in order before him, see **Ps 5:3**; or else as pleading in his own defence, and in justification of himself; not of his person before God, setting his works of righteousness in order before him, and pleading his justification on the foot of them; for, by these no flesh living can be justified before God; but of his cause, for, as a man may vindicate his cause before men, and clear himself from aspersions cast upon him, as Samuel did, 1Sa 12:5; so he may before God, with respect to the charges he is falsely loaded with, and may appeal to him for justice, and desire he would stir up himself, and awake to his judgment, even to his cause, and plead it against those that strive with him, as David did,

Ps 35:1;

and fill my mouth with arguments; either in prayer, as a good man may; not with such as are taken from his goodness and righteousness, but from the person, office, grace, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, and from the declarations of God's grace, and the promises of his word; or else as in a court of judicature, bringing forth his strong reasons, and giving proofs of his innocence, such as would be demonstrative, even convincing to all that should hear, and be not only proofs for him, and in his favour, but reproofs also, as the word {c} signifies, to those that contended with him.

{c} twxkwt "increpationibus", V. L. and so Montanus, Beza, Mercerus, Drusius, Schultens.

Job 23:5

Ver. 5. I would know the words [which] he would answer me,.... Being a God hearing and answering prayer, who always hears, and sooner or later answers the petitions of his people in his own way; and which when he does, they know, take notice, and observe it: or then he should know the reason why the Lord contended with him, and what were his sins and transgressions, which were the cause of his afflictions; things he had desired to know, but as yet had no answer, see Job 10:2;

and understand what he would say unto me; what judgment he would pass upon him, what sentence he would pronounce on him, whether guilty or not, and by which judgment he was content to stand or fall; as for men's judgment, the judgment of his friends, or to be judged by them, he required it not, as he did not understand upon what ground they went, or that it was a good one; but the judgment of God he should pay a deference to, as being always according to truth, and the reason of which, when he should have a hearing before him, and a decisive sentence by him, he should clearly perceive; see **1Co 4:3**.

Job 23:6

Ver. 6. Will he plead against me with [his] great power?.... God will not plead against his people at all, but for them: much less will he plead against them with his great strength, use all his power to run them down, crush, and oppress them; for he is a great God, and of great power, he is mighty in strength, and there is no contending with him, or answering of him, **Job 9:3**; nor will he deal with them according to the strict rigour of his justice, nor stir up all his wrath, nor contend for ever with them in such a way; for then the spirits would fail before him, and the souls that he has made; whatever he does with others, making known his power on the vessels of wrath, he will never act after this manner with the vessels of mercy:

no, but he would put [strength] in me: to pray unto him, and prevail with him to lay hold on him, and not let him go without the blessing, as Jacob did, Ho 12:3; or to stand before him, and plead his own cause with him, in such a strong and powerful manner as to bear down all the accusations and charges brought against him: or "he will set [his heart] upon me" {d}; deal mildly and gently, kindly and graciously, and not with his great strength and strict justice; or "will not put [sins] upon me", as Jarchi, or lay charges to him, however guilty of them, as his friends did, or impute such to him he never committed: God is so far from doing this to his people, that he does not impute their sins to them they have committed, but to his son, much less will he lay upon them more than is right, Job 34:23. Some take the sense of the words to be this, in answer to the above question, "will he plead against me with his great power?" let him do it, "only let him not set upon me" {e}, in an hostile way, and then I do not decline entering the debate with him; which expresses great boldness and confidence, and even too much, and must be reckoned among the unbecoming expressions Job was afterwards convinced of; but this he utters in his passion, in order the more clearly to show, and the more strongly to assert, his innocence.

{d} yb Mvy "ipse apponeret ad me animum", Junius & Tremellius; so Piscator, Cocceius, & Aben Ezra. {e} Schultens.

Job 23:7

Ver. 7. There the righteous might dispute with him,.... That is, at his seat, either at his mercy seat, where even God allows sinners to come and reason with him, for pardoning grace and mercy, upon the foot of his own declarations and promises, and the blood and sacrifice of his son, **Isa 1:18**; or at his judgment seat, pleading the righteousness of Christ, which is fully satisfactory to law and justice. Job most probably means himself by the righteous or upright man, being conscious to himself of his sincerity and integrity; and relying on this, he feared not to appear before God as a Judge, and reason his case before him, dispute the matter with him, and in his presence, which was in controversy between him and his friends, whether he was an hypocrite or a sincere good man:

so should I be delivered for ever from my Judge; either from those who judged harsely of him, and were very censorious in the character they gave of him; and from all their condemnation of him, and calumnies and charges they fastened on him; or "from him that judgest me" {f}, from anyone whatever that should wrongly judge him, friend or foe; or rather from God himself, his Judge, from whom he should depart acquitted; and so Mr. Broughton renders the words, "so should I be quit for ever by my Judge"; for, if God justifies, who shall condemn? such an one need not regard the condemnations of men or devils; being acquitted by God he is for ever instilled, and shall never enter into condemnation; God's acquittance is a security from the damnatory sentence of others.

{f} yjpvm "a judicante me", Beza, Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius, Vatablus, Cocceius.

Job 23:8

Ver. 8. Behold, I go forward, but he [is] not [there],.... Job here returns to what he had said before, Job 23:3; as Jarchi observes, where he expresses his earnest desire after God, that he might know where he was, and come up to his seat; here he relates the various ways he took to find him, and his fruitless search of him. Cocceius thinks, by these phrases "forward" and "backward", are meant times future and past; and that the sense is, that Job looked into the future times of the Messiah, and the grace promised him, his living Redeemer, that should stand on the earth in the latter day; and that he looked back to the ages before him, and to the first promise made to Adam; but could not understand by either the reason why good men were afflicted; and by the "right" hand and "left", the different dispensations of God to men, granting protection with his right hand, and distributing the blessings of his goodness by it; and with his left hand laying afflictions and evils upon them; and yet, neither from the one nor the other could he learn the mind and will of God concerning men, since love and hatred are not to be known by these things: but rather, with the Jewish commentators in general, we are to understand places by these various expressions; even each of the parts of the world, east, west, north, and south; which Job went through, and surveyed in his mind, to find God in, but to no purpose; for, when a man stands with his face to the rising sun, the east is before him, and, if he goes forward, he goes eastward; and behind him is the west, and, if he goes that way, he goes backward; so the eastern sea is called the former sea, and the western, or Mediterranean sea, the hinder sea, Zec 14:8; and a man, in this position, will have the north on his left hand, and the south on his right; see Ge 13:9; now Job says that he went "forward", that is, eastward; but, says he of God, "he [is] not [there]", or "is not" {g}; meaning not that he was not in being, did not exist; for he most firmly believed the existence of God, or that he was, but, as we rightly supply, he was not there, that is, eastward; and yet the greatest, the most glorious, and most gracious appearances of him were in the east; man was made in the east; the garden of Eden was planted eastward; here God appeared to Adam, both before and after his fall; and it was in the east, Christ, the second Adam, was born; his star appeared in it, and his Gospel was first preached in the eastern parts; in the east Job now lived, and had been the greatest man in it; but now God did not appear to him, as the Vulgate Latin version, not in a kind and gracious manner; nor could he find him at his throne of justice here, as he wished for; he was there, though Job saw him not; for he is everywhere; indeed he is not confined or limited to any place; for, as the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, so much less any part or corner of the earth:

and backward, but I cannot perceive him; or understand where he is, or get intelligence of him, and of the reason of his dispensations, especially concerning himself.

{g} wnnyaw "et non ipse", Montanus, Drusius, Bolducius.

Job 23:9

Ver. 9. On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold [him],.... The northern part of the world, where his seat is, or the circle of the earth, says Bar Tzemach, and who has stretched out the north over the empty place, Job 26:7. Jarchi's note is, when he created it, he did not make it the place of his throne: God works everywhere in a way of providence, but in some places more eminently than in others; the northern part of the world is observed to be more inhabited than the southern, and the people of it to be more active in war and business than elsewhere; and more and greater things are done by God among them as instruments than among any other; and Mr. Caryl observes, that the Gospel has ever more generally and more clearly been preached here than in the southern parts of the world; and perhaps by the northern chambers in Ezekiel's vision, Eze 42:1, were designed the Protestant churches in the northern parts, as it is well known the Protestant doctrine is called the northern heresy: but what Job meant by God's works in the north is not easy to say; but as this refers to some place where God had been used to work either in the way of providence or grace, it was the most likely one to find him in, and yet Job could not behold him, or get any sight of him, either as on a throne of grace or justice:

he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see [him]; or "he covereth the right hand" {h}, the southern parts of the world; he covers the face of the south with his face, that I cannot see him, so Jarchi; this is said because the south is covered with the waters of the ocean, as Bar Tzemach observes; what we call the South sea: or rather the meaning is, that God covered himself on the right hand, or on the south, as with a garment, as the word signifies; wrapped himself up either in light inaccessible, as with a garment, or with clouds of darkness, that he could not be seen; and if he hides himself, as he often does from the best of men, who can behold him? Job 34:29; see **Job 9:11**.

{h} Nymy Pjey "operiet dextram", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; so Cocceius, Drusius, Schmidt, Schultens, & Broughton.

Job 23:10

Ver. 10. But he knoweth the way that I take,.... This he seems to say in a way of solace to himself, comforting and contenting himself, that though he could not find God, nor knew where he was, or what way he took, nor the reasons of his ways and dispensations with the children of men, and with himself, yet God knew where he was, and what way he took; by which he means either the way he took, being directed to it for his acceptance with God, his justification before him, and eternal salvation; which was his living Redeemer, he looked unto by faith for righteousness and eternal life: or rather the way and manner of life he took to, the course of his conversation, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, in the paths of piety and truth, of righteousness and holiness; and this God knew not barely by his omniscience, as he knows all the ways of men, good and bad; his eyes are upon them, lie compasses them, and is thoroughly acquainted with them; but by way of approbation, he approved of it, and was well pleased with it, it being so agreeable to his revealed will, so pure and holy; thus the Lord knows the way of the righteous, **Ps 1:6**;

[when] he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold; as pure as gold, as free from dross as that, appear quite innocent of the charges brought against him,

and shine in his integrity. He was as valuable and precious as gold, as all God's people are in his esteem, however reckoned of by others; they are precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold; not that they have any intrinsic, worth in themselves, they are in no wise the better than others by nature; but through the grace of God bestowed on them, which is as gold tried in the fire; and through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, which is gold of Ophir, and clothing of wrought gold; and, on account of both, they are like a mass of gold, and are the chosen of God, and precious: this gold he tries, the Lord trieth the righteous; and which he does by afflictive providences; he puts them into the furnace of affliction, which is the fiery trial to try them; and hereby their graces are tried, their faith, hope, love, patience, &c. their principles and doctrines they embrace, whether they are gold, silver, and precious stones, or whether wood, hay, and stubble; the fire tries every man's work, of what sort it is, and whether they will abide by them and their profession also, whether they will adhere to it; and by this means he purges away their dross and tin, and they come out of the furnace as pure gold in great lustre and brightness, as those in **Re 7:13**; now Job was in this furnace and trying; and he was confident that, as he should come out of it, he should appear to great advantage, pure and spotless; though it may be he may have respect to his trial at the bar of justice, where he desired to be tried, and be brought under the strictest examination; and doubted not but he should be acquitted, and shine as bright as gold; nay, these words may be given as a reason why God would not be found by him as his Judge to try his cause, because he knew his uprightness and integrity, and that he must go from him acquitted and discharged; and therefore, for reasons unknown to him, declined the judging of him; to this purpose Jarchi interprets the words, which may be rendered, "for he knoweth the way that I take" {a}; and therefore will not be seen by me, nor appear to judge me: "he hath tried me"; again and again, and has seen the integrity of my heart, as Sephorno interprets it, and well knows my innocence; see Ps 17:3; and if he would try me again, "I shall come forth as gold"; quite clear of all charges and imputations; I am able to stand the strictest scrutiny: this he said as conscious of his uprightness, and of his strict regard to the ways and word of God, as follows; but this was a bold saying, and an unbecoming expression of his to God; and of which he afterwards was ashamed and repented, when God appeared and spoke to him out of the whirlwind.

{a} yk "quia", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Piscator, Michaelis; "nam", Tigurine version, Cocceius, Schultens.

Job 23:11

Ver. 11. My foot hath held his steps,.... Trod in the steps he has walked in; he followed God closely, imitated him in acts of holiness and righteousness, of mercy, kindness, and beneficence; and he continued therein; as he set his foot in the steps of God, which were to him for an example, he persisted therein; as he followed on to know him, so to imitate him, and walk worthy of him:

his way have I kept; the way he prescribed him, and directed him to walk in, the way of his commandments, which he observed constantly, and kept; though not perfectly, yet with great delight and pleasure, and so as not to be chargeable with any gross neglect of them, but in some sense to walk in all of them blameless, as not to be culpable before men:

and not declined: from the way of God, did not turn aside from it to the right or left, or go into crooked paths with wicked men, or wickedly depart from his God, his ways and worship, as David says,
Ps 18:21.

Job 23:12

Ver. 12. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips,.... From any of the commandments his lips had uttered; meaning not the ten commandments given to Israel, which perhaps as yet were not given, or had not come to the knowledge of Job; some speak of the seven commandments, given to the sons of Noah; See Gill on "Ge 9:4". It seems to design any and every commandment that God had given to Noah or Abraham, or any of the patriarchs, before the times of Job, and which he had knowledge of, and which he carefully observed, kept close to, and did not deviate from; but made it the rule of his walk and practice:

I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary [food]; the words of the Lord, the doctrines of grace that came from his mouth, are food for faith; there are in them milk for babes, and meat for strong men; they are savoury, salutary, and wholesome words, by which the people of God are nourished up unto eternal life; and they are esteemed by them more than the food that is necessary and convenient for their bodies; see Pr 30:8; for as the soul is preferable to the body, so the food of the one is preferable to the food of the other, and is sweeter, as the words of God are, to the taste of a believer, than honey, or the honeycomb: or "I have hid or laid up, the words of his mouth" {b}; he had laid them up in his heart, in order to meditate upon them, and receive comfort and spiritual nourishment from them when he should want it, as men lay up their food in a proper place against the time they want it for their support and refreshment; and Job was more careful to lay up the one than the other; see Ps 119:11; here Job meets with, and has respect unto, the advice of Eliphaz, Job 22:22; and signifies that he had no need to have given him it, he had done this already.

{b} ytnpu "abscondi", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Bolducius; "recondidi", Tigurine version, Beza, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens; so Broughton.

Job 23:13

Ver. 13. But he [is] in one [mind],.... Either with respect to his commandments, every precept remains in full force, he never alters the thing that is gone out of his lips, or delivers out other commandments different from, or contrary to what he has given; and therefore Job thought it his duty to abide by them, and not decline from them; which is the sense of a Jewish commentator {c}, connecting the words with the preceding: Or with respect to his dispensations towards Job in afflicting him; which he continued notwithstanding his innocence, because he is a sovereign Being, and does whatsoever he pleases; he is unchangeable in his purposes and decrees; he is not to be wrought upon by any means to alter his fixed course; he is not to be contradicted nor resisted; and this was the reason why he would not be found by him, though he sought him so earnestly and diligently, and why he would not hear him, and would not appear to try his cause, though he knew he was innocent, because he was determined to go on to afflict him; and he never changes his mind, or alters his counsels, on any account whatever. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "for he [is] alone": and so the Targum,

"if he is alone, or the only one;"

there is none with him to advise him, for "with whom took he counsel?" or to persuade him to be of another mind, and take contrary measures, who might be applied to, to use their interest with him to act it, a different manner; but he is alone, there are none with him that have any influence upon him, and can prevail with him to do otherwise than he does; some translate the words, "if he acts against one" {d}; against a man in a hostile way, if he sets his face against him, and comes upon him as an enemy; and so Mr. Broughton, "yet when he is against me, who can stay him?" notwithstanding my innocence and integrity, though I keep his ways, and do not go back from his commandments. Some think there is a redundancy of a letter, which we translate "in", and then the words wilt be read thus: "but he [is] one"; the one only living and true God; this is the voice of reason and revelation, "hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord", **De 6:4**; for though there are three Persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, "these three are one [God]", **1Jo 5:7**; and so the words are expressive of the unity of the Divine Being; but this seems not to be Job's sense: Aben Ezra says, the truth is, that the letter b is not added, is no redundancy, and should be read "he is in one"; but, says he, I cannot explain it, there is a great mystery in it: what the Jew understood not may be more clear and plain to us Christians, who are taught the mystery of the indwelling of the divine Persons in each other, the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father, as they are divine Persons; though in what manner they are we are not able to explain; besides, God was in Christ, as Mediator, reconciling the world, choosing his people in him, and blessing them with all spiritual blessings in him; though the true sense seems to, be what is before given, agreeably to our version, that God is in one mind, purpose, and design; that his decrees are unchangeable and invariable; that he always acts according to them, and never alters them:

and who can turn him? turn his mind, or cause him to change his counsel, and alter his purposes; or turn his hand, or stop and stay it from the execution of them; it is not to be done by force and power, there is no power equal to his, and much less superior to his; which must be the case, if any could turn him: and though he may be turned by the prayers of his people, and by the repentance of men, so as to repent himself, and not do what he has threatened to do; yet this is no change of his mind and counsels, only an alteration in the course of his providence, or a change of his outward dealings with men, according to his unchangeable will; see Isa 14:27;

and [what] his soul desireth, even [that] he doth: that is, what he himself desireth earnestly and vehemently; he has done all things in creation according to the good pleasure of his will; and he does all things in providence according to the counsel of it, and as seems best in his sight; and so he does all things in grace, chooses whom he will, predestinates to the adoption of children according to the good pleasure of his will: redeems whom he pleases, and calls by his grace, and brings to glory whomsoever he will be gracious to; see Ps 115:3.

{c} Sophorno. {d} dxab awhw "sed si ipse contra unum agit", Junius & Tremellius; so Piscator, Cocceius.

Job 23:14

Ver. 14. For he performeth [the thing that] is appointed for me,.... The same word is used as at the end of Job 23:12; where it is rendered, "my necessary food"; or appointed food a certain portion of it; food convenient, daily bread; and this has led some interpreters to take it in the same sense here, and render it, "he performeth my necessary things" {e}, or things necessary for me; supplies me with the necessaries of life, to which agrees the Targum, and so Mr. Broughton;

"because he hath furnished me with my daily bread, and many such graces are with him;"

and which he did according to his unchangeable purposes and decrees, and according as his soul desired, and it pleased him; and this laid Job under greater obligation still to have regard to his commandments, and the words of his mouth; but rather it is to be understood of the decrees and purposes of God relating to Job, to his person, case, and circumstances, throughout the whole course of his life hitherto: and indeed all things relating to every individual person, as to him, are appointed of God; and whatever he appoints he performs: all things relative to their temporal life, the birth of persons into the world, and their continuance in it; all the incidents in life, the places of their abode, their employments, callings, and occupations; their riches and poverty, prosperity and adversity; all their afflictions, and which Job has a special regard to, the kind and nature of them, their measure and duration, and the end and use of them; and death itself, which closes all things here, that is appointed of God, the time and circumstances of it, see **Ec 3:1**; and so all things relative to the spiritual and eternal salvation of men; to save men is the determinate will of God; the persons saved are appointed by him to it, and Christ is ordained to be the Redeemer and Saviour of them; whose coming into the world for that purpose was at the appointed time, called the fulness of time, and his going out of it, or his sufferings and death, by which salvation was accomplished, were in due time, and by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. The conversion of men is according to the appointment of God; they that are called are called according to his purpose; the time of conversion, the place where, and means whereby, are all fixed in the decrees and purposes of God, and have their sure and certain accomplishment; and the several vicissitudes of distress and comfort in spiritual things are as God has determined; all the times of his people are in his hands, and disposed by him;

times of temptation, darkness, and desertion, and times of peace, joy, and comfort; the everlasting happiness itself is a kingdom prepared in the purposes of God from the foundation of the world, and is an inheritance obtained according to the purpose of him who has predestinated unto it; and seeing God is all wise, all knowing, all powerful, faithful and true, what he appoints must certainly be performed:

and many such [things are] with him; besides what were appointed for Job, and performed upon him, there were innumerable instances in the world of God's appointments, and the performance of them, both with respect to good things and evil things, mercies and blessings, afflictions and troubles: or besides what God had performed with respect to Job, especially with regard to his afflictions and sufferings, there were still many more things to come, which were secret in his breast, and which he had decreed and appointed, and would in due time be performed, though Job knew not as yet what they, were, whether good or evil things, though he supposed the latter.

{e} yqx Mylvy yk "quia perfecit necessaria mea", Vatablus; so Nachmanides, Ben Gersom, Sephorno.

Job 23:15

Ver. 15. Therefore am I troubled at his presence,.... Not at his gracious presence, which he wanted, and every good man desires; but at his appearance as an enemy, as he apprehended him, laying and continuing his afflictive hand upon him, and indeed at his appearance as a Judge to try his cause; for though he had most earnestly desired it, yet when he thought of the sovereignty of God, and the immutability of his counsels, and of his perfect knowledge of all things; and he not knowing what he had with him, and to bring out against him, when he came to the point, might be troubled and shrink back, see Ps 77:3;

when I consider, I am afraid of him: when he considered his terrible majesty, his sovereign will, his unalterable purposes, his infinite wisdom, and almighty power, his strict justice, and spotless purity; he was afraid to appear before him, or afraid that since many such things were with him he had already experienced, there were more to be brought forth, which might be greater and heavier still.

Job 23:16

Ver. 16. For God maketh my heart soft,.... Not tender as Josiah's was, 2Ki 22:19, or as the heart of every penitent is, when God makes it humble and contrite by his spirit and grace, or takes away the stony heart, and gives an heart of flesh; though Job had such an heart, and God made it so; but he means a weak, feeble, fearful heart, pressed and broken with afflictions, that could not endure and bear up under the mighty hand of God; but became as water, and melted like wax in the midst of him, and was ready to faint, and sink, and die away:

and the Almighty troubleth me; by afflicting him; afflictions cause trouble, and these are of God; or he "astonishes" {a}, amazes me, throws me into the utmost consternation, the reason of which follows.

{a} ynlyhbh "me attonitum reddidit", Vatablus; "consternavit me", Drusius, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis; "externavit me", Schultens.

Job 23:17

Ver. 17. Because I was not cut off before the darkness,.... That is, it was amazing to him, and troubled him when he thought of it, that he was not cut off by death, before the darkness of afflictions, or this dark dispensation came upon him; as sometimes righteous ones are taken from the evil to come, as Methuselah was before the flood, **Ge 5:27**; and Job wonders this was not his case, or at least he wishes it had been; for so Aben Ezra seems to understand and read the words, "why was I not cut off?" &c. as if it was a wish, and expressive of his desire, that this had been done; which was what he had expostulated with God about at first, in the third chapter, and death was what he always desired, and still continued to wish for: or else the sense is, that he was amazed that he "was not cut off, because", "at", "through", or "by darkness" {b}; by means of his afflictions; he wondered how he was supported under them, and carried through them, that they did not press him down to death; how such a poor wasted creature as he was, reduced to skin and bones, should ever be able to endure what he did;

[neither] hath he covered the darkness from my face; that I should not see and feel the afflictions I do; or rather, "he hath covered the darkness from my face", for the word "neither" is not in the text, though repeated by many interpreters from the foregoing clause; and then the sense is though I am

sensible of the darkness of affliction upon me, yet he has covered it so from me, that I cannot see an end of it, or any way to escape out of it; or, which is the sense Drusius gives, he hath covered death and the grave from me, which is a state of darkness, a land of darkness, or darkness itself, as he calls Job 10:21; that he could not see it, and enjoy it; he wished for death, but could not have it, it was hid from him. Cocceius renders the words very differently, he, that is, "God, hath covered himself with darkness from my face"; and interprets it of divine desertion, which troubled and terrified Job; and because he thus covered himself as it were with a cloud, this was the reason why he knew not where he was, and could not find him, when he made the most diligent search for him, and this grieved and astonished him, see **La 3:44**.

{b} Kvx ynpm "propter tenebras", Pagninus, Piscator, Cocceius; so V. L. "a tenebris", Drusius; "a praesentibus, tenebris", Beza.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 24

This chapter contains the second part of Job's answer to the last discourse of Eliphaz, in which he shows that wicked men, those of the worst characters, prosper in the world, and go through it with impunity; he lays down this as a certain truth, that though no time is hid from God, yet they that are most familiar with him, and know most of him, do not see, and cannot observe, any days of his for judging and punishing wicked men in, this life, Job 24:1; and instances in men guilty of injustice, violence, oppression, cruelty, and inhumanity, to their neighbours, and yet God lays not folly to them, or charges them with sin, and punishes them for it, Job 24:2; and in persons that commit the most atrocious crimes in secret, such as murderers, adulterers, and thieves, Job 24:13; he allows that there is a curse upon their portion, and that the grave shall consume them, and they shall be remembered no more, Job 24:18; and because of their ill treatment of others, though they may be in safety and prosperity, and be exalted for a while, they shall be brought low and cut off by death, but generally speaking are not punished in this life, Job 24:21; and concludes with the greatest assurance of being in the right, and having truth on his side, Job 24:25.

Ver. 1. Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty,.... Which seems to be an inference deduced from what he had said in Job 23:14; that since all things are appointed by God, and his appointments are punctually performed by him, the times of his carrying his purposes and decrees into execution cannot be hidden from him; for, as he has determined what shall be done, he has determined the time before appointed for the doing of them; as there is a purpose for everything under the heavens, there is a time set for the execution of that purpose, which must be known unto God that has fixed it; for as all his works are known to him from the beginning, or from eternity, the times when those works should be wrought must also be known to him. The Vulgate Latin, version reduces the words to a categorical proposition, "times are not hidden from the Almighty"; either temporal things, as Sephorno interprets it, things done in time, or the times of doing those things; no sort of time is hid from God; time respecting the world in general, its beginning, duration, and end; all seasons in it, day and night, summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, which are all fixed and settled by him; the several distinct ages and periods of time, into which it has been divided; the old and new world, the legal and Gospel dispensation, the various generations in it; the four great monarchies of the world, their rise, and duration, and end, with all other lesser kingdoms and states; time respecting the inhabitants of the world, their coming into and passing out of it in successive generations, the time of their birth, and of their death, and of adversity and prosperity, which interchangeably take place during their abode in it; and particularly the people of God, the time of their redemption by Christ, of their conversion by the grace of God, and all their times of darkness, desertion, temptation, and afflictions, and of peace, joy, and comfort; time, past and future, respecting the church of God, and the state of it, and all things relative thereunto; and the times of Israel's affliction in a land not theirs, four hundred years, and of their seventy years' captivity in Babylon, were not hidden from the Almighty, but foretold by him; the suffering times of the church under the New Testament; the ten persecutions of it by the Roman emperors; the flight and nourishment of it in the wilderness for a time, and times, and half a time; the treading down of the holy city forty two months; the witnesses prophesying: in sackcloth 1260 days; the killing of them, and their bodies lying unburied three days and a half, and then rising; the reign of antichrist forty two months, at the end of which antichristian time will be no more; the time of Christ's coming to judgment, which is a day appointed, though unknown to men and angels, and the reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years; all these times are not hidden from, but known to the Almighty, even all time, past, present, and to come, and all things that have been, are, or shall be done therein. Several Jewish commentators {c} interpret these words as an expostulation or wish, "why are not times hidden?" &c. if they were, I should not wonder at it that those that knew him do not know what shall be; but he knows the times and days in which wicked men will do wickedness, why is he silent? Mr. Broughton, and others {d}, render them, "why are not", or "why should not times be hidden by the Almighty?" that is, be hidden in his own breast from men, as they are; for the times and seasons it is not for man to know, which God has put in his own power, **Ac 1:6**; as the times of future troubles, of a man's death, and the day of judgment; it is but right and fit, on many accounts, that they should be hid by him from them; but others of later date translate the words perhaps much better, "why are not [certain stated] times laid up", or "reserved by the Almighty" {e}? that is, for punishing wicked men in this, life, as would be the case, Job suggests, if it was true what his friends had asserted, that wicked men are always punished here: and then upon this another question follows, why

do they that know him not see his days? that know him not merely by the light of nature, but as revealed in Christ; and that have not a mere knowledge of him, but a spiritual and experimental one; who know him so as to love him, believe in him, fear, serve, and worship him; and who have a greater knowledge of him than others may have, and have an intimate acquaintance and familiarity with him, are his bosom friends; and if there are fixed times for punishing the wicked in this life, how comes it to pass that these friends of God, to whom he reveals his secrets, cannot see and observe any such days and times of his as these? but, on the contrary, observe, even to the stumbling of the greatest saints, that the wicked prosper and increase in riches. Job seems to refer to what Eliphaz had said, Job 22:19; which he here tacitly denies, and proves the contrary by various instances, as follows.

{c} Aben Ezra, Nachmanides, & Simeon Bar Tzemach. {d} ydvm ewdm "quinam ab omnipotente", Beza; so Junius & Tremellius. {e} "Quare ab omnipotente non sunt recondita in poenam stata tempora", Schultens.

Job 24:2

Ver. 2. [Some] remove the landmarks,.... Anciently set to distinguish one man's land from another, to secure property, and preserve from encroachments; but some were so wicked as either secretly in the night to remove them, or openly to do it, having power on their side, pretending they were wrongly located; this was not only prohibited by the law of God, and pronounced an accursed thing, De 19:14; but was reckoned so before the law was given, being known to be such by the light of nature, as what was now, and here condemned, was before that law was in being; and so we find that this was accounted an execrable thing among the Heathens, who had a deity they called

Jupiter Terminalis, who was appointed over bounds and landmarks; so Numa Pompilius appointed stones to be set as bounds to everyone's lands, and dedicated them to Jupiter Terminalis, and ordered that those that removed them should be slain as sacrilegious persons, and they and their oxen devoted to destruction {f}: some render it, "they touch the landmarks" {g}, as if to touch them was unlawful, and therefore much more to remove them:

they violently take away flocks, and feed [thereof]; not content with a sheep or a lamb, they took away whole flocks, and that by force and violence, openly and publicly, and slew them, and fed on them; or else took them and put them into their own grounds, or such as they had got by encroachments from others, where they fed them without any fear of men; which shows the effrontery and impudence of them.

{f} Dion. Halicarnass. & Festus apud Sanctium in loc. Vid. Rycquium de Capitol. Roman. c. 14. Ovid. Fasti, l. 2. {g} wgyvy "attigerunt", Pagninus, Bolducius; "attingunt", Vatablus.

Job 24:3

Ver. 3. They drive away the ass of the fatherless,.... Who are left destitute of friends, and have none to take care of them, and provide for them; and who having one ass to carry their goods for them from place to place, or to ride upon, which though a creature of no great worth, yet of some usefulness, this they drove away from its pasture, or however from its right owner; and who having but one, it was the more cruel and inhuman to take it from him, see, 2Sa 12:3;

they take the widow's ox for a pledge; or oxen, the singular for the plural, with which her lands were ploughed, for a single ox could be but of little service: some render it "a cow" {h}, by the milk of which she and her family were chiefly supported, as many poor country families are by the means of a good milch cow; and to take this, on which her livelihood depended, and retain for a pledge, was very barbarous; when the law concerning pledges took place among the Jews, in the times of Moses, which it seems was in being before with others, whatsoever was useful to persons, either to keep them warm, or by which they got their bread, were not to be taken, at least not detained for a pledge, see Ex 22:26.

{h} rwv "pro bove foemina, vacca", Bolducius.

Job 24:4

Ver. 4. They turn the needy out of the way,.... Either, in a moral sense, out of the right way, the way of righteousness and truth, by their bad examples, or by their threatenings or flatteries; or, in a civil sense, out of the way of their livelihood, by taking that from them by which they got it; or, in a literal sense, obliging them to turn out of the way from them, in a supercilious and haughty manner, or causing them, through fear of them, to get out of the way, that they might not meet them, lest they should insult them, beat and abuse them, or take that little from them they had, as follows:

the poor of the earth hide themselves together; who are not only poor in purse, but poor in spirit, meek, humble, and lowly, and have not spirit and courage to stand against such oppressors, but are easily crushed by them; these through fear of them hide themselves in holes and corners in a body, in a large company together, lest they should fall into their cruel hands, and be used by them in a barbarous manner, see Pr 28:28.

Job 24:5

Ver. 5. Behold, [as] wild asses in the desert,.... The word "as" is a supplement, and may be omitted, and the words be interpreted literally of wild asses, as they are by Sephorno, whose proper place is in the wilderness, to which they are used, and where their food is provided for them, and which they diligently seek for, for them and their young; and so the words may be descriptive of the place where the poor hide themselves, and of the company they are obliged to keep; but the Targum supplies the note of similitude as we do; and others {i} observe it to be wanting, and so it may respect wicked men before described, who may be compared to the wild asses of the wilderness for their folly and stupidity, man being born like a wild ass's colt, Job 11:12; and for their lust and wantonness, and for their rebellion against God and his laws, and their unteachableness. Perhaps some regard may be had to the wild Arabs that were in Job's neighbourhood, the descendants of Ishmael, called the wild man, as he is in Ge 16:12; who lived by plunder and robbery, as these here:

they go forth to their work: of thieving and stealing, robbing and plundering, as their trade, and business, and occupation of life, and as naturally and constantly as men go to their lawful employment, and as if it was one:

rising betimes for a prey; getting up early in a morning to meet the industrious traveller on the road, and make a prey of him, rob him of what he has about him; for they cannot sleep unless they do mischief:

the wilderness [yieldeth] food for them, [and] for [their] children; though they are lurking in a wilderness where no sustenance is to be had, yet, by robbing everyone that passes by, they get enough for them and their families: though some understand all this of the poor, who are obliged to hide themselves from their oppressors, and go into the wilderness in droves like wild asses, and as timorous and as swift as they in fleeing; and are forced to hard service, and to rise early to earn their bread, and get sustenance for their families; and who in the main are obliged to live on berries and roots, and what a wild desert will afford; but the, word "prey" is not applicable to the pains and labours of such industrious people, wherefore the former sense is best; and besides, there seems to be one continued account of wicked men.

{i} Aben Ezra, Ben Gersom, Bar Tzemach.

Job 24:6

Ver. 6. They reap [everyone] his corn in the field,.... Not the poor, who are obliged to reap the corn of the wicked for them without any wages, as some; but rather the wicked reap the corn of the poor; they are so insolent and impudent, that they do not take the corn out of their barns by stealth, but while it is standing in the field; they come openly and reap it down, as if it was their own, without any fear of God or men: it is observed, that the word {k} signifies a mixture of the poorer sorts of corn, which is scarce anything better than food for cattle; yet this they cut down and carry off, as forage for their horses and asses at least. Some of the ancient versions, taking it to be two words, render them, "which is not their own" {l}; they go into a field that is not theirs, and reap corn that do not belong to them, that they have no right unto, and so are guilty of great injustice, and of doing injury to others:

and they gather the vintage of the wicked; gather the grapes off of the vines of wicked men, which are gathered, as the word signifies, at the latter end of the year, in autumn; and though they belong to wicked men like themselves, yet they spare them not, but seize on all that come to hand, whether the property of good men or bad men; and thus sometimes one wicked man is an instrument of punishing another: or "the wicked gather the vintage" {m}; that is, of the poor;

as they reap where they have not sown, they gather of that they have not planted.

{k} wlylb "migma suum", Bolducius; "farraginem ejus [vel] suam", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis. {l} ouk autwn Sept. "non suum", V. L. so the Targum, and Aben Ezra, Grotius, Codurcus. {m} wvqly evr Mrkw "et in vinea (aliena) vindemiant impii", Tigurine version; "vineasque vindemiant impii", Castalio.

Job 24:7

Ver. 7. They cause the naked to lodge without clothing,.... That is, such as are poorly clothed, thinly arrayed, have scarce anything but rags, and yet so cruel the wicked men above described, that they take these away from the poor, and even their bed clothes, which seem chiefly designed; so that they are obliged to lodge or lie all night without anything upon them:

that [they have] no covering in the cold; neither in the daytime, nor in the night, and especially the latter; and having no house to go to, and obliged to lay themselves down upon the bare ground, had nothing to cover them from the inclemency of the weather; for even in hot countries nights are sometimes cold, and large dews fall, yea, sometimes it is a frost, see Ge 31:40.

Job 24:8

Ver. 8. They are wet with the showers of the mountains,.... They that are without any clothes to cover them, lying down at the bottom of a hill or mountain, where the clouds often gather, and there break, or the snow at the top of them melts through the heat of the day; and whether by the one or by the other, large streams of water run down the mountains, and the naked poor, or such who are thinly clothed, are all over wet therewith, as Nebuchadnezzar's body was with the dew of heaven, when he was driven from men, and lived among beasts, **Da 4:33**:

and embrace the rock for want of a shelter; or habitation, as the Targum; having no house to dwell in, nor any raiment to cover them, they were glad to get into the hole of a rock, in a cave or den there, and where some good men in former times were obliged to wander,
Heb 11:38; and whither mean persons, in the time and country in which Job

lived, were driven to dwell in, see Job 30:6.

Job 24:9

Ver. 9. They pluck the fatherless from the breast,.... Either on purpose to starve it, which must be extremely barbarous; or to sell it to be brought up a slave; or by obliging the mother to wean it before the due time, that she might be the better able to do work for them they obliged her to. Mr. Broughton renders the words, "of mischievousness they rob the fatherless"; that is, through the greatness of the mischief they do, as Ben Gersom interprets it; or through the exceeding mischievous disposition they are of; of which this is a flagrant instance; or

"they rob the fatherless of what remains for him after spoiling {n},"

or devastation, through the plunder of his father's substance now dead, which was exceeding cruel:

and take a pledge of the poor; either the poor himself, or his poor fatherless children, see **2Ki 4:1**; or what is "upon the poor" {o}, as it may be rendered; that is, his raiment, which was commonly taken for a pledge; and, by a law afterwards established in Israel, was obliged to be restored before sunset, that he might have a covering to sleep in, Ex 22:26;
See Gill on "Job 22:6".

{n} dvm "per devastationem", some in Munster; "post vastationem", Tigurine version; so Nachmanides & Bar Tzemach. {o} yne le "super inopem", Cocceius, Schultens; so Ben Gersom.

Job 24:10

Ver. 10. They cause [him] to go naked without clothing,.... Having taken his raiment from him for a pledge, or refusing to give him his wages for his work, whereby he might procure clothes to cover him, but that being withheld, is obliged to go naked, or next to it:

and they take away the sheaf [from] the hungry; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "ears of corn", such as the poor man plucked as he walked through a corn field, in order to rub them in his hand, and eat of, as the disciples of

Christ, with which the Pharisees were offended, **Lu 6:1**; and which, according to a law in Israel, was allowed to be done, De 23:25; but now so severe were these wicked men to these poor persons, that they took away from them such ears of corn: but it is more likely that this sheaf was what the poor had gleaned, and what they had been picking up ear by ear, and had bound up into a sheaf, in order to carry home and beat it out, and then grind the corn of it, and make a loaf of it to satisfy their hunger; but so cruel and hardhearted were these men, that they took it away from them, which they had been all, or the greatest part of the day, picking up; unless it can be thought there was a custom in Job's country, which was afterwards a law among the Jews, that if a sheaf was forgotten by the owner, and left in the field when he gathered in his corn, he was not to go back for it, and fetch it, but leave it to the poor, De 24:19; but these men would not suffer them to have it, but took it away from them; or the words may be rendered, as they are by some, "the hungry carry the sheaf" {p} that is, of their rich oppressive masters, who having reaped their fields for them, and bound up the corn in sheaves, carry it home for them; and yet they do not so much as give them food for their labour, or wages to purchase food to satisfy their; hunger, and so dealt with them worse than the oxen were, according to the Jewish law, which were not to be muzzled when they trod out the corn, but might eat of it, De 25:4.

{p} rme wavn Myberw "et famelici gestant manipulum", Tigurine version, Mercerus; so Schultens, Michaelis.

Job 24:11

Ver. 11. [Which] make oil within their walls,.... Not the poor within their own walls; as if the sense was, that they made their oil in a private manner within the walls of their houses, or in their cellars, lest it should be known and taken away from them; for such cannot be thought to have had oliveyards to make oil of; rather within the walls of their rich masters, where they were kept closely confined to their work, as if in a prison; or within the walls and fences of their oliveyards, where their olive presses stood; or best of all "within the rows {q} [of] their [olive trees]", as the word signifies, where having gathered the olives, they pressed out the oil in the presses and this they did at noon, in the heat of the day, as the word {r} for making oil is observed by some to signify, and yet had nothing given them to quench their thirst, as follows:

[and] tread [their] winepresses, and suffer thirst; after having gathered their grapes from their vines for them, they trod them in the winepresses, and made

their wine, and yet would not allow them to drink of it to allay their thirst.

{q} Mtrwv Nyb "inter ordines", Mercerus, Piscator, Cocceius; so Sephorno, and some in Eliae Tishbi, p. 241. {r} wryhuy "meridiati sunt", V. L. so Bolducius, Schultens.

Job 24:12

Ver. 12. Men groan from out of the city,.... Because of the oppressions and injuries done to them, so that not only the poor in the country that were employed in the fields, and oliveyards, and vineyards, were used exceeding ill; but even in cities, where not only are an abundance of people, and so the outrages committed upon them, which made them groan, were done openly and publicly, with great insolence and impudence, but where also courts of judicature were held, and yet in defiance of law and justice were those evils done, see **Ec 3:16**;

and the soul of the wounded crieth out; that is, the persons wounded with the sword, or any other instrument of vengeance, stabbed as they went along the public streets of the city, where they fell, these cried out vehemently as such persons do; so audacious, as well as barbarous, were these wicked men, that insulted and abused them:

yet God layeth not folly [to them]; it is for the sake of this observation that the whole above account is given of wicked men, as well as what follows; that though they are guilty of such atrocious crimes, such inhumanity, cruelty, and oppression in town and country, unheard of, unparalleled, iniquities, sins to be punished by a judge, yet are suffered of God to pass with impunity. By "folly" is meant sin, not lesser sins only, little, foolish, trifling things, but greater and grosser ones, such as before expressed; all sin is folly, being the breach of a law which is holy, just, and good, and exposes to its penalty and curse; and against God the lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; and as it is harmful and prejudicial, either to the characters, bodies, or estates of men, and especially to their immortal souls; and yet God that charges his angels with folly did not charge these men with it; that is, he seemed, in the outward dealings of his providence towards them, as if he took no notice of their sins, but connived at them, or took no account of them, and did not take any methods in his providence to show their folly, and convince them of it, nor discover it to others, and make them public examples, did not punish them, but let them go on in them without control; and this Job observes, in order to prove his point, that wicked men are not always punished in this life.

Job 24:13

Ver. 13. They are of those that rebel against the light,.... The light of nature, acting contrary to the dictates of their own consciences, in being guilty of the inhumanity, barbarity, and cruelty they were chargeable with in the above instances; or the light of the law, as the Targum; though as yet the law of the ten commandments was not in being; or however was not known to these persons; or against God himself, who is light, and in him no darkness at all, is clothed with it, and is the Father of lights unto his creatures, the Light of lights, and the Light of the world, from whom all light, natural, spiritual, and eternal, springs, **1Jo 1:5**; which is the sense of most of the Jewish commentators {s}; and every sin is a rebellion against God, and betrays the enmity of the carnal mind to him, is an act of hostility against him, and shows men to be enemies in their minds to him:

they know not the ways thereof; the ways of light, but prefer the ways of darkness to them; or the ways of God, the ways of his commandments, which he has prescribed for men, and directed them to walk in; these they know not, are wilfully ignorant of, desire not the knowledge of them, and will be at no pains to get any acquaintance with them; or they approve not of them, they are not pleasing to them, and they choose not to walk in them:

nor abide in the paths thereof; if at any time they are got into the paths of light, truth, and righteousness, or in the ways of God's commandments, and do a few good actions, they do not continue therein, but quickly go out of the way again, leave the paths of righteousness to walk in the ways of darkness, **Pr 2:13**. Some interpreters understand these words entirely of natural light, and of men who are like owls and bats that flee from the light, who are authors of the works of darkness, and do what they do in the dark secretly, and hate the light, and do not choose to come unto it, that their deeds may not be reproved; and so now Job enters upon the account of another set of men different from the former, who did what they did openly, in the face of the sun, and before all men; but these he is now about to describe are such who commit iniquity secretly and privately, and instances in the murderer adulterer, and thief, in Job 24:14.

{s} Aben Ezra, Ben Gersom, Sephorno, Bar Tzemach.

Job 24:14

Ver. 14. The murderer rising with the light,.... The light of the morning, before the sun is risen, about the time the early traveller is set out on his journey, and men go to distant markets to buy and sell goods, and the poor labourer goes forth to his work; then is the time for one that is used to commit robbery and murder to rise from his bed, or from his lurking place, in a cave or a thicket, where he has lain all night, in order to meet with the above persons: and so

killeth the poor and needy; takes away from them the little they have, whether money or provisions, and kills them because they have no more, and that they may not be evidence against him; it may be meant of the poor saints and people of God, whom the wicked slay out of hatred to them:

and in the night is as a thief; kills privately, secretly, at an unawares, as the thief does his work; or the "as" here is not a note of similitude or likeness, but of reality and truth; and so Mr. Broughton renders the words, "and in the night he will be as a thief"; in the morning he is a robber on the highway, and a murderer; all the day he is in his lurking place, in some haunt or another, sleeping or carousing; and when the night comes on, then he acts the part of a thief; in the morning he not only robs, but murders, that he may not be detected; at night he only steals, and not kills, because men are asleep, and see him not.

Job 24:15

Ver. 15. The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight,.... Not of the morning, which would not give him time enough to satiate his lust, but of the evening, that he may have the whole night before him to gratify his impure desires, and that these may be indulged in the most private and secret manner; and having fixed the time in the evening with his adulteress, he waits with impatience, and earnestly wishes and longs for its coming, and diligently looks out for the close of day, and takes the first opportunity of the darkness of the evening to set out on his adventure, see **Pr 7:7**; and the "eye" is particularly observed, not only because that is the instrument by which the twilight is discerned, and is industriously employed in looking out for it, but is full of adultery, as the Apostle Peter expresses it, **2Pe 2:14**; it is what is the inlet to this sin, the leader on to it, the caterer for it, and the nourisher, and cherisher of it, see

Job 30:1;

saying, no eye shall see me; no eye of man, which such an one is careful to guard against; and especially the eye of the husband of the adulteress, whose raging jealousy will not spare the adulterer, but take revenge on him by an immediate dispatch of him. And few care to have it known by any that they are guilty of this sin, because it brings dishonour and reproach upon them, which cannot be wiped off: the fact of Absalom going in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel, 2Sa 16:21, and lying with them in the face of the sun, is the most notorious instance of this kind to be read; usually both sexes choose the utmost secrecy. Potiphar's wife took the opportunity to tempt Joseph when none of the men of the house were within,
Ge 35:10; and when Amnon intended to force his sister, he ordered all the men to be had out of the room, 2Sa 13:9: and moreover, the adulterer foolishly fancies that God sees him not, or at least is not concerned about that; though there is no darkness where such workers of iniquity can hide themselves from his all seeing eye, the darkness and the light are both alike to him. These men are like the ostrich, which thrusting its head into a thicket, as Tertullian {t} observes, fancies it is not seen; so children cover their faces, and, because they see none, think that nobody sees them; and as weak and childish a part do such act, who imagine that their evil deeds, done in the dark, are not seen by him, before whom every creature is made manifest, and all things are naked and open:

and disguiseth [his] face; puts a mask upon it, that he may not be known by any he meets, when upon his amorous adventure, as harlots used to cover themselves with a vail, Ge 38:14.

{t} De Virgin, Veland. c. 17.

Job 24:16

Ver. 16. In the dark they dig through houses, [which] they had marked for themselves in the daytime,.... Which some understand of adulterers last mentioned, who, having observed where beautiful women dwell, mark their houses, and the way to them, and the best way into them, and in the dark get in at windows, or by breaking open doors get to the persons they lust after; but as such steps would be neither safe nor prudent, so they are not necessary; such sort of persons get admittance in an easier way, either by bribing servants, or by a previous agreement with the adulteress herself: rather this is to be understood of the thief and his companions, before spoken of; or designs another sort of thieves, such as are guilty of burglary, housebreakers, who in the daytime go about and observe such houses as are full of money, plate, and rich goods, see **Job 3:15**; and take diligent notice of the way to them, and which is the best and easiest part to get into them, and, perhaps, set on them a private mark that they may know them; these they break up, the walls, or doors, or windows, and get in at them, and rob, and plunder, and carry off all they can; the same sins were committed, and the same methods of committing them were used, formerly as now; there was a law in Israel concerning housebreaking, Ex 22:2; and our Lord alludes to it, Mt 24:43. Some render the words, "they seal up" or "shut up themselves in the day" {u}; in their caves, and dens, and lurking places, and do not appear, and scarce ever see the light, and therefore it follows:

they know not the light; it is seldom or ever seen by them, or they do not approve it, like it, and love it, being not for their purpose; while it is light they can do nothing, that manifestly discovers and betrays them, and therefore they hate it; and in a figurative sense they know not, or do not approve of the light of nature, which checks and controls such evil actions, and accuses them of them; nor the light of God's word, or holy law, which forbids them, and therefore they despise it, and cast it away from them, and will not be subject to it; nor God himself, who is light, and against whom their carnal minds are enmity; and whatever knowledge they have of him, or profess to have, in works they deny him, and live without him, as atheists in the world.

{u} wml wmtx esfragisan eautouv, Sept. "includunt sese", some in Mercerus; so Drusius; "semet sigillant", Schultens.

Job 24:17

Ver. 17. For the morning [is] to them even as the shadow of death,.... It is as disagreeable, and as hateful, and as terrible to them as the grossest and thickest darkness can be to others. The word wdxy is to be rendered either "alike" or "altogether", and not "even", as in our version: "the morning is to them equally" or "together" {w}; that is, to the murderer, robber, thief, adulterer, and housebreaker, "as the shadow of death"; alike disagreeable to them all; or "the shadow of death is to them together" or "alike [as the] morning"; what the morning is to others, exceeding pleasant and delightful, that to them is the shadow of death, or the darkest night; they love darkness rather than light:

if [one] know [them, they are in] the terrors of the shadow of death; they are frightened unto death, they are in as great terror as a man is to whom death is the king of terrors; and who is sensible of the near approach of it, the plain and manifest symptoms of it being upon him: this is the case of the murderer, adulterer, and thief, when they are caught in the fact; or are known by such who are capable of giving notice of them, detecting them, and bearing witness against them: or "he", each and everyone of these, "knows the terrors of the shadow of death" {x}; the darkest night, which strikes terrors into others, is known by them, is delighted in by them, is familiar with them, and friendly to them, and is as pleasing as the brightest day to others.

{w} Pariter, Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {x} twmlu twhlb ryky "agnoscit terrores umbrae mortis", Mercerus, Cocceius; so Codurcus, Schmidt.

Job 24:18

Ver. 18. He [is] swift as the waters,.... Or "upon the face of the waters" {y}; which some interpret of another set and sort of wicked men, guilty of like crimes, not on land, but upon the mighty waters; pirates, such that commit robberies upon the high seas; who generally choose the swiftest vessels to run from place to place for their prey, and to carry off their booty when pursued; whose manner of life is detestable to other persons; and especially they are cursed by those on land, who suffer by robbing the ships of their goods they send abroad; but these men best like such a manner of life, and prefer it to any thing by land, to agriculture or cultivation of vineyards, which they have no regard unto, as is supposed to be intimated by the following clauses; but it is greatly to be questioned whether there were any such persons, or that such practices obtained so early as the time of Job. Schultens thinks Sodomites are meant, who are most profuse to lust, and flow in it like water, plough the accursed field, by going after strange flesh, and have no regard to lawful marriage, or honest wives, comparable to vines and vineyards; but I should rather think those guilty of the sin of Onan are meant, who have no regard to the propagation of posterity. Others, as Ben Gersom are of opinion that this refers to the above persons, murderers, adulterers, and thieves, Job 24:14; who, being conscious of their crimes and due deserts, and in danger of being taken up, and brought to just punishment, flee to the sea with all the haste they can, take shipping, and go abroad into foreign parts; where they dwell in desolate and uncultivated places of the earth, which are cursed, or nigh unto cursing, and never more see pleasant fields, gardens, orchards, and vineyards: though others suppose that these words describe the temper and disposition of such wicked persons, who are unstable as water, carried about as any light thing upon the water with every wind of temptation, run swiftly into evil, and make haste to commit sin; though it seems best of all to interpret the words as respecting the state of wicked men at death, who then pass away swiftly and suddenly as gliding waters, and are "lighter" or swifter "than the waters", as Mr. Broughton renders the words:

their portion is cursed in the earth; that part and portion of the good things of this world they have is with a curse; their very blessings are cursed, and what they leave behind has a curse entailed on it, and in process of time is blasted, and comes to nothing; for, the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, **Pr 3:33**;

he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards; as in their lifetime they had no regard to the way of good and righteous men, of whom Jarchi in a mystical sense, interprets the vineyards; so at death they are taken away from all their worldly enjoyments they set their hearts upon; their places know them no more, and they no more see their fields, and vineyards, and oliveyards, and take no more walks unto them nor in them.

{y} Mym ynp le "super faciem aquarum", Mercerus, Bolducius, Beza, Drusius, Schultens.

Job 24:19

Ver. 19. Drought and heat consume the snow waters,.... Melt the snow into water, and dry up that, which is done easily, quickly, and suddenly:

[so doth] the grave [those which] have sinned; all have sinned, but some are more notorious sinners than others, as those here meant; and all die and are laid in the grave, and are consumed; hence the grave is called the pit of corruption and destruction, because bodies are corrupted and destroyed in it, and which is the case of all, both good and bad men; but the metaphor here used to express it by, of the consumption of snow water by drought and heat, denotes either that the death of these persons is sudden and violent, and in such a manner are brought to the grave, consumed there; that they die a sudden death, and before their time, and do not live out half the days, which, according to the course of nature, they might have lived, or it was expected by them and others they would; whereas they are "snatched away", as the word signifies, as suddenly and violently as snow waters are by the drought and

heat; or else that their death is quick, quiet, and easy, as snow is quickly dissolved, and the water as soon and as easily dried up by the drought and heat; they do not lie long under torturing diseases, but are at once taken away, and scarce feel any pain; they die in their full strength, wholly at ease and quiet; which sense well answers Job's scope and design, see Job 21:23. Some render the words, "in the drought and heat they rob, and in the snow waters" {z}; that is, they rob at all times and seasons of the year, summer and winter; and this is their constant trade and employ; they are always at it, let the weather be what it will: and "they sin unto the grave", or "hell" {a}; they continue in their wicked course of life as long as they live, until they are brought to the grave; they live and die in sin.

{z} b "deficit"; so some in Simeon, Bar Tzemach. {a} wajx lwav "ad infernum usque peccarunt", Schmidt; "usque ad sepulchrum", Mercerus; some in Drusius.

Job 24:20

Ver. 20. The womb shall forget him,.... His mother that bore him; or his wife, by whom he had many children; or his friend, as Gersom, who had a tender and affectionate respect for him; these all, and each of them, either because of his wicked life and infamous death, care not to speak of him, but bury him in oblivion; or because of his quiet and easy death, are not distressed with it, but soon forget him; unless this is to be understood of the womb of the earth, in which being buried, he lies forgotten, to which the next clause agrees; though some interpret it of God himself the word having the signification of mercy {b}; who, though mercy itself, is rich and abundant in it, yet has no mercy for, nor shows any favour to, such men; but they lie in the grave among those whom he remembers no more in a way of grace and favour,
Ps 85:5;

the worm shall feed sweetly on him; for being brought to the grave at once, without any wasting distemper, is a fine repast for worms, his breasts being full of milk, and his bones moistened with marrow, and full of flesh; or "the worm [is] sweet unto him" {c}; he feels no pain by its feeding on him, and so the sense is just the same with that expression, "the clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him",
Job 21:33;

he shall be no more remembered; with any mark of honour and respect; his memory shall rot with him, while the righteous are had in everlasting remembrance; or rather dying a common death, and not made a public example of:

and wickedness shall be broken as a tree; that is, wicked men, who are wickedness itself, extremely wicked, and are like to a tree, sometimes flourishing in external prosperity, having an affluence of the things of this world, and always like barren and unfruitful trees, with respect to grace and good works; these, when the axe of death is laid to the root of them, they are cut down, and their substance comes to nothing, and their families are destroyed, and so they become like trees struck with thunder and lightning, and broken into ten thousand shivers; or as the trees in Egypt were broken to pieces by the plague of hail, **Ex 9:25**.

{b} Mxr "misericordia", V. L. "miseratio", Montanus, Bolducius; so Tigurine version, Grotius. {c} wqtm "dulcescit ei", Beza, Piscator; "suavis", Cocceius; so Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 24:21

Ver. 21. He evil entreateth the barren, [that] beareth not,.... Here Job returns, to give some further account of the sins of some wicked men, who prosper in this world, and go through it with impunity; and speaks of such that use their wives ill because they are barren, upbraid them with it, and are churlish to them on account of it; or use them ill that they may be barren, and bear no children, having no pleasure in them, as not in vineyards, before, Job 24:18; and some interpret this of deflowering virgins, who never bore children, and of using methods to make them abortive, when with child; the word we translate "evil entreateth" sometimes signifies joining to, or being a companion of others, as in Pr 13:20; hence various senses are given; some, he joins himself to a barren woman, that he may have no children, being not desirous of any; others, he, joins himself to, and is a companion of harlots, who are commonly barren: and like the prodigal, spends his substance among them. Some interpreters take this verse and
Job 24:22; as expressive of the punishment of wicked men: so Mr. Broughton renders the words, "he adjoineth the barren" {d}, and gives the sense of them thus; God sends after him a barren wife, that he shall have no help by children; but, though a numerous offspring has been reckoned an outward happiness, and not to have any an infelicity, yet it has been the case of many good men and women to be childless; wherefore love and hatred are not known hereby:

besides, such a sense is contrary to the scope and design of Job, which is to prove that wicked men often go unpunished in this life; wherefore, rather the meaning is, that a wicked man uses ill such, who having not only lost their husbands, but having been barren, and so childless, have none to take their part, and to protect and defend them from the abuses of such men; the Targum renders the word, "he breaketh", and so some understand it {e}; he breaketh the barren, tears them to pieces, ruins and destroys them, as to their outward substance, because they have no children to help them; with which agrees what follows,

and doth not good to the widow; does not make her glad and cheerful, as Job did, who made the widow's heart to sing for joy, Job 29:13; does not relieve and assist her when in distress, either by counsel and advice, or by administering to her necessities; but, on the contrary, afflicts and oppresses her; takes her ox, or her raiment, for a pledge, and plunders her house, and devours the substance of it; for more is intended than is expressed.

{d} hrqe her "consociat ei sterilem", Junius & Tremellius. {e} Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius, Piscator, Mercerus, Drusius.

Job 24:22

Ver. 22. He draweth also the mighty with his power,.... Such a wicked man not only maltreats the weak, the helpless, and the defenceless, but even attacks the mighty and powerful; such as are in great power and authority, and abound in wealth and riches, only somewhat inferior in both to himself: wherefore, by his superior force, he draws them to be of his party, to join with him in acts of rapine and violence, oppression and cruelty; or he draws them by power or policy, or by both, as the wicked man does the poor with his net, Ps 10:9; and so makes a prey of him and his substance. Some understand this of the punishment of wicked men, and interpret it, as Jarchi does, of God's drawing him to punishment; God sometimes does indeed draw and hurl the mighty from their seats; though they are set in high, yet in slippery places, and are brought down to destruction in a moment; and he will draw them all to his judgment seat hereafter, whether they will or not, and send them into everlasting punishment; but the former sense is best:

he riseth up, and no [man] is sure of life; he rises up in the morning:, either from his bed, or from his lurking place, where he was all night with a murdering intention, and no man he meets with is safe, but in the utmost danger of his life, Job 24:14; or, he rises in the world to great power and dignity, and increases in wealth and riches, which he abuses to the hurt of others; so that they flee from him and hide themselves, not caring to trust their life with him, Pr 28:28; or he riseth up against a man in an hostile way, and against whomsoever he does, they are in the utmost jeopardy, and cannot be secure of their lives; though this also is by some interpreted as the punishment of a wicked man, who, when he rises in the morning, "trusteth not his own life" {f}, as the words may be rendered, and as they are in the margin of our Bibles; but his life is in suspense, being surrounded with a thousand dangers, and has no assurance of it, and is in continual fear, and often fears where no fear is; see De 28:66; or, if a man rises up against him, the wicked tyrant and cruel oppressor, he the tyrant is not sure of his life but may be slain by him that rises up against him; but the former sense is best.

{f} wyyxb Nymay "non fidit suae vitae", Tigurine version, Piscator; so V. L.

Job 24:23

Ver. 23. [Though] it be given him [to be] in safety,.... Or "he gives him" {g}, that is, it is God gives the wicked man to be in safety, notwithstanding all his wickedness; for Job, having described the wicked man, now represents him as in the greatest prosperity: safety is of God in every respect, not only the safety of good men, both in a way of providence and in a way of grace, but even of bad men; those are often preserved from the incursions and depredations of others, and their goods are kept, and they possess them in peace, and they dwell secure and confidently without care. The Vulgate Latin version is widely different,

"God gives him place of repentance, and he abuses it to pride;"

though the Targum somewhat agrees with it,

"he gives to him repentance, that he may trust, or be confident and be supported:"

so God gave space to repent to the old world; to whose case some Jewish writers apply the context, see **Ge 6:3**;

whereon he resteth; being in prosperity and safety, he trusts to it, and depends upon it it will ever be the case; he has much goods laid up for many years, and therefore sings "requiem" to his soul, saying, "take thine ease"; tomorrow will be as this day, and much more abundant; things will always be as they are, or better:

yet his eyes [are] upon their ways; or, "and his eyes" {h}, that is, the eyes of God, which are upon all men, good and bad, and upon all their ways and works; these are upon the wicked man and all his courses; not to punish him now for his sins; for, though he sees all his wicked actions, not one escapes his notice, yet he lays not folly to him, nor charges him with it, nor inflicts punishment on him for it; nay, his eyes are upon him to prosper and succeed him in all he does; which is the usual sense of the phrase, unless where there is an explanation, or anything said to show the contrary; see De 11:12. Some give a different sense of the words, as that such that fear the wicked man give him gifts, that they may be in safety, in which they trust; or he gives them his hand, or his word, or both, that they shall be, on which they rely; but his eyes are upon them, watching their ways and works, to take every opportunity and advantage against them; but the former is best.

{g} wl Nty "dat ei", Piscator, Mercerus, i.e., Deus, Beza, Drusius, Michaelis.
{h} whynyew "et ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius, Beza, Cocceius, Schultens.

Job 24:24

Ver. 24. They are exalted for a little while,.... To seats of honour, to places of profit and trust, to great wealth and riches, to be highly esteemed among men, and to have a large affluence of the good things of life; see **Mal 3:15**; though this exaltation, dignity, and glory, wealth and riches, last but for a little time, this life at longest being but short, like a vapour that appears, and soon vanishes away; and then all a man's honours and glory, riches and substance, are at an end, who is soon cut down as the grass, and withers as the green herb, Ps 37:2; but as this pretty much falls in with the sentiment of Zophar, or seems to do so, Job 20:5; rather this phrase, "for a little while", may be joined with what follows, "a little while, and they are gone";

but are gone; out of the world, to their own place, and death puts an end to all their prosperity, to all their outward enjoyments, which yet they retain till death: or "they are not" {i}; in the land of the living, in their houses and shops, and places of trade and commerce; they are no more about their business, and in their callings of life, nor in the possession of their worldly estates; the places which knew them know them no more; and this comes to pass in a very little time; their honour is short lived, and their earthly portion is not forever:

and brought low; not diminished in their substance in life, nor lessened in their honour and grandeur, nor are brought into poverty and disgrace; but are brought at last to death, and laid low in the grave, and are fed upon by worms, and reduced to rottenness and dust:

they are taken out of the way, as all [others]; out of the world, by death, and out of the way of others; who come in their room, and were hoping for their death, and waiting for their posts of honour, and places of profit, or for their worldly estates; and out of the way of doing more mischief, and especially to good men; or they are "closed" or "shut up" {k}; that is, in the grave, where they lie imprisoned until the resurrection morn, and out of which prison none can release themselves; nor will they be released, until Christ, who has the keys of the grave, unlocks it, and sets the prisoners free; but then all this is no other than what befalls the rest of mankind; all die, and must die, and all are brought to the grave, and laid in that, and shut up in it, which is the house appointed for all living:

and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn; when they are fully ripe at harvest time; it being usual in some places, as I have somewhere read, when they gather their corn, only to cut off the ears of corn at the top, which is very easily and quickly done; and so this may denote the quiet and easy death of wicked men, and when they are come to a full age, and are like a shock of corn in its season, **Job 5:26**.

{i} wnnyaw "et non ipse", Montanus, Bolducius; "et non sunt", Schultens. {k} wupqy "claudentur", Pagninus, Montanus; "clauduntur", Piscator.

Job 24:25

Ver. 25. And if [it be] not [so] now,.... If this is not the case of men of such wicked lives as above described, do not prosper in the world, and increase in riches, and do not pass through the world with impunity, and die quietly, in the full possession of their honour and wealth:

who will make me a liar? where is the man? let him stand forth and appear, and disprove what has been said, and make out the doctrine delivered to be false doctrine, and a lie; for no lie is of the truth:

and make my speech nothing worth; vain, useless, and unprofitable; truth is valuable, like gold, silver and precious stones; but error is as wood, hay, and stubble, and nothing worth, yea, to be detested and rejected: or let him make what I have said to stand "for nothing" {l}; let him show, if he can, that it is impertinent, and not to the purpose, that it does not prove the point for which it is brought: thus Job was willing to have what he had said tried by every method that could be made use of, that it might appear whether what he had said was true or false, worthy to be regarded, or worthless; and he here bids defiance to his friends, or to any other, and triumphs over them, as having gained his point; and, as it appears by the sequel, he had, at least in a great measure, and however with respect to this matter, that good men are afflicted in this life, and wicked men prosper; of which there are many instances,

{l} lal "ad nihilum", Pagninus, Montanus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 25:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 25

This chapter contains Bildad's reply to Job, such an one as it is; in which, declining the controversy between them, he endeavours to dissuade him from attempting to lay his cause before God, and think to justify himself before him, from the consideration of the majesty of God, described by the dominion he is possessed of; the fear creatures stand in of him; the peace he makes in his high places; the number of his armies, and the vast extent of his light, Job 25:1; and from the impossibility of man's being justified with him, or clean before him, argued from thence, Job 25:4; and which is further illustrated by a comparison of the celestial bodies with men, and by an argument from the greater to the less, that if they lose their lustre and purity in his sight, much more man, a mean despicable worm, Job 25:5.

Ver. 1. Then answered Bildad the Shuhite,.... Not to what Job had just now delivered, in order to disprove that, that men, guilty of the grossest crimes, often go unpunished in this life, and prosper and succeed, and die in peace and quietness, as other men; either because he was convinced of the truth of what he had said, or else because he thought he was an obstinate man, and that it was best to let him alone, and say no more to him, since there was no likelihood of working any conviction on him; wherefore he only tries to possess his mind of the greatness and majesty of God, in order to deter him from applying to God in a judicial way, and expecting redress and relief from him;

and said; as follows.

Job 25:2

Ver. 2. Dominion and fear [are] with him,.... Not with man, as Sephorno interprets it, as that with him is power to rule over the imagination (the evil figment of his heart) to choose the good, and refuse the evil; and with him is fear of punishment, and also the fear of God to restrain him from evil; but with God, as may easily be perceived from the whole context, though his name is not expressed in this clause, and not till Job 25:4; this dominion he is possessed of is universal; his kingdom rules over all, over all the angels, good and bad; over all men, over all the nations of the world, and the great men in it, the kings and princes of it; and over all, of every age, sex, and condition; and it is absolute and uncontrollable; he governs according to his will, and is not to be controlled in his ways; nor is he accountable to any for what he does, and his kingdom is an everlasting one, and his dominion for ever and ever: and by the fear that is with him is not meant actively, with which he fears; for he is afraid of none, be they ever so great and mighty, Job 22:4; but passively, with which he is feared; for holy and reverend is his name, and so his nature, and all that belong to him; he is feared by the angels in heaven, who cover their faces before him, and cast their crowns at his feet; and by the saints on earth, in whose assemblies he is served with reverence and godly fear; and should be stood in awe of by all the inhabitants of the world, because of the glory of his nature, the greatness of his works, and the goodness of his providence:

he maketh peace in his high places; in the high places of his earth, and among the great men of it, creating and commanding peace, and causing war among them to cease, whenever it is his pleasure; and in the regions of the air, where, though there are often thunder and lightning, storms and tempests of wind, hail, and rain, yet, when he says, Peace, be still, all is serene and quiet; and in the orbs of the heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, which know their appointed times and seasons, and keep their place or course, and do their work and office in the most easy and cheerful manner; and among the angels in the highest heaven, which are properly his high places, who, though their numbers are so great, and they themselves thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, and have various offices and different work assigned them, readily do his will, and are in the utmost harmony and concord among themselves, show no reluctance to him, nor any discord to each other: now Bildad would have Job consider whether he could think himself so significant, that cognizance would be taken of him and his cause by so great, glorious, and majestic a thing; or that he would suffer his high places, where peace reigned, to be disturbed by his noise and brawl.

Job 25:3

Ver. 3. Is there any number of his armies?.... His armies in heaven, the heavenly host of angels, which are innumerable; there are more than twelve legions of them, thousand and ten thousand times ten thousand, employed in a military way, for the safety and preservation of the saints; see Ge 32:1; and the sun, moon, and stars, often called the host of heaven, the latter of which cannot be numbered, and which fought in their courses against Sisera, **Jud 5:20**; and his armies on earth, all the inhabitants of it; yea, every creature, even the smallest insect in it, which are without number: thus, frogs, lice, flies, and locusts, were the armies of God, with which he fought against Pharaoh and the Egyptians, see **Joe 2:11**;

and upon whom doth not his light arise? either natural light, that grand luminary the sun, which rises on all, the evil and the good, nor is anything hid from the light and heat of it; or moral light, the light of nature, with which everyone that comes into the world is enlightened by him; or the light of providential goodness, which is unto all, and over all his creatures; the whole earth is full of it, and all the inhabitants have a share in it; nor is anything hid from his all piercing, all penetrating, all seeing eye, who is light itself, and dwells in light inaccessible, and from which light nothing can be hid.

Job 25:4

Ver. 4. How then can man be justified with God?] Since he sees all his ways and works, his secret as well as open sins; either be more just than he, as Eliphaz expresses it, **Job 4:17**; which no man in his senses will say; or just as he is, and upon a level with him, or in comparison of him, or before him, and in his sight: and this is what Job himself denies, **Job 9:2**; for however righteous a man may be in his own sight, or in the sight of others, he cannot of himself be justified in the sight of God; nor can any be justified with him by his own righteousness, because the best righteousness of man is imperfect; and, if Bildad thought this was the sentiment of Job, he mistook him; for, what he meant by coming to the seat of God, and ordering his cause before him, Job 23:2; to which Bildad seems to refer, and being judged by him, when he doubted not but he should be acquitted, was no other than the justification of his cause, and not of his person before God; or that he should be cleared of the imputation of hypocrisy, and of being the sinner and wicked man, and guilty of very bad things, though secret and private, for which he was afflicted; for otherwise Job knew full well that he could not be justified with God by his own personal righteousness, for he knew himself to be a sinner, and owns it; nor did he think himself perfect, and his righteousness a complete one; and therefore he expected not to be justified by it; he knew his living Redeemer, and believed in him for righteousness, and expected the justification of his person, and his acceptance with God, only by him; and in this way there are many that are justified with God secretly, "in foro Dei", in the court of God, and in his sight, who always beholds his people as righteous in Christ, and openly, "in foro conscientiae", in the court of conscience, when they believe in him; and who will be publicly justified, and declared righteous, at the day of judgment:

or how can he be clean [that is] born of a woman? which suggests a doctrine that Job as firmly believed as Bildad did, that all men are unclean by natural generation, or as they are born into the world; their ancestors being such, the more immediate, and the more remote, which may be traced back to the first man and woman, Job 14:4; so that as no man is clean and pure as God is, or in comparison of him, or in his sight; they can neither be naturally clean, nor so of themselves, by any means or methods they can make use of; but then they may be, as many are, clean by the blood of Christ, and grace of God, through which his people are cleansed from all their sins, and all their iniquities, and are without spot before the throne and in the sight of God.

Job 25:5

Ver. 5. Behold, even to the moon,.... If all things that are glorious and illustrious in the lower world, and which are between that and the region of the moon, are beheld; or all from the seat of the Divine Majesty, down to that glorious luminary, are viewed, they lose all their lustre and brightness, when compared with the Divine Being;

and it, even that itself

shineth not; it is darkened, confounded, and ashamed; it hides its beautiful face, and draws in its borrowed and useful light, at the approach of him, who is light itself, and in whom is no darkness at all: or it tabernacles not {n}; has no tabernacle to abide in, as is said of the sun, Ps 19:4; or does not expand and spread its light, as a tent {o} or tabernacle is spread; it does not diffuse, but contracts it. No mention is made of the sun, not because that shines in its own light, which the moon does not; but perhaps because the controversy between Job and his friends was held in the night, when the moon and the stars were only seen, and therefore only mentioned; otherwise, what is here observed equally holds good of the sun as of the moon; see
Isa 24:23;

yea, the stars are not pure in his sight; as there are spots in the sun and in the moon, seen by the eye of man, aided and assisted, so such may be seen by God in the stars also, and in these, both in a natural and in a mystical sense; as by them may be meant the angels of heaven, even those are not pure in the sight of God, and in comparison of him, the most perfectly pure and holy Being; see **Job 4:18**.

{n} lyhay alw "et non ponet tabernaculum", Montanus, Bolducius; so Schmidt, Schultens. {o} "Non expandet lumen suum in modum tentorii", Complutenses apud Bolduc.

Job 25:6

Ver. 6. How much less man, [that is] a worm?.... Whose original is of the earth, dwells in it, and is supported by it, and creeps into it again; who is impure by nature and by practice, weak and impotent to do anything that is spiritually good, or to defend himself from his spiritual enemies; and is mean and despicable, as even the best of men are, in their own eyes, and in the eyes of the world: and, if the best of men are comparable to such creatures, and our Lord himself, in human nature, was content to be called a worm, and no man; what must the worst of men be, or man be in and of himself, without the grace of God and righteousness of Christ, by which he can be only clean and righteous? see Isa 41:14; and, if the celestial bodies above mentioned are eclipsed of all their brightness and glory, in the presence of God; what a contemptible figure must man make in the court of heaven, who, in comparison of them, is but a worm, and much more so, as appearing before God?

and the son of man, [which is] a worm; which is repeated with a little variation for the confirmation of it; or it may signify, that even the first man was no other than of the earth, earthy, and so are all his sons. The Targum is,

"how much more man, who in his life is a reptile, and the son of man, who in his death is a worm?"

to which may be added, that he is in his grave a companion for the worms; and indeed it appears by the observations made through microscopes, that man, in his first state of generation, is really a worm {p}; so that, as Pliny says {q}, one that is a judge of things may pity and be ashamed of the sorry original of the proudest of animals. By this short reply of Bildad, and which contains little more than what had been before said, it is plain that he was tired of the controversy, and glad to give out.

{p} Lewenhoeck apud Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 721. Vid. Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 912, 913. {q} Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 7.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 26:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 26

In this chapter Job, in a very sarcastic manner, rallies Bildad on the weakness and impertinence of his reply, and sets it in a very ridiculous light; showing it to be quite foolish and stupid, and not at all to the purpose, and besides was none of his own, but what he had borrowed from another, Job 26:1; and if it was of any avail in the controversy to speak of the greatness and majesty of God, of his perfections and attributes, of his ways and works, he could say greater and more glorious things of God than he had done, and as he does, Job 26:5; beginning at the lower parts of the creation, and gradually ascending to the superior and celestial ones; and concludes with observing, that, after all, it was but little that was known of God and his ways, by himself, by Bildad, or by any mortal creature,
Job 26:14.

Ver. 1. But Job answered,.... In a very sharp and biting manner; one would wonder that a man in such circumstances should have so much keenness of spirit, and deal in so much irony, and be master of so much satire, and be able to laugh at his antagonist in the manner he does:

and said; as follows.

Job 26:2

Ver. 2. How hast thou helped [him that is] without power?.... This verse and Job 26:3 either are to be understood of God, as many do, by reading the words, "who hast thou helped? God" {r}? a fine advocate for him thou art, representing him as if he was without power, and could not help himself, but stood in need of another; as if he had no arm, and could not save and protect himself, but needed one to rise and stand up in his behalf, when he is God omnipotent, and has an arm strong and mighty, and there is none like his; and as if he wanted wisdom, and one to counsel him, when he is the all wise God, and never consults with any of his creatures, or admits them to be of his council; and as if his "essence" {s}, or "what he is", as he is, had been very copiously and plentifully declared in a few words by him; in supposing which he must be guilty of the greatest arrogance, stupidity, and folly; and therefore he asks him, who it was he uttered such things unto? and by whose spirit he must be aided in so doing? see
Job 13:7; or else Job refers to the cause undertaken by Bildad; and which he, in a sarcastic way, represents as a very weak and feeble one, that had neither strength nor wisdom in it, and was as weakly and as foolishly supported, or rather was entirely neglected and deserted, Bildad having wholly declined the thing in controversy, and said not one word of it; therefore Job ironically asks him, "in what", or "wherein hast thou helped?" {t} what good hast thou done to this poor tottering cause of yours? or what light hast thou thrown upon it? and to what purpose is anything that has been said by thee? Some are of opinion that Job refers to Bildad's friends, whom he represents as weak and stupid, as men of no argument, and had no strength of reasoning, and were as poorly assisted and defended by Bildad: but, why not to Bildad himself? for the sense of the question, agreeably enough to the original text, may be put after this manner; a fine patron and defender of a cause thou art; thou canst help and save a dying cause without power, and with a strengthless arm, or without any force of argument, or strength of reasoning; thou canst give counsel without any wisdom, without any show or share of it, and in half a dozen lines set the thing in a true light, just as it is and should be; a wonderful man indeed thou art! though I choose to join with such interpreters, who understand the whole of Job himself, who was without might and power, a weak and feeble creature in booty and mind, being pressed and broken with the

weight of his affliction, but was poorly helped, succoured, strengthened, and comforted, with what Bildad had said: it is the duty of all good men, and it is what Job himself had done in former times, to strengthen weak hands and feeble knees, by sympathizing with persons under affliction, by bearing their burdens and infirmities, by speaking comfortably unto them, and telling them what comforts they themselves have received under afflictions, see **Job 4:3**; but miserable comforters of Job were Bildad and his friends:

[how] savest thou the arm [that hath] no strength? the sense is the same as before, that he had done nothing to relieve Job in his bodily or soul distresses, and save him out of them; nor had contributed in the least towards his support under them; and be it that he was as weak in his intellectuals as he and his friends thought him to be, and had undertaken a cause which he had not strength of argument to defend; yet, what had he done to convince him of his mistake, and save him from the error of his way?

{r} trze hm "cui auxiliatis es", Pagninus, Montanus; so Tigurine version. {s} hyvwt "essentiam", Montanus. {t} "Qua nam re adjuvisti?" Vatablus; "quid auxiliatus es?" Drusius.

Job 26:3

Ver. 3. How hast thou counselled [him that hath] no wisdom?.... A man deprived of wisdom has need of counsel, and it should be given him; and he does well both to ask and take it; and be it so, as if Job should say, that I am the foolish and unwise creature you take me to be, what counsel and advice have you given me? what a wise counsellor have you shown yourself to be? or rather, what a miserable part have you acted under this character?

and [how] hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is? the thing in controversy, set it forth in a clear light, and in a copious manner, when he had not said one word about it, namely, concerning the afflictions of the godly, and the prosperity of the wicked; thus jeering at him, and laughing at the short reply he had made, and which was nothing to the purpose.

Job 26:4

Ver. 4. To whom hast thou uttered words?.... That others know not; dost thou think thou art talking to an ignorant man? be it known to thee, that he knows as much, and can say as much of the Divine Being, of his glories, and of his wondrous ways and works, as thyself, or more: or dost thou consider the circumstances he is in thou art speaking to? one under great affliction and distress, to whom it must be unsuitable to talk of the greatness and majesty of God, of his power and strength, of his purity, holiness, and strict justice; it would have been more proper and pertinent to have discoursed concerning his loving kindness, grace, and mercy, his pity and compassion towards his afflicted people, his readiness to forgive their sins, and overlook their failings; and concerning the promised Redeemer, his righteousness and sacrifice, and of the many instances of divine goodness to the sons of men, and in such like circumstances, by raising them up again, and restoring them to their former happiness. Some things of this nature would have been more pertinent and suitable, and would have been doing both a wise and friendly part:

and whose spirit came from thee? Not the spirit of God; dost thou think thyself inspired by God? or that what thou hast said is by the inspiration of his Spirit? or that thou speakest like such who are moved by the Holy Ghost? nor indeed was it his own spirit, or the words and things uttered were not of himself, or flowed not from his own knowledge and understanding: of things, but what he had borrowed from Eliphaz; for he had delivered very little more than what Eliphaz had said, **Job 4:17**; or else the sense is, whose spirit has been restored, revived, refreshed, and comforted by what thou hast said? The word of God has such efficacy as to restore the soul, to revive it when drooping, and as it were swooning away and dying, see Ps 19:7; and the words of some good men are spirit and life, the savour of life unto life, and are as life from the dead, very refreshing and comforting; but no such effect followed on what Bildad had said. Mr. Broughton renders the words, "whose soul admired thee?" thou mayest admire thyself, and thy friends may admire thee, at least thou mayest think they do, having said in thine own opinion admirable things; but who else does? for my own part I do not; and, if saying great and glorious things of God are to any purpose in the controversy between us, I am capable of speaking greater and better things than what have been delivered; and, for instance, let the following be attended to.

Job 26:5

Ver. 5. Dead [things] are formed from under the waters,.... It is difficult to say what things are here meant; it may be understood of "lifeless" things, as Mr. Broughton renders it; things that never had any life, things inanimate, that never had at least an animal life, though they may have a vegetable one; and so may be interpreted of grains of corn, and which indeed die before they are quickened; to which both Christ and the apostle allude, Joh 12:24; and which, as they cannot grow without water, and their fructification and increase are owing to the earth being plentifully watered with rain, may be said to be formed under the waters; and of these Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom interpret the words; and the latter also makes mention of herbs, plants, and trees in the sea, particularly almug trees, as being probably intended; to which may be added, corals, and other sea plants, formed from under the waters; yea, some make mention of woods and forests there: but the last mentioned writer, seems inclined to think that metals and minerals may be intended; and it is well known that much of gold is taken out of rivers, as also pearls and precious stones; and that iron is taken out of the earth, and brass molten out of stone; and that the several metals and minerals are dug out of mountains and hills, from whence fountains and rivers flow; but as the word used has the signification of something gigantic, it has inclined others to think of sea monsters, as of the great whales which God made in the seas, and the leviathan he has made to play therein:

and or "with"

the inhabitants thereof; the innumerable company of fishes, both of the larger and lesser sort, which are all formed in and under the waters: but why may not giants themselves be designed, since the word is sometimes used of them, **De 2:11**; and so the Vulgate Latin and the Septuagint version here render the word, and may refer to the giants that were before the flood, and who were the causes of filling the world with rapine and violence, and so of bringing the flood of waters upon it; in which they perished "with the inhabitants thereof"; or their neighbours; of whom see **Ge 6:4**; and the spirits of these being in prison, in hell, as the Apostle Peter says, **1Pe 3:19**; which is commonly supposed to be under the earth, and so under the waters, in which they perished; they may be represented as in pain and torment, and groaning and trembling under the same, as the word here used is by some thought to signify, and is so rendered {t}; though as the word "Rephaim" is often used of dead men, Ps 88:10; it may be understood of them here, and have respect to the formation of them anew, or their resurrection from the dead, when the earth shall cast them forth; and especially of those whose graves are in the sea, and who have been buried in the waters of it, when that shall deliver up the dead that are therein, Re 20:13; which will be a wonderful instance of the mighty power of God. The Targumist seems to have a notion of this, or at least refers unto it, paraphrasing the words thus, "is it possible that the mighty men (or giants) should be created (that is, recreated or regenerated; that is, raised from the dead); seeing they are under the waters, and their armies?"

{t} wllwxy "gemunt", V. L. "cruciabuntur", Bolducius; "cruciantur, dolore contremiscunt", Michaelis; "intremiscunt", Schultens. Vid. Windet. de Vita Funct. Stat. p. 90.

Job 26:6

Ver. 6. Hell [is] naked before him,.... Which may be taken either for the place of the damned, as it sometimes is; and then the sense is, that though it is hidden from men, and they know not where it is, or who are in it, and what is done and suffered there; yet it is all known to God: he knows the place thereof, for it is made, ordained, and prepared by him; he knows who are there, even all the wicked dead, and all the nations that forget God, being cast there by him; he knows the torments they endure, for the smoke of them continually ascends before him; and he knows all their malice and envy, their enmity to him, and blasphemy of him; for thither are they gone down with their weapons of war, and have laid their swords under their heads, Eze 32:27; or for Hades, the invisible world of spirits, or state of the dead, as the Septuagint version renders the word; though that is unseen to men, it is naked and open to the eye of God; or for the grave, in which the bodies of men are laid; which is the frequent sense of the word used,
Ps 88:11; and though this is a land of darkness, and where the light is as darkness, yet God can look into it; and the dust of men therein is carefully observed and preserved by him, and will be raised again at the last day; who has the keys of death and hell, or the grave, and can open it at his pleasure, and cause it to give up the dead that are therein:

and destruction hath no covering; and may design the same as before, either hell, the place of the damned, where men are destroyed soul and body with an everlasting destruction; or the grave, which the Targum calls the house of destruction, as it sometimes is, the pit of destruction and corruption; because bodies cast into it corrupt and putrefy, and are destroyed in it; and there is nothing to cover either the one or the other from the all seeing eye of God; see Ps 139:7; as hell is supposed to be under the earth, and the grave is in it, Job is as yet on things below, and from hence rises to those above, in the following words.

Job 26:7

Ver. 7. He stretcheth out the north over the empty place,.... The northern hemisphere, which is the chief and best known, at least it was in the time of Job, when the southern hemisphere might not be known at all; though, if our version of **Job 9:9** is right, Job seems to have had knowledge of it. Scheuchzer {u} thinks the thick air farthest north is meant, which expands itself everywhere, and is of great use to the whole earth. But if the northern hemisphere is meant, as a learned man {w} expresses it, it

"was not only principal as to Job's respect, and the position of Arabia, but because this hemisphere is absolutely so indeed, it is principal to the whole; for as the heavens and the earth are divided by the middle line, the northern half hath a strange share of excellency; we have more earth, more men, more stars, more day (the same also Sephorno, a Jewish commentator on the place, observes); and, which is more than all this, the north pole is more magnetic than the south:"

though the whole celestial sphere may be intended, the principal being put for the whole; even that whole expansion, or firmament of heaven, which has its name from being stretched out like a curtain, or canopy, over the earth; which was done when the earth was "tohu", empty of inhabitants, both men and beasts, and was without form and void, and had no beauty in it, or anything growing on it; see **Ge 1:2**;

[and] hangeth the earth upon nothing; as a ball in the air {x}, poised with its own weight {y}, or kept in this form and manner by the centre of gravity, and so some Jewish writers {z} interpret "nothing" of the centre of the earth, and which is nothing but "ens rationis", a figment and imagination of the mind; or rather the earth is held together, and in the position it is, by its own magnetic virtue, it being a loadstone itself; and as the above learned writer observes,

"the globe consisteth by a magnetic dependency, from which the parts cannot possibly start aside; but which, howsoever thus strongly seated on its centre and poles, is yet said to hang upon nothing; because the Creator in the beginning thus placed it within the "tohu", as it now also hangeth in the air; which itself also is nothing as to any regard of base or sustentation."

In short, what the foundations are on which it is laid, or the pillars by which it is sustained, cannot be said, except the mighty power and providence of God.

The word used seems to come from a root, which in the Syriac and Chaldee languages signifies to "bind [and] restrain"; and may design the expanse or atmosphere, so called from its binding and compressing nature, le, "in" or "within" which the earth is hung; see Ps 32:9.

{u} Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 724. {w} Gregory's Notes and Observations, &c. c. 12. p. 55. {x} "Terra pilae similis nullo fulcimine nixa", Ovid. Fast. 6. {y} "Circumfuso pendebat in aere tellus, ponderibus librata suis----", Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 1. {z} Ben Gersom & Bar Tzemach in loc.

Job 26:8

Ver. 8. He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds,.... The clouds are of his making; when he utters his voice, or gives the word of command, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; and the vapours he exhales from the ends of the earth and forms them into clouds, and they are his chariots, in which he rides up and down in the heavens, and waters his gardens and plantations on earth; see Jer 10:13; which may be said to be thick in comparison of the air, in which they are; otherwise they are but thin, and the thinner they are, the greater wonder it is that the waters, and such a heavy body of them, should be bound up in them, as there often is; and which is bound up, held, and retained therein, as anything bound up in a sack or bag, or in a garment, or the skirt of a man's coat; see Pr 30:4; and what is still more marvellous:

and the cloud is not rent under them; under the waters, and through the weight of them; which, if it was, would fall in vast water spouts, and were such to fall upon the earth, as it may be supposed they did at the general deluge, they would destroy man and beast, and wash off and wash away the things of the earth: but God has so ordered it in his infinite wisdom, and by his almighty power, that clouds should not be thus rent, but fall in small drops and gentle showers, as if they passed through a sieve or colander, whereby the earth is refreshed, and made fruitful; see Job 36:26.

Job 26:9

Ver. 9. He holdeth back the face of his throne,.... His throne is the heaven of heavens; the face of it, or what is before it, is the starry and airy heavens; this face of his throne is sometimes held back, or covered with clouds, that so his throne is so far from being visible, that even the face of it, or the outside or external appearance of it, is not to be seen, as follows:

[and] spreadeth his cloud upon it; and both he and his throne are invisible; clouds and darkness are round about him, and his pavilion round about are dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies,
Ps 18:11; and even the light in which he dwells, and with which he clothes himself, is impervious to us, and is so dazzling, that itself covers and keeps back himself and throne from being seen by mortals. The Targum suggests, that what is here said to be done is done that the angels may not see it; but these always stand before the throne of God, and always behold the face of God himself.

Job 26:10

Ver. 10. He hath compassed the waters with bounds,.... Not the waters above the firmament, compassed by that, as if Job was contemplating on and discoursing about what is done in the heavens above; though the Targum seems to incline to this sense, paraphrasing the words,

"he hath decreed that the firmament should be placed upon the face of the waters unto the end of light, with darkness;"

but the waters of the sea, Job descending now to consider the waters of the great deep, and the wonderful restraint that is laid upon them; which is as astonishing as the binding up of the waters in the clouds without being rent by them; for this vast and unwieldy body of waters in the ocean Jehovah manages with as much ease as a mother or nurse does a newborn infant, makes the cloud its garment, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it, Job 38:8; he has as it were with a compass drawn a line upon the face of it; he has broke up for it its decreed place, and set bars, and doors, and bounds to its waves, that they, nay come no further than is his pleasure, as is observed in the same place; the bounds he hath compassed it with are the shores, rocks, and cliffs, so that the waters cannot return and cover earth, as they once did; yea, which is very surprising, he has placed the sand, as weak and fluid as it is, the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree; so that though its waves toss and roar, they cannot prevail, nor pass over it; which must be owing to the almighty power and sovereign will of God, who has given the sea a decree that its waters should not pass his commandment; and it must be ascribed to his promise and oath that the waters no more go over the earth to destroy it; see Ps 104:9 **Pr 8:27**; until the dark and night come to an end; that is, as long as there will be the vicissitudes of day and night, till time shall be no more, as long as the world stands; for the those shall constitute so long are the ordinances of God, which shall never depart, and the covenant he has made, which shall never become void; wherefore, as long as they remain, the sea and its waters will be bounded as not to overflow the earth, **Ge 8:22**; or "until the end of light with darkness" {a}; until both these have an end in the same form and manner they now have; otherwise, after the end of all things, there will be light in heaven, and darkness in hell. Aben Ezra interprets it thus,

"unto the place which is the end of light, for all that is above it is light, and below it the reverse;"

he seems to have respect to the place that divides the hemispheres, where when one is light the other is dark; and so others seem to understand it of such places or parts of the world as are half day and half night, and where one half of the year is light, and the other dark; but the first sense is best.

{a} Kvx Me rwa tylkt de "usque ad finem lucis cum tenebris", Cocceius, Michaelis; so Targum & Sept.

Job 26:11

Ver. 11. The pillars of heaven tremble,.... Which may be understood either of the air, the lower part of the heavens, which may be thought to be the foundation, prop, and support of them, and is sometimes called the firmament, and "the firmament of his power", Ps 150:1; and which seems to tremble when there are thunder and lightnings, and coruscations in it; or else the mountains, which, reaching up to the heavens, look as if they were the pillars and support of them; and are indeed said to be the foundations of heaven, which move and shake and tremble at the presence and power of God, and at any expressions of his wrath and anger, and particularly through earthquakes and storms, and tempests of thunder and lightning; see 2Sa 22:8, which are meant by what follows:

and are astonished at his reproof; his voice of thunder, which is sometimes awful and terrible, astonishing and surprising; and, to set forth the greatness of it, inanimate creatures are represented as trembling, and astonished at it; see Ps 104:7; some interpret this figuratively of angels, who they suppose are employed in the direction of the heavens, and the motion of the heavenly bodies; and who they think are the same which in the New Testament are called "the powers of heaven said to be shaken", Mt 24:29; and to be the seraphim that covered their faces upon a glorious display of the majesty of God, and when the posts of the door of the temple moved at the voice of him that cried, **Isa 6:1**; but if a figurative sense may be admitted of, the principal persons in the church, sometimes signified by heaven in Scripture, may be thought of; as ministers of the word, who are pillars in the house of God; yea, every true member of the church of God is made a pillar in it; and these tremble, and are astonished oftentimes when the Lord rebukes them by afflictions, though it is in love and kindness to them, **Pr 9:1**.

Job 26:12

Ver. 12. He divideth the sea with his power,.... As at the first creation, when the waters were caused to go off the face of the earth, and were separated from it; and the one was called earth, and the other seas, **Ge 1:9**; or it may respect the division of those waters into divers seas and channels in the several parts of the world, for the better accommodation of the inhabitants of it, in respect of trade and commerce, and the more convenient supply of them with the various produce of different countries, and the transmitting of it to them: some have thought this has respect to the division of the Red sea for the children of Israel to walk in as on dry land, when pursued by the Egyptians, supposed to be meant by "Rahab" in the next clause; rather it may design the parting of the waves of the sea by a stormy wind, raised by the power of God, which lifts up the waves on high, and divides them in the sea, and dashes them one against another; wrinkles and furrows them, as Jarchi interprets the words, which is such an instance of the power and majesty or God, that he is sometimes described by it, Isa 51:15; though the word used is sometimes taken in a quite different sense, for the stilling of the waves of the sea, and so it is by some rendered here, "he stilleth the sea by his power" {b}; the noise of its waves, and makes them quiet, and the sea a calm, which has been exceeding boisterous and tempestuous, and is taken notice of as an effect of his sovereign and uncontrollable power, Ps 65:7; and may be observed as a proof of our Lord's divinity, whom the winds and sea obeyed, to the astonishment of the mariners, who were convinced thereby that he must be some wonderful and extraordinary person, **Mt 8:26**;

and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud; the proud waves of the sea, and humbles them, and makes them still, as before; or the proud monstrous creatures in it, as whales and others, particularly the leviathan, the king over all the children of pride, Job 41:34; see

Ps 74:13. The word used is "Rahab", one of the names of Egypt, Ps 87:4; and so Jarchi interprets it of the Egyptians, who were smitten of God with various plagues, and particularly in their firstborn; and at last at the Red sea, where multitudes perished, and Pharaoh their proud king, with his army; who was an emblem of the devil, whose sin, the cause of his fall and ruin, was pride; and the picture of proud and haughty sinners, whose destruction sooner or later is from the Lord; and which is an instance of his wisdom and understanding, who humbles the proud, and exalts the lowly.

{b} Myh egr "pacavit mare", Bolducius; "quiescit mare ipsum", Vatablus; so Sept. and Ben Gersom.

Job 26:13

Ver. 13. By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens,.... The visible heavens, with the sun, moon, and stars, with which they are studded and bespangled, and look exceeding beautiful; and the invisible heavens, with angels, the morning stars, and glorified saints, who especially in the resurrection morn will shine not only like stars, but as the sun in the firmament of heaven; and the church, which is the heaven below, is garnished with Gospel ministers, adorned with the gifts and graces of the spirit of God:

his hand hath formed the crooked serpent; because Job in the preceding clause has respect to the heavens and the ornament of them, this has led many to think that some constellation in the heavens is meant by the crooked serpent, either the galaxy, or milky way, as Ben Gersom and others; or the dragon star, as some in Aben Ezra {c}: but rather Job descends again to the sea, and concludes with taking notice of the wonderful work of God, the leviathan, with which God himself concludes his discourse with him in the close of this book, which is called as here the crooked or "bar serpent", Isa 27:1; and so the Targum understands it,

"his hand hath created leviathan, which is like unto a biting serpent."

Some understand it of the crocodile, and the epithet agrees with it, whether it be rendered a "bar serpent", as some {d}; that is, straight, stretched out, long, as a bar, the reverse of our version; or "fleeing" {e}, as others; the crocodile being, as Pliny {f} says, terrible to those that flee from it, but flees from those that pursue it. Jarchi interprets it of Pharaoh, or leviathan, both an emblem of Satan, the old serpent, the devil, who is God's creature, made by him as a creature, though not made a serpent, or a devil, by him, which was of himself. Some have observed the trinity of persons in these words, and who doubtless were concerned in the creation of all things; here is "Jehovah", of whom the whole context is; and "his Spirit", who, as he moved upon the face of the waters at the first creation, is here said to beautify and adorn the heavens; "and his hand"; his Son, the power and wisdom of God, by whom he made all things.

{c} So Dickinson. Physic. Vet. & Vera, c. 9. sect. 23. p. 137. {d} xyrb vxn "serpentem vectem", Pagninus, Cocceius; "oblongum instar vectis", Schmidt; "oblongum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "longa trabe rectior". Vide Metamorph. l. 3. Fab. 1. ver. 78. {e} "Fugacem", Montanus, Vatablus; "fugiens", Codurcus. {f} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 25.

Job 26:14

Ver. 14. Lo, these [are] parts of his ways,.... This is the conclusion of the discourse concerning the wonderful works of God; and Job was so far from thinking that he had taken notice of all, or even of the chief and principal, that what he observed were only the extremities, the edges, the borders, and outlines of the ways and works of God in creation and providence; wherefore, if these were so great and marvellous, what must the rest be which were out of the reach of men to point out and describe?

but how little a portion is heard of him? from the creatures, from the works of creation, whether in heaven, earth, or sea; for though they do declare in some measure his glory, and though their voice is heard everywhere, and shows forth the knowledge of him; even exhibits to view his invisible things, his eternal power and Godhead; yet it is comparatively so faint a light, that men grope as it were in the dark, if haply they might find him, having nothing but the light of nature to guide them. We hear the most of him in his word, and by his Son Jesus Christ, in whose face the knowledge of him, and his glorious perfections, is given; and yet we know but in part, and prophesy in part; it is but little in comparison of what is in him, and indeed of what will be heard and known of him hereafter in eternity:

but the thunder of his power who can understand? meaning not literally thunder, which though it is a voice peculiar to God, and is very strong and powerful, as appears by the effects of it; see Job 40:9; yet is not so very unintelligible as to be taken notice of so peculiarly, and to be instanced in as above all things out, of the reach of the understanding of men; but rather the attribute of his power, of which Job had been discoursing, and giving so many instances of; and yet there is such an exceeding greatness in it, as not to be comprehended and thoroughly understood by all that appear to our view; for his mighty power is such as is able to subdue all things to himself, and reaches to things we cannot conceive of. Ben Gersom, not amiss, applies this to the greatness and multitude of the decrees of God; and indeed if those works of his which are in sight cannot be fully understood by us, how should we be able to understand things that are secret and hidden in his own breast, until by his mighty power they are carried into execution? see **1Co 2:9**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 27:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 27

Though Job's friends were become silent, and dropped the controversy with him, he still continued his discourse in this and the four following chapters; in which he asserts his integrity; illustrates and confirms his former sentiments; gives further proof of his knowledge of things, natural and divine; takes notice of his former state of prosperity, and of his present distresses and afflictions, which came upon him, notwithstanding his piety, humanity, and beneficence, and his freedom from the grosser acts of sin, both with respect to God and men, all which he enlarges upon. In this chapter he gives his word and oath for it, that he would never belie himself, and own that he was an hypocrite, when he was not, but would continue to assert his integrity, and the righteousness of his cause, as long as he lived, Job 27:1; for to be an hypocrite, and to attempt to conceal his hypocrisy, would be of no advantage to him, either in life, or in death, Job 27:7; and was this his character and case, upon their principles, he could expect no other than to be a miserable man, as wicked men are, who have their blessings turned into curses, or taken away from them, and they removed out of the world in the most awful and terrible manner, and under manifest tokens of the wrath and displeasure of God,
Job 27:11.

Ver. 1. Moreover Job continued his parable,.... Having finished his discourse concerning the worlds and ways of God, and the display of his majesty, power, and glory, in them, he pauses awhile, waiting for Zophar, whose turn was next to rise up, and make a reply to him; but neither he, nor any of his friends, reassumed the debate, but kept a profound silence, and chose not to carry on the dispute any further with him; either concluding him to be an obstinate man, not open to conviction, and on whom no impressions could be made, and that it was all lost time and labour to use any argument with him; or else being convicted in their minds that he was in the right, and they in the wrong, though they did not choose to own it; and especially being surprised with what he had last said concerning God and his works, whereby they perceived he had great knowledge of divine things, and could not be the man they had suspected him to be from his afflictions: however, though they are silent, Job was not, "he added to take or lift up his parable" {a}, as the words may be rendered; or his oration, as Mr. Broughton, his discourse; which, because it consisted of choice and principal things, which command regard and attention, of wise, grave, serious, and sententious sayings, and some of them such as not easy to be understood, being delivered in similes and figurative expressions, as particularly in the following chapter, it is called his parable; what are called parables being proverbial phrases, dark sayings, allegorical or metaphorical expressions, and the like; and which way of speaking Job is here said to take, "and lift up", which is an eastern phraseology, as appears from Balaam's use of it, Nu 23:7; and may signify, that he delivered the following oration with great freedom, boldness, and confidence, and with a high tone and loud voice; to all which he might be induced by observing, through the silence of his friends, that he had got the advantage of them, and had carried his point, and had brought them to conviction or confusion, or however to silence, which gave him heart and spirit to proceed on with his oration, which he added to his former discourse:

and said; as follows.

{a} wlvm tav Powyw "et addidit assumere suam parabolam", Pagninus, Montanus.

Job 27:2

Ver. 2. [As] God liveth,.... Which is an oath, as Jarchi observes, and is a form of one frequently used, see **2Sa 2:27**; and is used by God himself, who, because he can swear by no greater, swears by himself, and by his life, which ever continues, as in Eze 18:3; and many other places; and so the Angel of the Lord, even the uncreated Angel,
Da 12:7; and so should men, when they swear at all, it should be in this manner, see **Jer 4:2**; though this ought not to be but in cases of moment and importance, for the confirmation of the truth, and to put an end to strife, when

it cannot be done any other way than by an appeal to God; as was the present case with Job, it being about hypocrisy, and want of integrity his friends charged him with; and such a case can only be determined truly and fully by God, who is here described as the living God, by whom men swear, in opposition to the idols of the Gentiles, which are of gold, silver, wood, and stone, and without life and breath, or to their deified heroes, who were dead men; but the true God is the living God, has life in and of himself, and is the fountain of life to others, the author and giver of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal, and who himself lives for ever and ever; and as such is the object of faith and confidence, of fear and reverence, of love and affection; all which swearing by him supposes and implies; it is a saying of R. Joshuah, as Jarchi on the place relates it,

"that Job from love served God, for no man swears by the life of a king but who loves the king;"

the object swore by is further described,

[who] hath taken away my judgment; not the judgment of his mind, or his sense of judging things, which remained with him quick and strong, notwithstanding his afflictions; nor correction with judgment, which continued with him; but, as the Targum paraphrases it,

"he hath taken away the rule of my judgment;"

that is, among men, his substance, wealth, and riches, his former affluence and prosperity, which while he enjoyed, he was reckoned a good man; but now all this being taken away by the hand of God as it was, he was censured as a wicked man, and even by his friends; or rather it is a complaint, that God had neglected the judgment of him, like that of the church in Isa 40:27; that he did not stir up himself to his judgment, even to his cause; did not vindicate him, though he appealed to him; did not admit him to his judgment seat, nor give his cause a hearing, and decide it, though he had most earnestly desired it; nor did he let him know the reason of his thus dealing and contending with him; yea, he afflicted him severely, though righteous and innocent, in which Job obliquely reflects upon the dealings of God with him; though he does not charge him with injustice, or break out into blasphemy of him; yet this seems to be one of those speeches which God disapproved of, and is taken notice of by Elihu with a censure,
Job 34:5;

and the Almighty, [who] hath vexed my soul; with whom nothing is impossible, and who could easily have relieved him from his distresses; and who was "Shaddai", the all-sufficient Being, who could have supplied him with all things temporal and spiritual he wanted; yet instead of this "vexed [his] soul" with adversity, with afflictions very grievous to him, his hand touching and pressing him sore: or, "hath made my soul bitter" {b}; dealt bitterly with him, as the Almighty did with Naomi, **Ru 1:20**. Afflictions are bitter things, they are like the waters of Marah, they are wormwood and gall, they cause bitter distress and sorrow, and make a man go and speak in the bitterness of his soul; and these are of God, to whom job ascribes his, and not to chance and fortune; they were bitter things God appointed for him and wrote against him.

{b} yvpn rmh "affecit amaritudine animam meam", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Michaelis; so Sept.

Job 27:3

Ver. 3. All the while my breath [is] in me,.... So long the oath of God would be upon him, or he bound himself under it:

and the spirit of God [is] in my nostrils; which signifies the same thing. The breath of a man is his spirit, and this is of God, the Father of spirits; he first breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul or spirit, **Ge 2:7**; it is he that gives life and breath to every man, Ac 17:25, and continues it as long as he pleases, which is a very precarious thing; for it is in his nostrils, where it is drawn to and fro and soon and easily stopped; nor will it always continue, it will some time not be, it will go forth, and then man dies, and returns to the earth, Ec 12:7; but as long as there is breath there is life; so that to say this is the same as to say, as long as I live, or have a being, Ps 104:33; and while that continued, Job looked upon himself under the oath he had taken by the living God.

Job 27:4

Ver. 4. My lips shall not speak wickedness,.... This is the thing he swears to, this the matter of his oath, not only that he would not speak a wicked word not anything corrupt, unsavoury, unchaste, profane, and idle nor speak evil of his neighbours and friends or of any man; but that he would not speak wickedly of himself, as he must do, if he owned himself to be a wicked man and an hypocrite as his friends charged him, and they would have had him confessed; but he swears he would not utter such wickedness as long as he had any breath in him:

nor my tongue utter deceit; which respects the same thing; not merely any fallacy or lie, or what might impose upon and deceive another, which yet he was careful of; but such deceit and falsehood as would be a belying himself, which would be the case should he say that he was devoid of integrity and sincerity.

Job 27:5

Ver. 5. God forbid that I should justify you,.... Not but that he counted them righteous and good men God-ward; he did not take upon him to judge their state, and to justify or condemn them with respect to their everlasting condition; but he could not justify them in their censures of him, and say they did a right thing in charging him with wickedness and hypocrisy; nor could he justify them in all their sentiments and doctrines which they had delivered concerning the punishment of the wicked in this life, and the happiness that attends all good men; and that a man by his outward circumstances may be known to be either a good man or a bad man; such things as these he could not say were right; for so to do would be to call evil good, and good evil; and therefore he expresses his utmost abhorrence and detestation of showing his approbation of such conduct as theirs towards him, and of such unbecoming sentiments of God, and of his dealings, they had entertained; and to join in with which would be a profanation and a pollution, as the word used by him signifies; he could not do it without defiling his conscience, and profaning truth:

until I die one will not remove my integrity from me; Job was an upright man both in heart and life, through the grace of God bestowed on him; and he continued in his integrity, notwithstanding the temptations of Satan, and his attacks upon him, and the solicitations of his wife; and he determined through the grace of God to persist therein to the end of his life; though what he chiefly means here is, that he would not part with his character as an upright man, which he had always had, and God himself had bore testimony to; he would never give up this till he gave up the ghost; he would never suffer his integrity to be removed from him, nor remove it from himself by denying that it belonged to him, which his friends bore hard upon him to do. So Jarchi paraphrases it,

"I will not confess (or agree) to your saying, that I am not upright;"

the phrase, "till I die", seems rather to belong to the first clause, though it is true of both, and may be repeated in this.

Job 27:6

Ver. 6. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go,.... Meaning not his personal righteousness, or the righteousness of his works, as his justifying righteousness before God, and for acceptance with him; which no man that is convinced of the insufficiency of, as Job was, will hold fast, but renounce, and desire, with the Apostle Paul, not to be found in it, **Php 3:9**. Indeed the righteousness of his living Redeemer, which was his, and he might call so, this he knew, and knew he should be justified by it, and which he laid hold upon by faith in the strong exercise of it, and would not drop it, or become remiss in it, but retain it, and constantly make mention of it, and plead it as his justifying righteousness with God; but here he intends the righteousness of his cause, which he always maintained strongly, and was determined he ever would, and never give way, or let it drop, but continue to affirm, that he was a righteous man, and that it was not for any unrighteousness he had done to any man that God dealt thus with him; he had wronged no man, he had done justice to all men, as well as he was not devoid of the fear of God, and piety towards him; and this character of himself he would never give up, but defend to the uttermost:

my heart shall not reproach [me] so long as I live; not that he imagined he should or could live without sin, so that his conscience could never charge, accuse, or upbraid him with it; for there is no man, let him live a life ever so harmless and inoffensive to God and man, but his heart will smite him, and condemn him for his sins committed in thought, word, and deed: but Job's sense is, that he would never deny his integrity, or renounce the righteousness of his cause, and own himself to be an insincere and unrighteous man; should he do this, he should speak contrary to his own conscience, which would accuse and reproach him for so saying, and therefore he was determined it never should; for, as long as he lived, he neither could nor would say any such thing. Some render the last phrase, "for my days" {c}, or "concerning" them; for my course of life, all my days, so Jarchi; for that my heart shall not reproach me, as being conscious to himself he had lived in all good conscience to that day, and trusted he ever should; but the sense before given is best.

{c} ymym "propter dies meos", Munster; "[vel] propter dies vitae meae", Michaelis; "de diebus meis", Schultens.

Job 27:7

Ver. 7. Let mine enemy be as the wicked,.... Job in this, and some following verses, shows, that he was not, and could not, and would not be a wicked man and an hypocrite, or however had no opinion and liking of such persons; for whatever his friends might think of him, because he had said so much of their outward prosperity in this world; yet he was far from approving of or conniving at their wickedness and hypocrisy, or choosing them for his companions, and joining with them in their actions, or imagining they were really happy persons; so far from it, that he would not be in their condition and circumstances for all the world: for if he was to wish a bad thing to the greatest enemy he had, he could not wish him any worse than to be as a wicked and unrighteous man; that is, to be a wicked and unrighteous man; which it is impossible for a good man to wish, and indeed would be a needless wish, since all that are enemies to good men, as such, must be wicked; and such were Job's enemies, as the Chaldeans and Sabeans; but that they might be as such, in their state and circumstances, or rather as they will be in the consequence of things, most wretched and miserable; for they are always under the displeasure of God, and hated by him; and whatever fulness they may have of the things of this world, they have them with a curse, and they are curses to them, and their end will be everlasting ruin and destruction; wherefore the Septuagint version is,

"as the overthrow of the ungodly, and as the perdition of transgressors;"

though some take this to be a kind of an ironic imprecation, and that by the wicked man here, and unrighteous in the next clause, he means himself, whom his friends reckoned a wicked and unrighteous man; and then the sense is, I wish you all, my friends, and even the worst enemies I have, were but as wicked Job is, as you call him; not that he wished they might be afflicted in body, family, and estate, as he was, but that they were as good men as he was, and partook of as much of the grace of God as he did, and had the same integrity and righteousness as he had, see Ac 26:29; and such a wish as this, as it serves to illustrate his own character, so it breathes charity and good will to others; and indeed it cannot be thought the words are to be taken in such a

sense as that he wished the same evils might be retorted upon his enemies, whether open or secret, which they were the means of bringing upon him, which was contrary to the spirit of Job,
Job 31:29. Some consider them not as an imprecation, but as a prediction, "mine enemy shall be as the wicked" {e}; and may have respect to his friends, who were so ready to charge him with wickedness, and suggests that in the issue of thin; they would be found, and not he, guilty of sin folly, and to have said the things that were not right, neither of God, nor of him, which had its accomplishment, Job 42:7;

and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous; which is but another way of expressing the same thing; for an enemy, and one that rises up against a man, is the same person; only this the better explains what enemy is intended, even an open one, that rises up in an hostile manner, full of rage and fury; and so a wicked and an unrighteous man are the same, and are frequently put together as describing the same sort of persons, see Isa 55:7.

{e} ybya evrk yhy "erit ut impius inimieus meus", Pagninus, Montanus, Boldacius; so Junius & Tremellius, Broughton, & Ramban.

Job 27:8

Ver. 8. For what [is] the hope of the hypocrite,.... In religion, who seems to be what he is not, a holy and righteous man; professes to have what he has not, the grace of God; pretends to do what he does not, worship God sincerely and fervently, and does all he does to be seen of men; though such a man may have an hope, as he has, of an interest in the divine layout, and of eternal glory and happiness, what will it signify? what avail will it be unto him? what will it issue in? Job was of the same mind in this with Bildad and Zophar, that such a man's hope is as the spider's web, and as the giving up of the ghost, **Job 8:14**; however he may please himself with it in this life, it will be of no service to him at death; for it is not like that of the true believer's, that is sure and steadfast, and founded upon the perfect righteousness and sacrifice of Christ; but upon his outward substance, fancying, that because God prospers him in this world, he is highly in his favour, and shall enjoy the happiness of the world to come; and upon his external profession of religion, and found of duties performed by him, but he will find himself mistaken: though he hath gained; great wealth and riches under a guise of religion, and by that means making gain of godliness, and taking the one for the other; so the Targum, "because he hath gathered the mammon of falsehood;"

and also has great gifts, and a great deal of head knowledge, being able to talk of and dispute about most points of religion, and so has gained a great name among men both for knowledge and holiness, and yet all will not stand him in any stead, or be of any advantage to him:

when God taketh away his soul? out of his body by death, as a sword is drawn out of its scabbard, and which is as easily done by him; or as a shoe is plucked off from the foot, as Aben Ezra, and what he has a right to do, and will do it: and this taking it away seems to be in a violent manner, though not by what is called a violent death, yet against the will of the person; a good man is willing to die, is desirous of it, and gives up the ghost cheerfully; but an hypocrite is not willing to die, being afraid of death, and therefore his life or soul is taken from him without his consent and will, and not in love but in wrath, as the latter part of this chapter shows. Now Job had an hope which bore him up under all his troubles, and which he retained in the most killing and distressed circumstances, and which continued with him, and supported him in the views of death and eternity, so that he could look upon death, and into another world, with pleasure, and therefore could be no hypocrite, see Job 13:15.

Job 27:9

Ver. 9. Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh, upon him?] No, he will not, he heareth not sinners, and such as regard iniquity in their hearts, Ps 66:18; every man has trouble more or less in this life, even the best of men; and generally speaking they have the most, and wicked men the least; but when death comes, he is a king of terrors to them, and they find sorrow and trouble; and especially at the day of judgment, when they will cry for mercy; and hypocrites, as the foolish virgins, will cry, "Lord, Lord, open unto us", Mt 25:11; but when they call for mercy, the Lord will not answer, but laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh, **Pr 1:26**; but God hears the cries of his people when in, trouble, whether in, life, or, in death, and is a present help unto them; and when, strength and heart fail, he is their portion, and will be so for evermore; and though sometimes they think he does not hear them, as Job sometimes complains, yet he makes it appear that he does sooner or later, and so Job describes himself as one that "calleth upon God, and he answereth him", Job 12:4; and therefore might conclude he was no hypocrite.

Job 27:10

Ver. 10. Will he delight himself in the Almighty?.... That is, the hypocrite; no, he will not; he may seem to delight in, him, but he does not truly and sincerely; not in him as the Almighty, or in his omnipotence, into whose hands it is a fearful thing to fall, and who is able to destroy soul and body in hell; nor his omniscience, who, searches and knows the hearts of all men, and the insincerity of the hypocrite, covert to men soever he is; nor in his holiness, which at heart he loves not; nor in his ways and worship, word, ordinances, and people, though he makes a show of it, Isa 58:2;

will he always call upon God? God only is to be called upon, and it becomes all men to call upon him for all blessings, temporal and spiritual; and this should be done in faith, with fervency, in sincerity and uprightness of soul, and with constancy, always, at all times both of prosperity and adversity; but an hypocrite does not, and cannot call upon God in a sincere and spiritual manner; nor is he constant in this work, only by fits and starts, when it is for his worldly interest and external honour so to do. Now Job was one that delighted in God, was uneasy at his absence, longed for communion with him, sought earnestly after him, frequently and constantly called upon him, though he was wrongly charged with casting off the fear of God, and restraining prayer before him, and therefore no hypocrite. Some understand {f} all this as affirmed of the hypocrite, setting forth his present seeming state of happiness; as that he has a hope of divine favour, and of eternal felicity; has much peace and tranquillity of mind in life, and at death; is heard of God when trouble comes, and so gets out of it, and enjoys great prosperity; professes much delight and pleasure in God, and his ways, and is a constant caller upon him, and keeps close to the external duties of religion; and yet, notwithstanding all this, is in the issue, when death comes, exceeding miserable, as the following part of the chapter shows.

{f} Schultens.

Job 27:11

Ver. 11. I will teach you by the hand of God,.... To serve God, and speak truth, says one of the Jewish commentators {g}; rather the works of God, and methods of his providence, with wicked men and hypocrites; the wisdom of God in his dispensations towards them; the reasons why he suffers them to live in outward prosperity and happiness, and what in the issue will be their case and circumstances; wherefore some render the words, "I will [teach you the] hand of God", or "of", or "concerning the hand of God" {h}; and so Mr. Broughton, of God, his hand; not his works of nature which his hand had wrought, of which he had discoursed in the preceding chapter; but his works of providence, and those more mysterious ones relating to the afflictions of the godly, and the prosperity of the wicked. Job had been a teacher and instructor of others in the times of his prosperity, and his words had upheld, strengthened, and comforted many, **Job 4:3**; and he was not the less qualified for, nor the less capable of such an office now in his adversity, which had been a school to him, in which he had learned many useful lessons himself, and so was in a better capacity of teaching others. Thus some render the words, "I will teach you", being in or "under the hand of God" {i}; under his mighty hand, his afflicting, chastising hand, which had touched him, and pressed him sore, and yet had guided and instructed him in many things, and particularly relating to the subject he proposed to instruct his friends in; who, though they were men of knowledge, and in years, yet he apprehended needed instruction; and he undertook to give them some by the good hand of God upon him, through his help and assistance, and under the influences and teachings of his spirit. The Targum is,

"I will teach you by the prophecy of God;"

see **Eze 1:3**;

[that] which [is] with the Almighty will I not conceal; meaning not the secret purposes and decrees of God within himself, which cannot be known, unless he reveals them; rather secret truths, which are not obvious to everyone, the mysteries of the kingdom, the wisdom of God in a mystery, the knowledge of which the Lord vouchsafes to some of his people in a very peculiar manner; though the mysteries of Providence seem chiefly intended, which those that carefully observe attain to an understanding of, so as to be capable of instructing others; and indeed what is in reserve with God for men among his treasures, whether of grace or glory for his own peculiar people, or especially of wrath and vengeance for wicked men and hypocrites, may be here designed; and whatever knowledge men have of the mysteries of nature, providence, and grace, which may be profitable unto others, and make for the glory of God, should not be concealed from men, see **Job 6:10**.

{g} Simeon Bar Tzemach. {h} la dyb "manum Dei", Beza, Cocceius; "de manu Dei", Mercerus, Piscator, Drusius, Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens. {i} "In plaga Dei fortis versans", Junius & Tremellius.

Job 27:12

Ver. 12. Behold, all ye yourselves have seen [it],.... As they were men of observation, at least made great pretensions to it, as well as of age and experience, they must have seen and observed somewhat at least of the above things; they must have seen the wicked, as David afterwards did, spreading himself like a green bay tree, and the hypocrites in easy and flourishing circumstances, and good men labouring under great afflictions and pressures, and Job himself was now an instance of that before their eyes:

why then are ye thus altogether vain? or "become vain in vanity" {k}; so exceeding vain, so excessively trifling, as to speak and act against the dictates of their own conscience, against their own sense, and what they saw with their own eyes, and advance notions so contrary thereunto; as to affirm that evil men are always punished of God in this life, and good men are succeeded and prospered by him; and so from Job's afflictions drew so vain and empty a conclusion, that he must be a wicked man and an hypocrite.

{k} wlbht lbh "vanitate vanescitis", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis, Schultens; "[vel] evanescitis", Montanus, Bolducius, Beza, Mercerus, Drusius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Job 27:13

Ver. 13. This [is] the portion of a wicked man with God,.... Not to be punished in this life, but after death. This is what Job undertook to teach his friends, and is the purport of what follows in this chapter. A wicked man is not only one that has been so from the womb, and is openly and notoriously a wicked man, but one also that is so secretly, under a mask of sobriety, religion, and godliness, and is an hypocrite, for of such Job speaks in the context; and the portion of such a man is not what he has in this life, which is oftentimes a very affluent one as to the things of this world, but what he has after death, which is banishment from the presence of God, the everlasting portion of his people, a part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, the wrath of God to the uttermost, the second death, and a dwelling with devils and wicked men, such as himself, even a portion with hypocrites, which of all is the most dreadful and miserable, Mt 24:51; and this is "with God", is appointed by him; for God has appointed the wicked, the vessels of wrath, fitted by their sins for destruction to the day of evil, to everlasting ruin and destruction; and it is prepared by him for them, as for the devil and his angels, and for them it is reserved among his treasures, even blackness of darkness, damnation, wrath, and vengeance:

and the heritage of oppressors, [which] they shall receive of the Almighty; these are such who are either oppressors of the poor in their natural and civil rights, taking from or denying to them what of right is their due; or oppressors of the saints in their religious rights and privileges, furious persecutors of them; and who, being powerful, are terrible, as the word signifies: there is an "heritage", or an inheritance for those, which is entailed upon them, and will descend unto them, as the firstborn of their father the devil, as children of disobedience, and so of wrath, and like an inheritance will endure: and this they "shall receive"; it is future, it is wrath to come, and it is certain there is no escaping it; it is their due desert, and they shall receive it; it is in the hands of the almighty God, and he will render it to them, and they shall most assuredly inherit it.

Job 27:14

Ver. 14. If his children be multiplied,.... As it is possible they may; this is one external blessing common to good men and bad men. Haman, that proud oppressor, left ten sons behind him, and wicked Ahab had seventy, **Es 9:12**:

[it is] for the sword; for them that kill with the sword, as the Targum; to be killed with it, as in the two instances above; Haman's ten sons were slain by the sword of the Jews, **Es 9:13**, and Ahab's seventy sons by the sword of Jehu, or those he ordered to slay them,
2Ki 10:7. The children of such wicked persons are oftentimes put to death, either by the sword of the enemy, fall in battle in an hostile way, which is one of God's four sore judgments, Eze 14:21; or, leading a most wicked life, commit such capital crimes as bring them into the hand of the civil magistrate, who bears not the sword in vain, but is the minister of God, a revengeful executioner of wrath on wicked men; or else they die by the sword of the murderer, being brought into the world for such, and through their riches become their prey, **Ho 9:13**; or if neither of these is the case, yet they at last, let them prosper as they will, fall a sacrifice to the glittering sword of divine justice, whetted and drawn in wrath against them; the sword of the enemy seems chiefly intended:

and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread; such of them as die not by the sword shall perish by famine, which is another of God's sore judgments; though this may respect the grandchildren of wicked men, whom God visits to the third and fourth generation; the Targum paraphrases it, his children's children, and so Sephorno; to which agrees the Vulgate Latin version: the sense is, that the posterity of such wicked men, when they are dead and gone, shall be so reduced as to beg their bread, and shall not have a sufficiency of that for the support of nature, but shall die for want of food.

Job 27:15

Ver. 15. Those that remain of him,.... Of the wicked man after his death; or such that remain, and have escaped the sword and famine:

shall be buried in death: the pestilence, emphatically called death by the Hebrews, as by us the mortality, see **Re 6:8**. This is another of God's sore public judgments wicked men, and is such a kind of death, by reason of the contagion of it, that a person is buried as soon as dead almost, being infectious to keep him; and so Mr. Broughton translates the words,

"his remnant shall be buried as soon as they are dead;"

or the disease of which such die being so very infectious sometimes, no one dares to bury them for fear of catching it, and so they lie unburied; which some take to be the sense of the phrase, either that they shall be hurried away to the grave, and so not be embalmed and lie in state, and have an honourable and pompous funeral, or that they shall have none at all, their death will be all the burial they shall have: or else the sense is, they shall die such a death as that death shall be their grave; and they shall have no other, as the men of the old world that were drowned in the flood, **Ge 7:23**; and Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, Ex 15:4; and Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who were swallowed up in the earth, Nu 16:27; and such as are devoured by wild beasts; and if this last could be thought to be meant, we have all the four sore judgments of God in this verse and Job 27:14, sword, famine, pestilence, and evil beasts, see Eze 14:21:

and his widows shall not weep; leaving more than one behind him, polygamy being frequent in those times; or else these are his sons' wives, left widows by them, as Bar Tzemach thinks, they being the persons immediately spoken of, dying by various deaths before mentioned; but whether they be his widows, or theirs, they shall weep for neither of them; either because they themselves will be cut off with them; or their husbands dying shameful deaths, lamentation would be forbidden; or they would not be able to weep through the astonishment and stupor they should be seized with at their death; or having lived such miserable and uncomfortable lives with them, they should be so far from lamenting their death, that they should, as Jarchi interprets it, rejoice at it; the Septuagint version is,

"no one shall have mercy on their widows."

Job 27:16

Ver. 16. Though he heap up silver as the dust,.... Which, as it denotes the great abundance of it collected together, so it expresses the bias and disposition of such a man's mind, that he cannot be content without amassing great quantities of it, and also his diligence and success therein, see 1Ki 10:27;

and prepare raiment as the clay; not merely, for use, but pomp and show, to fill his wardrobes with; and formerly, raiment was part of the treasure of great men: the phrase signifies that he might have such a variety of raiment, and such large quantities of it, that he would value it no more than so much clay; or else that his riches, consist of what it would, would be both polluting and troublesome to him; the Septuagint version reads "gold" instead of "raiment", as in **Zec 9:3**, where like expressions are used of Tyre.

Job 27:17

Ver. 17. He may prepare [it],.... Raiment; beginning with that first which was mentioned last, which is frequent in the Hebrew and eastern languages; such things may be done, and often are, by wicked men:

but the just shall put [it] on; the wicked man will either have no heart, or have no time, to wear it, at least to wear it out, and so a just man shall have it, as the Israelites put on the raiment of the Egyptians, which they begged or borrowed, and spoiled them of,
Ex 12:35; and oftentimes so it is in Providence, that the wealth of wicked men is by one means or another transferred into the families of good men, who enjoy it, and make a better use of it, Pr 13:22;

and the innocent shall divide the silver; have a part of it at least, or divide the whole between his children, or give a part of it to the poor; so money that is ill gotten, or ill used, is taken away, and put into the hands of one that will have mercy on the poor, and liberally distribute it to them, Pr 28:8.

Job 27:18

Ver. 18. He buildeth his house as a moth,.... Which builds its house in a garment by eating into it, and so destroying it, and in time eats itself out of house and home, and however does not continue long in it, but is soon and easily shook out, or brushed off; so a wicked man builds himself an house, a stately palace, like Arcturus {l}; so some render the words from **Job 9:9**, a palace among the stars, an heavenly palace and paradise, and expects it will continue for ever; but as he builds it with the mammon of unrighteousness, and to the prejudice and injury of others, and with their money, or what was due to them, so by his sins and iniquities he brings ruin and destruction upon himself and his family, so that his house soon falls to decay, and at least he and his posterity have but a short lived enjoyment of it. This may be applied in a figurative sense to the hypocrite's hope and confidence, which is like a spider's web, a moth eaten garment, and a house built upon the sand; the Septuagint version here adds, "as a spider", **Job 8:13**;

and as a booth [that] the keeper maketh; either a keeper of sheep, who sets up his tent in a certain place for a while, for the sake of pasturage, and then removes it, to which the allusion is, Isa 38:12; or a keeper of fruit, as the Targum, of gardens and orchards, that the fruit is not stolen; or of fig trees and vineyards, as Jarchi and Bar Tzemach, which is only a lodge or hut pitched for a season, until the fruit is gathered in, and then is taken down, see **Isa 1:8**; and it signifies here the short continuance of the house of the wicked man, which he imagined would continue for ever, Ps 49:11.

{l} vek "quasi Arcturi", Junius & Tremellius; so Aben Ezra.

Job 27:19

Ver. 19. The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered,.... That is, the wicked rich man; and the sense is, either he shall lie down upon his bed, but shall not be gathered to rest, shall get no sleep, the abundance of his riches, and the fear of losing them, or his life for them, will not suffer him to compose himself to sleep; or else it expresses his sudden loss of them, he "lies down" at night to take his rest, "and it is not gathered", his riches are not gathered or taken away from him, but remain with him:

he openeth his eyes: in the morning, when he awakes from sleep:

and it [is] not; by one providence or another he is stripped of all substance; or rather this is to be understood of his death, and of what befalls him at that time: death is often in Scripture signified by lying down, sleeping, and taking rest, as on a bed, see Job 14:10; rich men die as well as others; their riches cannot profit them, or be of any avail to them to ward off the stroke of death, and their death is miserable; he is "not gathered", or "shall not gather" {m}, he cannot gather up his riches, and carry it with him, Ps 49:15 **1Ti 6:7**; "he openeth his eyes" in another world, "and it is not", his riches are not with him; or, as the Vulgate Latin version, "he shall find nothing"; or rather the meaning is, he is "not gathered"; to his grave, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom; and so Mr. Broughton, "he is not taken up", that is, as he interprets it, to be honestly buried. He is not buried in the sepulchres of his ancestors, which is often in Scripture signified by a man being gathered to his people, or to his fathers; but here it is suggested, that, notwithstanding all his riches, he should have no burial, or, what is worse than that, when he dies he should not be gathered to the saints and people of God, or into God's garner, into heaven and happiness: "but he openeth his eyes"; in hell, as the rich man is said to do, and finds himself in inexpressible torment: "and he is not"; on earth, in his palace he built, nor among his numerous family, friends, and acquaintance, and in the possession of his earthly riches, but is in hell in the most miserable and distressed condition that can be conceived of. Some think this last clause respects the suddenness of his death, one "opens his eyes", and looks at him, "and he is not"; he is dead, in the twinkling of an eye, and is no more in the land of the living; but the former sense is best.

{m} Poayw "nihil secum auferet", V. L.

Job 27:20

Ver. 20. Terrors take hold on him as waters,.... The terrors of death, and of an awful judgment that is to come after it; finding himself dying, death is the king of terrors to him, dreading not only the awful stroke of death itself, but of what is to follow upon it; or rather these terrors are those that seize the wicked man

after death; perceiving what a horrible condition he is in, the terrors of a guilty conscience lay hold on him, remembering his former sins with all the aggravating circumstances of them; the terrors of the law's curses lighting upon him, and of the wrath and fury of the Almighty pouring out on him and surrounding him, and devils and damned spirits all about him. These will seize him "as waters", like a flood of waters, denoting the abundance of them, "terror on every side", a "Magormissabib",
Jer 20:3, will he be, and coming with great rapidity, with an irresistible force, and without ceasing, rolling one after another in a sudden and surprising manner:

a tempest stealeth him away in the night; the tempest of divine wrath, from which there is no shelter but the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; this comes like a thief, suddenly and unexpectedly, and steals the wicked man out of this world; or rather from the judgment seat, and carries him into the regions of darkness, of horror and black despair, where he is surrounded with the aforesaid terrors; this is said to be in the night, to make it the more shocking and terrible, see
Lu 12:19; and may have respect to that blackness that attends a tempest, and to that blackness of darkness reserved for wicked men, **Jude 1:13**.

Job 27:21

Ver. 21. The east wind carrieth him away,.... Which is very strong and powerful, and carries all before it; afflictions are sometimes compared to it, Isa 27:8; and here either death, accompanied with the wrath of God, which carries the wicked man, sore against his will, out of the world, from his house, his family, his friends, his possessions, and estates, and carries him to hell to be a companion with devils, and share with them in all the miseries of that dreadful state and place. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, "a burning wind", such as are frequent in the eastern countries, which carry a man off at once, so that he has only time at most to say, I burn, and immediately drops down dead, as Thevenot, and other travellers, relate; which is thus described;

"it is a wind called "Samiel", or poison wind, a very hot one, that reigns in summer from Mosul to Surrat, but only by land, not upon the water; they who have breathed that wind fall instantly dead upon the place, though sometimes they have time to say that they burn within. No sooner does a man die by this wind but he becomes as black as a coal; and if one take him by his leg, arm, or any other place, his flesh comes from the same, and is plucked off by the hand that would lift him up {n}:"

and again, it is observed, that in Persia, if a man, in June or July, breathes in certain hot south winds that come from the sea, he falls down dead, and at most has no more time than to say he burns {o}. Wicked men are like chaff and stubble, and they can no more resist death than either of these can resist the east wind; and they are as easily burnt up and consumed with the burning wind of God's wrath as they are by devouring flames; and though wicked men and hypocrites may think all will be well with them if they have but time to say, Lord have mercy on us; they may be carried off with such a burning wind, or scorching disease, as to be able only to say, that they burn, and not in their bodies only, but in their souls also, feeling the wrath of God in their consciences: or this may have respect to the devouring flames of hell they are surrounded with upon dying, or immediately after death, see Isa 33:14;

and he departeth; out of the world, not willingly, but, whether he will or not, he must depart; or rather he will be bid to depart, and he will depart from the bar of God, from his presence, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

an as a storm hurleth him out of his place: this is done either at death, when as a storm hurls a tree, or any other thing, out of its place, so is the sinner forced out of his place in a tempestuous manner, through the power and wrath of God, so that his place knows him no more; and he is hurried into hell and everlasting destruction, just as the sinning angels were hurled out of heaven, and cast down into hell, and there will be no place found in heaven for them any more; or rather this will be his case at judgment, which immediately follows, where the wicked shall not stand, or be able to justify themselves, and make their case good; but with the storm of divine wrath and vengeance shall be hurled from thence, and go, being driven, into everlasting punishment.

{n} Thevenot's Travels into the Levant, par. 2. B. 1. ch. 12. p. 54. {o} Thevenot's Travels into the Levant, par. 2. B. 3. ch. 5. p. 135.

Job 27:22

Ver. 22. For [God] shall cast upon him, and not spare,.... Cast his sins upon him, which will lie as an intolerable weight upon his conscience; and his wrath upon him, which being poured out like fire, he will not be able to bear it; and deserved punishment on him, which, like a talent of lead, will bear him down to the lowest hell; and this will be done without showing any mercy at all; for, though the wicked have much of sparing mercy in this world, they have none in the next; there is sparing mercy now, but none in hell; God, that spared not the angels that sinned, nor the old world, nor Sodom and Gomorrah, will not spare them, **2Pe 2:4**; he that made them will have no mercy on them; and he that formed them will show them no favour:

he would fain flee out of his hands; in whose hands he is, not as all men are, being the works of his hands, and supported by him; much less as his people are, secure there; but in his hands as an awful and terrible Judge, condemning him for his sins, and sentencing him to everlasting punishment; and a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living and almighty God: there is no getting out of them, though "fleeing, he flees", as the phrase is, with all his might and main, with all the swiftness he can; it is all to no purpose; he is where he was, and must continue in the torment and misery he is in to all eternity; his worm of conscience will never die, nor the fire of divine wrath be ever quenched; though he will desire death ten thousand times over, he shall not find it, it shall flee from him, **Re 9:6**.

Job 27:23

Ver. 23. [Men] shall clap their hands at him,.... In a way of joy and triumph, scorn and derision, see **La 2:15**; either at the time of his death, being glad they are rid of him, Ps 52:5; or rather hereafter, to all eternity, while the wrath and vengeance of God is pouring on him; and this will be done by all righteous men evermore; not pleasing themselves with the shocking scene, nor indulging any evil passion in them, from which they will be entirely free; but rejoicing in the glory of divine justice, which will be displayed in the everlasting destruction of wicked men, see Re 18:20; and this need not be restrained to good men only, but ascribed to angels also; for it may be rendered impersonally, "hands shall be clapped at him"; or joy be expressed on this occasion by all in heaven, angels and saints, who will all approve and applaud the divine procedure against wicked men as right and just; yea, this may express the glorying of divine justice, and its triumph in the condemnation and destruction of sinners;

and shall hiss him out of his place; from the bar and tribunal of God, where he stood and was condemned; and, as he goes to everlasting punishment, expressing abhorrence and detestation of him and his crimes, and as pleased with the righteous judgment of God upon him. Now this is the wicked man's portion, and the heritage he shall have of God at and after death, though he has been in flourishing circumstances in life; all which Job observes, to show that he was no friend nor favourer of wicked men, nor thought well of them and their ways, though he observed the prosperity they are attended with in their present state; and as for himself, he was not, and would not, be such a wicked man, and an hypocrite, on any account whatever, since he was sure he must then be miserable hereafter, to all intents and purposes.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 28:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 28

The design of this chapter is either to show the folly of such who are very diligent in their search and pursuit after earthly things, and neglect an inquiry after that which is infinitely more valuable, true wisdom; or rather to observe, that though things the most secret, and which are hidden in the bowels of the earth, may be investigated and discovered by the sagacity and diligence of men, yet wisdom cannot, especially the wisdom of God in his providences, which are past finding out; and particularly in what concerns the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous; the reason of which men should be content to be ignorant of for the present, and be studious to possess that wisdom which is attainable, and be thankful for it, if they have it; which lies in the fear of the Lord, and a departure from evil, with which this chapter concludes. It begins with setting forth the sagacity of men in searching and finding out useful metals, and other things the earth produces; the difficulty, fatigue, and labour, that attend such a search, and the dangers they are exposed unto in it, Job 28:1; then it declares the unsearchableness of wisdom, its superior excellency to things the most valuable, and that it is not to be found by sea or land, or among any of the creatures, Job 28:12; and that God only knows its way and place, who has sought it out, prepared and declared it, Job 28:23; and that which he has thought fit to make known of it, and is most for his glory and the good of men, is, that it is to fear God, and depart from evil, Job 28:28.

Ver. 1. Surely there is a vein for the silver,.... Silver is mentioned first, not because the most valuable, for gold is preferable to it, as brass is to iron, and yet iron is mentioned first in Job 28:2; but because silver might be first known, or was first in use, especially in the coinage of money; we read of pieces of

silver, or shekels of silver, in the times of Abraham, but not of any golden coin,
Ge 23:15; and among the old Romans silver was coined before gold {p}; it has its name from a word which signifies "desire", because it is desirable to men, it answering to various uses and purposes; and sometimes the desires and cravings of men after it are enlarged too far, and become criminal, and so the root of all evil to them: and now there is a "vein" for it in the earth, or a mine in which it may be dug for, and found, in which it runs as veins in a man's body, in certain ramifications, like branches of trees, as they do; and the inhabitants of Hispaniola, and other parts of the West Indies, when found out by Columbus, which abounded with gold mines, declared that they found by experience that the vein of gold is a living tree, (and so the same, perhaps, may be said of silver,) and that it spreads and springs from the root, which they say extends to the centre of the earth by soft pores and passages of the earth, and puts forth branches, even to the uppermost part of the earth, and ceases not till it discovers itself unto the open air; at which time it shows forth certain beautiful colours instead of flowers, round stones of golden earth instead of fruits, and thin plates instead of leaves {q}; so here there is a vein, or a "going out for the silver" {r}, by which it makes its way, as observed of the gold, and shows itself by some signs and tokens where it may be found; or rather this egress is made for it, by opening the mine where it is, digging into it, and fetching it out of it, and from whence great quantities are often brought. In Solomon's time it was made as the stones in Jerusalem, 1Ki 10:27;

and a place for gold [where] they fine [it]; there are particular places for this most excellent of all metals, which has its name in Hebrew from its yellow colour; all countries do not produce it; some are famous for it, and some parts of them, as the land of Havilah, where was gold, and that gold was good, **Ge 2:11**; and Ophir; hence we often read of the gold of Ophir, so called from the place where it was found, as in this chapter, Job 28:16; and now the Spanish West Indies; but nearer to Job than these gold was found; there were not only mountains that abounded with gold near to Horeb, in the desert of Arabia {s}, but it was to be found with the Sabeans {t}, the near neighbours of Job; yea, the Ophir before referred to was in Arabia. Some understand this of the place where pure gold is found already refined, and needs no melting and refining; and of such Pliny {u} speaks, and of large lumps and masses of it; but for the most part it lies in ore, which needs refining; and so here it may intend the place where it is found in the ore, and from whence it is taken and had to the place where it is refined; for melting places used to be near where the golden ore was found; and so when Hispaniola was first found by Columbus, the gold that was dug out of the mountains of Cibana, and other places, were brought to two shops, which were erected with all things appertaining to melt and refine it, and cast into wedges; and so early as that, in these two shops, were molten yearly three hundred thousand pound weight of gold {w}.

{p} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 3. {q} Peter Martyr. Decad. 3. l. 8. {r} auwm "exitus", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Drusius, Michaelis; "egressio", Vatablus. {s} Hieron. de loc. Heb. fol. 90. A. {t} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {u} Ut supra, (Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 33.) c. 4. {w} P. Martyr. Decad. 1. l. 10.

Job 28:2

Ver. 2. Iron is taken out of the earth,.... Very easily, and in great plenty, and is more common, being in most countries, is nearer the surface of the earth, and here said to be taken "out of the dust" {x}; which, being melted in a furnace, produces iron, a metal very serviceable for various rises, and without which there is scarce any thing to be done, and therefore was with brass of early invention. Tubalcain, son of Lamech, supposed to be the Vulcan of the Heathens, a worker in iron, is said to be the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron, **Ge 4:22**;

and brass [is] molten [out of] the stone; out of a brassy stone, called "cadmai", as Pliny says, and also out of another, as he observes {y}, called "chalcites", found in Cyprus, where was the first invention of brass, according to him, and hence perhaps copper had its name; but it is plain from Scripture, the places before referred to, that it was invented elsewhere, and long before Cyprus was known; or a "stone melted becomes brass", see **De 8:9**; of these four metals was the image in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, which represented the four monarchies of the world, Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman, **Da 2:30**; and to them are compared, and by them are represented many things in Scripture.

{x} rpem "e pulvere", V. L. Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 34. c. 1, 2.

Job 28:3

Ver. 3. He setteth an end to darkness,.... Some understand this and what follows of God, who, by making the luminaries, has fixed the periods and revolutions of light and darkness, of day and night; or who has determined the times before appointed, for the discoveries of things in nature, as mines of gold, silver, and precious stones, how long they should lie in darkness, and then be brought to light, and who searches out the perfection of all things in nature; and makes them known to men, when he himself and his ways are not to be found out unto perfection by men; but rather this is to be understood of the miner that digs for the above metals, who, when he opens a mine, lets in natural light, or carries artificial light along with him, and so puts an end to the darkness which had reigned there before, even from the creation:

and searcheth out all perfection; searches thoroughly the mines he opens, and gets all he can out of them, and searches perfectly into the nature of the ore; he finds, and tries, and proves it, what it is, its worth and value:

the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death; searches and digs through them, to get at what he is seeking; or brings stones, precious stones, to light, which lay in darkness from the beginning, and in such places which were the shadow of death, and looked dismal and horrible, and even threatened with death, to get into and fetch them out: so spiritual miners, that search into the mines of the Scriptures, should not be discouraged with darkness and difficulties that may attend their search; but should continue it, in order to find out truths that have lain in darkness, more precious than gold and silver, and the richest gems; and such who search for them in like manner as miners do shall find them, **Pr 2:4**.

Job 28:4

Ver. 4. The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant,.... Or, "so that there is no inhabitant" {z}; of the mine, as the miner may be said to be, who lives there continually; and, when a flood of water arises, which is an usual thing in mines, he is obliged to flee, and make haste to save his life:

[even the waters] forgotten of the foot; such as never any foot of man touched, or was acquainted with, being subterraneous water, and never seen with the eye of man before, and who before knew not there were such floods underground {a}. A like figurative expression in
Ps 137:5;

they are dried up, they are gone away from men; though such a flood of waters rise apace, and flow in with great force, and threaten the miners' lives, and the ruin of their works; yet they are not discouraged, but by means of engines, pumps, and buckets, and such like things, draw up the waters, and clear the mines of them; and they are gone from the workmen, who return to their work again, and go on with their mining: and so sometimes spiritual miners are interrupted by a flood of Satan's temptations, the world's persecutions, and various afflictions; but, by the assistance of the spirit and grace of God, whereby a standard is lifted up against them, they get clear of them, and receive no hurt by them, but go on cheerfully in the work of the Lord, Isa 59:19.

{z} rg Mem "qui accolas non fert", Tigurine version; "dimisso accola", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ut non sit accola", Mercerus. {a} Vid. Senecae Nat. Quaest. l. 5. c. 15.

Job 28:5

Ver. 5. [As for] the earth, out of it cometh bread,.... That is, bread corn, or corn of which bread is made particularly wheat; which falling, or being cast into the earth, rises up and brings forth fruit, and, when ground into flour, makes fine bread; and to this same original the psalmist ascribes bread, which strengthens man's heart, Ps 104:14. The West Indians formerly made their bread of roots of the earth, particularly one called "jucca" {b}; so Caesar's soldiers in distress made bread of a root called "chara", steeped in milk {c}:

and under it is turned up as it were fire; coal, which is fuel for fire; for, as in the earth are mines for gold and silver, iron and brass, out of which they are dug, or the ore of them, so there is coal under the earth; which, when turned up, or dug, is taken for firing; or brimstone, or sulphureous matter, which is easily inflammable; and sometimes the same earth, the surface of which is covered with corn, out of which bread cometh, underneath are coal, or sulphur, and such like combustible matter: some think precious stones are meant, which glitter and sparkle like fire; see Eze 28:14.

{b} P. Martyr, Decad 1. l. 1. {c} Caesar. Comment. Bell. Civil. l. 3. c. 48.

Job 28:6

Ver. 6. The stones of it [are] the place of sapphires,.... In some parts of the earth its stones are a quarry of sapphires, put here for all precious stones: this is a most excellent precious stone, of a sky colour, with golden specks, and was one of the stones in the breast plate of the high priest; and by which are represented the pavement under the feet of the God of Israel, the throne of Christ, his bowels and affections for his people, the comeliness of them, and the glory of his church in the latter day, Ex 24:10;

and it hath dust of gold; some parts of the earth abound with the dust of gold; its dust is gold, or it hath gold as plenty as dust; though some think this refers to the sapphire in the preceding clause, which, as Pliny says {d}, has "pulvis aureus", dust of gold, in it, and shines and sparkles with golden points, or specks; and so say other writers {e}; but the word used rather signifies clods, lumps, masses of gold, which better agree with the earth; and, besides, no very good reason can be given why there should be such a particular description of the sapphire; whereas the earth is the original of that, and of all the other things before spoken of.

{d} Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 9. {e} Ruaeus de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 2.

Job 28:7

Ver. 7. [There is] a path which no fowl knoweth,.... A path made by miners to the gold, silver, brass, and iron ores; to the places where gems and precious stones lie; the way to which was never seen, and could never have been discovered by the most sharp-sighted fowl, as "the eagle" {d}; which some think is particularly intended; and the Greek word for an eagle seems to be derived from the word used in the text: this fowl, the king of birds, as it is the swiftest, it is the most quick-sighted of any; but, though it is eager, and looks out sharp after its prey, and which it beholds at a great distance, and in the most secret lurking places, and flies unto it, and seizes upon it at once, yet it never could look into the bowels of the earth, or discover a track leading thereunto; in this it is outdone by the diligent and laborious miner, who is not at a loss to make his way into the inmost and darkest recesses of the earth:

which the vulture's eye hath not seen; which is next to the eagle, and some of them are of the species of it, and is a very sharp-sighted creature, even to a proverb, as well as voracious, which makes it diligent to search everywhere for its prey; and yet this creature's sharp and piercing eye never saw the path the miners make by digging into the earth, in order to get metals and minerals from it. Some understand this path of subterraneous paths in nature, made of God, through which rivers of water pass that were never seen by creatures of the quickest sight; it may rather be applied to the paths of God in providence, which are unsearchable and past finding out, by men of the most sagacious and penetrating capacities, though they will hereafter be made manifest; and also to his paths of love, grace, and mercy towards the sons of men, which are the deep things of God, searched into and revealed by his Spirit, or otherwise could not be known; as well as to the ways and paths of righteousness and holiness, of faith and truth, of the word and ordinances God has revealed, as his mind and will his people should walk in, which otherwise would not be known, and are not by carnal men; and especially to the principal way and path, Christ Jesus, who is the way to the Father, the way to everlasting happiness, the way of life and salvation, the high way and way of holiness, in which men, though fools, shall not err, and of which some things are said in Isa 35:8; which greatly agree with what are said of this path, here and in Job 28:8: this way of peace is not known by carnal men, nor the things of it discerned by natural men, though ever so sagacious; see **Ro 3:17**.

{d} jye "ad id alludit aquiae Graecum vocabulum" aetov, Bochart. Hierozoic par. 1. l. 1. c. 9. col. 59. Broughton renders it "a kite".

Job 28:8

Ver. 8. The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it. Or "upon it" {e}; such creatures that are exceeding fierce and cruel, hungry and voracious, eager after their prey, range here and there in pursuit of it, search every hole and corner, and rove in dens and caves of the earth; yet these never traversed such ways and paths the miners make to get out the wealth and riches of the earth. Wicked men are sometimes compared to lions, for their cruelty and oppression exercised on the saints, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against them, Ps 57:4; and particularly tyrannical princes and persecutors, as the kings of Assyria and Babylon, and Nero the Roman emperor, **Jer 1:17**; these never trod the way of holiness, nor walked in the path of truth, nor knew the wisdom of God in a mystery, nor the Lord of life and glory, and the way of life and salvation by him; which is a way the unclean walk not in, or persons of such a temper and disposition; see Isa 35:8. The former clause may be rendered, as it is by some, "the children of pride" {f}, and as it is in Job 41:34, which is the only place besides this where it is used; and so the Septuagint version, "the children of proud men": and may be accommodated to self-righteous persons, who are proud boasters of themselves and of their works, and go about to establish their own righteousness, and despise and will not submit unto the righteousness of Christ; these tread not in nor walk upon the good old way, and the only way of life, righteousness, and salvation, by Christ.

{e} wyle "super eam", Schultens. {f} Uxv ynb "filii superbiae", Montanus, Beza, Bolducius, Vatablus.

Job 28:9

Ver. 9. He putteth forth his hand upon the rock,.... The discourse is carried on concerning the miner, and digger in the earth for metals and precious stones; who meeting with a rock or flint, and a ridge of them, is not discouraged, but goes to work therewith, and with his hammer in his hand lays upon the rock or flint, and beats it to pieces, and with proper instruments cuts through it; and using fire and vinegar, as Pliny {g} observes, makes his way into it, and oftentimes by splitting it discovers gold {h} or silver, or precious stones, in it:

he overturneth the mountains by the roots; or turns them up from the roots; he roots them up, he undermines them; he turns up the earth at the roots of them, to get what is hid at the bottom, or in the bowels of them. Some understand this, and what is said in the following verses, of God, and of wonderful things done by him; so Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and others; and to whom indeed such things are sometimes ascribed in Scripture: he touches the hills, and they smoke, Ps 104:32; lays his hand on the rock, and removes it out of its place, Job 14:18; it was he that smote and opened the rock at Horeb, and the waters gushed out, Ex 17:6; yea, turned the rock into standing water, and the flint into a fountain of water, Ps 114:8: and he, in a figurative sense, has laid his hand on the rock Christ, and smote him with the rod of justice, whereby the blessings of grace come flowing down upon his people; and he it is that puts forth his hand of powerful and efficacious grace upon the rocky hearts of men, and with the hammer of his word breaks them to pieces, Jer 23:29, and takes away the stony heart, and gives an heart of flesh, Eze 11:19: and he also, in a literal sense, overturns hills and mountains by their roots, through storms, and tempests, and earthquakes; and figuratively, kingdoms and states, that lie in the way of his interest; for what are these mountains before the great Zerubbabel? they soon and easily become a plain; and so breaks through all difficulties, which proverbially may be signified by removing mountains, that seem to obstruct and hinder the conversion and salvation of his people; he makes those mountains a way, and his highways are exalted; see **So 2:8**; but the former sense is best, and most agreeable to the context.

{g} Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 4. "----Montem rumpit aceto", Juvenal. Sat. 10. v. 153.

{h} lbid.

Job 28:10

Ver. 10. He cutteth out rivers among the rocks,.... By cleaving rocks asunder in order to find out things of value in the cliffs of them; or by cutting his way through them, the miner opens a course for rivers and floods of water, to drain off from his mines, and so can go on with his works more comfortably, and with success; though sometimes they sink through high rocks, till they go so far below their basis, that they can go no further for water, in some places forty or fifty fathom deep {i}:

and his eye seeth every precious thing; in the cliffs of the rock, or at the bottom of the rivers and floods, as they go off, or in the mines he digs, even gold or silver, or precious stones: hence came the fable of Lynceus, and from him the phrase of Lyncean eyes {k}, who was said to see all things under the earth, because he was the first that searched for metals, as brass, silver, &c. and in search of them carried lamps, or links, under the earth {l}. This verse is also by some ascribed to God, who is said to cleave the fountain and the flood, and to dry up mighty rivers; and also to open rivers in high places, in hills, mountains, and rocks, as well as sometimes in the middle of the valleys, Ps 74:15; and who, in a spiritual sense, has cut out and opened the river of his pure love and grace, which flows from the throne of God and the Lamb; and the fulness of grace in Christ, which is as rivers of water in a dry land; and the graces of the Spirit in his people, which flow out of them as rivers of living water; and his word and ordinances in his church, which are the rivers of pleasure he makes his saints to drink of in it: and his eye of omniscience, which sees all things in particular, sees all the precious things in nature; the precious things of heaven, and earth, and sea; the precious things brought forth by the sun and moon; and the precious tidings of the ancient mountains and everlasting hills, the gold, silver, and precious stones that lie hid in the bowels of them, De 33:13; and who also sees all precious persons, and things, in a spiritual sense; he beholds his precious Son, his precious blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, with delight and pleasure; and his eye of love, grace, and mercy, upon the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, jewels, and precious stones; and sees all the precious graces of the Spirit in them, with acceptance and good will.

{i} Philos. Transaet. abridged, vol. 2. p. 469. {k} Horat. Sermon. l. 1. Satyr. 2. v. 90. {l} Palaephat. de Incredib. c. 10.

Job 28:11

Ver. 11. He bindeth the floods from overflowing,.... As the miner finds ways and means of cutting through rocks, and draining and carrying off the waters in his mine; so he makes use of other methods of restraining and keeping back the waters from coming into and overflowing his works, and even "from weeping" {m}, as in the original text; he binds them up so firmly, and stops every avenue and passage so close, that the waters cannot so much as ooze, or distil and drop as a tear from the eye:

and [the thing that is] hid bringeth he forth to light; the several metals and minerals, gems and precious stones, that lay hid in the bosom of the earth, are fetched out, and brought to light by the diligence and labours of the miner; the same that are called stones of darkness, and of the shadow of death, Job 28:3. This verse is likewise by several interpreted of God, and of what is done by him in the things of nature and providence; he it is that at first shut up the sea with doors; made the cloud its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling bands, in which he wrapped and bound it, as an infant, and still sets bars and doors to it, and says, hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, Job 38:8; and, in a spiritual sense, he restrains the floods of affliction from overflowing and overwhelming his people; and, when the temptations of Satan come in like a flood upon them, his Spirit sets up a standard against them, which keeps them from doing them any harm; and, when the wrath of persecutors rises up against them, and threatens them with destruction, he withholds those proud waters from going over their souls and overwhelming them: and so likewise it is he that bringeth hidden things to light, things in nature men had never seen or known before; things in providence, dark and intricate; things in grace, out of the sight of the most penetrating understanding: he reveals the secrets of his love and grace to them that fear him; the glorious scheme of salvation by Christ, which was hid in himself, in the thoughts, purposes, and counsels of his heart; the mysteries of his Gospel, hid from the wise and prudent, Mt 11:25; and life and immortality itself, or the way to it, which he has brought to light through the Gospel; yea, he brings to light all the hidden things of a man's heart, and sets them before him, and convinces him of them in a loving way; and if not now, he will hereafter "bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts", **1Co 4:5**; but, as before observed, it is best to understand the whole paragraph of miners; of their sagacity in opening mines, and searching into the bowels of the earth, where none were ever before them; and of their indefatigableness, industry, and labour therein, and of the success that attends them; Job's design being to show, that things rich and valuable, and most remote from the sight of men, may, by diligent application, be investigated and obtained; yet such wisdom is not attainable as to understand the reason of the various dealings of God with the sons of men, both good and bad; and therefore, after all he had said on the above subject, still the question is as follows.

{m} ykbm "a fletu", Montanus, Bolducius, Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis, Schultens; so Broughton; "a stillatione", Vatablus, Mercerus, Drusius.

Job 28:12

Ver. 12. But where shall wisdom be found?.... Though there is a vein for silver, a track where that lies, and is to be come at, and a place where gold is found, and where it may be refined, and parts of the earth, out of which brass and iron, and bread corn, may be produced, and even from whence may be fetched brilliant gems and precious stones; which, though attended with many difficulties, in cutting through rocks, draining rivers, and restraining the waters, yet are got over through the art and skill, industry, diligence, and labour of men; so that their eyes behold every precious thing their minds desire, and they bring to light what have been laid up in darkness from the creation of the world: but, though these things may be found by search and labour, the question is, what vein is there for wisdom, or where is the place in which that may be found? by which may be meant the wisdom of God, as a perfection in him; which, though displayed in some measure in the works of creation and providence, yet not completely, and especially in his dealings with the children of men; in all which there is undoubtedly the wisdom of God; yet it is such a depth as is unfathomable by mortals: such are God's dealings with men in a way of distinguishing grace and mercy, as that he should take no notice of any of the whole body of apostate angels that sinned against him, but doomed them all to destruction; and yet there should be a philanthropy, a love of men in him, and such as to give his Son to die for them, and redeem them from ruin and destruction; also that he should make a difference among men, and ordain some to eternal life, while others are foreordained to condemnation and death, when all were in the same situation, condition, and circumstances; and such likewise were his dealings with the Israelites, and other nations of the world, part of which Job was not a stranger to; as his choosing them to be his peculiar people before all others, and bestowing peculiar favours upon them, not because they were more in quantity, or better in quality, but because this was his pleasure; when he suffered all other nations to walk in their own ways,

for many hundreds of years, and winked at the times of their ignorance; and yet, after a long course of time, rejected the people of the Jews, and wrote a "loammi", or "not my people", **Ho 1:9**, on them, and took out from the Gentiles a people for his name; so that they, who were not a people, were called the people of God, and the Jews were broken off, and the Gentiles grafted in; and when the fulness of them is brought in, there will be a turn again, and then all Israel shall be saved: upon all which the apostle breaks out in this exclamation, which may serve as a comment on this text, "oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"
Ro 11:33; particularly here may be meant the wisdom of God in his dealings with men, good and bad, in afflicting good men, and in suffering the wicked to prosper: this is a fact Job had fully proved, and it cannot be denied; and there is, no doubt, much of the wisdom of God herein; he does all things well and wisely; as he cannot do an unjust thing, so neither an unwise one; though his wisdom is unsearchable, his judgments are a great deep, and not to be fathomed by men, not only not by weak men and wicked men, but even by the wisest and best of men, as Asaph and Jeremiah: and this being the case, Job suggests to his friends, that the dealings of God with him, and the reasons of them, and his wisdom in them, were not to be searched out by them; and that they should forbear imputing his afflictions to hypocrisy, or to secret sins indulged by him; but to leave all, without making rash censures and wrong constructions, until the time should come when the judgments of God should be made manifest; such wisdom and knowledge, as to account for God's different dealings with men, being too wonderful, too high to attain unto, and quite out of their reach. The Jews, as particularly Jarchi, understand by wisdom the law, not to be found in the depth or in the sea; and illustrate the words by
De 30:11; but it is much better to interpret it of the Gospel, to which the apostle applies the above passage, Ro 10:6; in which there is a glorious display of the wisdom of God, in all the truths and doctrines of it; that it is a mysterious wisdom, hidden wisdom, hid from the wise and prudent, and not to be attained unto by the light nature and carnal reason; it contains the deep things of God, which the Spirit of God alone searches and reveals; but why may not Christ, the Wisdom of God, be thought of? since many things are said in the following verses, as are of Wisdom, as a divine Person, in **Pr 8:13**; in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid, and on whom the spirit of wisdom and counsel rests, as Mediator; and who, as a divine Person, is the only wise God, and our Saviour: and to this question in Job's time, "where shall wisdom be found?" the only answer to be given is, that he, the Logos, or Wisdom, was with God, as one brought up with him, rejoicing

always before him and that he lay in his bosom, **Pr 8:30**; and to the same question in our time it must be returned, that he is in heaven at the right hand of God; but that there is no coming at the true knowledge of him by the light of nature, or by the law of Moses, but by means of the Gospel, and through the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. The first of these senses, respecting the wisdom of God in his different dealings with men, good and bad, is most generally given into by interpreters, and seems to suit well with the preceding dispute between Job and his friends: but if we look forward in the chapter, we shall find this question repeated, and an answer given to it as in the negative, so in the affirmative, that God knows the place of it; that he has searched it out, seen it, and declared it; and it is this, "the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding", Job 28:20; by which it should seem, that this wisdom is supernatural wisdom, or understanding in men; which lies in the fear of God, and the effects of it; in a spiritual knowledge of God and Christ, or of God in Christ; and in that godliness which is profitable in all things; and in that wisdom which comes from above, and is opposed to that which is earthly, sensual, and devilish, and is not to be found in carnal hearts, nor its worth known by carnal men, nor to be obtained by any thing in nature ever so valuable, but is the gift of God, the wisdom he makes men to know, in the hidden part, Ps 51:6;

and where [is] the place of understanding? to attain to the understanding of the mysteries of Providence, or of Christ, or of the Gospel; or to have a spiritual understanding of divine things, and experience of them, which only is the gift of God, **1Jo 5:20**; for, by wisdom and understanding are meant one and the same, as they often are, whether understood as a thing or person; see **Pr 1:2**.

Job 28:13

Ver. 13. Man knoweth not the price thereof,.... The worth and value of it, what price to set upon it, or offer and give for it; nor does he know where to find an equivalent to it, or what is a valuable consideration for it: as for the wisdom of God in his dealings with men, if a man was to give all the substance of his house to know the secret reasons of them, it would utterly be condemned; yea, if he had all the riches in the world in his possession, and would offer them on that consideration, he would not be able to attain the knowledge of them: or "the order thereof" {o}; the order of divine Providence, the wise disposal of thing, and the reasons thereof. In the first sense it is applicable to all the things before mentioned; to spiritual wisdom in men, supernatural grace, experimental religion, and real godliness; the worth of which is not known by carnal men, they despise it, and scoff at it; and to the Gospel, which is reckoned foolishness by them, and is of no account; and so is Christ himself rejected and disallowed of men, though chosen of God, and precious both to him and them that believe, who only know the price and value of him:

neither is it found in the land of the living; meaning not wisdom, though that in every sense is not from below, or earthly, but from above, and heavenly, but the price of it; and the sense is, that there is nothing in the whole globe that is equal to its worth, or can be proposed as a valuable consideration for it.

{o} hkre "ordinem ejus", Montanus, Bolducius.

Job 28:14

Ver. 14. The depth saith, it [is] not in me,.... That is, the deep places of the earth, that are dug in it, the mines, and the like, could they speak, they would say there are no metal, nor minerals, no rich treasures of gold and silver ore, of pearls and precious stones, in the bowels of it, that are of the value of wisdom, or to be compared to it:

and the sea saith, [it is] not with me; had that a voice to speak, it would freely declare, that there is nothing in its vast compass, at the bottom of it, or to be got out of it, as corals that grow in it, and pearls fished from thence, after mentioned, that are a sufficient price for wisdom. Some understand these words, the former part of miners and colliers, and such sort of men, that dig and live in the depths of the earth; and the latter part of mariners, that are employed on the sea, who are generally ignorant and carnal men, and void of the knowledge of wisdom in every view of it; but the sense first given is best.

Job 28:15

Ver. 15. It cannot be gotten for gold,.... Having in general said that there is nothing in the whole compass of the terraqueous globe, nothing that is upon the surface of the earth, or in the bowels of it, or in the vast ocean, that is an equivalent price for wisdom, Job descends to particulars, and instances first in gold, that being the most valuable of metals; the word here used for it signifies "shut up" {w}, because it is first shut up in the earth, out of which it is dug, and when taken from thence, and refined, and made into coins or vessels, it is shut up among the treasures of men; the words may be more literally rendered, "gold shall not be given instead of it" {x}; as a sufficient price, or valuable consideration for it:

neither shall silver be weighed [for] the price thereof; in former times this metal used to be delivered, in buying and selling, not by the number and value of pieces, but by weight, in rude masses and lumps, and even when coined into shekels; see Ge 23:16.

{w} rwgo sugkleismon, Sept. "conclusum", Tigurine version; "clausum", Bolducius. {x} hytxt-zty al "non dabitur pro ea", V. L. Montanus, Schultens.

Job 28:16

Ver. 16. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir,.... Which is often spoken of in Scripture as choice gold, if not the best;
See Gill on "Job 22:24"; the sense is, that the gold of Ophir is not of the value of wisdom, or of the same worth with that, and so not sufficient to purchase it: with the precious onyx and sapphire: two precious stones that were in the breastplate of the high priest, of which See Gill on "Ex 28:9",
See Gill on "Ex 28:18", and
See Gill on "Ex 28:20"; but not so precious, or of such value as wisdom. Pliny {y} speaks of the onyx stone as in Arabia, near which Job lived, and who doubtless was acquainted with it and its worth, and also with the sapphire he makes mention of before,
See Gill on "Job 28:6". The word for "valued" is by some rendered "strowed" {z}, as goods are when they are exposed to sale; but wisdom should not be laid, or put on a level with these, though so excellent and precious.

{y} Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 6. {z} hlot "verbum significat sternere", Michaelis.

Job 28:17

Ver. 17. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it,.... Crystal was found in an island of the Red sea, situated before Arabia, called Neron, and in another, which from a gem found in it bears the name of Topazion, and may be thought therefore to be well known by Job; and though it is not now of so much account, it formerly was very valuable. Pliny {a} makes mention of a crystal vessel, sold for 150,000 sesterces, about 1250 pounds sterling; and of two crystal cups broke by Nero in his fury, on hearing of some losses, to punish the then present age, that no other men might drink out of them: some render it "amber", which is found in Prussia, and being at a great distance from Job's country, might be the more valuable there; and Pliny {b} speaks of it as had in as great esteem as gems: the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin versions, and others, translate it "glass" {c} which had its original from Phoenicia, near Judea; so Pliny says {d} from the lake Cendevia, within the roots of Mount Carmel, in Phoenicia, near Judea, springs the river Belus, from whence glass came first; and he speaks of Sidon (a city in Phoenicia) as famous for it; and Tacitus {e} observes, that the river Belus glides in the Jewish sea, and about the mouth of it sand is gathered and mixed with nitre, and boiled into glass; and this being near the country where Job dwelt, it is thought be had knowledge of it; and from this passage some {f} have concluded the great antiquity of glass; and if it is true what Aelianus {g} relates, that when the monument of the ancient Belus (the first king of Babylon) was dug up by Xerxes, the son of Darius, that there was found a glass urn, where lay a body in oil, it must be in use before the times of Job. An Arabic chronologer {h} affirms what be had from men conversant in history, that in Egypt, after the flood, there were men learned in various sciences, and among the rest in alchemy, and had knowledge of burning glasses; though the invention of these, and of a glass globe, is ascribed to Archimedes {i}, who lived somewhat later than two hundred years before Christ. There was great plenty of glass very early in Ethiopia, after mentioned, in which they enclosed their dead, that they might be seen through it {k}; and if it was in use in Job's time, and especially if it was then a late invention, it might be highly valued, and therefore placed here with things of the greatest worth. In the times of Nero, Pliny says {l} two small glass cups were sold for six thousand sesterces, or forty five pounds sterling, and according to others near fifty pounds; and the same writer relates, that in the times of Tiberias an art was found out to make glass flexible and malleable; but was ordered to be destroyed, lest the value of gold, silver, and brass, should be lessened by it. The Targum renders the word here used a looking glass; See Gill on "Jos 11:8". Some think the diamond or adamant is meant, and others that it is a general name for all sorts of precious stones, they being clear, transparent, and lucid, as the word signifies:

and the exchange of it [shall not be for] jewels of fine gold; set in fine gold; or "vessels" of it, more valuable than gold itself, being made of gold, purified, refined, and wrought by art into curious forms; and yet wisdom is so valuable as not to be exchanged for these. Mr. Broughton takes this fine gold, or gold of Phaz, to be the same with Fess in Barbary, which had its name from a heap of gold there found when its foundation was laid; for "fess" with the Arabs signifies gold {m}.

{a} Ut supra, (Nat. Hist. l. 37.) c. 2. {b} Ib. c. 5. {c} tykwkz ualov, Sept. "vitrum", V. L. Tigurine version, Cocceius. {d} Ut supra, (Nat. Hist.) l. 36. c. 26. Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 10. sect. 2. {e} Hist. l. 5. c. 7. {f} Neri Praefat. ad. lib. de re vitriaria. {g} Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 3. {h} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 33. {i} Vid. Fabritii Bibliothec. Gr. l. 3. c. 22. sect. 11. 15. {k} Diodor. Sic. l. 2. p. 102. Herodot. Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 24. {l} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 26.) {m} Leo African. Descript. Africae, l. 3. p. 273.

Job 28:18

Ver. 18. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls,.... Coral is a marine plant, is as hard as a stone, and of such value as to be reckoned among precious stones; See Gill on "Eze 27:16". In Arabia Felix, on the shore of the Red sea, is a place called Coralia {n}; it may be from coral found there. Pearls are from shellfish taken out of the sea, though these seem rather intended in the next clause: the words "ramoth" and "gabish" are left untranslated by some, and by others are taken for precious stones, though unknown, so called because they are found in high places, which both words signify. The Targum renders the first by "sandalchin", and seems to be the same with the sardonyx, a precious stone found in Arabia, and which found there is by Pliny {o} said to excel. Junius and Tremellius render it by "sandastros"; which, as Pliny says {p}, some call "Garamantis", being bred in a place of that name in India; and he also observes, that it is found in Arabia towards the south, and has shining golden drops in the body of it; it is a sort of a carbuncle. "Gabish" seems to have some affinity with "chabazios", mentioned by Orpheus {q} as a precious stone; but whatever precious stones are meant, as it is hard to determine what, they are not to be spoken of with wisdom, or to be compared to it:

for the price of wisdom is above rubies; or rather pearls, as Bochart {r} seems to have abundantly proved, who renders the words,

"the extraction of wisdom is greater than the extraction of pearls;"

and so the Targum; there being, as he thinks, an allusion to the extraction of pearls out of the sea by divers into it {s}; who get them through much art, difficulty, and danger; and he observes, that there is a double extraction, or drawing them out, first of the shellfish out of the sea, and then of the pearls out of the shells; but the drawing out of wisdom, or the attainment of that; is more difficult, and superior to it, as well as attended with greater advantage; see **Pr**

3:15 and
See Gill on "La 4:7"; and though of pearls some are very large, Oviedo {t} speaks of one that weighed thirty one carats, and another twenty six; some as big as hazel nuts, and even as a middling walnut, and of very great price, as that bought by Pope Paul at 44,000 ducats {u}; that by Philip the Second, of the size of a pigeon's egg, valued at an hundred forty four thousand ducats; that drank by Cleopatra at a draught, reckoned worth eighty thousand pounds sterling; and that of the emperor of Persia, bought at 110,400 pounds {w}; yet the price of wisdom is above them.

{n} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {o} Ib. l. 37. c. 6. {p} Ib. c. 7. {q} peri liywn, p. 240. {r} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 6. col. 681, &c. {s} Of fishing for pearls in this way, see the Account of it in Vartoman. Navigat. l. 3. c. 2. in P. Martyr. Decad. 3. l. 2. and Oviedo de Occident. Ind. c. 4. and with nets, Aelian. de Animal. l. 15. c. 8. Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 35. {t} Ut supra. (Oviedo de Occident. Ind. c. 4.) {u} P. Martyr, Decad. 3. l. 10. {w} See Chambers's Dictionary on the word "Pearl".

Job 28:19

Ver. 19. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it,.... Not Ethiopia Abyssinia, or that which lies beyond Egypt in Africa; for, as Ludolphus {x} says, there are no gems found there, or very rarely; but Cush, as the word is, or Arabia Chusaea, the same with the country of Midian, and the parts adjacent; see **Hab 3:7**; hence Zipporah, the wife of Moses, who was of that country, is called an Ethiopian woman, Nu 12:1; and this was near Job's country, who knew the produce of it; and here the topaz is found, as many writers observe. Diodorus Siculus says {y}, in Ophiodes, an island in the Arabian gulf, belonging to the Troglodytes, the topaz is found, which is a very clear stone, pleasant to the sight, like to glass, and affording a wonderful golden colour; and with him Strabo {z} agrees, who relates there is an island called Ophiodes, from its being freed from serpents by the king's orders, which killed men that came there for topazes; which, he says, is a clear stone of a golden colour, and so refulgent, that it is not easy to see it in the daytime, being so surrounded with light; but at night it is seen by those that gather it, who set a vessel for a sign, and then dig for it in the daytime; and, he adds, a multitude of men are hired by the kings of Egypt, to gather and keep these stones, and men from stealing them; and, according to Archelaus {a}, the topaz is found in Chitis, an island in Arabia, where the Troglodytes digging for herbs and roots find it; and, as Juba relates {b}, there is an island called Topazion, in the Red sea, three hundred furlongs (about 73 miles) from the continent, which is cloudy, and is therefore often sought for by navigators; whence he says it had its name Topazion, which in the language of the Troglodytes signifies to seek, and the topaz itself in their language so signifies; in the Samaritan version of Ex 39:10; it is called Dachetah, from the Arabic word {c} "Dachatz", the language of the Troglodytes, which signifies to seek and search by removing the earth with the foot. This island seems to be the same with Topazos, which Pliny {d} says is an island of the Arabians, and gave name to a gem, meaning the topaz; but the truth rather is, that the gem gave name to the island: upon the whole, it is no wonder, as Braunius {e} observes, that this gem should be called by Job the Arabian topaz. The Targum here calls it a green pearl; and some have thought the emerald is meant, which is of that colour; and the emeralds of Ethiopia are praised by some, according to Juba {f}; and in Egypt were emerald mines the Ethiopians laid a claim to {g}; and there were emeralds also in Arabia, as the above Juba relates; however, be this what it may, as it is most likely to be the topaz, it is not equal in value to wisdom, no, not the largest topaz ever known; not even that of the great Mogul, which weighs more than an hundred fifty seven carats, valued at 271,500 French pounds {h}; and according to Tavernier {i} it weighs almost an hundred fifty eight carats, and was bought at Goa for almost 272,000 florins:

neither shall it be valued with pure gold; that is most refined and freed from dross; they are not to be laid together as of equal value;
See Gill on "Job 28:16", where the same word is used.

{x} Hist. Ethiop. l. 1. c. 7. {y} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 172. {z} Geograph. l. 16. p. 529. {a} Apud Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 8. {b} Apud ib. {c} Vid. Castel. Lex. Heptaglott. col. 686, 693. {d} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 29. {e} De Vest. Sacerdot. Heb. p. 649. {f} Apud Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 5. {g} Heliodor. Ethiop. l. 8. 1. & 9. 6. {h} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr p. 747. {i} Apud Braunium de Vest. Sacerdot. Heb. p. 649, 650.

Job 28:20

Ver. 20. Whence then cometh wisdom? and where [is] the place of understanding?] The same questions as in Job 28:12; repeated to set forth the superior excellency of wisdom, and to carry on the discourse, and lead on to other things concerning it.
See Gill on "Job 28:12".

Job 28:21

Ver. 21. Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living,.... Meaning not the beasts of the field, as some interpret it; this makes the sentiment jejune and trifling; but rational creatures, men, so the Septuagint, Eve is said to be the mother of, **Ge 3:20**; wisdom, as a perfection in God, displayed in his works of creation and providence, is but imperfectly known by men; and the secret reasons of his providential dealings with men, good and bad, are hid from all at present; and as for spiritual wisdom or godliness, and the Gospel of Christ, and Christ himself, they are hid from the eyes of all natural and carnal men, though ever so wise and prudent in other things:

and kept close from the fowls of the air, or "heaven" {k}; either the devils so called, because they dwell in the air, and are the posse or power of the air, **Eph 2:2**; and because of their ravenous and cruel disposition, and swiftness to do mischief; see **Lu 8:5**; or rather the holy angels, as Jarchi, whose habitation is in heaven, and who are swift to do the will of God, and are represented as having wings like fowls; though these know much, yet the wisdom of God in his providence, in the doctrines of the Gospel, and Christ himself, the Wisdom of God, are in a good measure hid from them; at least their knowledge is imperfect, and they are desirous of prying more into these things, **1Pe 1:12**: unless men of the most piercing and penetrating geniuses, that soar aloft in the things of nature, and make the greatest discoveries therein, and yet know nothing of divine and spiritual things, of the arcanas of Providence or of grace, should be meant.

{k} Mymvh "caeli", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Job 28:22

Ver. 22. Destruction and death say,.... Meaning the dead that are in the pit of destruction, the grave; not their dead bodies there, devoid of life and sense, and know not anything, but their souls; either the damned in hell, or the saints in heaven: the Targum is, the house of destruction, and the angel of death; or rather it regards such as are dead, who while alive had only a report of this wisdom; wherefore if their records and writings, or traditions handed down from them, are inquired into, the result of the information they will give concerning it will amount to no more than this:

we have heard the fame thereof with our ears; it has been reported to us there is such wisdom, but what it is we know not; and this is all that we can say about it.

Job 28:23

Ver. 23. God understandeth the way thereof,.... And he only; not the way that men can come at the knowledge of wisdom, which at present appears to be past finding out; but rather the way which wisdom itself takes, and is in the deep, and its footsteps not known by any other, and the grounds and reasons of its taking such a course it does; which are only understood by the Lord: it may be applied to spiritual wisdom in men, and the way to come at it; which God only knows and instructs in, and is his special and peculiar gift; and to Christ, the wisdom of God, and the way which he has taken in the council and covenant of grace and peace, for the salvation of his people; and which he took in time, in the assumption of human nature, and by sufferings and death to obtain it for them:

and he knoweth the place thereof; the seat of wisdom within himself, the source of all his dealings with men, his sovereign will and pleasure in his own heart; the place of spiritual wisdom and knowledge, the heart of a regenerate man, where his Gospel is, and has come with power, and took place and works effectually; and where Christ, the Logos, the Wisdom of God is, even with himself, and in his bosom, as in the times of Job, and now at his right hand, in human nature.

Job 28:24

Ver. 24. For he looketh to the ends of the earth,.... In this and some following verses, reasons and are given, which abundantly show that God must know the way and place of wisdom; since all the parts and places of the earth, even to the ends of it, are seen by him, and all creatures and things in it; nor is there anything in heaven, earth, and hell, that is hid from him; and therefore if there is a way to it, or a place for it, he must needs know it; where its direction is, or where it steers its course, and takes up its abode

[and] seeth under the whole heaven; the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, the inhabitants of the world, and all that is done in it; everything falls under the eye of his omniscience, and under the notice of his providence, which extends

to all creatures and things throughout the whole earth, and under the compass of the heavens; and since all places and persons are obvious to his view, and all subject to his all wise and disposing providence, and are ordered, directed, and governed, according to his sovereign will and pleasure; the path of wisdom, and the place of understanding, he must be acquainted with; and particularly his all seeing eye, and all powerful providence, are concerned in the following things, and in which there are wonderful proofs of his knowledge and wisdom.

Job 28:25

Ver. 25. To make the weight for the wind,.... He indeed makes the wind itself, holds it in his fists, and brings it forth out of his treasures, and lets it go, or restrains it, at his pleasure; he gives it an inclination to this or that or the other point of the heavens, and a force to blow with, greater or lesser, as he pleases, either for the good and benefit of men, or for the punishment of them; he raises the stormy wind, which fulfils his word and his will; and he makes it subside and become a calm when he thinks fit; he can make it heavier or lighter, add to or take from its weight, so that it becomes more or less pressing on bodies it meets with; he can make a rough wind, and stay that in the day of his east wind; he can make the rain in some sense a weight to it; he can wet its wings with it, and bear it down and cause it to rest and be still; and he that knows from whence it comes, and whither it goes, though we do not, being wholly under his direction, must know the way and place of wisdom:

and he weigheth the waters by measure; or, "in a measure" {k}; in the hollow of his hand, where he poises them; see Isa 40:12; some, because there is a seeming impropriety in weighing by, or with a measure, render it "out of a measure" {l} Mr. Broughton translates the words, "and held the waters in a measure"; in his hand, as before, or in the sea; weight and measure being both applied to the waters, may denote the perfect and exact knowledge God has of them, and of his great and diligent concern in Providence about them, he ordering and disposing of them according to his will; and which is greatly the sense of the word used for weighing; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"the waters he prepares (orders or disposes of) by measure."

These waters, as they seem to be distinguished from rain in Job 28:26, may design the waters of the sea and rivers; with these the earth at first was covered, which being ordered off of it, and a place provided for them, they were gathered into it, and measured and bounded in it by shores and sand, that they might not overflow the earth; which is a wonderful instance of the providence of God, in weighing and measuring the waters; of which also there was a singular instance at the general deluge, when the windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep broke up, which overflowed the whole earth, and the highest mountains in it; and after a time went off at the command of God, and the earth was dry as before: the tides, the ebbing and flowing of the sea, and the flux and reflux of rivers, from and to the same place, are surprising things, and wholly owing to the power and providence of God; the causes and reasons of which are unknown to us, but are well known to him, who weighs and measures the waters, which flow in a regular course; and who therefore must know the way and place of wisdom and understanding.

{k} hdmb "in mensura", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Bolducius, Beza. {l} "Ex mensura", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus.

Job 28:26

Ver. 26. When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder. Decreed within himself that he would give it; for rain is his gift alone, and which none of the vanities of the Gentiles can give, and a wonderful blessing to the earth it is; and which God bestows on all sorts of men, both good and bad, and causes it to fall sometimes on one place and sometimes on another, sometimes in greater, sometimes in lesser showers; and according to his sovereign pleasure he gives or withholds it; the effects of which are quickly seen. Mr. Broughton renders the clause, "he made a bound for the rain, and a way for the lightning of thunder", or "the lightning and the thunder", as Ben Gersom, who thinks the copulative w, "and", is wanting. Thunder is from God, it is his voice, and the word here used is in the plural number, "voices" {m}, signifying various claps of thunder; and lightning generally accompanies it, which, though first perceived, they are both at once the eye doing its office quicker than the ear; and a cloud also is usual; and so some render the word for lightning, as in Zec 10:1; it may signify the way of the lightning out of the thunder cloud, and attending claps of thunder; the thunder breaks the cloud and makes a path for the lightning: the Targum is,

"a path for the lightnings, which run with the voices or thunders;"

but, though the course or path the lightning steers is very quick and very extensive from east to west, and cannot be traced by us. God that made it knows it, and he knows the path and place of wisdom. Sephorno interprets this of the thunder and lightnings at the giving of the law, which he understands by wisdom, as do other Jewish writers: Pliny {n} speaks of thunder and lightning as chance matters; but Seneca {o} more truly ascribes them to divine power and Providence, as here.

{m} twlwq "vocum", Piscator, Mercerus, Drusius. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 43. {o} Nat. Quaest. l. 2. c. 13. 31.

Job 28:27

Ver. 27. Then did he see it, and declare it,.... His own wisdom, when he made and executed his decrees concerning rain, lightning, and thunder; he saw it in himself, and as it appeared in the works of his hands, which he looked on and approved of, and saw that all was very good; and he declared it to others, by his works of nature and providence; for they declare the glory of God, and particularly the glory of his wisdom:

he prepared it, yea, and searched it out; he prepared it in his counsels, according to which he wrought all things in the creation, and still does in Providence; and his searching out denotes his perfect knowledge of it, and the way and course of it, or he takes with it, though it is unsearchable, and past finding out by us. Mr. Broughton understands this of a person, as do some others, even Christ, the Wisdom of God; rendering the words, "then he saw her, and showed her", &c. and so the passages in **Pr 8:27**, may be a comment on these words and the foregoing; for when the above decrees were formed in the divine mind, then he "saw" his Wisdom, his Logos, his eternal Son; for he was by him, and with him, and in him, lying in his bosom; he looked at him in creation, and made man after his image, the idea he had formed of his human nature, and made all things for his sake; and he viewed him with the utmost delight and pleasure, as being the express image of his person; he declared him to be his only begotten Son, saying, "this day I have begotten thee", **Ps 2:7**; be made him known to the angels, as the Targum here expresses it, and what he designed to do by him, and with him; which occasioned the revolt of many of them from him; and he declared him to Adam as soon as there was an opportunity and occasion for it; he prepared him in his eternal purposes to be the Redeemer and Saviour of his people, to be the Head of the church, and the Judge of quick and dead; he searched him out in his infinite wisdom, and found him, singled him out, laid help on him with his holy oil anointed him, and appointed him to be the ransomer of his chosen ones, Job 33:24.

Job 28:28

Ver. 28. And unto man he said,.... What follows; unto Adam, so some render it, as Mr. Broughton; taking what is after delivered to be said to the first man; either by suggesting it to his mind and conscience, and inscribing it on his heart, where the law of God was written, and by which he was directed to fear God and avoid evil; or by the express command he gave him not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge; thereby instructing him to fear him, and abstain from evil; which, had he done, would have been his highest wisdom, and a proof of it, and of his understanding; but it seems best to understand it in general of the sons of men, as the Targum and others: this is the substance of what God says in his works, which are done that men might fear him, and stand in awe of him, Ps 33:6; and in his word, and by his prophets, and their ministry in all ages; whereby it appears, that this is the whole of men, to fear God and keep his commandments, Ec 12:14. Some render the words, "but unto men he said" {p}; though he knows his own wisdom, and the way and place of it, the course it steers in Providence, and has seen, observed, and shown it; has prepared, disposed, ordered, and searched it out, and perfectly knows it, and the causes and reasons of it; yet he has not thought fit to make these known clearly to men; who therefore must be content they should be secrets to them, and attend to the wisdom which is revealed, and is of the greatest importance and consequence to them; namely, what follows,

behold, the fear of the Lord, that [is] wisdom; by which is meant, not a fear of his wrath, and of eternal damnation, but an affection for God with reverence of him; such as is peculiar to children, a godly filial fear; and which is consistent with strong faith, great joy, and true courage; is opposite to pride and self-confidence, and takes in the whole worship of God both external and internal: and it is called the fear of the Lord, because he is the object and author of it; it is not from nature, or in men naturally, but comes from the grace of God, and is a gift of it; it is wrought in conversion, and is increased by the discoveries of the love and goodness of and is that wisdom which God makes his people know, in the hidden part; no man is wise till he fears the Lord; and when that grace is put into him, he begins to be wise, for this is the beginning of wisdom, **Pr 1:7**; and is a principal part of it, and very profitable to men, both for this life, and for that to come; and therefore it is their highest wisdom to be concerned for it: the heart of God is towards them that fear him; his eye is upon them; his hand communicates to them; his secret with them; he sets a guard of angels about them; causes the sun of righteousness to arise on them, and he has laid up much for them, for time and eternity:

and to depart from evil [is] understanding; this is the fruit and effect of the fear of the Lord, through which men have an hatred of sin, and an aversion to it, and are careful not to commit it; through it they depart from evil, and abstain from all appearance of it; see **Pr 8:13**; and it puts them upon a regard to God and his commandments, and to all that is good, and which is an evidence and proof of a good understanding, Ps 111:10. Now Job suggests by this, that his friends should be solicitous about, and satisfied with, such wisdom and understanding as this, and not pry into the secrets of Providence, and the wisdom of that, which are not to be found out; and so cease to charge him with being an hypocrite, and a wicked man, because of the dealings of God with him, which were not to be accounted for: and by this Job appears to be a good man, and had an experience what he here expresses; that he was one that feared God and eschewed evil, according to the testimony given of him, **Job 1:1**; and this he gave proof of his former life and conversation; of which an account is given in the following chapter.

{p} rmayw eipe de, Sept. "dixit autem", Tigurine version, Beza; "dixit vero", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 29:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 29

In this chapter Job gives an account of his former and wishes it was with him now as then; and which he describes with respect to his own person, and the favours he personally enjoyed, whether temporal or spiritual, Job 29:1; with respect to his family and domestic affairs, Job 29:5; with regard to the esteem he had from men of every age and station, Job 29:7; the reasons of which were the mercy and compassion he showed to the poor, the fatherless, and the widow, and the justice he administered in the execution of his office as a magistrate, Job 29:12; in which honour and prosperity he expected to have lived and died, Job 29:18; and which he further describes by the respect he had among men, and the power and authority he exercised over them, Job 29:21.

Ver. 1. Moreover, Job continued his parable,.... Or "added to take [it] up" {q}, that is, he took it up again, and went on with his discourse; he made a pause for awhile, waiting to observe whether any of his three friends would return an answer to what he had said; but perceiving they were not inclined to make any reply, he began again, and gave an account of his former life, in order to show that he was far from being the wicked man, or being so accounted by others, as his friends had represented him:

and said; as follows.

{q} tav Powyw "addidit assumere", Montanus, Bolducius, Mercerus; "addidit tollere", Drusius.

Job 29:2

Ver. 2. Oh that I were as [in] months past,.... Which is either an earnest wish for restoration to his former state of outward prosperity; which he might desire, not through impatience and discontent under his present circumstances, or from a carnal and worldly spirit; but either that the present reproach he lay under from his friends might be taken off, he observing that they accounted him a wicked man and an hypocrite, because of his afflictions; wherefore he judged, if these were removed, and he was in as prosperous a condition and in as good circumstances as before, they would entertain a different opinion of him; or, that his words might be better attended to, as they were by men, both young and old, and even princes and nobles before, it being a common case, that what a poor and distressed man says is not regarded; or that he might be in a capacity of doing good to the poor and fatherless, the widow and the oppressed, as he had formerly; or, this wish is only made to introduce the account of his former life, by which it would appear, that he was not the man his friends had represented him to be, from the favour he was in with God, and from the respect shown him by men, and the many good things done by him: but since, by various expressions, which before had dropped from his lips, it appears, that he had no hope nor expectation of ever being restored to his former outward happiness; this may be considered as a wish for the return of spiritual prosperity, wishing he was in as good frames of soul, and as much in the exercise of grace, and was as holy, as humble, as spiritual, and heavenly minded, as he was when he had so much of the world about him; and that he had but the like communion with God, and his gracious presence with him, as he had then. The state of the Lord's people, God-ward, is always the same; his election of them stands sure; the covenant of grace with them is unalterable; their interest in a living Redeemer always continues; grace in them is a principle, permanent and perpetual; but there may be, and often is, an alteration in their frames, and in the exercise of their graces, and in the open regard of God unto them; their graces may be low in exercise; there may be a decay of the life and power of godliness; their frames may change, and the presence of God may be withdrawn from them, and they may have no view of interest in salvation, at least not have the joys of it; wherefore, when sensible of all this, may be desirous it might be with them as it was before; that God would turn them again, and cause his face to shine upon them, that they might be comfortable; the particulars of Job's former case follow, which he desires a renewal of:

as [in] the days [when] God preserved me; either in a temporal sense; God having set an hedge of special providence about him, whereby he and his, his family and substance, were remarkably preserved; but now this was plucked up, and all were exposed to ravage and ruin; or in a spiritual sense, as he was both secretly and openly preserved, and as all the Lord's people are, in Christ, and in his hands, and by his power, spirit, and grace: the Lord preserves their souls from the evil of their own hearts, sin that dwells in them, that it shall not have the dominion over them; from the evil that is in the world, that they shall not be overcome by it, and carried away with if; and from the temptations of Satan, so as not to be devoured and destroyed by him, and from a final and total falling away; he preserves them in his own ways, safe to his kingdom and glory; but sometimes all this does not appear so evident unto them, as it might not to Job at this time; who observed the workings of his corruption, and the breaking out of them, in passionate words, wishes, and curses, and the temptations of Satan, who was busy with him to go further lengths, even to blaspheme and curse God; so that he might fear that God his defence was departed from him, the return of which he was desirous of; see Isa 49:14.

Job 29:3

Ver. 3. When his candle shined upon my head,.... Which may be understood either of outward prosperity, sometimes signified by a candle, Job 18:5; and may be called the candle of the Lord, because it is from him, it is of his lighting and setting up; and its shining on his head may denote the large measure and degree of it possessed by him, in allusion to torches carried on high to light with; or lamps, or candles, set up in the higher part of the house to give the more light; or to the sun in the firmament, and especially when in its meridian, and shines clearest right over our heads, and casts no shadow: or else it may be understood of light in a figurative sense, not of the light of nature in men, which, though called the candle of the Lord, Pr 20:27; yet, in man's fallen state, shines not clearly; and with respect to this there was no difference in Job than heretofore; but rather it is the light of grace, the true light, which had shone upon him and in him, but now not so clearly as formerly, and as he could wish for; or else the word of God, which is a light unto the feet, and a lamp to the path; or it may be, best of all, the favour of God, the light of his countenance he had before enjoyed, having had a comfortable display of his love, a clear view of interest in it, and had the blessings of it bestowed upon him, and enjoyed by him; and nothing was more desirable by him, as is by every good man, than the return of the light of God's countenance; and that he might be remembered with his special favour, as his people are, and as he had been in times past:

[and when] by his light I walked [through] darkness; that is, either by the light of outward prosperity he had escaped those calamities, distresses, and dangers, and got over those difficulties which attended others, though now surrounded with them; or by the light of divine grace, or of the word of God, and especially by and in the light of God's countenance, he walked cheerfully and comfortably, without any fear of the darkness of affliction and calamities, or of the dark valley of the shadow of death, or of the prince of darkness, or of the darkness of hell and damnation; but now clouds of darkness being about him, and he without the light of God's countenance, could not see the way in which he walked and therefore wished that that again might be lifted up upon him.

Job 29:4

Ver. 4. As I was in the days of my youth,.... Either taken literally, he being one like Obadiah, that feared God from his youth upward,
1Ki 18:3; or figuratively, for his former state of prosperity, when he was like a tree in autumn laden with ripe and rich fruit, and in great abundance; and so some render the words "in the days of my autumn", or "autumnity" {r}; though it may respect the time of his first conversion, the infancy and youth of his spiritual state, who, when first regenerated, was as a newborn babe, and then became a young man, and now a father in Christ, his living Redeemer: and Job wishes it was with him as in his youth, or in the early days of his conversion, at which season, generally speaking, there are great zeal and fervency of spirit, a flow of love and affection to God and the best things; large discoveries of his love, much sensible communion with him, and enjoyment of his presence; wherefore such returning seasons are desirable; see **Jer 2:2**;

when the secret of God [was] upon my tabernacle; either the secret power and

providence of God, which was upon his house and family, and all that belonged to him; or the secret of his love, which was manifested to him, and is from everlasting to everlasting on them that fear the Lord, as Job did; who had secret communion with God, his fellowship was with him; he dwelt in the secret place of the Almighty, and was taken into his secret chambers, where he had the greatest familiarity with him, see Ps 25:14. Some observe the word for "secret" is used for an "assembly" {s}, and take the sense to be, that the assembly of the saints and people of God was in his tabernacle or house; there they met together for religious worship, and where Job had often a comfortable opportunity, and wishes for the same again, see
Ps 42:1.

{r} yprx ymyb "in autumno dierum mearum", Hottinger. Thesaur. Phiolog. p. 507. "in diebus autumnitatis meae", Schultens; so the word signifies in Arabic, vid. Golium, col. 1415. Lud. Capell. in loc. {s} dwob "in societate Dei", Pagninus, Beza; "societas Dei", i.e. "con gregatio", Bolducius; so Jarchi.

Job 29:5

Ver. 5. When the Almighty [was] yet with me,.... Not merely by his powerful and providential presence, as he is with all men; but in a special manner by his gracious presence, which is a wonderful and distinguishing favour; but sometimes the people of God are without it, at least they think so, and which was now Job's case, see
Job 23:2; and therefore he desires he would return to him, and show him his face and favour:

[when] my children [were] about me; as olive plants about his table, in their youth; when he looked at them with great delight and pleasure, as his growing hopes; and, when grown up, and were not far from him, but were round about him, and lay near his heart, and whose welfare, temporal and spiritual, he was solicitous for; but now they were all taken away from him, and were no more: the word for "children" signifies also "servants" {t}, and may take in them, of whom he had many to do his work and business; to attend upon him, to wait his orders, and execute them, and guard his person; but now many of them were slain by the Sabeans and Chaldeans, and by fire from heaven; and those he had were very disrespectful to him, see Job 19:15.

{t} yren "juvenes mei", Tigurine version; "vel famuli vel filii", Mercerus, Drusius; so Jarchi.

Job 29:6

Ver. 6. When I washed my steps with butter,.... Not the steps of his house or palace; for to have done this, or his servants by his orders, as it would have been a very great impropriety, so a piece of great prodigality, which Job could never have been guilty of; but either his footsteps, the prints of his feet; and the sense be, that his cattle produced such a vast quantity of milk, that when his servants brought it from the fields to the dairy, their milk pails ran over in such abundance, that Job could not step out of his house, and take a walk in his fields, but he stepped into puddles of milk, of which butter was made: this is an exaggerated phrase, like that by which the land of Canaan is described as "flowing with milk and honey"; or rather this is to be understood of the washing of his feet, which are the instruments of stepping or walking. It was usual in those times, in the eastern countries, to wash their feet upon travelling, or at festivals; but then this was commonly done with water, not with butter, see
Ge 18:4; and the meaning can only be, that Job had such abundance of milk, or butter made of it, that he could, if he would, have washed his feet in it; indeed, they had used to anoint the feet with ointment; but whether cream or butter was any ingredient in it, and so the part is put for the whole, is not certain, see
Lu 7:38
Job 12:3; besides, that would have been more properly expressed by anointing than washing; it seems to be an hyperbole, an expression like that of Zophar, in Job 20:17; signifying the vast abundance of the increase and produce of Job's kine; who is said to wash his feet in milk or butter, as Asher is said to dip his feet in oil, because of the great plenty of it, De 33:24; the spiritual meditation upon the words may be this; the feet of the best of saints need washing, there being many failings and infirmities in their walk and conversation; in which they gather much pollution and faith daily; the proper wash for this is the blood of Christ, of which the layer in the tabernacle and temple was a type, at which the priests washed their hands and feet; but the word of God, called the sincere milk of the word, is the instrument or means of washing, or of directing souls to the fountain opened to wash in; so that with respect to that, the feet of saints, as the eyes of Christ, may be said to be washed with milk:

and the rock poured me out rivers of oil; another hyperbolical expression, like that in De 32:13, where honey is said to be sucked out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; as honey may be got out of a rock, because bees may make their nests and hives there, where it is laid up by them; so oil, in like manner, may be had from the flinty rock, olive trees growing on hills, mountains, and rocks, which yield oil in great abundance; near Jerusalem was a mount called Olivet, from thence: the land of Edom, or Idumea, where Job lived, abounded with cragged mountains and rocks; and there might be in Job's estate such on which olive trees grew in great plenty, as to produce vast quantities of oil: it is a very fanciful thought of Bolducius, that this rock was no other than a stone vessel, in which was oil, somewhat like the alabaster box in Mt 26:7; and which was plentifully poured on Job, when he was anointed high priest; and another learned man {u}, though he rejects the notion of its being a vessel for sacred use, yet is willing to allow it was an oil vessel for common use: as to the spiritual sense, it may be observed, that a rock in Scripture often signifies a divine Person, 1Co 10:4; it is an emblem of Christ, as oil also is of the Spirit of God and his grace, Mt 25:3; and which flows from Christ, who is full thereof, and that in such great abundance, as to be expressed by rivers; see **Joh 1:14**.

{u} Fortunat. Schacch. Elaeochrysm. Myroth. l. 2. c. 79. p. 715.

Job 29:7

Ver. 7. When I went out to the, gate through the city,.... Job having described his former state of happiness by the personal favours he enjoyed, and by the prosperity of his family, and his abundance of plenty at home, proceeds to give an account of the honour and respect he had from men of every age and rank abroad: though he had an affluence of the things of this world, he did not indulge himself at home in ease and sloth; but went abroad to take care of the public welfare, maintain public peace, and administer public justice among his neighbours; performing the office of a civil magistrate, which is often expressed in Scripture by going in and out before the people: Job went out from his own house to the gate of the city, where a court of judicature was kept, as it was usual in those times and countries to hold them in the gates of the city; see **Zec 8:16**; and to which he passed through the city, very probably, in great pomp and splendour, suitable to his office and character, which drew the eyes and attention of the people to him; by which it should seem that his house was on one side of the city, and the gate where justice was administered was on the other; though it may be rendered, "over the city" {o}, and the sense be, that he passed along as he that was over the city, the chief man in it, and president of the court of justice, see 2Ki 10:5;

[when] I prepared my seat in the street; where he sat, not as a teacher, though he was an instructor, not only of his family, but of his neighbours, as Eliphaz

himself testifies, **Job 4:3**; and it was usual for such to have seats to sit upon, as those had who succeeded Moses, and are said to sit in his chair; and it was usual to call to men and instruct them in open public places; hence Wisdom is said to utter her voice in the streets, in the opening of the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors, **Pr 1:20**; but Job here speaks of himself as a civil magistrate, as a judge upon the bench, who had a seat or throne erected for him to sit upon, while he was hearing and trying causes; and this was set up in the street under the open air, before the gate of the city, where the whole city might be convened together, and hear and see justice done to their neighbours; in such a street, before the gate of the city, Ezra read the law to Israel; and in such an one Hezekiah got the people of Israel together, and spoke comfortably to them when invaded by Sennacherib; see **Ne 8:2**; and the Arabs, to this day, hold their courts of justice in an open place under the heavens, as in a field, or in a market place {p}; and it is right that courts of justice should be open and accessible to all.

{o} tlq yle "super civitatem", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt; "super urbe", Schultens. {p} Norden's Travels in Egypt and Nubia, vol. 2. p. 140, 141, 158. See Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 5. sect. 6.

Job 29:8

Ver. 8. The young men saw me, and hid themselves,.... Through a veneration of him; which was much, since young men, through a vain conceit and opinion of themselves, are apt to treat their superiors in age with slight, neglect, and contempt; or through fear, lest he should spy them, and call them to him, and examine them closely concerning their conduct and behaviour, and reprove them for their youthful follies he might have knowledge of:

and the aged arose [and] stood up; as he passed by them, to show their respect unto him; or when he came into court, they rose up, and continued standing until he had took his seat; and even then kept the same posture, attending to his counsel and instruction, to his definitive sentence and decision of matters in debate; though they were venerable persons themselves, and such as before whom young men were to arise, Le 19:32; and were also men of wisdom and prudence,
Job 12:12; yet these men rose and stood up, paying a deference to Job's superior sense and judgment.

Job 29:9

Ver. 9. The princes refrained talking,.... Who were in court before Job came in, and were either talking with one another about indifferent matters, or were giving their opinion in a case before them; but no sooner did Job make his appearance, but they left off talking, and would not proceed any further; they laid a restraint upon their words, and curbed themselves from speaking any more till they had heard his opinion:

and laid [their] hand on their mouth; as a token of silence,
Jud 18:19.

Job 29:10

Ver. 10. The nobles held their peace,.... These may be in some respects inferior to the others; not princes of the blood, or sons of kings, who were properly princes, and yet great personages, of a noble extraction, and of considerable families: some think the leaders and generals of armies are meant, commanders and captains, and such like military officers, those sons of Mars, who are generally bold and daring, boisterous and blustering, and full of talk; and yet even these held their peace in the presence of Job:, or their "voice [was] hid" {r}; it could not be heard:

and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth; so that they had no use of it, and it was as if they had none, see **Eze 3:26**. Here are various expressions made use of, signifying the profound silence of great personages while Job was present; and this silence was owing either to a consciousness of their own weakness, and lest they should, by speaking before him, betray it, and he should expose them; or to the desire they had of hearing Job's opinion first, which was as an oracle to them, and usually determined matters in debate before them; such high sentiments did they entertain of Job's good sense and abilities.

{r} wabxn "occultabatur", Drusius; "occultabat se", Piscator.

Job 29:11

Ver. 11. When the ear heard [me], then it blessed me,.... The ear of the common people assembled together to hear causes tried, and how they would go; when they heard Job give his opinion in court, or the definitive sentence passed by him as a judge, they all applauded his wisdom and justice; they highly praised and commended him; in which sense the word "blessed" is used, Pr 31:28; or they wished a blessing on him; they prayed for his welfare, as it becomes people to do for those that are in authority, especially wise and faithful magistrates; or they accounted him a blessed man, and called him so, **Lu 1:48**; as he was, both in a temporal sense, being blessed with a great plenty of earthly things, and also blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, with an abundance of grace, and with a title to eternal glory; as well as he was blessed as a magistrate, with great wisdom, and with great integrity and uprightness in the discharge of his office:

and when the eye saw [me], it gave witness to me: of his gracefulness and gravity, of his honesty and faithfulness, of his good behaviour among his neighbours, and of his wise conduct in the courts of judicature.

Job 29:12

Ver. 12. Because I delivered the poor that cried,.... This honour and esteem he had not because of his grandeur and riches, because of his worldly wealth and substance, but because of the goodness of his disposition, and because of the good he did to men, his acts of pity and compassion to the poor, and of the justice he did to all men; the poor and the afflicted, when they cried to him for help, he delivered them out of the hands of their oppressors:

and the fatherless; the care and defence of which belongs to judges and civil magistrates, see Ps 82:1;

[and him that] had none to help him; as the poor and fatherless seldom have; there is power on the side of the oppressors of them, but they have few or none to take their parts, and to be their comforters, **Ec 4:1**; in these instances Job imitated God, and was a follower of him, as a dear child of his; who, when this and the other poor man cries unto him, he hears, saves, and delivers out of all their troubles; he is the helper, yea, the father of the fatherless, and the judge of the widow; and, when there is no help from men, he is a present help in times of need.

Job 29:13

Ver. 13. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me,.... That were ready to perish through the oppression of others, or through want of the necessaries of life, or through false charges brought, and through false witness bore against them, and so liable to a sentence of condemnation to death, or having it passed upon them; but Job taking their part, and searching thoroughly into their cause, not only respited them from destruction, but cleared them from the charges laid against them, and which brought the blessing of those persons on him; who blessed God for him, and blessed him, wished a blessing on him in their prayers to God, who had been such a happy instrument of their deliverance from ruin and destruction; see Pr 24:11;

and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy; by relieving her wants, defending her cause, and punishing those that oppressed her; which is the reverse of the character Eliphaz gives of Job, Job 22:9.

Job 29:14

Ver. 14. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me,.... Not the righteousness of his living Redeemer, the robe of righteousness and garment of salvation he had from him; though he had put on that by faith, and it was his clothing in the sight of God, which covered his person, and covered all his sins from the avenging eye of divine justice; and in which he was presented before God unblamable and irreprovable in his sight, and with which he was adorned and beautified, being made perfectly comely through it, and completely justified by it; but legal righteousness in the administration of his office as a magistrate; he put it on, that is, he exercised it, and he exercised it constantly from morning tonight, and day after day; as a man puts on his clothes in a morning, and keeps them on all the day, and which he is always repeating; and it was as visible in him, and to be seen and observed by all, as the clothes on his back; and it covered him all over as a garment does; no blemish was to be seen in him, or blame to be cast upon him, throughout the whole course of his administration; and this was a fence unto him against all calumny and reproach, as garments are against the inclemency of the weather; see 1Sa 12:3; so a godly conversation in the exercise of graces and virtues, and in the performance of duties both to God and man, is sometimes expressed by a putting them on, as garments are put on; see **Eph 4:24**; and these are an outward clothing to appear in before men, and should be shown forth with meekness and wisdom, so as to be beheld by men; and should be continually exercised and constantly performed; and then they are a covering with respect to men, and they appear harmless, blameless, and without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; and thus, by well doing, put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and such to the blush, those who falsely accuse their good conversation: and this in every sense was Job's case:

my judgment [was] as a robe and diadem; such as the high priest among the Jews wore in the execution of his office, which made him look grand and majestic; and it was usual in Job's time, as it is in ours, and has been the custom in all ages and countries, for judges and civil magistrates to be clothed in a different manner from others, as it is proper they should, to command an awe and reverence of them among the common people, and make them respectable to them: but Job did not so much regard his purple robe he was clad in, or the distinguishing turban he wore on his head, or whatever it was, and which might bear some resemblance to a mitre or a diadem; as it was his great concern to administer justice, which he reckoned his greatest honour, and was more ornamental to him than all the showy ensigns of his office; and it was this which gave him honour and esteem among all sorts of men, high and low: and his regard to the poor, before observed, did not arise from a foolish commiseration of them as poor men, and in order to get himself a name for his pity to them, but proceeded upon a principle of justice and equity, which he made the rule of his administration; he did not countenance the poor in his cause right or wrong; not the quality of the person, but the righteousness of his cause, was what he attended to; and he took his part not merely because he was a poor man, but seeing his cause was just.

Job 29:15

Ver. 15. I was eyes to the blind,.... Either in a literal sense: there was a law in Israel against putting a stumbling block before the blind, and a curse pronounced on those that caused them to wander out of the way; which implied that they ought to remove all impediments out of their way, and should lead, guide, and direct them in the right way; and this Job might do, if not in his own person, yet by his servants, and so was as eyes unto them, and especially by taking care of and providing for persons in such circumstances: or rather in a civil sense; such who were in perplexity and distress, oppressed by their neighbours, but did not know how to get justice done them, what steps to take, or methods to pursue, to obtain their right or secure it; these Job instructed with his good advice and counsel, and put them into a way of proceeding whereby they could be extricated out of their difficulties, and peaceably enjoy their own, see Nu 10:31, and it might be true of him in a spiritual sense; that he was eyes to his blind Heathen neighbours among whom he dwelt; who were ignorant of God, and of the living Redeemer, and of the way of life and salvation by him, and of their miserable and lost estate, and of their need of a Saviour; not being acquainted with the nature of sin, and the sad consequences of it, and with the way of atonement for it, nor with the mind and will of God, and the worship of him; all which he might be a means of enlightening their minds with: Eliphaz owns he instructed many, **Job 4:3**; thus ministers of the Gospel are eyes to the blind; for though they cannot give eyes, or spiritual sight to men, which is only from the Lord, yet they may be instruments of opening blind eyes, and of turning men from darkness to light, as the word preached by them is a means of "enlightening the eyes", Ac 26:18; whereby men come to see their lost estate, and the way of salvation by Christ:

and feet [was] I to the lame; either in a literal sense, as David was to Mephibosheth, when he sent for and maintained him at his own table, so that he had no occasion to seek for his bread elsewhere, **2Sa 9:13**; and Job might make a provision in some way or another for such sort of persons: or rather in a civil sense, such who were engaged in law suits, and had justice on their side, but for want of friends or money, or both, could not carry them on; these Job supported and supplied, and carried them through their suits, and got their cause for them.

Job 29:16

Ver. 16. I [was] a father to the poor,.... Not in a literal sense; for his children were rich as well as himself, while he had them; but in a civil sense, he was the patron of the poor; he was an advocate for them, he took their part, he pleaded their cause, defended their persons, and secured the little property they had; he had the pity and compassion of a father for them, and supplied their wants; he fed them and clothed them; he did not eat his morsel alone, but gave them part of it, and warmed them with the fleece of his flock:

and the cause [which] I knew not I searched out; any cause that was brought before him, he knew thing of before, and which, upon the opening of it, did not appear plain and easy, but had its difficulties; this he closely examined, and searched thoroughly into the merits of, till it appeared plain to him on which side the truth and justice of it lay; he did not hurry it over, and pass sentence, having only in a superficial manner considered it, as is too often the case; but after a long examination of the contending parties, and of the witnesses on both sides, to whom he gave an impartial hearing, he pronounced the decisive sentence; see Pr 25:2. Some think this refers to his diligent search and inquiry after causes that were not brought before him; he did, not wait for application to be made to him, but hearing of, or upon inquiry finding, that there were persons oppressed and distressed by cruel men, he of himself voluntarily offered his assistance, searched into their cause, made himself master of it, and freed them from their distresses; so different were his behaviour and character from that of the unjust judge, Lu 18:1; though others, choose to render the words, "the cause of him that I knew not", &c. {t}; of a stranger, of one that he had never seen before, of one that was most unknown to him in the world; the cause of such an one he took as, much pains with to get the true knowledge of, and do justice to, as of the dearest relation, the nearest neighbour, and the most intimate friend and acquaintance that he had.

{t} ytedy "quem non cognoveram", Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis; "ignotissimi", Schultens.

Job 29:17

Ver. 17. And I brake the jaws of the wicked,.... Their jaw teeth, or grinders, alluding to beasts of prey, who have such teeth, very large; the meaning may be, that Job confuted the arguments which wicked men made use of in their own defence, and against the poor, exposed the weakness of them, and made them ineffectual to answer their purposes; disabled tyrants and cruel oppressors from doing any further hurt and damage to the fatherless and helpless; was an instrument in the hand of God of breaking the power, and weakening the hands of such persons, and hindering them from doing the mischief they otherwise would; see
Pr 30:14;

and plucked the spoil out of his teeth; as David took the lamb out of the mouth of the bear and lion that came into his father's flock, and carried it off: thus Job delivered the poor out of the hands of such monsters in nature, comparable to beasts of prey, and saved them from being utterly ruined by them, and obliged them to restore unto them what they had in an unrighteous manner taken from them.

Job 29:18

Ver. 18. Then I said, I shall die in my nest,.... Job, amidst all his prosperity, knew he should die, death and the grave being appointed for all men; and he often thought of it, and of the manner of it; but he concluded that death was as yet some distance from him, as appears from the following clause; and that, when the time was come, he should not die on the ground, but in the city in which he lived {m}, in his house, and on his bed; that he should die with all his children about him, like a bird in its nest full of young; whereas now he was stripped of them all, and likely to die childless; that he should die amidst all his outward enjoyments, in an affluence of good things, in honour, credit, and esteem among men; whereas now he was deprived of all his substance, and had in contempt by friends and foes; and that he should die in great tranquillity of mind and peace of soul, in the enjoyment of the divine Presence, and under rich discoveries of his love and grace; whereas now God had hid himself from him, and the arrows of the Almighty stuck fast in him. Job now had dropped his former confidence, and yet after all he did die in all the circumstances he believed he should; see Job 42:10; and this confidence might rise not from any mercenary spirit in him, as if this would be the fruit and reward of his integrity and uprightness, justice and faithfulness, and as due to him on that account; but from the promises of God, which to the patriarchs were usually of temporal blessings, as types of spiritual ones; though it may be there was in this somewhat of the infirmity of the flesh, as in David, Ps 30:7; and an inattention to the uncertainty of all temporal enjoyments; nor might he then be so well acquainted with the doctrine of the cross he now had an experience of:

and I shall multiply [my] days as the sand; which is not to be numbered; an hyperbolical expression, to denote the long life he expected to enjoy, and which was promised to good men; and which Job, notwithstanding his present despair of it, was favoured and satisfied with, Ps 91:16. Some versions render it, "as the phoenix" {n}, a bird of that name, spoken of by many writers as a very long lived one; some say it lived five hundred years {o}, others five hundred forty {p}, others six hundred sixty {q}; yea, some, and so the Jewish writers, as Jarchi and others {r}, make it to live a thousand years, and some say {s} more; and it is reported of it, though not with sufficient evidence, that there is never but one of the kind at a time; which, perceiving its end drawing near, it makes a nest of cassia, frankincense, and other spices, and sets fire to it, and burns itself in it, and that out of its ashes comes forth an egg, which produces another; and some of the ancient writers, as Tertullian {t} particularly, have made use of this as an emblem of the resurrection; and to which some think Job has here respect; that he should live long like this bird, and then die and rise again; but inasmuch as this seems to be a fabulous bird, and that there is not, nor ever was, any such in being, it cannot well be thought that Job should allude unto it; though his making mention of his nest, in the former clause, may seem to favour it, and which has induced some to give into it {u}: others render it, "as the palm tree" {w}; between which and the phoenix there is thought to be some likeness on account of duration {x}, and both in the Greek tongue have the same name; the palm tree is an evergreen, and endures a long time; Pliny {y} speaks of a palm tree in his time at Delos, said to have been there from the days of Apollo, which is supposed to be 1400 years; and it is observed {z} that this tree does continue two or three hundred years; and this version may seem to be countenanced and confirmed by what follows: but since the Hebrew word here used is never used but of sand, it is best so to understand it here, seeing it as fully answers Job's purpose; which was to express his confidence of a very long life. Sand is frequently used in Scripture for what is innumerable; so qammokosia in Aristophanes {a}, for what cannot be numbered, and are equal to a mountain of sand.

{m} So Rufus Virginius used to call the villa where he dwelt, "Senectutio suae Nidulum", Plin. l. 6. Ep. 10. {n} lwxk "sicut phoenix", Pagninus; so Mercerus, Piscator. {o} Herodot Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 73. Pompon. Mela de situ Orbis, l. 6. c. 58. Tacit. Annal. l. 6. c. 28. {p} Solin. Polyhistor. c. 46. {q} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 2. {r} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 15. 2. Yalkut in loc. par. 1. fol. 152. 2. {s} Vid. Texelii Phoenix. l. 2. c. 1. p. 140. {t} De Resurrectione, c. 13. Vid. Clement. Rom. Ep. 1. ad Corinth. p. 60. & Felli Not. in ib. {u} Vid. Tentzelii Dissert. de Phoenice, &c. sect. 5. {w} wsper stelecov foinikov, Sept. "sicut palma", V. L. {x} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 4. {y} Ib. l. 16. c. 44. {z} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. l. vol. 4. p. 757. {a} Acharnes Act. 1. Sc. 1. & Scholia in ib.

Job 29:19

Ver. 19. My root [was] spread out by the waters,.... According to our version and others, Job here, and in the following verses, gives the reasons of his hope and confidence of his long life, and quiet and comfortable death amidst all his prosperity and happiness; which were founded upon his flourishing circumstances, and the great respect that was shown him among men; and this is the sense, if we read the words in the past tense, as we and many others do; or in the present tense, "my root is spread", &c. as others; but there are some interpreters, both Jewish and Christian {b}, that render them in the future tense, here and to the end of the chapter; and so they are a continuation of Job's hope and trust, in the times of his prosperity, that things would always continue as they were with him, and much more abundantly; and indeed all is true of Job, in every sense, and all may be taken into the account; and that these words, and the following, as they describe what had been, and at the then present time, when he concluded the above in his mind, was his case, so they may also declare what he believed would be always his case to the end of his days. Here he compares himself to a tree well rooted and happily situated by plenty of water, and which may be expressive both of his temporal and spiritual prosperity: his outward prosperity seemed to him to have been well settled and established, being like a tree that had taken root, and was like to continue, being watered with the favour and blessing of God, which maketh rich; and as to his spiritual estate, he was like a tree planted by a river of water, to which good men are often compared in Scripture, **Ps 1:3**; they are in general called trees of righteousness, and are sometimes likened to particular trees, as to olives, cedars, and palm trees; and some think, as Pineda, that it is to the latter Job here has respect; the last clause of Job 29:18 being in the Latin Vulgate version so rendered as to countenance this sense; and it may be observed that this tree having thick long leaves, and fruit full of juice, and its wood spongy, requires much water; and, as Pliny {c} says, delights in watery places; nor is it content with rain, but is better satisfied with waters flowing about it; hence it is often found necessary to dig about it, and lay its roots open, that the waters may more easily come at them, and flow about them {d} and so the words here in the original text are, "my root" was, is, or shall be "open to the waters" {e}: good men, as they are rooted in the love of God, and in the person of Christ, so they have, as Job had, the root of the matter in them, the truth of grace, or a principle of grace; which is watered, and kept alive and flourishing, by the love and favour of God shed abroad in the heart; by fresh supplies of grace out of the fulness of Christ, who is the fountain of gardens, and well of living waters; and by the means of grace, the word and ordinances, the still waters to which saints are led, and by which they are made to lie down, and where they are watered, refreshed, and comforted:

and the dew lay all night upon my branch; so that the water being at his root below, and the dew on his branch above, he must be in a fruitful and flourishing condition: the dew is a great blessing to the earth, to trees, herbs, and plants, and the cause of great fertility; and this may respect Job's temporal happiness, in the health and prosperity of his children, who were to him what branches are to a tree; and in the affluence of worldly good things, with which through the blessing of God, as dew upon him, he abounded; and may also have regard to his spiritual affairs: believers in Christ are branches in him, as Job was one; and the dew of divine grace and favour lies upon them continually, even in the darkest seasons; which revives and refreshes their souls, and makes them fruitful in the exercise of grace, and performance of good works; see Pr 19:12; the dew falls in the night, and the sooner it fails the

longer it lies, and is most useful: some render the words "upon my harvest", or "mowing" {f}; the dew is of great use in harvest time; mowers and reapers choose the morning to work in, when the stalks are moistened by the dew; and which is of use to keep the ears of corn from shedding by swelling the fibres, and so retaining the grains in their proper places {g}; see
Isa 18:4.

{b} Jarchi, Ben Gerson, Bar Tzemach, Schmidt, Schultens. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 13. 4. {d} Palladius apud Scheuchzer, ut supra (Physic. Sacr. l. vol. 4.), p. 759. {e} Mym yla xwtp "aperta ad aquas", Montanus, Bolducius, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis, Schultens. {f} yryuqb "in messe mea", Montanus, Tigurine version; "in segete mea", Cocceius; so the Targum. {g} Vid. Scheuchzer, ut supra. (Physic. Sacr. l. vol. 4. p. 759.)

Job 29:20

Ver. 20. My glory [was],.... "Is" or "shall be";

fresh in me; or "new" {g}; renewed day by day, having fresh additions made unto it; which was true of Job's temporal honour from among men; as a prince and civil magistrate, he had the honour given him that was due unto him, and this was continually increasing; and also of his spiritual glory, which lay, as every good man's glory does, in the grace of God wrought in him, and in the righteousness of Christ put upon him, Ps 45:9; which grace is renewed and increased in them by the Holy Spirit, and is therefore called the renewing of the Holy Ghost; and which righteousness is revealed "from faith to faith", **Ro 1:17**, from a lesser degree of it to a greater:

and my bow was renewed in my hand; "is" or "shall be"; meaning either his authority as a civil magistrate, increasing daily to the terror of evildoers, and to the praise, profit, and defence of them that did well; or his strength, as Gersom interprets it, his spiritual strength, as in Isa 40:31; where the same word is used as here; so that he grew stronger and stronger in faith and other graces, and went from strength to strength; the bow was a warlike instrument, and required strength to draw it, and is put for it; see Ge 48:22.

{g} vdx "nova", Mercerus, Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 29:21

Ver. 21. Unto me [men] gave ear,.... Or give ear, or shall give ear, being all ear; all attention to him, listening to what he said with the utmost diligence and earnestness; even all sorts of men, high and low, rich and poor, princes, nobles, and common people; this they had done, and Job concluded they still would do the same; see Job 29:9;

and waited; patiently, without any weariness, with pleasure and delight, without giving any interruption, or wishing his discourse was ended; and though continuing ever so long, were not impatient until it was finished:

and kept silence at my counsel; which was the thing waited for, and which when given, it was to the highest satisfaction; they acquiesced in it, and showed their approbation of it by their silence, not having anything to object to it, any alteration to be made in it, or any thing to be added to it; but being so complete and full, they were ready to take it at once, and act according to it; Job's counsel being like that of Ahithophel, which was as the oracle of God, 2Sa 16:23.

Job 29:22

Ver. 22. After my words they spake not again,.... Did not or would not make any reply to them; they did not attempt to change and alter them, to add unto them, or take from them, or in any wise to correct them, and much less to contradict them, and treat them with contempt; or "differed not", as Mr. Broughton renders it; differed not from them, but agreed to them; and differed not among themselves, but united in what Job said, as being full to the purpose, after which nothing more could be said; see **Ec 2:12**;

and my speech dropped upon them; his prophecy, as Jarchi, prophesying being expressed by dropping, **Am 7:16**; his doctrine dropped from his lips like the honeycomb, and was sweet, grateful, and delightful to his hearers, as the church's lips, **So 4:11**; or rather like the rain, as in De 32:2, when it falls and drops gently and easily, and so penetrates and soaks into the earth, and abides and does good: in like manner, when good and sound doctrine drops upon the hearers, so as to enter into their hearts, and work effectually in them, it does them good, and they rejoice at it, and are far from having anything to say against it.

Job 29:23

Ver. 23. And they waited for me as for the rain,.... The former rain, as appears by the following clause, which fell in autumn, about October, after seedtime, in order to nourish and cherish it, and bring it up; now as the husbandman waited for this, was in daily expectation of it, and greatly desired it, and longed for it; see **Jas 5:7**; so the people waited for Job, for his coming into their public assemblies, whether civil or religious, and longed to hear him speak, for their counsel and instruction, for their comfort and direction in all things they stood in need of:

and they opened their mouth wide [as] for the latter rain; which fell in the spring about March, in the time of harvest, which was of use to fatten the kernals of grain, and make them fuller, and the flour finer; now Job's hearers opened their mouths, as the dry and parched earth gapes for rain; or the husbandman, or the gardener, as the Targum, opens his mouth, and asks and prays for rain; or as a hungry and thirsty man opens his mouth to take in refreshment, or expresses thereby his desire of it; or as persons somewhat deaf open their mouths to hear the better, there being a way through the mouth to the internal ear, as anatomists {h} observe; which lies through the Eustachian tube, out of the palate, to the internal cavity of the ear, called the "concha"; wherefore such persons naturally open their mouths when they would hear attentively; all which expresses the eager desire of Job's hearers after his doctrine, which, like the rain, would be useful, profitable, and edifying to them; their view was not to indulge their curiosity, to please their ears, but to affect their hearts, and instruct their minds.

{h} Scheuchzer, ut supra. (Physic. Sacr. l. vol. 4. p. 759.)

Job 29:24

Ver. 24. [If] I laughed on them, they believed [it] not,.... Not that he at any time laughed at them, by way of derision; but when in a cheerful frame of mind, or in a merry mood, he used freedom and familiarity, and jested with them; but they could not believe that he did jest, or was in jest, he being a man always of such gravity and seriousness, that they concluded the smile on his countenance, and the pleasant turn of his expression, had a serious meaning in them; or such familiarity with them was so pleasing to them, that they could scarcely for joy believe that he did condescend to indulge such an air of pleasantry: or as Mr. Broughton renders it, and so some others to the same sense, "they would not be bold" {i}; familiarity with them did not breed contempt, as it sometimes does; they did not presume upon it, and grow bold and insolent, and make him their equal, and jest with him again; but still there was an awe upon them, and they behaved with reverence to him; and to show how great it was is the design of the expression:

and the light of my countenance they cast not down; they did not ruffle his mind, or disturb the serenity of it; or cause him to change his countenance, through any bold and indecent behaviour towards him, encouraged by the freedom and pleasantry he used with them; they did not put him to shame, or provoke him to anger and displeasure by any unbecoming deportment; they kept their distance, they did not detract from his authority and majesty, or in the least lessen that, but behaved with the same reverence and regard to him they ever did; see **Ge 4:6**.

{i} wnymay al "non tamen sibi sumebant audaciam", Michaelis; "neque tam audaces fiunt", Reimar apud Schultens.

Job 29:25

Ver. 25. I chose out their way,.... When his friends and neighbours came to him for advice in things civil, he marked out their way for them, directed what steps to take, what methods to pursue for their good; they desired him to choose for them, preferring his judgment to theirs, and were determined to abide by his choice of ways and means, and to follow his counsel; and in religious matters, he instructed them in their duty, both towards God and men, and proposed unto them what was most eligible, both with respect to doctrine and practice;

and sat chief; in all their public assemblies; he presided in their councils and courts of judicature; and when met together for religious worship, he sat in the chair of the teacher, and instructed them; he was chief speaker, as the Heathens said of the Apostle Paul, Ac 14:12;

and dwelt as a king in the army, or "troop" {k}. Mr. Broughton renders it with a garrison; Job was surrounded with multitudes of persons, that waited upon him on one account or another, who were ready to receive his words, and be obedient to them, as a king or general in the midst of an army, surrounded by his general officers, and the whole army encamped about him, doing him honour, and ready to obey whatever commands or instructions he should give them; some conclude from hence that Job was really a king, as being not a note of similitude, but of truth and reality, as in Mt 14:2; and so he might be; for in those times and countries every city almost had its king; though this is not necessarily supposed here; for the phrase seems only to denote the authority and influence Job had over men by his advice and instruction, which were as much regarded as from a king; and the majesty he appeared in, and the reverence in which he was had:

as one [that] comforteth the mourners: which some restrain to the king in his army, and connect them therewith thus, "when he comforteth the mourners" {l}; the soldiers mourning for some loss sustained, and slaughter made among them; whose minds the king or general by a set speech endeavours to cheer, and comfort, and allay their fears, and animate them to intrepidity and fortitude, when all eyes are upon him and attentive to him; and so attentive were Job's hearers to him. Bar Tzemach observes, that the copulative w, or "and", is wanting, and so is a clause by itself, and expresses something distinct from the forager, and may be supplied, "and I was as one that comforteth the mourners"; as a wise man that comforteth them, as Aben Ezra explains it; like one that made it his business to visit mourners in affliction, on account of the death of a relation, and the like: see Job 11:19; and speaks comfortable words to them, to support them under their sorrow; when such an one used to speak alone, and all stood silent before him, and attentive to him; and in a like position was Job, when he gave his instructions to those about him; and he was, no doubt, a comforter of mourners himself, being either in temporal afflictions, or in spiritual troubles; comforted those that were cast down in either sense, and was a type of Christ, who was appointed to comfort all that mourn in Zion.

{k} dwdgb "in agmine", Montanus, Bolducius; "in turma", Mercerus, Drusius, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens. {l} rvak "quando", Junius & Tremellius, Drusius; "quum vel quando", Schmidt.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 30:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 30

Job in this chapter sets forth his then unhappy state and condition, in contrast with his former state of prosperity described in the preceding chapter: things had taken a strange turn, and were just the reverse of what they were before; he that was before in such high esteem and credit with all sorts of men, young and old, high and low, rich and poor, now is had in derision by the meanest and basest of men, whose characters are described, Job 30:1; and the instances of their contempt of him by words and gestures are given, Job 30:9; he who enjoyed so much ease of mind, and health of body, is now filled with distresses of soul, and bodily diseases, Job 30:15; and he who enjoyed so much of the presence of God, and communion with him, and of his love and favour, was now disregarded, and, as he thought, cruelly used by him, who not only had destroyed his substance, but was about to bring him to the grave, Job 30:20; all which came upon him, though he had a sympathizing heart with the poor, and them that were in trouble, and when he expected better things, Job 30:25; and he close the chapter, lamenting his sad and sorrowful circumstances, Job 30:29.

Ver. 1. But now [they that are] younger than I have me in derision,.... Meaning not his three friends, who were men in years, and were not, at least all of them, younger than he, see Job 15:10; nor were they of such a mean extraction, and such low-lived creatures, and of such characters as here described; with such Job would never have held a correspondence in the time of his prosperity; both they and their fathers, in all appearance, were both great and good; but these were a set of profligate and abandoned wretches, who, as soon as Job's troubles came upon him, derided him, mocked and jeered at him, both by words and gestures; and which they might do even before his three friends came to him, and during their seven days' silence with him, and while this debate was carrying on between them, encouraged unto it by their behaviour towards him; to be derided by any is disagreeable to flesh and blood, though it is the common lot of good men, especially in poor and afflicted circumstances, and to be bore patiently; but to be so used by junior and inferior persons is an aggravation of it; as Job was, even by young children, as was also the prophet Elisha, **2Ki 2:23**; see Job 19:18;

whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock; either to have compared them with the dogs that kept his flock from the wolves, having some good qualities in them which they had not; for what more loving or faithful to their masters, or more vigilant and watchful of their affairs? or to set them at meat with the dogs of his flock; they were unworthy of it, though they would have been glad of the food his dogs ate of, they living better than they, whose meat were mallows and juniper roots, Job 30:4; and would have jumped at it; as the prodigal in want and famine, as those men were, would fain have filled his belly with husks that swine did eat; but as no man gave them to him, so Job disdained to give the meat of his dogs to such as those; or to set them "over" {m} the dogs of his flock, to be the keepers of them, to be at the head of his dogs, and to have the command of them; see the phrase in **2Sa 3:8**; or else to join them with his dogs, to keep his flock with them; they were such worthless faithless wretches, that they were not to be trusted with the care of his flock along with his dogs. It was usual in ancient times, as well as in ours, for dogs to be made use of in keeping flocks of sheep from beasts of prey, as appears from Orpheus {n}, Homer {o}, Theocritus {p}, and other writers: and if the fathers of those that derided Job were such mean, base, worthless creatures, what must their sons be, inferior to them in age and honour, if any degree of honour belonged to them?

{m} yblk Me "super canes", Noldius, p. 739. No. 1825. {n} De Lapidibus, Hypoth. ver. 53, 54. {o} Iliad. 10. wv kunev peri mhla, &c. v. 183. & Iliad 12. v. 303. {p} c' amin esti kuwn filopoimniov, &c. Idyll. 5. v. 106. & Idyll. 6. v. 9, 10.

Job 30:2

Ver. 2. Yea, whereto [might] the strength of their hands [profit] me,.... For though they were strong, lusty, hale men, able to do business, yet their strength was to sit still and fold their hands in their bosoms, so that their strength was of no profit or avail to themselves or others; they were so slothful and lazy, that Job could not employ them in any business of his to any advantage to himself; and this may be one reason, among others, why he disdained to set them with the dogs of his flock to keep it; for the fathers seem to be intended all along to Job 30:8; though it matters not much to which of them the words are applied, since they were like father like son:

in whom old age was perished? who did not arrive to old age, but were soon consumed by their lusts, or cut off for their sins; and so the strength and labour of their hands, had they been employed, would have been of little worth; because the time of their continuance in service would have been short, especially being idle and slothful: some understand it of a lively and vigorous old age, such as was in Moses; but this being not in them, they were unfit for business, see **Job 5:26**; or they had not the endowments of old age, the experience, wisdom, and prudence of ancient persons, to contrive, conduct, and manage affairs, or direct in the management of them, which would make up for lack of strength and labour. Ben Gersom, Bar Tzemach, and others, interpret the word of time, or the time of life, that was perished or lost in them; their whole course of life, being spent in sloth and idleness, was all lost time.

Job 30:3

Ver. 3. For want and famine [they were] solitary,.... The Targum interprets it, without children; but then this cannot be understood of the fathers; rather through famine and want they were reduced to the utmost extremity, and were as destitute of food as a rock, or hard flint, from whence nothing is to be had, as the word signifies, see **Job 3:7**;

fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste: to search and try what they could get there for their sustenance and relief, fleeing through fear of being taken up for some crimes committed, or through shame, on account of their miserable condition, not caring to be seen by men, and therefore fled into the wilderness to get what they could there: but since men in want and famine usually make to cities, and places of resort, where provision may be expected; this may be interpreted not of their flying into the wilderness, though of their being there, perhaps banished thither, see Job 30:5; but of their "gnawing" {q}, or biting the dry and barren wilderness, and what they could find there; where having short commons, and hunger bitten, they bit close; which, though extremely desolate, they were glad to feed upon what they could light on there; such miserable beggarly creatures were they: and with this agrees what follows.

{q} hyu Myqreh "qui rodebant in solitudine", V. L. "rodentes siccitatem", Schultens.

Job 30:4

Ver. 4. Who cut up mallows by the bushes,.... Which with the Troglodytes were of a vast size {r}; or rather "upon the bush" {s} or "tree"; and therefore cannot mean what we call mallows, which are herbs on the ground, and grow not on trees or bushes; and, besides, are not for food, but rather for medicine: though Plutarch {t} says they, were the food of the meaner sort of people; so Horace {u} speaks of them as such; and the word in the original is near in sound to a mallow; but it signifies something salt, wherefore Mr. Broughton renders it "salt herbs"; so Grotius, such as might grow by the seaside, or in salt marshes; and in Edom, or Idumea, where Job lived, was a valley of salt, see 2Ki 14:7. Jarchi says it is the same with what the Syrians in their language call "kakuli", which with them is a kind of pulse; but what the Turks at this day call "kakuli" is a kind of salt herb, like to "alcali", which is the food of camels {x} the Septuagint render the word by "alima"; and, by several modern learned men, what is intended is thought to be the "halimus" of Dioscorides, Galen, and Avicenna; which is like unto a bramble, and grows in hedges and maritime places; the tops of which, when young and tender, are eaten, and the leaves boiled for food, and are eaten by poor people, being what soon filled the belly, and satisfied; and seem to be the same the Moors call "mallochia", and cry about the streets, as food for the poor to buy {y}: however it appears upon the whole to be the tops or leaves of some sort of shrub, which Idumean people used to gather and live upon. The following story is reported in the Talmud {z} concerning King Jannai, who

"went to Cochalith in the wilderness, and there subdued sixty fortified towns; and, upon his return, he greatly rejoiced, and called all the wise men of Israel, and said unto them, our fathers ate "malluchim" (the word used in this text of Job) at the time they were employed in building the sanctuary; so we will eat "malluchim" on remembrance of our fathers; and they set "malluchim" on tables of gold, and they ate;"

which the gloss interprets herbs; the name of which, in the Syriac language, is "kakuli"; the Targum is, who plucks up thorns instead of eatable herbs. Some {a} render the word "nettles", see Job 30:7;

juniper roots [for] their meat, or "bread" {b}; with the roots of which the poor were fed in time of want, as Schindler {v} observes: that bread may be, and has been made out of roots, is certain, as with the West Indians, out of the roots of "ages" and "jucca" {c}; and in particular juniper roots in the northern countries have been used for bread {d}; and there were a people in Ethiopia above Egypt, who lived upon roots of reeds prepared, and were called "rhisophagi" {e}, "root eaters": some render the words, "or juniper roots to heat", or "warm with" {f}, as the word is used in Isa 47:14; and coals of juniper have in them a very great and vehement heat, see Ps 120:3; but if any part of the juniper tree was taken for this purpose, to warm with when cold, one should think the branches, or the body of the tree, should be cut down, rather than the roots dug up: another sense is given by some {g}, that meat or bread is to be understood of the livelihood these persons got by digging up juniper roots, and selling them: there are others that think, that not the roots of juniper, but of "broom" {h}, are meant, whose rape, or navew, or excrescence from the roots of it, seem to be more fit food. All this agrees with the Troglodytes, whom Pliny {i} represents as thieves and robbers, and, when pressed with famine, dig up herbs and roots: cutters of roots are reckoned among the worst of men by Manetho {k}.

{r} Diodorus Siculus, l. 3. p. 175. {s} xyv yle "super virgulto", Montanus, Schultens; "super arbustum", Bochart. {t} In symposio septem sap. {u} "-----me pascunt olivae. Me cichorea levesque malvae". Carmin. l. 1. Ode. 31. & Epod. Ode. 2. {x} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 760. {y} Ibid. vid. Reinesium de Lingua Punic. c. 9. S. 20, 21. {z} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 66. 1. {a} David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 80. 3. {b} Mmxl "panis eorum", Montanus, Michaelis, Schultens. {v} Lexic. col. 1775. {c} Pet. Martyr. de Angleria, decad. 1. l. 1. {d} Olaus Magnus, de Ritu Gent. Septent. l. 12. c. 4. {e} Diod. Sic. l. 3. p. 159. {f} "Ad calefaciendum se", Pagninus; so Kimchi, Sepher Shorash rad,
Mmx. {g} Hillerus apud Schultens in loc. {h} Mymtr vrv "radix genistarum", Michaelis, Schultens; so some in Mercerus, Drusius, & Gussetius, p. 839. {i} Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 8. {k} Apotelesm. l. 5. v. 183.

Job 30:5

Ver. 5. They were driven from among [men],.... From towns and cities, and all civil society, as unfit to be among them; not for any good, it may be observed, but for crimes that they had done, like our felons, and transported persons:

they cried after them as [after] a thief; as they were driven and run along, the people called after them, saying, there goes a thief; which they said by way of abhorrence of them, and for the shame of them, and that all might be warned and cautioned against them; and, generally speaking, such as are idle and slothful, and thereby become miserable, are pilferers and thieves.

Job 30:6

Ver. 6. To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys,.... Or "brooks" {l}, in such hollow places as were made by floods and streams of waters:

[in] caves of the earth, and [in] the rocks; where they betook themselves for fear of men, and through shame, being naked and miserable not fit to be seen: Job has respect to the Horites and Troglodytes, his neighbours, who dwelt in such places chiefly.

{l} Mylxn "torrentium", Tigurine version, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Job 30:7

Ver. 7. Among the bushes they brayed,.... Like wild asses; so Sephorno, to which wicked men are fitly compared, Job 11:12; or they "cried", or "groaned" {m}, and "moaned" among the bushes, where they lay lurking; either they groaned through cold, or want of food; for the wild ass brays not but when in want, **Job 6:5**;

under the nettles they were gathered together; or "under thistles" {n}, as some, or "under thorns", as {o} others; under thorn hedges, where they lay either for shelter, or to hide themselves, or to seize upon a prey that might pass by; and so were such sort of persons as in the parable in Lu 14:23; it not being usual for nettles to grow so high as to cover persons, at least they are not a proper shelter, and much less an eligible one; though some render the words, they were "pricked" {p}, blistered and wounded, a word derived from this being used for the scab of leprosy, Le 13:6; and so pustules and blisters are raised by the sting of nettles: the Targum is,

"under thorns they were associated together;"

under thorn hedges, as before observed; and if the juniper tree is meant in Job 30:4, they might be said to be gathered under thorns when under that; since, as Pliny {q} says, it has thorns instead of leaves; and the shadow of it, according to the poet {r}, is very noxious and disagreeable.

{m} wqhny "clamabant", Vatablus, Mercerus; so Ben Gerson; "gemebant", Michaelis; so Broughton. {n} lwrx txt "sub carduis", Vatablus. {o} "Sub sentibus", V. L. "sub vepreto aliquo", Tigurine version; "sub vepribus", Cocceius; "sub spina", Noldius, p. 193. Schultens. {p} wxpoy "pungebantur", Junius & Tremellius; "se ulcerant", Gussetius, p. 565. so Ben Gersom; "they smarted", Broughton. {q} Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 24. {r} "Juniperi gravis umbra----" Virgil. Bucolic. Eclog. 10.

Job 30:8

Ver. 8. [They were] children of fools,.... Their parents were fools, or they themselves were such; foolish children, or foolish men, were they that derided Job; and their derision of him was a proof of it: the meaning is not that they were idiots, or quite destitute of reason and natural knowledge, but that they were men of slender capacities; they were "Nabal like", which is the word here used of them; and, indeed, it may easily be concluded, they could not have much knowledge of men and things, from their pedigree, education, and manner of living before described; though rather this may signify their being wicked men, or children of such, which is the sense of the word "fool" frequently in the Psalms of David, and in the Proverbs of Solomon; and men may be fools in this sense, as having no understanding of divine and spiritual things, who yet have wit enough to do evil, though to do good they have no knowledge:

yea, children of base men, or "men without a name" {s}; a kind without fame, Mr. Broughton renders it; an infamous generation of men, famous for nothing; had no name for blood, birth, and breeding; for families, for power and authority among men, having no title of honour or of office; nor for wealth, wisdom, nor strength, for which some have a name; but these men had no name but an ill one, for their folly and wickedness; had no good name, were of no credit and reputation with men; and perhaps, strictly and literally speaking, were without a name, being a spurious and bastardly breed; or living solitary in woods and deserts, in cliffs and caves; they belonged not to any tribe or nation, and so bore no name:

they are viler than the earth; on which they trod, and who are unworthy to tread upon it; and out of which their vile bodies were made, and yet were viler than that which is the basest of the elements, being most distant from heaven, the throne of God {t}; they were not so valuable as some parts of the earth, the gold and silver, but were as vile as the dross of the earth, and viler than that; they were crushed and bruised, and "broken" more than the earth, as the word {u} signifies; they were as small and as contemptible as the dust of the earth and the mire of the streets, and more so; or than the men of the earth, as Aben Ezra observes, than the meanest and worst, and vilest of men: Mr. Broughton renders it, "banished from the earth"; smitten, stricken, and driven out of the land where they had dwelt, Job 30:5; whipped out of it, as some translate the word {w}, as vagabonds; as a lazy, idle, pilfering set of people, not fit to be in human society; and by such base, mean, lowly people, were Christ and his apostles ill treated; see Mt 23:33.

{s} Mv ylb "absque nomine", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so Beza, Mercerus, Piscator, Drusius, Michaelis, Cocceius. {t} See Weemse's Observat. Natural. c 3. {u} wakn "contriti", Montanus, Bolducius; so the Targum. {w} "Flagellati", Schultens.

Job 30:9

Ver. 9. And now am I their song,.... The subject of their song, of whom they sung ballads about the streets, in public places, and at their festivals and merriments, as Christ the antitype of Job was the song of the drunkard, Ps 69:12; see **La 3:14**; or the meaning may be, they rejoiced in his afflictions and calamities, and made themselves merry with them, which was cruel and inhuman, as David's enemies did in his, and those abject, mean, base people, like those that derided Job: and so the Edomites rejoiced over the children of Judah, in the day of their destruction, and as the inhabitants of Popish countries will rejoice over the witnesses when slain, and make merry, Ps 35:15;

yea, I am their byword: all their talk was about him continually, and at every turn would use his name proverbially for an hypocrite, or a wicked man; and thus Christ, of whom Job was a type, became a proverb in the mouth of the Jews, Ps 69:11; and as the Jews themselves now are with others, Jer 24:9.

Job 30:10

Ver. 10. They abhor me,.... As it is no wonder they should, since his inward and most intimate friends did, Job 19:19; they abhorred him, not for any evil in him; Job was ready enough to abhor that himself, and himself for it, as he did when sensible of it, Job 42:6; but for the good that was in him, spoken or done by him; which carried in it a reproof to them they could not bear; see **Am 5:10**; they abhorred him also because of his present meanness and poverty, and because of his afflictions and distresses; and particularly the diseases of his body; so Christ was abhorred by the Scribes, Pharisees and elders of the people, the three shepherds his soul loathed, and their soul abhorred him for his meanness and for his ministry: and even by the whole nation of the Jews, by the body of the people, particularly when they preferred Barabbas, a thief and a murderer, to him, Mr 15:7; see
Zec 11:8;

they flee from me; as from some hideous monster, or infectious person, as if he had the plague on him, or some nauseous disease, the stench of which they could not bear; so Christ his antitype was used by: his people; when they saw him in his afflictions they hid their faces from him, did not care to look at him, or come nigh him, Isa 53:3;

and spare not to spit in my face; not in his presence only, as some think, which is too low a sense, but literally and properly in his face, when they vouchsafed to come near him; in this opprobrious way they used him, than which nothing was a greater indignity and affront; and we need not scruple to interpret it in this sense of Job, since our Lord, whose type he was in this and other things, was so treated,
Isa 50:6.

Job 30:11

Ver. 11. Because he hath loosed my cord,.... Not his silver cord, for then he must have died immediately, Ec 12:6; though it may be understood of the loosening of his nerves through the force of his disease, and the afflictions he endured from God and man, see
Job 30:17; or rather of the shattered state and condition of his family and substance; which, while he enjoyed, he had respect and reverence from men; but now all being loosed, scattered, and destroyed, he was treated with derision and scorn; or, better still, of his power and authority as a civil magistrate, by which, as with a cord, he bound many to subjection and obedience to him, and which commanded reverence of him; but this being now loosed and removed from him, persons of the baser sort behaved in an insolent manner towards him; there is a "Keri", or a marginal reading of this clause, which we follow; but the "Cetib", or written text, is "his cord"; and so Mr. Broughton renders it, "he hath loosed his string"; which he explains of the string or rein of his government, that holdeth base men from striving with the mighty, and which comes to the same sense; for the power and authority Job had as a governor were of God, and which he had now loosened; the allusion may be to the string of a bow, which being loosed, it cannot cast out the arrow; and respect may be had to what Job had said,
Job 29:20, "my bow was renewed in my hand"; it then abode in strength, and its strength was renewed; but now he had lost his power and strength, at least it was greatly weakened, that he could not defend himself, nor punish the wicked:

and afflicted me; that is, God, who is also understood in the preceding clause, though not expressed. Job's afflictions were many, and there were second causes of them, who were the movers, instruments, and means of them, as Satan, the Sabeans and Chaldeans, yet they were of God, as the appointer, orderer, and sender of them; and so Job understood them, and always as here ascribed them to him; wherefore there was a just cause for them, and an end to be answered by them, and it became Job patiently to bear them, and to wait the issue of them: now, on this account, the above persons were emboldened and encouraged to use Job in the ill manner they did:

they have also let loose the bridle before me; the restraints that were upon them when Job was in his prosperity, and had the reins of government in his hand; these they now cast off, and showed no manner of reverence of him, nor respect for him; and the bridle that was upon their mouths, which kept them from speaking evil of him while he was in power, now they slipped it from them, and gave themselves an unbounded liberty in deriding, reproaching, and reviling him; see Ps 39:1; and this they did before him, in his presence and to his face, who before were mute and silent.

Job 30:12

Ver. 12. Upon [my] right [hand] rise the youth,.... "Springeth", as Mr. Broughton translates the word; such as were just sprung into being, as it were; the word {n} seems to have the signification of young birds that are not fledged; have not got their feathers on them, but are just got out of the shell, as it were; and such were these young men: some render the word the "flower" {o}; as if the flower of men, the chief and principal of them, were meant, such as were Job's three friends, who are here distinguished from the mean and baser sort before spoken of; but the word even in this sense signifies young men, who are like buds and flowers just sprung out, or who are beardless boys, or whose beards are just springing out; so the young priests are in the Misnah {p} called "the flowers of the priesthood": now such as these rose up, not in reverence to Job, as the aged before did, but in an hostile way, to oppose, resist, reproach, and deride him; they rose up on his right hand, took the right hand of him, as if they were his superiors and betters; or they stood at his right hand, took the right hand to accuse him, as Satan did at Joshua's; see Ps 109:6;

they push away my feet; they brought heavy charges and violent accusations against him, in order to cast him down, and trample upon him; nor would they suffer him to stand and answer for himself; he could have no justice done him, and so there was no standing for him. If this was to be understood literally, of their pushing at him to throw him down to the ground, or of an attempt trip up his heels, so that his feet were almost gone, and his steps had well nigh slipped, it was very rude and indecent treatment of him indeed:

and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction; as, in besieging a town, mounts, forts, and batteries are raised to destroy it, so those persons made use of all ways and means to destroy Job; or they trod upon him, and made him as a path or causeway to walk upon, in order utterly to destroy him. Mr. Broughton renders the words, "they cast upon me the causes of their woe", imputed all their calamities and miseries to him, reproached him on that account, and now were resolved to revenge themselves on him.

{n} hxrp "pullities", Schultens. {o} "Flos", Schmidt, Michaelis. {p} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 7.

Job 30:13

Ver. 13. They mar my path,.... Hindered him in the exercise of religious duties; would not suffer him to attend the ways and worship of God, or to walk in the paths of holiness and righteousness; or they reproached his holy walk and conversation, and treated it with contempt, and triumphed over religion and godliness:

they set forward my calamity; added affliction to affliction, increased his troubles by their reproaches and calumnies, and were pleased with it, as if it was profitable as well as pleasurable to them, see **Zec 1:15**;

they have no helper; either no person of note to join them, and, to abet, assist, and encourage them; or they needed none, being forward enough of themselves to give him all the distress and disturbance they could, and he being so weak and unable to resist them; nor there is "no helper against them" {q}; none to take Job's part against them, and deliver him out of their hands, see **Ec 4:1**.

{q} wml "adversus illos", Beza, Schmidt, Michaelis; so Noldius, p. 514.

Job 30:14

Ver. 14. They came [upon me] as a wide breaking in [of waters],.... As when a wide breach is made in the banks of a river, or of the sea, the waters rush through in great abundance, with great rapidity and swiftness; and with a force irresistible; and in like manner did Job's enemies rush in upon him in great numbers, overwhelming him in an instant, and he not able to oppose them; or as, when a wide breach is made in the wall of a city besieged, the besiegers pour themselves in, and bear down all before them: and thus Job in a like violent manner was run upon, and bore down by the persons before described:

in the desolation they rolled themselves [upon me]; as when a breach is made in a bank of a river, or of the sea, the waters roll themselves, one wave and flood over another; or, as when a breach is made in a wall, "in the broken place they tumble"; as Mr. Broughton renders it; the soldiers tumble one over another in haste, to get possession and seize the plunder: in such like manner did Job's enemies roll themselves on him, in order to crush and destroy him; and it may be rendered, "because of the desolation" {r}, because of bringing calamity on him in order to make him desolate; they came pouring in upon him with all their numbers, force, and strength, to bear him down, and crush him to the earth, as grass may be rolled upon, and beaten down by heavy bodies.

{r} hav txt "pro desolatione", Pagninus, Montanus; "propter vestalionem", Noldius, p. 3. No. 1864.

Job 30:15

Ver. 15. Terrors are turned upon me,.... Not the terrors of a guilty conscience, for Job had a clear one, and held fast his integrity; nor the terrors of a cursing and condemning law, for he knew he was justified by his living Redeemer, and his sins forgiven for his sake; nor the terrors of death, for that he had made familiar to him, and greatly desired it; nor the terrors of a future judgment, for there was nothing he was more solicitous for than to appear before the judgment seat of God, and take his trial there; but the afflictions that were upon him from the hand of God that was turned on him, who now hid his face from him, and withheld the influences of his grace and layout, and appeared as an enemy, and as a cruel one to him; the reason of all which he knew not, and this threw him into consternation of mind, and filled him with terror. Some {s} read the words

"my glory is turned into terrors;"

instead of being in the honour and glory, prosperity and happiness, he had been in, he was now possessed of terrors and distresses of various kinds: others render the words, "he is turned against me, as terrors", or "into terrors", or "with [them]" {t}; God cannot be turned or changed in his nature, in his will, counsel, purposes, and decrees, nor in his love and affection to his people; but he may turn in the outward dispensations of his providence according to his unchangeable will, as from evil to good, **Jon 3:9**; so from doing good to evil, Isa 63:10; this is complained of by the church, **La 3:3**; and deprecated by Jeremiah, Jer 17:17; or there is "a turn, terrors are upon me"; there was a very visible turn in Job's affairs in many respects, in his health, substance, and family, and particularly in this; while he was in his office as a civil magistrate, and in all the glory of it, he was a terror to evil doers; and young men, when he appeared, hid themselves for fear of him; but now those impudently rise up against him, and are terrors to him: or there is an "overthrow" {u}, an overturning of things, as of his civil and temporal affairs, so of his spiritual ones; instead of that peace, serenity, and tranquillity of mind he had enjoyed; now nothing but terror and distress of mind on account of his afflictions and troubles:

they pursue my soul as the wind; terrors one after another; they pursued him closely, with great swiftness, and with a force irresistible, like the wind; they pursued his soul, his life, and threatened the taking away of it: the word for soul is not the usual word for it; it signifies "my principal one", as in the margin, as the soul is the principal part of man, the immortal breath of God, the inhabitant in the tenement of the body, the jewel in the cabinet, immaterial and immortal, and of more worth than the whole world; or "my princely one", being of a princely original, is from God, the Father of spirits, of a noble extract: Mr. Broughton renders it my "nobility", having princely rule and government in the body; that using the members of the body as its instruments; and especially it may be said to have such rule, when grace is implanted in it, as a ruling governing principle; and the Targum is, my principality or government: it may be rendered, "my free" {w}, liberal, ingenuous, and munificent one: Job had such a generous and beneficent soul; but now all means of exercising generosity and liberality were cut off from him; and particularly he had find a free ingenuous one, as he was actuated by the free spirit of God, Ps 51:12, where this word is used; but now terrors pursuing him, a spirit of bondage unto fear was brought upon him: some {x} consider it as an apostrophe to God, "thou pursues, my soul, O God", &c. but rather the meaning is, a distress or affliction pursued it, or everyone of the above terrors:

and my welfare passeth away as a cloud; or "my salvation" {y}; not spiritual and eternal salvation, that was firm and stable, being fixed by the unalterable decree of God, secured in the covenant of grace, and engaged for to be wrought out by his living. Redeemer, and of which he had an application by the Spirit of God, and was possessed of the blessings of it; and though the joys and comforts of it, and views of interest in it, may go off for a while, yet Job seems to have had a strong faith of interest in it, and a lively and well grounded hope of its being his, Job 13:15; but his temporal salvation, health, and happiness, were gone suddenly, swiftly, utterly, entirely, totally, as a cloud dissolved into rain, or dissipated by the rays of the sun, or driven away with the wind, so as to be seen no more; nor had he any hope of its being restored to him: some understand this, as Sephorno, of the salvation with which he had saved others; but it was no more in the power of his hands, and the remembrance of it was gone from those who shared in it; see **Ho 6:4**.

{s} So some in Bar Tzemach in loc. {t} twhlb yle Kphh "conversus est contra me, sicut terrores", Schmidt; "in meros terrores, vel cum terroribus", Michaelis. {u} "Eversio", Schultens. {w} ytbdn "principalem meam", Mercerus; "meam principem", Vatablus, Piscator; "meam spontaneam", Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis; "meam ultroneam", Drusius; "generosum meam spiritum", Schultens. {x} Schmidt. {y} ytevy "salus mea", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Job 30:16

Ver. 16. And now my soul is poured out upon me,.... Either in prayer to God for help and deliverance; or rather he was dissolved as it were in floods of tears, because of his distress and anguish; or his spirits were sunk, his strength and courage failed, and his heart melted, and was poured out like water; yea, his soul was pouring out unto death, and he was, as he apprehended, near unto it; his body was so weakened and broken by diseases, that it was like a vessel full of holes, out of which the liquor runs away apace; so his life and soul were going away from him, his vital spirits were almost exhausted:

the days of affliction have taken hold upon me; afflictions seize on good men as well as others, and on them more than others; and there are certain times and seasons for them, appointed and ordered by the Lord; and there is a limited time, they are not to continue always, only for some days, for a time, and but a little time, and then they will have an end; but till that time comes, there can be no deliverance from them; being sent they come, coming they seized on Job, they laid hold on him, they "caught" him, as Mr. Broughton renders it, and held him fast, and would not let him go; nor could he get clear of them till God delivered him, who only can and does deliver out of them in his own time and way.

Job 30:17

Ver. 17. My bones are pierced in me in the night season,.... Such was the force of his disease, that it pierced and penetrated even into his bones, and the marrow of them; and such the pain that he endured in the muscles and tendons about them, and especially in the joints of them, that it was as if all his bones were piercing and breaking to pieces; he was in a like condition the sick man is described in Job 33:19; and as David and Hezekiah were, **Ps 6:2**; and what aggravated his case was, that this was "in the night season", when he should have got some sleep and rest, but could not for his pain: some render the words by supplying them thus; God, or the disease, or the pain, pierced my bones in the night season; or "the night pierced my bones from me"; so Mr. Broughton; but rather they may be rendered, and the sense be,

"in the night season everyone of my bones pierce "the flesh" that is upon me:"

his flesh was almost wasted and consumed, through the boil and ulcers on him, and he was reduced to a mere skeleton; and when he laid himself down on his bed, these pierced through his skin, and stuck out, and gave him exquisite pain:

and my sinews take no rest; being contracted; or his nerves, as the word in the Arabic language signifies, as is observed by Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Donesh, and others; which were loosened, and the animal spirits were sunk, and he so low and dispirited, that he could get no rest: or the pulsatile veins and arteries, as Ben Gersom and Elias Levita {a}, in which the pulse beats, and which beats with less strength when persons are asleep than when awake; but such was the force of Job's disease, that it beat even in the night, when on his bed, so strongly, that he could take no rest for it; the pulse beats, as physicians say {b}, sixty times in a minute, and double the number in a burning fever, and which might be Job's case. Some take the word in the sense of fleeing or gnawing {c}, as it is used Job 30:3; and interpret it either of his enemies, who pursued after him, and had no rest in their beds, but went out in the night to inquire and hear what they could learn concerning him and his illness, whether it was become greater {d}; or who devoured him by their calumnies and detractions, and could not sleep unless they did mischief to him; see **Pr 4:16**; or of the worms with which his body was covered, and which were continually gnawing, never rested, nor suffered him to take any rest; the Targum is, they that gnash at me rest not.

{a} In Tishbi, p. 67. So Lud. Capellus in loc. {b} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr.

vol. 4. p 764. {c} yqrew "et rodentia mea", Schultens; "fugientia membra mea", so some in Michaelis. {d} Vid. Bar Tzemach in loc.

Job 30:18

Ver. 18. By the great force [of my disease] is my garment changed,.... Either the colour of it, through the purulent matter from his ulcers running down upon it, or penetrating through it; or by reason of it he was obliged to shift himself, and to have a change of raiment very frequently; or the supplement, "of my disease", may be left out, and the sense be, with great force, through main strength, and with much difficulty, his garment was changed, was got off from him, sticking so close to him, and another put on:

it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat; his disease encompassed him about on all sides as the collar or edge of his coat encompassed his neck, and cleaved as close, and was as tight unto him as that, and threatened him perhaps with a suffocation or strangling; see **Job 7:15**; the allusion is to garments used in the eastern countries, which were only open at top and bottom; at the top there was a hole to put the head through when put on, and a binding about it, and a button to it, or some such thing, which kept it tight about the neck; see Ex 28:32.

Job 30:19

Ver. 19. He hath cast me into the mire,.... As Jeremiah was literally; here it is to be understood in a figurative sense; not of the mire of sin, into which God casts none, men fall into it of themselves, but of the mire of affliction and calamity; see Ps 40:2; and which Job here ascribes to God; and whereby he was in as mean, abject, and contemptible a condition, as if he had been thrown into a kennel, and rolled in it; and he speaks of it as an act of God, done with contempt of him, and indignation at him, as he apprehended it. Some Jewish writers {e} interpret it, "he taught me in the mire", or "it taught me"; his disease, his ulcers taught him to sit down in the mire, or in the midst of ashes, **Job 2:8**; but though this reading might admit of a good sense, as that Job was taught, as every good man is, many useful lessons in and by afflictions; yet it seems to be a sense foreign from the words:

and I am become like dust and ashes; a phrase by which Abraham expresses his vileness, meanness, and unworthiness in the sight of God, Ge 18:27; Job, through the force of his disease, looked like a corpse, or one half dead, and was crumbling and dropping into the dust of death and the grave, and looked livid and ash coloured; and even in a literal sense was covered with dust and ashes, when he sat among them, **Job 2:8**; though here it chiefly respects the miserable, forlorn, and contemptible condition in which he was.

{e} Vid. Jarchi & Bar Tzemach in loc.

Job 30:20

Ver. 20. I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me,.... Which added greatly to his affliction, that though he cried to the Lord for help and deliverance, yet he turned a deaf ear to him; and though he heard him, as undoubtedly he did, he did not answer him immediately; at least not in the way in which he desired and expected he would: crying is expressive of prayer, and supposes distress, and denotes vehemence of spirit:

I stand up; in prayer, standing being a prayer gesture, as many observe from Jer 15:1;
See Gill on "Mt 6:5"; or he persisted in it, he continued praying, was incessant in it, and yet could obtain no answer; or this signifies silence, as some {f} interpret it; he cried, and then ceased, waiting for an answer; but whether he prayed, or whether he was silent, it was the same thing:

and thou regardest me [not]; the word "not" is not in this clause, but is repeated from the preceding, as it is by Ben Gersom and others; but some read it without it, and give the sense either thus, thou considerest me whether it is fit to receive my prayer or not, so Sephorno; or to renew my strokes, to add new afflictions to me, as Jarchi and Bar Tzemach; or thou lookest upon me as one pleased with the sight of me in such a miserable condition, so far from helping me; wherefore it follows.

{f} Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and Bar Tzemach.

Job 30:21

Ver. 21. Thou art become cruel to me,.... Or "turned", or "changed" {g}, to be cruel to me. Job suggests that God had been kind and gracious to him, both in

a way of providence, and in showing special love and favour to him, in a very distinguishing manner; but now he intimates his affections were changed and altered, and these were alienated from him, and his love was turned into an hatred of him; this is one of the unbecoming expressions which dropped from his lips concerning God; for the love of God to his people is never changed; it remains invariable and unalterable, in all dispensations, in every state and condition into which they come; there may be some of God's dispensations towards them, which may have the appearance of severity in them; and he may make use of instruments to chastise them, which may use them cruelly; but even then his heart yearns towards them, and, being full of compassion, delivers out of their hands, and saves them,
Jer 30:14;

with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me; God has a strong hand and arm, and none like him, and sometimes he puts forth the strength of it, and exerts his mighty power in afflicting his people, and his hand presses them sore, and they can scarcely stand up under it; and then it becomes them to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and patiently bear it; and sometimes they take him to be their adversary, an enemy unto them, and filled with hatred of them, indignation against them, setting himself with all his might and main to ruin and destroy them; and this is a sad case indeed, to have such apprehensions of God, though unjust ones; for, as if God be for us, who shall be against us? so if he be against us, it signifies little who is for us; for there is no contending with him, **Job 9:3**.

{g} Kpht "mutatus es", V. L. Tigurine version; "versus es", Beza, Piscator; so Drusius, Cocceius, Vatablus, Michaelis, Mercerus, Schultens.

Job 30:22

Ver. 22. Thou liftest me up to the wind,.... Of affliction and adversity, to be carried up with it, and tossed about by it, as chaff or stubble, or a dry leaf, being no more able to stand up against it than such things are to oppose the wind; though some interpret this of God's lifting him up in his state of prosperity, in which he was very visible and conspicuous to all, and enjoyed much light and comfort; but then he raised him to such an estate, with a view to cast him down, and that his fall and ruin might be the greater; and so this is observed as a proof of his being become cruel to him:

thou causest me to ride [upon it]; seemingly in great pomp and state, but in great uncertainty and danger, being at best in a slippery place, in very fickle circumstances, as the event showed; or rather the sense is, that he was swiftly carried into destruction, as if he rode on the wings of the wind to it, and was hurried thither at once, as soon as he was taken up with the tempest of adversity:

and dissolvest my substance; his outward substance, his wealth and riches, his family, and the health of his body, all which as it were melted away, or were carried away as with a flood; and so as the metaphor of a tempestuous wind is used in the former clause, here that of an overflowing flood, which removed from him what seemed to be the most solid and substantial: the word is sometimes used for wisdom, and even sound wisdom, **Pr 2:7**; wherefore some have interpreted it of his being at his wits' end, of losing his reason and understanding, and which were at least disturbed and confounded by his afflictions; but his discourses and speeches show the contrary, and he himself denies that wisdom was driven from him, **Job 6:13**.

Job 30:23

Ver. 23. For I know [that] thou wilt bring me [to] death,.... Quickly and by the present affliction upon him; he was assured, as he thought, that this was the view and design of God in this providence, under which he was to bring him to death and the grave; that he would never take off his hand till he had brought him to the dust of death, to that lifeless dust from whence he had his original; otherwise, that he would he brought thither, sooner or later, was no great masterpiece of knowledge; every man knows this will be the case with him as with all; death is become necessary by sin, which brought it into the world, and the sentence of it on all men in it, and by the decree and appointment of God, by which it is fixed and settled that all should die; and this is confirmed by all experience in all ages, a very few excepted, only two persons, Enoch and Elijah, **Ge 5:24**: sometimes the death of persons is made known to them by divine revelation, as to Aaron and Moses, Nu 20:12; and sometimes it may be gathered to be nigh from the symptoms of it on the body; from growing diseases, and the infirmities of old age; but Job concluded it from the manner of God's dealing with him, as he thought in wrath and indignation, determining to make an utter end of him:

and [to] the house appointed for all living; the grave, which is the house for the body when dead to be brought unto and lodged in; as the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens", **2Co 5:1**, is for the soul in its separate state, until the resurrection morn; which house or grave is man's "long home", Ec 12:5; and this is prepared and appointed for all men living, since all must die; and all that die have a house or grave, though that is sometimes a watery, and not an earthy one; however the dust of everybody has a receptacle provided for it, where it is reserved until the time of the resurrection, and then it is brought forth, Re 20:13; and this is by divine appointment; the word used signifies both an appointed time and place, and is often used of the Jewish solemnities, which were fixed with respect to both; and also of the people or congregation that attended them; the grave is the general rendezvous of mankind, and both the time when and the place where the dead are gathered and brought unto it are fixed by the determinate will and counsel of God.

Job 30:24

Ver. 24. Howbeit he will not stretch out [his] hand to the grave,.... Or, "verily" {h}, truly he will not, &c. I am well assured he never will, meaning either he never would stretch out his hand to shut up the grave; or rather keep it shut, and prevent Job from going down into it; or to open it, and fetch him out of it when in it: God is indeed able to do either of these, and has done it; sometimes, when persons are brought as it were to the gates of death and the grave, he says to them, Return; yea, when they are brought to the dust of death, he prevents them going into the grave, by restoring them to life before carried thither, as the Shunammite's son, **2Ki 4:32**; Jairus's daughter, **Mr 5:41**; and the widow's son of Nain, even when he was carrying to his grave, **Lu 7:12**; some have been laid in the grave, and God has stretched out his hand, and raised them up again; as the man that was laid in Elisha's grave, 2Ki 13:21, and Lazarus after he had lain in the grave some days, Joh 11:39; but such things are not usually done; in common, when a man dies, and is laid in the grave, he rises not again, till the heavens be no more; and this Job was persuaded would be his case:

though they cry in his destruction; that is, though the friends and relations of the sick person, or the poor that he has been kind and bountiful unto, should cry unto God, while he is destroying him by the diseases upon him, and which threaten him with destruction, that he would spare his useful and valuable life; yet he is inexorable, and will not hear, but go on with what he intends to do, and takes him off by death, and lays him in the grave, "the pit of destruction", Ps 55:23, so called because it wastes and consumes bodies laid in it; and when once laid there, all cries for a restoration to life again are vain and fruitless. Some take these words as expressed in a way of solace, as if Job comforted himself with this thought under his present afflictions, that, when once he was brought to death and the grave, there would be an end of all his sorrow; the hand of the Lord, that was now stretched out on him in a terrible way, would be no longer stretched out on him; he would then cease to afflict him, and he should be where the weary are at rest; and so the last clause is read with an interrogation, "is there any cry", or "do any cry, in his destruction?" {i}; no, when death has done its office, and the body is laid in the grave, there is no more pain nor sorrow, nor crying; all tears are wiped away, and there is no more sense of afflictions and sufferings; they are all at an end. Mr. Broughton renders these words as to the sense the same, and as in connection with the following ones, "and prayed I not when plague was sent? when hurt came to any, thereupon cried I not?" and so do some others {k}.

{h} Ka "verum", Mercerus; profecto, Drusius, Bolducius; "sane", Tigurine version. {i} ewv Nhl wdypb Ma "aut clamant aliqui post obitum suum?" Tigurine version; "si in contritione ejus eis clamor?" Montanus, Bolducius. {k} Junius & Tremellius.

Job 30:25

Ver. 25. Did not I weep for him that was in trouble?.... In outward trouble, whether personal in his own body, or in his family, or in his worldly affairs, or from wicked men, the men of the world; or in inward trouble, in soul trouble, on account of indwelling sin, the breakings forth of it, the lowness of grace, as to exercise, the hidings of God's face, and the temptations of Satan: or "for him that is hard of day" {l}; with whom times are hard, the days are evil, with respect either to things temporal or spiritual; now Job had a sympathizing heart with such persons; he wept with them that wept; his bowels yearned towards them; he felt their sufferings and their sorrows, which is a Godlike frame of soul; for God, in all the afflictions of his people, is afflicted; a disposition of mind like that of the living Redeemer, who cannot but be touched with the feeling of the infirmities of saints, having been in all points tempted as they; and is a fruit of the Spirit of God, and very becoming the relation the saints stand in to one another, being members of the same body, and of each other; and therefore, when one member suffers, all the rest should sympathize with it, and, being brethren, should be loving, pitiful, and courteous to each other; and should consider that they also are in the body, and liable to the same distresses, whether outward or inward:

was [not] my soul grieved for the poor? in general, and especially for the

Lord's poor, for such in all ages have been chosen and called by him; for these Job was grieved at heart, when he saw their distress through poverty; and he not only expressed his concern for them by tears and words, but by distributing liberally to their necessities,
Job 31:17; and by which he showed his grief was real, hearty, and sincere, as here expressed; his soul was grieved, and he was sorry at his very heart for them: some render the words, "was not my soul like a pool of water?" {m} not only his head and his eyes, as Jeremiah's on another account, but his soul melted, and flowed like water with grief for them; and others, as Mr. Broughton, "did not my soul burn for the poor?" with sorrow for them, and an ardent desire to relieve them; see **2Co 9:12**; now this was the frame of Job's mind in the time of his prosperity, very different from that in **Am 6:4**; and was certain and well known; he could appeal to all that knew him for the truth of it, it being what, none could deny that had any knowledge of him; yea, he could appeal to an omniscient God, he was now speaking to, for the truth of it; nay, it is delivered in the form of an oath, "if I did not weep", &c. {n}, as in Job 31:16.

{l} Mwy hvql "ob durum die", Montanus, Mercerus, Drusius; "cui dura crant tempora", Junius & Tremellius; "ei cui durus dies", Cocceius. {m} hmue "restagnavit", some in Mercerus. {n} ytykb al Ma "si non deflevi", Tigurine version; "si non flevi", Piscator.

Job 30:26

Ver. 26. When I looked for good,.... As he thought he might reasonably expect it, since he had shown such a sympathizing spirit to persons in trouble, and such pity and mercy to the poor: in the time of his prosperity, he looked for a continuance of the good things he enjoyed, and expected to have had them for many years to come, and to have died in the possession of them, Job 29:18; and even in his adversity, though he had received evil things at the hand of God, which he took patiently; yet at first he did not think they would always continue, but that there would be a turn of affairs, and he should again receive good at his hands; and he had been looking for it, as good men have reason to expect it; since God is good and does good, and especially to his own people, and has laid up goodness for them that fear him, and such an one Job was; and has promised good things unto them, both temporal and spiritual; for godliness and godly men have the promise of this life, and of that which is to come: but Job was disappointed in his expectation; for, says he, then evil came [unto me], the evil of affliction, one upon the back of another, even when in the height of his prosperity; and since repeated evil, new afflictions, came upon him by the appointment, order, and direction of God:

and when I waited for light; for the light of outward prosperity, such as he had formerly enjoyed; and for the light of God's countenance, which he most earnestly sought after, and longed for, and was in a waiting posture for it, as good men have reason to be; since light is sown for them in the purposes and decrees of God, in his counsel and covenant, in his Gospel, and the promises of it; and therefore should wait for the springing of it up, as the husbandman does for the springing up of the corn sown in the earth, and lying under the clods; and seeing that to the upright there arises light in darkness; and though God hides his face from them, for a moment, he will have mercy on them, and therefore should wait his time to be gracious to them; but Job had waited long, and, as he thought, to no purpose: for

there came darkness; the darkness of adversity, still thicker and darker, and no appearance of spiritual light and favour, or any discoveries of the love of God to him, or enjoyment of his presence; see **Jer 8:15**.

Job 30:27

Ver. 27. My bowels boiled, and rested not,.... All contained within him, his heart, lungs, and liver, in a literal sense, through a violent fever burning within him; or figuratively, being under great distress and trouble, by reason of his afflictions, outward and inward, see **Jer 4:19**;

the days of affliction prevented me; came sooner upon him than he thought; he did not expect the evil days to come, and the years draw nigh in which he should have no pleasure, until he was more advanced in years, and the time of his dissolution was at hand; they came at once, and unawares, upon him, when he looked not for them: some render the word "met me" {o}, unexpectedly; or rather, they "rushed upon me" {p}, in an hostile way; came in troops, and invaded and surrounded him, see
Job 19:12.

{o} ynmdq "occurrerunt mihi", Piscator, Cocceius. {p} "Incursarunt me", Schultens.

Job 30:28

Ver. 28. I went mourning without the sun,.... So overwhelmed with grief, that he refused to have any comfort from, or any advantage by the sun; hence Mr. Broughton renders it, "out of the sun"; he did not choose to walk in the sunshine, but out of it, to indulge his grief and sorrow the more; or he went in black attire, and wrapped and covered himself with it, that he might not see the sun, or receive any relief by it: or "I go black, [but] not by the sun" {q}; his face and his skin were black, but not through the sun looking upon him and discolouring him, as in **So 1:6**; but through the force of his disease, which had changed his complexion, and made him as black as a Kedarene, or those that dwell in the tents of Kedar, **So 1:5**; and he also walked without the sun of righteousness arising on him, with healing in his wings, which was worst of all:

I stood up, [and] I cried in the congregation: either in the congregation of the saints met together for religious worship, where he cried unto God for help and deliverance, and for the light of his countenance, Job 30:20; or such was the extreme anguish of his soul, that when a multitude of people got about him to see him in his distressed condition, he could not contain himself, but burst out before them in crying and tears, though he knew it was unbecoming a man of his age and character; or he could not content himself to stay within doors and soothe his grief, but must go abroad and in public, and there expressed with strong cries and tears his miserable condition.

{q} hmx alb "non propter solem", Vatablus; "non a sole", Junius & Tremellius, Drusius, Mercerus; "non ob solem", Piscator.

Job 30:29

Ver. 29. I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls. Or ostriches, as the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; either he was obliged to dwell with such persons as were comparable to these creatures for their devouring words, hissing noise, and venomous speeches, or for want of compassion, and for their cruelty, as David is said to be among lions, Ps 57:4; or also, he was like unto them, being solitary and alone, all his friends and acquaintance standing at a distance from him, as these creatures love lonesome and desolate places; or because of the wailing and howling noise they make, to which his mournful notes bore some resemblance,
See Gill on "Mic 1:8"; or because, when these creatures cry and howl, and

make a noise, no mercy is shown to them, none pities or regards them; and so it was with him; though he stood and cried in ever so public a manner, none had any compassion on him.

Job 30:30

Ver. 30. My skin is black upon me,.... Either through deep melancholy, as may be observed in persons of such a disposition, through grief and trouble; or rather through the force of his disease, the burning ulcers and black scabs with which he was covered, as the Jews were through famine, in their captivity, **La 4:8**;

and my bones are burnt with heat; with the heat of a burning fever; which not only made his inwards boil, but reached to his bones, and dried up the marrow of them. Galen says {r} that bones may become so dry as to be crumbled into sand: the Syriac version is

"my bones are burnt as his who is in a hot wind;"

such as were common in the eastern countries, which killed men at once, and they became as black as a coal {s}.

{r} Apud Bartholin. de Cruce, sect. 12. p. 107. {s} See Gill on "Job 27:21".

Job 30:31

Ver. 31. My harp also is [turned] to mourning,.... Which he used, as David, either in religious worship, expressing praise to God thereby, or for his recreation in an innocent way; but now it was laid aside, and, instead of it, nothing was heard from him, or in his house, but the voice of mourning:

and my organ into the voice of them that weep; another instrument of music, which had its name from the pleasantness of its sound, and was of early use, being first invented by Jubal, **Ge 4:21**; but not that we now so call, which is of late invention: those instruments which Job might have and use, both in a civil and in a religious way, were now, through afflictions, become useless to him, and neglected by him; or these expressions in general may signify, that, instead of mirth and joy he was wont to have, there were nothing now to be heard but lamentation and woe; see **La 5:15**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 31:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 31

In this chapter Job gives an account of himself in private life, of the integrity and uprightness of his life, and his holy walk and conversation, with this view, that it might be thought that the afflictions which were upon him were not on account of a vicious course of life he had indulged unto, as was suggested; and he clears himself from various crimes which it might be insinuated he was guilty of, as from unchastity; and he observes the method he took to prevent his falling into it, and the reasons that dissuaded him from it,
Job 31:1; from injustice in his dealings with men, Job 31:5; from the sin of adultery, Job 31:9; from ill usage of his servants, Job 31:13; from unkindness to the poor, which he enlarges upon, and gives many instances of his charity to them,
Job 31:16; from covetousness, and a vain confidence in wealth,
Job 31:24; from idolatry, the worship of the sun and moon,
Job 31:26; from a revengeful spirit, Job 31:29; and from inhospitality to strangers, Job 31:32; from covering his sin,
Job 31:33; and fear of men, Job 31:34; and then wishes his cause might be heard before God, Job 31:35; and the chapter is closed with an imprecation on his head if guilty of any injustice,
Job 31:38.

Ver. 1. I made a covenant with mine eyes,.... Not to look upon a woman, and wantonly gaze at her beauty, lest his heart should be drawn thereby to lust after her; for the eyes are inlets to many sins, and particularly to uncleanness, of which there have been instances, both in bad men and good men, Ge 34:2; so the poet {t} represents the eye as the way through which the beauty of a woman passes swifter than an arrow into the hearts of men, and makes impressions there; see **2Pe 2:14**; hence Zaleucus ordered adulterers to be punished, by plucking out the eyes of the adulterer {u}; wherefore Job, to prevent this, entered into a solemn engagement with himself, laid himself under a strong obligation, as if he had bound himself by a covenant, made a resolution in the strength of divine grace, not to employ his eyes in looking on objects that might ensnare his heart, and lead him to the commission of sin; he made use of all ways and means, and took every precaution to guard against it;

and particularly this, to shut or turn his eyes from beholding what might be alluring and enticing to him: it is said {x} of Democritus, that he put out his eyes because he could not look upon a woman without lusting after her:

why then should I think upon a maid; of corrupting and defiling her, since he had made a covenant with his eyes, and this would be a breach of that covenant: and therefore, besides the sin of lusting after her, or of corrupting her, he would be a covenant breaker, and so his sin would be an aggravated one: or he made a covenant with his eyes, to prevent any impure thoughts, desires, and inclinations in him; for the eye affects the heart, and stirs up lust in it, and excites unclean thoughts and unchaste desires: this shows that the thought of sin is sin; that fornication was reckoned a sin before the law of Moses; and that Job better understood the spirituality of the law than the Pharisees did in the time of Christ, and had the same notion of lust in the heart being fornication and adultery as he had; and that good men are not without temptation to sin, both from within and from without; and therefore should carefully shun all appearances of evil, and whatsoever leads unto it, and take every necessary precaution to guard against it.

{t} Musaeus de Heron. & Leand. v. 92, &c. {u} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 13. c. 24. {x} Tertullian. Apolog. c. 46.

Job 31:2

Ver. 2. For what portion of God [is there] from above?.... What good portion, as the Targum paraphrases it, can impure persons expect from God? such who indulge themselves, and live in the sin of uncleanness, cannot hope to have any part in God, or a portion of good things from him; he is above, and in the highest heavens, and every good thing comes from thence, and from him there; and particularly the spiritual blessings, wherewith he blesses his people, are in heavenly places in Christ, and from thence come to them; and here a special respect may be had to God himself, who is the portion of his people, both in life and at death, and to all eternity; but men that live a vicious course of life cannot conclude they have any part in God and Christ, nor in the grace of God, and the blessings of it, nor enjoy communion with him:

and [what] inheritance of the Almighty from on high? heaven is an inheritance which belongs to the children of God, and he, as their heavenly Father, has bequeathed it unto then; this is from the almighty God, God all sufficient; he has chosen this inheritance for them, and appointed them unto it; this is laid up by him and reserved in heaven for them; and he gives both a right unto it, and a meetness for it, and will put them into the possession of it: but then impure persons, as fornicators and adulterers, have no inheritance in the kingdom of God and of Christ, **Eph 5:5**; and this was a reason with Job, and what had an influence on him, to be careful to avoid the sin of uncleanness. Some understand the words as a question concerning what would be the portion and heritage of a wicked man, a corrupter of virgins; the answer to which is given in the next verse, destruction and a strange punishment; this is their portion from God, and the heritage appointed to them by him; see Job 20:29.

Job 31:3

Ver. 3. [Is] not destruction to the wicked?.... It is even to such wicked men, who live in the sin of fornication, and make it their business to ensnare and corrupt virgins; and which is another reason why Job was careful to avoid that sin; wickedness of every sort is the cause of destruction, destruction and misery are in the ways of wicked men, and their wicked ways lead unto it, and issue in it, even destruction of soul and body in hell, which is swift and sudden, and will be everlasting: this is laid up for wicked men among the treasures of God's wrath, and they are reserved that, and there is no way of deliverance from it but by Christ:

and a strange [punishment] to the workers of iniquity; the iniquity of fornication and whoredom, Pr 30:20; who make it their business to commit it, and live in a continued course of uncleanness and other sins; a punishment, something strange, unusual, and uncommon, as the filthy venereal disease in this world, and everlasting burnings in another; or "alienation" {y}, a state of estrangement and banishment from the presence of God and Christ, and from the society of the saints, to all eternity; see Mt 25:46.

{y} rknw "et abalienatio", Munster; "et alienatio", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Drusius, Schmidt.

Job 31:4

Ver. 4. Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?] That is, God, who is above, and the Almighty that dwells on high; he looks down from heaven, and beholds all the ways and works, the steps and motions, of the children of men; there is no darkness where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves; the fornicator and adulterer choose the night season for the commission of their sin, fancying no eye sees them; but they cannot escape the eye of God, who is omniscient; he observes the ways they walk in, the methods they take to compass their designs; he marks and counts every step taken by them, as he does indeed take notice of and reckons up every action of men, good and bad; and the consideration of this was another argument with Job to avoid the sin of uncleanness; for however privately he might commit it, so as not to be seen by men, it could not be hidden from the all seeing eye of God. Some take these words to be an obtestation, or appeal to God for the truth of what he had said; that he made a covenant with his eyes, and took every precaution to prevent his failing into the sin of uncleanness; and he whose eyes were upon his ways, knew how holily and unblamably he had walked; or else, as if the sense was, that had he given in to such an impure course of life, he might expect the omniscient God, that is above, and dwells on high, would bring upon him destruction, and a strange punishment, since he is the avenger of all such; others connect the words with the following, doth he not see my ways and steps, whether I have walked with vanity, &c. or not?

Job 31:5

Ver. 5. If I have walked with vanity,.... Or with vain men, as Bar Tzemach interprets it, keeping company and having fellowship with them in their vain and sinful practices; or in the vanity of his mind, indulging himself in impurity of heart and life; or rather using deceitful methods to cheat and defraud others; for this seems to be another vice Job clears himself of, acting unjustly in his dealings with men, or dealing falsely with them:

or if my foot hath hasted to deceit; to cheat men in buying and selling, being ready and swift to do it, and in haste to become rich, which puts men oftentimes on evil ways and methods to attain it; see
Pr 28:20.

Job 31:6

Ver. 6. Let me be weighed in an even balance,.... Or "in balances of righteousness" {z}, even in the balance or strict justice, the justice of God; he was so conscious to himself that he had done no injustice to any man in his dealings with them, that, if weight of righteousness, which was to be, and was the rule of his conduct between man and man, was put into one scale, and his actions into another, the balance would be even, there would be nothing wanting, or, however, that would require any severe censure:

that God may know mine integrity; God did knew his integrity, and bore a testimony to it, and to his retaining it, **Job 2:3**; but his meaning is, that should God strictly inquire into his life and conduct with respect to his dealings with men, as it would appear that he had lived in all good conscience to that day, so he doubted not but he would find his integrity such, that he would own and acknowledge it, approve of it, and commend it, and make it known to his friends and others, whereby he would be cleared of all those calumnies that were cast upon him. Some connect these words with the following, reading them affirmatively, "God knows mine integrity"; he knows that my step has not turned out of the way of truth and righteousness; that my heart has not walked after mine eye, in lustful thoughts and desires; and that there is no spoil, nor rapine, nor violence in my hand, that I should deserve such a punishment as to sow, and another eat: thus Sephorno.

{z} qdu ynzamb "in bilancibus justitiae", Montanus, Mercerus, Drusius, so Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 31:7

Ver. 7. If my step hath turned out of the way,.... The way of God, the way of his commandments, the good and right way, the way of truth and righteousness, so far as Job had knowledge of it: for, besides the law and light of nature the Gentiles had in common, good men had some revelation, and notions of the mind and will of God unto them, both before and after the flood, previous to the Mosaic dispensation; which in some measure directed them what way to walk in, with respect to worship and duty; and from this way Job swerved not; not that he walked so perfectly in it as to be free from sin, and never commit any; or that he never took a step out of the way, or stepped awry; but he did not knowingly, wittingly, and purposely turn out of the way; and when, through infirmity of the flesh, the temptations of Satan, and snares of the world, he was drawn aside, he did not obstinately and finally persist therein; though this may have respect not to sin in general, but to the particular sin he is clearing himself from, namely, dealing falsely and deceitfully with men, in whatsoever he had to do with them, in matters of "meum" and "tuum"; or with regard to the rules of justice and equity between man and man, he was not conscious to himself he had departed from them; a like expression to those in **Ps 7:3**, where some particular sin is referred unto:

and mine heart walked after mine eyes; meaning not in the lust of uncleanness, of which he had spoken before, as such do whose eyes are full of adultery; but in the sin of covetousness, so Achan's heart walked after his eyes, **Jos 7:20**; and this is one of the three things the world is full of, and the men of it indulge themselves in, the lust of the eyes, **1Jo 2:16**; the sense is, that when he saw the riches and wealth of others, he did not covet them, nor take any illicit methods to get them out of their hands; or, when he saw the goods they were possessed of, and had with them to dispose of, he did not take the advantage of their ignorance, or use any evil ways and means to cheat and beguile them of them: it is pleasing to the flesh for the heart to walk after the eye, or to indulge to that which it is taken with; but it is very vain and foolish, as well as very dangerous so to do, **Ec 2:10**; a good man chooses a better guide than his eyes; even to be a follower of God, to tread in the steps of his living Redeemer, to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and according to the law and will of God:

and if any blot cleaved to my hands; any spot, stain, or blemish, as all sin is of a defiling nature, particularly the hands may be blotted by shedding innocent blood, by taking bribes to pervert judgment; which the Septuagint version directs to here; and by getting, holding, and retaining mammon of unrighteousness, or ill gotten goods; which is what is chiefly if not solely intended here; for it may be rendered, "if any thing hath cleaved", &c. so Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom; for the word signifies both a "blot" and "anything": and the Targum takes in both senses: the meaning seems to be, that there was not anything of another man's in his hands, which he had taken from him by force and violence, or find obtained by any deceitful methods, and which he held fast, and it stuck with him as pitch to the hands, and he did not care to part with it, or restore it, whereby his hands were defiled; otherwise Job had no such opinion of the cleanness of his hands and actions, as if he thought there was no spot of sin in them, or only such as he could wash out himself; he clearly speaks the contrary, **Job 9:30**; which is the sense of every good man, who, conscious of his spots and blemishes, washes his hands, his actions, his conversation garments, and makes them white in the blood of the Lamb; and such, and such only, have clean hands.

Job 31:8

Ver. 8. [Then] let me sow, and another eat,.... If what he had before said was not true; but he had turned out of the way of righteousness, and walked after the sight of his eyes, and the mammon of unrighteousness cleaved to his hands; then he wishes might sow his fields, and another enjoy the increase of them, which is one of God's judgments threatened unto the wicked and disobedient, Le 26:16;

let my offspring be rooted out; but Job had no offspring or children at this time to be rooted out or destroyed; they were all destroyed already; some think therefore that this imprecation was made by him in the time of his prosperity, though here repeated as it was then, he made a covenant with his eyes; but then this might have been improved against him and retorted on him, that so it was according to his wish; and therefore he must have been guilty of the sin he would have purged himself from; others suppose that he refers to the future, and to the offspring he hoped to have hereafter; and when he should have them, wishes they may be rooted out, if he had done what he denies he had; but it does not appear that Job had any hope at all of being restored to his former state of prosperity, and of being possessed of a family and substance again, but the reverse. Gussetius {a} will have it, that he means his grandchildren; those indeed are sometimes called a man's children, and may propriety be said to be his offspring, they springing frown him; and it is possible, that, as his sons were settled from him, they were married and had children; but this is not certain, or, if they had any, that these were not destroyed with them; wherefore it is best to take the word {b} in its first and literal sense, for what springs out of the earth, herbs, plants, and trees, as in Isa 42:5; so Ben Gersom and Bar Tzemach, and which best agrees with the phrase of being "rooted out", and with what goes before; that as he had wished that which was sown in his fields might be eaten up by another, so what was planted and grew up in his gardens, orchards, vineyards, and olive yards, and the like, might be quite rooted out and destroyed; if he was not the man he declared himself to be, or had wronged any of their goods and property, then this would have been a just retaliation of him.

{a} Comment. Ebr. p. 338. {b} yauay "germina mea", Beza, Montanus, Mercerus, Drusius, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 31:9

Ver. 9. If mine heart have been deceived by a woman,.... By another man's wife, by wantonly looking at her beauty, and so lusting after her; and so, not through any blame or fault of hers, or by any artful methods made use of by her, to allure and ensnare; such as were practised by the harlot, **Pr 7:1**; but by neither was the heart of Job deceived, and drawn into the sin of uncleanness;

for he had made a covenant with his eyes, as not to look at a virgin, so much less at another man's wife, to prevent his lusting after her; and whatever temptations and solicitations he might have been attended with, through the grace of God, as Joseph was, he was enabled to withstand them; though as wise a man, and the wisest of men, had his heart deceived and drawn aside thereby, **Ec 7:26**;

or [if] I have laid wait at my neighbour's door: to meet with his wife there, and carry on an intrigue with her; or to take the opportunity of going in when opened, in order to solicit her to his embraces, knowing her husband to be away from home; see **Pr 5:8**.

Job 31:10

Ver. 10. [Then] let my wife grind unto another,.... Which some understand literally, of her being put to the worst of drudgery and slavery, to work at a mill, and grind corn for the service of a stranger, and be exposed to the company of the meanest of persons, and to their insults and abuses; as we find such as were taken captives and made prisoners by an enemy were put unto, as Samson, Jud 16:21; and it may be observed, that to grind in a mill was also the work of women,
Ex 11:5; as it was in early times; Homer {c} speaks of it as in times before him; but others take the words in a figurative sense, as if he imprecated that she lie with another man, and be defiled by him, as the Targum, Aben Ezra, and others {d}; see Isa 47:1; and in like manner the following clause:

and let others bow down upon her; both which phrases are euphemisms, or clean and decent expressions, signifying what otherwise is not to be named; the Scriptures hereby directing, as to avoid unchaste thoughts, inclinations, and desires, and impure actions, so obscene words and filthy talking, as becometh saints: but there is some difficulty in Job's imprecating or wishing such a thing might befall his wife; it could not be lawful, if he had sinned, to wish his wife might sin also; or, if he was an adulterer, that she should be an adulteress; the sense is not, that Job really wished such a thing; but he uses such a way of speaking, to show how remote he was from the sin of uncleanness, there being nothing more disagreeable to a man than for his wife to defile his bed; it is the last thing he would wish for: and moreover Job suggests hereby, that had he been guilty of this sin, he must own and acknowledge that he would be righteously served, and it would be a just retaliation upon him, should his wife use him, or she be used, in such a manner; likewise, though a man may not wish nor commit a sin for the punishment of another; yet God sometimes punishes sin with sin, and even with the same kind of sin, and with this; so David's sin with Bathsheba was punished with Absalom lying with his wives and concubines before the sun, 2Sa 12:11; see De 28:30.

{c} Odyss. 7. v. 107. & Odyss. 20. v. 109. {d} So T. Bab Sotah, fol. 10. 1. & Luther, Schmidt apud Stockium, p. 414.

Job 31:11

Ver. 11. For this [is] an heinous crime,.... Adultery; it is contrary to the light of nature, and is condemned by it as a great sin, Ge 20:9; as well as contrary to the express will and law of God, Ex 20:14; and, though all sin is a transgression of the law of God, and deserving of death; yet there are some sins greater and more heinous than others, being attended with aggravating circumstances; and such is this sin, it is a breach of the marriage contract and covenant between man and wife; it is doing injury to a man's property, and to that which is the nearest and dearest to him, and is what introduces confusion into families, kingdoms, and states; and therefore it follows:

yea, it [is] an iniquity [to he punished by] the judges; who might take cognizance of it, examine into it, and pass sentence for it, and execute it; and, if they neglect do their duty, God, the Judge of all the earth, will punish for it in the world to come, unless repented of: "for whoremongers and adulterers God will judge", Heb 13:4; the punishment of adultery was death by the law of God, and that by stoning, as appears from Le 20:10; and it is remarkable, that the Heathens, who were ignorant of this law, enjoined the same punishment for it; so Homer {e} introduces Hector reproving Paris for this sin, and suggests to him, that if he had his deserved punishment, he would have been clothed with a "stone coat", as he beautifully expresses it; which Suidas {f} explains, by being overwhelmed with stones, or stoned; as Eustathius {g}.

{e} Iliad. 3. v. 57. {f} In voce lainon. {g} In Homer. ibid.

Job 31:12

Ver. 12. For it [is] a fire [that] consumeth to destruction,.... Referring either to the nature of the sin of uncleanness; it is inflammatory, a burning lust, a fire

burning in the breast; see **1Co 7:9**; or to the effect of it, either the rage of jealousy in the injured person, which is exceeding fierce, furious, and cruel, like devouring fire, not to be appeased or mitigated, **Pr 6:34**; or else it may respect the punishment of this sin in the times of Job, and which we find was practised among the Gentiles, as the Canaanites, Job's neighbours, burning such delinquents with fire; see Ge 38:24; or rather the wrath of God for it, which is poured forth as fire, and burns to the lowest hell, and into which lake of fire all such impure persons will be cast, unless the grace of God prevents; and which will be a fire that will consume and destroy both soul and body, and so be an utter and everlasting destruction,
Re 21:8;

and would root out all my increase; even in this world; adultery is a sin that not only ruins a man's character, fixes an indelible blot upon him, a reproach that shall not be wiped off, and consumes a man's body, and destroys the health of it, but his substance also, the increase of his fields, and of his fruits, and by means of it a man is brought to a piece of bread, to beg it, and to be glad of it, **Pr 6:26**.

Job 31:13

Ver. 13. If I did despise the cause of my manservant, or of my maidservant,.... Whether it was a cause that related to any controversy or quarrel among themselves when it was brought before him, he did not reject it, because of the meanness of the contending parties, and the state of servitude they were in; but he received it and searched into it, heard patiently what each had to say, examined them thoroughly, entered into the merits of the cause, and either reconciled them, or passed a righteous sentence, punished the delinquent, and protected the innocent; or, if it was a cause relating to himself, any complaint of their work, or wages, or food, or clothing, as it seems to be from what follows:

when they contended with me; had anything to complain of, or to object to him on the above account, or any other, where there was any show or colour of foundation for it; otherwise it cannot be thought he would indulge a saucy, impudent, and contradicting behaviour in them towards him: masters in those times and countries had an unlimited, and exercised a despotic power over their servants, and used them with great rigour, and refused to do them justice upon complaints; but Job behaved as if he had had the rules of the apostle before him to act by in his conduct towards his servants, **Eph 6:9**; and even condescended to submit the cause between him and his servants to other judges or arbitrators, or rather took cognizance of it himself, heard patiently and carefully what they had to allege, and did them justice.

Job 31:14

Ver. 14. What then shall I do when God riseth up?.... That is, if he had despised and rejected the cause of his servants, or had neglected, or refused to do them justice; he signifies he should be at the utmost loss to know what to do, what excuse to make, or what to say in his own defence, when God should rise up to defend the cause of the injured; either in a way of Providence in this life, or at the great day of judgment in the world to come, when everything will be brought to account, and masters and servants must stand alike before the judgment seat of God, to receive for the things they have done, whether good or evil:

and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? when he makes a visitation among men, either in this world, even in a fatherly way, visits transgressions, and reproves and corrects for them; had he been guilty of ill usage of his servants, he must have silently submitted to such visitations and chastisements, having nothing to say for himself why he should not be thus dealt with; or in the world to come, in the great day of visitation, when God shall make inquisition for sin, and seek it out, and call to an account for it; and should this be produced against him, even contempt of the cause of his servants, he was sensible he could not answer him for it, nor for anyone sin of a thousand, as no man will be able to do; but must be speechless, unless he has a better righteousness than his own to answer for him in that time to come. This is Job's first reason which deterred him from using his servants ill; another follows.

Job 31:15

Ver. 15. Did not he that made me in the womb make him?.... And her also, both his manservant and maidservant: these were made, by the Lord as Job was, and in a like place and manner as he himself; though parents are the instruments of begetting children, and of bringing them into the world, God is the Maker of men, as at the beginning, and all are alike made by him, in whatsoever rank, condition, and circumstance of life, whether masters or servants; and they are all fabricated in the same shop of nature, the womb of a woman:

and did not one fashion us in the womb? that is, he who is the one God, according to **Mal 2:10**; God is one in nature and essence, though there are three Persons in the unity of the Godhead; and this one God, Father, Son, and Spirit, is the Creator of all men and things; hence we read of "Creators", Ec 12:1; and, though one God makes the bodies and creates the souls of men now as at the first, and all are formed and fashioned by him, high, low, rich and poor, bond and free; and they have all the same rational powers and faculties of soul, Ps 33:15; as well as the same curious art and skill are employed in forming and fashioning their bodies and the members of them, in the lower parts of the earth, in their mother's womb; yea, they are fashioned "in one womb" {h}, as the words will better bear to be rendered according to the position of them in the original and the accents; not indeed in the same identical womb, but in a like one: there are two words in the original here, both translated "womb"; the one signifies the "ovarium", in which the conception is made; the other designs the "secundine", in which the fetus is wrapped or covered; for so it may be rendered, "did he not cover us?" &c. {i}; though Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Ben Gersom, and others, interpret it of the one God as we do: Job's reasoning is, that seeing he and his servants were equally the workmanship of God, and both made in the womb by him, and curiously fashioned alike, and possessed of the same rational powers, it would be unreasonable in him to use them ill, who were his fellow creatures; and should he, he might expect the Maker of them both would highly resent it. Macrobius {k}, an Heathen writer, gives a remarkable instance of the care heaven, as he expresses it, has of servants, and how much the contempt of it is resented thereby; and reasons much in the same manner concerning them as Job does here, that they are men, though servants; are of the same original, breathe in the same air, live and die as other men.

{h} dxa Mxrb en th auth koilia, Sept. "in utero uno", Munster; so Beza, Drusius, Michaelis. {i} Saturnal. l. 1. c. 11. {k} Vid. Hackman. Praecidan. Sacr. p. 193.

Job 31:16

Ver. 16. If I have withheld the poor from [their] desire,.... Their reasonable desires, and which it was in his power to grant; as when they desired a piece of bread, being hungry, or clothes to cover them, being naked; but not unreasonable desires, seeking and asking great things for themselves, or unlimited and unbounded ones, such as the two sons of Zebedee desired of Christ, Mr 10:35;

or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; through long waiting for, and expecting help and succour from him, and at last disappointed. Job did not use the widow in such a manner as to give her reason to hope for relief or counsel from him she came for, and make her wait long, and then send her away empty, as he was charged, Job 22:9; but he soon dispatched her, by granting her what she sued to him for.

Job 31:17

Ver. 17. Or have eaten my morsel myself alone,.... Though he had kept no doubt a plentiful table in the time of his prosperity suitable to his circumstances, yet had been no luxurious person, and therefore calls provisions a "morsel"; however, be it what it would, more or less, he did not eat it alone; what he had for himself the poor had a share of it with him, and the same he ate himself he gave to them:

and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof: meaning the poor fatherless: for as to the rich fatherless, it was no charity to feed them: this verse contradicts the charge exhibited against him, Job 22:7.

Job 31:18

Ver. 18. For from my youth he was brought up with me as [with] a father,.... That is, the poor or the fatherless, one or both; as soon as he was at years of discretion, and was capable of observing the distressed circumstances of others, he had a tender and compassionate regard to the poor and fatherless, and acted the part of a father to them; was as affectionately concerned for them as if he had been their father, and took such care of them as if they were his children; see
Job 29:16;

and I have guided her from my mother's womb; the widow, by his counsel and advice; an hyperbolical expression, signifying how early he was a succourer of such persons, by giving his friendly advice, or needful assistance; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "from my youth mercy grew up with me", &c. a merciful disposition, a compassionate regard to the poor and fatherless; this was as it were connatural to him; for though there is no good disposition really in man, without the grace of God, of which Job might early partake, yet there is a show of it in some persons, in comparison of others; some have a natural tender disposition to the poor, when others are naturally cruel and hardhearted to them; and so Mr. Broughton renders the words to this sense,

"for from my youth this grew with me as a father, and from my mother did I tender it:"

but the first sense seems best.

Job 31:19

Ver. 19. If I have seen any perish for want of clothing,.... A man may be in such poor circumstances as to want proper clothing to cover his naked body with, and preserve it from the inclemencies of the weather, and for want of it be ready to perish or die with cold. Job denies he had seen any such; not that he had never seen persons in such perishing circumstances; but he had not seen them as to "despise" them, as the Vulgate Latin version, as to have them in contempt, or look at them with disdain because of their poverty and rags, or sordid apparel; or so as to "overlook" them, as the Septuagint version, to neglect them, and to take no notice of them, and make no provision for their clothing, a warm and comfortable garment, as in Job 31:20:

or any poor without covering; without clothing sufficient to cover himself with, and keep him warm; Job had seen such objects, but he did not leave them in such a condition; he saw them, and had compassion on them, and clothed them.

Job 31:20

Ver. 20. If his loins have not blessed me,.... Which were girded and covered with garments he gave him; which, as often as he put on and girded his loins with, put him in mind of his generous benefactor, and this put him upon sending up an ejaculatory wish to heaven, that all happiness and blessedness might attend him, who had so comfortably clothed him; see Job 29:13;

and [if] he were [not] warmed with the fleece of my sheep; not with a fleece of wool as taken off the back of the sheep, or with a sheep's skin, having the wool on it, but with it, as made up into cloth; with a woollen garment, which was a kind of clothing that very early obtained, and is what is warm and comfortable, see De 22:11. Job clothed the naked, not with gay apparel, which was not necessary, but with decent and useful raiment, and not with the fleece of other men's sheep, but with the fleece of his own sheep, or with cloth made of the wool of his own flock, giving what was his own and not others; which always should be observed in acts of charity; see 2Sa 12:4. Thus Christ, the antitype of Job, feeds the poor and the fatherless whom he finds, though he does not leave them so; it is at his own table, and with his own bread, with provisions of his own making; and clothes them with the robe of his righteousness, and garments of salvation, which is a clothing and a covering to them, and secures them from perishing, and causes joy and gladness in them, Isa 61:10.

Job 31:21

Ver. 21. If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless,.... Either in a menacing way, threatening what he would do to them; which, from a man of wealth and authority, a civil magistrate, a judge, is very terrible to the poor and fatherless; or in order to strike him, which would be to smite with the fist of wickedness; or give a signal to others, by lifting up the hand to smite, as Ananias gave orders to smite the Apostle Paul; or thereby to give his vote against the fatherless wrongly, suffrages being sometimes made by lifting up the hands; or hereby Job signifies, that he was so far from doing the fatherless any real injury, that he had not so much as lifted up his hand, and even a finger against him:

when I saw my help in the gate; in the court of judicature held in the gate of the city, as was usual; though he knew he had the bench of judges for him, or they would give sentence in his behalf, and against the fatherless, if he did but hold up his hand, or lift up a finger to them, so ready would they be take his part and be on his side; yet he never made use of his power and interest to their detriment, or took such an advantage against them.

Job 31:22

Ver. 22. [Then] let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade,.... With which the upper part of it is connected; let it be disjointed from it, or rot and drop off from it; a dreadful calamity this, to lose an arm and the use of it, to have it full off immediately, as a judgment from God, and in just retaliation for lifting up an hand or arm against the fatherless; as Jeroboam's arm withered when he put it forth from the altar, and ordered hands to be laid upon the prophet for crying against the altar, 1Ki 13:4; and mine arm be broken from the bone; from the channel bone, as the margin of our Bibles, or rather from the elbow, the lower part of the arm and so may be rendered, "or mine arm", &c. Eliphaz had brought a charge against Job, that the arms of the fatherless had been broken, and suggests that they had been broken by him, or by his orders, Job 22:9; and Job here wishes, that if that was the case, that his own arm was broken: such imprecations are not to be made in common, or frequently, and only when a man's innocence cannot be vindicated but by an appeal to the omniscient God; an instance somewhat like this, see in Ps 137:5.

Job 31:23

Ver. 23. For destruction [from] God [was] a terror to me,.... Though he feared not men, they being at his beck and command, ready to do any thing for him he should order, yet he feared God; and the dread of his resentment, and of destruction from him the lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy, had such an influence on him as to deter and keep him from all unkindness to the poor, and in justice to the fatherless; he dreaded the destruction of himself, his family, and substance in this world, and everlasting destruction of soul and body in the world to come; which of all things is to be feared, Mt 10:28; and Old Testament saints were much under a spirit of bondage to fear, and were actuated thereby; and, though Job might not be under any dread of eternal damnation, knowing his interest in the living Redeemer; yet he might fear temporal destruction, as it is certain he did; which thing he feared came upon him, though not for any crime or crimes he was guilty of, see Job 30:25; he might fear, as a good man may, the chastisements and corrections of his heavenly Father:

and by reason of his highness I could not endure; God is higher than the highest angels, or men; he is above all gods, so called; he is God over all, blessed for ever; and such is his height, his glory, and his majesty, that it is terrible, and the dread of them makes men afraid; nor can any sinner stand before him, nor withstand him, nor hope to prevail against him, nor flee from his presence, nor escape out of his hand, nor bear his wrath and indignation, and the coming down of his arm; for what hands can be strong, or heart endure, when the almighty God deals with them? or Job's sense may be, that such an awe of the divine Being was always upon him, that he could not do any unkind thing to the poor, or unjust one to the fatherless.

Job 31:24

Ver. 24. If I have made gold my hope,.... Job here purges himself from idolatry in a figurative sense, as he afterwards does from it, taken in a literal sense; for covetousness is idolatry, and a covetous man is an idolater; he worships his gold and silver, placing his affections on them, and putting his trust and confidence in them, **Eph 5:5**; for to make gold the object or ground of hope is to place it in the room of God, who is the Hope of Israel, and in whom every good man should trust, and whom he should make his hope, Jer 14:8; not gold on earth, but glory in heaven, is what the good man is hoping for; and not riches, but Christ and his righteousness, are the foundation of such an hope; to make gold our hope, is to have hope in this life, and to make a thing present the object of it; whereas true hope is of things not seen and future, and if only in this life good men have hope, they are of all most miserable; but they have in heavens better and a more enduring substance, and a better ground for hope of that substance, than worldly wealth and riches can give:

or have said to the fine gold, [thou art] my confidence; as bad men do, and good men are prone unto, and therefore to be cautioned against it, Ps 49:6; for this is not only to trust in uncertain riches, and in unsatisfying ones, but to put them in the stead of God, who is or ought to be the confidence of the ends of the earth: not gold, but the living God, who gives all things richly to enjoy, is to be trusted in; when men covet riches, and trust in them as their security from evil, and that they may live independent of the providence of God, it is virtually to deny it, and carries in it secret atheism; as well as such a confidence is destruction of the worship of God, and such a temper makes a man an unprofitable hearer, plunges him into errors and hurtful lusts, and endangers his everlasting happiness, **Hab 2:9**; in later times the Romans worshipped the goddess "Pecunia", or money, as Austin {z} relates.

{z} De Civitate Dei, l. 4. c. 21.

Job 31:25

Ver. 25. If I rejoiced because my wealth [was] great,.... As it was, see **Job 1:2**; yet he did not set his heart upon it, please himself with it, indulge to a carnal joy on account of it, nor suffer it to engross his affections, or alienate them from God his chief joy; not but that a man may lawfully rejoice in the goodness of God unto him, in increasing his wealth, and praise him for it, who has placed him in such easy circumstances, and so comfortably provided for him and his family, and put him into a capacity to do good to others; and he may rejoice in what God has given him, and cheerfully partake of it, 1Ch 29:13;

and because my hand had gotten much; though he had much wealth, he did not ascribe it to his own industry, and applaud his own wisdom and diligence, as men are apt to do, for all comes of God, and is owing to his blessing; he did not please himself when become rich, as if his own hand had found him much substance, as Ephraim did, Ho 12:8.

Job 31:26

Ver. 26. If I beheld the sun when it shined,.... Some take this to be a reason why Job did not make gold his hope and confidence, because all sublunary and earthly enjoyments must be uncertain, fading, and perish, since the sun and moon are not without their deficiencies and changes, to which sense the Septuagint version inclines; others, as Nachmanides, that they are a denial that Job ascribed his wealth and substance to the influence of the heavenly bodies; and many interpreters are of opinion that they are a continuation of the same subject as before; Job hereby declaring that neither his eye nor his heart were set upon his outward prosperity, comparable to the light of the sun, and the brightness of the moon; that he did not secretly please himself with it, nor congratulate himself upon it nor applaud his own wisdom and industry; and of late Schultens and others interpret it of flattering great personages, complimenting: them, and courting their favour, which we call worshipping the rising sun; but I rather think it is to be understood, as it more generally is, of worshipping the sun and moon in a literal sense; which was the first kind of idolatry men went into; those very ancient idolaters, the Zabii, worshipped the sun as their greater god, as Maimonides {a} observes, to whom he says they offered seven bats, seven mice, and seven other creeping things, with some other things also; in later times horses were offered to it, see 2Ki 23:11. So the ancient Egyptians worshipped the sun and moon, calling the one Osiris, and the other Isis {b}. The word for sun is "light", and it is so called because it is a luminous body, and the fountain of light to others; it is called the greater light, **Ge 1:16**; and from this Hebrew word "or", with the Egyptians, Apollo, who is the sun, is called Horus, as Macrobius {c} relates; it is said to "shine", as it always does, even when below our horizon, or in an eclipse, or under a cloud, though not seen by us. Job has here respect to its shining clearly and visibly, and perhaps at noon day, when it is in its full strength; unless regard is had to its bright and shining appearance at its rising, when the Heathens used to pay their homage and adoration to it {d}: now when Job denies that he beheld it shining, it cannot be understood of the bare sight of it, which he continually had; nor of beholding it with delight and pleasure, which might be very lawfully done, Ec 11:7; nor of considering it as the work of God, being a very glorious and useful creature, in which his glory is displayed, and for which he is to be praised, because of its beneficial influence on the earth; see **Ps 8:3**; but of his beholding it with admiration, as if it was more than a creature, ascribing deity to it, and worshipping it as God; and the same must be understood of the moon in the next clause:

or the moon walking [in] brightness; as at first rising, or rather when in the full, in the middle of the month, as Aben Ezra; when it walks all night, in its brightness, illuminated by the sun: these two luminaries, the one called the king, the other the queen of heaven, were very early worshipped, if not the first instances of idolatry. Diodorus Siculus {e} says, that the first men of old, born in Egypt, beholding and admiring the beauty of the world, thought there were two gods in the nature of the universe, and that they were eternal; namely, the sun and moon, the one they called Osiris, and the other Isis; hence the Israelites, having dwelt long in Egypt, were in danger of being drawn into this idolatry, against which they are cautioned, **De 4:19**; and where was a city called Heliopolis, or the city of the sun, as in the Greek version of Isa 19:18; where was a temple dedicated to the worship of it; and so the Arabians, the neighbours of Job, according to Herodotus {f}, worshipped the sun and moon; for he says the Persians were taught by them and the Assyrians to sacrifice to the sun and moon; and so did the old Canaanites and the Phoenicians; hence one of their cities is called Bethshemesh, the house or temple of the sun, Jos 19:22, yea, we are told {g}, that to this day there are some traces of this ancient idolatry in Arabia, the neighbourhood of Job; as in a large city in Arabia, upon the Euphrates, called Anna, where they worship the sun only; this being common in those parts in Job's time, he purges himself from it.

{a} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 29. p. 424. {b} Diodor. Sic. l. 1. p. 10. {c} Saturnal. l. 1. c. 21. {d} "Illi ad surgentem conversi limina solem", Virgil. Aeneid. 12. {e} Bibliothec. l. 1. c. 10. {f} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 131. {g} De la Valle Itinerar. par. 2. c. 9. apud Spanheim. Hist. Job. c. 6. sect. 14. No. 6. p. 108, 109.

Job 31:27

Ver. 27. And mine heart hath been secretly enticed,.... Drawn away by beholding the magnitude of these bodies, the swiftness of their motion, their glorious appearance, and great usefulness to mankind, to entertain a thought of their being deities; and privately to worship them, in secret acts of devotion, as by an honourable esteem of them as such, reverence and affection for them, trust and confidence in them; for, as there is a secret worshipping of the true God, so there is a secret idolatry, idolatry in the heart, and setting up of idols there, as well as worshipping them in dark places, in chambers of imagery, as the Jews did, **Eze 8:12**;

or my mouth hath kissed my hand; idols used to be kissed by their votaries, in token of their veneration of them, and as expressive of their worship of them; so Baal and Jeroboam's calves were kissed by the worshippers of them, 1Ki 19:18. Kissing is used to signify the religious veneration, homage, and worship of a divine Person, the Son of God, **Ps 2:12**; and such deities especially that were out of the reach of their worshippers, as the sun, moon, and stars were, they used to put their hands to their mouths, and kiss them, in token of their worship; just as persons now, at a distance from each other, pay their civil respects to one another: instances of religious adoration of idols performed in this manner, See Gill on "Ho 13:2". Job denies that he had been guilty of such idolatry, either secretly or openly.

Job 31:28

Ver. 28. This also [were] an iniquity [to be punished by] the judge,.... As well as adultery, Job 31:11; by the civil magistrates and judges of the earth, who are God's vicegerents, and therefore it behooves them to take cognizance of such an iniquity, and to punish for it, which affects in so peculiar a manner the honour and worship of the true God; this by the law of Moses was punished by stoning to death,
De 13:9; however this will be taken notice of and punished by God the Judge of all, whose law is broken hereby, and who will visit this iniquity more especially on those who commit it, and their posterity after them. Idolaters of every sort shall have their part and portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, Ex 20:3; the consideration of its being such a heinous sin, and so deserving of punishment, deterred Job from it; the Targum paraphrases it, a most amazing iniquity, it being, as follows, a denial of the true God:

for I should have denied the God [that is] above; that is, had he worshipped the sun and moon secretly or openly; for, as the atheist denies him in words, the idolater denies him in facts, worshipping the creature besides the Creator, and giving his glory to another, and his praise to idols; which is a virtual denial of him, even of him who is above the sun and moon in place, being higher than the heavens; and in nature, excellency, and glory, being the Creator of them, and they his creatures; and in power and authority, who commands the sun, and it rises not, and has appointed the moon for seasons, **Job 9:7**.

Job 31:29

Ver. 29. If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me,.... Job, though a good man, had his enemies, as all good men have, and that because of their goodness, and who hated him with an implacable hatred, without a cause, there being a rooted bitter enmity in the seed of the serpent against the godly in all generations; on whom sooner or later, at one time or another, destruction comes, one calamity or another on their families, diseases on their bodies, loss of substance, death of themselves or relatives; now it is a common thing with wicked men to rejoice in the adversity of their enemies, but good men should not do so; yet it is a difficult thing, and requires a large measure of grace, and that in exercise, not to feel any pleasing emotion, a secret joy and inward pleasure, at the hearing of anything of this sort befalling an enemy; which is a new crime Job purges himself from:

or lifted up myself when evil found him; either the evil of sin, which sooner or later finds out the sinner, charges him with guilt, and requires punishment, or the evil of punishment for sin; which, though it may seem to move slowly, pursues the sinner, and will overtake him, and light upon him. Mr. Broughton renders the words, "and bestirred me when he found loss": loss in his family, in his cattle, and in his substance; now, when this was the case, Job did not raise up himself in a haughty manner, and insult and triumph over him, or stir up himself to joy and rejoicing, or to make joyful motions, as Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom interpret it; and by his gestures show that he was elated with the evil that had befallen his enemy; indeed so far as the fall and destruction of the wicked make for the public good, for the interest of religion, for the glory of God, and the honour of his justice, it is lawful for good men to rejoice thereat; but not from a private affection, or from a private spirit of revenge, see Ps 58:10.

Job 31:30

Ver. 30. Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin,.... Which, as it is the instrument of speech, is often the means of much sin; particularly of cursing men, and expressing much bitterness against enemies; but Job laid an embargo upon it, kept it as with a bridle, restrained it from uttering any evil, or wishing any to his worst adversaries; which is difficult to do, when provocations are given, as follows:

by wishing a curse to his soul; not to his soul as distinct from his body, being the superior excellency and immortal part; that it be everlastingly damned, as wicked men wish to their own souls, and the souls of others, but to his person, wishing some calamity might befall him, some disease seize upon him, or that God would take him away by death: Job would never suffer himself to wish anything of this kind unto his enemy.

Job 31:31

Ver. 31. If the men of my tabernacle,.... Either his friends, that came to visit him, and take a meal with him, and would sometimes tarry awhile with him in his house, being very free and familiar with him; and who were, as it were, at home in his tabernacle; or rather his domestic servants, that were under his roof, and dwelt in his house, see Job 19:15; if these

said not, oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied; of the flesh of Job's enemy; and the sense is that his servants used to say, are cannot bear to see our master so ill used and insulted by his enemy; we wish he would only allow us to avenge him on him, we would eat him up alive; we would devour him, and destroy him at once; nor can we be satisfied unless we have leave to do it: and so this is a further proof of Job's patience with his enemies, that though he had fetters on in his family, his servants solicited him to revenge, yet he abstained from it; which may be exemplified in the cases of David and of Christ,
1Sa 26:8, though some think these words express Job's patience towards his servants, who were so angry with him for the strict discipline he observed in his house, that they wished they had his flesh to eat, and could not be satisfied without it; and yet, so far was he from taking pleasure in the calamities of his enemies, and wishing ill to them, that he did not resent the ill natured speeches of his servants, and avenge himself on them for their wicked insults upon him: but it can hardly be thought that Job would keep such wicked servants in his house; but perhaps Job here enters upon a new crime, which he clears himself

of, and is opened more fully in Job 31:32, namely, inhospitality to strangers; since the particle "if" commonly begins a new article in this chapter, and being taken in this sense, various interpretations are given; some, as if Job's servants were displeased with him for his hospitality, that his house was always so full of guests, that they were continually employed in dressing food for them, that they had not time, or that there was not enough left for them to eat of his flesh, his food, and be satisfied with it; or else, as pleased with the plentiful table he kept, and therefore desired to continue always in his service, and eat of his food; nor could they be satisfied with the food of others, or live elsewhere; though perhaps it is best of all to render the words, as by some, who will give, or show the man "that is not satisfied of his flesh?" {h} point out the man in all the neighbourhood that has not been liberally entertained at Job's table to his full satisfaction and content; and his liberality did not extend only to his neighbours, but to strangers also; as follows.

{h} So Schultens, "quis"; and Ikenius, apud ib.

Job 31:32

Ver. 32. The stranger did not lodge in the street,.... By a stranger is not meant an unconverted man, that is a stranger to God and godliness, to Christ, and the way of salvation by him, to the Spirit of God and spiritual things, nor a good man, who is a stranger and pilgrim on earth; but one that is out of his nation and country, and at a distance from it, whether a good man or a bad man; these Job would not suffer to lie in the streets in the night season, exposed to the air and the inclemencies of it; see Jud 19:15;

[but] I opened my doors to the traveller; even all the doors of his house, to denote his great liberality, that as many as would might enter it; and this was done by himself, or, however, by his order; and some think that it signifies that he was at his door, waiting and watching for travellers to invite them in, as Abraham and Lot,
Ge 18:1; or his doors were opened "to the way" {i}: as it may be rendered, to the roadside; his house was built by the wayside; or, however, the doors which lay towards that side were thrown open for travellers to come in at as they pleased, and when they would; so very hospitable and kind to strangers and travellers was Job, and so welcome were they to his house and the entertainment of it, see Heb 13:2.

{i} xral "ad semitam seu viam", Mercerus; "versus viam", Piscator, Michaelis;

Krdl, Ben Gersom.

Job 31:33

Ver. 33. If I covered my transgressions as Adam,.... Job could not be understood, by this account he had given of the holiness of his life, that he thought himself quite free from sin; he had owned himself to be a sinner in several places before, and disclaimed perfection; and here he acknowledges he was guilty of transgressing the law of God, and that in many instances; for he speaks of his "transgressions" in the plural number; but then he did not seek to cover them from the of God or men, but frankly and ingenuously confessed them to both; he did not cover them, palliate, excuse, and extenuate them, as Adam did his, by laying the blame to his wife; and as she by charging it on the serpent; and those excuses they made are the inventions they found out, **Ec 7:29**; or the meaning is, Job did not do "as men" {k} in common do; who, when they have sinned, either through fear or shame, endeavour to conceal it, and keep it out of the sight of others, unless they are very hardened and audacious sinners, such as the men of Sodom were, see **Ho 6:7**;

by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom; meaning perhaps some particular iniquity which his nature was most inclined to; this he did not attempt to hide in secret, as what is put into the bosom is; or that he did not spare it and cherish it, and, from an affection to it, keep it as persons and things beloved are, laid in the bosom; and so Mr. Broughton reads the words, "hiding my sin of a self-love"; either having a self-love to it, or hiding it of self-love, that is, from a principle of self-love, to preserve his honour, credit, and reputation among men.

{k} Mdak "ut homo", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Beza, Bolducius, Mercerus, Drusius, Schmidt; "more hominum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Aben Ezra.

Job 31:34

Ver. 34. Did I fear a great multitude?.... No, they did not deter him from confessing his sin in the most public manner, when sensible or convicted of it, and when such a public acknowledgment was necessary:

or did the contempt of families terrify me? no, the contempt he might suppose he should be had in by some families that knew him, and he was well acquainted with, did not terrify him from making a free and ingenuous confession of his sins:

that I kept silence; or "did I keep silence",

[and] went not out of the door? so as not to open his mouth by confession in public, but kept within doors through fear and shame; or else the sense is, that he was not intimidated from doing his duty as a civil magistrate, administering justice to the poor and oppressed; neither the dread of a clamorous mob, nor the contempt of families of note, or great personages, could deter him from the execution of his office with uprightness, so as to cause him to be silent, and keep at home; but without any regard to the fear of the one, or the contempt of the other, he went out from his house through the street to the court of judicature, took his place on the bench, and gave judgment in favour of those that were oppressed, though the multitude was against them, and even persons and families of note: or thus, though I could have put a great multitude to fear, yet the most contemptible persons in any family, so Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom interpret that phrase, the meanest person, or but a beggar, if his cause was just, terrified him; or such was the fear of God upon him, that he durst do no other than to do him justice; so that he could not open his mouth against him, or stir out of doors to do him the tease; injury; though perhaps it may be best of all, with Schultens, to consider these words as an imprecation, that if what he had said before from Job 31:24 was not true; if he was not clear from idolatry figurative, and literal, from a malicious and revengeful spirit, from inhospitality and unkindness to strangers, from palliating, excusing, and extenuating his sins; then as if he should say, may I be frightened with a tumult, or a multitude of people, and terrified with the public contempt of families; may I be as silent as a mope in my own house, and never dare to stir out of doors, or show my thee, or see face of any man any more: and then, before he had quite finished his account of himself, breaks out in the following manner.

Job 31:35

Ver. 35. Oh, that one would hear me!.... Or, "who will give me a hearer?" {l} Oh, that I had one! not a nearer of him as a teacher and instructor of many, as he had been, **Job 4:3**; or only to hear what he had delivered in this chapter; but to hear his cause, and hear him plead his own cause in a judiciary way; he does not mean an ordinary hearer, one that, comes out of curiosity into courts of judicature to hear causes tried, what is said on both sides, and how they will issue; but, as Bar Tzemach paraphrases it,

"who shall give me a judge that shall hear me,"

that would hear his cause patiently, examine it thoroughly, and judge impartially, which is the business of judges to do, **De 1:16**; he did not care who it was, if he had but such an one; though he seems to have respect to God himself, from what he says in the next clause, and wishes that he would but hear, try, and judge his cause:

behold, my desire [is, that] the Almighty would answer me: answer to what he had said, or had further to say in his own defence; this is a request he had made before, and now repeats it, see Job 13:22; some render it, "behold my mark", or "scope" {m}; so Mr. Broughton, "behold my scope in this"; this is what I aim at, what I design and mean by wishing for an hearer, that the Almighty himself would take the cause in hand, and give me an answer: or, "behold my sign" {n}; the sign of my innocence, appealing to God, leaving my cause to be heard, tried, and judged by him, who is my witness, and will answer for me; see Job 16:19; as well as desiring mine adversary to put down in writing what he has against me; or, "behold my signature" {o}; the plea I have given is signed by my own hand: now "let the Almighty answer me"; a bold expression indeed, and a making too free with the Almighty, and was one of those speeches Job was to be blamed for, and for which he was after humbled and repented of:

and [that] mine adversary had written a book; or "the man of my contention" {p}: either that contended for him, as Aben Ezra, that pleaded for him, was his advocate in court, whom he would have take a brief of him, and so distinctly plead his cause; or rather that contended against him, a court adversary, by whom he means either his three friends, or some one of them, whom he more especially took for his enemy; see Job 16:9; and who he wishes had brought a bill of indictment, and put down in a book, on a paper in writing, the charge he had against him; that so it might be clearly known what could be alleged against him; and that it might be particularly and distinctly examined; when he doubted not but he should be able to give a full answer to every article in it; and that the very bill itself would carry in it a justification of him: or it may be, rather he means God himself, who carried it towards him as an adversary, at least in a providential way; he had before requested that be would show him wherefore he contended with him, Job 10:2; and now he desires he would give in writing his charge against him, being fully confident, that if he had but the opportunity of answering to it before him, he should be able sufficiently to vindicate himself; and that he should come off with honour, as follows.

{l} yl emv yl Nty ym "quis dabit mihi audientem me?" Montanus; "utinam sit mihi auditor", Tigurine version. {m} ywt Nh "en scopum meum", Junius & Tremellius. {n} "Ecce signum meum", Pagninus, Montanus, Beza, Bolducius; so Ben Gersom. {o} "En Signaturam meam", Schultens. {p} ybyr vya "vir litis meae", Montanus, Beza, Bolducius, Drusius, Michaelis; so Vatablus, Mercerus.

Job 31:36

Ver. 36. Surely I would take it upon my shoulder,.... The bill of indictment, the charge in writing; this he would take up and carry on his shoulder as a very light thing, having nothing weighty in it, no charge of sin and guilt to bear him down; nothing but what he could easily stand up under, only some trifling matter, which could not be interpreted sin; for anything of that kind would have been a burden too heavy for him to have borne: or else his sense is, that should he be convicted of any sin, he would openly confess the charge, acknowledge the sin in the most public manner, that being visible which is borne upon the shoulder; and would also patiently bear the afflictions and chastisements that were laid upon him for it: though rather the meaning is, that he should take up and carry such a bill, not as a burden, but as an honour, as one bears a sword of state, or carries a sceptre as an ensign of royalty on his shoulder; to which the allusion may be in **Isa 9:6**; not at all doubting but it would turn out to his glory; which is confirmed by what follows;

[and] bind it [as] a crown to me, or "crowns" {q}, having various circles of gold hung with jewels; signifying that he would not only take his bill or charge, and carry it on his shoulder, but put it on his head, and wear it there, as a king does his crown; which is an ornament and honour to him, as he should reckon this bill, seeing it would give him an opportunity of clearing himself effectually.

{q} twrje "diademata", Montanus; "corollas", Tigurine version; "coronas", Vatablus, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Job 31:37

Ver. 37. I would declare to him the number of my steps,.... To his judge, or to him that contended with him, and drew up the bill against him; he would forward it, assist in it, furnish materials for it, give an account of all the transactions of his life that he could remember; this he says not as though he thought that God stood in need of any such declaration, since he better knows the actions of men than they themselves, compasses their paths, and is acquainted with all their ways; but to show how confident he was of his innocence, and how little he feared the strictest and closest examination of his ways and works, knowing that he had lived with all good conscience unto that day:

and as a prince would I go near unto him; either he should consider such an hearer and judge of his cause he desired as a prince, and reverence and respect him as such; he should be as dear unto him, though his adversary that contended with him, as a prince; and he should be as ambitious of an acquaintance with him as with a prince: or rather he means that he himself as a prince, in a princely manner, and with a princely spirit, should draw nigh to his judge, to answer to the bill in writing against him; that he should not come up to the bar like a malefactor, that shows guilt in his countenance, and by his trembling limbs, and shrinking back, not caring to come nigh, but choosing rather to stand at a distance, or get off and escape if he could; but on the other hand, Job would go up to his judge, and to the judgment seat, with all the stateliness of a prince, with an heroic, intrepid, and undaunted spirit; like a "bold prince", as Mr. Broughton renders the word; see Job 23:3.

Job 31:38

Ver. 38. If my land cry against me,.... Some think that this verse and Job 31:39 stand out of their place, and should rather follow after Job 31:34; and some place them after Job 31:25; and others after Job 31:8; but this is the order of them in all copies and versions, as they stand in our Bibles; and here, after Job had expressed his desire to have a hearer and judge of his cause, and his charge exhibited in writing, and his confidence of the issue of it, should it be granted, returns to his former subject, to clear himself from any notorious vice he was suspected of or charged with; and as he had gone through what might respect him in private life, here he gives another instance in public life, with which he concludes; namely, purging himself from tyranny and oppression, with which his friends had charged him without any proof; and he denies that the land he lived on was possessed of, and of which he was the proprietor, cried against him as being unjustly gotten, either by fraud or by force, from others; or as being ill used by him either as being too much cultivated, having never any rest, or lying fallow; and so much weakened and drained of its strength, or neglected and overrun with weeds, thorns, and thistles; or on account of the dressers and tillers of it being badly dealt with, either overworked, or not having sufficiency of food, or their wages, detained from them; all which are crying sins, and by reason of which the land by a figure may be said to cry out as the stone out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber, because of the sins of spoil, violence, oppression, and covetousness, **Hab 2:11**;

or that the furrows likewise thereof complain; or "weep" {a}, on account of the like ill usage. Jarchi, and so the Midrash, interpret this of not allowing the forgotten sheaf and corner of the field to the poor, and detaining the tithes; and of ploughing and making furrows with an ox and an ass together; but the laws respecting these things were not yet in being; and if they had been, were only binding on Israelites, and not on Job, and the men of his country.

{a} Nwykby "defleant", Pagninus, Montanus; "flent", Beza, Piscator, Cocceius, &c.

Job 31:39

Ver. 39. If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money,.... Or, "the strength thereof without silver" {b}; see **Ge 4:12**, silver being the money chiefly in use in those times. Job's meaning is, that he ate not anything of the fruits and increase of his own land, without having paid for the same, which he would have done, if he had got his land out of the hands of the rightful owners of it, by deceit or violence; or if he had not paid his workmen for ploughing, sowing, reaping, &c. or if he had demanded the fruits of the earth of his tenants, to whom he had let out his farms, without giving them a proper price for them:

or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life; as Jezebel caused Naboth to lose his, who was the original proprietor, that Ahab might possess it, 1Ki 21:7; or it may signify tenants, to whom Job rented out fields, but did not starve them by renting them under hard leases, or lands on hard terms, so that they could not live upon them; or it may design the tillers of the land, as Jarchi and Bar Tzemach; those that wrought in it, the servants that were employed in ploughing, &c. to whom wages were due, and who had not too hard labour imposed upon them, to the endangering of their lives; or he did not "afflict

[and] grieve" {c} them, as some versions; or make their lives bitter, through hard bondage and service, as the Israelites in Egypt.

{b} hxk "robur ejus", Montanus, Bolducius, Mercerus, Drusius; "vim ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens;
Pok ylb "sine, vel absque argento", Mercer, Drusius, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

{c} ytxph "afflixi", V. L. "dolore affeci", Pagninus; so Broughton.

Job 31:40

Ver. 40. Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley,.... This is an imprecation of Job's, in which he wishes that if what he had said was not true, or if he was guilty of the crimes he denied, that when and where he sowed wheat, thorns or thistles might come up instead of it, or tares, as some Jewish writers {d} interpret it; and that when and where he should sow barley, cockle, or darnel, or any "stinking" or "harmful" weed {e}, as the word signifies, might spring up in room of it; respect seems to be had to the original curse upon the earth, and by the judgment of God is sometimes the case, that a fruitful land is turned into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell in it, **Ge 3:18**;

the words of Job are ended; which is either said by himself, at the close of his speech; thus far says Job, and no farther, having said enough in his own defence, and for the confutation of his antagonists, and so closes in a way of triumph: or else this was added by Moses, supposed to have written this book; or by some other hand, as Ezra, upon the revision of it, and other books of the Old Testament, when put in order by him: and these were the last words of Job to his friends, and in vindication of himself; for though there is somewhat more said afterwards by him, and but little, yet to God, and by way of humiliation, acknowledging his sin, and repentance for it with shame and abhorrence; see Job 40:3. Jarchi, and so the Midrash, understand this concluding clause as all imprecation of Job's; that if he had done otherwise than he had declared, he wishes that these might be his last words, and he become dumb, and never open his mouth more; but, as Bar Tzemach observes, the simple sense is, that his words were now completed and finished, just as the prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are said to be, Ps 72:20.

{d} Bar Tzemach, et alii. {e} hvab "herba foetens", Montanus, Bolducius;

"spina foetida", Drusius; "vitium frugum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "labrusca", Cocceius, Schultens.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 32:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 32

Job's three friends being silenced, and having no more to say in reply to him, Elihu, of whose descent some account is given, a bystander and hearer of the whole dispute between them, rises up as a moderator, and expresses some anger both against them and Job, Job 32:1; he makes an apology for engaging in this controversy, by reason of his youth, and they being advanced in years, Job 32:6; but since there is a spirit in man, that gives understanding to men of every age, and old men are not always wise, he desires they would hearken to him while he delivered his sentiments on the subject in debate, Job 32:8; and hopes to be heard patiently, since he had waited until they had said all they had to say, and had closely attended to it, and which fell short of convincing Job; and this he was obliged to say, lest they should be wise in their own conceit, and attribute that to men which belongs to God, Job 32:11; he proposes to take a new method with Job, different from theirs; and now they hearing all this from a young man, they were filled with amazement, and struck with silence; and after he had waited a while to observe whether they would say anything or not, he determined to take his turn, and show his opinion also, Job 32:14; and the rather because he was full of arguments, he was desirous to propose them, and was uneasy until he had brought them out; and which he was resolved to do with all impartiality and integrity, Job 32:18.

Ver. 1. So these three men ceased to answer Job,.... His three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, who came to visit and comfort him under his afflictions; but unawares were led into a controversy with him, occasioned by some rash and impatient expressions of his; which controversy had been carried on between them a considerable time, but now dropped; they grew weary of it, and now rested themselves as men do on a sabbath, as the word signifies; they set themselves down, and made no reply to Job's vindication of himself, not caring to give themselves any further trouble, or labour the point any more and longer, perceiving it was all to no purpose: or "and these three men ceased", &c. the last words of the preceding chapter are, "the words of Job are ended", Job 31:40; and the copulative "and" connects these with them, and shows that these men also had done speaking;

so that the dispute was closed between Job and them, and the way was clear for another disputant that might think fit to enter, as Elihu did, after mentioned

because he [was] righteous in his own eyes; some take this to express the state of the question between them, rendering the words, "that he was righteous", &c. {f}. The notion his friends had of him was, that he was righteous in his own account, and as he professed to be, and might so seem to others; but was a wicked man, and an hypocrite, as his afflictions showed; this point they had been labouring to prove, but, upon Job's long and clear vindication of his integrity, they ceased to defend it: others suppose the words to be an inference of Job's from their silence: "therefore he was righteous", &c. they making no reply to him, he concluded himself to be quit and clear of the charge they had brought against him; but they rather, according to our version, contain a reason why they ceased to answer him; because they thought him self-conceited, self-willed, obstinate, and incorrigible; not open to conviction, stiffly insisting on his own innocence, not allowing that he was guilty of any sin or sins, which were the cause of his afflictions; otherwise, in the article of justification before God, Job was no self-righteous man, nor was he so charged by his friends; to say he was is to abuse his character, and is contrary to that which God himself has given of him; nor would he have so highly commended him as to suggest there was none like him on earth, when of all men in the world there are none more abominable to God than a self-righteous man; see Isa 65:4. It is contrary to Job's knowledge of and faith in Christ, as his living Redeemer, Job 19:25; and to many clear and strong expressions, confessing his sin, disclaiming perfection, and declaring himself no self-justiciary, **Job 7:20**.

{f} qydu awx yk "quod ille (tantum) justus in oculis suis", Schmidt.

Job 32:2

Ver. 2. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite,.... Both against Job and his three friends, for reasons after given; who this person was is not easy to say; they debase him too much, who make him to be Balaam the soothsayer, according to the tradition of the Jews {g}; for neither the time he lived in, nor his character, will agree with him; this man living before the times of Balaam; and being also a holy good man, which all his discourses show: and they too much exalt him who make him to be Christ; for though some phrases, being strained, may seem to agree with him, and some things in the signification of his name, and the names of his ancestors, may be thought to answer to him; Elihu signifying, "my God is he"; the son of Barachel, "the

son of the blessed God"; of the kindred of Ram, of the high and holy line; the Buzite, one "despised" and reproached; yet there are other things that cannot be said of him, as particularly in
Job 32:22; besides, the Messiah seems to be spoken of by him as another person, Job 33:23; it is very probable that he was one of Job's relations that was come to visit him in his melancholy circumstances, had been a bystander, and an hearer of the whole dispute between Job and his friends, with the management of which he was not a little displeased; he is described by his descent, when Job's other three friends are not, because he was a young man, and not known as they were: and this serves to show the truth of this history, that it is not a mere apologue, or moral fable, but a real fact; though who his father Barachel the Buzite was cannot easily be determined; it is probable he was a descendant of Buz, the son of Nahor, Abraham's brother, Ge 22:20; of this opinion are Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom; unless it can be thought he was so called from the city Buz, of which he might be an inhabitant, mentioned along with Dedan and Tema,
Jer 25:23, places in Edom or Idumea, where or near to which Job lived:

of the kindred of Ram; according to the Targum, of the kindred of Abraham, in which it is followed by other Jewish writers {h}; and some even take him to be Isaac, the son of Abraham {i}; Aben Ezra thinks he is the same with Ram the father of Amminadab, **Ru 4:19**; but he is abundantly too late for this man to be of his kindred; others take him to be the same with Aram, the son of Kemuel, a brother of Buz,
Ge 22:21; these names being used for one another, either by adding or removing a letter; see **Mt 1:3**; compared with **Ru 4:19**;

against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God; not that he made himself more just than God, he could never think or say so, see **Job 4:17**; nor that he was just before him or by him; for he was so in an evangelic, though not in a legal sense; and Elihu would not have been displeased with him for asserting that; he did not deny that Job was a righteous man in the sight of God; nor that he was righteous, and in the right in the sight of God, with respect to the controversy between him and his friends; nor did he blame him for justifying himself from their charges; but that he justified himself "more" than God; so the Jewish writers {k} generally render it: he spent more time, and insisted longer on his own justification than upon the justification of God in the dealings of his providence with him; he was more careful of his own character and reputation than he was of the honour of God, and the glory of his justice; he said more for himself than he did for God; and this displeased Elihu; it gave this good man some concern, that, though Job did not directly charge God with unrighteousness in his dealings with him, yet by consequence; and he expressed himself in such language that would bear such a construction, whether it was his real sense or not; and to hear him complain so heavily of God, and at the same time enlarge so much on his own innocence, and to importune in so bold and daring a manner to have a hearing of his cause; these things being observed by Elihu, raised his choler and indignation.

{g} T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 20. 4. Hieron. Quaest. seu Traditiones in Gen. fol. 69. D. so Bolducius. {h} Jarchi, Bar Tzemach, &c. {i} T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 20. 4. {k} Jarchi, Aben Ezra. Ben Gersom.

Job 32:3

Ver. 3. Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled,.... He did not take part with either side, but blamed both, and took upon him to be a moderator between them, and deal impartially with them: what highly displeased him, and raised his spirit against the three friends of Job, was,

because they had found no answer; they were at a loss for one, for a sufficient one; they had all of them been answering him in their turns again and again, but with nothing to the purpose, not with anything conclusive and convincing; and particularly they could find and give no answer to Job's last vindication of himself:

and [yet] had condemned Job; as a very wicked man, and an hypocrite, for no other reason but because he was afflicted; and they still persisted in their sentiment, though Job had so fully cleared himself, and put them to entire silence; this exasperated Elihu, to observe these men to retain so unreasonable a sentiment, to pronounce such a rash sentence, and yet could make no reply to Job's defence of himself. Jarchi says, this place is one of the corrections of the Scribes, it having been formerly written "God" instead of "Job"; as if the sense was, that Elihu was provoked with them, because by their silence they had condemned the Lord, not vindicating his honour and glory as became them; but Aben Ezra declares his ignorance of that correction, and observes, that they that say so knew what was hid from him.

Job 32:4

Ver. 4. Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken,.... Made an end of speaking, until he had thus expressed himself, "the words of Job are ended", Job 31:40: and waited likewise until his three friends had said all they had to say, and which is here supposed and implied, as appears by what follows:

because they [were] elder than he; it may be added, from the original text, "in", or "as two days" {l}; they had lived longer in the world than he, and therefore did not take upon him to speak till they had done; he, as became a young man, was swift to hear, and slow to speak; that they were old men, appears from what Eliphaz says, Job 15:10.

{l} Mymyl "diebus", Beza, Montanus, Mercerus; "quod ad dies", Schultens.

Job 32:5

Ver. 5. When Elihu saw that [there was] no answer in the mouth of [these] three men,.... That could be called an answer; nay, when he perceived they were quite nonplussed and silenced, though men of years and experience, and reputed wise and knowing:

then his wrath was kindled; his spirit was stirred up; his heart was hot within him; he burned with anger against those men; he was all on fire, as it were, and wanted to vent his resentment.

Job 32:6

Ver. 6. And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said,.... Since there was no answer in them, he takes upon him to give one himself; but first makes an apology on account of his youth:

I [am] young, and ye [are] very old; or "few of days"; a few days, comparatively speaking, had he lived in the world; or "small", or "little as two days" {m}; he had been but a little time in it, and so could be thought to have but little knowledge and experience; whereas they were old, even very old; with them were the aged and the grayheaded, Job 15:10; in whom it might have been expected was much wisdom and knowledge:

wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show mine opinion; declare what knowledge he had of the things in dispute, lest it should appear mean, small, and contemptible; or give his sentiments concerning them, lest he should speak wrongly, and not only give offence, but do more harm than good: the first of these words, in the Arabic language {n}, as Aben Ezra observes, signifies to go back; it is used of worms, which, through fear, withdraw themselves from men; so mean an opinion had he of himself, and such a sense of his own weakness, that it not only kept him back, but even caused him to draw back, and keep out of the dispute, and at a distance from it, instead of being forward to engage in it: one Jewish commentator {o} paraphrases it

"I humbled myself as one that goes on his belly;"

referring to worms that go low and creep upon their belly, or to the prostrate posture of men that humble themselves to their superiors.

{m} Mymyl yna ryeu "minimus ego diebus", Montanus; "parvus diebus sum", Mercerus. {n} "recessit suo loco", Castel. col. 1036. {o} Sephorno.

Job 32:7

Ver. 7. I said, days should speak,.... That is, men of days, of many days, who have lived many days and years in the world: man in common is but of few days, even the most that men arrive to are but few; and some indeed are very few, in comparison of whom others may be said to be men of days, or to have lived many days; and to such it belongs to speak, it is their place, nor should they be prevented or interrupted; it should be allowed them to speak, nor should they be hindered; and it is their duty to speak and instruct juniors, and all that are under them; and it might be reasonably expected, that when they speak it will be to the purpose, and to profit and edification:

and multitude of years should teach wisdom; that is, such over whom many have passed; these it may be thought, having had an opportunity of making their observation on things, and of increasing experience, and of treasuring up a stock of knowledge, they should be very capable of, and indeed the only fit persons to teach others wisdom; either natural wisdom, or the knowledge of natural things; or divine wisdom, the knowledge of God, of his perfections and providences; and inward, spiritual, and evangelical wisdom, which lies in the knowledge of a man's self; in the knowledge of God in Christ; in the knowledge of Christ and of the Gospel of Christ, and the truths of it: this was a sentiment Elihu had entertained of ancient men, and this had restrained him from entering sooner into this debate between Job and his friends; they all being his superiors in age, and, as from thence he judged, in wisdom and knowledge also.

Job 32:8

Ver. 8. But [there is] a spirit in man,.... This seems to be a correction of his former sentiment; the consideration of which gave him encouragement, though young, to declare his opinion, since there is a spirit in men, both young and old; and wherever that be, there is an ability to speak and a capacity of teaching wisdom; which is not tied to age; but may he found in young men as well as in old men: some by this understand the rational soul, or spirit, which is immaterial, immortal, is of God, and is in man; and the rather it is thought this is meant, because it is in every man, whereby he has knowledge of many things, natural and divine, and particularly is capable of trying and judging things, of discerning the difference between one thing and another, and of reasoning and discoursing upon them; and this being observed by Elihu, and he being conscious to himself of having such a spirit in him, was emboldened to engage in the debate, though a young man; but if such a spirit is meant, the words may be rendered to such a sense, verily, truly, indeed "there is [such a rational spirit] in man", which makes him capable of knowing many things, "but the inspiration of the Almighty", &c. {p}; it is not owing to the rational powers and faculties of the soul of man, and the use of them, that a man becomes capable of teaching others wisdom; but to his soul or spirit being inspired by the Almighty; and such an one, be he young or old, that God breathes into, and he is under his inspiration, he is the man fit to engage in such work: though I rather think, that in this first clause the spirit of God is meant, and so Jarchi; who is an uncreated, infinite, and eternal Spirit; is of God, and is put into men; for he is not in men naturally, nor in everyone; and where he is, he is given, and there he abides; and it is from him men have their wisdom and knowledge; it is he that makes men know themselves, that searches the deep things of God, and reveals them to men, and that is the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and leads into all truth, as it is in him; though rather the spirit in his gifts, than in his spiritual saving grace, is here meant; and so does not point to every good man in common, but to such who are favoured with the gifts of the spirit superior to others; and so the Targum interprets it of the spirit of prophecy; and on whomsoever this rests, whether on young or old, he is fit to teach men wisdom:

and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding; not the soul of man, or breath of God inspired by him, which is the candle of the Lord, searching the inward parts of men; for that leaves him without understanding of things of the greatest importance: rather, as the Targum, the Word of God, the essential Word, the Son of God, who gives an understanding of the best things, **1Jo 5:20**; but, better, the Spirit of God, by whom the Scriptures were inspired, and who is breathed into men, Joh 20:22; and is a spirit of understanding to them; for though a man has an understanding of natural things, yet not of things spiritual; to have an understanding of them is the special gift of God, and is in particular the work of the Spirit of God: Elihu now having some reason to believe that he had the Spirit of God, and was under his inspiration, and was favoured with knowledge and understanding by him, is encouraged, though young, to interpose in this dispute between Job and his friends, and declare his opinion on the matter in debate; and which leads him to make an observation somewhat different from his former sentiment, as follows.

{p} So Vatablus, Beza.

Job 32:9

Ver. 9. Great men are not [always] wise,.... Men of grandeur and dignity, as Job's friends might be, the rich, the honourable, and noble; the apostle is thought to refer to this, at least to express the sentiment contained in it, **1Co 1:26**; or the great in quantity, the many, the multitude; and therefore are not to be followed in principle or practice; or that are great in years, well stricken in age, have lived long in the world, so some versions {q}; or are doctors, teachers of others, masters in Israel, as Nicodemus, and yet ignorant; all these may be wise in natural, civil, and worldly things, though this is not always the case; but not wise and knowing in divine and spiritual things, particularly in those respecting the causes and reasons of God's providential dealings with men, afflicting the righteous, and suffering the wicked to prosper, which is more fully explained in the next clause:

neither do the aged understand judgment; what is right and wrong, the difference between truth and error, and particularly the judgments of God, which are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out; even so to understand them as to observe and acknowledge his sovereignty, wisdom, truth, and faithfulness in them.

{q} Mybr polucronioi, Sept. "longaevi", V. L. Mr. Broughton renders it, "as men of not great time may be wise, as the old understand the right."

Job 32:10

Ver. 10. Therefore I said, hearken to me,.... Thou O Job, and every one of you his friends, for the word is singular; though I am but a young man, yet if I have the Spirit of God, and am under the inspiration of the Almighty, I may be able to say something to you worth your hearing:

I also will show mine opinion; for though for a while he was timorous and fearful of doing it, lest he should mistake and expose himself, yet having duly weighed and considered the above things, he was determined to do it.

Job 32:11

Ver. 11. Behold, I waited for your words,.... With great desire, with great eagerness and earnestness, in hope of meeting with arguments fully satisfying and convincing; he waited for them, as for the rain, and the latter rain, to be revived, refreshed, and edified therewith; and he patiently waited until they had done speaking:

I gave ear to your reasons, or "understandings" {r}; endeavoured to get into the sense and meaning of their words; not only attended to what they did say, but to what he thought they meant to say: some are not so happy in their expressions; and yet, by what they do say, with close attention it may be understood what they aim at, what is their drift and design; this Elihu was careful to attain unto, not barely to hear their words, but penetrate, if possible, into their meaning:

whilst ye searched out what to say; for they did not make their replies to Job immediately, and say what came uppermost at once, but they took time to think of things, and to search out for the most forcible arguments to refute Job, and strengthen their cause; it is very probable they made a pause at the end of every speech of Job's, and considered what was proper to be said in reply, and, perhaps, consulted each other.

{r} Mkytwnwbt de "usque ad intellignetias vestras", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Schultens; "usque ad sensa vestra", Beza, Junius & Tremellius.

Job 32:12

Ver. 12. Yea, I attended unto you,.... Very closely, with great application and diligence, endeavouring to get, as it were, within them, and thoroughly understand the meaning of what they said:

and, behold, [there was] none of you that convinced Job; which was not owing to his obstinacy, but to want of proof in them, their words and arguments; they had charged Job highly, as particularly Eliphaz,
Job 22:5; but then they failed in their proof; they produced nothing to support their allegations:

[or] that answered his words; the arguments and reasons he gave in proof of his own innocence and uprightness, or the instances he produced, showing that God often afflicted good men, and suffered the wicked to prosper; and therefore no argument could be drawn from God's dealings with men, proving they were either of this or the other character, good or bad men.

Job 32:13

Ver. 13. Lest ye should say, we have found out wisdom,.... They were left to themselves, and not directed to take the proper methods of convincing Job, and answering his arguments; lest they should be wise in their own conceits, and attribute too much to themselves; or Elihu told them this, that they had not convicted Job, though they had condemned him, nor answered his arguments, though they had left off speaking; and this he was obliged to say, and that for the reason before observed: for all wisdom is of God, and not to be found out or acquired by men; not natural wisdom, that is not of men, but of God, and especially supernatural wisdom, or the knowledge of divine and spiritual things, and the reason of God's dealings with the sons of men in the different manner he does, see Job 28:12;

God thrusteth him down, not man: some think Elihu says this in reference to himself, whom God would make use of as an instrument to convince Job and answer his arguments; and that he would ascribe this not to himself, but to God; they took a natural way to convince Job, which failed, that they might not be proud of their own wisdom; he should take a more divine and spiritual method, and, if he succeeded, he should give all the glory to God, and ascribe nothing to himself: as in the conviction and conversion of a sinner, though ministers are instruments, it is not by might or power of men, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts; it is God that thrusts down man from a vain opinion he has of himself; that convinces him of sin, that takes him off of his own righteousness, and humbles him, and lays him low at his feet: but they rather seem to be the words of Job's friends, as related by Elihu; and the sense is in connection with the former, either that they found it was the wisest method they could take with Job to be silent, and leave him to himself, lest they should add to his afflict; on; to which Jarchi inclines, who paraphrases it,

"we found wisdom by our silence, that we may not provoke him any more;"

which, if their sense, shows more tenderness and compassion than they had hitherto expressed, and answers pretty much to the advice given **2Co 2:6**; or else their meaning is, that they found it the best and wisest way to leave him with God, he being so obstinate and incorrigible that none but God could move him; it was not in the power of men, or of words used by men, to make him sensible of things; or rather the meaning is, Elihu was obliged to tell them, that none of them had convinced Job, or answered his arguments, lest they should say, we have found out a wise and strong argument, proving the charge brought against him, that he must be a wicked man and an hypocrite, since God has so sorely afflicted him, and thrust him down from all his grandeur and dignity; which no man could ever have done, and God would not, if he had not been the man we suppose him to be; now Elihu's view is to observe to them, that there was nothing in this argument convincing, in which they imagined so much wisdom lay. Job's afflictions, indeed, were of God, and not men; and which he often owns himself; but this was no proof or argument of his being a wicked man: Mr. Broughton renders the words,

"the Omnipotent doth toss him, not man."

Job 32:14

Ver. 14. Now he hath not directed [his] words against me,.... That is, Job had not directed his speech to him, or levelled his arguments against him; he had not set himself and his words in battle array against him, as the word signifies; he had not lashed and irritated him as he had them; and therefore he came into the dispute calm and unprovoked, having nothing in view but truth, the glory of God, and the good of Job; and therefore hoped for better success than they had had:

neither will I answer him with your speeches; he proposed to take a new and different method from them, as he did; for he never charges Job with any sin or sins, or a course of living in a sinful manner, before those afflictions came upon him, and as the cause of them; he only takes notice of what was amiss in him since his afflictions, and what dropped from him in the heat of this controversy, rash and unbecoming speeches, which reflected upon the honour and justice of God; and if he made use of any words and arguments similar to theirs, yet to another purpose, and in a milder and gentler manner.

Job 32:15

Ver. 15. They were amazed,.... They were like persons thunderstruck, quite surprised and astonished to hear a young man talk after this manner:

they answered no more; as they had ceased to answer Job, they did not undertake to answer Elihu, who had plainly told them their arguments were not convincing, their answers were no answers, and that they had done a wrong thing in condemning Job without proof; and that which they thought their greatest wisdom, and strongest argument, had no wisdom nor strength in it; namely, which was taken from his sore afflictions by the hand of God:

they left off speaking; or words departed from them, as Jarchi; their speech left them, they seemed deprived of it: Mr. Broughton renders the whole,

"they shrink away, do speak no more, speeches be departed from them."

Job 32:16

Ver. 16. When one had waited,.... To observe whether they would make any reply to what he had said, or any objection to his engaging in the controversy:

for they spake not; were as mute as fishes:

but stood still; like statues, had no power to move, neither to sit down nor to depart, but were as if all life, sense, and motion, were gone from them:

[and] answered no more; or not at all; for it does not appear that they had given him any answer before, as well as not now.

Job 32:17

Ver. 17. [I said], I will answer also my part,.... Or take his turn in giving an answer to Job; what they had given being quite insufficient and unsuitable:

I also will show mine opinion; knowledge, or sentiment; this for a while he was fearful of doing, but, upon a thorough and serious consideration of things, he determined upon it, and now repeats it, to assure he would do it; the reasons of which follow.

Job 32:18

Ver. 18. For I am full of matter,.... Or "full [of] words" {y}; not of mere words, such that have nothing solid and substantial in them; this is the character of a fool, Ec 10:14; nor was Elihu a loquacious talkative man, as Job is charged to be, a man full of talk, Job 11:2; but he was full of words, which had fulness of matter in them, which were to the purpose, and contained strong reasonings and solid arguments; his mind was full of them, and he could easily fill his mouth with them, and was not easy until he had uttered them: so an able minister of the word may be said to be full of words, of the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus, of useful doctrines, when the word of Christ dwells richly in him, and he has a rich treasure in an earthen vessel, is full of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; has a large knowledge of Gospel truths, a real experience of them in the heart, great gifts to express them to others, and is full of power and of the Spirit of God to declare them, as this good man was:

the spirit within me constraineth me, or "the spirit of my belly" {z}; alluding to wind pent up therein, which, unless expelled, gives great uneasiness and pain: he either means the Spirit of God within him, as in Job 32:8, by whom the prophets were inspired and spoke, by whom ordinary ministers of the word are qualified for their work, and by whom they are led into all truth, and who presses and obliges them to speak what they know; there is a necessity upon them to preach the Gospel wholly and faithfully, and a woe unto them if they do not: or else his own spirit, influenced and actuated by the Spirit of God; as the spirit of the Apostle Paul was stirred up in him to speak, when he saw the idolatry and superstition of the people of Athens, Ac 17:16; so love to God and Christ, and the souls of men, the honour of God, and interest of religion, constrain the ministers of Christ to speak in his name, notwithstanding all the opposition made unto them, and reproach cast upon them.

{y} Mylm ytlm "plenus sum sermonibus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Beza, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {z} ynjb xwr "spiritus ventris mei", Beza, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Schultens.

Job 32:19

Ver. 19. Behold, my belly [is] as wine, [which] hath no vent,.... Or, "is not opened" {a}, like a bottle of wine, as Ben Gersom, which is stopped close, and the wine in it new; which is most apt to ferment, and should have vent given it; so the Targum,

"as new wine, which is not opened:"

in the same manner Jarchi and Bar Tzemach interpret it; in these words Elihu illustrates, by a metaphor taken from new wine put into bottles and tightly stopped, what he had before more literally and properly expressed, and so in the following clause:

it is ready to burst like new bottles; or perhaps it may be better rendered, "like bottles of new wine" {b}; for new bottles are not so apt to burst as old ones, and especially when they have new wine in them; the bottles of the ancients, and in the eastern countries, being made of skin, which better agrees with what our Lord says, **Mt 9:17**; by his belly he means his mind, which was full of matter, and that matter he compares to new wine in bottles, tightly stopped, which need vent, and are in danger of bursting: the doctrine of the Gospel is like to wine, **So 7:9**; to wine neat and clean, being free from all human mixtures; to wine of a good flavour and pleasant taste, as the Gospel is to those whose taste is changed; to generous wine, which revives, and refreshes, and comforts; all which effects the doctrines of the Gospel have, when attended with a divine influence: and it may be compared to new wine; not that it is a new and upstart doctrine, it is the everlasting Gospel, made known immediately on the fall of Adam, and was ordained before the world for our glory; but because it is newly, or of late, under the Gospel dispensation, more clearly revealed: ministers of the word are like vessels, into which it is put; they are but vessels, even earthly vessels, and have nothing but what is put into them; and they are like vessels stopped up, when they are straitened in themselves, or shut up by the Lord, that they cannot come forth freely in their ministry, and when any outward restraint is laid upon them by persecuting magistrates, and when there is no open door for them in Providence; which gives them great pain and uneasiness, and, let the consequence be what it will,

they are weary of forbearing, and cannot stay, but must speak the things they see and know; see
Jer 20:9.

{a} htpy al "quod non est apertum", Pagninus, Michaelis, Schultens. {b} Myvdx twbak "sicut utres vino nova repleti", Piscator.

Job 32:20

Ver. 20. I will speak, that I may be refreshed,.... That his mind might be made easy; the matter it was full of lay with much weight upon it, pressed him hard, and gave him pain; and therefore he determines to speak his mind, and disburden himself: so a minister of the word speaks sometimes to the refreshment of others, the Gospel being a word in season to weary souls, bread to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, even wine to them that are of an heavy heart; and especially it is refreshing when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart through it, and the presence of God is enjoyed under it; and sometimes he speaks to the refreshment of himself with others, Ro 15:32; and whether it be so, one or the other, yet a faithful minister eases his mind, discharges his conscience, and is clear from the blood of all, when he truly and fully declares the whole counsel of God, so far as he is acquainted with it:

I will open my lips and answer; speak freely and boldly what was upon his mind, and he had to say, and which he judged would be a sufficient answer to Job; the opening of his lips is a phrase used by him in allusion to the opening of a bottle, full of new wine, the metaphor before expressed by him.

Job 32:21

Ver. 21. Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person,.... Neither the person of Job, because of his poverty and affliction, indulging too much to pity and commiseration, and affecting to get a good name from others for it; nor the persons of his three friends, on account of their wealth and grandeur; for neither the persons of the poor, nor of the rich, are to be regarded in judgment, or in the decision of any matter between them, but truth and justice are to be attended to; see
Ex 23:3. Elihu was determined with himself not to respect the person of any, and he hopes that Job and his friends would bear with him, and excuse him on that account:

neither let me give flattering titles unto men; he does not mean titles of civil honour and respect, which belong to men, and are in common use among men, according to the different stations of life, men are in; for honour is to be given to whom it is due; and it is no piece of flattery to give men their proper and usual titles, as it was not in the Evangelist Luke, and in the Apostle Paul, **Lu 1:3**; but he means such titles that do not belong to men, and are unsuitable unto them, and only given them by way of flattery; as to call a man wise and prudent when he is the reverse; or a holy, just, and good man, when he is a very wicked one. Elihu was resolved not to act such a part, and he hopes the persons he had to deal with would not take it amiss that he spake his mind plainly and freely, and called a spade a spade; not must they or any other expect to be complimented by him with the characters of wise and prudent, just and good, if they did not appear to him to be so. According to Ben Gersom the sense is, that he would not hide a man's name under epithets, but call him by his proper name; he would not do as they had done by Job, who, under covert names, meant him; as when they described a wicked man, and an hypocrite, designed him, but did not say so express words; now Elihu suggests, that, should Job or they appear to him to have acted a wrong part, he should tell them plainly of it, and say, thou art the man.

Job 32:22

Ver. 22. For I know not to give flattering titles,.... He had not been brought up in such a manner, nor taught to use them; he had not been inured to them, nor did he know or approve of them; nor could he in conscience give them;

[in so doing], my Maker would soon take me away; it being such a piece of wickedness, so abominable to him, and so highly resented by him, that I might justly expect he would, as he could, strike me dead at once; just as Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for lying, **Ac 5:5**: or he knew that it would be but a short time at most, and he should be taken out of the world by death, when he must appear before his Maker, his Judge, to whom he must give an account of his words, as well as actions; the awe of this being continually on his mind would not admit him to flatter any man. Some render it, "will burn me" {c}, as in **2Sa 5:21**; so Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom, that is, in hell fire; see Ps 12:2.

{c} ynavy "comburet me", Pagninus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 33:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 33

In this chapter Elihu addresses Job himself, and entreats his attention to what he had to say to him, and offers several things to induce him to it; and recommends himself as one that was according to his wish, in the stead of God, a man like himself, and of whom he had no reason to be afraid, Job 33:1; and then he brings a charge against him of things which he himself had heard, of words that had dropped from him in the course of his controversy with his friends; in which he too much and too strongly insisted on his own innocence and purity, and let fill very undue and unbecoming reflections on the dealings of God with him,
Job 33:8; to which he gives an answer by observing the superior greatness of God to man, and his sovereignty over him, not being accountable to him for anything done by him; and therefore man should be silent and submissive to him, Job 33:12; and yet, though he is so great and so absolute, and uncontrollable, and is not obliged to give an account of his affairs to man, and the reasons of them; yet he condescends by various ways and means to instruct him in his mind and will, and even by these very things complained of; and therefore should not be treated as if unkind and unfriendly to men; sometimes he does it by dreams and visions, when he opens the ears of men, and seals instruction to them, and with this view, to restrain them from their evil purposes and doings, and to weaken their pride and humble them, and preserve them from ruin, Job 33:14; and sometimes by chastening and afflictive providences, which are described, Job 33:19; and which become teaching ones; through the interposition of a divine messenger, and upon the afflicted man's prayer to God, and humiliation before him, God is gracious and favourable to him, and delivers him; which is frequently the design and the use that he makes of chastening dispensations, Job 33:23; and the chapter is concluded with beseeching Job to mark and consider well what had been said unto him, and to answer it if he could or thought fit; if not, silently to attend to what he had further to say to him for his instruction,
Job 33:31.

Ver. 1. Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches,.... In the preceding chapter, Elihu directed his discourse to the three friends of Job chiefly, here to Job himself, and that by name; which none of his friends in all their discourses ever used; and in an humble suppliant manner entreats his attention to what he was about to deliver, and that for reasons which his address to his friends could furnish him with; and hence begins his speech with "wherefore", seeing he took not the part of his three friends, but blamed them; and because he had the Spirit of God in him, and was full of matter, and uneasy until he had vented it; and which he proposed to deliver in a plain and faithful manner, with sincerity and without flattery; on all which accounts be beseeches him to give him a diligent and attentive hearing:

and hearken to all my words; not to some of them only, but to all; he bespeaks his candid and constant attention, that he would hear him out, all that he had to say, with patience, and without interruption; and then judge of the truth, force, and pertinency of them; which he would not so well be able to do, unless he heard them all; for sometimes the proof, the evidence, and demonstration of a thing depends not on a single argument, but upon many put together; each of them alone being insufficient, at least may appear so, when all considered together give full satisfaction.

Job 33:2

Ver. 2. Behold, now I have opened my mouth,.... Begun to speak in order to give vent to the fulness of matter within him, which made him, like bottles of new wine, ready to burst; and since he had opened his lips, that he might speak and be refreshed, he desires Job to listen to him, and offers same things to his consideration to induce him to it:

my tongue hath spoken in my mouth: but does not every man's tongue speak in his mouth when he speaks? is there anything singular and peculiar in this, that can excite attention? it may be rendered, "in my palate" {d}; which, as it is an instrument of speech, so of tasting and trying food, see **Job 6:30**; and Elihu's sense is, that he had thoroughly considered what he should say, he had well weighed what he should speak, and should not deliver anything raw, crude, and undigested; he had palated his words, in order to discern whether there was anything in them perverse or not.

{d} ykxb "in palato meo", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Beza, Schultens; so Mr. Broughton.

Job 33:3

Ver. 3. My words [shall be of] the uprightness of my heart,.... Not that the uprightness of his heart, or his own personal integrity, should be the subject of his discourse; but what he should say would be in or out of the uprightness of his heart, with all sincerity and faithfulness; what would be the real sentiments of his mind, and not proceed from a double or insincere heart:

and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly; what knowledge he had of God, and of the perfections of his nature, and of his works in nature and grace, and of his dealings in a providential way with the sons of men; and what knowledge he had of Christ, his person, office, and grace somewhat of which speaks in this chapter; and such sort of knowledge is to be uttered, to be published, and made known to the good of others; and not to be concealed, and hid, or held, as in a prison, in unrighteousness; and to be uttered clearly, plainly, and distinctly, in words intelligible, and easy to be understood; and not in ambiguous terms, or in words of a double meaning; or which are abstruse and intricate, and serve rather to make the mysteries of Providence and grace more dark and obscure than to explain them; integrity of heart, and perspicuity of language, serve much to recommend a speaker, and both are expressed in this verse.

Job 33:4

Ver. 4. The Spirit of God hath made me,.... As a man; so every man is made by God, and not by himself; Father, Son, and Spirit, are his Makers or Creators, as we read of them in the plural number, Ps 149:2; and this is a proof of the deity of the Spirit, who was not only concerned in the creation of all things, garnishing the heavens, and moving upon the face of the waters on the earth; but in the formation of man:

and the breath of the mighty hath given me life; the same with the Spirit of God, the allusion is to the creation of man at first, when God breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul: life natural is from God, he is the God of our life, he gives all the mercies of life, and by him is this life preserved; and the whole is the effect of almighty power: now this is observed by Elihu to Job, to encourage him to attend to him without fear, since he was a man, a creature of God, as he was: it may be understood of his spiritual formation, the Spirit of God remakes men, or makes them new men, new creatures; this is done in regeneration, which is the work of the Holy Spirit; hence regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, are put together; and being a work of almighty power, is proof of the deity of the Spirit of God; it is he that quickens men when dead in trespasses and sins, and makes them alive to God; which appears by their spiritual breathings after divine things, and by the exercise of their spiritual senses, and by their performance of spiritual actions; and now Elihu, being a man regenerated and quickened by the Spirit, might more justly claim the attention of Job, since what he should say was what he had heard, felt, and seen, as good man, one that had an experience of divine and spiritual things.

Job 33:5

Ver. 5. If thou canst answer me,.... That is, when he had done speaking, after he had heard him out; if he thought he could make a reply to him, he gave him full liberty so to do, and tacitly suggests that he should give him an attentive and candid hearing, as he had requested of him:

set [thy words] in order before me; put them into the best form and order thou canst for thy self-defence, and level them at me; set them, as it were, in battle array against me; give them all the poignancy, strength, and three thou art capable of:

stand up; not out of veneration to him, but to denote freedom and boldness in himself; a presentation of himself with boldness, and standing and keeping his ground: the expressions are military; Mr. Broughton renders it, "stand to it".

Job 33:6

Ver. 6. Behold, I [am] according to thy wish in God's stead,.... So some persons are, as civil magistrates, the ministers of the word, the prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New; see **2Co 5:20**; and so in some sense was Elihu; he undertakes to be an advocate for God, to vindicate his justice in his dealings with the children of men, and clear him from the charge of severity towards them, and hard usage of them, and particularly Job; and whom he besought, as in God's stead, to be reconciled to his providential dealings with him; to bear his afflictions patiently, and wait the issue of them: or "I am as thou art"; so the Targum and Ben Gersom interpret it; one that belongs to God, a creature of God's, a sinful frail mortal creature, as Job was, and accountable to God; one that belonged to him both as the God of nature and providence, and of grace; and such an one Job seemed to have wished for, to dispute the point in question with; see **Job 9:32**;

I also am formed out of the clay; or "cut out" {e} of it; alluding to the potter, who, out of a mass or lump of clay before him, cuts a piece out of it to make a vessel of God is the potter, men are as clay in his hands, their bodies are bodies of clay, houses of clay, which have their foundation in the dust; reference may be had to the original formation of man, **Ge 2:7**, and may denote not so, much the pollution of his nature, clay being defiling, but the frailty of man, a vessel made of clay being brittle, and easily broken; see **Job 4:19**
Isa 64:8.

{e} yturq "excisus", Montanus, Munster, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Job 33:7

Ver. 7. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid,.... To come near, join issue in a debate, and speak freely; this Job had wished for, and desired of God that his fear might not terrify him, and his dread not make him afraid, and then he could talk and reason freely with him, **Job 9:34**; now Job had nothing to fear from Elihu, he was a man and not God, with whom there was no terrible majesty, as with God; he was but a clod of clay, and had nothing in him or about him to strike terror into him; he was no great personage, as a king or prince, nor in any civil authority, nor had so much as age to command an awe, much less could inject dread and terror:

neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee; which is not to be literally understood; Job could be in no fear of that, nor Elihu guilty of such rudeness; but figuratively, that he should not seek to afflict and distress him, or add to his affliction, and make it heavier, by hard words, severe reflections, and cruel reproaches; he seems to refer to
Job 13:21; the Targum is,

"my burden upon time shall not be heavy;"

he promises not to aggravate things, but make them as easy as they would admit of.

Job 33:8

Ver. 8. Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing,.... After the above preface, Elihu proceeds to the point in hand, and enters a charge against Job; which he took up, not upon suspicion and surmisings, nor upon report, nor upon accusations received from others, but what he had heard with his own ears, unless he was greatly mistaken indeed, which he thought he was not:

and I have heard the voice of [thy] words; the sound of them, clearly and distinctly, and took in the sense of them, as he really believed:

[saying]; as follows.

Job 33:9

Ver. 9. I am clean without transgression,.... This with what follows is supposed to be gathered from Job 10:6; for this is nowhere said by Job in express words; though I rather think, since Elihu so peremptorily affirms that they were spoken in his hearing, that these words and the following did drop from Job's lips, in the controversy with his friends, though not recorded; for we are not to suppose that everything that was said on both sides is preserved, only so much as the Holy Ghost thought fit should be: no man is naturally clean, or free from sin; man came clean out of the hands of God, by sin is become unclean. This impurity is propagated by natural generation, and is in all without exception. Job expresses himself clearly on this point, and agreeably to it, Job 14:4; nor is any man clean by and of himself, or through anything he is capable of doing, in a moral, ceremonial, or evangelic sense, to make himself clean; as by moral actions, by ceremonial ablutions and sacrifices, or by submission to evangelic ordinances, or even by his own tears, repentance, and humiliation. Job seemed clearly and fully sensible of this, **Job 9:30**; see Pr 20:9; yet there are some persons that are clean through the blood of Christ, in which they are washed, and which cleanses from all sin; and through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, in which they appear without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and through the sentence of justification pronounced on them, by which word spoken they are all clean; and through the grace of God bestowed on them, the clean water that is sprinkled upon them, by which they are cleansed from all filthiness, and hence said to have clean hearts and clean hands; and if Job meant it in this sense, as he had knowledge of his living Redeemer, he no doubt was such an one,
Job 19:25: but not "without transgression": without transgression imputed he was, and such are all they whose persons are justified, and their sins pardoned; to those God does not impute sin, Ps 32:1; but they are not without the being nor commission of sin; for no man, even the best of men, are clear of it in this sense. Job might be free from the grosser sins of life, but not from indwelling

sin, and the actings of it; we find him confessing sin, and disclaiming perfection, **Job 7:20**;

I [am] innocent; so he was, as to the charges brought against him by his friends, or the things it was insinuated he was guilty of, as hypocrisy, &c. or as to doing any injury to the persons and properties of men, or with respect to gross enormities, from which he had sufficiently cleared himself in Job 31:1; but not so innocent as to be free from all sin, as Adam was in his state of innocence, which is contrary to his own declarations in the passages before referred to; some, as Aben Ezra observes, interpret the word "covered" {f}, and as having the same sense with Ps 32:1; and in which sense it was true of Job, that his iniquities were covered; and others of his being covered with righteousness, with civil righteousness, as in Job 29:14; which was true of the exercise of it; and in an evangelic sense he was covered with the justifying righteousness of Christ; the Targum renders the word "washed", as he was in a spiritual sense. Jarchi interprets it "wiped" or "rubbed", and others combed and brushed, and so "neat" and "clean", which is the sense of several versions {g}:

neither [is there] iniquity in me; in a Gospel sense there is none in believers in Christ; their iniquities being removed from them to him, and are done away and made an end of by him; nor are they to be seen with the eye of vindictive justice; God has cast them behind his back, and into the depths of the sea, never to be seen more; but then there is iniquity in them, as considered in themselves; for men to say they have none shows pride and ignorance, and is inconsistent with the truth of grace. If Job is to understood in these expressions in an evangelical sense, or with respect to the grossest sins of life, or a vicious course of life (and indeed in no other sense can he well be understood, consistent with himself), he is not to be blamed for what he said, and I apprehend that Elihu does not blame him for saying these things in his own defence; but for insisting so much and so long upon his innocence and purity, and unspotted life; and especially for joining with it undue and unbecoming reflections on the Lord, for afflicting a person so holy and righteous, as follows.

{f} Px "tectus", Montanus, Bolducius. {g} "Mundus", Beza; "nitidus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "tersus", Codurcus, Cocceius.

Job 33:10

Ver. 10. Behold, he findeth occasions against me,.... That is, sought in order to find them; so Job in some places suggests, that God inquired after his sins, and sought diligently after them, that he might have something to bring against him; and because he could not find great sins, gross enormities, he sought after lesser sins; so some render the word, "staggerings", "totterings" {h}; frailties, failings, and infirmities; and because he could find none of late of a very heinous nature, he went back as far as the sins of his youth; see Job 10:6; and this in order to pick a quarrel with him; and so Mr. Broughton renders the words, "lo, he picketh quarrels against me"; or that he might have just reason to depart from him, or to break from him, or to break off friendship with him, or to break him to pieces in his estate, family, and health; all which senses some observe the words will bear: but it would be needless for God to seek in order to find occasions against men; there is enough ready at hand, the sins that are about them; and to represent the Lord as dealing thus with good men is to represent him as acting contrary to the declarations and methods of his grace; yea, as doing what wicked men do to good men, as the enemies of David, Daniel, and Jeremiah, did to them; nay, even as Satan himself does, who goes about and seeks for, and picks up accusations against the saints; this must be owned to be a very irreverent and unbecoming expression of Job's, and for which he deserved to be sharply rebuked, as well as for some following ones, and for which he afterwards was thoroughly humbled:

he counteth me for his enemy; this he had often said, but very wrongly; See Gill on "Job 13:24", and
See Gill on "Job 16:9", and
See Gill on "Job 19:11".

{h} twawnt "vacillationes", Cocceius; "aut mutationes", Michaelis.

Job 33:11

Ver. 11. He putteth my feet in the stocks,.... This also he had said, Job 13:27; by which he would suggest not only that his afflictions were painful and disgraceful, and from which he could not extricate himself, being close fettered by them; but that they were inflicted on him as punishments, and he was treated as a criminal, as a malefactor, who had been guilty of some notorious breach of the law:

he marketh all my paths; looked narrowly at them, numbered and counted them; this also he had said, Job 13:27; meaning not only his natural and civil paths and steps, but his moral ones, that he could not step the least awry, but presently it was marked and observed, Job 10:14; but though God does take notice of the sins of his people, and chastises them for them, yet he does not mark them in strict justice, for, should he, they could not stand before him, Ps 130:3.

Job 33:12

Ver. 12. Behold, [in] this thou art not just,.... Here begins Elihu's answer, who does not deny that Job was a just man, both before God in an evangelic sense, and before men in a moral sense; he did not go about to detract from Job's general character, as a man that lived soberly, righteously, and godly in the world; but in this he was not just, nor is it to be justified, with respect to this thing, he could not acquit him of doing what was wrong; namely, insisting so much on his own innocence, and tacking therewith such unbecoming and undue reflections on the dealings of God with him; he did not give to God his due, he did not do him justice in representing him in this light; he did not say nor do the right thing, so Mr. Broughton translates the words,

"lo, here thou art not in the right;"

see Job 32:2;

I will answer thee; or "I must tell thee"; as the same writer renders the words, being able to make it clear and plain:

that God is greater than man: than any man, than the greatest of men, most famous for power, wisdom, or justice; he is not only greater in his power, faithfulness, goodness, grace, and mercy, but in his holiness and righteousness, wisdom and knowledge; and therefore can never do either an unjust thing, or an unwise one; and for man, who is both sinful and ignorant, even the best in comparison of him, to arraign him at his bar, is very arrogant and presumptuous; since he knows best what to do, and what are his reasons for so doing, and is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

Job 33:13

Ver. 13. Why dost thou strive against him?.... A creature against the Creator, a man against his Maker, the clay against the potter; how absurd and stupid is this! and a piece of weakness and folly it was in him to desire to litigate the point with God, and dispute with him, as he often did, when men cannot answer him one of a thousand, as he himself owned, **Job 9:3**; and very sinful and criminal it is to chide with God, or complain of him, on account of any of his dealings with the sons of men, as well as it is vain and fruitless:

for he giveth not account of any of his matters; he is a sovereign Being, and does what he pleases in nature, providence, and grace, and is not accountable to any for what he does; in things temporal, he does all after the counsel of his will; he bestows riches and honours, wealth and health, gifts of natural wisdom and knowledge on some, and withholds them from others; and each of these are his own, and he may do with them as he pleases: so likewise in things spiritual, he loves, chooses, redeems, regenerates, calls by his grace, and brings to glory whom he thinks fit; the blessings of grace and glory are his own, and he disposes of them as seems good in his sight; and in all respects he acts according to his will in heaven and in earth; none can stay his hand, or hinder him from doing his pleasure; and none ought to say to him, what dost thou? or why dost thou thus? or, if they do, he is not obliged to give any reasons for his so doing. Some take this to be the thing Job strove and contended with God about, that he did not, and because he did not give an account of all his matters, or answer all his words; and particularly he did not show to him wherefore he contended with him; and others think the meaning is, that God does not reveal all his secrets to men, but only as much as he thinks fit to acquaint them with; secret things belong to him, and things revealed to men; the secrets of his own nature, and the modes of subsistence of the divine Persons in the Godhead, the secret reasons of divine predestination of men to life or death, and of his dealings with men in a providential way, afflicting the righteous, and suffering the wicked to prosper.

Job 33:14

Ver. 14. For God speaketh once, yea, twice,.... Or, "but God speaketh" {i}; though he is not bound to give an account of his matters, and the reasons of his proceedings in a way of providence or grace; yet such is his condescension and goodness, that he makes use of various ways and means to make known his mind and will in his dispensations, if men were but attentive to them; he speaks once, in dreams and visions, as in
Job 33:15; and twice, or a second time, by chastisements, as in
Job 33:18; or he speaks frequently, again and again, see
Ps 62:11; gives line upon line, and precept upon precept; if one way is without effect, he will take another; and if one warning and admonition is not

sufficient, he will give another; so that though he is a sovereign Being, and not accountable to any, yet he does not act the unkind and unfriendly part Job had suggested:

[yet man] perceiveth it not: the voice of God speaking in one way or another; hearkens not to the admonition given in a dream or vision, nor hears the chastising rod, and him that has appointed it; he is deaf to all instructions; he understands not the mind and meaning of God in his dispensations; which is not owing to want of means of knowledge, but to the blindness and ignorance of his mind, to dulness of hearing, to negligence and inattention, and to the prevalence of sin and corruption: the words, "yet man", are a supplement to the text, and not in it, and some versions are without it, and understand the whole of God, rendering the words thus, "God speaketh once, and a second time he does not repeat it"; so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions: or "does not revise it", or "will not see it" {k}; to which agrees the Targum,

"and a second time he needs not to look upon it;"

and which rendering, as it suits with the context, so is more agreeable to the accents; but is differently applied, by some to the sufficiency of the word of God, that God has at once made known all truth, and there is no need to do it a second time; but certain it is, that God did at sundry times, and in divers manners, speak unto the fathers by the prophets; though indeed in these last days he hath spoken at once all his mind and will by his Son, so that no future revelation is to be expected; but though this is true now, it was not in the times of Elihu: by others it is referred to God's dealings with a proud man, that calls him to an account for his actions, to whom he speaks once, and reproves him for his boldness; but a second time he will not look at him, nor bear his pride and insolence: and by others to the unalterable decrees and purposes of God; what he has said or determined in his eternal mind is done at once, and remains invariably fixed; he has no need to look over a second time, or revise his first thoughts and designs, or reconsider them, whether it is proper to make any alteration in them or not, they are at once so wisely formed; and he has all things before him in one view in his all comprehending mind, so that there cannot possibly anything turn up unforeseen by him, to hinder the execution of his purposes, or cause him to make any change in them; no new thoughts, resolutions, or purposes, can arise in his mind, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning. This agrees well with his sovereignty, expressed in Job 33:13, and carries in it a strong reason enforcing what is there said. Though some take the meaning to be this, that God speaks once to a man, and admonishes and reproves him as he used to do, in the way expressed in the following verse; and if he regards it not, he do not speak to him a second time in that way, or no more by words, but now by blows or chastisements.

{i} yk "sed", Beza, Piscator. {k} hnrwvy al Mytvbw "secundo non revidet", Schmidt & Maius apud Michaelis; "et secunda vice non videbit illud", Schultens.

Job 33:15

Ver. 15. In a dream, in a vision of the night,.... That is, God speaks to men in this way, and which in those times was his most usual way; see **Job 4:12**; sometimes he spake to a prophet, a person in public office, and made known his mind and will in this manner to him, that he might deliver it to others, Nu 12:6; and sometimes directly and immediately to persons themselves, as he did to Abimelech and Laban,
Ge 20:3;

when deep sleep lieth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; the former denotes a fast, heavy, and sound sleep, when the senses are all locked up, and there is not the least attention to any outward object; the latter a slight sleep, when a man is between sleeping and waking; and now at such a time, when he was laid on his bed in the night season, it was usual for God to come to him in a visionary way, and impress things on his mind; when it was called off front worldly and earthly thoughts and cares, and was calm and serene, and so fit to receive what intimations and instructions might be given this way; see **Ps 4:4**. Job had his dreams and night visions, though he seems not to have had any benefit by them, or to have understood them, but was scared and terrified with them, **Job 7:14**; to which Elihu may have some respect.

Job 33:16

Ver. 16. Then he openeth the ears of men,.... Not the ears of his body, which remaining shut while things are presented to his mind in a dream or vision, but his internal ears; it is the same with opening the heart or understanding to attend to and receive the things delivered in this visionary way:

and sealeth their instruction; sends home the instruction given in this manner, and imprints it upon the mind, so that it is well remembered when awake, not only the dreams themselves, but the lessons taught and learnt there, as may be observed in the cases of Abimelech and Laban, Ge 20:3; the word signifies "chastisement" {l} as well as instruction, that being one way in which God teaches and instructs men, Ps 94:12; and so the sense may be, that God in a dream or vision makes it known to men, that if they regard not what he says to them, and repent not of their evils, and turn from them, he will correct and chastise them, and this he assures them of; and they may look for the certain performance of it, that he will visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes; things that are sealed being sure and firm. Mr. Broughton renders the words, "and imprints why they are chastised."

{l} Mromb "disciplinam eorum", Tigurine version; "castigationem eorum", Beza, Vatablus, Drusius, Mercerus, Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 33:17

Ver. 17. That he may withdraw a man [from his] purpose,.... Or "work" {m}, his wicked work, as the Targum; either which he has begun upon, or which he designed to do. Thus Abimelech and Laban were restrained from their intentions by a divine admonition in a dream, the one from taking Abraham's wife, as he intended, and the other from doing harm to Jacob, which he designed:

and hide pride from man; by pardoning his sins, in which there is always pride, so some; pardon of sin being expressed by covering it, Ps 32:1; or rather by repressing, weakening, and preventing it; and that by not suffering vain and proud men to perform their enterprises, but obliging them to submit to the will of God, and humble themselves under his mighty hand. These are the ends proposed, and which are effected through the Lord speaking to men in dreams, opening their ears, and sending instructions to them; and others also for their good follow.

{m} hvem "opere", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, &c.

Job 33:18

Ver. 18. He keepeth back his soul from the pit,.... Or, "that he may keep back" {n}; for this is another end and use of God's speaking unto men; it is to preserve them for the present from going down to the grave, the pit of corruption and destruction; so called because the bodies of men, being there laid, corrupt, and are entirely destroyed by worms, and turn to rottenness and dust; and to preserve them from the bottomless pit of everlasting ruin and destruction; for the Lord's people are reproved by him, that they may not be condemned with the world, 1Co 11:32;

and his life from perishing by the sword; by the sword of men, which is one of God's sore judgments; or by the sword of the civil magistrate, the man spoken to being warned of God of committing these sins, which would bring him into the hands of such; or by the sword of divine justice; Jarchi interprets it of the sword of the angel of death; the word signifies a missive weapon, as a dart; so Mr. Broughton renders the words, "and his life from going on the dart": or, as another version has it, "lest it should go on under the cast of darts" {o}; the darts of an enemy in war, or the fiery darts of Satan, **Eph 6:16**.

{n} Kvxy "ut prohibeat", Mercerus, Piscator. {o} Tigurine version.

Job 33:19

Ver. 19. He is chastened also with pain upon his bed,.... This seems to be another way, in which God, according to his eternal purposes, speaks unto men, as the word "also" intimates; namely, by afflictions, and sometimes painful ones; which have a voice in them, and men of wisdom will hearken to it, **Mic 6:9**. Pain here signifies not pain of the mind, or a wounded spirit, which is very afflicting, distressing, and intolerable; but pain of the body, as the next clause shows; and this endured on the bed, it being so great as to confine a man to his bed, or is what he felt there, where he might hope for ease and rest; see **Job 7:13**;

and the multitude of his bones with strong [pain]; not with a slight one, but a very strong one, such as those felt who gnawed their tongues for pain, Re 16:10. Jarchi interprets it, the multitude of his bones, which are strong; though they are hardy and strong, yet filled with exquisite pain; and not one, or a few of them, but a multitude of them, as there are a multitude of them in a man's body; even all of them, as Hezekiah complains, which must be very excruciating indeed, Isa 38:13; and which was Job's case; not only his flesh was in pain, through the sores and ulcers upon him, but his bones were pierced in him, and his sinews had no rest, and he was full of tossings to and fro, **Job 7:3**; and in this way he was, as other good men are, reproved and chastened by the Lord; and in which way he had spoke to him, as he does to others, and which should be attended to; and since such painful afflictions are but fatherly chastisements, they should be patiently endured, and the voice of God in them listened to, and before long there will be no more pain: the "Cetib", or textual writing, is, "the contention of his bones is strong"; through pain, or with which God contends with men; we follow the marginal reading.

Job 33:20

Ver. 20. So that his life abhorreth bread,.... Through the force of pain he loses his appetite for food, and even a nausea of it takes place; he loathes it as the most abominable and filthy thing that can be thought of; even bread, so necessary to the support of human life, so strengthening to the heart of man, and what he every day stands in need of, and should pray for, and in health is never weary of; it may be put for all common and useful food:

and his soul dainty meat; the most rich and delicious; such as the tables of the great and rich are furnished with: "food of desire" {p}; or desirable food, as it may be rendered; see Da 10:3; such as in the time of health the appetite craves and desires, and is fed on with delight and pleasure, but now had in the utmost aversion. Pains and diseases of body often produce such a nausea in men, Ps 107:17, and was Job's case, **Job 3:24**.

{p} hwat lkam "cibum desiderii", Vatablus, Drusius, Michaelis; "cibum appetentiae", Mercerus.

Job 33:21

Ver. 21. His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen,.... All being gone, none left to be seen, nothing but skin and bones; and this partly through the vehemence of strong pain, and partly through the nausea of food; not being able to take anything for nourishment and the support of the fluids, and so quite emaciated:

and his bones [that] were not seen stick out: which before were covered with flesh and fat, so that they could not be seen; but now the flesh and fat being wasted, they seem as if they rose up in an eminence, and stood out to be beheld; this was also Job's case, being reduced to a mere skeleton, Job 19:20. Elihu, in this description of an afflicted man, seems to have Job chiefly in view, and by this would intimate to him that God had been, and was speaking to him by those afflictions, which he would do well to advert unto.

Job 33:22

Ver. 22. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave,.... Not the soul, strictly and properly speaking, for that does not, nor is it laid in the grave at death, but returns to God that gave it; rather the body, for which it is sometimes put, and of which what is here said is true, see Ps 16:10; or the person of the sick man, whose disease being so threatening, all hope is gone, and he is given up by his physicians and friends, and seemingly is at the grave's mouth, and that is ready for him, and he on the brink of that; which were the apprehensions Job had of himself, Job 17:1; see Ps 88:3;

and his life to the destroyers; the destroying angels, as Aben Ezra, and so the Septuagint version: or destroying diseases, and so Mr. Broughton renders it, "to killing maladies"; or it may be to worms, which destroy the body in the grave, and which Job was sensible of would quickly be his case, Job 19:26; though some interpret it of those that kill, or of those that are dead, with whom they are laid that die; or of deaths corporeal and eternal, and the horrors and terrors of both, with which persons in such circumstances are sometimes distressed.

Job 33:23

Ver. 23. If there be a messenger with him,.... Or angel, either with God, as some think; or rather with the sick man; by which messenger is meant not an angel by nature, a created angel, though sometimes such are God's messengers, sent by him on errands to men, are interpreters of things to them, as Gabriel was to Daniel; of whom there are thousands, and who may be of service to sick men for their comfort and instruction, since it is certain they attend saints in their dying moments; yet this proves not that they are to be invoked as mediators between God and men: but rather a minister of the word is designed, who is by office an angel, a "messenger" of Christ, and of the churches; an "interpreter" of the Scriptures, and of the mind of God in them; and a spiritual, evangelical, faithful minister, is scarce and rare, one among a thousand; and his business is to visit sick persons, and to observe the "uprightness" and faithfulness of God in afflicting them, that they may quietly submit to and patiently bear the affliction; and to direct them for their peace and comfort to the uprightness or righteousness of Christ, for their justification before God;

and to show them what is right for them to do in their present circumstances; whether the sick man be stupid and insensible of his case, and his need of righteousness, or whether he be a truly gracious man, yet labouring under doubts and fears about the truth of grace in him, the uprightness of his heart, and his interest in the righteousness of Christ: but it seems best to understand this of Christ himself, the angel of God's presence, the messenger of the covenant, who is with the sick man, and favours him with his spiritual presence; or is "for him" {q} as it may be rendered, is on his side, an advocate and intercessor for him with God;

an interpreter of his Father's mind, and with which he is long acquainted, he lying in his bosom; and of the sacred Scriptures, as he was to his disciples concerning himself; or an "orator" {r}, an eloquent one, never man spake like him, having the tongue of the learned given him as man; and who as a divine Person is the eternal and essential Word of God; who spake for his people in the council of peace and covenant of grace; and also as Mediator is the antitypical Aaron, can speak well for them on all occasions:

one among a thousand: the chiefest among ten thousand, angels or men; see **So 5:10**;

to show unto man his uprightness; which to do is his office as Mediator, and especially as a prophet, even to show the uprightness of God, the rectitude of his nature, the righteousness required in his holy law; and this Christ has shown forth and declared in his being the propitiation for the sins of his people, **Ro 3:25**; by his Spirit he shows to man, and so to a sick man, his want of uprightness in himself, his need of righteousness from another; and brings it near him, and shows it to be perfect, complete, and suitable; as well as teaches to live soberly, righteously, and godly.

{q} wyle "pro eo", V. L. Pagninus, Mercerus. {r} Uylm "eloquens", Pagninus, Montanus; "orator", Tigurine version, Bolducius.

Job 33:24

Ver. 24. Then he is gracious to him,.... To the sick man; either the messenger or the minister that is with him, who pities his case and prays for him; and by some the following words are supposed to be a prayer of his, "deliver me", &c. since one find in the Gospel there is a ransom for such persons. Rather Christ, who is gracious to man, as appears by his assumption of their nature and becoming a ransom for them, and who upon the foot of redemption which he has "found" or obtained, see **Heb 9:12**; pleads for the present comfort and future happiness of his people, in such language as after expressed, "deliver him", &c. Or rather God the Father is gracious to the sick man for his Son's sake,

and saith, deliver him from going down to the pit; addressing either the disease, so Mr. Broughton renders the word, "spare him (O killing malady) from descending into the pit", the grave, for the present his disease threatened him with. Or the minister of the word attending the sick man, who is bid to declare to him, as Nathan to David, and Isaiah to Hezekiah, that he should live longer, and not die for the present: or rather the address is to law and justice, to let the redeemed of the Lord go free, and particularly the sick man being one of them; and not thrust him down into the bottomless pit of everlasting ruin and destruction, for the reason following:

I have found a ransom; which is no other than Christ the Son of God; whom Jehovah, in his infinite wisdom, found out and settled upon to be the ransomer of his people; to which he agreed, and in the fulness of time came to give his life a ransom for many, and for whom he has given himself as a ransom price, which has been testified in due time: and this ransom is for all the elect of God, and is of them from sin, Satan, law, hell, and death; and the finding of it is not of man, nor is the scheme of propitiation, peace and reconciliation by Christ, or of atonement and satisfaction {s} by the sacrifice of Christ, as the word here used signifies, an invention of men; but is the effect of infinite wisdom, and a scheme drawn in the eternal mind, and formed in Christ from everlasting; see **2Co 5:19**. Some take these words to be spoken by the Father to the Son, upon his appointment and agreement to be the ransomer and Redeemer, saying, "go, redeem him", &c. for so the words {t} may be rendered; and others think they are the words of the Son the messenger to his Father, the advocate with him for his people, as before observed.

{s} rpk "propitiationem", Beza, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Bolducius, Vatablus; "expiationem", Tigurine version; "lytrum", Cocceius; "satisfactionem", Schmidt. {t} whedp "redime eum", Pagninus, Montanus &c.

Job 33:25

Ver. 25. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's,.... Being recovered from illness and restored to health, through the gracious dealings of God with him.

This is to be understood not simply and absolutely, but comparatively, or with respect to his former condition; that he, who before was reduced to skin and bone, is now become fat and plump; and whose flesh was dry and withered, now moist, succulent, and juicy; and whose skin was wrinkled, now soft and smooth, and sleek; and whose face was pale, now bloomy and ruddy. The Targum is,

"his flesh is weakened more than a child,"

and the Vulgate Latin,

"is consumed,"

referring to his former state:

he shall return to the days of his youth. His youth renewed, and he seem young again; become hale and robust as in his youthful days; see Ps 103:5.

Job 33:26

Ver. 26. He shall pray unto God,.... As the former verse expresses the condition of the body of the man recovered from sickness, this the frame of his soul, and the spiritual blessings enjoyed by him: some understand this of his praying in the time of his affliction, and consider it as one means of his recovery; and indeed a time of affliction is a time for prayer; and which brings a good man to it, who in health and prosperity has been negligent of it; such an one will make his application to God for deliverance, and not to the creature; and it is his mercy and privilege he has a God to pray unto, who can and will help him. But according to the course and connection of the words, it seems rather to respect what the good man would do, and the frame he would be in upon his recovery; who would entreat the Lord to make him thankful the mercy received, and accept of his thanksgiving for the same; that his affliction might appear to be sanctified unto him, and that he is much the better for it, more holy and more humble; and that he would manifest his pardoning grace to him for all the sins and transgressions he had been guilty of, his murmurings and repinings, and everything else during his affliction; and that he may make use of his health and strength given him in the service of God, and for the glory of his name;

and he will be favourable to him; which, if understood of the time of affliction, it may be interpreted of his laying no more on him than he will enable him to bear, and supporting him under it; of granting his gracious presence in it, and of his taking notice of him, visiting him, knowing, owning, and choosing him in the furnace of affliction, and manifesting his care unto him; and of the deliverance of him out of it. But if it respects the man as recovered out of affliction, it denotes further discoveries of the special care and favour of God to him, which are very enlivening and refreshing, strengthening and supporting; and of his gracious acceptance of his person, and of his sacrifices of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, through Christ the Mediator and messenger of the covenant;

and he shall see his face with joy: that is, either God who is favourable to him, he looks with a smiling countenance upon the man now recovered, who before seemed to look upon him with frowns in his countenance, there being a change in the outward dispensations of his providence towards him, though none in his heart: his countenance beholds the upright with pleasure, whether they see it or not; he looks upon his people in Christ with the utmost complacency and delight, and particularly when they come to him in the exercise of grace, with their prayers, praises, and thanksgivings. Or the man recovered from illness, God being favourable to him, he beholds the face of God with joy, who perhaps had hid it from him in his affliction, which caused trouble; but now showing his face and favour, it causes joy and exultation, even a jubilee in his soul. He beholds him in Christ as the God of grace and peace; and through him can come to him, and look him in the face with comfort and pleasure, as nothing is more delightful to him than the light of his countenance;

for he will render unto man his righteousness: not the sick man recovered render to another man what is his right and due, or what he may have wronged him of; for which being reproved by the affliction, and convicted of, is desirous of making restitution: but God, who will render, return, or restore to the man recovered his righteousness, which is the foundation of his joy; not render to him according to his own righteousness, as the Targum, which would be but a poor recompense if strictly given; nor restore to him the righteousness he lost in Adam, which is but a creature righteousness; but the righteousness of Christ, as Mr. Broughton, which is the good man's or the believer's in Christ, because wrought out for him, imputed to him, and bestowed as a free gift on him. Now though this righteousness can never be lost, being an everlasting one, yet a sense of interest in it may, which is returned, restored, and rendered to a man, when that righteousness is afresh revealed to him from faith to faith; the consequence of which is peace and comfort, joy and triumph.

Job 33:27

Ver. 27. He looketh upon men,.... According to our version, and other interpreters, the sense is, God looks upon men as he does on all men in general, their ways and their works; and particularly he takes notice of men under affliction, and observes how they behave; if they are penitent and confess their sins, he restores them to health, and does them good both in body and soul. But most carry the sense another way, and interpret it of the sick man recovered, who looks upon his friends and relations about him, and any others that come within his reach; of he goes about them, as Aben Ezra explains the word; or will accompany with men, as Mr. Broughton; or sets them in rows, as Gersom, in order, as at a levee, that he may the better address them; or he shall direct himself to them, as the Targum; or shall sing over them or before them, so Schultens {t}; in a joyful manner, in an exulting strain, express himself, as follows; for the phrase,

and [if any] say {u}, should be rendered, "and he shall say"; make the following confession of his acknowledgment of the goodness of God unto him;

I have sinned; against God and man, and that has been the cause of all my afflictions; I am now sensible of it, and ingenuously own it:

and perverted [that which was] right: have not done that which is right in the sight of God, nor what is just and right between man and man; have perverted the right ways of God, swerved from his commandments, and gone into crooked paths, with the workers of iniquity; and declined from, or perverted, justice and judgment among men;

and it profiteth me not; as sin does not in the issue; though it promises profit and advantage, it does not yield it; but, on the contrary, much harm and mischief come by it.

{t} le rvy "cantabit super vel coram", Schultens. {u} roayw "et dicat", V. L. Beza, Montanus, Mercerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 33:28

Ver. 28. He will deliver his soul from going into the pit,.... Into the pit of the grave; and then the soul is put for the man or for the body; or into the pit of hell or perdition:

and his life shall see the light; or he shall live and enjoy outward prosperity here, and the light of eternal happiness hereafter; and so the Targum interprets it of superior light, or the light above, even the inheritance of the saints in light. These words have a double reading; the "Keri", or marginal reading, is what we follow; but the "Cetib", or textual reading, is, "he hath delivered my soul from going into the pit, and my life sees the light"; and which seems to be the better reading; and so the words are a continuation of the address of the man recovered from illness to his friends; setting forth and acknowledging, with joy and thankfulness, the great goodness of God unto him, that he had delivered him from the grave, and spared his life, and given him to enjoy great prosperity, both temporal and spiritual.

Job 33:29

Ver. 29. Lo, all these [things] worketh God oftentimes with man. This is a summary or recapitulation of what goes before, from Job 33:15; God is an operating Being, he is always at work in a providential way: "my father worketh hitherto", **Joh 5:17**; sometimes on the minds of men in dreams and visions; and sometimes by affliction; and sometimes by his prophets, messengers and ministers of the word; he works with and by these, and all according to the internal workings and actings of his mind, his eternal purposes and decrees, which are hereby brought about: and these he works "oftentimes", or, as in the original, "twice" {w}; therefore when once is not sufficient, he repeats it in dreams and visions; when men are not admonished by one, he comes to them in another: and afflictions, when one does not bring men to repentance, or answer a good purpose, he sends another; and continues the ministry of the word, in which he waits to be gracious, till all his people are brought to repentance, and all his ends answered by it: and all this he works "with man", his darling object, the special care of his providence; and for whom his great concern is in redemption and salvation. He works with men distributively considered, with various men, in the several ways before expressed; and with men personally and individually; to one and the same man he has often appeared in dreams and visions, and on the same person has laid his afflicting hand again and again; and to the same individual has given line upon line, and precept upon precept. And because this is certain and to be depended upon as truth, and is worthy of notice and consideration, as well as is very wonderful and astonishing, that God should thus be mindful of man, and work with him and for him, "lo", or "behold", is prefixed unto it: the ends for which all this is done follow.

{w} vlv Mymep "bis aut ter", Tigurine version; "bis et ter", Beza; "bis, ter", Mercerus, Cocceius.

Job 33:30

Ver. 30. To bring back his soul from the pit,.... From the pit of the grave; at the mouth or on the brink of which he seemed to be in the apprehension of his friends, and having the sentence of death in himself; see Ps 90:3. Or "to turn away" {x}, or "stay his soul from the pit", as Mr. Broughton; prevent his going into it by removing his disorder, and restoring him to health, as in the case of Hezekiah,
Isa 38:17. Or figuratively, from the pit of an unregenerate state, which may be compared to a pit or grave, because in it lie such who are dead in trespasses and sins; and which is a pit of corruption, or a corrupt state: men in it are corrupt and corrupters, corrupt both in principles and practices; and is an impure one, like to mire and clay; and a very uncomfortable one, a pit wherein is no water, no refreshment, no solid peace and comfort. In conversion, which sometimes is brought about by the above means, afflictive providences, as well as by the ministry of the word, souls are brought back from hence; are regenerated, quickened, and raised from the graves of sin, and live spiritually, as they are also secured from going down into the pit of hell and everlasting destruction:

to be enlightened with the light of the living; in a natural sense, to enjoy the light of living men, the light of the sun, and to live in health and prosperity, which is called light in opposition to affliction and adversity, expressed by darkness; see **Es 8:15** **Isa 8:22**. And in a spiritual sense, to live a spiritual life, who before were dead in sin, to live a life of faith on Christ as their righteousness, and to live a life of holiness from him, and in newness of life to his honour and glory; and to have spiritual light into their state by nature, and their recovery and salvation by Christ; to see their need of him, his suitableness, worth, and excellency, and to have a glimpse of eternal glory; as also hereafter to partake both of eternal life and eternal light, called by our Lord "the light of life", **Joh 8:12**.

{x} byvhl "ut avertat", Beza, Mercerus, Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 33:31

Ver. 31. Mark well, O Job,.... Consider and weigh well what has been said; or rather attend to what is further to be said:

hearken unto me; to what he was about to say; for he was full of matter, and had not yet vented all he had to utter:

hold thy peace, and I will speak; be silent and do not interrupt, and I will go on with my discourse.

Job 33:32

Ver. 32. If thou hast anything to say, answer me,.... Any thing to object to what he had delivered, or any answer to return to what he had charged him with:

speak, for I desire to justify thee. Elihu was a fair antagonist, and gave free liberty, time and space, to make whatsoever reply he thought fit, and which he should patiently and attentively hear: his view was not victory, but that truth might come out, and take place and prevail, having nothing more at heart than Job's good; and could wish it would appear that he was in all respects a just man, and even in that in which he thought he was not just; but could he fairly acquit himself it would be a pleasure to him.

Job 33:33

Ver. 33. If not, hearken to me,.... If he had no objection to make, nor answer to return, then he desires he would attend and listen to what he had further to lay before him:

hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom. For though Job was a wise and good man, he might become wiser and more knowing; and indeed when instruction is given to a wise man, he will be yet wiser, **Pr 9:9**; and this may be received sometimes from persons inferior in age and abilities. Elihu proposed to teach him, as he did, natural, moral, and evangelical wisdom, especially the wisdom of God in his providential dealings with men, and what is man's highest wisdom under them; which is to be reconciled unto them, and patiently to submit, and to fear the Lord, and be careful not to offend him, which to do is wisdom and understanding.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 34:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 34

In this chapter Elihu reassumes his discourse, and proceeds in his answer to Job, in which are first a preface exciting attention, Job 34:1; then a charge is brought against Job, expressed in or extracted from some words that dropped from his lips, not so well guarded, Job 34:5; a refutation of these expressions of his in a variety of arguments, Job 34:10; and the chapter is closed with some good advice to Job, Job 34:31; and with an earnest request of Elihu to men of understanding, to join with him in trying him to the uttermost, Job 34:34.

Ver. 1. Furthermore Elihu answered and said. It is reasonable to suppose that Elihu made a considerable pause, to see whether Job would make any reply to what he had delivered, or object to what he had said; which he gave him free liberty to do, if he had anything upon his mind: but perceiving he was not inclined to return any answer to him, he went on with his discourse; and which is called a further answer to him: for though Joh had made no reply to which this could be called an answer, yet as there were several things remaining for Elihu to answer to, and which he proposed to answer and did, it may with great propriety here be said that he answered him.

Job 34:2

Ver. 2. Hear my words, O ye wise [men],.... This is not an address to Job's three friends, as some think; for Elihu had expressed his displeasure at them, in condemning Job without convicting him, and returning solid answers to him; and therefore he should not take their method of dealing with him, but take another; and plainly suggests that wisdom was not with them, nor taught by them; and therefore, as he could not give flattering titles to men, it could not well be thought that he should address them as wise and understanding men, unless indeed in an ironic way, as some choose to interpret it; see Job 32:3. Rather therefore some bystanders are here spoken to, whom Elihu knew to be men of wisdom and knowledge, &c. as it follows, and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge; and as they were endued not only with natural and political wisdom and knowledge, but with that which is divine and spiritual, they were proper judges of the affair in controversy, and could best discern whether what Elihu delivered was right or wrong, and to the purpose or not. And besides, though they had a large share of wisdom and knowledge, yet it was but imperfect; and the most wise and knowing may become more so, and that sometimes by means of their inferiors and juniors: and therefore Elihu craves their attention to what he had said or should say, though he was but a young man, and they aged, and men of great geniuses and abilities; and the rather he might be pressing on them to be his hearers and judges, because, generally speaking, such, as they are the most judicious, so the most candid hearers.

Job 34:3

Ver. 3. For the ear trieth words,.... Not only the musical sound of them, the goodness of the language and diction, and the grammatical construction of them, but the sense of them, and whether the matter of them is good or not; that they are sound speech, which cannot be condemned, or unsound; whether they are right or wrong, agreeably to right reason, sound doctrine, and the word of God; for there are words and words, some the words of men, others the words of God. A sanctified ear tries these; but then men must have such ears to hear, and be attentive to what they hear, and retain it; hear internally as well as externally; and which a man does when his ears are opened by the Lord, from whom are the hearing ear and seeing eye; and such try what they hear, distinguish between good and bad, approve truth and receive it, and retain and hold it fast:

as the mouth tasteth meat; words and doctrines are like meat, some good and some bad; and such that have a good taste try them, either a rational or rather a spiritual discernment: some have no spiritual taste, their taste is not changed, and therefore cannot distinguish, nor make any good judgment of things; but others have, and these discern the difference, relish truth, savour the things that be of God, taste the good word of God, and esteem it more than their necessary food; and it is sweeter to them than the honey or the honeycomb. Such Elihu judged these men to be he addressed, and therefore desired their attention to what he had to say.

Job 34:4

Ver. 4. Let us choose to us judgments,.... Take the part of the question or controversy in which truth and justice lie, and he doubtless has respect to the present controversy with Job;

let us know among ourselves what [is] good; agree upon that which is best to be done in the present case, what judgment to be made of the dealings of God with Job, and his behaviour under them, and what the best advice to give to him.

Job 34:5

Ver. 5. For Job hath said, I am righteous,.... Not in express words, but what amounted to it: no doubt he was a righteous man in an evangelic sense, being justified by the righteousness of Christ, as all the Old Testament saints were, who looked to him and believed in him as the Lord their righteousness, and said, as the church in those times did, "surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength";
Isa 45:24. And moreover he was an upright man, to which the Lord himself bore testimony, **Job 1:8**; and had the truth of grace in him, that "new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness"; and also lived an holy life and conversation; but then he did not say or think that he was righteous in or of himself, or so as to be free from sin: Job could not judge or speak thus of himself, which would be contrary to what he expressly declares, **Job 7:20**; though it must be owned, that he thought himself so righteous, holy, and good, that he ought not to have been afflicted in the manner he was; in which sense it is probable Elihu understood him: and besides, these words are not to be taken separately, but in connection with what follows, which shows Job's sense, and how Elihu understood him, that though he was a righteous person, he had not justice done him:

and God hath taken away my judgment; which words he did say,
See Gill on "Job 27:2"; or, as Mr. Broughton renders the words, "the Omnipotent keeps back my right"; does not vindicate my cause, nor so much as give it a hearing, nor lets me know why he contends with me; and, though I call for justice to be done, cannot be heard, Job 19:7; a like complaint of the church in Isa 40:27.

Job 34:6

Ver. 6. Should I lie against my right?.... No; I ought not: this though Job had not said in so many words, yet this seems to be his sense in Job 27:4; that should he own and say that he was a wicked man, a hypocrite, and destitute of the grace of God, he should not only speak against himself, but, contrary to his conscience, say an untruth, and not do justice to his character. Some read the words without an interrogation, as Mr. Broughton,

"for my right I must be a liar;"

that is, for vindicating my right, seeking and endeavouring to do myself justice, and clear myself from false imputations, I am reckoned a liar. And to this purpose is the paraphrase of Aben Ezra,

"because I seek judgment, they say that I lie."

Others render them, "there is a lie in judging me", so the Vulgate Latin version; that is,

"I am falsely accused, I am judged wrongfully:"

things I know not are laid to my charge, which has often been the case of good men: or, "I have lied in judgment"; that is, "failed", as the word is sometimes used, Isa 58:11; failed in his expectation of judgment or of justice being done him; he looked for it, but was disappointed; but the first sense seems best;

my wound [is] incurable without transgression; not that he thought himself without transgression, but that his wound or stroke inflicted on him, or the afflictions he was exercised with, were without cause; were not for any injustice in his hands, or wickedness that he had committed; and that he utterly despaired of being rid of them, or restored to his former health and prosperity; and to this sense he had expressed himself, **Job 9:17**. In the Hebrew text it is, "my arrow" {y}, that is, the arrow that was in him, the arrows of the Lord that stuck fast in him; these were thrown at him and fastened in him without cause; and there was no hope of their being drawn out, or of the wounds made by them being healed; see **Job 6:4**. Now what Elihu was offended at in these expressions was, that Job should so rigidly insist on his innocence, and not own himself faulty in any respect; nor allow there was any cause for his afflictions, nor entertain any hope of the removal of them: whereas it became him to acknowledge his sins, which no man is free from, and that he was dealt with less than his iniquities deserved; and that, instead of indulging despair, he should rather say, "I will return" to the Lord; he hath "torn" and he will "heal", he hath "smitten" and he will "bind up", **Ho 6:1**.

{y} yux "sagitta mea", Montanus, Schultens, Michaelis.

Job 34:7

Ver. 7. What man [is] like Job,.... This is said as wondering at the part he acted, that a man so wise and good as Job was esteemed to be should behave in such a manner as he did;

[who] drinketh up scorning like water? For a foolish and wicked man to do so is not strange nor uncommon; but for a man of such sense and grace as Job was to do this was astonishing; to have no more regard to his character than to expose himself to the scorn and ridicule of men: for a man to become a laughing stock to profane and wicked men for his religion and piety, it is no disgrace, but an honour to him; but by unbecoming words and gestures to make himself justly jeered and scoffed at is great indiscretion. Or it may be understood actively of his dealing very freely and frequently in scoffs and jeers, which he poured out very liberally and plentifully, and seemingly with as much delight as a man drinks water when thirsty; see Job 11:3.

Job 34:8

Ver. 8. Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity,.... The worst of men, who make it their constant business and employment to commit sin:

and walketh with wicked men; the most abandoned of mankind. Not that Job kept company with such, and walked with them in all excess of not; nor did Elihu think so; Job was "a man that feared God, and eschewed evil", and evil men; he was "a companion of them that feared the Lord"; his delight was "with the excellent of the earth": nor should a good man keep company and walk with the wicked, nor can he with any pleasure. But the sense is, that by his words, the expressions that dropped from his lips, he seemed to agree with them, and to be of the same sentiments with them; and what he delivered tended to encourage and harden them in their sinful ways; and what those words were follow.

Job 34:9

Ver. 9. For he hath said,.... Not plainly and expressly, but consequentially; what it was thought might be inferred from what he had said, particularly in **Job 9:22**;

it profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God; in his house and ordinances, ways and worship; he may as well indulge himself in the pleasures of sin, and in the delights of the world, if God destroys the perfect and the wicked, as Job had said in the place referred to; if this be the case, it is in vain to serve God, and pray unto him, or keep his ordinances; which are the language and sentiments of wicked men, and according to which they act, see Job 21:14 **Mal 3:14**. Mr. Broughton renders it,

"when he would walk with God;"

and so the Targum,

"in his walking with God;"

and another Targum,

"in his running with God:"

though he walks and even runs in the way of his commandments, yet it is of no advantage to him; or he does the will of God, as Aben Ezra; or seeks to please him or be acceptable to him, and to find grace in his sight. Whereas though love and hatred are not known by prosperity and adversity, but both come to good and bad men, which seems to be Job's meaning in the above place, from whence this inference is deduced; yet it is certain that godliness is profitable to all, **1Ti 4:8**.

Job 34:10

Ver. 10. Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding,.... The same persons he addresses as wise men and men of knowledge, Job 34:2; and here as men of understanding, or "heart" {z}; the heart being the seat of wisdom and knowledge; and such Elihu desired to be his hearers, to attend to what he was about to say; which was to refute the words of Job, or his sense expressed in the preceding verses;

far be it from God [that he should do] wickedness; and [from] the Almighty, [that he should commit] iniquity; do any injustice or injury to any person, there being no unrighteousness in him, nor in any of his ways and works; which Job tacitly seemed to charge God with, at least as Elihu understood him. But sin is contrary to his pure and holy nature; he cannot look upon it with pleasure, much less commit it; it is forbidden by his holy righteous law, and therefore would never he done by him the lawgiver; nor can anyone single instance be given of wickedness and unrighteousness committed by him in any of his works of nature, or providence, or grace. He is the author of the evil of afflictions, whether as punishments or fatherly corrections; and in neither case does he commit or do any injustice; not in punishing wicked men less than they deserve, as he does in this life; nor in correcting his own people, which is always for their good: but not of the evil of sin; this may be concluded from the titles here given, of "Almighty and All-sufficient"; for being so he can be under no temptation of doing an unjust thing; and which is expressed with the like abhorrence and indignation by Elihu as the same sentiment is by the Apostle Paul, **Ro 9:14**.

{z} bbl yvna "viri cordis", Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis.

Job 34:11

Ver. 11. For the work of a man will he render unto him,.... The reward of his work, as Ben Gersom interprets it, whether the work of a wicked man or of a good man:

and cause every man to find according to [his] ways. Which is a truth frequently inculcated in the Scriptures; and will take place especially at the resurrection of the dead, which is for that purpose, and at the final judgment, by the righteous Judge of all; for, though wicked men may not be punished now according to their deserts, they will hereafter, which is sufficient to vindicate the justice of God: and as for the works and ways of good men, though God does not proceed according to them in the methods of his grace, they are not justified by them, nor called and saved according to them; for, though evil works deserve damnation, good works do not merit salvation; yet they are not neglected by the Lord; he is not unrighteous to forget them, and verily there is a reward for righteous men though it is not of debt but grace; and not for, but in keeping the commands of God, is this reward; even communion with him and peace in their souls, which they enjoy in, though not as arising from their keeping them; and at the last day, when their justification will be pronounced before men and angels, it will be according to their works of righteousness, not done by themselves, but done by Christ, in their room and stead and reckoned to them; for the obedience of Christ, by which they are made righteous, though imputed to them without works, is nothing else but a series of good works most perfectly done by Christ for them; and according to which the crown of righteousness in a righteous way will be given them by the righteous Judge. All which therefore is a full proof that no iniquity is, will, or can be committed by the Lord.

Job 34:12

Ver. 12. Yea, surely God will not do wickedly,.... This truth is repeated and affirmed in the strongest manner; or "will not condemn", as the Vulgate Latin version, and so the Targum, that is, he will not condemn the righteous; for, though he may afflict them, which is done that they may not be condemned with the world, he will not condemn them; for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ; his righteousness, by which they are justified, secures them from all condemnation;

neither will the Almighty pervert judgment: pronounce a wrong sentence, decline the execution of justice, swerve from the rule of it, or do a wrong thing; for he punishes wherever he finds it, either in the sinner or his surety; and his punishing it in his Son, as the surety of his people, is the strongest proof of his punitive justice that can be given: nor does he neglect to chastise his people for sin, though satisfied for; so far is he from conniving at sin, and still further from committing it; see See Gill on "Job 8:2".

Job 34:13

Ver. 13. Who hath given him a charge over the earth?.... Or who hath committed the earth unto him, and made it his care and charge? Is there any above him that has put him into this post and office? Under whose direction and command is he, and to whom is he accountable? None at all; he is no deputy or sub-governor: the kings of the earth are under him, and they have others subordinate to them; but he above all, higher than the highest: he is sole Governor of the world in his own right, by right of creation, and which he has from himself and not another; he has no rival, nor partner with him, none to whom he is accountable, or can control him; and since he is the Judge of all the earth, he will do right. Subordinate governors sometimes do unjust things in obedience to their superiors, or to please them, or through fear of them; but nothing of this kind is or can be the case with God; as he cannot do any injustice through inclination of nature, nor through ignorance, as men may; so neither through fear of any, there being none above him from whom he has received a charge, or that rules over him; and, as Jarchi expresses it, can say to him, what dost thou? as, I did not command thee so and so. And though he is sovereign and independent, and his power uncontrollable, it is contrary to his nature to make an ill use of it; and was justice perverted by him, the world would soon be in the utmost confusion: but it is a plain case there is a God that judgeth in the earth, and cannot commit iniquity. Or this may be said with respect to man; who has committed the earth to man, to be his charge, to be governed by him? if so, it would soon come to nothing; all creatures in it would be destroyed, as in the following verses; but this is not the case. Or who has given it to man to possess it, and to enjoy all things in it, and has put all things into his hands, and in subjection to him, to make use thereof, and for his good, delight, and pleasure, and visits him in it in a providential way, in great kindness and goodness? It is the Lord; and can it be thought that he that is so good and beneficent to men will do them any injustice? no, surely! Yea, should he take away all these good things he has given them, and even life itself, it could be no injustice, since he would only take away what he had given and had a right unto;

or who hath disposed the whole world? or created it, as Aben Ezra; that stored it with all the good things in it for the use of men? or put it in the beautiful order it is, so suitable and convenient for the good of his creatures? or made it the habitable earth it is for man and beast? so Mr. Broughton renders the whole,

"who before him looked to the earth, or who settled all the dwelt land?"

Or who made it the fruitful earth it is, abounding with plenty of food for man and beast? or who disposes of all things in it by his wise providence, so that everything is beautiful in its season? None but the Lord has done all this; how then can it be thought that he who has filled the earth with his goodness should do wickedly or pervert judgment?

Job 34:14

Ver. 14. If he set his heart upon man,.... Not his love and affections; though there are some he does in this sense set his heart on, and whose souls at death he gathers to himself, but with this sense the next verse will not agree; but to destroy him, as Jarchi adds by way of explanation; if he gives his mind to it, is set upon it and resolved to do it, none can hinder him; or sets himself against him in an hostile way, the issue must be entire ruin and destruction to the race of men; but it is plain this is not the case, or otherwise all must have perished long ago: or if he severely marks the ways and works of men, and deals with them according to the strictness of his justice, which yet he might do without any charge of injustice, none could stand before him; but this he does not, so far is he from any injustice, or any appearance of it;

[if] he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; not his own spirit and breath, drawing in and retaining that within himself, and withholding the influence of it from his creatures, which the Septuagint version seems to favour; but the spirit and breath of man, which are of God, and which, as he gives, he can gather when he pleases. The spirit or rational soul of man is put in him by the Lord; this at death is separated from the body, yet dies not with it, but is gathered to the Lord: and the breath which he breathes into man, and is in his nostrils, and which, as he gives, he can take away, and then man dies. But in doing this he does no injustice; indeed, should he in anger and resentment rise up and deal thus with men in general, the consequence must be as follows.

Job 34:15

Ver. 15. All flesh shall perish together,.... Not one by one, or one after another, as they generally do, but all together; as when the flood swept away the world of the ungodly. "All flesh" signifies all men, and their bodies of flesh particularly, which are weak, frail, and mortal; and if God gathers or takes out the spirit from them, they die immediately, which is meant by perishing, as in **Ec 7:15**;

and man shall turn again unto dust; from whence he came, as the body does at death; when those earthly tabernacles of the bodies of men, which have their foundation in the dust, are dissolved and sink into it. Now though this is the case of particular persons, one after another, yet it is not a general case, as it would be if God was to exert his power, as he might without any charge of injustice: and this shows the merciful kindness of God to man, so far is he from doing any thing injurious or unjust.

Job 34:16

Ver. 16. If now [thou hast] understanding, hear this,.... Not as calling his understanding in question, as if he, had none; for Job was a very understanding man; he had not lost his natural understanding by his afflictions, see **Job 6:13**; nor was he without an understanding of divine things, as his speeches and answers show; but rather it is taken for granted that he was a man of understanding: "if" or "seeing" thou hast understanding, art a man of knowledge and intelligence, therefore hearken and attend to what has been said or about to be said; though, as some Jewish interpreters {a} observe, the word is not a noun, but a verb, and is imperative, "understand thou now, hear this"; and then the sense is, "if" things are so as before related, Job 34:13; then now understand this, take it into thy heart and mind, and well weigh and consider it:

hearken to the voice of my words; either the preceding or following ones.

{a} Jarchi, Bar Tzemach, in loc. so Cocceius, Schmidt, and Schultens.

Job 34:17

Ver. 17. Shall even he that hateth right govern?.... That hates moral and civil justice; is such an one fit to rule among men or over them? No, surely; for to love righteousness and do it is a qualification of a civil governor; it is his business to administer justice; and if an hater of it, he can never be a proper person to rule: and if God was an hater of that which is right, as he would seem to be if he did not do it, he would not be fit to govern the world as he does. To this absurdity is Job reduced, by suggesting that right was not done him, or that God had removed his judgment from him; see 2Sa 23:3 **Ro 3:5**. Mr. Broughton translates the words, "can a foe to judgment rule well?" And yet it cannot be denied, but must be owned, that God does judge in the earth, and judges righteously. Or shall such an one "bind" {b}? the allusion may be to a surgeon that binds up wounds. Sin makes wounds, and such as cannot be healed by men; but God can bind them up and cure them, and does: but would he do this if he hated that which is right, if he was not kind and merciful, just and good? see **Ho 6:1**. Or, as others render it, which comes pretty near to the same sense, "shall a hater of judgment refrain wrath" {c}? Such are tyrants, cruel and unmerciful, full of wrath and vengeance, and which they execute in a barbarous manner: but such is not God; he stirs not up all his wrath, which he in justice might; he retains it not for ever, but delights in mercy;

and wilt thou condemn him that is most just? It is not right to condemn any just man, to charge him wrongfully, and then pass an unrighteous sentence on him; and much less to charge the righteous God with injustice, and condemn him that is most just, superlatively just; in whom there is not the least shadow of unrighteousness; who is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; who is naturally, essentially, and infinitely righteous.

{b} vbxy "obligabit", Montanus; so Junius and Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis. {c} "An nasum osor judicii fraenabit?" Schultens.

Job 34:18

Ver. 18. [Is it fit] to say to a king, [thou art] wicked?.... Not even to a bad king; for though he may be reproved for his sins, yet not by any or everyone, but by a fit and proper person: and generally speaking, if not always, the Scriptural instances of reproving such kings are of men that were prophets, and sent in the name of the Lord to do it; and when done by them, was done with decency: and much less should this be said to a good king; as to say to him, Belial, the word here used; or thou art Belial; or a son of Belial, as Shimei said to David, 2Sa 16:7; a name given to the worst of men, and is the devil himself; and signifies either one without a yoke, or lawless, which a king is not; or unprofitable, whereas a king is a minister of God for good; is for the punishment of evildoers, and for a praise to them that do well;

[and] to princes, [ye are] ungodly? Who have their name from being generous, munificent, and liberal, and therefore should not be treated in such a manner; who are the sons of kings, or subordinate magistrates to them, and execute their will and pleasure, laws and precepts. And if now such language is not to be used to earthly kings and princes, then surely not to the King of kings and Lord of lords; so Jarchi interprets it of God the King of the world; and some Christian interpreters, as Schmidt, understand by "princes" the three Persons in the Godhead; which can hardly be made to bear: though, could the whole be understood of God in the three Persons of the Deity, the connection with Job 34:19 would run more smoothly without the supplement that is made; so Broughton,

"to the King, the King of nobles, that accepteth not," &c.

Job 34:19

Ver. 19. [How much less to him] that accepteth not the persons of princes,.... And indeed God is not the respecter of the persons of any, no, not of the greatest men on earth, kings and princes,
Ac 10:34; these are alike dealt with by him as others in the dispensations of his providence; nor do they escape the marks of his displeasure, wrath and vengeance, when they sin against him:

nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? by showing favour to them, or conniving at them,

for they [are] all the work of his hands; both the rich and the poor; not only as creatures made by him, but as rich men and poor men; it is God that makes men rich or poor, **1Sa 2:7**; instances follow proving this, that God is no respecter of persons on account of outward circumstances.

Job 34:20

Ver. 20. In a moment shall they die,.... Princes as well as the common people, rich men as well as poor; all must and do die, great and small, high and low, kings and peasants, rich and poor men, and sometimes suddenly; are struck dead at once, and without any previous notice, that night, that hour, that moment their souls are required of them. The Targum interprets this of the men of Sodom. And Mr. Broughton, in his margin, refers to the history of them in Ge 19:1;

and the people shall be troubled at midnight; either the common people, when their kings and governors die; or the relations and friends of persons deceased; and this circumstance "at midnight" is added, which makes the scene more melancholy, awful, and shocking, when it happens at such a time. The above Targum understands it of the Egyptians, when their firstborn were slain, which was in the middle of the night; and Mr. Broughton refers in his margin to the same instance: but it is a question whether this affair ever came to the knowledge of Job and his friends, at least not so early as this controversy;

and pass away; not into another country, being taken and carried away captive; but pass away by death into their graves, and into another world. Sephorno interprets it of the destroying angel's passing over the tents of the Israelites, and not entering into them to smite them when they smote the firstborn of

Egypt. But the former sense is best, see Ps 37:36;

and the mighty shall be taken away without hand: without the hand of men, but by the immediate hand of God; not falling in battle, or in a common natural way by diseases, but by some judgment of God upon them: and the whole verse seems to be understood not of a natural death, or in the common way, but of sudden death in a way of judgment, from the immediate hand of God, and that upon the mighty and great men of the earth; which shows that he is no respecter of princes, see **Da 8:25**.

Job 34:21

Ver. 21. For his eyes [are] upon the ways of man,.... Which denotes the omniscience of God, which reaches to every man, to every individual, and to all men in general; and to their ways, to every step taken by them, to the whole of their lives and conversations, and every action of them; to all their internal and external ways and goings; perhaps the former may be meant in this, and the latter in the following clause. This may denote all their inward thoughts, the workings of their mind, the imaginations of their heart; all their secret purposes, designs, and schemes; and all the desires and affections of their soul; and all these, whether good or bad:

and he seeth all his goings; the whole of his walk and conversation, conduct and behaviour; all his external ways, works, and actions; and these whether of good or bad men, see Ps 139:1.

Job 34:22

Ver. 22. [There is] no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. By whom may be meant chiefly profane sinners that are abandoned to a vicious course of life, and make a trade of sin, or that the common course of their lives; though secret sinners, and even professors of religion, hypocrites, who in a more private manner live in sin, come under this name, **Mt 7:23**; such may endeavour to hide themselves through shame and fear, but all in vain and to no purpose; there is no screening themselves and their actions from the all-seeing eye of God, and from his wrath and vengeance. "No darkness" of any sort can hide them, not the thick clouds of the heavens, nor the darkness of the night; nor is there any darkness in God that can obstruct his sight of them; nor are they able to cast any mist before his eyes, or use any colourings, pretences, and excuses he cannot see through. "Nor shadow of death": the grossest and thickest darkness; nor is even the grave itself an hiding place for sinners, from whence they will be raised to receive the just deserts of their sins. See Job 10:21. Now from the omniscience of God, and his clear uninterrupted sight of all persons and their actions, inward and outward, Elihu argues to the justice of God, who therefore cannot do anything amiss through ignorance, error, or mistake.

Job 34:23

Ver. 23. For he will not lay upon man more [than right],.... Neither in a way of duty, his law being holy, just, and good, not any of his commandments grievous, but all his precepts concerning all things right, his yoke easy and his burden light; nor in a way of punishment, always punishing then less than their iniquities deserve; nor in a way of chastisement, suffering nothing to befall his people but what is common to men; and he is faithful to bear them up under it and through it, and to make a way to escape out of it: or the phrase, "than right", being a supplement, may be left out, and the words be connected with what follows,

that he should enter into judgment with God; and the sense is, either that God does not put it on man to go again into judgment with him; he does not suffer him to have a cause heard over again, to appeal from God or to him to have a second hearing; nor is anything to be got by it, he is in one mind, and none can turn him or reverse or get reversed any sentence of his; and therefore it was a piece of weakness in Job to insist so much as he did to have a hearing of his cause before him, since he could not expect there would be any alteration made in his favour: or, as Mr. Broughton reads it, "it is not for men to purpose to enter into judgment before the Omnipotent"; such a purpose is vain, he can never carry his cause against him; it is a piece of weakness to pretend to litigate a point with him: or the sense is, he puts no more on man than to come to him in judgment, so Schultens; he has appointed a person and time to judge the world in righteousness, and all must appear before his tribunal; and everything, thought, word and action, will then and there be brought into an account, and righteous judgment will pass; and therefore, since he has fixed such a method of proceeding, and requires no other, he can never be charged with injustice.

Job 34:24

Ver. 24. He shall break in pieces mighty men without number,.... Such as are mighty in bodily strength, as the giants of the old world, and such as were inhabitants of some parts of the land of Canaan; or mighty in power and authority, being kings, princes, rulers, and governors, over nations and cities; or mighty in wealth and riches, which give men power and strength; these God can and sometimes does break in pieces like potters' vessels, and even mighty kingdoms and nations themselves he will make like the chaff of the summer threshing floor: and even without number; or there have been and will be numberless instances of this kind; who can tell how many of these mighty men, men of gigantic stature, were drowned in the flood, or cut off by the sword of the Israelites in the land of Canaan? or "without search" {d} as it may be rendered; either on the part of God, who needs not any, with whom are unnecessary any formal inquiries into a cause, or examination of witnesses, in order to a judicial process against delinquents, all being naked and open before him at once; or on the part of man, with whom the ways and judgments of God are unsearchable and who ought not closely and curiously to inquire into any of his proceedings, and the causes and reasons of them, who does all things after the counsel of his own will. Mr. Broughton renders it "without end", for ever; with an everlasting destruction, an utter and irretrievable one; he so breaks them as that they never can be made whole again, like an earthen vessel that is broke to pieces and cannot be put together again;

and set others in their stead; God always provides for a succession in the world, that as when one generation goes off another comes on; when he destroyed the world with a flood, he preserved a family to replenish the earth; when the fathers of the Jewish nation, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, their children were raised up in their room to enter the good land and possess it; and particularly he provides for the civil government of the world and when he pulls down or removes one king he sets up another, and will not suffer kingdoms and states to fall into anarchy and confusion: and sometimes, when he casts down the mighty from their seats, he exalts men of low degree, as when he rejected Saul he took David from the sheepfold, 1Sa 16:11; and makes such kings and kingdoms to "stand" {e} stable and firm, as the kingdom of David, and as the word here used signifies.

{d} rqx al "absque inquisitione", Beza, Mercerus; "sine investigatione", Michaelis; so Cocceius, Schultens. {e} dmeyw "et stare faciet", Pagninus, Montanus, V. L. so Mercerus, Drusius, Cocceius, Schultens.

Job 34:25

Ver. 25. Therefore he knoweth their works,.... Being God omniscient, or rather takes notice of them, weighs and considers them, and gives to man according to them; or rather makes them known, for of his omniscience Elihu had spoken before; he makes them known to themselves, fastens convictions of their evil ways and works on their consciences, and obliges them to confess them, as the instances of Cain, Pharaoh, and others, show; and he makes them known to others by the judgment he executes, as on the old world, Sodom and Gomorrah; and the works of all will be made manifest at the day of judgment;

and he overturneth [them] in the night; literally taken, as the firstborn of the Egyptians were slain in the night, Ex 12:30; and Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the Red sea in the night, Ex 15:4; and the Assyrian army were destroyed by an angel in one night, 2Ki 19:35; and Belshazzar was killed in the night, and the Babylonian empire translated to the Medes and Persians at the same time, **Da 5:30**: or figuratively, that is, suddenly, at unawares, and by surprise, and as quickly and easily as the night is turned into day; and such a revolution is made, as when he turns the night into day, and discovers and makes known all their secret actions committed in the dark; or he turns the night of calamity upon them, and puts an end to their light of temporal happiness and prosperity; or turns the night of death and everlasting wrath and justice on them, the blackness of darkness upon them:

so that they are destroyed; both in a temporal sense, on every side, with an utter destruction; and in a spiritual sense, with an everlasting one.

Job 34:26

Ver. 26. He striketh them as wicked men,.... Such is the strict justice of God, that he never strikes men, or inflicts punishment on them, or brings down his judgments upon them, but as wicked men, and because of their wickedness; the casting of man out of Eden was for his sin, as well as the casting down the angels from heaven that sinned; the drowning of the old world, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the ruin of Pharaoh and his host, the driving the Canaanites out of their land, the various captivities of the Israelites, with other instances of God's displeasure with men in this world, and the everlasting punishment of them in another, are only of them as wicked men, and for sin; and therefore he is not chargeable with any unrighteousness. Sephorno interprets it, "instead of wicked men", and illustrates it by the shaking out of Pharaoh and his host into the sea in the room and stead of the wicked Israelites, that came up from thence,

in the open sight of others: which the same interpreter refers to the Israelites seeing the Egyptians dead on the seashore; or "in the place of them that see" {f}, that is, in a public manner, as generally malefactors are executed, to which the allusion may be; it denotes the publicness of God's righteous judgments on wicked men, for the greater declaration of his power and justice, and for the greater shame and disgrace of such wicked men, and for the joy and comfort of the righteous delivered from them.

{f} Myar Mwqmb "in loco videntium", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Michaelis; "in loco spectantium", Beza, Cocceius, Schultens.

Job 34:27

Ver. 27. Because they turned back from him,.... Became apostates from the ways and worship of God, as the posterity of Cain before the flood, and the posterity of Ham after it; who had been educated and trained up therein, and turned from the law of God, as the Septuagint version, from the light and law of nature:

and would not consider any of his ways; either of providence, whether in a way of mercy which might lead to repentance, or in a way of judgment which might be a caution and instruction to them; or of his precepts, the way of his commandments, not any of these would they consider; so as to express a value for them, show any regard to them, and walk in them; and which was owing to the stubbornness of their wills; they would not advert to them.

Job 34:28

Ver. 28. So that they cause the cry of the poor to come to him,.... To God; through their oppressions of the poor they are made to cry by reason of them, and who come to God with their cries, and tears, and supplications, and which enter into the ears of the Lord of hosts;

and he heareth the cry of the afflicted; as he did the cry of the Israelites under Egyptian bondage; he is a God hearing and answering prayer, and he particularly attends to the cry of the humble and of the afflicted, and arises for their help and deliverance.

Job 34:29

Ver. 29. When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?.... Quietness or peace is of God; external peace to bodies of men, to communities, civil and religious, and to particular persons; quietness and contentment in outward enjoyments, peace and safety at home, and from enemies abroad; inward spiritual peace, this is of God, is in Christ, and from him; is the fruit of his righteousness, spoke by his blood, comes through faith in Christ, and is enjoyed in his ordinances, and continues as long as it is the pleasure of God to give it, and cannot be disturbed by men or devils; a national peace, when God gives it, cannot be broke in upon; nor the peace of churches, though there are always some inclined to be troublers of the Israel of God; nor the peace of particular persons, not their outward peace and quietness, when God sets an hedge of providence about them; nor their inward peace, not by all the afflictions and persecutions they meet with in the world; nor by all the temptations of Satan, and the corruptions of their own hearts. The Targum is, "who shall condemn?" and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; when God acquits, absolves, and justifies men, who can condemn them? see **Ro 8:33**. When God pronounces the sentence of justification by the righteousness of Christ in the conscience of a sinner, it produces peace solid and substantial, and this being done, who shall condemn? or of what avail will their condemnation be? whether of the law, or of Satan, or of the world, or of themselves, of their own hearts;

and when he hideth [his] face, who then can behold him? whether [it be done] against a nation, or against a man only; whether God hides his face from a nation, as he sometimes did from the nation of Israel, because of their sins; when he would not hear their prayers, nor assist them against their enemies, nor arise for their help and deliverance out of their hands: or from his church and people, his spiritual Jacob and Israel, as when they complain, their way is hid from the Lord, and the Lord has forgotten and forsaken them; or from particular persons, as from David, Heman, and others; and who, of the Lord's people, but at one time or another are under the hidings of his face? and then there is no finding him, no looking to him with comfort and confidence; no looking into and beholding the works and ways of God, and the causes of his dealings with them; these are out of sight, his ways are in the deep, and his footsteps are not known. Some refer this to men; who will show favour to him whom God frowns upon? who will look at him in a pleasant manner, when God hides his face from him?

Job 34:30

Ver. 30. That the hypocrite reign not,.... These words seem to be connected with Job 34:24, "he breaketh in pieces mighty men", &c. the whole of Job 34:29 being read in a parenthesis; or with the phrase "he hideth his face"; as God is said to be in the destruction of mighty wicked men, who oppress the poor, and cause their cry to come to God, to prevent the reign of an hypocrite, or however to shorten it. By "an hypocrite" is not meant a common hypocrite in religion, but an hypocrite in politics; who pretends to great humanity and goodness, to a tender care of the people, and a preservation of them in their rights and liberties, and promises to support and establish the constitution, and observe the laws of the nation, with a show of zeal for the religion professed in it. But when he has ascended the throne, and got the power into his hands, he throws off the mask and becomes a tyrant; and men of such a temper, either God does not suffer to ascend the throne, but if they do get on it through artifice and deceit, he suffers them not to continue, but deposes them, and cuts their reign short: and this he does

lest the people be ensnared; be brought into bondage, and lose their rights, privileges, and liberties; or lest they be drawn into sin by their precepts or examples. Some take the sense of the words to be, that God suffers not such to reign, but when he does it is because of the offences or sins of the people; he gives them such kings in his wrath, to punish them for their iniquities.

Job 34:31

Ver. 31. Surely it is meet to be said unto God,.... By any afflicted person under his chastising hand, and particularly by Job, for whom the advice and instructions in this verse and Job 34:32 are designed:

I have borne [chastisement]; the word "chastisement" is not in the text, but is very properly supplied, as it is by Jarchi and others; the affliction of God's people is a fatherly chastisement, and should be considered and borne as such; and it becomes an afflicted good man to say,

"I have borne and still do bear, and I am content yet to bear, the chastisement of the Lord; I am desirous to bear it willingly, cheerfully, and patiently, until he is pleased to remove it from me."

See **Mic 7:9**;

I will not offend [any more]; that is, sin any more; sin is an offence to God, being contrary to his nature, and a breach of his law; Job had sinned as every good man does, no man is without sin, in many things we all offend; and on account of sin God chastens his people, and the design of it is to bring them to a sense and acknowledgment of it; and it becomes them under chastening providences to confess it, and humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and in the strength of divine grace determine to be careful not to offend more. Some render the words "I will not corrupt" {g}; that is, myself or others, my ways and works, by sinning; and others, "I will not break", or "break through" {h}; the commands of God; and so the sense of this and the former version is much the same with ours; or I will not endeavour to break through the afflictive providence in which I am shut up, or break off the fetters and cords of affliction, but bear all patiently, until it is the Lord's time and will to set me at liberty. Some, as Ben Gersom, interpret this and the preceding clause, "I pardon, I will not destroy"; or "will not retain a pledge", as others {i}; and so take them to be the words of God himself; and thus Mr. Broughton renders the whole verse,

"now unto the Omnipotent, which saith, I pardon, I will not destroy, "this should" be said,"

namely, what follows in Job 34:32 {k}; it is the prerogative of God, and it is his grace to pardon, and such whom he pardons he never destroys, but accepts, discharges, and remits the surety's bond or pledge; and nothing more effectually engages to a careful abstinence from sin for the future, than a sense of pardoning grace; and it highly becomes such persons to say what they are next directed to.

{g} lbxa al "non corrumpam", Montanus, Mercerus, Piscator. {h} "Non disrumpam", Beza. {i} "Non pignerabo", Cocceius; "non pigneratus eram", Schultens. Vid. Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 238. {k} Tigurine version, Vatablus, Junius and Tremellius.

Job 34:32

Ver. 32. [That which] I see not teach thou me,.... Which may be understood either of the chastisements of God, and his dealings with his people in a providential way, and of the design and use of them, which are sometimes unsearchable, and at most but a part of them only seen and known; it is meet to say to God, it is but a small part and portion of thy ways that is known by me; I can see but little into them: teach me more of thy mind and will in them, or else of sins and transgressions, the cause of chastisement; it is proper for an afflicted man to say unto God, I am conscious to myself of many sinful failings and infirmities, but there may be secret sins committed by me which have escaped my notice and observation; point them out to me, that I may be humbled for them, and make a free confession of them;

if I have done iniquity, I will do no more; that is, if I have committed any capital crime, any foul offence or gross enormity, for otherwise no man lives without sin, I sincerely repent of it, and will take care for the future, through divine grace, to do so no more.

Job 34:33

Ver. 33. [Should it be] according, to thy mind?.... O Job, for the words seem to he directed to him; and may respect either the government of the world in general, and the disposal of all things in it, treated of in this chapter, though more remotely, Job 34:13. Is it not proper that God should govern it, who has made it, and do all things in it as he pleases? is it fit he should consult with men what to do, or be instructed and taught by them in the path of judgment? is it meet that every man should have his mind and will, and have everything go in the form and course most eligible to him? Or else they may respect chastisement, with which the words are more nearly connected; and so the sense be, should man be consulted, as Job or any other, and his mind known first, whether he should be chastened or not? should a son or a servant be asked first by a parent or master, whether it is fitting to give correction or not? or is man to be advised with in what way and manner he should be chastened of God, whether in his person, or family, or estate? or how long the chastening should endure upon him, and when it should be removed? no, surely; all should be left with God, the wise and sovereign Disposer of all things;

he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose, and not I; that is, God will recompense chastisement; he will chastise whom he pleases, and in what manner he pleases, and as long as he pleases, whether man consents or submits to it or not; he will not ask his leave; he will do according to the counsel of his own will; and thou Job mayest choose or refuse to submit to him as thou likest best; for my part, was it my case, I would not refuse submission to his will; I would say, "it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good in his sight". Some make this last clause the words of God, put by way of question, "shouldest thou choose or refuse, and not I?" shouldest thou have thine option and refusal, and not I? should man be his own chooser, or choose for himself what he likes best? should he not say, the Lord shall choose mine inheritance for me, though that inheritance is affliction? The words are rendered by others to different senses, all which to observe would be too tedious: some {l} to this sense,

"what is of thyself God recompenses;"

sin is of a man's self, it flows from his corrupt heart and will, he is not tempted to it of God; nor is it to be ascribed to the temptations of Satan, which, though they may have their influence, sin is a man's own act and deed; and God will recompense it in one way or another, whether man will or not; either in a way of punishment on the sinner himself, or on his surety for him; or in a way of fatherly correction and chastisement; and this is the Lord's doing and not mine, and he is just in so doing;

therefore speak what thou knowest: if thou knowest anything better than this, or canst contradict what is said: or as others {m} to this purpose,

"did ever such a speech come from thee, as expressed in the preceding verses? God will recompense it, if thou refusest to speak in such a submissive manner; thou mayest refuse to do it, I would not; I should choose to submit and hear the affliction patiently; if thou thinkest otherwise, speak out thy mind."

{l} hnmlvy Kmemh "ecce de tuo rependit illud", Schultens. {m} Junius and Tremellius, Grotius.

Job 34:34

Ver. 34. Let men of understanding tell me,.... Whether I am right or wrong:

and let a wise man hearken unto me; to what I have said or shall say. Elihu here addresses the company around him, the wise and intelligent part of them; the words may be rendered in the future tense, men of understanding "will" tell me {n}, and a wise man "will" hearken to me and assent, not only to what I have said, but to what I am about to say, namely, what follows.

{n} wrmay "dicent"; Junius and Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus, Mercerus, Drusius, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens: so Broughton.

Job 34:35

Ver. 35. Job hath spoken without knowledge,.... Not that Job was an ignorant man, either in things natural or divine; but in this point, about the chastening hand of God upon him, he had said some things which betrayed lack of knowledge, as in Job 34:5;

and his words [were] without wisdom; Job was not destitute of human wisdom, nor of spiritual wisdom, but no man is wise at all times; some things had dropped from him which savoured of folly and ignorance, and which he afterwards was convinced of, and confessed with shame, Job 40:4; being charged by the Lord himself with what he is here by Elihu, Job 38:2; and it may be observed, that Elihu does not charge Job with being a wicked man, as his three friends did, but as having spoken unadvisedly with lips, under his chastening circumstances, and which he labours to convince him of.

Job 34:36

Ver. 36. My desire [is that] Job may be tried unto the end,.... This is my opinion, or what "I bring in" {o} adduce, and lay before you, men of understanding and wisdom, and leave it with you to consider of. Some render it, "O my Father, let Job be tried", &c. as if it was an apostrophe to God, and a request to him; so Mr. Broughton, who adds,

"which art in heaven,"

and the same is added by some Jewish interpreters {p}, as there are others {q} of them which go this way, and also several Christian commentators {r}; and of late {s} it has been urged, from this and other passages, that Elihu was Christ, who here addresses God as his father: but this is his New Testament title; and though God is the father of all men by creation, and of saints by adoption, yet this relation and title are not so frequently claimed under the former dispensation, or however not so early as the times of Job, but are more peculiar to the Gospel dispensation, under which saints receive "not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father", **Ro 8:15**; wherefore admitting this version, rather some grave venerable person, as Eliphaz {t}, senior to Elihu, who was a young man, is addressed under this title; or the whole circle of Job's friends now about him, all elder than Elihu, may be intended; "father" for "fathers", the singular for the plural, see **Ac 7:2**; and what he proposes is, that they should make it their joint request at the throne of grace, that Job's afflictions be still continued; that he might be thoroughly tried by them, and be purged from all his dross, he not appearing yet to be thoroughly sensible of his sinful speeches, and humbled for them; and therefore it was proper he should be still corrected and chastened to the end, or unto victory, as Mr. Broughton, or until victory was obtained, and he was obliged to yield, and cry "peccavi": but since afflictions are things not joyous but grievous, and it does not seem so agreeable to a good man, kind and humane, to desire the continuance of the afflictions of another, though palliated with a plausible for his good; it seems better to understand this as a motion made to the understanding part of the company by Elihu, that the words of Job, which he had spoken without knowledge and wisdom, might be taken under strict examination by them, and thoroughly scanned, that it might be better known what was proper to be said more to him for his conviction;

because of [his] answers for wicked men; or concerning or relative to such answers which he had made, which were like to those which wicked men make; who charge the ways of God with inequality and want of equity, ask where is the God of judgment? or which serve the cause of the wicked, and which furnish them with arguments, prepare them for them, and put them into their mouths, to argue against God and his providential dealings with men, and against all religion. See
Job 34:8.

{o} yba "pro" ayba "adducam", so some in Codurcus: "haec autem in medio affero", Tigurine version; "adduco", Schultens. {p} P. Abraham Peritsol, Simeon Bar Tzemach, Sephorno. {q} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Ben Gersom. {r} Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus, Drusius, Cocceius; so V. L. {s} Hodge's Elihu. {t} So Hieron. Trad. Heb. fol. 75. I.

Job 34:37

Ver. 37. For he addeth rebellion unto his sin,.... Or he "may" or "will" add {u}, if he is suffered to go on at this rate, and is not stopped; as yet he has only committed, it may be charitably hoped, some sins through ignorance, error, and mistake, but if he is let alone he will proceed from evil to evil, to more ungodliness; to be guilty of presumptuous sins, of open treason and rebellion against God;

he clappeth [his hands] amongst us, or "he will clap"; he will either clap his hands together as expressive of extreme grief and sorrow, of the agonies of his mind; showing extravagant impatience, and pouring out his complaints in the most bitter manner, see Eze 21:14; or rather by way of joy and triumph, as having got the victory over us, see
Ps 47:1;

and multiplieth his words against God, or "will multiply"; he has said too many things already against God, his justice in his dealings with him, Job 34:5; he will say more if he is not restrained. These are the reasons Elihu gives for a thorough trial and strict examination of Job; and they are taken partly from a concern for the good of Job, and partly on their account, that they might not be triumphed over, and chiefly for the glory of God.

{u} Poy "addet"; Montanus, Mercerus, Drusius, Cocceius, so in the next clauses.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 35:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 35

Is this chapter Elihu goes on to charge Job with other unbecoming speeches, which he undertakes to refute; as that he had represented his cause more just than God's, and religion and righteousness as things unprofitable to men, only to God; to which Elihu takes upon him to make answer, Job 35:1; and that the cries of the oppressed were not heard by the Lord, so as to give occasion to songs of praise and thankfulness, to which he replies, Job 35:9; and that Job had expressed diffidence and despair of ever seeing and enjoying the favour of God, which he endeavours to remove, Job 35:14.

Ver. 1. Elihu spake moreover, and said. Elihu very probably paused awhile, and waited to observe whether any of the company would rise up, and either contradict and refute what he had said, or declare their assent unto it and approbation of it; or rather to see whether Job would make any reply or not;

but perceiving no inclination in him to it, he proceeded to take notice of some other undue expressions of Job, and refute them; one of which is observed in Job 35:2, and the proof of it given in Job 35:3.

Job 35:2

Ver. 2. Thinkest thou this to be right,.... Elihu appeals to Job himself, to his conscience and reason; who as a natural man, guided by the light of nature and reason only, and judging according to the dictates of a natural conscience, and especially as a good man, one that feared God, and had so much knowledge of him and his perfections, as his speeches showed, could never upon reflection think it right what he had said concerning God and his justice, as follows:

[that] thou saidst, my righteousness [is] more than God's? A strange expression this indeed! but what is to be understood not of his personal righteousness; Job in his senses could never say that this was more or greater than God's, or to be above it and preferred to it in any sense; nor even of righteousness imputed. Old Testament saints had the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and were justified by it; and so Job, who had knowledge of and faith in Christ as his living Redeemer, and the Lord his righteousness: but then though this is the righteousness of God, wrought out by one that is God as well as man, and approved and accepted of by God, and imputed by him to his people, which is revealed in the Gospel, and is unto all, and upon all them that believe, and they are made the righteousness of God in Christ; yet this cannot be more than the righteousness of God: besides it is not the essential righteousness of Christ as God, as Osiander dreamed, by which men are justified, but his obedience, active and passive, as Mediator, otherwise they would be deified who are justified by it; and if even so absurd a notion as this could obtain, it would not be more of man than the righteousness of God: much less can this be interpreted of Job's inherent righteousness, or the new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness; since all the holiness and righteousness that is in man is from God, and at present imperfect, and therefore cannot be more or greater than his; and still less can this be meant of Job's external righteousness, which, how great soever, was not perfect and without sin; whereas God is just and without iniquity. But there is not a just man that does good and sins not. This therefore must be understood of the righteousness of his cause; and to say that this was more than God's was what he ought not to have said, and more than became him to say: for though a good man may defend himself against the calumnies of his enemies, by asserting his own righteousness, innocence, and integrity, and may desire the Lord to plead his cause against them, and

judge him according to his righteousness and the integrity of his heart; but to attempt to make it out, that his cause is more righteous than the Lord's, is doing an ill thing. Now though Job had not expressed this in so many words, yet he had said that from whence this might by consequence be deduced; he had given great occasion for such an inference to be drawn from his speeches; for since he had spoken so largely of his innocence and integrity, and holy life, and of the hard usage nevertheless he had met with from God; and had represented his own case, as if he had behaved so well as to deserve better treatment at the hand of God than to be afflicted in the manner he was; that he had wrong done him, and complained of it, and could not be heard; his judgment was taken from him by the Lord; which was in effect to say, that his cause was better than the Lord's, and would bear a stricter examination than his; which to say was, exceeding bad and unbecoming; see Job 16:17.

Job 35:3

Ver. 3. For thou saidst, what advantage will it be unto thee?.... Meaning that his righteousness, his holy life and conversation, were of no avail to him: he received no more benefit by being righteous than if he was wicked, since God destroyed one as well as another; and since his righteousness did not secure him from afflictions and calamities, it was of no advantage to him; he had not said so in so many words, but it is inferred from what he had said, **Job 9:22**. Man's own righteousness is of no advantage to him as to justification before God, and acceptance with him, nor in the business of salvation, or with respect to heaven and happiness, so as to give a right and title to it; bat is of great advantage in other respects; is for self-defence against the imputations and calumnies of wicked men; it makes a man honourable and respectable among men, when to live a vicious course of life is scandalous and reproachful; it gives pleasure and satisfaction to the mind, the testimony of a good conscience is matter of rejoicing; and such a man is free from the racks and tortures of an evil conscience others are distressed with; besides, good works are an evidence of the truth and genuineness of faith to others, and ornament the doctrines of the Gospel and a profession of them: and though a righteous man may be afflicted as others, yet in a different manner, in love and not in wrath, and always for his good;

[and], what profit shall one have, [if I be cleansed] from my sin? The words, "if I be cleansed", are a supplement, and seem necessary; so Mr. Broughton supplies. Sin is of a defiling nature, yet man may be cleansed from it, not by anything he can do, but only by the grace of. God and blood of Christ; and

from such a cleansing profit arises. This fits a man for the service and worship of God, and for communion with him; gives him peace of mind, and makes him meet for heaven. This Job had not expressly said, and not at all in this sense, but it seems to be inferred from **Job 9:29**; where he is speaking of outward purity of life, and yet was plunged into the ditch of afflictions. Some render the words to this sense, as if there was no profit "by expiation of atonement for sin" {u}; the same word signifying both sin and atonement for it: there is none but by the blood and sacrifice of Christ, and much profit arises from that; pardon of sin proceeds upon it, and this furnishes out much solid peace, joy, and comfort, **Ro 5:10**. Others, what profit by punishment for sin {w}, unless to God? so sin is sometimes put for punishment; or through leaving sin and repenting of it {x}. Now though these are not the causes of the pardon of sin, yet it is given and applied to such who do repent of it, confess and forsake it, Pr 28:13. Or by being "without sin" {y}: no man is without sin; but a man may be without any gross and enormous crime he is chargeable with, or without living a vicious course of life; and this is profitable, as has been before observed. Jarchi's paraphrase is,

"what shall I profit more by my righteousness than by my sin?"

which sense is followed by others: I may as well be wicked as righteous; I am not the better for it, since I am afflicted in the manner I am: my righteousness is of no profit to me; if to any, it is to God. To this Elihu returns an answer in the following verses.

{u} ytajxm "de expiatione mea", Mercerus, &c. "in expiando peccatum", Grotius; hajx "pro piaculo venit", Cocceius; so Simeon Bar Tzemach in loc. {w} "Supplicio meo", Junius & Tremellius; "mucta pro illo aut poena", Cocceius; "ex poena peccati mei", Drusius; so Ben Gersom. {x} "Subaudi relicto", so Mercerus, Drusius; "remisso et per poenitentiam diluto", Munster. {y} "Absque peccato", i.e. "ita vivendo ut non perccom"; so some in Michaelis.

Job 35:4

Ver. 4. I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee. Meaning not his three friends, as the Septuagint version expresses it; for they were not on the side of Job, and of the same sentiment with him, but rather on the side of Elihu; especially Eliphaz, who expresses much the same sentiment he does, Job 22:2; but all that were of the same mind with Job, whether present or absent, or in whatsoever part of the world; the answer he should return to him would serve for them all, and sufficiently confute such a bad notion of God, let it be embraced by whomsoever.

Job 35:5

Ver. 5. Look unto the heavens, and see,.... The firmament of heaven, in which are the sun and moon and stars:

and behold the clouds [which] are higher than thou; the clouds of the air or sky, which are lower than the starry heavens, yet these were higher than Job, and much more the starry heavens: but because the word has the signification of "thinness", which does not so well agree with the clouds, which are thick substances, condensed air; some take it to be meant of the supreme region of the heavens, which is pure and thin; so Sephorno: and Job is directed to look to these, not as stargazers do, such as are given to judicial astrology, to judge of the fates of men and kingdoms; but rather thereby to be led to the contemplation of God the author of them, and the glorious perfections of his being they display; and chiefly to observe the height of them, that they were out of his reach, and he could neither help them nor hurt them; that he could neither increase nor diminish the light of the celestial bodies, which he could only behold; nor either advance or hinder their course, nor in the least add to or abate their influence and efficacy; and if he could neither be beneficial nor harmful to them, how was it possible that he could be of any advantage or detriment to God, by any actions of his, good or bad, who is higher and out of sight? This is the answer Elihu in general returned, he more particularly replies as follows.

Job 35:6

Ver. 6. If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him?.... Sin is expressly said to be against God, Ps 51:4; it is contrary to his nature, as any opposites can be to each other: it is against his law, a breach and violation of it; and so against his supreme legislative power and authority, and a contempt of it; it is what he is angry with and is provoked by, being what he hates and abhors, and is abominable in his sight. But then he cannot be supposed to be so affected with it to be ruffled and discomposed, or his peace be disturbed, and his happiness in the least broke in upon; for affections are only attributed to him after the manner of men; much less is he so affected hereby as to be hurt or in danger of being destroyed, nor even of being dethroned: men can no more reach him by any hostile action of theirs, such as sin is, than they can reach the sun and stop its course, lessen its light or pluck it from its orbit. Or, "what canst thou work for him?" as Mr. Broughton; by way of atonement or satisfaction for sin? Nothing at all; see **Job 7:20**; but the other sense is best;

or [if] thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him? As he is not hurt by a slight single sin, a failing or infirmity, an error or mistake, common to men, as the preceding word may signify; so not by greater sins, presumptuous ones, gross enormities, rebellions against God, overt acts of treason against the Almighty, and these multiplied and heaped up even unto heaven; for though by these the name of God is profaned and blasphemed, and he is dishonoured and despised, and his manifestative glory is eclipsed, or he has not the honour given him that is due unto him; yet his essential glory is untarnished, unsullied, and unhurt, no more than the sun by an eclipse; he is the same without any variableness or shadow of turning, as well as is over all blessed for ever. And, indeed, his manifestative glory in many instances receives a lustre, through his power, wisdom, and goodness, overruling the sins of men for the display of it; as the fall of the first Adam made way for the sending of Christ the Saviour, in which God has shown forth the exceeding riches of his grace; and as his mercy and grace are displayed in the pardon of sin, and his power and justice in the punishment of sin and sinners; and his patience and longsuffering in bearing with them.

Job 35:7

Ver. 7. If thou be righteous, what givest thou him?.... All righteousness is of God that any creatures have. What the angels in heaven have, or Adam had in a state of innocence; or what believers in Christ have in and from him; his righteousness imputed to them is of God; the grace of righteousness, or holiness, imparted to them and implanted in them, is from him; and it is under the influence of his Spirit, and by his grace and strength, they do works of righteousness externally; and therefore can give nothing to him of their own, nor does he need any, being God all sufficient; even the goodness of his Son does not extend to him, but to the saints, Ps 16:2; much less any goodness of theirs: their best works of righteousness are due to him, and not gifts; and though they may contribute to his manifestative glory, both in them that do them and in others that see them, they can add nothing to the essential glory of God;

or what receiveth he of thine hand? He can receive nothing but what he has given, or what he has a prior right to and is his due, and so cannot be laid under any obligation to man by what he does; nor can man merit anything at his hand, not even the least temporal mercy, and much less spiritual ones and everlasting life: and what notice God is pleased to take of the good works of men, in away of reward, is not of debt, but of grace, and entirely owing to his goodness; and does not arise from any intrinsic worth in them, or from any advantage to him by them.

Job 35:8

Ver. 8. Thy wickedness [may hurt] a man as thou [art],.... But not God: a man may hurt himself by his wickedness; his body, by bringing various diseases upon it, through debauchery and intemperance; his family and estate, by wasting it; his soul, for every sin is a wrong and injury to a man's soul, and exposes it to ruin and destruction: and sin does even a good man harm, since it breaks in upon his peace, and hinders his communion with God; and the wickedness of men may harm others like themselves, frail, mortal, sinful creatures, and easily led aside by ill examples; as well as there are many sins which do injury to the persons, families, and estates of others, as murder, adultery, theft, &c. and since sin is harmful to others, God resents it, and punishes for it, though, strictly speaking, it cannot harm him in the sense before given;

and thy righteousness [may profit] the son of man; may profit a man himself (see Gill on "Job 35:3"), and others, but neither for justification before God; but godliness is profitable to a man's self, both for this life and that to come, and good works are profitable to other men; for what reasons they are to be performed and maintained, see **1Ti 4:8**. Some are of real and direct profit to men, as acts of beneficence to them, and all as being examples to them; but then no works of righteousness can be profitable to God, they adding nothing to him; which is what Elihu undertook to answer to.

Job 35:9

Ver. 9. By reason of the multitude of oppressions, they make [the oppressed] to cry,.... Which is either an illustration by an instance of what is before said, that wickedness hurts men, as particularly oppression does, which makes then cry; or this refers to something new, to another complaint of Job, or an undue

expression of his. Elihu undertakes to answer; that men cry unto God, as he himself had, but are not heard and answered; the place or places referred to may be
Job 24:12. To which Elihu replies, by granting that men oppressed cry because of their oppression, and are not heard; for which reasons may be given, as in the following verses. The poor are often oppressed by the rich, whose wealth gives them power, and that they abuse; and the weak and feeble by the mighty; and their oppressions are many, there is a multitude of them: men in power and authority have various ways of oppressing others, who like the Israelites cry by reason of them, and are made to cry by their oppressors;

they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty; which falls with weight, and lies heavy upon them, and crushes them; meaning the power they have, and which they abuse to the injury of them; nor are they able to help themselves or deliver themselves out of their hands, they being mighty, if not in body, yet through wealth; and by means of that authority over them which gives it them: now on account of the pressure upon them, they cry, not to God, but to men: and if they cry to God, it is in a murmuring and complaining way, through impatience under their burden, through envy at the riches and power of others, in a passionate manner, in a revengeful spirit, calling and seeking for vengeance on their oppressors; not in an humble penitent manner, acknowledging their sins, and owning their unworthiness to be heard and regarded, and submitting all to the will of God: for which reasons they are not heard, their cries and, prayers being reckoned no other than howlings, **Ho 7:14**.

Job 35:10

Ver. 10. But none saith, where [is] God my Maker?.... Or "Makers" {y}, as in Ps 149:2; for there are more concerned in the formation of man, **Ge 1:26**; even the Father, Son, and Spirit, who are the one God that has made all men, **Mal 2:10**. Now not one of the oppressed ones that cry by reason of their oppression, or very few of them, inquire after God, seek unto him for help and deliverance from their oppressions, or desire to enjoy him and his gracious presence under their afflictions and distresses; and that is one reason why they are not heard: they do not so much as consider him as the author of their beings, and be thankful to him for them; nor as the preserver of them in their beings; nor as their kind benefactor, who gives them all that they enjoy, and who is the disposer of all their affairs in providence: and if they are new creatures, or are remade, they are his workmanship; and therefore should upon all accounts seek him and submit to his will, and patiently bear all their afflictions, waiting his time to deliver them out of them: but there are few or none that regard him in this light, or make an inquiry after him, even though he has not only made them, but is he

who giveth songs in the night; which respects not the praises of the angels in the night, as the Targum; nor the shining of the moon and stars in the night, which cause praise and thankfulness; nor the singing of birds in the night, as of the nightingale; senses some give into: but matter and cause of rejoicing in the night, either taken literally, as the mercies of the day, which, when reflected upon when men come to lie down on their beds at night, and commune with their hearts there, afford them songs of praise, see Ps 42:8. Or the mercies of the night, as sweet refreshing sleep, and preservation in safety from all dangers by fire, thieves, &c. all which are of God; and, when duly considered, will direct to encompass him with songs of deliverance, see Ps 137:2. Or, figuratively, the night sometimes signifying a time of calamity, affliction, and distress, either on temporal or spiritual accounts; and when men seek to him in such a night with their whole hearts, and he is pleased to visit them in a gracious manner, and favour them with his presence and the discoveries of his love, this occasions songs of praise to him,
Isa 26:9. But when men are unconcerned about and not thankful for the mercies of the day and of the night, though these administer songs unto them, it is no wonder that, when they cry through oppression, they are not heard.

{y} yve "factores mei"; Drusius, Mercerus, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens; so Broughton.

Job 35:11

Ver. 11. Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth?.... Who are taught and know much, especially some of them; but not so much as man, see **Isa 1:3**;

and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven? who are wise to provide food and nests for themselves and their young; and such as are birds of passage, as the turtledove, the crane, the stork, and the swallow, to know the time of their coming and returning, see **Jer 8:7**. But then neither the beasts not; the fowls, though they are endowed with much knowledge and sagacity, according to their natures, yet not with reason and understanding, as men are, so as to make reflections on things they see and hear, and reason and discourse about them;

nor are they capable of being taught and attaining to knowledge and wisdom as men are, by the works of God, of creation, and providence; and by the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, which are able to make men wise unto salvation; and by the Spirit of God, who teaches all things of a spiritual nature. God not only endows men with reason, but with sentiments of religion, which brutes are incapable of: he gives to men wisdom in the hidden part; he puts in them his fear, which is the beginning of wisdom; he makes them wise to know God in Christ, and to know his Son Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal; and he gives them knowledge of a future state, and hope of immortality and eternal life. Wherefore it becomes them to bear afflictions and oppressions with a fortitude of mind, and patiently submit to the will of God, and wait his time for deliverance, having called upon him in faith, and left their case with him; but if they only cry, as the brutes do under their burdens, it need not seem strange they are not heard and answered; since God has given them more wisdom and knowledge than they, and therefore should behave after another manner; though sometimes they act a part inferior to them, **Jude 1:10**.

Job 35:12

Ver. 12. There they cry,.... As brutes do, and as in, Job 35:9; by reason of their oppressions, but not under a due sense of the hand of God upon them, nor of his being their only helper, and saviour, and deliverer;

but none giveth answer; to them, either God or men, and they lie groaning and howling under their oppression;

because of the pride of evil men; this is either to be connected with "they cry", and then the sense is, that they cry by reason of the oppressions of wicked men, who, through the pride of their hearts, and to show their superior power and authority, persecute and distress them, Ps 10:2. And it is because of this they cry out, being distressed by them, and not through any sense of sin they have committed, as the reason of God's suffering them to be thus oppressed: or "with none give answer"; God gives them no answer to their cry, because pride is not withdrawn from them, which is one end he has in afflicting men; because they are not humbled under the mighty hand of God, and are not brought to a sense of sin and humiliation for it, and acknowledgment of it. And another reason follows:

Job 35:13

Ver. 13. Surely God will not hear vanity,.... Or "a lie" {z}, than which nothing is more an abomination to him; if men come to him with a lie in their mouths, they cannot expect to be heard by him; he is only nigh to those who call upon him in truth: or that which is "rash" {a}; which is rashly uttered, and in a passionate wrathful manner, savouring of a revengeful spirit, too often the case of those that cry under oppression; see **Ec 5:2**; or vain and empty prayers, a speech of vanity, as Aben Ezra; which as to the matter of them are about vain and empty things; only for outward mercies, worldly goods; and not for spiritual mercies, or such things as are according to the will of God; but what are pleasing to the flesh, and sought for to consume on the lusts of it, and therefore such prayers are not heard, **Ps 4:6**; and as to the manner of them, they are not put up in the name of Christ, nor under the influence of the spirit of Christ, nor in the exercise of any grace, nor with reverence of God, nor with sincerity of soul, not in faith, nor with fervency: or "vanity" is put for vain men, as sin for sinners; such as are proud men, and are vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind. God hears humble penitent sinners, who find mercy with him; and humble saints, to whom he gives more grace; but not proud Pharisees, or men not humbled by afflictions; see Lu 18:11; nor light and empty persons, who are without God and Christ, destitute of the spirit, devoid of all grace, and full of all unrighteousness; unstable ones, who are vanity itself, and lighter than vanity, tossed to and fro like a wave of the sea, and double minded, **Jas 1:6**; nor men of vain conversations, that walk in the vanity of their minds, whose words are vain, and especially such as take the name of God in vain; and all whose actions are vain, or such that live a vain and sinful course of life; God hears not sinners, **Joh 9:31**;

neither will the Almighty regard it; vanity, vain prayers and vain persons; he regards the prayer of the destitute, the lowly, and the humble, but not the prayer of such as before described; he cannot "look" at, it {b}, nor at them: he looks to the poor and contrite, and desires to see their countenance and hear their voice in prayer; but he is of purer eyes thou to look on vain persons and their vain prayers; and a greater contempt cannot be shown to petitioners and their petitions than when those to whom they apply will not so much as look at them, but turn both a deaf ear to them, and their eyes away from them.

{z} awv "falsitatem", Beza; "mendacium", Pagninus, Montanus. {a} "Quod temerarium est", Cocceius. {b} hnrwvy al "non intuatur illud", Pagninus, Montanus; "non videt illud", Cocceius; so Michaelis and Schultens.

Job 35:14

Ver. 14. Although thou sayest thou shall not see him,.... Which is another expression of Job's taken notice of by Elihu, and to which he makes answer; he seems to refer to Job 23:3. God is indeed invisible in his nature and essence, but is to be seen in his works of creation and providence; which Job was acquainted with, and in which he had seen somewhat of the glory of God, and of his divine perfections in them. See **Job 9:4**. And he is to be seen in Christ by an eye of faith, and Job had trusted in him as his salvation; and he will be seen with the beatific vision in heaven as he is, in a more glorious and perfect manner, which Job had a full persuasion of,
Job 13:15; and therefore is not to be understood in either of those senses, but of his not seeing him on a throne of judgment, hearing and trying his cause, judging and acquitting him; this he had often desired, but despaired of ever seeing it; see
Job 23:4; to which Elihu replies;

[yet] judgment [is] before him; all things are naked and open to him, and stand clear before him; he has perfect knowledge of what is right and wrong; no cause is unknown to him, and needs not to be searched into by him; nor can he nor will he ever pass a wrong judgment: he is just and true, righteous in all his ways and works, the Judge of the whole earth, who will do right, and will plead and judge the cause of every good man sooner or later; if not now, there is a judgment to come with him, when all must appear before his judgment seat, and he will render unto every man according to his works;

therefore trust thou in him, or "wait for him" {c}; wait for his coming to judgment: wait till that time comes when everything will be brought to light, and every good man shall have praise of God. Or, as we render it, "trust in him"; God alone is the object of trust and confidence, and happy is the man that trusts in him; he is to be trusted in for all things, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal; and particularly for this of doing justice to his people; if not now, yet hereafter, he will render tribulation to them that trouble them; he will right all their wrongs and avenge their injuries, and remove the rebuke that is upon them, and confess them before men and angels, and declare them righteous, and receive them into his kingdom and glory: and be is to be trusted in at all times, in times of adversity as well as prosperity; and even when he is not to be seen, and the dispensations of his providence are dark and intricate, see Isa 50:10; The word used signifies such a trust, hope, and waiting, as of a woman in travail, who bears her pains patiently, holding and trusting for a safe deliverance of a child, to the joy of her and her family.

{c} wl llwxt "et expectabis eum", Montanus; "expecta eum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus; so Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 35:15

Ver. 15. But now, because [it is] not [so],.... Because there was not such trust, hope, patience, and quiet expectation in Job that God would appear for him, and do him, justice openly and publicly; for though he had hope and confidence of an interest in his living Redeemer and Saviour, and of eternal life and happiness through him; yet not of his bringing his judgment to the light, and of his beholding his righteousness, as he ought to have had, see Ps 37:5;

he hath visited in his anger; corrected and chastised in fatherly anger and displeasure, though not in wrath and vengeance, and in a way of punishment in strict justice; but consistent with his invariable love and free favour in Christ; being displeased at his want of faith and patience, failing in the exercise of which is oftentimes resented by the Lord, see Nu 20:12;

yet he knoweth [it] not in great extremity: so stupid was Job, that though he was in the utmost extremity of affliction, in his body, family, and substance, yet was not sensible it was his duty to trust in God, and patiently wait for him; he knew that the hand of God was upon him, and that he had visited him in anger, and that his arrows stuck fast in him, and his hand pressed him sore; but was insensible of the cause of the continuance of it, his unbelief, impatience, and non-submission to the will of God. The word for "extremity" signifies "abundance" {d}, and may be applied to an abundance and plenty of good things; and therefore some understand it of Job's prosperity, and take the sense to be, that God took no notice of this; it did not hinder him from visiting him, but he destroyed it all: though Mr. Broughton, on the other hand, interprets it of the great plenty of sorrows and distresses Job was attended with, the true cause of which he did not advert to: some {e} think the whole refers to the merciful dealings of God with Job, and read the first clause,

"know now his anger hath visited but a little or noticing;"

the affliction is but a light one comparatively speaking, scarce any thing at all in comparison of what sin deserves, being abundantly less than that:

"neither hath he made great inquisition, or inquired out the multitude"

of sins; not strictly and severely marking them, and dealing with and for them according to their deserts; see **Ezr 9:13**; with which compare **2Co 4:17**; and therefore Job had no reason to complain of God, or of any hard usage from him.

{d} vpb "in copia", Montanus; "ad auctum valde", Cocceius; "prosperitatem", De Dieu; so Patrick. {e} Tigurine version, Mercerus, Piscator; so Ben Gersom.

Job 35:16

Ver. 16. Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain,.... In uttering such unbecoming expressions, observed, and refuted, in his loud complaints of God, and of his dealings with him, and in defence of himself;

he multiplieth words without knowledge; both against God and in answer to others; being in a great measure ignorant of the nature and number of his sins, and of his afflictions; and of the end of God in them, and of the right he had to lay them upon him; us well as of his duty patiently to bear them, and trust in God, and wait his own time for deliverance out of them; and or the truth of this he was afterwards convinced, and acknowledged it, Job 42:3.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 36:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 36

This chapter, with the following, contains Elihu's fourth and last discourse, the principal view of which is to vindicate the righteousness of God; which is done by observing the dealings of God with men in his providence, according to their different characters, and from the wonderful works wrought by him in a sovereign manner, and for the benefit of his creatures. This chapter is introduced with a preface, the design of which is to gain attention, Job 36:1; the different dealings of God with men are observed, and the different issue of them, and the different ends answered thereby, Job 36:5; and it is suggested to Job, that had he attended to the design of the providence he was under, and had submitted to it patiently, things would have been otherwise with him; and therefore Elihu proceeds to give him some advice, which, if taken, would be for his own good, and the glory of God, Job 36:16; and closes the chapter by observing the unsearchable greatness of God, as appears by the works of nature wrought by him, Job 36:26.

Ver. 1. Elihu also proceeded, and said. Or "added" {f} what follows to his former discourses; pausing a while to see whether Job would make any reply to what he had already said; but perceiving he had no inclination to do it, and having more upon his mind to deliver, went on with his discourse.

{f} Poyw "et addidit", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Mercerus, Michaelis.

Job 36:2

Ver. 2. Suffer me a little,.... Bear with me a little longer, and allow me to say a few words more. I have but little more to say, and it will take but a little time to say it in; thus, proposing brevity, he hoped to be heard with patience, since he should not long trespass upon it. The word used has the signification of a crown; but not to be understood in the sense of surrounding, as a crown surrounds the head, as some, who interpret it, stand about me, surround me, in order to hear; for this cannot with propriety be said to a single person; but rather in the sense of doing honour, as Aben Ezra; and so the meaning may be, do me the honour of giving; me thy presence a little longer, and hearing me out patiently;

and I will show thee: make things clear, manifest, and plain to thee: clearness of expression, with brevity, recommends a discourse. Something may be here supplied; for a greater stop is here to be made than in our version, as either "my opinion", as in Job 32:10; his sentiment concerning God and his righteousness in his dealings with the sons of men; or "truth", as Ben Gersom; truth in general, plain naked truth, without any colouring, just as it is, cordially, sincerely, in love, and by clear manifestations of it; and particularly the truth of the righteousness of God in all his ways and works. He proposed to make it clear to him that God did all things well and right, and to lay before him in the plainest manner what were the ends God had in view in dealing thus with Job, and what was his duty to do in his present circumstances;

that [I have] yet to speak in God's behalf: or "for I have yet to speak" {g}, &c. Elihu had said much for God already, in vindication of his sovereignty, purity, holiness, and justice, and he had yet more to say; out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spake for God; he set out with this, that he was full of matter, and wanted to vent himself, that he might be eased, Job 32:18; and he had vented much, but he had yet more to deliver; and since it was not for himself, in his own behalf, nor of any other but God, he hoped he should be heard: it may be rendered, "for yet God has words" {h}, to put into my mouth, and speak by me; signifying, that he had spoken by him already, and had still more to say by him; and since it was not so much he that spoke, as God that spoke in him and by him, it might be expected he would be heard.

{g} yk "quia", Pagninus, Montanus; "nam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {h} Mylm hwlal dwe "adhue Deo sermones", Montanus; "habit enim Deus adhue quod dicet", Castalio; so some in Michaelis.

Job 36:3

Ver. 3. I will fetch my knowledge from afar,.... Not from himself; for it is but a small share of knowledge that a man gets of himself, or attains to by the light of nature, and especially concerning God and divine things; but from others, either from persons that lived in former ages, and in foreign countries; it being usual for men desirous of acquiring knowledge to travel into distant parts for it; and such were generally much esteemed of, and the knowledge they professed to have got and published; as the queen of Sheba came from the further parts of the earth to hear and learn the wisdom of Solomon, 1Ki 10:1: or rather the sense is, he would fetch the knowledge he should now communicate concerning God from God himself, from the nature and perfections of God, who, and his knowledge, are high as heaven; and from the works of God, which are far above men; or should treat of things deep and sublime, and not common; though perhaps it is best of all to read the words, "I will bring forth knowledge concerning", or "with respect to him that is afar off" {i}; that is, God, who is in the highest heavens, and inhabits the high and holy place; a God both at hand and afar off; with which agrees what follows; though some interpret it of lifting it up, and causing it to be heard afar off so some, as Aben Ezra;

and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker: God is the Maker of all men; Elihu considered him as his Maker with gratitude, while many have no regard of him, Job 35:10; and therefore thought himself obliged to speak for him, and on his behalf; and particularly in vindication of his righteousness; assert this to be an essential attribute and perfection of his nature; own, acknowledge, publish, and declare it; give him the glory of it, and demonstrate that he is righteous in all his ways and works; and clear him from all imputation of unrighteousness.

{i} qwxrml "ei, vel de eo qui est longinquus"; so Aben Ezra, Bar Tzemach.

Job 36:4

Ver. 4. For truly my words [shall] not [be] false,.... But strictly true; he would take the utmost care to say nothing but the truth, with the greatest impartiality and sincerity, so that what was said might be depended upon; truth spoken briefly, clearly, and on so important a subject as the righteousness of God, deserved attention;

he that is perfect in knowledge [is] with thee; meaning either God, whose knowledge is perfect, who knows all persons and things; knows himself, his nature, persons, and perfections; his thoughts, counsels, and purposes; all his creatures, angels and men; the hearts of all men, their thoughts, words, and works; he, the omniscient and omnipresent God was with Job, from whose presence there is no fleeing; and therefore it became him to be careful of his thoughts, words, and actions; that he did not entertain any unbecoming thoughts of God, and say anything unworthy of him, or do anything that tended to his dishonour; since he was present with him, and nothing could escape his notice: or else Elihu means himself; suggesting, that he who undertook to speak for God and plead his cause, and clear him from the charge of unrighteousness, was no novice, but one that thoroughly understood the point in hand; and though no man is perfect in knowledge in an absolute sense, yet may be in comparison of others; or however may be upright and sincere in his knowledge; which sense the word used often has; and so it may signify, that as he was a sincere searcher after knowledge, and had through divine goodness attained to a competent share of it, even of sound and not superficial knowledge, he should be honest and upright in the communication of it; and this he might choose to observe the more, to excite the attention of Job to what he had to say; though it may be the truest reading of the words is, "perfect knowledge" or "perfection of knowledge is with thee" {k}, that is, in his own apprehension, so Jarchi; and may be understood either ironically, or rather really, insinuating that Job was a man of such consummate wisdom and knowledge, that he would easily see the force of his reasonings, and the justness of them, and acquiesce in them; and having thus prefaced his discourse, he next enters upon his subject.

{k} Kme twer Mymt "scientiae perfectae tecum"; so some in Bar Tzemach.

Job 36:5

Ver. 5. Behold, God [is] mighty,.... This is a clear plain truth, easy to be discerned, and worthy of notice, and therefore introduced with a "behold"; that God is mighty, the most mighty, the Almighty, as appears from his works of nature and providence; making all things out of nothing, upholding them by the word of his power, and governing and overruling all things in the world, and doing in it whatever he pleases: and from the works of redemption and grace; ransoming his people out of the hands of them that are stronger than they; converting them by the power of his grace; assisting them to do all they do in a spiritual way; supporting them under all their troubles; protecting and defending them from all their enemies; supplying all their wants, and preserving them safe to his kingdom and glory;

and despises not [any]; not the meanest of his creatures, clothing the grass of the field, feeding the fowls of the air, and preserving man and beast; and particularly he despises not any of the sons of men: not the mighty through fear of them, nor envy at them, whose power and grandeur are from him, which he gives and can take away at his pleasure; nor the mean and miserable the poor and the afflicted, to whom he has a merciful regard; much less the innocent and harmless, as the Septuagint; or the just and righteous man, as the Targum: he does not despise his own people, whom he has loved and chosen, redeemed and called; nor any, as Aben Ezra observes, without a cause; for though there are some whose image he will despise, it is because of their own sins and transgressions; and since, therefore, though he is mighty, yet despises not any of his creatures, he cannot do any unrighteous thing; he does not and cannot use or abuse his power to the in jury of any of his creatures;

[he is] mighty in strength [and] wisdom, as there is a pleonasm, a redundancy in the expression, "mighty in strength", it denotes the abundance of his strength, that he is exceeding strong, superlatively and all expression so; and also strong in wisdom, his strength is tempered with wisdom, so that he cannot employ it to any bad purpose, or be guilty of any unrighteousness. Some men have strength, but not wisdom to make a right use of it; but God abounds as much in wisdom as in strength; he is the only wise and the all wise God, and therefore can do no injustice; and thus Elihu, as he promised, ascribes righteousness to his almighty Maker.

Job 36:6

Ver. 6. He preserveth not the life of the wicked,.... He makes a difference between wicked and righteous men, which shows him to be a holy and righteous God; though he preserves the life of all men so long as they live, yet not in the same way; he preserves the lives of wicked men in the common course of his providence, but not in a special way and manner, as he does the lives of the righteous, which are dear and precious to him; nor does he preserve to any great length such as are notorious sinners, who are guilty of capital crimes, as murder, &c. their lives are shortened, and they do not live out half their days: or he does not quicken them, bestow his spiritual favour upon them, in which only is life; and though they will be quickened and raised at the last day, as well as the righteous, yet not to the resurrection of life, but to the resurrection of damnation;

but giveth right to the poor; pleads their cause and rights their wrongs, administers justice to them, especially to the poor in spirit, who hunger and thirst after righteousness; to these he gives freely the righteousness of his son, which only denominates persons truly righteous: of whom in Job 36:7.

Job 36:7

Ver. 7. He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous,.... His eyes of providence are upon them to supply their temporal wants, and to protect and defend them from their enemies, and they are never off of them; his eyes of love, grace, and mercy, are upon them; he always viewed them as righteous in his Son, and through his righteousness imputed; and looked upon them with delight and pleasure, and always so views them; they are engraven on his heart and on his hands, and are ever before him, and in his sight: and his eyes are upon them from the beginning of the year to the end of it, yea, from one eternity to another; these were set upon them from everlasting, and are upon them in time; at the time of their conversion to quicken them, and call them by his grace; and afterwards they continue upon them under all their afflictions, temptations, and desertions, and ever will remain on them; they will never be withdrawn, nothing can separate them from the love of God;

but with kings [are they] on the throne; that is, either the eyes of the Lord are with them, even with righteous kings, as the Targum; to guide and direct them in the affairs of government, and to protect and preserve them from the designs of evil men: or the righteous are with kings on the throne, or are the favourites of kings that are on thrones; are admitted into their presence, and are highly esteemed by them, and have honour conferred on them, even to be the next to them in the throne and kingdom, as Joseph and Daniel, Ge 41:41: or rather, the righteous are equal to kings on the throne; they are so accounted of by the Lord as kings; they are made by him kings and priests, and are regarded by him as such; they have the power, and riches, and honour of kings; they have a kingdom of grace bestowed on them now, and a kingdom of glory they are entitled to hereafter; and shall reign with Christ on earth a thousand years, and in the ultimate glory to all eternity, Re 20:6;

yea, he doth establish them for ever; as righteous persons in their righteousness, which is an everlasting one; so that they shall never come into condemnation: they are established in the love of God, in the covenant of grace, in the hands of Christ, and in a state of grace now, and shall be in a stable permanent state of happiness to all eternity;

and they are exalted: now, being raised as beggars from the dung hill to sit among princes, even among the princes of God's people; and they will be exalted hereafter, and sit at Christ's right hand, and be introduced into his kingdom, where they will be set down with him in his throne, and reign with him for ever and ever, Re 22:5.

Job 36:8

Ver. 8. And if [they be] bound in fetters,.... Not the wicked, as the Targum, but the righteous spoken of in Job 36:7, with which this is closely connected; and this is not to be understood of righteous kings on the throne in particular, or their special favourites, but of the righteous in general; and not in a literal sense, of their bonds and imprisonment for religion and righteousness sake, which is sometimes their lot; but in a figurative sense, of afflictions, as chastenings and corrections for sin, as appears by the next clause; and the design is to obviate an objection, and to show that the eye of God is upon them, and his heart towards them; and they are not the less objects of his love and delight, of his value and esteem, care and protection, though they are afflicted by him, and, as it may seem, used with some severity; seeing he has gracious ends and designs in all this, which are suggested in the following verses;

[and] be holden in cords of affliction; righteous men are not exempt from afflictions; the afflictions of the righteous are many, according to divine

appointment, the covenant of grace, the declaration of God, the constant experience of good men, it being the way in which they are all led, and must enter into the kingdom; and the metaphor here used shows that afflictions are sometimes heavy upon them, like fetters and chains, and those made heavy by the hand of God pressing them sore, **La 3:7**; no affliction is joyous, but grievous and heavy in itself; it is indeed comparatively light when viewed with the weight of glory; and God can make a heavy affliction light with his presence, and the discoveries of his love; but they are heavy to the flesh, as Job felt his to be, **Job 6:2**; and, like fetters and cords, they cannot free themselves from them, or loose them, until it is the pleasure of God to take them off; and moreover by these they are sometimes held and restrained from going into more or greater sins, which is one use of them: as they are with afflictions hedged about that they cannot come out, any more than a person bound fast in a prison; so they are hedged up with thorns that they cannot go out after their lovers, **La 3:7** **Ho 2:6**. Some render the phrase, "cords of poverty" {l}; it is oftentimes the case of righteous persons to be poor, and to be sadly hampered with poverty, and out of which, by all that they can do, cannot extricate themselves; and sometimes they fall into it, and are held in it, after they have enjoyed much worldly prosperity, which was the case of Job. Mr. Broughton renders it, cords of anguish; and indeed the word for "cords" is used of the pains of a woman in travail, who has then great anguish and trouble; and anguish on various accounts lays hold on the righteous, and they are holden thereby, and cannot relieve themselves, Ps 119:143; and yet this is all in mercy, and to answer some good ends and purposes, as follow.

{l} yne ylbtb "funibus paupertatis", Mercerus, Drusius; "funibus inopiae", Cocceius.

Job 36:9

Ver. 9. Then he showeth them their work,.... Either what they ought to do, so the Tigurine version; and which they have not done, their sins of omission; when they have been negligent either of the duty of prayer in private and public, or of attendance on the ordinances of the house of God; then he sends an affliction, and by it, as in a glass, presents to their view the omissions they have been guilty of: or else the work which they have done, and should not have done, their sins of commission: sin is a work at which some toil and labour, and weary themselves to commit; it is a work of the flesh; and so it is in good men; it is a man's own work, and which he can work of himself; to have a will, and to do good works, is owing to God working in his people, and it is through him strengthening them they do them; but sin fill works are their own act and deed, though tempted to them by others, and which they are able to do of their own freewill and power. Now God, in the glass of affliction, holds forth to view the sinful actions of good men, and brings them to their remembrance which they had forgotten; as the cases of Joseph's brethren, David, and others, prove: the Lord shows them that they have done such actions, and shows them the evil of them, how exceeding sinful they are; and humbles them under a sense of them, and brings them to repentance for them, and the acknowledgment of them; which sense is confirmed by the next clause, which explains what this their work is,

and their transgressions that they have exceeded. Sin is a transgression of the law, **1Jo 3:4**; every sin, greater or lesser, is, and even righteous persons are guilty of many; for there is not a just man that sinneth not; and these exceed the bounds set by the righteous law of God, and many of them are sadly aggravated by the light and knowledge, grace and mercy, such have been favoured with; and some of them, they are suffered to fall into, are exceeding great and exceeding sinful; such as those of David, Peter, and others; all which they are made to see, bewail, and weep over, when God by afflictions brings them to a sense of them. Or "when" or "because they have prevailed" {m}; or begin to prevail: as soon as ever indwelling sin begins to be prevalent, the Lord is pleased to take measures to nip it in the bud, by sending a sharp and severe affliction; or when it has prevailed greatly, as sometimes it does, so that good is hindered from being done, and much evil is committed, then the soul is so much under the power of it, as to be carried captive with it; see **Ro 7:23**. Or "because they are become proud", or "behaved themselves proudly" {n}; and therefore he afflicts them to humble them, and drive pride from them.

{m} wrbgty yk "quum invalescunt", Mercerus; "quum invaluerunt", Munster, Piscator; so Drusius, Panginus, Bolducius. {n} "Quia superbierunt", Tigurine version; so Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

Job 36:10

Ver. 10. He openeth also their ear to discipline,.... Or "to correction" {o}; to the rod of correction; to hear the voice of it and him that has appointed it; its reproving voice for sin, its directing voice to duty, and its commanding voice to return from iniquity, as in the next clause. Or "to instruction" {p}; God's corrections of his people being instructions to them, whereby they learn more of their duty, and of the rich experiences of grace; their faith, hope, love, and patience, are tried and increased hereby; and more of the love of God, of his care and faithfulness, of his covenant, of his gracious presence, and communion with God, what it is; and even of the doctrines of the everlasting Gospel: sometimes more is learned by an affliction than by a sermon. Now in order to hearken hereunto, to the voice of God in an affliction, the ear must be opened; which is first done in conversion by the mighty power of God: but sometimes good men fall asleep, and are inattentive to divine things; and this is one way God takes to awaken them, to arouse their attention; he speaks to them out of a whirlwind; he sends some terrible startling affliction, which fetches them out of their slumber, and so their ears are opened to hear what he says in it: at the noise of his waterspouts, and his billows one after another rolling over them, they are awakened to a sense of their sin and duty, Ps 42:7;

and commandeth that they return from iniquity; repent of their sin, turn from it and forsake it: such a strong voice has an affliction in it, when sanctified and attended with the spirit and power of God; then it effectually teaches men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, as the word of God, the Gospel of the grace of God does, when accompanied with the same; as there is a commanding voice in the one, so there is in the other; and happy it is when such ends as these are answered by afflictions.

{o} rowml "ad correptionem", Montanus; "ad correctionem", Beza, Michaelis, Schultens. {p} "Ad eruditionem", Cocceius.

Job 36:11

Ver. 11. If they obey and serve [him],.... That is, God, to whom so many things are ascribed in the preceding verses; and who only is to be obeyed and served in a religious way, with the obedience of faith and love, in all his commands and ordinances. But here not so much obedience to his word, his law or Gospel, as to his rod is intended: "if they hear", &c. {q}; hear the rod and him that has appointed it; hearken to his reproving, instructing, and commanding voice, in affliction; to his calls, cautions, and admonitions thereby given; and act according to them; humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and return from iniquity:

they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures; which intimates, that those to whom afflictions are sanctified, and they obedient under them, when recovered out of them shall enjoy long life; not only live many days, but years, and those in great prosperity and pleasure; be blessed with much temporal prosperity, which lies in riches and wealth, as this word is rendered in Job 21:13; and in bodily health, which is a considerable part of outward prosperity; but more especially prosperity of soul may be intended, see **3Jo 1:2**; which is enjoyed when a man is favoured with the discoveries of the love of God to him; with applications of pardoning grace and mercy; when grace is in lively exercise in him, and he has a spiritual appetite for the good word of God, and is fruitful in every good work: and so pleasures do not so much design corporeal pleasures, though ever so innocent and lawful; for though they may at proper times be indulged unto, yet a man's days and years are not to be spent in them; but rather spiritual pleasures, which are had in views of the wonderful love of God in Christ; in the enjoyment of the gracious presence of God, and communion with him; and which the people of God are favoured with, in his house and ordinances, ways and worship: and when those years are gone, endless pleasures at God's right hand, and in his presence, will follow.

{q} wdkeyw wemvy Ma "si audierint et fecerint", Codurcus

Job 36:12

Ver. 12. But if they obey not,.... Who seem to be righteous and are not; and when afflicted are not submissive to the will of God; attend not to the voice of his providence; receive no instruction thereby; but kick against the pricks, and rebel, against God; complain of him, and murmur at his dealings with them:

they shall perish by the sword; or they shall pass away out of the world by it, or by some missive weapon: they shall die a violent death, by the sword of justice, of the civil magistrate, or by the sword of men; or, as a Jewish commentator {r} paraphrases it, by the dart of death, by the sword of Satan, they shall pass out of this world;

and they shall die without knowledge; without knowledge of their death being near, it coming upon them suddenly and at unawares; or without knowledge of themselves and of their miserable and lost estate; and without knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ, and of the way of salvation by him. Or they shall perish for lack of knowledge; because they have none; through ignorance and that affected; they know not nor will they understand, but despise the means of knowledge, and hate instruction.

{r} R. Simeon, Bar Tzemach.

Job 36:13

Ver. 13. But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath,.... Or "and the hypocrites" {s}; for these are the same with the disobedient in Job 36:12; who seem to be righteous, but are not; pretend to what they have not; have a double heart, Ps 12:2, or say one thing with their mouth, and mean another thing in their hearts; or with their mouths draw nigh to God, but their hearts are far from him, Mt 15:8; and so hypocrites, at least outwardly righteous before men, but inwardly full of wickedness, as the Pharisees were, whom our Lord often calls hypocrites, Mt 15:7: these "put" or add wrath, as Aben Ezra interprets it; they increase the wrath of God; or, as we express it, heap up wrath; or, to use the apostle's phrase, treasure up wrath against the day of wrath: though some understand it of the wrath of the hypocrites against God for afflicting them; so Jarchi. When afflictions come upon them, they reproach and blaspheme; they are angry with God and are wrathful, and quarrel at his dealings with them: "they put the nose" {t}; so it may be literally rendered; they erect that against God, and point it at him in a proud, haughty, wrathful, and contumacious manner;

they cry not when he bindeth them; in fetters and cords of affliction, Job 36:8; or when he corrects them, as Mr. Broughton rightly as to the sense renders it: they pray not, as Ben Gersom interprets it; whereas sanctified afflictions bring good men to the throne of grace, who have been too long absent from it: but these men cry not unto God for grace and mercy, help, assistance, and deliverance; they cry out against God, but not unto him.

{s} ypnxw "et hypocritae", Montanus; "et loripedes", Schultens. {t} Pa wmyvw "ponent nasum", Montanus; "ponunt nasum". Schultens.

Job 36:14

Ver. 14. They die in youth,.... They, or "their soul" {u}; which, though that dies not, being immaterial and immortal; yet being the principal part of man, is put for the whole person, and which being taken away, the body dies. All men must die, but all do not die at an age; there is a common term of human life, Ps 90:10; some few exceed it, multitudes arrive not to it; such who die before it may be said to die in youth; it seems to signify premature and untimely death: the word signifies an "excussion", or violent shaking out; and the Vulgate

Latin version is, "in a tempest"; in a tempest of divine wrath, and in a storm in their consciences, Job 27:20. Jarchi interprets it by suffocation or strangling;

and their life [is] among the unclean: all men are by nature unclean, and all that is in them; some are more notoriously and openly so than others, who give themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness; such as whoremongers and fornicators, of whom Mr. Broughton understands those unclean persons; or Sodomites, of whom the word is sometimes used, De 23:17. And this may be understood either of the present life of hypocrites before they die; who are unclean persons themselves, whatever show of purity they make, and love to live and converse, at least privately, if not openly, with unclean persons, and die while they live with such and in their sins: or of their life after death; for wicked men live after death; their souls live in hell, and their bodies at the resurrection will be raised to life, and be reunited to their souls, and both together will live in endless punishment; and the life of hypocrites will be among such; as is a man in life, so he is at and after death; if filthy, filthy still; and such will have no admittance into the heavenly state, and with such impure ones, hypocrites will live for ever, Re 21:8.

{u} Mvpn "anima eorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Job 36:15

Ver. 15. He delivereth the poor in his affliction,.... The righteous or godly poor; who are not only poor in worldly things, but poor in spirit; who are humbled, brought low, and made contrite, through the afflicting hand of God: these, though the Lord does sooner or later deliver "out" of their afflictions, yet that is not intended here, but a deliverance "in" them; which is done by supporting them under them, by supplying them with his grace to bear them patiently, by granting them his gracious presence for their comfort in them, by stilling the enemy and the avenger, keeping Satan from disturbing them, and freeing them from doubts and fears and unbelief, and by drawing their hearts and affections off of the world, and the things of it, to himself;

and openeth their ears in oppression; while they are oppressed; not only to discipline, correction, and instruction, Job 36:10; but to hear comfortable words spoken, to them by the Lord; who, in the midst of their affliction and oppression, whispers in their ears, and tells them how he loves them, though they are rebuked and chastened by him; how he has chosen them to everlasting life and happiness, though now in the furnace of affliction; that he is their covenant God and Father, and knows and owns their souls in adversity that he has pardoned all their sins, though he takes vengeance on their inventions; and in a little time will free them from all their afflictions and oppressions.

Job 36:16

Ver. 16. Even so,.... Here Elihu accommodates what he had said to the case of Job; that had he hearkened and been obedient to the voice of God in his rod, and had submitted to his chastening hand, and patiently bore his afflictions;

he, God,

would have removed thee out of the strait [into] a broad place, where [there is] no straitness: that is, out of the strait circumstances in which he was, into liberty; would have brought him into a large place, where he might walk at liberty, as David experienced, **Ps 4:1**; and may be understood both in a temporal and spiritual sense. In a temporal sense; he was now in great straits, in poverty and affliction; these pressed him hard on every side, so that his way, as he says, was "fenced up, that he could not pass", Job 19:8. Now had he been rightly humbled under his affliction, God would have taken him out of the straits of adversity, and set his feet in a large room of prosperity; see Ps 31:7. In a spiritual sense; persons are as in a strait place and pent up, when they cannot come forth in the free exercise of grace and duty; their souls are as it were in prison, they are shut up, and have not freedom with God nor man; their faith is ready to fail, their hope is sunk very low, they are straitened in their own bowels or affections, in their love to God and his people: and then they are removed into a large place, when it is the reverse with them; when they are favoured with the free spirit of the Lord, for where he is there is liberty; and when their hearts are enlarged with the love of God, and in the exercise of grace; and then they can run cheerfully the ways of his commandments;

and that which should be set on thy table [should be] full of fatness; which in a temporal sense denotes, that he should have had a plentiful table, spread with the best of provisions, the richest dainties, the finest of the wheat, and the fattest of the creatures; and these should rest and remain upon his table, or be constantly renewed there: and in a spiritual sense, that his soul should have been satisfied with the love of God, shed abroad in his heart; with the blessings of the everlasting covenant of grace applied unto him; and with the goodness of the house of God, his word and ordinances, as with marrow and fatness; see Ps 63:5.

Job 36:17

Ver. 17. But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked,.... Some {w} take this to be a continuation of the happiness Job would have enjoyed, had he behaved in his affliction as he ought to have done; then he would have been filled to satisfaction, by seeing the judgments of God exercised on wicked men, as on the Chaldeans and Sabeans, who had injured him: "and judgment and justice would have upheld thee"; when they should be cast down. But these words rather seem to be expressive of his present state, and the reason of it, he not being sufficiently humbled: and the sense is, not that he had lived a vicious course of life, as the wicked do, and filled up the measure of his wickedness as they; and so deserved to be filled with the like judgments as inflicted on them. Mr. Broughton reads the words,

"as thou hast fulfilled the sentence of the wicked, sentence and judgment have laid hold:"

but rather the meaning is, that he had "fulfilled the contention of the wicked" {x}; pleaded as they did, argued with God after their manner: and therefore is said to go in company and walk with them, and make answers for them, Job 34:8. Wherefore

justice and judgment take hold [on thee]; afflictions in righteousness, or the chastening hand of God, in righteous judgment, had taken hold upon him, and would hold him until he was sufficiently humbled under them.

{w} Schmidt, Michaelis. {x} talm evr Nyry "et litem improbi implevisti", Schultens.

Job 36:18

Ver. 18. Because [there is] wrath,.... Either wrath in Job, so some; indignation and impatience under the afflicting hand of God, expressed by cursing the day of his birth, and by his angry pleadings with God: and therefore Elihu advises him to beware of it, and check this impetuous spirit; cease from his anger and forsake wrath, and fret not himself to do evil, and provoke the Lord to take him away at once, and then his case would be irretrievable. Or rather wrath in God, which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. His vindictive and punitive justice, to revenge and punish wickedness, the effects of which are sometimes awful judgments on men in this life; and eternal vengeance hereafter, called wrath to come: this is laid up in store with him, and sealed up in his treasures, prepared in his purposes and decrees, is revealed in his law, and breaks forth in various instances; see Nu 16:46. And there is an appearance of wrath, a little wrath, which is no other than love displeased, in the afflictions and chastisements of God's people, and might be perceived by Job: and this being the case, Elihu advises him to

[beware]; which, though not expressed in the original, is well supplied; and his meaning is, that he would be cautious of what he said, and not go on to multiply words against God; speak unbecomingly of him, arraign his justice, and find fault with his dealings with him; as well as beware of his actions, conduct, and behaviour, that his tongue and his doings be not against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory;

lest he take thee away with [his] stroke; out of the world by death, which is the stroke of his hand; and is sometimes given suddenly, and in an awful manner, in wrath and vengeance. Some render the last word, "with clapping of hands" {y}; either the hands of men, Job 27:23; or of God; expressing his exultation and pleasure at the death of such a person, laughing at his calamity, and mocking when fear cometh; which is dreadful and tremendous;

then a great ransom cannot deliver thee: there is no ransom on earth equal to the life or soul of man; "what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mt 16:26; see Ps 49:6. The great ransom of all is the ransom of Christ, which Elihu had made mention of before,
Job 33:24; and what else could he have in his mind now? This is the ransom found by infinite wisdom, which Christ came to give, and has given; and by which he has ransomed his people from him that is stronger than they, from the bondage of sin, of Satan, of the world, of hell and death, and everlasting destruction: and this is a great one, plenteous redemption, a great salvation; the ransomer is the great God and our Saviour; the ransom price is not corruptible things, as silver and gold, but the precious blood of Christ, his life, yea, he himself. How great must this ransom be! and it is given for great sinners, the chief of them; and is sufficient for all the elect of God, both Jews and Gentiles: and yet, as great as it is, it is of no avail to one that God has taken away by a stroke out of this world, and sent to everlasting destruction; not through want

of sufficiency in this ransom, but by reason of the final and unalterable state of such persons; as, even in the present life, it is of no avail to the deniers and despisers of it, Heb 10:26.

{y} qpvb "complosione manuum", Tigurine version; so some in Munster.

Job 36:19

Ver. 19. Will he esteem thy riches? [no], not gold, nor all the forces of strength. Riches can be of no account, nor bear any weight with God; for they are of him and come from him, and what he has a right to take away and dispose of as he pleases. These cannot ward off the stroke of death, or secure from it; nor can a man possessed of them carry them with him into the other world; nor will they profit in the day of wrath. Mr. Broughton renders it, "will he esteem thy nobleness?" so Junius and Tremellius; thy noble birth, rank and station, thou hast had among men? Not at all. God is no respecter of persons; he regards not the noble and the rich more than the poor: and as for gold, the same may be said of that, which, though the most valuable among men, is of no esteem with God; and besides it is his: "the gold is mine", says he, "and the silver is mine", **Hag 2:8**. Nor is death to be bribed with it, or put off by it; nor is a "munition" {z} fortress or castle, as some render the word, any defence against it: "nor all the forces of strength". Had a man at his command ever such numerous and powerful armies, they could not protect him from the stroke of death, or deliver him from eternal punishment, the demerit of sin. Though as Job had no riches, no gold, nor troops of soldiers about him; nor was there any great likelihood that this would be his case at death; I should think the words might be better rendered, "will he regard thy cry? no, not in distress; not even the most strong and forcible" cries or entreaties: when the stroke of death is given, the sentence of wrath is passed, and eternal destruction takes place; weeping and wailing will signify nothing: the cries and howlings of the damned in hell are of no avail; their strong cryings, and most intense and earnest entreaties, will have no effect on the Lord; though he is a God of great pity and compassion, and has sympathy with his people in distress, and in all their afflictions is afflicted; yet will have no regard to cries and tears, when the decree is gone forth and carried into execution: the verb from whence the first word is derived is used for "crying" in this chapter, Job 36:13; and the Targum renders it here by supplication and petition; so some other Jewish writers {a} interpret it of crying: and the second word is by several rendered "in straits" {b} and distress; and Cocceius has observed the notion of intense and fervent prayer in the third, and renders the whole pretty near to what has been observed {c}.

{z} rub al "non munitionem", Tigurine version. {a} Vid. Aben Ezra, Bar Tzemach, Sephorno. {b} "In angustia", Mercerus, Drusius, Piscator; "in arcto", Cocceius, Schultens. {c} "Num aequalis esset imploration tua non in arcto et omnes contentiones virium", Cocceius.

Job 36:20

Ver. 20. Desire not the night,.... Either in a literal sense, which Job might do; not for secrecy to commit sin, as the thief, murderer, and adulterer do; Elihu had no such suspicion of Job; nor for ease and rest, which he expected not; nor would his sores admit thereof; his nights were wearisome, and when come he wished they were gone, **Job 7:2**; but either for retirement, that he might muse and consider, and endeavour to search and find out the reason of God's dealing with men, in cutting off sometimes such great numbers together. Elihu suggests, that such a search was altogether vain and to no purpose; he would never be able to find out the reason of these things: or rather for shelter from the eye and hand of God; as nothing before mentioned could ward off his stroke, so neither could the night or darkness preserve from it; see Ps 139:11. Or else the words may be taken in a figurative sense; either of the night of calamity and distress, he might be tempted to desire and wish for, to come upon his enemies; or rather of the night of death, he wished for himself, as he often had done; in doing which Elihu suggests he was wrong; not considering that if God should take him away with a stroke, and he not be humbled and brought to repentance, what would be the consequence of it;

when people are cut off in their place; as sometimes they are in the night, literally taken; just in the place where they stood or lay down, without moving elsewhere, or stirring hand or foot as it were. So Amraphel, and the kings with him, as Jarchi observes, were cut off in the night, the firstborn of Egypt, the Midianites and Sennacherib's army, Ge 14:15; and so in the night of death, figuratively, the common passage of all men, as Mr. Broughton observes, who renders the words, "for people's passage to their place".

Job 36:21

Ver. 21. Take heed, regard not iniquity,.... Not any iniquity, as to show any approbation of it, love for it, and desire after it. All appearance of sin, of every sin, is to be abstained from; but particularly by the iniquity here meant may be the sin of impatience under his affliction; murmuring at the dealings of God with him; arraigning his justice, and saying very indecent things of him, as in Job 34:5. Or it may mean the evil he had been guilty of in so earnestly desiring the night of death:

for this thou hast chosen rather than affliction; chose rather to die than to be afflicted as he was; or chose rather to complain of God, as if he dealt hardly with him, and did not do justly by him, than to submit patiently to the will of God, as he, ought to have done: or this he chose "through affliction" {d}; through the force of it, because of it, and by means thereof; and so is a sort of excuse that Elihu makes for him; though at the same time he would have him by no means to regard such iniquity, and indulge to it.

{d} ynem "prae afflictione", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "prae miseria ex adflictione", Michaelis.

Job 36:22

Ver. 22. Behold, God exalteth by his power,.... He exalts himself, or causes himself to be exalted, and even above all the blessing and praise of his creatures; by his power, in the works of creation and providence, he makes such a display of his glorious perfections, as to set him on high, and out of the reach of the highest praises of men. He exalts his Son as Mediator, and has made him higher than the kings of the earth, **1Ti 2:5**; he exalts him as a Prince and a Saviour, **Ac 5:31**, to give repentance and remission of sins to his people, and to be the Judge of quick and dead, Ac 10:42. He has exalted the human nature of Christ to the grace of union to the Son of God: and exalted him in this nature at his right hand, far above all principality and power, **Eph 1:21**: he exalts men in a civil sense, who are in a low estate, and raises them to a very high one; promotion is alone of him, he sets up and puts down at pleasure. In a spiritual sense, he exalts men when he brings them out of a state of nature into an open state of grace; brings them out of the horrible pit, and sets their feet upon the rock Christ Jesus; takes them as beggars from the dunghill, and places them among princes, even the princes of his people; admits them to communion with himself, puts and keeps them in his favour, as in a garrison; and at last causes them to inherit the throne of glory, **1Sa 2:8**. He exalts men, when he sets the poor on high from affliction, and brings them out of adversity into prosperity; and which is what may be chiefly intended here; let a man he brought as low as may, God can by his power, if he will, raise him up again.

And this may be said for the comfort and encouragement of Job, in his present circumstances: and so Aben Ezra interprets it,

"God will exalt thee;"

as he afterwards did. The Targum is,

"behold, God alone is strong in his might;"

see Ps 21:13;

who teacheth like him? He teaches by his providences, adverse as well as prosperous; he teaches by his word and ordinances; he teaches by his Spirit and grace, and none teaches like him. Ministers of the word teach men both doctrine and duty, but not like him; they have their gifts for teaching, their wisdom and knowledge, their doctrine, and all the use they are of, from him; none teach so pleasantly, so profitably, so powerfully and effectually, as he does: the Targum adds,

"right things?"

Job 36:23

Ver. 23. Who hath enjoined him his way?.... He teaches men his own ways, the methods of his grace and mercy towards them; and he prescribes to them the ways in which they should walk; but none can lead or prescribe to him; as the way of governing the world, in what manner he should act in it; who has "taught him in the path of judgment?" or "showed to him the way of understanding?" Isa 40:14; and particularly whom he should afflict, in what manner he should do it, when and how long he should continue it; all which he does according to his sovereign will, and is not to be controlled: and, in a spiritual sense, no man can or ought to enjoin and prescribe to him whom he should save, and in what way; he saves whom he pleases, and in his own way, even by his Son Jesus Christ, and no other; or "who hath visited", or "should visit on him", or "with him his way" {e}? who can take upon him to examine into his ways, and scrutinize them, and call him to an account for what he does? no man can overlook his ways and works, or censure him for any of his actions:

or, who can say, thou hast wrought iniquity? this may be said of every man, but it cannot be said of God by any without sin; for, as there is no iniquity in his nature, there can be none in his works; not any in his works of providence, no, not in the afflictions of his people; just and true are all his ways.

{e} wkrd wyle dqp ym "quis visitavit super illum viam ejus", Montanus, Michaelis; "cum eo", Tigurine version.

Job 36:24

Ver. 24. Remember that thou magnify his work,.... Or his works; his works of creation and providence, which are great in themselves, and declare the greatness of God; and which, though they cannot be made greater than they are, men may be said to magnify them when they ascribe them to God, and magnify him on account of them; when they think and speak well of them, and give glory to God: and particularly by his work may be meant the chastisement of his people, which is a rod in his hand, which he appoints, and with which he smites; it is his own doing, and he may do what he pleases this way; and it becomes his people to be still and patient because he does it; and then do they magnify this work of his, when they bear it patiently, quietly submit to it, and humble themselves under the mighty hand of God;

which men behold: for the works of God are visible, particularly the works of creation, and the glory of God in them; which men of wisdom and understanding behold with admiration and praise; and so the Targum is,

"which righteous men praise;"

and some derive the word here used from a root which signifies to "sing", and so may be understood of men's celebrating the works of God in songs of praise; though his work here may chiefly design the afflictions he lays on his people, and particularly which he had laid upon Job, which were so visible, and the hand of God in them was so clearly to be seen, that men easily beheld it and took notice of it.

Job 36:25

Ver. 25. Every man may see it,.... Not only was to be seen by the wise and learned, the just and good, but by the common people; whether it is to be understood of the works of creation, or of the afflictive providences of God in general, or of Job's afflictions in particular;

man may behold [it] afar off; as to time, from the creation of the world to the present time, as Jarchi; or as to place, from the heaven, so distant, where are the sun, moon, and stars; and which, though so far off, are easily beheld; or as to the manner of seeing them, not darkly, imperfectly, and in a confused manner, as things at a distance are seen, so some understand it; but rather clearly and plainly, as things easy to be seen are clearly discerned at a distance; and it signifies that the work of God here meant is so visible, that he must be quite blind and stupid that cannot see it; it may be seen, as it were, with half an eye, and a great way off; he that runs may see and read.

Job 36:26

Ver. 26. Behold, God [is] great,.... In his power and might, in his wisdom and knowledge, in his truth and faithfulness, in his love, grace, and mercy, and that to admiration; and it is worthy of notice and attention, which the word "behold", prefixed hereunto, is expressive of: or is "much" or "many" {f}; as he is in his persons: for though his essence is one, his persons are more, they are three, Father, Son, and Spirit; in his perfections, of which there is a fulness; in his thoughts, counsels, purposes? and decrees, which respect other persons and things; in his works of creation, providence, and grace, and in the blessings of his goodness, which are so many as not to be reckoned up;

and we know [him] not; God is to be known by the works of creation, and even by the very Heathen; though such is their inattention to them, that they are said not to know God; yea, even the wisest among them, by all their wisdom, knew not God, **1Co 1:21**; for though they might know there was a God, they knew not who and what he was. God is known by his word among those who are favoured with a divine revelation of him, and especially by true believers in Christ, who know God in Christ, whom to know is life eternal; and yet these know but in part, there is no finding out the Almighty to perfection; God is not known clearly, fully, and perfectly, by any: or "we know [it] not"; the greatness of God; he is great, but we know not how great he is; his greatness is beyond all conception and expression;

neither can the number of his years be searched out; years are ascribed to God, after the manner of men, otherwise, properly speaking, they are not applicable to him; by which time is measured, and which belongs not to the eternal God; however, the number of his years in an eternity past, and of those to come, cannot be searched out and reckoned up: it requires no great skill in arithmetic to reckon up the years of the oldest man that ever lived; yea, the months, the days, the hours, and minutes, of his life may be counted; but the years of the Most High cannot; this is a phrase expressive of the eternity of him which is, and was, and is to come, and who from everlasting to everlasting is God. He was before the world was, as the creation of it out of nothing shows. Jehovah the Father had a Son, and he loved him before the foundation of the world, and all his people in him; he made an everlasting choice of them in him, before the world began; he made an everlasting covenant with them in him, and gave them grace in him as early as that; he set him up as Mediator from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; and will be the everlasting and unchangeable portion of his people to all eternity. Cocceius thinks that these words are expressive of the constant love of God to the church, and the continuance of his kingdom in it; and of his most fixed purpose of love to men, and indefatigable care of them.

{f} aygv poluv, Sept. "multus", Mercerus, Drusius.

Job 36:27

Ver. 27. For he maketh small the drops of rain,.... Elihu proceeds to give instances and proofs of the greatness of God, and begins with rain, as Eliphaz does, **Job 5:9**; a common phenomenon, what is very frequent, and well known in all ages and countries, and by all men, more or less; and yet there are some things relative to it which are beyond the comprehension of men, and show the greatness and incomprehensibleness of God: and the design of this, and all other instances of this kind, is to convince Job of his folly in searching out the causes and reasons of God's works of providence, when the common works of nature lie out of the reach of men; and to reconcile him to them, and bring him patiently to submit to the will of God, whose ways are past finding out; and some render the words, "he restrains the drops of rain" {g}; he withholds it from the earth, which causes a drought, and so brings on a famine; others, "he subtracts", or draws out, or draws up, the drops of water {h}, which he exhales by the heat of the sun out of the earth and out of the sea; see Ps 135:7 **Am 5:8**; and which are drawn up in small particles, but form large bodies of waters in the clouds; and which are let down again upon the earth in small drops, in an easy and gentle manner, and so soak into the earth and make it fruitful; which is what is meant by our version here: this is a wonderful instance of God's power, wisdom, and goodness, and is beyond our comprehension; for no mortal man can tell how the Almighty parts and divides those large quantities of water in the clouds, that sometimes hang over our heads, into millions and ten thousand times ten thousand millions of drops, even innumerable; and causes these waters in such a manner to descend on the earth; lets them not fall at once, or in waterspouts, which would wash away the inhabitants of cities and towns, the cattle of the field, and the produce of the earth, as at the general deluge;

they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof: the water, drawn up and formed into large bodies in the heavens, pours down rain in a gentle and plentiful manner, according to the quantity of vapours exhaled out of the earth and sea; if a small quantity is drawn up, a small quantity is let down; and if a large quantity is attracted, a large quantity, or a plentiful shower, is given: some think that a small rain is meant in the preceding clause, and a great rain in this; for there is the small rain and the great rain of his strength, Job 37:6. The word translated "pour" has the signification of liquefying, melting, and dissolving, and of purging and purifying; and which is applicable to clouds which melt and dissolve gradually as they descend in drops upon the earth; and the water which they let down is of all the most clear and pure, as Galen and Hippocrates {i}, those eminent physicians, have observed; and a late celebrated one tells us {k}, that rain water is so truly distilled by nature, that the chemist, with all his distilling art, cannot produce purer water; for, though it is exhaled out of the dirty earth, out of miry places, bogs, and ditches, yet, being bound up in the clouds as in a garment, and passing through the atmosphere, it comes down to us pure as if it had been percolated or strained through a linen cloth; and though the water as drawn up out of the sea is salt, yet carried up into the air, and there, as in an alembic, distilled, it descends to us sweet and fresh, and has not the least brackishness in it.

{g} Mym ypjn ergy "aufert stillas pluviae et prohibebit", Pagninus; so Vatablus, Tigurine version, Targum, & Ben Gersom. {h} "Attrahit", Codurcus; "subtrahit", i.e. "a mare", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens. {i} Apud Pinedam in loc. {k} Boerhaav. Elem. Chem. p. 600. apud Schultens in loc.

Job 36:28

Ver. 28. Which the clouds do drop [and] distil upon man abundantly. Not upon the persons of men, which they take care as much as possible to shun and avoid, but upon the fields of men, and so for the profit and advantage of men; and this denotes both the gentle manner in which the clouds let down rain, and the liberal profusion of them; they let it down both in an easy and plentiful manner, and upon an abundance of men, or upon an abundance of fields and lands belonging to men; though sometimes rain falls upon the wilderness, where no man is, Job 38:26. The Targum is,

"at the prayer of a son of a great man,"

or at the prayer of a man that has great interest with God; that is famous for his faith and piety, as Elijah was, to whom perhaps the Targumist may have respect. The rain is an emblem of the word of God, the Gospel of Christ, which drops and distils on the souls of men like rain, and refreshes them, and makes them fruitful; and is dispensed by the ministers of it, who are compared to clouds, according to the measure of the gift of grace received by them, and that freely and fully as they have received it.

Job 36:29

Ver. 29. Also can [any] understand the spreadings of the clouds,.... Or "of a cloud" {l}, a thick cloud, a single one; which sometimes at the beginning is very small, about the size of a man's hand,
1Ki 18:44; and which in a little time spreads all over the heavens, and covers them with black clouds and darkness; none can understand, describe, and tell by what means so small a cloud at first appearance is spread to such a prodigious extent; and which is done partly for the use of God himself, to be a pavilion or tent around him,
Ps 18:11; and partly for the use of men, either to let down ram on the several parts of the world, or to be a sort of an umbrella to men, to shelter them from scorching heat; nor can any understand how the clouds, stretched out to such a compass, are poised and balanced in the air, so as to retain their position as long as it is the pleasure of God; see Job 37:16. Ben Gersom, who is followed by others {m}, interprets this of the differences of the clouds, which are unaccountable, as to the form and colour of them being curious, and the matter which they contain or what issues from them; out of some rain, others hail, others snow and sleet, others wind, others thunder and lightning; and yet all arise from the same, even from vapours exhaled from the earth and sea; some become moist and cold, others hot and dry. As clouds are emblems of Gospel ministers, **Isa 5:6**; this may lead us to observe the different gifts of grace bestowed on them, and the different uses they are of; some are Boanergeses, sons of thunder, **Mr 3:17**; others Barnabases, sons of consolation, **Ac 4:36**; and the extent of the Gospel ministry all over the world, which first began as a small cloud over the land of Judea, and then was spread throughout the Gentile

world;

[or] the noise of his tabernacle; the tabernacle of God, which are the clouds, which are laid as the flooring of his palace, and are drawn about him as a tent or pavilion, Ps 104:3, where he sits invisible, and from whence, as a general of an army, he issues out his orders, and sends forth his artillery, rain, hail, snow, thunder, and lightning, and stormy wind fulfilling his word; the noise hereof is either the noise of the waters in the clouds, the sound of an abundance of rain, 1Ki 18:41; or of the blustering winds, by which the clouds are moved and portend rain; or of the thunder that bursts out of them with a vehement noise, and which is usually followed with rain; and the thunder of his power who can understand? Job 26:14. This may be an emblem of the voice of God in his Gospel out of his tabernacle, the church, which the natural man understands not; or the voice of God in his providences, in which he speaks to men once and twice, and they perceive it not.

{l} be "nubis", Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Piscator, Schultens.
{m} yvrpm "differentias", Pagninus; "varietates", Vatablus.

Job 36:30

Ver. 30. Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it,.... Upon his tabernacle; that is, upon the clouds, which are his tabernacle; either the light of the sun, whereby the clouds are dispersed and blotted out; an emblem of the blotting out of sin, or the forgiveness of it,
Isa 44:22, which is like a clear shining after rain, 2Sa 23:4, or on a thin cloud, whereby the rainbow is formed, an emblem of peace and reconciliation by Christ; or lightning, which bursting out of the dark cloud is spread over it, when it seems to be all in flames. Cocceius renders it, "he spreads the light about himself"; God spreads it about himself, clothing himself with light as with a garment, and dwelling in light inaccessible to men: or he "spreads [it] upon him", upon man; causing his sun to shine on the just and unjust; or on it, the earth; so it was spread when first commanded to shine out of darkness, with which the earth in its primeval state was covered; and so it is spread every morning upon the earth; as soon as day breaks, the morning is spread upon the mountains, and in a short time it overspreads the whole hemisphere; an emblem this of the spread of the light of grace over the dark hearts of men, in conversion, which are like the earth in its chaotic state, or as in the night season covered with darkness; out of which they are called and brought by the grace of God, having the true light sprung and placed in their souls; which at

first is but glimmering, and at best imperfect in the present state, yet is spreading and increasing, **Pr 4:18**; and of the spread of the great and glorious light of the Gospel in the world, in the times of the apostles, and as it will be in the latter day glory;

and covereth the bottom of the sea, or "the roots of the sea" {n}; though one would think they should be rather covered with water and with darkness, as they are; see Job 38:8. This is to be understood either of the light of the sun, and the rays of it, which are so piercing and penetrating as to reach to the bottom of the sea, and cover it and exhale waters out of it; or of lightning, which is equally as piercing and penetrating, or more, and strikes to the very roots of the sea, and covers them, or rather discovers them, so that the channels of waters are seen, and the foundations of the world are discovered, Ps 18:14; the Targum of this verse is,

"he spreads upon it rain, and covers the rocks or foundations of the sea;"

and the rain is called light according to Ramban, because by the descent of it the day is enlightened, and the darkness of the clouds removed; and by this means the bottom of the sea is covered, so that it passes its bounds and covers the rocks, that is, the borders of it, as others explain it {o}.

{n} Myh yvrv "radices maris", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {o} In Bar Tzemach in loc.

Job 36:31

Ver. 31. For by them judgeth he the people,.... That is, by the clouds; which the Lord uses both in a way of judgment, as expressed in this clause; and in a way of mercy, as in the following; by these, and what issue out of them, as rain, hail, winds, thunder, and lightning, he sometimes punishes the inhabitants of the earth, as he did the old world by a deluge of water, which came partly from the fountains of the great deep, and partly from the windows of heaven, which destroyed man and beast, and the increase of the earth, **Ge 7:11**; he punished the Egyptians by a violent storm of hail, **Ex 9:23**; and slew many of the Canaanites with hailstones, Jos 10:11; Pharaoh and his host sunk like lead when he blew with his wind, Ex 15:10; and Sodom and Gomorrah, with the cities of the plain, were destroyed with thunder and lightning, fire and brimstone, from heaven, Ge 19:24; as the army of the Philistines were discomfited by thunder in the times of Samuel, **1Sa 7:10**; and the captains of fifties, with their men, were consumed by lightning in the times of Elijah, **2Ki 1:14**; and as the heavens and the earth will be burnt with fire at the end of all things, Mt 13:40 **2Pe 3:12**;

he giveth meat in abundance; very plentifully, or to a multitude of creatures, both men and cattle; who have a liberal supply of food by means of the clouds and rain, which falling upon the earth make it fruitful, so that it gives bread to the eater, and seed to the sower; causes grass to grow up for the beasts of the field, and produces bread corn, oil, and wine, for the benefit of men; an emblem of the variety and plenty of spiritual food dispensed to the churches of Christ, through the ministry of the word, and by the ministers of it.

Job 36:32

Ver. 32. With clouds he covereth the light,.... Either the lightning, which is hid and covered in the black dark cloud until it bursts out of it; or the light of the sun, which is wonderful, that waters naturally clear and transparent, when formed into clouds, should obstruct the rays of the sun and darken it; see Eze 32:7; and thus it was in the storm and tempest the Apostle Paul was in many days, which was so thick and dark, that the sun and stars did not appear of a long time,
Ac 27:20;

and commandeth it [not to shine], by [the cloud] that cometh betwixt; that is, commands the sun that it shines not, or hinders it from shining, by reason of the intervening clouds; this is an emblem of sin interposing between God and his people, which causes him to hide his face from them and not shine upon them: sins are comparable to clouds for numbers, being more than can be told; and for their nature and quality, like clouds they rise out of the earthly and carnal heart of man; and which is also like a troubled sea which cannot rest; and which reach up unto heaven and bring down wrath and vengeance from thence on wicked men; and in God's own people, like the clouds they intercept the light of his countenance, the bright shining of the sun of righteousness, the comfort, peace, and joy of the Holy Spirit: the words may be rendered, "with hands he covers the light, and commands [that it shine not] by [reason of] what comes between": and they are understood by some, as by Schmidt particularly, of the eclipses of the sun and moon, when God as it were covers them with hands, and suffers them not to shine by intervening bodies; so the eclipse of the sun is occasioned by the moon's coming between that and the earth, and the eclipse of the moon by the interposition of the earth between that and the sun;

the Targum is,

"because of rapine of hands he restrains rain, and commands it to descend because of him that prays,"

who comes between and intercedes for a sinful people, as Elijah did; or, as others, he commands the lightning that it harms not because of him that comes between and intercedes with his prayers.

Job 36:33

Ver. 33. The noise thereof showeth concerning it,.... The rain, that it is coming; it is a presage and prognostic of it, namely, the noise of the clouds in the air, the sound of abundance of rain there; or the noise of the winds, which is often a forerunner of it: or the noise of thunder when rain frequently follows, Jer 10:13;

the cattle also concerning the vapour; that is, the cattle likewise show signs of rain, being sensible of the vapours which rise up out of the earth, and are drawn up into the air and form clouds there; these, through their sharp sight, discern the vapours rising out of the earth insensible by men; or by their quick smell {p} or taste discern them, these leaving some tincture upon the grass they are feeding on; and which occasion some motions and gestures in them by which husbandmen, and those that are accustomed to them, know that the rain is at hand: and there are various things observable in brutes, fowls, and cattle, and other creatures, which are signs of approaching rain; as the cawing of crows, the croaking of frogs, the flying about of cranes and swallows, the motion of ants, the retire of cattle to places of shelter, and the like; Aben Ezra observes that sheep lying on their right side portends rain; the above things with others are most beautifully expressed by Virgil {q} and which with many others are collected together by Pliny {r}; and though there are various interpretations given of this passage, this seems to be the most agreeable, and which suits with our version; unless the following, which I only propose, should be more eligible, "he", that is, God, "by [it]", the rain, "declares his good will" to men, likewise to "the cattle, [and] also towards what rises up" out of the earth, the herbs and plants; all which receive much benefit by the clouds and rain.

{p} Vid. Democrit. Fragment. & Rendtorf. Not. in ib. apud Fabritii Bibliothec. Gr. l. 4. c. 29. p. 338, 362. {q} "Aut illum surgentem vallibus imis", c.

Georgic, l. 1. v. 374, &c. Bacon's Nat. Hist. cent. 9. p. 208. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 35. Vid. Democrit. Fragm. ut supra, p. 335, 358, 362, 366.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 37:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 37

Elihu in this chapter proceeds to show the greatness of God as it appears in other of his works of nature, which greatly affected him, and to an attention to which he exhorts others, Job 37:1; particularly thunder and lightning, the direction, extent, and order of which he observes, Job 37:3; and then suggests that besides these there are other great things done by him, incomprehensible and unknown in various respects; as the snow, and rain, lesser and greater, which come on the earth at his command, and have such effect on men as to seal up their hands, and on the beasts of the field as to cause them to retire to their dens, and there remain, Job 37:5; and then he goes on to take notice of wind, and frost, and the clouds, and dispersion of them; their use and ends, whether in judgment or mercy, Job 37:9; and then calls on Job to consider these wondrous works of God, and remark how ignorant men are of the disposition of clouds for the rainbow; of the balancing of them; of the heat and quietness that come by the south wind, and of the firmness of the sky, Job 37:14; and from all this he concludes the terrible majesty, unsearchable nature of God, the excellency of his power and justice; and that men therefore should and do fear him, who is no respecter of persons, Job 37:21.

Ver. 1. At this also my heart trembleth,.... At the greatness and majesty of God, not only as displayed in those works of his before observed, but as displayed in those he was about to speak of: such terrible majesty is there with God, that all rational creatures tremble at it; the nations of the world, the kings and great men of the earth, and even the devils themselves, Isa 64:2. Good men tremble in the worship of God, and at the word of God; and even at the judgments of God on wicked men, and at the things that are coming on the churches of Christ. But Elihu has a particular respect to thunder and lightning, which are very terrible to many persons {s}, both good and bad {t}. At the giving of the law, there were such blazes of lightning and claps of thunder, that not only all the people of Israel in the camp trembled, but Moses himself also exceedingly feared and quaked, Ex 19:16. It is very probable, that at this time Elihu saw a storm gathering, and a tempest rising; some flashes of lightning were seen, and some murmurs {u} of thunders heard, which began to affect him; since quickly after we read that God spoke out of the whirlwind or tempest, Job 38:1;

and is moved out of his place; was ready to leap out of his body. Such an effect had this phenomenon of nature on him; as is sometimes the case with men at a sudden fright or unusual sound, and particularly thunder {w}.

{s} ----kradih de moi exw, &c. Homer. Il. 10. v. 94, 95. {t} As it was to Augustus Caesar, who always carried about with him the skin of a sea calf, as a preservative; and, on suspicion of a storm rising, would betake himself to some secret and covered place: and to Tiberius, who wore his laurel to secure him from it: and to Caligula, who, on hearing it, would get out of bed and hide himself under it. Sueton. Vit. August. c. 90. Tiber. c. 69. & Caligul. c. 51. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 15. c. 30. Vid. Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. v. 330, 331. {u} "Tonitruorum unum genus grave murmur----aliud genus est acre quod crepitum magis dixerint". Senecae Quaest. Nat. c. 2. c. 27. {w} "Attonitos, quorum mentes sonus ille coelestis loco pepulit". Ibid.

Job 37:2

Ver. 2. Hear attentively the noise of his voice,.... Of the voice of God in the clouds; and of thunder, which is his voice, Job 40:9. Elihu being affected with it himself, exhorts the company about him to hearken and listen to it, and learn something from it;

and the sound [that] goeth out of his mouth: as the former clause may have respect to loud thunder, a more violent crack or clap of it; so this may intend some lesser whispers and murmurs of it at a distance; or a rumbling noise in the clouds before they burst; since the word is sometimes used for private meditation. Now the voice of God, whether in his works of nature, or in the dispensations of his providence, or in his word; whether in the thunder of the law, or in the still sound of the Gospel, is to be attentively hearkened to; because it is the voice of God, the voice of the God of glory, majestic and powerful, and is attended with various effects; of which see Ps 29:3.

Job 37:3

Ver. 3. He directeth it under the whole heaven,.... His voice of thunder, which rolls from one end of the heaven to the other: he charges the clouds with it, and directs both it and them where they shall go and discharge; what tree, house, or man, it shall strike; and where the rain shall fall when the clouds burst: yet Pliny {x} atheistically calls thunder and lightning chance matters. Thus the ministers of the word, who are compared to clouds, **Isa 5:6**, are charged with it by the Lord: they are directed by him what they shall say, where they shall go and declare it, and he directs where it shall fall with power and weight; yea, he directs it into the very hearts of men, where it pierces and penetrates, and is a discerner and discoverer of their thoughts and intents;

and his lightning unto the ends of the earth: it cometh out of the east, and shineth to the west, Mt 24:27; and swiftly move to the further parts of the earth: and such a direction, motion, and extent, has the Gospel had; the glorious light of it, comparable to lightning, it first broke forth in the east, where Christ, his forerunner and his disciples, first preached it, and Christian churches were formed; and from thence it spread into the western parts of the world, and before the destruction of Jerusalem it was preached unto all nations; it had a free course, ran, and was glorified; the sound of the voice of it went into all the earth, and the words and doctrines of the apostles unto the ends of the world.

{x} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 43.

Job 37:4

Ver. 4. After it a voice roareth,.... After the lightning comes a violent crack or clap of thunder, which is like the roaring of a lion. Such is the order of thunder and lightning, according to our sense and apprehension of them; otherwise in nature they are together: but the reasons given why the lightning is seen before, and so the same in the flash and report of a gun, are, because the sense of seeing is quicker than the sense of hearing {y}; and the motion of light is quicker than that of sound; which latter is the truest reason {z}. The roaring voice of thunder may be an emblem of the thunder of the law; its dreadful volleys of curses, vengeance, and wrath on the breakers of it, as delivered out by Boanergeses, sons of thunder, **Mr 3:17**: or the loud proclamation of the Gospel, made by the ministers of it; and the alarming awakening sound of the word, when attended with the Spirit and power of God, to sinners asleep and dead in trespasses and sins; upon which they awake, hear, and live;

he thundereth with the voice of his excellency: that is, God thunders with such a voice, an excellent and majestic one; for his voice of thunder is full of majesty, Ps 29:4. So is the voice of Christ in the Gospel; he spake when on earth as one having authority, and he comes forth and appears in it now with majesty and glory; and speaks in it of the excellent things which he has done, of the excellent righteousness he has wrought out, of the excellent sacrifice he has offered up, and of the excellent salvation he is the author of;

and he will not stay them when his voice is heard; either the thunder and the lightning, as some; which he does not long defer after he has given out the decree concerning them, the order and disposition for them: or rather the rain and hail; these are not stayed, but quickly follow the flash of lightning and clap of thunder: "for when he utters his voice [of thunder], there is a multitude of waters in the heavens"; and these quickly come down and are not stopped, Jer 10:13. The word for "stay" signifies "to supplant", or "act deceitfully"; the name of Jacob is derived from this root, because he supplanted his brother, Ge 25:26; and so it may be rendered here, "he will not supplant", or "deceive them {a}, when his voice is heard": that is, either he does not subvert them, the heavens and earth, but preserves them; though he makes them to tremble with his voice of thunder {b}: or he does not act the part of a secret, subtle, and deceitful enemy, when he thunders; but shows himself openly as a King, executing his decrees with authority {c}: or rather he deceives none with his voice; none can mistake it; all know it to be the voice of thunder when it is heard: so Christ's sheep know his voice in the Gospel, and cannot be deceived; the voice of a stranger they will not follow, Joh 10:4.

{y} Senec. Nat. Quaest. l. 2. c. 12. so Aristot. Meteorolog. l. 2. c. 9. {z} The noise is commonly about seven or eight seconds after the flash, that is, about half a quarter of a minute; but sometimes much sooner, in a second or two, or less than so, and almost immediately upon the flash: this is when the explosion is very near us. Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 183. see vol. 4. p. 398. {a} Mbqey alw "non supplantabit ea", Munster; so Schmidt, Michaelis, Gussetius, p. 633. {b} So Schmidt. {c} So Gussetius.

Job 37:5

Ver. 5. God thundereth marvellously with his voice,.... Or "marvels" {c}, or marvellous things, which may respect the marvellous effects of thunder and lightning: such as rending rocks and mountains; throwing down high and strong towers; shattering to pieces high and mighty oaks and cedars, and other such like effects, mentioned in Ps 29:5; and there are some things reported which seem almost incredible, were they not well attested facts; as that an egg should be consumed thereby, and the shell unhurt; a cask of liquor, the liquor in it spoiled, and the cask not touched; money melted in the purse, and the purse whole; the fetus in the womb killed, and the woman preserved; with other things of the like kind mentioned by various writers {d}; and which are to be accounted for only by the swift motion and piercing and penetrating nature of lightning. So the voice of God in the Gospel thunders out and declares many wonderful things; as the doctrines of the trinity of Persons in one God; of the everlasting love of the three Persons; of the Person of Christ, and the union of the two natures in him; of his incarnation, of redemption and salvation by him; of regeneration by the spirit of God; of union to Christ, and communion with him; and of the resurrection of the dead: and it produces marvellous effects, attended with a divine power; as quickening sinners dead in trespasses and sins; enlightening those who are darkness itself; bearing down all opposition before it; casting down the strong holds of sin and Satan, and reducing the most stubborn and obstinate to the obedience of Christ;

great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend; or "know" {e}: great things in creation, the nature and causes of which lie greatly out of the reach of man; and which he rather guesses at than knows, and still less comprehends. Great things in providence; in sustaining all creatures and providing for them; and in the government of the world, and in his dispensations in it; his judgments being unsearchable, and his ways past finding out: and great things in grace; as the salvation of sinners by Christ, and the conversion of their souls by his Spirit; and even what is known of them is known but in part and very imperfectly. This is a transition to other great things done by the Lord, besides those before mentioned, and particular instances follow.

{c} twalpn "mirabilia", Pagninus, Montanus. {d} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 51. Senec. Nat. Quaest. l. 2. c. 31. {e} ern alw "et nesciemus", Pagninus, Montanus; so Schultens.

Job 37:6

Ver. 6. For he saith to the snow, be thou [on] the earth,.... In the original it is, be thou earth: hence one of the Rabbins formed a notion, that the earth was created from snow under the throne of glory, which is justly censured by Maimonides {f}; for there is a defect of the letter b, as in 2Ch 34:30; as Aben Ezra observes; and therefore rightly supplied by us, on the earth. This is one of the great and incomprehensible things of God. What is the cause of it, how it is generated, what gives it its exceeding whiteness and its form, we rather guess at than certainly know; and there are some things relative to it not easy to be accounted for: as that it should be generated in the lower region of the air, so near us, and yet be so cold; and be so cold in its own nature, yet be like a blanket warming to the earth; and that being so cold, it should fall in hot countries, as in many parts of Africa, as Leo Africanus asserts {g}; and though so easily melted, yet lies continually upon the top of a burning mountain, Mount Etna, as observed by Pineda and others. God has his treasures of it, and he brings it forth from thence; it is at his command, it goes at a word speaking; it is one of the things that fulfil his word, Ps 148:8. And if what Pliny {h} says is true, that snow never falls upon the high seas or main ocean, the expression here is, with great exactness and propriety, be thou on the earth. However, this is certain, that to the earth only it is useful, warming, refreshing, and fructifying; it has a wonderful virtue in it to fatten the earth. Olaus Magnus {i} reports, that in the northern countries, where it falls in great plenty, the fields are more fruitful than any others, and sooner put forth their fruits and increase than other fields prepared and cultivated with the greatest labour and diligence: and that they are often obliged to drive off the cattle from them, lest they should eat too much and burst, the fields and meadows becoming so luxurious by it; and frequently they mow off the tops of herbs and grass with their scythes, to prevent their growing too thick. The word of God, as for its purity, so for its warming, refreshing, and fructifying nature, is compared unto it, Isa 55:10;

likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength: that is, God says to these as to the snow, be upon the earth; and they presently are, whether lesser or larger showers: the lesser or more gentle, according to Seneca {k}, fall in, the winter, and the larger in spring; the former when the north wind blows, the latter when the south; but whenever they come, they fall by the direction of God, and at his command. He and he only gives rain, the vanities of the Gentiles cannot; and these are sent to water and refresh the earth, and make it fruitful; for which reason also the word of God is compared thereunto, De 32:12. The Targum is,

"to the rain after rain in summer, to ripen the fruits; and to the rain after the rain, to cause the grass to bud in winter in his strength."

So a shower of rain in the singular number signifies rain that falls in summer; and a shower of rain in the plural what falls in winter.

{f} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 26. {g} Descriptio Africae, l. 1. c. 27, 28. l. 2. c. 27, 46, 69. {h} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 103. {i} De Ritu Gent. Septentr. l. 19. c. 15. {k} Nat. Quaest. l. 4. c. 4.

Job 37:7

Ver. 7. He sealeth up the hand of every man,.... That is, by deep snows and heavy rains being on the earth; where, as travellers are stopped in their journeys, and cannot proceed, so various artificers are hindered from their work, and husbandmen especially from their employment in the fields; so that their hands are as it were shut up and sealed, that they cannot work with them. Sephorno interprets this of the fruits and increase of the earth being produced and brought to perfection by means of the snow and rain, and so gathered by and into the hands of men; whereby they are led to observe the work of God and his goodness herein, and so to love and fear him; which he takes to be the sense of the following clause,

that all men may know his work; either their own work; what they have to do at home when they cannot work abroad; or that they may have leisure to reflect upon their moral ways and works, and consider how deficient they are: or rather the work of God; that they may know and own the snow and rain are his work, and depend upon his will; or that they may have time and opportunity of considering and meditating on the works of God, in nature, providence, and grace. Some choose to read the words, "that all men of his work may know" {l}; may know him the author of their beings, and the God of their mercies. For all men are the work of his hands; he has made them, and not they themselves; and the end of all God's dealings with them is, that they may know him, fear, serve, and glorify him.

{l} yvna lk whvem "omnes homines operis ipsius", Schmidt, Michaelis; so Schultens.

Job 37:8

Ver. 8. Then the beasts go into dens,.... When snow and rains are on the earth in great abundance, then the wild beasts of the field, not being able to prowl about, betake themselves to dens; where they lie in wait, lurking for any prey that may pass by, from whence they spring and seize it;

and remain in their places; until the snow and rains are finished. As for other beasts, Olaus Magnus {m} observes, that when such large snows fall, that trees are covered with them, and the tender branches bend under the weight of them, they will come and abide under them, as in shady places, in great security, sheltered from the cold wind. The former may put us in mind of great personages, comparable to beasts of prey for their savageness and cruelty, who, when the day of God's wrath and vengeance is come, will flee to rocks and mountains, dens and caverns, there to hide themselves from it; **Re 6:15**.

{m} Ut supra. (De Ritu Gent. Septentr. l. 19. c. 15.)

Job 37:9

Ver. 9. Out of the south cometh the whirlwind,.... Or "from the chamber" {n}; from the chamber of the cloud, as Ben Gersom, from the inside of it; or from the treasury of God, who bringeth the wind out of his treasures; alluding to chambers where treasures are kept; or from the heavens, shut up and veiled around with clouds like a pavilion: but because we read of the chambers of the south, **Job 9:9**; and the southern pole was like a secret chamber, shut up, unseen, and unknown very much to the ancients; hence we render it, and others interpret it, of the south; from whence in these countries came whirlwinds. Hence we read of the whirlwinds of the south, Isa 21:1;

and cold out of the north; cold freezing winds from thence; or "from the scatterers" {o}: Aben Ezra interprets them of stars, the same with the "Mazzaroth", Job 38:32; stars scattered about the Arctic or northern pole, as some: or rather the northern winds are designed which scatter the clouds, drive away rain, Pr 25:23; and bring fair weather,
Job 37:22. Wherefore Mr. Broughton renders the word,

"fair weather winds;"

and, in a marginal note,

"the scatterers of clouds {p}."

{n} rdxh Nm "de penetali", Montanus; so Junius and Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens. {o} Myrzmm "a dispergentibus", Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "a sparsoribus", Schultens. {p} So David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 7. 3.

Job 37:10

Ver. 10. By the breath of God frost is given,.... By the word of God, as the Targum; at his command it is, at his word it comes, and at his word it goes, Ps 147:15; or by his will, as Ben Gersom interprets it, when it is his pleasure it should be, it appears; it may be understood of a freezing wind from the Lord, for a wind is sometimes expressed by the breath of his nostrils, Ps 18:15; and as the word "God" added to things increases the signification of them, as mountains of God are strong mountains; so the breath of God may signify a strong wind, as Sephorno notes, the north wind {q};

and the breadth of the waters is straitened; by the frost they are reduced and brought into a narrower compass; or made hard, as Mr. Broughton renders it; so hard as to walk upon, to draw carriages on, and lay weights and burdens very great upon; or become compact or bound together, like metal melted, poured out, and consolidated; though some think it refers to the thawing of ice by the south winds {r}, when the waters return to their former breadth; which is done by the breath or commandment of God, as appears from the place before quoted from the psalmist, Ps 18:15; for it may be rendered, "and the breadth of the waters is pouring out", so the Targum, when thawed; or through the pouring down of rain, so the Syriac and Arabic versions, "he sends forth plenty of water".

{q} "Induroque nives", &c. Ovid. {r} "----cum vere reverso Bistoniae tepuere nives", &c. Statii Theb. l. 2.

Job 37:11

Ver. 11. Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud,.... By filling it with a multitude of water, it is as it were loaded and made weary with it; and especially by sending it about thus loaded from place to place before discharged, when it becomes as a weary traveller; and then by letting down the water in it, whereby it spends itself like one that is weary; an emblem of ministers that spend and are spent for the good of men: some render it by serenity or fair weather, and so Mr. Broughton,

"by clearness he wearieth the thick vapours;"

by causing a clear sky he dispels them;

he scattereth his bright cloud; thin light clouds that have nothing in them, and are soon dispersed and come to nothing, and are seen no more; all emblem of such as are clouds without water, **Jude 1:12**; see Zec 11:17; or "he scatters the cloud by his light" {s}; by the sun, which dispels clouds and makes a clear sky; an emblem of the blotting out and forgiveness of sins, and of restoring the manifestations of divine love, and the joys of salvation; see Isa 44:22.

{s} wrwa Nne Uypy "dispellit nubem luce sua", Munster.

Job 37:12

Ver. 12. And it is turned round about by his counsels,.... The cloud is, and that by the wind, which is turned about to all points of the compass, according to the will of God; by the counsels of him who sits at the helm, as the word signifies, and orders all things according to the counsel of his own will: to which owing every shifting of the wind, and the various motions of the clouds;

that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth; as all his creatures do; the several meteors in the air, clouds, stormy wind, fire, hail, snow, and vapour, all fulfilling his word; and which they do everywhere in the several parts of the world whither they are sent, Ps 107:25. So ministers of the word drop down or withhold the rain of Gospel doctrine, and carry it into the several places of the world, as the Lord directs them; see **Isa 5:6**.

Job 37:13

Ver. 13. He causeth it to come,.... The cloud, and rain by it;

whether for correction; for the reproof and chastisement of men for their sins, by suffering such quantities to fall as wash away, or corrupt and destroy, the fruits of the earth: or "for a tribe" {t}, as the word sometimes signifies; the rain is sent, and comes only to a particular part or spot of ground, to one city and not to another, **Am 4:7**;

or for his land; some particular land he has a favour for, as the land of Canaan he cared for from one end of the year to another, and therefore sent on it rain in due season, though as yet it did not appear to be the object of his peculiar regard; or for the whole earth, which is his; and wherever rain comes seasonably and in proper quantity, it is for the benefit of it; though some think the land which no man has a property in but the Lord is meant, even the wilderness where no man is, Job 38:26;

or for mercy; to some particular spot, and to some particular persons; and indeed it is a kindness and benefit both to good and bad men; hereby the earth is watered and made fertile and fruitful, to bring forth seed to the sower and bread to the eater, see **Mt 5:45**; the word of God is for the correction of some, and for the comfort of others, **2Ti 3:16**; yea, the savour of death unto death to some, and the savour of life unto life to others, **2Co 2:16**. The Targum paraphrases the words,

"either a rain of vengeance on the seas and deserts, or an impetuous rain on the trees of the mountains and hills, or a still rain of mercy on the fruitful fields and vineyards."

{t} jbvl "in una tribu", V. L. "uni tribui", Tigurine version.

Job 37:14

Ver. 14. Hearken unto this, O Job,.... Either to the present clap of thunder then heard; or rather to what Elihu had last said concerning clouds of rain coming for correction or mercy; and improve it and apply it to his own case, and consider whether the afflictions he was under were for the reproof and correction of him for sin, or in mercy and love to his soul and for his good, as both might be the case; or to what he had further to say to him, which was but little more, and he should conclude;

stand still; stand up, in order to hear better, and in reverence of what might be said; and with silence, that it might be the better received and understood:

and consider the wondrous works of God; not prodigies and extraordinary things, which are out of the common course of nature, such as the wonders in Egypt, at the Red sea, in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan, but common things; such as come more or less under daily observation, for of such only he had been speaking, and continued to speak; such as winds, clouds, thunder, lightning, hail, rain, and snow; these he would have him consider and reflect upon, that though they were so common and obvious to view, yet there were some things in them marvellous and beyond the full comprehension of men; and therefore much more must be the works of Providence, and the hidden causes and reasons of them.

Job 37:15

Ver. 15. Dost thou know when God disposed them?.... The clouds, that part of the wondrous works of God he was speaking of; when he decreed concerning them that they should be, when he put into them and stored them with rain, hail, snow, &c. disposed of them here and there in the heavens, and gave them orders to fall on this and the other spot of ground; wast thou present at all this, and knew what God was doing secretly in the clouds, and before heard what would break out of them, or fall from them? and if thou art ignorant of these things, canst thou imagine that thou shouldest be made acquainted with the secret springs of God's providential dealings with the children of men?

and caused the light of his cloud to shine; either the lightning to break through the cloud, or rather the light of the sun to shine upon his cloud, prepared to receive the light reflected on it, and form the rainbow; which, as it is called his bow, the cloud in which it is may be called his cloud; which is one of the wondrous works of God, and is called by the Heathens the daughter of wonder {u}; formed in a semicircle, with various colours, and as a token that God will drown the earth no more; an emblem of the covenant of peace, and of Jesus Christ, said to be clothed with a cloud, and with a rainbow about his head, Re 10:1.

{u} Apollodorus, l. 1. p. 5.

Job 37:16

Ver. 16. Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds?.... How those ponderous bodies, as some of them are very weighty, full of water, are poised, and hang in the air, without turning this way or the other, or falling on the earth;

the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge; of God, who is a God of knowledge, of knowledges, **1Sa 2:3**; who knows himself and all his works, all creatures and things whatever, see Job 36:4; and this is another of his wondrous works, which none but he, whose knowledge is perfect, and is the author and giver of knowledge, can know, even the poising and balancing of the clouds in the air; we see they are balanced, but we know not how it is done.

Job 37:17

Ver. 17. How thy garments [are] warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south [wind]?] One should think there is no great difficulty in accounting for this, that a man's clothes should be warm, and he so hot as not to be able to bear them, but obliged to put them off in the summer season, when only the south wind blows, which brings heat, a serene sky, and fine weather, Lu 12:55; and yet there is something in the concourse of divine Providence attending these natural causes, and his blessing with them, without which the garment of a man will not be warm, or at least not warming to him, **Hag 1:6**; or

"how thy garments are warm when the land is still from the south,"

as Mr. Broughton renders the words; that is, how it is when the earth is still from the whirlwinds of the south; or when that wind does not blow which brings heat, but northerly winds in the winter time; that then a man's garments should be warm, and keep him warm.

Job 37:18

Ver. 18. Hast thou with him spread out the sky?.... Wast thou concerned with him at the first spreading out of the sky? wast thou an assistant to him in it? did he not spread it as a curtain or canopy about himself, without the help of another? verily he did; see **Job 9:8**
Isa 44:24;

[which] is strong: for though it seems a fluid and thin, is very firm and strong, as appears by what it bears, and are contained in it; and therefore is called "the firmament of his power", Ps 150:1;

[and] as a molten looking glass; clear and transparent, like the looking glasses of the women, made of molten brass, Ex 38:8; and firm and permanent {u}; and a glass this is in which the glory of God, and his divine perfections, is to be seen; and is one of the wondrous works of God, made for the display of his own glory, and the benefit of men, Ps 19:1. Or this may respect the spreading out a clear serene sky, and smoothing it after it has been covered and ruffled with storms and tempests; which is such a wonderful work of God, that man has no hand in.

{u} calkeov ouranov. Pindar. Nem. Ode 6.

Job 37:19

Ver. 19. Teach us what we shall say unto him,.... To this wonder working God, of whose common works of nature we know so little; how we should reason with him about his works of Providence, when we know so little of these:

[for] we cannot order [our speech] by reason of darkness; by reason of darkness in themselves, which is in all men naturally, and even in the saints in this state of imperfection; and by reason of the clouds and darkness which are about the Lord himself, who is incomprehensible in his nature and perfections; and by reason of the darkness cast about his providential dealings with men, so that they are unsearchable and past finding out; and the best of men are at a loss how to order their speech, or discourse with God concerning these things.

Job 37:20

Ver. 20. Shall it be told him that I speak?.... And what I speak? there is no need of it, since he is omniscient, and knows every word that is spoken by men; or is anything I have said concerning him, his ways, and his works, worthy relating, or worthy of his hearing, being so very imperfect? nor can the things I have spoken of, though common things, be fully explained to any; or should it be told him, the Lord, that he, Elihu, had spoke as Job had done, and arraigned his justice, and complained of his dealings? God forbid; he would not have it said they were spoken by him for all the world: or "shall it be recorded unto him what I speak?" as Mr. Broughton, or that I speak; shall it be recorded in a book, and that sent to God; that I will speak in thy cause, and be an advocate for thee, and endeavour to justify thee in all thou hast said? no, by no means;

if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up; if he speaks of the being and perfections of God, he is soon lost; his essence, and many of his attributes, are beyond his comprehension; if he speaks of his works of nature and providence, he is presently out of his depth; there is a bathos, a depth in them he cannot fathom: if he speaks of his love, and grace, and mercy, in the salvation of man, he is swallowed up with admiration; he is obliged to say, what manner of love is this? it has heights he cannot reach, depths he cannot get to the bottom of, lengths and breadths immeasurable: or should he undertake to dispute with God, to litigate a point with him concerning his works, he could not answer him in one thing of a thousand; and particularly Elihu suggests, was he to undertake Job's cause, it would soon be lost and all over with him; so Mr. Broughton renders the words, "would any plead, when he should be undone?" who would engage in a cause he is sure would be lost, and prove his utter undoing?

Job 37:21

Ver. 21. And now men see not the bright light which [is] in the clouds,.... Here Elihu returns to his subject, it may be, occasioned by black clouds gathering in the heavens, as a preparation for the whirlwind, storm, and tempest, out of which the Lord is said to speak in the next chapter. And this is to be understood, not of the lightning in the cloud, which is not to be seen until it breaks out of it; nor the rainbow in the cloud, formed by the rays of light from the sun, which disappears when the wind passes and clears the sky of the cloud in which it is; nor of the Galaxy, or Milky Way, as Sephorno, which is not to be seen in a cloudy night; but of the sun, which is the great light and a bright one, and shines brightly; yet sometimes not to be seen by men, because of interposing clouds, until they are cleared away by winds. Though rather this respects the sun shining in its brightness, and in its full strength, in the skies or ethereal regions, in a clear day, when men are not able to look full at it: and how much less then are they able to behold him who is light itself, and in whom is no darkness at all, nor shadow of turning; who dwells in light, which no mortal can approach unto; into whose nature and perfections none can fully look, or behold the secret springs of his actions, and the reasons of his dispensations towards men?

but the wind passeth and cleanseth them; the clouds, and clears the air of them, which obstruct the light of the sun: or "when a wind passeth and cleareth it"; the air, as Mr. Broughton, then the sun shines so brightly that it dazzles the eye to look at it.

Job 37:22

Ver. 22. Fair weather cometh out of the north,.... Or "gold" {x}, which some understand literally; this being found in northern climates as well as southern, as Pliny relates {y}; particularly in Colchis and Scythia, which lay to the north of Palestine and Arabia; and is thought by a learned man {z} to be here intended: though to understand it figuratively of the serenity of the air, bright and pure as gold, or of fair weather, which is golden weather, as Mr. Broughton renders it,

"through the north the golden cometh,"

seems best to agree with the subject Elihu is upon; and such weather comes from the north, through the north winds, which drive away rain, Pr 25:23;

with God [is] terrible majesty; majesty belongs to him as he is King of kings, whose the kingdom of nature and providence is; and he is the Governor among and over the nations of the world. His throne is prepared in the heavens; that is his throne, and his kingdom ruleth over all: and this majesty of his is "terrible", commanding awe and reverence among all men, who are his subjects; and especially among his saints and peculiar people; and strikes a terror to others, even to great personages, the kings and princes of the earth; to whom the Lord is sometimes terrible now, and will be hereafter; see Ps 76:12 **Re 6:15**; and to all Christless sinners, especially when he comes to judgment; see **Isa 2:19**. Or "terrible praise" {a}; for God is "fearful in praises", Ex 15:11; which may respect the subject of praise, terrible things, and the manner of praising him with fear and reverence, Ps 106:22.

{x} bhz "aurum", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 11. & l. 33. c. 3, 4. {z} Reland. de Paradiso, s. 9, 10. p. 22, 23, 24. And, in the countries farthest north were mines of gold formerly, as Olaus Magnus relates, though now destroyed. De Ritu Gent. Septent. l. 6, 11. Vid. l. 3, 5. {a} dwh arwn foberov ainov, Symmachus, "formidolosa laudatio", V. L. "terribilem laude", Vatablus.

Job 37:23

Ver. 23. [Touching] the Almighty,.... Or with respect to God, who is almighty; with whom nothing is impossible; who can do and does do all things he pleases, and more than we can ask or think; and who is all sufficient, as this word is by some rendered; has enough of every thing in himself and of himself to make him happy; and needs not any of his creatures, nor anything they can do or give him, but has a sufficiency for himself and them;

we cannot find him out; found he may be in his works, and especially in his Son, the express image of his person; in whom he makes himself known as the God of grace: but he is not to be found out to perfection; neither by the light of nature, which is very dim, and by which men grope after him, if haply they may find him; nor even by the light of grace in the present state: and there are many things in God quite out of the reach of man, and ever will be, fully to comprehend; as the modes of the subsistence of the three Persons in the Godhead; the eternity and immensity of God; with all secret things, which belong not to us to inquire curiously into;

[he is] excellent in power; or great and much in it; which is displayed in the works of creation and sustentation of the world; in the redemption and conversion of his people; in the support, protection, and preservation of them; and in the destruction of his and their enemies;

and in judgment; in the government of the world in so righteous a manner; in the judgments he executes on wicked men; and as he will appear to be in the general judgment of the world, at the great day, which will be a righteous one;

and in plenty of justice; being most just, righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; distributing justice to all, acting according to the rules of it, in all things and towards all persons; so that though he is great in power, he does not abuse that power, to do things that are not just;

he will not afflict; without a just cause and reason for it; nor willingly, but with reluctance; nor never beyond deserts, nor more than he gives strength to bear; and only for the good of his people, and in love to them. Some render it, "he will not answer" {b}; or give an account of his matters, or the reason of his dealings with men.

{b} hgey al "non respondebit", Tigurine version; so some in Mercerus and Drusius.

Job 37:24

Ver. 24. Men do therefore fear him,.... Or should, because of his greatness in power, judgment, and justice; and because of his goodness, in not afflicting for his pleasure's sake, but for the profit of men; and therefore they should reverence and adore him, submit to his will, patiently bear afflictions, serve him internally and externally, with reverence and godly fear;

he respecteth not any [that are] wise of heart; that are wise in a natural sense: these are not always regarded by God, or are his favourites; neither temporal blessings, nor special grace, or the knowledge of spiritual things, are always given to the wise and prudent, **Ec 9:11**. Or that are wise in their own conceit; there is a woe to such; and there is more hope of a fool than of him, **Isa 5:21**. Or he is not "afraid" of them {c}, as some choose to render the word; he fears not to reprove them and correct them for their faults, or the schemes they form to counterwork him; for he can take them in their craftiness, and carry their counsel headlong. Or "every wise in heart shall not see him" {d}: the world by wisdom knows him not; nor can any look into his heart, his thoughts, purposes, and designs, and into the causes and reasons of his actions; nor have those that are truly wise perfect vision and knowledge of him now,
1Co 13:9.

{c} hary al "non timebit", Osiander. {d} "Non videbit eum omuis sapiens corde"; so some in Drusius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 38:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 38

In this chapter the Lord takes up the controversy with Job; calls upon him to prepare to engage with him in it, and demands an answer to posing questions he puts to him, concerning the earth and the fabric of it, Job 38:1; concerning the sea, compared to an infant in embryo, at its birth, in its swaddling bands and cradle, Job 38:8; concerning the morning light, its spread and influence, Job 38:12; concerning the springs of the sea, the dark parts of the earth, the place both of light and darkness, Job 38:16; concerning the various meteors, snow, hail, rain, thunder, lightning, and the influences of the stars, Job 38:22; and concerning provision for lions and ravens, Job 38:40.

Ver. 1. Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind,.... As soon as Elihu had done speaking, who saw the tempest rising, and gave hints of it, Job 37:2; and hastened to finish his discourse. This was raised to give notice of the Lord being about to appear, and to display his majesty, and to command reverence and attention. The Targum calls it the whirlwind of distress, as it might be to Job; and a representation of the distressed and disturbed state and condition in which he was. The person that spoke out of it is Jehovah the Son of God, the eternal Word, who very probably appeared in an human form; there was an object seen, Job 42:5; and spoke with an articulate voice to Job;

and said; in answer to his frequent wishes and desires that the Lord would appear and take his cause in hand.

Job 38:2

Ver. 2. Who [is] this,.... Meaning not Elihu the last speaker, as some think; and there are some who suppose not only that these words are directed to him, but all that is said in this and the following chapter: but it was Job the Lord spoke to and answered, as expressed in
Job 38:1; and these words are taken by Job to himself, Job 42:3. Concerning whom the Lord inquires, not as ignorant of him, who he was; but wondering that such a man as he should talk as he did; and as angry with him, and rebuking him for it;

that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? either his own counsel, his sense and sentiments of things, which were delivered in such an obscure manner as not to be intelligible by those that heard them; whereby they were led, as Job's friends were, into some mistaken notions of him: or rather the counsel of God, his works of providence, which are done according to the counsel of his will, and were misrepresented by Job, as not being wise and good, just and equitable; see Job 34:3.

Job 38:3

Ver. 3. Gird up now thy loins like a man,.... Like a man of valour that girds on his harness for battle: Job is bid to prepare for the controversy the Lord was entering into with him; and bring forth his strong reasons and most powerful arguments in his own defence. The allusion is to the custom in the eastern countries, where they wore long garments, to gird them about their loins, when they engaged in work or war. Job had blustered what he would do, and now he is dared to it; see Job 23:4;

for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me; put questions to him, to which he required a direct and positive answer. Jehovah takes the part of the opponent in this dispute, and gives that of the respondent to Job; since Job himself had put it to his option which to take,

Job 13:22.

Job 38:4

Ver. 4. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?.... The earth has foundations, and such firm ones that it cannot be moved; but what are they, since it is hung in the air on nothing! No other than the power and will of God, who laid these foundations, and the Son of God, who has created and upholds all things by the word of his power, **Heb 1:3**. Where was Job then? In a state of nothingness, a mere nonentity: he was not present when this amazing work of nature was done, and saw not how the Lord went about it; and yet takes upon him to dive into the secret works and ways of Providence, for which he is rebuked by this question and the following;

declare, if thou hast understanding: Job had the understanding of a man in things natural and civil, and of a good man in things spiritual and divine; but he had no understanding of this, of what he is questioned about; could not declare in what place he was, and where he stood, when the earth was founded.

Job 38:5

Ver. 5. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest?.... Did God or a creature? The Lord, no doubt. He laid them out in his divine mind, and laid them forth by his divine power; who does all things by weight and measure. He fixed the dimensions of the earth, how long, how thick, and how broad it should be; he settled the borders and boundaries of it. This Job might know that the Lord did; but he laid them, and what they are that are laid, he knew not. Mathematicians pretend to give us the circumference and diameter of the earth; but in their accounts are not agreed, but widely differ; which shows they are at no certainty about them {e}; and Job and the men of his age might be still less knowing: though the words may be rendered, "for thou knowest" {f}; surely such a knowing man as thou art must needs know this and so are a severe sarcasm upon him;

or who hath stretched the line upon it? The measuring line being formed according to rule, with exact symmetry and proportion. This may be the same with the circle of the earth, and the compass set upon the face of the deep or terraqueous globe, **Pr 8:27**. And with the same exactness and just proportion are the ways and works of Providence, which Job ought to have acquiesced in as being well and wisely done.

{e} The mathematicians in Aristotle's time reckoned the breadth of the earth a little less than forty myriads of furlongs, and the length of it seventy myriads. Aristot. de Mundo, c. 3. Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 108, 109. According to the moderns, the circumference of the earth is 25,031.5 of our statute miles, and its diameter 7967 such miles. See Chamber's Dictionary on the word "Earth". {f} yk "quadoquidem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "quia", Michaelis; "nam", Schultens; so Broughton.

Job 38:6

Ver. 6. Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?.... Or the pillars of it, as Ben Gersom interprets it; see Ps 75:3; and which Aben Ezra understands of the mountains: but be they what they may, on what can they be fastened or sunk into, when the earth hangs on nothing, and there is nothing visible to support it, nothing but the mighty hand of God?

or who laid the corner stone thereof? which unites, cements, and keeps the fabric together, and is the ornament and beauty of it; but who can tell what that is? Aben Ezra interprets it of the point or centre of the earth.

Job 38:7

Ver. 7. When the morning stars sang together,.... Either all the stars in a literal sense; for though, strictly speaking, there is but one morning star, yet all may be called so, because early created in the morning of the world; and are all stars of light, shine till the morning; and it is observed by some, that the nearer the morning the brighter they shine: and these in their way sing the praises of God, and set forth the glory of his perfections, and occasion songs of praise in men; see Ps 148:3. Or figuratively, either angels, as most interpret them, comparable to stars for their glory, purity, and light, for their constancy, permanency, and numbers: or good men, particularly ministers of the word, and angels of the churches; who are stars in Christ's right hand, **Re 1:20**; but the principal morning star is Christ himself, Re 22:16;

and all the sons of God shouted for joy; which are usually understood of angels also, so the Targum; who are the sons of God, not by birth, as Christ, nor by adoption, as saints; but by creation, as Adam, **Lu 3:38**. And because they bear

some likeness to God, as holy spirits, and honour and obey him in doing his will; though the character of sons of God, as distinct from the children of men, given to professors of religion, obtained before the times of Job; see **Ge 6:2**; and who might be said to sing together, and shout for joy, when they met for social worship; see **Job 1:6**; and especially when any fresh discoveries were made to them of the Messiah, and salvation by him. Thus Abraham, one of these sons of God, saw Christ's day and was glad, and shouted for joy, **Joh 8:56**. For these words are not necessarily to be restrained to the laying of the foundation and cornerstone of the earth, as our version directs; though indeed the angels then might be present, being created as soon as the heavens were, and with the stars, as Capellus on this place observes; and rejoiced, when the foundations of the earth were laid, on beholding such a display of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God therein; and which may be said of them, in allusion to what is done at the laying of the foundation of any building of note; see **Ezr 3:10**; for it may be repeated from
Job 38:4; "where wast thou when the morning stars", &c. and so may refer to any rejoicing, whether of angels or men, before the times of Job, at which he was not present.

Job 38:8

Ver. 8. Or [who] shut up the sea with doors,.... From the earth the transition is to the sea, according to the order of the creation; and this refers not to the state and case of the sea as at the flood, of which some interpret it, but as at its first creation; and it is throughout this account represented as an infant, and here first as in embryo, shut up in the bowels of the earth, where it was when first created with it, as an infant shut up in its mother's womb, and with the doors of it; see **Job 3:10**; the bowels of the earth being the storehouses where God first laid up the deep waters, Ps 33:7; and when the chaos, the misshapen earth, was like a woman big with child;

when it brake forth out of the abyss, as the Targum, with force and violence, as Pharez broke out of his mother's womb; for which reason he had his name given, which signifies a breach, Ge 38:29; so it follows,

[as if] it had issued out of the womb; as a child out of its mother's womb; so the sea burst forth and issued out of the bowels of the earth, and covered it all around, as in Ps 104:6; and now it was that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, before they were drained off the earth; this was the first open visible production of the sea, and nay be called the birth of it; see **Ge 1:2**.

Something like this the Heathen philosopher Archelaus had a notion of, who says {g}, the sea was shut up in hollow places, and was as it were strained through the earth.

{g} Laert. Vit. Philosoph. l. 2. p. 99.

Job 38:9

Ver. 9. When I made the cloud the garment thereof,.... For this newborn babe, the sea;

and thick darkness a swaddling band for it; which was the case of the sea when it burst out of the bowels of the earth and covered it, for then darkness was upon the face of the deep, a dark, foggy, misty air, **Ge 1:2**; and this was before its separation from the land, and in this order it stands in this account; though since, clouds, fogs, and mists, which rise out of the sea, are as garments to it, and cover it at times, and the surrounding atmosphere, as it presses the whole terraqueous globe, and keeps the parts of the earth together, so the waters of the sea from spilling out; and these are the garments and the swaddling bands with which the hands and arms of this big and boisterous creature are wreathed; it is said of the infant in Eze 16:4 that it was neither "salted nor swaddled at all"; but both may be said of the sea; that it is salted is sufficiently known, and that it is swaddled is here affirmed; but who except the Lord Almighty could do this? and who has managed, and still does and can manage, this unruly creature, as easily as a nurse can turn about and swaddle a newborn babe upon her lap.

Job 38:10

Ver. 10. And brake up for it my decreed [place],.... Or, as Mr. Broughton translates it, "and brake the earth for it by my decree": made a vast chasm in the earth to hold the waters of the sea, which was provided as a sort of cradle to put this swaddled infant in; God cleaved the earth, raised the hills and sank the valleys, which became as channels to convey the waters that ran off the earth to their appointed place, which beautifully expressed in Ps 104:7; and refers there, as here, to the work of creation on the second day, **Ge 1:9** {h};

and set bars and doors; to keep it in its decreed appointed place, that the waters might not go over the earth; these are the shores, as the Targum, the cliffs and rocks upon them, the boundaries of the sea; to which may be added, and what is amazing, the sand upon the seashore is such a boundary to it that it cannot pass, **Jer 5:22**; but these would be insufficient was it not for the power and will of God, next expressed.

{h} Or determined, that is, appointed for it its convenient, proper, and fixed place; so David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 203. 1.

Job 38:11

Ver. 11. And said, hitherto shalt thou come, but no further,.... The waters of the sea shall spread themselves to such and such shores, and wash them, but go no further; its rolling tides shall go up so far in rivers that go out of it, and then return, keeping exactly to time and place; this is said by Jehovah, the Word of God, and through his almighty power is tended to;

and here shall thy proud waves be stayed; so high and no higher shall they lift up themselves; so far and no farther shall they roll on, than to the boundaries fixed for them; and though they may toss up themselves as proud men toss up their heads, for which, reason pride is ascribed to them, yet they shall not prevail, **Jer 5:22**; all this may be accommodated to the afflictions of God's people, which are sometimes compared to the waves and billows of the sea, Ps 42:7; and these issue out of the womb of God's purposes and decrees, and are not the effects of chance; they are many, and threaten to overwhelm, but God is with his people in them, and preserves them from being overflowed by them; he has set the bounds and measures of them, beyond which they cannot go; see Isa 27:8; and also to the world, and to the men of it, who are like a troubled sea, **Da 7:2**; and who rise, and swell, and dash against the people of God, being separated from them who were originally mixed with them; but the Lord restrains their wrath and fury, and suffers them not to do his people any harm; whom he has placed in the munition of rocks out of their reach, that those proud waters cannot go over them as they threaten to do; see Ps 76:10.

Job 38:12

Ver. 12. Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days;.... Job had lived to see many a morning, but it never was in his power to command one; he had been in such circumstances as to wish for morning light before it was, but was obliged to wait for it, could not hasten it, or cause it to spring before its time; see **Job 7:3**; one of the Targums is,

"wast thou in the days of the first creation, and commandedst the morning to be?"

he was not, God was; he was before the first morning, and commanded it into being, **Ge 1:3**;

[and] caused the dayspring to know his place; the first spring of light or dawn of day; which though it has a different place every day in the year, as the sun ascends or descends in the signs of the Zodiac, yet it knows and observes its exact place, being taught of God.

Job 38:13

Ver. 13. That it might take hold of the ends of the earth,.... As when the morning light springs forth, it quickly does, reaching in a short time the extreme part of the hemisphere; which, and what goes before, may be applied to the light of the Gospel, and the direction of that under divine Providence in the several parts of the world, and unto the ends of it; see Ps 19:4;

that the wicked might be shaken out of it? the earth, by means of the light; which may be understood either of wicked men who have been all night upon works of darkness, and be take themselves on the approach of light to private lurking places, like beasts of prey, so that the earth seems to be, as it were, clear of them; or of their being taken up in the morning for deeds done in the night, and brought to justice, which used to be exercised in mornings, Jer 21:12; and so the earth rid of them: thus wicked men shun the light, of the Gospel, and are condemned by it; and in the latter day light and glory they will cease from the earth; see **Joh 3:19**.

Job 38:14

Ver. 14. It is turned as clay [to] the seal,.... As the clay receives a different form by the impress of the seal upon it, so the earth appears in a different manner by the spring of morning light upon it; in the darkness of the night nothing of its form and beauty is to be seen; it is a mere "tohu" and "bohu", like the chaos, **Ge 1:2**; its rising hills, and spreading dales, and beautiful landscapes, cannot be observed with pleasure; but when the light breaks forth in the morning, it is seen in all its beauty and glory: of the change the light of the Gospel makes in men, see **2Co 3:18**;

and they stand as a garment; or things stand upon it as a garment, as Mr. Broughton renders the words; herbs, plants, and trees, unseen in the night, stand up like a vesture to the earth in the morning light; and as they are clothed themselves, they are a garment to that, which now puts on another and beautiful habit; the pastures are clothed with flocks, and the valleys covered with corn, and the whole earth with light itself, as with a garment: and as beautifully do men made light in the Lord appear; see Isa 41:10.

Job 38:15

Ver. 15. And from the wicked their light is withholden,.... Whose light is darkness, and whose day is the night, of which they are deprived when the morning light breaks forth; see Job 24:17; it may be figuratively understood of the light of prosperity being removed from them, or the light of life, when they shall be sent into utter darkness;

and the high arm shall be broken; their power weakened and made useless; even the power of such wicked men who have had a large share of it, and have used it in a tyrannical manner; and especially this will be their case at death; see Isa 14:10.

Job 38:16

Ver. 16. Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea?.... The subterraneous passages through which the waters flow into the sea and supply it; or the springs and fountains that rise up at the bottom of it {i}; and some tell us of springs of sweet water that rise there, even though the water at the bottom of the sea is saltier than on the surface {k}: some render it "the drops of the sea" {l}; hast thou considered them and counted them? art thou able to do it? no: others the "perplexities" of it {m}, so the Targum, the word being used in this sense, Ex 14:3; the thickets of it; some speak of woods and forests in it, See Gill on "Ex 10:19"; others "rocks" and shelves {n}, and others the "borders" of it {o}; and the sense then is, hast thou entered into and travelled through the main ocean, observed the forests in it, the shelving rocks and sandy mountains in it, and gone to the utmost borders of it?

or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? to find out the deepest place of it, where no sounding line can reach {p}; or walked in quest of the curiosities of it, animals, plants and minerals, unknown to men; or of the riches that lie at the bottom of it, for which now the diving bell is used, but not invented and known in the times of Job; and if Job had not done and could not do all this, how should he be able to enter into the secret springs of Providence, or trace the ways of God, whose way is in the sea, and whose paths are in the great waters, and his footsteps not known? Ps 77:19.

{i} According to Dr. Plot, the principal fountains have their origin, and are supplied with water through subterraneous passages from the sea. De Origine Fontium, &c. apud Act. Erudit. Lips. A. M. 1685. p. 538. See Gen vii. 11. {k} Vid. Scheucbzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 803. {l} My ykbn "guttas maris", Tigurine version, Grotius. {m} "Perplexitates maris", Munster. {n} "Scopulos maris", Michaelis; "salebrosa maris", Schultens. {o} So Jarchi. {p} For though the greatest depth of the sea is said by Fabianus (apud Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2, c. 102.) to be fifteen furlongs, or near two miles, this must be understood of that part of it which is fathomable and nearer land. But such as those, called Bathea Ponti, the depths of the Pontus, and are almost three hundred furlongs from the continent, they are said (Plin. ib.) to be of an immense depth, and the bottom not to be found. And if the Sardinian sea, the deepest in the Mediterranean (Aristot. Meteorolog. l. 2, c. 1.) is a thousand orgies or fathoms deep, (Posidonius apud Strabo. Geograph. l. 1, p. 37.) that is, one mile and a fifth, what must the depth of the vast ocean be?

Job 38:17

Ver. 17. Have the gates of death been opened unto thee?.... Meaning not by which death has entered into the world, and which have been the causes and occasion of it; as the sin of man, the appointment of God, and various providences, calamities and diseases; but by which men enter into the state of the dead. Men know not experimentally what death is, nor in what way they shall go out of the world, nor at what time, nor in what place; they know not what the state of the dead is, there is no correspondence between them and the living; they do not know either what they enjoy or endure, or who precisely and with certainty are in the separate abodes of bliss or misery; the gates of these dark and invisible regions to us have never been thrown open, for mortals to look into them;

or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? the same thing in other words; the Targum and Jarchi interpret this of hell.

Job 38:18

Ver. 18. Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth?.... Which may be put for all the dimensions of it, length, breadth, diameter, and circumference, but especially it regards the surface of it, and the measurement of that; hast thou gone over the whole face of the earth and measured it, all its parts, its hills and dales, rocks and mountains, and took a survey of all the cities, towns and villages, woods, forests, fountains, rivers, &c? no; if a man lived as long as Methuselah, and spent all his days in this way, he could never be able to do it; and some parts are inaccessible, and not to be measured by the most skilful geometer;

declare, if thou knowest it all; the whole earth and every part of it, and all that is in it. Whether the other hemisphere and the antipodes were known in Job's time is a question; however not America, or the new world, which is a late discovery; and even now, in our most exact maps of the world, some parts are marked with "terra incognita", the unknown land.

Job 38:19

Ver. 19. Where [is] the way [where] light dwelleth?.... Or the way to the place where it dwells, and what that is;

and [as for] darkness, where [is] the place thereof? where these were placed when they were first separated at the creation? where light goes and dwells, when it departs from us at sun setting? and where the darkness betakes itself, and makes its abode at sun rising? What is the chamber of the sun, and the tabernacle of it? from whence it sets out, and whither it returns? And though these questions may be answered by geographers and astronomers in their way; yet they seem to respect chiefly the disposal of light and darkness, in such a manner as to cause the revolution of them, and the inequality of days and nights in different seasons and climates; and which is not in the power of men to effect, but depends on the sovereign will of God.

Job 38:20

Ver. 20. That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof,.... Either darkness, or rather the light; take it as it were by the hand, and guide and direct its course to its utmost bound. This only the Lord can do and does: he has set a tabernacle for the sun, which goes forth at his command as a strong man to run a race; whose going forth is from the end of the heavens, and his circuit unto the ends of it: in which his course is so steered and directed by the Lord, that he never misses his way or errs from it; but keeps his path exactly, as well as knows its rising and setting, its utmost bounds;

and that thou shouldest know the paths [to] the house thereof? from whence it sets out, and whither it returns; see Ps 19:4. And so the light and darkness of prosperity and adversity, as well as natural light and darkness, are of God, at his disposal, and bounded by him, and therefore his will should be submitted to; which is the doctrine the Lord would teach Job by all this.

Job 38:21

Ver. 21. Knowest thou [it], because thou wast then born?.... When light and darkness were first separated, and had their several apartments assigned them; their laws and rules given them, and their bounds and limits set them? No; he was not: and, had he been the first man, could not have been early enough to have been present at the doing of this, and so come at the knowledge thereof; since man was not made until the sixth day of the creation;

or [because] the number of thy days [is] great; reach to the beginning of time, and so as old as the creation. This was not the case. Some understand these words ironically; "thou knowest" the places and bounds of light and darkness, since thou art a very old man, born as soon as the world was. Whereas he was of yesterday, and knew nothing; which to convince him of is the design of this biting, cutting, expression. The Targum is,

"didst thou know then that thou shouldest be born, and the number of thy days many?"

No, Job did not know when he was born, nor of whom, and in what circumstances, but by the relation of others; and much less could he know before he was born, that he should be, or how long he should live in the world: but God knows all this beforehand; when men shall come into the world, at what period and of what parents, and how long they shall continue in it.

Job 38:22

Ver. 22. Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail?] The vapours raised, and clouds formed in the atmosphere, which is the storehouse of those meteors; and may be called treasures, because hidden in the clouds, and not seen by man until the fall of them; and because they are in the keeping, and at the command and direction of the Lord the proprietor of them; and because rich and enriching, especially snow, which falling keeps the earth warm, and makes it fruitful; and because of the abundance thereof which sometimes falls. Now we are not to imagine that the Lord has stores of these laid up in heaps, in times past for time to come; but that he can and does as easily and as soon produce them when he pleases, as one that has treasures laid up can bring them forth at once.

Job 38:23

Ver. 23. Which I have reserved against the time of trouble,.... For the punishment or affliction of men; and is explained as follows,

against the day of battle and war? as his artillery and ammunition to light his enemies with. Of hail we have instances in Scripture, as employed against the Egyptians and Canaanites, **Ex 9:25**; and of a reserve of it in the purposes of God, and in prophecy against the day of battle with antichrist, Re 16:21; and so Jarchi interprets it here of the war of Gog and Magog. And though there are no instances of snow being used in this way in Scripture, yet there is in history. Strabo {s} reports, that at Corzena and Cambysena, which join to Mount Caucasus, such snows have fallen, that whole companies of men have been swallowed up in them; and even armies have been overwhelmed with them, as the army of the Gauls {t}; and such quantities have been thrown down from mountains, on which they have been lodged, that towns, towers, and villages, have been laid prostrate by them {u}; and in the year 443, a vast snow destroyed many {w}. Frequently do we hear in our parts of the disasters occasioned by them. The Targum particularly makes mention of snow; and renders it, "which snow I have reserved", &c. though absurdly applies it to punishment in hell.

{s} Geograph. l. 11. p. 363. {t} Cicero de Divinatione, l. 1. {u} Olaus Magu. de Ritu Gent. Septent. l. 2. c. 13. {w} Whiston's Chronolog. Tables, cent. 20.

Job 38:24

Ver. 24. By what way is the light parted,.... That is, dost thou know by what way it is parted or divided? as at the first creation, when God divided the light from darkness, **Ge 1:4**; or at sun rising and sun setting; and so in the two hemispheres, when there is darkness on the one, and light on the other; or under the two poles, when there are interchangeably six months light and six months darkness. Or how it is parted in an unequal distribution of day and night, at different seasons and in different climates; or how on one and the same day, and at the same time, the sun shall shine in one part of the earth, and not another; and more especially if this had been now a fact, and known, that there should be darkness all over the land of Egypt, and light in Goshen. Some understand this of lightning, but that is later mentioned;

[which] scattereth the east wind upon the earth? that rising sometimes with the sun, or first spring of light; see **Jon 4:8**; or which light spreads and diffuses itself "from the east", as it may be rendered. The sun rises in the east, and in a very quick and surprising manner spreads and diffuses its light throughout the hemisphere. Or this may respect the east wind itself, which scatters the clouds; and either spreads them in the heavens over the earth, or disperses them and drives away rain {x}, as the north wind does: or as Mr. Broughton renders the words, "and the east wind scattereth itself over the earth"; it blowing invisibly and without our knowledge, goes and returns as other winds do, **Joh 3:8**.

{x} "Agente nimbos ocyor euro". Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode 16.

Job 38:25

Ver. 25. Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters,.... For a very large shower of rain, as the Vulgate Latin version: for this is not to be understood of an aqueduct, channel, or canal made on earth, either for the draining of waters off of land overflowed thereby, or for the conveyance of it to different parts to overflow it; such as were cut out of the Nile in Egypt, for the overflowing of the land, to make it fruitful; such may be and have been made by men: but of a watercourse in the air or atmosphere, as a canal or channel, for the rain to come down upon the earth; and this is the work of God, and him only, who directs and steers the course of rain, that it falls regularly and gently, not in spouts and floods, but in drops larger or lesser, on what spot of ground, or part of the earth, he pleases: and if what Jarchi says true, that every drop has its course, its canal, through which it passes, it is still more wonderful;

or a way for the lightning of thunder: which generally go together, and are of God. His fire and voice, and for which he makes a way, by which they burst and break forth out of the cloud, and their course is directed by him under the whole heavens; see Job 28:26. So the Gospel, compared to rain and lightning, has its direction and its course steered to what part of the world, he pleases; see Ps 19:4.

Job 38:26

Ver. 26. To cause it to rain on the earth, [where] no man [is]; [on] the wilderness, wherein [there is] no man. Which is uninhabited by men, being so dry and barren; where there is no man to cultivate and water it, as gardens are; and where is no man to receive any advantage by the rain that comes upon it; and yet the Lord sends it for the use of animals that dwell there; which shows his care and providence with respect even to the wild beasts of the earth. This may be an emblem of the rain of the Gospel upon the Gentile world, comparable to a wilderness; see Isa 35:1.

Job 38:27

Ver. 27. To satisfy the desolate and waste [ground],.... Which is exceeding desolate, and therefore two such words are used to express it; which is so dry and thirsty that it is one of the four things that say not it is enough, Pr 30:16; and yet God can and does give it rain to its full satisfaction, Ps 104:13; so the Lord satisfies souls, comparable to dry and thirsty ground, by his word and ordinances, with the goodness and fatness of his house; see Ps 63:1;

and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth? grass for the cattle, and herb for the service of men, Ps 104:14; of like use is the word in a spiritual sense for the budding and increase of the graces of the Spirit in the Lord's people; see De 32:2.

Job 38:28

Ver. 28. Hath the rain a father?.... None but God; hence the Heathens themselves call God getiov {y}, and ombriov {z}; see Jer 14:22; he that is our Father in heaven is the Father of rain, and him only; whatever secondary causes there be, God only is the efficient cause, parent, and producer of it: so the Gospel is not of men but of God, is a gift of his, comes down from heaven, tarries not for men, and is a great blessing, as rain is;

or who hath begotten the drops of the dew? which are innumerable; he that is the parent of the rain is of the dew also, and he only {a}; to which sometimes not only the word of God, and his free favour and good will, but the people of God themselves are compared for their number, influence, and use; see Ps 110:3; and their new birth is similar to the generation of dew, it being not of the will of man, but of God, according to his abundant mercy, free favour, and good will, is from above, from heaven, and is effected silently, secretly, suddenly, at an unawares; **Joh 1:13**.

{y} Aristot. de Mundo, c. 7. {z} Pausan. Attica, sive, l. 1. p. 60. {a} Though a certain poet (Alcman Lyricus apud Macrob. Saturnal. l. 7. c. 16.) says that dew is the offspring of the air and of the moon; but these can only at most be reckoned but secondary causes. The Arabs speak of an angel over dew. Abulpharag, Hist. Dynast. p. 75.

Job 38:29

Ver. 29. Out of whose womb came the ice?.... The parent of the rain and dew is the parent of the ice also, and he only; it is therefore called "his ice", his child, his offspring, Ps 147:17. Here the Lord is represented as a mother, and so he is by Orpheus {b} called "metropator", or "mother-father";

and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? this is of God, and by his breath; see Job 37:10.

{b} Apud Clement. Stromat. l. 5. p. 608.

Job 38:30

Ver. 30. The waters are hid as [with] a stone,.... The surface of the waters by frost become as hard as a stone, and will bear great burdens, and admit of carriages to pass over them {c} where ships went before; so that the waters under them are hid and quite out of sight: an emblem of the hard heart of man, which can only be thawed by the power and grace of God, by the south wind of the Spirit blowing, and the "sun of righteousness" rising on it;

and the face of the deep is frozen; or bound together by the frost, as the Targum; it is taken, laid hold on, and kept together, as the word signifies, so that it cannot flow. Historians speak of seas being frozen up, as some parts of the Scythian sea, reported by Mela {d}, and the Cimmerian Bosphorus, by Herodotus {e}, and the northern seas by Olaus Magnus {f}; as that men might travel over them on foot or on horseback, from one country to another; and Strabo relates {g}, that where a sea fight has been in the summer time, armies and hosts have met and fought in the winter. In Muscovy the ice is to six and ten feet deep {h}; in the year 401 the Euxine sea {i} was frozen over for the space of twenty days; and in the year 763 the seas at Constantinople were frozen one hundred miles from the shore, so thick as to bear the heaviest carriages {k}.

{c} "Nunc hospita plaustris", &c. Virg. Georgic. l. 3. v. 362. {d} De Situ Orbis, l. 3. c. 5. {e} Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 20. Vid. Macrob. Saturnal. l. 7. c. 12. {f} De Ritu Gent. Septent. l. 1. c. 13. {g} Geograph. l. 7. p. 211. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 22. {h} Scheuchzer. Phys. Sacr. vol 4. p. 810. {i} Universal History, vol. 16. p. 489. {k} Universal History, vol. 17. p. 45.

Job 38:31

Ver. 31. Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades,.... Of which See Gill on "Job 9:9"; and this constellation of the seven stars which is meant, rising in the spring, the pleasantnesses of the season, as the word may be rendered, may be intended here; which cannot be restrained or hindered from taking place in the proper course of the year; which is beautifully described in So 2:12; and may in a spiritual sense relate to the effects of powerful and efficacious grace, the influences of which are irresistible, and cause a springtime in the souls of men, where it was before winter, a state of darkness, deadness, coldness, hardness, and unfruitfulness, but now the reverse. Some versions read, "the bands of the Pleiades" {l}, as if the sense was, canst thou gather and bind, or cluster together, such a constellation as the seven stars be, as I have done? thou canst not; and so not stop their rising or hinder their influences, according to the other versions:

or loose the bands of Orion? of which See Gill on "Job 9:9" and **Am 5:8**. This constellation appears in the winter, and brings with it stormy winds, rain, snow, and frost, which latter binds up the earth, that seeds and roots in it cannot spring up; and binds the hands of men from working, by benumbing them, or rendering their materials or utensils useless; for which reasons bands are ascribed to Orion, and are such strong ones that it is not in the power of men to loose: the seasons are not to be altered by men; and, Job might be taught by this that it was not in his power to make any change in the dispensations of Providence; to turn the winter of adversity into the spring of prosperity; and therefore it was best silently to submit to the sovereignty of God, and wait his time for a change of circumstances.

{l} hmyk twndem desmon pleiadov, Sept. "nexus stellarum", Schmidt; so Jarchi and Targum.--According to the Talmud, the word signifies an hundred stars. Vid. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 58. 2.

Job 38:32

Ver. 32. Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season?.... Which are thought to be the same with "the chambers of the south", **Job 9:9**; the southern pole {m} with its stars, signified by chambers, because hidden from our sight in this part of the globe; and here by Mazzaroth, from, "nazar", to separate, because separated and at a distance from us; some think {n} the twelve signs of the Zodiac are meant, each of which are brought forth in their season, not by men, but by the Lord; see
Isa 40:26;

or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? a constellation of many stars called its sons, of which see **Job 9:9**. Schmidt conjectures that Jupiter and his satellites are meant; but rather what we call the greater and lesser Bear, in the tail of which is the north pole star, the guide of mariners, said {o} to be found out by Thales, by which the Phoenicians sailed, but is not to be guided by men; this, constellation is fancied to be in the form of a wain or wagon, and is called Charles's wain; could this be admitted, there might be thought to be an allusion to it {p}, and the sense be, canst thou guide and lead this constellation, as a wagon or team of horses can be guided and led? stars have their courses, **Jud 5:20**; but are not steered, guided, and directed by men, but by the Lord himself.

{m} David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 77. 3. {n} Vatablus, Codurcus, Schultens; so

Suidas in voce mazouray. {o} Callimachus apud Laert. Vit. Thalet. p. 16. {p} Vid. Hinckelman. Praefat. ad Alkoran. p. 29, 30.

Job 38:33

Ver. 33. Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven?.... Settled by the decree, purpose, and will of God, and are firm and stable; see Ps 148:6; the laws and statutes respecting their situation, motion, operation, influence, and use, which are constantly observed; these are so far from being made by men, and at their direction, that they are not known by them, at least not fully and perfectly;

canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? or over it; of the heavens over the earth; not such an one as judicial astrologers ascribe unto them, as to influence the bodies of men, especially the tempers and dispositions of their minds; to affect their wills and moral actions, the events and occurrences of their lives, and the fate of nations and kingdoms; their dominion is not moral and civil, but physical or natural, as to make the revolutions of night and day, and of the several seasons of the year; and to affect and influence the fruits of the earth, &c. see **Ge 1:16**; but this dominion is solely under God, and at his direction, and is not of men's fixing.

Job 38:34

Ver. 34. Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?] Thy gardens, fields, and farms; canst thou, in a magisterial way, call to and demand of the clouds to let down rain in large quantities, sufficient to water them and make them fruitful? no, thou canst not: thou mayest cry and call as long as thou wilt, not a cloud will stir, nor a drop of water be let down; rain is to be had in a suppliant way, through the prayer of faith, as by Elijah, but not in a dictatorial authoritative way: the clouds and rain are only at the disposal of the Lord; ask of him, and he will give them; but they are not to be commanded, Zec 10:1; see **Am 5:8**.

Job 38:35

Ver. 35. Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we [are]?] Thy humble servants; we have been where thou didst send us, and have executed what we were bid to do, and are returned, and here we are waiting further orders; see **Mt 8:9**; no; lightnings are only at the command of God, and there have been some awful instances of it, Le 10:1; but not in the power of men; indeed we have an extraordinary instance in Elijah, who, at the motion, and under the impulse of the spirit of prophecy in him, called for fire, or lightning, to consume captains with their fifties, and it came down on them, and consumed them, **2Ki 1:10**; but he is not to be imitated herein: when the disciples of Christ desired the same upon a provocation, they were severely reproved by him, **Lu 9:54**; were these at the call and dispose of men, what dreadful things would be done in the world! for if good men, when provoked, would make use of such a power to destroy the lives of men, much more bad men; and our eyes would continually behold the flashes of lighting, and our ears hear the roarings of thunder, and the terrible effects thereof; but neither mercies nor judgments are at the command of men, but of God.

Job 38:36

Ver. 36. Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts?.... That is, of man, in his heart, as explained in the next clause; such wisdom as to guide the stars, know the ordinances of heaven, set their dominion on earth, manage and direct the clouds and lightning; no such wisdom is put in man:

or who hath, given understanding to the heart? to understand all the above things, and answer to the several questions put in this chapter; though, as these clauses may respect much one and the same thing, they may be understood of wisdom and understanding in man, whether natural or spiritual; and seeing they are found there, the question is, who put them there, or how came they there? who gave them to him? the answer must be, God himself, and no other; man has his rational soul, his intellectual powers, the light of nature and reason in him; all his understanding in arts and sciences, trades and manufactures, is of the Lord, and not of himself or another, see Job 32:8; all spiritual wisdom and understanding which lies in a man's concern for his eternal welfare in the knowledge of himself, and of his state and condition by nature, and of the way of life and salvation by Christ, and of the truths and doctrines of the Gospel, is all of God and Christ, and by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; no man, therefore, has any reason to glory in his wisdom and knowledge, of whatsoever kind, as though he had not received it; nor should he dare to arraign the wisdom of God in his providential dealings with men; since he that teaches man knowledge must needs know better than man how to govern the world he has made, and dispose of all things in it. The last clause is in the Vulgate Latin rendered, "who hath given to the cock understanding?" and so the Targums and other Jewish writers {p} interpret it; and they observe {q}, that in Arabia a cock is called by the word that is here used; and in their morning prayers, and at hearing a cock crow {r},

"Blessed be the Lord, who giveth to the cock understanding to distinguish between the day and the night:"

but however remarkable the understanding of this creature is, which God has given it, and which is even taken notice of by Heathen writers {s}; that it should know the stars, distinguish the hours of the night by crowing, and express its joy at the rising of the sun and moon; yet such a sense of the text seems impertinent, as well as that of the Septuagint version, of giving to women the wisdom and knowledge of weaving and embroidery.

{p} Jarchi, Ramban, Simeon Bar. Tzemach. {q} Vajikra Rabba, s. 25. fol. 166. 1. Vid. T. Roshhashanah, fol. 26. 1. {r} Seder Tephillot. fol. 2. 2. Ed. Basil. & Bab. Beracot, fol. 60. 2. {s} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 21. Aelian. de Animal. l. 4. c. 29.

Job 38:37

Ver. 37. Who can number the clouds in wisdom?.... Or has such wisdom as to be able to count them when the heavens are full of them; hence they are used to denote a great multitude, Isa 55:8; or "declare" them {t}, set forth and explain the nature of them, their matter, motion, and use; none can do this perfectly or completely. Aben Ezra interprets it, who can make them as sapphire? in which he is followed by Mr. Broughton and others {u}; the sapphire is a precious stone, very clear and lucid, of a sky colour. And then the sense is, who can make a clear and serene sky, when it is cloudy? None but the Lord; see Job 37:11;

or who can stay the bottles of heaven? or "barrels", as Mr. Broughton; the clouds in which the rain is bottled or barrelled up; and when it is the pleasure of God to pour them out, who can stay, stop, or restrain them? or who can "cause [them] to lie down" {w}? that is, on the earth; to descend or "distil" on it, as the same translator. Who can do this, when it is the will of God to withhold them? To stop or unstop, those bottles, to restrain rain, or pour it forth, is entirely at his dispose, and not man's; see Job 38:34.

{t} rpoy "enarrabit", V. L. "vel explicabit", Mercerus, Schmidt. {u} Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vid. Ravii Orthograph. Ebr. p. 22. {w} bykvy "cubare faciet", Drusius, Schmidt; "quiescere", Montanus; "descendere", Pagninus, so Aben Ezra; "effundit humi", Schultens.

Job 38:38

Ver. 38. When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?] When the dust is attenuated, and ground, as it were, into powder; and the clods cleave together, as if glued, as in a drought for want of rain: or the bottles of heaven being unstopped and poured out; or

"sprinkling the dust with this sprinkling,"

as Mr. Broughton. Or rather, pouring on the dust with pouring; that is, pouring down rain, by unstopping the bottles of heaven. The dust, as meal, by water poured into it, cements, unites, and is compacted, and becomes earth, that may be cultivated; is clodded and cleaves together, and may be ploughed and sown.

Job 38:39

Ver. 39. Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion?.... From meteors the Lord passes to animals, beasts, and birds, wherefore some here begin the thirty ninth chapter, which only treats of such; and he begins with the lion, the strongest among beasts, and most fierce; cruel, and voracious; and asks, who hunts his prey for him? Not man, who cannot; and if he could, durst not: but the Lord does; and, according to some writers {x}, he has provided a small creature, between a fox and a wolf, called a jackal; which goes before the lion, and hunts the prey for him. And could this be understood particularly of the old lion, as Cocceius and others, naturalists {y} observe, that young lions hunt for the old ones, when they are not able to go in search of prey; and when they have got it, either bring it to them, or call them to partake of it with them;

or fill the appetite of the young lions, whose appetite is sharp and keen, and requires a great deal to fill it, and especially to satisfy a great many of them; herds of them, as Mr. Broughton renders the word, and which signifies a company; see Ps 68:30. Men cannot feed them, but God can and does; there being some ends in Providence to be answered thereby, see Ps 104:21; see also Ps 34:8.

{x} Thevenot's Travels, part 2. c. 13. {y} Aelian. de Animal. l. 9. c. 1.

Job 38:40

Ver. 40. When they couch in [their] dens, [and] abide in the covert to lie in wait?] Which some understand of old lions, who, for want of strength, lie couchant in their dens, or in some covert place, waiting for any prey that passes by, to seize upon it. But the same pasture and places are used by younger lions, as well as old ones; who are emblems of wicked men, cruel persecutors, and bloodthirsty tyrants, who fill their palaces and kingdoms with murder and rapine; see Ps 10:8 **Na 2:11**.

Job 38:41

Ver. 41. Who provideth for the raven his food?.... Not man, but God; he feeds the ravens, creatures very voracious, mean, and useless,
Lu 12:24;

when his young ones cry unto God; cry for want of food; which is interpreted by the Lord as a cry unto him, and he relieves them,
Ps 147:9; when deserted by the old ones; either left in their nests through forgetfulness, as some {z}; or because they are not, till fledged, black like them, as others {a}; when God feeds them, as some say {b}, with a kind of dew from heaven, or with flies that fly about them, and fall into their mouths; or with worms bred out of their dung but these things are not to be depended on; it may rather respect them when cast out of the nest by the old ones, when able to fly, which is testified by naturalists {c}; and with this agrees what follows:

they wander for lack of meat; being obliged to shift for themselves, when God takes care of them; which is an instance of his providential goodness; and how this is to be improved, see **Mt 6:26**.

{z} Plin. apud Servium in Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. p. 189. {a} Pirke Eliezer, c. 21. {b} Hieron. in Pasl. cxlvii. 9. {c} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 3. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 12.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 39:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 39

This chapter treats of various creatures, beasts and birds, which Job had little knowledge of, had no concern in the making of them, and scarcely any power over them; as of the goats and hinds, Job 39:1; of the wild ass, Job 39:5; of the unicorn, Job 39:9; of the peacock and ostrich, Job 39:13; of the horse, Job 39:19; and of the hawk and eagle, Job 39:26.

Ver. 1. Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth?.... Which creatures are so called, because they dwell among the rocks {d} and run upon them; and though their heads are loaded with a vast burden of horns upon them, yet can so poise themselves, as with the greatest swiftness, to leap from mountain to mountain, as Pliny says {e}: and if they bring forth their young in the rocks, as Olympiodorus asserts, and which is not improbable, it is not to be wondered, that the time of their bringing forth should not be known by men, to whom the rocks they run upon are inaccessible;

[or] canst thou mark the time when the hinds do calve? that is, precisely and exactly, and so as to direct, order, and manage, and bring it about, as the Lord does: and it is wonderful that they should calve, and not cast their young before their time, when they are continually in flight and fright, through men or wild beasts, and are almost always running and leaping about; and often scared with thunder, which hastens birth, Ps 29:9; otherwise the time of their bringing forth in general is known by men, as will be observed in Job 39:2.

{d} "----Amantis saxa capellae". Ovid. Epist. 15. v. 55. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 53. Aelian. de Animal. l. 14. c. 16.

Job 39:2

Ver. 2. Canst thou number the months [that] they fulfil?.... Which some understand both of wild goats and hinds. Common goats fulfil five months, they conceive in November, and bring forth in March, as Pliny {f} observes; but how many the wild goats of the rock fulfil is not said by him or any other I know of: the same writer says {g} of hinds, that they go eight months;

or knowest thou the time when they bring forth? naturalists {h} tell us, that the hinds conceive after the rise of the star Arcturus, which rises eleven days before the autumnal equinox; so that they conceive in September; and as they go eight months, they bring forth in April; but then the exact time to a day and hour is not known. Besides, who has fixed the time for their bringing forth, and carries them in it through so many dangers and difficulties? None but the Lord himself. Now if such common things in nature were not known perfectly by Job, how should he be able to search into and find out the causes and reasons of God's providential dealings with men, or what is in the womb of Providence?

{f} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 50. {g} Ib. c. 32. {h} Ib. & l. 2. c. 47. Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 29. Solinus, c. 31.

Job 39:3

Ver. 3. They bow themselves,.... That they may bring forth their young with greater ease and more safety: for it seems the hinds bring forth their young with great difficulty; and there are provisions in nature made to lessen it; as thunder, before observed, which causes them to bring forth the sooner; and there is an herb called "seselis", which it is said {i} they feed upon before birth, to make it the easier; as well as they use that, and another called "aros", after the birth, to ease them of their later pains;

they bring forth their young ones; renting and cleaving asunder the membrane, as the word signifies, in which their young is wrapped;

they cast out their sorrows; either their young, which they bring forth in pains and which then cease; or the secundines, or afterbirth, in which the young is wrapped, and which the philosopher says {k} they eat, and is supposed to be medical to them. None but a woman seems to bring forth with more pain than this creature; and a wife is compared to it, Pr 5:19.

{i} Cicero de Natura Deoram, l. 2. Plin. Nat. Hist. c. 8. 32. Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 5. {k} Aristot. ib.

Job 39:4

Ver. 4. Their young ones are in good liking,.... Plump, fat, and sleek, as fawns are:

they grow up with corn; by which they grow, or without in the field, as the word also signifies; and their growth and increase is very quick, as Aristotle observes {l};

they go forth, and return not unto them: they go forth into the fields, and shift and provide for themselves, and trouble their dams no more; and return not to them, nor are they known by them.

{l} Ib. (Aristot. Hist. Animal.) l. 6. c. 29.

Job 39:5

Ver. 5. Who hath sent out the wild ass free?.... Into the wide waste, where it is, ranges at pleasure, and is not under the restraint of any; a creature which, as it is naturally wild, is naturally averse to servitude, is desirous of liberty and maintains it: not but that it may be tamed, as Pliny {m} speaks of such as are; but it chooses to be free, and, agreeably to its nature, it is sent out into the wilderness as such: not that it is set free from bondage, for in that it never was until it is tamed; but its nature and inclination, and course it pursues, is to be free. And now the question is, who gave this creature such a nature, and desire after liberty? and such power to maintain it? and directs it to take such methods to secure it, and keep clear of bondage? It is of God;

or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? not that it has any naturally upon it, and is loosed from them; but because it is as clear of them as such creatures are, which have been in bands and are freed from them: therefore this mode of expression is used, and which signifies the same as before.

{m} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 44.

Job 39:6

Ver. 6. Whose house I have made the wilderness,.... Appointed that to be his place of residence, as being agreeable to his nature, at a distance from men, and in the less danger of being brought into subjection by them. Such were the deserts of Arabia; where, as Xenophon {n} relates, were many of these creatures, and which he represents as very swift: and Leo Africanus {o} says, great numbers of them are found in deserts, and on the borders of deserts; hence said to be used to the wilderness **Jer 2:24**;

and the barren land his dwellings; not entirely barren, for then it could not live there; but comparatively, with respect to land that is fruitful: or "salt land" {p}; for, as Pliny {q} says, every place where salt is, is barren.

{n} De Expedition. Cyri, l. 1. {o} Descriptio Africae, l. 9. p. 752. {p} hxlm "salsuginem", Montanus; "salsuginosam terram", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {q} Nat. Hist. l. 31. c. 7.

Job 39:7

Ver. 7. He scorneth the multitude of the city,.... Choosing rather to be alone in the wilderness and free than to be among a multitude of men in a city, and be a slave as the tame ass; or it despises and defies a multitude of men, that may come out of cities to take it, Leo Africanus says {r} it yields to none for swiftness but Barbary horses: according to Xenophon {s}, it exceeds the horse in swiftness; and when pursued by horsemen, it will outrun them, and stand still and rest till they come near it, and then start again; so that there is no taking it, unless many are employed. Aristotle {t} says it excels in swiftness; and, according to Bochart {u}, it has its name in Hebrew from the Chaldee word adp, "to run". Or it may be rendered, "the noise of the city", so Cocceius; the stir and bustle in it, through a multiplicity of men in business;

neither regardeth he the crying of the driver; or "hears" {w}: he neither feels his blows, nor hears his words; urging him to move faster and make quicker dispatch, as the tame ass does; he being neither ridden nor driven, nor drawing in a cart or plough.

{r} Ut supra. (Descriptio Africae, l. 9. p. 752.) {s} Ut supra. (De Expedition. Cyril, l. 1.) {t} Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 36. {u} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 1. c. 9. col. 63. {w} emvy al "non audiet", Pagninus, Montanus.

Job 39:8

Ver. 8. The range of the mountains [is] his pasture,.... It ranges about the mountains for food; it looks about for it, as the word signifies, and tries first one place and then another to get some, it having short commons there;

and he searcheth after every green thing; herb or plant, be it what it will that is green, it seeks after; and which being scarce in deserts and mountains, it searches about for and feeds upon it, wherever it can find it; grass being the peculiar food of these creatures, see **Job 6:5**; and which is observed by naturalists {x}.

{x} Oppiani Cyneget. l. 3.

Job 39:9

Ver. 9. Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee,.... Whether there is or ever was such a creature, as described under the name of an unicorn, is a question: it is thought the accounts of it are for the most part fabulous; though Vartomannus {y} says he saw two at Mecca, which came from Ethiopia, the largest of which had a horn in his forehead three cubits long. There are indeed several creatures which may be called "monocerots", who have but one horn; as the "rhinoceros", and the Indian horses and asses {z}. The Arabic geographer {a} speaks of a beast in the Indies, called "carcaddan", which is lesser than an elephant and bigger than a buffalo; having in the middle of the forehead an horn long and thick, as much as two hands can grasp: and not only on land, but in the sea are such, as the "nahr whal", or Greenland whale {b}; but then they do not answer to the creature so called in Scripture: and, besides, this must be a creature well known to Job, as it was to the Israelites; and must be a strong creature, from the account that gives of it, and not to be taken as here. And Solinus {c} speaks of such "monocerots" or unicorns, which may be killed, but cannot be taken, and were never known to be in any man's possession alive; and so Aelianus {d} says of the like creature, that it never was remembered that anyone of them had been taken. Some think the "rhinoceros" is meant; but that, though a very strong creature, and so may be thought fit for the uses after mentioned, yet may be tamed; whereas the creature here is represented as untamable, and not to be subdued, and brought under a yoke and managed; and besides, it is not very probable that it was known by Job. Bochart {e} takes it to be the "oryx", a creature of the goat kind; but to me it seems more likely to be of the ox kind, to be similar to them, and so might be thought to do the business of one; and the rather, because of its great strength, and yet could not be brought to do it, nor be trusted with it: for the questions concerning it relate to the work of oxen; and as the wild ass is opposed to the tame one in the preceding paragraph, so here the wild ox to a tame one. And both Strabo {f} and Diodorus Siculus {g} relate, that among the Troglodytes, a people that dwelt near the Red sea, and not far from Arabia, where Job lived, were abundance of wild oxen or bulls, and which far exceeded the common ones in size and swiftness; and the creature called the seem in the original, has its name from height. Now the question is, could Job take one of these wild bulls or oxen, and tame it, and make it willing to do any work or service he should choose to put it to? No, he could not;

or abide by thy crib? manger or stall, as the tame or common ox will; who, when it has done its labour, is glad to be led to its stall and feed, and then lie down and rest, and there abide; see **Isa 1:3**; but not so the wild ox.

{y} Navigat. l. 1. c. 19. {z} Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 26. {a} Nub. Clim. 1. par. 8. {b} Ludolf. Ethiop. Hist. l. 1. c. 10. Of this narhual, or sea unicorn, see the Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 9. p. 71, 72. {c} Polyhistor. c. 65. {d} De Animal. l. 16. c. 20. {e} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 27. col. 969, &c. {f} Geograph. l. 16. p. 533. {g} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 175.

Job 39:10

Ver. 10. Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow?.... Put the yoke and harness upon him, and fasten it to the plough to draw it, that he may make furrows with it in the field, or plough up the ground as the tame ox does? thou canst not;

or will he harrow the valleys after thee? draw the harrow which is used after ploughing to break the clods, and make the land smooth and even? he will not: valleys are particularly mentioned, because arable land is usually in them; see Ps 65:13.

Job 39:11

Ver. 11. Wilt thou trust him, because his strength [is] great?.... No; tame oxen are employed because they are strong to labour, Ps 144:14; and they are to be trusted, in ploughing or treading out the corn, under direction, because they are manageable, and will attend to business with constancy; but the wild ox, though stronger, and so fitter for labour, is yet not to be trusted, because unruly and unmanageable: if that sort of wild oxen called "uri" could be thought to be meant, for which Bootius {h} contends, Caesar's account of them would agree with this character of the "reem", as to his great strength: he says of them {i}, they are in size a little smaller than elephants, of the kind, colour, and shape of a bull; they are of great strength and of great swiftness, and not to be tamed;

or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? to plough thy fields, to harrow thy lands, and to bring home the ripe corn? as in Job 39:12; thou wilt not.

{h} Animadvers. Sacr. l. 3. c. 1. s. 14. {i} Comment. de Bello Gall. l. 6. c. 27.

Job 39:12

Ver. 12. Wilt thou believe him that he will bring home thy seed?.... Draw in the cart, and bring home the ripe sheaves of corn, as the tame ox does? no; thou knowest him too well to believe he will bring it home in safety;

and gather [it into] thy barn; to be trodden out, which used to be done by oxen in those times: if therefore Job could not manage such unruly creatures as the wild ass and the wild ox, and make them serviceable to him, how unfit must he be to govern the world, or to direct in the affairs of Providence?

Job 39:13

Ver. 13. [Gavest thou] the goodly wings unto the peacocks?.... Rather "ostriches", as the Vulgate Latin and Tigurine versions render it; some render it, "the wing of those that exult is joyful", so Montanus; that is, of the ostriches; who, in confidence of their wings, exult and glory over the horse and his rider, Job 39:18; for peacocks are not remarkable for their wings, but for their tails; whereas the wings of the ostrich are as sails unto them, as several writers observe {k}; and with which they rather run, or row, than fly: hence it is called by Plautus {l} "passer marinus", the sea sparrow: and the feathers of it are more goodly than those of the wings of the peacock; and besides, it is a question whether the peacock was where Job lived, and in his times; since it is originally from the Indies, and from thence it was brought to Judea in the times of Solomon; and was not known in Greece and Rome {m} until later ages. Alexander the Great, when he first saw them in India, was surprised at them; and yet Solon {n} speaks of them in his time as seen by him, which was at least two hundred years before Alexander; though at Rome not common in the times of Horace {o}, who calls a peacock "rara avis"; and speaks of them as sold for a great price; but ostriches were well known in Arabia, where Job lived, as is testified by Xenophon {p}, Strabo {q}, and Diodorus Siculus {r}. Moreover, what is said in the following verses is only true of the ostrich, and that only is spoken of here and there, as it follows;

or wings and feathers unto the ostrich; or whose wings and feathers are like the storks; and so Bochart renders the words, truly they have "the wing and feather of the stork"; the colours of which are black and white, from whence it has its name pelagrov {s} in Greek; and so Leo Africanus {t} says of the ostriches, that they have in their wings large feathers of a black and white colour; and this was a creature well known in Arabia {u}, in which Job lived.

{k} Xenophon. de Expedit. Cyri, l. 1. Aelian. de. Animal. l. 2. c. 77. {l} Persa, Act. 2. Sc. 2. v. 17. {m} Aelian. de Animal. l. 5. c. 21. {n} Laert. Vit. Solon. l. 1. c. 2. {o} Sermon. l. 2. Sat. 2. v. 25, 26. Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 20. Macrob. Saturnal. l. 3. c. 13. {p} Ut supra. (Xenophon. de Expedit. Cyri, l. 1.) {q} Geograph. l. 16. p. 531. {r} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 133. {s} Suidas in voce pelagrov. {t} Descriptio Africae, l. 9. p. 766. {u} Diodor. Sicul. ut supra. (Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 133.)

Job 39:14

Ver. 14. Which leaveth her eggs in the earth,.... Lays them and leaves them there. Aelianus, agreeably to this, says {w}, that it builds a low nest in the ground, making a hollow in the sand with its feet; though he seems to be mistaken as to the number of its eggs, which he makes to be more than eighty; more truly Leo Africanus {x}, who reckons them ten or twelve; which, he says, it lays in the sand, and each of them are of the size of a cannon ball, and weigh fifteen pounds, more or less. Hence, with the Arabs, it is called

"the mother of eggs,"

because of the large eggs it lays; and with them it is a proverb,

"meaner, or of a lesser account, than the eggs of an ostrich,"

because its eggs are neglected by it {y};

and warmeth them in the dust; not that she leaves them to be warmed by the hot sand, or by the heat of the sun upon them, by which they are hatched, as has been commonly said, for thereby they would rather be corrupted and become rotten; but she herself warms them and hatches them, by sitting upon them in the dust and sand: and for this the above historian is express, who says {z}, the female lighting on these eggs, whether her own or another's, sits on them and heats them. Concerning the ostrich hatching its eggs, Vansleb {a}, from an Arabic manuscript, relates what is incredible, that they are hatched by the male and female with their eye only; that one or other of them keep continually looking at them until they are all hatched; and this I observe is asserted also by another writer {b}.

{w} De Animal. l. 14. c. 17. {x} Ut supra. (Descriptio Africaae, l. 9. p. 766.) {y} Hottinger. Smegm. Orient. l. 1. c. 7. p. 128. {z} Descript. Africae, ut supra. (l. 9. p. 766.) Vid. Aelian. l. 4. c. 37. {a} Relation of a Voyage to Egypt, p. 64. {b} Coelius, l. 10. c. 5. apud Sanctium in loc.

Job 39:15

Ver. 15. And forgetteth that the foot may crush them,.... The foot of the traveller, they being laid in the ground, where he may walk, or on the sand of the seashore, where he may tread and trample upon them unawares, and crush them to pieces; to prevent which this creature has no foresight;

or that the wild beast may break them; supposing they may be, though not where men walk, yet where wild beasts frequent, they may be as easily broken by the one as the other; against which it guards not, having no instinct in nature, as some creatures have, to direct to the preservation of them.

Job 39:16

Ver. 16. She is hardened against her young ones, as though [they were] not hers,.... Hence said to be cruel, La 4:3; not against the young ones she hatches, for Aelianus {c} reports her as very tender of her young, and exposing herself to danger for the preservation of them; but being a very forgetful creature, having laid its eggs in the sand, where it leaves them, forgets where it has laid them; and finding other eggs sits on them and hatches them, and regards the young as its own, and is hardened against its true and real young, as not belonging to her;

her labour is in vain without fear; in laying her eggs and leaving them in the dust, without fear of their being crushed and broken, which yet they are, and so her labour is in vain; or her labour in hatching the eggs of others, without any fear or care of their belonging to others, which yet they do, and so she labours in vain.

{c} Ut supra. (Vid. Aelian. l. 4. c. 37.)

Job 39:17

Ver. 17. Because God hath deprived her of wisdom,.... Or "made her to forget" {d} what she had; an instance of her forgetfulness is mentioned Job 39:15; and so Leo Africanus {e} says of it, that it is of a very short memory, and presently forgets the place where its eggs are laid;

neither hath he imparted to her understanding; many instances are given of its stupidity by historians, as that it will take anything that is offered to it to eat, stones, iron, &c. {f}; that it will thrust its head and neck into a thicket, fancying: it is hid and covered, and that none can see it; which Pliny {g} remarks as an instance of its foolishness; though Diodorus Siculus {h} takes this to be a point of prudence, for the preservation of those parts of it which are weakest. Strabo gives {i} another instance of its stupidity, its being so easily deceived by sportsmen, who, by putting the skin of an ostrich on their hands, and reaching out fruits or seeds to it, it will receive them of them, and be taken. Others observe the smallness of their heads, and so of their brains, as an argument of their want of understanding; and it has been remarked, as a proof of their having but few brains, that Heliogabalus, the Roman emperor, had six hundred heads of ostriches dressed at once for his supper, for the sake of their brains {k}.

{d} hvh "oblivisci fecit eum", Montanus, Mercerus, Drusius, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens. {e} Ut supra. (Desciptio. Africae, l. 9. p. 766.) {f} Aelian. ut supra. (de Animal. l. 5. c. 21.) Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 1. {g} Ibid. (Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 1.) {h} Ut supra. (Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 133.) {i} Geograph. l. 16. p. 531. {k} Lamprid. Vit. Heliogab. c. 20, 30.

Job 39:18

Ver. 18. What time she lifted up herself on high,.... It is sometimes eight foot high {l}; when alarmed with approaching danger she raises up herself, being sitting on the ground, and erects her wings for flight, or rather running;

she scorneth the horse and his rider; being then, as Pliny {m} says, higher than a man on horseback, and superior to a horse in swiftness; and though horsemen have been able to take wild asses and goats, very swift creatures, yet never ostriches, as Xenophon relates {n} of those in Arabia; and this creature has another method, when pursued, by which it defies and despises, as well as hurts and incommodes its pursuers, which is by casting stones backward at them with its feet as out of a sling {o}.

{l} Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 360. {m} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 1. {n} De Expedit. Cyri, l. 1. {o} Plin. ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 1.) Aelian. de Animal. l. 4. c. 37.

Job 39:19

Ver. 19. Hast thou given the horse strength?.... Not only to bear burdens and draw carriages, but for war; for it is the war horse that is here spoken of, as what follows shows, and his strength denotes; not strength of body only, but fortitude and courage; for which, as well as the other, the horse is eminent, and both are the gift of God, and not of men;

hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? or with strength, as the Targum; the horse having particularly great strength in its neck, as well as in other parts; or with strength of voice, as Ben Gersom explains it; and it has been generally understood of the neighing of horses, which comes through and out of their neck, and makes a vehement sound: some render it, "with a mane" {p}; and could it be made to appear that the word is so used in any other place, or in any other writings, or in any of the dialects, it would afford a very good sense, since a fine large mane to a horse is a great ornament and recommendation: the Septuagint render it by "fear", and Jarchi interprets it of "terror"; and refers to the sense of, he word in
Eze 27:35; and it may signify such a tremor as thunder makes, from whence that has its name; and it may be observed that between the neck and shoulder bone of an horse there is a tremulous and quavering motion; and which is more vehement in battle, not from any fearfulness of it, but rather through eagerness to engage in it; and therefore Schultens translates the words, "hast thou clothed his neck with a cheerful tremor?"

{p} Bochart, Bootius, &c.

Job 39:20

Ver. 20. Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper?.... Which is frightened at every noise, and at any approach of men; but not so the horse; or canst thou move him, or cause him to skip and jump, or rather leap like a grasshopper? that is, hast thou given, or canst thou give him the faculty of leaping over hedges and ditches, for which the horse is famous? so Neptune's war horses are said {q} to be euskarymoi, good leapers;

the glory of his nostrils [is] terrible: which may be understood of his sneezing, snorting, pawing, and neighing, when his nostrils are broad, spread, and enlarged; and especially when enraged and in battle, when he foams and fumes, and his breath comes out of his nostrils like smoke {r}, and is very terrible.

{q} Homeri Iliad. 13. v. 31. {r} "Iguescunt patulae nares". Claudian. in 4. Consul. Honor.

Job 39:21

Ver. 21. He paweth in the valley,.... Where armies are usually pitched and set in battle army, and especially the cavalry, for which the valley is most convenient; and here the horse is impatient of engaging, cannot stand still, but rises up with his fore feet and paws and prances, and, as the word signifies, digs the earth and makes it hollow, by a continual striking upon it; so generally horses are commonly described in this manner {s};

and rejoiceth in [his] strength; of which he is sensible, and glories in it; marches to the battle with pride and stateliness, defying, as it were, the enemy, and as if sure of victory, of which he has knowledge when obtained; for Lactantius says {t} of horses, when conquerors they exult, when conquered they grieve; it has its name in the Hebrew language from rejoicing {u};

he goeth on to meet the armed men; without any fear or dread of them, as follows.

{s} "Cavatque tellurem". Virgil. Georgic. l. 3. v. 87. {t} Institut. l. 3. c. 8. {u} vwv "gavisus est". Vid. Buxtorf. in voce owo.

Job 39:22

Ver. 22. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted,.... At those things which cause fear and fright to men; as arms, though ever so terrible, and armies, though never so numerous;

neither turneth he back from the sword; the naked sword, when it is drawn against him, and ready to be thrust into him; the horse being so bold and courageous was with the Egyptians a symbol of courage and boldness {v}.

{v} Clement. Alex. Stromat. l. 5. p. 567.

Job 39:23

Ver. 23. The quiver rattleth against him,.... The quiver is what arrows are put into and carried in, and seems here to be put for arrows, which being shot by the enemy come whizzing about him, but do not intimidate him; unless this is to be understood of arrows rattling in the quiver when carried by the rider "upon him", so some render the last word; and thus Homer {w} and Virgil {x} speak of the rattling quiver and sounding arrows in it, as carried on the back or shoulder; but the first sense seems best, in which another poet uses it {y};

the glittering spear and the shield; the lance or javelin, as Mr. Broughton renders it, and others; that is, he does not turn back from these, nor is he frightened at them when they are pointed to him or flung at him; so Aelianus {z} speaks of the Persians training their horses and getting them used to noises, that in battle they might not be frightened at the clashing of arms, of swords and shields against each other; in like manner as our war horses are trained, not to start at the firing of a gun, or the explosion of a cannon.

{w} Iliad. 1. v. 4. {x} "Pharetramqne sonantem". Aeneid. 9. v. 666. {y} "---- audito sonitu per inane pharetrae". Ovid. Metamorph. l. 6. v. 230. {z} De Animal. l. 16. c. 25.

Job 39:24

Ver. 24. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage,.... Being so eager for the battle, and so full of fierceness and rage, he bounds the plain with such swiftness that he seems rather to swallow up the ground than to run upon it;

neither believeth he that [it is] the sound of the trumpet; for joy at hearing it; or he will not trust to his ears, but will see with his eyes whether the battle is ready, and therefore pushes forward. Mr. Broughton and others read it, "he will not stand still at the noise of the trumpet"; and the word signifies firm and stable, as well as to believe; when he hears the trumpet sound, the alarm of war, as a preparation for the battle, he knows not how to {a} stand; there is scarce any holding him in, but he rushes into the battle at once, **Jer 8:6**.

{a} "Stare loco nescit". Virgil. Georgic. l. 3. v. 84. "Ut fremit acer equus", &c. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 3. Fab. 10. v. 704.

Job 39:25

Ver. 25. He saith among the trumpets, ha, ha,.... As pleased with the sound of them, rejoicing thereat, and which he signifies by neighing;

and he smelleth the battle afar off; which respects not so much the distance of place as of time; he perceives beforehand that it is near, by the preparations making for it, and particularly by what follows; so Pliny {b} says of horses, they presage a fight. The thunder of the captains, and the shouting; they understand an engagement is just about to start by the loud and thundering voice of the captains, exhorting and spiralling up their men, and giving them the word of command; and by the clamorous shout of the soldiers echoing to the speech of their captains; and which are given forth upon an onset, both to animate one another, and intimidate the enemy. Bootius {c} observes, that Virgil {d} and Oppianus {e} say most of the same things in praise of the horse which are here said, and seem to have taken them from hence; and some {f} give the horse the preference to the lion, which, when it departs from a fight, never returns, whereas the horse will. This is an emblem both of good men, Zec 10:3; and of bad men, **Jer 8:6**.

{b} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 42. {c} Animadvers. Sacr. l. 3. c. 6. s. 1. {d} Georgic. l. 3. {e} Cyneget. l. 1. {f} Horus Aegypt. apud Steeb. Coelum Sephirot. Heb. c. 6. s. 1. p. 106.

Job 39:26

Ver. 26. Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom,.... With so much swiftness, steadiness, and constancy, until she has seized her prey. The Vulgate Latin version and some others read, "does she become feathered", or "begin to have feathers?" and so Bochart: either when first fledged; or when, as it is said {d} she casts her old feathers and gets new ones, and this every year. Now neither her flight nor her feathers, whether at one time or the other, are owing to men, but to the Lord, who gives both;

[and] stretch her wings towards the south? Being a bird of passage, she moves from colder climates towards the winter, and steers her course to the south towards warmer ones {e}; which she does by an instinct in nature, put into her by the Lord, and not through the instruction of man. Or, as some say, casting off her old feathers, she flies towards the south for warmth; and that her feathers may be cherished with the heat, and grow the sooner and better. Hence it is, perhaps, as Aelianus reports {f}, that this bird was by the Egyptians consecrated to Apollo or the sun; it being able to look upon the rays of it wistly, constantly, and easily, without being hurt thereby. Porphyry {g} says, that this bird is not only acceptable to the sun; but has divinity in it, according to the Egyptians; and is no other than Osiris, or the sun represented by the image of it {h}. Strabo {i} speaks of a city of the hawks, where this creature is worshipped. It has its name in Greek from the sacredness of it; and according to Hesiod {k}, is very swift, and has large wings. It is called wkupterov, swift in flying, by Manetho {l}; and by Homer, wkistov petehnwn, the swiftest of fowls {m}. It has its name from hun, to "fly", as Kimchi observes {n}. Cyril of Jerusalem, on the authority of the Greek version, affirms {o}, that by a divine instinct or order, the hawk, stretching out its wings, stands in the midst of the air unmoved, looking towards the south. All accounts show it to be a bird that loves warmth, which is the reason of the expression in the text.

{d} Aelian. de Animal. l. 12. c. 4. {e} Ibid. l. 2. c. 43. Plin. l. 10. c. 8. {f} De Animal. l. 7. c. 9. & l. 10. c. 14. {g} De Abstinentia, l. 4. s. 9. {h} Kircher. Prodrom. Copt. p. 232. {i} Geograph. l. 17. p. 562. {k} Opera & Dies, l. 1. v. 208. {l} Apotelesm. l. 5. v. 176. {m} Iliad. 15. v. 238. Odyss 13. v. 87. {n} Sepher Shorash. rad. hun. {o} Cateches. 9. s. 6.

Job 39:27

Ver. 27. Doth the eagle mount up at thy command,.... No; but by an instinct which God has placed in it, and a capacity he has given it above all other birds.

They take a circuit in their flight, and bend about before they soar aloft: but the eagle steers its course directly upwards towards heaven, till out of sight; and, as Apuleius says {p}, up to the clouds, where it rains and snows, and beyond which there is no place for thunder and lightning;

and make her nest on high? so the philosopher says {q}; eagles make their nests not in plains, but in high places, especially in cragged rocks, as in Job 39:28.

{p} Florida 1. {q} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 32.

Job 39:28

Ver. 28. She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. Where she and her young are safe: so Pliny {r} says, eagles make their nests in rocks, even in the precipices of them, as the philosopher quoted in the preceding verse; and here on the tooth, edge, or precipice of the rock, which is inaccessible, and so like a strong fortified place.

{r} Nat. Hist. l. 10. 3.

Job 39:29

Ver. 29. From thence she seeketh the prey,.... From the high rock; from whence she can look down into valleys, and even into the sea; and spy what is for her purpose, and descend and seize upon them; as lambs, fawns, geese, shellfish, &c. though they may lie in the most hidden and secret places. Wherefore in the original text it is, "she diggeth the prey or food" {s}; as treasure hid in secret is dug or diligently searched for; and for which she is qualified by the sharpness of her sight, as follows:

[and] her eyes behold afar off; from the high rocks and higher clouds, even from the high sky, as Aelianus {t} expresses it; and who observes that she is the most sharp sighted of all birds; and so, Homer {u} says, some affirm.

{s} lka rpx "fodit escam"; Montanus, Mercerus. {t} De Animal. l. 2. c. 26. & l. 1. c. 42. Aristot. & Plin. ut supra. (Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 32. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 3.) {u} Iliad. 17. v. 674, 675. so Diodor. Sic. l. 3. p. 145.

Job 39:30

Ver. 30. Her young ones also suck up blood,.... As well as herself, being brought up to it by her. The eagle cares not for water, but drinks the blood of her prey; and so her young ones after her, as naturalists report {w}. And Aelianus says {x} the same of the hawk, that it eats no seeds, but devours flesh and drinks blood, and nourishes her young ones with the same.

And where the slain are, there is she; where there has been a battle, and carcasses left on the field, the eagles will gather to them. This is particularly true of that kind of eagles called vulture eagles, as Aristotle {y} and Pliny {z} observe; see Mt 24:28. Now since Job was so ignorant of the nature of these creatures, and incapable of governing and directing them; and what they had of any excellency were of God, and not of him, nor of any man; how unfit must he be to dispute with God, and contend with him about his works of providence? which to convince him of was the design of this discourse about the creatures; and which had its intended effect, as appears in the next chapter.

{w} Aristot. de Animal. l. 8. c. 3. 18. Aelianus, l. 2. c. 26. {x} Ib. l. 10. c. 14. {y} Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 32. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 3.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 40:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 40

In this chapter Job is called upon to give in his answer, Job 40:1, which he does in the most humble manner, acknowledging his vileness and folly, Job 40:3; and then the Lord proceeds to give him further conviction of his superior justice and power, Job 40:6; and one thing he proposes to him, to humble the proud, if he could, and then he would own his own right hand could save him, Job 40:10; and observes to him another instance of his power in a creature called behemoth, which he had made, and gives a description of, Job 40:15.

Ver. 1. Moreover the Lord answered Job,.... The Lord having discoursed largely of the works of nature, in order to reconcile the mind of Job to his works of providence, stopped and made a pause for a little space, that Job might answer if he thought fit; but he being entirely silent, the Lord began again:

and said; as follows:

Job 40:2

Ver. 2. Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct [him]?.... Is he capable of it? He ought to be that takes upon him to dispute with God, to object or reply to him; that brings a charge against him, enters the debate, and litigates a point with him; which Job wanted to do. But could he or any other instruct him, who is the God of knowledge, the all wise and only wise God; who gives man wisdom, and teaches him knowledge? What folly is it to pretend to instruct him! Or can such an one be "instructed?" as the Targum: he is not in the way of instruction; he that submits to the chastising hand of God may be instructed thereby, but not he that contends with him; see Ps 94:12. Or should he be one that is instructed? no, he ought to be an instructor, and not one instructed; a teacher, and not one that is taught; he should be above all instruction from God or man that will dispute with the Almighty, The word for instruct has the signification of chastisement, because instruction sometimes comes that way; and then the sense either is, shall a man contend with the Almighty that chastises him? Does it become a son or a servant to strive against a parent or a master that corrects him? Or does not he deserve to be chastised that acts such a part? Some derive the word from one that signifies to remove or depart, and give the sense, shall the abundance, the all sufficiency of God, go from him to another, to a man; and so he, instead of God, be the all sufficient one? Or rather the meaning of the clause is, has there not been much, enough, and more than enough said, Job, to chastise thee, and convince thee of thy mistakes? must more be said? is there any need of it?

he that reproveth God, let him answer it; he that reproves God, for his words, or works, or ways, finding fault with either of them, ought to answer to the question now put; or to any or all of those in the preceding chapters, and not be silent as Job now was.

Job 40:3

Ver. 3. Then Job answered the Lord,.... Finding that he was obliged to answer, he did, but with some reluctance:

and said; as follows:

Job 40:4

Ver. 4. Behold, I am vile,.... Or "light" {a}; which may have respect either to his words and arguments, which he thought had force in them, but now he saw they had none; or to his works and actions, the integrity of his life, and the uprightness of his ways, which he imagined were weighty and of great importance, but now being weighed in the balances of justice were found wanting; or it may refer to his original meanness and distance from God, being dust and ashes, and nothing in comparison of him; and so the Septuagint version is, "I am nothing"; see Isa 40:17; or rather to the original vileness and sinfulness of his nature he had now a sight of, and saw how he had been breaking forth in unbecoming expressions concerning God and his providence: the nature of man is exceeding vile and sinful; his heart desperately wicked; his thoughts, and the imaginations of them, evil, and that continually; his mind and conscience are defiled; his affections inordinate, and his understanding and will sadly depraved; he is vile in soul and body; of all which an enlightened man is convinced, and will acknowledge;

what shall I answer thee? I am not able to answer thee, who am but dust and ashes; what more can I say than to acknowledge my levity, vanity, and vileness? he that talked so big, and in such a blustering manner of answering God, as in Job 13:22; now has nothing to say for himself;

I will lay mine hand upon my mouth; impose silence upon himself, and as it were lay a restraint upon himself from speaking: it looks as if there were some workings in Job's heart; he thought he could say something, and make some reply, but durst not, for fear of offending yet more and more, and therefore curbed it in; see Ps 39:1.

{a} ytlq "levis sum", Cocceius, Michaelis; "leviter locutus sum", V. L.

Job 40:5

Ver. 5. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer,.... Some think this refers to what he had just now said of his vileness, he had owned that, and that was all he had to say, or would say, he would give no other answer; Jarchi says, some suppose he has respect to his words in **Job 9:22**;

yea, twice; but I will proceed no further; the meaning seems to be, that he who had once and again, or very often, at least in some instances, spoken very imprudently and indecently, for the future would take care not to speak in such a manner: for this confession was not quite free and full; and therefore the Lord takes him in hand again, to bring him to make a more full and ingenuous one, as he does in
Job 42:1.

Job 40:6

Ver. 6. Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind,.... Some think that the whirlwind ceased while the Lord spake the words in
Job 40:2; which encouraged Job to make the answer he did; but others are of opinion that it continued, and now increased, and was more boisterous than before. The Targum calls it the whirlwind of tribulation: comfort does not always follow immediately on first convictions; Job, though humbled, was not yet humbled enough: God will have a fuller confession of sin from him: it was not sufficient to say he was vile, he must declare his sorrow for his sin, his abhorrence of it, and of himself for it, and his repentance of it; and that he had said things of God he ought not to have said, and which he understood not; and though he had said he would answer no more, God will make him say more, and therefore continued the whirlwind, and to speak out of it; for he had more to say to him, and give him further proof of his power to his full conviction;

and said; as follows.

Job 40:7

Ver. 7. Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and, declare thou unto me,.... And prepare to give an answer to what should be demanded of him. The same way of speaking is used in Job 38:3;
See Gill on "Job 38:3".

Job 40:8

Ver. 8. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment?.... The decrees and purposes of God concerning his dealings with men, particularly the afflictions of them, which are framed with the highest wisdom and reason, and according to the strictest justice, and can never be frustrated or made void; or the sentence of God concerning them, that is gone out of his mouth and cannot be altered; or the execution of it, which cannot be hindered: it respects the wisdom of God in the government of the world, as Aben Ezra observes, and the particular dealings of his providence with men, which ought to be submitted to; to do otherwise is for a man to set up his own judgment against the Lord's, which is as much as in him lies to disannul it; whereas God is a God of judgment, and his judgment is according to truth, and in righteousness, and will take place, let men do or say what they please;

wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous? Is there no other way of vindicating thine own innocence and integrity, without charging me with unrighteousness; at least saying such things as are judged by others to be an arraignment of my justice, wisdom, and goodness, in the government of the world? Now though Job did not expressly and directly condemn the Lord, and arraign his justice, yet when he talked of his own righteousness and integrity, he was not upon his guard as he should have been with respect to the justice of God in his afflictions; for though a man may justify his own character when abused, he should take care to speak well of God; and be it as it will between man and man, God is not to be brought into the question; and though some of his providences are not so easily reconciled to his promises, yet let God be true and every man a liar.

Job 40:9

Ver. 9. Hast thou an arm like God?.... Such power as he has, which is infinite, almighty, and uncontrollable, and therefore there is no contending with him; as he has an arm on which good men may lean on and trust in, and by which they are supported, protected, and saved, so he has an arm to crush like a moth all that strive with him or against him;

or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? thunder is his voice; see Job 37:4, &c. and is expressive of his power, Job 26:14; and his powerful voice may be observed in calling all things out of nothing into being in creation; in commanding and ordering all things in providence according to his pleasure; and in quickening sinners through his Gospel, by his Spirit and grace in conversion, and will be in calling men out of their graves and summoning them to judgment at the last day. God can both overpower and out voice men, and therefore it is in vain to oppose him and contend with him.

Job 40:10

Ver. 10. Deck thyself now [with] majesty and excellency,.... With excellent majesty, as I am decked and clothed, Ps 93:1;

and array thyself with glory and beauty; appear in the most glorious and splendid manner thou canst, make the best figure thou art able, put on royal robes, and take thy seat and throne, and sit as a king or judge in state and pomp, and exert thyself to do the following things; or take my seat and throne as the judge of the whole earth, and try if thou canst govern the world better than I do; for these and the expressions following are said in an ironic manner.

Job 40:11

Ver. 11. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath,.... Work thyself up into a passion, at least seemingly; put on all the airs of a wrathful and enraged king on a throne of state, whose wrath is like the roaring of a lion, and as messengers of death; pour out menaces plentifully, threatening what thou wilt do; and try if by such means thou canst humble the spirit of a proud man, as follows;

and behold everyone [that is] proud, and abase him; look sternly at him, put on a fierce, furious, and menacing countenance, and see if thou canst dash a proud man out of countenance, and humble him before thee, as I am able; among the many instances of divine power the Lord settles upon this one, and proposes it to Job to try his skill and power upon, the humbling of a proud man.

Job 40:12

Ver. 12. Look on everyone [that is] proud, [and] bring him low,.... As the Lord often does; see **Isa 2:11**; this is the same as before;

and tread down the wicked in their place; the same with the proud, for pride makes men wicked; it is a sin, and very odious in the sight of God, and is highly resented by him; he resists the proud: now Job is bid, when he has brought proud men low, and laid their honour in the dust, to keep them there, to trample upon them, and tread them as mire in the street; and that in their own place, or wherever he should find them; the Septuagint render it "immediately"; see Isa 28:3.

Job 40:13

Ver. 13. Hide them in the dust together,.... Either in the dust of death, that they may be seen no more in this world, in the same place and circumstances where they showed their pride and haughtiness; or in the dust of the grave, and let them have an inglorious burial, like that of malefactors thrown into some common pit together; as, when multitudes are slain in battle, a large pit is dug, and the bodies are cast in together without any order or decency; or it may be rendered "alike" {b}, let them be treated equally alike, no preference given to one above another;

[and] bind their faces in secret; alluding, as it is thought, to malefactors when condemned and about to be executed, whose faces are then covered, as Haman's was, **Es 7:8**; or to the dead when buried, whose faces are bound with napkins, as Lazarus's was, Joh 11:44; the meaning of all these expressions is, that Job would abase and destroy, if he could, every proud man he met with, as God does, in the course of his providence, sooner or later. There had been instances of divine power in this way before, or in the times of Job, which might come to his knowledge; as the casting down of the proud angels out of heaven, **2Pe 2:4**; and of casting proud Adam out of paradise, **Ge 3:24**; the drowning the proud giants of the old world, **Ge 7:23**; and of dispersing the proud builders of Babel, Ge 11:8; and of destroying Sodom and Gomorrah by fire, Ge 19:24, one of whose reigning sins was pride,
Eze 16:49; and of drowning proud Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea,
Ex 15:4: which last seems to have been done much about the time Job lived.

{b} dxy "pariter", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens.

Job 40:14

Ver. 14. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee. From all his enemies temporal and spiritual, and out of all evils and calamities whatsoever; and that he stood in no need of his help and assistance, yea, that he was a match for him, and might be allowed to contend with him; but whereas he was not able to do the above things proposed to him, it could not be admitted that his own right hand could save him; and therefore ought quietly to submit to the sovereignty of God over him, and to all the dispensations of his providence, and be humbled under his mighty hand, since no hand but his could save him; as no man's right hand can save him from temporal evils and enemies, and much less from spiritual ones, or with an everlasting salvation; nor any works of righteousness done by him, only the arm of the Lord has wrought salvation, and his right hand only supports and saves. Two instances are given in this and the following chapter, the one of a land animal, the other of a sea animal, as is generally supposed; or it may be of amphibious ones, that live both on land and water.

Job 40:15

Ver. 15. Behold, now behemoth,.... The word is plural, and signifies beasts, and may be used to denote the chiefest and largest of beasts, and therefore is commonly understood of the elephant; and certain it is that a single beast is described in the following account, and so the word is rendered, Ps 73:22; The word is here rendered by the Septuagint yhria, "beasts"; which is the word used by the Greeks {c} for elephants as "belluae", a word of the same signification, is by the Latins {d}: and so the Sabines called an elephant "barrus", and the Indians "barro" {e}, reb, a "beast"; and it may be observed, that ivory is called "shenhabbim", 1Ki 10:22; that is, "shenhabehim", "behem" or "behemoth" {f}, the tooth of the beast: and it may be also observed, that Seneca {g} says, that the Nile produces beasts like the sea; meaning particularly the crocodile and hippopotamus. Bochart dissents from the commonly received opinion of the elephant being meant; and thinks the "hippopotamus", or river horse, is intended so called from its having a head like a horse; and is said to have a mane, and to neigh like one, and to bear some resemblance to it in its snout, eyes, ears, and back {h}. And the reasons that celebrated author has given for this his opinion have prevailed on many learned men to follow him; and there are some things in the description of behemoth, as will be observed, which seem better to agree with the river horse than with the elephant. It is an amphibious creature, and sometimes lives upon the land, and sometimes in the water; and by various {i} writers is often called a beast and four footed one:

which I made with thee; or as well as thee; it being equally the work of my hands, a creature as thou art: or made on the continent, as than art, so Aben Ezra; and made on the same day man was made; which those observe, who understand it of the elephant; or, which cometh nearest to thee, the elephant being, as Pliny {k} says, the nearest to man in sense; and no beast more prudent, as Cicero {l} affirms. But the above learned writer, who interprets it of the river horse, takes the meaning of this phrase to be; that it was a creature in Job's neighbourhood, an inhabitant of the river Nile in Egypt, to which Arabia joined, where Job lived; which is testified by many writers {m}: and therefore it is thought more probable that a creature near at hand, and known should be instanced in, and not one that it may be was never seen nor known by Job. But both Diodorus Siculus {n} and Strabo {o} speak of herds of elephants in Arabia, and of that as abounding: with them; and of various places called from them, and the hunting of them, and even of men from eating them;

he eateth grass as an one; which is true both of the elephant and of the river horse: that a land animal should eat grass is not so wonderful; but that a creature who lives in the water should come out of it and eat grass is very strange and worthy of admiration, it is observed: and that the river horse feeds in corn fields and on grass many writers {p} assure us; yea, in the river it feeds not on fishes, but on the roots of the water lily, which fishermen therefore use to bait their hooks with to take it. Nor is it unlike an ox in its shape, and in some parts of its body: hence the Italians call it "bomaris", the "sea ox"; but it is double the size of an ox {q}. Olaus Magnus {r} speaks of a sea horse, found between Britain and Norway; which has the head of a horse, and neighs like one; has cloven feet with hoofs like a cow; and seeks its food both in the sea and on the land, and grows to the bigness of an ox, and has a forked tail like a fish.

(See Definition for 0930. Editor)

{c} Suidas in voce yhria. Plutarch in Eumenc. {d} Terent. Eunuch. Act. 3. Sc. 1. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 3. {e} Isidor. Origin. l. 12, c. 2. Vid. Horat. Epod. 12. v. 1. {f} Hiller. Oaomastic, Sacr. p. 434. {g} Nat. Quaest. l. 4. c. 2. {h} Vid. lsidor. Origin. l. 12. c. 6. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 25. Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 7. {i} Herodot. Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 71. Plin. ib. Ammian, Marcellin. l. 22. Leo African. Descript. African, l. 9. p. 758. {k} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 1. {l} De Natur. Deor. l. 1. {m} Solin. Polyhist. c. 45. Aelian. de Animal. l. 5. c. 53. Philo de Praemiis, p. 924. Plin. Afric. ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 1.) {n} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 136. & l. 3. p. 173, 174, 175. {o} Geograph. l. 16. p. 531, 533. {p} Diodor. Sic. l. 1. p. 31. Aelian. Plin. Solin. Ammian. ut supra. {q} Ludolf. Ethiop. Hist. l. 1. c. 11. {r} De Ritu Septent. Gent. l. 21. c. 26.

Job 40:16

Ver. 16. Lo now, his strength [is] in his loins,.... The strength of the elephant is well known, being able to carry a castle on its back, with a number of men therein; but what follows does not seem so well to agree with it;

and his force [is] in the navel of his belly; since the belly of the elephant is very tender; by means of which the rhinoceros, its enemy, in its fight with it, has the advantage of it, by getting under its belly, and ripping it up with its horn {s}. In like manner Eleazar the Jew killed one of the elephants of Antiochus, by getting between its legs, and thrusting his sword into its navel {t}; which fell and killed him with the weight of it. On the other hand, the "river horse" is covered with a skin all over, the hardest and strongest of all creatures {u}, as not to be pierced with spears or arrows {w}; and of it dried were made helmets, shields, spears, and polished darts {x}. That which Monsieur Thevenot {y} saw had several shot fired at it before it fell, for the bullets hardly pierced through its skin. We made several shot at him, says another traveller {z}, but to no purpose; for they would glance from him as from a wall. And indeed the elephant is said to have such a hard scaly skin as to resist the spear {a}: and Pliny {b}, though he speaks of the hide of the river horse being so thick that spears are made of it; yet of the hide of the elephant, as having targets made of that, which are impenetrable.

{s} Aelian. de Amimal. l. 17. c. 44. Plin. l. 8. c. 10, 20. Vid. Solin. c. 38. Diodor. Sic. l. 3. p. 167. & Strabo. Geograph. l. 16. p. 533. {t} Joseph. Ben Gorion. Hist. Heb. l. 3. c. 20. 1 Maccab. vi. 46. {u} Diodor. Sic. ut supra. (l. 3. p. 167) Plin. l. 8. c. 25. {w} Ptolem. Geograph. l. 7. c. 2. Fragment. Ctesiae ad Calcem Herodot. p. 701. Ed. Gronov. Boius apud Kircher. China cum Momument. p. 193. {x} Herodot. ut supra. (p. 701) Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 7. Plin. l. 11. c. 39. {y} Travels, part 1. c. 72. {z} Dampier's Voyages, vol. 2. part 2. p. 105. {a} Heliodor. Ethiop. Hist. l. 9. c. 18. {b} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 39. Vid. Vossium in Melam. de Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 5. p. 28.

Job 40:17

Ver. 17. He moveth his tail like a cedar,.... To which it is compared, not for the length and largeness of it; for the tail both of the elephant and of the river horse is short; though Vartomannus {c} says, the tail of the elephant is like a buffalo's, and is four hands long, and thin of hair: but because of the smoothness, roundness, thickness, and firmness of it; such is the tail of the river horse, being like that of a hog or boar {d}; which is crooked, twisted, and which it is said to turn back and about at pleasure, as the word used is thought to signify. Aben Ezra interprets it, "maketh to stand": that is, stiff and strong, and firm like a cedar. One writer {e} speaks of the horse of the Nile, as having a scaly tail; but he seems to confound it with the sea horse. Junius interprets it of its penis, its genital part; to which the Targum in the King's Bible is inclined: and Cicero {f} says, the ancients used to call that the tail; but that of the elephant, according to Aristotle {g}, is but small, and not in proportion to the size of its body; and not in sight, and therefore can hardly be thought to be described; though the next clause seems to favour this sense:

the sinews of his stones are wrapped together; if by these are meant the testicles, as some think, so the Targums; the sinews of which were wreathed, implicated and ramified, like branches of trees, as Montanus renders it. Bochart interprets this of the sinews or nerves of the river horse, which having such plenty of them, are exceeding strong; so that, as some report, this creature will with one foot sink a boat {h}; I have known him open his mouth, says a traveller {i}, and set one tooth on the gunnel of a boat, and another on the second strake from the keel, more than four feet distant, and there bite a hole through the plank, and sink the boat.

{c} Navigat. l. 4. c. 9. {d} Aristot. Plin. Solin. & Isidore ut supra. (See Job 40:16.) {e} Nicet. Choniat. apud Fabrit. Gr. Bibliothec. vol. 6. p. 410. {f} Epist. l. 9. ep. 22. {g} Hist. Amimal. l. 2. c. 1. {h} Apud Hierozoic, par. 2. l. 5. c. 14. col. 758. {i} Dampier's Voyages, vol. 2. part 2. p. 105.

Job 40:18

Ver. 18. His bones [are as] strong pieces of brass: his bones [are] as bars of iron. Than which nothing is stronger. The repetition is made for greater illustration and confirmation; but what is said is not applicable to the elephant, whose bones are porous and rimous, light and spongy for the most part, as appears from the osteology {k} of it; excepting its teeth, which are the ivory; though the teeth of the river horse are said to exceed them in hardness {l}; and artificers say {m} they are wrought with greater difficulty than ivory. The ancients, according to Pausanias {n}, used them instead of it; who relates, that the face of the image of the goddess Cybele was made of them: and Kircher {o} says, in India they make beads, crucifixes, and statues of saints of them; and that they are as hard or harder than a flint, and fire may be struck out of them. So the teeth of the morss, a creature of the like kind in the northern countries, are valued by the inhabitants as ivory {p}, for hardness, whiteness, and weight, beyond it, and are dearer and much traded in; See Gill on "Job 40:20"; but no doubt not the teeth only, but the other bones of the creature in the text are meant.

{k} In Philosoph. Transact. vol. 5. p. 155, 156. {l} Odoardus Barbosa apud Bochart. ut supra. (Apud Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 14. col. 758.) {m} Diepenses apud ib. {n} Arcadica, sive, l. 8. p. 530. {o} China cum Monument. p. 193. {p} Olaus Magnus, ut supra, (De Ritu. Septent. Gent.) l. 2. c. 19. Voyage to Spitzbergen, p. 115.

Job 40:19

Ver. 19. He [is] the chief of the ways of God,.... Or the beginning of them, that is, of the works of God in creation; which must be restrained to animals, otherwise there were works wrought before any of them were created. There were none made before the fifth day of the creation, and on that day was the river horse made; in which respect it has the preference to the elephant, not made till the sixth day. But if this phrase is expressive of the superior excellency of behemoth over other works of God, as it seems to be, it must be limited to the kind of which it is; otherwise man is the chief of all God's ways or works, made either on the fifth or sixth day: and so as the elephant may be observed to be the chief of the beasts of the earth, or of land animals, for its largeness and strength, its sagacity, docility, gentleness, and the like; so the river horse may be said to be the chief of its kind, of the aquatic animals, or of the amphibious ones, for the bulk of its body, which is not unlike that of the elephant, as says Diodorus Siculus {q}; and it has been by some called the Egyptian elephant {r}; and also from its great sagacity, of which instances are given by some writers {s}. However, it is one of the chief works of God, or a famous, excellent, and remarkable one, which may be the sense of the expression; see Nu 24:20. It might be remarked in favour of the elephant, that it seems to have its name from Pla, the first and chief; as the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet is called "aleph"; unless it should have its name from this root, on account of its docility;

he that made him can make his sword to approach [unto him]; not the sword of God, as if this creature could not be killed by any but by him that made it; for whether the elephant or river horse be understood, they are both to be taken and slain: but the sword of behemoth is that which he himself is furnished with; which some understand of the trunk of the elephant, with which he defends himself and annoys others; but that has no likeness of a sword. Bochart {t} renders the word by "harpe", which signifies a crooked instrument, sickle or scythe; and interprets it of the teeth of the river horse, which are sharp and long, and bent like a scythe. That which Thevenot {u} saw had four great teeth in the lower jaw, half a foot long, two whereof were crooked; and one on each side of the jaw; the other two were straight, and of the same length as the crooked, but standing out in the length: see the figure of it in Scheuchzer {w}; by which it also appears to have six teeth. Another traveller says {x}, of the teeth of the sea horse, that they are round like a bow, and about sixteen inches long, and in the biggest part more than six inches about: but another relation {y} agrees more nearly with Thevenot and Scheuchzer; that four of its teeth are longer than the rest, two in the upper jaw, one on each side, and two more in the under; these last are four or five inches long, the other two shorter; with which it mows down the corn and grass in great quantities: so that Diodorus Siculus {z} observes, that if this animal was very fruitful, and brought forth many young and frequently, the fields in Egypt would be utterly destroyed. This interpretation agrees with what follows.

{q} Ut supra. (Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 136. & l. 3. p. 173. 174. 175.) {r} Achilles Tatius, l. 4. {s} Ammian. Marcellin. Plin. Solin. ut supra. Vid. Plin. l. 28. c. 8. {t} Ut supra, (Apud Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 14.) col. 760. {u} Travels, part 1. c. 72. {w} Physic. Sacr. tab. 532. {x} Dampier's Voyages, vol. 2. part 2. p. 105. {y} Capt. Rogers apud Dampier, ib. p. 106. {z} Ut supra. (Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 136. & l. 3. p. 173. 174. 175.)

Job 40:20

Ver. 20. Surely the mountains bring him forth food,.... Grass, which grows on mountains, and is the food of the river horse as well as of the elephant; and therefore is furnished with teeth like a scythe to mow it down; and it is not a small quantity that will suffice it, mountains only can supply it; and marvellous it is that a creature bred in a river should come out of it to seek its food on mountains. There is a creature in the northern parts, as in Russia, Greenland, &c. which is called morss and sea morss, and by the description of it is much like the river horse, of the size of an ox, and having an head like one, with two large long teeth standing out of its upper jaw, and an hairy skin {a}, said to be an inch thick, and so tough that no lance will enter it {b}; it comes out of the sea, and by its teeth gets up to the tops of mountains, and having fed on grass rolls itself down again into the sea; and this it does by putting its hinder feet to its teeth, and so falls from the mountain with great celerity, as on a sledge {c};

where all the beasts of the field play; skip and dance, and delight in each other, being in no fear of behemoth; whether understood of the elephant or river horse; since neither of them are carnivorous creatures that feed on other animals, but on grass only; and therefore the beasts of the field may feed with them quietly and securely. Pliny {d} says of the elephant, that meeting with cattle in the fields, it will make signs to them not to be afraid of it, and so they will go in company together.

{a} Olaus Magus ut supra, (De Ritu. Septent. Gent.) l. 21. c. 19. Vid. Bochart. ut supra, (Apud Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 14.) col. 763. Eden's Travels, p. 318. {b} See the North West Fox, p. 232. Voyage to Spitzbergen, p. 115, 120. Supplement, p. 194. {c} Olaus Magnus, ut supra, (De Ritu. Septent. Gent. l. 21. c. 19.) & Eden's Travels, ut supra. (p. 318.) {d} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 7.

Job 40:21

Ver. 21. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens. This may be thought to agree very well with the river horse, the inhabitant of the Nile, where reeds in great plenty grew, and adjoining to which were fenny and marshy places, and shady trees; and, as historians relate {e}, this creature takes its lodging among high reeds, and in shady places; yea, the reeds and sugar canes, and the leaves of the papyrus, are part of the food on which it lives; and hence the hunters of them sometimes cover their bait with a reed to take them; though it must be allowed that the elephant delights to be about rivers, and in clayey and fenny places {f}, and therefore Aelianus {g} says it may be called the fenny animal.

{e} Ammian. Marcellin. l. 22. Bellonius & Achilles Tatius apud Bochart ut supra. (Apud Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 14. col. 760.) {f} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 46. Plin. l. 8. c. 10. Aelian. de Animal. l. 9. c. 56. {g} Ibid. l. 9. c. 24.

Job 40:22

Ver. 22. The shady trees cover him [with] their shadow,.... Under which it lies, as in Job 40:21; which is thought not so well to agree with the elephant, since, according to Aelianus {h} and other writers, it lies not down, at least but rarely, but sleeps standing; it being very troublesome to it to lie down and rise up again; and besides it is represented by some authors {i} as higher than the trees, and therefore this is supposed to agree better with the river horse; especially since it follows, the willows of the brook compass him about; or the willows of the Nile, as some choose to render it; which would put it out of all doubt that the river horse is intended, if it could be established, it being an inhabitant of that river; and yet the above writer {k} speaks of elephants, when grown old, seeking large thick and shady woods to take up their abode in.

{h} Ibid. (Aelian. de Animal.) c. 31. {i} Ibid. l. 7. c. 6. {k} Ibid. c. 2.

Job 40:23

Ver. 23. Behold, he drinketh up a river, [and] hasteth not,.... The elephant is indeed a very thirsty animal, and drinks largely; the philosopher {l} says it drinks nine Macedonian bushels at a feeding, and that it will drink fourteen Macedonian measures of water at once, and eight more at noon; but to drink up a river seems to be too great an hyperbole; wherefore the words may be rendered, "Behold, let a river oppress him", or "bear" ever so hard upon him, and come with the greatest force and pressure on him {m}, "he hasteth not" to get out of it; or he is not frightened or troubled, as the Targum; which agrees with the river horse, who walks into the river, and proceeds on in it, with the greatest ease and unconcernedness imaginable; now and then lifting up his head above water to take breath, which he can hold a long time; whereas the elephant cannot wade in the water any longer than his trunk is above it, as the philosopher observes {n}; and Livy {o} speaks of fear and trembling seizing an elephant, when about to be carried over a river in boats;

he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan in his mouth; so bold and confident he is, and not at all disturbed with its rapidity; or "though Jordan", or rather any descending flowing stream, "gushes into his mouth", so Mr. Broughton: for perhaps Jordan might not be known by Job; nor does it seem to have any connection with the Nile, the seat of the river horse; which has such large holes in its nostrils, and out of which, water being swallowed down, he can throw it with great force. Diodorus Siculus {p} represents it as lying all day in the water, and employing itself at the bottom of it, easy, careless, and unconcerned.

{l} Aristot. ut supra. (l. 9. c. 56.) {m} Vid. Bochart. ut supra, (Apud Hierozic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 14.) col. 766. {n} Aristot. ut supra. (l. 9. c. 56.) Vid Aelian. l. 7. c. 15. {o} Hist. l. 21. c. 28. {p} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 31. Isidor. Origin. l. 12. c. 6.

Job 40:24

Ver. 24. He taketh it with his eyes,.... Or "can men take him before his eyes?" so Mr. Broughton; and others translate it to the same purpose; no, he is not to be taken openly, but privately, by some insidious crafty methods; whether it be understood of the elephant or river horse; elephants, according to Strabo {q} and Pliny {r} were taken in pits dug for them, into which they were decoyed; in like manner, according to some {s}, the river horse is taken; a pit being dug and covered with reeds and sand, it falls into it unawares;

[his] nose pierceth through snares; he discerns them oftentimes and escapes them, so that he is not easily taken in them. It is reported of the sea morss {t}, before mentioned, See Gill on "Job 40:20", that they ascend mountains in great herds, where, before they give themselves to sleep, to which they are naturally inclined, they appoint one of their number as it were a watchman; who, if he chances to sleep or to be slain by the hunter, the rest may be easily taken; but if the watchman gives warning by roaring as the manner is, the whole herd immediately awake and fall down from the mountains with great swiftness into the sea, as before described; or, as Mr. Broughton, "cannot men take him, [to pierce] his nose with many snares?" they cannot; the elephant has no nose to be pierced, unless his trunk can be called so, and no hook nor snare can be put into the nose of the river horse. Diodorus Siculus {u} says, it cannot be taken but by many vessels joining together and surrounding it, and striking it with iron hooks, to one of which ropes are fastened, and so the creature is let go till it expires. The usual way of taking it now is, by baiting the hook with the roots of water lilies, at which it will catch, and swallow the hook with it; and by giving it line enough it will roll and tumble about, until, through loss of blood, it faints and dies. The way invented by Asdrubal for killing elephants was by striking a carpenter's chopping axe into his ear {w}; the Jews {x} say a fly is a terror to an elephant, it enters into his nose and torments him grievously.

{q} Geograph. l. 15. p. 484. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 8. See Ovington's Voyage to Surat, p. 192, 193. {s} Apud Bochart. ut supra, col. 768. {t} Eden's Travels, p. 318. Supplement to the North East Voyages, p. 94. {u} Bibliothec, l. 1. p. 32. {w} Orosii Hist. l. 4. c. 18. p. 62. Liv. Hist. l. 27. c. 49. {x} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 77. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 41:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 41

A large description is here given of the leviathan, from the difficulty and danger of taking it, from whence it is inferred that none can stand before God, Job 41:1; from the several parts of him, his face, teeth, scales, eyes, mouth and neck, flesh and heart, Job 41:11; and from various wonderful terrible things said of him, and ascribed to him, Job 41:25.

Ver. 1. Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook?.... That is, draw it out of the sea or river as anglers draw out smaller fishes with a line or hook? the question suggests it cannot be done; whether by the "leviathan" is meant the whale, which was the most generally received notion; or the crocodile, as Bochart, who has been followed by many; or the "orca", a large fish of the whale kind with many teeth, as Hasaeus, it is not easy to say "Leviathan" is a compound word of than the first syllable of "thanni", rendered either a whale, or a dragon, or a serpent, and of "levi", which signifies conjunction, from the close joining of its scales, Job 41:15; the patriarch Levi had his name from the same word; see Ge 29:34; and the name bids fairest for the crocodile, and which is called "thannin", Eze 29:3. Could the crocodile be established as the "leviathan", and the behemoth as the river horse, the transition from the one to the other would appear very easy; since, as Pliny says {a}, there is a sort of a kindred between them, being of the same river, the river Nile, and so may be thought to be better known to Job than the whale; though it is not to be concealed what Pliny says {b}, that whales have been seen in the Arabian seas; he speaks of one that came into the river of Arabia, six hundred feet long, and three hundred and sixty broad. There are some things in the description of this creature that seem to agree best with the crocodile, and others that suit better with the whale, and some with neither;

or his tongue with a cord [which] thou lettest down? into the river or sea, as anglers do, with lead to it to make it sink below the surface of the water, and a quill or cork that it may not sink too deep; but this creature is not to be taken in this manner; and which may be objected to the crocodile being meant, since that has no tongue {c}, or at least so small that it is not seen, and cleaves close to its lower jaw, which never moves; and is taken with hooks and cords, as Herodotus {d}, Diodorus Siculus {e}, and Leo Africanus {f}, testify; but not so the whale.

(See definition for 03882. Editor.)

{a} Nat. Hist. l. 28. c. 8. {b} Ib. l. 32. c. 1. {c} Diodor. Sicul. l. 1. p. 31. Herodot. Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 68. Solin. c. 45. Plutarch. de Is. & Osir. Vid. Aristot. de Animal. l. 2. c. 17. & l. 4. c. 11. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 37. Thevenot, ut supra. (Travels, part 1. c. 72.) Sandys's Travels, l. 2. p. 78. {d} Ut supra, (Herodot. Euterpe, sive, l. 2.) c. 70. {e} Ut supra. (Diodor. Sicul. l. 1. p. 31.) {f} Descriptio Africae, l. 9. p. 762. See Sandy's Travels, ut supra, (l. 2.) p. 79.

Job 41:2

Ver. 2. Canst thou put an hook into his nose?.... Or a rush, that is, a rope made of rushes; for of such ropes were made, as Pliny {g} affirms;

or bore his jaw through with a thorn? as men do herrings, or such like small fish, for the convenience of carrying them, or hanging them up to dry; the whale is not to be used in such a manner: but the Tentyritae, a people in Egypt, great enemies to crocodiles, had methods of taking thorn in nets, and of binding and bridling them, and carrying them as they pleased {h}.

{g} Nat. Hist. l. 19. c. 2. {h} Strabo. Geograph. l. 17. p. 560. Aelian. de Animal. l. 10. c. 21. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 25.

Job 41:3

Ver. 3. Will he make many supplications unto thee?.... To cease pursuing him, or to let him go when taken, or to use him well and not take away his life; no, he is too spirited and stouthearted to ask any favour, it is below him;

will he speak soft [words] unto thee? smooth and flattering ones, for the above purposes? he will not: this is a figurative way of speaking.

Job 41:4

Ver. 4. Will he make a covenant with thee?.... To live in friendship or servitude, as follows;

wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? oblige him to serve thee for life, or reduce him to perpetual bondage; signifying, that he is not to be tamed or brought into subjection; which is true of the whale, but not of the crocodile; for several authors {i} speak of them as making a sort of a truce with the priests of Egypt for a certain time, and of their being tamed so as to be handled, and fed, and brought up in the house.

{i} Herodot, ut supra, (Euterpe, sive, l. 2.) c. 69. Aelian. l. 8. c. 2. & l. 10. c. 21. Solin. c. 45. Plin. l. 8. c. 46.

Job 41:5

Ver. 5. Wilt thou play with him as [with] a bird?.... In the hand or cage: leviathan plays in the sea, but there is no playing with him by land, Ps 104:26;

or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens? or young girls, as Mr. Broughton renders it; tie him in a string, as birds are for children to play with? Now, though crocodiles are very pernicious to children, and often make a prey of them when they approach too near the banks of the Nile, or whenever they have an opportunity of seizing them {k}; yet there is an instance of the child of an Egyptian woman that was brought up with one, and used to play with it {l}, though, when grown up, was killed by it; but no such instance can be given of the whale of any sort.

{k} Aelian. l. 10. c. 21. {l} Maxim. Tyr. Sermon. 38.

Job 41:6

Ver. 6. Shall thy companions make a banquet of him?.... The fishermen that join together in catching fish, shall they make a feast for joy at taking the leviathan? which suggests that he is not to be taken by them, and so they have no opportunity or occasion for a feast: or will they feed on him? the flesh of crocodiles is by some eaten, and said {m} to be very savoury, but not the flesh of the whale;

shall they part him among the merchants? this seems to favour the crocodile, which is no part of merchandise, and to be against the whale, which, at least in our age, occasions a considerable trade for the sake of the bone and oil: but perhaps, in those times and countries in which Job lived, the use of them might not be known.

{m} Leo Africanus & Aelian. ut supra. (l. 10. c. 21.)

Job 41:7

Ver. 7. Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears?] This seems not so well to agree with the whale; whose skin, and the several parts of his body, are to be pierced with harpoons and lances, such as fishermen use in taking whales; and their flesh to be cut in pieces with their knives: but better with the crocodile, whose skin is so hard, and so closely set with scales, that it is impenetrable; See Gill on "Eze 29:4". Or if the words are rendered, as by some, "wilt thou fill ships with his skin? and the fishermen's boat with his head" {n}? it makes also against the whale; for this is done continually, ships of different nations are loaded every year with its skin, flesh, and the bones of its head.

{n} Vid. Schultens in loc.

Job 41:8

Ver. 8. Lay thine hand upon him,.... If thou canst or darest. It is dangerous so to do, either to the whale or crocodile;

remember the battle; or "look for war", as Mr. Broughton renders it; expect a fight will ensue, in which thou wilt have no share with this creature:

do no more; if thou canst by any means escape, take care never to do the like again; or thou wilt never do so any more, thou wilt certainly die for it.

Job 41:9

Ver. 9. Behold, the hope of him is in vain,.... Of getting the mastery over him, or of taking him; and yet both crocodiles and whales have been taken; nor is the taking of them to be despaired of; but it seems the "orca", or the whale with many teeth, has never been taken and killed {o};

shall not [one] be cast down even at the sight of him? the sight of a whale is terrible to mariners, lest their ships should be overturned by it; and some have been so frightened at the sight of a crocodile as to lose their senses: and we read of one that was greatly terrified at seeing the shadow of one; and the creature before mentioned is supposed to be much more terrible {p}.

{o} Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 846. {p} Scheuchzer. ib.

Job 41:10

Ver. 10. None [is so] fierce that dare stir him up,.... This seems best to agree with the crocodile, who frequently lies down and sleeps on the ground {q}, and in the water by night {r}; see Eze 29:3; when it is very dangerous to arouse him; and few, if any so daring, have courage enough to do it: though whales have been seen lying near shore asleep, and looked like rocks, even forty of them together {s};

who then is able to stand before me? This is the inference the Lord draws from hence, or the use he makes of it; that if this creature is so formidable and terrible, that it is dangerous to arouse and provoke him, and there is no standing before him or against him; then how should anyone be able to stand before the Lord, who made this creature, whenever he is angry? see Ps 76:7.

{q} Plin. l. 8. c. 25. Solin. c. 45. {r} Ammian. Marcellin. l. 22. {s} See the North-West Fox, p. 205.

Job 41:11

Ver. 11. Who hath prevented me, that one should repay [him]?.... First given me something that was not my own, and so laid me under an obligation to him to make a return. The apostle seems to have respect to this passage, Ro 11:35;

[whatsoever is] under the whole heaven is mine; the fowls of the air, the cattle on a thousand hills, the fulness of the earth; gold, silver: precious stones, &c. All things are made by him, are his property and at his dispose; and therefore no man on earth can give him what he has not a prior right unto; see Ps 24:1.

Job 41:12

Ver. 12. I will not conceal his parts,.... The parts of the leviathan; or "his bars", the members of his body, which are like bars of iron:

nor his power; which is very great, whether of the crocodile or the whale:

nor his comely proportion; the symmetry of his body, and the members of it; which, though large, every part is in just proportion to each other.

Job 41:13

Ver. 13. Who can discover the face of his garment?.... Or rather uncover it? Not the sea, which Mr. Broughton represents as the garment of the whale; who can strip him of it, or take him out of that, and bring him to land? which, though not impossible, is difficult: but either the garment of his face, the large bulk or prominence that hangs over his eyes; or rather his skin. Who dare venture to take off his skin, or flay him alive? or take off the scaly coat of the crocodile, which is like a coat of mail to him, and which he never of himself casts off, as serpents do?

[or] who can come [to him] with his double bridle? either go within his jaws, which, when opened, are like a double bridle; or go near and open his jaws, and put a curb bridle into them, and lead, direct, and rule him at pleasure. This is not to be done either to the whale or crocodile; yet the Tentyritae had a way of getting upon the back of the crocodile; and by putting a stick across its mouth, as it opened it to bite them, and so holding both the ends of it with the right and left hands, as with a bridle, brought them to land, as Pliny {s} relates; and so the Nereides are represented as sitting on the backs of whales by Theocritus {t}.

{s} Ut supra. (Plin. l. 8. c. 25.) {t} Idyll. 19.

Job 41:14

Ver. 14. Who can open the doors of his face?.... Of his mouth, the jaws thereof, which are like a pair of folding doors: the jaws of a crocodile have a prodigious opening. Peter Martyr {u} speaks of one, whose jaws opened seven feet broad; and Leo Africanus {w} affirms he saw some, whose jaws, when opened, would hold a whole cow. To the wideness of the jaws of this creature Martial {x} alludes; and that the doors or jaws of the mouth of the whale are of a vast extent will be easily believed by those who suppose that was the fish which swallowed Jonah;

his teeth are terrible round about; this may seem to make against the whale, the common whale having none; though the "ceti dentati" are a sort of whales that have many teeth in the lower jaw, white, large, solid, and terrible {y}. Olaus Magnus {z} speaks of some that have jaws twelve or fourteen feet long; and teeth of six, eight, and twelve feet; and there is a sort called "trumpo", having teeth resembling those of a mill {a}. In the spermaceti whale are rows of fine ivory teeth in each jaw, about five or six inches long {b}. But of the crocodile there is no doubt; which has two rows of teeth, very sharp and terrible, and to the number of sixty {c}.

{u} Decad. 5. c. 9. {w} Descript. Africae, l. 9. p. 763. So Sandys's Travels, l. 2. p. 78. Edit. 5. {x} Epigram. l. 3. cp. 64. {y} Vid. Plin. l. 9. c. 5, 6. and Philosoph. Transact. vol. 3. p. 544. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 848. {z} De Ritu Gent. Septent. l. 21. c. 8. {a} Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 847, 848. {b} Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 7. part 3. p. 425. {c} Aelian. l. 10. c. 21.

Job 41:15

Ver. 15. [His] scales [are his] pride, shut up together [as with] a close seal. This is notoriously true of the crocodile, whose back and tail are covered with scales, which are in a measure impenetrable and invincible: which all writers concerning it, and travellers that have seen it, agree in; See Gill on "Eze 29:4"; but the skin of the whale is smooth; the outward skin is thin, like parchment, and is easily pulled off with the hand; and its under skin, though an inch thick, is never stiff nor tough, but soft {d}: though, if Nearchus {e} is to be credited, he reports, that one was seen fifty cubits long, with a scaly skin all over it a cubit thick; and such, it is said, were by a storm brought into our river Trent some years ago, and cast ashore, which had scales upon their backs very hard, as large and thick as one of our shillings {f}. But Aben Ezra interprets this of the teeth of the leviathan, and in which he is followed by Hasaeus; which are strong like a shield, as the words used signify; so Mr. Broughton,

"the strong shields have pride:"

but then this is as applicable, or more so, to the scales of the crocodile; which are so close as if they were sealed together, and are like a shield, its defence, and in which it prides itself.

{d} Voyage to Spitzbergen, p. 146, 147, 152. {e} Apud Arrian. in Indicis. {f} Vid. Wesley's Dissertations on Job, dissert. 38. p. 290.

Job 41:16

Ver. 16. One is so near to another, that no air can come between them. This shows that it cannot be understood of the skin of the whale, and the hardness and strength of that, which is alike and of a piece; whereas those scales, or be they what they may, though closely joined, yet are distinct: those who interpret this of whales that have teeth, and these of the teeth, observe, that as they have teeth to the number of forty or fifty in the lower jaw, in the upper one fire holes or sockets into which they go; and they are so very close that no wind or air can come between them {g}.

{g} Vid. Scheuchzer. ut supra. (Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 848.)

Job 41:17

Ver. 17. They are joined one to another,.... One scale to another, or "a man in his brother" {h}: which may seem to favour the notion of the whale's teeth in the sockets, which exactly answer to one another; but the next clause will by no means agree with them;

they stick together, that they cannot be sundered: whereas they easily be, at least by the creature itself; but the scales of a crocodile are so closely joined and sealed together, that there is no parting them.

{h} whyxab vya "vir in fratre suo"; Montanus.

Job 41:18

Ver. 18. By his neesings a light doth shine,.... The philosopher {i} observes, that those who look to the sun are more apt to sneeze: and it is taken notice of by various writers {k}, that the crocodile delights to be sunning itself, and lying yawning in the sun and looking at it, as quoted by Bochart; and so frequently sneeze: which sneezings, through the rays of the sun, may seem to shine and give light. Though as, in sneezing, water is thrown out through the nostrils, it may be observed of the whale, that it has mouths or holes in its front, through which, as through pipes, it throws out showers and floods of water, as Pliny {l} relates; which, by means of the rays of the sun, as in a rainbow, appear bright and glittering;

and his eyes [are] like the eyelids of the morning: the break and dawn of day; a very beautiful expression, the same we call "peep of day": Pindar {m} has "the eye of the evening"; break of day, as Ben Gersom says, is about an hour and the fifth part of an hour before the sunrising. The eyes of the crocodile were, with the Egyptians, an hieroglyphic of the morning {n}: wherefore this seems better to agree with the crocodile than the whale, whose eyes are not much bigger than those of a bullock; and has eyelids and hair like men's eyes; the crystal of the eye is not much bigger than a pea {o}; its eyes are placed very low, almost at the end of the upper lip, and when without its guide, dashes itself against rocks and shoals {p}. Though that sort of whales called "orcae" are said to have eyes a foot long, and of a red rosy colour, such as the morning is described by {q}; and a northern writer {r} tells us that some whales have eyes, whose circumference will admit fifteen or twenty men to sit therein; and in others it exceeds eight or ten cubits; and that the pupil is a cubit, and of a red and flaming colour; which, at a distance, in dark seasons, among the waves, appears to fishermen as fire kindled. And Thevenot {s} says of crocodiles, that their eyes are indifferently big, and very darkish.

{i} Problem. s. 33. qu. 4. {k} Aelian. l. 3. c. 11. Leo African. Descriptio African, l. 9. p. 761. Pet. Martyr. Decad. 3. c. 4. {l} Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 4, 6. {m} Olymp. Ode 3. v. 36. {n} Hor. Hiereglyph. apud Scheuchzer. vol. 4. p. 849. {o} Voyage to Spitzbergen, p. 145. {p} Aelian. l. 2. c. 13. Plin. l. 9. c. 62. {q} Hasacus apud Schultens in loc. {r} Olaus Magnus de Ritu Gent. Septent. l. 21. c. 5, 8. so Albertus Magnus de Animal. l. 24. c. 1. {s} Travels, ut supra, (part. 1.) p. 245.

Job 41:19

Ver. 19. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, [and] sparks of fire leap out. Which, though hyperbolical expressions, have some foundation for them in the latter; in the vast quantities of water thrown out by the whale, through its mouth or hole in its frontispiece, which in the sun may look like lamps and sparks of fire, as before observed; and especially in the "orcae", or whales with teeth, which eject in the same way an oily mucus, or the fat liquor of the brain, commonly called spermaceti, which may appear more bright and glittering.

Ovid {t} says much the same of the boar as is here said of the leviathan.

{t} "Fulmen ab ore venit; frondesque adflatibus ardent". Metamorph. c. 8. Fab. 4.

Job 41:20

Ver. 20. Out of his nostrils goeth forth smoke, as [out] of a seething pot or caldron. In which flesh or anything else is boiling. It is observed that there is a likeness between the crocodile and the river horse, and particularly in their breathing {u}: and of the former it is remarked {w}, that its nostrils are very large and open, and that they breathe out a fiery smoke, as out of a furnace.

{u} Plin. l. 48. c. 8. Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 2. {w} Achilles Statius & Eustathius, apud Scheuchzer: ut supra. (vol. 4. p. 849.)

Job 41:21

Ver. 21. His breath kindles coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth. Hyperbolical expressions, which the above observations may seem to justify.

Job 41:22

Ver. 22. In his neck remaineth strength,.... This is thought to be an argument against the whale, which is said to have no neck: but whatever joins the head and body may be called the neck, though ever so small; and the shorter the neck is, the stronger it is. It is also said by some, that the crocodile has no neck also; but the philosopher {x} is express for it, that it has one and moves it: and Pliny {y} speaks of it as turning its head upwards, which it could not do without a neck;

and sorrow is turned into joy before him; or leaps and dances before him; it departs from him: he is not afraid of anything, though ever so threatening. Or sorrow and distress at the sight of him, in men and fishes, make them leap, and hasten to get out of the way of him and escape him.

{x} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 6. & Part. Animal l. 4. c. 11. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 25.

Job 41:23

Ver. 23. The flakes of his flesh are joined together,.... The muscles of his hefty are not flaccid and flabby, but solid and firmly compacted;

they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved; that is, not very easily, not without a large sharp cutting knife, and that used with much strength.

Job 41:24

Ver. 24. His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether [millstone]. Which must be understood not of the substance but of the qualities of it, being bold, courageous, undaunted, and unmerciful; which is true both of the whale and crocodile, and particularly of the crocodile: Aelianus {z} relates of one sort of them that they are unmerciful, though elsewhere {a}, he represents them as fearful.

{z} De Animal. l. 12. c. 41. {a} Ibid. l. 10. c. 24.

Job 41:25

Ver. 25. When he raiseth up himself,.... Not out of the waters, but above the surface of them, so as that his large bulk, his terrible jaws and teeth, are seem;

the mighty are afraid; not only fishes and other animals, but men, and these the most stouthearted and courageous, as mariners and masters of vessels;

by reason of breakings they purify themselves: either because of the breaches of the sea made through the lifting up of this creature, threatening the overturning of vessels; or of the breaches of men's hearts through fear, they are thrown into a vomiting, and purging both by stool and urine, which are often the effects of fear, so Ben Gersom; or they acknowledge themselves sinners, or expiate themselves, endeavouring to do it by making confession of sin, declaring repentance for it, praying for forgiveness of it, and promising amendment; which is frequently the case of seafaring men in distress; see **Jon 1:4**.

Job 41:26

Ver. 26. The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold,.... It is either broken by striking at him, or however cannot pierce him and stick in him; but since a sword is not used in fishery, rather the harpagon or harpoon may be meant, which cannot enter into the crocodile, being so fenced with scales; but the whale being struck with it, it enters deep into his flesh, and is wounded by it; wherefore this and what follows in the next verses seems best to agree with the crocodile, or some other fish;

the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon; that is, neither of these can fasten upon him or enter into him: and yet it is certain that the whale, after he has been struck and wounded by the harping-iron, men approach nearer to him and thrust a long steeled lance or spear under his gills into his breast, and through the intestines, which dispatches him: darts are not made use of in the whale fishery; and as for crocodiles, as Peter Martyr says {c}, they are not to be pierced with darts: the habergeon, or coat of mail, being a defensive piece of armour, seems not to be designed, as being never used in taking such creatures; rather therefore a javelin or hand dart may be intended; since, as Bochart observes, in the Arabic language such an one is expressed by this word.

{c} Apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 17. col. 785.

Job 41:27

Ver. 27. He esteemeth iron as straw,.... You may as well cast a straw at him as a bar of iron; it will make no impression on his steeled back, which is as a coat of mail to him; so Eustathius affirms {d} that the sharpest iron is rebounded and blunted by him;

[and] brass as rotten wood; or steel, any instrument made of it, though ever so strong or piercing.

{d} Apud ibid. (Bochard. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 17. col. 785.)

Job 41:28

Ver. 28. The arrow cannot make him flee,.... The skin of the crocodile is so hard, as Peter Martyr says, that it cannot be pierced with arrows, as before observed; therefore it is not afraid of them, nor will flee from them;

slingstones are turned with him into stubble; are no more regarded by him than if stubble was cast at him; not only stones out of a sling, but out of an engine; and such is the hardness of the skin of the crocodile, that, as Isidore says {e}, the strokes of the strongest stones are rebounded by it, yea, even it is said to withstand against musket shot {f}.

{e} Origin. l. 12. c. 6. {f} Mandelsloe in Harris's Voyages, &c. vol. 1. p. 759.

Job 41:29

Ver. 29. Darts are counted as stubble,.... Darts being mentioned before, perhaps something else is meant here, and, according to Ben Gersom, the word signifies an engine out of which stones are cast to batter down walls; but these are of no avail against the leviathan;

he laugheth at the shaking of a spear; at him, knowing it cannot hurt him; the crocodile, as Thevenot says {g}, is proof against the halberd. The Septuagint version is, "the shaking of the pyrophorus", or torch bearer; one that carried a torch before the army, who, when shook, it was a token to begin the battle; which the leviathan being fearless of laughs at it; See Gill on "Ob 1:18".

{g} Travels, part 1. b. 2. c. 72. p. 245.

Job 41:30

Ver. 30. Sharp stones [are] under him,.... And yet give him no pain nor uneasiness;

he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire; and makes his bed of them and lies upon them; as sharp stones, as before, shells of fishes, broken pieces of darts, arrows, and javelins thrown at him, which fall around him: this does not so well agree with the crocodile, the skin of whose belly is soft and thin; wherefore dolphins plunge under it and cut it with a thorn, as Pliny {h} relates, or with spiny fins {i}; but with the whale, which lies among hard rocks and sharp stones, and large cutting pieces of ice, as in the northern seas.

{h} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 25. {i} Sandys's Travels, l. 2. p. 78.

Job 41:31

Ver. 31. He maketh the deep to boil {k} like a pot,.... Which is all in a from through the violent agitation and motion of the waves, caused by its tossing and tumbling about; which better suits with the whale than the crocodile, whose motion in the water is not so vehement;

he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment; this also seems to make against the crocodile, which is a river fish, and is chiefly in the Nile. Lakes indeed are sometimes called seas, in which crocodiles are found; yea, they are also said to be in the seas, Eze 32:2; and Pliny {l} speaks of them as common to the land, river, and sea; and the Nile is in the Alcoran {m} called the sea, and its ancient name was "Oceames" with the Egyptians, that is, in Greek, "ocean", as Diodorus Siculus {n} affirms; and so it is thought to be the Egyptian sea in Isa 11:15. It is observed that they leave a sweet scent behind them; thus Peter Martyr {o}, in his account of the voyages of Columbus in the West Indies, says, they sometimes met with crocodiles, which, when they fled or took water, they left a very sweet savour behind them, sweeter than musk or castoreum. But this does not come up to the expression here of making the sea like a pot of ointment; but the sperm of the whale comes much nearer to it, which is of a fat oily nature, and like ointment, and which the whale sometimes throws out in great abundance, so that the sea is covered with it; whole pails full may be taken out of the water; it swims upon the sea like fat; abundance of it is seen in calm weather, so that it makes the sea all foul and slimy {p}: and there are a sort of birds called "mallemuck", which fly in great numbers and feed upon it {q}. I cannot but remark what the bishop of Bergen observes {r} of the sea serpent, that its excrements float on the water in summertime like fat slime.

{k} "Fervetque----aequor". Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. v. 327. {l} Nat. Hist. l. 32. c. 11. {m} Schultens in Job, xiv. 11. {n} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 17. {o} Decad. 3. l. 4. {p} Voyage to Spitzbergen, p. 148, 149. {q} Vid. Scheuchzer. ut supra, (vol. 4.) p. 852. & Voyage to Spitzbergen, p. 167. {r} Pantoppidan's History of Norway, part 2. p. 204.

Job 41:32

Ver. 32. He maketh a path to shine after him,.... Upon the sea, by raising a white from upon it, through its vehement motion as it passes along, or by the spermaceti it casts out and leaves behind it. It is said {s} that whales will cut and plough the sea in such a manner, as to leave a shining glittering path behind them, the length of a German mile, which is three of ours;

[one] would think the deep [to be] hoary; to be old and grey headed, or white like the hair of the head of an old man, a figure often used of the sea by poets {t}; and hence "Nereus" {u}, which is the sea, is said to be an old man, because the froth in the waves of it looks like white hair.

{s} Vid. Scheuchzer. ibid. (vol. 4.) p. 853. {t} polihv alov, Homer. Iliad. 1. v. 350. polihv yalasshv, Iliad. 4. v. 248. "incanuit unda", Catullus. {u} Phurnutus de Natura Deorum, p. 63.

Job 41:33

Ver. 33. Upon the earth there is not his like,.... As to form and figure; in most creatures there is some likeness between those in the sea and on the land, as sea horses, calves, &c. but there is no likeness between a whale and any creature on earth; there is between the crocodile and the lizard; nor is any like the whale for the largeness of its bulk; the Targum is,

"his dominion is not on the earth,"

but on the sea, as Aben Ezra notes; but rather the sense is, there is no power on earth that he obeys and submits to, as the Tigurine version; though the meaning seems to be, that there is none like him, for what follows:

who is made without fear; yet this agrees not neither with the crocodile, which Aelianus {w} says is fearful; nor with the whale, which will make off and depart at the shoutings of men, blowing of trumpets, and making use of any tinkling instruments, at which it is frightened, as Strabo {x}, Philostratus {y}, and Olaus Magnus {z}, relate. It is observed {a}; of their valour, that if they see a man or a long boat, they go under water and run away; and are never known to endeavour to hurt any man, but when in danger; though a voyager {b} of our own says,

"we saw whales in Whale-sound, and lying aloft on the water, not fearing our ships, or aught else."

The Targum is,

"he is made that he might not be broken;"

or bruised, as Bochart; as reptiles usually may, among whom the crocodile may be reckoned, because of its short legs; and yet is made with such a hard scaly skin, that it cannot be crushed, bruised, and broken. Aben Ezra observes that some say, the word "hu", that is, "he", is wanting, and should be supplied, "he", that is, "[God], made him without fear"; or that he might not be bruised; wherefore Cocceius interprets the following words entirely of God.

{w} De Animal. l. 10. c. 24. {x} Geograph. l. 15. p. 499. {y} Vit. Apollon. l. 3. c. 16. {z} De Ritu Gent. Septent. l. 21. c. 3, 6. {a} Voyage to Spitzbergen, p. 153. {b} Baffin in the North-West Fox, p. 150.

Job 41:34

Ver. 34. He beholdeth all high [things],.... Or "who beholdeth all high [things]"; even he that made leviathan, that is, God, as the above interpreter: he does that which Job was bid to do, and could not; beholds everyone that is proud, and abases him, Job 40:11; and therefore he ought to acknowledge his sovereignty and superiority over him, and submit to him;

he [is] a king over all the children of pride: the proud angels that fell, and all the proud sons of men; proud monarchs and potentates of the earth, such as Nebuchadnezzar and others, **Da 4:31**. But interpreters generally understand all this either of the crocodile, or of a fish of the whale kind. Bochart observes, that the crocodile, though it has short legs, will behold, and meet unterrified, beasts abundantly taller than itself, and with one stroke of its tail break their legs and bring them low; and will destroy not only men, but all sorts of beasts, as elephants, camels, horses, oxen, boars, and every animal whatsoever. But others apply this to the whale, which beholds the tossing waves of the sea, which mount up to heaven; the clouds of heaven on high over it; the lofty cliffs or shores, and ships of the greatest bulk and height; and which, when it lifts up itself above the water, equals the high masts of ships, and is abundantly superior to all the tribes of watery animals, or the beasts of the sea. But this seems not wholly to come up to the expressions here used. Upon the whole, as there are some things that agree with the crocodile, and not the whale; and others that agree with the whale, of one sort or another, and not with the crocodile; it is uncertain which is meant, and it seems as if neither of them were intended: and to me very probable is the opinion of Johannes Camerensis {c}, and to which the learned Schultens most inclines, that the leviathan is the dragon of the land sort, called leviathan, the piercing serpent, as distinct from the dragon in the sea, Isa 27:1; which agrees with the description of the leviathan in the whole: as its prodigious size; its terrible countenance; its wide jaws; its three forked tongue; its three rows of sharp teeth; its being covered all over, back and belly, with thick scales, not to be penetrated by arrows and darts; its flaming eyes, its fiery breath, and being most terrible to all, and fearless of every creature; it will engage with any, and conquer and kill an elephant {d}; hence in Ethiopia dragons have no other names than elephant killers: and so it may be said to be king over all the children of pride; of all which proof may be given from various writers, as Pliny {e}, Aelianus {f}, Philostratus {g}, and others; and particularly the dragon Attilius Regulus, the Roman general, killed near Bagrade in Africa, is a proof itself of almost all the above articles, as Osorius {h} has described it; nor is it any objection that the leviathan is represented as being in the sea, since the dragon, even the land dragon, will plunge into rivers, and is often found in lakes called seas, and in maritime places, and will go into the sea itself, as Pliny {i} and Philostratus {k} relate. To which may be added, that this creature was found among the Troglodytes {l} who lived near the Red sea, and not far from Arabia, where Job dwelt, and so might be well known by him: and besides, of all creatures, it is the most lively emblem of the devil, which all the ancient Christian writers make leviathan to be; and Satan is expressly called the dragon in Re 12:3. So Suidas {m} says, the devil is called a dragon in Job. But be the leviathan what it may, it certainly is an illustrious instance of the power of God in making it; and therefore Job and every other man ought to submit to him that made it, in all things, and be humble under his mighty hand; owning freely, that it is his right hand, and his only, and not man's, that can save, either in a temporal or spiritual sense; for which end this and the behemoth are instanced in.

(See definition for 03882. Editor.)

{c} Apud Pinedam, in v. 1. {d} Isidor. Origin l. 12. c. 4. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 14. {f} De Animal. l. 2. c. 21. & l. 10. c. 48. & l. 15. c. 21. & l. 16. c. 39. {g} Vit. Apollon. l. 3. c. 2. Vid. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 3. Fab. 1. {h} Hist. l. 4. c. 8. {i} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 13. {k} Ut supra. (Vit. Apollon. l. 3. c. 2. Vid. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 3. Fab. 1.) {l} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 11, 12. & l. 31. c. 2. {m}

In voce drakwn, & in voce qeliw.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Job 42:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 42

This chapter contains Job's answer to the last speech of the Lord's, in which he acknowledges his omnipotence, and his certain performance of his purposes and pleasure; owns his own folly and ignorance, and confesses his sins; for which he abhorred himself, and of which he repented, Job 42:1; it also gives an account of the Lord's decision of the controversy between Job and his friends, blaming them and commending him above them; and ordered them to take sacrifices and go to Job and offer them, who should pray for them and be accepted, which was done, Job 42:7; and it closes with a relation of the great prosperity Job was restored unto, in which he lived and died, Job 42:10.

Ver. 1. Then Job answered the Lord, and said. For though he had said he would answer no more, Job 40:5; yet he might mean not in the manner he had, complaining of God and justifying himself; besides he might change his mind without any imputation of falsehood or a lie; see Jer 20:9; to which may be added, that he had then said all he had to say, and did not know he should have more: he then confessed as much as he was convinced of, but it was not enough; and now through what the Lord had since said to him he was more convinced of his ignorance, mistakes, and sins, and had such a sight of God and of himself, that he could not forbear speaking; moreover an injunction was laid upon him from the Lord to speak again, and therefore he was obliged to give in his answer; see Job 40:7.

Job 42:2

Ver. 2. I know that thou canst do every [thing],.... As the works of creation, and the sustentation of them, show; so the Targum,

"thou sustainest all things,"

and can manage, every creature made by him, even such as were not tractable by men, such as behemoth and leviathan, the creatures last instanced in; and was able to abase and bring low the proud, which Job could not do; and could also save him by his right hand, and bring him out of his low estate in which he was, and raise him to great prosperity again, which Job always despaired of till now; and though he had a theoretical knowledge of the omnipotence of God before, see **Job 9:4**; yet not a practical experimental knowledge of it; at least not to such a degree as he now had, working upon his heart, bowing his will, and bringing him to a resignation to the will of God; he not only knew he could do all things, but that he had a right to do what he pleased; and that whatever he did he did well and wisely, and in a righteous manner, of which before he seemed to have some doubt. And that no thought can be withholden from thee; either no thought of men, good or bad, of God or of themselves, and so is an acknowledgment of the omniscience of God, and may be an appeal to that; that God, who knows the secrets of men's hearts, knew what thoughts Job now had of God; of the wisdom, righteousness, and goodness of God in the dispensations of his providence, different from what he had before; see Joh 21:17; or rather it may be understood of every thought of God's heart, of every secret purpose and wise counsel of his; which, as they are all well known to him, and cannot be withheld from having effect, or the performance of them hindered, Job now saw and was fully assured that all that had befallen him was according to the sovereign and inscrutable purposes of God, and according to the wise counsels of his will; he knew that not only God could do everything, but that he also did whatever he pleased.

Job 42:3

Ver. 3. Who [is] he that hideth counsel without knowledge?.... It may be understood, and supplied, as it is by Cocceius, "thou didst say"; as the Lord had said, or to this purpose, See Gill on "Job 38:2"; to which Job here replies, I am the foolish man that has done it, I own it with sorrow, shame, and confusion: or it may be interpreted as condemning every other man that should act the like part. Schultens understands this as spoken by Job of God, and renders the words,

"who is this that seals up counsel, which cannot be known?"

the counsels, purposes, and decrees of God are sealed up by him, among his treasures, in the cabinet of his own breast, and are not to be unsealed and unlocked by creatures, but are impenetrable to them, past finding out by them, and not to be searched and pried into; and so the secret springs of Providence are not to be known, which Job had attempted, and for which he condemns himself;

therefore have I uttered that I understood not; concerning the providential dealings of God with men, afflicting the righteous, and suffering the wicked to prosper, particularly relating to his own afflictions; in which he arraigned the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, as if things might have been better done than they were; but now he owns his ignorance and folly, as Asaph did in a like case, Ps 73:22;

things too wonderful for me, which I knew not; things out of his reach to search into, and beyond his capacity to comprehend; what he should have gazed upon with admiration, and there have stopped. The judgments of God are a great deep, not to be fathomed with the line of human understanding, of which it should be said with the apostle, "O the depth", Ro 11:33, &c. Job ought to have done as David did,
Ps 131:1; of which he was now convinced, and laments and confesses his folly.

Job 42:4

Ver. 4. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak,.... Not in the manner he had before, complaining of God and justifying himself, but in a way of humble entreaty of favours of him, of confession of sin before him, and of acknowledgment of his wisdom, goodness, and justice in all his dealings with him, which before he arraigned;

I will demand of thee; or rather "I will make petition to thee", as Mr. Broughton renders it; humbly ask a favour, and entreat a gracious answer; for to demand is not so agreeable to the frame and temper of soul Job was now in;

and declare thou unto me; or make him know what he knew not; he now in ignorance applies to God, as a God of knowledge, to inform him in things he was in the dark about, and to increase what knowledge he had. He was now willing to take the advice of Elihu, and pursue it,
Job 34:31.

Job 42:5

Ver. 5. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,.... From his ancestors, who in a traditionary way had handed down from one to another what they knew of God, his will and worship, his works and ways; and from those who had the care of his education, parents and tutors, who had instilled the principles of religion, and the knowledge of divine things, into him very early; and from such as might instruct in matters of religion in a public manner; and both by ordinary and extraordinary revelation made unto him, as was sometimes granted to men in that age in which Job lived; see **Job 4:16**. Though he had heard more of God through his speaking to him out of the whirlwind than ever he did before, to which he had attentively listened; and the phrase, hearing by or with the hearing of the ear, denotes close attention; see Eze 44:5;

but now mine eye seeth thee; thy Shechinah, as Jarchi; thy divine glory and Majesty; the Logos, the Word or Son of God, who now appeared in an human form, and spake to Job out of the whirlwind; and whom he saw with the eyes of his body, as several of the patriarchs had seen him, and which is the sense of an ancient writer {n}; though no doubt he saw him also with the eyes of his understanding, and had a clearer sight of his living Redeemer, the Messiah, than ever he had before; and saw more of God in Christ, of his nature, perfections, and glory, than ever he had as yet seen; and what he had heard of him came greatly short of what he now saw; particularly he had a more clear and distinct view of the sovereignty, wisdom, goodness, and justice of God in the dealings of his providence with the children of men, and with himself, to which now he humbly submitted.

{n} Euseb. Demonstr. Evangel. l. 1. c. 5. p. 11.

Job 42:6

Ver. 6. Wherefore I abhor [myself],.... Or all my words, as Aben Ezra; all the indecent expressions he had uttered concerning God; he could not bear to think of them; he loathed them, and himself on account of them: sin is abominable in its own nature, and makes men so; it is loathsome to God, and so it is to all good men when they see it in its proper light; am especially when they have a view of the purity and holiness of God, to which that is so very contrary, and also of his grace and goodness in the forgiveness of it; see **Isa 6:3**
Eze 16:63;

and repent in dust and ashes; which was an external ceremony used by mournful and penitent persons; see **Job 2:8**; and is expressive of the truth and sincerity of repentance; and never do any more truly mourn for sin and repent of it, are more ashamed of it, or have a more godly sorrow for it, or more ingenuously confess it, and heartily forsake it, than those who with an eye of faith behold God in Christ as a sin forgiving God; or behold their sins through the glass of pardoning grace and mercy; see Zec 12:10.

Job 42:7

Ver. 7. And it was [so],.... What follows came to pass:

that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job; which he spake to him out of the whirlwind, and after he had heard Job's confession, and the declaration he made of his humiliation and repentance:

the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite; who with his two friends were still present and heard the speeches of the Lord to Job, and the acknowledgment he had made of sin; though some {o} think that, when the dispute ended between Job and them, they returned to their own country, where Eliphaz is now supposed to be, and was bid with his two friends to go to Job again, which they did, as is concluded from the following verses: but no doubt they stayed and heard what Elihu had to say; and the voice of the Lord out of the whirlwind would command their attention and stay; and very desirous they must be to know how the cause would go, for or against Job; the latter of which they might expect from the appearance of things. Now the Lord directs his speech to Eliphaz, he being perhaps the principal man, on account of his age, wisdom and wealth, and being the man that led the dispute, began it, and formed the plan to go upon, and was the most severe on Job of any of them; wherefore the Lord said to him,

my wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; who were Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite; who gave into the same sentiments with Eliphaz, and went upon the same plan, speaking wrong things of God, charging Job falsely, and condemning him; which provoked the Lord, and caused his wrath to be kindled like fire against them, of which there were some appearances and breakings forth in his words and conduct towards them;

for ye have not spoken of me [the thing that is] right, as my servant Job [hath]; they had said many right things of God, and Job had said many wrong ones of him, and yet upon the whole Job had said more corrcet things of God than they; their notion, and which they had expressed, was, that God deals with men in this life according to their outward behaviour; that God did not afflict good men, at least not sorely, nor long; and that wicked men were always punished now: from whence they drew this inference, that Job, being so long and so greatly afflicted, must be a bad man, or God would never have dealt with him after this manner. Job, on the other hand, affirmed, that wicked men enjoyed great prosperity, which good men did not; and therefore the love and hatred of God were not known by these things; and men's characters were not to be judged of by these outward things; in which he was doubtless right: some render the words "have not spoken unto me" {p}, before him, in his presence; for they were all before God, and to him they all appealed, and he heard and observed all that was said, and now passed judgment. No notice is taken of Elihu, nor blame laid on him; he acting as a moderator, taking neither the part of Job, nor of his friends, but blaming both: nor did he pretend to charge Job with any sins of his former life as the cause of his calamities; only takes up some indecent, unguarded, and extravagant expressions of his in the heat of this controversy, and rebukes him for them; and throughout the whole vindicates the justice of God in his dealings with him.

{o} Vid. Spanhem. Hist. Jobi, c. 8. s. 1, 2. {p} yla "ad me", Mercerus, Drusius, Cocceius; "coram me", V. L. "apud me", Tigurine version.

Job 42:8

Ver. 8. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks, and seven rams,.... Creatures used in sacrifice before the giving of the Levitical law, **Ge 4:4**; and the same number of the same creatures were offered by Balaam in the country of Moab, not far from where Job lived, nor at any great distance of time from his age, Nu 23:1; and among the Gentiles in later times {q}. And these were typical of Christ, being strong creatures, especially the bullocks, and which were used for labour; and the number seven may point at the perfection of Christ's sacrifice; to which these men were directed in their sacrifices to look for the complete atonement of their sins: now though they were not at their own dwellings, and could not take these out of their own herds and flocks, and Job had none, yet they could purchase them of others; and which having done, they are bid to do as follows:

and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; that is, by Job, who was to offer it for them in their name, and at whose hands the Lord would accept it, and for his sake. Job, as the head and master of his family, was wont to sacrifice, as every such man did before the Aaronic priesthood took place, **Job 1:5**. Now this was doing Job a great deal of honour, both by calling him his servant, as before in Job 42:7, and twice more in this; which was plainly giving the cause on his side; confirming the character he always bore, and still retained; and declaring he had other thoughts of him than his friends had; as well by sending them to him with their sacrifices to offer for them; which was saying, that they had sinned, and must offer sacrifice, and that Job was in the right; and therefore must offer the sacrifice for them. This was putting them on a great piece of self-denial; that men, who were older than Job, great personages, heads of families, and who had been wont to offer sacrifices in them, yet are now sent to Job to offer them for them; a man now in mean circumstances, and who in they had treated with great contempt; and he in his turn had used them as roughly. And it was also a trial of Job's grace, and of his forgiving spirit, to do this for them, and pray to God on their behalf: and the Lord's design in it was, to exercise the graces of them both, and to reconcile them to one another, and to himself;

and my servant Job shall pray for you; that their sacrifice might be accepted, and their sin pardoned. In this Job was a type of Christ, as he was in many other things; see the notes on Job 16:9. There is an agreement in his name; Job, whether it signifies love or hatred, desired or hated, in both ways the etymology of it is given; it agrees with Christ, who is beloved of God and man, and the desire of all nations; who hates iniquity, and was hated for his inveighing against it. Job was a type of him in his threefold state; before his low estate, in it, and after it; see **Php 2:6**. In his temptations by Satan, and sufferings from men; and particularly in his office as a priest, who both offered himself a sacrifice for his people, and offers their services and sacrifices of prayer and praise to God; and who prayed for his disciples, and for all the Father has given him, for transgressors and sinners, and even for his enemies that used him ill;

for him will I accept; or his face, that is, hear his prayer, and grant what is asked by him; as well as accept his sacrifice;

lest I deal with you [after your] folly; as all sin is, being committed against God, a breach of his law, and injurious to men themselves; see De 32:6. Though here it seems to be restrained to their particular sin and folly in their dispute with Job; want of wisdom in them was discerned by Elihu, Job 32:7. So it follows:

in that ye have not spoken of me [the thing which is] right, like my servant Job; and if by neglect of his advice, which would have been another instance of their folly, they had provoked the Lord to deal with them as their sin deserved, it must have gone hard with them. The Targum is,

"lest I should do with you "what would be" a reproach"

(or disgrace); would put them to shame, and make them appear ignominious to men; as by stripping them of their substance and honour, and reducing them to the condition Job was in.

{q} "----Septem mactare juvencos", &c. Virgil. Aeneid. 6. v. 38, 39.

Job 42:9

Ver. 9. So Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, [and] Zophar the Naamathite, went,.... Having taken the above creatures for sacrifice, as directed, they went to Job with them;

and did according as the Lord commanded them; offered them by Job for a burnt offering, and desired him to pray for them. This they did, both as to matter and manner, as the Lord ordered them; and they did it immediately, without consulting flesh and blood, the pride and other passions of their hearts; and they all united in it, and served the Lord with one consent, which showed them to be good men;

the Lord also accepted Job; the sacrifice he offered; perhaps by sending fire from heaven, which consumed the burnt offering: or "the face of Job"; he heard his prayer for his friends, and granted his request for them: or "the person of Job", as Mr. Broughton renders it; Job in this was a type of Christ also, who is always heard in his intercession and mediation for his people. God has respect to his person, which always acceptable to him, and in whom he is well pleased; and he has respect to his offering and sacrifice, which is of a sweet smelling savour to him. And the persons of his people are accepted in him the Beloved, and all their services and sacrifices of prayer and praise, **Mt 3:17**. The Targum is,

"they did as the Word of the Lord spake unto them, and the Word of the Lord accepted the face of Job."

Job 42:10

Ver. 10. And the Lord turned the captivity of Job,.... Not literally, in such sense as Lot's captivity was turned, Ge 14:12; for Job's person was not seized on and carried away, though his cattle were: nor spiritually, being delivered from the captivity of sin; that had been his case many years ago, when first converted: but it is to be understood of his restoration from afflictions and calamities to a happy state; as of the return of his substance, his health and friends, and especially of his deliverance from Satan, in whose hands he had been some time, and by him distressed both in body and mind. But now his captivity was turned, and he was freed from all his distresses; and even from those which arose from the dealings of God with him, which he was now fully satisfied about; and this was done,

when he prayed for his friends; as he was directed to do. A good man will not only pray for himself, as Job doubtless did, but for others also; for his natural and spiritual friends, yea, for unkind friends, and even for enemies likewise: and the prayer of an upright man is very acceptable to the Lord; and many mercies and blessings come by it; and even prayer for others is profitable to a man's self; and sometimes he soon reaps the benefit of it, as Job now did. For when and while he was praying, or quickly upon it, there was a turn in his affairs: he presently found himself in better health; his friends came about him, and his substance began to increase; Satan had no more power over him, and the presence of God was with him. All which was of the Lord; and he enjoyed it in the way of prayer, and as the fruit of that;

also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before: or added to him double. Which chiefly respects his substance; his cattle, as appears from Job 42:12, and might be true both with respect to things temporal and spiritual. "Double" may denote an abundance, a large measure of good things; see **Zec 9:12**.

Job 42:11

Ver. 11. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters,.... Which may be taken not in a strict sense, but in a larger sense for all that were related to him; the same with his kinsfolks,
Job 19:14;

and all they that had been of his acquaintance before; that knew him, visited him, conversed with him, and kept up a friendly correspondence with him; the

circle of his acquaintance must have been large, for wealth makes many friends: now these had been shy of him, and kept at a distance from him, during the time of his affliction and distress; see
Job 19:13; but hearing he was in the favour of God, and the cause was given on his side, and against his friends, and his affairs began to take a more favourable turn, they came to him again, and paid him a friendly visit, even all of them;

and did eat bread with him in his house: expressing their joy for his recovery, and renewing their friendship with him: this was done either at their own expense or at Job's, for he might not be so poor at the worst as he is by most represented; for he had still an house of his own, and furniture in it, and servants to wait upon him, as appears from Job 19:15; nor do we read of anything being taken out of his house from him; he might still have gold and silver, and so could entertain his friends: and being a man of an excellent spirit received them kindly, without upbraiding them with their unkindness in deserting him when afflicted;

and they bemoaned him; shook their heads at him, pitying his case, that is, which he had been in; for this they might do, though things were now better with him, and might express themselves in such manner as this,

"Poor man, what hast thou endured? what hast thou gone through by diseases of body, loss of substance, and vexation from friends?"

and besides, though things began to mend with him, he was not come at once to the pitch of happiness he arrived unto; so that there might be still room for bemoaning, he being comparatively in poor circumstances to what he was before;

and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him; the evil of afflictions, of body and estate; which, though by means of Satan and wicked men, was according to the will of God, and might be said to be brought on him and done to him by the Lord, **Am 3:6**; and they congratulated him upon his deliverance from them;

every man also gave him a piece of money, or a "lamb"; which some understand in a proper sense, as being what might serve towards making up his loss of sheep, and increasing his stock of them; but others with us take it for a piece of money, in which sense it is used in
Ge 33:19, compared with **Ac 7:16**; which might have the figure of a lamb

impressed upon it; as we formerly had a piece of money called an angel, having the image of one stamped on it; and it was usual with the ancients both to barter with cattle instead of money before the coining of it, and when it was coined to impress upon it the figure of cattle; hence the Latin word "pecunia", for money, is from "pecus", cattle {r}; this piece of money in Africa is the same with the Jewish "meah" {s}, which weighed sixteen barley corns; the value of a penny;

and everyone earring of gold; or a jewel set in gold; such used to wear in Arabia, as appears from, **Jud 8:24**; however Job could turn them into money, and increase his stock of cattle thereby. Though, perhaps, these presents were made him, not so much to enrich him, but as tokens of renewing their friendship with him; it being then usual in the eastern countries, as it is to this day, that whenever they pay visits, even to the greatest personages, they always carry presents with them; see **1Sa 9:7**.

{r} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 3. & l. 33. c. 3. Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 15. {s} T Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 26. 1.

Job 42:12

Ver. 12. So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning,.... Which verified the words of Bildad, **Job 8:6**; though they were spoken by him only by way of supposition. All blessings are of the Lord, temporal and spiritual; and sometimes the last days of a good man are his best, as to temporal things, as were David's, and here Job's; though this is not always the case: however, if their last days are but the best in spiritual things, that is enough: if they have more faith, hope, love, patience, humility, and self-denial, and resignation of will to the will of God; are more holy, humble, spiritually and heavenly minded; have more light and knowledge in divine things; have more peace and joy, and are more fruitful in every good work, and more useful; and often they are in their very last moments most cheerful and comfortable: the best wine is reserved till last;

for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses: just double the number of each of what he had before, **Job 1:3**.

Job 42:13

Ver. 13. He had also seven sons, and three daughters. The same number of children, and of the same sort he had before, **Job 1:2**; and according to Nachman the very same he had before, which the additional letter in the word "seven" is with him the notification of; so that the doubting of what he had before, Job 42:10; respects only his substance, and particularly his cattle; though the Targum says he had fourteen sons, and so Jarchi {t}; others think these may be said to be double to Job in their good qualities, external and internal, in their dispositions, virtues, and graces; and others, inasmuch as his former children were not lost, but lived with God, and would live for ever, they might now be said to be double; and so they consider this as a proof of the immortality of the soul, and of the resurrection of the body; but these senses are not to be trusted to; whether these children were by a former wife or another is uncertain.

{t} Vid. Balmes. Gram. Strat. 26.

Job 42:14

Ver. 14. And he called the name of the first Jemima,.... That is, the name of the first and eldest daughter was called by Job Jemima; which either signifies "day", so the Targum interprets it, and most do, and so is the same with Diana; or, as Spanheim {u} observes, it may be the same with the Arabic word "jemama", which signifies a turtle or dove {w}; and who also observes that a country in Arabia is so called, and perhaps from her; and which seems to be confirmed by the Arabic geographer {x}, who speaks of a queen called Jamama, who dwelt in a city of the country he describes as being on the north of Arabia Felix, and also speaks of a way from thence to Bozrah in Edom;

and the name of the second, Kezia; or Cassia; an aromatic herb of a very fragrant smell, as we render the word, Ps 45:8; and from this person the above learned writer conjectures Mount Casius in Arabia might have its name;

and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch; which signifies an horn or vessel of paint, such as the eastern women used to paint their faces, particularly their eyes with, **Jer 4:30**; and as Jezebel did, **2Ki 9:30**; or "the ray of a precious stone"; some say the carbuncle {y} or ruby; according to the Targum, the emerald; in 1Ch 29:2, the word is rendered "glittering stones". Now these names may have respect to Job's daughters themselves, to their external beauty, afterwards observed, so the Targum, "he called the one Jemima, because her beauty was as the day; the other he called Kezia, because she was precious like cassia; and another he called Kerenhappuch, because great was the brightness of the glory of her countenance, as the emerald."

The complexion of the first might be clear as a bright day, though like that but of a short duration; see **So 6:10**; the next might have her name from the fragrancy and sweetness of her temper; and the third, as being so beautiful that she needed no paint to set her off, but was beauty and paint herself; or her beauty was as bright and dazzling as a precious stone; see **La 4:7**. Or these may respect their internal qualities, virtues, and graces; being children of the day, and not of the night; having a good name, which is better than all spices; and possessed of such graces as were comparable to jewels and precious stones. Though it might be, that Job, in giving them these names, may have respect to the change of his state and condition; his first daughter he called Jemima, or "day", because it was now day, with him: he had been in the night and darkness of adversity, temporal and spiritual, but now he enjoyed a day of prosperity, and of spiritual light and joy; the justness of his cause appeared, his righteousness was brought forth as the light, and his judgment as noonday; and the dispensations of divine Providence appeared to him in a different light than he had seen them in: his second daughter he called Kezia, or Cassia, an herb of a sweet smell, in opposition to the stench of his ulcers and of his breath, which had been so very offensive, and from which he was now free; and may denote also the recovery of his good name, better than precious ointment, in which cassia was an ingredient: his youngest daughter he called Kerenhappuch, the horn of paint, in opposition to his horn being defiled in the dust, and his face foul with weeping, Job 16:15; or if Kerenhappuch signifies the horn turned, as Peritsol interprets it, it may have respect to the strange and sudden turn of Job's affairs: and it is easy to observe, that men have given names to their children on account of their present state and condition, or on account of the change of a former one; see
Ge 41:51.

{u} Hist. Jobi, c. 12. s. 7. {w} Golii Lexic. Arab. col. 2767, 2768. {x} Geograph. Nub. Climat. 2. par. 6. {y} Hiller. Onomastic. Sacr. p. 356.

Job 42:15

Ver. 15. And in all the land were no women found [so] fair as the daughters of

Job,.... Either in the whole world, which is not improbable: or it may be rather in the land or country in which they dwelt; and which may be gathered from their names, as before observed. The people of God, and children of Christ, the antitype of Job, are all fair, and there is no spot in them; a perfection of beauty, perfectly comely, through the comeliness of Christ put upon them, and are without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing;

and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren; which was done not on account of their beauty or virtue; nor is this observed so much to show the great riches of Job, that he could give his daughters as much as his sons, as his impartiality to his children, and his strict justice and equity in distributing his substance to them all alike, making no difference between male and female. And so in Christ, the antitype of Job, there is neither male nor female, no difference between them, **Ga 3:28**: but being all children, they are heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, and equally partake of the same inheritance with the saints in light, **Ro 8:17**.

Job 42:16

Ver. 16. After this lived Job an hundred and forty years,.... Not after he had arrived to the height of his prosperity; not after the birth of his children, and they were grown up, and had their portions given them, which must take in a considerable number of years; but after his afflictions were over, and his prosperity began: and if his years were doubled, as some think, though that is not certain, then he must be seventy years of age when he was so sorely afflicted and must live to the age of two hundred and ten; which is the common notion of the Jewish writers {z}: however, he must be fifty or sixty years of age at that time, since his former children were grown up and were for themselves; and it is said {a}, his afflictions continued seven years. So that it is not at all improbable that he lived to be about two hundred years of age; and which was a singular blessing of God to him, if you compare his age with that of Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Joshua, between the two former and the two latter he may be supposed to live;

and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, [even] four generations; Joseph saw but the third, Job the fourth, he was a great-great-grandfather. This was no doubt a pleasant sight to him, to see such a numerous offspring descending from him; and especially if they were walking in the ways of God, as probably they were, since no doubt he would take all the care of their education that in him lay. This is the great blessing promised to the Messiah, the antitype of Job, Isa

53:10; see also Isa 59:21.

{z} T. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 3. {a} Suidas in voce iwb.

Job 42:17

Ver. 17. So Job died,.... As every man does, though he lived so long, and as Methuselah the oldest man did, **Ge 5:27**; and though a good man, the best of men die as well as others: so Job died, as a good man, in the Lord, in faith and hope of eternal life and happiness; and so he died in all his outward prosperity and happiness, having great substance and a numerous offspring;

[being] old; as he might be truly called, being two hundred years of age or thereabout:

and full of days; lived out all his days, the full term of life in common, and longer than it was usual for men to live. He had a long life to satisfaction, as is promised, Ps 91:16. He lived as long as he desired to live, was quite satisfied with living; not that he loathed life, as he once did, and in that sense he did, and from such principles and with such views as he then had, **Job 7:15**. But he had enough of life, and was willing to die; and came to his grave, as Eliphaz said, "like a shock of corn in his season", **Job 5:26**. Adrichomius {b}, from certain travellers, speaks of the sepulchre of Job, in the form of a pyramid, in the plains of the land of Uz, to the east of the city Sueta, shown to this day, and had in great honour by Greeks and others; and which is more probable than what some say {c}, that his grave is in Constantinople, where there is a gate called Job's gate, from thence: but the Job there buried was a general of the Saracens, who died besieging that city with a numerous army, and was there buried, A. D. 675 {d}. There is a fragment at the end of the Septuagint and Arabic versions of this book, said to be translated from a Syriac copy, which gives a very particular account of Job's descent as,

"that he dwelt in the land of Ausitis, on the borders of Idumaea and Arabia; that his name was first Jobab; that he married an Arabian woman, and begot a son, whose name was Ennon; that his father was Zare, a son of the sons of Esau; that his mother was Bosorra (or Bosra); and that he was the fifth from Abraham. And these are the kings that reigned in Edom, which country he reigned over; the first was Balac, the son of Beor, the name of whose city was Dennaba; after Balac, Jobab, called Job; after him Asom, who was governor in the country of Theman; after him Adad, the son of Barad, who cut off Midian in the field of Moab, the name of whose city was Gethaim. The friends that came to him (Job) were Eliphaz, of the sons of Esau, the king of the Themanites; Baldad, king of the Sauchseans; and Sophar, king of the Minaeans."

The substance of this is confirmed by Aristaeus, Philo, and Polyhistor {e}, ancient historians.

{b} Theatrum Terrae S. p. 93. {c} Juchasin, fol. 9. 2. {d} Schindler. Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 64. {e} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 25.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALMS

The title of this book may be rendered "the Book of Praises", or "Hymns"; the psalm which our Lord sung at the passover is called an "hymn", Mt 26:30; and the one hundred forty fifth Psalm is entitled hlht, "an Hymn of David"; and the psalms in general are called "hymns" by Philo the Jew {a}, and songs and hymns by Josephus {b}; and to these several names of this book the apostle manifestly refers in **Eph 5:19** **Col 3:16**. The Jews divided the writings of the Old Testament into three parts: the first division is the Law, or five books of Moses; the second is the Prophets, former and latter; and the third, the "Hagiographa", or holy writings; to which division Christ has a regard in Lu 24:44; and because the book of Psalms stand first in the last division, the whole goes by its name. This book by the Apostle Peter is entitled as here, **Ac 1:20**; the title in the Syriac version is,

"the Book of the Psalms of David, King and Prophet,"

with which agrees the Arabic version. As to the divine authority of it, that it was written by inspiration of God, we have not only the testimony of David, who says, "the Spirit of God spake by me",
2Sa 23:2; but the testimonies of Christ and his apostles,
Mt 22:43; and, as Aben Ezra {c} observes the whole of it was spoken vdwqh xwrb, "by the Holy Ghost". Concerning the penman or amanuensis, employed by the Spirit of God in writing it, there are different opinions. The Jews make mention of ten, which are differently reckoned by them. According to Jarchi

{d}, they were Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah. According to Kimchi {e}, they were Adam, the first, Melchizedek, Abraham, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, Moses, and the three sons of Korah; Asir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. Some ascribe all the Psalms to David {f}, and think that those which are said to be a psalm of Asaph, or of Heman, &c. should be rendered "a psalm to Asaph", &c. and only signify that they were psalms delivered to them, to be sung in a public manner. But the truest opinion seems to be, that the greater part of them were written by David, and for the most part those that have no title; and the rest by those whose names they bear. Some were written at and after the Babylonish captivity, as Ps 126:1 and Ps 137:1. The manner or form in which they were written was metre {g}, though some deny it that the Jews had metre: as appears by the different accentuation of them from other writings, and from their being sung vocally and on musical instruments. Josephus {h}, the Jewish historian, says, that

"David being free from war, and enjoying a profound peace, composed songs and hymns to God, of various metre; some trimeter, and some pentameter;"

that is, some of three feet, and others of five feet: for the Psalms of David are thought to be of the "lyric" kind; and Gomarus, in his Lyra, has given many instances out of them, which are of the "iambic", "trochaic" kind, &c. though the Jews for many years have lost the knowledge of the sacred poetry. R. Benjamin {i} indeed says, that in his time there were at Bagdad R. Eleazar and his brethren, who knew how to sing the songs, as the singers did when the temple was standing. The subject matter of this book is exceeding great and excellent; many of the psalms respect the person, offices, and grace of Christ; his sufferings and death, resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God; and so are exceeding suitable to the Gospel dispensation. The whole book is a rich mine of grace and evangelical truths, and a large fund of spiritual experience; and is abundantly suited to every case, state, and condition, that the church of Christ, or particular believers, are in at any time.

{a} De Mutat. Nom. p. 1062. {b} Antiquitat. l. 7. c. 12. s. 3. {c} Praefat. in Psalm. {d} Praefat. in Psalm. {e} Praefat. in ibid. {f} R. Hona in Midrash Tillim, fol. 2. 1. {g} Vid. Lowth de Sacr. Poes. Heb. Praelect. 3. s. 32, &c. {h} Ut supra. (Antiquitat. l. 7. c. 12. s. 3.) {i} Itinerar. p. 70, 71.

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 1

This psalm, though without a title, may reasonably be thought to be a psalm of David; since the next psalm, which is also without a title, is ascribed to him, **Ac 4:25**; and since both are joined together as one psalm by the Jews {k}; See Gill on "Ac 13:33"; and since this is the general preface to the whole book, which is chiefly of David's penning, it is entitled, in the metaphrase of Apollinarius,

"a Song of David, the Prophet and King."

{k} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 9. 2.

Ver. 1. Blessed [is] the man,.... This psalm begins in like manner as Christ's sermon on the mount, **Mt 5:3**; setting forth the praises and expressing the happiness of the man who is described in this verse and **Ps 1:2**. The words may be rendered, "O, the blessednesses of the man", or "of this man" {l}; he is doubly blessed, a thrice happy and blessed man; blessed in things temporal and spiritual; happy in this world, and in that to come. He is to be praised and commended as a good man, so the Targum:

"the goodness, or, Oh, the goodness of the man;"

or as others,

"Oh, the right goings or happy progress, or prosperous success of the man {m},"

who answers to the following characters; which right walking of his is next observed, and his prosperity in **Ps 1:3**. Some have interpreted this psalm of Christ, and think it is properly spoken of him {n};

that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly: all men are by nature and practice ungodly, without God, without the true knowledge, fear, and worship of God and are at enmity against him. It is a character that belongs to God's elect as well as others, while in a state of nature; and is sometimes used illustrate the love of Christ in dying for them, and the grace of God in the justification of them, **Ro 4:5**. But here it describes not such who are wicked in heart and life in common only, but the reprobate part of mankind, profligate and abandoned sinners, such as Jude speaks of, **Jude 1:4**; and for whom the law is made, and against whom it lies, **1Ti 1:9**. The word {o} here used signifies such who are restless and continually in mischief; who are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, ever casting up mire and dirt: they are always disquieted themselves, and are ever disquieting others; nor do they cease from being so till they are laid in their graves. And to these "counsel" is ascribed, which supposes capacity and wisdom; as, generally speaking, such are wise and prudent in natural and civil things, and are wise to do evil, though to do good they have no knowledge: and counsel implies consultation and deliberation; they act deliberately in sinning, they cast about in their minds, form schemes, and contrive ways and means how to accomplish their vicious purposes; and sometimes they enter into a confederacy, and consult together with one consent, and their counsel is generally against the Lord, though it does not prosper and prevail; and against his Christ, his people, truths and ordinances: it takes in both their principles and practices; and the sum of their counsel is to indulge themselves in sin, to throw off all religion, and to cast off the fear and worship of God, Job 21:14. Now "not to walk" herein is not to hearken to their counsel, to give into it, agree with it, pursue it, and act according to it; and happy is the man, who, though he may fall in the way of it, and may have bad counsel given him by ungodly men, yet does not consent to it, take it, and act upon it. This may be applied to the times of the Messiah, and the men of the age in which he lived; and the rather, since the next psalm, in which mention is made of the counsel of the ungodly, manifestly belongs unto them. The men of that generation were a set of ungodly men, who consulted against Christ to take away his life; and blessed is the man, as Joseph of Arimathea, who, though he was in that assembly which conspired against the life of Christ, did not walk in, nor consent unto, their counsel and their deeds, Lu 23:51;

nor standeth in the way of sinners; all men are sinners through Adam's disobedience, and their own actual transgressions, and such were the elect of God, when Christ died for them; and indeed are so after conversion, for no man lives without sin. But here it intends notorious sinners, who are open, bold, and daring in iniquity; the word {p} signifies such, who in shooting miss the mark, and go aside from it, as such sinners do from the law of God; proceed from evil to evil, choose their own ways, and delight in their abominations. Now their "way" is not only their "opinion", as the Syriac version renders it, their corrupt sentiments, but their sinful course of life; which is a way of darkness, a crooked path, and a road that leads to destruction and death: and happy is the man that does "not stand" in this way, which denotes openness, impudence, and continuance; who, though he may fall into this way, does not abide in it; see **Ro 6:1**. The Pharisees in the time of Christ, though they were not openly and outwardly sinners, yet they were secretly and inwardly such, Mt 23:28; and the way they stood in was that of justification by the works of the law, **Ro 9:31**: but happy is the man, as the Apostle Paul and others, who stands not in that way, but in the way Christ Jesus, and in the way of life and righteousness by him;

nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; by whom may be meant proud and haughty persons, in opposition to the humble and lowly, as in **Pr 3:34**; such who are proud of their natural abilities, knowledge, and wisdom, of their honours and riches, or of their own righteousness, and despise others; or such who are desperate in wickedness, of whom there is no hope; see **Pr 9:7**; and Deists and atheists, who scoff at divine revelation, and mock at a future state, at death, hell, and judgment, as in Isa 28:14. Now happy is the man that does not sit or keep company with such persons; who comes not into their secret and into their assembly; does not associate himself with them, nor approve of their dispositions, words, principles, and actions; see Ps 26:4. Such were the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time; they derided him and his doctrines, scoffed at him when he hung upon the cross, and despised him and his apostles, and his Gospel; but there were some that did not join with them, to whom he, his ministers, and truths, were precious and in high esteem, and to whom he was the power and wisdom of God.

{l} vyah yrva "beatitudines illius viri", Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus. {m} "Recti incessus, felices progressus, ac prosperi successus", Michaelis; so Piscator. {n} Justinian. in Octapl. Psalt, in loc. Romualdus apud Mabillon. Itinerar. Ital. p. 181. {o} Myevr "significat eos qui sine quiete et indesinenter impie degunt", Vatablus. {p} Myajh "qui longissime aberrant a scopo legis"; Gerjerus.

Psalms 1:2

Ver. 2. But his delight [is] in the law of the Lord,.... Not the law of nature, which was inscribed on Adam's heart in innocence, but now greatly impaired by sin, and become very imperfect and very insufficient to make men happy, or to lead them to true felicity; nor the law of Moses, which is a fiery law, and works wrath, accuses of sin, pronounces guilty, curses and condemns to death; and therefore cannot be delighted in by a sensible sinner, unless as it is in the hands of Christ, and as fulfilled by him, who is the end of it; and as it is written on the heart of a regenerate man, who, so far as it is, delights in it after the inward man, and serves it with his spirit: but rather the Scriptures, as much and as many parts of them as were written in David's time; particularly the five books of Moses, which are called the Law and the Testimony of the Lord; which being inspired by God, were profitable and delightful to read, and to hear explained; and as they were David's delight, and the men of his council, Ps 119:24; so they were the delight of every good man, there being many things in them concerning the Messiah, his grace and kingdom; see Lu 24:44. Moreover the word hrwt, here used, signifies "doctrine", and may intend the evangelic doctrine, as it does in Ps 19:7; which is a psalm concerning the doctrine of the apostles that went into all the world; and in like sense is the word used in **Isa 2:3**; of the doctrine of the Messiah, that is, the Gospel; and is the same with the law, or doctrine of faith, in **Ro 3:27**. And this may be called the doctrine of the Lord, because he is the author of it; it came by him, he revealed it; and because he is the subject of it; it is concerning him, his person, office, grace, and righteousness; and so far as it was published in the times of David, it was a joyful sound, good news and glad tidings, and the delight of good men;

and in his law doth he meditate day and night; as Joshua was directed to do, and David did, **Jos 1:8**. This is to be understood of a diligent reading and serious consideration of it; and of the employment of the thoughts, and of deep study upon it, in order to find out the sense and meaning of it; and which is to be done constantly, every day, as often as there is leisure and opportunity for it; or, as Kimchi on the place observes, whenever a man is free from the business of life; unless this should be taken figuratively, of the day of prosperity and night of adversity, whether in things temporal or spiritual, which are each of them proper seasons to meditate in, upon the word of God and Gospel of Christ.

Psalms 1:3

Ver. 3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,.... Or, "for then shall he be", &c. as Alshech renders the words; and the Hebrew "vau" is often used for "then" {q}. As **Ps 1:1** describe the man who is blessed, this points at his blessedness, and shows and proves him to be an happy man; for he is comparable to a "tree": not to a dry tree, or a tree without fruit, or whose fruit is withered, but to a fruitful tree, a green and flourishing one; green olive tree, or a palm tree, or a cedar in Lebanon; to which David compares himself and the righteous, Ps 52:8; and here such an one is compared to a tree "planted"; not to one that grows of itself, a wild tree, a tree of the wood; but to one that is removed from its native place and soil, and planted elsewhere; and so designs such who are broken off of the wild olive tree, and are grafted into the good olive tree; who are planted in Christ Jesus, and in the church, the house of the Lord; of which transplantation the removal of Israel into Canaan's land was an emblem, Ps 80:8; and such a spiritual plantation is of God the husbandman; whose planting the saints are efficiently, Isa 60:21. And it is owing to the word, the ingrafted word, **Jas 1:21**, which is the means of this ingrafture, and to the ministers of it instrumentally; some of whom plant, and others water, **1Co 3:6**. Moreover, the happy man before described is like a tree that is situated "by the rivers of water", or "divisions" {r} and rivulets of water; which running about the plants, make them very fruitful and flourishing; see Eze 31:4; and which may intend the river of the love of God, and the streams of it, the discoveries and applications of it to regenerate persons; and also the fulness of grace in Christ, who is the fountain of gardens, the well of living waters and streams from Lebanon, to revive, refresh, supply, and comfort his people, **So 4:15**; as well as the graces of the Spirit of God, which are near the saints, and like rivers of water flow out of them that believe in Christ, **Joh 7:38**; to which may be added the word and ordinances of the Gospel, which are the still waters, to which they are invited and led, and by which and with which they are greatly refreshed, and made fruitful. Arama interprets it of the waters of the law; it is best to understand it of the Gospel; see Isa 55:1; it follows,

that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; and so appears to be a tree of righteousness, filled with the fruits of righteousness, the graces of the Spirit, and good works; which are brought forth by him under the influence of grace, as he has opportunity, and according to the measure of grace bestowed. His leaf also shall not wither; neither tree, nor fruit, nor leaf shall wither, but shall be always green; which is expressive of the saints' perseverance: the reasons of which are, they are ingrafted in Christ the true vine, and abide in him, from whom they have their sap, nourishment, and fruit, Joh 15:1; they are rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith of him; and so they hold fast the profession of it without wavering;

and whatsoever he doth shall prosper; meaning not so much in things temporal, of which Arama interprets it, for in these the good man does not always succeed, but in things spiritual: whatever he does in faith, from love, to the glory of God, and in the name of Christ, prospers; yea, those things in which he is concerned, that are adverse, and seem for the present to be against him, in the issue work for good to him: in short, such a man is blessed with grace here, and glory hereafter; and therefore must needs be an happy man.

{q} Vid. Noldii Concord. Part. Ebr. p. 308. {r} yglp le "juxta divisiones"; Musculus, Hammond; so Ben Melech.

Psalms 1:4

Ver. 4. The ungodly [are] not so,.... They are not as the good man is; their manner and course of life are different; they walk in the counsel of ungodly men, like themselves, and take counsel against the Lord, his Anointed, and his people: they stand in the way of sinners, and steer their conversation according to the course of the world, and sit in the seat of the scornful; laugh at divine revelation, lampoon the Scriptures, deride good men, make a jest of religion and a future state: they have no delight in the law of the Lord, they cast it away from them, and despise it; and are so far from a constant meditation on it, that they never read it, nor so much as look into it, nor is it ever in their thoughts. They are not like to a tree, as described in **Ps 1:3**: if they are like to trees, it is to dry trees, and not green ones, to trees without any sap, moisture, and verdure, and which are only fit fuel for the fire; to the trees of the wood, to wild olive trees; to trees on an heath, in a desert, in parched land, and not to trees by rivers of water, but to trees that have no root, and are without fruit, **Jude 1:12**. And though they may be in a seeming prosperous condition for a time, may be in great power, riches, and honour, and spread themselves like a green bay tree; yet suddenly they are cut down as the grass, and wither as the green herb; and even their outward prosperity destroys them; so that not anything they have or do in the issue prospers: and therefore they are not blessed or happy as the good man is; yea, they are wretched and miserable, nay, cursed; they are cursed now, and will be hereafter; they are cursed in their basket and store, their blessings are curses to them; the law pronounces them cursed; and they will hear, "go ye cursed", at the day of judgment, see Mt 25:41. The Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, and Arabic versions, repeat the words "not so", and read "not so the ungodly, not so:" which seems to be done for the confirmation of the truth of it:

but [are] like the chaff which the wind driveth away; they are like chaff, which has no root, moisture, greenness, nor fruitfulness; they have nothing in them solid and substantial; they are destitute of all that is good; are vain and empty; without the knowledge of God and Christ; without faith in Christ and love to him; and are sensual, not having the Spirit, his graces and fruits: they are like chaff for lightness, vain in their imaginations, light in their principles, frothy in their words, and unstable in all their ways: they are never long in any position, unsettled, disquieted, and tossed to and fro; and there is no peace unto them: they are like chaff, useless and unprofitable, nothing worth, fit only for everlasting burnings, which will be their case. For when Christ will gather his wheat, the righteous, which are of value, into his garner, the heavenly glory, he will burn the chaff, the wicked, with unquenchable fire. They are now like chaff, driven and carried about with every wind of doctrine, with divers and strange doctrines, and entertain every light and airy notion; and are easily drawn aside and carried away by the force of their own lusts, and with every temptation of Satan, who works effectually in then: and particularly they are like chaff before the wind of terrible judgments and calamities in this life, and of the awful judgment hereafter, when they will be driven away from the presence of the Lord into everlasting destruction. The metaphor is often used in this sense; see Job 21:17; and denotes the secret, sudden, sure, and easy ruin of the ungodly, which comes upon them like a whirlwind, in an instant, which they cannot avoid; and they can no more stand before God and against him, than chaff before the wind. It follows,

Psalms 1:5

Ver. 5. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,.... Neither in temporal judgment, when God comes forth in a way of wrath and sore displeasure; for who can stand before him when he is angry? what are chaff and stubble, thorns and briers, to consuming fire? nor in the last and great day of judgment, so the Targum and Kimchi interpret the words; for that day will burn like an oven the wicked, who will be as stubble, and leave neither root nor branch, **Mal 4:1**: when the great day of the Lamb's wrath is come, who will be able to stand? **Ro 6:16**; there will be no standing for the wicked when he appears; they will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to take their trial and hear their sentence, **2Co 5:10**; but they shall not stand in the same place with the righteous, not at Christ's right hand, but at his left; they shall not stand with an holy confidence, with intrepidity, and without shame, as the blessed man will; they will not stand, but fall in judgment; they will not be acquitted and discharged, but be condemned to everlasting punishment, Mt 25:30; and this sense the Targum on the place expresses, "the ungodly shall not be justified in the great day"; the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions render the words, "the ungodly shall not rise again in judgment"; from whence some have concluded there will be no resurrection of the wicked: which seems, to be the sense of Kimchi and other Jewish writers; who assert that the souls of the wicked perish with their bodies at death, and that the latter rise not, contrary to Ec 12:7; but that the wicked will, rise may be concluded from the justice of God, which requires that the bodies which have sinned should be punished; and from the general judgment of good and bad, and from the account of the punishment of hell, which will be inflicted on the body as well as on the soul: besides, the contrary doctrine is a licentious one, and is calculated to harden wicked men in their sins, and is directly repugnant to the assertions of Christ, and the Apostle Paul, **Joh 5:28**; nor has it any foundation in this text, even admitting such a version; which does not absolutely affirm that the wicked shall not rise again, but that they shall not rise again in, judgment, in the first resurrection, the resurrection of the just, and so as to be acquitted and discharged, but they shall rise to the resurrection of damnation;

nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; who are made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and have a work of grace and holiness wrought in them; and who, under the influence of grace, live soberly, righteously, and godly; these are the same with the blessed man, **Ps 1:1**; and who at the day of judgment will be perfectly holy, and free from all sin; and they will be all gathered together by the holy angels; the dead saints will be raised, the living ones will be changed, and both will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and will make up one general assembly and church of the firstborn; and among these, and in this assembly, there will not be a single sinner; there are now sinners in Zion, foolish virgins with the wise, chaff and tares among Christ's wheat, and wolves and goats among his sheep; but then there will be an eternal separation, and no mixing together any more.

Psalms 1:6

Ver. 6. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous,.... The way in which he walks by faith, which is in Jesus Christ; the way in which he goes to the Father, and carries to him his sacrifices of prayer and praise, which meet with acceptance through him; the way in which he seeks for and expects justification, pardon, and salvation, namely, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ: and also it may denote his course, his walk and conversation; for the righteous man is a follower of God, he takes up the cross and follows after Christ: he walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, according to the rule of the word, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ: and this way of his in every sense the Lord "knows"; not merely as he is omniscient, for by his omniscience his eyes are upon the ways of all men; he knows the way of the wicked as well as the way of the righteous; but the sense is, that the Lord approves of and is well pleased with his way of faith and holiness; he knows this person, so as to love him and take delight and pleasure in him; his countenance beholds him with a smile; he is well pleased with him in Christ and for his sake, on whose account he has respect to him and to his offerings, to his service and duty, to his ways and works; and hence he is a blessed man, is in a happy situation, and all he does prospers, for he and his ways please the Lord: and hence also it is that neither he nor his way shall perish; the way he is in leads to everlasting life, and he being a follower of the Lord in a way pleasing to him, he shall never perish, but have eternal life;

but the way of the ungodly shall perish; for his way is a wicked way, the way of sinners, **Ps 1:1**; it leads to destruction and death, and all that walk in it shall perish; for if is a way the Lord knows not, does not approve of, he abhors it; wherefore the man that continues in it will be unhappy, wretched, and miserable to all eternity. These last words therefore show the reason of the happiness of one sort of men, and the unhappiness of the other; and prove and confirm the same: the Lord knows, approves of, loves, and delights in the one; he does not approve of and delight in the other.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 2

This psalm is the second in order, and so it is called in Ac 13:33; which shows that the book of Psalms was in the same form in the apostles' days as now, and as it ever had been; and though it is without a title, yet certain it is that it is a psalm of David, since the twelve apostles of Christ with one voice ascribe it to him, in which no doubt they the generally received sense of the Jewish **Ac 4:24**; and the Messiah is the subject of and that it is a prophecy concerning him, his person, office, and kingdom, appears from the express mention of the Lord's Anointed, or Messiah, in his being set as King over Zion, notwithstanding the opposition made against him; from the person spoken of being called the Son of God, and that in such sense as angels and men are not, and therefore cannot belong to any creature; and from his having so large an inheritance, and such power over the Heathen; and from the reverence, service, and obedience due to him from the kings and judges of the earth; and from the trust and confidence which is to be put in him, which ought not to be placed but in a divine Person; and more especially this appears from several passages cited out of it in the New Testament, and applied to the Messiah, **Ac 4:25**, to which may be added, that the ancient Jewish doctors interpreted this psalm of the Messiah {s}; and some of the modern ones own that it may be understood either of David or of the Messiah, and that some things are clearer of the Messiah than of David {t}; and some particular passages in it are applied to him both by ancient and later writers among the Jews, as **Ps 2:1**, "Why do the Heathen rage", &c. {u}; **Ps 2:6**, "I have set", &c. {w}; **Ps 2:7**, "I will declare the decree", &c. {x}, and **Ps 2:8**, "Ask of me", &c. {y}; and we may very safely interpret the whole of him.

{s} Jarchi in loc. {t} Kimchi in v. 12. & Aben Ezra in v. 6. 12. {u} T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 3. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 19. {w} R. Saadiah Gaon in Dan. vii. 13. {x} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 90. 2. Zohar in Numb. fol. 82. 2. Maimon in Misn Sanhedrin, c. 11. 1. & Abarbinel Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 37. 4. &. 38. 1. {y} T. Bab. Succah, fol. 52. 1. & Bereshit Rabba, s. 44. fol. 38. 4.

Ver. 1. Why do the Heathen rage,.... Or "the nations"; which some understand of the Jews, who are so called, Ge 17:5; because of their various tribes; and of their rage against the Messiah there have been many instances; as when they gnashed upon him with their teeth, and at several times took up stones to stone him, and cried out in a most furious and wrathful manner, crucify him, crucify him, **Lu 4:28**; though it is best to interpret it of the Gentiles, as the apostles seem to do in **Ac 4:27**. The Hebrew word translated "rage" is by one Jewish writer {z} explained by
wrbx, "associate" or "meet together"; and which is often the sense of the word in the Syriac and Chaldee languages, in which it is more used; and another {a} says, that it is expressive of "gathering together, and of a multitude"; it intends a tumultuous gathering together, as is that of a mob, with great confusion and noise {b}; and so the Gentiles, the Roman soldiers, gathered together, even multitudes of them, and came out with Judas at the head of them, with swords and staves, to apprehend Christ and bring him to the chief priests and elders, Mt 26:47; these assembled together in Pilate's hall, when Christ was condemned to be crucified, and insulted him in a most rude and shocking manner, Mt 26:2; and many are the instances of the Gentiles rising in mobs, and appearing in riotous assemblies, making tumults and uproars against the apostles to oppose them, and the spread of the Gospel by them; to which they were sometimes instigated by the unbelieving Jews, and sometimes by their own worldly interest; see Ac 13:50, to which may be added, as instances of this tumult and rage, the violent persecutions both of the Pagan emperors and of the Papists, which last are called Gentiles as well as the other; for this respects the kingdom of Christ, or the Gospel dispensations, from the beginning to the end;

and the people imagine a vain thing? by "the people" are meant the people of Israel, who were once God's peculiar people, and who were distinguished by him with peculiar favours above all others, and in whom this prophecy has been remarkably fulfilled; they imagine it and meditated a vain thing when they thought the Messiah would be a temporal King, and set up a kingdom, on earth in great worldly splendour and glory, and rejected Jesus, the true Messiah, because he did not answer to these their carnal imaginations; they meditated a vain thing when they sought to take away the good name and reputation of Christ, by fixing opprobrious names and injurious charges upon him, for Wisdom has been justified of her children, Mt 11:19; and so they did when they meditated his death, with those vain hopes that he should die and his name perish, and should lie down in the grave and never rise more, Ps 41:5; for he not only rose from the dead, but his name was more famous after his death than before; they imagined a vain thing when they took so much precaution to prevent the disciples stealing his body out of the sepulchre, and giving out that he was risen from the dead, and more especially when he was risen, to hire the soldiers to tell a lie in order to stifle and discredit the report of it; they meditated vain things when they attempted to oppose the apostles, and hinder the preaching of the Gospel by them, which they often did, as the Acts of the Apostles testify; and it was after one of these attempts that the apostles, in their address to God, made use of this very passage of Scripture, **Ac 4:2**; and they still meditate a vain thing in that they imagine Jesus of Nazareth is not the Messiah, and that the Messiah is not yet come; and in that they are expecting and looking for him. Now the Psalmist, or the Holy Ghost by him, asks "why" all this? what should move the Gentiles and the Jews to so much rage, tumult, and opposition against an holy and innocent person, and who went about doing good as he did? what end they could have in it, or serve by it? and how they could expect to succeed? what would all their rage and not, and vain imagination, signify? it is strongly suggested hereby that it would all be in vain and to no purpose, as well as what follows.

{z} Aben Ezra in loc. {a} R. Sol. Ben Melech in Ioc. {b} wvgr "congregrant se turmatim", Vatablus; "eum tumultu", Munster, Tigurine version.

Psalms 2:2

Ver. 2. The kings of the earth set themselves,.... Rose and stood up in great wrath and fury, and presented themselves in an hostile manner, and opposed the Messiah: as Herod the great, king of Judea, who very early bestirred himself, and sought to take away the life of Jesus in his infancy; and Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, who is called a king, **Mr 6:14**; who with his men of war mocked him, and set him at nought; and Pontius Pilate, the governor of Judea, who represented the Roman emperor, and condemned him to death, Mt 27:26; and all the kings of the earth ever since, who ever persecuted Christ in his members, and have set themselves with all their might to hinder the spread of his Gospel and the enlargement of his interest;

and the rulers take counsel together; as did the Jewish sanhedrim, the great court of judicature among the Jews, the members of which were the rulers of the people, who frequently met together and consulted to take away the life of Christ: though it may also include all other governors and magistrates who have entered into schemes

against the Lord, and against his Anointed, or Messiah, Christ: by "the Lord", or Jehovah, which is the great, the glorious, and incommunicable name of God, and is expressive of his eternal being and self-existence, and of his being the fountain of essence to all creatures, is meant God the Father; since he is distinguished from his Son, the Messiah, his anointed One, as Messiah and Christ signify; and who is so called, because he is anointed by God with the Holy Ghost, without measure, to the office of the Mediator, Prophet, Priest, and King; from whom the saints receive the anointing, which teacheth all things, and every grace of the Spirit in measure; and who, after his name, are called Christians. This name of the promised Redeemer was well known among the Jews, **Joh 1:41**; and which they took from this passage, and from some others;

[saying], as follows:

Psalms 2:3

Ver. 3. Let us break their bands asunder,.... These are not the words of the apostles, nor of the saints in Gospel times, encouraging one another, notwithstanding the rage and opposition of Jews and Gentiles against their Master and his interest, to break asunder the bands of wickedness, the idolatrous customs and practices of the Heathens, and to throw off the insupportable yoke of bondage, of Jewish traditions and ceremonies, see Isa 58:6; but of the Heathen, the people, and kings of the earth, and rulers who, with one voice, say this and what follows,

and cast away their cords from us; with relation to the Lord and his Anointed, whose laws, ordinances, and truths, they call "bands" and "cords"; so Arama interprets them of the law, and the commandments; or a "yoke", as the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render the last word; and the phrases in general express their irreverence of God and the Messiah, their rejection Christ and his religion; their non-subjection to him, and their refusal to have him to rule over them; and their disesteem and contempt of his Gospel, and of the ordinances of it, and of the laws and rules of his government in his churches: and also they show the wrong notion that carnal men have of these things that whereas Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden light, Mt 11:30; his Gospel and the truths of it make men free from the slavery of sin and Satan, and from a spirit of bondage, **Ro 8:15**; and true Gospel liberty consists in an observance of his commands and ordinances; yet they look upon these things as bands and cords, as fetters and shackles, as so many restraints upon their liberty, which are not to be bore: when, on the other hand, they promise themselves liberty in a disengagement from them, and in the enjoyment of their own lusts and sinful pleasures; whereas thereby they are brought into bondage, and become the servants of corruption. Some render it "cast away from him" {c}; either from Christ, or everyone from himself.

{c} wnmm "a nobis, sive ab illo", Nebiensis.

Psalms 2:4

Ver. 4. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh,.... At the rage and tumult of the Heathen; at the vain imaginations of the people; at the opposition of the kings of the earth; at the mad counsel of the rulers, against him and his Messiah; and at their proposal to one another to throw off the yoke and government of them both. This is a periphrasis of God, "who dwells in the heavens", and sits there enthroned; though he is not included and comprehended in them, but is everywhere; and his being there is mentioned in opposition to the kings of the earth, and the people in it; and to show the vast distance there is between them, and how they are as nothing to him, Isa 40:1 **Job 4:18**; and how vain and fruitless their attempts must be against him and his Messiah: and his sitting there still and quiet, serene and undisturbed, is opposed to the running to and fro, and the tumultuous and riotous assembling of the Heathen. Laughing is ascribed unto him, according to the language of men, as the Jewish writers speak {d}, by an anthropopathy; in the same sense as he is said to repent and grieve, **Ge 6:6**; and expresses his security from all their attempts, **Job 5:22**; and the contempt he has them in, and the certain punishment of them, and the aggravation of it; who will not only then laugh at them himself, but expose them to the laughter and scorn of others, **Pr 1:26**;

the Lord shall have them in derision; which is a repetition of the same thing in other words; and is made partly to show the certainty of their disappointment and ruin, and partly to explain who is meant by him that sits in the heavens.

The Targum calls him, "the Word of the Lord"; and Alshech interprets it of the Shechinah.

{d} Kimchi, Aben Ezra, & R. Sol. Ben Melech in loc.

Psalms 2:5

Ver. 5. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath,.... Or, "and he shall speak to them"; so Noldius: that is, the Lord that sits in the heavens, and laughs, and has the Heathen, the people, the kings and rulers in derision, shall not only silently despise their furious and concerted opposition to him and his Messiah, but shall at last speak out unto them, not in his word, but in his providences; and not in love, as to his own people, when he chastises them, but in great wrath, inflicting severe and just punishment. It seems to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, after the crucifixion, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; and after the pouring out of the Spirit, and when the Gospel, to their great mortification, had got ground, and made large advances in the Gentile world;

and vex them in his sore displeasure; or "in the heat of his anger" {e}: see De 29:24, where the Holy Ghost speaks of the same people, and of the same ruin and destruction of them at the same time, as here: and as the carrying of the Jews captive into Babylon is called their vexation, **Isa 9:1**; much more may their destruction by the Romans; then it was they howled for vexation of spirit, Isa 65:14; the wrath of God came upon them to the uttermost; they were filled with trouble and confusion, with terror and consternation, as the word {f} used signifies; they were vexed to see themselves straitened and pent in on every side by the Roman armies, oppressed with famine and internal divisions, rapine and murder; to see their temple profaned and burnt, their city plundered and destroyed, and themselves taken and carried captive: and what most of all vexed them was, that their attempts against Jesus of Nazareth, the true Messiah, were fruitless; and that, notwithstanding all their opposition to him, his name was famous, his interest increased, his kingdom was enlarged, through the spread of his Gospel among the Gentiles; and what Jehovah in **Ps 2:6** says, though it is to the comfort of his people, was to their terror and vexation.

{e} wnwrxb "in aestu irae suae", Junius & Tremellius. {f} wmlhby "conturbabit", V. L. Vatablus, Gejerus; so Musculus; Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "terrebit", Pagninus, Montanus; so Cocceius, Michaelis; see

Ainsworth.

Psalms 2:6

Ver. 6. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. Or, "behold, I have set", &c. so Noldius by Zion is meant the church of God, especially under the Gospel dispensation; see Heb 12:22; so called, because, as Zion was, it is the object of God's love and choice, the place of his habitation and residence; where divine worship is observed, and the word and ordinances of God administered; and where the Lord distributes his blessings of grace; and which is the perfection of beauty, through Christ's comeliness put upon her; and will be the joy of the whole earth: it is strongly fortified by the power and grace of God, and is immovable and impregnable, being built on Christ, the Rock of ages; and, like Zion, it is an high hill, eminent and visible; and more especially will be so when the mountain of the Lord's house is established upon the tops of the mountains: and it is an Holy One, through the presence and worship of God in it, and the sanctification of his Spirit. And over this hill, the church, Christ is King; he is King of saints, and is acknowledged by them; and it is for their great safety and security, their joy, comfort, and happiness, that he is set over them: he is called by his Father "my King", because he who is King of Zion is his Anointed, as in **Ps 2:2**; and his Son, his begotten Son, as in **Ps 2:7**; his firstborn, his fellow and equal; and because he is his as King; not that he is King over him, for his Father is greater than he, as man and Mediator, or with respect to his office capacity, in which he is to be considered as King; and therefore he is rather King under him: but he is a King of his setting up, and therefore called his; he has appointed him his kingdom, given him the throne of his father David; put a crown of pure gold on his head, and crowned him with glory and honour, and the sceptre of righteousness in his hand, and has given him a name above every name. He did not make himself a King, nor was he made so by men; but he was set up, or "anointed" by God the Father, as the word {g} here used signifies; and may refer either to the inauguration of Christ into his kingly office, and his investiture with it from all eternity, as in **Pr 8:23**, where the same word is used as here; and anointing with oil being a ceremony performed at the instalment of kings into their office, the phrase is used for the thing itself: or rather, since Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost in the human nature, at his incarnation and baptism, and especially at the time of his ascension, when he was made or declared to be LORD and CHRIST; this may refer to the time when he, as the ascended Lord and King, gave gifts to men, to his apostles, and qualified them in an extraordinary manner to carry his Gospel into the Gentile world, and spread it there, as they did with success; whereby his kingdom became more visible and glorious, to the great vexation of the Jews; for, in spite of all their opposition, Christ being set by his Father King over his church and people, continued so, and his kingdom was every day more and more enlarged, to their great mortification.

{g} ytkon ecrisa, Symmachus; "unxi", Musculus, Vatablus, Ainsworth, Piscator, Muis, Cocceius; "ego inungens", Junius & Tremellius; "inunxi", Michaelis.

Psalms 2:7

Ver. 7. I will declare the decree,.... These are the words of Jehovah's Anointed and King, exercising his kingly office, according to the decree and commandment of the Father: for these words refer not to the following, concerning the generation of the Son, which does not depend on the decree and arbitrary will of God, but is from his nature; but these words relate to what go before. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Oriental versions, place this clause at the end of **Ps 2:6**; some render it, "declaring his commandment", or "the commandment of the Lord"; the laws that he would have observed, both by him and by the subjects of his kingdom. The Syriac and Arabic versions, "that he might declare the commandment of the Lord"; as if this was the end of his being appointed King. The word qx is differently rendered; by many, "the decree", the purpose of God concerning Christ as Mediator, and the salvation of his people by him; and who so fit to declare this as he who lay in the bosom of the Father, and was privy to all his secret thoughts and designs, and in when the eternal purpose was purposed. **Joh 1:18**. The Chaldee paraphrase renders it by amyq, "the covenant", the everlasting covenant of grace; and who so proper to declare this as he with whom the covenant was made, and who is the covenant itself, in whom all the blessings and promises of it are, and the messenger of it. **Mal 3:1**. It may not be unfitly applied to the Gospel, which is the sum and substance of both the decree and covenant of God; it is what was ordained before the world for our glory. This Christ was appointed to preach, and did declare it in the great congregation; the same with the counsel of God, Ac 20:27. The words will bear to be rendered, "I will declare" px la "to the command" {h}; or according to the order and rule prescribed by Jehovah, without adding to it or taking from it: agreeably to which he executed his office as King, and Prophet also. The doctrine was not his own, but his Father's he preached; he spake not of himself, but as he taught and enjoined him; the Father gave him commandment what he should say and speak, Joh 12:49; and he kept close to it, as he here says he would: and he ruled in his name, and by his authority, according to the law of his office; and which might be depended upon from the dignity of his person, which qualified him both for his kingly and prophetic offices, expressed in the following words:

the Lord hath said unto me, thou [art] my Son; not by creation, as angels and men; nor by adoption, as saints; nor by office, as civil magistrates; nor on account of his incarnation or resurrection; nor because of the great love of God unto him; but in such a way of filiation as cannot be said of any creature nor of any other, **Heb 1:5**; He is the true, proper, natural, and eternal Son of God, and as such declared, owned, and acknowledged by Jehovah the Father, as in these words; the foundation of which relation lies in what follows:

this day have I begotten thee; which act of begetting refers not to the nature, nor to the office, but the person of Christ; not to his nature, not to his divine nature, which is common with the Father and Spirit; wherefore if his was begotten, theirs must be also: much less to his human nature, in which he is never said to be begotten, but always to be made, and with respect to which he is without father: nor to his office as Mediator, in which he is not a Son, but a servant; besides, he was a Son previous to his being Prophet, Priest, and King; and his office is not the foundation of his sonship, but his sonship is the foundation of his office; or by which that is supported, and which fits him for the performance of it: but it has respect to his person; for, as in human generation, person begets person, and like begets like, so in divine generation; but care must be taken to remove all imperfection from it, such as divisibility and multiplication of essence, priority and posteriority, dependence, and the like: nor can the "modus" or manner of it be conceived or explained by us. The date of it, "today", designs eternity, as in Isa 43:13, which is one continued day, an everlasting now. And this may be applied to any time and case in which Christ is declared to be the Son of God; as at his incarnation, his baptism, and transfiguration upon the mount, and his resurrection from the dead, as it is in Ac 13:33; because then he was declared to be the Son of God with power, **Ro 1:4**; and to his ascension into heaven, where he was made Lord and Christ, and his divine sonship more manifestly appeared; which seems to be the time and case more especially referred to here, if it be compared with **Heb 1:3**.

{h} qwx la Heb. "ad decretum", Michaelis, Piscator; "juxta vel secundum statutum", Musculus, Gejerus; "praescriptum et modum certum", Cocceius.

Psalms 2:8

Ver. 8. Ask of me,.... Jehovah is either here again introduced speaking, or these words are a continuation of the Son's account of what his Father said unto him; which do not suppose any superiority in the one, or inferiority in the other; but are only expressive of the Father's great respect and affection for his Son, as such a way of speaking among men shows, **Es 5:3**; and of the great interest the Son had in his Father, who could ask nothing but he had it; and shows the perfect harmony, agreement, and unity between them: see **1Ki 3:5**; Christ, in the council and covenant of grace and peace, asked many things of his Father, which were granted; he asked for the persons of all the elect to be his bride and spouse, and his heart's desire was given him, and the request of his lips was not withheld from him: he asked for all the blessings of grace for them; for spiritual life here, and eternal life hereafter; and all were given him, and put into his hands for them, Ps 20:2; and here it is promised him,

and I shall give [thee] the Heathen [for] thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth [for] thy possession; by "the Heathen", and "the uttermost parts of the earth", are meant God's elect among the Gentiles, and who live in the distant parts of the world; which are Christ's other sheep, the Father has given to him as his portion, and whom he has made his care and charge: as if it was not enough that he should be King of Zion, or have the government over his chosen ones among the Jews, he commits into his hands the Gentiles also; see
Isa 49:6; and these are given him as his inheritance and possession, as his portion, to be enjoyed by him; and who esteems them as such, and reckons them a goodly heritage, and a peculiar treasure, his jewels, and the apple of his eye. These words respect the calling of the Gentiles under the Gospel dispensation; and the amplitude of Christ's kingdom in all the earth, which shall be from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth.

Psalms 2:9

Ver. 9. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron,.... Not his inheritance and possession among the Gentiles, the chosen ones given him by the Father; these he delights in, takes care of, protects, and preserves: but the stubborn and rebellious ones among the Heathen, and in each of the parts of the world, who will not have him to reign over them; who treat his person with contempt, reject his government, disobey his Gospel, and despise his commands; towards these Christ will use severity, and will exert his power and break them in pieces. The Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, render it, "shall feed" or "rule them"; and so it is cited in **Re 2:27**; and applied to Christ, the Word of God, and King of kings; and must be understood, as it is in those places, of the severity of his government over them, of the strictness of his justice, without the least display of mercy; and then the sense is the same with those versions which render it, "shall break them:" as the word used is interpreted by the Targum, and the Jewish commentators on the place; and which is confirmed by what follows:

thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel; which is very easily done with a bar of iron; and, when it is done, the pieces can never be put together again: so that by the metaphor is signified the easy and irreparable ruin of the wicked; see Isa 30:14. The word signifies that they should be so crumbled into dust, that they should be scattered about as with the wind; which, so far as it relates to the Jews, was fulfilled in their destruction by the Romans, and will have its accomplishment in the antichristian nations at the latter day; see **Re 2:26**.

Psalms 2:10

Ver. 10. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings,.... This address is made not so much to the kings of the earth in David's time, as to those who would be under the Gospel dispensation, and times of the Messiah; and particularly who would rise up, and set themselves against the Lord and his Anointed, **Ps 2:2**; and with these are to be understood their subjects: for if they are to serve the Lord, and be subject to Christ, then much more those that are under them; and they are rather spoken to particularly, because their examples have great influence on those over whom they rule, whether for good or evil these are exhorted to be wise, or to act the wise part; for great men are not always wise; wisdom, riches, and honour, do not always go together; men may be in high places, and yet be of low understandings; however, they do not always act wisely, and particularly those kings did not, when they rose up and set themselves against the Lord and his Messiah; since such opposition must be fruitless, nor is there any counsel against the Lord. And we learn, from the connection of these words with the following, that the truest wisdom in kings and people is to fear God, be subject to Christ, and trust in him. The words are an inference from what goes before; "therefore", since Christ is set as King over Zion, and he is no other than the Son of God, and who has a power over all flesh; one part of the world is his inheritance and possession, and the other part he will in a little time break and dash to pieces; wherefore "now", under the Gospel dispensation, while it is today, and now is the accepted time and day of salvation, before the blow is given; act the wise part and leave off opposing, and become subject to so great and powerful a King;

be instructed, ye judges of the earth; who are under kings, being appointed by them to hear causes and minister justice; they answer to the sanhedrim of the Jews; to the rulers in **Ps 2:2**. These are exhorted to receive instructions, not in things political and civil they may be well acquainted with; but in things religious and evangelical, in the worship of God, in the Gospel of Christ, and in his ordinances; for persons in such posts should not be above instruction in these things. The word may be rendered, "be ye chastised" or "corrected" {i}; that is, suffer reproof, correction, and chastisement at the hand of God, whether by words or deeds; submit to it patiently, and receive instruction from it: for God sometimes reproves kings and princes of the earth, on account of their sins, and for the sake of his people, when they should learn righteousness; see Ps 105:14.

{i} wrowh "castigamini", Piscator; so Ainsworth; "corrigimini", Castalio, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 2:11

Ver. 11. Serve the Lord with fear,.... Not the creature, neither more, nor besides, nor with the Creator; God and mammon cannot both be served; nor any fictitious and nominal deities, the idols of the Gentiles, who are not gods by nature; but the true Jehovah, the one and only Lord God, he only is to be worshipped and served, even Father, Son, and Spirit. Here it may be understood either of the Lord Christ, the Son of God, who is to be served by the kings and judges of the earth, he being King of kings, and Lord of lords; or rather of Jehovah the Father, since the Son seems to be distinguished from him in **Ps 2:12**: and the service these persons are called unto lies not in the discharge of any office in the church, as in preaching the word, which is serving God in the Gospel of his Son; and hence the ministers of the word are eminently called the servants of the most high God; for kings and judges are not required hereby to lay aside their crowns and sceptres, and leave their seats of justice, and become preachers of the Gospel; but in acting according to the will of God revealed in his word, and in the whole worship of him, both internal and external: and this is to be done "with fear", not with fear of man, nor with servile fear of God, but with a godly and filial fear, with a reverential affection for him, and in a way agreeable to his mind and will; with reverence and awe of him, without levity, carelessness, and negligence;

and rejoice with trembling; some reference may be had to the joy in public worship, as at sacrifices and festivals, and the music in divine service under the law; and the singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs under the Gospel; and especially to the Gospel dispensation itself, which is a time of joy and rejoicing; the Gospel is good tidings of great joy; the kingdom of God is not in things external, but in joy in the Holy Ghost; and, above all, respect is had to a rejoicing in Christ Jesus, in his person, righteousness, and salvation: and which is consistent with "trembling"; not with a fearful looking for of judgment, but with modesty and humility; in which sense this word, when joined with "fear" as here, is used **Php 2:12**, and stands opposed to pride, haughtiness, and arrogance; men should so rejoice in Christ as to have no confidence in the flesh, or assume any degree of glory to themselves, or have any rejoicing in themselves, but wholly in Christ, giving all the glory of what they have to him.

Psalms 2:12

Ver. 12. Kiss the Son,.... The Son of God, spoken of in **Ps 2:7**; the word used is so rendered in Pr 31:2; and comes from another which signifies to "choose", and to "purify", or "to be pure"; hence some render it "the elect" or "chosen One", or "the pure One" {k}; and both agree with Christ, who is God's elect, chosen to be the Redeemer and Saviour of his people, and who is pure free from sin, original and actual. And whereas a kiss is a token of love among friends and relations, at meeting and parting, Ge 33:11; it may here design the love and affection that is to be expressed to Christ, who is a most lovely object, and to be loved above all creatures and things; or, as it sometimes signifies, homage and subjection, 1Sa 10:1: and it is the custom of the Indians to this day for subjects to kiss their kings: it may here also denote the subjection of the kings and judges and others to Christ, who is Lord of all; or else, as it has been used in token of adoration and worship, Job 31:26; it may design the worship which is due to him from all ranks of creatures, angels and men, **Heb 1:6**; and the honour which is to be given to him, as to the Father, **Joh 5:22**; which shows the greatness and dignity of his person, and that he is the true God and eternal life: in the Talmud {l} this is interpreted of the law, where it is said,

"there is no rb but the law, according to **Ps 2:12**;"

which agrees with the Septuagint version;

lest he be angry; though he is a Lamb, he has wrath in him, and when the great day of his wrath comes in any form on earth, there is no standing before him; and how much less when he shall appear as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire; then kings and freemen will call to the rocks to fall upon them, and hide them from him;

and ye perish [from] the way; the Syriac version renders it "from his way", the Son's way; and the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions "from the righteous way"; and the Arabic version "from the way of righteousness"; or "as to the way", as others {m}, the good way; all to one sense; meaning that way of righteousness, salvation and eternal life by Jesus Christ, which being missed by persons, they are eternally lost and undone: some render it "because of the way" {n}; that is, because of their sinful course of life; for the way of the ungodly shall perish itself, and therefore they that pursue it shall perish also: others render it "in the way" {o}; and then the sense is, lest they perish in the midst of their course of sin, in their own evil way, they have chosen and delighted in, or, to use the words of Christ, "die in their sins", **Joh 8:21**, and everlastingly perish; for this perishing is to be understood not of corporeal death, in which sense righteous men perish, but of everlasting destruction: or the word which is rendered "from the way" may be translated "suddenly" {p}, "immediately", or "straightway", and our English word "directly" is almost the same; and so may design the swift and sudden destruction of such persons who provoke the Son to wrath and anger; which sense is confirmed by what follows;

when his wrath is kindled but a little; either to a small degree, or but for a little while; for the least degree and duration of it are intolerable, and who then can dwell in everlasting burnings, or abide the devouring flames? or when it is kindled Mwatp, "suddenly" {q}, in a moment, as Jarchi interprets it; and so sudden wrath brings sudden destruction;

blessed [are] all they that put their trust in him; not in horses and chariots, in riches and honours, in their own wisdom, strength, and righteousness; but in the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and who is truly and properly God; or otherwise faith and trust would not be required to be put in him: and happy are those who betake themselves to him as to their strong hold and place of defence; who look to him and believe in him for pardon, peace, righteousness, every supply of grace and eternal life; these are safe and secure in him, nor shall they want any good thing needful for them; and they have much peace, joy, and comfort here, and shall have more grace as they want it, and hereafter eternal glory and happiness.

{k} rb eklekton, Aquila; "purum", Cocceius; so Kimchi & Ben Melech. {l} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 1. {m} Krd "quoad viam", Cocceius, Gussetius. {n} "Propter viam", Vatablus, Muis. {o} "In via", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Ainsworth, Gejerus. {p} "Subito", Noldius, p. 230. No. 1052. {q} en tacei Sept. "subito", Noldius, p. 433. No. 1371.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 3

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son. This is the first of the psalms that has a title, and is called a Psalm; the word for which, "mizmor", comes from one which signifies to "cut" or "prune" {r}, as trees are lopped of their superfluous branches; showing this to be a composition of even feet, in proper metre, formed for the modulation of the voice, to some tune or musical instrument; and it is said to be "a psalm of David", which may be rendered "a psalm for" or "to David" {s}, as if it was wrote by another for his use, and inscribed to him; or rather that it was given to him by the Holy Spirit, who was the author of it, though he was the penman. It is observed by some, that wherever the dative case is used in the title of the psalm, as it most frequently is, as such a psalm to David, or to Asaph, it may signify that it came from the Lord to him, or was divinely inspired; just as it is said, the word of the Lord came to the prophets; though some render it "a psalm concerning David" {t}, his troubles, his faith and security in God, his victory over his enemies, and salvation from the Lord. However, David was the composer of this psalm, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, occasioned by his flight from Absalom; who, having stolen away the hearts of the people of Israel, entered into a conspiracy with them to dethrone his father and place himself in his stead; and the people so increased continually with him, that David thought it advisable to flee from Jerusalem, 2Sa 15:12; and at the time of his flight, or after it, he penned this psalm on account of it, and as suitable to it. And now was fulfilled what God had said, by Nathan the prophet, should befall him, because of the affair of Bathsheba and Uriah; see 2Sa 12:11. David was an eminent type of Christ, and so he was in his troubles, and in these; as one of his sons conspired against him to dethrone him, and take away his life; so Judas, one of Christ's disciples or children, for disciples were called children, his familiar friend, that did eat of his bread, lifted up his heel against him, and sought to betray him, and did; and who, though he knew the designs of Judas against him, and did not flee from him, but rather went to meet him, yet it is easy to observe that he took the same route from Jerusalem as David did. At this time he went over the brook Kidron, and to the mount of Olives; see Joh 18:1; compared with 2Sa 15:23; And indeed the whole psalm may be applied to Christ; and so as the second psalm sets forth the dignity of Christ's person, as the Son of God, and the stability and enlargement of his kingdom, notwithstanding the opposition made to him; this expresses his troubles from his enemies, his death and resurrection from the dead, his victory over his enemies, and the salvation he wrought out for his people. In short, it may be understood of David as the type, of Christ as the antitype, and of the people of God, being suited to their experiences, more or less, in all ages; and in this large and extensive way I shall choose to interpret it.

{r} rwmzm "a radice" rmz "praescidit", Gejerus. {s} dwdl "psalmus Davidi", "sub. datus", Genebrardus. {t} "De Davide, vel in Davidem"; so some in Mariana.

Ver. 1. Lord, how are they increased that trouble me?.... David's enemies increased in the conspiracy against him, 2Sa 15:12; the hearts of the men of Israel were after Absalom, and against him. Christ's enemies increased when Judas with a multitude came to take him; when the body of the common people cried out, Crucify him; when the assembly of the wicked enclosed him, and pierced his hands and his feet. And the enemies of God's people are many; the men of this world are against them; legions of devils oppose them; and they have swarms of sins in their own hearts; and all these give trouble. David's enemies troubled him; he wept as he went up the hill, to think that his own son should seek to destroy him; that his subjects, whom he had ruled so long with clemency, and had hazarded his person in war for their defence, and to protect them in their civil and religious rights, should rebel against him. Christ's enemies troubled him, when they bound and led him away as a malefactor; when they spit upon him, smote and buffeted him; when they scourged and crucified him, and mocked at him. The enemies of the saints are troublers of them; in the world, and from the men of it, they have tribulation; Satan's temptations give them much uneasiness and distress; and their indwelling sins cause them to cry out, "Oh wretched men that we are!" This address is made to the Lord, as the Lord God omniscient, who knew the case to be as it was, and who had a concern in it not being without his will, but according to it, he having foretold it, and as he who only could help out of it: and the psalmist delivers it in a complaining way, and in an expostulatory manner; reasoning the case why it should be so, what should be the reason of it, for what end and purpose it was; and as wondering at it, suggesting his own innocence, and how undeserving he was to be treated in such a way;

many [are] they that rise up against me; many in quantity, and great in quality, great in the law, in wisdom, in riches, and in stature, as Jarchi interprets it; such as Ahithophel and others, who rose up against David in an hostile manner, to dispossess him of his kingdom, and to destroy his life. And many were they that rose up against Christ; the multitude came against him as a thief, with clubs and staves: the men of this world rise up against the saints with their tongues, and sometimes with open force and violence; Satan, like a roaring lion, seeks to devour them, and their own fleshly lusts war against them.

Psalms 3:2

Ver. 2. Many [there be] which say of my soul,.... Or "to my soul" {u}, the following cutting words, which touched to the quick, reached his very heart, and like a sword pierced through it:

[there is] no help for him in God; or "no salvation" {w}: neither in this world, nor in that which is to come, as Kimchi explains it. David's enemies looked upon his case to be desperate; that it was impossible he should ever extricate himself from it; yea, that God himself either could not or would not save him. And in like manner did the enemies of Christ say, when they had put him upon the cross; see
Mt 27:43; and how frequent is it for the men of the world to represent the saints as in a damnable state! and to call them a damned set and generation of men, as if there was no salvation for them? and how often does Satan suggest unto them, that there is no hope for them, and they may as well indulge themselves in all sinful lusts and pleasures? and how often do their own unbelieving hearts say to them, that there is no salvation in Christ for them, though there is for others; and that they have no interest in the favour of God, and shall be eternally lost and perish? And this account is concluded with the word

selah, which some take to be a musical note; and so the Septuagint render it diaqalma, which Suidas {x} interprets the change of the song, of the note or tune of it; and the rather it may be thought to be so, since it is only used in this book of Psalms, and in the prayer of Habakkuk, which was set to a tune, and directed to the chief singer. Kimchi derives it from a root which signifies "to lift up", and supposes that it denotes and directs to an elevation, or straining of the voice, at the place where this word stands. Others understand it as a pause, a full stop for a while; and as a note of attention, either to something that is remarkably bad and distressing, as here; or remarkably good, and matter of rejoicing, as in **Ps 3:4**. Others consider it as an affirmation of the truth of anything, good or bad; and render it "verily", "truly", as, answering to "Amen"; so be it, so it is, or shall be; it is the truth of the thing: to this sense agrees Aben Ezra. But others render it "for ever", as the Chaldee paraphrase; and it is a tradition of the Jews {y}, that wherever it is said, "netzach", "selah", and "ed", there is no ceasing, it is for ever and ever; and so then, according to this rule, the sense of David's enemies is, that there was no help for him in God for ever. A very learned man {z} has wrote a dissertation upon this word; in which he endeavours to prove, that it is a name of God, differently used, either in the vocative, genitive, and dative cases; as, O Selah, O God, or of God, or to God, &c. as the sense requires.

{u} yvpnl th quch mou, Sept. "animae meae", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so the Targum. {w} htewvy Nya "non est salus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "non ulla salus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Ainsworth. {x} In voce diaq. {y} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 54. 1. Vid. Ben Melech in loc. {z} Paschii Dissertatio de Selah, p. 670. in Thesaur. Theolog. Philolog. par. 1.

Psalms 3:3

Ver. 3. But thou, O Lord, [art] a shield for me,.... Or "about me" {a} protecting and defending me. David was a military man, and often alludes to military affairs; and borrows words from thence, expressive of his great security from the Lord; see Ps 18:2. So Jehovah the Father was a shield to Christ, in his infancy, from Herod's rage and fury; and afterwards from the insults of the Pharisees, and their attempts to take away his life before the time; and in his sufferings and death, so as that his faith and confidence in him were kept up, and he got the victory over sin, Satan, and the world; see Ps 22:9. And the Lord is a shield unto all his people, Ge 15:1. They are kept by his power, and encompassed about with his favour, as with a shield; his veracity and his faithfulness in his promises, and his truth, are their shield and buckler: and especially his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the shield which faith makes use of, particularly his blood and righteousness, and salvation by him; which it holds up, and defends itself with, against the charges of the law, the accusations of conscience, and the temptations of Satan; and which are a security from the justice of God, and wrath to come;

my glory; who took David from the sheepfold, and made him king over Israel, and raised him to all the glory he had enjoyed; and in whom he gloried as his covenant God, and of whom he made his boast; and not of his strength, valour, wisdom, riches, and honour. So God the Father is the glory of Christ, the glorifier of him, by supporting him under his sufferings, raising him from the dead, and setting him at his own right hand, where he is crowned with glory and honour: he is the glory of his people, in whom they glory, and by whom they are called to eternal glory; and who will give it to them, and reveal it in them, even an eternal weight of it, which the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared unto;

and the lifter up mine head; such as the helmet is: the Lord was lifter up of David's head when he brought him to the throne, and afterwards gave him victory over his enemies; for so the phrase of lifting up the head signifies; see 2Ki 25:27. And he was the lifter up of Christ's head when he raised him from the dead; and exalted him, both with and at his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, and gave him a name above every name. And he is the lifter up of the heads of his people in conversion, when he raises them from a low estate, and sets them among princes to inherit the throne of glory; and when he gives them comfort, peace, and joy, which causes them to lift up their heads; whereas in sorrow, and mourning, and distress, the head is bowed down like a bulrush, Isa 58:5; and when he gives them boldness and confidence, as at the throne of grace now, through the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon them; so at the bar of judgment hereafter, through the righteousness of Christ put upon them, as that they shall not be ashamed nor confounded; see Lu 21:28; and he will be the lifter up of their heads in the resurrection morn, and when they shall appear with Christ in glory.

{a} ydeb "circa me", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Muis, Ainsworth, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 3:4

Ver. 4. I cried unto the Lord with my voice,.... The experience which the psalmist had of being heard in prayer, was what gave great encouragement to his faith, as to his interest in God and salvation by him, when his enemies were so increased about him; for crying here is to be understood of prayer, as it is often used in this book of Psalms: and so the Targum renders it, "I prayed"; and this designs vocal prayer. Sometimes there is a crying in prayer and no voice heard, as it is said of Moses, Ex 14:15; and was the case of Hannah, **1Sa 1:13**; but this was with a voice, and a loud one, as in Ps 55:17; denoting ardour, fervency, and importunity; and such prayer avails much with God. The object addressed in prayer is the Lord, the God of his life, and who was able to save him, and supply all his wants;

and he heard me out of his holy hill; either out of the church, the holy hill of Zion, **Ps 2:6**; where David prayed and God granted his presence, and gave an answer to his prayers; or out from the mercy seat and ark, which was a type of the propitiatory, Christ, and which David had brought to his own city, the hill of Zion; or from heaven, the habitation of God's holiness: David was a man of prayer, and he was often heard and answered by God. And this also is true of Christ, he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to God **Heb 5:7**, that was able to save him; and he was heard by him, yea, the Father always heard him: and God is a God hearing and answering the prayers of his people, sooner or later: sometimes before, sometimes at, and sometimes after their crying to him.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 3:5

Ver. 5. I laid me down and slept,.... After the battle was over between Absalom's men and his, says Aben Ezra; but rather this was in the midst of his trouble and distress, since he afterwards prays for salvation: and this sleep was either, as Jarchi observes, through his heart being overwhelmed with grief; for there have been instances of persons sleeping through sorrow, as Elijah, Jonah, and the disciples of Christ, 1Ki 19:4; or rather this is expressive of the calmness and serenity of his mind amidst his troubles; he laid himself down in peace, and slept quietly and comfortably; he did not lose a night's rest, his sleep was sweet unto him; which was a blessing of life from the Lord that everyone does not enjoy; see Ps 127:2;

I awakened; in the morning, alive and cheerful, Some lay themselves down and never awake more, as Sisera the captain of Jabin's army, and Ishbosheth the son of Saul; and this might have been David's case, considering the circumstances he was in: and others, through perplexing thoughts and cares, or pains of body, or uneasy dreams, rise fatigued and distressed; but David arose in good health of body, and tranquillity of mind, and comfortably refreshed;

for the Lord sustained me; the psalmist committed himself to the care and protection of God; he laid himself down in his arms, and there slept in safety; the Lord preserved him, who is Israel's keeper, that neither slumbers nor sleeps: and he rose in health and cheerfulness in the morning, supported by his right hand. This shows, that lying down to sleep, when in such circumstances, and awaking with cheerfulness, were not owing to rashness, stupidity, and insensibility, but to divine supports. These words may be interpreted, as they are by some of the ancients, of the death of Christ, and of his resurrection from the dead by the power of God; death is often expressed by sleep, and the resurrection of the dead by an awaking out of sleep, Da 12:2; and Christ's death being signified by lying down and sleeping, may denote both the voluntariness of it, that he laid down his life freely and willingly; and his short continuance under the power of death, it was but like a night's sleep; and his resurrection from the dead, being expressed by an awaking through the Lord's sustaining him, shows that it was by the power of God, even the exceeding greatness of his power: and the whole of this may be applied to the case and state of the saints and people of God, who at times have rest and peace amidst their enemies; though they have tribulation in the world, they have peace in Christ; and notwithstanding the temptations of Satan, and the corruptions of their own hearts, they have joy and comfort through believing in Christ; the Lord sustains them with precious promises, and supports them with the discoveries of his love, and upholds them with the right hand of his righteousness.

Psalms 3:6

Ver. 6. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people,.... David was a man of courage from his youth; the instances of his attacking the lion and the bear, when he kept his father's sheep, his engaging with Goliath, and his military exploits, show it; and though there were now many thousands up in arms against him, and his own son at the head of them; all the tribes of Israel were revolting from him, and he was only attended with a few of his friends, yet he was not dismayed; for that he refers to this insurrection appears by what follows,

that have set [themselves] against me round about; and this was owing not to himself; but to the Lord's sustaining of him; see Ps 27:1; and such courage and greatness of soul did his antitype the Messiah express, and to a greater degree, when Judas, with his band of soldiers, and the multitude with clubs and staves, entered the garden to apprehend him; and when the prince of this world was marching towards him, and when he was engaged with all the powers of darkness, and when the sorrows of death compassed him about, yet he failed not, nor was he discouraged: and something of this spirit appears in true believers, When they are in the exercise of faith, have the presence of God, and the discoveries of his love; they are then not afraid what man can do unto them; nor are they afraid of devils themselves, but wrestle against them; nor of any nor all their enemies, they having victory over them, given by God through Christ.

Psalms 3:7

Ver. 7. Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God,.... God sometimes, in the apprehension of his people, seems to be as if he was asleep: when he does not appear to them and for them, and does not exert his power on their behalf, then they call to him to awake and arise; see Ps 44:23; and it may be some respect is had to the words of Moses when the ark set forward, Nu 10:35; and it may be observed, that though David enjoyed so much peace and tranquillity of mind, and was in such high spirits as not to be afraid of ten thousands of men, yet he did not neglect the right means of deliverance and safety, prayer to God, who he knew was his God; and he addresses him as such, and uses his covenant interest in him, as an argument with him to arise and save him from his enemies, who was able to do it, and to whom salvation belongs: so Christ, his antitype, prayed to God as his God to save him, and was heard by him in like manner; so the saints call upon God in a day of trouble, cry to him in their distresses, to be delivered out of them;

for thou hast smitten all mine enemies [upon] the cheekbone; to smite anyone upon the cheek is reckoned reproachful, and is casting contempt upon them; see Job 16:10 and the sense is, that God had poured contempt upon his enemies in time past, and had brought them to shame and confusion: hence he puts up the above prayer as a prayer of faith for salvation, founded on past experience of God's goodness; he prayed that his God would arise and save him, and he believed he would because he had hitherto appeared for him, and against his enemies;

thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly; who were like to beasts of prey, whose strength lies in their teeth, whereby they do the mischief they do; and the breaking of their teeth signifies the taking away from them the power of hurting, and refers to the victories which God had given David over the Philistines, Edomites, Syrians, and others; and maybe applied to Christ, and be expressive of sin, Satan, the world, and death, being overcome and abolished by him, and of the victory which the saints have through him over the same enemies.

Psalms 3:8

Ver. 8. Salvation [belongeth] unto the Lord,.... As the author of it; temporal salvation is of him; all the deliverances of the saints out of their troubles are from him; and to him is owing their spiritual and eternal salvation; this belongs to Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit: Jehovah the Father resolved upon it, chose men to it from everlasting, contrived the scheme of it in his infinite wisdom, made a covenant with his Son, in which he secured it, and appointed him to be the author of it, and sent him in the fulness of time to effect it; and Christ the Son of God, being qualified for it, being mighty to save, came into this world for that purpose, and is become the author of eternal salvation; his own arm has brought it to him, though there were many difficulties in the way; such as fulfilling the law, satisfying justice, making an end of sin, grappling with all the powers of darkness, and undergoing an accursed death: and the Spirit of God, he makes men sensible of their need of this salvation; he brings it near to them, and works faith in them to lay hold upon it, and shows them their interest in it; and in consequence of all this the glory of salvation belongs to the Lord, Father, Son, and Spirit, and should be given to the Father as the contriver of it, to the Son as the author of it, and to the Spirit as the applier of it; see **Re 7:10**;

thy blessing [is] upon thy people; or it may be considered prayer wise, let "thy blessing [be] upon thy people" {b}; either upon those that were on the side of David, or on those, as others interpret it, who had imprudently joined themselves to Absalom; which latter sense, if right, shows in what a divine frame and disposition of mind the psalmist was, to pray for his enemies: or the words are an assertion, that the blessing of the Lord was come upon his covenant people, and does descend upon them as they are called by grace; even all spiritual blessings, the blessings of a justifying righteousness, of pardon of sin, of reconciliation and peace by the blood of Christ, of adoption, and of eternal life; the blessing of grace, and the blessing of glory.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{b} Ktkrb "sit benedictio tua", Junius & Tremellius, Tarnovius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 4

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, a Psalm of David. This psalm is inscribed "to the chief musician", or "conqueror" {c}: who excelled others in the art of music, and carried the glory from them; who was very skilful, and instructed others in it, and was the master of the song, as Chenaniah, 1Ch 15:22; who set the tune, led on the psalm, and had the whole direction and management of it; and so the Jewish doctors {d} generally understand it of one that presided over the rest of the musicians and singers; and to such an one was this psalm sent, to be sung in public worship: for the psalms of David were not composed for private use only, but for public service; and were committed into the hands and care of the chief of the singers, as Asaph and others; see 1Ch 16:7; by whom they were preserved and transmitted to future ages for the use of the church, not only in the former but in the present dispensation. The Septuagint interpreters, and after them the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, render it "unto the end", or for ever; to this agrees the sense of R. Saadiah Gaon {e}, who says,

"this is a psalm of David, who gave it to one of the singers to sing it continually,"

as if it was xunl, "for ever"; but the former sense is best, to understand it of the chief musician, or precentor, who is said to be "on neginoth": the singular; "neginah", is used in the title of Ps 61:1, and it is sometimes rendered "a song", as in Job 30:9; hence the Vulgate Latin version here renders it "in songs"; and the Septuagint renders it "in psalms"; and then the meaning is, that this person was the chief man that presided over the songs and psalms: though the Jewish writers {f}, for the most part, interpret it of a musical instrument so called; not such an one as was blown, as the pipe and trumpet, but what was played upon with the hand; see 1Sa 16:16; a stringed instrument, which was touched with the fingers as an harp, or struck with a quill or bow as a violin. And as there were various instruments of music used in the temple service, so there were persons set over them, some over one sort, and some over another; and this man presided over

the instruments that were played with the hand: and it looks as if this psalm was to be sung to such an instrument, by its being inscribed and sent to him. Aben Ezra takes the word to be, "the beginning of a song"; and the Targum renders the whole, "to sing upon the chorus" or "dances". It is called "a Psalm of David", being written by him, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God; the occasion of it was Absalom's rebellion; and it was written when he fled from him, as the preceding, as Kimchi thinks; but, according to Lightfoot and others, it was the rebellion of Sheba,
2Sa 20:1, though others refer it to the time of his distresses and persecutions by Saul; according to the Jewish Rabbins {g}, where there are the words Nwgynw xwuyn, as they are both in this title, the psalm belongs to future time, to the world to come, to the times of the Messiah.

{c} xunml "victori", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "vincenti", Munster. {d} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, & Ben Melech in loc. {e} Apud Aben Ezra in loc. {f} Kimchi & Ben Melech in loc. and others in Aben Ezra in loc. {g} Kimchi Praefat. in Psalm.

Ver. 1. Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness,.... Or, "my righteous God" {h}, who is righteous in his nature, ways, and works, the just Judge of the whole earth, who will do right; or "the vindicator of my righteousness", as the Syriac version renders it; that is, of his innocence and uprightness, which the Lord knew and was a witness of: and since he was his covenant God, he doubted not but he would bring it forth as the light, and favour his righteous cause, and do him justice upon his enemies: or the psalmist addresses God in this manner, because he was the author of his righteousness, and was the justifier of him, by imputing the righteousness of his Son unto him. So Christ addresses his Father, Joh 17:26; who he knew would justify him, and by whom he was justified as the surety of his people, when he, rose from the dead: and so the saints can draw nigh to God the Judge of all, through the righteousness of Christ; knowing that he is just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus; and that he is just and faithful to forgive their sins, and cleanse them from all unrighteousness, on account of his blood. The petition put up by the psalmist is, to be heard when he called, that is, to hear his prayer, as it is explained in the latter part of the verse: and God is a God hearing prayer; and so David, Christ, and all the saints, have found him to be: and the encouragement to pray to the Lord, in hope of being heard, arose from past experience of divine goodness;

thou hast enlarged me [when I was] in distress; when he had like to have been killed by Saul casting a javelin at him; and when his house was watched by men that Saul set there, and he was let down through a window and escaped; and when he was shut in at Keilah, where Saul thought he had him safe; and at other times, to which he may here refer, as in Ps 18:19; and this may be applied to the Messiah, when in the garden, beset with sorrows, and an angel strengthened him; and when on the cross, surrounded by various enemies, whom he conquered; and when in death and the grave, from the pains and cords of which he was loosed, and set in a large place. And this agrees also with the experience of the saints; who, when in distress through sin, Satan, and the law, have been set free, through the Gospel proclaiming liberty to the captives to such enemies; and the opening of the prison to them that have been bound by them: and when they have been so shut up and straitened in themselves, that they could not come forth in the discharge of duty, and in the exercise of grace; through the Spirit of the Lord, who is a spirit of liberty, they have been enlarged in the duty of prayer and of praise, and in the exercise of faith and love; and their hearts have been enlarged through the discoveries of the love of God towards them, so that they have run cheerfully in the ways of his commandments; who also gives them largeness of heart, an increase of the knowledge of Christ, and of the love of God, and tills them with joy and peace in believing, and draws out the desires of their souls to his name, and the remembrance of him;

have mercy upon me: the psalmist pleads no merit nor worthiness of his own, but applies to the grace and mercy of God; and sensible of his sin, both original and actual, he entreats a discovery of pardoning grace and mercy. The words may be rendered, "be gracious unto me" {i}, or "show me favour"; bestow the blessings of grace, grant larger measures of grace, and fresh supplies of it: and so all sensible sinners apply to God for mercy; and all the saints have recourse to him as the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, for every mercy, both temporal and spiritual. Nor is this unsuitable to the Messiah, as man and Mediator; with whom, God keeps his mercy for evermore, as the head and surety of his people, and upon whom, as man, the grace of God was; and who increased, as in stature, so in favour with God and man; and which, no doubt, was desirable by him;

and hear my prayer: the same petition with that in the beginning of the verse; invocation and prayer being the same thing.

{h} yqdu yhla. {i} ynnx "gratiosus esto mihi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Psalms 4:2

Ver. 2. O ye sons of men,.... Meaning great men, the nobles of Israel; and so the Jewish interpreters {k} generally explain it; such as Ahithophel, and others, who were in the conspiracy with Absalom, 2Sa 15:12: and so they were the kings and princes of the earth, and the rulers of the Jewish sanhedrim, the chief priests and elders, who were the enemies of Christ; and such, generally speaking, have been the persecutors of the saints; these men of power and authority, of dignity and honour, and who were in high places, and boasted of their titles and grandeur, the psalmist addresses by way of expostulation in the following words;

how long [will ye turn] my glory into shame? Meaning either God, who was his glory, **Ps 3:3**; whom they reproached when they said there was no help for him in him; or his tongue, the instrument of praise, and the songs of praise he expressed by it, **Ps 7:8**; which they jeered and scoffed at: or rather his royal glory and majesty, which they attempted to vail by casting him down from his excellency, by dethroning him, and setting up Absalom in his room. So the Jews endeavoured to turn the glory of Christ into shame, which lay in his being the only begotten of the Father; by denying his sonship, by condemning him to death; because he said he was the Son of God; and by mocking at him under that character on the cross; and also by their spitting upon, buffeting, and crucifying the Lord of glory; by reproaching his Gospel, ministers, and people; and by not acknowledging him as the Messiah, and submitting to his righteousness. And wicked men do as much as in them lies to turn the glory of the saints into shame, by aspersing their character, taking away their good name and reputation among men; by reproaching and reviling them, and speaking all manner of evil of them; and by persecuting them in the most violent manner;

[how long] will ye love vanity; or "a vain thing" {l}. Such as the placing of Absalom upon the throne, on which their hearts were set; and such was the vain imagination of the Jews, with which they pleased themselves, that Jesus should die, and his name perish; and such are all the attempts of wicked men to ruin and destroy the people and interest of Christ; for no weapon formed against them shall prosper;

[and] seek after leasing? Or "a lie" {m}; or that which fails and deceives, as a lie does: and such were all the counsels and designs of the great men of Israel against David: and so the Jews may be said to seek after a lie, when they seek after another Messiah besides Jesus of Nazareth: for every other proves a "Bar

Cozbi", that is, the son of a lie; as the false Messiah in Adrian's time was called by themselves. And so do all such as seek after and embrace false doctrines, errors, and heresies, and are given up to believe them. Now the psalmist suggests that these great men were obstinate, and continued in these sinful practices; and that in the issue all their efforts would be vain and fruitless; and which he further strengthens by observing to them what follows.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{k} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, & Ben Melech in loc. {l} qyr "inane", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius; "inanem rem", Piscator. {m} bzk "mendacium", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 4:3

Ver. 3. But know,.... Take notice of it, consider it, be assured of the truth, of it; it may be depended upon as fact,

that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: which may be understood of David himself, an holy good man; a man after God's own heart; whom the Lord chose, and in a marvellous manner separated from the rest of his brethren; took him from the sheepfold, and set him upon the throne of Israel, for the glory of his great name; and therefore the attempts of his enemies against him would be without success: and also of the Messiah, God's Holy One, whom he has chosen out from among the people to be their Saviour and Redeemer, to the glory of his grace; wherefore the work of the Lord has prospered in his hands: and likewise of all the saints, and of their election; which act is expressed by their being set apart, or separated from others, who are called the rest; and which is a marvellous act of grace: for the word may be rendered, "he hath wonderfully set apart" {n}. It is an amazing instance of grace that God should make one to differ from another, and separate them from their mother's womb, and call them by his grace. The object of this act is "him that is godly", or "holy" {o}: not that any are set apart or chosen by God for their godliness, or holiness; for they are chosen through sanctification of the Spirit, and not because they were or it was foreseen they would be holy. Holiness, faith, godliness, and good works, are the fruits of election, and not the causes of it: but the word dyox, rendered "godly", signifies "good" and "merciful" {p}; and designs one, that God is good, and gracious, and merciful unto; who is an object of his free grace and favour; and therefore he chooses and sets him apart of his own grace and mercy, and according to his sovereign will and pleasure: and that "for himself"; for his own use and service, for his praise and honour, and to the glory of his grace; which is his grand end in predestination, election, and in all spiritual blessings. And now all attempts against such persons are in vain; all charges against them are of no avail; all methods, whether by open force of persecutors, or by the cunning of false teachers, that lie in wait to deceive, to prevail against them, prove failures: and God will avenge his elect, that cry unto him day and night; as follows;

the Lord will hear when I call unto him; and deliver out of the hands of enemies, and cut them off: wherefore it is a vain thing for men to set themselves against Christ and his people.

{n} So Ainsworth. hlph "mirificavit", V. L. "mirabilem effecit", Gejerus {o} dyox "sanctum", V. L. Muis, De Dieu. {p} "Eum quem benigne acceperit", Junius & Tremellius; "beneficiarium", Gejerus, Michaelis; "gratia vel favore a Deo affectum", Hammond.

Psalms 4:4

Ver. 4. Stand in awe, and sin not,.... That is, stand in awe of God, and his righteous, judgments; be afraid of him, and tremble before him; make him your fear and your dread, and go on no longer and proceed no further in sinning against him. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, render it, "be ye angry, and sin not": which are the words of the apostle, **Eph 4:26**; referring to this place; and which doubtless is the reason of these versions. There is an anger that is sinful, when it is without a cause, or exceeds due bounds, and is not directed to a good end, and is productive of bad effects, by words or deeds; and when it is soon raised, or long continued; and there is an anger that is not sinful; when it arises from a true zeal for God and religion; when it is kindled, not against the persons, but sins, of men; and when it is continued to answer good purposes; as the good of those with whom we are angry, and the glory of God, and the promoting of the kingdom and interest of Christ;

commune with your own heart upon your bed: when retired from men and business, and you are at leisure to think and meditate then reflect upon your actions, seriously consider them; ask your heart some proper and close questions; examine narrowly and thoroughly the principles on which, and the views with which, you act;

and be still; cease from all your rage and fury against me, against the Lord, and against his people; or "say in your own hearts" {q}, as follows.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{q} Mkbblb wrma "dicite in corde vestro", Montanus, Cocceius, Gussetius; "loquimini", Pagninus, Piscator.

Psalms 4:5

Ver. 5. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,.... Offer for sacrifice things righteously gotten, for the Lord hates robbery for burnt offering, Isa 61:8. Some respect may be had to the unrighteous acquisitions of Absalom and his men, and who were now in possession of Jerusalem, and of the altars of the Lord, and were sacrificing on them; in which they gloried; and to which this may be opposed. Likewise sacrifices of righteousness are such as were according to the law, and were offered in a right manner; which were not maimed, nor had any blemish in them; see **Mal 1:13**; and particularly such as were offered up in the faith of the great sacrifice, Christ; for, without faith, it is impossible to please God by any sacrifice. And this sense is confirmed by the following clause, which requires trust in the Lord. Moreover, righteousness, with the Jews, signifies alms, beneficence, showing mercy to the indigent; and acts of liberality are sacrifices, with which God is well pleased; and which are preferred by him to the sacrifices of the ceremonial law, Heb 13:16. The sacrifices also of a broken heart, and of a contrite spirit, are such as God esteems of; he looks to those that have them, and dwells with them. And to this sense the Chaldee paraphrase inclines, in which the words are thus paraphrased;

"subdue your corruptions, and it shall be reckoned to you as a sacrifice of righteousness?"

and why may not the sacrifice of praise for mercies received, especially for the righteousness of Christ, be at least included, if not principally designed; since these are sacrifices which, under the ceremonial law, were more pleasing to God than others; and are always acceptable to him through Jesus Christ our Lord? Agreeably to this, Aben Ezra thinks the peace offerings are intended, which were in a way of thanksgiving; and are opposed to sin offerings, and trespass offerings, and burnt offerings; from the last of which sacrifices of righteousness are distinguished in Ps 51:19;

and put your trust in the Lord: not in your strength, in horses and chariots, and numbers of men; nor in wise counsels, nor in riches, nor in fleshly privileges, nor in works of righteousness, or sacrifices of righteousness: for though they are to be performed, they are not to be trusted in; nor in your own hearts. And while the psalmist is striking at the false confidence of the sons of men he is addressing, he may at the same time be thought to be encouraging those that were with him to trust in the Lord, Jehovah, the Son of God, before spoken of by him as the object of trust, **Ps 2:12**; to trust in his person for the acceptance of their persons and sacrifices of righteousness; and in his righteousness for justification; in his blood for pardon; in his sacrifice for expiation of sin; in his fulness for daily supplies; and in his power for protection and safety. And it is right to trust in him at all times; in times of affliction, temptation, and desertion: he is always the same; in him is everlasting strength; he has an heart as well as an ability to help and succour, and none ever trusted in him and were confounded. Such have peace and safety, and can want no good thing.

Psalms 4:6

Ver. 6. [There be] many that say, who will show us [any] good?.... These may be thought to be the men of the world; carnal worldly minded men, seeking after temporal good, and taking up their rest and contentment in it; to whom the psalmist opposes his wish and request, in the following words. Or these are the words of the men that were along with David, wishing themselves at home and in their families, enjoying the good things of life they before had; or rather these are the words of the same many, the enemies of David, spoken of in **Ps 3:1**; who were wishing, as Kimchi observes, that Absalom's rebellion might prosper; that David might die and his son reign in his stead, so the evil they wished to him was good to them: or they may be the words of the same men, expressing the desperate condition that David and his friends were in, which the psalmist represents in this manner, "who will show us any good?" none, say they, will show them any good, neither God nor man; there is no help for him in God; he and his friends must unavoidably perish: and this produces the following petition,

Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us; meaning his gracious presence, the manifestations of himself, the discoveries of his love, communion with him, the comforts of his Spirit, and the joys of his salvation; suggesting that in the enjoyment of these things lay their good and happiness, and their safety also; his face and favour, love and grace, being as a shield to encompass them, and as a banner over them, **Ps 5:12**; and so Jarchi observes, that the word here used signifies to lift up for a banner {r}; so, me respect seems to be had to the form of the priests blessing, **Nu 6:24**; and the words are opposed to the good desired by carnal men, and express the true happiness of the saints, Ps 89:15; this is a blessing wished for not only by David, but by his antitype the Messiah, Mt 27:46; and by all believers.

{r} So Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 515, 518.

Psalms 4:7

Ver. 7. Thou hast put gladness in my heart,.... The Ethiopic version reads it "into our heart"; in granting the above request; for, nothing so rejoices the hearts of God's people as the light of his countenance, or the enjoyment of his gracious presence: this was matter of exceeding joy to Christ himself, Ps 21:6; and so it is to all his members; this causes inward gladness, gladness of heart, and is opposed to the external rejoicings of wicked men and of hypocrites: and this is of God's putting into the heart; and indeed none can put gladness either into a wounded conscience, into the heart of a sensible sinner, or into the soul of one that is panting after the presence of God, and communion with him, but God himself;

more than in the time [that] their corn and their wine increased: meaning the time of harvest and of vintage; when there is a good harvest, and a good vintage, there is joy among men, and the contrary when it is otherwise, **Isa 9:3**; these things being of general use, spread an universal joy among people; there is scarce any earthly thing that occasions more joy than these do: and yet the joy on such occasions is not to be compared with spiritual joy, that is a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Some take the m to be not comparative, but causal, and render the words {s}, "thou hast put gladness in ray heart from the time that their corn", &c. as do the Chaldee paraphrase and Syriac versions; and the Arabic version renders it, "because of the multitude of fruits", &c. and then the sense is, as if David should say concerning his enemies,

"I never envied their prosperity, I always rejoiced when they had a good harvest, or vintage, and still do; and yet they have rose up and rebelled against me, and requited me evil for good."

And this sense is given into by the Jewish commentators {t}, and shows of what an admirable spirit, and in what a sweet disposition of mind, the psalmist was; that while his enemies were seeking his life he was rejoicing in their prosperity; and is a sad aggravation of their wickedness: and this may also be understood of the rejoicing of David, and even of the Messiah, and likewise of all good men, at the spiritual prosperity of the saints, at any increase of grace, spiritual knowledge, and joy, signified by these outward things, as in Jer 31:12; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, add "oil" to corn and wine.

{s} Mngd tem "a vel ex tempore quo frumentum eorum", &c. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Cocceius. {t} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, & Kimchi in loc.

Psalms 4:8

Ver. 8. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep,.... Signifying, that he had such a calmness and serenity of mind, amidst all his troubles, that he could not only lay himself down in great peace, and much composure of mind, but sleep also, and that as soon as laid down almost; some lay themselves down, but cannot sleep, through the anxiety of their minds; but the psalmist could do both: or the word rendered "both" may he translated "together" {u}; and the sense be either that he would lie down and sleep together with his friends, committing himself and them to the care and protection of God; or that he should lie down and sleep together with his enemies; meaning that he was assured that there would quickly be a reconciliation and peace between them; see Pr 16:7;

for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety; suggesting that his protection and safety were owing to the power and presence of God only; and that was the reason of the tranquillity of his mind, and why he slept so quietly in the night watches, though in such danger from his enemies; or "thou, Lord, makest me only" or "alone" {w}, being solitary and destitute of friends, to dwell in safety; finder the shadow of thy wings, encompassed by thy favour, and surrounded by thy power; see De 33:28.

{u} wdxy "simul", Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Cocceius. {w} ddbl "me solum", Cocceius; "me seorsim", Gejerus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 5

To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth, a Psalm of David. This psalm, being written by David under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is inscribed and sent to him who had the direction and management of the musical instruments used in religious worship in David's time, and afterwards in the temple service, called "nehiloth"; as the preceding psalm is inscribed to him who presided over those called "neginoth", **Ps 4:1**; and as they seem to be such instruments as were played upon with the hand, stringed instruments, so these seem to be wind instruments, such as were blown with the mouth; as the flute, cornet, pipe, trumpet, and hautboy; the word being derived from the same root as "chalil", the pipe, is, and signifies hollow, and so designs such hollow instruments as above: Rabbenu Hai {x} thinks the instrument intended was so called from the humming of bees, which its sound resembled; "nechil shel deborim", with the Rabbins {y}, signifying a swarm of bees; and a word from the same root in the Arabic language is used for a bee {z}; though others have thought it might be so called from the murmuring noise of a brook or river, to which the sound of it might be like; because a word from the same root this is thought to come in the Hebrew language signifies a brook or river. The Septuagint version, which is followed by the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, renders it, "for that which obtained the inheritance"; and the Arabic version, "concerning the inheritance"; and to this agrees the old Midrash {a} of the Jews; but what is the meaning is left to everyone to conjecture; the reason of these versions is because the root from whence this word is supposed to be derived signifies to "inherit": the Targum renders the whole inscription thus, "to sing upon the dances a song of David", as it does the title of the preceding psalm; Aben Ezra takes the word, as he does "neginoth", to be the first word of some song, to the tune of which this psalm was to be sung; and Jarchi interprets it "troops" or "armies", and says it is a prayer on account of the troops of enemies that came against Israel; and that the singer said this psalm on the behalf of all Israel. The Syriac interpreter calls it a prayer in the person of the church, when it went in the morning to the house of the Lord. The occasion of it seems to be the same with that of the two former: and certain it is that the psalmist was in distress by reason of wicked men when he wrote it, as appears from several passages in it; the ancient Jewish doctors {b} understood by them Doeg and Ahithophel; some think it was penned, as the preceding psalm, on account of the rebellion of Sheba, 2Sa 20:1.

{x} Apud Kimchi & Ben Melech in loc. So David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 93. 1.

{y} Maimon. in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 10. s. 2. {z} Alnachal, "apes", Arab. vers. Deut. i. 44. {a} Midrash Tillim apud Viccars. in loc. {b} Apud Kimchi & Arama in loc.

Ver. 1. Give ear to my words, O Lord,.... Meaning not his words in common conversation, but in prayer; the words which came out of his mouth, and were audibly expressed by him at the throne of grace, and design vocal prayer; and so stand distinguished from the meditation of his heart, sacred ejaculations, or mental prayer; see Ps 54:2; and words in prayer to God ought to be few, at least not repeated, **Ec 5:2**; and these should be a man's own words, as were the psalmist's; not what were suggested by another, or written in a book before him, but what were of his own composing and putting together, under the direction of the Spirit of God; who put words into his mouth, and furnished him both with words and matter, and which he freely uttered before the Lord: and this is the "parrhesia", boldness, freedom of speech, which the Scriptures speak of, **Heb 4:16**; and the saints are allowed to use in prayer before God; when they may pour out their souls unto him, and freely tell him all their mind, as the psalmist now did; to which he entreats the Lord to "give ear"; not that God has a corporeal ear as man has, but he that made the ear has the power of hearing: this is an anthropopathy, and is spoken after the manner of men; such as are of kind and benevolent dispositions do not turn away, but stop and hear what a poor miserable object has to say to them, to whom they listen and return an answer; and so this phrase is expressive of the kind regard God has to the prayers of the destitute, which he does not despise but delight in; and of his bowing and inclining his ear, or of the strict and close attention he gives to them; and of the full and suitable answer he returns, in his own time and way; and is what the psalmist most earnestly entreats. He adds,

consider my meditation; the prayer he had meditated: for meditation is requisite to prayer, and should go before it; which is necessary in order to pray with the understanding; nor should men utter anything rashly and hastily before the Lord: it may design mental prayer, in distinction from vocal prayer, signified by his words before, such as that of Moses at the Red sea, and of Hannah before Eli, Ex 14:15 **1Sa 1:13**. The word also signifies inward mourning, and groans; the root from whence this is derived to mourn, and is so rendered in
Isa 38:14; where Hezekiah compares his prayers to the chattering of a crane and swallow, and the mourning of a dove; and are the same with the unutterable groanings with which the Spirit of God sometimes makes intercession for the saints, **Ro 8:26**; and which are not hid from God, Ps 38:9; but are well known to him: he understands the language of a sigh or groan; and

so the words may be rendered "understand my moan" {c}.

{c} ynynx "murmur meum", Vatablus, Gejerus; "gemitum meum", Cocceius, Hammond; "gemitus et suspiria mea", Michaelis.

Psalms 5:2

Ver. 2. Hearken unto the voice of my cry,.... Which seems to intend more than groans or words, even a loud outcry, as of a person in great distress; such as the strong crying of Christ, in the days of his flesh, when on the cross, forsaken by God, deserted by his friends, and surrounded by his enemies, **Heb 5:7**; and such, in some measure, was the case of David. The arguments used by him, that the Lord would hearken to him, are as follow: and the first is taken from his interest in the Lord, and his relation to him,

my King and my God; the Lord was David's King in a civil sense; though David was a king over others, yet the Lord, who is the King of kings, was King over him, and he owned him to be so; he was set upon the throne by him, had his kingdom from him, and was accountable to him: and he was his King in a natural sense, the kingdom of nature and providence belonging to him, as he was his Creator, preserver, protector, and defender; and in a spiritual sense, he being delivered from the dominion of other lords, sin, Satan, and the world, and brought to a subjection to him by his Spirit and grace; and so to own him as his King and Lawgiver, as well as his Saviour. And he was his God; not in a general way, as he is the God of the spirits of all flesh living; nor merely in the peculiar way in which he was the God of the people of Israel; but in a most special manner, as being his covenant God and Father in Christ. He was his God, not only as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of all grace; who had distinguished him by special and spiritual blessings and favours; and whom David loved, believed in, and worshipped as his God. And this his interest in him, and relation to him, he uses with great pertinence and propriety, as an argument that he might be heard by him; since the Lord was his King, and he his subject; the Lord was his God, and he one of his people; the Lord was his father, and he a child of his; and therefore entreats and hopes to be heard; see Isa 63:15. His next argument is taken from his resolution to pray to him, and to continue to do so:

for unto thee will I pray; and only to thee: not to the gods of the Heathen, to idols, the works of men's hands, who can neither hear nor save: and to thee always; suggesting, that he would never leave off praying till he was heard; he would give him no rest, day nor night, until he received an answer.

Psalms 5:3

Ver. 3. My voice shall thou hear in the morning, O Lord,.... These words may be considered either as expressing the confidence of the psalmist, that the Lord would hear and answer him, and that in the morning, every morning, as soon and as often as he prayed; or that he would hear him early, quickly, speedily, seasonably, and at the best time; or else as declaring what he would do in consequence of his resolution to pray to the Lord in **Ps 5:2**; he would pray to him every morning: the morning is a proper time for prayer, both to return thanks to God for refreshing sleep and rest, for preservation from dangers by fire, by thieves and murderers, and for renewed mercies in the morning; as also to pray to God to keep from evil and dangers the day following; to give daily food, and to succeed in business and the employments of life; and for a continuation of every mercy, temporal and spiritual. God should be served and sought in the first place; and so to do looks as if God was with his people, and they with him, when they awake in the morning. The Targum and Arabic version consider the words as a petition, and render them, "Hear {d} in the morning, O Lord, my voice", or "my petition"; and so bear the same sense as the other petitions;

in the morning will I direct [my prayer] unto thee; or "set [it] in order" {e}: not so much respecting the order of words, the method of prayer, which is sometimes very broken and confused, and yet regarded by God; but in allusion either to the shewbread, placed in order on the table, which was typical of Christ's continual intercession for his people, Ex 40:4; or to the offering of incense and other sacrifices, which when offered were put in order upon the altar; and to which prayer is compared, Ps 141:2. Or the words may be rendered, "I will stand before thee in the morning", as the Arabic version; or, "I will present unto thee", as the Septuagint; that is, myself; see **Job 1:6** Ro 12:1; though the supplement, "my prayer", seems to be a good one; and so the words are supplied by the Jewish commentators {f};

and will look up; or "out" {g} as out of a watch tower, **Hab 2:1**; to see if help is coming, and for an answer of prayer: the phrase is expressive of hope, expectation, faith, and confidence, that an answer would be returned; and therefore the psalmist determines to look upwards to heaven, whither he directed his prayer, and from whence the answer must come; and to look out from his watch tower, where he was waiting for it, and to continue patiently expecting it till he had it: and the ground of his confidence were the nature and perfections of God, particularly his purity and holiness, as appears from **Ps 5:4**.

{d} emvt "audi", Vatablus, Gejerus. {e} Krea "disponam", Montanus, Michaelis; "praeparabo", Pagninus, Musculus; "ordinabo", Piscator, Gejerus. {f} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, & Ben Melech in loc. {g} hpua "speculabor", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Michaelis; "speculatorus", Junius & Tremellius.

Psalms 5:4

Ver. 4. For thou [art] not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness,.... Sin, ungodliness; it is contrary to his nature, who is holy, just, and good; and to his will revealed in his law, which is the same with his nature; and sin is a transgression of it. God is so far from taking pleasure in sin, that it is the abominable thing which his righteous soul hates; though this hinders not his voluntary permission of sin, or his decree of it; which he has willed, though he does not delight in it, in order to magnify the riches of his grace and mercy in the salvation of his people: nor is this contrary to the delight and pleasure which he takes in the persons of his elect in Christ, though they are sinners in themselves, and were so when he so loved them as to give his Son for them, and who died for them while they were yet sinners; and when he sends his Spirit to regenerate and sanctify them, and are after conversion guilty of many sins: for, though he delights in their persons, he has no pleasure in their sins; nor is it consistent with the holiness of his nature to take pleasure in wickedness, let it be committed by whomsoever;

neither shall evil dwell with thee; that is, the evil man, who continues in a course of wickedness, and lives and dies in his sins. He has no communion with God here, nor shall he dwell with him hereafter; but shall be bid to depart from him, whether he be a profane sinner openly, or secretly a wicked professor of religion. The sense of the psalmist is, that since they were evil and wicked men, that were risen up against him, and gave him trouble, he entertained a strong confidence that God would hear him, for himself and his friends, whose cause was righteous; and appear against his enemies, who were wicked and ungodly men; and this he grounded upon the purity and holiness of God.

Psalms 5:5

Ver. 5. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight,.... By the "foolish" are meant not such who are so in a natural, but in a moral sense, wicked and ungodly men. The Septuagint render the word, "transgressors of the law"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "the unrighteous"; and the Arabic version, "they that contradict thy precepts". The word {h} used comes from a root which signifies to "praise"; and may design such as are praisers of themselves, proud boasters; who are elated with their own excellencies, with their wisdom, strength, honours, riches, and righteousness, and treat all others with contempt; for though they are unrighteous, yet they trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others, which betrays their folly; hence the Syriac version renders it, "the proud"; and the Chaldee paraphrase, "mockers". And their not standing in the sight of God denotes his abhorrence and detestation of them; as when one man abhors another he cannot endure to look upon him, or bear to have him in his presence: and it shows that such shall receive no favour from him; for though, like proud Haman, they may think themselves his favourites, and they are the persons the king will delight to honour; yet to their great mortification they will find, that a poor Mordecai, a mean despicable believer, will be preferred unto them. Nor shall they stand in acceptance and confidence before him at the day of judgment: they will not be able to stand themselves, but will call to the rocks and mountains to cover them; and they will not be suffered lost and, but will be driven from the presence of the Lord into everlasting burnings,

thou hatest all workers of iniquity; not all that have sin in them or do sin, for there are none without it; but such who give themselves up to work wickedness, who make it the business of their lives, and are slaves unto it, living in a continued series and course of impiety; and this character does not only belong to openly profane sinners, but to some professors of religion; see **Mt 7:22**; and these are the objects of God's hatred. Which does not so much intend any past act of his, the preterition or passing them by, when he chose others in his eternal purposes; in which sense the word is used in **Ro 9:13**, as his continued aversion to them, denying them his grace and favour, and rejecting them from all nearness to him and communion with him; and may include the everlasting punishment of them, by which his displicine and hatred will be made manifest: and he is impartial in it, without any respect to persons, high or low, rich or poor; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will come upon every soul of man that does evil. God's love to his own people was antecedent to sin, and was placed upon them in Christ, in whom their persons are always well pleasing to him; and though they sinned in Adam, and became actual transgressors of his law, yet such was his love to their persons, that he saves them from their sins by the blood and righteousness of his son.

{h} Myllwh "jactitantes", Gejerus; "insane gloriosi", Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 5:6

Ver. 6. Thou shall destroy them that speak leasing,.... Or "a lie" {i}; whether in matters of religion; as false doctrines, errors, and heresies, are lies; and so all that deny the deity, sonship, and Messiahship of Christ, are liars; and the followers of the man of sin speak lies in hypocrisy: or in common conversation; such are like to Satan, and are abominable in the sight of God; and he will destroy them, either with a temporal destruction, with bodily diseases, as Gehazi was smitten with a leprosy; and with corporeal death, as Ananias and Sapphira; or with eternal destruction, the destruction of body and soul in hell; for all liars have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone;

the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man; or "the man of blood and deceit" {k}; that thirsts after blood; who sheds innocent blood, as the Targum paraphrases it. He showed his resentment against Cain, the first of this sort, in a way that was intolerable to him. He very early established a law, requiring that he who shed man's blood, by man should his blood be shed; and he will give the whore of Rome, who has been drunk with the blood of his saints, blood to drink, because she is worthy. And all such who flatter with their tongue, and speak with a double heart, and lie in wait to deceive their neighbour, whether in things temporal or spiritual, are the objects of his abhorrence and indignation; see Ps 55:23. Now David's enemies being such sort of persons, foolish wicked men, proud and haughty, workers of iniquity, liars, bloody and deceitful men, men that God had an abhorrence of, he therefore hoped and was confident that God would hear his prayers against them, and for himself.

{i} bzk "mendacium", V. L. {k} hmrmw Mymd vya "vir sanguinum et doli, vel fraudis", Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 5:7

Ver. 7. But as for me, I will come [into] thy house,.... The tabernacle of Moses, sometimes called the house of God, **1Ch 9:23**; for as yet the temple was not built. Here David had been used to go in times past; and though he was now in a kind of exile from it, he was confident he should again enter into and determined so to do whenever he had an opportunity, and that in the following manner:

in the multitude of thy mercy; grace or goodness. God is rich in mercy, abundant in goodness and truth; there is a multitude of mercy, love, and grace in his heart, and which is stored up in his covenant, and displayed in his Son, and in the provision of him as a Saviour of lost sinners; abundant mercy is shown in regeneration, in adoption, and in the forgiveness of sins, and in every spiritual blessing, and in the gift of eternal life. And now, not relying on his own merits, strength, and righteousness, or leaning to his own understanding, but trusting in the mercy, grace, and goodness of God in Christ, and in hope of finding more grace and mercy to help in time of need; with thankfulness for what he had received, he determines, by divine leave and assistance, to enter, into the house of the Lord: and whatever other persons did, whom he had before described, it was his resolution to serve the Lord, under a sense of his mercy and goodness to him; which laid him under an obligation so to do, and is the true principle from which all service should proceed;

[and] in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple; either heaven, the habitation of God's holiness, towards which, and to God there, the psalmist would lift up his eyes, his hands, and heart; or the tabernacle, at the door of which the worship of God was performed, the sacrifices were brought, and God met his people; and therefore he says he would worship towards the temple or tabernacle, **Le 1:3**. And it may be that David has reference to the Messiah, the medium of divine worship; whose human nature was typified by the tabernacle and temple, in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells: the psalmist therefore purposes to worship God in Christ, and to perform all acts of worship, as prayer, praise, hearing the word, offering sacrifice, &c. in the name and faith of Christ; looking towards him for the presentation of his services by him, and for the acceptance of them with God through him: and this he desired to do in the "fear" of God; not with a slavish fear, but with reverence and godly fear; with a fear influenced by the multitude of God's mercy, grace, and goodness, in art humble modest manner, not trusting to, or depending upon, any service done by him.

Psalms 5:8

Ver. 8. Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness,.... Not in mine, but thine; in the righteousness of God, which is revealed in the Gospel, from faith to faith, and is imputed by God, and received by faith; in this righteousness the psalmist desired to be led into the house of God, and appear before him; nor is there any other righteousness in which man can stand before God and worship. Or else the sense is, that God would lead him in the way of righteousness, in his righteous statutes, judgments, and ordinances; in which way the Lord does lead his people, Ps 23:3. Or that he would lead him for his righteousness' sake; because of his faithfulness to his promises, that he would direct, uphold, and never leave nor forsake him. David was very sensible that the way of man is not in himself, and that he could not direct his own steps; and therefore desired to be guided by the Lord, and to be led by the right hand of his righteousness, and to be upheld by it in his ways:

because of mine enemies; or, "those that observe me" {l} that lie in wait and watch for my halting, as Jeremiah's enemies did; and would rejoice at my fall, and insult me, and blaspheme thy name; therefore lead, guide, and uphold me;

make thy way straight before my face; thy way of providence, thy way of grace, thy way of worship and duty; let it appear plain and manifest, that I may know in which way I should walk; and let all obstructions be removed out of the way, that I may walk straight on, without any difficulty or hinderance. He seems to have respect to his enemies, who lay in his way, that God would remove them; see **Ps 5:9**.

{l} yrrwv "observatores meos", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Michaelis; so Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Ben Melech, & Ainsworth.

Psalms 5:9

Ver. 9. For [there is] no faithfulness in their mouth,.... In the mouth of the ungodly, as the Chaldee paraphrase; in the mouth of every one of them, as Aben Ezra interprets it: that is, in the mouth of every wicked, bloody, and deceitful man; of everyone of David's enemies, as Saul, or the conspirators with Absalom his son. There was no steadfastness in them; nothing right, sure, or firm said by them; nothing that could be depended upon; there was "no truth" in them, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it. And as this was true of David's, so of Christ's enemies; of Herod, and of the Herodians, and of the Scribes and Pharisees; see **Mt 2:8**; and of the enemies of Christ's Gospel; of all false teachers, who speak not the word faithfully; tell dreams, use the hidden things of dishonesty, walk in craftiness, handle the word of God deceitfully, and speak lies in hypocrisy: there is no certainty in them, nor is any thing they say to be trusted to. And this is the character of wicked men in common: they are an assembly of treacherous men; there is none upright among them; nor is any confidence to be placed in them: the people of God are in danger of being imposed upon and misled by them to their hurt; and therefore the psalmist prays, that the Lord would lead him in his righteousness;

their inward part [is] very wickedness; their heart, which is desperately wicked, exceeding sinful; not only wicked, and very wicked, but wickedness itself. This is the root and fountain of all wickedness, and the reason why there is no faithfulness in their mouth: the word {m} is sometimes rendered, "their inward thought", Ps 49:11; which is the inmost of man, the nearest to him; and which, and even the imagination of it, is evil, and that continually: the word {n} translated "wickedness" signifies woes, calamities, and mischiefs; and such the wicked hearts of men are full of, and are continually devising against the people of God, and his righteous cause. And this is the just character of ungodly men, even though they may profess to know God, have a form of godliness, and be outwardly righteous before men; as these were David was concerned with;

their throat [is] an open sepulchre; or as one, as the Targum paraphrases it; to which the throat of wicked men may be compared for its voracity and insatiableness; the grave being one of those three or four things, which never has enough or is satisfied. And this is true of the throat, whether it be considered as an instrument of speech, and throws out devouring words to the prejudice of the characters and reputations of others; or as an instrument of swallowing meat and drink, and where the pleasure of appetite is; and so may be expressive of the eager desire of the wicked after sin, who drink up iniquity like water; and of their delight in it, and their fulness of it, and yet still greedy, insatiable, and not to be satisfied: and their throat may be compared to an open grave for the nauseous stench it emits; corrupt communication, filthiness, and foolish talking, proceeding out of it; and horrible oaths, curses, imprecations, and blasphemies, being belched out through it; and for the danger which is by it, since into it men may fall unawares; and so the evil communications of wicked men corrupt good manners, and do great mischief to those who fall into company with them;

they flatter with their tongue; or, "make it smooth" {o}; use oily expressions, soft language: or, "part" or "divide" {p} their tongue; are double tongued and double hearted; and so deceive persons, as the apostle interprets it in **Ro 3:13**.

They flatter God himself, drawing nigh to him in an hypocritical way; they flatter men, their neighbours, and impose upon them; they flatter princes, and such parasitic people were about David. And such are false teachers, who prophesy smooth things, and with good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple; or, which account there is great reason to pray to be led and directed by the Lord.

{m} Mbrq h kardia, Sept. "cor", V. L. i.e. "cogitatio", Muis. {n} twwh "aerumuae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; "calamitates", Cocceius; so Ainsworth. {o} Nwqylx "levigant, seu emolliunt", Piscator, Gejerus. {p} "Divident vel dispertient", Mariana.

Psalms 5:10

Ver. 10. Destroy thou them, O God,.... Or "make them guilty" {q}; that is, make them appear to be guilty, either to themselves, that they may acknowledge their offences, confess their guilt, and ask for pardon; or to others, pronounce them guilty, pass the sentence of condemnation on them: and the Chaldee paraphrase and the Syriac version render it by byx, "condemn them", or hold them guilty; and the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, "judge" them; treat them as guilty persons, punish them, destroy them, soul and body, with an everlasting destruction;

let them fall by their own counsels; into the pit they have dug for others; as Haman fell by his counsels, and was hanged on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai. And so sometimes a man's own counsel casts him down, and is the cause of his ruin, Job 18:7. Or, "because of their own counsels" {r}; which they have taken against the Lord and his Anointed, against his cause and interest, and against his righteous ones, particularly David; meaning their wicked counsels, in which they walked; see Ho 11:6. Or "from their counsels" {s}; as the Targum and most versions render it: that is, let their counsels be turned into foolishness, become brutish, be carried headlong, and come to nought. Which had its accomplishment in Ahithophel;

cast them out; either out of their own country, and carry them into captivity; or from the presence of the Lord, from his tabernacle and worship; which David's enemies now enjoyed, and gloried in: or into outer darkness, into a furnace of fire, where there is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth;

in the multitude of their transgressions: when God deals with men in a way of grace, he turns away ungodliness from them, or them from their ungodliness; but when in a way of judgment he suffers them to die in their sins, and so perish: or "for the multitude of their transgressions" {t}. The sins of transgressors are many and because of them they are cast out of the sight o God, and will be bid to depart from him hereafter;

for they have rebelled against thee: all sin is a rebellion against God; hence sinners are called rebellious ones. The rebellion of David's subjects against him was a rebellion against God; because it was an attempt to dethrone him, whom God had made king of Israel. The word {u} signifies to embitter, exasperate, and provoke: and such is the nature of sin, it is a bitter thing in itself, and it provokes the eyes of God's glory. Now each of these expressions are to be considered, not so much petitions, as prophecies; and not as imprecations, but as predictions of what would be the portion of wicked men.

{q} Mmyvah "reos fac istos", Junius & Tremellius; so Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis, Kimchi, and Ainsworth. {r} Mhytwuewmm "propter consilia sua", Piscater; so Tigurine version and Michaelis. {s} Mhytwuewmm "propter consilia sua", Piscater; so Tigurine version and Michaelis. {t} brb "propter multitudinem", Musculus, Pagninus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth. {u} wrm "irritaverunt", V. L. see Ainsworth.

Psalms 5:11

Ver. 11. But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice,.... Who trust not in themselves, in their own hearts, in their righteousness, or riches, or strength; but in the name, righteousness, and strength of the Lord: who betake themselves to him, and put all their confidence in him: let them rejoice in the salvation of the Lord, and in hope of eternal glory and happiness;

let them even shout for joy: not only rejoice inwardly, but express their joy externally, with their voices, and in the loudest manner; and that always, the matter and foundation of a believer's joy always continues; and so does the grace itself: though it is not always in exercise, yet it is an everlasting joy; and with it the redeemed of the Lord will come to Zion, and no man will be able to take away their joy. Which distinguishes it from the triumphing of the wicked, and the joy of the hypocrite, which is but for a moment;

because thou defendest them, or "coverest them" {w}; with the feathers of divine protection, under the shadow of his wings, and with the hollow of his hand: so God preserves his people, keeps them by his power, as the apple of his eye, and is a wall of fire round about them. Which is a good reason why they should rejoice, and shout for joy;

let them also that love thy name; as all that put their trust in the, Lord do; they love the Lord himself, because of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands, and for what he has done for them: they love all they know of him; they love him in all his persons, Father, Son, and Spirit; and every name of his, by which he has made himself known. They love, admire, and adore all his attributes and perfections, as they are displayed in the works of creation and providence; and especially in redemption by Jesus Christ, where they all gloriously meet together; and in whom God has proclaimed his name gracious and merciful. They love his word, his Gospel, by which he is made known; and they love his people, on whom his name is called, and who call upon his name. And let such, says the psalmist,

be joyful in thee: not rejoice in their boasting of their wisdom, strength, riches, and righteousness; all such rejoicing is evil: but in the Lord, in his grace, righteousness, and salvation. He is the only true proper object of spiritual joy; and there is good reason for it, from what follows.

{w} wmyle Kotw "et operies super eos", Vatablus; "operies et proteges eos", Michaelis.

Psalms 5:12

Ver. 12. For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous. As he has blessed him with a righteousness, even the righteousness of God imputed to him, by which he is denominated righteous, and with the forgiveness of his sins; so he will bless him with peace and prosperity, with all spiritual blessings, with the blessings of grace here, and glory hereafter. Hence he has just reason to rejoice and be glad;

with favour wilt thou compass him as [with] a shield: by which is meant the free favour, love, and grace of God in Christ, which springs from his sovereign will and pleasure; is his good will to men, and the exceeding riches of his grace, shown in his kindness towards them in Christ Jesus: and the compassing or crowning of the righteous with it, as the word {x} signifies, is expressive of the abundance of it, in the application of it to them in conversion, and in every instance and blessing of grace; for such are crowned with lovingkindness and

tender mercies; the grace of the Lord is exceeding abundant towards them, it flows and overflows; it surrounds them on all sides, and covers them all over: it is as a shield unto them from all their enemies,
Ps 40:11; and which being held in the hand of faith, quenches the fiery darts of Satan; and is the saints security from every enemy, and from all hurt and danger, here or hereafter; see **Zep 3:17**; and is a crown of glory upon them, which makes them glorious, lovely, and amiable. Some interpret this of Christ the righteous One; so Nebiensis.

{x} wnrjet estefanwsav hmav, Sept. "coronasti nos", V. L. Arab. Ethiop. "coronabis cum", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 6

To the chief Musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith, a Psalm of David. What is designed by "the chief musician", and what is meant by "neginoth", have been observed preciously, See Gill on "Ps 4:1". As for "sheminith", it seems to be one particular sort of the "neginoth", or stringed instrument, which this man had the care of; see the title of Ps 12:1: which most of the Hebrew writers {y} understand of the harp of eight strings, to which this psalm was set; and which, from the number of its strings, was called "sheminith", which signifies "the eighth": and this receives confirmation from 1Ch 15:21. The eighth string was added to the harp by Simonides, according to Pliny {z}: but if such an harp is here meant, this refutes it, for David lived long before Simonides. Though some {a} have thought it refers to a poem or song of eight notes, to the tune of which this psalm was sung; or to the eighth note, which was grave, and which we call the bass. As for the eighth day of circumcision, of which some Jewish writers mystically interpret it; or the eighth, that is, the first day, or Lord's day, to which some of the ancient Christian writers refer it, or the eighth age, or millennium, as Theodoret; these can by no means be admitted of. The occasion of it was either some bodily disease the psalmist laboured under, or some distress of soul, on account of sin; and the rather this seems to be the case, seeing the psalm begins with the same words as
Ps 38:1, in which the psalmist so much bewails his iniquity. Some have thought it was drawn up for the use of any and every sick person; and others say it was written on the account of Israel in captivity, who were then as sick persons {b}: but rather the occasion of it was bodily sickness, inward guilt of

conscience for sin, and distress by enemies; as appears from, **Ps 6:3**.

{y} Targum, Jarchi, Kimchi, & Ben Melech in loc. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56.
{a} In Aben Ezra in loc. {b} Vid. Kimchi & Aben Ezra in loc.

Ver. 1. O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, The Lord sometimes rebukes or reproves men by his spirit, and sometimes by his word and ministers, and sometimes by his providences, and that on account of sin; to bring to a sense and acknowledgment of it; and particularly for remissness in duty, or neglect of it; and for trusting in the creature, or in any outward enjoyment, boasting of it, and loving it too much; and these rebukes of his own people are always in love, and never in wrath, though they sometimes fear they are; see Ps 88:7 **La 3:1**; and therefore deprecate them, as the psalmist here does; not the thing itself, but the manner in which it is apprehended it is done, or doing;

neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure; when God chastens his own people it is not in a way of vindictive wrath, or as a proper punishment for sin; for this would be contrary to Christ's suretyship engagements and performances, and to the doctrine of his satisfaction for sin; it would draw a veil over it, and render it of none effect; it would be contrary to the justice of God to punish both surety and principal; and to the everlasting love of God to them, in which he always rests, and from which there can be no separation; nor would they be dealt with as children; and besides would be condemned with the world, and killed with the second death; whereas they will not, though chastened of God, it is the chastening of a father, is very instructive to them, and is always for their good, spiritual and eternal; is in measure, in judgment, and in love; and never in fury and hot displeasure; but this being feared, is deprecated.

Psalms 6:2

Ver. 2. Have mercy upon me, O Lord,.... He knew he was a sinner, both by original sin and actual transgression, which he was always ready to own; he knew that what he had done deserved the wrath of God, even his hot displeasure; and that for such things it came upon the children of disobedience: he knew that there was mercy with God through Christ, and therefore he flees unto it, pleads for it, and entreats the manifestation of forgiving love: he pleads no merits of his own, nor makes any mention of former works of righteousness done by him, but throws himself upon the mercy of God in Christ; giving this as a reason, for I [am] weak; either in body, through some disease upon him; or in soul, being enfeebled by sin, and so without spiritual strength to do that which was good of himself; to exercise grace, and perform duty, and much less to keep the law of God, or make atonement for sin, or to bear the punishment of it;

O Lord, heal me; meaning either his body, for God is the physician of the body, he wounds and he heals; so he healed Hezekiah and others; and he should be sought to in the first place by persons under bodily disorders: or else his soul, as in Ps 41:4; sin is the disease of the soul, and a very loathsome one it is, and is incurable but by the balm of Gilead, and the physician there; by the blood of Christ, and forgiveness through it; and the forgiveness of sin is the healing of the diseases of the soul, Ps 103:3;

for my bones are vexed; with strong pain; meaning his body, as Kimchi and Aben Ezra observe; because these are the foundation of the body, and the more principal parts of it: and this may be understood of his grief and trouble of heart for his sins and transgressions, which is sometimes expressed by the bones being broke, and by there being no rest in them, Ps 51:8.

Psalms 6:3

Ver. 3. My soul is also sore vexed,.... Or "exceedingly troubled" {c}, and even frightened and thrown into a consternation with indwelling sin, and on account of actual transgressions, and by reason of the hidings of God's face, and through the temptations of Satan, and because of the fear of death; to which Old Testament saints were very incident.

But thou, O Lord, how long? it is an abrupt expression, the whole he designed is not spoken, being hindered through the grief and sorrow with which his heart was overwhelmed; and is to be supplied after this manner,

"shall I have refreshment?"

as the Chaldee paraphrase; or,

"wilt thou look and not heal me?"

as Jarchi; or

"my soul be troubled?"

as Aben Ezra; or

"shall I be afflicted, and thou wilt not heal me?"

as Kimchi; or

"wilt thou afflict me, and not arise to my help?"

see Ps 13:1.

{c} dam hlhbn "turbata est valde", V. L. "conturbata", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "territa valde": Pagninus, Montanus; "consternata valde", Cocceius.

Psalms 6:4

Ver. 4. Return, O Lord,.... By this it seems that the Lord had withdrawn himself, and was departed from the psalmist, wherefore he entreats him to return unto him, and grant him his gracious presence. God is immense and omnipresent, he is everywhere: going away and returning cannot be properly ascribed to him; but he, nay be said to depart from his people, as to sensible communion with him, and enjoyment of him, when he hides his face, withdraws his gracious presence, and the comfortable discoveries and influences of his love; and he may be said to return when he visits them again, and manifests his love and favour to them: the Jewish writers {d} interpret it,

"return from the fierceness of thine anger,"

as in Ps 85:3; and though there is no such change in God, as from love to wrath, and from wrath to love; but inasmuch as there is a change in his dispensations towards his people, it is as if it was so; and thus it is apprehended by them;

deliver my soul; from the anxiety, distress, and sore vexation it was now in, for of all troubles soul troubles are the worst: and from all enemies and workers of iniquity which were now about him, and gave him much grief and uneasiness; and from death itself, he was in fear of;

O, save me for thy mercy's sake; out of all troubles of soul and body, and out of the hands of all enemies, inward and outward; and with temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation; not for his righteousness's sake, as Kimchi well observes; for salvation is according to the abundant mercy of God, and not through works of righteousness done by men, otherwise it would not be of grace.

{d} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, & Ben Melech in loc.

Psalms 6:5

Ver. 5. For in death [there is] no remembrance of thee,.... Of the goodness, truth, power, and faithfulness of God; no notice can be taken nor mention, made either of the perfections or works of God, whether of nature or of grace, by a dead man to others; he is wholly useless to men on earth with respect to these things;

in the grave who shall give thee thanks? for mercies temporal or spiritual; the dead cannot praise the Lord among men, only the living; see Ps 30:9; wherefore the psalmist desires that he might live and praise the Lord: this argument is taken from the glory of God, which end cannot be answered among men by death, as by life. It does not follow from hence that the soul either dies or sleeps with the body, and is inactive until the resurrection morn, neither of which are true; or that the souls of departed saints are unemployed in heaven; they are always before the throne, and serve the Lord day and night; they remember, with the utmost gratitude and thankfulness, all the goodness and grace of God unto them, and praise him for all his wondrous works: but the sense is, that when a saint is dead, he can no more serve and glorify God on earth among men.

Psalms 6:6

Ver. 6. I am weary with my groanings,.... By reason of bodily illness, or indwelling sin, or the guilt of actual transgressions, or the hidings of God's face, or a sense of divine wrath, or the temptations of Satan, or afflictions and crosses of various kinds, or fears of death, or even earnest desires after heaven and eternal happiness, or the low estate of Zion; each of which at times occasion groaning in the saints, as in the psalmist, and is the common experience of all good men. The psalmist being weary of his disease, or of sin, groaned till he was weary with his groaning; inward groaning affects the body, wastes the animal spirits, consumes the flesh, and induces weariness and faintness; see Ps 102:5;

all the night make I my bed to swim: I water my couch with my tears; these are hyperbolical phrases {e}, expressing more than is intended, and are not to be literally understood; for such a quantity of tears a man could never shed, as to water his couch and make his bed to swim with them, but they are used to denote the multitude of them, and the excessiveness of his sorrow; see Ps 119:136; and these tears were shed, not to atone and satisfy for sin, for nothing but the blood and sacrifice of Christ can do that; but to express the truth and reality, as well as the abundance of his grief; and this was done "all the night long"; see **Job 7:3**; when he had leisure to think and reflect upon his sins and transgressions, and when he was clear of all company, and no one could hear or see him, nor interrupt him in the vent of his sorrow, and when his disease might be heavier upon him, as some diseases increase in the night season: this may also be mystically understood, of a night of spiritual darkness and desertion, when a soul is without the discoveries of the love of God, and the influences of his grace; and has lost sight of God and Christ, and interest in them, and does not enjoy communion with them; and throughout this night season weeping endures, though joy comes in the morning. And it may be applicable to David's antitype, to the doleful night in which he was betrayed, when it was the hour and power of darkness, and when he had no other couch or bed but the ground itself; which was watered, not only with his tears, but with his sweat and blood, his sweat being as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground; so he is often said to sigh and groan in spirit, **Mr 7:34**.

{e} See the latter in Homer. Odyss 17. v. 110. Odyss. 19. prope finem.

Psalms 6:7

Ver. 7. Mine eye is consumed because of grief,.... Either by reason of the affliction he laboured under, which could not he joyous, but grievous; or because, of the sin that was in him, and those that he had committed, which were grieving to him; or through the sins of other professors of religion, or profane sinners, whom he beheld with grief of heart and weeping eyes: the word {f} used signifies anger and indignation, and sorrow arising from thence, and may denote either indignation in himself at his enemies, who were rejoicing at his calamities; or the sense he had of the anger of God, and his hot displeasure, which he feared he was rebuking and chastening him with; and now his heart being filled with grief on one or other of these accounts, or all of them, vented itself in floods of tears, which hurt the visive faculty; for through much weeping the eye is weakened and becomes dim; and through a multitude of tears, and a long continuance of them, it fails; see Job 17:7;

it waxeth old because of all mine enemies; saints have many enemies, sin, Satan, and the world; and these are very oppressive ones, as the word {g} here signifies; such as beset them about, straiten them on all hands, and press them sore; and they must be pressed down by them, were it not that he that is in them is greater than he that is in the world; and David's enemies gave him so much trouble, and caused him to shed such plenty of tears, that his eye waxed old, was shrunk up, and beset with wrinkles, the signs of old age; or it was removed out of its place, as the word is rendered in Job 18:4; or the sight was removed from that, it was gone from him, Ps 38:10.

{f} oekm "prae ira", Pagninus; "prae indignatione", Montanus, Musculus; "ex indignatione", Piscator. {g} wydrwu "angustiatores", Montanus; "angustiis afficientes me", Vatablus; "oppressores meos", Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus.

Psalms 6:8

Ver. 8. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity,.... The psalmist being fully assured that God had heard his prayer, that he should recover from his disorder, or be delivered out of his calamities, whether corporeal or spiritual, has on a sudden a spring of joy, faith, and comfort; as sometimes there is a quick transition from comfortable to uncomfortable frames; see Ps 30:7; so on the contrary, there is as quick a passage from uncomfortable to comfortable ones; see **La 3:18**; who may be called "workers of iniquity"
See Gill on "Ps 5:5"; and these were either his open enemies, as Saul and his men, or Absalom and the conspirators with him, whom he bids to cease from following and pursuing after him; or his secret ones, hypocritical courtiers, that were about him, who were wishing and hoping for his death. It is the lot of God's people to be among the workers of iniquity; Lot was among the Sodomites, David was in Meshech and in the tents of Kedar, Isaiah was among men of unclean lips; Christ's lily is among thorns, and his sheep among goats; and though in some respects a civil conversation with wicked men cannot be avoided, for then good men must needs go out of the world; yet as little company should be kept with them as can be, and no fellowship should be had with them in sinful practices, nor in superstitious worship; and though there will not be a full and final separation from them in the present state of things, there will be hereafter, when these very words will be used by David's antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ; not only to profane sinners, but to carnal

professors of religion, who have herded themselves with the people of God, Mt 25:41. The reason why the psalmist took heart and courage, and ordered his wicked persecutors, or sycophants, to be gone from him, was his assurance of being heard by the Lord;

for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping; referring to what is said **Ps 6:6**; he had not only lifted up his voice in prayer, but he had wept and made supplication, as Jacob did, Ho 12:4; sometimes God brings his people to the throne of grace weeping, and with supplications leads them, Jer 31:9; and then hears their cry and answers them.

Psalms 6:9

Ver. 9. The Lord hath heard my supplication,.... Which he had presented to him, **Ps 6:1**; in which he deprecates his anger and hot displeasure; entreats his free favour, grace, and mercy; desires healing for soul or body, or both; prays a return of his gracious presence; and deliverance and salvation out of all his troubles, from all his enemies, and from death itself. The word {h} used properly signifies petitions for grace and mercy, which the psalmist put up under the influence of the spirit of grace and supplication, and which were heard;

the Lord will receive my prayer; instead of a burnt offering, as Aben Ezra glosses it; as sweet incense, as what is grateful and delightful, coming up out of the hands of Christ the Mediator, perfumed with the sweet incense of his mediation: the word {i} signifies prayer made to God as the righteous Judge, as the God of his righteousness, who would vindicate his cause and right his wrongs; and a believer, through the blood and righteousness of Christ, can go to God as a righteous God, and plead with him even for pardon and cleansing, who is just and faithful to grant both unto him. The psalmist three times expresses his confidence of his prayers being heard and received, which may be either in reference to his having prayed so many times for help, as the Apostle Paul did, 2Co 12:8; and as Christ his antitype did, Mt 26:39; or to express the certainty of it, the strength of his faith in it, and the exuberance of his joy on account of it.

{h} ytnxt "supplices pro gratia preces meas", Michaelis: so Ainsworth. {i} hlpt "est propria oratio habita ad juris et aequi arbitrum"; Cocceius in Psal. iv. 2.

Psalms 6:10

Ver. 10. Let all mine enemies be ashamed,.... Or "they shall be ashamed" {k}; and so the following clauses may be rendered, and be considered as prophecies of what would be; though if this be considered as an imprecation, it is wishing no ill; wicked men are not ashamed of their abominations committed by them, neither can they blush; it would be well if they were ashamed of them, and brought to true repentance for them; and if they are not ashamed now, they will be hereafter, when the Judge of quick and dead appears;

and sore vexed; or "troubled" {l}; as his bones had been vexed, and his soul had been sore vexed by them; as he knew they would be through disappointment at his recovery, and at his deliverance from the distresses and calamities he was now in, when he should sing for joy of heart, and they should howl for vexation of spirit;

let them return; meaning either from him, from pursuing after him; or to him, to seek his favour, and be reconciled to him, and be at peace with him, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi explain it; unless this word should only signify "again", as it sometimes does, and be read in connection with what follows;

[and] let them be again ashamed suddenly {m}; intimating that his deliverance would be sudden, in a moment, in a very little time, and so would be their disappointment, shame, and confusion. Jarchi, from R. Jonathan and R. Samuel bar Nachmani, refers this to the shame of the wicked in the world to come.

{k} wvby "pudore afficientur", Pagninus, Montanus; "pudefient", Coeceius, Schmidt; so Ainsworth. {l} wlhby "conturbantur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {m} wvwby wbvy "iterum confundantur", Gejerus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 7

Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite. The name of this psalm, "Shiggaion", either respects the music or the matter of the psalm. Some take it to be the name of the musical instrument to which the psalm was set {n}: so Habakkuk's prayer is said to be "upon shigionoth"; which is the same word with this, only of the plural number, **Hab 3:1**. Others say it was the first word of a song, to the tune of which this was sung {o} And others understand it of a certain kind of a song {p}: and the Targum renders it, "the interpretation of the ode of David"; which Ainsworth renders, "David's interpretation of the law"; leading atyrwa instead of atydwa, as does also the king of Spain's Bible. And certain it is that it is the name of a song; since it follows, "which he sang unto the Lord"; in his presence, before him, and to the glory of his name. But the question is, of what sort it is? and why it should be so called? since its root hgv signifies "to err" or "wander": it is more generally rendered, "an erratic" or "wandering ode"; a song or psalm, which consisted of various kind of metre: it was sung with various notes, and all kind of music, which made it very pleasant. Hence some render it, "David's delight", as R. Obadiah Gaon; and the verb from whence it is derived is translated "ravished" in **Pr 5:19**; and Ben Melech says, the word signifies twhrew hxmv, "joy and pleasure"; and Aben Ezra observes that some interpret it gwnet, "delight". But others are of opinion that this word regards the subject matter of the psalm, and may be rendered, "David's ignorance" or "error"; his sin of ignorance; and respects his mistaken conduct with regard to his enemies, particularly Saul, in making imprecations upon them, **Ps 6:10**; in cursing them, and especially King Saul; when a king is not to be cursed, Ec 10:20; and in cutting off the skirt of his garment, for which his heart smote him, 1Sa 24:4. Some render it, "the care of David", as Cocceius; which he wrote in deep meditation, when he had forgot himself, and was as it were in an ecstasy; setting forth "the sum of his cares", as Ainsworth expresses it, when he was harassed and greatly afflicted by his enemies. The occasion of it is, "the words of Cush the Benjamite"; which some understand of Shimei the Benjamite, who came out and cursed David as he went along, when he fled from Absalom, 1Sa 16:5. Theodoret thinks Hushai is meant, who persuaded Absalom not to follow the counsel of Ahithophel; on which account David penned this psalm. Others interpret it of one of Saul's courtiers, who was of the tribe of Benjamin, and whose name was Cush {q}; and which is very likely, since it is evident that some of Saul's courtiers accused David to him, and charged him with seeking his harm, not only to take away his crown and kingdom, but his life, 1Sa 24:9. Though the generality of the Jewish writers {r} interpret it of Saul himself, who is called Cush, in allusion to his father's name Kish, who was a man of Benjamin, **1Sa 9:1**; or else because Cush signifies "an Ethiopian", to which he may be compared, as the children of Israel in **Am 9:7**. For as the Ethiopian is various in his skin, so was Saul in his actions, as Jarchi observes; or rather because, as Kimchi and Ben Melech express it, as the Ethiopian does not change his skin, Jer 13:23; so Saul did not change his hatred to David. Though the same writers observe, that he may be called so by the rule of contraries, because he was a very goodly and beautiful man; the words referred to are supposed to be those in 1Sa 22:7.

{n} Menachem in Jarchi in loc. So David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 204. 1. {o} Aben Ezra in loc. {p} Kimchi in loc. {q} Aben Ezra & Obadiah Gaon in loc. {r} Targum, Jarchi, Kimchi, Arama, & Ben Melech in loc.

Ver. 1. O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust,.... The psalmist expresses his interest in God as his covenant God, and his trust and confidence in him; and with these he sets out as the stay of his soul, and his bulwark against the fears of his enemies; and he does not say that he had trusted in God, or would for the future trust in him; but that he did trust in him, and continued to do so. And God is to be trusted in at all times; in times of affliction, temptation, and desertion; and these the psalmist premises to his petition, which follows, as an encouragement to him to hope for success, since God was his God, and none that ever trusted in him were confounded;

save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me; persecution is no new thing to the people of God; David had his persecutors, and many of them; the Church, in Jeremiah's time, had hers; the saints, in the times of the apostles, and in all ages since, have had theirs. Every one that will live godly in Christ Jesus must expect persecution in one shape or another; and there is none can save and deliver from it but God, and he can and will in his own time, **2Co 1:10**. David was sensible of this, and therefore applies to him, and him only; and not to an arm of flesh, to his friends, or to neighbouring princes and powers.

Psalms 7:2

Ver. 2. Lest he tear my soul like a lion,.... That is, one of his persecutors, the chief of them; it may be Saul, whom the psalmist compares to a lion for his majesty and greatness, the lion being the king among beasts; and for his authority, power, and might, and for his wrath and cruelty, which he feared; and which, should it be exerted on him, would tear his soul, or himself, in pieces; would rend his soul from his body, and dispatch his life; see Pr 19:12. So the Apostle Paul calls the Roman governor, before whom he was, and from whose hands he was delivered, a lion, for his power and fierceness, **2Ti 4:17**. And so our adversary the devil, the chief of all persecutors, and who instigates others against the saints, is by Peter said to go about like a roaring lion, **1Pe**

5:8;

rending [it] in pieces, as the lion does his prey when hungry. So Homer {s} compares Polyphemus to a mountain lion, which devours and leaves nothing, neither the intestines, nor flesh, nor bones; and represents {t} it first taking hold of the creature with its strong teeth, and breaking its neck, and drawing out its blood and all its inwards; see
Isa 38:13;

while [there is] none to deliver; no saviour, no deliverer: for if God does not save and deliver his people out of the hands of their persecutors, none can; especially out of the hands of such an one as is here described tearing and rending in pieces. As there is no God besides the Lord, there is no saviour besides him: there is no temporal nor spiritual saviour but he: salvation is not to be expected from any other; and were it not for him, saints must fall a prey to their enemies.

{s} Odyss. 9. v. 292, 293. {t} Iliad. 11. v. 175, 176. & Iliad. 17. v. 63.

Psalms 7:3

Ver. 3. O Lord my God, if I have done this. The crime which Saul and his courtiers charged him with, and which was made so public that every body knew it; and therefore it was needless particularly to mention it; namely, that he lay in wait for Saul, and sought his life to take it away, 1Sa 24:9. The Targum interprets it of this psalm, paraphrasing it, "if I have made this song with an evil intention"; to give an ill character of any, and lead them with false charges;

if there be iniquity in my hands; not that he was without sin, he had it in his heart; nor that he lived without the actual commission of sin: but his sense is, that there was no iniquity, as not in his heart, purpose, and design, so not in his hand, nor attempted by him, of the kind he was accused of, 1Sa 24:11. Otherwise, we often hear him complaining of the depravity of his nature, and acknowledging his sins and transgressions, Ps 32:5.

Psalms 7:4

Ver. 4. If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me,.... That is, when Saul was at peace with him; when he lived at his court, and ate at his table his meaning is, that he did not conspire against him, nor form schemes to deprive him of his crown nor of his life: or, as it may be rendered, "if I have rewarded to him that rewarded me evil" {u}; that is, as Jarchi explains it, if I rewarded him as he rewarded me, evil for evil. This David did not; and it is eminently true of Christ his antitype, **1Pe 2:23**; and in it he ought to be imitated by every believer, Ro 12:17;

yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy; meaning Saul, who persecuted David without any just reason, and whom David delivered without any obligation to do it; not for any benefit and kindness he had received from him; for the phrase "without cause" may be read in connection either with the word "delivered" {w}; for the deliverance was wrought without any cause or merit on Saul's part, or profit to David; or with the word "enemy", for Saul was David's enemy without any just cause on David's part: and the deliverance referred to was when he cut off Saul's skirt, in the cave at Engedi, and spared his life; and when he took away his spear from him, as he was sleeping in the trench, and did not destroy him, nor suffer those that would to do it, 1Sa 24:4. The words may be rendered, "only I stripped him" {x}. The sense is, that he cut off the skirt of his coat, and took away his spear, and so in part stripped him both of his clothes and armour, at two different times; not to do him any hurt, but to let him know, as Jarchi observes, that he was delivered into his hands, and he could have slain him, but did not. The same Jewish writer interprets the word used "of stripping of garments"; and Aben Ezra observes, from R. Moses, that the "vau", rendered "yea", signifies "only", as in Ge 42:10.

{u} "Si malum malo rependi", Castalio. {w} Mqyr "absque emolumento ullo ad me inde redeunte", Gussetius. {x} Verbum Ulx "proprie extrahere, &c. significat, et de vestibus quae alieui exuuntur et eripiuntur proprie dicitur", De Dieu.

Psalms 7:5

Ver. 5. Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take [it],.... That is, if the above things he was charged with could be proved against him; then he was content that Saul his enemy should pursue after him, and apprehend him, and bring him to justice, by taking away his life from him;

yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth; with the utmost indignation and contempt, without showing any mercy; as the lion treads down his prey, and tears it to pieces, **Mic 5:8**; or as the potter treads his clay under foot, Isa 41:25;

and lay mine honour in the dust; meaning either his life and soul, as before; denominating himself from his better part, and which he elsewhere calls his glory, Ps 16:9; see Ge 49:6; or else his body, as R. Judah Ben Balaam, who is blamed for it by Jarchi; or rather his fame, credit, and reputation, that he had gained, both by his courage and valour in the field, and by his wise and prudent behaviour at court, 1Sa 18:7. Should he appear to be guilty of the crimes he was accused of, he is willing to have his glorious name buried in the dust of oblivion, and his memory perish for ever. The words are to be considered as a strong assertion of his innocence, in an appeal to God, the searcher of hearts, and the trier of the reins of men; and as imprecating on himself the worst of evils, should it not appear; see Job 31:21.

Selah; Aben Ezra renders "selah", "in truth", "let it be so"; and the Targum renders it, as usual, "for ever"; See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 7:6

Ver. 6. Arise, O Lord, in thine anger,.... This and the following phrase do not suppose local motion in God, to whom it cannot belong, being infinite and immense, but are spoken of him after the manner of men, who seems sometimes as though he had laid himself down, and was unconcerned about and took no notice of human affairs, of the insults of the wicked and the oppressions of the righteous; wherefore the psalmist beseeches him to "arise", which he may be said to do when he comes forth in his power in the defence of his people, and against their enemies; see Ps 12:5; and he also prays him to arise in anger, to show himself displeased, and give some tokens of his resentment, by letting his enemies feel the lighting down of his arm with the indignation of his anger;

lift up thyself, because of the rage of mine enemies; ascend the throne of judgment, and there sit judging right; show thyself to be the Judge of the earth, high and lifted up; let it appear that thou art above all mine enemies, higher and more powerful than they; stop their rage, break the force of their fury, lift up a standard against them, who, likes mighty flood, threaten to bear all before them: or "lift up thyself in rage", or "fierce wrath, because of", or "against mine enemies" {y}: and so the sense is the same as before; and this way go many of the Jewish interpreters {z};

and awake for me [to] the judgment [that] thou hast commanded; not that sleep falls upon God, for the keeper of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps; nor does it fall on any but corporeal beings, not upon angels, nor the souls of men, much less on God; but he sometimes in his providence seems to lie dormant and inactive, as if he disregarded what is done in this world; and therefore his people address him as if he was asleep, and call upon him to arise to their help and assistance; see Ps 44:23; and so David here, "awake for me", that is, hasten to come to me and help me; suggesting that he was in great distress and danger, by reason of his enemies, should he delay coming to him. By "judgment" is either meant the vengeance which God had ordered him to execute upon his enemies, as Jarchi interprets it, and therefore he entreats him to arise and put him in a capacity of doing it; or else his innocence, and the vindication of it, which God had promised him, and then the petition is much the same with **Ps 7:8**. But the generality of Jewish {a} writers understand it of the kingdom which God had appointed for him, and for which he was anointed by Samuel; and who had told Saul that God had found a man after his own heart, whom he had "commanded" to be captain over his people, 1Sa 13:14; wherefore the psalmist prays that God would hasten the fulfilment of his purpose and promise, and set him on the throne, that so he might administer justice and judgment to the people.

{y} yrdwu twrbeb "in furore contra hostes meos", Mariana; "gravissimo furore percitus in eos qui me opprimunt", Junius & Tremellius. {z} Targum, Jarchi, & Kimchi, in loc. {a} R. Moses in Aben Ezra in loc. R. Obadiah Gaon, Kimchi, & Ben Melech in loc.

Psalms 7:7

Ver. 7. So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about,.... By "the congregation of the people" are meant the nation of the Jews, the twelve tribes of Israel, called an assembly of people, and a company of nations, Ge 28:3; and this is to be understood not of their gathering together in an hostile manner about David to take him, which might be interpreted compassing God himself about, David being as dear to him as the apple of his eye, which is the sense of several Jewish commentators {b}; but rather of their encompassing and surrounding the altar of God with songs of deliverance, upon David's being rid of his enemies and advanced to the throne of the kingdom; see Ps 26:6; unless it should have regard to the pure worship of God by David, which was greatly neglected in Saul's time; and then the sense is, that the psalmist prays that he might be established in his kingdom, as God had appointed and commanded, when he would fetch up the ark of God, and encourage the worship of God, and rectify all disorders in it; that so the several tribes might come up to Jerusalem and encompass the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence, and worship in his holy mountain;

for their sakes therefore return thou on high; take, the throne of justice, high and lifted up, vindicate the cause of the oppressed, deliver me from all my troubles, put me into the peaceable possession of my kingdom; if not for my, sake, yet for the sake of thy church and people, and for the sake of thy worship and thy glory; the Targum paraphrases it, "return thou to the house of thy Shechinah".

{b} Kimchi & Aben Ezra in loc.

Psalms 7:8

Ver. 8. The Lord shall judge the people,.... The inhabitants of the world in general; for God is the Judge of all the earth, and he judges the world in righteousness daily, and ministers judgment in uprightness, though it is not always manifest; or his own people in particular, whose cause he pleads, whose injuries and wrongs he avenges, whose persons he protects and defends; this the psalmist expresses with confidence, and therefore, suitable to his character as a Judge, he entreats him as follows:

judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness; he speaks not of his justification before God, in whose sight he well knew no flesh living could be justified by their own righteousness, Ps 143:2; nor of the righteousness of his person, either imputed or inherent; but of the righteousness of his cause, Ps 35:27; not of his righteousness God-ward, for he knew that he was a sinner with respect to him; but of his righteousness towards Saul, against whom he had not sinned, but had acted towards him in the most righteous and faithful manner,
1Sa 24:11; and therefore desired to be judged, and was content to stand or fall according to his conduct and behaviour towards him;

and according to mine integrity [that is] in me; who had always acted the sincere and upright part towards Saul, though he had pursued him with so much fury and violence; the psalmist's prayer was heard and answered, Ps

18:20.

Psalms 7:9

Ver. 9. Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end,.... Which will not be till the measure of it is fully up, and that will not be till the wicked are no more; for, as long as they are in the world they will be committing wickedness, and like the troubled sea continually cast up the mire and dirt of sin; and they will remain to the end of the world, till the new Jerusalem church state shall take place, when all the Lord's people will be righteous, and there will not be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts, nor a pricking brier or grieving thorn in all the land; for, in the new earth will no sinner be, but righteous persons only; and for this state the psalmist may be thought to pray; however by this petition and the following he expresses his hatred of sin and love of righteousness: some choose to render the words {c}, "let wickedness now consume the wicked"; as in the issue it will, unless the grace of God takes place; some sins consume the bodies, others the estates of wicked men, and some both; and all are the means of destroying both body and soul in hell, if grace prevent not; this may be considered as a declaration of what will be, being a prophetic petition {d};

but establish the just; or righteous one; meaning himself, and every other who is made righteous, not by his own righteousness, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; and who needs not to have his righteousness established, which is in itself stable, firm, and sure, and cannot be more so; it is an everlasting one, and cannot be abolished, but abides for ever, and will answer for him in a time to come; but his faith to be established more and more in its exercise on this righteousness: nor do the persons of the just need establishing, or can they be more stable than they are, as considered in Christ, as they are the objects of God's everlasting love, secured in the covenant of grace, and built on Christ the foundation; but the graces of faith, hope, and love, need daily establishing on their proper object, they being weak, fickle, and inconstant in their acts; and the saints need more and more establishing in the doctrines of the Gospel, and in their adherence to the cause of God and Christ and true religion; and it is God's work to establish them, to whom the psalmist applies; see **1Pe 5:10**;

for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins; he is righteous himself in his nature, and in all his works, and he knows who are righteous and who are wicked; he knows the hearts, thoughts, affections, and inward principles of all men, and the springs of all their actions; he looks not at outward appearances, but at the heart; and as he can distinguish between the one and the other, he is capable of punishing the wicked and of confirming the righteous, consistent with the truth of his perfections.

{c} Myevr er an rwmgy "consumat nunc vel quaeso malum impios", Muscuius, Vatablus, so Jarchi, Kimchi, & Ben Melech. {d} "Consumat nunc malum impios", Pagninus, Montanus, Hammond; so Obadiah Gaon.

Psalms 7:10

Ver. 10. My defence [is] of God,.... Or "my shield [is] in" or "of God" {e}; God was his shield, his protector and defender; see Ps 3:3; or "my shield [is] with God"; that is, Christ, who was the shield his faith made use of against every spiritual enemy, was with God; he was with him as the Word and Son of God from all eternity, and as the living Redeemer of his people before his incarnation; and he is now with him as their intercessor and advocate, who pleads in defence of them, and opposes himself, his blood and righteousness, to all the charges and accusations of Satan;

which saveth the upright in heart: who have the truth of grace in them, wisdom in the hidden part; who are sincere in their affections, purposes, and designs, in their faith, hope, and love; and act from real principles of truth and love, in the integrity of their souls; for these light and gladness are sown, to them grace and glory are given, and no good thing is withheld from them; they are saved by God from sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell, and every enemy, with a spiritual and everlasting salvation.

{e} Myhla le "in Deo", Musculus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Muis, Ainsworth; "apud Deum", Lutherus, Piscator, Gejerus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 7:11

Ver. 11. God judgeth the righteous,.... Not all that are thought to be righteous, or think themselves to be so, are such; nor is any man naturally righteous, or of himself, nor by virtue of his obedience to the law of works; but such only are righteous who are made so by the obedience of Christ; these God governs and protects, avenges their injuries and defends their persons; some render the words, "God is a righteous Judge" {f}; he is so now in the administrations of his government of the universe, and he will be so hereafter in the general judgment of the world;

and God is angry [with the wicked] every day; wicked men are daily sinning, and God is always the same in his nature, and has the same aversion to sin continually; and though he is not always making men examples of his wrath, yet his wrath is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men; and there are frequent stances of it; and when he is silent he is still angry, and in his own time will stir up all his wrath, and rebuke in his hot displeasure.

{f} Vid. Aben Ezra & Abendana not. in Miclol. Yophi in loc.
qydu jpwv Myhla "Deus judex justus", V. L. Munster, Musculus, Montanus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 7:12

Ver. 12. If he turn not,.... Not God, but the enemy, or the wicked man, spoken of **Ps 7:5**; if he turn not from his wicked course of life, to the Lord to live to him, and according to his will; unless he is converted and repents of his sin, and there is a change wrought in him, in his heart and life; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "if ye turn not", or "are not converted", an apostrophe to the wicked;

he will whet his sword: God is a man of war, and he is sometimes represented as accoutred with military weapons; see Isa 59:17; and among the rest with the sword of judgment, which he may be said to whet, when he prepares sharp and sore judgments for his enemies,
Isa 27:1;

he hath bent his bow, and made it ready; drawn his bow of vengeance, and put it on the full stretch, and made it ready with the arrows of his wrath, levelled against the wicked, with whom he is angry; which is expressive of their speedy and inevitable ruin, in case of impenitence; see **La 2:4**; or "trod his bow", as is the usual phrase elsewhere; see Ps 11:2; which was done by the feet, and was necessary when the bow was a strong one, as Jarchi on Ps 11:2; observes; and so the Arabs, as Suidas {g} relates, using arrows the length of a man, put their feet on the string of the bow instead of their hands.

{g} In voce arabev.

Psalms 7:13

Ver. 13. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death,.... The weapons of his indignation, Isa 13:5; which, will issue both in the first and second death, corporeal and eternal; the instruments of the former are diseases of various kinds, and judgments, as famine, pestilence, &c. and of the latter not only the law is an instrument of it, that being the letter which kills, and is the ministration of condemnation and death, but even the Gospel itself to wicked men is the savour of death unto death; and devils will be the executioners of it;

he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors: the word for persecutors signifies "hot" or "burning" {h}, and designs such persons who burn in malice and wrath, In rage and fury, against the saints, and hotly pursue after them, as Laban did after Jacob, Ge 31:36; for these more especially God has determined in his eternal purposes and decrees, and for these he has provided in his quiver, arrows of wrath and vengeance, fiery ones; and against these will he bring them forth, direct them, and shoot them at them, Ps 64:7. Some {i} understand all this not of God, but of the wicked man, and read "if he turn not", but, on the contrary, instead of that, "will whet his sword, bend his bow", &c. against the righteous; yet he shall be disappointed, he shall not accomplish his designs, as appears by the following verses; these phrases are used of wicked men, Ps 11:2, but the former sense seems best.

{h} Myqlwdl "ardentibus", V. L. "in ardentes", Montanus; "hot persecutors", Ainsworth. {i} So Brentius & Glassius in Gejerus.

Psalms 7:14

Ver. 14. Behold, he travaileth with iniquity,.... Is full of it, and big with it, as a woman with child, and eagerly desires to bring it forth, and is in pain till he commits it;

and hath conceived mischief; that which is injurious to God and the perfections of his nature, a transgression of his law, and an affront to his justice and holiness, is doing wrong to fellow creatures, and harm to themselves, either to their name and credit, or to their substance and estates, or to their bodies and souls, and it may be to them all; and yet this they conceive, they devise it in their hearts, and form schemes how to bring it to pass, and which they do with great freedom, deliberation, and pleasure;

and brought forth falsehood; or "vanity" {k}, or a vain thing, as the same word is rendered in Job 15:35; no fruit at all, but wind, or stubble, Isa 26:17; that which deceives does not answer the expectation, but the contrary to it; the sense is, that wicked men having devised mischievous things against the saints, they are big with expectations of success, and strive to bring their purposes to bear, but are miserably disappointed, for it all ends in vanity and vexation of spirit to themselves.

{k} rqv "rem inanem", so some in Vatablus; "vanitatem", Gejerum.

Psalms 7:15

Ver. 15. He made a pit and digged it,.... That is, he digged a pit, and made it very large and capacious, to answer his purposes;

and is fallen into the ditch [which] he made; so it is said of the Heathen, **Ps 9:15**; and is exemplified in the case of Haman, who was hanged upon the gallows he had built for Mordecai. Kimchi explains this of Saul's falling upon his own sword, and dying by it, which he drew against David; phrase is proverbial, Pr 26:27; the sense of this and the above figurative expressions is literally and properly given in **Ps 7:16**.

Psalms 7:16

Ver. 16. His mischief shall return upon his own head,.... That which he conceived and devised in his mind, and attempted to bring upon others, shall fall upon himself, as a just judgment from heaven upon him;

and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate; referring to the violence with which Saul pursued David, which would be requited to him, and of which he prophesied, 1Sa 26:10.

Psalms 7:17

Ver. 17. I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness,.... Or on account of it, as it was displayed in vindicating the innocent, and punishing the wicked;

so Pharaoh having ordered male infants of the Hebrews to be drowned, and he himself and his host in righteous judgment being drowned in the Red sea; Moses and the children of Israel sung a song, as the psalmist here;

and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high; whose name is Jehovah, and is the most High over all the earth; and who had now, according to the psalmist's request, **Ps 7:6**; arose and lifted up himself, and returned on high, and had shown himself to be above all David's enemies, and had sat on the throne judging right.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 8

To the chief Musician upon Gittith, a Psalm of David. Some think this psalm was composed when the ark was brought to the house of Obededom the Gittite; and that it was delivered to him and his sons, as others were to Asaph, to Jeduthun, to the sons of Korah, &c. {l}. But against this lies a strong objection, that Obededom and his sons were porters, and not singers, 1Ch 26:4; and for the same reason "gittith" cannot be the name of a musical instrument which was kept in his family, and presided over by them {m}. Some are of opinion this word had its name from Gath; and that this psalm was wrote by David when he was there {y}; or that it is the name of a musical instrument invented and made there, and which was brought from thence {z}: And so the Targum paraphrases it;

"upon the harp which was brought from Gath."

A word like this signifies "winepresses": and hence the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, render it "for the winepresses": which Theodoret interprets of churches, where Christ the true vine is gathered by believers, and they prepare the mystic wine. Some think {a} the psalms which bear this name were composed for the feast of tabernacles: when, having got in their vintage, they filled their presses, and squeezed their grapes, and therefore gave thanks; it was usual, even with the Heathens {b}, to make use of the harp, and other instruments of music, at the gathering of the grapes to be squeezed and pressed. Some of the Jewish writers {c} apply it to the times of Edom's destruction, who was to be trodden down as in a winepress, foretold in Isa 63:1; and others interpret it of the times of Gog and Magog, when the prophecy in **Joe 3:13**; shall be fulfilled {d} and some have thought this psalm to be a song of praise, like one of those sung by them that tread in the winepress; the time of vintage being a time of joy. The ancient Christian writers explain it of the sufferings of Christ, when he trod the winepress of his Father's wrath. But the word "gittith" is either the first word of some song, as Aben Ezra thinks; or the name of the tune, as Kimchi; or rather of the musical instrument to which this psalm was set and sung. Though the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, **Heb 2:6**; citing some passages from this psalm, only says, "one in a certain place testified"; without mentioning either the number of the psalm, or the name of the writer; yet it is certain that David was the penman of it: and both from the testimony of that writer, and from a citation of Christ himself, it is evident that the subject of this psalm is the Messiah, and that it belongs to his times; see **Heb 2:6**. So the Syriac scholiast;

"the eighth psalm is concerning Christ our Redeemer."

{l} Aben Ezra in loc. {m} R. Moses apud ibid. {y} Ben Melech in loc. vide Kimchi ibid. {z} Jarchi in loc. {a} Vide Godwin. Synops. Antiqu. Heb. l. 2. s. 1. c. G. {b} Phurnutus de Natura Deorum, p. 84. {c} Rabbini apud Jarchium in loc. {d} Midrash Tillim apud Viccars. in loc.

Ver. 1. O Lord our God,.... Jehovah, the one God, who is Lord of all angels and men, and in an especial manner Lord and King of saints;

how excellent [is] thy name in all the earth! by the "name" of God is not meant any particular name of his, by which he is called; but either himself, his nature and perfections; or rather that by which he is made known, and particularly his Gospel; see Joh 17:6; this is excellent in its nature, it being good news, and glad tidings of good things, which display the love, grace, mercy, and kindness of God to men, as well as his wisdom, power, truth, and faithfulness; and in the subject matter of it, Christ and his righteousness, and life and salvation by him, the spiritual blessings of grace it publishes, and the exceeding great and precious promises it contains; and in its usefulness for the enlightening, quickening, and converting sinners, and for the comforting and reviving of drooping saints. It is the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, and excels the law in glory. It cannot well be said how glorious it is; it is marvellously excellent; and that "in all the earth", being carried by the apostles, who were sent by Christ with it, into all the world; where it has shone out, and appeared gloriously to Gentiles as well as Jews. This clause shows that this is said by David prophetically of Gospel times; for not in his time, nor in any period under the Old Testament, was the name of the Lord glorious and excellent in all the earth. His name was great in Israel, but not in all the world. He showed his word, and gave his statutes and ordinances to Jacob; but as for the Gentiles, they were without them, and were strangers to the covenants of promise, Ps 76:1; but this was true of the first times of the Gospel; and will be still more fully accomplished when the prophecies in **Mal 1:11**; shall be fulfilled;

who hast set thy glory above the heavens: meaning his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the brightness of his glory; in whom is all the fulness of the Godhead, the glory of all the divine perfections; so called Ps 63:2; and the setting of him above the heavens designs the exaltation of him at the right hand of God; where angels, principalities, and powers, became subject to him, and he was made higher than the heavens, **Heb 7:26**. And it was in consequence, and by virtue of this, that the Gospel was spread throughout the earth; for upon Christ's exaltation the Spirit was poured down upon the apostles, and they were endowed with girls qualifying them to carry the Gospel into each of the parts of the world.

Psalms 8:2

Ver. 2. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings,.... Not literally such, though the Jewish writers {e} generally so understand it; as do some Christian interpreters, who explain it of the wonderful formation, nourishment, and growth of infants; and of the marvellous care of God in providing the breast for them; in filling it with milk, and teaching them to suck; which, being observed by men, occasion praise to God, to the confusion of atheists and infidels. But this is no other than what is common to brute creatures: rather the words are to be understood in a figurative sense. So Jarchi applies them to the priests and Levites in the temple: but it is best to interpret them of the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel; and of such who received it and professed it; who were in their own eyes, and in the eyes of the world, as babes and sucklings, Mt 11:25;

hast thou ordained strength: by which is meant the Gospel, the rod of Christ's strength, and the power of God unto salvation; and which being made useful for the conversion of souls, is the cause of much praise and thanksgiving to God: this, by the mouths and means of the apostles and first ministers of the word, God ordained, or "founded" {f}, settled and established in the world, notwithstanding all the opposition made unto it; so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, to root it out of the world; but it will continue the everlasting Gospel;

because of thine enemies: either for the sake of subduing them, and bringing them to the obedience of Christ, that is, the elect of God, who are before conversion enemies to God and Christ; or rather for the sake of confounding the implacable enemies of God and Christ, and of the cause and interest of religion. In order to which God has made choice of instruments the most mean and despicable, **1Co 1:26**; and God's end in this more particularly is expressed in the following clause;

that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger; Satan, the enemy of mankind, the adversary of Christ personal and mystical, who is filled with envy, wrath, and malice, against Christ and his people; him, by the, means of the Gospel and the ministry of it, God has "caused to cease" {g}, as the word may be rendered; not as to his being, but as to his power and authority, in the Gentile world; out of which, to his great mortification, he was cast, by the mouth and ministry of babes and sucklings. These words are applied by Christ to the children in the temple, crying Hosanna to the son of David, out of whose mouths God perfected the praise of the Messiah; and by which, and Christ's defence of them, the Scribes and Pharisees, the mortal enemies of Christ, and who wanted to revenge themselves on him, were silenced and stilled, Mt 21:15.

{e} Aben Ezra & R. Moses in ibid. Kimchi, Obadiah Gaon, & Ben Melech in loc. {f} tdoy "fundasti", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius, so the Targum; "fundatam disposuisti", Junius & Tremellius, Rivetus. {g} tybvhl "ad eessare faciendum", Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator; "ut facias cessare", Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 8:3

Ver. 3. When I consider thy heavens,.... Where God dwells, and which he has made; the airy and starry heavens, which are to be seen with the bodily eye; and the heaven of heavens, which is to be beheld and considered by faith:

the work of thy fingers; being curiously wrought by his power, and garnished by his Spirit: for the finger of God is the Spirit of God; see Mt 12:28; compared with Lu 11:20;

the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, or "prepared" {h}, for various uses to the earth, and the inhabitants of it. The sun is not mentioned, because it cannot be looked upon, as the moon and the stars may, nor be seen when they are. And it is generally thought that David composed this psalm in the night, When these celestial bodies were in view; and, it may be, while he was keeping his father's sheep, since, in the enumeration of the creatures subject to man, sheep are mentioned first, as being in view, **Ps 8:7**. The heavenly bodies are very glorious creatures, and are worthy of the consideration and contemplation of man, and even of a saint; whereby he may be led to observe the wisdom, power, goodness, and greatness of God.

{h} tnnwk "praeparasti", Pagninus, Montanus; "parasti", Musculus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 8:4

Ver. 4. What is man, that thou art mindful of him?.... That is, the psalmist, while he was considering the greatness and glory of the celestial bodies, thought this within himself, and so expressed it; which is to be understood, not of man in general, nor of Adam in a state of innocence; he could not be called "Enosh", the word here used, which signifies a frail, weak, sickly mortal man; nor could he with any propriety be said to be the son of man, as in the following clause: nor of fallen man, or of Adam's posterity, descending from him by ordinary generation; for all things are not put in subjection to them, as is hereafter said of man: but this is to be understood of the man Christ Jesus, as it is interpreted in **Heb 2:6**; or of that individual of human nature which Christ assumed. The name of Enosh well agrees with him, who was a man of no note and esteem among men, a worm and no man, a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs, encompassed with infirmities, and was subject to death, and did die. Now it was a marvellous thing that God should be mindful of that individual of human nature; that he should prepare it in his council and covenant; that among the vast numbers of individuals which it came up in his infinite mind to create, he should choose this, to exalt it, and appoint it to union with his own Son, and take that delight in it he did; that when it was formed by his Spirit, he should anoint it with the oil of gladness above his fellows; that he should take such providential care of it, and so often and so strongly express his affection for it; that he should regard it, and support it under sufferings; and when in the grave, did not leave it, nor suffer it to see corruption; but raised it from the dead, and gave it glory, and exalted it at his own right hand;

and the son of man, that thou visitest him? The name of "the son of man" is the name of the Messiah, in Ps 80:17; and is often given to Christ, and used by him of himself in the New Testament. And this visiting of him is not to be understood in a way of wrath, though he was so visited by God, when he bore the chastisements of his people; but in a way of favour, by bestowing upon him without measure the gifts and graces of his Spirit; by affording him his gracious presence, and tilling him with spiritual peace and joy.

Psalms 8:5

Ver. 5. For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,.... Than Elohim, "than God", as this word usually signifies: and could it be interpreted of man, as made by God, it might be thought to refer to the creation of him in the image and likeness of God; but as it must be understood of the human nature of Christ, it may regard the wonderful union of it to the Son of God, on account of which it is called by the same name, **Lu 1:35**; and so made but a little lower than God, being next unto him, and in so near an union with a divine Person; and which union is hypostatical or personal, the human nature being taken into a personal union with the Son of God: and so these words give an instance of God's marvellous regard to it; and contain a reason, proving that he has been mindful of it, and visited it. Though rather this clause refers to the humiliation of Christ in his human nature, as it is interpreted in **Heb 2:9**; and so it removes an objection, as it is connected with the following clause, which might be made against what had been observed in **Ps 8:4**, on account of the low estate of Christ's human nature, when here on the earth; and the sense is, that God has been mindful of it, and visited it, notwithstanding its state of humiliation for a little while, seeing he has crowned it with glory and honour, &c. Christ was made low as to nature, place, estate, reputation, and life; he who was the most high God, in the form of God, and equal to him in the divine nature, was made frail mortal flesh, and was in the form of a servant in the human nature. He who dwelt on high, and lay in the bosom of his Father, descended into the lower parts of the earth, was formed in the womb of a virgin, and when born was laid in a manager, and dwelt and conversed with sinful mortal men upon earth: he who was Lord of all, whose is the earth, and the fulness of it, had not where to lay his head: he whose glory was the glory of the only begotten of the Father, became a worm and no man in the esteem of men, was despised and rejected of men, and was of no reputation: and he who was the Lord of life and glory was crucified and killed; becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Such is the nature of Christ's humiliation, expressed by being "made low"; the degree of it is, "lower than Elohim", than God: he was equal to him in the divine nature, but inferior to

him in the human nature, Joh 14:28. As Mediator he was the servant of God, and the servant is not greater than his master; nor as such so great: and he was in his low estate in such a condition as to need the help and assistance of God, which he had in the day of salvation: and especially he was lower when he, was deserted by him, Mt 27:46. Agreeably to which, some render the words, as they will bear to be rendered, "thou didst make him want God", or "didst deprive", or "bereave him of God" {i}; that is, of the gracious presence of God: and so Christ was made lower than God in nature, office, and condition. Sometimes the word "Elohim" is used for civil magistrates, as in Ps 82:6; because they are in God's stead, and represent him; and, on account of their majesty, authority, and power, bear some resemblance to him. Now Christ was made lower than they, inasmuch as he not only taught obedience to them, but obeyed them himself, was a servant of rulers, paid tribute to them, and suffered himself to be examined, tried, judged, and condemned by them; but since the word is rendered "angels" by the Chaldee paraphrase, the Septuagint interpreters, the Jewish commentators, Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, and in the Arabic, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and above all by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, it is best to interpret it of them: and Christ was made lower than they by assuming human nature, which is inferior to theirs, especially in the corporeal part of it; and more so, inasmuch as it was attended with infirmities, and subject to sorrows and griefs; and as it was sometimes reduced to great extremes, and to want the comforts of life; and sometimes was in such distress as to need the assistance and ministration of angels, which it had, **Mt 4:11**; and particularly it was lower than they when deserted by God, whose face they always behold. To which may be added, that Christ was made under, a law given by the disposition of angels, ordained by them, and is called "the word" spoken by them; some parts of which they are not subject to; but the particular instance the apostle observes is suffering of death, **Heb 2:9**; which angels are not liable to, they die not. The duration of this low estate was "a little while"; for so the Hebrew word jem may be rendered, as it is in
Ps 37:10, and the Greek bracu ti, used by the Septuagint, and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, as it is in **Ac 5:34**; which refers either to the time of suffering death, and lying under the power of that and the grave, which was but a little time; or at most to the days of his flesh, reaching from his incarnation to his resurrection; which was a course but of a few years, and may very well be expressed in this manner. And to this low estate was Christ brought by Jehovah the Father, who is the person spoken of throughout the psalm; he preordained him to it, prepared a body for him, sent him in the fulness of time, made of a woman, made under the law, and had a very great hand in his sufferings and death: though all was with Christ's full consent, and

with his free good will;

and hast crowned him with glory and honour; by raising him from the dead, and setting him at his own right hand, committing all judgment to him; and requiring all creatures, angels and men, to give worship and adoration to him. And this being in consequence of his sufferings, after he had run the race, and endured a fight of afflictions; and because of the greatness of his glory and honour, with which he was as it were on all sides surrounded, he is said to be "crowned" with it; who a little before was crowned with thorns, and encompassed with the terrors of death and hell. This respects his mediatorial glory.

{i} Myhlam-whroxt "et deficere facies" ("vel facisti", Pagninus) "eum paululum a Deo", Montanus; "destitui quidem eum voluisti paululum a Deo", Michaelis; "carere eum fecisti Deo parumper", Gejerus.

Psalms 8:6

Ver. 6. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands,.... All power in heaven and in earth being given to him: when he was raised from the dead, and when he ascended on high, and was set down at the right hand of God, he was made or declared Lord and Christ; Lord of the hosts of heaven, of all the angels there, King of saints, King of kings, and Lord of lords. All things in heaven and earth, which God has made, are put into his hands, to subserve his cause and glory, and for the good of his people; for he is head over all things to the church. The Ethiopic version reads, "all the works of thy hands"; among whom are angels. This is a greater dominion than was given to the first man, Adam, **Ge 1:25**;

thou hast put all [things] under his feet; or put them in subjection to him, as the phrase signifies, and as it is interpreted, **Heb 2:8**. Good angels are subject to him, as appears by their ministration to him, their dependence on him, and adoration of him, **1Pe 3:22**; devils are subject to him, whether they will or not; and so are wicked men, whose power and wrath he is able to restrain, and does; and the church is subject to Christ, as her head; and so all good men, willingly and heartily, and from a principle of love, obey his commands: yea, all creatures in the earth, air, and sea, are in subjection to him; an enumeration of which is given in the following verses.

Psalms 8:7

Ver. 7. All sheep and oxen,.... The tame creatures, which are useful for food and clothing:

yea, and the beasts of the field; the wild beasts, which he can make use of to destroy and devour his enemies, and whom he can restrain from harming his own people, Jer 15:8.

Psalms 8:8

Ver. 8. The fowl of the air,.... These he rained about the tents of the Israelites for their relief, Ps 78:27, and can command them to feed his people, as the ravens did Elijah, 1Ki 17:4; or to destroy his enemies, Jer 15:3; see Ps 50:10;

and the fish of the sea: instances of Christ's power over them, and of their being at his command, and for his service, may be seen in Mt 17:27;

[and whatsoever] passeth through the paths of the seas: some {k} understand this of ships, made by the wisdom and art of men, in which they pass through the paths of the sea, and fish in the midst of it. The Targum paraphrases it, "and leviathan, which passes through the paths of the sea". Compare with this Isa 27:1. Some interpret all these things in a figurative and allegorical way; and some of the ancients by "sheep" understood believers among the Gentiles; by "oxen", the Jews; by "the beasts of the field", idolaters and profane persons; "by the fowls of the air", angels; and by "the fish of the sea", devils: but these are much better explained by Cocceius, who, by "sheep", understands common members of the churches; by "oxen", those that labour in the word and doctrine; by "the beasts of the field", aliens from the city and kingdom of God; men fierce and cruel, Isa 11:6; by "the fowl of the air", such as are tilted up with pride and vanity; and by "the fish of the sea", such as are immersed in worldly pleasures. But it is best to interpret the whole literally; from whence may be observed, that what was lost by the first Adam is restored by the second; and that believers have a free use of all the creatures through Christ: and not only the things here mentioned are subject to him, but everything else; there is nothing left that is not put under him, only he is excepted that put all things under him, **Heb 2:8**.

{k} Aben Ezra & Kimchi in loc.

Psalms 8:9

Ver. 9. O Lord our Lord, how excellent [is] thy name in all the earth! The psalm ends with the same words with which it begins; which shows that the sense of this, with which the psalmist was affected, continued with him, and doubtless increased, after such a confirmation of it, by the instances he was led to take notice of. See Gill on "Ps 8:1".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALMS 9

To the chief Musician upon Muthlabben, a Psalm of David. Some, take "muthlabben" to be the name of the tune to which this psalm was sung, and to design the same note which we call the counter-tenor: others think, that "upon muth", or "almuth", are but one word, and the same as "alamoth", Ps 45:1, title; and that it is the name of a musical instrument; and that "Ben" in "labben", is the name of the chief musician, who was over that sort of instrument, to whom the psalm is inscribed {l}; and indeed R. Sol Jarchi says, that he had seen in the great Masorah these words as one; and so it seems the Septuagint interpreters read them, who render them, "for the hidden things of the son"; and the Arabic version, "concerning the mysteries of the son": and Ben is a name, it is said, of one of the singers, whose kindred and companions were appointed with psalteries on "alamoth", 1Ch 15:18. And so then the title runs thus; "to the chief musician on alamoth, [even to] Ben". But others are of opinion that the subject matter or occasion of the psalm is designed by this phrase; and that as "muth" signifies "death", the death of some person is intended, on account of which this psalm was composed; some say Nabal, seeing the word Nbl, "Laban", inverted, or read backwards, is "Nabal" {m}, whose death affected David; as appears from 1Sa 25:38. Others, that it was one of the kings of the Gentiles, whose name was Labben, and is mentioned nowhere else, who fought with David, and whom he slew, and upon his death penned this psalm {n}. Others, Goliath the Philistine {o}, who is called, 1Sa 17:4. Mynbh vya, which we render "champion" and dueller, one of two that fight together. But rather the reason of the name is, as given by the Jewish commentators {p}, because he went and stood between the two camps of the Philistines and the Israelites; and so the Chaldee paraphrase renders the title of this psalm,

"to praise, concerning the death of the man who went out between the camps, a song of David."

And so the psalm itself, in the Targum, and by other Jewish writers, is interpreted of Goliath and the Philistines, and of the victory over them; and which does not seem amiss. Arama interprets it of the death of Saul. Others interpret Almuth Labben "of the death of the son"; and understand it of the death of Absalom, the son of David {q}: but David's passion moved in another way, not in joy, but in grief, 2Sa 18:33; nor is there anything in the psalm that can be referred unto it. Others, of the death of the son of God; but of that there is not the least hint in the psalm. Theodoret interprets it of Christ's victory over death by dying, which was a mystery or hidden thing. Rather, I should think, it might be interpreted of the death of the son of perdition, the man of sin and his followers; who may be typified by Goliath, and the Philistines: and so, as Ainsworth observes, as the former psalm was concerning the propagation of Christ's kingdom, this is of the destruction of antichrist. And Jerom, long ago said, this whole psalm is sung by the prophet in the person of the church, concerning antichrist: and to this agrees the Syriac version; which makes the subject of the psalm to be,

"concerning Christ, taking the throne and kingdom, and routing the enemy."

And also the Arabic version, according to which the argument of the psalm is,

"concerning the mysteries of the Son, with respect to the glory of Christ, and his resurrection and kingdom, and the destruction of all the children of disobedience."

To which may be added, that this psalm, according to R. Sol Jarchi, belongs to the time to come, to the days of the Messiah, and the future redemption by him.

{l} Kimchi & Abendana in Miclol Yophi in loc. {m} So some in Jarchi & Aben Ezra in loc. {n} Donesh Hallevi in ibid. {o} Kimchi & Ben Melech in loc. {p} Jarchi, Kimchi, Levi Ben Gersom, R. Isaiah, & Ben Melech in 1 Sam. xvii. 4. {q} So some in Jarchi in loc.

Ver. 1. I will praise [thee], O Lord, with my whole, heart,.... This is what is called in the New Testament making melody in the heart, or singing with grace in the heart, **Eph 5:19**; and yet does not signify mere mental singing, but vocal singing, the heart joining therein; for the word here used for praise signifies to confess, to speak out, to declare openly the praises of God in the public congregation, as David elsewhere determines to do, Ps 111:1; the heart ought to, be engaged in every, part of divine service and worship, whether in preaching or in hearing, or in prayer, or in singing of praise; and the whole heart also: sometimes God has nothing of the heart in worship, it is removed far from, him, and gone after other objects; and sometimes it is divided between God and the creature; hence the psalmist prays that God would unite his heart to fear him, and then he should praise him with all his heart, with all that was within him, with all the powers and faculties of his soul; see Ps 86:11. This phrase is not expressive of the perfection of this duty, or of performing it in such manner as that there would be no imperfection in it, or sin attending it; for good men fail in all their performances, and do nothing good without sin; hence provision is made for the iniquities of holy things; but of the heartiness and sincerity of it; and in such a sincere and upright manner the psalmist determines, in the strength of divine grace, to praise the Lord;

I will show forth all thy marvellous works; such as the creation of all things out of nothing, and the bringing them into the form and order in which they are by the word of God; and in which there is such a display of the power and wisdom of God; and particularly the formation of man out of the dust of the earth, in the image, and after the likeness of God; the sustentation of the whole world of creatures in their being, the providential care of them all, the preservation of man and beast; and especially the work of redemption: it is marvellous that God should think of redeeming sinful men; that he should fix the scheme of it in the way he has; that he should pick upon his own Son to be the Redeemer; that ungodly men, sinners, the chief of sinners, and enemies, should be the persons redeemed; and that not all the individuals of human nature, but some out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation: as also the work of grace, which is a new creation, and more marvellous than the old; a regeneration, or a being born again, which is astonishing to a natural man, who cannot conceive how this can be; a resurrection from the dead, or a causing dry bones to live; a call of men out of darkness into marvellous light; and it is as wondrous how this work is preserved amidst so many corruptions of the heart, temptations of Satan, and snares of the world, as that it is; to which may be added the wonderful works yet to be done, as the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, the destruction of antichrist, the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, and the eternal glory and happiness of the saints; and doubtless the psalmist may have respect to the many victories which he, through the divine power, obtained over his enemies; and particularly the marvellous one which was given him over Goliath with a stone and sling: these the psalmist determined to make the subject of his song, to dwell and enlarge upon, to show forth unto others, and to point out the glories, beauties, and excellency of them: and when he says "all" of them, it must be understood of as many of them as were within the compass of his knowledge, and of as much of them as he was acquainted with; for otherwise the marvellous works of God are infinite and without number, **Job 5:9**.

Psalms 9:2

Ver. 2. I will be glad and rejoice in thee,.... Not in himself, in any attainments or works of his; not in his wisdom, riches, and strength, nor in his warlike exploits, but in the Lord; not in second causes, in horses and chariots, in armies, and in the courage and valour of men, but in God, as the author of deliverance, victory, and salvation; not in God only as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of all grace, and as his covenant God and Father; and because of the blessings of this covenant, as forgiveness of sin, a justifying righteousness, &c. for he rejoiced not in his own righteousness, but in the righteousness of Christ, as well as in his person, grace, and sacrifice; so the Chaldee paraphrase renders it, "I will be glad and rejoice", Krmymb, "in thy Word", the Logos, the essential Word of God, of whom there were many types, promises, and prophecies in the former dispensation; two words being here used express the greatness of this joy, and especially the latter word denotes a very vehement joy, a joy unspeakable and full of glory; such as arises from a sight of Christ the object, and which the psalmist had now in view; and this was not a carnal and worldly joy, but joy in the Holy Ghost;

I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High; that is, to the glory of his name, his being, and perfections, as displayed in his marvellous works, and in the revelation of his word, and especially in his son; and under the character of the "most high" God, the supreme Being over all creatures, angels and men; see **Ps 7:17**.

Psalms 9:3

Ver. 3. When mine enemies are turned back,.... As the Philistines were, when Goliath their champion was dead; and as the men that came to apprehend Christ, David's antitype, went backwards and fell to the ground, through the superior power of Christ; and as sin, Satan, and the world, and at last antichrist, are made to retreat from the Lord's people, who are more than conquerors over them through Christ that has loved them. "They shall fall and perish at thy presence"; they shall stumble at one thing or another which divine Providence will throw in their way to hinder them from executing their designs, and so fall before them they meant to destroy, and perish at the presence of God as wax melteth before the fire; see Ps 27:2; so antichrist shall be consumed with the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming, **2Th 2:8**; and this is the ground and foundation of the psalmist's joy, and rejoicing, and singing praise to God as it will be the reason of the joy of saints in the latter day, Re 18:22.

Psalms 9:4

Ver. 4. For thou hast maintained my right and my cause,.... Or vindicated and established his righteous cause; God had pleaded and defended it, and by the flight, fall, and ruin of his enemies, had clearly made it appear that his cause was just and good;

thou sittest in the throne judging right; God has not only a throne of grace on which he sits, and from whence he distributes grace and mercy to his people, but he has a throne of judgment, and which is prepared for it, as in **Ps 9:7**; where he sits as the Judge of all the earth, and will do right; nor can he do otherwise, though his judgments are not always manifest in the present state of things; and the vindication of the psalmist's innocence and uprightness is another reason of his joy and gladness.

Psalms 9:5

Ver. 5. Thou hast rebuked the Heathen,.... The people of the Philistines, as the Targum and Kimchi explain it, though some Jewish writers {a} understand it of Amalek the chief of the Heathen nations; but it rather refers to Gospel times, and to the rebukes of the Heathen, by the preaching of the Gospel, for their idolatry and superstition; and especially to the latter day, and to the rebukes of the antichristian states, the Papists who are called Gentiles; which will be with flames of fire, and will issue in their utter extirpation, upon which a profound peace and prosperity will succeed in the Christian churches, according to **Isa 2:4**; which is a prophecy of those times;

thou hast destroyed the wicked; the wicked man; for it is in the singular number, "labben", as Aben Ezra observes, or who is meant by him; Goliath, according to the Targum and Kimchi; or Esau, as other Jewish writers {b}, that is, his posterity the Edomites; and each of these were figures of antichrist, the man of sin, the wicked one, whom Christ will slay with the breath of his lips, Isa 11:4;

thou hast put out their name for ever and ever; that is, the glory and reputation of their name, a good and honourable one, which they sought to transmit to the latest posterity; for though the names of wicked men may continue, as Pharaoh, Judas, and others; yet they continue with a scandal and reproach upon them that shall never be wiped off, their names rot and stink; see Pr 10:7; the whole of this denotes the utter ruin and shameful end of the enemies of Christ and his church, and which is matter of joy to the saints.

{a} Jarchi in loc. & Pesikta in ibid. in v. 1. {b} Ibid.

Psalms 9:6

Ver. 6. O thou enemy,.... Which some understand of Goliath, though we do not read of any desolations made by him, nor of any cities destroyed by him; nor by the Israelites upon his death, and the flight of the Philistines on that account; Jarchi interprets it of Esau and his posterity, who shall be destroyed in future time, to which he applies,
Eze 35:9; other Jewish writers {c} think Amalek is intended, whose destruction they suppose will be in the days of the Messiah, and then will this Scripture be fulfilled: and as these all prefigured antichrist, as before observed, he seems to be designed, and not Satan, as some Christian interpreters have thought, that enemy of Christ, personal and mystical, of the church, and every true believer; and so is antichrist, he opposes himself to God, and all that is called God; he is one that is contrary to Christ, as his name signifies, to his persons, offices, grace, and kingdom; who blasphemes the name of God, his tabernacle, and his saints;

destructions are come to a perpetual end; which may be understood either of the destructions and desolations made by antichrist, the havoc he has made in the world, treading under foot the holy city, the church, destroying the earth and the inhabitants of it, the bodies, souls, and estates of men; but now the psalmist prophetically declares the end of them to be come, his forty two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days or years, will be up, and

he will go on no more desolating and destroying; see Re 11:2; or of the destructions and desolations made upon him by the pouring out of the seven vials upon the antichristian states, upon the seat of the beast, and upon both Pope and Turk, the eastern and western antichrist; when in the issue the beast, and the false prophet with him, will be taken and cast alive into a lake of fire; see Re 19:20; and so this phrase denotes that the destruction of antichrist will be consummate, his ruin will be complete, and there will be an utter end of him. Some, instead of "desolations", by the change of a point read twhrx, "swords", and Ben Labrat or R. Donesh says {d} that he found it so written in an ancient book; and so reads Jarchi, though he takes notice of the other reading also; and so read the Septuagint, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; and then the sense is, swords shall fail, they shall be no more made use of to destroy men with, they shall be beaten into ploughshares; for upon the destruction of the man of sin there will be a profound peace in the world; see **Isa 2:4**. Some {e} read these words interrogatively, "are destructions come to a perpetual end?" that is, which the enemy antichrist designed to bring upon the people of God? no, they are not; he may imagine they are, when the two witnesses are slain; and may think he has then made an entire slaughter, and a complete destruction of the saints; but he will be mistaken, these witnesses will rise again, and ascend up to heaven in the sight of their enemies, and to the great terror of them,
Re 11:10;

and thou hast destroyed cities, or "hast thou destroyed cities?" that is, as antichrist threatened and intended, namely, to destroy all the cities and churches of Christ; but, alas! he will never be able to do it, they are built on a rock against which the gates of hell can never prevail: but it is better to read the words affirmatively, and interpret them not of the enemy, but of God, and of him destroying the cities of the enemy; for, at the pouring out the seventh and last vial, the great city, the whole antichristian jurisdiction, will be divided into three parts, and utterly perish; and the cities of the Pagan and Mahometan nations will fall, and particularly Babylon the great city will come in remembrance before God, and be utterly destroyed,
Re 16:19;

their memorial is perished with them; they shall not be returned or built any more, but shall be like a millstone cast into the sea, and be found no more at all, Eze 35:9. Some {f} read this clause by way of interrogation as the others, "is their memorial perished with them?" no, the righteous are in everlasting remembrance, even those churches which the Romish antichrist has made havoc of, as the Albigenses and Waldenses; the memory of them is still precious.

{c} Midrash Tillim in loc. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 150. 2. {d} Apud Aben Ezra in loc. {e} So Piscator, Cocceius, Ainsworth. {f} Sic Genevenses, Diodatus, Bueerus, Cocceius.

Psalms 9:7

Ver. 7. But the Lord shall endure for ever,.... When antichrist is entirely ruined, his cities destroyed, and the memorial of them perished, then "shall the Lord sit for ever" {g}, as the words may be rendered; that is, as a Jewish writer {h} paraphrases them, in rest and quiet. The words may be expressive of the unchangeableness and eternity and power of God; the Chaldee paraphrase of them is, yyd armym, "the Word of the Lord is for ever; his habitation is in the highest heavens". And they may very well be interpreted of Christ, the essential Word of God, who is the unchangeable, everlasting, and almighty God; and who sits King for ever, and must sit at God's right hand, in the highest heavens, until all his enemies are made his footstool; and to him most properly do the following things in this verse **Ps 9:8** belong:

he hath prepared his throne for judgment; for the administration of judgment in this world, for the particular judgment after death, and for the general judgment after the resurrection of the dead; which seems by what follows to be chiefly meant, and which will come on after the destruction of antichrist; and all things are preparing for it; the day is appointed in which God will judge the world; Christ is ordained to be the Judge of quick and dead; devils and ungodly men are reserved to the judgment of the great day; the throne is ready, which will be a white one, Re 20:11; denoting the purity, justice, and uprightness of the Judge, who himself is at the door.

{g} bvy "sedebit", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Michaelis; so Ainsworth; "sedet", Vatablus, Musculus. {h} R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 150. 2.

Psalms 9:8

Ver. 8. And he shall judge the world in righteousness,.... The word lbt, rendered "world", is, as Ben Melech well observes, a general name for all the countries of the habitable world; and so shows that it is the universal judgment that is here spoken of; and which will be carried on and finished with the utmost righteousness, and according to the strictest rules of justice and equity; and is therefore called the righteous judgment of God, **Ro 2:5**; see Ps 96:13;

he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness; which signifies the same with the former clause, unless by the "world" there, should be meant the wicked of the world; and by the "people" here, the people of God; to whom the righteous Judge will give the crown of righteousness.

Psalms 9:9

Ver. 9. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed,.... The poor and weak, such as have no might nor power, and are thrown down and trampled upon, as the word {i} signifies; and such are the people of God. They are oppressed with the burden of sin; they are bowed down with Satan and his temptations; and are sometimes pressed out of measure, and above their strength, with the persecutions of men; they are trodden under foot by antichrist, or otherwise are borne down with a variety of sorrows and afflictions; but the Lord is a refuge for them. The Chaldee paraphrase renders it as before, "the Word of the Lord", the eternal Logos, the Son of God: he is a refuge for poor sensible sinners, fleeing from wrath to come; being typified by the cities of refuge, whither the manslayer fled from the avenger of blood: he is the strong hold for the prisoners of hope to turn into; his name is a strong tower and place of defence for oppressed saints; he is a refuge when all others fail, and at all times, in the day of affliction, and in the hour of death, and at judgment;

a refuge in times of trouble; of which the saints have many, as when God hides his face, when corruptions prevail, when grace is low in exercise, and temptations are strong, yet even then Christ is the refuge from the storm; the salvation of his people is of him, and he is their strength in every time of trouble; see Isa 25:4.

{i} Kdl "attrito", Cocceius, Gejerus: "contrito", Michaelis.

Psalms 9:10

Ver. 10. And they that know thy name,.... As proclaimed in the Gospel, a God gracious and merciful, and forgiving sin; and as in Christ, in whom his name is, and in whom he is the God of love, grace, and mercy, though out of him a consuming fire; or the name of Christ himself, the Word of the Lord, who is the refuge of saints and sinners; his name Jesus, a Saviour: such who know him to be the able, willing, complete, all sufficient, and everlasting Saviour; who know his power and faithfulness to keep what is committed to him; and who know him not merely notionally and speculatively, and in a professional way only, but affectionately, spiritually, and experimentally: such

will put their trust in thee; as they have great reason to do; and the more they know of the grace and mercy of God in Christ, and of the ability and suitableness of Christ as a Saviour, the more strongly will they place their trust and confidence in him;

for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee: who are first sought out by God in the effectual calling, and then under the influence and direction of his grace and Spirit seek him in Christ, where he is only to be found; and seek Christ and his righteousness above all things else, and with their whole hearts, and diligently; and seek to Christ alone for life and salvation, and continue seeking the Lord, by prayer and supplication, for whatever they stand in need of; these God does not forsake: he may sometimes hide his face from them, as he does from his own children, and did from his own Son, yet he never forsakes them totally and finally; nor will he forsake the work of his own hands, which he has wrought in them, but will perfect it; he will never leave them so as that they shall perish by sin, Satan, or any enemy; he will not forsake them in life, nor at death, but will be the strength of their hearts, and their portion for ever.

Psalms 9:11

Ver. 11. Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion,.... The psalmist having determined in the strength of grace to praise the Lord himself, and show forth all his marvellous works, and given his reasons for it, both with respect to himself in particular, and with respect to the people of God in general, here calls upon others to engage in the same work; the Lord is not only to be praised, which may be done by celebrating the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands; by giving him thanks for mercies temporal and spiritual, and by living to his glory; but his praises are to be sung by a modulation of the voice in musical notes, as the word used signifies; see **So 2:12**; where the same word is used of the singing of birds; and this is to be done by the saints jointly, in concert together, as Paul and Silas in prison sang

the praises of God; and there is great reason why they should join together in this work, since they share the blessings of divine grace in common together; and it is their duty to stir up one another to this service, as well as to other parts of worship: and this perfectly agrees with the exhortation to the saints, and the work they shall be employed in at the fall of Babylon, or destruction of antichrist,
Re 14:1. Jehovah, to whom praises are to be sung, is described as the inhabitant of Zion, the ark and tabernacle being there before the temple was built, which were symbols of the divine Presence. The Targum paraphrases it, "who causeth his Shechinah to dwell in Zion"; as many of the Jewish writers interpret this psalm of Goliath, a doubt arises here about it, since in the days of Saul, and at the time of Goliath's death, Zion was in the hands of the Jebusites, and the ark of God was not there till many years afterwards; to this it is replied, that David might compose this psalm upon that occasion not immediately at that time, but after he was king of Israel, and when the ark was brought to Zion; or that he said this by a prophetic spirit, foreseeing that, God would dwell there; and Kimchi observes, that it was everywhere a received tradition among the people of Israel that the sanctuary would be built there; but however this be, certain it is that the church of God goes by the name of Zion frequently; see **Ps 2:6**
Heb 12:22. God by his essence and power is everywhere, he fills heaven and earth, and cannot be contained in either; his glorious presence is in heaven; his gracious presence is in his church and among his people; where they dwell he dwells, and where he dwells they dwell: hence the church is called by the same name as the Lord is here, the inhabitant of Zion, Isa 12:6; and this description of him points out the place where his praises are to be sung, in Zion; who are to sing them, the members of the church; and the reason why, because the Lord dwells in Zion; and is there a refuge for his people, and protects them;

declare among the people his doings; what God does for the souls of men is not only to be declared among the people of God, Ps 66:16; but also among the people of the world, when a suitable opportunity offers; and especially in the public ministry of the word; partly that the name of God may be exalted, his grace, goodness, and mercy be displayed; and partly that it might be the means of the conversion of God's chosen ones among them, Ps 96:2; though it may be here his doings in providence are meant, his special providential care of his church and people, and his vengeance on their enemies, on Babylon; for upon the ruin of antichrist, the judgments of God, his providential dispensations towards his church and people, will be made manifest, and all nations will be called upon to fear and worship him; see
Jer 50:28; the word {k} which is here used signifies such deeds and actions as

are the effects of thought and counsel, and which are purposely and industriously done; and whatsoever is done by the Lord, whether in a way of grace or providence, is done after the counsel of his own will; as he thought so it is, as he purposes so it comes to pass, and all things are done well and wisely, and answer the ends and designs of them.

{k} hlyle "significat tam machinationes, sive consilia", 1 Sam. ii. 3. "quam consiliorum eventus, seu opera ipsa, quomodo", Jer. xxxii. 19. Gejerus.

Psalms 9:12

Ver. 12. When he maketh inquisition for blood,.... The Arabic version renders it, "he remembers him that seeks their blood"; that is, the wicked man, that lies in wait for innocent blood, and whose feet are swift to shed it; the man of sin, who is bloodthirsty; who drinks up the blood of the saints like water, and has been made drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, him will God remember, and take vengeance on, in his own time: but rather this is to be understood of God himself, seeking for the blood of his saints: he knows where it is, though ever so privily shed, as he did Abel's; yet, to show his strict care and accurate notice of it, he is represented as searching for it, and finding it out by secret search, **Jer 2:34**. And it is the same phrase with "requiring" blood, and expresses a demand of satisfaction for it; and declares the vengeance that God will take on account of it: he requires the blood of every man at the hand of him by whom it is shed, **Ge 9:5**; especially the blood of the righteous, Mt 23:35; particularly the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, shed by the Romish antichrist; he will make inquisition for that, and will find in Babylon the blood of the prophets and saints, and of all that are slain on earth; and will avenge the blood of his servants at her hand, and give her blood to drink, Re 18:24;

he remembereth them; either the "righteous", as the Targum paraphrases it, whose blood has been shed; or else the wicked, who shed their blood: God will remember them and their sins; which, for some time, may seem not to have been taken notice of by him, and will pour out his wrath, and inflict just punishment on them; see Re 16:19;

he forgetteth not the cry of the humble: the "Cetib", or writing of the text, is Myyne, "afflicted"; the "Keri", or marginal reading, is Mywne, "humble"; so the Masorah and Targum read: both may be taken into the sense: afflicted persons are generally humble, afflictions make them humble; God's people are an afflicted people; afflicted with sin, with Satan, with the world, with antichrist and his followers: and they are an humble people; grace makes them humble, and a sense of their sin and unworthiness keeps them so: and this is a proper character of the followers of Jesus. These in their distress cry to the Lord, as the Israelites did in Egypt under their bondage and, pressures: yea, their blood cries after death, as Abel's did, and as the blood of the martyrs of Christ does, whose souls under the altar cry for vengeance, **Re 6:9**; and God is not unmindful of their cry; however he may seem to be, he takes notice of it, and wilt in his own time avenge his elect, which cry unto him day and night.

Psalms 9:13

Ver. 13. Have mercy upon me, O Lord,.... The psalmist proceeds to petitions on his own account in this verse: the ends he proposes by the fulfilling of them are mentioned in the next. A good man, a man called by the grace of God, though he has obtained mercy of the Lord, yet still stands in need of more, of fresh discoveries of pardoning grace and mercy, of merciful supplies, of merciful support, and merciful deliverances from enemies, inward and outward: and such an one flees to God, and not to the creature; and pleads, not his own dignity, righteousness, or merit, but the mercy of God;

consider, my trouble [which I suffer] of them that hate me; or "see my affliction because of mine enemies" {l}; look upon me under it with an eye of pity and compassion, and help and deliver me; and look upon mine enemies that give me this trouble, and take vengeance on them;

thou that liftest me up from the gates of death; the house appointed for all living; that is, from the power of it, when just upon the brink of it; when near it, as a person is to an house, when he is at the gates of it; either through sickness, or some violent distemper of body, as Hezekiah was; or through some imminent danger in battle, as David was when engaged with Goliath; when everyone thought, as Kimchi observes, that he should fall by his hand: or it may be this may have respect to his being raised up from the death of sin, and delivered from the power of darkness; to his being brought out of the horrible pit and miry clay of an unregenerate state, and set upon the rock of salvation; which is a lifting up indeed, an exaltation from a very low to a very high estate: and this the psalmist takes notice of to encourage his faith; and makes use of it as an argument with God, that as he had dealt so graciously and bountifully with him, he would still show mercy to him, and look upon him under his affliction.

{l} yanwvm yyne har "intuere afflictionem meum propter osores meos", Gejerus.

Psalms 9:14

Ver. 14. That I may show forth all thy praise,.... That is, all thy bounties and acts of goodness, deserving of praise; even as many of them as he had an experience of, and which came within his knowledge; and as much of them as he was capable of observing: for otherwise the instances of divine grace and goodness are so many, that they cannot be reckoned up in order, nor God be praised for them, in the present state of things, as he should; See Gill on "Ps 9:1";

in the gates of the daughter of Zion: it was usual with the Hebrews to represent a chief city as a mother city, and the towns and villages, and places adjacent, as daughters; and so, as Zion or Jerusalem signifies the church of God in general, or the mother church, **Ga 4:26**; so "the daughter" of Zion may mean a particular church: the Targum renders it the congregation of Zion; and "the gates" of it are the public ordinances of divine worship in it; and the sense is, that the psalmist desired to show forth the praises of God in the most public manner in the congregation and assembly of the saints;

I will rejoice in thy salvation, or "that I may rejoice in thy salvation" {m}: meaning either temporal salvation and deliverance from enemies, wrought by God for him, which would be matter of joy to him; or spiritual salvation, which may be called God's salvation, because contrived by him in the council of peace, and secured by him in the covenant of grace, and wrought out by his Son in the fulness of time, and applied by his Spirit at conversion. And a gracious man rejoices in this salvation more because it is the Lord's than because it is his own; or he rejoices more because of the glory of God, which is displayed in it, than because of his own advantage and happiness by it.

{m} hlyga "exultem", Junius & Tremellius, Musculus; "ut exultem", Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; "gaudeam", Cocceius; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 9:15

Ver. 15. The Heathen are sunk into the pit [that] they made,.... The psalmist having determined to praise the Lord, and called upon others to join with him in it, here enters upon it: for, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe, this is hlht "the praise" he was desirous to show forth, which is occasioned by the destruction of God's enemies, and the deliverance of his people: by "the Heathen" are meant not the Philistines, as Kimchi interprets it, who thought to cause Israel to fall, and fell themselves; but this is spoken prophetically of the nations of the earth, who have joined in the idolatry of antichrist, the Gentiles, by whom the holy city has been trodden under foot; even the several antichristian states, that will be destroyed by the pouring out of the seven vials, and especially the last, at the battle of Armageddon; and which will be brought on by themselves, with a design to destroy the whole kingdom and interest of Christ, but will issue in their utter ruin, which this phrase is expressive of; see Re 18:3. The metaphor is taken from hunters, who dig pits for the wild beasts to fall into, that they may the more easily take them, into which they fall themselves; see **Ps 7:15**. Wicked men are mischievous and crafty, but sometimes they are taken in their own craftiness;

in the net which they laid is their own foot taken; which may signify the same thing as before, that the mischief they design for others falls upon themselves; only as the former phrase denotes their utter destruction like the sinking of a millstone in the sea, by which the irrecoverable ruin of Babylon is expressed, Re 18:21; this may design the restraint and hinderance of them from doing the evil they would; their feet are entangled, that they cannot run to shed blood; and their hands are held, that they cannot perform their enterprise; and their wrath in restrained and made to praise the Lord. The metaphor is taken from fowlers, who lay nets and snares for birds, and cover them that they may not be seen, but fall into them unawares; see Ps 124:7.

Psalms 9:16

Ver. 16. The Lord is known [by] the judgment [which] he executeth,.... The judgment which God will execute upon antichrist, and the antichristian powers, will be a means of making known his name, his glory, his perfections, in all the earth; as his wisdom, power, justice, and goodness; see **Ex 9:16**. The destruction of antichrist will be the Lord's doing, and it will be a righteous one; it will be a just retaliation; as he has killed with the sword, multitudes of his followers shall be killed with the sword; as he has led captive, he shall be taken captive at the battle of Armageddon; as he has burnt, many of the martyrs of Jesus, he shall be cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Some read these words as two sentences, "The Lord is known; he hath executed judgment" {n}: the latter of these refers not to the ministration of justice in the providential government of the world, or at the last day in the general judgment; but to the judgment of the great whore, or antichrist, at which time the Lord will be known in his Gospel in all the world; the earth will be tilled with the knowledge of him, and he, and he alone, will be exalted; his name will be great and glorious throughout the earth; all shall know him, from the least to the greatest; and their knowledge of him will be very clear and comprehensive;

the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands; not Goliath, as Kimchi thinks, who was slain by David with his own sword, though this was true of him in the letter and type; but the wicked one, the man of sin and son of perdition, antichrist, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all craftiness and wily stratagems, called the depths of Satan, **Re 2:24**; but his own sins shall take him, and he shall be holden with the cords of his iniquities, and be rewarded double for all his sins; what is before figuratively expressed is here literally declared; or, "he hath snared the wicked in or by the work of his hands" {o}, that is, God.

Higgaion. Selah; of the latter of these words, See Gill on "Ps 3:2"; the former signifies "meditation"; Jarchi paraphrases it hghn, "let us meditate on this, selah"; Aben Ezra interprets it, "I will show forth this in truth"; the Chaldee paraphrase is, "the righteous shall rejoice for ever"; the note of Kimchi and Ben Melech is, "this salvation is to us meditation and praise"; upon the whole the sense seems to be this, that God's judgments upon antichrist, and the antichristian states, and the deliverance of his people from their yoke and tyranny, are things worthy of the meditation of the saints, and afford just matter of joy, praise, and thanksgiving.

{n} hve jpvm hwhy edwn "notus est Dominus; judicium fecit", Pagninus, Montanus, Gussetius; so Vatablus, Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis, and Ainsworth. {o} evr vqwn wypk lepb "illaqueavit iniquum per opus (vel in opere) manunm ipsius", Gussetius.

Psalms 9:17

Ver. 17. The wicked shall be turned into hell,.... Some render it, "shall return to the grave" {p}, to the earth, the original dust from whence they came; but this is common to all men, to the righteous as well as the wicked; rather lwav here signifies the place of torment, commonly called hell, where devils and damned spirits are; hither the souls of the wicked go immediately upon their departure from their bodies, Lu 16:23; and after the judgment is over, they will be remanded thither in soul and body; and their damnation is called the destruction of soul and body in hell; which will consist in an everlasting separation from God, and in a sense of his wrath and fiery indignation: and though this is true of all the wicked, yet here that wicked one, antichrist, and his wicked followers, are chiefly designed; even the beast and false prophet, who shall be cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, Re 19:20;

[and] all the nations that forget God; which is not to be understood of the Pagan nations, though they may be said to forget God, since he is to be known by the light of nature, and yet they worship idols, the works of their hands; but the Papal nations, who adore the pope of Rome as God on earth, worship angels and saints departed, and images of gold and silver, and wood and stone. It may be applied to every wicked man who forgets there is a God who sees and knows all things, and to whom men are accountable; see Ps 50:22.

{p} hlwavl wbwvy "revertentur ad vel in sepulchrum", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 9:18

Ver. 18. For the needy shall not always be forgotten,.... The people of God are poor and needy for the most part; they are so in things temporal, and they are poor in spirit, or in things spiritual, of which they are sensible; their needs are many, and frequently return; but God has provided a throne of grace for them to come to for help in time of need, and he will supply all their wants out of the fulness of grace in Christ; nor is he unmindful of them, and of his covenant with them; strictly speaking, they are never forgotten by him, being engraven on his hands, and set as a seal on his heart; but they sometimes seem to be so both to themselves and others, Ps 42:3; and they may continue so long; God may seem for a long time to take no notice of them, but suffer them to lie under affliction and persecution; the holy city is trodden under foot forty two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days, that is, so many years; so long the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, so long the church is in the wilderness, and so long will be the reign of antichrist,
Re 11:2; but as great Babylon will come up in remembrance before God, and he will remember her sins, and render her double; the set time to favour his poor and needy will come, and he will arise and have mercy on them, and

bring them into a glorious and comfortable state and condition;

the expectation of the poor shall [not] perish for ever; the negative particle, though not in the original text, is rightly supplied from the preceding clause, as it is by the Targum, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, and as the sense requires; and the expectation of Christ's poor ones is not only a supply of grace here and eternal happiness hereafter; but they expect a glorious state of the church on earth, and that Christ will descend in person from heaven, and his tabernacle will be among men; and that they shall be kings and priests, and possess the kingdom, and reign with Christ a thousand years; and though these things may seem to be deferred, and their expectation put off to a length of time, yet it shall not perish for ever; there will be a performance of the things promised and expected.

Psalms 9:19

Ver. 19. Arise, O Lord,.... To the destruction of thine enemies, and the salvation of thy people; See Gill on "Ps 7:6";

let not man prevail; the man of sin, antichrist, that is, let him not always prevail; he is the little horn that was to prevail against the saints, and has prevailed, **Da 7:21**; but he shall not always prevail; this petition will be heard and answered; for though he shall cast down many thousands, he shall not be "strengthened" by it,
Da 11:12; where the same word is used as here; the Lamb at last shall overcome him and his ten kings, his supporters, and all that shall aid and assist him, Re 17:14;

let the Heathen be judged in thy sight; that is, the antichristian nations that adhere to the man of sin, let them be judged and punished in the sight of God, the Judge of all the earth, whose eyes are as a flame of fire; compare with this **Joe 3:12**.

Psalms 9:20

Ver. 20. Put them in fear, O Lord,.... Who are, a bold, impudent, fearless generation of men; who, like the unjust judge, neither fear God nor regard men, therefore the psalmist prays that God would inject fear into them, who only can do it; and this will be done at Babylon's destruction, when the antichristian kings, merchants, and seafaring men, will stand afar off for fear of her torment, Re 18:10;

[that] the nations may know themselves [to be but] men; and not God, and have no power against him; see Isa 31:3; the sense is, that the antichristian nations, who oppose themselves to Christ and his people, may know that they are but frail, mortal, miserable men, as the word {q} signifies; and that he who is at the head of them, the man of sin, is no other, though he exalts himself above all that is called God, **2Th 2:4**; or these words are a prayer for the conversion of many among the nations, and may be rendered, "put, O Lord, fear in them" {r}; that is, the true grace of fear, "that the nations may know" themselves, their sin and guilt and danger, and know God in Christ, and Christ, and the way of salvation by him; for at the word "know" should be a stop, concluding a proposition, since the accent "athnach" is there; and then follows another, "they [are] men. Selah": destitute of the fear and grace of God, are capable of it, but cannot give it to themselves.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{q} hmh vwna "mortales esse", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; "homines miseri", Cocceius, Michaelis; "sorry men", Ainsworth. {r} Mhl hrwm htyv "pone timorem eis", so Junius and Tremellius, Piscator, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Ainsworth.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 10

This psalm in the Septuagint version, and those that follow it, is a part and continuation of the preceding psalm, and makes but one with it; hence in these versions the number of the following psalms differ from others, and what is the eleventh with others is the tenth with them, and so on to the hundred fourteenth and one hundred fifteenth, which also are put into one; but in order to make up the whole number of one hundred and fifty, the hundred sixteenth and the hundred forty seventh are both divided into two; and indeed the subject of this psalm is much the same with the former. Antichrist and antichristian times are very manifestly described; the impiety, blasphemy, and atheism of the man of sin; his pride, haughtiness, boasting of himself, and presumption of security; his persecution of the poor, and murder of innocents, are plainly pointed at; nor does the character of the man of the earth agree to well to any as to him: his times are times of trouble; but at the end of them the kingdom of Christ will appear in great glory, when the Gentiles, the antichristian nations, will perish out of his land, Ps 10:1.

Ver. 1. Why standest thou afar off, O Lord?.... This psalm begins with a complaint which proceeds on two general heads; the one is with respect to God, his distance from his people, and desertion of them in times of trouble, in this verse; and the other is with respect to the wicked in some following ones. God by his infinite essence and power is everywhere, and is never far off from any of his creatures; and though his glorious presence is in heaven, which, with respect to us on earth, is a land afar off, yet this hinders not but that there is often great nearness between God and his people; and when he stands afar off from them in their apprehensions, it is when he withdraws his gracious presence from them, and defers help and assistance to them, and does not immediately and directly come and visit them: this they cannot bear, they complain; they wonder that, seeing they are the objects of his love, this should be his manner of conduct towards them; they expostulate with him, and inquire for what end and upon what account he should so use them, and most earnestly desire that he would haste and come unto them and help them; see Ps 22:1;

[why] hidest thou [thyself] in times of trouble? when God seems to take no notice of his people, does not look upon them, but turns a deaf ear to them, he is said to hide his face, his eyes and ears, from them: and this is sometimes the case of the best of saints, as it has been of Job, David, Heman, and others; and though this is done in a sovereign way by God, who comes and goes when he pleases; for sensible communion with him as much depends upon his sovereign pleasure as the gift of his grace itself does; yet, generally speaking, the denial or withdrawing of his gracious presence is by way of resentment for some disagreeable conduct and behaviour of his people; and is consistent with his everlasting and unchangeable love to them, but is what fills them with grief and sorrow; nor can they: forbear making mournful complaints upon it; and this is aggravated when it is a time of trouble with them, either of soul trouble, by reason of the prevalence of unbelief, and the force of Satan's temptations; or of bodily affliction; though times of trouble here seem to design times of persecution, as may be concluded from the connection of these words with the following; and antichristian times are times of persecution: during the reign of antichrist, in which he is suffered to make war with the saints and overcome them; and during the church's being in the wilderness the space of one thousand two hundred and sixty days or years, God may seem to stand at a distance, and to hide himself from her.

Psalms 10:2

Ver. 2. The wicked in [his] pride doth persecute the poor,.... The "poor" is the good and gracious man, who is commonly poor in this world's things, and is sensibly poor in spirit, or sensible of his spiritual poverty; or he is so called because "afflicted", as the word signifies; and he is afflicted because he is poor: these two characters generally go together. The "wicked" man is the wicked one, the lawless one, the man of sin, and son of perdition, antichrist, the great persecutor of Christ's poor saints and faithful witnesses, more or less, ever since he has been in power; and which arises from the "pride" of his heart, not bearing that any should refuse to pay homage to him, contradict his will, or dissent from him. The word {s} signifies to follow after, to pursue, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it; and "to pursue hotly", as it is rendered in Ge 31:36; and denotes the vehemence and heat of his wrath and fury, with which antichrist persecutes the followers of the Lamb; hence persecution is compared to the heat of the sun, Mt 13:6; Some render the words, "through the pride of the wicked the poor is burned", or "the poor burns" {t}: which may be understood either literally, of the burning of the martyrs of Jesus by antichrist, as here in Queen Mary's days; and which was foretold, that some of the saints should fall by flame, as well as by sword, captivity, and spoil; and to which that part of the description of Christ answers, whose feet are said to be like fine brass, as if it burned in a furnace; and which is prefaced to the epistle to the church at Thyatira, which is an emblem of the apostate church: see Da 11:33; or figuratively, of the poor saints burning with grief at the pride and wickedness of the man of sin, and with zeal for the honour and glory of God; see 2Co 11:29 **So 8:6**;

let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined: we read the words as a petition; and so the sense is, let the wicked persecutors be taken in the wicked and crafty schemes which they have devised for the hurt of others, as they are, or will be; see **Ps 9:15**. But the psalmist is not yet come to petitions, nor does he until Ps 10:12; but is all along describing the wickedness of the wicked one. It seems better therefore to render the words as do the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, "they are taken in the devices that they have imagined": and the meaning is, that the poor, who are persecuted by the wicked, are taken by their crafty schemes they lay for them, as Jarchi interprets it, and are put to death by them. So these words show the issue and event of persecution: and this sense best agrees with the boasted success of the wicked man Ps 10:3.

{s} qldy "fervide persequitur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ferventer", Gejerus; so Ainsworth. {t} "Incenditur", V. L. "ardet", Tigurine version, Muis, Cocceius.

Psalms 10:3

Ver. 3. For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire,.... As antichrist does of his universal power over all bishops and princes, which his heart was long desiring after; of his being Christ's vicar, Peter's successor, and head of the church; and of having power in heaven, earth, and hell: he boasts of his wealth and riches, of the righteousness and merits of saints, of works of supererogation, a stock of which he pretends to have in his hands to dispense to others: he boasts of his own holiness and infallibility, and of miracles, signs, and lying wonders done by his creatures, and of his great success in destroying those that oppose him; see Re 18:7. The words may be rendered, "the wicked praiseth himself for the desire of his heart" {u}, so the Chaldee paraphrase; to which agrees Jarchi's gloss,

"wicked Esau praiseth himself, because he hath obtained the desire of his soul:"

and thus it is usual for proud, haughty, wicked men, as the Assyrian monarch, Nebuchadnezzar, and so the man of sin, to ascribe whatsoever they have or do to their own power and prudence; see Isa 10:12 **Da 4:30**. Or they may be rendered, "he praiseth the wicked for his heart's desire" {w}; or for his lusts, for his indulging them: for a wicked man not only delights in committing sin himself, but he also takes pleasure in those that do it; and some of the antichristian party have even wrote in commendation of the most unnatural lusts;

and blesseth the covetous, [whom] the Lord abhorreth: the covetous man is one that makes no use of what he has but for himself; and oftentimes withholds that which is meet from himself, as well as from others; and who makes use of unlawful ways to get, retain, and increase wealth, and is never satisfied: such an one God abhors, because he is an idolater, he has other gods before him; he worships his gold, be sets his affection on it, places his confidence in it, and expects protection and security from it, to a neglect of divine Providence; and yet the wicked man blesses him, calls his covetousness frugality and good husbandry; ascribes what he has to his diligence, care, and industry, and bestows gifts upon him. The words may be rendered, "the covetous man blesses himself" {x}; with the good things he has laid up for many years; he pronounces himself blessed, and promises himself a great deal of happiness, in futurity; and ascribes all he has to his own hands. Or, "the covetous man curses, he abhors the Lord" {y}; for the same word in the Hebrew language signifies to bless and curse, **Job 1:5**, which Aben Ezra on the place observes; and it is applicable enough to antichrist, who opens his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven; see Re 13:6.

{u} wvpn twat le evr llh yk "nam laudat improbus animam suam in desiderio ipsius", Junius & Tremellius; so Michaelis. {w} "Quoniam laudat ipsium pro desiderio animi sui", Tigurine version. {x} Krb euwbw "et avarus benedicit sibi", Piscator; so Ainsworth. {y} "Avarus maledicit sive blasphemat Jehovam", Tarnovius, Hammond; so some in Michaelis.

Psalms 10:4

Ver. 4. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek [after God],.... We supply it, "after God"; as do the Targum and Kimchi on the place: the sense is, he will not seek to God for counsel or assistance, he will not pray unto him; which is the character of every unregenerate man, **Ro 3:11**; or, he will not inquire into the will of God, to know what is right or what is wrong, but will do what seems best in his own eyes: and this arises from the pride of his heart, which shows itself in his countenance, in his proud and haughty look. It is said of the little horn, who is antichrist, that he has a look more stout than his fellows, **Da 7:20**. The words may be rendered, "the wicked inquires not into the height of his anger"; so Ainsworth observes; that is, of God's anger; he is not concerned about it; he neither fears God nor regards men. Jarchi's sense of the words is,

"all his thoughts say unto him, God will not inquire into everything that I shall do, for there is no judgment."

God [is] not in all his thoughts; nor in any of them, for they are evil continually; and if he does at any time think of him, his thoughts of him are wrong; he thinks he is altogether such an one as himself: or, "all his thoughts [are, there is] no God" {z}: though he does not choose to say so, he thinks so; at least, he wishes it may be so; and he works himself into such impiety and atheism as to deny the providence of God, and thinks that he does not govern the world, nor concern himself with what is done below; that he takes no notice of men's actions, nor will call them to an account for them; and that there will be no future state or judgment, in which secret as well as open things will be made manifest: or, as the Chaldee paraphrase glosses it, "that all his thoughts are not manifest before the Lord".

{z} wytwmzm lk Myhla Nya "non Deus, omnes cogitationes ejus", Montanus, Vatablus, Muis; "nullum esse Deum hae sunt omnes cogitationes ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Ainsworth.

Psalms 10:5

Ver. 5. His ways are always grievous,.... To God and to his people; or, "his ways cause terror" {a}, so Aben Ezra; make men fear; as antichrist has made the whole world tremble at him, Re 13:4; or, "his ways are defiled", as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin render it; for to him is nothing pure, his mind and conscience being defiled, **Tit 1:15**; or, "his ways always remain" {b}; they are always the same, there is no change in them for the better: or they "prosper" {c} as Jarchi interprets it; and this is sometimes stumbling to the saints,
Jer 12:1;

thy judgments [are] far above, out of his sight: meaning either the laws, statutes, and commandments of God, which are not taken notice of by him; but his own decrees or orders are set in the room of them; or the examples of punishment inflicted on wicked men, as on the old world, on Sodom and Gomorrah, the Egyptians, and other nations; these are not regarded, when they should be a terror to him;

[as for] all his enemies, he puffeth at them; who are the poor saints, and are looked upon by antichrist as feeble creatures, and all their efforts against him and his kingdom are treated with contempt: he blows upon them, and suggests that he can cause them to fall with the breath of his mouth, or strike them down with a straw or a feather; see
Ps 12:6.

{a} wlyxy "terrent", Cocceius. {b} "Permanent sive perdurant", Lutherus, Gejerus. {c} "Prosperantur", Musculus, Calvin, Ainsworth, Piscator.

Psalms 10:6

Ver. 6. He hath said in his heart,.... To and within himself, he thought in his own mind; for the thought is the word or speech of the mind, logov endiauetov;

I shall not be moved; from his prosperous and happy condition, abounding: with riches and honours; from his seat of empire, over kings, princes, and the nations of the world; flattering himself that it would never be otherwise with him than it is: even "to generation and generation", I shall not be moved; so the words may be rendered;

for [I shall] never [be] in adversity, or "in evil" {d}: meaning either the evil of sin; so asserting his innocence, wiping himself clean of all iniquity, claiming to himself the title of "holiness" itself, and the character of infallibility; giving out that he is impeccable, and cannot err; when he is not only almost, but altogether, in all evil; and is o anomov, the lawless and wicked one, the man of sin, who is nothing but sin itself. The Targum paraphrases the whole thus; "I shall not be moved from generation to generation from doing evil"; and so it is a boast of impiety, and that none can restrain him from it, no one having a superior power over him; see Ps 12:4. Or the evil of affliction, or calamity; wherefore we render it "adversity", so Jarchi and Aben Ezra understand it: the note of the former is,

"evil shall not come upon me in my generation,"

or for ever; and the latter compares it with Nu 11:15; Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it of long life. It is a vaunt of antichrist, promising himself a continuance of his grandeur, ease, peace, and prosperity; in which he will be wretchedly disappointed. The language and sense are much the same with that of the antichristian Babylon,
Re 18:7.

{d} erb "in malo", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 10:7

Ver. 7. His mouth is full of cursing,.... Or, "he has filled his mouth with cursing" {e} God and good men, his superiors, himself and others. The word signifies "an oath"; and may design either a profane oath, taking the name of God in vain; or an oath on a civil account, a false oath, taken with a design to defraud and deceive others, as follows, and intends perjury; and this, as applicable to antichrist, regards his mouth speaking great things and blasphemies against God, and uttering curses and anathemas against the saints, Re 13:5;

and deceit and fraud; such as flattery and lying, which are both used by him with an intention to impose upon and deceive. The apostle, in **Ro 3:14**; renders both these words by one, "bitterness"; which may be said of sin in general, which is a very bitter thing; though it is rolled as a sweet morsel in the mouth of a wicked man, yet in the issue it is bitterness to him: and it is applicable to sinful words, which are bitter in their effects to those against whom they are spoken, or who are deceived and imposed upon by them: and, as they refer to antichrist, may have respect to the lies in hypocrisy spoken by him, and to the deceitfulness of unrighteousness, by which he works upon those that perish, **1Ti 4:2**;

under his tongue [is] mischief and vanity; alluding to serpents, who have little bags of poison under their teeth; see Ps 140:3; Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, that the heart is under the tongue, being lower than it, and so denotes the wickedness which that is full of, and devises continually, and is latent in it until discovered; and is mischievous iniquity, injurious to God, and the honour of his law, and to fellow creatures; and especially to the saints, whose persons, characters, and estates, are aimed at; but in the issue it is all vanity, and a fruitless attempt, being blasted by God, and overruled for good to him; see Isa 54:17;

{e} alm whyp hla.

Psalms 10:8

Ver. 8. He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages,.... Which were by the wayside, where thieves and robbers harboured, and out of which they came, and robbed passengers as they came by. The word {f} signifies "palaces" or "courts": and so it is rendered by the Chaldee paraphrase and Syriac version; and so the allusion is not to mean thieves and robbers, but to persons of note and figure. Hence the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, render it, "he sitteth in lurking places with the rich"; and may be fitly applied to the pope and his cardinals. Antichrist sits in the temple of God, and by his emissaries gets into the villages, the particular churches and congregations of saints, where they lie in ambush to do mischief, to corrupt their faith, worship, and manners; and like thieves and robbers enter in to steal, kill, and destroy;

in secret places doth he murder the innocent; the harmless lambs and sheep of Christ; who, though they are not without sin in themselves, yet are innocent with respect to the cause and the things for which they suffer: these are the saints and prophets and martyrs of Jesus, whose blood is shed by antichrist; and the taking away of their lives is reckoned murder with God; and is so styled in the Scriptures, **Re 9:21**; though the antichristian party call it doing God good service, and impute it to zeal for the good of holy church; and yet this they choose to do in secret, by private massacres, or by the inquisition; which having condemned men to death, delivers them over to the secular power to execute the sentence on them: just as the Jews delivered Christ to the Roman governor, to shift off the sin and blame from themselves; murder being what no one cares to be known in, or chargeable with;

his eyes are privily set against the poor: the word hklx, rendered "poor", is used nowhere but in this psalm, in which it is used three times, here, and in Ps 10:1; and in the plural number in Ps 10:10. It is translated "poor" both in the Chaldee paraphrase and Septuagint version, and in those that follow them. In the Arabic language it signifies "black" {g}, and may design such who are black by reason of persecution and affliction, who go mourning all the day long on account of sin, their own and others; and because of the distresses and calamities of the church and people of God. These the eyes of the wicked watch and observe, and are set against them to do them all the mischief they can; their eyes are full of envy and indignation at them, though it is all in a private and secret way. The allusion is to thieves and robbers, who hide themselves in some secret place, and from thence look out for them that pass by, and narrowly observe whether they are for their purpose, and when it will be proper to come out and seize upon them.

{f} Myrux aulav, Symmachus in Drusius; "atriorum", Munster; so Hammond, Ainsworth, & Michaelis. {g} "Chalae, valde niger fuit", Golius, col. 646.

Psalms 10:9

Ver. 9. He lieth in wait secretly as a lion,.... The first beast in

Re 13:2; is said to have a mouth like a lion, and the second beast in Ps 10:11; spake like a dragon; and both design one and the same, antichrist, in his twofold capacity, civil and ecclesiastical; this metaphor of the lion lying in wait secretly for his prey denotes the insidious methods used by antichrist to destroy the faithful witnesses of Christ; who lies like a lion

in his den, in the temple of God, now become a den of thieves;

he lieth in wait to catch the poor: to snatch and carry them away captive as his prey; see Re 13:10;

he doth catch the poor when he draweth him into his net; this metaphor is taken from fowlers, who spread nets, into which they allure and draw the birds and catch them. The allurements, snares, and nets, which antichrist lays to catch the poor saints and people of God in, are the riches and honours of this world, great pretensions to holiness, devotion; and religion, and many lying signs and wonders.

Psalms 10:10

Ver. 10. He croucheth [and] humbleth himself,.... As the lion before he leaps and seizes on his prey, and as the fowler creepeth upon the ground to draw the bird into his net and catch it; so the antichristian beast has two horns like a lamb; though he has the mouth of a lion, and speaks like a dragon, he would be thought to be like the Lamb of God, meek, and lowly, and humble, and therefore calls himself "servus servorum", "the servant of servants"; but his end is,

that the poor may fall by his strong ones; the word for "poor" is here used, as before observed on Ps 10:8, in the plural number, and is read by the Masorites as two words, though it is written as one, and is by them and other Jewish writers {h} interpreted a multitude, company, or army of poor ones, whose strength is worn out; these weak and feeble ones antichrist causes to fall by his strong ones; either by his strong decrees, cruel edicts, and severe punishments, as by sword, by flame, by captivity and by spoils, Da 11:33; or by the kings of the earth and their armies, their mighty men of war, their soldiers, whom he instigates and influences to persecute their subjects, who will not receive his mark in their right hands or foreheads, Re 13:15. It is very observable, that those persecuted by antichrist are so often in this prophetic psalm called "poor"; and it is also remarkable, that there were a set of men in the darkest times of Popery, and who were persecuted by the Papists, called the "poor" men of Lyons: the whole verse may be rendered and paraphrased thus, "he tears in pieces", that is, the poor, whom he catches in his net; "he boweth himself", as the lion does, as before observed; "that he may fall", or rush upon; with his strong ones, his mighty armies, "upon the multitude of the poor".

{h} Jarchi, Kimchi, & Ben Melech in loc.

Psalms 10:11

Ver. 11. He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten,.... Meaning either his own sins, because they are not immediately punished; wherefore he hopes to go on for ever with impunity, but will be mistaken, for God will remember the iniquities of Babylon, and render to her double, Re 18:5; see **Am 7:17**; or else the poor ones he oppresses; for though they seem for a while to be forgotten by God, they are not, a book of remembrance is written for them;

he hideth his face; that is, from his poor saints, which is true oftentimes; but then the use the wicked one makes of it is bad, namely, to insult them on that account, and to imagine that it is grateful to God, and doing him good service, to afflict and persecute them; and that God will never regard them, nor return to them more, as follows;

he will never see [it]; or them; he will never more look upon the poor, he will no more regard them, and take notice of them and their afflictions; than which nothing is more false; for though he hides his face for a moment, yet with everlasting kindness will he gather them to himself; and he beholds all their oppressions and afflictions, and not as a bare spectator; he sympathizes with them, and delivers them out of them. Or "he will never" the wickedness committed by the wicked; which is a very foolish thought, since what is done in the dark, and in the most secret manner, is seen by God, the darkness and the light are alike to him; he is all-seeing and ever-seeing, and everywhere seeing; and he it is that has made the eye, and shall not he see? Ps 94:5; the sense of the whole in general is, that God takes no notice of good men or bad men, nor of what is done by either of them; he does not concern himself with the affairs of this world, which is an impious denial of divine Providence; see **Eze 9:9**.

Psalms 10:12

Ver. 12. Arise, O Lord,.... See **Ps 3:7**;

O God, lift up thine hand; either on the behalf of his people, to help and deliver them; his hand may be said to be let down when their enemies prevail, and to be lifted up or exalted when it does valiantly, and works salvation for them; so when Moses's hands were let down Amalek prevailed, and when his hands were lifted up Israel prevailed,
Ex 17:11; or against their enemies, to strike them, to inflict punishment upon them, as God's hand is said to be stretched out against the Egyptians, and to lie upon them, when he sent his plagues among them, **Ex 7:4**; and a dreadful thing it is to fall both into and under the hand of the living God, and to feel the weight of the lighting down of his arm with indignation. The Targum understands it as a gesture of swearing; see Ge 14:22; and paraphrases it, "confirm the oath of thine hand"; either sworn in wrath against his enemies, or in love to his people; either of which is sure and certain, and according to the immutable counsel of his will;

forget not the humble; the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, the Lamb of God, by which character the saints are distinguished from the antichristian party, Re 14:4; these are such who are made so by the Spirit of God, who in conversion brings down the pride and haughtiness of man, that Christ and his grace may be alone exalted; these have the meanest thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; their motto is,

"less than the least of all saints, and the chief of sinners;"

they envy not the gifts and graces of others, and ascribe all they have and are to the free grace of God; they are not easily provoked, they patiently bear injuries, and quietly submit to the adverse dispensations of Providence: the word in the original text is read "humble", but written "afflicted": both characters generally meet together in the people of God; See Gill on "Ps 9:12"; this prayer for the humble is a prayer of faith; for though the humble may seem to be forgotten by God, they are not, they are precious in his sight; he dwells among them, he gives more grace unto them, he comforts them when disconsolate, he feeds them when they are hungry, he teaches and guides them when they want direction, he lifts them up when they are cast down, and beautifies them with salvation.

Psalms 10:13

Ver. 13. Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God?.... God may be said to be contemned or despised, when his being, perfections, and providence are denied, or called in question, or abused, Ps 10:9; when his word is derided, the great things of his law are counted as a strange thing **Ho 8:12**, and the truths of his Gospel are reckoned foolishness; and instead of these, the decrees, doctrines, and traditions of men, are set up, as by antichrist; and when his ministers, and especially his Son, are treated with disdain, Lu 10:16;

he hath said in his heart, thou wilt not require [it], or "seek [it]" {i}; or inquire after it, his iniquity; the sense is, that God will make no inquiry after sin, and bring it into judgment, unto account, and under examination; or will not make inquisition, that is, for blood, for the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, shed by antichrist; or will not require it at his hands, or recompense vengeance for it: all which is false and vain; the contrary to it will be found true.

{i} vwrdt al "te non inquisiturum", Piscator, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 10:14

Ver. 14. Thou hast seen [it],.... Though the wicked say God will never see, Ps 10:11; he sees all things in general, all men and all their actions; all are manifest and open to him, and everything in particular, especially the wickedness of men; even that which is said or thought in the heart;

for thou beholdest mischief and spite; that mischief which arises from spite or malice in the heart; God beholds the inward principle from whence it proceeds, as well as that itself; the mischief devised in the heart, on the bed, and which lies under the tongue, designed against the people of God, either to the injury of their characters and estates, or to their bodies, and even to their souls, as much as in them lies, proceeding from implacable malice and enmity to them;

to requite [it] with thy hand: of power, to retaliate it upon their own heads, to render tribulation to them that trouble the saints, which is but a righteous thing with God: or "to put [it] in thy hand" {k}; and the sense is, that God looks upon all the injuries the wicked out of spite devise to do to his people, and puts them in his hand, that they may be ever before him, and always in his sight, and he will take a proper opportunity of avenging them. The Targum interprets it of God's rewarding good men, as well as punishing the wicked, paraphrasing the whole thus, "it is manifest before thee that thou wilt send sorrow and wrath upon the wicked; thou lookest to render a good reward to the righteous with thy hand;"

the poor committeth himself unto thee: his body, and the outward concerns of life, as to a faithful Creator; his soul, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of it, as to the only Saviour and Redeemer; he commits all his ways to him, as the God of providence and grace; and at last he commits his spirit to him at death, as to his covenant God and Father: the words may be rendered, "the poor leaveth upon thee" {l}; that is, he leaves himself and his upon the Lord; he leaves his burden on him, he casts all his care upon him, as he is advised and encouraged to do; he leaves his cause with him to plead it for him, who will plead it thoroughly and maintain it: the phrase is expressive of the poor's faith and hope in God; hence the Chaldee paraphrase renders it, "on thee will thy poor ones hope"; for the supply of their wants, and for help and assistance against their enemies;

thou art the helper of the fatherless; God is the Father of them, provides for them, supplies, supports, and defends them; nor will he in a spiritual sense leave his people orphans or comfortless, but will visit and help them; see Ps 68:5;

{k} Kdyb ttl "ut ponas in manibus tuis", Vatablus, Cocceius. {l} hklx bwzy Kyle "super te relinquit pauper", Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Cocceius.

Psalms 10:15

Ver. 15. Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil [man],.... His power and strength, so that he shall not be able to hold the sword, to strike a blow, or do any hurt to the people of God; see Eze 30:21. This prayer is in some measure already fulfilled in antichrist, the man of sin, or pope of Rome; though his kingdom is not broke to pieces; as it will be when Christ's kingdom shall be more visibly set up, to which reference is had in Ps 10:16; see **Da 2:44**; yet his strength is weakened, his arm is broken, he has not the power he had, nor can he tyrannise and do the mischief he once did: "but as [for] the evil man" {m}, for so the words should be read, there being an "athnach" under the word "wicked", which ends the proposition there:

seek out his wickedness [till] thou find none; which designs a thorough search after sin, full punishment of it, and the entire ruin and destruction of the

wicked; and the sense is, that God would make a strict inquiry into the wickedness of the man of sin, which he promised himself he would not, Ps 10:13; and that he would punish him and his followers to the uttermost for it, until there should not be one of the antichristian party found upon earth; with which sense agrees
Ps 10:16; see Ps 104:35.

{m} erw "improbum quod attinet, requiras", &c. Gejerus; so Michaelis.

Psalms 10:16

Ver. 16. The Lord [is] King for ever and ever,.... Christ was King from everlasting, and during the Old Testament dispensation he was promised and prophesied of as King; and he had a kingdom when he was here on earth, though not of this world; nor was it with observation. At his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, he sat down upon the same throne with his Father, and was made or declared Lord and Christ, and appeared more visibly in his kingly office; and in the latter day it will be yet more manifest that he is King of saints, and when indeed he will be King over all the earth, and his kingdom will be an everlasting one: he will have no successor in it, nor will any usurper obtain any more; the devil, beast, and false prophet, will be cast into the lake of fire; all antichristian states will be destroyed, and all authority, rule, and power, put down; nor can his kingdom ever be subverted, he must reign till all enemies are put under his feet; he will reign to the end of the present world, and with the saints a thousand years in the new heaven and earth, and in the ultimate glory to all eternity; nor will his government cease when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father, only the mode of the administration of it. Here begins the song of praise; the reign of Christ is matter of joy; see Ps 97:1;

the Heathen are perished out of his land: not the seven nations which were driven out of the land of Canaan, to make way for the people of Israel, that was long ago; nor the wicked and degenerate Jews, called the Heathen, **Ps 2:1**; compared with **Ac 4:27**; on whom, and on whose temple, city, and nation, Christ's native land, wrath is come to the uttermost; and they are perished out of it: nor hypocrites out of churches, which are Christ's property; but the antichristian party out of the world, which is Christ's land by creation, as God, and by the gift of his father to him, as Mediator. The followers of antichrist are called Gentiles, and the nations of the earth, Re 11:2; and these will be no more; they will be utterly destroyed, when the man of sin shall be consumed

with the breath of Christ's mouth and the brightness of his coming. The seventh vial will clear the world of all the remains of Christ's enemies: this also is cause of rejoicing,
Ps 132:16.

Psalms 10:17

Ver. 17. Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble,.... See
Ps 10:12; for the coming of Christ's kingdom, and that the kingdoms of this world may become his; for the destruction of antichrist, and for the avenging the blood of the saints. The prayers of God's people sometimes lie in inward and secret desires of the soul, and are not expressed in words; and these desires are all before the Lord, and are well known unto him; yea, such prayers of the heart, and which come from it, are principally regarded by him; they being his own preparation, as is suggested in the next clause, and the breathings of his Spirit; and especially the desires of humble souls are regarded, whose prayers he never despises, nor sends them away empty, but fills with his good things;

thou wilt prepare their heart; for prayer, by pouring a spirit of grace and supplication on them, impressing their minds with a sense of things to be prayed for, and drawing out the desires of their souls unto them, and making intercession for them with groanings according to the will of God, and so helping their infirmities; and it is God's work to prepare the heart for prayer, as well as to put words into the mouth,
Pr 16:1; or "thou wilt direct their heart" {n}; to the object of prayer, himself, and to the things to be prayed for, for they know not what to pray for, nor how as they should; and to what may encourage to it, as the love of God, the covenant of grace, the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ: or "confirm" or "establish their heart" {o}; strengthen and fix them, that they be not wavering and doubtful, but certain and assured of success, believing that their desires will be fulfilled in God's own time;

thou wilt cause thine ear to hear; God has an ear to hear the prayers of his people, nor is his ear heavy that it cannot hear; his ears are open to the cries of righteous ones; nor will he ever turn a deaf ear to them, but will give an answer in his own time and way; which is an instance of his sovereign grace and goodness. These words express the faith of the psalmist in God being a God hearing and answering prayer, particularly in things relating to the ruin of antichrist and his followers, and to the kingdom and glory of his son Jesus Christ.

{n} Mbl Nykt "dirigis", Vatablus; "diriges", Tigurine version. {o} "Confirmas", Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; "confirmes", Cocceius; "confirma", Junius & Tremellius.

Psalms 10:18

Ver. 18. To judge the fatherless and the oppressed,.... That is, God will cause his ear to hear the cries of his people, so as to avenge the wrongs done to the fatherless, and them that are oppressed by the man of sin; see Re 11:18;

that the man of the earth may no more oppress: or "terrify" {p}, the dear children of God, and faithful witnesses of Christ, as he has done; for by "the man of the earth" is not meant carnal worldly men in general, "the wicked of the earth", as the Targum renders it; who are so called because their original is from the earth, and they dwell in earthly tabernacles, and shall return to the earth again, and are earthly minded men, and have much of this world's things; and are therefore sometimes called the men and children of this world, and who, generally speaking, are oppressors of the saints; and who shall cease to be so in the latter day, when the kingdom shall be given to the saints of the most High; but particularly the man of sin, the Romish antichrist, seems intended, who is the beast that is risen up out of the earth, Re 13:11; and so the words may be rendered here, "the man out of the earth" {q}; whose kingdom and government is an earthly one, and is supported by the kings of the earth, and with earthly power and grandeur, and with earthly views and worldly ends: he has been the great oppressor and terrifier of the poor people of God; but when Christ comes to avenge them on him, he will no more oppress, he will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire; see Re 13:10. The words may be rendered according to the accents thus, "to judge the fatherless and the oppressed; he shall not add any more": for there is an "athnach" which makes a proposition "under" dwe, "any more": and the sense is, God shall so thoroughly avenge the injuries of the fatherless and the oppressed, that there will be no need to add thereunto or repeat the vengeance, it will be an utter destruction; and then follows another distinct end of causing his ear to hear, namely, "to shake terribly the man of the earth", or "to shake terribly man from off the earth" {r}, the man of sin, as before; see **Isa 2:19**; or, as Jarchi interprets the words, "to beat and break in pieces"; that is, antichrist and his kingdom; so Montanus.

{p} Uwrel "perterrefacere", Piscator; "terrere", Musculus, Vatablus; so

Ainsworth. {q} Urah Nm vwna "homines de terra", Pagninus, Montanus. {r} So Jarchi from Aben Ezra.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 11

To the chief Musician, [A Psalm] of David. This psalm has no name; it is neither called a psalm, nor hymn, nor song, nor prayer, only said to be David's; and is inscribed and directed as others to the chief musician, or master of the song, to be used in public service; and seems to be written much upon the same subject with the two preceding psalms. According to Theodoret it was written when David was persecuted by Saul, and was advised by some to flee for his safety.

Ver. 1. In the Lord put I my trust,.... Not in himself, in his own heart, nor in his own righteousness and strength; nor in men, the greatest of men, the princes of the earth; nor in his armies, or any outward force; but in the Lord, as the God of providence and of grace; and in the Messiah, in his person and righteousness; so the Chaldee paraphrase renders it, "in the Word of the Lord do I hope": and the phrase denotes a continued exercise of faith in the Lord; that he was always looking to him, staying himself on him, and committing himself and all his concerns to him; for he does not say, I "have", or I "will", but I "do", put my trust in the Lord; at all times, even in the worst of times, and in the present one; wherefore he is displeased with his friends for endeavouring to intimidate him, persuading him to flee and provide for his safety, when he had betaken himself to the Lord, and was safe enough;

how say ye to my soul, flee [as] a bird to your mountain? they compare him to a little, fearful, trembling bird, wandering from its nest, moving through fear from place to place, whereas his heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord; and this gave him a disgust: they advise him to flee either "from" his mountain, so Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; that is, either from Judea, which was a mountainous country, especially some parts of it; or from Mount Zion, or rather from the mountain in the wilderness of Ziph, or the hill of Hachilah, where David sometimes was, 1Sa 23:14; or it may be rendered "to your mountain", as we, so the Targum; that is, to the said place or places where he had sometimes hid himself; and this they said to his "soul", which was very cutting and grieving to him; the word rendered "flee" in the "Cetib", or writing of the text, is wdwn, in the plural, "flee ye"; but is pointed for, and in the "Keri", or marginal reading, is ydwn, "flee thou"; the latter agrees with this being said to David's soul, the former with the phrase "your mountain", and both are to be taken into the sense of the words; not as if the one respected David's soul only, and the other both soul and body, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; but the one regards David's person, and the other his companions, or the people with him; and contains an advice, both to him and them, to flee for their safety; the reasons follow.

Psalms 11:2

Ver. 2. For, lo, the wicked bend [their] bow,.... Are devising mischief, and making preparations to accomplish it;

they make ready their arrow upon the string; of the bow, and are just about to execute their wicked designs;

that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart; such as David, and those that were with him, were; they were men whose hearts were upright before God, and were of upright conversations before men, and so became the butt of the malice and resentment of wicked men; against these they formed evil purposes, delivered out bitter words, which were like sharp arrows of the mighty; threatened them with ruin and destruction, and took methods to bring about their designs and make good their words, in the most private and secret manner. Hence some of David's friends thought it most advisable for him to make his escape; adding,

Psalms 11:3

Ver. 3. If the foundations be destroyed,.... Or, "for the foundations are destroyed" {s}; all things are out of order and course both in church and state; the laws, which are the foundations of government, are despised and disregarded; judgment is perverted, and justice stands afar off; the doctrines and principles of religion are derided and subverted; so that there is no standing, either in a political or religious sense. Jarchi interprets this of the priests of the Lord, the righteous, who are the foundations of the world, particularly the priests of Nob, slain by Doeg. Other Jewish writers, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, understand it of the purposes and counsels, nets and snares, laid by the wicked for the righteous, which are broken and destroyed; not by them, for what can they do? but by the Lord, who is in his holy temple. So it

what can the righteous do? or "what does the righteous one do" {t}? that is, the righteous Lord, he sits in the heavens, he beholds all the actions of the wicked, he distinguishes the righteous from them, and rains a violent storm of wrath upon them, as in the following verses; or "what has the righteous man done" {u}? what has David done, that the priests of Nob should be slain? nothing that was criminal; nor shall he bear the sin, but they, according to Jarchi's sense; or rather, what has he done that the wicked should bend their bow, prepare their arrow, and attempt to shoot privily at him, and to overturn the foundations of justice and equity? nothing that deserves such treatment: or if the fundamental doctrines of true religion and everlasting salvation be subverted, what can the righteous do? he can do nothing to obtain salvation, nor do any good works of himself; the Chaldee paraphrase is, "wherefore does he do good?" he can have no principle, motive, or end to do good, if fundamental truths are destroyed: or "what should he do" {w}? something the righteous ones may do, and should do, when men are attempting to undermine and sap the foundation articles of religion; they should go to the throne of grace, to God in his holy temple, who knows what is doing, and plead with him to put a stop to the designs and attempts of such subverters of foundations; and they should endeavour to build one another up on their most holy faith, and constantly affirm it while others deny it; and should contend earnestly for it, and stand fast in it.

{s} Nworhy twtvh yk "nam fundamenta destruuntur", Piscator, Michaelis; "quoniam", Pagninus, Montanus; so Ainsworth. {t} lep hm qydu "justus quid operatus est?" Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus; "quid facit?" Syr. Arab. {u} "Justus quid fecit?" V. L. Munster, Tigurine versiom, Piscator; so Ainsworth. {w} "Quid fuerit operatus justus?" Junius & Tremellius; "quid fecerit?" Schmidt.

Psalms 11:4

Ver. 4. The Lord [is] in his holy temple,.... Not in the temple at Jerusalem, which as yet was not built; nor in the temple of Christ's human nature; but rather in the church, where he dwells, which is an holy temple to the Lord; and which is an argument for trust in him, and a reason against the fears of men in the worst of times; see
Ps 46:1. Though it may be best to understand it of heaven, the habitation of God's holiness, and which is the true sanctuary; and which the holy places

made with hands were only a figure of; since it follows,

the Lord's throne [is] in heaven; yea, the heaven is his throne; here he sits on a throne of grace, and here he has prepared his throne for judgment; and both this and the preceding clause are expressive of his glory and majesty; and are said to command awe and reverence of the Divine Being, and to inject terror into the wicked; and to show that God is above the enemies of his people, and to encourage the saints' trust and confidence in him; and are mentioned as a reason why David put his trust in him; and are, with what follows in Ps 11:5, opposed to the advice and reasonings of some of his friends in the preceding ones;

his eyes behold; all men, and all their actions; he sees what the wicked are doing in the dark, what preparations for mischief they are making, and beholds them when they shoot privily at the upright in heart; he can turn the arrow another way, and cause it to miss the mark: his eyes run to and fro throughout the earth, in favour of those whose hearts are perfect and sincere. God's omniscience, which is denied by wicked men, who are therefore hardened in sin, and promise themselves impunity, is used by the saints as an argument to encourage their faith and trust in God, with respect to their preservation and deliverance. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, "his eyes look unto the poor"; but this is an addition to the text not suitable to the context;

his eyelids try the children of men; he tries their reins, he searches into their very hearts, and into the inmost recesses of them, and takes cognizance of their thoughts, intentions, and designs; and confounds and disappoints them, so that they cannot perform their enterprises.

Psalms 11:5

Ver. 5. The Lord trieth the righteous,.... As gold is tried in the fire, by afflictive providences; hereby he tries their graces, their faith, and patience, their hope, and love, and fear; and, by so doing, expresses his love to them, since this is all for their good: and therefore, when he suffers the wicked to go great lengths in persecuting and distressing them, this should not weaken, their confidence in him; he still loves them, and loves when he rebukes and chastises them;

but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth; that is, such who live in a course of sin and wickedness, and who not only do injury to the persons, characters, and properties of men, but love it, and delight therein, and also take pleasure in them that do the same: these God has a continued and inward aversion to; sin and wickedness being the abominable thing his righteous soul hates: and he shows his hatred to them, by not chastising them now, as he does his own people, but reserving everlasting punishment for them hereafter; see Pr 13:24.

Psalms 11:6

Ver. 6. Upon the wicked,.... The wicked one, the man of sin, antichrist, and upon all that worship the beast and his image, on all persecutors, and upon all wicked men in general:

he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this will be in hell, as Jarchi observes. The allusion is to the Lord's raining fire and brimstone from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, which was an example and emblem of eternal fire; see Ge 19:24. For the beast and the false prophet, and all the antichristian party, and all wicked men, will have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. The phrases used express the dreadfulness and horribleness of their punishment; the suddenness, violence, and force, with which it will come; and the rise of it, it will be from heaven; God himself will rain this shower of wrath upon them, Job 20:23; nor will there be any escaping it, it will be inevitable: therefore "snares" are said to be "rained"; the wicked will be snared in the works of their own hands; they will be taken and held in the cords of their own sins; and full and deserved punishment will be inflicted on them, which will be very severe and terrible. All that is dreadful in a storm is here expressed, even in a storm of fire. The word rendered "snares" is by some thought to be the same with Mymxp, "burning coals"; and may signify burning stones, hot thunderbolts; see Ps 18:13; "fire" may signify lightning, with its dreadful flashes, and which burn and consume in an instant; and "brimstone" the nauseous scent and smell, which always attend lightning and thunder, as naturalists observe {x}: and the words for "an horrible tempest" signify a burning wind: so that they all serve to convey horrible ideas of the punishment of the wicked in hell. The Targum calls them "showers of vengeance";

[this shall be] the portion of their cup; which will be measured out to them in proportion to their sins, and which God, in righteous judgment, has appointed for them; and which they shall all drink of, and wring out the very dregs of it.

{x} Senecae Nat. Quaest. l. 2. c. 21, 53. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 35. c. 15.

Psalms 11:7

Ver. 7. For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness,.... The Lord is righteous in himself, and in all his ways and works; and therefore righteousness, as it lies both in punishing the wicked, and in maintaining the righteous cause of his people, must be loved by him, it being agreeable to his nature: he loves to exercise righteousness in the earth, to administer it to and among men; this he delights in. He is well pleased with the righteousness of his Son, it being satisfactory to his justice, and that by which his law is magnified and made honourable; and he is well pleased with his people, as they are clothed with it: and he approves of their righteous actions, as they are done in obedience to his righteous law, in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to his glory; these are acceptable to him in Christ;

his countenance doth behold the upright; whom wicked men privily shoot at, Ps 11:2; God looks with pleasure upon them, and takes delight in them, and takes care of them, protects and defends them, and at last saves them; and which, with all that goes before, was an encouragement to David to trust in the Lord; see **Ps 7:10**; and moreover, the Lord lifts up the light of his countenance on such, and indulges them with his gracious presence, than which nothing is more comfortable and desirable. Some choose to render the word, "their countenance" {y}, meaning the trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, who all have a gracious regard to such: others render the clause thus, "the upright shall see his face", the face of God; so the Chaldee paraphrase and the Arabic version; see Ps 17:15.

{y} wmynp "facies eorum", Genebrardus, Vatablus, Gussetius; so R. Japhet in Aben Ezra, who compares it with Genesis xx. 13.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 12

To the chief Musician upon Sheminith, a Psalm of David. The word "sheminith" is used in the title of **Ps 6:1**, and signifies "eighth"; and intends either the eighth note, to which the psalm was sung, or rather the harp of eight chords, to which it was set, as the Targum and Jarchi interpret it. Some Jewish writers {y} understand it of the times of the Messiah; and the Syriac version entitles the psalm,

"an accusation of the wicked, and a prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah:"

and the Arabic version says, it is concerning the end of the world, which shall be in the eighth day; and concerning the coming of the Messiah: but Arnobius interprets it of the Lord's day.

{y} Sepher Lekach Shechachah apud Caphtor, fol. 64. 1. & Ceseph Misnah in Maimon. Hilch. Teshuvah, c. 9.

Ver. 1. Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth,.... A godly man, according to the notation of the word {z}, is one that has received grace and mercy of the Lord; as pardoning mercy, justifying and adopting grace; and who has principles of grace, goodness, and holiness, wrought in him; who fears the Lord, and serves him acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, and sorrows for sin, after a godly sort; who loves the Lord, and hopes and believes in him; who is regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God, and is a true worshipper of God, and lives in all holy conversation and godliness; and, particularly, is "beneficent", "kind", and "merciful" {a} unto men: such may be said to "cease" when there are but few of them; when their number is greatly reduced {b}, either by death, or when such who have seemed, and have been thought to be so, prove otherwise: in a view of which, the psalmist prays for help and salvation; "help", or "save" {c} Lord; meaning himself, being destitute of the company, counsel, and assistance of good and gracious men; or the cause and interest of religion, which he feared would sink by the ceasing of godly men. When all friends and refuge fail, saints betake themselves to God, and their salvation is of him; and he is their present help in a time of trouble; and he saves and reserves for himself a number in the worst of times; as he did in Elijah's time, who thought there was no godly man left but himself; see Ro 11:1;

for the faithful fail from among the children of men; so that there are none left among them but carnal, unregenerate, ungodly, and unfaithful men. The "faithful" are such who are upright in heart and conversation; who trust in the Lord, and believe in the Messiah; who abide by the truths and ordinances of God; and are faithful in what is committed to their trust, whether they be gifts of nature, Providence, or grace; and to their fellow Christians, in advising, reproving, &c. when needful: these may fail in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty, but not so as to perish eternally. The words design the paucity of them, and the sad degeneracy of the times to which they refer: and they may belong either to the times of David, when Saul's courtiers flattered him, and spoke evil of David; when the men of Keilah intended to have delivered him up; when the Ziphites discovered him to Saul, and invited him to come and take him; or when Absalom rose up in rebellion against him, and so many of the people fell off from him: or else to the times of Christ; the people of the Jews in his age were a wicked and faithless generation; and even among his own disciples there was great want of fidelity: one betrayed him, another denied him, and all forsook him and fled; after his death, some doubted his being the Redeemer, and one of them could not believe he was risen from the dead, when he was. And these words may be applied to the antichristian times, the times of the grand apostasy, and falling away from the faith, upon the revealing of the man of sin; since which the holy city is trodden under foot; the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth; and the church is in the wilderness, and is hid there. Yea, to the second coming of Christ, when there will be great carnality and security, and little faith found in the earth. A like complaint with this see in Isa 57:1.

{z} dyox "passive pro beneficiario, sive alterius beneficiis gratiosis cumulato", Gejerus. {a} "Misericors", Pagninus, Mariana; beneficus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {b} "Rari quippe boni", &c. Juvenal. Satyr. 13. v. 36. {c} heyvwh "serva", Pagninus, Cocceius; "da salutem", Junius & Tremellius.

Psalms 12:2

Ver. 2. They speak vanity everyone with his neighbour,.... That which is false and a lie, either doctrinal or practical; what was not according to the word of God, and was vain and empty, frothy, filthy, and corrupt; and which no godly and faithful man would do. And this being done in common, by the generality of men, one with another, shows the degeneracy of the age, and supports the complaint before made. They speak even

[with] flattering lips; as Cain did to Abel, Joab to Amasa, the Herodians to Christ, Judas to his Master, false teachers to those that are simple, hypocrites to God himself, when they draw nigh to him only with their lips, and all formal professors to the churches of Christ, when they profess themselves to be what they are not. And this is a further proof of the justness of the above complaint;

[and] with a double heart do they speak: or "with an heart and an heart" {d}; such are double minded men, who say one thing, and mean another; their words are not to be depended upon; there is no faithfulness in them. The Chinese {e} reckon a man of "two hearts", as they call him, a very wicked man, and none more remote from honesty.

{d} blw blb "in corde & corde", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus. {e} Martin. Sinic. Hist. p. 144. a heart having dicomuyon nohma, a double meaning, as Pittacus says, Laert. in Vit. Pittac. l. 1. p. 53.

Psalms 12:3

Ver. 3. The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips,.... This is either a prophecy or a prayer, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe; that God either would or should cut off such who used flattery with their lips, by inflicting some judgment in this life, or everlasting punishment hereafter; by taking them away by death "out of the world", as the Targum paraphrases it; or by casting them into hell, where all liars and deceitful persons will have their portion; see Job 32:21;

[and] the tongue that speaketh proud things, or "great things" {f}, as the little horn, **Da 7:20**; and the beast, or Romish antichrist, who is designed by both, Re 13:5; and which will be accomplished when Christ shall destroy him with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming; and indeed every tongue that riseth up against God, Christ, and his people, will be condemned; when ungodly sinners will be convinced of all their hard speeches, Isa 54:17 **Jude 1:15**. Perhaps some regard may be had to the tongue of Doeg the Edomite; see Ps 52:3.

{f} twldg "magna", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; "grandia", Cocceius.

Psalms 12:4

Ver. 4. Who have said, with our tongue will we prevail,.... Either through the eloquence of them, or the outward force and power with which they are backed. The sense is, as we say, so shall it be; our words are laws, and shall be obeyed, there is no standing against them; our edicts and decrees shall everywhere be regarded: or "we will make one to prevail", or "have the dominion" {g}; meaning antichrist, the man of sin; for all this is true of the tongues of the antichristian party, and of their laws, edicts, and decrees and which have obtained everywhere, and by which the wicked one has been established in his tyrannical power and authority;

our lips [are] our own, or "with us" {h}: we will say what we please, and make what laws and decrees we think fit, and impose them upon men; and so change times and laws without control, **Da 7:25**;

who [is] Lord over us? which is the very language and conduct of antichrist, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, **2Th 2:4**; and is indeed the language of the hearts and lives of all wicked and ungodly men, sons of Belial, men without any yoke or restraint; who walk, and are resolved to walk, after the imagination of their own evil hearts; not knowing the Lord, and being unwilling to obey him, or to be restrained by him; see **Ex 5:2**.

{g} rybgn "prevalere ac dominare, faciemus, scil. aliquem regem, dominum", Cocceius. {h} wnta "nobiscum", Musculus, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Ainsworth.

Psalms 12:5

Ver. 5. For the oppression of the poor,.... The servants and people of God, who, for the most part, are poor in a temporal sense, and are all of them, and always, so in a spiritual sense, standing continually in need of fresh supplies of grace; and being often afflicted, as the word signifies, are mean and despicable in the eyes of the men of this world, and so oppressed by them, as the poor generally are by the rich; and as the people of Israel were oppressed by the Egyptians, so are the people of God by antichrist, and by his tyrannical laws and edicts, and by such haughty and insolent persons as before described;

for the sighing of the needy; who groan under their oppressions; being stripped of all good things, their friends, and worldly substance, they sigh inwardly, and cry unto the Lord, who sees their oppressions, hears their groans; and though he cannot be moved, as men are, by anything without himself, yet, according to his abundant mercy and sovereign will, he appears and exerts himself on the behalf of his people, and for their relief and assistance;

now will I arise, saith the Lord; to have mercy on the poor and needy, and to avenge them on their oppressors, and free them from them. And this the Lord promises to do "now", speedily, immediately; God arises in the most seasonable time, when his people are in the greatest straits, and in the utmost distress and herein displays his wisdom, power, and goodness. This is an answer to the petition of the psalmist in Ps 12:1;

I will set [him] in safety [from him that] puffeth at him; or "in salvation" {i}; in Christ the Saviour. All God's people are put into the hands of Christ, and are preserved in him; there they are in safety, for out of his hands none can pluck them; and being built on him, the Rock, they are safe, notwithstanding the waves and winds of temptation, persecution, &c. come with ever so much force upon them. Here it seems to signify, that God would deliver his poor and needy from their oppressions, and put them into a comfortable, prosperous, safe, and happy situation, in which they will be out of the reach of their enemies; as will be the witnesses, when they shall ascend to heaven, Re 11:11; even out of the reach of him that "puffeth at" them, despises them, and treats them with the utmost scorn and contempt; see Ps 10:5. Or that "breathes", or "let him breathe" {k} threatenings and slaughters; as Saul did against the disciples of Christ, **Ac 9:1**; or that "lays snares for him" {l}, as the wicked do for the righteous; or that "speaks unto him" in such haughty and insolent language as before expressed. Some make this clause a proposition of itself, "he puffeth at him"; meaning either that he that is secure, safety puffs at his enemy, despises him, as he has been despised by him; or God, who breathes upon him, and whose breath is as a stream of brimstone, which kindles in him a fire of divine wrath, which is unquenchable; or else the sense is, God will "speak to himself", or "to him" {m}; in which sense the word is used **Hab 2:4**; that is, good and comfortable words to the poor; or "he will give him refreshment", or "rest": which he will determine in himself to speak to him: or "he shall have breathing", or "let him breathe" {n}: he shall have times of refreshing from the Lord, and rest from adversity, from the oppositions and persecutions of his enemies.

{i} evyb "in salute", Pagninus, Montanus, Mariana, Vatablus, Junius, & Tremeliius, Piscator; so Ainsworth. {k} wl xypy "spiret vel spirabit sibi", De Dieu. {l} "Qui ponit ei laqueum", Munster; "qui laqueum injicit illis", Heb. "illi", Muis; so Kimchi. {m} "Loquetur sibi vel ei", Vatablus. {n} "Respirationem dabit illi", Cloppenburgius; so Ainsworth, and some in Michaelis.

Psalms 12:6

Ver. 6. The words of the Lord [are] pure words,.... This observation the psalmist makes in reference to what is just now said in Ps 12:5:, and in opposition to the words of wicked men in Ps 12:2; which are deceitful, sinful, and impure. The Scriptures are the words of God; and they are pure and holy, free from all human mixtures, and from all fraud and deceit; they are the Scriptures of truth. The promises are the words of God, and they are firm and stable, and always to be depended on, and are ever fulfilled, being yea and amen in Christ Jesus. The Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are the words of God; that is the sincere milk of the word, pure and incorrupt; as it is in itself, and as it is dispensed by the faithful ministers of it; and they are all according to godliness, and tend to encourage and promote purity and holiness of heart and life; See Pr 30:5;

[as] silver tried in a furnace of earth; they are as "silver" for worth and value; yea, they are more valuable than silver or gold,
Ps 19:10. The Bible is a mine of rich treasure, and to be searched into as for it; the promises in it are exceeding precious; they are like apples of gold in pictures of silver, and yield more joy than the finding a great spoil. The doctrines of the Gospel are comparable to gold and silver and precious stones, and to be bought at any rate, but to be sold at none: and they are as silver "tried", which is pure, and free from dross. The words of men, of false teachers, are as dross and reprobate silver; but the words of the Lord are tried, and are pure, and free from all the dross of error and falsehood, Ps 18:30. And they are as silver tried "in a furnace of earth", which some {o} render "by the Lord of the earth"; but the word rather signifies a furnace, or an refinery, in which metal is melted and purified; and may be applied to the Lord Jesus Christ in human nature, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and who came full fraught with the doctrines of the Gospel; and in whom they have been "tried", by his sufferings and death, and are found to be pure, solid, and substantial: or to the ministers of the Gospel, who have this treasure in earthen vessels, whose works and words and ministry are tried by many fiery trials, and abide: or to all the people of God in general, who dwelt in earthly tabernacles; and who, in the midst of various afflictions, have a comfortable and confirming evidence of the purity and truth of the words of God, of the promises of his covenant, and the doctrines of the Gospel;

purified seven times; that is, many times, Pr 24:16; and so completely and perfectly pure, and clear of all dross whatsoever, as silver so many times tried must needs be: and so the words of God are not only pure, but very pure, exceeding pure, Ps 119:140.

{o} Vid. Jarchi, Kimchi, & Ben Melech in loc. so some in David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 11. 1. taking b in lyleb to be radical, and l doubled as if it was leb.

Psalms 12:7

Ver. 7. Thou shall keep them, O Lord,.... Not the words before mentioned, as Aben Ezra explains it, for the affix is masculine and not feminine; not but God has wonderfully kept and preserved the sacred writings; and he keeps every word of promise which he has made; and the doctrines of the Gospel will always continue from one generation to another; but the sense is, that God will keep the poor and needy, and such as he sets in safety, as Kimchi rightly observes: they are not their own keepers, but God is the keeper of them; he keeps them by his power, and in his Son, in whose hands they are, and who is able to keep them from falling; they are kept by him from a total and final falling away; from the dominion and damning power of sin, and from being devoured by Satan, and from the evil of the world: and this the psalmist had good reason to believe, because of the love of God to them, his covenant with them, and the promises of safety and salvation he has made unto them;

thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever; or "thou shalt preserve him" {p}; that is, everyone of the poor and needy, from the wicked generation of men in which they live, from being corrupted or intimidated by them; and who are described in the beginning of the psalm. Some take these words to be a prayer, "keep thou them, O Lord, and preserve them", &c. {q}; and so the following words may be thought to be a reason or argument enforcing the request.

{p} wnrut "custodies eum", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth. {q} "Custodi eum", Tigurine version, Vatablus, "custodito eorum quemque", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 12:8

Ver. 8. The wicked walk on every side,.... Of the poor and needy, of the righteous ones, to watch them, lay snares for them, and hurt them; therefore, Lord, keep and preserve them: the wicked are everywhere in great numbers, the whole world lies in wickedness; and the men of it are like their father the devil, they go about to do all the mischief they can to the saints; wherefore they stand in need continually of divine preservation;

when the vilest men are exalted: either to great dignities and high offices, to be magistrates and rulers; see Pr 29:2; or are highly esteemed and caressed; which shows the sad degeneracy and badness of the times, and the unsafe and dangerous condition the people of God are in, unless kept by him; see **Mal 3:15**; or else these words may be considered as expressive of the judgment of God upon wicked men, and so confirm what the psalmist had said of God's regard to and preservation of his own people; and the sense be, that the wicked shall walk up and down here and there, as outcasts and vagabonds, in a most desolate, destitute, and miserable condition; and as the latter clause may be rendered, "according to [their] exaltation [shall be] the vileness", depression, or humiliation "of the children of men" {r}; they shall be brought as low as they have been made high; by how much the more highly they have been exalted, by so much the more deeply they shall be humbled: or else the meaning is, they shall walk about here and there fretting and vexing, when they shall see such who in their opinion are the meanest and basest of men, of low degree, and of a mean extract, exalted to the highest posts of honour and dignity; as David, who was taken from the sheepfold, and placed on the throne of Israel; so Jarchi, who observes that the Haggadah explains it of the Israelites, who will be exalted in time to come.

{r} twlz Mrk "secundum superelevationem, vilitas (erit vel est)", Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 13

To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David. According to Theodoret this psalm was written by David, not when he fled from Saul, but from Absalom; and gives this reason for it, what happened to him from Saul was before his sin, and therefore he could speak with great boldness; but what befell him from Absalom was after it, and therefore mourning and groans were mixed with his words.

Ver. 1. How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever?.... When God does not immediately deliver his people from their enemies, or help them out of an affliction; when he does not discover his love, communicate his grace, apply the blessings and promises of his covenant as usual; and when he does not visit them in his usual manner, and so frequently as he has formerly done, they are ready to conclude he has forgotten them; and sometimes this continues long,

and then they fear they are forgotten for ever; and this they cannot bear, and therefore expostulate with God in a querulous manner, as the psalmist does here; but this is to be understood not in reality, but in their own apprehension, and in the opinion of their enemies; God never does nor can forget his people; oblivion does not fall upon him with respect to common persons and things; and much less with respect to his own dear children, for whom a special book of remembrance is written;
See Gill on "Ps 9:18";

how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? his love, and the manifestation of it, from his person; his gracious presence, the light of his smiling countenance, which sometimes God hides or withdraws from his people by way of resentment of their unbecoming carriage to him; and which is very distressing to them, for they are apt to imagine it is in wrath and hot displeasure, when he still loves them, and will with everlasting kindness have mercy on them; see **Isa 8:17**. The Targum renders it, "the glory of thy face".

Psalms 13:2

Ver. 2. How long shall I take counsel in my soul,.... Or "put it" {s}; to take counsel of good men and faithful friends, in matters of moment and difficulty, is safe and right; and it is best of all to take counsel of God, who is wonderful in it, and guides his people with it; but nothing is worse than for a man to take counsel of his own heart, or only to consult himself; for such counsel often casts a man down, and he is ashamed of it sooner or later: but this seems not to be the sense here; the phrase denotes the distressing circumstances and anxiety of mind the psalmist was in; he was at his wits' end, and cast about in his mind, and had various devises and counsels formed there; and yet knew not what way to take, what course to steer;

[having] sorrow in my heart daily; by reason of God's hiding his face from him; on account of sin that dwelt in him, or was committed by him; because of his distance from the house of God, and the worship and ordinances of it; and by reason of his many enemies that surrounded him on every side: this sorrow was an heart sorrow, and what continually attended him day by day; or was in the daytime, when men are generally amused with business or diversions, as well as in the night, as Kimchi observes;

how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me? even the vilest of men, Ps 12:8; this may be understood either of temporal enemies, and was true of

David when he was obliged not only to leave his own house and family, but the land of Judea, and flee to the Philistines; and when he fled from Absalom his son, lest he should be taken and slain by him; or of spiritual enemies, and is true of saints when sin prevails and leads captive, and when the temptations of Satan succeed; as when he prevailed upon David to number the people, Peter to deny his master, &c. The Jewish writers {t} observe that here are four "how longs", answerable to the four monarchies, Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman, and their captivities under them.

{s} tyva "ponam", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus. {t} Jarchi, Midrash in Kimchi, & Abendana in Miclol Yophi in loc.

Psalms 13:3

Ver. 3. Consider [and] hear me, O Lord my God,.... The psalmist amidst all his distresses rightly applies to God by prayer, claims his interest in him as his covenant God, which still continued notwithstanding all his darkness, desertions, and afflictions; and entreats him to "consider" his affliction and trouble, and deliver him out of it; to consider his enemies, how many and mighty they were; and his own weakness his frame, that he was but dust, and unable to stand against them: or to "look" {u} upon his affliction, and upon him under it, with an eye of pity and compassion; to have respect to him and to his prayers, and to turn unto him, and lift up the light of his countenance upon him: and so this petition is opposed to the complaint in Ps 13:1; and he further requests that he would "hear" him; that is, so as to answer him, and that immediately, and thereby show that he had not forgotten him, but was mindful of him, of his love to him, and covenant with him;

lighten mine eyes: meaning either the eyes of his body, which might be dim and dull through a failure of the animal spirits, by reason of inward grief, outward afflictions, or for want of bodily food; which when obtained refreshes nature, cheers the animal spirits, enlightens or gives a briskness to the eyes; see 1Sa 14:27; or else the eyes of his understanding, **Eph 1:18**; that he might behold wondrous things in the law of God, know the things which were freely given to him of God, see more clearly his interest in him, and in the covenant of his grace, and have his soul refreshed and comforted with the light of God's countenance; and he be better able to discern his enemies, and guard against them; and be directed to take the best method to be delivered and secured from them. The people of God are sometimes in the dark, and see no light; especially when benighted, and in sleepy frames; and it is God's work to enlighten and quicken them;

lest I sleep [the sleep] of death; a natural death {w}, which is comparable to sleep, and often expressed by it; and which sense agrees with lightening the eyes of his body, as before explained; or rather the sense is, lift up the light of thy countenance, revive thy work in the midst of the years; let me see thy goodness in the land of the living, that I may not faint and sink and die away. Or it may be an eternal death is designed; for though true believers shall never die this death, yet they may be in such circumstances, as through unbelief to fear they shall. The Targum paraphrases the word thus;

"enlighten mine eyes in thy law, lest I sin, and sleep with those who are guilty of death."

{u} hjybh "intuere", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "aspice", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius. {w} calkeon upnon, Homer. Iliad. 11. v. 241. "ferreus somnus", Virgil. Aeneid. 10. v. 745, & 12. v. 309.

Psalms 13:4

Ver. 4. Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him,.... Which is an argument God takes notice of; and for which reason he does not give up his people into the hands of their enemies; see De 32:27. The Chaldee paraphrase interprets this of the evil imagination or corruption of nature, and represents it as a person, as the Apostle Paul does in **Ro 7:15**; and which may be said to prevail, when it pushes on to sin, and hinders doing good, and carries captive; and it may be applied to Satan, the great enemy of God's people, who triumphs over them, when he succeeds in his temptations;

[and] those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved; meaning from his house and family, from his country and kingdom, from a prosperous state and condition to a distressed one; at which the troublers of David's peace would rejoice. They that trouble the saints are sin, Satan, and the world; and the two last rejoice when they are in an uncomfortable and afflicted condition; and especially Satan rejoices when he gains his point, if it is but to move them from any degree of steadfastness, of faith and hope, or from the ways of God in any respect: the Targum adds, "from thy ways"; for to be moved so as to perish eternally they cannot, being built upon the Rock of ages, and surrounded by the power and grace of God.

Psalms 13:5

Ver. 5. But I have trusted in thy mercy,.... The faith, hope, and comfort of the psalmist grew and increased by prayer; from complaining he goes to praying, from praying to believing; he trusted not in himself, not in his own heart, nor in his own righteousness and merits, but in the mercy of God; and not in the bare absolute mercy of God, but in the grace and goodness of God, as the word {x} here used signifies, as it is displayed in the plenteous redemption which is by Christ; which is a sufficient ground of faith and hope; see Ps 130:7;

my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation; which God is the contriver, author, and giver of, and in which the glory of his perfections is so greatly displayed: and a true believer rejoices more on account that God is glorified by it than because of his own interest in it; and this joy is an inward one, it is joy in the heart, and is real and unfeigned, and is what continues, and will be felt and expressed both here and hereafter.

{x} Kdoxb "in bonitate tua", Vatablus; "in benignitate tua", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "in benignissima voluntate tua", Gejerus.

Psalms 13:6

Ver. 6. I will sing unto the Lord,.... In prayer faith is encouraged, through believing the heart is filled with joy; and this joy is expressed by the lips, in songs of praise to the Lord, ascribing the glory of salvation to him, and giving him thanks for every mercy and blessing of life;

because he hath dealt bountifully with me; both in a way of providence and grace, granting life and preserving it, and supporting with the comforts of it; blessing with spiritual blessings, and crowning with loving kindness and tender mercies; all which is generous and bountiful dealing, and affords a just occasion of praise and thanksgiving; see
Ps 116:7.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 14

To the chief Musician, [a Psalm] of David. The argument of this psalm, according to Theodoret, is Sennacherib's invasion of Judea, when he sent Rabshakeh to Hezekiah, with menaces and curses; upon which Hezekiah implored divine help, and obtained it, and the Assyrian army was destroyed by an angel; of all which he thinks this psalm was prophetic.

Ver. 1. The fool hath said in his heart,.... This is to be understood not of a single individual person, as Nabal, which is the word here used; nor of some Gentile king, as Sennacherib, or Rabshakeh his general, as Theodoret; nor of Nebuchadnezzar, nor of Titus, as some Jewish writers {y} interpret it, making one to be here intended, and the other in the fifty third psalm: the same with this; but of a body, a set of men, who justly bear this character; and design not such who are idiots, persons void of common sense and understanding; but such who are fools in their morals, without understanding in spiritual things; wicked profligate wretches, apostates from God, alienated from the life of God; and whose hearts are full of blindness and ignorance, and whose conversations are vile and impure, and they enemies of righteousness, though full of all wicked subtlety and mischief: these say in their hearts, which are desperately wicked, and out of which evil thoughts proceed, pregnant with atheism and impiety; these endeavour to work themselves into such a belief, and inwardly to conclude, at least to wish,

[there is] no God; though they do not express it with their mouths, yet they would fain persuade their hearts to deny the being of God; that so having no superior to whom they are accountable, they may go on in sin with impunity; however, to consider him as altogether such an one as themselves, and to remove such perfections from him, as may render him unworthy to be regarded by them; such as omniscience, omnipresence, &c. and to conceive of him as entirely negligent of and unconcerned about affairs of this lower world, having nothing to do with the government of it: and thus to deny his perfections and providence, is all one as to deny his existence, or that there is a God: accordingly the Targum paraphrases it,

"there is no anjlwv, "government" of God in the earth;"

so Kimchi interprets it,

"there is no governor, nor judge in the world, to render to man according to his works;"

they are corrupt; that is, everyone of these fools; and it is owing to the corruption of their hearts they say such things: they are corrupt in themselves; they have corrupt natures, they are born in sin, and of the flesh, and must be carnal and corrupt: or "they do corrupt", or "have corrupted" {z}: they corrupt themselves by their atheistic thoughts and wicked practices, **Jude 1:10**; or their works, as the Chaldee paraphrase adds; or their ways, their manner and course of life, **Ge 6:12**; and they corrupt others with their evil communications, their bad principles and practices, their ill examples and wicked lives;

they have done abominable works: every sinful action is abominable in the sight of God; but there are some sins more abominable than others; there are abominable idolatries, and abominable lusts, such as were committed in Sodom; and it may be these are pointed at here, and which are usually committed by such who like not to retain God in their knowledge; see **Ro 1:24**;

[there is] none that doeth good; anyone good work in a spiritual manner; not in faith, from love, in the name and strength of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God: nor can any man do a good work without the grace of God, and strength from Christ, and the assistance of the Spirit of God: hence, whatsoever a wicked man does, whether in a civil or in a religious way, is sin; see Pr 21:4. Arama takes these to be the words of the fool, or atheist, saying, there is no God that does good, like those in **Zep 1:12**.

{y} Vid. Jarchi, Kimchi & Ben Melech in loc. {z} wtyxvh "corruperunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus; "corrumpunt", Junius & Tremellius; "corrumpunt se", Piscator.

Psalms 14:2

Ver. 2. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men,.... As he did when all flesh had corrupted its way, and before he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly, **Ge 6:12**. This is said in direct opposition to the atheistic thoughts and reasonings of wicked men, in Ps 14:1. There is a God, and he takes notice of the children of men, and of what is done by them; though his throne is in the heavens, and his dwelling there, yet he looks down from thence, and takes cognizance of all human affairs. This must be understood consistent with the omniscience and omnipresence of God; it is an anthropopathy, or a speaking after the manner of

men; and denotes the exact notice which God takes, and distinct observation he makes, and the perfect and accurate knowledge he has of men and their actions; see
Ge 11:5;

to see if there were any that did understand: not things natural, civil, and moral, but things spiritual as the Apostle Paul interprets the words, **Ro 3:11**. For though man has not lost the natural faculty of his understanding, and may have an understanding of the things of nature, yet not of the things of God, until a supernatural light is put into him; not any spiritual experimental knowledge of God in Christ, nor of the way of salvation by Christ, nor of the work of the Spirit of God upon the heart, nor of the doctrines of the Gospel, nor any true sight and sense of his own state and condition;

[and] seek God; that is, "after God"; as the apostle in the same place explains it; after the knowledge of him and his ways, and communion with him; after the things of God, his interest and his glory: they do not seek after him in prayer, or by an attendance on his worship and ordinances; at least with their whole hearts, earnestly, diligently, constantly, and in the first place; nor do they seek after him in Christ, where he is only to be found; nor under the influence, and with the assistance of the blessed Spirit.

Psalms 14:3

Ver. 3. They are all gone aside,.... As bankrupts, having run out their whole stock, and into debt, and have nothing to pay, nor make composition with, and are obliged to abscond, as Adam, **Ge 3:8**. The words in Ps 53:3 are, "everyone of them is gone back"; from God; have revolted from him, and turned their backs upon him, and have gone back from his commandment, despised his law, and cast away his word. The Apostle Paul interprets it, "they are all gone out of the way"; out of God's way, into their own way; out of the path of truth, righteousness, and holiness, into the way of sin, error, darkness, and death; and with this agrees the interpretation of Aben Ezra, who adds, "out of the right way"; and of Kimchi and Ben Melech, whose gloss is, "out of the good way"; which is God's way, or the way of his commandments;

they are [all] together become filthy, or "stinking" {a}, like putrid and corrupt flesh; see Ps 38:5; and so "unprofitable", useless, and good for nothing, as the apostle renders it, **Ro 3:12**. Mankind are universally filthy and unclean; they are all of them defiled with sin, both in soul and body, in all the faculties of their souls and members of their bodies; and they are originally and naturally so; nor can anything cleanse them from their pollution but the blood of Christ;

[there is] none that doeth good, no, not one: this is repeated partly to asseverate more strongly the depravity of mankind, and partly to express the universality of it; that there is no exception to it in any that descend from Adam by ordinary generation. Here follows in the Septuagint version, according to the Vatican copy, all those passages quoted by the apostle, **Ro 3:13**; which have been generally supposed to have been taken from different parts of Scripture; so the Syriac scholiast says, in some ancient Greek copies are found eight more verses, and these are they, "Their throat", &c.

{a} wxlan "faetnerunt, putruerunt", Pagninus; "aut putruerunt", Vatabulus; "putidi vel foetidi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 14:4

Ver. 4. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?.... Of the being of God, of the nature of sin, and of the punishment due unto it? This question is put either by way of admiration, as Kimchi and Aben Ezra observe; the psalmist, or rather God speaking after the manner of men, wondering that there should be such ignorance and stupidity among men, as before expressed; or rather, as denying this to be the case, and affirming that they have knowledge, notwithstanding they think, and say, and do, as before related, as in **Ro 9:21**. Do not they know that there is a God? and that they are accountable to him for their actions? Verily they do: for this is said, not of sinners of the Gentiles; though even they, by the light of nature, know there is a God, and show the work of the law written in their hearts; and have a consciousness in them of good and evil; but of sinners in Zion, of the profligate part of mankind among the Jews, who had a divine revelation, by which they knew the one God of Israel; and a law, by which was the knowledge of sin, and whose sanctions were rewards and punishments. And it seems to design the chief among them, who had power over others, to eat them up and devour them; even their political and ecclesiastical governors see **Mic 3:1**, who, though they had no spiritual understanding, nor experimental knowledge of things, yet had a theoretical and speculative one; so that their sins were attended with this aggravation, that they were against light and knowledge, particularly what follows:

who eat up my people [as] they eat bread: not David's people, but the Lord's

people: see Ps 14:2; whom he chose for his people, who were his covenant people, and who professed his name, and were called by it; these the workers of iniquity ate up, devoured, and consumed; see
Jer 10:25; by reproaching and persecuting them, doing injury to their persons, property, and character: they devoured their persons, by using them cruelly and putting them to death; they devoured their substance, by spoiling them of it, and converting it to their own use, as the Pharisees are said to devour widows' houses and they destroyed their good names and characters with their devouring words: and this they did with as much ease, delight, and pleasure, and without any remorse of conscience, and as constantly, as a man eats his bread. Or the words may be rendered, "they eat up my people, they eat bread"; that is, though they act such a wicked and cruel part, yet they have bread to eat, and fulness of it; they are not in straits, nor afflicted and punished; and because they are not, they are hardened in their impiety and iniquity: or "they eat bread", after they have persecuted and devoured the Lord's people, with peace of mind, without remorse of conscience, as if they had done no iniquity, like the adulterous woman in Pr 30:20;

and call not upon the Lord; or pray to him, or serve and worship him; for invocation includes the whole worship of God; and this they do not, though they know him, and are daily supplied by him, and eat his bread. Some read this clause with the former, "they eat bread, and call not on the Lord"; as if their sin was, that when they eat bread, they did not ask a blessing upon it, nor return thanks to God for it, which ought to be done; but the accent "athnach" under mxl, "bread", will not admit of this sense, though it seems to be countenanced by the Targum.

Psalms 14:5

Ver. 5. There were they in great fear,.... This, shows that they had some knowledge of God, and consciousness of guilt, which they endeavoured to banish out of their minds by their fears of punishment; and these fears men of the most atheistic principles cannot get rid of. In Ps 53:5 it is added, "where no fear was": that is, any cause or reason for it: such men are often frightened at their own shadows, afraid to be in the dark alone, as Hobbes the atheist was. The wicked flee when no man pursues, and are chased by the sound of a shaken leaf; see
Pr 28:1; or where there was no fear of God before their eyes, nor on their hearts, as well as no regard to men; or where before there were perfect peace and security, and no apprehension or dread of any calamity, ruin, and

destruction;

for God [is] in the generation of the righteous, or "of the righteous One" {b}; which some understood of Jesus Christ the righteous: and though the age or generation in which he lived was a very wicked one, yet God was with him; as was seen by the doctrines he taught, and the miracles he wrought; and which filled the Jews with panic fears, lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation: but rather this is to be understood of the generation of the saints, who are righteous through the righteousness of Christ, and have the new man in them, which is created in righteousness and true holiness, and live soberly and righteously; these are sometimes called the generation of the upright, and of the children of God, and of them that seek him, Ps 112:2; in the midst of these God is, among them he affords his gracious presence, and is with them, for their help and assistance against their enemies: and as this makes them fearless of them, it fills their enemies with dread and terror; see **Jos 2:9**. The Targum renders it,

"the Word of the Lord is in the generation of the righteous."

{b} qydu "justi", Montanus, Gejerus.

Psalms 14:6

Ver. 6. You have shamed the counsel of the poor,.... The poor saints, the Lord's people, the generation of the righteous, who are generally the poor of this world; poor in spirit, and an afflicted people: and the counsel of them intends not the counsel which they give to others, but the counsel which they receive from the Lord, from the Spirit of counsel, which rests upon them, and with which they are guided; and this is to trust in the Lord, and to make him their refuge; and which is good advice, the best of counsel. Happy and safe are they that take it! But this is derided by wicked and ungodly men; they mock at the poor saints for it, and endeavour to shame them out of it; but hope makes not ashamed; see Ps 22:7;

because the Lord [is] his refuge: he betakes himself to him when all others fail; and finds him to be a refuge from the storm of impending calamities, and from all enemies.

Psalms 14:7

Ver. 7. O that the salvation of Israel [were come] out of Zion!.... By whom is meant the Messiah, the Saviour of Israel, of all the elect of God, whether Jews or Gentiles; and who is so called, because the salvation of them was put into his hands, and he undertook it; and because he is the Captain and Author of it, and it is in him, and in no other. He was to come out of Zion, out of Judea, from among the Jews; Zion being, as Kimchi observes, the head of the kingdom of Israel; see
Ro 11:26. Accordingly Christ did come of the Jews, and salvation was of them, **Ro 9:4**; and for his coming from hence, or for his incarnation, the psalmist most earnestly wishes: he was one of those kings, prophets, and righteous men, that desired to see the days of the Messiah, Mt 13:17. And what might move him so vehemently to wish for it, at this time, might be the sad corruption and depravity of mankind he had been describing, and the afflicted and distressed state of the saints;

when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people. The people of God are, in their unregeneracy, in a state of captivity to sin, Satan, and the law; the work of the Messiah, when he came, was to proclaim liberty to the captives, to set them free, to deliver them from their spiritual bondage: and this Christ has done; he has redeemed his people from all their sins, and from the curse of the law, and from the power of Satan, and has led captivity captive; and which has justly occasioned great joy in the redeemed ones, according to this prophecy:

Jacob shall rejoice, [and] Israel shall be glad; that is, the posterity of Jacob and Israel; not his natural, but spiritual seed, such who are the true sons of Jacob, Israelites indeed; these having faith and hope in the plenteous redemption of Christ, rejoice in the view of their interest in it; they the song of redeeming love now, and these ransomed ones will hereafter come to Zion with joy, and everlasting joy upon their heads. The Jews refer this to the times of the Messiah {c}.

{c} Baal Hatturim in Numb. xxv. 12. & Midrash Tillim in loc.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 15

A Psalm of David. As in the preceding psalm, according to Theodoret, the salvation of the inhabitants of Jerusalem is foretold, and the liberty of the captives; so in this advice is given to them, and the life they ought to live proposed, who should share in such benefits.

Ver. 1. Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?.... This question, with the following, is put by the psalmist in a view of the sad corruption and degeneracy of mankind described in the preceding psalm, which renders the sons of men unfit for the presence of God, and communion with him; and it is put to the Lord himself, the founder of Zion, who has set his King over this holy hill of his; who has enacted laws for the good of it, and brings his people thither, making them meet for it, and so is most proper to give the qualifications of such as are admitted here; for by the tabernacle is meant not the human nature of Christ, as in **Heb 8:2**; as some interpret it, and apply all the characters in the following verses to Christ; nor heaven itself, of which the holy place made with hands in the tabernacle and temple were a figure, **Heb 9:24**; for to "sojourn" {d} or "lodge", as in an inn, as the word rendered abide signifies, will not suit with that state and place which is fixed and immovable; but the church of God on earth, called a "tabernacle", in allusion to the tabernacle of Moses, where God granted his presence, sacrifices were offered up with acceptance, and the holy vessels were put; and which was mean without, but rich and glorious within: so God affords his gracious presence in his church, accepts the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise offered to him there; and here are the vessels of mercy placed, which are sanctified and meet for the master's use; and though it is mean and despicable in its outward appearance, in the eyes of men, it is all glorious within; see **So 1:6**; and this is the tabernacle of God, being of his building and preserving, and the place of his residence;

who shall dwell in thy holy hill? the same is here intended as in the preceding clause; the allusion is to Mount Zion, whither the ark of the Lord was brought in David's time, and on one part of which the temple was afterwards built: and the church may be compared to this hill, for its eminence and visibility in the world; for the holiness which God has put upon it, and for the immovableness of it; for though like, a tabernacle it may be carried from place to place, yet it is like an hill that can never be removed out of the world; it is built on a sure foundation, the Rock of ages. Now the purport of these questions is, who is a proper person to be an inhabitant of Zion? or to be a member of the church of God? the answer is in the following verses.

{d} wwny "peregrinabitur", Pagninus, Montanus; "diversabitur", Muis; so Ainsworth; "vel hospitabitur", Cocceius.

Psalms 15:2

Ver. 2. He that walketh uprightly,.... Or "perfectly" {e}; see Ge 17:1; not so as to be without sin entirely, but as not to be chargeable with any notorious crime, and living in it; moreover, perfection and uprightness often signify sincerity, and the phrase here may design an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile; whose faith is unfeigned, whose love is without dissimulation, whose hope is without hypocrisy, and his whole conduct without fraud and deceit; likewise such an one may be said to walk uprightly who walks according to the truth of the Gospel, and by faith on Christ and in Christ, as he has received him; and such an one is fit to be a member of a Gospel church;

and worketh righteousness; not in order to his justification before God; for not such an one, but he that trusts in the Lord for righteousness, shall inherit his holy mountain, Isa 57:12; but he that works the work of faith, and believes in the righteousness of Christ; who looks to it and receives it; that lays hold on it and pleads it as his justifying righteousness; he that does righteousness in this sense, is righteous as Christ is righteous, **1Jo 3:7**; and such an one is a proper person to dwell in his house; and who also by faith does works of righteousness, and whose life is a series and course of righteousness, as a fruit of his faith, and in consequence of his having laid hold on the righteousness of Christ;

and speaketh the truth in his heart; receives Christ who is the truth, and the Gospel the word of truth into his heart, and makes an hearty profession of the same before men; and both speaks according to his light in the Scriptures of truth, whenever he speaks of divine things; and in common conversation speaks truth from his heart to his neighbour, and does not speak with a double heart, or say one thing with his mouth, and intend another in his heart; see Ps 12:2; or endeavour to deceive persons, and impose a falsehood on them, or tell them lies; for as such a person is not fit to dwell in a private house, or to be in a civil society, much less is he a proper person to be in the house of God.

{e} Mymtw "perfectus", Montanus, Gejerus,

Psalms 15:3

Ver. 3. [He that] backbiteth not with his tongue,.... Is not a slanderer, a defamer, a tale bearer; a backbiter is one who privately, secretly, behind a man's back speaks evil of him, devours and destroys his credit and reputation: the word here used comes from lgr, which signifies the "foot", and denotes such a person who goes about from house to house, speaking things he should not, **1Ti 5:13**; and a word from this root signifies spies; and the phrase here may point at such persons who creep into houses, pry into the secrets of families, and divulge them, and oftentimes represent them in a false light. Such are ranked amongst the worst of men, and are very unfit to be in the society of the saints, or in a church of Christ; see **Ro 1:30**
2Co 12:20;

nor doeth evil to his neighbour: to any man whatever, good or bad, friend or foe, whether in a natural, civil, or spiritual relation, either by words or deeds, to his person, property, or good name;

nor taketh up, a reproach against his neighbour; does not raise any scandalous report on him himself, nor will he bear to hear one from another, much less will he spread one; nor will he suffer one to lie upon his neighbour, but will do all he can to vindicate him, and clear his character.

Psalms 15:4

Ver. 4. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned,.... A "vile" man is a very wicked, profligate, and abandoned creature, one that is to every good work reprobate; and such sometimes are in high places, Ps 12:8; and are greatly caressed and esteemed by the men of the world; but then, as they are an abomination to God, they should be despised by his people, let them be what they will as to their riches, honours, and wisdom among men; as Haman was by Mordecai, **Es 3:2**; and Ahab by Elisha, **2Ki 3:14**; and such who keep company with, and express a delight and pleasure in such sort of persons, ought by no means to have a place in the house of God. Some understand this of a good man being "despised in his own eyes", as it may be rendered {f}; on account of his vileness, and the imperfection of his obedience, and as expressive of his great humility, esteeming others better than himself; and who renounces himself, and is rejected by himself, having a very mean opinion of himself; which is the sense of the Targum, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi; and which is no bad sense, though the former is countenanced by what follows;

but he honoureth them that fear the Lord; who have the covenant grace of fear wrought in their hearts, and serve the Lord with reverence and godly fear; that is, who are truly religious and godly persons; these such who are fit members of the church of Christ love heartily, esteem of highly, and honour them by thinking and speaking well of them, and behaving with great respect and decency to them; see Ro 12:10;

[he that] sweareth to [his own] hurt, and changeth not; having taken a solemn oath, so sacred is it with him, and such a regard has he to the name of God, by whom he swears, that though it is to his civil loss and detriment, yet he will not break it and depart from it, but punctually observe it: some render it, "he that swears to his neighbour, and changeth not" {g}; he that is just to his word, faithful to his promises, that exactly fulfils all the obligations he lays himself under unto others; he that is honest and upright in all his dealings. The Jewish writers interpret this clause of a man's vowing and swearing to afflict himself by fasting, which, though it is to the emaciating of his body, yet he strictly observes his vow or oath; but this is foreign from the scope of the place: it might be rendered, "he that swears to do evil, and does not recompense or perform" {h}, it being better to break through such an oath than to keep it; see **Le 5:4**.

{f} wynyeb hzbn "qui despicit se in oculis suis", so some in Vatablus; "ille est despectus in propriis oculis, reprobatus", Gussetius, p. 453. {g} erhl tw plhsion autou, Sept. "proximo suo", V. L. Sic. Syr. Ar. Aethiop. {h} So Ainsworth.

Psalms 15:5

Ver. 5. [He that] putteth not out his money to usury,.... To the poor, in an extravagant and exorbitant way, by which he bites, devours, and destroys his little substance, and sadly afflicts and distresses him; see Ex 22:25; otherwise, to lend money on moderate interest, and according to the laws, customs, and usages of nations, and to take interest for it, is no more unlawful than to take interest for houses and land; yea, it is according to the law of common justice and equity, that if one man lends money to another to trade with, and gain by, that he should have a proportionate share in the gain of such a trade; but the design of this passage, and the law on which it is founded, is, to forbid all exactions and oppressions of the poor, and all avaricious practices, and to encourage liberality and beneficence; and such who are covetous, and bite and oppress the poor, are not fit for church communion; see **1Co 5:11**;

nor taketh reward against the innocent; either to swear falsely against him, or to pass a wrong sentence on him; see 1Sa 12:3;

he that doeth these [things] shall never be moved; from the tabernacle of God, and his holy hill; he is fit to be a member of the church of God, and an inhabitant of Zion; and he shall dwell and abide there, he shall be a pillar which shall never go out, **Re 3:12**; he shall finally persevere, through the grace of God; he shall hold on and out unto the end: and though he may fall through infirmity and temptation into sin, and that many times, yet he shall not finally and totally fall, **2Pe 1:10**; but shall be as Mount Zion which can never be removed,
Ps 125:1; The words should be rendered, since the accent "athnach" is on hla, "these things", thus; "he that doeth these things", not only what is mentioned in this verse, but in the foregoing, "he", I say, "shall never be moved".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 16

Michtam of David. This is a new title, not met with before, though it afterwards is prefixed to "five" psalms running, the fifty sixth, the fifty seventh, the fifty eighth, the fifty ninth, and the sixtieth psalms. Some take the word "michtam" to be the name of a musical instrument, as Kimchi on **Ps 4:1**; others the name of one of the tunes, as Jarchi; and others the tune of a song which began with this word, as Aben Ezra observes, to which this psalm was sung; the Septuagint translate it "stelography", or an inscription upon a pillar; such an one as is erected by conquerors, as Theodoret observes, having writing on it declaring the victory obtained; suggesting that the psalm, or the subject of it, the death and resurrection of Christ, was worthy to be inscribed on a pillar of marble; and the Targum renders it, "a right engraving", that deserves to be engraven in a monument of brass: but what seems to be the best sense of the word is, that it signifies a work of gold, and may be rendered, "a golden [psalm] of David"; so called, either because it was a dear and favourite song of his; or from the subject matter, which is more valuable and precious than the most fine gold: the title of it in the Syriac and Arabic versions is,

"concerning the election of the church, and the resurrection of Christ;"

and certain it is from Ps 16:10, the resurrection of Christ is spoken of in it, as is clear from the testimonies of two apostles, Peter and Paul, who cite it in proof of it, **Ac 2:25**; and since there is but one person speaking throughout the psalm, and Christ is he that speaks in Ps 16:10, and which cannot be understood of David, nor of any other person but Christ, the whole of the psalm must be interpreted of him.

Ver. 1. Preserve me, O God,.... Prayer is proper to Christ as man; he offered up many prayers and supplications to Cost, even his Father, and his God, and as the strong and mighty God, as the word {i} here used is commonly rendered by interpreters; with whom, all things are possible, and who is able to save; see **Heb 5:7**; and this petition for preservation was suitable to him and his case, and was heard and answered by God; he was very remarkably preserved in his infancy from the rage and fury of Herod; and very wonderfully was his body preserved and supported in the wilderness under a fast of forty days and forty nights together, and from being torn to pieces by the wild beasts among which he was, and from the temptations of Satan, with which he was there assaulted; and throughout the whole of his ministry he was preserved from being hindered in the execution of his office, either by the flatteries, or menaces, or false charges of his enemies; and though his life was often attempted they could not take it away before his time: and whereas Christ is in this psalm represented as in the view of death and the grave, this petition may be of the same kind with those in Joh 12:27; and put up with the same submission to the will of God; and at least may intend divine help and support in his sufferings and death, preservation from corruption in the grave, and the resurrection of him from the dead; and it may also include his concern for the preservation of his church, his other self, and the members of it, his apostles, disciples, and all that did or should believe in his name, for whom he prayed after this manner a little before his death; see Lu 22:31;

for in thee do I put my trust: or "have hoped" {k}; the graces of faith and hope were implanted in the heart of Christ, as man, who had the gifts and graces of the Spirit without measure bestowed on him, and these very early appeared in him, and showed themselves in a very lively exercise, Ps 22:7; and were in a very eminent manner exercised by him a little before his death, in the view of it, and when he was under his sufferings, and hung upon the cross, **Isa 1:6** Mt 27:46; and this his trust and confidence in God alone, and not in any other, is used as a reason or argument for his preservation and safety.

{i} la "Deus fortis seu potens", Muis; "Deus omnipotens", Cocceius, Michaelis. {k} Kb ytyox "speravi in te", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 16:2

Ver. 2. [O my soul], thou hast said unto the Lord,.... Some take these to be the words of David speaking to the church, who had owned the Lord to be her Lord, and had declared what follows; others think they are the words of God the Father to his Son, suggesting to him what he had said; but they are rather an apostrophe, or an address of Christ to his own soul; and the phrase, "O my soul", though not in the original text, is rightly supplied by our translators, and which is confirmed by the Targum, and by the Jewish commentators, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi;

thou [art] my Lord; Christ, as man, is a creature made by God; his human nature is the true tabernacle which God pitched and not man, and on this consideration he is his Lord, being his Creator; and as Mediator Christ is his servant, and was made under the law to him, obeyed him, and submitted to his will in all things; so that he not only in words said he was his Lord, but by deeds declared him to be so;

my goodness [extendeth] not to thee; such who suppose that David here speaks in his own person, or in the person of other believers, or that the church here speaks, differently interpret these words: some render them, "my goodness [is] not above thee" {l}; it is far inferior to thine, it is not to be mentioned with it, it is nothing in comparison of it; all my goodness, happiness, and felicity lies, in thee,
Ps 73:25; others, "I have no goodness without thee": the sense is the same as if it was "I have said", as read the Greek, Vulgate Latin, and Oriental versions, and so Apollinarius; I have none but what comes from thee; what I have is given me by thee, which is the sense of the Targum; see **Jas 1:17**; others, "my goodness is not upon thee" {m}; does not lie upon thee, or thou art not obliged to bestow the blessings of goodness on me; they are not due to me, they spring from thy free grace and favour; to this sense incline Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi; see Lu 17:10; others, "thou hast no need of my goodness"; nor wilt it profit thee, so R. Joseph Kimchi; see Job 22:2; or the words may be rendered, "O my goodness", or "thou art my good, nothing is above thee" {n}; no goodness in any superior to God. But they are the words of Christ, and to be understood of his goodness; not of his essential goodness as God, nor of his providential goodness, the same with his Father's; but of his special goodness, and the effect of it to his church and people; and denotes his love, grace, and good will towards them, shown in his incarnation, sufferings, and death; and the blessings of goodness which come thereby; such as a justifying righteousness, forgiveness of sin, peace, and reconciliation, redemption,

salvation, and eternal life. Now though God is glorified by Christ in his incarnation, sufferings, and death, and in the work of man's redemption, yet he stood in no need of the obedience and sufferings of his Son; he could have glorified his justice another way, as he did in not sparing the angels that sinned, in drowning the old world, and in burning Sodom and Gomorrah, and in other instances of his vengeance; though there is glory to God in the highest in the affair of salvation by Christ, yet the good will is to men; though the debt of obedience and sufferings was paid to the justice of God, whereby that is satisfied and glorified, yet the kindness in paying the debt was not to God but to men, described in Ps 16:8.

{l} Kyle lb ytbwj "bonum meum non est supra te", Gejerus. {m} "Bonum meum non est super te", Montanus, Cocceius. {n} So Gussetius, p. 299.

Psalms 16:3

Ver. 3. [But] to the saints that [are] in the earth,.... Who are sanctified or set apart by God the Father in election; whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ in redemption, and who are sanctified or made holy by the Spirit of God in the effectual calling; and who live a holy life and conversation: these are said to be "in the earth", not to distinguish them from the saints in heaven, to whom the goodness of Christ extends as to them, unless it be to distinguish them from the angels in heaven, who are called saints, De 33:2; as Aben Ezra observes; but to point out the place of their abode, scattered up and down in the earth; and to show that love, grace, goodness, and kindness of Christ reaches to them in the present state of things, notwithstanding all their meanness and imperfection in themselves, and their despicableness in the eyes of others; see Joh 13:1;

and [to] the excellent; the same with the saints, who though reckoned by men the faith of the world, and the offscouring of all things, are in high esteem with Christ; they are "nobles" {o} in his account, as the word is rendered in Jer 30:21; they are princes in all the earth, and these princes are kings; they are made kings and priests unto God by Christ; they wear and live like kings, and have the attendance, power, riches, and glory of kings; they are guarded by angels, they have power with God, they are rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom;

in whom [is] all my delight; Christ's delights were with these sons of men before the world was, and have always continued with them; they are his

"Hepbzibah" and "Beulah", as in Isa 62:4; hence he became incarnate, and suffered and died for them, and makes application of all the blessings of his grace and goodness to them.

{o} yryda "magnificis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Rivetus; "nobilibus delectationis meae", Gejerus; "ducibus eorum", Cocceius; so Michaelis.

Psalms 16:4

Ver. 4. Their sorrows shall be multiplied,.... Not the sorrows of the saints and excellent ones, by seeing the idolatry of men, as Aben Ezra interprets it; but the sorrows of such

[that] hasten [after] another [god]; a false god, an idol, to serve and worship it; for, generally speaking, idolaters are more forward, eager, and hasty to attend a false worship, than the worshippers of the true God are to attend his service: now their sorrows are many, even in their worship, by cutting their bodies with knives and lancets, as the worshippers of Baal did; and by sacrificing their own children, which, notwithstanding their rash and precipitate zeal, could not fail of giving them pain and uneasiness; and, besides temporal punishments inflicted on them for their idolatry by God, and stings of conscience, which must sometimes attend them, the wrath of God lies upon them, and they will have their portion in the lake of fire, and the smoke of their torment will ascend for ever and ever. Some render the words, "their idols are multiplied"; and so the Chaldee paraphrase,

"they multiply their idols, and after that hasten to offer their sacrifices;"

when men leave the true God, they know not where to stop; the Heathens had not less than thirty thousand gods, and the Jews when they fell into idolatry ran in the same way, **Jer 2:28**. The word "god" is not in the original text, though the supplement is countenanced by the Jewish writers {p}, who interpret it in this way; but I rather think the text is to be understood not of Heathen idolaters, but of unbelieving Jews, who, rejecting the true Messiah, hasten after another Messiah, king, and saviour; when Jesus the true Messiah came they received him not; but when another came in his own name they were eager to embrace him, **Joh 5:43**; and to this day they are hastening after another; and in their daily prayers pray that the coming of the Messiah might be hdyhmb, "in haste", in their days {q}; and the sense of the passage is, that the sorrows of the Jews, rejecting the Messiah and hastening after another, would come thick and fast upon them, until wrath came upon them to the uttermost, Mt 24:6 **1Th 2:16**; and it holds good of all, whether Jews or Gentiles, that hasten after another saviour; that say to the works of their hands, that they are their gods, or go about to establish a righteousness of their own, or seek for life and salvation by their own doings; these, sooner or later, will lie down in sorrow, Isa 50:11;

their drink offerings of blood will I not offer: meaning not the libations of the Gentiles, which were not wine, according to the law, Nu 15:10; but blood, even sometimes human blood; but the sacrifices of the Jews, which were either got by blood, murders and robberies, and on that account were hateful to God, Isa 61:8; or rather the sacrifices of bloodthirsty persons, whose hands were full of blood, **Isa 1:11**; and such were the offerings of the priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, in Christ's time, who were the children of them that killed the prophets, and sought after the blood of Christ. Or it may be rendered, "I will not offer their drink offerings because of blood" {r}; meaning his own blood shed for the remission of sins, which being obtained, there remains no more offering for sin; and so the words may express the abolition of all legal sacrifices, and the causing of them to cease through the blood and sacrifice of Christ. This shows the person speaking to be a priest, and therefore could not be David, but must be the Messiah, who is a priest after the order of Melchizedek; and who had a better sacrifice to other up than any of the offerings of the Jews, even his own self, by which he has put away sin for ever. He adds,

nor take up their names into my lips; not the names of idol deities, nor of their worshippers, but of the Jews that rejected him as the Messiah, for whom he would not pray, Joh 17:9; and so as he refused to offer their sacrifices, he would not perform the other part of his priestly office for them in intercession; though this may also have respect to the rejection of the Jewish nation as the people of God; writing a "Loammi", **Ho 1:9**, upon them, declaring them to be no longer the children of the living God; leaving their names for a curse, a taunt, and a proverb in every place; expressing the utmost abhorrence of them, and showing the utmost indignation at them, as persons whose names were not worthy or fit to be mentioned, **Eph 5:3**.

{p} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Ben Melech, & Abendana in loc. {q} Seder Tephillot, fol. 128. 2. {r} Mdm "propter sanguinem", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 16:5

Ver. 5. The Lord [is] the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup,.... This is said by Christ as a priest, and in allusion to the Levitical priests, who had no inheritance in the land of Canaan with their brethren, but the Lord was their part and portion, and their inheritance, Nu 18:20; and it expresses the strong love and affection Christ had for the Lord as his God, the delight and pleasure he had in him, and the satisfaction he had in the enjoyment of him and communion with him, and that it was his meat and drink to serve him, and to do his will; and though his goodness did not extend to him, yet his goodness and happiness as man lay in him: unless the sense should be,

"the Lord is he who gives me the portion of mine inheritance;"

meaning his church and people, all the elect of God, who are Christ's portion and inheritance, given him by the Father; see De 32:9; And assigns to me my cup, as of blessings, so of sorrows and sufferings, which being measured out, filled up, and put into his hand by his Father, he freely took it, Joh 18:11;

thou maintainest my lot; that is, either his interest in God himself, as his covenant God, which always continued; or the lot of goods, of grace and glory, put into his hands for his people, which always remains; or rather the saints themselves, who, as they are Christ's portion and inheritance, so they are his lot; in allusion to the land of Canaan, which was divided by lot: these Jehovah took hold of, kept, preserved, and upheld, as the word {s} signifies; so that they shall never totally and finally fall and perish; and this sense is countenanced by what follows.

{s} Kymwt "sustentas", Musculus, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth; "sustentans", Montanus, Michaelis; "tenuisti", Cocceius; "tenendo quasi sustentans", Gejerus.

Psalms 16:6

Ver. 6. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant [places],.... The allusion is to the measuring of land by lines, and appropriating each part to the proper owners; and lines design the land that is measured out by them, and here the church and people of God, the chosen ones who are given to Christ, as his portion and inheritance; and the sense is, that Christ's portion lies among or in pleasant persons; such as were so to him, as he saw them in his Father's purposes and decrees; and as they are clothed in his righteousness, and washed in his blood; and as they are adorned with the graces of his Spirit; and as they will be as a bride adorned for him in the New Jerusalem state, for rather persons than places are here meant: though as the bounds of the saints' habitations are set, and they are known to Christ, so they were pleasant to him, and he took delight and rejoiced in the very spots of ground where he knew they would dwell, **Pr 8:31**; and the word "places" is supplied by Aben Ezra and Kimchi: but the former sense seems best, and agrees with what follows;

yea, I have a goodly heritage: so the Lord's people are called, **1Pe 5:3**; these are Christ's heritage, his peculiar treasure, his jewels, with whom he is greatly delighted and well pleased; more than men are with their gold and silver, houses and land, and their greatest wealth and substance: these persons are the inheritance with which he is contented and fully satisfied.

Psalms 16:7

Ver. 7. I will bless the Lord,.... As prayer, so thanksgiving belongs to Christ, as man and Mediator; see Mt 11:25; and here he determines to praise the Lord, and give thanks to him for counsel and instruction:

who hath given me counsel; for though he himself is the Counsellor, with respect to his people, yet as man he received counsel from God, and the spirit of counsel rested on him, Isa 11:2; and fitted him for and directed him in the execution of his prophetic office; for the doctrine he taught was not his own, but his Father's; and he said nothing of himself but what his Father taught him, and instructed him to speak, **Joh 6:16**. And he also gave him counsel about the execution of his priestly office, or about his sufferings and death, and drinking of the cup, which he, with submission to the divine will, desired might pass from him; but having advice in this matter, most cheerfully and courageously yielded to take it, see
Mt 26:39;

my reins also instruct me in the night seasons; when engaged in prayer to God, in which he sometimes continued a whole night together, **Lu 6:12**; and especially in that dark and dismal night in which he was betrayed, when it was the hour and power of darkness with his enemies; then, his inward parts being influenced by the spirit of wisdom and counsel, directed him how to behave and conduct himself. Or "the reins" being the seat of the affections, and being put for them, may signify, that his strong affection for God, and love to his people, put him upon and moved him to take the steps he did, to deliver up himself into the hands of sinful men, in order to suffer and die for his friends, and obtain eternal salvation for them.

Psalms 16:8

Ver. 8. I have set the Lord always before me, Not his fear only, or the book of the law, as Jarchi interprets it, but the Lord himself; or, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face", **Ac 2:26**; as Christ is set before men in the Gospel, to look unto as the object of faith and hope, to trust in and depend upon for life and salvation; so Jehovah the Father is the object which Christ set before him, and looked unto in the whole course of his life here on earth; he had always an eye to his glory, as the ultimate end of all his actions; and to his will, his orders, and commands, as the rule of them; and to his purposes, and counsel, and covenant, to accomplish them; and to his power, truth, and faithfulness, to assist, support, and encourage him in all his difficulties and most distressed circumstances;

because [he is] at my right hand: to counsel and instruct, to help, protect, and defend: the phrase is expressive of the nearness of God to Christ, his presence with him, and readiness to assist and stand by him against all his enemies; see Ps 109:31; so the Targum paraphrases it, "because his Shechinah rests upon me";

I shall not be moved: as he was not from his place and nation, from the duty of his office, and the execution of it, by all the threats and menaces of men; nor from the fear, worship, and service of God, by all the temptations of Satan; nor from the cause of his people he had espoused, by all the terrors of death, the flaming sword of justice, and the wrath of God; but, in the midst and view of all, stood unshaken and unmoved; see Isa 42:4.

Psalms 16:9

Ver. 9. Therefore my heart is glad,.... Because he had the Lord always in view; he was at his right hand, for his support and assistance, as well as because of what is expressed in the next verses: this is the same with rejoicing in spirit, Lu 10:21; it denotes an inward joy, and fulness of it, because of the Lord's presence with him; see **Ac 2:28**;

and my glory rejoiceth; meaning either his soul, which is the most glorious and noble part of man, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech interpret it; or rather his tongue, as in **Ac 2:26**; the faculty of speaking in man being what gives him a superior glory and excellency to other creatures, and is that whereby he glorifies God; and so the word is often used in this book; see Ps 30:12; and here the phrase designs Christ's glorifying God, and singing his praise with joyful lips, among his disciples, a little before his sufferings and death;

my flesh also shall rest in hope; in the grave, which, as it is a resting place to the members of Christ, from all their sorrow, toil, and labour here; so it was to Christ their head, who rested in it on the Jewish sabbath, that day of rest, and that berth "in safety" {t}, as the word used may signify, and in of his resurrection from the dead, as follows.

{t} xjbl "in tuto", Tigurine version; "secure", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "in confidence", Ainsworth.

Psalms 16:10

Ver. 10. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,.... Meaning, not in the place of the damned, where Christ never went, nor was; for at his death his soul was committed to his Father, and was the same day in paradise: but rather, "sheol" here, as "hades" in the Near Testament, signifies the state of the dead, the separate state of souls after death, the invisible world of souls, where Christ's soul was; though it was not left there, nor did it continue, but on the third day returned to its body again; though it seems best of all to interpret it of the grave, as the word is rendered in Ge 42:38; and then by his "soul" must be meant, not the more noble part of his human nature, the soul, in distinction from the body; for as it died not, but went to God, it was not laid in the grave; but either he himself, in which sense the word "soul" is sometimes used, even for a man's self, **Ps 3:2**. For it might be truly said of him, God's Holy One, that he was laid in the grave, though not left there; or rather his dead body, for so the word "nephesh" is rendered in **Nu 9:6**; so "anima" is used in Latin authors {u}: this was laid in the grave; for Joseph having begged it of Pilate, took it down from the cross, and laid it in his own new tomb; though it was the will of God it should not be left there, but be raised from the dead, as it was on the third day, before it was corrupted, as follows:

neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption; that is, to lie so long in the grave as to putrefy and be corrupted; wherefore he was raised from the dead on the third day, according to the Scriptures, before the time bodies begin to be corrupted; see Joh 11:39; and this was owing not to the care of Joseph or Nicodemus, in providing spices to preserve it, but of God who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; and who would not suffer his body to be corrupted, because he was holy, and because he was his Holy One; that so as there was no moral corruption in him, there should be no natural corruption in him; so the Jewish Midrash {w} interprets it, that

"no worm or maggot should have power over him;"

which is not true of David, nor of any but the Messiah. This character of "Holy One" eminently belongs to Christ above angels and men, yea, it is often used of the divine Being, and it agrees with Christ in his divine nature, and is true of him as man; he is the holy thing, the holy child Jesus; his nature is pure and spotless, free from the taint of original sin; his life and conversation were holy and harmless, he did no sin, nor knew any, nor could any be found in him by men or devils; his doctrines were holy, and tended to promote holiness of life; all his works are holy, and such is the work of redemption, which is wrought out in consistence with and to the glory of the holiness and righteousness of God; Christ is holy in all his offices, and is the fountain of holiness to his people; and he is God's Holy One, he has property in him as his Son, and as Mediator, and even as an Holy One; for he was sanctified and sent into the world by him, being anointed with the holy oil of his Spirit without measure. The word may be rendered, a "merciful" {x} or "liberal" and "beneficent one": for Christ is all this; he is a merciful as well as a faithful high priest, and he generously distributes grace and glory to his people.

{u} "--animamque sepulchro coudimus--". Virgil. Aeneid. 3. v. 67. {w} Apud Kimchi in v. 9. {x} Kydox "misericordem tuum", Pagninus, Montanus; "beneficus tuus", Piscator.

Psalms 16:11

Ver. 11. Thou wilt show me the path of life,.... Not the way of life and salvation for lost sinners, which is Christ himself; but the resurrection of the dead, which is a passing from death to life; and was shown to Christ, not doctrinally, or by illuminating his mind, and leading him into the doctrine of it, for so he himself has brought it to light by the Gospel; practically and experimentally, by raising him the dead, or by causing him to pass from death to life; and he was the first to whom the path of life was shown in this sense, or the that who ever trod in it, and so has led the way for others: hence he is called the that fruits of them that slept, the firstborn and first begotten from the dead; for though others were raised before, yet not to an immortal life, never to die more, as he was; now the view, the faith, and hope of this, of not being left in the grave so long as to see corruption, and of being raised from the dead to an immortal life, caused joy and gladness in Christ, at the time of his sufferings and death, as well as what follows;

in thy presence [is] fulness of joy: Christ, being raised from the dead, ascended to heaven, and was received up into glory into his Father's presence, and is glorified with his own self, with his glorious presence, for which he prayed, Joh 17:5; and which fills his human nature with fulness of joy, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory; see **Ac 2:28**; and as it is with the head it will be with the members in some measure; now the presence of God puts more joy and gladness into them than anything else can do; but as yet their joy is not full; but it will be when they shall enter into the joy of their Lord, into the presence of God in the other world then everlasting joy will be upon their heads;

at thy right hand [there are] pleasures for evermore; Christ being entered into heaven is set down at the right hand of God in human nature, an honour which is not conferred on any of the angels, **Heb 1:13**; where the man Christ Jesus is infinitely delighted with the presence of God, the never fading joys of heaven, the company of angels and glorified saints; here he sits and sees of the travail of his soul; he prolongs his days and sees his seed, souls called by grace, and brought to glory one after another, until they are all brought in, in whom is all his delight; and which was the joy set before him at the time of his sufferings and death: or the words may be rendered "in thy right are pleasant things for ever" {y}, and may design those gifts and graces, which Christ, being exalted at the right hand of God, received from thence and gives to men, for the use and service, of his church and people, in the several successive ages of time; and so Aben Ezra takes the words to be an allusion to a man's giving pleasant gifts to his friend with his right hand.

{y} xun Knymyb twmyen "amoenorum quae sunt in dextera tua perpetuo", Cocceius; "delectationes in dextera tua usque in seculum", Musculas.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 17

A Prayer of David. This prayer was put up by David either in his own person, on his own account, praying to God for the vindication of his cause, and for salvation and deliverance from his enemies; or in the person of the Messiah, whose type he was, and of the whole church, so Jerom of old interpreted it; and the title of it in the Arabic version is,

"a prayer in the person of a perfect man, and of Christ himself, and of everyone that is redeemed by him;"

in which preservation and protection are prayed for, and hope of eternal life is expressed. It was written, according to Theodoret, when David suffered persecution from Saul.

Ver. 1. Hear the right, O Lord,.... The psalmist appeals to the Lord as a Judge, sitting on the throne judging right, that he would hear his cause litigated between him and his adversaries, determine and give the decisive sentence about it; so Christ committed himself to him that judgeth righteously, **1Pe 2:23**; for by "right" may be meant his right and cause, or his righteous cause, as in **Ps 9:4**; unless rather his righteous prayer should be intended, so the Targum paraphrases it, "my prayer in righteousness"; not presented for the sake of his own righteousness, but on account of the righteousness of Christ, and for the vindication of his righteous cause before men: the Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it "my righteousness", meaning his righteous cause; but rather the word may be rendered "righteousness" {z}, or the "righteous one", and may design the psalmist himself, who was a righteous person, and such the Lord hears; or Christ, whose name is the Lord our righteousness, Jer 23:6; and who, as an advocate or intercessor for himself and for his people, is Jesus Christ the righteous, **1Jo 2:1**. The Septuagint version takes it to be an epithet of the Lord himself, translating it, "O Lord of my righteousness", as in **Ps 4:1**; and so the Syriac version, "hear, O holy Lord"; and in this manner does Christ address his father in prayer, Joh 17:11; and the consideration of the holiness and righteousness of God is of use in prayer to glorify God, and to command a proper awe and reverence of him;

attend unto my cry; the word for "cry" signifies both a noise made in a way of joy and grief; wherefore the Chaldee paraphrase renders it, "attend to my praise", or hymn of praise, and which arises from sorrow and distress; and intends not mental prayer attended with groanings which cannot be uttered, but vocal prayer expressed in a loud and mournful manner, signifying the distress the person is in, and his earnestness and importunacy for help; and of this sort were some of Christ's prayers; see **Heb 5:7**;

give ear unto my prayer, [that goeth] not out of feigned lips; hypocritical and deceitful ones; but this went forth from his heart, which was lifted up with his hands to God, to whom he drew nigh with a true heart, and called upon him in the sincerity and uprightness of his soul; and of this sort were all Christ's prayers, in whose mouth there is no guile: the various expressions, "hear, attend, give ear", which signify the same thing, show the distress the supplicant was in, the fervency of his prayer, and his vehement and earnest desire to be heard and answered immediately; and since the accent "athnach" is upon the word ytlpt, "my prayer", this last clause is not to be joined only to that, but refers to all that is said before; as that his "right" and his "cry", as well as his prayer, were unfeigned.

{z} qdu "justitiam", Vatablus, Cocceius, Gejerus; to dikaion, Aquila in Drusius; "justitiam", i.e. "me qui sum justus", Piscator.

Psalms 17:2

Ver. 2. Let my sentence come forth from thy presence,.... Not of condemnation, such as came forth from God and passed on Adam and all his posterity, **Ro 5:12**; though such an one was executed on Christ, as he was the surety and representative of his people; but of justification, which came forth from God and passed on Christ, when he rose from the dead, and upon his people in him, **1Ti 3:16**. Here it chiefly designs the vindication of the innocence of the psalmist before men; and his request is, that as he was fully persuaded that he was clear of the things he was charged with in the sight of God, that he would openly and publicly make him appear so before men; that he would bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noonday, Ps 37:6; and of which he made no doubt but he would; so Christ, though he was traduced by men, knew he should be justified by his Father, and by his children, Isa 50:8;

let thine eyes behold the things that are equal; which is not to be understood barely of the eyes of his omniscience; for these behold things both equal and unequal, good and evil, things which agree and disagree with the law of God, the rule of righteousness and equity; but of his approbation of them, and that he would some way or other testify that approbation; for the petition intends the favouring of his just and equal cause, and making it to appear to be so.

Psalms 17:3

Ver. 3. Thou hast proved mine heart,.... This properly belongs to God, who is the searcher of the heart and reins, and is desired by all good men; and though God has no need to make use of any means to know the heart, and what is in it; yet in order to know, or rather to make known, what is in the hearts of his people, he proves them sometimes by adversity, as he did Abraham and Job, and sometimes by prosperity, by mercies given forth in a wonderful way, as to the Israelites in the wilderness, **De 8:2**; sometimes by suffering false prophets and false teachers to be among them, De 13:3; and sometimes by leaving corruptions in them, and them to their corruptions, as he left the Canaanites in the land, and as he left Hezekiah to his own heart, **Jud 2:22**. In one or other or more of these ways God proved the heart of David, and found him to be a man after his own heart; and in the first of these ways he proved Christ, who was found faithful to him that appointed him, and was a man approved of God;

thou hast visited [me] in the night; God visited and redeemed his people in the night of Jewish darkness; he visits and calls them by his grace in the night of unregeneracy; and so he visits with his gracious presence in the night of desertion; and he often visits by granting counsel, comfort, and support, in the night of affliction, which seems to be intended here; thus he visited the human nature of Christ in the midst of his sorrows and sufferings, when it was the Jews' hour and power of darkness. Elsewhere God is said to visit every morning, **Job 7:18**;

thou hast tried me; as silver and gold are tried in the furnace; thus the people of God, and their graces in them, are tried by afflictions; so David was tried, and in this manner Christ himself was tried; wherefore he is called the tried stone, Isa 28:16;

[and] shalt find nothing; or "shalt not find": which is variously supplied; some "thy desire", or what is well pleasing to thee, so Jarchi; or "thou hast not found me innocent", as Kimchi; others supply it quite the reverse, "and iniquity is not found in me", as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions; or "thou hast not found iniquity in me", as the Syriac and Arabic versions; to which agrees the Chaldee paraphrase, "and thou hast not found corruption"; which

must be understood, not as if there was no sin and corruption in David; for he often makes loud complaints and large confessions of his sins, and earnestly prays for the forgiveness of them; but either that there was no sin in his heart which he regarded, Ps 66:18; which he nourished and cherished, which he indulged and lived in; or rather there was no such crime found in him, which his enemies charged him with; see **Ps 7:3**. This is true of Christ in the fullest sense; no iniquity was ever found in him by God, by men or devils, Joh 14:30 **1Pe 2:22**; and also of his people, as considered in him, being justified by his righteousness, and washed in his blood, Jer 50:20; though otherwise, as considered in themselves, they themselves find sin and corruption abounding in them, **Ro 7:18**;

I am purposed [that] my mouth shall not transgress; by murmuring against God, on account of his visitation and fiery trials, or by railing at men for their false charges and accusations; this resolution was taken up by the psalmist in the strength of divine grace, and was kept by him, Ps 39:9; so Christ submitted himself patiently to the will of God without repining, and when reviled by men reviled not again, Lu 22:42; and from hence may be learned, that the laws of God may be transgressed by words as well as by works, and that the one as well as the other should be guarded against; see Ps 39:1.

Psalms 17:4

Ver. 4. Concerning the works of men,.... Of wicked men, as to what respects and concerns them, or in the midst of them; in the midst of a wicked generation of men, and their filthy conversation; who appear to be so,

by the word of thy lips; the law of God, the Scriptures of truth, the rule and standard of faith and practice, which show what works are good and what are not; by the use, help, and benefit of this;

I have kept [me from] the paths of the destroyer; such is the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning; antichrist, whose name is Abaddon and Apollyon, both which signify a destroyer; false teachers, and all wicked men: the "paths" of such are their wicked principles and practices, their damnable errors and heresies, their sins and lusts, which make up the broad road that leads to destruction: these the psalmist "kept" or "observed" {a}, for the words "me" and "from" are not in the original text; and the sense is, that he took notice of them, and avoided them, and, as a faithful prince and magistrate, forbad his subjects walking in them, and restrained them from them, making the word of God the rule of his conduct.

{a} ytrmv "custodivi", Pagninus, Montanus; "observavi", Musculus, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus; so Ainsworth; "vel prohibui", Muis.

Psalms 17:5

Ver. 5. Hold up my goings in thy paths,.... Which being spoken by David in his own person, and for himself, shows that he was conscious of his own weakness to keep himself in the ways of God, and to direct his steps therein; and that he was sensible of, the need he stood in of divine power to uphold and support him in them;

[that] my footsteps slip not; out of the paths of truth and duty, of faith and holiness; of which there is danger, should a man be left to himself, and destitute of divine direction and aid; see Ps 73:2; and though Christ had no moral weakness in him, and was in no danger of falling into sin, or slipping out of the ways of God; yet these words may be applied to him in a good sense, as considered in human nature, and attended with the sinless infirmities of it, he being God's servant, whom he upheld, and of whom he gave his angels charge to keep him in all his ways, Isa 42:1.

Psalms 17:6

Ver. 6. I have called upon thee,.... In prayer. This had been the constant practice of the psalmist, and he still continued in it;

for thou wilt hear me, O God; God is a God hearing prayer; he is used to hear his people, and they have frequent experience of it, and they may be assured that whatsoever they ask according to his will, and in the name of Christ, he will hear; and such an assurance is a reason engaging the saints to a constant calling upon God, Ps 116:2; and such confidence of being always heard Christ had, Joh 11:41;

incline thine ear unto me, [and hear] my speech; meaning his prayer, which he now directed to him in full assurance of being heard, and is as follows.

Psalms 17:7

Ver. 7. Show thy marvellous loving kindness,.... Such is the lovingkindness of God to his people in Christ; which is sovereign, free, special, distinguishing, everlasting, and unchangeable; it is better than life, and passes knowledge; and which is set upon men and not angels, some and not all, and these many of them the worst and vilest of men, and all of them by nature children of wrath as others; and which has appeared in choosing them in Christ, putting them into his hand, and making a covenant with him for them; in sending him into the world to suffer and die for them; in regenerating, adopting, justifying, pardoning, and saving them with an everlasting salvation; all which is marvellous in their eyes, and will be the wonder of men and angels to all eternity: this sometimes is hidden from the objects of it, as it might be from the psalmist, and therefore he desires a manifestation of it to him; or else his sense is, that God would show to others in what a marvellous manner he loved him, by the help, deliverance, and salvation he would give him. Such a petition will agree with Christ; see Ps 40:10. Some render the words {b}, "separate thy lovingkindness", or cause it to pass "from them that rise up on" or "against thy right hand"; but these were never the objects of it; and there is no separation of them from it, nor of that from them who are interested in it, **Ro 8:38**; much better may it be rendered, "separate" or "distinguish thy lovingkindness" {c}; that is, let it appear that I have special interest in thy lovingkindness, distinct from others; distinguish me by thy lovingkindness, remember me with that which thou bearest to a peculiar people, Ps 106:4;

O thou that savest by thy right hand; either by his power, or by the man of his right hand, his own son;

them which put their trust [in thee]; not in men, not in an arm of flesh, not in themselves, in their own power, wisdom, riches, and righteousness; but in the Lord their God, who is the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe, **1Ti 4:10**; for these he saves both in a temporal and in a spiritual manner;

from those that rise up [against them]; from all their spiritual enemies, sin and Satan; and from all outward ones, from the men of the world, oppressors and violent persecutors, who are afterwards described: the phrase, "by thy right hand", is by some, as Aben Ezra, connected with the word trust, and rendered, "them which trust in thy right hand" {d}; either in the grace, mercy, and favour of God, dispensed by his right hand; or in his strength, and the mighty power of his arm; and by others it is joined to the last clause, and so it stands in the original text, and rendered, "from those that rise up against thy right hand" {e}; and so the words describe such persons who in a bold and presumptuous manner set themselves against God, and strengthen themselves against the Almighty; who resist his counsel and will, oppose themselves to the Lord and his Anointed, the man of his right hand, made strong for himself; and to his saints, who are as dear to him as his right hand, and who are preserved by him in the hollow of his hand.

{b} Kimchi & Ben Melech. {c} hlph "separa", Junius & Tremellius; "segrega", Montanus; so some in Vatablus; see Ainsworth. {d} Knymyb-Myowx "eos qui fidunt in dextera tua", so some in Vatablus, Castalio, Ainsworth; "recipentes se ad dexteram suam", Junius & Tremellius. {e} Knymyb Mymmwqtmm "ob insurgentes in dexteram tuam", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; so Michaelis, Gejerus, Musculus.

Psalms 17:8

Ver. 8. Keep me as the apple of the eye,.... Which is weak and tender, and is hurt and put to pain, and made uneasy by every little thing that annoys it, and than which nothing is more dear to a man, or he is more careful of preserving from being hurt; and fitly represents the weak estate and condition of God's people, his affection for them, and tender care of them; who as he has provided tunics for the eye, and guarded it with eyebrows, so he has taken care for the safety of his dear children, De 32:10;

hide me under the shadow of thy wings; alluding either to the wings of the cherubim over the mercy seat, where God granted his presence; so the Targum paraphrases it,

"under the shadow of thy Shechinah hide me;"

or to birds, who cover their young ones with their wings to save them from birds of prey; see Ps 91:1. From such passages perhaps the Heathens had their notion of presenting their gods with wings {f}.

{f} Vid. Cuperi Apotheos. Homer. p. 169, &c.

Psalms 17:9

Ver. 9. From the wicked that oppress me,.... Or "waste" or "destroy" {g}; as wild beasts do a field or vineyard when they get into it; and such havoc do persecutors and false teachers make of the church and people of God, when they are suffered to get in among them, Ps 80:13; wherefore from such wicked and unreasonable men protection is desired, **2Th 3:2**;

[from] my deadly enemies; enemies against his soul or life, who sought to take it away, nothing would satisfy them but this;

[who] compass me about; on all sides, in order to obtain their desire; such were the enemies of Christ, and so they are described,
Ps 22:12.

{g} ynwdv wz "quid vastant", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "qui vastaverunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 17:10

Ver. 10. They are enclosed in their own fat,.... Or "their fat has enclosed them"; either their eyes, that they can hardly see out of them, or their hearts, so that they are stupid and senseless, and devoid of the fear of God; the phrase is expressive of the multitude of their wealth and increase of power, by which they were swelled with pride and vanity, and neither feared God nor regarded man; so the Targum paraphrases it,

"their riches are multiplied, their fat covers them;"

see De 32:15; some read it, "their fat shuts their mouths", so Aben Ezra and Kimchi; or "with their fat they shut them" {h}; but the accent "athnach" will not admit of this reading; the last word belongs to the next clause;

with their mouth they speak proudly; against God and his people, belching out blasphemies against the one, and severe menaces and threatenings against the other.

{h} So De Dieu.

Psalms 17:11

Ver. 11. They have now compassed us in our steps,.... The sense is, they could

not stir a step but they were at their heels, surrounding them on every side. This was true of David, when he was pursued by Saul, and followed by him to Keilah and the wilderness of Maon,
1Sa 23:8; according to the "Cetib", or textual writing, it should be rendered, "they have compassed me"; but, according to the "Keri", or marginal reading, and the points, it is as we have translated it, and which is followed by the Targum, and both are right, and design David as a principal person, and those that were with him, who were encompassed by Saul and his men. This also was verified in Christ, when Judas followed him into the garden with a band of men to betray him, and when he was enclosed by wicked men as he went to the cross, and hung upon it, Joh 18:2; and may likewise be accommodated to the case of all the saints, who are troubled on every side, are beset with the corruptions of their hearts, the temptations of Satan, and the reproaches and persecutions of the men of the world, **2Co 4:8**;

they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth; which posture either denotes fraudulence and hypocrisy, showing, by looking only upon the ground, as if they were harmless and inoffensive, and had no ill designs, and took no notice of anything; which, as it was true of David's enemies, so of the Jews and of Judas with respect to Christ, and of false teachers with respect to the church, Lu 20:20 **Mt 7:15**; or else inhumanity and contempt, not caring to turn their eyes to look upon them in distress, but kept their eyes fixed upon the earth, so Christ was treated by the Jews, Isa 53:3; or rather their being intent upon mischief, their diligence and watchfulness to observe all motions, and take every opportunity "to strike", or "cast me down to the earth", as the Arabic and Syriac versions render it; or the sense is, as Kimchi gives it, their eyes are upon our ways, to spread nets for us in the earth to take us.

Psalms 17:12

Ver. 12. Like as a lion [that] is greedy of his prey,.... Or "the likeness of him is as a lion" {i}; meaning Saul, as Kimchi interprets it; or everyone of them that compassed them about, as Aben Ezra observes; sometimes wicked and persecuting princes are compared to lions, for their strength and cruelty; see Pr 28:15; so the devil is called a roaring lion, **1Pe 5:8**; and the antichristian beast is said to have the mouth of a lion, Re 13:2;

and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places; to leap upon its prey, and seize it at once, as it has opportunity; this denotes the secret and insidious method which the enemies of Christ take to do mischief; see Ps 10:9.

{i} hyrak wnwymd "similitudo ejus, vel cujusque est tanquam leonis", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; so Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 17:13

Ver. 13. Arise, O Lord,.... See **Ps 3:7**;

disappoint him, or "prevent his face" {k}; be beforehand with him, and so disappoint him, when he is about to seize his prey; who is comparable to the lion, or to the young lion; meaning the chief of his enemies, it may be Saul;

cast him down; everyone of them that set themselves to cast down others to the earth. Jarchi's note is,

"cut off his feet,"

that he may bow down and fall;

deliver my soul from the wicked, [which is] thy sword; so Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, render the words; that is, from wicked men, whom God makes use of as instruments to afflict and chastise his people: so the Assyrian monarch is called the "rod" of his anger, with whom he scourged his people Israel, Isa 10:5. Compare with this Ps 22:20. The words are rendered by some, "deliver my soul from the wicked by thy swords" {l}; meaning not the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God by which Christ was delivered from the wicked one, when tempted by him in the wilderness; but the avenging justice of God, the sword of the Lord, which, being whetted and taken hold on, and used by him, brings vengeance on his enemies, and salvation to his people; see De 32:41. The Targum paraphrases the clause thus,

"deliver my soul from the wicked, who deserves to be slain by thy sword."

{k} wynp hmdq "praeveni faciem ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus, Gejerus; "anticipa faciem ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {l} Kbrx evrm "gladio tuo ab improbis", Junius & Tremellius; Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 17:14

Ver. 14. From men [which are] thy hand, O Lord,.... Some understand these words, with what follows, as independent of the former, and of another set of men, even of good men; so the Targum,

"and the righteous who deliver their souls for thy sake, O Lord, unto death in the earth, their portion is in eternal life;"

so Jarchi gives the like sense of them: but the words are to be connected with the preceding, as they are by Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech; and the sense is, deliver my soul from men, which are instruments in thine hand to chastise thy people: so even Satan himself, and the Sabeans and Chaldeans, whom he instigated to afflict Job, are called the "hand" of the Lord that touched him, because he suffered them to do what they did for the trial of him, Job 19:21. The words may be rendered, "the men of thy hand" {m}; who are raised up by thine hand to the power and dignity they have; and who can easily be pulled down by it; and who are in thine hand, and at thy beck and control, and whose wrath and fury thou canst restrain. Or they may be rendered, "from men by thy hand" {n}; that is, deliver me from them by thy strong hand and mighty power; as Israel of old was delivered from the Egyptians by the strong and mighty hand of God;

from men of the world: who are, as they were when they came into the world, in sin, in darkness, and in a carnal and unregenerate state; who are not only in the world, but of it, and belong to it, and to it only; and are under the influence of the god of the world, and are taken with the lusts and pleasures of it, and live in them and serve them: and are of worldly spirits, inordinately love the things of the world, mind earth and earthly things, and are unconcerned about the things of another world; see Lu 16:8;

[which have] their portion in [this] life; and in this only; have a large share of the good things of this life; and which is all their portion, Lu 16:25;

and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid [treasure]: earthly treasure, as gold and silver, which is called hid treasure, because it is first hid in the bowels of the earth, out of which it is dug, and afterwards hid in the coffers of worldly men; and oftentimes kept to the hurt of the owners of it. Or the phrase may denote the value and preciousness of it. And to have the belly filled with this is to have a very great affluence and plenty of it; though it is very rare, let it be ever so large, that men are fully satisfied with it;

they are full of children; which among the eastern nations was reckoned a considerable part of outward prosperity and happiness; see Job 21:7; or their "children are full", or "filled" {o} with hidden treasure also;

and leave the rest of their [substance] to their babes; their children's children; their grandchildren, as Kimchi explains it; and which is said, not by way of complaint, as an evil in them, since it is lawful and right for parents to lay up for their children, and leave it to them: unless the sense is, that they engross all to themselves, and to their posterity, in life and death; while they live, they indulge their sensual appetites and lusts, and fill themselves and theirs, but give nothing to the poor and hungry; nor part with anything for the interest of God and true religion; and when they die leave nothing for such use and service, but all to their posterity: but rather the phrase is expressive of their great plenty; that having lived in and enjoyed great fulness themselves, and given large portions to their children, yet have much left; which, at death, they bequeath to the young generation. Now from such men in power and dignity, and from being hurt by them, as well as from communion and conversation with them, the psalmist desires to be delivered; and expresses his satisfaction in other and better things than they enjoy, in the following words.

{m} Kdy Mytmm "ab inimieis manus tuae", V. L. so Sept. "a viris manus tuae", Lutherus, Musculus. {n} "Manu tua", Montaus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus. {o} Mynb webvy "saturantur vel satiantur filii", Munster, Muis, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; so Targ. Ar. Ainsworth.

Psalms 17:15

Ver. 15. As for me,.... I do not desire to be in their place and stead, with all their plenty and prosperity; I am content with my present condition and situation: for

I will, or "shall"

behold thy face in righteousness; that is, appear before God in public worship, where was the ark, the symbol of the face of God; enjoy his gracious presence, have the discoveries of his love, and see his face and favour; than which nothing was more desirable by him and delightful to him. Or God himself may be meant by "his face"; and especially God as he is to be beheld in the face of

Christ, the Angel of his presence; and who is to be beheld by faith in the present state of things, though as through a glass, darkly; and in the future state perfectly, and as he is, both with the eyes of the understanding, and, after the resurrection, with the eyes of the body; see Job 19:26; and to this state the psalmist seems more especially to have respect, as Jarchi interprets it: and the beatific vision of God in Christ will be very glorious and exceeding delightful; it will be assimilating and appropriating; it will be free from all darkness and interruption, and will continue for ever. And this shall be seen "in righteousness"; the psalmist believing that he should then appear as an innocent person clear of all the false charges brought against him; and so this may be understood of the righteousness of his cause, in which he should stand before God, and enjoy communion with him:, or this may design that perfect holiness and purity of heart, without which no man shall see the Lord; and which, though now imperfect, shall in the other state be without spot or blemish: or rather, the righteousness of Christ, which fits believers for, and in which they are brought into and stand in, the King's presence;

I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness; which will be in the resurrection morn: or, as Jarchi expresses it, when the dead shall awake from their sleep; for this is not to be understood of awaking from natural sleep in the morning; when it is a satisfaction to a believer to be with God, and to have God with him, Ps 139:18; nor of awaking from a sleepy drowsy frame of spirit, which sometimes attends the saints; but of rising from the dead: for as death is oftentimes expressed by sleep in Scripture, so the resurrection by an awaking out of it, Isa 26:19; at which time the saints will arise with the image of the heavenly One upon them: they will be like to Christ both in soul and body; in soul, in perfect knowledge and complete holiness: in body, in incorruption and immortality, in power, glory, and spirituality; in this will lie their happiness and satisfaction. Or the meaning is, that he should be satisfied with the likeness of God, with Christ the image of God, when he should arise from the dead; seeing he should then appear with him in glory, see him as he is, and be like him, and be for ever in his presence; which will yield endless pleasure and unspeakable satisfaction. For the words may be interpreted, not of David's awaking, but of the glory of God awaking or appearing; which would afford an infinitely greater satisfaction than worldly men have in worldly things {p}, to which this is opposed, Ps 17:10; so the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions read, I shall be satisfied when thy glory appears, or is seen; and so the Ethiopic and Arabic versions.

{p} Vid. Castel. Lexic. Heptaglott. col. 2014.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 18

To the chief Musician, [a Psalm] of David. This is the same with that in 2Sa 22:1, with some variations, omissions, and alterations:

the servant of the Lord; not only by creation, nor merely by regeneration, but by office, as king of Israel, being put into it by the Lord, and acting in it in submission and obedience to him; just as the apostles under the New Testament, on account of their office, so style themselves in their epistles:

who spake unto the Lord the words of this song; that is, who delivered and sung this song in so many express words, in public, before all the congregation of Israel, to the honour and glory of God:

in the day [that] the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul, Not that this psalm was composed and sung the selfsame day that David was delivered from Saul, and set upon the throne; for it seems to have been written in his old age, at the close of his days; for immediately after it, in the second book of Samuel, it follows, "now these be the last words of David", 2Sa 23:1: but the sense is, that whereas David had many enemies, and particularly Saul, who was his greatest enemy, the Lord delivered him from them all, and especially from him, from him first, and then from all the rest; which when he reflected upon in his last days, he sat down and wrote this psalm, and then sung it in public, having delivered it into the hands of the chief musician for that purpose. There are two passages cited out of it in the New Testament, and applied to Christ; Ps 18:2, in **Heb 2:13**, and Ps 18:49 in Ro 15:9; and there are many things in it that very well agree with him; he is eminently the "servant" of the Lord as Mediator; he was encompassed with the snares and sorrows of death and hell, and with the floods of ungodly men, when in the garden and on the cross God was his helper and deliverer, as man; and he was victorious over all enemies, sin, Satan, the world, death and hell; as the subject of this psalm is all along represented: and to Christ it does most properly belong to be the head of the Heathen, whose voluntary subjects the Gentiles are said to be, Ps 18:43; and which is expressed in much the same language as the like things are in Isa 55:4; which is a clear and undoubted prophecy of the Messiah; to which may be added, that the Lord's Anointed, the King Messiah, and who is also called David, is expressly mentioned in Ps 18:50; and which is applied to the Messiah by the Jews {q} as Ps 18:32 is paraphrased of him by the Targum on it;

and he said; the following words:

{q} Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. & Midrash Tillim in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 47. 3.

Ver. 1. I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. These words are not in twenty second chapter of Second Samuel: the psalm there begins with Ps 18:2. The psalmist here expresses his love to the Lord, and his continuance in it; that Jehovah the Father was, is, and ever will be the object of Christ's love, is certain; and which has appeared by his readiness in the council and covenant of grace to do his will; by his coming down from heaven to earth for that purpose; by his delight in it, it being his meat and drink to do it; and by his sufferings and death, which were in compliance with, and obedience to it, Joh 14:31; and as in David, so in all regenerate ones, there is love to God; Jehovah is loved by them in all his persons; Jehovah the Father is loved, and to be loved, for the perfections of his nature, because of the works of his hands, of creation and providence; and particularly because of his works of special grace and goodness, and especially because of his love wherewith he has loved his people, **1Jo 4:19**. Jehovah the Son is loved, and to be loved, above all creatures and things whatever, sincerely and heartily, fervently and constantly; because of the loveliness of his person, the love of his heart, and his works of grace and redemption; all of him is lovely; and he is to be loved, and is loved, in his person, offices, relations, people, word, and ordinances: Jehovah the Spirit is loved, and to be loved, because of his person and perfections, and operations of grace; as a sanctifier, comforter, the spirit of adoption, the earnest and pledge of eternal glory. The word here used signifies the most intimate, tender, and affectionate love; it often designs mercy and bowels of mercy; so Aben Ezra interprets it of seeking mercy of God: the reasons are as follow in this verse and Ps 18:2: because "the Lord is my strength"; so he was to Christ as man, who as such was the man of his right hand, the Son of Man, whom he made strong for himself, to do his work, and for his glory, Ps 80:17; he promised to strengthen him, and he did, Ps 89:21; and so he is the strength of all his saints, even Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; he is the strength of their hearts both in life and at death; he is the strength of their graces, who strengthens that which he has wrought for them, and in them; he strengthens them to do their duty, to bear the cross, and every affliction, and against every enemy of their souls; and this renders him very lovely and amiable to them.

Psalms 18:2

Ver. 2. The Lord [is] my rock,.... To whom the saints have recourse for shelter and safety, for supply, support, and divine refreshment; and in whom they are secure, and on whom they build their hopes of eternal life and happiness, and so are safe from all enemies, and from all danger. Christ is called a Rock on all these accounts, Ps 61:2;

and my fortress; or garrison; so the saints are kept in and by the power of God as in a garrison, **1Pe 1:5**;

and my deliverer: out of all afflictions, and from all temptations, and out of the hands of all enemies; from a body of sin and death at last, and from wrath to come;

my God; the strong and mighty One, who is able to save, and who is the covenant God and Father of his people;

my strength, in whom I will trust; as Christ did, and to whom these words are applied in **Heb 2:13**; and as his people are enabled to do even under very distressing and discouraging circumstances, Job 13:15;

my buckler; or shield; who protects and defends them from their enemies, and preserves them from the fiery darts of Satan;

and the horn of my salvation; who pushes, scatters, and destroys their enemies, and saves them; a metaphor taken from horned beasts; so Christ, the mighty and able Saviour, is called, **Lu 1:69**;

[and] my high tower; such is the name of the Lord, whither the righteous run and are safe, Pr 18:10; and where they are above and out of the reach of every enemy; see Isa 33:16; in 2Sa 22:3, it is added, "and my refuge, my Saviour, thou savest me from violence". These various epithets show the fulness of safety in Jehovah, the various ways he has to deliver his people from their enemies, and secure them from danger; and the psalmist beholding and claiming his interest in him under all these characters, rendered him exceeding lovely and delightful to him; and each of them contain a reason why he loved him, and why, in the strength of grace, he determined to love him. God may be regarded in all these characters by Christ as man.

Psalms 18:3

Ver. 3. I will call upon the Lord,.... In prayer, for fresh mercies, and further appearances of himself, and discoveries of his grace and favour;

[who is worthy] to be praised; for the perfections of his nature, the works of his hands, his providential goodness, and more especially for his covenant grace and blessings in Christ. The Targum is,

"in praise, or with an hymn, I pray before the Lord;"

agreeably to the rule the apostle gives, **Php 4:6**; and this prayer was a prayer of faith, as follows;

so shall I be saved from mine enemies: which was founded upon past experience of God's goodness to him in distress, when he called upon him, as the next words show.

Psalms 18:4

Ver. 4. The sorrows of death compassed me,.... These words and the following, in this verse and Ps 18:5, as they respect David, show the snares that were laid for his life, the danger of death he was in, and the anxiety of mind he was possessed of on account of it; and as they refer to Christ, include all the sorrows of his life to the time of his death, who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief personally, and bore and carried the sorrows and griefs of all his people; and may chiefly intend his sorrows in the garden, arising from a view of the sins of his people, which he was about to bear upon the cross; and from an apprehension of the wrath of God, and curse of the law, which he was going to sustain for them, when his soul was perilupov, encompassed about with sorrow, even unto death, Mt 26:38; when his sorrow was so great, and lay so heavy upon him, that it almost pressed him down to death, he could scarce live under it; and may also take in the very pains and agonies of death; he dying the death of the cross, which was a very painful and excruciating one; see Ps 22:14; The Hebrew word for "sorrows" signifies the pains and birth throes of a woman in travail; and is here fitly used of the sufferings and death of Christ; through which he brought forth much fruit, or many sons to glory. The Targum is, "distress has encompassed me, as a woman that sits upon the stool, and has no strength to bring forth, and is in danger of dying."

In 2Sa 22:5, it is "the waves" or "breakers of death compassed me"; and the word there used is rendered in Ho 13:13; "the breaking forth of children"; moreover the same word signifies "cords" {r}, as well as pains and sorrows; and the allusion may be to malefactors being bound with cords when led to execution, and put to death; and may here signify the power of death, under which the Messiah was held for a while, but was loosed from it at his resurrection; to which sense of the word, and to the words here, the Apostle Peter manifestly refers, **Ac 2:24**;

and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid; meaning either the multitude of them, as Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Roman soldiers, and people of the Jews, who all gathered together against him; so the Targum renders it, "a company of wicked men"; or the variety of sufferings he endured by them; as spitting upon, buffering, scourging, &c. The word rendered "ungodly men [is] Belial"; and signifies vain, worthless, and unprofitable men; men of no figure or account; or lawless ones, such as have cast off the yoke of the law, are not subject to it; persons very wicked and profligate. The word in the New Testament seems to be used for Satan, **2Co 6:15**; where it is so rendered in the Syriac version, and he may be designed here; and by the floods of Belial may be meant, not so much the temptations of Satan in the wilderness, as his violent and impetuous attacks upon Christ in the garden, when being in an agony or conflict with him, his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, Lu 22:44. The Septuagint render the word, "the torrents of iniquity troubled me"; which was true of Christ, when all the sins of his people came flowing in upon him, like mighty torrents, from all quarters; when God laid on him the iniquity of them all, and he was made sin for them; and in a view of all this "he began to be sore amazed", Mr 14:33; compare with this Ps 69:1. Arama interprets Belial of the evil imagination in David, who had a war in himself.

{r} twm ylbx "funes mortis", Musculus, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth, Hammond.

Psalms 18:5

Ver. 5. The sorrows of hell compassed me about,.... Or "the cords of the grave" {s}, under the power of which he was detained for awhile; the allusion may be to the manner of burying among the Jews, who wound up their dead bodies in linen clothes; so that they were as persons bound hand and foot; and thus were they laid in the grave; see Joh 11:44; and so was Christ, till he was raised from the dead, when he showed himself to have the keys of hell and death, and to be no more under their power, or be held by them;

the snares of death prevented me; or "met" or "got before me" {t} the sense is, he was taken in them: this phrase designs the insidious ways and methods which the enemies of Christ took to ensnare him, and take away his life, and in which they succeeded; see Mt 26:4.

{s} lwav ylbx "funes sepulchri", Musculus, Gejerus. {t} ynwmdq "praeoccupaverunt me", V. L. "anteverterunt me", Vatablus; "occurrerunt", Cocceius.

Psalms 18:6

Ver. 6. In my distress I called upon the Lord,.... The great Jehovah, the everlasting I AM, who is the most High in all the earth, and who is able to save, **Heb 5:7**;

and cried unto my God; as Jesus did, Mt 27:46; so the members of Christ, when in distress, as they often are, through sin and Satan, through the hidings of God's face, a variety of afflictions, and the persecutions of men, betake themselves to the Lord, and call upon their God: a time of distress is a time for prayer; and sometimes the end God has in suffering them to be in distress is to bring them to the throne of his grace; and a great privilege it is they have that they have such a throne to come to for grace and mercy to help them in time of need, and such a God to sympathize with them, and help them; and their encouragement to call upon him, and cry unto him, is, that he is Jehovah, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent; who knows their wants, is able to help them, and is a God at hand to do it;

He heard my voice out of his temple; that is, out of heaven his dwelling place; for the temple at Jerusalem was not built in David's time; and it may be observed, that the prayer of the psalmist, or whom he represents, was a vocal one, and not merely mental; and hearing it intends a gracious regard unto it, an acceptance of it, and an agreeable answer: for it follows,

and my cry came before him, [even] into his ears; God did not cover himself with a cloud, that his prayer could not pass through; but it was admitted and received; it came up before him with acceptance; it reached his ears, and even entered into them, and was delightful music to them: see Joh 11:41.

Psalms 18:7

Ver. 7. Then the earth shook and trembled,.... As it did quickly after Christ called upon the Lord, and cried to his God upon the cross, Mt 27:50; and so some time after, when his people were praying together, the place where they were assembled was shaken, **Ac 4:31**; as a token of God's presence being with them: and the shaking and trembling of the earth is often used as a symbol of the presence of God, and of the greatness of his majesty; as when he brought the children of Israel through the Red sea, went before them in the wilderness, and descended on Mount Sinai, which mountain then moved and quaked exceedingly; see Ps 104:32; and it is easy to observe, that in this, and other parts of this majestic account of the appearance of God on the behalf of the person the subject of this psalm, and against his enemies, there are manifest allusions to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; though it may be this shaking of the earth, and what follows, are to be understood in a figurative sense;

the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken; and design the shaking of the earth and heavens, prophesied of in **Hag 2:6**; and which is explained in Heb 12:26; of the removing the ordinances of the ceremonial law, that Gospel ordinances might remain unshaken; for in 2Sa 22:8; the words are, "the foundations of heaven moved and shook"; and the shaking and moving of the earth and mountains may denote the abolition and destruction of kingdoms and nations; and first of the civil polity of the Jews, and of their ecclesiastical state, which quickly ensued upon the death of Christ; and next of the ruin of Rome Pagan, and then of Rome Papal; which are both signified by an earthquake, and by the removal of mountains, **Re 6:12**;

because he was wroth; with the people of the Jews, for disbelieving and rejecting the Messiah; for setting themselves, and taking counsel together against him, and putting him to death; for these things God was angry with them, and wrath came upon them to the uttermost, and their nation, city, and temple were destroyed, **Ps 2:1**; and with the Pagan empire and antichristian powers, **Re 6:16**.

Psalms 18:8

Ver. 8. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils,.... This, with what follows, describes a storm of thunder; the "smoke" designs thick black clouds, gathered together; "fire" intends lightning; and "coals of fire", hot thunderbolts; and the whole is borrowed from, and is an allusion to what was at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai,
Ex 19:16; The majesty of God is here set forth in much such language as is the leviathan in Job 41:19; the "smoke of his nostrils" seems to intend the indignation of God against the enemies of David, of Christ, and of his people, and the punishment be will inflict upon them, Isa 65:5. The Targum interprets it of the pride and insolence of Pharaoh;

and fire out of his mouth devoured; God is a wall of fire round about his people, and a consuming one to his and their enemies. This expresses the wrath of God upon the Jewish nation, and his sending the Roman armies to burn their city, Mt 22:7;

coals were kindled by it; the Jews being as dry trees, were fit fuel for the fire of divine wrath, and so presently became as coals of fire; so the antichristian party, upon the pouring out of the fourth vial, will be scorched with heat, and blaspheme the name of God, Re 16:8.

Psalms 18:9

Ver. 9. He bowed the heavens also, and came down,.... To execute wrath and vengeance on wicked men; which is always the sense of these phrases when they go together; see Ps 144:6; The Targum is, "he bowed the heavens, and his glory appeared"; that is, the glory of his power, and of his mighty hand of vengeance; for not his grace and mercy, but his indignation and wrath, showed themselves; for it follows,

and darkness [was] under his feet; the Targum is, "a dark cloud", expressive of the awfulness of the dispensation to wicked men; who are not allowed to see the face of God, are debarred his presence, and denied, communion with him, and to whom everything appears awful and terrible, Ps 97:2.

Psalms 18:10

Ver. 10. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly,.... The Targum renders it in the plural number, "cherubim"; and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and by whom may be meant, either the angels, who are as horses and chariots, on whom Jehovah rides, and who art he makes use of as executioners of his wrath and vengeance, **Zec 6:5**; and to whom wings are assigned as a token of swiftness, **Isa 6:2**; or rather the ministers of the Gospel, who are the living creatures in **Re 4:7**; and answer to the "cherubim" in Ezekiel's visions; and whom God made use of, especially after the death of Christ, and when the Gospel was rejected by the Jews, to carry it into the Gentile world, which was done by them with great speed and swiftness; and Maimonides {u} gives a caution, not to understand the phrase, "he did fly", as of God, but of the cherub;

yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind; which may design the speedy help and assistance God gave to his Son, and gives to his people; and the swift destruction of their enemies; see Ps 104:3; the words in 2Sa 22:11, with only the variation of a letter in one word, are, "and he was seen upon the wings of the wind"; which were both true; nor need a various reading be supposed, the psalmist using both words at different times, suitable to his purpose, and which both express his sense. Wings are ascribed to the winds by the Heathen poets, and they are represented as winged on ancient monuments {w}.

{u} Moreh Nevochim. par. 1. c. 49. {w} Vide Cuperi Apotheos. Homeri, p. 178. Wings are given to the south wind by Ovid, Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 7. and by Juvenal, Satyr. 5. v. 10. and by Virgil, Aeneid. 8. v. 430. and who also speaks of wings of lightning, Aeneid. 5. v. 319.

Psalms 18:11

Ver. 11. He made darkness his secret place,.... Which, and the dark waters in the next clause, are the same with the thick clouds in the last, in which Jehovah is represented as wrapping himself, and in which he lies hid as in a secret place; not so as that he cannot see others, as wicked men imagine, Job 22:13; but as that he cannot be beheld by others; the Targum interprets it,

"he caused his Shechinah to dwell in darkness;"

his pavilion round about him [were] dark waters, [and] thick clouds of the skies; these were as a tent or tabernacle, in which he dwelt unseen by men; see Job 36:29; all this may design the dark dispensation of the Jews, after their rejection and crucifixion of Christ; when God departed from them, left their house desolate, and them without his presence and protection; when the light of the Gospel was taken away from them, and blindness happened unto them, and they had eyes that they should not see, and were given up to a judicial darkness of mind and hardness of heart; which were some of the dark, deep, and mysterious methods of divine Providence, with respect to which God may be said to be surrounded with darkness, dark waters, and thick clouds; see Ro 11:7.

Psalms 18:12

Ver. 12. At the brightness [that was] before him, The lightning that came out of the thick clouds; which may denote, either the coming of Christ to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, which was swift and sudden, clear and manifest; or the spreading of the Gospel in the Gentile world, in which Christ, the brightness of his Father's glory, appeared to the illumination of many; see Mt 24:27; and both may be intended, as the effects following show;

his thick clouds passed; that is, passed away; the gross darkness, which had for so many years covered the Gentile world, was removed when God sent forth his light and truth; and multitudes, who were darkness itself, were made light in the Lord;

hail [stones] and coals of fire; the same Gospel that was enlightening to the Gentiles, and the savour of life unto life unto them, was grievous, like hail stones, and tormenting, scorching, irritating, and provoking, like coals of fire, and the savour of death unto death, to the Jews; when God provoked them, by sending the Gospel among the Gentiles, and calling them: or these may design the heavy, awful, and consuming judgments of God upon them, which are sometimes signified by hail storms; see **Re 8:7**. In 2Sa 22:13, it is only, "through the brightness before him were coals of fire kindled".

Psalms 18:13

Ver. 13. The Lord also thundered in the heavens,.... By his apostles and ministers, some of which were Boanergeses, sons of thunder, whose ministry was useful to shake the consciences of men, and bring them to a sense of themselves, **Mr 3:17**;

and the Highest gave his voice; the same with thunder; for thunder is often called the voice of the Lord, Job 37:5; compare with this Ps 68:11; the Targum interprets it, "he lifted up his word"; the same effects as before follow,

hail [stones] and coals of fire; See Gill on "Ps 18:12".

Psalms 18:14

Ver. 14. Yea, he sent out his arrows,.... By which thunderbolts, cracks of thunder, and flashes of lightning, seem to be meant; see Ps 77:17; comparable to arrows shot, and sent out of a bow; and may denote, either the doctrines of the Gospel, which were sharp in the hearts of Christ's enemies, and are either the means of subduing them to him, or of destroying them, being the savour of death unto death; or however, like arrows, give great pain and uneasiness where they stick, and grievously distress and torment; as does the fire which comes out of the mouth of the two witnesses, Re 11:5. The Targum is,

"he sent his word as arrows;"

or else the judgments of God are meant, as famine, pestilence, and the sword, which God sent unto, and spent upon the Jewish nation, De 32:23;

and scattered them; among the nations of the world, where they have been dispersed ever since;

and he shot out lightnings; or "many lightnings", so the Targum:

and discomfited them; troubled, terrified, and distressed them.

Psalms 18:15

Ver. 15. Then the channels of water were seen,.... Or, "of the sea"; as in 2Sa 22:16. There seems to be an allusion to the drying up of the sea when the Israelites passed through it. Aben Ezra interprets this of the discovery of the secrets of enemies, and of their deep schemes and counsels, which they seek to hide, but are made known by him who sees all things in the dark; and so the following clause;

and the foundations of the world were discovered; but it rather seems to intend the utter extirpation and ruin of the Jewish nation, both in their civil and ecclesiastic state, the foundation of which was rooted up and laid bare; unless with Jerom we understand this of the ministers of the word, in whom the doctrines of grace were channelled, and who were as fountains of water; and of the foundation of the apostles and prophets made known in the Gospel: but the former sense is best; since it follows,

at thy rebuke, O Lord; at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils; for the destruction of the Jews was the effect of divine wrath and vengeance: so ends the account of the wonderful appearance of God in favour of the person the subject of this psalm, and against his enemies; the deliverance wrought for him is next described.

Psalms 18:16

Ver. 16. He sent from above,.... Either his hand, as in Ps 144:7; he exerted and displayed his mighty power in raising Christ from the dead; or he sent help from his sanctuary; as in Ps 20:2; and helped and strengthened him in a day of salvation; or when he wrought out the salvation of his people; or "he sent his word", as in Ps 107:20; his word of command, to take up his life again, as he had given it to lay it down, Joh 10:18. The Targum is, he sent his prophets; but it may be much better supplied, he sent his angels, or an angel; as he did at his resurrection, who rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, as a token of his justification and discharge: so Jarchi interprets it, he sent his angels; and Aben Ezra supplies it thus,

"he sent his word or his angel:"

unless the sense should be, as Cocceius suggests, he sent a cloud from above, which was done at Christ's ascension, and which received him out of the sight of the apostles, **Ac 1:9**. Since it follows,

he took me; that is, up to heaven; thither Christ was carried in a cloud, one of God's chariots, he sent for him; and where he is received, and will be retained until his second coming; though rather the sense is, he took me by the hand:

he drew me out of many waters. This is said either in allusion to Moses, who had his name from his being drawn out of the water, **Ex 2:10**; and who was an eminent type of Christ; and this is the only place where the Hebrew word is made use of from whence he had his name; or else to a man plunged in water ready to be drowned; see Ps 69:1. By these "many waters" may be meant the many afflictions, sorrows, and sufferings from which Christ was freed, when raised from the dead, and highly exalted and crowned with glory and honour; and the torrent of sins which flowed in upon him at the time he was made sin for his people, from which he was justified when risen; and so will appear a second time without sin unto salvation; and the wrath of God, the waves and billows of which went over him, and compassed him about as water, at the time of his sufferings; from which he was delivered when he was shown the path of life, and entered into the presence of God, and sat at his right hand, where are joys and pleasures for evermore; and also his grand enemy Satan, with his principalities and powers, who came in like a flood upon him; but he destroyed him and spoiled them; and particularly the floods of ungodly men, spoken of in Ps 18:4; seem to be here designed; compare with this Ps 144:7; "so many waters" signify many people and nations, Re 17:15; and accordingly the Targum is,

"he delivered me from many people."

This was true of Christ when risen and ascended; he was then separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; and this sense is confirmed by the following words, where what is expressed figuratively here is there literally explained.

Psalms 18:17

Ver. 17. He delivered me from my strong enemy,.... Which, as it may respect David, may be understood of Goliath the Philistine champion, who was a man of war from his youth; or Saul, king of Israel; and, as it may respect David's antitype, may design either the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, who were men of power and influence; or more especially Satan, the strong man armed, with all his principalities and powers; or, likewise death, the last enemy, from whose pains and cords he was loosed when raised from the dead, and when he was delivered from every other strong enemy;

and from them which hated me; from the old serpent the devil, between whom and him there has been a lasting enmity; and from the world, the people of the Jews, particularly the Pharisees, who bore an implacable hatred to Christ;

for they were too strong for me; as Goliath and Saul were too strong for David of himself, so Christ's enemies were too strong for him; not as God, for he is the mighty God, the Almighty, and stronger than the strong man armed, but as man; for in his human nature he had a sinless weakness, which showed itself in his agonies in the garden; or a natural weakness, through which he was crucified; and this weak nature of Christ Satan attacked, and got an advantage over, and brought it to the dust of death, which is meant by his bruising his heel, though by it he got a broken head. But though Christ's enemies were too strong for him, considered merely as man, they not being, at least many of them, flesh and blood, but principalities and powers; yet being helped by his Father, and supported by his divine nature, he overcame them, and was delivered from them.

Psalms 18:18

Ver. 18. They prevented me in the day of my calamity,.... Referring to the times of his distress in the garden and upon the cross; the time of his sufferings and death, which was a dark and cloudy day, as the word {x} used suggests, both in a literal and in a spiritual sense; and when the day and hour was come, fixed and determined by the will of God, then his enemies, though not before, met him, laid hold on him, were too mighty for him, condemned, crucified, and insulted him;

but the Lord was my stay; or staff, on whom he leaned, relied, and depended, believing he would help him; and by whom he was supported and upheld, Isa 42:1. The Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord was my stay."

{x} ydya Mwyb "in the day of my cloudy calamity", Ainsworth; "nomen" dya "proprie signifient vaporem vel nubem, ut Gen. vii. 6. hinc per metaphoram transfertur ad obscuras ac terrificas calamitatum nebulas, Prov. i. 26.", Gejerus.

Psalms 18:19

Ver. 19. He brought me forth also into a large place,.... Into heaven, a place of the glorious liberty of Christ, after his captivity to death and the grave, whither he ascended leading captivity captive, and of the children of God; and a spacious place, where there is room enough for Christ and all his people; here he now is, and will remain till his second coming, and from hence we expect him; see Joh 14:2. Compare with this Ps 31:8;

he delivered me, because he delighted in me; God delivered David from all his enemies, because he was a man after his own heart, in whom he delighted; not for any merit and worthiness in him, but of his good will and pleasure: he delivered Christ because he was his elect, in whom his soul delighted; and who was daily his delight, rejoicing in his presence before the world was: and he delivers his church and people, because they are his Hephzibah, in whom is his delight,
Isa 62:4; the Father delighted in them, and therefore chose them to salvation; the Son delighted in them, and gave himself for them, and ransomed them out of the hands of him that is stronger than they; the Holy Spirit delighted in them, and therefore regenerates, renews, and sanctifies them, and seals them up unto the day of redemption.

Psalms 18:20

Ver. 20. The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness,.... Which, if applied to David, cannot be understood of his own personal righteousness, or of works of righteousness done by him, for these merit nothing at the hand of God; no reward, in strict justice, is due to them, or given to them: a man's own righteousness is imperfect, and by the law of God is not accounted a righteousness; and it is unprofitable to God, is no gain to him, and so not rewardable by him; and were it perfect, it is but man's duty, and what God has a prior right to, and so is not recompensed by him; though it is so far from being pure and perfect, that it is attended with much sin, and is no other than rags, and filthy ones, which can never recommend a person to God; it is what will not bear the sight of God, and can never be called cleanness in his eyesight: by it no man is justified before him; and though God does, indeed, reward the works of his people, which are fruits of his grace, yet the reward is not of debt, but of grace. This, therefore, must be understood of the righteousness of David's cause, and of his innocence with respect to the things he was charged with by his enemies; of his righteousness towards Saul; and of "the cleanness of [his] hands", in not defiling them with his blood, when it was in his power to take away his life; therefore God rewarded him by delivering him out of his hands, and setting him upon the throne, and causing his kingdom to flourish and prosper; for this respects temporal blessings, and not eternal glory and happiness; and is something that had been and was then enjoyed, and not anything future, or in another world: though it is best of all to apply it to Christ, and understand it of his righteousness, which he, as Mediator, has wrought out for his people; this is perfect, pure, and spotless, and entirely agreeable to the law of God; what will bear the sight of God, is satisfying to his justice, is well pleasing to him, and is what he accepts of, and imputes to them that believe in Christ, and by which they are justified from all things. Now, according to this righteousness, Christ in strict justice has been rewarded in his own person; as he had the work of man's redemption assigned him, and he agreed to do it, he had a reward promised him, and which he claimed, when he had glorified his Father and finished his work; and which he received when he was set down at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honour, in consequence of his obedience, sufferings, and death; see **Php 2:7**; and he is rewarded in his members according to his righteousness, they being justified by it, and made heirs of eternal life on account of it, and are or will be glorified with him for evermore;

according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me; which signifies the same thing.

Psalms 18:21

Ver. 21. For I have kept the ways of the Lord,.... Not those which the Lord himself walks in, his ways of providence, or of grace; though these are and should be taken notice of and observed by good men, as the word {y} used will bear to be rendered; but the ways which he has prescribed and directed men to walk in, the ways of his commandments, in which they should go; these were, in some measure, kept by David, who often, in the hundred nineteenth psalm speaks of his keeping the testimonies and statutes, and commandments of the Lord; as they are by good men, with some degree of pleasure, they take delight to walk in them; and with some degree of constancy, they keep walking in them, without turning to the right hand or the left, though solicited to it; but yet not perfectly, for they have many a slip and fall in them; wherefore this cannot be a reason of their being rewarded according to their righteousness: in strict justice, the words better agree with Christ, who kept the law of God perfectly, did his will completely; he came from heaven to do it; it was his meat and drink to accomplish it; and he always did the things which pleased his father, wherefore he rewarded him;

and have not wickedly departed from my God; which was, in some sense, true of David; not as by disbelieving the power and providence, the promises, truth, and faithfulness of God, and his covenant interest in him; which to do would have been a wicked departure from God; see **Heb 3:12**; nor by forsaking the house and worship of God; though he was driven from thence by wicked men, yet sore against his will, and which during his exile he frequently laments and complains of; nor by sinning wilfully and presumptuously, only through error, inadvertency, infirmity, and temptation: but when it is observed, how much unbelief, which is a partial departing from the living God, and how many there are that neglect private and public worship, and what a proneness there is to sin and wickedness, and how much there is of the will in sinful actions, in the best of men; it is right and best to understand this of Christ, who never was guilty of sin, nor committed any wickedness in departing from God in the least: as man, God was his God, and he always believed his interest in him, and claimed it even when he forsook him on the cross; nor did he quit his service, desert his cause, nor depart from the work and business he enjoined him, till it was finished.

{y} ytrmv "observaveram", Tigurine version, Vatablus; "observo", Junius & Tremellius; "observavi", Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 18:22

Ver. 22. For all his judgments [were] before me,.... That is, the precepts of the law of God, which David had a respect unto, loved, took delight and pleasure in, and so had them all in his sight, and made them the rule of his actions; and the law of God is delighted in by regenerate persons, after the inward man; and though it is abolished as a covenant of works, it is a rule of walk and conversation to the saints; and as such they keep it in view, and regard it impartially, not only some of its precepts, but all. This in the highest and fullest sense was done by Christ, who was made under the law, in whose heart it was, and who came to fulfil it, and has completely fulfilled it;

and I did not put away his statutes from me; in 2Sa 22:23; it is read, "and as for his statutes, I did not depart from them"; the sense is the same; this may have respect to the ceremonial law, and the ordinances of it, which David abode by, very strictly observed, renewed, and put in order; and which Christ, his antitype, never departed from, but conformed unto throughout the whole of his life; witness his circumcision, keeping of the passover, attendance on the synagogue and temple worship; nor did he put them away until they had their full accomplishment in him; when there was a disannulling of them because of their weakness and unprofitableness.

Psalms 18:23

Ver. 23. I was also upright before him,.... In heart and conversation, being sincere and faithful; so David was in the sight of God; but this is much more true of Christ, in whom there was no unrighteousness nor guile, neither in his heart, nor in his lips; he was of perfect integrity, and faithful in all things to him that appointed him;

and I kept myself from mine iniquity; which some interpret of original sin, in which David was born, which dwelt in him, and prompted him to sin; but rather it refers to the taking away of Saul's life, which he might be tempted to do, as being his enemy that sought his life; and which he was put upon and urged to by some about him, and yet did it not. But it is best here also to apply these words to Christ; for though he had no iniquity of his own, yet he had the iniquities of his people on him, as their surety, and which he calls "mine", Ps 40:12. But though he bore them, he did not commit any of them; though he was made sin, he knew none; and though he was tempted by Satan to the most enormous iniquities, as destroying himself and worshipping the devil, he kept himself from the evil one, that he could not touch him: the sense is, that he kept himself from committing any sin, which cannot be said of any mere man; and so far as good men are kept from sin, they are kept by the power of God, and not by themselves. All these things show, that the righteousness of Christ was a perfect, sinless one, entirely agreeable to the laws, statutes, and judgments of God; was pure in the sight of God, and rewardable in strict justice. Hence it is repeated as follows:

Psalms 18:24

Ver. 24. Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness,.... Having proved and supported this proposition by the above reasons, it is repeated, for confirmation's sake;

according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight; this phrase, "in his eyesight", is here added, to show that the righteousness of Christ was clean, pure, and spotless in the sight of God; in the eye of divine justice: hence those that are clothed with it are holy and unblamable, and irreprovable in his sight, **Col 1:22**.

Psalms 18:25

Ver. 25. With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful,.... The merciful man is the good, gracious, holy, and godly man, as the word {z} here used signifies, and is sometimes rendered; one that has received grace and mercy from the Lord, and has principles of grace and goodness wrought in him, and is kind and merciful to others, both to their souls and bodies; and to such men God shows himself merciful: not that they are first merciful to others, and then he is so to them, for it is just the reverse; nor is their mercifulness the cause or condition of his, for he has mercy on whom he will have mercy; but to such he shows fresh mercy, and bestows more grace upon them; they find grace and mercy with him now, and will do hereafter; see **Mt 5:7**. This may be applied to Christ, all whose ways are mercy and truth; he saw the estate his people would come into; he pitied their case, and became their surety in eternity; he betrothed them to himself in loving kindness and tender mercies; and undertook to feed the flock of slaughter, even the poor of the flock; having, through his merciful lovingkindness, assumed human nature, he went about doing good to the souls and bodies of men; he healed the diseased and fed the hungry, and had compassion on the ignorant, and them that were out of the way; and, as a merciful high priest, he bore the sins and sorrows of his people; and in his love and pity redeemed them, and continues to sympathize with them in all their afflictions and temptations; and though no mercy was shown him while he was suffering for them, for God spared him not, but awoke the sword of justice against him, and used him with the utmost rigour and severity; yet satisfaction being made, he did not leave him in the grave, nor suffer his holy, good, and merciful One to see corruption; but raised him from the dead, prevented him with the blessings of his goodness, and set upon his head a crown of honour and glory;

with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; an upright man, as the word {a} used signifies, is a perfect man, not absolutely, but comparatively; not in himself, but in Christ; perfect with a perfection of parts, but not of degrees; he is one that is upright in heart, sincere and without hypocrisy; an Israelite indeed, whose faith, hope, and love, are undisguised; he is a man of integrity, a faithful man, faithful to God, his cause and interest, his word and ordinances, and is faithful with the saints; he walks, uprightly according to the rule of God's word, and by faith in Christ; and to such upright men God shows himself upright, or faithful, by keeping his covenant with them, fulfilling his promises to them, and not suffering one good thing to fail he has given them reason to expect from him. This may also be interpreted of Christ, who is in the highest and fullest sense perfect, upright, and sincere, and faithful to him that appointed him; and as he has been faithful in all his covenant engagements with his Father, so his Father has been faithful to him in making good all he promised him; both with respect to his own glory, and the happiness of his people; see Isa 53:10.

{z} dyox "benigno", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius; "bono", Gejerus, some in Vatablus; "qui bonitati studet", Tigurine version; "pio", Munster, Cocceius, Michaelis; "gracious saint", Ainsworth. {a} Mymt "perfecto", Pagninus, Montanus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 18:26

Ver. 26. With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure,.... None of Adam's posterity are pure by nature; they are all defiled with sin; and though some are pure in their own eyes, they are far from being cleansed from their filthiness; such only are pure who are sanctified by the Spirit of God, have clean hearts created in them, and whose hearts are purified by faith in the blood of Christ; who are justified by Christ's righteousness, and are washed from their sins in his blood; and who, in consequence of such grace, love, pureness of heart, speak a pure language, hold the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, and with a pure conversation, and live soberly, righteously, and godly: and whereas God is a pure and holy Being, his perfections, works, and word, are pure; he shows himself to be so to such persons, by providing for the honour of his purity and holiness in their redemption, sanctification, and salvation; by making all things to be pure to them; by granting them his presence, and blessing them with the vision of himself here and hereafter; see **Mt 5:8**; this may likewise be understood of Christ, who, in his human nature, is pure from all sin, both original and actual: he indeed took upon him the sins of his people, and bore them, and made satisfaction for them, and brought in everlasting righteousness; which being done, God has showed himself pure to him, by justifying, acquitting, and discharging him from all such sins; by accepting his righteousness, and imputing it to those for whom he wrought it;

and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward; or "thou wrestlest" {b}, or wilt contend with them until they are destroyed: the same word is here used which Naphtali has his name from, Ge 30:8. The froward are such as are of perverse dispositions, and of stubborn and obstinate tempers, and whose ways are crooked and distorted; and such were the people of the Jews in the times of Moses, and of Christ,
De 32:5; and who seem here to be designed; even the Jews in Christ's time,

who were just the reverse of the above characters, were cruel and unmerciful, faithless and hypocritical, filthy and pure, disbelieved the Messiah, rejected and crucified him, were contrary to God, and to all men; and therefore God walked contrary to them, as he threatened, Le 26:27; the same as showing himself froward to them; for God is not froward and perverse in himself, nor in his ways, which are all equal, just, and pure: and though there is one and the same word used in our version, yet there are two different words in the Hebrew text; the same word that is used of the froward is not used of God; that which is used of God, as before observed, signifies wrestling, and designs God's contending with the people of the Jews, in a way of wrath and fury, which came upon them to the uttermost, and issued in their entire ruin as a people and nation; the words here had their fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem.

{b} ltptt "eluctaris", Junius & Tremellius; "colluctaris", Aben Ezra; "reluctaris", Gejerus; "certas", Schmidt.

Psalms 18:27

Ver. 27. For thou wilt save the afflicted people,.... As the people of God commonly are; they are afflicted with sin, and the corruption of their own hearts, and with Satan and his temptations, and with the world, its reproaches, and persecutions; but God in his own time saves them out of them, if not here, yet hereafter. This is particularly and eminently true of the Christians who lived between the crucifixion of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem; who were greatly afflicted and persecuted by the Jews, but were in a remarkable manner saved a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, by being directed to go out of it to a place called Pella {c}; so that not one Christian suffered in it;

but wilt bring down high looks; or proud men, whom God humbles; these he abhors, resists, sets himself against, scatters and destroys. The Jews were a very proud people, and behaved in an insolent and insulting manner towards Christ and his followers; but the high looks of the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, were brought down to a purpose, when their city, temple, and nation, were destroyed; see **Isa 2:11**.

{c} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 5.

Psalms 18:28

Ver. 28. For thou wilt light my candle,.... Or lamp {d}: in 2Sa 22:29, it is, "Thou [art] my lamp, O Lord"; which may either design outward prosperity, and the flourishing condition of David's kingdom; or internal spiritual light, and an increase of it, by giving fresh supplies of the oil of grace, to cause the lamp to burn more clearly; or rather the prosperous estate of Christ's kingdom; and may be the same with the lamp ordained for the Messiah, Ps 132:17;

the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness; or "cause light to shine in my darkness" {e}; that is, bring me out of darkness into light; either out of adversity to prosperity, or from walking in darkness to the enjoyment of the light of his countenance; and is true of Christ, not only of the prosperity of his kingdom and interest, but of him personally; who though, when on the cross, was in darkness of soul, being forsaken by his God; yet, when raised from the dead, he was received up to heaven, and set down at the right hand of God, and was made full of joy with his countenance, **Ac 2:28**.

{d} yrn "lucernam meam", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c. {e} So Gussetius, Comment. Ebr. p. 495.

Psalms 18:29

Ver. 29. For by thee I have run through a troop,.... Or, "I have run to a troop": to meet one {f} with courage and intrepidity, as some interpret it {g}; or, as others {h}, "I have run after a troop": that is, pursued after one, as David pursued after the troops of the Amalekites who burnt Ziklag, 1Sa 30:8; to which Jarchi refers this passage; or rather, "I have broke a troop", or "through one" {i}; for the word, as some Jewish writers {k} observe, comes from a root which signifies to "break" in pieces, and is fitly used for the destroying or cutting in pieces a troop of the enemy; and is true of Christ, when he engaged with the troops of hell, and broke the squadrons of the infernal fiends, and spoiled or disarmed principalities and powers, and triumphed over them on the cross, and made a show of them openly, when he dragged them at his chariot wheels, and led captivity captive;

and by my God have I leaped over a wall; which refers to the scaling of walls, and taking of fortified places; and so the Targum, "By the word of my God I will subdue fortified towns"; so Apollinarius has it, passed over a tower, or took it; which was literally true of David, in many instances. Jarchi applies this to his taking the fortress of Zion from the Jebusites: a learned writer {l} thinks this refers to his leaping over the city wall, and slipping through the city watch, when Michal let him down through a window: it may be applied to Christ, who broke down the middle wail of partition, the ceremonial law, which stood between Jew and Gentile; or rather it may design the many difficulties which were in the way of the salvation of his people, which he surmounted and got over with great strength and swiftness; such as fulfilling the law, satisfying justice, bearing sin, and making atonement for it, undergoing a shameful and an accursed death, and grappling with numerous enemies, whom he conquered; and he is said to do all this by his God; because, as man and Mediator, he was strengthened and assisted by him.

{f} dwdg Uwra "occurram turmae", so some in Vatablus. {g} Apud Kimchi in loc. {h} Apud Aben Ezra in loc. {i} "Conteram", Pagninus; "perfregi", Vatablus; "perrupi", Musculus; "perrumpo", Tigurine version, Castalio; so Ainsworth. {k} Kimchi & Ben Melech. {l} Delaney's Life of King David, vol. 1. p. 62.

Psalms 18:30

Ver. 30. [As for] God, his way [is] perfect,.... Or "without spot" {m}, as the Septuagint render the word; without any just charge of inequality, or unrighteousness; such is God's way of providence, though sometimes his methods of providence are cavilled at by wicked men, and murmured at by his own people: they are at a loss, at times, to reconcile promises and providences together, and to account for the justice and equity of them; these ways of his are unsearchable, and not to be traced out by them; but when his judgments will be made manifest, the wisdom, goodness, and righteousness of them will be clearly discerned, and they will be admired; for they are all of a piece, and perfectly consistent with the attributes of God: and such also is his way of grace, and method of salvation; it is agreeable to all his perfections, and according to his purposes, counsel, and covenant; this being resolved on in his breast, contrived by his wisdom, and concluded on in the covenant, has been effected and finished by his son; and his inward way of working upon the heart, though at present imperfect, will be completed; he is a rock, and his work is perfect, and all his ways are judgment: whatever way or method he contrives and enters upon, whether in providence or grace, he pursues and brings to an issue; for he is an omnipotent, omniscient, and unchangeable Being, and neither frustrates, nor is he frustrated; nor is there any insincerity, unrighteousness, and unfaithfulness in him; nor can he act contrary to himself, and the perfections of his nature: the way also which he prescribes to others is perfect and plain, whether the path of doctrine or of duty; the path of truth is plain to the enlightened understanding, and the way of holiness is such, in which men, though fools, shall not err; see **Pr 8:8**;

the word of the Lord is tried; as silver in a furnace, and is clear of all dross, of error, and falsehood; is free from human mixtures, and without any impurity and unholiness; nor is God's word of promise chargeable with unfaithfulness; all his promises being yea and amen in Christ, and have been tried and proved by the saints in all ages; and have been found true, faithful, constant, and invariable;

he [is] a buckler to all those that trust in him; not in man, nor in themselves; in their own righteousness, or in any creature or creature enjoyment or performance; but in the providence and power of God, in his grace and mercy, in his word, and especially in his Son; in his person, blood, and righteousness; to such he is a buckler or shield: his power is all around them, his favour encompasses them, and his truth, or faithfulness in his word, is their shield and buckler: and so is his Son, who is both a sun and shield to them; and such are his precious blood, his spotless righteousness, and stoning sacrifice; which, being held up by faith, repel the fiery darts of Satan.

{m} Mymt amwmov, Sept. "impolluta", V. L. so Syriac. Aethiop.

Psalms 18:31

Ver. 31. For who [is] God save the Lord?.... Or Jehovah: there is but one God, and Jehovah is he; there is none besides him, nor any like him: there are many that are called gods, nominal deities, who are not by nature gods; fictitious ones, the idols of the Gentiles, made of gold, silver, brass, wood, and stone; but there is but one true God: there are gods, in an improper sense, as civil magistrates; but there is none really and truly so but the Lord; which is to be understood, not of Jehovah the Father, to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; for the Son is Jehovah, and the Spirit is Jehovah; both are so called, as well as the Father, and all three one God;

or who [is] a rock save our God? to have recourse to for shelter and protection; or to trust to, and build upon, for eternal life and salvation. False gods are rocks; but not like ours, our enemies themselves being judges, De 32:31; so Apollo at Delphos is called the Delphian rock {n}: the words seem to be taken from, or at least there is in them a reference to, **1Sa 2:2**.

{n} delfiv petra, Sophoclis Oedipus, v. 472.

Psalms 18:32

Ver. 32. [It is] God that girdeth me with strength,.... For battle, as in Ps 18:39; with strength of body and fortitude of mind; both which are from the Lord, and were in David; and were acknowledged by him as bestowed on him by the Lord; and which confirms what he had before said of him: or with spiritual strength, with strength in his soul, against sin, Satan, and the world; and to do the will and work of God: saints are girt by the Lord with the whole armour of God, and among the rest with the girdle of truth; and are prepared and ready to every good work; see **1Sa 2:4**. Hannah's song is again referred to: in 2Sa 22:33, the words are, "God is my strength [and] power"; they are true of Christ, the man of God's right hand, whom he promised to strengthen, and whom he has made strong for himself, Ps 80:17;

and maketh my way perfect; or safe, or prosperous. God removed every impediment and obstacle out of his way, and made it plain and easy, as Jarchi observes; and succeeded him, and gave him victory over his enemies; this has been verified in Christ, who has conquered sin, Satan, the world, death, and the grave: for this is not to be understood of the way and course of David's life and conversation, which was not perfect and unspotted, but had many blemishes and imperfections in it, which he often owns, confesses, and bewails.

Psalms 18:33

Ver. 33. He maketh my feet like hind's [feet],.... As light and swift as theirs, as the Targum; that is, either to flee, when there was a necessity for it, as Kimchi observes; or rather to pursue after the enemy, to run through a troop, and leap over a wall, as before; see 1Ch 12:8; the same phrase is used in **Hab 3:19**; and may be understood in a spiritual sense of that readiness and cheerfulness with which the saints run the ways of God's commandments, when their hearts are enlarged with his love and grace; and may very well be applied to Christ, who is often compared to a roe, or a young hart, for swiftness; who readily and at once engaged to come and do the will of God, and whose coming in the flesh, at the appointed time, was swift; and who made haste to do the work of God, in which he took the utmost pleasure; and who is a speedy and present help to his people in time of trouble; see **So 2:8**;

and setteth me upon my high places; the towers and fortresses, and strong and fortified places, where he was safe from his enemies; and: in a spiritual sense, may design the everlasting love of God, the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises; and Christ himself, with the fulness of grace in him, on which believers may be said to be set, when their faith is directed to them, and they live and dwell upon them; see **Hab 3:19**; and, the words were fulfilled in Christ, when God highly exalted him at his right hand, and set him above all principalities and powers, and made him higher than the heavens.

Psalms 18:34

Ver. 34. He teacheth my hands to war,.... From whence it appears, that war, in some cases, is lawful; and that all the skilfulness and art in training men for war, in the use of armour, in marshalling of armies, in forming sieges, &c. is all from God; see Ps 144:1; and so is all that spiritual skill, in making use of the whole armour of God against every enemy, sin, Satan, and the world; and even the wisdom and skill, counsel and instruction, which Christ as man and Mediator had, when it was the hour and power of darkness; when he was engaged with principalities and powers, and got the victory over them, were from the Lord: see Ps 16:7;

so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms; that is, the bow of an enemy falling into his hands, which might be literally true of David. It is in the Hebrew text, "a bow of brass"; and so Apollinarius renders it; which Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret strong iron, that is, steel; and so the Targum; see Job 20:24; Satan is an archer; his temptations are darts, and fiery ones; and his strong bow may be said to be broken by the arms of faith, when his temptations, under the influence of divine grace, are repelled and rendered ineffectual; and especially his bow was broken by Christ, not only in the wilderness, when he was vanquished by him; but in the garden, and on the cross, when Satan could find nothing in him, and get no other advantage over him, but to bruise his heel; when he himself had his head broke, his works ruined, and he himself destroyed. Some render the words, "mine arms have bent a bow of steel": that is, such skill and strength were given him that he was able to bend, draw, and shoot a bow or steel: the Targum is, "and hath strengthened mine arm as a bow of brass", or "steel"; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions; and to the same purpose the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and

Ethiopic versions; or it may be rendered, "my arms have bent", or "made to descend {o}, a bow of brass"; for when a bow is bent, the horns or corners of it are made to descend towards a man.

{o} htxnw "ut current", Cocceius; so Michaelis; "ut descendat vel deprimatur", Gejerus; vid. Gussetii Comment. Ebr. p. 507. so Jarchi.

Psalms 18:35

Ver. 35. Thou hast given me the shield of thy salvation,.... Meaning either temporal salvation, which was a shield to him when he had no outward one, as when he fought with Goliath; and was what preserved him in all his battles at other times: or spiritual salvation, which is of the Lord, of his contriving, effecting:, and applying, and in which his glory is concerned; interest in which is a free gift of his, as are the knowledge, application, and possession of it; and this is as a shield, which saves from sin, from all sin, and the damning power of it; keeps off the curses of the law, secures from wrath to come, and repels Satan's temptations; the words may be applied to Christ, who, though he was not saved from dying, yet was preserved in the day of salvation, and was not suffered to see corruption in the grave, and was quickly delivered from the power and dominion of it;

and thy right hand hath holden me up; Christ may be said to be the right hand of God, being as dear to him as his right hand; and being exalted at it; and because by him he communicates all good things to his people, and with him upholds and sustains them; or else it designs the mighty power of God, which is often signified by it,
Ps 20:6; and may be understood of the sustentation of David, both in a providential way, with respect to his being, the preservation of it, the supplies of life, and support in times of trouble and distress; and in a spiritual sense, maintaining the principle of grace in him, furnishing him with fresh supplies of grace, and bearing him up under and through every temptation and exercise; so upholding him that he stood firm in the true grace of God, in the exercise of it implanted, and in the doctrine of grace, so as to go forward in the ways of God, and follow hard after him, and so as not to fall and utterly perish; and which is true of all the saints; see
Ps 63:8. The words may be interpreted of Christ, who, as man and Mediator, as God's righteous servant, was upheld by him, so that he failed not, nor was he discouraged; the hand of the Lord was established with him, and his arm also strengthened him, Isa 42:1; this clause is not in 2Sa 22:36;

and thy gentleness hath made me great; David was very mean and low by his birth and occupation, and while persecuted by Saul; but God of his grace and goodness, of his sovereign good will and pleasure, raised him to an high estate, set him on the throne of Israel, and gave him honour among and above the kings of the earth; so Kimchi interprets the word for "gentleness" by "goodness" or "merciful" kindness; R. Jonah by "providence"; and R. Isaac explains it "thy help [and] good will"; and all shows that his greatness was not owing to his merits, but to the providential goodness of God; and his special grace and mercy in Christ Jesus made him still greater, even a child of God, an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ, a King and a Priest unto God; gave him a right unto and a meetness for a crown of glory, an everlasting kingdom, an eternal inheritance, as it does all the saints. The words may be rendered, "thy humility hath made me great" {p}; which may be understood either of God's humbling himself to look upon him in his low estate, and to raise him to such honour and dignity as he did, both in a temporal and spiritual sense; see Ps 113:6; or of the humility which he had in himself from God, as Aben Ezra interprets it; of which grace God is the author; it is a fruit of the Spirit; which he takes great notice of, gives more grace to them that have it, and exalts them, as he did David, who was mean and low in his own eyes. The Septuagint, and those versions which follow that, render it "thy discipline" or "correction": and so may design the gentleness and lenity of God in chastising his people, which is always in measure and in judgment, and for their good; whereby he increases grace in them, and trains them up for, and brings them to his kingdom and glory. The Chaldee paraphrase is, "by thy word thou hast increased me"; it may not be improperly interpreted of Christ, who was very low in his estate of humiliation on earth, but is now highly exalted, and crowned with glory and honour; who first endured great sufferings, and then entered into his glory.

{p} Ktwne "mansuetudo tua", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Gejerus; "thy meekness", Ainsworth; hwne "sumitur pro humilitate seu mansuetudine", Zeph. ii. 3. Gejerus.

Psalms 18:36

Ver. 36. Thou hast enlarged my steps under me,.... Which is opposed to those straitened circumstances in which the psalmist was, Ps 18:4; and is expressive of deliverance from his enemies, by whom he was surrounded, besieged, and shut up; see Ps 31:8; and of freedom of walking at large, without being straitened for room, or interrupted by others, **Pr 4:12**; and of safety in standing; all which is true in a spiritual sense of believers in Christ, who being delivered by him out of the hands of their enemies, serve the Lord without fear in righteousness and holiness; walk at liberty by faith in Christ, and up and down in the name of the Lord their God; and have their feet established upon the Rock of ages, that sure and large foundation, Christ, from which there is no danger of slipping and falling; as follows;

that my feet did not slip; so as to fall and perish; for sometimes the steps of the saints are well nigh slipped; yea, in some sense they stumble; slip, and fall, but not so as to be utterly cast down and perish eternally; the bottom on which they are is so broad, and the foundation so sure, that it is not possible they should. The words will bear to be applied to Christ, who was in very pressed and straitened circumstances, when beset with the bulls of Bashan, encompassed with dogs, and enclosed with the assembly of the wicked; and was in slippery places, when he sunk in deep mire where there is no standing, Ps 22:12; but now being delivered from all this, he is brought, as in Ps 18:19, into a large place, into heaven, and made higher than the heavens, and is set down at the right hand of God, from whence he can never be moved.

Psalms 18:37

Ver. 37. I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them,.... Which may refer to David's pursuing the Amalekites, who overtook them and recovered all they had carried away, 1Sa 30:8; so Kimchi explains it;

neither did I turn again till they were consumed; for not a man escaped, save four hundred young men that rode on camels and fled,
Ps 18:17.

Psalms 18:38

Ver. 38. I have wounded them, that they were not able to rise,.... Which was not only true of the Amalekites, but of all with whom David engaged in war;

they are fallen under my feet; either dead, or become subject and tributaries to him; as the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and Edomites; see **2Sa 8:1**. This, with Ps 18:37, may very well be accommodated to David's antitype, and be expressive of the entire victory he has obtained over all his and his people's enemies; he wounded the heads over many countries, Ps 110:6. Satan and his principalities and powers, whose head is broke, whose works are destroyed; yea, he himself, which had the power of death, so as not to be able to rise more against Christ, who has led captivity captive: he has also finished and made an end of sin, and overcome the world; nor did he turn back from this work he engaged in until he had made a complete conquest; and moreover he has likewise made his people more than conquerors, through him, over these same enemies; so that the words are also applicable to them.

Psalms 18:39

Ver. 39. For thou hast girded me with strength unto battle,.... See Ps 18:32; that natural strength, courage and valour, which David had, were from the Lord; and so is the Spirit of power, love, and of a sound mind, which believers have; and likewise that strength which Christ, as man, had and used in his combat with the powers of darkness; see Ps 80:17;

thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me; as the psalmist ascribes his strength, so he attributes his success to the Lord; who likewise subdues the sins of his people, and all other enemies of theirs, and who also makes the enemies of his Son his footstool, Ps 110:1.

Psalms 18:40

Ver. 40. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies,.... Either to slay them, or to trample or put a yoke upon them; or rather the sense is, thou hast made them to fly before me, to turn their necks or backs unto me, as the word is used in **Jos 7:8**; and it is expressive of an utter rout and vanquishing of them;

that I might destroy them that hate me; they not being able to face him and stand against him.

Psalms 18:41

Ver. 41. They cried, but [there was] none to save [them],.... It is in 2Sa 22:42; "they looked"; that is, they looked round about, here and there, to see if there were any near at hand to help and deliver them; they cried in their distress, and because of the anguish of their spirits, and for help and assistance, but in vain; they cried, as Jarchi thinks, to their idols, as Jonah's mariners cried everyone to their god; and, if so, it is no wonder there was none to save; for such are gods that cannot save: but it follows,

[even] unto the Lord, but he answered them not; as Saul, for instance, 1Sa 28:6; so God deals with wicked men, often by way of righteous retaliation; see **Pr 1:28**.

Psalms 18:42

Ver. 42. Then did I beat them small, as the dust before the wind,.... They being given up by God, and he not answering to their cries; the phrase denotes the utter ruin and destruction of them, and represents their case as desperate and irrecoverable; being, as it were, pounded to dust, and that driven away with the wind: just as the destruction of the four monarchies is signified by the iron, clay, brass, silver, and gold, being broken to pieces, and made like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and carried away with the wind, so that no place is found for them any more, **Da 2:35**;

I did cast them out as the dirt of the streets; expressing indignation and contempt: in 2Sa 22:43; it is, "I did stamp them as the mire of the street, [and] did, spread them abroad"; which also denotes the low and miserable condition to which they were reduced, and the entire conquest made of them, and triumph over them; see Isa 10:6; compare with this 2Sa 12:31.

Psalms 18:43

Ver. 43. Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people,.... In 2Sa 22:44, it is read "my people", meaning the people of Israel; either Saul and his men, who contended with David, and sought his life; or rather the tribes of Israel, who, after Saul's death, refused to acknowledge David as their king, but afterwards came and anointed him in Hebron. The words may very well be interpreted of the contentions of the Scribes and Pharisees with Christ, and of the opposition from sinners, which he for a while endured, but is now delivered from them all;

[and] thou hast made me the head of the Heathen; which, if understood of

David, refers to the Philistines, Syrians, Moabites, and Edomites, being subdued by him, and becoming tributaries to him, **2Sa 8:1**. But it best agrees with Christ, who is the head of his chosen ones among the Gentiles; the political head, King, and Governor of them, the Heathen being given him for his inheritance and possession; and which appeared in the first ages of Christianity, when the Gospel was first preached to the Gentiles by the apostles; and still continues, and will be more clearly seen in the latter day, when the Lord shall be King over all the earth. Christ was made the head of the Heathen, by the appointment and designation of his Father; and, in fact, was so when multitudes from among the Gentiles were converted and brought to the obedience of him. In 2Sa 22:44 it is, "thou hast kept me [to be] head of the Heathen"; which does not seem so much to intend the designation and constitution of him as such, but the continuation of him; and denotes the stability of his government in the Gentile world, of which there will be no end;

a people [whom] I have not known shall serve me; by whom are meant the Gentiles, who were not the people of God, were without Christ and without God, and without hope in the world: not that there are any people that can be unknown to Christ, as he is the omniscient God; nor were these unknown to him, in such sense as reprobates, nominal professors, and foolish virgins, are said not to be known by him, **Mt 7:23**. For these people among the Heathen, who are or shall be brought to serve the Lord, are such who were the objects of his love and delight from everlasting; were in his Father's choice and in his own, and in the gift of his Father to him, and in the covenant of his grace; and therefore must be known by him; moreover, they are the purchase of his blood; and the sheep he knows, for whom he has laid down his life, and of whom he has such an exact and particular knowledge, that he can and does call them by name. But the sense is, these seemed not to be taken notice of and cared for by Christ; they were not owned and acknowledged by him as his people; the Jews were distinguished from all others; they only had the law, the word of God, and his ordinances; the Gentiles were suffered to walk in their own ways; they were neglected, and the times of their ignorance were overlooked and disregarded; so that they were treated as a people that were not known for many hundreds of years: but here it is predicted, that when the Gospel should come among them, and they be called by it, they should "serve" the Lord in righteousness and true holiness, with reverence and godly fear, from a principle of love, in his name and strength, and to his glory; see Isa 55:4.

Psalms 18:44

Ver. 44. As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me,.... That is, as soon as they should hear of Christ, through the preaching of the word, by which faith would come, they should readily and at once receive, embrace, and profess the Gospel, and yield a cheerful submission to the ordinances of it; and which has had its accomplishment among the Gentiles, Ac 28:28;

the strangers shall submit themselves unto me; meaning either the same persons as before; the Gentiles, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise, who should submit to Christ, to his Gospel, to his righteousness, and to the sceptre of his kingdom; though some interpret it of the degenerate Jews, "the sons of the stranger", as the words may be rendered; who, though called the children of God, and the children of the kingdom, yet were, as our Lord says, of their father the devil; and these, some of them, in a flattering and dissembling way, feigned themselves to be the followers and disciples of Christ: and, indeed, it looks as if hypocrites were intended, whether among Jews or Gentiles, or both, since the word here used, and rendered "submit", signifies to "lie"; and so it is in the metaphrase of Apollinarius; or, as in the margin of some Bibles, to "yield a feigned obedience"; see Ps 66:3. There seems to be an allusion to the conquest of nations, some of the inhabitants of which readily and heartily submit, but others only feignedly, and through fear, and the force of superior power they cannot withstand.

Psalms 18:45

Ver. 45. The strangers shall fade away,.... Like the leaves of trees in autumn, when they fall and perish; to which hypocrites and nominal professors are compared, **Jude 1:12**;

and be afraid out of their close places; their towers and fortified places, or the rocks and mountains to which they betake themselves for shelter; but, as not thinking themselves safe enough, through fear and dread, come out of them; see **Mic 7:17**. Some Jewish writers {q} interpret the words, they shall halt or be lame; that is, because of the chains put upon their feet: and so they are expressive of the conquest made of them. The word in the Arabic language signifies to "come out"; and may be so rendered here, and "come out": in 2Sa 22:46; it is, "they shall gird themselves", or "come out girt".

{q} R. Donesh apud Jarchi & Abendana not. in Miclol Yophi in loc. to Apollinar. Metaphras.

Psalms 18:46

Ver. 46. The Lord liveth, and blessed [be] my Rock,.... This, with what follows, is the concluding part of the psalm, which ends with a celebration of the Divine Being, and with thankfulness for mercies received from him. The psalmist praises him on account of what he is in himself, what he was to him, and had done for him: in himself he is the living God, "the Lord liveth": he has life in himself, essentially, originally, and independently; and is the fountain and author of life to all others, even to all creatures that have life, whether rational or irrational: he is the giver of natural life to all men, and the supporter of it; and of spiritual and eternal life to his chosen people; and he continues to live, and ever will; wherefore the saints may conclude that their life in every sense is safe and secure. Some render the phrase, by way of wish, "may the Lord live" {r}; but then it must be understood only that he would show himself more abundantly to be the living God, and that he might be acknowledged so by others. The next clauses are by way of petition; "and blessed be my Rock"; on which he was built and established, to which he betook himself in times of distress, which was his place of defence, and from whence he had a supply; wherefore he desires he might be blessed, not by invoking or conferring a blessing on him, neither of which can be; there being none greater than he to call upon, and he being "Elshaddai", God all sufficient, and in no need of any; but by declaring his blessedness, by celebrating his greatness and goodness, and by ascribing blessing and honour and glory to him;

and let the God of my salvation be exalted; God was the God of his salvation in a temporal sense, saving him daily from his many enemies; and in a spiritual sense, being the contriver, author, and applier of it to him; on which account he would have him be exalted both by himself, and in the high praises of his people; ascribing the whole of salvation to him, and giving him all the glory of it. Some render the words, "the God of my salvation is high" {s}; he is the most high God, the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, and is above all others. In 2Sa 22:47 the words are read, "and exalted be the God of the Rock of my salvation".

{r} hwhy yx "vivat Jehova", Musculus, Tigurine version, Piscator, Muis; so some in Vatablus, Ainsworth. {s} Mwry "excelsus est", Gejerus.

Psalms 18:47

Ver. 47. [It is] God that avengeth me,.... Or "gives vengeance unto me", or "for me" {t}: vengeance only belongs to God, and he repays it for and in behalf of his people. Private revenge is not to be exercised by any; public vengeance on delinquents may be exercised by the civil magistrate, to whom God gives power and authority to exercise it,
Ro 13:4; as he did to David, as king of Israel; though the phrase rather seems to design the victories which he obtained over his enemies, which were punishments to them, vengeances inflicted on them; and owing to God; so the acceptable year of the Messiah's coming, and the time of his people redeemed by him, is called the day of vengeance of our God, both on his and their enemies, Isa 61:2;

and subdueth the people under me; the Edomites, Moabites, and others, as in **2Sa 8:1**, or the Gentiles under Christ;
See Gill on "Ps 18:39";

{t} yl twmqn Ntwnh "qui dat ultiones mihi", Pagninus, Gejerus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Musculus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 18:48

Ver. 48. He delivereth me from mine enemies,.... From Saul and his men, from Ishbosheth and Abner, from Absalom, and the conspirators with him; so all believers are delivered out of the hands of their enemies by Christ, as that they can serve the Lord without fear; and so Christ himself is delivered from all his enemies, being raised from the dead, and set at the right hand of God, where he must reign till all enemies are put under his feet;

yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me; David was lifted up from a low and mean estate, and placed on the throne of Israel, above all those that rose up against him, and sought to destroy him; and the saints are set upon their high places in Christ, where they are out of the reach of their enemies to do them any harm; and Christ, he is highly exalted at the right hand of God, above all principality and power, might and dominion, and every name that is named in this world;

thou hast delivered me from the violent man; either from Saul, from whom David was delivered; or from Satan the enemy, the son of wickedness, who shall no more exact upon and afflict the Messiah, Ps 89:21. The Chaldee paraphrase says, from Gog; as the saints will be delivered from antichrist, the man of sin, and son of perdition, who will be destroyed with the breath of Christ's mouth.

Psalms 18:49

Ver. 49. Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen,.... These words are cited by the apostle, in Ro 15:9; and applied to the conversion of the Gentiles, which is manifestly prophesied of in some preceding verses of this psalm: there it is rendered, "I will confess to thee among the Gentiles"; and designs not confession of sin, nor profession of the truth, but an acknowledgment of unworthiness, joined with thankfulness for mercies received; done in the most public manner, not only in the congregation of the righteous, but before the Heathen conquered by him; owning before them all, that the victories he had obtained over them were not to be ascribed to his arm and sword, but to the power of the Lord;

and sing praises unto thy name; which is comely for the saints to do, and which Jesus Christ himself did, in the great congregation of his disciples, and among the Gentiles, by his apostles, and others, on the account of the conversion of them.

Psalms 18:50

Ver. 50. Great deliverance giveth he to his king,.... Not that is king over him; for he is King of kings and Lord of lords; but that is made king by him, as David was; who did not usurp the throne, but was anointed king by the appointment of God, and was placed by him upon the throne; to whom he gave great deliverance from his enemies, or "magnified salvations" to him; which were great in kind, and many in number; and as Christ is, whom God has set as his King on his holy hill of Sion, against whom the Heathen raged, and kings and princes set themselves; but he is delivered from them all, and saved from the power of death and the grave, and ever lives to reign over, protect, and defend his people; in 2Sa 22:51, it is, he is "the tower of salvation for his king", with which compare Pr 18:10;

and showeth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore; which may be understood either of David literally, who was the Lord's anointed, and to whom God showed mercy in various instances; and then by his seed is meant the Messiah, who was of his seed according to the flesh; or of the Messiah, whose name signifies Anointed; and who is often called David, Eze 34:23 **Ho 3:5**; and so some of the Jewish doctors {u} from this verse prove that the name of the Messiah is David: and by his seed are meant his spiritual seed; all the elect of God, who are given him as his children, to whom he stands in the relation of the everlasting Father: and as mercy is kept with him for evermore, Ps 89:28; so it is shown to them in regeneration, in the forgiveness of their sins, and in their everlasting salvation.

{u} Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 19

To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David. This psalm was penned by David, and inscribed to the chief musician, as others, to be used in public service, and was designed for Gospel times, as the subject of it shows; which is first, not an account of the light of nature, and then of the law of Moses, but of the Gospel of Christ; and especially as ministered in the times of the apostles, as a citation out of it in
Ro 10:18, makes clear.

Ver. 1. The heavens declare the glory of God,.... By which we are to understand not the heavens literally taken, though these with the firmament are the handiworks of God, and do declare the glory of his perfections, especially his wisdom and power; these show that there is a God, and that he is a glorious one: but either Gospel churches, often signified by the kingdom of heaven, in the New Testament; the members of them being heaven-born souls, and the doctrines and ordinances ministered among them being from heaven; and there being a very great resemblance between them and heaven, in the company and communion enjoyed in them; and who declare the glory of the divine perfections, which is very great in the handiwork of their redemption; and who ascribe the glory of their whole salvation to God: or rather the apostles and first preachers of the word, as appears from Ro 10:18; who were set in the highest place in the church; had their commission, doctrine, and success from heaven; and who may be called by this name, because of the purity and solidity of their ministry, and their constancy and steadfastness in it, and because of their heavenly lives and conversations: these declared the glory of the divine perfections; such as those particularly of grace, goodness, and mercy, which are not discoverable by the light of nature or law of Moses, as, they are displayed in the salvation of men by Christ, in the forgiveness of their sins, the justification of their persons, and the gift of eternal life unto them: they taught men to ascribe the glory of salvation to God alone, Father, Son, and Spirit; they set forth in their ministry the glory of Christ, of his person, and of his offices and grace; and they showed that redemption was his handiwork, as follows:

and the firmament showeth his handiwork; for the same persons may be called the firmament, since they that are wise are said to shine as the brightness of it, Da 12:3. These were like to stars in it, and were the light of the world, and declared that redemption is the work which Christ undertook, and came into this world to perform, and which he has finished; his hands have wrought it, and his own arm has brought salvation to him. The Targum interprets the heavens and the firmament, of such persons as contemplate the heavens, and look upon the firmament or air; and so do some other Jewish writers {w}.

{w} Jarchi & Kimchi in loc.

Psalms 19:2

Ver. 2. Day untoday uttereth speech,.... This, with the following clause,

and night untonight showeth knowledge, some understand of the constant and continued succession of day and night; which declares the glory of God, and shows him to be possessed of infinite knowledge and wisdom; and which brings a new accession of knowledge to men; others, of the continual declaration of the glory of God, and of the knowledge of him made by the heavens and the firmament, the ordinances of which always continue; the sun for a light by day, and the moon and stars for a light by night; and so night and day constantly and successively proclaim the glory and wisdom of God: but rather this is to be understood of the constancy of the Gospel ministry, and the continuance of the evangelic revelation. The apostles of Christ persevered in their work, and laboured in the word and doctrine night and day: they were in it at all seasons; yea, were instant in season and out of season; and though they are dead, the Gospel continues, and will do as long as day and night remain: and these, like overflowing fountains, sent forth in great abundance, as the word {x} rendered "uttereth" signifies, the streams of divine light and knowledge; they were full of matter, and their tongues were as the pen of a ready writer; they diffused the savour of the knowledge of Christ, in great plenty, in every place where they came. These words express the continuance of the Gospel revelation, as the next do the extent of it.

{x} eyby "eructat", Musculus, Munster, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth; "scaturit", Muis; "scaturiendo effundit", Cocceius; "copiose ac constanter instar foecundae cujusdam scaturiginis protrudit, emittit", Gejerus; so Michaelis.

Psalms 19:3

Ver. 3. [There is] no speech nor language [where] their voice is not heard,.... Not the voice of the day and night; as if the sense was, that there is no people, of any speech or language under the sun, but there is something said every day and night of the weather, what it is, or will be, as the face of the heavens appears morning and evening: but of the heavens and firmament; the meaning of which some take to be this; either that though they have no proper speech nor language, yet there is a voice in them which is heard, declaring the glory of God and his handiworks; and the words may very well be rendered, "they have no speech nor words, without [these] their voice is heard"; or that there is no people, nation, or language under the heavens; see Da 3:4; though they are ever so different one from another, so as not to be able to understand each other; yet the voice of the heavens, uttering and proclaiming the glory of their Maker, is heard and understood by them all: but rather this is to be interpreted of the extent of the Gospel ministry by the apostles; who, according to their commission, went everywhere preaching the word, to men of all nations, of every speech and language; for which they were qualified, by having the gift of various tongues bestowed upon them; so that there were no nations, of ever so barbarous a speech and language, but they were capable of speaking to and of being understood by them; and though they could not understand one another, they all heard the apostles speak in their own tongues the wonderful works of God, Ac 2:4. Their voice, in the ministration of the Gospel, was heard in every nation externally, and by many internally: faith came by hearing; and they received the word with gladness and readiness. This gives the Gospel revelation a superiority to the legal one; that was only made to one nation, to the nation of the Jews; the voice of that was not heard elsewhere; but the voice of the Gospel is heard in all nations; this revelation is published throughout the world: and this shows that these words belong to the times of the apostles, after they had received a commission from Christ, to go into, all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; which was done before the destruction of Jerusalem, Mt 24:14; and which is further confirmed by what follows.

Psalms 19:4

Ver. 4. Their line is gone out through all the earth,.... Not the line or writings in the book of the creatures, the heavens, and the earth, which lie open, and are legible, and to be seen and read of all men; nor the line and writings in the book of the Scriptures, called line upon line, and precept upon precept, Isa 28:13, which, though first given to the Jews, were written for the instruction of others, and have been communicated to them; but the line of the apostles: everyone had his line or measure; or the course he was to steer was measured out and directed to him; the line of one, where he was to go and preach the Gospel, reached so far one way, and the line of another reached so far another way; and what with one and another, their line reached throughout all the earth; see 2Co 10:13; the apostle citing these words in Ro 10:18; renders them, "their sound went", &c. the sound of the Gospel, as published by them; which agrees with the next clause;

and their words to the end of the world; to the isles afar off, even to these northern and distant ones of England, Scotland, and Ireland, which were reached and visited with the Gospel, either by the apostles, or at least by some of the first ministers of the word;

in them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun; that is, in the heavens and firmament, where the natural sun is placed; and its habitation is fitly called a tabernacle, because it is always in motion and never stops: or this may have some respect to its setting, when, according to the common appearance, and to common understandings, it seems to be hid as in a tent or tabernacle; to be as it were gone to bed, and at rest; when in the morning it rises gay and cheerful, and comes forth like a bridegroom out of his chamber, as is said in Ps 19:5: but this is all to be understood, spiritually and mystically, of Christ the sun of righteousness, who has his tabernacle among his people, his churches; and particularly has a place, and the chief place, in the ministry of the Gospel, being the sum and substance of it; and this is of God's putting there, who committed to his apostles the word of reconciliation, the sum of which is Christ; and this is what makes the Gospel so glorious a light, so clear a revelation as it is: the nature, continuance, and extent of this revelation, are described in the foregoing verses; the perspicuity and clearness of it is set forth in this clause, and in what follows.

Psalms 19:5

Ver. 5. Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,.... His nuptial chamber, on which Elias writes {y},

"we call the garment (or canopy) spread over the head of the bridegroom and bride, supported by four pillars, in the time of their espousals, hpx."

who looks lovely and beautiful in his nuptial robes, cheerful and pleasant in his countenance, creating pleasure and delight in all his friends that see him and hear his voice: and this simile is expressive of the brightness and glory of the sun when it rises; and of the joy and pleasure which it produces in the minds of men when they behold it: all which sets forth the loveliness and beauty of Christ, as he is held forth in the ministration of the Gospel, and the joy unspeakable and full of glory which his presence yields, after a short departure from his people; see Isa 61:10;

[and] rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race; in which he shows his readiness, velocity, and strength; and this denotes the swiftness of the sun in running its course, and its indefatigableness in its constant motion; though it has been employed therein for so many thousands of years, yet every morning rises with the same cheerfulness, pursues its course, and is never weary: all which may point at the readiness of Gospel ministers, their swiftness to run to and fro, and their strength to fulfil the course of their ministry, in which Christ, the sun of righteousness, is held forth in so glorious a manner.

{y} Elias, in his Tishbi, p. 119. The same word is used Isa. iv. 5. and translated "a defence".

Psalms 19:6

Ver. 6. His going forth is from the end of the heaven,.... From the east, where it rises:

and his circuit to the ends of it; to the west, where it sets; which is expressive of the large compass the Gospel administration took in the times of the apostles; whereby the grace of God appeared to all men, shone out in a very illustrious manner, and Christ became, what the sun is to the earth, the light of the world;

and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof; though things may be hid from the light of it, yet not from its heat, so forcible and penetrating it is Christ, in the administration of the Gospel to all to whom it comes with power, not only enlightens their minds, but quickens their souls, warms their hearts, causes them to burn within them, arises with healing in his wings upon them, and makes his Gospel the savour of life unto life unto them. The psalmist goes on to say more and excellent things of the Gospel, its nature and usefulness.

Psalms 19:7

Ver. 7. The law of the Lord [is] perfect,.... By which is meant, not the law of Moses, or the ten commandments, but the "doctrine" of the Lord; as the word hrwt, "torah", signifies, even the whole word of God, as in **Isa 8:20**. All the Scriptures of truth, which are profitable for doctrine; for setting doctrine in a clear light, and for the vindication and establishment of it, and are the rule of doctrine both to preachers and hearers; and which are "perfect", contain the whole mind and will of God, both with respect to faith and practice; whereby the man of God is made perfect, and thoroughly furnished to all good works, **2Ti 3:16**; and especially the Gospel part of the word of God may be designed, which both in the Old and New Testament is called "a law" or "doctrine", being eminently so; the doctrine of the Messiah, and of justification by faith in his righteousness, **Isa 2:3** **Ro 3:27**. The Gospel is a perfect plan and scheme of spiritual and saving truths: it gives an account of perfect things; as of the perfect righteousness of Christ, and complete justification by it; of the full as well as free pardon of sins by the blood of Christ; and of redemption and salvation from all sin and evils by him: and it also shows where true perfection is; namely, in Christ, in whom the saints are complete, be being made to them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; see **Jas 1:25**. This character, therefore, suits better with the Gospel than with the moral law; though that, as it is to be gathered out of the whole word of God, contains the good and perfect will of God, with respect to what is to be done or avoided; nor is anything to be added to it; nor did our Lord come to add unto it, or to make it more perfect, but to fulfil it, which men could not do; nor could the law make any man or anything perfect, either perfectly sanctify, or justify, or save; whereas the bringing in of the better hope in the Gospel does, **Heb 9:7**. The effect, under a divine influence and blessing ascribed to it, is,

converting the soul; which is a further proof that the law of Moses is not intended: for though by it is the knowledge of sin, or conviction of sin, which often falls short of conversion; yet the Spirit of God, as a spirit of regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, is not received through the doctrine or preaching of the law, but through the ministration of the Gospel; which is designed to turn men from darkness to light, and from the powers of Satan to God; and which use it has when it is attended with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power; see **Ro 3:20**, though the words may be rendered "relieving", that is, refreshing and comforting the "soul" {z} as in **La 1:11**; Through want of bodily food, which is the case in the passage retorted to, the spirits faint and sink, the soul is almost gone, when, by the ministration of proper food, it is as it were brought back again, as the word {a} here used signifies, and the animal spirits are cheered and revived: and of like use is the Gospel; it is the food of the soul, by which it is refreshed and exhilarated, when ready to sink and faint away; hereby it is restored and revived, comforted and nourished;

the testimony of the Lord [is] sure; this is another name for the word of God, or the Holy Scriptures; so called because they testify of Christ, of his person, office, and grace; of what he is, was to do, and suffer, and perform for his people, and of his glory that should follow thereon, **Joh 5:39**; and particularly the doctrine of the Gospel is the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ, both which he himself testified, and which is a testimony concerning him, **2Ti 1:8**. And this is "sure", or "to be believed" {b}; the whole of Scripture is true, coming from the God of truth; having for its principal subject Christ, who is truth itself, and being dictated by the Spirit of truth; and particularly the Gospel part of it, and all the truths therein contained, especially the doctrine of salvation by Christ, which is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation: the Gospel is a testimony of record which God himself has bore concerning his Son, and eternal life by him, and therefore sure and to be depended upon; for if the witness of men is received, the witness of God is greater, **1Jo 5:9**. The effect ascribed to the word of God, Or to the Gospel under this character, is,

making wise the simple. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, render it "babes" or "children"; and so Apollinarius; and the word ytp, here used in the Arabic language, is said to {c} signify such; and here it intends babes and children not in years, but in understanding, to whom God is pleased to reveal the truths of his Gospel, when he hides them from the wise and prudent: these simple ones are such who are sensible of their simplicity and folly, and of their want of understanding; who, with Agur, think themselves more foolish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man; and these, by the word of God, are made wise to know themselves, their folly, sinfulness, imperfections, and impotence; and are made wise unto salvation, to know the right way of salvation by Christ; see **2Ti 3:15**; where the same phrase is used as here, and seems to be borrowed from hence, and is used of the Scriptures; which also make men wise in the knowledge of Gospel doctrines, the wisdom of God in a mystery, which to know is the greatest wisdom and understanding, and much more so than to be acquainted with the law only, **De 4:6**.

{z} vpn tbyvm "recreans animam", Vatablus, Schmidt; "refocillat", Piscator. {a} "Restituens animam", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius; "reducens", Gejerus, Montanus; so Ainsworth. {b} hnman "fidele", V. L. Musculus, Pagninus; "fide dignum", Piscator, Michaelis. {c} Shemot Rabba, s. 3. fol. 93. 2.

Psalms 19:8

Ver. 8. The statutes of the Lord [are] right,.... The word of God may be called "statutes", or "visitations" {d} because that God will visit, in a way of resentment, such persons as despise its authority, do not act according to it, or add unto it, or detract from it; or the word may be rendered "commissions" {e}, things committed to trust, as the Scriptures were to the Jews, **Ro 3:1**; and as the Gospel is committed to the trust of the ministers of it, who faithfully dispense it, **2Co 5:19**. Now these may be said to be right, as the word of the Lord is, Ps 33:4; since they set men right in their principles, and direct them to right practices; they are the means of making them upright in heart, and in conversation: the doctrines of the word of God have nothing crooked, froward, and perverse in them; are without sophism, and the hidden things of dishonesty; they are all in righteousness, and plain and easy in everything respecting salvation, to those who have a spiritual knowledge and understanding of them, **Pr 8:8**; they lead into right and straight paths of truth and holiness, in which wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err; and particularly the Gospel directs to the right way of salvation and eternal life by Jesus Christ; the effect of which is

rejoicing the heart. This cannot be understood of the law, which is a voice of terror, pronounces guilty, curses and condemns, is the killing letter, and works wrath; but of the Gospel part of the word, which is a joyful sound; publishes good tidings of good things; and, when applied by the Spirit of God, is found to have this effect, see Jer 15:16;

the commandment of the Lord [is] pure; not only the Scriptures in general may bear this name, because they deliver out the commands of God to men, as those of a moral and ceremonial kind to the Jews under the former dispensation; so the ordinances of Christ, which are his commands under the Gospel dispensation; yea, the Gospel itself may be so called, though, strictly speaking, it has no command in it; because, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, it is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, Ro 16:25; besides, the commandment is no other than the word or doctrine, see **1Jo 2:7**; and as every commandment of the Lord, of what kind soever it is, is pure and holy, so is every word of God, Pr 30:5; being without any mixture of men's inventions, or the dross of corrupt doctrine, sincere, unadulterated, clear of all chaff and impurity, consistent, uniform, and all of a piece, and which tends to promote purity of heart, life, and conversation;

enlightening the eyes: that is, of the understanding, so as for a man to see his lost state and condition by nature; to see the glory, fulness, and grace of Christ; to behold wondrous things in the doctrine of the Gospel, and to observe the way of duty in which he should walk: this is the eyesalve in **Re 3:18**; and so the Jewish doctors {f} explaining this text call the law, using the same word as there.

{d} ydwqp "visitationes", Ainsworth. {e} "Commissiones", Munster; "deposita", so some in Rivetus; "depositum", Gejerus, Michaelis. {f} Vajikra Rabba, s. 12. fol. 155. 3. & Debarim Rabba, s. 8. fol. 243. 3.

Psalms 19:9

Ver. 9. The fear of the Lord [is] clean,.... Still the word of God is intended, which teaches men to fear the Lord; gives a full account of the worship of God, which is often meant by the fear of God; it instructs in the matter and manner of worship; and nothing more powerfully engages to serve the Lord with reverence and godly fear than the Gospel does: and this is "clean"; and the doctrines of it direct to the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, and to the righteousness of Christ, the fine linen, clean and white; the promises of it put the saints on cleansing themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; and the whole of it is the word of truth, by which God and Christ sanctify the church and the members of it,
Joh 15:2. And this word is

enduring for ever; the law is done away; the ceremonial law entirely, and the moral law, as a covenant of works, and as to the ministration of it by Moses;

but the Gospel continues; it is an everlasting one; it endures for ever, notwithstanding all the opposition made to it by open persecution, or false teachers;

the judgments of the Lord [are] true, [and] righteous altogether; "the judgments of the Lord" are the same with "the word of God", as appears from Ps 119:25; and these seem to design that part of the word, which contains rules of God's judging and governing his people; or the laws, orders, and ordinances of Christ in his house, which his people should observe, and yield a cheerful obedience to, he being their King, Judge, and Lawgiver: and these are "true", or "truth" {g} itself; being wisely made, according to the truth of things, and agreeable to the holiness and righteousness of God, and so righteous; not at all grievous, but easy, pleasant, and delightful, one and all of them.

{g} tma "veritas", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Rivetus.

Psalms 19:10

Ver. 10. More to be desired [are they] than gold,.... This refers to all the truths in the word of God; to all the doctrines of the Gospel; which, by good men, are more desirable, and by them more prized and valued, than all worldly riches and treasure;

yea, than much fine gold: more than gold, and the best of gold, and a great deal of it, than thousands of gold and silver; see Ps 119:72 **Pr 8:10**;

sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb; or "the dropping of the honeycombs" {h}, which is the purest and sweetest of the honey; and what honey is to the natural taste of men, that is the Gospel, and the truths of it, to the spiritual taste of believers, Ps 119:103; and when the presence of Christ is enjoyed, his love is shed abroad, and the blessings of his grace are partook of, the ordinances of the Gospel are very delightful, **So 2:3**; eloquence, and eloquent orators, are sometimes described by mellifluous words; or by their expressions being like honey, and sweeter than that {i}.

{h} Mypwu tpwn "stillatione favorum", Vatablus, Rivetus, Cocceius; so Ainsworth. {i} tou kai apo glwsshv, Homer. Iliad. 1. v. 249.

Psalms 19:11

Ver. 11. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned,.... By whom the psalmist means himself, who was the servant of the Lord, not only in common with other saints, but as he was a king and prophet, and as such he received advantage from the word of God; all his instructions as a prophet, and all his rules of government as a king; and the whole of that wisdom, prudence, and knowledge, with which the conducted in both offices, were from the Lord by his word: and it may be applied to any servant of the Lord, and especially in an ecclesiastical office, as an apostle of Christ, and minister of the word; who serve God in the Gospel of his Son, and, by means of the Scriptures, are furnished for every good work; and also to believers in Christ in common; who, of whatsoever rank and quality, in whatsoever state and condition of life, whether high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, are Christ's servants; and whatsoever is written is for their instruction, and by the word of God they are "warned"; the Scriptures are a way mark to them, to direct them in a right way, and to caution them against turning to the right or left; either to immoral practices, or the errors and heresies of wicked men: it is a lamp to their feet, and a light to their path, and teaches them to walk circumspectly, and warns them of rocks, gins, and snares in the way; or, as the words may be rendered, "by them is thy servant made clear", or "bright" {k}; so the word is used in Da 12:3; that is, in his understanding: the psalmist confirms, by his own experience, what he had said before of the word, Ps 19:8; that it enlightened the eyes: the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ shining into the heart gives the light of the glory of God in the person of Christ; it illuminates and irradiates the mind, and gives clear ideas of the glory and perfections of God, of his counsels and covenant, of his works of nature and of grace; and makes a bright discovery of the person, offices, and grace of Christ; and of the blessed Spirit, and his operations; and of the blessings of grace, and of eternal glory and happiness;

[and] in keeping of them [there is] great reward; which is to be understood, not of keeping the law of Moses, and the precepts of that, which, if a man did keep perfectly and constantly, he should live in them; but of observing the word of God, and by diligent searching into it, reading and learning it, and meditating on it, to get and obtain knowledge of divine things; which carries its own reward with it, and is better than thousands of gold and silver; and of laying up the word of God, and the truths of the Gospel, and keeping them in mind and memory, which is very profitable and serviceable, to promote spiritual peace and comfort, and to preserve from sin, doctrinal and practical; and also of yielding a cheerful obedience to the Gospel, by cordially embracing and

professing the doctrines, and submitting to the ordinances of it; from all which arise great profit, and much reward: such come at the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which is preferable to everything else, and is more precious than rubies; and all desirable things; such enjoy the presence of Christ, have much peace and comfort in their souls; they are made wise unto salvation, and are fitted for every good word and work.

{k} rhzn "illustratur", Pagninus, Montanus, Rivetus.

Psalms 19:12

Ver. 12. Who can understand [his] errors?.... Sin is an error, a wandering out of the way of God, swerving from the rule of his word; and many mistakes are made by the people of God themselves; even so many that they cannot number them; they are more than the hairs of their head; they cannot understand, find out and express, neither their number, nor their evil nature, nor the many aggravating circumstances which attend them: this the psalmist said, upon a view of the large extent, glory, and excellency of the word of God; and upon comparing himself with it, in which, as in a glass, he saw how far short he came of it, and what a disagreement and want of conformity there was in him unto it; see Ps 119:97; and he suggests, that though the word he had been describing was perfect, pure, and clean, he was not; nor could he expect any reward of debt, but merely of grace, for his observance of it; and that it was best, under a sense of sin, to have recourse, not to works of righteousness done by men; but to the grace and mercy of God in Christ, as follows:

cleanse thou me from secret [faults]; by which are meant not such sins as are done in secret, and are unknown to men; such as David's sin with Bathsheba, 2Sa 12:12; nor the inward motions of sin in the heart, to which none are privy but God, and a man's own soul; not but that each of these may be properly enough included in such a petition; but sins, which are unknown to a man himself are meant: there are some actions, which, though known when committed, are not known to be sinful ones; and there are some sins which are committed unadvisedly, and through carelessness, and pass unobserved; not only many vain and sinful thoughts pass to and fro uncontrolled, without being taken notice of; but many foolish and idle words are spoken, and many evil actions, through infirmity and inadvertency, are done, which, when a good man, at the close of a day, comes to reflect upon the things that have passed in it, are quite hidden from him, are unknown to him, being unobserved by him; wherefore such a petition is highly proper to be inserted in his address at the throne of grace: and which also supposes the person sensible of the defiling nature of sin, and of his own impotency to cleanse himself from it; and that God only can do it, who does it by the application of the blood of his Son, which cleanses from all sin; for this respects not regenerating and sanctifying grace, but pardoning grace; a manifestation of it, a view of acquittance from sin by Christ, and of freedom from obligation to punishment for it.

Psalms 19:13

Ver. 13. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous [sins],.... Some understand these words of persons: the Septuagint, and the versions that follow that, render it "from strangers": such who are strangers to God and godliness; that is, keep from all conversation with them in things sinful, or from others' sins; from having a fellowship with them, being a partaker of them, lest their plagues and punishments should be shared in: others, as the Targum, "from proud men", who are haughty, insolent, and conceited of themselves; lest he should be so corrupted and drawn aside by them: but rather the words are to be understood of sins wilfully, contumaciously, and presumptuously committed; and the petition supposes, that these may be committed by good men, if left to themselves; and that there is a proneness in them to them; and that they would rush into them, were they not kept back and restrained by the powerful and efficacious grace of God: and it also supposes that the saints cannot keep themselves; that God only can keep them from evil; and therefore they pray to him that he would, who does keep them by his power, at least from a final and total falling away

let them not have dominion over me: neither presumptuous sins, nor any other, Ps 119:133; as they shall not, **Ro 6:14**; as sin has over wicked men; and they yield a ready obedience to the laws and lusts of it; it reigns over them as a king and tyrant, even unto death: it is something very powerful in good men; it prevails over them, and carries them captive; wherefore they pray it may not have a continued dominion, as it shall not; because they are in another kingdom, and under grace as a governing principle, which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life;

then shall I be upright; in heart, and walk uprightly in conversation; being cleansed from secret faults, and kept from notorious crimes, and gross enormities; and shall exercise a conscience void of offence, both to God and man; and be "perfect", as the word is sometimes rendered, at least comparatively; and absolutely so, as washed in Christ's blood, and justified by his righteousness;

and I shall be innocent from the great transgression; which some understand of pride, others of apostasy; perhaps the sin against the Holy Ghost may be intended; though the words may be rendered, "from much transgression" {k}; and the sense is, that he should be cleared and acquitted of a multitude of transgressions he had been guilty of; or be preserved from much sin, which otherwise he should have fallen into.

{k} br "multa", Montanus, Rivetus, Gejerus, Cocceius; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 19:14

Ver. 14. Let the words of my mouth,.... Meaning either his speech in common conversation, which should not be filthy and foolish, rotten and corrupt; but such as ministers grace to the hearer: or else his address to God, both in prayer and thanksgiving;

and the meditation of my heart; his inward thoughts continually revolving in his mind; or his meditation on the word of God and divine things; or mental prayer, which is not expressed, only conceived in the mind;

be acceptable in thy sight; as words and thoughts are, when they are according to the word of God; and as the sacrifices of prayer, whether vocal or mental, and of praise, are through Jesus Christ our Lord. The psalmist, in order to strengthen his faith in God, that he should be heard and answered in the petitions he put up, makes use of the following epithets:

O Lord, my strength, or "rock" {l},

and my Redeemer; who had been the strength of his life and of his salvation, the rock on which he was built and established, and the Redeemer who had redeemed his life from destruction, and out of the hands of all his enemies, and from all his iniquities.

{l} yrwu "rupes mea", Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "mea petra", Pagninus, Montanus, Rivetus; so Ainsworth.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 20

To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David. This psalm is thought, by some, to be written by David, on account of himself, and as a form to be used by the people for him, when he was about to go to war; particularly with the Ammonites and Syrians, 2Sa 10:6; mention being made of chariots in it, Ps 20:7; of which there was a great number in that war: Arama thinks it was made by him when he got the victory over the Philistines; others think it was written by one of the singers on David's account, and should be rendered, "a psalm, for David", as Ps 72:1: but rather it is a psalm concerning David; concerning the Messiah, whose name is David; or a psalm of David concerning the Messiah, since he is expressly mentioned, Ps 20:6; and Aben Ezra says, there are some that interpret it of the Messiah; and some passages in it are, by Jewish writers {m}, applied unto him, as
Ps 20:6; and our countryman, Mr. Ainsworth, says, the whole psalm is a prophecy of Christ's sufferings, and his deliverance out of them, for which the church with him triumphs. Theodoret takes it to be a prophecy of Sennacherib's invasion of Judea, and of Rabshakeh's blasphemy, and of Hezekiah's distress and prayer on that account.

{m} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 18. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 44. 2.

Ver. 1. The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble,.... All the days of Christ were days of trouble; he was a brother born for adversity; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; he had his own sorrows, and he bore the griefs of others; he was persecuted by Herod in his infancy; he was tempted by Satan in the wilderness; he was harassed by the Scribes and Pharisees continually; he was grieved at the hardness, impenitence, and unbelief, of that perverse and faithless generation of men, and was sometimes made uneasy by his own disciples: at some particular seasons his soul or spirit is said to be troubled, as at the grave of Lazarus, and when in a view of his own death, and when he was about to acquaint his disciples that one of them should betray him,
Joh 11:33; but more particularly it was a day of trouble with him, when he was in the garden, heavy, and sore amazed, and his sweat was, as it were, drops of blood falling on the ground, and his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; but more especially this was his case when he hung upon the cross, and is what seems to be principally respected here; when he was in great torture of body through the rack of the cross; when he endured the cruel mockings of men, of the common people, of the chief priests, and even of the thieves that

suffered with him; when he had Satan, and all his principalities and powers, let loose upon him, and he was grappling with them; when he bore all the sins of his people, endured the wrath of his Father, and was forsaken by him: now in this day of trouble, both when in the garden and on the cross, he prayed unto his Father, as he had been used to do in other cases, and at other times; and the church here prays, that God would hear and answer him, as he did: he always heard him; he heard him at the grave of Lazarus; he heard him in the garden, and filled his human soul with courage and intrepidity, of which there were immediate instances; he heard him on the cross, and helped him as man and Mediator, Isa 49:8;

the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; that is, God himself, who is named the God of Jacob, whom Jacob called upon, and trusted in as his God, and who answered him in the day of his distress: Jacob was exercised with many troubles, but the Lord delivered him out of them all; and which may be the reason why the Lord is addressed under this character here; besides, Israel is one of the names of the Messiah,
Isa 49:3; on whose account the petition is put to which may be added, that Jacob may design people of God, the spiritual sons of Jacob, the church of the living God, whose God the Lord is; and the phrase may be here used by the church, to encourage her faith in prayer: the petition, on account of the Messiah, is, that God would "defend" him, or "set" him on "an high place" {n}; or "exalt" him: he was brought very low in his state of humiliation; he was in the form of a servant; he was in a very low and mean condition throughout the whole of his life; through the suffering of death he was made lower than the angels, and he was laid in the lower parts of the earth: the church, in this petition, prays for his resurrection from the dead; for his ascension into the highest heavens; for his exaltation at the right hand of God; for the more visible setting him on his throne in his kingdom; in all which she has been answered.

{n} Kbgvy "elevet te", Pagninus, Montanus; "exaltet te", Vatablus, Museulus, Michaelis; "in edito collocet te", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 20:2

Ver. 2. Send thee help from the sanctuary,.... Meaning either from the tabernacle, the holy place, where was the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence; or rather heaven, the habitation of God's holiness unless the same is meant by it as by Zion, in the next clause, the church of God, from whence he sends the rod of his strength;

and strengthen thee out of Zion; and the "help" and "strength" prayed for are not to be understood of that assistance and support, which Christ, as man, had from his Father, at the time of his sufferings, which were promised him, and he believed he should have, and had,
Ps 89:21; since these petitions follow that which relates to his exaltation; but of the help and strength afforded to the apostles and ministers of Christ, after they had received the commission from him to preach the Gospel to every creature; when, as a full answer to these petitions, God worked with them, greatly assisted them, strengthened them with strength in their souls; confirmed the word with signs and wonders following; made it the power of God to salvation to multitudes; and so strengthened the cause, interest, and kingdom of the Redeemer.

Psalms 20:3

Ver. 3. Remember all thy offerings,.... The spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise which Christ, as the great High Priest, offers up for his people; or which they offer by him, and are acceptable to God through him, by virtue of the incense of his mediation; or the offering up of himself, which answers to, and is the body, the sum and substance, of all the offerings of the law; they were types of this, and what they could not do this did; and therefore it is expressed in the singular number in the next clause;

and accept thy burnt sacrifice. The word rendered "accept" signifies to "reduce to ashes" {o}; and the way in which it was known that sacrifices were acceptable to God was by fire coming down from heaven upon them and consuming them, **Le 9:24**; and therefore the word is rightly rendered "accept"; and Christ's sacrifice of himself, putting away sin, and perfecting for ever them that are sanctified, is of a sweet smelling savour to God; for hereby his justice is satisfied, his law is magnified and made honourable, the sins of his people are atoned for, their persons are accepted, and their sacrifices of prayer and praise come up also with acceptance to him through the virtue of this sacrifice; and so these petitions have their accomplishment.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{o} hnvdy "incineret", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; "in cinerem vertat", Vatablus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Ainsworth.

Psalms 20:4

Ver. 4. Grant thee according to thine own heart,.... Which is to see his seed, the travail of his soul, and to have the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hand; to have all his people called, preserved, and glorified;

and fulfil all thy counsel; whatever was agreed upon in the council and covenant of peace between him and his Father, relating to his own glory, and the salvation of his people.

Psalms 20:5

Ver. 5. We will rejoice in thy salvation,.... That is, "so will we", &c. or "that we may" {p}, &c. or "let us"; these words, with what follow, point at the end of the church's requests, and what she resolved to do upon the accomplishment of the above things; for instance, she would rejoice in the salvation of the Messiah; meaning either the salvation and deliverance from death and the grave, and all other enemies, which he himself is possessed of, and which enters into, and is the occasion of the joy of his people; for not his sufferings and death only, but chiefly his resurrection from the dead, session at God's right hand, and intercession for them, cause the triumph of faith in him, and further the joy of it, **Ro 8:33**; or else the salvation he is the author of, which being so great, so suitable, so complete and perfect, and an everlasting one; is matter of joy to all sensible of their need of it, and who have a comfortable hope of interest in it;

and in the name of our God we will set up [our] banners; either as a preparation for war; see Jer 51:27; so when Caesar {q} set up his banner, it was a sign to his soldiers to run to their arms and prepare to fight; and then the sense is, putting our trust in the Lord, relying on his strength, and not on our own, we will cheerfully and courageously engage with all his and our enemies, sin, Satan, and the world; as good soldiers of Christ, we will endure hardness, fight his battles under the banners of the Lord of hosts, in whose service we are enlisted; or as a sign of victory, when standards were set up, and flags hung out {r}; see Jer 50:2; and then the meaning is, Christ, the great Captain of our salvation, having obtained a complete victory over all enemies, and made us more than conquerors thereby, we will set up our banners, hang out the flag, and in his name triumph over sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell;

the Lord fulfil all thy petitions: the same as in Ps 20:4; this is put here to show that the church will be in such a frame as before described, when the Lord shall have fulfilled all the petitions of his Anointed; of which she had a full assurance, as appears from the following words.

{p} So Ainsworth; hnnrn "ovemus", Vatablus, Piscator, Michaelis; "cantemus", Gejerus. {q} De Bello Gallico, l. 2. c. 20. {r} Schindler. Pentaglott. col. 1126.

Psalms 20:6

Ver. 6. Now know I that the Lord saveth his Anointed,.... Not David, though he was the anointed of the God of Jacob, and was anointed with material oil to be king of Israel by Samuel, at the express order of God himself; but David is not here speaking of himself, nor the church of him, but of the Messiah; anointed by Jehovah king over his holy hill of Zion, with the oil of gladness, or the Holy Spirit. The church in prayer rises in her faith, and is strongly assured of the salvation of the Messiah; that though his troubles would be many and great, he should be delivered out of them all; should be heard and helped in the day of salvation, and be freed from the sorrows of death and hell, he should be encompassed with; that he should be raised from the dead; have all power in heaven and earth given him; ascend on high, and triumph over all his enemies; and all his people, all the members of his body, should be saved through him, which is in a sense the salvation of himself;

he will hear him from his holy heaven; where his throne and temple are, which is the habitation of his holiness, whither the prayers of the Messiah when on earth ascended, where they were received, heard, and answered. Before the church prays that he might be heard, now she believes he would; and that,

with the saving strength of his right hand; that is, by the exertion of his mighty power, in strengthening him as man to bear up under his sorrows, go through his work, and finish it; by upholding him with his right hand while engaged in it, and by raising him up from the dead with it, and setting him down at it in the highest heavens.

Psalms 20:7

Ver. 7. Some [trust] in chariots, and some in horses,.... That is, in chariots and horses prepared for war; which, besides their use for carriage, did great annoyance to the enemy in battle, and were very terrible to them, and were greatly trusted in by those that possessed them, De 20:1; such chariots as were called "currus falcati", that had scythes at the sides of them, which being drove with fury among the infantry, cut them down as grass is mown with scythes; such the old Canaanites used, which were very terrible, Jos 17:16; and horses trained up for war do much execution in a battle by pawing and trampling; see Job 39:21; though these are vain things for safety, and not to be depended on, for salvation and victory are of the Lord, Ps 33:17; and such are the chariots and horses of the sun, and the idols in which the Gentiles trusted, 2Ki 23:11; and all external things in which men depend for salvation, as fleshly privileges, outward works of righteousness, morality, a profession of religion, a round of duties, &c. all which are disclaimed by those who know the way of life and salvation by Christ, Ho 14:3;

but we will remember the name of the Lord our God; not any of the names by which the Lord God is called, as Elohim, Elshaddai, Jehovah, and the like; though each of these are worthy of remembrance, and greatly serve to encourage faith in him; but rather the perfections of God, such as the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, which are to be remembered and confided in; and not the friendship of princes, the schemes of human policy, and the outward forces of strength; or else God himself is intended, whose name is himself, and is a strong tower to the righteous: and to remember him is to bear him in mind, and not forget him; to have the desires of the soul towards him, and to the remembrance of him; and to make mention of him, of his names, attributes, word, and works; which is both for his glory and for the encouragement of faith in him, both in ourselves and others; it is to call upon his name in times of trouble, and at all times, and also to trust in him and not in an arm of flesh; for it stands opposed to trusting in chariots and horses; and it is to call to mind past instances of his goodness, wisdom, and power, and be thankful for them, and make use of them to engage confidence in him; and which should be done from the consideration of his being God and not man, and of his being our God, our covenant God and Father.

Psalms 20:8

Ver. 8. They are brought down and fallen,.... These are they that rode in chariots and on horses, and trusted in them; who are brought down from their places of honour and safety; and fall, not into the hands of their enemies, and into a low and mean estate, but to the ground by death; as also such who, being like Capernaum, lifted up to heaven with their own outward attainments, and think to get thither by them, are brought down to hell, and fall into the pit of corruption;

but we are risen, and stand upright; who remember the name of the Lord, and trust in him; the church is sometimes in a very low and depressed condition; it consists of a poor and an afflicted people, and who are persecuted by men; so the church has been under the Heathen Roman emperors, and under the Papacy, and will be as long as she is in the wilderness, and the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth; and especially when they will be slain, and their bodies lie on the earth unburied; but these shall rise and stand upright, and ascend to heaven; there will be a glorious state of the church; there will be a reviving of the interest of Christ, through the bringing in the fulness and forces of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Jews; the dry bones will live again, and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army; in those days the righteous will flourish and have abundance of peace and prosperity. This may also include the first resurrection, which the saints will have a part in; the dead in Christ will rise first, and will stand before the Lord with confidence, and not be ashamed; when the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in, the congregation of the righteous; for though these words are expressed in the present tense, because of the certainty of them, they belong to future times; hence the following petitions.

Psalms 20:9

Ver. 9. Save, Lord,.... Not "the king", as the Septuagint, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions read the words, joining the word "king" to them, which is in the next clause; but this, as Aben Ezra observes, is not right, because of the accent "athnach", which divides these words from the following; rather the word us may be supplied; and so the Syriac version renders it, "the Lord will deliver us"; and the Targum is, "O Lord", Nl qrp, "redeem us", or "save us"; that is, with a temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation: this petition is directed to Jehovah the Father, as the following is to the King Messiah;

let the King hear us when we call; for not God the Father is here meant, though he is an everlasting King, the King of kings; and who hears his people, when they call upon him, and while they are calling; yet he is rarely, if ever, called "the King", without any other additional epithet; whereas the Messiah often is, as in the next psalm, Ps 20:1; and prayer is made to him, and he hears and receives the prayers of his people; and, as Mediator, presents them to his Father perfumed with his much incense; for he is a Priest as well as a King.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 21

To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David. This psalm was either written by David; and therefore called a "psalm of David"; or it was written, as it may be rendered, "for David", by some other person, on account of his victories and triumphs; or rather "concerning David" {s}; that is, concerning the Messiah, the son of David, as Kimchi says some expound it; or concerning the Messiah, who is called David,
Eze 37:24; and Jarchi observes, that their Rabbins interpret it of the Messiah; but, says he, it is right to explain it, moreover, of David himself, for an answer to the heretics (Christians) who err in it; and various passages in this psalm are by the Jewish writers understood of the Messiah; as "the King", in Ps 20:1 is in the Targum called the King Messiah; Ps 21:4 is in the Talmud applied {t} to him; Ps 21:3 are in Zohar {u}, and in the Midrashes {w}, interpreted of him; and many Christian writers understand the whole of him; which is right: though Theodoret thinks it was penned on the account of the health of King Hezekiah, and his restoration from his disease; which is not likely.

{s} dwdl "pro Davide, vel de Davide", Vatablus. {t} T. Bab. Succah, fol. 52. 1. Vid. Nachman. disput. "cum fratre Paulo", p. 36. Ed. Wagenseil. {u} In Numb. fol. 68. 3. 4. {w} Midrash Tillim apud Viccars. in loc. & in Galatin. l. 3. c. 9. Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 212. 4. & 218. 1.

Ver. 1. The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord,.... Either in that strength which is in Jehovah himself, in whom is everlasting strength; and which is seen in the works of creation and providence, and is the same in Christ himself, as he is the mighty God; or else in the strength which Jehovah communicated to Christ as man, whereby he was strengthened in his human nature to go through and complete the work of man's redemption; or in the strength which the Lord puts forth, and the power which he exerts towards and upon his people, in conversion; which is the produce of the exceeding greatness of his power; and in strengthening them, from time to time, to exercise grace, discharge duty, and withstand temptations and sin; and in keeping them safe to the end; in supporting them under all their trials, and in carrying on and finishing the work of faith upon their souls; all which is matter of joy to Christ;

and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice? meaning either his own salvation by the Lord, from all his sorrows and troubles, and out of the hands of all enemies, being in the presence of God, where is fulness of joy, Ps 16:9; or else the salvation of his people by him, which Jehovah appointed them to, secured for them in the covenant of grace, sent Christ to work out for them, applies by his Spirit, and at last puts into the full possession of: Christ rejoices at the effectual calling and conversion of his people, when salvation is brought near unto them; and especially at their glorification, when they shall be in the full enjoyment of it; then will they be his joy, and crown of rejoicing: this is the joy that was set before him, which made him go so cheerfully through his sufferings and death for them,
Heb 12:2; the reasons of this joy are, because of the great love he bears to them; the interest and property he has in them; his undertakings for them, as their surety, to bring them safe to glory; his purchase of them by his blood; his intercession for them, that they might be with him to behold his glory; and, last of all, because of his Father's glory, his own glory, and the glory of the blessed Spirit, which are concerned in the salvation of these persons.

Psalms 21:2

Ver. 2. Thou hast given him his heart's desire,.... Which the church had prayed for in Ps 20:4; whatever Christ's heart desired, or his lips requested, has been given him;

and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Whatever he asked in the council and covenant of peace was granted; he asked for all the elect, as his spouse and bride; these were the desire of his heart and eyes, and they were given him; he asked for all the blessings of grace for them, and all grace was given to them in him; he asked for glory, for eternal life, and it was promised him; and not only the promise of it was put into his hand, but the thing itself; see **Ps 2:8** **1Jo 5:11**; and Ps 20:4; whatever he requested of his Father, when here on earth, was granted; he always heard him; that memorable prayer of his in Joh 17:1 is heard and answered, both in what respects himself, his own glorification, and the conversion, sanctification, union, preservation, and glorification of his people; whatever he now desires and requests in heaven, as the advocate and intercessor for his saints, is ever fulfilled; which is an instance of the great regard Jehovah has unto him, and may be considered as a reason of his joy in him.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 21:3

Ver. 3. For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness,.... Not temporal, but spiritual blessings, which spring from the grace and goodness of God, and consist of it; and relate to the spiritual and eternal welfare of those for whose sake he receives them, and who are blessed with them in him: his being "prevented" with them denotes the freeness of the donation of them; that before he could well ask for them, or before he had done requesting them, they were given him; and also the earliness of the gift of them, they were put into his hands before his incarnation, before he was manifest in the flesh, even from the foundation of the world, and before the world began, **Eph 1:3** **2Ti 1:9**, and likewise the order in which they were given; first to Christ, and then to his people in him, as the passages referred to show;

thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head; which is expressive of his victory over all enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, death and hell; and of his being possessed of his throne and kingdom; and has respect to his exaltation at the right hand of God, where he is crowned with glory and honour: and this crown being of "pure gold" denotes the purity, glory, solidity, and perpetuity of his kingdom; this is a crown, not which believers put upon him by believing in him, and ascribing the glory of their salvation to him, or what the church, called his mother, has crowned him with, **So 3:11**, but which his father put upon him, who has set him King over his holy hill of Zion, **Ps 2:6**; compare with this Re 14:14. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions read "a crown of a precious stone"; and so Apollinarius; and seem to refer to the crown set on David's head, which had precious stones in it, 2Sa 12:30; Josephus {x} says it had a sardonyx. Fortunatus Scacchus {y} fancies the topaz is meant, and that the Hebrew text should be read "a crown of topaz"; mistaking the sense of the word "phaz", which never signifies a topaz, but the best gold, pure solid gold.

{x} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 7. s. 5. {y} Elaeochrism. Sacr. l. 3. c. 40. p. 1003.

Psalms 21:4

Ver. 4. He asked life of thee, [and] thou gavest [it] him,.... Both for himself, as man, when he was about to die, that he might be raised to life again, which was granted him; and for his people, that they might live spiritually and eternally, and accordingly life is given to him for them; and he has power to give it to as many as the Father has given him, Joh 17:2;

[even] length of days for ever and ever; the life he has for himself as man is what will ever continue; he will die no more, death will have no more dominion over him; he will live for evermore, and that to make intercession for his members, **Ro 6:9**; and the life which is granted them at his request is an everlasting one, both as to body and soul; for though they die as other men, they shall live again in the resurrection of the just, and never die more, but shall be like the angels in heaven; and as for the second death, that shall not harm them, nor have any power over them; they will live and reign with Christ for ever.

Psalms 21:5

Ver. 5. His glory [is] great in thy salvation,.... That is, the glory of the King Messiah is great in the Lord's salvation of him; delivering him from all his troubles and sorrows, and out of the hands of all his enemies, when he was raised from the dead, and was set at the right hand of God, and crowned with glory and honour: or the sense is, that his glory is great in the salvation of his people by him; it was his glory as Mediator to be appointed to be the Lord's salvation to them; and it being effected by him declares the glory and greatness of his person; and the nature of it is such as cannot fast of bringing glory to him; and such is the sense his people have of it, that it obliges them to ascribe the glory of it alone to him;

honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him; which is to be understood not of the honour and majesty of his divine nature, which are essential to him, and not laid upon him by any; nor of the glory which the saints attribute to him on account of their salvation by him; but of that which his Father has put upon him, and lies in the introduction of him into his glory after his sufferings and death, and resurrection from the dead; in exalting him at his right hand above all creatures and things; in giving him all power in heaven and in earth; in putting all the gifts of the Spirit into his hands, which he receiving gave to men, and in ordaining him Judge of quick and dead.

Psalms 21:6

Ver. 6. For thou hast made him most blessed for ever,.... Not as God, for as such he is over all blessed for ever, and not made so; but as man and Mediator; the words may be rendered, "thou hast set him to be blessings for ever" {z}; which design the blessings which are laid up in Christ for his people, and which he imparts unto, them, and they are blessed with in him; so that he is made a blessing, or rather blessings to them; such as redemption to free them from, bondage, righteousness to justify them, sanctification to make them holy, wisdom to direct and guide them, and strength to assist and support them; through whom they have the forgiveness of sins, by whom they have peace with God, and from whom they receive all their joy and comfort, and at last eternal life and happiness; and all these are for ever, they are irreversible blessings, are never repented of, nor taken away: or this blessedness may be understood of that which Christ himself enjoys as man; which lies in his human nature being exalted to union with the Son of God; in being heard and helped in the day of salvation; in being raised from the dead, and glory given him; in being set at God's right hand, angels, authorities, and powers, being subject to him; and in seeing the travail of his soul with satisfaction: the particular instance of his blessedness follows;

thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance; the glorious presence of God in heaven; Christ having done his work on earth ascended to heaven, where he was received by his Father with a cheerful countenance, was made to sit down on the same throne with him, being well pleased with his obedience, righteousness, and sacrifice; and being now in the presence of God, in which is fulness of joy, and at his right hand, where are pleasures for evermore, the human nature of Christ is filled with an excess of joy; the words may be rendered, "thou hast made" or "wilt make him glad with joy {a}, with thy countenance"; see Ps 16:11.

{z} twkrb whtyvt "posuisti vel pones eum benedictiones", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so Ainsworth, Cocceius, Gejerus. {a} hxmvb whdxt "laetificabis eum in laetitia", Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis; so Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus.

Psalms 21:7

Ver. 7. For the King trusteth in the Lord,.... That is, the King Messiah, as the Targum paraphrases it; he trusted in the Lord for his support and sustenance as man, for assistance and help in his time of trouble, and for deliverance out of it; he trusted in the Lord that he would hear him for himself, and for his people; and that he would glorify him with all glory, honour, majesty, and blessedness, before spoken of; see Ps 22:8;

and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved; God the Father is the most High; Christ is called the Son of the Highest, and the Spirit the power of the Highest, **Lu 1:32**; there is mercy with him, which is a ground of hope and trust, in his people, and also in the Messiah; see Ps 89:28; and some versions make the mercy of the most High to be what the King Messiah trusts in, reading the words {b}, "for the King trusteth in the Lord, and in the mercy of the most High"; but the accent "athnach", which distinguishes the propositions, will not admit of it; but the sense is, that because of the mercy, grace, goodness, and faithfulness of God in making and keeping his promises, Christ would not be and was not moved from his trust and confidence in the Lord; nor shall he even be removed from his throne of glory on which he sits; nor from the glorious and happy state in which he is: nor will it ever be in the power of his enemies to displace him; for these in time will be destroyed by him, as the following words show.

{b} So Genebrard, Muis,

Psalms 21:8

Ver. 8. Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies,.... The Jews, that would not have him to reign over them, who crucified him and persecuted his apostles; the Gentiles, who were also concerned in his death; the Roman emperors, who persecuted the Christians, and are signified by the red dragon that waited to devour the man child when brought forth by the woman, the church, Re 12:3; and also the Papists, the followers of the man of sin, who oppose Christ in his offices and grace, and are the enemies of his witnesses, and of his interest; and besides these there are many professors of religion who are enemies of Christ, either doctrinally or practically; to whom may be added, the devil and his angels, and all those who are the children of him and are influenced by him: these the hand of Christ will find out sooner or later; for the words are an address to the King Messiah, who being omniscient knows where all his enemies are, and where to find them; and being omnipotent he will lay hold upon them, and hold them, and none shall escape from him; his hand of vengeance shall fall upon them, and he shall inflict righteous and deserved punishment on them; and this shall be the case of "all" of them, none will be able to hide themselves in secret places from him. This has been in part verified in the Jewish nation at the destruction of Jerusalem, when wrath came upon that people to the uttermost for their treatment of the Messiah; and in the Pagan empire, when it was demolished, and kings and great men in vain called to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb, **Re 6:15**; and will have a further accomplishment in the antichristian states and kingdoms, when the vials of God's wrath shall be poured out upon them; and especially at the battle of Armageddon, when Christ will avenge himself, and get rid of all his enemies at once; and will have its final accomplishment in all wicked men and devils at the day of judgment, when all Christ's enemies will be found out by him, whether open or secret, and receive their just punishment;

thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee; this is the same with the former clause, and is repeated for the further certainty and greater confirmation of the thing; and "the right hand" is mentioned as expressive of the mighty power of the Lord. The Chaldee paraphrase renders it, "the vengeance of thy right hand".

Psalms 21:9

Ver. 9. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven,.... Some think the allusion is to David's causing the Ammonites to pass through the brick kiln, 2Sa 12:31; others to the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah: it represents what a severe punishment shall be inflicted on the enemies of Christ; they shall be cast into a fiery oven, or furnace of fire, as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were by the order of Nebuchadnezzar; so some render the words, "thou shalt put them into a fiery oven", k, "as", being put for b, "into" {c}: wicked men are as dry trees, as stubble, as thorns or briers, and are fit fuel for a fiery oven or furnace; by which is meant the wrath and fury of God, which is poured forth as fire; and this has had its fulfilment in part in the Jews at Jerusalem's destruction; when that day of the Lord burned like an oven, and the proud and haughty Jews, and who dealt wickedly by Christ, were burned up in it, **Mal 4:1**; and will have an additional accomplishment when the whore of Babylon shall be burnt with fire, and when the beast and false prophet shall be cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone; and still more fully at the general conflagration, when will be the perdition of ungodly men, and the earth and all that is therein shall be burnt up; and especially when all wicked men and devils shall be cast into the lake and furnace of fire, where will be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; see Re 17:16. This will be in the time of thine anger, or "of thy countenance" {d}; not his gracious, but his angry countenance; when he shall put on a fierce look, and appear as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and stir up all his wrath;

the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath; not that they shall be annihilated; their souls remain after death, and their bodies after the resurrection; and will be tormented with the fire of God's wrath for ever and ever; the phrase is expressive of utter ruin, of the destruction of soul and body in hell; see Ps 35:25; Jarchi takes it to be a prayer, "may the Lord swallow them up", &c.

and the fire shall devour them; that is, as the Targum paraphrases it, the fire of hell; or, however, it designs the wrath of God, who is a consuming fire; or that fiery indignation of his, which shall devour the adversaries; which comes down upon them either in temporal judgments here, or in their everlasting destruction hereafter.

{c} Vide Aben Ezram in loc. {d} Kynp "vultus tui", V. L. so Sept. Aethiop. Gejerus, Muis, Ainsworth; "faciei iratae tuae", Junius & Tremellius; so Michaelis.

Psalms 21:10

Ver. 10. Their fruit shall thou destroy from the earth,.... Meaning the offspring of wicked men; the fruit of the womb, Ps 127:3; the same with their seed in the next clause:

and their seed from among the children of men; see Ps 37:28; which must be understood of such of their seed, and offspring as are as they were when born; are never renewed and sanctified, but are like their parents; as the Jews were, their parents were vipers, and they were serpents, the generation of them; and were the children of the devil, and did his works: now these passages had their accomplishment in the Jews, when the day of God's wrath burnt them up, and left them neither root nor branch, **Mal 4:1**; and in the Pagan empire, when every mountain and island were moved out of their places, and the Heathen perished out of the land, **Re 6:14**; and will be further accomplished when the Lord shall punish the wicked woman Jezebel, the antichristian harlot, and kill her children with death, **Re 2:23**; see Ps 104:35.

Psalms 21:11

Ver. 11. For they intended evil against thee,.... All evil, whether in thought or deed, if not immediately and directly, yet is ultimately against the Lord, whose law is transgressed, and who is despised and reflected upon as a lawgiver; all sin is an hostility committed against God, or against Christ, against the Lord and his Anointed, or against his people, who are all one as himself: the intention of evil is evil, and is cognizable by the Lord, and punishable by him:

they imagined a mischievous device, [which] they are not able [to perform]; not the death of Christ; that was indeed in itself a mischievous device of theirs, but that they performed, though they had not their end in it; they expected his name would then perish, and they should hear no more of him: but rather it respects his resurrection from the dead, they could not prevent, though they took all imaginable care that them might be no show of it; and when they found he was really raised from the dead, they contrived a wicked scheme to stop the credit of it, but in vain, Mt 27:63; and Jews and Gentiles, and Papists, have formed schemes and done all they can to root the Gospel, cause, and interest of Christ, out of the world, but have not been able to perform it.

Psalms 21:12

Ver. 12. Therefore shall thou make them turn their back,.... Or flee and run away to private places, to hide themselves from the wrath of God and of the Lamb, though to no purpose; or "make them turn [behind thy] back": God will turn his back upon them, and be negligent and careless of them, and not regard them when they cry in their misery and destruction. Some Jewish interpreters {e} understand it of their being put together on one side, in one corner, and be separate from the people of God; to which sense the Targum inclines, rendering the word for "back" the "shoulder", which sometimes signifies unanimity and union, **Zep 3:9**; and thus, being all together by themselves, the wrath of God shall be poured forth upon them, and they shall be destroyed at once: so the Christians were, by the providence of God, brought out of Jerusalem before its destruction; and the saints will be called out of Babylon before its fall; and the goats, the wicked, will be separated from the righteous, and set together at Christ's left hand; for they shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous: but the best sense of the words is, "thou shalt set them [for a] butt" or {f} "heap"; or, as it is in the Hebrew text, a shoulder; a butt to shoot at being so called, because it is earth heaped up like a shoulder; see Job 16:12; and to this agrees what follows:

[when] thou shalt make ready [thine arrows] upon thy strings against the face of them; that is, direct the arrows of his wrath and vengeance right against them; see **Ps 7:11**.

{e} Kimchi & Ben Melech in loc. {f} Mkv wmtyvt "ponis eos metam", Cocceius; "humerum", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus; "velut tumulum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 21:13

Ver. 13. Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength,.... Exert thy strength, display thy power in such manner, that thou mayest be exalted and magnified on account of it. This was fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem, when the kingdom of God came with power, **Mr 9:1**; and will be again when Babylon shall be utterly destroyed, because the Lord is strong who judgeth her, Re 18:8; and finally at the day of judgment, when the wicked will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, **2Th 1:9**;

[so] will we sing and praise thy power; forms of such songs of praise may be seen, as Cocceius observes, in Re 11:15; at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, at the victory over the beast, and his image, and at the destruction of Babylon.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 22

To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, a Psalm of David. The only thing observable in the title of this psalm is the sense of the words "Aijeleth Shahar", left untranslated; which, according to some of the Jewish {g} interpreters, is the name of a musical instrument; to which our version inclines; and a learned Jew {h} says, it is the instrument which the mourning women used on account of distress which was sudden, not known till it came, as a man does not think of the morning till he sees it. "Aijeleth" with him has the signification of mourning, as "Eli" in **Joe 1:8**; and "Shahar", as in Isa 47:11; so tyla and tyyla are used in the Misnah {i} for a mourning woman; and with others it is the beginning of a song to the tune of which the psalm was set {k} but I rather think the words express the subject matter of the psalm, and that they may be rendered, concerning "Aijeleth Shahar"; which signify, either according to the Chaldee paraphrase, "the daily morning sacrifice"; or, as some Jewish writers {l} observe, the "morning star"; or, according to the Septuagint, "the morning help" {m}; or rather "the morning hind"; or "hind of the morning": but who should be designed hereby is the question. The Jews would have any rather than the Messiah; some say Esther {n}, who so seasonably and readily appeared for the Jews in distress, and was the means of their deliverance; but there is not one word in the psalm that agrees with her; and there are some things which were manifestly spoken of a man, and not a woman, Ps 22:8; others say David {o}, when he fled from Saul, or, as others, from Absalom: but the disjointing the bones of this person, the piercing his hands and feet, parting his garments, and casting lots on his vesture, mentioned in Ps 22:14; were never fulfilled in him. Others {p} would have the congregation of Israel in captivity intended; but it is plain that a single person is spoken of throughout; and he is manifestly distinguished from others, from his brethren, from the congregation, from the seed of Jacob and Israel, Ps 22:22; and, indeed, no other than the Messiah can be meant: and of this there ought to be no doubt with Christians, when Ps 22:1 is compared with Mt 27:46; Ps 22:8 with Mt 27:43; Ps 22:18 with Mt 27:35; Ps 22:22 with **Heb 2:12**; and the Jews themselves sometimes say, that by "Aijeleth Shahar" is meant the Shechinah {q}, or the divine Majesty; and in what way soever these words are rendered, they agree with Christ: he is the antitype of "the daily morning sacrifice", the Lamb of God, who continually takes away the sin of the world; and very fitly is he so called in the title of a psalm which speaks so much of his sufferings and death, which are a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of his people; he is "the bright and morning star", Re 22:16; the dayspring from on high, the sun of righteousness, and light of the world: he had "morning help" in his very infancy, when his life was sought for by Herod; and had early and seasonable help and assistance in the acceptable time, and in the day of salvation, and early in the morning was he raised from the dead, and had glory given him: but as the words are better rendered "the morning hind", this suits with Christ, who is frequently compared to a roe or a young hart, **So 2:9**; and he may be compared to a "hind" for its lovingness to its mate and young, **Pr 5:19**; the love of Christ to his church and people being very strong and affectionate, and passing knowledge; and also for its loveliness and goodliness, Ge 49:21; Christ being exceeding amiable and lovely, and fairer than the children of men; likewise for its gentleness and harmlessness, Christ being meek and lowly, holy and harmless; and for its antipathy to serpents, there being an enmity between

Christ, the seed of the woman, and the serpent and his seed; for its being hunted by dogs, as Christ was by Herod, by the Scribes and Pharisees, by Judas, and the band of soldiers; see
Ps 22:16; for its being fit for food, De 14:5; and as it is said to be the fitter for being hunted, Christ's flesh being meat indeed, and the more suitable to faith, as being sacrificed for us; and for its long life it is said to have, Christ, though once dead, being alive again, and living for evermore; to which may be added its great swiftness, expressive of the readiness of Christ to comply with his Father's proposals and do his will; to come into this world in the fulness of time, and set about the work he came to do; to deliver up himself into the hands of his enemies, and lay down his life for his people; and of his haste to help them in distress, and visit them with his gracious presence, and to appear a second time to them unto salvation. He may be called the hind of "the morning", looking lovely and beautiful as the morning, and swift and cheerful as the hind when it rises from its rest, and runs its course; or because of his being hunted in the morning of his infancy by Herod; or because it was early in the morning the chief priests consulted to take away his life; and as early also he rose from the dead, when God made his feet like hinds feet, and set him on his high places, Ps 18:33. The ancient Christian writers generally understood it of Christ wholly. Justin Martyr {r} says, the whole psalm is spoken of Christ; and Tertullian observes {s}, that it contains the whole passion, or all the sufferings of Christ. The late Mons. Fourmont {t}, the elder, professor of the Oriental languages in the university of Paris, has a very singular notion, that this psalm was written by Jeremiah, when he was drawn up from the dungeon, and is a history of his life and sufferings, in which he was a type of Christ.

{g} Jarchi, Kimchi, & Abendana in loc. {h} Leo Mutinens. Shilte Hagibborim, fol. 5. 1. {i} Misn. Celim, c. 15. 6. & 16. 7. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {k} Aben Ezra in loc. {l} Vide Kimchium & Abendauam in loc. {m} So Menachem in Jarchi, and others in Kimchi & Abendana in loc. {n} R. R. in Jarchi in loc. {o} In Kimchi in loc. {p} Kimchi & Ben Melech in loc. {q} Zohar in Lev. fol. 5. 4. & Imre Binah in ib. {r} Dialog cum Tryphone, p. 325. {s} Adv. Judaeos, c. 10. {t} In hunc Psalm. M. S. penes me, fol. 8. 9.

Ver. 1. My God, my God,.... God is the God of Christ as he is man; he prepared a body for him, an human nature; anointed it with the oil of gladness; supported it under all its sorrows and sufferings, and at last exalted it at his own right hand:, and Christ behaved towards him as his covenant God; prayed to him, believed in him, loved him, and was obedient to him as such; and here expresses his faith of interest in him, when he hid his face from him, on account of which he expostulates with him thus, "why hast thou forsaken me?" which is to be understood, not as if the hypostatical or personal union of the divine and human natures were dissolved, or that the one was now separated from the other: for the fulness of the Godhead still dwelt bodily in him; nor that he ceased to be the object of the Father's love; for so he was in the midst of all his sufferings, yea, his Father loved him because he laid down his life for the sheep; nor that the principle of joy and comfort was lost in him, only the act and sense of it; he was now deprived of the gracious presence of God, of the manifestations of his love to his human soul, and had a sense of divine wrath, not for his own sins, but for the sins of his people, and was for a while destitute of help and comfort; all which were necessary in order to make satisfaction for sin: for as he had the sins of his people imputed to him, he must bear the whole punishment of them, which is twofold the punishment of loss and the punishment of sense; the former lies in a deprivation of the divine presence, and the latter in a sense of divine wrath, and both Christ sustained as the surety of his people. This expostulation is made not as ignorant of the reason of it; he knew that as he was wounded and bruised for the sins of his people, he was deserted on the same account; nor as impatient, for he was a mirror of patience in all his sufferings; and much less as in despair; for, in these very words, he strongly expresses and repeats his faith of interest in God; see Ps 22:8; and also Isa 50:6. But this is done to set forth the greatness and bitterness of his sufferings; that not only men hid their faces from him, and the sun in the firmament withdrew its light and heat from him, but, what was most grievous of all, his God departed from him. From hence it appears that he was truly man, had an human soul, and endured sorrows and sufferings in it; and this may be of use to his members, to expect the hidings of God's face, though on another account; and to teach them to wait patiently for him, and to trust in the Lord, and stay themselves upon their God, even while they walk in darkness and see no light;

[why art thou so] far from helping me? or from my salvation; from saving and delivering him out of his sorrows and sufferings? not that he despaired of help; he firmly believed he should have it, and accordingly had it: but he expostulates about the deferring of it. He adds,

[and from] the words of my roaring? which expresses the vehemency of his spirit in crying to God, the exceeding greatness of his sorrows, and his excruciating pains and sufferings: this is what the apostle means by his "strong crying and tears", **Heb 5:7**; or "the words of my roaring [are] far from my salvation"; there is a great space or interval between the one and the other, as Gussetius {u} observes.

{u} Comment. Ebr. p. 788.

Psalms 22:2

Ver. 2. O my God, I cry in the daytime,.... In the time of his suffering on the cross, which was in the daytime:

but thou hearest me not; and yet he was always heard, Joh 11:41; though he was not saved from dying, yet he was quickly delivered from the power of death, and so was heard in that he feared, **Heb 5:7**;

and in the night season: in the night in which he was in the garden, sorrowing and praying, the night in which he was betrayed and was apprehended; and though the natural desires of his human soul were not heard and answered, that the cup might pass from him, yet his prayer in submission to the will of God was: moreover, the daytime and night season may design the incessant and continual prayer of Christ; he prayed always, night and day:

and am not silent; but continue to pray, though as yet seemingly not heard and answered; or there is "no silence to me" {w}; that is, no rest from sorrow and pain; or "no likeness to me" {x}, there are none like me, no sorrow like my sorrow, as in **La 1:12**.

{w} yl hymd al "non est silentium mihi", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; "intermissio", Cocceius; "quies", Gejerus; "cessatio, quies, aut silentium", Michaelis. {x} "Non est mihi similitudo", Gussetius, p. 193.

Psalms 22:3

Ver. 3. But thou [art] holy,.... Which may be considered either as an argument with his God, why he should hear and answer him, since he is holy, just, and faithful; he has promised, when any call upon him in a day of trouble, he will hear and answer them, and will be glorified by them; this Christ did, and therefore pleads his faithfulness to his promise: or rather a reason quieting him under divine desertion, and a sense of divine wrath, that God was righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; and that whereas he was the surety of his people, and had all their sins on him, it was perfectly agreeable to the holiness and justice of God to treat him in the manner he did; yea, it was done to declare his righteousness, that he might appear to be just, while he is the justifier of him that believes in him;

[O thou] that inhabitest the praises of Israel; either the place where Israel offered the sacrifices of praise to God, the tabernacle or temple, the house of prayer and praise in which Jehovah dwelt: or the true Israel of God praising him, who are formed for himself, and called by his grace to show forth his praises; among whom he takes up his residence: or else the praises themselves; and so the phrase denotes God's gracious acceptance of them, and well pleasedness in them, signified by his inhabiting of them, and the frequent and constant ascription of them to him: and perhaps respect may be had chiefly to the praises of his people for providing such a Saviour for them, settling him in the fulness of time, and not sparing him, but delivering him up into the hands of justice and death for them; and for giving all things freely with him.

Psalms 22:4

Ver. 4. Our fathers trusted in thee,.... By whom are meant Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, from whom our Lord descended; and the people of Israel when in Egypt, in the times of the judges, and in all ages before the coming of Christ, of whom, as concerning the flesh, or as to his human nature, Christ came, **Ro 9:5**; these, as they were sojourners, and went from place to place, especially the patriarchs, and were often in trouble and distress, when they called upon the Lord, looked to him, and put their trust and confidence in him; not in themselves, their own wisdom, riches, and strength, nor in others, in any mere creature, nor in any outward thing, or arm of flesh, but in the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength; they believed in the power of God, that he was able to help and deliver them, and they had faith in him that he would; they depended upon his word and promise, and were persuaded he would never suffer his faithfulness to fail; they committed themselves to the Lord, and stayed themselves upon him;

they trusted; this is repeated not only for the sake of emphasis, pointing out something remarkable and commendable, and for the greater certainty of it, more strongly confirming it; or to observe the many that put their trust in the Lord, the numerous instances of confidence in him; but also to denote the constancy and continuance of their faith, they trusted in the Lord at all times;

and thou didst deliver them; out of the hands of all their enemies, and out of all their sorrows and afflictions; instances of which we have in the patriarchs, and in the people of Israel when brought out of Egypt, and through the Red sea and wilderness, and in the times of the judges, when they were distressed by their neighbours, and God sent them a deliverer time after time.

Psalms 22:5

Ver. 5. They cried unto thee, and were delivered,.... As the Israelites did in Egyptian bondage, and as they in later times did when in distress; see **Ex 2:23**; &c. The crying is to be understood of prayer to God, and sometimes designs mental prayer, sighing, and groaning, which cannot be uttered, when no voice is heard, as in Moses, Ex 14:15; but oftener vocal prayer, put up in times of distress, and denotes the vehemency of trouble, and eagerness of desire to be heard and relieved; and this cry was from faith, it followed upon and was accompanied with trusting in the Lord; it was the prayer of faith, which is effectual and availeth much, and issued in deliverance;

they trusted in thee, and were not confounded: or ashamed; neither of the object of their trust, the living God, as those who trust in graven images; so Moab was ashamed of Chemosh, Jer 48:13; nor of their hope and trust in him, it being such as makes not ashamed, Ps 119:116 **Ro 5:5**; nor of the consequences of it; When men trust in anything and it fails them, and they have not what they expect by it, they are filled with shame and confusion, Isa 30:2; but they that trust in the Lord are never confounded, or made ashamed; their expectations do not perish: now Christ mentions this case of his ancestors as a reason of the praises of Israel, which they offered up to God for deliverances, and which he inhabited, Ps 22:3; as also by way of encouragement to himself in his present circumstances, that though the Lord was at a distance from him, and seemed not to regard him and his cries, yet that he would deliver him; and likewise as an argument with God that he would do so, since it had been his wonted way and method with his fathers before; moreover he may take notice of it in order to represent his own forlorn, uncomfortable, and deplorable condition, which was abundantly worse than theirs, and the reverse of it, as it seemed at present.

Psalms 22:6

Ver. 6. But I [am] a worm, and no man,.... Christ calls himself a worm, not because of his original, for he was not of the earth earthy, but was the Lord from heaven; nor because of his human nature, man being a worm, and the Son of Man such, Job 25:6; and because of his meanness and low estate in that nature, in his humiliation; nor to express his humility, and the mean thoughts he had of himself, as David, his type, calls himself a dead dog, and a flea, 1Sa 24:14; but on account of the opinion that men of the world had of him; so Jacob is called "a worm", Isa 41:14; not only because mean in his own eyes, but contemptible in the eyes of others. The Jews esteemed Christ as a worm, and treated him as such; he was loathsome to them and hated by them; everyone trampled upon him and trod him under foot as men do worms; such a phrase is used of him in Heb 10:29; there is an agreement in some things between the worm and Christ in his state of humiliation; as in its uncomeliness and disagreeable appearance; so in Christ the Jews could discern no form nor comeliness wherefore he should be desired; and in its weakness, the worm being an impotent, unarmed, and defenceless creatures, hence the Chaldee paraphrase renders it here "a weak worm"; and though Christ is the mighty God, and is also the Son of Man whom God made strong for himself, yet mere was a weakness in his human nature and he was crucified through it, 2Co 13:4; and it has been observed by some, that the word telwt here used signifies the scarlet worm, or the worm that is in the grain or berry with which scarlet is dyed; and like, is scarlet worm did our Lord look, when by way of mockery be was clothed with a scarlet robe; and especially when he appeared in his dyed garments, and was red in his apparel, as one that treadeth in the wine fat; when his body was covered with blood when he hung upon the cross, which was shed to make crimson and scarlet sins as white as wool. When Christ says he was "no man", his meaning is, not that he was not truly and really man, for he assumed a true body and a reasonable soul; he partook of the same flesh and blood with his children, and was in all things made like unto his brethren, excepting sin; but that he was a man of no figure, he bore no office, and had no title of honour; he was not a Rabbi, nor a member of the Jewish sanhedrim; he had no share of government, either in the civil or ecclesiastic state; he was a carpenter's son, and a carpenter; nor was he treated as a man, but in the most inhuman manner; he was despised and rejected of men, he was called a madman, and said to have a devil;

a reproach of men; he was reproached by men, as if he had been the worst of men; the reproaches of God and of his people all fell on him, insomuch that his heart was broken with them; see Ps 69:7; and it was reckoned a reproach to men to be seen in his company, or to be thought to belong to him, and be a disciple of his; hence some, who believed he was the Messiah, yet would not confess him, because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God, Joh 12:42;

and despised of the people; rejected with contempt as the Messiah, refused with scorn as the stone of Israel, disallowed of men, and set at nought by them; by "the people" are meant the people of the Jews, his own people and nation; which contempt of him they signified both by gestures and words, as in the following verses.

(When the female of the scarlet worm species was ready to give birth to her young, she would attach her body to the trunk of a tree, fixing herself so firmly and permanently that she would never leave again. The eggs deposited beneath her body were thus protected until the larvae were hatched and able to enter their own life cycle. As the mother died, the crimson fluid stained her body and the surrounding wood. From the dead bodies of such female scarlet worms, the commercial scarlet dyes of antiquity were extracted. {x} What a picture this gives of Christ, dying on the tree, shedding his precious blood that he might "bring many sons unto glory" (**Heb 2:10**)! He died for us, that we might live through him! Ps 22:6 describes such a worm and gives us this picture of Christ. (cf. **Isa 1:18**) Editor.)

{x} Dr. Henry Morris, "Biblical Basis for Modern Science", p. 73. Baker Book House, 1985.

Psalms 22:7

Ver. 7. All they that see me laugh me to scorn,.... To the afflicted pity should be shown; but instead or pitying him in his distresses they laughed at him; this must be understood of the soldiers when they had him in Pilate's hall, and of the Jews in general when he hung upon the cross; some particular persons must be excepted, as John the beloved disciple, the mother of our Lord, Mary Magdalene, and some other women, who stood afar off beholding him;

they shoot out the lip; or "open with the lip" {y}; they made mouths at him, they put out their lips, or gaped upon him with their mouths, and in a way of sport and pastime made wide mouths and drew out their tongues, as in Job 16:10;

they shake the head, [saying]; in a way of scorn and derision, as in **La 2:15**. This was fulfilled in the Jews, Mt 27:39.

{y} hpvb wryjpy "hiatum fecerunt labiis suis", Grotius; "they make a mow with their lip", Ainsworth.

Psalms 22:8

Ver. 8. He trusted on the Lord, [that] he would deliver him,.... Not that they spoke in a deriding way of the object of his trust, for, as impious as they were, this they did not do; but of his trust in the Lord, which they looked upon to be a false one, as would appear by his not being delivered, as he trusted; but his confidence was a well grounded one, though jeered at by these men, and he was delivered in the Lord's own time and way from all his enemies, and out of all his troubles;

let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him; this is another ironical sarcastic flout, not at God, but at Christ, and at his profession of trust in God, his claim of interest in his favour, and of relation to him as being the Son of his love, in whom he was well pleased; he always was the delight of his Father; he expressed his well pleasedness in him at his baptism, and transfiguration on the mount; he took pleasure in him while he was suffering and dying in the room and stead of his people; and he delivered him, raised him from the dead, and brought him into a large place, because he delighted in him, Ps 18:19; These very words were said by the Jews concerning Christ, as he hung upon the cross, Mt 27:43.

Psalms 22:9

Ver. 9. But thou [art] he that took me out of the womb,.... The Papists affirm, that there was something miraculous in the manner of Christ's coming into the world, as well as in his conception; that his conception of a virgin was miraculous is certain, being entirely owing to the wonderful and mysterious overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and which was necessary to preserve his human nature from the contagion of sin, common to all that descend from Adam by ordinary generation; that so that individual of human nature might be proper to be united to the Son of God, and that it might be a fit sacrifice for the sins of men; but otherwise in all other things, sin only excepted, he was made like unto us; and it is a clear case, that his mother bore him the usual time, and went with him her full time of nine months, as women commonly do; see **Lu 1:56**; and it is as evident that he was born and brought forth in the same manner other infants are, seeing he was presented, to the Lord in the temple, and the offering was brought for him according to the law respecting the male that opens the womb, **Lu 2:22**; and the phrase that is here used is expressive of the common providence of God which attends such an event, every man being as it were midwifed into the world by God himself; see Job 10:18; though there was, no doubt, a peculiar providence which attended the birth of our Lord, and makes this expression more peculiarly applicable to him; since his mother Mary, when her full time was come, was at a distance from the place of her residence, was in an inn, and in a stable there, there being no room for her in the inn, and so very probably had no women about her to assist her, nor any midwife with her; and there was the more visible appearance of the hand of God in this affair, who might truly be said to take him out of the womb:

thou didst make me hope [when I was] upon my mother's breasts; which may be understood of the expectation and hope, common to infants, which have not the use of reason, with all creatures, whose eyes wait upon the Lord, and he gives them their meat in due season; and here may regard the sudden and suitable provision of milk in the mother's breast, to which there is in the infant a natural desire, and an hope and expectation of. The words may be rendered, as they are by some, "thou didst keep me in safety", or make me safe and secure {z}, when I was "upon my mother's breast": this was verified in Christ at the time Herod sought to take away his life; he was then in his mother's arms, and sucked at her breast; when the Lord in a dream acquainted Joseph with Herod's design, and directed him to flee with the young child and his mother into Egypt, where they were kept in safety till the death of Herod. This sense of the words frees them from a difficulty, how the grace of hope, or of faith and confidence, can, in a proper sense, be exercised in the infant state; for though the principle of grace may be implanted so early, yet how it should be exercised when there is not the due use of reason is not easy to conceive; if, therefore, the words are taken in this sense, the meaning must be, that he was caused to hope as soon as he was capable of it, which is sometimes the design of such a phrase; see Job 31:18; unless we suppose something extraordinary in Christ's human nature, which some interpreters are not willing to allow, because he was in all things like unto us excepting sin; but I see not, that seeing the human nature was an extraordinary one, was perfectly holy from the first of it, the grace of God was upon it as soon as born, and it was anointed with the Holy Ghost above its fellows, why it may not be thought to exercise grace in an extraordinary manner, so early as is here expressed, literally understood.

{z} yxyjbm "tu me tutum fecisti", Cocceius; so Michaelis.

Psalms 22:10

Ver. 10. I was cast upon thee from the womb,.... Either by himself, trusting in God, hoping in him, and casting all the care of himself upon him; or by his parents, who knew the danger he was exposed to, and what schemes were laid to take away his life; and therefore did, in the use of all means they were directed to, commit him to the care and protection of God: the sense is, that the care of him was committed to God so early; and he took the care of him and gave full proof of it:

thou [art] my God from my mother's belly: God was his covenant God from everlasting, as he loved his human nature, chose it to the grace of union, and gave it a covenant subsistence; but he showed himself to be his God in time, and that very early, calling him from the womb, and making mention of his name from his mother's belly, and preserving him from danger in his infancy; and it was his covenant interest in God, which, though mentioned last, was the foundation of all his providential care of him and goodness to him. Now all these early appearances of the power and providence of God, on the behalf of Christ as man, are spoken of in opposition to the scoffs and flouts of his enemies about his trust in God, and deliverance by him, and to encourage his faith and confidence in him; as well as are so many reasons and arguments with God yet to be with him, help and assist him, as follows.

Psalms 22:11

Ver. 11. Be not far from me,.... Who had been so near unto him, as to take him out of the womb, and to take the care of him ever since; this is to be understood not with respect to the omnipresence of God, who is everywhere, and is not far from any of us; but of his presence, which was now withdrawn from Christ, and he was filled with a sense of divine wrath, and with sorrow and distress; and also of his powerful and assisting presence which he had promised, and Christ expected, and believed he should have, as he had: the reasons for it follow:

for trouble [is] near; Satan was marching towards him with his principalities and powers, to attack him in the garden and on the cross; Judas, one of his own disciples, was at hand to betray him; a multitude with swords and staves were about to seize him; the sins and chastisement of his people were just going to be laid upon him; the sword of justice was awaked against him, ready to give the blow; the hour of death was near, he was brought to the dust of it, as in Ps 22:15. A second reason is given, for [there is] none to help; none among his disciples: one of them was to betray him, another to deny him, and all to forsake him and flee from him, as they did; nor any among the angels in heaven; for though they ministered to him in the wilderness, and strengthened him in the garden, there were none near him on the cross, that it might be manifest that salvation was wrought out alone by him, Isa 63:5; and, indeed, if any of these had been willing to have helped him, it was not in their power to do it, none but God could; and therefore he applies to him, who had promised and was as good as his word, Isa 49:8.

Psalms 22:12

Ver. 12. Many bulls have compassed me,.... By whom are meant the chief priests, elders, Scribes, and Pharisees, among the Jews, and Herod and Pontius Pilate among the Gentiles, comparable to bulls for their fierceness, rage, and fury against Christ, **Ps 2:1**; and for their pushing at him with their horns of power and authority, and for their trampling him under their feet, his person and offices; these compassed him about at his apprehension, arraignment, trial, and condemnation; and there were many of them to one child, Jesus:

strong [bulls] of Bashan have beset me round; Bashan was a very fruitful country, in which cattle of various sorts, and bulls among the rest, were fed and fattened; see De 32:14; bulls are noted for their strength in other writers {a}. Hence great men, who abounded in riches and power, and used them to the oppression of the poor, are compared to the kine of Bashan, **Am 4:1**; and a very fit name this was for the kings and princes of the earth; for Caiaphas, Annas, and the chief priests, that lived upon the fat of the land, who beset Christ around, and employed all their power and policy to take him and bring him to death; nor is it unusual with Heathen writers {b} to compare great personages to bulls.

{a} "Fortes tauri", Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. v. 65. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 9. Fab. 1.
{b} Homer. Iliad. 2. v. 48. Horat. Satyr. l. 1. Satyr. 3. v. 110.

Psalms 22:13

Ver. 13. They gaped upon me [with] their mouths,.... Either by way of derision and contempt, Job 16:10; or belching out blasphemy against him, or rather, with the greatest vehemency, crying out "Crucify him, crucify him", Lu 23:21;

and this they did

[as] a ravening and roaring lion, when it has got its prey and rejoices, **Am 3:4**; and being in such hands, and encompassed about with such enemies, as Christ was in the garden, in the high priest's hall, and in Pilate's judgment hall, is a third reason or argument used by him with God his Father, to be near to him and not far from him.

Psalms 22:14

Ver. 14. I am poured out like water,.... This may refer to Christ's sweat in the garden, when through his agony or conflict with Satan, and his vehemency in prayer, and the pressure on his mind, in a view of his people's sins, and the wrath of God for, them, and the accursed death he was about to undergo on that account, sweat in great abundance came from all parts of his body, and not only stood in large drops, but fell to the ground like great drops of blood; so that his body was all covered with water, or rather seemed to be dissolving into water, or else to the quantity of tears he shed both there and elsewhere; his sorrow was great even unto death, which vented itself in floods of tears; his prayers were offered up with strong crying and tears; his head was, as Jeremiah wished his might be, as waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears, yea, his whole body seemed to be bathed with them: or else to the shedding of his blood, and the pouring out his soul unto death for his people, which was voluntarily done by himself, or by his enemies; which they shed like water, and made no account of it,
Ps 79:3. Some have thought this respects the opinion some had of him, even some of his own disciples, when he was dead; all their hopes of his being their Redeemer and Saviour being gone, he was as water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up; see 2Sa 14:14; but rather the phrase intends his being quite dispirited, his heart failing, his soul sorrowful unto death, his hands feeble, his knees weak like water, and he just ready to faint and die; see **Jos 7:5** **Eze 7:17**;

and all my bones are out of joint; not through the stretching of his body on the cross, which seems to be designed in Ps 22:17; but as it is with persons in a panic, their joints seem to be loosed, and their bones parting asunder, their legs tremble, no member can perform its office, but as if everyone was dislocated and out of its place; see **Ps 6:2**;

my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels; as wax melts before the fire, so did the heart of Christ at the wrath and fury of God, which was poured forth like fire upon him; and which he had a sense of, when in the garden and on the cross, bearing the sins of his people, and sustaining the punishment due unto them for it was not because of his enemies, nor merely at the presence of God, and his righteous judgments, which is sometimes the case; see 2Sa 17:10; but at the apprehension of divine wrath, and feeling the same, as the surety of his people; and what an idea does this give of the wrath of God! for if the heart of Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, melted at it, what heart can endure, or hands be strong, when God deals with them in his wrath? Eze 22:14.

Psalms 22:15

Ver. 15. My strength is dried up like a potsherd,.... The radical moisture of his body was dried up through his loss of blood and spirits, and through the violent fever upon him, brought on him by his being hurried from court to court; and which generally attends persons under a panic, in consternation and fear of danger and death, and at crucifixion; or this was occasioned by the inward sorrow and distress of his mind, which affected his body and dried his bones, as a broken spirit is said to do, Pr 17:22; and chiefly it was brought upon him through the sense he had the wrath of God, which like fire dried up his strength, just as a potsherd burnt in a furnace; which expresses his dolorous sufferings, which were typified by the passover lamb being roasted with fire, and the manna being baked in pans;

and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; so that he could not, or rather would not, speak; this phrase sometimes signifying silence, Job 29:10 **Eze 3:26**. Thus Christ answered not a word to the charges of the false witnesses before the high priest, nor to the accusations of the chief priests and elders before Pilate; nor did he open his mouth, when he was led to be crucified, neither against the law and justice of God, nor against his people for whom he suffered, nor against his enemies who used him cruelly; when he was reviled he reviled not again; but rather this was occasioned by thirst, through the violent fever that was upon him; see **La 4:4**; Hence, when he hung upon the cross, he said, "I thirst", Joh 19:28;

and thou hast brought me into the dust of death; meaning either death itself, which brings to the dust, and which is signified in this psalm by going down to it, Ps 22:29; or the grave, where the body crumbles into dust, and where it is covered with dust, and therefore is said to sleep in the dust of the earth, Da

12:2; and accordingly the Targum renders it here, "thou hast shut me up in the house of the grave": now Christ both died and was laid in the grave, though he did not lie there so long as to corrupt and decompose, yet he might be truly said to be laid in the dust: and this is attributed to God, to his counsel, disposal, and Providence; and even whatever was done to Christ antecedent to his death, and which led on to it, were what God's hand and counsel had determined to be done; and though it was with wicked hands the Jews took Christ and used him in the manner after related, and crucified and slew him, he was delivered to them by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; and by these he was delivered into the hands of justice, and brought to death itself, **Ac 2:23**.

Psalms 22:16

Ver. 16. For dogs have compassed me,.... By whom are meant wicked men, as the following clause shows; and so the Chaldee paraphrase renders it, "the wicked who are like to many dogs"; and to these such are often compared in Scripture, **Mt 7:6**; and it may be the Roman soldiers, who were Gentiles, may be chiefly intended, whom the Jews used to call dogs, Mt 15:26; these assembled together in Pilate's hall and surrounded Christ, and made sport with him; to these were committed the execution of him, they crucified him, and sat around him watching him while on the cross, as they also did when in the grave: some have thought the dregs of the Jewish people are designed, the common people, such as Job says he would not set with the dogs of his flock, Job 30:1; who encompassed Christ on the cross, wagging their heads at him; though I see not but that all of them, even the chief among them, the high priest, sanhedrim, Scribes, and Pharisees, may be intended; who are so called because of their impurity in themselves; for their avarice and covetousness, being greedy dogs that could never have enough; and for their impudence, calumnies, malice, and envy, against Christ: the allusion seems to be to hunting dogs, who, when they have got the creature they have been in pursuit of, surround it and fall upon it. Christ, in the title of this psalm, is called Aijeleth Shahar, "the morning hind", who was hunted by the Jews, and at last surrounded and taken by them;

the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; the Jewish sanhedrim, the chief priests and elders, who assembled together to consult his death, before whom he was brought when taken; and in, the midst of whom he was set and examined, and by them unanimously condemned; and who, notwithstanding all their pretensions to religion, were a set of wicked men: and also the whole congregation of the Jews, the body of the people, who were united in their request for his crucifixion and death; and who in great numbers got together, and in a circle stood around him when on the cross, insulting him;

they pierced my hands and my feet; by nailing them to the cross, which, though not related by the evangelists, is plainly suggested in Joh 20:25; and is referred to in other passages of Scripture, Zec 12:10; and clearly points at the kind of death Christ should die; the death, of the cross, a shameful and painful one. In this clause there is a various reading; in some copies in the margin it is, "as a lion my hands and my feet", but in the text, "they have dug" or "pierced my hands and my feet"; both are joined together in the Targum, "biting as a lion my hands and my feet"; as it is by other interpreters {c}; and Schultens {d} retains the latter, rendering the preceding clause in connection with it thus,

"the assembly of the wicked have broken me to pieces, as a lion, my hands and my feet."

In the Targum, in the king of Spain's Bible, the phrase, "as a lion", is left out. The modern Jews are for retaining the marginal reading, though without any good sense, and are therefore sometimes charged with a wilful and malicious corruption of the text; but without sufficient proof, since the different reading in some copies might be originally occasioned by the similarity of the letters y and w; and therefore finding it in their copies, or margin, sometimes wrak, and sometimes
yrak, have chose that which best suits their purpose, and is not to be wondered at; however, their "masoretic" notes, continued by them, sufficiently clear them from such an imputation, and direct to the true reading of the words; in the small Masorah on the text it is observed that the word is twice used as here pointed, but in two different senses; this is one of the places; the other is Isa 38:13; where the sense requires it should be read "as a lion": wherefore, according to the authors of that note, it must have a different sense here, and not to be understood of a lion; the larger Masorah, in Nu 24:9; observes the word is to be found in two places, in that place and in Ps 22:16; and adds to that, it is written wrak, "they pierced"; and Ben Chayim confirms {e} this reading, and says he found it so written it, some correct copies, and in the margin yrak; and so it is written in several manuscripts; and which is confirmed by the Arabic, Syriac, Ethiopic, Greek, and Vulgate Latin versions; in which it is rendered, "they dug my hands and my feet"; and so took it to be a verb and not a noun: so Apollinarius in his metaphrase; and which is also confirmed by the points; though taking yrak for a participle, as the Targum, that reading may be admitted, as it is by some learned men {f}, who render it

"digging" or "piercing", and so has the same sense, deriving the word either from rak or rwk, which signify to dig, pierce, or make hollow; and there are many instances of plural words which end in y, the m omitted, being cut off by an apocope; see 2Sa 23:8; and either way the words are expressive of the same thing, and manifestly point to the sufferings of Christ, and that kind of death he should die, the death of the cross, and the nailing of his hands and feet to it, whereby they were pierced. This passage is sometimes applied by the Jews {g} themselves to their Messiah.

{c} Amamae Antibarb. Bibl. p. 743. {d} Origin. Heb. l. 1. c. 12. s. 8. Vid. Jacob. Alting. Dissert. Philolog. 5. s. 27-34. {e} In Maarcath a, fol. 10. 2. ad Calc. Buxtorf. Bibl. {f} Pocock. Miscell. c. 4. p. 59, 60. Pfeiffer. Exercitat. 8. s. 37. Carpzov. Critic. Sacr. p. 838, 839. Alting. ut supra. (Dissert. Philolog. 5.) s. 48, 49. {g} Pesikta in Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 56. 4.

Psalms 22:17

Ver. 17. I may tell all my bones,.... For what with the stretching out of his body on the cross, when it was fastened to it as it lay on the ground, and with the jolt of the cross when, being reared up, it was fixed in the ground, and with the weight of the body hanging upon it, all his bones were disjointed and started out; so that, could he have seen them, he might have told them, as they might be told by the spectators who were around him; and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, "they have numbered all my bones"; that is, they might have done if: the Targum is, "I will number all the scars of my members", made by the blows, scourges, and wounds he received;

they look [and] stare upon me; meaning not his bones, but his enemies; which may be understood either by way of contempt, as many Jewish interpreters explain it: so the Scribes and elders of the people, and the people themselves, looked and stared at him on the cross, and mocked at him, and insulted him; or by way of rejoicing, saying, "Aha, aha, our eye hath seen", namely, what they desired and wished for,
Ps 35:21; a sight as was enough to have moved an heart of stone made no impression on them; they had no sympathy with him, no compassion on him, but rejoiced at his misery: this staring agrees with their character as dogs.

Psalms 22:18

Ver. 18. They part my garments among them,.... Such as died the death of the cross were crucified naked {h}, and their clothes were the perquisites of the executioners; there were four soldiers concerned in the crucifixion of Christ, and these parted his garments into four parts, and everyone took his part;

and cast lots on my vesture; which was a seamless coat, wove from the top to the bottom; and therefore, not willing to rend it, they cast lots upon it who should have it; all this was exactly fulfilled in Christ, Joh 19:23.

{h} Vid Lipsium de Cruce, l. 2. c. 7. p. 81.

Psalms 22:19

Ver. 19. But be not thou far from me, O Lord,....
See Gill on "Ps 22:11";

O my strength; Christ as God is the mighty God, the Almighty; as Mediator, he is the strength of his people; but, as man, God is his strength; he is the man of his right hand, whom he has made strong for himself, and whom he has promised his arm shall strengthen,
Ps 80:17; and therefore he addresses him in this manner here, saying,

haste thee to help me; his help was alone in God his strength; there were none that could help him but he, and he seemed to stand afar off from helping him,
Ps 22:1; and his case being so distressed, as is represented in the preceding verses, it required haste.

Psalms 22:20

Ver. 20. Deliver my soul from the sword,.... Wicked men, whose tongues were as a sharp sword, reproaching and blaspheming him, and bearing false witness against him; and crying out, "Crucify him, crucify him",
Lu 23:21; see Ps 17:12; or any instrument of violence, as the iron bar with which the legs of the malefactors crucified with him were broken, which he escaped; and the spear which pierced his side, after he had commended his soul or spirit into the hands of his Father; or a violent death; for though his death had the appearance of one, he was taken in a violent manner, and condemned to be put to death, and was crucified, yet his life was not taken

away by men; he laid it down, and gave up his breath himself;

my darling from the power of the dog, or "my only one" {i}; meaning his life or soul, as before; so called, not because there is but one soul in the body, but because it was dear and valuable to him; and hence we render it "darling", an only one being usually the darling of its parents; so a man's life is dear to him, all that he has will he give for it, **Job 2:4**. Christ's life was a more precious life than any man's, and peculiarly his own, in such sense as another man's, is not his own; and his soul also was an only one, it was not polluted with original sin, as the souls of other men are; it was pure and holy: the word here used is sometimes rendered "desolate" and "solitary"; see
Ps 25:16; and it may have this sense here, and be translated "my lonely" or "solitary one" {k}; he being forsaken by God, and deserted by his disciples; his soul was in darkness, sorrow, and distress, wherefore he prays it might be delivered "from the power of the dog"; either Satan is so called for his malice and envy, who had put it into the heart of Judas to betray him, and had filled the Pharisees with envy at him, and who through it delivered him to Pilate; or the impure, cruel, and wicked Roman soldiers, and in short all his crucifiers; called in the plural number "dogs", See Gill on "Ps 22:16".

{i} dtyyxy "unicam meam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Tiguriue version, Cocceius, Junius & Tremellius. {k} "Solitariam meam", Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 22:21

Ver. 21. Save me from the lion's mouth,.... Either the devil, who is as a roaring lion, whom Christ overcame both in the garden and on the cross, and destroyed him and his works; or all his wicked enemies, especially the most powerful of them, who were in greatest authority, as the chief priests and elders; so rulers and civil magistrates, who are cruel and unmerciful, are compared to lions, Pr 28:15;

for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns; some read this as a prayer like the former, "hear thou me" {l}, &c. that is, deliver me; but according to our version it expresses what God had done, that he had heard him and saved him; and is used as a reason or argument with him that he would regard also his other petitions: or it may have respect to what follows, that since God had heard him, and delivered him out of the hands of his most powerful enemies, therefore he would declare his name and praise him; for the

unicorn being a very strong creature, and its strength lying much in its horn, with which it pushes and does mischief; see Nu 23:22. Christ's strong and potent enemies are intended here; such as Satan and his principalities and powers, the sanhedrim of the Jews, Herod, Pontius Pilate, and others, from whose power he was freed when raised from the dead. According to Pliny {m}, the monoceros, or unicorn, is the fiercest of wild beasts; in its body like a horse, it has the head of an hart and feet of an elephant, the tail of a bear, makes a great bellowing; has one black horn rising up in the middle of the forehead, of two cubits long; it is denied that it was ever taken alive, which agrees with Job 39:9;
See Gill on "Job 39:9" and
See Gill on "Job 39:10".

{l} yntyne "exaudi me", Muis, Gejerus, Michaelis. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 21.

Psalms 22:22

Ver. 22. I will declare thy name unto my brethren,.... Not those who were more nearly related to him according to the flesh; for though there were some who believed in him, and to whom he declared the name of God, as James and Joses, and Judas and Simon, Mt 13:55; yet there were others that did not believe on him, **Joh 7:3**; nor those more remotely related to him, as all the Jews, who were his brethren and kinsmen also according to the flesh; to these indeed he came and preached, but they received him not; but rather his apostles, whom he called his brethren, even after his resurrection, and to whom he appeared and declared the name of God, Mt 28:10; and the five hundred brethren by whom he was seen at once may be also included; and even all true believers in him, who through his incarnation, being their "goel" and near kinsman, stands in such a relation to them, and through their adoption into his Father's family, his Father being their Father, and his God their God; which is manifested in regeneration, and evidenced by their doing the will of God, which is believing in Christ,
Mt 12:49. By the "name" of God is meant, not anyone of the names by which he is known, as God Almighty, Jehovah, &c. if any of these could be thought to be designed, the New Testament name and title of God as the Father of Christ would bid fair for it; but rather the perfections of God, which appear in Christ, and were glorified in the work of redemption; or God himself; or else his Gospel, **Ac 9:15**; and which Christ declared and manifested to his disciples, both before and after his resurrection, Joh 17:6; which latter seems here to be referred unto;

in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee; meaning not the congregation of the Jews, their synagogue, or temple, where he often attended on public worship, and preached and praised the Lord; but rather the company of his disciples, among whom he sung an hymn the night he was betrayed, and with whom he conversed by times for forty days after his resurrection: unless the general assembly and church of the firstborn in heaven is intended, in the midst of which he praised the Lord, when he ascended on high, led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; though it seems best to understand this of the church of God, particularly among the Gentiles, under the Gospel dispensation, where Christ in his members sings the praise of electing, redeeming, and calling grace; see Ps 18:49; compared with Ro 15:9. This is a proof of singing of psalms and hymns in Gospel churches, and of its being a duty to be publicly performed by the members of them, who may expect the presence of Christ in the midst of his church, seeing he here promises to be there: these words are applied to Christ in **Heb 2:12**.

Psalms 22:23

Ver. 23. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him,.... By whom are meant, not the proselytes among the Gentiles, as distinct from the Jews, which is the sense of some Jewish interpreters {n}; but all the people of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, who have the grace of filial and godly fear put into their hearts, with which they worship God, and walk before him in all holy conversation; which is not a fear of wrath, or a distrust of divine goodness; but is a reverential affection for God, and is consistent with the greatest degree of faith, the strongest expressions of spiritual joy and holy courage: it includes the whole worship of God, internal and external; and such who have it in their hearts, and before their eyes, are called upon by Christ to praise the Lord for him, for the unspeakable gift of his love; that he has not spared his son, but delivered him up for them, to undergo so much sorrow, and such sufferings as before related, to obtain salvation for them; and that he has delivered him out of them, raised him from the dead, and has given him glory;

all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; not the natural, but spiritual seed of Jacob, who walk in the steps of the faith of that man of God; these are exhorted to glorify the Lord with their bodies and spirits, which are his, being redeemed with the precious blood of Christ; by believing in him, glorying in him, and offering praise unto him;

and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel; who are the same with the seed of Jacob, Jacob and Israel being two names of the same person; and design not Israel according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit; the whole Israel of God, the all spiritual seed of Israel, who are justified in Christ, and are saved in him; they are the same with them that fear the Lord, and are here stirred up to exercise the grace of fear upon him; to fear him only, and not men, though ever so mighty and powerful, as before described in Ps 22:12; and that not only because of his power and greatness; but because of his grace and goodness, as shown forth in Christ Jesus.

{n} Midrash Tillim, Jarchi & Aben Ezra, in loc.

Psalms 22:24

Ver. 24. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted,.... That is, Christ, who was afflicted by men, both by their tongues, and by their hands; by devils, by the temptations of Satan for Christ suffered being tempted, though he was not overcome; and by his attacks upon him, both in the garden and on the cross; and by the Lord himself, Jehovah his Father, who laid on him the iniquity and chastisement of his people, bruised him, and put him to grief; awoke the sword of justice against him, and spared him not: his afflictions were many, both in body and soul; in body, being scourged, buffeted, bruised, pierced, racked, and tortured on the cross; in soul, being made exceeding sorrowful, and an offering for sin; sustaining his Father's wrath, and seeking and enduring affliction by the rod of it; see Isa 53:4; now, though his afflictions and sufferings were despised by men, and he was despised and abhorred on account of them; yet not by his Father, he took pleasure in them, and in him as suffering for his people; not simply considered, as if he delighted in his sufferings as such, but as they were agreeable to his counsel and covenant, and brought about the salvation of his chosen ones: he accepted them in the room and stead of his people; the sacrifice of Christ was of a sweet smelling savour to him; he was well pleased with his righteousness, his law being magnified and made honourable by it; and his death was precious in his sight, being the propitiation for the sins of his people; so far was he from despising and abhorring the afflictions of his son. And this is mentioned as a reason or argument for praise and thanksgiving in them that fear the Lord; since God has looked upon the redemption price his Son has paid for them sufficient; has not despised, but accepted of it as the ransom of their souls: some render the words, "the prayer of the afflicted"; so the Targum, and the Septuagint version, and the versions that follow that; which agrees with the next words:

neither hath he hid his face from him; when men did, as ashamed of him, Isa 53:3; for though he forsook him for a while, and in a little wrath hid his face from him for a moment, that he might bear the whole curse of the law for us; yet he returned again, and did not hide his face from him for even;

but when he cried unto him, he heard; cried not only on account of his crucifiers, that God would forgive them; but on account of himself, that he would not be afar off from him; that he would take his spirit or soul into his hands, into which he committed it; that he would deliver him from the power of death and the grave, and loose their bands; in all which he was heard, **Heb 5:7**.

Psalms 22:25

Ver. 25. My praise [shall be] of thee in the great congregation,.... Or, "my praise is from thee" {o}; not that he should have praise of God, as he had, when he was received up into heaven, and set down at the right hand of God; but that God should be the object of his praise, as he was the cause of it; his salvation and deliverance of him, and resurrection from the dead, and exaltation of him, were the occasion and matter of it: the place where Christ determined to praise the Lord is "the great congregation"; either his apostles, who, though a little flock, yet, on account of their extraordinary office and gifts, and peculiar privileges, were the greatest congregation that ever was in the world; or the five hundred brethren to whom Christ appeared at once after his resurrection; or else the whole church under the Gospel dispensation; in the midst of which Christ is, and who in the members of it praises the name of the Lord; and this especially will have its accomplishment at the latter day, when great multitudes will be converted, and the voice of praise and thanksgiving will be among them, **Re 7:9**;

I will pay my vows before them that fear him; either those which he made in the council and covenant of grace, when he engaged to become a surety for his people, to assume their nature, to suffer and die for them, to redeem them from sin and misery, and bring them nigh to God, and save them with an everlasting salvation; all which he has openly done; see Ps 31:19; or those which he made in Ps 22:21; that he would declare the name of the Lord unto his brethren, and sing praise unto him in the midst of the church; compare with this Ps 116:12.

{o} Ktam para sou, Sept. "a te", Pagninus, Montanus, Rivetus, Cocceius, Ainsworth.

Psalms 22:26

Ver. 26. The meek shall eat and be satisfied,.... Such who, being made thoroughly sensible of sin, look upon themselves the chief of sinners, and the least of saints; and being truly convicted of the insufficiency of their own righteousness, wholly trust to and rely on the righteousness of Christ; and, being acquainted with their impotency and inability to do any good thing of themselves, ascribe all to the grace of God, and have no dependence on anything done by them; who are willing to be instructed and reproved by the meanest saint; are not easily provoked to wrath; patiently bear indignities and affronts, and are gentle unto all men: these shall "eat" the fat and drink the sweet of Christ the bread of lift; they shall eat of his flesh by faith, which is meat indeed; they shall find the word, and eat it; feed on the wholesome words of Christ, the words of faith and good doctrine, and shall be "satisfied", or "filled": other food is not satisfying; it proves gravel, ashes, and wind; it is not bread, and satisfies not; but such as hunger and thirst after Christ and his righteousness, and are poor in their own eyes, meek and humble; these are filled with good things to satisfaction, **Mt 5:6**; Jarchi interprets these words of the time of the redemption and the days of the Messiah;

they shall praise the Lord that seek him; in Christ, with their whole heart; who being filled by him and satisfied, bless the Lord for their spiritual food and comfortable repast, as it becomes men to do for their corporeal food, **De 8:10**;

your heart shall live for ever; this is an address of Christ to them that fear the Lord, the seed of Jacob and Israel; the meek ones, and that seek the Lord, his face and favour, and who eat and are satisfied; signifying, that they should be revived and refreshed, should be cheerful and comfortable; should live by faith on Christ now, and have eternal life in them; and should live with him for ever hereafter, and never die the second death.

Psalms 22:27

Ver. 27. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord,.... That is, all the elect of God among the Gentiles, who live in the farthermost parts of the world, for whom Christ is appointed to be their salvation, and whom he calls to look to him for it; these shall remember the Lord whom they have forgotten, and against whom they have sinned, how great and how good he is; they shall be put in mind of their sins and iniquities committed against him, and call to mind their latter end; and consider, that after death will come judgment to which they must be brought; they shall be apprised of the grace and goodness of God in Christ, in providing and sending him to be the Saviour of lost sinners, by his sufferings and death, at large described in this psalm; which will encourage them to turn unto the Lord, since they may hope for full pardon of sin, through his blood and sacrifice; and to turn from their idols, and from all their evil ways, and from all dependence on themselves or on creatures, to trust in and serve the living God in faith and fear; which turning is usually brought about under and by the ministry of the word; which is appointed to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; and has this effect when it is attended with the Spirit and power of God; for conversion is not the work of man, neither of ministers nor of men themselves, but of God, in which men are at first passive; they are turned, and then, under the influence of grace, become active, and turn to the Lord, by believing in him, and so cleave unto him: and likewise remembrance of the above things is not owing to themselves, but to the Spirit of God, who puts them into their minds; and which is very necessary and essential to conversion, even as a remembrance of past things is necessary to a restoration after backslidings, which is a second conversion;

and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee; not only externally, by praying before the Lord, and attending on his word and ordinances; but internally, in spirit and in truth, which worshippers the Lord seeks; such spiritual worship being suitable to his nature, and such worshippers believers in him are; this must be understood of some of all nations, kindred and tongues, whom Christ has redeemed by his blood, and calls by his grace; see Zec 14:16.

Psalms 22:28

Ver. 28. For the kingdom [is] the Lord's,.... Not the kingdom of nature and providence, though that is the Lord Christ's; but the kingdom of grace, the mediatorial kingdom: this was Christ's by the designation and constitution of his Father from eternity; the government of the church was always upon his shoulders during the Old Testament dispensation; when he came into this world, he came as a King; though his kingdom being not of this world, it came not with observation; but upon his ascension to heaven, whither he went to receive a kingdom and return, he was made or declared Lord and Christ, and was exalted as a Prince, as well as a Saviour; and in consequence of his being set down at the right hand of God, he sent forth the rod of his strength, his Gospel, into the Gentile world, which was succeeded to the conversion of multitudes of them, among whom he has had a visible kingdom and interest ever since; and which will more abundantly appear in the latter day, when he shall be King over all the earth; and now this is a reason why so many, in the distant parts of the world, and among all the kindreds of the nations, shall remember, turn to him, and worship him;

and he [is] the Governor among the nations; he rules in the hearts of some by his Spirit and grace, and over others with a rod of iron.

Psalms 22:29

Ver. 29. All [they that be] fat upon earth,.... Rich men, who abound in worldly substance, are in very flourishing and prosperous circumstances, of whom for the most part this is literally true; yea, by these sometimes are meant princes, rulers, the chief among the people in power and authority, as well as in riches; see Ps 78:31; the phrase may design such who are in prosperous circumstances in their souls, in spiritual things, in faith, comfort, and spiritual joy, Ps 92:14; but the former sense is best: Jarchi inverts the words, "they shall eat", that is, the meek shall eat, "all the fat of the earth, and worship"; which may be understood of the spiritual blessings of grace, which converted persons shall feed and live upon, Ps 63:5; the allusion may be to the fat parts of the earth, and what grows thereon, made so by ashes, which the word used has the signification of; for some lands are fattened by ashes being strewed upon them {p}; but rather the rich and great men of the earth are intended, who yet are but dust and ashes. They

shall eat, and worship; for as, in the first times of the Gospel, not many mighty and noble were called, yet some were; so more especially, in the latter day, many of this sort will be called, even kings and queens; who will not live upon their titles of honour, their grandeur and glory, but upon Christ and his Gospel, and will fall down before him, and serve and worship him; see Ps 72:10;

all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him; such as are in mean circumstances of life; so that both rich and poor shall serve him; or who are mean in their own eyes, sit in the dust of self-abhorrence, and put their mouths in the dust, are in a low condition, out of which the Lord raises them, Ps 113:7.

The Targum paraphrases it, "who go down to the house of the grave"; that is, the dead; and then the sense is, that Christ is the Lord, both of the dead and living, and that those that are under the earth, and are reduced to dust, as well as they that live and are fat upon it, shall bow the knee to Christ, when raised again, who is the Judge of quick and dead; see Ro 14:9 **Php 2:10**;

and none can keep alive his own soul; as no man can quicken himself when dead in trespasses and sins; so when he is made alive, he cannot preserve his life, nor nourish himself, nor make himself lively and comfortable, nor cause his heart to live, as in Ps 22:26; but by eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Christ, feeding and living upon him by faith: though some take the sense to be, that such as are before described as converted persons, will not seek to save their lives, but will freely lay them down and part with them for Christ's sake; but rather the meaning is, that so universal will the kingdom of Christ be, as that high and low, rich and poor, will be bowing to him; whoever are his enemies, and will not have him to rule over them, will be brought before him and slain, and none of them will be able to save themselves; so the Targum, "he will not quicken", or "keep alive, the soul of the wicked"; or as Jarchi interprets it,

"he will have no mercy on them, to keep their souls alive from hell."

{p} "Effoetos cinerem immundum jactare per agros", Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. v. 79.

Psalms 22:30

Ver. 30. A seed shall serve him,.... That is, Christ shall always have a seed to serve him in every age; a remnant according to the election of grace; see **Ro 9:29**; so that as the former verses speak of the amplitude of Christ's kingdom, through the calling of the Gentiles, these words and the following express the duration of it: and this "seed" either means Christ's seed; so the Septuagint version, and others that follow it, render it, "my seed"; the spiritual seed and offspring of Christ, which the Father has given him, and which shall endure for ever, Isa 53:10; or else the church's seed, which comes to the same thing; not the natural seed of believers, but a succession of godly men in the church, who are born in her, and nursed up at her side; see Isa 59:21; such shall, and do, in every age serve Christ, willingly and cheerfully, in righteousness and true holiness, without slavish fear, and yet with reverence and godly fear. The Chaldee paraphrase is, "the seed of Abraham shall serve before him"; but this seed designs not the Jews only, but the Gentiles also, and chiefly;

it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation; of his people, his children whom he accounts of, reckons, and esteems as such; or the seed shall be reckoned to the Lord, as belonging to him, "unto generation"; that is, in every generation {q}, throughout all ages, to the end of time; so the Targum, "to an after generation"; or "a generation to come".

{q} rwdl "in quacunque generatione", Noldius, p. 236. No. 1076.

Psalms 22:31

Ver. 31. They shall come,.... One generation after another; there shall always be a succession of regenerate persons, who shall come to Christ, and to his churches; and a succession of Gospel ministers among them, who shall come forth, being sent and qualified by Christ;

and shall declare his righteousness, either the faithfulness of God, in fulfilling his promises; especially those which respect the mission of Christ, and salvation by him, as Zacharias did, **Lu 1:68**; or rather the righteousness of Christ, which is revealed in the Gospel, and makes a most considerable part of the declaration of it, and is published by Gospel ministers in all ages, as the only justifying righteousness before God: and that

unto a people that shall be born; in successive generations; that shall be brought upon the stage of time and life; or that shall be born again; for to such only, in a spiritual and saving way, is the righteousness of Christ declared, revealed, and applied, by the blessed Spirit, through the ministry of the word: it is added,

that he hath done [this]; wrought this righteousness; so Jarchi; that is, is the author of it; is become the end of the law for it; has finished it, and brought it in; or else all the great things spoken of in this psalm, relating to the Messiah, his sufferings, death, and resurrection, and the calling of the Gentiles; all which are the Lord's doings, and are what is declared in the Gospel: the Targum is, "the miracles which he hath done"; the Septuagint version, and those that follow it, connect this clause with the preceding thus, "to a people that shall be born, whom the Lord hath made"; made them his people, created them in Christ, and formed them for himself.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 23

A Psalm of David. Thus psalm was written by David, either when he was in distressed circumstances, being persecuted by Saul, and was in the forest of Hareth, 1Sa 22:5; as some think {r}; wherefore he comforts himself with the Lord's being his shepherd, so that he should not want; nor would he fear, was he in worse circumstances than he at present was; or rather, when he was settled upon the throne of Israel, and in the most prosperous and flourishing state of his reign, as the latter part of the psalm shows; he speaks not in his own person only, but in the name of all believers; for Christ, who is the shepherd spoken of, is a common shepherd to all the saints, who are all the sheep of his pasture, as well as David; and the prophet here makes use of similes very familiar with him; he having been a shepherd himself, and knew what it was to do all the parts of that office, which are herein expressed; and very pertinently does this psalm follow the former; for as there Christ is prophesied of as laying down his life for the sheep, as the good shepherd does; and of his being brought again from the dead, as the great shepherd of the sheep, as Christ has been; so here of his performing his office as such, in all its parts, to the great comfort, refreshment, and safety of his people.

{r} Jarchi & Kimchi.

Ver. 1. The Lord [is] my shepherd,.... This is to be understood not of Jehovah the Father, and of his feeding the people of Israel in the wilderness, as the Targum paraphrases it, though the character of a shepherd is sometimes given to him, Ps 77:20; but of Jehovah the Son, to whom it is most frequently ascribed, Ge 49:24. This office he was called and appointed to by his Father, and which through his condescending grace he undertook to execute, and for which he is abundantly qualified; being omniscient, and so knows all his sheep and their maladies, where to find them, what is their case, and what is to be done for them; and being omnipotent, he can do everything proper for them; and having all power in heaven and in earth, can protect, defend, and save them; and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge being in him, he can guide and direct them in the best manner; wherefore he is called the great shepherd, and the chief shepherd, and the good shepherd. David calls him "my shepherd"; Christ having a right unto him, as he has to all the sheep of God, by virtue of his Father's gift, his own purchase, and the power of his grace; and as owning him as such, and yielding subjection to him, following him as the sheep of Christ do wheresoever he goes; and also as expressing his faith of interest in him, affection for him, and joy because of him: and from thence comfortably concludes,

I shall not want; not anything, as the Targum and Aben Ezra interpret it; not any temporal good thing, as none of Christ's sheep do, that he in his wisdom sees proper and convenient for them; nor any spiritual good things, since a fulness of them is in him, out of which all their wants are supplied; they cannot want food, for by him they go in and out and find pasture; in him their bread is given them, where they have enough and to spare, and their waters are sure unto them; nor clothing, for he is the Lord their righteousness, and they are clothed with the robe of his righteousness; nor rest, for he is their resting place, in whom they find rest for their souls, and are by him led to waters of rest, as in Ps 23:2: the words may be rendered, "I shall not fail", or "come short" {s}; that is, of eternal glory and happiness; for Christ's sheep are in his hands, out of which none can pluck them, and therefore shall not perish, but have everlasting life, Joh 10:27.

{s} roxa al "non deficiam", Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 23:2

Ver. 2. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,.... Or "pastures of tender grass" {t}; this is one part of the shepherd's work, and which is performed by Christ, Eze 34:14; by these "green pastures" may be meant the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises, where there is delicious feeding; likewise the fulness of grace in Christ, from whence grace for grace is received; also the flesh and blood, righteousness and sacrifice, of Christ, which faith is led unto and lives upon, and is refreshed and invigorated by; to which may be added the doctrines of the Gospel, with which Christ's under-shepherds feed his lambs and sheep, there being in them milk for babes and meat for strong men; and likewise the ordinances of the Gospel, the goodness and fatness of the Lord's house, the feast of fat things, and breasts of consolation: here Christ's sheep are made to "lie down", denoting their satiety and fulness; they having in these green pastures what is satisfying and replenishing; as also their rest and safety, these being sure dwellings and quiet resting places, even in the noon of temptation and persecution; see **So 1:7**;

he leadeth me beside the still waters, or "waters of rest and quietness" {u}; not to rapid torrents, which by reason of the noise they make, and the swiftness of their motion, the sheep are frightened, and not able to drink of them; but to still waters, pure and clear, and motionless, or that go softly, like the waters of Shiloah, **Isa 8:6**; and the "leading" to them is in a gentle way, easily, as they are able to bear it; so Jacob led his flock, Ge 33:14; and Christ leads his, Isa 40:11; by these "still waters" may be designed the everlasting love of God, which is like a river, the streams whereof make glad the hearts of his people; these are the waters of the sanctuary, which rise to the ankles, knees, and loins, and are as a broad river to swim in; the pure river of water of life Christ leads his sheep to, and gives them to drink freely of: also communion with God, which the saints pant after, as the hart pants after the water brooks, and Christ gives access unto; moreover he himself is the fountain of gardens, and well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon; and the graces of his Spirit are also as rivers of living water, all which he makes his people partakers of; to which may be added, that the Scriptures, and the truths of the Gospel, are like still, quiet, and refreshing waters to them, and are the waters to which those that are athirst are invited to come, Isa 55:1; and in the immortal state Christ will still be a shepherd, and will feed his people, and lead them to fountains of living water, where they shall solace themselves for ever, and shall know no more sorrow and sighing, **Re 7:17**.

{t} avd "tenerae herbae", Piscator, Amama, Gejerus, Michaelis; "in folds of budding grass", Ainsworth. {u} txwnm ym "aquas requietum", Pagninus, Montanus; "quietum", Vatablus, Michaelis; "vel quietis", Gejerus; so Ainsworth;
ampaumatov, Apollinar.

Psalms 23:3

Ver. 3. He restoreth my soul,.... Either when backslidden, and brings it back again when led or driven away, and heals its backslidings; or rather, when fainting, swooning, and ready to die away, he fetches it back again, relieves, refreshes, and comforts with the discoveries of his love, with the promises of his word, and with the consolations of his Spirit, and such like reviving cordials, See Gill on "Ps 19:7";

he leadeth, he in the paths of righteousness; in the plain paths of truth and holiness, in which men, though fools, shall not err; in right ones, though they sometimes seem rough and rugged to Christ's sheep, yet are not crooked; there is no turning to the right hand or the left; they lead straight on to the city of habitation; and they are righteous ones, as paths of duty are, and all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord be; moreover, Christ leads his by faith, to walk on in him and in his righteousness, looking through it, and on account of it, for eternal life; see **Pr 8:20**; and all this he does

for his name's sake; for his own glory and the praise of his grace, and not for any merits or deserts in men.

Psalms 23:4

Ver. 4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,.... Which designs not a state of spiritual darkness and ignorance, as sitting in the shadow of death sometimes does, since the psalmist cannot be supposed to be at this time or after in such a condition; see **Isa 9:2**; nor desertion or the hidings of God's face, which is sometimes the case of the people of God, and was the case of the psalmist at times; but now he expressly says the Lord was with him; but rather, since the grave is called the land of the shadow of death, and the distresses persons are usually in, under apprehensions of immediate death, are called the terrors of the shadow of death; see Job 10:21; the case supposed is, that should his soul draw nigh to the grave, and the sorrows of death compass him about, and he should be upon the brink and borders of eternity, he should be fearless of evil, and sing, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?" 1Co 15:55, though it seems best of all to interpret it of the most severe and terrible affliction or dark dispensation of Providence it could be thought he should ever come under, Ps 44:19. The Targum interprets it of captivity, and Jarchi and Kimchi of the wilderness of Ziph, in which David was when pursued by Saul; and the latter also, together with Ben Melech, of the grave, and of a place of danger and of distress, which is like unto the grave, that is, a place of darkness; and Aben Ezra of some grievous calamity, which God had decreed to bring into the world. Suidas {w} interprets this phrase of danger leading to death; afflictions attend the people of God in this life; there is a continued series of them, so that they may be said to walk in them; these are the way in which they walk heaven, and through which they enter the kingdom; for though they continue long, and one affliction comes after another, yet there will be an end at last; they will walk and wade through them, and come out of great tribulations; and in the midst of such dark dispensations, comparable to a dark and gloomy valley, covered with the shadow of death, the psalmist intimates what would be the inward disposition of his mind, and what his conduct and behaviour:

I will fear no evil; neither the evil one Satan, who is the wolf that comes to the flock to kill and to destroy, and the roaring lion that seeks whom he may devour, since the Lord was his shepherd, and on his side: nor evil men, who kill the body and can do no more, Ps 27:1; nor any evil thing, the worst calamity that could befall him, since everything of this kind is determined by God, and comes not without his knowledge and will, and works for good, and cannot separate from the love of Christ; see Ps 46:1;

for thou [art] with me; sheep are timorous creatures, and so are Christ's people; but when he the shepherd is them, to sympathize with them under all their afflictions, to revive and comfort them with the cordials of his love and promises of his grace, to bear them up and support them with his mighty arm of power, to teach and instruct them by every providence, and sanctify all unto them; their fears are driven away, and they pass through the dark valley, the deep waters, and fiery trials, with courage and cheerfulness; see Isa 41:10;

thy rod and thy staff they comfort me; not the rod of afflictions and chastisements, which is the sense of some Jewish {x} as well as Christian interpreters; though these are in love, and the saints have often much consolation under them; but these are designed by the valley of the shadow of death, and cannot have a place here, but rather the rod of the word, called the rod of Christ's strength, and the staff of the promises and the provisions of God's house, the whole staff and stay of bread and water, which are sure unto the saints, and refresh and comfort them. The Targum interprets the rod and staff of the word and law of God; and those interpreters who explain the rod of afflictions, yet by the staff understand the law; and Jarchi expounds it, of the mercy of God in the remission of sin, in which the psalmist trusted: the allusion is to the shepherd's crook or staff, as in other places; see **Mic 7:14**; which was made use of for the telling and numbering of the sheep, Le 27:32; and it is no small comfort to the sheep of Christ that they have passed under his rod, who has told them, and that they are all numbered by him; not only their persons, but the very hairs of their head; and that they are under his care and protection: the shepherd with his rod, staff, or crook, directs the sheep where to go, pushes forward those that are behind, and fetches back those that go astray; as well as drives away dogs, wolves, bears, &c. that would make a prey of the flock; and of such use is the word of God, attended with the power of Christ and his Spirit; it points out the path of faith, truth, and holiness, the saints should walk in; it urges and stirs up those that are negligent to the discharge of their duty, and is the means of reclaiming backsliders, and of preserving the flock from the ravenous wolves of false teachers: in a word, the presence, power, and protection of Christ, in and by is Gospel and ordinances, are what are here intended, and which are the comfort and safety of his people, in the worst of times and cases.

{w} In voce skia. {x} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 9. 2. Jarchi & Kimchi in loc.

Psalms 23:5

Ver. 5. Thou preparest a table before me,.... In a providential way granting a sufficiency, and even an affluence of temporal good things; the providence of God lays and spreads a table for his people in the wilderness, and sets them down at it, and bids them welcome to it; see
Ps 78:19; and in a way of grace, the Lord making large provisions in his house for them, called the goodness and fatness of his house, and a feast of fat things; and under the Gospel dispensation, the table of the Lord, on which are set his flesh and blood for faith to feed upon; see **Pr 9:2**; and also in heaven, the joys of which are compared to a feast, and the enjoyment of them to sitting at a table, and which are prepared by the Lord for his people, from the foundation of the world; and of which they have some foresight and foretaste in this world; see
Lu 22:30; and all this

in the presence of my enemies; they seeing and envying the outward prosperity of the saints, whenever they enjoy it, and their liberty of worshipping God, hearing his word, and attending on his ordinances, none making them afraid; as they will see, and envy, and be distressed at a more glorious state of the church yet to come, Re 11:12; and even, as it should seem from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the glory and happiness of the saints in the other world will be seen, or by some way or other known, by wicked men; which will be an affliction to them, and an aggravation of their misery; though here it seems chiefly to regard the present life. Some have thought there is an allusion to princes, who, having conquered others, eat and feast at a well spread table in the presence of the conquered, and they being under it; see **Jud 1:7**;

thou anointest my head with oil; giving him an abundance of good things, not only for necessity, but for pleasure and delight; especially pouring out largely upon him the oil of gladness, the Spirit of God and his graces, the anointing which teaches all things, and filling him with spiritual joy and comfort; for this refers not to the anointing of David with material oil for the kingdom, by Samuel, while Saul was living, or by the men of Judah, and afterwards by all the tribes of Israel, when Saul was dead. The allusion is to the custom of the eastern countries, at feasts, to anoint the heads of the guests with oil; see **Ec 9:7**. It was usual to anoint the head, as well as other parts of the body, on certain occasions; hence that of Propertius {y}: and in the times before Homer {z} it was usual both to wash and anoint before meals, and not the head only, but the feet also; which, though Pliny {a} represents as luxurious, was in use in Christ's time, **Lu 7:38**; and spoken of as an ancient custom by Aristophanes {b} his Scholiast for daughters to anoint the feet of their parents after they had washed them; which may serve to illustrate the passage in the Gospel; see **Ec 9:8**;

my cup runneth over; denoting an affluence of temporal good things, and especially of spiritual ones, which was David's case. Such who are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, to whom the grace of the Lord has been exceeding abundant, and the Lord himself is the portion of their cup, their cup may be said to run over indeed.

{y} "Terque lavet nostras spica cilissa comas", l. 4. eleg. 6. v. 74. {z} Iliad. 10. v. 577, 578. Odyss. l. 3. v. 466. & l. 8. v. 454. & l. 10. v. 450. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 3. {b} Vespes, p. 473, 516, 517.

Psalms 23:6

Ver. 6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me,.... Either the free grace, love, favour, and mercy of God in Christ, which endures continually, and is always the same from everlasting to everlasting; or the effects of it; and these either temporal good things, which flow from the goodness and mercy of God, and not the merits of men; and which are in great mercy and loving kindness bestowed on his people, and which follow them: they do not anxiously seek after them; but seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness, these are added to them, they trusting in the Lord, and he caring for them: or spiritual good things, which arise from the mere grace and mercy of God; such as the blessings of the covenant, the sure mercies of David, the discoveries and instances of the love of God, and the provisions of his house, which follow them, being undeserving of them; and even when they have backslidden from the Lord, and in times of distress, when his grace is sufficient for them; and of all this the psalmist had a comfortable assurance, depending upon the promise of God, arguing from the blessings he had already bestowed, and from the constant care he takes of his people, having in view his unchangeableness and faithfulness, the firmness of his covenant, and the irreversibleness of the blessings of it: the words may be rendered "only goodness and mercy", &c.

{c} nothing but mere mercy and kindness; for though afflictions do attend the children of God, yet these are in mercy and love; there is no fury in the Lord against them; there is nothing comes in wrath to them, throughout the whole course of their lives; wherefore it is added,

all the days of my life; the mercies of God are new every morning, they continue all the day long; temporal goodness abides as long as life lasts, and ends with it; and spiritual blessings are for ever, they are the gifts of God, which are without repentance;

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever; which may denote his constant attendance on the public worship of God, of which he had been deprived in time past, being driven out from it, but now he enjoyed it, and believed he ever should; or it may design his being a member of the church of God, and a pillar in the house and temple of the Lord, that should never go out; see **Re 3:12**; or it may regard the assurance he had of dwelling in the house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens, Christ's Father's house, in which are many mansions, sure dwellings, and quiet resting places for his people, and that to all eternity. The Targum interprets it of the house of the sanctuary; and Kimchi expounds the whole verse in a petitionary way, "may goodness and mercy", &c.

{c} Ka "nil nisi", Junius & Tremellius; "certe vel tantum", Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 24

A Psalm of David. This psalm is thought by some of the Jewish writers {d} to have been wrote when the ark was brought from the house of Obededom to the city of David, and put into the place prepared for it by him, **2Sa 6:17**; to which reference is supposed to be had in
Ps 24:7; or after that David had built an altar in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, and had knowledge of the hill Moriah, as the place where the sanctuary was to be built; called the hill of the Lord, and his holy place, Ps 24:3; however, it was certainly written by David, under the inspiration of the spirit of God; and is a prophecy of Christ, and of the Gospel church, and describes the members of it.

{d} Aben Ezra & Kimchi.

Ver. 1. The earth [is] the Lord's, and the fulness thereof,.... The whole universe, all the terraqueous globe, both land and water, and the circumambient air, and all that is therein; the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, all plants and vegetables that spring out of the earth, and metals and minerals in the bowels of it; all which are the riches of the Lord the earth is full of,
Ps 104:24; see Ps 50:10;

the world, and they that dwell therein; the habitable world, and the dwellers on it, rational and irrational. These words may be interpreted of Christ, who is Lord of all; he made the world, and has a right and claim to all things in it; for the same person is here spoken of as in the preceding psalm, under the character of a shepherd; and this shows him to be very fit and proper for such an office, seeing he cannot fail of feeding and protecting his sheep; nor can they want any good thing, since the fulness both of nature and of grace is with him; and hence it is that all things are theirs, whether the world, or things present, or things to come; and though they seem to have nothing, yet possess all things, they possessing him whose all things are. The apostle makes use of this passage of Scripture, to prove, explain, and direct in the use of Christian liberty, with respect to the free use of creatures, they all being the Lord's; and therefore good, and to be received with thanksgiving: and yet, inasmuch as there is a variety of them, such should be abstained from, when to use them serves to embolden evil men in their wicked ways, or offend and grieve weak Christians,
1Co 10:25.

Psalms 24:2

Ver. 2. For he hath founded it upon the seas,.... Or "with" them, as some interpret {e} the particle le; he hath founded the earth and seas together, and both upon nothing; and yet are stable and firm; or "by the seas" {f}, near unto them, at the side of them; which, though higher than the earth, are wonderfully bounded by the power of God, so as not to return and cover the earth; see Job 38:8; so the particle is used in **Ps 1:3**. Some have thought that the first earth, which Peter says was standing in the water, and out of the water, **2Pe 3:5**, was made in the form of an egg, and that the waters were under the earth, and the earth was as a crust or shell over them, until the deluge came; and this crust then broke in, and formed the sea; and so it was literally true, that the earth was founded upon, or over the waters;

and established it upon the floods; the floods of the seas, or rivers of water running to and fro in it: this shows the ground and foundation of Christ's right and claim to the earth, and all that is in it; which is not by reason of his father's gift to him as Mediator, but by virtue of his concern in creation, the world, and all things in it, being made and established by him; in him do all things consist, **Col 1:16**.

{e} R. Moses in Aben Ezra in loc. {f} Mymy le "juxta maria", Vatablus, Gejerus, Amama; so Kimchi & Ben Melech.

Psalms 24:3

Ver. 3. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?.... Though the Lord has a claim in general to the whole world, and all its fulness; yet there is a particular part of it, or spot in it, which is his special and peculiar property, and that is his church and people; for though some reference may be had, in this passage, to Mount Moriah, and the hill of Zion, on which the temple was afterwards built, and is called the hill of the Lord, where he desired to dwell, Ps 68:15; yet the church is mystically intended, and is so called on account of its visibility, through a profession of faith in Christ, and for its immovableness, being built on him;

and who shall stand in his holy place? the same with the hill of the Lord; the temple being to be built upon it, where the Lord took up his residence, and was worshipped, and holiness becomes the house of God for evermore: the import of these questions is, who is a proper person to be an inhabitant of Zion, or a member of a Gospel church? and the answer to them is in Ps 24:4, in which is a description much like that which is given of one hundred forty and four thousand seen with the Lamb on Mount Zion, Re 14:1; compare with this verse.

Psalms 24:4

Ver. 4. He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart,.... Though "clean hands" are mentioned first, as being more obvious to view, and better known, and more subject to the cognizance and observation of others; yet a "pure heart" is first in being and in order; from whence cleanness of hands, when right and truth springs: no man has a pure heart naturally and of himself: the heart is desperately wicked; the imagination of the thoughts of it is evil continually; the mind and conscience are defiled with sin; nor can any man make his heart clean, or say he is pure from sin; but it is God that creates a clean heart, and renews a right spirit within men, and purifies the heart by faith, which is led to the blood of sprinkling, which purges the conscience, and cleanseth it from all sin; and from this purity of heart flows purity of life and conversation, signified by "clean hands"; the hand being the instrument of action, holy actions, or good works, performed from a principle of grace, are meant; the phrase is expressive of a holy, harmless, and innocent conversation, washing the hands being used to denote innocence, Mt 27:24; not a conversation entirely free from sin, nor by which a man is justified before God; for though he wash his hands ever so clean, they will not be pure in his sight, and will need washing in the blood of the Lamb; but it denotes a conversation upright in general, and declares a man righteous in the sight of men, and distinguishes him from one of a dissolute life, whose hands are full of blood, and defiled with sin;

who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity; or "set his heart upon" {g}, and desired vain things, as the phrase is sometimes used, De 24:15; that is, the vain things of this world; as the riches, honours, pleasures, and profits of it; or has not served other gods, the idols of the Gentiles, which are lying vanities, but has lifted up his soul to God, and served him only: or "who hath not received his soul in vain" {h}; from the hands of God, but loves him with all his soul, believes with the heart in Christ for righteousness, being sanctified by the Spirit of God; and so the desire of his soul is to his name, and the remembrance of him. The "Keri", or marginal reading, according to the points, is, "who hath not lifted up my soul to vanity" {i}; that is, has not taken the name of God in vain, or swore falsely by his name; his soul being put for his name or himself; and by which he is said sometimes to swear, Jer 51:14; and this sense the Jewish interpreters {k} generally give into. The Targum seems to take in both the writing of the text and the marginal reading, as it often does, and renders the words, "who hath not sworn in vain, to the condemnation of his soul"; though sometimes to his own disadvantage, yet not to the hurt of others; see Ps 15:4; it follows,

nor sworn deceitfully; by bearing false witness against any man; or by cheating him out of his substance through a false oath.

{g} wvpn avn al "non inhiat, aut intentus est", Vatablus, Amama; so Gejerus, Michaelis. {h} So Pagninus. {i} "Animam meam", Montanus, Vatablus, Hillerus. {k} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, & Ben Melech in loc.

Psalms 24:5

Ver. 5. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,.... Or "who receives" {l}; the future for the present; and so is a continuation of the description of a person proper to enter and abide in the church of God, as Ps 24:6 seems to require; even one who has received every spiritual blessing in Christ in general, special grace out of his fulness; particularly the blessing of pardon, as also adoption, and a right to eternal life; though it may be that the following clause is explanative of this;

and righteousness from the God of his salvation; from Christ, who is God his Saviour, the author of salvation; and who has brought in an everlasting righteousness, which is in him, and is a gift of his grace, and is received from him by faith, and is a great blessing indeed; it secures from condemnation and death, and entitles to eternal life.

{l} avy "qui accipit", Cocceius.

Psalms 24:6

Ver. 6. This [is] the generation of them that seek him,.... The persons above described are such, who in every age are the generation of the children of God, and are accounted by him for a generation; they are such that seek him, in the first place, with their whole hearts, and in Christ, where they find him;

that seek thy face, O Jacob. By the "face" of God is meant the favour of God, the discoveries of his love, the light of his countenance, than which nothing is more desirable to gracious souls, or more sought after by them; and by Jacob is meant the God of Jacob; and so Apollinarius has it in his metaphrase; see Ps 10:1; unless Christ should be intended, one of whose names is Israel, Isa 49:3; or the words may be supplied, as they are by some Jewish writers {m}, "this is Jacob"; or the persons before described are the seed of Jacob, and who are called by his name: and it may be observed, that the church of God often bears the same name, Isa 43:1; and then the sense is, the persons whose characters are given above are fit to ascend, and stand in the holy hill of God, are Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{m} Aben Ezra, Kimchi, & Ben Melech in loc.

Psalms 24:7

Ver. 7. Lift up your heads, O ye gates,.... By which the gates of hell are not meant; nor are the words to be understood of the descent of Christ thither, to fetch the souls of Old Testament saints from thence; who the Papists dream were detained in an apartment there, as in a prison, called by them "limbus patrum"; seeing these, immediately upon their separation from the body, were in a state of happiness and glory, as the parable of the rich man and Lazarus shows; and since Christ, at his death, went, in his human soul, immediately into heaven, or paradise, where the penitent thief was that day with him: nor do the words design the gates of heaven, and Christ's ascension thither, shut by the sins of men, and opened by the blood of Christ, by which he entered himself, and has made way for all his people; though this sense is much preferable to the former. The Jewish interpreters understand the phrase of the gates of the temple, which David prophetically speaks of as to be opened, when it should be built and dedicated by Solomon, and when the ark, the symbol of Jehovah's presence, was brought into it, and the glory of the Lord filled the house; so the Targum interprets this first clause of "the gates of the house of the sanctuary"; though the next of "the gates of the garden of Eden"; but the words are better interpreted, in a mystical and spiritual sense, of the church of God, the temple of the living God, which is said to have gates, Isa 60:11; and is itself called a door, **So 8:9**; where the open door of the Gospel is set, or an opportunity of preaching the Gospel given, and a door of utterance to the ministers of the word, and the doors of men's hearts are opened to attend to it; and indeed the hearts of particular believers, individual members of the church, may be intended, or at least included in the sense of the passage; see **Re 3:20**; and it may be observed, that the new Jerusalem is said to have gates of pearl, through which Christ, when he makes his glorious appearance, will enter in his own glory, and in his father's, and in the glory of the holy angels;

and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; or "the doors of the world" {n}; which some understand of the kingdoms and nations of the world, and of the kings and princes thereof, as called upon to open and make way for, and receive the Gospel of Christ into them, and to support and retain it; but it is best to interpret it of the church and its members, whose continuance, perpetuity, and duration, are here intimated, by being called "everlasting doors"; which may be said to be "lifted up", as it may respect churches, when those things are removed which hinder communion with Christ; as their sins, which separate between them and their God, and the wall of unbelief, behind which Christ stands; and sleepiness, drowsiness, coldness, lukewarmness, and indifference; see Isa 59:2; and when public worship is closely and strictly attended on, as the ministration of the word and ordinances, prayer to God, which is the lifting up the heart with the hands to God, and singing his praise: and as it may respect particular believers; these doors and gates may be said to be lifted up, when their hearts are enlarged with the love of God; the desires and affections of their souls are drawn out towards the Lord, and the graces of the Spirit are in a lively exercise on him; and when they lift up their heads with joy in a view of Christ coming to them. This must not be understood as if they could do all this of themselves, any more than gates and doors can be thought to open and lift up themselves;

and the King of glory shall come in; the Lord Jesus Christ, called the Lord of glory, **1Co 2:8**; who is glorious in himself, in the perfections of his divine nature, as the Son of God; being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and in his office as Mediator, being full of grace and truth, and having a glory given him before the world was; and which became manifest upon his resurrection, ascension to heaven, and session at God's right hand; and particularly he is glorious as a King, being made higher than the kings of the earth, and crowned with glory and honour; and so the Targum renders it aryqy Klm, "the glorious King"; and he is moreover the author and giver, the sum and substance, of the glory and happiness of the saints: and now, as the inhabitants of Zion, and members of the church, are described in the preceding verses, an account is given of the King of Zion in this and the following; who may be said to "come into" his churches, when he grants his gracious presence, shows himself through the lattices, and in the galleries of ordinances, in his beauty and glory; takes his walks there, and his goings are seen, even in the sanctuary; and where he dwells as King in his palace, and as a Son in his own house; and he may be said to come into the hearts of particular believers, when he manifests himself, his love and grace, unto them, and grants them such communion as is expressed by supping with them, and by dwelling in their hearts by faith,

{n} Mlwe yxtp "ostia mundi", Gejerus, Schmidt.

Psalms 24:8

Ver. 8. Who [is] this King of glory?.... Which question is put by the church, or particular believers; not through ignorance, as the daughters of Jerusalem, **So 5:9**; or the Pharisees, when Christ made his public entrance into Jerusalem, Mt 21:10; much less in pride and haughtiness, in scorn and derision, as Pharaoh, **Ex 5:1**; and the Capernaites, **Joh 6:42**; but as wondering at the glories and excellencies of his person, and as desirous of knowing more of him. The answer to the question is, the Lord strong and mighty: he whose name alone is Jehovah; the most high in all the earth; the everlasting I AM; Jehovah our righteousness; the mighty God, even the Almighty; the Son of Man, whom God has made strong for himself: his strength and might have been seen in the creation of all things out of nothing, in upholding all things by his power, in the redemption of his people, in the resurrection of himself, in dispossessing the strong man armed out of the hearts of his chosen ones, in the government of his church, and the care of all his saints, and in keeping them from a final and total falling away. From the first of these words, which is only here used, Mars, because of his strength, has the name of Azizus; which name of his Julian {o} makes mention of; and very probably Hesus, also a deity of the ancient Gauls, spoken of by the poet {p}, and by Lactantius {q}; but to none does it belong as to our Jehovah;

the Lord mighty in battle; as he was when he was up on the cross; when he made an end of sin, spoiled principalities and powers; abolished death, and destroyed him that had the power of it; and as he will be at the last day, when the kings of the earth shall make war with him, and he shall overcome them; when the beast and false prophet shall be taken, and cast alive into the lake of fire; and the remnant shall be slain with the sword of his mouth; see Re 17:14; and who is now the Captain of salvation to his people, their Leader and Commander; who furnishes them with weapons of warfare, which are mighty through God; who teaches their hands to war, and their fingers to fight the good fight of faith; and makes them more than conquerors, through himself, that has loved them.

{o} Orat. 4. in solem, p. 281. {p} "Teutates horrensque feris altaribus Hesus". Lucan. {q} De Fals. Relig. l. 1. c. 31.

Psalms 24:9

Ver. 9. Lift up your heads, O ye gates even lift [them] up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.
See Gill on "Ps 24:7". This is repeated on account of the backwardness and negligence of churches, and particular believers, to open and let Christ in; as may be seen in the case of the church in **So 5:2**; as well as the more to set forth the greatness and glory of Christ, about to make his entrance, and to command a proper awe and reverence of him: some think respect is had to the twofold coming of Christ; first into the second temple, and next at the last judgment; though rather the certainty of his coming, in a spiritual manner, to his church and people, is here designed.

Psalms 24:10

Ver. 10. Who is this King of glory?.... This is repeated, because of the preceding words, and in order to have a further account of his glorious Person, as follows:

the Lord of hosts, he [is] the King of glory; he who is the Lord of sabaoth, the Lord of the armies, both of the heavens and the earth; at whose dispose and control all things are in both worlds, above and below: this is the great and glorious Person that condescends to dwell in his churches, and in the hearts of his people; and this honour have his saints.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 25:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 25

[A Psalm] of David. This is the first of the psalms which is written in an alphabetical order, or in which the first word of every verse begins with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in order, though it is not strictly and regularly observed; the reason of this manner of writing is not very obvious; the {r} Jews confess their ignorance of it; it may be to engage the attention to what is said, or to assist the memory in laying it up, and retaining it there. The occasion of the psalm seems to be the troubles David was in on account of an unnatural rebellion raised against him by some of his subjects, at the head of which was his own son Absalom; he speaks of himself as in a net, and in great affliction, distress, and trouble, by reason of his enemies, Ps 25:15; and as being brought to a sense of his former sins, for which he desires pardon, Ps 25:7.

{r} Kimchi in loc.

Ver. 1. Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. Either "in prayer", as the Chaldee paraphrase adds {s}; and denotes sincere, affectionate, hearty prayer to God, a drawing nigh to him with a true heart: for unless the heart is lifted up, the lifting up of the eyes or hands in prayer is of no avail; see **La 3:41**; or by way of offering to the Lord, as some Jewish writers {t} interpret it; David not only presented his body in public worship, but his soul also as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which was his reasonable service; or else as a "depositum", which he committed into the hands of God, to be under his care and protection; and then the sense is the same with Ps 31:5 {u}; the phrase is sometimes used to express earnest and vehement desire after anything; See Gill on "Ps 24:4"; and may here intend the very great desire of the psalmist after communion with God; which is elsewhere by him expressed by panting after him, and by thirsting for him in a dry and thirsty land, Ps 42:1; the desires of his soul were not to vain things, the vanities and idols of the Gentiles, but to God only, and to the remembrance of his name.

{s} So Kimchi & Ben Melech. {t} R. Moseh in Aben Ezra in loc. {u} Midrash Tillim.

Psalms 25:2

Ver. 2. O my God, I trust in thee,.... He claims his interest in God, and expresses his faith and confidence in him, in the midst of all his troubles; See Gill on "Ps 7:1";

let me not be ashamed; meaning of his trust in God, by being disappointed of the help, deliverance, and salvation from him, which he trusted in him for; and the believer, as he has no reason to be ashamed of God, the object of his trust; so neither of the act of his hope or trust in him; nor shall he; for hope makes not ashamed; see Ps 119:116 **Ro 5:5**;

let not mine enemies triumph over me; either his temporal enemies, his subjects that were risen up against him; or his spiritual enemies, Satan, and the men of the world, who rejoice and triumph when the saints are forsaken by God; and they are ready to say, as David's enemies did of him, there is no help or salvation for him in God, **Ps 3:2**; and when they fall into their hands, or fall by them.

Psalms 25:3

Ver. 3. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed,.... David not only prays for himself, but for other saints, as it becomes the people of God to do; for them they waited on the Lord in public worship, attended his house and ordinances, and waited on him for the discoveries of his love, the enjoyment of his voracious presence, and were looking for his salvation, for the Messiah; for those the psalmist prays, that they might not be ashamed of their expectation and hope, by the delay of those things, or the denial them;

let them be ashamed which transgress without cause; or "act treacherously without cause" {w}; as David's subjects did, who were risen up in rebellion against him, and acted the perfidious part, contrary to their allegiance, and without any just reason, they not being ruled with rigour, and oppressed; but were guided and governed by him according to the laws of God, in the integrity of his heart, and by the skilfulness of his hands; he being a king that reigned in righteousness, and a prince that decreed judgment: and such are those who are now risen up against our rightful sovereign King George {x}, a parcel of perfidious treacherous wretches; some of them who were in the last rebellion, and obtained his father's pardon; others that have partook yearly of his royal bounty, for the instruction of their children; and all have enjoyed the blessings of his mild and gentle government; and therefore are without cause his enemies: and for such we should pray, as David did for his enemies, that they might be ashamed; that they may fail in their attempts and designs, and be brought to deserved punishment; see **Ps 7:4**; or "let transgressors be ashamed", and be empty {y}; in a state of emptiness and want; lose their wealth, honour, and credit.

{w} Mydgwbh "qui perfide agunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis; so Amama & Ainsworth. {x} This was written December 2, 1745. {y} Mqyr "in statu vacuitatis ac egestatis", Gussetius, p. 790.

Psalms 25:4

Ver. 4. Show me thy ways, O Lord,.... Either those which the Lord himself took and walked in; as those of creation and providence, in which he has displayed his power, wisdom, and goodness; and which are desirable to be known by his people, and require divine instruction and direction; and particularly his ways of grace, mercy, and truth, and the methods he has taken for the salvation of his people, both in eternity and in time; or those ways which he orders and directs his people to walk in; namely, the paths of duty, the ways of his worship and ordinances; a greater knowledge of which good men desire to have, as well as more grace to enable them to walk more closely and constantly in them;

teach me thy paths; a petition the same with the other, in different words.

Psalms 25:5

Ver. 5. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me,.... Meaning the word of God, the Scriptures of truth; and the Gospel, which is the word of truth, and truth itself, Joh 17:17; and the sense is, either that God would lead him by his Spirit more and more into all truth, as contained in his word; or that he would lead him by it and according to it, that he might form his principles and his conduct more agreeably to it, which is the standard and rule of faith and practice: which leading is by teaching; and reasons urged for granting all the above petitions follow,

for thou [art] the God of my salvation; who, in infinite wisdom, contrived scheme and method of it in his Son, and by him effected it, and by his Spirit had made application of it to him: and since the Lord had done such great things for him, he hoped the requests he had made would be granted: he adds,

on thee do I wait all the day; or continually, in public and in private, attending to all the duties of religion, yet not trusting in them, but in the Lord; and therefore he entreated he might not be ashamed of his hope and expectation for deliverance and salvation.

Psalms 25:6

Ver. 6. Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses,.... Not the providential mercy and kindness of God, in the care of him in his mother's womb, at the time of his birth, in his nurture and education, and in the preservation of him to the present time; but the special mercy, grace, and love of God in Christ: the sense of the petition is the same with that of Ps 106:4; which are expressed in the plural number, because of the largeness and abundance of it, and because of the various acts and instances of it; the Lord is rich and plenteous in mercy, abundant in goodness; his love is exceeding great, and numerous are the ways and methods in which it is declared, both in eternity and in time; and though he can never forget his love, nor the people whom he loves, for they are engraven on his hand, and set as a seal on his heart; yet he sometimes seems, by the conduct of his providence, as if he did not remember it, and had no tender affection for them; and their unbelief is ready to say, the Lord has forgotten to be gracious; and the design of such a petition as this is to entreat a fresh discovery and application of the grace, mercy, and loving kindness of God, and which he allows his people to put him in remembrance of;

for they [have been] ever of old: meaning not only from the time of his birth, and in after appearances of God for him, nor the favours shown to the people of Israel in former times at the Red sea, and in the wilderness and elsewhere, and to the patriarchs from the beginning of the world; but the love of God from everlasting, which appears in the choice of his people in Christ, before the foundation of the world, in the everlasting covenant of grace made with him, and in the setting of him up as the Mediator of it, and in putting his people into his hands, with all grace and spiritual blessings for them before the world began; and which love as it is from everlasting it is to everlasting, and remains invariably the same.

Psalms 25:7

Ver. 7. Remember not the sins of my youth,.... Original sin, in which he was born, and the breakings forth of corrupt nature in infancy, he brought into the world with him, together with all the youthful lusts and vanities to which that age is addicted; and sometimes the sins of youth are in some persons remembered by God, and punished in old age; and if not, they are brought to remembrance through the dispensations of Providence: and the people of God are chastised for them then, and are ready to fear it is in a way of wrath; see Job 13:26; which the psalmist here deprecates; for this is not said in order to extenuate his sins, they being but youthful follies, imprudencies, and inadvertencies, sins committed through ignorance, when he had not the knowledge of things he now had; nor as if he had lived so holy a life, that there were no sins of his to be taken notice of but what he had committed in his younger days; but rather this is to be considered as a confession of his having sinned from his youth upwards unto that time, as in **Jer 3:25**; and therefore entreat, that God would not remember his sins, so as to correct him for them in wrath and hot displeasure; neither the sins he had formerly been guilty of, nor those of a later date; which he next mentions;

nor my transgressions; his more notorious and glaring ones; such as murder and adultery, in the case of Uriah and Bathsheba, and which now stared him in the face; and on account of these, and as a chastening for them, this unnatural rebellion of his son's, which was now raised against him, was suffered to befall him, as had been foretold to him,
2Sa 12:11;

according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord; he pleads no merit nor goodness of his own, but casts himself upon the mercy, grace, and goodness of God; in which he was certainly right; and on that account prayed and hoped for deliverance from his present troubles, and for discoveries of the pardon of his sins unto him, which is what he means by remembering him.

Psalms 25:8

Ver. 8. Good and upright [is] the Lord,.... He is essentially, originally, and independently good of himself in his own nature, and he is providentially good to all his creatures; and he is in a way of special grace and mercy good to his own people: and he is "upright", just in himself, righteous in all his ways and works, and faithful in all his promises; and the consideration of these excellent perfections of his encouraged the psalmist to entertain an holy confidence, that his petitions, respecting instruction and guidance in the ways of the Lord, Ps 25:4; would be heard and answered, notwithstanding his sins and transgressions;

therefore will he teach sinners in the way; such who are in sinful ways, he will teach them by his word and Spirit the evil of their ways, and bring them out of them, and to repentance for them; and he will teach them his own ways, both the ways and methods of his grace, in saving sinners by Christ, and the paths of faith and duty in which he would have them walk; see Ps 51:13.

Psalms 25:9

Ver. 9. The meek will he guide in judgment,.... Or "the miserable" {z} and afflicted; such as see themselves to be wretched and miserable, lost and undone; and cry out, What shall we do to be saved? and who are meek and lowly, are humbled under a sense of their sins, are poor in spirit, and of broken and contrite hearts; these the Lord will guide by his Spirit into the truth, as it is in Jesus; even the great truth of salvation by him; and in the way of his judgments, statutes, and ordinances; and will give them a true judgment and a right discerning of things that differ; and he will lead them on in judgment, or gently; see Jer 10:24; into every truth of the Gospel by degrees, and as they are able to bear them;

and the meek will he teach his way; of justifying sinners by the righteousness of his son; for such who are humble and confess their sins and unworthiness, and throw themselves on the mercy of God in Christ, are declaratively justified by the Lord, when the proud boasting Pharisee is an abomination to him.

{z} Mywne "miseros", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 25:10

Ver. 10. All the paths of the Lord [are] mercy and truth,.... By which are meant, not the paths in which the Lord would have his people walk; though these are good and gracious, right and true; his commandments are not grievous, his yoke is easy, and burden light; his ways are ways of pleasantness, and his paths, paths of peace: but rather the paths in which the Lord himself walks; not his paths of providence, though these are mercy and truth to his own people; every step he takes is in a way of goodness and kindness to them, and in truth and faithfulness to his promises; but the ways and methods he has taken towards the spiritual and eternal salvation of his people; as in his counsels and purposes, in which there is a large display of his grace and mercy; in the choice of them in Christ, as vessels of mercy, and which is of grace, and not of works; in determining to send his Son to die for them, which springs from the tender mercy of our God; in resolving to call them by his grace, and to adopt them into his family, and at last to glorify them; all which proceed from his merciful lovingkindness; and all these, his counsels of old, are faithfulness and truth, since they can never be frustrated, but are always accomplished; as also in his covenant, which springs from grace, is built upon mercy, and contains the sure mercies of David, and is ever fulfilled; the faithfulness of God is engaged to keep it, and its promises are yea and amen in Christ: and likewise the steps he has taken in Christ, the Mediator of the covenant, who is full of grace and truth; "mercy" appears in the mission of him, and redemption by him; and "truth", in fulfilling the promise of him; and both mercy and truth meet together in him: and so they do in the various blessings of grace which come by him; as particularly justification and pardon of sin, in both which there is a display of grace and mercy; and also of the truth of holiness and justice: and the mercy and truth of God appear in these paths of his,

unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies; by which are designed, not the covenant of works, and the precepts of the law, which are sometimes called the testimonies of God, because they testify what is his will that should be done: but these are broke, and not kept perfectly by any; nor is it any favour or high privilege to be shown this covenant and the duties of it, as is suggested of the covenant here meant, as appears from Ps 25:14; wherefore the covenant of grace must be intended, which is made with Christ, and his people in him; and the "testimonies" are the promises of it, which testify of the grace, mercy, truth, and faithfulness of Gods; and the keeping of these is done by faith: faith lays hold on the covenant, its blessings and promises, and claims an interest in them, as David did, 2Sa 23:5; see Isa 56:4; and it keeps or retains its hold; it will not let go its hold of the covenant and its testimonies, but asserts its interest, even when things are at the worst with it; and it holds fast the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end; and to such all the steps the Lord takes appear to be in mercy and truth.

Psalms 25:11

Ver. 11. For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity,.... Which to do is one of the promises and blessings of the covenant. The psalmist may have reference to his sin with Bathsheba, as Kimchi observes; since it was foretold to him, that, on account of that sin, evil should arise to him out of his own house, 2Sa 12:11; meaning that his son should rise up in rebellion against him; which was now the case, and which, no doubt, brought afresh this sin to his mind; and the guilt of it lay heavy upon his conscience; and therefore he prays for an application of pardoning grace and mercy; or he may have respect to original sin, the sin of his nature, which so easily beset him; the loathsome disease his loins were filled with; the law in his members warring against the law of his mind; and which a view of every actual sin led him to the consideration and acknowledgment of, as did that now mentioned, Ps 51:4; or, "iniquity" may be put for "iniquities", and the sense be, that he desired a manifestation of the pardon of all his sins; for when God forgives sin, he forgives all iniquities: and David here prays for pardon in a way of mercy, and upon the foot of satisfaction; for he prays that God would "mercifully pardon" {a}, as the word signifies; or, according to his tender mercies, blot out his transgressions, and cleanse him from his sins; or that he would be "propitious" {b} to him; or forgive him in a propitiatory way, or through the propitiation of Christ, whom God had set forth in his purposes and promises to be the propitiation for the remission of sins; and therefore he entreats this favour "for [his] name's sake"; not for his own merits and good works, but for the Lord's sake, for his mercy's sake, or for his Son's sake; see Isa 43:25; compared with **Eph 5:32**. The argument or reason he urges is,

for it [is] great; being committed against the great God, against great light and knowledge, and attended with very aggravating circumstances; or "much" {c}, he being guilty of many sins; his sins were great, both as to quality and quantity: this seems to be rather a reason against than a reason for the pardon of sin; it denotes the sense the psalmist had of his iniquity, and his importunity for the pardon of it; just as a person, sensible of the violence and malignity of his disease, entreats the physician with the greater eagerness and importunity to do his utmost for him; see Ps 41:4; or the words may be rendered, "though it [is] great" {d}; so Aben Ezra understands them;

"though it is so very heinous and provoking, yet since forgiveness is with thee, and thou hast promised it in covenant, and hast proclaimed thy name, a God gracious and merciful, pardon it;"

unless the words are to be connected, as they are by some Jewish {e} interpreters, with the phrase "thy name's sake, for it [is] great"; that is, thy name is great, and that it may appear to be so, as it is proclaimed, forgive mine iniquity.

{a} txlo "mercifully pardon"; so Ainsworth. {b} ilash Sept. "propitiaberis", V. L. "propitius esto", Musculus. {c} br "multum", V. L. "multa", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version. {d} yk "quamvis", Gejerus, Schmidt, {e} Vide Abendanae Not. in Miclol Yophi in loc.

Psalms 25:12

Ver. 12. What man [is] he that feareth the Lord? That is, how happy a man is he! and one that fears the Lord is one that has the fear of God put into his heart, as a blessing of the covenant of grace before spoken of; who fears the Lord, not on account of the punishment of sin, but under the influence of the pardon of it, and for his goodness's sake; who loves the Lord, trusts in him, is careful not to offend him, hates sin, and avoids it, and has a strict regard to the worship of God in all its parts and branches, and performs it in fear; or who serves the Lord with reverence and godly fear. The description of this man's happiness follows in this verse and Ps 25:12:

him shall he teach in the way [that] he shall choose; either which the man that fears God shall choose, which is the way of truth and duty, Ps 119:30; or the way which God prescribes to him, and is well pleasing in his sight, who teaches to profit, and leads in the way his people should go; and a great happiness it is for a man to have his steps ordered by the Lord and his goings directed by him.

Psalms 25:13

Ver. 13. His soul shall dwell at ease,.... Or in "goodness" {f}, enjoying an affluence of good things, of spiritual blessings in Christ, in whom he dwells by faith; and where he has peace and safety, amidst all the troubles, afflictions, and exercises, he meets with; and where with godliness he has contentment, which is great gain indeed; for, though he may seem to have nothing, he possesses all things; and has all things given him richly to enjoy, even all things pertaining to life and godliness; and at death, when his soul is separated from his body, it shall enter into rest, and be in perfect peace; it shall lie in Abraham's bosom, and in the arms of Jesus, during the night of the grave, until the resurrection morn, when the body will be raised and united to it, and both will dwell in perfect happiness to all eternity;

and his seed shall inherit the earth; that is, those who tread in the same steps, and fear the Lord as he does; these shall possess the good things of this world, which is theirs, in a comfortable way, as their Father's gift, as covenant mercies, and in love; though it may be but a small portion that they have of them; or rather they shall inherit the new heavens and earth, wherein will dwell only righteous persons, meek ones, and such as fear the Lord, **Mt 5:5**; and this they shall inherit for a thousand years, and afterwards the land afar off, the better country, the ultimate glory to all eternity.

{f} bwjb "in bono", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, &c. so Ainsworth.

Psalms 25:14

Ver. 14. The secret of the Lord [is] with them that fear him,.... The secret of his purposes with them; as his purpose according to election; his resolution to redeem his chosen ones by his Son; his design to call them by his grace; his predestination of them to the adoption of children, and eternal life; which are the deep things of God the Spirit of God reveals; and all which are made manifest to them in effectual calling; and the secret of his providences is with them; some are made known to them that fear the Lord before they come to pass; as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah to Abraham, with many other instances in the Old Testament; see **Am 3:7**; and what is the book of the Revelation but a revelation of the secrets of Providence, from the time of

Christ and his apostles, to the end of the world? some they observe and take notice of while they are performing, and see the gracious designs of God in them, for their good and his glory; and though some of his ways of Providence are past finding out, and his footsteps are not known as yet; hereafter his judgments will be made manifest, and the whole scene will be opened to the saints, and be clear to their view: the secret of his love, free grace, and favour, is with them, which was in his heart from everlasting, and lay hid in his thoughts, which are as much higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth; and which is made manifest in regeneration, and then shed abroad in the hearts of his people: secret communion with God is enjoyed by those that fear him, which is what the world knows nothing of, and the joy that results from it is what a stranger intermeddles not with; the Lord has his chambers and secret places, into which he brings them, and where they dwell. The secret of his Gospel is with them; and the mysteries of it, which were kept secret since the world began; as the mystery of a trinity of Persons in the Godhead; the union of the two natures in Christ; the regeneration of the Spirit; the union of the saints to Christ, and their communion with him; the calling of the Gentiles; the resurrection of the dead; and the change of living saints;

and he will show them his covenant: the covenant of grace, which was made with Christ for them from eternity, is made known to them in time, when they are called by the grace of God, and made partakers of the grace of the covenant, then the Lord reveals himself as their covenant God and Father; shows them that his Son is their surety, Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour; puts his Spirit into them to implant covenant grace in them, to seal up the blessings of it to them, and bear witness to their interest in them, as pardon, justification, and adoption; and to apply the exceeding great and precious promises of it to them.

Psalms 25:15

Ver. 15. Mine eyes [are] ever towards the Lord,.... Not only as the God of nature and providence, for his daily support and supply, in which sense the eyes of all creatures wait upon him; but as his covenant God and Father, having the eyes of his understanding opened to see and know him as such, and the eye of his faith directed to him, to believe in him, and make him his hope and trust; and his eye was single to him; it was to him, and him only, that he looked; and it was constant, it was ever to him, he set the Lord always before him; and such a look was well pleasing to God: it may also respect the lifting up of his eyes to God in prayer for all mercies temporal and spiritual, and his prayer was the prayer of faith; as follows:

for he shall pluck my feet out of the net; of the corruption of nature, and the lusts of it, as Aben Ezra interprets it; by which the saints are sometimes ensnared and taken captive, and out of which they cannot make their escape of themselves; but there is a deliverance from it by Jesus Christ their Lord: or out of the temptations of Satan, called his devices, and wiles, and the snares of the devil; and as the Lord knows how to deliver his out of temptations, he does deliver them in his own time; or rather out of the nets and snares laid for him by wicked men; as by his son Absalom, Ahithophel, and others, in which his feet were as a bird in the snare of the fowler; but he believed the net, or snare, would be broken, and he should escape, as he did.

Psalms 25:16

Ver. 16. Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me,.... Or "look unto me", or "upon me" {f}; which suggests that the Lord had turned himself, and hid his face from him; and expresses a desire that he would look upon him with a look of love and mercy, and arise to help and deliver him out of the hands of his enemies; he pleads no merits nor works of righteousness of his, but casts himself upon the mercy of God;

for I [am] desolate and afflicted; or "alone and poor" {g}; not that he was quite alone, and had none with him; for though he was obliged to quit his palace, and the city of Jerusalem, yet he was accompanied by his servants, and a large number of his people; and could not be poor, in a literal sense, being king of Israel; yet he put no trust in men, nor in riches, but wholly depended on the Lord, as if he had none with him, nor anything to subsist with: and his case was indeed very deplorable, and called for pity and assistance; his own son was risen up against him, and the hearts of the men of Israel went after him; and he was obliged to flee from the city, and leave his house and family.

{f} yla hnp "respice ad me", Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, &c.
{g} ynew dyhy "solitarius et pauper", Junius & Tremellius; "et miser", Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 25:17

Ver. 17. The troubles of my heart are enlarged,.... His enemies being increased, which troubled him; the floods of ungodly men made him afraid; the waters of affliction were come into his soul, and spread themselves, and threatened to overwhelm him: or it may be rendered, as by some, "troubles have enlarged my heart" {h}; made him wiser, increased his knowledge and experience; see Ps 119:67; but the former seems better to agree with what follows;

[O] bring thou me out of my distresses; or "straits" {i}; for the enlargement of his troubles was the straitening of his heart; and therefore he applies to the Lord to bring him out of his afflicted circumstances, in which he was penned up, as in a strait place, on every side, and which were such that he could not free himself from; but he knew that God could deliver him.

{h} wbyxrh "dilataverunt cor meum", Vatablus; "reddiderunt cor meum latius", Gussetius, p. 786. {i} ytwqwumm "ab angustiis meis", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius; so Musculus, Piscator, Michaelis.

Psalms 25:18

Ver. 18. Look upon mine affliction and my pain,.... The "affliction" was the rebellion of his subjects against him, at the head of which was his own son; and the "pain" was the uneasiness of mind it gave him; or the "labour" {k}, as the word may be rendered; the toil and fatigue of body he was exercised with, he flying from place to place; and he desires that God would look upon all this with an eye of pity and compassion to him, and arise to his help and deliverance; as he looked upon the affliction of the children of Israel in Egypt, and delivered them, **Ex 3:7**;

and forgive all my sins; or "lift up", "bear", or "take away" {l}, as the word signifies; sins are burdens, and they lay heavy at this time on David's conscience, being brought to mind by the affliction he laboured under, not only his sin with Bathsheba, but all others; and these were on him as a heavy burden, too heavy to bear; wherefore he entreats that the Lord would lift them off, and take them away from him, by the fresh discoveries of pardoning grace to him. The sins of God's people are removed from them to Christ, by his Father, on whom they have been laid by his act of imputation; and he has bore them, and all the punishment due unto them, and, has taken them away, and made an end of them; and through the application of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, they are caused to pass from the consciences of the saints, and are removed as far from them as the east is from the west; and this is what the psalmist here desires, and this he requests with respect to all his sins, knowing well that, if one was left upon him, it would be an insupportable burden to him.

{k} ylme "laborem meum", Pagninus, Mortanus, Junius & Tremellius, &c. {l} avw Heb. "tolle", Piscator; "aufer", Michaelis.

Psalms 25:19

Ver. 19. Consider mine enemies,.... Or "look" {m} upon them; but with another kind of look; so as he looked through the pillar of fire upon the Egyptians, and troubled them, Ex 14:24; with a look of wrath and vengeance. The arguments he uses are taken both from the quantity and quality of his enemies, their number and their nature;

for they are many; the hearts of the people of Israel, in general, being after Absalom, 2Sa 15:12; and so the spiritual enemies of the Lord's people are many; their sins and corruptions, Satan, and his principalities and powers, and the men of this world;

and they hate me with cruel hatred; like that of Simeon and Levi, Ge 49:7; their hatred broke out in a cruel manner, in acts of force and cruelty; and it was the more cruel, inasmuch as it was without cause: and such is the hatred of Satan and his emissaries against the faithful followers of Christ; who breathe out cruelty, thirst after their blood, and make themselves drunk with it; even their tender mercies are cruel, and much more their hatred.

{m} har "vide", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Cocceius, Michaelis "aspice", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "intuere", Gejerus.

Psalms 25:20

Ver. 20. O keep my soul,.... Or "life" {n}, which was in danger, his enemies seeking for it; wherefore he applies to God that gave it, and who had hitherto held him in it, to preserve it. God is the keeper of has people in a spiritual sense; they cannot keep themselves from sin, Satan, and the world; but he is able to keep them from falling, and therefore they pray to him that he would keep them; and they have reason to believe they shall be kept by his power, through faith, unto salvation;

and deliver me; as out of the hands of his present enemies, so from all evil, from the evils of the world, from the evil one, Satan, from the evil of sin, and out of all affliction and troubles;

let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee;
See Gill on "Ps 25:2".

{n} yvpn "animam meam", i.e. "vitam meam", Gejerus.

Psalms 25:21

Ver. 21. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me,.... Meaning either his own, as in **Ps 7:8**; and then the sense is, either that God would preserve him, seeing he had acted the faithful and upright part in the government of the people of Israel, and they had rebelled against him without a cause; see Ps 78:72; or that those might be continued with him, that he might not be led aside by the corruptions of his heart, and the temptations of Satan, and by the provocations of his rebellious subjects, to act a part disagreeable to his character, as a man of integrity and uprightness; but that these remaining with him, might be a means of keeping him in the ways of God, Pr 13:6; or else the integrity and uprightness of God are designed, which are no other than his goodness and grace to his people, and his faithfulness in his covenant and promises, or his lovingkindness and his truth; see
Ps 40:11;

for I wait on thee: in the use of means for deliverance and safety; the Targum is, "for I trust in thy word".

Psalms 25:22

Ver. 22. Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles. David was not only concerned for himself, but for the whole nation of Israel, which was involved in trouble through this unnatural rebellion of his son, and many of his subjects; and no doubt he may have a further view to the redemption of the church of God, the spiritual Israel, by the Messiah; and his sense may be, that God would send the promised Redeemer and Saviour, to redeem his people from all their iniquities; from the law, its curses and condemnation; to ransom them out of the hands of Satan, that is stronger than they; and to deliver them from all their enemies, and from death itself, the last enemy, which will put an end to all their troubles, Isa 35:10.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 26:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 26

Psalm of David. The occasion of this psalm seems to be the quarrel between Saul and David, the former listening to calumnies and reproaches cast upon the latter, and persecuting him in a violent manner. The argument of it is the same, in a great measure, with the seventh psalm, and is an appeal made to God, the Judge of the whole earth, by the psalmist, for his innocence and integrity; Theodoret thinks it was written by David when he fled from Saul.

Ver. 1. Judge me, O Lord,.... Meaning not that God would enter into judgment with him, in respect to the justification of his person in his sight, which he knew was not by his own righteousness and integrity, but by the righteousness of God; but his view is, to the justification of his cause before men; and particularly to the difference between Saul and him; and entreats that God would interpose, take his cause in hand, judge between them, and vindicate him;

for I have walked in mine integrity; or "perfection" {o} not that he thought himself free from sin; this would be contrary to the complaints, confessions, and petitions frequently made by him; but that in the affair with which he was accused, of seeking Saul's harm,
1Sa 24:9; he was quite innocent: by his "integrity" he means the purity of his intentions and designs; the uprightness of his conduct, the simplicity and sincerity of his conduct towards all men, and especially his fidelity to his prince; but though he knew nothing by himself, and could not charge himself with any wrong action in this respect, and therefore ought to be acquitted before men; yet he did not expect hereby to be justified in the sight of God;

I have trusted also in the Lord; not in himself, in the sincerity of his heart, and the uprightness of his life; nor did he trust to the goodness of his cause; but he committed it to the Lord, who judgeth righteously; and trusted in him that he should not be ashamed and confounded: this shows from whence his integrity sprung, even from faith unfeigned; for, where that is true and genuine, there are works of righteousness, and integrity of life;

[therefore] I shall not slide; these words may be connected with the former, thus; "I have trusted also in the Lord, that I shall not slide" {p}; that is, shall not fail in judgment, or lose the cause; but shall stand and carry it, and not be confounded or condemned. Our version supplies the word "therefore", making these words to be an inference from the former, that because he trusted in the Lord, therefore he should not slide, slip, and fall; not but that true believers may not only have their feet well nigh slipped, but altogether; yea, fall, and that sometimes into great sins, to the breaking of their bones; but then they shall not totally and finally fall; for they stand by faith, and are kept through it by the power of God. The words may be considered as a prayer, "let me not slide" {q}; being sensible of his own weakness, and of the necessity of being upheld in his uprightness, and in the ways of the Lord by him, that his footsteps might not slip; for though he walked in his uprightness, he was not self-sufficient and self-confident, but dependent on the Lord.

{o} ymtb "in perfectione mea", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so the Targum, Ainsworth. {p} dema al "me non vacillaturum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {q} "Ne nutare me patiaris", Gejerus.

Psalms 26:2

Ver. 2. Examine me, O Lord,.... His cause, his integrity, and trust in the Lord, as silver and gold are examined by the touchstone, the word of God, which is the standard of faith and practice;

and prove me; or "tempt me" {r}; as Abraham was tempted by the Lord; and his faith in him, and fear of him, and love to him, were proved to be true and genuine;

try my reins and my heart; the thoughts, desires, and affections of it, as gold and silver are tried in the furnace; and so God sometimes tries the faith and patience of his people by afflictive providences; and this examination, probation, and trial, are made by him, not for his own sake, who knows the hearts and ways of all men; but for the sake of others, to make known either to themselves or others the truth of grace that is in them, and the uprightness of their hearts and ways; and it was on this account the psalmist desired to pass under such an examination.

{r} ynon "tenta me", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

Psalms 26:3

Ver. 3. For thy lovingkindness [is] before mine eyes,.... The special lovingkindness of God, shown in the choice of him in Christ, in the provision of a Saviour for him, and in the effectual calling of him; which lovingkindness is unmerited, free, and sovereign, is from everlasting and to everlasting; it is better than life, excellent beyond expression, and marvellous: and this may be said to be "before [his] eyes"; because it was now in sight; he had a comfortable view of interest in it, and was persuaded nothing should separate him from it; it was upon his heart, shed abroad in it, and he was affected with it; it was in his mind, and in his thoughts, and they were employed about it; he had it in remembrance, and was comfortably refreshed with it: and this he mentions as the reason of his laying his cause before the Lord, as the ground of his trust in him, and why he desired to be examined, proved, and tried by him;

and I have walked in thy truth; by faith in Christ, who is the truth of all promises, prophecies, types, and figures; in the word of truth, by abiding by it, and walking according to it; and in the truth of worship, in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; and to walk herein he used himself to, and was constant in, as the word {s} signifies: and nothing more engages to walk on in Christ, as he has been received and to walk as becomes his Gospel, and in all holy conversation and godliness, than the love of God manifested to the soul; this being set continually before our eyes encourages faith and hope, and influences a holy life and cheerful obedience to the will of God.

{s} ytklhth "ambulavi indesinenter et sedulo", Gejerus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 26:4

Ver. 4. I have not sat with vain persons,.... Or "men of vanity" {t}; who are full of it; who are addicted to the vanities of the world; who pursue the riches, honours, pleasures, and profits of it; which is no other than walking in a vain show: whose thoughts, words, and actions are vain; who are vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind, and walk in the vanity of it; who take the name of God in vain, and whose common discourse is foolish, frothy, light, and empty; and who are men of a vain conversation, and are rash, imprudent, and deceitful: men of bad principles may very well go by this name, who are vain and unruly talkers, and whose doctrines are doctrines of vanity, and no other than vain babbling; and also men guilty of idolatrous practices, who observe lying vanities, and worship them, and lift up their souls unto them; with such vain men, in any of these senses, the psalmist would have nothing to do; he would not keep company with them, nor have any communion, consultation, and conversation with them; it may be, he may have some respect to the men that were about Saul, to whom such a character agreed; or he may say this, and what follows, to remove a calumny cast upon him and his friends; as if they that were with him were such men as here described, and in Ps 26:5;

neither will I go in with dissemblers: or "hidden" or "unknown" persons {u}, who lie in private lurking places, to murder the innocent, or secretly take away the good names and characters of men, and it is not known who they are; or who commit sin secretly; go into secret places to do their works in the dark, and hide themselves to do evil; as the Targum, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it; who love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; or who cover themselves with lying and flattering words, that it is not known what their real intentions be; they speak one thing, and mean another; are an assembly of treacherous men: such are all deceitful workers, who lie in wait to deceive, and walk in craftiness; and hypocrites, who have the form of religion, but are strangers to the power of it; and who are to be turned away from, and avoided; the houses, assemblies, cabals, and company of such, are to be shunned; see Ge 49:6; or such as are "signed", or "marked"; that is, infamous persons {w}.

{t} awv ytm Me "cum hominibus vanitatis", Gejerus, Michaelis. {u} Mymlen Me "cum occultis", Vatablus, Michaelis; "absconditis", Gejerus; so Ainsworth. {w} Vide Schultens de def. Hod. ling. Heb. s. 188.

Psalms 26:5

Ver. 5. I have hated the congregation of evildoers,.... That do harm to the persons, characters, or properties of men; and who meet together in bodies, to consult and form schemes to do mischief, and have their assemblies to encourage each other in it; these, their works and actions, the psalmist hated, though not their persons; and showed his displicency at them, and dislike and disapprobation of them, by absenting from them; see Jer 15:17;

and will not sit with the wicked; ungodly and unrighteous men, sons of Belial; for with such what fellowship and concord can there be? **2Co 6:14**; the word {x} signifies restless and uneasy persons, who cannot rest unless they do mischief; are like the troubled sea, continually casting up mire and dirt, Isa 57:20; now, by all this the psalmist means not that good men should have no manner of conversation with the men of the world: for then, as the apostle says, we must needs go out of the world, **1Co 5:9**. Conversation in civil things, in matters of trade and business, is lawful; though all unnecessary conversation in things of civil life is to be shunned; no more should be had than what natural relation and the business of life require; but all conversation in things criminal is to be avoided; company is not to be kept with them, so as to join them in anything sinful; this is to harden them in their evil ways, and it brings into danger and into disgrace: a man is known and is judged of by the company that he keeps; and evil communications corrupt good manners.

{x} evr "significat inquietum esse, ceu patet ex", Isa. xlviii. 22. Gejerus

Psalms 26:6

Ver. 6. I will wash my hands in innocency,.... The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "among innocent persons"; men of a holy harmless life and conversation; with these he determined to converse in common, and not with such as before described; or the sense is, that he would wash his hands, in token of his innocence, integrity, and uprightness, he had before spoke of, and of his having nothing to do with such evil men as now mentioned; see De 21:6; "hands" are the instrument of action, and to "wash" them may design the performance of good works, **Job 9:30**; and to do this "in innocency", or "purity", may signify the performance of them from a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned; and particularly may have some respect to the lifting up of holy hands in prayer to God, previous to public worship; there seems to be an allusion to the priests washing their hands before they offered sacrifice, Ex 30:19;

so will I compass thine altar, O Lord; frequent the house of God, where the altar was, and constantly attend the worship and ordinances of God; the work of the altar being put for the whole of divine service; the altar of burnt offering is here meant, which was a type of Christ; see
Heb 13:10; reference is had to the priests at the altar, who used to go round it, when they laid the sacrifice on the altar, and bound it to the horns of it, at the four corners, and there sprinkled and poured out the blood; compare Ps 43:4; in order to which they washed their hands, as before; and in later times it was usual with the Heathens {y} to wash their hands before divine service.

{y} "----pura cum veste venito, et manibus puris sumite fontis aquam, nunc lavabo ut rem divinam faciam", Tibull. l. 2. eleg. 1. Plantus in Aullular. Act. 3. Sc. 6. Vide Homer. Odyss, 12. v. 336, 337.

Psalms 26:7

Ver. 7. That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving,.... Or "cause to hear with the voice of confession" {z}: the meaning is, that the view of the psalmist, in compassing the altar of God in the manner he proposed, was not to offer upon it any slain beast; but to offer the sacrifices of praise upon that altar, which sanctifies the gift, and from whence they come with acceptance to God; even for all mercies, both temporal and spiritual, and that with a confession and acknowledgment of sin and unworthiness; all this is agreeable to the will of God; it is well pleasing in his sight, what glorifies him, and is but our reasonable service;

and tell of all thy wondrous works; of creation and providence; and especially of grace and redemption; this is the business of saints in God's house below, and will be their employment in heaven to all eternity. Jarchi on the place says, that this song of praise has in it what relates to future times, to Gog, to the days of the Messiah, and to the world to come.

{z} hdwt lwqb "voce confessionis", Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 26:8

Ver. 8. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house,.... Meaning the tabernacle, for as yet the temple was not built; which was an habitation for the saints, where they chose to dwell, and reckoned it their happiness, and was the habitation of the Lord himself: the sanctuary was built for that purpose; and between the cherubim, over the mercy seat, he took up his residence; hence it follows,

and the place where thine honour dwelleth: or "glory" {a}: when the tabernacle was set up, the glory of the Lord filled it, as it did the temple, when it was dedicated, Ex 40:35. The psalmist expresses his love to this place, in opposition to the, congregation of evildoers, which he hated, Ps 26:5; and to

remove a calumny from him, that being among the Philistines, and at a distance from the house of God, his affections were alienated from it; whereas it was his greatest concern that he was debarred the privileges of it; see Ps 42:1; besides, he had showed his great regard to it by his constant attendance before his exile, as he did after it,
Ps 42:3; and it was out of pure love to the worship of God, and with real pleasure and delight, that he did attend; and not through custom, and in mere form, Ps 122:1. The Lord's house is loved by his people, because of his word and ordinances, which are ministered there, and because of his presence in it: or else what was typified by the tabernacle in here designed; either the tabernacle of Christ's human nature, called the true tabernacle, **Heb 8:2**; in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells; which the Son of God, the brightness of his Father's glory, inhabits; and in the redemption and salvation wrought out in it the glory of all the divine attributes is displayed; and Christ incarnate is the mercy seat from which God communes with his people, and is their way of access unto him, and whereby they have fellowship with him; and who is loved by the saints sincerely, above all creatures and things, and in the most ardent and affectionate manner: or heaven itself, of which the tabernacle was a figure, **Heb 9:24**; which is the habitation of the holiness and glory of God, and in which are many mansions or dwelling places for his people; and is the continuing city they seek, the heavenly and better country they are desirous of, and where their hearts and affections are; because there their God, their Saviour, and their treasure be; which sense seems to be confirmed by what follows.

{a} Kkwbk "gloria tua", Musculus, Piscator; "tabernaculum gloriae tuae", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 26:9

Ver. 9. Gather not my soul with sinners,.... Profligate and abandoned ones, such as are notoriously profane, and who live and die impenitent ones; otherwise all men are sinners: the sense is, either that he desires that he might not, by any means, be brought into the company of such persons, be joined unto them, and have a conversation with them, which would be uncomfortable, dishonourable, and dangerous; or that God would not destroy him with them; and that he might not die the death of the wicked, nor be gathered with them at death: death is often expressed by a man's being gathered to his people, and to his fathers; see 2Ki 22:20; the body is gathered to the grave, the soul returns to God that gave it, and has its place assigned by him; the souls of the righteous are gathered into heaven, Christ's garner; the souls of the wicked into hell; the psalmist deprecates being gathered with them;

nor my life with bloody men; that thirst after blood, lie in wait for it, shed it, and are drunk with it, as the antichristian party; these God abhors and detests; nor shall they live out half their days, and their end is miserable.

Psalms 26:10

Ver. 10. In whose hands [is] mischief,.... Every abominable wickedness; as idolatry, adultery, murder, &c. the word signifies and is sometimes used for mischief conceived in the mind, artificially devised and contrived there; here mischief committed, the hand being the instrument of action, and intends whatever is prejudicial to the person, character, and properties of men;

and their right hand is full of bribes; whereby the eyes of judges are blinded, the words of the righteous perverted, men's persons respected, and judgment wrested, De 16:19.

Psalms 26:11

Ver. 11. But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity,.... In which he had hitherto walked, Ps 26:1; or it may express his faith, that after he was gathered by death he should walk in uprightness and righteousness, in purity and perfection, with Christ in white, and behold the face of God in righteousness; see Isa 57:1;

redeem me; from the vain conversation of the wicked, from all troubles, and out of the hands of all enemies;

and be merciful unto me; who was now in distress, being persecuted by Saul, and at a distance from the house of God: this shows that mercy is the source and spring of redemption, both temporal and spiritual; and that the psalmist did not trust in and depend upon his present upright walk and conversation, but in redemption by Christ, and upon the mercy of God in Christ.

Psalms 26:12

Ver. 12. My foot standeth in an even place,.... Or "in a plain" {b}; in a sure place; on Christ the sure foundation, and who is the plain way and path to eternal life; see Ps 27:11; or in the ways and worship of God, prescribed by his word; and so denotes steadfastness and continuance in them;

in the congregations will I bless the Lord; in the assemblies of the saints, in the churches of Christ below, and in the great congregation above, in the general assembly and church of the firstborn; where it is the work of saints now, and will be hereafter, to praise the Lord, for all his mercies temporal and spiritual.

{b} rwvymb "in plano", Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis; "in planitie", Gejerus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 27:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 27

[A Psalm] of David. The Septuagint interpreters add to this title, "before he was anointed". David was anointed three times, first when a youth in his father's house; but this psalm could not be written before that time, because he had not had then any experience of war, nor could be in any immediate apprehension of it, as here suggested; he was anointed a second time, after the death of Saul at Hebron, by the men of Judah; before that time indeed he had been harassed by Saul, and distressed by the Amalekites, and was driven from the public worship of God, to which he has a respect, Ps 27:4; and he was a third time anointed, by the elders of Israel, king over all Israel; and between the death of Saul and this unction there was a war between the house of David and the house of Saul; but what is referred to is not certain, nor is it of moment, since these words are neither in the Hebrew text, nor in the Chaldee paraphrase. Theodoret is of opinion this psalm was written by David when he fled from Saul, and came to Ahimelech the priest.

Ver. 1. The Lord [is] my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?.... The Targum in the king of Spain's Bible explains it, "the Word of the Lord is my light"; and so Ainsworth cites it; that is, Christ the eternal Word, in whom "was life, and that life was the light of men", **Joh 1:4**; and the psalmist is not to be understood of the light of nature and reason, with which the Logos, or Word, enlightens every man that comes into the world; nor merely in a temporal sense, of giving him the light of prosperity, and delivering him from

the darkness of adversity; but of the light of grace communicated to him by him who is the sun of righteousness, and the light of the world; and by whom such who are darkness itself, while in an unregenerate state, are made light, and see light; all the light which is given to men at first conversion is from Christ; and all the after communications and increase of it are from him; as well as all that spiritual joy, peace, and comfort they partake of, which light sometimes signifies,
Ps 97:11; and which the psalmist now had an experience of; enjoying the light of God's countenance, and having discoveries of his love, which made him fearless of danger and enemies: and such who are made light in the Lord have no reason to be afraid of the prince of darkness; nor of the rulers of the darkness of this world; nor of all the darkness, distress, and persecutions they are the authors of; nor of the blackness of darkness reserved for ungodly men; for their light is an everlasting one, and they are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light: and the more light they have, the less fear; and what made the psalmist still more fearless was, that Christ was his "salvation"; by the light which the Lord was to him, he saw his need of salvation, he knew that his own righteousness would not save him; he was made acquainted with the design and appointment of the Lord, that Christ should be salvation to the ends of the earth; he had knowledge of the covenant of grace, and faith in it, which was all his salvation, 2Sa 23:5. Salvation was revealed to the Old Testament saints, in the promises, sacrifices, types, and figures of that dispensation; and they looked through them to him for it, and were saved by him, as New Testament believers are; and they had faith of interest in Christ, and knew him to be their Saviour and Redeemer, as did Job, and here the psalmist David: and such who know Christ to be their salvation need not be afraid of any person or thing; not of sin, for though they fear, and should fear to commit it, they need not fear the damning power of it, for they are saved from it; nor of Satan, out of whose hands they are ransomed; nor of the world, which is overcome by Christ; nor of the last enemy, death, which is abolished by him; nor of hell, and wrath to come, for he has delivered them from it;

the Lord [is] the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? meaning not of his natural life, though he was the God of his life, who had given it to him, and had preserved it, and upheld his soul in it; but of his spiritual life: Christ is the author of spiritual life, he implants the principle of it in the hearts of his people, yea, he himself is that life; he lives in them, and is the support of their life; he is the tree of life, and the bread of life, by which it is maintained; and he is the security of it, it is bound up in the bundle of life with him, it is hid with Christ in God; and because he lives they live also; and he gives unto them eternal life, so that they have no reason to be afraid that they shall come short of heaven and happiness; nor need they fear them that kill the body and can do no more; nor any enemy whatever, who cannot reach their spiritual life, nor hurt that, nor hinder them of the enjoyment of eternal life.

Psalms 27:2

Ver. 2. When the wicked, [even] mine enemies and my foes, came upon me,.... They are wicked men, men of malignant spirits, and evildoers, who are the enemies and foes of the people of God, and who hate them with an implacable hatred, and do everything they can to distress and afflict them; and such enemies David had, who were many and mighty; and these "came upon" him, or "approached against" him {c}, they drew near to him to make war with him, as the word signifies {d}; they attacked him in an hostile manner; and their view was, as he says,

to eat up my flesh, as they eat bread, Ps 14:4; to devour him at once, to make but one morsel of him, to destroy his life, to strip him of his substance, to take away his wives and children, as the Amalekites at Ziklag, 1Sa 30:1;

they stumbled and fell; the Lord put stumbling blocks in their way, and retarded their march, and hindered them from executing their designs; and they fell into the hands of David, and were subdued under him, or fell by death; and these past instances of divine goodness the psalmist calls to mind, to keep up his heart and courage, and animate and strengthen him against the fears of men, of death and hell.

{c} yle brqb "cum appropinquaverint adversum me", Pagninus; so Gejerus.
{d} "Belligerantibus contra me", Junius & Tremellius; so Piscator & Ainsworth.

Psalms 27:3

Ver. 3. Though an host should encamp against me,.... An host of the ungodly, as the Targum; though ever so many of them, even ten thousands of them, as in **Ps 3:6**; should beset him on every side;

my heart shall not fear; for not only the angels of the Lord encamped about him, as they do about all that fear the Lord; but salvation was appointed for walls and bulwarks about him; yea, the Lord himself was a wall of fire around him, and he was kept as in a garrison by the power of God;

though war should rise against me: in all its terrible shapes:

in this [will] I [be] confident; either in this war, in the midst of it; or in this that he had expressed, Ps 27:1; that the Lord was his light, his salvation, and the strength of his life; so the Jewish writers {e}: or as others {f}, in this one thing, desired in Ps 27:4; but either of the former senses is best, especially the latter of them. Saints need not be afraid, though there is a war within them between the flesh and spirit; and though without are fightings with Satan and his principalities and powers; since they may be confident of victory, and that they are more than conquerors, through Christ that has loved them.

{e} Jarchi, Kimchi, & Aben Ezra in loc. {f} Some in Aben Ezra in loc.

Psalms 27:4

Ver. 4. One [thing] have I desired of the Lord,.... Not to be returned to Saul's court; nor to his own house and family; nor to have an affluence of worldly riches and honours; but to have constant abode it, the house of the Lord; an opportunity of attending continually on the public worship of God; which is excused and neglected by many, and is a weariness to others, but was by the psalmist preferred to everything else; he being now deprived of it, as it seems;

that will I seek after; by incessant prayer, until obtained; importunity and perseverance in prayer are the way to succeed, as appears from the parable of the widow and unjust judge;

that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life: not in heaven, Christ's Father's house, where he dwells, and where the saints, will dwell to all eternity; though to be clothed upon with the house from heaven is very desirable; rather, in the church of the living God, which is the house of God, and pillar of truth, where true believers in Christ have a place and a name, and are pillars that will never go out; but here the place of divine worship seems to be meant, where the Lord granted his presence, and where to dwell the psalmist counted the greatest happiness on earth; he envied the very sparrows and swallows, that built their nests on the altars in it; and reckoned a day in it better than a thousand elsewhere; and to have the privilege of attending all opportunities in it, as long as he lived, is the singular request he here makes:

the ends he had in view follow;

to behold the beauty of the Lord, or "the delight [and] pleasantness of the Lord" {g}; to see the priests in their robes, and doing their office, as typical of Christ the great High Priest; and the Levites and singers performing their work in melodious strains, prefiguring the churches in Gospel times, singing to the Lord with grace in their hearts, and the four and twenty elders, and one hundred and forty four thousand, with the Lamb on Mount Zion, singing the song of redeeming love; and all the tribes and people of Israel, assembled together to worship God, representing the church of Christ as a perfection of beauty, having the beauty of the Lord upon her, and made perfectly comely through his comeliness; as it is a most delightful sight to see a company of saints attending Gospel worship, meeting together to sing, and pray, and hear the word, and wait upon the Lord in all his appointments; to see them walking in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, and according to the order of it; this is next to the desirable sight of the bride, the Lamb's wife, in the New Jerusalem state, having the glory of God upon her: moreover, it was a pleasant sight to a believer in those times to behold the sacrifices of slain beasts, which were figures of the better sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; to which may be added other things that were to be seen by priests; as the ark of the Lord, which had the two tables in it, typical of Christ, the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness; and the table of shewbread, which pointed out Christ the bread of life, and his perpetual intercession for his people; and the golden candlestick, a type of the church, holding forth the word of life to others; with many other things, which, with an eye of faith, the saints of those times could look upon with delight and pleasure: also the presence of the Lord may be intended by his beauty, than which nothing is more desirable to the people of God, even to behold his smiling countenance, to see his face, and enjoy his favour, and to have fellowship with him, and with one another; and particularly the beauty and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ may be designed, represented by the Shechinah, or glory, which filled both the tabernacle and the temple; who being the brightness of his Father's glory, and fairer than the children of men, and altogether lovely and full of grace, is a very desirable object to be beheld by faith;

and to inquire in his temple; to seek the face of the Lord, to consult him in matters of difficulty and moment; to search after the knowledge of divine things, and to ask for blessings of grace, for which he will be inquired of by his people, to bestow them on them.

{g} hwhy Menb "amaemotate, Jehovae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; so Ainsworth; "suavitatem Jehovae", Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 27:5

Ver. 5. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion,.... This, with what follows, is given as a reason why the psalmist desired to dwell in the house of the Lord; because he considered it as a pavilion or booth, as the word {h} signifies in which he should be hid by the Lord, in times of trouble and distress, either through the heat of persecution, or of inward anxiety of mind, caused by the working of a fiery law; the allusion being, as some think, to the shepherd's tent or booth, into which he sometimes takes a poor sheep, and protects it from the scorching heat of the sun at noon: and of such use is the tabernacle of the Lord; see **Isa 4:6**;

in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; alluding either to the tents of generals of armies, who receive into them those whom they would protect from the insults and injuries of others; or rather to the most holy place in the tabernacle, called the secret place, **Eze 7:22**; typical of Christ, the hiding place of his, people, in whom their life is hid, and where it is safe and secure;

he shall set me up upon a rock; where he would be above and out of the reach of his enemies; meaning Christ, comparable to a rock for its height, he being higher than the kings of the earth, than the angels in heaven, than the heavens themselves, and much more than the sons of men; see Ps 61:2; and for shelter and safety, he being a munition of rocks, a strong tower, a place of defence, and rock of refuge; and for firmness, solidity, and strength, he being able to bear the whole weight of the building of the church, and every believer laid upon him; and for duration, he being more immovable than rocks and mountains; so that such who are set up upon him are in the most safe and secure state imaginable.

{h} hkob "in tugurio suo", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 27:6

Ver. 6. And now shall mine head be lifted up,.... That is, when brought into the house of the Lord, hid in the secret of his tabernacle, and set upon the rock Christ; by this phrase he means, either that he should be then restored to his former happy and comfortable condition, as it is used in Ge 40:13; or that he should overcome all his enemies, and triumph over them, being exalted, as he adds,

above mine enemies round about me; so that not only they should not be able to come at him, but should be subdued under him;

therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy: attended with shouting and sounding of trumpets: in allusion to the blowing of trumpets at the time of sacrifice, Nu 10:10; Sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, with a joyful heart, for mercies received, offered up publicly in the house of the Lord, are here intended;

I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord; for whom praise waits in Zion, to whom it is due; he being the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, and the author and giver of all blessings, temporal and spiritual.

Psalms 27:7

Ver. 7. Hear, O Lord, [when] I cry with my voice,.... Which is to be understood of prayer, and that in the time of distress; and of vocal prayer, as distinguished from mental prayer; and the phrase denotes the vehemency and intenseness of it: and the request is, that the Lord would hear it; not only as he is omniscient and omnipresent, and so hears the prayers of all, good and bad; but as a God gracious and merciful, who sometimes very quickly hears, and answers in a gracious way, and sometimes seems to turn a deaf car, to shut out the prayers of his people, and cover himself with a cloud, that they should not pass through, or, however, defers an answer to it for a little while; yet, sooner or later, he always shows himself a God hearing prayer;

have mercy also upon me; by delivering him out of his temporal distresses, and by forgiving his iniquities;

and answer me; by speaking a word in season; commanding off the affliction he lay under, and by saying to him that his sins were forgiven him.

Psalms 27:8

Ver. 8. [When thou saidst], seek ye my face,.... To seek the face of the Lord is to attend his house and ordinances, where he grants his presence; and with this view to enjoy his gracious presence, and the light of his countenance, not being content with bare attendance without it; it is to seek the Lord himself, and communion with him through Christ, the brightness of his glory, and the Angel of his presence; for the right way of seeking the Lord is in Christ, who is the way of access to him, and of acceptance and fellowship with him; and that by prayer and supplication for his sake, and with all the heart and soul; and this the Lord calls upon his people to do, in his word, in his providences, and by his Spirit moving upon their hearts, and inclining them to it, as follows;

my heart said unto thee, thy face, Lord, will I seek: it is an encouragement to believers to seek the Lord when he calls them to it; for it is a command with promise, that they shall find him, see his face, and enjoy his favour; and he never says to any, "seek ye my face, in vain"; and they always find it good for them to draw nigh to him: and as it is the best way of seeking God, when the heart is engaged in it, so it is a token for good; and it looks as though the Lord had a mind to manifest himself, and grant the favour sought for, when he inclines the hearts of his people to pray unto him for it; and this the psalmist makes mention of as taking encouragement from it, to hope and believe that the Lord would hear and answer him, and have mercy on him; because he had bid him seek his face, and he found his heart ready to do it.

Psalms 27:9

Ver. 9. Hide not thy face [far] from me,.... Yea, not at all from him; for the word "far" is not in the text: this is sometimes the case of the best of men, and was of the psalmist at times, and might be now, notwithstanding his strong expressions of faith and joy in the preceding verses; for frames are very changeable things; and this case is consistent with the everlasting and unchangeable love of God to his people; though they are ready to impute it to wrath and anger, and is what is very cutting and grievous to them; and therefore deprecate it as the psalmist does here,

put not thy servant away in anger; either cast him not away from thy presence, as being angry with him, though there is just reason for it; or suffer him not to go away angry, fretting and murmuring: he makes mention of his relation to God as a servant, as he was; not only by creation as a man, and by his office as a king, but by efficacious grace as a converted man; and this only as descriptive of himself, and as acknowledging his dependence on the Lord, and his obligation to him; but not as a reason why he should be regarded by him, for he knew he was but an unprofitable servant;

thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me: which request, as the rest, he might put up in faith; for God will not leave his people destitute of his presence finally and totally; nor to themselves and the corruptions of their hearts, nor to the temptations of Satan; nor will he forsake the work of his hands, the work of grace upon their hearts; or so forsake them as that they shall perish: and that the Lord would not leave nor forsake him in such sense, the psalmist had reason to conclude; since he had been his help in times past, a present help in time of trouble; and his arm was not shortened, his power was the same to help as ever, and so were his inclination and will; since he could also call unto him, and upon him, as follows:

O God of my salvation; the author both of his temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation; and what might he not hope for from him? salvation includes all blessings, both for soul and body, for time and eternity.

Psalms 27:10

Ver. 10. When my father and my mother forsake me,.... Which is not to be understood strictly and literally of his parents, that were in that near relation to him according to the flesh, nor of anything that had past; not of his parents leaving him to shift for himself, after having brought him up; nor of his father being unmindful of him, when Samuel came to anoint one of his sons to be king; nor of any slight and neglect of him by them when persecuted by Saul; nor of their inability to help him then; see 1Sa 22:3; but this is to be understood of something supposed yet to come; and it seems best to interpret it of his nearest and dearest friends, his closest adherents, best counsellors, and most firm allies; that when they should fail and drop him, his God would not leave him: the design of it is to set forth the love and care of God, as superior to that of the most affectionate friends; see Isa 49:14;

then the Lord will take me up; like a foundling in the street, and such are called, in the Talmudic language, "persons gathered up" {i}; and so the words may be rendered here, "then the Lord will gather me" {k}; into his arms and bosom, and under the wings of his protection, and at last to himself in glory.

{i} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 69. 1. {k} ynpoay "colliget me", Pagninus, Montanus; "collegit me", Musculus, Vatablus, Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 27:11

Ver. 11. Teach me thy way, O Lord,.... Of providence, grace, and duty;
See Gill on "Ps 25:4";

and lead me in a plain path: as the path of truth is to those that understand and find knowledge; and as the way of holiness is, even to such who in other things are fools, but shall not err therein, **Pr 8:9**
Isa 35:8; or the path of righteousness, in which Christ, the wisdom of God, and shepherd of his people, leads them, Ps 23:3;

because of mine enemies, or "those that observe me"; who eyed him as Saul did, 1Sa 18:9; and waited for his halting, as Jeremiah's familiars did for him; and lay in wait to deceive him, and lead him out of the way, as false teachers do; and come upon him at an unawares, and take every advantage against him, as Satan does.

Psalms 27:12

Ver. 12. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies,.... It is a dreadful thing for a man to be given up to his own heart's lusts, and to be delivered up into the hands of Satan; who would fain have even the people of God themselves in his hands, that he might distress them at pleasure, if not destroy them; and also to be suffered to fall into the hands of wicked men, whose tender mercies are cruel;

for false witnesses are risen up against me; laying to his charge, that he sought to take away from Saul his crown and kingdom, and even his life, 1Sa 24:9;

and such as breathe out cruelty; as Doeg the Edomite, whose tongue was as a sharp razor, and by whose hands four score and five priests were slain, on account of David's being supplied with bread by Ahimelech; the word is in the singular number; see Ps 52:1; compare with this clause **Ac 9:1**; and Horace's phrase, "Spirabat amores" {l}.

{l} Carmin. l. 4. Ode. 13. v. 19.

Psalms 27:13

Ver. 13. [I had fainted],.... When false witnesses rose up against him, and threatened to take away his life, and the life of his friends, in the most barbarous and cruel manner: the people of God are subject to faintings, in the present state of things; by reason of afflictions; because of the nature, number, and continuance of them; and especially when they apprehend them to be in wrath and sore displeasure: and on account of their sins, and the corruptions of their hearts; fearing lest there should be no pardon for them; or that the true work of grace is not in them; or that they shall fall, to the dishonour of the name of God, and to the reproach of his, cause and interest; or that they shall perish eternally: likewise, by reason of Satan's temptations, which are sometimes so grievous, that if Christ did not pray for them, their faith would fail; and also on account of the hidings of God's face, which they cannot bear: they are sometimes ready to faint in the way of their duty, in the course of their profession, because of the difficulties and discouragements, reproaches and persecutions, they meet with; and sometimes in the expectation of blessings; and of the fulfilment of promises, and of answers of prayer, which have been long deferred. This clause is not in the original text, but is a supplement of our translators; and it is generally agreed there is a defect of expression, which must be supplied in some way or other: the Jewish interpreters generally refer it to the preceding words; one supplies thus {m}, "those false witnesses would have rose up against me, and consumed me"; another {n} after this manner, "mine enemies had almost got the dominion over me"; a third {o}, "I had almost perished at their sayings": and a fourth {p}, "and they would have destroyed me". Perhaps it may be as well supplied from Ps 119:92; "I should then have perished in mine affliction"; it follows,

unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living: both the providential goodness of the Lord, in supplying him with the, necessaries of life, and in delivering him out of the hands of his enemies; and his special goodness, which he has laid up in his covenant, and in his son; even all spiritual blessings in Christ, in whom he causes all his goodness to pass before his people. The psalmist believed that he should "see"; that is, enjoy all these, or whatever was needful for him; all the good things of life, all special favours; as supports under afflictions, views of pardoning grace under a sense of sin, strength against Satan's temptations, and deliverance out of them; the discoveries of the love of God, and the light of his countenance, after desertions, and divine refreshments in his house, from his word and ordinances; and at last all the glories of the other world; and faith in these things is the best antidote against faintings. By "the land of the living" may be meant either the land of Canaan, where the living God was worshipped, and living saints dwelt, in opposition to other lands, the habitations of men dead in sins; and at a distance from which David now might be; or else the world in general, in opposition to the place and state of the dead; or, as some think, heaven, or he life of the world to come, as Kimchi expresses it; and so Apollinarius paraphrases it,

"I shall see the blessed God with my eyes in the land of the blessed."

The word alwl, rendered "unless", is one of the fifteen words which are extraordinarily pointed in the Hebrew Bible.

{m} Jarchi. {n} Aben Ezra. {o} Kimchi. {p} Abendana, Not. in Miclol Yophi in loc.

Psalms 27:14

Ver. 14. Wait on the Lord,.... This, with what follows, is spoken by the psalmist either to himself or to others, or it may be to both, upon the rich experience he declares in Ps 27:13: it becomes believers to wait on the Lord for the common blessings of life, for even the eyes of all wait upon him for their daily food; and for the light of his countenance, when it is withdrawn from them, for he will return again at the set time; and for answers of prayer, which will be given sooner or later; and for the performance of his promises, which are yea and amen in Christ: they should wait upon him in his house and ordinances constantly, with reverence and godly fear; they should wait upon him as servants on their masters, observe his orders, and diligently execute them; and, as beggars for their alms, they should knock and wait at Wisdom's gates, tell their case and wait, take repulses and wait, and, when they succeed, give thanks. It is good to wait upon the Lord; many are the favours and blessings such receive now, and eye has not seen what God has prepared for them that wait for him;

be of good courage; the saints have need of courage, considering the enemies they have to grapple with; the corruptions of their own hearts, the enemies of a man's own house; the worst of all, Satan, and his principalities and powers; and men of the world, and a world of them: and they have great reason, notwithstanding, be of good courage, since God is for them; Christ is the Captain of their salvation; the Holy Spirit, that is in them, is greater than he that is in the world; angels encamp around them; they are provided with the whole armour of God; they are engaged in a good cause, are sure of victory, and shall wear the crown of righteousness; and it follows,

and he shall strengthen thine heart; that is, the Lord will do it, as he has promised to them that wait on him, Isa 40:31; or "let thine heart be strengthened": as the Septuagint render it; and so the Chaldee paraphrase, "strengthen thine heart"; taking it for an exhortation; as indeed it seems to be by what goes before and follows; see **Jos 1:6**;

wait, I say, on the Lord; this is repeated, to express the importance of this duty, and to encourage to it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 28:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 28

[A Psalm] of David. This psalm, Aben Ezra says, David either composed himself, or one of the singers for him; the former seems most likely; and it might be made by him when he was persecuted by Saul, or when delivered from him; or at least when he had faith and hope that he should be delivered: the psalm consists of two parts, petitions and thanksgivings.

Ver. 1. Unto thee will I cry,.... This denotes the distress the psalmist was in, fervency and ardour in prayer, resolution to continue in it, and singularity with respect to the object of it; determining to cry to the Lord only; to which he was encouraged by what follows;

O Lord my rock; he being a strong tower and place of defence to him, in whom were all his safety, and his trust and confidence, and in whom he had an interest;

be not silent to me; or "deaf" {q}; persons that do not hear are silent, and make no answer; as the Lord seems to be, when he returns no answer to the cries of his people; when he does not arise and help them; when he seems not to take any notice of his and their enemies, but stands at a distance from them, and as if he had forsaken them; see
Ps 39:12; the words may be considered, as they are by some, as an address to Christ his rock, his advocate and intercessor; that he would not be silent, but speak for him, and present his supplications to God, with the much incense of his mediation; see **1Sa 7:8**;

lest, [if] thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit; either like such that fall into a ditch, and cannot help themselves out, and they cry, and there is none to take them out from thence; or like such that die in battle, and are cast into a pit, and there buried in common with others; which David might fear would be his case, through Saul's violent pursuit after him; or lest he should be like the dead, who are not regarded, and are remembered no more; or lest he should really die by the hands of his enemies, and so be laid in the grave, the pit of corruption; or be in such distress and despair as even the damned in hell be, the pit out of which there is no deliverance.

{q} vrxt la "ne obsurdescas", Vatablus, Tigurine version, Gejerus; so Ainsworth, Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis.

Psalms 28:2

Ver. 2. Hear the voice of my supplications,.... Which proceed from the Spirit of grace and of supplication, and are put up in an humble manner, under a sense of wants and unworthiness, and on the foot of grace and mercy, and not merit;

when I cry unto thee; as he now did, and determined he would, and continue so doing, until he was heard;

when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle: the holy of holies, in the tabernacle and in the temple, which was sometimes so called, **1Ki 6:23**; compared with **2Ch 3:10**; where were the ark, the mercy seat, and cherubim, between which the Lord dwelt, and gave responses to his people; or heaven itself, which the holy of holies was a figure of; where is the throne of God, and from whence he hears the prayers of his people directed to him; or else Christ himself, who is the most Holy, and the "Debir", or Oracle, who speaks to the Lord for his people; and by whom the Lord speaks to them again, and communes with them. The oracle had its name, "debir", from speaking. Lifting up of the hands is a prayer gesture, and here designs the performance of that duty to God in heaven, through Christ; see **La 3:41**; it was frequently used, even by the Heathens, as a prayer gesture {r}; see Ps 141:2.

{r} "Duplices manus ad sidera tendit--et paulo post--et ambas ad coelum tendit palmas", Virgil. Aeneid. 10. vid. Aeneid. 2. "Ad coelum manibus sublatis", Horat. Satyr. l. 2. satyr. 5. v. 97. "Coelo supines si tuleris manus", ib. Carmin.

l. 3. Ode 23. v. 1. "Et pandere palmas ante Deum delubra", Lucretius l. 5. prope finem
dh ceira anascwn, Homer. Iliad. 5. v. 174.

Psalms 28:3

Ver. 3. Draw me not away with the wicked,.... That is, with those who are notoriously wicked; who are inwardly and outwardly wicked; whose inward part is very wickedness, and who sell themselves and give up themselves to work wickedness: the sense is, that God would not suffer him to be drawn away, or drawn aside by wicked men, but that he would deliver him from temptation; or that he would not give him up into their hands, to be at their mercy; who he knew would not spare him, if they had him in their power; or that he might not die the death of the wicked, and perish with them; see Ps 26:9;

and with the workers of iniquity; who make it the trade and business of their lives to commit sin; and which may be applied, not only to profane sinners, but to professors of religion, **Mt 7:23**; since it follows,

which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief [is] in their hearts; hypocrites, double minded men, who have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it; pretend to religion, and have none; and speak fair to the face, but design mischief and ruin; as Saul and his servants did to David, 1Sa 18:17.

Psalms 28:4

Ver. 4. Give them according to their deeds,.... According to the demerit of them, which is death, even death eternal;

and according to the wickedness of their endeavours; for though wicked men do not always succeed; yet their want of success does not excuse their wickedness;

give them after the work of their hands; see **2Ti 4:14**;

render to them their desert; what their iniquities, in thought, word, and deed, deserve: such petitions are not contrary to that Christian charity which the Gospel recommends; nor do they savour of a spirit of revenge, which is condemned by the word of God; for it should be observed, that these things are said with respect to men given up to a reprobate mind; and that the psalmist does not seek to avenge himself, nor to gratify his own mind; but he sought the glory of God, and moreover spoke by a prophetic spirit, knowing what was the will of God in this case; see Ps 28:5; and therefore these petitions of his are not to be drawn into an example in common and ordinary cases.

Psalms 28:5

Ver. 5. Because they regard not the works of the Lord,.... Neither the work of creation, as if there was no first cause of all things; nor the work of Providence, taking no notice either of the judgments or of the mercies of God; as though they believed that God had forsaken the earth, and would do neither good nor evil; and still less the work of redemption, which in covenant, promise, and prophecy, was appointed for the Messiah to work out; and as for the work of the Spirit of God upon the soul, they had no notion of that, of the nature and necessity of it; the things of the Spirit of God being foolishness to them, and undiscernible by them; see **Isa 5:12**. Perhaps the psalmist may have some regard to his being anointed by Samuel, according to the will of God, and to the victory which he obtained over Goliath, and over others, which justly gained him great esteem among some, and created envy in others; and also the wonderful protection of him from time to time; the Chaldee paraphrase is, "because they do not understand the law of the Lord". It follows,

nor the operation of his hands; in which his hand was so very apparent, that nothing less could be said than that this was the finger of God; wherefore,

he shall destroy them, and not build them up; that is, they shall be irrecoverably lost; they shall be punished with everlasting destruction; there will be no help or remedy for them: some {s} understand this as a prayer, that God would destroy them in such a manner, and render it, "let him destroy them", &c. {t}.

{s} Kimchi in loc. Vid. Aben Ezram in loc. {t} Morhy "destruat eos", Vatablus; so the Arabic version.

Psalms 28:6

Ver. 6. Blessed [be] the Lord,.... Which must be understood, not as invoking nor as conferring a blessing on him, neither of which can be done by a creature; nor does he stand in need of any, he being Elshaddai, God all sufficient, God over all, blessed for ever; but as ascribing all blessedness to him, congratulating his greatness and happiness, and giving him praise and glory for mercies received; and particularly for the following:

because he hath heard the voice of my supplications; what he had prayed for, Ps 28:2; an answer was quickly returned, even while he was speaking, Isa 65:24; though this may be an expression of faith, being fully persuaded and assured that he was heard, and would be answered, and may be said by a prophetic spirit; knowing that what he had humbly asked for would be granted; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi understand it in a way of prophecy.

Psalms 28:7

Ver. 7. The Lord [is] my strength,.... That is, the author both of natural and spiritual strength; that gave him strength of body, and fortitude of mind, to bear up under all the exercises he was tried with; the strength of his life, spiritual and temporal, and of his salvation; the strength of his heart under present distresses, and who he knew would be so in the hour of death, when his heart and strength would fail;

and my shield; to protect and defend him; as were the love, power, and faithfulness of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, his power and fulness, his blood, righteousness, and salvation;

my heart trusted in him; in the Lord as his strength and shield; not in any creature, nor in his own strength and righteousness; but in the Lord God, in whom are righteousness and strength: and it is plain he did not trust in his own heart, since his heart trusted in the Lord; and which shows that his trust was an hearty one, his faith was a faith unfeigned, he believed with the heart unto righteousness;

and I am helped: this was the fruit of his trust, even a gracious experience of divine assistance: saints are helpless in themselves, and are also as to the help of man; God is the only helper of them; he helps them out of all their troubles; in whatsoever he calls them unto, and to what they want; and the help he affords is sometimes quick, and always seasonable; and sometimes by means, and sometimes without them;

therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; that is, in the Lord, the ground of which was the help he had from him; and this joy was very great, a joy unspeakable, and full of glory; it was not carnal, but spiritual, a heart joy, joy in the Holy Ghost;

and with my song will I praise him; praise is due to God, what glorifies him, and is acceptable to him; it becomes the saints, is comely for them, and it is pleasant work to them, when grace is in exercise; see Ps 69:30; this may be understood of one of his songs, and one of the best of them, and of one better than this, as a Jewish writer {u} observes.

{u} R. Moseh in Aben Ezra in loc.

Psalms 28:8

Ver. 8. The Lord [is] their strength,.... The strength of his people, mentioned in Ps 28:9; not only the strength of David in particular, but of all his people in general; see Ps 37:39;

and he [is] the saving strength of his anointed; meaning either himself, as before, who was anointed by Samuel king of Israel, and therefore had not invaded and thrust himself into an office he had no call and right unto; or the Messiah, the Lord's Anointed, whom he heard, helped, and strengthened in the day of salvation, and delivered him from the power of death and the grave, and raised him from thence, and gave him glory; see Ps 20:6.

Psalms 28:9

Ver. 9. Save thy people,.... The psalmist begins the psalm with petitions for himself, and closes it with prayers for the people of God; whom God has chosen for his people, taken into covenant to be his people, and given them to his son as such; these he has resolved to save, and has appointed Christ, and sent him into the world, to be the Saviour of them; and to them he makes known and applies the great salvation by his Spirit: so that this prayer was a prayer of faith, as are also the following petitions;

and bless thine inheritance; the people whom the Lord has chosen for his inheritance, and has given to Christ as his portion, and are his peculiar possession; and these he blesses with all spiritual blessings, with grace here, and glory hereafter, as is requested;

feed them also; as the shepherd does his flock, by leading them into green pastures, by giving them the bread of life, by nourishing them with the word and ordinances, by the means or his ministering servants, who are under-shepherds appointed to feed the saints with knowledge and understanding;

and lift them up for ever; above their enemies, and out of the reach of them; bear and carry them now, as the shepherd does his lambs, in his arms and bosom; and raise them out of their graves, and give them the dominion in the morning of the resurrection, and cause them to reign as kings and priests with Christ, as they ever will.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 29:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 29

A Psalm of David. In the Vulgate Latin version is added, "at the finishing of the tabernacle"; suggesting that this psalm was composed at that time, and on that occasion; not at the finishing of the tabernacle by Moses, but at the finishing of the tent or tabernacle which David made for the ark in Zion, **2Sa 6:17**. The title in the Arabic version is,

"a prophecy concerning the incarnation, ark, and tabernacle."

In the Septuagint version, from whence the Vulgate seems to have taken the clause, it is, at the "exodion", "exit", or "going out of the tabernacle"; that is, of the feast of tabernacles; and which was the eighth day of the feast, and was called true, which word the Septuagint renders exodion, the word here used, Le 23:36; though it was on the first of the common days of this feast that this psalm was sung, as Maimonides {w} says. Some think it was composed when the psalmist was in a thunder storm, or had lately been in one, which he in a very beautiful manner describes. Kimchi thinks it refers to the times of the Messiah; and it may indeed be very well interpreted of the Gospel, and is very suitable to Gospel times.

{w} Hilchot Tamidin, c. 10. s. 11.

Ver. 1. Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty,.... The Targum refers this to the angels,

"give praise before the Lord, ye companies of angels, sons of the Mighty;"

these are mighty ones, and excel all other creatures in strength; and are the sons of the Mighty, or of God; it is their duty and their business to glorify and to worship him and his Son Jesus Christ, as they do continually; but rather the princes and great men of the earth are here meant, who are so called, Ps 82:1; and these, as they receive much honour and glory, both from God and man; and because they are apt to seek their own glory, and ascribe too much to themselves, are called upon particularly to give glory to God; and the more, inasmuch as they may be the means of engaging their subjects, by their influence and example, to do the same, and who may be included in them; for this is not to be understood of them exclusive of others, as appears from Ps 96:7; moreover, all the saints and people of God may be intended, who are all princes and kings; and may be said to be mighty, especially those who are strong in faith; and these are they who give most glory to God;

give unto the Lord glory and strength; give glory to Jehovah the Father, by celebrating the perfections of his nature; by commending the works of his hands, the works of creation; by acquiescing in his providential dispensations; by returning thanks to him for mercies received, temporal and spiritual; particularly for salvation by Christ, and, above all, for Christ himself; by exercising faith in him as a promising God; by living becoming his Gospel, and to the honour of his name: give glory to the Son of God, by ascribing all divine perfections to him, by attributing salvation to him, and by trusting in him alone for it: give glory to the Spirit of God, by asserting his deity, by referring the work of grace and conversion to him, and by depending upon him for thee performance of the good work begun: give "strength" to each person, by acknowledging that power belongs to them, which is seen in creation, redemption, and the effectual calling; or else strength may mean the same thing as praise and glory; see **Ps 8:2**, compared with
Mt 21:16; and both may design strong praise and glory, expressed in the strongest and with the greatest vigour and vehemency of spirit.

Psalms 29:2

Ver. 2. Give unto the Lord the glory due to his name,.... Or "the glory of his name" {x}: which is suitable to his nature, agreeable to his perfections, and which belongs unto him on account of his works;

worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; the Lord is only to be worshipped, and not any creature, angels or men; not Jehovah the Father only, who is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; but the Son of God, and the Holy Ghost also, being of the same nature, and possessed of the same perfections; and that with both internal and external worship; and in true holiness, in which there is a real beauty: holiness is the beauty of God himself, he is glorious in it; it is the beauty of angels, it makes them so glorious as they are; and it is the beauty of saints, it is what makes them like unto Christ, and by which they are partakers of the divine nature; and in the exercise of holy graces, and in the discharge of holy duties, should they worship the Lord; unless this is to be understood of the place of worship, the sanctuary, or holy place in the tabernacle; or rather the church of God, which holiness becomes; but the former sense seems best.

{x} wmv dwbk "gloriam nominis ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 29:3

Ver. 3. The voice of the Lord [is] upon the waters,.... What follows concerning thunder, the voice of the Lord, gives so many reasons why he should have glory given him and be worshipped; the Heathens {y} paid their devotion to thunder and lightning: but this should be done to the author of them; which may be literally understood of thunder, and is the voice of the Lord; see Ps 18:13; and which is commonly attended with large showers of rain, Jer 10:13; and is very terrible upon the waters, and has its effect there, Ps 104:7; and this is the rather mentioned, because that there is a God above, who is higher than the mighty, who are called upon to give glory to him, and because that thunder has been terrible to kings and great men of the earth; or this may be figuratively interpreted of the voice of Christ in the Gospel, which reaches to many nations and people, compared to waters, Re 17:15. The disciples had a commission to preach it to all nations, and the sound of their words went into all the world, Ro 10:18;

the God of glory thundereth; this shows that thunder may be meant by the voice of the Lord, who is glorious in himself, and in all his works; and may be applied to the Gospel of Christ, who is the Lord of glory, and whose ministers, at least some of them, are sons of thunder; see **1Co 2:8**;

the Lord [is] upon many waters; that is, his voice is, as before, which is thunder; and that this belongs to God, the Heathens were so sensible of, that they called their chief deity Jupiter Tonans {z}.

{y} Pausan. Arcad. sive l. 8. p. 503. {z} Horat. Epod. l. 5. Ode 2. v. 29. Martial. l. 2. Ep. 95.

Psalms 29:4

Ver. 4. The voice of the Lord [is] powerful,.... Or "with power" {a}; as thunder, in the effect of it, shows; and so is the Gospel, when it comes, not in word only, but is attended with the power of God to the conversion and salvation of souls; it is then quick and powerful, **Heb 4:12**; and the word of Christ personal, when here on earth, was with power, **Lu 4:32**;

the voice of the Lord [is] full of majesty; Christ, in his state of humiliation, spake and taught as one having authority; and now, in the ministration of his Gospel by his servants, he goes forth with glory and majesty, Ps 45:3.

{a} xkb "in potentia", Pagninus, Montanus; "cum potentia", Cocceius, Michaelis; "with able power", Ainsworth.

Psalms 29:5

Ver. 5. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars,.... Such an effect thunder has upon the tallest, strongest, and largest trees, as to break them into shivers;

yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon; a mountain in the north part of the land of Judea, so called from its whiteness, both by reason of the snow with which some part of it is covered in summer, as Tacitus observes {b}; and partly from the colour of the earth that has no snow on it, which looks as white as if it was covered with white tiles, as Maundrell {c} says; and where the goodliest cedars grow; and to which may be compared proud, haughty, lofty, and stouthearted sinners, who are broken, brought down, and laid low, by the voice of Christ in his Gospel, his power attending it. The Targum renders it, "the Word of the Lord".

{b} Hist. l. 5. c. 6. {c} Travels, p. 176.

Psalms 29:6

Ver. 6. He maketh them also to skip like a calf,.... That is, the cedars, the branches being broken off, or they torn up by the roots, and tossed about by the wind; which motion is compared to that of a calf that leaps and skips about;

Lebanon and Sirion, like a young unicorn; that is, these mountains move and skip about through the force of thunder, and the violence of an earthquake attending it; so historians report that mountains have moved from place to place, and they have met and dashed against one another {d}. Sirion was a mountain in Judea near to Lebanon, and is the same with Hermon; which was called by the Sidonians Sirion, and by the Amorites Shenir, **De 3:9**. This may regard the inward motions of the mind, produced by the Gospel of Christ under a divine influence; see
Isa 35:6.

{d} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 83. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 9. c. 11.

Psalms 29:7

Ver. 7. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. Or "cutteth with flames of fire" {e}; that is, the thunder breaks through the clouds with flames of fire, or lightning, as that is sometimes called,
Ps 105:32; and with which it cleaves asunder trees and masts of ships, cuts and hews them down, and divides them into a thousand shivers. Some refer this, in the figurative and mystical sense, to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai {f}, on which the Lord descended in fire, and from his right hand went a fiery law; but rather this may be applied to the cloven or divided tongues of fire which sat upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, as an emblem of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit bestowed on them; though it seems best of all, as before, to understand this of the voice of Christ in the Gospel, which cuts and hews down all the goodliness of men, and lays them to the ground, **Ho 6:5**; and is of a dividing nature, and lays open all the secrets of the heart, **Heb 4:12**; and, through the corruption or human nature, is the occasion of dividing one friend from another, Lu 12:51; and like flames of fire it has both light and heat in it; it is the means of enlightening men's eyes to see their sad estate, and their need of Christ, and salvation by him; and of warming their souls with its refreshing truths and promises, and of inflaming their love to God and Christ, and of setting their affections on things above, and of causing their hearts to

burn within them.

{e} va twbhl bux "caedit cum flammis ignis", Cocceius, Gejerus. {f} Jarchi in loc.

Psalms 29:8

Ver. 8. The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness,.... The ground of it, the trees in it, and the beasts that harbour there; and causes them to be in pain, and to bring forth their young, as the {g} word signifies, and as it is rendered in Ps 29:9; all which effects thunder produces, and may mystically signify the preaching of the Gospel among the Gentiles, and the consequence of it. The Gentile world may be compared to a wilderness, and is called the wilderness of the people,
Eze 20:35; the inhabitants of it being ignorant, barren, and unfruitful; and the conversion of them is expressed by turning a wilderness into a fruitful land, Isa 35:1; and the Gospel being sent thither has been the means of shaking the minds of many with strong and saving convictions; which made them tremble and cry out, what shall we do to be saved?

the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh; which was the terrible wilderness that the children of Israel passed through to Canaan's land; the same with the wilderness of Zin, Nu 33:36; and was called Kadesh from the city of that name, on the borders of Edom, Nu 20:1; the Targum paraphrases it,

"The word of the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Rekam;"

in the Targum in the King's Bible it is,

"makes the serpents in the wilderness of Rekam to tremble;"

but that thunder frightens them, I have not met with in any writer.

{g} lyxy "parturire faciet", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis; "dolore parturientis afflicit", Piscator.

Psalms 29:9

Ver. 9. The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve,.... Which being timorous creatures, the bringing forth of their young, which is naturally very painful and difficult, is lessened and facilitated by thunder; they being either so frightened with it that they feel not their pains; or their pains, being hastened by it, become more easy; and naturalists observe, that the time of bringing forth their young is at that season of the year when thunder is most frequent; see Job 39:1. Thunder has a like effect on sheep, and makes them abortive {g}: this may be applied to the Gospel, which is the means of bringing forth souls to Christ by his churches and ministers; who may very fitly be compared to hinds for their love and loveliness, their swiftness and readiness to do the will of Christ, and their eager desires after communion with him, **Pr 5:19**;

and discovereth the forests; or "maketh bare" {h}: by beating off the leaves and branches of trees, and them to the ground; or by causing the wild beasts that frequent them to retire to their holes and dens; which effects are produced by thunder; and this aptly agrees with the Gospel, which is a revelation of secrets, of the thickets and deep things of God; of his council, covenant, mind, and will; and of the mysteries of his grace to the sons of men, and generally to babes, or men of their capacities; and of its stripping them of all their own righteousness, and dependence on it;

and in his temple doth everyone speak of [his] glory; either in heaven, where angels and glorified saints are continually employed in speaking of his glorious name, nature, and works; or in the temple, or tabernacle at Jerusalem, where the Levites stood to praise the Lord morning and evening, and where the tribes went up to worship, and to give thanks unto the Lord, 1Ch 23:30; or the church of God, which is the temple of the living God, whither saints resort, and where they dwell, and speak of the glory of God, of his divine perfections, and of his works of creation and providence; and of the glory of the person of Christ, and salvation by him; and of the glorious work of grace begun in their souls by the blessed Spirit; for hither such as have heard the voice of Christ, and have felt the power of it, and have found it to be a soul-shaking, an heart-breaking, and an illuminating voice, come, and declare it to the glory of the grace of God.

{g} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 3. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 47. {h} Pvxyw "et denudat", Musculus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; so Cocceius, Michaelis, Ainsworth.

Psalms 29:10

Ver. 10. The Lord sitteth upon the flood,.... Noah's flood; which is always designed by the word here used, the Lord sat and judged the old world for its wickedness, and brought a flood upon them, and destroyed them; and then he abated it, sent a wind to assuage the waters, stopped up the windows of heaven, and the fountains of the great deep, and restrained rain from heaven; and he now sits upon the confidence of waters in the heavens, at the time of a thunder storm, which threatens with an overflowing flood; and he remembers his covenant, and restrains them from destroying the earth any more: and he sits upon the floods of ungodly men, and stops their rage and fury, and suffers them not to proceed to overwhelm his people and interest; and so the floods of afflictions of every kind, and the floods of Satan's temptations, and of errors and heresies, are at his control, and he permits them to go so far, and no farther;

yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever: he is King of the whole world, over angels and men, and even the kings of the earth; and he is also King of saints, in whose hearts he reigns by his Spirit and grace; and the Gospel dispensation is more eminently his kingdom, in which his spiritual government is most visible; and this will more appear in the latter day glory, when the Lord shall be King over all the earth; and after which the Lord Christ will reign with his saints here a thousand years, and then with them to all eternity, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Psalms 29:11

Ver. 11. The Lord will give strength unto his people,.... His special people, his covenant people, whom he has chosen for himself; these are encompassed with infirmities, and are weak in themselves; but there is strength for them in Christ: the Lord promises it unto them, and bestows it on them, and which is a pure gift of his grace unto them; this may more especially regard that strength, power, and dominion, which will be given to the people of the most High in the latter day; since it follows, upon the account of the everlasting kingdom of Christ;

the Lord will bless his people with peace: with internal peace, which is peculiar to them, and to which wicked men are strangers; and which arises from a comfortable apprehension of justification by the righteousness of Christ, of pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice; and is enjoyed in a way of believing; and with external peace in the latter day, when there shall be no more war with them, nor persecution of them; but there shall be abundance of peace, and that without end; and at last with eternal peace, which is the end of the perfect and upright man; and the whole is a great blessing.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 30:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 30

A Psalm [and] Song [at] the dedication of the house of David. This is the first time that a psalm is called a song; some psalms are called by one name, some by another, and some by both, as here; and some are called hymns: to which distinction of them the apostle refers in **Eph 5:19**. A psalm was sung upon musical instruments, a song with the voice; it may be this psalm was sung both ways: the occasion of it was the dedication of David's house: the Targum interprets it of the house of the sanctuary, the temple; and so most of the Jewish commentators {i}; which might be called his house, because it was his intention to build it; his heart was set upon it, he provided materials for it, and gave his son Solomon the form of it, and a charge to build it; and, as is thought, composed this psalm to be sung, and which was sung by the Levites at the dedication of it: others, as Aben Ezra, are of opinion it was his own dwelling house, made of cedar, which he dedicated according to the law of Moses, with sacrifices and offerings, prayer and thanksgiving, **2Sa 5:11**; so Apollinarius calls it a new house David built; but since there is nothing in the whole psalm that agrees with the dedication, either of the temple, or of David's own private house, it seems better, with other interpreters, to understand it of the purging of David's house from the wickedness and incest of his son Absalom, upon his return to it, when the rebellion raised by him was extinguished; which might be reckoned a new dedication of it; see 2Sa 20:3; and to a deliverance from such troubles this psalm well agrees. Theodoret interprets it of the restoration of the human nature by Christ, through his resurrection from the dead.

{i} Jarchi, Kimchi, & Abdendana.

Ver. 1. I will extol thee, O Lord,.... Or "lift thee up on high" {k}. The Lord is high in his name, he is the most High; and in his nature, there is none besides him, nor like unto him; and in place, he dwells in the high and holy place; he is above all, angels and men; he is above all gods; he is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; he cannot be higher than he is: to extol him, therefore, is to declare him to be what he is; to exalt him in high praises of him, which the psalmist determined to do, for the following reasons;

for thou hast lifted me up; or "drawn me up", or "out" {l}; from the pit of nature; the low estate of unregeneracy; the pit wherein is no water: the horrible pit, the mire and clay of sin and misery, in which all men, while unconverted, are; and out of which they cannot lift themselves, being without strength, yea, dead in sin: this is God's work; he takes out of this pit, he draws out of it by his efficacious grace; he raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill; and this is an instance of his grace and mercy, and requires a new song of praise: or this may regard some great fall by sin, from which he was restored, through the grace and power of God; or deliverance from great troubles, compared to waters, out of which he was drawn, Ps 18:16; and was lifted up above his enemies; and agrees very well with his being brought to his palace and throne again, upon the defeat of Absalom;

and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me; as Satan does over unregenerate sinners, when he possesses their hearts, and keeps the house and goods in peace; and as the men of the world do over fallen saints, when forsaken by the Lord, and afflicted by him, and are under the frowns of his providence; but the conspirators against David were not suffered to succeed and rejoice over him, which they otherwise would have done; and for this he praises the Lord.

{k} Kmmwda "superexaltabo te", Cocceius; "elevabo te", Michaelis. {l} ygylr "me sursum extraxisti", Cocceius; so Michaelis; "thou hast drawn me up", Ainsworth.

Psalms 30:2

Ver. 2. O Lord my God, I cried unto thee,.... In the time of his distress and trouble; and whither should he go but unto his covenant God and Father?

and thou hast healed me: either of some bodily disease that attended him; for the Lord is the physician of the body, as well as of the soul; and that either immediately, or by giving a blessing to means used; and the glory of such a mercy should be given to him: or else of soul diseases, which are natural and hereditary, epidemical, nauseous, mortal, and incurable, but by the grace of God and blood of Christ; and the healing: of them either respects the pardon of them at first conversion; for healing diseases, and forgiving iniquities, signify one and the same thing; or else fresh discoveries and applications of pardoning grace, after falls into sin, which are an healing backslidings, and restoring comforts; and this is God's work; none can heal but himself, and he does it effectually, universally, and freely, and which calls for thankfulness, Ps 103:1; or this may be understood in a civil sense, of restoring him to his house, his throne and kingdom, and the peace of it.

Psalms 30:3

Ver. 3. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave,.... When his life being in danger, was near unto it, Job 33:22; otherwise the soul dies not, nor does it lie and sleep in the grave; or "thou hast brought up my soul from hell" {m}; that is, delivered him from those horrors of conscience and terrors of mind, by reason of sin, which were as hell itself unto him; see Ps 116:3;

thou hast kept me alive: preserved his corporeal life when in danger, and maintained his spiritual life; and quickened him by his word, under all his afflictions, and kept him from utter and black despair;

that I should not go down to the pit; either of the grave or hell. There is in this clause a "Keri" and a "Cetib"; a marginal reading, and a textual writing: according to the latter it is, "from them that go down to the pit"; which some versions {n} follow; that is, thou hast preserved me from going along with them, and being where and as they are: our version follows the former; the sense is the same.

{m} lwav Nm "ab inferno", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth. {n} So Sept. V. L. Pagninus, Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Ainsworth.

Psalms 30:4

Ver. 4. Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his,.... Such to whom he has been gracious and merciful, and has blessed with pardoning grace, and justifying righteousness, adoption, and a right to eternal life; and who are holy godly persons; in whose hearts principles of grace and holiness are formed; and who are kind and bountiful to others: all which the word {o} here used signifies: and these are the Lord's; they are set apart for him, and they are sanctified by him; and therefore should sing his praises, both vocally, and with melody in their hearts;

and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness; which is essential to him, and in which he is glorious; and which appears in all his ways and works of providence and grace, and both in the redemption and sanctification of his people; and besides this, there is the holiness of Christ, which is imputed to his saints, and the sanctification of the Spirit, which is wrought in them; and at the remembrance of each of these it highly becomes them to give thanks to the Lord, since hereby they are made meet to be partakers of his kingdom and glory.

{o} wydyoh "quos ipse benignitate prosequitur", Junius & Tremellius; so Tigurine version.

Psalms 30:5

Ver. 5. For his anger [endureth but] a moment,.... Anger is not properly in God, he being a simple, uncompounded, immovable, and unchangeable being; nor is it ever towards his people in reality, unless anger is distinguished from wrath, and is considered as consistent with his everlasting and invariable love to them; but only in their apprehension, he doing those things which in some respects are similar to those which men do when they are angry; he turns away from them and hides his face, he chides, chastises, and afflicts, and then they conclude he is angry; and when he returns again and takes off his hand, manifests his pardoning love, and comforts them, then they understand it that his anger is turned away from them; for in this improper sense of it, and as his children conceive of it, it is but for a moment, or a very short time: he forsakes them but for a moment, and their light afflictions endure no longer, Isa 54:7;

in his favour [is] life; by which is meant his free love and favour in Christ towards his people; and designs either the duration of it, that it lives and always is, even when he seems to be angry, and that it lasts as long as life does, yea, to all eternity; neither death nor life can separate from it; or the object of it, God delighting not in the death but the life of a sinner; or rather the effects of it, it is what makes the present life to be properly life, and really comfortable; without it men may be said rather to be dead than to live, notwithstanding all enjoyments; and therefore it is better than life, abstracted from it, Ps 63:3; it quickens the soul in a spiritual sense, and makes grace lively; it invigorates faith, encourages hope, and makes love to abound, and it issues in eternal life;

weeping may endure for a night; the allusion is to the time when afflictions are usually most heavy and pressing upon persons, when they most feel them, or, however, are free from diversion, and at leisure to bemoan themselves; and may point at the season of weeping, and cause of it, the night of affliction, or of darkness and desertion, and denotes the short continuance of it; weeping is here represented as a person, and as a lodger, for the word may be rendered "lodge" {p}; but then it is as a wayfaring man, who continues but for a night; see Isa 17:14;

but joy [cometh] in the morning; alluding to the time when all nature is fresh and gay, when man rises cheerful from his rest, darkness removes, light breaks forth, and the sun rises and sheds its beams, and everything looks pleasant and delightful; moreover, the mercies of God are new every morning, which cause joy, and call for thankfulness; and especially it is a time of joy after weeping and darkness, when the sun of righteousness arises with healing in his wings; as it will be to perfection in the resurrection morn, when the dead in Christ will rise first, and be like to him, and reign with him for evermore.

{p} Nyly "diversetur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "lodgeth", Ainsworth.

Psalms 30:6

Ver. 6. And in my prosperity,.... Either outward prosperity, when he was settled in his kingdom, and as acknowledged king by all the tribes of Israel, and had gotten the victory over all his enemies, and was at rest from them round about; or inward and spiritual prosperity, having a spiritual appetite for the word, being in the lively exercise of grace, growing in it, and in the knowledge of Christ; favoured with communion with God, having flesh discoveries of pardoning grace and mercy, corruptions being subdued, the inward man renewed with spiritual strength, and more fruitful in every good word and work. This being the case,

I said, I shall never be moved; so in outward prosperity men are apt to sing a requiem to themselves, and fancy it will always be thus with them, be in health of body, and enjoying the affluence of temporal things, and so put away the evil day in one sense and another from them; and even good men themselves are subject to this infirmity,
Job 29:18; and who also, when in comfortable frames of soul, and in prosperous circumstances in spiritual things, are ready to conclude if will always be thus with them, or better. Indeed they can never be moved as to their state and condition with respect to God; not from his heart, where they are set

as a seal; nor out of the arms of Christ, and covenant of grace; nor out of the family of God; nor from a state of justification and grace; but they may be moved as to the exercise of grace and discharge of duty, in which they vary; and especially when they are self-confident, and depend upon their own strength for the performance of these things, and for a continuance in such frames, which seems to have been David's case; and therefore he corrects himself, and his sense of things, in Ps 30:7.

Psalms 30:7

Ver. 7. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong,.... The psalmist found himself mistaken, and acknowledges it; that as it was not owing to his own merit that he enjoyed the prosperity that he did, so neither was the continuance of it owing to his goodness, power, and strength, but to the free grace and favour of God; as the church of God is compared to a mountain, and the several individuals of believers are like to Mount Zion, so the soul of a child of God may be called his mountain, which is made strong by the Lord as to its state in Christ, being set on him, the Rock of ages, and sure foundation, where it is safe and secure; and as to its grace, whenever it is in any strong exercise, which is altogether owing to the favour of God, and continues as long as he pleases;

thou didst hide thy face, [and] I was troubled; the Lord may hide his face from his people, and yet their state be safe; their mountain stands strong in that respect; yet this generally produces a change of frames; it gives trouble, and faith and hope become feeble and languid in their acts and exercises; this shows the changeableness of frames, that they are not to be depended upon; that they are entirely owing to the pleasure of God, and that rejoicing only should be in him: very likely some regard is had to the affair of Absalom's rebellion, which came unawares, unthought of, when David was in the greatest prosperity and security.

Psalms 30:8

Ver. 8. I cried to thee, O Lord,.... In his trouble, when the Lord had hid his face from him, and he was sensible that he had departed from him: he was not stupid and unaffected with it; nor did he turn his back upon God, and seek to others; but he cried after a departing God, which showed love to him, and some degree of faith in him, by looking again towards his holy temple, and waiting upon him until he returned;

and unto the Lord I made supplication; in the most humble manner; entreating his grace and mercy, and that he would again show him his face and favour.

Psalms 30:9

Ver. 9. What profit [is there] in my blood?.... Should that be shed, and he die by the hands of his enemies, through divine permission: death is not profitable to a man's self by way of merit; it does not atone for sin, satisfy justice, and merit heaven; even the death of martyrs, and of such who shed their blood, died in the cause of Christ, and for his sake, is not meritorious; it does not profit in such sense: there is profit in no blood but in the blood of Christ, by which peace is made, pardon procured, and redemption obtained. Indeed death is consequentially profitable to good men; it is an outlet of all sorrows and afflictions, and the inlet of joy and happiness; it is the saints' passage to heaven, and upon it they are immediately with Christ, and rest from their labours: nor is there profit in the blood of the saints to them that shed it; for when inquisition is made for it, vengeance will be taken on them who have shed it, and blood will be given them to drink, as will be particularly to antichrist: nor is there any profit in it to the Lord himself; which seems to be what is chiefly designed, since it is used by the psalmist as an argument with him in prayer, that he might not be left by him, and to his enemies, so as to perish, since no glory could accrue to God by it from them; they would not give him thanks for it, but ascribe it to themselves, and say their own hand had done it; so far, the psalmist suggests, would his death be from being profitable to God, that it would rather be a loss to the interest of religion; since he had not as yet fully restored religion, and settled the pure worship of God in order, and made the preparations for the building the house of God he intended. God may be glorified in the death of his people; either by their dying in the faith of interest in him; or by suffering death for his name's sake; but, in a strict sense, there is nothing either in life or death in which man can be profitable unto God; see Job 22:2; some understand this of life; because the life is in the blood: as if the sense was, of what advantage is life to me? it would have been better for the if I had never been born, had had no life and being at all, if I must for ever be banished from thy presence, and go down to the pit of hell, which they suppose is designed in the following phrase;

when I go down to the pit; though the grave seems rather to be meant, and the former sense is best;

shall the dust praise thee? that is, men, whose original is dust, being reduced to dust again, as the body at death, when laid in the grave, and corrupted there, is; this lifeless dust cannot praise the Lord: the soul indeed dies not with the body; nor does it sleep in the grave with it; nor is it unemployed in heaven; but is continually engaged in the high praises of God: but the sense of the psalmist is, that should he die, and be buried, and be reduced to dust, he should no more praise the Lord in the land of the living, among men, to the glory of divine grace and goodness; so that this revenue of his glory would be lost. Shall it declare thy truth? either the truth of the Gospel, which lies in the word of God; or rather the faithfulness of God in the performance of his promises; see Ps 40:10.

Psalms 30:10

Ver. 10. Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me,.... By lifting up the light of his countenance again upon him; by manifesting and applying his pardoning grace to him, and by delivering him out of all his afflictions;

Lord, be thou my helper; in this time of trouble; for he knew that vain was the help of man; and he was entirely in the right to betake himself to the Lord, who was able to help him, when none else could.

Psalms 30:11

Ver. 11. Those hast turned for me my mourning into dancing,.... This, with what follows, expresses the success he had in seeking the Lord by prayer and supplication; there was a sudden change of things, as it often is with the people of God; sometimes they are mourning by reason of sin, their own and others; or on account of afflictions; or because of spiritual decays; or through the temptations of Satan; or, as it was the case of the psalmist now, because of the hidings of God's face; but this mourning is exchanged for joy and gladness when the Lord discovers his pardoning love, revives his work in their souls, takes off his afflicting hand from them, rebukes the tempter, and delivers out of his temptations, and shows himself, his grace and favour;

thou hast put off my sackcloth; which was used in mourning for relations, and in times of calamity and distress, and as a token of humiliation and repentance, Ge 37:34;

and girded me with gladness; by these phrases the same thing is signified as before; see Isa 61:3.

Psalms 30:12

Ver. 12. To the end that [my] glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent,.... Meaning either his soul, the more noble and glorious part of him; or the members of his body, his tongue, which is the glory of it, and with which he glorified God; see Ps 16:9; compared with **Ac 2:26**, this was the end that was to be answered by changing the scene of things; and which was answered;

O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever; to the end of life, as long as he had a being, and to all eternity, Ps 104:33. Jerom interprets the whole psalm of the resurrection of Christ.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 31:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 31

To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David. This psalm, according to Arama, was composed by David when in Keilah; but, according to Kimchi and others, when the Ziphites proposed to deliver him up into the hands of Saul; and who, upon their solicitations, came down and surrounded him with his army, from whom in haste he made his escape, and to which he is thought to refer in Ps 31:22. Theodoret supposes it was written by David when he fled from Absalom, and that it has some respect in it to his sin against Uriah, in that verse.

Ver. 1. In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust,.... Not in any creature, but in the Lord Jehovah; the Targum, "in thy Word"; the essential Logos, or Word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God, and so an equal object of faith, trust, and confidence, as Jehovah the Father: this act includes a trusting all with God, body and soul, and the welfare of them, in time, and to eternity; and a trusting him for all things, both of providence and grace, and for both grace and glory, and is a continued act; for the psalmist does not say, "I have trusted", or "I will trust", but "I do"; and this was a very consider able thing to do in this time of his distress: the Lord is to be trusted in at all times;

let me never be ashamed; neither in this world, nor in that to come. The believer has no reason to be ashamed of anything in this life but sin, and the imperfection of his own righteousness, and his trust in it; not of the Lord, in whom he trusts; nor of his Word, or Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom he believes as his Saviour and Redeemer; nor of the Spirit, and his work of grace upon him; nor of his faith, hope, trust, and confidence in them; nor of the Gospel, the means of faith, and of the support of it; nor of, the reproaches, afflictions, and sufferings, he endures for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; nor of his ordinances and his people; nor will he be ashamed hereafter at the coming of Christ, when he will appear in his righteousness, be clothed with white robes, have palms in his hands, and shall stand at his right hand, and be received into glory;

deliver me in thy righteousness; not in his own, by which he knew there was no acceptance with God, no justification before him, nor any deliverance and salvation from sin and death; but by the righteousness of God, which the Son of God has wrought out, God the Father accepts of and imputes, and the Spirit of God reveals and applies; by this there is deliverance from sin, its guilt, and damning power, and from the curses and condemnation of the law, and from wrath to come, and from the second death.

Psalms 31:2

Ver. 2. Bow down thine ear to me,.... Which is said after the manner of men, who, when they give attention, and listen to anything, stoop, and incline the ear; and this for God to do, as he sometimes does, is wonderful condescending grace!

deliver me speedily; which shows that he was in great danger, and his case required haste: the Lord does help right early, and is sometimes a present help in time of need, and delivers at once, as soon as the mercy is asked for;

be thou my strong rock: for shelter and security from enemies, as well as to build his everlasting salvation on, and to stand firmly upon, and out of danger;

for an house of defence to save me; both for an house to dwell in, Lord being the dwelling place of his people in all generations, and a strong habitation to which they may continually resort; and for protection and safety, their place of defence in him being the munition of rocks, a strong hold, and a strong tower from the enemy.

Psalms 31:3

Ver. 3. For thou [art] my rock and my fortress,.... What he prayed for he knew him to be, and to have been in times past, and could claim his interest in him; and therefore entreats that he would appear to be to him what he was in himself, and what he had been to him;

therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me; either as a shepherd does his flock, gently, as they are able to bear it; into the green pastures of the word and ordinances, and beside the still waters of divine love, and to the overflowing fountain, and fulness of grace in himself; or as a general leads and guides his army; Christ being a Leader and Commander of the people, and the great Captain of their salvation, and who being at the head of them, they fear no enemy; or as a guide leads and directs such as are ignorant, and out of the way. The psalmist desires the Lord would lead him in the way of truth and paths of righteousness, according to his word; and guide him with his counsel, and by his Spirit, that so he might walk in the way in which he should go; and this he entreats he would do "for [his] name's sake"; not for any merit or worthiness in him; but for the glory of his own name, and for the honour of his free grace and mercy, for which the Lord often does many things; he defers his anger, he purges away the sins of his people, he forgives their transgressions, and remembers their sins no more, for his name's sake.

Psalms 31:4

Ver. 4. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me,.... The Ziphites, and Saul, and his men; the former intending treacherously to betray him, and the latter encompassing him about in order to take him; and such was his danger and difficulty, that he saw none but God could deliver him; and he it is that breaks the nets of men, and the snares of the devil, which they secretly lay for the people of God, that they may stumble, and fall, and be taken, and delivers them out of them;

for thou [art] my strength; the author, giver, and maintainer, both of his natural and spiritual strength; and who was able, and was only able, to pull him out of the net, and extricate him out of the difficulties in which he was.

Psalms 31:5

Ver. 5. Into thine hand I commit my spirit,.... Either his life, as to a faithful Creator and Preserver, who was the God of his life, gave him it, and upheld his soul in it; or his soul, and the eternal salvation of it, which he committed into the hand of the Lord his Redeemer, where he knew it would be safe, and out of whose hands none can pluck; or this he might say, as apprehensive of immediate death, through the danger he was in; and therefore commits his spirit into the hands of God, to whom he knew it belonged, and to whom it returns at death, and dies not with the body, but exists in a separate state, and would be immediately with him. Our Lord Jesus Christ used the same words when he was expiring on the cross, and seems to have taken them from hence, or to refer to these, Lu 23:46;

thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth; which may be understood, either of the temporal redemption of his life from destruction in times past, which encouraged him to commit his life into the hands of God now, who was the same, and changed not; or of spiritual and eternal redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and which the psalmist speaks of as if it was past, though it was to come, because of the certainty of it; just as Isaiah speaks of the incarnation and sufferings of Christ, **Isa 9:6**; and of which he was assured, because the Lord, who had provided, appointed, and promised the Redeemer, was the God of truth, and was faithful to every word of promise; and Christ, who had engaged to be the Redeemer, was faithful to him that appointed him; and having an interest therefore in this plenteous redemption, by virtue of which he was the Lord's, he committed himself into his hands.

Psalms 31:6

Ver. 6. I have hated them that regard lying vanities,.... Soothsaying and divination, as Aben Ezra and others think; made use of by kings, and generals of armies, to know when it was proper to go out to war, and what success they should have; see Eze 21:21; but such men and their practices David abhorred; he took no such methods when in distress, but applied to the Lord, and trusted in him; or rather idol gods, as Jarchi, and others, who are vanity, and the work of errors, and are nothing in the world; see **Jon 2:8**; all will worship and superstition may be included in this phrase, which being not according to the will and word of God, is worshipping in vain, and carries off from true spiritual worship; and so is a lying vanity, and to be detested, and the abettors of it: as also all errors and heresies; these are great swelling words of vanity, and are lies in hypocrisy; and likewise all immorality and wickedness, which spring from the vanity of the mind, and promise much liberty and pleasure, but deceive, and therefore lying; yea, all worldly enjoyments are vanity and vexation of spirit, and are fallacious and deceitful when trusted in; and indeed every false trust and confidence may come under this name; such as trust in riches, in wisdom and knowledge, in carnal descent, and privileges, in a moral and legal righteousness, and even in a bare profession of true religion, and a subjection to Gospel ordinances; for there is no true object of trust, no Redeemer and Saviour, but the Lord: now such as regard those lying vanities are they that look to them, love them, embrace them, and put their confidence in them; and such are to be "hated"; not their persons, but their principles and practices, and they themselves are to be shunned and abstained from;

but I trust in the Lord; the God of truth, that cannot lie, deny himself, nor deceive; who is unchangeable, and without any variableness, or shadow of turning.

Psalms 31:7

Ver. 7. I will be glad, and rejoice in thy mercy,.... Both because of the nature of it, which is large and abundant, free and sovereign, from everlasting to everlasting, and is communicated in and through Christ, and is a good ground of hope and trust; and because of the effects of it, or what it has produced; for to it are owing the covenant of grace, and all the sure mercies of it; the mission of Christ, and redemption by him; regeneration, and the forgiveness of sins, and even eternal life and glory; besides a multitude of blessings, deliverances, and salvations in Providence; on account of all which there is great reason for joy and gladness; of which the following are particulars;

for thou hast considered my trouble; inward, arising from indwelling sin, doubts and fears, desertions and darkness, and Satan's temptations; and outward, from the world, and the men of it, and by reason of bodily afflictions: now the Lord looks upon the troubles of his people, and upon them in them, with an eye of pity and compassion; he sympathizes with them; he considers the nature of their trouble, their weakness to bear it, and the best way, in tans, and time to deliver out of it; he working all things after the counsel of his own will; see **Ex 3:7**;

thou hast known my soul in adversities; that is, the Lord had took notice of him, approved of him, loved him, had visited him, and made known his love to him, and owned him for his own, and had chosen him in the furnace of affliction; a time and season when oftentimes friends and acquaintance are shy, and will not look upon men, know them, and own them; but the Lord does otherwise, and which is another reason of joy and gladness in his mercy.

Psalms 31:8

Ver. 8. And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy,.... When in Keilah, in the wilderness of Ziph, and Maon, and encompassed about by Saul and his army, 1Sa 23:7; nor does the Lord suffer his people to be shut up under the power of sin and Satan, so that they cannot come forth in the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty: but he brings their souls out of prison, that they may praise his name;

thou hast set my feet in a large room; at full liberty from his enemies; Saul and his army being called off from pursuing him, by tidings of an invasion by the Philistines, 1Sa 23:27; and this is the case of the saints when they are brought to Christ, to walk by faith at large on him; when grace is drawn forth into exercise, and spiritual knowledge is increased, and they are delivered from their enemies; or, however, can look upon them as conquered ones, and are sure of victory over them, and at last of an entire deliverance from them; see **Ps 4:1**.

Psalms 31:9

Ver. 9. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble,.... A sudden change of case and frame this! and so it is with the people of God; as soon as, out of one trouble, they are in another; these are what are appointed for them, and lie in their pathway to heaven, and are necessary; and under them it is quite right to betake themselves to the Lord, who is a merciful God; and it is best to cast themselves upon his mercy, having no merit of their own to plead with him; and they may freely tell him all their distresses, as the psalmist here does, and hope for grace and mercy to help them in time of need;

mine eye, is consumed with grief; expressed by tears; through the multitude of which, by reason of trouble, his sight was greatly harmed; according to Jarchi, the word signifies, that his sight was so dim as is a man's when he puts a glass before his eyes, to see what is beyond the glass: this shows that the invention of spectacles was before the year 1105; for in that year Jarchi died; and proves it more early than any other writer has pretended to {a}; for the commonly received opinion is, that they were invented at the latter end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century; but the apostle, as A-Lapide thinks, respects them, in 1Co 13:12; and they are mentioned by Plautus {b}, who lived almost two hundred years before the birth of Christ: the same Jarchi observes on **Ps 6:7**;

[yea], my soul and my belly; perhaps he could not eat his food, or digest it, which brought upon him internal disorders, and even brought his soul or life into danger.

{a} See Chambers's Dictionary on the word "Spectacles". {b} Vid. Ainsworth's Lat. Dict. in voce "Conspicill". & Panciroll. Rer. Memorab. par. 2. tit. 15. & Salmath. in ib. p. 268.

Psalms 31:10

Ver. 10. For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing,.... Which shows the continuance of his troubles, and that his whole life had been, as it were, an uninterrupted series of sorrows;

my strength faileth because of mine iniquity; this opens the source and spring of all his grief and trouble; his sin, and the sin of his nature, in which he was conceived and born; indwelling sin, which remained and worked in him; and it may be also the sin of unbelief, which beset him, and prevailed in him, notwithstanding the instances of divine goodness, the declarations of grace, the discoveries of love, and the exceeding great and precious promises he had made to him; as also his daily sins and infirmities, and very likely some great backslidings, which had brought grief of soul upon aim, and which grief affected the several parts of his body. Sin was the cause of the failure of natural strength in Adam and his posterity; of diseases and death, by which their strength is weakened in the way; and was the cause of impairing moral strength in men to do that which is good, and has a very great influence on the spiritual strength of the Lord's people, in the exercise of grace;

and my bones are consumed; which are the firmest and strongest parts of the human body, and the support of it.

Psalms 31:11

Ver. 11. I was a reproach among all mine enemies,.... This is a common case of the people of God; and though it may be the least of their afflictions, yet it is not grateful to the flesh; and it is as it is made: under divine supports saints rejoice, and take pleasure in reproaches, that they are counted worthy to bear them, and esteem them as great riches; at other times they seize and feed upon their spirits, and are ready to break their hearts;

but especially among my neighbours; who knew him, and knew he did not deserve to be so treated; and who ought, as neighbours, to have loved him, and done all good offices to him; so that this is an aggravation both of their sin and his distress;

and a fear to mine acquaintance; not that they were afraid that he should do them any mischief; but they were afraid to own him, and to do him any service; unless the sense is, that they were afraid that evil would befall him, that he should not escape with his life; which, though it may express the affectionate concern of his friends, yet shows the danger he was exposed to;

they that did see me without fled from me; as if he had something very pestilential and infectious about him.

Psalms 31:12

Ver. 12. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind,.... Either by his friends, being out of sight, out of mind; as even the nearest relations and acquaintance are, in process of time, when dead, **Ec 9:5**; or by the Lord; which shows the weakness of his faith, the uncomfortable frame he was in, through darkness and desertion; see Ps 88:5;

I am like a broken vessel; or a "perishing vessel" {c}; or "a vessel of perdition" {d}: the Septuagint version renders it "a lost vessel" {e}; one entirely useless, wholly lost, and irrecoverably so; like a broken vessel, which can never be put together again, Isa 30:14; a most sad apprehension he had of himself, as if his case was desperate, and he a vessel of wrath; compare with this, **Ro 9:22**.

{c} dba ylkk "sicut vas periens", Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus. {d} So Ainsworth. {e} V. L. Pagninus, Musculus, Piscator.

Psalms 31:13

Ver. 13. For I have heard the slander of many,.... Both enemies and neighbours;

fear [was] on every side; his enemies were a "Magormissabib" to him, Jer 20:3; encompassed him around, so that he was in fear from every quarter;

while they took counsel together against me; how to apprehend him, and what to do with him;

they devised to take away my life; nothing short of that would satisfy; but life is in the hand of God; men may devise, but God disappoints, and his counsel stands; hence the psalmist was encouraged, after all, to trust in him, in this time of imminent danger, as follows.

Psalms 31:14

Ver. 14. But I trusted in thee, O Lord,.... His faith revived again under all the discouraging views he had of things, and was exercised upon the Lord; he committed himself to him, believing he was able to help him in his time of trouble, and deliver him;

I said, thou [art] my God; he claimed his covenant interest in him, and used it as an argument with him to have regard unto him, and as a support to his faith in his present distress; See Gill on "Ps 7:1".

Psalms 31:15

Ver. 15. My times [are] in thy hand,.... And not in the hand of his enemies; as his time of life and death, which was only by the direction and appointment of God, was in his power, and fixed by him; nor could his enemies take away his life before his time, and without the will of his covenant God: the time of his coming to the throne, and what was gone over him during his reign hitherto, 1Ch 29:30; and all his times of trouble in it; times of prosperity and of adversity; of darkness, desertion, and temptation; and of joy, peace, and comfort; these were all in the hands of the Lord, at his disposal, and ordered by him for the good of his servant, and for the glory of his own name; and this was a quieting consideration to the psalmist under his present trials and exercises; the Targum is, "the times of my redemption"

deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me; a good man has many enemies, and even his very goodness creates him such; for wicked men are enemies to all that is good; and those are persecuting ones, in one way or other; either by words or deeds; and deliverance out of their hands is by the Lord, who sometimes gives his people rest from adversity, and suffers not the rod of the wicked to continue on them; and therefore it is best to apply to him for it.

Psalms 31:16

Ver. 16. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant,.... In which he prays for the gracious presence of God, the manifestations of himself unto him, the discoveries of his love, the enjoyment of him in Christ, communion with him, the comforts of his Spirit, and joys of his salvation; see **Nu 6:25**;

save me for thy mercies' sake; not for any merit and righteousness of his own, but for the sake of the grace and goodness of the Lord; which is putting salvation, whether temporal or spiritual, upon its right foot and foundation; which is never wrought out by, or is for works of righteousness done by men, but according to the grace and mercy of God.

Psalms 31:17

Ver. 17. Let me not be ashamed, O Lord,.... The same petition as in
Ps 31:1;

for I have called upon thee; who is nigh unto all that call upon him in truth, and is rich unto them, and has promised to help and save them; which should he not do, not only he would be made ashamed, but the promise of God would seem to fail: for the psalmist does not plead any duty of his, nor make a merit of his prayers; but has respect to the promise and faithfulness of God;

let the wicked be ashamed; as they will be, sooner or later, of their wickedness, and of their false trust and confidence; of their being incensed against Christ, and their rage against his people, and persecution of them;

[and] let them be silent in the grave; as all are that are there; and the sense is, let them be brought to the grave, where they will be silent, or cease {f}; that is, from their evil words and works, and particularly from troubling the saints, **Job 3:17**.

{f} "Verbum est" Mmd "quod significat cessare ab aliquo opere, vel sermone", Psal. iv. 5. Gejerus.

Psalms 31:18

Ver. 18. Let the lying lips be put to silence,.... Being convicted of the lies told by them, and so silenced and confounded; or being cut off and destroyed, as all such will be in the Lord's own time, Ps 12:3. It is very likely the psalmist may have respect either to Doeg the Edomite, who loved lying rather than righteousness; or to others that were about Saul, who lying said to him that David sought his harm, even to take away his kingdom and his life, Ps 52:3;

which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous; meaning himself; not that he thought himself righteous in the sight of God by any righteousness of his own, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; see Ps 143:2. Though he may have regard here to the righteousness of his cause before men, and assert himself righteous, as he might with respect to the "grievous things", the hard and lying speeches, which were spoken against him, in a proud, haughty, and contemptuous manner. And it is no unusual thing for such false charges to be brought against righteous men; nay, such hard speeches were spoken by ungodly men against Jesus Christ the righteous himself, **Jude 1:15**. The Targum interprets it of "reproaches".

Psalms 31:19

Ver. 19. [O] how great [is] thy goodness,.... Not the natural and essential goodness of God; for though that is large and abundant, yea, infinite, as every perfection of his is, yet it cannot with propriety be said to be laid up and wrought out; but rather the effects of his goodness, and not those which appear in Providence, for they, though very large and plenteous, are common to all, and are not restrained to them that fear the Lord, and trust in him; but such as are displayed in a way of special grace and favour to his own people, and which the psalmist saw his interest in and was affected with; and which supported his faith under his present troubles, and appeared to be so great, both for quality and quantity, that he could not well say how great the blessings of his goodness were;

which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; both grace and glory; the blessings of grace were laid up in God's heart, in his thoughts and purposes, from everlasting; and in Christ, in whom the fulness of all grace dwells; he was loaded with the blessings of goodness, and his people were blessed in him with all spiritual blessings, and had all grace given them in him before the world was; and these were likewise laid up in the covenant of grace, ordered in all things, and sure; eternal glory is the hope and crown of righteousness laid up in heaven, where it is reserved for the saints, who are heirs of it: and the laying up of all this goodness shows it to be a treasure, riches of grace, and riches of glory; and that it is an hidden treasure, and riches of secret places, which are out of the view of carnal men, and not perfectly seen and enjoyed by the people of God themselves as yet; and also that it is safe and secure for them, and can never be lost; and it expresses the paternal care of God, his great love and affection for them, to lay up so early so much goodness for them: and this is said to be "for them that fear [him]"; not naturally, but by his grace; for the fear of God is not in man naturally, but is put there by the grace of God; and such who have it are those who are brought to a true sight and sense of sin, so as to loathe it and forsake it; for the fear of the Lord is to hate evil, and by it men depart from it, and because of it cannot sin as others do; such have an humble sense of themselves, their own insufficiency and weakness, and trust in the grace of God and righteousness of Christ; they have a filial reverence of God, and worship him in spirit and in truth: but now this fear of the Lord is not the cause of goodness being laid up for them, for that only is the will of God; and besides the fear of God is a part of the goodness which is laid up in promise in the covenant of grace, Jer 32:39; and it is the goodness of God displayed in the blessings of it, such as pardon of sin, &c. which influences, promotes, and increases the fear of God, **Ho 3:5**; but, goodness being manifested to and bestowed upon them that fear the Lord, it appears eventually to be laid up for them;

[which] thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! by which may be meant the work of redemption, in which the goodness of God greatly appears; in calling and appointing Christ unto it, in sending him to effect it, in strengthening him as man and Mediator to do it; and in the work itself, in which many things are wrought, the law is fulfilled, justice satisfied, a righteousness brought in, peace made, pardon procured, and everlasting salvation obtained. And whereas this is said to be "wrought for them that trust

in" the Lord, it is not to be understood as if trusting in the Lord was the cause of this work being wrought out, which is the love of God and grace of Christ; but inasmuch as those that trust in the Lord have openly an interest in redemption, and they that believe in Christ shall be saved; therefore it clearly appears in the issue of things to be wrought out for them. The phrase "before the sons of men", may be connected either with the goodness wrought, and so signifies that the work of redemption was done in a most public manner, openly before men, even the enemies of God's people; nor was it in the power of men and devils to hinder it; or else with trusting in the Lord, and so is expressive of a public profession of faith and confidence in the Lord before men, which ought to be done: moreover this goodness wrought may include the good work of grace upon the soul; and the Lord's fulfilling the good pleasure of his goodness in the hearts of his people, and the work of faith with power on them; and also the many deliverances of them out of afflictions and temptations, and the many salvations from their enemies he works for them in the earth, before the sons of men.

Psalms 31:20

Ver. 20. Thou shall hide them in the secret of thy presence,.... That is, those that fear the Lord and trust in him; and therefore they are called his "hidden ones", Ps 83:3; these the Lord preserves in times of trouble and danger, and when his indignation is out against others; and so the Targum is, "in the time of thine anger"; see Isa 26:20; the presence of God is their protection, he himself is a wall of fire round about them, his favour compasses them as a shield, and they are kept as in a garrison by his power; see Ps 91:1; and that "from the pride of man", which otherwise would at once oppress, bear them down, and destroy them, Ps 124:1;

thou shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues; which areas a sharp sword, and from whence proceed devouring words, such contradiction of sinners as Christ endured; not that the saints are kept free from the reproaches of men, from the lash of their tongues, but from being harmed by them; and sometimes, through the strivings and contentions of men with one another, they privately escape and are preserved, as the Apostle Paul was, Ac 23:9.

Psalms 31:21

Ver. 21. Blessed [be] the Lord,.... A form of thanksgiving, in which the psalmist calls upon himself and others to bless and praise the Lord for the singular mercy granted him, expressed in the next clause;
See Gill on "Ps 18:46";

for he hath showed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city; either in the city Keilah, so Jarchi; a city which had gates and bars, where Saul thought he had David safe, and he could not escape his hands; but notwithstanding that, and though the inhabitants of that place intended to deliver him up, yet he was marvellously saved; as he also was from the Ziphites; and when Saul and his army had encompassed him about, by a surprising incident, a messenger coming to Saul just as he was about to seize him, informing him that the Philistines had invaded the land,
1Sa 23:7. Or the city of Jerusalem, which was fortified both by nature and art, whither he was brought and placed as king, and enjoyed rest from all his enemies round about him, **2Sa 5:6**. Or this may spiritually design the church of God, which is called a strong city, being built on Christ the Rock, and having salvation for walls and bulwarks, Isa 26:1: where the Lord displays his banner of love, makes discoveries of his marvellous kindness, and commands his blessing for evermore. Some render it "as in a strong city" {g}, and take the sense to be, that he was safe, through the kindness of God showed to him in the salvation of him, as if he was in a fortified city {h}, and this was marvellous in his eyes, as every instance of providential goodness is to the people of God; especially his lovingkindness showed in spiritual things, in choosing them in Christ, saving them by him, regenerating them by his Spirit, and taking them into his family; which love is free and sovereign, distinguishing, unchangeable, from everlasting to everlasting; and so wonderful and astonishing; and which was hid in God until revealed; and sometimes the manifestations of it are withdrawn, and then it is showed again, and fresh discoveries of it are made, and effects of it applied, and the blessings of it bestowed, which occasion thankfulness.

{g} rwum ryeb "ut in civitate munita", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; Michaelis. {h} Aben Ezra, Kimchi, & Ben Melech in loc.

Psalms 31:22

Ver. 22. For I said in my haste,.... When he made haste to get away for fear of Saul, 1Sa 23:26; and so the Targum renders it, "I said when I sought to flee away"; or else he said this hastily and rashly, in the hurry of his mind, being in the utmost confusion and distress, as in Ps 116:11;

I am cut off from before thine eyes; his case was very bad, he was reduced to the utmost extremity, and his faith was as low; he thought it was all over with him, and there was no way of escape, nor hope of it; and that he was like a branch cut off, ready to be cast into the fire; that he was cut off from the house of God, and from communion with him; that he would never look upon him more, and he should never enjoy his presence: this instance of weakness and unbelief is mentioned to illustrate the goodness of God, and to make his kindness appear to be the more marvellous in the salvation of him; so sometimes the Lord suffers his people to be in the utmost distress, and their faith to be at the lowest ebb, when he appears to their help, and makes it manifest that their salvation is by his own arm, and of his own good will, and not by them, or for any goodness of theirs;

nevertheless, thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee; for though faith was very low, and unbelief strongly prevailed, yet he was not so far gone as to stop praying; for though he saw no rational way of escape, and feared the Lord would take no notice of him; yet he knew that nothing was impossible with him, and therefore he still looked up to him, as Jonah did when he thought himself in a like condition, **Jon 2:4**; and such was the grace and goodness of God, that he did not despise but regard his prayer, though attended with so much weakness and unbelief.

Psalms 31:23

Ver. 23. O love the Lord, all ye his saints,.... To whom his goodness extends; who are favoured with the blessings of his grace, as pardon, peace, and righteousness; and who particularly are sanctified by his Spirit, and have principles of grace and holiness wrought in their hearts: these, even all of them, are called upon to love the Lord, having that grace implanted in their souls; that is, to express it, not by words, but by deeds, under a sense of the love and kindness of God to them; and to join with the psalmist in an affectionate reverence of him, trust in him, and thankfulness to him, on account of his marvellous kindness showed him;

[for] the Lord preserveth the faithful; such as trust in him, believe in Christ, and are faithful to his word and ordinances, abide by them, and stays near his people; these he not only preserves in a providential way, but he preserves them in a way of special grace; he keeps them "from evil", as the Targum;

from the evil of sin; from a total and final falling away by it; from the evil of the world, so as not to be drawn off from Christ and his ways, either by its frowns or flatteries; and from the evil one, Satan, from being destroyed by him and his temptations; and these are preserved safe to the kingdom and glory of Christ, by the mighty power of God: some render the words, "the Lord keepeth faithfulness" {i}; he will never suffer his own faithfulness to fail; he is a covenant keeping God, and is always true to his word and promise;

and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer; such as all self-righteous persons are, and all that speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the truly righteous, Ps 31:18; who bear hard upon them, and oppress them; and such as antichrist and his party, who exalts himself above all that is called God; but in what those deal proudly, God is above them, an more than a match for them, and he sets himself against them; he resists them, and will reward them according to their works.

{i} Mynwma "fidelitatem", Gejerus; or "fidelitles", Ainsworth.

Psalms 31:24

Ver. 24. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart,....
See Gill on "Ps 27:14"; by this instance of God's wonderful kindness to the psalmist, he would have the saints take heart, and be of good cheer, even in the greatest distresses, since their case cannot be worse than his was; and yet he had deliverance out of it;

all ye that hope in the Lord; for the eye of the Lord is on such, and he takes delight in them, Ps 33:18. The Targum is, "who hope for", or "trust in the word of the Lord"; the essential Word, the promised Messiah.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 32:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 32

[A Psalm], of David, Maschil. This is the first of the psalms that bears this title: some think it is the name of a musical instrument, on which this psalm was sung; others the first word of a song, to the tune of which it was sung, as Aben Ezra; some say it is so called, because it was explained by an interpreter, as Jarchi; and the Rabbins {k} say, that every psalm that is called "Maschil" was dictated by an interpreter: the Targum renders it "a good understanding"; and the word properly signifies "instruction", or "causing to understand" {l}; and it may be the apostle has some reference to this title in 1Co 14:15; It is an instructive psalm; a didascalic ode, as Junius renders it: it gives an account how the psalmist was instructed under a dispensation of Providence; and was brought to a sense of sin, and acknowledgment of it; and was favoured with a discovery of pardoning grace; and in it he takes upon him to instruct others, Ps 32:8, and does instruct in the doctrine of the pardon of sin by the grace of God.

{k} Elias Levita in Tishbi, p. 271. {l} lykvm "erudiens", Musculus, Munster, Vatablus, Montanus; "informans", Gejerus; "an instructing psalm", Ainsworth.

Ver. 1. Blessed [is he whose] transgression [is] forgiven,.... Or "lifted up" {m}; bore and carried away: sin is a transgression of the law; the guilt of it charged upon the conscience of a sinner is a heavy burden, too heavy for him to bear, and the punishment of it is intolerable: forgiveness is a removal of sin, guilt, and punishment. Sin was first taken off, and transferred from the sinner to Christ, the surety; and who laid upon him really and judicially, as the sins of the people of Israel were put upon the scapegoat typically; and was bore by him, both guilt and punishment, and taken away, finished, and made an end of; and by the application of his blood and sacrifice it is taken away from the sinner's conscience; it is caused to pass from him, and is removed afar off, as far as the east is from the west; it is so lifted off from him as to give him ease and peace, and so as never to return to the destruction of him; wherefore such a man is a happy man; he has much peace, comfort, calmness, and serenity of mind now can appear before God with intrepidity, and serve him without fear; no bill of indictment can hereafter be found against him; no charge will be exhibited, and so no condemnation to him. The same is expressed, though in different words, in the next clause;

[whose] sin [is] covered; not by himself, by any works of righteousness done by him; for these are a covering too narrow; nor by excuses and extenuations; for prosperity and happiness do not attend such a conduct, Pr 28:13; but by Christ; he is the mercy seat, the covering of the law; who is the covert of his people from the curses of it, and from the storm of divine wrath and vengeance, due to the transgressions of it; his blood is the purple covering of the chariot, under which the saints ride safe to heaven; the lines of his blood are drawn over crimson and scarlet sins, by which they are blotted out, and are not legible; and being clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness, all their

sins are covered from the eye of divine Justice; not from the eye of God's omniscience, which sees the sins of all men, and beholds those of his own people; and which he takes notice of, and corrects for, in a fatherly way; but from vindictive justice, they are so hid as not to be imputed and charged, nor the saints to be condemned for them; such are unblamable and unreproveable in the sight of God, and are all fair in the eyes of Christ; and their sins are caused to pass away from themselves, and they have no more sight and conscience of them; and though sought for at the last day, they will not be found and brought to light, nor be seen by men or angels. There is something unseemly, impure, nauseous, abominable, and provoking in sin; which will not bear to be seen by the Lord, and therefore must be covered, or the sinner can never stand in his presence and be happy.

{m} Verbum avn "elevavit quaudoque idem est ac condonavit", Gejerus; ywvn "ablata est", Piscator, Cocceius.

Psalms 32:2

Ver. 2. Blessed [is] the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity,.... Or "does not think of it" {n}; with respect unto men, at least to the harm of them; his thoughts are thoughts of peace, and not of evil; their sins and iniquities he remembers no more; he does not charge them with them, he does not reckon them, or place them to their account, having imputed them to his Son; see **2Co 5:19**. The Apostle Paul interprets this as inclusive of the imputation of righteousness without works; even of the righteousness of Christ, in which the blessedness of a man lies, **Ro 4:6**; for such an one is accepted with God, is justified in his sight, and is secure from condemnation and wrath; it is well with him at all times, in life, at death, and at judgment; he is an heir of eternal life, will enter into it, and be for ever glorified;

and in whose spirit [there is] no guile: for being thoroughly convinced of sin, he is sincere in his repentance for it, without deceit and hypocrisy in his confession of it; as David, the Apostle Paul, and the publican were, when they acknowledged themselves sinners; his faith, in looking to Christ for pardon and righteousness, is from the heart, and is unfeigned, and so is his profession of it before God, angels, and men; and whatever hypocrisy and guile are remaining in the old man, there is none in the new spirit put into him; in the new man, which is created in him, and which sinneth not: as the other phrases are expressive of pardon and justification, this points at internal sanctification, and which serves to complete the description of the happy man; such an one as

David himself was; and this happiness he illustrates from his own experience in the following verses.

{n} bvxy "cogitat", Piscator; "cogitando reputavit", Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 32:3

Ver. 3. When I kept silence,.... Was unthoughtful of sin, unconcerned about it, and made no acknowledgment and confession of it to God, being quite senseless and stupid; the Targum adds, "from the words of the law"; which seems to point at sin as the cause of what follows;

my bones waxed old; through my roaring all the day long; not under a sense of sin, but under some severe affliction, and through impatience in it; not considering that sin lay at the bottom, and was the occasion of it; and such was the violence of the disorder, and his uneasiness under it, that his strength was dried up by it, and his bones stuck out as they do in aged persons, whose flesh is wasted away from them; see
Ps 102:3.

Psalms 32:4

Ver. 4. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me,.... Meaning the afflicting hand of God, which is not joyous, but grievous, and heavy to be borne; especially without his gracious presence, and the discoveries of his love: this continued night and day, without any intermission; and may design some violent distemper; perhaps a fever; since it follows,

my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. That is, the radical moisture in him was almost dried up, as brooks in the summer season; his body was parched, as it were, with the burning heat of the disease; or with an apprehension of the wrath of God under it, or both: and so he continued until be was brought to a true sense of sin, and an acknowledgment of it, when he had the discoveries of pardoning love, as is expressed in Ps 32:5. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions read, "I am turned into distress, through a thorn being fixed"; and so Apollinarius paraphrases the words,

"I am become miserable, because thorns are fixed in my skin;"

reading Uwq for Uyq; and which Suidas {o} interprets "sin", that being like the thorn, unfruitful and pricking; see 2Co 12:7.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{o} In voce akanya.

Psalms 32:5

Ver. 5. I acknowledged my sin unto thee,.... The sin of Adam, in which he was concerned; original sin, the corruption of his nature, the sin that dwelt in him, his private and secret sins, which none knew but God and himself; even all his sins, which were many, with all their aggravated circumstances; wherefore he uses various words to express them by, in this and the following clauses; as "sin", "iniquity", and "transgressions"; the same that are used in the doctrine of pardon in the preceding verses; his confession being of the same extent with pardon, and all these he calls his own; as nothing is more a man's own than his sins are; and these the psalmist acknowledged to the Lord; or "made", or "will make known" {p} to him: not that any sin is unknown to God, even the most secret ones; but they may be said to be made known to God, when a sinner makes a sincere and hearty acknowledgment of them before him, and expresses his own sense of them; how that they are with him, and ever before him, what knowledge rather he has of them, how much he is affected with them, and concerned for the commission of them; and such an acknowledgment the Lord expects and requires of his people, **Jer 3:12**;

and mine iniquity have I not hid; by retaining it as a sweet morsel under his tongue; for he not only acknowledged it, but forsook it; or by not confessing it, as Achan; for not confessing sin is the of hiding it; or by denying it, as Gehazi, Ananias and Sapphira; or by palliating and extenuating it; or by casting the blame on others, as did Adam and his wife; see Job 31:33; or by covering it with a guise of sanctify and religion;

I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; not unto men, though in some cases confession of sin is to be made to men; a confession of it in general is to be made to the churches, and administrators of ordinances, in order to admission into a church state, and to the ordinances of Christ, **Mt 3:6**; and in case of private offences, faults are to be confessed one to another, and forgiveness granted; and in case of public offences, a confession should be made to a church publicly; partly for the satisfaction of the church, and partly for the glory of divine grace; but confession is not to be made to a priest, or to a person in a ministerial character, in order for absolution; but to the Lord only, against whom sin is committed, and who only can pardon it: and this the psalmist saith in his heart he would do, and did do it; he not only confessed facts, but the fault of them, with their evil circumstances, and that he justly deserved punishment for them; and this he did from his heart, with abhorrence of the sins committed by him, and in faith, with a view to the pardoning mercy of God in Christ;

and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. That is, either the guilt of his sin, which he took away from him; or the punishment of it, which he delivered him from: moreover, this phrase may denote the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and so may both express the sense which the psalmist had of it, and exalt the grace of God in the forgiveness of it; by which must be meant a fresh manifestation and application of pardon to his soul: now, when confession of sin, and remission of it, are thus put together, the sense is not that confession of sin is the cause of pardon; it is not the moving cause of it, that is the grace and mercy of God; nor the procuring and meritorious cause of it, that is the blood of Christ: it is not for the sake of a sinner's confession of sin, but for Christ's sake, that sin is forgiven; but this is the way in which it is enjoyed; and such as truly repent of sin, and sincerely confess it, are the persons to whom the Lord manifests his forgiving love; such may expect it, Pr 28:13.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{p} Keydwa "cognoscere feci te", Pagninus, Montanus; so Musculus, Vatablus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, & Gejerus, to the same purport.

Psalms 32:6

Ver. 6. For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto thee,.... Meaning either that the success he had met with, in acknowledging his sin, would encourage others also to take a like step, and make their supplications to the Lord also; or that every godly person should pray to God for the same blessing of pardoning grace likewise. Pardon of sin is to be prayed for; not only Moses, David, Daniel, and other Old Testament saints, prayed for it; but Christ has directed his disciples and followers, under the Gospel dispensation, to do the same, Lu 11:4; and which must be understood of praying for the manifestation of it to their consciences; for God has by one eternal act forgiven all trespasses at once, for Christ's sake; nor can any new act of pardon arise in the mind of God, or a fresh one pass in the court of heaven, nor the blood of Christ be shed again for the remission of it. Moreover, godly men will, in this sense, pray for it, as they have daily occasion to do: a godly man is a man that is created after the image of God, is born of him, and is possessed of internal powerful godliness, and has all things pertaining to it; and particularly has a godly sorrow for sin, and the fear of God in his heart, and before his eyes: and such a man is a praying one; having the spirit of grace, he has the spirit of supplication, and prays with the Spirit and with the understanding; and his praying for the pardon of sin shows that he is not without it, but daily commits it, and so needs fresh discoveries of forgiving love: and which he prays for

in a time when thou mayest be found; which is to be understood, not of any particular stated times of prayer, as morning, noon, and night; for the throne of grace is always open, and God is to be found, and grace and mercy with him at all times; and much less does this respect a day of grace for particular persons, which, if improved, and the opportunity taken, they may have pardon; but if neglected till it is over, then there is no pardon for them; for there is no such day of grace: the whole Gospel dispensation is a day of grace; and that will not be over until all the elect of God are gathered in; and until then it is, and will be; now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation; but it designs a time of need, of soul distress, in which, when persons call upon God in truth, and seek him with their whole heart, he is found by them, and they find grace and mercy with him to relieve them in their distress; the Targum is,

"in an acceptable time;"

surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him; that is, unto the godly man; not but that afflictions, which are comparable to great floods of waters, do reach godly persons; but not so as to overwhelm them and destroy them; they are delivered out of them. The phrase seems to denote safety in the greatest calamities; that though even a deluge of vengeance and awful judgments should come upon the world, yet the godly man is safe; his place is the munition of rocks; he is in the hands of Christ, and is enclosed in the arms of everlasting love, from whence he can never be taken by men or devils: the Targum interprets these "waters of many people"; and adds, so as "to do any evil", or "hurt".

Psalms 32:7

Ver. 7. Thou [art] my hiding place,.... In time of trouble; see

Ps 27:5; so Christ is said to be, Isa 32:2. "Thou shall preserve me from trouble"; not from having it; for in this world the saints must have tribulation, and through it enter the kingdom, but from being swallowed up with it; the Lord will bring them safe out of it, and of them it shall be said, "these are they that came out of great tribulation", **Re 7:14**;

thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance; or gird with gladness, as in Ps 30:11; the meaning is, that God would give him abundant reason for praise and thankfulness; and an opportunity of attending him with songs of praise for deliverance out of the hands of his enemies, and from trouble; and that both in his house below, where the saints, his loving people and faithful subjects, would join with him, in the midst of whom he should stand encompassed with their songs of praise; or in heaven above, where he should sing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb, and be surrounded with the hallelujahs of angels and glorified saints; Aben Ebra interprets these songs of the voices of angels.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 32:8

Ver. 8. I will instruct thee,.... Or "cause thee to understand" {q}. These are by many thought to be the words of the Lord, who gives to a man an understanding of spiritual things; he instructs by his providence, and even by afflictive dispensations of providence; and by his word, which is written for the learning of men, and is profitable for doctrine and instruction in righteousness, and by the ministers of it, who are therefore called instructors in Christ; and by his Spirit, when he instructs effectually and to purpose; by him he instructs men in the knowledge of themselves, and of himself in Christ, and of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; and leads into all truth as it is in Jesus; and opens the understanding to understand the Scriptures, and the doctrines contained in them;

and teach thee in the way which shall go; the path of duty, from whence men are apt to wander; when the Lord hedges up the way they would go with thorny providences, and by his ministers, word, and Spirit, directs them in the right way; saying, this is the way, walk in it; and the way of truth, which is clearly pointed to in the Scriptures of truth, and by the Spirit of truth; and also the way of life and salvation by Christ, revealed in the Gospel and which the preachers of it show to the sons of men;

I will guide thee with mine eye; as a master guides his scholar; or as "mine eye" {r}: with as much care and tenderness as if thou wert the apple of mine eye; see De 32:10; or the words may be rendered, "I will counsel", or "give counsel"; as he does, who is wonderful in counsel, and that by his Son, who is the wonderful Counsellor; and by his word and testimonies, which are the delight of his people, and the men of their counsel: "mine eye [is] upon thee" {s}; as the eye of the Lord is upon the righteous, to watch over them for good, to provide for them, guide and direct them. These words may very well be considered as the words of David, in which he determines to act a part, agreeable to the title of the psalm, "Maschil"; which signifies instructing, or causing to understand; and as he thought himself bound in duty to do, under the influence of the grace and mercy he had received from the Lord, in the forgiveness of his sins; and which he elsewhere resolved to do in a like case, and which is an instance parallel to this,
Ps 51:13; he here promises to "instruct" men in the way of attaining to the blessedness he had been speaking of, by directing them to take the steps he did; namely, to go to the, Lord, and acknowledge and confess their sins before him, when they might expect to find pardoning mercy and grace, as he did; and to "teach" them the way of their duty upon this, to fear the Lord and his goodness, and to serve him in righteousness and holiness all the days of their lives; and to "guide [them] with his eye"; by declaring to them the gracious experiences he had been favoured with, by telling them what he himself had seen and known.

{q} Klykva "intellectum tibi dabo", V. L. Musculus; "intelligere faciam te", Pagninus, Montanus; so Ainsworth. {r} ynye Kyle hueya "consulam tibi sicut oculo meo", Drusius. {s} "Consulam, super te est oculus meus", Cocceius, Gejerus, Ainsworth; so the Targum.

Psalms 32:9

Ver. 9. Be ye not as the horse, [or] as the mule, [which] have no understanding,.... The design of this exhortation is to direct men how to behave under the instructions given; not as brutes, which have no rational faculties, but as men; that they should not show themselves thoughtless, stupid, and unteachable, as these animals, or worse than they; nor stubborn and obstinate, refractory and untractable, resolving not to be taught, stopping the ear, and pulling away the shoulder; nor ill natured and mischievous; not only hating instruction, casting away the law of the Lord, but kicking and spurning at, and persecuting such who undertake to instruct them; as these creatures sometimes attempt to throw their riders, and, when down, kick at them;

whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee; to do mischief, bite or kick; or "because they do not come near to thee" {t}; and that they may come near, and be brought into subjection, and become obedient; therefore such methods are used; see **Jas 3:3**; there is in the words a tacit intimation, that men are commonly, and for the most part, like these creatures, stupid, stubborn, and mischievous; and therefore severe methods are used by the Lord, sore chastenings, to humble and instruct them; see Jer 31:18; the mule, more especially, is remarkable for its stupidity {u}; and though the horse is docile, yet he is sometimes stubborn and refractory.

{t} Kyla brq lb "quia non accedunt ad te", Grotius. {u} "Mule, nihil sentis----", Catullus.

Psalms 32:10

Ver. 10. Many sorrows [shall be] to the wicked,.... Who will not be instructed and reformed, but are like the horse and mule, without understanding; many outward sorrows or afflictions attend them; loathsome and consuming diseases come upon their bodies by intemperance and debauchery; and they and their families are brought to a piece of bread, through their vicious courses; and inward sorrows, horror and terror of mind, seize them when their consciences are at any time awakened, and are open to conviction; when a load of guilt lies on them, what remorse of conscience they feel! and what severe reflections do they make! and how are they pierced through with many sorrows! And though indeed, for the most part, wicked men have their good things in this life, and are in prosperous circumstances, and are not in trouble, as other men; yet what they have is with a curse; and they have no true peace, pleasure, and satisfaction in what they enjoy; and the curses of a righteous law; and everlasting destruction is prepared for them in the other world, when they will have many sorrows indeed; their worm will not die, and the fire of divine fury will not be quenched; there will be for ever indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that does evil;

but he that trusteth in the Lord; not in his wealth and riches, in his wisdom and strength, in himself, and his own righteousness; for such are wicked persons; but in the Lord; in his righteousness to justify him, in his blood to pardon him, in his strength to support him, and in his grace to supply him with everything necessary for him;

mercy shall compass him about; not only follow him and overtake him, but surround him; he shall be crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies: the phrase denotes the abundance of mercies that shall be bestowed upon him here and hereafter, as both grace and glory.

Psalms 32:11

Ver. 11. Be glad in the Lord,.... The Targum renders it, "in the Word of the Lord"; in Christ the essential Word; in him as the Lord their righteousness, and because of his righteousness imputed to them, by which they become righteous; and in him as their Saviour and Redeemer, and because of the salvation which he has wrought out for them; see
Isa 61:10;

and rejoice, ye righteous; in the Lord, as before; for this is not a carnal, but spiritual joy, which is here exhorted to, the same as in **Php 4:4**; and "righteous" ones, who are excited to it, are such who are not righteous in appearance only, or in their own conceit, or by the deeds of the law, or in and of themselves; for there is none righteous this way: but who are made righteous by the obedience of Christ, and are righteousness itself in him; under a sense of which grace they live soberly, righteously, and godly; and these have great reason to rejoice and be glad;

and shout for joy all [ye that are] upright in heart: who have the truth of grace, and the root of the matter in them, oil in the vessels of their hearts, with their lamps; whose faith is unfeigned, whose hope is without hypocrisy, and whose love is without dissimulation; and who worship the Lord in spirit and in truth, and draw nigh to him with true hearts, and call upon him in the simplicity of them; these ought to rejoice, and even shout for joy, because of the grace that is wrought in them, and bestowed upon them, and the glory they shall be partakers of; for both grace and glory are given to these, and no good thing is withheld from them; the end of these upright souls is peace; and when they have done their work, they shall lie down and rest in their beds, and each one shall walk in his uprightness, Ps 84:11.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 33:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 33

Though this psalm has no title to it, it seems to be a psalm of David, from the style and matter of it; and indeed begins with the same words with which the preceding psalm is ended. Theodoret is of opinion it was written by David as a prophecy concerning Hezekiah, as a song to be sung by the people after the destruction of the Assyrian army.

Ver. 1. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous,....
See Gill on "Ps 32:11";

[for] praise is comely for the upright; it becomes them; it is their duty; they are bound unto it by the mercies and favours they have received; should they not give praise to God, the stones of the wall would cry out, and rebuke them for their ingratitude: it is beautiful, and looks lovely in them; it is an ornament to them, and is, in the sight of God, of great esteem: it is very acceptable to him, and when grace is in exercise, and their hearts in tune, being sensibly touched and impressed with the goodness of God, it is desirable by them, and is pleasant and delightful to them.

Psalms 33:2

Ver. 2. Praise the Lord with harp,.... An instrument David was well skilled in the use of, the inventor of which was Jubal, **Ge 4:21**;

sing unto, him with the psaltery; the name of this instrument is in the Hebrew language "nebel": the account which Josephus {w} gives of this, and of the former, is,

"the harp is extended with ten strings, and is plucked with a quill; the "nabla", or psaltery, has twelve sounds, and is played upon with the fingers;"

some make this and the next to be the same:

[and] an instrument of ten strings; and read them together thus, "with the psaltery of ten strings": and so the Targum, Septuagint, and other versions {x}: but it seems from Josephus that it was not a stringed instrument, but had holes, and those twelve; and besides it is distinguished from the instrument of ten

strings, Ps 92:3; it was in the form of a bottle, from whence it had its name.

{w} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. s. 3. {x} Vid. Jarchium in loc. & R. Mosem in Aben Ezra in loc.

Psalms 33:3

Ver. 3. Sing unto him a new song,.... One newly composed on account of recent mercies received; and as the mercies of God are new every morning, there ought to be a daily song of praise to him; and so a new song is a continual song, as Christ is called the "new and living way", Heb 10:20; because he is the everliving way; or the constant and only one, which always was, is, and will be. Or it may denote some famous and excellent song, as a new name is an excellent name, an unknown and unspeakable one; see **Re 2:17**; compared with Re 14:2; or respect may be had to the New Testament dispensation, in which old things are passed away, and all things become new; a new covenant is exhibited, a new and living way opened, and new ordinances instituted, and at the end of it there will be new heavens and a new earth; and so here is a new song made mention of, as suited to it;

play skilfully with a loud voice: either with the quill upon the harp, and the instrument of ten strings; or with the fingers upon the psaltery, at the same time, vocally, and aloud, expressing the new song.

Psalms 33:4

Ver. 4. For the word of the Lord [is] right,.... The revealed word of God: the law of God is right; its precepts are holy, just, and good; its sanction or penalty is righteous; it is impartial unto all; it is just in condemning the wicked, and in acquitting believers on the account of Christ's perfect righteousness, by which it is magnified and made honourable: the Gospel part of the word is right; it publishes right and good things; it directs to the right way, to heaven and happiness; it makes men right when it works effectually in them; it engages them to walk in right ways; and its doctrines are right or plain to them that have a spiritual understanding given them; and all this is matter of joy and praise;

and all his works [are done] in truth; his works of creation are done in the truth of things, with the utmost exactness and accuracy, and are a wonderful display of his power, wisdom, and goodness: his works of providence are according to the counsel of his own will, and are done in the wisest and best manner; and his work of redemption is a proof of his veracity and faithfulness to his covenant oath and promise; and his work of grace upon the hearts of his people is truth in the inward parts; and which, as he has promised to carry on and finish, he is faithful and will do it; in short, his way of acting both towards the godly and ungodly agrees with his promises to the one and his threatenings to the other, and so is in truth; and the whole of this is a reason why the saints should praise the Lord.

Psalms 33:5

Ver. 5. He loveth righteousness and judgment,.... Or "righteous judgment" {y}; he delights in the administration of it himself, **Jer 9:24**; and he is well pleased with acts of righteousness done by others, when done according to his word, from love to him, by faith in him, and with a view to his glory; especially he loves the righteousness of his son, being satisfactory to his law and justice, and his people, as clothed with it; and he delights in the condemnation of sin in the flesh of Christ, and in the righteous judgment of the world, and the prince of it, by Christ;

the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord; of the providential goodness of God, of which all creatures partake; and of the special goodness or grace of God manifested in Christ Jesus; it was full of it particularly when Christ was here on earth, who is full of grace and truth; and when the Gospel of the grace of God was preached everywhere by his apostles, according to his order, and appeared to all men; and so it will be especially in the latter day, when multitudes will be called by grace and converted, and when the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord; and still more when it will become a new earth, wherein only righteous men will dwell.

{y} jpvmw hqdu "judicium justum", Gejerus.

Psalms 33:6

Ver. 6. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made,.... The aerial and starry heavens, and the heaven of heavens, the third heaven, the seat of the divine Majesty, and the habitation of angels and glorified saints; these were

"made" even out of nothing, not out of any pre-existent matter, nor were they eternal; and being made are creatures, and so not to be worshipped, neither they nor their hosts after mentioned; angels, sun, moon, and stars; these were made by the Word of God, the essential Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who often goes by this name, **Joh 1:1**; and very fitly agrees with him, who spoke for all his people in the council and covenant of grace, and undertook to be their surety; is the Word spoken of by all the holy prophets since the beginning of the world; is the interpreter of his Father's mind and will, of which he must be capable, since he lay in his bosom; and now he speaks for his saints in heaven, whose advocate he is; and especially he may be so called because he so often spake on the six days of creation, and said, let this and the other thing be, and it was so; and to him, as the Word of God, is the creation of all things frequently ascribed, **Joh 1:1**
Heb 11:3, and particularly the heavens, **Heb 1:10**. This is a proof of the deity of Christ, and of the dignity of his person; and shows how fit he is to be the Saviour of men; how safe the saints are in his hands; and that he ought to be trusted in, adored, and worshipped;

and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth: by "the host" of the heavens are meant the angels of heaven, who dwell in the third heaven, and are the militia of it; they are called the heavenly host, **Lu 2:13**; these are under Jehovah, as their Lord and King, and are the army among whom he does according to his will, 1Ki 22:19; these attended him whenever he has made any remarkable appearance; and they have been employed by him against his enemies, and in defence of his people, about whom they encamp, 2Ki 19:35. The sun, moon, and stars, are the host of the next heaven, these are ranged in their proper order by the Lord, and he keeps the muster roll of them, Isa 40:26; and these are used by him as his militia; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera, **Jud 5:20**; and the winged tribe are the host of the lower heaven; and even the lower class of these, as the locusts and grasshoppers, go forth in bands and troops, and encamp in the hedges, and at the command of God pass through and devour whole countries, Pr 30:27; and all these are made by "the breath" or "spirit {z} of [Jehovah's] mouth"; that is, by the Spirit of God, the third Person in the Trinity; a name which is suitable to him who is breathed forth, and proceeds from the Father and the Son, and to whom creation is ascribed, **Ge 1:2**; and which is no inconsiderable proof of his deity; and shows that he must be equal to the work of sanctification, which he begins and carries on. Now though the creation of the heavens is attributed to the Word, and the host of them to the Spirit, yet we are not to suppose that one Person took one part, and another Person another part of the creation; but they were all, Father, Word, and Spirit, jointly concerned in the whole.

{z} wyp xwrb "spiritu oris ejus", V. L. Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 33:7

Ver. 7. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap,.... Which was done on the third day of the creation, by means of which the dry land appeared, **Ge 1:9**; when the waters of the sea were piled up as an heap, and stood higher than the earth, as they now do; and which is a wonderful instance of the power and providence of God, to bound them, and preserve the earth from being overflowed by them,
Job 38:9;

he layeth up the depth in storehouses; that is, large quantities of water, for which he has his treasure houses, as for the wind, hail and snow, Ps 135:7; and these are the clouds of heaven above, and the fountains of the great deep below, which the Lord opens and stops at his pleasure; see **Ge 7:11**.

Psalms 33:8

Ver. 8. Let all the earth fear the Lord,.... That is, all the men that dwell upon the face of the earth. As it follows,

let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him; which fear and awe design a reverence of the divine Majesty, whose divine perfections are so manifest in the works of creation; and a carefulness not to offend him, into whose hands it must be a fearful thing to fall; and the whole worship of him, which is often in Scripture expressed by the fear of him: and this is to be understood either as what is the duty of all men; for to "fear God, and keep his commandments, is the whole duty of man", Ec 12:13; and which is incumbent on all men, in consideration of his being the Creator of them; and the obligation to it is yet more increased through his providential care of them and goodness to them; and still more should be found in them, seeing he will be the Judge of them, and has a despotic and uncontrollable power over them; and what is it that he cannot do, who has done all this before related? though none can fear him aright but such who have the grace of fear put into their hearts by the Spirit of God: or else this may be prophetically said, as what will be in the latter day, when not only the Jews shall fear the Lord and his goodness, **Ho 3:5**, but when the fulness of the Gentiles being brought into the church, it shall fear and be enlarged; yea, all nations shall fear the Lord and glorify his name, and come and worship before him, Isa 60:5.

Psalms 33:9

Ver. 9. For he spake, and it was [done],.... Or "it was" {a}, it came into being by a word speaking, almighty power going along with it; see **Ge 1:3**;

he commanded, and it stood fast; every created thing continued in its being; not only all things were produced into being by his all commanding word and power, "nutu Jovis", as Maximus Tyrius speaks {b}; but by the same all things are upheld and consist, **Heb 1:3** **Col 1:17**. The poet {c} uses the same word of God in the creation of things; and is the phrase in **Ge 1:3** admired by Longinus {d}: or this may refer to the implantation of the grace of fear in the hearts of his people; for as he speaks life into them in regeneration, commands light to shine in their dark heart, and says to them, when in their blood, Live; so by the mighty power of his word he commands the fear of him in them, and it continues.

{a} yhyw "et fuit", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Gejerus; so Ainsworth. {b} Dissert. 25. {c} "Jussit et extendi campos", &c. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 1. v. 43. {d} De Sublimi.

Psalms 33:10

Ver. 10. The Lord bringeth the counsel of the Heathen to nought,.... The psalmist having taken notice of the works of creation, in order to excite the saints to praise, proceeds to observe the providence of God, and particularly that branch of it which lies in disappointing the designs of wicked men; it is wickedness which they consult and devise, and thin is against the Lord's people, his cause and interest, and so against himself; and though their schemes are formed and contrived with a great deal of subtlety, yet they are commonly blasted; whether laid by particular persons, as by Ahithophel against David; or by nations, whole bodies of men, as of the Egyptians and Assyrians against Israel; and of Jews and Gentiles against Christ and his cause;

he maketh the devices of the people of none effect; the same thing is expressed here as before, in different words, for the further confirmation of it, and that it might be attended to. This is the Lord's doing, he is omniscient, and knows all the secret plots and designs of men; and he is omnipotent, and counteracts them, and confounds them in all their measures; and is faithful to his people, cause, and interest.

Psalms 33:11

Ver. 11. The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever,.... By which are meant, not the doctrines of the Gospel, nor the ordinances of it; though these will stand firm, and remain to the end of the world; but the purposes and decrees of God, which are wisely formed in himself, are eternal and unfrustrable, and relate to all things in providence and grace. The Lord does all things according to the counsel of his will in the government of the world, and in the salvation of men: the choice of persons to everlasting life is according to it; and so are their redemption, effectual calling, and glorification;

the thoughts of his heart to all generations; which, with respect to his own people, are thoughts of peace, grace, and mercy; these are many, and within himself, were very early, even from all eternity, and have their sure and certain effect, Isa 14:24; see Pr 19:21.

Psalms 33:12

Ver. 12. Blessed [is] the nation whose God [is] the Lord,.... Who have an interest in such a wonder working God, both in creation and in providence, and especially in grace: which, though it may have a principal regard to the nation of Israel, whose God he was in a very distinguishing manner, yet must not be limited to them; for he is the God of the Gentiles also: this nation is the chosen generation, the holy nation and peculiar people, both among Jews and Gentiles; and the Lord is the God of these; not only as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of all grace; who must be happy, since he is their portion and exceeding great reward; nor shall they want any good thing, nor need they fear any evil; they are on the heart of God, and cannot be separated from his love; they are engraven on the palms of his hands, and shall be helped, strengthened, and upheld with the right hand of his righteousness; all things work together for their good; and this God of theirs will be their God and guide unto death; they may expect every needful good thing now, and all glory and happiness hereafter;

[and] the people [whom] he hath chosen for his own inheritance; not Israel

only, but the Gentiles also; not all mankind, but a peculiar people, whom the Lord has chosen out of the world to be his possession, and who are his jewels and peculiar treasure; these are happy, being the Lord's portion, and the lot of his inheritance; and he chooses an inheritance for them, adopts and begets them unto it, and makes them meet to be partakers of it.

Psalms 33:13

Ver. 13. The Lord looketh from heaven,.... Where his throne and temple are, upon the earth and men, and things in it, as follows;

he beholdeth all the sons of men; the evil and the good; which is contrary to the sense of many wicked men, who imagine he takes no notice of what is done here below; but his eye is upon all, upon all the workers of iniquity, how secret soever they may be; and not only his eye of Providence is upon good men, but his eye of love, grace, and mercy; and he has a special and distinct knowledge of them: agreeably to this are some expressions of Heathen writers; says one {e},

"the eye of God sees all things;"

says another {f},

"there is a great God in heaven who sees all things, and governs."

{e} panta idwn diov ofyalmov, &c. Hesiod. Opera & Dies, l. 1. v. 263. {f} esti megav en ouranw, &c. Sophoclis Electra, v. 174, 175.

Psalms 33:14

Ver. 14. From the place of his habitation,.... Which is heaven, that is, the habitation of his holiness, and of his glory, Isa 63:15;

he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth; good and bad; and not the nation of Israel only, but the Gentile world, whom in former times he overlooked, but under the Gospel dispensation visits in a way of mercy; by sending his son to die for them, by spreading his Gospel among them, by calling them by his grace, by planting churches in the midst of them, and by continuing his word and ordinances with them.

Psalms 33:15

Ver. 15. He fashioneth their hearts alike,.... The Lord is the former and fashioner of the heart, spirit, or soul of man, even of all hearts and spirits; whence he is called the Father of spirits, Heb 12:9; see Zec 12:1; and he is the former of them alike; which seems to intimate as if all seals were alike, as they are made by the Lord; and it may be the difference there appears to be between them afterwards, nay be owing to the make and constitution of their bodies, to their education, and different situation, circumstances, and advantages in life, whereby the hearts of some may be more opened and enlarged than others. Some render it "together", or "altogether" {g}; which must not be understood of time, as if they were all made at once, but of equality; the one was made by him as well as the other; he is the fashioner of one and all of them, every whit of them; they are wholly fashioned by him, and all that is in them, all the powers and faculties of the soul; and by him only, and not by the instrumentality of another; for souls are created, not generated; they are produced out of nothing, and not out of pre-existent matter, as bodies; parents contribute somewhat to the bodies of their children, but not anything to their souls. God only "is the God of the spirits of all flesh", Nu 16:22; some translate the word "singly" {h}; one by one, one after another in the several ages of time; for he continues to fashion them, and is always doing it; see Zec 12:1. And he forms the hearts of his own people anew for himself, for his own glory; he forms Christ in them, and every grace of his Spirit; he forms them into one, and knits and unites them together in love, and makes them like to one another; for as face answers to face in water, so do the hearts and experiences of the saints one to another, Pr 27:19; all which he does wholly and alone; and since he fashions the hearts of all men in every sense, he must know them, which is the design of this expression; he knows the hearts of wicked men, and all the wickedness that is in them; he knows the hearts of good men, the worst that is in them, and also the best, which he himself has put there;

he considereth all their works; the works of evil men, not only their more open ones, but their more secret ones, and will bring them into judgment; and the works of good men, even their good works, which he will remember and reward in a way of grace.

{g} dxy "simul", Musculus, Gejerus; so Ainsworth. {h} katamonav Sept.

"sigillatim", V. L.

Psalms 33:16

Ver. 16. There is no king saved by the multitude of an host,.... He may be at the head of a numerous army, and yet not get the victory over a lesser one, nor escape safe, but be taken by it: there have been such instances; and if he is saved, or gets the victory, it is not owing to the multitude with him, but to the Lord, that gives salvation to kings,
Ps 144:10. Hence it appears that even such men need salvation themselves, and cannot save themselves, though they have ever so many at command, and therefore are not to be trusted in; salvation is only of the Lord;

a mighty man is not delivered by much strength; as Goliath, with his great strength, could not deliver himself out of the hands of David, a stripling; wherefore the mighty man should not glory in his might.

Psalms 33:17

Ver. 17. A horse [is] a vain thing for safety,.... Though it is prepared for the day of battle, and is a very warlike creature, and of great service in war, yet safety only is of the Lord, Pr 21:31; this is put for all kinds of military preparations which men are apt to trust in, but should not, for they are "a lie" {i}, as the horse is here said to be; that is, deceives and disappoints when trusted to; in like manner the olive is said "to lie", **Hab 3:17**; when hope of fruit from it is disappointed; so "fundus mendax" in Horace {k};

neither shall he deliver [any] by his great strength; in the time of battle; either by fighting for him, or fleeing with him.

{i} rqv "mendacium", Pagninus, Montanus; "fallax", V. L. {k} Epod. l. 1. Ode 16. ver. 45. Carmin. l. 3. Ode 1. v. 30. "Spem mentita seges", ib. Epist. l. 1. ep. 7. v. 87.

Psalms 33:18

Ver. 18. Behold, the eye of the Lord [is] upon them that fear him,.... Not with dread of his wrath, or distrust of his grace, or for sinister ends and selfish views, but with a godly fear; by which men hate evil, depart from it, are careful not to offend God by it, but to serve and worship him; on such is not only his eye of Providence to protect from danger, to supply with the necessaries of life, but of love and grace; he looks upon them with delight and pleasure; his eye is upon them to watch over them for good, to guard them from every enemy, and from all evil, and to communicate to them every needful measure of grace;

upon them that hope in his mercy; not his absolute mercy, but his special mercy in Christ; which appears in the provision of him as a Saviour, in the mission of him into this world, and redemption by him; and is displayed in regeneration, the pardon of sin, and eternal life: and such that hope in it are they that see themselves miserable creatures, and in need of it; and who are encouraged to hope in it from the plenty and abundance of it in the heart of God; and from the many instances of it among men, and even some the chief of sinners; and they do hope in it for the forgiveness of their sins, and for salvation and eternal glory; and on these the eye of the Lord is, as before,

Psalms 33:19

Ver. 19. To deliver their soul from death,.... Not a corporeal death, for the soul dies not, and is never in any danger of death; and should life, or the whole man, be intended here, yet those that fear the Lord, and hope in his mercy, are not exempted and secured from a corporeal death, but die as other men; though sometimes indeed they are remarkably preserved from death, and even in a time of general calamity; but a spiritual death is meant, which, while in a state of nature, they are under; but, being quickened at conversion, they live spiritually, and are preserved from dying any more in this sense; and also from an eternal death, which shall never harm them, nor have any power over them;

and to keep them alive in famine; not corporeal, though the Lord does give meat to them that fear him, and sometimes in a miraculous way provides for them; as by sending ravens to feed them, and by increasing the cruse of oil; see Isa 41:17; but spiritual, a famine of hearing the word of the Lord; the Lord prepares a place for his church and people in the wilderness, where they are privately nourished with the word and ordinances, and their souls kept alive, Re 12:6.

Psalms 33:20

Ver. 20. Our soul waiteth for the Lord,.... This, and what follows, are the words of the church, expressing her expectation, faith, and joy, by reason of what is suggested in the preceding verses. She signifies her expectation of good by waiting for the Lord; either for his coming in the flesh, and salvation by him; for which the patriarchs, prophets, and all the Old Testament saints, waited,
Ge 49:18; and so the Targum paraphrases it, "our soul waiteth for the redemption of the Lord"; or for his spiritual coming, his appearance to them, and gracious presence with them, he having been for some time absent; and it is right and good so to do, and in the issue proves advantageous, **Isa 8:17**; and this being soul waiting, it denotes the heartiness, sincerity, and earnestness of it;

he [is] our help and our shield; the Lord is the help of his people in time of trouble, when none else is or can be; and he is a present one, and helps right early, and at the best season: and he is their shield, who encompasses them about with his love and favour, and keeps them by his power in the greatest safety; all which encourages their waiting upon him, and expectation of good things from him.

Psalms 33:21

Ver. 21. For our heart shall rejoice in him,.... Not in sin, nor in themselves and in their boastings, all such rejoicing is evil; but in the Lord, "in his Word"; as the Targum is, in the essential Word of God, Christ Jesus; in his person, righteousness, and salvation; and this joy is heart joy, inward joy, real joy, joy in the Holy Ghost; and is unspeakable and full of glory. This is what the psalmist calls upon the saints to do, in the beginning of the psalm; and so his end in composing it is answered;

because we have trusted in his holy name; that is, in himself, who is holy, just, and good; and so faithful to every word of promise, to every engagement of his, and therefore to be trusted in: and hence it appears that the joy before spoken of is the joy of faith.

Psalms 33:22

Ver. 22. Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us,.... That is, an application of it in its effects: it is a prayer for a communication of grace and mercy to help in a time of need; and for a discovery of pardoning grace and mercy; and it is a prayer of faith; for the mercy of the Lord is upon his people in great plenty, and it continues; and they have reason to believe it ever will, Ps 103:17;

according as we hope in thee; not according to any merits of theirs, but according to the measure of grace, of the grace of hope which God had bestowed on them, and encouraged them to exercise on him, in expectation of finding grace and mercy with him.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 34:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 34

[A Psalm] of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed. The author of this psalm is expressed by name; and the time and occasion of it are plainly intimated: it was composed by David, "when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech"; not Ahimelech the priest, sometimes called Abimelech, 1Ch 18:16; to whom David went alone for bread, pretending he was upon a private business of the king's; to which sense the Syriac version inclines, rendering the words, "when he went to the house of the Lord, [and] gave the firstfruits to the priests". But this Abimelech was king of Gath, the same with Achish, 1Sa 21:10; who either had two names; or this of Abimelech, as it should seem, was a common name to all the kings of the Philistines; see Ge 20:2; as Pharaoh was to the Egyptian kings, and Caesar to the Roman emperors: the name signifies a "father king", or "my father king", or a "royal father"; as kings should be the fathers of their country: before him "David changed his behaviour", his taste, sense, or reason: he imitated a madman; behaved as if he was out of his senses, scrabbling on the doors of the gates, and letting his spittle fall down upon his beard; for he being known and made known by the servants of the king, he was in great fear of losing his life, being in the hands of an enemy, and who he might justly fear would revenge the death of their champion Goliath; wherefore he took this method to get himself despised and neglected by them, and escape out of their hands: and which succeeded; for Abimelech, or Achish, seeing him behave in such a manner, treated him with contempt, was displeased with his servants for bringing him into his presence, and ordered them to take him away, or dismiss him; which is here expressed by this phrase, "who drove him away", with scorn and indignation; "and he departed" to the cave of Adullam, glad at heart he had escaped such danger: upon which, under a sense of divine goodness, and by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, he composed the following psalm; see 1Sa 21:10.

Ver. 1. I will bless the Lord at all times,.... That is, ascribe blessing, give honour, praise, and glory to him, both as the God of nature and providence, for every temporal mercy; and that every day, and at all times in the day; since these are renewed every morning, and continue all the day long: and as the God of grace, for all spiritual blessings; and that continually, because these last always; they are irreversible, unchangeable, and without repentance; yea, saints have reason to bless God in times of adversity as well as prosperity, since it might have been worse with them than it is; they have a mixture of mercy in all, and all things work together for their good;

his praise [shall] continually [be] in my mouth; not the "praise" of which God is the author, but of which he is the object; which is due unto him, and is given him on account of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands, and the blessings of his providence and grace; this, the psalmist says, should be in his mouth: his meaning is, that he should not only retain in his heart a grateful sense of the divine favours, but should express it with his lips; should both make melody in his heart to the Lord, and vocally sing his praise; and that "continually", as long as he lived, or had any being, Ps 146:2.

Psalms 34:2

Ver. 2. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord,.... Not in men, nor in any outward enjoyment, nor in any works of righteousness, but in the Lord; "in the Word of the Lord", as the Targum; in the Lord Jesus Christ; in his wisdom, strength, riches, righteousness, redemption, and salvation; in interest in him, and communion with him: and this is not tongue but soul boasting; and not flashy and selfish, but solid, spiritual, and hearty; and with all the powers and faculties of the soul; see **1Co 1:29**;

the humble shall hear [thereof]; either of the deliverance the psalmist had out of the hands of his enemies; or of his blessing and praising the Lord for the same, and making his boast in him as the God of his salvation; or of both: of these humble ones, See Gill on "Ps 10:12";

and be glad; for such rejoice with them that rejoice, and are glad at heart that others share in the goodness and grace of God; and also because by such an instance of the divine power and kindness they are encouraged to hope that he will, in his own time, deliver them out of their afflictions and distresses also.

Psalms 34:3

Ver. 3. O magnify the Lord with me,.... The psalmist invites the humble ones, who he knew would rejoice at the goodness of God to him, to join with him in ascribing greatness to the Lord, which is meant by magnifying him; for he cannot be made great by men, only declared how great he is, and that can only be done in an imperfect manner;

and let us exalt his name together: by proclaiming him to be the most High; by making mention of his glorious perfections and works, that he be exalted; and by praising him in the highest strains; or by having the high praises of him in their mouths; and there is more pleasure as well as more glory brought to God by doing this in a social way, or by a number of saints joining together in such service.

Psalms 34:4

Ver. 4. I sought the Lord, and he heard me,.... Not that he sought the Lord publicly in his house and ordinances, for he was now at Gath; but privately by prayer and supplication; and that not vocally, but mentally; for he was in the midst of the servants of the king of Gath; yet earnestly, diligently, and with his whole heart, being in great distress; when it was right to seek the Lord, and which showed him to be a good man; and the Lord heard and answered even his silent groans, which could not be uttered;

and delivered me from all my fear; of being seized on by Achish, king of Gath, and of losing his life for killing Goliath: and many are the fears of God's people, both from within and from without, by reason of sin, Satan, and the world; but the Lord saves them out of the hands of all their enemies, grants them his presence, and shows them their interest in himself, which, scatters all their fears.

Psalms 34:5

Ver. 5. They looked to him, and were lightened,.... That is, "the humble" ones, Ps 34:2; and so this is a reason why they should join in praising and magnifying the Lord; these "looked" up to God in prayer and by faith, when in distressed and uncomfortable circumstances, for help and deliverance, and a supply of every needful good thing; and they were "enlightened"; so the Targum renders it, "their faces were enlightened"; as Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it, in opposition to what follows: they must have been enlightened before they could look, but by looking to the Lord more light was gained: this chiefly designs the light of joy, peace, and comfort, which is had in a way of believing: some render the word "and flowed" {l}, as a river does, that is, to the Lord, as in Jer 31:12. So Kimchi and Ben Melech explain the word; and it denotes both the numbers of them that looked up to the Lord in their distress, and the swiftness of their motion to him, and their earnestness and fervour of mind; so faith is not only a looking to Christ, but a going forth unto him;

and their faces were not ashamed; having what they prayed and looked for, and what they hoped and believed they should have; namely, deliverance and salvation, and so peace and pleasure.

{l} wdhnw "et confluunt", Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis; "et instar fluvii irruerint", Piscator, Amama; "et confluxerunt", Gejerus.

Psalms 34:6

Ver. 6. This poor man cried,.... Singling out some one person from among the humble, who was remarkably delivered; it is the common case of the people of God to be poor and afflicted, and in their afflictions they cry unto the Lord to be supported under them, and delivered out of them: or this may be understood of David himself, who was poor, not with respect to outward things, but in spirit; was much afflicted, and especially greatly distressed when in the court of Achish; at which time he cried unto the Lord, as was his usual way, and that internally, as Moses did, Ex 14:15. Some think Jesus Christ is intended by this poor man, who was poor in temporals, though rich, and Lord of all; and was greatly afflicted, both in body and soul; and who, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, **Heb 5:7**;

and the Lord heard [him], and saved him out of all his troubles; so the Lord always heard his son Jesus Christ, and especially in the day of salvation, and delivered him out of all his troubles, both of body and soul, when he raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; and he heard David his servant, as he often did; particularly when at Gath, and made way for his escape from thence;

and from whence he came safe to the cave of Adullam; and the Lord hears all his poor and afflicted ones, when they cry unto him, and in the issue saves them from all their troubles, by reason of a body of sin and death, the temptations of Satan, and the persecutions of men.

Psalms 34:7

Ver. 7. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him,.... By whom may be meant, either the uncreated Angel, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of God's presence, and of the covenant, the Captain of salvation, the Leader and Commander of the people; and whose salvation is as walls and bulwarks about them; or as an army surrounding them: or a created angel may be intended, even a single one, which is sufficient to guard a multitude of saints, since one could destroy at once such a vast number of enemies, as in 2Ki 19:35; or one may be put for more, since they are an innumerable company that are on the side of the Lord's people, and to whom they are joined; and these may be said to encamp about them, because they are an host or army; see Ge 32:1; and are the guardians of the saints, that stand up for them and protect them, as well as minister to them;

and delivereth them; out of the hands of all their enemies. David had a guard, an army of these about him, in the court of Achish, who preserved him from being seized, and receiving any harm there; and who brought him from thence in safety: there is no doubt but he here speaks his own experience.

Psalms 34:8

Ver. 8. O taste, and see that the Lord [is] good,.... He is essentially, infinitely, perfectly, immutably, and solely good in himself; and he is communicatively and diffusively good to others: he is the author of all good, but not of any evil, in a moral sense; this chiefly regards his special grace and goodness through Christ: all the divine Persons in the Godhead are good; the Father is good, he has good designs towards his people, has provided good things for them, made good promises to them, and bestows good gifts on them: the Son is good; the good Shepherd that has laid down his life for the sheep; he is the fountain of all grace and goodness to his churches, and to particular believers; he has wrought a good work for them, the work of redemption, and he speaks a good word on their behalf in the court of heaven: the Spirit is good; he works good things in the hearts of the sons of men, and shows good things unto them; and gracious souls, such as the psalmist here calls upon, are capable of tasting and discerning how good the Lord is in some measure; see Ps 119:103. While unregenerate, their taste is vitiated, and remains unchanged, and sin is what they feed upon with pleasure, and so detest everything that is good; but in conversion a new taste is given, so as to have a saving experimental knowledge of the grace and goodness of God in Christ, an application of it to them; and in such manner as to live upon it, and be nourished by it; and though this is not a superficial taste of things, like that of hypocrites, nor a single one only, being frequently repeated; yet it is but a taste in comparison of the enjoyment of it in the heavenly state; and every taste now influences and engages trust in the Lord, as follows;

blessed [is] the man [that] trusteth in him; See Gill on "Ps 2:12"; the Targum renders it, "that trust in his word".

Psalms 34:9

Ver. 9. O fear the Lord, ye his saints,.... Who are sanctified by his Spirit, and so are openly and manifestly his; these are exhorted to fear the Lord with reverence and godly fear; and great reason there is why they should fear him, since he is King of saints, and fear is due to him from them; and seeing they have received many instances of grace and goodness from him, and therefore should fear him for his goodness's sake; and besides they, and they only, know him, and have the grace of fear in them, and so only can exercise it on him;

for [there is] no want to them that fear him; not in spirituals, since so much goodness is laid up for them; the heart of God is towards them, his secret is with them, his eye is upon them, and the sun of righteousness arises on them; and both grace and glory are given to them; nor in temporals, since godliness, or the fear of God, has the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come.

Psalms 34:10

Ver. 10. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger,.... According to Apollinarius,

"the needy rich, whom famine presses;"

see **Job 4:10**;

but they that seek the Lord; by prayer, diligently, with their whole heart, and in the sincerity of their souls; the Targum is, "that seek the doctrine of the Lord"; that seek instruction from him, and to be taught by him: these

shall not want any good [thing]: which God has purposed to bestow upon them, which he has promised unto them, and provided for them; nor any thing that shall be for their good.

Psalms 34:11

Ver. 11. Come, ye children,.... Meaning either his own children, those of his own family, judging it his duty to instruct them, and bring them up in the fear of the Lord; or his subjects, to whom he stood in the relation of a father, as every king does; or all his hearers, as those who attended the prophets are called the children or sons of the prophets; or young people in common may be designed, who should be taught early their duty to God and men: unless the children of God in general are here meant; or particularly the least among them, called babes and little children, who are little in their own eyes, are modest and humble; and who, as they need instruction, are most forward to receive it; and the word "come" does not so much design local motion, a drawing near to hear, as readiness to hear, and a close attention of mind; as follows;

hearken unto me; as unto a father, giving good doctrine and wholesome advice; **Pr 2:1**;

I will teach you the fear of the Lord; which he had so often spoken of, and so many good things are promised to them that have it, and even in the context: this the psalmist could not give, nor can any man, only teach it, show the nature of it, in what it lies, how it shows itself, and what are the effects it produces: this is the first lesson to be taught and learnt; for it is the beginning of wisdom; it includes all grace, and every duty, and regards the whole worship of God, and the manner of it.

Psalms 34:12

Ver. 12. What man [is he that] desireth life?.... Every man desires life, even a natural life; it is more desirable than all things in it; especially an healthful life, without which the blessings and mercies of life cannot be comfortably enjoyed; and still more a life of prosperity; life, with an affluence of good things, and even a long one: though it may be rather that a spiritual life is here meant, and a comfortable one; a life free from the remorses of a guilty conscience, from the fear of hell, damnation, and wrath; from the bondage of the law, and the dread of death; a life of faith on Christ, and communion with him; and a life of sobriety, righteousness, and holiness; and perhaps it may be best of all to understand it of eternal life, which is life eminently and emphatically; it follows,

[and] loveth [many] days; that is, good ones; as they are interpreted in **1Pe 3:10**; not of this life, for the days of it are evil, and especially when they are lengthened out; the days of old age, Ec 12:1; unless the days of the son of man, the days of enjoying the presence of God in his house and ordinances, should be intended; though rather the good and many days of eternity, even length of days, for ever and ever, in which will be fulness of joy, and never ceasing and never fading pleasures;

that he may see good; there is good to be seen and enjoyed in this life, which if the saints did not believe they should see and enjoy, they would often faint; and this good lies in the participation of the blessings of grace, and in fellowship with Father, Son, and Spirit: but the great and lasting good to be seen and enjoyed is in the world to come, when God shall be all in all, be seen as he is, and the saints shall inherit all things.

Psalms 34:13

Ver. 13. Keep thy tongue from evil,.... This, and what follows in this verse and Ps 34:14, point at the things wherein the fear of God shows itself; and suggest, that those who have it, and which is known by these fruits, shall enjoy the desirable and good days before mentioned. The tongue is an instrument of much evil, an unruly member, and needs restraint; and it is from evil, and not from good, it is to be kept; from evil speaking of God, from cursing and swearing; from evil speaking of men, reproaching and reviling them; from filthy speaking, from all obscene and unchaste words, and from all lying ones; for where such evil speaking is indulged, the fear of God cannot be in that man;

and thy lips from speaking guile; hypocritical and deceitful words, speaking with flattering lips and a double heart: some speak bad words in common conversation, through an evil habit and custom; and some speak good words with an ill design; and in neither of them is the fear of God before their eyes, nor in their hearts.

Psalms 34:14

Ver. 14. Depart from evil,.... This denotes that evil is near to men; it keeps close to them, and should be declined and shunned: and it regards all sorts of evil; evil men, and their evil company; evil things, evil words and works, and all appearance of evil; and the fear of the Lord shows itself in an hatred of it, and a departure from it, **Pr 8:13**;

and do good; not only acts of beneficence to all in necessitous circumstances, but every good work; whatever the word of God directs, or suggests should be done; and which should be done from right principles of faith and love, and to right ends, the glory of God, and the good of his interest; and Christ should be looked and applied unto for grace and strength to perform; all which are evidences of the true fear of God;

seek peace, and pursue it; in the world, and with all men, as much as possibly can be; in neighbourhoods, cities, and states, and in the churches of Christ, and with the saints, as well as with God through Christ; and which in every sense is to be pursued after with eagerness, and to be endeavoured for with diligence; see Ro 12:18.

Psalms 34:15

Ver. 15. The eyes of the Lord [are] upon the righteous,.... These are the same with them that fear the Lord, and do good; not that they become righteous in the sight of God, or are justified before him, by their fear of him, and by their good works; but these are the fruits and effects of grace, showing them to be righteous persons; for it is only by the righteousness of Christ that men are righteous before God: and upon these the eyes of the Lord are; not only his eye of Providence, to watch over them, protect them, and supply them with good things, but his eye of love; with complacency and delight he looks upon them, as clothed with the righteousness of his son; and it is with pleasure he looks upon them, that being well pleasing in his sight; seeing by it the law is magnified and made honourable; nor does he ever withdraw his eyes from them, Job 36:7;

and his ears [are open] unto their cry; for though they are righteous, they are sometimes in distress; their afflictions are many; the good days they are to see are hereafter; and at those times they cry unto the Lord; which is to be understood of prayer, and of the vehemency and fervency of it, when they have the ear of God, and he shows himself to be a God hearing and answering prayer.

Psalms 34:16

Ver. 16. The face of the Lord [is] against them that do evil,.... Not against everyone that sins; for the righteous are not without sin; they have sin in them, and they do no good without it; but against them that live in sin, whose course of life is a series of wickedness, and they are workers of iniquity; and have no sense of sin, nor sorrow for it, go on in it without shame or fear; against these the face of the Lord is, he shows his resentment, and stirs up his wrath. For the Lord to be against a man is dreadful; a fearful thing it is to fill into his hands as a God of vengeance; there is no standing before him when once he is angry: and to have the face of God against a man is intolerable, when it is to destroy, and

to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth; so that they shall be no more thought of, nor spoken of, but with contempt and reproach; an everlasting mark of infamy being upon their names; see Pr 10:7.

Psalms 34:17

Ver. 17. [The righteous] cry,.... The word "righteous" is not in the original text, but is rightly supplied in our version, as it is in the Targum, and by Jarchi; and so Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, that these words are not to be connected with Ps 34:16, but with Ps 34:15; and they are indeed an amplification of the last clause of it; and the cry of the righteous is meant, to which the ears of the Lord are open; though Aben Ezra thinks that these words are to be understood of them that do evil, and of their cry to the Lord, when they turn from their evil ways; but the former sense is best;

and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles; their inward troubles, through the workings of corruption in their hearts; through the violent assaults of Satan, the blasphemous thoughts he injects into them, and his solicitations of them to sin; and through divine desertions, and their outward troubles; through afflictions of body, losses of estate and friends, and the reproaches and persecutions of men; out of all these the Lord sooner or later delivers his people who cry unto him.

Psalms 34:18

Ver. 18. The Lord [is] nigh unto them that are of a broken heart,.... Who are pressed and bore down with afflictions, by the sorrow of heart under which their spirits are broken, Pr 15:13; or with a sense of sin, and sorrow for it, for which their hearts smite them, and they are wounded by it, and broken with it: to these the Lord is "nigh"; not in a general way only, as he is to all men, being God omnipresent, but in a special manner; he comes and manifests himself to them in a gracious way, pours in the oil and wine of his love, and binds up their broken hearts; yea, comes and dwells with them: he does not pass by them and neglect them, much less make the breach worse; he does not break the bruised reeds, but he heals their breaches;

and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit; not in a legal, but in an evangelical way; who are humbled under a sense of sin, and melted down in true repentance, under a view of the love and grace of God; and are poor and mean in their own eyes: to these the Lord has respect; the sacrifices of a broken and contrite spirit are not despised by him, but accepted through faith in Christ; and such he saves with an everlasting salvation in him.

Psalms 34:19

Ver. 19. Many [are] the afflictions of the righteous,.... This may be understood of some one particular righteous person, since the singular number is here made use of; whereas the plural is always used before, when the righteous are made mention of; and the Lord Jesus Christ may be designed, who is eminently and emphatically "the righteous"; he is righteous both as God and man, and as Mediator, in the discharge of every branch of his office; and his afflictions were many, which he endured from men, from devils, and from God himself: many were the afflictions of his body, which he bore when buffeted, scourged, and crucified; and many were the afflictions of his soul, when he bore the sins of his people, endured the wrath of God for them, and was forsaken by him; though none of these were for any sins of his own, but for the sins of others; and out of them all the Lord delivered him at last, and set him at his own right hand; or this may be understood of everyone of the righteous; who, though they are justified from sin, and are saved from wrath, yet have many afflictions; which are "evils" in themselves, as the word {m} may be rendered, and are very troublesome and distressing; and these are great and grievous for quality, and many and abundant for quantity; though no more than it is the will of God should be, and not one too many;

but the Lord delivereth him out of them all; as Christ was, and all his people will be; if not in this life, by giving respites and intervals, as he sometimes does; yet hereafter, when the righteous are completely delivered out of all their trials and exercises, so as that they shall never return more upon them. The word translated "afflictions", as it signifies "evils", may be safely interpreted of moral evils, as well as of evils of afflictions: it is the same word that is used for moral evil in Ps 34:21; and then the sense is, that many are the sins committed by righteous persons; for there are none without sin, in many things they all offend; yet they shall not perish by them, but they shall be delivered from them; as, from the dominion of them by the power of grace, and from the guilt of them by the blood of Christ, and from condemnation for them through his righteousness; so hereafter from the very being of them, and all molestation and disturbance by them.

{m} twer "mala", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 34:20

Ver. 20. He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken. This is literally true of Christ, in whom the type of the passover lamb had its accomplishment, and this passage also; see Ex 12:46; and seems better to agree with him than with any of his members, since the bones of many of them have been broken by one accident or another; and especially many of the martyrs of Jesus have had all their bones broken upon the rack or wheel; wherefore, to understand these words of them might tend to create uneasiness and despondency in the minds of such who by any means have their bones broken; as if they were not righteous persons, this promise not being fulfilled in them: and to interpret this of the Lord's keeping the bones of his people in the grave, and in the resurrection putting them together again; this is no other than what will be done to the wicked; it seems therefore best to understand the whole of Christ; and it looks as if this passage was had in view as fulfilled in Joh 19:36; since a

Scripture is referred to; but if it is interpreted of the righteous in general, it must be with a limitation; as that their bones are all kept by the Lord, and not one is broken without his knowledge and will; and that they are not broken finally, but restored again perfect and whole in the resurrection, and so will continue to all eternity: the phrase, without entering into particulars, may in general design the care of Providence over the righteous; with this compare Mt 10:29.

Psalms 34:21

Ver. 21. Evil shall slay the wicked,.... Meaning either the evil they designed against the righteous shall return and fall upon their heads, to their own ruin; or the evil of affliction, which to them is the evil of punishment, both here and hereafter, from which they will have no deliverance in the end; though the righteous have from their afflictions, being not properly punishments, but chastisements for sin, and are but for a time; or else the evil of sin, which is the cause of death corporeal and eternal;

and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate; or "shall be guilty" {n}; be found so; or "shall be condemned", or "damned", as the Targum renders it. All wicked men hate the righteous, both Jesus Christ the righteous, and his people; and that because they are righteous, and do not run into the same excess of wickedness with them, these will be arraigned at the day of judgment, and will be convicted of all their hard speeches which they have spoken against Christ and his members; and will be pronounced guilty, and will be punished with everlasting destruction.

{n} wmvay "rei fiunt", Cocceius; "reatum habebunt", Schmidt; "damnabuntur", Gejerus; "shall be condemned as guilty", Ainsworth.

Psalms 34:22

Ver. 22. The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants,.... Who are made so by his grace in the day of his power, and are willing to serve him, and to serve him with their minds, readily and cheerfully; and the soul of these, which is the more noble part of them, and is of more worth than a world, the redemption of which is precious, and requires a great price, the Lord redeems; not that their bodies are neglected, and not redeemed; but this is mentioned as the principal part, and for the whole; and this redemption is by the Lord, who only is able to effect it, and which he has obtained through his precious blood; and here it seems to denote the application of it in its effects; that is, the forgiveness of sin, justification, and sanctification, since it respects something that is continually doing;

and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate; or "be guilty" {o}, or "condemned", or "damned"; because they are justified from all the sins they have been guilty of, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; and having believed in him, they shall not be damned, according to Mr 16:16; and they shall be far from being desolate, and alone, and miserable; they shall stand at Christ's right hand, be received into his kingdom and glory, and be for ever with him.

{o} wmvay al "non rei fiunt", Cocceius; "non punientur", Gejerus; "shall not be condemned as guilty", Ainsworth.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 35:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 35

[A Psalm] of David. This psalm seems to have been written by David, when he was persecuted by Saul; and when many false charges were brought against him by his courtiers; and when he was the scorn and derision of the people; the subject of it is pretty much of the same kind with the seventh psalm, and might be written about the same time that was, and on the same occasion; and it may be applied to the church and people of God in like cases. There is a passage in it, Ps 35:19, which our Lord seems to refer to and apply to himself, Joh 15:25; and some interpret the whole of it concerning him. The Arabic version calls it a prophecy of the incarnation; though there does not appear any thing in it applicable to that.

Ver. 1. Plead [my cause], O Lord, with them that strive with me,.... Meaning Saul and his courtiers; concerning whom he elsewhere desires that the Lord would judge between them, plead his cause, and deliver him; as he accordingly did, and maintained it, and the righteousness of it, 1Sa 24:12. So Christ pleaded not his own cause as man, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously; and his people leave their cause with him, who is their advocate, and is able to plead it thoroughly; and does plead it against wicked and ungodly men, who unrighteously charge them; against. Satan the accuser of the brethren, who stands at their right hand to resist them; and against their own hearts, and the sins of them, which lust and war against them, and condemn them;

fight against them that fight against me: so the Lord is sometimes represented as a man of war, and Christ as a warrior fighting for the saints; and safe are they on whose side he is; but miserable all such who are found fighters against him and his; for none ever opposed him and prospered.

Psalms 35:2

Ver. 2. Take hold of shield and buckler,.... Defensive weapons; not that the Lord stands in need of any of these to defend himself with: but the sense is, that he would be as these to David; as he was to him, and is to all his people; namely, their shield and buckler: he gives unto them the shield of salvation; he encompasses them about with his favour as with a shield, and keeps them by his power safe from all their enemies;

and stand up for mine help; for which the Lord arises, and stands by his people, and against their enemies, delivering them out of their hands.

Psalms 35:3

Ver. 3. Draw out also the spear,.... An offensive weapon; expressive of the vengeance which God sometimes takes of the enemies of his people, when he bends his bow, shoots his arrows, whets his glittering sword, and his hand takes hold of judgment;

and stop [the way] against them that persecute me; that they might not overtake him; God can hinder, and he sometimes does hinder persecutors from overtaking his people in their straits; and as he hedges up their way with thorns, that they cannot proceed as they have begun, so he hedges up the way of their enemies; interposes himself and his power, and is a wall of fire about them; a wall for the defence and security of his saints, and a wall of fire for the consumption of those that rise up against them. The words may be rendered, "draw out the spear and sword, to meet those that persecute me" {p}; for rygo is a noun, and signifies a sword shut up in its scabbard; from whence "sagaris" comes, which is kind of a sword;

say unto my soul, I [am] thy salvation; Christ is the salvation of his people; he is the only person appointed, provided, promised, and sent to be the Saviour; and he is the alone author of salvation it is wrought out by him, and it is in him, and in him only; and therefore he is called their salvation, and the salvation of God: and they are interested in the salvation which is in him; it was designed, prepared, and wrought out for them, and for them only; and is applied unto them by the Spirit, and they shall perfectly enjoy it to all eternity: find yet sometimes they are at a loss about their interest in it, and desire might be made known unto them, which was the case of the psalmist here; they, as he, see their necessity it, and that there is no comfort nor safety without it they are wonderfully delighted with the excellency of it, that it is so great in itself, so suitable to them, so complete and perfect, and of an everlasting duration yet, what through the hidings of God's face, the temptations of Satan, the greatness of their sins, and the prevalence of unbelief, they cannot tell how to believe their interest in it; yet most earnestly desire the Lord would show it to them, and assure them of it; which favour, when granted, is by the witnessings of the Spirit to their spirits, that they are the children of God, and the redeemed of the Lamb: and this is said particularly to them; it is not a discovery of salvation by Christ in general; that they have before; but it is a saying to their souls, that it is theirs; and when this is spoken bathe to the soul by the Spirit of God, it is effectual; and removes unbelief at once, and fills with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

{p} So Grotius, Amama, Ainsworth, and some in Mollerus.

Psalms 35:4

Ver. 4. Let them be confounded, and put to shame, that seek after my soul,.... This petition, and what follows, which seem to be by way of imprecation, are to be considered as prophecies of what would be, and as expressions of faith that so it should be; and are not to be drawn into examples, and to be imitated by private persons; nor are they contrary to those evangelical rules, which require men to love their enemies, and pray for them; to give place to wrath, and not meditate vengeance, nor take it: and so it was with David's enemies. Saul, who hunted after his soul or life, to take it away, was filled with shame and confusion, when David, having cut off the skirt of his garment, held it up to him; by which he was convinced that his life was in his hands, and he did not take it away, though he was seeking after his: and so it will fare with the enemies of Christ, the Jews; who sought to take away his life and did take it away, when they shall see him come in the clouds of heaven, whom they have

pierced; and in like manner will it be with the enemies of all his people, whom nothing will content but their lives, when they shall see the lambs they have worried and butchered on Christ's right hand, and they on the left; and to the sheep said, Come, ye blessed; and to them, Go, ye cursed,
Mt 25:34;

let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt; as Saul did David's, even when he made the most specious show of affection and respect unto him, as well as when he more openly persecuted him; and more than once was he turned back with shame, and departed home; see 1Sa 24:22. The Jews, that came to apprehend Christ, together with the Roman soldiers, and who had devised and intended his hurt, went backward, and fell to the ground with shame and confusion, when, having asked them who they sought, and they had replied, told them he was the person; and how often has it been, that when wicked men have devised, deceitful matters against the members of Christ, that their counsel has been carried headlong, they have not been able to perform their enterprises; a hook has been put into their nose, and a bridle in their jaws, and they have been turned back the way they came, with shame and disgrace.

Psalms 35:5

Ver. 5. Let them be as chaff before the wind,.... As they are; see **Ps 1:4**;

and let the angel of the Lord chase [them]; either a good angel, who is the Lord's, his creature that ministers unto him, and is ready to obey his orders; and who, as he encamps about the saints and protects them, so he is able to destroy their enemies; as one angel in a night destroyed all the firstborn in Egypt, and another the whole army of the Assyrians, Ex 12:29; an angel of the Lord, who is swift to fly, and so to chase and overtake, and able to execute whatever is the will of the Lord; or else an evil angel, who is the Lord's, being made by him, though not made evil by him; and who is under his restraints, and can do nothing but by his permission; and who sometimes is employed by the Lord, as the executioner of his wrath upon wicked men; is suffered to distress and torture their consciences in this life, and hereafter drag them into everlasting burnings, prepared for the devil and his angels.

Psalms 35:6

Ver. 6. Let their way be dark and slippery,.... In which they run before the angel, chasing and pursuing them; so that they know not where they are, at what they stumble, whither to flee, nor how to stand; the ways of wicked men are as darkness, they know not in what condition they are, and whither they are going; and utter darkness, even blackness of darkness, is reserved for them: but here it means a calamitous, uncomfortable, fickle, and unstable situation in this life; see Jer 23:11. The allusion is to some of the valleys in the land of Palestine, which were dark, and the roads in them very smooth and slippery, as travellers in those parts have observed {q};

and let the angel of God persecute them; See Gill on "Ps 35:5".

{q} See Maundrell's Travel's, p. 7.

Psalms 35:7

Ver. 7. For without cause have they hid for me their net [in] a pit,.... This is said in allusion to the custom of digging pits, and putting nets into them, for the catching of wild beasts; and covering them with straw or dust, or such like things, as Jarchi observes, that they might not be discerned; and which intends the secret and crafty methods taken by David's enemies to ensnare him and destroy him; though he had given them no cause to use him in such a manner; which is an aggravation of their sins, and a reason of the above imprecations, as well as of what follows: and in the same manner, and without any just cause, Christ and his members have been treated by wicked men, and therefore their damnation is just, and will be inevitable:

[which] without cause they have digged for my soul; which is added for further explanation's sake, and to aggravate their sin, and to show the justness of their punishment.

Psalms 35:8

Ver. 8. Let destruction come upon him at unawares,.... Or a "storm" {r}, such as is caused in the eastern countries by a south wind, very sudden, violent, and destructive {s}: the singular number being here used, some Jewish commentators, as Kimchi, have thought Saul is particularly meant; and some Christian interpreters have been of opinion that Judas is intended: the imprecations here may be compared with those which respect him, Ps 109:6.

Though this may regard every one of the enemies of David, or of Christ and his people, whose ruin and destruction will come upon them unawares; see **1Th 5:3**;

and let his net that he hath laid catch himself; a figurative expression, agreeable to the allusion before made, and which is explained in the next clause;

into that very destruction let him fall, which he had designed and contrived for others; so Haman was hanged on the same gallows he had prepared for Mordecai; and so it often is in the course of Providence, that the wicked fall into the same calamity they have intended and endeavoured to bring others into; see **Ps 7:15**.

{r} hawv "tumultuosa calamitas", Cocceius; so Ainsworth; "tumultus", Vatablus. {s} See Thevenot, Tavernier, &c.

Psalms 35:9

Ver. 9. And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord,.... Not in the destruction of his enemies, but in the God of his salvation; the Targum is, "in the Word of the Lord"; the essential Word of God, the promised Messiah, Saviour, and Redeemer. Christ is the object of a believer's joy; he rejoices in his person, as he is the mighty God, able to save him, and to keep what he has committed to him, and to preserve him from falling; as he is God and man in one person, and so fit to be a Mediator between God and man; and as he is a Prophet to instruct him, a Priest to expiate his sin and make intercession for him, and as a King to rule over, protect, and defend him; and as he stands in the relations of a father, husband, brother, and friend: he rejoices in what he has done and is doing; in that this Word is made flesh, and has obtained eternal redemption, and now appears in the presence of God, as an advocate and intercessor: it follows,

it shall rejoice in his salvation; that which Jehovah the Father has determined upon, provided for, and has formed the scheme of; that which Jehovah the Son undertook to accomplish, and now has finished; and that which Jehovah the Spirit had made a discovery and application of unto the psalmist, in answer to his request in Ps 35:3. This filled him with so much joy, as it does every believer that has a view of interest in it; seeing hereby the law is fulfilled, justice is satisfied, sin is atoned for, the pardon of it is procured, an everlasting righteousness is brought in, and a solid foundation laid for hope of eternal glory and happiness.

Psalms 35:10

Ver. 10. All my bones shall say,.... So, in a figurative sense, vexation and disquietude are ascribed to the bones, **Ps 6:2**; and sometimes joy and gladness, Ps 51:8. His soul is said to rejoice in Ps 35:9; and here his bones are said to show forth the praises of the Lord; and both together design the whole man, as heart and flesh in Ps 84:2; and the bones being the strength of the body may denote his saying what follows, with all his might, and with all his strength, and with the utmost fervency of spirit:

Lord, who [is] like unto thee; on account of the perfections of his nature, which appear in the salvation and deliverance of his people: there is none like unto him for his wisdom, holiness, power, grace, and mercy; for his foreknowledge, wisdom, and counsel, in forming the scheme of salvation; for his holiness and justice, which are glorified by it; for his might and power in effecting it; and for his grace, mercy, goodness, and faithfulness shown in keeping covenant with his people, in pardoning and passing by their iniquity and transgression, and in condescending to take notice of his poor and needy, to deliver them, as follows; see Ps 113:5;

which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him: yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him? in which words the psalmist doubtless respects himself and his own case, who was poor and afflicted, and stood in need of help when he was persecuted by Saul, who was his enemy, too strong for him, and who sought to spoil and ruin him, but the Lord delivered him out of his hands; see Ps 18:17. They agree with the case of all the Lord's poor and needy, who are so not only in a temporal sense, as they commonly be; and in such sense as all mankind are, though everyone is not sensible of his spiritual poverty through sin; having neither food nor raiment, nor anything to procure them with, and yet think themselves rich and increased with goods; but in the best sense, being poor in spirit and rich in faith; these have enemies stronger than they. Sin is sometimes represented as a person, their antagonist that fights against them, wars with them, prevails over them sometimes, and carries them captive: sin is too strong for a man without the grace of God; nay, it was too strong for Adam in innocence, and spoiled him of the image of God, stripped him of his righteousness, and marred all the glory and honour in which he was; and it is too strong for a man that has the grace of God, when left to himself: but the Lord delivers his people from it; they; are redeemed from it, and saved from punishment for it by the blood of Christ; and they are freed from the power and dominion of it, by the Spirit and grace of Christ at conversion, and at death they are delivered from the being of it. Satan is the strong man armed, and is more than a match for the poor and needy; but Christ the mighty God is stronger than he, and has ransomed them out of the hands of him that was stronger than they; and the prey, or they that were made a spoil by him, are taken out of the hands of the mighty, and the lawful captive is delivered: they are, indeed, assaulted by his temptations, in which he would be too many for them, but that they are strengthened against him by the Lord, and are enabled to withstand him; who, in the issue, flees from them; nor can he do as he pleases with them, nor reassume his power over them he once had, nor lead them captive at his will as he once did: God is on their side, Christ is their patron and defender, that pleads their cause against him; the Spirit that is within them is greater than he that is in the world; angels are all around them, and in a little while these poor and needy will be in heaven, and out of his reach, and so of every oppressor and persecutor; now they are the weak things of this world, and their enemies are the mighty ones, and too strong for them, who spoil them of their good name and character, and sometimes of their goods and property; but the Lord does and will deliver them out of their hands, and enter them into rest, where the wicked cease from troubling.

Psalms 35:11

Ver. 11. False witnesses did rise up,.... Against David, saying he sought the hurt of Saul, 1Sa 24:9, as did against David's antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ, Mt 26:59; and against his apostles,
Ac 24:5; and very frequently do they rise up and bear false witness against his people, which is a very heinous crime;

they laid to my charge [things] that I knew not: such as David was not conscious of, never thought of doing, much less attempted to do; as the taking away of Saul's life, the contrary of which appeared by his cutting off his skirt only when he was in his hands, and taking away his spear from his bolster when he could have taken off his head; and such were the things laid to the charge of the Messiah, David's son, who knew no sin, nor did any; and the like are exhibited against his members, who go through good report and bad report, and whose good conversation is falsely accused by malicious men.

Psalms 35:12

Ver. 12. They rewarded me evil for good,.... For the good David did in killing Goliath, and slaying his ten thousands of the Philistines, and thereby saving his king and country, Saul and his courtiers envied him, and sought to slay him: so our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the good he did to the Jews, by healing their bodies of diseases, and preaching the Gospel to them for the benefit of their souls, was rewarded with reproaches and persecutions, and at last with the shameful death of the cross; and in like manner are his people used; but this is an evil that shall not go unpunished; see Pr 17:13. It is added,

[to] the spoiling of my soul; or "to the bereaving of it" {t}; causing it to be fatherless; that is, to the bereaving it of its joy, peace, and comfort; so fatherless is put for comfortless, Joh 14:18; or to the taking away of his soul, which being separated from the body, its companion is left alone, as one that is fatherless.

{t} lwkv "orbitatem", Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 35:13

Ver. 13. But as for me, when they were sick,.... Or under any disorder or distress of body or mind, when any misfortune or infirmity attended them; meaning Saul and his courtiers, before David was persecuted by them;

my clothing [was] sackcloth; that is, he was grieved, and mourned for them, it being usual to put on sackcloth in time of mourning; see
Ge 37:34;

I humbled my soul with fasting; on the account of them, giving up himself to prayer for them, as follows:

and my prayer returned into mine own bosom; that is, he prayed privately and heartily for them, as for himself; he was constant in it, his heart was in it, and he took delight in it, and he was heard and answered; unless the sense should be, that his prayer was slighted by them, and so returned back to himself, as a present despised is returned; but however it was not without its effect, the good for which he prayed for them was returned by the Lord unto him.

Psalms 35:14

Ver. 14. I behaved myself as though [he had been] my friend [or] brother,.... Meaning either Saul or Doeg the Edomite, or some such evil man; somewhat like this he says of Ahithophel, Ps 41:9; and Arama thinks he is meant here; as Christ of Judas, whom he called friend, when he came to betray him; and who not only ate with him at table of his bread, but was steward of his family, and carried the bag,
Mt 26:50;

I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth [for his] mother; or as a mother that mourneth for her son, as Jarchi interprets it, whose affections are very strong; and thus Christ wept over Jerusalem, and had a tender concern for and sympathy with the Jews, his implacable enemies, and wept over them, and prayed for them, Lu 19:41.

Psalms 35:15

Ver. 15. But in mine adversity they rejoiced,.... Or "at my halting" {u}, either by means of falling into sin; good men are subject to slips and falls, and that to the dislocating or breaking of their bones, which cause them to go halting all their days; wicked men watch for their halting, as Jeremiah's familiars did for his, Jer 20:10; and rejoice at it; see Ps 38:16; or by falling into some misfortune or calamity; hence we render it "adversity", and may design some affliction or other, as in **Mic 4:6**, at which wicked men rejoice; see Eze 35:15; so David's enemies rejoiced at his afflictions; and the enemies of his son and antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ, were glad when Judas offered to betray him to them; more so when they had got him into their hands; and most of all when he was condemned and crucified: and so do the enemies of his people, as the Philistines sported with Samson when he was in his adversity, and as the antichristian party will rejoice and send gifts one to another when the two witnesses are slain; but the saints have a gracious God, who knows their souls in adversity; a sympathizing high priest, who is touched with a feeling of their infirmities; and fellow saints that are afflicted with them in all their afflictions, and bear a part of their burdens;

and gathered themselves together; not to pity him, but to insult him; not to help him in his distress, but to add to it;

[yea], the abjects gathered themselves together against me; mean persons, the refuse and scum of the earth; such as Job describes, Job 30:1; the word may be rendered "smitten" {w}, either in spirit, as in Isa 66:2; they pretending sorrow of heart for his troubles; or rather smitten in body, in their feet, as Mephibosheth was; yet as lame as they were, and notwithstanding their lameness, they got together to rejoice at David's halting: or it may be best of all to understand it of their being smitten of God and afflicted; and the sense may be, that though the hand of God was upon them, this did not deter them from gathering together to insult David in his afflictions; some render the word "smiters" {x}, that is, with their tongues, and so the Targum, "the wicked who smite with their words"; see Jer 18:18; and such sort of persons were they that gathered together against Christ: it is true indeed that some of them were men of rank and figure, were the princes of this world, as Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the Jewish rulers, **Ac 4:27**, compared with **Ps 2:1**; but the greater part of them were the meaner sort of people; particularly the Roman soldiers that gathered about him, and sported with him in Pilate's hall, and that surrounded him with scoffs when upon the cross; these also were literally "smiters" of him, both with words and with their hands, and are so called, Isa 50:6;

and I knew [it] not; David knew his enemies, or he could not have shown so much concern for them, as he did in the preceding verses; but either he knew not of their gathering together against him; until he saw them in great numbers about him; or he was not conscious to himself of any evil he had done them, that should be the reason of it; and this was the case of his son the Messiah, he who they were that gathered about him, even those that blindfolded him, and bid him prophesy who smote him; but he knew no sin he had done why he should be treated in the manner he was;

they did tear [me], and ceased not; not their own garments, as some supply it, pretending great grief of heart for him; nor their mouth with laughing at him, as others; see Ps 35:21; but either his character and reputation, with hard sayings and reproachful words, or his flesh with blows; and this they did incessantly; and which was literally true of Christ, whose enemies tore his flesh, by plucking off the hair, by buffeting and scourging him, and by piercing his hands and his feet with nails, when they crucified him; and they ceased not, even after death, to pierce his side with a spear.

{u} yelub "in claudicatione mea", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth. {w} Mybn "percussi", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius. {x} So Ainsworth.

Psalms 35:16

Ver. 16. With hypocritical mockers in feasts,.... That is, the abjects gathered, themselves together with such; these may design Saul's courtiers, his parasites and flatterers, and who were hypocrites in religion also, and made it their business at Saul's table, and in their banquetings and revellings, to mock at David; and who were "hypocritical mockers of" or "for a piece of bread" {y}, as it may be rendered; the same word is used for a pastry, or cake, and for flatterers; and they used at their feasts to throw a pastry baked with honey to parasites {z}, for the word gwem signifies a cake, or a piece of bread, 1Ki 17:12; and the sense may be, that they mocked at David as wanting a piece of bread, and that he had brought himself to one; or else those, and they that gathered with them especially, mocked at David for the sake of a meal; or for a piece of bread; see Pr 28:27; and such sort of men were the enemies of Christ, the Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites to God, flatterers of men, who loved feasts, and the uppermost places there, and whose god was their belly; and who were mockers of Christ, derided his doctrine, and scoffed at his person, especially when he hung upon the cross;

they gnashed upon me with their teeth; in indignation and contempt; as Stephen's enemies did on him, **Ac 7:54**.

{y} gwem ygel "subsannatoribus subcineritii panis", Vatablus; "subsanmantes propter placentam", Piscator; "scoffers for a cake of bread", Ainsworth; hence a "parasite", a "table companion", or "trencher friend", is used for a "flatterer", vid. Suidam in voce
parasitov. {z} Weemse's Christ. Synag. l. 1. c. 6. s. 8. p. 209. of the Moral Law, l. 2. c. 9. p. 310.

Psalms 35:17

Ver. 17. Lord, how long wilt thou look on?.... And behold these injuries and insults, and not arise to help and save? The psalmist firmly believed the omniscience of God, and was well assured he saw all that was done; but he was ready to consider him only as a spectator; or, however, seems impatient until he arose and showed himself strong on his behalf; see Ps 35:22;

rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions; his "soul" and his "darling" mean the same; either his life, than which nothing is dearer to a man; or his soul, his more noble part, and which was now "alone", or solitary, as the word {a} used signifies; being forsaken of God and men, and was desolate and afflicted, as it is rendered Ps 25:16; or his whole person, which was among men comparable to lions, for their strength and savageness, who breathed out nothing but cruelty and destruction; from which he desires he might be rescued, or returned to the quiet possession of his own house, and the house of God: the words are much the same with those of the Messiah,
See Gill on "Ps 22:20" and
See Gill on "Ps 22:21".

{a} ytdyxy "solitariam meam", Piscator, Gejerus, Schmidt, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 35:18

Ver. 18. I will give thee thanks in the great congregation,.... This is the resolution the psalmist came unto; the promise he made, that should he be delivered from his enemies, he would give God thanks in the most public manner; that is, he would acknowledge God to be the author of the mercy, and himself unworthy of it; and would ascribe glory, honour, blessing, and thanksgiving to him, in the midst of the church and people of God; they joining with him in it, when he should be restored to an attendance with them he before prays for;

I will praise thee among much people; meaning the same as before, the people of God meeting together for solemn worship; the great congregation of all, and the much people, will be the saints in heaven, when they shall be gathered together, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. The words will bear to be applied to the Messiah, see
Ps 22:22.

Psalms 35:19

Ver. 19. Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me,.... The word "wrongfully" is to be joined not to the word "rejoice", but to the word "enemies"; and the sense is, that they were his enemies wrongfully, for false reasons, unjust causes, or without any cause that was just; as follows;

[neither] let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause; such were David's enemies, particularly Saul, **Ps 7:4**; and such were the enemies of Christ: this last clause is thought to be referred to by him, and applied to himself, Joh 15:25; and the whole of this is said him and by him, Ps 69:4; see also Ps 109:3. These were the Jews, of whom he came, among whom he was, and who had no reason to be his enemies, and to hate him; since he was harmless and inoffensive in his life and conversation among them; went about doing a great deal of good to them, both for soul and body, and always expressed the most tender concern for them: they had reasons for their hatred and rejection of him, but not justifiable ones; such as the meanness of his person and state in their view, the doctrines he preached relating to his deity, divine sonship, and the distinguishing grace of God; and his inveighing against the sins and vices which prevailed among them; and such are the enemies of his people, who hate them, though they are the quiet in the land, as is said in Ps 35:20; and are harmless and inoffensive in their behaviour towards men: these are hated for Christ's sake; and because he has chosen and called them out of the world; and because of their principles, which are distinguishing, and their practices, which are good: now the psalmist entreats that such might not be suffered to go on rejoicing over him, and at his calamities, but that he might be delivered out of all troubles, and out of their hands; and that they might not have any reason to wink with their eyes in a scornful and deriding way to him, and as expressing their pleasure to one an other at his distresses; see **Pr 1:12**.

Psalms 35:20

Ver. 20. For they speak not peace,.... Meaning to himself, or any good man; as Joseph's brethren could not to him, Ge 37:4; such were the men David had to do with, Ps 120:6; and such were the enemies of Christ, who could not give him a good word, nor speak one to him, Joh 10:20; and such are the enemies of his people, who breathe out nothing but threatenings and slaughter, and not anything that tends to peace, to promote and maintain it. Some versions, as the Septuagint, and they that follow that, render it, "they do speak peace to me"; but then it was in an hypocritical way, as in Ps 28:3; and as the Jews did to Christ, Mt 22:16; for it follows:

but they devise deceitful matters against [them that are] quiet in the land; meaning not the wicked, as Kimchi thinks; the rich, who live at ease and in quietness, having as much as heart can wish, "with" whom, as he renders it, David's enemies devised mischief in a deceitful way; but the righteous of the earth, as the Targum; such as David and his men were, who desired to live peaceable and quiet lives under Saul's government; and had no intention to disturb his government, or wrest the crown from him; and as the Messiah, David's son, was, "the humble one in the earth"; as the Arabic version renders it in the singular number; a character that well agrees with Christ, who showed great humility in coming into this world, and during his stay in it; it was a state of humiliation with him, and in which he behaved in the most lowly and humble manner; he was the quiet one in the land; he strove not, nor cried, nor was his voice heard in the street; he was not noisy and clamorous, quarrelsome and litigious; but all the reverse; he bore all insults, reproaches, and sufferings, patiently and quietly: and such are his people, so far as they are influenced by his grace and Spirit; they are quiet and peaceable in kingdoms, cities, and neighbourhoods, and in the churches of God; and yet the wicked are continually plotting against them, and devising things, to their hurt.

Psalms 35:21

Ver. 21. Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me,.... In laughter, scorn, and derision; see Ps 22:7;

[and] said, Aha, aha: a word expressive of joy; and the doubling it shows the greatness of it;

our eye hath seen [it]; what their heart wished for; namely, the distress of him, whose enemies they were.

Psalms 35:22

Ver. 22. [This] thou hast seen, O Lord,.... The insults and derisions of these men, and the injuries they did to him, whom they hated. God is omniscient, and sees all things, all the evil wicked men do to him; and he will requite them in his own time; see Ps 10:14;

keep not silence; meaning at his prayers; that he would not be as one deaf and dumb, turning his ears from his cries, and giving no answer to his requests; see Ps 28:1;

O Lord, be not far from me; meaning not as to his general presence, in which sense he is not far from any, Ac 17:07; but with respect to his gracious

presence and appearance to him for help and deliverance; see
Ps 22:1.

Psalms 35:23

Ver. 23. Stir up thyself and awake,.... Who seemed to be asleep in the apprehensions of the psalmist, and to take no notice of his distresses, and the insults of his enemies; see Ps 44:23; he adds,

to my judgment, [even] to my cause; that is, to plead it and maintain it, and avenge him of his enemies, as in Ps 35:1; making use of his covenant interest in him as a plea for it to engage him to do it, saying,

my God, and my Lord; see Ps 22:1.

Psalms 35:24

Ver. 24. Judge me, O Lord my God, according to thy righteousness,.... Either that righteousness of his, by which he justifies his people, which Christ has wrought out, God has accepted of, and imputes; and which, though revealed in the Gospel, was witnessed to by the law and prophets, and was known to the saints under the Old Testament, and particularly to David; see **Ro 4:6**; or the perfection of his justice, his essential righteousness displayed in all his works and actions, and in the government of the world; according to this the psalmist desired to be judged; not with respect to his person before God, but with respect to his cause before men, by delivering him from his enemies, and taking vengeance on them: thus Christ also was judged according to the strict justice or righteousness of God; for as sin was righteously condemned in his flesh, being imputed to him, and found upon him; so he was, according to the justice of God, acquitted, discharged, and justified in the Spirit, when he arose from the dead; and afterwards righteous judgment was executed on his enemies the Jews, when wrath came upon them to the uttermost: and his people are also dealt with according to the righteousness of God; who acts as a righteous God, as just and faithful in forgiving their sins, on account of the blood of Christ being shed for it; and in justifying their persons by his righteousness, and by giving them the crown of righteousness laid up for them; and at last by rendering tribulation to them that have troubled them;

and let them not rejoice over me; meaning his enemies, as in

Ps 35:15; that is, let them not go on to rejoice; let them have no occasion for it, but deliver me out of their hands.

Psalms 35:25

Ver. 25. Let them not say in their hearts, ah, so would we have it,.... Or we have what our souls wished for and desired: the sense of the petition is the same with Ps 27:12;

let them not say, we have swallowed him up; as roaring lions swallow down their prey, to which he had compared them, Ps 35:17; and as wicked men eat up the Lord's people as they eat bread, Ps 14:4.

Psalms 35:26

Ver. 26. Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together,.... In a body, as one man; as they gathered together against him, Ps 35:15; so he entreats they might together be brought to shame and confusion, they not being able to execute their designs; their schemes being broken, their counsels defeated, and they exposed to contempt;

that rejoice at mine hurt; the same with his adversity, or halting, Ps 35:15;

let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify [themselves] against me; let them be covered with it, as a man is with a garment; who magnified themselves, opened their mouths in great swelling words of vanity against him, vaunted and bragged over him, as in their power, and at their will.

Psalms 35:27

Ver. 27. Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause,.... The cause of David was a righteous cause, he having done no iniquity, or anything criminal against Saul his enemy, who persecuted him; and there were some that favoured his cause, as Jonathan, Saul's son, and a few others of rank and figure; but the greatest part were mean and despicable, 1Sa 22:2; and so the cause of Christ and of his people, which is one, is a righteous cause, which no one need to be ashamed of, and is worth suffering for; though those that favour it are for the most part the poor and base and weak things of the world: but when this cause prospers they rejoice and are glad, as they do at the happiness of every particular saint; for if one member is honoured, all the rest rejoice with it;

yea, let them say continually, the Lord be magnified; let them continually ascribe greatness, give honour and glory, to him,

which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant; meaning either himself, who was a servant of the Lord, not only by creation, but by grace; and who had his times both of temporal and spiritual prosperity; which were owing to the good will and pleasure of God, and to the delight and complacency he had in him, being a man after his own heart, raised up to fulfil his will; and since this prosperity did not arise from any desert of his, he would have all the glory of it given to God: or else he intends the Messiah, his antitype, who, as Mediator, is the servant of the Lord; of his choosing, calling, and sending; whose commands he diligently and faithfully obeyed; from whom he had his work, and also his reward: his prosperity lies in the work of redemption succeeding in his hands; in his exaltation at the right hand of God; and in the spread of his Gospel in the world, and the efficacy of it to the conviction of sinners; and in the establishment and increase of his kingdom and interest; on which account the Lord's name is to be magnified and glorified, who delights in him as his servant, and in his prosperity; and the rather this is to be done, since the saints have an interest in him as a Prince and a Saviour: or anyone of the servants of the Lord may be understood; or however it is applicable to anyone of them, who, through the power of divine grace upon them, are made willing to serve the Lord with reverence and godly fear; who are his Hephzibah, in whom is all his delight and pleasure, Isa 62:4; who rejoices over them to do them good: and hence flows all the spiritual prosperity they enjoy, on account of which glory is to be given to God by them and all the saints that know it, Ps 34:1.

Psalms 35:28

Ver. 28. And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness,.... In vindicating his cause, and bringing his enemies to shame and confusion, as well as of the glory and excellency of that righteousness of his, by which he was justified in his sight, and from whence his inward peace and prosperity flowed:

[and] of thy praise all the day long; for the many mercies, temporal and

spiritual, he was every day favoured with.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 36:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 36

To the chief Musician, [a Psalm] of David, the servant of the Lord. This title, which the psalmist takes to himself, regards him not only as a creature, every man being the servant of the Lord as such, of right, though not in fact; but as a king, he being a minister of God for good to good men, and for evil to evil men; and also may respect him as a renewed man; and it is here used in opposition to and distinction from the wicked, who are the servants of sin and Satan, of whom he speaks in this psalm. The Syriac and Arabic versions in their titles suggest that this psalm was written when David was persecuted by Saul, and which is the sense of some interpreters; but R. Obadiah thinks Ahithophel is designed by the wicked man in it; and so it was penned on account of Absalom's rebellion.

Ver. 1. The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart,.... Which is represented as a person speaking within him; not that the transgression of the wicked was really in him; sin was in him, and sin of the same kind and nature with the wicked man's; but he taking notice of and considering the wicked man's sinful course of life, and his daring impieties, conceived in his own mind, and concluded from hence,

[that there is] no fear of God before his eyes; no reverential affection for him, but enmity to him; no godly filial fear, but at most only a slavish fear, a fear of punishment; no holy and humble fear of him, but pride and wickedness; no fiducial and obediential fear, but all the reverse; true worship of him, either internally or externally: there can be no fear of God in any unregenerate man's, heart, because it is not of nature, but of grace, and is, what is implanted at first conversion; there is in some an appearance of it, where it is not really, whose fear is taught by the precept of men; and in others there may be some awe of the divine Being, and trembling at the thought of a future judgment, arising from the dictates of nature, the light of revelation, and the enjoyment of a religious education; but in some there is no fear of God at all, and they are bold and daring enough to assert it themselves, as the unjust judge did, Lu 18:4. Such as the atheist, the common swearer, the debauchee and epicure, who give up themselves to all manner of wickedness, contemn revelation, despise the word of God, and regard no day nor manner of worship; and this notwithstanding the majesty of God, at whose presence they tremble not, and notwithstanding the goodness of God, which should induce them to fear him, and notwithstanding the judgment of God on others, and even on themselves; see **Jer 3:8**; and notwithstanding the future awful judgment, which they put far away or disbelieve. The Targum is, "transgression saith to the wicked within my heart"; and Jarchi's note upon the text is this,

"this text is to be transposed thus, it is in my heart, that transgression, which is the evil imagination, says to the wicked man, that there should be no fear of God before his eyes; and the phrase, "in the midst of my heart", is as if a man should say, so it seems to me."

The Septuagint version, and those that follow it, render the words thus, "the transgressor said, that he might sin in himself, there is no fear of God before his eyes". Gussetius {b} interprets "before his eyes", before the eyes of God himself, who is so good a Being, that the sinner fears no punishment from him, but will pardon all his sins.

{b} Ebr. Comment. p. 488.

Psalms 36:2

Ver. 2. For he flattereth himself in his own eyes,.... There are many self-flatterers; some on account of their worldly estate, that they are out of the reach of God and men, and regard neither; and that as they have much goods laid up, they shall enjoy them many years, and so never think of dying, nor of another world: others on account of their eternal state, pleasing themselves with their own purity, goodness, and righteousness: some flatter themselves either that their sins are not sins, or they are small ones; or they are no other than what multitudes commit; or they are not seen and known, and that God himself sees them not, or takes no notice of them; and that they shall go on with impunity, sentence against them being not speedily executed; and others that there is no God, will be no judgment, nor future state;

until his iniquity be found to be hateful, or, "to find his iniquity and to hate" {c} that which is good, as the word may be rendered; that is, he flatters himself, or speaks smooth things to himself, and endeavours to work himself up into the belief of the above things; that he may find, embrace, and indulge his lusts with a quiet conscience, and hate God, good men, and everything that is good; the Targum is,

"that he may find sins and hate doctrine"

or instruction. Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret the words another way,

"that the holy and blessed God may find out his iniquity to hate him;"

see Ge 44:16, which God may be said to do, when he charges the guilt of sin upon the conscience, and punishes for it; and exposes both the sinner and his sins to the world; thereby testifying his hatred of him and his sins; and which should have been hateful to him, as they are to all good men.

{c} So. Pagninus.

Psalms 36:3

Ver. 3. The words of his mouth [are] iniquity and deceit,.... Not only sinful, but sin itself; his mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, of filthy and unchaste words, of corrupt communication, lying, deceit, and flattery; out of the abundance of the wickedness of his heart his mouth speaketh; and which shows the badness of it, and proves all that is said before of him;

he hath left off to be wise, [and] to do good; by which the psalmist seems to intend one that had been a professor of religion, who, besides the light of nature he had acted contrary to, had had the advantage of a divine revelation, and had been enlightened into the knowledge of divine things, and had done many things externally good, particularly acts of beneficence; but now had dropped his profession of religion, denied the truths he had been enlightened into, and ceased from doing good; otherwise a natural man understandeth not; and, though he is wise to do evil, to do good he has no knowledge.

Psalms 36:4

Ver. 4. He deviseth mischief upon his bed,.... He casts about in his mind on his pillow, when at leisure from all employment; and consults and contrives schemes how to compass his lusts, and to do injury to others, without doing which he cannot sleep;

he setteth himself in a way [that is] not good, in an evil way, which he chooses and delights in, and determines to continue in, he leaving the paths of righteousness to walk in the ways of darkness:

he abhorreth not evil; which is to be abhorred both because of its nature and effects; see Ro 12:9; but on the contrary he loves it, takes pleasure in doing it, and in them that commit it: thus, by his thoughts, words, and actions, he appears to be devoid of the fear of God.

Psalms 36:5

Ver. 5. Thy mercy, O Lord, [is] in the heavens,.... Meaning either the general mercy of God the earth is full of, and extends to all creatures; to which it is owing that wicked men before described are not consumed; and which reaches "up to the heavens" {d}, as the words are by some rendered, as their sins do; see Ps 57:10; or the special mercy of God, and regards not the objects of it, creatures in heaven; for there at, none there proper objects of mercy; but the seat of it, the heart of God, who is in heaven; or the repository of it, the covenant of grace, which is full of the sure mercies of David; and of mercy there was a most glaring instance, when the son of God was sent down from heaven, to obtain salvation for sinful men; or it may denote the original of it, the heaven, being, as Aben Ezra observes some Jewish interpreters say, the fountain of mercy, and the spring of truth; or the greatness and abundance of it, it being as high as heaven, yea, above it; see Ps 103:11;

[and] thy faithfulness [reacheth] unto the clouds; which lies in the execution of his purposes, whose counsels of old were faithfulness and truth; and in keeping his covenant and promises; he never changes his mind, nor forgets his word; he is a God of truth, and cannot lie; he knows the end from the beginning; no unforeseen event can turn up to hinder the performance of what he has purposed and promised, and he is able to perform; nor does ever any of the good things he has spoken of fail: though his faithfulness sometimes seems to be not only to the clouds, but in them, and out of sight; providences seem to clash with promises, which make unbelief to say, doth his promise fail for evermore? yet, though we believe not, he abides faithful, Ps 77:8 **2Ti 2:13**.

{d} Mymvhb "usque ad coelos", Pagninus, Musculus, Muis, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Kimchi & Noldius, p. 164. No. 744. & Ainsworth.

Psalms 36:6

Ver. 6. Thy righteousness [is] like the great mountains,.... Or, "the mountains of God"; so called for their excellency, as the cedars of God, Ps 80:10; or, as Gussetius {e} observes, the greatest and highest mountains, which are here meant, reaching above the clouds and the region of the air, are the pillars of the palace of God, and a part of it; and therefore called his mountains with great propriety, to which his righteousness is compared: that is, either the righteousness of God in the government of the world, which is sometimes like the high mountains, not to be reached and accounted for in the present state of things, though always is, and is immovable as they are; or the righteousness of God, by which he justifies sinners, which may be said to be as the mountains of God, because of the dignity of his person, who has wrought it out; and because of the clear manifestation of it, the Gospel, and so visible, as high mountains; and because of the immovableness and duration of it;

thy judgments [are] a great deep; both in a way of providence, many of them being at present not to be traced, though before long they will be made manifest; and in a way of grace, such as the choice of some, and the leaving of others, the rejection of the Jews, and the call of the Gentiles; see Ro 11:33;

O Lord, thou preservest man and beast; in a providential way, upholding each in their being, and supplying them with the necessaries of life: some understand this figuratively, of God's saving Jews and Gentiles, wise and unwise, and particularly those who, through humility and modesty, as Jarchi says, compare themselves to beasts, because of their ignorance and stupidity, Pr 30:2.

{e} Ebr. Comment. p. 66.

Psalms 36:7

Ver. 7. How excellent [is] thy lovingkindness, O God,.... Which has appeared to men and not angels, to some and not others; to the chief of sinners, who are by nature children of wrath as others; in choosing, redeeming, and calling them, taking them into his family, and making them heirs of eternal glory; and all this of his sovereign good will and pleasure, there being nothing in them that could move him to it; which lovingkindness was in his heart from everlasting, and will never change in him, nor depart from them; and hence it must be most excellent and precious:

therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings; not all men; for all have not faith, only some, to whom it is given to believe, and who know the Lord and his lovingkindness; by which they are induced and encouraged to trust in him, to betake themselves to him for mercy and protection, which they find in him: the allusion is either to the hen that gathers her chickens under her wings, and protects them in time of danger, and so it expresses both the paternal affection of God to his people, and the protection of them; or else to the wings of the cherubim over the mercy seat, between which the Lord sat and communed with his people, and showed mercy and favour to them, which encouraged them to trust in him.

Psalms 36:8

Ver. 8. They shall be abundantly sallied with the fatness of thy house,.... By his "house" is meant the church of God, of his building, and where he dwells; by the fatness of it the provisions there, the word and ordinances, and the blessings of grace which they hold forth; and especially Christ, the fatted calf, the bread of life, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed, and which make a feast of fat things; and these they that trust in the Lord are welcome to eat and drink of abundantly, and to abundant satisfaction; see **Mt 5:6**
Ps 22:26;

and thou shall make them drink of the river of thy pleasure; the love of God, whose streams make glad the city of God; or the fulness of grace, which is in Christ, out of which believers draw with joy, and drink with pleasure; or eternal glory and happiness, enjoyed in the presence of God, in which is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore; a never ceasing torrent of them.

Psalms 36:9

Ver. 9. For with thee [is] the fountain of life,.... Or "lives" {f}: God himself is the fountain of living waters; this is a reason proving the happiness of those that trust in the Lord, and that they shall enjoy the above things; because with God the object of their trust is the fountain of life; not only of natural life, from whom they have it, and by whom it is supported, but of spiritual life, being quickened by him when dead in sin, by virtue of which they live by faith on

Christ, and also of eternal life; and the phrase denotes, that life is originally in God as in its fountain, and that both the fulness of it is with him, and the freeness of it in the communication of it to others, as well as its continuance and duration;

in thy light shall we see light; God is light itself, the Father of lights, and the former of it in every sense; in the light of his countenance, and the discoveries of his love, they that trust in him see light, or enjoy comfort; and in the light of his Son Jesus Christ, the sun of righteousness and light of the world, they see the face of God, and enjoy his favour, and behold the glory and excellency of Christ himself; and in the light of the divine Spirit, who is a spirit of wisdom and revelation, they see their sins exceeding sinful, their righteousness as nothing, and a preciousness in the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and in the light of the divine word they see the truths of the Gospel in their native simplicity and excellency, and the duties of religion to be performed by them; and in the light of faith, which is the gift of God, they have at least a glimpse of the unseen glories of the other world; and when the beatific vision shall take place, they shall see no more darkly through a glass, but face to face, even God himself, as he is in Christ.

{f} Myyx rwqm "vena vitarum", Montanus.

Psalms 36:10

Ver. 10. O continue thy lovingkindness to them that know thee,.... That is, spiritually and experimentally; and such are they that trust in him and love him: and these are the objects of the love of God; not that their knowledge, faith, or love, are the cause of his love to them; but these things describe and point at manifestly the objects of it; and this request regards the open discovery of it unto them: for the love of God itself always continues, though the manifestations of it are not always the same; and it is for the enlargement and continuance of them the psalmist here prays: for it may be rendered, "draw out thy lovingkindness" {g}; that is, to a greater length; make a larger and clearer discovery of it, that the height and depth, and length and breadth of it, may be more discerned;

and thy righteousness unto the upright in heart; who are sincere and without guile; who have new hearts created and right spirits renewed in them, and have truth in the inward parts; and unto and upon such is the righteousness of Christ, and where it always continues, for it is an everlasting one; but here it means a clearer and constant revelation of it from faith to faith; unless it should rather intend the righteousness of God in protecting his people from the insults of their enemies, and the continual exertion of it for that purpose.

{g} Kvm "trahe", Pagninus, Montanus; "extende", Vatablus, Piscator; "protrahe", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 36:11

Ver. 11. Let not the foot of pride come against me,.... Meaning some proud enemy, such an one as Ahithophel, of whom R. Obadiah expounds, it, who lifted up his heel against him; and is applicable to any haughty enemy of Christ and his people, and particularly to antichrist, the man of sin, that exalts himself above all that is called God;

and let not the hand of the wicked remove me; either from the house of God; or from his throne, that high station and dignity in which he was placed.

Psalms 36:12

Ver. 12. There are the workers, of iniquity fallen,.... Either in the pit they dug for others; or into hell, where they shall be turned at last; See Gill on "Ps 5:5" and
See Gill on "Ps 6:8";

they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise; which will be the case of Babylon when fallen, Re 18:21, and this distinguishes the falls of the wicked from those of the righteous; for though the righteous fall, whether into sin, or into any calamity, they rise again; not so the wicked; see Ps 37:24; and thus, as the psalm begins with the transgression of the wicked, it ends with their ruin.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 37:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 37

[A Psalm] of David. This psalm, it is very probable, was written at the same time, and upon the same occasion, with the former; and describes the different states of good and bad men; and is full of exhortations, instructions, and advice to the people of God; intermixed with various encouraging promises. A late learned writer {h} thinks it was written for Mephibosheth's consolation under Ziba's calumny.

{h} Delaney's Life of King David, vol. 2. p. 219.

Ver. 1. Fret not thyself because of evildoers,.... The saints may be grieved at them and for them, because of their evil doings, and may be angry with them for them; yet are not to show any undue warmth, at least in an indecent way, by calling them opprobrious names; for the words may be rendered, "do not show thyself warm" or "angry" {i}: in a sinful way; or fret not at their outward prosperity, as it is explained
Ps 37:7. The Targum adds, "to be like them", which agrees with
Ps 37:8;

neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity; that is, at their present temporal happiness; see Ps 73:3. The Targum adds, as before, to be joined with them; which sense some parallel places seem to incline to, **Pr 3:31**.

{i} rxtt "ne accendaris ira", Junius & Tremellius; "ne exardescas", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 37:2

Ver. 2. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Which in the morning looks green, pretty, and flourishing, and in the evening is cut down, and then fades away; see
Ps 90:5; and so the wicked prosper and flourish for a while, and then they perish with all their honour, riches, and wealth; so that their happiness is a very short lived one, and therefore need not be envied and fretted at.

Psalms 37:3

Ver. 3. Trust in the Lord,.... Not in men, who are fading and perishing like the green grass and tender herb; nor in riches, which are very uncertain things; but in the Lord, in whom is everlasting strength; and with whom are riches and honour, yea, durable riches and righteousness; trust in him both for things temporal and spiritual, for soul and body, for time and eternity; the way to have peace and quietness of mind under all dispensations is to exercise faith on a promising God. The Targum is, "trust in the Word of the Lord", in the essential Word of God, the promised Messiah;

and do good; in general, all good actions, in faith, and as the fruits and effects of it, without trusting to them, but in the Lord; doing them in his strength, and with a view to his glory; or in particular, acts of beneficence to the poor, to which the encouragement follows;

[so] shalt thou dwell in the land; either in the land of Canaan, a continuance in which depended upon the obedience of the people of the Jews to the commands of God; see **Isa 1:19**; or rather in the good land which is afar off, the heavenly and better country, which those that trust in the Lord, and have that faith in Christ which works by love, shall dwell in to all eternity;

and verily thou shalt be fed; either temporally, shall have food and raiment, even all the necessaries of life; or spiritually, with the word and ordinances, and with Christ the bread of life now; and hereafter shall be fed by him, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, and by him led to fountains of living water: some read the words as an exhortation, and render them, "feed truth" {k}, that is, teach it, as Abraham taught his household, and as faithful pastors feed with knowledge and understanding; or "feed by faith" {l}, as the just live by it; or, as the Targum renders it, "be strong in faith", as Abraham was, **Ro 4:20**; or rather, "feed upon truth" {m}, the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation, and the several truths and doctrines of it, which are food for faith, and nourish up to everlasting life.

{k} hnwma her "pasce veritatem", Pagninus, Montanus. {l} "Pascere fide", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius. {m} "Pasce te veritate", Gejerus; "ut alimentum tuum", Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 942. "feed on faith", Ainsworth.

Psalms 37:4

Ver. 4. Delight thyself also in the Lord,.... In the persons in God, Father, Son, and Spirit; in the perfections of God, his power, goodness, faithfulness, wisdom, love, grace, and mercy; in his works of creation, providence, and redemption; in his word, his Gospel, the truths and ordinances of it; in his house, and the worship of it; and in his people, the excellent in the earth, in whom was all the delight of the psalmist; and each of these afford a field of delight and pleasure, to attend unto, contemplate, and meditate upon;

and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart; such as are according to the will of God, and for the good of his people; such as relate to communion with him, and to the communication of more grace from him, and to the enjoyment of eternal glory.

Psalms 37:5

Ver. 5. Commit thy way unto the Lord,.... Or "thy works", as in Pr 16:3; that is, all the affairs and business of life, which are a man's ways in which he walks; not that men should sit still, be inactive, and do nothing, and leave all to be done by the Lord; but should seek direction of God in everything engaged in, and for strength and assistance to perform it, and go on in it, and depend upon him for success, and give him all the glory, without trusting to any thing done by them: or, as some render the words, "reveal thy way unto the Lord" {n}; not that God is ignorant of the ways of men, and of their affairs, and of their wants and necessities, but it is their duty to ask, and it is his delight to hear; they may come and use freedom with him, and tell him their whole case, and leave it with him, believing he will supply all their need: or, as others render it, "roll thy way on the Lord" {o}; see Ps 55:22; meaning not the burden of sin, nor the weight of affliction, but any affair of moment and importance that lies heavy upon the mind;

trust also in him; it is an ease to the mind to spread it before the Lord, who sympathizes with his people, supports them under and brings them through their difficulties;

and he shall bring [it] to pass; as he does whatever he has appointed and determined shall be, and whatever he has promised, and whatever will be for his own glory and his people's good.

{n} lwg apokaluqon, Sept. "revela", V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so the Targum, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {o} "Devolve super Jehovam", Tigurine version.

Psalms 37:6

Ver. 6. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light,.... That is, the good man having committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously, he will, in his own time, clearly make it appear that it is a righteous one, both to himself and others, in whatsoever obscurity it may have lain;

and thy judgment as the noonday; the same as before, unless rather the righteousness of Christ, which is the believer's by imputation, and is a justifying one in the judgment of God, should be meant; see **Mic 7:9**; and the phrases may denote not barely the revelation of it in the Gospel, but the more clear manifestation of it to the believer himself, from faith to faith; or as it will be still more clearly revealed and declared at the day of judgment, when those who are clothed with it shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and be clear of all those charges and imputations which they have lain under in this life.

Psalms 37:7

Ver. 7. Rest in the Lord,.... Or "be silent to the Lord" {p}; be still, and know that he is God; quietly submit to his will, and acquiesce in all the dispensations of his providence: it does not design a stupid indolence, or a stoical apathy, that we should be like sticks and stones, without any concern at the hand of God upon us; nor an entire silence under afflictions; we should own that they are of God, and that we are deserving of them; we should pray to him to sanctify them, to support under them, and deliver out of them; we should bless his name that they are no worse, and that they are any ways useful to us; and we should speak to others of the divine goodness experienced under them; but this stands opposed to an arraigning or murmuring at the providence of God, and intends a patient bearing the hand of God, and a resignation of will to his will; for it follows,

and wait patiently for him: for the enjoyment of him, help from him, and deliverance by him;

fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass; this explains the sense of Ps 37:1; it being often an additional uneasiness to the people of God under affliction, when they observe the prosperity of men that go on in a sinful way, and have all or more than heart can wish; and whatever they contrive and devise, though wicked and criminal.

{p} hwhyl Mwd "tace Domino", Pagninus, Montanus; "sile", Musculus, Piscator, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 37:8

Ver. 8. Cease from anger,.... Either at these wicked men who are so prosperous, or at God, who for the present suffers it; see **Jon 4:9** Pr 19:3;

and forsake wrath; which is anger wrought up to a greater degree; and the rather to be shunned and avoided, as being very disagreeable to the character of a good man;

fret not thyself in any wise to do evil; evil may be done by fretting at the prosperity of wicked men, or by imitating them, doing as they do, in hope of being prosperous as they are; from which the psalmist dissuades by reasons following.

Psalms 37:9

Ver. 9. For evildoers shall be cut off,.... Though they flourish for a while, they shall be cut down like the grass or flower of the field, or they shall be cut off as branches from a flourishing tree; they shall be cut off from the earth, and rooted out of it by death or some desolating judgment; see **Pr 2:22**; and therefore not to be envied and fretted at;

but those that wait upon the Lord shall inherit the earth; such who attend his word, worship, and ordinances; obey his commands, trust in his grace and mercy; or, as the Targum, "trust in the word of the Lord"; who wait upon him for the manifestations of himself, for the performance of his promises, for answer of prayer, for supplies of grace, and live in the expectation of the heavenly glory; these shall have for their inheritance, not the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, which the obedient Jews enjoyed; but either this world and the necessaries of it, which such persons have the promise of, a right unto through Christ, are heirs of, and do enjoy what they do with a blessing; or else the new earth after this, in which only righteous ones, those that wait upon the Lord, and trust in him, will dwell; unless the heavenly country, the good land afar off, is meant, often called an inheritance.

Psalms 37:10

Ver. 10. For yet a little while, and the wicked [shall] not [be],.... Not that they shall be annihilated or reduced to nothing, because nonentities have no place nor being any where; when they die they shall lift up their eyes in hell; their bodies will rise again at the last day; they shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and go into everlasting punishment; but they shall be no more in the world, and in the same flourishing and prosperous circumstances they were: and this their destruction will be in a short time, very quickly;

yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it [shall] not [be]; his dwelling place, called after his own name, to perpetuate the memory of him; see **Job 7:10**; an instance of this the psalmist gives of his own knowledge, Ps 37:35.

Psalms 37:11

Ver. 11. But the meek shall inherit the earth,....
See Gill on "Ps 37:9"; of this character
See Gill on "Ps 22:26". Our Lord seems to refer to this passage in **Mt 5:5**;

and shall delight themselves is the abundance of peace; of spiritual peace enjoyed in a way of believing, arising from a comfortable view of interest in the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and of all happiness and prosperity in the kingdom of Christ here on earth, at which time there will be abundance of peace, Ps 72:7; or of eternal peace in the world to come, which will be a state of uninterrupted and unspeakable peace; see Ps 37:37; all which afford inconceivable delight and pleasure; and therefore such have no need to fret and be envious at the fading happiness of wicked men.

Psalms 37:12

Ver. 12. The wicked plotteth against the just,.... Forms schemes to make him uneasy, uncomfortable, and unhappy:

and gnasheth upon him with his teeth: which expresses his malice and hatred, as David's enemies did upon him, Ps 35:16; and Stephen's, **Ac 7:54**.

Psalms 37:13

Ver. 13. The Lord shall laugh at him,.... Have him and his plots in derision, confound his schemes, and disappoint him of his designs, bring him into calamity, and laugh at it; see **Ps 2:4**;

for he seeth that his day is coming; either the day of the Lord, which he has appointed to judge the world in, and which comes suddenly, at unawares, as a thief in the night, and is known unto the Lord, though to none else; or the day of the wicked man's ruin and destruction, to which he is appointed, and which is the same; and so the Targum is, "the day of his calamity": which the Lord observes is hastening on, when he will be for ever miserable.

Psalms 37:14

Ver. 14. The wicked have drawn out the sword,.... That is, out of the scabbard; they drew upon the righteous, in order to sheath it in them; or they sharpened the sword, as Aben Ezra observes some interpret the word; it may be literally rendered, "opened the sword" {q}, which before lay hid in the scabbard:

and have bent their bow; having put the arrow in it, in order to shoot. The former expression may design the more open, and this the more secret way of acting against the righteous; and their view in both is

to cast down the poor and needy, who are so, both in a temporal and spiritual sense; to cause such to fall either into sin, or into some calamity or another:

[and] to slay such as be of upright conversation; who walk according to the rule of the word of God, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ: nothing less than the blood and life of these men will satisfy the wicked; and it is an aggravation of their wickedness that they should attempt to hurt men of such character who are poor and needy, holy, harmless, inoffensive, and upright; and this points at the reason why they hate them, and seek their ruin, because of the holiness and uprightness of their lives; see Joh 15:19.

{q} wxtp brx "aperuerunt gladium", Gejerus.

Psalms 37:15

Ver. 15. Their sword shall enter into their own heart,.... As Saul's did into his, 1Sa 31:4;

and their bows shall be broken; the meaning is, that their efforts shall be fruitless, and their attempts in vain; the mischief they have contrived and designed for others shall fall upon themselves; see **Ps 7:15**; and therefore the saints should not be fretful and envious.

Psalms 37:16

Ver. 16. A little that a righteous man hath,.... It is the portion of the righteous, for the most part, to have but little of this world's goods; some indeed have been rich, as Abraham, Lot, David, Joseph of Arimathea, and others; but, generally speaking, the wicked have the largest share of worldly things, and the righteous but little, and are as having nothing comparatively; and yet their little

[is] better than the riches of many wicked; not that a little is better than much, or that poverty is better than riches, or a poor man better than a rich man; but the comparison is between a righteous man and a wicked man; the emphasis lies there; and the sense is, that a "righteous" man's "little" is better than a "wicked" man's "much"; the righteous have a right to what they have, through Christ, who is heir of all things, but not the wicked; they have what they have in love and with a blessing, not so the wicked; they are contented in their state and condition, when the wicked are never satisfied; they possess and enjoy what they have, even all they have, when God oftentimes does not give the wicked an heart to eat and drink of what they are possessed, but a stranger eats it; they have the presence of God with them, and that makes a little sweet, and to go a great way; and they live without any anxious, distressing, burdensome care; not so the wicked; and before long the tables will be turned, and they will have their good things, and the wicked their evil things; see Pr 16:8; wherefore they have no need to fret under present circumstances, nor envy the happiness of wicked men. Arama interprets it, of a little help that a righteous man has, better than the riches of many wicked; and Gussetius {r} understands all this not of the smallness and largeness of the substance of different persons, but of their numbers, the one small, the other large; and Jarchi, that the sense is, that a few persons with the righteous, which was the case of Abraham and Gideon, are better and succeed more than the multitude of many wicked persons; and the church should be content with a small number of believers, and not draw in a multitude of wicked men into their communion.

{r} Ebr. Comment. p. 213, 475.

Psalms 37:17

Ver. 17. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,.... That is, their sword arm, with which they have drawn it; and so shall not be able to strike with it; and with which they have bent their bows, but shall not be able to shoot: and this proves, what is before suggested, that their efforts shall be fruitless; or their substance shall be taken away from them, in which they trusted, and wherein their strength lay; and this confirms what had been just spoken, that the righteous man's little is better than the wicked man's much; and which is further confirmed by what follows;

but the Lord upholdeth the righteous; both in a providential way, by supporting them in their being, supplying their need, preserving them from dangers, and bearing them up under all their afflictions; and in a spiritual way, by maintaining the principle of grace and life in them, by furnishing them with all spiritual blessings, by sustaining them in times of temptation, and by securing them safe from their enemies; upholding them so as that they stand in the grace of God now, and shall stand before Christ with confidence hereafter; and shall not fall here finally and totally, nor in the day of judgment. The Targum is, "the Word of the Lord upholdeth the righteous".

Psalms 37:18

Ver. 18. The Lord knoweth the days of the upright,.... Not only how long they shall live, and so fill up their days, the number of them, as Aben Ezra interprets it; but the nature of their days, whether prosperous or adverse; and causes both to work together for their good; and he knows the work of their days, as Jarchi explains it, the actions done by them in faith and love, and to his honour and glory, and which he approves and accepts of in Christ; see **Ps 1:6**;

and their inheritance shall be for ever; in heaven, which is an eternal and never fading one, **Heb 9:15**; and therefore they ought not to fret and be envious.

Psalms 37:19

Ver. 19. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time,.... Of affliction and persecution, or of old age, or in the day of judgment, when it will go ill with others; see **1Jo 2:28**;

and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied: whether it is understood figuratively of a famine of hearing the word, or literally of a proper famine of bread and water: these God will provide for them, as he did for Elijah, and they shall be sure unto them, and therefore let them not fret nor envy.

Psalms 37:20

Ver. 20. But the wicked shall perish,.... In a time of famine, in an evil day, and particularly at the day of judgment: for this is to be understood, not merely of being in bodily distress and want; nor of perishing by death, common to the righteous and the wicked; nor of being in a lost perishing condition, as all men by nature are, but of eternal perdition in hell;

and the enemies of the Lord [shall be] as the fat of lambs, they shall consume; that is, either they shall consume away as the fat of lambs burnt upon the altar, which evaporates, or as lambs fattened on purpose to be killed, and so prepared for the day of slaughter; in like manner the wicked, who have waxed fat and kicked, will be destroyed; they being the enemies of God, yea, enmity to him, to Father, Son, and Spirit, to the Gospel and ordinances of Christ, and to his people, and will be treated as such. Some render the word, "like the excellency of pastures" {s}; the grass of the field, which is cut down and withers presently; see Ps 37:2;

into smoke shall they consume away, or "with" {t} it; that is, as it; see Ps 68:1; or "in smoke" {u}; in the smoke of eternal torments, or hell, as the Targum.

{s} Myrk rqyk "sicut pretiosum pratorum", Muis; so some in Piscator; "vel gloria", Michaelis. {t} Nveb "cum fumo", Gejerus, Tigurine version; so Ainsworth. {u} "In fumo", Montanus, Musculus, Michaelis.

Psalms 37:21

Ver. 21. The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again,.... While the wicked live, they are scandalous; they live by borrowing, which was always reckoned mean; see De 28:12; and what is worse, as they borrow, they do not design to repay; they take no care nor thought about that, but live upon what they borrow: for this either expresses their incapacity that they cannot pay; or the evil disposition of their mind, which rather seems to be the sense, that they will not pay;

but the righteous showeth mercy, and giveth; which not only argues capacity and ability, but a kind, merciful, and tender spirit to persons in distress, and is expressive of a generous action.

Psalms 37:22

Ver. 22. For [such as be] blessed of him,.... Not of the righteous man; for he blesses them that curse and persecute him, and despitefully use him; but of the Lord, as the Syriac version expresses it; or by the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; both in a providential way, for it is the blessing of the Lord that makes rich, and puts into a capacity to give to others; and in a way of grace, with an interest in God as a covenant God in Christ; and with the blessings of grace in him, with a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, and a right to eternal glory. The Septuagint version, and those that follow that, render the words actively, "such as bless him"; either such as bless the righteous, who are blessed also, Ge 12:3; or rather such as bless the Lord, as the righteous do, for all their blessings temporal and spiritual they receive from him; these

shall inherit the earth; See Gill on "Ps 37:9";

and [they that be] cursed of him; not of the righteous man, but of the Lord, according to the tenor of his righteous law, which they have broken:

shall be cut off; out of the land of the living; many of them in the midst of their days, and shall everlastingly perish.

Psalms 37:23

Ver. 23. The steps of a [good] man are ordered by the Lord,.... Or "of a man" {w}; such a man as is blessed of the Lord; the steps which he takes in life are ordered by the Lord, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual: his good conduct is not of himself, it is a blessing of the Lord, who directs and keeps the feet of his saints, and inclines them to take such steps, and pursue such methods, which he succeeds and prospers;

and he delighteth in his way; which he knows and approves of, guides and directs him in; see **Ps 1:6**.

{w} rbg "hominis", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Psalms 37:24

Ver. 24. Though he fall,.... Into temptation, and by it into sins, and these very great ones; from a lively and comfortable exercise of grace, and a degree of steadfastness in the doctrine of grace:

he shall not be utterly cast down; because he is in the arms of everlasting love, and in the hands of Christ Jesus; is on him as the sure foundation, and is kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, and so shall not perish, but have everlasting life;

for the Lord upholdeth [him with] his hand; with the right hand of his righteousness, and keeps him from falling finally and totally; see
Isa 41:10; and
See Gill on "Ps 37:17".

Psalms 37:25

Ver. 25. I have been young, and [now] am old,.... The psalmist makes mention of his age, which takes in the whole compass of his life, to command attention to what he was about to say; which was founded upon a long experience and observation of things, and was as follows;

yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken; though afflicted of God, and persecuted by men, yet not forsaken; though poor and needy, and often in necessitous circumstances, yet God in his providence appeared for them in one way or another; and so as Apollinarius paraphrases it,

"I never knew a just man entirely needy;"

for such might be forsaken by men, and even by their dearest friends and relations, yet not by the Lord: they might indeed, at times, think themselves forsaken of him, and their enemies might conclude and say they were, and yet this was not their case, Isa 49:14; and though they may be forsaken by him for a while, yet not utterly; he will not leave them and forsake them for ever, Isa 54:7;

nor his seed begging bread; they being righteous also, which must be supposed; otherwise, as good men have wicked children, these, through their wickedness, may come to poverty, to beggary, as they sometimes do; though a distinction may be made between being poor and beggars; the seed of the righteous may be the one, and not the other: besides, there is a difference between asking bread of others, in some few instances, and constantly begging bread from door to door, in which last sense the psalmist must be understood here; for otherwise he himself in some cases, had asked bread, as of Ahimelech at Nob, and of Nabal, &c. as did also Elijah of the widow of Sarepta: and though there might have been instances of some of the posterity of the righteous who got their bread by begging at the door, as in the case of Lazarus; yet David had never observed any such instance during the time of his life, which shows that such instances are very rare; whereas among wicked men and their offspring the case is frequent and common. Again, it may be observed, that the psalmist is speaking in the context of righteous men that are liberal, and give to the poor freely and largely; and it is seldom if ever known that they or their children come to want and poverty. Once more, the word "forsaken" may be repeated in this clause, thus; "nor his seed begging bread forsaken" {x}; or seeking it in vain, and finally destitute of it; though they have been so reduced as to beg their bread, they have not been forsaken; they have find it, bread sufficient to support life, as Apollinarius paraphrases it; their bread has been given and their water sure; see Isa 41:17. In an ancient Midrash {y}, or exposition of the Jews, the sense is thus given:

"although his seed and his sons are begging bread, yet I have not seen the righteous man, their father, forsaken, because of his fear of the blessed God."

{x} "Justum non vidi derelictum, et semen justi quaerens panem non vidi derelictum"; so Hopfnerus, Titelmannus, Lorinus, Franzius apud Gejerum; "frustra quaerens panem, et finalitur destitutum", Michaelis. {y} Vajikra Rabba, s. 35. fol. 175. 2.

Psalms 37:26

Ver. 26. [He is] ever merciful, and lendeth,.... He sympathizes with the poor in distress, and shows mercy to miserable objects; not only by words, but deeds:

and this is his constant disposition and conduct; of which his lending, as well as giving to persons in necessity, is an instance; and which shows capacity, and is a proof of the observation of the psalmist, that such are never forsaken, nor left to beg their bread: so far from it, that they have to lend and give to others;

and his seed [is] blessed; either his seed sown, his alms deeds, which are blessed to him and his, and to them to whom he ministers, as Jarchi explains it; see **2Co 9:6**; or rather his offspring, who are blessed of God with things temporal for his sake; and are blessed by men, who say of them, these are the posterity of such and such liberal persons.

Psalms 37:27

Ver. 27. Depart from evil, and do good,.... Depart from evildoers, and their evil ways; join not with them, nor fret and be envious at them; but do acts of beneficence, and all good works; since righteous men, and their seed, are not forsaken, but blessed of God;
See Gill on "Ps 34:14";

and dwell for evermore; or "thou shalt dwell for evermore" {z}; see Ps 37:3; that is, in everlasting habitations, in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, Lu 16:9. The Targum is, "that thou mayest dwell in everlasting life".

{z} Mlwel Nkvw "et habitabis in seculum", Pagninus, Vatablus, Piscator; so Aben Ezra & Kimchi.

Psalms 37:28

Ver. 28. For the Lord loveth judgment,.... Righteousness, or righteous actions, when done according to his will, from love, in faith, and to his glory; see Ps 11:7; or to minister judgment to the people, and to render to every man according to his works;

and forsaketh not his saints; his Holy Ones, who are called with an holy calling, are created in righteousness and true holiness, and have principles of grace and holiness wrought in them; or whom he prosecutes with his favour and goodness, with his everlasting love and mercy, with spiritual blessings, with the blessings of justification, pardon, adoption, and a right to eternal life: these he never forsakes, not their persons, neither in life nor at death, nor at judgment; nor does he ever forsake the work of his own hands in them; but performs it until the day of Christ: nor will he ever so forsake them, as that they shall perish through the strength of sin, the temptations of Satan, or the snares of the world;

they are preserved for ever; from the dominion and damning power of sin, from being devoured by Satan, from a total and final falling away, and from being hurt of the second death: they are preserved in Christ, in whose hands they are; and by the power of God, safe to his kingdom and glory, into which they shall have an abundant entrance;

but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off; out of the earth, in the midst of their days, like withered branches; and be cast into everlasting burnings.

Psalms 37:29

Ver. 29. The righteous shall inherit the land,....
See Gill on "Ps 37:9" and
See Gill on "Ps 37:11";

and dwell therein for ever; See Gill on "Ps 37:27".

Psalms 37:30

Ver. 30. The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom,.... Or "meditateth wisdom" {a}; that is, utters the wisdom he has been meditating upon; see Ps 69:3; he meditates and speaks of the wisdom of God, which appears in the works of creation, providence, and grace; and of Christ, who is wisdom itself, and the wisdom of God essentially; and who, as Mediator, has the spirit of wisdom resting on him, the treasures of wisdom hid in him, and is made wisdom to his people: and righteous men meditate upon and speak of the glories of his person, the fulness of his grace, and the works of his hands; as also of the Gospel, which is the wisdom of God, mysterious, hidden, ancient wisdom, ordained before the world for their glory; and likewise of that internal wisdom, and experience of divine grace, the Lord has made them to know in the hidden part; which lies in the knowledge of themselves, and in a spiritual, experimental, and saving knowledge of Christ, and the way of salvation by him; and his mouth delivers out wise sayings, and useful instructions, fetched out of the word of God, and founded on experience and observation;

and his tongue talketh of judgment; of the judgment which the righteous God ordinarily ministers in a providential way; and of his extraordinary and awful judgments, which have been or are in the earth; these he takes notice of for his own use, and observes them to others for their instruction; and also of the last judgment, the judgment to come, which he speaks of as sure and certain, as universal and inevitable, and at which he must appear before God: and he talks of judgment or righteousness; that is, of the righteousness of Christ; he makes mention of this only as his justifying righteousness before God; he rejoices and glories in it, and desires to be found in it living and dying, and at judgment; and whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, and of good report, he thinks and speaks of them, and instructs his family, his children and servants, in them, that they may do them; see
Ge 18:19.

{a} hghy melethsei, Sept. "meditabitur", V. L. so Musculus: Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

Psalms 37:31

Ver. 31. The law of his God [is] in his heart,.... Which may be understood of the moral law, which was written in the heart of Adam an his creation, and continued there during his state of innocence, but was greatly obliterated by sin: there are some remains of it in fallen man, even in the very Gentiles; who, though without the law, do some things contained in it, which shows the work of it to be written in them; though in some it is scarcely legible, having lost all distinction between good and evil: but in regeneration the law of God is reinscribed, according to the promise of the covenant of grace,
Jer 31:33; and such have a real knowledge of the spirituality and perfection of it; of the impossibility of justification by it; and of Christ being the fulfilling end of it: and they have a strong affection for it; they love it; and delight in it after the inward man, and serve it with their minds; in which lies part of their conformity to Christ, and is a branch of their character as good men; see Ps 40:8; moreover, the word trwt, here used, signifies any doctrine or instruction, and is sometimes used for the doctrine of the Gospel, **Isa 2:3**, and may have this sense here, and the meaning be, that that has a place in the hearts or righteous men, dwells richly there, and works effectually in them; and particularly the doctrine of grace which relates to covenant interest in God; for

it is the law or doctrine of "his God" that is in his heart;

none of his steps shall slide; not that he shall never slip nor fall; for that is supposed Ps 37:24; but he shall never finally and totally go out of the paths of truth, holiness, and righteousness: the Lord keeps the feet of his saints, and orders their steps, and directs them in the way they should go, and preserves them in it; and enables them to walk uprightly, according to the rule of the divine word, and in all his commandments and ordinances; and to hold on and out unto the end: or the clause may be rendered, "it", the law, "shall not cause his steps to slide" {b}; neither the law of God, nor the Gospel of Christ, but shall guide him in the right way, and be a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path.

{b} wyrva demt "non vacillat gressus ejus", Cocceius.

Psalms 37:32

Ver. 32. The wicked watcheth the righteous,.... All his motions and steps, his works and actions; he watches for his halting, and to take all opportunities and advantages against him; see Jer 20:10;

and seeketh to slay him; murder his reputation, destroy his substance, and take away his life: some understand it of the devil, who watches the saints, observes their failings, accuses then, before the throne, and seeks to devour them, **1Pe 5:8**.

Psalms 37:33

Ver. 33. The Lord will not leave him in his hand,.... Or power; but will in his own time deliver him from all the reproach, affliction, and persecution endures by him; as he will also deliver him out of all the temptations of Satan;

nor condemn him when he is judged; by the wicked man: he will not join in the sentence, but reverse it, and condemn the tongue that rises up in judgment against him, and save him from him; see Ps 109:31; nor will the Lord condemn him when he is judged by him at the hast judgment; but will acquit him before men and angels, and introduce him into his kingdom and glory.

Psalms 37:34

Ver. 34. Wait on the Lord,.... In the way of his appointments and ordinances; where may be learned the design of his providences, and of the prosperity of the wicked, and their end, Ps 73:16; and in a providential way, for the performance of his promises, in which he never fails; and patiently bear whatever he is pleased to lay upon them; waiting for a deliverance out of every affliction, which will be in his own time. The Chaldee paraphrase

"trust in the word of the Lord;"

and keep his way: which he has pointed out in his word, and has directed his people to walk in; though tempted by Satan to turn aside to the right hand or the left; though wicked men reproach, persecute, and seek to pervert it; and though a narrow and rough way, yet keep constantly in it, in which there are both pleasure and profit; good comes of it, and in it peace is had, and the presence of God enjoyed;

and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: that is, shall raise out of a low and uncomfortable situation of life to a more comfortable one; or however, hereafter, to dwell in the new heavens and new earth, to reign with Christ upon his throne, and to enjoy the eternal inheritance;

when the wicked are cut off; as in Ps 37:9;

thou shall see [it]; with joy and pleasure; not as exulting: in the destruction of the wicked, simply considered; but as the glory of divine justice is displayed therein; see Ps 52:5.

Psalms 37:35

Ver. 35. I have seen the wicked in great power,.... Meaning some particular person invested with great power, in great authority among men, one of the spiritual wickednesses in high places; such a man as Haman in Ahasuerus's court; and though the psalmist does not choose to mention his name, he doubtless had him in his mind; as either Saul, or Doeg the Edomite, or Ahithophel, or some such man, who was in an exalted station of life; and it may be when he himself was in low and distressed circumstances: the word used {c} signifies one formidable and terrible, striking terror to all around; of whom others are afraid, as Aben Ezra interprets it, Isa 29:20;

and spreading himself like a green bay tree: or like one that grows up out of the earth of itself, and is in its native soil, and very flourishing: and the metaphor denotes an increase of riches and honour, and a seemingly settled state in the enjoyment of such outward felicity; so Jarchi interprets it vyrvm, "taking root"; as well as such a man's glorying in and boasting of his affluence and fulness; see
Ps 73:12. Aben Ezra explains it of a wicked man's openly committing iniquity, declaring his sin as Sodom, and glorying in his shame; but rather it denotes a man in great authority and esteem, as a man crowned with laurels, and in a very exalted and triumphant state.

{c} Uyde "terrificam", Montanus, Vatablus; "terribilem ant formidabilem", Gejerus, Michaelis; "daunting, terrible", Ainsworth.

Psalms 37:36

Ver. 36. Yet he passed away,.... At once, on a sudden; either his riches and honour, which, in one hour, came to nought, by one providence or another; or he himself by death; in the midst of all his prosperity, and while blessing himself in it, his soul was required of him; and so the Targum is, "he ceased from the world"; he went out of it unawares: the laurel, or bay tree, very quickly grows old {d};

and, lo, he [was] not; he was not reduced to nothing; he did not become a nonentity, though he might wish himself to be so; it being better for him if he had never been born; but he was not in the land of the living, in hell he lifted up his eyes;

yea, I sought him, but he could not be found; in the place where he formerly was, that knowing him no more; he could not be found on earth, from whence he was gone; nor in heaven, where no place is found for such wicked men; he was gone to his own place, as is said of Judas, and of whom Jerom interprets the whole of this passage.

{d} "Senescit velociter", Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 44.

Psalms 37:37

Ver. 37. Mark the perfect [man],.... None are so in themselves, not the most holy man upon earth; for though all grace is implanted at once in regeneration, the seed of grace of every kind is cast into the heart at once; yet it opens and spreads, and gradually increases; nor is any grace in its exercise perfect; not faith, nor hope, nor love: sin is in the best of men, and all stand in need of fresh supplies of grace. None of the saints ever affirmed that they had arrived to perfection, but have disclaimed it: one saint may indeed attain to a greater degree of grace and knowledge than another, and in a comparative sense be perfect; and there is a perfection of parts, though not of degrees, in all; the new man is formed in all its parts, though these are not grown to their full perfection: and whereas perfection often denotes truth and sincerity, such may be said to be perfect, that is, sincere, who have received the grace of God in truth, have the, truth and root of the matter in them; so Noah, Job, and others, are said to be perfect men; but not simply and absolutely in themselves, but as in Christ Jesus; who has obtained complete redemption, perfectly fulfilled the law for them, fully expiated their sins, procured the entire pardon of them, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, by which they are justified from all sin, and are perfectly comely, and a perfection of beauty, through the comeliness of Christ put upon them;

and behold the upright; the man that is upright in heart and conversation, who has a right spirit renewed in him, and the uprightness of Christ showed unto him; or, in other words, who has the truth of grace within him, and the righteousness of Christ upon him: such men are to be marked, observed, viewed, and considered, as rare and uncommon men; and to be imitated and followed in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; and especially the end of such persons is to be marked and beheld, as follows;

for the end of [that] man [is] peace: such a man now enjoys a conscience peace, which passes the understanding of worldly men; and which he possesses in Christ, and from him, amidst a variety of tribulations, arising from a view of interest in his blood and righteousness; and, generally speaking, goes off the stage of life, if not triumphing, yet resigned to the will of God, and in a serene and tranquil frame of spirit, and even desiring to be gone, and to be with Christ, and to have leave, with good old Simeon, to depart in peace; and as soon as they are departed they enter into peace, into the joy of their Lord, into his presence, where is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore; see Nu 23:10.

Psalms 37:38

Ver. 38. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together,.... This is to be understood of obstinate and continued transgressors, who live and die in their transgressions; see Pr 11:3; otherwise all men are transgressors in Adam, and sinned and fell with him in his transgression; and are justly called transgressors from the womb; and are guilty of actual transgressions, nor are any clear from them; and are arraigned, convinced, and judged by the law as transgressors; and for many of these Christ died, and makes intercession; and who are converted, and turned from their transgressions; and these are pardoned, and saved, and not destroyed: but stubborn and perverse transgressors are destroyed; not only with a temporal destruction of their substance, and of their names, and they themselves are rooted out of the earth; but with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power; for this seems to refer to the day of judgment, when all the wicked will be "together"; and shall in a body stand at Christ's left hand, and be bid to go, "ye cursed into everlasting fire", Mt 25:41, and shall be turned into hell at once, and together;

the end of the wicked shall be cut off; meaning either their posterity, as the word is rendered in Ps 109:13; or their hope and expectation of good things here and hereafter; when the righteous man receives the end of his faith, hope, and expectation, even the salvation of his soul; but these shall be disappointed and frustrated of their end; see
Pr 23:18; or their last end is cutting off from the presence and sight of God, utter ruin and destruction; and so it stands opposed to the end of the perfect and upright man, which is eternal peace and happiness.

Psalms 37:39

Ver. 39. But the salvation of the righteous [is] of the Lord,.... Both their temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation; particularly the latter, which is originally of the Lord, and springs from the thoughts, purposes, and resolutions of his heart: it is of him freely, of his rich grace and abundant mercy; and it is of him fully and completely; it is an entire salvation of soul and body; includes all blessings of grace and glory in it; it is to the uttermost, and from all sin, and every enemy; and it is of him only; there is no salvation in any other; and the glory of it is to be ascribed to him, even to Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; for all the three divine Persons have a concern in it: the determination, contrivance, and settlement of it, is of Jehovah the Father; the impetration or effecting of it is of Jehovah the Son; and the application of it is of Jehovah the Spirit; See Gill on "Ps 3:8";

[he is] their strength in the time of trouble; by reason of the hidings of God's face, the temptations of Satan, the prevalence of corruptions, the weakness of grace, and the many afflictions that befall them from God and men; the Lord he is their strong hold and munition of rocks, whither they, betake themselves, and find help, protection, and safety; he puts underneath everlasting arms, bears them up, and upholds them with the right hand of his righteousness; and is the strength of their hearts, of their lives, and of their salvation.

Psalms 37:40

Ver. 40. And the Lord shall help them,.... In their distress, and out of their troubles, when none else can, and they themselves cannot; and that seasonably, and sometimes with means, and sometimes without;

and deliver them; out of all their afflictions, which he does sooner or later; if not in life, yet at death;

he shall deliver them from the wicked; this is repeated both for confirmation and explanation sake, showing who they are the Lord will deliver his people from, even from wicked and unreasonable men; he will not leave them in their hands now to do with them as they shall think fit; and he will free them from them to all eternity in the other world, where they shall cease from giving them any trouble;

and save them, because they trust in him; not that there is any saving virtue in faith, or in trusting in the Lord; the saving virtue is in the Lord, the object of faith and trust; but inasmuch as the Lord has appointed salvation to be through faith, or has made that the means of receiving and enjoying salvation, and the blessings of it, and has declared that he that believeth shall be saved, he does accordingly save all such persons; wherefore blessed are they that trust in him. The Chaldee paraphrase is,

"he shall redeem them because they trust in his Word."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 38:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 38

A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance. This psalm was composed by David under some sore affliction, and when in great distress of mind by reason of sin, perhaps his sin with Bathsheba; and was written as a memorial of his sense of sin, of his great afflictions, and deliverance from them; and therefore is said to be "to bring to remembrance", or to refresh his memory with the said things. Kimchi and Ben Melech think the psalm was made for the sake of such as are in distress, to put them in mind and teach them how to pray. The Targum calls the psalm,

"a good remembrance concerning Israel;"

and Jarchi says it was to remember the distress of Israel before the Lord, and that it is said with respect to all Israel; though others think the word "lehazcir" is the name of a psalm tune; and Aben Ezra was of opinion that it was the first word of some pleasant poem. The Septuagint version adds,

"concerning the sabbath,"

as if it was wrote to put persons in mind of that day; whereas there is nothing in the whole psalm that has any such tendency.

Ver. 1. O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure,.... This and the following clause are the same as in **Ps 6:1**, only instead of wrath there it is anger;
See Gill on "Ps 6:1".

Psalms 38:2

Ver. 2. For thine arrows stick fast in me,.... Meaning either words with which as a father the Lord rebuked him; and which were sharp and cutting, entered into him and abode with him, and gave him much pain and uneasiness; and by which he concluded that his rebukes were in wrath and hot displeasure; such as those in 2Sa 12:11; so the words of men are compared to arrows, Ps 57:4 or outward afflictions, attended with inward trouble of soul; for as judgments are the arrows of God, such as famine, pestilence, &c. **Eze 5:16**
De 32:21; so the chastening dispensations of Providence, under which the people of God themselves are, are so called, because they oftentimes come swiftly, suddenly, and at unawares, and are very pungent and distressing; and sometimes stick fast and continue long, by reason of which they are inwardly

wounded, and conceive of God as sorely displeased with them; see **Job 6:4**;

and thy hand presseth me sore; the afflicting hand of God, which lay heavy upon him; and is a mighty hand when laid on such worms as mortal sinful men are, who cannot bear up under it, unless they have divine supports; see Job 19:21. This is by some supposed to be some bodily disease inflicted on him; some have thought of the leprosy, which was a stroke from the hand of God; but this is not likely, since he must have been deposed and shut up; the Jews indeed say {e} that he was a leper six months, and that the divine Presence was taken from him; a late learned man {f} thinks it was the smallpox, from the unsoundness of his flesh, the soreness of the disease, the stench of it, temporary blindness, and his friends standing aloof from him; though perhaps no other than affliction of mired for sin, comparable to the disease described, is meant.

{e} In R. Obadiah in loc. {f} De Laney's Life of King David, vol. 2. p. 146.

Psalms 38:3

Ver. 3. [There is] no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger,.... Such was the nature of the affliction the psalmist laboured under, and which he took to be an effect of the anger of God towards him, that the whole frame of nature was affected with it, and from the crown of the head to, the soles of the feet there was no health or soundness, as in **Isa 1:6**; where the same word is used as here; some think the word {g} here used has the signification of man; and that the sense is, that through, the violence of the distemper he had not so much, as the form of a man, as his antitype in Isa 52:14; and as this led him to a view of his sins, as the cause of his affliction, he was so far from thinking himself sound and whole, or perfect in a spiritual sense, that he saw he was all over diseased with sin, and that in his flesh dwelt no good thing;

neither [is there any] rest in my bones, because of my sin; or "peace" {h} there; sin breaks the believer's rest, and disturbs his peace; nor can he, in a view of it, find any rest in himself, nor in any creature, nor in any service or duty, only in Jesus Christ, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice.

{g} Mtm Nya "non superest amplius ulla forma seu figura hominis", Amama; so Joseph Kimchi. {h} Mwlv Nya "non (est) pax", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 38:4

Ver. 4. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head,.... Like an inundation of waters, as the waves and billows of the sea; for the waters to come up to the neck or chin shows great danger; but when they go over the head the case is desperate, and a person is sinking and drowning; compare with this Ps 69:1; the simile may denote both the number and weight of sins, and also signifies the overwhelming distress the psalmist was in, under a view of them;

as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me; the guilt of sin upon the conscience, without a view of pardon, lies heavy indeed, and makes a man a burden to himself, as it did Job, **Job 7:20**; yea, sin is not only grieving and afflicting to pardoned ones, and who know they are pardoned, but it is a burden to them under which they groan; nor is it possible for any so to bear it as to satisfy and make atonement for it; none but Christ could ever do this, and he has done it; nor is there any relief for burdened souls, but by looking to a sin bearing and sin atoning Saviour, and by casting the burden upon him, who invites them to him for rest.

Psalms 38:5

Ver. 5. My wounds stink, [and] are corrupt,.... Meaning his sins, which had wounded him, and for which there is no healing but in a wounded Saviour, and by his stripes we are healed, Isa 53:5; where the same word is used as here; Christ's black and blue stripes and wounds, as the word signifies, are the healing of ours, both of sins, and of the effects of them; which, to a sensible sinner, are as nauseous and loathsome as an old wound that is festered and corrupt;

because of my foolishness: as all sin arises from foolishness, which is bound in the hearts of men, and from whence it arises, **Mr 7:22**; perhaps the psalmist may have respect to his folly with Bathsheba, which had been the occasion of all the distress that is spoken of both before and afterwards.

Psalms 38:6

Ver. 6. I am troubled,.... Discomposed and perplexed in mind; his thoughts were disturbed and irregular, and in the utmost confusion and distress: this trouble was not only on account of the affliction that was upon him, but chiefly because of his sin; and which was increased by the view he had of the displeasure of God, concluding he was come forth against him in wrath and fury;

I am bowed down greatly; not in his body, at least not in that only, as if he was bowed together by his disorder, that he could not lift himself up; for he is said to walk in the next clause: or rather he bowed down his head as a bulrush voluntarily, and through sorrow and shame could not lift it up before the Lord; though it may chiefly design the pressure of his mind, that his soul was cast down within him, and with all his spiritual reasonings he could not erect himself; it is the Lord that raiseth up those that are bowed down in this sense; see Ps 42:5;

I go mourning all the day long; or "I go black", or "in black" {i}; meaning either that his skin was black, through the disease upon him, and the trouble that was in him, Job 30:30; or that he was clothed in black garments, as a token of mourning; as white garments were of joy and cheerfulness, **Ec 9:7**; and he was blacker still in his own apprehension, by reason of inward corruptions and outward transgressions, which appeared in a very black hue, attended with aggravating circumstances; see **So 1:5**.

{i} rdwq "atratus", Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 38:7

Ver. 7. For my loins are filled with a loathsome [disease],.... The word here used has the signification of burning {k}; and the Targum renders it, "my loins are filled with burning"; a burning fever was upon him, or there was an inflammation in those parts; a hot burning ulcer, which might be nauseous; and so was true in both senses. Aben Ezra interprets it abominable and vile; something not fit to be mentioned; and so Kimchi and Ben Melech. The word is rendered sometimes "lightly esteemed"; as in 1Sa 18:23; and Jarchi thinks it has this sense here; and the meaning is, that he was vile in his own eyes, and mean in his own esteem. Doubtless the psalmist has reference to something more than a bodily disease; at least not to that only, but to the disease of his soul also, sin, which has the nature of a disease; it is an hereditary one, which is derived from one to another by propagation; it is universal, and reaches to all men, and to all the parts of the body and powers of the soul; it is a complication of disorders: it is in its own nature mortal, and ever incurable but by Christ; and, as here, it is a loathsome one; it is loathsome to God, and to all sensible sinners: and when the psalmist says his loins were filled with it, it may signify that it was an internal disorder that was in him; sin that dwelt in him, a law in his members; and may denote the aboundings of sin in him, the swarms of corruptions that were in him; as also the pain it gave him, and the quick sense he had of it;

and [there is] no soundness in my flesh: which is repeated, see Ps 38:3; partly for confirmation's sake, and partly to show the continued sense of it, as persons under a disorder are continually making mention of it.

{k} R. Joseph Kimchi & Abendana hlqn "ardore", Pagninus, Vatablus; "ardens ulcus", Musculus, so some in Vatablus; "tostione", Piscator; "adustione", Gejerus; so the Targum; "adusto", Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 742.

Psalms 38:8

Ver. 8. I am feeble,.... Both in body, natural strength being weakened by the affliction, and dried up like a potsherd by the heat of the distemper; and in soul, being weak in the exercise of faith and other graces. The word is used of Jacob, fainting at and disbelieving the news of his son Joseph being alive, Ge 45:26;

and sore broken; in his constitution with the disease, and in his mind with trouble; especially for his sin, and under a sense of the divine displeasure; his bones were broken by his fall, and his heart broken with a sense of sin, Ps 51:8;

I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart: which was like the raging of the sea, as the word {l} rendered disquietness here signifies; and to which the uneasiness and restlessness of wicked men is sometimes compared, **Isa 5:30**; and so great was the disquietude of this good man under affliction, and sense of sin and wrath, that he had no rest night nor day; and could not forbear crying out, in a very hideous manner, like the roaring of a lion.

{l} tmhnm "prae fremitu", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, so Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 38:9

Ver. 9. Lord, all my desire [is] before thee,.... To be delivered from his afflictions, to have a discovery and application of pardoning grace, and to have communion with his God: the desire of his soul was unto these things; and it was some satisfaction to him that it was before the Lord, and known unto him, before whom all things are naked and open;

and my groaning is not hid from thee; under the weight of his affliction, the burden of his sin, and which he expressed in prayer to the Lord, and which is often done with groanings which cannot be uttered: but even these are known and understood by the Lord.

Psalms 38:10

Ver. 10. My heart panteth,.... Or "goes about" {m}; runs here and there, and finds no rest; as Aben Ezra interprets the word from the Targum he cites; though the Targum we have renders it, "my heart shakes with fear", or dread, as persons in a fever. Jarchi interprets the word, surrounded with grief; it denotes the panting or palpitation of the heart, through sorrow and dread, and the failing of it, even as at death;

my strength faileth me, or "forsakes me" {n}; bodily strength and spiritual strength; the strength of faith, hope, and confidence;

as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me; which is often the case of persons under bodily disorders, their eyes grow dim, and sight fails them; and this might be true in a spiritual sense of the psalmist, who had lost sight of God as his covenant God; of his interest in his love, in the blessings of his grace, and in eternal salvation, and was walking in darkness, and saw no light.

{m} rxrxo "circuivit", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus. {n} ynbze "dereliquit me", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Musculus, Cocceius.

Psalms 38:11

Ver. 11. My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore,.... As if it was a plague sore, lest they should be infected with it; or because they could not bear the stench of his wounds, and the loathsomeness of his disease, or to see him in his agonies, and hear his roaring and his groans, Ps 38:2; or as taking his case to be desperate, as if he was just dying, and no help could be given him, Ps 38:10; If it was the leprosy, as some Jewish writers have affirmed, the word egn, translated "sore", being used for the plague of the leprosy, they were obliged by the ceremonial law to keep at a distance from him: but this rather seems to be voluntary, and to proceed from neglect and contempt. These "lovers" and "friends" were such for whom David had had an affection, and had been friendly to, and therefore it was ungrateful in them to act the part they did; and such who had pretended love and friendship to him in his health and prosperity, but now had deserted him, which is a common case; see Job 19:13. Afflictions try men's friends; and as that is a time when friendly visits are most wanting and most useful, so it is an aggravation of the affliction, and makes it the heavier when such are denied;

and my kinsmen stand afar off; that were near to him by the ties of nature or friendship.

Psalms 38:12

Ver. 12. They also that seek after my life,.... His avowed and implacable enemies, whom nothing would satisfy but the taking away of his life: these came too near him; for these, he says,

lay snares [for me], as Satan does for the souls of men, as the Jews did for Christ, and as wicked men do for the saints, Ps 124:7;

and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things; to the injury of his character and reputation:

and imagine deceits all the day long; contrive artful schemes to deceive; see Ps 35:20.

Psalms 38:13

Ver. 13. But I, as a deaf [man], heard not,.... He acted the part of a deaf man, and made as if he did not hear the mischievous things his enemies spoke; as Saul, when the sons of Belial spoke against him and despised him, 1Sa 10:27;

and as our Lord when his enemies accused him,
Mt 27:12;

and [I was] as a dumb man, [that] openeth not his mouth; made no reply to what they said, and did not render railing for railing; in which Christ was the antitype of him, Isa 53:7.

Psalms 38:14

Ver. 14. Thus I was as a man that heareth not,.... Any thing that is said unto him; he took no more notice of it than if he had never heard it; but bore all the railings and calumnies of men with calmness and patience;

and in whose mouth [are] no reproofs; as if he had nothing to say for himself, in vindication of his character, and to the refutation of his enemies; as if he had no arguments to make use of, for the conviction and reproof of his adversaries.

Psalms 38:15

Ver. 15. For in thee, O Lord, do I hope,.... That he would plead his cause against his accusers and revilers, and who sought his hurt; that he should be delivered out of their hands, and out of all his afflictions; that he should be healed of his diseases, both of soul and body, under which he laboured; and should again enjoy the light of God's countenance, and have the discoveries of his pardoning grace and mercy; and this was the reason why he was so calm and quiet amidst the unkindnesses of his friends, and the cruel usage of his enemies;

thou wilt hear, or "answer",

O Lord my God; in the midst of all his distresses of body and mind, he had not given up his interest in God, as his God and Father; which is the great blessing of the covenant of grace, and which ever continues; and is the great support of believers, under whatsoever they meet with in soul and body, from friends or foes; this his God the psalmist believed would not only hear his cries in his sore distress, but hear the reproaches of his enemies, and answer them in a providential way in his own time, by terrible things in righteousness to their conviction and confusion; and therefore he himself was silent.

Psalms 38:16

Ver. 16. For I said, [hear me],.... This he had expressed in prayer to God; he had committed his cause to him, and entreated him that he would hear and answer him; giving this as a reason,

lest [otherwise] they should rejoice over me; at his misfortunes and calamities, at the continuance of his trouble and distress, both of body and mind;

when my foot slippeth; as it sometimes did through the corruptions of nature, the temptations of Satan, and the snares of the world; which is more or less the case of all the people of God, who are all subject to slips and falls, though they shall not finally and totally fall away;

they magnify [themselves] against me; that is, his enemies exulted and triumphed over him: this was what he found by experience; and therefore makes use of it as an argument with God, that he would hear and answer and deliver him out of his trouble, and preserve him from falling.

Psalms 38:17

Ver. 17. For I [am] ready to halt,.... Meaning either that there was a proneness in him to sin; see Jer 20:10; or that he was subject to affliction and adversity, as the same word is rendered in Ps 35:15; and the words are either a reason and argument used with the Lord, to hear and keep his foot from slipping, that so his enemies might not rejoice over him, and magnify themselves against him; as they would do should he fall into sin or into any calamity, both which he was liable to: or they are a reason why he was so calm and quiet under the ill usage he met with from friends and enemies, because he was "ready for halting", or "prepared" {o} for it; he considered that he was born for trouble and adversity; that God had appointed him to it, and it was appointed for him, and therefore he was quiet under it; see **Job 5:6**; he was prepared to meet it; he expected it, it being the common lot of God's people; and therefore when it came upon him it was no strange thing to him. The Septuagint version, and those that follow that, render the words, "I am ready for scourges"; and Jerom applies them to Christ, who was ready to undergo scourges, sufferings, and death itself, for his people;

and my sorrow [is] continually before me; that is, for his sin, which was ever before him, stared him in the face, lay heavy on his conscience, and appeared very terrible and loathsome to him; his sorrow for it was without intermission, and was a godly sorrow, a sorrow for sin, as committed against a God of love, grace, and mercy: or he may mean, that his affliction, which was grievous to him, was continually upon him night and day: our Lord himself, David's antitype, was a man of sorrows all his days.

{o} Nwkn V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 38:18

Ver. 18. For I will declare mine iniquity,.... Either to men, to ease his mind, justify God in his proceedings with him, and for their caution and admonition: or rather to God, against whom he had sinned, and who only could pardon him; with a view to which he was determined to make a free and open confession of it before him:

I will be sorry for my sin, or "careful" {p} about it; that is, how he committed it for the future: true repentance for sin produces a carefulness to abstain from all appearance of it; see **2Co 7:10**.

{p} gada "solicitus ero", Montanus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, Ainsworth.

Psalms 38:19

Ver. 19. But mine enemies [are] lively,.... Or "living" {q} or "live"; not in a spiritual sense; for they had no lively hope, nor living faith, but were dead in trespasses and sins; nor merely in a natural sense, or corporeally, so David was living himself; but in great prosperity and worldly happiness, and so were brisk and cheerful, and lived a merry and pleasent life;

[and] they are strong; not only hale and robust in body, but abounded in riches and wealth, which are the strength of wicked men;

and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied; that is, such as hated him without a cause, and made lies and falsehoods the reasons of it: these increased in numbers, or in their outward state and circumstances; see Ps 73:4.

{q} Myyx "viventes", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Psalms 38:20

Ver. 20. They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries,....
See Gill on "Ps 35:12";

because I follow [the thing that] good [is]; or "follow good"; a good God, whom his soul followed hard after, Ps 63:8; the good Shepherd of the sheep, who led him into green pastures, whither he followed him,
Ps 23:1; the good Spirit of God his guide, whom he walked after, **Ro 8:1**; good and holy men of God, whom he took for examples and copied after; and every good work, which he pursued with eagerness and pleasure; and all this drew upon him the hatred of his adversaries.

Psalms 38:21

Ver. 21. Forsake me not, O Lord,.... Or continue not to forsake; for he seems to have been under divine desertion, and might be under apprehensions that God had utterly forsaken him; which he entreats he would not, though his friends had forsook him, and his own strength had failed and left him, Ps 38:10;

O my God, be not far from me; as to his gracious presence, and with respect to help and deliverance, otherwise God is not far from any of his creatures, being omnipresent.

Psalms 38:22

Ver. 22. Make haste and help me,.... Or, "for my help"; his case required haste, and God does help his people when none else can, and that right early;

O Lord, my salvation; by which it appears that his prayer was a prayer of faith; he saw that his salvation was in the Lord, and in no other; and though he had been and was in such a low condition, both in soul and body, yet his faith was not lost; that is an abiding grace, and will continue under the influence of the author and finisher of it, until the end of it is received, the salvation of the soul. R. Moses {r} thinks the phrase "make haste" is to be repeated here, and read thus, "make haste, O Lord, to my salvation".

{r} In Aben Ezra & R. Joseph Kimchi in R. David Kimchi in loc.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 39:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 39

To the chief Musician, [even] to Jeduthun, a Psalm of David. Some take Jeduthun to be the name of a musical instrument, as Jarchi, on which, and others the first word of a song, to the tune of which, this psalm was sung, as Aben Ezra; though it seems best, with Kimchi and others, to understand it as the name of the chief musician, to whom this psalm was sent to be made use of in public service; since Jeduthun was, with his sons, appointed by David to prophesy with harps and psalteries, and to give praise and thanks unto the Lord,
1Ch 16:41; he is the same with Ethan {s}. The occasion of it is thought, by some, to be the rebellion of his son Absalom; so Theodoret thinks it was written when he fled from Absalom, and was cursed by Shimei; or rather it may be some sore affliction, which lay upon David for the chastisement of him; see Ps 39:9; and the argument of the psalm seems to be much the same with that of the preceding one, as Kimchi observes.

{s} Vid. Hiller. Onomastic. Sacr. p. 513, 805.

Ver. 1. I said,.... That is, in his heart; he purposed and determined within himself to do as follows; and he might express it with his mouth, and so his purpose became a promise;

I will take heed to my ways; as every good man should; that is, to all his actions, conduct, and conversation: it becomes him to take heed what ways he walks in; that they are the ways of God, which he directs to; that they are the ways of Christ, which he has left an example to follow in; and that they are according to the word of God; that he walks in Christ, the way of salvation, and by faith on him; that he chooses and walks in the way of truth, and not error; and in all, the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; and in the path of holiness, in which, though fools, they shall not err: and it is also necessary that he should take heed that he does nothing, either by embracing error, or going into immorality, by which the ways of God, and Christ, and truth, are evil spoken of, blasphemed and reproached; and that he does not depart out of these ways, nor stumble, slip, and fall in them;

that I sin not with my tongue; which is a world of iniquity, and has a multitude of vices belonging to it; not only in profane men, but in professors of religion; whom it becomes to take heed that they sin not with it, by lying one to another, by angry and passionate expressions, by corrupt communication, filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting, which are not convenient; by whispering, talebearing, backbiting, and by evil speaking one of another: particularly there are vices of the tongue, which the saints are liable to under afflictive providences, and seem chiefly designed here; such as envious expressions at the prosperity of others; words of impatience under their own afflictions, and murmurings at the hand of God upon them; such as these the psalmist determined, within himself, to guard against; in order to which he proposed to take the following method;

I will keep my mouth with a bridle: that is, bridle his tongue, that being an unruly member, and to be kept in with bit and bridle, like an unruly horse; see **Jas 1:26**;

while the wicked is before me; or "against me" {t}; meaning either while Ahithophel and Absalom were conspiring and rebelling against him, and Shimei was cursing him, under which he behaved with great silence, calmness, and patience; see 2Sa 15:25; or while he had the flourishing condition of wicked men in his view, and was meditating on it; or rather, when anyone of them came to visit him in his affliction, he was determined to be wholly silent, that they might have no opportunity of rejoicing over him, nor of reproaching him, and the good ways of God: and indeed it is proper for the people of God to be always upon their guard, when they are in the presence of wicked men; and be careful what they utter with their lips, who watch their words to improve them against them, and the religion they profess.

{t} ydgnl "adversum me", V. L. "contra me", Cocceius; so the Targum.

Psalms 39:2

Ver. 2. I was dumb with silence,.... Quite silent, as if he had been a dumb man, and could not speak; so he was before men, especially wicked men, and under the afflicting hand of God; see Ps 39:9; thus he put his resolution into practice;

I held my peace, [even] from good; that is, he said neither good nor bad: this expresses the greatness of his silence: he did not choose to open his lips, and say anything that was good, lest evil should come out along with it; though this may be considered as carrying the matter too far, even to a criminal silence; saying nothing of the affliction he laboured under as coming from the hand of God, and of his own desert of it; nor praying to God for the removal of it, nor giving him thanks for his divine goodness in supporting him under it, and making it useful to him; though it seems rather to have respect to his silence concerning the goodness of his cause before men; he said not one word in the vindication of himself; but committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously. The Targum and Jarchi interpret it of his silence and cessation "from the words of the law": he said nothing concerning the good word of God; which sense, could it be admitted, the words in
Jer 20:9; might be compared with these and the following;

and my sorrow was stirred; this was the issue and effect of his silence; his sorrow being pent up, and not let out and eased by words, swelled and increased the more; or the sorrow of his heart was stirred up at the insults and reproaches of his enemies, as Paul's spirit was stirred up by the superstition and idolatry of the city of Athens,
Ac 17:16.

Psalms 39:3

Ver. 3. My heart was hot within me,.... Either with zeal for God; or rather with envy at the prosperity of wicked men, and with impatience at his own afflictions;

while I was musing the fire burned; not the fire of the divine word, while he was meditating upon it, which caused his heart to burn within him; nor the fire of divine love, the coals whereof give a most vehement flame, when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, and the thoughts of it are directed by the Spirit of God to dwell in meditation on it; but the fire of passion, anger, and resentment, while meditating on his own adversity, and the prosperity of others;

[then] spake I with my tongue; and so broke the resolution he had made,
Ps 39:1; he spoke not for God, though to him; not by way of thankfulness for his grace and goodness to him, in supporting him under his exercises; but in a way of complaint, because of his afflictions; it was in prayer he spoke to God

with his tongue, and it was unadvisedly with his lips, as follows.

Psalms 39:4

Ver. 4. Lord, make me to know mine end,.... Not Christ, the end of the law for righteousness, as Jerom interprets it; nor how long he should live, how many days, months, and years more; for though they are known of God, they are not to be known by men; but either the end of his afflictions, or his, latter end, his mortal state, that he might be more thoughtful of that, and so less concerned about worldly things, his own external happiness, or that of others; or rather his death; see **Job 6:11**; and his sense is, that he might know death experimentally; or that he might die: this he said in a sinful passionate way, as impatient of his afflictions and exercises; and in the same way the following expressions are to be understood;

and the measure of my days, what it [is]; being desirous to come to the end of it; otherwise he knew it was but as an hand's breadth, as he says in Ps 39:5;

[that] I may know how frail I [am]; or "what time I have here"; or "when I shall cease to be" {u}; or, as the Targum is, "when I shall cease from the world"; so common it is for the saints themselves, in an angry or impatient fit, to desire death; see **Job 7:15**; and a very rare and difficult thing it is to wish for it from right principles, and with right views, as the Apostle Paul did, **Php 1:23**.

{u} yna ldx hm "quanti aevi ego", Montanus; "quamdiu roundanus ero", Vatablus; "quam brevis temporis sim", Musculus.

Psalms 39:5

Ver. 5. Behold, thou hast made my days [as] an handbreadth,.... These words, with the following clause, are the psalmist's answer to his own inquiries; or rather a correction of his inquiry and impatience, showing how needless it was to ask such questions, and be impatient to die, when it was so clear and certain a case that life was so short; not a yard or ell (forty five inches), but an handbreadth, the breadth of four fingers; or at most a span of time was allowed to man, whose days are few, like the shadow that declineth, and the grass that withers; by which figurative expressions the brevity of human life is described, Ps 102:11; and this is the measure made, cut out, and appointed by the Lord himself, who has determined the years, months, and days of man's life, Job 14:5;

and mine age [is] as nothing before thee; in the sight of God, or in comparison of his eternity; not so much as an handbreadth, or to be accounted as an inch, but nothing at, all; yea, less than nothing, and vanity; see Isa 40:17; that is, the age or life of man in this world, as the word {w} used signifies; for otherwise the age or life of man, in the world to come, is of an everlasting duration; but the years of this present life are threescore and ten; ordinarily speaking; an hundred and thirty are by Jacob reckoned but few; and even a thousand years with the Lord are but as one day, Ps 90:4;

verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. As vanity may signify sin, emptiness, folly, falsehood, fickleness, and inconstancy; for man is a very sinful creature, empty of all that is good; foolish as to the knowledge of divine things; he is deceiving and deceived, his heart is deceitful and desperately wicked; and he is unstable in all his ways: he is "all vanity" {x}, as the words may be rendered; all that he has, or is, or is in him, is vanity; his body, in the health, beauty, and strength of it, is subject to change; and so are his mind, his memory, his judgment and affections, his purposes and promises; and so are his goods and estate, his riches and honours; yea, all the vanity that is in the creatures, that is, in the vegetable and sensitive creatures, yea, that is in the whole, world, is in him; who is a microcosm, a little world himself: and this is true of every man, even in his "best settled" {y} estate; when he stood the most firm, as the word used signifies; it is true of men of high and low degree, of the wise, knowing, and learned, as well as of the illiterate and ignorant, Ps 62:9; even of those that are in the most prosperous circumstances, in the greatest ease and affluence,
Lu 12:16; David himself had an experience of it, **2Sa 7:1**; yea, this is true of Adam in his best estate, in his estate of innocence; for he was even then subject to change, as the event has shown; and being in honour, he abode not long; and, though upright, became sinful, and came short of the glory of God: indeed, the spiritual estate of believers in Christ is so well settled as that it cannot be altered; nor is it subject to any vanity.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{w} ydlx "vitale aevum meum", Cocceius; "my worldly time", Ainsworth. {x} lbh lk "universa, vel omnis vanitas", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Musculus, Cocceius; so Ainsworth. {y} bun "stans", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; "quamlibet firmus consistere videatur", Tigurine version, Vatablus;

"though settled", Ainsworth; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 39:6

Ver. 6. Surely every man walketh in a vain show,.... Or "in an image" {z}; not "in the image of the Lord", as the Targum; in the image in which God created man, for that is lost; nor in that which is stamped on men in regeneration; for every man does not walk in that; rather in the image of fallen man, in which every man is born and walks: or "in a shadow" {a}; or like one; to which the days of man's life are often compared, 1Ch 29:15; and who, for the most part, busies himself in shadowy and imaginary things; agreeably to all which the poet says {b},

"I see that we who live are nothing else but images, and a vain shadow."

Some {c} interpret it of "the shadow of death"; and others {d} of "darkness" itself; and it fitly expresses the state of unregeneracy and darkness in which every man walks without the grace of God; and which will end in utter darkness, if that does not prevent it; and which is called "a walking in the vanity of the mind", **Eph 4:17**. Here it seems rather to intend the outward show, pomp, and grandeur of every great man; of emperors, kings, princes, nobles, and the great men of the world; which is all a vain show, a glittering appearance for a while, a glory that passeth away, and will not descend after them when laid in the grave, and oftentimes lasts not so long;

surely they are disquieted in vain; about vain things, as riches and honours, which are fickle and unstable; and sometimes in vain are all the carking cares and disquietude of the mind, and toil and labour of the body, which are here referred to, to obtain these things; some rise early, and sit up late, and yet eat the bread of sorrow; and if they gain their point, yet do not find the pleasure and satisfaction in them they promised themselves and expected;

he heapeth up [riches], and knoweth not who shall gather them: according to Jarchi, the metaphor seems to be taken from a man that has been ploughing and sowing, and reaping and laying up the increase of the field in heaps, and yet knows not who shall gather it into the barn, seeing he may die before it is gathered in; compare with this
Lu 12:16; or the meaning is, when a man has amassed a prodigious deal of wealth together, he knows not who shall enjoy it, whether a son or a servant, a friend or a foe, a good man or a bad man, a wise man or a fool, **Ec 2:18**.

{z} Mlub "in imagine", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis. {a} "In umbra", Gejerus; "instar umbrae", Musculus; vid. Hackman. Praecidan. Sacr. tom. 1. p. 82. {b} orw gar hmav Sophoclis Ajax, v. 125, 126. {c} Donesh in Jarchi in loc. {d} Jarchi & Kimchi in loc. & R. Jonah in Miclol Yophi in loc.

Psalms 39:7

Ver. 7. And now, Lord, what wait I for?.... Look for, or expect, in this view of things? not long life, since the days of man are so short, and his age as nothing; not help from man, since he is altogether vanity; not riches and honour, since they are such poor, fading, perishing things; but the glories of another world, and the enjoyment of the Lord himself, both in this and that;

my hope [is] in thee; the psalmist now returns to himself, and comes to his right mind, and to a right way of judging and acting; making the Lord the object of his hope and trust, expecting all good things, grace and glory, alone from him; and this is the hope which makes not ashamed.

Psalms 39:8

Ver. 8. Deliver me from all my transgressions,.... Which were the cause and occasion of all his distresses, inward and outward; and the deliverance prayed for includes a freedom from the dominion of sin, which is by the power of efficacious grace; and from the guilt of sin, which is by the application of the blood of Christ; and from obligation to punishment for it, or deliverance from wrath to come, which is through Christ's being made a curse, and enduring wrath in the room and stead of his people; and from the very being of sin, which, though it cannot be expected in this life, is desirable: and the psalmist prays that he might be delivered from "all" his transgressions; knowing: that if one of them was left to have dominion over him, or the guilt of it to lie upon him, and he be obliged to undergo due punishment for it, he must be for ever miserable;

make me not the reproach of the foolish; of a Nabal; meaning not any particular person; as Esau, according to Jarchi; or Absalom, as others; but every foolish man, that is, a wicked man; such who deny the being and providence of God, make a mock at sin, and scoff at the saints: and the sense of the psalmist is, that the Lord would keep him from sinning, and deliver him out of all his afflictions, on account of which he was reproached by wicked men.

Psalms 39:9

Ver. 9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth,.... This refers either to his former silence, before he broke it, Ps 39:1, or to what he after that came into again, when he had seen the folly of his impatience, the frailty of his life, the vanity of man, and all human affairs, and had been directed to place his hope and confidence in the Lord, Ps 39:5; or to the present frame of his mind, and his future conduct, he had resolved upon; and may be rendered, "I am dumb"; or "will be dumb, and will not open my mouth" {e}; that is, not in a complaining and murmuring way against the Lord, but be still, and know or own that he is God;

because thou didst [it]; not "because thou hast made me", as Austin reads the, words, and as the Arabic version renders them, "because thou hast created me"; though the consideration of God being a Creator lays his creatures under obligation as to serve him, so to be silent under his afflicting hand upon them; but the sense is, that the psalmist was determined to be patient and quiet under his affliction, because God was the author of it; for though he is not the author of the evil of sin, yet of the evil of affliction; see **Am 3:6**; and it is a quieting consideration to a child of God under it, that it comes from God, who is a sovereign Being, and does what he pleases; and does all things well and wisely, in truth and faithfulness, and in mercy and loving kindness: this some refer to the rebellion of Absalom, and the cursing of Shimei, 2Sa 12:11; or it may refer to the death of his child, 2Sa 12:22; or rather to some sore affliction upon himself; since it follows,

{e} xtpa al "non aperiam", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 39:10

Ver. 10. Remove thy stroke away from me,.... The psalmist still considers his affliction as coming from the hand of God, as his stroke upon him, and which lay as a heavy burden on him, and which God only could remove; and to him he applies for the removal of it, who is to be sought unto by his people to do such things for them; nor is such an application any ways contrary to that silence and patience before expressed;

I am consumed by the blow of thine hand; meaning either that his flesh was consumed by his affliction, which came from the hand of God, or he should be consumed if he did not remove it: he could not bear up under it, but must sink and die; if he continued to strive and contend with him, his spirit would fail before him, and the soul that he had made; and therefore he entreats he would remember he was but dust, and remove his hand from him; for this is a reason enforcing the preceding petition.

Psalms 39:11

Ver. 11. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity,.... The psalmist illustrates his own case, before suggested, by the common case and condition of men, when God corrects them; which he has a right to do, as the Father of spirits, and which he does with rebukes; sometimes with rebukes of wrath, with furious rebukes, rebukes in flames of fire, as the men of the world; and sometimes with rebukes of love, the chastenings of a father, as his own dear children; and always for iniquity, whether one or another; and not the iniquity of Adam is here meant, but personal iniquity: and correction for it is to be understood of some bodily affliction, as the effect of it shows;

thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth; that is, secretly, suddenly, and at once; as a moth eats a garment, and takes off the beauty of it; or as easily as a moth is crushed between a man's fingers; so the Targum;

"he melts away as a moth, whose body is broken:"

the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, and so the metaphrase of Apollinarius, read, as a spider which destroys itself. The word rendered "beauty" takes in all that is desirable in man; as his flesh, his strength, his comeliness, his pleasantness of countenance, &c. all which are quickly destroyed by a distemper of the body seizing on it; wherefore the psalmist makes and confirms the conclusion he had made before:

surely every man [is] vanity; See Gill on "Ps 39:5";

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 39:12

Ver. 12. Hear my prayer, O Lord,.... Which was, that he would remove the affliction from him that lay so hard and heavy upon him;

and give ear unto my cry; which shows the distress he was in, and the vehemency with which he put up his petition to the Lord;

hold not thy peace at my tears; which were shed in great plenty, through the violence of the affliction, and in his fervent prayers to God; see **Heb 5:7**;

for I [am] a stranger with thee; not to God, to Christ, to the Spirit, to the saints, to himself, and the plague of his own heart, or to the devices of Satan; but in the world, and to the men of it; being unknown to them, and behaving as a stranger among them; all which was known to God, and may be the meaning of the phrase "with thee"; or reference may be had to the land of Canaan, in which David dwelt, and which was the Lord's, and in which the Israelites dwelt as strangers and sojourners with him, Le 25:23; as it follows here;

[and] a sojourner, as all my fathers [were]; meaning Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their posterity; see Ge 23:4; as are all the people of God in this world: this is not their native place; they belong to another and better country; their citizenship is in heaven; their Father's house is there, and there is their inheritance, which they have a right unto, and a meetness for: they have no settlement here; nor is their rest and satisfaction in the things of this world: they reckon themselves, while here, as not at home, but in a foreign land; and this the psalmist mentions, to engage the Lord to regard his prayers, since he has so often expressed a concern for the strangers and sojourners in the land of Israel.

Psalms 39:13

Ver. 13. O spare me,.... Or "look from me" {f}; turn away thy fierce countenance from me; or "cease from me {g}, and let me alone"; as in Job 10:20; from whence the words seem to be taken, by what follows:

that I may recover strength; both corporeal and spiritual:

before I go hence; out of this world by death:

and be no more; that is, among men in the land of the living; not but that he believed he should exist after death, and should be somewhere, even in heaven, though he should return no more to the place where he was; see Job 10:20, when a man is born, he comes into the world; when he dies, he goes out of it; a phrase frequently used for death in Scripture; so the ancient Heathens called death "abitio", a going away {h}.

{f} ynmm evh "respice aliorsum a me", Gejerus; "averte visum a me", Michaelis. {g} "Desine a me", Pagninus; "desiste a me", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "cessa a me", Vatablus. {h} Fest. Pomp. apud Schindler. Lexic. col. 440.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 40:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 40

To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David. Jarchi interprets this psalm of the Israelites, and of their deliverance and song at the Red sea. The title of it, in the Syriac version, is,

"A psalm of David according to the letter, when Shemaiah brought the names of those who minister in the house of the Lord;"

see 1Ch 24:6; according to Kimchi, the subject of this psalm is the same with that of the two preceding; and R. Obadiah thinks it was composed by David, when he was recovered of a leprosy; but though it might be written by David, it was not written concerning himself, or on his own account, but of another. The title of this psalm is somewhat different from others in the order of the words; whereas it is usually put "a psalm of", or "for David"; here it is, "for David, a psalm"; and may be rendered, as Ainsworth observes, "a psalm concerning David"; not literally, but typically understood; not concerning David himself, but concerning his antitype and son, who is called by his name, Eze 37:24; and that it is to be interpreted of him is evident from the application of Ps 39:6, unto him by the apostle in Heb 10:5; and the whole of it is applicable to him; some apply it to Jeremiah in the dungeon, and others to Daniel in the den, as Theodoret observes.

Ver. 1. I waited patiently for the Lord,.... Or "waiting I waited" {i}; which denotes continuance, constancy, and patience; and which Christ exercised in the garden, when he submitted himself entirely to the will of God; and on the cross, when he continued in sure hope and firm expectation of his help and assistance, though he was for a while forsaken by him; see Isa 50:7;

and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry; both in the garden, by delivering him from fear of death; and on the cross, by upholding, helping, and assisting him, by carrying him through his sufferings and death, and raising him from the dead; see Isa 49:8.

{i} ytywq hwq "expectando expectavi", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus Musculus, Rivetus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 40:2

Ver. 2. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit,.... Which, with the following phrase,

out of the miry clay, expresses the state and condition Christ was in at the time of his bloody sweat, his crucifixion, and his lying in "sheol", the pit or grave, sometimes rendered hell, which these figurative phrases fitly signify; when it is observed, that he was made sin, and had the sins of all his people on him; and, as the type of Joshua, was clothed with their filthy garments; he might be truly said to be in the miry clay; and also that he was made a curse for them, and bore the wrath of God in their room and stead; and was forsaken by his God and Father, and so endured both the punishment of loss and sense, and what was tantamount to the sufferings of the damned in hell; see Ps 69:1; to which may be added the noisy insults of malignant men, and the infernal fiends, who surrounded him on the cross; when he was in an horrible, or "noisy pit", as the words may be rendered {k}, the allusion being to subterraneous caverns or pits, in which the falls of water make so horrible a noise as is intolerable; or to deep pits, into which anything cast makes a great sound: and the issue of all this was, that he was laid in the pit of the grave, and held under the power and with the cords of death; from all which he was delivered when he was raised from the dead, justified in the Spirit, and glorified in the human nature by his God and Father;

and set my feet upon a rock; on Mount Zion in heaven, whither he was carried up after his resurrection; where he will remain until his second coming, being set down at the right hand of God, in a most stable, firm, and unalterable state, as well as an honourable one; for he will die no more, and death shall no more have dominion over him;

[and] established my goings; in treading the path of life, which was shown him at his resurrection; in passing through the air, the territory of Satan, at his ascension; and in his entrance into his glory, and making his way to his Father's right hand and throne.

{k} Nwav rwbm "e cisterna sonitus", Pagninus, Montanus; "strepitus", Vatablus, the Targum & Kimchi; and to the same purpose Musculus, Cocceius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "out of the pit of sounding calamity", Ainsworth.

Psalms 40:3

Ver. 3. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, [even] praise to our God,.... Sung by him in the midst of the great congregation of angels and saints, upon his resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God; see Ps 22:22; when he went to his God and ours, to his Father and ours; and in which song he is joined by all his people above and below, **Re 5:9**;

many shall see [it], and fear, and shall trust in the Lord; even all the elect of God, as many as are ordained to eternal life; the many whose sins Christ bore, for whom he became a ransom, whom he justifies and brings to glory: these all "see" him in the horrible pit and miry clay, in his state of humiliation, as bearing their sins, and the punishment due unto them; as wounded, bruised, and crucified; as rising again for their justification; and as on Mount Zion crowned with glory and honour; and a multitude of harpers with him, singing the new song; these see the salvation he has wrought out, the glory, fulness, and suitableness of it, and their interest in it; and they "fear" not with a fear of hell and damnation, which is inconsistent with the trust after mentioned; but with a godly and filial fear, which arises from and is encouraged by the grace and goodness of God, their faith in the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ Jesus, and which render him a proper object of trust and confidence; for he is so both as suffering, crucified, and slain, and as risen again, and exalted at the Father's right hand, **Ga 2:20**.

Psalms 40:4

Ver. 4. Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust,.... For such are safe and secure in him, are possessed of all blessings of grace through him, have peace in their own souls now, and shall enjoy eternal happiness with him hereafter;

and respecteth not the proud; such as the Pharisees, and all self-righteous persons, who trust in themselves and their own righteousness, submit not to the righteousness of Christ, and despise others; to these such who trust in Christ have no respect; they neither esteem them, nor imitate them;

nor such as turn aside to lies; to idols, the lying vanities of the Gentiles; or to any doctrines injurious to the person, office, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and grace of Christ; which are no other than lies, and which those who believe in Christ have no respect to, but abhor both them and the abettors of them.

Psalms 40:5

Ver. 5. Many, O Lord my God, [are] thy wonderful works [which] thou hast done,.... This is the "new song", as Aben Ezra rightly observes, which is said in Ps 40:3, to be put in the mouth of the Messiah; who sometimes speaks in the plural number, being the representative of his people, and sometimes in the singular; for it is the same person that speaks here who is continued speaking in Ps 40:6, and following; and which are applied to Christ, Heb 10:5; the "works" here said to be done, and to be "many" and "wonderful", are not the creation of the world, the dividing of the sea, and feeding the people of Israel forty years in the wilderness, as Jarchi interprets them; but the incarnation of Christ, redemption by him, the resurrection of him from the dead; regeneration and conversion, and the preservation of the saints from the evil of the world, safe to the kingdom and glory of God; all which, as they are many and various, and display the manifold wisdom and grace of God, so they are marvellous, and will be the subject of the wonder of saints to all eternity;

and thy thoughts [which are] to us-ward; that is, the decrees of God, as Aben Ezra truly explains them; the purposes, counsels, and intentions of God; which, though mentioned last, are before his works, and are the spring of them: these were in the mind of God from everlasting, were unknown till revealed, were thoughts of peace, and not of evil, and are unfrustrable, and ever fulfilled, and are manifold, precious, and amazing, Ps 139:17; and these were concerning all the elect of God as considered in Christ, and members of his; and therefore he says to us-ward; and all the works before mentioned were done to them, or for them, and on their account; and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret the phrase, "because of us", or "for our sakes"; even the incarnation, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the thoughts of them, were for them;

they cannot be reckoned up in order to thee; or "there is none can order them unto thee" {l}; there is no power in man to do it, as Aben Ezra observes; or "there is none like unto thee", as Jarchi and the Oriental versions; see Ex 15:11; though this sense seems to break in upon the account of the wonderful works and thoughts of God, which are still designed in the following clause;

[if] I could declare and speak [of them], they are more than can be numbered; that is, by men: from this general account of, the many and wonderful works and thoughts of God, the Messiah passes on to take notice of one particular design and work of the Lord, the redemption of his people by the sacrifice of himself.

{l} Kyla Kwre Nya "non est qui ordinet apud te", Pagninus; "none can count them in order to thee", Ainsworth.

Psalms 40:6

Ver. 6. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire,.... These were desired, willed, and appointed by God, and that very early, even from the times of our first parents; and, when performed aright, were acceptable to God, quite down to the times of the Messiah: indeed, when offered without faith in Christ, and with a wicked mind, to merit any thing at the hand of God, they were always abominable to him; and he likewise ever preferred love to himself, and of the neighbour, obedience to the commands of the moral law, and works of mercy to men, before all the sacrifices of the ceremonial law, 1Sa 15:22; nor were these ever in such esteem with him as the sacrifices of a broken and contrite heart, or of praise and thanksgiving, Ps 51:16; nor were they ever regarded by him but as they respected Christ; nor were they ever designed to cleanse from sin, and take it away, but to lead to the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ: but none of these senses have place here: the meaning of the words is, that it was not the will of God, at the time this passage refers to, that legal sacrifices should continue any longer; and that they should not be offered up, even by good men, in the best manner, and to the best ends and purposes; the time being come that a better sacrifice should be offered, which was the sum and substance of them, and was prefigured by them;

mine ears hast thou opened; or "dug", or "bored" {m}; in allusion, as is thought by many, to Ex 21:6; though the phrase rather signifies the formation and excavation of the ear; or the preparing and fitting it for its use; that is, to hearken to the will of his heavenly Father, to become man, offer himself a sacrifice, and suffer and die in the room of his people; to which he became obedient, taking upon him the form of a servant, when found in fashion as a man; and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; see Isa 50:4; in Heb 10:5, the words are rendered as by the Septuagint, "but a body hast thou prepared me"; and with it the Arabic and Ethiopic versions agree; and so Apollinarius,

"flesh of mortal generation;"

a part of the body being put for the whole; and which, indeed, is supposed: for unless a body had been prepared for him, his ears could not have been opened; and it was in the body, in human nature, that he was the obedient servant; and this is to be understood, not only of a preparation of this body, in the purposes, counsel, and covenant of God; but chiefly of the formation of it in the womb of the virgin, where it was curiously wrought and prepared by the Holy, Ghost, that he might have something to offer, and in it become, as he did, an offering and a sacrifice to God, of a sweet smelling savour;

burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required; any longer; this body being prepared for the Messiah to be offered up in.

{m} tyrk "fodisti", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "perfodisti", Tigurine version, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "perforasti", Cocceius.

Psalms 40:7

Ver. 7. Then said I,.... As in the council and covenant of peace, when and where he declared his willingness to come into the world, and make satisfaction for the sins of his people; so when the fulness of time was come for his appearance in human nature he repeated the same; for of the time of his coming into the world are these words interpreted,
Heb 10:5; when sacrifice and offering God would not have any longer continued, and when a body was prepared him, then he said,

Lo, I come; O Father; as Apollinarius, in his metaphrase, adds; that is, freely, and without compulsion; immediately, at once, without any delay; and he himself, and not another; and this not by change of place, but by assumption of nature; taking the body, or human nature, prepared for him, and uniting it to himself; to which the word "lo" is prefixed as a note of attention and admiration; the incarnation of Christ being a wonderful affair, and of the utmost moment and importance;

in the volume of the book [it is] written of me; either in the book of divine predestination, in the purposes and decrees of God, Ps 139:16; or in the book of the Scriptures; either in general, **Joh 5:39**
Lu 24:27; or particularly in the book of the Psalms, **Ps 1:1**; or rather in the book of the law, the five books of Moses, since these were the only books or volumes that were composed at the writing of this psalm; and it has respect not to De 18:15; nor De 17:18; nor Ex 21:6; but rather **Ge 3:15**; and seeing the coming of Christ into the world was not only appointed of God, agreed unto by Christ, but was prophesied of, and penned down in the sacred writings; therefore at the appointed time he came, freely and willingly. This book is called a volume, or roll, alluding to the manner of writing formerly; when what was written was finished, it was rolled about a stick in the manner of a cylinder; and in this form is the book of the law with the Jews to this day; See Gill on "Lu 4:17".

Psalms 40:8

Ver. 8. I delight to do thy will, O my God,.... This he came down from heaven to do, and this he did do, by preaching the Gospel, and working miracles; and above all by obtaining eternal redemption for his people, which he effected by fulfilling the law, becoming a sacrifice, and suffering and dying in their room; all which were the will of God, and grateful to him, and in doing which Christ took the utmost delight and pleasure, **Joh 4:34**;

yea, thy law [is] within my heart; either the whole moral law, under which he was, as man, and the surety of his people; and which was written upon his heart, and which he perfectly obeyed; or that particular law, injunction, and command laid upon him by his Father, to offer himself a sacrifice, and lay down his life for men; which he agreed to, had it in his mind, his heart was set upon it, and he cheerfully complied with it, Joh 10:18.

Psalms 40:9

Ver. 9. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation,.... Not the righteousness which the law requires men to do; but the righteousness which Christ himself wrought out, for the justification of them that believe; this he was a preacher, as well as the author of, and is part of the glad tidings he was anointed to preach, Isa 61:1; and the word {n} here used signifies, for the most part, the publishing of good tidings; and this our Lord did publicly, before all the people, in the synagogues of the Jews, and in the temple, whither the people in great numbers resorted; especially at the three great festivals in the year; the feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, when all the males were obliged to appear, and made up a great congregation indeed; see **Joh 2:23**;

lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest; Christ appeals to his divine Father, the searcher of hearts, and trier of reins, for the truth of this; that he had not laid any restraint upon his lips, nor kept back anything in his ministry that was profitable; but had taught the way of God in great integrity and sincerity; had opened his mouth, and spoke freely and fully, and used great plainness of speech.

{n} ytrvb euhggelisamhn Sept. "evangelizavi", Schmidt, Michaelis; "I have preached the glad tidings of justice", Ainsworth.

Psalms 40:10

Ver. 10. I have not not hid thy righteousness within my heart,.... Meaning not the essential righteousness of God, though that was abundantly declared in the wounds, sufferings, and death of Christ; and which was the end indeed of his being a propitiation for sin, **Ro 3:25**; but his own righteousness, as before, which he wrought out, and brought in; and which is called the righteousness of God his Father, because it is approved of by him, and accepted with him, and which he imputes to all his people;

I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: trial is, the "faithfulness" of God in executing all his purposes, counsels, and decrees, which are said to be faithfulness and truth; and in fulfilling his covenant and promises, relating to the redemption and salvation of men by Christ; and in the mission of Christ into this world on that account; and in the accomplishment of all the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning him; and in making good all the particular promises of support, help, and strength, made to the Messiah himself: and by his "salvation" is meant, that which is of God the Father's appointing, continuing, and settling, in the council and covenant of grace; which he sent his Son to be the author of, and which he has obtained; and is the great doctrine of the Gospel preached by himself, and his faithful ministers, Lu 19:9;

I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation; or "in the great congregation", as the Targum. By the "lovingkindness" of God is designed both his love to Christ, which was before the foundation of the world, and continued in his lowest state of humiliation, and which our Lord was far from concealing, but gave openly instances of it, Joh 17:24; and this love to his people; and which he declared to be the same with that which he is loved with, and instances in the gift of himself to them by his Father, as the great evidence of it, Joh 17:23; and by "truth" is intended the Gospel in general, which came by Christ, was preached by him, which he bore witness to, to do which was one end of his coming into the world; and this was not concealed by him, who is truth itself; but was fully and plainly declared by him, as it had not been before, **Joh 1:17**.

Psalms 40:11

Ver. 11. Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord,.... this is a petition of Christ to his Father, when in the midst of his sorrows and sufferings, before related; and particularly when he hid his face from him, and withheld the discoveries of his tender and affectionate love;

let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me; as he had promised; of which promise some notice is given, Isa 49:8, in the fulfilment of which the lovingkindness, truth, and faithfulness of God, would appear. Some read these words as expressive of faith in these things, "thou wilt not withhold", &c. "thy lovingkindness and thy truth shall continually preserve me" {o}.

{o} alkt al "non cohibebis", Gejerus, Michaelis; ynwruy "custodient me", Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 40:12

Ver. 12. For innumerable evils have compassed me about,.... Like floods of water all around him; see Ps 18:4; these are the evils of punishment inflicted on him, as the surety and Saviour of his people; such as the sorrows and griefs he bore all his days; the cruel mockings and scourges he endured; his being buffeted and spit upon; his head crowned with thorns, and his hands and feet pierced with nails; insulted by men and devils; crucified between two thieves, and so died the shameful and painful death of the cross;

mine iniquities have taken hold upon me; not any committed by him; he was conceived, born, and lived without sin, knew none, nor did he any; but the sins of his people, which were imputed to him, laid upon him, and which he voluntarily took and bore; and which he reckoned as his own and was responsible for them; these, when he hung upon the cross, came upon him from all quarters, and he bore them in his own body upon the tree;

so that I am not able to look up; or "cannot see" {p}; either the end of these iniquities, they being so numerous, as is after related; or he could not bear to look upon them, they were so filthy and nauseous, and he so pure and holy; or he could not behold his Father's countenance, which these sins that were upon him separated him from, and caused to be hid from him; or, like one pressed down with the guilt of sin, as the poor publican was, could not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven,
Lu 18:13;

they are more than the hairs of mine head; as they must needs be, since they were the iniquities of all the elect of God, of the whole general assembly ad church of the firstborn, written in heaven, Isa 53:6;

therefore my heart faileth me; as man; see Ps 22:14; though being supported by his divine nature, and by his divine Father and eternal Spirit, he failed not, nor was he discouraged, Isa 42:4; this is said to show the truth of the human nature, the greatness of men's sins, the strictness of divine justice, and what strength was necessary to accomplish man's salvation.

{p} ytlky al twarl "non potai videre", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus; "cernere", Cocceius; "intueri", Gejerus.

Psalms 40:13

Ver. 13. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me,.... From the innumerable evils which compassed him about; from sinful men, and from devils, signified by

the sword, dog, and lion, Ps 22:20; and from the power and dominion of death and the grave; all which was done when he was raised from the dead, and as the fruit and effect of God's well pleasedness in him, and with what he did and suffered; see
Ps 22:8;

O Lord, make haste to help me; See Gill on "Ps 22:19".

Psalms 40:14

Ver. 14. Let them be ashamed and confounded together,.... As they will be at the last day, when they shall see him whom they have pierced come in the clouds of heaven, in his own and his Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels;

that seek after my soul to destroy it; that is, his life, as did Herod in his infancy, and the Scribes and Pharisees, chief priests and elders of the people of the Jews, frequently, and at last accomplished what they sought after;

let them be driven backward; as those were who came with Judas into the garden to apprehend him, Joh 18:6;

and put to shame that wish me evil: as did the Jews, who sought all opportunities to ensnare him, and that they might have to accuse him to the Roman governor; and who earnestly desired his crucifixion, and vehemently wished his death; see Ps 41:5.

Psalms 40:15

Ver. 15. Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame,.... Of their shameful wishes, words, and actions, as they were: their habitations in Jerusalem were desolate, and so was their house or temple there, and their whole land, and they themselves were stripped of everything, when Jerusalem was taken and destroyed; see Mt 23:38 **Ac 1:20**;

that say unto me, Aha, aha; words expressive of joy, Ps 35:21, exulting at his miseries and sufferings on the cross, Mt 27:39; so the Targum,

"we have rejoiced at his destruction, with joy at his affliction."

Psalms 40:16

Ver. 16. Let all those that seek thee,.... In the first place, with their whole hearts, earnestly and diligently, in Christ, and under the influences of his Spirit, for pardon, righteousness, communion, larger measures of grace, and for honour, glory, immortality, and eternal life;

rejoice and be glad in thee: as their covenant God, the Father of their mercies, the God of all comfort and salvation, who pardons their sins, clothes them with the robes of righteousness and garments of salvation, and accepts their persons in Christ; all which is matter of joy and gladness: Christ is concerned for the joy of his people, Joh 15:11; the Targum is, "they shall", or "let them rejoice, and be glad in thy word": in himself, the essential Word, in whom there is always ground and reason of joy and gladness; because of his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice;

let such as love thy salvation; either Christ, who is God's salvation, Ge 49:18; and who is loved by his people, universally, superlatively, and sincerely; or the salvation of him, his deliverance from the grave, resurrection from the dead, and exaltation; the benefits of which believers share in, and so have reason to love it: or the salvation he is the author of, which is loved by those that know it; partly because agreeable to the divine perfections, the glory of God is great in it; and partly because it is so full and complete in itself, and so suitable to them;

say continually, the Lord be magnified; let this be their constant employment in this world, as it will be for ever in the next, to ascribe greatness to God; or greatly to praise him, because of the great salvation wrought out for them.

Psalms 40:17

Ver. 17. But I [am] poor and needy,.... As Christ was literally, **2Co 8:9**; and in a spiritual sense, when deserted by his Father, forsaken by his disciples, and surrounded by his enemies; and had the sins of his people, the curse of the law, and the wrath of God upon him;

[yet] the Lord thinketh upon me; thinketh good for me, as the Targum; or thinks highly of me; has me in great esteem though despised of men, and in

such a suffering state;

thou [art] my help and my deliverer; he believed he should have what he prayed for, Ps 40:13; see Isa 50:7;

make no tarrying, O my God; which is a repetition of the request in Ps 40:13.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 41:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 41

To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David. In this psalm is a prophecy concerning Christ, and concerning Judas Iscariot, as runs part of the title in the Syriac version; and in the Arabic version it is called a prophecy concerning the incarnation, and the salutation of Judas; and certain it is that Ps 41:9 is to be understood of him, and of his betraying Christ into the hands of his enemies, since it is cited and applied to him by our Lord himself, Joh 13:18; so that having such a sure rule of interpretation, we may safely venture to explain the whole psalm of Christ, which treats both of his humiliation and exaltation; for it neither agrees with David wholly, nor with Hezekiah, to whom some ascribe it, as Theodoret remarks.

Ver. 1. Blessed [is] he that considereth the poor,.... Not the poor of the world in common, nor poor saints in particular, but some single poor man; for the word is in the singular number, and designs our Lord Jesus Christ, who, in Ps 40:17, is said to be "poor and needy": and so read the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions here; who became poor for our sakes, that we might be enriched by his poverty; being born of poor parents, educated in a mean manner, and in public life was ministered to by others: the word {q} here used signifies one that is attenuated, weak, and exhausted either of his substance or strength, or both; as Christ was in his state of humiliation, when he was emptied of his riches, and, though Lord of all, had not where to lay his head; and whose strength was dried up like a potsherd, when he suffered on the cross; and indeed at best he was encompassed with weaknesses and infirmities: and in this his low estate he is to be wisely considered, or attended to with wisdom and understanding; and he may be said wisely to consider him, who considers how great a person he is, that came into such a low estate for us; not a mere man, but above angels and men, that has all the perfections of

deity in him, is the eternal Son of God, truly and properly God, and the Creator of all things, and Governor of the universe; which consideration will engage to and encourage faith and hope in him, lead to adore his wonderful grace, and to admire his condescension and humility in becoming poor and weak; as also who considers that the poverty of Christ was for our sakes, and that we might be made rich with the riches of grace and glory; and considers it so as not to be offended with it; see
Mt 11:6; and which may serve to support us under all meanness and infirmity, and in whatsoever estate saints may come into; and likewise who considers him in his offices which he exercised in that his estate as the apostle and high priest of our profession; and him in his exalted state in heaven; see Heb 12:3; in a word, he wisely considers him, who believes in him as his Saviour, prizes him as the pearl of great price, cleaves close unto him, and follows him wherever he goes; who desires to know more of him, is concerned for his honour, interest, kingdom and glory, and pities his poor members, and freely and bountifully communicates to them; and so the Targum,

"blessed is the man that wisely considers the afflictions of the poor, that he may have mercy on him;"

and such an one is an happy man, and the following things said of him prove him to be so;

the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble: or "in the evil day" {r}; out of all his trouble, temporal and spiritual, of body and soul; in every time of affliction, private and personal; or in a time of public calamity; perhaps reference may be had to the time of Jerusalem's destruction, which was a time of great tribulation, Mt 24:21; when those who did not consider Christ in his poor and low estate, but despised and rejected him, were destroyed; and such as did were saved from that calamity: and it may also include the day of judgment, which is the evil day, unto which the wicked are reserved, and when they will be punished with everlasting destruction; but then those that consider Christ, and believe in him, will be saved from wrath. Some {s} take these words, with what follows in the two next verses, as a prayer, and as delivered by him that visits the sick, for his comfort; and so Joseph Kimchi interprets it of an honourable man visiting a sick man, and instructing and comforting him with such words as these, that "the Lord will deliver him", &c.

{q} ld "tenuem", Montanus, Cocceius; "attenuatum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "the poor weakling", Ainsworth. {r} her Mwyb "in die mala", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus. {s} Vid. R. David Kimchium in loc.

Psalms 41:2

Ver. 2. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive,.... Amidst a thousand deaths, to which he is exposed for making a profession of his faith in Christ; see **2Co 1:10**; or this may refer to his spiritual life, which is hid and preserved in Christ, in whom he believes; and is safe and secure; because Christ lives he shall live also, and shall never die the second death, nor be hurt by it, but shall have everlasting life;

[and] he shall be blessed upon the earth; with temporal blessings; for whatever he has, be it more or less, he has it with the blessing of God, and as a blessing of the covenant, and in love, and so is a blessing indeed: and with spiritual blessings; with peace, pardon, righteousness, and a right and title to eternal glory and happiness; and he will be blessed in the new earth, in which righteousness will dwell, and where he will dwell, live, and reign with Christ a thousand years;

and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies; not into the will of Satan, that roaring lion who would devour him if he might; nor of wicked men, and furious persecutors, whose wrath the Lord makes to praise him; and the remainder of it is restrained by him; some read these words as a prayer, "do not thou deliver him", &c. see Ps 27:12; so Pagninus, Montanus, Junius and Tremellius, Ainsworth, and others.

Psalms 41:3

Ver. 3. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing,.... When on a sick bed, or a death bed, where he lies languishing, and ready to expire; when his natural strength, spirits, and heart fail him, then the Lord strengthens him with strength in his soul; and is the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever. The Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord shall help him in his life, and shall appear to him on the bed of his illness, to quicken him;"

thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness; or "all his bed thou hast turned" or "wilt turn in his sickness" {t}; meaning not the recovery of him from a bed of sickness to a state of health, which is the sense given by many; much less a turning him from a state of ease and rest into trouble and distress; but making him easy and comfortable on a bed of sickness; which, in a literal sense, is done when a sick person's bed is turned or made, or he is turned upon it from side to side; so the Lord, by the comforts of his Spirit, makes a sick and death bed easy to them that believe in Christ, and often puts that triumphant song into their mouths in their dying moments, "O death! where is that sting?" &c. 1Co 15:55; and this is the peaceful end and blissful state of such who wisely consider Christ and believe in him; low estate, through the sins of his the insults of his enemies, and the treachery of one of his disciples, is described in the following verses.

{t} tkph "versasti", Pagninus, Montanus; "vertisti", Vatablus; "ita vertes", Michaelis; so Ainsworth; demnia oi meteyhken, Apollinarius.

Psalms 41:4

Ver. 4. I said, Lord, be merciful unto me,....
See Gill on "Ps 40:11";

heal my soul; not that it was diseased with sin in such sense as the souls of other men are; but it is to be understood as a petition for comfort while bearing the sins of others, and which Christ as man stood in need of when in the garden and on the cross; so healing signifies comfort in trouble, as in Isa 57:18;

for I have sinned against thee; or "unto thee", or "before thee", as the Targum; not that any sin was committed by him in his own person, but he having all the sins of his people on him, which he calls his own, Ps 40:12; he was treated as a sinner, and as guilty before God,
Isa 53:12; and so the words may be read, "for I am a sinner unto thee" {u}; I am counted as one by thee, having the sins of my people imputed to me; and am bound unto thee, or under obligation to bear the punishment of sin; or thus, "for I have made an offering for sin unto thee" {w}, so the word is used, **Le 6:26**; and so it might be rendered in **Le 5:7**; and perhaps may be better rendered so in **Le 4:3**; and be understood, not of the sin of the anointed priest, but of his offering a sacrifice for the soul that sinned through ignorance,
Ps 41:2, which offering is directed to: and then the sense here is, heal me, acquit me, discharge me, and deliver me out of this poor and low estate in which I am; for I have made my soul an offering for sin, and thereby have made atonement for all the sins of my people laid upon me; and accordingly he

was acquitted and justified, **1Ti 3:16**.

{u} Kl "tibi", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius. {w} "Obtuli sacrificium pro peccato", Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 249, 923.

Psalms 41:5

Ver. 5. Mine enemies speak evil of me,.... That is, the Jews, who were enemies to his person, people, doctrines and ordinances, and would not have him to reign over them; these spake evil of him, charged him with being a glutton and a winebibber; said he had a devil, and was a Samaritan; imputed his miracles to diabolical influence; branded his doctrine with blasphemy, and spoke against his religion and worship, and wished him ill, saying,

when shall he die; they had a good will to assassinate him privately, but upon mature deliberation they consulted and determined to take what advantage they could against him, and deliver him up to the Roman governor; they feared, should he go on and succeed, through his doctrines and miracles, as he did, it would go ill with them; and they concluded, could he be brought to death, it would clearly appear to the common people that he was not the Messiah; though this was the very thing he came into the world for, and which he himself was very desirous of; because hereby, and hereby only, the salvation of his people could be brought about; and though this was a thing foretold in prophecy, yet it seems as if Christ's enemies the Jews, and Satan himself, were ignorant of it, and of its virtue and use to save men; however, though it was an ill wish in them, it was well for us that he did die, though the consequence is not as they wished;

and his name perish? that is, the fame of his doctrine and miracles, the memory of him and his worthy deeds, particularly his Gospel, which so fully expresses the glory of his person and grace; yea, he himself, for they hoped that upon his death he would come into general disgrace, that his name would never be mentioned but with reproach, that his Gospel would be no more preached, and that he would be accursed of God and men: in all which they were sadly disappointed; for, upon his resurrection from the dead, he had a name given him above every name; his memory became precious to thousands; an ordinance was appointed to remember him to the end of the world in all his churches; his Gospel was ordered to be preached to all the world, as it was; and he himself is blessed for evermore.

Psalms 41:6

Ver. 6. And if he come to see [me],.... Meaning anyone of his enemies, when they came, as pretended, to pay him a friendly visit. A late learned writer {x} interprets this of Absalom, who visited his father when he had the smallpox, which he thinks, after mentioned, of which his enemies expected he would die, when Absalom pretended great concern for his life; though he, with others, were plotting against him, should he live, to destroy him;

he speaketh vanity; lies and falsehoods, in an hypocritical manner, with a double heart; his mouth and his heart not agreeing together; see Mt 22:16;

his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; amasses to itself greater treasures of wickedness still, thought that itself is desperately wicked, and very wickedness: this is to be understood of the enemies of Christ observing his words and actions, and laying them up, with a wicked intention, against a proper time;

[when] he goeth abroad, he telleth [it]; as in the instances concerning giving tribute to Caesar, destroying the temple, and saying he was the son of God, Mt 22:17; compared with Lu 23:2; compared with Mt 26:60, compared with Joh 19:5.

{x} Delaney's Life of King David, vol. 2. p. 157, 158.

Psalms 41:7

Ver. 7. All that hate me whisper together against me,.... That is, they privately conspired against him; see Mt 22:15;

against me do they devise my hurt; not only to take away his name and credit, but his life.

Psalms 41:8

Ver. 8. An evil disease, [say they], cleaveth fast unto him,.... Not any bodily one, of which they might hope he would die; much less any foul disease, the disease of sin; but, as the phrase may be rendered, "a word of Belial" {y}; that is, a wicked charge or accusation; a charge of sin brought against him by the sons of Belial, as of blasphemy and sedition, which they concluded would be fastened upon him, and stick by him, and in which they should succeed to their wishes; or else the shameful punishment the death of the cross, inflicted on him, which they fancied would fix an indelible mark of infamy and scandal on him, since cursed is he that hangeth on a tree;

and [now] that he lieth, let him rise up no more; has much as he was dead, of which they had full proof, and was laid in the grave, his tomb watched, and the stone rolled to it sealed; they thought all was safe, and it was all over with him, that he would never rise again, as he had given out, and his disciples incapable of committing a fraud they afterwards accused them with: this, according to the above learned writer, see Ps 41:6, was said by Absalom, as he thinks Ahithophel is the person designed in Ps 41:9.

{y} leylb rbd "verbum Belijahal", Montanus, Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus.

Psalms 41:9

Ver. 9. Yea, mine own familiar friend,.... Or, "the man of my peace" {z}; who did live peaceably with him, and ought always to have done so; whom he treated as his friend, as the rest of the apostles; calling him to that high office, and ordaining him to it, and qualifying him for it; and whom he called by the name of friend, when he came to betray him; Judas is meant;

in whom I trusted; with the bag and the money in it, both for the sustenance of his own family, the apostles, and for the relief of the poor, Joh 12:6;

which did eat of my bread; of his bread in common with the rest of the apostles; and who was eating with him when he gave the sign who should betray him; and who seems to have eaten of the bread in the Lord's supper: even this same person

hath lifted up his heel against me; by supplanting him, dealing hypocritically with him, and betraying him into the hands of his enemies: the metaphor is either taken from an unruly horse throwing his rider, and then ungenerously spurning at him, and trampling on him; or from wrestlers, who seek to supplant and trip up each other's heels; which shows the ingratitude, baseness, and treachery of Judas; see

Joh 13:18.

{z} ymwlv vya "vir pacis meae", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 41:10

Ver. 10. But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up,.... Not from a bed of illness, nor from a state of poverty and want; but from the dead: it was by the will of his divine Father that he suffered death, and it was to him he made satisfaction and reconciliation for the sins of his people, by his sufferings and death; and therefore it was but a reasonable request, that, having done this, he should be raised from the dead: besides, his Father had promised it, and he had believed it; so that this prayer was a prayer of faith, founded upon a divine promise; and the resurrection of Christ is for the most part ascribed to God the Father as his act; though not to the exclusion of the Son, who had power, as to lay down his life, so to take it up again; and though the resurrection of Christ from the dead is not only an act of power, but also of justice, he having paid his people's debts, atoned for their sins, and satisfied law and justice, it was but right and equitable that he should be discharged from the prison of the grave, and set free; yet here it is requested as an act of mercy, grace, and kindness; for, by doing it, it would appear that his Father's wrath was taken away from him, and that he had turned himself from the fierceness of his anger to him, and that he was well pleased with his righteousness and sacrifice; besides, it was giving him glory, as well as rolling away the reproach he lay under; and, however, it was in mercy to his body the church, whom he represented, since it was for their justification; nay, their regeneration is influenced by it; and so is the resurrection of their bodies, of which Christ's resurrection is the pledge and pattern. The end Christ had in view in making the request follows;

that I may requite them: not "him", Judas, last mentioned; for justice pursued and overtook him; he destroyed himself, and was gone to his own place, before Christ's resurrection from the dead; but them, the Jews, as a body; his enemies that spoke ill of him, wished ill to him, conspired against him, to take away his life, and did bring him to the dust of death: and this his requital of them, after his resurrection, was either of good for evil, by ordering his disciples to preach his Gospel, first at Jerusalem, to those very persons who were concerned in his death, many of whom were converted, baptized, and added to the church; or of evil, for their evil to him, which had its accomplishment in part, at the destruction of Jerusalem, and will more fully at the day of judgment, when they that have pierced him shall see him come in the clouds of heaven.

Psalms 41:11

Ver. 11. By this I know that thou favourest me,.... Or "delightest in me" {z}; as he did, both as his Son and his servant; in his obedience, sufferings, and death, whereby his counsels were accomplished, his covenant ratified, and the salvation of his people procured; and which delight and well pleasedness in him was the ground of his deliverance from the power of death and the grave; see Ps 18:19; the token by which Christ knew this was,

because mine enemy doth not triumph over me; Judas could not; he was too short lived, he was quickly taken away, and all the woes fall upon him imprecated on him, Ps 109:6; nor the Jews; for though they were highly delighted when they had fastened him to the cross, and when he was dead, and laid in the grave; yet they could not sing their jubilee song over him until the third day was past; for they knew he had given out that he should rise again the third day; on which day he did rise, and his apostles preached that he was alive, and through him the resurrection of the dead, to their great grief, vexation, and mortification: nor did Satan, the enemy of Christ, personal and mystical, triumph over him; not in the wilderness, where, after he had tempted him, he was obliged to leave him; nor in the garden, and his agony there, where he was strengthened by an angel; nor even on the cross; for on that Christ himself triumphed over Satan and his principalities, whom he spoiled, and destroyed the devil and all his works; and, at his ascension to heaven, led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men, in token of triumph, and went forth, in the ministration of the Gospel, conquering, and to conquer; turning men from the power of Satan, and causing his servants to triumph in him, while they were in every place diffusing the savour of his knowledge.

{z} yb tuph "complacuisti in me", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "delectaris me", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Psalms 41:12

Ver. 12. And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity,.... In the innocence of his nature, being free from sin, original and actual; in the uprightness of his life and conversation before God and men; and in the perfection of his obedience and sacrifice, whereby he brought in a perfect righteousness, made complete atonement, and obtained full salvation and redemption for his people; and, because of all this, Jehovah the Father upheld him in his sufferings, as man and Mediator, that he failed not, and was not discouraged: or rather the sense is, that by several things which turned up in Providence, as the disagreement of the witnesses, declaration of his judge, and the confession of Judas his betrayer, he was cleared of the charges brought against him, and his innocence was maintained, and he upheld in it; but especially this was done by raising him from the dead, when he was openly acquitted, discharged, and justified, and declared to be the Holy One of God, **1Ti 3:16**;

and settest me before thy face for ever; after his resurrection, he was introduced into the presence of his Father, and was made glad with his countenance; where he sits before him as the Angel of his presence, and appears in the presence of God in the behalf of his people; is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, as though he had been slain; where his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, are ever in view for their acceptance, and where he ever lives to make intercession for them; for here he will continue until the time of the restitution of all things.

Psalms 41:13

Ver. 13. Blessed [be] the Lord God of Israel,.... Which is said, either by the Messiah, on account of the delight his Father had in him; the favour he had shown him in raising him from the dead, maintaining his innocence, and exalting him at his own right hand; and for all the blessings of grace the whole Israel of God enjoyed through him: or else by the church, who is meant by Israel, the Lord is the God of in a covenant way; who, hearing such things done to her Lord and head, breaks out into an exclamation of praise, and ascribes blessing and glory to God for them, which is due to him;

from everlasting, and to everlasting; that is, throughout all ages, world without end, **Eph 3:21**.

Amen and Amen; which word, as Kimchi observes, signifies confirmation; and the doubling of it is for the greater confirmation of what is expressed. Here ends the first part of the book of Psalms, which is divided into five parts by the Jews {a}.

{a} Midrash Tillim, fol. 2. 1. Kimchi Praefat. in Psal.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 42:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 42

To the chief Musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah. Of the word "Maschil", See Gill on "Ps 32:1", title. Korah was he who was at the head of a conspiracy against Moses and Aaron, for which sin the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed alive him and his company, and fire devoured two hundred and fifty more; the history of which is recorded in Nu 16:1; yet all his posterity were not cut off, Nu 26:11; some were in David's time porters, or keepers of the gates of the tabernacle, and some were singers; see **1Ch 6:33**; and to the chief musician was this psalm directed for them to sing, for they were not the authors of it, as some {b} have thought; but most probably David himself composed it; and it seems to have been written by him, not as representing the captives in Babylon, as Theodoret, but on his own account, when he was persecuted by Saul, and driven out by men from abiding in the Lord's inheritance, and was in a strange land among the Heathen, where he was reproached by them; and everything in this psalm agrees with his state and condition; or rather when he fled from his son Absalom, and was in those parts beyond Jordan, mentioned in this psalm; see 2Sa 17:24; so the Syriac inscription, the song which David sung in the time of his persecution, desiring to return to Jerusalem.

{b} So R. Moses in Muis, Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 918, & others.

Ver. 1. As the hart panteth after the water brooks,.... Either through a natural thirst that creature is said to have; or through the heat of the summer season; and especially when hunted by dogs, it betakes itself to rivers of water, partly to make its escape, and partly to extinguish its thirst, and refresh itself. The word here used denotes the cry of the hart, when in distress for water, and pants after it, and is peculiar to it; and the verb being of the feminine gender, hence the Septuagint render it the "hind"; and Kimchi conjectures that the reason of it may be, because the voice of the female may be stronger than that of the male; but the contrary is asserted by the philosopher {c}, who says, that the male harts cry much stronger than the females; and that the voice of the female is short, but that of the male is long, or protracted. Schindler {d} gives three reasons why these creatures are so desirous of water; because they were in desert places, where water was wanting; and another, that being heated by destroying and eating serpents, they coveted water to refresh themselves; and the third, when followed by dogs, they betake themselves into the water, and go into that for safety;

so panteth my soul after thee, O God; being persecuted by men, and deprived of the word and worship of God, which occasioned a vehement desire after communion with him in his house and ordinances: some render the words, "as the field", or "meadow, desires the shower", &c. {e}; or thirsts after it when parched with drought; see Isa 35:7; and by these metaphors, one or the other, is expressed the psalmist's violent and eager thirst after the enjoyment of God in public worship.

{c} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 4. c. 11. {d} Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 68. so Kimchi. {e} Sept. & Symmachus apud Drusium.

Psalms 42:2

Ver. 2. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God,.... Who is so called, in opposition to the idols of the Gentiles, which were lifeless statues; and who is the author, giver, and maintainer of natural life; and who has promised and provided eternal life in his Son; and is himself the fountain of life, and the fountain of living waters, and a place of broad rivers and streams: particularly his lovingkindness, which is better than life, is a pure river of water of life, the streams where make glad the saints; and hence it is that the psalmist thirsted after God, and the discoveries of his love: saying,

when shall I come and appear before God? meaning, not in heaven, as desiring the beatific vision; but in the tabernacle, where were the worship of God, and the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence, and where the Israelites appeared before him, even in Zion; see Ps 84:7.

Psalms 42:3

Ver. 3. My tears have been my meat day and night,.... That is, he could not eat for sorrow, like Hannah, 1Sa 1:7,8; or while he was eating tears fell in plenty, and they were as common, day and night, as his food, and mixed with it {f}; see Ps 80:5;

while they continually say unto me, his enemies the Philistines,

where [is] thy God? theirs were to be seen and pointed at, as the host of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, and idols of gold, silver, brass, wood, and stone; wherefore they ask, where was his? but David's God was invisible; he is in the heavens, and does what he pleases,
Ps 115:2; or the sense is, that if there was such a God he believed in and professed, and he was his servant, surely he would never have suffered him to fall into so much distress and calamity, but would have appeared for his relief and deliverance; and therefore tauntingly, and by way of reproach, ask where he was.

{f} "--lachrymaeque alimenta fuere", Ovid. Metamorph. l. 10. Fab. 1. v. 75.

Psalms 42:4

Ver. 4. When I remember these [things],.... Either the reproaches of his enemies; or rather his past enjoyments of God in his house, he after makes mention of;

I pour out my soul in me, that is, he had no life nor spirit in him, but was quite overwhelmed with distress and anguish; or he poured out his soul in prayer to God, that it might be with him as in times past;

for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God; the place of public worship, whither he had often gone, with great pleasure and delight; and, which added thereto, there were many that went along with him; or whom he had "caused to go" {g}, had brought along with him; which is the sense of the word, only used here and in
Isa 38:15; as Dr. Hammond from R. Tanchum and Aben Walid, has shown: a good man will not only attend divine worship himself, but will bring others with him: but now, he could neither go alone, nor in company, the remembrance of which greatly affected his mind; see Ps 137:1;

with the voice of joy and praise: the people singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs;

with a multitude that kept holy day; as especially on the three great festivals in the year, the feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, when all the males of Israel appeared before God together, and which was a large multitude; and a delightful sight it was to behold them, when they were all engaged in religious worship at once.

{g} Mrda "deduceham", Tigurine version; "assumebum mihi iilos", Michaelis; "efficiebam eos in societatem collectos socios esse mihi", Gussetius, p. 180.

Psalms 42:5

Ver. 5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul?.... The psalmist corrects himself, as being too much depressed in spirit with his present circumstances, and expostulates with himself; adding,

and [why] art thou disquieted in me? which suggests, that the dejections of God's people are unreasonable ones; sin itself is no just cause and reason of them; for though it is very disagreeable, loathsome, and abhorring, troublesome and burdensome, to a spiritual man, and is ingenuously confessed, and heartily mourned over, and is matter of humiliation; yet no true reason of dejection: because there is forgiveness of it with God; the blood of Christ has been shed for the remission of it; it has been bore and done away by him; nor is there any condemnation for it to them that are in him; and though it rages, and threatens to get the ascendant; yet it is promised it shall not have the dominion over the saints; neither the nature of it, being great, as committed against God himself, nor the multitude of sins, nor the aggravated circumstances of them, are just causes of dejection, since the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin; nor are Satan and his temptations; he is indeed an enemy, very powerful, subtle, and terrible; he is the strong man armed, the old serpent, and a roaring lion; and his temptations are very troublesome and grieving; and it becomes the saints to be upon their guard against him and them; but they have no reason to be cast down on account hereof; for God, who is on the side of his people, is mightier than he; Christ is stronger than the strong man armed, and the divine Spirit who is in them is greater than he that is in the world: Satan is under divine restraints, and can go no further in tempting than he is suffered, and his temptations are overruled for good; besides, good armour is provided for the Christian to fight against him with, and in a short time he will be bruised under his feet: nor are the hidings of God's face a sufficient reason of dejection; for though such a case is very distressing, and gives great trouble to those that love the Lord; nor can they, nor does it become them to sit easy and unconcerned in such circumstances, as they are great trials of faith and patience; yet it is the experience of the people of God in all ages: some good ends are answered hereby, as to bring saints to a sense of sins, which has deprived them of the divine Presence, to make them prize it the more when they have it, and to be careful of losing it for the future. Besides, the love of God continues the same when he hides and chides; and he will return again, and will not finally and totally forsake his people; and in a little while they shall be for ever with him, and see him as he is; and though by one providence or another they may be deprived for a while of the word, worship, and ordinances of God, he that provides a place for his church, and feeds and nourishes her in the wilderness, can make up the lack of such enjoyments by his presence and Spirit. The means and methods the psalmist took to remove his dejections and disquietudes of mind are as follow;

hope thou in God; for the pardon of sin; for which there is good ground of hope, and so no reason to be cast down on account of it; for strength against Satan's temptations, which is to be had in Christ, as well as righteousness; and for the appearance of God, and the discoveries of his love, who has his set time to favour his people, and therefore to be hoped, and quietly waited for. Hope is of great use against castings down; it is an helmet, an erector of the head, which keeps it upright, and from bowing down: it is an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, and is of great service in the troubles of life, and against the fears of death;

for I shall yet praise him [for] the help of his countenance; or "the salvations of his countenance" {h}; which implies that the psalmist believed, notwithstanding his present circumstances, that he should have salvation upon salvation; salvation of every kind; or a full and complete one, which should spring, not from any merits of his, but from the free grace and favour of God, expressed in his gracious countenance towards him; and also intimates, that the light of his countenance would be salvation to him {i} now; and that his consummate happiness hereafter would lie in beholding his face for evermore: all which would give him occasion and opportunity of praising the Lord. Now such a faith and persuasion as this is a good antidote against dejections of soul, and disquietude of mind; see Ps 27:13.

{h} wynp twewvy "salutes faciei ipsius", Cocceius; so Michaelis. {i} "Salutes sunt facies ejus", De Dieu.

Psalms 42:6

Ver. 6. O my God, my soul is cast down within me,.... Which the psalmist repeats, partly to show the greatness of his dejection, though he had not lost his view of interest in God as his covenant God; and partly to observe another method he made use of to remove his dejection and refresh his spirits; and that was by calling to mind past experiences of divine goodness;

therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan; the country round about it, or rather beyond it; which was at the farthest parts of the land of Canaan, where David was obliged to flee, and where he had often met with God;

and of the Hermonites; who inhabited the mountain of Hermon; or the Hermonian mountains, as the Targum; see Ps 133:3; a mountain upon the border of the land of Israel eastward, and which was very high; Cocceius thinks the Geshurites are meant; see 1Sa 27:8; here also the Lord had appeared to him, and for him; and

from the hill Mizar; or "the little hill" {k}; which might be so in comparison of Hermon. The above interpreter thinks Zoar is meant, which Lot so called, Ge 19:20; which was near Sodom and Gomorrah: Kimchi thinks it might be Zior, mentioned in Jos 15:54; but, be it what or where it will, in this little hill David enjoyed the divine Presence; or was indulged with some remarkable favour; from all which he concludes he had no just reason to be dejected and disquieted in his mind: and right it is for the people of God to call to mind past experiences, and make mention of them; partly for the glory of divine grace, and to express their gratitude to God, and their sense of his goodness; and partly to cheer and refresh their own spirits, and prevent dejection and despondency: and delightful it is to call to mind, how, at such a time, and in such a place, the Lord was pleased to manifest his love, apply some gracious promise, or deliver from some sore temptation or distress: all which must tend to encourage faith and hope. The Jewish writers differently interpret these words; Jarchi, of David's remembrance of the wonderful works God did for the people of Israel of old, in drying up the river Jordan, and giving them the law on Mount Sinai, a little hill, in comparison of some others: Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, understand them as a reason of his dejection, when he remembered how the Israelites came from those several parts to the solemn feasts at Jerusalem, which he was now deprived of; and the Targum paraphrases them of the inhabitants of those places, and of the people that received the law on Mount Sinai, remembering God; and so Arama thinks "beyond Jordan" is mentioned because the law was given there; and by the hill Mizar he understands Sinai: and some Christian interpreters consider them as a reason why David's soul was cast down in him, he being in such places as here mentioned, at a distance from his own house, from Jerusalem, and the place of divine worship, and so render the words, "because that I remember thee", &c. {l}.

{k} rhm reum "de monte modico", V. L. Musculus; "parvo", Pagninus, Vatablus; so Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {l} Nk-le "propterea quod", Tigurine version, Piscator, Muis; "quia", Noldius, p. 727, No. 1790.

Psalms 42:7

Ver. 7. Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of the water spouts,.... By which are meant afflictions, comparable to the deep waters of the sea, for their multitude and overwhelming nature; see Ps 69:1; these came pouring down, one after another, upon the psalmist: as soon as one affliction over, another came, as in the case of Job; which is signified by one calling to another, and were clamorous, troublesome, and very grievous and distressing;

all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me: with which he seemed to be covered and overwhelmed, as a ship is at sea. It may be observed, that the psalmist calls afflictions God's water spouts, and "his" waves and "his" billows; because they are appointed, sent, ordered, and overruled by him, and made to work for the good of his people: and now, though these might seem to be a just cause of dejection, yet they were not, as appears from Ps 42:8.

Psalms 42:8

Ver. 8. [Yet] the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime,.... Which is a tender affection in God towards his people, springs from his sovereign will and pleasure, is from everlasting, is ever the same, never removes from them, and is better than life; the effects of which are all spiritual blessings, grace, and glory: and this the Lord "commands" when he sends it forth with power, makes a clear manifestation and home application of it to them; when he commands his covenant, or bestows covenant blessings on them; when he commands his strength, or gives them strength to bear up under afflictions; when he commands deliverances for Jacob, or works salvation for them; and when he commands blessings temporal and spiritual on them, especially life for evermore: see Ps 111:9; and this is done in "the daytime"; either, as some interpret it, in a fit and seasonable time, in God's appointed time, who has his set time to favour his people, and show his lovingkindness to them; or openly and publicly, so as themselves and others may see the salvation of the Lord; or continually; for mercy, goodness, and lovingkindness, follow them all the days of their lives; yea, are from everlasting to everlasting: and these words may be read either in the past tense, as some do, "yet the Lord hath commanded" {m}, &c. and so respect what had been, and relate to the former experiences and manifestations of the love of God, with which the psalmist encourages himself under his present afflictions; or in the future, as in our version; and so they are an expression of faith as to what would be hereafter, that the Lord would appear again, and show him his face and favour;

and in the night his song [shall be] with me; signifying hereby, that he strongly believed he should have occasion of singing praise to God in the night season, though he was now in such mournful circumstances: he calls it "his song"; that is, the Lord's song; because the matter of it are his lovingkindness, and the blessings springing from it; because the Lord himself is the subject of it; his perfections, his works, his salvation and glory; and because he gives songs in the night, and puts them into the mouths of his people; see Isa 12:2; and the psalmist says it would be with him, in his heart, and in his mouth, and be his constant companion wherever he was, lying down, or rising up; and that "in the night"; either figuratively understood of affliction and distress, out of which he would be delivered, and so be compassed about with songs of deliverance; or literally, it being a time of leisure to call to mind the salvation and mercies of the day, and be thankful for them; see Ps 77:6;

[and] my prayer unto the God of my life: natural, spiritual, and eternal; being the author, giver, and preserver of each; and this is no inconsiderable mercy, to have such a God to pray unto in a time of distress; as well as in a time of salvation, to go to, and make known requests with thanksgiving; which seems to be intended here, since it is joined with a song. Prayer and praise go together, the object of which are not lifeless idols, that cannot save; but the living God, who is a God hearing and answering prayer, and does not despise the prayer of the destitute. The prayer of the psalmist follows.

{m} hwuy "praecepit", Tigurine version; "mandavit", Hammond; so Aben Ezra and others.

Psalms 42:9

Ver. 9. I will say unto God my rock,.... A name frequently given to the eternal God, Father, Son, and Spirit, De 32:4;

See Gill on "Ps 18:2";

why hast thou forgotten me? See Gill on "Ps 13:1";

why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? meaning perhaps Saul; though it may be applied to any spiritual enemy, sin, Satan, and the world; who are very oppressive and afflicting, and occasion continual mourning to the children of God.

Psalms 42:10

Ver. 10. [As] with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me,.... The reproaches of his enemies were grievous and cutting to him, as if a sword pierced through the marrow in his bones, which, being very sensitive, gives exquisite pain. There is a various reading here: some copies, as Vatablus observes, read b, "in", or with, and others k, "as", which seems to be the truest; and our translators supply "as", to make the sense, though they read "with"; but some {n} only read "as"; and the sense is, the reproaches cast upon the psalmist were as a sword cutting and killing; and these reproaches were as follow;

while they say daily unto me, where [is] thy God?
See Gill on "Ps 42:3".

{n} xurk wv sfaghn, Symmachus in Drusius; "ut occisio", Pagninus, Amama; so Aben Ezra interprets it.

Psalms 42:11

Ver. 11. Why art thou cast down, O my soul?.... The same expostulation as in Ps 42:5; and so is what follows,

and why art thou disquieted within me? and the same argument and means are made use of to remove dejection and disquietude;

hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him; See Gill on "Ps 42:5"; to which is added a new argument, taken from the grace and goodness of God, and covenant interest in him;

[who is] the health of my countenance, and my God; as the bodily health of man is seen in the countenance, and for the most part to be judged of by it; so is the spiritual health of the saints, and which they have from the Lord; when he, as the sun of righteousness, arises upon them with healing in his wings, he, by his gracious presence, makes their countenances cheerful, fills them with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and causes them to lift up their heads with an holy boldness and confidence, and without shame and fear: or as it may be rendered, who "is the salvations of my countenance" {o}; that is, who is or will be the author of full and complete salvation to me; which will be so public and open, so clear and manifest, as to be beheld by myself and others; and this the psalmist mentions, in order to remove his present dejections; and besides, this God of salvation he believed was his covenant God, and would be so even unto death; and therefore he had no just reason to be dejected and disquieted.

{o} tewvy "salutes", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 43:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 43

This psalm is without a title; but may well enough be thought to be one of David's: and the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Syriac versions, call it a psalm of David, and the latter adds, when Jonathan told him that Saul intended to kill him; and certain it is, that it was wrote by the same person, at the same time, and upon the same occasion as the preceding, seeing some of the same expressions are used in it, see Ps 42:1, title; and some take this and the preceding to be but one psalm, and this might be written with that on account of the rebellion of his son Absalom.

Ver. 1. Judge me, O God,.... The Targum adds, with the judgment of truth; see **Ro 2:2**;

and plead my cause; which was a righteous one; and therefore he could commit it to God to be tried and judged by him, and could put it into his hands to plead it for him; See Gill on "Ps 35:1";

against an ungodly nation; meaning either the Philistines, among whom he was; or his own nation, when they joined his son Absalom in rebellion against him: some understand it of the great numbers that were with Saul, when he was persecuted by him;

O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man; either Absalom, who, under pretence of a vow he had vowed in Hebron, got leave of David to go thither, and then engaged in a conspiracy against him; or Ahithophel, who had been his friend and acquaintance, but now joined with Absalom. It is true of Saul, who, under pretence of friendship, sought his ruin, and to whom he expressed himself almost in the same words here used; see 1Sa 18:17.

Psalms 43:2

Ver. 2. For thou [art] the God of my strength,.... Who being the strong and mighty God was able to deliver and save him, as well as to plead his cause; and was the author and giver of strength, natural and spiritual, to him; and was the strength of his heart, life and salvation; and is a good reason why he committed his cause unto him;

why doest thou cast me off? this is the language of unbelief: it being what was not in reality, only in appearance: the psalmist was ready to conclude he was cast off and rejected of God, because he was afflicted and left in a desolate condition by him, and he did not immediately arise to his help and deliverance, and had withdrawn the light of his countenance from him; but God does not cast off or reject any of his people; they always continue in his love, and in his covenant, and in the hands of his Son; they are always in his sight and family, and shall never perish eternally; and whoever casts them off, or casts them out, he will not;

why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
See Gill on "Ps 42:9".

Psalms 43:3

Ver. 3. O send out thy light and thy truth,.... By light is meant, not the law, as Arama; but rather, as some Jewish {p} interpreters understand it, the Messiah, the sun of righteousness, and light of the world; who is the author of all light, natural, spiritual, and eternal; and whose coming into the world is often signified by being sent into it. The Spirit of God also is the enlightener of men, both at first conversion and afterwards, and is sent down into their hearts as a comforter of them, by being the Spirit of adoption. The Gospel of Christ is a great and glorious light, which, with the Holy Ghost, is sent down from heaven; though perhaps here rather may be meant the light of God's countenance, the discoveries of his favour and lovingkindness, which produce light, life, joy, peace, and comfort: and by "truth" may be meant, either Christ himself, who is the truth; or the Gospel the word of truth; or rather the faithfulness of God in the fulfilment of his promises; and so the words are a petition that God would show forth his lovingkindness, and make good his word, which would be of the following use:

let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles; that is, to the place of public worship, where the tabernacle was, the "hill" where it was, which seems to be Mount Zion; and is called "holy"; not that there was any real holiness in it; only relative, because of the worship of God in it; and the "tabernacle" is called "tabernacles", because of the holy place and the most holy place in it; the one being the first, the other the second tabernacle, as in **Heb 9:2**; and this hill and tabernacles represented the church and ordinances of God, to which such who are possessed of light and truth are led.

{p} Midrash Tillim, & Jarchi, in loc.

Psalms 43:4

Ver. 4. Then will I go unto the altar of God,.... Which was in the tabernacle, either of burnt offerings, or of incense, there to offer up the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for mercies received. The altar under the Gospel dispensation is Christ, on which such sacrifices being offered, are acceptable to God, Heb 13:10;

unto God my exceeding joy; as over the mercy seat, upon a throne of grace, and as his covenant God; or this is exegetical of the altar, which is Christ, God over all, blessed for ever; and who is the object of the unspeakable joy of his people, in his person, righteousness, and salvation;

yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God: the harp is a musical instrument, used in that part of public worship which concerned the praise of God under the former dispensation, and was typical of that spiritual melody made in the hearts of God's people when they sing his praise, see **Re 5:8**.

Psalms 43:5

Ver. 5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul?....
See Gill on "Ps 42:5" and
See Gill on "Ps 42:11".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 44:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 44

To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, Maschil. It is not certain who was the writer of this psalm, nor when it was written, and to what time it belongs: some have thought it was composed by one of the Babylonish captivity, and that it gives an account of the church and people of God in those times; but what is said in Ps 44:17 does not seem to agree with **Da 9:5**. It is most likely it was written by David, and to him the Targum ascribes it; though it does not respect his times; since what is said in Ps 44:9 cannot agree with them; yet he being a prophet might, under a prophetic influence, speak of future times, and represent the church in them. Some are of opinion that he prophetically speaks of the times of the Maccabees and of Antiochus, when the church and people of God suffered much for the true religion, and abode steadfast in it; so Theodoret: but rather the whole may be applied to the times of the New Testament, since Ps 44:22 is cited by the Apostle Paul, **Ro 8:36**, and is applied to his times, and as descriptive of the suffering state and condition of the church then; and which seems to be the guide and key for the opening of the whole psalm.

Ver. 1. We have heard with our ears, O God,.... The church being in distress calls to mind the past favours of God to his people, in order to encourage her faith and hope; and this expression, delivered in such a form, shows the clearness, evidence, and certainty of what was heard; and which was heard not only as a tradition from father to son; but being recorded in the writings of Moses and the prophets, and these things read both in private and in public, were heard with the ear;

our fathers have told us [what] works thou didst in their days, in the times of old: such as the signs and wonders in Egypt, the slaying of the firstborn there, and the bringing of the people of Israel from thence with a mighty hand and outstretched arm; which fathers were used to tell in the ears of their sons, and sons' sons; and of which there were memorials continued in future ages, which led children to ask their parents the meaning of them; when they informed them of the wondrous works of Providence done in former times, and by which means they were handed down from age to age: see Ex 10:2.

Psalms 44:2

Ver. 2. [How] thou didst drive out the Heathen with thy hand,.... Of power; that is, the Canaanites, as the Targum; the seven nations which inhabited the land of Canaan before the children of Israel came into it, **De 7:1**;

and plantedst them: not the Canaanites elsewhere; but, as the same Targum explains it the house of Israel in their land; which, like a vine, was removed from one place, and planted in another; and the settlement of the children of Israel in the land of Canaan is frequently expressed by this metaphor, Ex 15:17 **Jer 2:21**;

[how] thou didst afflict the people; the Egyptians, according to Arama; rather the Canaanitish nations by wars and desolating judgments;

and cast them out; that is, the same nations out of their land; though some render this clause, "and didst send them out"; the captive Israelites, as Arama; or "didst propagate them" {q}; meaning the people of Israel; who being like a vine planted in the and, sent out its boughs and branches, and became very flourishing and fruitful; see
Ps 80:9; and so the Syriac version renders it, "and thou confirmedst them"; but the former sense seems best, agreeably to which is the Targum, "thou hast broken the nations, and hast consumed them"; and that all this was the Lord's work appears by what follows.

{q} Mxlvtw "has autem germinare fecisti", Tigurine version; "propagasti ipsos", Piscator; so Ainsworth; but rejected by Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 859.

Psalms 44:3

Ver. 3. For they got not the land in possession by their own sword,.... There were many things which show that the possession of the land of Canaan was not of the Israelites themselves, but of the Lord; as their passing over into it through Jordan as on dry land; the manner in which Jericho, the first city of it, was taken, and the smiting of the Israelites by the men of Ai;

neither did their own arm save them; from their enemies, and deliver them into their hands: they were too apt to ascribe things to their own righteousness, merit, and power; but such methods were taken by the Lord as to prevent such attributions to themselves; see **De 8:16**;

but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance; the mighty power of God, his outstretched arm in their favour, and which arose from his pure good will to them;

because thou hadst a favour unto them; was well pleased, and took delight in them; chose them to be a special people to himself, above all people on the face of the earth.

Psalms 44:4

Ver. 4. Thou art my King, O God,.... Besides the favours God had done for his people in time past, the church takes notice of her interest in God as her King, who was able to protect and defend her, and to deliver her out of all her distresses, in order the more to strengthen her faith and hope in him; and, claiming her interest in him, she draws nigh to him with an holy boldness, and desires him as a King, that by a word of his (for where the word of a king is, there is power) he would

command deliverances for Jacob; not literally, but mystically understood; the spiritual Jacob, and people of God; all Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile; meaning herself and members: the blessing desired is "deliverances", or "salvations"; so called, because the, deliverance or salvation the Lord commands grants, and works out for his people, is of different kinds, both spiritual and, temporal, and is a deliverance from various things; from sin, Satan, the present evil world, wrath to come, and all enemies; and out of various temptations and afflictions, and which follow successively one upon another; and at last it is complete and perfect.

Psalms 44:5

Ver. 5. Through thee will we push down our enemies,.... The Chaldee paraphrase renders it, "through the Word": the essential Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the church's King and God, and has wrought out complete deliverance and salvation for his people; and he is the horn of salvation, by which, though weak in themselves, they push down their enemies, which are many and mighty, and they are more than conquerors over them: the metaphor is taken from creatures pushing with their horns those that oppose them, and in defence of themselves; and there seems to be an allusion to De 33:17;

through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us; in the name of the Lord the saints set up their banners, and in his name they come forth and fight with their spiritual enemies, that rise up against them, as sin, Satan, and wicked men; and in the name, and through the power of the Lord, they tread them down as mire in the streets; and before long Satan will be wholly bruised under them; and the antichristian party shall be trodden down by them, and be as ashes under the soles of their feet; see Ro 16:20.

Psalms 44:6

Ver. 6. For I will not trust in my bow,.... In any carnal weapon, in any creature help and assistance, or in an arm of flesh, but in the word of the Lord, and in his name; see Ps 20:7;

neither shall my sword save me; that is, I will not ascribe salvation to it; the church's weapons are not carnal, but spiritual; not the sword of the civil magistrate, but the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; Christ's kingdom, being not of this world, is not supported and defended by worldly means, or carnal weapons.

Psalms 44:7

Ver. 7. But thou hast saved us from our enemies,.... Spiritual ones, and not we ourselves; and therefore will not trust in ourselves, nor in anything of ours, but in the Lord, and give him the glory of salvation;

and hast put them to shame that hated us; the men of the world, the seed of the serpent, and the serpent himself, when his works were destroyed, and his principalities and powers spoiled by Christ upon the cross; hence the following boasting of the Lord, and glorying in him.

Psalms 44:8

Ver. 8. In God we boast all the day long,.... Or, as the Targum, "in the word of the Lord", in Christ, who is God over all, and who of God is made to his church and people wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; so that there is always matter of glorying and boasting in him;

and praise thy name for ever and ever; in this world, as long as life continues; and in the other world to all eternity; both for the works of providence and of grace; for deliverances commanded, and for salvation from all enemies wrought out.

Selah; of this word See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 44:9

Ver. 9. But thou hast cast off,.... This, with what follows to Ps 44:17, describe the desolate and afflicted state of the church, under the Gospel dispensation, in some parts and ages of it; and in the light in which it was viewed by the church, previous to the encouragement she took from the consideration of favours and benefits formerly bestowed, and of her covenant interest in God, related in the preceding verses. She looked upon herself as cast off, because afflicted and persecuted, and the Lord did not arise to her immediate help and deliverance; this may regard the ten persecutions under Rome Pagan; See Gill on "Ps 43:2";

and put us to shame; before men, at the taking of the ark, as Arama; rather for their faith in God, and boasting of him, when he did not appear for them, but suffered them to continue in their afflictions and distresses; which occasioned their enemies to triumph over them, and say unto them, where is your God? and also before God, who being forsaken by him, could not come before him with that holy boldness and confidence they were wont to do; see **So 2:14**;

and goest not forth with our armies; as the Generalissimo of them; see **1Sa 8:20**; not leading them forth, and going before them; not teaching their hands to war and their fingers to fight; nor inspiring them with courage and valour; nor giving success and victory to them as formerly; but seeing that Christians, at least in the first ages of Christianity, had no armies in a literal sense, this may rather be understood of the lack of success of the Gospel in some period

of it, and of the power and prevalence of antichrist, the man of sin. The Gospel ministry is a warfare; the preachers of it are good soldiers of Christ under him; their weapons are not carnal, but spiritual; great success attended the word in the first times of the Gospel; Christ went forth with his armies conquering and to conquer; and multitudes were subdued by him, and became subjects of him; but in some ages there has been but little success, few have believed the report of the Gospel, and been converted by it; Christ's ministers have laboured in vain, Satan's kingdom, though attacked, yet not weakened, nor Christ's kingdom enlarged, but rather all the reverse; antichrist has been suffered, as to make war with the saints, so to prevail and overcome, and will do so, Re 13:4; but it will not be always the case, Christ will go forth with his armies, and make great conquests again,
Re 11:15; this may refer to the wars of the Papists with the Waldenses and Albigenses, who were vanquished by the former.

Psalms 44:10

Ver. 10. Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy,.... In the times of Eli, according to Arama; but may he understood of some of the visible members of the church, and professors of religion, not being valiant for the truth, and deserting the cause of God and Christ, by reason of tribulation and persecution arising because of the word;

and they which hate us spoil for themselves; by seizing on the goods and substance of those they persecuted; enriching themselves by confiscating their estates and possessions to their own use; or by spoiling others of them, they deceived with their corrupt doctrines and soul destroying principles, whereby they became slaves to the antichristian party; this may respect the same wars as before.

Psalms 44:11

Ver. 11. Thou hast given us like sheep [appointed] for meat,.... To be butchered, and then eaten as sheep are; and therefore are called "the flock of slaughter", Zec 11:4; as the church was, not only under the ten persecutions of Rome Pagan, but through the butcheries and massacres of Rome Papal; who have worried many of Christ's sheep, have eaten their flesh and drank their blood, and have become drunken with it; it has been their meat and drink to persecute the saints of the most High;

and hast scattered us among the Heathen: the Pagan world, as the first Christians were, who were scattered up and down in the Gentile world everywhere; see **1Pe 1:1**; or the Papacy, who are sometimes called Gentiles, Re 11:2; because much of the Gentile idolatry is introduced into the Popish religion; and among these many of the true members of Christ and of his church have been carried captive and scattered; and such will be found there a little before the destruction of Babylon, and will be called out from thence; see Re 13:10.

Psalms 44:12

Ver. 12. Thou sellest thy people for nought,.... So God, when he is said to deliver up his people into the hands of their enemies, is said to sell them to them; see **Jud 2:14**; and selling them for nought suggests, that in their apprehensions he had no esteem of them and value for them; just as men, when they have any person or thing to dispose of they have no regard unto, but choose to be rid of, will part with it for nothing: and as it follows,

and dost not increase [thy wealth] by their price; get nothing by the bargain. This must be understood after the manner of men, and in the opinion of the church, and not as in reality; no otherwise than as it has been true, that God has suffered some of his people to be in the bondage and slavery of mystical Babylon, called Egypt, one part of whose wares and merchandises are slaves and souls of men,
Re 11:8.

Psalms 44:13

Ver. 13. Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours,.... Which is the common lot of Christians: Christ and his apostles have given reason for the saints in all ages to expect it, and have fortified their minds to bear it patiently, yea, to esteem it an honour, and greater riches than the treasures of the antichristian Egypt;

a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us; being always represented as mean and despicable, and reckoned ignorant and accursed, and as the faith of the world, and the offscouring of all things.

Psalms 44:14

Ver. 14. Thou makest us a byword among the Heathen,.... Among the Papists, as the Jews were among the Gentiles, De 28:37; calling them schismatics, heretics, fanatics, and what not?

a shaking of the head among the people; by way of indignation, scorn, and contempt; see Ps 22:7.

Psalms 44:15

Ver. 15. My confusion [is] continually before me,.... Meaning that which is the occasion of it;

and the shame of my face hath covered me; not by reason of sin, which is often the cause of confusion and shame in God's people; see **Jer 3:25**; but on account of what follows.

Psalms 44:16

Ver. 16. For the voice, of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth,.... That is, antichrist, to whom a mouth speaking blasphemies has been given, and which he has opened in blasphemy against God, attributing that to himself which belongs to God; blaspheming his name, his tabernacle, and them that well in heaven; see Re 13:5;

by reason of the enemy and avenger; which are very proper characters of antichrist, who is the enemy of Christ and of his people, and breathes out vengeance against them; as the same titles are also given to the Scribes and Pharisees, the implacable enemies of Christ, **Ps 8:2**.

Psalms 44:17

Ver. 17. All this is come upon us,.... Not by chance, but according to the purpose and counsel of God; not for sin, and as a punishment of it, but for Christ's sake and his Gospel; for a profession of faith in him, and for the trial of it;

yet have we not forgotten thee; not the being and perfections of God, on which they often meditated, especially as displayed in the affair of salvation by Jesus Christ; nor the works of God, which were remembered to encourage faith and hope in their present circumstances, Ps 44:1; nor the benefits and favours bestowed upon them by him; nor his word, worship, and ordinances; their reproach, afflictions, and persecutions, did not move them from the hope of the Gospel, and the service of God;

neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant; by disbelieving their interest in God as their covenant God; by disregarding or not coming to and making use of Christ the Mediator of it; and by calling in question their interest in the blessings and promises of the covenant; for nothing can be more called dealing falsely in or with respect to the covenant of grace than unbelief about it; which remains firm and sure notwithstanding all the afflictions that may come on such who are interested in it: moreover, as this may respect the formal exhibition of the covenant under the Gospel dispensation, by the ministry of the word, and the administration of ordinances, the sense may be, that though the church and her members met with so much reproach and persecution from men, yet did not drop nor deny any of the truths of the Gospel, nor corrupt the ordinances of Christ, nor neglect an attendance on them; but were virgins, pure and incorrupt in doctrine and practice, and followed the Lamb whithersoever he went.

Psalms 44:18

Ver. 18. Our heart is not turned back,.... To its original hardness, blindness, and bondage, to its former sin and folly, to cherish, gratify, and fulfil its lusts and desires; not from God, from love to him, faith in him, and desires after him; nor from his worship and service; their trials had no such influence upon them as to cause them to apostatize from God, neither in heart, nor in action;

neither have our steps declined from thy way; from the way of his commandments, from the paths of holiness, truth, and faith, being directed and guided therein by the counsel of the Lord, and kept and preserved by his power.

Psalms 44:19

Ver. 19. Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons,.... Where men, comparable to dragons or their poison and cruelty, dwell; particularly in Rome, and the Roman jurisdiction, both Pagan and Papal, the seat of Satan the great red dragon, and of his wretched brood and offspring, the beast, to whom he has given his power; here the saints and followers of Christ have been sorely afflicted and persecuted, and yet have held fast the name of Christ, and not denied his faith; see **Re 2:13**; the wilderness is the habitation of dragons; and this is the name of the place where the church is said to be in the times of the Papacy, and where she is fed and preserved for a time, and times, and half a time, Re 12:6;

and covered us with the shadow of death; as the former phrase denotes the cruelty of the enemies of Christ's church and people, this their dismal afflictions and forlorn state and condition; see Ps 23:4 **Isa 9:2**; and may have some respect to the darkness of Popery, when it was at the height, and the church of Christ was covered with it, there being very little appearances and breakings forth of Gospel light any where. According to Arama, the "place of dragons" denotes the captivity of Egypt, which is the great dragon; and the "shadow of death", he says, was a name of Egypt in ancient times, as say the Rabbins; and observes that Ps 44:25 explains this; see **Ge 3:14**.

Psalms 44:20

Ver. 20. If we have forgotten the name of our God,.... As antichrist, and the antichristian party did in those times, Da 11:36;

or stretched out our hands to a strange god; as not to any of the Heathen deities under the Pagan persecutions, so not to any images of gold, silver, brass, and wood, under the Papal tyranny; not to the Virgin Mary, nor to angels and saints departed; nor to the breaden God in the mass, never heard of before; see Da 11:38.

Psalms 44:21

Ver. 21. Shall not God search this out?.... Undoubtedly he would, was it so, and expose it, and punish for it; as he will the Balaamites and children of Jezebel, **Re 2:18**; this seems to be an appeal to God for the truth of all that the church had said concerning her steadfastness and integrity under the most trying exercises;

for he knoweth the secrets of the heart; whether the heart is turned back, or there is any inclination to apostatize from God, or his name is forgotten in it; as well as whether in fact the hand has been stretched out, or prayer made to a strange god, Jer 17:9.

Psalms 44:22

Ver. 22. Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long,.... These words are cited by the Apostle Paul in **Ro 8:36**; and are applied to his times, showing the then close attachment of the saints to Christ, and their strong love and affection for him; and they have the same sense here, being an instance and proof of the church's integrity and faithfulness in the cause of God, amidst the sorest afflictions and persecutions; for the truth of which she appeals to the searcher of hearts; and had their accomplishment in the ten persecutions under the Heathen emperors, and under the Papal tyranny; and may be understood of their being threatened with death, being in danger of it, and exposed unto it continually, 1Co 15:31; or of their being in such troubles and afflictions, which may be called death, **2Co 1:8**; or of the actual slaying them: and what was done to many of the members of the church she attributes to herself, because of the union between them; and for the sake of the worship of the true God, because they would not worship the gods of the Heathens, nor the image of the beast, multitudes of them were put to death; and that all the day long, and every day, and that for a long series and course of time, or continually; and indeed, ever since the Gospel day or dispensation began, this killing work has been more or less; and it will continue during the reign of antichrist, until the measure of his iniquity is filled up, and the afflictions of the saints are accomplished;

we are counted as sheep for the slaughter; or "as sheep of slaughter" {q}; see Zec 11:4; that is, either as sheep to be slaughtered for food, their enemies delighting to eat their flesh and drink their blood; See Gill on "Ps 44:11", or for sacrifice, they reckoning it doing God good service to take away their lives, as though they sacrificed a lamb or a sheep unto him; and which, like sheep, they have patiently endured: this is the account made of them, not by the Lord, in whose sight their death is precious; nor by the saints, with whom their memory is dear; but by their furious persecutors, among whom they are as sheep among wolves; see **1Co 4:13**.

{q} hxbj Nauk "ut pecus mactationis", Montanus, Vatablus; so Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis, Ainsworth.

Psalms 44:23

Ver. 23. Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?.... Not that sleep properly falls upon God: the Keeper of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps; his eyes are always upon his people; he never withdraws them from them, and he watches over them night and day: but sometimes he seems and is thought to be asleep; as when wicked men flourish and triumph over the righteous, and go on in sin with impunity; when their judgment seems to linger, and their damnation to slumber, though it does not; and when the saints are under sore afflictions, and the Lord seems to disregard them, and does not appear for their deliverance; and when things are as when the disciples were in a storm, and Christ was asleep, to whom they said, "carest thou not that we perish?" and the Lord may be said to awake, and it is what is here prayed for, when he stirs up himself and takes vengeance on his enemies, as he will before long on antichrist and his followers; and when he takes in hand the cause and judgment of his people, and pleads it thoroughly, and delivers them out of the hands of all their oppressors, and gives them the dominion and kingdom under the whole heaven; see **Isa 2:9**;

arise; to revenge the blood of his people, and to have mercy on his Zion;

cast [us] not off for ever; as he might seem to do, by suffering their enemies to triumph over them; but in reality he does not; much less with loathing and abhorrence, as the word {r} used signifies, since his church is his Hephzibah, in whom he delights, Isa 62:4; and still less for ever, since his love to them is from everlasting to everlasting, and they shall be for ever with him; See Gill on "Ps 43:2".

{r} xnzt la "ne abjicias cum fastidio", Gejerus.

Psalms 44:24

Ver. 24. Wherefore hidest thou thy face?.... See Ps 10:1;

[and] forgettest our affliction and our oppression. Not that the Lord does really forget either the persons of his people, which he cannot, since they are engraven on the palms of his hands, and a book of remembrance is written for

them: nor the afflictions of his people; he knows their souls in adversity; he chooses them in the furnace of affliction; he makes all afflictions work together for good, and delivers out of them. But because deliverance is not immediately wrought, and they sometimes continue long under their afflictions and oppressions, they seem to be forgotten by him, as during the ten persecutions and the long reign of antichrist.

Psalms 44:25

Ver. 25. For our soul is bowed down to the dust,.... Which may signify great declension in spiritual things, much dejection of mind, and little exercise of grace, Ps 119:25; or a very low estate in temporals; subjection to their enemies; they setting their feet upon their necks, and obliging them to lick the dust of them: and even it may signify nearness to death itself; see Jos 10:24;

our belly cleaveth to the earth; as persons that lie prostrate, being conquered and suppliants.

Psalms 44:26

Ver. 26. Arise for our help,.... Or, "arise our help" {s}. God is the help of his people, and he is a present help in time of trouble; and he is the only one; and he can help and does, when none else can;

and redeem us for thy mercies' sake; not for the sake of her integrity and faithfulness; nor for her sufferings for Christ's sake; but for his grace and mercy's sake, which is the source and spring of redemption or deliverance, both temporal and spiritual; and to that the saints ascribe it, and not to any merit of theirs, or works of righteousness done by them.

{s} wnl htrze "auxilium nostrum", Cocceius, Gejerus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 45:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 45

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah, Maschil, A Song of loves.

There are some things in this title we have met with already in other psalms; as the direction, "to the chief Musician, for the sons of Korah"; and one of its names, "Maschil". The word "shoshannim", according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, is the name of a musical instrument, on which this psalm was sung; an instrument of six strings, as Junius: but Aben Ezra thinks it was the first word of a song, to the tune of which it was sunny; though others are of opinion that it points at the persons, the subjects of this psalm, and may be rendered, "concerning Shoshannim"; that is, as the Targum interprets it, "concerning those that sit in the sanhedrim of Moses": and Jarchi's note is, "for the glory of the disciples of the wise men", comparable to lilies; for so this word signifies, and may be translated, "concerning the lilies" {t}; that is, concerning Christ and his church, who are manifestly the subject of this psalm, and are compared to lilies, **So 2:1**. This psalm is called "a song of loves", an epithalamium, or marriage song, setting forth the mutual love of Christ and his church; or "a song of the beloved ones" {u} or "friends"; of Christ, who is the beloved and friend of his church; and the church, who is the beloved and friend of Christ; see **Isa 5:1**; and the word here used being in the feminine gender, some have supplied the word "virgins", and render it thus, "a song of the beloved virgins" {w}; sung by them on account of the marriage between Christ and his church, who are the companions of the bride, mentioned in Ps 45:14, and friends and lovers of the bridegroom; see **So 1:3**. The writer of this psalm is not mentioned; it was not written by the sons of Korah, as say the Targum and Syriac version; but most probably by David, though not concerning his son Solomon, as some have thought, who, though wiser than all men, is never said to be fairer; nor was he a warrior, as the person is represented; nor was his throne and kingdom for ever and ever; nor he the object of worship; nor was his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter so commendable a thing; nor is she ever praised, as the queen herein mentioned is: but the person who is spoken of is the Messiah, as is owned by several Jewish writers: the Targum interprets Ps 45:2 of the King Messiah; and Ben Melech says, he is meant by the King in Ps 45:1. Aben Ezra observes, that this psalm is said concerning David, or concerning the Messiah his son, for so is his name, Eze 37:26; and Kimchi expressly says, it is spoken concerning the Messiah; and Arama affirms, that all agree that it treats of him.

{t} Mynvv le "de liliis", Tigurine version. {u} tdydy ryv "canticum amicarum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "amatarum", Cocceius. {w} "Dilectarum sen de dilectis Christo virginibus", Michaelis; "a song of the well beloved virgins", Ainsworth.

Ver. 1. My heart is inditing a good matter,.... What is valuable and excellent, concerning the excellency of Christ's person, of his kingdom, of his love to the church, and of the church itself; what is pleasant and delightful, comfortable, useful, and profitable: this his heart was inditing; which shows that it was under the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and denotes the fervour of it; it "boiling up", as the word {x} signifies; being heated by the fire of the divine Spirit, whereby it was hot within him, and caused him to speak with his tongue; and also the abundance that was in it, it "bubbling up" {y}, as some choose to render it: from whence this good matter flowed like water out of a fountain;

I speak of the things which I have made touching the King; the King Messiah; the King of the whole world, and of the kings of it, and of the saints in it; over whom he reigns in a spiritual manner, and in righteousness; concerning whom this psalm or poem was composed by David under divine inspiration, and which he here delivers:

my tongue [is] the pen of a ready writer; or as {z} one; such an one as Ezra was, **Ezr 7:6**, that writes swiftly and compendiously; suggesting, that as he was; full of matter, he freely communicated it, being moved by the Holy Spirit, who spake by him, and whose word was in his tongue; which made him so ready and expert in this work. The allusion is to scribes and notaries, and such like persons, that are extremely ready and swift in the use of the pen. The word for "pen" is derived either from jwe, which signifies "to fly" {a}, and from whence is a word used for a "flying fowl"; yet we are not to imagine that here it signifies a pen made of a bird's quill, as now in common use with us: for this did not obtain until many hundred years after David's time. It seems that Isidore of Seville, who lived in the seventh century, is the first person that makes mention of "penna", a "pen", as made of the quill of a bird {b}, but rather the pen has its name in Hebrew, if from the above root, from the velocity of it, as in the hand of a ready writer; or rather it may be derived from hje, "to sharpen", in which sense it seems to be used, Eze 21:15; and so a pen has its name from the sharp point of it: for when the ancients wrote, or rather engraved, on stone, brass, lead, and wood, they used a style or pen of iron; see Job 19:24; so when they wrote on tables of wood covered with wax, they used a kind of bodkin made of iron, brass, or bone;
See Gill on "Hab 2:2"; and when upon the rind and leaves of trees, and on papyrus and parchment, they made use of reeds, particularly the Egyptian calamus or reed; and the word here is translated calamus or reed by the Targum, Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions. Now as the Jews had

occasion frequently to copy out the book of the law, and other writings of theirs, their scribes, at least some of them, were very expert and dexterous at it; but whether the art of "shorthand" was to any degree in use among them is not certain, as it was in later times among the Romans, when they used marks, signs, and abbreviations, which seems to have laid the foundation of the above art, and had its rise, as is said, from Cicero himself, though some ascribe it to Mecaenas {c}: and in Martial's time it was brought to such perfection, that, according to him, the hand could write swifter than a man could speak {d}.

{x} vxr "ebullit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth. {y} "Eructavit", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Munster. {z} So the Targum, Tigurine version, Gejerus, & Michaelis. {a} Vid. Kimchi Sepher Shorash. rad. je. {b} Origin. l. 6. c. 13. {c} Vid. Kipping. Antiqu. Roman. l. 2. c. 4. p. 554. {d} "Currant verba licet, manus est velociter illis; nondum lingua suum, dextra peregit opus", Martial. Epigr. l. 14. ep. 189. of the origin of shorthand with the Romans, and among us, with other curious things concerning writing, and the matter and instruments of it, see a learned treatise of Mr. Massey's, called, "The Origin and Progress of Letters", p. 144. printed 1763.

Psalms 45:2

Ver. 2. Thou art fairer than the children of men,.... Here begins the psalm, and this is an address to the King Messiah, the subject of it, commending him for his beauty and comeliness; which is not to be understood of his divine beauty or his glory, as the only begotten of the Father, in which he is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; for this admits of no comparison, nor is the beauty of angels and men to be mentioned with it; but of the beauty of his human nature, both in body and soul, which being the immediate produce of the Holy Spirit, and without sin, and full of wisdom, grace, and holiness, must transcend that of any or all the sons of Adam. They are all deformed by sin; and whatever spiritual beauty there is in any of them, they have it from Christ; they are comely through his comeliness the outward beauty of men is vain and deceitful, and soon perishes; but Christ is ever the same, and he esteemed of by all that know him, as exceeding precious, altogether lovely, and transcendently excellent and glorious. The Hebrew word here used is doubled in its radicals, which denotes the exceeding great fairness and beauty of Christ, especially as Mediator, and as full of grace and truth. It follows, grace is poured into thy lips; by which is meant the matter of his speech, or the Gospel preached by him; these words of grace, as Kimchi on the text expresses himself; or gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, **Lu 4:22**. The Gospel of the grace of God was given him to preach; it was put into his mouth, and that in great abundance; it was given at sundry times and in divers manners, and by piecemeal, to the prophets before him; but it was poured into his lips, and he was abundantly qualified for preaching it, by having the Spirit without measure given him; and so was poured out in a graceful manner, with great authority, and as never man before him spake, in doctrines of grace, gracious invitations, precious promises, excellent prayers, and even words of eternal life; see **So 5:13**;

therefore God hath blessed thee for ever; or, "because {e} God hath blessed thee for ever"; in his human nature, with the grace of union to the Son of God, and with all the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God; and as Mediator, with all spiritual blessings, with grace and glory for his people. Hence all his comeliness, grace, and gracefulness.

{e} Nk-le "eo quid", Tigurine version; "propterea quod", Musculus, Piscator; "quia", Gejerus.

Psalms 45:3

Ver. 3. Gird thy sword upon [thy] thigh, O [most] mighty,.... As Christ is, the mighty God, even the Almighty, and which appears by his works of creation and providence; by the redemption of his people; by his care and government of them; by succouring them under all their temptations and afflictions; by strengthening them for every service, duty, and suffering; by pleading their cause, and supplying their wants; by preserving them to his kingdom and glory; by raising them from the dead at the last day, and by introducing them into the possession of the heavenly inheritance. This mighty One is called upon to "gird [on his] sword": by which is meant either the sword of the Spirit, the word of God; which is sharp in convincing of sin, reproving for it, and threatening on account of it, as well as in refuting error and heresy; and a twoedged one, consisting of law and Gospel, and which Christ made use of to great purpose, against Satan in the wilderness, and against the Scribes and Pharisees; and which he will make further use of in the latter day, against the man of sin, and his followers: or else the power of Christ, which, as the Leader and Commander of his people, and the Captain of their salvation, is called upon to exert, by preparing to engage with, and by destroying his and their enemies; and which he did put forth when the year of the redeemed was come, which was the day of vengeance in his heart; when he combated with and destroyed Satan, and spoiled his principalities and powers; when he abolished death itself, and took away sin the sting of it, and the law, the strength of sin; overcame the world, and delivered his people from it, and out of the hand of every enemy. It is added,

with thy glory and thy majesty; which may be connected either with the phrase "and most mighty", and so be expressive of the glory and majesty of Christ, as the mighty God; or with his sword, as an emblem of his authority and majesty as a King, and may denote the glory of his Gospel and of his power; or may point at the end of his girding his sword upon his thigh, which was to show forth the glory of his majesty, or to obtain honour and glory: though the word "gird" may be supplied and repeated, and so make a distinct proposition, "gird with thy glory and thy majesty"; which was done when he was raised from the dead, and had glory given him; was crowned with it, and had the glory put upon him he had with his Father before the world was.

Psalms 45:4

Ver. 4. And in thy majesty ride prosperously,.... Not literally, as was prophesied of him he should, and as he did, **Zec 9:9**; but mystically and spiritually, either in the chariots of angels up to heaven, Ps 68:17; or on the white horse of the Gospel, with his bow and arrows after mentioned, conquering and to conquer, **Re 6:2**; and where he rides "in [his] majesty", showing forth his glory both as a divine Person and as Mediator; and which is very conspicuous in the Gospel, and the ministry of it; and also "prosperously", as he did in the first preaching of the word by the apostles, when it was made the power of God to salvation to multitudes, and the Lord caused them to triumph in Christ everywhere; and as he will in the latter day, when the Jews will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in;

because of truth, and meekness, [and] righteousness; either because he himself is "truth", the truth of all types, promises, prophecies, and doctrines; or because of the Gospel of truth which comes by him; or on account of his truth and faithfulness in fulfilling his own engagements, and the promises of his father: and because of the "meekness" which was so apparent in him, in taking upon him the form of a servant; in his marriage to sinners, and conversation with them; in ministering: to his disciples; in his conduct towards his enemies; and in seeking not his own glory, but his Father's: and because of "righteousness", the holiness of his nature, the purity of his life and actions; and because of the righteousness he is the author of to his people, and of his righteous administration of his offices, especially as a King;

and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things; or thy power, which the right hand is a symbol of, shall perform terrible things; as it did in the work of redemption, by conquering and destroying the enemies of his people, and of himself; and as it does in the conversion of men, which makes terrible work in their consciences, as the instances of the three thousand, of Saul, and of the jailer show; and as it has in his judgments on his enemies the Jews, in the utter ruin of their nation, city, and temple; and will do on all the antichristian powers in the latter day. The Targum paraphrases it,

"the Lord shall teach thee to do terrible things with thy right hand {f}."

{f} "Dextra mihi Deus", &c. Virgil. Aeneid. 10. prope finem.

Psalms 45:5

Ver. 5. Thine arrows [are] sharp in the heart of the king's enemies,.... Meaning either the Jews, who were the implacable enemies of Christ, and who would not have him to reign over them; in the midst of whom were sent his arrows, of the sword, famine, and pestilence, and which were very sharp, and made sad havoc among them, and caused such a time of tribulation as was not before, or has been since, Mt 24:21; or else the doctrines of the Gospel. The Scriptures are the quiver out of which they are taken; the Gospel is the bow into which they are put, and out of which they are shot; and ministers are the archers that draw the bow at a venture, and shoot them; and which are compared to "arrows" for their swift, sudden, and secret motion, and for their piercing and penetrating power and efficacy: and these are Christ's, which he is the author of, and which he makes use of to good purpose, by striking the hearts of his people with them, who in their state of unregeneracy are enemies to him; which appears by their wicked works, and as they were when he died for them, and reconciled them to God; by means of which arrows fixed in them, and with which their hearts are pricked and wounded, they submit unto him, signified by the next clause:

[whereby] the people fall under thee: acknowledge themselves sinners; fall down at his feet; humbly implore his grace and mercy; submit to his righteousness; depend on him alone for salvation; adore him, and give him the

glory of it, as well as become subject to his laws and ordinances. This is to be understood of those who are God's covenant people, whom he has given to Christ, and he has redeemed by his blood; and particularly the Gentiles, who were not a people, but now openly are, in distinction from the Jews, the enemies of the King Messiah.

Psalms 45:6

Ver. 6. Thy throne, O God, [is] for ever and ever,.... This verse and Ps 45:7 are cited in **Heb 1:8**; and applied to the Son of God, the second Person in the Trinity; and therefore are not an apostrophe to the Father, as some have said; nor will they bear to be rendered, "thy throne is the throne of God", or "thy throne is God"; or be supplied thus, "God shall establish thy throne". But they are spoken of the Son of God, who is truly and properly God, the true God and eternal life; as appears by the names by which he is called, as Jehovah, and the like; by his having all divine perfections in him; by the works which he has wrought, and by the worship which is given unto him; and to whom dominion is ascribed, of which the throne is an emblem, Ge 41:40. And this his government is either general, over angels, good and bad, and over men, even wicked men, and over the greatest among men, the kings of the earth; or special, over his own church and people, and which is exercised by his Spirit and grace in them; by his word and ordinances among them; and which will be in a glorious manner in the latter day; and in heaven, though not in the same manner as now, and that to all eternity: for to this government duration for ever and ever is attributed; Christ will have no successor, he will die no more; nor can his government be subverted or taken out of his hands, or he be removed from his throne by any of his enemies, or by all of them; and though his kingdom will be delivered up to the Father, it will not cease, it is an everlasting one;

the sceptre of thy kingdom [is] a right sceptre; meaning either the Gospel, which is the golden sceptre of mercy and grace, stretched out and held forth for the encouragement of sensible sinners; and is a sceptre of righteousness, as it directs to the righteousness of Christ for justification, and encourages works of righteousness to be done by men: or rather the righteous administration of Christ's government is meant, the sceptre being an emblem of dominion and government,
Ge 49:10.

Psalms 45:7

Ver. 7. Thou lovest righteousness,.... Either righteous persons, whom his countenance beholds, on whom his eyes are, and from whom they are never withdrawn, and with whom he is exceedingly delighted: or righteous things; a righteous administration of government; faithfulness and integrity in whatsoever he is intrusted with, or appointed to by his father; all righteous actions which the law requires, as appeared in the whole course of his life; and by working out a righteousness for his people, and by encouraging them in works of righteousness; and as also will appear by judging the world in righteousness at the last day, and by giving the crown of righteousness to his righteous ones;

and hatest wickedness; which was manifest not only by his inveighing against it and dehorting from it, and by his severity exercised towards delinquents; but by suffering for it, and abolishing it, and by chastising his own people on account of it;

therefore God, thy God; or "because {g} God", thy God; who is the God of Christ, as Christ is man; who prepared and formed his human nature, supported it in suffering, and glorified it, and to whom Christ prayed, and whom he believed in, loved, and obeyed as such:

hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows; who though he is called God, Ps 45:6, and is truly so, yet was not anointed as such, but as man and Mediator, to the office of Prophet, Priest, and King; and not with material oil, but with the Holy Ghost, his gifts and graces; see Ac 10:38; called "the oil of gladness", in allusion to the use of oil at feasts and weddings, for the delight and refreshment of guests, and particularly of the oil of lilies, "olcum susinum", so some {h} translate it; well known to the Hebrews, who inhabited Syria and Palestine, where red lilies grew, of which this was made, and had in great esteem; and because of its effects in the human nature of Christ, filling it with alacrity and cheerfulness to go through the work he came about. This unction rotors to the time of his conception and birth, and also to the time of his baptism; and the phrase, "above thy fellows", denotes the abundance of the Spirit's grace, his having it without measure, and in a transcendent manner to any of the sons of men, even his own people; for these, and not angels, nor the princes of the earth, are meant, neither of which are his fellows; but the saints, who are of the same nature with him, of the same family he is the head of, of the same dignity through him, being made kings and priests by him, partakers of the same Spirit and grace; and will be companions with him, and sit on the same throne with him to all eternity. The Targum, in the king of Spain's Bible, begins the verse thus;

"But thou, O King Messiah, because thou lovest, &c."

{g} Nk-le "propterea quod", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Piscator, Gejerus; "quia", Rivet. Noldius, p. 727, No. 1730. {h} Vid. Schacchi Elaeochrism, l. 1. c. 27. & 28.

Psalms 45:8

Ver. 8. All thy garments [smell] of myrrh, and aloes, [and] cassia,.... Either his human nature, as anointed with the oil of gladness, and filled with the graces of the Spirit, signified by the holy anointing oil in the tabernacle, of which the things mentioned were ingredients,
Ex 30:23; or the garments of salvation and robe of righteousness, wrought out by him for his people, which are well pleasing and acceptable to his Father, and of a sweet smelling savour, being agreeable to his law and justice; and also to himself, as they are put upon his people; see **So 4:11**. And likewise to them who rejoice at being clothed with them, and desire to be found in them: or else his people themselves, who are sometimes compared to a clothing and to garments, Isa 49:18; whose persons are to God as the smell of a field, whom the Lord has blessed; and whose sacrifices of prayer and praise are sweet odours to him, through the mediation of his Son;

out of the ivory palaces; see **So 7:4**; meaning the places from whence these garments were taken, the wardrobe; or from whence Christ came, and where he appears; as heaven, the palace of the great King, from whence he came down, whither he is gone, and from whence he is expected again; and the human nature of Christ, in which he tabernacled on earth, and was pure and clear from sin; and his churches, which are his temples and palaces, where he grants his presence. Or it may be rendered, "more than the ivory palaces" {i}, and so be expressive of the excellency of Christ's garments above them; and denote the purity of his human nature, the spotlessness of his righteousness, and the comeliness of his people;

whereby they have made thee glad; or, "wherein" or "from whence" {k}; in which palaces, the churches, the saints make Christ glad, by speaking of his glory; by ascribing glory to him; and by the exercise of grace upon him, with which his heart is ravished, **So 4:9**. Or "for which" {l}; garments of salvation, and robe of righteousness; they being clothed with them, and rejoicing in them, cause joy and gladness in Christ: or "more than they", or "theirs that make thee glad" {m}; meaning his fellows and their garments, his being more odorous than theirs.

{i} Nv ylkyh Nm "prae palatiis eburneis", Cocceius, Gejerus. {k} ynm "unde", Montanus, Musculus, Muis, Noldius, p. 629, No. 1664. {l} "Propter quod", Muis. {m} "Prae iis", Junius & Tremellius; "magis quam eorum", Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 45:9

Ver. 9. Kings' daughters [were] among thy honourable women,.... Or "maids of honour" {n}; who filled and adorned the king's court, and made a splendid appearance there, the same with the virgins, the companions of the bride, in Ps 45:14; and design truly gracious souls, believers in Christ, who are his "precious ones" {o}, as the word may be rendered; the excellent in the earth, in whom is all his delight; the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold; his portion, his jewels, his peculiar treasure, and the apple of his eye: and since they have been precious to him, they have been "honourable", as they are, both by birth and marriage, being born of God, and espoused to Christ; by their character, kings and priests; and by their company, being among princes, and especially by their having communion with Father, Son, and Spirit: and among these are "kings' daughters"; yea, they are all of them the sons and daughters of the King of kings; not by their first birth, by which they were mean, base, and dishonourable, wretched and miserable, and children of wrath, as others; but by their second birth, or regeneration, through being born from above, and of God, to an incorruptible inheritance; and so are clothed and fed like the daughters of kings, and have the attendance of such, angels to wait upon them and guard them; and through adopting grace, which regeneration is the evidence of, by virtue of which some of the children of men become the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty; and through their marriage to the King's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ: the words may be rendered, "Kings' daughters [were] in thy precious things" {p}; that is, were arrayed with them: meaning either the graces of the Spirit, comparable to gems, pearls, jewels, and precious stones; see **So 1:10**; or else the rich robe of Christ's righteousness, and garments of salvation, with which believers being clothed, are as a bridegroom decked with ornaments, and as a bride adorned with jewels, Isa 61:10; and this agrees with what follows;

upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir; by whom is meant the church, whose title is a "queen", being the bride, the Lamb's wife: wherefore, because he is King, she is queen; for this title she has not of herself; it is founded not in her own right, but upon her relation to Christ, being married to him; and so is expressive of relation to him, union with him, and of privilege and dignity through him; she sharing with him in all he has, even in his kingdom and government, reigning with him, and on the same throne: her being "on his right hand" shows the honour she is advanced unto; yet "standing" may denote subjection to him as her Lord and head; and being so close by him may suggest her fidelity and inviolable attachment to him, and strict adherence to his person, cause and interest; as well as her protection from him, being held and upheld by his right hand; and her reception of favours from thence, and her enjoyment of his presence, at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore. Her dress is "gold of Ophir": a place famous for gold; See Gill on "1Ki 9:28"; with which the clothes of great personages used to be embroidered; so Esther is said {q} to put on her royal apparel, adorned with the good gold of "Ophir": here it means, that the queen's or church's clothing was of wrought gold, as in Ps 45:13, and intends the righteousness of Christ, with which she is arrayed, comparable to it for its richness, purity, lustre, glory, and duration.

{n} Kytwrqyb "inter noblies tuas", Tigurine version. {o} Heb. "pretiosas", Piscator; so Ainsworth. {p} In "pretiositatibus tuis", Montanus, Gejerus; so some in Vatablus. {q} Targum Sheni in Esther v. 1.

Psalms 45:10

Ver. 10. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear,.... These words are either spoken by the prophet, the author of the psalm; or by the King, the bridegroom himself; or, as others think, by Jehovah the Father, whose daughter the church is; unless it should be rather thought to be an address of the honourable women, the kings' daughters, the virgins and companions of the bride, delivered by them to her under the character of the daughter of Zion, the King's daughter, as she is called, Ps 45:13, "to hearken, incline [her] ear" and listen to her Lord and King, to his Gospel, and the doctrines of it, which are his voice and words, and to all his precepts and commands; and to "consider", see, and behold the goodness of God unto her, the greatness, excellencies, and glories of her husband; to look to him by faith, as he is held forth in the word and ordinances, and to him only and that constantly, which is well pleasing to him;

forget also thine own people and thy father's house; Christ is to be preferred before natural relations; converted persons are not to have fellowship with carnal men, though ever so, nearly related; former superstitions, Whether Jewish or Heathenish, are to be buried in forgetfulness; sinful self, and righteous self, are to be denied for Christ's sake; and the world, and all things in it, are to be treated with neglect and contempt by such who cleave to him. The Targum interprets this of the congregation of Israel hearing the law, beholding the wonderful works of God, and forgetting the idolatrous practices of their ancestors.

Psalms 45:11

Ver. 11. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty,.... Which lies in the comeliness or righteousness of Christ put upon her; in the holiness of Christ reckoned to her; in being washed from all sin in the blood of Christ; in the graces of the Spirit being implanted in her, in which the beauty of holiness lies; in the salvation she is interested in, and beautified with; in enjoying the order and ordinance of Christ's house, and in having the presence of God and Christ with her: and this beauty is not natural, nor acquired by her, but what is given her; it is not an outward, but an inward beauty; nor is it fictitious, but real; it is perfect through the comeliness of her Lord upon her; and it is durable as the olive tree: and this is greatly desired by Christ, who delights in her, and to behold her countenance; seeks after her company, and will have her where he is, that she may behold his glory, and he may behold her beauty;

for he [is] thy Lord; not only by creation, but by redemption, and in right of marriage, as well as on account of other relations he stands in to her, as Father, Head, King, and Master; and it is her privilege that he is her Lord, as well as her duty to own the relation; since, though he is a sovereign Lord, he is no tyrannical one, but governs with gentleness, and he has all power to protect her, and all fulness to supply her wants; and on account of his being her Husband, Lord, and Head, he has a right of worship from her, as follows;

and worship thou him; both internally, by the exercise of faith, hope, and love upon him; and externally, by praying to him, praising of him, and attending on all his ordinances, and doing everything in a religious way, in his name, according to his word, and by his authority; and such worship should be in spirit and in truth, in sincerity, and without hypocrisy, in righteousness and true holiness, and with reverence and godly fear.

Psalms 45:12

Ver. 12. And the daughter of Tyre [shall be there] with a gift,.... That is, among the honourable women in the king's court and palace: it is a prophecy of the conversion of the Tyrians, and their admission into a Gospel church, state, which had its accomplishment in the times of Christ and his apostles, **Mr 7:24**; compare with this
Ps 87:4; and though Tyre is only mentioned, it being, as Kimchi on this place observes, near to the land of Judea; yet all other Gentiles are meant, to whom the Gospel should come to the conversion of them, and thereby become members of churches; where they are "with a gift", of themselves to the churches; see **2Co 8:5**; joining themselves to them, to walk with them, and serve the Lord with one consent; and with the gift or offering of praise and thanksgiving, for the grace and blessings of it bestowed upon them; and with a free donation out of their substance, to support a Gospel church state, its ministers, and the interest, of religion; see Isa 23:18; the allusion may be to Ex 23:15;

[even] the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour; either such as are rich, in a literal sense, both among the inhabitants of Tyre, who were a very wealthy people, Isa 23:8; and among other Gentiles, especially in the latter day, when kings shall be the church's nursing fathers, and bow down to her, Isa 49:23; or such who are so in a spiritual sense, enriched by Christ with all spiritual blessings, and who are particularly rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom; these shall "entreat [the] favour" of the queen the church; not pray unto her, or worship her in a religious way; for God is only the object of such worship; but do those things by which they would show that they valued her friendship, and would gain her good will; as also acknowledge any former injury done her by them, and entreat her forgiveness; and particularly desire to have communion with her, and share in her prayers.

Psalms 45:13

Ver. 13. The King's daughter [is] all glorious within,.... The "King's daughter" is the same with the "queen", Ps 45:9; the church, who is the King's daughter, the daughter of the King of kings, through adopting grace, by marriage to Christ the King's son, and by regeneration, or being born of God: and she is "all glorious within"; within doors, in the inner chamber of the King, where being brought, she enjoys such communion with him as reflects a glory upon her; in his banqueting house, where his banner over her is love, and where her members enjoy fellowship with one another, and this in harmony, unity, and love; which make her look amiable, pleasant, beautiful and glorious: or within the hearts of her members, through the internal graces of the Spirit wrought there; the work of grace is an inward work; it has its seat in the heart or spirit of man, and is a glorious one, in its author, original, and usefulness; it is the workmanship of the Spirit, and a curious piece it is; it is the image of Christ upon the soul, a partaking of the divine nature; it is pure and spotless; it is clear of all sin, there is no sin in it, nor any comes from it; it is the saints' meetness for glory; it is the pledge, earnest, and beginning of it; it is "all glorious", and so are the persons that are the subjects of it, as born of God: there is nothing glorious in the old man, or corrupt nature; but in the new man, or work of grace upon the soul, everything is glorious, and it will issue in eternal glory and happiness: or all glorified within {r}; like any house or building, to which the church is sometimes compared, particularly the tabernacle or temple, which were glorious within side being greatly adorned, and having many glorious things therein; as the church is with the graces of the spirit, and with the word and ordinances, and the presence of God in them;

her clothing [is] of wrought gold; this is different from internal grace, which is sometimes spoken of as a clothing, **1Pe 5:5**; since that is designed in the preceding clause; and yet this does not intend the outward conversation garments of the saints, which, though ornamental, are not so glorious as to be said to be of wrought gold; and yet not the robes of immortality and glory are meant; but the robe of Christ's righteousness, which he has wrought out for his church, the Father imputes unto her, and bestows upon her, and faith receives at his hand, and puts it on as a clothing, to appear in before God; and this may be said to be "of wrought gold"; because rich and valuable, splendid and glorious, substantial and durable.

{r} hdwbk "honorata", Junius & Tremellius; "glorificata", Gussetius, p. 362.

Psalms 45:14

Ver. 14. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework,.... Not in her sins, and trader the sense and guilt of them; as souls are brought to Christ, at first conversion, under the drawings of the Father's grace; nor in the rags of her own righteousness; but in the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, the change of raiment Christ has put upon her, having before this caused her iniquities to pass from her; or in the shining robes of immortality and glory: for this introduction of the church to Christ, her King, Head, and Husband, will be upon the first resurrection; when she being as a bride adorned and prepared for her husband, will be brought unto him, and presented to him by himself, a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: and she will be introduced, either by the angels, who will be employed in gathering the elect from the four winds; or by the ministers of the Gospel, who, at the general harvest, in the end of the world will bring their sheaves with them; those souls they have been the instruments of converting, comforting, and ripening for glory; who will be their joy and crown of rejoicing then; these will be brought in several companies, which joining together, will make up the general assembly and church of the firstborn, that will then be presented to Christ: or by Jehovah the Father, who, as he brought Eve to Adam, when he had formed her of his rib, and had prepared her as a helpmeet for him; so when all the elect of God are formed by divine grace, and are prepared as a bride for the bridegroom, he will then bring them unto him, and they shall be with him where he is, and behold his glory; which is what he prays his father for, Joh 17:24;

the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee; such who are betrothed as chaste virgins to Christ, who strictly and chastely adhere unto him, love him in the singleness of their hearts; are incorrupt in faith and worship, and of pure and upright conversations; see Re 14:4; these are the "companions" of the church, who are partakers of the same grace, enjoy the same privileges, and share in the common salvation; and, as they are partners together in sufferings, they will be in glory: these "follow" the footsteps of the flock, walk after the church in the path of doctrine and duty; are followers of her, as she is of the Lord, in the word and ordinances, and in the exercise of faith and patience; these, even everyone, shall be brought unto the King, not one shall be lost, or left behind: whither they shall be brought, and the manner in which, are expressed in Ps 45:15.

Psalms 45:15

Ver. 15. With, gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought,.... With joy unspeakable, and full of glory in themselves, because of what they shall be delivered from; from all outward troubles and afflictions; from all inward distresses, darkness, doubts, and fears; from sin, Satan, and all spiritual enemies; and because of what they shall enjoy, communion with God, angels and saints, the vision of God in Christ, conformity to him, perfect knowledge, complete holiness and happiness, and a glory both upon their souls and bodies: they shall also be brought with the joy of Christ's faithful minister, who will rejoice in that day that they have not run nor laboured in vain; and with the joy of all the holy angels; and with the joy of Christ the King himself, who always rejoiced in them and over them; yea, with the rejoicing of Father, Son, and Spirit: the Father will rejoice to see those brought in whom he has loved with an everlasting love, has chosen in Christ, given to him, and whom he sent his Son to redeem: the Son of God will rejoice to see those presented to him whom he has loved and betrothed to himself; who are the purchase of his blood, and the travail of his soul; who are his jewels, treasure and portion: and the Holy Spirit will rejoice to see those brought to glory whom he has been the convincer, comforter, and sealer of; whom he has been at work upon, and has wrought them up for this selfsame thing:

they shall enter into the King's palace; into heaven, the palace of the King Messiah, the King of kings and King of saints; where are mansions preparing for them, suitable to their high birth and character, as the daughters of a king; and where they shall enter, not merely to see it and go out again, but to dwell in it with their Lord, Head, and Husband, for evermore; and that as in their own palace, upon the foot of their relation to Christ, interest in him, right and meetness by him.

Psalms 45:16

Ver. 16. Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children,.... This is an address, not to the church, the queen, the King's daughter, spoken to and of in the preceding verses, but to the King Messiah himself, who was of the Jewish fathers, according to the flesh, **Ro 9:4**; and though he was rejected by that people, yet he had children; not only the apostles, who are sometimes so called, whom he set on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, in a doctrinal way, and sent into all the world to preach his Gospel; and which being attended with his mighty power, made them triumphant conquerors everywhere; but also a numerous progeny among the Gentiles: all the elect of God are his children, and he stands in the revelation of the everlasting Father to them, they being given unto him as such; and he being concerned in their adoption, by which they become children, and in their regeneration by which they appear to be such. Here the children of God, scattered abroad in the Gentile world, as distinct from the Jews, seem to be meant;

whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth; these children are princes, being the sons of a King; they look like princes, and have the spirit of such; they are treated as princes, fed, clothed, and attended on as such; and are, as princes, heirs of a kingdom: but then, they are not so originally, they are "made princes"; not by themselves, but by Christ, and who even makes them kings and priests unto God and his father: and that "in all the earth"; not with respect to earthly things: they are not made the princes of this world; but while they are on earth they are translated into the kingdom of Christ, and have a kingdom which never can be moved; and besides, they shall reign with Christ on earth a thousand years: moreover, this may have respect to the several parts of the world where they shall be, even in all parts of the world, especially in the latter day; see Isa 43:5.

Psalms 45:17

Ver. 17. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations,.... These are the words of the psalmist, spoken to the King Messiah, declaring what he would do with respect to him; cause his name, that is, not any particular name or title of his, but rather his Gospel, the good matter he had endited concerning him; or he himself to be remembered, desired, loved, thought of, called upon, and praised in all succeeding generations; and which he did by penning of this psalm, which has been the occasion of the remembrance of Christ's name in all ages, to the present time; and of its being remembered by us now, and the same use it will have in time to come; see **2Pe 1:13**;

therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever; because of the excellencies of his person; and particularly because of his greatness and glory as a King; as well as for all mercies, temporal and spiritual, they have from him; and this is but just, meet, and lovely, and is and will be their employment, as long as they live in this world, and to all eternity. This must be understood not of all people, but of God's chosen and covenant people; those that are given to Christ to be his people, and whom he has redeemed and purified to himself, a peculiar people; and particularly his people among the Gentiles: and so the Targum interprets it of such that are proselytes.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 46:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 46

To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamoth. The word "Alamoth" is thought by some, as Aben Ezra, to be the beginning of a song, to which this psalm was set; and by others a high tune, such as virgins express; and by others the name of musical instruments, as Jarchi and Kimchi; which seems most likely, since it is mentioned with other instruments of music in 1Ch 15:19; and may not unfitly be rendered "virginals", from the sound of them being like the shrill voice of virgins, which this word signifies; though others choose to render it "of hidden things", {s}, making it to design the subject matter of the psalm, the secret counsels and purposes of God, both in a way of love and grace to his people, and of judgment to his enemies. Some think this psalm was occasioned by the victories which David obtained over the Ammonites and Moabites, and other neighbouring countries; and others are of opinion that it was penned on account of the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib being raised, in the times of Hezekiah: but it seems rather to be a prophecy of the church in Gospel times, and is applicable to any time of confusion and distress the nations of the world may be in through any kind of calamity, when those that trust in the Lord have no reason in the least to be afraid. Kimchi says this psalm belongs to future times; either to the gathering of the captives, or to the war of Gog and Magog; to which also R. Obadiah refers it, and Jarchi interprets it of time to come; according to the Targum it was written by the sons of Korah, when their father was hid from them, and they were delivered.

{s} twmle le upev twn krufiwn, Sept. "pro arcanis", V. L.

Ver. 1. God [is] our refuge and strength,.... That is, Christ, who is God as well as man, is the "refuge" for souls to fly unto for safety; as for sensible sinners, in a view of danger, wrath, and misery, so for saints, in every time of distress; typified by the cities of refuge, under the legal dispensation; See Gill on "Ps 9:9"; and he it is from whom they have all their spiritual strength, and every renewal and supply of it, to exercise grace, perform duties, withstand enemies, bear the cross patiently, show a fortitude of mind under the sorest distresses, and hold on and out unto the end: in short, he is the strength of their hearts, under the greatest trials, of their lives, amidst the greatest dangers; and of their salvation, notwithstanding all their enemies;

a very present help in trouble; whether inward or outward, of soul or body; the Lord helps his people under it to bear it, and he helps them out of it in the most proper and seasonable time: they are poor helpless creatures in themselves; nor can any other help them but the Lord, who made heaven and earth; and he helps presently, speedily, and effectually: in the Hebrew text it is, "he is found an exceeding help in trouble" {t}; in all kind of trouble that the saints come into, the Lord has been found, by experience, to be an exceeding great helper of them; moreover, he is easily and always to be come at, and found by them for their help.

{t} dam aumn "inventum valde", Michaelis.

Psalms 46:2

Ver. 2. Therefore will not we fear,...., The consideration of the Lord's being the refuge, strength, and help of his people, in all times of trouble and distress, has a great influence on their faith and confidence, and makes them intrepid and fearless in the midst of the greatest dangers: nor indeed have they any reason to be afraid of men or devils, since the Lord is on their side; nor should they indulge a slavish fear on any account whatever;

though the earth be removed; or "changed" {u}, as to its position or fruitfulness; or whatever changes, vicissitudes, and revolutions may be in the kingdoms, nations, and among the inhabitants of the earth, through wars and desolations made thereby;

and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; so the destruction of kingdoms, empires, and cities, is expressed by a like phrase; as of Babylon, Jer 51:25; and of the Roman and Pagan empire, **Re 6:12**, and of the city of Rome, **Re 8:8**.

{u} rymhb "cum mutabit", Pagninus; "etiamsi permutarit", Vatalbulus; "si commutaret", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 46:3

Ver. 3. [Though] the waters thereof roar [and] be troubled,.... The noise of which causes men's hearts to fail them for fear,
Lu 21:25;

[though] the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. All these figurative expressions denote the hurlyburlies, confusions, and disorders that have been or will be in the world; amidst all which the people of God have no reason to fear; for it is always well with the righteous, let it go how it will with others.

The passage may be applied to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the wars preceding it, and the dispersion of the Jews upon it; when true believers in Christ found him to be their refuge, strength, and help in that time of trouble, such as never was the like, and were safe and without fear; and Aben Ezra, a Jewish commentator, thinks it is right to interpret this psalm concerning the wars of Jerusalem: moreover, these words may be applied to any other time of calamity, through war or persecution, that has been since; as also to any that is to come; as to the slaying of the witnesses, the hour of temptation that will try all that are upon the earth; and even to the day of judgment, when heaven and earth shall flee away from the face of the Judge; when the heavens shall be folded up as a garment, and the earth, and all that is therein, shall be burnt up, and the whole world of the ungodly shall be thrown into the utmost panic, the saints will be safe with Christ, and ever happy with him; and, in the worst of times in this world, God is always their covenant God, their shield, portion, and exceeding great reward; Christ is their Redeemer and Saviour, their city of refuge, and strong hold; and though they may be plundered of their goods and property, they have a better and a more enduring substance in heaven; an estate, an inheritance there, that can never be taken away; and even should their enemies kill the body, that is the utmost they can do; their souls are safe in the hands of Christ; their life is hid with him; and when he shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory; and therefore they may well say, "we will not fear" {w}.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{w} "Si fractus illabatur orbis", &c. Horat. Carmin. l. 3. Ode. 3. v. 7.

Psalms 46:4

Ver. 4. [There] is a river,.... The allusion is either to the river Kidron, which ran by Jerusalem; or to the waters of Shiloah, which by different courses and branches, ran through the city of Jerusalem, and supplied the several parts of it with water, to the joy and comfort of its inhabitants: but the words are to be understood in a figurative sense, as applicable to Gospel times; and this river either designs the Gospel, the streams of which are its doctrines, which are living waters that went out from Jerusalem, and which publish glad tidings of great joy to all sensible sinners; or the Spirit and his graces, which are compared to a well, and rivers of living water, in the exercise of which the saints have much joy and peace; or else the Lord himself, who is a place of broad rivers and streams to his people, and is both their refreshment and protection; or rather his everlasting love to them is here intended; see Ps 36:8; The head of this river is the heart of God, his sovereign goodwill and pleasure; the channel through which it runs is Christ Jesus; the rise of it was in eternity, when, like a river that runs underground, it flowed secretly, as it does before the effectual calling; when it breaks up, and appears in large streams, and flows, and so it proceeds running on to all eternity. It is a river that is unfathomable, and cannot be passed over; it has heights and depths, and lengths and breadths, which cannot be fully comprehended: as for the quality of it, it is a pure river, clear as crystal; free of all dissimulation in the heart of God, and clear of all motives and conditions in the creature. Its water is living water; which quickens dead sinners, revives drooping saints, secures from the second death, and gives eternal life; it makes all fruitful about it, or that are planted by it;

the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God; the "streams" of this river are eternal election; the covenant of grace its blessings and promises; the provision and mission of Christ as a Saviour, and redemption by him; justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, perseverance in grace, and eternal life; called "streams", because they flow from the fountain of divine love; and because of the rapidity, force, and power of the grace of God, in the application of them in conversion, which carries all before it; and because of the abundance, continuance, and freeness of them, and the gratefulness and acceptableness of them to those who see the worth of them, and their interest in them; see **So 4:15**; and these, when made known and applied, "make glad" the hearts of God's people under a sense of sin and guilt, under divine desertions, the temptations of Satan, and the various afflictions they meet with; for these are intended by "the city of God", as the church is often called, because of his building, and where he dwells, and where the saints are fellow citizens. And the same are signified by

the holy [place]; being an holy temple to God, consisting of holy persons, such who are sanctified by the Spirit of God, and live holy lives and conversations: and

of the tabernacles of the most High; being the dwelling places of God, Father, Son, and Spirit. All which is a reason why the saints should not fear in the worst of times.

Psalms 46:5

Ver. 5. God [is] in the midst of her,.... The church and people of God; not merely by his essence, power, and providence, as he is in the midst of the world; but by his gracious presence, and which always continues, though not always perceived; and is a sufficient antidote against all fear of men and devils;

she shall not be moved; though the earth may; and when it is, Ps 46:2, neither from the heart of God, on which his people are set as a seal; nor from the hands of Christ, from whence they can never be plucked; nor from the covenant of grace, which is immovable; nor off of the rock Christ, on which they are built; nor from the state of grace, of justification, adoption, and sanctification, in which they stand; nor out of the world, by all the cunning and power of antichrist;

God shall help her, [and that] right early: or "when the morning looks out" {x}. When it is night with the church, it is the hour and power of darkness with the enemies of it; and this is the time of the reign of antichrist, whose kingdom is a kingdom of darkness: but the "morning cometh, and also the night"; the former being about to break forth, and the latter to be at an end; yea, at eventide it shall be light: and the Lord will be a suitable, seasonable, and timely help to his people; for though weeping endures the night, joy comes in the morning.

{x} rqb twnpl "respiciente mane", Pagninus; "ad prospectum aurorae", Musculus; "at the looking forth of the morning", Ainsworth; that is, "speedily and quickly", as Suidas interprets it in voce prwi.

Psalms 46:6

Ver. 6. The Heathen raged,.... As they did at Christ's first coming, against him, his Gospel, and people; and which continued during the three first centuries; and then the Pagan kingdoms belonging to the Roman empire were removed; since then another sort of Heathens, the Papists, have raged, in violent persecutions and bloodshed of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, and will rage again, about and at the downfall of Babylon; see Re 11:18;

the kingdoms were moved; either from their Pagan or Papal religion, and became subject to Christ. So it was at the downfall of Rome Pagan; and so it will be at the downfall of Rome Papal; when the kings of the earth shall hate the whore, make her desolate, and burn her flesh with fire. Or they shall be destroyed; that is, those that shall be gathered together in Armageddon, to

make war with the Lamb; see
Re 16:14;

he uttered his voice, the earth melted; like wax, as the inhabitants of the earth do at the voice of his thunder, and as antichrist will at the breath of his mouth; and all within the Romish jurisdiction, signified by "the earth", as it often is in the book of the Revelation, when the voice of the mighty angel shall be heard, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen", Re 18:1.

Psalms 46:7

Ver. 7. The Lord of hosts [is] with us,.... The Targum is, "the Word of the Lord of hosts". He whose name is Immanuel, which is, by interpretation, "God with us", **Mt 1:23**; who is King of kings, and Lord of lords; who has all creatures in heaven and earth at his command, whom all the hosts of angels obey; he is on the side of his people, and therefore they have nothing to fear from all the hosts and armies of men; seeing more are they that are for them than they that are against them;

the God of Jacob [is] our refuge. As, in the former clause, the argument against fear of men is taken from the power of God, and the extent of his dominion, here it is taken from the grace of God, and his people's covenant interest in him: for by Jacob is meant the church of God, and all true believers, who are Israelites indeed; the Lord is the refuge and shelter of such in all times of distress and trouble, and therefore they need not fear; See Gill on "Ps 46:1".

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 46:8

Ver. 8. Come, behold the works of the Lord,.... Of nature and grace, especially those of Providence; both in a way of judgment, as in this verse; and of mercy, as in Ps 46:9. These words are an address of the psalmist to his friends, as Apollinarius supplies it; or of the church to the fearful among them, who were dismayed at the commotions and disturbances that were in the world, Ps 46:2; and who are encouraged to trust in the Lord, from the consideration of his works, particularly his providential dispensations;

what desolations he hath made in the earth; in the land of Judea, at the time of the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, foretold by Moses, De 32:22; by Daniel, **Da 9:26**; and by our Lord Jesus Christ, Mt 23:38; and which desolations being the fulfilling of prophecy, may serve to strengthen the faith of God's people, that whatsoever he has said shall come to pass; and that seeing he made such desolations among the Jews, for their rejection of the Messiah, what may not be expected will be made in the antichristian states, for their opposition to him? and, besides, are a confirmation of the truth of his being come; since after his coming these desolations, according to Daniel, were to be made; nor was the sceptre to depart from Judah till he came, nor the second temple to be destroyed before he was in it. Moreover, these desolations may refer to those that have been made in the Roman empire, upon the blowing of the trumpets; the first "four" of which brought in the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, into the western part of it, which made sad ravages and devastations in it; see **Re 8:7**; and the "fifth" and "sixth" brought in the Saracens and Turks into the eastern part of it, which seized and demolished it, and made dreadful havoc among men; see **Re 9:1**. Likewise the desolations that will be made in the antichristian states may be here intended; when the seven vials of God's wrath will be poured out upon them, Re 16:1 when the kings of the earth will hate the whore, and make her desolate, Re 17:16; and all her plagues shall come upon her in one day, Re 18:8. And a view of these desolations, even in prophecy, may serve to cheer the hearts of God's people under the present reign of antichrist, and under all the rage, fury, and oppression of antichristian powers, since they will all in a little time become desolate. This will be the Lord's doing, and it will be wondrous in our eyes.

Psalms 46:9

Ver. 9. He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth,.... As at the birth of Christ, the Prince of peace, in the times of Augustus Caesar, when there was a general peace in the world, though it did not last long; and in the times of Constantine, signified by silence in heaven for half an hour, **Re 8:1**; when for a while there was a cessation from wars and persecution; and as will be in the latter day, and which is here chiefly designed; when nations shall learn war no more, and Christ's kingdom will take place; of which and its peace there shall be no end, **Isa 2:4**. The consideration of which may serve to relieve distressed minds under terrible apprehensions of present troubles and public calamities;

he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire; that is, "chariots", or "carts" {y} or "wagons", in which, as Aben Ezra observes, arms and provision were carried for the use of soldiers; the Targum renders it "round shields" {z}: and the destroying of all these military weapons and carriages is a token of peace, and of war's being caused to cease, there being no more use for them; with this compare Eze 39:8. It was usual to burn the arms of enemies taken in war {a}.

{y} twlge "plaustra", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis. {z} So the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic and Arabic versions. {a} Vid. Lydium de Re Militari, l. 6. c. 4. p. 229, 230.

Psalms 46:10

Ver. 10. Be still, and know that I [am] God,.... These words are thought by some to be spoken by the Lord to the nations of the world, to "cease from war", as the Targum renders the words; or from going up any more against Jerusalem, as Jarchi interprets them; and that they were spoken to them before the breaking of their bows, &c. as Aben Ezra observes; or that they are an exhortation to them to cease from their evil works, and know that the Lord is God, and has power to raise up and to make low; which, is Kimchi's sense of the words: but they are rather a continuation of the church's address to the fearful among them, as before to behold the works of the Lord, so here to hearken to what he says, as follows, "be still"; not that they should be like sticks and stones, stupid, indolent, and unconcerned at the commotions that were in the earth, and be unaffected with the judgments of God, and be wholly silent and inactive; but that they should not be fearful, nor fretful and impatient, or restless and tumultuous; but be quiet and easy, resigned to the will of God, and live in an assured expectation of the appearance of divine Providence in their layout. And "know"; own and acknowledge that he is God, a sovereign Being that does whatsoever he pleases; that he is unchangeable in his nature, purposes, promises, and covenant; that he is omnipotent, able to help them and deliver them at the last extremity; that he is omniscient, knows their persons, cases, and troubles, and how and where to hide them till the storm is over; that he is the all wise God, and does all things after the counsel of his own will, and makes all things work together for good to them; and that he is faithful to his word and promise, and will not suffer them to be overpressed and bore down with troubles. Who further says for their encouragement, and is to be hearkened to in it,

I will be exalted among the Heathen; with or in the conversion of the Gentiles; when the kingdoms of this world shall become Christ's, and all nations shall come and worship before him, Re 11:15. Or in the destruction of the Gentiles;

the Papists, the antichristian states; which will cause great rejoicings, hallelujahs, and attributions of honour and glory to him, Re 16:5; so Jarchi interprets the words, "I will be exalted", ytmqub, "in my vengeance"; that I will take upon the Heathen;

I will be exalted in the earth; now Christ is exalted in heaven at the right hand of God, before long he will be exalted in the earth, where he was despised and rejected, crucified and slain; he will be King over all the earth; his dominion will be from one end of it to the other; his tabernacle will be among men; and his people, as kings and priests, will reign with him on earth; by whom he, and he alone, will be exalted in the dignity of his person and offices, and, especially in his kingly office, Zec 14:9. The consideration of which may serve to remove fears and dismayings of mind under present troubles.

Psalms 46:11

Ver. 11. The Lord of hosts [is] with us; the God of Jacob [is] our refuge. See Gill on "Ps 46:7". The Targum paraphrases it, "the Word of the Lord of hosts", as in Ps 46:7; and the same words are here repeated, to comfort those that were fearful and unbelieving, with which the church then comforted herself.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 47:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 47

To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah. Thus psalm is thought by some to be written on occasion of the ark being brought from the house of Obededom to the city of David, to the place he had prepared for it; which was attended with singing and dancing, with shouting, and the sound of a trumpet, **2Sa 6:12**; but it rather seems to be penned on account of the ascension of Christ to heaven, prophetically spoken of in this psalm; and of the spread of the Gospel, and the conquests it made in the Gentile world upon Christ's ascension; as the whole psalm shows: and even Aben Ezra and Kimchi apply it to the times of the Messiah; and so do some of their most ancient writers, who particularly interpret Ps 47:5 of him, as may be seen in the note upon it.

Ver. 1. O clap your hands, all ye people, Meaning the Gentiles more especially; see Ps 117:1 compared with Ro 15:9; who had reason to rejoice and be glad, since the ascended Lord and King here spoken of was given to be their Saviour, was the propitiation for their sins, and had given himself a ransom price for them; and now the Gospel was preached among them, by an order from him after his resurrection; and upon his ascension gifts were bestowed on his apostles, qualifying them for it; when many of them were converted by it, and were made partakers of the same grace and privileges with the Jews that believed in Christ, and were formed into Gospel churches. Wherefore they are called upon to declare their joy and gladness by "clapping their hands"; which is a gesture expressive of exultation and joy; see Ps 98:8 **Na 3:19**. It was used at the unction and coronation of a king,
2Ki 11:12; and so very proper to be used on occasion of the Messiah being made or declared Lord and Christ, as he was at his ascension, **Ac 2:36**;

shout unto God with the voice of triumph; as when triumphs are made on account of victories obtained, which was now the case; Christ having conquered sin, Satan, and the world, by his sufferings and death, and having spoiled principalities and powers, made a show of them, openly triumphing over them, when he ascended on high, and led captivity captive; and he having sent his apostles into the Gentile world with his Gospel, they were caused to triumph in him wherever they came. And now these external actions of clapping hands, and shouting with the voice, are expressive of inward spiritual joy; which those among the people who were conquered by the grace of God, and had a sight of their ascended Lord and Saviour, were filled with: and who are exhorted to express it in this manner, unto God: not to angels, nor to men, no, not to ministers, who brought the joyful tidings to them; but to God, either to God the Father, for all their temporal and spiritual blessings; especially for the unspeakable gift of his Son, to suffer and die for them: or to the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh; God that was gone up with a shout, Ps 47:5; and was now at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honour; who, by the sufferings of death, had obtained eternal redemption for them.

Psalms 47:2

Ver. 2. For the Lord most high [is] terrible,.... Christ is not only the Son of the Highest, but he himself is the most high God, God over all, blessed for ever. He is higher than the highest, than the angels in heaven, or any of the sons of men on earth. He is the high and lofty One, that dwells in the high and lofty place. And even this character agrees with him as the ascended Lord and King in his human nature; he is ascended on high, is set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is highly exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour; he is made higher than the heavens, and than the kings of the earth are; angels, authorities, and powers, are subject to him. And this is a reason exciting all the people to joy and gladness. And he is "terrible" to his enemies, being the Lion of the tribe of Judah; who will rule the nations with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces as a potter's vessel: and so he will be when he shall come in the clouds of heaven, land descend from thence, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on those who have despised and rejected him; and at the same time will be glorious to and admired by them that believe in him. His appearance, which will be terrible to others, will be matter of joy to them. Though the word used may be rendered as it is in Ps 111:9; "reverend" or "to be feared" {b}, as he is; see **Isa 8:13**; both on account of his goodness, as the Redeemer and Saviour of his people, **Ho 3:5**; and of his greatness, being equal with God, and King of saints. As it follows;

[he is] a great King over all the earth; as he must needs be, since he is the great God and our Saviour; and is King of kings, and Lord of lords. He is now King of Zion, and head over all things to the church; and before long the kingdoms of this world will become his, and he will take to himself his great power and reign, and shall be King over all the earth openly and visibly; he shall be one, and his name One,
Zec 14:9; which is another reason for joy and gladness among the people.

{b} arwn "reverendus", Junius & Tremellius; "timendus est", Coccius; "venerandus", Michaelis.

Psalms 47:3

Ver. 3. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet. As Joshua, his type, subdued the Canaanites; and as David, another type of subdued the Syrians, Moabites, and others: the Jews from these words expect, that, in the times of the Messiah they look for, the Gentiles in a literal sense will be subdued by him, and become subject to them; but these, and all other expressions of the like kind, are to be understood in a spiritual sense; such as Isa 49:23; and which will have their accomplishment in the latter day, in the subjection of the Gentiles to the word and ordinances of the Gospel administered in his churches: though the passage here refers to the times following the ascension of Christ to heaven, when he went forth in the ministry of his apostles conquering and to conquer; and which he made use of to cause the people to fall under him, and to be willing to be saved by him; to submit to his righteousness, and to his ordinances, the sceptre of his kingdom; and which was causing them to triumph, and subduing the people under them, who through the Gospel preached by them became obedient by word and deed; and which was an occasion of joy even to the conquered ones.

Psalms 47:4

Ver. 4. He shall choose our inheritance for us,.... Either a portion in this life; God knows what is best for his people, and therefore they should leave it with him, who can make a better choice for them than for themselves: an Heathen {c} once gave this advice,

"give thyself wholly to the will and disposal of the celestial ones; for they who are used to give good things easily can also choose the fittest."

Or the heavenly inheritance, so called in allusion to the land of Canaan, subdued and possessed by the Israelites, in which Christ is greatly concerned; his people are predestinated to the adoption of children, that is, to the inheritance they are adopted to by him, in whom they obtain it; through his death they receive the promise of eternal inheritance, he being the testator of that will of their heavenly Father which bequeaths it to them; it is his righteousness which gives them a title to it, and through his grace they have a meetness for it, and he will at last introduce them into it; all which is a reason for joy and gladness in them. The Arabic version renders it, "he hath chosen us an inheritance for himself"; so the Lord's people are, De 32:9. Christ asked them of his father, and he gave them for his inheritance, he having chosen them as such, and greatly delighted he is with them, **Ps 2:8**;

the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. The saints, who are, in his esteem, the excellent in the earth, and who will be in the latter day an eternal excellency, Ps 16:3; even the whole church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, the spiritual Jacob or Israel of God, whom Christ has loved with an everlasting love, and therefore has chosen them for his portion and peculiar treasure; as Jacob in person was loved when Esau was hated.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{c} Socrates apud Valer. Maxim. l. 7. c. 2. extern. 1.

Psalms 47:5

Ver. 5. God is gone up with a shout,.... That is, the Son of God, who is truly and properly God, equal to the Father, having the same perfections; God manifest in the flesh, the Word that was made flesh, and dwelt among men on earth; who in the next clause is called "Lord" or "Jehovah", being the everlasting "I AM", which is, and was, and is to come; he having done his work on earth he came about, went up from earth to heaven in human nature, really, locally, and visibly, in the sight of his apostles, attended by angels, and with their shouts and acclamations, which are here meant;

the Lord with the sound of the trumpet; which circumstance, though not related in the account of Christ's ascension in the New Testament, yet inasmuch as the angels say he shall descend in like manner as he ascended, and that it is certain he will descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; so that if his ascent was as his descent will be, it must be then with a shout, and the sound of a trumpet, **Ac 1:10**. This text is applied to the Messiah by the ancient Jewish writers {d}.

{d} Bemidbar Rabba, s. 15. fol. 218. 1.

Psalms 47:6

Ver. 6. Sing praises to God,.... That is gone up with a shout, Christ Jesus, our ascended Lord and King, as the apostles did at the time of his ascension, Lu 24:52;

sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises: who was then made Lord and Christ, declared King of saints, and crowned with glory and honour; the repetition of the phrase sing praises denotes frequency, constancy, fervency, and great devotion in the performance of this service; and that the ascension of Christ, the occasion of it, is of the greatest moment and importance, and requires it to be performed in such a manner.

Psalms 47:7

Ver. 7. For God [is] the King of all the earth,.... Or "the king of all the earth [is] God" {e}; the same that is ascended into heaven, and is King of saints, even Christ Jesus; and so he will appear to be, especially in the latter day; See Gill on "Ps 47:2";

sing ye praises with understanding; or, as De Dieu renders it, to him that understandeth, that is, to God the only wise, whose understanding is infinite; even to Christ, who, as God, knows all things; and, as man and Mediator, is of quick understanding, and has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him; so R. Obadiah, "sing of him who understands"; or, "sing ye praises, O everyone that understandeth" {f}; that is, how to sing, as everyone does not; this is the sense of Aben Ezra and Kimchi; or "with understanding", as we render it; with understanding of what is sung. The Apostle Paul seems to refer to this passage in 1Co 14:15. The Targum renders it, "with a good understanding".

{e} So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis. {f} lykvm wrmz "canite, intelligens", Montanus; i.e. "unusquisque", Vatablus.

Psalms 47:8

Ver. 8. God reigneth over the Heathen,.... He reigned over Israel under the former dispensation, and now he reigns over the Gentiles under the Gospel dispensation; as appears by the numerous instances of conversion among them in the first ages of Christianity; and by the many churches that were planted by the means of the apostles; and by the destruction of the Roman Pagan empire under the sixth seal, **Re 6:12**; and which will still more appear by the destruction of Rome Papal, when all the Heathens shall perish out of the land; and by the fulness and forces of the Gentiles being brought into a submission to him; all which are reasons to sing praises to him;

God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness; or his holy throne, which is heaven; on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; on his Father's throne; having done his work on earth he is received up into heaven, and is set down on a throne at the right hand of God, an honour which none of the angels have: he has ceased from his work and entered into his rest, and sits and sees of the travail of his soul; all which is matter of joy to his people, and a reason why they should sing praises; and the rather, since they are set down with him in heavenly places: or this may be understood of his sitting on the throne of judgment to judge the world in righteousness at the last day, it following upon his reign over the Gentiles; though the other sense best agrees with his immediate ascension to heaven.

Psalms 47:9

Ver. 9. The princes of the people are gathered together,.... Not against Christ, as at his first coming, but to him, and to his church and people; even the great men of the earth, the kings and princes of it, as they will in the latter day; see Isa 49:23; or this may mean the saints in general, who are all of them the princes of people, and are set among princes, yea, are kings priests unto God; some render it, "the willing" or "voluntary ones of his people" {g}; the same word is here used as in Ps 110:3; where it is rendered "willing", and designs such who are made willing to be saved by Christ, submit to his righteousness, and be subject to his word and ordinances;

[even] the people of the God of Abraham; whom the God of Abraham has chosen for his people, taken into covenant, given to his Son, and who are redeemed by his blood, and effectually called by his grace; and who, though Gentiles, belong to the same covenant and the same covenant God as Abraham did, and have the blessing of Abraham upon them; and are indeed his spiritual seed, being Christ's. The Targum is, "the people that believe in the God of Abraham". The words may be rendered in connection with the former clause, "gathered together unto the people of the God of Abraham" {h}; and so denote the association of the Gentiles converted with the believing Jews, as was at the first times of the Gospel, and will be at the latter day, 1Co 12:13;

for the shields of the earth [belong] unto God; that is, the rulers of the earth, as the word is rendered in **Ho 4:18**; who are as a shield and a protection to their subjects; these are set up and put down by the Lord at his pleasure; and their hearts are in his hands, and he can convert them when he pleases, and gather them to his Son, and into his churches; or, as Jarchi interprets it,

"he has power in his hands to protect as with a shield all that trust in him;"

safety is of the Lord; the protection of the world and of the church is from him who is King over all the earth;

he is greatly exalted; that is, Christ, who has all power in heaven and in earth; he is highly exalted at the right hand of God, angels, authorities, and powers, being subject to him.

{g} Myme ybydn "voluntarii populorum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {h} So Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 48:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 48

A Song [and] Psalm for the sons of Korah. This psalm is entitled a "song psalm", a psalm to be sung vocally; or "a song and psalm" to be sung both vocally and instrumentally; and is one of the spiritual songs the apostle speaks of, **Eph 5:19**; It was occasioned, as some think, by David's spoiling the Philistines, **2Sa 5:17**; or, as others, by the deliverance of the people from the Moabites and Ammonites in the times of Jehoshaphat, 2Ch 20:27; or, as others, by the deliverance of the inhabitants of Jerusalem from Sennacherib in the times of Hezekiah, 2Ki 19:34; though as Kimchi, a celebrated Jewish commentator, owns, it belongs to the times of the Messiah, as the other preceding psalms; and treats of his greatness, and of the praise and glory due to him, and gives large encomiums of his church.

Ver. 1. Great [is] the Lord,.... The same that in the foregoing psalm is said to be gone, up to heaven with a shout, to sit on the throne of his holiness, to reign over the Heathen, and to be King over all the earth; who is great, and the Son of the Highest; the great God and our Saviour; great in his person as God-man, God manifest in the flesh, his Father's fellow and equal; and in the perfections of his nature, being of great power, and of great wisdom, and of great faithfulness, and of strict holiness and justice, and of wonderful grace and goodness; great in his works of creation and providence; in his miraculous operations when on earth, and in the work of man's redemption and salvation; great is he in all his offices, a great Prophet risen in Israel, a great High Priest over thee house of God, a Saviour, and a great one, and the great Shepherd of the sheep;

and greatly to be praised in the city of our God; the city of Jerusalem, the city of solemnities, where was the worship of God, and where the tribes went up to worship, and God was present with his people; and where the great Lord of all showed himself to be great; here Christ the great Saviour appeared, even in the temple, when a child, where Simeon and Anna saw him, and spoke great things of him; where he at twelve years of age disputed with the doctors, and showed his great wisdom; here when grown up he wrought many of his great miracles, and taught his doctrines; here he entered in great triumph, attended

with the shouts, acclamations, and hosannas of the people; here he ate his last passover with his disciples; and in a garden near it was he taken and brought before the sanhedrim, assembled at the high priest's palace at Jerusalem; and then tried and condemned at the bar of Pilate; when being led a little way out of the city he was crucified on Mount Calvary; and on another mount, the mount of Olives, about a mile from it, he ascended to heaven; and here in this city he poured forth the Spirit in an extraordinary manner on his disciples at the day of Pentecost, as an evidence of his ascension; and from hence his Gospel went forth into all the world; and therefore was greatly to be praised here, as he was by his disciples, church, and people, **Ac 2:46**. Jerusalem is a figure of the Gospel church, which is often compared to a city, Isa 26:1; of which saints are citizens and fellow citizens of each other; this is a city built on Christ the foundation; is full of inhabitants, when together and considered by themselves; is governed by wholesome laws, enacted by Christ its King, who has appointed officers under him to explain and enforce them, and see that they are put in execution; and has many privileges and immunities belonging to it; and this is the city of God, of his building and of his defending, and where he dwells; it is, as in
Ps 48:2; "the city of the great King", the King Messiah, and where he displays his greatness; here he appears great and glorious, shows his power and his glory; is seen in the galleries and through the lattices of ordinances, in his beauty and splendour; here he grants his gracious presence, and bestows his favours and blessings; and is therefore greatly to be praised here, as he is by all his people on the above accounts, Even

[in] the mountain of his holiness; as Mount Zion is called on account of the temple built upon it, and the worship of God in it; and a fit emblem it was of the church of Christ, which, as that is, is chosen and, loved of God, and is his habitation, is impregnable and immovable, and consists of persons sanctified by God the Father, in the Son, and through the Spirit.

Psalms 48:2

Ver. 2. Beautiful for situation,.... This, and what follows, are said of the city of God, the city of Jerusalem, which was delightfully situated on an eminence, in a wholesome air; the brook Kidron gliding by it, the water of Siloah running through it or at least through some parts of it; fields and gardens adjoining to it, and mountains all around it: and so the church of Christ is built upon him, the Rock; the river of divine love runs by it, the streams whereof make it glad; the green pastures of the word and ordinances are in it; and salvation is as walls and bulwarks about it; and so healthful is it, that the inhabitants have no reason to say they are sick, since the people that dwell therein have their iniquities forgiven, Isa 33:24;

the joy of the whole earth: that is, the city of Jerusalem, **La 2:15**; especially it was so when Christ, whose birth near it was matter of great joy to all people; when he who is the desire of all nations was in it; and when the Gospel went out from it unto the whole earth, and caused joy wherever it came in power, and with the Holy Ghost: and the church of Christ, particularly in the latter day, will be an eternal excellency, and a joy of many generations, Isa 60:15; and even now the whole world has reason to rejoice and be glad, because of the church of Christ in it, who are the light of the world and the salt of the earth, and on whose account the world continues, and the men of it enjoy the blessings they do;

[is] Mount Zion; or "by Mount Zion": Jerusalem was near it, and beautifully situated by it;

[on] the sides of the north; Jerusalem was north of Zion, as Zion was south of Jerusalem; likewise the temple was on the north part of Mount Zion, Isa 14:13; the altar and altar gate were on the north side at the temple, and there were the tables on which the sacrifices were slain, **Eze 8:5**; and on the north side of the altar was the creature to be offered killed, **Le 1:11**; and perhaps some reference is here had to the church of Christ in the latter day, which for many years past has been chiefly in our northern part of the world: hence the Protestant doctrine is by the Papists called the Northern Heresy; and it will be "tidings out of the north" that shall trouble the man of sin, or some agent of his, to come forth with fury, and plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain, Da 11:44;

the city of the great King; of Christ the King of kings;
See Gill on "Ps 47:2"; and
See Gill on "Ps 48:1".

Psalms 48:3

Ver. 3. God is known in her palaces for a refuge. As there were palaces in Jerusalem; see Ps 48:13; so there are in the church of Christ; every place in it is a palace fit for a king; and everyone that has truly a name and a place there are kings and priests unto God: and here God is a "refuge" both for saints and

sinners to fly unto;
See Gill on "Ps 46:1"; and is "known" to be so; the ministers of the Gospel being here appointed to direct and encourage souls to flee to Christ for refuge, who is the hope set before them in the everlasting Gospel, preached by them to lay hold upon; and all that do flee to him know, by experience, that he is a refuge for them; and as all the people of God do in every time of distress, and when all refuge fails them elsewhere.

Psalms 48:4

Ver. 4. For, lo, the kings were assembled,.... As the princes of the Philistines to seek for David, when in the strong hold of Zion, **2Sa 5:17**; as the Ethiopians in the time of Asa, 2Ch 14:9; and the Moabites and Ammonites in the times of Jehoshaphat, 2Ch 20:1; and the kings of Syria and Israel in the times of Ahaz, **Isa 7:1**; and Sennacherib with his princes, who, in his esteem, were kings, in the times of Hezekiah, 2Ki 18:17; which are instances of the kings, of the nations' gathering together against Zion, the city of Jerusalem, and people of the Jews, who were typical of the church of Christ; and that without success, and to their own confusion and destruction; though this seems to refer to the latter day of the Gospel dispensation, when all the kings of the earth, Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan, will be gathered together at the instigation of Satan, to the battle of the great day of the Lord God Almighty, in a place called Armageddon, where they will be defeated by Christ the King of kings, Re 16:13. Jarchi and Kimchi interpret the passage of Gog and Magog gathering together to fight against Jerusalem, with which compare Re 20:8;

they passed by together; either to the battle, as Jarchi explains it; or they passed by Jerusalem, the city of our God, the church, without entering into it, or doing it any harm.

Psalms 48:5

Ver. 5. They saw [it],.... Either the city or the power of God, as Aben Ezra; or, as Jarchi, God himself going forth to fight against the nations. This refers to the power Christ will take to himself, and show forth, by reigning in his church, and protecting it, which will not only be visible to the saints, but to the nations of the world; and to the brightness of Christ's coming in his spiritual reign, with the lustre of which antichrist will be destroyed, Re 11:17; and to the glorious state of the church, signified by the rising of the witnesses, and

their standing on their feet, and ascending to heaven, which will be seen by their enemies, Re 11:11; and to the destruction of Rome, the smoke of whose burning, the kings of the earth, that have committed fornication with her, will see and lament,
Re 18:8;

[and] so their marvelled: at the glory of the church, the security of it, the power of Christ in it and over it, and at the destruction of mystical Babylon; see Isa 52:14;

they were troubled: as Herod and all Jerusalem were, upon hearing of the birth of Christ, **Mt 2:3**; so these kings will be, upon seeing the coming and power of Christ in the latter day, the invincibleness of his church, and their own immediate and utter ruin: this will be the time or the howling of the shepherds, both civil and ecclesiastical, when all hands will be faint, and every man's heart will melt, Zec 11:2;

[and] hasted away: fled for fear of the great King at the head of his armies, in the defence of his church and people: and as the kings of the earth also at the destruction of Rome will flee and stand afar off, for fear of her torment, Re 18:10.

Psalms 48:6

Ver. 6. Fear took hold upon them there,.... That is, either when they came up to the city, and passed by it, and saw what they did; or, as Kimchi observes, in the place where they thought to have made a great slaughter; that is, in Armageddon, Re 16:16; so upon the slaughter of the seven thousand names of men, or men of name and renown, such as the kings here assembled, the remnant will be frightened, Re 11:13;

[and] pain, as of a woman in travail; this figure is made use of elsewhere, when the destruction of Babylon and the coming of Christ are spoken of; see Isa 13:8.

Psalms 48:7

Ver. 7. Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with east wind. This is either another simile, expressing the greatness of the dread and fear that shall now seize the kings of the earth; which will be, as Kimchi observes, as if they were smitten with a strong east wind, which breaks the ships of Tarshish; and to the same purpose is the note of Aben Ezra; who says, the psalmist compares the pain that shall take hold upon them to an east wind in the sea, which breaks the ships; for by Tarshish is meant, not Tartessus in Spain, nor Tarsus in Cilicia, or the port to which the Prophet Jonah went and took shipping; but the sea in general: or else this phrase denotes the manner in which the antichristian kings, and antichristian states, wilt be destroyed; just as ships upon the ocean are dashed to pieces with a strong east wind: or it may design the loss of all their riches and substance brought to them in ships; hence the lamentations of merchants, and sailors, and ship masters, Re 18:15.

Psalms 48:8

Ver. 8. As we have heard, so have we seen,.... These are the words of the people of God making their observations on the above things; and so Aben Ezra and Kimchi understand them of the people of Israel; and the former, referring them to the war of Gog and Magog, paraphrases them thus:

"the Israelites shall say in that day, as we have heard the prophets, who prophesied of the fall of Gog and Magog, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts."

The words may be understood, either of facts which have been reported and heard to have been done in time past, to which others will correspond, and will be seen to do to in the latter day; as, for instance, as it has been heard that God inflicted plagues upon Egypt; so it will be seen that he will pour out the vials of his wrath upon the great city, which is spiritually called Egypt and Sodom: as it has been heard that God brought his people Israel out of Egypt with a mighty hand; so it will be seen that he will deliver his people from the captivity and tyranny of the man of sin, and will call them out from Babylon a little before the destruction of it: as it has been heard that Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the Red sea; so it will be seen that Babylon shall be thrown down like a mill stone cast into the sea, and be found no more: as it has been heard that, literal Babylon is destroyed; so it will be seen that mystical Babylon will be destroyed also: and as it has been heard that the kings of the nations, at several times, have gathered themselves together against Jerusalem, without effect; so it will be seen treat the kings of the earth will assemble together against the church of Christ; but, as soon as they shall come up to her, and look upon her, they shall be astonished and flee with the utmost consternation, fear, and dread, and be utterly ruined: or else the sense is, as it has been heard, from the promises and prophecies delivered out from time to time, that God will grant his presence to his church and people, and will be the protection of them, and will destroy all his and their enemies; so it has been seen that these have been fulfilled, more or less, in all ages; in the latter day their accomplishment will be full and manifest, even

in the city of the Lord of hosts; of the hosts of heaven and earth, of all armies above and below; and therefore the church must be safe under his protection;

in the city of our God: the covenant God of his people; wherefore, as the former title declares his power, this shows his love and affection, and both together secure the happiness of the saints: wherefore it follows,

God will establish it for ever. Not only particular believers, of which the church consists, are established on the foundation, Christ; but the church itself is built on him, the Rock against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; yet as they are not always in a settled and constant condition, so neither is that, being sometimes tossed with the tempests of afflictions and persecutions, and sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; but in the latter day it will be established on the top of the mountains; and which is a desirable thing by all the saints, and what they should, as many do, earnestly pray for; and which God will do in his own time; and then it shall be established for ever, and be a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of its stakes shall be removed, nor any of its cords broken, **Isa 2:2**
Isa 33:20.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 48:9

Ver. 9. We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God,.... Jarchi interprets it, "we have waited for thy lovingkindness"; to see thy salvation; and some, as Ben Melech observes, explain it of hope and expectation; as if the sense was, "we have hoped for thy lovingkindness"; so the Syriac version renders it, and the word used has the signification of tarrying, 1Sa 14:9. God has his set time to favour his Zion, and till that time comes it is right in them to be hoping, expecting, and waiting for it. The Chaldee paraphrase is, "we have esteemed thy goodness"; it being very excellent, exceeding valuable, and better than life itself; but other Jewish writers, as Menachem, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben

Melech, render it as we do, "we have thought", &c. The lovingkindness of God towards his people in Christ is a very delightful and profitable subject to dwell in meditation upon, to consider the objects, instances, cause, and nature of it; and serves greatly to encourage faith and hope, to draw out love to God, and engage to a ready and cheerful obedience to his will; and this is sometimes done in public, as well as in private conversation, and in the closet; as follows;

in the midst of thy temple; the church of Christ, which is of his building, where he dwells, and grants his presence, and is often called the temple of God in the New Testament, in allusion to Solomon's temple; see **1Co 3:16**; here the word of God is preached, his ordinances administered, and his presence granted; which are instances of his lovingkindness, and lead his people to think of it; and particularly when the faithful ministers of the Gospel make mention of it, and the ordinance of the supper is administering, which is intended to bring to remembrance the love of God and Christ: moreover, in the latter day, to which this psalm belongs, the temple of God will be opened, Re 11:19; that is, the true worship of God will be restored, and pure and undefiled religion freely exercised; the Gospel will be clearly and fully preached; and the ordinances administered as they were first delivered, which will lead the saints to think of the lovingkindness of God unto them; and particularly when they shall see the angels with the seven vials the executioners of God's wrath on the antichristian states, go forth from the temple to pour them out upon them, Re 15:6.

Psalms 48:10

Ver. 10. According to thy name, O God, so [is] thy praise unto the ends of the earth,.... That is, as he himself is in the perfections of his nature, which are displayed in the works of his bands, throughout the whole creation; so is or ought his praise to be: or rather, as in the latter day his name will be great in all the earth, **Mal 1:11**; so will his praise be; and as his name will be One, Zec 14:9; he will be one Lord, there will be one faith and one baptism; his worship, word, and ordinances, will be uniformly observed and attended to; so will be his praise: all the saints will unite together in giving glory to him: he, and he alone, shall be exalted. Moreover, his Gospel is his name, **Ac 9:15**; and that in the latter day will be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, Re 14:6; and multitudes, both of Jews and Gentiles, will be convert ed, and from the uttermost parts of the earth will be heard songs of praise and glory unto him, Isa 24:15;

thy right hand is full of righteousness: of all spiritual blessings for his people;

and particularly of the righteousness of Christ, which God accepts of, imputes unto, and liberally bestows upon them: and it is also full of punitive justice, which he inflicts on his and their enemies; his right hand teaches him terrible things, and these terrible things he does in righteousness; all his works are in righteousness, which the right hand, being the instrument of action, is a token of. Moreover, Christ is the right hand of God; he is the man of his right hand, and as dear to him as his right hand; he is the right hand of his righteousness, by which he upholds his people; and this right hand of his is full of righteousness; he does nothing else but righteousness; he is the author and donor of it to his people, and will execute righteousness upon his enemies; in righteousness he will make war with them, Re 19:11; and which is greatly the sense of this passage, as appears by Ps 48:11.

Psalms 48:11

Ver. 11. Let Mount Zion rejoice,.... The church in general; see
Ps 48:1;

let the daughters of Judah be glad; particular churches; and so the Targum renders it, "the congregations of the house of Judah"; or particular believers; such as are called the daughters of Jerusalem, and the daughters of Zion, **So 3:10**; these are exhorted to joy and gladness, at the loving kindness of God, at the spread of his name and glory to the ends of the earth, and at his righteousness his right hand is full of; and as it follows,

because of thy judgments; executed on the antichristian kings,
Ps 48:4; and on all the antichristian states, and on the whore of Babylon, and those who have committed fornication with her; see
Re 19:1.

Psalms 48:12

Ver. 12. Walk about Zion, and go round about her,.... These words are either an address to the enemies of the church, sarcastically delivered; calling upon them to come, and surround, and besiege Zion, and see what the issue and consequence of it will he, even the same as that of the kings, Ps 48:4; or to the builders of Zion, as Jarchi observes, to come and take a survey of it, and see what repairs were necessary; or rather to the saints, to the daughters of Judah before mentioned, to take a view of the strength and defence of the church, for their own comfort and encouragement, and to report the same to others for theirs also; for by walking around it may be observed the foundation, the rock and eminence on which it is built, Christ Jesus; the wall of it, the Lord himself, a wall of fire; the entrance into it, Christ the gate of righteousness; the fortress and strong hold of it the same; and the guards about it, the watch men on its walls, the ministers of the Gospel, and an innumerable company of angels, that in a circle surround both ministers and people; see **Re 7:11**;

tell the towers thereof; see 2Ch 26:9; the Lord himself is the tower of his people, high and strong, which secures and defends them from all their enemies, Ps 18:2; the ministers of the Gospel, who are immovable, and are set for the defence of it, **Jer 6:27**; the Scriptures of truth, which are like a tower built for an armoury, out of which the saints are furnished and provided with proper armour, whereby they are able to engage with false teachers, and to overcome the evil one, **So 4:4**; and the ordinances of the Gospel, the church's two breasts, said to be as towers, **So 8:10**; some render the words, "tell in the towers" {i}; publish on the house tops, declare in the high places of the city, in the most public manner, the great things of the Gospel, which relate to the glory of Christ and his church.

{i} hyldgm en toiv purgoiv authv, Sept. "in turribus ejus", V. L.

Psalms 48:13

Ver. 13. Mark ye well her bulwarks,.... Such as the free favour of God in Christ; which is not only as a shield, but as a bulwark to the church; his everlasting love, electing grace, the covenant of grace, with its blessings and promises, all which are more immovable than rocks and mountains; and especially the power of God, which surrounds his church, as the mountains did Jerusalem; and by which they are kept and preserved as in a garrison, Ps 125:2. Also salvation by Christ; his righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction, which God has appointed for walls and bulwarks, and which make the city, the church, a strong and impregnable one, Isa 26:1. Likewise the Spirit of God, and his operations and influences, which are a standard against the enemy's flood of opposition and persecution; and who being in his church and people, is greater than he that is in the world, Isa 59:19 **1Jo 4:4**. Some render the words, set "your hearts on her strength", as the Vulgate Latin version; that is, on Christ, who is the strength of the poor and needy in their distress; the strength of their hearts, of their lives, and of their salvation, and the security of the church. Others readier them, "set your hearts on her armies"; as the Targum is; her volunteers, her soldiers, who endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ, fight the Lord's battles, and are more than conquerors through him; and a lovely sight it is to behold them, with Christ at the head of them; see Re 19:14;

consider her palaces; for Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, have their dwelling places in Zion; and here, besides apostles, prophets, evangelists, and ordinary ministers of the word, who are rulers and officers set in the first place, every saint is a prince and a king; and has a place and a name here, better than that of sons and daughters of the greatest potentate on earth; every dwelling place in Mount Zion is a palace.

that ye may tell [it] to the generation following: that is, the beauty and glory, strength and safety of the church; and even all that is spoken of her in this psalm, as well as what follows: this is the end proposed by taking a circuit round Zion, and making the above observations on it.

Psalms 48:14

Ver. 14. For this God [is] our God for ever and ever,.... Who is spoken of throughout the whole psalm as greatly to be praised, as well as is known in Zion, as the stability, security, and protection of her. This is said as pointing unto him as if visible, as Christ is God manifest in the flesh, now in Gospel times, to which this psalm belongs; as distinguishing him from all others, from the gods of the Gentiles, rejected by the people of God; as claiming an interest in him as their covenant God; as exulting in the view of such relation to him; as suggesting how happy they were on this account; and especially since this relation will always continue, being founded in an everlasting covenant, and arising from the unchangeable love of God;

he will be our guide, [even] unto death; the Lord orders the steps of the righteous, holds them by the right hand, and guides them with his counsel and in judgment: Christ, the great Shepherd of the flock, feeds them, as the antitype of David, according to the integrity of his heart, and guides them by the skilfulness of his hands; he guides their feet in the ways of peace, life, and salvation, by himself; he leads them into green pastures, beside the still waters, and unto fountains of living waters: the Spirit of the Lord leads them to the fulness of Christ; guides them into all truth, as it is in him; directs them into his and his Father's love, and leads them on to the land of uprightness. And this guide is an everlasting one; "even unto death", or "in death", or "above death" {k}; so as not to be hurt of the second death. He guides not only to the brink of

Jordan's river, but through the deep waters of it, and never leaves till he has landed them safe on the shores of eternity: and some, as Aben Ezra, render the word as if it was tymlwe, "for ever"; and others, as Abendana observes, render it "secretly"; the Lord sometimes leading his people in ways dark and hidden to them: and others give the sense of it, "as in the days of youth"; that is, God is the guide of his people in old age as in youth; he is always their guide, and ever will be: to which sense incline R. Moses in Aben Ezra, others in Kimchi and Abendana, and as also Jarchi and the Chaldee paraphrase; but Kimchi and Ben Melech render it as we do, "unto death", or "unto our death".

{k} twm le "super mortem", Montanus; "supra mortem", Cocceius, Gussetius, Michaelis; so Syr. vers. "in ipsa morte", Pfeiffer, Dub. Ver. loc. 66.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 49:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 49

To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah. Aben Ezra says this psalm is a very excellent one, since in it is explained the Light of the world to come, and of the rational and immortal soul; and Kimchi is of opinion that it respects both this world and that which is to come: and indeed it treats of the vanity of trusting in riches: of the insufficiency of them for the redemption of the soul; of the short continuance of worldly honour and substance; of the certainty of death, and of the resurrection of the dead. And the design of it is to expose the folly of trusting in uncertain riches, and to comfort the people of God under the want of them.

Ver. 1. Hear this,.... Not the law, as some Jewish writers {l} interpret it, which was not desirable to be heard by those that did hear it; it being a voice of wrath and terror, a cursing law, and a ministration of condemnation and death; but rather ad atywxa, "this news", as the Targum; the good news of the Gospel; the word of "this" salvation; the voice from heaven; the word not spoken by angels, but by the Lord himself: or hmkxh taz, "this wisdom", as Kimchi interprets it; which the psalmist was about to speak of, Ps 49:3; also the parable and dark saying he should attend unto and open, Ps 49:4; and indeed it may take in the whole subject matter of the psalm;

all [ye] people: not the people of Israel only, but all the people of the world, as appears from the following clause; whence it is evident that this psalm belongs to Gospel times; in which the middle wall of partition is broken down, and there is no difference of people; God is the God both of Jews and Gentiles; Christ is the Saviour and Redeemer of one as well as of the other; the Spirit of God has been poured out upon the latter; the Gospel has been sent into all the world, and all are called upon to hear it;

give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world, or "of time"; so the word is rendered "age", the age of a man, Ps 39:5. The inhabitants of this world are but for a time; wherefore Ben Melech interprets the phrase by Nmwh yvna, "men of time", the inhabitants of time; it is peculiar to the most High to "inhabit eternity", Isa 57:15. Under the Gospel dispensation there is no distinction of places; the Gospel is not confined to the land of Judea; the sound of it is gone into all the world, and men may worship God, and offer incense to his name, in every place; and whoever fears him in any nation is accepted of him.

{l} Midrash Tillim in loc. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 106. 2.

Psalms 49:2

Ver. 2. Both low and high,.... Or "both the sons of Adam and the sons of men". By the sons of "Adam" are meant the multitude of the people, as Ben Melech explains it; the common people, the meaner sort, the base things of this world; and such are they, generally speaking, who are called by grace under the Gospel dispensation: and by "the sons of men" are meant the princes, nobles, and great men of the earth; men of high birth and illustrious extraction: so Adam is rendered, "the mean man", and "Ish", the word here used, "the great man", in **Isa 2:9**. And though not many, yet some of this sort are called by grace; and all of them have a peculiar concern in many things spoken of in this psalm; see
Ps 49:12;

rich and poor together: these are called upon to hearken to what is after said, that the one may not be elated with and trust in their riches, and that the other may not be dejected on account of their poverty; and seeing both must die, and meet together at the judgment day; and inasmuch as the Gospel is preached to one as to another; and for the most part the poor hear it, receive it, and are called by it.

Psalms 49:3

Ver. 3. My mouth shall speak of wisdom,.... Or "wisdoms" {m}; of Christ, who is so called, **Pr 1:20**. He being as a divine Person the wisdom of God, and the only wise God; and having all the treasures of wisdom in him, as man and Mediator: of him the prophet spake, and of him the apostles and all Gospel ministers speak; of the glories of his Person, of the fulness of his grace, and of his wonderful works; especially of that of redemption and salvation by him, in which there is an abounding of wisdom and prudence. Or the Gospel may be meant, and all the truths of it, in which there is a glorious display of divine wisdom; it is the wisdom of God in a mystery; hidden and ancient wisdom; and which, when truly understood, makes a man wise unto salvation; see **1Co 2:6**;

and the meditation of my heart [shall be] of understanding; or "understandings" {n}; and this is in order to the former; what the heart meditates the mouth speaks. If the heart meditates on understanding, the mouth will speak of wisdom; and a man should think before he speaks, especially the ministers of the Gospel: they ought to meditate on the word of God, the Gospel, and the truths of it, that their profiling may appear to all; that they may understand divine things themselves, and deliver them out to the understanding of others: their concern should be, that through meditation they may have a good treasure of wisdom and knowledge in their hearts, that out of it they may bring forth things pleasant and profitable unto others.

{m} twmkx "sapientias", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {n} twnwbt "intelligentias", Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 49:4

Ver. 4. I will incline mine ear to a parable,.... In which way of speaking the doctrines of the Gospel were delivered out by Christ,
Mt 13:3. Wherefore the prophet, representing his apostles and disciples, signifies that he would listen thereunto, that he might attain to the knowledge thereof, and communicate it to others;

I will open my dark saying upon the harp; the enigmas, riddles, and mysteries of the Gospel, being understood by the ministers of it, are opened and explained in a very pleasant and delightful manner; they are made clear and evident, and are as a lovely song upon a harp; see

Eze 33:32.

Psalms 49:5

Ver. 5. Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil,.... This is the principal thing that all are before called to hearken to. This is the wisdom and understanding the psalmist had been meditating upon, and was about to utter; this is the parable he inclined his ear to, and the dark saying he would open; namely, that a saint has nothing to fear in the worst of times; which is a riddle to a natural man. Aben Ezra interprets "the days of evil" of the days of old age, as they are called, Ec 12:1, which bring on diseases, weakness, and death; in which a good man has no reason to fear; as that he should want the necessaries of life, since they that fear the Lord shall want no good thing; or that he should not hold out to the end, seeing God, who is the guide of youth, is the staff of old age, and carries to hoary hairs, and will never leave nor forsake; and though the wicked man in old age has reason to be afraid of death and eternity at hand, the saint has not; but may sing, on the borders of the grave, "O death! where is thy sting?" &c. 1Co 15:55. Also days in which iniquity abounds, and error and heresy prevail, are days of evil; and though the good man may fear he shall be led aside by the ill example of some, or by the craft of others; yet he need not, since the foundation of God stands sure, and he knows them that are his, and will take care of them and preserve them. Moreover, times of affliction and persecution are evil days; see **Eph 5:16**; and such will be the hour of temptation, that shall try the inhabitants of the earth, **Re 3:10**. Yet the righteous man need not fear, since it is always well with him, let his case and circumstances be what they will. Yea, the day of death, and the day of judgment are days of evil to wicked men; and therefore they put them away far from them, **Am 6:3**; but believers have reason to rejoice at them, the day of their death being better than the day of their birth; and the day of judgment will be the time of the glorious appearing of Christ to them. It is added,

[when] the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about; that is, the sins of life and conversation; "heels" denote "steps", and the word is sometimes so rendered, as in Ps 56:6; and "iniquity" intends sin committed in walking; and so designs not original sin, as some have thought, but actual sins and transgressions: and these may be said to "compass [the saints] about", when they are chastised for them, and so are brought to a sense and acknowledgment of them, and to be humbled for them; and then they have nothing to fear in a slavish way, since these chastisements are not in wrath, or in a way of vindictive justice, or punishment for sin; but the fruits of love and favour. Or

the sense may be, when death, the fruit of iniquity, the wages of sin, surrounds and seizes upon me; ypwob, "in my end", as the Targum; in my last days, at the heel or close of them, I will not fear; the saint has no reason to fear, when he walks through death's dark valley; for death is abolished as a penal evil, its sting is took away, and its curse removed. Some render the words, "when the iniquity of my supplanters shall compass me about" {o}; meaning his enemies, who either lay in wait for him privately, and endeavoured to supplant him; or that pursued him closely, and pressed upon his heels, just ready to destroy him; yet even then he signifies he should not fear: and then the sense is the same with Ps 27:1; to which agree the Syriac and Arabic versions, which render it, "the iniquity of mine enemies"; or, "when my enemies surround me": and it may be literally rendered, when "iniquity surrounds me at my heels" {p}; that is, when men, who are iniquity itself, encompass me, are at my heels, ready to seize me, I will not fear.

{o} ybqe Nwe "iniquitas supplantatorum meorum", Gejerus; "insidiatorum meorum", some in Vatablus. {p} "Iniquitas oppressorum", i.e. "iniquissimi mei oppressores ambiunt me", Gejerus.

Psalms 49:6

Ver. 6. They that trust in their wealth,.... In their outward force, power, and strength; their horses, chariots, and armies; see
Ps 33:16; or in their worldly goods and substance; which seems to be the sense of the word here, as appears from
Ps 49:10. To "trust" in them is to set the eye and heart upon them; or to take up rest in them, to depend on them, to the neglect of divine Providence, with respect to future living in this world; and to expect eternal happiness hereafter, because favoured with many earthly enjoyments here: so to do is evil. Therefore the Targum is, "woe to the wicked that trust in their substance". And it is also very weak and foolish to trust in riches, since they are uncertain, are here today, and gone tomorrow; and are unsatisfying, he that has much would still have more: nor can they deliver from evil, from present judgments, from the sword, the pestilence, and famine; nor from death, nor from the future judgment, and wrath to come; and are often injurious to the spiritual and eternal welfare of men; see **1Ti 6:9**;

and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; of their acquisition of them by their own diligence and industry; and of their having them because of some peculiar virtue and excellency in themselves; and of the abundance of them. Such rejoicing and boasting is evil; since riches are the gifts of God, the blessings of his Providence; and are often bestowed on persons neither wise nor diligent, and much less deserving; see **Jer 9:23**. The whole may be applied to the Romish antichrist and his followers, who trust in and boast of their temporal riches, which in one hour will come to nought, Re 18:7; and of the treasure of the church, of merit; and works of supererogation; with all which they cannot redeem one soul from ruin and destruction, as follows:

Psalms 49:7

Ver. 7. None [of them] can by any means redeem his brother,.... That is, "with their substance", or "riches", as the Targum and Jarchi supply. Some, according to the order of the words in the original, render them, "a brother redeeming cannot redeem a man", or "anyone" {q}: but, as Aben Ezra observes, xa, "a brother", is the effect, and vya, "a man", is the cause. The Targum is, "his brother that is a captive, a man redeeming cannot redeem with his substance"; or by any means redeem. Indeed a rich man may redeem his brother from debt, or from a prison, into which he is cast for it, by paying his debts for him; or from thraldom and bondage, being taken captive and becoming a prisoner of war, by giving a ransom for him. This he may do with respect to man; but, with respect to God, he cannot, with all his riches, pay the debts he owes to the law and justice of God; nor free him from his bondage to sin, Satan, and the law, by whom he is held a captive. The sense here is, that he cannot redeem him from death; he cannot, with all his money, secure him from dying; nor, when dead, bring him back from the grave; and much less deliver him from eternal death, or wrath to come; this only God can do, see Ps 49:15;

nor give to God a ransom for him; a ransom to redeem from sin, and so from the curse of the law and eternal death, must be given to God, against whom sin is committed, the lawgiver that is able to save and destroy; whose law is transgressed by it, and must be fulfilled; and whose justice is affronted and injured, and must be satisfied; and who is the creditor to whom men are debtors, and therefore the payment must be made to him. Hence our Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of his people, paid the ransom price to God, and offered himself a sacrifice to him; see **Eph 5:2**. But this ransom is not of man's giving, but of God's; it is of his finding out in his infinite wisdom: he set forth and sent forth Christ to be the ransom or "propitiation" {r}, as the word here used signifies; and Christ came to give his life and himself a ransom for many, and is the propitiation for their sins: and this is a sufficient one, a plenteous redemption, and there needs no other, not is there any other; there were typical atonements under the law, but there is no real atonement, propitiation, or ransom, but by the precious blood of Christ; not by corruptible things, as silver and gold; with these a man cannot give to God a ransom for himself, or for his brother.

{q} So Cocceius; and some in Michaelis. {r} wrpk "propitiationem suam", Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 49:8

Ver. 8. For the redemption of their soul [is] precious,.... Or "heavy" {s}; it is, as Jarchi observes, "heavier than their substance": it is too weighty a matter for the richest man in the world to engage in; he is not equal to it; his riches are not an equivalent to the redemption of a soul which has sinned, and which is of more worth than the whole world: "what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" or another for him? all the substance of his house would be utterly despised. It requires a greater price for the redemption of it than gold and silver, and therefore it is impossible to be obtained by any such means; and which may be the sense of the word here, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; and so it is used for that which is "rare", "difficult", yea, "impossible", not to be found or come at, in **1Sa 3:1**. The only price of redemption of the soul is the precious blood of Christ; his life is the ransom price, yea, he himself, **1Pe 1:18** **1Ti 2:6**; nor is the redemption of the soul possible upon any other ground;

and it ceaseth for ever; that is, the redemption of the soul; it must have ceased, it could never have been accomplished, had not Christ undertook it and performed it; he has obtained eternal redemption, and in him we have it, and in no other. Or the words may be rendered, "and he ceaseth for ever"; the brother, whose soul or life is to be redeemed, he dies; see Ps 12:1; and dies the second and eternal death, for aught his brother can do for him, with all his riches: or he that attempts to redeem him, "he leaves off for ever" {t}; see Ps 36:3; whether he will or not, as Jarchi observes; he ceases from redeeming his brother; he finds he cannot do it; his endeavours are vain and fruitless. Some join and connect these words with the following, "and it ceaseth for ever, that he should still live for ever", &c. that is, it is impossible that such an one by such means should live for ever. Gussetius {u} renders and interprets the words quite to another sense, "but the redemption of their soul shall come": the true redemption price by Christ; and which, being once paid and perfectly done, "ceaseth for ever", and shall never be required more; so that he for whom it is made "shall live for ever", as in Ps 49:9, which is a truly evangelic sense.

{s} rqy "gravis", De Dieu, Michaelis. {t} ldx "definet", Montanus, Vatablus. {u} Ebr. Comment. p. 345.

Psalms 49:9

Ver. 9. That he should still live for ever,.... Or "though he should live", &c. {w}. Though the rich man should live ever so long, a thousand years twice told, as in **Ec 6:6**; yet he could not in all this time, with all his riches, redeem his brother; and at last must die himself, and so must his brother too, as his own experience and observation may assure him, Ps 49:10. Or the meaning is, he cannot so redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him, that he should live a corporeal life for ever, and never die; since all men die, wise men and fools, rich and poor; and much less that he should live and enjoy an "eternal life", as the Targum; a life of happiness and bliss hereafter, which is not to be obtained by gold and silver, but is the pure gift of God;

[and] not see corruption; the grave, the pit of corruption, the house appointed for all living: or "the judgment of hell", according to the Chaldee paraphrase.

{w} yhyw "etiamsi vivat", Gejerus.

Psalms 49:10

Ver. 10. For he seeth [that] wise men die,.... This is a reason convincing the rich man, that with all his riches he cannot redeem his brother from death; since he must see, by daily and constant experience, that none are exempted from dying, no, not even the wise man; and therefore, not the rich, since wisdom is better than riches, and is said to give life, **Ec 7:12**; and yet wise men die, yea, Solomon, the wisest of men, died. Worldly wise men, such who are wiser in their generation than the children of light, know how, to get money and estates, and to provide for futurity, and yet cannot secure themselves from death: men that are wise in natural things, know the secrets of nature, the constitution of human bodies, what is proper to preserve health and life, as philosophers and physicians, and yet cannot deliver themselves from death: wise politicians, prudent magistrates, instructors of mankind in all the branches of useful knowledge, who are profitable to themselves and others, and are the most deserving to live because of usefulness, yet these die as well as others: such as are spiritually wise, wise unto salvation, who know themselves, and know Christ, whom to know is life eternal; and the wisest among them, such as are capable of teaching others the hidden and mysterious wisdom of God; even these wise men and prophets do not live for ever. The Targum interprets this of wicked wise men, condemned to hell; or as it is in the king's Bible,

"the wicked wise men, who die the second death;"

see **Re 2:11**; and are condemned to hell;

likewise the fool and the brutish person perish; the worldly fool, who trusts in his riches, and boasts of them; his soul is at once required of him. The atheistical fool, who says there is no God, no judgment, no future state; has made a covenant with death, and with hell is at an agreement; this covenant does not stand, he dies, and finds himself dreadfully mistaken: the fool that is so immorally, who makes a mock at sin, a jest of religion, and puts away the evil day far from him; his great wickedness, to which he is given, shall not deliver him from death. Every man is become brutish in his knowledge; but there are some among the people more brutish than others, who are as natural brute beasts, and shall utterly perish in their own corruptions. The wise good man dies, but perishes not; he inherits eternal life; but the wicked fool and brute not only perish by death, but are punished with everlasting destruction in soul and body;

and leave their wealth to others; they cannot carry it with them, so that it will be of no service to them after death any more than at it: if the Judge could be bribed by gold, as he cannot, they will not have it with them to do it; they came into the world naked, and so they will go out, and carry nothing with them, but leave all behind them; either to their babes, their children, and heirs, Ps 17:14; or to strangers, they know not who; and if they do, they do not know whether they will be wise men or fools, or what use they will make of it, Ps 39:6 **Ec 2:18**.

Psalms 49:11

Ver. 11. Their inward thought [is, that] their houses [shall continue] for ever,.... This is the thought of their hearts, what they secretly imagine, and conclude within themselves; either that their families, which may be meant by their houses, see **2Sa 3:1**; shall continue in succeeding ages, to the end of the world, to inherit their possessions, and perpetuate their name; though often so it is, that great families become extinct, and the seed of the wicked is cut off: or that their magnificent buildings, which they have erected to dwell in, and for their honour and glory, shall abide for ever; though in a little time, so it is by one means or another, like the buildings of the temple, not one stone is left upon another. Or the words may be rendered, "in the midst of them" (their heirs to whom they leave their wealth) "their houses shall remain for ever", so Aben Ezra; that is, so they fancy they will; but this is not always true, for fine houses and large estates belonging to them often pass into other hands and families. The word Mbrq, rendered "their inward part", by a transposition of two letters in it may be read Mrbq, "their graves", as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech observe; and to this sense the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions render the words: and then the meaning is, that of all the houses they have built or been possessed of, they have only one left, and that is the grave; in which they shall dwell until the resurrection, and therefore is called "a long home", Ec 12:5; see Job 17:13;

[and] their dwelling places to all generations; which signify the same as before;

they call their lands after their own names; as Egypt was called Mizraim, Ethiopia was called Cush, and Palestine Canaan, from men who were the first possessors of them, Ge 10:6. Or "they proclaim their names throughout the land" {x}; they seek to get a name, and spread and continue it in all part of the world; being unconcerned about their names being written in heaven, or about having a house not made with hands eternal there.

{x} So Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 49:12

Ver. 12. Nevertheless man [being] in honour abideth not,.... Or Adam: and some understand this of the first man Adam, who was created and crowned with glory and honour; but it did not abide with him, nor he in that: so some Jewish writers {y} interpret it. But whether the words will admit of this sense or not, the general view of the psalmist, which is to show the inconstancy and instability of worldly honour, may be exemplified in the case of the first man; he was in honour he was created after the image and likeness of God, and so was the glory of God, being his image; he was in friendship with God, as many instances show, and had dominion over all the creatures below; he had much knowledge of God, and communion with him, and was a pure, holy, and upright creature; but he continued not long in this state of honour and glory; "he lodged not a night" {z}, as the words may be rendered; see Ge 28:11; and as they are by some, who conclude from hence that Adam fell the same day in which he was created; and which is the sense of the above Jewish writers, who say, he was driven out of paradise the evening of that day; but though he might stand longer, and the word is sometimes used of a longer continuance; see Ps 25:13; yet by the account in Genesis it looks as if he continued in his state of honour but a short time;

he is like the beasts [that] perish; becoming mortal in his body, and brutish and stupid in his understanding. Or, "he is like the beasts", "they perish", or "[are] cut off" {a}; the word being in the plural number, which shows that not a single individual person is meant, but men in general; or, however, such of the sons of Adam that come to honour; these do not abide long in it, their honour is a very short lived one, sometimes it does not last their lives: they that are in high places are in slippery ones, and are often cast down from the pinnacle of honour in a moment; and if their glory does abide with them throughout the day of life, yet it shall not lodge with them in the night of the grave; thither their glory shall not descend after them, Ps 49:17; and when they die, they perish like the beasts; as they are like them in life, stupid, brutish, and ignorant, so in death; as the beast dies, so do they, **Ec 3:19**; as the one dies without any thought of or preparation for death, so do the other; as the one carries nothing along with it, so neither do the other: as beasts that die of themselves, for such are here meant, as Junius well observes, are good for nothing but to be cast into the ditch; so are wicked men, notwithstanding all their riches and honours; yea, it is worse with them than with the beasts, since after death comes judgment, and after that the second death, the wrath of God.

{y} Bereshit Rabba, s. 11. fol. 9. 1. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 19. {z} Nyly lb "non pernoctabit", Montanus, Amama; so Ainsworth. {a} wmdn "excisi sunt", Montanus.

Psalms 49:13

Ver. 13. This their way [is] their folly,.... This their last end becoming like the beasts that perish, which is the issue and event of all their confidence, ambition, and honour, shows the folly of their lives and conduct: or this their course of life, in trusting to their riches; boasting of their wealth; pleasing themselves with the thoughts of the continuance of their houses and dwelling places to all generations; and calling their lands after their own names; all proclaim their folly. Or, as some render the words, "this their way [is] their hope" or "confidence" {b}; they place all their hope and confidence in their riches and honour, which is but a vain hope and a foolish confidence;

yet their posterity approve their sayings; they are of the same sentiments with their fathers; they say the same things, and do the same actions; tread in their steps, and follow the same track; though there have been such innumerable instances of the vanity and inconstancy of all worldly riches and grandeur.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{b} wml lok "est fiducia ipsorum", Cocceius, Gejerus; "stolida fiducia vel spes", Michaelis.

Psalms 49:14

Ver. 14. Like sheep they are laid in the grave,.... They are not in life like sheep, harmless and innocent; nor reckoned as such for the slaughter, as the people of God are; unless it be that they are like them, brutish and stupid, thoughtless of death, and unconcerned about their estate after it; and so die and go into the grave, like natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, **2Pe 2:12**; or rather like sheep that have been grazing in good pasture in the daytime, at night are put into a dark and narrow pinfold or pound; so wicked rich men, having lived in great abundance and plenty in the day of life, when the night of death comes, they are put into the dark and narrow grave. And it is further to be observed, that the comparison is not to sheep prepared for slaughter, and killed for food; for these are not laid in a ditch, to which the grave may answer; but, as Junius observes, to those that die of themselves; to rotten sheep, and who are no other than carrion, and are good for nothing but to be cast into a ditch; so wicked men are laid in the grave; but as to be laid in the grave is common to good and bad after death, rather the words should be rendered, "like sheep they are laid in hell" {c}; as the word is in **Ps 9:17**; a place of utter darkness and misery, where the wicked rich man was put when he died,
Lu 16:19;

death shall feed on them: or "rule them" {d}; as shepherds rule their flocks, in imitation of whom kings govern their subjects; the same word is used of both; and so death is represented as a king, or rather as a tyrant reigning over the sons of men; even over kings and princes, and the great men of the earth, who have reigned over others; see **Ro 5:14**; or "shall feed them" {e}, as the shepherd feeds the sheep; not by leading them into green pastures, into the Elysian fields; but where a drop of water cannot be obtained to cool the tongue; into utter darkness, where are weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; into the apartments of hell, and habitations of devils, to be guests with them, and live as they do: or "shall feed on them"; as the wolf on the sheep, devouring their strength, and consuming their bodies, Job 18:13; but as this is no other than what it does to everyone, rather the second, or an eternal death, is here meant; the wrath of God, the worm that is always gnawing, eating, and consuming, and never dies;

and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; the upright are such to whom the uprightness or righteousness of Christ is shown or imputed, and who have right spirits renewed, and principles of grace and holiness formed in them, and walk uprightly in their lives and conversations; these, in the morning of the resurrection day, when Christ the sun of righteousness shall arise, when the light of joy and gladness, shall break forth upon his coming, at the beginning of the day of the Lord, which will last a thousand years; they, the dead in Christ, rising first, shall, during that time, reign with him as kings and priests; when the wicked, being destroyed in the general conflagration, shall become the footstool of Christ, and be like ashes under the soles of the feet of his people; and the kingdom, the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints; see **1Th 4:16** **Da 7:27**; and though this is a branch of the happiness and glory of the people of God, yet it is here mentioned as an aggravation of the misery of the wicked, who, in another state, will be subject to those they have tyrannized over here;

and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling; or "their form" {f} and figure; diseases often destroy the beauty of a man, death changes his countenance, and makes a greater alteration still; but the grave takes away the very form and figure of the man; or, as it is in the "Keri", or margin of the Hebrew text, "and their rock shall consume" {g}; that is, their riches, which are their rock, fortress, and strong city, and in which they place their trust and confidence; these shall fail them when they come to the grave, which is "their dwelling", and is the house appointed for all living: and seeming it is so, rather this should be understood of "hell" {h}, which will be the everlasting mansion of wicked men, and in which they will be punished in soul and body for ever; though rather the sense is, "when their rock", that is, Christ, shall come "to consume the grave", and destroy its power; when he, I say, shall come "out of his habitation", heaven, then shall the righteous have the dominion, **1Th 4:16**.

{c} lwavl "in inferno", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth. {d} Mery "reget eos", Vatablus. {e} "Pascet eos", Musculus, Tigurine version, Gejerus, Cocceius. {f} Mryu "figura eorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "forma eorum", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {g} Mrwu "auxilium eorum", Sept. V. L. Eth. Ar. "robur illorum", Musculus; "petra illorum", Cocceius. {h} lwav "infernus", Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 49:15

Ver. 15. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave,.... The psalmist expresses his faith, that though he should die, and for a while be under the power of the grave, yet he should be redeemed from it in the resurrection; which to the saints will be "the day of redemption", **Eph 4:30**; their bodies then will be redeemed from mortality, weakness, corruption, and dishonour, which attend them now, and in the grave; and which will, be in consequence of the redemption both of their souls and bodies, through the blood of Christ; see
Ho 13:14; or the words may be rendered, "but God will redeem my soul from the power of hell"; and so the Targum,

"David said by the spirit of prophecy, but God will redeem my soul from the judgment of hell;"

that is, will keep and preserve from the second death, from being hurt by it, or from its having any power over him; and Christ, who is the Redeemer of his people, and who, being God over, all, is an able and mighty one, has redeemed the souls of his from wrath to come, hell, or the second death, by destroying sin, the cause of it, by satisfying the law, the administration of it, and by abolishing death itself; all which he has done by giving himself a ransom price for them, whereby he has procured the redemption which rich men, with all their gold and silver, could never obtain for themselves or others. The reason why the psalmist believed Christ would do this for him, follows;

for he shall receive me. Or, "for he hath received me" {i}; into his arms of love, into his grace and favour; which he does openly at conversion, and in the

effectual calling; men being drawn to Christ by the cords of love, come to him, and are received by him, who casts none out; and the argument from hence is very strong, that such whom Christ receives by his grace, he will redeem from the grave, or raise at the last day to the resurrection of life: or, "for he will receive me"; as he does the souls of his people to glory at death, when, during their separate state, they will be happy with him, and takes their bodies into his care and custody; from whence it may be strongly concluded he will raise them up again at the resurrection morn, and then will receive them soul and body to himself, and present them to his Father, and introduce them into his kingdom and glory; wherefore, as in
Ps 49:5, the good man has no reason to fear anything in the day of evil; for when it goes ever so ill with others, it is well with him. The Targum in the king's Bible is,

"he will lead me into his part or portion in the world to come."

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{i} ynxqy "suscepit me", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Musculus, Gejerus.

Psalms 49:16

Ver. 16. Be not thou afraid when one is made rich,.... Who before was poor, or not so rich; but now become so, either by inheritance, or by his own diligence and industry, through the permission of Providence. This is to be understood, not of a good man, from whom oppression is not to be feared; but it may be hoped he will do good with his riches, by relieving the poor, and ministering to the support of the interest of religion, and using what power and authority he may have in defence of it: but it is to be interpreted of a wicked man; of one who neither fears God, nor regards man; who makes an ill use of his riches, power, and authority, to the oppression of the poor, and the persecution of the saints, and who seeks to be feared when he is not loved; see
Pr 28:12; but the people of God should not be afraid when this is the case, since God is their strength, their light, and their salvation; and since wicked men can go no further than permitted, and at most can do no more than kill the body; see Ps 27:1; these words are an apostrophe of the psalmist, either to his own soul, or to the saints, and every particular believer;

when the glory of his house is increased; either the same with riches, so called, Ge 31:1; because men are apt to glory in them, and for the most part obtain honour and glory from men by them; or children, and an increase of them, and especially when they come to honour; as also the advancement of themselves to high places of honour and trust; as well as additional buildings, large stately edifices, to make them look great, and perpetuate their names.

Psalms 49:17

Ver. 17. For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away,.... Such men, with all their riches and honour, must die; therefore why should men be afraid of them? or wherein are they to be accounted of, whose breath is in their nostrils? nor can they carry either of them with them; their riches will be of no profit to them after death, when they will be upon a level with the poor, who will have nothing to fear from them; see **1Ti 6:7**;

his glory shall not descend after him; either into the grave, the pit of corruption, the lower part of the earth, where kings, princes, counsellors, and peasants, are all alike, **Job 3:14**; or into hell, where are no titles of honour, nor respect of persons; no Pharaoh king of Egypt, or Sennacherib king of Assyria, there; but plain Pharaoh, &c. see Eze 32:31.

Psalms 49:18

Ver. 18. Though while he lived he blessed his soul,.... Praised and extolled himself on account of his acquisitions and merit; or proclaimed himself a happy man, because of his wealth and riches; or foolishly flattered himself with peace, prosperity, and length of days, and even with honour and glory after death;

and [men] will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself; or "but {k} men will praise thee", &c. both rich and poor, all wise men; when, as the Jewish interpreters {l} generally explain the word, a man regards true wisdom and religion, and is concerned for the welfare of his soul more than that of his body; or "when thou thyself doest well": that is, to others, doing acts of beneficence, communicating to the necessities of the poor; or rather, "when thou doest well to thyself", by enjoying the good things of life, taking his portion, eating the fruit of his labour, which is good and comely; see **Ec 5:18**.

{k} Kdwyw "atque celebraverint te", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {l} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi & Ben Melech in loc.

Psalms 49:19

Ver. 19. He shall go to the generation of his fathers,.... Be gathered to them at death; or "to the dwelling place of his fathers" {m}; either the grave, or hell, or both; the habitation of his wicked ancestors: unless the words be rendered, as they are by some, though "he shall come to the age of his fathers" {n}; live as long as they have done; yet he must die at last, and leave all behind, as they have done;

they shall never see light; neither he nor his fathers; they shall never see light of the sun any more, nor return to the light of the living, but shall lie in the dark and silent grave until the resurrection; or rather, they shall never enjoy eternal light, glory, and happiness. The ultimate state of glory is sometimes expressed by "light"; **Joh 8:12**; this the people of God, such who are made light in the Lord, and are the children of the day, shall see; but wicked men shall not; they will be cast into outer darkness, where are weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

{m} rwd-de "ad habitationem", Gejerus. {n} "Usque ad aetatem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 49:20

Ver. 20. Man [that is] in honour,.... A wicked man, as the Targum;
See Gill on "Ps 49:12";

and understandeth not; from whence his riches and honour, come, and what use he should make of them, and for what end he has them; or that understandeth not spiritual things, which relate to the salvation of his soul; who does not know God in Christ, nor the way of salvation by Christ; nor has any experience of the work of the Spirit of God upon his soul; nor has any spiritual understanding of the doctrines of the Gospel; nor knows himself, his state and condition, and what true happiness is:

is like the beasts [that] perish; See Gill on "Ps 49:12".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 50:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 50

A Psalm of Asaph. This psalm is called a psalm of Asaph; either because it was composed by him under divine inspiration, since he was a prophet and a seer, 1Ch 25:2; or because it was delivered to him to be sung in public service, he being a chief musician; see
1Ch 16:7; and so it may be rendered, "a psalm for Asaph"; or "unto Asaph" {o}; which was directed, sent, and delivered to him, and might be written by David; and, as Junius thinks, after the angel had appeared to him, and he was directed where he should build an altar to the Lord,
1Ch 21:18. The Targum, Kimchi, and R. Obadiah Gaon, interpret this psalm of the day of judgment; and Jarchi takes it to be a prophecy of the future redemption by their expected Messiah; and indeed it does refer to the times of the Gospel dispensation; for it treats of the calling of the Gentiles, of the abrogation of legal sacrifices, and of the controversy the Lord would have with the Jews for retaining them, and rejecting pure, spiritual, and evangelical worship.

{o} Poal "ipsi Asaph", Tigurine version, Vatablus; "Asapho", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Ver. 1. The mighty God,.... In the Hebrew text it is "El", "Elohim", which Jarchi renders the "God of gods"; that is, of angels, who are so called, **Ps 8:5**; so Christ, who is God over all, is over them; he is their Creator, and the object of their worship, **Heb 1:6**; or of kings, princes, judges, and all civil magistrates, called gods,
Ps 82:1; and so Kimchi interprets the phrase here "Judge of judges". Christ is King of kings, and Lord of lords, by whom they reign and judge, and to whom they are accountable. The Targum renders it "the mighty God"; as we do; which is the title and name of Christ in **Isa 9:6**; and well agrees with him, as appears by his works of creation, providence, and redemption, and by his government of his church and people; by all the grace, strength, assistance, and preservation they have from him now, and by all that glory and happiness they will be brought unto by him hereafter, when raised from the dead, according to his mighty power. It is added,

[even] the Lord, hath spoken: or "Jehovah", Some have observed, that these three names, El, Elohim, Jehovah, here mentioned, have three very distinctive accents set to them, and which being joined to a verb singular, rbd, "hath

spoken", contains the mystery of the trinity of Persons in the unity of the divine Essence; see Jos 22:22; though rather all the names belong to Christ the Son of God, and who is Jehovah our righteousness, and to whom, he being the eternal Logos, speech is very properly ascribed. He hath spoken for the elect in the council and covenant of grace and peace, that they might be given to him; and on their behalf, that they might have grace and glory, and he might be their Surety, Saviour, and Redeemer. He hath spoken all things out of nothing in creation: he spoke with. Moses at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai: he, the Angel of God's presence, spoke for the Old Testament saints, and spoke good and comfortable words unto them: he hath spoken in his own person here on earth, and such words and with such authority as never man did; and he has spoken in his judgments and providences against the Jews; and he now speaks in his Gospel by his ministers: wherefore it follows,

and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof; which may be considered as a preface, exciting attention to what is after spoken, as being of moment and importance; see De 32:1; or as calling the earth, and so the heavens, Ps 50:4, to be witnesses of the justness and equity of his dealings with the Jews, for their rejection of him and his Gospel; see **De 4:26**; or rather as a call to the inhabitants of the earth to hear the Gospel; which had its accomplishment in the times of the apostles; when Christ having a people, not in Judea only, but in the several parts of the world from east to west, sent them into all the world with his Gospel, and by it effectually called them through his grace; and churches were planted everywhere to the honour of his name; compare with this **Mal 1:11**.

Psalms 50:2

Ver. 2. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Or "shall shine" {p}; the past for the future, as Kimchi observes; or "the perfection of the beauty of God hath shined out of Zion" {q}; that is, Christ; he is the perfection of beauty; he is fairer than the children of men; he is more glorious than the angels in heaven: as Mediator, he is full of grace and truth, which makes him very lovely and amiable to his people: he is the express image of his Father's person; and the glory of all the divine perfections is conspicuous in his work of salvation, as well as in himself: now as he was to come out of Zion, Ps 14:7; that is, not from the fort of Zion, or city of Jerusalem; for he was to be born at Bethlehem; only he was to be of the Jews, and spring from them; so he shone out, or his appearance and manifestation in Israel was like the rising sun; see **Mal 4:2**; and the love and kindness of God in the mission and gift of him appeared and shone out in like manner, **Tit 3:4**; or else the Gospel may be meant, which has a beauty in it: it is a glorious Gospel, and holds forth the beauty and glory of Christ. All truth is lovely and amiable, especially evangelical truth: it has a divine beauty on it; it comes from God, and bears his impress; yea, it is a perfection of beauty: it contains a perfect plan of truth, and is able to make the man of God perfect; and this was to come out of Zion, **Isa 2:3**; and which great light first arose in Judea, and from thence shone out in the Gentile world, like the sun in all its lustre and glory, **Tit 2:11**; or, according to our version, "God hath shined out of Zion"; which, as Ben Melech on the text observes, is the perfection of beauty; see **La 2:15**; by which is meant the church under the Gospel dispensation, Heb 12:22; which, as in Gospel order, is exceeding beautiful; and as its members are adorned with the graces of the Spirit, by which they are all glorious within; and especially as they are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and so are perfectly comely through the comeliness he hath put upon them and here it is that Christ, who is the great God, and our Saviour, shines forth upon his people, grants his gracious presence, and manifests himself in his ordinances, to their great joy and pleasure.

{p} eymwh "emicabit", Tigurine version; "vel effulgebit", Vatablus; "illucescet", Amama, Grotius. {q} So De Dieu.

Psalms 50:3

Ver. 3. Our God shall come,.... That is, Christ, who is truly and properly God, and who was promised and expected as a divine Person; and which was necessary on account of the work he came about; and believers claim an interest in him as their God; and he is their God, in whom they trust, and whom they worship: and this coming of his is to be understood, not of his coming in the flesh; for though that was promised, believed, and prayed for, as these words are by some rendered, "may our God come" {r}; yet at his first coming he was silent, his voice was not heard in the streets, Mt 12:19; nor did any fire or tempest attend that: nor is it to be interpreted of his second coming, or coming to judgment; for though that also is promised, believed, and prayed for; and when he will not be silent, but by his voice will raise the dead, summon all before him, and pronounce the sentence on all; and the world, and all that is therein, will be burnt with fire, and a horrible tempest rained upon the wicked; yet it is better to understand it of his coming to set up his kingdom in the world, and to punish his professing people for their disbelief and rejection of him; see Mt 16:28;

and shall not keep silence; contain himself, bear with the Jews any longer, but come forth in his wrath against them; see Ps 50:21; and it may also denote the great sound of the Gospel, and the very public ministration of it in the Gentile world, at or before this time, for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom in it;

a fire shall devour before him; meaning either the fire of the divine word making its way among the Gentiles, consuming their idolatry, superstition, &c. or rather the fire of divine wrath coming upon the Jews to the uttermost and even it may be literally understood of the fire that consumed their city and temple, as was predicted, Zec 11:1;

and it shall be very tempestuous round about him; the time of Jerusalem's destruction being such a time of trouble as has not been since the world began, Mt 24:21.

{r} aby "veniat", Junius & Tremellius; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 50:4

Ver. 4. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth,.... To hear what he shall say, when he will no longer keep silence; and to be witnesses of the justice of his proceedings; see **Isa 1:2**. The Targum interprets this of the angels above on high, and of the righteous on the earth below; and so Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, explain it of the angels of heaven, and of the inhabitants of the earth;

that he may judge his people; not that they, the heavens and the earth, the inhabitants of either, may judge his people; but the Lord himself, as in Ps 50:6; and this designs not the judgment of the whole world, nor that of his own covenant people, whom he judges when he corrects them in love, that they might not be condemned with the world; when he vindicates them, and avenges them on their enemies, and when he protects and saves them; but the judgment of the Jewish nation, his professing people, the same that Peter speaks of, **1Pe 4:17**.

Psalms 50:5

Ver. 5. Gather my saints together unto me,.... These words are spoken by

Christ to the heavens and the earth; that is, to the angels, the ministers of the Gospel, to gather in, by the ministry of the word, his elect ones among the Gentiles; see Mt 24:30; called his "saints", who had an interest in his favour and lovingkindness, and were sanctified or set apart for his service and glory;

those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice; or, "who have made my covenant by, or on sacrifice" {s}; the covenant of grace, which was made with Christ from everlasting, and which was confirmed by his blood and sacrifice; this his people may be said to make with God in him, he being their head, surety, and representative: now these covenant ones he will have gathered in to himself by the effectual calling, which is usually done by the ministry of the word; for this is not to be understood of the gathering of all nations to him, before him as a Judge; but of his special people to him as a Saviour, the "Shiloh", to whom the gathering of the people was to be, Ge 49:10.

{s} So Pagninus.

Psalms 50:6

Ver. 6. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness,.... That is, either the heavens shall bear witness to his justice and equity in judging his people; or the angels, the ministers of the Gospel, shall declare his justifying righteousness, which is revealed in it, to the saints and covenant ones they shall be a means of gathering in: or rather the justice of Christ in the destruction of the Jews shall be attested and applauded by angels and men, just as the righteousness of God in the destruction of the antichristian powers is celebrated by the angel of the waters, Re 16:5;

for God [is] Judge himself. And not another, or by another; and therefore his judgments must be just and righteous, seeing he is just and true, loves righteousness, and is righteous in all his ways and works.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 50:7

Ver. 7. Hear, O my people,.... This is an address to the people of the Jews, whom God had chosen to be his people above all others, and who professed themselves to be his people; but now a "loammi", **Ho 1:9**, was about to be written upon them, being a people uncircumcised in heart and ears, refusing to hear the great Prophet of the church, him that spake from heaven;

and I will speak: by way of accusation and charge, and in judgment against them for their sins and transgressions;

O Israel, and I will testify against thee; or "to thee" {t}; to thy face produce witnesses, and bring sufficient evidence to prove the things laid to thy charge,

I [am] God, [even] thy God; which is an aggravation of their sin against him, and is the reason why they should hearken to him; see
Ps 81:10.

{t} Kb "tibi", V. L. Vatablus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 50:8

Ver. 8. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices,.... For the neglect of them; this they were not chargeable with; and had they omitted them, a charge would not have been brought against them on that account, since these were not what God commanded when he brought them out of Egypt, **Jer 7:22**; and were now abrogated; and when they were in force, acts of mercy, kindness, and beneficence, were preferred unto them, **Ho 6:6**;

or thy burnt offerings, [to have been] continually before me; or, "for thy burnt offerings [are] continually before me" {u}; so far were they from being reprovable for not bringing their sacrifices, that they were continually offering up before the Lord even multitudes of them, though to no purpose, being offered up without faith, and in hypocrisy; and could not take away sin, and make atonement for it; and besides, ought now to have ceased to be offered, Christ the great sacrifice being now offered up, as he was in the times to which this psalm belongs; see **Isa 1:14**; wherefore it follows:

{u} So Tigurine version, Vatablus, Piscator, Cocceius, and Ainsworth.

Psalms 50:9

Ver. 9. I will take no bullock out of thy house,.... That is, will accept of none; such sacrifices being no more agreeable to the will of God, Heb 10:5; the "bullock" is mentioned, that being a principal creature used in sacrifice; as also the following,

[nor] he goats out of thy folds; the reasons follow.

Psalms 50:10

Ver. 10. For every beast of the forest [is] mine,.... By creation and preservation; and therefore he stood in no need of their bullocks and he goats;

[and the cattle upon a thousand hills; meaning all the cattle in the whole world.

Psalms 50:11

Ver. 11. I know all the fowls of the mountains,.... God not only knows them, but takes care of them; not a sparrow fails to the ground without his knowledge, and all the fowls of the air are fed by him, Mt 10:29; and therefore needed not their turtledoves and young pigeons, which were the only fowls used in sacrifice;

and the wild beasts of the field [are] mine; which are mentioned in opposition to domestic ones, such as they had in their houses or folds, Ps 50:9.

Psalms 50:12

Ver. 12. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee,.... Or "say to thee" {w}; ask for anything

for the world [is] mine, and the fulness thereof; with which, was the former his case, he could satisfy himself; see Ps 24:1.

{w} Kl rma al "non dicam tibi", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus; "non dicerem tibi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 50:13

Ver. 13. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?] That is, express a pleasure, take delight and satisfaction, in such kind of sacrifices, which can never take away sin: no, I will not; wherefore other sacrifices, more agreeable to his nature, mind, and will, and to the Gospel dispensation, are next mentioned.

Psalms 50:14

Ver. 14. Offer unto God thanksgiving,.... Which is a sacrifice, Ps 50:23; and the Jews say {x}, that all sacrifices will cease in future time, the times of the Messiah, but the sacrifice of praise; and this should be offered up for all mercies, temporal and spiritual; and unto God, because they all come from him; and because such sacrifices are well pleasing to him, and are no other than our reasonable service, and agreeably to his will; and then are they offered up aright when they are offered up through Christ, the great High Priest, by whom they are acceptable unto God, and upon him the altar, which sanctifies every gift, and by faith in him, without which it is impossible to please God. Some render the word "confession" {y}; and in all thanksgivings it is necessary that men should confess their sins and unworthiness, and acknowledge the goodness of God, and ascribe all the glory to him; for to him, and him only, is this sacrifice to be offered: not to man; for that would be to sacrifice to his own net, and burn incense to his drag;

and pay thy vows unto the most High: meaning not ceremonial ones, as the vow of the Nazarite; nor to offer such and such a sacrifice, since these are distinguished from and opposed unto the sacrifices of the ceremonial law before mentioned; and much less monastic ones, as the vow of celibacy, and abstinence from certain meats at certain times; but moral, or spiritual and evangelical ones; such as devoting one's self to the Lord and to his service and worship, under the influence and in the strength of grace; signified by saying, I am the Lord's, and the giving up ourselves to him and to his churches, to walk with them in all his commands and ordinances, to which his love and grace constrain and oblige; see Isa 44:5; and particularly by them may be meant giving God the glory and praise of every mercy and deliverance, as was promised previous to it; hence those are put together, Ps 65:1. This Scripture does not oblige to the making of vows, but to the payment of them when made; see **Ec 5:4**; and may refer to everything a man lays himself in a solemn manner under obligation to perform, especially in religious affairs.

{x} Vajikra Rabba, fol. 153. 1. & 168. 4. {y} hdwt "confessionem", Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 50:15

Ver. 15. And call upon me in the day of trouble,.... This is another part of spiritual sacrifice or worship, which is much more acceptable to God than legal sacrifices. Invocation of God includes all parts of religious worship, and particularly designs prayer, as it does here, of which God, and he only, is the object; and which should be performed in faith, in sincerity, and with fervency; and though it should be made at all times, in private and in public, yet more especially should be attended to in a time of affliction, whether of soul or body, whether of a personal, family, or public kind, **Jas 5:13**; and the encouragement to it is,

I will deliver thee: that is, out of trouble: as he is able, so faithful is he that hath promised, and will do it. The obligation follows,

and thou shall glorify me; by offering praise, Ps 50:23; ascribing the glory of the deliverance to God, and serving him in righteousness and true holiness continually.

Psalms 50:16

Ver. 16. But unto the wicked God saith,.... By whom are meant, not openly profane sinners; but men under a profession of religion, and indeed who were teachers of others, as appears from the following expostulation with them: the Scribes, Pharisees, and doctors among the Jews, are designed; and so Kimchi interprets it of their wise men, who learnt and taught the law, but did not act according to it. It seems as if the preceding verses respected the truly godly among the Jews, who believed in Christ, and yet were zealous of the law; and retained legal sacrifices; as such there were, Ac 21:20; and that these words, and what follow, are spoken to hypocrites among them, who sat in Moses's chair, and said, and did not; were outwardly righteous before men, but inwardly full of wickedness, destitute of the grace of God and righteousness of Christ;

what hast thou to do to declare my statutes; the laws of God, which were given to the people of Israel; some of which were of a moral, others of a ceremonial, and others of a judicial nature; and there were persons appointed to teach and explain these to the people, as the priests and Levites: now some of these were abrogated, and not to be declared at all in the times this psalm refers to; and as for others, those persons were very improper to teach and urge the observance of them, when they themselves did not keep them; and especially it was wrong in them to declare them to the people, for such purposes as they did, namely, to obtain life and righteousness by them;

or [that] thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? which is to be understood, not of the covenant of works made with Adam, and now broke; nor of the pure covenant of grace, as administered under the Gospel dispensation, of which Christ is the Mediator, and the Gospel a transcript, since both were rejected by these persons; but the covenant at Mount Sinai, which was a typical one; and being in some sense faulty, was now antiquated, and ought to have ceased; and therefore these men are blamed for taking it in their mouths, and urging it on the people: and besides, they had no true sight of and faith in the thing exhibited by it; and moreover were not steadfast, nor did they continue in it, like their fathers before them, Ps 78:37 **Heb 8:7**.

Psalms 50:17

Ver. 17. Seeing thou hatest instruction,.... Or "correction" {z}; to be reproved or reformed by the statutes and covenant they declared to others; they taught others, but not themselves, **Ro 2:21**; or evangelical instruction, the doctrines of grace, and of Christ; for, as concerning the Gospel, they were enemies, Ro 11:28; and since they were haters of that, they ought not to have been teachers of others;

and castest my words behind thee; the doctrines of the Gospel, which they despised and rejected with the utmost abhorrence, as loathsome, and not fit to be looked upon and into; and also the ordinances of it, the counsel of God, which they rejected against themselves,
Ac 13:45.

{z} dowm "correctionem", Vatablus; "correptionem", Gejerus.

Psalms 50:18

Ver. 18. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him,.... Or "didst run with him" {a}; joined and agreed with him in the commission of the same things; which was literally true of the Scribes and Pharisees: they devoured widows' houses, and robbed them of their substance, under a pretence of long prayers; they consented to the deeds of Barabbas, a robber, when they preferred him to Jesus Christ; and they joined with the thieves on the cross in reviling him: and, in a spiritual sense, they stole away the word of the Lord, every man from his neighbour; took away the key of knowledge from the people, and put false glosses upon the sacred writings;

and hast been a partaker with adulterers; these teachers of the law were guilty both of theft and adultery, **Ro 2:21**; they are called by our Lord an adulterous generation, Mt 12:39; and they were so in a literal sense; see **Joh 8:4**; and in a figurative one, adulterating the word of God, and handling it deceitfully.

{a} wme Urt sunetrecev autw, Sept. "currebas cum eo", V. L. sic Eth. Syr. Targum, so Vatablus, Musculus, Piscator, Ainsworth.

Psalms 50:19

Ver. 19. Thou givest thy mouth to evil,.... To speak evil things against Christ, his doctrines, ordinances, ministers and people; and to deliver out evil doctrines, pernicious to the souls of men;

and thy tongue frameth deceit; puts and joins together deceitful words in a very artful manner, by which simple and unstable minds are beguiled.

Psalms 50:20

Ver. 20. Thou sittest,.... Either in the chair of Moses, or on the seat of judgment, in the great sanhedrim of the nation; or, as Aben Ezra paraphrases it, "in the seat of the scornful";

[and] speakest against thy brother; even to pass sentence upon him, to put him to death for professing faith in Christ, Mt 10:21;

thou slanderest thine own mother's son; the apostles and disciples of Christ, who were their brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh; and even our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who was bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh.

Psalms 50:21

Ver. 21. These things hast thou done,.... "These evil works", as the Targum; which they had done over and over again without remorse, with the greatest pleasure, and with promises of impunity to themselves. This is a confirmation of the charge made by the omniscient God, who saw and knew all their actions;

and I kept silence; spoke not by terrible things in righteousness, deferred the execution of judgment, exercised forbearance and patience, and gave space to repent; which being despised, they were hardened yet more and more in sin; see **Ec 8:11**. This refers to the space of time between the crucifixion of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem;

thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; either that he did not see the things committed by them in secret, as the things before mentioned, theft, adultery, slander, and detraction, commonly are; because they could not see such actions done by others: or that he took pleasure in them, as they did, and that he approved of their crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, and of their contempt of his Gospel, and of the persecution of his followers;

[but] I will reprove thee: not verbally by the ministry of the word, much less effectually and savingly by his Spirit; nor in a way of fatherly correction and chastisement; but by sore judgments; by sending the Roman armies to burn their city and temple, and carry them captive;

and set [them] in order before thine eyes; that is, their sins, and thereby fully confute their vain imagination, that either he did not take notice of them, or else approved of them. This signifies a formal process against them, as in a court of judicature; bringing in a regular charge and accusation against them, and an orderly disposition of their sins, as to time, place, and circumstances, committed by them, and a strong evidence or thorough conviction of them, so as not to be denied and gainsaid by them: or a setting them in battle array, as in **Job 6:4**; in rank and file; sins being what war against men, and bring upon them utter ruin and destruction; as the sins of the Jews fought against them, and destroyed them; see **Jer 2:19**.

Psalms 50:22

Ver. 22. Now consider this,.... The evils that had been committed, and repent of them; for repentance is an after thought and reconsideration of sin, and humiliation for it; that the Lord, was not like them, not an approver of sin, but a reprover for it; and what would be their latter end, what all this would issue in, in case of impenitence;

ye that forget God; that there is a God, his being, perfections, word, works, and benefits;

lest I tear [you] in pieces; as a lion, leopard, or bear; see Ho 13:7; which was accomplished in the destruction of Jerusalem; when both their civil and ecclesiastical state were torn in pieces; their city and temple levelled with the ground, and not one stone left upon another; and they scattered about in the earth;

and [there be] none to deliver; which denotes their utter and irreparable ruin, till the time comes they shall turn to the Lord; see Isa 42:22.

Psalms 50:23

Ver. 23. Whoso offereth praise,...., Which is exhorted to;
See Gill on "Ps 50:14";

glorifieth me; celebrates the divine perfections, gives God the glory of all mercies; which honours him, and is more grateful and well pleasing to him than all burnt offerings and sacrifices;

and to him that ordereth [his] conversation [aright]; according to the rule of God's word, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ; who walks inoffensively to all, circumspectly and wisely in the world, and in love to the saints; in wisdom towards them that are without, and in peace with them that are within; who is a follower of God, of Christ, and of his people; and who lives so as to glorify God, and cause others to glorify him likewise: or that chooses for himself the right way, as Aben Ezra, the right way to eternal life; and the sense is, he that puts or sets his heart upon it, and is in pursuit after the evangelical way of life. To him

will I show the salvation of God; or, "cause to see" or "enjoy it" {b}; not only temporal salvation from time to time, but spiritual and eternal salvation; to see interest in it, and to possess it; and particularly Christ, the author of it, who is the salvation of God's providing, appointing, and sending, and whose glory is greatly concerned therein; see Isa 52:10.

{b} wnada "videre faciam eum", Montanus; "faciam ut is fruatur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 51:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 51

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. The occasion of this psalm was the sin of David with Bathsheba, signified by "going in to her"; an euphemism for "lying with her"; which sin was a very aggravated one, she being another man's wife, and the wife of a servant and soldier of his, who was at the same time exposing his life for his king and country's good; and David besides had many wives, and was also king of Israel, and should have set a better example to his subjects; and it was followed with other sins, as the murder of Uriah, and the death of several others; with scandal to religion, and with security and impenitence in him for a long time, until Nathan the prophet was sent to him of God, to awaken him to a sense of his sin; which he immediately acknowledged, and showed true repentance for it: upon which, either while Nathan was present, or after he was gone, he penned this psalm; that it might remain on record, as a testification of his repentance, and for the instruction of such as should fall into sin, how to behave, where to apply, and for their comfort. The history of all this may be seen in the eleventh and twelfth chapters of the second book of Samuel.

Ver. 1. Have mercy upon me, O God,.... David, under a sense of sin, does not run away from God, but applies unto him, and casts himself at his feet, and upon his mercy; which shows the view he had of his miserable condition, and that he saw there was mercy in God, which gave him hope; and upon his bended knees, and in the exercise of faith, he asks for it;

according to thy lovingkindness; not according to his merits, nor according to the general mercy of God, which carnal men rely upon; but according to his everlasting and unchangeable love in Christ; from which as the source, and through whom as the medium, special mercy comes to the children of men. The acts of special mercy are according to the sovereign will of God: he is not moved to mercy neither by the merits nor misery of men, but by his free grace and favour; it is love that sets mercy to work: this is a most glaring gleam of Gospel light, which none of the inspired writers besides, except the Apostle Paul, saw, **Eph 2:4**;

according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions; for his sin was complicated, attended with many others; and, besides, upon a view of this, he was led to observe all his other sins; and particularly the corruption of his nature, his original sin, which he mentions, Ps 51:5. These he desires might be "blotted out"; out of the book of account, out of God's debt book; that they might not stand against him, being debts he was not able to pay or make satisfaction for; and out of the table of his own heart and conscience, where they were ever before him, and seemed to be engraven; that they might be caused to pass from him, and he might have no more conscience of them; or that they might be blotted out, as a cloud by the clear shining of the sun of righteousness, with the healing of pardoning grace in his wings; or that they might be wiped away, as any faith is wiped from any person or thing: and all this "according to the multitude of [his] tender mercies". The mercy of God is plenteous and abundant; he is rich in it, and various are the instances of it; and it is exceeding tender, like that of a father to his children, or like that of a mother to the son of her womb; and from this abundant and tender mercy springs the forgiveness of sin, **Lu 1:77**. The psalmist makes mention of the multitude of the mercies of God, because of the multitude of his sins, which required a multitude of mercy to forgive, and to encourage his hope of it.

Psalms 51:2

Ver. 2. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,.... Which supposes defilement by sin, and that very great, and such as none can remove but the Lord himself; who, when he takes it in hand, does it effectually and thoroughly; see Eze 36:25. David's sin had long lain upon him, the faith of it had as it were eaten into him, and spread itself over him, and therefore he needed much washing: "wash me much", all over, and thoroughly:

and cleanse me from my sin: which only the blood of Christ can do, **1Jo 1:7**. The psalmist makes use of three words to express his sin by, in this verse Ps 51:1; evp, which signifies "rebellion", as all sin has in it rebellion against God the lawgiver, and a contempt of his commandments; Nwe, "perverseness", "crookedness", sin being a going out of the plain way of God's righteous law; and tajx, "a missing the mark"; going besides it or not coming up to it: and these he makes rise of to set forth the malignity of sin, and the deep sense he had of the exceeding sinfulness of it; and these are the three words used by the Lord in Ex 34:7; when he declares himself to be a sin forgiving God; so that David's sin came within the reach of pardoning mercy.

Psalms 51:3

Ver. 3. For I acknowledge my transgressions,.... Before God and man. Acknowledgment of sin is what the Lord requires, and promises forgiveness upon, and therefore is used here as a plea for it; and moreover the psalmist had done so before, and had succeeded in this way, which must encourage him to take the same course again; see
Ps 32:5;

and my sin [is] ever before me; staring him in the face; gnawing upon his conscience, and filling him with remorse and distress; so that his life was a burden to him: for though God had put away sin out of his own sight, so that he would not condemn him for it, and he should not die; notwithstanding as yet it was not caused to pass from David, or the guilt of it removed from his conscience.

Psalms 51:4

Ver. 4. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,.... All sin, though committed against a fellow creature, being a transgression of the law, is against the lawgiver; and, indeed, begins at the neglect or contempt of his commandment, as David's sin did, 2Sa 12:9; and being committed against God, that had bestowed so many favours upon him, was a cutting consideration to him, which made his sorrow appear to be of a godly sort; wherefore he makes his humble and hearty confession to the Lord, and who only could forgive his sin;

and done [this] evil in thy sight; for with respect to men it was secretly done; and was only known to God, with whom the darkness and the light are both alike;

that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, [and] be clear when thou judgest; not that David committed this sin that God might be just, and pure, and holy; but this was the event and consequence of it: God, by taking notice of it, resenting it, and reproving for it, appeared to be a righteous Being, and of purer eyes than to behold sin with pleasure; see **Ex 9:27**. Or these words may be connected with his acknowledgment and confession of sin; which were done to this end and purpose, to justify God in his charge of it upon him, and in threatening him with evils on account of it, by the mouth of Nathan the prophet: or with his petitions for pardoning grace and mercy; that so he might appear to be just to his promise, of forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, to humble penitents; and particularly that he might appear to be just and faithful to his Son, in forgiving sin for his sake; whom he had set forth, in his purposes and promises, to be the propitiation for sin, to declare his righteousness, **Ro 3:25**; see **Ro 3:4**.

Psalms 51:5

Ver. 5. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity,.... This cannot be understood of any personal iniquity of his immediate parents; since this respects his wonderful formation in the womb, in which both he and they were wholly passive, as the word here used is of that form; and is the amazing work of God himself, so much admired by the psalmist,
Ps 139:13; and cannot design any sinfulness then infused into him by his Maker, seeing God cannot be the author of sin; but of original sin and corruption, derived to him by natural generation: and the sense is, that as soon as ever the mass of human nature was shaped and quickened, or as soon as soul and body were united together, sin was in him, and he was in sin, or became a sinful creature;

and in sin did my mother conceive me; by whom cannot be meant Eve; for though she is the mother of all living, and so of David, yet could not, with any propriety, be said to conceive him: this only could be said of his immediate parent, not even of his next grandmother, much less of Eve, at the distance of almost three thousand years. Nor does the sin in which he was conceived intend any sin of his parents, in begetting and conceiving him, being in lawful wedlock; which acts cannot be sinful, since the propagation of the human species by natural generation is a principle of nature implanted by God himself; and is agreeably to the first law of nature, given to man in a state of innocence, "increase and multiply", **Ge 1:28**. Marriage is the institution of God in paradise; and in all ages has been accounted "honourable in all, [when] the bed is undefiled", Heb 13:4. Nor does it design his being conceived when his mother was in "profluviis", of which there is no proof, and is a mere imagination, and can answer no purpose; much less that he was conceived in adultery, as the contenders for the purity of human nature broadly intimate;

which shows how much they are convicted by this text, to give into such an interpretation of it, at the expense of the character of an innocent person, of whom there is not the least suggestion of this kind in the Holy Scriptures; but on the contrary, she is represented as a religious woman, and David valued himself upon his relation to her as such, Ps 86:16. Besides, had this been the case, as David would have been a bastard, he would not have been suffered to enter into the congregation of the Lord, according to the law in De 23:2; whereas he often did with great delight, Ps 42:4. Moreover, it is beside his scope and design to expose the sins of others, much less his own parents, while he is confessing and lamenting his own iniquities: and to what purpose should he mention theirs, especially if he himself was not affected by them, and did not derive a corrupt nature from them? Nor is the sin he speaks of any actual sin of his own, and therefore he does not call it, as before, "my" iniquity and "my" sin; though it was so, he having sinned in Adam, and this being in his nature; but "iniquity" and "sin", it being common to him with all mankind. Hence we learn the earliness of the corruption of nature; it is as soon as man is conceived and shapen; and that it is propagated from one to another by natural generation; and that it is the case of all men: for if this was the case of David, who was born of religious parents, was famous for his early piety, and from whose seed the Messiah sprung, it may well be concluded to be the case of all. And this corruption of nature is the fountain, source, and spring of all sin, secret and open, private and public; and is mentioned here not as an extenuation of David's actual transgressions, but as an aggravation of them; he having been, from his conception and formation, nothing else but a mass of sin, a lump of iniquity; and, in his evangelical repentance for them, he is led to take notice of and mourn over the corruption of his nature, from whence they arose. The Heathens themselves affirm, that no man is born without sin {c}.

{c} "Nam vitiis nemo sine nascitur". Horat. Sermon. l. 1. Satyr. 3.

Psalms 51:6

Ver. 6. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts,.... With delight and pleasure, as the word {d} signifies: meaning either Christ, the truth and the life, formed and dwelling in the hearts of his people; or the Gospel, the word of truth, which has a place there; and particularly that branch of it which proclaims pardon to sensible sinners, and is the ground of hope within them: or else a true and hearty confession of sin, which David now made; or rather internal holiness and purity of heart, in opposition to the corruption of nature before acknowledged: this is what is agreeable to the nature of God, is required by his holy law, and is wrought in the hearts of his people in regeneration; and this is "truth", real, and not imaginary, genuine and unfeigned; where it is there is a true sense of sin, a right sight of Christ, unfeigned faith in him, sincere love to him, hope in him without hypocrisy, and a reverential fear of God upon the heart; the inward parts are the seat of all this, and in the exercise of it the Lord takes great delight and pleasure;

and in the hidden [part] thou shall make me to know wisdom; either Christ, the wisdom of God; or the Gospel, and particularly that part of it which concerns the pardon of sin; or a true knowledge of sin, and of the way of life and salvation by Christ, which is the truest and highest wisdom: and the phrase "hidden" or "secret" may either denote the nature of the wisdom made known, which is hidden wisdom, the wisdom of God in a mystery; or the manner in which it is made known; it is in a hidden way, privately, and secretly, and indiscernibly like the wind, by the Spirit and grace of God; or the seat and subject of it, "the hidden part", as we supply it; the hidden man of the heart. David begins to rise in the exercise of his faith in the grace of God, "thou shall make me to know", &c. unless the words should be rendered as a prayer, as they are by some, "make me to know" {e}, &c. and as are the following.

{d} tupx "delectaris", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "delectatus es", Cocceius; so Ainsworth. {e} yneydwt "notam mihi fac", Gejerus.

Psalms 51:7

Ver. 7. Purge me with hyssop,.... Or "thou shalt purge me with hyssop" {f}; or "expiate me"; which was used in sprinkling the blood of the paschal lamb on the door posts of the Israelites in Egypt, that the destroying angel might pass over them, Ex 12:22; and in the cleansing of the leper, Le 14:4; and in the purification of one that was unclean by the touch of a dead body, &c. Nu 19:6; which the Targum on the text has respect to; and this petition of the psalmist shows that he saw himself a guilty creature, and in danger of the destroying angel, and a filthy creature like the leper, and deserving to be excluded from the society of the saints, and the house of God; and that he had respect not hereby to ceremonial sprinklings and purifications, for them he would have applied to a priest; but to the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, typified thereby; and therefore he applies to God to purge his conscience with it; and, as Suidas {g} from Theodoret observes, hyssop did not procure remission of sins, but has a mystical signification, and refers to what was meant by the sprinkling of the blood of the passover; and then he says, and I shall be clean; thoroughly clean; for the blood sprinkled on the heart by the spirit clears it from an evil conscience, purges the conscience from dead works, and cleanses from all sin;

wash me; or "thou shall wash me" {h}; alluding to the washing at the cleansing of a leper, and the purification of an unclean person,
Le 14:8; but had in view the fountain of Christ's blood, in which believers are washed from all their sins, Zec 13:1;

and I shall be whiter than snow; who was black with original corruption, and actual transgressions; but the blood of Christ makes not only the conversation garments white that are washed in it; but even crimson and scarlet sins as white as wool, as white as snow, and the persons of the saints without spot or blemish, **Re 7:14** **Eph 5:25**; "whiter than the snow" is a phrase used by Homer {i}, and others, to describe what is exceeding white.

{f} ynajxt "purificabis me", Pagninus, Montanus; "exiabis me", Vatablus, Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus. {g} In voce usswpov. {h} ynobkt "lavabis me", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus, Cocceius. {i} Iliad. 10. v. 437. So Martial. l. 7. Epigr. 27. Ovid. Amor. l. 3. Eleg. 6.

Psalms 51:8

Ver. 8. Make me to hear joy and gladness,.... Which he had not heard for some time; sin had sadly broke in upon and interrupted his spiritual peace and joy; for though the love and favour of God cannot be lost, yet his sensible presence, which puts joy and gladness into the heart, may; and though an interest in Christ ever continues, and union to him is always the same; yet a view of interest in him, which fills with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and communion with him, may not be had for a time: and though justification by his righteousness, from whence flows much peace, is an invariable blessing; yet the comfortable perception of it may be taken away: and though salvation by Christ is a certain thing, yet the joy of it may be lost for a season; which was now the case of the psalmist: and when he desires that God would cause him to hear joy and gladness, his meaning is, that he might have that made known unto him; namely, the forgiveness of his sins, which would give him joy: not by an articulate voice from heaven, which he did not expect; nor by an angel from thence, which was not usual; but by the prophet, who as yet might not have declared to him that God had put away his sin; or, if he had, he might desire to have it repeated, for his fuller assurance, and greater joy; or by his Spirit, in an impulse on his mind, saying to him, thy sins are forgiven thee; which would give him great joy, fulness of it, even what is inconceivable and inexpressible, signified by these two words, "joy" and "gladness";

[that] the bones [which] thou hast broken may rejoice: a backsliding believer is not only like a bone out of joint, **Ga 6:1**; but his falls are sometimes both to the bruising of him, and to the breaking of his bones; of which when he is sensible, the quick sense of his sin is as the pain of a broken bone; see Ps 38:3; and here the breaking of them is ascribed to God; not that he is the cause or occasion of falling into sin, which breaks the bones, **Jas 1:13**; but of afflictions, corrections, and chastisements for sin, which are sometimes expressed by this phrase, Isa 38:13; and which David was threatened with, and gave him great uneasiness; and of the menaces and threatenings of the law, which being let into his conscience, worked wrath and terror there; and also of that true contrition of heart, and brokenness of spirit, which the Lord produces, and can only cure, by the discoveries of pardoning grace; which affects the whole frame of nature, the report of which makes the bones fat, and all of them to say, who is a God like unto thee? Pr 15:30.

Psalms 51:9

Ver. 9. Hide thy face from my sins,.... In whose sight they were committed, being now ashamed of them himself, and ashamed that any should see them, and especially his God; and being filthy and nauseous, he knew they must be abominable to him, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and being breaches of his law, must be offensive to him, and provoke the eyes of his glory; and were such that he knew would not bear the examination of justice; and that if God was strict to mark them, he could not stand before him: moreover, in this petition the psalmist deprecates a severe chastisement of them, which is sometimes expressed by setting sins before him, Ps 90:8; and entreats the pardon of them, or oblivion and non-remembrance of them, that they might be cast behind his back, and into the depths of the sea;

and blot out all mine iniquities; as in Ps 51:1; here repeated, to show his deep sense of them, and his great importunity for the forgiveness of them; and adds the word all, including all his other sins, with those he had lately committed; for he knew that, if anyone, was left unpardoned, he could never answer for it.

Psalms 51:10

Ver. 10. Create in me a clean heart, O God,.... Which was now defiled with sin, and of which being convinced, he was led more and more to see the impurity of his heart and nature, from which all his evil actions flowed; and being sensible that he could not make his heart clean himself, and that this was the work of God, and a work which required creating power, he entreats it of him: for as the first work of conversion is no other than a creation, or a production of something new, which was not before; so the restoring of a backslider, as it goes by the same name, it requires the same power; and as the implantation of grace at first, and particularly of faith, is a work of almighty power; so the same power must be put forth to bring it into exercise, after falls into sin; that it may afresh deal with the heart purifying blood of Christ, which only can make it clean, and is what is here meant;

and renew a right spirit within me; by which is designed, not the Holy Spirit of God {k}; for he is the renewer; nor the spirit or soul of man as to its essence; but with respect to the qualities of it; and here it signifies a renewing of the inward man, or an increase of grace, and causing it to abound in act and exercise; and intends a spirit of uprightness and integrity, in opposition to dissimulation and hypocrisy; a spirit "prepared [and] ready" {l} to every good work,
Mt 26:41; "one firm" {m} and unmoved from obedience to the Lord, by sin, temptations, and snares; a heart fixed, trusting in the Lord, and comfortably assured of an interest in pardoning grace and mercy.

{k} Vid. Zohar in Gen. fol. 107. 3. {l} Nwkn "paratum seu promptum", Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth. {m} "Firmua", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Psalms 51:11

Ver. 11. Cast me not away from thy presence,.... As abominable; as a vessel in which he had no pleasure; with indignation and wrath; as one that is angry with another, cannot bear him in his sight, but bids him be gone from him. Nothing is more desirable to a child of God than the presence of God; and nothing gives him more sensible pain than his absence; and even to be deprived of or denied the means of enjoying his presence the word and ordinances, makes them very uneasy: to be utterly, and for ever deprived of it, is the case of the damned in hell, and is the punishment of loss they sustain;

and, on the other hand, the happiness of the saints in heaven is to enjoy it without interruption. The people of God are never cast away from his favour, or out of his heart's love; but they may for a while be without his gracious presence, or not see his face, nor have the light of his countenance, nor sensible communion with him, which is here deprecated. David might call to mind the case of Cain, **Ge 4:14**; or rather the more recent one of Saul, whom the Lord rejected, and from whom he departed upon his sinning, and which he might fear would be his case,
1Sa 28:15;

and take not thy Holy Spirit from me; or "the Spirit of thine holiness"; the third Person in the Trinity; so called, not because this epithet of "holy" is peculiar to him; for it is used also of the Father, and of the Son, Joh 17:11; but because he is equally holy with them, and is the author of holiness in his people, which is therefore called the sanctification of the Spirit, **1Pe 1:2**; and without whom David knew that purity and holiness of heart and spirit he had desired could not be renewed and increased in him; and therefore deprecates the taking of him away; which shows that he was not as yet removed from him, not with standing he had fallen into great sins; and his sense of sin, and confession of it, and his fervent application for pardoning grace, and purity of heart, abundantly prove it. The Spirit of God is a gift of his, which is without repentance, and where he once is as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, he ever abides: his external gifts may be taken away; but internal grace is an incorruptible seed, and always continues. By sin the Spirit of God may be grieved, so as to withdraw his gracious influences, and his powerful operations may not be felt; and this is what is here deprecated. The Targum interprets this of the spirit of prophecy which David had, by which he composed psalms and songs prophetic of Christ, and of Gospel times, and which was not taken away from him; see 2Sa 23:1.

Psalms 51:12

Ver. 12. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,.... Not temporal, but spiritual and eternal; and designs either Christ himself, who is God's salvation, of his appointing and providing, in the view of whom, as such, David had much spiritual joy; or the salvation he was to work out, which God the Father had contrived the scheme of in him, had covenanted with him to do, and had appointed his people to: salvation itself is a sure thing, and can never fail, being founded upon the purpose and counsel of God, which shall ever stand; and is secured in the covenant of grace, which can never be removed; and is now completely wrought out by Christ, and is applied by his Spirit to the heirs of it, who shall certainly and fully enjoy it; otherwise the glory of all the three Persons in it would be lost: but the joy of it may be interrupted and discontinued for a while, through falls into sin, as this case of David, and the case of Peter, show; and therefore a restoration of it is desired, by showing a fresh interest in this salvation; and particularly by an application of pardoning grace and mercy; see Ps 35:3;

and uphold me [with thy] free Spirit: or "let thy free Spirit uphold me" {n}; the same with the Holy Spirit of God; called "free", because he is a most free and munificent giver: he gives his grace, and bestows his gifts severally, as he pleases, and liberally, and upbraids not; and because he is freely given of God; his graces are freely given, as faith, hope, love, &c. and because he frees them to whom he is given from the bondage of sin and corruption, and makes them Christ's free men, and delivers them into the liberty of the children of God; and so is a spirit of adoption, in opposition to a spirit of bondage, by which they have freedom and boldness to call God their Father; and by whom also they have liberty of soul at the throne of grace, and can freely make known their requests, and spread their cases before God; see **Ro 8:15**; also he may be so called, because he makes the saints ready and willing to obey the will of God, and to run with cheerfulness the way of his commandments; and is moreover "a princely spirit" {o}, or beneficent, as some choose to render the words; and which becomes such who are set among princes, and are made kings and priests unto God: and with this spirit the psalmist desires to be "upheld", to be strengthened by it, to do the will and work of God, that so he might not stumble and fall into sin as he had done; that he might be stayed, supported, and comforted with it, as the Holy Spirit of promise; that so he might not faint and sink under his present sense of sin, and the guilt of it; and that he would be not only a guide unto him in the ways of God, but that he would hold up his goings in them, that so he might walk both at liberty and in safety. The Targum interprets this also of the spirit of prophecy.

{n} So Vatablus, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Schmidt. {o} hbydn xwr pneumati hgemonikw, Sept. "spiritu principali", V. L. Tigurine version; "munifico", so some in Vatablus.

Psalms 51:13

Ver. 13. [Then] will I teach transgressors thy ways,.... David was a prophet as well as a king; see **Ac 2:30**; and taught men the fear of the Lord, Ps 34:11, and instructed them in his ways, as he here promises he would; by which are meant, either the ways which God prescribes and directs men to walk in, as the paths of faith, holiness, and truth, and the ways of his commandments; or which he himself has walked in; meaning not the ways of his providence, which are sometimes past finding out; but the ways of his grace, the steps and methods he has taken in the salvation of men, by forming the scheme of it, by choosing unto it, by making a covenant with his Son, and appointing him to effect it; and particularly his ways and methods in receiving and pardoning backsliders, when returned by repentance to him; and who may be meant by "transgressors" here: and then the sense is, that David, upon his being received and pardoned, would teach others like himself how graciously God had dealt with him; how plenteous he is in mercy; how ready to forgive, and how faithful to his promises; and so encourage them to go to him, and acknowledge their transgressions, and seek pardoning grace at his hands, who does abundantly pardon, and whose ways are not as theirs; see Isa 55:7;

and sinners shall be converted unto thee: or "that sinners may be converted unto thee" {p}; this being the end of teaching by the word, and the means of the conversion of profane and unregenerate sinners, through the power of divine grace; though rather this seems to be understood of the conversion of God's own people after backslidings, and not of first conversion; see Lu 22:32.

{p} Myajxw "ut peccatores convertantur", Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 51:14

Ver. 14. Deliver me from blood guiltiness,.... Or "from bloods" {q}; meaning not the corruption of nature; see Eze 16:6; though to be rid of that, and to be free from the guilt and condemnation of it, is very desirable, **Ro 7:24**; but either from capital punishment in his family, the effusion of blood and slaughter in it, threatened him on account of his sin, 2Sa 12:10. So the Targum is,

"deliver me from the judgment of slaying or killing;"

or rather from the guilt of the blood of Uriah, and other servants of his, he had been the occasion of shedding, and was chargeable with, being accessary thereunto, 2Sa 11:15; which lay heavy upon his conscience, pressed him on every side, as if he was in prison, and brought upon him a spirit of bondage to fear; and therefore he prays to be delivered from it, by the application of pardoning grace, which would be like proclaiming liberty to the captive;

O God, thou God of my salvation; who has contrived it for his people, chosen them to it, secured it for them in covenant, and provided his Son to be the author of it, and sends his Spirit to apply it. The psalmist knew, that being God he could pardon his sin, remove his guilt, and free him from obligation to punishment, which none else could; and being the "God of [his] salvation", and his covenant God, he had reason to hope and believe he would;

[and] my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness; goodness, grace, and mercy, in forgiving sin; for "righteousness" sometimes designs clemency, goodness, and mercy; see Ps 31:1; and faithfulness in making good the divine promise to forgive such who are sensible of sin, and repent of it, acknowledge it, and ask for mercy; or the righteousness of Christ, well known to David, **Ro 4:6**; which justifies from all sin, removes the guilt of it, and fills the soul with joy and gladness,
Isa 61:10.

{q} Mymdm "de sanguinibus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Musculus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 51:15

Ver. 15. O Lord, open thou my lips,.... The Targum adds, "in the late"; which were shut with a sense of sin, with shame of it, and sorrow for it; and though they were in some measure opened in prayer to God for the forgiveness of it, as appears by various petitions in this psalm, yet he still wanted a free spirit and boldness at the throne of grace, which the believer has when his heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Christ; and especially his lips were shut as to praise and thanksgiving; the guilt of sin had sealed up his lips, that he could not sing the praises of God as he had formerly done; and only a discovery of pardoning grace could open them, and for this he prays:

and my mouth shall show forth thy praise: the praise of his mercy, grace, goodness, truth, and faithfulness, in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; see Ps 103:1.

Psalms 51:16

Ver. 16. For thou desirest not sacrifice,.... Legal sacrifice; for there was no sacrifice appointed under the law for murder and adultery;

else would I give [it]; he would gladly have offered it up;

thou delightest not in burnt offering; at least such kind of sacrifices, though they were of divine appointment, and at that time in full force and use; yet they were not the only and principal sacrifices God desired and delighted in; nor were they at all acceptable to him without faith in Christ, and an humble sense of sin; and when offered in the best manner, yet spiritual obedience, acts of mercy, and sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, were more pleasing to him, 1Sa 15:15; wherefore the psalmist proposed to offer praise in Ps 51:15, and adds what follows.

Psalms 51:17

Ver. 17. The sacrifices of God [are] a broken spirit,.... That is humbled under a sense of sin; has true repentance for it; is smitten, wounded, and broken with it, by the word of God in the hand of the Spirit, which is a hammer to break the rock in pieces; and that not merely in a legal, but in an evangelical way; grieving for sin as committed against a God of love; broken and melted down under a sense of it, in a view of pardoning grace; and mourning for it, while beholding a pierced and wounded Saviour: the sacrifices of such a broken heart and contrite spirit are the sacrifices God desires, approves, accepts of, and delights in;

a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise; but regard, and receive with pleasure; see Ps 102:17; the Lord binds up and heals such broken hearts and spirits, Ps 147:3; he is nigh to such persons, looks upon them, has respect unto them, and comes and dwells among them, Ps 34:18.

Psalms 51:18

Ver. 18. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion,.... This verse, and Ps 51:19, are thought, by a Spanish Rabbi mentioned by Aben Ezra, to have been added by one of the holy men that lived in the time of the Babylonish captivity; though rather it is thought, by the latter, to be written by David, under a spirit of prophecy, concerning, times to come; and so Kimchi thinks they are prophetic of future things; of the destruction of the first and second temple, and of the acceptableness of sacrifices in the times of the Messiah: and by Zion is meant the church, under the Gospel dispensation, Heb 12:22; and the "good" prayed for includes all the good and glorious things spoken of the church of Christ in the latter day; such as an increase of its numbers, the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, the conversion of the Jews, and the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; the spread of the Gospel all over the world, the purity of Gospel doctrine, worship, and ordinances, the spirituality of religion, the power of godliness, and an abounding of brotherly love, and the like. The "good pleasure" of God, in which this is desired to be done, may denote either Nwur te, "the acceptable time"; or "time of good pleasure"; the Gospel dispensation, so called Isa 49:8, in which it has been foretold, and may be expected these things shall be done; or else the cause, source, and spring of them, which is the sovereign good will and pleasure of God, from whence flow all the blessings of grace and goodness;

build thou the walls of Jerusalem; not literally taken; for these do not appear to have stood in need of being repaired or rebuilt in David's time; but the church of God, which is a spiritual house, built up of lively stones, true believers; which may be said to be more and more built up by an addition of such unto it: it is as a city compact together, whose walls are salvation, and its gates praise, Isa 26:1; of the wall of the new Jerusalem, see Re 21:12.

Psalms 51:19

Ver. 19. Then shall thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness,.... Which must be different from the legal ones he desired not, and did not delight in, Ps 51:16; but design sacrifices under the Gospel dispensation, as the word "then" shows, which connects this verse with Ps 51:18: and in the first place intend the sacrifice of Christ, which is of a sweet smelling savour to God; and his righteousness, with which he is well pleased, because the law is magnified and made honourable by it; and next the saints themselves, who present their bodies to him a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice, they being accepted with him in Christ the beloved; as also their good works, particularly acts of charity and beneficence, with which sacrifices God is well pleased; and especially the spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, which are acceptable to him through Jesus Christ; as all are that are offered in faith through him, and from love, and with a view to the glory of God; see **Eph 5:2**

Ro 12:1;

with burnt offering, and whole burnt offering; the difference between these two, according to Aben Ezra and Kimchi, was, that the hlwe, "olah", or "burnt offering", was the daily sacrifice; and the additional ones, which were of beasts and birds, **Le 1:1**, and the
lylk, "calil", was the meat offering of the priests, which was wholly consumed, **Le 6:22**; though this also is sometimes used of beasts, **1Sa 7:9**; and both may signify love to God, and to our neighbour; or a man's devoting himself to the Lord in the flames of love, as a whole burnt offering to him, and which is better than all burnt offerings,
Mr 12:33;

then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar; or "calves" {r}; meaning the calves of the lips, Ho 14:2; interpreted the fruit of the lips, even giving thanks to the name of God, Heb 13:16; which sacrifices of praise being offered up on the altar Christ, come with acceptance before God, Heb 13:10.

{r} Myrp "vitulos", V. L. Pagninus, Tigurine version, Musculus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 52:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 52

To the chief Musician, Maschil, [A Psalm] of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech. Of the title "Maschil", See Gill on "Ps 32:1", title. The occasion of this psalm is here related, the history of which is in 1Sa 21:7. The sum of it is this; David having fled from Saul, came to Ahimelech the priest at Nob, and desired bread and a sword of him, which were given him, Doeg the Edomite being present at the same time. Sulpicius Severus {s} calls him a Syrian, following the Greek version of 1Sa 21:7; and so does Josephus {t}, through a mistake of the letter d for r, an Aramite instead of an Edomite; See Gill on "1Sa 21:7" and
See Gill on "1Sa 22:9"; this man observed what was done for David by the priest; and when Saul complained to his captains that they all conspired against him, and no man was sorry for him, or showed him the intrigue between David and his son; Doeg stood up and related what, and more than what he had heard and seen pass between David and Ahimelech; upon which Saul sent for the

priest, and all his father's house with him, and charged him with treasonable practices; and though he solemnly protested his innocency, Saul would not believe him, but ordered his footmen to fall upon him, and upon all the priests with him; but they refusing, he commanded Doeg to do it, who accordingly did, and slew eighty five priests, and destroyed all in the city of Nob, men, women, children, and sucklings, oxen, asses, and sheep; only Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, escaped, who fled to David, and reported the whole affair; upon which he penned this psalm: in which he has respect not only to the then present case, but to future times, Doeg being a type of antichrist, the man of sin; in his name, which signifies "anxious [and] solicitous" {u}, as he was to gain the king's favour, and obtain wealth and honour; so is antichrist to grasp all power, civil and ecclesiastical, and to get worldly honour and riches: in the country he was of, being an Edomite; and it is easy to observe, that Edom is the name which the Jews commonly give to the Roman empire, in which antichrist has his seat and power: in his religion, being a proselyte of the Jews, and was at an act of devotion, detained before the Lord, when he saw and heard what passed between David and Ahimelech; so antichrist appeared with the mask of religion, rose up out of the church, and sat in the temple of God, showing himself as though he was God: in his office, the chiefest of the herdmen, or mightiest among the shepherds of Saul; so antichrist calls himself "princeps pastorum", that is, "the chief of pastors"; assuming to himself the title which belongs to Christ, the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls: and, lastly, in his cruelty in slaying the priests of the Lord. Antichrist is notorious for shedding and drinking the blood of the saints, the faithful confessors and witnesses of Jesus Christ. In this psalm David upbraids him with his glorying in his wickedness, and checks it by observing that the grace and goodness of God to his people ever endures, Ps 52:4; charges him with devising mischief, and loving it,
Ps 52:2; and foretells his everlasting ruin and destruction,
Ps 52:5; which will be seen by the righteous with pleasure, who will have just reason to insult over him, Ps 52:6; and the psalm is concluded with an account of the happy condition and comfortable frame of soul the psalmist was in, in a view of all his troubles and enemies; he was flourishing in the church of God, trusted in the mercy of God for ever, and determined always to praise him and wait upon him, which is good for the saints to do, Ps 52:8.

{s} Sacr. Hist. l. 1. p. 43. {t} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 12. s. 1. 4. {u} A rad. gad, "solicitus, anxius fuit", Buxtorf.

Ver. 1. Why boastest thou thyself in mischief?.... Or "in evil" {w}; in that which is sinful; to glory in riches, wisdom, and strength, which are not in themselves evil, is wrong; and to rejoice in such boastings, all such rejoicing is evil; to be a doer of mischief, or sin, is bad; to make a sport of it, worse; but to glory in it, and boast of it when done, is worse still: to be boasters of evil things, is the character of antichrist and his followers, **2Ti 3:2**; who not only boast of their merit, their good works, and works of supererogation, and of their riches, and honour, and grandeur, saying, "I sit as a queen", Re 18:7; but of their wickedness in shedding the blood of the saints, thinking thereby they do God good service, and merit heaven, and eternal happiness; as Doeg boasted of his slaughter of the priests, and of his gaining the king's favour by it;

O mighty man! referring either to his office, being the chief of Saul's herdmen, and set over his servants, 1Sa 21:7; or ironically, to the mighty deed he had done, in slaying the unarmed priests, and putting to death the very sucklings at the breast, and even the innocent sheep, oxen, and asses; or to his great wickedness and power to commit it; though man has no power and free will to that which is good, yet he has to that which is evil; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and the eastern versions render it, "O thou! mighty in wickedness"; and to the same purpose the Targum paraphrases it, "mighty to shed innocent blood"; and the note of Aben Ezra is, "mighty to do evil". A learned writer {x} thinks this relates to Saul, and describes him as a man of power and dignity. The character well agrees with the little horn and Romish beast, **Da 7:20**;

the goodness of God [endureth] continually: that is, the love, grace, and mercy of God; this is observed as what is the matter of the saints' boasting, in opposition to the wicked boasting of Doeg; they glory in the love of God, and in that they know him who exerciseth lovingkindness, which is the source of all the blessings of grace and goodness; and in Christ, through whom all are communicated to them; and in him, as made every blessing to them, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: they ascribe the whole of their salvation, and all they have, to the grace of God, and glory in nothing as of themselves, and as though not received of the Lord. Moreover, the psalmist may take notice of this, as what was his support under all the persecutions he endured from men; that he had an interest in the grace and goodness of God, which is immutable and everlasting, invariably the same in all states and conditions; and that he was encompassed about with the favour of God as with a shield; and that it was not in the power of his most implacable enemies to separate him from the love of God; and therefore it was egregious folly in Doeg to boast himself in mischief; for, be he as mighty as he might, he could not prevent his sharing in the divine goodness, which always continues.

{w} herb "in malo", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus. {x} Delaney's Life of King David, vol. 1. p. 119.

Psalms 52:2

Ver. 2. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs,.... Abundance of mischiefs, in a variety of ways, against many persons, even all good men. What properly belongs to the heart is here ascribed to the tongue; because, as Aben Ezra observes, it is the interpreter and discoverer of the thoughts of the heart: out of the abundance of that the tongue speaks and declares the mischief it has devised. Doeg intended mischief to David, when he spoke to Saul, 1Sa 22:9; so antichrist devises mischiefs against the saints of the most High, to wear them out, and thinks to change times and laws, **Da 7:25**;

like a sharp razor, working deceitfully; that is, his tongue was like a razor; the razor is but a small instrument, and the tongue is but a little member: the razor is a sharp and cutting one, and so is the tongue; and therefore compared to a sharp sword, Ps 57:4; see
Jer 18:18; the razor takes off the beard cleanly and wholly; Doeg's tongue was the cause of the utter ruin of Ahimelech's family and the city of Nob; and as a razor may be said to "work deceitfully", when it turns aside in the hand of him that useth it, and with the hair takes off more than it should, even skin and flesh, or cuts the man's throat; so in a deceitful and insidious manner did Doeg work the destruction of Ahimelech and the priests of the Lord.

Psalms 52:3

Ver. 3. Thou lovest evil more than good,.... Indeed not good at all; such comparatives being strong negatives; see Ps 118:8; a wicked man loves evil, and nothing else; his carnal mind being enmity to all that is good

[and] lying rather than to speak righteousness; as appears by his affirming that Ahimelech inquired of the Lord for David, when he did not, 1Sa 22:10; and by suffering some things to pass for truths which were falsehoods, when it lay in his power to have disproved them: and such a lover of lies is antichrist; see **1Ti 4:2**.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2". The Targum renders the word "Selah" here "for ever", as in Ps 52:5.

Psalms 52:4

Ver. 4. Thou lovest all devouring words,.... Or "words of swallowing up" {y}; such as lies, calumnies, and detractions are, which devour the characters and reputations of men, and are the cause sometimes of their utter ruin and destruction; of the devouring and blasphemous words of antichrist see Re 13:5;

O [thou] deceitful tongue; See Gill on "Ps 52:2".

{y} elb yrbd "verba absorptionis", Vatablus, Gejerus, Schmidt.

Psalms 52:5

Ver. 5. God shall likewise destroy thee for ever,.... As a just retaliation for the mischief done to others; or, "therefore God shall destroy" {z}, &c. even body and soul in hell, with an everlasting destruction, which will be the case of every wicked man, and particularly of the antichristian party, Re 14:10; the word is used of breaking down the house in which the leprosy was, Le 14:45; and denotes the utter extinction of Doeg's family, and the irrecoverable ruin of antichrist, Re 18:21;

he shall take thee away; as fire from the hearth, Isa 30:14; or as burning coals from the altar: a word from the root here used signifies a censer: and the meaning is, that as his tongue was a fire, and set on fire of hell, and he was as a burning coal, he was fit for nothing but to be cast into everlasting burnings;

and pluck thee out of [thy] dwelling place; "tent", or "tabernacle" {a}; referring to the tents of shepherds, he being the chief of Saul's shepherds, or to some stately palace he had built for himself to dwell in, upon his advancement at court; or rather to the tabernacle of the Lord, where he had been an hypocritical worshipper; but now should be cut off from the church of God, as a rotten member, and cast out of the tabernacle of Jacob, **Mal 2:12**; while David flourished as an olive tree in the house of the Lord, Ps 52:8;

and root thee out of the land of the living. In retaliation for his rooting out Ahimelech's family, and the inhabitants of Nob; so in like manner he and his should be destroyed root and branch, and not see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, nor enjoy eternal life in the world to come.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2". The Targum renders the word "Selah" here "for ever", as in Ps 52:3.

{z} Mg dia touto, Sept. "propterea", V. L. "idcirco etiam", Piscator; "ideo etiam", Michaelis. {a} lham "de tabernaculo", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus; "e tentorio", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Psalms 52:6

Ver. 6. The righteous also shall see,.... The Targum adds, "the punishment of the wicked"; particularly what is before predicted of Doeg. The judgments of God upon the ungodly, as they are certain, so they will be visible, either in this world, or in that to come,
Re 15:4;

and fear; the Targum adds, "from before the Lord"; not with a slavish fear, with a dread of the same punishment, from which they are free, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, by which they are denominated righteous ones; though the judgments of God on others strike them with solemn awe and reverence, Ps 119:120, but with a filial godly fear; with a fear of God for his goodness to them, in delivering them out of the hands of wicked men, which engages them more and more to fear the Lord, and to serve and worship him; see Re 15:4;

and shall laugh at him; at Doeg; and so at any other wicked man, when they see the vengeance of God upon him, Ps 58:10; not that they rejoice at that, barely considered in itself, or as it is an evil and mischief to wicked men; for that does not become them, Pr 24:17; but as it is expressive of the care of God over them, and love to them, in avenging their enemies; and more especially as the glory of divine justice is displayed therein; see Re 18:20; for all this will be eminently fulfilled in the destruction of antichrist.

Psalms 52:7

Ver. 7. Lo, [this is] the man [that] made not God his strength,.... The Targum renders it, "that made not the Word of the Lord his strength". These are the words the righteous would say, when they should see the destruction of Doeg: see the man, the mighty man, and his end; what all his ill gotten honour and

riches are come to; and what his wickedness, deceit, and cruelty, have brought upon him. The righteous make the Lord their strength, put their trust in him, in whom is everlasting strength; do all they do in his strength; fly to him as their "strong hold", as the word {b} may be rendered; thither they run, and are safe: but the rich man's wealth is his strong city,
Pr 18:10; there he thinks himself safe, and places his confidence in it, as follows:

but trusted in the abundance of his riches; See Gill on "Ps 49:6"; so the antichristian whore is represented as boasting of her riches and honour, and trusting in them, that they would always continue, Re 18:7; like the fool in Lu 12:19;

[and] strengthened himself in his wickedness; encouraged and hardened himself in sin, gave up himself to it; and, by art obstinate continuance in it, strengthened the vicious habits contracted; stretched out his hand against God, and strengthened himself against the Almighty; went on in a daring manner, promising himself impunity; and as if his wickedness was his strength, his safeguard and protection: or in his mammon, his wealth and substance; as the Targum interprets it; and so R. Saadiah Gaon {c}, and with which the Syriac version agrees; and then the sense is the same with the other clause. But, alas! what are all such forces of strength, when wrath comes forth from the Lord of hosts? Job 36:18.

{b} wzwem "arcem suam", Cocceius; "presidium, munimemtum", Michaelis.
{c} Apud Kimchi in loc.

Psalms 52:8

Ver. 8. But I [am] like a green olive tree in the house of God,.... Or rather it should be supplied, "I shall be" {d}; since David was at this time an exile from the house of God: and this expresses his faith and confidence, that, notwithstanding his present troubles, he should be restored again, and be in a very flourishing condition, in the church of God; which is here meant by "the house of God": it being of his building, and where he dwells, and where to have a place is the great privilege of the saints; they are planted there by the Lord himself, and shall never be rooted up; they are fixed there, and shall never go out; which was David's confidence, Ps 23:6; and where he believed he should be as "a green olive tree"; which is a very choice and fruitful tree, has fatness in it, produces an excellent oil; is beautiful to look at; delights in hot climates and sunny places; is found on mountains, we read of the mount of Olives; is ever green and durable, and its leaves and branches are symbols of peace: all which is applicable to truly righteous persons and believers in Christ; who are the excellent of the earth, are filled with the fruits of righteousness; are fat and flourishing; have the oil of grace, the anointing which teacheth all things; are a perfection of beauty, made perfectly comely through Christ's comeliness; thrive under him, the sun of righteousness; grow in the mountain of the Lord's house, the church: their grace is incorruptible, their leaf withers not; they are rooted in Christ, and ever continue; they are the sons of peace, and their last end will be eternal peace. Now as such David was assured he should be, when his enemy would be rooted up out of the land of the living, and cast like a dry and worthless branch into everlasting burnings; the ground of which confidence follows:

I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever; the mercy of God is not only an encouragement to trust, but the object of it; not the absolute mercy of God, but the grace and goodness of God in Christ Jesus, which endures continually, Ps 52:1; and so does hope in it, which never makes ashamed, but abides to the end. The psalmist seems to have respect to the mercy promised him, that he should sit upon the throne. This he believed, and therefore was assured he should be in the flourishing circumstances in the house of God before mentioned.

{d} "Ero", Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus.

Psalms 52:9

Ver. 9. I will praise thee for ever,.... Both in this world, as long as he lived, and had a being in it; and in the world to come, to all eternity. This is a resolution respecting what he would do, when he should be in the happy condition he was confident of;

because thou hast done [it]; the Targum interprets it, "the revenge of my judgment"; meaning the vengeance of God on Doeg; and to the same sense Aben Ezra and Kimchi: though it may refer to the comfortable and happy condition he should be in, Ps 52:8; and which he wholly ascribes to the grace and goodness of God, and not to any merits of his own, and therefore determines to praise him for it;

and I will wait on thy name; on the Lord himself, in his house and ordinances, for his presence and fresh supplies of grace and strength, when he should be restored. Or the sense is, that in the mean while he would wait patiently on the Lord, until he had accomplished what he had promised, and David believed;

for [it is] good before thy saints; the sense is, either that it is good to wait upon the Lord and for him; which appears to be so to all the saints, by the comfortable experience they have had of it,
Isa 40:31; or the name of the Lord is good unto them, pleasant, delightful, and comfortable, as proclaimed, Ex 34:6; see **So 1:3**; and also Re 15:4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 53:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 53

To the chief Musician upon Mahalath, Maschil, [A Psalm] of David. The word "mahalath" is only used here and in Ps 88:1. Some, with Aben Ezra, take it to be the first word of a song, to the tune of which this psalm was set; others, with Jarchi, that it is the name of a musical instrument on which it was sung; a hollow instrument; of the same nature with "nehiloth", See Gill on "Ps 5:1", title. Though it may relate to the argument or subject matter of the psalm, and be rendered, "concerning sickness" or "infirmity" {e}; and, as Jarchi observes, some interpret it, "concerning the sickness or weakness of Israel", when the temple was destroyed. But it seems much better to understand it of the sickness and disease of sin, and the weakness following upon that, to which all mankind are subject; since the psalm manifestly treats of the general corruption and depravity of human nature. This psalm is the same with Ps 14:1, and is expressed in the same words, with some little difference; the reason of its repetition is variously conjectured. Some think that the compiler of the book of Psalms, observing various readings in it occasioned by copying, thought fit to insert it both ways; but it is most likely to be composed by David himself, at different times, and it may be on different occasions, and with different views. Some think the former, namely the fourteenth psalm, was written concerning Nabal, and this concerning Doeg; according to Jarchi, that was concerning Nebuchadnezzar, this concerning Titus Vespasian; or, as others think, Antiochus Epiphanes. Kimchi is of opinion that this psalm, being placed between one that relates to Doeg, and another that refers to the Ziphites, points at the likeness there is between the case of David and the Messiah; that as David had many who sought to ensnare him, yet God rewarded them, and established him in the kingdom; so it will be with the Messiah: but it is much more reasonable with others to conclude, that it is repeated either because of the importance of it; because that as the former may refer to the corruption of the Jews in the times of David, this to the corruption of men in the times of Christ and his apostles, and under the Gospel dispensation, until the second coming of Christ, especially under the reign of antichrist. The argument of the psalm, according to the Syriac version, is concerning Ahithophel, who gave counsel to Absalom to pursue his father David and kill him: and, according to the Arabic version, it is a prophecy concerning Babel and Sennacherib; so Theodoret: but rather concerning mystical Babylon, and the man of sin.

{e} tlxm le "de miseria", Tigurine version, "vel infirmitate"; so Ainsworth.

Ver. 1. The fool hath said in his heart, [there is] no God,.... The Targum adds, "of whom is revenge"; or there is no God to punish and avenge the wicked;

corrupt are they; the Chaldee paraphrase is, "the wicked have corrupted their ways"; as all flesh had done in the old world, **Ge 6:12**;

and have done abominable iniquity; iniquity is the abominable thing that God hates, and makes men abominable in his sight; in Ps 11:1, it is read, "abominable worlds": the Targum paraphrases the words, "they are far from good, for iniquity is found in them"; see Re 21:8;

[there is] none that doeth good; See Gill on "Ps 14:1".

Psalms 53:2

Ver. 2. God looked down from heaven upon the children of men,.... In Ps 14:2, it is read, "the Lord" or "Jehovah"; in everything else there is an agreement in this verse; See Gill on "Ps 14:2";

to see if there were [any] that did understand; the Targum is, "that were understanding" in the law; it doubtless means understanding in divine and spiritual things;

that did seek God; the above paraphrase is, "seeking doctrine from before the Lord".

Psalms 53:3

Ver. 3. Every one of them is gone back,.... From God, and the way of his commandments. In Ps 14:3, it is, "they are all gone aside";
See Gill on "Ps 14:3";

they are altogether become filthy; [there is] none that doeth good, no, not one. What follows in this verse is the same as Ps 14:3.

Psalms 53:4

Ver. 4. Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?.... In Ps 14:4, it is, "have all the workers", &c. There are none of them but what have, unless given up to judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, to believe a lie, as antichrist and his followers, **2Th 2:10**;
See Gill on "Ps 14:4";

who eat up my people, [as] they eat bread; and drink their blood, and are drunken with it, Re 17:6;

they have not called upon God; but upon their idols, upon the Virgin Mary, and saints departed. In Ps 14:4, it is, "upon the Lord".

Psalms 53:5

Ver. 5. There were they in great, fear, [where] no fear was,.... Before; neither of God nor man, nor any dread of punishment, but the utmost security, Re 18:7; also
See Gill on "Ps 14:5";

for God hath scattered the bones of [him] that encampeth [against] thee; either against Christ, or against his church and people; who set themselves against the person, office, and grace of Christ, and seek to distress and destroy his interest: "the bones [of such] God will scatter": that is, he will destroy antichrist and his armies, which are his strength, as the bones are the strength of the human body; and make such a carnage of them, that the fowls of the air shall eat their flesh, and their bones shall be scattered here and there; see Re 19:17. So the Targum,

"for God scatters the strength of the armies of the wicked."

Kimchi interprets it of the bones of the nations that shall encamp against Jerusalem, in the days of Gog; see Re 20:8; and Aben Ezra observes, that "thee" respects either God or the Messiah;

thou hast put [them] to shame; this is either an address of the psalmist unto God, declaring what he had done; or rather of God the Father to his Son Christ Jesus; and so Kimchi and Ben Melech say this refers to the Messiah: and it may be expressive of the shame and confusion that antichrist and his followers will be thrown into, when they shall make war with the Lamb, and he shall overcome them,
Re 17:14;

because God hath despised them; or rejected them as reprobates; given them up to a reprobate mind; and being ungodly men, has before ordained them to this condemnation. The Targum is,

"for the Word of the Lord hath rejected them;"

as filthy, loathsome, and abominable, and cast them alive into the lake of fire, Re 19:20.

Psalms 53:6

Ver. 6. O that the salvation of Israel [were come] out of Zion!.... Or, "who will give {f} out of Zion the salvation of Israel?" The Targum adds, "except the Lord"; and this is a request to him for it: and, as in Ps 14:7, it may be a wish for the first coming of Christ, to work out salvation for his people; here it may be expressive of the desire of the church for his coming in a spiritual manner, in the latter day, to take to himself his great power, and reign; to destroy antichrist, and deliver his people from bondage and oppression by him; when the Gentiles shall be gathered in, the Jews will be converted, and all Israel saved; see Ro 11:25. It is in the original text, "salvations" {g}; denoting the complete salvation of the church; when all her enemies will be destroyed, and all peace and prosperity shall be enjoyed by her; See Gill on "Ps 14:6".

when God bringeth back the captivity of his people: who have been carried into it by antichrist, Re 13:10;

Jacob shall rejoice, [and] Israel shall be glad; for now the kingdoms of this world will become Christ's; the marriage of the Lamb will be come, and the bride made ready, through the calling of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Jews; which will occasion the twenty four elders, the representatives of the Christian church, to give thanks to the Lord God Almighty, and cause many voices to be heard in heaven, expressing great joy on this occasion, Re 11:15.

{f} Nty ym "quis dabit", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {g} twevy "salutes", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; so Ainsworth.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 54:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 54

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, [A Psalm] of David, when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us? Of the word "neginoth", See Gill on "Ps 4:1", title; and of "maschil", See Gill on "Ps 32:1", title. The occasion of writing this psalm were the discoveries the Ziphims or Ziphites made to Saul of David being in their neighbourhood; which they did twice, as appears from
1Sa 23:14. Which of these gave occasion to the psalm is not certain; it is very likely that it was composed after both had been made. These Ziphims were the inhabitants of a city called Ziph, which was in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:55, near to which was a wilderness, which had its name from the city in which David was when they came to Saul with this news of him.

Ver. 1. Save me, O God, by thy name,.... That is, by himself, by his power, and of his grace and goodness; the Lord's name is often used for himself. David in his distress applies to his God for salvation and deliverance, who only could give it; which was right; and his prayer was remarkably heard and answered: for when Saul came down upon the first discovery, and beset David and his men all around, just as he was about to seize the prey, tidings came to him of the invasion of the Philistines; which obliged him directly to quit his pursuit of David, and return in haste for the defence of his country, 1Sa 23:26; and upon the second discovery, when Saul came again to take him, Saul was delivered into the hands of David, who could have took away his life if he would; but he only took his spear and cruse of water by his bolster, as a proof of his being in his power, 1Sa 26:12. Of such avail is the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man. This prayer is suitable enough to David's antitype and son, the Messiah; see Ps 69:1; and especially to sensible sinners; who, being made acquainted with, their lost and perishing condition, inquire the way of salvation; and finding it is not by works, but by Christ alone, apply in that way for it, and desire that God would save them by his Son; who is his name, in whom his name is, and whose name Jesus, a Saviour, is of God's giving; and this name is a strong tower, whither such souls, sensible of danger, flee and are safe; nor is there any other name in which salvation is, and which is therefore exceeding precious, and like ointment poured forth; see Ex 23:21. Or, "for thy name's sake" {h}; for the sake of the glory of his divine perfections; which was displayed in the deliverance of David, and more abundantly in the salvation of lost sinners; such as the wisdom, power, faithfulness, justice, grace and mercy of God. Such a petition shows that man cannot save himself; that no creature, none but God can save him; and that a sensible sinner desires to be saved in such a way that God may be glorified;

and judge me by thy strength; David, though innocent, had many charges laid against him; his enemies were lively and strong; he puts his cause into the hands of the Lord, his strong Redeemer, who was able to plead it thoroughly against those that strove with him; so Christ, his antitype, committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously, **1Pe 2:23**; and so should every believer.

{h} Kmvb "propter nomen tuum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Amama, Michaelis.

Psalms 54:2

Ver. 2. Hear my prayer, O God,.... The psalmist first puts up his petitions, and then desires to be heard; his distress, and the fervency of his spirit, not suffering him to observe order;

give ear to the words of my mouth; for the prayer which was conceived in his mind, and inwrought there by the Spirit of God, was expressed vocally.

Psalms 54:3

Ver. 3. For strangers are risen up against me,.... Meaning such as Doeg the Edomite, or Heathen soldiers, that Saul had hired and took into his army, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; and such as these rose up against David's antitype, the Messiah, **Ps 2:1** **Ac 4:27**. Or rather the Ziphims, who were of his own nation, yea, of his own tribe, yet used him as barbarously as the very Heathens would have done, or worse; and who, though notwithstanding they were of Israel, might not be Israelites indeed, but strangers to an inward experience of divine and spiritual things: for men may be professors of religion, and yet be strangers to God in Christ, to Christ himself, and the way of salvation by him, and communion with him; to the Spirit of God, and the operations of his grace on the heart; to themselves, their own hearts, and their state and condition by nature; to the Gospel of Christ, and to the people of God; and these are sometimes the most violent persecutors of good and spiritual men;

and oppressors seek after my soul; or "life" {i}, to take it away; as did Saul and his army; who are "the mighty" or "strong ones" {k}, as the word here used signifies; see 1Sa 24:11; and as the Jewish sanhedrim, Scribes and Pharisees, sought after the soul or life of Christ, to take that away, as they did;

they have not set God before them. They did not consider themselves as under the omniscient eye of God; they did not set his word before them, as the rule of their conduct, but cast it behind their backs; nor did they regard his providential mercies and layouts as a motive to engage them to obedience to him, but despised them; they had not the fear of God before their eyes, nor in their hearts, nor any concern for his glory; and therefore did the wicked things they did against his servant.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{i} yvpn "vitam meam", Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis. {k} Myuyre "fortes", V. L. Pagninus, Musculus, Gejerus; "praepotentes", Vatablus.

Psalms 54:4

Ver. 4. Behold, God [is] mine helper,.... This being a matter of wonder to be helped in so extraordinary a manner, and a sure and certain case, and what was deserving the attention of others; for the encouragement of their faith and hope in like cases, a "behold" is prefixed unto it: and what is here said is true of David's son, the Messiah, and is expressed by him in much the same language, Isa 50:9; and of all the saints whom the Lord helps, as at first conversion, out of the pit wherein is no water, out of the horrible pit, the mire and clay of nature's darkness, ignorance, and unbelief; so out of all their afflictions and temptations, and out of the hands of all their enemies; he helps in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty; and he helps to all mercies, temporal and spiritual, needful for them; which help is quick and present, seasonable and suitable, always sufficient; and is what they have reason to expect both from what he has said to them in promise, and from what he has done for them;

the Lord [is] with them that uphold my soul; that ministered to his sustenance, as Abigail did, and that gathered to him and joined him, and exposed their lives in the defence of him; these the Lord was with, blessed, protected, and afforded them his gracious presence. Such there were with Christ; who followed him in the regeneration; who ministered to him of their substance, whom God rewarded in a way of grace; and he blesses them that bless his, and do good to them; they being the excellent in the earth, in whom is his delight, the apple of his eye, and his jewels. Or the sense is, that the Lord is he that upheld his soul; not only the chief of his upholders, but the only one: so R. Moses {l} interprets it, that he is the alone upholder, and is instead of all upholders, and answers to them all; who upheld his soul in life, and followed him with his goodness: as when God is said to be the first, and "with the last", the meaning is, that he is the first and the last, Isa 41:4; see Ps 118:7; so he upheld the soul of Christ in the wilderness, and in the garden, and on the cross; see Isa 42:1. And he upholds all his people in a providential way in their beings, and supplies them with all the necessaries of life; and, in a spiritual way, maintaining their spiritual life, supplying them with all grace, bearing them up under all trials, holding up their goings in his ways, and preserving them to the end.

{l} Apud Aben Ezram in loc.

Psalms 54:5

Ver. 5. He shall reward evil unto mine enemies,.... That eyed him as Saul did; that observed his haunts, where he resorted, and who were with him, as the Ziphites did under Saul's direction; as the Word {m} here used for "enemies" signifies: the mischief they had devised for him, he believed, would be returned upon their own heads; the pit they digged they would fall into themselves; and the net they had spread for others their own feet would be taken in. This was true as of David's enemies, so of Christ's, the wicked Jews, who narrowly watched him to take every advantage against him;

cut them off in thy truth; root and branch, as Saul, and his family, and his courtiers, quickly were, according to the truth of promises made to David, and of threatenings unto them.

{m} yrrvl "observatoribus meis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

Psalms 54:6

Ver. 6. I will freely sacrifice unto thee,.... Not legal sacrifices; no, nor freewill offerings the law gives directions about, though the allusion is to them; but the freewill offerings of his mouth, Ps 119:108; the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, on account of help, salvation, and deliverance, as appears from the following clause; which he determines to offer, not by constraint, but willingly; not by force, but of a ready mind; freely, and with all his heart. The sacrifice of his antitype is himself, his soul and body, as in union with his divine Person; and this was offered up to God, against whom man has sinned, and whose justice must be satisfied; and this was done freely and voluntarily; he gave himself an offering; he laid down his life of himself, and that for sinners. The sacrifices of his people are their prayers and praises, their acts of beneficence, and the presentation of their souls and bodies in divine service; all which they do freely, under the influence of divine grace;

I will praise thy name, O Lord; which explains what is meant by sacrificing: this is what is due to the Lord, and comely in his people;

for [it is] good; either the name of God; and therefore to be praised. He himself is good, as, he is, both in a way of providence and of grace; and it is good, both pleasantly and profitably good, to sing praises to him, Ps 147:1.

Psalms 54:7

Ver. 7. For he hath delivered me out of all trouble,.... As he desired, 1Sa 26:24; that is, out of all his present trouble; not that he had no more afterwards; for as soon as one trouble is gone, generally speaking, another comes; but as God delivered him out of his present distress, so he believed he would deliver him out of all his afflictions in future times;

and mine eye hath seen [his desire] upon mine enemies: or revenge, as the Targum supplies it; not that he delighted in the destruction of his enemies, but in the justice of God glorified thereby, and in the goodness of God to him, in delivering him from them; see Re 18:20.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 55:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 55

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil [A Psalm] of David. The occasion of this psalm was either the persecution of Saul, or the conspiracy of Absalom. Some think it was written when David understood that the inhabitants of Keilah would deliver him into the hands of Saul, 1Sa 23:12; and others when the Ziphites attempted a second time to do the same, 1Sa 26:1; but since a single person is spoken of that magnified himself against him, Ps 55:12; and Ahithophel seems to be designed; it may be thought rather to be written on account of Absalom's rebellion, and Ahithophel's counsel against him; who is considered by many Christian interpreters as a type of Judas, the betrayer of our Lord; and, indeed, there are many things in this psalm, if not the whole, which may be truly applied to Christ, as will be seen in the following exposition of it.

Ver. 1. Give ear to my prayer, O God,.... Which was for that which is just and right, and equitable to be given, as the word {n} used signifies; being promised in the covenant of grace, ratified and confirmed by the blood of Christ, Not only David was a man much given to prayer, as well as was the sweet psalmist of Israel; but the Messiah, as man, was much and often engaged in this work, in the days of his flesh, **Lu 6:12**;

and hide not thyself from my supplication; made for mercies and blessings, which spring from the free grace and goodness of God, which is the sense of the word {o} here used; and such are all mercies, whether temporal or spiritual; for none are merited by men: and from his supplication for such things the psalmist desires, that as he would not be as one deaf to him, so that he would not hide his eyes, or refuse to look upon him, and deny his, requests; see **Isa 1:15**.

{n} ytlpt "orationem meam", i.e. "secundum judicium"; so Arana. {o} ytnxt "my supplication for grace", Ainsworth.

Psalms 55:2

Ver. 2. Attend unto me, and hear me,.... So as to answer, and that immediately and directly, his case requiring present help;

I mourn in my complaint; or "in my meditation" {p}; solitary thoughts, and melancholy views of things. Saints have their complaints, on account of their sins and corruptions, their barrenness and unfruitfulness, and the decay of vital religion in them; and because of the low estate of Zion, the declining state of the interest of Christ, and the little success of his Gospel; and they mourn, in these complaints, over their own sins, and the sins of others, professors and profane, and under afflictions temporal and spiritual, both their own and the church's. Christ also, in the days of his flesh, had his complaints of the perverseness and faithlessness of the generation of men among whom he lived; of the frowardness, pride and contentions of his disciples; of the reproaches, insult, and injuries of his enemies; and of the dereliction of his God and Father; and he often mourned on account of one or other of these things, being a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs;

and make a noise; not only with sighs and groans, but in so loud a manner as to be called roaring; see Ps 22:1.

{p} yxyvb "in meditatione mea", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 55:3

Ver. 3. Because of the voice of the enemy,.... Of Absalom, as Arama; or of Ahithophel, who gave out he would smite the king only, 2Sa 17:2; and so of any spiritual enemy, as sin, Satan, and the world, when they threaten dominion and tyranny; and of the Scribes and Pharisees reproaching Christ, as being a Samaritan, and having a devil, and doing his miracles by his assistance; menacing, insulting, and triumphing over him, when on the cross;

because of the oppression of the wicked; of Absalom or Ahithophel, as Arama; who conspired against David, and obliged him to quit his palace, and the city of Jerusalem; and is applicable to the troubles which surround the people of God, from every quarter, by wicked men, and to our Lord's being enclosed by them at the time of his Crucifixion,
Ps 22:12;

for they cast iniquity upon me; laid things to his charge he knew not: so wicked men falsely accuse the good conversation of the saints; and so the Jews imputed crimes to Christ he was innocent of; as immorality, sedition, blasphemy, &c.

and in wrath they hate me; as they do all the people of God, because chosen and called, and separated from them: and so they did Christ, and with a mortal hatred, though without a cause.

Psalms 55:4

Ver. 4. My heart is sore pained within me,.... At the civil war in his kingdom; at the battle likely to ensue between his forces and Absalom's, and at the issue of it; see **Jer 4:19**; this was true of Christ in the garden, when his soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death, and he was in pain, as a woman in travail, as the word {q} here used signifies; and on the cross, when his heart, like wax, melted in the midst of his bowels;

and the terrors of death are fallen upon me; see 2Sa 15:14; thus it was with the human nature of Christ, when he desired, if possible, the cup might pass from him.

{q} ynokt "operuit me", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "operit", Cocceius; "obtegit", Junius & Tremellius; "obtexit", Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 55:5

Ver. 5. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me,.... Fear and dread of mind, and trembling of body;

and horror hath overwhelmed me; or "covered me"; he was in the utmost consternation and surprise at what he apprehended would be the issue of things; so Christ in the garden is said to be "sore amazed", Mr 14:33; all which terror, fearfulness, trembling, and horror, arose from a sense of sin imputed to him, even of all the sins of his people, the faith of which must be nauseous to him, and the guilt thereof pressing upon him; and from a feeling of the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, which he endured in the room and stead of his people; and this shows the truth of his human nature, and the weakness and insufficiency of that, without his divine nature, to have performed the great work of redemption; also the evil of sin, the exceeding sinfulness of it, and the strictness of divine justice; and likewise the wonderful love of Christ in becoming a surety for his people, and what ease and pleasure they may take; all the pain, the trembling, and horror, were his, and all the joy is theirs.

Psalms 55:6

Ver. 6. And I said, oh that I had wings like a dove,.... The psalmist pitches upon this creature, partly to suggest that his enemies pursuing him were like the ravenous hawk, and he like the harmless, innocent, and trembling dove; and partly because of its swiftness in flying. Aben Ezra thinks the dove is mentioned, because it is sociable with men, and who send letters by them for quick dispatch, of which instances may be given {r}. This wish is expressed suitably to his character and case. The church is sometimes compared to a dove for its innocence, modesty, chastity, purity, affection, inconsolableness for the loss of its mate, and for its fearfulness, **So 2:14**; and so is Christ, **So 5:12**; who was typified by Jonah, whose name signifies a dove; and on whom the Spirit of God descended as a dove, at his baptism, and by whom he was filled with his dovelike graces;

[for then] would I fly away; so David desired to flee, and did flee with good speed and haste from Absalom his son, 2Sa 15:14, title. Arama observes of the dove, that, when weary with flying with one wing, it rests that, and flies with the other, and so has strength to fly continually without stopping, which he supposes to be the reason why the wing of a dove is desired. So every sensible sinner desires to flee from sin and sinners, and from wrath to come; from avenging justice, to Christ the city of refuge; so Christ, under the terrors of death, in his human nature, in a view of the law's curse and wrath, desired the cup might pass from him, and he might flee and escape death, though with submission to the divine will;

and be at rest; safe and secure from the conspirators, as David was; and as a sinner is that has fled to Christ; in whom is rest from the burden and guilt of sin, from the wrath, curse, and condemnation of the law, and under all afflictions, whether of body or mind; and not in the world, and worldly enjoyments; nor in the law, and the works of it: and as Christ is; not by escaping death, but through dying, and having done his work has ceased from it, and is entered into his rest; which was the joy set before him, that animated him as man to endure the cross, and despise the shame; here also true believers, weary of the world, desire to be, enjoying that rest which remains for the people of God.

{r} Vid. Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 9. c. 2.

Psalms 55:7

Ver. 7. Lo, [then] would I wander far off, [and] remain in the wilderness,.... So David did when he fled from Absalom,
2Sa 15:23; so gracious souls desire to be; not in the wilderness of the people; but to be solitary as in a wilderness, clear of the company of wicked men, as Jeremiah wished for, **Jer 9:2**; and that they might be more at leisure for and given up unto spiritual devotion, and be secure from their enemies: and as this may be applied to Christ, it shows the wickedness, cruelty, and barbarity of the men of that generation among whom he lived; that he chose rather to be in the wilderness, among wild beasts, than to dwell among them, Mt 17:17; some apply this to the state of the primitive church under Jewish persecution, when it fled from Judea, and settled in the wilderness of the Gentiles; the preachers of the word being scattered abroad by the windy storm and tempest of persecution, and the Gospel taken from the Jews, and carried to a nation bringing forth the fruit of it, where it has remained ever since. With this may be compared the state of the church under Rome Pagan, in Re 12:6.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 55:8

Ver. 8. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm [and] tempest. Of an army of rebellious subjects, bearing down all before them, and threatening with utter ruin and destruction; so a powerful army of enemies invading a country is signified by a storm and tempest,
Isa 28:2; and may be expressive of the storm and tempest of divine wrath and vengeance the sensible sinner hastens his escape from by fleeing to Christ; and of the blowing and furious winds of persecution, which the church, Christ's dove, flees from, by getting into the clefts of the rock, and the secret places of the stairs, **So 2:14**; and of the storms of divine wrath and justice that fell upon Christ as the surety of his people; from which the human nature, seized with fearfulness, trembling, and horror, desired an hasty escape.

Psalms 55:9

Ver. 9. Destroy, O Lord,.... Or "swallow up" {s}, as Pharaoh and his host were swallowed up in the Red sea; or as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, were swallowed up in the earth; so all the enemies of Christ and his church will be destroyed; and death, the last of them, will be swallowed up in victory, Isa 25:8. The Targum interprets it, "destroy", or "scatter their counsel": but this seems to be intended in the next clause;

[and] divide their tongues: as at the confusion of languages at Babel, to which the allusion is: this had its accomplishment in Absalom's counsellors according to David's wish, 2Sa 15:31; and in the Jewish sanhedrim in Christ's time, and in the witnesses they produced against him, Lu 23:51; and of which there is an instance in the council of the Jews, held on account of the Apostle Paul, Ac 23:7;

for I have seen violence and strife in the city: in the city of Jerusalem, now left by David, and possessed by Absalom, by whom "violence" was done to David's wives, through the advice of Ahithophel; and "strife", contention, and rebellion, were fomented among the people: this David saw, understood, and perceived, by the intelligence brought him from time to time: and in the times of Christ the kingdom of heaven suffered "violence" in this place, and he endured the "contradiction" of sinners against himself.

{s} elb "degluti", Montanus, Tigurine version; "absorbe", Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 55:10

Ver. 10. Day and night they go about it, upon the walls thereof,.... That is, "violence" and "strife" go about the walls of it continually; men of violence and contention are the only watchmen of it: a city must be sadly guarded that has no better watch than this;

mischief also and sorrow [are] in the midst of it; it was full of wickedness within and without; the city, as Aben Ezra observes, was like a circle; violence and strife were as a line round about it, and mischief and sorrow the centre of it: and these two commonly go together; where mischief is, sorrow follows.

Psalms 55:11

Ver. 11. Wickedness [is] in the midst thereof,.... All manner of wickedness; abominable wickedness; wickedness as arrived to its highest pitch, and as having filled up its measure; see **Eze 9:4**;

deceit and guile depart not from her streets; where truth was fallen, and equity could not enter, Isa 59:14; for these are contrary the one to the other, and are incompatible; where the one prevails, the other must give way. This whole account shows the aboundings of sin in Jerusalem at this time, and that it was openly and publicly committed, and contains so many reasons of the imprecations in Ps 55:9.

Psalms 55:12

Ver. 12. For [it was] not an enemy [that] reproached me,.... An open and avowed one; a Moabite or a Philistine; such an one as Goliath, who cursed him by his gods; but one of his own country, city, court, and family, who pretended to be a friend; his son Absalom, according to Arama: so it was not one of the Scribes and Pharisees, the sworn enemies of Christ, who rejected him as the Messiah, and would not have him to reign over them, that reproached him, but one of his own apostles;

then I could have borne [it]; reproach from an enemy is to be expected, and may be patiently endured; and, when it is for righteousness' sake, should be accounted an happiness, and rejoiced at; but the reproaches of one that has been thought to be a friend are very cutting, wounding, heartbreaking, and intolerable, Ps 69:7; the calumnies and reproaches of the Scribes and Pharisees were borne by Christ with great patience, and were answered with great calmness and mildness,
Mt 11:19. Or, "I would have lifted up" {t}; that is, my hand, and defended myself; I should have been upon my guard, ready to receive the blow, or to have put it off, or repelled it;

neither [was it] he that hated me: openly, but secretly in his heart;

[that] did magnify [himself] against me; made himself a great man, and set himself at the head of the conspiracy and opposition against him, and spoke great swelling words, in way of raillery and reproach;

then I would have hid myself from him; as David did from Saul, when he became his enemy, 1Sa 20:24; and as Christ from the Jews, **Joh 8:59**; but as for Judas, he knew the place he resorted to; and therefore easily found him, Joh 18:2; the sense may be, that he would have shunned his company, refused conversation with him; much less would he have admitted him to his privy councils, by which means he knew all his affairs, and there was no hiding and concealing things from him.

{t} avaw.

Psalms 55:13

Ver. 13. But [it was] thou,.... The Targum is, "but thou Ahithophel"; of whom the words are literally to be understood, and so they are in the Talmud {u}; and mystically and typically of Judas;

a man mine equal; "a man", and not a beast, nor a devil; but a man, from whom humanity, kindness, and tenderness might have been expected; though both Ahithophel and Judas acted the part of a devil; and the latter is expressly called one, **Joh 6:70**; "mine equal"; or like unto me; as the Targum. Ahithophel was not equal to David in dignity, as the king of Israel; nor in gifts, as the sweet psalmist of Israel; nor in grace as he; but as a man, a mortal dying man: kings and subjects are of the same blood, equally liable to death, and in the grave will be manifestly on a level: or rather the sense is, that he was in his esteem and affliction as himself; he was his friend that he loved as his own soul: so Judas could not be in every sense equal to Christ who is Jehovah's fellow, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God. Indeed as a man he was like unto him; a frail, mortal man, though not sinless as Christ. The word ykrek may be rendered "according to my appointment" {w}, ordination, or constitution; Judas being a man appointed and ordained to be an apostle of Christ with the rest: or, "according to my esteem" {x}; being had in great esteem and familiarity with Christ: or, "according to my order" {y}, rank and class; being taken into his family, admitted to his table, where be sat down and ate with him, as if he was his equal;

my guide: or "governor" {z}. Ahithophel was not governor over David; but was made a governor by him: he was one of his dukes or nobles, as the word is rendered in Ge 36:15, was raised to great dignity by him; perhaps was chief minister of state: it is certain he was his counsellor, and his counsel was with him as the oracle of God, 1Ch 27:33; he was his guide in civil affairs; he was directed by his advice, and it may be was president of his privy council. Judas was not only the guide of them to Christ who took him, **Ac 1:16**; but when the apostles were sent out two by two before the face of Christ, to preach where he himself should come, Judas was sent also, **Mr 6:7**;

and mine acquaintance: one well known to him, as Ahithophel was to David, and Judas to Christ, his friend and companion, in whom he confided, and who ate of his bread; and all these characters are so many aggravations of his treachery and wickedness.

{u} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 2. Pirke Abot, c. 6. s. 3. {w} "Secundum dispositionem, sc. ordinationem et constitutionem meam", Calvinus in Michaelis. {x} "Juxta estimationem meam", Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "qui par mihi estimatus est", Piscator. {y} "Secundum ordinem meum", Mollerus. {z} ypwla "dux meus", Pagninus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "princeps meus", Cocceius.

Psalms 55:14

Ver. 14. We took sweet counsel together,.... Not in religious matters; for in these the testimonies of the Lord were David's counsellors, Ps 119:24; but in civil things: hearty counsel is one branch of friendship, and which greatly sweetens it, Pr 27:9; as this may be applied to Christ and Judas, it may denote the mutual delight and pleasure they had, the one in communicating, the other in receiving a notional knowledge of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it, which are the counsel of God, Ac 20:27; for if hearers may hear the word gladly, as Herod did, and receive it with joy, as did the stony ground hearers, and yet be destitute of the grace of God; why may not Judas, and other preachers devoid of true grace, be thought to receive and preach the doctrines of the Gospel in a speculative way, with some kind of delight and pleasure? so professors of religion take sweet counsel together, when they communicate to each other what light and knowledge they have in the mysteries of the Gospel, and converse about experience, and the mysteries and secrets of internal godliness, and give and take advice in spiritual things; and sad it is when anyone of these drop their profession, and reproachers, scoffers, or persecutors;

[and] walked unto the house of God in company: David with his royal family and courtiers, and Ahithophel among the rest; where he delighted to go, and

that with a multitude. So Christ and Judas often went to the temple together, with the rest of the disciples, who heard many an excellent sermon from his mouth: all which are further aggravations of sin and guilt. And so such persons, who have walked together to the house of God and in it, have attended together on public worship, and walked together in holy fellowship; when any of these forsake the assembling of themselves together, scoff at religion, speak evil of ordinances, reproach the saints, or persecute them, it is very shocking, cutting, and grieving indeed.

Psalms 55:15

Ver. 15. Let death seize upon them,.... Ahithophel and his accomplices, Judas and the men with him; as a mighty man, as the king of terrors, and shake them to pieces. Or, "let him exact upon them" {a}; as a creditor upon the debtor, and demand the debt of punishment for sin: or let him come upon them at an unawares; let them not die a natural, but a violent death. The Targum mentions Doeg and Ahithophel;

[and] let them, go down quick into hell: as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, went down quick or alive into the earth; so let these men die, and descend into the grave, in their full strength; and accordingly Absalom and Ahithophel died sudden and violent deaths, 2Sa 17:23; and so did Judas, Mt 27:5; and the beast and false prophet, another part of the antitype, will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire,
Re 19:20;

for wickedness [is] in their dwellings; and dwells in them; wherever they go or sojourn, this goes and abides with them, being the reigning principle in their hearts and lives;

[and] among them; in the midst of them; their inward part is very wickedness. The Targum is, "in their bodies". But rather the sense is, in their hearts; wickedness was both in their houses and in their hearts, and is the reason of the imprecation on them; which arises not from a revengeful spirit, but from a zeal for the glory of God; and is to be considered as a prophecy of what would be, and not to be drawn into an example for private Christians to act by.

{a} yvy "exigat debitum", Pagninus; "aget vel agat exactorem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Amama.

Psalms 55:16

Ver. 16. As for me, I will call upon God,.... Not upon a creature, on idols and images, on angels or saints departed; but upon God, in his time of trouble, for salvation and deliverance from enemies; who is able to save. This is to be understood of calling upon God in prayer; as Ps 55:17 explains it, and the Targum here renders it; though sometimes invocation of the name of God takes in the whole of divine worship;

and the Lord shall save me; which confidence was founded partly upon his promise to deliver such that call upon him in the day of trouble, Ps 50:15; and partly upon his power, whose hand is not shortened that it cannot save. The Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord shall redeem me."

Psalms 55:17

Ver. 17. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray,.... These being the stated times of prayer with the Jews, and which continued to later ages, **Da 6:10**. These times, they say {b}, were fixed by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: the morning prayer by Abraham, according to Ge 22:3, the prayer of the "minchah" by Isaac, according to Ge 24:63; and the evening prayer by Jacob, according to Ge 28:11. The prayer of the evening was at the time of the evening sacrifice, to which it is compared, Ps 141:2. This was at the ninth hour, at which time Peter and John went up to the temple to pray; and Cornelius prayed in his own house, **Ac 3:1**. The prayer of the morning was at the time of the morning daily sacrifice, and was about the third hour of the day; at which time the apostles met together for prayer on the day of Pentecost, **Ac 2:1**; and that at noon was at the sixth hour of the day; at which time Peter went up to the housetop to pray, Ac 10:9. And now, though we are not tied down to these exact and precise times of prayer, yet this teaches us that we ought to pray frequently and constantly, and that a day should not pass without it; and the morning and evening seem to be very proper seasons for it, seeing the mercies of the Lord are new every morning; and we should be thankful for them and the mercies of the night past, and implore divine protection and grace for the day following; and at evening we should express our thankfulness for the mercies of the day, and commit ourselves and families into the hands of God, who is Israel's Keeper, that neither slumbers nor sleeps;

and cry aloud; denoting the distress he was in, the fervency of his prayer, and the importunity of it;

and he shall hear my voice; this he might be assured of, from the general character of God, as a God hearing prayer, and from his own special and particular experience of the truth of it, and from the promises made unto him.

{b} Yalkut Simeoni in loc.

Psalms 55:18

Ver. 18. He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle [that was] against me,.... That is, God had preserved his life, and delivered him safe and sound from many a battle which was fought against him, and might seem at first to go against him; and had given him peace and rest from all his enemies before the present trouble came upon him, **2Sa 7:1**; wherefore he believed, that he who had delivered him in time past would deliver him again; this is the reasoning of faith, **2Co 1:9**. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, render the last clause, "from them that draw nigh unto thee"; and the Syriac version renders it, by way of petition, "deliver my soul from them that know me"; and the Targum,

"lest evil should come unto me;"

for there were many with me; either enemies fighting with him; and so this is mentioned to set forth the more the power of God in his deliverance: or friends, who were on his side; all Israel and Judah, who loved David and prayed for him, as Jarchi interprets it: or the angels of God, as Aben Ezra; who being for the Lord's people, are more than they that are against them, **2Ki 6:16**; or God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and if he is for us, who shall be against us? **Ro 8:31**. The Targum is,

"for in many afflictions his Word was for my help."

Psalms 55:19

Ver. 19. God shall hear and afflict them,.... That is, either he shall hear the prayers of his servant, imprecating evils upon his enemies, Ps 55:9; and shall bring them down upon them, in answer to his requests; or it may be, rendered, "God shall hear and answer them" {c}; he shall hear their blasphemies, and take notice of their wickedness, and answer them by terrible things in righteousness;

even he that abideth of old; or "is the inhabitant of eternity" {d} Isa 57:15; the eternal God, from everlasting to everlasting, who was before all creatures and before all time, and will ever remain the same, out of whose hands there is no escaping. The Targum is,

"and he inhabiteth the heavens from of old to everlasting."

Selah; of this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Because they have no changes; Kimchi renders it, who hath no changes; taking wml to be the same with wl, and interprets it of God; connecting it with the former clause, that he that abideth of old hath no changes. There is no variableness nor shadow of turning with him; he never changes his mind, nor alters his counsel, whether it be for good or evil; and yet wicked men fear him not. But rather this is to be understood of sinners, as the Targum paraphrases it,

"who are not of old, and who do not change their evil way;"

who have no changes in their hearts, nor in their lives, but continue in their natural and sinful estate, without any impression of the power and grace of God upon them. Or they have no changes in their worldly circumstances, from good to bad, as Aben Ezra explains it; things go well with them, and they are not in trouble as other men; they are at ease and quiet, and are settled on their lees; see Job 10:17. Or they have no regard to their last change by death; and are not afraid of that, as Jarchi interprets it; they put away this evil day far from them; think nothing about it, as if it would never be, and as if they had made an agreement with it that this change should never come upon them, Job 14:14;

therefore they fear not God; do not serve and worship him now, and are not afraid of his judgments here or hereafter; no change being made in their hearts, nor any alteration in their secular affairs for the worse; but having much goods laid up for many years, and sentence against their evil works not being speedily executed, their hearts are hardened, and they live secure in sin.

{c} Mneyw "et respondeat illis", Cocceius. {d} Mdq bvyw "et incola antiquitatis, vel aeternitatis", Gejerus.

Psalms 55:20

Ver. 20. He hath put forth his hands,.... The psalmist returns and describes, in this verse Ps 55:3, the cruelty, perfidy, and hypocrisy of his false friend; who had stretched forth his hands

against such as be at peace with him, or he pretended to be at peace with. So Ahithophel put forth his hands against David, by whom he had been admitted into his privy council, and there had taken sweet counsel together, by entering into a conspiracy and rebellion against him, and by forming a scheme to smite the king only, 2Sa 17:1; and Judas, though he did not lay hands on Christ himself, yet he gave his enemies a sign by which they might know him, and seize him, and hold him fast, as they did; and him Christ calls the man of his peace, Ps 41:9; they being at peace when he lifted up his heel against him;

he hath broken his covenant; of friendship that was made between them; he proved false and treacherous, broke through his engagements, and violated his faith.

Psalms 55:21

Ver. 21. [The words] of his mouth were smoother than butter,.... Such were the words of Ahithophel, when in counsel with David; and such the words of Judas, when he said to Christ, "hail, master", and kissed him, Mt 26:49;

but war [was] in his heart; even a civil war, rebellion against his prince; that was what Ahithophel meditated in his heart; and nothing less than to take away the life of Christ was designed by Judas. The words may be rendered, "they were divided" {e}; that is, his mouth and his heart: "his mouth [was] butter, and his heart war"; the one declared for peace, when the other intended war; see **Jer 9:8**;

his words were softer than oil; at one time full of soothing and flattery:

yet [were] they drawn swords: at another time sharp and cutting, breathing out threatening and slaughter, destruction and death.

{e} wqlx diemerisyhsan, Sept. "divisi sunt", V. L. Hammond.

Psalms 55:22

Ver. 22. Cast thy burden upon the Lord,.... These are either the words of the Holy Ghost to David, according to Jarchi; or of David to his own soul in distress, and may be directed to any good man in like circumstances. The word rendered "burden" signifies a gift and so the words are translated by many, "cast thy gift upon the Lord" {f}; what he has given in a way of providence and of grace, acknowledge him to be the author of it; pray for a continuance of mercies, and for fresh supplies, and expect them; and also what he gives in a way of trial, the cross, with all afflictions and troubles: which sense seems most agreeable to the context; and these may be said to be "the gift" of God, as the cup of sorrow Christ drank of is said to be "given" him by his Father, Joh 18:11. These are given by the Lord to bring his people to a sense of sin, and acknowledgment of it; to humble them for it, and cause them to return from it; and to try their graces: and then do they cast them upon him, when they acknowledge them as coming from him; wait the removal of them in his time; desire a sanctified use of them, and expect deliverance from them by him. Or the sense is, whatever thou desirest should be given thee by the Lord, cast it on him; that is, leave it with him to do as he pleases, who works all things after the counsel of his own will. The Targum renders it,

"cast thy hope upon the Lord;"

as an anchor on a good bottom, to which hope is compared, **Heb 6:19**. This is done when persons make the Lord the object of their hope, and expect all from him they hope to enjoy here and hereafter. The Septuagint version is, "cast thy care upon the Lord"; of thy body, and all the temporal concerns of thy family, and everything relating thereunto; and of thy soul, and its everlasting welfare and salvation; see **1Pe 5:7**. But Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, interpret the word by
Kavm, "thy burden", which is learnt from the use of it in the Arabic language. The Rabbins did not know the meaning of the word, till one of them heard an Arabian merchant say {g},

"take up Kybhy, "thy burden", and cast it upon the camels."

The burden here meant is either the burden of afflictions, which is sometimes very heavy; see **Job 6:23**; no affliction is joyous, but grievous; but some are heavier in their own kind and nature than others, and become so through the multiplicity of them, as in the case of Job; or through the long continuance of them, and especially when attended with the hidings of God's face, or with the temptations of Satan: or else the burden of sin and corruption, which is an heavy burden, and a very disagreeable one; under which the saints groan, and by which they are hindered in running their Christian race, and which they are like to carry with them to their graves; their only relief under it is to look to Christ, who has borne it and took it away; which may be meant by casting it on the Lord:

and he shall sustain thee; in being, both natural and spiritual; and supply with all things necessary both to the temporal and spiritual life, and support under all trials and difficulties;

he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved; to be shaken and stagger so as to fall, especially totally and finally; for the words may be rendered, "he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved for ever" {h}; or so to be moved by their afflictions as to desert the cause in which they are engaged; nor shall they ever be moved by men or devils, or anything whatever, from their spiritual estate, in which they are by grace; nor from the love of God and covenant of grace; nor out of the hands of Christ; nor from their state of justification, adoption, and sanctification.

{f} Kbhy "donum tuum", Montanus; "quicquid dat tibi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {g} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 26. 2. Megillah, fol. 18. 1. Bereshit Rabba, s. 79. fol 69. 4. {h} Mlwel "in aeternum", Musculus, Gussetius, p. 460. "perpetuo", Tigurine version, Lutherus, Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 55:23

Ver. 23. But thou, O God, shall bring them down,.... Ahithophel and his accomplices in the conspiracy against David, Judas and the wicked Jews concerned in Christ's death; and did not believe in him;

into the pit of destruction, or "corruption" {i}; either the grave, where bodies being put corrupt and putrefy; or hell, where the wicked are punished with everlasting destruction; see Ps 55:15;

bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; such as Ahithophel and Absalom, Judas, and the murderers of our Lord: or, "do not halve their days" {k}; do not come up to the half of the ordinary term of man's life, which is threescore years and ten. The Jews say {l}, that all the years of Doeg were but thirty four, and of Ahithophel thirty three; and probably Judas might be about the same age. Or the sense is, that, generally speaking, such sort of men die in the prime of their days, and do not live half the time that, according to the course of nature, they might live; and which they promise themselves they should, and their friends hoped and expected they would:

but I will trust in thee; the Lord, that he would hear and save him, support him under his burden, supply him with his grace, and every thing needful, and not suffer him to be moved; and that he should live to fill up the measure of his days, do the will and work of God, and then be received to glory.

{i} txv "corruptionis", Vatablus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth; approved by Gussetius, p. 850. {k} wuxy "dividiabunt", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {l} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 69. 2. & 106. 2. & Gloss. in Pirke Abot, c. 5. s. 19.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 56:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 56

To the chief Musician upon Jonathelemrechokim, Michtam of David when the Philistines took him in Gath. The words "jonathelemrechokim" are by our translators left untranslated. Aben Ezra takes them to be the beginning of a song; and others think they are the name of a musical instrument: but they seem rather to design the subject matter of the psalm, and may be rendered, "concerning the mute dove among them that are afar off" {m}, or "in far places" {n}; and refer to David, who, when he wrote this psalm, was among the Philistines, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, afar off from God and his law, and from righteousness; and when David was there, he was at a distance from his native country, his father's house, the king's court, and, what gave him most concern, from the house and worship of God; and here he was as a mute dove. He may be compared to a dove for his innocence in the case of Saul; and to a silly dove, for his acting the part of a fool or madman before Achish king of Gath; and was mute to what the servants of Achish said, and was dumb before the Lord, who had suffered him to fall into their hands, and into this distress he was now in. They are also applicable to Christ, who is comparable to a dove for his harmlessness, innocence, meekness and humility; and was as a mute one before Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, when his enemies accused him, and he answered not a word; and when among the Roman soldiers, who mocked at him and reviled him, and he reviled not again; and when he was led to be crucified, he opened not his mouth either against God or man. They may be also applied to the church of God, which is often called a dove in **So 4:1**; and is in the wilderness, and among wicked men, that are afar off from God, and is silent under all afflictions and persecutions; see **So 2:14**. The Targum paraphrases the words thus;

"concerning the congregation of Israel, which is like to a silent dove, at the time they are removed afar off from their cities."

Moreover, the words may be applied to any truly gracious soul, that is sensible of sin, and mourns as a dove for it; has fled to Christ, as doves to their windows; and is harmless and humble; and living among men, aliens from God, is vexed and afflicted by them, yet patiently bears all that is said and done unto it. The fact which occasioned the writing of this psalm is related in 1Sa 21:10. Of the word "michtam", See Gill on "Ps 16:1", title; and Gussetius {o} is of opinion, that every psalm that has this title belongs to Christ.

{m} "De columba muta procul inter alienos constituta", Musculus; "inter longinquos", Piscator, Pfeiffer. {n} "Remotis", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus; so Ainsworth. {o} Ebr. Comment p. 410.

Ver. 1. Be merciful unto me, O God,.... For David could expect no mercy at the hands of men, among whom he was, whose tender mercies were cruel; he being at Gath, the city of Goliath, whom he had slain, and whose sword he had now with him; and among his brethren and friends, who he might justly fear would revenge his death upon him: wherefore he betakes himself to God, and pleads not any merit or righteousness of his own, but implores the grace and mercy of God; and he might expect to find grace and mercy in this his time of need, since there is mercy with the Lord; he is plenteous in it, distributes it freely, delights in so doing, and does it constantly; his mercy endures for ever, it is from everlasting to everlasting on them that fear him;

for man would swallow me up; the Targum renders it "isbi", a wicked man: it may be understood of some one man, some great man, as Achish king of Gath; or rather Saul king of Israel, who breathed and panted after his ruin and destruction, as the word {p}, signifies; who sought to eat up his flesh, to take away his life, and utterly ruin him: or collectively of many, since it appears, by the following verse, that he had many enemies who were desirous to swallow him up. This he mentions as an aggravation of his distress, and as a reason why he hoped the Lord would be merciful to him; and that he, being God, would not suffer than to prevail; see 2Ch 14:12;

he fighting daily oppresseth me; this shows that Saul is more especially intended, who was continually with his army pursuing him, and sometimes surrounded him and his men, and reduced him to great distress. This may be applied to the old man, the corruptions of nature, and the lusts of the flesh, which are continually warring against the soul, oppress it, bring it into captivity, and threaten to swallow it up.

{p} ynpav "anhelus persequitur me", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "anhelat in me", Cocceius; "contra me", Gejerus.

Psalms 56:2

Ver. 2. Mine enemies would daily swallow [me] up,.... For not one man only, but many, were his enemies; who observed and watched him, and were eagerly desirous of his ruin. The believer has many enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, seeking to devour and destroy him, though they cannot;

for [they be] many that fight against me, O thou most High; he appeals to God, who dwells on high, and sees all things, for the truth of this, that he had many enemies both at Gath and in Israel; as well as applies to him for help, he being higher than they. Some render the words, "for [they] be many that fight against me from on high" {q}, or "highly" {r}, proudly and haughtily. Aben Ezra gives a very different sense,

"I have many angels on high that fight for me."

But Mwrm, "marom", is an epithet of God, as in Ps 92:8; and so it is interpreted by Jarchi and Kimchi; and also by the Targum, which renders it, O God most High; and adds,

"whose throne is on high;"

which is approved by Gussetius {s}.

{q} Mwrm "a sublimi", Junius & Tremellius; "ex alto", Cocceius; so Arab vers. and Michaelis. {r} "Elato animo", Musculus; so some in Vatablus; "superbe", Gejerus. {s} Ebr. Comment. p. 783.

Psalms 56:3

Ver. 3. What time I am afraid,.... It was a time of fear with him now; he was afraid of Achish king of Gath, 1Sa 21:12; so believers have their times of fear; about their interest in the love, and grace, and covenant of God; about their sins and corruptions, and the prevalence of them, fearing they shall perish by them; and about their enemies, who are many, lively, and strong;

I will trust in thee; trust and confidence in the Lord is the best antidote against fears; who is unchangeable in his love, in whom is everlasting strength, and who is faithful and true to every word of promise; and therefore there is great reason to trust in him, and not be afraid.

Psalms 56:4

Ver. 4. In God I will praise his word,.... Or praise him for his words for the whole Scripture that was then in being; for those testimonies which were David's counsellors in times of difficulty and distress; and particularly for some word of promise made unto him, he was persuaded would be fulfilled, and in which he gloried and made his boast of, and on which his faith and hope were built; and this he did, and determined to do, in the strength of the Lord, and by the assistance of his grace;

in God I have put my trust; either in times past, and was not ashamed or confounded; or now, as he determined he would in Ps 56:3;

I will not fear what flesh can do unto me: or continue to fear any or all of my enemies; though I have been afraid of them, I will shake off these fears, trusting in the Lord, and depending on his word. Or, "what can flesh do unto me?" {t} which is as grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. Poor, frail, mortal man! what can he do against me, if God be for me? And therefore why should I fear? Men may contrive schemes, form weapons, and attempt many things against the saints, but can execute nothing, except permitted by the Lord; and the utmost they can do, when suffered, is to kill the body.

{t} So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 56:5

Ver. 5. Every day they wrest my words,.... Form, fashion, and shape them at their pleasure; construe them, and put what sense upon them they think fit. The word {u} is used of the formation of the human body, in Job 10:8; They put his words upon the rack, and made them speak what he never intended; as some men wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction, **2Pe 3:16**; and as the Jews wrested the words of Christ, **Joh 2:19**. The word has also the sense of causing vexation and grief, Isa 63:10; and so it may be rendered here, "my words cause grief" {w}; to his enemies; because he had said, in the preceding verses, that he would trust in the Lord, and praise his word, and not be afraid of men; just as the Sadducees were grieved at the apostles preaching, through Jesus, the resurrection of the dead, **Ac 4:1**. Or they caused grief to himself; for because of these his enemies reproached him, cursed him, and distressed him. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin render it, "they cursed my words"; or despised them, as the Ethiopic and Arabic versions:

all their thoughts [are] against me for evil; their counsels, schemes, and contrivances, were all formed to do him all the hurt and mischief they could.

{u} wbuey "fingunt mea verba", Cocceius, Gusset. p. 628. "They painfully form and frame my words", Ainsworth. {w} "Dolore afficient", Montanus, Gejerus, Vatablus.

Psalms 56:6

Ver. 6. They gather themselves together,.... And meet in some one place, to contrive ways and means to do hurt, and then assemble together again to put them in execution; as did the Jews with respect to Christ, Mt 26:3. Aben Ezra supposes a various reading without any reason; and that, instead of wrwgy which Jarchi renders "they lodge", and the Septuagint, and the versions following that, "they sojourn", it should be read wdwgy, "they assemble in troops": because they were many: but the sense is, "they stay" {x}, or continue in some certain place:

they hide themselves; the Targum adds, "in ambush": they lay in wait, and caused others to lie in wait for him, in order to take him; as did Saul and his men, and the servants of the king of Gath;

they mark my steps; they observed where he went, that they might seize him; or they observed his heels, as the old serpent did the Messiah's, that he might bruise them; or they watched for his halting, as Jeremiah's familiars did for his;

when they wait for my soul; to take away his life, to destroy him; see Ps 119:95; they wanted not a will to do it, they only waited for an opportunity. The Targum is,

"as they waited, they did to my soul:"

or rather, "after they had hoped for my soul" {y}: when they had entertained hopes of taking him, this animated them to do the above things.

{x} "Commorabuntur", Montanus; "simul ipsi morantur", Vatablus; so Gussetius, p. 166. {y} Vid. Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 361.

Psalms 56:7

Ver. 7. Shall they escape by iniquity?.... Shall such iniquity as this, or persons guilty of it, go unpunished, or escape righteous judgment, and the vengeance of God? No; and much less shall they escape by means of their iniquity; by their wicked subtlety, or by any evil arts and methods made use of, by making a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell; or escape because of their iniquity; or be delivered because of the abominations done by them, as they flatter themselves, **Jer 7:10**. Some understand these words, not as referring to the escape of David's enemies, but of himself; and render them, either by way of petition, "because of iniquity", the iniquity of his enemies before described, "deliver [me] from them"; or "deliver them" {z}, meaning his heels they marked, and his soul they waited for: or by way of assertion or interrogation, "because of iniquity" there shall be; or shall there be "a deliverance to them?" {a} his heels and his soul; or from them, his enemies. Though others choose to render the words thus; "because of [their] iniquity", there shall be "a casting of them away" {b} by the Lord, and from his presence, with loathing and contempt, as sons of Belial; reprobate silver, rejected of the Lord; which agrees with what follows:

in [thine] anger, cast down the people, O God; Saul's courtiers, or the servants of Achish king of Gath, or both, who were in high places, but slippery ones; and such are sometimes brought down to destruction in a moment, by that God from whom promotion comes; who putteth down one, and sets up another, and which he does in wrath and anger.

{z} wml mlq Nwa le "ob iniquitatem eorum eripe me", Schmidt; "illos", Gejerus; "ipsis", De Dieu. {a} "Ipsis est liberatio", Cocceius; "evasio erit eis?" Pagninus, Vatablus; "ereptio erit eis?" Piscator. {b} "Abjectio erit iis", Hammond.

Psalms 56:8

Ver. 8. Thou tellest my wanderings,.... Not his sins; though these are aberrations or wanderings from the ways of God's commandments; yet these are not told by the Lord: he takes no account of them; the number of them is not kept by him; they are blotted out, cast behind his back, and into the depths of the sea; though sometimes his people think they are told and numbered by him, Job 14:16; but David's moves and flights from place to place are meant, through Saul's pursuit of him, as a partridge on the mountains. Some writers reckon twelve of these moves. The Targum renders it,

"thou numberest the days of my wandering;"

that is, the days of his pilgrimage and sojourning in this world: the number of our days, and months and years, in which we wander about in this uncertain state of things, is with the Lord, Job 14:5;

put thou my tears into thy bottle; the allusion is to "lachrymatories", or tear bottles, in which surviving relatives dropped their tears for their deceased friends, and buried them with their ashes, or in their urns; some of which tear bottles are still to be seen in the cabinets of the curious. A description of which is given by Gejerus {c}, from Olaus Wormius; and who also from Cotovicus relates, that the grave of M. Tullius Cicero was dug up in the island of Zacynthus, A. D. 1544, in which were found two glass urns; the larger had ashes in it, the lesser water: the one was supposed to contain his ashes, the other the tears of his friends: and as this was a custom with the Romans, something like this might obtain among the Jews; and it is a saying with them {d}, "whoever sheds tears for a good man (deceased) the holy blessed God numbers them, and puts them into his treasures, according to Ps 56:8;"

which shows, that they thought that reference is here had to funeral tears. The meaning of the text is, that God would take notice of David's afflictions and troubles, which had caused so many tears, and remember them, and deliver him out of them: these being desired to be put into a bottle was, that they might be kept and reserved; not to make atonement for sin; for as a thousand rivers of oil cannot expiate one sin, could they be come at; so neither as many rivers of brinish tears, could they possibly be shed: nor to obtain heaven and happiness; for there is no comparison nor proportion between the sufferings of the saints and the glory that shall be revealed in them; though there is a connection of grace through the promise of God between them: but rather, that they might be brought forth another day and shown, to the aggravation of the condemnation of wicked men, who by their hard speeches, and ungodly actions, have caused them;

[are they] not in thy book? verily they are; that is, the tears and afflictions of his people. They are in his book of purposes; they are all appointed by him, their kind and nature, their measure and duration, their quality and quantity; what they shall be, and how long they shall last; and their end and use: and they are in his book of providence, and are all overruled and caused to work for their good; and they are in the book of his remembrance; they are taken notice of and numbered by him, and shall be finished; they shall not exceed their bounds. These tears will be turned into joy, and God will wipe them all away from the eyes of his people.

{c} De Ebr. Luctu, c. 12. s. 5. {d} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 105. 2.

Psalms 56:9

Ver. 9. When I cry [unto thee],.... In prayer;

then shall mine enemies turn back; great is the strength of prayer; the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous avails much against their enemies: when Moses lifted up his hands, Israel prevailed: the cases of Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah, prove it; this David was assured of, and knew it to be true by experience, his prayer being often the prayer of faith in this respect;

this I know: for God [is] for me; he knew that when he prayed his enemies would flee; because God was on his side, who is greater than they; or by this he knew that God was for him, and was his God, by hearing his prayers, and causing his enemies to turn back: or, however, let things go how they will, this he was assured of, that he had a covenant interest in God, and who would be his God and guide even unto death.

Psalms 56:10

Ver. 10. In God will I praise [his] word,.... These words are repeated from Ps 56:4; and for the greater certainty of the thing, and to show his fixed resolution to do it, and his strong affection for the Lord and his word, they are doubled;

in the Lord will I praise [his] word: in the former clause the word "Elohim" is made use of, which, the Jews say, denotes the property of justice, and in the latter Jehovah, which with them is the property of mercy; and accordingly the Targum paraphrases the words,

"in the attribute of the justice of God will I praise his word; in the attribute of the mercies of Jehovah will I praise his word;"

and to the same sense Jarchi: that is, whether I am in adversity or prosperity, receive evil or good things from the hand of the Lord; yet will I praise him: I will sing of mercy and of judgment, Ps 101:1; or rather the one may denote the grace and goodness of a covenant God in making promises, and the other his truth and faithfulness in keeping them; on account of both which he is worthy of praise. The word "his" is not in either clause in the original text, and they may be rendered, "in God will I praise the word; in the Lord will I praise the word": in and by the help, assistance, and grace of Jehovah the Father, will I praise the eternal and essential Word, his Son. The Targum renders it his "Memra"; a word often used in it for a divine Person, the eternal Logos; the loveliness of his person, the love of his heart to his people, the fulness of grace that is in him, the offices he sustains on their account, and the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, render him praiseworthy in their esteem.

Psalms 56:11

Ver. 11. In God have I put my trust,.... See Gill on "Ps 56:4";

I will not be afraid what man can do unto me; the same with flesh in

Ps 56:4, and is opposed to God, in whom he trusted; and it suggests that he was not, and would not, be afraid of the greatest of men, as well as of the meanest; See Gill on "Ps 56:4"; Arama distinguishes between "flesh" and "man"; the former, he says, means the Philistines, and the latter Saul and his army.

Psalms 56:12

Ver. 12. Thy vows [are] upon me, O God,.... Which he had made to him in the time of his distress and trouble, and which he looked upon himself under obligation to perform; they were debts upon him he ought to pay off; they were with him; they were fresh in his mind and memory; he had not forgot them, which is often the case when trouble is over; and he found his heart inclined to make them good;

I will render praises unto thee; which explains what he meant by his vows; namely, sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord: when he was in distress, he had vowed and promised, that, if the Lord would deliver him, he would praise his name, and give him all the glory; and now he resolves to fulfil what he had promised.

Psalms 56:13

Ver. 13. For thou hast delivered my soul from death,.... From imminent danger of death, when in the hands of the Philistines; not that the soul can die; that is immortal; but he means his person, on which account he determines to render praise to God: moreover, this may include the deliverance of his soul from a moral or spiritual death, in which he was by nature, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; from which he was delivered by regenerating grace, when he was quickened, who before was dead in trespasses and sins; and so delivered, as that this death should no more come upon him; the grace of God in him being a well of living water, springing up unto eternal life: and it may also be understood of deliverance from eternal death, by Christ, who has redeemed his people from the curse of the law, and delivered them from wrath to come; so that they shall never be hurt of the second death; that shall have no power over them; but they shall have eternal life; all which is matter of praise and thanksgiving;

[wilt] not [thou deliver] my feet from falling? that is, "thou wilt deliver" them;

for this way of speaking strongly affirms; or "hast thou not delivered [them]?" {e} thou hast; and wilt still deliver, or keep from falling. The people of God are subject to falling; God is the only keeper of them; and they have reason to believe that he will keep them from a final and total filling away; because of the great love which he has for them, the gracious promises of preservation he has made unto them, and his power, which is engaged in keeping of them; and because they are put into the hands of Christ, who is able to keep them, and who has an interest in them, and an affection for them; and because of the glory of all, the three divine Persons concerned in the saints' preservation; and this is another reason for rendering praises unto the Lord; the end of which follows;

that I may walk before God in the light of the living; to "walk before God" is to walk as in his sight, who sees and knows all hearts, thoughts, words, and actions; with great circumspection, and caution, and watchfulness; to walk according to the word and will of God, in all his ways, commands, and ordinances; and so the Arabic version, "that I may do the will of the Lord"; and so as to please him, as Enoch did, who walked with him, and whose walking with him is interpreted by pleasing him, Heb 11:5; agreeably to which the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, render the words, "that I may please before the Lord"; or do what is acceptable in his sight. Moreover, to walk before the Lord is to walk in the light of his countenance, to have his presence, enjoy his favour, and be blessed with communion with him. "In the light of the living?" that is, to walk as an enlightened and quickened person, as the children of the light; and to walk in the light of the Gospel, and as becomes that; and to walk in Christ the light, and by faith on him; and such shall have "the light of life", **Joh 8:12**; a phrase the same with this here; and designs the light of the heavenly glory, and of the New Jerusalem church state, in which the nations of them that are saved shall walk,
Re 21:23. Some Jewish {f} writers interpret this of paradise.

{e} "An non eripuisti?" Piscator, Gejerus; "nonne liberasti?" Michaelis. {f} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 108. 3. Targum in Psal. lvii. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 57:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 57

To the chief Musician, Altaschith, Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul

in the cave. Some think the words "Altaschith" are the beginning of a song, to the tune of which this was set, as Aben Ezra; others, that they are taken from **De 9:26**; they signifying "destroy not" {g}; others, that they refer to what David said to Abishai, when he would have slain Saul, "destroy him not", 1Sa 26:9; but that was an affair that happened after this psalm was penned: they seem rather to be words which were frequently used by David in the time of his distress; who often said unto the Lord, either in an ejaculatory way, or vocally, or both, "do not destroy [me]", or "suffer [me] to be destroyed"; of which he was in great danger, as appears from
Ps 57:4; and therefore prefixed these words in the title of the psalm, in memorial of the inward anguish of his mind, and of what his mouth then uttered; and to this agrees the Chaldee paraphrase,

"concerning the trouble at the time when David said, do not destroy."

Of the word "michtam", See Gill on "Ps 16:1", title. The occasion and time of writing this psalm were David's fleeing from Saul in the cave; or rather "into" {h} the cave, as it should be rendered; for it was after that Saul was gone that David and his men came out of the cave; but he fled hither for fear of Saul; and while he was here, Saul, with three thousand men, came to the mouth of the cave, and he himself went into it; which must have put David and his men into a very great panic, there being no retreat, nor any human possibility of an escape, but must expect to fall into the hands of the enemy, and be cut to pieces at once. This cave was in Engedi, 1Sa 24:1; of which Le Bruyn {i} says, it is on the top of a very high hill, and is extremely dark; which agrees with the account in the above place, since it was on the rocks of the wild goats Saul sought David, and coming to the sheepcotes there, went into the cave where David was.

{g} txvt-la "ne disperdas", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "ne perdas", Tigurine version, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis {h} hremb "in speluncam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. "in specum", Tigurine version. {i} Voyage to the Levant, ch. 51. p. 199.

Ver. 1. Be merciful unto me, O God,.... Or "be gracious to me" {k}; which words are repeated by him. "Be merciful", or "gracious, unto me"; to show the greatness of his distress, the eagerness, vehemency, and importunity he used in prayer; his case requiring a speedy answer, and immediate relief; and that he expected only from the mercy and grace of God; See Gill on "Ps 56:1";

for my soul trusteth in thee; or "in thy word"; as the Targum; and in thee only, both as the God of providence and the God of grace; and a great act of faith this was to trust in the Lord in such circumstances; and it was not a bare profession of trust, but it was hearty and sincere; his "soul" trusted in the Lord; he trusted in him with all his heart and soul, and trusted him with his soul or life: and this he makes a reason or argument for mercy; seeing, as the mercy of the Lord is an encouragement to faith and hope; so the Lord has declared, that he takes pleasure in those that hope and trust in it; wherefore mercy may be expected by such;

yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge; or "I will hope" {l}; the meaning is, that he would betake himself to the power and protection of God, and make him his refuge from the enemy: the allusion is either to the hen, or any other bird covering its young with its wings, when a bird of prey is near, till that is gone; or to the cherubim, whose wings overshadowed the mercy seat, between which the glory of God dwelt; and so the Targum,

"in the shadow of thy Shechinah, or glorious Majesty, will I trust;"

which agrees with his applying to the mercy seat, or to God on a throne of grace and mercy: and here he determines to abide,

until [these] calamities be overpast; the storm of them was over, which was very black and threatening. The Targum is,

"until the tumult is over;"

and so the Syriac version; until Saul and his men were gone, of whom he was afraid. The Septuagint version, and those that follow it, render the words "until sin passeth away"; the cause of these troubles; unless sin is put for sinful men; and so the sense is as before; see
Isa 26:20.

{k} ynnx "gratiam fac mihi", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius; so Piscator, Ainsworth. {l} hoxa "sperabo", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "spero", Tigurine version, Musculus, Michaelis.

Psalms 57:2

Ver. 2. I will cry unto God most high,.... To remember him in his low estate, and who is higher than the highest, than Saul and his mighty men with him.

This epithet David no doubt made use of, to encourage his faith in the Lord, who is above all, and can do all things; as follows;

unto God that performeth [all things] for me; in a providential way, having made him, upheld him in being, fed and clothed him, preserved him, and followed him with his goodness all his days; and in a way of grace he performed all his purposes concerning him, all his promises unto him, and was performing and would perfect the work of grace in him; see Ps 138:8. The Targum adds a fable by way of paraphrase on the text,

"who commanded, or prepared a spider, to perfect in the mouth of the cave a web for me;"

so it is in the king's Bible; as if, when he was in the cave, God so ordered it in his providence, that a spider should spin a web over the month of it, which prevented his persecutors from searching for him in it; but the Scripture is silent in this matter. Such a story is reported of Felix, bishop of Nola, in ecclesiastical history {m}.

{m} Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 23. col. 611.

Psalms 57:3

Ver. 3. He shall send from heaven, and save me,.... His angel, as the Targum adds; or his angels, as Kimchi; who are ministering spirits, sent forth by him, to encamp about his people, and guard them, as they did Jacob when in fear of Esau, Ge 32:1; or to deliver them out of trouble, as Peter when in prison, Ac 12:7; or rather the sense may be, that David did not expect any help and deliverance in an human way, by means of men on earth; but he expected it from above, from heaven, from God above, and which he believed he should have; and he might have a further view to the mission of Christ from heaven to save him, and all the Lord's people; and which he may mention, both for his own comfort, and for the strengthening of the faith of others in that important article;

[from] the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Meaning Saul; see Ps 56:1. The Targum renders it,

"he hath reproached him that would swallow me up for ever;"

and to the same sense the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Syriac versions; disappointed them, and filled them with reproach, shame, and confusion.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

God shall send forth his mercy and his truth; shall manifest and display the glory of these his perfections, his mercy and grace, his truth and faithfulness, in his deliverance and salvation; and which are remarkably glorified in salvation by Christ Jesus; and who himself may be called "his grace and his truth" {n}, as the words may be rendered; he being the Word of his grace, and truth itself, and full of both; and by whom, when sent forth, grace and truth came, **Joh 1:14**; it may also intend a constant supply of grace, whereby God would show forth the truth of his promises to him.

{n} wtmaw wdox "gratiam et veritatem suam", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 57:4

Ver. 4. My soul [is] among lions,.... Not literally understood; though such there might be in the wildernesses where he sometimes was; but figuratively, men comparable to lions, for their stoutness, courage, strength, fierceness, and cruelty; meaning not his own men, as some think, who were fierce, and of keen resentment against Saul, and would fain have killed him when he was in the cave, had they not been restrained by David, 1Sa 24:4; but Saul, and those with him, who were three thousand chosen men, stout, courageous, fierce, and furious. It is usual in scripture to describe powerful princes, and especially persecuting ones, by the name of lions, Pr 28:15. Achilles, in Homer {o}, is compared to a lion for his cruelty. The soul of Christ was among such, when he was apprehended by the band of men that came with Judas to take him; when he was in the high priest's hall buffeted and spit upon; and when he was in the common hall of Pilate, surrounded by the Roman soldiers; and when he was encircled on the cross with the crowd of the common people, priests and elders,
Mt 26:55; and so the souls of his people are often among lions, persecuting men, and Satan and his principalities, who is compared to a roaring lion, **1Pe 5:8**; and among whom they are as wonderfully preserved as Daniel in the lion's den;

[and] I lie [even among] them that are set on fire; of hell, as the tongue is said

to be in **Jas 3:6**; by the devil, who stirred up Saul against David, filled him with wrath and fury, so that he breathed out nothing but flaming vengeance, threatening and slaughter, against him; and by wicked men his courtiers, who kindled and stirred up the fire of contention between them; among these incendiaries, as Junius renders the word {p}, David was, who inflamed the mind of Saul against him, which he suggests in 1Sa 24:10;

[even] the sons of men, whose teeth [are] spears and arrows; whose words, formed by means of their teeth, were very devouring ones, Ps 52:4; were very piercing and wounding; calumnies, detractions, and backbitings, speaking against him when absent and at a distance, may be meant; see Pr 30:14;

and their tongue a sharp sword; See Gill on "Ps 52:2"; and there was a sort of swords called "lingulae", because in the shape of a tongue {q}.

{o} Iliad. 24. v. 40, 41. {p} Myjhl "incendiarios", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "flammantes", Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth, Cocceius, Vatablus, Musculus. {q} A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 10. c. 25.

Psalms 57:5

Ver. 5. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens,.... That is, show thyself to be God, that sittest in the heavens, and art higher than they, by saving me, and disappointing mine enemies; that I, and those that are with me, may magnify the Lord and exalt his name together. The Targum is,

"be thou exalted above the angels of heaven, O God;"

[let] thy glory [be] above all the earth; that is, above all the inhabitants of the earth, as the Chaldee paraphrase: let the glory of God in my deliverance be seen by all that dwell upon the earth; for by how much the lower and more distressed his case and condition were, by so much the more would the glory of God be displayed in bringing him out of it. Nothing lies nearer the hearts of the people of God than his glory; this is more desirable than their own salvation: David breathes after the one, when he says nothing of the other, that being uppermost; though his meaning is, that the one might be brought about by the other.

Psalms 57:6

Ver. 6. They have prepared a net for my steps,.... They laid snares for him, as the fowler does for the bird, in order to take him. It denotes the insidious ways used by Saul and his men to get David into their hands; so the Pharisees consulted together how they might entangle Christ in his talk, Mt 22:15;

my soul is bowed down; dejected by reason of his numerous enemies, and the crafty methods they took to ensnare and ruin him; so the soul of Christ was bowed down with the sins of his people, and with a sense of divine wrath because of them; and so their souls are often bowed down; or they are dejected in their spirits, on account of sin, Satan's temptations, various afflictions, and divine desertions. The Targum renders it,

"he bowed down my soul;"

that is, the enemy; Saul in particular. The Septuagint, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, "they bowed down my soul"; the same that prepared a net for his steps; everyone of his enemies; they all were the cause of the dejection of his soul: the Syriac version leaves out the clause;

they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen [themselves]; contriving and seeking to find out the places where David's haunt was, Saul got into the very cave where he and his men were; and had his skirt cut off, when his life might as easily have been taken away, 1Sa 23:22. See **Ps 7:15**.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 57:7

Ver. 7. My heart is fixed, O God,.... Firm and sure, trusting in the Lord, believing that he should be saved by him out of his troubles; see Ps 101:1. So, in a spiritual sense, a heart fixed and established, or that is firm and sure, is one that is assured of its salvation by Christ, rooted and grounded in the love of God, firmly built on the foundation, Christ, and has its affections set on him; and is unmoved, from the hope of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, by whatsoever it meets with in the world. It may be rendered, "my heart is prepared", or "ready" {r}; that is, according to some, to receive good or evil, prosperity or adversity, at the hand of God; to which sense is Jarchi's note, "my heart is faithful with thee in the measure of judgment, and it is faithful with thee in the measure of mercy."

That is, whether I am chastised with judgments, or followed with mercies, my heart is firm and true to God. The Targum is,

"my heart is prepared for thy law, O Lord; my heart is prepared for thy fear;"

that is, it is prepared for the worship and service of God; it is ready to every good work; it is prepared to pray unto him, and to wait for an answer, which are both from the Lord, Pr 16:1; and particularly to sing praise unto him, as follows;

my heart is fixed; this is repeated, to show the vehemency of his spirit, and the certainty of the thing;

I will sing and give praise; for the salvation wrought for him, and which he was sure of; and before he had finished this psalm, or while he had composed it, did enjoy it.

{r} Nwkn "paratum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Psalms 57:8

Ver. 8. Awake up, my glory,.... Meaning his soul, whom Jacob calls his honour, Ge 49:6; it being the most honourable, glorious, and excellent part of man; is the breath of God, of his immediate production; is a spirit incorporeal and immortal; is possessed of glorious powers and faculties; had the image of God stamped upon it, which made man the glory of God, 1Co 11:7; and has the image of Christ on it in regenerated persons; and is that with which God and Christ are glorified; and is, upon all accounts, of great worth and value, even of more worth than the whole world: and this sometimes in the saints is as it were asleep, and needs awaking; not in a literal sense; for it is incapable of natural sleep, being incorporeal; but in a figurative and spiritual sense, as when grace is dormant, and not in exercise; when the soul is backward to and slothful in duty, unconcerned about divine things, and lukewarm and indifferent to them; which is occasioned by prevailing corruptions and worldly cares; and sometimes it becomes dull, and heavy, and inactive, through an over pressure by sorrows and troubles, as the disciples of Christ were found

sleeping for sorrow,
Lu 22:45; which seems to have been the case of the psalmist here; he had been in great distress, his soul was bowed down, Ps 57:6; he had hung his harp upon the willow, and could not sing one of the Lord's songs in the place and circumstances be was in; but now he calls upon his soul, and arouses all the powers and faculties of it, and stirs up himself to the work of praise, just as Deborah did, **Jud 5:12**; some by his glory understand his tongue, as in Ps 16:9 compared with **Ac 2:26**; and so may design vocal singing here, as instrumental music in the next clause:

awake, psaltery and harp; which, by a prosopopoeia, are represented as persons; as if they were animate, sensible, and living: these had been laid aside for some time as useless; but now the psalmist determines to take them up and employ them in the service of praising God: these are fitly put together, because psalms were sung to harps; and so with the Greeks a psalm is said to be properly the sound of the harp {s};

I [myself] will awake early; in the morning, when salvation and joy come; and so soon cause his voice to be heard, as in prayer, so in praise; or "I will awaken the morning": so Jarchi; be up before the sun rises, the morning appears, or day dawns: this is taking the wings of the morning, and even preventing that. The Targum is,

"I will awake to the morning prayer."

{s} Scholia in Aristoph. Aves, p. 551.

Psalms 57:9

Ver. 9. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people,.... Either among the people of Israel, as Aben Ezra, when each of the tribes meet together; and so it denotes the public manner in which he would praise God for his salvation: or among the Gentiles, as the following clause shows;

I will sing unto thee among the nations: the Apostle Paul seems to have reference to this passage in Ro 15:9; which he produces as a proof of the Gentiles glorifying God for his mercy in sending the Gospel among them, and calling them by his grace; by which they appeared to be his chosen and redeemed ones; and in forming them into Gospel churches, among whom his praise was sung: for this supposes something to be done among the Gentiles, which should occasion praise; and here the psalmist represents the Messiah, who in his ministers and members praise God for his wonderful mercy to the Gentile world, as follows.

Psalms 57:10

Ver. 10. For thy mercy [is] great unto the heavens,.... Which denotes the exceeding greatness and largeness of it; as it is in the heart of God, who is plenteous in mercy; as it is expressed in the covenant of grace, where are stores of it; as it is shown forth in the choice of persons to eternal life; in the mission of Christ into this world to die for them; in the regeneration of them, the pardon of their sins, and eternal life: and this mercy is not only extended to persons in the several parts of the earth, but is as high as the heaven above it, Ps 103:11;

and thy truth unto the clouds; the faithfulness of God in performing his purposes and his promises; or the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, which contain the deep things of God; unless Christ himself should be meant, who is the truth which sprung out of the earth, Ps 85:11; is now ascended unto heaven, and is higher than the heavens; and whose exaltation and glory may be designed in Ps 57:11.

Psalms 57:11

Ver. 11. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens,.... As Christ now is at the Father's right hand, and who is God over all, blessed for ever;

[let] thy glory [be] above all the earth; as it is above all the men on earth and angels in heaven. This is repeated from Ps 57:5;
See Gill on "Ps 57:5", and shows the vehemency of his desire after these things, and how much his heart was set upon them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 58:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 58

To the chief Musician, Altaschith, Michtam of David. According to the Syriac version, this psalm was written when Saul threatened the priests, because they did not show him where David was, when they knew it. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that the title "Altaschith" refers to David's not destroying Nabal, as he threatened; and that the venom of Nabal's tongue in reviling him, and the deafness of his ears in not attending to the messengers that told their errand wisely, are designed in this psalm; and in which the psalmist prophesies of his sudden death, before the pots for his feast could be warmed by the thorns under them, and while he was lively and jovial. Jarchi is of opinion that it was composed after David had been in the trench where Saul lay, and took away the spear and cruse, and went his way, and called to Abner, saying, "answerest thou not?" which is as if he should say, hast thou it not in thy power now to convince Saul, and show him that he pursues me without cause, since, if I would, I could have slain him? Kimchi says it was written on account of Abner, and the rest of Saul's princes, who judged David as a rebel against the government, and said it was for Saul to pursue after him to slay him; for if they had restrained him, Saul would not have pursued after him; and indeed they seem to be wicked judges who are addressed in this psalm; "do not destroy". Arama says, it declares the wickedness of Saul's judges.

Ver. 1. Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation?.... Of the mighty, as in Ps 82:1; the judges of the land, who were many, and therefore called a congregation, as it is necessary they should; for, being many, they are not so easily bribed; and besides, one may see that in a cause which another does not. The word signifies a "sheaf" {t}; and so it is by some rendered, to which a bench or assembly of judges may be compared; because consisting of many, and a select body, who should unite together in a sentence or decree, and act uprightly, like a sheaf of wheat standing upright; see Ge 37:7; some think the word has the signification of dumbness, or silence; so Jarchi and R. Moses {u}; as "elem" in Ps 56:1, title, and render it, "do ye indeed speak dumb justice?" or "the dumbness of justice" {w}; or are you dumb, or your mouth silent, when ye should speak righteousness? and so the psalmist accuses them for their criminal silence, in not contradicting Saul and his courtiers when they spake against him; and for not advising him to another kind of conduct towards him. All men ought to speak that which is right and truth; but especially judges on the bench, who are to judge the people with just judgment, De 16:18; but here this is doubted of, and called in question; at least their sincerity in giving judgment: yea, it is denied; for this interrogation carries in it a strong denial; and the meaning is, that they did not speak righteousness, or that which was just and right in the cause of David, when before them;

do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men? no, they did not; they were unjust judges. The psalmist calls them "the sons of men", as in 1Sa 26:19, in distinction from God the Judge of all, and to put them in mind of their frailty and mortality; for though they were gods by office, they were but men, and should die like men, and be accountable to the supreme Judge for all their proceedings in judgment here, Ps 82:1.

{t} Mla "e manipulo", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "e manipulo justifiae", Cocceius. {u} In Aben Ezra in loc. {w} So Varenius, Reinbech, Michaelis.

Psalms 58:2

Ver. 2. Yea, in heart ye work wickedness,.... So far were they from speaking righteousness, and judging uprightly. The heart of man is wickedness itself; it is desperately wicked, and is the shop in which all wickedness is wrought; for sinful acts are committed there as well as by the tongue and hand, as follows. This phrase also denotes their sinning; not with precipitancy, and through surprise; but with premeditation and deliberation; and their doing it heartily, with good will, and with allowance, and their continuance and constant persisting in it;

ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth; they were guilty of acts of violence and oppression, which, of all men, judges should not be guilty of; whose business it is to plead the cause of the injured and oppressed, to right their wrongs, and to protect and defend them: these they pretended to weigh in the balance of justice and equity, and committed them under a show of righteousness; they decreed unrighteous decrees, and framed mischief by a law; and this they did openly, and everywhere, throughout the whole land.

Psalms 58:3

Ver. 3. The wicked are estranged from the womb,.... Which original corruption of nature accounts for all the wickedness done by men: they are conceived in sin, shapen in iniquity, and are transgressors from the womb; they are alienated from God, and from that godly life which is agreeable to him, and he requires; and from the knowledge and fear of him, and love to him; and they desire not the knowledge of him nor his ways; they are far from his law, and averse to it;

and still more so to the Gospel of Christ; the doctrines of which, as well as the great things written in the law, are strange things to them; and they are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, estranged from the people of God, know nothing of them, neither of their joys, nor of their sorrows;

they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies; they are wicked from their infancy, from their youth upward; and sin, which is meant by "going astray", as soon as they are capable of it, and which is very early. Sin soon appears in the temper and actions of then; they go out of God's way, and turn everyone to their own way, and walk in the broad road which leads to destruction: and particularly they are very early guilty of lying; as soon as they can speak, and before they can speak plain, they lisp out lies, which they learn from their father the devil, who is the father of lies; and so they continue all their days strangers to divine things, going astray from God, the God of truth, continually doing abominations and speaking lies; which continuance in these things makes the difference between reprobate men and God's elect; for though the latter are the same by nature as the former, yet their natures are restrained, before conversion, from going into all the sins they are inclined to; and if not, yet at conversion a stop is put to their progress in iniquity.

Psalms 58:4

Ver. 4. Their poison [is] like the poison of a serpent,.... Either their "wrath" and fury, as the word {x} may be rendered, against God, his people, and even one another, is like that of a serpent when irritated and provoked; or their mischievous and devouring words are like the poison of asps under their lips, **Ro 3:13**; or the malignity of sin in them is here meant, which, like the poison of a serpent, is latent, hid, and lurking in them; is very infectious to all the powers and faculties of the soul, and members of the body; and is deadly and incurable, without the grace of God and blood of Christ;

[they are] like the deaf adder [that] stoppeth her ear; the adder is a kind of serpent, in Hebrew called "pethen"; hence the serpent "Python". This is not, deaf naturally, otherwise it would have no need to stop its ear, but of choice; and naturalists {y} observe, that it is quicker of hearing than of sight. Jarchi indeed says, when it grows old it becomes deaf in one of its ears, and it stops its other ear with dust, that it may not hear the voice of the charmer; though others say {z} it stops one ear with its tail, and lays the other to the ground; but these seem fabulous. David speaks of it figuratively, that it acts as if it was deaf, regarding no enchantments, but bites notwithstanding; these having no influence on it, which, if they had any, could not be hindered by its deafness; and he compares wicked men to it, who are wilfully deaf to all good counsel and advice given them {a}.

{x} tmx yumov, Sept. "furor", V. L. {y} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 23. {z} Isidor. Hispal. Origin. l. 12. c. 4. {a} Vid. Gataker. Adversaria, c. 8. p. 70, &c.

Psalms 58:5

Ver. 5. Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers,.... Or "that use enchantments", to enchant serpents, by muttering certain words, or by magical songs; by which means it is said that they have been drawn out of their holes, or caused to fly, or have become stupefied, and have lost their poison, and even burst asunder; as Bochart {b} relates from Pliny, Aelianus, Lucan, Isidore, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, and others: but an "asp" is unmoved by enchantments, and they are of no avail against its bites and poison {c}. Nor do these words suppose that the psalmist approved of enchantments, or affirms the virtue of them to be real, but rather suggests the contrary; he only takes his similitude from the seeming deafness and disregard of serpents to enchantments, to set forth the obstinacy of wicked men: and their resolution to continue in their wicked ways; like the serpent that disregards men:

charming never so wisely; being "wise, skilful" {d}, or made wise in enchanting enchantments; one very learned and expert in the art; or in "associating associations, skilful" {e}: who makes a consort of magical words to obtain his point, as some think; or because by his enchantments he associates and gathers many serpents together, and tames them; or because he does this by society and fellowship with the devil; methods no ways approved of by the psalmist, only alluded to. It may perhaps better be rendered, "which will not hearken to the voice of the eloquent, putting things together ever so wisely": the word is used for an eloquent orator, **Isa 3:3**. Such Gospel ministers are, who are mighty in the Scriptures. The voice of the Gospel is a charming voice; it publishes good news and glad tidings; it is a voice of love, grace, and mercy, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; and is wisely charmed when it gives no uncertain sound, is all of a piece, and is faithfully preached, as it was by the apostles of Christ; who, as wise men, laid him as the foundation of eternal life and salvation; and especially as it was preached by Christ himself, who spake as never man did: and yet, such were the hardness and obstinacy of the wicked Jews, that they stopped their ears to his ministry, nor would they suffer others to attend upon it; and so it is now:

which shows the insufficiency of the best means of themselves, and the necessity of powerful and efficacious grace, to work upon the hearts of men.

{b} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 6. col. 390. {c} Aelian. de Animal. l. 1. c. 54. {d} Mkxm Myrbx rbwx "incantantis incantationem periti", Vatablus; "vel incantationes exercitati ac peritissimi", Michaelis; "of him that is made wise", Ainsworth. {e} "Jungentis conjunctiones docti", Montanus; "consociantis societates serpentum", Michaelis.

Psalms 58:6

Ver. 6. Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth,.... From the description of the wicked, the psalmist passes to imprecations on his enemies; whom he represents as cruel and bloodthirsty, and as being stronger than he; and therefore he applies to God, who could, as he sometimes did, smite his enemies on the cheekbone, and break the teeth of the ungodly; which is done by taking the power and instruments of hurting from them: and it may be by "their teeth in their mouth" may be meant their malicious words, calumnies, and detractions; teeth being the instrument of speech; and by "breaking" them, preventing the mischief designed by them;

break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord: Saul was the old lion; his princes, nobles, and courtiers, the young ones; whose jaw teeth were as knives to devour David and his men, unless plucked out; or God in his providence should interpose, and hinder the performance of their mischievous and cruel designs; and who could easily destroy them by his blast, and by the breath of his nostrils, **Job 4:9**.

Psalms 58:7

Ver. 7. Let them melt away as waters [which] run continually,.... Let them be disheartened, and their courage fail them, and let there be no spirit left in them, **Jos 7:5**; or let them be unstable as water that is continually running, ever upon the flux and motion; let them never be settled, but always changing in their state and circumstances,
Ge 49:4; or let them "come to nought", as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; which is the case of water that runs over or runs away: or "let them be despised", as Jarchi, and the Arabic, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; being useless and unprofitable, as water is when passed and gone: or let their ruin

and destruction be as swift as the gliding water; let them be brought to desolation in a moment;
Job 24:18; and let it be irrecoverable, as water running over the cup, and scattering itself, is spilled upon the ground, and cannot be gathered up, 2Sa 14:14. The Targum is,

"let them melt in their sins as water;"

[when] he bendeth [his bow to shoot] his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces; either when the wicked man bends his bow to shoot his arrows against the righteous; when he devises, his chief against him, shoots out bitter words, and attempts to do hurt unto him; let it be as if the string of his bow and his arrows were all cut to pieces; let all his designs, words, and actions, be without effect, and let not his hand perform his enterprise: or when God bends his bow against the wicked, so Jarchi; and prepares the instruments of death for them, and ordains his arrows against the persecutors, **Ps 7:12**; let then his and his people's enemies be cut off, as the tops of the ears of corn; as the word used signifies, Job 24:24. The words may be rendered, "let him (God) direct his arrows; as the tops of the ears of corn are cut off" {f}; so let them be.

{f} wllmty wmk "concidantur, succidantur instar spicarum", Michaelis.

Psalms 58:8

Ver. 8. As a snail [which] melteth, let [everyone of them] pass away,.... As a snail when it comes out of its shell liquefies, drops its moisture, and with it makes a "path", from whence it has its name
lwlbv, in the Hebrew language; and so the Targum here,

"as the snail moistens its way;"

which moistness it gradually exhausts, and melts away, and dies: so the psalmist prays that everyone of his enemies might die in like manner. Some think reference is had to the snail's putting out its horns to no purpose when in danger, and apply it to the vain threatenings of the wicked; a strange difference this, between a roaring young lion,
Ps 58:6, and a melting snail. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, render it, "as wax [which] melteth": see
Ps 68:2;

[like] the untimely birth of a woman, [that] they may not see the sun; see **Job 3:16**. The Targum is,

"as an abortive and a mole, which are blind and see not the sun."

So Jarchi renders it a "mole", agreeably to the Talmud {g}. Or, "let them not see the sun" {h}; let them die, and never see the sun in the firmament any more; Christ, the sun of righteousness; nor enjoy the favour of God, and the light of his countenance; nor have the light of life, or eternal glory and happiness; see Ps 49:19.

{g} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 6. 2. {h} vmv wzx lb "ne videant solem", Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 58:9

Ver. 9. Before your pots can feel the thorns,.... Which is soon done; for as dry thorns make a great blaze, so they give a quick heat; the pots soon feel them, or the water in them soon receives heat from them. From imprecations the psalmist proceeds to prophesy, and foretells the sudden destruction of wicked men, which would be before a pot could be heated with a blaze of thorns. The Targum is,

"before the wicked become tender, they harden as the thorn:"

that is, they never become tender, or have any tender consciences, but are hardened in sin from their infancy. Some render the words, "before your thorns grow up to a brier" or "bramble" {i}; little thorns become great ones, tender thorns hard ones, as Jarchi; that is, as he interprets it, before the children of the wicked are grown up, they are destroyed; those sons of Belial, who are like to thorns thrust away, 2Sa 23:6. Others, as Aben Ezra, "before they understand"; that is, wise and knowing men; "that your thorns are a bramble"; or from lesser ones are become greater; and so denotes, as before, the suddenness and quickness of their destruction, as follows:

he, that is, God,

shall take them away as with a whirlwind: not to himself, as Enoch; nor to heaven, whither Elijah went up by a whirlwind; but out of the land of the living, and as with a tempest, to hell, where snares, fire, and brimstone, are rained upon them; see Job 27:20;

both living, and in [his] wrath: when in health and full strength, and so go quick to hell; as Korah and his company alive into the earth; and all in wrath and sore displeasure: for the righteous are also taken away; but then it is from the evil to come, and to everlasting happiness; and through many tempestuous providences, which are in love, and for their good, do they enter the kingdom: and those that are alive at Christ's coming will be caught up to meet him in the air; but the wicked are taken away as in a whirlwind, alive, and in wrath.

{i} Tigurine version.

Psalms 58:10

Ver. 10. The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance,.... Before imprecated and foretold; the punishment inflicted by the Lord, to whom vengeance belongs, in a way of vindictive wrath; for what befalls the wicked in an afflictive way is in wrath, and as a vengeance upon them: and as the judgments of God are sometimes manifest, are to be seen, they are observed by the righteous, who rejoice at them; not as evils and miseries simply considered, nor from a private affection; but as the glory of divine justice is displayed therein, and the goodness of God is shown to them, by delivering them out of their hands; see Re 18:20;

he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked; which denotes the great destruction of the wicked, and the abundance of blood that shall be shed; see Re 14:20; and the entire victory the saints shall have over them, and their security from them, Ps 68:21; as well as the satisfaction, and pleasure and refreshment, as it were, they shall have in their destruction; signified by their feet being washed in their blood, instead of being washed in water, usual in the eastern countries; because of the glory of the divine perfections appearing therein. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, "his hands".

Psalms 58:11

Ver. 11. So that a man shall say,.... Any man, and every man, especially, that is observing, wise, and knowing; he shall conclude, from such a dispensation of things, from God's dealing with the wicked after this manner:

verily, [there is] a reward for the righteous; or "fruit" {k} for them: they have the fruits of divine love, the blessings of an everlasting covenant; and the fruit of Christ, the tree of life, which is sweet unto their taste, as are the benefits of his death, his word and ordinances; and the fruits of the Spirit, his several graces wrought in their souls; and the fruits of righteousness, the effect of which is peace; and is a reward they receive in, though not for keeping the commands of God; and they gather fruit unto eternal life, which is the recompence of reward, the reward of the inheritance, the great reward in heaven, which remains for them; and which they shall have, not for their own righteousness's sake, but for the sake of Christ's righteousness; from which they are denominated righteous persons, and which gives them a right and title to it: so that this is a reward, not of debt as due to them, and to be claimed by them on account of any thing they have done; but of grace, streaming through the blood and righteousness of Christ;

verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth; that there is a God is known by the judgments that he executeth; and that he judgeth in the earth, and is the Judge of all the earth, who will do right, may be concluded from the vengeance inflicted on wicked men; and he will one day judge the world in righteousness, by him whom he has ordained to be Judge of quick and dead. The words in the Hebrew text are in the plural number, Myjpv Myhla, "gods that judge": which Kimchi and Ben Melech say is on account of honour; or as they, with Aben Ezra, interpret it, of the angels: but these are not judges in the earth; rather it is expressive of a trinity of Persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit. The Father is the Judge of all, though he does not execute judgment; but has committed it to the Son, who is Judge of quick and dead; and the Spirit judges, reproves, and convinces the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

{k} yrp "fructus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 59:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 59

To the chief Musician, Altaschith, Michtam of David; when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him. The history of Saul's sending messengers to watch the house of David, and to kill him when he rose in the morning, is in 1Sa 19:11; which was the occasion of his writing this psalm; though the title of the Syriac version of it is,

"David said or composed this, when he heard that the priests were slain by Saul:"

and in the same is added,

"but unto us it declares the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith, and the rejection of the Jews."

And which perhaps is designed in Ps 59:5; and some interpreters are of opinion that the whole psalm is to be understood of Christ, of whom David was a type, especially in his sufferings; and there are some things in it which better agree with him than with David, as particularly his being without sin, Ps 59:3.

Ver. 1. Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God,.... David had his enemies in his youth, notwithstanding the amiableness of his person, the endowments of his mind, his martial achievements, his wise behaviour and conduct, and the presence of God with him; yea, it were some of these things that made Saul his enemy, who, by his power and authority, made others; see 1Sa 18:5. Christ had his enemies, though he went about doing good, both to the bodies and souls of men, continually; the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, were his implacable enemies, and even the people of the Jews in general: and the church of God, and members of it, whom David may represent, have their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world; and as David and Christ, so the church has a covenant God to go unto, from whom deliverance from enemies may be desired and expected;

defend me from them that rise up against me; or, "set me on high above them" {l}; out of their reach, as David was protected from Saul and his men, who rose up in an hostile manner against him; and as Christ was, when raised from the dead, and exalted at his Father's right hand; and as the saints are in great safety, dwelling on high, where their place of defence is the munition of rocks; and therefore it matters not who rise up against them.

{l} ynbgvt "statue me in loco alto, i.e. tuto", Vatablus; and to the same sense Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis, Gejerus.

Psalms 59:2

Ver. 2. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity,....
See Gill on "Ps 6:8";

and save me from bloody men; such as Saul sent to kill David, as appears from the title of the psalm; and such as were concerned in the death of Christ; and such, are the enemies of God's people, the followers of the man of sin. The heap of words, the various expressions used in a way of petition, in this verse and Ps 59:1, show the distress the psalmist was in, and whom he represents; his importunity, earnestness, and fervency in prayer.

Psalms 59:3

Ver. 3. For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul,.... As the men did that watched his house, when Saul sent to kill him; so the Jews sought and lay in wait to take away the life of Christ; and very often was it the case of the Apostle Paul, that he was in danger of his life, through the lying in wait of the Jews; so Satan makes use of cunning devices, stratagems, and wiles, to ruin the souls of God's people, if possible; and false teachers lie in wait to deceive them. The emphasis lies upon the word "soul", which is so precious, and the redemption of which has cost so much, even the blood of Christ;

the mighty are gathered against me; or, "dwell by me"; see
Ps 56:6; around his house, the soldiers that Saul sent; and such were the enemies of Christ, Ps 69:4; the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, men of great authority and influence among the people; the kings of the earth and rulers, Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and people of the Jews, **Ac 4:26**; yea, Satan, and his principalities and powers; and who are also those against whom the saints wrestle, and would be too mighty for them, were it not that God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and the holy angels, are on their side;

not [for] my transgression, nor [for] my sin, O Lord; as the cause of such usage and treatment. David was not without original sin, in which he was conceived and born; nor without inward corruptions, of which he often complained; nor without actual transgressions, and some very gross ones, and which he owned and confessed, and prayed for the pardon of: but in the case of Saul there was no transgression nor iniquity in him, as he declared to him himself, and appeals to God for the truth of it, 1Sa 24:11. One of the words here used signifies "rebellion" {m}; of this he was not guilty; he never entered into any treasonable measures, nor committed any treasonable practices, nor conspired against the life and crown of his sovereign; in this respect he was quite clear and innocent. Christ, his antitype, was entirely without sin, without original or actual transgression; he had no sin in his nature, nor committed any in his life; he had none inherent in him, only the sins of his people imputed to him; and therefore the usage he met with from men was very cruel and unjust. And as for the saints, though they are not free from sin, original and actual, yet in the case for which they suffer reproach, and are persecuted by men, they are not criminal; they have done nothing to deserve such usage; they do not suffer as evildoers, but as Christians, **1Pe 4:15**.

{m} yevp "rebellionem meam", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 59:4

Ver. 4. They run and prepare themselves without [my] fault,.... Or, "without sin [in me]"; or "without punishment [in them]"; so the same word is rendered, 1Sa 28:10. "They run", in an hostile manner, "against me", as the Syriac version adds; or like dogs up and down, about the city, to find him and kill him; see Ps 59:7. Or this may denote their readiness and swiftness to shed blood, **Pr 1:16**; "and prepare themselves" with weapon, with instruments of death, as the men did that were sent to kill him; and as the band of men that came with Judas to take Christ prepared themselves with swords and staves. The Targum is,

"they order or ordain war;"

which they prosecuted without any occasion of it from him, and wilt, impunity in them. Wherefore it follows,

awake to help me; or "to meet me" {n}; see Ge 46:29; with succour and supplies, and to deliver out of the hands of enemies. The Lord, though he neither slumbers nor sleeps, yet seems to be asleep when he does not arise to help his people, but suffers the enemy to prevail; and when he seems to take no notice of their case, but hides his eyes, and shuts them as a man asleep. Hence the following petition,

and behold; the distress the psalmist was in, and the wickedness and malice of his enemies against him.

{n} ytarql "in occursum meum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus,

Michaelis.

Psalms 59:5

Ver. 5. Thou therefore, O Lord God of hosts,.... Of the armies in heaven, the angels, and of all the inhabitants of the earth; who are all under him, and at his dispose, and can do among them and with them whatsoever he pleases;

the God of Israel; of the people of Israel, literally understood; and mystically of all the elect of God, Jews and Gentiles. The former epithet is expressive of his power, this of his grace and goodness in a covenant way; and both encouraged the psalmist to address him on the following account:

awake to visit all the Heathen: either the wicked Israelites that rose up against David, and sought to take away his life, who behaved like Heathens towards him, and were accounted as such by him; and the petition is, that God would arise and punish them, everyone of them, according to their deserts: or else the Gentiles, properly so called, whom he desires the Lord would visit, either in a way of grace, by sending the Gospel to them, and taking out of them a people for his name, as he did, Ac 15:14; foreseeing, by a spirit of prophecy, that the Jews would be rejected for their ill usage of the Messiah;
See Gill on "Ps 59:1", title: or in a way of punishment for their idolatry and impiety; and particularly the antichristian states and powers, called the Heathen, and Gentiles, and nations of the earth,
Ps 10:16; may be here meant; whom God will visit for their idolatry, blasphemy, and bloodshed;

be not merciful to any wicked transgressors; that are perfidiously and abominably wicked, as Judas Iscariot, the Romish antichrist. The Targum renders it, "princes of a lie"; that speak lies in hypocrisy, and are given up to believe a lie, as the followers of antichrist. God is merciful to wicked men and to transgressors, but not to wicked transgressors; apostates may be meant, such as deal perfidiously and treacherously, as the word {o} used signifies; who sin wilfully and knowingly, after they have received the knowledge of the truth; sin against light and evidence, and obstinately and wickedly persist therein: who sin the sin against the Holy Ghost, the sin unto death, which is not to be prayed for, **1Jo 4:16**; or otherwise this may seem to be contrary to the command and example of Christ, **Mt 5:44**.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{o} ydgb "perfide agentibus", Junius & Tremellius.

Psalms 59:6

Ver. 6. They return at evening,.... It was at evening Saul sent messengers to watch David's house, that they might take him in the morning; but missing him, perhaps after a fruitless search for him all the day, returned at evening to watch his house again; or they might come, and go and return the first evening. So it was night when Judas set out from Bethany, to go to the chief priests at Jerusalem, to covenant with them, and betray his master; and it was in the night he did betray him, after he had eaten the passover at evening with him. Or, "let them return" {p}, as in Ps 59:14; with shame and confusion, as David's enemies, when they found nothing but an image in the bed, which they reported to Saul; and as Judas returned to the chief priests with confusion and horror. Or, "they shall return" {q}; which being prophetically said, had its accomplishment, both in the enemies of David and of Christ; and will be true of all the wicked, who will return from their graves and live again, and give an account of themselves at the evening of the day of the Lord, which is a thousand years; in the morning of which day the dead in Christ will rise, but the rest will not rise until the end of the thousand years;

they make a noise like a dog: which is a very noisy creature, and especially some of them, which are always yelping and barking; though indeed there are some that are naturally dumb, and cannot bark: such there are in the West Indies, as we are told {r}; and to which the allusion is in Isa 56:10; and which may serve to illustrate the passage there: but those referred to here are of another kind; and this noise of theirs either respects their bark in the night, as some dogs do continually, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; or to their howling, as the Syriac and Arabic versions. Wicked men are compared to dogs, **Mt 7:6** Re 22:15; and particularly the enemies of Christ, Ps 22:16, in allusion either to hunting dogs, who make a noise all the while they are pursuing after the game; or hungry ravenous ones, who make a noise for want of food; and this character agrees not only with the Roman soldiers, who were Gentiles, and whom the Jews used to call by this name, Mt 15:26; but the Jews also, even their principal men, as well as the dregs of the people, who were concerned in the death of Christ; and may be truly said to make a noise like dogs when they cried Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas, crucify him, crucify him; for which they were instant and pressing with loud voices, and their voices prevailed, Lu 23:18;

and go round about the city; as Saul's messengers, very probably, when they found David had made his escape from his house, searched the city round in quest of him; and there was much going about the city of Jerusalem at the time of our Lord's apprehension, trial, and condemnation; after he was taken in the garden: they went with him first to Annas's house, then to Caiaphas's, then to Pilate's, and then to Herod's, and back again to Pilate's, and from thence out of the city to Golgotha. The allusion is still to dogs, who go through a city barking {s} at persons, or in quest of what they can get; so informers and accusers may be called city dogs, as some sort of orators are by Demosthenes {t}.

{p} wbwvy "revertantur", Gejerus, Schmidt. {q} "Convertentur", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; so Sept. Syr. Ar. {r} P. Martyr. Decad. Ocean decad. 1. l. 3. & de Insulis Occid. Ind. Vid. Iguatii Epist. ad Eph. p. 124. {s} kunhv ana ptolin wruontai. Theocrit. Idyll. 2. v. 35. {t} Apud Salmuth. in Pancirol. Memorub. Rer. par. 2. tit. 2. p. 97.

Psalms 59:7

Ver. 7. Behold, they belch out with their mouth,.... Bark like dogs, so Aben Ezra; or "bubble out" {u}, as a fountain bubbles out with water; so they cast out their wickedness in great abundance; see **Jer 6:7**; the phrase denotes the abundance of evil things and wicked speeches that came out of their mouths, which showed the naughtiness of their hearts; so David's enemies blustered and threatened what they would do to him could they find him; and Christ's enemies poured out their wicked charges of blasphemy and sedition against him, in great plenty, and without proof;

swords [are] in their lips; the words of their lips were like sharp swords; see Ps 55:21; threatening the most severe and cruel things: or, besides their lips, and what they belched out with their mouths, they took swords in their hands in a literal sense; as Saul's messengers did to kill David, and as Judas and his band of men, who came to take Christ as a thief, with swords and staves, Mt 26:55;

for who, [say they], doth hear? what they uttered with their mouths and lips, in a blustering and threatening manner; though they were overheard by men, who carried what they said and designed to do to Michal, David's wife. The meaning may be, they would say what they pleased, and did not care who heard them, having nothing to fear from any, they having their orders from the king; see Ps 12:4; and so the Targum,

"behold they belch out with their mouths words which are sharp as swords, and with their lips saying, we shall prevail; for who is he that hears, and can punish?"

Aben Ezra's note is,

"they thought that God did not hear their counsels;"

and therefore the next words are in direct opposition to them; but so to think is monstrous stupidity and brutishness, Ps 94:4; some take the words to be the words of David, complaining that the civil magistrate, none of the judges, took notice of or punished such who belched out their lies and calumnies against him, saying, "for who doth hear?" no man.

{u} Nweyby "scaturient", Montanus; "copiose eructant", Gejerus.

Psalms 59:8

Ver. 8. But thou, O Lord, shall laugh at them,.... Disappoint their counsels, hinder them from performing their enterprise; send them back with shame and confusion, and expose them to the laughter and derision of others; as Saul's messengers were, when instead of David they found an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for its bolster,
1Sa 19:16; the same is said as here with respect to the enemies of Christ, **Ps 2:4**;

thou shall have all the Heathen in derision: either David's enemies, who, though Israelites, yet acted like Heathens to him, as in Ps 59:5; or the Gentiles that were gathered together against Christ, **Ps 2:1**; or the antichristian states and powers, who will be triumphed over at the time of their ruin, Re 18:20; and even all the wicked at the last day, **Pr 1:26**.

Psalms 59:9

Ver. 9. [Because of] his strength will I wait upon thee,.... Either because of the strength of Saul, who was stronger than David, he determined to wait upon the Lord for salvation and deliverance from him; or because of the strength of the

Lord, which he expected from him, and therefore would wait upon him for it. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and also the Chaldee paraphrase, render the words, "my strength will I keep for thee"; or "with thee". I ascribe all my strength unto thee; I expect every supply of it from thee, and put my trust and confidence in thee for it: so did Christ as man, and had strength from the Lord, according to his promise, Isa 50:7; and so every believer, Isa 14:24;

for God [is] my defence; or "my high refuge"; or "high tower" {w}; see **Ps 9:9**; where he was defended and exalted, as is petitioned
Ps 59:1; and was safe and secure from every enemy.

{w} ybgvm "vice arcis sublimis", Tigurine version; Vatablus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, all to the same purport.

Psalms 59:10

Ver. 10. The God of my mercy shall prevent me,.... Or "of my grace", or "goodness", as the Targum; see **1Pe 5:10**. God is gracious in himself, and he has treasured up a fulness of grace in Christ: he is the donor of all the blessings of grace in the covenant; and the author of all internal grace in the hearts of his people; and who supplies them with more grace as they want it; and he is the Father of all temporal and spiritual mercies. The "Cetib", or writing, is wdox, "his mercy"; the "Keri", or reading, is ydox, "my mercy"; grace or mercy is the Lord's; it is his own, which he disposes of as he pleases; being given and applied, it is the believer's; all the grace and mercy in the heart of God, in his Son, and in his covenant, is the saints', which he keeps for them with Christ for evermore; "the God of my mercy", or "grace", is the same with "my merciful", or "my gracious God"; who goes before his people, as he does the Messiah, with the blessings of his goodness, Ps 21:3. It may be rendered, "hath came before me"; and denote the antiquity of his love, being before his people's to him, and the early provisions of his grace and mercy for them: or "doth prevent me": expressing the freeness of it; he not waiting for any duties, services, or conditions to be performed, but bestows his grace and mercy, notwithstanding much unworthiness: or "shall come before me"; designing the seasonable and timely application of mercy come before his fears, as it sometimes does the prayers of his people, Isa 65:24;

God shall let me see [my desire] upon mine enemies; expressed in the following verses, Ps 59:11; or "vengeance upon them"; as the Targum paraphrases it; see Ps 58:10.

Psalms 59:11

Ver. 11. Slay thou not,.... Though they deserved to be slain, and the Lord seemed as if he was about to slay them, who was able to do it; he seemed to be whetting his glittering sword, and his hand to take hold of vengeance ready to execute it; wherefore intercession is made to spare them, which agrees with Christ's petition on the cross,
Lu 23:34. The Targum adds, "immediately": slay them not directly, and at once; give them space for repentance; and so the Jews had: for it was forty years after the death of Christ before their destruction was: or the meaning may be, slay them not utterly; destroy them not totally: and so it was; for though multitudes were slain during the siege of Jerusalem, and at the taking of it, yet they were not all slain: there were many carried captive, and sent into different parts of the world, whose posterity continue to this day. The reason of this petition is,

lest my people forget: the Syriac version renders it, "lest they should forget my people"; or my people should be forgotten. David's people, the Jews by birth and religion, though not as yet his subjects, unless in designation and appointment, and Christ's people according to the flesh: now if these had all been slain at once, they had been forgotten, like dead men out of mind: or Christ's special and peculiar people; his chosen, redeemed, and called ones, who truly believe in him, and are real Christians; and then the sense is, if full vengeance had been taken of the Jews at once, and they had been cut off root and branch, so that none of them remained, Christ's people would have forgot them, and the vengeance inflicted on them for their rejection of the Messiah; but now they are a continued and lasting instance of God's wrath and displeasure on that account, and they and their case cannot be forgotten. The Arabic version renders it, "lest my people forget the law"; its precepts and sanction, its rewards and punishments;

scatter them by thy power; or let them wander up and down like fugitives and vagabonds in the earth, as Cain did, and as the Jews now do, being dispersed in the several parts of the world; and which was done by the power of God, or through the kingdom of God coming with power upon that people, **Mr 9:1**; or "by thine army" {x}; the Roman army, which was the Lord's, being permitted by him to come against them, and being made use of as an instrument to destroy and scatter them, Mt 22:7;

and bring them down; from their excellency, greatness, riches, and honour, into a low, base, mean, and poor estate and condition, in which the Jews now are;

O Lord, our shield; the protector and defender of his people, while he is the destroyer and scatterer of their enemies.

{x} Klyxb "exercitu tuo", Michaelis, Vatablus.

Psalms 59:12

Ver. 12. [For] the sin of their mouth, [and] the words of their lips,.... The words may be read as one proposition, "the words of their lips [are] the sin of their mouth" {y}; they speak nothing but evil; whatever they say is sin; out of the abundance of their evil hearts their mouths speak: or "for the sin of their mouth" and lips; because of the calumnies cast by them on the Messiah, traducing him as a sinful man, a blasphemer, a seditious person, and even as one that had familiarity with the devil;

let them even be taken in their pride; in their city and temple, of which they boasted, and prided themselves in; and so they were: or for their pride in rejecting the Messiah, because of his mean descent and parentage, and because his kingdom was not with outward pomp and observation; and being vain boasters of their carnal privileges, and works of righteousness, they refused to submit to the righteousness of God, and were neither subject to the law of God, nor to the Gospel of Christ;

and for cursing and lying [which] they speak; for cursing the Messiah, pronouncing him accursed, and treating him as such, by hanging him on a tree; and for lying against him, saying that he was a Samaritan, and had a devil, and cast out devils by Beelzebub; and that he was a deceiver of the people, and a wicked man: for these things they were taken in their besieged city, as is here imprecated.

{y} So Gejerus, Schmidt.

Psalms 59:13

Ver. 13. Consume [them] in wrath, consume [them],.... The repetition of the request shows the ardour and vehemency of the mind of the petitioner, and the importunity in which he put up the petition; and suggests that the persons designed were guilty of very great sins, deserving of the wrath of God, and which came upon them to the uttermost, **1Th 2:16**;

that they [may] not [be]; either any more in the land of the living; be utterly extinct, having no being in this world, Jer 31:15; or that they might not be in the glory and grandeur, in the honour, dignity, and felicity, they once were in; which best suits the present state of the Jews; and this sense better agrees with what follows;

and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob, unto the ends of the earth; this is to be understood of the Messiah, who is God over all, blessed for ever, and is the ruler in Israel, King of saints; reigns over the house of Jacob, in his church, and among his people, wherever they are; even to the ends of the earth, where he has had, or will have, some that are subject to him: for his dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, Ps 72:8; and this his government is known to men good and bad, by the judgments which he executeth; and particularly it is apparent that he is made Lord and Christ, and that he is come in his kingdom, and with power, by the vengeance taken on the Jewish nation.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 59:14

Ver. 14. And at evening let them return; [and] let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. What in Ps 59:6 is related as matter of fact, is here expressed by way of imprecation; and what is there taken notice of as their sin, is here wished for at their punishment; unless it can be thought that this should refer to the conversion and return of the Jews in the evening of the world, and to their humiliation and mourning for piercing Christ, and to their very distressed and uncomfortable condition they will be in, until they have satisfaction that their sins are forgiven them; See Gill on "Ps 59:6".

Psalms 59:15

Ver. 15. Let them wander up and down for meat,.... Like hungry dogs;

and grudge if they be not satisfied; or murmur and howl as dogs when hungry, and can find nothing to eat; or "when they shall not be satisfied, and shall lodge" {z}; when they shall get nothing to satisfy their hungry appetite, and shall go to bed without a supper, and lie all night without food. The Targum is,

"they shall wander about to seize the prey to eat, and will not rest till the are satisfied, and will lie all night;"

that is, in quest of prey.

{z} wnylyw "nec satiati cubabunt", Tigurine version; "famelici pernoctabunt", Michaelis.

Psalms 59:16

Ver. 16. But I will sing of thy power,.... In creating all things out of nothing; in upholding all things in being; in the redemption of his people; in their conversion and calling; in the preservation of them to eternal happiness; in the performance of his promises to them; in the destruction of their enemies; and in their protection:

yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning; of providential mercies, which are new every morning; and of special mercy in the heart of God, in the covenant of his grace, in redemption, in regeneration, in the pardon of sin, and in eternal life and salvation;

for thou hast been my defence; See Gill on "Ps 59:9";

and refuge in the day of my trouble; whither he fled, and found protection and safety; See Gill on "Ps 9:9".

Psalms 59:17

Ver. 17. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing,.... That is, to God, whom he made his strength, and put his trust in for strength, and from whom he received it; and he therefore determined to sing praise to him for it, and give him the glory of it;

for God [is] my defence: as before in Ps 59:9;

[and] the God of my mercy; See Gill on "Ps 59:10".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 60:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 60

To the chief Musician upon Shushaneduth, Michtam of David, to teach; when he strove with Aramnaharaim, and with Aramzobah, when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of Salt twelve thousand. The words "shushaneduth" are thought, by Aben Ezra, to be the beginning of a song, to the tune of which this psalm was set; though others, as he observes, take them to be the name of a musical instrument, on which it was sung. Some take "shushan" to be an instrument of six chords, an hexachord; and "eduth", which signifies a "testimony", to be the title of the psalm, it being a testimony, or lasting memorial, of the victory obtained over the Syrians and Edomites; though rather they may be considered as expressing the subject matter of the psalm; and so the Targum interprets them,

"concerning the ancient testimony of the sons of Jacob and Laban;"

referring to Ge 31:47; they may be rendered, as they are by some, "concerning the lily of the testimony" {a}; and be applied to the Gospel, the testimony of our Lord Jesus, the pure, lily white, and unblemished testimony it bears to him, his person, office, and grace; and particularly to salvation as alone in him, and to which witness is borne in this psalm, Ps 60:11. This psalm is a "michtam", or golden psalm of David, and its use is "to teach". It is of the instructive kind, and teaches where help and salvation are to be expected; see **Col 3:16**; it was written when David "strove", or fought, with Aramnaharaim, the Syrians of Mesopotamia, which lay between the two rivers, Tigris and Euphrates, from whence is the name; hence the Septuagint render it Mesopotamia of Syria; and the Targum is,

"he made war with Aram, which is by Euphrates;"

and at the same time David also fought with Aramzobah, or the Syrians of Zobah, as they are called in 2Sa 10:6; with Josephus {b}, Zobah is the same with Sophene; but wrongly, as is thought by learned men {c}: for though this is a name which some part of Syria goes by in Mela {d}; and Ptolemy {e} makes mention of a place of this name; yet that was beyond Euphrates, and in Armenia; whereas this must be nearer the land of Israel; for it is said {f} that Aramzobah is the country of Syria, which David subdued, and joined to the land of Israel; concerning which the Jews so often say, that in some things it was the same with it: according to Hillerus {g}, it is the same country which the Arabians call Kinnosrina, the chief city of which is Haleb, or Aleppo; and R. Benjamin Tudelensis {h} making mention of Haleb, says, this is Aramzobah. Moreover, this psalm was written "when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand"; the "valley of salt" was near the Dead Sea, and upon the borders of Idumea; the battle fought here by Joab was either the same with the former, or different from it, at or about the same time; and accounts seemingly different from this are given in **2Sa 8:13**; in the first of these the number is said to be eighteen thousand Syrians, and the victory is ascribed to David; and in the latter the same number as there, but said to be Edomites, as here, and the slaughter ascribed to Abishai. The note of R. Abendana {i}, for the reconciling of this, is worth transcribing: Our Rabbins of blessed memory say there were two battles; that Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, slew eighteen thousand, and after that Joab came and smote of them twelve thousand; and this is what is said; and "Joab returned", &c. the sense is, he returned after Abishai: and in the book of Samuel the battle is ascribed to David, because he was the root or chief (that is, under whom Joab and Abishai fought); but R. David Kimchi writes, that there were between them all eighteen thousand only; that Abishai began the battle, and smote of them six thousand, and after that Joab returned, and smote of them twelve thousand; but of a truth the wise R. Joel Ben Sueb gives the right sense of this affair, which is this; when David was fighting with the Syrians of Naharaim and Zobah, it was told him that Edom was come out to meet him, and help the Syrians; and then he veiled himself in prayer, and said this psalm; and Joab returned from the army, and went to meet the Edomites, that they might not pass over to help the Syrians, and join them, and he smote of them twelve thousand; and David was left fighting with the Syrians of Naharaim and Zobah, and subdued them under him, and he turned to help Joab; and Abishai, the son of Zeruiah was over the army, and he smote of them eighteen thousand, and they were in all thirty thousand, according to our Rabbins of blessed memory; and the text in **2Sa 8:13**; should be inverted and explained thus;

"when he returned from smiting the Syrians, he got him in the valley of salt a name; for his fame went abroad, because he smote there eighteen thousand, and this was in Edom."

The Targum very wrongly renders it,

"and there fell of the armies of David and Joab twelve thousand."

The title of this psalm, in the Syriac version, is,

"which David gave out, saying, if I should come into the hands of Saul, I shall perish; and he fled, and those that were with him: but to us it declares the conversion of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews."

The former part of which is quite foreign; but the latter seems to be right; for reference is had to both in this psalm, and to Christ, the banner displayed, or ensign lifted up, and to his dominion over Jews and Gentiles in the latter day, and to that salvation which is alone in him.

{a} "Super rosa testimonii", Tigurine version; "super flore testimonii", Musculus. {b} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5. s. 1. and l. 8. c. 7. s. 6. {c} Vid. Hudson. Not in ibid. {d} De Orbis Situ, l. 1. c. 6. {e} Geograph. l. 5. c. 13. {f} Gloss. in T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 25. 1. {g} Onomast. Sacr. p. 586. {h} Itimerar. p. 59. {i} In Miclol Yophi in loc.

Ver. 1. O God, thou hast cast us off,.... What is said in this verse, and Ps 60:2, are by some applied to times past; to the distress of the people Israel by their neighbours in the times of the judges; to their being smitten by the Philistines, in the times of Eli and Samuel; and to the victory they obtained over them, when Saul and his sons were slain; and to the civil wars between the house of Saul and David; but rather the whole belongs to future times, which David, by a prophetic spirit, was led to on the occasion of the victory obtained, when before this the nation had been in bad circumstances. This refers to the casting off of the Jews as a church and nation, when they had rejected the Messiah and killed him, persecuted his apostles, and despised his Gospel; of which see Ro 11:15;

thou hast scattered us; as they were by the Romans among the various nations of the world, and among whom they are dispersed to this day; or "thou hast broken us" {k}, as in Ps 80:12; not only the walls of their city were broken by the battering rams of the Romans, but their commonwealth, their civil state, were broke to pieces by them. Jarchi applies this to the Romans; his note is this;

"when Edom fell by his hand (David's), he foresaw, by the Holy Ghost, that the Romans would rule over Israel, and decree hard decrees concerning them;"

thou hast been displeased; not only with their immorality and profaneness, with their hypocrisy and insincerity, with their will worship and superstition, and the observance of the traditions of their elders; but also with their rejection of the Messiah, and contempt of his Gospel and ordinances;

O turn thyself to us again; which prayer will be made by them, when they shall become sensible of their sins, and of their state and condition, and shall turn unto the Lord; and when he will turn himself to them, and turn away iniquity from them, and all Israel shall be saved, Ro 11:25; or "thou wilt return unto us" {l}; who before were cast off, broken, and he was displeased with; or others to us.

{k} wnturp "rupisti nos", Montanus, Michaelis; "disrupisti", Gejerus; so Ainsworth. {l} wnl bbwvt "reverteris ad nos", Pagninus, Montanus; "reduces ad nos", Gussetius, p. 836.

Psalms 60:2

Ver. 2. Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it,.... As is frequently done by an earthquake; which, whatever natural causes there may be of it, is always to be ascribed to God. The ancient Heathens {m} were of opinion that all earthquakes were of God. This respects not the whole earth, but the land of Israel only; and so the Targum,

"thou hast moved the land of Israel, thou hast shaken and rent it;"

and it does not design a natural earthquake in it, but a figurative one; a shaking and rending of their civil and church state; see
Heb 12:26;

heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh; which will be done in the latter day, when they shall return into their own land, and be restored as at the beginning, Isa 30:30.

{m} A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 2. c. 28.

Psalms 60:3

Ver. 3. Thou hast showed thy people hard things,.... As to have their city and temple burial, multitudes of them slain, and the rest carried captive, and put into the hands of cruel lords and hard masters, and made a proverb, a taunt, and a curse, in all places; and all this done to a people that were the Lord's by profession, who called themselves so, though now a "loammi", **Ho 1:9**; and these were hard things to flesh and blood, yet no other than what they deserved;

thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment; or "of trembling" {n}, Isa 51:17; that is, to endure such troubles as made them tremble, and astonished and stupefied them; took away their senses, and made them unfit for anything, being smitten with madness, blindness, and astonishment of heart, as is threatened them, De 28:28; see
Ro 11:7.

{n} hlert "tremoris", Musculus, Vatablus, Amama; "trepidationis", Michaelis; "horroris", Gejerus.

Psalms 60:4

Ver. 4. Thou hast given a banner,.... The word on is, by Jarchi, taken to signify "temptation" or "trial" {o}; and he interprets it of many troubles which they had, that they might be tried by them, whether they would stand in the fear of God, and so considers these words as a continuation of the account of the distresses of the people of Israel; but they are rather to be considered as declaring a peculiar blessing and favour bestowed upon some among them, who are here described, when the rest were involved in the greatest calamities, signified by a "banner" or "ensign" given them; by which is meant, not so much David literally, and the victory he obtained over the Syrians and Edomites, of which the banner displayed might be a token; but the Messiah, who is said to be given for a banner, or set up as an ensign for the people, Isa 11:10; for the gathering of them to him, to prepare them for war, and animate them to fight the good fight of faith, and oppose every enemy; to direct where they should stand to be on duty, where they should go, and whom they should follow; and is expressive of the victory over sin, Satan, and the world, they have through him: and this is given

to them that fear thee; who have the grace of fear put into their hearts; who fear the Lord and his goodness, and serve him with reverence and godly fear; who worship him both inwardly and outwardly, in spirit and in truth, whether among Jews or Gentiles, though the former may be chiefly intended; such as old Simeon, Anna the prophetess, and others, to whom Christ was made known; and especially the apostles of Christ, and those to whom their ministry became useful; whose business it was to display this banner, set up this ensign, and hold out this flag; as it follows:

that it may be displayed because of the truth; not because of the truth of Abraham, as the Targum; nor because of the truth, sincerity, and uprightness, of those that fear the Lord; but because of his own truth and faithfulness in the performance of his promises made concerning the displaying of this banner; or the sending of his son into the world, and the preaching of his Gospel in it; see Ro 15:8.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{o} So Yalkut Simconi in loc. par. 2. fol. 103. 1.

Psalms 60:5

Ver. 5. That thy beloved may be delivered,.... Some think that these words express the effect or end of the banner being displayed; but because of the word "Selah" at the end of Ps 60:4, which makes so full a stop; rather they are to be considered in construction with the following clause. By the Lord's "beloved" ones are meant, not so much the people of Israel, who were loved and chosen by the Lord above all people on the face of the earth, as the elect of God, both among Jews and Gentiles, who are the chosen of God, and precious, and are loved of him with a free, sovereign, everlasting, and unchangeable love: these are the beloved of Father, Son, and Spirit; who, falling into a state of condemnation and death in Adam, and being under the power of sin, and involved in the guilt and faith of it; and being fallen into the hands of many enemies, sin, Satan, and the world; stood in need of deliverance out of all this, which they could not work out of themselves, nor any creature for them; wherefore, that they might be delivered, the following request is made;

save [with] thy right hand; from sin, the cause of damnation; from the law, which threatens with condemnation and death; from Satan, that would devour and destroy; and from all their enemies; from wrath to come, from hell and the second death; or from going down to the pit of corruption. The persons for whom this petition is put up are not only David himself, but all the beloved ones; and these God has appointed unto salvation; Christ is the Saviour of them, and to them salvation is applied in due time by the Spirit, and in a little while they will be in the full possession of it: and this is wrought out by the "right hand" of the Lord; either by his mighty power, the saving strength of his right hand, who is mighty to save; or by his Son, the man of his right hand, made strong for himself, who able to save to the uttermost; and by whom God has determined to save, and does save all his people; or the words may be rendered, "save thy right hand, [thy] Benjamins" {p} who are as near and dear to thee as thy right hand, being his mystical self, to whom salvation is brought by him, Isa 63:1;

and hear me; in so doing, he suggests he would hear and answer him his prayers would be ended and accomplished; this being the sum of them, his own salvation, and the salvation of the Lord's beloved ones. The "Cetib", or writing of this clause, is, "hear us"; the "Keri", or reading of it, "hear me".

{p} Knymy heyvwh.

Psalms 60:6

Ver. 6. God hath spoken in his holiness,.... Or "in his holy place" {q}; in heaven, the habitation of his holiness and of his glory; or "in the house of the sanctuary", as the Targum: in the tabernacle, in the holy place by Urim and Thummim; and in the most holy place by his sacred oracle, from between the mercy seat: or "by his Holy Ones", as the Arabic version; by his holy prophets, Samuel and Nathan, by whom he spoke to David concerning the kingdom; and by his Holy Spirit dictating this psalm, and the rest unto him; and by his Son, his Holy One, by whom he has spoken in these last times unto his people, to which this psalm has reference: or it may be understood of the perfection of his holiness in which he has spoken, and by which he has swore; not only to David literally, concerning the extent of his dominion, the perpetuity and stability of it; but to David's son and antitype, the Messiah, concerning his seed, possession, and inheritance,
Ps 89:19;

I will rejoice; at the holiness of the Lord, which is matter of joy to the saints, especially as the is displayed and glorified in salvation by Christ, Ps 97:12; and at what he said in his holiness to David, concerning his temporal kingdom, and the duration of it; because he knew that what he said he would perform; and at what was spoken to him by the Messiah, in council and covenant, concerning his seeing his seed, and prolonging his days; which was the joy set before him, which carried him through his sorrows and sufferings, Heb 12:2; wherefore he believed his kingdom should be enlarged, both among Jews and Gentiles, as follows;

I will divide Shechem; a city in Mount Ephraim, Jos 20:7; and so was in the hands of Ishbosheth the son of Saul; as the valley of Succoth, Gilead, Ephraim, and Manasseh, after mentioned, and all the tribes of Israel, were, but Judah, **2Sa 2:4**; but, because of God's promise, David believed that they would be all in his possession; signified by dividing, as a land is divided for an inheritance when conquered, Jos 13:7; or this is said in allusion to the dividing of spoils in a conquered place; and so the Targum,

"I will divide the prey with the children of Joseph, that dwell in Shechem;"

and as Shechem was the same with Sychar, near to which our Lord met with the Samaritan woman, and converted her, and many others of that place, then might he be said to divide the spoils there, **Joh 4:5**;

and mete out the valley of Succoth; with a measuring line, so taking possession of it, **2Sa 8:2**; Succoth was near to Shechem,
Ge 33:17; and was in the tribe of Gad, and in a valley,
Jos 13:27; there was a Succoth in the plain of Jordan, **1Ki 7:46**; it signifies booths, tents, or tabernacles, and may mystically signify the churches of Christ, wherein he dwells and exercises his dominion.

{q} wvdqb "in sanctuario suo", Tigurine version, Vatablus; "in sancto suo", V. L. Musculus, Cocceius.

Psalms 60:7

Ver. 7. Gilead [is] mine,.... This is particularly mentioned, because over this Abner made Ishbosheth king, **2Sa 2:9**; and is the place to which the Jews shall be brought in the latter day, when converted,
Zec 10:10; It was a country that abounded with pastures fit for feeding cattle,
Nu 32:1, and may point out those green pastures where Christ makes his flocks to lie down and rest;

and Manasseh [is] mine; Ephraim also [is] the strength of mine head: these two were also under Saul's son when David first came to the throne, but afterwards became his, as was promised him, and he believed, **2Sa 2:9**. And the concord and harmony of the people of God among themselves, and under David their Prince, the King Messiah, are signified and Ephraim being one in the hand of the by the ceasing of the envy of the one, and of the vexation of the other, Eze 37:19; Ephraim was more numerous and populous than Manasseh, and abounded with mighty men, which are the strength of a prince, and therefore called here the strength of his head;

Judah [is] my lawgiver; manifestly referring to Ge 49:10; which furnished out persons fit to be counsellors in enacting laws, and proper to be employed in the execution of them. The great Lawgiver is Christ himself, who came of this tribe, Isa 33:22; All this is expressive of dominion over the whole land of Judea, Ephraim, and Manasseh, with the places mentioned with them; the house of Joseph being, as Aben Ezra observes, in the north part of it, and Judah in the south. Next mention is made of the subjection of the Gentiles, and dominion over them.

Psalms 60:8

Ver. 8. Moab [is] my washpot,.... To wash hands and feet in: and so the Syriac version, "and Moab the washing of my feet"; a vessel for low and mean service, and so denotes the servile subjection of the Moabites to David; see **2Sa 8:2**; and as the words may be rendered, "the pot of my washing" {r}. Great numbers of the Moabites might be at this time servants to the Israelites, and to David and his court particularly; and might be employed, as the Gibeonites were, to be drawers of water, to fill their pots, in which they washed their hands and feet, and their bathing vessels, in which they bathed themselves: Aben Ezra explains it,

"I wilt wash their land as a pot;"

and so may not only signify the very great subjection of the Gentiles, even the chief among them, to Christ and his church, Isa 49:23; but as Moab was begotten and born in uncleanness, and his posterity an unclean generation, it may design the washing, cleansing, sanctifying, and justifying of the Gentiles in the name of Christ, and by his Spirit, **1Co 6:11**;

over Edom will I cast out my shoe; as a token of possessing their land, **Ru 4:7**; so some; or of subduing them; putting the feet on which the shoe is upon the necks of them, Jos 10:24. So Kimchi interprets it, "the treading of my foot;"

to which the Targum agrees, paraphrasing it thus;

"upon the joint of the neck of the mighty men of Edom I have cast my shoe."

It may allude to a custom {s} in confirming a bargain, or taking possession, to pluck off the shoe in token of it, ylen may be rendered "my glove"; as it is by the Targum on **Ru 4:7**; for, as the shoe encloses and binds the foot, so the glove the hand: and the allusion may be thought to be to a custom used by kings, when they sat down before any strong city to besiege it, to throw in a glove into the city; signifying they would never depart from the city until they had took it. Hence the custom, which still continues, of sending a glove to a person challenged to fight. And indeed the custom of casting a shoe was used by the emperor of the Abyssines, as a sign of dominion {t}. Take the phrase in every light, it signifies victory and power; that he should be in Edom as at home, and there pluck off his shoe, and cast it upon him; either to carry it after him, as some think, which was the work of a servant, to which the Baptist alludes, **Mt 3:11**; or rather to clean it for him; for as Moab was his washpot, to wash his hands and feet, in Edom was his shoe cleaner, to wipe off and remove the dirt and dust that was upon them {u}; all which denotes great subjection: and this was fulfilled in David, **2Sa 8:14**; and may refer to the spread of the Gospel in the Gentile world, and the power accompanying that to the subduing of many sinners in it, carried thither by those whose feet were shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace;

Philistia, triumph thou because of me: some take this to be an ironic expression, like that in Ec 11:9; so R. Moses in Aben Ezra, and also Kimchi. Triumph now as thou usedst to do, or if thou canst: but rather they are seriously spoken, seeing they had reason to rejoice and be glad, because they had changed hands and masters for the better, being subject to David, **2Sa 8:1**, with this compare Ps 108:9, and may very well be applied to the Gentiles, subdued and conquered by Christ, who triumph in him; and because delivered out of the hands of sin, Satan, and the world, through his victorious arms.

{r} yuxr ryo "olla lotionis meae", Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis, Gejerus; so Tigurine version, Musculus, Vatablus. {s} Elias in Tishbi, fol. 267. {t} R. Immanuel apud Castell. Lex. Polygott. col. 2342. {u} Vid. Bynaeum de Calceis Heb. l. 2. c. 8. Gusset. Ebr. Comment p. 520.

Psalms 60:9

Ver. 9. Who will bring me [into] the strong city?.... Which some understand of Rabbah of the Ammonites, which Joab besieged, and sent to David to come and take it in person, 2Sa 12:26. The Targum interprets it of Tyre, which was a strong fortified city, Eze 26:4. It rather seems to be the same with Edom, or the metropolis of the Edomites; since it follows:

who will lead me into Edom? which was situated in the clefts of the rock, and on the height of the hill, Jer 49:16; but is mystically to be understood of the city of Rome, the great and mighty city, as it is often called in the book of the Revelation, Re 11:8; whose destruction is certain, being predicted; and after which there have been desires raised in the hearts of God's people in all ages; and particularly just before the time God will put it into the hearts of the kings of the earth to burn it with fire; who are here represented by David, as desirous of entering into it in triumph to destroy it,
Re 17:16.

Psalms 60:10

Ver. 10. [Wilt] not thou, O God?.... This is an answer to the question, and is made by putting another, which tacitly contains in it an affirmation that God would do it. He has foretold the destruction of the Romish antichrist; he has said it shall be: he is faithful to his purposes, predictions, and promises; he is able to effect it; strong is the Lord that judgeth Babylon, Re 18:10; He will put it into the hearts of the kings of the earth to hate her; he will encourage them to reward her double; he will give her blood to drink, because she is worthy; her destruction will be according to his righteous judgment, and will be irretrievable; he will call upon all his people to rejoice at it, whose shoutings on this occasion will be like those of persons that enter into a conquered city in triumph;

[which] hadst cast us off; who seemed in former times to have cast off his people, when they were killed all the day long; accounted as sheep for the slaughter; were slain in great numbers in the Low Countries; burnt here in England; massacred in France and Ireland: especially God seemed to have cast off his people, and to have had no regard to his interest, when antichrist so prevailed, that all the world wondered after the beast;

and [thou], O God, [which] didst not go forth with our armies: but suffered the antichristian beast to make war with the saints, and to overcome and kill them; and which was the case in many pitched battles with the Waldenses and Albigenses before the Reformation, and with the Protestants in Germany since. But this will not be always the case; he whose name is the Word of God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, will fight with the antichristian powers, and overcome them, and make his people more than conquerors over them; and his having formerly seemed to have cast them off, and not going forth with their armies, will serve as a foil to set off the glorious and complete victory that will at last be obtained.

Psalms 60:11

Ver. 11. Give us help from trouble,.... To have trouble is the common lot of all men, but especially of the people of God. They have some troubles which others have not, arising from indwelling sin, Satan's temptations, and the hidings of God's face; and as for outward troubles, they have generally the greatest share of them, which are certain to them by the appointment of God, and the legacy of Christ; though they are needful and for their good, and lie in their way to heaven. But perhaps here is particularly meant the time of trouble, which will be a little before the destruction of antichrist; which will be great, and none like it; will be the time of Jacob's trouble, though he shall be saved out of it, Jer 30:7. This will be the time of the slaying of the witnesses, the hour of temptation, that will try the inhabitants of the Christian world; and when the saints, as they do in all their times of trouble, will seek to the Lord for help, in whom it is, and who has promised it, and gives it seasonably, and which is owing wholly to his own grace and goodness; and therefore it is asked that he would "give" it;

for vain [is] the help of man: or "the salvation of man" {w}; man himself is a vain thing; vanity itself, yea, lighter than vanity; even man at his best state, and the greatest among men; and therefore it is a vain thing to expect help and salvation from men, for indeed there is none in them; only in the Lord God is the salvation of his people, both temporal and spiritual.

{w} Mda tewvt "salus hominis", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Psalms 60:12

Ver. 12. Through God we shall do valiantly,.... Or, "through the Word of the

Lord", as the Targum; Christ, whose name is the Word of God, appearing at the head of his armies, in a vesture dipped in blood, and with a sharp sword proceeding out of his mouth, will inspire his people to fight valiantly under him; and who, in his name and strength, will get the victory over all their enemies, the beast, false prophets, and kings of the earth, and all under them; see Re 19:11;

for he [it is that] shall tread down our enemies; as mire in the street, or as grapes in a winepress; even kings, captains, mighty men, and all the antichristian nations and states; the beast, false prophet, and Satan himself, Re 19:15; and so there will be an end of all the enemies of Christ and his people; after which they will spend an endless eternity together, in joy, peace, and pleasure. The victory is wholly ascribed to God the Word; it is not they that shall do valiantly, that shall tread down their enemies; but he by whom they shall do valiantly shall do it; even the mighty awh, "He", to whom was promised, in Eden's garden, the bruising the head of the serpent, and all enemies, **Ge 3:15**; and who has the same name here as there.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 61:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 61

To the chief Musician upon Neginah, [A Psalm] of David. "Neginah" is either the beginning of a song, as Aben Ezra; or the musical note or tune of one: or rather the name of a musical instrument, which was touched by the hand, or with a quill or bow. It is the singular of "neginoth", See Gill on "Ps 4:1". This psalm was written by David, when at the end of the earth, or land of Judea, as appears from Ps 61:2; either when he was fighting with the Syrians, as R. Obadiah, and so was composed about the same time with the former; or when he was in the land of the Philistines, being obliged to fly there from Saul, as Kimchi and others: or rather after he himself was king, since mention is made of the king in it; and when he fled from his son Absalom, and passed over to the other side of Jordan, and came to Mahanaim, 2Sa 17:22; where very probably he wrote this psalm. In it respect is had to the Messiah, as in Ps 61:2; though Arama thinks it was composed after the prophecy came to Nathan that David should not build the temple; see Ps 61:4.

Ver. 1. Hear my cry, O God,.... Being in distress; and which was vocally expressed with great fervency and importunity;

attend unto my prayer; which psalm was made by him, and not for him; inwrought in his heart by the Spirit of God, and put up by him with a true heart and full assurance of faith, and related to his own case in particular. Aben Ezra thinks that the former word designs public prayer, vocally and openly expressed; and that this intends prayer in the heart, or mental prayer; both the Lord hears and attends unto, and is here requested; which is marvellous grace and condescension in him.

Psalms 61:2

Ver. 2. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee,.... Where he now was, as is observed on the title, See Gill on "Ps 61:1": though he was distant from his own house, and from the house of God, he did not restrain prayer before him, but continued to cry unto him, and determined to do so; and as the people of God are sometimes forced to flee to distant parts, they have a God still to go to, who is a God afar off, as well as at hand. It may be the psalmist may represent the church in Gospel times, throughout the whole world, even at the further parts of it, in the isles afar off, where men may and do lift up holy hands to God without wrath and doubting:

when my heart is overwhelmed; or "covered" {x}; with grief and sorrow for any trouble, outward or inward, and ready to sink, and fail and die. Sometimes the saints are overwhelmed with a sense of sin, are pressed down with the weight and burden of its guilt; their faces are covered with shame and confusion; and their hearts are swallowed up and overwhelmed with overmuch sorrow, both at the number of their sins, and at the aggravated circumstances of them; and especially when they are without a view of pardoning grace and mercy, Ps 38:4 **La 3:42**; and sometimes they are overwhelmed with afflictive providences; the Lord causes all his waves and billows to go over them, and they are just ready to sink; and did he not stay his hand, and stop contending with them, the spirit would fail before him, and the souls that he has made, Ps 42:6; and sometimes with divine desertions, which cause a "deliquium" of soul, and throw them into fainting fits, **So 5:6**; and sometimes through unbelieving frames; and did not the Lord appear to them, and strengthen their faith, and remove their unbelief, they would sink and die away, Ps 77:2. And at all such times it is right to cry unto the Lord, and make the following request to him:

lead me to the rock [that] is higher than I; not the land of Israel, as Kimchi

thinks, the psalmist being now in the low lands of the Philistines; nor Jerusalem, and the fort and hill of Zion; he being now at the extreme and lower parts of the land: this sense is too low. Some think that some great difficulty is meant; which seemed insuperable, and like a rock inaccessible, which he could not get up to, and upon, and get over; and therefore desires the Lord would lead him up it, and over it, before whom every rock, mountain, and hill, becomes a plain, **Zec 4:7**; but rather Christ is meant, the Rock of Israel, the Rock of our salvation, and our refuge. He is higher than David, and all the kings of the earth; higher than the angels in heaven, and than the heavens themselves, **Heb 7:26**; and who by his height is able to protect and defend his people from all their enemies; and by the shade he casts to refresh and comfort them; and by the sufficiency in him to supply all their wants; for he is as a rock impregnable, and well stored,
Isa 33:16. And here gracious souls desire to be led by the Spirit of God always, and especially when in distressing circumstances; and he does lead them to his blood for pardon and cleansing, and to his righteousness for justification and acceptance with God, and to his fulness for fresh supplies.

{x} Pjeb "quum tegitur", Michaelis.

Psalms 61:3

Ver. 3. For thou hast been a shelter for me,.... Or "refuge" {y}, from avenging justice; a hiding place and covert from the storms and tempests of divine wrath; a shadow and a screen from the heat of Satan's fiery darts, and the blast of his terrible temptations,
Isa 25:4;

[and] a strong tower from the enemy: from Satan the devouring lion, from furious persecutors, and every other enemy; see Pr 18:10; and this experience the psalmist had of protection from the Rock in former times made him desirous of being led to it now.

{y} hoxm "asylum", Tigurine version, Vatablus; "perfagium", Cocceius; "refugium", Michaelis.

Psalms 61:4

Ver. 4. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever,.... Under the protection of the

Lord, as in a shepherd's tent, or as in one belonging to a general of an army, where are fulness and safety;
See Gill on "Ps 27:5"; or else the tabernacle of the congregation is meant; the house of God, the place of divine and public worship, where he desired and determined always to continue, Ps 23:6; or else the tabernacle which was prefigured by that below, where he knew he should dwell to all eternity. Kimchi, by "for ever", understands a long time; and Jarchi explains it both of this world and of the world to come; which is true, understanding the tabernacle of the church below, and the church above;

I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Or, "in" or "into the secret of thy wings" {z}; this he determined to make his refuge for the present time, and while in this world; See Gill on "Ps 57:1".

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{z} rtob "in abscondito", Pagninus, Montanus; "in occultum", Junius & Tremellius.

Psalms 61:5

Ver. 5. For thou, O God, hast heard my vows,.... Or "my prayers", as the Septuagint and other versions. Vows are so called, because it was usual to make vows in trouble, when prayer was made to the Lord for help and deliverance, Ps 66:13. This is a reason why the psalmist was encouraged to put his trust in the Lord, because his prayers were heard by him; or he was sure they would be, as he had entreated, Ps 61:1. The past is put for the future, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; and it may be because of the certainty of his prayers being heard; and which may be concluded from the Lord's declaring himself a God hearing prayer, from the prevalent mediation of Christ, from the assistance and intercession of the Spirit, and from the exercise of faith in prayer, and the divine promises; or while he was crying to God an answer was returned, and he was delivered out of his troubles, Isa 65:24. Another reason follows:

thou hast given [me] the heritage of those that fear thy name: not the land of Israel, as Aben Ezra and Jarchi; which was given for an inheritance to the posterity of Abraham, Ps 105:11; and which was never more fully in their possession than in the times of David: nor the tabernacle or sanctuary of the Lord, as Kimchi; where he desired to dwell, Ps 61:4; and now had his request granted: but the heavenly glory, the incorruptible inheritance, the inheritance of the saints in light, prefigured by them both; which is the gift of God their Father to them his children; comes to them through the death of Christ the testator; is not of the law, and the works of it; is not acquired nor purchased; but is owing to the free grace of God; to predestinating grace, as the source of it; to justifying grace, through the righteousness of Christ, as the right unto it; and to regenerating and sanctifying grace, as the meetness for it. Wherefore it manifestly belongs to those that "fear the name of the Lord", himself, his perfections, particularly his goodness; who adore and admire, serve and worship him, internally and externally; not with a slavish fear, but with a filial godly fear. The Targum renders it,

"thou hast given an inheritance to them that fear thy name;"

that in the King's Bible is,

"an inheritance in the world to come;"

so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and the Oriental versions; and which sense is given by Aben Ezra. It may be understood of them that fear the Lord, being the inheritance itself; as they are of Christ, David's son and antitype, and who is designed in Ps 61:6: see De 32:9 **Ps 2:8**.

Psalms 61:6

Ver. 6. Thou wilt prolong the King's life,.... Or "add days to the days of the King" {a}. Meaning either himself, who, though his life was in danger by fighting with the Syrians and Edomites, or rather through the conspiracy of his son; yet was assured that he should yet live many years more, and especially in his posterity; and that his kingdom would be established for ever, as was promised him, **2Sa 7:12**. Or rather the King Messiah, so the Targum: and Kimchi observes, that if this psalm respects the captivity, the King is the King Messiah: it may be understood of his life as man; who, though he died, rose again, and lives for evermore; and that, as to the glory of God the Father, so to the good of his people, for whom he makes intercession; and of the continuance of his spiritual seed, in whom he may be said to live, and his days be prolonged, Isa 53:10; and of the duration of his kingdom, of which there will be no end. For it is an everlasting one, as follows:

[and] his years as many generations; he living, and his posterity and kingdom

continuing, age after age. The Targum is,

"his years as the generations of this world, and the generations of the world to, come."

{a} Pyowt Klm ymy le Mymy "dies super dies regis adjicieo", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Psalms 61:7

Ver. 7. He shall abide before God for ever,.... Or "sit" {b}; or "may he sit". Being raised from the dead he was received up to heaven into the presence of God, and sat down at his right hand; where he abides for ever, a Priest upon his throne, having an unchangeable priesthood, **Heb 7:24**;

and prepare mercy and truth, [which] may preserve him; which, if literally understood of David, is a prayer that the Lord would show him favour and kindness, and perform his promises to him, whereby his life would be preserved from the plots and, conspiracies of his enemies, and his kingdom be established; or that he might be exalted to exercise mercy towards his subjects, and administer justice, or execute the judgment of truth among them; which would make for the preservation of his person, and the support of his throne and government, Pr 20:28. But as the words may be applied to the Messiah, they are to be understood, not of the preservation of his corporeal life while here on earth; but either of the preservation of his people, in whom he lives, through the mercy and truth of God, expressed in the exertion of his power, by which they are preserved unto the heavenly kingdom and glory; or of the security of his kingdom, which not being of this world, is not supported by worldly power and policy, but in a spiritual manner, and by spiritual means; such as mercy, or "grace and truth"; that is, the doctrines of grace and truth, which came by Christ, and are preached by his ministers, and are the means of continuing, promoting, and preserving his kingdom and interest in the world, Or the words may be rendered, "may mercy and the truth of manna keep thee"; the true manna, Christ; see **Joh 6:32**; or "mercy and truth, as the manna, keep thee" {c}; as that was kept in the golden pot, Ex 16:33; or rather as that kept and sustained the Israelites in the wilderness.

{b} bvy "sedebit", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Musculus, Cocceius, Michaelis; so Ainsworth; "vel sedeat", Vatablus, Gejerus, Amama. {c} Vid. Hackman. Praecidan. Sacr. tom. 1. p. 71.

Psalms 61:8

Ver. 8. So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever,.... Or constantly; and not only in this world, but in that to come, for the favours before mentioned; for hearing his prayers; giving him a goodly heritage; prolonging the King's life; and preparing mercy and truth to preserve him;

that I may daily perform vows; which is done by praising the Lord, giving him the glory of all mercies, as vowed and promised; see Ps 50:14. The Targum adds,

"in the day of the redemption of Israel, and in the day that the King Messiah shall be anointed, that he may reign."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 62:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 62

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, [A Psalm] of David. Concerning "Jeduthun", See Gill on "Ps 39:1", title. Kimchi thinks this psalm was written concerning the captivity; and Jarchi twtdh le, concerning the decrees and judgments made against Israel by their enemies; and so some of their ancient expositions {d}; but it seems to have been composed by David when in distress, either through Saul and his courtiers, or by reason of the conspiracy of Absalom. Theodoret takes it to be a prophecy of the persecution of Antiochus in the times of the Maccabees.

{d} Vid. Yalkut Simeoni in loc.

Ver. 1. Truly my soul waiteth upon God,.... In the use of means, for answers of prayer, for performance of promises, and for deliverance from enemies, and out of every trouble: or "is silent" {e}, as the Targum; not as to prayer, but as to murmuring; patiently and quietly waiting for salvation until the Lord's time come to give it; being "subject" to him, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; resigned to his will, and patient under his afflicting hand: it denotes a quiet, patient, waiting on the Lord, and not merely bodily exercise in outward ordinances; but an inward frame of spirit, a soul waiting on the Lord, and that in truth and reality, in opposition to mere form and show; and with constancy "waiteth", and "only" {f} on him, as the same particle is rendered in Ps 62:2; and so Aben Ezra here;

from him [cometh] my salvation; both temporal, spiritual, and eternal, and not from any creature; the consideration of which makes the mind quiet and easy under afflictive provide uses: the contrivance of everlasting salvation is from the Father, the impetration of it from the Son, and the application of it from the Spirit.

{e} hymwd "silet", Pagninus, Munster, Cocceius; "silens", Montanus, Tigurine version; so the Targum. {f} Ka "tantum", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus; "tantummodo", Junius & Tremellius, Schmidt.

Psalms 62:2

Ver. 2. He only [is] my Rock and my salvation,.... The Rock on which the church is built, and every believer; and which was David's safety, shelter, and shade, and which made him easy in his present state; and he was the author of his salvation, and the rock and strength of it,
Ps 95:1;

[he is] my defence; or refuge; see **Ps 9:9**;

I shall not be greatly moved; or "with much motion", as Kimchi; or "with great motions", as Jarchi: he could not be moved off of the rock on which he was built; nor out of the city of refuge, whither he had betook himself for safety; and though he might be troubled in spirit, and shaken in mind, and staggered in his faith, and fall from some degree of steadfastness of it; yet not fall so as to be utterly cast down, or finally and totally, and so as to perish eternally. Aben Ezra interprets it, "shall not be moved" into the great deep; into the abyss or bottomless pit; and so some of the ancient Midrashes expound hbd of "hell" {g}; but much better is the Targum,

"I shall not be moved in a day of great affliction;"

see Ac 20:23.

{g} Vid. Jarchi & Yalkut Simeoni in loc.

Psalms 62:3

Ver. 3. How long will ye imagine mischief against a man?.... Against a good man, as the Targum; or against any Israelite, as Kimchi; or rather he means himself, a single man, a weak man, and an innocent one; which aggravated their sin, in devising his hurt, and contriving ways to take away his life, as did Saul and his courtiers; and, Absalom, and those that were with him. R. Jonah, from the Arabic language, interprets the word here used of putting or drawing out the tongue to a great length; that is, multiplying words, as lies and calumnies, in agreement with Ps 62:4; but Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, explain it as we do, of devising mischief. The Targum is,

"how long do ye rage against a good man?"

Ye shall be slain all of you; this is a further aggravation of their folly, since it would issue in their own ruin; the mischief they devised for him would fall upon themselves. Some understand this
hlpt Krd, "by way of prayer"; as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech,

"may ye be slain all of you:"

there is a double reading of these words; Ben Napthali, who is followed by the eastern Jews, reads them actively, "ye shall slay"; with which agree the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and so the Targum,

"ye shall become murderers all of you."

Ben Asher, who is followed by the western Jews, reads passively as we do, "ye shall be slain"; and which is approved by Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and others;

as a bowing wall [shall ye be, and as] a tottering fence; which are easily and suddenly pushed down; and so these similes denote the easy, sudden, and certain destruction of those men; see Isa 36:13; though some connect the words with the men against whom mischief was imagined by his enemies, who was like a bowing wall and a tottering fence; and so are expressive of his weakness, and of the easy destruction of him; and read the words, "ye shall be slain all of you", in a parenthesis; but the former sense seems best.

Psalms 62:4

Ver. 4. They only consult to cast [him] down from his excellency,.... Either from the excellency of God, from his greatness, and from his height, as Kimchi; or from his grace, as the Arabic version: that is, they consulted to discourage him from looking to God, his rock and fortress, and from trusting in him; or rather, from his own excellency, from what high estate of dignity and honour he was advanced to, or designed for, namely his kingly office. Saul and his courtiers consulted how to prevent his coming to the throne, and Absalom and Ahithophel how to pull him down from it, and seize his crown and kingdom; which latter best agrees with the expression here;

they delight in lies; in making and in spreading them, in order to hurt his character, and give his subjects an ill opinion of him; and thereby alienate their affections from him, and weaken their allegiance and obedience to him; see Re 22:15;

they bless with their mouth: saying, God bless the king, or save the king:

but they curse inwardly; they curse the king in their hearts, and when by themselves in private, when they imagine nobody hears them; see Ec 10:20.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 62:5

Ver. 5. My soul, wait thou only upon God,.... Be silent and subject to him, acquiesce in his providences, rest in him patiently and quietly, wait for his salvation; See Gill on "Ps 62:1"; perhaps some new temptation might arise, and David's soul began to be uneasy and impatient; for frames are very changeable things; and therefore he encourages it to be still and quiet, and patiently wait on the Lord, and on him only:

for my expectation [is] from him; or "my hope", as the Targum; the grace of hope is from the Lord, and the thing hoped for is from him; he is the author and the object of it; and his word of promise encourages to the exercise of it; or "my patience"; as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions. The grace of patience is from the Lord; the means of it is his word; and it is exercised, tried, and increased by afflictions sent and sanctified by him; and "expectation" is nothing else than these graces in exercise, a waiting patiently for things hoped for Old Testament saints expected the first coming of Christ; New Testament saints expect his second coming; and all expect good things from him in time and eternity; nor shall their expectation fail and perish; and therefore is a reason why their souls should wait only on the Lord.

Psalms 62:6

Ver. 6. He only [is] my rock and my salvation,....
See Gill on "Ps 62:2";

[he is] my defence; these epithets of God are repeated, to strengthen his faith and hope in him, and to encourage a patient waiting upon him;

I shall not be moved; neither greatly, nor at all; his faith gets fresh strength and rigour, the more he considers God as his rock, salvation, defence, and refuge; See Gill on "Ps 62:2".

Psalms 62:7

Ver. 7. In God [is] my salvation,.... Or "upon God" {h}; he that is God over all has took it upon him to save me; he is the author of salvation to me; and it is in him safe and secure, and I shall be saved in him with an everlasting salvation:

and my glory; the author of all his temporal glory, honour, and dignity; and of all his spiritual glory, which lay in the righteousness of Christ put upon him, and in the grace of God wrought in him; and of the eternal glory he was waiting for; and besides, God was the object of his glorying, of whom he boasted, and in whom he gloried; see **Ps 3:3**;

the rock of my strength, [and] my refuge, [is] in God; not only his strength, as well as his righteousness and refuge; but the firmness and security of his strength were in God, who is the Rock of ages, in whom is everlasting strength.

{h} Myhla le "super Deo", Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "super Deum", Vatablus, Cocceius.

Psalms 62:8

Ver. 8. Trust in him at all times, [ye] people,.... Of the house of Israel, as the Targum; or of God, as Aben Ezra; all that are Israelites indeed, and are the Lord's covenant people; these are exhorted and encouraged to trust in him; not in a creature, nor in any outward thing, in riches, wisdom, strength, birth, privileges, the law, and the works of it; in their own righteousness, in their hearts, in themselves or in others; but in the Lord only, both for temporal and spiritual blessings: the Targum is, "in his Word"; his essential Word, by whom the world was made, and who, in the fulness of time, was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and who is a proper object of trust; in him should the people of God trust; in his person for acceptance with God, in his righteousness for justification, in his blood for pardon, in his grace for supply, and in his strength for support, deliverance, and salvation, and that "at all times": there is no time excepted; there is not a moment in which the Lord is not to be trusted in: he is to be trusted in in adversity as well as in prosperity; in times of affliction, when he is present, and will not forsake; in times of temptation, when his grace is sufficient for them; and in times of darkness, when he will arise and appear unto them;

pour out your heart before him: as Hannah did, **1Sa 1:15**; and as water is poured out, **La 2:19**; it means the desires of the heart, the complaints of the soul, the whole of their case which they should spread before the Lord, and make known unto him; see Ps 102:1, title, and #Ps 142: 2; the phrase denotes the abundance of the heart, and of its requests, and the freedom with which they should be made to the Lord; for through the blood and sacrifice of Christ a believer may come to the throne of grace with boldness and liberty, and there freely tell the Lord all his mind, and all that is in his heart;

God [is] a refuge for us; to whom the saints may have recourse in all their times of trouble, and where they find safety and plenty, Isa 33:16.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 62:9

Ver. 9. Surely men of low degree [are] vanity,.... Or "sons of Adam" {i}; of the earthly man; of fallen Adam; one of his immediate sons was called Hebel, "vanity"; and it is true of all his sons; but here it designs only one sort of them; such as are poor and low in the world; mean men, as the phrase is rendered in

Isa 2:9;
See Gill on "Ps 49:2"; these are subject to sinful vanity; their thoughts are vain, their affections vain, their minds vain, their conversation vain, sinful, foolish, fallacious, and inconstant. The wicked poor are, generally speaking, of all persons, the most wicked; and therefore, though they are the multitude, they are not to be trusted in. The Arabic version is, they are as a "shadow", fleeting and unstable, no solidity in them; the Syriac version, "as a vapour", that soon passeth away, like the breath of the mouth, and so not to be accounted of;

[and] men of high degree [are] a lie; or "sons of men"; of vya, "the great man" {k}, as it is rendered in **Isa 2:9**, noblemen, men of high birth, fortune, rank, and quality; these are a "lie", fallacious and deceitful: they talk of their blood, as if it was different from the rest of mankind; but, trace them up to their original, Adam, and it is a lie. All men are made of one blood, Ac 17:26; their riches promise them peace and pleasure, and long life, but do not give those things, Lu 12:16; their honour is fickle and inconstant; they are act in high places, and those are slippery ones; they are brought to desolation in a moment; and if they continue in them till death, their glory does not descend after them, Ps 49:17; they make promises of great things to those who apply to them, but rarely perform, and are by no means to be confided in. This distinction of high and low degree is observed in **Jas 1:9**;

to be laid in the balance, they [are] altogether [lighter] than vanity; take a pair of balances, and put men both of high and low degree together in one scale, and vanity in the other, vanity will weigh heaviest; the scale in which men are will go up, as the word {l} here used signifies: they are "in the balances to ascend"; or being put in the balances, they will ascend, and the scale in which vanity is will go down; for, take them altogether, they are "lighter" than that: the word "lighter" is not in the text, but is rightly supplied, as it is by Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech. This last clause, according to the accents, may be best rendered thus; being put "in the balance, they must ascend; they are [lighter] than vanity together". The Targum is,

"if they should take the sons of men in a balance, and weigh their fates, they themselves would be "lighter" than nothing, as one;"

or than vanity together.

{i} Mda ynb "filii Adam", Musculus, Michaelis; "nati plebeio homine", Junius & Tremellius; "plebeii", Gejerus; "sons of base men", Ainsworth. {k} vya ynb "nati praestante viro", Junius & Tremellius; "sons of noble men", Ainsworth.

Vid. Schindler. col. 214. {l} twlel "ascendant", Pagninus, Cocceius; so Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

Psalms 62:10

Ver. 10. Trust not in oppression,.... Either in the power of oppressing others; see Isa 30:12; or in riches gotten by oppression, which being put into a man's hand by his friend, he keeps, and will not return them; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it of mammon unlawfully obtained; mammon of unrighteousness, or unrighteous mammon; see
Jer 17:11;

and become not vain in robbery; in riches gotten by open rapine and theft; and men become vain herein when they boast of such riches, place their confidence in them, and think to make atonement for their sins by burnt sacrifices purchased with them, Isa 61:8;

if riches increase; in a lawful way, in such manner as the fruits of the earth do, as the word {m} used signifies: if they increase in great abundance from a little, as from one grain of corn many proceed; and insensibly, as the seed sown grows up, a man knows not how, through diligence and the blessing of God from heaven;

set not your heart [upon them]; your affections on them; they are ensnaring, they are apt to take the heart from God, to draw off the affections from Christ and things above, to choke the word, and lead into many temptations and harmful lusts; let not your hearts be elated, or lifted up with them; be not highminded, or filled with pride and vanity on account of them; nor put any trust in them, for they are uncertain things. Jarchi interprets it of the increase of the riches of others; see Ps 49:16.

{m} bwny "cum pullulaverit", Montanus; "efflorescunt", Cocceius; "germinant, fructificant", Amama.

Psalms 62:11

Ver. 11. God hath spoken once,.... One word of his is more to be confided in, and depended on, than all the men and things in the world. The meaning is not that God hath only spoke once; he has spoke often; he spoke all things out of nothing in creation; he spoke all the words of the law at Mount Sinai; he spoke by the prophets under the Old Testament dispensation, and by his Son in the last days, and still by the ministers of the Gospel: but the sense is, that what God has once spoken stands; it is irreversible and immutable; it is firm, sure, and unalterable; he does not repent, he cannot lie, nor will he alter the thing that is gone out of his lips; and therefore his word is to be trusted to, when men of high degree are a lie;

twice have I heard this; that is, many times, as Kimchi explains it: the Targum refers this, and the preceding clause, to the delivery of the law:

"one law God spake, and twice we heard it from the mouth of Moses the great scribe;"

but the meaning is, that the psalmist had heard of two things, and was well assured of the truth of them, and which were the foundation of his trust and confidence; one is mentioned in this verse and the other in
Ps 62:12; the first is,

that power [belongeth] unto God; great power, even almighty power, as appears from the creation of all things out of nothing, the preservation of them in their beings, the government of the world, the redemption of his people by Christ, the work of grace upon their hearts by his Spirit, the perseverance of the saints, their deliverance from their enemies, and the destruction of them. The ancient Cabalists {n} among the Jews have endeavoured, from this passage, to establish a Trinity in unity, they speak of

"three superior "Sephirot", or numbers; and of them it is said, "God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this": once and twice, lo, the three superior numbers, of whom it is said, one, one, one, three ones; and this is the meaning of "God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this; this" in it makes them one."

{n} Tikkune Zohar, Correct. 38. fol. 82. 1.

Psalms 62:12

Ver. 12. Also unto thee, O Lord, [belongeth] mercy,.... This is the other thing the psalmist had heard, and was assured of, and which encouraged his hope and trust in the Lord; that mercy belonged to him,
Ps 130:7; as appears, not only from the common bounties of his providence,

daily bestowed upon his creatures; but from the special gift of his Son, and of all spiritual mercies and blessings in him; from the regeneration of the Lord's people, the pardon of their sins, and their eternal salvation;

for thou renderest to every man according to his work; and which is a reason proving that both power and mercy belong to God; power in punishing the wicked according to their deserts, and mercy in rewarding the saints, not in a way of merit, or of debt, but of grace. Some interpret the words, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe, "though thou renderest", &c. that is, God is gracious and merciful, though he is also just and righteous in rendering to every man as his work is, whether it be good or evil.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 63:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 63

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. This psalm was composed by David, either when he was persecuted by Saul, and obliged to hide himself in desert places, as in the forest of Hareth, the wildernesses of Ziph, Maon, and Engedi, 1Sa 22:5; all which were in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:55; or when his son Absalom rebelled against him, which obliged him to flee from Jerusalem, and go the way of the wilderness, where Ziba and Barzillai sent him food, lest his young men that were with him should faint there,
2Sa 15:23. The Septuagint version, and those that follow that, call it the wilderness of Idumea, or Edom, as the Arabic version; and so the Chaldee paraphrase,

"in the wilderness which was on the border of the tribe of Judah;"

as Edom was, Jos 15:21; so the Messiah, David's son, was in a wilderness, where he was tempted by the devil, and where he was hungry and thirsty in a literal sense, as David was here in a spiritual sense, as the psalm shows, **Mt 4:1**; and the church of God, whom David sometimes represents, is said to be in a wilderness, where she is fed for a time, and times, and half a time, even during the whole reign of the antichristian beast, Re 12:14; and, indeed, all the saints are, at one time or another, in a desert condition, and while they are here are in the wilderness of the people, **Ho 2:14**.

Ver. 1. O God, thou [art] my God,.... Not by nature only, or by birth; not merely as an Israelite and son of Abraham; but by grace through Christ, and in virtue of an everlasting covenant, the blessings and promises of which were applied unto him; and he, by faith, could now claim his interest in them, and in his God as his covenant God; who is a God at hand and afar off, was his God in the wilderness of Judea, as in his palace at Jerusalem. The Targum is,

"thou art my strength;"

early will I seek thee; or "I will morning thee" {o}; I will seek thee as soon as the morning appears; and so the Targum,

"I will arise in the morning before thee;"

it has respect to prayer in the morning, and to seeking God early, and in the first place; see **Ps 5:3**; or "diligently" {p}; as a merchant seeks for goodly pearls, or other commodities suitable for him; so Aben Ezra suggests, as if the word was to be derived, not from
rxv, "the morning", but from rxo, "merchandise"; and those who seek the Lord both early and diligently shall find him, and not lose their labour, **Pr 2:4**;

my soul thirsteth for thee; after his word, worship, and ordinances; after greater knowledge of him, communion with him, and more grace from him; particularly after pardoning grace and justifying righteousness; see Ps 42:1; My flesh longeth for thee; which is expressive of the same thing in different words; and denotes, that he most earnestly desired, with his whole self, his heart, soul, and strength, that he might enjoy the presence of God;

in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; such was the wilderness of Judea, where he now was, and where he was destitute of the means of grace, of the ordinances of God's house, and wanted comfort and refreshment for his soul, which he thirsted and longed after, as a thirsty man after water in a desert place.

{o} Krxva "sub auroram quaero te", Piscator. {p} "Studiosissime", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 63:2

Ver. 2. To see thy power and thy glory,.... Either the ark, as the Jewish writers

generally interpret it; the symbol of God's presence and glory, and which is called his strength and his glory; see
Ps 78:61; or rather the Lord Christ, who is the power of God, as well as the wisdom of God; by whom he made the world, and upholds it; by whom he has redeemed his people, and keeps and preserves them; and whose power is seen in the efficacy of the word and ordinances: and who is also the glory of God; he is the brightness of his Father's glory; his glory is the glory as of the only begotten of the Father; he has the same glorious nature, perfections, names, homage, and worship; and the glory of all the divine attributes is displayed in the work of salvation and redemption he has wrought out; and this glory is to be seen, through the glass of the word and ordinances, in the house of God. Hence it follows;

so [as] I have seen thee in the sanctuary; where he comes and blesses his people, and manifests himself unto them, as he does not unto the world; where his goings are seen, and his footsteps traced, Ps 68:24. The psalmist calls to mind former experiences in the sanctuary; and these stimulate him to an eager desire of fresh tastes of the grace of God, and clearer views of his power and glory. Or, as in a dry and thirsty land my soul longed and thirsted for time, so have I desired to see thee in the sanctuary; or so I see thee there as if in the sanctuary.

Psalms 63:3

Ver. 3. Because thy lovingkindness [is] better than life,.... For life without the love of God is nothing else than death: a man that has no share in the love of God is dead while he lives; all the enjoyments of life, health, riches, honour, friends, &c. are nothing without the love of God; the meanest temporal blessings with it are preferable to the greatest without it, Pr 15:17; it lasts longer than life, and therefore must be better than that; death cannot separate from it; it continues to all eternity. And that the saints prefer it to this natural life appears by their readiness to lay it down for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, in which the lovingkindness of God is so richly manifested unto them; to which may be added, that it is the love of God which gives to his people spiritual life, and which issues in eternal life, and therefore must be better than a temporal one. The Targum is,

"for better is thy kindness, which thou wilt do for the righteous in the world to come, than the life which thou givest the wicked in this world;"

my lips shall praise thee; that is, for thy lovingkindness, and because it is better than life, and any enjoyment of it.

Psalms 63:4

Ver. 4. Thus will I bless thee while I live,.... With his whole heart and soul, as he had sought after him, and as under a sense of his lovingkindness; and as he now praised him with his lips, so he determined to do as long as he had life and being; by proclaiming his blessedness, by ascribing blessing and honour to him, and by giving him the glory of all mercies temporal and spiritual;

I will lift up my hands in thy name; not against his enemies, against those that fought against him, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, but unto God in heaven; and that not as a gesture used in swearing, but either in blessing, as Aben Ezra observes; so the high priest lifted up his hands when he blessed the people; or in prayer, or in both, so Jarchi's note is, to pray and to praise; See Gill on "Ps 28:2". The Targum is,

"in the name of thy Word I will spread out my hands in prayer for the world to come;"

that is, in the name of the Messiah, the essential Word, in whose name prayer is to be made, and whereby it becomes prevalent and successful; see Joh 14:13. This is a prayer gesture;
See Gill on "Ps 28:2".

Psalms 63:5

Ver. 5. My soul shall be satisfied as [with] marrow and fatness,.... When he should return to the house of the Lord, and partake of the provisions of it, called the fatness of his house,
See Gill on "Ps 36:8". The phrase denotes the abundance of spiritual refreshment and delight in the word and ordinances, and the great satisfaction had in them; and may have some regard to benefits arising from prayer, as well as other ordinances. Fat was not to be eaten under the legal dispensation, and therefore not to be literally taken; but in the typical and spiritual sense which David understood, and therefore respects that, or otherwise he would speak contrary to the law of God: he refers to those spiritual good things which they typified, and give spiritual pleasure and satisfaction;

and my mouth shall praise [thee] with joyful lips; such a full meal, such a rich entertainment, calls for abundant thankfulness; which is here signified by the mouth praising the Lord, and doing this with lips of shouting, expressions of joy, songs of praise, jubilee songs. The allusion is to the use of music and singing at festivals; see **Isa 5:12**.

Psalms 63:6

Ver. 6. When I remember thee upon my bed,.... Or "beds" {q}; seeing he lay in many, as Kimchi observes, being obliged to flee from place to place. The sense is, that when he was on his bed in the night season, when alone, and free from worldly cares and fatigues, and called to mind the love of God to him, the past experience of his kindness, his promises to hits, and the fulfilment of them: that he should then be delightfully entertained, abundantly satisfied, slid his mouth be filled with songs of praise;

[and] meditate on thee in the [night] watches; which the Jewish writers on the text say were three, as they were with the Jews, but with the Romans four; See Gill on "Mt 14:25"; and the night, in the times of Homer {r}, was divided into three parts: the night season is a very proper one for meditation on the perfections, providences, promises, word and works of God; and which is very delightful and profitable, when attended with the presence, Spirit, and grace of God. The Targum is,

"in the watches I will meditate on thy word."

{q} yewuy "stratis meis", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius; so Junius & Tremellius, Ainsworth. {r} Iliad. 10. v. 252, 253.

Psalms 63:7

Ver. 7. Because thou hast been my help,.... Or, "that thou hast been my help" {s}; and so the words may be considered as the subject of his meditation in the night watches, at least as a part of it; and as what gave him a great deal of pleasure to reflect upon, how the Lord had been in times past a present help to him in time of trouble;

therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice; meaning under the protecting power of God, where he knew he was safe, and therefore had reason to rejoice. The allusion is to the chirping of chickens under the wing of the hen; see Ps 57:1. The Targum is,

"in the shadow of thy Shechinah will I rejoice;"

referring it may be to the Shechinah, or presence of God, between the cherubim, whose wings overshadowed the mercy seat.

{s} yk "quod", Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 63:8

Ver. 8. My soul followeth hard after thee,.... In a way of duty, and in the use of means; as prayer, meditation, &c. though at a distance from the house of God, and worship of it; that he might not lose sight of him; that he might know more of him, and have more communion with him; being drawn after him with the cords of love, and strongly affected to him. Or, "my soul cleaveth after thee", or "to thee" {t}; not to the world, and the things of it; not to that which is evil, but to that which is good, even the "summum bonum"; not to the creature, but to the Lord; which is expressive of union to him, even such an one as is between man and wife, who cleave to each other, and are one flesh, **Ge 2:24**; and as is between head and members, vine and branches; see **1Co 6:17**; and of communion in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty. To cleave to the Lord into hold to him, the head; to exercise the graces of faith, hope, and love upon him; and to follow him in his ways and worship; to abide by his truths; to attend his ordinances; to keep close to his people, and to adhere firmly to his cause and interest; see Ac 11:23. The Targum is,

"my soul cleaveth after thy law;"

thy right hand upholdeth me; that he fell not through the snares laid for him, and the stumbling blocks thrown in his way; that he stood and bore up under all his afflictions, temptations, and difficulties; that he was enabled to follow hard after the Lord, and cleave unto him; this supported, supplied, and protected him, even the mighty power and grace of God. In what a happy, comfortable, and safe condition must the psalmist be! his soul following hard after the Lord; and the Lord holding and sustaining him with his right hand! and how vain must be the attempts of his enemies against him! whose destruction is next predicted.

{t} Kyrxa hqbd "adhaesit post te", Montanus, Gejerus; "tibi adhaesit", Tigurine version; so Piscator, Michaelis.

Psalms 63:9

Ver. 9. But those [that] seek my soul to destroy it,.... Meaning his life; for as for his soul, that was immaterial and immortal, and could never be destroyed by man: but as for his natural life, his enemies laid snares for that, and sought to take it away, and nothing less would satisfy them;

shall go into the lower parts of the earth; not the grave, whither the righteous go as well as the wicked; besides, by their being the portion of foxes, as follows, it seems that they should have no burial; but hell is meant, the bottomless pit. Some take it to be a prayer, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; "may they go", or "let them go", &c. see Ps 55:15. The allusion may be thought to be to the death of Korah and his company.

Psalms 63:10

Ver. 10. They shall fall by the sword,.... As Saul, his sons, and mighty men, did, 1Sa 31:4; or, "they shall make him pour out" {u}; that is, his blood, "by the hands" or "[means] of the sword"; meaning either some principal enemy, as Saul in particular, or everyone of his enemies; who should be thrust with the sword, their blood let out, and they slain: so antichrist, the enemy of David's son, will be put to death in this manner, Re 13:10;

they shall be a portion for foxes; falling in desolate places where foxes run, and so become the food of them, and have no other burial. The foxes hunt after dead carcasses, and will find them out where they are, in holes and ditches; as appears from the case of Aristomenes, related by Pausanias {w}: so the followers of antichrist, their flesh will be eaten by the fowls of heaven, Re 19:17.

{u} whrygy "fundere facient eum", Montanus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt. {w} Messenica, sive l. 4. p. 251.

Psalms 63:11

Ver. 11. But the king shall rejoice in God,.... Not Saul, as R. Obadiah; as if David wished him well, and that he might have reason to rejoice in God, though he sought his hurt; which sense is rejected by Abea Ezra: but either David, who speaks of himself as king, being anointed by Samuel, and who, upon the death of Saul, was so in fact; and who rejoiced, not merely at the destruction of his enemies, for he lamented the death of Saul, **2Sa 1:17**; but in God, in his grace and goodness to him, and in his power and justice shown in the vengeance taken on them. Or rather, the King Messiah, who rejoiced in God because of the good of his people, their conversion and salvation, and their deliverance from their enemies, Ps 21:1;

everyone that sweareth by him shall glory; not by David, though such a form of swearing was used; see 2Sa 15:21; or, "to him": and so describes his faithful subjects swearing allegiance to him: but rather by the Lord, in whom the king should rejoice; and designs the worshippers of him; swearing by him being sometimes put for the whole worship and service of God, **De 6:13**. The Heathens used to swear by their deities, and their chief was called Jupiter Horcius, because he presided over oaths {x}. Or else that the King Christ should rejoice in God; and intends such as believe in him and confess him; see Isa 45:23, compared with Ro 14:11. And every such an one will glory, not in themselves, nor in anything of theirs, but in Christ, in his grace and righteousness, and in what he is unto them;

but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped; such as Saul's courtiers, who invented and spread lies of David; but now upon the death of Saul, and David's advancement to the throne, would be silent; their mouths being stopped either by death, or through fear: and so all the followers of antichrist, that make and believe a lie, will have their mouths stopped, when cast into the lake of fire, Re 21:8.

{x} Euripidis Medea, v. 170. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 10.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 64:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 64

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. This psalm is applied by R. Obadiah to Haman and Mordecai. The enemy is Haman, the perfect man shot at is Mordecai; about whom Haman communed with his friends to lay snares for him, and searched diligently for occasions against him and his people, which issued in his own destruction. The ancient Midrash {y} of the Jews applies it to Daniel, when cast into the den of lions; and Jarchi supposes that David, by a spirit of prophecy, foresaw it, and prayed for him who was of his seed; and that everything in the psalm beautifully falls in with that account: Daniel is the perfect man aimed at; the enemy are the princes of Darius's court, who consulted against him, communed of laying snares for him, and gained their point, which proved their own ruin. But the psalm literally belongs to David, by whom it was composed. The Arabic versions call it a psalm of David, when Saul persecuted him; and the Syriac version refers it to the time when Gad said to him, abide not in the hold, 1Sa 22:5. He is the perfect man, who was upright and innocent as to what he was charged with in respect to Saul; who is the enemy, from the fear of whom he desires his life might be preserved; and who with his courtiers took counsel against him, and laid deep schemes to destroy him, but at last were destroyed themselves. Moreover, the psalm may very well be applied to the Messiah, the son of David, and who was his antitype, and especially in his sufferings: he is the perfect man in the highest sense; the Jews were the enemies that took counsel, and searched for occasions against him, and accomplished their designs in a good measure; for which wrath came upon them to the uttermost. The psalmist also may be very well thought to represent the church and people of God; who in all ages have had their enemies and their fears; against whom wicked men have devised mischief, and levelled their arrows of persecution; though no weapon formed against them shall prosper.

{y} Apud Jarchium & Yalkut Simeoni in loc.

Ver. 1. Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer,.... The prayer of the psalmist was vocal and expressed in a mournful manner, with groans and cries, as the word {z} used signifies, and with great ardour and fervency; his condition, by reason of his enemies, being very distressing, and therefore he is very eager and earnest that he might be heard;

preserve my life from fear of the enemy; David had his enemies. Saul and his courtiers, and was afraid of them; Christ had his enemies the wicked Jews, who sought his life before the time, and therefore he walked no more in Judea till near the time; and whose human nature was sometimes possessed of the fears of death, though they were sinless ones: the church and people of God have their enemies; as the men of the world, who revile, reproach, and persecute them; Satan their adversary, who goes about seeking to devour them; and their own corruptions and lusts which war against their souls; and death, the last enemy, which is so to human nature, though by the grace of Christ friendly to the saints. And the people of God have their fears of these enemies; they are afraid of men, their revilings and persecutions, though they have no reason since God is on their side; and of Satan, whose fiery darts and buffetings are very distressing, though if resisted he will flee; and of their own corruptions, lest they should one day perish by them; or, at least, lest they should break out, to the wounding of their souls, and the dishonour of God: and some of them, through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage: which fears, though they are not the saints' excellencies, but their infirmities, yet are consistent with the grace of God; and under the power and influence of these fears they apprehend sometimes their life to be in danger; and therefore pray to the God of their life, who has given them it, and is the preserver of it, that he would preserve their natural life, as he does; as also their spiritual life, which is preserved by him; is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord their God, and is hid with Christ in God.

{z} yxyvb "in querimonia mea", Tigurine version; "in oratione mea gemebunda", Gejerus; so Michaelis.

Psalms 64:2

Ver. 2. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked,.... The word used denotes both the place where wicked men meet together for consultation; see Ge 49:6; and the counsel itself they there take; from the bad effects of which the psalmist desired to be hid and preserved. So Saul and his courtiers secretly took counsel against David, and the Jews against Christ, and that very privily and secretly; see Mt 26:3;

from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity; their noise, rage, and tumult; see **Ps 2:1**. The former phrase denotes their secret machinations and designs, and this their open violence; and the persons that entered into such measures are no other than evildoers and workers of iniquity; though they might be under a profession of religion, as David's enemies, and the Jews, who were Christ's enemies, were, **Mt 7:22**; and who are further described in the next verses.

Psalms 64:3

Ver. 3. Who whet their tongue like a sword,.... Use cutting, wounding, killing, and devouring words; on which they set an edge, and make them keener and keener to hurt and ruin the characters and reputations of good men, and grieve and distress their minds;

[and] bend [their bows to shoot] their arrows, [even] bitter words; such are the these doctrines of heretical men, which are roots of bitterness, that defile some and trouble others; such are the oaths and curses of profane sinners, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness; and such are the blasphemies of antichrist against God, against his tabernacle, and against them that dwell therein; and such are the hard speeches spoken by ungodly sinners against Christ and his people; these are like arrows shot from a bow, and full of deadly poison. The Targum is

"they stretch out their bows, they anoint their arrows with deadly and bitter poison."

There seems to be an allusion to fixing letters in arrows, and so shooting or directing them where it was desired they should fall and be taken up; so Timoxenus and Artobazus sent letters to one another in this way, at the siege of Potidaea {a}: and after the same manner, the Jews say {b}, Shebna and Joab sent letters to Sennacherib, acquainting him that all Israel were willing to make peace with him; but Hezekiah and Isaiah would not allow them to.

{a} Herodot. Urania, sive l. 8. c. 128. {b} Derash R. Aba in Kimchi in Psal. xi. 2.

Psalms 64:4

Ver. 4. That they may shoot in secret at the perfect,.... Meaning himself, who though not without sin, and far from perfection in himself, in the sight of God and with respect to his righteous law, which was exceeding broad; and therefore he saw an end of all perfection, and desired that God would not enter into judgment with him; but yet, in the case of Saul, he was quite clear and innocent, and without fault. Likewise the Messiah, of whom David was a type, may be meant; who has all the perfections of the divine and human nature in him, and is without sin, holy, harmless, pure, and undefiled: and it may be applied to the church and people of God, who, though they are not perfect in themselves, far from it, sin being in them, and their graces weak; unless it be in a comparative sense; yet they are perfect in Christ Jesus, their souls being clothed with his righteousness, and so are the spirits of just men made perfect. And this character may also respect the truth and sincerity of grace in them, and the uprightness of their hearts and conversation; and such as these wicked men level their arrows at, and direct their spite and venom against, and that in the most private and secret manner;

suddenly do they shoot at him; as unseen by him, so unawares to him;

and fear not; neither God nor judgment to come. Though some understand this of the perfect who, though shot at in this manner are intrepid and courageous, and have no fear of their enemies; but the former sense seems best, which describes persons that neither fear God, nor regard man.

Psalms 64:5

Ver. 5. They encourage themselves [in] an evil matter,.... Or "strengthen him" {c}; that is, Saul, by making use of arguments and reasonings to induce him to go on in his wicked persecution of David; or they strengthened and hardened themselves in their wickedness, as Saul's courtiers and the enemies of Christ did, and as all wicked men do, when they observe the sentence against them is not speedily executed, **Ec 8:11**;

they commune of laying snares privily; that is, they conversed together, and consulted how to lay snares for the perfect man in the most private manner, that they might entrap him and destroy him;

they say, who shall see them? either the snares laid, or the persons that laid them? None; no, not even God himself; see Ps 10:11.

{c} wml wqzhy "firmant illi", Muis.

Psalms 64:6

Ver. 6. They search out iniquities,.... The Targum adds,

"to destroy the just."

Either occasions against them, by charging them with sin and hiring false witnesses against them, as did the enemies both of David and Christ; they sought for proper time and opportunity of committing the iniquities they were bent upon, and even searched for new sins, being inventors of evil things, **Ro 1:30**;

they accomplish a diligent search; diligently searched out the perfect man, and found him; and also false witnesses against him, and carried their point; which was especially true with respect to Christ;

both the inward [thought] of everyone [of them], and the heart, [is] deep; being full of cunning, craftiness and wickedness, so as not to be searched out and fully known; see **Ps 5:9**.

Psalms 64:7

Ver. 7. But God shall shoot at them [with] an arrow,.... With one or other of his four judgments; famine, pestilence, sword, and wild beasts, Eze 14:21; which he brings upon wicked men; and may be compared to arrows, as they are, **Eze 5:16**; because they move swiftly. The judgment of wicked men lingereth not, though it may seem to do so; and because they often come suddenly and at an unawares, when men are crying Peace, peace; and because they are sharp and piercing, penetrate deep and stick fast, and wound and kill; they are not arrows of deliverance, unless to the Lord's people, who, by his judgments on the wicked, are delivered from them; but destroying ones, 2Ki 13:17; when God draws the bow and shoots, execution is done. This is said in opposition to what wicked men do, Ps 64:3; and in just retaliation; they shoot at the perfect, and God shoots at them;

suddenly shall they be wounded; with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, with a deadly wound that shall never be healed; not with the arrow of God's word, but with the stroke of his hand; which comes suddenly, falls heavy, and makes the wound incurable.

Psalms 64:8

Ver. 8. So shall they make their own tongue to fall upon themselves,.... The evil things they have wished for, threatened unto, and imprecated on others, shall come upon themselves; the curses they have cursed others with shall come upon themselves; the pit they have dug for others, they fall into. So

Haman, to whom some apply the psalm, was hanged on the gallows he made for Mordecai; and the accusers of Daniel, to whom others apply it, were cast into the same den of lions they procured for him; and Babylon, who has been drunk with the blood of the saints, shall have blood given her to drink.

all that see them shall flee away; not being able to help them, nor to bear the horrible sight, and fearing the same judgments should fall on themselves; see Nu 16:34. Or, "they shall move themselves" {d}; shake their heads in a way of derision, as Jarchi interprets it; or skip for joy, as the word is rendered in Jer 48:27; and then it must be understood of the righteous; who, seeing the vengeance on the wicked, rejoice, as in Ps 52:6; though, as they are afterwards particularly mentioned, others seem to be designed. The word is used for lamenting and bemoaning one's self, in Jer 31:18; and so may be applied to the friends of the wicked lamenting and bemoaning their ruin, and their being bereaved of them, Re 18:9.

{d} wrdwnty "amovebunt se", Montanus; "commovebuntur", Vatablus.

Psalms 64:9

Ver. 9. And all men shall fear,.... Either God himself, or his judgments: they shall be frightened at them, learn righteousness by them, worship God, and give glory to him; they shall fear him as King of saints, his judgments being made manifest; not with a slavish fear, but with reverence and godly fear; see Re 11:13;

and shall declare the work of God; the punishments inflicted on wicked men; his work of justice and judgment, which is his work, his strange work; for there is no evil of punishment but the Lord has done it, Isa 28:21;

for they shall wisely consider of his doings; consider that it is done by him, and done well and wisely, after the counsel of his own will; and so consider it as to be admonished, and take warning and caution by it. This is the use men in general should make of such dispensations of Providence; the use the righteous in particular make of them follows:

Psalms 64:10

Ver. 10. The righteous shall be glad in the Lord,.... They rejoice at the vengeance executed on the wicked; but then their joy centres in the Lord: it is not at the ruin of the wicked, simply considered, but because of the glory of God's justice displayed therein, and of his grace and mercy to them. They rejoice in the Lord, because of what he is unto them, and because of what he has done for them; because of his righteousness they are clothed with, from whence they are denominated righteous ones; and because of the salvation he has wrought out for them; and they are the more affected with it when they see the calamities, woes, and destruction of wicked men; See Gill on "Ps 32:11";

and shall trust in him; who is known by his judgments he executes on the wicked; and the more he is known, be it in what way it will, the more is he trusted in, **Ps 9:10**. The Targum paraphrases it,

"and shall trust in his Word;"

either in his word of promise, or rather in his essential Word, Christ;

and all the upright in heart shall glory; not in men, nor in themselves, nor in any creature, or creature enjoyments; nor in their wisdom, strength, riches, nor righteousness; but in Christ, in his wisdom, righteousness, and strength; in whom all the seed of Israel are justified and glory; and in what he is to them, and has done for them; of the upright in heart, See Gill on "Ps 32:11".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 65:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 65

To the chief Musician, A Psalm [and] Song of David. Some copies of the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions read

"a song of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, "sung" by the people of the captivity, when they were about to come out;"

and some copies have "Haggai": but though it is possible it might be sung upon that occasion, it is certain it was not then composed, but was written by David, as the genuine title shows: as for Jeremiah; he was not carried captive to Babylon, and Ezekiel died before the return of the people from it; nor is there anything in the psalm relating to that captivity. The title of it, indeed, in the Arabic version, is concerning the captivity of the people; which it seems to have taken from some Greek copy; and Kimchi and Arama interpret it of the captivity of the people of the Jews; but then they mean their present captivity, and their deliverance from it. According to the title of it in the Syriac version, the occasion of it was the bringing up of the ark of God to Sion; and Aben Ezra is of opinion that David composed the psalm at that time; or that one of the singers composed it at the building of the temple, and which he thinks is right, and perhaps is concluded from Ps 65:1; and who also says it was composed in a year of drought; but it rather seems to have been written in a year of great plenty, as the latter part of it shows; and the whole seems to respect the fruitful, flourishing, and happy state of the church in Gospel times, for which it is a song of praise.

Ver. 1. Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion,.... Who dwells in Sion, as Jarchi interprets it; and so the Targum; whose Shechinah, or glorious Majesty, is in Sion; see Ps 76:2; or else Sion, which designs no other than the church of God, and which is so called under the Gospel dispensation, Heb 12:22; is the place where "praise" waits for God, that being the city of our solemnities, as well as the city of the great King; and not only a house of prayer, but of praise, where the sacrifices, both of prayer and praise, are offered to God through Christ with acceptance: and praise may be said to "wait" for him here, because it is "due" to him here, as some render it, on account of many blessings and privileges of grace here enjoyed, through the word and ordinances; and because the people of God wait upon him here with their tribute of praise, which is comely in them to bring, and is "agreeable" and acceptable to him; and because it "remains", abides, and continues here; or, in other words, the saints are continually praising the Lord here, giving thanks to him always for all things, Ps 84:4; some render the words "praise [is] silent for thee" {e}; because there is no end of it, as Jarchi observes; or, because of the greatness of the works of the Lord, praise cannot reach him, as Ben Melech expresses it. The greatest shouts, and loudest acclamations of praise, are but silence in comparison of what ought, if it could be expressed, on account of the nature, perfections, and works of God. The Targum is,

"before thee praise is reputed as silence."

In the king of Spain's Bible it is,

"the praise of angels is reputed before thee as silence;"

perhaps it may be best rendered, "[to] thee [belong]", or "[are due], silence

[and] praise" {f}: there ought to be first a silent and quiet waiting upon God for mercies wanted, and which he has promised to give; and, when they are bestowed, praise should be rendered unto him. Gussetius {g} gives the sense of the words, and renders them,

"praise, which is thine image, which bears a likeness to thee shall be paid in Sion;"

and unto thee shall the vow be performed: that is, of praise and thankfulness for deliverance and salvation, made in a time of trouble and distress; see Ps 66:13.

{e} hlht hymd Kl "tibi silet laus", Pagninus, Vatablus. {f} "Tibi silentium est et laus", Piscator, Gejerus. {g} Ebr. Comment. p. 193.

Psalms 65:2

Ver. 2. O thou that hearest prayer,.... So as to answer it sooner or later, in one way or another, and always in the fittest time, and in the best way; so as to fulfil the requests and supply the wants of men, so far as may be for their good, and God's glory; which is a proof of the omnipresence, omniscience, and all sufficiency of God; who can hear the prayers of his people in all places at the same time, and knows all their persons and wants, and what is most proper for them, and can and does supply all their needs, and causes all grace to abound towards them; and it also shows his wondrous grace and condescension, to listen to the cries and regard the prayers of the poor and destitute;

unto thee shall all flesh come; being encouraged by the above character of him. All sorts of persons may come to him; men of all nations, of every rank and degree, condition and circumstance; there is no bar unto nor bounds about the throne of grace; the way to it lies open through the Mediator; and all sensible sinners shall and do come thither, though they are but "flesh", frail and mortal, corrupt and sinful creatures, and know themselves to be so; and they that come aright come through Christ, the new and living way, in his name, and in the faith of him, and of being heard for his sake, and under the gracious influences of the spirit of grace and supplication: it may be considered as a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles, and of their calling upon God through Christ, and of their coming to God in his house, which was to be, and is, an house of prayer to all people,
Isa 56:7.

Psalms 65:3

Ver. 3. Iniquities prevail against me,.... Or, "are mightier than I" {h}; this may be understood either of the iniquities of others, his enemies; their "words of iniquities" {i} or iniquitous words, as in the Hebrew text; their calumnies, reproaches, false charges, and accusations, which prevailed against David in Saul's court; or rather his own iniquities, inward lusts, indwelling sins, as well as open transgressions, which he considers as his enemies, as numerous and powerful, too mighty for him, which warred against him, and sometimes got the better of him, and threatened him with utter ruin and destruction; but amidst all this he spies atonement and pardon through the blood and sacrifice of Christ, as follows;

[as for] our transgressions, thou shall purge them away; not only his own, but others, which Christ has done by the sacrifice of himself; and when his blood is applied to the conscience of a sensible sinner, it purges it from all his sins, **Heb 1:3**; it may be rendered, "thou shall expiate them", or "make atonement for them" {k}; which Christ, our propitiation, has done: this was the work appointed him, which he undertook, came into the world to do, and has performed, **Da 9:24** **Heb 2:17**; or "thou shalt cover them"; with the blood and righteousness of Christ; or forgive them for the sake of them, Ps 32:1.

{h} ynm "prae me", Muis, Michaelis. {i} tnwe yrbd "verba iniquitatum", Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth. {k} Mrpkt "propitiaberis", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "expiabis", Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 65:4

Ver. 4. Blessed [is the man whom] thou choosest,.... In eternity; both to grace and glory; for such have true faith in Christ given them, called the faith of God's elect, and shall never perish: they are effectually called by the grace of God, and are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and shall be glorified; or in time, for there is a choice in time, as the fruit, effect, and evidence of the eternal choice, and is no other than effectual calling; see Joh 15:19 **1Co 1:26**; and happy are those who are both chosen and called; both election and the effectual calling are to grace and glory, and spring from the good will and pleasure of God; and the Targum in the king of Spain's Bible is,

"blessed is the man in whom thou art well pleased;"

and causest to approach [unto thee]; the same Targum supplies,

"unto the fear of thee;"

or unto thy fear and worship. The persons whom God has chosen for himself are, in their state of nature, at a distance from him by reason of sin; and through the blood and sacrifice of Christ, by which atonement is made, they are brought nigh to him; and in the faith of Christ the Mediator, their hearts are engaged to approach unto God, and come with boldness to his throne, and ask grace and mercy of him; and through the grace of Christ they have nearness to him, and communion with him, **Eph 2:18**;

[that] he may dwell in thy courts; or "he shall dwell" {l}; the man that is chosen of God, and brought nigh by Christ; he shall not only come into the house of God, and tread in his courts, but he shall dwell there, ever abide, and never go out;

we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house; even all that are like this man, chosen by the grace of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, brought into the house of God, and have a place and a name there, better than that of sons and daughters of men: by "the house" of God we are to understand the church of God; and by "the goodness" of it the provisions of grace in it, the word and ordinances, and the blessings of grace held forth in them, and especially Christ the bread of life, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed; of which true believers may eat, and do to full satisfaction; and blessed are they that have such food, and appetites for it, and are filled with it. The Targum paraphrases it,

"the righteous shall say, we shall be satisfied with the goodness of shy house."

It follows,

[even] of thy holy temple: which means the same as the house of God; namely, the church; see **Eph 2:21**. Some, as Aben Ezra observes, interpret it, "thou Holy One in thy temple"; as if it was an address to God, and a description of him as in his temple.

{l} Nkvy "habitabit", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Musculus.

Psalms 65:5

Ver. 5. [By] terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us,.... Not by afflictive dispensations of Providence, which, though disagreeable to flesh and blood, and are sometimes terrible to good men, when they apprehend the wrath of God in them, and look upon them as punishments for sin; yet these are consistent with the love of God to them, are for their spiritual good, and, when viewed in this light, they rejoice and glory in them; but as afflictions are not prayed for, nor to be prayed for, there being no direction for it, nor example of it, they cannot be considered as answers of prayer; but the Lord answers his people in this way, by inflicting judgments on their enemies: by such terrible things did he answer the Israelites at the Red sea, in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan, De 10:17; and in this way will he answer his people in the destruction of antichrist and his followers, **Re 6:9**. Moreover, by "terrible things" may be meant things stupendous, marvellous, and even miraculous; and by such things does God sometimes answer his people, in destroying their enemies and saving them; and which are so called, because they inject horror and terror into their enemies, and fill them with fear and reverence of God: and which are done "in righteousness"; in faithfulness to his promises made to his people; in the exercise of his vindictive justice upon their enemies; in goodness, grace, and mercy to them, as "righteousness" sometimes signifies, as in Ps 51:14; and not for their righteousness, who do not present their supplications to him for the sake of that; but for the righteousness of his Son, for the sake of which they are heard and answered;

O God of our salvation: not only temporal, but spiritual and eternal; which he has resolved upon, and chose his people to, and has settled the way and manner of, in which it should be brought about; has secured it in covenant for them, promised it in his word, sent his Son to obtain it, and his Spirit to give knowledge and make application of it; and from this character of his, and the concern he has in salvation, it may be concluded he will answer the prayers of his people for their good;

[who art] the confidence of all the ends of the earth; of all that dwell upon the continent, to the uttermost parts of the habitable world;

and of them that are afar off [upon] the sea: not only in ships upon the sea, but upon islands in the sea; and so the Targum, "and of the islands of the sea, which are afar off from the dry land;"

and Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it in the same manner; such snare the isles in which we live: this seems to refer to Gospel times, in which the Lord is not only the "confidence" or "hope of Israel", but of the Gentiles also; who are encouraged to hope in the Lord, and put their confidence in him, seeing with him there is forgiving mercy, and plenteous redemption; hath appointed Christ to be his salvation to the ends of the earth; has sent his Gospel into all the world declaring this; and Christ in it encourages all the ends of the earth to look unto him for salvation; and multitudes upon the continent, and in different isles, have been enabled to hope in him.

Psalms 65:6

Ver. 6. Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains,.... In the first creation and formation of them, when they were settled on their basis so firmly that they are rarely removed, and when they are it is something extraordinary. Some understand this of the Lord's preparing the mountains with the rain of his strength, for the bringing forth of herbs and grass for the service of man and beast, and of his adorning them with trees; and the Targum is,

"who preparest food for the wild goats of the mountains;"

others interpret them of kingdoms and communities, comparable to mountains, Jer 51:25; but these are not set fast, they are not firm and stable, but in a course of time are removed, and give way to others; rather the church of God is meant; see **Isa 2:2**; where the same phrase is used as here; and "mountains" may signify particular churches, or indeed particular believers; for all that trust in the Lord are like to mountains, Ps 125:1; and these are set fast in the everlasting love of God, by which their mountain is made to stand strong; in eternal election, which is the foundation of God that stands sure; in the covenant of grace, which is more immovable than hills and mountains; and on Christ the Rock, against whom the gates of hell can never prevail; and who are so established, settled, and kept by the power of God, that they cannot be removed by the most boisterous storms and winds of the world's persecutions, Satan's temptations, or their own sins and corruptions;

[being] girded with power: not the mountains, but God himself; whose power, like himself, is infinite, and appears in the works of his hands, of nature,

providence, and grace: the allusion is to a mighty man girded for battle; or for the performance of great undertakings.

Psalms 65:7

Ver. 7. Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves,.... By a word speaking; as our Lord did when here on earth, and which was a proof and evidence of his eternal power and Godhead. These figurative expressions are interpreted by the next clause;

and the tumult of the people: of wicked men, who foam and rage against the people of God, and are like a troubled sea that cannot rest; but God can say to these proud waters, which threaten to go over their souls, Peace, be still; he can stop their opposition, quell their insurrections, restrain their wrath, and make them peaceable and quiet; wherefore the saints have no reason to be afraid of them,
Ps 46:2.

Psalms 65:8

Ver. 8. They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens,.... The tokens of his wrath and displeasure at wicked men, seen in the punishments inflicted on them, which cause them to fear and tremble. Some interpret them of the sun, moon, and stars, which are set for "signs", as the word {m} used signifies; and which declare the glory of God to the uttermost parts of the earth, and strike men with awe and reverence of him; and others of thunder and lightning, which are sometimes very dreadful and terrible. Moreover, the word {n} signifies signs and wonders, marvellous things, miraculous operations; and may be understood of those that were wrought in the first times of the Gospel, for the confirmation of it; some of which were wrought in the uttermost parts of the earth; or, however, were heard of there, and believed; which caused them to receive the Gospel with all reverence, not as the word of man, but as the word of God;

thou makest the outgoings of the morning and of the evening to rejoice; some interpret this of the morning and evening sacrifices; others of the sun that goes forth in the morning, and rejoices as a strong man to run his race, and of the moon and stars that appear in the evening, and both give pleasure and delight to the inhabitants of the earth; others of men who go forth in the morning cheerfully to their labour, and of the beasts that go out in the evening to seek their prey, Ps 19:5; but it seems better to understand it of the rising of the stars before the sun in the morning, and the appearance of them after the moon is up in the evening; or of the rising and setting sun; of the east and west, which include the whole world, and the inhabitants of it; who are made to rejoice at the coming of the Gospel among them, which rings the good news and glad tidings of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation, by Christ, whereby his name becomes great, and is praised among the Gentiles; see **Mal 1:11**.

{m} Kyttwam "a signis tuis", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {n} "A signis et prodigiis tuis", Michaelis.

Psalms 65:9

Ver. 9. Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it,.... So the Lord looked upon the earth, quickly after its formation, before rain came upon it, and he watered the whole face of the ground, **Ge 2:5**; so he cared for the land of Judea in particular, and watered it with the rain of heaven, De 11:11; see 2Sa 21:1; to which some think reference is had here; and so he visits and waters the whole earth in general, at certain times and seasons, Ac 14:16; this may be applied to the church and people of God in Gospel times, who are his husbandry, and the good ground on which the seed falls and is received, and brings forth fruit; and are comparable to the earth that drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it, and brings forth herbs meet for those that dress it, and receives a blessing from God, **Heb 6:7**; thus the Lord visited his people, by the mission of his Son to redeem them, whose coming was as the rain, the former and latter, to the earth, **Lu 1:68**; so he visited the Gentile world, by the preaching of the Gospel by his apostles, whose doctrines dropped as the rain, and distilled as the dew and small rain on the tender herb, and as showers on the grass; and so made a wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water, Ac 15:14; and in like manner he visits particular persons in conversion, and waters them with the graces of his Spirit, by which he regenerates, quickens, and sanctifies them, and makes them fruitful, Isa 44:3;

thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, [which] is full of water; not Shiloah nor Jordan; but the clouds which are full of rain, which falling upon the earth, impregnate it with rich particles, which make it very fertile and fruitful; so the Targum,

"with a multitude of fruits thou enrichest it out of the river of God, which is in heaven, which is full of rain:"

this may mystically denote the river of God's everlasting love, which is full of the blessings of grace, and which flowing upon his people, makes them fruitful, and enriches them with the riches of grace and glory; see Ps 46:4;

thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it; or because thou hast so prepared it {o}; that is, the earth being disposed and prepared by the Lord, watered and enriched with the rain of heaven, produces corn in great plenty for the inhabitants of the earth; which may spiritually design either the fruitfulness of the saints, whose hearts are disposed and prepared by the grace of God to receive the seed of the word, which brings forth fruit in them; or the bread corn, that wheat of the Gospel, and Christ the sum and substance of it, which is of God's preparing for his people, and by which they are nourished and made comfortable; see **Zec 9:17**.

{o} hnybt Nk yk "quia sic parasti eam", Pagninus; so Cocceius.

Psalms 65:10

Ver. 10. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly,.... Kimchi calls them the eminences of the earth, the little hills, the higher parts of ploughed land; those which lie between furrow and furrow seem to be meant, which being watered with rain become lower, and are made fruitful: these may denote such as are lifted up with their own imaginary purity and righteousness; and who, when the grace of God takes hold upon them, are humbled, and confess themselves the chief of sinners and the least of saints, renounce their own righteousness, and submit to Christ's;

thou settlest the furrows thereof; or "thou causest [the rain] to descend into the furrows thereof" {p}; which fills them, and makes them fruitful; and may design humble souls, whom the Lord fills with his good things, and makes them fruitful in every good work;

thou makest it soft with showers; which through drought is become like iron and brass, and, without large and heavy showers, as the word {q} used signifies, and these repeated, it is so hard, that no impressions can be made upon it, nor anything spring out of it; and such is the hard heart of man, which God only can make soft by the means of his word, through the energy of his Spirit, and the efficacy of his grace; which coming in great abundance, like large showers of rain, removes the hardness of the heart, makes it susceptible of divine impressions, and of receiving the seed of the word, whereby it becomes fruitful;

thou blessest the springing thereof; the tender blade, when it first peeps out of the earth; this the Lord nourishes and cherishes; he preserves it from the nipping frosts, by covering it with snow; he waters it with the dews of heaven, and warms it with the beams of the sun; he causes it to grow, and brings it to perfection: so the Lord takes great notice of the springing and buddings forth of grace, of the first acts and exercises of it in young converts, and takes care of them; and as he will not hurt them himself, nor break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax; so he takes care that others should not; see **So 6:11**; he gives them more grace, and strengthens what they have; causes it to grow, and brings it on to perfection. The word here used is the same by which Christ, the branch, is expressed, **Zec 3:8**; and as the Lord has blessed him with the blessings of goodness, so he blesses all the branches which are in him, Joh 15:4 **Eph 1:3**.

{p} hydwdg txn "descendere facis pluviam in sulcos ejus", Vatablus. {q} Mybybrb "guttis grandioribus", Piscator.

Psalms 65:11

Ver. 11. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness,.... The whole circling year, from one end of it to the other; particularly that season of it when the harvest is gathered in; the seed being sown, the earth watered, the springing of it blessed, and the corn brought to perfection, the year is crowned with a plentiful harvest: this may denote the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of the redeemed, the whole Gospel dispensation, Isa 61:2; in certain seasons and periods of which there have been great gatherings of souls to Christ; at the first of it multitudes were converted in Judea, and in the Gentile world, which were the first fruits of the Spirit; and in all ages there have been more or less instances of this kind; and in the latter day there will be a large harvest, when the Jews will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in;

and thy paths drop fatness; the heavens, as Jarchi interprets it; or the clouds, as Kimchi; which are the chariots and horses of God, in which he rides, and are the dust of his feet, Ps 104:3 **Na 1:3**; and these drop down rain upon the earth, and make it fat and flourishing; and may mystically design the administration of the Gospel, and the administration of ordinances; which are the paths in which the Lord goes forth to his people, and directs them to walk in, and in which he meets them with a fulness of blessings, and satisfies them as with marrow and fatness.

Psalms 65:12

Ver. 12. They drop [upon] the pastures of the wilderness,.... As well as upon the ploughed land, and turn them into a fruitful field; which may denote the Gentile world, whither the Gospel was sent by Christ, and preached by his apostles; and whose doctrines dropped as the rain, and prospered to the thing whereunto they were sent, and made this wilderness as the garden of God;

and the little hills rejoice on every side; or "joy girds the hills"; or "they are girded with joy" {r}; or "gird themselves with joy", as the Targum; being covered on all sides with grass, herbs, and trees: these may denote the churches of Christ, and little hills of Sion, who rejoice when the interest of Christ flourishes, Ps 68:14.

{r} hnrgxt twebg lygw "collesque exultatione accinguntur", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth; "accinxerunt se", Pagninus; "accingent se", Montanus.

Psalms 65:13

Ver. 13. The pastures are clothed with flocks,.... Of sheep, which are so thick, that there is scarce anything to be seen upon the pastures but them; which look as if they were clothed with them: these may intend the multitude of converts, signified by the flocks of Kedar, and rams of Nebaioth; which gathering about the church, and joining to her, she clothes herself with them as with an ornament, Isa 60:7 it may be rendered the "rams clothe", or "cover, the flocks" {s}; or the flocks are clothed, or covered, with the rams, as expressive of their copulation with them; and so the Targum,

"the rams ascend upon the flocks;"

which sense is favoured by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions;

the valleys also are covered over with corn; being made very fruitful with the rain, and bringing forth in great abundance; so humble souls are the most fruitful ones;

they shout for joy, they also sing; that is, the pastures, hills, and valleys, being laden with all kind of fruit for the use of man and beast, for necessity and pleasure, which occasion joy to the inhabitants of the earth: this may be expressive of the joy that will be among men, when the interest of Christ will be in a more flourishing condition in the latter day; see Isa 49:13.

{s} Myrk krioi, Sept. "arietes", V. L.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 66:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 66

To the chief Musician, A Song [or] Psalm. This psalm does not bear the name of David in the title of it, yet is generally thought to be one of his; but because the plural number is used in it, which is not so common in David's psalms, Aben Ezra is of opinion it is not his, but written by the singers. This is not a sufficient objection: and besides, in Ps 66:13, the singular number is used. The Arabic version ascribes it to David, and that version makes the subject matter of it to be "concerning the resurrection"; as do the Septuagint, Ethiopic, and Vulgate Latin versions. The title of the Syriac version is,

"concerning sacrifices and burnt offerings, and the incense of rams; the spiritual sense intimates to us the calling of the Gentiles, and the preaching, that is, of the Gospel;"

which comes nearest the truth: for the psalm respects Gospel times, and the church of Christ under the New Testament, spread throughout the world, and especially as it will be in the latter day; see Ps 66:1; and so in Yalkut Simeoni on the psalm, it is said to be a psalm for time to come, and agrees with **Zep 3:9**; "I will turn to the people a pure language", &c. Kimchi says it is a psalm concerning the gathering of the captives of Israel; and so Jarchi and Obadiah expound it; and Theodoret says David wrote this psalm for the captives in Babylon.

Ver. 1. Make a joyful noise unto God,.... The Creator of the ends of the earth; the Provider for all his creatures; and the Dispenser of the blessings of grace,

under the Gospel dispensation, to men in all countries. The Messiah may well be thought to be intended, since the psalm refers to Gospel times; who is God over all, blessed for ever; to whom a joyful noise, shouts, and acclamations, are to be made by all his subjects, true believers in him, in all lands, as to their King; see Nu 23:21; who is ascended on high, has led captivity captive; received gifts for then, and gives them to them; is enthroned on his Father's right hand, is crowned with glory and honour, where he reigns, and must reign, till all enemies are put under his feet; when his kingdom will be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth: and upon the destruction of his enemies, and the enlargement of his kingdom in the latter day, voices will be heard in heaven, the church; and such joyful noises as are here exhorted and directed to,
Re 19:1. Moreover, such acclamations are suitable to him, as a victorious conqueror; who, at his death, overcame sin, Satan, the world, and death itself; and, by the ministry of the Gospel, went forth conquering, and to conquer; and has subdued many people in all nations, and caused his ministers to triumph in him in every place; and who, by his Spirit and grace, still continues to bring souls to a subjection to him, to dispossess Satan from them, to set up his throne in their hearts, and reign there, and to make them more than conquerors through himself that has loved them: of which there will be more numerous instances in the latter day; and all such are under great obligations to make a joyful noise unto him, or to express their joy and thankfulness in loud singing of his praises;

all ye lands; that is, all the inhabitants of the earth, as the Targum; not Judea, to which some restrain it, but the whole earth: for Christ is the Saviour of some, in all countries, of the children of God, that are scattered abroad throughout the whole world, for whom he is a propitiation. The Gospel has been sent to all nations, and preached to every creature; some in all lands have been converted, and made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the Gospel, and therefore have reason to be glad and make a joyful noise; and the more so, inasmuch as they were in a state of great darkness and ignorance before, without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world.

Psalms 66:2

Ver. 2. Sing forth the honour of his name,.... Meaning not any particular names of the Messiah, such as in **Isa 9:6**; or his name "Jesus", a Saviour; though they are all honourable and glorious, and furnish out sufficient matter for a song: but rather that by which he was made known to the sons of men, his Gospel;

see **Ac 9:15**. Which is a glorious Gospel; the truths of which may be expressed in a song of praise, to the honour and glory of Christ, and to the instruction and profit of men, **Col 3:16**. Or rather Christ himself is meant; his name often designs himself, Mt 12:21. There that is due unto him, and ought to be given which is done when all divine perfections and works are ascribed to him, divine worship is paid him, and the glory of salvation given him; which may be done in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs;

make his praise glorious: let the high praises of him be in your mouths; give him, the most excellent praise; praise him in the best manner. This is done when we sing his praise with grace in our hears in exercise; when we with one mind and mouth glorify him; and when we honour him, the Son, as we honour the Father.

Psalms 66:3

Ver. 3. Say unto God,.... Or, "concerning God" {t}, as some; or, "before God", as the Targum; say to him as follows, in psalms and hymns of praise:

how terrible art thou in thy works! or "reverend" {u}; to be feared and reverenced with a godly fear on account of them; such as the works of nature and providence, which are stupendous and marvellous, fearfully and wonderfully wrought; and especially those of grace and redemption, in which the goodness of Christ is manifest, and for which he is to be feared: unless rather his judgments upon his enemies are here meant; who, though he is a Lamb to his own people, is the Lion of the tribe of Judah to them, whom he will break in pieces as a potter's vessel it may be read, "how terrible", or "tremendous", is everyone of "thy works"; so Aben Ezra, and also Jarchi, who interprets the next clause,

through the greatness of thy power, thus,

"when thou showest to the world thy power, by the pestilence, or sword, or famine, or lightnings:"

shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee? in a lying, flattering, and deceitful manner, as the word {w} here used signifies;
See Gill on "Ps 18:44"; or, as the above interpreters,

"they shall, through the greatness of fear, confess the lies and transgressions they have committed."

It will be a forced, and not a free, confession and submission; Christ's enemies, whether they will or not, will be obliged to own that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, **Php 2:10**.

{t} Myhlal wrma "dicite de Deo", Campensis apud Gejerum; and some in Michaelis. {u} arwn "reverendus", Junius & Tremellius. {w} wvxby "mentientur", V. L. Musculus, Montanus; "mendaciter se dedunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Amama.

Psalms 66:4

Ver. 4. All the earth shall worship thee,.... The Messiah, who is equal with God; the Creator of men; the Redeemer of his people; the Head of the church, and King of saints; their Lord, and therefore to be worshipped; with internal worship, in the exercise of faith, hope, and love; and with external worship, in the word and ordinances, by prayer and praise, public and private. This universal worship, that will be yielded him, will be in the latter day; which shows that this psalm respects those times, when Christ shall be King over all the earth, and his name, worship, and religion, one, Zec 14:9;

and shall sing unto thee; the song of Moses and the Lamb, the Lamb's new song, the song of redeeming grace; which none but the redeemed ever can sing aright, Re 14:3;

they shall sing [to] thy name; or, "they shall", or "let them sing thy name" {x}; thou shall be the subject of their song; thy person, offices, kingdom, grace, and glory: or they shall sing to the honour of thy name, as in Ps 66:2.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{x} Kmv wrmzy "cantent nomen tuum", Gejerus; "cantabunt nomen tuum", Michaelis.

Psalms 66:5

Ver. 5. Come and see the works of God,.... Of the Messiah, God manifest in the flesh; those divine works which he did when here on earth; his miraculous works, which were proofs of his deity and Messiahship; his preaching the Gospel, in so divine a manner as never man did; his works of obedience to the law, which were pure and perfect; the everlasting righteousness he wrought out for the justification of his people; and the great work of redemption and salvation finished by him, which none but God could ever have effected. This is an invitation to the inhabitants of all lands, where the Gospel should come with power, to take notice of and consider these works of Christ, and the glory of his might, wisdom, and grace in them, in order to engage them to sing his praise;

[he is] terrible [in his] doing toward the children of men; in his vengeance on the Jews, for disbelieving and rejecting him; in destroying antichrist, and pouring out the vials of his wrath on the antichristian states; and in the everlasting damnation of the wicked. So that as his other works in the former clause design these of grace, this doing of his respects his work, his strange work of judgment on his enemies; on account of which he is terrible to them, and reverenced by his people.

Psalms 66:6

Ver. 6. He turned the sea into dry [land],.... The Red sea, or sea of Zuph, as the Targum; by causing a strong east wind to blow, which made it dry, so that the children of Israel passed through it on dry ground,
Ex 14:21. Or, "he turneth" {y}; for though the allusion is to the making the Red sea dry land, when the Israelites passed through it; yet it refers to something to be done in the times of Christ and the Gospel dispensation. So Christ might be said to do this literally, when he walked upon the sea of Galilee as on dry land, and enabled Peter to do so likewise, Mt 14:25; and figuratively, when he makes his people walk through the sea of this world, and the waters of afflictions in it, without overflowing them. He with them, bears them up, and upholds them with his right hand; so that they pass on, as on dry land, till they come safe to the shores of bliss and happiness;

they went through the flood on foot; or "river" {z}; the river Jordan, as the Targum: for this alludes not to the passage of the Israelites through the sea, but through Jordan, when they entered into the land, of Canaan, **Jos 3:17**. The words may be rendered, according to Kimchi,

"they shall pass through the river on foot;"

the Targum adds,

"the children of Israel;"

so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions. Such things are said in prophecy concerning the people of God in future times; see Isa 11:15. So the river Euphrates shall be dried up, to make way for the kings of the east, Re 16:12;

there did we rejoice in him; still alluding to the above cases, when Israel passed through the Red sea, and sung praise to God; and went through Jordan, and set up stones of memorial, Ex 15:1. Or "there shall we rejoice in him": so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Arabic versions; only the latter reads in the singular, "he shall rejoice." The Targum is,

"I will lead them to the mountain of his holiness, there shall we rejoice in his word:"

in the essential Word, the Messiah, as the saints do rejoice in him in his house, under his word and ordinances; when they see the salvation wrought out by him, and their interest in it; the righteousness he has brought in, and themselves clothed with it; pardon procured by him, and that applied to them; and when they are favoured with a sight of him, and communion with him; so will they rejoice in him when the marriage of the Lamb is come, and the bride is ready; when antichrist shall be destroyed, and they shall have got the victory over him; then they shall stand on the sea of glass, and there shall they sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, Re 19:7; and when they shall have come through all their difficulties safely to heaven; there shall they rejoice in Christ, and with him to all eternity.

{y} Kph "convertit", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {z} rhnb "per fluvium", Gejerus.

Psalms 66:7

Ver. 7. He ruleth by his power forever,.... Christ is the Ruler in Israel, King over his holy hill of Zion; who must reign till all enemies are put under his feet. He rules in the kingdom of nature and providence by his power, and does whatsoever he pleases; nor can any stay his hand. He rules in the kingdom of grace, in the hearts of his people, by his efficacious grace; which makes them willing, in the day of his power, to be subject to him; and in the latter day he will take to himself his great power and reign, when he will be King for ever. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, it shall never be subverted nor usurped; nor will he in it be succeeded by another; he will reign to the end of the world, throughout the thousand years, with his saints on earth, and then with them in heaven for evermore. The Targum renders it,

"over the world;"

over the whole world; for Christ will be King over all the earth in the latter day, Zec 14:9;

his eyes behold the nations; the antichristian states. He sees all the idolatry and wickedness committed in them; and his eyes will be as flames of fire to destroy them, when the time is come. The allusion is to God's looking through the pillar of fire and cloud upon the Egyptians in the Red sea, and troubling them, Ex 14:24;

let not the rebellious exalt themselves. That are rebels against Christ, would not have him to reign over them; antichrist, who exalts himself above all that is called God, and all his followers. Or, "they shall not exalt themselves" {a}: or, as the Targum,

"they shall not be exalted in themselves for ever;"

see Re 18:7.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{a} wml wmyry la "haudquaquam sese exultabunt", Tigurine version, Musculus, & Gejerus.

Psalms 66:8

Ver. 8. O bless our God, ye people,.... In all countries, that know the Lord and fear him; ascribe blessing, and honour and glory, to Christ our God, on account of his works, actions, perfections, kingdom and power; and because of the destruction of those who are rebels to his government;

and make the voice of his praise to be heard; far and near, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; by shoutings, and loud acclamations of joy; see Re 19:5; where Christ is called our God, and a like exhortation is made as here.

Psalms 66:9

Ver. 9. Which holdeth our soul in life,.... Or, "putteth our soul in life" {b}, or "among the living", which is not to be understood of infusing a living soul in man, nor of the preservation of natural life, which is common to all men; but of appointing and ordaining them unto eternal life, as the Targum; and of procuring it for them by Christ; and of implanting a principle of spiritual life in them, by his Spirit and grace; and of the preservation of the principle of life, that it be not lost; and of giving them a right and title to eternal life, and that itself: all which are a sufficient reason, and powerful argument, to bless our God, and praise his name. It follows:

and suffereth not our feet to be moved; that is, not to be greatly moved; or if moved so as to slip and fall, yet not so as to fall finally and totally; see Ps 55:22.

{b} Mvh "qui posuit", V. L. Pagninus, Musculus, Vatablus; "ponene", Montanus; "qui ponit", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 66:10

Ver. 10. For thou, O God, hast proved us,.... And by the experiment found them to be true and faithful; to have the truth of grace, and the root of the matter in them; not reprobate silver, or their grace counterfeit grace; but of the right kind, solid and substantial;

thou hast tried us as silver is tried; in a furnace, where it is put and melted by the refiner, and purified from the dross that attends it. So the Targum,

"thou hast purified us as the silversmith purifieth the silver;"

or tries it by melting and purifying it. Thus the Lord puts his people into the furnace of afflictions, and sits as a refiner and purifier of them; hereby he tries their graces, faith, patience, hope, and love, their principles and their professions; refines their graces, and makes them more bright and illustrious; removes their dross and tin, and reforms their manners; and proves them to be good silver, and approves of them, and esteems them as such, even as his peculiar treasure. From whence it appears, as well as from the following verses, that afflictions are of God; that they are for the good of his people, and not their hurt; like silver they are put into the fire of affliction, not to be destroyed and lost, but to be purged and refined; and that they are not in wrath, but in love: and this, with what follows, may respect the sufferings of the saints under Rome, Pagan and Papal; when Christ's feet, the members of his mystical body, were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; when their graces were tried, their works were known, and their persons proved and approved, **Re 1:15**; see Zec 13:9.

Psalms 66:11

Ver. 11. Thou broughtest us into the net,.... That is, suffered them to be taken in the net of wicked men, which they laid and spread for them; whereby they were drawn either into bad principles or bad practices, or into ruinous circumstances; though the Lord does not leave his own people there, but breaks the net or snare, sooner or later, and they escape; see **Ps 9:15**. Jarchi interprets it of a strait place, as in a prison; and which has often been literally true of the people of God, into which, though they have been cast by Satan, or by men instigated by him, yet, because permitted by the Lord, it is ascribed to him, **Re 2:10**;

thou laidst affliction upon our loins: the Targum renders it "a chain": the word signifies anything that is binding and pressing; it seems to be a metaphor taken from the binding of burdens upon the backs of any creatures. Afflictions often lie heavy upon the saints, are very close upon them, and press them sore, even, as they sometimes think, beyond measure; though the Lord supports them, and will not suffer them to sink under them.

Psalms 66:12

Ver. 12. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads,.... Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of the kings and nations of the world ruling over Israel; and may very well design the Heathen powers and antichristian states tyrannizing over Christian people. The word in the original text is singular, "a man" {c}, a frail mortal man; and may be understood of the man of sin and son of perdition; who rides upon the heads of men, exalts himself above all that is called God, and has exercised dominion over the saints in a most lawless and tyrannical

manner. Vitringa, on
Isa 43:2 interprets it of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a type of antichrist, and supposes the following clause to refer to the persecution of the church in his time. The Targum renders it, "a lord of rebuke"; that is, either one worthy of rebuke, as antichrist is; or one that gives rebukes, delivers out anathemas and excommunications, as he does: though some translate the words of the Targum, "lords of usury", or "usurers"; a title not unfit for the creatures of antichrist;

we went through fire and through water; through afflictions, compared to fire and water; through fiery trials and overwhelming providences, though not destroyed by them, because the Lord was with them; see
Isa 43:2; therefore they are said to go through them, not to abide in them; nor to sink under them, and perish by them: they went cheerfully through them for Christ's sake, even the greatest hardships and difficulties, which this phrase may be expressive of. It may have a particular reference to the sufferings of the saints in Gospel times; to the burning of the martyrs with fire and faggot, who, like Elijah, went up to heaven in a fiery chariot; and to the flood of waters cast out after the woman, the church, by the dragon; see **Re 1:15**;

but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy [place]; the Targum is, into largeness; or into a large place; see Ps 18:19. This may intend either the state of the church upon the Reformation, or rather as it will be in the latter day glory; when there will be a large spread of the Gospel, and of the interest of Christ, everywhere; when the church will be enlarged with converts, and the members of it with the gifts and graces of the Spirit; and which will be a state of great liberty and freedom in the worship of God, both inward and outward. The Septuagint version renders it, "into refreshment": so the Tigurine version, and Piscator; as those times will be times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, which will be everywhere among his people, in his word and ordinances, and to a great degree; see **Ac 3:19**. The Arabic version, "unto rest"; from adversity, from persecution; for, after this state takes place, there will be no more persecution; no more fines, imprisonment, racks, and torturing deaths, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel. The word used signifies a well watered place {d} or land; such as was the land of Canaan, **De 8:7**; and such will be the state of the church in the latter day: the Spirit will be poured down like floods of water upon the dry ground; the doctrines of the Gospel will drop as the rain, and as showers upon the grass: the ordinances of it will be as green pastures beside the still waters; and every believer will be as a watered garden, whose springs fail not; it will be a time of great plenty and prosperity in spiritual things. Ainsworth renders it, "to an abundant place"; so Gejerus: a place abounding with all good things: a "wealthy" one, as we translate it. And even in a literal sense this will be the wealthy time of the church; when kings shall come into it, and bring their riches and honour there, and use them for the good of it, Isa 49:23; and then also will the saints be enriched with every gift, and be rich in grace and in all good works.

{c} vwna "hominem", Pagninus, Montanus. {d} hywrl "ad irrignam", Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 66:13

Ver. 13. I will go into thy house with burnt offerings,.... The psalmist here represents the saints and faithful in those times, who being delivered out of all their troubles, and brought into a large, free, plentiful, and comfortable condition, will come together into the place of public worship, and there unite in their sacrifices of praise to God; will come and present themselves as a whole burnt offering to the Lord; will come with hearts inflamed with love to God and one another, which is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices,
Mr 12:33;

I will pay thee my vows; thanksgivings promised in time of distress, as follows; see Ps 50:14.

Psalms 66:14

Ver. 14. Which my lips have uttered,.... Or "opened" {e}; publicly and distinctly declared, and from which there is no going back; see
Jud 11:33;

and my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble; this refers to the time when the people of God were under antichristian tyranny and bondage; and when they vowed and promised, that, if the Lord would deliver them, they would give him all praise and glory.

{e} wup "aperuerunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus.

Psalms 66:15

Ver. 15. I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings,.... Of the fattest of the flock; that is, of the best; such as Abel offered, **Ge 4:4**;

with the incense of rams; or "rams with incense" {f}; the Targum is,

"with sweet incense, the sacrifice of rams;"

Kimchi interprets it of incense of the fat of rams.

I will offer bullocks with goats; he proposed to offer all kind of offerings, to show gratitude and thankfulness for the favours received; by all which are meant the calves, or fruit of the lips, the sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving to God, in the name of the whole church and people of God; see Re 19:1.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{f} Mylya trjp Me "arietes cum incenso", Gejerus; so Campeusis in ibid.

Psalms 66:16

Ver. 16. Come [and] hear, all ye that fear God,.... Who have a reverential affection for him, and by whom he is worshipped and served with reverence and godly fear; these have good things done for themselves, and will glorify God for what he does for others: these know the nature, worth, and value of the good things the Lord does for the souls of men, and hear them with pleasure and profit; when to tell them to others is casting pearl before swine, and giving that which is holy to dogs; and therefore only such as fear the Lord are called upon to come and hear what follows. Jarchi interprets this character of proselytes; see Ac 13:26;

and I will declare what he hath done for my soul: not what he had done for God, or offered unto him, or suffered for his sake; nor what God had done for his body in the make and preservation of it; but what he had done for his soul, and the salvation of that: what God the Father had done in setting him apart for himself; in making a sure, well ordered, and everlasting covenant with him in Christ; in blessing him with all spiritual blessings in him; in providing for the redemption of his soul by him; in pardoning his sins, justifying his person, adopting him into his family, and regenerating, quickening, and sanctifying him: also what God the Son had done for him; in engaging to assume a true body and a reasonable soul on his account; and to make that soul an offering for his sin, and thereby obtain for him eternal redemption, even the salvation of his immortal soul: likewise what God the Spirit had done for him; in quickening and enlightening his soul; in implanting principles of grace and holiness in it; in showing Christ unto him, and bringing near his righteousness, and leading him to him for salvation and eternal life; in applying exceeding great and precious promises to him, and remembering to him such on which he had caused him to hope; in delivering him out of temptation and troubles, and in carrying on the work of his grace in him hitherto: these are things that are not to be concealed in a man's breast, but to be told to the church and people of God, to their joy and comfort, and to the glory of divine grace; see **Mr 5:19**.

Psalms 66:17

Ver. 17. I cried unto him with my mouth,.... Crying designs prayer, and supposes distress; and crying with the mouth denotes vocal, ardent, and fervent prayer;

and he was extolled with my tongue: at the same time the psalmist prayed for deliverance out of his distresses, he praised God for the mercies he had received: and did, as the Apostle Paul directs, make known his requests with thanksgiving, **Php 4:6**; or "he was exalted under my tongue" {g}; that is, in his heart, as some interpret it; his heart and his mouth went together; and out of the abundance of his heart his tongue spoke of the goodness, kindness, and mercy of God to him. The Targum is,

"and his promise was under my tongue;"

and so he was very different from a wicked man, who keeps iniquity under his tongue, as a sweet morsel, Job 20:12.

{g} ynwvl txt "sublingua mea", Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 66:18

Ver. 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart,.... There was iniquity in his heart, as there is in every good man's heart, and a great deal too; it is full of it; and it should be regarded in some sense, so as to guard against it, and pray to be kept from it, that it may not break forth into action; and so as to loath it, abhor it, and be humbled for it; but not so as to nourish and cherish it, to take delight and pleasure in it: or "if I look upon it" {h}, as it may be rendered; that is, with approbation of it, and satisfaction in it, and ordered his conversation according to it; or acted the deceitful and hypocritical part in prayer; or had any evil intention in his petitions, to consume on his lusts what he asked for;

the Lord will not hear [me]; for the Lord hears not sinners that delight in sin, and live in it; neither profane sinners nor hypocrites; see **Joh 9:31**.

{h} ytyar Ma "si vidi", Pagninus, Montanus; "si aspexi", V. L. "si conspexi", Gejerus.

Psalms 66:19

Ver. 19. [But] verily God hath heard [me],.... So that it was a plain case that he had not regarded iniquity in his heart; had not lived a vicious course of life, nor was an hypocrite; otherwise God would not have heard his prayer; whereas he had, and which is confirmed in the following clause;

he hath attended to the voice of my prayer; which is an instance of the grace and condescension of God, and showed in what high favour the psalmist was with the Lord, and what regard he had unto him; and therefore could not be the man his enemies represented him to be.

Psalms 66:20

Ver. 20. Blessed [be] God, which hath not turned away my prayer,.... Has not been angry against it, shut it out, or covered himself with a cloud that it might not pass through, which sometimes saints have complained of, Ps 80:4; but graciously heard and received it;

nor his mercy from me; for that endures for ever, and is from everlasting to everlasting on them that fear the Lord, Ps 103:17; all which require thankfulness and praise, which is here given.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 67:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 67

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm [or] Song. According to the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, this psalm is a psalm of David; and very probably it was written by him, since the spirit and language of it agree with that sweet singer of Israel, though his name is not in the title; wherefore Aben Ezra says, we know not who composed it: and so the inscription of the Syriac version pronounces the same uncertain; which adds,

"the people sung it when they brought David over Jordan;"

meaning after Absalom's rebellion was over, 2Sa 19:41; but what follows better expresses the occasion and intent of it;

"but to us it intimates a prophecy in it concerning the calling of the Gentiles, and the preaching of the apostles; likewise concerning the judgments of the Lord:"

and it seems indeed to breathe out the desires of the church after the coming of Christ, and spiritual blessings by him, and the spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles, as what would bring forth much fruit in the earth, and be the occasion of great joy. The ancient Jews {i} apply it
abl dytel, "to future time"; the world to come, the times of the Messiah: and Kimchi understands it of the gathering of the present captivity when the Messiah comes, and of the destruction of Gog and Magog. Of the word "neginoth", See Gill on "Ps 4:1", title.

{i} Debarim Rabba, s. 1. fol. 233. 4. Yalkut Simeoni in loc.

Ver. 1. God be merciful unto us, and bless us,.... That is, God, of his unmerited mercy, of his rich grace and free favour, bless us with the coming of his Son, the promised seed, in whom all nations are to be blessed; and with the blessings of peace, pardon, and righteousness in him; all which with him spring from the tender mercy of God, the riches of his grace, and his great love; than which nothing could be more desirable to the Old Testament saints, who were shut up under the law, until faith came; and though children, they differed nothing from servants, being in a state and under a spirit of bondage: for the psalmist seems to represent the whole church under that dispensation: some understand the words as a prophecy, expressing the certainty of what would be; and, as the words may be rendered, "God will be merciful", or "gracious to us {k}, and he will bless us"; as he has promised to do;

[and] cause his face to shine upon us; that is, grant his gracious presence, and the discoveries of his love; that he would favour with communion with himself through Christ, and a greater knowledge of him in him; or that he would cause him, who is his face, his image, the brightness of his glory, to appear and shine forth; the great light, the sun of righteousness, and dayspring from on high, that was to arise and shine upon the people of God. The Targum is,

"and cause the splendour of his face to shine with us always;"

there seems to be some reference to the high priest's form of blessing in **Nu 6:24**.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{k} wnnxy "miserebitur", Gejerus, Schmidt.

Psalms 67:2

Ver. 2. That thy way may be known upon earth,.... God's way and method of grace, in the salvation of sinners; the contrivance of it in Christ, the impetration of it by him, and the application of it by his Spirit; and the way of sinners to him through Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, the new and living way to the Father; and the way of life and salvation, which is grace, and by Christ alone; and the Gospel which points out this way, and is itself called the way of God, Ac 18:25; together with the ordinances of it, which are ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace; all this was made known by the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel; not only in the land of Judea, but throughout the whole earth;

thy saving health among all nations; or "thy salvation"; or "thy Jesus" {l}; whose name signifies a Saviour; and who is the only one, and an able and willing one, and is God's salvation, of his appointing, promising, and sending; salvation is by him, and by him only; he came to obtain it, and he is the author of it; health is also by him, he is the physician of souls, and his blood the balm that cures every disease; so that he is the Saviour, salvation, and saving health, to his people; this was unknown to the nations of the world until the Gospel came among them, until the grace of God bringing this salvation appeared unto them, and shone upon them, **Tit 2:11**.

{l} Ktewvy "salutem tuam", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. "i.e. salvatorem cujus nomen erit Jesus", Gejerus.

Psalms 67:3

Ver. 3. Let the people praise thee, O God,.... Let them have occasion to praise God, the people of the Jews, for the mission of Christ, and for the blessings of grace and peace with him;

let all the people praise thee; all the nations of the world, for making known the way of life and grace, and the saving health or salvation of God unto them: the word used signifies to "confess" {m}; and so the Targum,

"the people shall confess before thee, O God; all the people shall confess before thee;"

that is, shall confess their sins, being made sensible of them; and confess the true and living God, turning from their idols to serve him; and Christ to be the only Saviour and Redeemer, being now made known unto them, through the preaching of the Gospel.

{m} Kwdwy "confiteantur", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Psalms 67:4

Ver. 4. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy,.... As they were glad, and did sing for joy, and glorified God, when Christ was made known, and the Gospel was preached unto them, **Ac 8:5**.

for thou shalt judge the people righteously; meaning not the people of the world at the last day, at the general judgment, which will be a righteous one; when God will judge the world in righteousness, according to the strict rules of justice and equity, by him whom he has ordained, Ps 96:1; but either the righteous judgment which will be executed on the enemies of Christ's church and people; particularly on antichrist, which will be matter of great joy, Re 19:1; and Kimchi interprets it of the judgment of the nations which shall come with Gog and Magog; or else the judging and vindicating the Lord's own people, defending their cause, righting their wrongs, and suffering no weapon to prosper against them;

and govern the nations upon earth; or "lead [them]" {n}; not to punishment, as Kimchi, who interprets this clause as the other; but by his grace and Spirit, into the knowledge of his way, and saving health; or as a shepherd leads his flock into green pastures, and beside the still waters; or as a king leads and governs his people, as David guided the people of Israel, with the skilfulness of his hands; so Christ leads and governs his people, protects and defends them, holds them by his right hand, guides them with his counsel, and then receives them to glory; see Ps 23:2.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{n} Mxnt "duces eas", Montanus; "deduces", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius; "deducis", Piscator.

Psalms 67:5

Ver. 5. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. See Gill on "Ps 67:3". This is repeated from that preceding verse to show the earnest desire of the church that it might be so; or that there might be an occasion for it; the ardour of her mind, and fervency of her petitions, and how much she was solicitous for the praise and glory of God; or to declare the certainty of it, she most strongly believing that so it would be; as the Targum, "the people shall confess", &c. because of a new favour to be enjoyed, mentioned in Ps 67:6.

Psalms 67:6

Ver. 6. [Then] shall the earth yield her increase,.... Not literally the land of Israel, as in some copies of the Targum, and as Kimchi interprets it; see Le 26:3; but mystically and spiritually the church of God in the times of the Messiah, Eze 34:23; the word of God preached in the world is the seed sown in it; converts to Christ are the increase or fruit of it; and the church is God's husbandry, where it is yielded or brought forth; and this increase is of God, and is owing to the efficacy of his grace attending the ministration of the word, **1Co 3:6**; it had its accomplishment in part in the first times of the Gospel, when it was preached by the apostles throughout the earth, and brought forth

fruit everywhere, **Col 1:5**; and has been fulfilling more or less ever since, and will appear more abundantly in the latter day; a large increase and a plentiful harvest of souls shall be brought in, both Jews and Gentiles: or this may be understood of the fruitfulness of believers in Christ, who may be called "earth", because of their common original from the earth with the rest of mankind; because they are inhabitants of the earth; and because they have earthly as well as heavenly principles in them; but more especially because they are the good ground on whom the seed of the word falls and becomes fruitful; or are the earth which drinks in the rain of the Gospel, and of grace, and brings forth fruit meet for them, by whom it is dressed, and receives blessing of God, Mt 13:23; these yield the fruits of the Spirit, increase in grace, and abound in the exercise of it; bring forth fruits meet for repentance, being filled with the fruits of righteousness by Christ; for the increase and fruit yielded by them are owing to the grace of God, to their grafting into Christ the vine, and to the influence of the blessed Spirit. Some of the ancients understand this of the incarnation of Christ; see
Ps 85:11; then "the earth" is the Virgin Mary, who was, as to her original, of the earth, earthly; of whose earthly substance Christ took flesh, and is called the fruit of her womb; yea, the fruit of the earth, **Lu 1:42**; for though he is the Lord from heaven, as to his divine nature, and came down from thence, not by change of place, but by assumption of nature; yet, as to his human nature, he was made of a woman, and is the seed of the woman, the promised seed, in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed; and it here follows:

[and] God, [even] our own God, shall bless us; not as the God of nature and providence only; but as the God of grace, as a covenant God in Christ, in which sense he is peculiarly his people's own God, so as he is not others; and as such he blesses them with all spiritual blessings in Christ: or the repetition of the word "God", with the affix "our own", may denote the certainty of the divine blessing, the assurance had of it, and the great affection of the persons that express it: and some think, because the word is repeated three times in this verse and Ps 68:7, respect is had to the trinity of Persons in the Godhead; God the Father blesses his people in Christ with the blessings of justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life: the Son, who is Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, our own God, God manifest in the flesh; he blesses with the same blessings of grace, peace, and eternal happiness; he was raised up of God as man and Mediator, and sent to bless his people, **Ac 3:26**.

Psalms 67:7

Ver. 7. God shall bless us,.... The Holy Spirit blesses with regenerating and renewing grace; with faith, comfort, joy and peace, by shedding abroad in the heart the love of the Father and the Son; by applying precious promises; by testifying adoption; by making meet for heaven and happiness, and working up for the selfsame thing eternal glory;

and all the ends of the earth shall fear him; the one God, Father, Son, and Spirit, the object of religious fear, internal and external; for this includes the exercise of that inward grace of filial fear, and the performance of all divine worship, public and private; and which in the latter day will be found among Jews and Gentiles, in all the inhabitants of the earth, even to the ends of it, **Ho 3:5**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 68:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 68

To the chief Musician, A Psalm [or] Song of David. The Targum makes the argument of this psalm to be the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; in which it is followed by many of the Jewish interpreters: but Aben Ezra rejects such an interpretation of it, and thinks that David composed it, concerning the war he had with the uncircumcised nations, the Philistines and others, **2Sa 8:1**, &c. And so the title of the Syriac version begins,

"a psalm of David, when the kings prepared themselves to fight against him:"

and Kimchi says it was composed on account of Sennacherib's army coming against Jerusalem, in the times of Hezekiah, and so delivered by David, under a spirit of prophecy concerning that affair; though he owns that some of their writers interpret it of the war of Gog and Magog, in the times of the Messiah they yet expect. But they are much nearer the truth, who take it that it was written on occasion of the ark being brought to the city of David; seeing it begins with much the same words that Moses used when the ark set forward in his times, Nu 10:35; and the bringing of which was attended with great joy and gladness, **2Sa 6:14**; such as the righteous are called upon to express in this psalm, Ps 68:3. And this being a type of Christ, and of his ascending the holy hill of God, may be allowed of; for certain it is that this psalm treats of the coming of Christ, and of blessings by him, and of victory over his enemies;

and particularly of his ascension to heaven, as most evidently appears from **Eph 4:8**; and from prophecies in it, concerning the calling of the Gentiles. Wherefore the latter part of the Syriac inscription of it is very pertinent;

"also a prophecy concerning the dispensation of the Messiah, and concerning the calling of the Gentiles to the faith."

Jarchi interprets Ps 68:31 of the Messiah.

Ver. 1. Let God arise,.... Which, as Kimchi observes, is either by way of prayer, or by way of prophecy; and in either way the sense is the same: for, if it is considered as a prayer, it is a prayer of faith that so it would be; or, if as a prophecy, it is certain that so it should be. And this is to be understood of the same divine Person, whose chariots the angels are; who is said to be the "Adonai", or "Lord" in the midst of them; and of whom it is prophesied that he should ascend to heaven, Ps 68:17; even the Messiah, who is God over all. And this "arising", attributed to him, may be interpreted either of his incarnation, his exhibition and manifestation in the flesh; which is sometimes called in Scripture a raising of him up, as in **Ac 3:26**; or of his resurrection from the dead, as it is interpreted by many of the ancients; which, as it was a certain thing, and previous to his ascension hereafter spoken of, so it was a proof of his deity; for though it was only the man that rose, who died and was buried, yet as in union with the divine Person of the Son of God, and who rose by virtue of that union; and thereby he was declared to be the Son of God with power. Or else rather this is to be understood of his arising and exerting his power as a man of war, as a mighty and victorious hero, on the behalf of his people, and against his enemies; as he did when he arose and met Satan, the prince of the world, and engaged with all the powers of darkness; see Ps 45:3; and this sense is confirmed by what follows:

let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him flee before him: the sense of these two clauses is the same; his enemies, and those that hate him, are the same persons; and to be scattered and flee express the same things; for enemies, being discomfited, flee and scatter. Some interpret this of the watch set to guard our Lord's sepulchre; who, upon his rising from the dead, were filled with great fear and dread, and scattered, and fled to the priests, to acquaint them with what was done: others, of the Jewish nation in general, who were enemies to Christ; and hated him, and would not have him to reign over them; against whom he rose up and exerted his great strength; came in his kingdom and power against them; poured out his wrath upon them to the uttermost; which issued in the utter destruction of them, as a body politic; and in the entire dispersion of them in all countries, which remains until quite recently. Or rather the whole is to be applied to Satan, and to his principalities and powers; the professed enemies of Christ, personal and mystical; who, when he arose and exerted his mighty power in his conflict with them, in the garden and on the cross, were spoiled and dissipated, and obliged to fly before him: and who at the same time overcame the world, made an end of sin, abolished death, as well as destroyed him which had the power of it; see Nu 10:35.

Psalms 68:2

Ver. 2. As smoke is driven away, so drive [them] away,.... This both describes the character of wicked men, Christ's enemies; as their darkness and ignorance, their will worship and superstition, and their detestableness to God, **Re 9:2**; and the manner of their destruction; which is as easily brought about as smoke is driven by the wind, and is as irretrievable, like smoke that vanisheth into air {o}; see Ps 37:20;

as wax melteth before fire; whereby its consistency, form, and strength, are lost. Respect may be had, both in this and the foregoing metaphor, to the fire of, divine wrath, and the smoke of eternal torments; since it follows:

[so] let the wicked perish at the presence of God; the appearance of Christ, either in his awful dispensation against the Jews, or in the last judgment; when the wicked shall not be able to stand before his face, but shall call to the rocks and mountains to hide them from him; and when they shall be bid to depart from him, and shall be punished with everlasting destruction in soul and body, from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power.

{o} "----et tenues fugit, ceu fumus in auras". Virgil. Aeneid. 5. prope finem.

Psalms 68:3

Ver. 3. But let the righteous be glad,.... At the incarnation of Christ, which is matter of joy to all people that believe in him; as did Zacharias and Elisabeth, who were both righteous, and also Simeon; and at his resurrection from the dead, since it is for their justification, by which they are denominated righteous; as did the disciples of Christ, and as do saints in all ages; who know the power of his resurrection, and the influence it has on the regeneration of their souls, the justification of their persons now, and the resurrection of their bodies hereafter; and at the destruction of the enemies of Christ and theirs;

let them rejoice before God; in the presence of him; enjoying communion with him; having views of interest in him; as they do when this is the case, and as they will when they shall appear before him, and stand at his right hand at the last day, clothed with his righteousness, and having palms in their hands;

yea, let them exceedingly rejoice; as they have just reason to do, in his person, grace, righteousness, and salvation. All these expressions denote the greatness, frequency, fervency, fulness, and continuance of their joy. They may be rendered in the future, "but the righteous shall be glad" {p}, &c. so the Targum.

{p} wxmvy "laetabuntur, exultabunt, et gaudebunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 68:4

Ver. 4. Sing unto God,.... Manifest in the flesh, risen from the dead, ascended on high, set down at the right hand of his divine Father; having exerted his great strength in their redemption; and therefore should sing the song of redeeming love, with grace and melody in their hearts, unto him;

sing praises to his name: to the honour of his name Jesus, a Saviour, because of the great work of salvation wrought out by him; give him all the praise and glory of it, which due unto his name;

extol him that rideth upon heavens: having ascended above them, and being higher than they, and so is exalted above all blessing and praise; and uses his power and greatness for the help of his people: see De 33:26. Some choose to render the words, "prepare the way" {q}, as John the Baptist is said to do before him, Isa 11:3; "for him that rideth through the deserts", or "fields" {r}; as he did through the fields of Judea on an ass; and through the nations of the world, in the ministry of the word, carried thither by his apostles; whereby places, comparable to deserts for their barrenness and unfruitfulness, became like the garden of the Lord: or rather, "that rideth in the west"; it being at the west end of the tabernacle and temple, where the cherubim were, on which Jehovah rode, they being his chariot;

by his name JAH; or Jehovah; which being a name incommunicable to creatures, and given to Christ, shows him to be the most High; a self-existent Being, the immutable and everlasting "I AM"; which is, and was, and is to come; from whom all creatures receive their being, and are continued in it; and who is also Jehovah our righteousness; and by, in, and because of this name, is he to be extolled and magnified;

and rejoice before him; See Gill on "Ps 68:3".

{q} wlo "elevate viam lapidibus", Vatablus; "parata viam", Gejerus; "make an highway", Ainsworth. {r} twbdeb "per deserta", Hieron. Theodoret. Bugenhagius, aliique in Michaelis; "in campestribus", Piscator, Cocceius; "in campis, vel per campos", Gussetius, p. 641. "in the deserts", Ainsworth.

Psalms 68:5

Ver. 5. A father of the fatherless,.... In a literal sense, so as to show mercy to them, take care of then}, and protect them; and this is a character which the great God often assumes, partly to express his power and providence over such, and partly to signify his tenderness, mercy, and goodness to them; and in which he should be imitated by civil magistrates, and by all good men: for it was not only a law in Israel to show regard to such, and take care not to afflict them, but it is also a branch of pure undefiled Christian religion, **Jas 1:27**, in attending to which we resemble the great Author of it, who is here intended. Moreover, this may be understood in a spiritual sense of such who are deserted by their friends, or are called to leave father and mother for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; and who are like fatherless ones, in an helpless condition in themselves, and are sensible of it; and will not trust in the creature, nor in any works of their own, but apply to Christ, where they have help and salvation, in whom the fatherless find mercy, Ho 14:3; and who afterwards, when they are without the presence of Christ, and sensible communion with him, are like orphans or fatherless children; but Christ, who is the father of such, will not leave them so, will have pity on them, show favour to them, provide everything needful for them, and will come and visit them, as in Joh 14:18; where the word "orphans" or "fatherless" is used of Christ's disciples;

and a Judge of the widows; of such who are widows indeed in a literal sense, and especially that are believers, his elect that cry unto him; see Lu 18:2; and of such who are so in a spiritual sense; even of the whole church of Christ, who may, even now, be said to be in a widowhood estate, as well as under the

former dispensation; since Christ, her bridegroom, is gone to heaven, and who yet, in the mean time, is her Judge, protector, and defender; and when she is made ready for him, as a bride adorned for her husband, will come and take her to himself, and she shall remember the reproach of her widowhood no more,
Isa 54:4;

[is] God in his holy habitation: in heaven, the habitation of his holiness, where is Christ the high and Holy One; and has respect to the poor and lowly, the fatherless and the widow: or in his church, his holy temple, where he dwells and walks, and grants his gracious presence, and will do to the end of the world, according to his promise; or in his holy human nature, the temple and the tabernacle, in which the Godhead dwells.

Psalms 68:6

Ver. 6. God setteth the solitary in families,.... Which the Jewish writers generally understand of an increase of families, with children in lawful marriage; see Ps 113:9; an instance of which we have in Abraham and Sarah; from which single or solitary ones, when joined in marriage, sprung a numerous offspring, Isa 51:2. And to this sense the Targum paraphrases the words;

"God is he that joins, couples single ones into a couple, as one:"

some copies add,

"to build an house out of them;"

that is, a family; see **Ru 4:11**. But it may be better interpreted of the fruitfulness and increase of the church with converts, under the Gospel dispensation, even from among the Gentiles; who were before solitary, or were alone, without God and Christ, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; but being called and converted by the ministry of the word, were brought into and placed in Gospel churches, or families; see Isa 54:1; and may be applied to particular persons, who, before conversion, may be said to be "solitary" or alone; living without God, the knowledge and fear of him, and fellowship with him, being alienated from the life of him through ignorance; and without Christ, and communion with him, he not dwelling in them, nor they in him; and also sensual, not having the Spirit, his graces and fruits; being destitute of faith, hope, and love: and, moreover, aliens from the people of God, having no society with them, being in a state of solitude and darkness, and under the power of sin and Satan; helpless and "desolate", as the word here used rendered, Ps 25:16. But, in effectual calling, such are brought out of this dismal state, and being drawn with the cords of love by the Spirit, to the Father and the Son, and brought to a spiritual acquaintance with them, they are "set in families", or placed in Gospel churches; which, as families, have a master over them, who is Christ the Son and firstborn, of whom they are named; where are saints of various ages, sizes, and standing; some fathers, some young men, and some children; where are provisions suitable for them, and stewards to give them their portion of meat in due season, who are the ministers of the word; and laws and rules, by which they are directed and regulated, and everything is kept in good decorum;

he bringeth out those which are bound with chains; as Peter and others literally, Ac 12:5; or rather it is to be understood spiritually of such as are bound with the chains of their own sins, and are under the power of them, with the fetters of the law, in which they are held, and who are led and kept captive by Satan; those Christ the Son makes free, proclaims liberty to them, says to such prisoners, Go forth; and, by the blood of his covenant, sends them forth, and directs them to himself, the strong hold, as prisoners of hope; see Isa 61:1. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, "he bringeth forth the prisoners with fortitude"; so Apollinarius, "with his great power and strength"; and the Syriac version, with prosperity; or in a pompous manner, as the Targum. But the words may be better rendered, "he bringeth forth the prisoners", either as Ainsworth, "into fit (and commodious) places", or rather, "into the conveniencies" or "commodities": that is, of life, such as prisoners are destitute of;

but the rebellious dwell in a dry [land]; meaning the Jews, to whom Christ came, and whom they rejected, reviled, hated, and would not have him to reign over them, and were a gainsaying and disobedient people; for which their land was smitten with a curse, and in the time of their wars became a dry land; when famine and pestilence were everywhere, and such tribulation as was never known, **Isa 8:21**. Moreover, the nations of the world, among whom they are dispersed, are a dry land to them; and even such places as are become fruitful through the preaching of the Gospel are no other to them, who neither do hear it, nor will they hear it; and they are like persons in a dry and thirsty land, vainly expecting a Messiah, who will never come. This may also be applied to all that obey not the Gospel of Christ, who will be punished with everlasting destruction from his presence, and shall not have a drop of cold water allowed them to cool their tongue. The allusion may be thought to be to the Jews, that murmured and rebelled against God, and vexed his Spirit in the wilderness, where their carcasses fell; and so dwelt in a dry land, and entered not into rest, or the land of Canaan. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, render it, "in graves"; Apollinarius paraphrases it,

"he bringeth the dead out of the graves to light."

Psalms 68:7

Ver. 7. O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people,.... In the pillar of cloud, and in the pillar of fire, as the Targum adds; and this divine Person was the Son of God, the Angel of his presence, in whom his name was, even his name JAH or Jehovah before mentioned;

when thou didst march through the wilderness; at the head of the Israelites, leading, guiding, and directing them; providing for them all things necessary, and protecting them against their enemies. And so Christ goes before his people, as they pass through the wilderness of this world; and does the like good offices for them, until he, as the great Captain of their salvation, brings them safe to glory: for what is here said is taken notice of as a resemblance of what he now does, or has done, under the Gospel dispensation, to which this psalm belongs; particularly of his marching through the wilderness of the Gentile world, in the ministry of the word by his apostles, wherein he went forth conquering and to conquer.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 68:8

Ver. 8. The earth shook,.... Not only about Sinai, but in other places; see Ps 114:1. It may also design the dread and trembling of the inhabitants of the earth, when they heard of the wonderful things God did for his people, Ex 15:14;

the heavens also dropped at the presence of God; the Targum supplies, dew; to which may be added, quails and manna: though it rather seems to design a large shower of rain, which followed the lightning and thunder, when the law was given;

[even] Sinai itself [was moved] at the presence of God, the God of Israel: it is said to quake greatly, Ex 19:18. The words of this verse and Ps 68:7 seem to be borrowed out of the song of Deborah, **Jud 5:4**. Like effects followed the promulgation of the Gospel, even a shaking of the heavens and of the earth as an emblem of the removing of the ceremonial rites and Mosaic ordinances. Let it be observed, that Christ, who went before the Israelites in the wilderness, and whom they tempted and rebelled against, is called the God of Israel.

Psalms 68:9

Ver. 9. Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain,.... Not of water literally taken, as when the Israelites passed through the sea, Ps 77:17; or when the thunderings and lightnings were on Mount Sinai, at the giving of the law, which are commonly attended with rain, Ex 19:16; or in the land of Canaan, which was the land that drank in the water of the rain of heaven, De 11:11; nor the rain of manna and of quails, as Arama, Ex 16:4; but either the effusion of the Holy Spirit, ordinary or extraordinary; that, on the day of Pentecost, in consequence of Christ's ascension, prophesied of in this psalm, was a "plentiful" one indeed; when the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost, and baptized with it: yea, the ordinary measure of the Spirit's grace in conversion is abundant, and exceeding abundant; it is shed abundantly through Christ, and superabounds sin, and may be called, as the words here signify, "a rain of liberalities" {s}, or a free and liberal rain; for it comes from the free grace of God, and makes those on whom it descends a willing people in their obedience. The Spirit of God is a free Spirit; and, where he is, there is liberty, in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty. Or else the ministration of the Gospel {t} is meant; which is compared to rain, De 32:2. This, especially in the first times of the Gospel, was a very large and plentiful one; it being sent all over the world, and brought forth fruit in every place: this was also a "liberal" one, flowed from the free grace of God; the subject of it is free grace; and the tendency and effect of it are, to make men free from the bondage of the law, and the spirit of bondage which that induces. The Targum is,

"thou hast let down the dews of quickening, and the rains of good pleasure;"

grace, or free favour;

whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance when it was weary; that is, the church, as the Targum explains it; the inheritance of Christ, which he has chosen, the Father has given him, and he possesses: the people of God, "weary" with the burdensome rites and ceremonies of the law; with their own sins and corruptions, a burden too heavy for them to bear; with the sins of others, among whom they dwell; with the temptations of Satan, with which they are annoyed; with the persecutions of the men of the world, which make them weary sometimes, and faint in their minds; and with the common afflictions of life, which often make them weary of life itself. Now, by the plentiful ministration of the doctrines of the Gospel, accompanied with the Spirit and grace of God, the hearts of the Lord's people are refreshed, as the weary, dry, and thirsty land, is with a comfortable shower of rain; and by it weary souls have rest, or at least are directed by it to Christ, where they find it: and as the earth is "prepared" {u}, as the word used signifies, by rain, for the nourishment of plants; so is the church by the Gospel, whose plants are an orchard of pomegranates, for the reviving and fructifying of those who are planted in it; whereby they appear to be trees of righteousness, and the planting of the Lord; and so are confirmed, settled, and established in the house of God, and in the truths of the Gospel.

{s} twbdn Mvg "pluviam munificentiarum", Montanus; "vel liberalitatum", Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth; to the same purpose the Tigurine version, Cocceius, Junius & Tremellius. {t} "Dicitur de pluvia", Psal. lxviii. 10. "quae effusionem Spiritus sancti, et praeconium evangelii designat". Stockius, p. 660. {u} htnnwk "parasti eam", Michaelis; "praeparas", Gejerus.

Psalms 68:10

Ver. 10. Thy congregation hath dwelt therein,.... That is, in the Lord's inheritance, in the midst of his church and people. The word for "congregation" signifies "beasts" or "living creatures" {w}: some understand them of the Gentiles, who, before the Gospel came among them, were comparable to such; but, under the Gospel dispensation, being called and taken out by it, were put among the people of God, and dwelt in his inheritance. Though, without any limitation, it may be applied to all that are quickened and made alive by the grace of God; to all that are written among the living in Jerusalem; and particularly to the ministers of the Gospel, who are signified by the four living creatures, in Ezekiel's vision and in John's Revelation; though not to the exclusion of any living believer, who has a name and a place here, and who are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God:

thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor; blessings of goodness, spiritual blessings, blessings of grace and of glory; which flow from divine goodness, are in themselves good, and in their effects; and these were prepared in the covenant of grace and in Christ from all eternity; and that for persons poor and mean, indigent and helpless; and so the goodness of God in preparing them appears to he free and unmerited. The Targum is,

"thou hast prepared an host of angels to do good to the poor of God."

Arama interprets it of the manna.

{w} Ktyx ta zwa sou, Sept. "animalia tua", V. L. so Eth. Syr. Arab. & Cocceius; "pecus tuum", Musculus, and some in Vatablus.

Psalms 68:11

Ver. 11. The Lord gave the word,.... The word of the Gospel to his apostles. He committed the word of reconciliation to them; he intrusted them with it, as a sacred depositum; he gave gifts unto them, qualifying them for the ministration of it; he gave them a commission to preach it; and he gave them a door of utterance to speak it as it should be, and an opportunity to publish it. The Targum wrongly interprets it of the word of the law;

great [was] the company of those that published [it]; there were in our Lord's time twelve apostles and seventy disciples, who were sent out to preach the Gospel; and many more in the times of the apostles, and since. The word for "company" signifies an "army" {x}: Christ's ministers are soldiers, and war a good warfare; they have weapons which are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God, and they are made to triumph in Christ in every place. And the word rendered "those that published" is in the feminine gender; not as suggesting that women would be preachers of the Gospel under the New Testament dispensation, for that is forbidden, 1Co 14:34; but in allusion to the custom of women in Israel publishing the victories obtained by their armies and generals; see 1Sa 18:7; and it may be it is used to denote the weakness of Gospel ministers in themselves, who have the treasure of the word put into their earthen vessels, that the power may appear to be of God, and not of man; so ministers are called maidens, **Pr 9:3**; and this same word is used of them in Isa 40:9. And it may be observed, that notwithstanding it is of the said gender, yet it is by the Targum interpreted of men, thus;

"but Moses and Aaron evangelized the word of God to the great army of Israel."

And it may also be observed, that this word twrvbmh, which signifies a "publishing of good news", is derived from a root which signifies "flesh" denoting, that the good tidings of the Gospel, or of peace and pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation, published in it, are by an incarnate Saviour, or through his assumption of our flesh, and suffering in it.

{x} abu "exercitus", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Cocceius.

Psalms 68:12

Ver. 12. Kings of armies did flee apace,.... Or "they fled, they fled" {y}; or "they flee, they flee". This is either the subject matter of the word "published", the words of the publishers so saying; or the effect of the publication of the Gospel: for though some, by these kings of armies, understand the apostles either fleeing from place to place because of persecution, or running to and fro, as they interpret the words, to spread the Gospel; yet they rather intend the enemies of the Gospel, and the chief of them that opposed themselves to it; namely, Roman emperors and kings, and who fled before it; particularly at the time of the downfall of Paganism, when they fled to the mountains and hills, and called upon them to hide them from Christ, **Re 6:15**;

and she that tarried at home divided the spoil; the church, compared to a woman that keeps at home, **Tit 2:5**, who shared in the spoils token out of the hands of Satan, and from among the Gentiles, even converted souls, brought unto her. What is promised to Christ, Isa 53:12; is said of the church; she being made more than a conqueror through him, and sharing in all his victories and spoils. It denotes the certain and easy success of the Gospel ministry, attended with a divine power, and the advantages thereof to the church of Christ; this was particularly true of the church in the times of Constantine.

{y} Nwddy Nwddy "fugiebant, fugiebant", Pagninus, Montanus; "fugerunt, fugerunt", Tigurine version, Musculus.

Psalms 68:13

Ver. 13. Though ye have lain among the pots,.... Kimchi takes these words to be the words of the women, or of the psalmist addressing the Israelites going out to war; that though they should lie in a low, dark, and disagreeable place, in the camp, in the open field, exposed to wind and weather; yet they should be fair and beautiful, and be loaded with gold and silver, the spoil of the enemy. But Fortunatus Scacchus {z} refers them, much better, to the encampment of the Israelites in their tents, and to the disposition and order of their army going to battle: the body of the army in the middle, and the two wings, right and left, on each side; whose glittering armour of gold and brass, the rays of the sun striking on them, are fitly resembled by the colours on the wings and back of a dove. Another learned writer {a} thinks they are an address to the wings of the dove; that is, to the dove itself, meaning the Holy Spirit, expostulating with him how long he would dwell within the limits and borders of the land of Canaan; which was not long after the ascension of Christ, for soon was the gift of the Holy Ghost poured down upon the Gentiles, But rather they are an address to the people of Israel; intimating, that though they had been in adversity, and their lives had been made bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field; and had lain among the brick kilns and furnaces when in Egypt; and in the times of the Judges had suffered much from their neighbours, by whom they were frequently carried captive; and had been in affliction in the times of Saul; yet now in prosperous circumstances in the times of David, who had conquered their enemies, and enlarged their dominions, and restored peace; and especially would be more so in the days of Solomon, when they enjoyed great plenty and prosperity, and silver was made to be as the stones of the street. Though it is best of all to apply the words to the church and people of God in Gospel times; and they may describe their state and condition by nature and by grace, in adversity and in prosperity: the former in this clause, in which there is an allusion to scullions, or such as lie among coppers and furnaces, and are black and sooty; and so it describes the Lord's people before conversion, who are black with original sin and actual transgressions; who being transgressors from the womb, and as long as they live and walk in sin, and have their conversation with the men of the world, may be said to lie among the pots: and this may also be expressive of the church of Christ being in adversity, and black with the sun of persecution smiting her; and she might be said to lie among the pots while the ten Heathen persecutions lasted, and also in the reign of antichrist; during which time the church is in the wilderness, and the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth;

[yet shall they be as] the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold: alluding to the white silver colour of some doves. Such were the white doves Charon of Lampsacum speaks of {b}, seen about Athos, which

were like the white crow Ovid calls {c} the silver fowl with snowy wings: and also it may be to the time when they become of a golden colour, at which time they are fit for sacrifice, as the Jews {d} observe; or to the different appearances of them, according as the rays of light and of the sun differently fall upon them. So the philosopher {e} observes, that the necks of doves appear of a golden colour by the refraction of light. And this describes the saints and people of God as they are by grace. They are comparable to the dove on many accounts: like doves of the valleys, everyone of them mourn for their iniquities; like the trembling and fearful dove, tremble at the apprehensions of divine wrath, and judgment to come under first convictions; and are fearful of their enemies, and of their own state; are humble, modest, and meek; think the worst of themselves, and the best of others; flee to Christ for refuge, and to ordinances for refreshment; are chaste and affectionate to Christ, and harmless and inoffensive in their lives and conversations, **Eze 7:16**. Being "as the wings of a dove covered with silver" may denote the purity of doctrine held by them; the words of the Lord being as silver purified seven times, Ps 12:6; and the preciousness and sincerity of their faith, by which they mount up with wings as eagles; and the holiness of their conversation, being as becomes the Gospel of Christ: and being as the "feathers" of a dove covered "with yellow gold" may denote their being adorned with the graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love; which are more precious than gold that perisheth, and are called chains of gold, **So 1:10**; see **1Pe 1:7**; or their being clothed with the righteousness of Christ, signified by gold of Ophir, and clothing of wrought gold, Ps 45:9; or their being enriched with the unsearchable, solid, substantial, and durable riches of Christ, **Re 3:18**. And both may describe also the prosperous estates of the church, either in the first ages of Christianity, when she was clothed with the sun, and had a crown of twelve stars on her head, Re 12:1; or in the latter day, when her light will be come, and the glory of the Lord will rise upon her; when her stones will be laid with fair colours, and her foundations with sapphires; when she shall, have the glory of God upon her, and be as a bride adorned for her husband,
Isa 60:1.

{z} Elaeochrism. Sacr. l. 3. c. 24. {a} Gusset. Comment. Heb. p. 884. {b} Apud Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 1. c. 15. {c} Metamorph. l. 2. Fab. 7. {d} Maimon. Issure Mizbeach, c. 3. s. 2. {e} Aristotel. de Color. c. 3. Vid. Lucret. l. 2. v. 800.

Psalms 68:14

Ver. 14. When the Almighty scattered kings in it,.... His inheritance, his congregation, the church, Ps 68:9. Which some understand of his diffusing, and spreading and giving, in large numbers, ministers and preachers of the Gospel, pastors and teachers; who are kings and spiritual governors, are over churches, and have the rule over them in the Lord: and so Jarchi interprets them of the disciples of the wise men. Or they may be understood of the Lord's bringing into his churches such as are made kings and priests unto God, and in whose hearts grace reigns; and even of kings, in a literal sense, who will be brought into the church in the latter day, Isa 49:23. Though they may be interpreted of wicked kings, and the destruction of them "by it" {f}, the dove, the church of Christ; which will be done at the battle of Armageddon, at which time we read of the church being clothed in white, as follows; see Re 16:14. The name of "Almighty" well agrees with Christ, **Re 1:8**; or "Shaddai", who is sufficient, all sufficient; and whose grace is sufficient for his people, 2Co 12:9;

it was [white] as snow in Salmon; a mountain near to Shechem, **Jud 9:48**; which seems to have had its name from the shady trees upon it; and which also, as it seems from hence, was sometimes covered with snow; as was Lebanon, so called from the whiteness of the snow on it; and Olympus is called snowy by Homer, from the snow continually on it {g}. Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it, "in darkness", or "in the shadow of death"; denoting, as Ainsworth observes, light in darkness; joy in tribulation: but rather it may design the purity of the church and people of God, through the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them, which is as fine linen, clean and white; and through his pardoning blood, whereby their scarlet and crimson sins are as white as wool, as white as snow; and through the sanctifying grace of the Spirit, by which they are washed and cleansed, and made all glorious within; and through the holiness of their lives and conversations, they hating the garment spotted with the flesh; and washing their garments, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb: or they may be said to be so, as having got the victory over all their enemies; and especially this will be the case when the kings of the earth will be scattered and destroyed by the Almighty Saviour, **Re 7:9**.

{f} hb "per eam, vel propter eam", Gejerus. {g} Iliad. c. v. 420. & 18. v. 615.

Psalms 68:15

Ver. 15. The hill of God [is as] the hill of Bashan,.... The church is the hill of God, an excellent and supereminent one, and in which he dwells, as is said in

Ps 68:16; called an hill for its visibility, and especially as it will be in the latter day, when it will be established and exalted above the mountains and hills, the kingdoms of this world, **Isa 2:2**; this is compared to the hill of Bashan for fertility and fruitfulness; hence we read of the kine and bulls, the rams and lambs, and fatlings of Bashan, and of the oaks thereof, De 32:14 **Isa 2:13**; the ordinances of the church are green pastures, where his people become fat and flourishing,
Ps 23:2;

an high hill, [as] the hill of Bashan; or "an hill of eminences" {h}; it had several tops, or little hills that rose up from it; so the church of Christ, though but one hill or church in general, yet there are several little hills belong unto it, or particular congregational churches, of which it consists: for "a mountain abounding with cheese" {i}; which fed much cattle, and these produced much milk, of which large quantities of cheese were made, and so is expressive of the fruitfulness of it.

{h} Mynnbg rh "mons gibborum", Montanus; "vel eminentiarum", Gejerus; "monte frequente gibbis", Junius & Tremellius; "mons fastigiorum", Cocceius.
{i} "Mons qui caseis abundat", Tigurine version.

Psalms 68:16

Ver. 16. Why leap ye, ye high hills?.... Meaning the kingdoms of this world that lift up themselves above, and look with contempt upon the interest, kingdom, and church of Christ; lie in wait for it, leap upon it, insult over it, and endeavour to crush and extirpate it; but all in vain; these high hills and mountains are nothing before Zerubbabel King of saints; his church is built on a rock, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it; the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands will become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth, and break in pieces and consume the kingdoms of it: the word dur, in, the Arabic language, signifies "to lie in wait", as Jarchi from R. Moses Hadarsan observes; and to look out, and leap upon the prey; so R. Hai in Ben Melech says, it has the signification of looking, observing, hoping, or waiting, in the Arable language {k};

[this is] the hill [which] God desireth to dwell in; as in
Ps 132:13; the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; the essential Word, the Messiah: his desire was towards his church and people, in eternity, in time, and now is; he has chosen and desired them for his habitation, and in the midst of

them he delights to be, **Re 1:13**;

yea, the Lord will dwell [in it] for ever: he dwells in his church now by his gracious presence; he will dwell in the New Jerusalem church state personally for the space of a thousand years; and after that he will dwell with and among his people to all eternity; see Ps 132:14.

{k} "Ratzad, insidiatus fuit, uti praedae leo", Golius, col. 991. Castel. col. 3633.

Psalms 68:17

Ver. 17. The chariots of God [are] twenty thousand,.... By which are meant the angels, as the following clause shows; called "chariots", because they have appeared in such a form, **2Ki 2:11**; and because, like chariots of war, they are the strength and protection of the Lord's people; and because of their swiftness in doing his work; and because they are for his honour and glory: they are the chariots of God, in which he rides about the world doing his will; they are the chariots in which Christ ascended up to heaven, and in which he will descend at the last day; and in which he now fetches the souls of his people to him at death, and will make use of them at the resurrection to gather them to him, when their bodies are raised by him: their number is very great, and in other places is mentioned as greater, **Da 7:10**; Christ speaks of twelve legions of them,
Mt 26:53; there is a multitude of them, and they are said to be even innumerable, **Lu 2:13**; which is observed, both for the glory of God, and for the safety of his people: even "thousands of angels"; the word for "angels" is only used in this place; Kimchi and Ben Melech take it to be one of the names of angels by which they were called: some derive it from a word which signifies "peaceable [and] quiet"; as expressive of the tranquil state in which they are in heaven, always beholding the face of God there: others from a word which signifies "sharp", as Jarchi; and so refers to their being the executioners of God's wrath and vengeance on men, and alluding to a sort of chariots with sharp hooks used in war: others from a word which signifies to "second"; these being the second, or next to God, the chief princes; or, as Aben Ezra, it denotes the number of angels, even "two thousand"; so the Targum,

"the chariots of God are two myriads (or twenty thousand) of burning fires, two thousand of angels lead them;"

the Lord [is] among them [as in] Sinai, in the holy [place]; that is, at the head of them, being their Governor and Commander, at whose beck they are, and ready to do his will; and he was among them when he ascended to heaven, as it follows, being carried up by them; as he was among them at Sinai, when the law was given; for Christ was there then, **Ac 7:38**; and attended with ten thousands of his holy angels, by whom the law was ordained, spoken, and given, De 33:2 **Heb 2:2**; which Sinai is called the holy place, from the presence of God there, and the law given from it: or else the sense is, that Christ is among the angels as in Sinai of old; so in the holy place, in Sion his holy hill, the church under the Gospel dispensation, where there are an innumerable company of angels, Heb 12:22; according to the construction of the word in the Hebrew text, it seems as if Sinai was in the holy place, the inside of it being of cedar, like the Shittim wood that grew about Sinai {l}; or rather the worship commanded and directed to on mount Sinai was performed in it.

{l} Vid. Texelii Phoenix, l. 3. c. 7. p. 281.

Psalms 68:18

Ver. 18. Thou hast ascended on high,.... Which is to be understood, not of Moses ascending up to the firmament, as the Targum and Jarchi interpret it, of which we nowhere read; nor of David's going up to the high fortresses, as Aben Ezra; nor of God's ascent from Mount Sinai; but of Christ's ascension to heaven, as the apostle cites and explains it in **Eph 4:8**; which ascension respects him as man, was not figurative, as in Ge 17:22; but real and local, from earth to heaven, and was certain and visible; he was seen to go up by angels and men; and, because of the certainty of it, it is here expressed in the past tense, though it was then future;

thou hast led captivity captive; meaning either such who had been captives, in which sense the word is used, Ps 126:1; and so may design either those who had been prisoners in the grave, but were set free at Christ's resurrection, and went with him in triumph to heaven; or all his people, whom he redeemed by his blood from that captivity and bondage they were in by nature; or rather those who led them captive are here meant by "captivity"; such as sin, Satan, the world, death, and every spiritual enemy, whom Christ conquered and triumphed over; the allusion may be to public triumphs, when captives were led in chains, even kings and great men, that had captivated others: the words seem to be borrowed out of **Jud 5:12**;

thou hast received gifts for men; the gifts of the Holy Spirit, qualifying men for the ministry of the Gospel, as they are interpreted by the Apostle, **Eph 4:11**; these Christ received from his divine Father in human nature, when he ascended up to heaven, in order to give them to men; and which he did in a very extraordinary manner on the day of Pentecost. The Targum and Syriac version render it, "thou hast given gifts to men"; and the Arabic version, "and he gave gifts to men", as the apostle, **Eph 4:8**;

yea, [for] the rebellious also; disobedient and unbelieving {m}, as all men are by nature, even God's elect, before conversion, **Tit 3:3**; who are not only called by grace, and have the blessings of grace bestowed upon them; but some of them have gifts given them, whereby they are fitted to preach the Gospel to others, as Saul, the blasphemer, persecutor, and injurious; and some of those among the Jews, that were concerned in the crucifixion of Christ: though some think the Gentiles are intended, on whom the Holy Spirit was poured forth after our Lord's ascension; and so the Targum interprets it of the rebellious, who become proselytes, and return by repentance;

that the Lord God might dwell [among them]; that is, that they, by the gifts and graces of the Spirit bestowed on them, might become a fit habitation for God; or that "they", the rebellious, being now partakers of the grace of God and his gifts, "might dwell [with] the Lord God" {n} in his churches; enjoy his divine presence, and have communion with him in his word and ordinances.

{m} Myrdwo apeiyountev Sept. "non credentes", V. L. {n} Nkvl "ut habitent cum Jah, Jehovah", Piscator; "cum Deo", Gejerus; "ut habitent pulchritudinem Dei", Cocceius.

Psalms 68:19

Ver. 19. Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us [with benefits],.... With all spiritual blessings, with an abundance of grace, as well as with temporal mercies, for which he is, and ought to be, praised day by day: so Aben Ezra and Kimchi supply the text, and suppose the word "blessings" or "goodness" to be wanting; though the words may be rendered, "blessed be the Lord day by day, he will hear us", or "carry us" {o}; as a father his child, or a shepherd his lambs; and so he does from the womb, even to hoary hairs; and therefore blessing and praise should be ascribed to him; see Isa 46:3; or "he will put a burden upon us" {p}; meaning the burden of afflictions: these are of the Lord's laying upon his people; and he will lay no more upon them than he will enable them to bear; and will, in his own time and way, deliver them from them, and be the author of salvation to them, as follows; and therefore his name is to be praised, 1Co 10:13; the Targum interprets it of the burdensomeness of the law;

"blessed be the Lord every day, he burdens us, adding precepts unto precepts;"

[even] the God of our salvation; the author of temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation, as Christ is.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{o} wnl omey "portal nos", Vatablus, Musculus; "bajulat nos", Cocceius. {p} "Onus imponit nobis", Lutherus, Gejerus.

Psalms 68:20

Ver. 20. [He that is] our God,.... Or "God for us" {q}; is on our side; and is the mighty God, able to save to the uttermost;

[is] the God of salvation; or "God for salvations" {r}; for the obtaining of them for his people, and giving them to them, even of every kind;

and unto God the Lord [belong] the issues from death; deliverance from it; Christ has abolished it, and him that had the power of it; has delivered himself from it, and will deliver all his people from it, though they become subject to it, as well as from eternal death; for he has the keys of hell and death in his hands. Some render the words, "to God the Lord belong the issues", or "ways unto death" {s}; he has various ways of bringing persons to death, of destroying his and his people's enemies; and so Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi interpret it; though the following words seem to be opposed to these: the Heathens had a notion that the power of death belonged to God; hence they had a deity called the god of death, "Dites" {t}.

{q} wnl lah "Deus nobis, vel est nobis", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator. {r} twevwml la "Deus ad salutes", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {s} twauwt twml "ad mortem exitus", Pagninus, Montanus; "mille viae laethi", Lucan. {t} Macrob. in Somn. Scip. l. 1. c. 11.

Psalms 68:21

Ver. 21. But God shall wound the head of his enemies,.... Him who is the chief of his enemies, even Satan the prince of devils, the god of the world, the father of the wicked Jews, all enemies of Christ; to "wound" is the same as to bruise him, as in **Ge 3:15**; and so the Targum here,

"but God shall break the head of his enemies;"

disappoint his schemes, blast his designs, crush his power and authority, demolish his empire, and eternally destroy him with the fire prepared for him and his angels; and the same may be applied to the man of sin, and all other enemies of Christ, who is the divine Person here, and all along, spoken of; see Ps 110:6;

[and] the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses; by whom may be meant antichrist: Jarchi interprets it of Esau, who was an hairy man, and a figure of antichrist: and his hairy scalp may denote his fierceness and cruelty, appearing like a savage beast, drinking the blood of the saints; and like a thief and a robber, who used to let their hair grow long, shagged, and entangled, to strike terror into men they met with, **Job 5:5**; and also his pride and haughtiness; he exalting himself above all that is called God, and opening his mouth in blasphemy against him: and likewise it signifies his great power and authority, he having people, kingdoms, and nations, depending upon him, as hair on the head, and subject to him: and of him it may be truly said, that he "goes on still in his trespasses"; in tyranny, idolatry, superstition, and will worship; taking no notice of what God says by his witnesses, nor any warning by what the eastern empire suffered by the Turks and Saracens; so as to repent of the works of his hands, of worshipping idols of gold, silver, brass, and wood; nor of his murders, sorceries, fornications, and thefts; but still persisting in them, until his, and the sins of his followers, reach to heaven, **Re 9:20**; but the God-man, Christ Jesus, will give him a deadly wound, of which he shall never be healed: this also holds true of all that persist in a sinful course of life without repentance; who are workers of iniquity, whose lives are one continued series of sinning; these will be punished by Christ with everlasting destruction.

Psalms 68:22

Ver. 22. The Lord said,.... Within himself, in his own heart; he resolved upon it in his mind; or he said it in council and in covenant; he undertook and engaged to do what follows; or he spoke of it in promise and in prophecy, as what would be done;

I will bring again from Bashan; as he delivered his people from Og king of Bashan formerly, Nu 21:33; so he purposed and promised to ransom them out of the hands of him that was stronger than they; to recover them from the strong man armed, and deliver them from the power of darkness, and translate them into his own kingdom, and save them from all the bulls of Bashan; see Ps 22:12; to which text Jarchi refers in the exposition of this; though some understand it of the fat and great ones of the earth, of the conversion of kings and princes,
Ps 22:29;

I will bring [my people] again from the depths of the sea; out of the most wretched and desperate condition, out of the depths of sin and misery; out of an helpless and hopeless state, in which they were through the fall, and their actual transgressions: the allusion is to the bringing of the children of Israel through the Red sea, and out of the depths of it, unto dry land: the Targum interprets the whole of the resurrection of the righteous, whether devoured by wild beasts, or drowned in the sea; see Re 20:13; some interpret the passage of the Lord's gathering of his people, in the effectual calling, from the east and from the west; from the east, signified by Bashan; and from the west, by the depths of the sea; see Isa 43:5.

Psalms 68:23

Ver. 23. That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of [thine] enemies,.... This verse is in connection with Ps 68:21, with Ps 68:23 being to be read in a parenthesis: the sense is, that the Messiah would so wound the head and hairy scalp of his people's enemies, and there should be such a large effusion of blood, that their feet should be dipped therein, Re 14:20;
See Gill on "Ps 58:10";

[and] the tongue of thy dogs in the same; who should lick it up, as the dogs licked the blood of Jezebel, 1Ki 21:19; and so such a carnage will be made of antichrist and his followers, that the fowls of the heavens will be called upon to eat the flesh of kings, captains, and mighty ones, Re 19:17.

Psalms 68:24

Ver. 24. They have seen thy goings, O God,.... In saving his people, and destroying his enemies;

[even] the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary; the walk and conversation of Christ, when he was made flesh, and dwelt among men; his manner of life and deportment; his works and miracles, his sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead; all which his apostles were eyewitnesses of; as also his going up to heaven, which was visible to angels and men; likewise his progress and victorious expeditions in Judea, and in the Gentile world, by the ministry of the word, in which he went forth conquering, and to conquer; which sense is confirmed by the following words: for Christ, who is God over all, the Lord and God of his people, and King of saints, is here, as throughout the psalm, intended. The Targum interprets it of the path or goings of the divine Majesty upon the sea, which the house of Israel saw.

Psalms 68:25

Ver. 25. The singers went before,.... The apostles and ministers of the word, the sweet singers of Israel, the charmers that charm so very wisely: the Gospel is a joyful sound; it is like vocal music, harmonious and delightful; it is as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, as Ezekiel's ministry was, Eze 33:32; it is a voice of love, grace, and mercy, of peace, pardon, and righteousness, and of eternal life and salvation by Christ; it is as music in the ears of sensible souls, when sounded forth, and sung out clearly and distinctly by the faithful ministers of it. The allusion seems to be to singers going before armies, when marching to battle, or returning with victory; see 2Ch 20:21;

the players on instruments [followed] after; so the sweet strains of the Gospel, the melodious notes and distinguishing sounds of it, as well as the praises of God's people, are, in the New Testament, signified by harps, and men's playing upon them, **Re 5:8**;

amongst [them were] the damsels playing with timbrels; or "in the midst of the virgins playing [with] timbrels" {u}; or "beating on tabrets"; as women used to do when they met their kings returning from the conquest of their enemies; see 1Sa 18:6; these may be the pure and primitive churches of Christ, and the members thereof, rejoicing at the preaching of the Gospel, and praising God for the blessings of grace in it; in the midst of which the ministers of the word sung the new song of Gospel truths: and who may be compared to damsels or virgins for their beauty and comeliness through Christ; for their relation to him, being betrothed unto him; and for their strong and chaste affection for him; for their uncorruptness in doctrine and worship, and their uprightness in their lives and conversation, Re 14:4; the allusion may be to Miriam and the women with her at the Red sea, Ex 15:20; and the Targum interprets the whole verse of Moses and Aaron singing at the Red sea, and of Miriam and the women playing with timbrels.

{u} twmle Kwtb "in medio puellarum", Pagninus, Montanus; "inter puellas", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Cocceius, Gejerus.

Psalms 68:26

Ver. 26. Bless ye God in the congregations,.... This was what they said as they sung and played; they called upon the churches, and the members of them, and upon one another, to bless the Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh; not by invoking or bestowing a blessing on him, which cannot be, and of which he has no need; but by proclaiming him to be God over all, blessed for evermore, as he is in himself; and the perfections of his nature, by attributing all the blessings of nature, grace, and glory to him, in whom they are, and from whom they come; and by exercising faith upon him for them particularly, and for pardon, righteousness, supplies of grace, and everlasting salvation; and by giving him the glory of all, and ascribing blessing and honour to him on account of them; which should be done openly and publicly, in the several particular congregated churches of Christ; and this shows the psalm still refers to Gospel times, in which only such churches are;

[even] the Lord, from the fountain of Israel; or, "the Lord, [who is] of the fountain of Israel" {w}; that is, whose natural descent is from Israel, or Jacob, as Christ's was, according to the flesh, **Ro 9:5**; though some take this to be a description of the posterity of Jacob, those that go out from the fountain of Israel, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; see Isa 48:1; so the Tigurine version, and others; who are called upon to bless the Lord: but then it must be understood not of the carnal Israelites, they rejected the Messiah, Jesus, and called him accursed; but the spiritual seed of Jacob, whether Jews or Gentiles; Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile. The Targum, and so Jarchi, interpret it of the seed of Israel; compare with this **Lu 1:41**; the words may be read, "for", or "because of [the fountain of] Israel" {x}: God, who is the fountain of living

wafers; Christ, whose blood is the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; the Spirit, who, in the operations of his grace, is a well or fountain of living water, springing up unto eternal life; and all spiritual blessings, and the abundance of them, which the spiritual Israel of God enjoy, may be designed by this phrase; and so be considered as the reason why God the Lord is to be blessed. Some understand it of the Scriptures, from whence all divine knowledge, blessing, and praise are derived; and others of the heart, and the abundance of it, from whence, and not with the lips only, men should bless and praise the Lord.

{w} larvy rwqmm "qui est ex fonte Israelis", i.e. "natus ex semine Israelis", Tillius & Vitringa apud Michael {x} "Ob vel propter fontem lsrael", Gejerus.

Psalms 68:27

Ver. 27. There [is] little Benjamin, [with] their ruler,.... Or who is "their ruler" {y}; that is, in the congregations or churches, where he was a ruler; or in the procession, the triumphal progress of Christ in Judea, and in the Gentile world, by the ministry of the word; where the singers and players of instruments, and damsels with timbrels, went in order: for not the tribe of Benjamin is meant, called "little", because Benjamin was Jacob's younger son; or because it was greatly weakened and reduced at Gibeah, Jud 20:48; and was one of the smallest tribes in Israel; and Saul's family, who was the first king of Israel, the least in that tribe, **1Sa 9:21**; though the Targum interprets it of the tribe; and so Jarchi; but the Apostle Paul is here meant, who was of the tribe of Benjamin, Ro 11:1; was a young man when he was converted, **Ac 7:58**; as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions have it here; was "little" in stature, as is generally reported of him, and as his name "Paul" may be thought to signify, and might be given him on that account; see 2Co 10:10; and was little in his own eyes, less than the least of all saints, and the chief of sinners; one born out of due time, and unworthy to be called an apostle; as well as he was little and contemptible in the eyes of others; yet he was greatly honoured by Christ, had an authority from him, was a "ruler" in his churches; set in the first place there, made an apostle, and was an apostle of the Gentiles, and not a whit behind the very chief of the apostles; and he was a principal in this progress, and therefore is named first: he was a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ, and carry it into the Gentile world; he travelled and laboured more abundantly than the rest, and preached the Gospel fully from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, render it, "there was Benjamin the younger in an ecstasy", or trance, as the Apostle Paul was, **Ac 9:9**; but our version is best;

the princes of Judah, [and] their council; or "company", as Kimchi; their churches, or congregations over which they presided, or were the means of gathering; these were the apostles, some of which were of the tribe of Judah, of which tribe Christ was, and so must be those that are called his brethren, Mt 13:55; these were "princes", not only in common with other Christians, by adoption and regeneration, but by their office, being apostles, and over others in the Lord; and besides the church at Jerusalem, where James presided, there were other churches in Judea, which had spiritual guides and governors over them; see Heb 13:7; and so the Septuagint version, and those that follow it, render the words, "the princes of Judah, their governors"; and so Aben Ezra interprets them, and observes that "regem", in **Zec 7:2** so signifies; to which the sense of R. Menachem in Jarchi agrees, who renders it "their purpled ones"; so Cocceius; but Gussetius {z} renders it "their stoning"; who stoned those that preached the Gospel to them; see Mt 21:35; or stoned their enemies, conquered them; or "their stone" {a}, the Messiah, that sprung from Judah, Ge 49:24;

the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali; the rest of the apostles, who were of Galilee, in which country lay the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali: such as Peter, Andrew, James and John, Philip and Nathaniel, see **Mt 4:13**.

{y} Mdr "dominans eos", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus; "dominator eorum", Musculus: so Tigurine version, Cocceius. {z} Ebr. Comment. p. 777. {a} Vid. Teelman. Explic. Parabol. p. 312.

Psalms 68:28

Ver. 28. Thy God hath commanded thy strength,.... Which is either an apostrophe or an address to the Messiah, as in Ps 45:7; declaring, that as his God and Father had purposed and promised to send forth, so he had sent forth, the rod of his strength out of Zion, Ps 110:1; that is, his Gospel, both into the several cities of Judea, and into the Gentile world, where it was the power of God unto salvation, both to Jew and Gentile: or else these words are spoken to the churches and congregations, in whom the Lord's name was to be blessed; or to the princes, rulers, and governors of them before mentioned, showing that the Lord has made good his promise to them, that as their day was their strength should be; and it was owing to their being strengthened by him that they walked up and down in his name, doing his work, and preaching his Gospel, both to Jews and Gentiles: to which they reply by petition,

strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us; which, if understood of the apostles, princes, and rulers, refers to the work of preaching the Gospel, and the success of it, desiring it might be more and more confirmed; and to the settlement of Christianity in the Pagan world, and also to the work of the reformation from Popery in later times; compare with this **Re 3:2**; if of the churches, and the members thereof, it may respect the carrying on and finishing the work of grace in them. It is rendered "in us" by the Septuagint and others; see
Isa 26:12; for this work sometimes seems to be very low and weak, and needs strengthening, and it is God only that can do it, and he will do it, **1Pe 5:10**; and this shows that the grace of God is not only necessary at first conversion, but to be continued for the performing of the work of grace until the day of Christ.

Psalms 68:29

Ver. 29. Because of thy temple at Jerusalem,.... Not the material temple there, which was not in being in David's time, but was built by his son, and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar; and though it was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, repaired by Herod, and was the Messiah's temple, into which he entered as the Lord and proprietor of it, **Mal 3:1**; yet was quickly after his time demolished, and will never be rebuilt more; but the Messiah's spiritual temple, of which he is the builder, foundation, and cornerstone; the materials of which are believers in him, and it is for his service, worship, and glory: and "because of Jerusalem" {b}, as it may be translated: by which also the church of Christ is meant, which is the heavenly Jerusalem, the Jerusalem which is above, and free, the mother of us all, the city of the great King, the place of divine worship, and well fortified by the power and grace of God. The words may be rendered "above Jerusalem" {c}, and connected either with
Ps 68:28, and so point at the place, heaven, the temple and palace of the Messiah; from whence spiritual health and strength are desired, and may be expected; or with the following words, and the sense be, "from", or "out of thy temple in Jerusalem": even out of the material temple, the Gospel should be preached, as it was by the apostles on the day of Pentecost; and so the word of the Lord went out from thence, and from Jerusalem into Judea, and so into the Gentile world, where it is continued, and will be until the kings of the earth shall be converted, as follows;

shall kings bring presents unto thee: that is, such as should become Christians, as Constantine, and others, in the earlier ages of Christianity; who brought their riches and wealth to Christ, and into his church, with a design for the good and welfare of it, though it proved otherwise; and as many will in the latter day, who, being converted, will bring presents to the King Messiah, join his churches, and be their nursing fathers; see Ps 72:10; and who will bring their glory and honour, and that of the nations, into the New Jerusalem church state, Re 21:24; and it will be because of his church and people, and for their good and welfare, as well as for the glory and honour of Christ, that those presents will be brought; and which will not only be theirs, their good things, but themselves, whom they will present to the Lord, as living and acceptable sacrifices, Ro 12:1; the Targum is,

"out of thy temple thou shalt receive offerings; upon Jerusalem thy Shechinah dwells; out of their palaces kings shall bring unto thee sacrifices."

{b} Mlvwry le "propter Jeruschalaima", Junius & Tremellius. {c} "Super Jerusalaim", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

Psalms 68:30

Ver. 30. Rebuke the company of spearmen,.... Or, "of the reed" {d}; that is, men that use and fight with spears, like to reeds, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it. Aben Ezra says, that spears are so called in the Kedarene or Arabian language; and the Arabians use a sort of reed for a spear, as Mr. Castel out of Avicenna observes {e}, and Pliny {f} says they are used spears: or rather the words should be rendered, "rebuke", restrain, destroy "the wild beast", or "beasts of the reed" {g}; as the Syriac, Septuagint, and Vulgate Latin versions, and others, render it: the allusion is to such kind of creatures as lions in the thickets of Jordan; See Gill on "Jer 49:19"; and the behemoth, that lies under the covert of reeds, Job 40:21; or as the crocodile in the river Nile, and other rivers of Egypt, which abounded with flags and reeds, in which such creatures lay; see Isa 19:6; perhaps the hippopotamus, or river horse, is referred to; so may design an insidious, cruel, and tyrannical prince; such an one as Pharaoh king of Egypt, Isa 27:1; a type of antichrist, and who seems to be here meant; for as Rome, for its wickedness, cruelty, and idolatry, is spiritually called Egypt, Re 11:8; so the Romish antichrist is the beast ascending out of the bottomless pit; and is an insidious creature, lies in wait to deceive, puts on the mask and visor of Christianity; has two horns, like a lamb in his ecclesiastic capacity; lies covered with the reeds of the traditions, inventions, and the doctrines of men; and teaches men to trust in the staff of a broken reed, in their own merits, and the merits of others. Jarchi interprets it of

Esau, who is like to a wild boar that dwells among the reeds; and the Talmud {h} interprets it of a beast that dwells among reeds, and the gloss explains it of the nation of Amalek; the Turks, according to some, are meant;

the multitude of bulls; the secular powers of the beast of Rome; the antichristian states, their kings and princes, comparable to these creatures for their great strength, power, and authority, and for their fierceness and furiousness in persecuting the people of God: these are horned creatures, the ten horns of the beast, in his civil and secular capacity, with which he pushes at the saints, casts them down, and tramples upon them; see Ps 22:13; compared with
Re 19:18;

with the calves of the people; or the people, comparable to calves for their weakness, folly, and stupidity; these are the common people under the government and influence of the kings and princes of the earth; the people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, over whom the antichristian harlot sits, rules, and reigns: this phrase shows that the whole is to be taken, not in a literal, but figurative, sense;

[till everyone] submit himself with pieces of silver; that is, rebuke them by thy word, or by thy providences, until they become sensible of their sins, repent of them, and submit themselves to Christ; and bring with them their wealth and substance, and lay it at his feet for the use of his interest, as a testification of their subjection to him: but as this is not to be expected from the persons before described, at least not from everyone of them, the words require another sense, and are to be considered as a continued description of the persons to be rebuked, and may be rendered, even everyone "that treads with pieces of silver" {k}; that walks proudly and haughtily, being decorated with gold and silver on their garments; so the Romish antichrist is said to be decked, his popes, cardinals, and bishops, with gold and precious stones, Re 17:4; or "everyone that humbles himself for pieces of silver" {l}, as the word is rendered in **Pr 6:3**; that lies down to be trampled upon for the sake of temporal advantage; and so it describes the parasites and flatterers of the man of sin, who crouch unto him, take his mark in their hands or foreheads, that they may be allowed to buy and sell; all these, it is desired, God would rebuke, not in love, but with flames of fire, as he will sooner or later; for when the kings of the earth are become Christians, as in Ps 68:29, God will put it into their hearts to hate the whore, and burn her flesh with fire;

scatter thou the people [that] delight in war; as antichrist, and the antichristian states, do: they take delight in making war with the saints, and in slaying of them, to whom power has been given so to do; with whose blood they have been made drunk, and have took as much pleasure in the shedding of it as a drunken man does in indulging himself to excess in liquor; but these in God's own time shall be scattered, when Christ the Lamb shall fight against them with the sword of his mouth, and shall utterly destroy them; see Re 13:7.

{d} hnq tyx "congregationem calami", Pagninus. {e} Lexic. Polyglott. col. 3376. {f} Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 36. {g} "Feram cannae", Montanus; "bestiam arundineti", Cocceius; "feram vel bestiam arundinis", Gejerus, Michaelis. {h} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 2. {k} oprtm "gloriantem se", Montanus, Vatablus; "calcantem", Rivet. {l} "Ob fragmina argenti", Gejerus.

Psalms 68:31

Ver. 31. Princes shall come out of Egypt,.... The Vulgate Latin and all the Oriental versions render it "ambassadors". This verse is a prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles, under the names of Egypt and Ethiopia; which will be at the same time that the kings of the earth will become Christians, and antichrist will be destroyed. The Gospel is said to be preached in Egypt by Mark the Evangelist; and no doubt but there were conversions there in the first times of the Gospel; but there will be more in the latter day; see Ps 87:3. Unless we understand this of kings and princes, that shall leave the communion of the church of Rome, which is spiritually and mystically Egypt, and join themselves with the true churches of see
Re 11:8. The conversion of every sinner is a coming out of Egypt; it is a call of them out of darkness and bondage, worse than that of Egypt, into light and liberty, when they are set among princes, even the princes of Christ's people;

Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God; the Gospel is said to be preached in Ethiopia by the Evangelist Matthew, and also by Matthias, who succeeded Judas in the apostleship; by means of whose ministry there is reason to conclude some were converted: and we have an instance of a famous Ethiopian, that was converted and baptized by Philip, **Ac 8:27**; and who very likely carried the Gospel into this country, and spread it: so that this prophecy began to have its fulfilment then, but will have a greater hereafter; see, Ps 87:4. All men are like Ethiopians, even God's elect, in a state of nature and unregeneracy: they are black with original sin and actual transgressions; and can no more remove this blackness than the Ethiopian can change his skin, Jer 13:23. They are, like them, idolaters, serving divers lusts and pleasures, the idols of their own hearts; are in a state of distance, afar off from God and Christ, and from his people, word, and ordinances; and are enemies in their minds by wicked works, yea, enmity itself, and stretch out their hands against God; but when they are called and converted, and made sensible of their state, then they stretch out their hands unto God, as a gesture of sorrow, **Jer 4:31**; expressing their sorrow for sin, as committed against God, and because of the evil that is in it; and look to Christ, and stretch out their hands to him, whom they have pierced, and mourn; and as a prayer gesture, Job 11:13. For, as soon as a man is converted, he prays and cries to God for pardoning grace and mercy, and to be cleansed from his sin, and to be openly received into his favour, and to enjoy communion with him; and as the gesture of a man in the utmost danger, who stretches out, his hand to lay hold on anything to save him; and so a sinner, sensible of its danger, and seeing Christ and salvation in him, it stretches out its hand, lays hold on him, and will have him and no other to be its Saviour, and receives his righteousness, and grace out of his fulness; and as the gesture of one that is conquered, resigning up himself into the victor's hands, as a token of submission, peace, and reconciliation {m}; so sinners, in the day of Christ's power upon them, are made willing to submit and give up themselves to him. In the Hebrew text it is, "shall make her hands to run unto God" {n}; that is, with an offering, gold or some treasure, to bring it unto God, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it, which may very well be understood of the offering of themselves, as well as of the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise. The Targum is,

"the sons of Ham shall come, the great men out of Egypt, to be made proselytes; the children of Cush (or Ethiopia) shall run to stretch out their hands in prayer to God."

Jarchi's note is,

"and then when thou shalt destroy Esau (his posterity), and the King Messiah shall arise, they shall bring to thee gifts out of Ethiopia."

And so he owns this to be a prophecy of the Messiah; and so it is applied to the times of the Messiahs and to the nations bringing gifts to him, in the Talmud {o}, and other Jewish writings {p}.

{m} Vid. Caesar. Comment. de Bello Gallic. l. 7. c. 48. "Oremus pacem et dextras tendamus inermes". Virgil. Aeneid. 11. {n} Uyrt "faciet currere", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis. {o} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 2. {p} Shemot Rabba, s. 35. fol. 136. 4.

Psalms 68:32

Ver. 32. Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth,.... Not only the Egyptian and Ethiopian kingdoms, but all the kingdoms of the world; which will now be converted to Christ, and become his, even all the Papal, Pagan, and Mahometan kingdoms; see Re 11:15. These are called upon to sing songs and hymns of praise to Christ, who is God, for redemption by him, and salvation in him; and for their deliverance from all the darkness and delusions under which they formerly were;

O sing praises unto the Lord; the Lord of all, the Lord of lords, the Head of the church, and Saviour of the body; and whom those converted nations will acknowledge to be their Lord and King; and make their homage, and bring their tribute of praise to him, for breaking the antichristian yokes that were upon them, and freeing them from the tyranny and bondage with which they were oppressed: this will be fulfilled in the latter day; see Re 11:1.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 68:33

Ver. 33. To him that rideth upon the heaven of heavens, [which were] of old,.... Or "eastward" {q}; the first, second, and third heavens, which were created from the beginning of time by Christ himself, Ps 102:25 compared with **Heb 1:10**. These he rode upon when he ascended on high, even far above all heavens, as the apostle says, **Eph 4:10**; and so above the heaven of heavens, when he was made higher than they, and both Lord and Christ; and placed his throne in them, and from thence exercises his government over the whole world: and it may be observed, that it was from Mount Olivet, which was to the east of Jerusalem, that Christ ascended, and so to the eastern part of the heavens, **Ac 1:12**; see **Re 7:2**;

lo, he doth send out his voice; which is his Gospel, for that is the voice of Christ; which he utters by his ministers, and which his sheep, his people, hearken unto, and can distinguish from the voice of a stranger. This is a voice of love, grace, and mercy; it speaks of righteousness, peace, pardon, and salvation by him, and is very joyful and comfortable to hear. This he sent out by his apostles into all the earth, after his ascension to heaven; and which he has been, more or less, sending out in one place or another, by his ministers, ever since; and in the latter day will send it out more clearly, fully, and largely, by a set of ministers he will raise up for that purpose;

[and that] a mighty voice; or, "a voice of strength" {r}; a strong and powerful voice, such as the Gospel is, when accompanied with the power and Spirit of God. It is a soul shaking and awakening voice; it is an heartmelting and an heartbreaking one; it is a quickening and an enlightening voice; it quickens dead sinners, gives life unto them, and the entrance of it gives light to dark minds: it is a soul charming and alluring one; it draws to Christ, engages the affections to him, and fills with unspeakable delight and pleasure. The Targum interprets this of the voice of the spirit of prophecy; Aben Ezra understands this voice as saying what follows.

{q} Mdq "ab oriente", Pagninus; "ad orientem", V. L. so Sept. Eth. Syr. Arab.
{r} ze lwq "vocem fortitudinis", Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 68:34

Ver. 34. Ascribe ye strength unto God,.... The Messiah; by asserting him to be the mighty God, even the Almighty; by attributing works of strength and power to him: such as the creation of all things; upholding all things in their being; the redemption and preservation of his people; the resurrection of the dead, &c. by applying to him, and exercising faith on him for spiritual strength, and giving him the glory of it: so the Targum,

"give the glory of strength to God."

Moreover, this may be understood of ascribing dominion and power to him by the kingdoms of the earth, who are here addressed, when they shall be converted to him; and who, upon this enlargement of his kingdom, will be congratulated by his people, for taking to himself his great power and reigning, Re 11:15;

his excellency [is] over Israel; the spiritual Israel, such who are Israelites indeed. Over these his glorious Majesty in his kingdom rules; they are subject to him, and acknowledge him for their King; and among them is his Shechinah, or divine Presence. Or over Israel, literally understood; when they shall, as at this time the prophecy refers to, be all called, converted, and saved: they shall seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and he shall be

Prince over them;

and his strength [is] in the clouds; which are round about him, the chariots in which he rides, and in which he shows his strength; by sending forth from thence the rain of his strength, the terrible lightning and thunder. In these he went up to heaven, and in these he will come again to judgment. They may be mystically understood of the ministers of the Gospel, especially in the latter day, who may be compared to clouds for their numbers, they will then be many; for their swiftness in moving to and fro, and spreading the Gospel; and for their being full of the doctrines of grace, comparable to rain; see **Isa 5:6**. And the Lord's strength will be seen in them, who will greatly strengthen them to do their work; his strength will be made perfect in their weakness; the excellency of the power attending their ministrations, to the large conversion of sinners, will appear to be of God, and not of man.

Psalms 68:35

Ver. 35. O God, [thou art] terrible,.... In his judgments and acts of vengeance, on antichrist and the antichristian states; being the Lion of the tribe of Judah, that will break them to pieces as a potter's vessel: or "reverend" {s}; to be feared and worshipped by his saints;

out of thy holy places; both out of heaven, the habitation of his holiness, by angels and glorified saints there; and out of all his churches, the several assemblies of them, among whom he is greatly to be feared and adored: the Targum interprets it of the house of the sanctuary;

the God of Israel [is] he that giveth strength and power unto [his] people; his peculiar covenant people, his Israel he is the God of. These are weak, and encompassed about with infirmities; he has strength in himself for them; he has promised it to them, and he gives it to them as a pure gift and unmerited favour of his. It may be understood of the great degree of strength that will be given them in the latter day; when a small one shall be a strong nation, and the feeble shall be as David, and David as God, as the Angel of the Lord, Isa 60:21; and of the dominion and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven; which will be given to the saints of the most High, **Da 7:27**;

blessed [be] God: the psalm is concluded with an ascription of blessing to the Messiah, who is God blessed for evermore; and who, as Mediator, is the promised seed, in whom all nations were to be blessed, and now will be; see

Re 5:12.

{s} arwn "venerandus", Michaelis.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 69:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 69

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, [A Psalm] of David. Of the word "shoshannim", See Gill on "Ps 45:1", title. The Targum renders it,

"concerning the removal of the sanhedrim;"

which was about the time of Christ's death. The Talmudists {t} say, that forty years before the destruction of the temple, the sanhedrim removed, they removed from the paved chamber, &c. But it can hardly be thought that David prophesied of this affair; nor of the captivity of the people of Israel, as the Targum, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Arama, and R. Obadiah interpret it: and so Jarchi takes the word "shoshannim" to signify lilies, and applies it to the Israelites, who are as a lily among thorns. But not a body of people, but a single person, is spoken of, and in sorrowful and suffering circumstances; and, if the Jews were not blind, they might see that they are the enemies of the person designed, and the evil men from whom he suffered so much. And indeed what is said of him cannot be said of them, nor of any other person whatever but the Messiah: and that the psalm belongs to Christ, and to the times of the Gospel, is abundantly evident from the citations out of it in the New Testament; as

Ps 69:4 in Joh 15:25;
Ps 69:9 in **Joh 2:17**;
Ps 69:21 in Mt 27:34;
Ps 69:22 in Ro 11:9;
Ps 69:25 in **Ac 1:16**.

The inscription of the psalm in the Syriac version is,

""a psalm" of David, according to the letter, when Shemuah (Sheba), the son of Bichri, blew a trumpet, and the people ceased from following after him (David); but the prophecy is said concerning those things which the Messiah suffered, and concerning the rejection of the Jews."

And Aben Ezra interprets Ps 69:36 of the days of David, or of the days of the Messiah.

{t} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 8. 2. & Roshhashanah, fol. 31. 1, 2.

Ver. 1. Save me, O God,.... The petitioner is Christ; not as a divine Person, as such he is blessed for ever, and stands in no need of help and assistance; but as man, and in distressed and suffering circumstances. As a priest, it was part of his work to intercede, as well as to offer sacrifice; and though he did not offer a sin offering for himself, yet he offered up supplications, with strong cryings and tears; and, as the surety of his people, he prayed, in point of right and justice, both for himself and them; see Joh 17:4. The person petitioned is God the Father, who was able to save him, and always heard him; and did in this petition, **Heb 5:7**; which perfectly agrees with some petitions of Christ, recorded in the New Testament,
Joh 12:27. These show the weakness of the human nature, the weight of sin upon him, and his sense of the wrath of God; and which, notwithstanding, were made with limitations and restrictions, and even with a correction. Moreover, this may also design help and assistance from his divine Father, which was promised him, and he expected and had, in the acceptable time, in the day of salvation: and he was so saved in death, as that he abolished that, and destroyed him that had the power of it; and was quickly raised from the grave, and thereby saved out of it. And this he could have done himself, but he would be saved in a legal way, in a way of justice; and as a point of honour, when he had done the work, he, as a surety, engaged to do. The reasons enforcing this petition follow:

for the waters are come in unto [my] soul: the Messiah represents his case, in these words, and in Ps 69:2, as like to that of a man standing up to his chin in water, and the waters running into his mouth, just suffocating him; and that in a miry place, where he could not set his feet firm, nor get himself out; and even overflowed with the floods, and immersed in the deep waters, and so in the most imminent danger. These overwhelming waters may signify the floods of ungodly men that encompassed him, the assembly of the wicked that enclosed him; and the proud waters that went over his soul, the Gentiles and people of Israel, that were gathered against him to destroy him; and so the Targum interprets it of the camp of sinners, that pressed him on every side, as water: the whole posse of devils may also be designed, for now was the hour and power of darkness; Satan, and his principalities and powers, came in like a flood upon him, to swallow him up; innumerable evils, the sins of his people, came upon him from every quarter, and pressed him sore; the curses of the law fell upon him, which may be compared to the bitter water of jealousy that caused the curse. These entered into him, when he was made a curse for his people; and the wrath of God went over him, and lay hard upon him, and came about him like water, into his very soul, which made him exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

Psalms 69:2

Ver. 2. I sink in deep mire, where [there is] no standing,.... Which signifies not despair of mind, but difficult and distressed circumstances; the Messiah now bearing the filthy sins of his people, and the punishment of them, and so was got into the horrible pit, the mire and clay; See Gill on "Ps 40:2";

I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me: as afflictions are often compared to waters in Scripture, Christ's sorrows and sufferings are very aptly signified by deep waters and overflowing floods; and therefore rightly called a baptism, as by himself,
Lu 12:50, when he was as one immersed in and overwhelmed with water.

Psalms 69:3

Ver. 3. I am weary of my crying,.... In his distress; when, bearing the punishment both of loss and sense, he cried unto God; he prayed earnestly, with great intenseness and fervency of spirit; he offered supplications, with strong cryings and tears, insomuch that he calls it a roaring: and whereas there was a seeming delay of answer to his cries, he cried till he was weary of crying; and yet it is remarkable that his last cry was with a loud voice, which surprised the centurion; see Ps 22:1;

my throat is dried; with crying, so that he was hoarse; or "burnt" {u}; with inward heat of a fever, which usually attended persons crucified; see Ps 22:15;

mine eyes fail while I wait for my God; God the Father was the God of Christ, as he was man; he prepared a body for him, and anointed his human nature with the Holy Spirit; he supported and upheld him: and as such Christ loved him, believed in him, prayed to him, and waited and looked for help and salvation from him; this being delayed, his eyes failed with intense looking about for it, as well as with grief and tears. Ainsworth observes, that failing of the eyes is one of the curses of the law, Le 26:16, and it shows how in every thing Christ was made a curse for his people.

{u} rxn "adustum", Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 69:4

Ver. 4. They that hate me without a cause,.... As the Jews did; see Joh 15:18; for he did no injury to the persons or properties of men; but went about continually doing good, both to their souls and bodies; so that he merited their highest esteem and love, and not their hatred; and yet they were his implacable enemies; see Lu 19:14;

are more than the hairs of mine head; they were a multitude that came to take him in the garden; and it was the multitude that the priests and Pharisees instigated to ask for the release of Barabbas, and the crucifixion of Jesus; and a vast number of people followed him to the cross, and insulted him on it; the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together against him;

they that would destroy me; as the Jews sought to do often before his time was come;

[being] mine enemies wrongfully; without cause, as before; or through lies and falsehoods told of him, and spread about concerning him:

are mighty; lively and strong, as David's enemies were, Ps 38:19. The great men of the earth, kings and princes, as Herod and Pontius Pilate, and also the infernal principalities and powers, who were concerned in contriving those lies, and putting them into the minds of men; for Satan is the father of lies and falsehood;

then I restored [that] which I took not away; by rapine, force, and violence, as the word {w} signifies; and which was done by others. Thus, for instance, Christ restored the glory of God, of which he was robbed, and which was taken away by the sin of man; by veiling his own glory, not seeking that, but his Father's; and by working out the salvation of his people, in such a manner as that all the divine perfections were glorified by it; hence, "glory to God in the highest", **Lu 2:14**. He satisfied justice he had never injured, though others had; he fulfilled a law, and bore the penalty of it, which he never broke; and made satisfaction for sins he never committed; and brought in a righteousness he had not taken away; and provided a better inheritance than what was lost by Adam: and all this was done at the time of his sufferings and death, and by the means of them.

{w} ytlzg "rapui", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Psalms 69:5

Ver. 5. O God, thou knowest my foolishness,.... Not that there was real foolishness in him, who, as man, from his infancy was filled with wisdom, and increased in it; and, as Mediator, had the spirit of wisdom on him, and the treasures of wisdom in him; and, as a divine Person, he is the Wisdom of God, and the only wise God; and, as in our nature, there was no foolishness in his heart, nor in his words, nor in his actions: but this is to be understood either of what was accounted so by others; he and his followers were reckoned foolish and illiterate men, and the Gospel preached by him and his apostles was foolishness to them that perished; or of what he was charged with by his enemies; even with immorality, heresy, blasphemy, and sedition; of all which he was innocent, and therefore could appeal to his divine Father, who knows all things, that he was clear of all such folly; for it may be rendered, "thou knowest as to my foolishness" {x}, with respect to what he was charged with, that there was none in him; or else it regards the foolishness of his people imputed to him, the sin that folly of follies, together with all the foolishness in the heart, lip, and lives of his people, before and after conversion; these were all reckoned to him, and reckoned by him, as his own in some sense; and which is confirmed by what follows:

and my sins are not hid from thee; meaning not any committed by him; for then he could not have said what he does in Ps 69:4; but the sins of his people imputed to him, which be calls his own,
See Gill on "Ps 40:12": these must be known to his divine Father, since he is God omniscient, and since he laid them upon him, and he made satisfaction for them to him; and which he observes to enforce his petition, Ps 69:1; with this compare Isa 53:11.

{x} ytlwal "tu nosti ut res se habeat quoad stultitiam meam", Gussetius, p. 312.

Psalms 69:6

Ver. 6. Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake,.... Of their expectation of redemption and salvation by the Messiah, they have been waiting upon the Lord for; when they shall see him in suffering circumstances, and even dead and laid in the grave, without any hope of his rising again; which was the case of the two disciples travelling to Emmaus, Lu 24:19; whose trust in him, and expectation of him, as the Redeemer of Israel, were almost gone. The people of God, and believers in Christ, are described by such that "wait on the Lord"; for the coming of Christ, and salvation by him; who would be in danger of being put to shame and in confusion, when they should see him under the power of death and the grave; wherefore in this petition Christ addresses his divine Father as "the Lord God of hosts", of armies above and below, as God omnipotent; partly to encourage their trust and confidence in him, and partly to encourage his own faith as man, that this petition would be answered;

let not those that seek thee: in the word and ordinances, by prayer and supplication, with all their hearts, in Christ, in whom the Lord is only to be found, and for life and happiness:

be confounded for my sake; that is, through his sufferings and death, as before:

O God of Israel; the covenant God of the spiritual Israel, whom he has chosen, the Messiah redeems, and the Spirit makes Israelites indeed.

Psalms 69:7

Ver. 7. Because for thy sake I have borne reproach,.... Being reckoned a sinner, called a deceiver, said to be a Samaritan, and to have a devil; with many other reproaches, which he bore patiently for the sake of the word and worship of God, and for the sake of the glory of God, which he all along sought; and to repair the loss of it, which was sustained through the sin of man;

shame hath covered my face; when he was spit upon by some, and smote by others with a rod upon his cheek; and when he was blindfolded, and bid to prophesy who smote him; see Isa 50:6.

Psalms 69:8

Ver. 8. I am become a stranger unto my brethren,.... Not only to the Jews in general, who were his own people and nation, to whom he came, and of whom he came; who received him not, hid as it were their faces from him, and rejected him as the Messiah; but also to such who were still nearer akin to him, according to the flesh, who did not believe in him, **Joh 7:5**; and even in some sense to his disciples and followers; some of which having heard some doctrines delivered by him not agreeable to them, withdrew from him, and walked no more with him, **Joh 6:60**; yea, to his apostles, whom he often called his brethren: one of these betrayed him, another denied him with oaths and cursing, and all of them forsook him and fled, when he was taken by his enemies, and about to suffer death;

and an alien unto my mother's children; which is the same as before, in other words. The Targum is,

"as the son of the Gentiles to my mother's children;"

that is, as an Heathen to them; see Mt 18:17.

Psalms 69:9

Ver. 9. For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up,.... Of the house of the sanctuary, as the Targum; that is, the temple, which was Christ's Father's house, where he was worshipped and dwelt; and zeal for his Father, and his glory in it, and indignation against those that made it an house of merchandise, inflamed him; put him upon driving out the buyers and sellers in it, whereby this passage had its accomplishment, **Joh 2:14**; and this may be applied to the church of God which is the house of God, of his building, and where he dwells; and zeal may design the fervent affection of Christ for it, for the doctrine, discipline, and salvation of it. His zeal for the Gospel appeared in his warm and lively preaching it, in his assiduity and constancy in it; in the wearisome journeys he took to spread it, in the risks he run, and dangers he exposed himself to, for the sake of it; in the miracles he wrought to confirm it, and in the care he took to free it from calumny and reproach: his zeal for the worship and discipline of God's house was shown by his asserting the purity of worship in spirit and truth; by his severe inveighing against the traditions, superstition, and will worship of men, and against the vices and corruptions of professors of religion, the Scribes and Pharisees: his zeal for the salvation of his people is easily seen in his suretyship engagements for them; in coming into this world to do the will of him that sent him; in his early regards unto it, and vehement desire, even of suffering death, in order to accomplish it, and in his voluntary and cheerful submission and obedience, even to the death of the cross: this zeal of his was according to knowledge, and was cordial, hearty, and unfeigned; and this "eat [him] up": inflamed like fire his spirit and affections; consumed his time and strength, and even life itself;

and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me: the same persons that reproached the one reproached the other; and the reproaches of his divine Father were as cutting to him as if cast on himself; it went to his heart that his Father's house should be made an house of merchandise; that his doctrine should be despised, his worship neglected, and his glory lessened; to have the name of God, his ways and truth, evil spoken of, were not pleasing to him; he took all reproach of this kind to himself, and bore it becomingly; and yet showed zeal for his Father's glory, and indignation against those that reproached him; see Ro 15:1.

Psalms 69:10

Ver. 10. When I wept,.... Because of the sins of his people imputed to him; the hardness and unbelief of the Jews that rejected him; their impiety and profaneness in polluting the temple with their merchandise: he wept at the grave of Lazarus, and over the city of Jerusalem, on account of the blindness of its inhabitants, and the ruin coming upon them; and in his prayers at different times, especially in the garden and on the cross, which were offered up with strong crying and tears; see Joh 11:35;

[and chastened] my soul with fasting; or "my soul [being] in fasting" {y}. The Targum renders it, "in the fasting of my soul"; the word "chastened" is supplied from Ps 35:13; and "soul" is put for the body, or for the whole person. Christ fasted forty days and nights in the wilderness; and often, through neglect of himself, and multiplicity of business, in preaching, and in healing diseases, was without food for some time: he seems to have been fasting the day that he suffered, when he made atonement for sin; and so answered the type on the day of atonement, when every man was to afflict his soul with fasting,
Le 16:29; hence the Jews taunting at him gave him gall for his meat, and vinegar for his drink, Ps 69:21; and it follows,

that was to my reproach; if he ate and drank, he was charged with being a glutton and a winebibber; and if he wept and fasted, as John his forerunner did, they reproached him with madness, and having a devil, Mt 11:18; and, as may be reasonably supposed, after this manner;

"can this poor creature, that weeps, and mourns, and fasts, be thought to be the Son of God, a divine Person, as he makes himself to be, and his followers believe he is?"

and so the blind Jews reason to this day.

{y} yvpn Mwub "cum esset in jejunio anima mea", Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus, De Dieu.

Psalms 69:11

Ver. 11. I made sackcloth also my garment,.... Though we nowhere read that Jesus put on sackcloth upon any occasion, yet it is not improbable that he did; besides, the phrase may only intend that he mourned and sorrowed at certain times, as persons do when they put on sackcloth: moreover, as the common garb of his forerunner was raiment of camels' hair, with a leathern girdle; so it is very likely his own was very mean, suitable to his condition; who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor;

and I became a proverb to them; a byword; so that when they saw any person in sackcloth, or in vile raiment, behold such an one looks like Jesus of Nazareth.

Psalms 69:12

Ver. 12. They that sit in the gate speak against me,.... The princes, magistrates, and judges, who sat in the gates of cities, heard and tried causes, and executed judgment there; the elders of the city; see **Ru 4:1**; the civil rulers among the Jews are meant; and also their ecclesiastical ones, the Scribes and Pharisees that sat in Moses's seat; though some think men of lower characters are designed, idle persons that saunter about, and sit in gateways, and corners of streets, and in marketplaces; spending their time, like the Athenians, in hearing and telling of news, and prating about this and the other person, and their affairs; but the former sense seems best, since these are rather intended in the next clause: now such men of rank and figure spoke against Christ; against his person as the Son of God, against his office as the Messiah, against his doctrines and ordinances, and against his people and followers: or they spake together "of him" {z}; they confabulated and consulted together how to seize him, and take away his life, as the chief priests and elders frequently did; and when they had taken him they gave their voice against him, and unanimously condemned him, when they sat in judgment upon him;

and I [was] the song of the drunkards; or "of them that drink strong drink" {a}; be it made of what it will; that is, to excess: these, while they played on their instruments of music, as the word {b} here used signifies, sung songs, and Christ was the subject of them; as Job complains was his case, Job 30:8; very probably the common people that were employed in taking of Jesus might have plenty of liquor given them by the priests and elders, to encourage them; and this being a festival time too, might come at it more easily than usual, and drink more freely; and this might be the case of the Roman soldiers, when they made Christ the subject of their mirth and diversion in Pilate's hall.

{z} yb "de me", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {a} rxv "sechar", Montanus; siceram, Tigurine version, Cocceius; "potum inebriantem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis. {b} twnygn "cantiones ad instrumenta musica", Vatablus; "pulsationes", Gejerus.

Psalms 69:13

Ver. 13. But as for me, my prayer [is] unto thee, O Lord,.... Christ betook himself to prayer in these circumstances, and not to railing and reviling again: he applied to his divine Father, and committed himself to him that judgeth righteously, and prayed both for himself and for his enemies too: and this he did

[in] an acceptable time; or "a time of good will" {c}; which was the time of his sufferings and death; so called, because the good will and pleasure of God was seen therein; in not sparing his Son, his own and only begotten Son, his beloved Son, and delivering him up to justice and death for the worst of sinners; and because at this time the good will of God was done: Christ laid down his life by the commandment of his Father, offered himself a sacrifice by the will of God, and hereby the law of God was fulfilled, justice satisfied, and the work of man's redemption finished; which was the pleasure of the Lord, that prospered in his hands; and therefore this must be an acceptable time to God. The sufferings of Christ were well pleasing to him; the sacrifice of Christ was for a sweet smelling savour; the righteousness of Christ was acceptable to him, the law being magnified and made honourable by it: peace was now made

by the blood of his cross; the perfections of God were glorified, his purposes executed, his promises fulfilled, his covenant confirmed, and his people saved; and so a proper time for the Mediator to offer up his supplications and prayers, in which he was heard, as appears from Isa 49:8;

O God, in the multitude of thy mercy; these words, according to the accents in the Hebrew text, should be rendered in connection with the preceding words, thus: "in the time of good will, O God"; or "in the time of the good will of God, through the multitude of thy mercy"; and then the sense is, that the acceptable time was owing to the greatness of divine mercy; it was from hence that the dayspring from on high visited men; or Christ came in the flesh, and suffered in the room and stead of sinners; in which there was a wonderful display of the abundant mercy of God to men; for otherwise there was none shown to the surety and Saviour; he was not spared, but delivered up; and then it follows,

hear me, in the truth of thy salvation; or "because of", or "by thy true salvation" {d}; that which God contrived in council, and secured in covenant, and sent his Son to effect, and which he is become the author of, is a true and real salvation; not figurative and shadowy, as the salvation of Israel out of Egypt and Babylon were: or because of the truth and faithfulness of God, who had promised salvation to the Messiah, that he should be carried through his sufferings, be raised from the dead, and be crowned with glory and honour; and therefore he prays he might be heard on this account, and his prayer follows, and the several petitions in it.

{c} Nwur te "tempus beneplaciti", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {d} Kevy tmab "per salutem tuam veram", Gejerus.

Psalms 69:14

Ver. 14. Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink,.... In which he was sinking, Ps 69:2; and accordingly he was delivered out of it, Ps 11:2; even out of all the mire of sin, the sins of his people that were upon him, from which he was justified when raised from the dead; and so will appear without sin, when he comes a second time:

let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters; these phrases design the same, even the enemies of Christ; such that hated him, compared to deep waters: these are the floods of the ungodly, and the many

waters out of which he was drawn and delivered,
Ps 18:4.

Psalms 69:15

Ver. 15. Let not the water flood overflow me,.... The enemy, Satan, that came in like a flood upon him, with his whole posse of devils; or the wrath of God, which came upon him like a flood overwhelming him:

neither let the deep swallow me up: as Jonah by the whale, and Dathan and Abiram in the earth:

and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me; either the pit of hell; so the Targum interprets it: for Christ, when he endured the curses of the law, and the wrath of God, suffered the same for kind as the damned in hell; only the mouth of this pit could not be shut upon him, or he be continued under such wrath and curse: or else the pit of the grave, where his divine Father left him not, or suffered him to be so long in it as to see corruption; this pit was not shut upon him, but he was delivered out of it, and will die no more.

Psalms 69:16

Ver. 16. Hear me, O Lord; for thy lovingkindness [is] good,.... His lovingkindness to him, not only as his Son, but as Mediator; and which is a love of complacency and delight, and was from eternity, and will be to eternity: and this is "good", as appears by the effects and evidences of it; such as putting all things into his hands, showing him all that he does, concealing and keeping nothing from him, appointing him to be the Saviour of his people, the Head of the church, and the Judge of the world; and this lovingkindness shown to him is a reason why he might expect to be heard by his God and Father; see Joh 17:24; and the loving kindness of God to his people, and the members of Christ, is also good: it arises from the good will and pleasure of God; it is pleasantly and delightfully good to the saints, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and have had his love shed abroad in their hearts; it is profitably good unto them; it has prepared and laid up good things for them, both for time and eternity, even all the blessings of grace and goodness: it has promised good things unto them in covenant, and it gives Christ, and all good things along with him; it has a good influence on the graces of the Spirit, faith, hope, and love, to encourage them; and engages believers to a cheerful obedience to all the divine commands; to which may be added the duration of it, it lasts for ever: and it is so good, that it is better than any temporal good thing without it; it is better than life, and all the comforts of it, Ps 63:3;

turn unto me, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies; his divine Father had turned away his face from him, and turned his fury upon him; he had awoke his sword of justice against him, pointed it at him, and thrust it into him; and now, satisfaction being made, he desires he would turn unto him in a way of grace and favour; that he would have respect unto him, and look upon him with his paternal countenance, and in a kind and tender manner, as well pleased with him, and with his righteousness and sacrifice. Of the phrase, "according to the multitude of that tender mercies", See Gill on "Ps 51:1".

Psalms 69:17

Ver. 17. And hide not thy face from thy servant,.... This is a character that is frequently given to Christ as Mediator; he is a servant of God's choosing, calling, and appointing; of his sending, bringing forth, and supporting; who is an obedient, diligent, righteous, and prudent one; who always reverenced and honoured him whose servant he was, Isa 42:1; now, when he was on the cross, suffering in the room and stead of his people, his Father hid his face from him; which he here deprecates, and desires he would not continue to do, seeing he was his servant, now doing his service, and about to finish it, even the great work of man's redemption; and for a reason following;

for I am in trouble; in straits and difficulties; pressed on every side, enclosed with the assembly of the wicked, who were mocking of him, and with the whole posse of devils, who were throwing their fiery darts at him; having the sins of his people and the curses of a righteous law on him, and the wrath of God in him; and what increased his trouble was, he was forsaken by him;

hear me speedily; or "make haste to hear" {e}; and answer me; his case required haste; see Ps 22:19.

{e} ynne rhm "festina exaudire me", Vatablus.

Psalms 69:18

Ver. 18. Draw nigh unto my soul,.... God his father, while he was suffering, stood afar off from him; wherefore he desires that he would draw nigh to him in the manifestations of his love and favour to him; which he did, when he made known to him the way of life, and made him full of joy with his countenance;

[and] redeem it: that is, from the power of the grave; not leave it there, but raise him from the dead, and give him glory, as he did;

deliver me, because of mine enemies; that they might not triumph over him, as if, being dead, he should rise no more; and so the Targum,

"that mine enemies might not lift up themselves against me."

Or the meaning is, deliver me from the grave, raise me from the dead, that I may requite mine enemies, and take vengeance on them; see
Ps 41:8.

Psalms 69:19

Ver. 19. Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour,.... A heap of words to express the greatness of the contempt that was cast upon him, and the injury that was done to his person and character; which was all known to God: as how he was vilified by wicked words and blasphemous speeches; how he was exposed to shame and dishonour by deeds; by spitting upon him, buffeting him, veiling his face, stripping him of his garments, and scourging and crucifying him naked;

mine adversaries [are] all before thee; in his sight: he knew their persons, the malice and wickedness that were in their hearts; and all the evil words that were spoken, and the evil actions that were done by them. Or, "are all against thee" {f}; for they that were against Christ were against his Father.

{f} Krgn "coram te, vel contra te", Cocceius.

Psalms 69:20

Ver. 20. Reproach hath broken my heart,.... This was his case when his soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death, and his heart like wax melted in the midst of his bows is, Mt 26:38;

and I am full of heaviness; as he was in the garden, Mr 14:33; or, "very sick, [yea], incurably sick", as the word {g} signifies; see 2Sa 12:15. For what cure is there for a broken heart?

and I looked [for some] to take pity, but [there was] none; and for comforters, but I found none: his disciples forsook him and fled; the priests, scribes, and common people, that attended him at the cross, mocking him; the thieves that were crucified with him reviled him; and his Father hid his face from him; only a few women stood afar off and lamented.

{g} hvwnaw "adeo ut afficiar aegritudine", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "dolui vel aegritudine affectus sum", Gejerus.

Psalms 69:21

Ver. 21. They gave me also gall for my meat,.... Either some bitter herb mentioned with wormwood and hemlock, De 29:18; or the gall of some animal The Targum renders it,

"the gall of the heads of serpents:"

the poison of some serpents is in their heads, and the word that is here used signifies the head; see De 32:33. This was literally fulfilled in Christ, Mt 27:34; and showed that he bore the curse of the law; that being given to him for food, which was not fit to be eaten; thereby intimating, that he deserved not to have the common food and necessaries of life; which is the case of those in whose place and stead he suffered: and this may be a rebuke to such who, through fulness and affluence, are apt to slight and contemn some of the good creatures of God, which ought to be received with thanksgiving; let them remember the gall that was given Christ for meat. And this may serve to reconcile poor Christians to that mean fare and low way of living they are obliged to; though they, have but a dinner of herbs, or bread and water, it is better fare than their Lord's; it is not gall;

and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink; Christ, when on the cross, was athirst, which was occasioned by a fever that usually attended persons in his circumstances; see Ps 22:15; and, that this Scripture might be fulfilled, he signified it, saying, "I thirst"; upon which vinegar was given to him, as all the evangelists relate;

Mt 27:48. This shows the truth of Christ's human nature; that it was a true and real body that he assumed, which was subject to hunger and thirst, and was supported by food and drink, as our bodies are; also the truth of divine revelation; since such a minute circumstance as this, predicted so many hundred years ago, should, after so long a time, be exactly fulfilled; and likewise the truth of the Messiahship of Jesus, in whom this, and every thing else said Messiah, in the Law, the Prophets, and the book of Psalms, were fully accomplished; and therefore it may be strongly concluded that this is he of whom they spoke. Moreover, this expresses the inhumanity of the enemies of Christ, to use him in this manner, when he was suffering and dying; see Pr 31:6.

Psalms 69:22

Ver. 22. Let their table become a snare before them,.... This and the following imprecations were not the effects of a spirit of private revenge; of which there was no appearance in Christ, but all the reverse who prayed for his enemies, while they were using him as above related: but they are prophecies of what should be, being delivered out under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, **Ac 1:16**. Wherefore some versions render the words, "their table shall become a snare" {h}; and therefore are not to be drawn into an example by us, to favour and encourage a revengeful spirit: and they are very just and righteous, according to "lex talionis", the law of retaliation; since, inasmuch as they gave Christ gall for his meat, and vinegar for his drink, it was but right that the same measure should be meted out to them again; and their table mercies and blessings be cursed; that they should have them not in love, but in bitter wrath. Or that they should be left to be overcharged with them, and surfeit upon them; and so the day of their destruction come upon them as a snare: or that they should want the common necessaries of life, and be tempted to eat what was not lawful; and even their own children, as some did; see **Mal 2:2** **La 4:10**. The Targum gives the sense of the words thus;

"let their table, which they prepared before me, that I might eat before them, be for a snare;"

meaning a table spread with vinegar and gall. Of the figurative sense of these words, See Gill on "Ro 11:9"; where apostle cites this passage, and applies it to the enemies of Christ;

and [that which should have been] for [their] welfare, [let it become] a trap;

the word translated, "for [their] welfare", comes from mlv, which signifies both "to be at peace", and "to recompense"; and so is differently interpreted. Some think the "shelamim", or peace offerings, are meant; see Ex 24:5; and so the Targum,

"let their sacrifices be for a trap, or stumbling block;"

as they were, they trusting in them for the atonement of sin: and so neglected the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and his righteousness; which was the stumbling block at which they stumbled, and the trap into which they fell, and was their ruin. And it is observable, that while they were eating the sacrifice of the passover, they were surrounded by the Roman army, and taken as birds in a net, and as beasts in a trap. Others render the words, "to them that are at peace" {i}, let their table be "for a trap"; while they are living in security, and crying, Peace, peace, let sudden, destruction come upon them; as it did. But the apostle has taught us how to render the word "for a recompence", Ro 11:9; as the word, differently pointed, is in Isa 34:8. The true rendering and meaning of the whole seem to be this, "let their table become a snare before them"; and let their table be "for recompences" unto them, or in just retaliation; let the same food, or the like unto it, be set upon their tables, they gave to Christ, and let their table "become a trap"; for all relate to their table.

{h} why "erit", Pagninus, Montanus; "fiet vel fiat", Gejerus. {i} Mymwlvl "tranquilli", Gejerus; so some in Michaelis.

Psalms 69:23

Ver. 23. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not,.... Not literally, the eyes of their bodies; but figuratively, the eyes of their understanding; which were so darkened, and they given up to such judicial blindness, that they could not discern the signs of the times that the Messiah must be come, Daniel's weeks being up; could not see any glory, excellency, and comeliness in Christ; could not see the evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus in the miracles he wrought; nor in the prophecies of the Old Testament fulfilled in him: that book was a sealed book unto them; the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, were hid from them, even from the wise and prudent among them; yea, also those things which belonged to their temporal peace; they were so blinded and infatuated, they could not see what was for their outward good and happiness: and, in proof of this their blindness, the words are cited by the apostle in Ro 11:7; see Mt 16:3;

and make their loins continually to shake; weaken their loins, in which a man's strength lies, that they may not be able to rise up against their enemies; and that they might not be able to flee and escape from them; see De 33:11; or fill them with horror, dread, and trembling, as they will be when Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven; and they shall see him whom they have pierced, **Re 1:7**. The apostle renders the words "bow down their back alway"; See Gill on "Ro 11:10".

Psalms 69:24

Ver. 24. Pour out thine indignation upon them,.... Not a few drops of it only, but a flood of it, sweeping away and bearing down all before it; which was done when wrath came upon them to the uttermost, in the destruction of their city, temple, and nation, **1Th 2:16**;

let thy wrathful anger take hold of them; follow after them, overtake them, seize upon them, and hold them fast, that they may not escape. It denotes the severity of God towards them; the fierceness and fury of his wrath upon them; and that their destruction would be inevitable, and an entire and utter one.

Psalms 69:25

Ver. 25. Let their habitation be desolate,.... Which is applied to Judas, **Ac 1:20**; but not to the exclusion of others; for it must be understood of the habitations of others; even of their princes and nobles, their chief magistrates, high priest and other priests, scribes, and doctors of the law: for the word may be rendered, "their palace" or "castle" {k}, as it is by some; and so may denote the houses of their principal men, the members of their sanhedrim; their houses great and fair, of which there were many in Jerusalem when it was destroyed; see **Isa 5:9**; as well as the habitations of the meaner sort of people, which all became desolate at that time; and particularly their house, the temple, which was like a palace or castle, built upon a mountain. This was left desolate, as our Lord foretold it would,
Mt 23:38;

[and] let none dwell in their tents; the city of Jerusalem was wholly destroyed and not a house left standing in it, nor an inhabitant of it; it was laid even with the ground, ploughed up, and not one stone left upon another, Lu 19:44.

{k} Mtryj "palatium eorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Michaelis; "castella eorum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "palatium vel casteilum eorum", Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 69:26

Ver. 26. For they persecute [him] whom thou hast smitten,.... Meaning the Messiah, who was not only smitten and scourged by men, but was stricken and smitten of God; according to his determinate counsel and foreknowledge, and agreeably to his will and plea sure; with the rod of his justice for the satisfaction of it; for the sins of his people, whose surety he was. Him the Jews followed with reproaches and calumnies; pursued after his life, and persecuted him unto death; and which was the cause of their ruin and destruction; see **1Th 2:15**;

and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded; or, "of thy wounded ones" {l}; not wounded by him, but wounded for his sake, on his account, and for their profession of faith in his son Jesus Christ. These, as they were led to the slaughter, had trial of cruel mockings, which aggravated their sufferings, and were very grieving to them; especially such talk as reflected upon their dear Redeemer, for whose sake they were put to death.

{l} Kyllx "vulneratorum tuorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Musculus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 69:27

Ver. 27. Add iniquity to their iniquity,.... Let them alone in sin; suffer them to go on in it; lay no restraints upon them; put no stop in providence in their way; let them proceed from one evil to another, till they fall into ruin: to their natural and acquired hardness of heart, give them up to a judicial hardness; that they may do things that are not convenient, and be damned. Suffer them not to stop at the crucifixion of the Messiah; let them go on to persecute his apostles and followers; to show the utmost spite and malice against the Christian religion; to embrace false Christs, and blaspheme the true one; to believe the greatest lies and absurdities, and commit the foulest of actions; as seditions, rapines, murders, &c. as they did while Jerusalem was besieged; that they may fill up the measure of their sins, and wrath may come upon them to the uttermost, **1Th 2:15**. The word Nwe, rendered "iniquity", sometimes signifies "punishment", as in **Ge 4:13**; and, according to this sense of it, the words may be differently rendered, and admit a different meaning; either, "give punishment for their iniquity" {m}; so Kimchi; that is, punish them according to their deserts, as their sins and iniquities require: or, "add punishment to their punishment" {n}; to their present temporal punishment before imprecated, relating to their table mercies, their persons, and their habitations, add future and everlasting punishment; let them be punished with everlasting destruction, soul and body, in hell;

and let them not come into thy righteousness; meaning, not his strict justice or righteous judgment; into that they would certainly come; nor was it the will of the Messiah they should escape it: but either the goodness, grace, and mercy of God, which is sometimes desired by righteousness, as in Ps 31:1; and the sense is, let them have no share in pardoning grace now, nor obtain mercy in the last day; but be condemned when they are judged, Ps 109:7. Or rather, the righteousness of Christ, which is called the righteousness of God, that is, the Father; because he approves and accepts of it, and imputes it to his people without works: and seeing the Jews sought for justification by their own works, and went about to establish their own righteousness, and submitted not to Christ's, but despised and rejected it; it was but just that they should be excluded from all benefit and advantage by it, as is here imprecated. The Targum is,

"and let them not be worthy to come into the congregation of shy righteous ones;"

neither here, nor at the last judgment; see **Ps 1:5**.

{m} Mnwe le Nwe hnt "da punitionem iniquitatis", Pagninus; "appone illis poenam pro iniquitate", Muis. {n} So Junius & Tremellius.

Psalms 69:28

Ver. 28. Let them be blotted out of the book of life,.... Which some understand of this animal life, or of the catalogue of living saints; of their being not written among the living in Jerusalem, or in the writing of the house of Israel, **Isa 4:3**. The Targum is,

"let them he blotted out of the book of the memory of the living."

Let their names rot and perish, being buried in everlasting oblivion. Aben Ezra interprets this book of the heavens; where, he says, all things that should come to pass were written, at the time they were created; see Lu 10:20. But this is the book of divine predestination or election, often in the New Testament called the book of life; in which the names of some persons are written, and others not, **Php 4:3**; so called, not with respect to the present life, and the affairs of it, which belong to the book of Providence; but with respect to the life of the world to come, or eternal life, as Kimchi explains it. It is no other than God's ordination or foreappointment of men to eternal life; which being called a book, and names written in it, show that election is personal or particular; the exact knowledge God has of his chosen ones; his great care of them, and value for them; his constant remembrance of them, and the certainty of their salvation; for such whose names are written here in reality can never be blotted out: this would be contrary to the unchangeableness of God, the firmness of his purposes, and the safety of his people. Wherefore the design of this imprecation is, that those persons who had, in their own conceits, and in the apprehensions of others, a name in this book; that it might appear, both to themselves and others, they had none, by the awful ruin and destruction that should be brought upon them;

and not be written with the righteous; neither in the book of life with them; by which it appears, that to be blotted out, and not be written, are the same: nor in a Gospel church state; so they were the branches broken off: nor be among them at the resurrection of the just, and in the judgment day. Kimchi observes, that it is the same thing in different words; to be blotted out is the same as not to be written.

Psalms 69:29

Ver. 29. But I [am] poor and sorrowful,.... The Messiah was poor in a literal sense, as it was foretold he should, **Zec 9:9**; so he was in his private life; born of poor parents, and brought up in a mean way: and in his public life, having no certain dwelling place, and ministered to by others; and when on the cross, being stripped of his garments; and nothing to eat and drink but gall and vinegar; and nothing to leave to his mother, but commits her to the care of his beloved disciple. Though this phrase in general may denote the low estate of Christ in his humiliation, being in the form of a servant, humbled and obedient to death; and the character of "sorrowful" well agrees with him, who was a man of sorrows all his days; and in the garden his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; and when on the cross he had sorrow enough; what with the sins of his people on him, the flouts and jeers of his enemies at him; the pains of body he endured, the wrath of God, the hidings of his face, and the curses of his righteous law. After this declaration of his low and distressed state, a petition follows:

let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high: meaning either the salvation of the Lord's people, so called, because concerted and appointed of God, and is what he sent his Son to effect, and he approves of; this being wrought out was the way and, means of the exaltation of Christ; both by his divine Father, who on this account exalted him at his right hand; and by his people, who exalt him in their hearts, and with their tongues, and give him all the glory of their salvation. Or else this means the salvation of Christ out of the hands of all his enemies, whom he conquered on the cross; and particularly death, from which he was saved by his resurrection, and was the first step to his exaltation and glory; after which he ascended on high, and sat down at the right hand of God; where no mere creature, angels or men, were ever admitted; and where angels, principalities, and powers, are subject to him. The whole may be rendered thus; "though I am poor and sorrowful, thy salvation, O God, will set me up on high" {o}; and so is expressive of the Messiah's faith in his resurrection and exaltation, notwithstanding his sorrows and sufferings; on account of which he determines to praise the Lord, as follows.

{o} ynbgvt "elevabit me", Pagninus, Montanus; so Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 69:30

Ver. 30. I will praise the name of God with a song,.... The "name" of God is himself, his perfections and attributes; which are to be "praised" by all his creatures, and especially his saints; and here by the Messiah, who sung the praise of God with his disciples at the supper, a little before his death; and in the great congregation in heaven, upon his ascension thither, having finished the great work of man's redemption. For as it was no lessening of his glory, as Mediator, to pray to God when on earth, it is no diminution of it to praise him in our nature in heaven; see Ps 22:22. This being said to be done with a song agrees with **Heb 2:12**; and is an instance of praising God this way, and which could not be prayer wise; as well as is a confirmation of the practice of New Testament churches, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, by the example of our Lord;

and will magnify him with thanksgiving: to "magnify" is to make great; but God cannot be greater than he is. He is great above all gods; he is greater than all. But he is magnified when his greatness is owned and declared, and that is ascribed unto him; and particularly when "thanks" are given to him for favours; for then is he acknowledged by men to be the Father of mercies, the author and giver of them; and that they are unworthy of them, and that all the glory belongs to him. Christ, as man, not only prayed, but gave thanks to his Father when on earth,
Mt 11:25; nor is it unsuitable to him, as such now in heaven, to give thanks and praise for being heard and helped in a day of salvation; or at the time when he wrought out the salvation of his people, and glorified all the divine perfections.

Psalms 69:31

Ver. 31. [This] also shall please the Lord,.... That is, this song of praise and thanksgiving. The Targum has it,

"my prayers;"

as if it retorted to Ps 69:29; but what is expressed in Ps 69:30 seems to be the proper antecedent to this, and which is a sacrifice; see Ps 50:14; and more acceptable to God than any of the legal sacrifices, even when they were in force; and much more, now they are abrogated; and especially as offered up by the Messiah himself, all whose offerings are well pleasing to God; particularly the offering up of himself, which was for a sweet smelling savour to him, and in virtue of which all spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise become acceptable unto God;

better than an ox [or] bullock that hath horns and hoofs; that is, than the best of legal sacrifices; as an ox or bullock was, whose horns and hoofs were grown; one of three years old, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe: the words may be literally rendered, "than an ox, than a bullock, than horns, than hoofs"; not only better than an ox or a bullock, but than any creature that has horns and hoofs; that is, than the lawful sacrifice of any animal whatever, as Junius renders and explains it.

Psalms 69:32

Ver. 32. The humble shall see [this, and] be glad,.... The resurrection and exaltation of Christ, Ps 69:29; the meek and humble followers of Christ, as his disciples were, saw him risen from the dead, saw him alive, to whom he showed himself forty days after his resurrection; they saw his hands, and feet, and side, and the prints of the nails and spear in them; they saw him go up to heaven, to be set on high at the right hand of God; and humble believers now see him by faith, crowned with glory and honour; and as the disciples were glad, and rejoiced when they saw him again, and when he was parted from them, and went up to heaven, Joh 20:20; so true believers in Christ, who have a spiritual sight of a risen, ascended, and exalted Saviour, are glad, and rejoice in him with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, **1Pe 1:8**; they rejoice in the righteousness he has brought in, in the atonement that he has made, and in the salvation he has wrought out, which is so suitable for them; and because they do or will share in all the blessings of his resurrection, ascension, and exaltation; such as regeneration, justification, every supply of grace, and perseverance in it, the resurrection of their bodies, and eternal glorification: and "humble" ones are such as are humbled under a sense of sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of it, in a view of their own righteousness, and its insufficiency to justify them before God: they ascribe all they have and are to the free grace of God; and all boasting is excluded from them, save in Christ; they are such that learn of him, who is meek and lowly; and behave humbly before men, esteem others better than themselves; and are in their own account the chief of sinners, and the least of saints: and as they are, for the most part, "afflicted", and so some render the word {p} here; they are humble under the mighty hand of God, and patiently bear it;

and your heart shall live that seek God; that seek his face and favour, his gracious presence, and communion with him; that seek, by prayer and supplications, blessings from him; that seek him in Christ, where he is to be found; that seek Christ, and righteousness and salvation by him, and that early, earnestly, and diligently; that seek the things of Christ, the honour of his name, and the good of his interest; and who, in a word, are the true and spiritual worshippers of God; these seek him, and he seeks them. The Targum is,

"that seek doctrine from before God;"

and the hearts of those revived, who were as dead men before, as were the two disciples travelling to Emmaus, when they found that Christ was risen, Lu 24:17; just as the spirit of old Jacob revived, when he understood that his son Joseph was alive, Ge 45:27; see Ps 22:26.

{p} Mywne "afflicti", Vatablus, Musculus; "miseri", Gejerus; "mansueti ac miseri", Michaelis.

Psalms 69:33

Ver. 33. For the Lord heareth the poor,.... The prayer of the poor, as the Targum; of the poor disciples of Christ, who were together mourning, weeping, and praying, when their Lord was dead, and laid in the sepulchre, Mr 16:10; this epithet agrees with all the followers of Christ, who for the most part are literally poor, and are all of them so in a spiritual sense; they are poor in spirit, and are sensible of it; they are full of wants, and these daily return upon them; wherefore they constantly apply to the throne of grace for help in time of need; and the Lord regards them, his eye is upon them, his heart is towards them, his thoughts are about them, his ears are open to their cries, and his hand is ready to supply their wants;

and despiseth not his prisoners; the same disciples of Christ; who being assembled together, the doors were shut for fear of the Jews, Joh 20:19; it may be applied to such who are the Lord's prisoners; that is, for his sake, in a literal sense, as the Apostle Paul is called the prisoner of the Lord, **Eph 3:1**; and there were many, both under the Old and under the New Testament, that suffered imprisonment for their profession of religion; and these the Lord despises not, though men may, but highly esteems and honours; and it may be understood mystically and spiritually of such as are, in their nature state, prisoner of sin and Satan, and the law, and, when called, are prisoners of hope; these the Lord has a regard unto, and opens the prison doors and sets them at and directs them to the strong hold, Isa 49:9.

Psalms 69:34

Ver. 34. Let the heaven and earth praise him,.... As those, by a prosopopoeia, are often called upon to do, to express the greatness of the favour enjoyed, and to excite those that are possessed of it to greater joy and thankfulness; see Ps 96:11; or the inhabitants of the heavens and earth may be meant, as the angels of heaven; and so the Targum interprets it; who, as they praised the Lord at the incarnation of Christ, **Lu 2:14**; so doubtless they did at his ascension, when he was seen and accompanied by them, **1Ti 3:16**
Ps 68:17; and also the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, who were

there when Christ was received into it; and the inhabitants of the earth, as the Targum also paraphrases it; of the continent, particularly the Roman empire, when the Gospel was sent thither, which brought the good news of an incarnate, suffering, risen, ascended, and exalted Saviour;

the seas, and everything that moveth therein; the inhabitants of the isles in the seas, such as ours of Great Britain and Ireland, who waited for the doctrine of the Messiah, and to whom he calls to listen to what he says; and which is a sufficient reason for praise and thanksgiving in them; even in as many as have spiritual life and motion, who are quickened, influenced, and moved by the Spirit of God; see Isa 42:4.

Psalms 69:35

Ver. 35. For God will save Zion,.... The church of Christ, as it is often called; See Gill on "Ps 2:6"; this is to be understood not so much of the salvation of the people of God, by Christ, from sin and Satan, and the world, law, hell, and death, as of the preservation and continuance of the Gospel church state, notwithstanding all the opposition and persecution of the Jews and Gentiles; and especially of the deliverance of the Lord's people, in the latter day, from the cruelty, captivity, and bondage of antichrist, by the destruction of him; which will occasion joy and praise, Re 18:4;

and will build the cities of Judah: erect Gospel churches in the Roman empire, and in the several parts of the world; as were in the first times of the Gospel, and will be in the latter day, when the cities of God shall be yet spread abroad through prosperity, **Zec 1:17**; of which the saints are citizens, and enjoy in them many privileges and immunities: these may be said to be "built", when they are built upon Christ, and on their most holy faith; when the members of them are edified and multiplied; when purity of faith, discipline, and worship, prevails among them; and though this is usually by the ministers of the Gospel, as instruments, yet the Lord is the chief builder; for, unless he builds, in vain do the builders build, Ps 127:1;

that they may dwell there, and have it in possession; the men of Judah, such as confess the name of Christ, as the word "Judah" signifies; who profess to believe in him with their hearts; these have a name and a place, and an inheritance in the churches, and an abiding one; they shall never go out, but dwell in the house of God for ever; Gospel churches being erected and built up for their sakes, and for such ends and purposes.

Psalms 69:36

Ver. 36. The seed also of his servants shall inherit it,.... Not their natural, but spiritual seed, or a succession of converts in the churches; see Ps 45:16; who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; not of corruptible, but incorruptible seed, by the word of God, which lives and abides for ever, **Joh 1:13**; these are the proper and rightful inheritors of the Gospel church state, and all its privileges, in all successive generations, quite down to the New Jerusalem church state, wherein will dwell only righteous persons, and whose names are in the Lamb's book of life. Aben Ezra's note upon it is,

"they shall inherit it, they and their children, in the days of David, or in the days of the Messiah;"

and they that love his name shall dwell therein; that love the person, Gospel, truths and ordinances of Christ; see **So 1:3**; these shall have an abiding place in Zion, the church of God; in the cities of Judah, particular congregational churches; and in the city of the New Jerusalem, where will be the tabernacle of God among men, and he shall dwell among them, and they with him.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 70:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 70

To the chief Musician, [A Psalm] of David, to bring to remembrance. This psalm, according to Kimchi, was composed by David when he fled from Saul, or from Absalom; so Theodoret; but if at either of those times, it is most likely to be the latter, since the following psalm, it is certain, was penned when he was an old man, Ps 69:9; the word translated "to bring to remembrance" is thought, by Aben Ezra, to be the first word of some pleasant song; see Ps 38:1. The Targum paraphrases it, to remember the use of the frankincense; alluding to **Le 2:2**; Jarchi says it signifies prayer, and refers to Ps 20:7, as instances of the use of the word in such a sense; and so this psalm is composed by the psalmist in a petitionary way, to put the Lord in remembrance of his afflictions, and of his promises of help and deliverance, which he prays for; see Ps 132:1; and that he would avenge him on his enemies, and show respect to his friends; or it was written to refresh his own memory with his present state, and to put him in mind from whence he might expect help and salvation. The title of the psalm in the Arabic version is, and so in the Vulgate Latin, following the Septuagint,

"a remembrance that the Lord had saved him:"

and in the Syriac version,

"a psalm of David as to the letter, when he sent Joab to take Shemuah (Sheba), who rebelled; also a supplication of the righteous, and even of Christ himself."

And seeing this follows upon the preceding, and may be reckoned an appendix to it, and there are some things in it which manifestly refer to the latter part of that, and the whole is detached from the fortieth psalm, with which it agrees, a few words only excepted, which manifestly belongs to the Messiah; it is right to understand this of him; Ps 40:13.

Ver. 1. [Make haste], O God, to deliver me,.... The phrase, "make haste", is supplied from the following clause in Ps 40:13; it is, "be pleased, O Lord", or "Jehovah". The Targum renders it, "to deliver us"; very wrongly;

make haste to help me, O Lord; See Gill on "Ps 22:19".

Psalms 70:2

Ver. 2. Let them be ashamed and confounded,.... In Ps 40:14 it is added, "together"; See Gill on "Ps 40:14";

that seek after my soul; or "life"; in Ps 40:14 it is added, "to destroy it"; for that was the end of their seeking after it;

let them be turned backward, &c. See Gill on "Ps 40:14".

Psalms 70:3

Ver. 3. Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame,.... In Ps 40:15 it is, "let them be desolate"; which seems to respect their land and houses, here their persons; See Gill on "Ps 40:15";

that say; in Ps 40:15 it is added, "to me"; not to his people, but himself,

aha, aha: rejoicing at his calamity and distress. The Targum is,

"we are glad, we are glad;"

See Gill on "Ps 40:15", and compare with this
Eze 25:3.

Psalms 70:4

Ver. 4. Let all those that seek thee,.... The Targum is,

"that seek doctrine (or instruction) from thee."

rejoice and be glad in thee; the Targum paraphrases it,

"rejoice and be glad in thy word."

and let such as love thy salvation say continually, let God be magnified; the Targum is,

"let the glory of the Lord be increased;"

and in Ps 40:16, instead of "God", it is "the Lord", or "Jehovah":
See Gill on "Ps 40:16".

Psalms 70:5

Ver. 5. But I [am] poor and needy,.... In Ps 40:17 it follows, yet "the Lord thinketh on me"; instead of which it is here,
See Gill on "Ps 40:17";

make haste unto me, O God; which repeats for sense the same petition as in Ps 71:1;

thou [art] my help and my deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying; in

Ps 40:17 it is, "O my God".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 71:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 71

This psalm is without a title, but is thought to be David's: the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and all the Oriental ones, ascribe it to him; and both the subject and style show it to be his. According to the title of the Syriac version, it was composed by him when Saul made war against the house of David; but this is not likely, since it was written by him in his old age, Ps 71:9; rather, according to Kimchi and Arama, it was penned when he fled from his son Absalom: there are several things in it which incline to this. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions call it

"A Psalm of David, of the sons of Jonadab, and of the first that were carried captive;"

and so the Ethiopic and Arabic versions. Apollinarius says the sons of Jonadab composed it; but without any foundation for it; and the Syriac version is, it is a prophecy concerning the sufferings and resurrection of the Messiah; and so Jerom and others interpret it. The literal meaning respecting David seems best, though it may be applied to the church, and to any believer in distress. Theodoret thinks it was written by David in the person of the captives in Babylon.

Ver. 1. In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust,.... The Targum is,

"in thy Word;"

See Gill on "Ps 31:1";

let me never be put to confusion; or "be ashamed"; see the note as before.

Psalms 71:2

Ver. 2. Deliver me in thy righteousness,.... By it, or "for the sake of [it]" {q}; See Gill on "Ps 31:1";

and cause me to escape; present danger, and out of the hands of enemies, as well as wrath to come, and eternal death; which nothing but the righteousness of God can deliver from, or cause to escape;

incline thine ear unto me; or "bow it"; See Gill on "Ps 31:2";

and save me; out of all troubles and afflictions, and from wicked and unreasonable men.

{q} Ktqdub "propter justitiam tuam", Pagninus, Piscator; so Schmidt.

Psalms 71:3

Ver. 3. Be thou my strong habitation,.... This is very appropiately said, when David was driven out of his dwelling place, and palace at Jerusalem, by his son, as Kimchi observes. When God's people have no certain dwelling place, which is sometimes their case, they always find one in the Lord; particularly in his heart's love; for he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, **1Jo 4:16**; and a strong habitation he is: wherefore he is called a strong rock, a strong hold, a strong tower; he is as a wall of fire around his people, a munition of rocks; his salvation is as walls and bulwarks, and his power as a garrison in which they are kept. The psalmist adds,

whereunto I may continually resort; or "may go into daily" {r}, in times of danger and distress, for safety; the name of the Lord being a strong tower, whither the righteous run, and are safe, Pr 18:10; and his perfections, his power, faithfulness, lovingkindness, and unchangeableness, being as so many secret chambers, where they may enter into, and hide themselves, till calamities are over, Ps 57:1; and every day indeed for food, for comfort, for refreshment and pleasure, through communion with him; and God in Christ is always to be come at: Christ is the way of access and acceptance; and through his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness, the believer has boldness to enter into the holiest of all, and go up to the seat of God, the throne of his grace; and even to enter into him himself, who has been the dwelling place of his people in all generations, Ps 90:1;

thou hast given commandment to save me; either to the ministering angels, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it, comparing it with Ps 91:11; or rather to his Son, in the council and covenant of grace and peace;

when he enjoined him the salvation of his people, which he readily agreed to, and with which David was acquainted,
Ps 40:7; of this command our Lord speaks, Joh 10:18; and to which he was obedient, **Php 2:8**; it may respect David's salvation from present trouble, and his assurance of it, believing that the Lord had determined it, and by his mighty power would effect it; see Ps 44:4;

for thou [art] my rock and my fortress; see Ps 18:2.

{r} dymt awbl "ut ingrediar jugiter", Pagninus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 71:4

Ver. 4. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked,.... Meaning Absalom his son, as Arama, who had risen up in rebellion against him; and he may not only intend him, but all those wicked men that had joined with him: it was David's mercy he had a covenant God to go to, and could claim his interest in him, who had power to deliver him, and from whom he might expect it;

out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man; or "leavened" {s}; a sour ill natured man; one leavened with malice and wickedness: perhaps Ahithophel is intended. It may be applied to any wicked, lawless, and tyrannical persecutor of God's people; and particularly to the lawless and wicked one, the man of sin, the son of perdition, antichrist, **2Th 2:4**.

{s} Umwx "malitiae fermento prorsus corrupti", Michaelis, "secundum", Gejerum & Gussetium; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 71:5

Ver. 5. For thou [art] my hope, O Lord God,.... The object, ground, and foundation of it, even of present deliverance, and of future and eternal salvation;

[thou art] my trust from my youth; in whom he trusted in his youthful days, of which there is an eminent instance in 1Sa 17:33.

Psalms 71:6

Ver. 6. By thee have I been holden up from the womb,.... Supported in being, upheld in life, and sustained with food and raiment, and followed with the mercies and blessings of life from thence to this present moment; which the psalmist takes notice of, as he does of what goes before and follows after, to encourage his faith and hope in God as to present deliverance;

thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels;
See Gill on "Ps 22:9"; the Syriac version is, "thou art my hope from my mother's bowels"; the Arabic version, "thou art my helper"; and the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, "thou art my protector"; the word is only used here, and in Ps 90:10; and is there rendered "cut off"; the Lord was, as it were, his "cutter off" {t}; that cut the navel string, and loosed him from his mother, and safely brought him into the world, and preserved him ever since: wherefore he adds,

my praise [shall be] continually of thee; as the God of nature and providence; and also as the God of grace, who had blessed him both with temporal and spiritual blessings; and these being continued with him, he determines that God should be the subject of his praise always. The Targum is,

"in thy Word my praise is continually."

{t} yzwn "excisor meus", Gejerus.

Psalms 71:7

Ver. 7. I am as a wonder unto many,.... To the multitude, to the populace, or "to the great" {u} and mighty; and indeed to both: which respects not his wonderful preservation from the womb, he had before observed; nor his being in a wonderful manner raised to the throne of Israel; nor the wonderful things and amazing exploits done by him, and victories he obtained; nor the wonderful instances of divine grace and goodness to him; but rather the forlorn and distressed state and condition he was now in, being obliged to quit his palace, and flee from the face of his son, accompanied only with a few of his servants; and so was a shocking sight, a spectacle, as the apostle says of himself, to others, to the world, to angels, and to men, **1Co 4:9**; so the Messiah and his children are said to be set for signs and wonders, **Isa 8:18**; and Joshua and his fellows to be men wondered at, **Zec 3:8**; as the saints are by themselves, that they should partake of such favours; and by the angels, that they should be the objects of electing, redeeming, calling, adopting, justifying, and pardoning grace; and by the world, that they should choose to suffer affliction and reproach for Christ, bear it with so much patience, and be supported, and thrive under it; see **2Co 6:8**;

but thou [art] my strong refuge; or "my refuge of strength" {w}; his refuge and strength, as in Ps 46:1; his refuge, to which he betook himself, when refuge failed him, and no man cared for him, and which he found to be a strong one, and in it safety.

{u} Mybrl "multis vel magnis", Piscator; so Ainsworth. {w} ze yoxm "refugium meum roboris", Gejerus.

Psalms 71:8

Ver. 8. Let my mouth be filled [with] thy praise,.... Or "thy praise shall fill my mouth" {x}; which shows that his heart was affected with the goodness of God to him, and that he had a deep impression and sense of it upon him; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks; and for the mouth to be filled with the praise of God, is to speak largely, publicly, and with great delight, in the praise of God, his divine perfections and benefits;

[and with] thy honour all the day; the excellency of his nature, the glory of his majesty, the honour due unto him, on account of his being, attributes, and blessings of providence and grace; a work to be employed in all the day, evening, morning, and at noon; as often as prayer is made to God, praise, honour, and glory, should be given him; since his mercies are new every morning, and they continue all the day long; his goodness endures for ever.

{x} Ktlht yp almy

Psalms 71:9

Ver. 9. Cast me not off in the time of old age,.... The Lord never casts off nor casts away his people, whom he foreknew; they are near unto him; they are on his heart, and are engraven on the palms of his hands; and they shall never be removed from his heart's love, nor out of his arms, nor out of his covenant, and shall always be the objects of his care: he bears and carries them to old age, and even to hoary hairs: the Lord had been the guide of David's youth, and his trust then, Ps 71:5; and now he desires he would be the staff of his old age; at which age he was when Absalom rebelled against him;

forsake me not when my strength faileth: as it does when old age comes on; then the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, and especially at death, when flesh and heart fail; but God will never forsake his people, neither in youth nor in old age, neither in life nor at death.

Psalms 71:10

Ver. 10. For mine enemies speak against, me,.... Or "say unto me" {y} what is expressed in the following verse, "God hath forsaken him"; and so these words are a reason of the above petitions: or "mine enemies speak to me"; or "of me" {z}; not good, but evil, and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"for mine enemies speak evil against me;"

or concerning me. David had his enemies, and many, as Ahithophel, and others, who spake against him to the people, and thereby drew many with them into rebellion against him; and particularly Shimei spoke against him, and cursed him, calling him a bloody man, a man of Belial, 2Sa 16:7;

and they that lay wait for my soul; or "life"; that laid snares for him; or lay in ambush, and sought for an opportunity to take away his life: or "they that keep my soul", or "life" {a}; that were his bodyguards that were about his person for the preservation of him; and so the Targum seems to understand it;

take counsel together; lay schemes and form plots how to destroy him, as Ahithophel did, 2Sa 16:20.

{y} yl wrma "dixerunt mihi", Montanus. {z} "De me loquuti sunt, vel loquuntur", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {a} yvpn yrmv "custodientes animam meam", Pagninus, Montanus; "custodiebant", V. L.

Psalms 71:11

Ver. 11. Saying, God hath forsaken him,.... Good men may seem to others to be forsaken of God; and they themselves may sometimes think they are; and they may be forsaken for a small moment, when God withdraws his gracious presence, or does not afford immediate help; but never finally and totally. This David's enemies concluded, from the distressed condition he was in, being obliged to leave his family and court, and flee from his son, and wander up and down with a small retinue; and this they said to one another, to encourage themselves to lay violent hands upon him, which they thought they might do with ease and impunity; wherefore it follows,

persecute and take him; pursue after him eagerly and diligently; lose no time; and, when come up to him, seize upon him, without any fear of God or man;

for [there is] none to deliver [him]; out of our hands. God will not, for he has forsaken him; and men cannot, for he has not an army sufficient to defend him or recover him.

Psalms 71:12

Ver. 12. O God, be not far from me,.... God is everywhere, at hand and afar off, with regard to his being, power, and providence; his glorious presence is in heaven, his gracious presence is with his people; but, when he hides his face, he seems to be at a distance; and this they cannot bear, and therefore deprecate it; see Ps 10:1;

O my God, make haste for my help; he knew that his help was in God, and that there was none for him elsewhere; and that he could help him when none else could, and was a present help in time of trouble; and it being such a time with him, and his case desperate, he desires the Lord that he would make haste; and he addresses him as his own God, the consideration of which encouraged his faith and hope in him, and carried in it an argument to help him; see Ps 119:94.

Psalms 71:13

Ver. 13. Let them be confounded,.... See Ps 70:2;

[and] consumed; like smoke; see Ps 37:20; as antichrist will be with the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming, **2Th 2:8**;

that are adversaries to my soul; that hated him with a diabolical hatred, as the devil hates the souls of men, and who has his name "Satan" from the word here used; all wicked men are Satans, full of enmity against God, and all good men; and such were David's enemies, spiteful and malicious, and nothing would satisfy them but his life;

let them be covered [with] reproach and dishonour; as with a garment:

that seek my hurt; see Ps 35:26; as Absalom and his company; so Arama.

Psalms 71:14

Ver. 14. But I will hope continually,.... For deliverance and salvation from present outward troubles, for; more grace here and glory hereafter: it is the excellency of the grace of hope to be exercised in times of affliction and distress, and with Abraham to believe in hope against hope; and then it is that this grace is eminently and remarkably useful: it is an anchor to the soul when in distress, which keeps it firm and steadfast; and an helmet, which covers the head in the day of battle; in the exercise of which the believer glories in tribulation: it is an abiding grace, and should be continually exercised by those that have it, which is to abound in it; but this must be through the power of the Holy Ghost, Ro 15:13;

and will yet praise thee more and more; or "will add to all thy praise" {b}; to former praises and thanksgivings, fresh ones, as his mercies were renewed to him, and he was daily loaded with benefits.

{b} Ktlht lk le ytpowhw "omnibus laudibus tuis adjiciam", Tigurine version.

Psalms 71:15

Ver. 15. My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness,.... Both his punitive justice in taking vengeance on his enemies, agreeably to the above imprecations; and his faithfulness in the performance of promises of good things unto him; as also his essential righteousness displayed and glorified in the redemption that is by Christ; and particularly the righteousness of Christ, accepted of God, and imputed by him; which the psalmist with his mouth declared his faith in, expressed his joy at, and set forth in a strong manner the glory and excellency of it, and determined to make mention of it, and of that only, as in Ps 71:16;

[and] thy salvation all the day; both temporal and eternal; the glory of both, and praise for the same;

for I know not the numbers [thereof]; of that righteousness and salvation, the numerous blessings which are contained in them; see Ps 40:5; or "though I know not the numbers of them" {c}; though he could not fully declare the glories and excellencies of the righteousness and salvation of God, and the numerous mercies and rich grace included in them; yet he would attempt to set them forth in the best way he could, though in a feeble and imperfect manner.

{c} yk "quamvis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; So Ainsworth.

Psalms 71:16

Ver. 16. I will go in the strength of the Lord God,.... Go on praising him, as he had determined to do in the preceding verses; not in his own strength, knowing that his heart was not always disposed aright or prepared and fit for such service; and that though the daily continuance of favours required constant praise, yet he needed always the aids of divine grace to raise his affection and song: or "I will go into the strengths of the Lord God" {d}; the power of God is expressed in the plural number, to show the greatness of it, which is as a garrison to the believer; see **1Pe 1:5**; a strong hold, a strong tower, a strong habitation, as in Ps 71:3; into which he goes by faith, and is there safe, in all times of distress and danger: or the sense is, that he would go into the house of God, the temple and sanctuary, and in his strength perform the duties of public worship there; and it may include all religious actions, private and public, and every, spiritual undertaking; which ought to be attempted and performed, not in our own strength, but in the strength of the Lord: man is become, through sin, a weak and impotent creature; though he is very hard to be brought to a sense and acknowledgment of his weakness; true believers are sensible of it, and own it; and such, knowing that there is a sufficiency of strength in Christ for them, look and go to him for it; to do otherwise, to attempt to do anything in our own strength, betrays our weakness, folly, and vanity, and is dangerous, attended with bad consequences, and never succeeds well: the Apostle Peter is an instance of this, Mt 26:33;

I will make mention of thy righteousness, [even] of thine only; and that before the Lord himself: not his own righteousness, which he knew would not justify him in his sight, nor render him acceptable to him; nor furnish out a plea or argument why he should receive any favour from him; and therefore resolves not to mention it; but the righteousness of Christ, which is the righteousness of God, which he approves of, accepts, and imputes. This is a pure, perfect, and spotless righteousness, which God is well pleased with; honours his law, satisfies his justice, and so justifies in his sight; and renders person and service acceptable to him; and therefore with great pleasure and boldness, may be mentioned unto as it should be to Christ himself also; by ascribing it to him, as the author of it; by expressing a desire to be found in it; to have faith of interest in it, and joy on account of it; and by owning him openly and freely as the Lord our righteousness: and we should make mention of it to others, in praise of it; extolling it as the righteousness of God, and not a creature; and so sufficient to justify many, even all the seed of Israel; as the best robe of righteousness, better than the best of man's, better than Adam's in innocence, or than the angels' in heaven; as a law honouring and justice satisfying one, and as an everlasting one. And we should put ourselves in mind of it, and, by repeated acts of faith, put it on as our justifying righteousness; since much of our joy, peace, and comfort, depend upon it. And this, and this only, is to be made mention of; it is only in the Lord that there is righteousness: as there is salvation in him, and in no other, so there is righteousness in him, and in no other; wherefore no other is to be mentioned along with it: justification is not partly by Christ's righteousness, and partly by our own; but only by his, and through faith in it; see **Ro 9:32**.

{d} twrbgb "in fortitudines", Montanus; "in potentias", V. L. Vatablus.

Psalms 71:17

Ver. 17. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth,.... The corruption of human nature; the weakness and impotence of it, to everything that is spiritually good; and the need of continual strength and grace from Christ, to go to him for righteousness and strength, life and salvation, and to walk by faith on him; the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, and the insufficiency of his own; the will, ways, and worship of God; and all the duties of religion, prayer, praise, &c. and whoever were the instruments, or whatever were the means, of teaching David these things, he ascribes it to God. Whether his parents, or the priests and Levites, taught him the sacrifices and ordinances of the law, it was the Lord that blessed instructions to him; and that taught him by providences and precepts, and by his Holy Spirit. And a wonderful blessing it is to be taught of God, and not of men, things relating both to doctrine and practice; and it is an addition to it to be taught these things early, as David was from his youth; and therefore the Lord was so soon the object of his faith and trust, Ps 71:5; and, as Timothy, from a child, was acquainted with the holy Scriptures, and the things contained in them, which are able to make wise unto salvation, Isa 29:13;

and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works: not only of nature and providence, but of grace; the treasuring up of all grace, and the blessings of it in Christ; the work of redemption by him; the work of regeneration and conversion by his Spirit; and the perseverance of the saints by his grace and strength; which are all wonderful and amazing. And as the psalmist saw his interest in these things, and had an experience of them, he declared them to others for their encouragement, and to the glory of all the three Persons; see Ps 66:16.

Psalms 71:18

Ver. 18. Now also, when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not,.... A repetition of his request, Ps 71:9; with a reason annexed to it, suggested in the following words:

until I have showed thy strength unto [this] generation; or, "thine arm" {e}; which sometimes the Messiah, Isa 53:1; who is the power of by whom he made the worlds, and in whom all things consist; and who has wrought out the salvation people; and is the arm on which they lean, and they are upheld. And the psalmist may be thought to desire that he might be continued a little longer, and be favoured with the presence of God, and the influences of his Spirit and grace; that he might show forth in prophecy, both by word and writing, to the men of the then present age, more things concerning the person, office, and grace of Christ; his sufferings, death, resurrection from the dead, and session at the right hand of God; things which are spoken of in the book of Psalms. Sometimes the arm of the Lord denotes his power and strength, Ps 44:3; and so it may be taken here; and the next clause seems to be an explanation of it:

[and] thy power; or "[even] thy power",

to everyone [that] is to come; that is, to come into the world, that is to be born into it; namely, the power of God, not only in creating all things out of nothing, and supporting what is made; but in the redemption of men, in the conversion of sinners, and in the preservation of the saints, and in enabling them to hold on and out unto the end: and which is shown forth by the psalmist in what he has committed to writing; and which continue, and will continue, to the end of the world, for the instruction of those that come into it; see Ps 22:31.

{e} Kewrz "brachium tuum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 71:19

Ver. 19. Thy righteousness also, O God, [is] very high,.... Or, "unto [the place] on high" {f}; it reaches unto heaven, as the mercy, truth, and faithfulness of God, are said to do, Ps 36:5. The righteousness of Christ is accepted of with God the Father in heaven; it is in Christ, who is there at the right hand of God; and it is higher and infinitely above any righteousness of a creature, angel's or man's;

who hast done great things; in nature, in forming the world out of nothing, and in upholding all creatures in their beings; in providence, in governing the world, and ordering all things in it for the best, and to answer the wisest purposes; in grace, in the salvation of lost sinners by Christ; in the justification of them by his righteousness; and in the atonement and pardon of their sins, through his blood and sacrifice; in the regeneration of them by his grace; in making and performing exceeding great and precious promises, and in giving them eternal life;

O God, who [is] like unto thee? either for greatness or goodness; for power or for mercy; for justice, truth, and faithfulness; for the perfections of his nature, or the works of his hands; and to be praised, reverenced and adored, as he is; see Ps 89:6.

{f} Mwrm de "usque in excelsum", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus; "in altum usque", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 71:20

Ver. 20. [Thou], which hast showed me great and sore troubles,.... Or, "made [him] to see" {g}; that is, to experience. David had his troubles, and these were great, both as to quantity and quality; and very grievous and hard to be borne, and were very trying and afflictive: some outward, such as he endured when persecuted by Saul; and afterwards in his own family, though the incest of Ammon, the murder of him by Absalom, and Absalom's rebellion against him; the curses of Shimei, and the bickerings of the sons of Zeruiah; with many others: and some inward, arising from the corruptions of his heart, the hidings of God's face, and the temptations of Satan. His experience of all which he ascribes, not to instruments or second causes, but to God himself; who had either laid them upon him, or suffered them to befall him, for wise ends of his glory, and his servant's good. There is in this clause and the following, a "Keri" and a "Cetib"; according to the "Cetib", or writing in the text, it is, "who hast showed us"; and so the Targum renders it: but according to the "Keri" in the margin, and the points, it is as we read; so it is in the Septuagint and Oriental versions, and both may be retained; for David's troubles, and those of other saints, are much the same;

shalt quicken me again; either raise him from so great a death of afflictions, in which he seemed to be as a dead man, both by himself and others, to a more comfortable and happy state and condition, in which he might live more free from vexation and trouble: or, in a spiritual sense, quicken him, being dead and lifeless, in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; which is usually done by the word and ordinances, and to purpose, by the discoveries of the love of God, which excite grace, and animate to duty. And this is God's work, and may be called a quickening again in distinction from the first quickening, when dead in trespasses and sins;

and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth; expressive of a very low estate, either of body or mind, into which he had been brought; see Ps 130:1. Could the psalm be understood of Christ, this and the preceding clause might be applied to his resurrection from the dead; see **Eph 4:9**; and to the resurrection of the saints; on which the faith of Christ and his people is exercised,

{g} wntyarh "fecisti me videre", Vatablus, Cocceius, Gejerus; "videre et experiri fecisti nos", Michaelis.

Psalms 71:21

Ver. 21. Thou shalt increase my greatness,.... His temporal greatness, as he did, by crushing the rebellion of his son; returning him to his palace and family; and giving him rest from his enemies all around: and his spiritual greatness, by favouring him with his presence; by shedding abroad his love in his heart; by enlarging his experience; increasing his faith, causing his love to abound, and him to grow in every grace, and in the knowledge of Christ;

and comfort me on every side; by his Spirit, word, and ordinances; by his truths and promises; with his rod and staff; and with mercy, grace, and lovingkindness. The phrase denotes the abundance of comfort, which should come as it were from every quarter, and encompass him about.

Psalms 71:22

Ver. 22. I will also praise thee with the psaltery,.... An instrument of music; See Gill on "Ps 33:2";

[even] thy truth, O my God; that is, his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises, which is never suffered to fail;

unto thee will I sing with the harp; another instrument of music; and both typical of the spiritual melody in the heart, which believers make in praising the Lord, when they sing the Lamb's new song; see
Re 14:2;

O thou Holy One of Israel; the God of Israel, that dwells among them, and sanctifies them; and who is essentially and perfectly holy in himself, and in all his ways and works; the remembrance of which occasions praise and thankfulness, Ps 97:12.

Psalms 71:23

Ver. 23. My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee,.... Both with vocal and instrumental music; this is praising the Lord with joyful lips, Ps 63:5;

and my soul, which thou hast redeemed; signifying that it would not be lip labour, or bodily service, only that he should perform; but that his heart would go along with his lips in praise; and that under a sense of redeeming love, than which nothing can more strongly engage in such work, Ps 103:1. For the redemption of the soul is exceeding precious; being the contrivance of infinite wisdom, the fruit of divine grace, and owing to the blood and sacrifice of Christ.

Psalms 71:24

Ver. 24. My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long,.... See Gill on "Ps 71:16";

for they are confounded; his adversaries, for whose confusion he prayed, Ps 71:13;

for they are brought unto shame that seek my hurt; as Absalom and Ahithophel, being both brought to a shameful end.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 72:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 72

[A Psalm] for Solomon. The title of this psalm is by some rendered, "a psalm of Solomon" {h}; as a psalm dwdl, "for David", is often rendered "a psalm of David"; and so make Solomon to be the writer of it: to which the Targum inclines, which paraphrases it,

"by the hand of Solomon, said in prophecy."

But, though Solomon had a gift of divine poetry, as appears by the Song of Songs, composed by him; and the Thousand and Five, he was the author of; and perhaps wrote the hundred twenty seventh Psalm: yet by the first and last verses of this psalm it may be concluded it was not written by him, but by David; and very likely at the close of his days, when he ordered Solomon to be anointed king, and expressed his satisfaction in it; his prayers and wishes then being ended with regard to that affair; see **1Ki 1:34**. And so the title in the Syriac version is,

"a psalm of David, when he made Solomon king:"

the same Kimchi observes; it was written for him, and on his account: and it might be sent to him, and delivered into his hands, to be laid up and kept by him, and be referred to for his use at proper times. For it may be rendered, as in the Arabic version, "to Solomon"; which adds, the son of David: or else it may denote the subject of the psalm, and be read, "concerning Solomon" {i}; the Messiah, the antitypical Solomon; who is often called by this name in the Song of Songs; see **So 3:7**; Solomon being a type of him in his wisdom and riches, and in the peaceableness and extent of his kingdom; to which reference is had in this psalm. But a greater than Solomon is here; that the Messiah is the subject of it is manifest from the largeness of his kingdom, it reaching to the ends of the earth; which was not true of Solomon, Ps 72:8; and from the duration of it, it being as long as the sun and moon endure, Ps 72:5; and from the abundance of peace and prosperity in it, which equally last, Ps 72:3; and from the subjection of kings and nations to him, even all of them, Ps 72:9; and from the happiness of his subjects; they having protection, deliverance, and salvation by him, and all spiritual blessings in him; which shows him to be the promised seed, in whom all nations should be blessed, Ps 72:2, and from the honour, praise, glory, and blessedness, ascribed to him, Ps 72:15. So Tertullian {k}, long ago, observed, that this psalm belongs to Christ, and not to Solomon. And that the Messiah is intended, many of the Jewish writers, both ancient and modern, acknowledge, as appears from the Targum, Talmud, Midrash, and other writings, which will be observed in the exposition of it. Jarchi, though he interprets it of Solomon, yet owns that their Rabbins expound the whole psalm of the Messiah: and Kimchi, who explains it hyperbolically of Solomon, acknowledges that, in the proper and literal sense, it is to be understood of the Messiah; and which is the sense given by his father, R. Joseph Kimchi. Aben Ezra says, this psalm is either concerning Solomon, or concerning the Messiah; but Abarbinel {l} makes no doubt that it is said concerning him. R. Obadiah says, it is concerning the coming of the Messiah; and to this agrees the title in the Syriac version,

"and a prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah, and the calling of the Gentiles."

{h} hmlvl "ipsius Selomoh", Vatablus; Salomonis, Cocceius. {i} "De Salomone", Muis. {k} Adv. Marcion. l. 5. c. 9. {l} Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 78. 2, 3.

Ver. 1. Give the King thy judgments, O God,.... A prayer of David, or of the church he represents, to God the Father concerning Christ; for he is "the King" meant; which is the sense of the old Jewish synagogue: the Targum is, "give the constitutions of thy judgments to the King Messiah;"

and so their Midrash {m} interprets it. He is "the King", by way of eminence, as in Ps 45:1; not only the King of the world in right of creation and preservation, in conjunction; with his Father, having an equal right with him; but of saints, of the church and people of God, by the designation and constitution of his Father; hence he was promised and prophesied of as a King, Jer 23:5 **Zec 9:9**; and he came into the world as such, though his kingdom did not appear very manifest in his state of humiliation; yet at his ascension it did, when he was made and declared Lord and Christ; and it is for the manifestation of his kingdom, and the glory of it, the psalmist here prays. For by "judgments" are meant not the statutes and laws of God, given him to be shown, explained unto, and enforced on others, which rather belongs to his prophetic office, or as the rule of his government; nor the judgments of God to be inflicted upon wicked men, which is only one part of his kingly office; but of all power in heaven and in earth, which was given him by his Father upon his resurrection, and about the time of his ascension, Mt 28:18; and is the same with "all judgment" committed by him to his Son, **Joh 5:22**; and which explains the clause here, and is the reason why it is expressed in the plural number here; which takes in the whole of the power and authority, the kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom, delivered to Christ; and which chiefly lies in the government of the church, which is on his shoulders, and is committed into his hand; exercised in enacting laws, and delivering out ordinances, to be observed by the saints, and in the protection and defence of them; and also includes his judgment of the world at the last day, to which he is ordained and appointed by his Father, and will be managed and conducted by him;

and thy righteousness unto the King's Son; who is the same with the King, as Jarchi well observes; for only one single person is afterwards spoken of, and designs the Messiah; who, as a divine Person, is the Son of the King of kings, the only begotten of the Father, the true and proper Son of God; and, as man, the Son of David the king. And so the Targum,

"and thy righteousness to the Son of David the king;"

a known name of the Messiah, **Mt 1:1**. And by "righteousness" is meant, not the essential righteousness of God; this Christ has by nature equally with his divine Father, and is not given or communicated to him; but the fulness of the graces of the Spirit, and perfection of virtues, which he received without measure; whereby, as Mediator, he is abundantly qualified to judge with righteousness, and reprove with equity; and not as other judges do, after the sight of the eyes, or hearing of the ears; see Isa 11:2. Unless it can be understood of the everlasting righteousness, which Christ has wrought out, called his Father's, because appointed in council and covenant, approved of and accepted by him, and imputed to his people. To work out this righteousness was not only given to Christ in covenant, but he was sent in the fulness of time to do it; and had a power given him, as Mediator, to justify many with it, Isa 53:11; and which may be here prayed for. Jerom, by the "King's Son", understands such as are regenerated, and taken into the adoption of children; and to such the righteousness of God is given. This is a truth, but not the sense of the text.

{m} In Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 112. 2.

Psalms 72:2

Ver. 2. He shall judge thy people with righteousness,.... Or, "so shall he judge"; or, "that he may judge" {n}, as the Syriac and Arabic versions; having the judgments and righteousness of God given him, he will be thereby qualified to judge the people of God; such as are so, not by creation, but by special grace; his chosen and covenant people, the redeemed and purchased people of God, and who in the effectual calling appear to be so, and are made his willing people. These Christ judges, rules, and governs, protects and defends, in a righteous manner; pleads their cause, vindicates their right, and avenges them on their enemies, as well as justifies them with his own righteousness;

and thy poor with judgment; justice and equity. Such who are literally poor, and are the Lord's poor, whom he has chosen, and makes rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom; and with whom Christ, when here on earth, was chiefly concerned, and now is; and not with the great men and rulers of the earth: or such who are poor in spirit, sensible of their spiritual poverty; that find themselves hungry and thirsty, and destitute of righteousness, and without money, or anything to procure either. Or, "thine afflicted ones" {o}; such as are distressed in body or mind, with respect to things temporal or spiritual; oppressed by sin, Satan, and the world, These Christ regards, and administers justice to in his own time and way; see Isa 11:4.

{n} Nydy "ut jus dicat", Tigurine version; so Ainsworth. {o} Kyne "afflictos tuos", Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, Tiguriue

version.

Psalms 72:3

Ver. 3. The mountains shall bring peace to the people,.... The people of God, as before. Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret this of the nations, and kings of the nations, comparable to mountains and hills, as in **Mic 6:1**; that should make peace with Israel in the days of Solomon, and in the days of the King Messiah. Jarchi, of the abundance of fruit the mountains and hills should bring forth; so that there would be no contention among men about gathering it; but everyone would invite his neighbour to partake thereof, according to **Zec 3:10**, and so the Midrash {p}. The Targum explains it of the inhabitants of the mountains; and may be applied to the churches of Christ, comparable to the mountains for their firmness and stability, **Isa 2:2**; and to the abundance of peace, holiness, and righteousness, that should be found in them in the times of Christ; or to the ministers of the Gospel, whose feet are beautiful, upon the mountains publishing peace and salvation by Christ, Isa 52:7;

and the little hills by righteousness: that is, shall bring peace, by or with righteousness, the righteousness of Christ; the effect of which is spiritual peace and joy, **Ro 5:1**.

{p} In Yalkut Simeoni, ut supra. (par. 2. fol. 112. 2.)

Psalms 72:4

Ver. 4. He shall judge the poor of the people,.... Of the people of God, whether among Jews or Gentiles; See Gill on "Ps 72:2";

he shall save the children of the needy; whose parents being needy, they are so too, in a spiritual sense, and in distressed circumstances. Such Christ saves from their sins; from the curses and condemnation of the law: from, wrath to come, and out of the hands of all their enemies;

and shall break in pieces the oppressor; the tyrant Satan, the god of this world; that has usurped a power over it; who works in the children of disobedience, and leads captive the people of God in their unregenerate state: the "calumniator", as some render the word; the accuser of the brethren: "the defrauder" {q}, as others: who beguiled our first parents, and deceives mankind. Now it was foretold of Christ that he should break his head; and he was manifested in the flesh to destroy his works; and him himself; and he has broke him and all his schemes in pieces, and spoiled all his principalities and powers: The Syriac Version reads, "tyrants" or "oppressors", in the plural number; and it may include the Jews, who were the persecutors and oppressors of the first Christians; and Rome, Pagan and Papal; antichrist, and all the antichristian states, which have been, or will be, broken to pieces by Christ; who will rule them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces as a potter's vessel, **Re 2:27**.

{q} qvwe "calumniatorem", Pagninus, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Musculus; "fraudatorem", Muis, Cocceius.

Psalms 72:5

Ver. 5. They shall fear thee,.... The King Messiah, the Judge of the poor, and the destroyer of the oppressor: either the tyrants and oppressors themselves shall fear him, and such who have been aiding and assisting to them; see Re 11:11; or rather the people of God, the poor of the people, and children of the needy, judged and saved by Christ; who shall fear the Lord, both internally and externally, in the exercise of grace, and in the performance of religious worship; in all the parts of it, which are both included in the fear of the Lord; of which there will be many instances, both among Jews and Gentiles, in the latter day; see **Ho 3:5**; and this they shall do,

as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations; or, "with the sun, and before the moon, generation of generations" {r}; that is, to the end of the world, until sun and moon shall be no more: so long will Christ have a seed to serve him:; see Ps 89:36.

{r} Sic Eth. Syr. Arab. Apollinarius, Vatablus, & Cocceius.

Psalms 72:6

Ver. 6. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass,.... That is, the King and King's Son, the Messiah, whose coming is compared to rain, and showers of it; see **Ho 6:3**; and may be understood of his incarnation; when, like rain, he came down from heaven; not by an illapse or entrance of the human nature, which before was not in him; nor by local motion of his divine

Person, with which that will not agree; but by assumption of human nature into union with him, as the Son of God; which was an instance of his condescending grace: like rain, he had no father as man; see Job 38:28; but was born of a virgin, through the power of the Holy Ghost; which was very marvellous, like the dew that fell on Gideon's fleece, when the earth about it was dry; which some think is here referred to. The word used signifies also a shorn fleece of wool; and so it is rendered by the Septuagint, and those versions which follow that: or, "shorn grass", shorn by locusts, as the Targum; rather by sheep, who, as by classical writers {s}, are said to sheer the grass by biting it. Or, "like rain upon the fleece" {t}; and as the rain is the gift of God to persons undeserving, in consequence of a decree, Job 28:26; sometimes comes suddenly, and is very grateful and refreshing; so Christ is the free gift of God to sinners, and by a decree of his; and his coming was suddenly, into his temple, and was welcome to them that looked for him; as he still is to all sensible sinners. Or this may be interpreted of the coming of Christ into the hearts of his people, by the communications of his Spirit and grace, which, like rain, came down from heaven; are dependent on the will of God, are free grace gifts, and given in abundance; and, like rain, refresh, revive, and make fruitful. Or else this may be applied to the administration of Christ's offices; as his prophetic office, his Gospel and doctrine, being from heaven, like rain, and falling, by divine direction, sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; and like it in its effects, softening, quickening, and fructifying; and more especially it may respect the administration of his kingly office, since he is in the context spoken of as a King and Judge, and that in the latter day; whose administrations, though just and righteous; yet not cruel and severe, but mild and gentle; his commands are not grievous, nor his yoke heavy; though he will rule the wicked with a rod of iron, he holds forth the sceptre of grace and mercy to his own people; and when his kingdom shall come in all its glory, it will be times refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and his favour will be as the cloud of the latter rain; see **Ac 3:19**;

as showers [that] water the earth: signifying the same. The word Pyzrz is only in this place, and is used in the Talmud {u}, in the plural number, for drops of water; and this sense of showers dropping on the earth is given by the Targum. Kimchi derives it from Prz, which, in the Syriac language, signifies to "cut"; and thinks the phrase is the same with the former, "as showers on the cut grass of the earth" {w}. But perhaps the word rather designs the fissures and cracks of the earth through drought; and the sense is, that Christ's coming is like showers of rain upon the dry and parched ground, which are very acceptable to it.

{s} "Tondentes gramen oves", Ovid. de Remed. Amor. l. 1. "Tondentes gramina lanigerae pecudes", Lucret. c. 2. {t} zg le "super vellus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus. {u} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 87. 1. {w} In Sepher Shorash. rad. Pwrz.

Psalms 72:7

Ver. 7. In his days shall the righteous flourish,.... As the grass of the field, Ps 72:16; the dews and rain of grace descending upon them; and as a branch, Pr 11:28. They being branches in Christ the vine, flourish and bring forth fruit; and as the palm tree, Ps 92:12; which the more it is pressed with weights, the more it grows; so they, the more they are afflicted, as the Israelites, the more they grow in grace and experience, and become fruitful in every good word and work; which is owing to their being planted in a good soil, in the house and courts of the Lord, where the word is preached, and ordinances administered; to their being rooted and grounded in the love of God and grace of Christ; to their being watered continually with the dews of divine favour; enjoying the bright shining of the sun of righteousness, and the refreshing gales of the divine Spirit, like the south wind upon them, causing their spices to flow out. The Targum is,

"in his days the righteous shall be multiplied;"

when the forces and fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, and the nation of the Jews shall be born at once: in the latter days of the Messiah, all the Lord's people shall be righteous; and none but righteous persons shall dwell in the new heavens and earth, Isa 60:21 **2Pe 3:13**. This is to be understood not of persons outwardly righteous only; nor that are so in their own conceit; nor that seek for righteousness by the works of the law, or depend on an external profession of religion; for such never flourish, nor grow in grace, who have no grace to grow in: but of such that are justified by the righteousness of Christ, have faith in him, and the seed of grace implanted in them. This is interpreted of the Messiah, by a Jewish writer {x}; who observes, that in his days the priesthood shall return, and the rod of Aaron shall flourish;

and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth; alluding, no doubt, to the name of Solomon, which signifies peace; and to that peace and prosperity which were enjoyed under his reign, and was a shadow of what would be in the times of Christ: universal peace, in a temporal sense, was in the times of Augustus, in which Christ was born, and in whose reign the temple of Janus was shut, a sure sign of peace {y}. Spiritual peace was made with God by his blood, and all things were reconciled by him, whether in heaven or in earth; Jew and Gentile were made both one, and reconciled in one body; and abundance of spiritual peace is enjoyed by those that believe in Christ: they are kept in perfect peace, and filled with it; and in the latter day there will be abundance of peace among the saints, There will be no disputes nor discord among them; no envying nor vexing one another; no animosities or contentions about religious matters; for they will then see eye to eye: and they will be at peace with the men of the world; there will be no more wars in the earth, nor bloodshed, nor persecution. And this shall endure till there is no moon, till there shall be no need of one; as there will not in the New Jerusalem state, in which there will be no night.

{x} Baal Hatiurim in Numb. fol. 169. 3. {y} Vell. Patercul. Hist. Rom. l. 2. Aurel. Victor. de Vir. Illust. Addit. c. 2. de Caesar. c. 1.

Psalms 72:8

Ver. 8. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,.... The same is said of the Messiah in **Zec 9:10**; where he is manifestly spoken of as here, and regards the extent of his dominion; not over the land of Israel only, as some think; but over the Gentile world, through the preaching of the Gospel in the several parts of it; and especially as it will be in the latter day, when the kingdoms of this world will be his, and he will be King over all the earth; see Re 17:14; which cannot agree with Solomon, whose dominion reached only to the land of the Philistines, to the border of Egypt, **1Ki 4:21**; but Christ's dominion will be, as it follows,

and from the river unto the ends of the earth; which, as Kimchi owns, is clear, if applied to the Messiah, since his government shall be over all the world. The note of Aben Ezra on the text is worthy of regard.

"If this is said concerning Solomon, the meaning is, from the Red sea to the sea of the Philistines; and from the river, this is Euphrates; and the ends of the earth mean the wilderness; (see Ex 23:31); and, lo, mention is made of the length and breadth of the land of Israel: and if of the Messiah, the sense is, from the south sea, which is called the Idumean sea, to the northern sea, which is the sea of the ocean; and from the river, the river that goes out of Eden at the beginning of the east, unto the ends of the earth, which is at the end of the west;"

though rather the sense is, from the Indian ocean, the great sea, unto the Mediterranean sea; and from the river Euphrates to the end of the world. This text is applied to the Messiah by many Jewish writers {z}, ancient and modern.

{z} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 49. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, s. 13. fol. 209. 4. Baal Hatturim in Num. fol. 178. 4. R. Nachman. Disput. cum fratre Paulo, p. 41.

Psalms 72:9

Ver. 9. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him,.... In token of subjection to him, reverence and worship of him, to whom every knee shall bow, Isa 45:23. The Septuagint version, and others, render the word Myyu, "Ethiopians", who dwell in a dry land, parched and burnt with the sun; and so it is a prophecy of their conversion to Christ, as in Ps 68:31; of which there is an instance, **Ac 8:27**; the word is used of the wild beasts of the field, in Isa 13:21; to which wicked men, for the malignity of their nature, may be compared; as they are to the wild ass, to lions, leopards, and bears; and yet these are so tamed by the power of divine grace as to be made subject to Christ. Kimchi explains it as we do, of the inhabitants of the wilderness; and so the word is rendered in Ps 74:14; and instances in the Kedarenes; and it may in particular design those that dwell in the deserts of Arabia; and in general the Gentiles, the wilderness of the people, who in Gospel times should be brought to the knowledge of Christ, and submission to him: and it fitly describes the people of God in an unregenerate state; when they are as barren and unfruitful as the dry and parched ground, and as the heath in the wilderness; are in want of provision, and have nothing but husks to feed upon; in perplexity of ways, and know not which to take, or whither they are going; and in very dangerous circumstances, destruction and misery being in all their ways: in this wilderness state the Lord finds them, as he did Israel of old, and leads them about, and brings them to Christ; when they submit to him as a Saviour, being willing to be saved by him, and him only, and to his righteousness, as their justifying righteousness before God, and to the sceptre of his kingdom, to his laws and commands, to his Gospel, and the ordinances of it; all which they do not by constraint, but willingly. The Targum and Jarchi interpret it, the one of governors of provinces; the other of companies of princes. The Syriac version is, "the isles shall bow before him"; the inhabitants of the islands: but this is expressed in Ps 72:10. Aben Ezra thinks masters of ships are meant;

and his enemies shall lick the dust; of the earth; which is an instance of their great subjection to him; see Isa 49:23; the allusion is to the custom of the eastern people, and which continues to this day with the Turks, that as soon as an ambassador sees the sultan, whether at the window, or elsewhere, he immediately falls down on his knees, and kisses the ground {a}. The Jews particularly are the enemies of Christ, who rejected him, and would not have him to reign over them; and yet some of these became obedient to the faith of Christ, and more of them, even the whole nation, will in the latter day: all that are Christ's are, before conversion, enemies to him, to his people, to his Gospel and ordinances, to him as a King, and to all his laws and commands; but when his arrows are sharp in their hearts, they fall under him, and submit to him; throw off the yoke of sin, Satan, and the world, and own him, and obey him, as their King and Lawgiver.

{a} Mandevil. Itinerar. c. 7.

Psalms 72:10

Ver. 10. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents,.... Tarshish either signifies the sea, as it is sometimes rendered in the Targum; and then the sense is, the kings of the sea, that is, of the islands of the sea, as it follows, shall be subject to the kingdom of Christ; and, as a token of it, bring presents to him, as the Moabites and Syrians did to David, and as several nations and kings did to Solomon, **2Sa 8:2**; or it designs a large country inhabited by the Celtae {b}, and so is distinct from the islands; and then the sense is, that kings, both of the continent, and of the islands of the sea, shall do homage to the Messiah;

and the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it, "the kings of the Arabians and Saba"; and so Apollinarius, the Arabians, and Sabeans, these being places in Arabia Felix and Petraea {c}: this will be fulfilled when the kings of the earth shall bring their honour and glory into the New Jerusalem, Re 21:24. This, and the preceding verse, are interpreted of the Messiah by the ancient Jews {d}; who say {e}, that all the gifts that Jacob their father gave to Esau, the nations of the world shall return them to the King Messiah in time to come, according to the sense of these words; where it is not written "they shall bring"; but whyvy {f}, "they shall return [presents]".

{b} Hiller. Onomast. p. 944. {c} Hiller. ibid. p. 165, 920. {d} Zohar in Gen.

fol. 71. 1. {e} Bereshit Rabba, s. 78. fol. 69. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, s. 13. fol. 210. {f} "Redire facient, vel reddant", Muis.

Psalms 72:11

Ver. 11. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him,.... Or worship him; not with a civil, but religious worship; for such worship is due to Christ, he being God equal with the Father, and so to be equally honoured; the Creator of all things, the Redeemer of his people, Head and Lord of the church, and whom the angels adore; every part of worship is to be given him; internal, which lies in the exercise of faith, hope, love, fear, &c. and external, which consists of prayer to him, praise of him, preaching in his name, and the administration of ordinances; and this worship is to be performed in the same manner as to the Father, in spirit and in truth, in righteousness and holiness, with reverence and godly fear. This is to be understood, either literally of the kings of the earth, and which will have its full accomplishment in the latter day; see Isa 49:23; or mystically of such who are made kings unto God the Father by Christ; who reign spiritually now, through the power of divine grace in their hearts; have the honour, riches, and attendance of kings, and a crown and kingdom prepared for them; and shall reign with Christ on earth, though under him, at whose feet they cast their crowns: all this shows the dignity of Christ's person and office; that he is the Prince of the kings of the earth, the firstborn of God, whom he has made higher than they, and King of kings, and Lord of lords; whose princes, and all whose subjects, are altogether kings. This passage is allowed to belong to the Messiah, both by ancient and modern Jews {g}; and indeed it never was true of Solomon, nor of any other;

all nations shall serve him; which will be in the latter day; see **Isa 2:2**; the Jews say {h}, that in the world to come, or the times of the Messiah, all the Gentiles shall be voluntary proselytes.

{g} Zohar in Gen. fol. 84. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, s. 13. fol. 209. 4. Midrash Megillat Esther, fol. 86. 2. R. Isaac Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 44. {h} T. Avodah Zarah, fol. 24. 1.

Psalms 72:12

Ver. 12. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth,.... Such as are not only in want, but are sensible of it, see their need of Christ and his righteousness, and salvation by him, and cry to him for the same, under a sense of their misery and danger; these he delivers out of all their troubles, and out of the hands of all their enemies, and supplies all their need;

the poor also; the poor in spirit; who acknowledge their spiritual poverty, and apply to him for the true riches; to these he gives gold tried in the fire, that they may be rich; he gives them grace here, and glory hereafter;

and [him] that hath no helper; that is in an helpless condition; can neither help himself, nor can any creature, angel or man, give him any help: but this being laid on Christ, and found in him, is given to him, whereby he is delivered out of a miserable state into a very comfortable and happy one; and such humane, kind, and tender regard to the needy, poor, and helpless, in this great King spoken of, is what engages to a cheerful subjection to him, and worship and reverence of him; more of which is expressed in the following verses, as the reason of the great esteem he should be had in.

Psalms 72:13

Ver. 13. He shall spare the poor and needy,.... Pity them, have mercy and compassion on them, and sympathize with them; such an one is Christ, a merciful King, as well as High Priest, who is touched with a feeling of his people's infirmities, and who in his love and pity has redeemed them;

and shall save the souls of the needy; not to the exclusion of their bodies, which are also his care and charge, are bought with his blood, are preserved by him, will be raised from the dead, and made like his glorious body; but souls are mentioned as being the most excellent part of man, and which having sinned, are liable to damnation and the second death; and are therefore the special objects of redemption and salvation; these are saved by him from all their sins, and from wrath to come they deserve; hence his name is called "Jesus", a Saviour.

Psalms 72:14

Ver. 14. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence,.... From all the secret and open designs and efforts of their enemies; "from deceit", and deceitfulness of sin and its lusts, so as that they shall not be finally hardened and destroyed by it; from the deceitfulness of the old serpent the devil, and all his cunning wiles and stratagems; and from false teachers, who lie in wait to deceive, and who would, if possible, deceive the very elect, but shall not: and from "violence"; from the violent and tyrannical power of sin, so as that it shall not have the dominion over them; from the rage and fury of the men of the world, which is overcome by him; and from Satan, the strong man armed, who is stronger than they; from him the devouring lion, who will not be able to snatch them out of Christ's hands;

and precious shall their blood be in his sight; so that he either prevents the shedding of it, or, when shed, avenges it; and dear are such persons to him; and very acceptable is the sacrifice of their lives for his sake, who have the honour to suffer martyrdom for him; see Ps 116:15.

Psalms 72:15

Ver. 15. And he shall live,.... Either the poor and needy man, saved and redeemed by Christ; he, though dead in trespasses and sins, shall live spiritually, be quickened together with Christ, and by his Spirit, and live a life of faith and holiness; and though dead by law, yet, through the righteousness of Christ, shall have the justification of life, and live in the sight of God; and so shall live comfortably by faith in Christ, being filled with joy and peace in believing in him; and though he may lose his life for Christ's sake, he shall find it again, and live eternally with him: or the Messiah, the Saviour and Redeemer of the poor and needy; who, though he was to die, and by his precious blood redeem them; yet should live again, and never die anymore; as he now does live at the right hand of God, where he ever lives to make intercession for his people, as well as lives in their hearts, and supplies them with all grace, and keeps alive his own work on their souls;

and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: or Arabia, as Apollinarius; either to the poor and needy, to whom is given faith, which is more precious than gold that perisheth; or the knowledge of Christ, which is preferable to gold and silver; and of the doctrines of the Gospel, which are of more value than thousands of gold and silver: also the justifying righteousness of Christ, which is the free gift, and is called clothing of wrought gold, and is signified by gold of Ophir, Ps 45:9; moreover, this may include all the riches of Christ, his durable and unsearchable riches; his riches of grace and glory, which he bestows upon his subjects; so that the poor and needy are not only saved and redeemed, and live through him; but are made rich by him, become rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom: or to the Messiah, who had gold presented to him, in his infancy, **Mt 2:11**; though rather it is to be understood spiritually of the exercise of faith upon him, and every other grace, which is as gold tried in the fire; and which, as it comes from Christ, it is given to him again. A truly gracious soul gives Christ the best it has: it gives him its whole self, body and soul, its heart and affections, and all its grace, and the glory of all;

prayer also shall be made for him continually; or "he shall pray for him" {i}; that is, either Christ shall pray for the poor and needy man; not only save and redeem, but make intercession for him, as Christ does for all he redeems: he prays for them, that they may be enriched with all the blessings of grace; that the gold he gives them may be kept; that their faith fail not; that they may be preserved from the evil of the world, and be with him, where he is, to behold his glory: or the poor and needy shall pray for Christ, for the prosperity of his church, for the increase of his interest, and the coming of his kingdom: or "prayer shall be made by him"; or "through him continually" {k}; as the Mediator between God and man, the way of access to God, through whom petitions are offered to him, and become acceptable with him;

[and] daily shall he be praised; or "daily shall he bless him" {l}; either Christ shall daily bless the poor and needy, with spiritual blessings, as he stands in need of them, and even load him with his benefits: or he shall bless Christ, ascribe blessing, honour, praise, and glory to him; because of his perfections and excellencies; because of redemption and salvation by him; and on account of the various blessings of grace, and the daily supplies of it, he receives from him.

{i} wdeb llptyw "et orabit pro eo", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius. {k} "Per ipsum", Genebrardus; "per et propter eum", Calvinus apud Michaelim. {l} whnkrby "benedicet ei", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius.

Psalms 72:16

Ver. 16. There shall be an handful of corn,.... By which are not meant the people of Christ, compared to corn, or wheat, in distinction from hypocrites, said to be as chaff, **Mt 2:12**; who are but few, yet fruitful and flourishing; nor the Gospel, so called in opposition to the chaff of false doctrine, Jer 23:28; nor the blessings of grace, signified by corn, wine, and oil, Jer 31:12; but Christ, who compares himself to a corn of wheat, Joh 12:24; for its choiceness and purity, and for its usefulness for food; and he may be compared to an handful of it, because of the little account he was made of here on earth, and the little that was expected from him; and on account of the small beginnings of his kingdom, which came not with observation, was like a little stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and like a grain of mustard seed: so R. Obadiah Gaon {m} interprets these words,

"an handful of corn; that is, the Messiah shall be at first as an handful of corn; but afterwards a multitude of disciples shall grow as the grass;"

in the earth; that is, sown in the earth: this denotes not Christ's being on the earth in the days of his flesh; but his death and burial, his descending into the lower parts of the earth, where he continued a while to answer the type of Jonah; and which is represented by a corn of wheat falling into the earth and dying, Joh 12:24; by which is signified, that Christ's death was not accidental, but designed, as is the sowing of corn in the earth; and that it was voluntary, and not forced, and was but for a time: for as the corn dies, and lives again, and does not lie always under the clods; so Christ rose again; nor could he be held with the cords of death. It is added,

upon the top of the mountains; where corn being sown, it is very unlikely it should come to anything; and as little was expected by the Jews from the crucifixion and death of Christ: or else this may denote the publicness of Christ's death, it being a fact known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and many others;

the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; meaning either a large number of souls converted, the fruit of Christ's death, and of the Gospel ministry; of whom there was a large harvests, both in Judea and in the Gentile world, in the first times of the Gospel, immediately after Christ's death and resurrection; and there will be still a greater in the latter day: or else the blessings of grace are meant, which come by the death and resurrection of Christ; as righteousness, peace, pardon, and eternal life. The allusion is to a field of wheat when ripe, and its ears heavy, which, when the wind blows upon it, is shaken, rustles, and makes a noise {n}, like the shaking of trees, and even of the cedars in Lebanon; it denotes the goodness and excellency or the fruit;

and [they] of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth; or "they shall flourish out of the city" {o}; which the Targum interprets of the city of Jerusalem; and so the Talmud {p}, and also Jarchi; and was literally true; for the Gospel, after Christ's death, was first preached in the city of Jerusalem, and was blessed for the conversion of many there, who were fruitful in grace and good works: it may very well be understood of all the citizens of Sion; such who are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, who being planted in the house of the Lord, flourish in the court of our God, and become very fruitful in every good word and work; and flourish like grass of the earth for numbers, for quickness of growth, and for verdure and beauty; all which is owing to their being rooted in Christ, to his coming down upon them as rain, Ps 72:6; to the dews of his grace, and to his arising upon them as the sun of righteousness. The ancient Jews interpreted this passage of the Messiah:

"as the first Redeemer, they say {q}, caused manna to descend, as it is said, Ex 16:4; so the latter Redeemer shall cause manna to descend, as it is said, "there shall be an handful of corn in the earth"."

Jarchi says our Rabbins interpret this of the dainties in the days of the Messiah, and the whole psalm concerning the King Messiah.

{m} In Viccars. in loc. {n} "Corpus ut impulsae segetes aquilonibus horret", Ovid. Epist. 10. v. 139. {o} ryem "de civilate", V. L. Musculus, Gejerus; so Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Michaelis. {p} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 111. 2. {q} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 63. 2.

Psalms 72:17

Ver. 17. His name shall endure for ever,.... As a King; for he is chiefly spoken of here in his kingly office: not merely the fame of him; for so the fame of an earthly king; even of a tyrant, may continue as long as the world does; but the meaning is, that he himself should continue in his office for ever: his throne is for ever and ever; of his government there will be no end; his kingdom is an everlasting one; he shall reign over the house of Jacob, and on the throne of David, for ever and ever: he shall have no successor in this his office, any more than in the priestly office; which is an unchangeable one, or does not pass from one to another: his Gospel is his name, **Ac 9:15**; and that shall endure for ever, or to the end of the world; until all his elect are gathered in, notwithstanding the violent persecutions of men, the cunning craft of false teachers, and the death of Gospel ministers and professors: as long as this is preached, Christ's name will endure, since he is the sum and substance of it; and not only is his name perpetuated in his Gospel, but also in his ordinances, those of baptism and the Lord's supper, which are administered in his name, and will be unto his second coming;

his name shall be continued as long as the sun; or "shall be sonned" or "filiated" {r}; that is, shall be continued in his sons, in his spiritual offspring, as long as the sun lasts; as the names of parents are continued in their children; so the name of Christ is, and will be, continued in him: he has children which the Lord has given him; a seed that he shall see in all periods of time, to whom he stands in the relation of the everlasting Father; these bear his name, are called "Christians" from him, and these his seed and offspring shall endure for ever: for though sometimes their number may be few; yet there are always some in the worst of times; Christ has always had some to bear his name, and ever will have; and in the latter day they will be very numerous, even as the sand of the sea. The Jews take the word "Yinnon", here used, for a name of the Messiah {s}, and render the words, "before the sun his name was Yinnon"; and so the Targum,

"before the sun was, or was created, (as in the king's Bible,) his name was prepared;"

or appointed: for they say {t}, the name of the Messiah was one of the seven things created before the world was: it is certain that Christ was the Son of God, from eternity, or the eternal Son of God: he was so before his resurrection from the dead, when he was only declared, and did not then become the Son of God: he was owned by his divine Father, and believed in as the Son of God by men before that time: he was so before his incarnation, and not by that: he, the Son of God, was sent in human nature, and made manifest in it, and was known by David and Solomon, under that relation; and, as such, he was concerned in the creation of all things; and was in the day of eternity, and from all eternity, the only begotten Son of the Father; see **Ps 2:7**; but the version and sense which Gussetius {u} gives seem best of all; "his name shall generate", or "beget children before the sun"; that is, his name preached, as the Gospel, which is his name, **Ac 9:15**, shall be the means of begetting many sons and daughters openly and publicly, in the face of the sun, and wherever that is;

and [men] shall be blessed in him; men, and not angels, sinful men; such as are by nature children of wrath, and cursed by the law of works, yet blessed in Christ; even all elect men, all that are chosen in him, whether Jews or Gentiles; for he is the "seed [of] Abraham", in whom "all the nations of the earth should be blessed", Ge 22:18; as they are with all spiritual blessings; with redemption, peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life: they are in him, and blessed in him; he is their head and representative, and so blessed in him; he is the fountain, cause, author, and giver of all blessings; they all come from him, through him, and for his sake, through his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice.

Or, "they shall be blessed in him": that is, his children and spiritual offspring, in whom his name is perpetuated. Or, "they shall bless themselves in him" {w}; reckon themselves blessed in him, and make their boast of him, and glory in him;

all nations shall call him blessed; as he is a divine Person; not only the Son of the Blessed, but God over all, blessed for ever; and as man, being set at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honour, and all creatures, angels and men, subject to him; and as Mediator, acknowledging him to be the fountain of all blessedness to them, and, upon that account, ascribing all blessing, honour, glory, and praise, unto him.

{r} Nwny "filiabitur", Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis. {s} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. Midrash Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 32. fol. 33. 2. {t} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 54. 1. Nedarim, fol. 39. 2. Bereshit Bereihit Rabba, s. 1. fol. 1. 2. {u} Ebr. Comment. p. 511. {w} wb wkrbtyw "et benedicentes sibi in eo", Junius & Tremellius; so Cocceius, Michaelis, Ainsworth.

Psalms 72:18

Ver. 18. Blessed [be] the Lord God,.... The Messiah, who is truly and properly God, Jehovah, Lord of all, and the Lord our righteousness; to whom such a doxology or ascription of glory and blessing properly belongs, since all good things are from him, and by him;

the God of Israel; that brought Israel out of Egypt; went before them in the wilderness; redeemed and saved them, and bore and carried them all the days of old; and in whom all the true Israel of God are justified, and shall be saved with an everlasting salvation;

who only doeth wondrous things; in the creation of all things out of nothing; in the government of the world; and in the redemption and salvation of his people; which is a very marvellous thing: as that God should become man, suffer and die in the room of men, and save them from sin and ruin; this wondrous thing. Christ has done alone, and there was none with him.

Psalms 72:19

Ver. 19. And blessed be his glorious name for ever,.... Every name of Christ is glorious in itself, and precious to his people; "like ointment poured forth", as his name Messiah, to which the allusion is in **So 1:3**; his name Immanuel, God with us, **Isa 7:14**; Jehovah our righteousness, Jer 23:6; Jesus a Saviour; as well as what belongs to his royal dignity, King of kings, and Lord of lords; a name above every name that is named in this world, or that to come;

and let the whole earth [be] filled with his glory; as it will be, when his kingdom shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; when the little stone cut out without hands shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth; when the Gospel shall be spread all over the world; and the earth be filled with the knowledge of Christ, by means of it, as the waters cover the sea; and when all nations shall come and worship before him.

Amen, and Amen; which word added is expressive of the desires of the psalmist, that all that he had said might come to pass; and of his faith, that so it would be: and it is repeated to show the vehemence of his desires, and the strength of his faith.

Psalms 72:20

Ver. 20. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. The Septuagint version renders it, the hymns. This psalm is thought by some to be the last that was written by David, though put in this place; and it is certain that the psalms are not always placed in the order of time in which they were written: this being, as is supposed, made by him in his old age, when Solomon his son was appointed and set upon his throne by his order; on account of which he composed it, with a view to the Messiah, the antitype of Solomon. Or, as others, this is the last of the psalms, which were put together and digested in order by David himself; the rest that follow being collected by Hezekiah or the Levites. Aben Ezra mentions it as the sense of some of their interpreters,

"then shall be fulfilled the prayers of the son of Jesse;"

that is, as R. Joseph Kimchi explains it, when those consolations are completed, then the prayers of David the son of Jesse shall be fulfilled. The sense is, when all the things spoken of in this psalm, concerning the Messiah and his kingdom, should be accomplished, then the prayers of David, and so of every good man, his hearty wishes and desires, will then be answered, and have their full effect, and not till then. This verse seems to be written not by David, for the psalm itself ends with "Amen and Amen"; but by some collector of the Psalms: it is not in the Arabic version, in the room of which is "Hallelujah"; and in the Syriac version it is, "the end of the second book". The first book of Psalms ends with the forty first Psalm. The whole is divided into five parts by the Jews; observed by Origen {x} and Hilarius {y}, and others.

{x} Apud Montfaucon. Praelim. ad Hexapla Origen. p. 78, 79. {y} Prolog. in Psalm. p. 33.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 73:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 73

A Psalm of Asaph. It seems by the title that Asaph was the penman of this psalm, as it is certain that he was a composer of psalms and hymns; see 2Ch 29:30, though it may be rendered, "a psalm for Asaph", or "unto Asaph" {a}; and might have David for its author, as some think, who, having penned it, sent it to Asaph, to be made use of by him in public service; see 1Ch 16:7, and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"a song by the hands of Asaph;"

the occasion of it was a temptation the psalmist fell into, through the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous, to think there was nothing in religion, that it was a vain and useless thing; under which he continued until he went into the house of God, and was taught better; when he acknowledged his stupidity and folly, and penned this psalm, to prevent others falling into the same snare, and to set forth the goodness of God to his people, with which it begins.

Ver. 1. Truly God is good to Israel,.... To Israel, literally understood; in choosing them to be his people above all people on earth; in bringing them into a good land; in favouring them with many external privileges, civil and religious; in giving them his word, statutes, and ordinances, as he did not to other nations: or, spiritually understood, the Israel whom God has chosen, redeemed, and called by his special grace; verily of a truth, God is good to these; there is abundant proof and evidence of it; See Gill on "Ps 34:8",

or "only" God is good to such; though he is good to all in a providential way, yet only to his chosen and redeemed ones in a way of special favour; the

goodness others share is but a shadow of goodness, in comparison of what they do and shall partake of; they are blessed with blessings indeed, and are only blessed; so this particle is rendered in
Ps 62:2, or "but", or "notwithstanding" {b}, God is good, &c. that is, though he suffers the wicked to prosper, and his own people much afflicted, yet he is good to them; he supports them under their afflictions, and makes all to work for their good; gives them grace here, and glory hereafter;

even to such as are of a clean heart; this character excludes the carnal Israelites, who were pure in their own eyes, but not cleansed from their filthiness, and describes the true Israel of God, and explains who are meant by them, such as are pure in heart, inwardly Jews, Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile; this is not natural to men, their hearts are by nature unclean, nor is it in their power to make them clean: this is God's work, he only can create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit; which is done by the sanctifying influences of his grace, and by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, and thus purifying their heart's by faith; yet so as not to be free from all impurity of spirit, but as to have a conscience purged from the guilt of sin, and to have the heart sincere and upright towards God.

{a} Poal tw asaf Sept. "Asaph ipsi", Pagninus, Montanus; "Asapho", Gejerus; so Ainsworth. {b} Ka "attamen", Tigurine version, Piscator, Gussetius, Michaelis.

Psalms 73:2

Ver. 2. But as for me,.... Who am one of the Israel of God whose heart has been renewed and purified by the grace of God, and to whom he has been kind and good in a thousand instances; yet, ungrateful creature that I am,

my feet were almost gone; out of the good ways of God, the ways of truth and holiness just upon the turn, ready to forsake them, and give up all religion as a vain thing:

my steps had well nigh slipped, or "poured out" {c} like water; the allusion is to standing on wet and slippery ground, where a man can scarcely keep upon his feet. It may be observed, that good men are liable to slips and falls, to fall into sin, snares, and temptations, and from their steadfastness in the faith, but not totally and finally; their feet may be "almost", but not "altogether", gone: their steps may "well nigh" slip, but not "quite"; they may fall, but not be utterly cast down; at least they rise again, and are made to stand; for God is able to keep them, and does keep them, from a total and final falling away.

{c} hkpv "effusi sunt", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; "effusi fuissent", Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 73:3

Ver. 3. For I was envious at the foolish,.... The atheists, as in Ps 14:1, who deny the creation, as Arama; the wicked, as after explained, as all wicked men are, how wise soever they may be in things natural and civil, yet in religious things, in things of a spiritual nature, they have no understanding; they are proud boasters, glory in themselves, and in their outward attainments, as the word {d} here used signifies; the external happiness of these, their riches, health, and ease, were envied by the psalmist; see Ps 37:1,

when I saw the prosperity of the wicked, or "the peace of the wicked" {e}; with an evil eye. This was the occasion of his slip and fall, this was the temptation he was left unto for a while.

{d} Myllwhb "in arrogantes", Gejerus; "stolide gloriosos", Michaelis; "at vain glorious fools", Ainsworth. {e} Mwlv "pacem", Pagninus, Musculus, Piscator.

Psalms 73:4

Ver. 4. For there are no bands in their death,.... Nothing that binds and straitens them, afflicts and distresses them; they have no pain of mind nor of body, but die at once, suddenly, in a moment, wholly at ease and quiet, without any bitterness of soul; see Job 21:13, or "there are no bands until their death" {f}; they have no straits nor difficulties all their life long, no distempers nor diseases which may be called "bonds", Lu 13:12, till they come to die: the Vulgate Latin version is, "there is no respect to their death"; they take no notice of it, they have no care or concern about it; or, as the Targum,

"they are not terrified nor troubled because of the day of their death;"

they put it away far from them, and think nothing about it: but their strength is firm; they are hale and robust, healthful and sound, to the day of their death; their strength is not weakened in the way by diseases and distempers. Some take the word rendered "strength" to signify a porch or palace, and translate it, they are strong as a palace, or in a palace, or their palace is strong {g} their houses are well built, and continue long.

{f} Mtwml "usque ad mortem eorum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis. {g} Mlwa "palatium vel sicut palatium"; so some in Piscator; "porticus", Schmidt; so R. Jonah, Arama, and Jerom.

Psalms 73:5

Ver. 5. They are not in trouble, as other men,.... Either of body or of mind, as the saints are, who through many tribulations enter the kingdom; or are not in "labour" {h}, do not labour for food and raiment, or get their bread by the sweat of their brow, as poor men do; nor are weary, so Arama: "neither are they plagued like other men"; smitten of God, corrected, and chastised by him, as his children are; the rod of God is not upon them, Job 21:9.

{h} lmeb "in labore", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus.

Psalms 73:6

Ver. 6. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain, &.] Which was the sin of the devils, and of our first parents, and of Sodom, and is the sin of antichrist; and which, of all sins, is most hateful to God; this arises from, at least is increased by, outward prosperity. Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked; pride and fulness of bread went together in Sodom; and, where it is predominant, it binds as a chain; such who are under the power of it are slaves unto it, they are chained and fettered by it, and it possesses them wholly; it shows itself in the several members of their bodies, in their eyes and feet, their walk and gait, and in their conduct and behaviour, and in the several actions of their lives, and is rightly called "the pride of life"; or rather they bind it about themselves as a chain, fancying it to be an ornament to them, what sets them off, and makes them look great in the eyes of others; whereas the reverse is what is of great price, and in high esteem with God and good men; namely, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit:

violence covereth them as a garment; wicked men that are prosperous and proud are generally oppressive to others; and are very often open in their acts of violence, which are as openly done and to be seen of all men, as the clothes upon their backs; and frequently the clothes they wear are got by rapine and oppression, so that they may properly be called garments of violence; see Isa 59:6.

Psalms 73:7

Ver. 7 Their eyes stand out with fatness,.... Or their face, the eyes being put for the whole face; so the Targum,

"their face is changed, because of fatness;"

see Job 15:27, otherwise through fatness the eyes are almost enclosed: or "it goes forth out of the fatness of their eyes" {i}; that is, either "pride", which shows itself in haughty looks and scornful airs, through the abundance possessed; or "violence", seen in the fierceness of the eyes, and fury of the countenance; or "their eyes go out through fatness" {k} that is, through the plenty they enjoy, their eyes go out in lust after lawful objects:

they have more than heart could wish; that they themselves could have wished for heretofore, though not now; for what is it that a worldly covetous heart cannot and does not wish for? if it had all the world, it would not satisfy it: or "the imaginations of the heart go on" {l}; that is, after more, not being content with such things as they have; or "they", i.e. their pride and violence,

exceed the imaginations of the heart {m}; they are more than can be conceived of, they overpass the deeds of the wicked, **Jer 5:28** or "they transgress by the imaginations of the heart" {n}; which are evil, and that continually.

{i} wmnye blxm auy "prodit vel exit e pinguedine oculorum eorum", Michaelis. {k} "Exivit prae adipe oculus eorum", Montanus; "egreditur prae pinguedine", Gejerus. {l} bbl twykvm wrbe "pergunt cogitationes cordis eorum", Piscator. {m} "Excesserunt imaginationes cordis", Cocceius; "excedunt", Michaelis. {n} "Transgrediuntur cogitationibus cordis", Gejerus.

Psalms 73:8

Ver. 8. They are corrupt,.... In themselves, in their principles, and in their practices, being shapen and conceived in sin, and born of the flesh; and are corrupters, or "corrupt" themselves, and their ways, and also others by their corrupt speech, evil communications, and bad examples: or "they consume away"; like smoke, or into it, as Ps 37:20 or as wax melteth at the fire, Ps 68:2, where the same word is used as here: or "they cause to consume away" {o}; "they melt or dissolve others"; they consume them, and waste their estates by their oppression and violence; they make their hearts to melt with their threatening and terrifying words; or they make them dissolute in their lives by keeping them company:

and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak oppression and revolt, threaten with it, Isa 59:13, and speak in vindication of it, and in a boasting glorying manner; so Arama; which is speaking wickedly concerning it:

they speak loftily: proudly, arrogantly, in a haughty and imperious manner: or "from on high" {p}; as if they were in heaven, and above all creatures, and even God himself; and as if what they said were oracles, and to be received as such, without any scruple and hesitation. Thus Pharaoh, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar spake, **Ex 5:2** and the little horn, or antichrist, **Da 7:20**.

{o} wqymy "dissolutos reddunt", Vatablus; "reddent se dissolutos", Montanus; "faciunt tabescere", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {p} Mwrmm "a sublimi", Musculus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ex alto", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 73:9

Ver. 9. They set their mouth against the heavens,.... Against God in heaven, see **Da 4:26**, against his being, saying, there is no God; against his perfections, thinking him to be such an one as themselves; against his purposes and decrees, replying against him, and charging him with insincerity, cruelty, and unrighteousness; and against his providence, either denying it, or affirming it to be unequal; and against his doctrines, ordinances, and ministers. Aben Ezra interprets it also of the angels of heaven, who are spoken against, when it is denied that there are any such beings, as were by the Sadducees; and blasphemed, when the worshipping of them is introduced. The Targum understands it of the saints of heaven, with which compare Re 13:6 it may be applied to civil magistrates, the higher powers, who represent on earth God in heaven; and there are some that despise dominion, and speak evil of such dignities:

and their tongue walketh through the earth: sparing none, high nor low, but injures all sorts of persons with their lies and calumnies. This denotes the unbridled liberty which wicked men take with their tongues; there is no restraint upon them, no stopping of them; see Ps 12:5 the universal mischief they are continually doing, and the diabolical influence of their detraction and falsehood; like Satan, their tongues walk to and fro in the earth, doing all the injury to the credit and characters of men they possibly can.

Psalms 73:10

Ver. 10. Therefore his people return hither,.... Either the true people of God, and so the Targum, the people of the Lord, and whom the psalmist owned for his people; for the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read "my people"; who seeing the prosperity of the wicked, and feeling their own afflictions, return to the same way of thinking, and fall by the same snare and temptation as the psalmist did; or such who were only the people of God by profession, but hypocrites, who observing the trouble that attends a religious life, and the prosperity of wicked men, return from the good ways of God they have outwardly walked in for some time, to the conversation of these men, and join themselves to them: or else, "his" being put for "their", the sense is, the people of these wicked men, of everyone of them, return unto them, and flock about them, and caress and flatter them, because of their prosperous circumstances, and join with them in their evil practices of oppression and slander; which sense seems best to agree with what goes before and follows after:

and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them; meaning either to the people of God, and to be understood either of the abundance of their tears, on account of their afflictions inward and outward; see **Ps 6:6**, so the Targum,

"and many tears flow unto them;"

or of their afflictions themselves, which are oftentimes compared to waters in Scripture; see Ps 42:7, which are given them in measure: it is a cup of them that is put into their hands, and in full measure; they have a full cup of them; many are their tribulations, through which they enter the kingdom, and they are all of God; it is he that wrings them out to them with his fatherly hand: or else, taking the people to mean the followers and companions of the wicked, the words are to be understood of the plenty of good things which such men enjoy in this life, their cup runs over; and indeed these seem to be the persons who are introduced speaking the following words.

Psalms 73:11

Ver. 11. And they say, how doth God know?.... Owning there is a God, but questioning his knowledge; for the words are not an inquiry about the way and manner of his knowing things; which is not by the senses, as hearing and seeing; eyes and ears are improperly ascribed to him; nor in a discursive way, by reasoning, and inferring one thing from another; for he knows things intuitively, beholding all things in his own eternal mind and will: but they are a question about his knowledge itself, as follows:

and is their knowledge in the most High? they acknowledge God to be the most High, and yet doubt whether there is knowledge in him; and indeed the higher with respect to place, and at the greater distance he was from them, the less they imagined he knew of affairs below; see Job 22:13 for the knowledge called in question is to be understood of his providential notice of human affairs, which they thought he did not concern himself with, as being below his regard; see **Eze 9:9** and therefore concluded that their acts of oppression and violence, and their insolent words against God and men, would pass unobserved, and with impunity. If these are the words of good men, of the people of God under affliction, they are to be considered as under a temptation from their affliction, and the prosperity of the wicked, to call in question the providence of God in the government of the world, and his love to them, which is sometimes expressed by his knowledge of them, **Ps 1:6**.

Psalms 73:12

Ver. 12. Behold, these are the ungodly,.... Who say and do as before declared; such as these must be without the knowledge of God, the fear, love, and worship of him: who prosper in the world; in worldly and temporal things, in their bodies and outward estates, but not in their souls and spiritual things: "in this world", as the Targum is; all their prosperity is here; their good things are in this life, their evil things will be in that to come; though ungodly, they prosper in the world, and as long as they are in it; or they are at peace and in case, and are quiet; they have nothing to disturb them, they are not in outward trouble, and their sins do not distress them, and they have no concern about another world:

they increase in riches; which they are in the pursuit of, and overtake and enjoy in great abundance; whereby they become mighty and powerful, as the word {o} for "riches" signifies: these words are the observation of the psalmist, and which was the occasion of the following temptation he was led into.

{o} lyx "vires", Junius & Tremellius; "potentiam", Piscator.

Psalms 73:13

Ver. 13. Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain,.... Which supposes that his heart had been unclean, as every man's is, and which appears by what is in it, and by what comes out of it; that it was now cleansed, not in an absolute and legal sense, as if it was wholly free from sin, for this no man can say; but in an evangelical sense, being purified by faith in the blood of Christ; that he had himself some concern in the cleansing of his heart, which seems to be contrary to Pr 20:9 and besides, this is the Lord's own work, Ps 51:10 wherefore this may be considered as a wrong and rash expression of his; for as he was wrong in one part of it, its being cleansed in vain, so he might be in the other, in ascribing it to himself; though it may be allowed, consistent with what is before observed, that a believer has a concern in the cleansing of his heart; for, being convinced of the impurity of it, he owns and laments it before the Lord; and, seeing the fountain of the Redeemer's blood opened, he applies to it, and to him for cleansing; and expresses a love unto, a great and studious concern for purity of heart as well as life; and, under the influence of divine grace, is enabled to keep a watch over it, whereby, through the same grace, it is preserved from much pollution; and by fresh application to the blood of Christ, is cleansed from what it daily contracts:

and washed my hands in innocency: that is, "in vain", as before; which denotes the performance of good works, a course of holy life and conversation, which when right springs from purity of heart;
See Gill on "Ps 26:6", now the psalmist under temptation concluded that all his religion and devotion were in vain, all his hearing, and reading, and attending on ordinances, all his concern for purity of heart and life; since those who showed no regard to these things prospered in the world, and increased in riches, abounded in ease and plenty, and seemed to be rather the favourites of heaven than religious men; and this temptation was strengthened by the following observation.

Psalms 73:14

Ver. 14. For all the day long have I been plagued,.... "Smitten or scourged" {p}, as in Ps 73:5, that is, afflicted of God; which is no ways inconsistent with his love, nor with his covenant, nor with an interest in him, as a covenant God and Father; see Ps 89:29,

and chastened every morning; not in wrath, but in love, and for good; not with the chastisement of a cruel one, but of a loving and tender father; and therefore not to be improved in such a manner, as if on this account there was nothing in religion; whereas the daily notices the Lord takes of his people this way show his regard unto them, and care of them.

{p} ewgn "flagellatus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "percussus", Gejerus.

Psalms 73:15

Ver. 15. If I say, I will speak thus,.... Either as the wicked do, Ps 73:8 or rather as he had thought in his own mind, Ps 73:13, wherefore he kept it all to himself, and did not make known to others the reasonings of his mind, and the temptations he laboured under:

behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children; of whom care should be taken, above all things, that they be not offended, Mt 18:6, or "should condemn"; as the Targum; or as Jarchi,

"I should make them transgressors, and wicked persons;"

should represent them as if they were men hated and rejected of God, because of their afflictions: the words may be rendered, "behold the generation of thy children, I have transgressed" {q}; by giving way to the above temptation, which might have been prevented by considering the church, children, and people of God, and the care he has taken of them, the regard he has shown to them, and the preservation of them in all ages. The words are an apostrophe to God, who has children by adopting grace, and which appear so by their regeneration; and there is a generation of them in all ages; when one goes, another comes; there is always a seed, a spiritual offspring, to serve him, which is counted for a generation.

{q} ytdgb Kynb rwd hnh "ecce generatio filiorum tuorum, praevaricatus sum", Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 73:16

Ver. 16. When I thought to know this,.... How to reconcile the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous, to the perfections of God, and his wise providence in the government of the world, by the mere dint of reason, without consulting the sacred oracles, or his own and others' experience:

it was too painful for me: too laborious and toilsome, a work he was not equal to; "hic labor, hoc opus"; see **Ec 8:17**.

Psalms 73:17

Ver. 17. Until I went into the sanctuary of God,.... The tabernacle or house of God, where the Word of God was read and explained, prayer was made, and sacrifices offered up, and where fellowship was had with the saints, and communion with God himself; which for one hour or moment is preferable to all the prosperity of the wicked, during their whole life. This shows that though the psalmist was beset with the temptation, yet not overcome; it did not so far prevail as to cause him to neglect public worship, and relinquish the house of God, and the ordinances of it; and it is right, under temptations, doubts, and difficulties, to attend the public ministrations, which is the way and means to have relief under temptations, to have doubts resolved, and difficulties removed: some by "the sanctuary of God" understand the Scriptures, which are holy and of God, and are profitable for instruction, and are to be consulted and entered into by a serious reading of and deep meditation on them; whereby may be known the happiness that is prepared for the saints in the other world, and the misery of the wicked, and hereby judgment may be made of the present case and condition of each: others interpret it of the world of spirits, which may be entered into by contemplation; when it may be observed that the spirits of just men upon their dissolution possess unspeakable joys and glories, and the souls of the wicked are in inconceivable torments:

then understood I their end; both of the godly and of the wicked; that the end of the righteous is peace, rest, salvation, and eternal life, and the end of the wicked is ruin, destruction, and death; see

Ps 37:35.

Psalms 73:18

Ver. 18. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places,.... In which a man cannot stand long, and without danger; and the higher they are the more dangerous, being slippery, and such are places of honour and riches. The phrase denotes the uncertainty and instability of these things, and the danger men are in who are possessed of them of falling into destruction and misery. The Targum is,

"thou didst set them in darkness;"

to be in slippery places, and in the dark, is very uncomfortable, unsafe, and dangerous indeed; See Ps 35:6 and it may be observed, that all this honour, promotion, and riches, are of God; it is he that sets them in these places of honour and profit; and he that sets them up can pull them down, as he does; so it follows,

thou castest them down into destruction: into temporal destruction, by removing them from their high stations into a very low, mean, and contemptible state, as were Shebna and Nebuchadnezzar, Isa 22:15 and into everlasting destruction, from whence there is no recovery; see Ps 55:23.

Psalms 73:19

Ver. 19. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment?.... Very suddenly, which is often the case of wicked men, who cry Peace and safety, and sudden destruction comes upon them, **1Th 5:3**, so as in a moment were the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Pharaoh and his host, and of Korah and his company, **La 4:6**, the words are expressed with admiration, as wondering at the sudden and amazing turn of things:

they are utterly consumed with terrors: their destruction is not only sudden, but entire; it is like the breaking in pieces of a potter's vessel; a shard of which cannot be gathered up and used, or like the casting of a millstone into the sea, which will never rise more; such will be the destruction of antichrist; see **Re 2:27** and this is done "with terrors"; either by terrible judgments inflicted on them from without; or with terrors inwardly seizing upon their minds and consciences; as, at the time of temporal calamities, or at death, however at judgment, when the awful sentence will be pronounced upon them; see Job 27:20.

Psalms 73:20

Ver. 20. As a dream when one awaketh,.... So will be all the temporal felicity of wicked men, all an illusion, all a dream; when they lift up their eyes in hell, and awake in the resurrection, they will find themselves destitute of all their riches and honours, and it will be as if they had only dreamed of them, and never enjoyed them; see
Job 20:6 so, "O Lord, when thou awakest"; to judgment, to take vengeance on wicked men, and vindicate his own people; and who seems sometimes to be as it were asleep, and to take no notice of things, when the judgment of the ungodly, and their damnation, seem to slumber, though it does not; see **Ps 7:6** or when he awakes the dead at the time of the resurrection. Death is often compared to sleep in Scripture, and the resurrection to an awaking out of it, which is the Lord's work, Isa 26:19, and so the Targum,

"O Lord, when thou shalt raise them from their graves:"

thou shalt despise their image; the image of the earthly man, of sin and of Satan, which is upon both their souls and bodies; which will both be destroyed in hell: or their riches and honour, the vain show in which they have walked, their outward pomp and splendour; which was only a show, an outward appearance, and no solidity and substance; and which will not be esteemed in the great day of account, but despised; see Job 36:18, the wicked will awake, and arise to everlasting shame and contempt, Da 12:2.

Psalms 73:21

Ver. 21. Thus my heart was grieved,.... Not with his own sins, nor with the sins of the wicked, but at their prosperity; for this is an account of himself, while under the temptation, and before he went into the sanctuary of the Lord; or when he was "leavened" {r}, with the old leaven of wickedness, and envy, and indignation; he was in a ferment, so Plautus {s} uses the phrase for being in anger and wrath; he swelled, as what is leavened does, against God and his providence: or was "soured" {t}; he was out of humour and angry with God, or was exasperated and provoked at the favours bestowed upon the wicked. Some render it "inflamed" {u}, made hot; not with the love of God, and meditation upon it, but with wrath and indignation:

and I was pricked in my reins; disturbed and distracted in his thoughts, felt a great deal of pain in his mind, while he was considering the prosperity of the wicked; which was as a sword in his bones, and as an arrow shot into his reins; see **La 3:13**.

{r} Umxty "effervesceret fermenti instar", Tigurine version; "in fermento esset", Cocceius; so Ainsworth. {s} Casina, Act. 2. Sc. 5. v. 17. {t} Acescet Montanus; "quasi aceto acri perfundebatur", Vatablus. {u} "Inflammatum est", V. L.

Psalms 73:22

Ver. 22. So foolish was I,.... To envy the prosperity of the wicked, which is of so short a continuance; to arraign the providence and perfections of God, and to conclude so hastily that there was nothing in religion:

and ignorant; or, "I knew not" {w}; what he attempted to know, Ps 73:16, nor the end of the wicked, till he went into the sanctuary of the Lord; nor the counsel and design of God, in his methods of providence towards wicked men:

I was as a beast before thee, or "with thee" {x}; in the knowledge of the ways and works of God, even those of providence; see Ps 92:5, unteachable, untractable, kicking against God and his providential dispensations; not behaving like a man, much, less like a saint; but even as the worst of brutes, as the behemoth in Job 40:15, for the same word is here used; he concluded that God, who saw all the wickedness of his heart, the workings and reasonings of his mind, which were so vain and foolish, could esteem him no other than as a beast; so the Targum,

"as a beast I am accounted with thee:"

the words may be rendered, "I was the veriest beast before thee"; there being no note of similitude in the text; the word for "beast" being in the plural number, may be used for a superlative; Plautus {y} uses the word "bellua", beast, for a stupid man.

{w} eda al "nescivi", V. L. "non cognoscebam", Pagninus, Montanus; "nec sciebam", Piscator; "non noveram", Cocceius. {x} Kme "apud te", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {y} Trinum. Act. 4. Sc. 2. v. 110.

Psalms 73:23

Ver. 23. Nevertheless, I am continually with thee,.... Upon the heart of God, in his hands, under his eye, under his wings of protection and care, and not suffered to depart from him finally and totally; he could not be disunited and removed from him by the above temptation; nor was he left to cast off the fear of the Lord, and to forsake his worship and service; nor altogether to lose his love and affection for him, which still continued; see Ps 73:25, or "I shall be always with thee" {z}; not now, for though the saints are always in union with the Lord, yet they have not always communion with him; but hereafter, in heaven, to all eternity:

thou hast holden me by my right hand; as an instance of condescension, respect, and familiarity; see Ac 23:19, as a parent takes his child by the hand, and learns it to go, so the Lord takes his children by the hand, and teaches them to walk by faith in him, Ho 11:3 or in order to keep them from falling, and bear them up under temptations and exercises; as well as to lead them into more intimate communion with himself in his sanctuary, and to raise them up out of their low estate to an exalted one; see Isa 45:1, and likewise to put something into their hands, to supply their wants, and fill them with his good things; see Eze 16:49.

{z} dymt ynaw "ego jugiter futurus sum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "itaque ego in posterum semper tecum ero", Michaelis.

Psalms 73:24

Ver. 24. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel,.... Which is wise and prudent, wholesome, suitable, and seasonable, hearty, sincere, and faithful, and which is freely given, and when taken, infallibly succeeds: or "according to thy counsel" {a}; the determinate counsels, purposes, and will of God, which were of old faithfulness and truth; who does all things after the counsel of his own will in providence and grace: or "by thy counsel" {b}; by the Scriptures of truth, the revealed word, which contains the will of God, and directions for a holy walk and conversation; by the Gospel and truths of it, called the whole counsel of God, Ac 20:27, and by his Holy Spirit, which is a spirit of counsel as well as of might; and by which the Lord guides his people in the ways of peace, truth, righteousness, and holiness, through this world, to the heavenly glory, as follows:

and afterward receive me to glory; into a glorious place, an house not made with hands, a city whose builder and maker is God, into a kingdom and glory, or a glorious kingdom; and into glorious company, the company of Father, Son, and Spirit, angels and glorified saints, where glorious things will be seen, and a glory enjoyed both in soul and body to all eternity; for this glory is eternal glory, a glory that passes not away: or "in glory" {c}; in a glorious manner: some render it, "after glory thou wilt receive me" {d}; that is, after all the glory and honour thou hast bestowed upon me here, thou wilt take me to thyself in heaven; so the Targum,

"after the glory is completed, which thou saidst thou wouldst bring upon me, thou wilt receive me:"

but rather the sense is, "after" thou hast led and guided me by thy counsel through the wilderness of this world; "after" all the afflictions and temptations of this present life are over; "after" I have passed through the valley of the shadow of death, or "after" death itself, thou wilt receive me into everlasting joy and happiness; see **1Pe 5:10**.

{a} Ktueb "pro consilio tuo", Michaelis. {b} "Consilio tuo", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {c} dwbk "in gloria", Gejerus. {d} dwbk rxa "post gloriam", Hammond.

Psalms 73:25

Ver. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee,.... Which includes God the Father, Son, and Spirit; God the Father, as his only covenant God and Father; Christ as his only Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer, Head, Husband, Advocate, and Intercessor; the Spirit as his only sanctifier, Comforter, earnest, and sealer; and is expressive of their being the one and only Lord God, the sole object of worship, trust, and confidence; his only helper and guide; and in whom his supreme happiness and glory lay; and it excludes the sun, moon, and stars, in the lower heavens, from being the object of worship and trust; and angels and glorified saints in the highest heavens: the words may be rendered, "who is for me in heaven?" {e} on my side, my protector and defender; see **Ro 8:31**

and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee; or "with thee" {f}; there are many things on earth desirable, as riches, health, friends, food, raiment, &c. but not to be compared with God and Christ, and the blessed Spirit; with the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost; there are none to be loved and delighted in as they, nor anything so desirable as fellowship with them: or "with thee I desire not the earth" {g}; the whole world, and all things in it, are nothing in comparison of God; if a man was possessed of the whole of it, and had not interest in the Lord, he would be miserable; and if he has an interest in him, he has enough without it; for all things are his, God is all in all; wherefore he is willing to leave all, and be with him for ever: the Targum is,

"who is like unto thee, that is, mine in heaven but thee? and with thee I do not desire a companion on earth."

See Ps 89:6.

{e} yl ym "quis pro me?" Gejerus. {f} Kme "tecum", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Masculus, Gejerus. {g} Urab ytupx al "nec terram totam diligo tecum", Gejerus.

Psalms 73:26

Ver. 26. My flesh and my heart faileth,.... Either through vehement desires of communion with God deferred, see Ps 84:2 or through afflictive dispensations of Providence, being smitten and chastened continually, Ps 73:14, or through inward trials and exercises, by reason of indwelling sin, temptations, and desertions: or rather the words are expressive of the body being emaciated by sickness and diseases; and the heart fainting through fear of death, or rather failing at it, being at the point of death; the heart being, as philosophers say, the first that lives, and the last that dies:

but God is the strength of my heart, or "the rock of my heart" {h}; when overwhelmed with distress through outward trouble, or in the lowest condition with respect to spiritual things; when grace is weak, corruptions strong, temptations prevail, and afflictions are many; then does the Lord support and sustain his people, and strengthens them with strength in their souls; and in the moment of death, by showing them that its sting is taken away, and its curse removed; that their souls are going to their Lord, and about to enter into his joy; and that their bodies will rise again glorious and incorruptible:

and my portion for ever; both in life and at death, and to all eternity; this is a very large portion indeed; such who have it inherit all things; yea, it is immense and inconceivable; it is a soul satisfying one, and is safe and secure; it can never be taken away, nor can it be spent; it will last always; see Ps 142:5.

{h} ybbl rww "rupes cordis mei", Montanus, Musculus, Piscator, Cocceius, "petra cordis mei", Tigurine version, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 73:27

Ver. 27. For, lo, they that are far from thee,.... Who are alienated from the life of God, far from the law of God, and subjection and obedience to it; and from righteousness either moral or evangelical, and from the love and fear of God, and worship of him:

shall perish; not merely at death, as even righteous men do, but be lost eternally:

thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee; that follow after other gods, and worship them; which is spiritual adultery and fornication, the Scriptures often speak of, and intend by it idolatry; see De 31:16 or who set their hearts and affections upon the creature, and have them alienated from God; and love the creature more and besides the Creator: the past tense seems to be put for the future, and so some render it, "thou shalt destroy", or "cut off" {i}; destroy them soul and body, and punish them with an everlasting destruction in hell; the Targum is,

"that wander from thy fear;"

that is, from the worship of God.

{i} htmuh "perdes", Tigurine version, Musculus, so some in Vatablus; "exscindes", Michaelis.

Psalms 73:28

Ver. 28. But it is good for me to draw near to God,.... In prayer, and other acts of religious worship; to attend the word and ordinances in the sanctuary, where the psalmist had lately been delivered out of a sore temptation, and so had a recent experience, which was fresh in his mind, of the advantages of such exercises; for it is both an honourable good, what is becoming and commendable, and a pleasant good, what yields delight and satisfaction, and a profitable good, to draw nigh to God by Christ, the new and living way, assisted by the Holy Spirit; which, when done aright, is with faith, sincerity, reverence, and a holy boldness:

I have put my trust in the Lord God; as the rock of his refuge and salvation, as his portion and inheritance:

that I may declare all thy works; of providence and grace, by proclaiming the wisdom, power, goodness, and faithfulness of God in them; by giving him the glory of them, and by expressing thankfulness for them, both by words and deeds.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 74:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 74

Maschil of Asaph. Some think that Asaph, the penman of this psalm, was not the same that lived in the times of David, but some other of the same name, a descendant of his {k}, that lived after the Babylonish captivity, since the psalm treats of things that were done at the time the Jews were carried captive into Babylon, or after; but this hinders not that it might be the same man; for why might he not, under a spirit of prophecy, speak of the sufferings of the church in later ages, as well as David and others testify before hand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow? The psalm is called "Maschil", because it gives knowledge of, and causes to understand what afflictions should befall the church and people of God in later times. The Targum is,

"a good understanding by the hands of Asaph."

Some think the occasion of the psalm was the Babylonish captivity, as before observed, when indeed the city and temple were burnt; but then there were prophets, as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and after them Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; which is here denied, Ps 74:9, others think it refers to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes; but though prophecy indeed had then ceased, and the temple was profaned, yet not burnt. The Jews apply it to their present captivity, and to the profanation of the temple, by Titus {l}, and to the destruction both of the city and temple by him; so Theodoret: the title of it in the Syriac version is,

"when David saw the angel slaying the people, and he wept and said, on me and my seed, and not on these innocent sheep; and again a prediction of the siege of the city of the Jews, forty years after the ascension, by Vespasian the old man, and Titus his son, who killed multitudes of the Jews, and destroyed Jerusalem; and hence the Jews have been wandering to this day."

But then it is not easy to account for it why a psalm of lamentation should be composed for the destruction of that people, which so righteously came upon them for their sins, and particularly for their contempt and rejection of the Messiah. It therefore seems better, with Calvin and Cocceius, to suppose that this psalm refers to the various afflictions, which at different times should come upon the church and people of God; and perhaps the superstition, wickedness, and cruelty of the Romish antichrist, may be hinted at.

Ver. 1. O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever?..... This the church supposed because of the prevalence, oppression, and triumph of the enemy, because of the hardships and afflictions she laboured under, and because of the hidings of the face of God from her, which unbelief interpreted of a casting off; see Ps 77:7 when in reality it was not so, only in appearance, and according to a wrong judgment made of things; for God never did nor never will cast off, nor cast away, his people whom he foreknew, Ro 11:1,

why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture? the people of God are called "sheep", because subject to go astray, not only before conversion, but after; and because harmless and inoffensive in their lives and conversations; and because, though exposed to the insults and persecutions of men, and their butcheries and barbarities, and therefore called "the flock of slaughter", Zec 11:4, yet bear all patiently, as the sheep before her shearers is dumb; and because like sheep they are weak and timorous, unable to defend themselves; are clean, and so distinguished from dogs and swine; and are profitable, though not to God, yet to men, and one another; and like sheep are sociable, and love to be together: and they are called the sheep of the Lord's pasture; because he provides good pasture for them, leads them into it, and feeds them himself with Christ, the bread of life, the tree of life, and hidden manna; with covenant grace and promises, even the sure mercies of David; with discoveries of his love and grace, and with his word and ordinances; and yet these, when under afflictions and desertions, are ready to conclude that God is angry with them, yea, is very angry; that his anger burns against them, and his fierce wrath goes over them, signified by smoking; see De 19:20, alluding to men, who, when they are angry, become hot, as Kimchi observes, and their breath like smoke comes out of their nostrils.

{k} Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 29. col. 984. {l} Vid. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 56. 2.

Psalms 74:2

Ver. 2. Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old,.... Alluding to the redemption of the congregation of Israel out of Egypt, when they were said to be "purchased", Ex 15:16 and as that people were typical of the people of God, they may be said to be "purchased then", even of old; though the purchase in reality was not made till the blood of Christ was shed, with which he purchased his church, Ac 20:28, indeed he was the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world, in the purpose and promise of God, and in the typical sacrifices so early offered up, Re 13:8, and besides, the words may be considered as the words of the church of God groaning under antichristian oppression and cruelty, hundreds of years since the death of Christ, and so may be said to be of old purchased; and which is called a "congregation", because a select number, chosen of God, and called out of the world, and brought into one body, and into fellowship with Christ and one another; and though they may not meet together in one place, they are all of one body, and will one day make one general assembly and church of the firstborn, called "the congregation of the righteous", **Ps 1:5** now it is desired of the Lord for these, that they might be remembered with his lovingkindness and tender mercies, with his covenant and promises, and be delivered and saved out of the hands of their enemies:

the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; the Targum adds, out of Egypt; but this is to be understood not of the redemption of the people of Israel, but of the redemption of the church of God from sin, Satan, the law, the world, hell, and death; who are chosen by the Lord for his inheritance, his peculiar treasure and portion; and which he highly values and esteems, and is dear unto him as such, as the redemption of them by the blood of Christ shows:

this Mount Sion wherein thou hast dwelt; meaning the church of God, which often goes by this name, both in the Old and in the New Testament, comparable to the mount of Zion for its height, holiness, and immoveableness; where the Lord has promised to dwell, and where he does dwell, and will for evermore. As the reference to Sion literally understood, it is called "this Sion", because well known, and because the psalm might be composed or said in it, as Kimchi observes; and which shows that it was written before the destruction of the city and temple, and while Zion was the seat of religious worship, and therefore a prophecy of future times.

Psalms 74:3

Ver. 3. Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations,.... That is, arise, hasten, move swiftly, and in the greatness of strength, and come and see the desolations made by the enemy, which look as if they would remain for ever; meaning either the desolations made in the city and temple of Jerusalem, either by Nebuchadnezzar, or by Titus; or the havocs and devastations made in the church of God by the tyranny and persecutions of antichrist; which have continued so long, that an end of them has been almost despaired of. So Jacob is said to "lift up his feet"; which we render went on his way, Ge 29:1. Some take these words in a different sense, as a prayer for the destruction of the church's enemies; so the Targum,

"lift up thy feet or goings, to make desolate the nations for ever;"

and Kimchi makes but one sentence of this and the following clause, and reads it thus,

"lift up thy feet, to make desolate for ever every enemy that does wickedly in the sanctuary:"

but the accent "athnach", which divides propositions, and is upon the word xun, forbids such a reading. The former sense is best, and most agreeable to the context;

even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary; by profaning and destroying the temple, as did Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus, and Titus; or by antichrist sitting in the temple and church of God, setting up idolatrous worship in it, and blaspheming the tabernacle of God, and those that dwell therein, **2Th 2:4**.

Psalms 74:4

Ver. 4. Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations,.... Particular churches, gathered out of the world in Gospel order, and which meet together at particular times and places; in the midst of these, and against them their enemies, and who are the Lord's enemies, roar like lions, as Satan, and bloody persecutors, and particularly antichrist, whose mouth is the mouth of a lion, which is opened in blasphemy against God and his people, Re 13:2,

they set up their ensigns for signs; or "signs", "signs", false ones for true ones; meaning either military signs, as the Roman eagle, set as signs and trophies of victory; or idolatrous statues and images, such an one as Antiochus brought into the temple; or false miracles and antichristian marks, in the room of true miracles, and the true mark of Christ's followers; see **2Th 2:9**. The Jewish writers generally interpret it of the divinations and superstitions rites used by the king of Babylon, when he was coming up against Jerusalem, Eze 21:21.

Psalms 74:5

Ver. 5. A man was famous,.... Or, "it was", or "is known" {m}; the desolations the enemy made, the wickedness they committed, the terror they spread, and the signs they set in the sanctuary of the Lord:

according as he had lifted up, or "as one that lifts up"

axes upon the thick trees {n}; that is, the above things were as visible, and as well known, being as easy to be seen as such an action is, a man being obliged to lift his axe above his head, to cut down a thick tree: or rather the sense is, formerly a man was famous for, and it gave him some credit and esteem, to be an hewer of wood in the forest of Lebanon, where he lifted up his axe, and cut down the thick trees for the building of the temple, as the servants of Hiram king of Tyre did; and such an action was esteemed as if a man brought an offering to God; agreeably to which is Kimchi's note,

"when the temple was built, he who lifted up his axe upon a thick tree, to cut it down for the building, was known, as if he lifted it up above in heaven before the throne of glory; all so rejoiced and gloried in the building:"

and Aben Ezra interprets it of acclamations made above on that account. The words, according to the accents, should be rendered thus, "he" or "it was known, as he that lifteth up on high; even as he that lifteth up on high, axes upon the thick tree".

{m} edwy "cognitus erat", Munster; "noscitur", Cocceius; "cognoscitur, innotescit", Gejerus. {n} aybmk "velut adducens", Montanus, Gejerus; "tanquam sursum tollens et desuper inducens", Michaelis.

Psalms 74:6

Ver. 6. But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers. Formerly it was an honour to be employed in cutting down a tree for the building of the temple; but now so little regard was paid to it, that all its fine carved work, which Solomon made, **1Ki 6:18**, was demolished at once in a rude and furious manner with axes and hammers; which was done either by the Chaldeans in Nebuchadnezzar's time, or by the Syrians in the times of Antiochus, or by the Romans in the times of Vespasian; the first seems intended; see
Jer 46:22.

Psalms 74:7

Ver. 7. They have cast fire into thy sanctuary,.... Or, "thy sanctuary into the fire" {o}; which denotes the utter destruction of it by fire, which was done both by the Chaldean and Roman armies; see
2Ki 25:9,

they have defiled, by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground, or "to the earth they have defiled the habitation of thy name" {p}; that is, to the last and lowest degree; this Antiochus did when he set up an idol in the temple, and Titus when he laid it level with the ground, not leaving one stone upon another, as our Lord predicted, Mt 24:1 the aggravation of which was, that it was the place where the Lord had put his name, where his name was called upon, and where was the symbol of his presence.

{o} Kvdqm vab "in ignem sanctuaria tua", Pagninus, Vatablus; so Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {p} Kmv Nkvm wllx Ural "ad terram usque prophanarunt tabernaculum, vel habitationem nominis tui", Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Cocceius.

Psalms 74:8

Ver. 8. They said in their hearts, let us destroy them together,.... The Targum is,

"their children, are together;"

or "their kindred", as the Septuagint Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, taking the word to be of Nyn, which signifies a "son"; and the sense to be, that seeing they were all together, as the Jews were at the taking of Jerusalem, they might be cut off at once. Jarchi explains it of their rulers; Marinus, as Aben Ezra observes, derives it from a word which signifies to afflict and oppress, to which he agrees; see Ps 83:3,

they have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land; not only in Jerusalem, where there were, the Jewish {q} writers say, four hundred and sixty, and others four hundred and eighty of them, but also in all the land of Judea; of these synagogues there is much mention made in the New Testament; they were places for public worship, in which, prayer was made, and the Scriptures were read and explained; see **Mt 6:5**, but it may be doubted whether they are meant here, since it does not appear that there were any until after the return of the Jews from Babylon {r}; the temple, and the parts of it, may be meant, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; or the schools of the prophets; though the psalm may refer to times after the Babylonish captivity, and so may design Jewish synagogues, and even take in places of worship among Christians.

{q} T. Hieros. Cetubot, fol. 35. 3. & Megillah, fol. 73. 4. {r} Vid. Vitringam de Synagog. Vet. l. 1. par. 2. c. 9. Reland. Antiqu. Heb. par. 1. c. 16. sect. 3. Burmannum de Synagogis disp. I. sect. 9.

Psalms 74:9

Ver. 9. We see not our signs,.... Either such miracles as were formerly wrought to support the faith of God's people in distress, and for their deliverance out of it, as when they were in Egypt, and brought forth from thence; see Ps 78:43 or rather their sabbaths and sacrifices, the passover and circumcision, and other ordinances and institutions of divine worship; which were signs of the presence of God with them, and of Christ, and blessings of grace, and good things to come by him; which ceased, or were interrupted in their captivity, and which the godly lament: or the signs of redemption, as Kimchi; and may be interpreted of the blindness and stupidity of the greater part of them, who could not discern the signs of the times, as before the destruction of the city and temple, Mt 16:3 so after it, when these being destroyed, and they in the hands of the Romans, might easily have perceived that the sceptre was departed from Judah, and therefore Shiloh must be come, or the Messiah; who also must have been in his temple, and Daniel's weeks be up; but these signs they saw not, nor do they yet: and so though the signs of the latter day are upon us, we see them not, or at least very few take notice of them, and lament them; such as a very great departure from the faith of the Gospel, a neglect of Gospel worship and ordinances, coldness and lukewarmness in matters of religion, want of love to Christ and his people, a general sleepiness and security, a form of religion without the power of it, a name to live and be dead, and iniquity abounding even among professors of religion; besides the frequent signs in heaven and in earth; see Mt 24:12,

there is no more any prophet; there were but few in the Babylonish captivity, and after Malachi there were none; there were none in the times of Antiochus; there were none till John the forerunner of Christ came; and in the latter day the two prophets that prophesy in sackcloth will be slain, and there will be no prophesying for a while,
Re 11:7. Kimchi explains it, there is no prophet yet, and interprets it thus, Elijah the prophet is not yet come:

neither is there among us any that knoweth how long; the calamity will endure, and ere deliverance will come; how long the Babylonish captivity would continue was known, that it would be seventy years, and no longer; the prophets that searched after the time of salvation and redemption by Christ knew how long it would be to it; Daniel fixed the exact time of it; but how long the present times will last we know not, or how long it is to the end of wonders; or when will end the 1260 days of the reign of antichrist, of the church's being in the wilderness, of the holy city being trodden under foot by the Gentiles, and of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth.

Psalms 74:10

Ver. 10. O God, how long shall the adversary reproach?.... The name of God, as in the next clause, the divine Persons and perfections, the purposes and providence of God, his people, ways, worship, truths, and ordinances:

shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever? The "adversary" and "enemy" being in the singular number, may intend some particular one, as antichrist; who is emphatically and eminently "the enemy" of God, he opposing himself to, and exalting himself above, all that is called God; and the adversary of Christ, as his name shows; not only setting himself in his room and stead, but undermining him in all his offices; changing his laws as a King, dishonouring his sacrifice and intercession as a priest, and doing injury to his word and ordinances as a Prophet; and who has a mouth speaking blasphemies against God, his name, and tabernacle, heaven, and they that dwell therein, angels and saints, Re 13:5. He reproaches and blasphemes God himself, by showing himself to be God, by suffering himself to be so called, and to be worshipped as if he was God; by taking infallibility to himself, and setting up image worship, and obliging persons to it: he reproaches and blasphemes the Son of God, in whom the name of God is, by pretending to be his vicar on earth, and head of the church; to transubstantiate the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ; and to offer him up again in the blasphemous service of the mass: he reproaches and blasphemes his Gospel, which is his name, **Ac 9:15**, by introducing doctrines contrary to it, as the doctrines of merit, of works of supererogation, and justification by works; and the Scriptures, which bear the name and authority of God, by making them a nose of wax, taking upon himself to be the infallible interpreter of Scripture, and sole judge of controversies; by setting up his own unwritten traditions upon an equality with them, and forbidding the use of them to the people in their mother tongue: and he reproaches and blasphemes his name and authority by assuming it to himself in civil things, deposing and setting up kings at his pleasure; in religious affairs, dispensing with the laws of God, and teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; yea, in matters of salvation, giving out pardons and indulgences, pretending to open and shut heaven at pleasure. Moreover, these terms may be understood of many enemies and adversaries, even of all the enemies of the grace of God, and person of Christ; such reproach and blaspheme the name of God the Father; by denying some of his perfections, as his sovereignty, omniscience, and punitive justice, and by charging his decrees with injustice, insincerity, and cruelty; they reproach and blaspheme the name of Christ, by denying his deity, eternal sonship, and distinct personality, and by speaking contemptuously of his righteousness, blood, and sacrifice; and they do despight unto the Spirit of grace, and speak evil of his person, and the operations of his grace on the souls of men; and such a day of rebuke and blasphemy is the present one: and these things give good men that observe them a great concern for the name of God, who are ready to fear there will be no end to these reproaches and blasphemies; but there will, the time is coming when the name of the Lord will be excellent in all the earth, and the Lord alone shall be exalted; but it is not known how long it will be to it.

Psalms 74:11

Ver. 11. Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even that right hand?.... By which is meant the power of God; by which he made the heavens and the earth, and all things therein, and supports them in their beings; by which the work of his grace is wrought in the hearts of his people, and they are upheld; and by which he conquers their enemies, and saves them: this may be said to be withdrawn when he denies his people the help and succour they have had from him; when he seems to have forsaken the work of his hands; when there is not that success in the ministry of the word there formerly was, his arm being not revealed and made bare; and when the enemies of religion prosper and get ground; and when the Lord seems to be altogether inactive and unconcerned, like a man that folds up his arms under his arm holes, or hides his hands in his bosom, see Ps 44:23 wherefore it follows:

pluck it out of thy bosom; as he will one day, and strike with a home blow, antichrist and his followers, and destroy them with his rod of iron, with which he will break them in shivers as a potter's vessel; and all his enemies shall feel the lighting down of his arm with the indignation of his anger; and then this request will be fulfilled: the word used signifies to "consume" {a}; and Kimchi interprets it, consume the enemy out of thy bosom, which is the house of the sanctuary; his secret place, as the bosom is to man; but both senses of the word maybe retained, and the meaning be, pluck it out of thy bosom to consume them {b}: also it signifies to restrain {c}; and the sense may be, as the above writer observes, restrain it, that it may not return to thy bosom, till thou hast executed judgment on the wicked.

{a} hlk "consume", Montanus, Gejerus. {b} So some in Vatablus. {c} "Cohibe", Junius & Tremellius.

Psalms 74:12

Ver. 12. For God is my King of old,.... Or "but God", or "verily God", &c. {d};

for these words contain the church's consolation under all the above melancholy circumstances, taken from what God was, and had been to her, even Christ, who is God over all; he was her King by the constitution and designation of his Father, and so he had been of old, even from everlasting; for so early was he set up as King; and he had in all ages been exercising his kingly office for the good of his church, and continued to do so; and this was her comfort, and is the comfort of saints in the worst of times, that Zion's King reigneth, see
Ps 46:1

working salvation in the midst of the earth; it is "salvations" {e} in the plural number, and means both spiritual and eternal salvation, which the Lord has wrought out; and is continually applying to his people; and temporal salvation, which the Lord has been and is daily working out; he continually protecting his people, and saving them from their enemies, and delivering them out of their afflictions and temptations; and which the church considers and improves into an argument to encourage her faith, and expect the time when her walls would be salvation, and her gates praise; and she should have reason to say, now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ; and give him all the glory of it; see
Isa 60:18, which salvation, as it has been, so will be wrought

in the midst of the earth; meaning not in the midst of the land of Judea, or in Judea, the middle of the world, but openly and publicly in all the earth; though Cyril of Jerusalem says {f} Golgotha is the midst of the earth, where Christ suffered and wrought out salvation; and that it is here referred to.

{d} Myhlaw "atqui Deus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "at Deus" Vatablus, Cocceius; "equidem", Tigurine version; "certe", Schmidt. {e} twewvy "salutes", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Gejerus. {f} Cateches. 13. sect. 13. p. 180. Vid. Amamae Antibarb. Bibl. l. 3. p. 798, &c.

Psalms 74:13

Ver. 13. Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength,.... This and the following instances from hence to Ps 74:18 are proofs of God's working salvation in the midst of the earth; some of them seem peculiar to the people of Israel, and others are benefits common to mankind in general; which the church makes use of to encourage her faith and hope, in expectation of salvation, and deliverance out of her present distressed and melancholy circumstances. This seems to refer to the Lord's dividing of the Red sea into parts by a strong east wind, while Moses lifted up his rod and stretched out his hand as he was ordered, as a token of the divine power, and so the children of Israel passed through it as on dry land, Ex 14:21, and he that did this can make way for his redeemed ones to return to Zion with everlasting joy, Isa 51:10. Some render the words, "thou hast broken the sea by thy strength" {g}; subdued and conquered it, and so hast the dominion over it, rulest the raging of it, settest bounds to it, and hast ordered its proud waves to go so far and no farther; and thus the Arabic version, "thou hast made it to stand"; and the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, "thou hast confirmed it": but our version is best, which refers it to the work of God at the Red sea, and with which the Targum agrees; and Aben Ezra observes, that some refer it to the dividing of the Red sea:

thou breakest the heads of the dragons in the waters: or great whales, as the word is rendered in **Ge 1:21**, by which are meant Pharaoh and his generals, his captains and chief men, who were destroyed in the waters of the Red sea; comparable to dragons for their strength, for their cruelty to the children of Israel, and for their wrath and malice against them; and so, for the same reason, another Pharaoh, king of Egypt, in later times, is called the great dragon, that lies in the midst of his rivers, Eze 29:3 and the king of Babylon or of Egypt, Isa 27:1. So the Targum paraphrases it:

"thou hast broken the heads of dragons, and hast suffocated the Egyptians in the sea."

Rome Pagan is compared to a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, which have been broken and destroyed, Re 12:3, and Rome Papal has the power, seat, and great authority of the dragon; and though the Romish antichrist has two horns like a lamb, he speaks as a dragon, who also has seven heads and ten horns, and which ere long will be broke in pieces, see Re 13:1, in the faith of which the church might be strengthened, by considering what God had done to the heads of the dragon in the Red sea; to which may be added that Satan is called a dragon, Ps 91:13, whose head was bruised, and his principalities and powers spoiled, by Christ at his death, and will be utterly destroyed at his second coming.

{g} trrwp "contrivisti", Pagninus, Montanus; "disrupisti", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; "rupisti", Cocceius.

Psalms 74:14

Ver. 14. Thou breakest the heads of leviathan in pieces,.... A large fish, generally thought to be the whale, by some the crocodile, described in Job 41:1 to which the king of Egypt or Babylon is compared, Isa 27:1 and so the Romish antichrist in one of his characters is represented as a sea beast with many heads, which will all be broken in pieces in due time, Re 13:1, as here is one "leviathan" with heads in the plural number. Aben Ezra thinks the word lk is wanting, and may be supplied thus, "thou hast broken the heads of every leviathan"; it may be interpreted as before of Pharaoh and his chief men; so the Targum,

"thou hast broken the heads of the mighty men of Pharaoh:"

and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness; either to the wild beasts, called "tziim", the word here used,
Isa 13:21 and may be called a people, as the ants and coneys are,
Pr 30:25, to whom the dead bodies of Pharaoh and his host, drowned in the Red sea, were given for food, when they were cast upon the shore, where the Israelites saw them dead, Ex 14:28, or to the "Ichthyophagy", a sort of people that dwelt by the Red sea, and lived on fishes; and so the Egyptians became their food, they living upon the fish which devoured their bodies, at least some of them: the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it, "to the people", the Ethiopians; who, it seems, living upon the borders of Egypt, took this opportunity, when Pharaoh and his host were drowned, and seized upon their country; but others refer it to the people of Israel themselves, as the Targum,

"thou hast given them for destruction to the people of the house of Israel, and their bodies to the dragons;"

and so Jarchi,

"thou hast given his mammon or riches to the people of Israel, to feed their companies and armies;"

and Kimchi interprets it of the spoil of the sea which the Israelites took from them; and they may be truly called the people inhabiting the wilderness, since they were in one forty years; so the Romish "leviathan", or antichristian whore, will be given to the Christian kings, who will hate her, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; and to the Christian church, which now is in the wilderness, where it is nourished for a time and times, and half a time.

Psalms 74:15

Ver. 15. Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood,.... That is, the rocks at Horeb and at Kadesh, from whence water flowed as out of a fountain, and became a flood, whereby the people of Israel were supplied with water in the wilderness, and also their beasts; and from this instance it may be concluded that God will not leave his people, nor suffer them to want, but will supply all their need while they are in the wilderness, and will open fountains and rivers for them,
Isa 41:17 he himself is a fountain of living water; Christ is the fountain of gardens, and the Spirit and his grace a well of living water springing up unto everlasting life:

thou driedst up mighty rivers; the river of Jordan, called "mighty", as Kimchi says, because by its strength it overflowed all its banks and "rivers", and because other rivers flowed into it; this was dried up, or way was made through it, as on dry land, for the people of Israel to pass into Canaan, **Jos 3:14**, the Targum is,

"thou hast dried up the fords and brooks of Hermon, and the fords of Jabbok and Jordan;"

see Nu 21:14, and the Lord, that did this, is able to dry up, and will dry up, the river Euphrates, as is foretold, Re 16:12, that is, destroy the Turkish empire, and make way for the spread of the Gospel in the eastern parts of the world; to which reference is had in
Isa 11:15.

Psalms 74:16

Ver. 16. The day is thine, and the night also is thine,.... He made the one and the other, and divided the one from the other; and can make them longer or shorter, clear or cloudy, as he pleases: and the day of prosperity and night of adversity are at his disposal; all the times of his people and of his church are in his hands; sometimes it is a night of darkness, deadness, sleepiness, and security, as it now is; ere long there will be no more night, but bright day; the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be seven fold as the light of seven days; and this is to be expected from him whose is the day and the night also, Re 21:25. Jarchi interprets the day, of the redemption of Israel; and the night, of distresses and afflictions:

thou hast prepared the light and the sun; first the light, and then the sun; for the light was before the sun; or the luminary, even the sun. Aben Ezra interprets the "light" of the moon, and so the Targum; and Kimchi, both of the moon and of the stars; Jarchi takes the light figuratively to be meant of the light of the law; but it is much better to understand it of the light of the Gospel, which God has prepared, and will send forth more largely in the latter day, whereby the whole earth shall be lightened; and when Christ the "sun" of righteousness will arise with healing in his wings, and who gives both the light of grace and glory to his people.

Psalms 74:17

Ver. 17. Thou hast set all the borders of the earth,.... Of the whole world, and each of the nations, as of the land of Canaan, so of others, De 32:8, and even has fixed and settled the bounds of every man's habitation, Ac 17:26,

thou hast made summer and winter; see **Ge 8:22**, which, taken literally, are great benefits to the world; and, figuratively understood, may represent the two dispensations of the law and Gospel; see **So 2:11**, and the different frames of God's people when under temptations, and clouds, and darkness, and when they enjoy peace and comfort; and the different state of the church, when affected with affliction, persecution, false doctrine, deadness, and formality, which is now greatly the case; but there is a summer coming, when it will be otherwise; see Lu 21:30.

Psalms 74:18

Ver. 18. Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord,.... Or "hath reproached the Lord", as the Septuagint version and others render it, and very rightly; though not so well the former part of the clause, which it renders, or rather paraphrases, thus: "remember this thy creation", or "creature"; as if it referred to what goes before, as day and night, light and sun, the borders of the earth, summer and winter; whereas it is to be connected with what follows, the reproach of the Lord by the enemy; and it is a prayer of the church, that God would remember the enemy and his reproaches, which seemed to be forgotten, and inflict deserved punishments on him, which will be done in due time, Re

16:19, and that

the foolish people have blasphemed thy name; the "foolish people" are not such as want common sense, or are idiots; the blasphemers of God and Christ, and the blessed Spirit, are generally the wise and prudent of this world, from whom the things of the Gospel are hidden; but wicked and profane men: scoffers at religion, and blasphemers of Christ, his truths and ordinances, are commonly such who walk after their own ungodly lusts, who, though wise to do evil, are foolish in matters of religion: perhaps the Gentiles, which know not God, are here meant, and are so called, De 32:21, and it is observable, that the Papists bear the name of Gentiles in Re 11:2, and may be the foolish people here chiefly designed, who worship images of gold, silver, brass, and wood, and are notorious for their blasphemies;
See Gill on "Ps 74:10".

Psalms 74:19

Ver. 19. O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove,.... By which is meant the church, see **So 2:14**, which is comparable to this creature for its cleanness and purity, for its amiableness and beauty, for its harmlessness and innocence, for its modesty and meekness, for its affection and chastity to its mate, for its mournful and bemoaning voice for the loss of it, for its being a timorous and fearful creature, a weak one, and exposed to the prey of others; all which is true of the church, and may be applied to it: the Targum is,

"do not deliver the souls of them that teach thy law;"

the word having some affinity with "torah", the law; but Jarchi says, that Jonathan, in his Targum (which is not now extant) interprets it a turtle; the Syriac version, by the change of a letter, renders it, "the soul that confesseth thee": and the Arabic version, by a like change, and the addition of a letter, "the soul that knows thee"; all which, indeed, is applicable to the church of God; but our version expresses the true sense of the word, with which agree Jarchi, Kimchi, Ben Melech, and others: and it is a prayer of the church for herself; that the life of her members, their corporeal life (for not the soul, the better part, and its eternal concerns, are meant, which are safe in Christ's hands), might not be delivered

unto the multitude of the wicked, or "to the beast" {g}; to persecutors comparable to lions and bears, and particularly the Romish antichrist, often called the beast in Re 11:8, do not deliver

"to the people, who are like to the beasts of the field, the souls of, &c.:"

forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever; the church of God is a congregation of men gathered out of the world by effectual grace, and consists chiefly of such who are literally poor, and all of them are spiritually so, and are sensible of it; for the most part they are a poor and "afflicted" {h} people, as the word may be also rendered, which the church is made up of; and may seem by themselves and others to be forgotten of God, when under divine desertions, or under afflictions, and immediate help is not given; but they are not forgotten, and still less for ever; see Isa 49:14.

{g} tyxl "ferae", Montanus, Piscator; "bestiae", Musculus, Vatablus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; "bestiis", V. L. {h} Kyyne "afflictorum tuorum", Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 74:20

Ver. 20. Have respect unto the covenant,.... The Targum adds,

"which thou hast made with our fathers;"

meaning not the covenant of works, which being broken, no good thing was to be expected from it, not liberty, life, nor eternal salvation, but all the reverse; but the covenant of grace, made with Christ before the world was, and made manifest to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to David, and others: this God has a respect unto, and does look unto it; he looks to the surety and Mediator of it, which is Christ, for the fulfilment of all conditions in it; to the promises of it, that they may be made good; to the blessings of it, that they be bestowed upon the persons to whom they belong; to the blood of it, for the delivering of the church's prisoners, and the salvation of them from wrath to come; and to the persons interested in it, that they be all called and brought safe to glory; and particularly to the things in it, respecting the glory of the church in the latter day, and increase of its members, and of its light, which seem chiefly designed here; and therefore it follows:

for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty; many places of the earth are in gross darkness as to the knowledge of spiritual and divine things; even all those places which are inhabited by Pagans, Mahometans, and Papists, which make a great part of the globe; and in these dark places cruelty reigns, and especially in the antichristian states; wherefore the church pleads the covenant of God and his promises, that he would send forth his light and his truth, and cover the earth with the knowledge of the Lord, which is now covered with gross darkness, and under the tyranny and oppression of the man of sin.

Psalms 74:21

Ver. 21. O let not the oppressed return ashamed,.... From the throne of grace, not having an answer of their prayer, but still continuing under the oppressions of their enemies:

let the poor and needy praise thy name; let them have occasion for it, by the destruction of their enemies, and their deliverance from them, as they will have ere long; see Re 19:1.

Psalms 74:22

Ver. 22. Arise, O God, plead thine own cause,.... The church's cause being the cause of God; and therefore she desires that he would arise and exert himself, and take vengeance on his and her enemies: this is an interesting argument, and a forcible one:

remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily; this being so frequently repeated, as in Ps 74:10, shows how much the name and glory of God lay near her heart; the Targum is,

"remember the reproach of thy people by a foolish king all the day;"

perhaps the man of sin is meant, the king of the locusts, and angel of the bottomless pit.

Psalms 74:23

Ver. 23. Forget not the voice of thine enemies,.... Their roaring in the midst of the sanctuary and the congregation, Ps 74:4, their reproaching and blaspheming voice, Ps 74:10, the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually, or "ascendeth" {i}; goes up to God, and is taken notice of by him; the cry of their sins, like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of the city of Nineveh, Ge 18:20, was continually going up to God; wherefore it might be hoped and expected that vengeance in a little time would come down; see Re 18:5, the Septuagint, and the versions that follow that, render it, "the pride of those", &c. all these petitions are prayers of faith, and are, or will be, heard and answered; upon which will follow thanksgivings, with which the next psalm begins.

{i} dymt hlwe "ascendens semper", Montanus; "ascendit semper", V. L. Musculus, Gejerus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 75:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 75

To the chief Musician, Altaschith, A Psalm [or] Song of Asaph. Of the word "altaschith", See Gill on "Ps 57:1", it signifies "do not destroy", or "do not corrupt"; the Targum renders it,

"do not destroy thy people;"

so Jarchi,

"do not destroy Israel;"

perhaps it may be considered as a petition, that God would not suffer the man of sin to go on to destroy the earth, and corrupt the inhabitants of it with his false doctrine, idolatry, and superstition,
Re 11:18, for the psalm respects the times of the Gospel dispensation, and includes both the first coming of Christ in the flesh, and his second coming to judgment; the argument of it with the Syriac version is,

"the divinity of Christ, and a remembrance of the judgment;"

it is said to be a psalm or song of Asaph, but is thought to be written by David, and delivered to Asaph; for it may be rendered "for Asaph" {k}; and so the Targum, "by the hands of Asaph;"

though some think it was written after the Babylonish captivity; perhaps by some person whose name was Asaph, or was of the family of him that lived in David's time. Theodoret supposes it was written in the person of the captives in Babylon.

Ver. 1. Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks,.... Either David and his men, when he was delivered from Saul, and raised to the kingdom, or the Jews upon their return from the Babylonish captivity; or rather the churches of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, for the coming of Christ and the blessings of grace through him, and in the view of the sure and certain destruction of antichrist and all the wicked of the earth; yea, Christ himself may be considered as at the head of his people, joining with them in thanksgiving, to whom this action is sometimes ascribed, Mt 11:25 and the rather since he is continued all along speaking to the end of the psalm:

unto thee do we give thanks; which is repeated to show the constancy, fervency, and sincerity with which this was performed: it may be rendered, "unto thee do we confess" {l}; sins committed against God, unworthiness to receive favours from him, and his grace and goodness in bestowing them:

for that thy name is near; or rather, "for thy name is near" {m}; and so the words are a reason of the above thanksgiving; for they belong not so much to what follows after as to what goes before, since the accent "athnach" is upon Kmv, "thy name"; and are to be understood of God himself, for his name is himself; who is near to his people, both in relation, being their Father, and as to presence, communion, and fellowship, which are matter of praise and thanksgiving; or his works and word, by which he is known and made manifest; his works which are throughout the earth, and so near at hand, and his word which is nigh, being in the mouths and in the hearts of his people; or rather his Son, in whom his name is, his nature and divine perfections: he was at a distance in promise and prophecy, and only seen afar off; after the Babylonish captivity, at which time some think this psalm was written, he was near; the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, speak of him as just coming; and when he was made flesh, and dwelt among men, he was near indeed, so as to be found of them, seen, heard, and handled by them; on which account there was and is reason to give thanks to God:

thy wondrous works declare; meaning either the miracles of Christ, which were proofs and evidences of his being come, and of his being the true Messiah; see Mt 11:3 or the wonderful works done by him, which to do were the principal end of his coming; as the work of righteousness, the business of reconciliation, and in general the affair of redemption and salvation; all which were amazing instances of his power, grace, and goodness, and which are declared in the everlasting Gospel by the ministers of it; for the words, I think, may be better rendered, "they declare thy wondrous works" {n}, or impersonally, "thy wondrous works are declared".

{k} Poal "ipsi Asaph", Pagninus, Montanus; "Asapho", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {l} wnydwh "confessi sumus", Montanus; "confitemur", Cocceius, Michaelis. {m} bwrqw "nam propiuquum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {n} Kytwalpn wrpo "narrant mirabilia tua", Montanus; "enarrant", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 75:2

Ver. 2. When I shall receive the congregation,.... Some render it, from the Arabic signification of the word, "the promise" {o}; the Spirit promised, the gifts of the Spirit, which Christ received for men, and gave to men, whereby he executes the judgment or government of the church committed to him: others the time, so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Arabic versions, to which agrees the Targum, the word signifying a set appointed time, Ps 102:14, and so may respect the time appointed for the judgment of the world, which when come, Christ will execute in a most righteous manner, as follows; see Ac 17:31, but whereas the people of Israel met at the door of the tabernacle, which from thence was called "Ohel Moed", the tabernacle of the congregation; hence the word is used for a congregation, and here designs the general assembly and church of the firstborn written in heaven, even all the elect of God; these were received by Christ of his Father in eternity, when he espoused them to himself, and undertook the care of them; and they are received by him, one by one, in effectual calling; and in like manner are they received by him into glory at death; but when they are all gathered in, and are prepared for him as a bride for her husband, then will he receive them all in a body, and present them to himself a glorious church during the thousand years' reign; upon which will proceed the judgment of the wicked; see
Re 20:5,

I will judge uprightly; in equity, in strict justice, in the most righteous manner, rendering to every man according to his works; hence the future judgment is called a righteous one, and so is the Judge; no injustice will be done to men, but the strictest integrity, uprightness, and impartiality, will be observed in pronouncing the several sentences on the righteous and on the wicked, and in adjudging them to their several places and states.

{o} dewm "promissa", Schultens animadv. p. 174. "festi dona", Gusset. p. 334.

Psalms 75:3

Ver. 3. The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved,.... Or "melted" {p}; the inhabitants, through fear and dread of the righteous Judge, appearing in the clouds of heaven, and of the wrath that is coming on they are deserving of; and the earth, through fire, when the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works therein shall be burnt up, **2Pe 3:10**.

I bear up the pillars of it.: so that it shall not utterly perish; for though by the fire, at the general conflagration, the heavens and the earth will be so melted and dissolved as to lose their present form, and shall be purged and purified from all noxious qualities, the effects of sin; yet the substance will remain, out of which will be formed new heavens and a new earth, and this through the power of Christ sustaining it, and preserving it from entire destruction or annihilation. R. Obadiah by "pillars" understands in a figurative sense the righteous, for whose sake the world is continued in its being; these at the general conflagration will be bore up and preserved by Christ, whom they shall meet in the air, even the church, who is the pillar and ground of truth; and not only the ministers of the Gospel, who are pillars in Christ's house, but also every believer, which is a pillar there, that shall never go out, **1Ti 3:15**. Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret the pillars of the mountains.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{p} Mygmn "liquefacti", Montanus; "liquefiet", Musculus.

Psalms 75:4

Ver. 4. I said unto the fools,.... To the vain gloriosos, proud boasters, mockers, and scoffers at the day of judgment, and burning of the world:

deal not foolishly; by glorying in themselves, boasting of their riches, and trusting in them; singing a requiem to themselves on account of their abundance, and by putting away the evil day far from them:

and to the wicked, lift not up the horn; of power, grandeur, and wealth, and use it to the injury of others; or be so elated with it as to look with disdain on others; or imagine they shall always continue in this exalted state, as antichrist the horned beast does, Re 18:7, the allusion is to horned beasts, particularly harts, which lift up their heads and horns in great pride {p}: the phrase signifies to behave proudly and haughtily.

{p} Vid. "Suidam in voce" ekepoutiav.

Psalms 75:5

Ver. 5. Lift not up your horn on high,.... Or "against the most High" {q}; as the little horn, or the beast with ten horns, antichrist, does, whose look is more stout than his fellows, and opens his mouth in blasphemy against God, his name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven, **Da 7:8**,

speak [not with] a stiff neck; arrogantly, proudly, and haughtily: or "hard things with a neck" {r}; hard speeches against Christ and his people with an outstretched neck, in an imperious and insolent manner; for the righteous Judge will convince such of their hard speeches, and condemn them for them; **Jude 1:14**.

{q} Mwrml "contra excelsum", Junius & Tremellius. {r} qte rawub "collo durum", Michaelis.

Psalms 75:6

Ver. 6. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. It is not from men, from themselves, or others, or from any quarter under the heavens, but from God; it is he that raises men to high places, and sets them there, which are often slippery ones: by him kings reign; they have their crowns and sceptres, thrones and kingdoms from him; there is no power but what is of God; riches and honour come of him, and he can take them away when he pleases; and therefore men should not be proud, haughty, and arrogant: some take these words to be the words of the fools and wicked, when they speak with a stiff neck, either as triumphing over the Messiah, his ministers, cause, and interest, reading the words thus, "neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, shall there be a lifting up" {s}, or an exaltation; that is, of Christ and his people, they are low, and shall never rise more; but in this they are mistaken; though now the Son of God is trampled under foot in his person and offices, there is a day coming when the Lord, and he alone, shall be exalted; though his ministers and witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, and shall be slain and lie unburied, yet they will arise again and ascend to heaven, to the great terror and astonishment of those their enemies; though Jacob is small, and it is said, by whom shall he arise? yet he shall become, great and numerous; the mountain of the Lord's house, the church, shall be established upon the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills; and this enlargement of Christ's kingdom and interest shall be east, west, north, and south; or else as flattering themselves that no evil shall come to them from any quarter: "neither from the east, nor from the west, nor, from the desert of the mountains" {t}, cometh evil; meaning to themselves, looking upon themselves as secure, and putting the evil day far from them: but there will be an awful and righteous judgment; there is a Judge ordained, a day appointed, in which the world will be judged in righteousness, and destruction and ruin will come upon the ungodly, and at a time when they are crying Peace, peace; nor shall they escape; and so the Syriac version renders the words, "for there is no escape from the west, nor from the desert of the mountains"; taking the word Myrh, not to signify "promotion, elevation", or "a lifting up", as Kimchi and others, whom we follow: but Moatanus and R. Aba observe that the word always signifies "mountains" but in this place: the Targum is,

"for there is none besides me from the east to the west, nor from the north of the wildernesses, and from the south, the place of the mountains;"

no Messiah to be expected from any quarter; see Mt 24:23, no God besides him, nor any other Saviour, Isa 44:6 nor any other Judge, as follows.

{s} Myrh "exaltatio", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {t} "Neque a desertis montibus", V. L. "neque a deserto montium", Cocceius; "neque a deserto Australi montium", Michaelis.

Psalms 75:7

Ver. 7. But God is the Judge,.... Or "because God is the Judge" {u}; and so this is another reason why fools should not deal foolishly, nor wicked men lift up the horn, and speak with a stiff neck, because there is a Judge to whom they are accountable for their words and actions; and this Judge is God omniscient, knows all persons and things, searches the heart and tries the reins, will bring every secret thing into judgment, bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart; omnipotent, able to do all things, raise the dead, call to judgment, bring all before him, pass the sentences, and execute them; omnipresent, there is no fleeing from him, nor escaping his righteous judgment; holy, just, and true, who will render to every man according to his works:

he putteth down one, and setteth up another; he humbles or brings one low, such as are proud, haughty, and arrogant; and he exalts another, such as are lowly and humble: this he does in providence, he removes kings, and sets up kings; puts down the mighty from their seats, and exalts them of low degree, **Da 2:21**, he has many ways to mortify the proud, by inflicting diseases on their bodies, by stripping them of their honour and wealth, and by bringing them into disgrace among men: and this he does in grace; such as are stout hearted and far from righteousness, and will not submit to the righteousness of Christ, he brings them to it; and those whom he makes humble by his grace, he raises to a high estate, to be kings and priests, and to sit among princes, and to inherit a throne of glory. This might be exemplified in Jews and Gentiles; he has stripped the one of their privileges, and put them down from their civil and church state, and raised up the other to be his church and people; and also in antichrist and the true church of Christ; he will ere long put down the one, that sits as a queen, and exalt the other, when she shall be as a bride adorned for her husband, having the glory of God upon her.

{u} yk "quoniam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus; "siquidem", Tigurine version; "quia", Gejerus; so some in Michaelis.

Psalms 75:8

Ver. 8. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup,.... Another reason why men should not act haughtily and arrogantly; for by the cup are meant afflictions, calamities, and judgments, which are measured out in proportion to men's sins, and are of God's appointing, and in his hands, and at his disposal

and the wine is red; an emblem of the wrath of God this cup is full of, as it is explained, Re 14:10, where there is a reference to this passage; for it is a cup of fury, of trembling, and of indignation:

Isa 51:17,

it is full of mixture; has many ingredients in it, dreadful and shocking ones, though it is sometimes said to be without mixture,
Re 14:10, without any allay, alluding to the mixing of wine with water in the eastern countries; see **Pr 9:2**,

and he poureth out of the same; his judgments upon men in this world, in all ages; on some more, others less, as their sins call for, or his infinite wisdom judges meet and proper:

but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them; the whole cup that God has measured out and filled up shall be poured out at last, and all be drank up; the very dregs of it by the wicked of the world, when they shall be punished with everlasting destruction in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: this will be the portion of their cup, Ps 11:6.

Psalms 75:9

Ver. 9. But I will declare for ever,.... These are not the words of the psalmist, but of Christ, who is all along speaking in the psalm; what he would declare is not expressed, and is to be supplied in sense thus; either that he would declare the wonderful works of God,
Ps 75:1, so the Targum, his thoughts, mercies, and kindnesses to his people, as in Ps 55:5, or his judgments on his enemies, whom he shall pass sentence on, which will be for ever; or the name of the Lord, his purposes and decrees, his counsel and covenant, his mind and will, his Gospel and the truth of it: see Ps 22:22,

I will sing praises to the God of Jacob; the covenant God of his people, Christ's God, and their God; of his singing praise to him, see
Ps 22:22.

Psalms 75:10

Ver. 10. All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off,.... Therefore let them not lift up the horn on high: "horns" denote the power and authority of wicked men, their kingdoms and states; both Rome Pagan and Rome Papal are said to have ten horns, which are interpreted of ten kings or kingdoms; and which will be cut off when the vials of God's wrath are poured out on the antichristian states; which vials will be filled from the cup which is in the hand of the Lord, Re 12:1, the Jews {b} interpret this of the ten horns of the nations of the world, that shall be cut off in future time; and Jarchi particularly of the horns of Esau, by whom he means Rome, or the Roman empire:

but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted; either of the righteous one Christ, for the word is in the singular number; he who is the Lord our righteousness, whose power and authority, kingdom and government, shall be enlarged and increased, signified by the budding of the horn of David, and the exaltation of the horn of his Messiah, **1Sa 2:10** or of everyone of the righteous, which will be when the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, and they shall reign with Christ on earth a thousand years, **Da 7:27**. Kimchi says this will be in the war of Gog and Magog, which is expected by the Jews.

{b} Vid. Yalkut in loc.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 76:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 76

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm [or] Song of Asaph. The Targum is,

"by the hand of Asaph:"

concerning "neginoth", see the title of **Ps 4:1**, this psalm is generally thought to be written on account of some great appearance of God for the Jews, or victory obtained by them over their enemies, either the Ammonites in the times of David; so the first part of the Syriac inscription is,

"when Rabbah of the children of Ammon was destroyed;"

see 2Sa 12:26 or in the time of Jehoshaphat, when they came up against him, and were in a wonderful manner defeated, which occasioned great joy and thankfulness, 2Ch 20:1. The Septuagint version entitles the psalm "an ode against the Assyrian", in which it is followed by the Vulgate Latin and

Ethiopic versions: and it is the opinion of many that it was written on account of the defeat of Sennacherib, and his army, which came up against Jerusalem in the times of Hezekiah, and was destroyed by an angel in one night, and so slept their sleep, and a dead one, with which agree Ps 76:5, so Arama and Theodoret; Jarchi gives this reason for such an interpretation, because we do not find that any enemy fell at or near Jerusalem but he, as is said Ps 76:3, "there brake he the arrows of the bow", &c. nor was one arrow suffered to be thrown into the city, 2Ki 19:32. Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it of the war of Gog and Magog, yet to come; and the latter part of the Syriac inscription is,

"moreover it shows the vengeance of the judgment of Christ against the ungodly;"

and indeed it seems to point out the latter day, when Christ shalt destroy the antichristian kings and states, and save his own people, and shall be feared and praised; as the former part of it may respect his incarnation, appearance, and dwelling in the land of Judea, and so the whole is of the same argument with the preceding psalm.

Ver. 1. In Judah is God known,.... God is to be known, and is made known, by his works of creation, and by his providences, and particularly by his judgments in the whole world, even among the Gentiles; and he was made known by his word and ordinances, his statutes and his judgments, among the Jews, to whom these were specially given; and he is made known by his Spirit, and in his Son in a spiritual and saving manner to such who are Jews inwardly, or the true circumcision: moreover this may be understood of Christ, God manifest in the flesh, and regard his appearance in human nature in the land of Judea; he was, according to prophecy, of the tribe of Judah as man, and was born in Bethlehem, a city in that tribe, where David was, and of the family of David, that formerly lived there: and he was made known by John the Baptist, who came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and by his being baptized of him in Jordan; by his own ministry and miracles in that land, and by the preaching of his apostles in the several cities of it, he was known in person to many; and by the fame of his doctrine and miracles to more, though seemingly but to few:

his name is great in Israel; he himself is great, for his name is himself, being the great God, and possessed of all divine perfections; his offices and titles are great, he is a great Saviour, a great High Priest, a great Prophet risen up in Israel, a great King, add the great Shepherd of the sheep; his works which make him known are great, his works of creation and providence, in which he is jointly concerned with his Father; the mighty works he did on earth, and especially the great work of our redemption; and his Gospel, which is called his name, **Ac 9:15**, brings glad tidings of great and good things; by means of which, and the wonderful things he did in the land of Israel, his fame was spread about in it, for he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; here his marvellous works were done, and his Gospel first preached, which afterwards went into all the earth.

Psalms 76:2

Ver. 2. In Salem also is his tabernacle,.... That is, in Jerusalem, as the Targum expresses it, where the tabernacle of Moses and the ark of the covenant were, and afterwards the temple of Solomon, which the Targum here calls the house of the sanctuary; and may be interpreted of the human nature of Christ, the true tabernacle which God pitched, and not man, in which the divine word when he was made flesh dwelt or tabernacled among the Jews at Jerusalem, and in other parts of Judea, **Heb 8:2**. Salem or Jerusalem often signifies the church of God in Gospel times, in the midst of which Christ resides, and where he grants his gracious presence, Heb 12:22 and in the New Jerusalem the tabernacle of God will be with men, and he will dwell among them,
Re 21:2. The Septuagint translate the word, and render it, "in peace", as in **Heb 7:2**, the God of peace dwells among those that live in peace, 2Co 13:11,

and his dwelling place in Zion; where the ark was brought by David, and the temple was built by Solomon, into which, as rebuilt by Zerubbabel, Christ came, and here he preached; a figure of the church, which is his habitation.

Psalms 76:3

Ver. 3. There brake he the arrows of the bow.... The Targum is,

"there brake he the arrows and the bows of the people that make war;"

the word ypvr, translated "arrows", signifies "sparks or coals of fire"; see **Job 5:7** and is used of arrows, because they fly swiftly, as sparks do, or because of their brightness, or because fiery; so we read of "the fiery darts of Satan", **Eph 6:16**, and perhaps they may be meant here: when Christ our Lord suffered near Jerusalem, he spoiled principalities and powers, and broke their strength and might, and made peace by the blood of his cross, in which he triumphed over them; for the destroying of these instruments of war with what follow:

the shield, and the sword, and the battle, is expressive of making wars to cease, and causing peace; and may include the peace which was all the world over at the birth of Christ, and was foretold and expressed in much such language as here, **Zec 9:9**, and also that which was made by his sufferings and death, and which was published in his Gospel by his apostles, whom he sent forth unarmed, whose weapons were not carnal, but spiritual; and likewise the spiritual peace he gives to his people, quenching the fiery darts of Satan, and delivering them from the archers that shoot at them, and sorely grieve them; as well as that peace which shall be in the world and churches in the latter day; see
Ps 46:11,

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 76:4

Ver. 4. Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey. Which is to be understood not of Zion, as some interpret it; though it is true that the mountain of Zion, or the church of Christ, his kingdom and interest, shall in the latter day be more glorious and excellent than all other mountains, kingdoms, and interests; see **Isa 2:2**, but of God or Christ before spoken of; and so the Targum,

"bright, to be feared, art thou, O God, to be praised from the house of thy sanctuary."

Christ, who is God over all, is "bright" {z}, splendid, and glorious, in his divine nature, being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person: and "excellent" in his office as Mediator, and in all his works as such; and in human nature, at he is exalted at his Father's right hand, far above all principality, power, might, and dominion, signified here by "mountains of prey": the kingdoms of this world, because of their eminence and strength, are compared to mountains: see Isa 41:15 and may be called "mountains of prey", in allusion to mountains inhabited by beasts of prey, as lions and leopards; see **So 4:8** because obtained and possessed by tyranny and oppression. Christ is more glorious and excellent than the kings of the earth; he is higher than they, and is King of kings; he is richer than they, the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein; he is wiser than they, by him kings reign, and princes decree justice; he is more powerful than they, and all must submit to him, and all will serve him hereafter; and his kingdom will be greater than theirs, more large and more lasting; it will be an everlasting one, and reach from sea to sea, and even to the ends of the earth.

{z} rwan "illustris", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "illustrior", Tigurine, version; "splendidus", Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "bright", Ainsworth.

Psalms 76:5

Ver. 5. The stout hearted are spoiled,.... The Assyrian army, its officers and generals, that came up against Jerusalem, with great resolution and courage, and with daring impiety and blasphemy against the God of heaven, as Rabshakeh and others; these were spoiled, and their armour and riches became a prey to those they thought to have made a prey of. So principalities and powers were spoiled by Christ upon the cross, and Satan, the strong man armed, has in the conversion of a sinner his armour taken from him, and his spoils divided by him that is stronger than he; and such as are stouthearted, and far from true righteousness, are stripped of their own, and made willing, in the day of Christ's power upon them, to submit to his; and as for antichrist, whose look is more stout than his fellows, that exalts himself above all that is called God, and opens his mouth in blasphemy against him and his followers, he shall be destroyed with the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming: or "the stout hearted have spoiled themselves" {a}; as the Midianites did, or gave themselves for a prey; so the Targum,

"the stouthearted have cast off from them the weapons of war;"

threw away their armour, and ran away, such of them as were not destroyed by the angel. It is observable, that the Hebrew word, translated "spoiled", is in the Syriac form:

they have slept their sleep: the sleep of death, as did the Assyrians when smitten by the angel, which was done in the night, when probably they were fast asleep, and so never awoke more, as the Babylonians, Jer 51:57. So Jezebel, or the Romish antichrist, shall be cast into a bed, and her children killed with death, **Re 2:22**. Death is often in Scripture signified by a sleep, both the death of the righteous and of the wicked; but there is a difference between the one and the other; wherefore the death of the wicked here is called "their sleep"; the one sleep in Jesus, in his arms, and under his guardianship, the other not; to the one death is a true and proper rest from toil and labour, to the other only a cessation from doing mischief, **Job 3:17**, the one rests in hopes of a glorious resurrection, the other not; the one will awake in Christ's likeness, and to everlasting life; the other in the image of Satan, and to everlasting shame and contempt:

and none of the men of might have found their hands; none of the valiant soldiers in the Assyrian army could find their hands to fight their enemies, or defend themselves; as men in a deep sleep cannot find their hands to do anything, and are as if they had none, and still less in a dead sleep. The Targum is,

"they were not able to lay hold on their armour with their hands."

This was the case of them that were killed; and as for those that remained alive, they were struck with such a panic, that their hearts could not endure, nor their hands be strong when God thus dealt with them; and so it will be with the antichristian army at the battle of Armageddon; and so it is with the wicked at death, they cannot find their hands so as to prevent it; and when it has seized upon them, they cannot find their hands to do any more mischief.

{a} wllwtva "praedae se exposnerunt", Tigurine version, Gejerus; "dediderunt se in praedam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 76:6

Ver. 6. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob,.... The God of Jacob personally, and of his posterity, the children of Israel, and of the church, often so called who rebukes his people in love, but his enemies with furious rebukes, with rebukes in flames of fire; with such he rebukes the Heathen, destroys the wicked, and puts out their name for ever:

both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep; that is, the riders in chariots and on horses; such there were doubtless in the Assyrian army, it being usual to have such in great armies. Kimchi observes, that the word Mdrn, translated "cast into a dead sleep", is in the singular number, and interprets it of the king, the head of the men of might: but Sennacherib, king of Assyria, was not slain, he departed to his own country; wherefore he applies it to Gog and Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, Eze 39:1 and may very well be understood of the head of the apostasy, the king of the bottomless pit, the beast or false prophet, who being destroyed, the flesh of his captains and horsemen shall be the food of the fowls of the air, at the supper of the great God, Re 19:17.

Psalms 76:7

Ver. 7. Thou, even thou, art to be feared,.... By his own people with reverence and godly fear, because of his greatness and goodness; and to be dreaded by his enemies; which seems to be the sense here, as appears by what follows:

and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry? or "from the moment thou art angry" {b}; so the Targum, from the "time", and Jarchi, from the "hour": that is, as soon as ever his anger begins, when it is kindled but a little, and how much less when it burns in its full strength? there is no standing before his justice, and at his judgment seat, with boldness and confidence, and so as to succeed, or come off acquitted, without having on his righteousness; and much less is there any standing before his wrath and fury, when his hand takes hold on judgment to execute it; see **Na 1:6**.

{b} Kpa zam "ex quo irasceris", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "a momento, vel tempore irae tuae", Michaelis.

Psalms 76:8

Ver. 8. Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven,.... When an angel was sent down from heaven, and destroyed the Assyrian army, a judgment of God upon them; at which time some think there was a violent clap of thunder, which is the voice of God: and it may refer to the judgments which God has decreed to execute on the antichristian states, the seven vials of his wrath he will pour upon them; for all decrees, as Aben Ezra on the place observes, come from heaven; or to the last judgment, when Christ the Judge shall descend from heaven, the voice of the archangel shall be heard, the last trumpet shall sound, the dead in their graves shall hear it, and rise and stand before the judgment seat, and hear the sentence pronounced:

the earth feared, and was still: or "trembled, and was quiet" {c}; that is, again: some think there was an earthquake when the angel smote the Assyrian camp, but was quickly over. It may regard the panic the other nations were in when they heard of it, and therefore were still and quiet, and never offered to give the Israelites any disturbance. Some understand this of the remainder of the army that escaped with Sennacherib; these were seized with fear, and quickly withdrew, and silently departed into their own land. Aben Ezra observes it as the sense of some, "the earth feared", these are the wicked; "and was still", they are the righteous; so the Targum,

"the land of the people feared, the land of Israel was still;"

reference may be had to the consternation, fear, and dread, that will fall on them that escape the judgments inflicted on the antichristian party, Re 11:13 and the fear and silence that will attend the last and awful judgment; see **Zec 2:13**.

{c} hjqvw hady Ura "terra tremuit, et quievit", V. L.

Psalms 76:9

Ver. 9. When God arose to judgment,.... He may sometimes seem to be asleep, and to defer judgment, but he will arise and hasten it in his own time, and will take vengeance on all his and his people's enemies, as he did upon the army of the Assyrians, and will upon the antichristian powers, and upon all the wicked, and at the same time will save his own people, as follows:

to save all the meek of the earth; the quiet in the land, who are afflicted in this world, despised by the men of it, are lowly and humble, and mean in their own eyes; these the Lord takes notice of and cares for them, he will beautify them with salvation; these, all of them, even everyone of them, shall be saved in him with an everlasting salvation; this verse is by some connected with the preceding; so Kimchi, "the earth feared, and was still, when God arose to judgment", &c. and by others, as R. Moses and Aben Ezra, with the following.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 76:10

Ver. 10. Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee,.... Either the wrath which comes from God, and has man for its object; and that either as it regards the people of God; so the Targum, "when thou art angry with thy people, thou hast mercy on them, and they shall confess unto thy name;"

or praise thee; see Isa 12:1, they are deserving of the wrath of God, but are not appointed to it, and are delivered from it by Christ, who bore it for them as their representative; by which as the justice of God is glorified, it is matter of praise to them; when the law enters into their consciences, it works wrath there, which being removed by the application of pardoning grace, is an occasion of praise to God; and whereas, under afflictive dispensations, they apprehend and deprecate the wrath of God, when they are delivered from them their mouths are filled with songs of praise: or, as it regards wicked men, so it came forth upon the old world, and drowned it; upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and reduced them to ashes; upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, in the plagues inflicted on them; all which turned to the praise and glory of God; of the last instance, see **Ro 9:17**, it came upon the wicked Jews to the uttermost in the destruction of their nation, city, and temple; and upon Rome Pagan, in the entire demolition of it as such; and so it will come upon Rome Papal, which will be attended with great joy, praise, and thanksgiving in the saints; see Re 11:17 or else this is to be understood of the wrath which is in man, and comes forth from him, and has him for its subject; which though it does not work the righteousness of God, yet the righteousness of God is glorified both in checking and punishing it; and the more it rages and burns against the people of God, the greater reason have they to praise the Lord when delivered from it; see
Ps 124:1, so the wrath of the Assyrian monarch, and of railing and blaspheming Rabshakeh, gave the people of the Jews a greater occasion to praise the Lord for their wonderful deliverance; so the wrath of men against Christ, his church and people, his ministers, Gospel, and ordinances, will all turn to the glory of his name, when in the issue it will be seen that these are established, overcoming all the rage and malice of men:

the remainder of wrath shall thou restrain: that which remains in a man's breast, he has not yet vented, God can and does keep in, that it may not break forth; this very likely was verified in Sennacherib, who might breathe revenge, and threaten the Jews with a second visit; but was prevented by a sudden and violent death. Some read the words, "the remainder of wraths thou wilt gird" {d}; that is, those that remain, and are not destroyed through the rage and fury of men, God will gird with strength to defend themselves, and resist their enemies that may rise up against them, or with gladness, because of deliverance from them; see Ps 18:32. Some understand this of the wrath of

God, which he has in reserve and store for wicked men, and render the words thus, with the remainder of wrath wilt thou gird thyself {e}; and so come forth like an armed man, clad with zeal, and arrayed with the garments of wrath and vengeance; see Isa 49:17.

{d} rgxt tmx tyrav "res duum irarum accinges", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator, Gejerus. {e} "Reliquo indignationum accinges te", so some in Vatablus; "residuo irarum accinges te", Michaelis.

Psalms 76:11

Ver. 11. Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God,.... Not monastic vows, which the Papists would infer from these and such like words; nor ceremonial ones, but spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, such as men sometimes make in times of distress, or when delivered,
Ps 66:13 and which when vowed ought to be paid, **Ec 5:4**, not to creatures, angels, or saints, but to God, from whom the mercy desired must be expected, and from whence it comes,
Ps 50:14, these words are an address to such who were delivered from wrath, either of God or man:

let all that be round about him; who surround the throne of his grace, gather together in his house to attend his word and ordinances, who are his servants, and constantly and faithfully adhere to him; among whom he grants his presence, they are near to him, and he to them. It is a periphrasis of the assembly of the saints; see Ps 89:7. The Targum is,

"all ye that dwell round about his sanctuary;"

the allusion is to the situation of the camp of Israel, and the tabernacle in the wilderness, **Nu 2:1** compare with this **Re 4:4**,

bring presents unto him that ought to be feared, or "to the fear" {f}, which is one of the names of God; see Ge 31:42 and who is and ought to be the object of the fear and reverence of men; the "presents", to be brought to him are the sacrifices of prayer and praise, yea, the whole persons, the souls and bodies, of men; see Ps 72:10, compare with this 2Ch 32:22. The Targum is,

"let them bring offerings into the house of the sanctuary of the terrible One;"

of him that is to be feared, with a godly fear by good men, and to be dreaded by evil men, as follows.

{f} arwml "ad verb terrori, timori", Vatsblus; "numini", De Dieu, "venerando et timendo huic numini", Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 76:12

Ver. 12. He shall cut off the spirit of princes,.... The pride of their spirits, as the Targum, humble their proud spirits, and bring them down; or dispirit them, take away their courage from them, upon which they flee apace to rocks and mountains to cover them; or confound them, blast their schemes, and carry their counsel headlong, and even take away their breath, or life; which he can as easily do as a man can cut off a bunch of grapes from the vine, as the word {g} here used signifies; the destruction of the wicked is expressed by cutting down the vine of the earth, and casting it into the winepress of God's wrath, Re 14:17,

he is terrible to the kings of the earth; as he was to the king of Assyria, when he sent his angel, and destroyed his army; and as he has been to others in all ages; so he will be to the kings of the earth that have committed fornication with the whore of Rome, who will be in the utmost panic at the time of her destruction, Re 18:9, and who will themselves be overcome by the Lamb, Re 16:14. The Targum is, he is to be feared above all the kings of the earth.

{g} ruby "qui vindemiat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "succidet nempe, ut vindemiator racemos", Vatablus, so Ainsworth.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 77:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 77

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of Asaph. Jeduthun was the name of the chief musician, to whom this psalm was inscribed and sent; see 1Ch 25:1, though Aben Ezra takes it to be the first word of some song, to the tune of which this was sung; and the Midrash interprets it of the subject of the psalm, which is followed by Jarchi, who explains it thus, "concerning the decrees and judgments which passed upon Israel;"

that is, in the time of their present captivity, to which, as he, Kimchi, and Arama think, the whole psalm belongs. Some interpreters refer it to the affliction of the Jews in Babylon, so Theodoret; or under Ahasuerus, or Antiochus; and others to the great and last distress of the church under antichrist; though it seems to express the particular case of the psalmist, and which is common to other saints.

Ver. 1. I cried unto God with my voice,.... Which is to be understood of prayer, and that vocal, and which is importunate and fervent, being made in distress; see **Ps 3:4**, or "my voice was unto God" {h}, "and I cried"; it was directed to him, and expressed in a very loud and clamorous way:

even unto God with my voice; or "my voice was unto God"; which is repeated to show that he prayed again and again, with great eagerness and earnestness, his case being a very afflicted one:

and he gave ear unto me; his prayer was not without success; God is a God hearing and answering prayer, according to his promise, Ps 50:15.

{h} Myhla la ylwq "vox mea ad Deum", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, "fertur", Junius & Tremellius; "erat", Cocceius.

Psalms 77:2

Ver. 2. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord,.... Not the creature, for help, and creature amusements to drive away trouble, but the Lord, in private, by prayer and supplication; a time of trouble is a time for prayer, **Jas 5:13**, all men have their trouble, but the people of God more especially; and there are some particular times in which they have more than usual, and then it may be said to be "a day of trouble" with them; which sometimes arises from themselves, the strength of their corruptions, the weakness of their graces, their backwardness to duties, or poor performance of them; sometimes from others, from the profaneness or persecutions of the men of the world, from the heretical notions or wicked lives of professors; sometimes from the temptations of Satan, and at other times from the Lord himself more immediately, by his withdrawing his presence from them, or by laying his afflicting hand upon them; but, let the trouble come from what quarter it may, it is always right to seek the Lord. Some think reference is had to the time of trouble mentioned in Da 12:1,

my sore ran in the night; my "stroke", or "wound" {i}; so Kimchi interprets it; the wound that was made in his soul, and the pain and anguish, grief and trouble, which flowed from it; see **Jer 6:7** though the word may be literally rendered "my hand" {k}; and the sense is, either that his hand flowed or was wet with wiping his eyes, or with the tears that flowed from his eyes, which ran down to his fingers' ends; so the Targum,

"in the night my eye dropped with tears;"

or rather that his hand was stretched out, as waters, that are poured out and run, are spread, that is, in prayer; the stretching out of the hand being a prayer gesture:

and ceased not; was not remiss and feeble, or was not let down, as Moses's, Ex 17:11, it denotes the constancy of prayer, and his continuance in it; he prayed without ceasing:

my soul refused to be comforted: such was the greatness of his distress, like that of Jacob's and Rachel's, Ge 37:35, it is right to refuse comfort and peace, which men speak to themselves upon the false foundation of their own merit and works; or any but what comes from the God of all comfort, and through Christ, in whom is all solid consolation, and by his Spirit, who is the Comforter; but it is wrong to refuse any that comes from hence, and by means of the promises, the word and ordinances and ministries of the Gospel, or Christian friends; this shows the strength of unbelief.

{i} ydy "plaga mea", Pagninus, Muis. {k} "Manus mea", Montanus, Piscator, Gejerus, &c.

Psalms 77:3

Ver. 3. I remembered God, and was troubled,.... Either the mercy, grace, and goodness of God, as Jarchi; how ungrateful he had been to him, how sadly he had requited him, how unthankful and unholy he was, notwithstanding so much kindness; and when he called this to mind it troubled him; or when he remembered the grace and goodness of God to him in time past, and how it was with him now, that it was not with him as then; this gave him uneasiness, and set him a praying and crying, that it might be with him as heretofore, Job 29:2, or rather he remembered the greatness and majesty of God, his power and his justice, his purity and holiness, and himself as a worm, a poor weak creature, sinful dust and ashes, not able to stand before him; he considered him not as his father and friend, but as an angry Judge, incensed against him, and demanding satisfaction of him:

I complained; of sin and sorrow, of affliction and distress: or "I prayed", or "meditated" {l}; he thought on his case, and prayed over it, and poured out his complaint unto God, yet found no relief:

and my spirit was overwhelmed; covered with grief and sorrow, pressed down with affliction, ready to sink and faint under it:

Selah: See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{l} hxyva "meditabor", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus; "meditabor", Musculus, Piscator, Cocceius.

Psalms 77:4

Ver. 4. Thou holdest mine eyes waking,.... Or, "the watches", or rather "keepers of the eyes" {m}; the eyebrows, which protect the eyes; these were held, so that he could not shut them, and get any sleep; so R. Moses Haccohen interprets the words, as Jarchi observes; and so the Targum,

"thou holdest the brows of my eyes;"

a person in trouble, when he can get some sleep, it interrupts his sorrow, weakens it at least, if it does not put a stop to it; wherefore it is a great mercy to have sleep, and that refreshing, Ps 127:1, but to have this denied, and to have wearisome nights, and be in continual tossing to and fro, is very distressing:

I am so troubled that I cannot speak; his spirits were so sunk with weariness, and want of sleep in the night, that he could not speak in the morning; or his heart was so full with sorrow, that he could not utter himself; or it was so great that he could not express it; or his thoughts were such that he dared not declare them; or he was so straitened and shut up in himself that he could not go on speaking unto God in prayer.

{m} ynye twrmv "vigilias", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version; "palpebras oculorum meorum", Musculus, Cocceius; "palpebras quasi custodias oculorum", Michaelis.

Psalms 77:5

Ver. 5. I have considered the days of old,.... Either the former part of his life, the various occurrences of it, how it had been with him in time past, what experience he had had of the divine goodness; so the Syriac version renders it, "I have considered my days of old"; or the preceding age, and what has happened in that, which his ancestors had acquainted him with; or rather many ages past, from the days of Adam to the then present time; at least it may include the Israelites coming out of Egypt, their passage through the Red sea and wilderness, the times of the judges, and what befell them in their days, and how they were delivered out of their troubles; as appears from the latter part of the psalm, and with which agrees the following clause:

the years of ancient times; or, "of ages" {n}; of times long ago past; it is very useful to read the history of the Bible, with respect to ancient times, and so the ecclesiastical history of ages past, and observe the faith and dependence of the Lord's people upon him, and their deliverance out of trouble by him; which may be a means of strengthening faith in him, and of relief under present trials; but frequently the goodness of former times is only observed as an aggravation of the badness of the present ones, and of trouble in them; see **Ec 7:10**, the Targum interprets the whole of happy days and times, paraphrasing it thus,

"I have mentioned the good days which were of old, the good years which were of ages past."

{n} Mymlwe twnv "annos seculorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus.

Psalms 77:6

Ver. 6. I call to remembrance my song in the night,.... What had been an occasion of praising the Lord with a song, and which he had sung in the night seasons, when he was at leisure, his thoughts free, and he retired from company; or it now being night with him, he endeavoured to recollect what had been matter of praise and thankfulness to him, and tried to sing one of those songs now, in order to remove his melancholy thoughts and fears, but all to no purpose:

I commune with mine own heart; or "meditate" {o} with it; looked into his own heart, put questions to it, and conversed with himself, in order to find out the reason of the present dispensation:

and my spirit made diligent search; into the causes of his troubles, and ways and means of deliverance out of them, and what would be the issue and consequence of them; the result of all which was as follows.

{o} hxyva "meditabor", Montanus; meditatus sum, V. L. "meditor", Junius & Tremellius; "meditabar", Piscator, Cocceius.

Psalms 77:7

Ver. 7. Will the Lord cast off for ever?.... The Syriac version of this, and the two following verses, is not by way of interrogation, but affirmation: "the Lord hath forgotten me for ever, nor will he", &c. and so expresses the language of unbelief; but the Arabic version, in connection with the last words, with which it begins this verse, is, "and I weighed in my spirit whether the Lord", &c. and so makes it a subject of inquiry, and at most of questioning or doubting. The Targum, different from either, begins this and each of the verses thus, "is it possible that the Lord", &c. suggesting that it was not possible that he should do this and the other, and so speaks the language of faith. Unbelief in the psalmist said, the Lord will cast "me", or "his people", off, for either or both may be understood; which so appears when God hides his face, or does not immediately arise to help; or suffers the enemy to prevail, and difficulties and discouragements to obtain and continue; but Faith says, he will not cast off his people, whom he foreknew, from having a share in his affections, from being interested in his covenant, from his sight, and being the objects of his care, from enjoying the privileges of his house and family, or so as to perish eternally:

and will he be favourable no more? or bear good will, show kindness, be propitious, graciously accept, as the word {p} signifies; this question supposes that he had been favourable, and bore a good will, as the gracious purposes and kind intentions of his heart, the well stored covenant of his grace, and the mission of his Son to be a Saviour, show; that he has been propitious through the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and has accepted of the persons and services of his people, and indulged them with near communion with himself; but that now he is not, he having withdrawn the sense of his love, and the communications of his divine favours; and Unbelief says he will be so no more, and adds, I am cut off from before his eyes, and am as the slain, that are remembered no more; and shall go softly all my years, in the bitterness of my soul; but Faith says, he will be favourable again; that joy will come in the morning; that the Lord will hear, and be a light unto the souls of his people, though in darkness; and will bring to the light, and cause to behold his righteousness.

{p} twurl "acceptos habere", Cocceius, so Ainsworth; "propitius et gratiosus esse", Michaelis.

Psalms 77:8

Ver. 8. Is his mercy clean gone for ever?.... Or "his grace" {q}; and mercy is no other than grace to objects in misery; Unbelief says it is gone, that no more will be shown, and that the treasures of it are exhausted; but Faith says it is not gone, and observes that God is the God of all grace, is rich in mercy, and abundant in goodness; that his Son is full of grace and truth, and so is the covenant; and that though there is an abundance of it given in conversion, and there are continual supplies of it afterwards; yet this grace is still sufficient, and this mercy abundant; salvation is by it, as for millions past, so for millions present and to come; the mercy of God is new every morning, it endures for ever, it is from everlasting to everlasting:

doth his promise fail for evermore? or word {r}; his words of consolation, as Kimchi interprets it; the sense may be, will he speak never a word of comfort more? Unbelief says he will not, but Faith says he will; and that though he brings into the wilderness, yet he will speak comfortably there; and as he answered the Angel of the covenant with good and comfortable words, so he orders his ministers to speak, and by them he does speak comfortably to his people: or, in general, the word of the Gospel is meant; which though it may be sometimes scarce and rare, and there may be few preachers of it; yet it lives and abides for ever, it is the everlasting Gospel; or, in particular, the promise or promises of the Gospel: Faith says not one of these shall fail, grounding it upon the ability of God, and his power to perform: and upon his faithfulness, which he will never suffer to fail; and the promises of God are so far from failing for evermore, that they never fail at all; there never was any instance of any; not one of the good things which God has spoken of, from the creation of the world to this present time, have ever failed; the promises are yea and amen in Christ; see Jos 23:14. The Targum interprets it differently of his evil word being fulfilled on every generation.

{q} wdox "gratia ipsius", Cocceius, Gejerus. {r} rma "eloquim", Pagninus, Montanus; "sermo", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "verbum", Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "oraculum", Tigurine version, Musculus.

Psalms 77:9

Ver. 9. Hath God forgotten to be gracious,.... He has not, is it possible that he should? as the Targum; it is not; he cannot forget the purposes of his grace and mercy, nor the covenant and promises of it, nor people the objects of it; and much less can he for his grace and mercy itself, so agreeable to his nature, what he delights in, and which he has proclaimed in Christ:

hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?; as an avaricious man shuts up his hand, and will not communicate liberally; or as the sea is shut up with doors, that its waters may not overflow; no, the mercies of God are not restrained, though unbelief says they are, at least queries if they are not, Isa 63:15, but Faith says they flow freely through Christ, and the people of God are crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies; God gives liberally, and upbraideth not; and though he may hide his face in a little seeming wrath for a moment, yet with great mercies will he gather, and with everlasting kindness will he have mercy.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 77:10

Ver. 10. And I said, this is my infirmity,.... Referring either to what he had said in the preceding verses; and which is to be considered either as checking and correcting himself for what he had said, and acknowledging his evil in it; and it is as if he had said, this is a sin against God, that I am guilty of in questioning his love, and disbelieving his promises; it is an iniquity I am prone unto, a sin that easily besets me; it flows from the corruption of my nature, and the plague of my heart, and shows a distempered mind; it is owing to the weakness of my faith and judgment; I have said this rashly, and in haste,

without well weighing and considering things, and I am sorry for it, I will stop and proceed no further: or else as comforting and encouraging himself in his melancholy circumstances; and the sense is, this is an "infirmity", an affliction and trouble that I am at present exercised with; but it is but a temporal one, it will not always last; I shall get over it, and out of it; it is a sickness, but not to death; and it is "mine", what is allotted to me; every man has his affliction and cross, and this is mine, and I must bear it patiently; see
Jer 10:19, or else this refers to what follows, which some render, "the changes of the right hand of the most High" {s}; and the meaning may be, this is my affliction and trouble, that there are changes in the right hand of the most High; that is, that that hand which used to be exerted in his favour, and against his enemies, was now withdrawn, and hid in his bosom; see Ps 74:11, and that which liberally distributed favours to him was now laid upon him in an afflictive way; and to this sense is the Targum,

"this is my infirmity, the change of the power of the right hand (or the powerful right hand) of the most High;"

though another Targum is,

"this is my prayer, &c. the years of the end from the right hand;"

and Aben Ezra makes mention of some as so interpreting the first clause, to which De Dieu agrees, who renders the whole, "and I said, this is my prayer, that the right hand of the most High might be changed"; that is, that his dispensations of providence might be changed; that he would bring him out of these afflicted, sorrowful, and melancholy circumstances, into a more comfortable one: as these words may be understood as what the psalmist comforted himself with, that there are "changes of the right hand of the most High"; I have been greatly troubled and distressed, and I have been so weak as to call in question the mercy and favour of God, and his promises to me, which I own is my sin; but I have reason to believe it will not be always thus with me, God will take off his hand, it shall not always lie thus heavy upon me; though he cause grief, he will have compassion, and turn again to me; there will be a change, and I will wait till that comes: but Kimchi thinks the word rwkza, "I will remember", which stands at the beginning of the next verse, belongs to that and this; and is to be supplied here, as it is in our translation, and interprets the whole to the like sense;

but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High; which the psalmist proposed to do as a means to remove his doubts, despondency, and unbelief, and to relieve and strengthen his faith; as that God was the most High in all the earth, and above his enemies; that he had a right hand of power, which in years past had been exerted on the behalf of his people, and on his behalf; which was not impaired and shortened, but the same as ever, and sooner or later would be again used in his favour.

{s} Nwyle Nymy twnv "mutationes sunt dexterae excelsi", Musculus, Muis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 77:11

Ver. 11. I will remember the works of the Lord,.... His works of creation and providence, his government of the world, and particularly his regard for his own people, and his preservation of them, especially the people of Israel, whom he had not cast off, nor would and so might serve to strengthen his faith, that he would not cast him off for ever: and in like manner, what God has done for his people in a way of grace, in their redemption by Christ, and in a work of grace upon their souls, may be improved to the removing of doubts and fears, and unbelief, and for the strengthening of faith: there is a double reading of this clause, that in the margin is followed by us; but in the text it is written, "I will cause to remember"; that is, I will declare and show forth to others the works of the Lord:

surely I will remember thy wonders of old; such as were done in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; which exceeded the power and reason of man, and which showed ancient love and old friendship subsisting between God and his people; so the remembrance of God's everlasting love, his ancient covenant, and the grace and blessings given in Christ before the world was, may be of use against despondency, and for the support and encouragement of faith.

Psalms 77:12

Ver. 12. I will meditate also of all thy work,.... Or "works" {t}, which were many; he desired not to forget any of them, but remember the multitude of his tender mercies, and not only call them to mind, but dwell upon them in his meditations and contemplations, in order to gain some relief by them under his present circumstances:

and talk of thy doings: for the good of others, and so for the glory of God, as well as to imprint them on his own mind, that they might not be forgotten by him; for all things that are talked of, and especially frequently, are better remembered, see Ps 145:4, the Targum is,

"I will meditate on all thy good works, and speak of the causes of thy wonders."

{t} Klep lkb "de unoquoque opere tuo", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 77:13

Ver. 13. Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary,.... Or "in holiness" {y}; that is, is holy, so the Syriac version, and to which the Targum agrees.

"O God, how holy are thy ways,"

see Ps 145:17, or "in the sanctuary", the temple, the church of God, where he takes his walks, and manifests himself, and where the reasons of his providence, and dealing with his people, are opened and made known unto them, see Ps 68:24,

who is so great a God as our God? the Targum is, as the God of Israel; he is great in his persons, perfections, and works, and is greatly to be loved, feared, and praised.

{y} vdqb "in sanctitate", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 77:14

Ver. 14. Thou art the God that doest wonders,.... In nature, providence, and grace; it seems chiefly to regard what was done for the Israelites in Egypt, and in the wilderness, see Ps 78:12,

thou hast declared thy strength among the people; the nations of the world, who heard what the Lord did for Israel by his mighty power, and with an outstretched arm, as follows.

Psalms 77:15

Ver. 15. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people,.... The people of Israel out of Egypt, which was typical of the redemption of the Lord's people by Christ, the arm and power of God:

the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Joseph is particularly mentioned for honour's sake, and because he was the means of supporting Jacob and his family in Egypt; and had special faith in their deliverance from thence; the Targum is,

"the sons whom Jacob begot, and Joseph nourished."

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 77:16

Ver. 16. The waters saw thee, O God,.... The waters not of Jordan, but of the Red sea; these felt and perceived the power of God, in causing a strong east wind, which dried it up, and made way for the children of Israel to pass through it as on dry land: compare with this
Ps 114:3,

the waters saw thee; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and to excite attention to it, as well as to express the psalmist's admiration at it; the Targum is,

"they saw thy majesty in the midst of the sea, O God; they saw thy power upon the sea;"

not the Egyptians, but the sons of Jacob and Joseph; the old Syriac church understood these waters of the waters of Jordan, at the baptism of Christ, when in their way they saw the incarnate God, and felt his sacred body laid in them, by which he was made manifest to Israel; but Jerom better interprets them, by the help of
Re 17:15 of people, nations, and tongues; some of which saw Christ corporeally, others spiritually, and by faith, as preached in the Gospel to the Gentile world:

they were afraid; of the majesty of God, obeyed their Sovereign, of whom they

stood in awe, gave way unto him, and fled at his rebuke, see
Ps 114:5 or "were in pain" {z}, as a woman in travail, as were the Gentile world at the preaching of the Gospel of redemption and salvation by Christ, **Ro 8:22**,

the depths also were troubled; not only the surface, or waves of the waters, were moved by the strong east wind, through the power of God, but the bottom of the sea was reached by it; the depths were congealed in the midst of it, the channels of water were seen, and the foundation of the world discovered, and the children of Israel went through the deep as on dry land, see Ex 15:8.

{z} wlyx "parturierunt", Montanus, Vatablus; "dolore corruptae sunt, videl dolore parturientium", Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 77:17

Ver. 17. The clouds poured out water,.... This, with some other circumstances which follow, are not related by Moses in the history of this affair; but as they are here recorded by an inspired penman, there is no doubt to be made of the truth of them; besides Josephus {a} relates the same things; he says, that at the time when the Egyptians were drowned in the Red sea, rains descended from heaven, and there were terrible thunders, lightnings, and thunderbolts; this was when the Lord looked through the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians,
Ex 14:24,

the skies sent out a sound; or the airy clouds, the lighter ones, and which were higher in the heavens, as the others before mentioned were thick clouds, full of water, and hung lower; these were thunderclouds, and thunder is the sound which they sent forth, as in the following verse:

thine arrows also went abroad: that is, lightnings, as in
Ps 18:14, so Aben Ezra; but Kimchi interprets them of hailstones.

{a} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 3.

Psalms 77:18

Ver. 18. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven,.... Thunder is the voice of

God, Job 37:5 this is heard in "the orb" {b}, or the air, so called, because spherical; the Targum is

"the voice of thy thunder was heard in the wheel;"

so the word here used sometimes signifies; so Eze 10:13, and is so rendered here by some {c}; some think this refers to the wheels of the chariots of the Egyptians, which were taken off, it may be by the force of thunder and lightning, so that they drove on heavily, Ex 14:25,

the lightnings lightened the world; not only that part of the world where the Israelites and Egyptians were, but the whole world; for lightning comes out of the east, and shines to the west, Mt 24:27, this was in the night, and a very dark night it was, as Josephus {d} affirms; see Ps 97:4,

the earth trembled and shook; there was an earthquake at the same time; unless this is to be understood of the panic which the inhabitants of the earth were put into on hearing of this wonderful event, **Jos 2:9**.

{b} lglgb "in rotunditate", Montanus, Vatablus; "in isto orbe", Junius & Tremeullis; "in orbe", Cocceius; "in sphaera", Arab. {c} "In rota", Pagninus, Tigurine version, Musculus, Gejerus; "in rotis", Muis, Syr. vid. Suidam in voce trocov. {d} Ut supra. (Antiq. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 3.)

Psalms 77:19

Ver. 19. Thy way is in the sea,.... In the sea of Suph, as the Targum, the Red sea; it was the Lord that made the way in the sea for the Israelites, and went before them, and led them through it:

and thy path in the great waters; because the word rendered path is written with y yod, and is in the plural number, though the Masorites observe, that that letter is redundant, and so the word is singular; hence the Jews imagine there were more paths than one, even twelve, according to the number of the tribes, and which they think is intimated in Ps 136:13,

and thy footsteps are not known; not by the Egyptians, who assayed to follow after the people of Israel with the Lord at the head of them, nor by any since; for the waters returned and covered the place on which the Israelites went as on dry ground; so that no footsteps or traces were to be seen at all ever since;

and such are the ways God, many of them in providence as well as in grace, Ro 11:33, it may be rendered "thy heels", which made the footsteps or impressions; which latter being the works of God, may be seen and known, but not the former, he being invisible; so Gussetius {e} observes.

{e} Comment. Ebr. p. 633.

Psalms 77:20

Ver. 20. Thou leddest thy people like a flock,.... Either through the Red sea, according to R. Moses Hacohen, as Aben Ezra observes; see Isa 63:11, or rather, as he and Kimchi, through the wilderness, after they were led through the sea; the people of Israel are compared to a flock of sheep; the Lord is represented as the Shepherd of them, who took care of them, protected and preserved them from their enemies:

by the hand of Moses and Aaron; the one was their civil and the other their ecclesiastical governor, and both under the Lord, and instruments of his, in guiding and conducting the people in all things needful for them. The Arabic version adds, "Allelujah"; from all this the psalmist concluded, though it is not mentioned, that as God had delivered his people of old out of their straits and difficulties, so he hoped and believed, that as he could, he would deliver him in his own time and way; and by this means his faith was relieved and strengthened.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 78:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 78

Maschil of Asaph. Or for "Asaph" {f}; a doctrinal and "instructive" psalm, as the word "Maschil" signifies; see Ps 32:1, which was delivered to Asaph to be sung; the Targum is,

"the understanding of the Holy Spirit by the hands of Asaph."

Some think David was the penman of it; but from the latter part of it, in which mention is made of him, and of his government of the people of Israel, it looks as if it was wrote by another, and after his death, though not long after, since the account is carried on no further than his times; and therefore it is probable enough it was written by Asaph, the chief singer, that lived in that age: whoever was the penman of it, it is certain he was a prophet, and so was Asaph, who is called a seer, the same with a prophet, and who is said to prophesy, 2Ch 29:30 and also that he represented Christ; for that the Messiah is the person that is introduced speaking in this psalm is clear from Mt 13:34 and the whole may be considered as a discourse of his to the Jews of his time; giving them an history of the Israelites from their first coming out of Egypt to the times of David, and in it an account of the various benefits bestowed upon them, of their great ingratitude, and of the divine resentment; the design of which is to admonish and caution them against committing the like sins, lest they should be rejected of God, as their fathers were, and perish: some Jewish writers, as Arama observes, interpret this psalm of the children of Ephraim going out of Egypt before the time appointed.

Ver. 1. Give ear, O my people,.... The Jews were Christ's people, he descending from their fathers according to the flesh; they were his own, to whom he came, though rejected by them; they were his nation and people that delivered him up into the hands of the Romans; see **Ro 9:4** thus it is usual with persons to call those, who are of the same nation with them, their people, **Es 7:3** and especially for kings to call their subjects so; see 1Ch 28:2, and such was Christ; he was King of the Jews, though they would not have him reign over them; and therefore he here speaks as one having royal authority, and requires attention to him, and obedience to his word, which he calls his law:

to my law; meaning neither the moral nor the ceremonial law, but the doctrine of the Gospel, or law of faith, called the Messiah's law, **Isa 2:3**. This is the doctrine which he as man received of his Father, and which he taught and delivered to his disciples, and which concerns himself, his person, office, and grace, and is sometimes called the doctrine of Christ, **2Jo 1:9**,

incline your ears to the words of my mouth; the several doctrines of the everlasting Gospel preached by him, which were words of wisdom and of grace, of righteousness and eternal life, of peace, pardon, and everlasting salvation: these ought to be heard and diligently attended to; the matter contained in them requires attention; the office Christ bears demands it of men; all that have ears to hear should hear; all Christ's sheep do hear his voice, understand it, and act according to it: hear ye him was the instruction of Moses, and the direction of Christ's heavenly Father, De 18:15, and great is the danger such incur who hear him not, but neglect and despise his word, **Heb 2:2**.

{f} Poal tw asaf, Sept. "ipsi Asaph", Pagninus, Montanus; "tradita Asapho", Piscator.

Psalms 78:2

Ver. 2. I will open my mouth,.... Speak freely, boldly, and without reserve, **Eph 6:19**, so Christ opened his mouth, **Mt 5:2**,

in a parable; not that what follows in this psalm was such, but what were delivered by our Lord in the days of his flesh, who spake many parables; as of the sower, and of tares, and of the grain of mustard seed, and many others, and without a parable he spake not, and so fulfilled what he here said he would do, Mt 13:34.

I will utter dark sayings of old; sayings that relate to things of old; meaning not to the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and what follows in the psalm, delivered, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe, in figurative and topical terms, as in Ps 78:19, but to the things which were from the foundation of the world, as the phrase is rendered in Mt 13:35, spoken of Christ in his ministry, such as the fall of the angels, the ruin of man by Satan, the murder of Abel, Abraham's sight of his day with joy, and many things that were said by them of old, Lu 10:18 or rather this refers to the Gospel, and the sayings and doctrines of it, which were kept secret since the world began, Mt 13:3, yea, which were ordained before the world was, and therefore called the everlasting Gospel, **1Co 2:7** and here in the Arabic version, "eternal mysteries"; such as concerning the everlasting love of God to his people, his everlasting choice of them, and everlasting covenant with them: and the sayings or doctrines of the Gospel may he called "dark", because secret, hidden, and mysterious; and were so under the legal dispensation, in comparison of the more clear light under the Gospel dispensation; they having been wrapped up in types and shadows, and in the rites and ceremonies of the law, but now held forth clearly and plainly in the ministry of Christ and his apostles, as in a glass: these Christ says he would "utter" or deliver out as water from a fountain, in great plenty, as he did; he came in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel; and being full of grace and truth, the doctrines of grace and truth, these came by him, and were delivered from him in all their fulness and glory.

Psalms 78:3

Ver. 3. Which we have heard and known,.... The change of number from "I" to "we" have made some think that the disciples of Christ are here introduced speaking; but there is no need to suppose that, since our Lord uses the same form of speech, **Joh 3:11**,

and our fathers have told us; this may not only regard the Jewish ancestors, from whom our Lord descended according to the flesh, and so refer to the following account of the wonderful things done for the people of Israel; but also the divine Father of Christ, from whom, as his only begotten Son that lay in his bosom, and as Mediator, and the Angel of the great council, he heard and became acquainted with the secrets and mysteries of grace, and with his Father's mind and will; all which he declared and made known to his apostles, and in so doing used them as his friends, **Joh 1:18** and so the apostles of Christ, what they had from him their everlasting Father, and who had used to call them his children, even what they had seen, and heard, and learned, they made known to others, **Ac 4:20**.

Psalms 78:4

Ver. 4. We will not hide them from their children,.... The children of the Jewish fathers, but faithfully publish and declare them, as Christ and his apostles did; or the children of God and Christ, their spiritual seed and offspring:

showing to the generation to come; and so in all successive ages, by the ministration of the word, and the Spirit attending it; see
Ps 22:30,

the praises of the Lord; what he has done in predestination, redemption, and effectual calling, which is to the praise of the glory of his grace, **Eph 1:6**, and so all other truths of the Gospel, which are to the praise of Father, Son, and Spirit, and engage men to show it forth:

and his strength displayed; in Christ, the man of his right hand, made strong for himself, and in the redemption wrought out by him, as well as in the conversion of sinners by his mighty grace, and in the preservation of them by his power:

and his wonderful works that he hath done; in providence and grace; the miracles wrought by Christ, which were the wonderful works given him to finish, as proofs of his deity and Messiahship, and are testified in the Gospel for the confirmation of it; and especially the wonders of redeeming love, and calling grace, which are peculiarly to be ascribed unto him as the works his hands have wrought, and the wonderful decrees of God he made in eternity concerning these things.

Psalms 78:5

Ver. 5. For he established a testimony in Jacob,.... So the law is called, being a testification of the divine will, Ex 25:16 and the Scriptures, the writings of the Old Testament, which testify of Christ, his person, office, sufferings, and death, **Isa 8:20** and particularly the Gospel, which is the testimony of God, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his apostles, **2Ti 1:8** which bears witness to the love and grace of God in the salvation of men by Christ; to the dignity of Christ's person, to the fulness of his grace, to each of the offices and relations he bears and stands in to his people; to the virtue of his obedience, sufferings, and death; to redemption, righteousness, peace and pardon by him: this is established in the house of Jacob, as the Targum; in the church, which is the pillar and ground of truth, among the saints and people of God, to whom it is delivered, and by whom it will be kept, and with whom it will remain throughout all ages; for it is the everlasting Gospel:

and appointed a law in Israel; the law given on Mount Sinai was peculiar to them, and so were the word and oracles, they were committed to them; and not only the writings of Moses, but the prophets, are called the law, Joh 10:34, but the Gospel seems to be here meant, See Gill on "Ps 78:1": this was ordained before the world for our glory, and is put and placed in the hands and hearts of the faithful ministers of it, and is published among, and received by, the true Israel of God:

which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children; that is, the testimony and the law, and the things contained in them; the Jewish fathers were frequently commanded to teach their children the law of Moses, **De 4:9** and it was their practice to instruct them in the knowledge of the Scriptures, **2Ti 3:15**, and it becomes Christian parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, by making known to them the principles of the Christian religion, and the truths of the Gospel, **Eph 6:4**.

Psalms 78:6

Ver. 6. That the generation to come might know them,.... Not only notionally, but spiritually and experimentally; which is the case, when human teachings are attended with the spirit of wisdom and revertion in the knowledge of divine truths; for the truths of the Gospel are unknown to men; the Gospel is hidden wisdom, the wisdom of God in a mystery; the Bible is a sealed book, the doctrines of it are riddles and dark sayings; the ministry of the word is the means of knowledge, which become effectual when attended with the Spirit and power of God:

even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children; and so be transmitted from age to age: it is the will of God, that, besides private instructions, there should be a standing ministry kept up in all ages, to the end of the world; and he will have some that shall receive the Gospel, and profess his name; there has been and will be a succession of regenerate persons; instead of the fathers come up the children, a seed to serve the Lord, accounted to him for a generation; the seed and the seed's seed of the church, from whose mouth the word of God shall never depart; but they shall declare it one to another, by which means it shall be continued to the latest posterity, Ps 22:30.

Psalms 78:7

Ver. 7. That they might set their hope in God,.... And not in the creature, nor in any creature enjoyment; see Job 31:24, the Lord is the only proper object of hope and confidence; Christ, who is truly God, is the hope of his people, and in him they place it, as they have great reason to do; since with him there is mercy, the mercy of God is proclaimed in him; and with him there is redemption, which includes the blessings of peace, pardon, and righteousness; and a plenteous one, a redemption from all sin; and it is the Gospel which points out these things in Christ, and encourages a firm and settled hope and trust in him: and this shows that that is meant by the law and testimony; since the law of Moses gives no encouragement to hope in God; it convinces of sin, but does not direct to a Saviour, and so leaves without hope; it works wrath, terror, and despair; it is in the Gospel only Christ is set before men, as the object of hope to lay hold on, and which is as an anchor sure and steadfast, where they may securely place it:

and not forget the works of God; which the Gospel declares; not only the miracles of Christ recorded by the evangelists, but the works of grace, redemption, and salvation; the remembrance of which is kept up by the ministry of the word, and the administration of ordinances:

but keep his commandments; the commandments of Christ, and which are peculiar to the Gospel dispensation; and are to be kept in faith, from a principle of love, through the grace and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God by him; see Joh 14:15.

Psalms 78:8

Ver. 8. And might not be as their fathers,.... This chiefly respects the Jews in Christ's time: though it also is an admonition to them in succeeding ages, and especially in the latter day, when they shall be instructed, called, and converted; and even to us, to whom the Gospel is preached, on whom the ends of the world are come, not to be disobedient, as the Jewish fathers were, and to take care we do not fall after the same example of unbelief; this opens the whole scope and general design of the psalm; see 1Co 10:6,

a stubborn and rebellions generation; as the generation in the wilderness was, **De 9:6** and so were their posterity in Christ's time, Mt 12:34,

a generation that set not their heart aright; to seek the Lord, serve and obey him; their hearts were removed far from him, and they were hypocritical in their prayers to him, and service of him:

and whose spirit was not steadfast with God; did not continue in the faith of God, in the true religion, but departed and apostatized from him; see Ps 78:37. Apostasy is generally the fruit and effect of hypocrisy; all the following facts support the character which is here given of them.

Psalms 78:9

Ver. 9. The children of Ephraim being armed, and carrying bows,.... Or "casting" arrows out of the "bow" {a}; they went out well armed to meet the enemy, and they trusted in their armour, and not in the Lord; and being skilful in throwing darts, or shooting arrows, promised themselves victory:

but turned back in the day of battle; fled from the enemy, could not stand their

ground when the onset was made: what this refers to is not easy to determine; some think this with what follows respects the defection of the ten tribes in Rehoboam's time, which frequently go under the name of Ephraim; but we have no account of any battle then fought, and lost by them; and besides the history of this psalm reaches no further than the times of David; others are of opinion that it regards the time of Eli, when the Israelites were beaten by the Philistines, the ark of God was taken, Eli's two sons slain, and thirty thousand more, **1Sa 4:1**. Ephraim being put for the rest of the tribes, the ark being in that tribe; others suppose that the affair between the Gileadites and Ephraimites, in the times of Jephthah, is referred to, when there fell of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand,
Jud 12:1, many of the Jewish {b} writers take it to be the history of a fact that was done in Egypt before the children of Israel came out from thence; see **1Ch 7:20**, so the Targum,

"when they dwelt in Egypt, the children of Ephraim grew proud, they appointed the end (or term of going out of Egypt), and they erred, and went out thirty years before the end, with warlike arms, and mighty men carrying bows, turned back, and were slain in the day of battle;"

though it seems most likely to have respect to what was done in the wilderness, as Kimchi observes, after they were come out of Egypt, and had seen the wonders of God there, and at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; and perhaps reference is had to the discomfiture of the Israelites by the Amalekites, when they went up the hill they were forbid to do, and in which, it may be, the Ephraimites were most forward, and suffered most; see Nu 14:40.

{a} tvq ymwr "jacientes arcu", Pagninus, Montanus; "jaculantes arcu", Tigurine version, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {b} See Pirke Eliezer, c. 48. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2.

Psalms 78:10

Ver. 10. They kept not the covenant of God,.... Either the covenant of circumcision, which was neglected during their travels through the wilderness, **Jos 5:5** or the covenant made with the people of Israel at Mount Sinai, Ex 24:7 and this is to be understood not of the children of Ephraim only, but of the Israelites in general, who in many instances broke the covenant, and were not steadfast in it, Ps 78:37,
See Gill on "Jer 31:32"

and refused to walk in his law; the law of God, which was given forth by him, by the disposition of angels, through the hands of a mediator, Moses, as a rule of their walk and conversation; but they refused to order their conversation according to it, being unwilling to be subject to it, but despised and cast it away; a sad instance of the corruption of human nature, and the depravity of man's will, boasted of for its freedom, yet what is common, and to be observed in all mankind.

Psalms 78:11

Ver. 11. And forgat his works, and his wonders,.... That is, his wonderful works, the miracles he wrought in their favour, and for their deliverance, afterwards particularly mentioned; these were not only forgotten in the next generation, Jud 15:10, but in a few years, yea, in a few months, nay, in a few days, when they had been but three days' journey in the wilderness, after their passage through the Red sea, see
Ex 15:1, which occasioned the observation of the psalmist,
Ps 106:12, that he had showed them; done in their sight, and in the sight of their fathers, as follows.

Psalms 78:12

Ver. 12. Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers,.... The Targum is,

"before Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes of their fathers, he did marvellous things;"

but these were dead before this time; the Jews have a fancy, that these were brought to the sea, and placed upon it; and the Lord showed them what he would do for their children, and how he would redeem them; but this is to be understood of the plagues which were brought upon the Egyptians, and which are called wonders, Ex 11:10, and were so to the Egyptians themselves; and these were done by the hands of Moses and Aaron, and in their sight:

in the land of Egypt; where the Israelites were in bondage, and while they were there, and on their account were these things done:

in the field of Zoan; that is, in the territory of Zoan, which was an ancient city of Egypt, Nu 13:22, the metropolis of the land where Pharaoh kept his court; hence we read of the princes of Zoan,
Isa 19:11, it is the same with Tanis, and so it is called here in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and also in the Targum; it is said to have been two miles from Heliopolis, and one from Memphis; and at this day these three cities are become one, which is fifteen miles in compass, and goes by the name of Alcair. In this great city, the metropolis of the nation, before Pharaoh and all his court, were the above wonders done.

Psalms 78:13

Ver. 13. He divided the sea,.... The Targum adds,

"by the rod of Moses their master;"

which he was ordered to lift up, and to stretch out his hand over the sea; which he did, and at the same time a strong east wind was raised, which caused the sea to go back, and divided the waters of it; see
Ex 14:16

and caused them to pass through; that is, he caused the Israelites to pass through the sea; this they did in faith, Heb 11:29, in the faith of the power and promise of God, and of future grace and blessings, which this was an emblem of; for it was a representation of baptism, and is so called, 1Co 10:1 and of the sea of Christ's blood, or of his sufferings and death; whereby all enemies are overcome and destroyed, as sin and Satan, signified by the Egyptians, and salvation is wrought, and every blessing of grace procured; and of the passage of God's people through the sea of this world, and afflictions in it, safe to glory:

and he made the waters to stand as an heap; and were as a wall on the right hand and on the left hand so they continued until the Israelites had passed through; and then they returned, and covered the Egyptians, and drowned them, Ex 14:22.

Psalms 78:14

Ver. 14. In the daytime also he led them with a cloud,.... Which was in the form of a pillar, and went before them, and the Lord in it, and directed their way, and protected them from heat; see Ex 13:21 **Ne 9:12** this was typical of Christ, who is a shadow and security from the heat of a fiery law, the flaming sword of justice, the wrath of God, which is poured forth like fire, the fiery darts of Satan, and from hurt by any enemy whatever; see **Isa 4:5**, and who leads his people through the wilderness of this world by his Spirit, by his word, and by his own example; and who is the best and safest guide to follow:

and all the night with a light of fire; which also was in the form of a pillar, and went before them, and gave light in the night, and the Lord was in it; and this also was typical of Christ, who is the light of his people amidst all their darkness in this world.

Psalms 78:15

Ver. 15. He clave the rocks in the wilderness,.... The one at Rephidim, Ex 17:1, and the other at Kadesh, Nu 20:1 both to be seen at this day; See Gill on "Ex 17:1",
See Gill on "Ex 17:2",
See Gill on "Ex 17:3",
See Gill on "Ex 17:4",
See Gill on "Ex 17:5",
See Gill on "Ex 17:6",
See Gill on "Nu 20:1",
See Gill on "Nu 20:2",
See Gill on "Nu 20:3",
See Gill on "Nu 20:4",
See Gill on "Nu 20:5",
See Gill on "Nu 20:6",
See Gill on "Nu 20:7",
See Gill on "Nu 20:8",
See Gill on "Nu 20:9",
See Gill on "Nu 20:10",
See Gill on "Nu 20:11", though of the latter no modern traveller makes mention but one, yet Jerom {b} from Eusebius affirms that it was shown in his day: they were typical of Christ, 1Co 10:4, who is frequently compared to one for height, strength, and duration, shade, shelter, and protection; and is called the Rock of Israel, the Rock of offence to both houses of Israel, the Rock of salvation, the Rock of refuge, the Rock of strength, the Rock that is higher than the saints, and on which the church is built, and who is the shadow of a

great rock in a weary land. The cleaving of the rocks is ascribed to God, which was done by the hands of Moses; and so the Targum adds,

"by the rod of Moses their master;"

but Moses was only the instrument, it was the Lord that did it; Moses with his rod could never have done it, had not the power of God went along with it. This smiting and cleaving the rocks were an emblem of the sufferings of Christ, who was smitten of God with the rod of justice, according to the law of Moses, in a judicial way, for the sins of his people, and in order to obtain salvation for them:

and gave them drink as out of the great depths; such a large quantity of water flowed out of the rocks when smitten, as if it came out of the great sea, which furnished them with drink sufficient, and more than enough for them and their cattle; this was typical of the large abundance of grace, and the blessings of it, which flow freely and plentifully from Christ and his fulness, and through his sufferings and death.

{b} De loc. Heb. fol. 93. L.

Psalms 78:16

Ver. 16. He brought streams also out of the rock,.... Which is expressed in the singular number, as also in Ps 78:20, because the children of Israel were not come to Kadesh, and the second rock was not smitten when they lusted after flesh, and murmured against God, and tempted him, as is after related:

and caused waters to run down like rivers; from the descent of the rock, which followed them all the way in the wilderness; this was a most marvellous thing, that water should flow from a flinty rock upon striking it, from whence fire rather than water might have been expected; and that it should flow in such great abundance, and that from a rock in a wilderness.

Psalms 78:17

Ver. 17. And they sinned yet more against him,.... Or, "and they added yet to sin against him" {c}; which was great ingratitude; they had sinned before, and it might have been hoped that the goodness of God to them would have engaged them to have sinned no more, at least at such a rate, and in such a manner, as they had done; but instead of sinning less, they sinned more and more, they added sin to sin; such is the corrupt heart of man, notwithstanding the grace of God, and the blessings of it vouchsafed unto him:

by provoking the most High in the wilderness; everything is aggravating; the object against whom they sinned was the most High, which betrays their impiety, folly, and vanity; and they did not slightly sin against him, but did those things which were highly provoking and exasperating; and that in the wilderness, where they received so many favours, and where they must have been starved and perish, and could not have lived, without immediate provision, support, and protection, from the hand of the Lord.

{c} wl awjxl dwe wpyowyw "et addiderunt adhuc ad peccandum ei", Montanus, "vel peccare", Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 78:18

Ver. 18. And they tempted God in their heart,.... Which is desperately wicked, and from whence all impiety flows; they entertained hard thoughts of God; they inwardly fretted at their present circumstances, and secretly repined and murmured against God, and wished for things they should not; not being contented with what they had, and thankful for them, as they ought to have been:

by asking meat for their lust; or, "for their soul"; such as their souls lusted after, and their sensitive appetites craved; for they were not satisfied with the bread they had, which was sufficient for their sustenance and support; they wanted food for pleasure and wantonness; to ask for daily bread is right, but to ask for more to consume on our lusts is wrong, **Jas 4:3**.

Psalms 78:19

Ver. 19. Yea, they spoke against God,.... Not only thought ill of him, and tempted him in their hearts, but they expressed with their mouths what was in their hearts, and spoke against him, his power, and his providence, in plain words, though he had been so good and gracious to them, and had done such wonderful things for them: they said, can God furnish a table in the wilderness? these are the words which they spoke against him, and by which they tempted him, questioning his power and his goodness, and expressing their dissatisfaction with their present and daily allowance; they were not content with the manna they had every day, but they wanted to have a table ordered and spread with all kind of dainties. The sense of the question is, can the Lord do this for us? give us a plentiful table in the wilderness, as well as drop the manna about our tents? if he can, why does not he? if he does not, it must be either for want in himself, or want of good will to us; and thus tried and tempted the Lord.

Psalms 78:20

Ver. 20. Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed,.... This they allow was done by him, for these are their words continued; suggesting, that though the waters did gush out upon smiting the rock, yet they might have been in the caverns of it before, and had remained there a long time, and might have come out of themselves; and therefore this was no such great matter, and might easily be accounted for:

but can he give bread also? solid, substantial bread, and not like this light bread, the manna, as they called it, Nu 21:5, can he give us bread of corn, in a wilderness which is not a place of seed, where no corn grows? can he do this? this would show his power indeed:

can he provide flesh for his people? for so great a multitude, and in a place where no cattle are? let him do this, and we will believe his power; or else the words intimate that the smiting of the rock, and the waters flowing in such large streams, were an instance of his power, and therefore he that could do the one could do the other; he that could bring such large quantities of water out of a rock could give them solid bread and suitable flesh, and fulness of both; and should he not do so, they must conclude that he bore no good will to them, and had no love and kindness for them.

Psalms 78:21

Ver. 21. Therefore the Lord heard this,.... What they said in their hearts, and what they expressed with their mouths, all their murmurings against him, their distrust of his power and providence, and disbelief of his promises; see Nu 11:1, and was wroth; exceeding wroth; he was highly displeased; there was an overflow of his indignation, as the word {a} signifies; it was running upon him, upon the thick bosses of his buckler, to arraign his perfections, call in question any of his attributes, and disbelieve his word; this must greatly exasperate him, and provoke the eyes of his glory:

so a fire was kindled against Jacob; the posterity of Jacob; or in Jacob {b}, in the camp of Israel; which was literally true, because of the murmurings of the people against the Lord fire came down from heaven, and burnt among them, and consumed the uttermost parts of the camp; wherefore the name of the place was called Taberah, which signifies a burning, Nu 11:1, or it may be taken figuratively for the wrath of God, which is oftentimes compared to fire; see **Na 1:6** hence it follows,

and anger also came up against Israel; the people of Israel, the same with Jacob before; the allusion is to men when angry, in whose breasts anger burns, and from thence it rises up, and shows itself in their countenance, in their eyes, and by the words of their mouth.

{a} rbety "transiit in hithpael de transitu vel exundatione bilis solet usurpari", Gejerus. {b} bqeyb "in Jahacob", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus.

Psalms 78:22

Ver. 22. Because they believed not in God,.... That he was able to give them bread, and provide flesh for them, or bring them through the wilderness to Canaan's land, as he had promised. God, and he only, is the object of faith, and he is to be believed in at all times, and for all things temporal and spiritual; and nothing is more displeasing to him than unbelief; for as faith gives glory to him, unbelief reflects dishonour upon him; faith sets its seal to him as true, but unbelief makes him a liar; and what is more provoking to man than to have his veracity called in question, and to be counted a liar? in short, as faith has salvation annexed to it, unbelief has damnation, and to whom did the Lord swear that they should not enter into his rest but to them that believed not? so great an evil is unbelief, and is the sin which "easily beset" {c} the Israelites, as appears from the context; see **Heb 3:12**

and trusted not in his salvation; which he promised them, and bid them stand still and see, Ex 14:13, and of which they had had some proofs and instances in leading them through the Red sea, and thus far guiding them through the wilderness, and providing for them; and therefore had reason and encouragement to trust in the Lord, that he would yet be with them, and save them, and complete the mercy promised unto them.

{c} euperistaton, which Suidas, in voce enperis interprets a foolish thing; and it is thought by his learned editor Kusterus, in ibid. to allude to foolish persons, who stand round about a mountebank or juggler, gazing at his tricks with pleasure and admiration, being insnared by them.

Psalms 78:23

Ver. 23. Though he had commanded the clouds from above,.... Which were round about him, his chariots, and the dust of his feet; and which were at his command to go here and there, and carry and let down provisions for his people, as they did:

and opened the doors of heaven; as a large granary, from whence the manna, afterwards called the corn of heaven, was given out in great abundance, which is signified by opening the doors; see **Mal 3:10**.

Psalms 78:24

Ver. 24. And had rained down manna upon them to eat,.... So called, either from hnm, "manah", which signifies to prepare, appoint, and distribute, because this was food prepared of God for the Israelites without them, and was their provision, their appointed portion, and which was daily distributed to them in measure; or from the words
wh Nm, "man hu", what is it? which they used at first sight of the manna, they not knowing what it was, and hence called it "man"; or "manna"; this the Lord rained down from heaven, as he promised he would, that they might have food to eat; see Ex 16:4

and had given them of the corn of heaven; bread corn springs out of the earth, but this was corn from heaven, very unusual and wonderful; this greatly aggravated the unbelief of the Israelites, and shows their great ingratitude, that after all this they should disbelieve the Lord, and not trust in his salvation; the manna was a type of Christ, who is called the hidden manna, 1Co 10:3,
See Gill on "Joh 6:32".

Psalms 78:25

Ver. 25. Man did eat angels' food,.... Or, "the bread of the mighty" {d}; such as Moses and Elijah ate of; so Arama; but Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it of the clouds, or skies, said to be strong,
Job 37:18 in which the manna was prepared, and let down: but rather the words may be read, "every man did eat the bread of the mighty ones"; of princes and nobles, and the great men of the earth; it was royal food, it was princely fare; and, indeed, the common people of Israel ate the same as their princes and nobles did; they all fared alike; but the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, render the word "angels", and so Jarchi interprets it, and who are called mighty angels, and are creatures that excel in strength, **2Th 1:7** now the manna may be said to be their food, as it is in the Apocrypha:

"Instead whereof thou feddest thine own people with angels' food, and didst send them from heaven bread prepared without their labour, able to content every man's delight, and agreeing to every taste." (Wisdom 16:20)

because it might be prepared in the air by the ministry of angels, and given by their disposition, as the law was, **Ac 7:53** or because it came down from heaven, where they dwell, and so the Targum,

"the children of men did eat food, which came down from the habitation of angels;"

or because it was most excellent food, as the tongue of angels is the most excellent and eloquent, 1Co 13:1, or because it was such food, that, if angels ate any, it was fit for them, and not at all unworthy of them. Cocceius thinks, and so Gussetius {e}, that by the mighty ones are meant the mighty God, Father, Son, and Spirit, by whom this food was prepared and given; so the word is used in the singular number, of Jehovah, who is called the mighty One of Jacob, Ge 49:24 and of the Redeemer, Isa 49:26,

he sent them meat to the full; which may be understood either of the manna, of which they had great plenty, so that there was no lack for any man, and this continued with them till they came to the land of Canaan; or of the quails, of which in the following verses.

{d} Myryba "fortium", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. "magnificorum, potentium", Vatablus. {e} Comment. Ebr. p. 14. Vid. Witsium de Oeconom. Foeder. l. 4. c. 10. sect. 99.

Psalms 78:26

Ver. 26. He caused an east wind to blow in the heavens,.... In the airy heaven: or "he caused it to go" {f}; to go forth out of its place, out of the repositories and treasures of it, from whence he brings the wind, Ps 130:7 the winds are under the power and government of God, they are his servants that obey him; he says to one, Go, and it goes; and to another, Come, and it comes; stormy wind fulfils his word of command, and obeys its Creator:

and by his power he brought in the south wind; into the heavens, into the air, as before, and with it he brought the quails; and which made his power to appear the greater, since they do not fly with the south wind, which is too moist and heavy for them, as naturalists observe {g}; it looks as if first one wind blew, and then another was used for the bringing of them from the place where they were; perhaps about the Red sea, where they are said to have been in great numbers; and that the east wind brought them to a certain point, and then the south wind blew to bring them into the camp of Israel, where, by the moistness of it, they fell; hence fowlers, as the above naturalists relate, observe the south wind, in order to take them; though it may be that only one wind is intended, namely, the southeast wind; and so Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, understand it.

{f} eoy "fecit proficisci", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus. {g} Aristot. de Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 12. Plin. Hist. l. 10. c. 23.

Psalms 78:27

Ver. 27. He rained flesh also upon them as dust,.... By "flesh" is meant fowl, as the following clause shows; for there is flesh of birds, as well as of other creatures, see 1Co 15:39 and the quails which are here meant may be very fitly called flesh, since they are, for their size, a very plump, fat, and fleshy bird:

and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea; or "fowl of wing" {h}: winged fowls, so the Targum; fowl that flies; and therefore it was the more remarkable that these should be rained and fall, and be taken by the Israelites; and which fell in great numbers, as is signified by these phrases, the dust and the sand of the sea; for there fell enough to feed six hundred thousand men, beside women and children, for a month together; they lay in heaps, two cubits high, on one

another, and everyone that gathered them brought in ten homers; see
Nu 11:19, which is the history referred to; and quails are used to fly together in large bodies; and sometimes, as Pliny {i} relates, will light on ships at sea, and sink them with their numbers. Some think one sort of locusts is meant, which were used for food, and was very delicious food; and the circumstances of bringing them with an east or southeast wind, their falling in heaps, and being gathered in bushels, and spread about to be dried in the sun, seem to favour such a sense; See Gill on "Nu 11:19",
See Gill on "Nu 11:20",
See Gill on "Nu 11:21",
See Gill on "Nu 11:31",
See Gill on "Nu 11:32". The ancients interpret this mystically of the flesh of Christ, whose flesh is meat indeed, delicious food for faith, as the quails were a rich food; and as they were rained down from heaven, so Christ is the bread of life which came down from heaven, and the bread he gave for the life of the world was his flesh: and as these came up, however the first quails, in the evening, Ex 16:13, so Christ came in the flesh, in the evening or end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; to which may be added, that these creatures sit upon their young, and cherish and protect them, as an hen her chickens {k} with which compare Mt 23:37, but seeing the quails are never called spiritual meat, as the manna is, 1Co 10:3, but were given in wrath and judgment, they are rather an emblem of riches, or worldly goods, things given to carnal men; these are of God, as the quails were, and are by some persons enjoyed without care or trouble, as these were; their meat, as it is sometimes said, falls into their mouth, as these quails did into the mouths of the Israelites, as it were; and are in wrath, their blessings are cursed to them, and, while they have a great affluence of worldly things, have leanness in their souls, as the Israelites now had,
Ps 106:15, moreover, as these were feathered or winged fowl, so riches have wings, and sometimes flee away, and are very uncertain things to trust to, Pr 23:5.

{h} Pnk Pwe "volucres alatas", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {i} Hist. l. 10. c. 23. {k} Arist. de Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 8.

Psalms 78:28

Ver. 28. And he let it fall in the midst of their camp,.... Or, "his camps" {l}; the four camps of Israel; for so many there were, **Nu 2:1** or the camp of God, where he dwelt, and before which he went as the General, Leader, and

Commander of them; in the midst of this, or by it, by the side of it, Nu 11:31, the flesh or feathered fowl fell, so that they had no trouble to fetch it in; and here it fell by the order and direction of the Lord himself; he caused it to fall, without whose knowledge and will a sparrow does not fall to the ground, Mt 10:29. These creatures fell either, as some think, being wearied with their flight over the Red sea; or through their wings being broken by the vehemency of the wind that brought them, as others; or by the moistness of the south wind, which wetted their wings, and made them flag and fall; but, by whatever means this was done, it was so ordered by the Lord that they should fall, and fall just in the place where they did:

round about their habitations; for the space of a day's journey on every side, where they lay in heaps, here and there, two cubits high,
Nu 11:31, so that they could gather them with great ease, and had no need of arrows to shoot at them, nor nets to spread for them; they were ready at hand, and in great plenty.

{l} whnxm "castrorum ejus", Pagninus, Vatablus, Gejerus.

Psalms 78:29

Ver. 29. So they did eat, and were well filled,..... Or "exceedingly filled" {m}, or too much, as some versions render it; they eat to excess, not merely to satisfy nature, but to gratify their sensual appetite: gluttony is a sin; it is an abuse of the creatures; it hurts the body by filling it with gross humours, and bringing diseases on it; it is injurious to the mind; the heart may be overcharged by it; it disposes it to sin; it leads to impiety, to atheism, and disbelief of a future state, which often go along with it, and ends in destruction, which is the case of those whose god is their belly:

for he gave them their own desire; or their lust {n}, what they lusted after, flesh; and they had as much of it as they would, though this was given in judgment; and a sad thing it is when God gives men a fulness of this world's things, and leaves them to the abuse of them, or sends leanness into their souls, and gives them up to their own hearts' lusts.

{m} dam webvyw "et saturati sunt valde", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {n} Mtwat "concupiscentiam ipsorum", Cocceius.

Psalms 78:30

Ver. 30. They were not estranged from their lust,.... By the goodness and liberality of God unto them, they were not brought to repentance for their sin of lusting; nor did they abstain from their fleshly lusts, or deny themselves of them, which the grace of God teaches to do; or else the sense is, what they lusted after, flesh, was not withheld from them, or they restrained from eating it; they were indulged with it for a whole month together; to which agrees what follows:

but while their meat was yet in their mouths; the meat of the quails, while it was between their teeth, ere it was chewed, and before it was swallowed down, while they were rolling this sweet morsel under their tongues, and were gorging themselves with it, destruction came upon them, as follows; just as Belshazzar, while he was feasting with his nobles, in the midst of his mirth and jollity, was slain by the Persians, **Da 5:1**.

Psalms 78:31

Ver. 31. The wrath of God came upon them,.... Either by causing fire to come down from heaven, or by suffering them to be surfeited by excessive eating, or by sending a plague among them; see Nu 11:33,

and slew the fattest of them; such perhaps who had been most guilty of the sin of gluttony, and had fed the most inordinately upon the flesh that was sent them; or this designs the chief among their princes and nobles, though not only them, but them as well as the common people; so the Targum,

"and slew their mighty ones:"

or the words may be rendered, "and slew them among their fatness", or "fat things" {o}; while they were feeding on their feast of fat things, the fat quails, which were brought among them, in such plenty; for the quail is a very fat bird, as Kimchi observes {p}:

and smote down the chosen men of Israel; or the young men, as the Targum, who were within the twentieth and fiftieth year of their age; who were chosen and fit for war within that time, as well as were the choicest for comeliness, strength, and service; or "made" them "to bow" {q} to death and the grave; whose power they could not withstand, though in the prime and vigour of youth, and while they were freely and heartily feeding upon the food they lusted after.

{o} Mhynmvb "in opimis ipsorum", Cocceius; "inter pinguedines eorum", Michaelis. {p} In Sepher Shorashim, rad. wlv. {q} eyrkh "incurvavit", Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 78:32

Ver. 32. For all this they sinned still,.... Those that survived, not being brought to repentance by mercies, nor by judgments; not by mercies, such as before mentioned, though they were great and many, and some of them continued, and of which they were very unworthy; the goodness of God should, but it does not always, lead persons to repentance; mercies, unless they are sanctified, often prove snares and temptations to sin yet more and more; nothing short of the grace of God will bring persons to repentance for sin, or keep them from it: nor by judgments, which were last mentioned, and seem chiefly designed; these have no more effect than the other, unless the power of divine grace goes along with them; see **Am 4:6** it could not be thought, nor was it expected, that they should, after all these mercies and judgments, have lived without sin, which no man does, or can do; but then they went on in a course of sin, and were continually repeating their transgressions, and were guilty of sins of a very heinous nature, many of which are on record; as Aaron and Miriam, by speaking against Moses, the faithful servant of the Lord, which brought upon the latter the plague of leprosy; the spies which were sent to search the land, and brought an evil report of it, which set the people a murmuring, and put them on thoughts of returning to Egypt; those that were concerned in the business of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who were swallowed up in the earth, or burnt with fire from heaven; the whole congregation which murmured at Kadesh, whom Moses called rebels, and who afterwards expressed their loathing of the manna, for which fiery serpents were sent among them, Nu 12:1,
Nu 20:2 but their prevailing sin was unbelief, as follows:

and believed not for his wondrous works: not "in" them, though the words will bear to be so rendered; for they did believe in them when they were wrought, and that they were wrought by the Lord; though they soon forgot them, and fell into distrust and unbelief; but "by" them {r}, or by means of them; though such wonderful things were done for them in providence, as before related, which should have engaged their faith and trust in the Lord; yet, notwithstanding these, they called in question his providence, power, and goodness.

{r} wytalpnb "per miracula ejus", Schmidt; so some in Gejerus.

Psalms 78:33

Ver. 33. Therefore their days did he consume in vanity,.... They were not immediately cut off by the hand of God, though some were; but the greatest part spent their time, for about eight and thirty years together, in fruitless marches to and fro in the wilderness, and never entered into the land of Canaan, where they were gradually wasted and consumed, till at length all their carcasses fell in the wilderness; see Nu 14:32, time spent in sin is all waste time, and is spent in vanity; let a man enjoy ever so much of worldly things, it is all vanity and vexation of spirit; if he does not get to heaven at last, his life here is lived in vain; it had been better if he had never been born:

and their years in trouble: or "in terror" {a} and consternation; through their enemies, who smote and discomfited them, Nu 14:45, through the earth's opening and swallowing many of them up; through fire coming from heaven on some of them, and fiery serpents being sent among them all, Nu 16:31. It is an awful consideration, and yet it is true, of some wicked men, though not all, that they have nothing but trouble here, by what their sins bring upon them, and hell at last. Kimchi renders the word here used "suddenly", and interprets it of the sudden death of the spies; so the Syriac and Arabic versions "swiftly", following the Vulgate Latin, which renders it "with haste".

{a} hlhbb "in terrore", Montanus; "per consternationem aut terrorem", Gejerus; "in terrore et consternatione", Michaelis.

Psalms 78:34

Ver. 34. When he slew them,.... Some of them, the spies particularly; or when he threatened to slay them, or was about to do it:

then they sought him; that is, those who either survived the slain, or were threatened with destruction; these sought the Lord by prayer and supplication, that he would not destroy them; the Targum is, "they repented and sought him;"

see Nu 14:37,

and they returned; from their evil ways, and by repentance, at least in show and appearance:

and inquired early after God; but not earnestly, and with their whole hearts and spirits; the Targum is,

"they prayed before God;"

which is often done, by carnal professors, in trouble; see Isa 26:16 **Ho 5:15**.

Psalms 78:35

Ver. 35. And they remembered that God was their Rock,.... Who had delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, had strengthened them against them, and supported and protected them, as well as supplied them with all good things, of whom they had been greatly unmindful; but affliction was a means of refreshing their memory; see De 32:15,

and the high God their Redeemer; who had redeemed them out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, with a high hand and a mighty arm, and thereby showed himself to be the most high God: between this and the following verse the Masorah puts this note,

"half of the book,"

i.e. half of the book of Psalms ends here.

Psalms 78:36

Ver. 36. Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth,.... In prayer to him, they only drew nigh to him with their mouths, and honoured him with their lips; they showed much love to him and his ways and ordinances hereby; but their hearts were not with him, but after their lusts; they made fine speeches and fair promises, but their hearts and mouths did not agree; they spoke with a double heart, thinking and endeavouring to "deceive" the Lord, as the word {b} here used signifies; but he is not to be deceived, nor will he be mocked; the Targum is,

"they allured (or persuaded) him, with their mouth;"

they attempted to do so; the Syriac and Arabic versions are, "they loved him with their mouth"; professed great love and sincere affection to him, when they had none:

and they lied unto him with their tongues; to lie unto men is bad, but to God is worse; and it is a most vain and foolish thing, since there is not a word in the tongue of any but is known to him.

{b} whwtpyw "quamvis conarentur eum decipere", Junius & Tremellius; "attamen decipiebant eum", Cocceius.

Psalms 78:37

Ver. 37. For their heart was not right with him,.... Neither prepared and ready to any good work, but reprobate thereunto; nor steady, fixed, and established, as a good man's heart is, trusting in the Lord; but wavering, fickle, and inconstant; nor true, faithful, and upright; but turning aside like a deceitful bow, as is afterwards said, Ps 78:57,

neither were they steadfast in his covenant; which was made with them at Sinai, though they promised to be obedient, and to do all the Lord said unto them; but this covenant they broke, though he were an husband to them; see Ex 24:7.

Psalms 78:38

Ver. 38. But he, being full of compassion,.... Or merciful; having bowels of mercy, as a tender mother to the son of her womb; a word from the same root as this signifies the womb: the mercies of God are tender and abundant; there is a multitude of them; he is rich and plenteous in mercy, and so ready to forgive; hence it follows,

forgave their iniquity; forgiveness of sin flows from the tender mercy of God; it is according to the multitude of his mercies, and the riches of his grace; yet is through the blood and attoning sacrifice of his Son; and the word {c} that is here used signifies to expiate or atone; God never intended to pardon sinners, but through the propitiation of his Son, whom he set forth in his purpose, and sent forth in the fulness of time to be the propitiatory sacrifice for sin; he forgave the sins of Old Testament saints with a view to that; and it is for Christ's sake he forgives any; for without shedding of blood there is no remission; though perhaps, since these persons were impenitent, unbelievers and hypocrites, no more may be meant here by the forgiveness of their sins than averting a threatened judgment, or a removing of one, and putting a stop to the further execution of it, which is sometimes meant by forgiving sin; see Nu 14:19 **1Ki 8:30** which sense the following words incline to:

and destroyed [them] not; though they deserved it, and he was able to do it, he did not destroy them immediately and at once, nor all of them, at least not their seed and posterity, who were preserved and brought into the land of Canaan:

yea, many a time turned he his anger away; he does not retain it for ever, or always carry on a resentment, or the appearance of it; though he causes grief, he has and shows compassion; he is said to turn away his anger from his own people when he forgives their sins, and comforts their souls, Ps 85:2, so when he causes the effects of his displeasure to cease, or stays a plague, or stops a judgment, by means of any of his servants; see Nu 25:8,

and did not stir up all his wrath; which their sins deserved, and was laid up among his treasures: the wrath of a temporal king is as the roaring of a lion, Pr 19:12 much more that of the King of kings; and the allusion here seems to be to the arousing of some fierce creature; the wrath of God is intolerable, and, even when it is kindled but a little, it cannot be endured; and much less should it be all stirred up; but here in wrath he remembered mercy.

{c} rpky "propitiabitur", Montanus; "propitiatus est", Pagninus, Museulus; "propitius fuit", Tigurine version; "expiabat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 78:39

Ver. 39. For he remembered that they [were but] flesh,.... Or "children of flesh", as the Targum; poor, frail, weak, mortal creatures, unable to bear the weight of his displeasure, the stroke of his hand, and the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his wrath; that they must be crushed before him, and would sink, and fail, and die; see Ps 103:14, or that they were naturally sinful and corrupt, prone to evil, easily drawn into sin; it was what their depraved natures inclined unto; they were impotent to that which is good, and unable to withstand temptations to evil; all which was taken notice of and considered by the Lord in his condescending goodness, and therefore he dealt gently with them; see **Ge 6:3**,

a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again; such is the life of man; it may be fitly compared to the wind, which moves swiftly, and, passing on, loses its strength and subsides; so the life of man is quickly gone, his days move swiftly on, he dies, and returns not again to his former state, to a mortal life; and though the spirit returns to the body again, yet not till the resurrection; and then not of itself, but by the power of God; see **Job 7:7**.

Psalms 78:40

Ver. 40. How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness,.... Where they were not only at his mercy, having nothing to help themselves with, but had many singular mercies bestowed upon them; and yet were continually committing such sins against God as provoked the eyes of his glory; ten times they tempted him, the Lord says, Nu 14:22, therefore that dispensation is called the provocation and day of temptation; for it was a series of rebellion and sin, Ps 95:8,

and grieve him in the desert; which signifies the same as before, and is spoken after the manner of men, **Ge 6:6** and like a tender parent grieved at the disobedience of his child, and that he is obliged to take the rod and chastise it. The prophet Isaiah says, they "vexed" or "grieved his Holy Spirit", Isa 63:10, the same word is there used as here; compare with it **Eph 4:30**.

Psalms 78:41

Ver. 41. Yea, they turned back, and tempted God,.... They talked of going back to Egypt, and of choosing a captain to lead them back thither, Nu 14:3, and they turned back from the Lord, and from his good ways, and chose their own ways, and followed after idols; or the sense is, they again tempted God, not only at Meribah, but elsewhere; they tempted him again and again, even ten times, as before observed:

and limited the Holy One of Israel; or "signed" {d} him; signed him with a sign, so the Targum; they tempted him by asking a sign of him, as Jarchi interprets it; insisting that a miracle be wrought, by which it might be known whether the Lord was among them or not, Ex 17:7, with which compare Mt 16:1, or they set bounds, so Kimchi; to his power and goodness, saying, this he could do, and the other he could not; see Ps 78:19, and so men limit the Lord when they fix on a blessing they would have, even that, and not another; and the measure of it, to what degree it should be bestowed on them, as well as set the time when they would have it; whereas the blessing itself, and the degree of it, and the time of giving it, should be all left with the Lord; who knows which and what of it is most convenient for us, and when is the best time to bestow it on us.

{d} wwth "signaverunt", Pagninus.

Psalms 78:42

Ver. 42. They remembered not his hand,.... Which brought them out of Egypt, and dashed their enemies in pieces, and which had been so often opened to supply their wants in the wilderness; the Targum renders it, the miracles of his hand:

nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy; Pharaoh king of Egypt; that very memorable day in which they were delivered out of his hands, that selfsame day which had been fixed, by promise and prophecy many hundreds of years before, in which the hosts of the Lord went out of Egypt, Ex 12:41, times when as well as places where deliverances and salvation have been wrought should not be forgotten; and forgetfulness of the goodness of God in times past is often the cause and occasion of sinning against him, which, by a remembrance of his kind appearances, might be prevented.

Psalms 78:43

Ver. 43. How he had wrought his signs in Egypt,.... The plagues which he brought upon the Egyptians, for refusing to let Israel go:

and his wonders in the field of Zoan, or in the country of Zoan, that is, Tanis, as the Targum renders it; so the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; see Ps 78:12, an enumeration of these signs and wonders follows; but not of all, nor in the order in which they were: only seven are mentioned, with which compare the seven vials or last plagues, **Re 6:1**.

Psalms 78:44

Ver. 44. And had turned their rivers into blood,.... The river Nile and its seven streams; this was the first of the plagues of Egypt, **Ex 7:20**, and was a just retaliation for drowning the infants of the Israelites in their river, **Ex 1:22**, a like plague will be inflicted on spiritual Egypt, and with equal justice; see Re 11:8,

and their floods, that they could not drink; the rivulets that flowed from the Nile, and every spring or confluence of water; or rather by these rivers and floods are meant the canals and ditches, which, as Jarchi {e} observes, were made by the hands of men, from the banks of the river Nile, to water their fields with.

{e} Comment. on Exod. vii. 19. so Kimchi in Sepher Shorash. rad. ra.

Psalms 78:45

Ver. 45. He sent divers sorts of flies among them,.... This was the fourth plague; see **Ex 8:24**, the word signifies a "mixture" {f}, and the Targum renders it

"a mixture of wild beasts;"

so Josephus {g} understood this plague of various sorts of beasts of different forms, and such as had never been seen before. Aben Ezra, on **Ex 8:24** interprets it of evil beasts mixed together, as lions, wolves, bears, and leopards; and Jarchi, on the same place, of serpents and scorpions: the Syriac and Arabic versions here, following the Septuagint, render the word "dog flies"; so called because they were, as Pliny {h} says, very troublesome to dogs, and so might give the Egyptians greater uneasiness, because they worshipped dogs. God can make use of very mean and contemptible instruments, the least of insects, to plague and distress the most powerful enemies of his people;

which devoured them; corrupted their land, **Ex 8:24**, perhaps produced a pestilence, which destroyed many of the inhabitants, or consumed the vegetables of the land; as but a few years ago {e}, in New England, a sort of insects came out of little holes in the ground, in the form of maggots, and turned to flies, which for the space of two hundred miles poisoned and destroyed all the trees in the country {i}:

and frogs, which destroyed them; with their stench; see **Ex 8:5**, with this plague compare Re 16:13, this was the second plague.

{e} This was written about 1750. Editor. {f} bre "mixtionem", Montanus; "miscellam", Vatablus; "a mixed swarm", Ainsworth. {g} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 14. sect. 3. {h} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 34. {i} See Philosoph. Transact. vol. 2. p. 766. See also p. 781.

Psalms 78:46

Ver. 46. He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar,.... A kind of locust, and the same with the locust in the next clause; for we read but of the locust only in Ex 10:13

and their labour unto the locust; which devoured the increase of the field, all green grass and trees, all sorts of corn, wheat, barley and rye, and the increase of vineyards, and all fruit trees, on which much labour had been used to manure and cultivate; see **Re 9:3** this was the eighth plague.

Psalms 78:47

Ver. 47. He destroyed their vines with hail,.... Or "killed" {k} them; for there is a vegetative life in plants: this was the seventh plague of Egypt, attended with thunder and lightning, and was very terrible to Pharaoh, **Ex 9:23**, with this compare Re 16:21,

and their sycamore trees with frost: sycamore trees, according to Kimchi, were a sort of wild figs, and these with the vines are only mentioned; though the plague of hail destroyed all sorts of trees; because there were many of these in Egypt, and are put for all others; and who also observes, that the word lmnx, rendered "frost", which is only used in this place, signifies a kind of hail; and so Aben Ezra interprets it of great hailstones which beat off the fruit of the sycamore trees: but R. Saadiah Gaon explains it by the Arabic word "Al-sakia", which signifies a strong frost which breaks the buds of trees, and dries up their moisture. Jarchi will have it to be, according to the Midrash, a kind of locust, which comes and sits and cuts off the green of the trees and grass, and eats it. Aben Ezra makes mention of this sense, but rejects it.

{k} grhy "occidit", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "interfecit", Gejerus.

Psalms 78:48

Ver. 48. He gave up their cattle also to the hail,.... For the hail fell upon man and beast, as well as upon herbs and trees, **Ex 9:22**,

and their flocks to hot thunderbolts: which were killed by them: this is to be understood of the fire that was mingled with the hail, and ran upon the ground, and destroyed their flocks, **Ex 9:23**. Jarchi, out of the Midrash, interprets the words of fowls which devoured the sheep killed by the hail.

Psalms 78:49

Ver. 49. He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger,.... This with the following words,

wrath, and indignation, and trouble, are thought by some to intend the other plagues, which are not particularly mentioned; or rather they express the manner in which they were all inflicted, in great wrath and hot displeasure for their sins and iniquities, and which particularly were shown

by sending evil angels among them; not evil in themselves, but because they were the instruments God made use of to bring evil things upon the Egyptians, as good angels often are; though some think that demons, devils, or wicked spirits, were sent among them at that time; the darkness was over all the land, and frightened them; in the Apocrypha:

"3 For while they supposed to lie hid in their secret sins, they were scattered under a dark veil of forgetfulness, being horribly astonished, and troubled with [strange] apparitions. 4 For neither might the corner that held them keep them from fear: but noises [as of waters] falling down sounded about them, and sad visions appeared unto them with heavy countenances." (Wisdom 17)

According to Arama, the three last plagues are meant: the words may be rendered "messengers of evil things" {l}, as they are by some, and be understood of Moses and Aaron, who were sent time after time with messages of evil things to Pharaoh, in which were expressed his wrath and fury against them.

{l} Myer ykalm "numcios malorum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 78:50

Ver. 50. He made a way to his anger,.... Or, "for" it, so that nothing could obstruct it, or hinder the execution of it; or "he weighed a path for his anger" {m}; he weighed it in the balance of justice, and proportioned his anger to their crimes, and punished them according to their just deserts:

he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence; which some understand of their cattle, and of the murrain that came upon them, by which they were destroyed, and which was the fifth plague of Egypt, **Ex 9:3**, so the Targum,

"their beasts he delivered unto death;"

but Aben Ezra interprets it of the slaughter of the firstborn, expressed in the following verse; and so others.

{m} wpal bytn olpy "ponderavit semitam furori suo", Pagninus, Vatablus; "libravit semitam irae suae", Tigurine version; "iter ad iram suam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 78:51

Ver. 51. And smote all the firstborn in Egypt,.... From the prince to the peasant; and not only the firstborn of men, but of beasts also, Ex 12:29,

the chief of their strength; or first of it, as the firstborn is called, Ge 49:3,

in the tabernacles of Ham; in the several cities, towns, villages, and houses of the Egyptians, the descendants of cursed Ham; for Mizraim, from whom the

Egyptians have their name, and from whence they sprung, was a son of Ham's, Ge 10:6. Perhaps No Ammon may be particularly meant, **Na 3:8**, the same with Memphis, and which signifies the mansion or palace of Ammon, that is, Ham; and so Chemmis, another city in Egypt, signifies the same {n}; of which see Ps 105:23 this was the tenth and last plague: according to Suidas {o}, the plagues of Egypt continued forty days.

{n} Dickinson Delph. Phoeniciz. cap. 4. {o} In voce aiguptou.

Psalms 78:52

Ver. 52. But made his own people to go forth like sheep,.... The people of Israel, whom the Lord chose to be his peculiar people above all others; these he caused to go forth out of Egypt, with a mighty hand and stretched out arm; like sheep, weak, timorous, unarmed, harmless, and inoffensive, not a dog daring to move his tongue at them: the power of God was wonderfully displayed in the delivery of his poor, helpless, and oppressed people, well may it be ascribed to him; for it was not their arm, but his, that brought them out:

and guided them in the wilderness like a flock; by the hands of Moses and Aaron, Ps 77:20, he also going before them as the Shepherd of the flock, in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; he kept them together as a flock from scattering, straying, and being lost; and directed their way in the untrodden wilderness, through all the windings and turnings of it, and protected them from all dangers and enemies.

Psalms 78:53

Ver. 53. And he led them on safely,.... Through the sea, where the waters were on each side; and through the wilderness, in which were serpents and scorpions, and where they were attacked by many powerful enemies:

so that they feared not; for though they feared for a while at the Red sea, yet their fears were soon silenced, and they by faith passed through the Red sea as on dry land; and especially their fears were gone, when they saw the Egyptians dead on the sea shore; wherefore it follows:

but the sea overwhelmed their enemies; or "covered" them {p}; the waters returned, and overflowed and drowned the Egyptians, who were their implacable enemies, and vowed their destruction, and were sure of it; but now the Israelites had nothing to fear from them.

{p} hok "operuit", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Piscator, Gejerus.

Psalms 78:54

Ver. 54. And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary,.... Of the land of Canaan, which the Lord had sanctified, and set apart for them; and of Jerusalem, the holy city, the city of the great God, and of the temple where his residence was to be; so the Targum,

"to the border of the place of the house of his sanctuary:"

even to this mountain, which his right hand purchased; the mount Moriah, on which the temple was built; this psalm being composed, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi think, after it was made known to David, by the prophet Gad, the place where the temple should be built; namely, on the very mountain, on part of which David had his palace; and this was obtained and possessed, not by the power nor through the merits of the Israelites, but through the power and goodness of God; see Ps 44:3.

Psalms 78:55

Ver. 55. He cast out the Heathen also before them,.... The seven nations, the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, **De 7:1**

and divided them an inheritance by line: the land of Canaan was divided among the nine tribes and a half by Joshua, the other two and a half having had their portion assigned them on the other side; this distribution was made very exactly by lot, by line, and measure, so that every tribe had their proper portion and inheritance; see
Jos 13:6,

and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents; in the cities, towns, villages, and houses of the Heathen cast out before them.

Psalms 78:56

Ver. 56. Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God,.... After the death of Joshua, and in the times of the judges, by worshipping and serving the gods of the nations, and forsaking the Lord their God, who had done such great things for them, **Jud 2:11**,

and kept not his testimonies; the laws of God, which testified and declared his mind and will; nor observed his word and ordinances, which testified of his grace, and of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

Psalms 78:57

Ver. 57. But turned back,.... From God and his worship, apostatized from the true religion, and turned to idols:

and dealt unfaithfully, like their fathers; in the wilderness; see
Ps 78:8,

they were turned aside like a deceitful bow; that promises well to carry the arrow right, but drops it at the feet of the archer; or carries it another way, so that it misses the mark, The Targum is,

"as a bow casting arrows;"

to the ground, and not to the mark; see **Ho 7:16**, or being too much stretched is suddenly broken, and kills the archer; or returns to its own nature; so Arama.

Psalms 78:58

Ver. 58. For they provoked him to anger with their high places,.... Which they built to Baal, and other Heathen dieties:

and moved him to jealousy with their graven images; which they worshipped, see Jud 10:6, which idolatry was spiritual adultery, and so made the Lord jealous of them, who stood in the relation of a husband to them, as a man becomes jealous by the unchaste and lascivious conduct of his wife; and such a course of life the Israelites lived, throughout the reigns of the judges, at certain seasons, until the times of Eli and Samuel, when the ark was carried captive, of which mention is made in the following verses.

Psalms 78:59

Ver. 59. When God heard this,.... Their building high places, and sacrificing on them, their making and worshipping graven images, and the language which such actions spoke; who also heard what they said to their idols, when they paid their devotion to them, acknowledging them to be their gods; he took notice of and observed all this, for nothing could pass his all seeing eye and hearing ear; and who acted as a righteous Judge, first heard, and then proceeded to give and execute the sentence; by which he let them know that he did hear and observe what they said and did:

he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel; not his remnant among them, according to the election of grace, which he in all ages had; for this would be contrary to his everlasting love, which always continues; to the immutability of his nature, who changes not; to his Word, who says, fury is not in me; and to his oath, who hath sworn that he will not be wroth with his people: he may indeed, and does, abhor their sins, but not their persons; he may seem to them and others, in the dispensations of his providence, to be wroth with them and abhor them; but does not in reality. This is to be understood of the bulk of the people in general, and is to be explained and illustrated by those several instances of his displeasure with them in the times of the judges; when his anger waxed hot against them for their idolatries and other sins, and he delivered them up into the hands of their enemies, **Jud 3:7**.

Psalms 78:60

Ver. 60. So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh.... The tabernacle which Moses built in the wilderness by the command of the Lord, and according to the pattern showed him; and which, when the Israelites were settled in the land of Canaan, was set up in Shiloh; see Jos 18:1, and here it was in the times of Eli and Samuel, which are here referred to:

the tent which he placed among men; it was as a tent moveable from place to place, and was to continue at longest but for a while, as the whole tabernacle worship and service was to do; here the divine Majesty dwelt, and among men, vile, sinful, wicked, and ungrateful men; which was a wonderful instance of his condescension and goodness, **1Ki 8:27**, but when their iniquities grew to such a degree as were intolerable, he forsook it and removed it elsewhere; see **Jer 7:12**, rather the words may be rendered, "the tent", or "tabernacle, which he had fixed in Adam"; as they are by Doctor Lightfoot {q}; that is, in the city Adam, which was in the centre of the parting of the waters of Jordan, and where was the station of the tabernacle and ark of the covenant, when Israel entered into them, and passed through them; which is mentioned as a wonderful circumstance, both with respect to the tabernacle and to the people of Israel.

{q} See his Works, vol. 2. p. 82.

Psalms 78:61

Ver. 61. And delivered his strength into captivity,.... That is, the ark, called his strength, and the ark of his strength, Ps 105:4, because it was a token of his strength, and by means of which he displayed it, as when the Israelites passed through Jordan into Canaan's land, and encompassed the city of Jericho; and besides, it was typical of Christ, the man of God's right hand, made strong for himself, and in whom is strength as well as righteousness for his people; now this was delivered up into the hands of the Philistines, and carried captive, **1Sa 4:11**. The Targum renders it, "his law", because the two tables of the law were in the ark; so Jarchi interprets it, the ark and the tables:

and his glory into the enemy's hand; which designs the same thing, the ark being the glory of God, over which upon the mercy seat the glorious majesty of the Lord was; hence Phinehas's wife, when she heard the ark was taken, fell into labour, her time being near, and brought forth a son, and called him Ichabod, saying, the glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken, **1Sa 4:21**.

Psalms 78:62

Ver. 62. He gave his people over also to the sword,.... To those that kill with the sword, as the Targum; that is, to the Philistines, when there fell of them thirty thousand men at once, **1Sa 4:10**

and was wroth with his inheritance; and the above showed that he was, though they were his inheritance, his portion and possession, and he had chosen them for it, Ps 33:12.

Psalms 78:63

Ver. 63. The fire consumed their young men,.... Not Nadab and Abihu, as some of the Jewish Rabbins interpret it, of which Jarchi makes mention; but the young men, the choice, the flower, of the Israelitish army, which engaged with the Philistines in the times of Eli; and the fire that consumed them is not to be understood of material fire, or of extraordinary fire from heaven, but either of the wrath of God, as Jarchi, or of the flaming glittering sword of the enemy, which consumed them like fire; see Nu 21:28

and their maidens were not given to marriage; the young men to whom they should have been married, and to whom they might have been espoused, being slain in battle: or, "were not honoured" {a}; that with marriage, which is honourable to all, Heb 13:4, or "were not praised" {b}; were not attended with epithalamies and nuptial songs, such as used to be sung at the time of marriage; hence, as Kimchi observes, the nuptial chamber is called alwlh tyb, "the house of praise"; and so frequently, when a great calamity is threatened or described, it is said, the voice of the bride and bridegroom is not heard; see Jer 16:9.

{a} wllwh "honoratae", Munster; so some in Vatablus. {b} "Celebratae epithalamio", Montanus; "laudatae", Tigurine version, Amama, so Ainsworth; "laudarentur", Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis; "laudabantur", Piscator; "commendabantur", Gejerus.

Psalms 78:64

Ver. 64. Their priests fell by the sword,.... Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, and other priests; which shows the cruelty of the enemy, not to spare men unarmed, as the priests were; and the justice of God, which pursued these men, who were very wicked, and whose character and office could not secure them from divine wrath:

and their widows made no lamentation; for their husbands the priests, who fell by the sword; particularly the widow of Phinehas, who upon the news fell into labour, and as soon as she brought forth her child died, and while she lived took no notice of the death of her husband, nor lamented that, only that the ark of the Lord was taken, **1Sa 4:19**, and which might be the case of others; nor could they attend their funerals, or follow them to the grave with lamentations, they falling in battle; and such was their concern for the public loss, that their private sorrow was swallowed up in it. Some understand it of the disrespect and neglect of others, who came not to lament with them, and comfort them, as was usual: one of the Targums paraphrases the whole thus,

"at the time that the Philistines carried captive the ark of the Lord, the priests of Shiloh, Hophni, and Phinehas, fell by the sword; and at the time they brought their wives the news of it, they wept not, for they died even the same day."

Psalms 78:65

Ver. 65. Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep,.... He seemed to be asleep, while he suffered the ark to be taken, and the Israelites to be slain; and he may be said to awake when he exerted his power in smiting the Philistines, and causing their idol to fall before his ark; see **Ps 7:6**,

and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine; who having taken a free draught of generous wine, not to excess, goes forth with great courage and cheerfulness to meet his adversary, shouting as he goes, being sure of victory; which must be applied to God with decency, consistent with the glory of his majesty, and the perfections of his nature; and seems designed to express his power and readiness to help his people, and avenge himself on his enemies; see Isa 42:13.

Psalms 78:66

Ver. 66. And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts,.... Not the Israelites, as Kimchi interprets it, but the Philistines, who in another battle were put to flight, and turned their backs, and so were smitten in their hinder parts; or rather this has reference to the Philistines being smitten with haemorrhoids, or piles in their posteriors, while the ark was retained a captive by them, **1Sa 5:6**, and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"and he smote them that troubled them with haemorrhoids in their posteriors;"

the Greek version, as quoted by Suidas {c}, is, "he smote his enemies on the back parts of the seat"; signifying, he says, a disease, modestly expressed:

he put them to a perpetual reproach; either by causing their idol Dagon to fall before his ark, and be broken upon the threshold of the house of the idol; in memory of which the priests ever after, nor any that came in thither, trod upon the threshold, **1Sa 5:3**, or rather through their sending golden images of their haemorrhoids, and golden mice along with the ark, which were reserved to their perpetual reproach: other instances of the Lord's regard to Israel follow, in providing a proper place for the ark, and appointing a suitable governor over the people.

{c} In voce edra.

Psalms 78:67

Ver. 67. Moreover, he refused the tabernacle of Joseph,.... That is, the tabernacle of Moses, which had been for a long time at Shiloh, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph; when the ark was brought back by the Philistines, it was not returned to Shiloh, but carried to Kirjathjearim, where it remained twenty years, and after that was had to Zion, the city of David, **1Sa 7:1**, so the Targum,

"and he rejected the tabernacle which he had stretched out in the border of Joseph;"

he did not refuse the tabernacle, or remove his presence from it; but he refused the place it had been in, or refused that it should be any more there:

and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: the same thing is designed as before; the meaning is, not that he rejected the tribe of Ephraim from being one of the tribes of Israel; nor does it refer to the revolt of Ephraim, or the ten tribes, from the pure worship of God to idolatry, and their separation from the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; or to their being carried captive into Assyria; since this historical narration reaches no further than the reign of David, or the time of Solomon at furthest; whereas the facts mentioned were a long time afterwards; nor does it regard the removal of government from the tribe of Ephraim, which was the seat of it in the times of Joshua, of which tribe he was, Nu 13:8, though this tribe was overlooked in the choice of a king, one of the tribe of Benjamin being first chosen; and when he was rejected, then one of the tribe of Judah; but this purely, at least principally, intends that it was the will of God that the seat of worship should not be in this tribe any longer; that the ark and tabernacle should be no more there: perhaps the Ephraimites were more culpable, and more provoked the Lord with their idolatry, than the other tribes, since they are first and last taken notice of as the objects of the divine resentment in this account; see Ps 78:9.

Psalms 78:68

Ver. 68. But chose the tribe of Judah,.... Both to be the seat of kingly power and government, and of religious worship; the latter is chiefly designed. Jerusalem was, at least part of it, in the tribe of Judah: here David, who was of that tribe, dwelt, and Solomon his son, and all the kings of Judah afterwards; here the temple was built, into which the ark of the covenant was put, and whither the tribes went up to worship

the mount Zion, which he loved; where was the city of David; into which the ark was brought when removed from Gibeah, and on part of which the temple was built: the choice of this place, for such a purpose, was from love, Ps 87:2, it was typical of the church, the choice of which also arises from the everlasting and unchangeable love of God to it.

Psalms 78:69

Ver. 69. And he built his sanctuary like high palaces,.... The temple at Jerusalem, called a sanctuary, or holy place, because separated and dedicated to holy use and service; where the holy God had his residence, and was worshipped, and was a figure of the holy place not made with hands: this is said to be built by the Lord, because the materials provided for it, and which David and his people so willingly offered, were his own; "of his own" they gave him; as well as the pattern after which it was made was had from the Spirit of God; and it was the Lord that put it into the heart of David to set such a work afoot, and encouraged Solomon to begin and finish it, and gave wisdom, health, and strength, to the workmen to accomplish it; and in reference to this are the words in Ps 127:1, "except the Lord build the house", &c. and this he built not like the "high places", where idolatry was committed; the temple was not built in imitation of them; but like what high and eminent men, like such buildings as: they erect; like stately palaces, so Aben Ezra and Kimchi, built for kings and great personages; and such a building was the temple, the most magnificent in all the world, as built by Solomon, and even as rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and repaired by Herod; see Mr 13:1 or it was built "on high", as the Syriac version, on a high hill, Mount Moriah: the Targum is,

"as the horn of the unicorn;"

and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions. Jarchi interprets it as the high heavens, of which it was a figure; it was like them for magnificence and glory, and like the earth for stability, as follows:

like the earth, which he hath established for ever; as to the substance of it; though as to the qualities of it, it will be done away, and a new one arise; otherwise it will abide for ever, **Ec 1:4**, this respects the continuance of the temple during the Jewish dispensation, when the Gospel temple, or Gospel church, should take place, which will continue to the end of the world: this is opposed to the frequent moves of the tabernacle and ark before the temple was built, when there was no abiding habitation provided for it.

Psalms 78:70

Ver. 70. He chose David also his servant,.... To be king of Israel, the youngest of his father's family, when he rejected all the rest; see
1Sa 16:6, an eminent type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is called by his name, Ps 89:3 and the signification of his name "Beloved" agrees with him, who is beloved of God, as his Son, and as man and Mediator; and beloved of men, of all the saints: and so likewise his character as a servant suits with him; who not only frequently has the name of a servant, Ps 89:19, but appeared in the form of one, **Php 2:7**, had the work of a servant to do, which he has accomplished, even the great work of our salvation,
Joh 17:4, in doing which, and all things leading on and appertaining to it, he took the utmost delight and pleasure, and used the greatest diligence and assiduity, **Joh 4:34** and justly acquired the character of a faithful and righteous servant, Isa 53:11, and to this work and office he was chosen and called by his Father,
Isa 42:1,

and took him from the sheepfolds; from whence he was fetched when Samuel was sent by the Lord to anoint him, 1Sa 16:11, so Moses, while he was feeding his father's sheep, was called to be the saviour and deliverer of Israel, **Ex 3:1**, and Amos was taken from following the flock to be a prophet of the Lord, **Am 7:13**, and as David was a type of Christ, this may express the mean condition of our Lord, in his state of humiliation, previous to his exaltation, and the more open exercise of his kingly office.

Psalms 78:71

Ver. 71. From following the ewes great with young,.... Or, "from after" them {a}; it was usual with the shepherd to put them before him, and to follow them, and gently drive them, which is expressive of his care and tenderness of them; see Ge 33:13, the same is observed of David's antitype, the great and good Shepherd of the sheep, Isa 40:11. David was a type of Christ as a shepherd; as he kept his father's sheep, so Christ keeps those that the Father has given him, Joh 10:29, as David kept his flock with great care and courage, and in safety,
1Sa 17:34, so does the Lord Jesus Christ keep his flock in safety, and preserves it from Satan, the roaring lion, and from grievous wolves that enter into it, and every beast of prey that would devour it; and particularly as David took special care of those that were with young, so does the Lord take special care of such that are newborn babes, that have Christ formed in them, and are big with desires after him, carry a burden, and are weary, and heavy laden: the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret the word {b} of such that give suck, and so it most properly signifies:

he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance; that is, to rule over them: this is said in allusion to his having been a shepherd; and nothing is more common than for kings to be represented as shepherds, and their acts of government by leading and feeding; and one and the same word in the Greek language signifies to feed and rule: and so the Targum,

"he brought him to rule over Jacob his people:"

this was a great honour indeed, to be the governor of the Lord's people, a special people above all people on the face of the earth, and whom he had chosen to be his inheritance; and in this also he was a type of Christ, who has the throne of his father David given him, and who reigns over the house of Jacob, one of whose titles is King of saints; for as the government of the world in general, so of the church in particular, is on his shoulders, **Lu 1:32**.

{a} rxam "de post", Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus; "a post", Michaelis. {b} twle "lactantes", Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 78:72

Ver. 72. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart,.... Or, "reigned over them", as the Targum; that is, over the people of Israel, and which he did in such manner as showed uprightness of heart, and that he was, as his character is, a man after God's own heart: it appeared, by his administration of government, that he sought not his own honour and interest, and the aggrandizing of his family, but the good of his people, and the glory of God; and this character, in the fullest extent, and highest sense of it, best agrees with Christ, the righteous branch raised unto David, Jer 23:5,

and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands; or "by the prudencies" of his hands, as the Targum; or, by the prudencies {c}, as in the original text; with the most consummate wisdom and skill: hands are made mention of, partly in allusion to the shepherd, as David had been, who carries a staff in his hand, and guides his flock with it; and partly with respect to the acts and administration of government, which were wisely performed by him: he made wise laws for his people and soldiers, and put them in execution; he behaved wisely in the court and in the camp; but was greatly and infinitely exceeded by his antitype, the servant of the Lord, that should deal prudently, Isa 52:13, and who is abundantly qualified for it, as being not only the Wisdom of God, and the all wise God, but even, as Mediator, has the spirit of wisdom on him, and the treasures of wisdom in him.

{c} twnwbtb "prudentiis", Vatablus; "intelligentiis", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "discretions", Ainsworth.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 79:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 79

A Psalm of Asaph. This psalm was not written by one Asaph, who is supposed to live after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, or, according to some, even after the times of Antiochus, of whom there is no account, nor any certainty that there ever was such a man in those times; but by Asaph, the seer and prophet, that lived in the time of David, who, under a prophetic spirit, foresaw and foretold things that should come to pass, spoken of in this psalm: nor is it any objection that what is here said is delivered as an history of facts, since many prophecies are delivered in this way, especially those of the prophet Isaiah. The Targum is,

"a song by the hands of Asaph, concerning the destruction of the house of the sanctuary (or temple), which he said by a spirit of prophecy."

The title of the Syriac versions,

"said by Asaph concerning the destruction of Jerusalem."

The argument of the psalm is of the same kind with the Seventy Fourth. Some refer it to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes; so Theodoret; but though the temple was then defiled, Jerusalem was not utterly destroyed; and others to the destruction of the city and temple by Nebuchadnezzar; and why may it not refer to both, and even to the after destruction of both by Titus Vespasian? and may include the affliction and troubles of the Christians under Rome Pagan and Papal, and especially the latter; for Jerusalem and the temple may be understood in a mystical and spiritual sense; at least the troubles of the Jews, in the times referred to, were typical of what should befall the people of God under the New Testament, and in antichristian times.

Ver. 1. O God, the Heathen are come into thine inheritance,.... The land of Canaan, divided among the children of Israel by lot and line for an inheritance, out of which the Heathen were cast, to make room for them; but now would come into it again; see
Ps 89:35, and this is called the Lord's inheritance, because he gave it as such to the people of Israel, and dwelt in it himself; and the rather this is observed as something marvellous, that he should suffer Heathens to possess his own inheritance; or the city of Jerusalem, which was the place the Lord chose to put his name in; or the temple, where he had his residence, called the mountain of his inheritance, Ex 15:17, and into which it was always accounted a profanation for Heathens to enter; see Ac 21:28, into each of these places the Heathen came; the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar; the Syrians under Antiochus, as in the Apocrypha:

"Insomuch that the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled because of them: whereupon the city was made an habitation of strangers, and became strange to those that were born in her; and her own children left her." (1 Maccabees 1:38)

"Now Jerusalem lay void as a wilderness, there was none of her children that went in or out: the sanctuary also was trodden down, and aliens kept the strong hold; the heathen had their habitation in that place; and joy was taken from

Jacob, and the pipe with the harp ceased." (1 Maccabees 3:45)

the Romans under Pompey, Vespasian, and Titus; and the Papists have since entered among the people of God, who are his heritage or inheritance, and have lorded it over them, and made havoc of them, and who are called Heathens and Gentiles, Ps 10:16,

thy holy temple have they defiled: this was done in the times of Antiochus, by entering into it, taking away the holy vessels out of it, shedding innocent blood in it, and setting up the abomination of desolation on the altar, and sacrificing to it, as in the Apocrypha:

"Every bridegroom took up lamentation, and she that sat in the marriage chamber was in heaviness," (1 Maccabees 1:27)

"Thus they shed innocent blood on every side of the sanctuary, and defiled it:" (1 Maccabees 1:37)

"And pollute the sanctuary and holy people:" (1 Maccabees 1:46)

"And whosoever was found with any the book of the testament, or if any committed to the law, the king's commandment was, that they should put him to death." (1 Maccabees 1:57)

"For thy sanctuary is trodden down and profaned, and thy priests are in heaviness, and brought low." (1 Maccabees 3:51)

"And they called upon the Lord, that he would look upon the people that was trodden down of all; and also pity the temple profaned of ungodly men;" (2 Maccabees 8:2)

and by burning it in the times of Nebuchadnezzar and Titus; see Ps 74:7, and the church, which is the holy temple of God, has been defiled by antichrist sitting in it, and showing himself there as if he was God, by his dreadful blasphemies, idolatrous worship, and false doctrines, **2Th 2:4**,

they have laid Jerusalem on heaps; the walls and buildings being pulled down, and made a heap of stones and rubbish: in the times of Antiochus and of the Maccabees, it was set on fire, and the houses and the walls pulled down on every side, and was greatly defaced, and threatened to be laid level with the ground, as in the Apocrypha:

"And when he had taken the spoils of the city, he set it on fire, and pulled down the houses and walls thereof on every side." (1 Maccabees 1:31)

"And that he would have compassion upon the city, sore defaced, and ready to be made even with the ground; and hear the blood that cried unto him," (2 Maccabees 8:3)

"That the holy city (to the which he was going in haste to lay it even with the ground, and to make it a common buryingplace,) he would set at liberty:" (2 Maccabees 9:14)

and this was thoroughly done in the times of Nebuchadnezzar and Titus, when the city was broke up and burnt with fire, and laid utterly desolate; so the Targum renders the word for "desolation"; it sometimes signifies a grave; see Job 30:24, and the sense may be here, that the city of Jerusalem was made graves to many; and multitudes were buried under the ruins of it. Aben Ezra interprets it, low places which were dug to find hidden things; the Septuagint translate it "a watch", or cottage "for apple orchards", and so the versions that follow it; signifying to what a low condition the city was reduced. Jarchi and Kimchi interpret the word as we do, "heaps": this, as it is true of Jerusalem, which has been trodden under foot by the Gentiles, and remains so to this day, Lu 21:24, so likewise of mystical Jerusalem, the holy city, given to the Gentiles or Papists, to be trodden down for the space of forty and two months, the exact time of the reign of antichrist, Re 11:2.

Psalms 79:2

Ver. 2. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven,.... For such there were, both at the time of the Babylonish captivity, and in the times of Antiochus, who were good men, and served the Lord, and yet suffered in the common calamity. Nicanor, a general of Demetrius, in the time of the Maccabees, seems to have been guilty of such a fact as this, since, when he was slain, his tongue was given in pieces to the fowls, and the reward of his madness was hung up before the temple, as in the Apocrypha:

"And when he had cut out the tongue of that ungodly Nicanor, he commanded that they should give it by pieces unto the fowls, and hang up the reward of his madness before the temple." (2 Maccabees 15:33)

the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth; this clause and the following verse are applied to a case in the times of the Maccabees, when sixty men of the Assideans were slain, religious, devout, and holy men, so called from the very word here translated "saints";

"Now the Assideans were the first among the children of Israel that sought peace of them:" (1 Maccabees 7:13)

"The flesh of thy saints have they cast out, and their blood have they shed round about Jerusalem, and there was none to bury them." (1 Maccabees 7:17)

Psalms 79:3

Ver. 3. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem,.... Without any concern of mind, or remorse of conscience; without any fear of God or man; as if it had been so much water only; and this they shed in great abundance: from the Apocrypha:

"And when he had taken all away, he went into his own land, having made a great massacre, and spoken very proudly." (1 Maccabees 1:24)

"And spake peaceable words unto them, but all was deceit: for when they had given him credence, he fell suddenly upon the city, and smote it very sore, and destroyed much people of Israel." (1 Maccabees 1:30)

"Thus they shed innocent blood on every side of the sanctuary, and defiled it:" (1 Maccabees 1:37)

"So they rose up against them in battle on the sabbath, and they slew them, with their wives and children and their cattle, to the number of a thousand people." (1 Maccabees 2:38)

in like manner the blood of the saints has been shed by the antichristian beast of Rome, for which he and his followers will be righteously retaliated, Re 17:6

and there was none to bury them: either the number of the slain was so great, that there were not left enough to bury the dead, or they that did remain were not suffered to do it; this will be the case of the two witnesses, when slain, Re

11:7.

Psalms 79:4

Ver. 4. We are become a reproach to our neighbours,.... That is, those that remained; so the Jews were to the Edomites, especially at the time of the Babylonish captivity, Ps 137:7,

a scorn and derision to them that are round about us; as the Christians in all ages have been to the men of the world, and especially will be insulted and triumphed over when the witnesses are slain, Re 11:10.

Psalms 79:5

Ver. 5. How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry? for ever?.... That is, how long wilt thou be angry? shall it be for ever? see Ps 85:4, for though what was done, or to be done, as before related, was or will be done by the enemies of the Lord's people, yet by his permission, and as a token of his anger and displeasure against them: at least it might be so understood, both by them and by their enemies; and hence this expostulation,

shall thy jealousy burn like fire? so jealousy does; its coals are coals of fire, **So 8:6**, there were, at the times referred to, such among the people, who did evil things, and provoked the Lord to jealousy and wrath: see the Apocrypha:

"And there was very great wrath upon Israel." (1 Maccabees 1:64)

"When this was done, and they had made a common supplication, they besought the merciful Lord to be reconciled with his servants for ever." (2 Maccabees 8:29)

Psalms 79:6

Ver. 6. Pour out thy wrath upon the Heathen that have not known thee,.... Who had poured out the blood of the saints like water, and therefore it was a righteous thing with God to pour out the cup of wrath in his hands, and cause them to drink the dregs of it: these words, though they are in the form of an imprecation, yet regard not private revenge, but public justice, and the honour of God; and, besides, may be considered as a prophecy of what would be, and particularly of God's pouring out the vials of his wrath on the antichristian states; who, though they profess Christianity, are no other than Heathens, and have no spiritual and serious knowledge of Christ:

and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name; but upon their idols of gold, silver, brass, and stone, on the Virgin Mary, angels, and saints departed; for these, besides the kingdoms of Babylon, Syria, and Rome Pagan, are the kingdoms of the ten kings, that gave their kingdoms to the beast, and committed fornication, i.e. idolatry, with the whore of Rome; see Re 17:2, these words are referred to in Jer 10:25 and also the following.

Psalms 79:7

Ver. 7. For they have devoured Jacob,.... The posterity of Jacob, the people of the Jews, typical of the church of God, made havoc of by the Romish antichrist: and laid waste his dwelling place; both Jerusalem and the temple, which was done both by the Chaldeans and the Romans, and also in the times of Antiochus; see the Apocrypha:

"38 Insomuch that the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled because of them: whereupon the city was made an habitation of strangers, and became strange to those that were born in her; and her own children left her. 39 Her sanctuary was laid waste like a wilderness, her feasts were turned into mourning, her sabbaths into reproach her honour into contempt." (1 Maccabees 1)

"4 In his acts he was like a lion, and like a lion's whelp roaring for his prey. 5 For He pursued the wicked, and sought them out, and burnt up those that vexed his people." (1 Maccabees 3)

which were types of the Gospel church made desolate by the Papists: the word {d} used signifies a sheepcote, the dwelling place of those sheep that are troubled by the beast of Rome.

{d} whwn "caulam ejus", Michaelis.

Psalms 79:8

Ver. 8. O remember not against us former iniquities,.... Or, "our ancient

iniquities", as the Septuagint; the most ancient sin of all is that of our first parents, in which we are involved, and by which we are made sinners; and for which judgment comes upon all men; and from thence flows the corruption of nature, or that original sin of our nature in which we are all conceived and born, and so are transgressors from the womb; or iniquities of former times, of our youth, as Kimchi, sins done of old, committed long ago, in the youthful age, see
Ps 25:7, or the sins of former persons, of our fathers, as Aben Ezra, which the Lord visits sometimes upon the children: some think reference is had to the sin of their forefathers in making and worshipping the golden calf; the Jews {e} have a saying, that there is no punishment happens to Israel, but there is an ounce in it for the sin of the calf; their meaning is, that this is always remembered and visited, according to Ex 32:34, the phrase may take in all the sins of former persons, their ancestors, and of former times, from age to age, they had continued in, which had brought ruin upon them; and all their own sins, of nature and of youth, all past ones, to the present time: and it is desired that God would not "remember these against them"; that is, that he would not chastise or punish them for them, but that he would pardon them; for forgiveness of sin is sometimes expressed by a non-remembrance of it, Isa 43:25, or that he would not "remember unto" {f} them; that is, put them in mind of them, lay them home and heavy upon their consciences, charge them with the guilt of them, and demand satisfaction for them; which is causing them to possess the sins of their youth, or former ones,
Job 13:26,

let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us; the mercy of God is rich, plenteous, and abundant; many are the acts, and manifold the instances of it; and there is a heart of compassion, and a tenderness expressed in it; and which is free, and comes before the merits of men, goes before them, and is not caused by them; and the phrase denotes the early and timely application of it, the case being desperate, and requiring haste, and the danger such that nothing but mercy could prevent; and indeed it is mercy that prevents both our temporal and eternal ruin. The reason given for this request is,

for we are brought very low; sin brings men into a low estate, and only the grace and mercy of God can raise them up, and that exalts to an high estate; or are become very "weak" {g} and helpless; sin strips men of their strength, leaves them without any, and incapable of helping themselves out of that estate into which it has brought them: or are quite "exhausted" {h} and dried up, no good thing in them, no comfort left them; but are poor, and wretched, and miserable.

{e} T Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 68. 3. {f} wnl rkzt la "ne memineris nobis", Montanus, Michaelis; so Cocceius. {g} wnwld "attenuati", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {h} "Exhausti", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 79:9

Ver. 9. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name,.... Help us out of the troubles in which we are; enable us to bear them with patience, and without murmuring, while it is thy pleasure to continue them; assist us against our powerful enemies, and strengthen us to do our duty; afford us more grace, and fresh supplies of it in our time of need: the arguments enforcing these petitions are, because God is "the God of salvation", to whom it belongs, of whom it is, and of him only to be expected; he is the sole author and giver of it; and because to help and save is for the glory of his name, which is great in the salvation of his people:

and deliver us; out of the hands of all our enemies, and out of all our afflictions, and out of this low estate in which we are:

and purge away our sins for thy name's sake; which were the cause of all calamities and distress, and which can only be purged away by the blood and sacrifice of Christ, **Heb 1:3**, the word signifies to "expiate" {i} sin, or atone for it; which was the work and business of Christ our High Priest, who has made reconciliation for sin, finished, made an end of it, and put it away by the oblation of himself, for the sake of which God is propitious; and so the words may be rendered, "be propitious to our sins" {k}: or merciful to our unrighteousnesses, for the sake of Christ the great propitiation; or through the propitiatory sacrifice to be offered up by him; or, in other words, "cover our sins" {l}; which is also the sense of the phrase, that they may be seen no more; pardon and forgive them for Christ's sake; see Ps 32:1.

{i} rpk "expiationem fac", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis. {k} "Propitiare", Pagninus, Montanus; "propitius esto", V. L. Musculus; so Tigurine version. {l} rpk metaph. "texit", Amama.

Psalms 79:10

Ver. 10. Wherefore should the Heathen say, where is their God?.... They boast of, and put their confidence in, and expect salvation from? he does not appear for them, he is not with them; he has forsaken them, and will not help them; than which nothing can be more afflicting and distressing to the Lord's people; see Ps 42:3,

let him be known among the Heathen in our sight; in his holiness and justice, as a God of power, and to whom vengeance belongs; let him be known by his judgments executed upon the Heathen, openly and publicly in our sight, and in the view of the whole world; see **Ps 9:16**, so it follows,

by the revenging of the blood of thy servants, which is shed; as in Ps 79:3, which blood God will revenge according to the request of his people, and give them blood to drink by way of retaliation; by which means his vindictive justice will be known, and it will be seen where the God of his people is, that he is with them, and maintains their cause; see **Re 6:9**. The words may be rendered in connection with the preceding clause thus; "let it be known among the Heathen in our sight, even the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed"; though Kimchi supplies the words as we do, "by a revenging", &c.

Psalms 79:11

Ver. 11. Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee,.... Such as were so in a literal or spiritual sense; and the sighs and groans of such are not hid from the Lord; they come up into his ears as did the sighing and groaning of the children of Israel when in Egypt, **Ex 2:23**,

according to the greatness of thy power, preserve thou those that are appointed to die; not by the Lord, as all men are, but by men; who are under a sentence of condemnation, who are ready to die, being appointed to destruction, Pr 31:6, or are in danger of death, as Jarchi observes; the phrase is used in Talmudic writings; whose lives are exposed to danger, who are killed all the day long, and are accounted as sheep for the slaughter, Ps 44:22, these it is desired the Lord would keep from dying, or cause them to remain in life; or not suffer their lives to be taken away from them, which he was able to do through "the greatness of his power"; though these words according to the accents belong to the preceding clause. The Targum, and so Jarchi, and other Jewish writers, render the words, "loose thou those", &c. mention being made before of prisoners, or of persons bound.

Psalms 79:12

Ver. 12. And render unto our neighbours seven fold into their bosom, ec.] Not seven fold for one, as the Targum paraphrases it, or a seven fold punishment for one sin; but that he would recompense their sins, or punish for them, and take vengeance on them, largely, abundantly, though not beyond measure, or exceeding the rules of justice; see **Ge 4:15**,

the reproach with which they have reproached thee, O Lord; by denying his being, or calling in question his perfections of power, truth, and goodness, to help his people; speaking ill of his providence, despising his word and ordinances, and even reproaching his people in reproaching him, Ps 89:50, and this is what a righteous recompence is desired for; see **La 3:64**.

Psalms 79:13

Ver. 13. So we thy people, and sheep of thy pasture,.... Who were the people of God, not by creation and providence only, as all men are, being his creatures, and provided for by him; but by special choice, and by covenant grace: and "the sheep of his pasture"; whom he feeds as a shepherd does his flock, provides good pasture for them, and leads them into it:

will give thee thanks for ever, we will show forth thy praise to all generations: the above petitions being answered and fulfilled; the work of praise is acceptable unto God, what he is well pleased with, being glorified thereby; and is what becomes his people to do, and which they are formed for, and that for evermore, as long as they live in this world, and to all eternity in another; and who will and do take care that the wonders of divine grace and providence be transmitted and told to their posterity in succeeding ages, that so thanks may be given him, and his praise shown forth in one generation after another.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 80:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 80

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannimeduth, A Psalm of Asaph. Of the word "shoshannim", See Gill on "Ps 45:1", and of "shushaneduth", See Gill on "Ps 60:1" which seems to be the same with this here, and is thought by some to be the name of a musical instrument now unknown, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; though these two words are not to be read together as one, for there is a dividing accent on "shoshannim", and which may be rendered "concerning the lilies" {a}; and so may denote the subject matter of the psalm, or respect the people of God, comparable to lilies for their beauty, purity, and holiness in Christ, **So 6:2**, and to lilies among thorns, **So 2:2**, being in great afflictions and persecutions, as appears from Ps 80:5, the word "eduth" is to be read not along with "shoshannim", but with what follows, thus, "Eduth unto Asaph a psalm"; some render the word "eduth" an ornament or glory, as R. Marinus in Aben Ezra; and take the sense to be, that the psalm was a glorious one, and desirable to Asaph; but it rather signifies a testimony, and is by the Targum interpreted of the testimony of the law; but it is rather to be understood of the testimony of the Gospel, which is the testimony of Christ, and bears witness of him; and there is a testimony of him in this psalm, Ps 80:17, and there seem to be in it many breathings after his coming and appearance in the flesh. Some take this psalm to be of the same argument with the foregoing, and think it refers to the destruction of the Jews, the two tribes, by the Chaldeans; so Theodoret; but there is no mention made of the temple, nor of Jerusalem, as in the preceding psalm; and besides, why should Manasseh and Ephraim be mentioned? wherefore others are of opinion that it has regard to the captivity of the ten tribes by Salmaneser; but then it may be asked, why is Benjamin taken notice of, which had no concern in the affliction? this has led others to conclude that it respects some time of affliction before either of these captivities, or between them both; and it may be applied to any affliction of the people of God in any age or period of time; and no doubt was written by Asaph, or by David, and put into his hands before the distress was, under a spirit of prophecy. Kimchi interprets it of the present captivity of the Jews, and Jarchi of their three captivities.

{a} Mynvv la "super liliis", Tigurine version, Cocceius; "pro liliis", Musculus.

Ver. 1. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,.... The title of a shepherd for the most part belongs to the Messiah, and who is expressly called the Shepherd and stone of Israel, as distinct from the God of Jacob,
Ge 49:24 and may be so called because he was to be, and was of Israel, according to the flesh, and sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and appointed by his Father as a Shepherd over them; and it is on the mountains of Israel he provides a good fold, and pasture for his sheep, **Ro 9:4** and it is for the spiritual Israel, his sheep, his elect, both among Jews and Gentiles, for

whom he laid down his life; by which it appears that he is the good Shepherd, as he also is the great, the chief, the only one; though this character also may be given, and agrees unto God the Father, who rules, and governs, and feeds his people, his spiritual Israel, as a shepherd his flock; and who is addressed by his people, and is desired to "give ear" to their cries and prayers in their affliction and distress: God has an ear to hear his people's prayers, though sometimes they think he does not hear them; but he not only hears, but answers sooner or later, and in his own way; and the consideration of his character as a shepherd may be an encouragement to their faith, that he will hear, and will not withhold any good thing from them, Ps 23:1

thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; the posterity of Joseph, the same with Israel, the spiritual Israel, who are like a flock of sheep, a separate people, distinguished by the grace of God, and purchased by the blood of Christ; and as there is but one Shepherd, so one fold, and one flock, and that but a little one neither; and which is sometimes called a flock of slaughter, because exposed to the rage and fury of men; yet a beautiful one in the eye of Christ, which he undertook to feed: and this he leads on gently and softly, gradually, and proportionate to their strength, or as they are able to bear; he leads in and out, and they find pasture; he leads them out of their former state and condition, in which he finds them, out of the pastures of sin and self-righteousness into the green pastures of his love, grace, word, and ordinances:

thou that dwellest between the cherubim; which were over the mercy seat, and were either emblems of angels, among whom Jehovah dwells, and is surrounded by them; by whom Christ was ministered to on earth, and now in heaven, and among whom he was when he ascended thither, and where they are subject to him: or of the two Testaments, which look to Christ, the mercy seat, and agree with each other in their testimony of him, and in other things; and where these are truly opened and explained, there the Lord dwells: or rather of the saints of both dispensations, who look to Christ alone for salvation, and expect to be saved by his grace; are both partakers of it, as they will be of the same glory; and among these the Lord dwells as in his temple; though it seems best of all to consider them as emblems of Gospel ministers, since Ezekiel's four living creatures are the "cherubim",
Eze 10:20, and these the same with John's four beasts, or living creatures, who were certainly men, being redeemed by the blood of Christ; and were ministers, being distinguished from the four and twenty elders, **Re 4:6** and among these the Lord dwells, and with them he has promised his presence shall be unto the end of the world:

shine forth; either God the Father, who dwelt between the cherubim, over the mercy seat, who sits upon a throne of grace, from whence he communes with his people and communicates to them; and then the request is, that he would shine forth in the perfections of his nature, as he has done in his Son, the brightness of his glory, and in redemption and salvation by him, where they are all illustriously displayed; and particularly in his lovingkindness through him, which has appeared and shone forth in the mission of Christ, and in giving him up for us all; and by granting his gracious presence unto his people in Zion, in his house and ordinances; see **Ps 1:2**, or the Messiah, the Shepherd of Israel, and the Leader of his flock, and under whom the living creatures and cherubim are, **Eze 1:26**, that he would shine forth in human nature; that this bright morning star would appear; that the dayspring from on high would visit men, and that the sun of righteousness would arise with healing in his wings; and that the glorious light of his Gospel would break forth, and the grace of God, the doctrine of it, appear and shine out unto all men, Jews and Gentiles.

Psalms 80:2

Ver. 2. Before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength,.... Which Christ did in the public ministry of the word, speaking as one having authority, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees; and in the performance of miracles, openly, and in the sight of all; and in his sufferings and death for the salvation of his people; in which he appeared to be the mighty God, travelling in the greatness of his strength, and mighty to save. These tribes design all Israel, before whom the above things were done; and the allusion is to these three tribes marching immediately after the Kohathites, who carried the ark on their shoulders in journeying, **Nu 2:17** which is called the Lord's strength, and the ark of his strength,
Ps 78:61. The Targum in the king's Bible reads, to the children of Ephraim, &c. reading ynbl instead of ynpl; see the Masorah, and **Pr 4:3**,

and come and save us; come from heaven to earth, not by change of place, but by assumption of nature; this was promised and expected, and is here prayed for; Christ is now come in the flesh, which to deny is antichristian; and his end in coming was to save his people from their sins, from the curse and condemnation of the law, and wrath to come; and as he came on this errand, he is become the author of eternal salvation, in working out which he has shown his great strength.

Psalms 80:3

Ver. 3. Turn us again, O God,.... From our captivity, as the Targum, into our own land; or return us backsliding sinners to thyself by repentance; turn us, and we shall be turned; for the prayer shows it was not in their power, but must be effected by the grace of God; or restore our souls, which have been wandering, and them to their former flourishing and comfortable condition:

and cause thy face to shine; grant thy gracious presence, lift up the light of thy countenance; favour with the manifestations of thyself, the enjoyment of thee, and communion with thee through Christ; indulge us with the discoveries of thy love, the joys of salvation, the comforts of the Spirit, and larger measures of grace:

and we shall be saved; be in a very happy and comfortable condition; see **Ps 4:6**.

Psalms 80:4

Ver. 4. O Lord God of hosts,.... Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe, that the word "Elohe" is here understood, and the words to be read, "O Lord God, the God of hosts"; of the armies above and below, against whom there is no standing, nor any before him when he is angry:

how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people? which must be put up in a wrong manner, in a very cold and lukewarm way, without faith and love, and with wrath and doubting; or otherwise God is not angry with, nor sets himself against the prayer of his people; nor does he despise, but is highly delighted with it: or how long wilt thou be angry with thy people, and continue the tokens of thy displeasure, though they pray, and keep praying, unto thee? it is in the Hebrew text, "how long wilt thou smoke {m} at the prayer of thy people?" that is, cause thine anger to smoke at it; in which it is thought there is an allusion to the smoke of the incense, to which prayer is compared; see Ps 141:2, and denotes the acceptance of it with God through the mediation of Christ; but here his displicency at it, not being offered up through him, and by faith in him; such were the prayers of the Pharisees, **Mt 6:5**.

{m} tnve "fumabis", Pagninus, Vatablus; "fumaturus es", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "fumasti", Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis, & Ainsworth.

Psalms 80:5

Ver. 5. Thou feedest them with the bread of tears,.... With tears instead of bread, having none to eat; or their bread is mingled with their tears, "dipped" therein, as the Targum; such was their constant grief, and the occasion of it, that they could not cease from tears while they were eating their meals, and so ate them with them {n}:

and givest them tears to drink in great measure; or the wine of tears "three fold", as the Targum. Jarchi interprets it of the captivity of Babylon, which was the third part of the two hundred and ten years of Israel's being in Egypt; which exposition, he says, he learned from R. Moses Hadarsan; but he observes, that some interpret it of the kingdom of Grecia, which was the third distress: and so Kimchi and Arama explain it of the third captivity; but Menachem, as Jarchi says, takes "shalish" to be the name of a drinking vessel, and so does Aben Ezra; the same it may be which the Latins call a "triental", the third part of a pint; unless the Hebrew measure, the "seah", which was the third part of an "ephah", is meant; it is translated a "measure" in Isa 40:12 and seems to design a large one, and so our version interprets it; compare with this Isa 30:20.

{n} "----lachrymisque suis jejunia pavit", Ovid. Metamorph. l. 4. Fab. 6.

Psalms 80:6

Ver. 6. Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours,.... Either obliges us to contend with them for our defence and safety; or having given us into their hands, they strive and contend one with another about dividing the spoil:

and our enemies laugh among themselves; at us, and because there is no help for us in God, as they imagine; or at God himself, as Kimchi, saying he cannot save as.

Psalms 80:7

Ver. 7. Turn us again, O God of hosts,.... The same with Ps 80:3, only instead of God there, here it is "the God of hosts"; the repetition of these words shows what was uppermost on the minds of God's people; what they were longing for, and most desirous of, namely, the light of God's countenance.

Psalms 80:8

Ver. 8. Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt,.... The house of Israel, who are like unto a vine, as the Targum paraphrases it; and to a vine or vineyard are they often compared; see **Isa 5:1** **Jer 2:21**. These were in Egypt awhile, where they were grievously oppressed and trampled upon; and yet the more they were afflicted, the more they grew and multiplied; and from hence the Lord brought them in due time, with a mighty hand and outstretched arm;

he caused them to go out; the word {o} used fitly expresses their journeyings from thence, and through the wilderness; they were a type of the church of Christ, and special people of God, who also are frequently compared to vines and vineyards; see **So 2:13** the vine tree is fruitful, and bears fruit in clusters but its wood is very useless and unprofitable, Eze 15:2 and it is a tree very weak, and cannot rise and support itself, it must be propped up; so believers in Christ, though fruitful through the grace of God, yet are unprofitable to him, and very weak in themselves, and are upheld by the right hand of his righteousness, on whom they lean and stay themselves; and these, in their natural state, are in worse than Egyptian bondage, darkness, and idolatry, out of which they are brought, in the effectual calling, into Gospel liberty, marvellous light, and the true worship and service of God; and out of the antichristian Egypt will all the Lord's people be brought one day; see Re 11:8.

thou hast cast out the Heathen; the Targum adds, out of the land of Israel, that is, Canaan; it designs the expulsion of the seven nations from thence, to make way for the Israelites, **De 7:1** and was an emblem of the ejection of Satan out of the Gentile world, and out of the souls of men, through the ministry of the word; and of sin, and the lusts of it, when the King of glory enters in, so as that they shall not any more have dominion; though as the Canaanites were left in the land to be pricks and thorns in the eyes and sides of the Israelites, so indwelling sin remains in God's people to the distress of their souls, and the trial of their graces. The Papists are sometimes called the Heathens and Gentiles; and there will be a time when they shall be cast out, and be no more in the land, Ps 10:16,

and planted it; the vine, the Israelites, in the land of Canaan; see Ex 15:17. So saints are planted not only in Christ, the true vine, of which they are branches; but in a Gospel church state, where they flourish and become fruitful and pleasant plants, plants of renown; and being of the Lord's planting, he is glorified by them, and they shall never be rooted up, nor wither, but prosper and thrive; see **Ps 1:3**.

{o} eyot "fecisti proficisci", Paginus, Montanus, Vatablus

Psalms 80:9

Ver. 9. Thou preparedst room before it,.... By sending the hornet before the Israelites, and driving the Canaanites out of the land,
Ex 23:28 and so the Targum,

"thou didst remove from before thee the Canaanites;"

which made way and room for them: and thus the Lord prepared room for his interest, church, and people, in the Gentile world, in the first times of Christianity, by sending the Gospel into all parts of it, and making it successful, and still there is room, Lu 14:22

and didst cause it to take deep root; which denotes the settlement of the people of Israel in Canaan, in church and state, as a body ecclesiastic and politic; so believers, being rooted in Christ, are grounded, settled, and established in him, and in a Gospel church state, and so become fruitful; see **Col 2:7**

and it filled the land; with people, who, in the days of Solomon, were as the sand of the sea, **1Ki 4:20** and so the Gentile world was filled with Christian converts in the first times of the Gospel; and the interest and church of Christ will fill the whole world another day,
Isa 11:9.

Psalms 80:10

Ver. 10. The hills were covered with the shadow of it,.... Alluding to the land of Canaan, which was a mountainous and hilly country, at least some part of it; hence we read of the hill country of Judea, **Lu 1:39** and to the nature of vines, which delight to grow on hills and mountains {p}: in a figurative sense this may denote the subjection of kings and kingdoms, comparable to hills, to the Israelites in the times of David and Solomon, **2Sa 8:1** and the exaltation of the church of Christ, in the latter day, over the hills and mountains, **Isa 2:2**. The

Targum is,

"the mountains of Jerusalem were covered with the shadow of the house of the sanctuary, and of the houses of the schools:"

and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars; to these the righteous are compared, Ps 92:13, the Targum is,

"the doctors, the mighty preachers, who are like to the strong cedars:"

the words may be rendered, "the boughs thereof cover the goodly cedars", or "cedars of God" {q}; that is, overrun and overtop the goodly cedars; alluding to vines running and growing upon high and goodly trees; and so may denote, as before, the power of Israel over the princes and potentates of the earth, comparable to cedars, the most excellent; as things most excellent have often the name of God added to them; see Ps 104:16.

{p} "Bacchus amat colles----" Virgil Georgic. l. 2. v. 113. {q} la yzra hypne "rami ejus cedros Dei", Tigurine version; so Sept. "et ramia ejus cedri Dei", Musculus, Cocceius; "palmitibus ejus cedri altissimae operiebantur", Piscator, De Dieu; "ramis ejus opertae sunt cedri Dei", Michaelis.

Psalms 80:11

Ver. 11. She sent out her boughs unto the sea,.... The Mediterranean, or midland sea, which was the border of the land of Canaan to the west:

and her branches unto the river; the river Euphrates, which was its border to the east; see De 11:24. This, in the spiritual sense of it, will have its accomplishment in the church of Christ, when he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, Ps 72:8. The Targum is,

"she sent out her disciples to the great sea, and to the river Euphrates her babes;"

or sucklings.

Psalms 80:12

Ver. 12. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges,.... After having done all this for her; which signifies the Lord's removing his presence, power, and protection, from Israel; which were the hedge he set about them, and by which they were secured and defended from their enemies; but these being gone, they became an easy prey to them; see **Job 1:10**, the hedge about the church and people of God are the angels that encamp about them; salvation, which is as walls and bulwarks to them; and the Lord himself, who is a wall of fire around them; which may be said to be broken down when he withdraws his presence, and does not exert his power in the protection of them; but suffers them to be exposed to the persecutions of men:

so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? the hedge being broken down, all passengers and travellers plucked the fruit of the vine as they passed along, there being noticing to keep them off from it: this may denote the plunder of the Israelites by their enemies, when left of God, they fell into their hands; and the havoc persecutors make of the church of Christ, and their spoiling them of their goods and substance, when they are permitted to do it.

Psalms 80:13

Ver. 13. The boar out of the wood doth waste it,.... As Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, who carried the ten tribes captive; the title of this psalm in the Septuagint version is, a psalm for the Assyrian. Vitringa, on Isa 24:2 interprets this of Antiochus Epiphanes, to whose times he thinks the psalm refers; but the Jews {r} of the fourth beast in **Da 7:7**, which designs the Roman empire: the wild boar is alluded to, which lives in woods and forests {s}, and wastes, fields, and vineyards:

and the wild beast of the field doth devour it; as Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who carried the two tribes captive, and who for a while lived among and lived as the beasts of the field; both these, in their turns, wasted and devoured the people of Israel; see Jer 50:17. Jarchi interprets this of Esau or Edom, that is, Rome; and says the whole of the paragraph respects the Roman captivity; that is, their present one; but rather the words describe the persecutors of the Christian church in general, comparable to wild boars and wild beasts for their fierceness and cruelty; and perhaps, in particular, Rome Pagan may be pointed at by the one, and Rome Papal by the other; though the latter is signified by two beasts, one that rose out of the sea, and the other out of the earth; which have made dreadful havoc of the church of Christ, his vine, and have shed the blood of the saints in great abundance; see Re 12:3, unless we should rather by the one understand the pope, and by the other the Turk, as the Jews interpret them of Esau and of Ishmael.

{r} Gloss. in T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 2. {s} Homer. Odyss. xix. v. 439.

Psalms 80:14

Ver. 14. Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts,.... The Lord had been with his vine, the people of Israel, when he brought them out of Egypt, and planted and settled them in the land of Canaan, and made them a flourishing people; but had departed from them when he suffered the hedges about them to be broken down, and the boar and wild beast to enter and devour them; and here he is entreated to return and restore them to their former prosperity. So the Lord sometimes departs from his church and people, and hides his face from them; and may be said to return, when he manifests himself, shows his face and his favour again, and grants his gracious presence, than which nothing is more desirable; and if he, the Lord of hosts and armies, above and below, is with his people, none can be against them to their hurt; they have nothing to fear from any enemy:

look down from heaven: the habitation of his holiness, the high and holy place where he dwells, and his throne is, from whence he takes a survey of men and things; where he now was at a distance from his people, being returned to his place in resentment, and covered himself with a cloud from their sight; and from whence it would be a condescension in him to look on them on earth, so very undeserving of a look of love and mercy from him:

and behold; the affliction and distress his people were in, as he formerly beheld the affliction of Israel in Egypt, and sympathized with them, and brought them out of it:

and visit this vine; before described, for whom he had done such great things, and now was in such a ruinous condition; the visit desired is in a way of mercy and kind providence; so the Targum,

"and remember in mercies this vine;"

so the Lord visits his chosen people by the mission and incarnation of his Son, and by the redemption of them by him, and by the effectual calling of them by his Spirit and grace through the ministration of the Gospel; and which perhaps may, in the mystical sense, be respected here; see **Lu 1:68**.

Psalms 80:15

Ver. 15. And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted,.... The word "Cannah" is only used in this place, and the first letter of it is larger than usual, to keep in perpetual remembrance, as is thought by some {t}, the bringing of this vine out of Egypt, and the great things done for it in the land of Israel; and the letter, being crooked, may denote the oppression of this vine by various calamities. The Targum renders the word, a branch or shoot; and Kimchi, according to the scope of the place, a plant; and observes, that others interpret it an habitation or dwelling place; and so may be understood of Jerusalem, or the temple. Aben Ezra takes it to be an adjective, and to signify "prepared" or "established", which is said of this vine, Ps 80:9. It is an Egyptian word used by the psalmist, treating of the vine brought out of Egypt, and signifies a plant; hence the ivy is by the Greeks called cenosiriv the plant of Osiris {u}; the clause carries in it a reason or argument, enforcing the above petition, taken from this vine being of the Lord's planting, as in Ps 80:8 and therefore his own honour and glory were concerned in it:

and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself: meaning the same thing, and the same people whom he confirmed in the land of Canaan, and made strong for his service and glory. The word {w} translated "branch" signifies a son, as Israel was, to the Lord, son and firstborn. The Targum understands it of Christ, and paraphrases it thus,

"and for the King Messiah, whom thou hast strengthened for thyself;"

that is, for the sake of Christ, whom thou hast appointed to work out the salvation of thy people by his great strength, and who was to come from this vine, or descend from Israel; for the sake of him destroy it not, nor suffer it to be destroyed; and is the same with the Son of man, Ps 80:17, and so it is read in a manuscript.

{t} Vid. Buxtorf. Tiberias, c. 14. {u} Plutarch de lsid. & Osir. {w} Nb le "super filium", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus; "propter filium", Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis.

Psalms 80:16

Ver. 16. It is burnt with fire, it is cut down,.... That is, the vine of Israel, and the branch before spoken of, alluding to a vine, and its branches; which, when become unprofitable, are cut down or cut off, and cast into the fire; see Joh 15:6, so Jerusalem and the temple were burnt with fire by Nebuchadnezzar, and afterwards by Vespasian:

they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance; that is, the Israelites, signified by the vine, whose destruction was owing to the wrath of God upon them for their sins; he frowned upon them, and rebuked them in his hot displeasure, and to that their ruin was owing; others were only instruments in his hands. Some understand this as a wish or imprecation, let them that cut down the vine, and burn it with fire, perish at the rebuke of thy countenance; see Ps 68:1, so the Targum.

Psalms 80:17

Ver. 17. Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand,.... Which some understand of the people of Israel in general, beloved, supported, and strengthened, by the Lord: and others of the then king of Israel, or Judah, the vinedresser, or keeper of the vineyard under God; praying that he might be directed, supported, and protected, by the Lord; but it seems better to understand it with R. Obadiah on the place, and Abarbinel {x} of the Messiah; and so Aben Ezra interprets it either of Israel, or of Messiah the son of Ephraim. Christ is called the "man", though as yet he was not really man, because it was purposed and promised that he should; and he had agreed to become man, and had appeared often in an human form; and it was certain that he would be incarnate: and also the man of God's "right hand", which is expressive of the power of God, because by him, who, in time, became man, even the Son of God, the world, and all things in it, were made; and by him all things are upheld in their being; by him his people were to be redeemed, and have been redeemed from all their enemies; and by him they are upheld, kept, and preserved from a final and total falling away, and will be raised at the last day: and the phrase may design the support and strength the human nature of Christ, which was weak in itself, was to have, and had, not only from its union in the Son of God, but from God the Father; who promised and gave support and strength to it, under all the sufferings endured in it: to which may be added, that this phrase is expressive of love and affection; so Benjamin had his name, which signifies the son of the right hand, from the great affection of his father; so Christ is the Son of God's love, his dear and well beloved Son; as appears by hiding nothing from him, by putting all things into his hands, and appointing him the Head and Saviour of his people, and the Judge of the world; and his love to him is a love of complacency and delight, is everlasting and unchangeable: moreover, he may be so called, because he was to be, and now is, exalted at the right hand of God, in human nature, as a Prince and Saviour, above angels, authorities, and powers, and above every name whatever: and the prayer is either that the hand of vindictive justice might not be upon the vine, or the church of God, but upon Christ their surety, who was able to bear it, and had engaged to do it; or the hand of divine power and support might be upon him, to strengthen him for the work of redemption and salvation, that so that might prosper in his hand; and the hand of love, grace, and mercy, might be turned upon his people: it is added,

upon the son of man, whom thou madest strong for thyself; for the accomplishment of his purposes, promises, and covenant, for the bringing about the salvation of his own people, and for ends of his own glory: the same person is here meant as before; and his being called "the Son of Man", which is a very usual phrase for Christ in the New Testament, and which seems to be taken from hence, and from **Da 7:13**, shows that he could not be really from eternity, since he was to be the Son of Man, as he was, of Abraham, David, &c.

{x} Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 81. 2.

Psalms 80:18

Ver. 18. So will not we go back from thee,.... From thy fear, as the Targum; or from thy service, as Kimchi; doing as above would encourage them to stand before the Lord, and worship him; which they could not do, if he marked their sins, and demanded satisfaction from them for them; but if he looked to his Son and their surety, and took it from him, this would encourage their faith and hope, and give them boldness in his presence, and attach them to his service:

quicken us, and we will call upon thy name; the people of God are sometimes dead and lifeless in their frames, and in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty, and have need of the quickening influences of the Spirit and grace of God; and which are necessary to a fervent calling upon the name of the Lord in prayer, and without which none will stir up themselves so to do. Kimchi interprets this of quickening, or of raising to life, from the death of the captivity; and so Abarbinel, who thinks also that it respects the resurrection of the dead in the times of the Messiah.

Psalms 80:19

Ver. 19. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts,.... This is a repetition of Ps 80:3, in which may be observed an increase of the names or titles of the Divine Being: in Ps 80:3, it is only "O God"; in
Ps 80:7 "O God of hosts"; and here, "Lord God of hosts"; some have thought that the doctrine of the Trinity is here suggested; which is a better thought than that of Jarchi's, who supposes that three captivities of Israel are pointed at: but as it follows,

cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved; it appears that this was the burden of their song, being in darkness and distress, that they might have the light of God's countenance, and therefore repeat it again and again.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 81:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 81

To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A [Psalm] of Asaph. Of "gittith", See Gill on "Ps 8:1". The Targum renders it,

"upon the harp which came from Gath;"

and so Jarchi says it was a musical instrument that came from Gath. The Septuagint, and the versions which follow that, render it, "for the winepresses". This psalm, according to Kimchi, is said concerning the going out of the children of Israel from Egypt; and was composed in order to be sung at their new moons and solemn feasts, which were typical of Gospel things in Gospel times; see **Col 2:16** and so the Syriac version,

"a psalm of Asaph, when David by him prepared himself for the solemnities."

Ver. 1. Sing aloud unto God our strength,.... The strength of Israel, who, by strength of hand, and a mighty arm, brought Israel out of Egypt, protected and upheld them in the wilderness, and brought them to, and settled and established them in the land of Canaan; and who is the strength of every true

Israelite, from whom they have both their natural and spiritual strength; so that they can exercise grace, perform duty, bear afflictions, withstand temptations, fight with and conquer enemies, and hold on and out unto the end; and therefore have reason to sing the praises of God with great fervour, zeal, and affection:

make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob; or Israel, being the God that had made a covenant with them, had chosen them for his peculiar people, and had redeemed them out of the house of bondage, and bestowed peculiar favours upon them; and therefore were under obligation to show forth his praise vocally and audibly, and with strong expressions of joy; and the spiritual Israel of God much more so, who have an interest in the covenant of grace, and share in electing, redeeming, and calling grace, by all which he appears to be their God and Father, in a special sense.

Psalms 81:2

Ver. 2. Take a psalm,.... Or "lift one up" {y}; hold up the book, and read and sing it; or rather, lift up the voice in singing a psalm:

and bring hither the timbrel; or "give one" {z}, put the hand to one:

the pleasant harp with the psaltery; make use of all these musical instruments in singing, and so make an agreeable melody: these were used in the times of the Old Testament, and were typical of the spiritual joy and melody in the heart, expressed by vocal singing, under the New Testament; see **Re 5:8**.

{y} Nav "attollite", Piscator; "tollite", Cocceius, Amama, Gejerus. {z} wnt "date", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Psalms 81:3

Ver. 3. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon,.... Either in every new moon, or first day of the month, which was religiously observed by the Jews, **2Ki 4:23** or rather the new moon, or first day of the seventh month, the month Tisri, which day was a memorial of blowing of trumpets, Le 23:34, and so the Targum,

"blow the trumpet in the month of Tisri," when their new year began, and was typical of the year of the redeemed of the Lord, of the acceptable year of our God, of the famous new year, the Gospel dispensation, when old things passed away, and all things became new. The Jews say this blowing of trumpets was in commemoration of Isaac's deliverance, a ram being sacrificed for him, and therefore they sounded with trumpets made of rams' horns; or in remembrance of the trumpet blown at the giving of the law; though it rather was an emblem of the Gospel, and the ministry of it, by which sinners are aroused, awakened and quickened, and souls are charmed and allured, and filled with spiritual joy and gladness:

in the time appointed; so Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret the word of a set fixed time; see **Pr 7:20**, the word {a} used has the signification of covering; and the former of these understand it of the time just before the change of the moon, when it is covered, which falls in with the former phrase; and so the Targum,

"in the moon that is covered;"

though the Latin interpreter renders it,

"in the month which is covered with the days of our solemnities,"

there being many festivals in the month of Tisri; the blowing of trumpets on the first day of it, the atonement on the tenth, and the feast of tabernacles on the fifteenth. But De Dieu has made it appear, from the use of the word in the Syriac language, that it should be rendered "in the full moon", and so directs to the right understanding of the feast next mentioned;

on our solemn feast day, which must design a feast which was at the full of the moon; and so must be either the feast of the passover, which was on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, and was a type of Christ our Passover, sacrificed for us, on which account we should keep the feast, Ex 12:6, or else the feast of tabernacles, which was on the fifteenth of the month Tisri, kept in commemoration of the Israelites dwelling in booths, Le 23:34 and which is called the feast, and the solemn feast, emphatically; see **1Ki 8:2**, and was typical of the state of God's people in this world, who dwell in the earthly houses of their tabernacles, and have no continuing city; and of the churches of Christ, which are the tabernacles in which God and his people dwell, and will abide in this form but for a time, and are moveable; and also of Christ's tabernacling in human nature, **Joh 1:14**.

{a} hokb "quum tegitur luna", Piscator; "ad verbum in obtectione", i. e. "eum obtegatur luna a sole", Amama.

Psalms 81:4

Ver. 4. For this was a statute for Israel,.... It was not a piece of will worship, or device of the children of Israel, but was of divine institution; that the passover should be kept at the time it was; and that the trumpets should be blown on the new moon, or first of Tisri; and that the feast of tabernacles should be kept on the fifteenth of the same month:

and a law of the God of Jacob; and therefore to be observed by Jacob's posterity: the law for the one is in Ex 12:18 and for the other is in Le 23:24 and so all the ordinances of Christ, and of the Gospel dispensation, are to be regarded on the same account, because they are the statutes and appointments of God; and the feast of tabernacles is particularly put for them all, Zec 14:16.

Psalms 81:5

Ver. 5. This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony,.... That is, this law concerning the blowing of trumpets on the new moon, and the keeping the solemn feast at the full of the moon, was made to be observed by all Israel, who are meant by Joseph, for a testimony of God's good will to them, and of their duty and obedience to him:

when he went out through the land of Egypt, or "over it" {b}; which some understand of Joseph, who is said to go over all the land of Egypt, to gather in provision against the seven years of famine,
Ge 41:45 and Jarchi says that his deliverance from prison was at the beginning of the year, and was advanced in Pharaoh's court: and the meaning is, either "when he", the Lord, "went out against the land of Egypt", so Arama, in order to slay their firstborn; and when he passed over Israel, and saved them; marched through the land in his indignation, and went forth for the salvation of his people,
Ex 11:4 then was the ordinance of the passover appointed: or when Israel went out of Egypt, designed by Joseph, some little time after, while in the wilderness, and dwelling in tents, the feast of tabernacles was instituted; but rather this shows that the feast of passover is before meant, which was

instituted at the time of Israel's going out of Egypt, and was the solemn feast day ordained for a statute, law and testimony in Israel; and that the new moon, or month rather, on which the trumpet was to be blown, was the month Abib, the beginning of months, by an ordinance of God, Ex 12:2

where I heard a language that I understood not; here the prophet represents the people of Israel in Egypt; though the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read,

he heard, and he understood not and the language is either the voice of God out of the fire, which before was never heard in this unusual manner, nor understood, **De 5:24** or the speech of Moses, who had Aaron for his mouth and spokesman; or rather the Egyptian language, which was not understood by the Israelites without an interpreter,
Ge 42:23 which sense is confirmed by Ps 114:1, and this is mentioned as an aggravation of their affliction in Egypt; see **Jer 5:15**.

{b} Ura le wtaub "in ipsum exeundo", Montanus; "cum exiret ipse super terram", Pagninus.

Psalms 81:6

Ver. 6. I removed his shoulder from the burden,.... These are the words of God, declaring how he had delivered the Israelites from the oppression and cruelty of the Egyptians; who made their lives bitter in hard bondage, and obliged them to carry heavy loads of bricks upon their shoulders:

his hands were delivered from the pots, or "baskets" {c}; into which the bricks were put when made, and carried on their shoulders; or from making of pots, as Kimchi, who thinks the Israelites were employed in making pots of clay as well as bricks; see Ps 68:13, the Targum is,

"his hands withdrew themselves from casting clay into the pots:"

the whole is typical of the saints' deliverance by Christ from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law.

{c} dwdm "a sporta, a cophino", Gejerus, Amama, Michaelis.

Psalms 81:7

Ver. 7. Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee,.... That is, when Israel were in trouble in Egypt, as the Targum adds, and they cried unto the Lord in their distress, he heard them, and answered them, and sent them a deliverer, and brought them out of all their troubles, **Ex 3:7**.

I answered thee in the secret place of thunder; by bringing the plague of thunder and lightnings upon the Egyptians, when the Israelites were hidden from them; a sense given by some, as Kimchi observes: or rather this was done when the Lord looked out of the pillar of cloud at the Red sea upon the Egyptian host, and troubled them; at which time the voice of his thunder was heard in heaven, Ps 77:16. Some think this has reference to the thunder at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; but the sense before given is best:

I proved thee at the waters of Meribah; by withholding water from them to try them, and see whether they would behave patiently, and put their trust and confidence in the Lord, or not; see Ex 17:4.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 81:8

Ver. 8. Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee,.... Of himself, his being, and perfections; what he was unto them, had done for them, and would do for them, as in the following verses: or "testify in thee" {d}, bear witness to their spirits, that they were his people, and he was their God; this is a witness which the people of God have in themselves; it is the inward testimony of the Spirit; besides which, there is the outward testimony of the word, and which also may be here meant; for it may be rendered,

I will give a testimony to thee: the law is a testimony of the will of God to his people, what he would have done, or not done; and the Gospel is a testimony of his grace, and the whole word testifies of Christ, his person, offices, obedience, sufferings, and death: some render it, "testify against thee" {e}, for their murmurings, rebellion, and idolatry, as in Ps 50:7 and they are called upon to hear the voice of God in his word, and in his providences, being his people; and as such he addresses them, which bespeaks interest in them, affection to them, and an acknowledgment of them, and carries in it a reason why they should hear him:

O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; this explains who are meant by the Lord's people, Israel, the posterity of Jacob, a chosen and special people, who are exhorted not only to hear, but to hearken and to obey; suggesting, it would be well with them, if they did as in
Ps 81:13, and some {f} take these words to be a wish, as there; "Israel, O that thou wouldest hearken unto me": see Isa 48:18.

{d} Kb hdyea "testificabor in te", Gejerus. {e} "Ut testificer contra te", Schmidt. {f} So Michaelis, and Gussetius, and Genevenses, in ib. Comment. Ebr. p. 431.

Psalms 81:9

Ver. 9. There shall no strange god be in thee,.... Or in the midst of thee, owned and worshipped as God; or in thine heart, for whatever engrosses the affection, or a man puts his trust and confidence in, that he makes his god, and is a strange one: thus, if any friend or relation, father or mother, wife or children, are loved more than God, they are set up as such in his place; thus the epicure, that seeks the gratification of his carnal lusts, makes his belly his god; and the covetous man his money, in which he trusts, and therefore is called an idolater; and the self-righteous man his righteousness, on which he depends for salvation: hence we read of idols set up in the heart, from which they are disengaged in conversion, and kept from,
Eze 14:7

neither shall thou worship any strange god; only the Lord God is to be worshipped, Mt 28:19 and there is but one God; though this is to be understood not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, who are with the Father the one God, and to be worshipped equally with him, and are; see Mt 28:19.

Psalms 81:10

Ver. 10. I am the Lord thy God,.... The true Jehovah, the Being of beings, in whom all live and move and have their beings, the covenant God of his people; and is a reason why they should hear him, and worship him, and no other:

which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; this, with what goes before, is the preface to the ten commands, the first and principal of which is urged in the preceding verse; and this is another reason why the Lord God should be had and worshipped, and not a strange god; and redemption from worse than Egyptian bondage, from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law, and a deliverance from worse than Egyptian darkness, and from a state of wickedness and impiety, should lay under greater obligations still to serve the Lord, and worship him only; who adds, as a further reason for it,

open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it; which may be understood of opening the mouth either in prayer or in praise: to open the mouth wide in prayer is to pray with great freedom, to pour out the soul to God, lay open its whole case, and tell him all his mind and wants; to pray with great boldness, and with much importunity and fervency, and in full assurance of faith, pleading with great strength the promises of God, and asking in faith for much, according to them; and God may be said to fill this wide mouth of faith in prayer, when he grants the desires of the heart, gives his people what they will, even very largely and abundantly, yea, more than they can ask or think: to open the mouth wide in praise is to be abundantly thankful for mercies received; and when persons are so, the Lord fills them with more abundant matter for praise and thanksgiving; see Ps 71:8, or this may be interpreted of opening the mouth wide in expressions of desire after spiritual food, hungering and thirsting after spiritual things, when the Lord fills or satisfies the mouths of his people with good things,
Ps 103:5, with the sincere milk of the word which they desire, and with the ordinances, the breasts of consolation they long for, and so satisfies them with the goodness and fatness of his house, Ps 64:4, the metaphor seems to be taken from the young of birds, which open their mouths, and are filled by the old ones: the Targum is,

"open thy mouth to the words of the law, and I will fill it with every good thing."

Psalms 81:11

Ver. 11. But my people would not hearken to my voice,.... Neither as exhorting them to the above duties, nor as promising the above favours; would neither hearken to the voice of the law, nor to the voice of the Gospel; but were like the deaf adder, which stops its ear to the voice of the charmer, charming never so wisely:

and Israel would none of me; would not attend to his word, acquiesce in his will, nor delight themselves in him, and in his worship and service; would have none of his salutary doctrines, or wholesome reproofs, nor of his laws and government; would not have him to reign over them, nor to be their Saviour, though the only one, and there is none beside him; though the chiefest good, and from whom all good things come, and is the portion and exceeding great reward of his people: see **Pr 1:25**.

Psalms 81:12

Ver. 12. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust,.... Sometimes God gave them up, when they sinned, into the hands of the Moabites, or Ammonites, or Philistines, or other neighbouring nations, for their chastisement; but to be delivered up unto their own hearts' lust is worse than that; nay, than to be delivered to Satan: salvation may be the consequence of that, but damnation of this; and yet it is a righteous judgment; for as men like not to retain God in their knowledge, it is but just with him to give them up to vile affections, to a reprobate mind, to do things not convenient, **Ro 1:24** there is nothing men are more desirous of than to have their hearts' lusts; and there is no greater judgment can befall them than to be left to the power of them, which must unavoidably issue in their ruin here and hereafter: and they walked in their own counsels; which were bad; after the imagination of their own evil hearts, and not after the counsels and directions of God in his word, and by his servants.

Psalms 81:13

Ver. 13. O that my people had hearkened unto me,.... This might have been expected from them, as they were his professing people; and it would have been to their advantage if they had hearkened to him, as well as it would have been well pleasing to him; for that is what is designed by this wish, which does not express the purposing will of God; for who hath resisted that? if he had so willed, he could have given them ears to hear; but his commanding will, and what is his approving one: to hearken to him is not only to hearken to what he commands, but to what he approves of; it is the good and acceptable will of God that men should hearken to the declarations of his will in the law, and to the declarations of his grace in the Gospel; and indeed it is the voice of Christ, the Angel of God's presence, who went before the children of Israel in the wilderness, which they were to hearken to and obey, that is here meant; see Ex 23:20, and **Heb 3:6**, and Israel had walked in my ways; which he marked out and directed them unto, meaning his ordinances and commandments; which to walk in, as it denotes progress and continuance, and supposes and requires life and strength, so it is both pleasant and profitable.

Psalms 81:14

Ver. 14. I should soon have subdued their enemies,.... The Canaanites, and others: this he would have done in a very little time, or at once, and that easily, and without any trouble; he would quickly have humbled them, and brought them on their knees, as the word {g} signifies, to terms of peace; for when a man's ways please the Lord, he makes his enemies to be at peace with him, Pr 16:7 so those that hearken to the voice of Christ, and walk in his ways, he subdues their iniquities, and will bruise Satan under their feet shortly, and make them more than conquerors: through himself, over the world; the men and things of it he has overcome:

and turned my hand against their adversaries; that troubled, distressed, and oppressed them; and it is a righteous thing with God to render tribulation to them that trouble his people; he turns his chastising hand off of them, which sometimes is heavy upon them, and presses them sore, and turns it in a way of wrath and vindictive justice against their adversaries; and so the Targum,

"and turned the stroke of my power against their adversaries;"

this is the lighting down of his arm with the indignation of his anger, which is intolerable, Isa 30:30.

{g} eynka "flecterem", Cocceius.

Psalms 81:15

Ver. 15. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him,.... Or, "lied unto him" {h}; feignedly submitted to him, flattered him, pretended friendship to him, and entered into a league with him; either Israel, mentioned Ps 81:13, our God, whom and whose worship and people they hated; as every natural man is an hater of God, and all that is good, and enmity itself unto him; but these shall all submit to Christ, sooner or later, in one way or another, and acknowledge him Lord, and that he is superior to them, and themselves not a match for him; as Julian the emperor when wounded, said, Thou hast overcome me, O Galilean:

but their time should have endured for ever; which Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret of the calamities and vengeance that should come upon the haters of God, who will be punished with everlasting destruction; their worm will never die, nor their fire be quenched; it is everlasting, and the smoke of their torment will ascend for ever and ever; in which sense the word is used, Isa 13:22 or rather this is to be understood of the time, or happy state and condition, of the Israelites, which would have been of long continuance, had they hearkened to the Lord, and walked in his ways; particularly, they would have long enjoyed the land of Canaan, which was given to Abraham and his seed for an everlasting possession, and which they held by the tenure of their obedience, Ge 17:8, and so all truly gracious souls, that hearken to the voice of Christ, and walk in his ways, are in a happy state, which will endure for ever; they are blessed with all spiritual blessings, and those are for ever; the heavenly land of Canaan they shall dwell in for ever; their mansions or habitations in Christ's Father's house are everlasting; their house, not made with hands, is eternal in the heavens; their estate, possession, and inheritance is an eternal one; it is incorruptible, and fades not away; their being with Christ is for ever; and their happiness is often expressed by eternal life and eternal glory.

{h} wvxky "mentientur", Montanus; "mentiti fuissent", Vatablus; "mentirentur", Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus; "mendaciter se dedissent", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 81:16

Ver. 16. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat,.... Or the "fat of the wheat {y}"; see De 32:14, with the finest flour of it: the Targum is,

"with the best bread of wheat;"

with the best of wheat, and the best bread that can be made of it: Aben Ezra interprets it of the manna, which was better than the fat, or finest, of the wheat, being the corn of heaven, and angels' food,
Ps 78:24, but it rather respects what the Israelites would have been continued to be fed with in the land of Canaan, which was a land of wheat, **De 8:8**, and such who hearken to the Lord, and walk in his ways, are fed by him with the

Gospel, which is comparable to wheat, and the finest of it, for its choiceness and excellency, for its solidity and substantiality, for its purity and cleanness, and for its being of a nourishing and strengthening nature, see Jer 38:28, and especially Christ, the sum and substance of the Gospel, may be figuratively meant, with whom the saints are fed, and who is compared to a corn of wheat, Joh 12:24 for his preciousness and excellency, for his purity and fruitfulness, and for being the food of his people, the bread of life, for which he was prepared by his sufferings and death; which may be fitly expressed by the threshing, winnowing, and grinding of wheat, and then of kneading the flour, and baking the bread:

and with honey out of the rock would I have satisfied thee; the land of Canaan abounded with hills and rocks, in which bees had their hives, and from whence honey dropped to lower places; and hence the land is said to flow with milk and honey, **Ex 3:8**, nor is it unusual in other places to find honey in rocks; at Guadaloupe, in the West Indies, we are told {z}, honey was found in trees and caves of rocks. Aben Ezra interprets this of the water which flowed out of the rock at Horeb, which was sweeter than honey; but the former sense is best: the rock spiritually and mystically designs Christ, the Rock of salvation, 1Co 10:4, the honey out of the rock, the fulness of grace in him, and the blessings of it, the sure mercies of David, and the precious promises of the everlasting covenant; and the Gospel, which is sweeter than the honey or the honeycomb; and with these such are filled and satisfied, who hearken to Christ, and walk in his ways; for, as the whole of what is here said shows what Israel lost by disobedience, it clearly suggests what such enjoy who hear and obey.

{y} hjx blxm "ex adipe frumenti", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus; "adipe tritici", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.
{z} P. Martyr. Decad. 3. lib. 9.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 82:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 82

A Psalm of Asaph. This psalm was written for the use of persons in power, for the instruction of kings and princes, judges and civil magistrates; according to Kimchi, it was written about the times of Jehoshaphat, who appointed new judges throughout the land; those that were before having been very corrupt, to whom he gave a charge agreeably to the purport of this psalm, 2Ch 19:5, but it seems rather to be written by Asaph, in the times of David, under a spirit of prophecy, and has respect to the times of Christ, when there was a great corruption among the judges and rulers of the Jews, both civil and ecclesiastic. The Syriac version calls it, "a reproof of the ungodly Jews"; our Lord cites a passage out of it in vindication of himself from their charge of blasphemy, Joh 10:34.

Ver. 1. God standeth in the congregation of the mighty,.... The Syriac version renders it, "in the congregation of angels"; they are mighty, and excel in strength, and there is a large company of them, even an innumerable one, and who surround the throne of the Majesty on high. Christ, who is God over all, was among those on Mount Sinai, and when he ascended to heaven; and with these he will descend when he comes a second time, Ps 68:17. The Targum interprets it of the righteous thus,

"God, whose majesty (or Shechinah) dwells in the congregation of the righteous that are strong in the law."

It may be better understood of such as are strong in the Lord, in the grace that is in Christ, and in the exercise of grace upon him; who are gathered out of the world unto him, and unto distinct societies and congregations; in the midst of which God is, where he grants his presence, bestows the blessings of his grace, and affords his divine aid and protection; and where Christ the Son of God is, and will be to the end of the world. The words may be rendered, "God standeth in the congregation of God" {a}: that is, in his own congregation, his church and people; but it seems best of all to understand the words of rulers and civil magistrates, of the cabinet councils of princes, of benches of judges, and courts of judicature; in all which God is present, and observes what is said and done; perhaps reference may be had to the Jewish sanhedrim, the chief court of judicature with the Jews, consisting of seventy one persons; in the midst of which Christ, God manifest in the flesh, God in our nature, stood, and was ill used, and most unjustly judged by them, of whose unjust judgment complaint is made in the next verse:

he judgeth among the gods: which the Syriac version renders "angels" again; and so Aben Ezra interprets it of them, who are so called, **Ps 8:5**, but rather civil magistrates are meant, the rulers and judges of the people, who go by this name of "elohim", or gods, in
Ex 21:6, and are so called because they are the powers ordained of God, are representatives of him, are his vicegerents and deputies under him; should act in his name, according to his law, and for his glory, and are clothed with great

power and authority from and under him; and therefore are before styled the "mighty". Among these Christ, the Son of God, judges, to whom all judgment is committed; he qualifies these for the discharge of their office, he directs them how to judge, and all the right judgment they make and do is from him, "by" whom "kings"

reign, and princes decree justice; by whom princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth; and to whom they are all accountable, and will be themselves judged by him another day, **Pr 8:15** so the Targum,

"in the midst of the judges of truth he judges."

{a} la tdeb "in congregatione Dei", Pagninus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Ainsworth.

Psalms 82:2

Ver. 2. How long will ye judge unjustly,.... These are the words not of the psalmist, but of the divine Person that stands in the congregation of the mighty, and judges among the gods; calling the unjust judges to an account, and reproving them for their unrighteous proceedings and perversion of justice, in which they had long continued, and which was an aggravation of their sin; this is very applicable to the rulers and judges of the Jewish nation in the times of Christ, who had long dealt very unjustly, and continued to do so; they judged wrong judgment, or judgment of iniquity, as Aben Ezra renders it, both in civil and ecclesiastical things; their judgment was depraved concerning the law, which they transgressed and made void by adhering to the traditions of the elders; they passed an unrighteous judgment on John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, rejecting his baptism, and calling him a devil; and upon Christ himself, adjudging him to death for crimes he was not guilty of; and upon his followers, whom they cast out of the synagogue; the character of an unjust judge see in Lu 18:2,

and accept the persons of the wicked? gave the cause in favour of them, and against the righteous, because they were rich, or related to them, or had bribes from them, contrary to the law in De 16:19, so the judges among the Jews, in Christ's time, judged according to appearance, the outward circumstances of men, and not righteous judgment, as our Lord suggests, **Joh 7:24**.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 82:3

Ver. 3. Defend the poor and fatherless,.... Or, judge {d} them; such as have no money to enter and carry on a suit, and have no friends to assist and advise them, and abide by them; these should be taken under the care and wing of judges; their cause should be attended to, and justice done them; their persons should be protected, and their property defended and secured for, since they are called gods, they ought to imitate him whose name they bear, who is the Father of the fatherless, the Judge of the widows, and the helper of the poor that commit themselves to him, Ps 10:14, such a righteous judge and good magistrate was Job; see Job 29:12,

do justice to the afflicted and needy; or "justify" {e} them, pronounce them righteous, give the cause for them, not right or wrong, nor because they are poor and needy, but because they are in the right; for, if wicked, they are not to be justified, this is an abomination to the Lord; see Le 19:15.

{d} wjpv "judicate", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {e} wqyduh "justificate", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus, Cocceius, &c.

Psalms 82:4

Ver. 4. Deliver the poor and needy,.... From his adversary and oppressor, who is mightier than he, and draws him to the judgment seat; when it is not in his power to defend himself against him, and get out of his hands, unless a righteous judge will show a regard to him and his cause; and sometimes even an unjust judge, through importunity, will do this, as everyone ought, and every righteous one will:

rid them out of the hand of the wicked; this was what the poor widow importuned the unjust judge for, and obtained, Lu 18:3.

Psalms 82:5

Ver. 5. They knew not,.... The Targum adds, to do well. This is to be understood of unjust judges and wicked magistrates, who know not God, and have not the fear of him before their eyes, though he stands in the midst of them, and judges among them; which is the source of their unjust judging and unrighteous proceedings: for because they know not God, nor fear him, therefore they regard not men: nor do such know themselves; they are called gods, and they think they are so, and do not consider they are but men; they are the ministers of God, deputies under him, and are accountable to him: nor do they know their duty before pointed out; it is for them to know judgment, what is right, and what is wrong, that they may pronounce righteous judgment, **Mic 3:2**, but they do not know it, at least so as to practise it: nor did the Jewish rulers know Christ, which was the reason of their unrighteous dealing with him and with his followers; they put him to death, and so they did them, because they knew him not, **1Co 2:8**,

neither will they understand: the Targum adds, by way of explanation, "the law", the rule of judgment, which judges ought to understand; so the Jewish rulers, Pharisees and Sadducees, were upbraided by Christ with ignorance of the Scriptures, and the law of God, their false glosses of which he refutes, **Mt 5:1** and their ignorance was wilful and affected, they shut their eyes against light and evidence, especially with respect to Christ; they could discern the face of the sky, but not the signs of the times, Mt 16:3, who so blind as they that will not see? and such were the Jewish rulers; see Isa 42:19,

they walk on in darkness; they chose darkness rather than light, and so were blind leaders of the blind, and were wilfully so, having their eyes blinded with gifts, De 16:19,

all the foundations of the earth are out of course; or "shaken" or "moved" {f}: by the perversion of justice, towns, cities, commonwealths, kingdoms, and states, are thrown into the utmost disorder and confusion: as the king by judgment establisheth the land;
Pr 29:4, so when judgment is not executed, it is unsettled, and thrown into confusion; or though {g} "the foundation", &c. though this is the case, yet unjust judges will go on, perverting judgment, even though, as at the deluge, the foundations of the earth were shaken and moved, for the violence, rapine, and oppression, the earth was then filled with, which Kimchi thinks is here referred to; and though a dissolution of the Jewish polity, civil and ecclesiastical, was threatened, because of such injustice; that God would once more shake the heavens and the earth, remove their church and civil state, when they should cease to be a nation, their city be destroyed, and their temple, not one stone left upon another; and yet such was the obstinacy of their

wicked judges, that they would persist their wicked ways.

{f} wjwmy "moventur", Vatablus; "dimoventur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "commoventur", Gejerus; "nutant", Tigurine version. {g} So Ainsworth.

Psalms 82:6

Ver. 6. I have said, ye are gods,.... In the law, Ex 21:6 or they were so by his appointment and commission; he constituted them judges and magistrates, invested them with such an office, by which they came to have this title; see Ro 13:1, and so our Lord interprets these words, that they were gods "to whom" the word of God came, which gave them a commission and authority to exercise their office,
Joh 10:35, or rather "against whom" it came, pronouncing the sentence of death on them, as in Ps 82:7, to which the reference is; declaring, that though they were gods by office, yet were mortal men, and should die. The Targum is, "I said, as angels are ye accounted"; and so judges and civil magistrates had need to be as angels, and to have the wisdom of them; see 2Sa 14:20. Jarchi interprets it of angels, but magistrates are undoubtedly meant:

and all of you are children of the most High; the Targum here again renders it,

"the angels of the most High:"

and so Aben Ezra explains it of them who are called the sons of God,
Job 38:7 but men in power are meant, who, because of their eminency and dignity, their high office, post, and place, are so called; see **Ge 6:2**.

Psalms 82:7

Ver. 7. But ye shall die like men,.... As men in common do, to whom it is appointed to die, **Heb 9:27** or as common men, as men in the lowest class of life: the wise man dies as the fool, the king as the peasant, high as the low, rich as the poor; death levels and makes all alike: or as Adam, as the first man, so Jarchi, who was lord of the whole universe; but being in honour, abode not, but became like the beasts that perish; sinning he died, and so all his posterity, even those who have the greatest power and authority on earth; see
Ps 49:2 and not only die a corporeal death, but an eternal one, dying in their

sins; as Christ threatened the Jewish rulers, Scribes, and Pharisees, if they believed not in him, **Joh 8:21**

and fall like one of the princes; or the chief of them, Satan, who fell like lightning from heaven, Lu 10:18 or rather as one of the giants that lived in the old world, famous for their injustice and oppression, that fell in the deluge, **Ge 6:4** or any of the Heathen princes, tyrants and oppressors, such as are mentioned in the following psalm,
Ps 83:9. This may have respect to the destruction of the Jewish nation, which is called the falling of them, Ro 11:11 and the words may be rendered, "and ye shall fall together, equally and alike, O ye princes" {a}; when the Jewish state, civil and ecclesiastical, fell, they fell with it, and together; the princes of this world then came to nought, or were abolished, they and their authority, as the Apostle Paul says they should, **1Co 2:6** the sceptre then departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet; all rule and authority ceased among them, as Jacob foretold it would, Ge 49:10.

{a} dxak "pariter; sive ex aequo", Maius apud Gataker. Cin. c. 10. p. 292.

Psalms 82:8

Ver. 8. Arise, O God,.... These are the words of the prophet, or of the church, whom he represents, addressing Christ, who is God over all; that seeing there was such a corruption and degeneracy in the world, and such wretched perversion of justice, that he would arise and exert himself, and show himself strong on the behalf of his people:

judge the earth: who is the Judge of the whole earth, to whom all judgment is committed, and who will judge the world in righteousness:

for thou shalt inherit all nations; which he will do in the latter day, when he shall be King over all the earth, and the Heathen shall be given him for his inheritance, he being heir of all things; and universal justice will not take place in the world till that time comes; and therefore it is to be wished and prayed for, as by the prophet and church here.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 83:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 83

A Song [or] Psalm of Asaph. This is the last of the psalms that bear the name of Asaph, and some think it was written by him on occasion of David's smiting the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, Edomites, and others, **2Sa 8:1**, but these did not conjunctly, but separately, fight with David, and were overcome by him; whereas those this psalm makes mention of were in a confederacy together; and besides, the Tyrians in David's time were in friendship with him; but are here mentioned as joining with others against Israel, Ps 83:7, others are of opinion that this was prophetic delivered out with respect to future times, either to the conspiracy of the enemies of the Jews against them in the times of the Maccabees,

"Now when the nations round about heard that the altar was built and the sanctuary renewed as before, it displeased them very much. &c." (1 Maccabees 5:1)

or rather to the confederacy of the Moabites, Ammonites, and others, in the times of Jehoshaphat, 2Ch 20:1, so Kimchi, Arama, and the generality of interpreters: perhaps reference is had to the enemies of God's people, from age to age, both in the Old and in the New Testament; R. Obadiah understands it of the war of Gog and Magog.

Ver. 1. Keep not thou silence, O God,.... Which he is thought and said to do, when he does not answer the prayers of his people, nor plead their cause, nor rebuke their enemies; when he does not speak a good word to them, or one for them, or one against those that hate and persecute them;

hold not thy peace; or "be not deaf" {b} to the cries and tears of his people, and to the reproaches, menaces, and blasphemies of wicked men:

and be not still, O God; or "quiet" {c}, at rest and ease, inactive and unconcerned, as if he cared not how things went; the reason follows.

{b} vrxt-la "ne obsurdescas", Vatablus; "ne surdum agas", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ne quasi surdus et mutus sis", Michaelis. {c} jqvt la "ne quiescas", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; "neque quietus sis", Michaelis.

Psalms 83:2

Ver. 2. For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult,.... Or "a noise" {d}: wicked men are commonly noisy, roaring out their blasphemies against God, belching out oaths and curses, and breathing threatenings and slaughter against the saints; especially a numerous army of them, consisting of many people and nations, as this did; who are called the Lord's "enemies", being the enemies of his people, and their cause and his are one and the same; and besides, all wicked men are enemies to God, and all that is good, in their minds, and which appears by their actions; yea, they are enmity itself unto him:

and they that hate thee have lift up the head; are haughty, proud, and arrogant; speak loftily, and with a stiff neck; set their mouth against heaven, and God in it; and their tongue walks through the earth, and spares none; they exult and rejoice, as sure of victory, before the battle is fought; such then were, and such there are, who are haters of God, hate his being, perfections, purposes, and providences; hate his Son without a cause, and even do despite unto the Spirit of grace; hate the law and its precepts, the Gospel and its doctrines and ordinances, and the ways, worship, and people of God, as appears by what follows.

{d} Nwymhy "sonuerunt", V. L. "perstrepunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "strepunt", Gejerus.

Psalms 83:3

Ver. 3. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people,.... The people of Israel, hereafter named, whom God had chosen and avouched to be his people; these they dealt subtlety with, as the king of Egypt had done with their forefathers; and this, agreeably to their character, being the seed of the old serpent, more subtle than any of the beasts of the field; these devised cunning devices, formed crafty schemes for the destruction of the Lord's people; but often so it is, that the wise are taken in their own craftiness, and their counsel is carried headlong:

and consulted against thy hidden ones; not hidden from the Lord, and unknown unto him, though from their enemies, and unknown by them, and so the object of their hatred and persecution; but hidden by him as his jewels and peculiar treasure, which he takes care of; hidden under the shadow of his wings, in the secret of his presence and tabernacle, as in a pavilion; and therefore it was a daring piece of insolence in their enemies to attack them: so the life of saints is said to be hid with Christ in God, which denotes both its secrecy and safety; see **Col 3:3**, the Targum is,

"against the things hidden in thy treasures;"

meaning the riches of the temple.

Psalms 83:4

Ver. 4. They have said,.... Secretly in their hearts, or openly to one another, and gave it out in the most public manner, as what they had consulted and determined upon; see Ps 74:8,

come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; they were not content to invade their country, take their cities, plunder them of their substance, and carry them captives, but utterly to destroy them, root and branch; so that they might be no more a body politic, under rule and government, in their own land, nor have so much as a name and place in others; this was Haman's scheme, **Es 3:8**

that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance; but this desperate and dreadful scheme, and wretched design of theirs, took not effect; but, on the contrary, the several nations hereafter mentioned, who were in this conspiracy, are no more, and have not had a name in the world for many hundreds of years; while the Jews are still a people, and are preserved, in order to be called and saved, as all Israel will be in the latter day, Ro 11:25. So Dioclesian thought to have rooted the Christian name out of the world; but in vain: the name of Christ, the name of Christianity, the name of a Christian church, will endure to the end of the world; see Ps 72:17. Compare with this Jer 11:19.

Psalms 83:5

Ver. 5. For they have consulted together with one consent,.... Or "heart" {e}; wicked men are cordial to one another, and united in their counsels against the people of God, and his interest: whatever things they may disagree in, they agree in this, to oppose the cause and interest of true religion, or to persecute the church and people of God: Herod and Pontius Pilate are instances of this:

they are confederate against thee; or have made a covenant against thee {f};

the covenant they had entered into among themselves, being against the Lord's people, was against him; and such a covenant and agreement can never stand; for there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord, Pr 21:30. This the psalmist mentions to engage the Lord in the quarrel of his people, and not be still, and act a neutral part; since those were his enemies, and confederates against him, and they are next particularly named.

{e} bl "corde", Pagninus, Montanus; "ex corde", Tigurine version, Musculus, Gejerus; "cordicitus", Cocceius. {f} wtrky tyrb Kyle "foedus adversus te icerunt", Tigurine version; "contra te foedus pepigerunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; so Musculus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 83:6

Ver. 6. The tabernacles of Edom, &c] Or the Idumeans, as the Targum; the posterity of Esau, who, with the rest that joined with them, hereafter mentioned, and made the confederate army, brought their tents with them, pitched them, and encamped in them against Israel:

and the Ishmaelites; or Arabians, as the Targum, who descended from Ishmael, the son of Abraham:

of Moab, and the Hagarenes; the Moabites, who sprung from Lot by one of his daughters, in an incestuous way; and the Hagarenes are the same with the Hagarites, **1Ch 5:10** who dwelt to the east of the land of Israel, so called from Hagar, the handmaid of Abraham, but not by him, but by another husband, after sent away from him, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi think, or by him, supposing Hagar to be the same with Keturah, as some do: the Targum calls them Hungarians; the Syriac version renders it Gadareans, or Gadarenes; of which see **Mr 5:1**.

Psalms 83:7

Ver. 7. Gebal,.... Gubleans, or Gebalites, as the Targum; the same with Giblites, Jos 23:5, or men of Gebal, Eze 27:9 the same with Byblus: these dwelt in Phoenicia, near Tyre, where Pliny {g} makes mention of a place called Gabale: the Syriac version joins it with Ammon, and renders it "the border of Ammon":

and Ammon and Amalek, the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre; these are well known in Scripture, and as the enemies of Israel.

{g} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 20.

Psalms 83:8

Ver. 8. Assur also is joined with them,.... Before mentioned, or Assyria, though at so great a distance from Israel, and unprovoked by them: according to R. Joseph Kimchi, the sense is, that the Assyrians joined them, continuing in their wickedness, though their army had been destroyed by an angel in Hezekiah's time, of which they were unmindful; but this, as his son observes, makes this confederacy and war to be after the times of Hezekiah; whereas it was long before it: the Targum is,

"Sennacherib, king of Syria, is joined with them;"

and so some refer this to his invasion of Judea, and besieging Jerusalem, with an army consisting of many nations, in Hezekiah's time; but he was the principal there, and not an auxiliary, as here:

they have holpen the children of Lot; or were "an arm" {h} unto them, assisted and strengthened them: these were the Moabites and Ammonites, who were the principals in the war, and the rest auxiliaries, as it appears they were in the times of Jehoshaphat,
2Ch 20:1, here were ten different nations, which joined in confederacy against the people of Israel; to which answer the ten horns of the beast, or ten antichristian kings, who agreed to give their kingdom to the beast, and to make war with the Lamb and his followers, Re 17:12, and it may be observed, that these were on all sides of the land of Israel; the Edomites, Ishmaelites, and Amalekites, were on the south; the Moabites, Ammonites, and Hagarenes, were on the east; the Assyrians on the north; and the Philistines, Gebalites, and Tyrians, on the west: so that Israel was surrounded on all sides with enemies, as the Lord's people are troubled on every side, **2Co 4:8**, and so the Gog and Magog army, of which some understand this, will encompass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, Re 20:9.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{h} ewrz wyh "fuerunt brachium", Pagniuus, Montanus; "sunt brachium", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 83:9

Ver. 9. Do unto them as unto the Midianites,.... In the times of Gideon, who destroyed one another, trod in whose destruction the hand of the Lord was very visible, **Jud 7:20**, and much in the same manner was the confederate army of the Moabites, Ammonites, and others, destroyed in the times of Jehoshaphat, 2Ch 20:20,

as to Sisera, as to Jabin: Jabin was a king of Canaan, who oppressed Israel, and Sisera was his general; the latter was slain by a woman, Jael, the wife of Heber; and the former the hand of Israel prevailed against, until they destroyed him, **Jud 4:2**, the great victory which they obtained over them was

at the brook of Kison, or "Kishon", **Jud 4:7** with this compare 2Ch 20:16.

Psalms 83:10

Ver. 10. Which perished at Endor,.... Aben Ezra and Kimchi understand this of the Midianites; but rather it is to be understood of Jabin and Sisera, and the army under them, who perished at this place, which is mentioned along with Taanach and Megiddo, Jos 17:11, which are the very places where the battle was fought between Jabin and Israel, **Jud 5:19** according to Jerom {i}, it was four miles from Mount Tabor to the south, and was a large village in his days, and was near to Nain, the place where Christ raised the widow's son from the dead, **Lu 7:11**

they became as dung for the earth; being unburied, they lay and rotted on the earth, and became dung for it; see **Jer 8:2**, or were trodden under foot, as dung upon the earth; so the Targum,

"they became as dung trodden to the earth."

{i} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 88. L. and 91. E.

Psalms 83:11

Ver. 11. Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb,.... Two princes of Midian, who were slain, the one at the rock Oreb, and the other at the winepress of Zeeb, so called after their names, **Jud 7:25**,

yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna; kings of Midian, slain by Gideon, **Jud 8:21**.

Psalms 83:12

Ver. 12. Who said,.... Not the kings and princes of Midian just mentioned, but the confederate enemies of Israel, named Ps 83:6, to whom the like things are wished as to the Midianites and others, because they said what follows:

let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession; not only the temple, which was eminently the house of God, but all the habitations of the Israelites in Jerusalem, and other places, where the Lord vouchsafed to dwell; unless this should be ironically spoken by their enemies calling them so, because they pretended, as they reckoned it, to have and to hold them by the gift of God; whereas, of right, they belonged to them, at least some of them: such a claim was made by the Ammonites in the times of Jephthah, Jud 11:13, and to dispossess the Israelites was the intention of the Ammonites and Moabites in the times of Jehoshaphat, 2Ch 20:10.

Psalms 83:13

Ver. 13. O my God, make them like a wheel,.... Which, as the Targum adds, is rolled, and goes on, and rests not in a declivity; let them be as fickle and inconstant as a wheel; being in high, let them be in slippery places, and brought down to desolation in a moment; like a wheel set running down hill, so let them swiftly and suddenly come to ruin; or be in all kind of calamities, and continual troubles {k} as the wheel is always turning: some think there is an allusion to the wheel by which bread corn was bruised; see Isa 28:28, but the word {l} signifies a rolling thing before the wind, as a wisp of straw or stubble, which is easily carried away with it: Jarchi interprets it of the tops or down of thistles, which fly off from them, and roll up, and are scattered by the wind; see Isa 17:13, and which agrees with what follows:

as the stubble before the wind; which cannot stand before it, but is driven about by it here and there; and so wicked men are, as chaff and stubble, driven away in their wickedness, with the stormy wind of divine wrath and vengeance, and chased out of the world, which is here imprecated.

{k} "Vide Suidam in voce" trocou. {l} lglgk "rem in levem quae turbine circumagitur", some in Amama; "pappos", i.e. "lanuginem carduorum", so some in Grotius; "as a rolling thing", Ainsworth.

Psalms 83:14

Ver. 14. As the fire burneth the wood,.... Or "forest" {m}; which is sometimes done purposely, and sometimes through carelessness, as Virgil {n} observes; and which is done very easily and swiftly, when fire is set to it; even all the trees of it, great and small, to which an army is sometimes compared, Isa 10:18, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire; either the mountains themselves, as Etna, Vesuvius, and others; or rather the grass and trees that grow upon them, smitten by lightning from heaven, which may be meant by the flame: in like manner it is wished that the fire and flame of divine wrath would consume the confederate enemies of Israel, above mentioned; as wicked men are but as trees of the forest, and the grass of the mountains, or as thorns and briers, to the wrath of God, which is poured out as fire, and is signified by everlasting burnings.

{m} rey "sylvam", Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c. {n} Georgic. l. 2. v. 310.

Psalms 83:15

Ver. 15. So persecute them with thy tempest,.... Pursue them with thy fury, follow them with thy vengeance; cause it to fall upon them like a mighty tempest:

and make them afraid with thy storm; God has his storms and tempests of wrath and vengeance, which he sometimes causes to fall upon wicked men in this life, to their inexpressible terror, and with which he takes them out of this world; and he has still more horrible ones to rain upon them hereafter: see Job 27:20.

Psalms 83:16

Ver. 16. Fill their faces with shame,.... For their sins, or rather through disappointment, not being able to put their desperate and deep laid schemes into execution: or "with lightness" {o}; instead of a weight of honour and glory upon them, let them be despised. R. Joseph Kimchi renders it, "fill their faces with fire"; let their faces be as if they were on fire, as men's faces are, who are put to an exceeding great blush, or are most sadly confounded and ashamed:

that they may seek thy name, O Lord; not they themselves, who are filled with shame; for it is imprecated, that they be ashamed, and troubled for ever, and so as to perish, Ps 83:17 but others; for the words may be supplied, as in Ps 83:18 "that men may seek thy name, or that thy name may be sought": the judgments of God upon wicked men are sometimes the means of arousing others, and putting them upon seeking the Lord, his face, and his favour; that God would be merciful to them, pardon their iniquities, avert judgments from them, and preserve them from threatened calamities; and this is a good end, when answered; see
Isa 26:9.

{o} Nwlq Heb. "levitate", Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 83:17

Ver. 17. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever,.... As long as they are in this world, and to all eternity in another; a dreadful portion this:

yea, let them be put to shame, and perish; wholly and eternally, in soul and body, for evermore.

Psalms 83:18

Ver. 18. That men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah,.... Or, "that thou, thy name alone is Jehovah" {p}, a self-existent Being, the Being of beings, the everlasting I AM, the immutable God; for this name is expressive of the being, eternity, and unchangeableness of God, who is, and was, and is to come, invariably the same, **Re 1:4** which is to be understood not to the exclusion of the Son or Spirit, who are with the Father the one Jehovah, **De 6:4**, and to whom this name is given; see Ex 17:6, compared with 1Co 10:9 **Isa**

6:8 compared with Ac 28:25, but to the exclusion of all nominal and fictitious deities, the gods of the Heathens; and the being and perfections of God are known by the judgments he executes, **Ps 9:16**,

art the most High over all the earth; or,

and that thou art, &c. {q}, being the Maker and the Possessor of it, and the sovereign Lord of its inhabitants, doing in it what seems good in his sight; see Ge 14:22, for the accents require two propositions in the text: the Heathens {r} give the title of most high to their supreme deity: the Targum is,

"over all the inhabitants of the earth."

{p} Kmv hta yk "quod nomen tuum", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus. {q} "Quod tu, inquam, sis altissimus", Michaelis. {r} Pansan. Boeotica sive, l. 9. p. 555.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 84:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 84

To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah. Of "gittith", See Gill on "Ps 8:1". The Targum renders it here, as there,

"to praise upon the harp that was brought from Gath;"

and of the sons of Korah, See Gill on "Ps 42:1" and the argument of this psalm is thought to be much the same with that and Ps 43:1. It was, very probably, written by David; to whom the Targum, on Ps 84:8, ascribes it; though it does not bear his name, the spirit it breathes, and the language in which it is written, show it to be his; though not when he was an exile among the Philistines, in the times of Saul, as some in Kimchi think; for then the ark was not in Zion, as is suggested
Ps 84:7, but elsewhere; for it was brought thither by David, after he was king of Israel, **2Sa 7:2**, but rather when he fled from his son Absalom; though there is nothing in it that necessarily supposes him to be banished, or at a distance from the house of God; only he expresses his great affection for it, and his earnest desires for returning seasons and opportunities of worshipping God in it; and the general view of it is to set forth the blessedness of such who

frequently attend divine service: the inscription of it, in the Syriac version, is,

"for the sons of Korah, when David meditated to go out of Zion, to worship in the house of God: and it is called a prophecy concerning Christ, and concerning his church,"

as it undoubtedly is. Bishop Patrick thinks it was composed by some pious Levite in the country, when Sennacherib's army had blocked up the way to Jerusalem, and hindered them from waiting upon the service of God at the temple; and others refer it to the times of the Babylonish captivity; and both Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of the captivity, when the temple and altars of God were in ruins; but this does not agree with the loveliness of them, in which they were at the time of writing this psalm.

Ver. 1. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!] Which were erected in the wilderness by Moses at the command of God, and brought into the land of Canaan, where the Lord took up his dwelling: here he was worshipped, and sacrifices offered to him; here he granted his presence, and commanded his blessing; here it was in David's time; for as yet the temple was not built: it is called "tabernacles", in the plural number, because of its several parts: hence we read of a first and second tabernacle, **Heb 9:2**, there was the holy place, and the holy of holies, besides the court of the people; unless it can be thought to refer to the tabernacle David had built for the ark in Zion, and to the old tabernacle which was at Gibeon, **2Sa 6:17** the whole was a representation of the church of God, and the ordinances of it; which is the dwelling place of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, where he is worshipped, his presence enjoyed, his word is preached, ordinances administered, and the sacrifices of prayer and praise offered up; on account of all which it is very "amiable": what made the tabernacle of Moses lovely was not the outside, which was very mean, as the church of God outwardly is, through persecution, affliction, and poverty; but what was within, having many golden vessels in it, and those typical of things much more precious: moreover, here the priests were to be seen in their robes, doing their duty and service, and, at certain times, the high priest in his rich apparel; here were seen the sacrifices slain and offered, by which the people were taught the nature of sin, the strictness of justice, and the necessity and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ; here the Levites were heard singing their songs, and blowing their trumpets: but much more amiable are the church of God and its ordinances in Gospel times, where Christ, the great High Priest, is seen in the glories of his person, and the fulness of his grace; where Zion's priests, or the ministers of the Gospel, stand clothed, being full fraught with salvation, and the tidings of it; where Christ is openly set forth, as crucified and slain, in the ministry of the word, and the administration of ordinances; here the Gospel trumpet is blown, and its joyful sound echoed forth, and songs of love and grace are sung by all believers: besides, what makes these tabernacles still more lovely are, the presence of God here, so that they are no other than the house of God, and gate of heaven; the provisions that are here made, and the company that are here enjoyed; to which may be added, the properties of those dwellings; they are lightsome, like the habitations of Israel in Goshen; they are healthful, no plague comes nigh them; the inhabitants of them are not sick; their sins are forgiven them; they are safe, sure, and quiet dwelling places; see Isa 32:18 and they are lovely to such, and to such only, who have seen the unamiableness of sin, and are sick of its tents, and of enjoying its fading pleasures, and to whom Christ is precious, and altogether lovely: these have an intense affection for him, and for his house, word, worship, and ordinances, and with admiration say, "how amiable", &c.

Psalms 84:2

Ver. 2. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord,.... The courts of the tabernacle now at Gibeon, though the ark was in Zion, **2Ch 1:3** as the court of the priests, and the court of the Israelites, in which latter the people in common stood: after these David longed; he longed to enter into them, and stand in them, and worship God there; which soul longings and hearty desires were the fruits and evidences of true grace, of being born again; so newly born souls desire the sincere milk of the word, and the breasts of Gospel ordinances, as a newly born babe desires its mother's milk and breast; and he even "fainted", through disappointment, or length of time, being impatient of the returning season and opportunity of treading in them; see Ps 42:1,

my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God; he only inwardly desired, and secretly fainted, but audibly cried out in his distress, and verbally expressed, great vehemence, his desire to enjoy the living God: it was not merely the courts, but God in them, that he wanted; even that God which has life in himself, with whom is the fountain of life; who gives life to others, natural, spiritual, and eternal, and in whose favour is life; yea, whose lovingkindness is better than life, and which was the thing longed and thirsted after: and these desires were the desires of the whole man, soul and body; not only he cried with his mouth and lips, signified by his flesh, but with his heart also, sincerely and heartily; his heart went along with his mouth.

Psalms 84:3

Ver. 3. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house,.... One or other of the houses of men, where to build its nest; or its nest itself is called an house, as it seems to be explained in the next clause: the word here used signifies any bird; we translate it a "sparrow", and so Kimchi; the Targum renders it the "dove"; but the Midrash is,

"it is not said as a dove, but as a sparrow: the dove takes its young, and returns to its place; not so the sparrow:"

and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, have it the "turtle", the stock, or ring dove: and so the Targum, which paraphrases this clause, in connection with the following, thus:

"and the turtle a nest for herself, whose young are fit to be offered up upon thine altars:"

it is translated a swallow in Pr 26:2 and has its name in Hebrew from liberty, it not loving confinement, or because it freely visits the houses of men without fear:

even thine altars, O Lord of hosts; that is, as some understand it, there the swallow builds a nest, and lays her young; but it can hardly be thought that this could be done in them, since the priests were so often officiating at them, and there were so much noise, fire, and smoke there; it must be "at the sides of them", as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, or near unto them; or rather in the rafters of the house where they were; and the rafters and beams of the temple were of cedar, and in such turtles have their nests {s}; or in the houses adjoining to the tabernacle; or in the trees that might be near it; see Jos 24:26, and so the psalmist seems to envy and begrudge the place these birds had, and wishes he had the same nearness as they. Kimchi observes, that if this is to be understood of David, when in the land of the Philistines, at that time high places and altars were lawful everywhere, and there birds might build their nests; but if of the captivity, the birds found a place and built their nests in the ruins of the temple and altars; and so Jarchi; for as for the temple, it was not built in the times of David; besides, when built, had a scarecrow on it {t}: though the words may be considered as in connection with Ps 84:3 and what goes before be read in a parenthesis, as they are by R. Judah Ben Balsam, cited by R. Aben Ezra;

"my soul longeth for the courts of the Lord, crieth out for the living God: even thine altars, O Lord of hosts";

that is, for them; or may be supplied thus,

"I desire thine altars, O Lord of hosts" {u}:

as the birds above mentioned seek for a nest, and desire to find one, and have what they want, and nature prompts them to; so I desire a place in thine house and courts, and near thine altars; see **Mt 8:20**, or thus; as these birds rejoice, when they have found an house or nest for themselves and young; so should I rejoice, might I be favoured once more with attendance on thine altars, O Lord of hosts: mention is made of "altars", referring both to the altar of burnt sacrifice, and the altar of incense, both typical of Christ, Heb 13:10 and of his sacrifice and intercession; both which believers have to do with: it is added,

my King, and my God; when, by attending at his tabernacle, courts, and altars, he would testify his subjection to him as his King, and his faith in him, and thankfulness to him, as his God; see Joh 20:28.

{s} Vide Theocrit. Idyl. 5. {t} "To drive away birds", or "to destroy them", Misn. Middot, c. 4. s. 6. Maimon. & Bartenora, in ib. {u} So Noldius, p. 23.

Psalms 84:4

Ver. 4. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house,.... The house of God, in his tabernacles and courts; referring to the priests and Levites, who were frequently officiating there, in their turns, night and day; and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Gibeon, where the ark and tabernacle were, who had frequent opportunities of attendance on divine worship: and happy are those who have a name and place in the church of God, who abide there, and never go out; see Ps 65:4, the Targum is,

"blessed are the righteous, &c."

and the Arabic version, "blessed are all they that dwell, &c", they are happy on account of their settlement, and also on account of their work, as follows:

they will be still praising thee; which is delightful employment; for praise is pleasant and comely; and in which they are continually and constantly engaged, as their mercies return upon them, as they do every day; and especially on Lord's days, or at the stated times of public worship; such will bless and praise the Lord, both for temporal and spiritual blessings, as long as they live; see Heb 13:15.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 84:5

Ver. 5. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, &e.] Or, "for thee", as some choose to render the words; who have bodily strength from the Lord, for his worship and service, to go up to his house, and serve him: this, with what follows in the two next verses, seem to refer to the males in Israel going up from different parts of the land to Jerusalem to worship, who had strength so to do; when the women and children, for want thereof, stayed at home, which was their infelicity, as it was the happiness of the males that they had ability for such a journey and service: the Targum is,

"whose strength is in thy Word;"

the essential Word, the Messiah, who have spiritual strength in and from him; see Isa 45:24, without this there is no heart to go up to the house of God; and this will carry through a great deal of bodily weakness; and by it saints overcome the temptations of Satan to the contrary, and perform the several duties of religion:

in whose heart are the ways of them; or "thy ways" {x}; the ways of God, the ways of Zion, the ways to the house of God; who have these ways at heart, who ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherwards; who have not only ability, but inclination and readiness of mind, to walk in them; whose hearts are bent upon them, regarding no objection, difficulty, and discouragement; who stir up themselves and others to go up to the house of God, and are heartily desirous of being taught his ways, and walking in them, and take great pleasure and delight therein; they are ways of pleasantness and paths of peace to them; the word properly signifies "highways" {y}, ways cast up. Some render it "ascensions in his heart" {z}; the affections of whose heart go up to God, like pillars of smoke perfumed with frankincense, are after God, his ways and worship, and are set on things above.

{x} "Semitae tuae", Tigurine version; so Kimchi. {y} twlom "viae stratae", Montanus, Cocceius. {z} "Ascensiones in corde suo", V. L. so Sept.

Psalms 84:6

Ver. 6. Who passing through the valley of Baca,.... Kimchi interprets it a valley of springs, or fountains, taking the word to be of the same signification as in Job 38:16, and mention being made of a well and pools in it, or of mulberry trees, which grow, as he says, in a place where there is no water, and such a place was this; and therefore pools or ditches were dug in it, and built of stone, to catch rain water for the supply of travellers; and so Aben Ezra says, it is the name of a place or valley where were trees, called mulberries; and is by some thought to be the same with the valley of Rephaim, where we read of mulberry trees, **2Sa 5:22**, the Septuagint render it "the valley of weeping", and the Vulgate Latin version "the valley of tears"; which have led some interpreters to think of Bochim, a place so called from the children of Israel weeping there, **Jud 2:1**, it does not seem to design any particular place, through which all the males could not pass from the different parts of the land of Israel, as they came to Zion at the three grand festivals; but any difficult and troublesome place, any rough valley, or dry and thirsty land, where there was no water: so saints are passengers, travellers, or pilgrims, in this world, and often pass through a valley; are in a low valley, through the weakness of grace; a rough one, through affliction; and a dark one, through desertion and temptation; and a valley of weeping and tears, on account both of outward and inward trials. The way to Zion, or to the house and ordinances of God below, lies through the valley of weeping; none come rightly thither but who come weeping over their sins and unworthiness; or by repentance towards God, and by looking by faith to Christ whom they have pierced, and mourning for it; see Jer 50:4 and the way to Zion above lies through a vale of tears, shed in plenty by reason of sin, a man's own, original and actual, the sins of professors and profane, by reason of Satan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, and the distresses, divisions, and declensions of Zion; yet relief is afforded, help is given, refreshment is had, in this valley, for such passengers:

they make it a well; either the valley a well with their tears, an hyperbolical expression, like that in **La 2:18** or they account it as such, a dry valley, as if it was a well watered place; look upon all their toil and labour in going to the house of God as a pleasure; and esteem all reproach, afflictions, and persecutions, they meet with from the world, or relations, for the sake of religion, as riches and honours; or they find a supply, which is kindly and graciously given, even rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of valleys, streams of divine love, and precious promises in a wilderness, Isa 41:18 "or make him a well" {a}: that is, God himself; they account of him as such; they find him to be so, and make use of him as one, who is a well of living waters; such are his love, his covenant, and his grace; such are his Son and his fulness, his Spirit, the gifts and graces of it; all which yield a rich supply:

the rain also filleth the pools; of the word and ordinances: "or the rain covereth with blessings" {b}; the rain of divine love covers the passengers with spiritual blessings, which flow from it; Christ, whose coming is compared to the rain, brings a train of blessings with him to his people; and the Gospel, which drops as the rain, and distils as the dew, is full of the blessings of Christ; is a glorious revelation of them, and is the means of conveying them to the saints; or the "teacher covereth", or "is covered with blessings" {c}; the great Teacher of all, God, Father, Son, and Spirit; the Father teaches all his children to great profit and advantage, and covers or blesses them with all spiritual blessings; the Son is a teacher come from God, and is covered or loaded with the blessings of goodness, and communicates them to his disciples and followers; and the Spirit teacheth all things, and takes of the things of Christ, the blessings of his grace, and covers his people with them; and all under teachers, ministers of the Gospel, are clothed with salvation, and come forth in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

{a} whwtyvy Nyem "fontem constituunt eum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Ainsworth; "Deum ipsum", Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis. {b} hrwm hjey twkrb "quam in benedictionibus operit pluvia", Cocceius. {c} "Benedictionibus operietur docens", Montanus; "benedictiones induit doctor", Gejerus, Michaelis; so Gussetius, p. 725.

Psalms 84:7

Ver. 7. They go from strength to strength,.... Whose strength is in the Lord, and in whose heart are his ways, and who pass through the valley of Baca, and find a well of supply, and pools of blessings there; they renew their spiritual strength; they grow stronger and stronger every step they take; the way of the Lord is strength unto them: or "from army to army", or "from company to company" {d}, as Kimchi, alluding to the companies in which they went up to the feasts; see **Lu 2:44** when those who were more zealous, or more able to undergo journeys, would outgo the rest, and first overtake one company, and then another, and get to Zion first: or from victory to victory: first overcoming one enemy, and then another, as sin, Satan, and the world, being more than conquerors through him that has loved them: or "from doctrine to doctrine" {e}; being led first into one truth, and then into another, as they were able to bear them; and so following on to know the Lord, and increasing in the knowledge of him: or "from class to class" {f}; from the lower to an higher form in the school of Christ; so Jarchi interprets it, from school to school; and the Targum, from the sanctuary to the school; compare with this **Ro 1:17**

everyone of them in Zion appeareth before God; three times in the year, but not empty, Ex 34:20 so the saints appear before God in his church below, presenting their persons, souls and bodies, prayers and praises, as holy and spiritual sacrifices unto him; than which nothing is more desirable to them. This is the wished for happiness, and the issue of their travel, toil, and labour; see
Ps 42:2, and they shall appear before him, and in his presence, in the, church above; when Christ shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory, and be like him, and see him as he is; even everyone of them, not one shall be wanting; because he is great in power, not one of them shall fail; and he will present them to his Father, saying,

lo, I and the children thou hast given me: some render the words, "the God of gods will appear", or "be seen in Zion" {g}; there Jehovah manifests himself, and grants his gracious presence; this is the mount of the Lord, in which he is and shall be seen, Ge 22:14.

{d} lyx la lyxm "de exercitu in exercitum", Pagninus; so Piscator, Junius & Tremellius; "de turma ad turmam": Vatablus, Cocceius. {e} "De doctrina ad doctrinam", so some in Vatablus. {f} "Ex cohorte, vel classe rudiorum et infirmiorum, ad classem adultiorum", Gussetius, p. 725. {g} Nwyub Myhla la hary "videbitur Deus deorum in Sijon", Pagninus Montanus; "videtur Deus deorum in Sion", Musculus; so Sept. and Eth.

Psalms 84:8

Ver. 8. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer,.... the redemption of the captives, says Kimchi; for the building of the house, the temple, according to Jarchi; but rather for the courts of God, an opportunity of attending them, and for the presence of God in them; see Ps 84:2 in which he might hope to succeed, from the consideration of the Lord's being the God of hosts, or armies, in heaven and in earth; and so was able to do everything for him, and more for him than he could ask or think; his arm was not shortened, nor his ear heavy, Isa 59:1, and as this character is expressive of his power, the following is of his grace:

give ear, O God of Jacob; he being the covenant God of the people of Israel in general, and of David in particular; from whence he might comfortably conclude he would give ear to him, and it carries in it an argument why he should.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 84:9

Ver. 9. Behold, O God our shield,.... Which may be considered either as the character of God, who is addressed, who was David's shield, and the shield of his people, to protect and defend them from their enemies, and is the shield of all the saints; this favour encompasses them as a shield, and his truth is their shield and buckler; his veracity and faithfulness, in keeping covenant and promises; and so is his power, by which they are kept unto salvation; see **Ps 3:3**, or else it belongs to other persons and things the psalmist desires God would behold, in agreement with the following clause. Jarchi interprets it of the house of the sanctuary, as a shield unto them; much better Aben Ezra of the king their protector; and makes the sense of the petition to be, that God would save our king; it is best to apply it to Christ, afterwards called a sun and shield; see on
Ps 84:11, and to whom the following clause belongs:

and look upon the face of thine anointed; meaning either himself, David, the anointed of the God of Jacob, who was anointed with oil, in a literal sense, king of Israel, by the appointment and order of the Lord himself; and his request is, that God would look upon his outward state and condition, which was a distressed and an afflicted one, with an eye of pity and compassion, he being deprived of sanctuary worship and service, and of the presence of God there; see Ps 132:1 or rather he has a view to the Messiah, the Lord's Christ, or Anointed, the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King, anointed with the oil of gladness, the grace of the Spirit, without measure; and so the sense is, that though he and his petitions were unworthy of notice, yet he entreats that God would look upon his Son the Messiah, and for his sake hear and answer him;

look upon his person, and accept him in him, the Beloved; upon his future obedience and righteousness, and impute it to him; upon his sufferings, and death he was to endure, to save him from his sins; upon his blood to be shed for the remission of them, as he had looked upon the blood of the passover, upon the doorposts of the Israelites, and saved them when he destroyed the firstborn of Egypt; and upon his sacrifice, which is of a sweet smelling savour; and upon his fulness, for the supply of his wants. Kimchi takes it to be a prayer for the speedy coming of the Messiah.

Psalms 84:10

Ver. 10. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand,.... "One day"; so the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and so the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it; one day in the house of God, in the world to come, so Arama: though rather reference is had to the seventh day sabbath, then in being; and which with the psalmist was a delight, holy and honourable; and though now abolished, as to the time of it, with the rest of the ceremonial law, there is yet a day of public worship, called the Lord's day, and the day of the Son of man; and one of these days spent in the courts of the Lord, in an attendance on the word and ordinances, in worshipping in the fear of God, in spirit and in truth; in divine service, assisted by the Spirit of God, doing everything in faith, from love, and with a view to the glory of God; a day thus spent in religious exercises "is better than a thousand"; that is, than a thousand days; not than a thousand days spent in like manner, but than a thousand other days, common day, of the week; or than a thousand in other places, especially in places of sin, and in the company of wicked men; one day in God's house employed in spiritual exercises, and enjoying communion with him, is better than a thousand days in any of the houses of Satan, of sinful pleasure, or in the houses of sinful men; better as to peace of mind, solid pleasure, real profit, and true honour:

I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God; in the meanest post and place there; alluding to the Levites, who were some of them porters, and kept the doors of the Lord's house, 1Ch 26:1 or to the beggars that lay at the gates of the temple for alms; see **Ac 3:1** or to be fixed to the door post of it, alluding to the servant that was desirous of continuing in his master's house, and serving him for ever; who was brought to the door post, and had his ears bored through with an awl, Ex 21:5. Such a willing servant was the psalmist; and this sense the Targum seems to incline to, which renders it, "I have chose to cleave to the house of the sanctuary of God;"

or to be a waiter there, to watch daily at Wisdom's gates, and to wait at the posts of her doors; such lie in the way of conversion, and of finding Christ; in the way of spiritual healing, as the man at the pool; and of spiritual instruction, and of spiritual strength, and an increase of it: or to be, or sit, upon the threshold; or to be "thresholding" {i} of it; that is, to frequent the house of God, to be often going over the threshold of it; this the psalmist took delight to do, even to be the threshold {k} itself, for men to tread upon as they go into the house of God:

than to dwell in the tents of wickedness; meaning not houses built by wicked men, or with money ill got; but where wicked men dwelt, and who were so bad as to be called wickedness itself; perhaps the psalmist might have in his mind the tents of Kedar, where he had sometimes been; see Ps 120:5, now to live in the meanest place in the house of God, to wait at the door as a porter, to lie there as a beggar, to sit upon the threshold, and much more to go often over it, or be that itself, was abundantly preferable than to dwell "an age" {l} in the house of princes and great men, being wicked; than to live in the most pompous manner, at ease and in plenty, enjoying all the good things of life that heart can wish for; one hour's communion with God in his house is better than all this, and that for the reason following.

{i} Ppwtoh "esse in limine", Pagninus, Montanus; "ad limen esse", Musculus; "desidere ad limen", Tigurine version, Vatablus, so Ainsworth; "frequentare limen", Junius & Tremellius; "commorari limen", Piscator; "ad limen stare", Gejerus, Michaelis. {k} Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 565. {l} rwdm "quam aetatem agere", Piscator; "vel aetatem omnem agere", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 84:11

Ver. 11. For the Lord God is a sun and shield,.... Christ is "the sun of righteousness", and it is in the house of God that he arises upon his people with healing in his wings, **Mal 4:2** he is like the sun, the great light, the fountain of light, the light of the world, that dispels darkness, makes day, and gives light to all the celestial bodies, moon and stars, church and ministers; he is a "sun" to enlighten his people with the light of grace, to warm them with the beams of his love, to cheer and refresh their souls with the light of his countenance, and to make them fruitful and flourishing and he is a "shield" to protect them from all their enemies; he is the shield of faith, or which faith makes use of, against the temptations of Satan; he is the shield of salvation, and his salvation is a shield which shelters from divine justice, and secures from wrath to come:

the Lord will give grace and glory: he gives converting grace, the first grace, and all future supplies of it; he gives sanctifying grace, all sorts of it, faith, hope, love, and every other; he gives justifying, pardoning, adopting, and persevering grace, and all freely; he gives honour and glory among men, fellow creatures, and fellow Christians; and he gives eternal glory, the glory his Father gave him, the crown of glory, life, and righteousness: this is the gift of God through Christ; Christ gives a right unto it, meetness for it, and the thing itself; and in his house and ordinances, as he gives more grace to the humble that wait upon him, so he encourages and increases their hope of glory; and he that gives the one will certainly give the other; for these two are inseparably connected together, so that he that has the one shall enjoy the other:

no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly; that walk by faith, and on in Christ, as they have received him; who have their conversation according to the Gospel of Christ, and walk in the uprightness and sincerity of their hearts; from such the Lord will not withhold any good thing he has purposed for them, promised to them, or laid up for them in covenant; no spiritual good thing appertaining to life and godliness, and no temporal blessing that is good for them; he will deny them no good thing they ask of him, not anything that is good for them; and he will not draw back any good things he has bestowed on them, his gifts are without repentance.

Psalms 84:12

Ver. 12. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee,.... For grace and glory, and every good thing; that trusts in the Lord at all times, and not in the creature, or in an arm of flesh; but in the Lord of hosts and armies, in whom is everlasting strength, and is the sun and shield of his people: happy are such that trust in him, whether they have ability or opportunity of going up to the house of the Lord, or not; they are happy that have and make use thereof, and so are they that trust in the Lord, whether they have or not; they are safe, being as Mount Zion, which can never be removed; and do and shall enjoy perfect peace and solid comfort here, and eternal happiness hereafter; see Jer 17:5. The Targum is, "blessed is the man that trusteth in thy Word;"

in Christ, the essential Word.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 85:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 85

To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah. This psalm is generally thought to have been composed after the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon; and yet when they were in some distress from their neighbours, either in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, or in the times of Antiochus; but then this deliverance from captivity must be considered as typical of redemption by Christ; for as the title of the Syriac version is,

"it is a prophecy concerning Christ;"

it speaks of his dwelling in the land, of his salvation being near, and of the glory of the divine perfections as displayed in it; and perhaps some parts of it may respect the conversion of the Jews in the latter day; and Aben Ezra and Kimchi say, it is concerning the captivity of Babylon, yet also of their present captivity.

Ver. 1. Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land,.... The land of Canaan, which the Lord chose for the people of Israel, and put them into the possession of it; and where he himself chose to dwell, and had a sanctuary built for him; and therefore though the whole earth is his, yet this was his land and inheritance in a peculiar manner, as it is called, Jer 16:18, the inhabitants of it are meant, to whom the Lord was favourable, or whom he graciously accepted, and was well pleased with and delighted in, as appears by his choosing them above all people to be his people; by bringing them out of Egyptian bondage, by leading them through the Red sea and wilderness, by feeding and protecting them there; and by bringing them into the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, and settling them in it; and by many temporal blessings, and also spiritual ones, as his word and ordinances; but especially by sending his own Son, the Messiah and Saviour, unto them; and which perhaps is what is here principally intended:

thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob; or, "the captives" {m} of Jacob;

in a temporal sense, both out of Egypt, and out of Babylon; and in a spiritual sense from sin, Satan, and the law; the special people of God often go by the name of Jacob, and these are captives to the above mentioned; and redemption by Christ is a deliverance of them from their captivity, or a bringing of it back, for he has led captivity captive; and in consequence of this they are put into a state of freedom, liberty is proclaimed to these captives, and they are delivered, and all as the fruit and effect of divine favour.

{m} twbv "captivam turbam", Junius & Tremellius; i. e. "captivos", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 85:2

Ver. 2. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people,.... Took it from them, and laid it on Christ, who has bore it, and took it away, so as it shall never return more to their destruction; and by the application of his blood it is taken away from their own consciences; for this denotes the manifestation and discovery of forgiveness to themselves; it is a branch of redemption, and is in consequence of it; and is a fruit of the free favour and good will of God through Christ; and it only belongs to the Lord's special people, the people he has taken into covenant with him, and for whose iniquity Christ was stricken:

thou hast covered all their sin; this is but another phrase for forgiveness, see Ps 32:1, and this is done by the blood and righteousness, and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, the antitypical mercy seat, the covering of the law and its transgressions, and the people of God from its curse and condemnation; whose sins are so covered by Christ, as not to be seen by the eye of avenging justice, even all of them, not one remains uncovered.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 85:3

Ver. 3. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath,.... Or "gathered" {n} it; sin occasions wrath, and the people of God are as deserving of it as others; but the Lord has gathered it up, and poured it forth upon his Son, and their surety; hence nothing of this kind shall ever fall upon them, either here or hereafter; and it is taken away from them, so as to have no sense, apprehension, or conscience of it, which before the law had wrought in them, when pardon is applied unto them, which is what is here meant; see Isa 12:1,

thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger; the anger of God is very fierce against sin and sinners; it is poured forth like fire, and there is no abiding it; but, with respect to the Lord's people, it is pacified by the death of his Son; or he is pacified towards them for all that they have done, for the sake of his righteousness and sacrifice; and which appears to them when he manifests his love and pardoning grace to their souls; see Eze 16:63.

{n} tpoa "collegisti", Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 85:4

Ver. 4. Turn us, O God of our salvation,.... Who appointed it in his purposes, contrived it in council, secured it in covenant, and sent his Son to effect it; the prayer to him is for converting grace, either at first, for first conversion is his work, and his only; or after backslidings, for he it is that restores the souls of his people; and perhaps it is a prayer of the Jews, for their conversion in the latter day; when sensible of sin, and seeking after the Messiah they have rejected, when the Lord will turn them to himself, and turn away iniquity from them, and they shall be saved, **Ho 3:5**,

and cause thine anger towards us to cease: the manifest tokens of which are now upon them, being scattered up and down in the world, and made a proverb, a taunt, and a jeer; but will be removed, and cease, when they shall be converted.

Psalms 85:5

Ver. 5. Wilt thou be angry with us for ever?.... God is angry with the wicked every day, their life being a continued series of sin, without repentance for it, or confession of it; and he will be so for ever, of which they will have a constant sense and feeling; and is the worm that never dies, and the fire that is inextinguishable; but he does not retain his anger for ever with his own people; though he is displeased with them, and chastises them for their sins, his anger endures but for a moment; he is pacified towards them and turns away his anger from them, by discovering his pardoning love, and withdrawing his afflicting hand:

wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations? out of his heart, where it is supposed to be conceived; and out of his treasury, where it is thought to be laid up: this has been drawn out to a great length of time upon the Jewish nation; it has been upon them for almost twenty centuries, or ages, and still remains, and will until the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in; but it will not be drawn out to "all" ages or generations; for they shall return to the Lord, and seek him; and he will come to them, and turn away iniquity from them, and so all Israel shall be saved.

Psalms 85:6

Ver. 6. Wilt thou not revive us again,.... Their return from the Babylonish captivity was a reviving of them in their bondage, **Ezr 9:8** and the conversion of them in the latter day will be a reviving them again, be as life from the dead; they are like the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision, or like the dead in the graves; and their being turned to the Lord will be a resurrection, or quickening of them, as every instance of conversion is; see
Ro 11:15, men are dead in trespasses and sins, and they are quickened by the Spirit and grace of God, so that they revive, and live a life of sanctification; they are dead in law, and find themselves to be so, when spiritually enlightened; when the Spirit of God works faith in them, to look to and live upon the righteousness of Christ for justification; and who, after spiritual decays, declensions, and deadness, are revived again, and are made cheerful and comfortable by the same Spirit; all which may be here intended:

that thy people may rejoice in thee; it was a time of rejoicing in the Lord, when the Jews were returned from their captivity in Babylon; but their future conversion will be matter of greater joy, both to themselves and to the Gentiles; everlasting joy will be upon their heads, and in their hearts, when they shall return to Zion,
Ps 14:7 and so is the conversion of every sinner joyful to himself and to others; such rejoice in Christ, in his person, blood, and righteousness; and every view of him afterwards, as it is a reviving time, it fills with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: the Targum is,

"and thy people shall rejoice in thy Word;"

Christ, the essential Word.

Psalms 85:7

Ver. 7. Show us thy mercy, O Lord,.... Or, "thy grace" {o} and goodness, the riches of which are shown forth in Christ; the mercy promised to Abraham and others, long expected, wished, and prayed for; his pardoning mercy, justification, salvation, and eternal life, by his free grace:

and grant us thy salvation; Jesus, the Saviour, and salvation by him, an interest in it, and the joys of it; which is all a free gift, a grant of divine favour, and not according to the merits and works of men.

{o} Kdox "bonitatem tuam", Tigurine version, Musculus; "benignitatem tuam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "gratiam tuam", Cocceius, Gejerus.

Psalms 85:8

Ver. 8. I will hear what God the Lord will speak,.... This the psalmist says in the name of the people of the Jews, whom he represents, in all the foregoing expostulations and petitions, refusing to be still and quiet, and wait and listen for an answer to the above request from the Lord, who speaks by his providences, word, and Spirit; see **Hab 2:1**,

for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints; as he does in his word, which is the Gospel of peace; and by his ministers, who bring the good tidings of it, and publish it; and by the blood and righteousness of his Son, which both procure, call for, and produce it; and by his Spirit, the fruit of which is peace: it is an answer of peace, or of good and comfortable words, that the Lord returns to his people sooner or later; and it is only to his own people he speaks peace, to his covenant ones, with whom the covenant of peace is made; and to his saints, his Holy Ones, whom he has set apart for himself, and sanctified by his Spirit: as for the wicked, there is no peace unto them, nor any spoken to them by him: Kimchi understands by the "saints" the godly among the Gentiles, as distinct from the Lord's "people", the Jews:

but let them not turn again to folly; to doubt of and question the providence of God; so Arama; or to idolatry, which there was danger of, upon the Jews' return from Babylon; and it is observable, that they afterwards never did return to it, to which they were so much addicted before; or to a vicious course of life, to sin and iniquity, which is the greatest folly, after mercy has been shown; or to self-righteousness, and a dependence on it, to the neglect of

Christ and his righteousness, which is the great folly of the Jews to this day; and when the Lord shall quicken them, and convert them, show them his mercy and salvation, speak peace and pardon to them, it would be very ungrateful in them to turn again to this folly.

Psalms 85:9

Ver. 9. Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him,.... That have a true sense of sin and folly, are humbled for it, hate it, and depart from it, and do not return unto it; have a reverential affection for God, a sense of his goodness, particularly his pardoning grace and mercy, and fear him on account of it, and to offend him; and that serve him with reverence and godly fear: to these his salvation is nigh; temporal salvation, for that is his, it is of him, and from him; and he is a present help in time of trouble: spiritual and eternal salvation is his; it is of his contriving, settling, appointing, and giving; and was now near being accomplished by Christ; who also may be meant by God's salvation, being the Saviour of his providing, choosing, and sending, who, in a short time, would appear, and suddenly come to his temple, as Haggai and Malachi foretold, and as was fixed by Daniel's weeks, **Hag 2:6**, and therefore the psalmist speaks of it with the utmost certainty; "surely": verily of a truth it is so; there can be no dispute about it; for this psalm, as is generally thought, was written after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity; so that the coming of the Saviour was at hand, and the impetration of salvation not afar off; and the revelation of it in the Gospel was just ready to be made, or in a little time; see Isa 56:1 and this may be said to be nigh to sensible sinners, when it is brought unto them by the Gospel, and applied to their hearts by the Spirit of God, and they see their interest in it, the full possession of which in heaven is still nearer than when they believed; but then it is only so to them that fear the Lord; not to the wicked, from whom it is afar off, Ps 119:155, this character seems to design converted persons among the Gentiles, as well as among the Jews; see Ac 13:26

that glory may dwell in our land; Christ, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, having the same nature, names, worship, and honour; whose glory is the glory of the only begotten of the Father, and who also is the glory of his people Israel; who, when he was incarnate, dwelt among men, particularly in the land of Judea, where the writer of this psalm dwelt, and therefore calls it "our land"; and though his appearance was then but mean, in the form of a servant, yet he had a glory, which was manifest in his doctrine and miracles; and he was the Lord of glory, even when he was crucified; see **Heb 1:3** **Lu 2:32**, or else the

Gospel may be meant, which has a glory in it excelling that of the law; it containing glorious truths, and glorious promises; and which is the glory of a land where it is, and, when it departs, an "Ichabod" may be written on it: this came in consequence of Christ, the Saviour, and salvation by him, which it is a revelation of; and dwelt and abode in the land of Judea, till it was utterly despised and rejected: the whole of Gospel worship and ordinances may be intended also, together with a holy life and conversation becoming it.

Psalms 85:10

Ver. 10. Mercy and truth are met together,.... Or "grace and truth" {p}, which are in Christ, and come by him; and so may be said to meet in him, the glorious Person, the Author of salvation, before mentioned, **Joh 1:14**, these may be considered as perfections in God, displayed in salvation by Christ: "mercy" is the original of it; it is owing to that that the dayspring from on high visited us, or glory dwelt in our land, or Christ was sent and came to work salvation for us; it was pity to the lost human race which moved God to send him, and him to come, who is the merciful as well as faithful High Priest, and who in his love and pity redeemed us; and though there was no mercy shown to him, he not being spared in the least, yet there was to us; and which appears in the whole of our salvation, and in every part of it, in our regeneration, pardon, and eternal life; see **Lu 1:72** **1Pe 1:3** or "grace", the exceeding riches of which are shown forth in the kindness of God to us, through Christ; and to which our salvation, in whole and in part, is to be attributed, **Eph 2:7**, "truth" may signify the veracity and faithfulness of God, in his promises and threatenings: his promises have their true and full accomplishment in Christ, **Lu 1:72** so have his threatenings of death to sinful men, he being the surety for them, **Ge 2:17** and so mercy is shown to man, and God is true to his word:

righteousness and peace have kissed each other; as friends at meeting used to do: "righteousness" may intend the essential justice of God, which will not admit of the pardon and justification of a sinner, without a satisfaction; wherefore Christ was set forth to be the propitiation for sin, to declare and manifest the righteousness of God, his strict justice; that he might be just, and appear to be so, when he is the justifier of him that believes in Jesus; and Christ's blood being shed, and his sacrifice offered up, he is just and faithful to forgive sin, and cleanse from all unrighteousness, Ex 34:6 **Ro 3:25** and thus the law being magnified, and made honourable by the obedience and sufferings of Christ, an everlasting righteousness being brought in, and justice entirely satisfied, there is "peace" on earth, and good will to men: peace with

God is made by Christ the peacemaker, and so the glory of divine justice is secured and peace with God for men obtained, in a way consistent with it, **Lu 2:14** and Christ's righteousness being imputed and applied to men, and received by faith, produces a conscience peace, an inward peace of mind, which passeth all understanding, **Ro 5:1**.

{p} tmaw dox "gratia et veritas", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 85:11

Ver. 11. Truth shall spring out of the earth,.... Either the Gospel, the word of truth, which sprung up at once in the land of Judea, as if it came out of the earth; and from Zion and Jerusalem it came forth into the Gentile world: or else the truth of grace God desires in the inward parts, and which springs up in such who are like cultivated earth, or good ground, being made so by the Spirit and grace of God, particularly the grace of "faith"; by which some render the word {q} here, which springs up in the heart, and, with it, man believes to righteousness: or rather Christ himself, "who is the way, the truth, and the life"; who, though he is the Lord from heaven, yet may be said, with respect to his incarnation, to spring out of the earth, he taking flesh of the virgin: hence his human nature is said to be "curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth"; and "that new thing created in the earth", Ps 139:15

and righteousness shall look down from heaven: the justice of God, or the righteous God, shall look down from heaven on Christ, the truth, in our nature on earth, with pleasure beholding his obedience, sufferings and death, sacrifice and righteousness; being well pleased with him, and with all he did and suffered, and with all his people, considered in him: these upright and righteous ones his countenance beholds with delight, as they are clothed with Christ's righteousness, washed in his blood, and their sins expiated by his sacrifice, and as they are hoping in his mercy, and trusting in his Son.

{q} tma fides. Tigurine version, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius.

Psalms 85:12

Ver. 12. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good,.... Meaning not merely temporal good, as rain in particular, as some think, because of the following clause; but that which is spiritually good, his good Spirit and his grace, grace and glory: nor will he withhold any good thing from his people; every good and perfect gift comes from him:

and our land shall yield her increase; such who are like to the earth, which receives blessing of God, and oft drinks in the rain that comes upon it, and brings forth herbs to the dresser of it, **Heb 6:2**, these increase with the increase of God, bring forth fruits of righteousness, and grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ; though the whole may be interpreted of the incarnation of Christ, which agrees with what goes before and follows after; see Ps 67:6.

Psalms 85:13

Ver. 13. Righteousness shall go before him,.... The incarnate Saviour, the increase of our land, and fruit of the virgin's womb; and righteousness may be put for a righteous person, as Aben Ezra interprets it; and may design John the Baptist, a holy and just man, **Mr 6:20**, who was the forerunner and harbinger of Christ, went before him, and prepared the way for him, **Lu 1:76**

and shall set us in the way of his steps; the business of John the Baptist being not only to prepare the way of Christ by his doctrine and baptism, but to guide the feet of his people into the way of peace; or to direct them to believe in Christ, and to be followers of him, the Lamb of God, whithersoever he went; who has left an example of grace and duty, that we should tread in his steps, **Lu 1:79**, the Targum renders it, "in the good way"; and such a way John taught men to walk in.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 86:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 86

A Prayer of David. The title is the same with the Seventeenth Psalm, and the subject of it is much alike: it was written by David, when in distress, and his life was sought after; very likely when he was persecuted by Saul, and fled from him; so Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi: and as he was a type of Christ in his afflictions, as well as in his exalted state, it may not be unfitly applied to him, as it is by some interpreters. The Syriac inscription of it is,

"for David, when he built an house for the Lord; and a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles; and moreover, a prayer of a peculiar righteous man."

Theodoret thinks it predicts the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians, and Hezekiah's hope in God.

Ver. 1. Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me,.... This is spoken of God after the manner of men, who, when they listen and attentively hearken to what is said to them, stoop and bow the head, and incline the ear; and it denotes condescension in the Lord, who humbles himself as to look upon men, so to bow down the ear and hearken to them: this favour is granted to the saints, to whom he is a God hearing and answering prayer, and which Christ, as man and Mediator, enjoyed; see **Heb 5:7**,

for I am poor and needy; weak and feeble, destitute and distressed, and so wanted help and assistance; and which carries in it an argument or reason enforcing the above petition; for the Lord has a regard to the poor and needy; see **Ps 6:2**. This may be understood literally, it being the common case of the people of God, who are generally the poor and needy of this world, whom God chooses, calls, and makes his own; and so was David when he fled from Saul, being often in want of temporal mercies, as appears by his application to Ahimelech and Nabal for food; and having nothing, as Kimchi observes, to support him, but what his friends, and the men of Judah, privately helped him to; and the character well agrees with Christ, whose case this was; see **2Co 8:9**. Moreover, it may be taken in a spiritual sense; all men are poor and needy, though not sensible of it; good men are poor in spirit, are sensible of their spiritual poverty, and apply to the Lord, and to the throne of his grace, for the supply of their need; and such an one was David, even when he was king of Israel, as well as at this time, Ps 40:17, and may be applied to Christ; especially when destitute of his Father's gracious presence, and was forsaken by him and all his friends, Mt 27:46.

Psalms 86:2

Ver. 2. Preserve my soul,.... Or life, which Saul sought after; and this prayer was heard: David was often remarkably preserved by the Lord from his attempts upon him; and so was the soul or life of Christ preserved in his infancy from Herod's malice; in the wilderness from wild beasts, and from perishing with hunger; and often from the designs of the Jews, to take away his life before his time; and he was supported in death, preserved from corruption in the grave, and raised from thence: instances there are of his praying for the

preservation of his life, with submission to the will of God, in which he was heard,
Mt 26:39. The Lord is not only the preserver of the lives of men in a temporal sense, but he is the preserver of the souls of his people, their more noble part, whose redemption is precious; he keeps them from the evil of sin, and preserves them safe to his kingdom and glory; yea, their whole soul, body, and spirit, are preserved by him blameless, unto the coming of Christ:

for I am holy; quite innocent, as to the crime that was laid to his charge by Saul and his courtiers; or was kind, beneficent, and merciful, to others, and to such God shows himself merciful, they obtain mercy: or was favoured of God, to whom he had been bountiful, on whom he had bestowed many mercies and blessings; and therefore desires and hopes that, to the rest of favours, this of preservation might be added; or, as he was a sanctified person, and God had begun his work of grace in him, he therefore entreats the Lord would preserve him, and perfect his own work in him: some, as Aben Ezra observes, would have the sense to be,

"keep my soul until I am holy:"

so Arama interprets it,

"keep me unto the world to come, where all are holy:"

the character of an Holy One eminently and perfectly agrees with Christ, as well as the petition; see Ps 16:1.

O thou, my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee; both temporally and spiritually: the arguments are taken from covenant interest in God, which is a strong one; from relation to him as a servant, not by nature only, but by grace; and from his trust and confidence in him; all which, as well as the petition, agree with Christ; see
Ps 22:1.

Psalms 86:3

Ver. 3. Be merciful unto me, O Lord,.... In my distressed and miserable condition, being an object of mercy, pity, and compassion; this petition is used by Christ in Ps 41:10

for I cry unto thee daily; or "all the day"; every day, and several times in a day, Ps 55:17 constant and importunate prayer is the duty of saints, and available with God, **1Th 5:17**. Christ was much in the exercise of it, **Lu 6:12**.

Psalms 86:4

Ver. 4. Rejoice the soul of thy servant,.... With the discoveries of love, of pardoning grace, and mercy, before made sad with sin or sufferings; and with the light of God's countenance, before troubled with the hidings of his face: this may be applied to Christ, in sorrowful circumstances, who was made full of joy with his Father's countenance, Mt 26:37

for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul: in prayer, as the Targum adds; and it denotes the devotion, fervency, heartiness, and sincerity, of his prayer; the doing of it with a true heart, the lifting up of the heart with the hands unto God, **La 3:41** or by way of offering unto the Lord, not the body only, but the soul or heart also; or as a depositum committed into his hands; so Christ lifted up his eyes, and his heart and soul, to his divine Father; and also made his soul an offering for sin, and at death commended his spirit into his hands,
Joh 17:1,
See Gill on "Ps 25:1".

Psalms 86:5

Ver. 5. For thou, Lord, art good,.... Essentially and independently good, from whom every good and perfect gift comes; good in himself, and good to others; good to all, in a providential way; and good to his own special people in a way of grace: this is asserted by Christ, Mt 19:17

and ready to forgive; there is forgiveness with him, and it is to be had without difficulty; he has largely provided for it; he is forward unto it, he freely giving it; it is according to the riches of his grace; he does abundantly pardon; no sooner is it asked but it is had; this David knew by experience, Ps 32:5,

and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee; in truth, in sincerity, in a right way, through Christ, and faith in him; to such not only the Lord shows himself merciful, but is rich and abundant in mercy; he has a multitude of tender mercies, and abounds in his grace and goodness, and in the donation of it to his people; all which encourage their faith and hope in their petitions to

him.

Psalms 86:6

Ver. 6. Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer,.... As this psalm is called, in the title of it; his own prayer, and not another's, not one composed for him, but what was composed by him; this petition is repeated, as to the sense of it, from Ps 86:1 to show his importunity to be heard:

and attend to the voice of my supplications; which proceeded from the spirit of grace and supplication, put up in an humble manner, in a dependence on the mercy of God, which the word used has the signification of, and were attended with thanksgiving, Ps 86:12, according to the apostle's rule, **Php 4:6**, these were vocal prayers, and not mere mental ones; see **Heb 5:7**.

Psalms 86:7

Ver. 7. In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee,.... David had his troubles, both inward and outward, before and after he came to the throne, in private and public life; and every good man has his troubles; and there are some particular times or days of trouble; which trouble arises from different causes; sometimes from themselves, their corruptions, the weakness of their grace, and the poor performance of their duties; sometimes from others; from the persecutions of the men of the world; from the wicked lives of profane sinners, and especially professors of religion, and from the spread of false doctrine; sometimes from Satan and his temptations; and sometimes from the more immediate hand of God in afflictions, and from the hidings of his face: these troubles do not last always; they are but for a day, for a particular time; and such a season is a fit one for prayer, and the Lord invites and encourages his people to call upon him in prayer when this is the case, Ps 50:15. Christ had his times of trouble, in which he called upon his divine Father, Joh 11:33

for thou wilt answer me; which the idols of the Gentiles could not do; Baal could not answer his priests, 1Ki 18:26, this the psalmist concluded, both from the promise of God, Ps 50:15, and from his frequent experience, Ps 138:3, a very encouraging reason or argument this to call on the Lord: Christ was always heard and answered,
Joh 11:41.

Psalms 86:8

Ver. 8. Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord,.... Among the angels of heaven, as the Targum, in the king's Bible; see Mt 24:36, and who are sometimes called gods, and among whom there is none like to the Lord; see Ps 97:7 or among civil magistrates, he being King of kings, and Lord of lords, the only Potentate; among whom he judges, over whom he presides, and whom he sets up and puts down at pleasure, Ps 82:1, or among all those that are named gods in heaven, or on earth, the nominal and fictitious gods of the Gentiles, who are vanity, and the work of error: the portion of Jacob is not like them, Jer 10:15, there is none like him, for the perfections of his nature, his power, wisdom, faithfulness, holiness, justice, mercy, grace, and goodness; Ex 15:11.

neither are there any works like unto thy works; as the works of creation and providence, and those of redemption and grace, in which there is such a manifest display of the perfections of his nature, **De 3:24**.

Psalms 86:9

Ver. 9. All nations whom thou hast made,.... All nations, or the inhabitants of all nations, are made by the Lord, and of the blood of one man, Ac 17:26, and which as it shows the obligation of all men to come and worship, as is said should be; so likewise that the Lord, who has made them, is able to make them come to do homage to him, as follows:

shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; "come", spiritually, by faith and repentance, to the Lord himself, being drawn by the power of his efficacious grace through the ministry of the word; and, locally, to the house and ordinances of God, to attend upon them, and wait on him in them; and "worship" both externally, according to his revealed will; and internally in the exercise of grace, in spirit and in truth: this is prophetically said of the conversion of the Gentiles in Gospel times, especially in the latter day; see Re 15:4. Kimchi and Arama say this will be in the time of the Messiah:

and shall glorify thy name; the Lord himself, with their bodies and spirits, which are his; and ascribe the glory of their salvation to him, and glorify him for his mercy towards them in their redemption and conversion; glorify that and every perfection of his, displayed in their salvation; and also his Gospel, which brings them the news of it; see Ro 15:9.

Psalms 86:10

Ver. 10. For thou art great,.... In his nature, and the perfections of it; in his power, wisdom, truth, faithfulness, love, grace, and mercy; and in all his persons; the Father is great, greater than all; the Son is the great God, and our Saviour; and the Spirit, which is in his people, is greater than he that is in the world:

and doest wondrous things; in nature and providence; such as the forming of all things out of nothing; upholding all things by the word of his power; the formation of man, soul and body, and the union of both; and the constant government of the world; and more especially in grace, as the provision in the covenant in eternity, the mission of Christ in time, the conversion of a sinner, and bringing him to eternal glory:

thou art God alone; to the exclusion of all such who are not gods by nature; but not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, who are, with the Father, the one God, **1Jo 5:7**.

Psalms 86:11

Ver. 11. Teach me thy way, O Lord,.... The methods of thy grace, which thou hast taken, and dost take, in the salvation of men, in the contrivance, impetration, and application of it; or the way which thou hast marked out for thy people to walk in, the way of thy commandments: each of these the psalmist had knowledge of before; but he desires to be more and more instructed therein, as every good man does; see
Ps 25:4.

I will walk in thy truth; in Christ, the truth of types, and by whom grace and truth came, and who is truth itself, and the true way to eternal life; and to walk in him is to walk by faith in him, in hope of eternal happiness through him, **Joh 1:17** or in the truth of the Gospel, of Gospel doctrine, Gospel worship, and Gospel conversation; to walk in it is to walk becoming it, and abide by it, its truths and ordinances; see **2Jo 1:4**

unite my heart to fear thy name; there must be an heart given to man to fear the

Lord; for the fear of the Lord is not naturally in their hearts, or before their eyes; and they should have, not a divided and distracted heart, an heart divided between God and the world, between the fear of God and the fear of man; but a heart united to the Lord, that cleaves to him, and him only; a single and a sincere heart; a heart that has a single view to his glory, and a sincere affection for him; and such a heart the Lord has promised to give to his people, in order to fear him, Jer 32:39.

Psalms 86:12

Ver. 12. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart,.... And under that consideration, that he was his God, and which itself is sufficient matter of praise; this makes him amiable, and such he is, love itself: this is a blessing of pure grace, and is the foundation of all other blessings, and continues for ever: this work of praise, which is no other than ascribing glory to God, and giving thanks unto him for mercies received, the psalmist determines to do with his whole heart, which is to be engaged in every spiritual service; even all of it, all that is within it, every power and faculty of the soul, Ps 103:1, which is expressive not of perfection, but sincerity:

and I will glorify thy name for evermore; by celebrating the perfections of his nature, by giving him the glory of the works of his hands, by praising him for all favours, by devoting himself unto him, and by doing all things for his glory, and that for ever, in time as long as he lived, and to all eternity.

Psalms 86:13

Ver. 13. For great is thy mercy toward me,.... Both in things temporal and spiritual; an instance of which follows:

and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell; from a very distressed and disconsolate condition, being almost in despair, under a deep sense of sin, and a fearful apprehension of the wrath of God, as, particularly, when he was charged by Nathan; or from hell itself, and the severest punishment in it; from the second and eternal death, which every man is deserving of, and are only delivered from by the grace of God, and blood of Christ: this shows the sense the psalmist had of the just demerit of sin, and his thankfulness for deliverance from it; see
Ps 56:13. Kimchi interprets it of the grave; but says, there are some that

interpret it of the judgment, or condemnation of hell: such who have escaped great dangers in long and perilous journeys, or have been delivered from threatening diseases, are said to be saved from hell {r}.

{r} Vide Heraclit. de Incredib. c. 21. p. 86.

Psalms 86:14

Ver. 14. O God, the proud are risen against me,.... As all men naturally are, and as all are without the grace of God; and because they are, they deal in proud wrath: as, through the pride of their heart, they seek not after God; so, through the same, they persecute his people, treating them with the utmost contempt, and as the offscouring of all things. Jarchi interprets this particularly of Doeg and Ahithophel:

and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; or "terrible" {s} ones, who breathed out nothing but cruelty, threatenings, and slaughter; and who were many, and got together in bodies, and entered into combinations and conspiracies; and whom nothing would satisfy but the taking away of his life, which they sought after; see Ps 22:12

and have not set thee before them; they did not consider the omniscience of God, that he knew and took notice of all they did; nor his omnipresence, that he was everywhere, and there was no fleeing from him; nor his omnipotence, who was able to crush them to pieces; nor his justice, which will render tribulation to them that trouble his; nor his goodness, which should lead to repentance; nor had they any fear of him, nor respect to his glory: in short, they were like the unjust judge, who neither feared God nor regarded men, Lu 18:4.

{s} Myuyre "terribilium", Montanus; so some in Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 86:15

Ver. 15. But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion,.... Or merciful {t}, in the most affectionate and tender manner, as a parent to its child, or particularly as a mother to the son of her womb; and is rich and plenteous in his mercy, and freely bestows it; and this was the support of the psalmist under his troubles from his enemies, that though they were cruel the Lord was merciful:

and gracious; so he has been in eternity, as appears by his election of grace, by the covenant of his grace, and the provisions of it in his Son; and so he is in time, as is manifest from his kindness in Christ Jesus, from his justification, pardon, adoption, effectual calling and salvation of his people, which are all of grace;

longsuffering; not only to wicked men, but to his chosen ones; which longsuffering of his is salvation to them; he bears with them, and waits to be gracious to them, to bring them to repentance, and save them, **2Pe 3:9**,

plenteous in mercy; or goodness; See Gill on "Ps 86:5", and truth: in fulfilling promises; see Ex 34:6, to which these words refer.

{t} Mwxr "misericors", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 86:16

Ver. 16. O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me,.... For it seems the Lord had turned away from him, and had hid his face, and withheld the manifestation of his grace and mercy from him, and had not yielded him the help and assistance he expected; and therefore entreats that he would turn again to him, and show him his face and favour, and be merciful to him:

give thy strength unto thy servant; spiritual strength, strength in his soul, to exercise grace, perform duty, bear the cross, and stand up against all enemies, and hold out to the end: this is God's gift; and the psalmist pleads his relation to him as his servant, not merely by creation, but by grace; this is interpreted by the Jews of the King Messiah {u}:

and save the son of thine handmaid; out of the hands of those that were risen up against him; see Ps 119:94. Some think this has a special reference to Christ, who was made of a woman, called an handmaid, **Lu 1:48**, born of a virgin, the son of Mary: Arama says David uses the word "handmaid", because he sprung from Ruth the Moabitess.

{u} Zohar in Gen. fol. 58. 4. & 59. 1.

Psalms 86:17

Ver. 17. Show me a token for good,.... Not only one by which he might know that his sins were pardoned, and his person accepted with God, and that he should be saved; but one visible to others, even to his enemies, by which they might know that God was on his side, and would verily do him good: Kimchi interprets it of the kingdom; and his being raised to the throne of Israel was a token of the Lord's goodness to him, and showed that he had a delight in him, and meant to do him good:

that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed; of their envy of him, their combinations and conspiracies against him, and of all their efforts to distress him, to hinder him of the kingdom, or deprive him of it, or make him uncomfortable in it:

because thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me; he comforted him by helping him against his enemies, and out of his troubles; and, by doing both, showed him a token for good, and filled his enemies with shame and confusion.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 87:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 87

A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah. Whether this psalm was composed by David, in a view of the temple to be built by his son Solomon; or whether by one that returned from the Babylonish captivity, who wrote it for the comfort of those that wept at the laying of the foundation of the second temple; it seems evident that the subject matter of it is the church of God in Gospel times, and especially in the latter day glory: the title in the Syriac version is,

"concerning the redemption of Jerusalem."

Ver. 1. His foundation is in the holy mountains. The Jewish writers connect these words with the title of the psalm, and make the sense to be this; "the foundation" or argument "of it", the psalm, "is concerning the holy mountains" of Zion and Jerusalem; so Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi; and the Targum joins them together thus, "by the hands of the sons of Korah is said a song, which is founded by the mouth of the fathers that were of old:"

but the words are a part of the song or psalm, which begins in an abrupt manner, just as **So 1:2** and may be rendered either "its foundation", or "his foundation", and refer either to the church, or to the Lord, and the sense is the same either way; for the church's foundation is also the Lord's foundation, a foundation of his laying; see Isa 14:32 and is laid "in the holy mountains"; alluding to the mountains of Zion and Moriah, where the temple stood, a type of the church; or to the mountains about Jerusalem, by which also the church is frequently signified; and by those, in a mystical and spiritual sense, may be meant the purposes and decrees of God, which are as mountains of brass, **Zec 6:1**, they are like the ancient mountains for the antiquity of them, and are high, and not to be reached and searched into, and are firm, solid, and immoveable; and are also holy, particularly the decree of election, that source of all true holiness, which has sanctification for its end and means; and is the foundation of the church, which supports and secures it, and stands sure, **2Ti 2:19**, also the covenant of grace, which is sure and immoveable, and in which are provisions for holiness, internal and external; and is the foundation and security of the church, and all believers; but especially Jesus Christ, the Rock of ages, is meant, the Holy One of Israel, the sure foundation laid in Zion: some interpret these holy mountains of the holy apostles, who were in an high and eminent station in the church, and were doctrinally foundations, as they ministerially laid Christ, as the only foundation; see **Eph 2:20**, it may be rendered, "among the holy mountains" {w}; and so may regard, as Cocceius explains it, the several kingdoms and provinces of the world in which the Gospel shall be preached; and the church shall be established and settled in the latter day even upon the tops of mountains, which shall become holy to the Lord, **Isa 2:2**.

{w} vdq yrrhb "inter montes sanctitatis", Junius & Tremellius; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 87:2

Ver. 2. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion,.... Which the Targum interprets of the schools, as preferable to the synagogues: the Lord loves Zion herself; that is, the church, and therefore has chosen it for his habitation, took up his rest and residence in it, has founded it, and set Christ as King over it, and by whom he has redeemed it; and he loves her gates, the public ordinances; he loves them that come to Zion's gates, and wait and worship there, and who enter in and become members thereof; and he loves what is done there, he being there publicly prayed unto, and publicly praised by a large number of his people; where his word is faithfully preached, and reverently attended to, and his ordinances truly administered, and the graces of his saints exercised on him: wherefore, because all this is done socially, and in a public manner, and so much for his own manifestative glory, he esteems these

more than all the dwellings of Jacob; the private habitations of his people; yet he has a regard to these, the bounds of which he fixed from eternity, and where he was delighting himself before they were in being; and he loves the persons that dwell in them, and what is done there in a right manner, as closet and family worship; but when these are put in competition with public worship, the latter is preferred unto them, because done by more, and more publicly; Zion and its gates, the church and its ordinances, are preferable to all the dwellings of Jacob put together.

Psalms 87:3

Ver. 3. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.] Which is to be understood not of the city of Jerusalem literally, which was a magnificent city, compact together, full of inhabitants, and spacious houses, the metropolis of Judea, and seat of the kings of Judah; and what was most glorious of all that could be said of it, it was the city of God; and so Jarchi interprets it, the glory spoken of it is, that it is the city of God; here the temple was built, and many glorious things were in it; here God granted his presence, and his worship was kept up: and besides, there were other and more glorious things spoken of it, by way of prophecy; as, that the Messiah should come in person into it, as the owner of it, and give it a greater glory than the first temple had; here he was to preach his doctrines, and do his miracles, which he accordingly did; near this city he suffered, died, and was buried; rose again, ascended to heaven; and here he poured forth the gifts of the Holy Spirit in an extraordinary manner: but rather this is to be interpreted of the church of God, comparable to a city, and which is of God's building, and where he dwells;
See Gill on "Ps 48:1" of which glorious things are spoken for the present; as, that it is the city of the King of kings, the name of which is "Jehovah Shammah", the Lord is there; its foundation is Christ; its walls and bulwarks are salvation; its gates are praise; glorious ordinances are administered in it, and glorious truths are preached here; and so the words may be rendered, "glorious things are spoken in thee" {x}: and of it also glorious things are spoken, by way of prophecy, as, what shall be in the latter day; a great effusion

of the Spirit upon it; the gracious presence of Christ in it in a more visible manner; a great increase of converts both among Jews and Gentiles, which shall flock into it; and the great spread of the Gospel, which shall be the means of it; the unity, harmony, and concord of professors of religion; the holiness of their lives and conversation; and the very great peace and prosperity which will everywhere abound; and especially glorious things are spoken of the New Jerusalem, the city of our God; of which see Re 21:1.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{x} Kb "in te", Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Schmidt, Syr. vers.

Psalms 87:4

Ver. 4. I will make mention of Rahab,.... Not of Rahab the harlot, as Jerom and others of the ancients {y} interpret it; for the letters of both words are not the same in Hebrew; though mention is made of her in the Gospel, and Gospel times, in the genealogy of Christ, and by two of the apostles, **Mt 1:5**, but of Egypt; and so the Targum interprets it, which is so called, as it is in Ps 89:10 either from the pride of its inhabitants, the word having in it the sense of pride and haughtiness, and these being naturally proud and haughty, as Philo {z} the Jew observes; or from some city of this name in it; or rather this respects that part of Egypt called Delta, which was in the form of a pear; which "raab", or "rib", in the Egyptian language, signifies; in the midst of which was the city of Athribis of Ptolemy {a}, which has its name from hence, and signifies the heart of a pear; and still this part of the country is called Errifia, as Leo Africanus {b} relates, and is here put for the whole country: the passage respects the conversion of it, and are the words of God foretelling it, and of which mention is made in
Isa 19:18 and had its accomplishment, at least in part, on the day of Pentecost, **Ac 2:10** and will be further accomplished in the latter day, when the people that now inhabit that country shall be converted, which will be when the kingdoms of this world become Christ's: and Babylon; the country of the Assyrians and Chaldeans, of which Babylon was the metropolis: mention is made of the conversion of these in Isa 19:24 and which also was fulfilled, in part, on the day of Pentecost, **Ac 2:9** and in Babylon there was a church, in the times of the Apostle Peter, **1Pe 5:13** these the Lord promises that he would make mention of:

to them that know me; says he, that so they might expect their conversion, and take notice of them, and receive them, when converted;

or among them that know me {c}; that is, I will make mention of them, as such that know me, and belong to that number; even such that love the Lord, believe in him, own and confess him, and yield obedience to him, and whom he takes into communion and fellowship with himself, and makes his friends, familiars, and acquaintance:

behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; where also will be many converts, regenerate persons, and such as know the Lord; of which there has been a partial accomplishment already; of Philistia, see **Ac 8:40**, for Azotus, or Ashdod, was a city of the Philistines; and of Tyre, see Ps 45:12 and of Ethiopia, and its conversion, mention is made in Ps 68:31, and the Ethiopian eunuch is one instance of it, **Ac 8:27** of all which there will be abundance of instances in the latter day; and thus, as the church is commended from her foundation, from the superlative love the Lord bears to her, and the glorious things spoken of her; so from the number of her converts in different nations, in which her glory in Gospel times would greatly lie; see Isa 49:18,

this man was born there; not any particular man; any single individual, famous for piety, wisdom, wealth, or power; as if it suggested that now and then such a person might be born in the above countries; whereas in Zion there were frequently many such persons born: nor is it to be understood of the Messiah, that should come out of Zion, as if that was the reason why multitudes from the above places should flock thither, because of the birth of this illustrious Person: the Targum understands it of a great personage, a king; and paraphrases it,

"a king is educated there;"

but it designs many persons in each of those countries that should be born again, of water, and of the Spirit, of the incorruptible seed of grace, by the ministry of the word; who, because they should be regenerated by means of the Gospel preached in Zion, therefore are said to be born there; and besides, being born again, they are admitted members of Zion, and to all the privileges of Zion, as true born Israelites; and are brought up there, are nourished with the sincere milk of the word, and nursed with the breasts of Gospel ordinances there administered; and so Zion, or Jerusalem, the Gospel church, is truly the mother of them all, **Ga 4:26**.

{y} Aug. Euthymius, Theodoret, & alii, in Amama, Antibarbar. Bibl. I. 3. p. 820. {z} De Agricultura, p. 196. {a} Geograph. l. 4. c. 5. {b} Descriptio Africae, l. 8. c. 2. {c} yedyl "inter scientes me", Vatablus, Gejerus, Schmidt; "apud noscentes me", Junius & Tremellius; "apud familiares meos", Piscator; "apud notos meos", Amama.

Psalms 87:5

Ver. 5. And of Zion it shall be said,.... The same with the city of God, the church before commended:

this and that man was born in her; this and that great man, in opposition to a mean person, in the preceding verse: "or a man and man" {d}; men of all sorts, and of different nations, Jews and Gentiles, and great numbers of them:

and the Highest himself shall establish her; the church of God, though founded by him, and laid on a sure foundation, on the Rock of ages, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, yet is sometimes fluctuating and unsettled;

it is tossed with tempests, the persecutions of men, the errors and heresies of false teachers, and the contentions and divisions of its own members; and is not always in one place, but is removed from one place to another, and is obliged to flee into the wilderness; but in the latter day it will be established and settled; it will be a tabernacle that shall not be taken down nor removed; but shall be established for ever, Ps 89:37, and this is the work of God, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, whatever instruments he may make use of, as ministers of the word, and kings of the earth; as it is his work, and his only, to establish particular believers, **2Co 1:21**, so it is his to establish the church in general: or it may be rendered, "he shall establish her on high" {e}, which will be the case when she is established upon the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, **Isa 2:2**.

{d} vyaw vya "vir et vir", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis. {e} So the Targum, and Ainsworth.

Psalms 87:6

Ver. 6. The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, &]. Not in the Lamb's book of life; for that was written from eternity, Re 13:8 but in the writing of the house of Israel, among the living in Jerusalem, and with his righteous ones; which is done at effectual calling, and when admitted members of Gospel churches, whereby they openly appear to be the children of God, and are taken into the list and catalogue of saints; see Eze 13:9 or in the last day, when the Lord will take the number of his people,

and cause them again to pass under the rod of him that telleth them; and will make up his jewels, complete the number of them in conversion, and collect them all together; and his counting and writing them may denote his exact knowledge of them, and his care that he lose none; but this will only concern regenerate persons; the Lord will not count nor make any account of any others, as follows:

that this man was born there; and the man that is born in Zion, even every regenerate man, will be counted and numbered by him, and declared to be his, when he makes a general survey and muster of his saints another day.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 87:7

Ver. 7. As well the singers as the players on the instruments shall be there,.... In Zion, in the church; signifying that there should be great spiritual joy there when the above things should be accomplished; great joy in the churches, because of the conversion of Jews and Gentiles; and great joy in the persons themselves, born again, and brought to Zion; in allusion to the vocal and instrumental music used in the temple service; see Isa 35:10

all my springs are in thee; which are either the words of the psalmist, or rather of the souls born in Zion; who, in their spiritual songs, will thus express themselves concerning the church, in which are the word and ordinances, compared to fountains of living water, and are springs of spiritual peace and refreshment to converted persons; see **Joe 3:18**, where also the Spirit and his graces are communicated by the ministry of the word and ordinances in the church, which are signified by wells and rivers of living water, **Joh 4:14** and particularly here stands Christ, the fountain of gardens, and well of living waters, for the supply and comfort of saints, and his blood a fountain opened for cleansing and purification, **So 4:15**, yea, here flows the river of God's love, the streams whereof make glad the city of God; and which, like the waters in Ezekiel's vision, come from under the threshold of the sanctuary, Ps 46:4 or the words may be considered as an address of the psalmist, or of the church, or of regenerate persons, unto Christ:

all my springs or fountains are in thee; the fulness of grace dwells in him, the springs of all joy, and peace, and comfort, are with him; the wells of salvation are in him, and both grace and glory are from him; he is the spring of all grace now, and the fountain of all happiness hereafter. Gussetius {z} has a very peculiar version of the whole text, which he renders thus

"all my fountains will be singing in thee, or of thee, as those that dance at the sound of the pipe:"

taking the allusion to be to the playing of fountains in gardens, and to the delightful sound the waters make; but the accents will not admit of such a sense.

{z} Comment. Ebr. p. 845.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 88:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 88

A Song [or] Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite. Of the word "maalath", See Gill on "Ps 53:1". "Leannoth" signifies "to answer". Perhaps this song was to be sung alternately, or by responses. Both words are thought by some, as Aben Ezra, to be the beginning of a song, to the tune of which this was set; and by others a musical instrument, on which it was sung; a hollow one, as the word "maalath" seems to signify, a wind instrument: others are of opinion that they intend the subject matter of the psalm, and render them, "concerning the disease to afflict", or "the afflicting disease" {a}; either a bodily one, which threatened with death, under which the psalmist now was; or a soul disorder, being under desertions, and a sense of divine wrath, which were very afflicting. The psalm is called "Maschil", which may be translated "causing to understand"; it being instructive to persons in a like case to apply to God, as he did; and if it respects Christ, it teaches many things concerning him, his sorrows and his sufferings: the author of it is said to be Heman the Ezrahite; the Targum calls him Heman the native, and the Septuagint render it Heman the Israelite, and Arama says this is Abraham. There were two of this name, one the son of Zerah, the son of

Judah, and so might be called the Zerahite, and with the addition of a letter the Ezrahite; he is mentioned along with others as famous for wisdom, **1Ch 2:6**, but this man seems to be too early to be the penman of this psalm: though Dr. Lightfoot {b} is of opinion that this psalm was penned by this Heman many years before the birth of Moses; which and the following psalm are the oldest pieces of writing the world has to show, being written by two men who felt and groaned under the bondage and affliction of Egypt, which Heman here deplores, and therefore entitles his elegy "Maalath Leannoth, concerning sickness by affliction"; and accordingly he and his brethren are called the sons of Mahali, **1Ki 4:31**. There was another Heman, who was both a singer in David's time, and the king's seer, who seems most likely to be the person, **1Ch 6:33**, he was when he wrote this psalm under sore temptations, desertions, and dejections, though not in downright despair; there is but one comfortable clause in it, and that is the first of it; many interpreters, both ancient and modern, think he is to be considered throughout as a type of Christ, with whom everything in it more exactly agrees than with anyone man else. The Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it of the people of Israel in captivity; and so the Syriac version entitles it,

"concerning the people that were in Babylon;"

but a single person only is designed throughout. Spinosa {c} affirms, from the testimony of Philo the Jew, that this psalm was published when King Jehoiachin was a prisoner in Babylon, and the following psalm when he was released: but this is not to be found in the true Philo, but in Pseudo-Philo {d}.

Ver. 1. O Lord God of my salvation,.... The author both of temporal and spiritual salvation; see Ps 18:46 from the experience the psalmist had had of the Lord's working salvation for him in times past, he is encouraged to hope that he would appear for him, and help him out of his present distress; his faith was not so low, but that amidst all his darkness and dejection he could look upon the Lord as his God, and the God of salvation to him; so our Lord Jesus Christ, when deserted by his Father, still called him his God, and believed that he would help him, Ps 22:1.

I have cried day and night before thee, or "in the day I have cried, and in the night before thee"; that is, as the Targum paraphrases it,

"in the night my prayer was before thee."

prayer being expressed by crying shows the person to be in distress, denotes the earnestness of it, and shows it to be vocal; and it being both in the day and in the night, that it was without ceasing. The same is said by Christ, Ps 22:2 and is true of him, who in the days of his flesh was frequent in prayer, and especially in the night season, **Lu 6:12** and particularly his praying in the garden the night he was betrayed may be here referred to, Mt 26:38.

{a} twnel tlxm le "pro infirmitate ad affligendum", so some in Munster; "de miseria ad affligendum", Tigurine version; "de infirmitate affligente", Piscator, so Gussetius, p. 622. {b} Works, vol. 1. p. 699. {c} Tractat. Theolog. Politic. c. 10. p. 184. {d} Apud Meor Enayim, c. 32. p. 106.

Psalms 88:2

Ver. 2. Let my prayer come before thee,.... Not before men, as hypocrites desire, but before the Lord; let it not be shut out, but be admitted; and let it come with acceptance, as it does when it ascends before God, out of the hands of the angel before the throne, perfumed with the much incense of his mediation, **Re 8:3**,

incline thine ear unto my cry; hearken to it, receive it, and give an answer to it; Christ's prayers were attended with strong crying, and were always received and heard, **Heb 5:7**.

Psalms 88:3

Ver. 3. For my soul is full of troubles,.... Or "satiated or glutted" {e} with them, as a stomach full of meat that can receive no more, to which the allusion is; having been fed with the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, so that he had his fill of trouble: every man is full of trouble, of one kind or another, Job 14:1 especially the saint, who besides his outward troubles has inward ones, arising from indwelling sin, the temptations of Satan, and divine desertions, which was now the case of the psalmist: this may be truly applied to Christ, who himself said, when in the garden, "my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death", Mt 26:38, he was a man of sorrows all his days, but especially at that time, and when upon the cross, forsaken by his Father, and sustaining his wrath: "his soul" was then "filled with evil things" {f}, as the words may be rendered:

innumerable evils compassed him about, Ps 40:12, the sins of his people, those evil things, were imputed to him; the iniquity of them all was laid upon him, as was also the evil of punishment for them; and then he found trouble and sorrow enough:

and my life draweth nigh unto the grave: a phrase expressive of a person's being just ready to die, Job 33:22 as the psalmist now thought he was, Ps 88:5, it is in the plural number "my lives" {g}; and so may not only denote the danger he was in of his natural life, but of his spiritual and eternal life, which he might fear, being in darkness and desertion, would be lost, though they could not; yea, that he was near to "hell" itself, for so the word {h} may be rendered; for when the presence of God is withdrawn, and wrath let into the conscience, a person in his own apprehension seems to be in hell as it were, or near it; see **Jon 2:2**. This was true of Christ, when he was sorrowful unto death, and was brought to the dust of it, and under divine dereliction, and a sense of the wrath of God, as the surety of his people.

{e} hebv "saturata", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "satiata", Tigurine version. {f} twerb "in malis", Pagninus, Montanus; "malis", Junius & Tremellius, &c. {g} yyx "vitae meae", Montanus, Michaelis. {h} lwavl "ad orcum", Cocceius; "inferno", Gejerus; "ad infernum", Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 88:4

Ver. 4. I am counted with them that go down into the pit,.... With the dead, with them that are worthy of death, with malefactors that are judicially put to death, and are not laid in a common grave, but put into a pit together: thus Christ was reckoned and accounted of by the Jews; the sanhedrim counted him worthy of death; and the common people cried out Crucify him; and they did crucify him between two malefactors; and so he was numbered or counted with transgressors, and as one of them, Isa 53:3.

I am as a man that hath no strength; for his "strength" was "dried up like a potsherd", Ps 22:15, though he was the mighty God, and, as man, was made strong by the Lord for himself.

Psalms 88:5

Ver. 5. Free among the dead,.... If he was a freeman, it was only among the dead, not among the living; if he was free of any city, it was of the city of the dead; he looked upon himself as a dead man, as one belonging to the state of the dead, who are free from all relations, and from all business and labour, and removed from all company and society; he thought himself quite neglected, of whom there was no more care and notice taken than of a dead man:

like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more; in a providential way, as in life, to clothe them, and feed them, and protect and preserve them; in which sense God is said to be mindful of men, **Ps 8:4**, who when dead have no need to be minded, and remembered in such a manner; otherwise God does remember the dead, and takes care of their dust, and will raise them again; and especially he remembers his own people, those that sleep in Jesus, who will be thought of in the resurrection morn, and will be raised first, and brought with Christ; see Job 14:13,

and they are cut off from thy hand; that is, the slain that lie in the grave, the dead that are buried there; these are cut off from the hand of Providence, they needing no supplies from thence as in the time of life. The Targum is,

"and they are separated from the face of thy majesty."

or "they are cut off by thine hand" {i}; by the immediate hand of God, in a judicial way; so Christ in his death was like one of these, he was cut off in a judicial way, not for his own sins, but for the transgressions of his people, Isa 53:8.

{i} Kdym "manu tua", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Amama.

Psalms 88:6

Ver. 6. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit,.... The Targum interprets it of

"captivity which was like unto the lowest pit;"

and so Jarchi and Kimchi. Some understand it of a prison or dungeon, into which the psalmist was put; it may be interpreted of the pit of the grave, into which Christ was laid; though he continued in it not so long as to see corruption; from that prison and judgment he was quickly taken, Ps 16:10, "in darkness"; both corporeal and spiritual,
Mt 27:45, and it is in the Hebrew text "in darknesses" {k}, denoting both:

in the deeps; in the deep waters of affliction, sorrows, and sufferings; see Ps 69:1. The allusion is to a dark and deep pit, under ground, such as in the eastern countries they used to put their captives and prisoners into in the night, and take them out in the morning; and which custom continues still among the Turks. Leo Africanus {l} says he has seen three thousand Christian captives together, clothed in a woollen sack, and chained to one another; and in the night put into pits or ditches under ground; see **Zec 9:11**.

{k} Mykvxmb "in loca tenebrosa", Tigurine version, Musculus; "in tenebrosissimis", Junius & Tremellius; "in densis tenebris", Piscator; "in caligines, vel obscuritates", Gejerus. {l} Descriptio Africae, l. 3. p. 413.

Psalms 88:7

Ver. 7. The wrath lieth hard upon me,.... So some good men apprehend, when they are under afflictive dispensations of Providence, and are left of God, and have not his immediate presence, and the discoveries of his love; though fury is not in him, nor does any wrath in reality fall upon them, only it seems so to them; see Ps 38:1, but the wrath of God did really lie with all the effects of it upon Christ, as the surety of his people, when he was made sin, and a curse for them; see Ps 89:38,

and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves; the afflictions of God's people are compared to waves and billows of the sea, which are many, and come one upon the back of another, and threaten to overwhelm and sink; see Ps 42:7 and so the sufferings of Christ are signified by waters coming into him, and floods overflowing him; and hence they are called a baptism, Ps 69:1, and these were brought upon him by the Lord; he spared him not; he laid the whole chastisement, all the punishment due to the sins of his people, on him; he caused every wave to come upon him, and him to endure all sorrows and sufferings the law and justice of God could require.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 88:8

Ver. 8. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me,.... His familiar friends, who were well known to him, and he to them: it is a mercy and

privilege to have good acquaintance, and hearty faithful friends, to converse and advise with, whether about things civil or religious; and it is an affliction to be deprived of them; and oftentimes in distress and adversity they drop and fail, which is an additional trouble: this was the ease of Job and of David,
Job 19:13 and here of Heman, who attributes it to God, as done by him; as also Job does, in the place referred to; for as it is the Lord that gives favour in the sight of men, he can take it away when he pleases: this is true of Christ, and the like is said of him,
Ps 69:8, and by his "acquaintance", familiars, and friends, may be meant his apostles, who, upon his being apprehended, forsook him, and fled; who, though they were not all alienated in their affections, yet stood at a distance from him; Peter, though he followed him, it was afar off, and at last he denied him; and others of acquaintance and intimates stood afar off, beholding was done to him on the cross; and his familiar friend, Judas, lifted up his heel against him, and basely betrayed him, Mt 26:50,

thou hast made me an abomination unto them; to some of them, as to Judas, and to many that hosanna'd him into Jerusalem, and within a few days cried "Crucify him, crucify him", Mt 21:9 compare with this Isa 53:3.

I am shut up, and I cannot come forth; the Targum renders it,

"shut up in the house of prison,"

in a prison; and so some literally understand it of the author of the psalm being in a prison, or dungeon, in the time of the captivity: but it is rather to be understood of some bodily disease, by which he was detained a prisoner at home, and of his being bound in fetters, and held in the cords of affliction; which was as a prison to him, and in which when the Lord "shuts up a man, there can be no opening",
Job 36:8, or else of soul troubles, being in great darkness and desertion; so that his soul was as in a prison, and could not come forth in the free exercise of grace, and needed the free Spirit of God to set him at liberty; see Ps 142:7, this may be applied to Christ, when in the hands of Judas, and the hand of soldiers with him, who took him, and bound him, and led him to the high priest; and when he was encompassed with bulls of Bashan, and enclosed by the assembly of the wicked, as he hung on the cross, Ps 22:12.

Psalms 88:9

Ver. 9. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction,.... Or dropped tears, as the Targum, by which grief was vented; see **Ps 6:7**.

Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee; in prayer, as the Targum adds, this being a prayer gesture: notwithstanding his troubles continued and increased, he did not leave off praying, though he was not immediately heard and answered, which is what is tacitly complained of, as in Ps 22:2. Christ, in his troubles in the garden, and on the cross, prayed for himself, for divine support and assistance, as man; for his friends, disciples, and apostles, and for all that should believe in him through them; and even for his enemies.

Psalms 88:10

Ver. 10. Wilt thou show wonders to the dead?.... The Lord does show wonders to some that are spiritually dead, dead in Adam, dead in law, dead in trespasses and sins, by quickening them; whereby the wonders of his grace and love, and of his power, and the exceeding greatness of it, are displayed; for the conversion and quickening of a dead sinner is a marvellous event, like that of; raising Lazarus from the dead, and causing Ezekiel's dry bones to live: likewise the Lord will show wonders to those that are corporeally dead, by raising them from the dead; which work, though not incredible, yet is very wonderful, and can only be accounted for by the attributes of Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence: yea, he would, and he has shown wonders to Christ, when dead, by raising him up again, and giving him glory, and that before he saw corruption, and as the head and representative of his people; and by raising many of the saints also, after his resurrection:

shall the dead arise and praise thee? the spiritually dead, when they are made alive, and rise out of their graves of sin, praise the Lord for the exertion of his grace and power upon them; which is one end of their being formed anew, quickened, and converted; and those that are corporeally dead, such of them as shall rise again to everlasting life, their mouths will be filled with everlasting praise: but here the author of the psalm suggests, that in a little time he should be among the dead, unless he had speedy help and deliverance from his troubles; to whom wonders are not shown, but to the living; and who ordinarily do not rise again to this mortal state, to praise the Lord in it: or, considering them as the words of Christ, he suggests, that none of the above things would be done, unless he was a conqueror over death and the grave, and was raised from thence himself; and so these expostulations carry in them the nature of a prayer, even of the prayer of Christ, as man, to be assisted in overcoming all his enemies, and to be raised from the dead, as Cocceius and others think: the Greek and Vulgate Latin versions are,

"shall physicians rise again?"

of whom the Jews had a bad opinion; See Gill on "2Ch 16:12".

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 88:11

Ver. 11. Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave?.... Where he saw himself now going, and where should he be detained, and not raised out of it, the lovingkindness of God to him, as his Son, and as man and Mediator, and to his people in the gift and mission of him to be their Saviour and Redeemer, how would that be declared and made known? now it is, Christ being raised, and his ministers having a commission from him to preach the Gospel, in which the lovingkindness of God is abundantly manifested:

or thy faithfulness in destruction? the grave, so called from dead bodies being cast into it, and wasted, consumed, and destroyed in it: the meaning may be, that should he be laid in the grave, and there putrefy and rot, and not be raised again, where would be the faithfulness of God to his purposes, to his covenant and promises, to him his Son, and to his people?

Psalms 88:12

Ver. 12. Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?.... A description of the grave again; see Job 10:21, The sense may be, should he continue in the dark and silent grave, how would the wonders of the grace of God, of electing, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace, be made known; the wonders of Christ's person and offices, and the wondrous things, and doctrines of the Gospel, relating thereunto? as the glory of these would be eclipsed, there would be none to publish them:

and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? the grave, where the dead lie, who, having lost all sense of things, forget what were done in this world, and they themselves are quickly forgotten by the living; and had Christ continued in this state, and had not risen again to our justification, how would his justifying righteousness have been revealed, as it is from faith to faith in the Gospel, which is therefore called the word and ministration of righteousness?

Psalms 88:13

Ver. 13. But unto thee have I cried, O Lord,.... Formerly, and had been heard, answered, and relieved, and which was an encouragement to cry again to him in his distress; Christ was always heard, Joh 11:42, or, now, in his present case, yet was not heard, at least not immediately answered; which was the case of the Messiah, when forsaken by his God and Father, Ps 22:1, yet still determines to continue praying, as follows:

and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee; not before the Lord is awake, and can hear; for he neither slumbers nor sleeps, and he always hears: but the meaning is, that he would pray before he entered upon another business; this should be the first thing in the morning he would do, and this he would do before others did, or he himself used to do; before the usual time of morning prayer; signifying, he would pray to him very early, which is expressive of his vehemency, fervency, and importunity and earnestness, and what a sense he had of his case, and of his need of divine help: so Christ rose early in the morning, a great while before day, to pray, **Mr 1:35**.
See Gill on "Ps 5:4".

Psalms 88:14

Ver. 14. Lord, why castest thou off my soul?.... Here begins his prayer, which he determined to present early in the morning, and consists of expostulations, and a representation of his distressed case: this shows that he was under soul desertion, and which was what so greatly afflicted him; imagining that his soul was cast off by the Lord, and had no more share in his affection, and was no more under his care, and in his sight: such expostulations of the saints, the church, and people of God, in a like case, are elsewhere met with,
Ps 43:3 and may be applied to Christ, when his soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death, and was made an offering for sin; and particularly when he was forsaken by his Father: the Targum is,

"why hast thou forsaken my soul?"

and rises the word "sabachtha", which Christ did when on the cross, Mt 27:46, the Septuagint version is,

"wherefore, O Lord, dost thou reject my prayers?"

"why hidest thou thy face from me?" which is a denial of sensible communion, a withdrawing the influences and communications of divine grace for a time; and which sometimes is the case of the best of men, as Job, David, and others; and is very grieving and distressing to them; and, for the most part, is on account of sin; it is sin which separates between God and his people, and causes him to hide his face from them, or not grant them his gracious presence: this was the case of Christ, who knew no sin, while he was suffering for the sins of his people; see Ps 69:17 compared with Mt 27:46.

Psalms 88:15

Ver. 15. I am afflicted,.... In body and mind, from within and from without, by Satan, by the men of the world, and by the Lord himself; which is the common lot of God's people, Ps 34:19 and was the case of the Messiah, who was afflicted both with the tongues and hands of men, by words, by blows, and by the temptations of Satan; and was smitten and afflicted of God, by divine justice, as the sinner's surety: see Ps 22:24 or

I am poor {a}; which as it is a character, which, for the most part, agrees with the saints, who are the poor of this world God has chosen, to whom the Gospel is sent, and by whom it is received, and who are effectually called by it, so likewise belongs to Christ, **Zec 9:9**,

and ready to die, from my youth up; a sickly unhealthful person from his infancy, and often in danger of death; which last was certainly the case of Christ in his infancy, through the malice of Herod; and many times afterwards, when grown up, through the attempts of the Jews to take away his life: some render it, "I am ready to die through concussion", or "shaking" {b}; meaning some very rough and severe dispensation of Providence, such an one as Job expresses by shaking him to pieces, Job 16:12 and was literally true of Christ, when his body was so shaken by the jog of the cross, that all his bones were put out of joint, Ps 22:14

while I suffer thy terrors; or "bear" {c} them, or "carry", even terrible afflictions, in which he had terrible apprehensions of the wrath of God in them, of death they would issue in, and of an awful judgment that should follow that; all which are called the terrors of the Lord, **Job 6:4**, and which the saints, when left to God, have some dreadful apprehensions of: such were the terrors of the Lord the Messiah endured, when in a view of the sins of his people being laid upon him, and of the wrath of God coming on him for them, his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground, Lu 22:44. Compare with this Ps 18:4.

I am distracted: not out of his mind, deprived of his senses, and without the use of reason; but his thoughts were distracted and confused, and his mind discomposed with the terrors of God upon him: the Hebrew word "aphunah" is only used in this place, and is difficult of interpretation, and is variously derived and rendered: some take it to be of the same root with "pen", which signifies "lest, perhaps" {d}; seeing persons in a panic are apt to use such expressions; perhaps, or it may be, such and such things will befall me; forming and framing in their minds ten thousand dreadful things, which they fear are coming upon them; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi; and is applied by Cocceius {e} to the solicitous care and fear of Christ concerning his body, the church, **Heb 5:7** others derive it from "ophen", which signifies a wheel, and so may be rendered, "I am wheeled about" {f}; always in motion, and have no rest day nor night; as Christ was after his apprehension, being carried from place to place, and from bar to bar: others derive it from the Arabic word "aphan" {g}, which signifies to be in want of counsel and advice: Christ though, as God, needed no counsel, nor did he take counsel with any; and, as Mediator, is the wonderful Counsellor; yet, as man, he needed it, and had it from his Father, for which he blesses him, Ps 16:7, others from the Hebrew root "phanah", which signifies to look unto, as persons in a panic look here and there; and as Christ did when suffering, who looked, and there was none to help, Isa 63:5. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it "amazed", or "astonished", which is said of Christ, Mr 14:33, the Vulgate Latin version is "troubled", which also agrees with Christ, Joh 12:27 as he must needs be, when his enemies surrounded him, the sins of his people were upon him, the sword of justice awaked against him, and the wrath of God on him, as follows.

{a} yne "pauper", V. L. Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius; "inops", Cocceius, Michaelis. {b} renm "a concussione", Luther, Schmidt, Junius & Tremellius; "propter concussionem", Piscator; "prae concussione", Gejerus. {c} ytavn "portavi", Pagninus, Montanus; "fero", Tigurine version, Piscator; "tuli", Musculus, Cocceius; "pertuli portavi", Michaelis. {d} hnwpa a Np "ne forte", Amama, Gejerus; "anxius timeo vel metno, ne hoc vel illud fiat", Michaelis.

{e} Lex. Heb. p. 663. {f} Heb. "rotor, seu instar rotae circumagor", Piscator. {g} "consilii inops fuit", Castel. Lex. col. 199.

Psalms 88:16

Ver. 16. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me,.... Or "wraths" {h}, burning wrath; the whole of divine wrath, in all its fierceness, due to the sins of his people: these, like the mighty waves of the sea, passed over him, threatening to overwhelm him, Ps 89:38,

thy terrors have cut me off; from the presence of God, and out of his sight; as sometimes the Lord's people are ready to imagine, when forsaken by him, Ps 31:22 or from the land of the living, as the Messiah was, and in a judicial way, though not for any sin of his own,
Isa 53:8.

{h} Kynwrx "irae tuae", Pagninus, Montanus; "furores tui", Musculus, Tigurine version.

Psalms 88:17

Ver. 17. They came round about me daily like water,.... That is, the terrors of the Lord, the sorrows of death and hell, Ps 18:4, this was the Messiah's case, when it was with him as is expressed
Ps 69:1,

they compassed me about together; as waters coming from many places, from all quarters, meet together, and together surround a person or place in such circumstances was Christ, when the bulls of Bashan beset him around, and the assembly of the wicked enclosed him, and innumerable evils encompassed him about, Ps 22:12.

Psalms 88:18

Ver. 18. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me,.... This is mentioned in Ps 88:8, and is here repeated; and the account is closed with it, to show that this was a most aggravating circumstance of his affliction, and which bore exceeding hard upon him; and this must be a very uncomfortable case, to be in distress, whether of body or mind, and to have no kind friend near to yield the least help, relief, and comfort; so Christ's lovers and friends, his disciples, who loved him and he loved them, and reckoned them as his friends, and was a friend to them, when he was taken by his enemies, they all forsook him, and fled, Mt 26:56,

and mine acquaintance into darkness; either by death into the dark grave, which Job calls the land of darkness and shadow of death, Job 10:21, or being removed from him, so that he could not see them, it was all one to him as if they had been put into darkness, into some dark dungeon, or into the grave itself: or the words may be rendered, mine acquaintance are darkness {i}: this was the case of Christ, when on the cross; he had none near him, no acquaintance about him, but darkness; and darkness was over all the land for the space of three hours; and a darkness was on his soul, being forsaken by his Father; and the prince of darkness, with all the fiends of hell, were throwing their fiery darts at him, Mt 27:45. Thus ends this sorrowful and mournful song; a joyful one follows.

{i} Kvxm yedym "noti mei sunt tenebrae", Cocceius, Schmidt, Michaelis; "amici mei sunt caligo", Gejerus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 89:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 89

Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite. Who this Ethan was is not certain. Kimchi takes him to be the same with Ethan the wise man, a grandson of Judah, **1Ki 4:31**. But seeing he lived some hundreds of years before the times of David, it is not likely that he should be the writer of this psalm; for David is made mention of in it, which could not be, unless it can be thought to be by a spirit of prophecy; which indeed is the opinion of Doctor Lightfoot {k}, who takes this Ethan to be the penman of this psalm; and who

"from the promise, Ge 15:1 sings joyfully the deliverance (of Israel); that the raging of the Red sea should be ruled, Ps 89:9, and Rahab, or Egypt, should be broken in pieces, Ps 89:10, and that the people should hear the joyful sound of the law, Ps 89:15, and as for the name of David in it, this, he says, might be done prophetically; as Samuel is thought to be named by Moses, Ps 99:6, which psalm is held to be made by him; or else might be put into it, in later times, by some divine penman, endued with the same gift of prophecy, who might improve the ground work of this psalm laid by Ethan, and set it to an higher key; namely, that whereas he treated only of bodily deliverance from Egypt, it is wound up so high as to reach the spiritual delivery by Christ; and therefore David is often named, from whence he should come."

There was another Ethan, a singer, in David's time; and it is more probable that he is the person, who might live to the times of Rehoboam, and see the decline of David's family, and the revolt of the ten tribes from it; or perhaps it was one of this name who lived in the times of the Babylonish captivity, and saw the low estate that David's family were come into; to which agrees the latter part of this psalm; and, in order to comfort the people of God, he wrote this psalm, showing that the covenant and promises of God, made with David, nevertheless stood firm, and would be accomplished: the title of the Septuagint version calls him Etham the Israelite; and the Arabic version Nathan the Israelite: the Targum makes him to be Abraham, paraphrasing it

"a good understanding, which was said by the hand of Abraham, that came from the east."

But whoever was the penman of this psalm, it is "maschil", an instructive psalm, a psalm causing to understand; it treats concerning the covenant of grace, and the promises of it; and concerning the mercy and faithfulness of God, in making and keeping the same; and concerning the Messiah and his seed, his church and people; and the stability and duration of all these: many passages in it are applied to the Messiah by Jewish writers, ancient and modern; and Ps 89:20 is manifestly referred to in Ac 13:22.

Ver. 1. I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever,.... Both temporal and spiritual, especially the latter, in which there is a large display of the rich and abundant mercy of God, from whence they are so called; as in the choice of men to everlasting life, who are said to be vessels of mercy; in the covenant of grace made with them, the blessings of which are the sure mercies of David; in the mission of Christ, whose coming, as the dayspring from on high, is owing to the tender mercy of our God; in redemption by him, in which mercy and truth have met together; in regeneration, which is according to abundant mercy; in the forgiveness of sins, which is according to the multitude of his tender mercies; and in the whole of salvation, which is not by works of righteousness, but by the mercy of God through Christ: the word may be rendered "graces, kindnesses, goodnesses" {1}, and designs the abundance of grace; as in the heart of God, in the covenant, in the hands of Christ, as displayed through him, and in the several parts of salvation, and the whole of it: and these are a proper subject for a song; and a truly gracious soul, sensible of these things, thankful for them, cheerful on account of them, and seeing his interest in them, cannot but "sing" of them; and will determine to do it "for ever", every day, and all the day long, as long as he lives, and while he has any being, and which he will do to all eternity:

with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations; God is faithful to himself, to all the perfections of his nature, to his truth, holiness, and justice, he cannot deny himself; he is so to his Son, and to all engagements with him, and promises to him; to all his counsels, purposes, and decrees; all which are faithfulness and truth, or faithfully and truly performed; and to his covenant and promises made to his people in Christ, in whom they are all yea and amen: and that this glorious perfection of God might be made known to the saints in all successive generations, and be taken notice of by them, the psalmist spoke and sung this psalm with his mouth, and penned it with his hand; in which there is more mention made of the faithfulness of God than perhaps in any other passage of Scripture besides; see Ps 89:2.

{k} Works, vol. i. p. 699, 700. {l} ydox "bonitates", Tigurine version; "benignitates", Junius & Tremellius; "beneficia", Piscator; "gratias", Cocceius.

Psalms 89:2

Ver. 2. For I have said,.... That is, in his heart he had said, he had thought of it, was assured of it, strongly concluded it, from the Spirit and word of God; he believed it, and therefore he spoke it; having it from the Lord, it was all one as if he had spoke it:

Psalms 89:3

Ver. 3. I have made a covenant with my chosen,.... Not with Abraham, as the Targum expresses it: but with David, as in the following clause; not David, literally understood, though he was chosen of the Lord to be his servant, and a covenant was made with him, and a promise made to him of the perpetuity of his throne and kingdom in his family,
Ps 78:70 but mystical David, the Messiah, David's son and antitype; after, on this account, called David in Scripture,

Eze 34:23 and who is the Lord's "chosen" One, foreordained to be the Redeemer of lost sinners, chosen to be the Mediator between God and them, to be the head of the church, and Saviour of the body; and his human nature was chosen to the grace of union to the Son of God, Ps 89:19, hence he is called God's elect, Isa 43:1 and with him the covenant of grace was made from all eternity, and all the blessings and promises of it were put into his hands; he is the Mediator, surety, and messenger of it, and by his blood it is ratified and confirmed: the Septuagint render it, in the plural number, "with mine elect ones"; and it is a truth, that the covenant of grace is made with all the elect, considered in Christ, and is made with them as such, and not as believers, converted persons, &c. election is the foundation of the covenant, and the source of all covenant blessings:

I have sworn unto David my servant: to the Messiah, called David, as before observed, and who is the Lord's servant, as man and Mediator, of his choosing, calling, sending, and supporting, Isa 42:1, to whom he swore, and he will not repent; and which oath of his, joined to his covenant and promise, makes for the strong consolation of the heirs of promise; see Ps 89:35, the sum and substance of which covenant and oath follow.

Psalms 89:4

Ver. 4. Thy seed will I establish for ever,.... Meaning not the natural seed of David, at least not only them; whose family was indeed preserved, though in very low circumstances, until the Messiah came, who sprung from thence, **Lu 1:27**, but the spiritual seed of Christ, to whom it was promised that he should have a seed, and should see and enjoy it, and which should endure for ever; see Ps 89:29, and so he always has had a seed to serve him in all generations, in the worst of times, and will; and who are established in him, and will be kept and preserved by him, and whom he will present to his Father, saying, "Lo, I and the children whom thou hast given me", **Heb 2:13**

and build up thy throne to all generations; and this shows that the passage is not to be understood literally of David, and of his temporal throne and kingdom, which did not last many generations; but of the spiritual throne and kingdom of the Messiah, who sprung from him, called the throne of his father David, whose throne is for ever and ever, and whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, **Lu 1:32**
Ps 45:6, his throne is in the heavens, where he will reign until all enemies are put under his feet; and it is also in the midst of his church, and in the hearts of

his people, where he reigns as King of saints; and he is on the same throne with his Father; it is the same with his, as to glory, power, and authority; on this he will sit, and judge the world at the last day; and on it he will reign with his people a thousand years, in the New Jerusalem state, and after that to all eternity, **Re 3:21**.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 89:5

Ver. 5. And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord,.... Which, by a prosopopceia, may be understood of the heavens literally, in the same sense as other inanimate creatures praise the Lord, Ps 148:3, or mystically of the church, consisting of heaven born souls, and whose doctrines and ordinances are from heaven; or of the apostles, as Jerom, who had their ministry, mission, commission, and gifts, from thence; or rather of the angels, the inhabitants of heaven, who praise the Lord for his wonderful works of nature, providence, and grace, Ps 148:2, particularly they admire and praise the wonderful work of redemption "that wonderful thing of thine" {m}, as the word may be rendered, being in the singular number: the person of the Redeemer is wonderful, and that is his name; his incarnation is a most amazing thing, it is the great mystery of godliness; and the redemption wrought out by him is the wonder of men and angels: when he appeared in the world, the angels of God worshipped him; at his birth, they sung glory to God in the highest; and the mysteries of his grace are what they look into with wonder and praise, **Heb 1:6**,

thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints; i.e. is praised there; which Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret of the angels also, who are called saints, De 33:2, of which there is a congregation, even an innumerable company, Re 19:6, these not only admire and praise the wonderful works of the Lord, but his perfections also; and particularly his faithfulness in the execution of promises and threatenings, **Re 7:11**, but rather holy men are meant, such as are called to be saints, and are gathered together in a Gospel church state, designed by a congregation of them, among and by whom the truth and faithfulness of God, as well as his lovingkindness and mercy, are spoken of with the highest commendation, Ps 40:9.

{m} Kalp "mirabile tuum", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Gerjus; "mirabile apus tuum", Junius & Tremellius; "illud miraculum tuum", Michaelis.

Psalms 89:6

Ver. 6. For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord?.... Or "ranked" {n}, or put upon a par, with him; none of the angels in heaven; for though they are holy, wise, knowing, powerful, faithful, kind, and merciful creatures, yet not to be compared with the Lord for holiness, wisdom, knowledge, strength, faithfulness, and mercy; see
Ex 15:11,

who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? the Syriac version very wrongly renders it "the sons of angels", seeing angels do not propagate their species, Lu 20:36 to which Kimchi agrees, who makes the "mighty" to be angels, and their sons to be the host of heaven, which are moved and guided by them: the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it "the sons of God"; and this phrase, indeed, is applicable to the angels, Job 38:7, and so the Targum interprets it of the multitude of the angels; but rather the mighty men of the earth, and their children, are meant; princes, nobles, judges, and civil magistrates of all sorts, men of power and authority in the world; there are none of them to be likened to the Lord, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords; see Ps 82:1.

{n} Krey "par aestimetur", Junius & Tremellius; "par aestimabitur", Piscator.

Psalms 89:7

Ver. 7. God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints,.... Which Jarchi and Kimchi understand of angels again, and render it "God is to be feared in the great assembly of them"; for they are a very large number, even an innumerable company, in and by whom the Lord is feared and worshipped, Heb 12:21, but rather an assembly or congregation of holy men are designed: it is the duty of such to assemble together publicly for religious worship; they ought to do it on account of the Lord, who requires it, and encourages it by his presence, he has promised; on the account of themselves, it being for their profit and pleasure; and on the account of others, for their conversion and comfort; and in imitation of the people of God, in all ages; nor should they forsake the assembling of themselves: the word
dwo rendered "assembly", signifies "counsel" or "secret"; see
Ge 49:6 and so the Targum,

"God is mighty in the secrets of the saints, sitting on a throne of glory;"

in the assembly of the saints, the secrets of God's love are disclosed unto them; the doctrines and mysteries of his grace, called the whole counsel of God, Ac 20:27 are there made known; and the ordinances of the Gospel, which also are styled the counsel of God, **Lu 7:30**, are there administered: now, where all this is done,

God is greatly feared herein; not with a slavish fear, a fear of hell and damnation, such as may be in devils; nor with an hypocritical fear, such as is taught by the precepts of men; but with a filial, godly fear, such as is peculiar to the children of God; with an holy and humble fear, with a fiducial and fearless one; with a reverential affection for the Divine Being, and such as includes all worship of him, internal and external: and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him; which the Targum paraphrases

"and is to be feared above all the angels that stand round about him"

and so Kimchi interprets it; see **Re 5:11**, but the same thing, in different words, is meant, as in the preceding clause.

Psalms 89:8

Ver. 8. O Lord God of hosts,.... Of all the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, and of all the heavenly hosts of angels, of all the armies in heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth:

who is a strong Lord like unto thee? he is Jah, or Jehovah, and he alone is so, and is the most High in all the earth, Ps 83:18 and there is none like him for his great power and strength, by which he has made the heavens and the earth, and upholds them in their being; and by which he has redeemed his people, plucked them out of the hands of sin and Satan, and preserves them safe to his kingdom and glory: see
Job 40:9,

or to thy faithfulness round about thee; none so faithful as the Lord, none to be trusted as he, either angels or men; some understand it of the faithful ones that are about him, his trusty servants the angels, who stand round about him ready to do his will; or the glorified saints that are with him, the called, chosen, and faithful; see Ps 103:19 or rather the words are to be read, "and thy faithfulness is round about thee"; and so the Targum,

"and thy truth (or faithfulness) surroundeth thee:"

look all around him, and his faithfulness is everywhere to be seen; to himself, and the perfections of his nature; to his Son, and agreements with him; and to his counsels of old, his purposes and decrees, and to his covenant and promises: he is as it were clothed with faithfulness, and it appears in all the dispensations of his providence and grace.

Psalms 89:9

Ver. 9. Thou rulest the raging of the sea,.... The power, pride, and elation of it, when it swells, and foams, and rages, and becomes boisterous, and threatens vessels upon it with utter ruin and destruction; but the Lord, who has it under his dominion and government, restrains it; he has made and can manage it, and he only: his power over it is seen in assigning it its place, and ordering the waters of it to it when first made; in placing the sand for its boundary by a perpetual decree, which it cannot pass; by commanding the stormy wind to lift up its waves, and by making the storm a calm, and the waves thereof still; see Ps 107:25, instances of this were at the universal deluge, and at the Red sea:

when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them; when the sea lifts up its waves, and both lift up their voice, and make a noise, and roar, the Lord hushes them, and makes them still and quiet, as a parent its child when it cries, or a master his scholars, when they are noisy and tumultuous; so Christ rebuked the wind, and checked the raging sea, and made it calm, when the ship in which he was with his disciples was covered with its waves; and as this is mentioned here as an instance of the great power and strength of the Lord of hosts, so that was a proof and evidence of the true and proper divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, **Mt 8:24**, all this may be understood, in a mystical sense, of the sea of this world, and the wicked inhabitants of it, who are as the troubled sea, and cannot rest, casting up mire and dirt, reproaching and blaspheming God and man; and particularly of tyrannical princes and potentates, who are like the proud waters and raging waves of the sea; but the Lord on high is mightier than they, and can and does restrain their wrath and rage, so that his people have nothing to fear from them; see Ps 124:3.

Psalms 89:10

Ver. 10. Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain,.... Or Egypt, as in Ps 87:4 or the Egyptians, and particularly Pharaoh their king; so the Targum explains it,

"Rahab or the proud one, this is Pharaoh the wicked;"

who and his people were broken to pieces by the plagues that were brought upon them, especially when all their firstborn were slain; and he and his host were broke in pieces at the Red sea, and were seen by the Israelites on the shore, all dead men; and this was done as easily by the Lord, as one slain with the sword, as a dead carcass which has no life, power, and strength to defend itself, may be trampled upon, crushed, bruised, and broken to pieces, by a living man. All this may be an emblem of the Lord's breaking in pieces the proud and insolent one Satan, as Rahab signifies; of his breaking his head, destroying his works, and spoiling his principalities and powers; and indeed of his destruction of every proud and haughty sinner, that says, Pharaoh like, who is the Lord, that I should obey him? and of every vain boaster, and self-righteous person, that trusts in his own righteousness, and will not submit to the righteousness of Christ; and particularly of mystical Egypt, the proud beast of Rome, antichrist, who sits in the temple of God as if he was God, showing himself to be so, blaspheming God, his name, his tabernacle, and his saints; who will be broken to shivers as a potter's vessel, when the vials of God's wrath are poured out, and at and by the coming of Christ:

thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm; as the Egyptians were in the Red sea, by the waves of it, and cast upon the shore by them; and as the Amorites were by Moses, and the Canaanites by Joshua; which instances may be here referred unto; see Nu 10:35 these are further proofs of the power and strength of the Lord, Job 40:9.

Psalms 89:11

Ver. 11. The heavens are thine,.... They are made and inhabited by him, they are the work of his hands, and the seat of his majesty, and the throne of his glory; the angels of heaven are his, his creatures and servants; the several heavens are his, the airy, starry, and third heavens; the place and state of the blessed and glorified saints is of his preparing and giving:

the earth also is thine; the whole terraqueous globe, and all that is in it, being made, preserved, and continued by him, and by him given to the sons of men, Ps 116:15,

as for the world, and the fulness thereof: the habitable world, and all that dwell therein, all the children of men, the beasts of the field, and cattle on a thousand hills, and the provisions for them all; which is the goodness of the Lord, the earth is full of; these are all the Lord's; see Ps 24:1,

thou hast founded them; the world, and the inhabitants of it; the earth is founded upon the seas, and the world upon nothing; and the inhabitants are wonderfully preserved and continued by the power and providence of God; see Ps 24:2.

Psalms 89:12

Ver. 12 The north and the south, thou hast created them,.... The two extreme parts of the world, the northern and southern poles, whether inhabited or uninhabited, are created by the Lord, to answer some purpose or another; see Job 26:7.

Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name; Tabor was a mountain in the western part of Galilee, in the tribe of Zebulun, Jos 19:12. This mountain, according to Mr. Maundrell {a}, stands by itself in the plain of Esdraelon, about 1200 to 1800 yards within the plain; it has a plain area at top, most fertile and delicious, of an oval figure, extended about six hundred yards in breadth, and twice that in length; this area is enclosed with trees on all parts, except towards the south, in which there are in several places cisterns of good water. It is generally thought to be the mountain Christ was transfigured upon before his disciples; and if so, it might then be said to rejoice in his name, when he appeared in so glorious a form upon it; Moses and Elias talking with him, and a voice from the excellent Glory declaring him his beloved Son; and especially the disciples rejoiced in his name there and then, who could say, It is good for us to be here, Mt 17:1. Hermon was a mountain called by the Sidonians Sirion, and by the Amorites Shenir, **De 3:8** and was in the east; and so Mr. Maundrell {b}, speaking of Tabor, says, not many miles eastward you see Mount Hermon, at the foot of which is seated Nain, famous for our Lord's raising the widow's son there, **Lu 7:11**, there was an Hermon near Mount Tabor, thought likely to be here meant; but, be these mountains where and what they may, they were no doubt very high and fruitful ones, clothed with fruitful trees and grass, and covered with flocks; which made the proprietors and all the beholders rejoice in the goodness, wisdom, and power of God: the Targum in the king's Bible gives the four quarters very truly,

"the desert of the north, and the inhabitants of the south, thou hast created; Tabor on the west, and Hermon on the east, praise in thy name."

{a} Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 113, 114, Ed. 7. {b} Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 115, Ed. 7.

Psalms 89:13

Ver. 13. Thou hast a mighty arm,.... Christ is the arm of the Lord, and a mighty one he is, and so is the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation; here it seems to design the almighty power of God, displayed in the works of creation and providence; see Isa 51:9

strong is thy hand; thy "left hand", as some, it being distinguished from his right hand, mentioned in the next clause; the Targum adds,

"to redeem thy people;"

the work of redemption was put into the hand of Christ, and it prospered in his hand, and his own arm brought salvation to him; and his hand is strong to keep and preserve his people, where they are put, and where they are safe; and the hand of the Lord is strong to correct and chastise them, and sometimes his hand lies heavy upon them, and presses them sore, when it becomes them to humble themselves under his "mighty hand": and it also strong to punish his and their enemies:

and high is thy right hand; when it is lifted up in a way of judgment against wicked men, and for the defence of his people, then may it be said to be exalted: and it is high enough to reach the highest and most powerful of his adversaries; see Ps 118:16. The Targum adds,

"to build the house of thy sanctuary."

Some render {c} these two last clauses as a wish or prayer; "let thy hand be strong, and let thy right hand be lifted up".

{c} So Paginus, Montana, and V. L.

Psalms 89:14

Ver. 14. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne,.... The seat and throne on which he sits; all the administrations of his kingly power in the government of the world, in the salvation of his people, and in the punishment of his enemies, being according to the strict rules of justice and judgment: or "the preparation of thy throne" {d}; all that the Lord does according to the counsel of his will; and these counsels were of old, and were formed in strict justice and judgment, and were a preparation for his future government in providence and grace: or "the establishment of thy throne" {e}; the throne of an earthly king is established by righteousness; and so the throne of God, and of Christ, is ordered and established with justice and judgment in the exercise of righteousness for evermore,
Pr 16:12

mercy and truth shall go before thy face; be and appear wherever he is; all his ways are mercy and truth, Ps 25:10, "mercy" in pardoning and saving sinners that come unto him by Christ; and "truth" in performing all his purposes and promises; and these make the joyful sound next mentioned.

{d} Kaok Nwkm "praeparatio sedis tuae". V. L. so the Sept. {e} Basis, "fulchrum et stabilimentum", Michaelis.

Psalms 89:15

Ver. 15. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound,.... Of the love, grace, and mercy of God displayed in Christ, of peace and pardon by his blood, of justification by his righteousness, of atonement by his sacrifice, and of complete salvation by his obedience, sufferings, and death; this is the sound of the Gospel, and a joyful one it is to sensible sinners; and is so called in allusion either to a shout made upon a victory gained, and such a sound is the Gospel; it declares victory by Christ over sin, Satan, the world, and death, and every enemy; and that he has made his people more than conquerors over them; or to the jubilee trumpet, which proclaimed liberty and a restoration of inheritances, Le 25:9 and so the Gospel proclaims liberty to the captives, freedom from the dominion of sin, and condemnation by it, from the tyranny of Satan, and the bondage of the law; and gives an account of the inheritance the saints have in Christ, and through his death, to which they are regenerated,

and for which they are made meet by the Spirit of God, and of which he is the seal and earnest: or to the silver trumpets, for the use of the congregation of Israel, and blown at their solemn feasts, and other times, and were all of a piece,
Nu 10:1, the trumpet of the Gospel gives a certain sound, an even one, a very musical one; there is no jar nor discord in it; is a soul charming alluring sound, and very loud; it has reached, and will reach again, to the ends of the earth, Ro 10:18, it is a blessing to hear it, but it is a greater to "know" it, not merely notionally, but spiritually and experimentally; so as not only to approve of it, and be delighted with it, but so as to distinguish it from all other sounds; and by faith to receive it, and appropriate the things it publishes to a man's own soul; and such must be "blessed", or happy persons, for the reasons following in this verse, and in Ps 89:16:

they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance: enjoy the gracious presence of God, have the manifestation of himself, the discoveries of his love, communion with him through Christ, and the comforts of the Holy Spirit, and these continued; so that they shall walk in the sunshine of these things, though not always; for sometimes they walk in darkness, and see no light; but it is an unspeakable mercy and blessing to walk herein at any time, for ever so short a season, see **Ps 4:6**.

Psalms 89:16

Ver. 16. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day,.... That know the joyful sound, and walk in the light of God's countenance, as they have reason to do; these will "rejoice" in the Lord himself, for his "name" is himself; in the perfections of his nature, as displayed in redemption and salvation by Christ; in him as the God of all grace, as their covenant God and Father in Christ, and the God of their salvation; and they will rejoice in Christ, in his name, in which is salvation, and therefore precious; in his person, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and fitness; and that "all the day" long, continually; there is always reason, ground, and matter for rejoicing in Christ, though it is sometimes interrupted by sin, temptation, and desertion; see **Php 4:4**

and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted; from a low estate of sin and misery to an high estate of grace and glory; from a state of condemnation and death to a state of justification of life; from being beggars on the dunghill, to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory; such as are clothed with the righteousness of the Son of God are exalted to great honour, as to be admitted into the presence of the King of kings in raiment of needlework, to stand at his right hand in gold of Ophir, and to live and reign with him for evermore in his kingdom and glory.

Psalms 89:17

Ver. 17. For thou art the glory of their strength,.... By which they walk, and do all they do, exercise every grace, and discharge their duty; they have their strength from Christ, as well as their righteousness, without whom they can do nothing, but all things through him strengthening them; and as his righteousness exalts them, his strength adorns and glorifies them; how glorious and beautiful does a believer look, that is strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, in the grace that is in Christ, and in the exercise of faith on him, giving glory to God; on whom the power of Christ rests, and it overshadows, and in whose weakness his strength is made perfect!

and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted; either Christ, the Horn of their salvation, who in an acceptable time, in the time of God's favour, or good will, was heard and helped by him as man, carried through his sufferings and death, was raised from the dead, and exalted at his right hand; see Ps 89:24 or the saints themselves, their power and strength, kingdom and glory; by the special favour of God in Christ, their mountain is made so strong, and they so highly exalted, as that they think they shall never be moved; and in the latter day the mountain of the Lord's house shall be exalted above the hills, Ps 30:6.

Psalms 89:18

Ver. 18. For the Lord is our defence,.... From all their enemies, being all around them, as a wall of fire to protect them, and as the mountains were round about Jerusalem, and being kept by his power as in a fortress, strong hold, or garrison, unto salvation; or our shield {f}; see Ps 84:9 as are his favour, righteousness, and salvation, **Ps 5:12** or "to the Lord belongs our defence or shield" {g} our protection and salvation is from him:

and the Holy One of Israel is our King; he who was to be, and is of Israel according to the flesh, and is holy in his nature, life, and office; he is King of saints, that rules over them, protects and defends them, and therefore they must be happy: or "to" or "with the Holy One of Israel is our king" {h}; Christ is King of Zion by designation, appointment, and constitution, of God the Holy

One of Israel, the holy God that has chosen Israel for his peculiar people; though it rather seems that Christ is the Holy One by what follows.

{f} wnngm "clypeus noster", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version; "scutum nostrum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {g} hwhyl "Domino", Pagninus, Montanus. {h} larvy vdqlw "et sancto Israelis", Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 89:19

Ver. 19. Then thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One,.... Samuel the prophet, that holy man of God, to whom the Lord spoke in vision, or by a spirit of prophecy, concerning David, the choice and exaltation of him to the kingdom, and his unction for it, 1Sa 16:1. The Vulgate Latin version reads it "to thy Holy Ones": and so the Targum, with which agree the Septuagint and Arabic versions, which render it "thy sons"; and the Syriac version "his righteous ones", and so takes in Nathan also, to whom the Lord spake in a vision, by night, concerning the settlement and perpetuity of the kingdom in David's family, **2Sa 7:4**, &c. Aben Ezra interprets it of the singers, Heman, Ethan, and others; and Jarchi of Gad and Nathan: but the whole is rather to be understood of David's son, the Messiah; and it may be rendered "concerning thy Holy One" {i} as he is called, Ps 16:10, concerning whom in vision, that is, in prophecy, see **Isa 1:1**. The Lord said, by the mouth of his holy prophets, from the beginning of the world, the following things:

and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; this "mighty" One is the Messiah, the mighty God, the mighty Man, the mighty Mediator and Redeemer; who was mighty to save to the uttermost, and was every way fit for and equal to the work of a Redeemer; for which reason the Lord "laid help" upon him, not for himself; for this is not to be understood of help promised or given him as man and Mediator: this is after spoken of, Ps 89:21, but for others; and so the Targum adds, "for my people": laying it on him is no other than ordering or enjoining him, to which he agreed, to help his people out of that miserable condition they were fallen into, through Adam's transgression, and their own sins, out of which they could not help themselves: the work assigned to Christ, and devolved on him in council and covenant, was to help them out of this estate by price and power; and to help them on in their way to heaven, through all difficulties, trials, and temptations; and to help them to heaven itself, and introduce them there: and being thus laid upon him, according to his Father's will and purpose, and with his own consent, it was found in him, and exercised by him, Ho 13:9.

I have exalted one chosen out of the people; the same as before, the Messiah, God's elect, his chosen One, Isa 42:1 "chosen" to be the head of the church, to be the Mediator between God and man, and to be the Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners; to be the foundation and corner stone in the spiritual building, and to be the Judge of quick and dead: and he was "chosen out of the people"; out of the vast number of the individuals of human nature God determined to create, there was a certain number which he selected for himself, for his own glory, and to be eternally happy with him; and out of these he singled one "individuum" of human nature, to be united to the eternal Word, the second Person in the Trinity; and which may be truly said to be the "chiefest among", or, as the Septuagint version has it, "chosen out of ten thousand", **So 5:10**, this the Lord "exalted" to the grace of union to the Son of God, whereby it became higher than angels and men, and to have a more excellent name than either of them, it bearing the name of him to whom it is united, **Heb 1:4**, and he has exalted him to the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, for which he is

anointed above his fellows; and he has also, having done his work, highly exalted him at his right hand; angels, principalities, and powers, being subject to him.

{i} Kdyoxl "de pio tuo", Cocceius; "de sancto tuo", Gejerus.

Psalms 89:20

Ver. 20. I have found David my servant,.... Not David literally; but his Son and antitype, the Messiah, who is sometimes called by his name;
See Gill on "Ps 89:3", and his "finding" him does not suppose any ignorance of him, nor anxious solicitude in seeking him, nor any

fortuitous event; but is attributed to God by an anthropopathy, or speaking after the manner of men; for it is an act of the highest wisdom, and richest grace, to find out, that is, to pick and appoint, in council and covenant, his own Son to be his servant, to be the Redeemer and Saviour of sinners, and to be a ransom for them,
Job 33:24. The Apostle Paul seems to refer to this passage in
Ac 13:22

with my holy oil have I anointed him: not with material oil, as David, his type,

1Sa 16:13 but with the Holy Ghost, which may well be called holy oil, in allusion to the holy anointing oil under the law; the oil of gladness with which Christ was anointed above his fellows, and without measure, at the time of his conception and birth, at his baptism and ascension to heaven, and even, in some sense, from all eternity; for so early is he said to be anointed, and to be possessed with all fulness of grace, being invested with and installed into his office as Mediator; and from this anointing he has the name of Messiah and Christ, both which signify anointed,
Ac 10:38.

Psalms 89:21

Ver. 21. With whom my hand shall be established,.... A promise of God's gracious presence with Christ, as man and Mediator, which is his work; of a communication of grace and strength from him, to carry him through it; and of his supporting and upholding him under it; which hand of his power and grace would be always prepared and ready for him, as the word {a} signifies, and stable and firm with him, so that he should have success in it; the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand; so the Targum,

"for my hands are prepared for his help;"

the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the eastern versions, "mine hand shall help him"; and which is confirmed in the next words: mine arm also shall strengthen him; in the human nature, subject to and encompassed with infirmities: this shows the greatness of the work of man's redemption, which no creature could effect; it required the arm and power of the Lord to be exerted, and by which Christ was made strong by the Lord, both for himself, and for the working out of salvation for us; which he did when he travelled in the greatness of his strength, standing up under the mighty weight of our sins, and the wrath of God; and yet failed not, nor was he discouraged, till his own arm brought salvation to him; see Ps 80:17.

{a} Nwkt "parate erit", Musculus, Muis; so the Targum.

Psalms 89:22

Ver. 22. The enemy shall not exact upon him,.... The enemy is the devil, as in the interpretation of the parable of the tares, Mt 13:39, the implacable enemy of Christ and his church; and yet, notwithstanding all his enmity and malice, he could not "exact", or get more inflicted on him, than the law and justice of God required of him, as the sinner's surety; or could not "exact" a tribute of him, or make him tributary to him; or, in other words, conquer him, and subject him to him: so far from it, that he was conquered by Christ, and all his principalities and powers spoiled; or could not "deceive" him, in which sense the word {b} is sometimes used; and so the Targum here: though he deceived Eve, he could not deceive the Messiah, the seed of the woman; he tried it, in person, by his temptations in the wilderness, and by his agents and instruments, the Scribes and Pharisees: but in vain, and to no purpose; he could not succeed:

nor the son of wickedness afflict him: at least not always: he was indeed afflicted, as by wicked men, and by Satan the wicked one, yet not so as to be overcome by any; and as Christ personal, so Christ mystical, or his church and people, are afflicted by the sons of wickedness; yet, sooner or later, they are delivered out of all their afflictions. Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that wicked one, that is eminently so, and may be well called "the son of wickedness", has long and greatly oppressed the people of Christ, and his interest; but he shall not always; he shall be destroyed with the spirit of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming, **2Th 2:3**. This passage is applied to the Messiah by the Jews {c}.

{b} ayvy "non imponet ei", Tigurine version; "non seducet eum", so some in Vatablus; "non decipiet eum", Gejerus, Schmidt. {c} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 56. 3.

Psalms 89:23

Ver. 23. And I will beat down his foes before his face,.... In Judea, and in the Gentile world; more especially in Rome Pagan, and Rome Papal; in the most public manner, before his Gospel, and the ministry of it by his servants; and they shall either submit unto it, or be broken to pieces as a potter's vessel; for he must reign till all enemies are put under his feet, 1Co 15:25,

and plague them that hate him; that would not have him to reign over them, the unbelieving Jews, and all the followers of antichrist; who are either plagued with the judgments of God here, or with everlasting punishment hereafter, with which they will be tormented for ever and ever, Lu 19:14 or "strike" {d} them with a rod of iron, with his wrath and vengeance; strike them down to the ground, and to the lowest hell.

{d} Pwga "percutiam", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Piscator, Michaelis.

Psalms 89:24

Ver. 24. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him,.... The "faithfulness" of God was and is with Christ, in performing promises made to him respecting his work, and strength to do it, as man, and the glory that should follow; and also those made to his people in him, relating to grace here, and happiness hereafter: and though there was no "mercy" shown to Christ, as the surety of his people, but he was dealt with in strict justice; yet, as Mediator of the covenant, the special mercy of God is with him, even every blessing of it, called "the sure mercies of David"; and is only communicated through him; he is the mercy seat, from whence mercy is dispensed, and the propitiation through whom God is merciful to men; the words may be rendered, "my truth and my grace" {e}, as they are by the Targum; and both are with Christ, the truth of doctrine, and all the fulness of grace, justifying, sanctifying, pardoning, adopting, and persevering grace, **Joh 1:14**,

and in my name shall his horn be exalted, or "his glory", as the Targum; his power and dominion, of which the horn is an emblem; and his glory is displayed in having the same name his Father has: his name is expressive of his nature, being, and perfections, the name Jehovah; and his name of title and office "King of Kings, and Lord of lords"; or his name the Word of God, as the Targum; who, as such, is the brightness of his Father's glory: or the sense is, that, by the power of God, he should be raised from the dead, and have glory given him, and be exalted at his right hand, and made Lord and Christ; or by means of the Gospel, which is the name of the Lord, Joh 17:6, his kingdom and dominion should be spread in the world; see **1Sa 2:10**.

{e} ydoxw ytnwmaw "et veritas mea, et gratia mea", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 89:25

Ver. 25. I will set his hand also in the sea,.... Which is expressive not of his dominion over the sea, and of his power and authority over all things in it, which: he has by right of creation, and as Mediator, **Ps 8:5**, of which there were instances in the days of his flesh, **Mt 8:26**, but of his kingdom taking place in, and of his government over the inhabitants of the isles of the sea; and so the Targum,

"I will set or place his government in the provinces of the sea;"

and which has been remarkably accomplished in our isles, where his Gospel has been preached, his kingdom set up, and he has had a race of subjects, and a seed, to serve him for many years:

and his right hand in the rivers: or, as the Targum,

"the power of his right hand in those that dwell by rivers;"

meaning such that dwell upon the continent, afar off from the sea, and whose countries are watered by rivers: so that both phrases denote the extent of Christ's kingdom in the continent, and in the islands of the sea; signifying, that it should reach everywhere, and be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, Ps 72:8. Compare with this Re 10:1. Aben Ezra interprets it of David's prevailing over those that go in ships in the sea, and in rivers.

Psalms 89:26

Ver. 26. He shall cry unto me, thou art my Father,.... Not by creation, as he is the Father of angels and men; nor by adoption, as he is the Father of saints; but by generation, being the begotter of him, **Ps 2:7** so that he is Christ's own and proper Father, and Christ is his own and proper Son, **Joh 5:18**, and he frequently called him his Father, and asserted him to be in this relation to him, **Joh 5:17**
Joh 10:30, and addressed him, called upon him, and prayed unto him as such, Mt 11:25, "my God"; that chose him to be the Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour; who made a covenant with him, his chosen; who prepared and provided the human nature of Christ; anointed him with the gifts and graces of his Spirit, and supported him in his sufferings, and crowned him with glory and honour; whom Christ loved as his God, trusted in him as such, obeyed him, and prayed unto him: he called him his God, owned him to be so, and called upon him, and cried unto him, as such, Joh 20:17. God is the Father of Christ, as Christ is a divine Person; and he is the God of Christ, as Christ is man: these two relations frequently go together in the New Testament, Joh 20:17. It is added,

and the Rock of my salvation; that bore him up, and where he stood firm, while he was working out the salvation of his people; and though he was not saved from sufferings and death, yet he was quickly delivered from the grave, and raised from the dead, and set at the right hand of God, where he must reign till all enemies are put under his feet.

Psalms 89:27

Ver. 27. Also I will make him my firstborn,.... Or, "make him the firstborn"; make him great, as Jarchi interprets it; give him the blessing, the double portion of inheritance: so Christ is made most blessed for ever, and has all spiritual blessings in his hands; and is heir of all things, and his people joint-heirs with him. Christ is God's "firstborn", or "first begotten", **Heb 1:6**, being begotten by him, and of him; and his firstbegotten, though none begotten after him; as the first that opened the womb, under the law, was called the firstborn, though none were ever born after; and in such sense his first begotten, as that he is his only begotten: and he is the firstborn, with respect to creatures; "he is the firstborn of every creature"; **Col 1:15**, being begotten and brought forth before any creature was in being, **Pr 8:22**, and, with respect to the saints, "he is the firstborn among many brethren", **Ro 8:29**, they are of the same nature, and in the same family, and in which Christ is a son, and the firstborn; and in all things he has the preeminence; and he is also "the firstborn from the dead", or "the first begotten of the dead", **Col 1:18** being raised first from thence by his own power, and to an immortal life; and is the first fruits of them that sleep, and the efficient and meritorious cause of the resurrection of life, and the pattern and exemplar of it: even him the Father promises to make "higher than the kings of the earth"; having a kingdom of a superior nature to theirs, and a more extensive and durable one; and even they themselves shall be subject to him; hence he is called "King of kings", Re 19:16. This will be when their kingdoms become his; when they shall fall down before him, and worship him, and bring their riches and glory into his kingdom, or the New Jerusalem church state,
Ps 72:10. This passage is interpreted of the Messiah by the Jews {f}.

{f} In Shemot Rabba, s. 19. fol. 104. 4.

Psalms 89:28

Ver. 28. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore,.... That is, for his mystical body, his church and people; for whom stores of mercy are kept with him, to be laid out in their regeneration, pardon, salvation, and eternal life; for to them the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting, Ps 103:17, unless this is to be understood of the "grace" and "kindness" {g} of God, as the word may be rendered; his free favour and love to Christ, which always continues; for as he was always his dearly beloved Son, that lay in his bosom from eternity, so he continued, throughout his state, of humiliation, his well beloved, in whom he was well pleased, and still is, and ever will:

and my covenant shall stand fast with him; being made with him as the head and representative of his people, it remains, and will remain, sure, firm, and immoveable; its blessings are "sure mercies", and its promises are all "yea and amen in Christ": the stability of it, and of all that is in it, is owing to its being made with him, and being in his hands, who is the surety, Mediator, and messenger of it.

{g} ydox "bonitatem meam", Musculus, Tigurine version; "benignitatem meam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "gratiam meam", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 89:29

Ver. 29. His seed also will I make to endure for ever,.... Not a race of kings from David, which ended at the Babylonish captivity; not the natural seed of David, not the Messiah himself, who sprung from him, but the Messiah's spiritual seed, which were given him by the Father, adopted through him, regenerated by his Spirit and grace, begotten through his Gospel, and the ministry of it, and born again in his church, and to whom he stands in the relation of the everlasting Father, **Isa 9:6**. The "enduring" of these "for ever" may denote the final perseverance of particular believers; which may be concluded from the relation of Christ, as an everlasting Father to them, who therefore must continue as his children; from his affection to them, from which there can be no separation; from their security in and by him, being in his hand, and in his heart; from their adoption, which is never revoked, being sons they are no more servants; from their regeneration of incorruptible seed; and from the nature of faith, which can never be lost: they that trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion, which endures for ever, Ps 125:1 or it may be expressive of the duration of the church of Christ in general, throughout all periods of time, notwithstanding the malice and opposition of men and devils against it; see Mt

16:18,

and his throne as the days of heaven; a phrase signifying a great length of time, De 11:21 yea, invariable constancy and duration,
Jer 31:25 and indeed the throne of Christ is for ever and ever, and will be when the present earth and heavens are fled away,
Ps 45:6. Christ is upon a throne now in heaven, the same with his divine Father's; and here he must sit and reign, till all enemies are put under him; and he will be on a throne of glory when he judges the world, and in the New Jerusalem state for the space of a thousand years; and, after that, he will reign with his saints, and they with him, for evermore; his throne and kingdom are everlasting, **Isa 9:7**.

Psalms 89:30

Ver. 30. If his children forsake my law,.... The same with the seed before mentioned, the children of the Messiah: it is not said "if he forsakes", which cannot be supposed of Christ, because he knew no sin, nor did any; which yet might be supposed of David, had he been literally meant; but not he, nor his natural children, but the spiritual seed of mystical David, are here designed, who may sin, and do sin, of which there is too much proof and evidence; and who sin not only through infirmity, but sometimes very grossly, and which sins are here expressed by various phrases: they sometimes "forsake the law of God"; do not attend to it, as they should, as the rule of their walk and conversation; are remiss in their observance of it, and obedience to it, and transgress its precepts; or his "doctrine" {h}, even the doctrine of the Gospel; which may be said to be forsaken when men grow indifferent to it; go off from it in any measure, drop their profession of it, or hold it remissly, or become careless in their attendance on it: forsaking the assembling together to hear it, in some sense, is a forsaking of it; and this the Lord takes notice of, and resents, in his people:

and walk not in my judgments; those laws of his house by which he judges, regulates, and governs his people; by which they are directed by him, as their Judge and Lawgiver, how to behave themselves in the church of God; and in which they are to walk, and continue in the observance of; and so to do is to walk as becomes the Gospel, and worthy of their calling; but to do otherwise is to walk disorderly; and such are cognizable by the Lord, and by his people.

{h} ytrwt "verbum meaum revelatum", Gejerus; "legem et doctrinam meam",

Michaelis.

Psalms 89:31

Ver. 31. If they break my statutes,.... Fixed, settled, appointed ordinances; such as are baptism and the Lord's supper, under the New Testament dispensation; which are the things that are unshaken, and will remain until the second coming of Christ: these are to be kept as they were first delivered; no change and alteration ought to be made in them; so to do is to break and violate them, or "profane" them, as the word {i} here used signifies; and which may be done by an unbecoming, irreverent, and indecent attendance on them; as was by some in the Corinthian church, of which the apostle complains, and who for it were taken notice of, and chastened by the Lord, 1Co 11:2, and keep not my commandments; which should be kept impartially, with great affection to them, from a principle of love to the Lord, with a view to his glory, and without trusting to and depending upon an obedience to them; for they are not grievous; and, besides, "in", though not "for", keeping them, there is great reward; and a contrary behaviour is displeasing to God: now this particular enumeration of offences, that may be committed by the children of God to Christ, show that all sorts of sins may be committed by them; sins of omission and commission; sins against the law, and against the Gospel; all but the unpardonable one; and that these, though they are observed in a way hereafter mentioned, yet are all forgiven.

{i} wllxy "prophanaverint", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 89:32

Ver. 32. Then will I visit their transgression with the rod,.... That is, of men; as in **2Sa 7:14**, the Lord making use of men to chastise his people by, as he did of the neighbouring nations of the Jews, when they sinned against him; and so the Targum interprets it here,

"I will visit their transgressions by the hands of the tribes of the ungodly;"

or with such afflictions as are common to men, 1Co 10:13, in a kind, humane, moderate way, in measure, in judgment, and not in wrath and hot displeasure; or in such like manner as a man chastises his children, which is in love, **De 8:5** and their iniquity with stripes; such as diseases of body, loss of relations, crosses and disappointments in the world; not with the stripes of divine vengeance, of vindictive justice, such as Christ, the surety of his people, endured for them; but with the scourges of a father, Isa 53:8.

Psalms 89:33

Ver. 33. Nevertheless, my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him,.... Or "make it void" {k}, not from Christ, who always was, and ever will be, the dear Son of his love, even while he was obeying, suffering, and dying; nor from all those that are in him, loved and chosen in him, from everyone of his spiritual seed, who are all dear sons, and pleasant children; and the love of God to his people is in Christ; and therefore there can he no separation from it; nor will it ever depart from them, or be utterly or at all taken from them, as to that itself, though sometimes the manifestations of it are withdrawn from them; but the love of God itself is invariable and unchangeable; see **Ro 8:38**, nor is it removed when God afflicts and chastens his people; for his chastenings are from love, and in love; the reason why he chastens them is because he loves them, and he loves them while he is chastening them; he visits and comforts them, sympathizes with them, supports them, and supplies them, and makes all things work together for their good, **Re 3:19**,

nor suffer my faithfulness to fail; in making good his engagements to Christ, in keeping the covenant made with him, and in fulfilling his promises to his people; and even when he afflicts them, it is in faithfulness to them; nor will he suffer them to be afflicted above what they are able to bear, and will support them under it, and deliver out of it, Ps 119:75 or "I will not falsify in my truth" {i}; or falsify his word; he is faithful that has promised, who will do it, yea, notwithstanding the unbelief of his people,
Heb 10:23.

{k} rypa "not irritam faciam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus. {i} ytnwmab rqva alw "neque faciam mendacium" ("neque fallam", Montanus) "in veritate mea", Pagninus; "neque mentiar aut fallam in veritate mea", Michaelis.

Psalms 89:34

Ver. 34. My covenant will I not break,.... Not the covenant at Sinai, as Aben

Ezra, but the covenant of grace made with Christ, and which stands fast with him, Ps 89:3, which is firm, sure, and stable, and as immovable as mountains and hills, and more so, 2Sa 23:5 or "profane" {m} it, though his people profane his statutes, Ps 89:31, he will not profane his covenant; though they violate his laws, he is a God keeping covenant with them, and will not break his word with them:

nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips; any promise of his, respecting either the temporal, spiritual, or eternal welfare of his people: or "not change" {n}; as he changes not in his nature and perfections, nor in his love and affections, nor in his counsels and purposes; so neither in his covenant and promises, they are always the same, and have a certain and unchangeable accomplishment; there is a performance of whatsoever is spoken by the Lord, **Lu 1:45**.

{m} llxa al "non prophanabo", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c. {n} hnva al "non mutabo", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

Psalms 89:35

Ver. 35. Once have I sworn by my holiness,.... Swearing is ascribed to God after the manner of men, and is done in condescension to the weakness of his people, and to remove doubts and hesitations from them, relating to things spiritual and eternal; as to his everlasting love to them, his covenant with them in Christ, and their perseverance in his grace; and it is made by himself, or one or other of his perfections, as here by his "holiness"; see **Am 4:2**, and indeed his holiness being his nature, is no other than he himself, the holy God; and because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, that as sure as he was, and was holy, just, and true, he would make good what he promises, **Heb 6:13** and this is done but once, once for all, that being sufficient; it need not be repeated, nor is it ever revoked; when he swears, he never repents of it, nor changes his mind; and it is to show the immutability of his counsel that he swears at all,
Ps 110:4,

that I will not lie unto David; he will not lie to any, he cannot, it is impossible he should; it would be to deny himself, it is contrary to his being as God, he is not a man that he should lie; it is contrary to his character as the God of truth; he will not lie, neither in his counsel nor covenant, in his purposes nor promises; these are the two immutable things, in which it is impossible he should lie: and he has swore to it that he will not lie to David, to David's son the Messiah, with whom the covenant is made, and stands fast; all the prophecies concerning him he has fulfilled; and all the promises made to him of help and assistance, as man and Mediator, in his work, and of the reward of it, a glory with him, he has made good.

Psalms 89:36

Ver. 36. His seed shall endure for ever,.... This is a confirmation by his oath of what he had before said, Ps 89:29 which may be understood either of the perseverance of particular believers, of everyone of the spiritual seed of Christ; or of the duration of the church in general, throughout all ages, as before observed; and these being matters of moment and importance, and of which there are sometimes doubts in the minds of the Lord's people about them, and that they may be firmly believed by them, he confirms them with an oath; for God never swears to trivial things; and when he does swear, it is to remove the doubts of his people, and make their minds easy:

and his throne as the sun before me; that is, shall continue as long as it does; see Ps 89:29, or shall be bright, splendid, and glorious as the sun, so the Targum,

"and his throne light as the sun before me;"

meaning his church and kingdom, of which the throne is an emblem, and which became so in Gospel times, clear and lucid as the sun, **So 6:10**, when day was made by the rising of the sun of righteousness, and by the bright shining of the Gospel ministry; and at particular periods since, as in the times of Constantine, when the church was clothed with the sun, and at the Reformation, when Christ appeared with a rainbow on his head, and his face was as the sun, Re 12:1 and especially this will be the case of the church in the latter day, when the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun seven fold, as the light of seven days; and when the city, the church, will stand in no need of the sun, nor of the moon; and also in the ultimate glory, when the saints will shine as the sun in the kingdom of God; see Isa 30:26. This passage is applied to the Messiah by the Jews {a}.

{a} Zohar in Gen. fol. 30. 1.

Psalms 89:37

Ver. 37. It shall be established for ever as the moon,.... Either Christ's seed, or throne, which comes to much the same sense; for by both are meant his church and people, his kingdom and interest in the world; the moon is as perpetual as the sun, and is used as elsewhere to signify the continuance of the people, church, and interest of Christ,
Ps 72:5, for though the moon has its spots, and is changeable, sometimes in the full, and sometimes in the decline, yet always is, and always continues, and ever will; and so though the people of God have their spots and imperfections, and are sometimes on the decline in the frames and dispositions of their minds, in the exercise of grace, in their spirituality, liveliness, and zeal, and in their walk and conversation in the church and world; yet they shall abide and persevere to the end; and though the church may be like the moon in the wane, be declining as to numbers, gifts, and graces, yet it shall continue and be established; it is sometimes indeed in a fluctuating state, and is not always in the same place, but is removed from one country to another; yet it always is somewhere, even though in the wilderness, and ere long will be established on the top of the mountains, and be no more a tabernacle that shall be taken down; see
Ps 48:8

and as a faithful witness in heaven: or "in the sky or cloud" {b}; some understand this of the moon, others of both sun and moon; but it seems best to interpret it of something distinct from either, even of the rainbow, which though it does not always appear in the clouds, yet it has appeared at times, and does and will unto the end of the world; and be a faithful and an everlasting token and witness of the covenant of God made with all creatures, that he will no more destroy the world by a flood, **Ge 9:12**, and is an emblem of the covenant of grace, and of the continuance, perpetuity, and immutability of it; see
Isa 54:9.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{b} qxvb "in aethere", Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus; "in superiore nube", Junius & Tremellius; "in nubibus", Gejerus.

Psalms 89:38

Ver. 38. But thou hast cast off,.... Here begin objections to what is before said, and swore to; even to the everlasting love of God, to Christ, and to his seed, to the unchangeableness and unalterableness of the covenant, and to the continuance and perpetuity of the kingdom and church of Christ, taken from the dealings of the Lord with the Messiah and his people; which were made either by the psalmist, under a spirit of prophecy, foreseeing what would come to pass; or by the apostles and church of Christ, about the time of his sufferings and death, and after; when he seemed to be "cast off", and rejected by the Lord, particularly when he forsook him, and hid his face from him, Mt 27:46, as when he hides his face from his people, it is interpreted by them a casting them off; see Ps 44:22,

and abhorred; not that he abhorred the person of Christ, who was his own Son, his beloved Son; nor his afflictions and sufferings, which were a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to him; see Ps 22:24, though these might be interpreted by others as if the Lord abhorred or rejected him; because he suffered him to be used in the manner he was, and particularly to be abhorred by the Jews, even by the nation in general, Isa 49:7, though the sins of his people, which he had upon him, and for which he suffered, were an abhorring to the Lord; and when he was made sin, he was made a curse:

thou hast been wroth with thine Anointed; with thy Messiah; not Rehoboam, from whom the ten tribes were rent; nor Josiah, who was killed by Pharaohnecho; nor Zedekiah, carried captive into Babylon; but the true Messiah, the son of David, before said to be found by the Lord, and anointed with his holy oil, Ps 89:20, which is to be understood of him, not as his own son, who was always the object of his love, but as the sinner's surety, bearing the sins of his people, and all the wrath and punishment due unto them; and so is reconcilable to the promise, that lovingkindness should not be taken from him,
Ps 89:33 and is no objection to it, though made one.

Psalms 89:39

Ver. 39. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant,.... His servant David the Messiah, Ps 89:3, meaning not the covenant of circumcision, nor the covenant at Sinai, which were really made void at the death of Christ; but the covenant of grace and redemption made with Christ, which it was promised should stand fast, and never be broken,

Ps 89:3, but was thought to be null and void when the Redeemer was in the grave, and all hopes of redemption by him were gone,
Lu 24:21, but so far was it from being so, that it was confirmed by the sufferings and death of Christ; and every blessing and promise of it were ratified by his blood, hence called the blood of the everlasting covenant, Heb 13:20,

thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground: by suffering it to be cast to the ground, and used contemptibly; as when Jesus was crowned with thorns, and saluted in a mock manner; when an "if" was put upon his being the King of Israel, Mt 27:29, and which seemed very inconsistent with the promise, Ps 89:27 that he should be made higher than the kings of the earth; and yet so it was, and is; he is highly exalted, made Lord and Christ, crowned with glory and honour, and is set far above all principality and power, and every name that is named in this world or that to come, notwithstanding all the above usage of him.

Psalms 89:40

Ver. 40. Thou hast broken down all his hedges,.... Round about his vine, the church; see Ps 80:12. A famous church was raised at Jerusalem, quickly after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, which seemed to be well filled, fenced, and protected; but on a sudden a violent persecution arose, and the members of it were made havoc of, and the ministers of the word were scattered abroad, and which was the breaking down of the hedges; and what was done to the church was taken by Christ as done to himself, as it is here spoken of him; see **Ac 8:1**, and this might seem contrary to the word and oath of God, that his seed should endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven, Ps 89:29, when the first Christian church was used in this manner; but that providence was overruled, for the spread of the Gospel, and the interest of Christ, in other parts; see **Ac 8:4**, and so no objection to what is before said:

thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin; the same as before, the church of Christ, which seemed to be so well built and fortified; see
Isa 26:1.

Psalms 89:41

Ver. 41. All that pass by the way spoil him,.... His church, his members, which are himself, when made havoc of by their persecutors, and they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, Heb 10:34, so the church of Christ may be spoiled, however, attempted to be spoiled, by false teachers, who are the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; crafty seducers, who spoil Christians of their peace and comfort, through philosophy and vain deceit, **So 2:15**. Christ himself may be said to be spoiled, when he was stripped of his clothes by the Roman soldiers, who also parted his garments, casting lots on his vesture; when they that passed by his cross, as he hung upon it, reviled him, and robbed him of his good name, and of his kingly and priestly offices; and he is also spoiled by false teachers, who rob him of his deity, his divine and eternal sonship, and of his satisfaction and righteousness, by whom he is trodden under foot, and his blood counted as an unholy thing; and so the Targum,

"all that pass by the way tread upon him;"

see Heb 10:29, these are they that walk not in the right way; but go out of it, and choose their own way; they are such as pass over the right way, or cross it; they are they that transgress, and abide not in the doctrine of Christ, that so use him, **2Jo 1:9**,

he is a reproach to his neighbours; his name and character were reproached by the Jews, his countrymen, who called him a glutton and a wine bibber; and represented him as a notorious sinner; his miracles as done by the help of Satan; his doctrine as hard sayings, novel opinions, contrary to common sense and reason, and tending to licentiousness; and his followers and members as the offscouring of all things: but all this has been or will be rolled off, and is no objection to the glory promised him.

Psalms 89:42

Ver. 42. Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries,.... Suffered them to become powerful, and to prevail against him; as the wicked Jews, and Satan, and his principalities and powers, at the time of Christ's apprehension, crucifixion, and death; for then were their hour, and the power of darkness, Lu 22:53, death also had dominion over him, and held him under the power of it for awhile: the enemies of his interest, Rome Pagan, and Rome Papal, have, in their turns, had their right hands set up, and have had power, and prevailed over it; and the latter will again, at the slaying of the witnesses: all which, though it seems contrary to Ps 89:21, yet is not; for Satan, though he bruised Christ's heel, yet Christ bruised his head, destroyed his works, and him himself, and that by dying; and spoiled his principalities and powers; and death could not hold him long, nor has it now any dominion over him, and is abolished by him; and antichrist, and all the antichristian powers, will be destroyed by him ere long:

thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice; as they did when they had got him on the cross; and especially when he was laid in the grave,
Ps 22:7, and as the antichristian party will when his witnesses are slain, Re 11:10, but as the joy of the former was short lived, and was soon turned into sorrow, so will be that of the latter.

Psalms 89:43

Ver. 43. Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword,.... Or the "sharpness" {a} of it blunted it, so that it could do no execution: the disciples of Christ were not allowed the use of the temporal sword to defend their master; and his house, his kingdom, not being of this world, Mt 26:51, other weapons were put into their hands; the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; and the edge of this was blunted, with respect to the Jews, being of little or no efficacy among them; it was turned off by them, and put away from them; but then it was turned towards the Gentiles, and was powerful and effectual among them; Christ girt it on his thigh, and rode forth in his glory and majesty, conquering, and to conquer, and by it subdued many, who fell under him, and gave up themselves unto him; see **Eph 6:17**, and ere long, with the twoedged sword, which proceeds out of his mouth, will he smite the antichristian nations; and the remnant of those that escape at the battle of Armageddon shall be slain with it, Re 19:15,

and hast not made him to stand in the battle; but to fall in it, being delivered up into the hands of wicked men, of justice, and death; and yet, by dying, he put away sin, finished it, made an end of it, and destroyed it; he conquered Satan, and led him captive; overcame the world, the spite and malice of it, and its prince; and abolished death itself.

{a} rwu "acumen", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 89:44

Ver. 44. Thou hast made his glory to cease,.... The glory of his deity, though it did not properly cease, yet it seemed to do so, being covered, and out of sight, and seen but by a very few, while he appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh; and the glory of his humanity was made to cease, in which he was fairer than the children of men, and his visage was more marred than any man's, and his form than the sons of men; and the glory of his offices, prophetical, priestly, and kingly, which were reproached and vilified, and disputed and contradicted by the Jews, Mt 26:68, it may be rendered, "his purity" {b}, which seemed to cease when he was clothed with our filthy garments; or had all our sins laid upon him, and imputed to him, by his Father; and he was made sin for us, who knew none: the Targum is,

"thou hast made the priests to cease who sprinkle upon the altar, and purify his people:"

and cast his throne down to the ground; this seems contrary, and is an objection to Ps 89:29, but is not; for not withstanding the usage of Christ by the Jews, who rejected him as the King Messiah,
See Gill on "Ps 89:39", yet he is now upon the same throne with his Father, and will sit upon a throne of glory when he comes to judge the world, and so in the New Jerusalem church state, and to all eternity.

{b} wrhjm "puritatem ejus", Montanus, Michaelis.

Psalms 89:45

Ver. 45. The days of his youth hast thou shortened,.... His days of joy and pleasure; such as days of youth are, in opposition to the days of old age, which are evil, Ec 11:9, these were shortened when his sorrows and sufferings came on, and God hid his face from him; and indeed he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief all his days: the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "the days of his time"; and the Arabic version "the days of his years"; for he did not live out half the time of man's age, which is threescore years and ten, Ps 90:10, he dying at the age of thirty three or four; but, notwithstanding this, he lives again, and lives for evermore; he has length of days for ever and ever, Ps 21:4, though his days were in some sense shortened, yet in another sense they are and will be prolonged, even his own, and those of his spiritual seed, according to the promise of God, Isa 53:10,

thou hast covered him with shame; see Ps 69:7, when his face was covered with shame and spitting, from which he hid it not, **Isa 1:6**, but now he is crowned with glory and honour; wherefore all these complaints, though true, are no objections to what is before said and swore to.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 89:46

Ver. 46. How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thyself? for ever?.... When God hides his face front his people, though it is but for a little while, it seems long, and a kind of an eternity to them; and so it seemed to the man Christ Jesus; and indeed what he endured, when his Father hid his face from him, was of the same kind with an eternal absence; see Ps 13:1,

shall thy wrath burn like fire? it did so when Christ bore the sins of his people, and all the punishment due unto them; when his strength was dried up like a potsherd; when he, the antitype of the passover lamb roasted with fire, was sacrificed for us; all which is entirely consistent with God's everlasting and invariable love to him, as his own Son. See Gill on "Ps 89:38".

Psalms 89:47

Ver. 47. Remember how short my time is,.... In this world man's time here is fixed, and it is but a short time; his life is but a vapour, which appeareth for a little while; his days are as an hand's breadth; they pass away like a tale that is told; the common term of life is but threescore years and ten, and few arrive to that: to know and observe this is proper and useful; it may awaken a concern for a future state, excite to a vigorous discharge of duty, and animate to patience under afflictions: the clause in connection with the preceding verse seems to be a plea for mercy; that, since time was short, it might not be consumed in bearing the wrath of God; but be spent in peace and comfort, like that of Job 10:20: Compare with this Ps 103:13, the Targum is,

"remember that I am created out of the dust:"

but these words, with what follow, are the words of the psalmist, representing the apostles of Christ, and other saints, at the time of his sufferings and death, and when under the power of the grave, and when they were almost out of hope of his resurrection: see Lu 24:21, expostulating with the Lord on that account; and here entreat him to remember the shortness of their time, if there was no resurrection from the dead, as there would be none if Christ rose not; and therefore, as their life was a short one, it would be of all men's the most miserable:

wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? none of the sons of men are made in vain; for they are all made for the glory of God, which end is answered, some way or another, in everyone of them; either in the salvation of them by Christ, or in the just destruction of them through their own sin; and though the time of life is short, and afflictions many, yet men are not made in vain, and especially those of them who believe in Christ; for, for them to live is Christ, they live to his glory: whether they live a longer or shorter time, they live to the Lord; and when they die, they die to him; and their afflictions are always for good, temporal, or spiritual, and eternal: indeed, if there was no future state after this, men might seem to be made in vain, and there might be some reason for such a question or complaint; but so it is not; there is an immortal life and state after this, either of bliss or woe: also, if there was no such thing as the redemption, justification, and salvation of any of the sons of men, through the sufferings and death of Christ, and which could not be without his resurrection from the dead, with a view to which the question is put, then there would seem some room for it; but there is a redemption of them, and therefore are not made in vain; and Christ, who was delivered for their offences, is risen for their justification.

Psalms 89:48

Ver. 48. What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?.... Every living man must die; as sure as a man lives, so sure he shall die: be he strong and mighty, as the word signifies, or weak and sickly; be he high or low, rich or poor, prince or peasant, righteous or wicked; persons of all ranks, states, and conditions, age or sex, must die; for all have sinned; and it is the appointment of God that they should die, and very few are the exceptions; as Enoch and Elijah, and those that will be found alive at Christ's coming:

shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave; either from going down into it, or coming under the power of it; so the Targum,

"what man is he that shall live, and shall not see the angel of death (**Heb 2:14**) shall he deliver his soul from his hand, that he should not go down to the house of his grave?"

or deliver himself from the power of it, when in it; that is, raise himself from the dead: none ever did this, or ever can: Christ indeed undertook, and has promised, to redeem his people from the power of the grave, upon which they have believed they should be delivered; see
Ho 13:14, but if Christ rose not himself, which was the thing now in question, how could it be? the case stands thus; every man must die; no man can raise himself from the dead; if Christ rise not, everyone must continue under the power of the grave; for then there could be no resurrection.

Selah. See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 89:49

Ver. 49. Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses,.... The spiritual blessings said to be in Christ; the grace said to be given to us in him; the sure mercies of David, such as redemption, justification, remission of sins, and eternal life; so called because they flow from the free favour and love of God, and, being many, are expressed in the plural number; and which were former or ancient ones, even promised and secured in Christ before the world began; springing from the love of God, which, both to Christ and his people, was from everlasting, and provided for in a covenant, which was as early:

which thou swarest unto David in thy truth? which were promised to Christ, the antitype of David, and that with an oath, by the truth or faithfulness of God, for the certainty thereof: but now where are all these? or how will they take place, if Christ rise not from the dead? where will be the redemption of his people, the justification of their persons, the remission of their sins, and their everlasting salvation? and what will become then of the covenant, oath, and faithfulness of God?

Psalms 89:50

Ver. 50. Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants,.... The apostles of Christ, his servants, and the servants of the living God, that showed unto men the way of salvation, and other saints with them that believed in Christ, and were made willing to serve and follow him; these were now reproached by the Scribes and Pharisees for believing in him, and professing him; and were scoffed and laughed at, when they had crucified him, and laid him in the grave, triumphing over him and them, believing he would never rise again, as he had given out he should, and for which his followers were reproached; and therefore desire the Lord would remember the reproach cast upon Christ, and them, for his sake, and roll it away:

how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty people; the ecclesiastical and civil rulers of the Jews, their chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, who poured out their reproaches very plentifully on the followers of Christ, whom the psalmist here represents; which fell very heavily upon them, as a very great weight and burden, and pressed them sore, and went to their very hearts, and therefore said to be "in their bosom"; and which is mentioned to excite the divine compassion, that he would appear for them, and raise his Son from the dead, as was promised and expected; that their enemies might have no more occasion to reproach him and them: it is in the original, "I bear in my bosom all the many people" {c}; which some understand of the people of God, and of Christ's sustaining their persons, and making satisfaction for their sins; but the other sense is preferable: Kimchi supplies the words as we do; and so the Targum, which renders them thus,

"I bear in my bosom all the reproaches of many people."

{c} Myme Mybr lk "omnes multos populos", Montanus; "omnes, quam multi sunt, populos", Cocceius.

Psalms 89:51

Ver. 51. Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O Lord,.... Which carries in it another argument why the Lord should take notice of these reproaches; because they come not only from their enemies, but from his also, and the enemies of his Son, who would not have him, the King Messiah, to reign over them, and are said to reproach him in the next clause:

wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine Anointed; or thy Messiah; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it of the Messiah: Jarchi renders it "the ends of the Messiah"; and all of them understand it of the coming of the Messiah, as in the Talmud {d}; which, because delayed, or was not so soon as expected, was scoffed at and reproached by wicked men; see **Mal 2:17**, but it rather designs the ways and works, actions, and especially the miracles of Christ, which were reproached, either as done on the sabbath day, or by the help of Satan; and he was traduced in his kindest actions to the bodies and souls of men, as a friend of publicans and sinners, and himself as a sinner: and it may have a particular view to the latter end of the Messiah, the last part of his life, his sufferings and death, and when he hung on the cross; at which time he was, in the most insolent manner, reviled and reproached by his enemies: the words may be rendered "the heels of the Messiah" {e}, and are thought by some to have reference to the promise in **Ge 3:15**, and may regard either the human nature of Christ, which was both reproached and bruised; or his members suffering disgrace and persecution for his sake, and which he takes as done to himself. Suidas {f} interprets it of the ancestors of Christ, according to the flesh; and Theodoret of the kings of that time.

{d} Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. {e} twbqe "calcibus", Vatablus; "calcaneos"; Gussetius, Michaelis. {f} In voce antallagma.

Psalms 89:52

Ver. 52. Blessed be the Lord for evermore,.... In this world, and in the world to come, as the Targum; for reproaches and afflictions for Christ's sake, since they work together for good; as Job blessed the Lord in the midst of his troubles, **Job 1:21**, or rather the psalmist, viewing, by a spirit of prophecy, Christ rising from the dead, ascending to heaven, sitting at the right hand of God, and interceding for the application of all the blessings of the covenant; and now, seeing all before objected and complained of was reconcilable to the love, covenant, and oath of God, breaks out into this benediction, and with it closes the psalm; which agrees with Christ, not only as God over all, blessed for ever, but as Mediator, who, as such, is made most blessed for evermore; see Ps 21:6. These are not the words of the copier of the Psalms, blessing God for assistance in prosecuting the work thus far, which is the sense of some Jewish writers mentioned by Aben Ezra and Kimchi, but of the psalmist himself:

Amen, and Amen; which words are added to express the wish and faith of the psalmist; and the word is repeated to denote the vehemence and strength of the same. Here ends the third part of the book of Psalms, and so the Syriac version closes it. See Gill on "Ps 41:13".
See Gill on "Ps 72:20".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 90:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 90

A Prayer of Moses the man of God. Here begins the fourth part of the book of Psalms, and with the most ancient psalm throughout the whole book, it being written by Moses; not by one of that name that lived in later times; nor by one of his posterity; nor by some one who composed it, agreeably to his words and doctrines, and called it by his name; but by that Moses by whom the Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, led them through the wilderness to the borders of Canaan's land, and by whom he delivered to them the lively oracles; and who is described as the man of God, a title given to Moses, De 33:1, so called, not as a creature of his make, so all men are; nor as a man of grace, born of God, so is every saint; but a man of more than ordinary gifts received from the Lord, a prophet of the Lord, and the chief of the prophets, and a type of the great Prophet; so inspired men and prophets under the Old Testament bear this name, and ministers of the Gospel under the New, 1Ki 17:18. It is a conceit of Bohlius, that this prayer of his (so it is called, as several other psalms are, see Ps 17:1) was made by him when he was about seventy years of age, ten years before he was sent to Pharaoh, while he was in Midian, which he gathers from Ps 90:10; others think it was written towards the end of his life, and when weary of it, and his travels in the wilderness; but it is more generally thought that it was penned about the time when the spies brought a bad report of the land, and the people fell a murmuring; which provoked the Lord, that he threatened them that they should spend their lives in misery in the wilderness, and their carcasses should fall there; and their lives were cut short, and reduced to threescore years and ten, or thereabout; only Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, lived to a greater age; and on occasion of this Moses wrote this psalm, setting forth the brevity and misery of human life; so the Targum,

"a prayer which Moses the prophet of the Lord prayed, when the people of the house of Israel sinned in the wilderness."

Jarchi and some other Jewish writers {z} not only ascribe this psalm to Moses, but the ten following, being without a name; but it is certain that Psalm 95 was written by David, as appears from **Heb 4:7** and Psalm 96 is his, compared with 1Ch 16:23 and in Psalm 99 mention is made of Samuel, who lived long after the times of Moses.

Ver. 1. Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations,.... Even when they had no certain dwelling place in the world; so their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, dwelt in tabernacles in the land of promise, as in a

strange land; and their posterity for many years served under great affliction and oppression in a land that was not theirs; and now they were dwelling in tents in the wilderness, and removing from place to place; but as the Lord had been in every age, so he now was the dwelling place of those that trusted in him; being that to them as an habitation is to man, in whom they had provision, protection, rest, and safety; see
Ps 31:2 so all that believe in Christ dwell in him, and he in them, **Joh 6:56**, they dwelt secretly in him before they believed; so they dwelt in his heart's love, in his arms, in him as their head in election, and as their representative in the covenant of grace from eternity; and, when they fell in Adam, they were preserved in Christ, dwelling in him; and so they were in him when on the cross, in the grave, and now in heaven; for they are said to be crucified, buried, and risen with him, and set down in heavenly places in him, **Ga 2:20**, and, being converted, they have an open dwelling in him by faith, to whom they have fled for refuge, and in whom they dwell safely, quietly, comfortably, pleasantly, and shall never be turned out: here they have room, plenty of provisions, rest, and peace, and security from all evils; he is an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the storm. Some render the word "refuge"; {a} such is Christ to his people, being the antitype of the cities of refuge; and others "helper", as the Targum; which also well agrees with him, on whom their help is laid, and is found.

{z} Huillus Patriarch. in Origen. apud Hieron. adv. Ruffin. l. 1. fol. 67. L. {a} Nwem "refugium", V. L. Vatablus; "asylum", Gejerus.

Psalms 90:2

Ver. 2. Before the mountains were brought forth,.... Or "were born" {b}, and came forth out of the womb and bowels of the earth, and were made to rise and stand up at the command of God, as they did when he first created the earth; and are mentioned not only because of their firmness and stability, but their antiquity: hence we read of the ancient mountains and everlasting hills, Ge 49:26, for they were before the flood, and as soon as the earth was; or otherwise the eternity of God would not be so fully expressed by this phrase as it is here, and elsewhere the eternity of Christ, **Pr 8:25**, or "ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world"; the whole terraqueous globe, and all the inhabitants of it; so the Targum; or "before the earth brought forth; or thou causedst it to bring forth" {c} its herbs, plants, and trees, as on the third day:

even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God; and so are his love, grace, and mercy towards his people, and his covenant with them; and this is as true of Jehovah the Son as of the Father, whose eternity is described in the same manner as his; see **Pr 8:22**, and may be concluded from his name, the everlasting Father; from his having the same nature and perfections with his Father; from his concern in eternal election, in the everlasting covenant of grace, and in the creation of all things; and his being the eternal and unchangeable I AM, yesterday, today, and for ever, is matter of comfort to his people.

{b} wdly "nascerentur", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Michaelis; so Ainsworth; "geniti essent", Piscator, Gejerus. {c} Ura llwxtw "antequam parturiret terra", Syr. "aut peperisses terram", Piscator, Amama.

Psalms 90:3

Ver. 3. Thou turnest man to destruction,.... Or to death, as the Targum, which is the destruction of man; not an annihilation of body or soul, but a dissolution of the union between them; the words may be rendered, "thou turnest man until he is broken" {b}; and crumbled into dust; thou turnest him about in the world, and through a course of afflictions and diseases, and at last by old age, and however by death, returns him to his original, from whence he came, the dust of the earth, which he becomes again, **Ge 3:19** the grave may be meant by destruction:

and sayest, return, ye children of men, or "Adam"; from whom they all sprung, and in whom they all sinned, and so became subject to death; to these he says, when by diseases he threatens them with a dissolution, return by repentance, and live; and sometimes, when they are brought to the brink of the grave, he returns them from sickness to health, delivers them from the pit, and enlightens them with the light of the living, as he did Hezekiah: or this may refer to the resurrection of the dead, which will be by Christ, and by his voice calling the dead to return to life, to rise and come to judgment; though some understand this as descriptive of death, when by the divine order and command man returns to his original dust; thus the frailty of man is opposed to the eternity of God. Gussetius understands all this of God's bringing men to repentance, contrition, and conversion; and takes the sense to be,

"thou turnest till he becomes contrite, and sayest, be ye converted, ye sons of Adam;"

which he thinks {c} best agrees with the mind of the Apostle Peter, who quotes the following passage, **2Pe 3:8**. Some, as Arama observes, connect this with the following verse; though men live 1000 years, yet they are but as yesterday in the sight of God.

{b} akd de vwna bvt "convertes hominem usque ad contritionem", Montanus; "donec conteratur", Musculus, Tigurine verion; "donee sit contritus", Vatablus; "ut sit contritus", Junius & Tremellius. {c} Ebr. Comment. p. 158.

Psalms 90:4

Ver. 4. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday,.... Which may be said to obviate the difficulty in man's return, or resurrection, from the dead, taken from the length of time in which some have continued in the grave; which vanishes, when it is observed, that in thy sight, esteem, and account of God, a thousand years are but as one day; and therefore, should a man lie in the grave six or seven thousand years, it would be but as so many days with God; wherefore, if the resurrection is not incredible, as it is not, length of time can be no objection to it. Just in the same manner is this phrase used by the Apostle Peter, and who is thought to refer to this passage, to remove an objection against the second coming of Christ, taken from the continuance of things as they had been from the beginning, and from the time of the promise of it: see **2Pe 3:4**, though the words aptly express the disproportion there is between the eternal God and mortal man; for, was he to live a thousand years, which no man ever did, yet this would be as yesterday with God, with whom eternity itself is but a day, Isa 43:13, man is but of yesterday, that has lived the longest; and were he to live a thousand years, and that twice told, it would be but "as yesterday when it is past"; though it may seem a long time to come, yet when it is gone it is as nothing, and can never be fetched back again:

and as a watch in the night; which was divided sometimes into three, and sometimes into four parts, and so consisted but of three or four hours; and which, being in the night, is spent in sleep; so that, when a man wakes, it is but as a moment with him; so short is human life, even the longest, in the account of God; See Gill on "Mt 14:25".

Psalms 90:5

Ver. 5. Thou carriest them away as with a flood,.... As the whole world of the ungodly were with the deluge, to which perhaps the allusion is; the phrase is expressive of death; so the Targum,

"if they are not converted, thou wilt bring death upon them;"

the swiftness of time is aptly signified by the flowing gliding stream of a flood, by the rolling billows and waves of it; so one hour, one day, one month, one year, roll on after another: moreover, the suddenness of death may be here intended, which comes in an hour unlooked for, and unaware of, as a flood comes suddenly, occasioned by hasty showers of rain; as also the irresistible force and power of it, which none can withstand; of which the rapidity of a flood is a lively emblem, and which carries all before it, and sweeps away everything that stands in its course; as death, by an epidemic and infectious disease, or in a battle, carries off thousands and ten thousands in a very little time; nor does it spare any, as a flood does not, of any age or sex, of any rank or condition of life; and, like a flood, makes sad destruction and devastation where it comes, and especially where it takes off great numbers; it not only turns beauty to ashes, and strength into weakness and corruption, but depopulates towns, and cities, and kingdoms; and as the flowing flood and gliding stream can never be fetched back again, so neither can life when past, not one moment of time when gone; see 2Sa 14:14, besides this phrase may denote the turbulent and tempestuous manner in which, sometimes, wicked men go out of the world, a storm being within and without, as in Job 27:20, "they are as a sleep"; or dream, which soon passeth away; in a sound sleep, time is insensibly gone; and a dream, before it can be well known what it is, is over and lost in oblivion; and so short is human life, Job 20:8 there may be, sometimes, a seeming pleasure enjoyed, as in dreams, but no satisfaction; as a man in sleep may dream that he is eating and drinking, and please himself with it; but, when he awakes, he is hungry and empty, and unsatisfied; and so is man with everything in this life, Isa 29:8, and all things in life are a mere dream, as the honours, riches, and pleasures of it; a man rather dreams of honour, substance, and pleasure, than really enjoys them. Wicked men, while they live, are "as those that sleep"; as the Targum renders it; they have no spiritual senses, cannot see, hear, smell, taste, nor feel; they are without strength to everything that is spiritually good; inactive, and do none; are subject to illusions and mistakes; are in imminent danger, and unconcerned about it; and do not care to be jogged or awaked, and sleep on till they sleep the sleep of death, unless awaked by powerful and efficacious grace; and men when dead are asleep, not in their souls, but in their bodies; death is often in Scripture signified by a sleep, under which men continue until the resurrection, which is an awaking out of it:

in the morning they are like grass, which groweth up or "passeth away", or "changeth" {d}; or is changed; some understand this of the morning of the resurrection, when there will be a change for the better, a renovation, as Kimchi interprets the word; and which, from the use of it in the Arabic language, as Schultens observes {e}, signifies to be green and flourishing, as grass in the morning is; and so intends a recovery of rigour and strength, as a man after sleep, and as the saints will have when raised from the dead. The Targum refers it to the world to come,

"and in the world to come, as grass is cut down, they shall be changed or renewed;"

but it is rather to be understood of the flourishing of men in the morning of youth, as the next verse shows, where it is repeated, and where the change of grass is beautifully illustrated and explained.

{d} Plxy "quae mutatur", Pagninus; "mutabitur", Montanus; "immutatur", Tigurine version; "transiens", Junius & Tremellius; "quae transit", Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis. {e} Animadv. in Job, p. 34.

Psalms 90:6

Ver. 6. In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up,.... That is, the grass, through the dew that lay all night on it, and by the clear shining of the sun after rain, when it appears in great beauty and verdure; so man in the morning of his youth looks gay and beautiful, grows in the stature and strength of his body, and in the endowments of his mind; and it may be also in riches and wealth; it is well if he grows in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ:

in the evening it is cut down, and withereth; the Targum adds, "through heat"; but it cannot be by the heat of the sun, when it is cut down at evening; but it withers in course, being cut down. This respects the latter part of life, the evening of old age; and the whole expresses the shortness of life, which is compared to grass, that now is in all its beauty and glory, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, **Mt 6:30**. This metaphor of grass, to set forth the frailty of man, and his short continuance, is frequently used; see Ps 37:2 **1Pe 1:24**. It may be observed, that man's life is represented but as one day, consisting of a morning and an evening, which signifies the bloom and decline of life.

Psalms 90:7

Ver. 7. For we are consumed by thine anger,.... Kimchi applies this to the Jews in captivity; but it is to be understood of the Israelites in the wilderness, who are here introduced by Moses as owning and acknowledging that they were wasting and consuming there, as it was threatened they should; and that as an effect of the divine anger and displeasure occasioned by their sins; see Nu 14:33. Death is a consumption of the body; in the grave worms destroy the flesh and skin, and the reins of a man are consumed within him; hell is a consumption or destruction of the soul and body, though both always continue: saints, though consumed in body by death, yet not in anger; for

when flesh and heart fail, or "is consumed", "God is the strength of their hearts, and their portion for ever", Ps 73:26, their souls are saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, and their bodies will rise glorious and incorruptible; but the wicked are consumed at death, and in hell, in anger and hot displeasure:

and by thy wrath are we troubled; the wrath of God produces trouble of mind, whenever it is apprehended, and especially in the views of death and eternity; and it is this which makes death the king of terrors, and men subject to bondage in life through fear of it, even the wrath to come, which follows upon it; nothing indeed, either in life or at death, or death itself, comes in wrath to the saints; nor is there any after it to them, though they have sometimes fearful apprehensions of it, and are troubled at it.

Psalms 90:8

Ver. 8. Thou hast set our sins before thee,.... The cause of all trouble, consumption, and death; these are before the Lord, as the evidence, according to which he as a righteous Judge proceeds; this is opposed to the pardon of sin, which is expressed by a casting it behind his back, Isa 38:17,

our secret sins in the light of thy countenance; the Targum and Jarchi interpret it of the sins of youth; the word is in the singular number, and may be rendered, "our secret sin" {f}; which has led some to think of original sin, which is hidden from, and not taken notice of by, the greatest part of the world, though it is the source and spring of all sin. It is not unusual for the singular to be put for the plural, and may intend all such sins as are secretly committed, and not known by other men, and such as are unobserved by men themselves;

as the evil thoughts of their hearts, the foolish words of their mouths, and many infirmities of life, that are not taken notice of as sins: these are all known to God, and will be brought to light and into judgment by him, and will be set in "the light of his countenance"; which denotes not a gracious forgiveness of them, but his clear and distinct knowledge of them, and what a full evidence they give against men, to their condemnation and death; and intends not only a future, but the present view the Lord has of them, and his dealings with men in life, and at death, according to them.

{f} wnmle "mostrum absconditum", Montanus; "sive occultum", Vatablus, Muis, Michaelis.

Psalms 90:9

Ver. 9. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath,.... The life of man is rather measured by days than by months or years; and these are but few, which pass away or "decline" {g} as the day does towards the evening; see **Jer 6:4** or "turn away their face", as the word {h} may be rendered: they turn their backs upon us, and not the face to us; so that it is a hard thing to get time by the forelock; and these, which is worst of all, pass away in the "wrath" of God. This has a particular reference to the people of Israel in the wilderness, when God had swore in his wrath they should not enter into the land of Canaan, but wander about all their days in the wilderness, and be consumed there; so that their days manifestly passed away under visible marks of the divine displeasure; and this is true of all wicked men, who are by nature children of wrath, and go through the world, and out of it, as such: and even it may be said of man in general; the ailments, diseases, and calamities, that attend the state of infancy and youth; the losses, crosses, and disappointments, vexations and afflictions, which wait upon man in riper years; and the evils and infirmities of old age, do abundantly confirm this truth: none but God's people can, in any sense, be excepted from it, on whom no wrath comes, being loved with an everlasting love; and yet these, in their own apprehensions, have frequently the wrath of God upon them, and pass many days under a dreadful sense of it:

we spend our years as a tale that is told; or as a "meditation" {y} a thought of the heart, which quickly passes away; or as a "word" {z}, as others, which is soon pronounced and gone; or as an assemblage of words, a tale or story told, a short and pleasant one; for long tales are not listened to; and the pleasanter they are, the shorter the time seems to be in which they are told: the design of the metaphor is to set forth the brevity, and also the vanity, of human life; for in tales there are often many trifling and vain things, as well as untruths told; men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree a lie, in every state; and, in their best state, they are altogether vanity: a tale is a mere amusement; affects for a while, if attended to, and then is lost in oblivion; and such is human life: in a tale there is oftentimes a mixture, something pleasant, and something tragic; such changes are there in life, which is filled up with different scenes of prosperity and adversity: and perhaps this phrase may point at the idle and unprofitable way and manner in which the years of life are spent, like that of consuming time by telling idle stories; some of them spent in youthful lusts and pleasures; others in an immoderate pursuit of the world, and the things of it; very few in a religious way, and these with great imperfection, and to very little purpose and profit; and particularly point to the children of Israel in the wilderness, who how they spent their time for thirty eight years there, we have no tale nor story of it. The Targum is,

"we have consumed the days of our life as the breath or vapour of the mouth in winter,"

which is very visible, and soon passes away; see **Jas 4:14**.

{g} wnp "declinaverunt", Pagninus, Montanus; "declinant", Munster, Muis. {h} "Deflectunt faciem", Gejerus, so Ainsworth. {y} hgh wmk "sicut cogitationem", Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth. {z} "Sicut sermonem", Pagninus, Montanus; "instar locutionis", Musculus, Vatablus; "dicto citius", Tigurine version.

Psalms 90:10

Ver. 10. The days of our years are threescore years and ten,.... In the Hebrew text it is, "the days of our years in them are", &c. {a}; which refers either to the days in which we live, or to the persons of the Israelites in the wilderness, who were instances of this term of life, in whom perhaps it first took place in a general way: before the flood, men lived to a great age; some nine hundred years and upwards; after the flood, men lived not so long; the term fixed then, as some think, was an hundred and twenty years, grounding it on the passage in **Ge 6:3**, but now, in the time of Moses, it was brought to threescore years and ten, or eighty at most: of those that were numbered in the wilderness of Sinai, from twenty years and upwards, there were none left, save Joshua and Caleb, when the account was taken in the plains of Moab; see Nu 14:29, so that some must die before they were sixty; others before seventy; and perhaps all, or however the generality of them, before eighty: and, from that time, this was the common age of men, some few excepted; to the age of seventy David lived, **2Sa 5:4**, and so it has been ever since; many never come up to it, and few go beyond it: this is not only pointed at in revelation, but is what the Heathens have observed. Solon used to say, the term of human life was seventy years {b}; so others; and a people called Berbiccae, as Aelianus relates {c}, used to kill those of them that lived above seventy years of age, having exceeded the term of life. The Syriac version is, "in our days our years are seventy years"; with which the Targum agrees,

"the days of our years in this world are seventy years of the stronger;"

for it is in them that such a number of years is arrived unto; or "in them", that is, in some of them; in some of mankind, their years amount hereunto, but not in all: "and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years"; through a good temperament of body, a healthful and strong constitution, under a divine blessing, some may arrive to the age of eighty; there have been some instances of a strong constitution at this age and upwards, but not very common; see Jos 14:11, for, generally speaking, such who through strength of body live to such an age,

yet is their strength labour and sorrow; they labour under great infirmities, feel much pain, and little pleasure, as Barzillai at this age intimates, 2Sa 19:35, these are the evil days {d}, in which is no pleasure, Ec 12:1, or "their largeness or breadth is labour and sin" {e}; the whole extent of their days, from first to last, is spent in toil and labour to live in the world; and is attended with much sin, and so with much sorrow:

for it is soon cut off; either the strength of man, or his age, by one disease or incident or another, like grass that is cut down with the scythe, or a flower that is cropped by the hand; see Job 14:2,

and we fly away; as a shadow does, or as a bird with wings; out of time into eternity; from the place of our habitation to the grave; from a land of light to the regions of darkness: it is well if we fly away to heaven and happiness.

{a} Mhb "in ipsis", Pagninus, Montanus; "in quibus vivimus", Tigurine version, Vatablus. {b} Laertius in Vita Solon. p. 36. Herodotus, l. 1. sive Clio, c. 32. Macrob. in Somno Scipionis, l. 1. c. 6. p. 58. & Plin. Epist. l. 1. Ep. 12. & Solon. Eleg. apud Clement. Alex. Stromat. l. 6. p. 685, 686. {c} Vat. Hist. l. 4. c. 1. {d} "----tristisque senectus et labor----". Virgil. Georg. l. 3. v. 67. {e}

Mbhr "amplitudo eorum", Montanus.

Psalms 90:11

Ver. 11. Who knoweth the power of thine anger?.... Expressed in his judgments on men: as the drowning of the old world, the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, the consumption of the Israelites in the wilderness; or in shortening the days of men, and bringing them to the dust of death; or by inflicting punishment on men after death; they are few that take notice of this, and consider it well, or look into the causes of it, the sins of men: such as are in hell experimentally know it; but men on earth, very few closely attend to it, or rarely think of it:

even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath; or who knows thy wrath, so as to fear thee? who considers it so, as that it has such an influence upon him to fear the Lord, and stand in awe of him, and fear to offend him, and seek to please him? or rather the wrath of God is answerable to men's fear of him; and that, in some things and cases, men's fears exceed the things feared; as afflictions viewed beforehand, and death itself: the fears of them are oftentimes greater, and more distressing, than they themselves, when they come; but so it is not with the wrath of God; the greatest fears, and the most dreadful apprehensions of it, do not come up to it; it is full as great as they fear it is, and more so.

Psalms 90:12

Ver. 12. So teach us to number our days,.... Not merely to count them, how many they are, in an arithmetical way; there is no need of divine teachings for that; some few instructions from an arithmetician, and a moderate skill in arithmetic, will enable persons not only to count the years of their lives, but even how many days they have lived: nor is this to be understood of calculating or reckoning of time to come; no man can count the number of days he has to live; the number of his days, months, and years, is with the Lord; but is hid from him: the living know they shall die; but know not how long they shall live, and when they shall die: this the Lord teaches not, nor should we be solicitous to know: but rather the meaning of the petition is, that God would teach us to number our days, as if the present one was the last; for we cannot boast of tomorrow; we know not but this day, or night, our souls may be required of us: but the sense is, that God would teach us seriously to meditate on, and consider of, the shortness of our days; that they are but as a shadow, and there is no abiding; and the vanity and sinfulness of them, that so we may not desire to live here always; and the troubles and sorrows of them, which may serve to wean us from the world, and to observe how unprofitably we have spent them; which may put us upon redeeming time, and also to take notice of the goodness of God, that has followed us all our days, which may lead us to repentance, and engage us in the fear of God:

that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom; to consider our latter end, and what will become of us hereafter; which is a branch of wisdom so to do; to seek the way of salvation by Christ; to seek to Christ, the wisdom of God, for it; to fear the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom; and to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; to all which an application of the heart is necessary; for wisdom is to be sought for heartily, and with the whole heart: and to this divine teachings are requisite, as well as to number our days; for unless a man is taught of God, and by his Spirit convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, he will never be concerned, in good earnest, about a future state; nor inquire the way of salvation, nor heartily apply to Christ for it: he may number his days, and consider the shortness of them, and apply his heart to folly, and not wisdom; see Isa 22:21.

Psalms 90:13

Ver. 13. Return, O Lord,.... Either from the fierceness of thine anger, according to Aben Ezra and Jarchi; of which complaint is made, Ps 90:7, or unto us, from whom he had departed; for though God is everywhere, as to his being and immensity, yet, as to his gracious presence, he is not; and where that is, he sometimes withdraws it; and when he visits again with it, be may be said to return; and when he returns, he visits with it, and which is here prayed for; and designs a manifestation of himself, of his love and grace, and particularly his pardoning mercy; see Ps 80:14

how long? this is a short abrupt way of speaking, in which something is understood, which the affection of the speaker would not admit him to deliver; and may be supplied, either thus,

how long wilt thou be angry? God is sometimes angry with his people, which, when they are sensible of, gives them a pain and uneasiness they are not able to bear; and though it endures but for a moment, yet they think it a long time; see Ps 30:5. Arama interprets it, "how long ere the time of the Messiah shall come?"

or "how long wilt thou hide thyself?" when he does this, they are troubled; and though it is but for a small moment he forsakes them, yet they count it long, and as if it was for ever; see Ps 13:1, or "how long wilt thou afflict us?" as the Targum; afflictions come from the Lord, and sometimes continue long; at least they are thought so by the afflicted, who are ready to fear God has forgotten them and their afflictions, Ps 44:23, or "how long wilt thou defer help?" the Lord helps, and that right early, at the most seasonable time, and when difficulties, are the greatest; but it sometimes seems long first; see **Ps 6:3**,

and let it repent thee concerning thy servants; men are all so, of right, by creation, and through the benefits of Providence; and many, in fact, being made willing servants by the grace of God; and this carries in it an argument for the petition: repentance does not properly belong to God; it is denied of him, Nu 23:19, yet it is sometimes ascribed to him, both with respect to the good he has done, or promised, and with respect to the evil he has brought on men, or threatened to bring; see **Ge 6:6**, and in the latter sense it is to be understood here; and intends not any change of mind or will in God, which cannot be; but a change of his dispensations, with respect to desertion, affliction, and the like; which the Targum expresses thus,

"and turn from the evil thou hast said thou wilt do to thy servants:"

if this respects the Israelites in the wilderness, and their exclusion from Canaan, God never repented of what he threatened; he swore they should not enter it, and they did not, only their children, excepting two persons: some render the words, "comfort thy servants" {f}; with thy presence, the discoveries of thy love, especially pardoning grace, and by removing afflictions, or supporting under them.

{f} Mxnh "consolare", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

Psalms 90:14

Ver. 14. O satisfy us early with thy mercy,.... Or "grace" {g}; the means of grace, the God of all grace, and communion with him, Christ and his grace; things without which, souls hungry and thirsty, in a spiritual sense, cannot be satisfied; these will satisfy them, and nothing else; namely, the discoveries of the love of God, his pardoning grace and mercy, Christ and his righteousness,

and the fulness of grace in him; see Ps 63:3, this grace and mercy they desire to be satisfied and filled with betimes, early, seasonably, as soon as could be, or it was fitting it should: it may be rendered "in the morning" {h}, which some understand literally of the beginning of the day, and so lay a foundation for joy the whole day following: some interpret it of the morning of the resurrection; with which compare
Ps 49:14 and Ps 17:15 others of the day of redemption and salvation, as Kimchi and Jarchi: it may well enough be applied to the morning of the Gospel dispensation; and Christ himself, who is "the mercy promised" unto the fathers, may be meant; "whose coming was prepared as the morning"; and satisfied such as were hungry and thirsty, weary and faint, with looking for it, **Ho 6:3** The Targum is,

"satisfy us with thy goodness in the world, which is like to the morning;"

and Arama interprets it of the time of the resurrection of the dead.

that we may rejoice and be glad all our days; the love, grace, and mercy of God, his presence, and communion with him, the coming of Christ, and the blessings of grace by him, lay a solid foundation for lasting joy in the Lord's people, who have reason always to rejoice in him; and their joy is such that no man can take from them, **Php 4:4**.

{g} Kdox "gratia tua", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {h} rqbb "matutino Montanus", Cocceius; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 90:15

Ver. 15. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us,.... The days of affliction are times of sorrow; and days of prosperity make glad and joyful; and the psalmist here seems to desire an equal number of the one as of the other; not that an exact precise number of the one with the other is intended; but that there might be a proper proportion of the one to the other; and commonly God does "set the one over against the other": there is a mixture of both in the believer's life, which is like unto a chequer of black and white, in which there is a proper proportion of both colours; and so prosperity and adversity are had in turns, "and work together for good" to them that love the Lord: and when it is said "make us glad", that is, with thy favour and presence, it suggests, that these are a sufficient recompence for all affliction and trouble; and if so here, what must the enjoyment of these be in heaven!

Between this and present afflictions there is no proportion, neither with respect to the things themselves, nor the duration of them; see **Ro 8:18** and "the years" wherein "we have seen evil"; afflictions are evils; they flow from the evil of sin, and to some are the evil of punishment; and even chastisements are not joyous, but grievous: this may have respect to the forty years' travel in the wilderness, in which the Israelites saw or had an experience of much affliction and trouble; and even to the four hundred years in which the seed of Abraham were afflicted in a land not their's; see Nu 14:33. Hence the Jews {i} make the times of the Messiah to last four hundred years, answerable to those years of evil, and which they take to be the sense of the text; and so Jarchi's note on it is,

"make us glad in the days of the Messiah, according to the number of the days in which thou hast afflicted us in the captivities, and according to the number of the years in which we have seen evil."

{i} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1.

Psalms 90:16

Ver. 16. Let thy work appear unto thy servants,.... Either the work of Providence, in conducting the people of Israel through the wilderness, and bringing them into the land of Canaan; which God had promised to do for them, especially for their posterity, and therefore their "children" are particularly mentioned in the next clause; or the work of salvation, as Kimchi; even the great work of redemption by the Messiah, which is the work of God, which he determined should be done, appointed his Son to do, and gave it him for that purpose now this was spoken of, and promised, as what should be done; but as yet it did not appear; wherefore it is prayed for, that it might; that the Redeemer might be sent, and the work be done: or else the work of grace upon the heart, which is God's work, and an internal one, and not so obvious to view; and hence it is entreated, that, being wrought by him, he would shine upon it, bear witness to it, and make it manifest that it was really wrought, and a genuine and true work; and moreover this may reach to and include the great work of God, to be brought about in the latter day, respecting the conversion of the Jews, the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, the destruction of antichrist, and the establishment and glory of the kingdom of Christ:

and thy glory unto their children; the glory of God, displayed in the above works of providence and grace, particularly in the work of redemption, in which all the divine perfections are glorified; or Christ himself, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, that he would appear to them in human nature, and dwell among them; and they behold his glory, as they afterwards did, **Joh 1:14**, or else the sense is, that the glorious grace of God might appear unto them, and upon them, by which they would be made all glorious within, and be changed into the image of Christ, from glory to glory; or that the Shechinah, the glorious majesty and presence of God, might be among them, and be seen by them in his sanctuary, Ps 63:2.

Psalms 90:17

Ver. 17. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us,.... Either the grace and favour of God, his gracious presence vouchsafed in his ordinances, which makes his tabernacles amiable and lovely, and his ways of pleasantness; or the righteousness of Christ, which is that comeliness he puts upon his people, whereby they become a perfection of beauty; or the beauty of holiness, which appears on them, when renewed and sanctified by the Spirit; every grace is beautiful and ornamental: or Christ himself may be meant; for the words may be rendered, "let the beauty of the Lord be with us" {k}; he who is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand altogether lovely, fairer than the children of men, let him appear as the Immanuel, God with us:

and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it; or "direct it" {l}; though God works all works of grace for us, and in us, yet there is a work of duty and obedience to him for us to do; nor should we be slothful and inactive, but be the rather animated to it by what he has done for us: our hands should be continually employed in service for his honour and glory; and, whatever we find to do, do it with all the might of grace we have; and in which we need divine direction and strength, and also establishment, that we may be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord: and this petition is repeated, to show the sense he had of the necessity of it, and of the vehemence and strength of desire after it. Jarchi interprets this of the work of the tabernacle, in which the hands of the Israelites were employed in the wilderness; so Arama of the tabernacle of Bezaleel.

{k} wnyle "adsis nobis", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius; Heb. "sit apud nos", Piscator; "super nobis et apud nos", Michaelis. {l} whnnwk katayeunon, Sept. "dirige", V. L. Musculus; "dirige et confirma", Michaelis.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 91:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 91

Jarchi and others think this psalm was written by Moses {m}, as was the preceding; but the Targum ascribes it to David; as do the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; and very probably, as is generally thought, was penned by him on occasion of the pestilence which came upon the people, through his numbering of them, 2Sa 24:1. The person all along spoken of, and to, according to the Targum, is Solomon his son; and, according to the title in the Syriac version, King Hezekiah, so Theodoret, who is called the son of David; neither of which are probable. Some think the Messiah is meant; and that the psalm contains promises of protection and safety to him, as man, from diseases, beasts of prey, evil spirits, and wicked men, under the care of angels; and this not because that Satan has applied one of these promises to him, **Mt 4:6**, but because they seem better to agree with him than with any other: and one part of the title of the psalm, in the Syriac version, runs thus,

"and spiritually it is called the victory of the Messiah, and of everyone that is perfected by him."

It seems best to understand it of every godly man, who is always safe under the divine protection. The Talmudisis {n} call it Myegp ryv, "a song of the occursions", or "meetings with evil spirits."

Ver. 1. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High,.... Or the Supreme; a title of God, who is superior to all beings, the Creator and Preserver of them, God over all, higher than the highest of angels or men; see Ge 14:22, "his secret place" is his heart, his bosom, where his only begotten Son lies; and into which he takes his people, where they are set as a seal, and who enjoy intimate communion with him; which is no other than his gracious presence, called "the secret of his presence",
Ps 31:20, which none but saints are admitted to, when his everlasting love, which was a secret in his heart, is made known unto them, and in which they also dwell, **1Jo 4:16**, as they likewise do in the eternal decree of election; which perhaps is meant by "the clefts of the rock, and secret places of the stairs", where the church is said to dwell, **So 2:14**, unless rather Christ the Rock, and who may be signified by the cleft of that Moses was put into, when

the goodness of the Lord passed before him, is intended; and who is the hiding place from the wind: mention is made of "the secret" of God's "tabernacle", Ps 27:5, in which he hides his people; alluding to the tabernacle, or temple, and the most holy place in it, called his secret place, **Eze 7:22**, and may refer to the ministry of the word and ordinances, where saints dwell, and enjoy much communion with God; and who are particularly under his special providence, protection, and power; which may here be designed:

shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty: who is able to do all things for his people, and is "Shaddai", all sufficient, as this word is thought to signify; has a sufficiency of happiness in and for himself, and of provisions for all his creatures, and of power and grace for his own children: his "shadow" may be the same with his secret place, his power and protection, often in this book of Psalms called "the shadow of his wings", Ps 17:8, in allusion to birds that overshadow and protect their young with their wings; though perhaps the allusion here may be to the shadow of a tree, and design the word and ordinances of the Lord's house, which are a delightful, refreshing, reviving, and fruitful shadow, **So 2:3**, where gracious souls dwell, and abide with great delight and pleasure. Christ, the Son of God, is sometimes compared to the shadow of a rock, or tree, which screens and shelters from heat; as he preserves his people from the heat of a fiery law, the flaming sword of justice, the wrath of God, the fiery darts of Satan, and the fury of persecutors: under this shadow do they abide or lodge all night, safe and secure, as the word {o} signifies: the Targum calls this shadow the shadow of the clouds of glory; the Arabic version, "the shadow of the God of heaven."

{m} So in Tikkune Zohar, correct. 20. fol. 50. 1. {n} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 8. 2. {o} Nnwlty "indesinenter pernoctans", Junius & Tremellius; "pernoctat", Piscator, Gejerus; "pernoctabit", Michaelis.

Psalms 91:2

Ver. 2. I will say of the Lord,.... Or to the Lord {p}: these are the words of the psalmist, expressing his faith in the Lord in the following words, taking encouragement from the safety of the godly man above described: the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, he shall say to the Lord; that is, the man that dwells in the secret place, and under the shadow of the Lord: the Targum is,

"David said, I will say to the Lord,"

as follows:

he is my refuge: a refuge in every time of trouble, outward or toward; a refuge when all others fail; and is himself a never failing one, a strong refuge, which none can break through and into, and in which all that have fled thither and dwell are safe:

and my fortress; what fortifications, natural or artificial, are to a city and its inhabitants, that is God to his people, and much more; he is round about them, as the mountains were about Jerusalem; his salvation are walls and bulwarks to them; yea, he is a wall of fire about them, Ps 125:2, they are kept by his power, as in a garrison, **1Pe 1:5**,

my God, in him will I trust; his covenant God, his God in Christ, and who would ever continue so; and was a proper object of his trust and confidence, both as the God of nature, and the God of grace; who is to be trusted in, both for temporal and spiritual blessings, and at all times; to which his lovingkindness, power, and faithfulness, greatly encourage and engage: the Targum is,

"in his Word will I trust."

{p} hwhyl Domino, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Musculus; "ad Jehovam", de Dieu.

Psalms 91:3

Ver. 3. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,.... These are the words of the psalmist, either speaking to himself, for the encouragement of his own faith and trust in the Lord; or to the man that dwells in the secret place, and under the shadow of the most High; which latter seems most agreeable; though Cocceius thinks they are the words of God in one of his Persons, speaking of another divine Person that should deliver such that trust in him: the Targum makes them to be the words of David to Solomon his son. By the "fowler" and his "snare" may be meant either Saul, who laid wait for David, spread snares for him, and hunted him as a partridge on the mountains, from whom he was delivered; or rather any tyrannical enemy and persecutor of the saints, who lay snares for them; and these are broken by the Lord, and so they escape, as a bird out of the hands of the fowler, Ps 124:6 or it may, best of all, be understood of Satan and his temptations, which are as snares that he lays to catch the people of God in, and from which they are delivered by the power and grace of God; see **1Ti 3:7**

and from the noisome pestilence; the most pernicious and destructive one; which may be literally understood of any pestilential distemper; from which the Lord, by his powerful providence, sometimes protects his people, when in danger of it: or, spiritually, of the pestilential disease of sin, that noisome and deadly one, the plague of the heart, which is the worst of all plagues; and from the ruinous and destructive effects and consequences of which the Lord saves his saints.

Psalms 91:4

Ver. 4. He shall cover thee with his feathers,.... As birds do their young, who cannot cover themselves: this they do from a tender regard to them, whereby they both keep them warm, and protect them from those that would hurt them: this represents the helpless state of the children of God, who are, like to young birds, weak and unable to defend themselves: the tender regard of God unto them, as the eagle and other birds have to their young; see De 32:11 and the warmth and comforts souls have, as well as protection, under his powerful and gracious presence; he comforts them under their tribulations, as well as defends them from their enemies:

and under his wings shalt thou trust; See Gill on "Ps 91:1" and the passages there referred to; the same metaphor is continued:

his truth shall be thy shield and buckler; his faithfulness, which is engaged to keep and preserve his saints safe to his kingdom and glory, **1Co 1:8**, his Son, who is "truth" itself, Joh 14:6, and whose person, blood, righteousness, and salvation, are as a shield and buckler all around the saints, to secure them from ruin and destruction; and are the shield which faith lays hold on, and makes use of, against the temptation, of Satan; see Ps 84:11, the word of God also, which is truth, Joh 17:19, every promise in it, and doctrine of it, is as a shield and buckler to strengthen, support, and secure the faith of his people, Pr 30:5.

Psalms 91:5

Ver. 5. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night,.... The terrible things that happen in the night; as fire, storms and tempests, invasion of enemies, murders, thefts, and, robberies: a good man, when he has committed himself and his family to the care and protection of God by prayer, has no reason to be anxiously careful of these things, or to indulge a slavish fear about them; see **Ps 3:5**, the Targum is,

"thou shall not be afraid for the fear of devils that walk in the night:"

so Jarchi interprets this, and the next verse, of such; as do others of the Jewish writers: a man that trusts in the Lord need not be afraid of men or devils: a fear of evil spirits is natural to men, and very early appeared; perhaps it took its rise from the fatal affair of the fall of our first parents, through an intercourse with an evil spirit; and ever since has been imprinted on human nature an aversion to evil spirits, and a dread of them, and even of all spirits in general; see **Job 4:13**,

nor for the arrow that flieth by day; the judgments of God, such as the sword, famine, and pestilence; these are called the arrows of God, De 32:23 {q}, because they move swiftly, come suddenly, and strike surely, and are open and visible; they are sent by the Lord, and are ordered and directed by him, and hit and hurt whom he pleases, and none else; and therefore such who dwell in the secret of the Lord, and under his shadow, need not be distressed about them: the Targum interprets it of the arrow of the angel of death, which he sends out in the day; see **Heb 2:14**, so Jarchi understands it of a demon that flies like an arrow.

{q} ecepeukev belouv----khla yeoio, Homer. Iliad. 1. v. 51, 53.

Psalms 91:6

Ver. 6. Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness,.... Some think, and not without cause, that what is figuratively expressed in the preceding verse is here explained; and, indeed, the "pestilence" may well be called the "terror by night": the name of the plague, at a distance, is terrible; the near approach of it is more so; when it enters a country, city, or town, what fleeing is there from it? and in the night season it is more dreadful than in the day; not only to think of it in the gloomy watches of the night, but to see the vast numbers carried out to be interred, and to hear the dismal cry, Bring out your dead: and so it is here said to "walk in darkness"; in the darkness of the night, or to arise from dark and unknown causes; when it moves and walks through cities, towns, and villages, and there is no stopping it: and this also may be the "arrow that flieth by day"; which flies as swift as an arrow, and that flies as swift as a bird {r}; this is taken out of the Lord's quiver, has its commission and direction from him, and does execution by night and by day: the plague that smote the firstborn in Egypt was in the night; and that which was in David's time, and might be the occasion of penning this psalm, began in the day, Ex 12:29,

nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon day; as the pestilence, which may be increased, and rage the more, through the heat of the day; and which destroys great numbers wherever it comes: seventy thousand were taken off in three days by the plague occasioned by David's numbering of the people: the Targum is,

"of a company of devils that destroy at noon day;"

that is, thou shall not be afraid: some think respect is had to a pestilential hot wind, common in the eastern countries, which begins to blow about eight o'clock in a morning, and is hottest at noon; which instantly suffocates persons, burns them, and reduces them to ashes presently, which the Arabs call "sammiel", or a poison wind {s}.

{r} "Voluces sagittae", Virgil. Aeneid. 12. "volante sagitta", Ovid. Trist. eleg. 10. {s} Vide Thevenot's Travels, par. 2. sect. 1. c. 12. p. 54. & l. 3. c. 8. p. 135.

Psalms 91:7

Ver. 7. A thousand shall fall at thy side,.... The left side, as the Targum; so the Arabic version, and Jarchi and Kimchi; which sense the opposition and distinction in the next clause direct unto: this is not to be understood of falling in battle, as some interpret it, but by the pestilence before spoken of:

and ten thousand at thy right hand; which shows both the great devastation made by the plague where it comes, and the special care and providence of God in preserving his people from it; of which David had an experience, when vast numbers of his people were destroyed by it on the right and left:

but it shall not come nigh thee; it may come near the place where good men are, or else it could not be said that a thousand should fall on their side, and ten thousand at their right hand: the plague that killed the firstborn in Egypt was near the dwellings of the Israelites, though it entered not into them; and that in

David's time was near him, though he was not infected with it: but the meaning is, that it should not come so near such as to seize their bodies and they fall by the distemper; there being a particular providence oftentimes concerned for their safety, which guards them from it; see **Eze 9:4**, not but that good men may fall in a common calamity, and by an epidemical distemper; but then it is for their good, and not their hurt; they are taken away from the evil to come, and are delivered from a worse plague than that by which they fall, the plague of their own hearts, the evil of sin; and so the Targum adds, "shall not come near to hurt", though it understands it of devils.

Psalms 91:8

Ver. 8. Only with thine eyes shall thou behold,.... The flying arrow, the walking pestilence, and wasting destruction, and the great devastations made by it:

and see the reward of the wicked; the vengeance of God upon them, and this as a just punishment for their sins; not looking upon it with delight and pleasure, rejoicing in the misery of their fellow creatures, any otherwise than as the glory of divine justice is displayed in it; see Ps 52:6, the pestilence is always threatened, and it always comes, as a Judgment upon a wicked generation of men; and so it is ever to be considered, and is considered by good men, Le 26:5.

Psalms 91:9

Ver. 9. Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge,.... So the words, according to Kimchi, also are directed to the good man; giving the reason of his safety, because he trusts in the Lord, and puts himself under his protection: but they should rather be rendered, and the accents require such a reading, "because thou, Lord, art my refuge" {t}; and so are either the words of the good man that trusts in the Lord; or rather of the psalmist himself, seeing his safety in the midst of danger, and ascribing it to the Lord; whose providence was in a peculiar manner over him, whose power protected him, and he was as an asylum or city of refuge to him; so that nothing could hurt him:

even the most High, thy habitation; it should be rendered, "thou hast made the most High thy habitation"; being an apostrophe of the psalmist to his own soul, observing the ground of his security; the most high God being made and used by him as his habitation, or dwelling place, where he dwelt, as every good man does, safely, quietly, comfortably, pleasantly, and continually: the Targum makes them to be the words of Solomon, paraphrasing them thus,

"Solomon answered, and thus he said, thou thyself, O Lord, art my confidence; in an high habitation thou hast put the house of thy majesty."

{t} yoxm hwhy hta yk "quniam tu Domine spes mea", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus; "nam tu O Jehova es receptus meus", Cocceius; so Piscator; "quia tu Domine, es perfugium meum", De Dieu, Gejerus.

Psalms 91:10

Ver. 10. There shall no evil befall thee,.... The evil of sin cleaves to the best of saints, the evil of temptations besets them, and the evil of afflictions comes upon them, as chastisements from the Lord; for they must expect to receive evil, in this sense, as well as good, from his hands; but the evil of punishment never touches them; and therefore, when any public calamity befalls them in common with others, yet not as an evil of punishment; it is not an evil to them, it is for their good:

neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling; how should it, when they dwell in God, and have made him, the most High, their habitation {u}; Ps 91:1 otherwise it may come nigh their temporal dwellings;
See Gill on "Ps 91:7" though it may not enter into them; and, should it, yet not as an evil, or by way of punishment; see **Pr 3:33**.

{u} Knwem tmv Nwyle "excelsum posuisti habitaculum tuum", Pagninus, Montanus, De Dieu, Gejerus.

Psalms 91:11

Ver. 11. For he shall give his angels charge over thee,.... Created spirits, so called, made by the Lord, and are at his command; who are ministering spirits to his people, who encamp about them, and are concerned in the preservation of them; they being committed to their care and charge by him who is Lord of heaven and earth: Satan applied this passage to Christ, **Mt 4:6**, nor did our Lord object to the application of it; and it can hardly be thought that he would have ventured to have done it, had he been aware that a misapplication might be objected; or that it was not the received sense of the place: what he is to be blamed for, in quoting it, was the wrong purpose for which he produced it, and for leaving out the next clause, which he saw was against his design;

to keep thee in all thy ways; in walking and travelling from place to place, as Providence calls and directs; and in all civil ways, in all lawful business and employment of life; in all spiritual ones, as the ways of God and religion: what Satan tempted Christ to was neither of these ways; it was not a natural way of going, nor the duty of his office, nor any of the ways of God.

Psalms 91:12

Ver. 12. They shall bear thee up in their hands,.... Which denotes the strength and power of angels to carry the saints in their hands; their tender care of them, such as a parent or nurse have of children; the helpless condition of the people of God, who are like infants, and need to be dealt with after this manner; the condescension of angels to take such an office on them, in submission to the will of God; the constant view they have of the saints, being always in their hands, and so in sight: thus they bear them, up in life, and at death carry their souls to Abraham's bosom:

lest thou dash thy foot against a stone; lest they fall into sin, or into any calamity and distress; lest the least hurt or mischief befall them, or the least injury be done them; see **Pr 3:23**. The Targum interprets it of the evil concupiscence, or corruption of nature, which is like a stone; see Eze 36:26.

Psalms 91:13

Ver. 13. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder,.... Or be unhurt by such savage and poisonous creatures; as the Israelites, when they travelled through the wilderness, in which were serpents and scorpions; and many of the servants of God have been delivered from them, or have slain them, as Samson, David, and Daniel; and so Christ was among the wild beasts in the wilderness, and yet not touched or hurt by them; and his disciples had power given them by him to tread on serpents and scorpions, and to take up serpents, without receiving any damage from them; and when a viper fastened on the hand of the Apostle Paul, he shook it off, without being hurt by it; see **Mr 1:13** Ac 28:5, it may be understood figuratively of Satan, who, for his voraciousness and cruelty, is compared to a lion; and, for his craft and subtlety, to a serpent, **1Pe 5:8**,

the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample underfoot; which also may be understood of the great dragon, the old serpent, called the devil and Satan; whom Christ trampled under his feet when he hung on the cross, and spoiled him and his principalities and powers; and who, in a short time, will be bruised under the feet of his people, as he has been already by the seed of the woman, **Ge 3:15**.

Psalms 91:14

Ver. 14. Because he hath set his love upon me,.... These are the words of God himself; and, according to Aben Ezra, are directed to the angels, describing the good man, and making promises to him; and in this clause he is represented as one that had "set his love" upon the Lord, being first loved by the Lord, and having the grace of love wrought in his heart by him: the phrase denotes the strength of his affection to God, and the sincerity of it; its singularity, being placed alone on him, and the settlement and fixedness of it, so as nothing could separate from it: this the Lord takes great notice of, and is highly well pleased with: hence it follows,

therefore will I deliver him: from noisome diseases before mentioned, from all afflictions into which he comes, and from all the temptations of the evil one, so as that he shall not be hurt or destroyed by them:

I will set him on high; on the Rock Christ Jesus, that is higher than he, higher than the angels, higher than the heavens, and where he is now out of the reach of all his enemies, and will be set hereafter on high in heaven, among princes, inheriting the throne of glory; yea, even set upon the same throne with Christ himself:

because he hath known my name; himself, his being, and perfections; his Son, the Angel of his presence, in whom his name, nature, and perfections are; and his name as proclaimed in him, a God gracious and merciful; and this not merely notionally, but experimentally, and affectionately and fiducially; for such, that truly know him, love him, and trust in him; and these exalt him, and so are exalted and set on high by him.

Psalms 91:15

Ver. 15. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him,.... God is to be invoked by prayer, and to be called upon in every time of trouble, in faith and with fervency, in truth and uprightness, and sincerity of soul; and he himself directs and encourages to it, and promises an answer, which he always sooner or later gives; for he is a God hearing and answering prayer; see Ps 50:15.

I will be with him in trouble; the Lord knows his people in adversity; he visits them in their affliction, grants his gracious presence with them, supports them under it, that they are not overwhelmed by it; he bears them up and through it, and makes all things work together for their good:

I will deliver him, and honour him: deliverance is again promised, to denote the certainty of it; and with this addition, that the Lord will honour such that know him, and love him: all his saints are honoured by him, by taking them into his family, and giving them a name better than that of sons and daughters of the greatest potentate; by clothing them with the righteousness of his Son; by adorning them with the graces of his Spirit; by granting them communion and fellowship with himself, and by bringing them to his kingdom and glory.

Psalms 91:16

Ver. 16. With long life will I satisfy him,.... In this world: the saints live in it as long as they choose to live; and when they come to die, be it when it will, they are, like Abraham, full of years, or satisfied with them; they have had enough of them, and would not live always here; but, with good old Simeon, desire to depart in peace; and in the other world they shall be satisfied with length of days, for ever and ever, even with eternal life; and nothing short of this will satisfy a good man:

and show him my salvation; Jesus Christ, the author of salvation, whom God appointed to do it, and who has finished it; salvation itself, wrought out by him; its fulness and suitableness, and interest in it; and also eternal glory and happiness, the completion and consummation of salvation: the former is shown unto and seen by faith here; the latter will be seen and enjoyed in heaven to all eternity. Aben Ezra and Kimchi refer this salvation to the days of the Messiah.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 92:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 92

A Psalm [or] Song for the Sabbath day. Many of the Jewish writers {a} think that this psalm was written by the first man Adam, and so the Targum,

"a hymn or song which the first man said for the sabbath day."

But had it been a composure of his, one would think it should have been placed at the head of this collection of psalms, and before that of Moses, Psalm 90, besides there were no musical instruments then for this psalm to be sung on, as in Ps 92:3, for they say it was made by him quickly after his creation, and his ejection from paradise; for Jubal was the father of them that handle the harp and organ; nor were there any number of enemies and wicked men to rise up against him, as in Ps 92:7. Nor was it written by Moses, as others have thought; but rather by David, to whom the Arabic version ascribes it; the musical instruments, the number of enemies, and the mention of the house and courts of the Lord, best agree with his times. It was made for the sabbath day, and to be used upon it; and directs to the work and worship of it; praising of God and celebrating his works, attending his house and ordinances; even for the seventh day sabbath, which God instituted and appointed the Jews to observe; and which in David's time was religiously kept; though some understand this of the time of rest which David had from his enemies round about him, and apply it to all such times of rest from tyranny and persecution, which the church of God in any period enjoys; and which is a proper season for praise and thanksgiving. Some Jewish writers refer it to the world to come, which will be all sabbath, even to the days of the Messiah, as Jarchi and others; so Theodorot; see **Heb 4:9**.

Ver. 1. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord,.... For all mercies, temporal and spiritual; for Christ, and salvation by him; for the Gospel, and for Gospel opportunities and ordinances; for, such days and seasons this psalm was composed for. It is "good" so to do, for it is the will of God that we should in and for every thing give thanks; it is due unto him, and is our reasonable service; it is well pleasing unto God through Christ; it is pleasant work for the saints themselves, and is profitable unto them; to be thankful for what they have is the way to have more. Kimchi connects this with the title; the sabbath day is good to give thanks unto the Lord; it is a very fit opportunity for such service; when a man is at leisure from worldly business, and his heart is engaged in spiritual exercises, and especially when it is warmed with the love of God:

and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High; a name and epithet of God, suitable to his majesty and glory, to his supereminence over all his creatures, and the place where he dwells, and to whom the highest praises are due; these two phrases, giving thanks, and singing praise, are much the same; only with this difference, the former may be done in prayer, and without the modulation of the voice, as well as with it; the latter only with it; hence these two are mentioned as distinct things in **Eph 5:19**.

{a} Zohar in Gen. fol. 43. 2. Vajikra Rabba, s. 10. fol. 153. 4. See the Targum in Cant. i. 1.

Psalms 92:2

Ver. 2. To show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning,.... God has shown forth his lovingkindness in Christ, and Christ has shown it in a ministerial way; and saints should show it forth also with their lips, to warm the hearts of one another, and encourage distressed minds; this should be a part, and a considerable one, of their thanksgiving and praise; as it will appear to be, when the objects of it are considered, not angels, but men, and these the worst and vilest; the instances of it in election, redemption, calling, adoption, and eternal life; and the freeness, earliness, and immovableness of it; and this is to be done in the "morning", not of the sabbath day only, but every other day, giving praise and thanks for the mercies of the night. Jarchi interprets it of the time of salvation:

and thy faithfulness every night: or "in the nights" {b}; not the night and goings out of the sabbath only, so Arama; but every other night, observing and declaring the faithfulness and truth of God in his counsels and covenant, in his word and promises, and in the preservation of his people, and the continuance of favours to them; particularly praising his name, and giving thanks unto him openly for the mercies of the day past: morning and night being mentioned may have some respect to the morning and evening sacrifices; and may signify that our sacrifices of praise should be offered up to God continually, Heb 13:15.

{b} twlylb "in noetibus", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c.

Psalms 92:3

Ver. 3. Upon an instrument of ten strings,.... An harp of ten strings, as the Targum. The harp invented by Terpander had only seven strings {c}; according to Pliny {d}; Simonides added the eighth, and Timotheus the ninth; but this of David was of ten strings:

and upon the psaltery; of which See Gill on "Ps 33:2", "upon the harp with a solemn sound"; or "upon higgaon with the harp"; which "higgaon", Aben Ezra says, was either the tune of a song, or an instrument of music; all these instruments of music were typical of the spiritual joy and melody which the saints have in their hearts when they praise the Lord; hence mention is made of harps in particular in this spiritual sense, under the Gospel dispensation, **Re 5:8**.

{c} Suidas in voce terpandrov. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56. {d} Ibid.

Psalms 92:4

Ver. 4. For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work,.... Either of creation, which work is mentioned in the precept of the sabbath, as an argument for it; and therefore a very proper work to be remembered and observed on that day; or of providence, which in general extends to all men, but especially to them that believe; or of the work of redemption wrought out by Christ, which is cause of great joy and gladness; or of the work of grace upon the soul, which when a man is satisfied of, gives him infinite pleasure, as knowing it will be performed until the day of Christ; and when a man is in such a joyful frame of spirit, he is in a very suitable one to sing the praises of God, **Jas 5:13**,

I will triumph in the works of thine hands; those before mentioned; or shout aloud for joy, on account of them; and also triumph over all enemies, as being out of the reach of them, so as to be hurt and ruined by them.

Psalms 92:5

Ver. 5. O Lord, how great are thy works!.... Of nature, providence, and grace, both for quantity and for quality, for number, excellency, and glory, as they are a display of God's wisdom, power, and goodness; see Ps 104:24, and thy thoughts are very deep; his counsels, purposes, and designs, they are unfathomable and unsearchable; see **1Co 2:10**.

Psalms 92:6

Ver. 6. A brutish man knoweth not,.... The lovingkindness of the Lord, and his faithfulness, nor how to show them forth, nor his great works and deep thoughts; man was made originally far above the brute creatures, and had them all under his dominion; but, sinning, became like the beasts that perish; and is in Scripture often compared to one or other of them, as the horse, ass, &c. a brutish man is one that only knows things naturally, as brute beasts do, and in which also he corrupts himself; he is governed by sense, and not by reason, and much less by faith, which he has not; one that indulges his sensual appetite, whose god is his belly, and minds nothing but earth and earthly things; and, though he has an immortal soul, has no more care of it, and concern about it, than a beast that has none; he lives like one, without fear or shame; and in some things acts below them, and at last dies, as they do, without any thought of, or regard unto, a future state:

neither doth a fool understand this; what is before said, or else what follows in the next verse, as Jarchi and others interpret it, concerning the end and event of the prosperity of the wicked; Arama interprets it of the Gentiles not knowing this law of the land, the sabbath, and so rejected it: a "fool" is the same with the "brutish" man, one that is so, not in things natural and civil, but in things moral, spiritual, and religious.

Psalms 92:7

Ver. 7. When the wicked spring as the grass,.... Out of the earth, as they do, and are of the earth earthly, and become numerous as spires of grass, and look pleasant and beautiful for a while, as that does; but, like it, weak and unstable, and of a short continuance:

and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; in the health of their bodies; not being afflicted as other men, and their eyes standing out with fatness; while a Job, an upright man, is smitten with boils from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot: in wealth and riches, in which they increase often to such a degree, as to think of pulling down their barns, and building greater, to put their substance in; in their progeny and offspring, having a numerous issue; as well as in their cattle, and the standing of them, and in other stores; likewise in their power and authority, grandeur and glory, being set in high places of honour and profit, though slippery ones: these are the godly, who are "wicked" at heart, and show it by their wicked works; who are continually committing sin, it is the course of their conversation, and yet prosper in the world; which is sometimes a stumblingblock to God's people, and a hardening of sinners, who consider not that

it is that they shall be destroyed for ever they are like brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, and as lambs and other creatures are nourished and fattened for the day of slaughter, **2Pe 2:12**, and as land is manured and cultivated, and grass springs up and flourishes, that it may be, when grown, cut down, and become the fodder of beasts, or the fuel of fire; so the prosperity of the wicked issues in their ruin, and is an aggravation of their damnation; their destruction is of soul and body in hell, and is an everlasting one; the Targum is,

"and it shall be that God shall destroy them for ever,"

Psalms 92:8

Ver. 8. But thou, Lord, art most high for evermore,.... God is "the most High"; that is one of his names; he is above all, is higher than the highest; and he dwells on high, and looks down upon the inhabitants of the earth, and sees what is doing among them; and to him they will be accountable another day for what they do; and when wicked, men perish, being destroyed, he will continue for ever in all his greatness, glory, and majesty; for there seems to be an antithesis in this verse to the former, or between wicked men and the Lord; and besides he endures for ever to inflict punishment upon them; and therefore it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.

Psalms 92:9

Ver. 9. For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord,.... The particle "lo", or "behold", is not used for the sake of God, but for the sake of men; to excite their attention, and to observe unto them that those who are everlastingly destroyed are the enemies of the Lord; who are enemies in their minds by wicked works, yea, enmity itself against God; and therefore their perdition is just as well as certain; sooner or later these shall be brought forth and slain before him; and for the certainty of it is repeated,

for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; the Targum adds, in the world to come: "all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered"; one from another, and not be able to unite and combine together against the saints, as they have done; or they shall be separated from them at the last day, being placed at Christ's left hand; and shall not stand in judgment, nor in the congregation of the righteous; and so the Targum,

"and all the workers of iniquity shall be separated from the congregation of the righteous;"

see **Ps 1:5**.

Psalms 92:10

Ver. 10. But my horn shall thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn,.... Which is said to be very high and strong, see De 33:17 this may be understood of the establishment of David's kingdom, of his royal authority, power, and the glory of it, signified by his horn; which was fulfilled when he had subdued the neighbouring nations, and the kings of them, and was exalted above them, and had rest from all his enemies: and may be applied unto the Messiah, the horn of David, the horn of salvation raised up in his house, Ps 132:17 and so may refer to exaltation at the right hand of God, and the strength and glory of his kingdom; see **1Sa 2:10**, and also may be interpreted of every good man, in opposition to the wicked; who, though low and abased, God will exalt and set them among princes, and cause them to inherit the throne of glory, and even to sit down on the same throne with Christ; see **1Sa 2:8**.

I shall be anointed with fresh oil; oil of olive, as the Targum; oil of myrrh, as Aben Ezra; it may respect David's unction to office, as king of Israel; for not only after he had been anointed by Samuel, but even after he was anointed by the men of Judah as king over them, he was afresh anointed by all the tribes of Israel as their king, **2Sa 2:4**, "oil" often signifies the Spirit of God, his gifts and graces; and "fresh" oil may intend new supplies of his grace out of the fulness of it, which is in Christ; and also the renewed joys and comforts of the Holy Spirit, who is the oil of gladness Christ was anointed with above his fellows, and is given to his people in measure.

Psalms 92:11

Ver. 11. Mine eyes also shall see my desire on mine enemies,.... The Targum supplies thus,

"shall see destruction;"

Aben Ezra, shall see "the vengeance of God", as in Ps 58:10, and Kimchi, as we do, shall "see what I will", or "my desire"; which arose not from a revengeful spirit, or from a spirit of private revenge, but from a regard to the glory of God, and the honour of his name; and in no other view could the destruction of fellow creatures, though his enemies, be grateful to him:

and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me; he should see the ruin of some, and hear of the destruction of others; that which his eyes saw not, his ears should hear; the report would be brought to him; as in the latter day the voice of the angel will be heard, "Babylon is fallen"; and other voices heard in heaven, giving glory to God; an account of which will be acceptable to the saints, because of the justice of God, and the honour of it, as well as because it will make for their future peace and comfort, Re 18:2.

Psalms 92:12

Ver. 12. The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree,.... Not like grass, as the wicked, Ps 92:7 which is weak and tender, and soon cut down; but like trees, and like palm trees, that are firm and strong, and of a long continuance: the word for righteous being of the singular number, has led some to think that Christ is meant; but though he is eminently the righteous One, being so in himself, and the author of righteousness to others, yet not he, but his church and people, are compared to a palm tree, **So 7:7**, the reason why the singular number is made use of is, as Aben Ezra thinks, because the righteous are very few, in comparison of the wicked: the sense is, that everyone of the righteous, or everyone that is righteous, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and are created anew in righteousness and true holiness, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, are like the flourishing palm trees; which grow upright, and under the greatest pressures, and rise upwards against the greatest weight upon them {e}; whose force and vigour is on the top of them, which being cut off, they die; which delight in hot climates and sunny places, bear a delicious fruit, are ever green, are very durable, and their branches used in token of joy and victory; it is said to be a perfect image of a man, and in many things to resemble him {f}: so truly righteous persons are upright ones in heart and life, grow up into their head, Christ, and rise up heavenwards in their desires and affections; and, like the Israelites, the more they are pressed with the weight of afflictions, the more they grow; their grace and strength, their life and rigour, lie in their head, Christ; from whom was it possible they could be separated, as it is not, they would instantly die; they flourish under him, the sun of righteousness, and his warming beams of love, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness by him, to the glory of God; their leaf of profession does not wither, but is always green; the grace of God, which is in them, being an incorruptible and never dying seed: hence, in the issue, they make that palm, bearing company in **Re 7:9** who are more than conquerors through Christ, that has loved them: the Greek version is, "as the phoenix", which some of the ancients understood of a bird so called, supposed to rise out of its ashes, and use it to prove the resurrection of the dead {g}:

he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon; where the best, tallest, largest, and strongest cedars grow; See Gill on "Isa 37:24" to which the righteous are compared, who grow up by degrees higher and higher, even to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and, stronger and stronger in him, go from strength to strength, having their spiritual strength renewed by him; and cast forth their roots in him, like Lebanon, and the cedars there; and spread their boughs and branches, like them, in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; and grow in every grace, of faith, hope, love, humility, self-denial, and submission to the will of God, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; and are durable as the cedar, never die, their life being hid with Christ in God. Kimchi refers this to the days of the Messiah.

{e} Plutarch. apud A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 3. c. 6. {f} Set Sandys's Travels, l. 2. p. 80. {g} Texelii Phoenix, l. 1. c. 4. p. 14.

Psalms 92:13

Ver. 13. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord,.... Or being planted {e}, that is, everyone of the righteous before mentioned; such are they that are planted out of the wilderness of the world, and into Christ, and are rooted in him, and are planted together in the likeness of his death and resurrection; have the graces of the Spirit of God implanted in them, have received the ingrafted word; and, in consequence of all this, are grafted into the olive tree, the church; or have a place and name there, better than that of sons and daughters, where they are as plants grown up in their youth; and which is here meant by "the house of the Lord", in allusion to the tabernacle, or temple, which had the figure of palm trees on the walls of it: so the Targum interprets it the temple, rendering it,

"his children shall be planted in the sanctuary of the Lord:"

and though it may seem strange that trees should be planted in an house, it should be remembered that the house of the Lord, or the church, is a garden, whose plants are an orchard of pomegranates, **So 4:12**, and such are not mere education plants, or such as are merely by outward profession, or only ministerially, planted, but are planted by the Lord himself; and so are choice and pleasant ones, by which God is glorified, and which shall never be plucked up: and these

shall flourish in the courts of our God; like trees in courtyards before houses; alluding to the courts in the tabernacle or temple, where the people worshipped: here the righteous flourish like palm trees, as in the preceding verse, being rooted in Christ, who is the righteous man's root, that yieldeth fruit, and from whom all his fruit is found; but this flourishing is not merely in the leaves of profession, but in the fruits of grace and righteousness, being watered with the dews of divine grace, and having the benefit of the word and ordinances; which are the waters of the sanctuary, that refresh and quicken the trees of righteousness that grow by it; see
Eze 47:1. This is referred to the times of the Messiah, and the resurrection, by the ancient Jews {f}.

{e} Mylwtv "plantati", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, &c. {f} Zohar in Lev. 7. 1.

Psalms 92:14

Ver. 14. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age,.... Being thus planted and watered, they shall not only bring forth the fruits of righteousness, but shall continue, and go on to do so, and even when they are grown old; contrary to all other trees, which, when old, cease bearing fruit; but so do not the righteous; grace is often in the greatest vigour when nature is decayed; witness Abraham, Job, David, Zachariah, and Elisabeth, and good old Simeon, who went to the grave like shocks of corn, fully ripe:

they shall be fat and flourishing; or "green", full of sap and moisture, abound with green leaves and precious fruit; or, in other words, abound in grace, and be fruitful in every good work: being ingrafted into the true olive, the church of God, they partake of the root and fatness of it; having a place in the house of the Lord, they are satisfied with the goodness and fatness thereof, and are made to drink of the river of divine pleasure; and being in the courts of the Lord, where a feast of fat things is provided for them, they eat and feed, and so thrive and flourish; the allusion is to fat and flourishing palm trees {g}.

{g} "Praeferat Herodis palmetis pinguibus----". Horat. Ep. l. 2. Ep. 2. v. 148.

Psalms 92:15

Ver. 15. To show that the Lord is upright,.... Or righteous, that is, faithful; as he is in his counsels, covenant, and promises, which he makes good by causing his people to grow and flourish, and become fruitful; by carrying on the work of grace upon their souls, and by preserving them to the end safe to his kingdom and glory; by all which it appears that he does not and will not suffer his faithfulness to fail: the Targum is,

"that the inhabitants of the earth may show, &c."

he is my Rock; the psalmist sets his seal to the truth of God's faithfulness, firmness, and constancy, calling him a Rock for his strength and stability, and claiming his interest in him; declaring he found him to be so by experience,

even the Rock whose work is perfect; who always completes what he undertakes, and finishes what he begins, and will not forsake the work of his own hands:

just and right is he; the Rock of ages, that remains firm, steadfast, and unalterable in all generations:

and there is no unrighteousness in him; as not in his sovereign acts of grace, so neither in his providential dispensations, either towards good men or bad men; not in suffering the wicked to prosper, as in
Ps 92:7, and the righteous to be afflicted; nor in punishing bad men here, or hereafter; nor in justifying sinners by the righteousness of his Son, and giving them the crown of righteousness at the last day: all his proceedings are in the

most just and equitable manner; see **Ro 9:14**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 93:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 93

This psalm is by some ascribed to Moses, by others to David, which latter is more probable; with which agree the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; all which, excepting the Syriac and Arabic versions, say it is a psalm that was made to be sung the day before the sabbath; and it was a custom with the Jews {a} to sing it on the sixth day of the week; which it is likely the authors of the Septuagint version were acquainted with, and therefore inserted it in the title of the psalm, though it is not in the Hebrew text. The subject of the psalm is the kingdom of God; not of nature and providence, but of grace; the kingdom of the Messiah; of the certainty, firmness, and eternity of it, notwithstanding the opposition of mighty enemies; being established by the sure promises of God, which his faithfulness and holiness were engaged to make good. Kimchi says, that all these psalms, this and the following to Psalm 101, are concerning the Messiah; and so say Kabvenaki and Ben Melech.

Ver. 1. The Lord reigneth,.... The King Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true Jehovah. God over all, the Lord God omnipotent: he has reigned, he was set up as King from everlasting; he reigned throughout the whole Old Testament dispensation; he was promised, and prophesied of, as a King; he came as such, in human nature, into the world, though his kingdom was not with observation; when he ascended to heaven, he was made or declared Lord and Christ, and was crowned with glory and honour; he now reigns in the hearts of his people, by his Spirit and grace; and, ere long, he will take to himself his great power, and reign more manifestly; when the kingdoms of this world shall become his, and he shall be King over all the earth; and this his government will be still more apparent when he shall come in person, and reign with his saints on earth a thousand years; and, after that, for ever and ever, in heaven:

he is clothed with majesty; with all the regalia and ensigns of royalty; seated on a throne of glory, with a crown of pure gold on his head, a sceptre of righteousness in his hand, and arrayed with robes of honour and majesty; so that his appearance at his kingdom will be very splendid, Ps 104:1, the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself; as he was, when he came here on earth, travelling in the greatness of his strength, and mighty to save; bearing the sins of his people, conflicting with and spoiling principalities and powers, and obtaining eternal redemption; and which also appeared in carrying the Gospel into the Gentile world, and succeeding it, against all the opposition made unto it; and making his way into the hearts of sinners at conversion, binding the strong man armed, and dispossessing him, and taking his place; in strengthening them with strength in the inward man, against him and all enemies; and keeping them by his power, through faith, unto salvation: and which will be further manifest in the destruction of antichrist, and in the ruin of all the antichristian states, which will make way for his spiritual reign; and especially this will be seen, at his personal coming, by raising the dead in Christ, causing the heavens and earth to pass away, and making new ones; and binding Satan for a thousand years, that he may give no disturbance to his subjects during that time:

the world also is established, that it cannot be moved; the world to come, of which Christ is the Father; that which is not put into subjection to angels, **Isa 9:6**, the Gospel dispensation, the church state in it; which, though it has been unsettled, the church has been tossed about with tempests, and has been moved from place to place, and obliged to fly into the wilderness; yet, in the latter day, it will be established on the top of the mountains: this is one of the glorious things that are spoken of it, and for the accomplishment of which we should earnestly pray, and give the Lord no rest until it is; after which it shall never be moved again; it shall be a tabernacle that shall never be taken down; there will be no enemies to attack it; all will be vanquished and destroyed; the beast, the false prophet, and the old serpent the devil, Ps 87:3.

{a} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 31. 1. & Tamid, fol. 33. 2.

Psalms 93:2

Ver. 2. Thy throne is established of old,.... Or "prepared from eternity" {b}; Christ was set up and anointed as King from everlasting; he had a kingdom appointed and prepared for him so early; and his throne, which is prepared in the heavens, is an established one; it is for ever and ever; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; of his government, and the increase of it, there is no end:

thou art from everlasting; as a divine Person, as God, and the Son of God; or he could not have been anointed unto or invested with the kingly office so early; nor have had a glory with his Father before the world began: his eternal existence, as God, accounts for the establishment of his throne of old, without which it could not be.

{b} Nwkn wam "paratum", Pagninus, Montanus; "a principio", Targum; "ab antiquo", Syr. "ab aeterno", Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 93:3

Ver. 3. The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice,.... The Targum adds,

"in a song,"

taking the words in a good sense; and so some of the ancients, as Jerome particularly, understood them of the apostles and their ministrations; who lifted up their voice like a trumpet, which went into all the world, and unto the ends of the earth; and who came with the fulness of the gifts and graces of the Spirit; and were attended with a force and power which bore down all before them: but rather by "the floods" are meant the enemies of Christ, his kingdom, and interest; and by their "lifting up their voice", the opposition made by them thereunto; see **Isa 8:7**, this was fulfilled in the Jews and Gentiles, who raged, like foaming waves of the sea, against Christ, and lifted up their voices to have him crucified; in the Roman emperors, and in the ten persecutions under them; in those floods of errors and heresies, which the dragon has cast out of his mouth to devour the church of Christ, against which the Spirit of the Lord has lifted up a standard in all ages; in the antichristian kingdoms, compared to many waters, on which the whore of Rome is said to sit, Re 17:1 and especially in antichrist himself, who has opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, his tabernacle, and they that dwell therein; and will be further fulfilled in the last persecution and slaying of the witnesses, and in the Gog and Magog army, which shall encompass the beloved city and camp of the saints. Kimchi interprets it of Gog and Magog, and of the kings that shall be gathered together to fight against Jerusalem:

the floods lift up their waves; with great strength, making a great noise, and threatening with ruin and destruction, as before.

Psalms 93:4

Ver. 4. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters,.... Christ is the most High; he is God over all, higher than the highest; he is, as King, higher than the kings of the earth; he is in the highest heavens, and higher than they; he is highly exalted, as Mediator, at the right hand of God: he is the mighty God, and mighty Saviour; yea, he is Almighty, and therefore mightier than all his enemies, and the noise they make, and the force they use; he is stronger than the strong man armed; than Satan, and all his principalities and powers; than all the persecuting princes and potentates of this world; than antichrist, and all the antichristian states: yea, than "the mighty waves of the sea"; the same are intended as before {c}.

{c} Vide Homer. Iliad. 21. v. 190,]91. where the same is said of Jove, almost in the same words, and repeated as here.

Psalms 93:5

Ver. 5. Thy testimonies are very sure,.... Meaning not the works of God, of nature, and providence, which testify of his power and Godhead, and other perfections of it; rather the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, the law and Gospel; the one being a testimony of his will to be done by men, the other a testimony of his good will to men; which are sure and true, and to be believed; though it seems best of all to understand them of the promises of God, which testify what he will do, or shall be done hereafter, and which are all yea and amen in Christ; and especially those that respect his kingdom and interest, the glory, stability, and eternity of it, things which are the principal subjects of this psalm; all which promises are sure and certain, true and faithful, firm, and to be believed; see Ge 19:9,

holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever; or "unto length of days" {d}: holiness is a dress or clothing; though it is not the robe of a justifying righteousness, yet it is an inner garment, which makes the saints all glorious within; it is a very beautiful and becoming dress; it is called "the beauty of holiness", and it is always becoming; it becomes the church and people of God, all that are of the household of God, both now and for evermore; it will never be out of use; it will be more and more in use, both in the spiritual reign of Christ, and in the New Jerusalem church state, and in heaven to all eternity; see Zec 14:20.

{d} Mymy Kral "in longitudinem dierum", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 94:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 94

Some, as Jarchi and others, think this psalm was written by Moses; others, with greater probability, assign it to David; as do the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and which all but the Syriac version say it was composed to be sung on the fourth day of the week, on which day the Talmudists say it was sung; see the argument of the preceding psalm. This psalm and others, that go before and follow, are without any title in the Hebrew Bible: the title of it in the Syriac version is,

"a Psalm of David, concerning the company of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; but spiritually, concerning the persecution against the church;"

not of the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt, as some; nor of the Jews in their present exile, as Kimchi; but rather of the people of God under the tyranny of antichrist; who are represented as complaining of his insults and cruelty, and as comforting themselves in the hopes of deliverance, and in the view of his destruction.

Ver. 1. O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth,.... As it does to God, and to him only; not to Heathen deities, one of which has the name of Vengeance given it, Ac 28:4, nor to Satan, the enemy and avenger, and his spiteful principalities and powers; nor to men, who are not to exercise private revenge on their fellow creatures; only to civil magistrates, to whom public revenge belongs, they being God's viceregents, and representing him; otherwise to God only it belongs, against whom sin is committed; and he will, in his own time and way, execute it; he is "the God of revenges" {e}, as the words may be rendered; and this is applicable to Christ, who is the true Jehovah, and God over all: it was he that took vengeance on Sodom and Gomorrah, and rained from the Lord fire and brimstone on them; and who took vengeance on the inventions of the Israelites in the wilderness; and when he came in the flesh, he came with vengeance to destroy Satan and his works, as it was promised and prophesied he should, Isa 35:4, forty years after his death, resurrection, and ascension, he came in his power and kingdom, and took vengeance on the

Jewish nation, for their unbelief and rejection of him, Lu 21:22, and at the opening of the sixth seal his wrath came upon Rome Pagan in a manner intolerable to them, for their cruel persecutions of his church and people; and the cry of the souls under the altar was much like what is uttered in this psalm; see **Re 6:9**, and at the time of his spiritual coming and reign he will avenge the blood of his saints on Rome Papal, or antichrist, whom he will destroy with the breath of his mouth, and the saints will be called upon to rejoice, and will rejoice, when they see the vengeance, Re 18:20 and his personal coming will be in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not his Gospel, and when all the wicked will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, **2Th 1:8**.

O God, to whom vengeance belongeth; which is repeated to observe the certainty of it, and to express the vehement and importunate desire of the psalmist, and those he represents, that he would show himself to be so, follows:

show thyself; or "shine forth" {f}, as in Ps 80:1 either at his incarnation, when he appeared as the dayspring from on high; yea, as the sun of righteousness; or, in the ministry of the Gospel, the great light which shone first on the inhabitants of Judea and Galilee, and then on the Gentile world; or in his gracious presence with his people, which is expressed by causing his face to shine upon them, Ps 80:7, or in the protection of them, and destruction of their enemies; which is a showing himself strong on their behalf, an appearing to the joy of the one, and the confusion of the other; and in this manner will Christ show himself in the latter day.

{e} twmqn la "Deus ultionum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c. {f} eypwh "irradia", Montanus; "illucesce", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "effulsit", Cocceius; "adfulge", Michaelis.

Psalms 94:2

Ver. 2. Lift up thyself, thou, O Judge of the earth,.... A title very proper to Christ, and which is given him by Abraham, Ge 18:25, who then appeared to him in an human form, and with whom he was conversing; he judges his own people on earth, all judgment being committed to him by the Father; he judges and chastises them, that they may not be condemned with the world; he judges and distinguishes between them and the world; he protects and defends them, he pleads their cause, and avenges them on their enemies: and for this purpose he is requested to "lift up" himself; being in the apprehension of his people as one laid down and asleep, quite negligent and careless of them; and therefore they desire that he would awake and arise, and exert his power, and show himself higher than their enemies; that he would mount his throne, and execute justice and judgment on the wicked, agreeably to his character and office:

render a reward to the proud; an evil reward, as the Targum; to proud persecutors of the church, who through their pride persecute the poor saints; and to render tribulation to them is but just with the Lord; to antichrist, that exalts himself above all that is called God, and to all his haughty and ambitious dependents and followers, cardinals, bishops, priests, &c.

Psalms 94:3

Ver. 3. Lord, how long shall the wicked,.... The reign of antichrist is thought long by the saints, being the space of forty two months, or 1260 days or years and this tries the faith and patience of the church of Christ, Re 13:5

how long shall the wicked triumph? in their prosperity, and in the ruins of the interest of Christ; the Targum is,

"how long shall they sit in tranquillity, or prosperity?"

the triumphing of the wicked may seem long, but it is but short, Job 20:5, the inhabitants of the Romish jurisdiction will triumph when the witnesses are slain, and send gifts to one another, as a token of their joy; but this will not last long, no more than three days, or three years and a half; and while antichrist is saying, I sit a queen, and shall know no sorrow, her plagues shall come upon her in one day, Re 11:10.

Psalms 94:4

Ver. 4. How long shall they utter and speak hard things?,.... Against Christ, his person and offices, his ministers, his people, his truths and ordinances; this is very applicable to antichrist, who has a mouth speaking blasphemies, and which he opens, and with it blasphemes God, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in it, Re 13:5. The Targum is, "will they utter and speak reproachful words?"

contumelies or calumnies; and such are uttered by the antichristian party against the true professors of religion in great abundance, as water out of a fountain, as the first word {a} used signifies; see **Jude 1:15**,

and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves; the just character of the followers of antichrist, who work an abomination, and make a lie, and whose whole course of life, and even of religion, is a series of sin and iniquity, Re 21:27, these lift up themselves against, the Lord, like the high branches of a tree, as Aben Ezra; or praise themselves, as Jarchi; being proud, they are boasters; boast of their antiquity and precedence, of their wealth and riches, of their power and authority, of infallibility, and works of supererogation, and the like.

{a} weyby "effutient", Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus; "effutiunt", Musculus; "scaturiunt", Cocceius.

Psalms 94:5

Ver. 5. They break in pieces thy people, O Lord,.... Not the Israelites, as Kimchi; but the church of Christ, by their anathemas, cruel edicts, and persecutions; by confiscating their goods, imprisoning their persons, putting them to cruel deaths; and by such means think to "wear out" the saints of the most High, the Lord's covenant and peculiar people; which is mentioned as an aggravation of their sin, and as an argument with the Lord to arise on their behalf:

and afflict thine heritage; the church, styled God's heritage, **1Pe 5:3**, whom the Lord has chosen for his inheritance; and are dear to him, as his portion, his jewels, and even as the apple of his eye; and yet these are afflicted all manner of ways by their persecuting enemies, as Israel was of old in Egypt.

Psalms 94:6

Ver. 6. They slay the widow and the stranger,.... Who are so both in a literal and figurative sense, such who are weak and feeble, helpless and friendless; or who are deprived of their faithful pastors, who were as husbands and fathers to them, and who profess themselves pilgrims and strangers here; these the followers of the man of sin have inhumanly put to death, supposing they did God good service:

and murder the fatherless; having slain the parents in a cruel and barbarous manner, murder their infants; or figuratively such who are as orphans, destitute of their spiritual fathers, who were the instruments of begetting them in Christ, and of nourishing them with the words of faith and good doctrine; with the blood of these the whore of Rome has often made herself drunk, and therefore blood shall be given her to drink, Re 17:5.

Psalms 94:7

Ver. 7. Yet they say, the Lord shall not see,.... The blood they shed, the murders they commit, the mischief they do, the wickedness they are guilty of, so flattering themselves with impunity; such atheism reigns at Rome, but God sees all their abominations, and he will let them know one day that he does behold them; see Ps 10:10,

neither shall the God of Jacob regard it; the same as before; this title of "the God of Jacob" may be considered either as put in by the psalmist, as an argument strengthening the faith of the church of God; that being their covenant God, he would take notice and care of them, and resent the injuries done them, and avenge them: or else as mentioned by their enemies, sneering at their confidence in God, whom they called their covenant God; that notwithstanding he would not regard or take any notice of what was done unto them, so as to appear in their behalf; all this has been said, if not openly with the mouth, yet secretly in the heart; the language of their actions has abundantly declared this gross atheism of antichrist, and his abettors, who are addressed as follows.

Psalms 94:8

Ver. 8. Understand, ye brutish among the people,.... Or the most brutish and stupid of all people; especially that profess themselves to be the people of God, or Christians, as the Papists do; and who seem to be the persons here addressed: "brutish"; to murder the servants of the Lord, and drink their blood, till inebriated with it; stupid to the last degree to think that hereby they did God good service: hence the pope, the head of them, is represented both in his secular and ecclesiastical power by two beasts; the one rising out of the sea with seven heads and ten horns, a monster in nature, most like a leopard, his feet as a bear's, and his mouth as a lion's, having the fierceness and cruelty of them all; and the other coming out of the earth with two horns like a lamb, but spake like a dragon, Re 13:1, the exhortation to these brutish creatures supposes them to be without understanding, like the beasts by whom they are represented; or, however, that they did not make use of those intellectual powers which God had given them; had they, they would have learned more humanity to their fellow creatures, and more religion towards God; they would have known more of him than to have said and done what is before declared; wherefore they are called upon to "consider" (so the word {b} is sometimes rendered, Ps 50:22) the reasonings about it to be laid before them:

and ye fools, when will ye be wise? "fools" they are to worship stocks and stones, the images of the Virgin Mary, and other saints; to give into the gross atheism they do; to disbelieve the omniscience of God and his providence, at least to behave as though they did; and think to do the vilest actions with impunity; wherefore it would be their wisdom to relinquish such stupid notions, and do no more such foolish and wicked actions.

{b} wnyb "animadvertite", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 94:9

Ver. 9. He that planted the ear,.... In the human body, with so much art and skill, in so convenient a place, so capacious of receiving sounds, and fitted it with organs suited for such a purpose:

shall he not hear? the atheism spoke in the heart, in the actions and by the mouths of such blasphemers of him; the hard speeches spoken against his Son, his person and offices; and against his Spirit, his being, and operations; and against his people, the saints of the most High; in short, all those blasphemies and evil speakings of God, of his tabernacle, and those that dwell therein: it would be monstrous stupidity to imagine, that that God, that communicates a faculty of hearing to his creatures, should not hear himself; for none can give that which they have not:

he that formed the eye: in so curious a manner, with such exquisite parts; with such fine humours, nerves, and tunics; so adapted to receive all objects, and take the impress of them in so wonderful a manner:

shall he not see? all persons and things, all the ways and actions of men; certainly he must: clouds, rocks, and hills, are no obstruction to him; the darkness and the light are both alike to him; his eyes are everywhere, and all things are naked and open before him: it is the height of madness and folly to think that that God cannot see what men are doing here below, who has given to men eyes to see the heavens above, and all their host; and in this so small a compass to take in the sight of the largest mountains, as well as the most minute things: since the seeing eye, and the hearing ear, are both from the Lord, it may be most strongly concluded that he hears all that is said, and sees all that is done, against him and his people; see Pr 20:12. A Heathen {c} could say,

"truly there is a God, who hears and sees all that we do."

{c} Plauti Capteivei, Act. 2. Sc. 2. v. 63.

Psalms 94:10

Ver. 10. He that chastiseth the Heathen,.... As he did the old world, by bringing a flood upon it, and sweeping away its inhabitants at once; and Sodom and Gomorrah, by raining fire and brimstone upon them, and consuming them from off the earth; and the old inhabitants of Canaan, by ejecting them out of their land for their abominations, with other similar instances:

shall he not correct? such audacious wretches, guilty of such atrocious crimes, such horrid murders, and gross atheism? certainly he will, as he has both a right and power to do it. The Targum is,

"is it possible that he should give the law to his people, and, when they have sinned, should they not be corrected?"

and if these are corrected and chastised, then surely such daring and insolent wretches shall not go unpunished: or, "he that instructeth the Heathen" {d}; by the light of nature in things civil and moral, and therefore has a right to punish such who act contrary to it; see **Ro 2:12**,

he that teacheth man knowledge; that has given him the light of nature; inspired him with reason and understanding; taught him more than the beasts of the field, and made him wiser than the fowls of the heaven; from whom he has the knowledge of all arts and sciences, liberal and mechanic, those of the lower as well as of the higher class; see **Joh 1:9**. The Targum is,

"has not the Lord taught the first man knowledge?"

that more perfect knowledge of things, which Adam had in innocence, was from the Lord; and therefore,

shall not he know? all persons and things? verily he does; he is a God of knowledge, of all knowledge; his knowledge and understanding is infinite; it reaches to all persons, and to all their thoughts, words, and actions: this clause is not in the Hebrew text; but is understood, and rightly supplied; see **2Sa 5:8**, compared with 1Ch 11:6.

{d} royx "an erudiens gentes", Cocceius.

Psalms 94:11

Ver. 11. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man,.... He not only hears their words, and sees their actions; but he knows their thoughts, the secret thoughts of their hearts, though he is afar off from them, and, they from him; he is the searcher of the hearts and trier of the reins of the children of men; see Ps 139:2, and so is Christ, who is the omniscient God, and is the Jehovah all along spoken to and of in this psalm; he knows the thoughts of men, and is a critical discerner of them, **Mt 9:3**

that they are vanity; either that their thoughts are vanity; the object of them is vanity, the riches and honours of this world, which are all vanity and vexation of spirit; and sinful lusts and pleasures, which are vain and useless, yea, pernicious and hurtful: and so they are in their issue and event; they come to nothing, they are without effect; the Lord disappoints men's devices, and frustrates their designs; they think of this and the other, form schemes, but cannot execute them: or else the sense is, that they themselves are vanity, as man in his best estate is; even every man, whether of high or low degree; see Ps 39:5. The Syriac version is, "for they are a vapour"; with which compare **Jas 4:14**. Thales, an Heathen philosopher {e}, being asked whether men's deeds could be hid from God, answered, no, nor their thoughts.

{e} Apud Laert. Vit. ejus, Valer. Maxim. l. 7. c. 2. extern. 8.

Psalms 94:12

Ver. 12. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord,.... Much more happy now, and hereafter, than the proud insulting persecutor of him; he is chastened of the Lord, that he might not be condemned with the world; he is chastened not in wrath, but in love; not with the chastisement of a cruel one, nor indeed of a magistrate nor a master; but of a tenderhearted father, who always does it for his profit and advantage, and therefore is he "blessed", or happy; for these chastenings are tokens of God's love, evidences of sonship, or of a man's being an adopted child of God; are for, and do work for good, either temporal, spiritual, or eternal, and even in every sense; and, besides, the Lord grants his presence in them, supports under them, and teaches by them, as follows:

and teachest him out of thy law; or "doctrine" {f}; and may be understood of the doctrine of the Gospel, as well as of the law; the Lord teaches by his Spirit, his word, and providences; and, even by afflictive ones, he teaches men their sins and transgressions, and shows them wherein they have exceeded; brings them to a sense and confession of them, repentance and reformation; he teaches them hereby their duty, both to himself and all men, which they have neglected, and departed from; he teaches many lessons of faith, patience, humility, self-denial, and submission to his will in the school of affliction; here they learn much of God, of his power and faithfulness, truth, goodness, grace, and love, and of evangelical doctrines; of his everlasting love, of eternal election, the covenant of grace, the righteousness of Christ, and salvation by him; which the Lord makes known unto them at such seasons, and on which account they are pronounced blessed, or happy persons.

{f} Ktrwtm "ex lege", sc. "doctrina verbi tui", Michaelis.

Psalms 94:13

Ver. 13. That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity,.... Or "evil" {c}; or "in the evil days", as the Arabic version; for through teaching men under afflictions, they become tranquil and quiet in them; they yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them; such men patiently bear them; and quietly submit to the will of God in them, and are still, and know that he is God, that does all things well and wisely: moreover, the Lord does not always chasten his people; when he has taught them by his rod, and the affliction has answered its end, he gives them rest or intermission from those days of affliction: God does not always suffer the rod of the wicked, or persecution, to be upon the lot of the righteous; he gives his churches rest at times: in all ages there have been some intervals of respite; and after the slaying of the witnesses, and their rising, there will be no more of those days of adversity; but the

times of refreshing, or rest, will come, which will make up the spiritual reign of Christ; and there remains a "rest", or "sabbatism", for the people of God, which will last a thousand years; and, after that, an eternal rest in heaven, which the light afflictions of the saints here are working, and are the means of making them meet for it: "until the pit be digged for the wicked"; hell, the pit of destruction, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: this pit and lake is dug and prepared by the sovereign will and unchangeable purpose and decree of God, for all wicked and Christless sinners; particularly for the beast and false prophet, and his followers, who shall be cast into it, and be tormented in it day and night, and have no rest; while the saints they here persecuted will be in the greatest repose, and utmost felicity; and when it will appear who are the blessed and happy persons, and who not.

{c} er "mali", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 94:14

Ver. 14. For the Lord will not cast off his people,.... The people whom he has foreknown, his chosen people, whether among Jews or Gentiles, Ro 11:1, his covenant people, whom he has given to Christ, and who are redeemed by his blood, and called by his Spirit and grace: these, though he may not arise immediately for their help; though he may withdraw his presence from them for a time, may afflict them, and suffer them to be afflicted by others, Ps 94:5, he will not cast them off, at least for ever, so as to be removed out of his sight, or off of his heart, or from his covenant, or out of the hands of his Son, or from being a part of his family, or so as to perish eternally; they are a people near and dear unto him; he takes pleasure in them, and will not eternally reject them; whoever casts them off, he will not:

neither will he forsake his inheritance; which he has chosen, and values and esteems as a goodly one; he will not give up his title to it, nor drop his claim upon it, nor relinquish his hold and use of it; he will not forsake his people for this reason, because they are his inheritance, as well as because he has promised that he will not: he may seem to forsake them, and they may think they are forsaken by him; but he will not forsake neither their persons in youth nor in old age, nor his work upon their hearts: the church, in the wilderness, and under the persecution of antichrist, might seem to be cast off and forsaken; yet is not, being nourished there for a time and times, and half a time, Re 12:14, the note of Arama is,

"at the coming of the Messiah all this good shall be."

Psalms 94:15

Ver. 15. But judgment shall return unto righteousness,.... Which may be understood either of the judgment and righteousness of God, which seemed to be parted, and stand at a distance from each other; his conduct and government of the world from his justice; the righteous being persecuted and afflicted, and wicked men suffered to prosper; which sometimes makes it difficult to reconcile the judgment of God, or his government of the world, to his justice; see Jer 12:1, but as this has been made manifest in the destruction of the Jews, and in the downfall of Rome Pagan, the first persecutors of the Christians; so it will be seen in Rome Papal, when the judgments of God will be manifest, and appear to be just and true; and these two, judgment and justice, will openly come together, in the sight of all; as they also will at the last judgment; see Re 15:4 or else of the righteousness of men, which, in times of general corruption, seems to be fled from them, and to stand at a distance, from their conduct and behaviour; as in the old world before the flood, and in the times Isaiah beautifully describes, Isa 59:14, and in the times of Christ and his apostles; and in the persecuting times of Rome Pagan and Papal; and as it will be at the time of the slaying of the witnesses; but upon the rising of them, which will not be long after, there will be a great pouring down of the Spirit, and a general reformation will follow throughout the world; all the Lord's people will be righteous, not only nominally, but really; every pot in Jerusalem shall be holy; and holiness shall be so common as that it is said it shall be upon the bells of the horses; and in the new heavens and new earth will dwell none but righteous persons; and then judgment and righteousness will come together indeed:

and all the upright in heart shall follow it; either judgment, as Jarchi; or righteousness, as Kimchi; not the righteousness of the law, but the righteousness of faith; or rather practical righteousness, works of righteousness, which both the grace wrought in them, and the doctrine of grace received by them, will teach, influence, and engage to pursue after with

eagerness: or else the meaning is, that such who are "upright in heart"; who have new hearts and right spirits formed in them; who have the truth of grace, and the root of the matter, in them; whose hearts, words, and actions, agree; who are sincere souls, Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile; these will approve and applaud the righteous judgments of God upon antichrist; they shall follow the justice of God with their commendations and praises; see Re 15:3. The words may be rendered, "and all the upright in heart shall be after him" {d}, the Lord; they shall follow him whithersoever he goes, as sheep follow the shepherd, servants their masters, and soldiers their general; they shall follow him in his own ways, observe his commands, and obey his orders; see the description of such that will be with Christ, and follow him, before and at the time of antichrist's ruin,
Re 14:4. The Targum is,

"after him shall be redeemed all the upright in heart."

{d} wyrxa "post ipsum", Musculus, Gejerus.

Psalms 94:16

Ver. 16. Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?.... These are the words of the psalmist, representing the church of God, under sore persecutions from the antichristian party; called "evildoers", because of their thefts, murders, idolatries, sorceries, and all manner of wickedness committed by them, **Re 9:21**, intimating that she had looked all around her, and could not observe any that she could hope for assistance from, to fight her battles for her with the enemy, and deliver her out of his hands: the Targum is,

"who will rise up, for me, to make war with the evildoers?"

what the church here seems to say in a despairing way, the followers of antichrist say in a triumphant and insulting manner; "who is like unto the beast who is able to make war with him?" Re 13:4, or "who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" to contend or strive with them, as the Targum; suggesting, that she had no friends to appear for her, that had either courage or strength to engage in such a warfare; her case was like that of the oppressed, Solomon speaks of, **Ec 4:1**, or the Apostle Paul's, when none stood with him; but all forsook him, excepting the Lord, **2Ti 4:16** and so here the church had none to rise up, and stand by her, but the Lord; Michael, the great Prince that stands for the children and people of God, and who is a match for all the enemies of his church; and he will rise and stand up for them, and fight their battles; and overcome the beast and false prophet, with the kings of the earth, Da 12:1.

Psalms 94:17

Ver. 17. Unless the Lord had been my help,.... Against her enemies, which were so many and mighty, and her friends so few and feeble, and having no heart to defend her cause; especially this will be the case at the time of the slaying of the witnesses; but the Lord will appear, and help her; the Spirit of life, from him, shall enter into them, and cause them to live again, and to ascend up to heaven; and shall destroy great numbers of their enemies, and the rest shall be frightened, and give glory to God, Re 11:11,

my soul had almost dwelt in silence; or "within a little", or "must quickly" {e}; not only have been, but must have dwelt, continued in silence, in the grave; see Ps 115:17 his case being desperate, like that of the apostles, when they had the sentence of death within themselves, **2Co 1:10**, this is to be understood not of the soul precisely, and abstractly considered, which dies not, nor is it silent after death; but of the whole person, being a part for the whole; and of the person, with respect to the mortal part, the body, which only dies, and while in a state of separation, or in the grave, is silent, and ceases from all operations of life: perhaps this may have some respect to the silencing of the witnesses, which is a principal thing meant by the slaying of them; a stop put to their ministrations, partly by the edicts of their enemies, and partly by the discouragement of their friends, their shyness, and negligence of them; and which silence will be almost total, if not altogether; though it will last but for a short time; they shall not dwell or continue in silence, but will open their mouths again; signified by the angel flying through the midst of heaven, with the everlasting Gospel, Re 14:6.

{e} jemk "quasi parum", Montanus, Gejerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 94:18

Ver. 18. When I said, my foot slippeth,.... There is no ground for me to stand upon; all is over with me; there is no hope nor help for me; I am just falling into ruin and destruction: such will be the desperate case of the church, at the time before referred to:

thy mercy, O Lord, held me up; the extremity of his people is the Lord's opportunity; then is his set time to arise, and have mercy on them; then mercy steps in, lays a solid ground and foundation for hope, and holds up in its arms a sinking people, and revives a dying cause.

Psalms 94:19

Ver. 19. In the multitude of my thoughts within me,.... The word for thoughts is used of branches of trees, thick and entwined, and so denotes perplexed and distressing thoughts; such as good men sometimes have concerning God; his awful and tremendous majesty; the perfections of his nature, particularly his power, purity, and holiness; concerning their relation to him, his presence with them, and good will towards them, which, because of their sins, they are ready to doubt of: thoughts concerning sin; that there are no sins like theirs, attended with such aggravated circumstances; that they are such as will not be forgiven; or they fear their corruptions will be too many for them, and they shall perish by them; or that they shall so fall as to bring dishonour on the ways of God; and sometimes that they have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost: thoughts concerning the law of God their sins are a violation of, of the holiness and spirituality of it; by comparing themselves with which, they find they are very deficient, and very carnal; and ready to fear that all the curses of it belong to them, and the condemnation of it will light upon them: thoughts concerning Christ, the Saviour; that he is the Saviour of others, but not of them; that he is able to save, but they cannot think he is willing to save such vile sinners as they are: thoughts concerning the work of the Spirit of God upon them; calling it in question, fearing it was never begun, because of the power and prevalence of sin and corruption in them: thoughts concerning their present and future state; how it is with them now, and how it will be with them hereafter; how they shall pass through the troubles and difficulties of this world, and pass over Jordan's river, or get through the valley of the shadow of death; and how they shall appear before the judgment seat of God; and how things will be with them to all eternity: these are some of the perplexing and distressing thoughts, a multitude of which rise up at times in the minds of God's people, who yet are favoured with the same gracious experience the psalmist was, expressed as follows:

thy comforts delight my soul; such as flow from the love of God, is shed abroad in the heart; from the presence of God enjoyed; from the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel; from Christ, and the things of

Christ, shown, brought home, and applied by the Spirit; his person, offices, fulness, righteousness, blood, and sacrifice; all which are a fund of divine consolation to a distressed mind: these are the consolations of God, of which he is the provider, author, and giver, and therefore called "the God of all comfort"; they come from Christ, the "consolation of Israel", and by the Spirit the Comforter, who sheds abroad the love of God in the heart; reveals Christ, and the things of Christ; opens and applies the promises; wherefore these comforts are called the "comforts of the Holy Ghost"; and they are usually enjoyed by means of the word and ordinances, which are "breasts of consolation"; and these are not small, but strong, and even everlasting, and which "delight the soul"; worldly comforts may delight the animal part, and please the senses, but not delight the soul, especially a wounded spirit, a distressed mind; but these will satiate the weary soul, and replenish the sorrowful soul with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory: the psalmist may here represent the church in the latter day, when in the midst of her troubles, and having many distressing thoughts concerning the issue of things; the comforts of God, from his promises, will delight her; Ps 94:14, that he will not cast off his people, nor forsake his inheritance; but judgment shall return to righteousness; that he will keep her in the hour of temptation, and avenge the blood of her slain.

Psalms 94:20

Ver. 20. Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee,.... Or "be joined with thee", be "partner with thee" {f}, as antichrist affects to be; who may well be called "the throne of iniquity", since the dragon, the old serpent, and Satan, gave him his power, seat, or throne, and great authority: his coming is after the working of Satan, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; he sits and enacts, practices and countenances, all manner of iniquity; he sits in the temple of God, showing himself as if he was God; he claims all power in heaven and in earth; takes upon him to dispense with the laws of God and men, and makes new laws, and binds the consciences of men with them; presumes to forgive sin, which none but God can do; and to open the gates of heaven to whom he pleases; see Re 13:2, but can these things be allowed of shall not such pride and arrogance, and horrible iniquity be punished with the utmost severity? doubtless it will:

which frameth mischief by a law? does all manner of mischief to men, without control, as if he had a law for doing it; or makes a law that all men shall worship him, or receive his mark in their right hand, or forehead; or else shall

not buy or sell, yea, be killed; see
Re 13:15, or "against law" {g}; against the laws of God and man; for antichrist is o anomouv, "the lawless one", spoken of in **2Th 2:8**.

{f} Krbxyh "an sociabitur tibi?" Cocceius, Gejerus; "num consociabitur?" Michaelis. {g} qx yle "praeter statutum", Piscator, Cocceius; "contra statutum", Gejerus; "contra legem tuam", Arab.

Psalms 94:21

Ver. 21. They gather themselves together,.... As "in troops" {h}, as the word signifies; in great armies; so the antichristian kings and states will, at the instigation of Popish emissaries; see
Re 16:17,

against the soul of the righteous; or "the life" of them; in order to take away their lives; to cut them off, root and branch, and destroy at once the whole interest of Christ; for it will be to make war with him, and them his followers, who are the righteous here meant, made so by his righteousness, that they will be gathered together in such great numbers:

and condemn the innocent blood; condemn innocent persons to death, shed their blood, and drink it, and to such a degree as to be drunk with it; for in them will be found the blood of the prophets and saints, and of all that are slain on earth, Re 17:6.

{h} wdwgy "turmatim conveniunt", Vatablus, Piscator.

Psalms 94:22

Ver. 22. But the Lord is my defence,.... The defence of his church and people, of all the righteous, against those great armies of their enemies that gather together against them: the Targum, in the king's Bible is,

"the Word of the Lord shall be my weapon:"

and my God is the rock of my refuge; to whom recourse is had for shelter from the enemy, and against which the gates of hell cannot prevail: both characters, rock and refuge, agree with Christ, the essential Word of the Lord.

Psalms 94:23

Ver. 23. And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity,.... The just punishment of it; or cause the mischief they designed to others to fall upon themselves; or make retaliation to them; that whereas they had drank the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, blood should be given them to drink; or their own blood should be shed, Re 16:6, the Jews {i} say, that the Levites stood on their desks, and recited this passage, both at the precise time of the destruction of the first temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and of the second by the Romans:

and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; in the midst of it, while slaying the witnesses, and triumphing over them, Re 18:7, yea,

the Lord our God shall cut them off; the God of Jacob, who, they said, did not see nor regard what they did, Ps 94:7, and so this latter part of the psalm fulfils the former, and proves that God is a God of vengeance, to whom it belongs; and he will exercise it in due time.

{i} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 30. p. 92.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 95:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 95

This psalm, though without a title, was written by David, as appears from **Heb 4:7**, and to him the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions ascribe it. It belongs to the times of the Messiah, as Kimchi observes; the apostle applies it to the Jews of his time, and bespeaks them in the language of it, **Heb 3:7**, and in which time Israelites, believers in Christ, are called upon to serve and worship him, in consideration of his greatness in himself, and his goodness to them. Theodoret thinks that David spoke prophetically of King Josiah and his times; and wrote it in the person of him, and the priests of God.

Ver. 1. O come, let us sing unto the Lord,.... To Jehovah the Messiah, the Lord our righteousness; setting forth, in songs of praise, the glory of his person, the riches of his grace, and our thankfulness to him for spiritual mercies by him:

Christ is to be the subject of our spiritual songs, and is the person to whose honour and glory they should be directed: in the New Testament we are instructed to sing unto the Lord, the Lord Christ, **Eph 5:19**, and this is what Pliny {a} tells Trajan, the Roman emperor, the Christians in his time did; they sung a hymn to Christ, as to a God:

let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation; to Christ, the Rock, 1Co 10:4, a Rock, for height, being higher than the saints, than the kings of the earth, than the angels in heaven, than the heavens themselves; for strength, being the mighty God, and mighty Saviour; for shelter, being the saints security from avenging justice and wrath to come: a Rock, on which the church and all believers are built, and which endures for ever; "the Rock of salvation", being the author of spiritual and eternal salvation, and the strength and security of it; not only is he strong to do it, but, being done by him, it is safe in him; wherefore shouts of joy and songs of praise are due unto him. This shows that vocal singing is meant, singing with an harmonious and musical voice; and that social singing, or singing in concert together, is intended. The Septuagint renders it, "to God our Saviour", **Lu 1:47**.

{a} Ep. l. 10. ep. 97.

Psalms 95:2

Ver. 2. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,.... Come with the sacrifice of praise, there being no other in the days of the Messiah, all ceremonial sacrifices being put an end to when his sacrifice was offered up; so Arama observes, that the offering of thanksgiving shall remain, or be left in the days of the Messiah; come with this to Christ as a priest, to offer it by him to God his Father, to whom it is acceptable through him, and with this to himself for the great salvation he has wrought out: "to come before his presence", or "face" {b}, supposes his being come in the flesh, his being God manifest in it, and also as clear and free from the veil of types and shadows; these all being gone now he is come, and to be beheld with open face; and likewise his having done his work as a Saviour, and now upon his throne as a King; into whose presence chamber saints are admitted to make their acknowledgments to him, and profess their allegiance and subjection to him, and their gratitude for favours received. It signifies an attendance on him in his house and ordinances, where he shows his face, and grants his presence; and intends not merely bodily exercise, or a presentation of our bodies only to him, but a drawing nigh to him with true hearts, and serving him in a spiritual manner:

and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms; with a melodious voice, and grace in the heart, with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; this belonging to Gospel times shows that singing of psalms vocally in a musical way is an ordinance of Christ, to be performed to him under the Gospel dispensation, **Eph 5:19**.

{b} wynp "faciem ejus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c.

Psalms 95:3

Ver. 3. For the Lord is a great God,.... Christ is truly and properly God, wherefore divine service is to be performed unto him; particularly singing psalms, setting forth therein his greatness and glory: and he is a great one; great in power, wisdom, justice, truth, mercy, and grace; greatness is to be ascribed unto him, and worship given him, because of his greatness, **Tit 2:13**

and a great King over all gods; he is King of the whole world; his kingdom ruleth over all; he is King of kings, and Lord of lords; he is King of saints, the government of the whole church is upon his shoulders, which he exercises in the most wise, powerful, and righteous manner imaginable; he is above all that are called gods, all the nominal and fictitious deities of the Heathens; above all civil magistrates, who are gods by office; and above the angels, who have this name, **1Pe 3:22**. Aben Ezra interprets it of angels.

Psalms 95:4

Ver. 4. In his hand are the deep places of the earth,.... The "penetrals" {c} of it; not only what are penetrated by men, the minerals that are in it; but what are of such deep recess as to be penetrated only by the Lord himself; these are in the hands and power of Christ, which he can search into, discover, and dispose of; these are the foundations of the earth, which cannot be searched out beneath by men, Jer 31:37,

the strength of the hills is his also; or, "the wearinesses" {d} of them, the tops {e} of them, which make a man weary to go up unto, they are so high; the Targum is,

"the strengths of the height of the hills;"

which takes in both ideas, both the height and strength of them. The hills, that are both high and strong, are set fast by his power, and are at his command; and bow and tremble before him, whom men ought to worship.

{c} yrqxm "penetralia terrae", Musculus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis. {d} twpewt "lassitudines", Gejerus. {e} "Cacumina", Montanus, Tigurine version, Musculus.

Psalms 95:5

Ver. 5. The sea is his, and he made it,.... He made it, and therefore it is, and all creatures in it; he sets bounds to it, and its waves, and restrains the raging of it at his pleasure, **Mt 8:26**,

and his hands formed the dry land; the whole world, all besides the sea, the vast continent; he is the Maker of it, and all creatures in it; without him was nothing made that is made; and, being the Creator of all things, is the proper object of worship, **Joh 1:2**, as follows.

Psalms 95:6

Ver. 6. O come, let us worship and bow down,.... Before him who is the Rock of our salvation, the great God and great King, the Creator of the ends of the earth, the proper object of all religious worship and adoration: Christ is to be worshipped with every part of external worship under the New Testament dispensation; psalms and songs of praise are to be sung unto him; prayer is to be made unto him; the Gospel is to be preached, and ordinances to be administered, in his name; and likewise with all internal worship, in the exercise of every grace on him, as faith, hope, and love: see Ps 45:11,

let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; both in a natural and spiritual sense: Christ is the Maker of us as creatures, of our souls and bodies; we have our natural being from him, and are supported in it by him; and he is the Maker of us as new creatures; we are his workmanship, created in him, and by him; and therefore he should be worshipped by us, **Eph 2:10**. Kimchi distinguishes these several gestures, expressed by the different words here used; the first, we render worship, signifies, according to him, the prostration of the whole body on the ground, with the hands and legs stretched out; the second, a bowing of the head, with part of the body; and the third, a bending of the knees on the ground; but though each of these postures and gestures have been, and may be, used in religious worship, yet they seem not so much to design them themselves, and the particular use of them, as worship itself, which is in general intended by them.

Psalms 95:7

Ver. 7. For he is our God,.... God over all, blessed for ever, truly and properly God, and therefore to be worshipped: "our God"; in whom we have interest, who became our head and surety in covenant; took upon him our nature, is our "Immanuel", God with as, which increases the obligation to worship him; these are the words of New Testament saints:

and we are the people of his pasture; for whom he has provided a good pasture; whom he leads into it, and feeds in it, even by the ministry of the word and ordinances:

and the sheep of his hand; made and fashioned by his hand, both in a natural and spiritual sense; led and guided by his hand, as a flock by the hand of the shepherd; are in his hand, being put there for safety by his Father; and upheld by it, and preserved in it, and from whence none can pluck them; see De 33:3 receiving such favours from him, he ought to be worshipped by them. The Heathens had a deity they called Pan, whom they make to be a keeper of sheep {e}; and some Christian writers have thought that Christ the chief Shepherd is meant; since, when the Heathen oracles ceased, after the coming and death of Christ, a voice is {f} said to be heard at a certain place, "the great Pan is dead: today, if ye will hear his voice"; the voice of the Shepherd, the voice of God, says Aben Ezra, his Word, as the Targum; the voice of the Messiah, both his perceptive voice, his commands and ordinances, which ought to be hearkened to and obeyed; and the voice of his Gospel, and the doctrines of it; which is to be heard not only externally, but internally: when it is heard as to be understood, to be approved of and believed, and to be distinguished; so as to have a spiritual and experimental knowledge of it; to feel the power and efficacy of it, and practically attend to it; it is an evidence of being the sheep of Christ; see Joh 10:4, where the sheep are said to know the voice of the shepherd, and not that of a stranger; of which Polybius {g} gives a remarkable instance in the goats of the island of Cyrnon, who will flee from strangers, but, as soon as the keeper sounds his trumpet, they will run to him: though the words may be connected with what follows, as they are in **Heb 3:7**, where they are said to be the words of the Holy Ghost, and are applied to times, and are interpreted of the voice of the Son of God in his house; for though it may refer to some certain day in David's time, as the seventh day sabbath, in which the voice of God might be heard, the word of God read and explained; and in Gospel times, as the Lord's day, in which Christ speaks by his ministers; and to the whole time of a man's life, which is called "while it is today", **Heb 3:13**, yet it chiefly respects the whole day of the Gospel, the whole Gospel dispensation, **2Co 6:2**.

{e} "Pan ovium custos----" Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. v. 17. "Pana deum pecoris veteres coluisse feruntur", Ovid. Fasti, l. 2. {f} Plutarch. de orac. defect. p. 419. {g} Hist. l. 12. in principio.

Psalms 95:8

Ver. 8. Harden not your hearts,.... Against Christ, against his Gospel, against all the light and evidence of it. There is a natural hardness of the heart, owing to the corruption of nature; and an habitual hardness, acquired by a constant continuance and long custom in sinning; and there is a judicial hardness, which God gives men up unto. There is a hardness of heart, which sometimes attends God's own people, through the deceitfulness of sin gaining upon them; of which, when sensible, they complain, and do well to guard against. Respect seems to be had here to the hardness of heart in the Jews in the times of Christ and his apostles, which the Holy Ghost foresaw, and here dehorts from; who, notwithstanding the clear evidence of Jesus being the Messiah, from prophecy, from miracles, from doctrines, from the gifts of the Spirit, &c. yet hardened their hearts against him, rebelled against light, and would not receive, but reject him:

as in the provocation; or "as at Meribah" {h}; a place so called from the contention and striving of the people of Israel with the Lord and his servants; and when they provoked not only the meek man Moses to speak unadvisedly with his lips; but also the Lord himself by their murmurings, Ex 17:7 though this may respect their provocations in general in the wilderness; for they often provoked him by their unbelief, ingratitude, and idolatry; see **De 9:8**,

and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness; or "as in the day of Massah" {i}; the time when they tempted him at Massah, so called from their tempting him by distrusting his power and presence among them, by disobeying his commands, and limiting the Holy One of Israel to time and means of deliverance; see Ex 17:7 and this being in the wilderness was an aggravation of their sin; they being just brought out of Egypt, and having had such a wonderful appearance of God for them, there and at the Red sea; and besides being in a place where their whole dependence must be upon God, where they could have nothing but what they had from him immediately, it was egregious folly as well as wickedness to provoke and tempt him.

{h} hbyrmk "sicut Meribah", Montanus; "sicut in Meriba", Musculus, Tigurine version, Gejerus, Michaelis, so Ainsworth. {i} hom Mwyk "sicut die Massah", Montanus, Musculus, Tigurine version; "secundum diem Massah", Gejerus, Michaelis, so Ainsworth.

Psalms 95:9

Ver. 9. When your fathers tempted me,.... Or, "where" {i}; that is, in the wilderness, particularly at Meribah and Massah; it was Christ they tempted, as appears from 1Co 10:9

proved me: had proof of his power, goodness, and mercy, in providing for them, and in the preservation of them: or "tried" {k} him, his patience, longsuffering, and forbearance, by their repeated provocations of him:

and saw my work; his work of judgment upon their enemies the Egyptians, by inflicting plagues upon them, and by the destruction of Pharaoh and his host at the Red sea; and his work of goodness to them, in bringing them out of bondage, leading them through the Red sea safely, raining manna about their tents, and giving them water out of the rock; or particularly his work in consuming them in the wilderness, as he swore he would, and which they saw with their eyes, and was near forty years a doing. The Syriac version joins the "forty years" at the beginning of the next verse to this; the phrase standing in such a situation as to be connected with both, and is true of each; so the apostle uses it both ways, **Heb 3:9**.

{i} rva "quo", Pagninus, Montanus; "ubi", V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, so Ainsworth. {k} ynwnxb "explorarunt me", Tigurine version, Piscator, Gejerus.

Psalms 95:10

Ver. 10. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation,.... The generation of the wilderness, as the Jews commonly call them; and which was a stubborn and a rebellious one, whose heart and spirit were not right with God, Ps 78:8, wherefore, speaking after the manner of men, God was grieved with them, as he was with the old world, **Ge 6:6**, or he was "weary" of them, and "loathed" them as the word {l} sometimes signifies; wherefore, after the affair of the spies, to which Aben Ezra thinks this had reference, they did not hear from the mouth of the Lord, there was no prophecy sent them by the hand of Moses, as the same writer observes; nor any history or account of them, from that time till they came to the border of Canaan; so greatly was their conduct and behaviour resented: and it was much such a term of time that was between the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist and of Christ, and the destruction of Jerusalem; during which time the Jews tempted Christ, tried his patience, saw his works, and grieved his Spirit, which brought at last ruin upon them:

and said, it is a people that do err in their heart; he was not only inwardly grieved with them, but, speaking after the same human manner, he gave his grief vent, he spoke and gave this just character of them. The apostle adds "alway", **Heb 3:10** and so does the Arabic version here, and which is implied in the words "do err"; they not only had erred, but they continued to do so; and their errors were not merely through weakness, ignorance, and mistake, but were voluntary, and with their whole hearts; they sprung from their hearts, which were desperately wicked; they erred willingly and wilfully; and this the Lord, the searcher of hearts, knew and took notice of:

and they have not known my ways; they had his law, his statutes, and his judgments, and so must know the ways he prescribed them to walk in; but they did not practically observe them: or his ways of providence; which they did not take that notice of as they ought to have done; they did not consider them as they should, nor improve them in the manner as became them; they were not thankful for their mercies as they ought; nor did the goodness of God lead them to repentance.

{l} jwqa "fastidio habui", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, so Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 95:11

Ver. 11. Unto whom I sware in my wrath,.... Being angry with them, he sware for the confirmation of what he said; the form of the oath was, "as truly as I live"; he sware by himself, for he could swear by no greater; see Nu 14:21

that they should not enter into my rest; the land of Canaan, or Israel, as Kimchi; which the Lord provided, promised, and gave to the Israelites, as their rest; the land of Israel and Jerusalem, as Jarchi; or the house of the sanctuary, the temple, as the Targum; which Jehovah chose for his rest, and took it up in it, and where he promised the Messiah, the Prince of peace, who gives to his people spiritual and eternal rest. Canaan was typical of the rest which remains for the people of God; the use that believing Jews, and all Christians under the Gospel dispensation, are to make of this, see in **Heb 3:18**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 96:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 96

This psalm was written by David, as appears from 1Ch 16:7 to whom it is ascribed by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions. This and part of Psalm 105 were first composed and sung at the bringing of the ark from the house of Obededom to the city of David; and here it is detached from that with a new introduction to it, and applied to the times and kingdom of the Messiah, and; with great propriety, since the ark was an eminent type of him. The inscription in the Syriac version is,

"a Psalm of David, a Prophecy of the coming of the Messiah, and of the calling of the Gentiles that believe in him:"

and very rightly, since express mention is made of them in it, and of the publication of the Gospel among them; and clear reference is had to Christ, who is the Jehovah all along spoken of Jarchi well observes, that wherever a "new song" is mentioned, it is to be understood of future time, or the times of the Messiah; and the end of the psalm shows it,

he cometh to judge, &c.

Ver. 1. O sing unto the Lord a new song,.... A famous excellent one, suited to Gospel times, on account of the new benefit and blessing of redemption and salvation lately obtained by the Messiah; which should be sung to him, who is the Lord or Jehovah here designed, by all the redeemed ones, **Re 5:9**,
See Gill on "Ps 33:3", the Targum adds,

"sing, ye angels on high:"

sing unto the Lord all the earth: not the whole land of Israel only, as Aben Ezra interprets it; though here the Saviour first appeared, taught his doctrines, wrought his miracles, suffered, and died for the salvation of his people; here the angels first begun the new song; and here those that believed in him first expressed that spiritual joy which afterwards spread through the whole world, and who are here called upon to sing; namely, all those that are redeemed from among men, throughout all the earth: believing Gentiles are here intended: the Targum is,

"sing before the Lord, all ye righteous of the earth."

Psalms 96:2

Ver. 2. Sing unto the Lord,.... Which is repeated to show the vehemency of the speaker, and the importance of the work exhorted to: this being the third time that the word Lord or Jehovah is mentioned, have led some to think of the trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, the one only Jehovah, to whom the new song of salvation is to be sung, because of their joyful concern in it; the Father has contrived it, the Son has effected it, and the Spirit applies it:

bless his name: speak well of him, whose name is excellent and glorious, sweet and precious; even every name of his, Jesus, Immanuel, &c. proclaim him the ever blessed God, as he is, as comes before with the blessings of goodness, and made most blessed for ever; as Mediator, ascribe all spiritual blessings to him, and bless him for them, and give him the glory and honour of them:

show forth his salvation from day today; the salvation of his people he undertook, and has completed; publish that as a piece of good news, as glad tidings; so the word {n} used signifies; even evangelizing, or preaching the Gospel; for this is the Gospel, the sum and substance of it, salvation by Jesus Christ: this may be considered as directed to ministers of the Gospel, whose work it is, more peculiarly, to show forth the salvation of Christ; to point him out as a Saviour to sensible sinners; to declare that this salvation is done, is wrought out for sinners, is full and complete; is to be had freely, and to be had now; and this is to be done from day today, one Lord's day after another, frequently and constantly, when opportunity serves.

{n} wrvb "evangelizate", Montanus, Tigurine version, Musculus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 96:3

Ver. 3. Declare his glory among the Heathen,.... What a glorious Person the Messiah is; the brightness of his Father's glory; having all the perfections of deity in him; how the glory of God appears in him, and in all that he has done; and especially in the work of redemption, in which the glory of divine wisdom, power, justice, truth, and faithfulness, love, grace, and mercy, is richly displayed; say what glory he is advanced unto, having done his work, being highly exalted, set at the right hand of God, and crowned with glory and honour; and what a fulness of grace there is in him, for the supply of his people; and what a glory is on him, which they shall behold to all eternity:

his wonders among all people: what a wonderful person he is, God manifest in the flesh; what wonderful love he has shown in his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death; what amazing miracles he wrought, and what a wonderful work he performed; the work of our redemption, the wonder of men and angels; declare his wonderful resurrection from the dead, his ascension to heaven, sitting at the right hand of God, and intercession for his people; the wonderful effusion of his Spirit, and the conquests of his grace, and the enlargement of his kingdom in the world; as also what wonders will be wrought by him when he appears a second time; how the dead will be raised and all will be judged.

Psalms 96:4

Ver. 4. For the Lord is great,.... In the perfections of his nature; in the works of his hands, of creation, providence, and redemption; and in the several offices he bears and executes:

and greatly to be praised; because of his greatness and glory;
See Gill on "Ps 48:1",

he is to be feared above all gods; the angels by whom he is worshipped; civil magistrates, among whom he presides, and judges; and all the fictitious deities of the Gentiles, who are not to be named with him, and to whom no fear, reverence, and worship, are due.

Psalms 96:5

Ver. 5. For all the gods of the nations are idols,.... Or are "nothings" {o}, nonentities; such as have not, and never had, any being, at least many of them, but in the fancies of men; and all of them such as have no divinity in them;

an idol is nothing in the world, **1Co 8:4**,

but the Lord made the heavens; and all the hosts of them, the sun, moon, and stars; these are the curious workmanship of his fingers, and which declare his glory, and show him to be truly and properly God, who is to be feared and worshipped; see **Heb 1:10**.

{o} Mylyla "nihila", Tigurine version, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 96:6

Ver. 6. Honour and majesty are before him,.... He being set down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, and having honour and majesty laid upon him; being arrayed in robes of majesty, crowned with glory and honour, sitting on the same throne of glory with his Father, and having a sceptre of righteousness in his hand, and all the forms and ensigns of royalty and majesty about him; rays of light and glory darting from him; as well as those glorious and bright forms before him; the holy angels continually praising him; which is a much more noble sense than that of Kimchi's, who interprets them of the stars:

strength and beauty are in his sanctuary; the Targum is,

"the house of his sanctuary,"

the temple; the Gospel church, of which the temple or sanctuary was a figure: the strength of Christ is seen here, in the conversion of sinners by his Gospel, which is the rod of his strength, the power of God unto salvation, when it comes not in word only; and by which he also strengthens his people to the

more vigorous exercise of grace and discharge of duty; here they go from strength to strength: the "beauty" of Christ is seen here; the King is held in the galleries of Gospel ordinances, and is beheld in his beauty; his people appear here in the beauties of holiness, and as a perfection of beauty, through the righteousness of Christ upon them; and as they observe the order of the Gospel, and do all things decently, and with a good decorum: or else, as Kimchi interprets it, heaven may be meant by the sanctuary, of which the holy place, made with hands, was a figure; here Christ reigns, girded with "strength"; here he rules as the Lord God omnipotent, having all power in heaven, and in earth, and doing according to his will in both; and from hence he shows himself strong on the behalf of his people; here. He, who is beauty itself, fairer than the children of men, dwells; here those beauteous forms of light and glory, the holy angels, are; and here the spirits of just men made perfect, who are without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, have their abode: in
1Ch 16:27, it is,

strength and gladness are in his place; among his people and worshippers there.

Psalms 96:7

Ver. 7. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people,.... Or families {p}: the Targum is,

"give unto the Lord a song, ye families of the people;"

by whom are meant not the tribes and families of the people of Israel, but the Gentiles, the nations of the world, who were to be blessed in the seed of Abraham, the family of Egypt, and others; see **Am 3:2**
Zec 14:17, even such as were chosen of them, taken out from among them for a people to his name; who were redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; and were taken, one of a city, and two of a family, and brought to Zion: give unto the Lord glory and strength; See Gill on "Ps 29:1".

{p} twxpvm "familiae", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 96:8

Ver. 8. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name,.... Or "the glory of his name" {q}; whose name is glorious and excellent, because of his nature and perfections, because of the works done by him, and because of his benefits and blessings bestowed on his creatures; wherefore it is his due, and their duty, to give him glory; See Gill on "Ps 29:2",
See Gill on "Ps 66:2", the word "Jehovah", or "Lord", being thrice mentioned in this and the preceding verse, in the ascription of glory, may lead our thoughts to the trinity of Persons, Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, to whom glory is to be equally given:

bring an offering, and come into his courts; not ceremonial sacrifices, which are abolished under the Gospel dispensation, to which times this psalm belongs; but either the saints themselves, their bodies, as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice, and especially the sacrifices of a broken heart, with as much of their substance as is necessary for the relief of the poor, the support of the ministry, and the carrying on of the cause and interest of the Redeemer: the allusion is to the law that enjoined the Israelites not to appear empty before the Lord; but everyone to bring his gift according to his ability,
De 16:16, or else their sacrifices of prayer and praise, which are the spiritual sacrifices of the Gospel dispensation, and are to be offered by the saints, as priests, to God through Christ; or rather the sacrifice of Christ himself, which is of a sweet smelling savour to God, makes way for access unto him, and acceptance with him; and which should be brought in the arms of faith, when they enter into the house of the Lord, and attend his word and ordinances; for, through this, their persons and services become acceptable to God, and the sins of their holy things are taken away.

{q} wmv dwbk "gloriam nominis ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus; so Ainsworth, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 96:9

Ver. 9. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,....
See Gill on "Ps 29:2", in this and the three preceding verses there is a manifest allusion to the form of addresses made to kings in the eastern nations; who being arrayed, and seated in a majestic manner, with all the marks of royal honour and dignity about them, whom their subjects approach with ascriptions of glory to them; bringing presents in their hands, and bowing down to the ground before them, as the word {r} for "worship" signifies; expressing the

utmost awe and reverence of them, as in the next clause:

fear before him, all the earth; or, as the Targum,

"all the inhabitants of the earth;"

it is the duty of all men to fear the Lord; but none can fear him aright without his grace, or an heart given them to fear him: this respects the latter day, when the Jews shall seek the Lord, and fear him and his goodness; when all nations shall fear and worship him; when, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the name of the Lord shall be great and tremendous among the Gentiles; see **Ho 3:5**.

{r} wwxtvh "incurvate vos", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "prosternite vos", Tigurine version.

Psalms 96:10

Ver. 10. Say among the Heathen,.... This is a direction to such as were converted to Christ among the Jews, or were first called out from among the Gentiles; or to the ministers of the word, the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel more especially, who were sent into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature, that a people from among them might he taken for the Lord:

that the Lord reigneth; whose Gospel should be received and obeyed, and his ordinances submitted to; who now reigns in heaven, at his Father's right hand, and must reign till all enemies are put under his feet; he reigns in the hearts of his people by his Spirit and grace; will reign more gloriously in his churches in the latter day, and with his saints for a thousand years in the New Jerusalem church state; and, after that, to all eternity in heaven: this is one part of the Gospel, or good tidings to be published among the Gentiles, Isa 52:7,

the world also shall be established, that it shall not be moved; not the natural material world; for that shall flee, and pass away, and be no more; it shall be burnt up, and all things in it; though that, and mankind on it, will be continued till all the elect of God are gathered in; Christ will uphold it, it being by his power that it shall not be moved till the work is effected: moreover, the church, in however fluctuating and unsettled a condition it may be now, sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another, yet ere long will be established on the top of the mountains, so that it shall not be moved; and the Gospel dispensation is what will remain unto the end of time, and the Gospel is an everlasting one; the ordinances of it will continue to the second coming of Christ; and he will be with his churches to the end of the world; he is reigning King of Zion; has set up a government, of which, and the peace of it, there shall be no end: during the spiritual reign of Christ, the world will be in such stable tranquillity as to have no commotions in it, nor to be moved with wars, and rumours of wars; and when the Millennium shall take place, the new heavens and new earth shall never pass away:

he shall judge the people righteously: he reigns over his people in a righteous manner, with a sceptre of righteousness, according to the rules of righteousness, by righteous laws and ordinances; he justifies his people with his own righteousness; he forms the new man in them, which is created in righteousness, and sets up a kingdom within them, which consists of righteousness; and he protects and defends them, and keeps them in safety from all their enemies.

Psalms 96:11

Ver. 11. Let the heavens rejoice,.... At the coming and kingdom of Christ; at what is said and done in the Gentile world; even the hosts of heaven, as the Targum, the angels that dwell there, and never left their habitation and first estate: these rejoiced at the incarnation of Christ, at the first setting up and appearance of his kingdom in the world; and as they rejoice at the conversion of a single sinner, much more must they be supposed to do at the conversion of multitudes in the Gentile world, and at the increase of the Redeemer's interest there: or heavenly men, such as are born from above, partakers of the heavenly calling; these rejoice when the kingdom of Christ is enlarged, and his cause flourishes: or the holy apostles and prophets of Christ, and ministers of the word, full of heavenly gifts and grace, are meant; who express their joy when sinners are converted, and made subject to Christ, at any time; and will be called upon to do it, when the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in, and Babylon is fallen, Re 18:20,

and let the earth be glad; the righteous of the earth, as the Targum; the excellent of the earth, who are glad, and exult at the coming and kingdom of Christ, in every sense; in the salvation which he has wrought out; in the righteousness which he has brought in; at the sight of him, the glory of his person, and riches of his grace; in the enjoyment of his presence; at hearing his Gospel, and the comfortable truths of it; and when it is made useful to the souls of others; and in a view and hope of the glory of God, and of being partakers of it to all eternity:

let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the roaring of the waves is the voice of the sea, which sometimes speaks terror, and here expresses joy: its fulness is not literally the abundance of its waves, or the multitude of its fishes, as Kimchi; but the islands in it, the inhabitants of them; see Ps 97:1 and such as ours of Great Britain and Ireland, who have reason to rejoice and be glad at the bringing of the Gospel among us, the continuance of it with us, and the kingdom and, interest of Christ in the midst of us.

Psalms 96:12

Ver. 12. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein,.... Not the field of the world, but of the church, separated from others by distinguishing grace; the peculiar property of Christ, cultivated and manured by his Spirit and grace, and abounding with the fruits and flowers thereof; of a wilderness becoming a fruitful field, and for that reason should rejoice, even with joy and singing, Isa 35:1,

then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice; the sons of God, so called, **So 2:3**, who, though like such, in their nature state, barren and unfruitful, yet, being ingrafted into Christ, become trees of righteousness; and so have reason to rejoice at their root in Christ, their stability by him, and fruitfulness through him: Jarchi interprets this of all the governors of the people; see Eze 17:24, all this, indeed, by a prosopopoeia, may be understood of inanimate creatures; the heavens, earth, and sea, fields, woods, and trees, rejoicing, if they could, and in their way, at such great and wonderful appearances in the Gentile world; see Isa 44:23. Aben Ezra interprets all this of the heavens giving dew, the earth its increase, and the field its fruit; all which is rejoicing.

Psalms 96:13

Ver. 13. Before the Lord,.... At the face of him, in his presence; meeting him as he comes, and rejoicing at his coming: this clause is to be joined to everyone in the two preceding verses:

for he cometh, for he cometh; which is repeated to show the certainty of Christ's coming, and the importance of it, and the just reason there was for the above joy and gladness on account of it; and it may be also, as Jerom and others have observed, to point out both the first and second coming of Christ, which are both matter of joy to the saints: his first coming, which was from heaven into this world, in a very mean and abject manner, to save the chief of sinners, to procure peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life for them, and therefore must be matter of joy: his second coming, which will be also from heaven, but in an extremely glorious manner, without sin, or the likeness of it, unto the salvation of is people: it will be as follows,

to judge the earth; the inhabitants of it, small and great, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, quick and dead, righteous and wicked; when all works, words, and thoughts, good and bad, will be brought to account; and every man will be judged, as those shall be, with or without the grace of God:

he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth; according to the rules of justice and equity; he will truly discern and rightly judge; his judgment will be according to his truth; he will approve himself to be the righteous Judge, and his judgment will appear to be a righteous judgment; for which he is abundantly qualified, as being the Lord God omniscient and omnipotent, holy, just, and true; see Ac 17:31.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 97:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 97

This psalm is ascribed to David by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions. It is of the same argument, and upon the same subject, as the preceding, the coming and kingdom of Christ; and that it respects his first coming into the world, when angels were called upon to worship him, appears from Ps 97:7 compared with **Heb 1:6** though it is expressed in such language as seems to agree with his second coming; and, perhaps, both are included, with various things between the one and the other; or it respects the kingdom of Christ, from his first to his second coming; to which agrees the inscription of the Syriac version, which is

"a Psalm of David, in which he prophesies concerning the coming of the Messiah, and again he intimates in it his last appearance."

Ver. 1. The Lord reigneth,.... He has reigned, now reigns, will and must reign

until all enemies are made his footstool;
See Gill on "Ps 93:1",
See Gill on "Ps 96:10",

let the earth rejoice: not the land of Judea only, and the inhabitants of it, to whom the King Messiah came; for there were but few among them that received him, and rejoiced at his coming; but the whole earth, the vast continent, as distinguished from the isles after mentioned, and they that dwell upon it; the Gentiles, who had a concern in his coming, in whom they were to be blessed, to whom they were to be gathered, and in whom they should find a glorious rest; and therefore he is called

the desire of all nations: the first preaching of the Gospel was occasion and matter of great joy to them; not only the blessings contained in it of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; but the effects of it, delivering them from the dominion of Satan, the god of this world; and from superstition, and idolatry, with which they were enslaved; and the bringing them into the glorious liberty of the children of God:

let the multitude of isles be glad thereof; the isles of the sea are many, even many thousands: Columbus, when he first discovered America, sailing by Cuba westward, gave names, as he passed along, to seven hundred islands, leaving three thousand more without names {r}: Gejerus reports, from some writers, that an Indian king, in 1553, was converted to the Christian faith, that ruled over eleven thousand islands; and that in Maldivar there are reckoned to be sixteen thousand: well may the text speak of a multitude of them: or, "let the great islands", &c. such as ours of Great Britain and Ireland; these isles are said to wait for Christ and his doctrine, Isa 42:4 and therefore must be glad to hear of his coming and kingdom: the Gospel was very early sent to the isles, as to Cyprus, Crete, &c. see Ac 13:4 and to our northern isles likewise, who have great reason to be glad at its coming among us, continuance with us, and the success it has had; and that it is yet in the midst of us for further usefulness; and that Christ reigns, and will reign evermore.

{r} P. Martyr. Decad. 1. l. 3.

Psalms 97:2

Ver. 2. Clouds and darkness are round about him,.... Either as a garment; so Apollinarius paraphrases it, "near is the King clothed with a cloud and tempest;"

and it is usual with the Heathens to represent their deities as surrounded or clothed with a cloud {s}: here the allusion is to the tabernacle and temple, when reared up and dedicated, Ex 40:34 **1Ki 8:10** and to other appearances of God, or Christ, in a cloud, Ex 19:9, it may denote the obscurity of his divine nature at his first coming; he appearing in the form of a servant, and in the likeness of sinful flesh, so that few discerned his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father; as also the darkness and blindness of the Jews concerning him, who could not perceive him to be the Messiah; notwithstanding all the characters of him; clouds and darkness were about him to them; as they were, in a literal sense, when he hung on the cross; the sun withdrew and hid itself, and darkness was upon the face of the earth for three hours; Christ was enveloped in it; and a greater darkness surrounded his soul when his divine Father hid his face from him: dark providences attended the first setting up of his kingdom, and the ministration of his Gospel in the world; the apostles, the first preachers of it, were persecuted by their own countrymen the Jews; the whole Gentile world was against them; the Roman empire, emperors, and governors of provinces, opposed them; wherever there was an open door, there were many adversaries, so that things looked very unpromising: nevertheless these clouds were dissipated, and the difficulties got over; though this has sometimes been the case since, and will be again, ere the kingdom of Christ is in all its glory; he now sits enthroned in heaven, surrounded with clouds and darkness, and unseen to us; whose being and perfections are inscrutable to us, his providences unsearchable, and his ways past finding out; and when he comes a second time, it will be at midnight, and in the clouds of heaven:

righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne; the seat, basis, and support of it; he sits on a throne doing right, and by it his throne is established; See Gill on "Ps 89:14".

{s} "Et Venus aethereos inter dea candida nimbos", Virgil. Aeneid. 8. "Venus circumdata nimbo", ib. Aeneid. 12. "Nube candentes humeros amictus augur Apollo", Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 2. so Homer. Il. 5. v. 186.

Psalms 97:3

Ver. 3. A fire goeth before him, &c,] Not the fiery law, which went forth from

his right hand on Mount Sinai; but rather his Gospel, which, as it enlightens, warms, comforts, and refreshes his people, searches, torments, and destroys his enemies, and is the savour of death unto death to them; see Jer 23:29. Some apply this to the gifts of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, signified by cloven tongues of fire; but then no such effect followed as mentioned in the next clause: it seems best to interpret it of his wrath, which, like fire, was poured out to the uttermost on the Jews, for their disbelief and rejection of him; they would not have him to reign over them; they despised his Gospel, and slew his servants; wherefore he sent the Roman armies to them, who destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city,
Mt 22:7, this will be also verified in the second coming of Christ, who will descend in flaming fire, and the earth will be burnt up, and all that is therein, **2Th 1:7**, some Jewish writers interpret this of the war of Gog and Magog, in Ezekiel, which they suppose still future; as, when it is, fire will be sent and rained upon them, Eze 38:22, but may be better applied to the Gog and Magog in Re 20:8

and burneth up his enemies round about; so that none can escape: this was true of the Jewish nation, who were burnt up; so that there was not left root nor branch in it, **Mal 4:1**, and will be true of the wicked, at the general conflagration of the world, upon Christ's second coming; and of the Gog and Magog army, after the resurrection.

Psalms 97:4

Ver. 4. His lightnings enlightened the world,.... Either the doctrines of the Gospel, compared thereunto, because of the swift progress they made, and the large extent of them in the world, in a very little time; by the apostles they were published in all nations, and were the means of enlightening them in the true knowledge of themselves, and of the way of salvation by Christ: hence they are called the "lights of the world", **Mt 5:14**, as the coming of Christ, in his kingdom and power, by them, is compared to lightning, and so are the arrows of his word,
Mt 24:27, or else his judgments on the Jewish nation are meant, which were manifest and clear, and obvious to all the world; see
Ps 18:14,

the earth saw, and trembled; the inhabitants of the earth, of the Gentile world, saw the judgments of God upon the Jews, and were astonished at them; see De 29:24, it is usual for lightnings and earthquakes to go together; see Re 11:19.

Psalms 97:5

Ver. 5. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord,.... Kimchi interprets the "hills" of the kings of the wicked; and it was verified in Herod and his nobles, and the citizens of Jerusalem, who, when they heard of the coming of the Messiah, of the birth of the King of the Jews, were exceedingly moved and troubled; their hearts melted like wax within them, **Mt 2:1**, so when he appeared, in the power of his Gospel, in the Gentile world, and went forth in the ministration of it, conquering, and to conquer, all fled before him; every mountain and island were moved out of their places; and the kings of the earth, and great men, ran to the rocks to hide them from his face, which they could not bear, **Re 6:14**, and the like events, and more terrible, will they be, when he comes to destroy antichrist, and especially to judge the world, Re 16:19

at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth; as Christ is; he is Lord of all, the Prince of the kings of the earth, Ac 10:36 **Re 1:5**, and as he will show himself to be at the great day; and that is the reason why the proud and lofty, comparable to hills and mountains, shall melt at his presence.

Psalms 97:6

Ver. 6. The heavens declare his righteousness,.... His justice in punishing his enemies; the lightning and the thunder in the heavens, the tokens of his wrath, and instruments of it; his wrath itself, which is revealed from heaven, **Ro 1:18**, or the inhabitants of heaven, as Aben Ezra; the angels of heaven; so the Targum, "the angels on high (or of heaven, as in the king's Bible) declare his righteousness"; see
Re 16:5, it is true of the ministers of the Gospel, who are Christ's angels or messengers, men of heavenly gifts and grace, whose work it is to declare the justifying righteousness of Christ, which is revealed in the Gospel from faith to faith, and which is therefore called the word of righteousness, and the ministration of it, **Ro 1:17**,

and all the people see his glory; the glory of his justice in the destruction of his enemies; the glory of his power and grace in the salvation of his chosen; the glory of God in the face of Christ; the glory of Christ himself, as the only begotten of the Father; the glory of his person, office, grace, and righteousness, in the glass of the Gospel; the glory and honour he is now crowned with in heaven; and all the people, even all the chosen, redeemed, and called people, shall behold his glory to all eternity: it seems chiefly to respect the revelation of his glory, and his people's view of it at his first coming; see Isa 60:5.

Psalms 97:7

Ver. 7. Confounded be all they that serve graven images,.... Images of gold, silver, and stone, graven by art and man's device; to serve and worship which must be the grossest ignorance and stupidity, which, when convinced of, must fill with shame and confusion: this may be considered either as a prayer, that the idolatrous Gentiles might be enlightened to see the vanity of their idols, and their worship of them, and turn to the living God; or as a prophecy that it should be; for it may be rendered, "they are" or "shall be confounded", or "ashamed" {t}, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi; which had its accomplishment in the first times of the Gospel; when, being preached in the Gentile world, multitudes forsook their idols and served the true God; and especially at the opening of the sixth seal, when Pagan worship was abolished throughout the Roman empire; and when the kings and great men in it, through shame, confusion, and dread, fled to the rocks and mountains, to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb, **Re 6:12**, and will have a further accomplishment, when the Papists, the worshippers of the beast, shall be ashamed of their graven images, of the Virgin Mary, and other saints; which will be when the Gospel shall be published throughout the world, Re 14:6,

that boast themselves of idols; as their saviours and deliverers, which yet are nothing, as the word {u} signifies; that praise and extol them, as the givers of good things to them, or the procurers of them for them; that glory in them, and in their worship of them, than which nothing can be a greater instance of folly and madness:

worship him, all ye gods; those that are so called, the graven images and idols before mentioned; let them bow down, and be prostrate before the Lord, as Dagon before the ark; or they that serve other gods, as Kimchi; so the Targum,

"and all the nations that serve idols shall worship before him;"

rather kings and princes, civil magistrates, who are sometimes called gods, are meant, Ps 95:3, and who, in the latter day especially, shall serve and worship the Messiah, Ps 72:10 though it is best of all to interpret it of angels, as this word Elohim is rendered in **Ps 8:5**, and Aben Ezra says there are some of their interpreters that understand it of angels: the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, and so Apollinarius, render it, "worship him, all his angels": Gussetius {w} interprets it, "all that is God's"; all that belong to him, angels and men, and all creatures; particularly angels, the most noble of all: and this sense is confirmed by an inspired writer, who manifestly refers to and quotes this passage, and applies it to the angels worshipping Christ, the first begotten Son of God, when he came into the world, **Heb 1:6**, with which compare **Lu 2:13**, from whence it appears not only that Christ is superior to angels, for the proof of which it is produced by the apostle; but that he is truly God, since God only is the object of religions worship; and that, if he is worshipped by angels, he ought to be worshipped by men; and that angels are not the proper objects of worship, since they are worshippers.

{t} wvby "pudefiunt", Cocceius; "erubescent", Gejerus. {u} Mylylab "in diis nihili"; Tigurine version; so some in Vatablus, Cocceius. {w} Ebr. Comment. p. 386.

Psalms 97:8

Ver. 8. Zion heard, and was glad,.... Or, the congregation of Zion, as the Targum; the church of Christ, and the members of it, called Zion, in allusion to the mountain of that name, in which the temple stood; a type of the church, Heb 12:22, these heard the Gospel, the good news and glad tidings of good things; they heard that Zion's King reigned, and that his kingdom was enlarged, and interest increased; they heard the heavenly men declare his righteousness, by which they are justified from all things; they heard of the conversion of the Gentiles, and the confusion of idolaters; of the incarnation of Christ, and of his being worshipped by angels; all which filled them with joy and gladness:

and the daughters of Judah rejoiced; particular congregated churches, particular believers and professors of Christ and his Gospel; these rejoiced at the above things, as well as because of what follows:

because of thy judgments, O Lord; either the doctrines of the Gospel, which come from the God of judgment, and are according to his justice and holiness; and are matter of joy and gladness when they are spread in the world, and succeed to the conversion of sinners, the comfort of saints and the glory of Christ; see Ps 19:9, or his judgments upon his enemies, and the enemies of his church and people; which also are an occasion of rejoicing to them, because Christ is thereby glorified in his power, justice, truth, and faithfulness, Re 19:1.

Psalms 97:9

Ver. 9. For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth,.... Above all the inhabitants of the earth, as the Targum; he is highly exalted above every name, men of the greatest name that is named in the world; he is made higher than the heavens, and the inhabitants of it; and has all power in heaven and earth, as Mediator; and, as a divine Person, he is the most high God, as the word "Elion", here used, signifies; and all this lays a foundation for joy and gladness in the saints; even the dignity of Christ's person, and the exaltation of him in the human nature:

thou art exalted far above all gods: not only the fictitious deities of the Gentiles, or the greatest potentates upon earth, being made higher than the kings of the earth, who are called gods; but also than the angels in heaven; he is set down at the right hand of God, where they are not, and never were, nor shall be; angels, authorities, and powers, being subject to him, **Heb 1:13**.

Psalms 97:10

Ver. 10. Ye that love the Lord, hate evil,.... The evil of sin, which is to be hated, because of the evil nature of it, it being exceeding sinful; and because of its evil consequences, bringing death, ruin, and destruction with it to the souls of men, unless grace prevents; and disquietude, distress, and trouble to the saints themselves; and because it is hateful to God, being contrary to his nature, will, and law, and is hated by Christ; and therefore those that love him should hate that, shun it, avoid it, depart from it, and abstain from all appearance of it; as all such will that love him in sincerity above all persons and things; and all of him, and that belong to him, his people, ways, worship, truths, and ordinances: and such are they that have seen the loveliness of him, and know his love, and have had it shed abroad in their hearts; and these will not only hate the evil of sin, but evil men; not their persons, but their actions and conversations; and will avoid them, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness:

he preserveth the souls of his saints; that are set apart by him, and chosen in him to be holy; that are sanctified by his blood, and by his Spirit and grace, and to whom he is made sanctification: the "souls" of these, their better and more noble part, which are dear to him, and he has redeemed by his blood, and whose salvation he has obtained, and they still receive, he "preserves" from the evil of sin, from its governing and damning power, from a final and total apostasy by it, from ruin and destruction through it, from being hurt by the second death; and he preserves them from all their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, from being destroyed by them, safe to his kingdom and glory; therefore he is to be loved, and sin to be hated by them:

he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked; of wicked and unreasonable men, into whose hands they sometimes fall, cruel and bloodthirsty persecutors; as he is able to deliver them, so oftentimes he does; and will, ere long, put them entirely out of their reach. Kimchi interprets this of the deliverance of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon, Media, and Persia.

Psalms 97:11

Ver. 11. Light is sown for the righteous,.... Who are made righteous by the obedience of Christ, and live soberly and righteously; the light of joy and gladness, as it is explained in the next clause; see **Es 8:16** so, fowv, "light", is frequently used by Homer {x} for joy and gladness: these sometimes are without it, through the hidings of God's face, the prevalence of corruptions, the force of Satan's temptations, and the many afflictions they meet with; but joy and gladness, peace and comfort, are sown for them in the counsels and purposes of God, in his covenant, in the Scriptures, in the Gospel, and in the promises of it; and, though at present hidden, will spring up in God's due time, Ps 112:4, and which also may be interpreted of the light of glory, which at present does not appear; but it is prepared in the purpose of God, and in his promise, and shall be enjoyed by the heirs of it. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, render it, "light is risen for the righteous"; and so the Targum,

"light is risen and prepared for the righteous;"

Christ, the light of the world, the sun of righteousness, is risen for them, and upon them, with healing in his wings, which bring joy and comfort to them:

and gladness for the upright in heart; such as have new hearts and right spirits formed in them, and are Israelites indeed, that have the truth of grace and the root of the matter in them: gladness is prepared, provided, and promised to them, and sooner or later they shall have it; the seed of it is sown, and it will spring up, and a large crop shall be enjoyed. Kimchi's note is,

"light is sown for the righteous in this world, and they shall reap light and joy in time to come, in the days of the Messiah."

{x} Iliad 6. v. 6. & 8. v. 282. & 16. v. 39.

Psalms 97:12

Ver. 12. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous,.... In the word of the Lord, as the Targum; in Christ, the essential Word, in his person, the greatness, glory, and fulness of it; in his righteousness, and in salvation by him, and that always; see **Php 4:4**,

and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness; of his essential holiness, as a divine Person, in which he is glorious, and which appears in all that he has done; and of the holiness of his nature and life, as man and Mediator, which are imputed to his people for their justification; and at the remembrance of that holiness which they have from him, and are made partakers of in sanctification: and at the remembrance of that perfect holiness which they shall have with him in heaven to all eternity. Holiness may also signify his faithfulness in the discharge of his work and office as Mediator, and in the fulfilment of his promises to his people; See Gill on "Ps 30:4".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 98:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 98

A Psalm. This is the only psalm throughout the whole book which is so called, without any other additional word, epithet, or inscription. The Targum calls it a psalm of prophecy, or a prophetic psalm, as indeed it is; for it respects time to come, as Jarchi observes, even the Gospel dispensation. Aben Ezra says, perhaps this psalm is concerning the coming of the Redeemer; a doubt need not be made of it, it certainly is. Abendana, a later writer among the Jews, says of the latter part of the psalm, that it figuratively expresses the greatness of the joy that shall be in the days of the Messiah. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, ascribe it unto David; but it was not penned by him on account of any victory obtained by him, but as a prophecy of the victories and salvation of the Messiah; nor is it of the same argument with, or a compendium of, the song of Moses at the Red sea, as Grotius thinks; though the inscription of the Syriac version begins thus,

"a Psalm of David, concerning the redemption of the people out of Egypt, when they conquered and triumphed;"

yet it more rightly adds,

"but spiritually a prophecy concerning the coming of Christ, and the calling of the Gentiles unto the faith."

Ver. 1. O sing unto the Lord a new song,.... An excellent one unto the Lord Christ, on account of the great work of redemption and salvation wrought out by him; and because of the new and living way opened by him, and because of the new dispensation of the Gospel, which takes place through him, and for the reasons next mentioned;
See Gill on "Ps 96:1",

for he hath done marvellous things; by assuming human nature, in that he, being God, became man, took flesh of a virgin, even pure and uncorrupted, a clean thing out of an unclean; which he took into personal union with himself, and that for the sake of sinful creatures: a most marvellous affair this! which calls for a new song from men, as it had from the angels. In this nature he taught wonderful doctrines, at which his hearers were astonished, wondering from whence he had his wisdom; and in it he did many miraculous works, which filled them with amazement above measure; and especially in it he performed the amazing and surprising work of man's redemption, an instance of the marvellous lovingkindness and astonishing wisdom of God; performed in a manner quite stupendous, through Christ's being made under the law both the precept and penalty of it; through his being made sin and a curse for men, even for the ungodly, sinners and enemies; a redemption which is of the souls of men from sin, Satan, and the law; a complete and plenteous one, which includes and secures all the blessings of grace and glory, justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life. To which may be added the resurrection of himself from the dead, his ascension to heaven, the effusion of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit on the apostles, the wonderful success of the Gospel in the Gentile world, the support of his interest against all the powers on earth, the destruction of the man of sin, the calling of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles in the latter day; all which marvellous events require a new song of praise: another reason of which follows:

his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory: over sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell, in which he has made his people sharers, yea, more than conquerors; and therefore may well sing the new triumphant song to him: the words may be rendered, "hath brought salvation to him" {b}; as in Isa 59:16; to him personally, he raising himself from the dead, as a triumphant Conqueror; to him mystically, his body the church, to whom he is the author of salvation; or to him, that is, to his Father, in obedience to whose will he wrought out salvation for his people, and for the honour of his name, and for the glorifying of his perfections. This was done by him alone, by his right hand of power, by the mighty arm of his strength, and which no mere creature could ever have performed: and this he did in a way of holiness; his holy arm did it in a way that maintains and secures the glory of divine holiness and justice.

{b} wl heyvwh "salutem attulit ei", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Tigurine version, Munster, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 98:2

Ver. 2. The Lord hath made known his salvation,.... Which was appointed him, he undertook, came to perform, and has effected; this, though wrought out, is unknown to men, especially to the Gentile world, who had no prophecy, promise, or revelation of the Messiah, and salvation by him; but now this is made known in the everlasting Gospel, called therefore the Gospel of salvation, and by the ministers of it; and, besides this, the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and his salvation, is given to some; whereby they come to know their need of it, the suitableness of it to their case, the necessity of going to Christ for it, and their special and particular interest in it; and such have a new song put into their mouths, and are under great obligation to sing it:

his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the Heathen; either the faithfulness of God in fulfilling his promises, particularly in raising up the Saviour Jesus; or the goodness of God to his people, and the strictness of his justice on their surety; goodness towards them, and severity on him, when he spared them and not him, turned his hand of grace and mercy on them, when he awoke the sword of justice against him; or rather his own righteousness, by which he fulfilled the law in the room and stead of his people; and which being brought in is revealed in the gospel, from faith to faith; and that "openly", not in dark shadows, types, and figures; but it is to be seen with open face in the clear glass of the Gospel; and is held up and forth in the ministration of it unto the Gentiles, whom God justifies through faith in it, as well as the believing Jews; see **Ro 3:30**.

Psalms 98:3

Ver. 3. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel,.... His mercy promised them, in raising up a Saviour to them, one that should be the glory of them; and his truth, in fulfilling that and every other promise concerning him; see **Lu 1:72**,

all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God; either Christ himself, who is the salvation or Saviour of God's appointing, providing, and sending; or the salvation which he has wrought out, the Gospel declaring it; which has been sent throughout the world; and many in all parts of it, even in the most distant parts of it, in the very ends of it, have been made to see the nature, want, worth, and value of it; not every individual person in the world, but some in the several parts, and in the remote corners of it, whither the Gospel has been or will be sent; see Isa 52:10.

Psalms 98:4

Ver. 4. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth,.... That is, all the inhabitants of the earth, as the Targum, to whom the joyful sound of the Gospel comes; See Gill on "Ps 95:1",

make a loud noise, rejoice, and sing praise; exalt and extend the voice to the highest pitch, in the most musical and melodious strains; this heap of words is used to express the intenseness of mind, vehemency of affection, and strength of spirit and exceeding greatness of joy, with which the Lord should be praised for his great and marvellous works.

Psalms 98:5

Ver. 5. Sing unto the Lord with the harp,.... Playing upon that at the same time: here and in the following verse is an allusion to Old Testament worship, and the manner of performing that; not that this should be done in New Testament times, only New Testament worship is expressed in Old Testament language, which is no unusual thing; hence in Gospel times, and Gospel churches, the saints, especially when singing the new song of redeeming grace, are said to have harps in their hands, expressive only of their spiritual melody in their hearts, **Re 5:8**,

with the harp, and the voice of the psalm; with the harp alone first, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it, and then with the harp, and together with the words of a psalm, sung in a psalm tune. Gospel churches are to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, **Eph 5:19**.

Psalms 98:6

Ver. 6. With trumpet and sound of cornet,.... The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, render it

with ductile trumpets, such as were made of silver, as the two trumpets for the calling of the assembly, Nu 10:2 to which the allusion seems to be here, called "asosra" by Josephus {c} according to the Hebrew language twruwux; which he says were in length a little less than a cubit, but the pipe narrow, somewhat thicker than a flute, having a sufficient breadth at the mouth to blow with, ending after the manner of a bell. The cornet was a trumpet or pipe, made of horn, from whence it has its name; such were those, made of rams' horns, the priests blew with when they encompassed Jericho, **Jos 6:4**,

make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King; or rather "before the King, the Lord" {d}; before the King, who is Jehovah, who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; let this shout be made before him, in his presence, and on account of his kingly office, and because of some eminent appearance of his kingdom and glory; see Re 19:6.

{c} Antique. Jud. l. 3. c. 12. sect. 6. {d} hwhy Klmh ynpl "coram rege Domino", Pagninus, Tigurine version; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Psalms 98:7

Ver. 7. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof,....

See Gill on "Ps 96:11",

the world, and they that dwell therein; men, the inhabitants of the world; that is, let them rejoice because this glorious King has taken to himself his great power, and reigns, Re 11:15.

Psalms 98:8

Ver. 8. Let the floods clap their hands,.... Or "rivers" {e}, dashing against their banks, as they pass along; a prosopopoeia, as the preceding and following, expressing great joy on account of the Messiah, the reigning King. Aben Ezra interprets this of men that are in rivers, as the sea; in the preceding verse of such that are in ships at sea; and the hills in the next clause of such that dwell on them;

let the hills be joyful together; see Isa 55:12.

{e} twrhn "fluvii", Cocceius, Gejerus, so Ainsworth.

Psalms 98:9

Ver. 9. Before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth,....
See Gill on "Ps 96:13",

with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity; both at his first and second coming, and during the intermediate time; see the note as before. The only difference is, that in Ps 96:13, it is said that he shall judge the people "with his truth", here "with equity", or "uprightnesses" {f}; in the most upright manner, according to the strictest rules of justice and judgment; see Isa 11:3.

{f} Myrvmb "in rectitudinibus", Montanus, Michaelis.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 99:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 99

This psalm, with the foregoing from Ps 90:1 is ascribed to Moses by Jarchi and others; but cannot be his, since mention is made of Samuel in it, who lived many years after him. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, more rightly attribute it to David; the inscription of the Syriac version, after saying it is David's, subjoins,

"concerning the destruction of the Midianites, whom Moses and the people of Israel led captive;"

of which there is not the least mention in it; but it more truly adds,

"and a prophecy concerning the glory of the kingdom of the Messiah;"

as it undoubtedly is.

Ver. 1. The Lord reigneth,.... The King Messiah, he is made and declared Lord and Christ; he has reigned, does reign, and ever will; see Ps 93:1,

let the people tremble: with awe of his majesty, and reverence of his word and ordinances; rejoicing before him with trembling, as his own people and subjects do, **Ps 2:11**, and so it agrees with Ps 97:1, or it may be understood of the people that are enemies to Christ, who would not have him to reign, though he shall whether they will or not; and who will sooner or later tremble for fear of him, and his righteous judgment. Jarchi refers this to the war of Gog and Magog. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it, "let the people be angry"; or it may be rendered, "they are angry"; or "therefore they are angry"; because he reigns; so the people, both Jews and Gentiles, were angry and raged, when his kingdom was first visibly set up among them, **Ps 2:1**, and so the nations will when he takes to himself his great power, and reigns, Re 11:18,

he sitteth [between] the cherubim; "upon" or "above", as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; alluding to the seat of the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, in the holy of holies; and respects either the exalted glory of Christ among the angels, and above them at the right hand of God, where they are subject to him, stand about him, ready to do his will; or rather his presence with his ministers of the word, who are the instruments of spreading his Gospel, and enlarging his kingdom and interest in the world; See Gill on "Ps 80:1"

let the earth be moved: not that itself out of its place, but the inhabitants of it;

and these either with a sense of sin and duty, and become subject to Christ their King; or with wrath and indignation at him, or through fear of him, as before; Kimchi says, at the fall of Gog and Magog; it may be particularly understood of the land of Judea, and of the commotion in it, especially in Jerusalem, when the tidings were brought of the birth of the King Messiah, **Mt 2:1**, or of the shaking and moving both of the civil and ecclesiastical state of the nation, and of the ruin of it; see Heb 12:26.

Psalms 99:2

Ver. 2. The Lord is great in Zion,.... Where the temple stood, and into which Christ came as the proprietor of it, and gave it a greater glory by his presence than the first temple had; here he preached his doctrines, wrought many of his miracles; here he poured forth the Spirit on his apostles; and from hence went forth his Gospel into all the world: or in Zion, that is, in his church, and among his people; here he grants his gracious presence, and bestows the blessings of his goodness; and shows himself to be great and glorious in his person, offices, and operations; see Ps 98:1,

and he is high above all people; as God, he is the Creator of them all; in whom they live, move, and have their being, and so must be above them all; as Mediator, he is the Saviour of his own people, and exalted to be so unto them; as King, he is higher than the kings of the earth, and therefore must be above all the rest of the inhabitants of it; he is higher than the heavens, and the angels there, and therefore he must be higher than the earth, and they that dwell in it; he is highly exalted above every name that is named in this world, or in that to come.

Psalms 99:3

Ver. 3. Let them praise thy great and terrible name,.... All people, especially the Lord's people; those that dwell in Zion, where his name is great, in high esteem, venerable, and valued; as his name Jesus, or Saviour, is amiable and lovely to his saints; and his name, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is terrible to his enemies:

for it is holy; his name is holy, as well as reverend and great; his nature is holy, both divine and human; holy in all his ways and works; and is holiness to his people, and therefore worthy of praise; holiness is the ground and foundation of his praise from the seraphim, **Isa 6:3**.

Psalms 99:4

Ver. 4. The King's strength also loveth judgment,.... Or he who is a strong and mighty King, as Christ is; which appears by saving his people, and preserving them to his kingdom and glory, and by destroying all his and their enemies; but, though he is so potent and victorious a Prince, yet no tyrannical one, he loves and does what is just and righteous; he loved the righteous law of God, and obeyed it in the whole course of his life; he wrought out a perfect righteousness for his people, and encourages and loves righteousness in them; he will judge the world in righteousness hereafter; and is now on his throne, and in his kingdom, ordering it with judgment and justice; all the administrations of his kingly office are just and true, and herein he delights:

thou dost establish equity, or "equities" {a}; uprightnesses, righteousnesses; a perfect and a complete righteousness:

this he has prepared {b}, as the word signifies, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and has established as an everlasting one; moreover, equity, righteousness, and justice, are the settled rules and laws of his government; see **Isa 9:7**,

thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob; among the true Israel and people of God, as David his type did, **2Sa 8:15**, thereby keeping them in due order, in the observance of his righteous judgments and statutes, and defending them from their enemies.

{a} Myrvym "rectitudines", Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "aequitates", Vatablus; "recta", Musculus. {b} tnnwk "parasti", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus; "praeparasti", Tigure version.

Psalms 99:5

Ver. 5. Exalt ye the Lord our God,.... Christ, who is Lord of all, and Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, our Lord and our God; exalt him in his person, as God over all, blessed for ever; in his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, by hearkening to his word, by trusting in his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and by submitting to his ordinances, and obeying his commands; exalt him in heart, thought, and affection, thinking highly of him, and affectionately loving him; exalt and extol him in words, speak of his love and loveliness, and of the great things he has done; exalt him in private and in public, in the family and in the house of God; make mention of him everywhere, that his name be exalted:

and worship at his footstool; worship him who is the object of the adoration of angels, and ought to be of men; worship him privately and publicly, internally and externally, in spirit and in truth; at his footstool, on earth, he being on his throne in heaven; see Isa 65:1 or else the ark is meant, which is so called, 1Ch 28:2, and this being a type of the human nature of Christ, that may be meant here; and which, though not the object of worship, nor is it said, worship his footstool, but at it; yet, in worshipping Christ, respect is to be had unto him, as in our nature, in which he has done such great things for us: the Targum is,

"worship in or at the house of his sanctuary;"

so Kimchi interprets it of the sanctuary, which agrees with Ps 99:9,

for he is holy: essentially holy, glorious in holiness as a divine Person, and therefore to be worshipped: or "it is holy"; the footstool, the ark, the human nature of Christ, in which the Godhead dwells bodily.

Psalms 99:6

Ver. 6. Moses and Aaron among his priests,.... The priests of the Lord, called and appointed by him, that ministered to him in that office, were the priests of Christ, types of him, and ceased when he came: these were the chief among them, or of them, as Kimchi observes: Moses officiated as a priest before Aaron was called and separated to that service; yea, it was he that consecrated and installed him in it, and that by offering sacrifice among other things, Ex 29:1 **Nu 7:1**, and that Aaron was the chief of them there can be no question, seeing he was the first from whom a race of priests sprung, and who gave name to that order of priesthood which continued until the Messiah's coming:

and Samuel among them that call upon his name; these, according to Kimchi, describe the prophets, among whom Samuel was the chief; see **Ac 3:24** calling on the name of the Lord includes the whole worship of God, and is often used particularly of prayer; the object of which is God, and him only; and who is to be called upon at all times, and especially in a time of trouble, and always in faith, and with sincerity and truth; and an honour it is to be among such persons: now these three men, who were eminent for religion and piety, and particularly prayer, see Jer 15:1 are mentioned to animate and encourage the saints, by their example, to the worship and service of the Lord, before exhorted to: they called upon the Lord; the Lord Christ, who is the object of invocation, was so in the Old Testament dispensation, and should be so in the New; see **Ac 7:59**. Moses called upon him, Ex 32:11; so did Aaron, Nu 16:22, and also Samuel, **1Sa 7:8**,

and he answered them; as he does all his people, sooner or later, in one way or another; which is no small encouragement to pray unto him.

Psalms 99:7

Ver. 7. He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar,.... In the pillar of the clouds of glory, as the Targum; in which the Lord went before the children of Israel in the wilderness, to lead them, and protect them from heat in the day, Ex 13:21, that is, he spake in this to Moses and Aaron; for it ceased when they came to the land of Canaan; instances of which see in Ex 19:9, some have thought that the Lord might speak to Samuel also out of a cloud, when he called upon him, and it thundered, since clouds and thunder go together, 1Sa 12:18, the cloudy pillar was a type of Christ; and it is by him the Lord has spoken all his mind and will, when he was clothed with a cloud, or became obscure in the form of a servant; and it is through him, the Mediator, that men have access to God, and answers of prayer from him:

they kept his testimonies; the law, and the precepts of it, which were testifications of the mind and will of God; these Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, kept, though not perfectly, yet sincerely, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God:

and the ordinance that he gave them; the ordinance of the passover, with the several rituals of the ceremonial law, which was an ordinance of God until the Messiah came; and we, under the Gospel dispensation, ought to keep the ordinances of Christ in faith and love, as they have been delivered to us; and such only can expect to be heard and answered by the Lord; and this is the reason of the mention of these things; see Ps 66:18.

Psalms 99:8

Ver. 8. Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God,.... This is repeated to show the certainty of it, and to encourage the people of God, in all ages, to pray unto him:

thou wast a God that forgavest them; even Moses, Aaron, and Samuel; for, though they were great and good men, they did not live without sin, and stood in need of pardoning grace and mercy, which they had; or rather the people for whom they prayed: so the Targum,

"O God, thou wast forgiving thy people for them;"

that is, through their prayers; see Nu 14:19,

though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions; their sins, which are the inventions of men, **Ec 7:29**. Kimchi and others interpret this of the inventions, designs, and practices of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, against Moses and Aaron, Nu 16:32 but though God took vengeance on them, it does not appear that he forgave their iniquities; wherefore it is best to understand this either of the sins of Moses and Aaron themselves, which, though pardoned, God took vengeance of, and showed his displeasure at, by not suffering them to go into the land of Canaan, Nu 20:10, or else of the sins of the Israelites, who murmured upon the report of the spies; and though they were pardoned at the intercession of Moses, yet so far vengeance was taken upon them, that none of them were suffered to enter the land of Canaan; but their carcasses fell in the wilderness, Nu 14:19, and thus, though God forgives the iniquities of his people, for the sake of his Son, yet he takes vengeance of them on him, their surety; on whom they have been laid and borne, and who has not been spared in the least; but has bore the whole wrath and vengeance of God due to sin; and besides, though he pardons his people, yet he chastises them for their sins, and shows his fatherly displeasure at them.

Psalms 99:9

Ver. 9. Exalt the Lord our God,.... Having given the above instances of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, serving and worshipping the Lord, the psalmist repeats the exhortation in Ps 99:5, which he enforces by their example; See Gill on "Ps 99:5":

and worship at his holy hill; the holy hill of Zion, the church; attend the public worship and service of it: the Targum is,

"worship at the mountain of the house of his sanctuary; the temple, a type of the church of Christ:"

for the Lord our God is holy; his nature is holy, and he is glorious in the perfection of his holiness, and therefore to be praised and exalted; and his name is holy, and so reverend, and therefore to be worshipped; see in Ps 99:3.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 100:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 100

A Psalm of Praise. The Arabic version ascribes this psalm to David, and very likely it is one of his: the Targum calls it

"a hymn for the sacrifice of thanksgiving;"

and so Jarchi. It is supposed to have been used when peace offerings for thanksgivings were offered up, **Le 7:11**. The Syriac inscription is very odd;

"concerning Joshua the son of Nun, when he made the war of the Ammonites to cease;"

though it more rightly adds,

"but in the New Testament, when the Gentiles are converted to the faith:"

and indeed the scope of the psalm is to exhort the Gentiles to praise the Messiah, to serve and worship him, from the consideration of his goodness and mercy, truth and faithfulness.

Ver. 1. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Or, "all the earth" {c}; that is, as the Targum, all the inhabitants of the earth, who are called upon to shout unto him as their King; as the angels did at his birth, the disciples when he made his public entrance into Jerusalem, the apostles at his ascension to heaven, the saints when the marriage of him, the Lamb, will be come, and both men and angels when he shall descend from heaven to judge the world; and such a joyful noise or shout should be made unto him as to a triumphant conqueror, who has got the victory over sin, Satan, death, and the grave, and every enemy of his and his people, and made them more than conquerors through himself; see Ps 95:1.

{c} Urah lk "omnis terra", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c.

Psalms 100:2

Ver. 2. Serve the Lord with gladness,.... Not with a slavish fear, under a spirit of bondage, as the Jews under the legal dispensation; not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit: with spiritual joy and freedom of soul, as under the spirit of adoption; readily, willingly, cheerfully; without sinister and selfish ends and views; as their Lord and Master; taking delight in his person, and pleasure in his service; rejoicing in him, without having any confidence in the flesh:

come before his presence with singing; to the throne of his grace with thankfulness for mercies received, as well as to implore others; and into his house, and at his ordinances, beginning public worship with singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; see Ps 95:2.

Psalms 100:3

Ver. 3. Know ye that the Lord he is God,.... Own and acknowledge him to be God, as well as man; and though a man, yet not a mere man, but the great God and our Saviour, the true God and eternal life; so a man, as that he is Jehovah's fellow; or our God, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, God manifest in the flesh:

[it is] he [that] hath made us; as men, without whom nothing is made that was made; in him we live, move, and have our being; and, as new creatures, we are his workmanship, created in him, and by him; regenerated by his Spirit and grace, and formed for himself, his service and glory; and made great and honourable by him, raised from a low to an high estate; from being beggars on the dunghill, to sit among princes; yea, made kings and priests unto God by him; so, Kimchi,

"he hath brought us up, and exalted us:"

and not we ourselves; that is, did not make ourselves, neither as creatures, nor as new creatures; as we have no hand in making either our souls or bodies, so neither in our regeneration, or in the work of God upon our hearts; that is solely the Lord's work: there is a double reading of this clause; the marginal reading is,

and we are his; which is followed by the Targum and Aben Ezra: both are approved of by Kimchi, and the sense of both is included; for if the Lord has made us, and not we ourselves, then we are not our own, but his, and ought to serve and glorify him: we are his by creation; "we are also his offspring", as said Aratus {d}, an Heathen poet, cited by the Apostle Paul, Ac 17:28,

we are his people; by choice and covenant; by his Father's gift, and his own purchase; and by the power of his grace, bringing to a voluntary surrender and subjection to him; even the Gentiles particularly, who were not his people, but now his people, **1Pe 2:9**,

and the sheep of his pasture; his sheep also by gift and purchase, called by him, made to know his voice, and follow him; for whom he provides pasture, leads to it, and feeds them with it himself; see
Ps 74:1.

{d} tou gar kai genouv esmen. Arati Phaenomena, v. 5.

Psalms 100:4

Ver. 4. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,.... The same with the gates of Zion, loved by the Lord more than all the dwellings of Jacob; the gates of Jerusalem, within which the feet of the saints stand with pleasure; the gates of Wisdom, or Christ, where his followers watch and wait; the gates into his house, the church, and the public ordinances of it, to be entered into with thankfulness for all mercies, temporal and spiritual; for the Gospel, and Gospel opportunities and ordinances:

and into his courts with praise; with the sacrifice of praise, as in
Ps 96:8, of these courts, see Ps 65:4,

be thankful unto him; for all blessings of grace in him and by him; for all things, and at all times:

and bless his name; by ascribing honour, blessing, and glory to him, saying, "blessed be his glorious name for ever", Ps 72:19.

Psalms 100:5

Ver. 5. For the Lord is good,.... Both in a providential way, and in a way of grace, and does good; he is the good Shepherd, that has laid down his life for the sheep; and the good Samaritan, that pours in the wine and oil of his love and grace, and his precious blood, to the healing of the wounds made by sin: while he was on earth, he went about doing good to the bodies and souls of men; and he continues to do good unto them, and therefore should be praised, served, and worshipped:

his mercy is everlasting; or "his grace" {e}; there is always a sufficiency of it for his people; and his lovingkindness, which may be also here meant, is always the same; having loved his own which were in the world, he loves them to the end, Joh 13:1

and his truth endureth to all generations; or his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises, and performing his engagements; he was faithful to his Father that appointed him, and to the covenant he made with him; and he is faithful to his people, to keep what they commit to his care and charge now, and to give them the crown of righteousness at the last day, which is laid up for them; and upon all these considerations, and for these reasons, ought to be praised and adored.

{e} wdox "gratia ejus", Cocceius, Gejerus; "gratia et misericordia ejus", Michaelis.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 101:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 101

A Psalm of David. The title of this psalm, in the Syriac version, is,

"for Asaph, an exhortation of David, concerning those things which are required in the ministry of the house of the Lord; and a prophecy of the praise of the conqueror, and of the perfect man in God."

Theodoret thinks it was written by David concerning good Josiah, whom he foresaw, by a spirit of prophecy, would rise up a great reformer of the people, and whom he proposes as a pattern of perfection to others; but it was, no doubt, written by him of himself; very likely, after he was delivered out of his troubles by the death of Saul, and was come to the kingdom, since he resolves to "sing of mercy and judgment": though by the interrogation, "when wilt thou come unto me?" it looks as if he had not arrived to the height of his honour: wherefore, perhaps, this psalm was penned between his being made king over Judah, and his being made king over all the tribes; but, be it as it may, the design of it is to show his resolutions, how he would behave as a king in his court, and as a master in his family; so that it is very instructive to kings and civil magistrates, and to parents and masters of families: and as David was a type of Christ, he seems, throughout the whole, to represent him; and, indeed, there are some things in it which agree with none so well as with him; such as behaving wisely, in a perfect way, and walking in his house with a perfect heart; not suffering any evil thing to cleave unto him, and knowing none, and the like.

Ver. 1. I will sing of mercy and judgment,.... Either of mercy and justice, exercised by him towards his people, which he resolved to do, and did, **2Sa 8:15** which are two very principal points in government, are the glory of a reign, the support of the throne, and the happiness of a people, Pr 20:28, or rather of the mercy of God to himself, in delivering him from his enemies, and raising him to the throne; and of the judgment of God in maintaining his cause, and avenging him on those that hated him: every good man has reason to sing of the "mercy" of God; not only of his providential mercy, but of his special mercy, prepared in council and covenant for him, displayed in regeneration, in the pardon of sin, and in his everlasting salvation: or of "grace" and goodness, as the word {f} signifies; of the grace and goodness of God laid up in Christ, shown forth through him, and to which the whole of salvation is owing; singing of this shows a sense of it, thankfulness for it, and a cheerful disposition of soul, in a view of interest in it: and he may also sing of "judgment": of righteous punishment inflicted upon his enemies, and the enemies of God, and Christ, and true religion; not as taking delight in the misery of fellow creatures, but as rejoicing in the glory of divine justice displayed therein, and in a deliverance from them; as Israel did at the Red sea; and as the church will, when Babylon is destroyed: moreover, a good man may sing of mercy and judgment together, with respect to himself; there being, in the course of his life, a mixture of prosperity and adversity, of merciful and afflictive dispensations, which work together for his good; and he has reason to be thankful for the one as for the other, as Job was, **Job 1:21**, so the Targum,

"if thou renderest mercy to me; if thou exercisest judgment on me; for all I will praise thee:"

judgment sometimes signifies chastisement, Jer 10:24, it may be understood of Christ, who sung of the mercy of God, as shown in the mission of him into the world to save men, and which was glorified in their redemption by him; and of the justice of God exercised on him, as their surety, on whom judgment came unto condemnation for their sins; and when the sword of justice was awaked against him, the hand of mercy was turned on the little ones, Zec 13:7,

unto thee, O Lord, will I sing; on the above subjects.

{f} dox "gratiam", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 101:2

Ver. 2. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way, &e.] So David did before he came to the throne, which made Saul fear him, and the people love him, 1Sa 18:14 and so he resolved to do, and did afterwards; and thus it becomes all good men, in every station of life, to do: and then do they behave wisely, when they walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time; when they make the perfect law of liberty, the word of God, the rule of their faith; take Christ for their pattern and example, and the Spirit for their guide; when they walk as becomes the Gospel of Christ; seek the glory of God, and the good of others; behave inoffensively to all, and live as pilgrims and strangers here; attending closely to their duty, walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless: and yet it is certain that no man lives without sin, or does or can behave himself wisely in so "perfect a way" and manner as to have no fault in him; wherefore this seems most applicable to Christ, who, as it was prophesied he should, so he did "deal prudently", or behave wisely, Isa 52:13, where the same word is used as here; and this is true of Christ throughout the whole of his life; in his infancy, when but twelve years of age; in his public ministry, in his conduct towards all men; in his answers to the ensnaring questions of his enemies; in his behaviour at his apprehension, arraignment, condemnation and crucifixion; and this to perfection, so as that the least fault could not be found in him:

O when wilt thou come unto me? and perform thy promise in bringing me to rule over all the tribes of Israel: or it may be read without an interrogation, "when thou wilt come unto me" {g}; that is, when thou wilt grant me thy gracious presence, and divine assistance, then I will behave myself wisely, in a perfect way; or "in the way of perfect" {h} and upright men, and will walk with them, and do as they do; without the grace of God, and strength of Christ, and the assistance of the Spirit, nothing is to be done that is wise and good: if it is applied to Christ, it respects the time of his sufferings and death, when he was without the divine Presence and help:

I will walk within my house with a perfect heart; or "in the integrity of my heart" {i}; in a sincere and upright manner, ruling my own house well, and setting a good example to all in the family; and so should all good men do, performing all duties of religion in the family; be a pattern of good works, bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and neglect nothing that may contribute to their real good and the glory of God: the house of Christ is his church and people: here he walks and manifests himself, giving proofs of his sincere love and affection to them: the Targum paraphrases it,

"the house of my doctrine;"

such is the church of Christ, **Isa 2:3**.

{g} So V. L. Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tigurine version. {h} Mymt Krdb "in via integri"; so some in Michaelis. {i} ybbl Mtb "in integritate cordis mei", Tigurine version, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus.

Psalms 101:3

Ver. 3. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes, Either the eyes of the body, which are the inlets of lust and are easily caught with objects that inflame the heart, and should be turned aside from beholding vanity; or the eyes of the mind; so the Targum,

"I will not propose to my heart;"

or, as Kimchi,

"in my thought",

that is, I will not set up an evil thing in my imagination, to dwell upon in my thoughts, and take delight and pleasure in meditating upon it; or set it before me, to imitate as a pattern, to work by, and copy after: Christ did not so; he set the Lord always before him, Ps 16:8, not anything of Belial {k} or Satan, as the phrase here may be rendered; no, he always bid Satan, or anything of his, be gone, and get behind him, **Mt 4:10**.

I hate the work of them that turn aside; from God, and from his law; from the paths of religion, truth, and virtue; and from the Gospel, and a profession of it; such are not fit for the kingdom of God, and in these God and Christ have no pleasure, Heb 10:38,

it shall not cleave to me; neither the wicked thing, or thing of Belial, nor the work of apostasy; that is, he would have no familiarity nor fellowship with it; not come near it, nor connive at it, but hate and abhor it: the Jews said, an evil disease, or a thing of Belial, "cleaveth fast unto him", Ps 41:8, but they were mistaken.

{k} leylb rbd "verbum Belijahal", Montanus; so Cocceius, Gejerus, Ainsworth.

Psalms 101:4

Ver. 4. A froward heart shall depart from me,.... A man of a froward heart, that devises frowardness in his heart, and speaks it out with his mouth; that which is perverse, and contrary to the law of God and Gospel of Christ, to the light of nature and the word of God; contrary to the sentiments of all good men, and repugnant to truth and good manners: such sort of persons are disagreeable companions, and good men would not choose to have anything to do with them; they are hateful to Christ, and shall be bid to depart from him; see **Pr 8:13**.

I will not know a wicked person: so as to be familiar with him, or show him any respect; have any affection for him, or take any notice of him; such Christ will not know at the great day, **Mt 7:23**, or "I will not know wickedness" {l}, or any wicked work and action, approve of it, love it, delight in it, and do it: the Targum interprets it of the evil concupiscence, corruption of nature, or indwelling sin, which is hated by the believer, **Ro 7:15** and is utterly unknown to Christ; he was not conscious of it; he knew no sin, **2Co 5:21** original or actual; he had no sin in him, nor was any done by him, or, it may be, mention is made of the morning, because that was the usual time of hearing and judging causes, Jer 21:12, or this may have respect to the spiritual reign of Christ, whose coming will be as the morning; when the Heathens shall perish out of his land, when sinners shall be consumed out of the earth, and the wicked shall be no more, and he will destroy them that destroy the earth, Ps 10:16. The Targum agrees with this,

"in the world to come, which is like to the light of the morning, I will destroy all the wicked of the earth:"

that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord; from the city of Jerusalem, as the Targum and Kimchi interpret it; and it may be understood of the church of God, in the spiritual reign of Christ, into which shall enter no more the uncircumcised and the unclean; and all that offend and do iniquity shall be gathered out of it,
Isa 52:1 or of the New Jerusalem church state, in the personal reign of Christ, into which no wicked doers will be admitted, but will remain for ever without, Re 21:27.

{l} er "malum hominem sive opus", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 101:5

Ver. 5. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off,.... That raises and spreads a false report of him; that insinuates evil things of him; that brings false charges and accusations against him, in a private manner, when he has no opportunity to defend himself: such an one David threatens to cut off from his presence, as Kimchi interprets it; from all communion and conversation with him; and yet he listened to the slanders of Ziba against Mephibosheth: but Christ, who knows the hearts and the secret actions of men, will reject and cut off all persons of such a character: the Targum is,

"he that speaketh with a triple tongue against his neighbour, him will I destroy, and he shall be smitten with the leprosy:"

a slandering tongue is called a triple tongue with the Jews {m}, because, as they say, it kills three persons; him that carries the slander, him that receives it, and him of whom it is related; see the Apocrypha:

"Whoso hearkeneth unto it shall never find rest, and never dwell quietly."

(Sirach 28:16)

him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer; or, "I cannot" {n}; that is, cannot bear him in my presence and company; cannot look upon him with any pleasure and delight: the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and the Oriental versions, render it, "with him I will not eat": have no familiarity or acquaintance with him; see **1Co 5:11**, such who looked above others, and with contempt upon them, whose hearts were large, as the word {o} signifies, were ambitious and insatiable, and never had enough of riches and honour; such were very contrary to David's character, and could never be agreeable to him, Ps 121:1, as the proud and haughty Pharisees were not to Christ, Lu 18:9, and the man of sin that exalts himself above all that is called God, that little horn, whose look is more stout than his fellows, **2Th 2:4**.

{m} T. Bab. Erahin, fol. 15. 2. Vide Targum Jon. in Deut. 27. 4. {n} lkwa al "non potero", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus; "ferre", Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis. {o} bbl bxr "vastum corde", Montanus; "latum corde", Vatablus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 101:6

Ver. 6. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land,.... To look them out, bring them to court, and promote them to places of honour and trust; such an one was David himself, and such there were in the land of Israel, though but few, and of which he complains, Ps 12:1. Christ's eyes are upon faithful persons, on faithful ministers of the word, who preach the Gospel faithfully, administer the ordinances truly, are faithful to the souls of men in watching over them, reproving and exhorting them; his eyes are upon them to keep and preserve them, and to honour and reward them with a crown of life that fadeth not away; and his eyes are also on faithful members of churches, such who truly believe in him, who hold fast the faithful word, and keep close to his worship and ordinances; his eyes are upon them, to show favour to them, to bestow blessings upon them, and to protect and defend them, and preserve them from perishing:

that they may dwell with me; or, "sit with me" {p}; at his table, or at the council board, or in judgment, and assist him in the affairs of government: so such as are faithful shall dwell with Christ both here and hereafter; they dwell in him and with him by faith, and have communion with him; they dwell in his house below, and shall dwell with him above for evermore:

he that walketh in a perfect way; in God's way, in the way he has prescribed and directed, to what is perfect; in a way agreeable to his word, in all his commandments and ordinances, in Christ, the way, the truth, and the life:

and in the way of perfect men {q}, as it may be rendered; in the way that such walk; and though he does not walk perfectly, or without sin, yet sincerely and uprightly:

he shall serve me; be taken into my service, be employed by me, as a prime minister, a counsellor, a secretary of state, or in other lesser places under David. But, as it refers to Christ, it signifies that such an one shall be a servant of his, which is no small honour; for, where he is, there shall his servant be, Joh 12:26. The Targum is,

"he shall stand with my servants;"

in his house here, and at his right hand hereafter.

{p} tbvl "ad sedendum", Montanus; "ut sedeant", V. L. Gejerus. {q} Mymt Krdb "in via integra vel integri", Michaelis.

Psalms 101:7

Ver. 7. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house,.... Flatterers, sycophants, tricking and fraudulent persons, who seek to supplant others, and get into their places; these should lose the favour they had, when detected. So hypocritical persons, that have only a form of godliness, a mask of religion, and false teachers that lie in wait to deceive; and antichrist, whose coming was with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; who has seduced men by his miracles, doctrines, and sorceries; these shall have no place, neither in Christ's house below nor above. The Targum is,

"he that works deceit shall not dwell in the midst of the house of my sanctuary:"

he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight; or, "he shall not be established" before mine eyes {r}; he shall not continue in his post and place, in his office and station; he shall soon be dismissed from it; lying is very abominable to God, very prejudicial to men, and hated by Christ, who is truth itself. All sorts of lies, and liars are so, religious and doctrinal ones; such who speak lies in hypocrisy, as the emissaries of Rome; all that make an abomination, or a lie, will have no place with Christ in the New Jerusalem, Re 21:27.

{r} Nwkn al "nequaquam firmabitur", Pagninus, Montanus; "non stabilietur", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 101:8

Ver. 8. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land, &e.] Of the land of Israel, signifying that he would make a general reformation throughout the kingdom; that as soon as wicked men were discovered in any part of the land, he would cut them off, would take the first opportunity of punishing them as the law directs: or he would do it "in morning" {s}, as in the Hebrew text; that is, every morning, constantly and continually;

{s} Myrqbl "in matutinis", Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; so Ainsworth.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 102:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 102

A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord; Whether this psalm was written by David, under a prophetic spirit, concerning future times; or whether by one of the Babylonish captivity, as Daniel, Nehemiah, Ezra, or any other; either just at the close of it, or upon their return from it; since it is said that "the set time to favour Zion was come", is not certain: however, since Zion was a type of the Gospel church, it may be very well applied to Gospel times; and the rather, since some passages in it are cited by the apostle in **Heb 1:10** as to be understood of Christ: see Ps 102:25. The Syriac version calls it,

"a prophecy concerning the new people, namely, the Gentiles in the faith:"

it is entitled, "a prayer of the afflicted", or "poor" {e}; which Austin understood of Christ, who became poor for our sakes, and was afflicted of God and men. Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it of the Jews suffering affliction in the Babylonish captivity; the former observes, that it was the opinion of some of their interpreters that this prayer was composed by some wise and understanding man that fell into the hand of his enemies. It may very well be applied to any afflicted person; all the people of God are more or less a poor and afflicted people; outwardly afflicted in body, in estate, and in their good name and character; inwardly with the corruptions of their own hearts, the temptations of Satan, and divine desertions; when it is a very proper time for prayer, **Jas 5:13**, and it is their privilege that they have a God of grace and mercy to pray unto, a throne of grace to come to at all times, a spirit of grace and supplication to assist them, and Christ their Advocate and High Priest, to present their petitions for them: and this everyone may do, "when he is overwhelmed"; pressed with the burden of sin, without a view of pardon, covered, as the word {f} signifies, with shame and sorrow for it; almost overset with, and ready to faint and sink under, afflictions, which like waves and billows roll over him; and at the same time is attended with much darkness and unbelieving frames of soul: "and poureth out his complaint before the Lord"; concerning his trials and afflictions, especially concerning the badness and haughtiness of his heart, the hardness of it, being so unaffected with providences, and under the word, and at the ordinances; concerning his leanness, barrenness, and unfruitfulness under the means of grace; his lukewarmness and indifference, his deadness and dulness in duty; his unbelief, distrust, and dejection of mind; as well as of the low estate of Zion, the little success of the Gospel, the few instances of conversion, and the unbecoming walk of many professors. Such a "complaint" as this, or "meditation" {g}, which he has thought of and digested in his mind; or all that is in his heart, as Aben Ezra observes, "he pours out" which denotes enlargement in prayer, the abundance of his heart, out of which his mouth speaketh; the fulness of his petition, as also freedom of expression it signifies a parrhsia, a telling all one's mind, speaking out with great liberty; laying it in an humble manner before the Lord, before whom all things are naked and open, and leaving it with him, in entire submission and resignation to his will, to do as seems good in his sight.

Ver. 1. Hear my prayer, O Lord,.... The prayer of a poor, destitute, and afflicted one; his own, and not another's; not what was composed for him, but composed by him; which came out of his own heart, and out of unfeigned lips, and expressed under a feeling sense of his own wants and troubles; and though dictated and inwrought in his heart by the Spirit of God, yet, being put up by him in faith and fervency, it is called his own, and which he desires might be heard:

and let my cry come unto thee; he calls his prayer cry, because it was uttered in distress, and with great vehemency and importunity; and he prays that it might come unto God, even into his ears, and be regarded by him, and not shut out: prayer comes aright to God, when it comes through Christ, and out of his hands, perfumed with the incense of his mediation.

{e} ynel "pauperis", V. L. Pagninus, Vatablus, Amama; "inopis", Cocceius. {f} Pjey "convolveretur", Munster; "obtegitur", Gejerus, so Michaelis. {g} wxyv "meditationem suam", Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, so Ainsworth.

Psalms 102:2

Ver. 2. Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble,.... Thy Shechinah, as the Targum: when God hides his face at any time from his people, it is a trouble to them, and very grievous; but especially when they are in any other trouble besides; it is very afflicting, indeed, when to their outward trouble this is added, which was Job's case, Job 23:1, incline thine ear unto me; condescend, in great grace and goodness, to stoop and bow thine ear, and listen to the voice of my supplication: in the day when I call, answer me speedily; good men are always for speedy answers of prayer; they would have them the day, the hour, the moment they are calling upon God: sometimes answers are returned as soon,
Isa 65:24, the case of the psalmist was very distressing, and, as he thought at least, required haste, and therefore requests a speedy answer.

Psalms 102:3

Ver. 3. For my days are consumed like smoke,.... Which suddenly rises up, is easily dissipated, and quickly disappears; so sudden, short, and transient, are the days of man's life; see **Jas 4:14** or "in smoke" {c}, as the Syriac version; his days were spent in great obscurity, in the darkness of affliction, temptation, and desertion; and in so much vexation, trouble, and uneasiness, as if he had lived in smoke all his time: and

my bones are burnt as an hearth; on which fire is continually made for the preparation of food, and other uses: or as a "trivet", or "gridiron": so the Targum: or as a frying pan; so the Arabic version: the meaning is, that, through trouble and grief, his bones, the strongest parts of his body, the props and supports of it, were so weakened and enfeebled, the strength of them so exhausted, that they were as if they had been parched and burnt up, as the hearth by fire; see Pr 17:22.

{c} Nveb "in fumo", Montanus.

Psalms 102:4

Ver. 4. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass,.... Like grass in the summer solstice {d}, which being smitten with the heat of the sun, or by some blast of thunder and lightning, is dried up, and withers away; so his heart was smitten with a sense of sin, and of God's wrath and displeasure at him, and with the heat of affliction and trouble, that it failed him, and he could not look up with joy and comfort:

so that I forget to eat my bread; sometimes, through grief and trouble, persons refuse to eat bread, as Jonathan and Ahab, which is a voluntary act, and purposely done; but here, in the psalmist, there was such a loss of appetite, through sorrow, that he forgot his stated meals, having no manner of inclination to food: some understand this of spiritual food, the bread of life, refusing to be comforted with it; so the Targum,

"for I forgot the law of my doctrine."

{d} "Quasi solstitialis herba paulisper fui", Plauti Pseudolus, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 36.

Psalms 102:5

Ver. 5. By reason of the voice of my groaning,.... Under the burden of sin, and pressure of afflictions:

my bones cleave to my skin; was quite emaciated, reduced to a skeleton, became nothing but skin and bone {e}; which sometimes is occasioned, as by outward afflictions, so by soul troubles: or "to my flesh" {f}; flesh is put for skin; see Job 19:20.

{e} "Ossa atque pellis sum", Plauti Capteivei, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 26. Asinaria 3. 6. v. 28. {f} yrvbl "carni meae", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Psalms 102:6

Ver. 6. I am like a pelican of the wilderness,.... It may be so called, to distinguish it from another of the same name that lives upon the waters; which has the name of "pelican" in the Greek tongue, as is said, from its smiting and piercing its breast, and letting out blood for the reviving of its young; and in the Hebrew language, from its vomiting shell fish it has swallowed down; See Gill on "Le 11:18" where the word is rendered a "pelican" as here, and in De 14:17, the same we call the "shovelard"; but a "cormorant" in Isa 34:11, however, it seems to be a bird of solitude, and therefore the psalmist compares himself to it. According to Isidore {g}, it is an Egyptian bird, that inhabits the desert of the river Nile, from whence it has the name of Canopus Aegyptus:

I am like an owl of the desert; or "of desert places"; so the Tigurine version; it is translated "the little owl" in Le 11:17. It delights to be on old walls, and in ruined houses, and cares not to consort with other birds, and it makes a hideous sorrowful noise {h}. Jarchi renders it the hawk, but that, as Kimchi {i} observes, is found in habitable places. Bochart {k} thinks the "onocrotalos" is meant, a bird so much of the same kind with the pelican, that they are promiscuously used by learned men; and which is a creature, as Jerom {l} says, that is used to dwell in desert places; and Isidore {m} observes, that there are two sorts of them, one that lives in the water, and another in the desert; it has its name from its braying like an ass; and Aelianus {n} speaks of a bird of this sort in India, which has a large crop like a sack; and the Hebrew word "cos" here used signifies a cup or vessel, from whence it may have its name; and which he says makes a very disagreeable noise, to which the psalmist may compare the voice of his groaning, Ps 102:5.

{g} Origin. l. 12. c. 7. {h} "Solaque culminibus ferali carmine Bubo, saepe queri----", Virgil. Aeneid. 4. {i} Sepher Shorash. rad. owk. {k} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 20. col. 275, 276. {l} Comment. in Esaiam, c. 34. fol. 64. A. {m} Ut supra. (Origin. l. 12. c. 7.) {n} De Animal. l. 16. c. 4.

Psalms 102:7

Ver. 7. I watch,.... Night after night, and take no sleep; cannot get any by reason of thoughtfulness, care, and trouble:

and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop; or, "as a bird" {o}; for there is no necessity of limiting it to a sparrow, to which the account does not seem so

well to agree; for sparrows will not only perch on housetops and solitary places, but will make their nests in dwelling houses, and in places of public resort, as temples; hence David speaks of the sparrow finding an house near the altars of God,
Ps 84:3 and Herodotus {p} makes mention of sparrows and other birds making their nests in the temple at Branchides; which may serve to illustrate the text last mentioned: wherefore this may be understood of any solitary bird, and especially of the owl {q}; the Jews had flat roofs upon their houses, and here birds of solitude would come and sit alone in the night season, to which the psalmist likens himself; being either forsaken by his friends and acquaintance; or, being in melancholy circumstances, he chose to be alone, mourning over his sorrowful state and condition.

{o} rwpuk "sicut avis", Gejerus, Schmidt. {p} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 159. {q} "--------tectoque prophanus Incubuit bubo" Ovid. Metamorph. l. 6. Fab. 8. "E tectis strix", &c. Tibullus, l. 1. Eleg. 5. v. 52.

Psalms 102:8

Ver. 8. Mine enemies reproach me all the day,.... For his principles and practices, being different from theirs; for his religion, and preciseness in it; for his faith and profession of it, and for his holy walk and conversation. Good men have their enemies, and always had; but then they are such who are also enemies to God and Christ, and true religion; and these, not content to reproach now and then, continually throw out their scoffs and jeers; which is not grateful, and is here mentioned as an article of complaint; though the saints should reckon reproach for the sake of Christ and religion greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt:

and they that are mad against me; as the Jews were against Christ, because of his miracles, doctrine, and success, and therefore sought to take away his life; and as the Apostle Paul before conversion was, even exceeding mad against the saints, and persecuted them to strange cities, **Lu 6:11**, so were the psalmist's enemies quite outrageous and implacable, being his sworn enemies, as follows:

are sworn against me: laid themselves under a curse, to do him all the mischief they could, and it may be to take away his life; as those who sware they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul,
Ac 23:12 or they sware to lies, false charges and accusations brought against

him, like those that Jezebel suborned against Naboth: or "they sware by me" {r}; as the words may be rendered; they sware by his calamities and distresses, and wished they might be as he was, if they did not do so and so; and took his name for a curse.

{r} webvn yb "per me jurant", Tigurine version, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 102:9

Ver. 9. For I have eaten ashes like bread,.... He sitting in ashes, as Job did, and rolling himself in them in the manner of mourners; and, having no other table than the ground to eat his food upon, he might eat ashes along with it; and by an hypallage of the words, the sense may be, that he ate bread like ashes, no more savoured and relished it, or was nourished by it, than if he had eaten ashes; the meaning is, that he was fed with the bread of adversity, and water of affliction:

and mingled my drink with weeping; that is, with tears; as he drank, the tears ran down his cheeks, and mixed with the liquor in his cup; he was fed with the bread of tears, and had them to drink in great measure; these were his meat and his drink, day and night, while enemies reproached him, swore at him, against him, and by him; see
Ps 80:5.

Psalms 102:10

Ver. 10. Because of thine indignation and thy wrath,.... This was the burden of his complaint, what gave him the greatest uneasiness; not so much the reproach of his enemies, and his other outward afflictions, as the sense he had of God's wrath and indignation. The people of God are as deserving of his wrath as others; and when they are awakened to a sense of sin and danger, or the law enters into their consciences, it works wrath there, and leaves nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, till comfort is given; and under afflictive providences they are very ready to conclude, that the wrath of God is upon them; but this is only their apprehension of things; it is not in reality: for God has not appointed them to wrath, and has swore he will not be wroth with them; Christ has bore it for them, in their room and stead; and being justified by his blood and righteousness, they are saved from it; but then the sense they have of it is very terrible, and there is no rest, peace, and comfort in their souls, while under the apprehensions of it:

for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down; as a man that, in wrestling, has the advantage of his antagonist, lifts him up as high as he can, that he may throw him with the greater force upon the ground; in like manner the psalmist thought the Lord was dealing with him: or this may express his changeable state and condition, sometimes lifted up, and sometimes cast down, and which is the case of every believer, more or less; all have their liftings up, and their castings down: when God first calls them by his grace, he raises them from a low estate, lifts them up out of an horrible pit, takes them from the dunghill, sets them among princes to inherit the throne of glory: when he comforts them with the consolations of his Spirit, he is the lifter up of their heads; when he grants his presence, and lifts up the light of his countenance: when he discovers his love, and makes their mountain to stand strong; when he shows them their interest in himself, as their covenant God, in Christ, as their Redeemer and Saviour, and grants them the communion of the Holy Ghost; and when their graces are in lively exercise, then is it a time of lifting up: and they are cast down when corruptions prevail, when grace is weak, when God hides his face, and when afflictions lie heavy on them: this was now the case of the psalmist, and perhaps the remembrance of his liftings up in former times was an aggravation of it.

Psalms 102:11

Ver. 11. My days are like a shadow that declineth,.... Or, "that is stretched out" {s}, which, though it may appear long, is soon at an end; as it does appear longer when the sun sets {t}, and departs from the earth: he reckons his life not by months and years, but by days; and these he compares to a "shadow", which has no substance in it; his age being as nothing before the Lord, and has much darkness and obscurity in it; his days being days of darkness, affliction, and trouble, and quickly gone, as man's life is; there is no abiding; see 1Ch 29:15. Pindar {u} calls man the dream of a shadow:

and I am withered like grass; which in the morning is flourishing, is cut down at noon, and withered at evening: this is the case of all flesh, however beautiful and goodly it may look; it is weak, frail, and mortal; cannot stand before the force of afflictions, which quickly consume strength and beauty, and much less before the scythe of death; see Ps 90:5.

{s} ywjn "inclinata", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Musculus, Cocceius; "extensa", Michaelis. {t} "Et sol crescentes decedens duplicat umbras", Virgil. Bacol. Eclog. 2. {u} Pyth. Ode 8.

Psalms 102:12

Ver. 12. But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever,.... This address is made to Christ, as is clear from Ps 102:25, compared with **Heb 1:10**, who is a divine Person, endures for ever, is from everlasting to everlasting, unchangeably the same in his love, power, wisdom, faithfulness, &c. and though he died as man, he will die no more; he is alive, and lives for evermore; and because he lives, his people shall live also; and he will come again to take them to himself: and, as Mediator, he is King for ever; always continues, as such, to rule over, protect, and defend his people; and is a Priest for ever, and ever lives to make intercession for them; and his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, have a constant virtue in them, to take away sin, and secure from it: the consideration of the perpetuity of Christ, in his person and offices, was a comfort to the psalmist under his troubles, and in a view of his own declining state: the Targum is,

"but thou, O Lord, thy habitation continues for ever in heaven:"

and thy remembrance to all generations; the remembrance of his name Jehovah, or Jesus, or Immanuel, or any other, is sweet and precious to his saints in all ages; and so the remembrance of his works, of what he has done and suffered, especially the great work of redemption; for the remembrance of which the ordinance of the Lord's supper is appointed to be continued till his second coming; and his Gospel is an everlasting one, which will transmit the memory of him to men in every age, to the end of the world; and though all flesh is as grass, and every man dies, even the ministers of the word, yet that itself lives for ever. Aben Ezra reads "thy throne", as agreeing with **Lam 5:19**, but Kimchi observes that this reading is owing to a bad copy.

Psalms 102:13

Ver. 13. Thou shalt arise, and have mercy on Zion,.... Exert his power, and display the riches of his grace and mercy; not by delivering the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, to which some restrain it; but by redeeming his church and people by power and price; or rather by raising up and restoring them to great glory and prosperity in the latter day:

for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come; not the seventy years of the captivity made known to the prophet Jeremiah; rather the seventy weeks of Daniel fixed for the Messiah's coming; or the fulness of time agreed upon, between Christ and his Father, for him to come and redeem his people; but it may best of all design the end of the forty two months, or the 1260 days, or years, fixed for the treading under foot the holy city, for the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and for the reign of antichrist; which when come will usher in glorious times in favour of Zion, the church of God, Re 11:2.

Psalms 102:14

Ver. 14. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones,.... Meaning not Cyrus and Darius, who gave leave and orders for the rebuilding of the city and temple of Jerusalem, as some; nor Nehemiah, and Ezra, and others, who took more pleasure in the stones and rubbish of the temple, as it lay in ruins, than in all the stately palaces in Babylon; and who were very desirous of, and took delight in gathering these stones, and putting them together again, as others; but, the ministers of the Gospel, and other Christians, in the latter day, who will take pleasure in the great number of converts that there will then be, who, as lively stones, will be built up a spiritual house; and especially when those stones shall be laid with fair colours, and the headstone shall be brought in with acclamations, crying, Grace, grace unto it; see **1Pe 2:5**.

and favour the dust thereof; which sometimes designs multitudes, Nu 23:10, perhaps here it may denote the meanest of the Lord's people, who will be regarded, and not despised by his servants; but they will show favour to them, do them all the good they can, and wish well to them, and pray for their prosperity, and for the peace of Zion; that God would make it the joy of the whole earth; and when there shall be such a delight in the stones and dust of Zion, and a spirit of grace and supplication poured forth upon the servants of the Lord, to pray for the promised glory and happiness of it, it will be a token for good, and an intimation that the set time to favour her is at hand; which seems to be the sense of the psalmist: such great reverence and respect have the greatest of the wise men among the Jews for the land of Israel, literally understood, that they kiss the borders, the stones of it, and roll themselves in its dust {a}, having perhaps in mind this passage of Scripture.

{a} Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 5. s. 10.

Psalms 102:15

Ver. 15. So the Heathen shall fear the name of the Lord,.... Whose name is reverend, and to be feared; especially the glorious and fearful name "Jehovah", expressive of the divine existence, of his eternity and immutability; though the name of the Lord frequently signifies himself, and here particularly the Messiah, the Son of God, in whom the name of the Lord is; the King of saints, whom all men will fear in the latter day, when the set time to favour Zion is come; will stand in awe of him, be careful of offending him, and will serve and worship him; even the very Heathen, who knew not God, and had no fear of him before their eyes, or in their hearts; the Pagan nations, whose kingdoms will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; see Re 11:15

and all the kings of the earth thy glory; which may be supplied thus, either "all the kings of the earth shall see thy glory", or shall fear thee because of "thy glory"; the glory of Christ's person, as the Son of God; the glory of his offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King; especially the glory of his kingly office, to which that of the kings of the earth is not to be compared; the glory of his works of creation, providence, and redemption; and as it will be held forth in the Gospel, with which the earth will now be full, and so be filled with the glory of the Lord, Ps 72:19, and will be so remarkable and conspicuous as to be taken notice of by the kings of the earth, even by all of them, who, when the glory of the Lord shall be risen in Zion, will come to the brightness of it, and look upon it, and admire it, and fear because of it, Isa 60:1.

Psalms 102:16

Ver. 16. When the Lord shall build up Zion,.... The church of God, fallen down, and in a ruinous condition, as it may be said to be when the doctrines of the Gospel are departed from; the ordinances of it are corrupted and altered, or not attended to; the worship and discipline of the Lord's house are neglected; great declensions in faith, love, and zeal, among the professors of religion, and but few instances of conversion: and it may be said to be built up again, as it will be in the latter day, when the doctrines of grace will be revived; the ordinances will be administered in their primitive purity; great spirituality, holiness, and brotherly love, among the saints, and large numbers converted and brought into it: and this will be the work of Christ, the great master builder; the materials of this building are the saints, those lively stones which will now be laid with fair colours; the ministers of the word will be the instruments that Christ will make use of in rebuilding his church; it is his Spirit, power, and grace, which will make all effectual; and he will have the glory, as follows: the Targum is,

"for the city of Zion is built by the Word of the Lord:"

he shall appear in his glory; or "shall be seen in his glory" {b}, which will be upon his church and people, and on which there will be a defence, so that it shall continue; and this will lie chiefly in the purity of Gospel truths, ordinances, and worship; in the number of converts; in the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God upon them; in their peace, prosperity, unity, and spirituality; and in the presence of Christ with them, who will be seen in all the glory and majesty of his kingly office; he will now reign before his ancients gloriously.

{b} harn "videbitur", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 102:17

Ver. 17. He will regard the prayer of the destitute,.... Of the destitute of human help and support, protection and defence; as the church in the wilderness; of the "poor", as the Syriac and Arabic versions, both in spirit and in purse; of the "humble", as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin: the word {c} signifies a low shrub or plant; it is rendered, the heath in the wilderness, Jer 17:6 and designs the saints in their low and afflicted state, during the reign of antichrist, and while the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth; these are the elect that pray day and night, and give the Lord no rest till he establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth; and the prayers of these are regarded and looked to by the Lord; his eyes are upon and his ears are open to these praying ones; and all the glorious things which shall be done for the church of God will be in consequence of their prayers:

and not despise their prayer; not reject it with contempt and abhorrence; more is intended than is expressed: the meaning is, that he will receive it with pleasure, and return an answer to it; the prayer of these poor destitute ones is delightful to him, Pr 15:8.

{c} rereh "eorum, qui sunt veluti myricae", Pagninus, Vatablus, Cocceius.

Psalms 102:18

Ver. 18. This shall be written for the generation to come,.... This prayer, as the Targum paraphrases it, is a directory to saints in distressed circumstances; or that which was just now said, that the Lord will regard, and not despise the prayer of the destitute; this shall stand on record, for the encouragement of praying souls in all generations; or this whole prophecy, concerning the glory of the church in the latter day; this shall be written for the next generation, and so on until it is accomplished, to keep up the faith and expectation of the fulfilment of it:

and the people which shall be created: born at the time when all this shall be done; or who shall become new creatures; be created in Christ Jesus, and made new men;

these shall praise the Lord, when he shall arise and have mercy on Zion; when he shall favour and rebuild her, in answer to the prayers of his people; then their prayers will be turned into praise; then will those voices be heard among them, hallelujah, salvation, glory, honour, and power unto the Lord our God, Re 19:1.

Psalms 102:19

Ver. 19. For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary,.... From heaven, as it is explained in the next clause, which is the Lord's sanctuary, or holy place, where he dwells, even in the height of it; it is both high and holy, as he himself is; yet he condescends to look down from thence on sinful mortals:

from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; the inhabitants of it, good and bad: it designs the general notice he takes of men and things in a providential way; he beholds the world, that lies in wickedness, and all the wickedness committed in it; and will one day call to an account, and punish for it; he beholds good men, not only with an eye of providence, to take care of them, protect and defend, but with an eye of love, grace, and mercy; he has a special and distinct knowledge of them, and it may here particularly regard the notice he takes of his people, under antichristian tyranny; he sees all the barbarity and cruelty exercised upon them, and will requite it, ere long, to their adversaries, and free them from it, as follows.

Psalms 102:20

Ver. 20. To hear the groanings of the prisoner,.... Not of a single person only, but of many, who lie in prisons in Popish countries, especially in the Inquisition; where they lie and groan, in darkness and misery, under dreadful tortures; their cries and groans the Lord hears; his heart yearns towards them; he looks with pity on them; and, because of the sighing of these poor and needy ones, he will arise in due time, and set them in safety from him that puffs at them: it is true also of such who are prisoners of sin, Satan, and the law; and, when sensible of it, groan under their bondage, and cry to the Lord for help, who hears them, and directs them, as prisoners of hope, to turn to Christ, their strong hold, **Zec 9:11**,

to loose those that are appointed to death; delivered to death, as the Targum; delivered over to the secular power, in order to be put to death; who are arraigned and condemned as malefactors, and put into the condemned hole, in order for execution; these the Lord will loose, and save them from the death they are appointed to by men; for this is not to be understood of persons appointed by the Lord to death, either corporeal or eternal, from which none can be loosed, so appointed: in the original text the phrase is "children of death" {d}; the same as "children of wrath", **Eph 2:3**, that is, deserving of death, and under the sentence of it; as all men are in Adam, even the Lord's own people; and who are, in their own apprehension, as dead men, when awakened and convinced of their state by the Spirit of God; these Christ looses from the shackles and fetters of sin, from the bondage of the law, from the tyranny of Satan, and from fears of death, and puts them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

{d} htwmt ynb "filios mortis", Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 102:21

Ver. 21. To declare the name of the Lord in Zion,.... That is, that the prisoners and persons appointed to death, being loosed, might declare, in the church, what great things the Lord has done for them; and so speak well of his wisdom, power, grace, and goodness, in their deliverance; profess his name, and confess him before men, and express a value for his name, and show forth the honour of it, and seek his glory:

and his praise in Jerusalem; the Gospel church state, the same with Zion; when it shall be the praise of the whole earth; then and there will those, that are delivered from the antichristian yoke, praise the Lord, sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and glorify God for all that he has done for them.

Psalms 102:22

Ver. 22. When the people are gathered together,.... When the people of the Jews shall be gathered together, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King, the Messiah, and appoint them one head, even Christ; and when the Gentiles shall gather together, in great numbers, to the church of God, **Ho 1:11**,

and the kingdoms to serve the Lord; even the kingdoms of this world, which will become his, and will serve him in righteousness and holiness, freely and cheerfully, with one shoulder and one content; their kings will fall down before the Lord, and all nations shall serve him, Ps 72:11, and then will be the time when the prisoners shall be loosed, and the Lord shall be praised in Zion.

Psalms 102:23

Ver. 23. He weakened my strength in the way,.... The psalmist here returns to his complaint of his afflictions, weakness, and frailty, which ended Ps 102:11, after which some hints are given of the latter day glory, which though he despaired of seeing, by reason of his frailty and mortality, yet comforts himself with the eternity and immutability of Christ, and that there would be a succession of the church, a seed of true believers, who would see and enjoy it: as for himself, he says that God (for he is that "He", and not the enemy, as some) had "weakened" his "strength in the way", by afflictions, as the word {e} signifies; which weakens the strength and vigour of the mind, and discourages and dispirits it, and enfeebles the body: many are the afflictions which the people of God meet with in the course of their life, in their way to heaven, which have such an effect upon them; through many tribulations they pass to enter the kingdom, as the Israelites in their way to Canaan, and Christ to glory: some think the psalmist represents the Jews in their return from the Babylonish captivity, meeting with difficulties and discouragements in the way; rather the church of God, in the expectation of the Messiah, who, because his coming was delayed, grew feeble in their faith and hope, had weak hands and feeble knees, which needed strengthening by fresh promises: though it may be, best of all, the people of God, waiting for latter day glory, enfeebled by the persecutions of antichrist, or grown weak in the exercises of their grace, faith, hope, and love; which will be their case before these glorious times, and now is, see **Re 3:2**,

he shortened my days; which he thought he should live, and expected he would; and which, according to the course of nature, and the common term of man's life, he might, in all human appearance, have lived; otherwise, with respect to the decree of God, which has fixed the bounds of man's days, they cannot be shorter or longer than they are,
Job 14:5.

{e} hne "afflixit", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Musculus, Piscator, Gejerus, Schmidt; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 102:24

Ver. 24. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days;.... Which was always reckoned as a judgment, as a token of God's sore displeasure, and as what only befell wicked men, Ps 55:23, in the Hebrew it is, "cause me not to ascend" {f}; either as smoke, which ascends, and vanishes away; or rather it designs the separation of the soul from the body at death, when it ascends upwards to God that gave it; so Aben Ezra compares it with Ec 12:7, the Targum is,

"do not take me out of the world in the midst of my days, bring me to the world to come:"

some, who think that Daniel was the penman of this psalm, or some other, about the time of the Babylonish captivity, curiously observe, that that period was much about the middle between the building of Solomon's temple and the coming of Christ, the antitype of it; which was about a thousand years, of which four hundred and ninety were to come, according to Daniel's weeks; so, representing the church, prays they might not be destroyed, as such; but be continued till the Messiah came:

thy years are throughout all generations; which are not as men's years, of the same measure or number; but are boundless and infinite: the phrase is expressive of the eternity of God, or Christ; which the psalmist opposes to his own frailty, and which he illustrates in the following verses, by setting it in contrast with the discontinuance and changeableness of the heavens and the earth; see Job 10:5.

{f} ynlet la "ne ascendere facias me", Montanus, Gejerus.

Psalms 102:25

Ver. 25. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth,.... The lower part of the creation, the Lord's footstool, called the earth beneath: this has its foundation; though what it is cannot be well said, it cannot be searched out; it is sometimes said to be founded upon the waters, and yet so as not to be removed for ever,
Jer 31:37, this shows the wisdom of God, as a wise master builder, and the stability of the earth; and is a proof of the deity of Christ, to whom these words belong: this is said to be done "of old", or "at" or "in the beginning", as Jarchi and the Targum; and so in **Heb 1:10**, where they are applied to the Messiah, the Son of God; and this, as it proves the eternity of Christ, who must be in the beginning, and before all things, so it confutes the notion of the eternity of the earth, received by some philosophers: besides, the words may be rendered, "before" {g} "thou foundest the earth"; and so refers to the preceding, "thy years", &c. were before the earth was; that is, from eternity, and so fully express the eternal existence of Christ:

and the heavens are the work of thy hands; these are the airy and starry heavens, and the heaven of heavens; which are creatures, and not to be worshipped, made by Christ himself, and are expressive of his power, wisdom, and glory.

{g} Mynpl "antea", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus.

Psalms 102:26

Ver. 26. They shall perish,.... Both the heavens and the earth, though so well founded, and so firmly made; they shall be dissolved, melt, and pass away; not as to the substance, but as to the quality of them: or, as R. Judah Ben David says, whom Aben Ezra on the place cites, and calls the first grammarian in the west, not as to generals, but as to particulars:

but thou shalt endure; as the eternal God, from everlasting to everlasting; and, even as man, he will die no more; and, as Mediator, will ever remain; he will be King for ever; his throne is for ever and ever; his kingdom is an everlasting one; he is a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek; his sacrifice is of an eternal efficacy, and he ever lives to make intercession for his people; he will always continue, as the Prophet, in his church, to teach by his Spirit, word, and ordinances, in the present state; and hereafter will be the light of the New Jerusalem, and of his saints, for ever:

yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment: not only the heavens, which are as a curtain and garment about the earth, but the earth itself, Isa 51:6, will lose their beauty and glory, and become useless, as to the present form of them:

as a vesture shall thou change them, and they shall be changed; as to their form, as a garment that is turned or folded up, and laid aside, as to present use: this seems to favour the above sense given, that the earth and heavens will not perish, as to the substance of them; but as to their form, figure, fashion, and scheme; and as to the qualities of them, all noxious ones being purged away by fire, the curse removed, and new heavens and new earth arise out of them.

Psalms 102:27

Ver. 27. But thou art the same,.... That hast created them, as the Targum adds; or "thou art he" {h}, the everlasting I AM, the unchangeable Jehovah; immutable in his nature and perfections; in his love and affections to his people; in his power to protect and keep them; in his wisdom to guide and direct them; in his righteousness to clothe them, and render them acceptable to God; in his blood to cleanse them, and speak peace and pardon to them; in his fulness to supply them, and in his intercession for them,

and thy years shall have no end; See Gill on "Ps 102:24", now he, that made the heavens and the earth, and will be when they will not be, especially in the present form they are, must be able to rebuild his Zion, and bring on the glory he has promised; and from his eternity and immutability may be concluded the continuance of his church and interest in the world, until all the glorious things spoken of it shall be fulfilled, as follows.

{h} awh hta "tu ipse", Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 102:28

Ver. 28. The children of thy servants shall continue,.... The "servants" of the Lord are the apostles of Christ, and ministers of the word, in all successive generations, with whom Christ will be to the end of the world: their "children" are such whom they have begotten again, through the Gospel, to whom they are spiritual fathers; regenerated souls are meant; of these there will be a succession in all ages, until latter day glory takes place; these are the church's seed, and her seed's seed, from whom the word of the Lord, the Gospel, will never depart, Isa 59:21, or these "shall inhabit" {i}, as the word may be rendered, the earth, as the Targum adds; that is, the new heavens, and the new earth, when the old ones are passed away; here they shall dwell with the Lord, who is the same today, yesterday, and for ever:

and their seed shall be established before thee; the same with the children, the spiritual seed of the church and of faithful minister; these, with the church, in which they are born and brought up, shall be established in Christ; the church will be no more in an unstable and fluctuating state, but will he as a tabernacle, that shall not be taken down; yea, shall be established upon the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills; see **Isa 2:2**.

{i} wnwkvy "habitabunt", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus; so Sept.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 103:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 103

A Psalm of David. The Targum adds,

"spoken in prophecy,"

as doubtless it was, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Some think it was written by David, after a fit of illness, and his recovery from it, since he speaks of his diseases being healed, and his youth renewed; for which reason the Syriac interpreter suggests it was written in his old age; for he makes the subject of the psalm to be,

"concerning coldness which prevailed upon him in old age;"

but rather he wrote it when his heart was warm with a sense of the love of God, and spiritual blessings of grace flowing from thence; and in it celebrates and sings the benefits of New Testament times; and it is a psalm suitable to be sung by every believer, under a quick sense of divine favours: wherefore the above interpreter better adds,

"also an instruction and thanksgiving by men of God;"

whom the psalmist may very well be thought to personate, even in Gospel times; and much rather than the Jews in captivity, as Kimchi thinks.

Ver. 1. Bless the Lord, O my soul,.... His better part, his soul, which comes immediately from God, and returns to him, which is immaterial and immortal, and of more worth than the world: God is to be served with the best we have; as with the best of our substance, so with the best of our persons; and it is the heart, or soul, which he requires to be given him; and such service as is performed with the soul or spirit is most agreeable to him; he being a Spirit, and therefore must be worshipped in spirit and in truth: unless the spirit or soul of a man, is engaged in the service of God, it is of little avail; for bodily exercise profiteth not; preaching, hearing, praying, and praising, should be both with the spirit, and with the understanding: here the psalmist calls upon his soul to "bless" the Lord; not by invoking or conferring a blessing on him, which as it is impossible to be done, so he stands in no need of it, being God, all sufficient, and blessed for evermore; but by proclaiming and congratulating his blessedness, and by giving him thanks for all mercies, spiritual and temporal:

and all that is within me, bless his holy name; meaning not only all within his body, his heart, reins, lungs, &c. but all within his soul, all the powers and faculties of it; his understanding, will, affections, and judgment; and all the grace that was wrought in him, faith, hope, love, joy, and the like; these he would have all concerned and employed in praising the name of the Lord; which is exalted above all blessing and praise; is great and glorious in all the earth, by reason of his works wrought, and blessings of goodness bestowed; and which appears to be holy in them all, as it does in the works of creation, providence, and redemption; at the remembrance of which holiness thanks should be given; for he that is glorious in holiness is fearful in praises, Ps 97:12.

Psalms 103:2

Ver. 2. Bless the Lord, O my soul,.... Which is repeated to show the importance of the service, and the vehement desire of the psalmist, that his soul should be engaged in it:

and forget not all his benefits; not any of them; the least of them are not to be forgotten, being such as men are altogether unworthy of; they flow not from the merit of men, but from the mercy of God; and they are many, even innumerable; they are new every morning, and continue all the day; and how great must the sum of them be, and not one should be forgotten; and yet even good men are very apt to forget them; as the Israelites of old, who sung the praises of the Lord, and soon forgot his works: the Lord, knowing the weakness of his people's memories, has not only, under the Gospel dispensation, appointed an ordinance, to be continued to the end of the world, to commemorate a principal blessing and benefit of his, redemption by his Son; but has also promised his Spirit, to bring all things to their remembrance; and this they should be concerned for, that they do remember what God has done for them, in order both to show gratitude and thankfulness to him, and for the encouragement of their faith and hope in him.

Psalms 103:3

Ver. 3. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities,.... The psalmist explains here what he means by benefits, and gives a particular enumeration of them; and begins with the blessing of pardon, which is a special and peculiar benefit; it is according to the riches of divine grace, and the multitude of tender mercies; without which all outward blessings signify nothing; and, without a sense of this, a man is not in a suitable and proper frame to bless the Lord; and this being the first benefit a soul sensible of sin, its guilt and is concerned for, and seeks after; so enjoying it, it is the first he is thankful for: this is rightly ascribed to God; for none can forgive sins but he; and what he forgives are not mere infirmities, peccadillos, the lesser sins of life; but "iniquities", grosser sins, unrighteousnesses, impieties, the most enormous crimes, sins of a crimson and scarlet die; yea, "all" of them, though they are many, more than the hairs of a man's head; he abundantly pardons, multiplies pardons, as sins are multiplied, and leaves none unforgiven; original sin, actual sins, sins of heart, lip, and life, of omission and commission, all are forgiven for Christ's sake: and the special mercy is when a man has an application of this to himself, and can say to his soul, as David to his, God has forgiven "thine" iniquities; for though it may be observed with pleasure, and it is an encouragement to hope in the Lord, that he is a forgiving God, and has forgiven others, yet what would this avail a man, if his sins should not be forgiven? the sweetness of the blessing lies in its being brought home to a man's own soul: and it may be further observed, that this is a continued act; it is not said who has forgiven, and will forgive, though both are true; but "forgiveth", continues to forgive; for as there is a continual virtue in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world, and in his blood to cleanse from all sin, so there is a continual flow of pardoning grace in the heart of God, which is afresh applied to the consciences of his people by his Spirit; and this is a blessing to be thankful for:

who healeth all thy diseases; not bodily ones, though the Lord is the physician of the bodies as well as of the souls of men, and sometimes heals the diseases of soul and body at once, as in the case of the paralytic man in the Gospel; but spiritual diseases, or soul maladies, are here meant; the same with "iniquities" in the preceding clause: sin is a natural, hereditary, epidemical, nauseous, and mortal disease; and there are many of them, a complication of them, in men, which God only can cure; and he heals them by his word, by means of his Gospel, preaching peace, pardon, and righteousness by Christ; by the blood, wounds, and stripes of his Son; by the application of pardoning grace and mercy; for healing diseases, and forgiving iniquities, are one and the same thing; see Isa 33:24, and this the Lord does freely, fully, and infallibly, and for which thanks are due unto him; and it would be very ungrateful, and justly resented, should they not be returned to him; see Lu 17:15.

Psalms 103:4

Ver. 4. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction,.... Not from temporal destruction, to which the natural life is subject, through diseases, dangerous occurrences, and the malice of enemies; to be delivered from which is a blessing, and for which God is to be praised; but from eternal destruction, the destruction of the body and soul in hell; and so the Targum,

"who redeemest thy life from hell;"

to which destruction all men are liable through sin; their ways lead unto it, and grace only prevents it: the people of God are redeemed from sin, the cause of it; and from the curse of the law, in the execution of which it lies; and from Satan, the executor of it; and all this by Christ, who is the Redeemer appointed and sent, and who being mighty, and so equal to the work, has obtained eternal redemption; through which the saints are secure from going down to the pit of destruction, or from wrath to come; and this is a blessing they can never be enough thankful for; see **Lu 1:68**,

who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; with all other blessings which flow from the lovingkindness and tender mercy of God, even all the blessings of the everlasting covenant, the sure mercies of David; all the spiritual blessings with which the saints are blessed in Christ, the grace given them in him, and the mercy kept with him for evermore; all things pertaining to life and godliness given in regeneration; the fruits of great love and abundant mercy, with all the other supplies of grace between that and eternal glory: "crowning" with these denotes an application and enjoyment of them, the great plenty and abundance of them, a being surrounded and loaded with them; as also the honour that goes along with them, which makes those that have them great and glorious, rich and honourable; as well as preservation and protection by them; these encompassing about as a crown the head, and as a shield the body; see **Ps 5:12**, where the same word is used as here.

Psalms 103:5

Ver. 5. Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things,.... With the good things in the heart of God, with his favour and lovingkindness, as with marrow and fatness; with the good things in the hands of Christ, with the fulness of grace in him, with pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him; with the good things of the Spirit of God, his gifts and graces; and with the provisions of the Lord's house, the goodness and fatness of it; these he shows unto his people, creates hungerings and thirstings in them after them, sets their hearts a longing after them, and then fills and satisfies them with them: hence the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions render it, "who filleth thy desire with good things": the word used has sometimes the signification of an ornament; wherefore Aben Ezra interprets it of the soul, which is the glory and ornament of the body, and renders it, "who satisfieth thy soul with good things"; which is not amiss: "so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's"; not the youth of the body, or the juvenile vigour of it; nor the outward prosperity of it; but the youth of grace, or a renewal of spiritual love and affection to divine and heavenly persons and things; of holy zeal for God, his ways and worship; for Christ, his Gospel, truths, and ordinances; of spiritual joy and comfort, strength, liveliness, and activity, as formerly were in the days of espousals, in the youth of first conversion, or when first made acquainted with the best things; so that though the outward man may decay, yet the inward man is renewed day by day: and this is said to be "like the eagle's", whose youth and strength are renewed, as some observe {a}, by dropping their feathers, and having new ones, by feeding upon the blood of slain creatures; and whereas, when they are grown old, the upper part of their bill grows over the lower part {b}, so that they are not able, to eat, but must die through want; Austin {c} says, that by rubbing it against a rock, it comes to its use of eating, and so recovers its strength: but there is no need to have recourse to any of these things; for as the old age of au eagle is lively and vigorous, like the youth of another creature; so it is here signified, that saints through the grace of God, even in old age, become fat and flourishing, and fruitful, and are steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, run and are not weary, walk and faint not, Isa 40:31, all which are inestimable mercies, and the Lord is to be praised for them.

{a} Ambrosii Opera, tom. 5. p. 78. {b} Aristot. de Animal. l. 9. c. 32. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 3. {c} Opera, tom. 8. in Psal. 102. fol. 474. c.

Psalms 103:6

Ver. 6. The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. Not only for the Israelites oppressed by the Egyptians, though the psalmist might have them in his view, by what follows; for whom the Lord did justice, by delivering them out of the hands of their oppressors, and by punishing Pharaoh and his people, and bringing down judgments upon them, both in Egypt and at the Red sea; but for all other oppressed ones in common, the poor, the widow, and the fatherless, who are often oppressed by the rich and mighty; the Lord judges their cause, and does them right, and frees them from their oppression; and so all good men who are oppressed by tyrannical princes and cruel persecutors, and all such whom the man of the earth, the man of sin, antichrist, oppresses, Ps 10:18 and all those who are oppressed by the devil, buffeted by Satan, and bore down with his temptations; the Lord rebukes him in his own time, and delivers his people out of his hands; which is matter of praise and thankfulness: the psalmist, in this verse and the following, passes to the consideration of the good things God did for others, in order to keep up a warm sense of divine goodness upon his heart.

Psalms 103:7

Ver. 7. He made known his ways unto Moses,.... The ways in which he himself walks, the steps and methods which he has taken to show forth his glory; his way in creation, and the order of it, as in **Ge 1:1**, for though, by the light of nature, it might be known that God created all things; yet, without a revelation from him, it could never have been known in what manner he made them, and the peculiar work of each of the six days, in which they were made; this was made known to Moses; as also his way in providence, which sometimes is in the deep, and past finding out: Moses was made acquainted with the methods of divine Providence, with many special instances of it, relating both to himself in his infancy and in riper years, and to the people of Israel in their march from Egypt to Canaan's land; and the Lord likewise made known unto him his way of grace and mercy, life and salvation, by Christ, which he desired to show him, and he did, Ex 33:13. Christ was made known to him, as the seed of the woman that should break the serpent's head, as God's salvation, old Jacob waited for: he was shown him in the types of the passover lamb, the brasen serpent, and the rock in the wilderness, and in other things; the way of atonement, by the sacrifice of Christ, was made known to him through the sacrifices which he from God enjoined the people of Israel: hence he wrote of Christ, and of what he should do and suffer; and so fully, that the Apostle Paul said no other things than what he did, **Joh 5:46** moreover, the Lord made known to him the ways in which he would have him and the people of Israel to walk; the way of his commandments, his statutes and ordinances; which were made known to him, to deliver to them, and was a peculiar favour, Ps 147:19,

his acts unto the children of Israel; his works, his wonderful works; his plagues on their enemies the Egyptians; his redemption of them out of the house of bondage; his leading them through the Red sea as on dry land; his feeding them with manna in the wilderness, protecting them from their enemies, bringing them into the land of Canaan, and settling them there; see Ps 78:11.

Psalms 103:8

Ver. 8. The Lord is merciful and gracious,.... So he made himself known to Moses, Ex 34:6, and so David found him to be, and therefore calls upon his soul to bless his name. God is "merciful" in the most tender and affectionate manner; he has bowels of mercy, which yearn towards his people, as those of a tender parent to its child, as the word signifies; his mercy is free, without any motive or merit in men to engage it; he delights in showing it; he constantly bestows it; it is the source of all good things; it is communicated through Christ; all mercies temporal and spiritual come by him; and this lays a foundation for faith and hope: and he is gracious, as appears in the eternal choice of his people to salvation; in providing a Saviour and a ransom for them; in giving all grace and the blessings of it to them in his Son; in giving him for them, and all things to them with him; in justifying them by his righteousness; in pardoning their sins for his sake; in taking them into his family; in regenerating, calling, preserving, and saving them:

slow to anger, or "longsuffering" {d}; even to wicked men, to the vessels of wrath, to the old world, yea, to Jezebel, to whom he gave space to repent; which longsuffering being abused and despised, is an aggravation of condemnation: but rather here it intends God's longsuffering to his people, as before conversion, waiting till the time comes that he is gracious to them; and after conversion, notwithstanding their backslidings and revoltings; and this longsuffering is their salvation:

and plenteous in mercy; large and abundant in it, as appears by the various instances of it, and ways and methods in which he shows it; in election, in the covenant, in redemption, in regeneration, in pardon and eternal life; and by the abundance of it which he bestows on every one of his people; and by the vast numbers which do partake of it.

{d} Mypa Kra "longanimis", V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Psalms 103:9

Ver. 9. He will not always chide,.... He sometimes does chide his children, though never but when they have done a fault; always for their sins, in order to bring them to a sense and acknowledgment of them, and to depart from them; not for chiding sake, as some parents, to gratify their passion and ill humour, who correct for their own pleasure; but the Lord chides and corrects for the profit of his children, that they may be partakers of his holiness; he ever does it for their good, but he will not always chide, or continue it ever: or "he will not always contend" {e}, strive with them, litigate a point with them, hold out a controversy, not being able to stand before him; he knows their frame, their weakness, and frailty; see Isa 57:16,

neither will he keep his anger for ever; though he does with the wicked, yet not with his own people; that endures but for a moment, and is rather seeming than real; and what does appear is soon turned away; he does not retain it long, he is quickly pacified towards them for all they have done, and smiles again upon them, **Mic 7:18**.

{e} byry "contendet", Pagninus, Montanus; "litigat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "litigabit", Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 103:10

Ver. 10. He hath not dealt with us after our sins,.... God deals with his people, and deals with them roundly, for their sins, reproving them by his Spirit, and by his ministers, and by his chastising rod; but not after or according to them, or as they deserve; in this David acknowledges himself and other saints, with whom he joins, to be sinners, to have been guilty of sins, as none live without them; and that God had taken notice of them, and chastised them for them; but in great moderation, and not according to the due demerit of them:

nor rewarded us according to our iniquities; had he, if every transgression had received its just recompence of reward, they must have been sent to hell; the lake burning with fire and brimstone must have been their portion; the wages of sin is eternal death: the reason why God deals not with nor rewards his people according to the due desert of their sins is because Christ has bore them, and the chastisement of them, and made satisfaction to divine justice for them; see **Ezr 9:13**.

Psalms 103:11

Ver. 11. For as the heaven is high above the earth,.... Which is the greatest distance known, or can be conceived of; the space between the heaven and the earth is seemingly almost infinite; and nothing can more illustrate the mercy of God, which reaches to the heavens, and is in heaven; though this is but a faint representation of the largeness and abundance of it, and which indeed is boundless and infinite:

so great is his mercy towards them that fear him, or, his mercy hath prevailed over them that fear him {a}; as the waters of the flood prevailed upon the earth, and reached and overflowed the highest hills, **Ge 7:18**, so abundant and superabundant is the grace of God over them that "fear" him. Which character is given, not as being the cause of their obtaining mercy, but as descriptive of the persons that partake of it; on whom it has such an effect, as to cause them to fear the Lord, and his goodness; and is mentioned to prevent obstinate and presumptuous sinners expecting it, or trusting to it.

{a} le-rbg "praevalet super", Musculus; so Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 103:12

Ver. 12. As far as the east is from the west,.... Which Kimchi thinks is mentioned because it contains the length of the habitable world; and therefore it is not said as far as the north is from the south; since a man can go from east to west, but not from north to south, because of the extreme heat and cold. But this distance is not given with respect to those opposite parts of the earth, which scarcely exceed 12700 miles; but with respect to those opposite points in the heavens: and the meaning is, that as far as the eastern point of the heavens is from the western point of them; which more illustrates the matter in hand, or the blessing later mentioned, than the other.

So far hath he removed our transgressions from us; which removed men and angels from God, and set them at a distance from him; and which, if not removed, are such burdens as must sink men down into the lowest hell; and yet cannot be removed by anything that they can do; not by any sacrifices, services, or duties of any kind; nor in any other way, nor by any other person, than the Lord himself: and this is to be understood not of a removal of the being of sin out of his people, for that is not done in this life; rather of the removal of the guilt of sin, by a special application of pardoning grace and mercy; see 2Sa 12:13, but, best of all, of a removal of sins to Christ, and of them by his sacrifice and satisfaction: Christ engaged as a surety for his people; Jehovah the Father considered him as such; and therefore did not impute their sins to them, but to him; and when he sent him in the likeness of sinful flesh, he removed them from them, and laid them upon him; who voluntarily took them on himself, cheerfully bore them, and, by bearing them, removed the iniquity of the land in one day; and carried them away to the greatest distance, and even put them away for ever by the sacrifice of himself; and upon the satisfaction he gave to divine justice, the Lord removed them both from him and them; justified and acquitted him, and his people in him: and by this means so effectually, and so far, are their transgressions removed, that they shall never be seen any more, nor ever be imputed to them, nor be brought against them to their condemnation; in consequence of which, pardon is applied to them, and so sin is removed from their consciences, as before observed; see Le 16:21.

Psalms 103:13

Ver. 13. Like as a father pitieth his children,.... When in any affliction, disorder, or distress: the Lord stands in the relation of a Father to his people; they are his children by adopting grace, through the covenant of grace with them; by a sovereign act of his own will he puts them among the children, predestinates them to the adoption of children; and sends his Son to redeem them, that they might receive it, and his Spirit to bear witness to their spirits, that they are his children; and towards these he has all the affections of a tender parent.

So the Lord pitieth them that fear him; not with a servile fear, which is unsuitable to the relation of children; but with reverence and godly fear, with a fear of him and his goodness, and on account of that; a filial fear, such a reverence as children should have of a father: and this character belongs to all the saints of all nations, Jews or Gentiles; and seems to be here given an purpose to include all; and that the divine pity and compassion might not be thought to be restrained to any particular nation. And, as the fruit of his tender mercy, he looks upon his children in their lost estate, and brings them out of it; he succours them under all their temptations; he sympathizes with them under all their afflictions: being full of compassion, he forgives their iniquities; and in the most tender manner receives them when they have backslidden, and heals their backslidings. The Targum in the king of Spain's Bible is,

"so the Word of the Lord pities,"

&c. See **Heb 4:15**.

Psalms 103:14

Ver. 14. For he knoweth our frame,.... The outward frame of their bodies, what brittle ware, what earthen vessels, they be; he being the potter, they the clay, he knows what they are able to bear, and what not; that if he lays his hand too heavy, or strikes too hard, or repeats his strokes too often, they will fall in pieces: he knows the inward frame of their minds, the corruption of their nature, how prone they are to sin; and therefore does not expect perfect services from them: how impotent they are to that which is good; that they can do nothing of themselves; nor think a good thought, nor do a good action; and that their best frames are very uncertain ones; and that, though the spirit may be willing, the flesh is weak. The word used is the same that is rendered "imagination", **Ge 6:5**, and by which the Jews generally express the depravity and corruption of nature; and so the Targum here paraphrases it,

"for he knows our evil concupiscence, which causes us to sin;"

and to this sense Kimchi.

He remembereth that we are dust {b}; are of the dust originally, and return to it again at death; and into which men soon crumble when he lays his hand upon them; this he considers, see Ps 78:38. The Targum is,

"it is remembered before him, that we are of the dust:"

the Septuagint version makes a petition of it, "remember that we are dust"; and so the Arabic version. And we should remember it ourselves, and be humble before God; and wonder at his grace and goodness to us,
Ge 18:27.

{b} "Pulvis et umbra sumus", Horat. Carmin. l. 4. Ode 7. v. 16.

Psalms 103:15

Ver. 15. As for man, his days are as grass,.... He himself is like the grass which springs out of the earth; continues on it for a time, and then drops into it; the continuance of the grass is very short, it flourishes in the morning, is cut down at evening, and withers; see
Ps 90:5. As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth; which denotes the goodliness of man, and describes him in his best estate, as possessed of health, riches, honour, and all the gifts and endowments of nature; and yet, with all these, is only like a field flower, exposed to every wind, liable to be cropped by every hand, and to be trampled upon by the beasts of the field; and therefore flourishes not long: so very precarious and uncertain is man in his most flourishing circumstances; see Isa 40:6.

Psalms 103:16

Ver. 16. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone,.... A stormy wind, as the

Targum, which tears it up by its roots, or blows off the flower, and it is seen no more; or a blighting easterly wind, which, blowing on it, shrivels it up, and it dies at once; such an one as blasted the seven ears of corn in Pharaoh's dream, Ge 41:23 or any impetuous, drying, and noxious wind: and so when the east wind of adversity passes over a man, his riches, and honour, and estate, are presently gone; or some bodily distemper, which takes away health, strength, and beauty, and impairs the mind; and especially death, which removes at once into another world.

And the place thereof shall know it no more; the place where the flower grew shall know it no more; or it shall be seen no more in it: so man, when he dies, though he is not annihilated, he is somewhere; he is in another world, either of happiness or woe; yet he is not in this world, in the house and family, in the station and business he was; he is no longer known nor seen among men on earth; see **Job 7:10**.

Psalms 103:17

Ver. 17. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him,.... In opposition to the frailty of man, the stability and duration of the mercy of God is observed. This reaches from one eternity to another; it is from everlasting in the heart of God: it appeared in the choice of the vessels of mercy; in the covenant of grace, which is founded upon it, and filled with it; every blessing of which flows from it, and therefore are called the "sure mercies of David". And it appears in time in the regeneration of God's elect, which is according to his abundant mercy; in the forgiveness of their sins, which is according to the multitude of his tender mercies; and in their whole salvation, which is by that, and not by works of righteousness; and will endure for ever, for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ is unto eternal life. It reaches from the world past to the world to come, as the Targum; and it is so "upon them that fear" the Lord; not with a servile, but a filial fear; a fear of the Lord and his goodness; which only is consistent with the grace and mercy of God, and a sense of it: not that the fear of God is the cause of mercy or grace; but, on the contrary, grace and mercy are the cause of the fear of God; which is a blessing of the covenant of grace, and one of the first things which appear in conversion; but this properly describes the persons who openly and manifestly share in the grace or mercy of God, and to whom he manifests it yet more and more; nor have any reason to believe they are the objects of it, until the true fear of God is wrought in their hearts; and, besides, this character may be given to show that the mercy and grace of God are not limited to the Israelites only, but belong to such of all nations that fear the Lord.

And his righteousness unto children's children; not the essential righteousness of God, but rather his faithfulness in the performance of his promises, which he will not suffer to fail: the justifying righteousness of Christ is here meant; which is an everlasting one, and is unto and upon all them that believe, in all successive generations; which is meant by the phrase of "children's children", even the spiritual seed of Christ, the seed of the church, the seed of Israel; to all and each of which, in every age, the word of God comes, and his promises are fulfilled; and who are justified by and glory in Christ, their righteousness; and who are further described in the next verse, which shows that not the carnal seed of them that fear the Lord are meant.

Psalms 103:18

Ver. 18. To such as keep his covenant,.... The covenant of grace, which is peculiarly the Lord's covenant, as distinct from man's; and which he keeps himself, and is ever mindful of it. This he makes known to his people at conversion; his secret is with them, and he shows them his covenant; the blessings and promises of it; their interest in them, and in himself, as their covenant God: which they "observe" {c}, as the word here used signifies; and observing it, they lay hold upon it by faith, as belonging to them; and laying hold upon it, they "keep" it as their own, and keep it fast, and will not part with their interest in it for all the world.

And to those that remember his commandments to do them; some read them and hear them, but forget them, at least to do them: these are like a man that beholds his face in a glass, and forgets what manner of man he is; so James compares one that is a forgetful hearer, and not a doer of the word, **Jas 1:23**. The commandments of God are best remembered, so as to be done, when he puts his laws into the minds of men, and writes them in their hearts, and puts his Spirit within them, to cause them to walk in his statutes, and do them, Jer 31:34.

{c} yrmvl "observantes", Junius & Tremellius; so Piscator, Gejerus.

Psalms 103:19

Ver. 19. The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens,.... The heaven is his throne; here he sits enthroned in all the glory of his majesty, with all his attendants upon him, and courtiers about him. The Lord Christ is now in heaven; and where he will continue to the restitution of all things, and from whence his people expect him at the last day. Here he is on the same throne with his divine Father; which throne he has "prepared" or "established" {d}, so as it cannot be moved: when others are cast down, this shall stand; his throne is for ever and ever. The Targum in the king's Bible is,

"the Word of the Lord hath prepared, &c."

And his kingdom ruleth over all; over all created beings; over angels, good and bad; over men, righteous and wicked; over the greatest of men, the kings and princes of the earth. Good angels are subject to him devils tremble at him; saints acknowledge him as their King; the wicked he rules with a rod of iron; and kings reign by him, and are accountable to him; see Ps 22:28.

{d} Nykx "stabilivit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 103:20

Ver. 20. Bless the Lord, ye his angels,.... For their creation, being made by him; for their preservation, living, moving, and having their being in him; and for their happiness, in which they are continued, owing to their being chosen of God in Christ, and to their confirmation by Christ. These are always employed in the work of blessing and praising the Lord nor are they in the least backward to it, nor remiss it; nor does this address unto them suppose anything of this kind. The design of the psalmist is only to show how great and good the Lord is; that angels, the more excellent order of creatures, are under obligation to him, and are bound to praise him: and his further view is, to stir up himself and others to this work, from such a consideration, that such noble creatures are employed in the same, and who are further described:

that excel in strength; or, "are mighty in strength" {e}; they are called mighty angels, **2Th 1:7** an instance of the might and power of an angel see in 2Ki 19:35. These, not having sinned, have lost nothing of their original strength and power, and therefore must greatly excel fallen man; who is become a very weak creature, and unable to do the will and work of God, which angels are, as follows:

that do his commandments; or "his word" {f}; what he orders to be done: this they do readily and willingly, constantly, perfectly, and completely; see **Mt 6:10**.

Hearkening to the voice of his word; they stand before the Lord, waiting his orders; listening with great attention to what he says, and then readily execute it. Or, "at hearing the voice of his word"; that is, as soon as they hear the voice of his word, or hear him speaking {g}, immediately they apply themselves to the performance of it.

{e} xk yrbg "fortes robore", Pagninus, Montanus; "valentissimi robore", Junius & Tremellius. {f} wrbk "verbum ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {g} So Muis.

Psalms 103:21

Ver. 21. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts,.... Which some understand of the sun, moon, and stars, sometimes called the hosts of heaven; and who in their way bless and praise the Lord; see
Ps 148:2. Others, of the angels, as before; who are sometimes styled the heavenly host, **Lu 2:13**, and may be so called from their numbers, there being legions of them; and for their military employment, in guarding and protecting the saints, in encamping about them, and fighting for them. Or rather, since these seem to be distinguished from the angels before addressed, by them may be meant the church militant and her members; who are like an army with banners, consisting of volunteer soldiers under Christ, the Captain of their salvation; whose battles they fight against sin, Satan, and the world; and have a great deal of reason to bless and praise the Lord, for all the great and good things he has done to them, and for them.

Ye ministers of his that do his pleasure; so the angels are called, and they do the will of God; what is acceptable to him, and well pleasing in his sight, **Heb 1:7**. But rather, as distinct from them, the ministers of the Gospel are intended; a name which the preachers of it bear, both in the Old and in the New Testament, Isa 61:4, They are ministers of Christ's appointing, calling, qualifying, and sending; and who are employed in his service, in preaching him, his Gospel, and the truths of it; and who do his pleasure, that which is grateful to him, when they speak his word faithfully, declare his whole counsel, and keep back nothing that is profitable: and these have reason to bless the Lord for the gifts bestowed upon them, and for their success and usefulness; and indeed they bear a leading part in giving praise and glory to

God, **Re 4:9**.

Psalms 103:22

Ver. 22. Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion,.... Which some interpret of all his creatures, animate or inanimate, rational or irrational, throughout the whole world, which is all under his government; and who all of them, objectively, bless and praise the Lord, Ps 148:7. Or rather regenerate persons, his sons and daughters, the work of his hand, in each of the parts of the world where they live, are here called upon to bless the Lord; who, of his abundant mercy, hath begotten them again to a glorious inheritance: these are his workmanship in Christ; formed for himself, his service, and glory; and are under the highest obligations to show forth his praise.

Bless the Lord, O my soul: thus the psalmist ends the psalm as he begun it; not excusing himself by what he had done, nor by calling upon others to this service; knowing that this is constant employment for time and eternity; a work in which he delighted, and was desirous of being concerned in, now and for ever.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 104:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 104

This psalm, though without a title, was probably written by David, since it begins and ends as the former does, as Aben Ezra observes; and to him the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, ascribe it. The inscription of the Syriac version is,

"a psalm of David, when he went to worship before the ark of the Lord with the priests; and as to us, it teaches us confession and prayer; and intimates to us the constitution of the beginning of the creatures; and declares some things concerning the angels."

Some copies of the Septuagint version have it,

"a psalm of David concerning the constitution of the world;"

which indeed is the subject matter of it; for it treats of the creation of all things, of the heavens and the earth, and of all creatures in them; and of the providence of God in taking care of them. Christ is the divine Person addressed and described throughout the whole, as appears from the quotation of Ps 104:5 and the application of it to him in **Heb 1:7**.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,.... As for the blessings of grace and mercy expressed in the preceding psalm, so on account of the works of creation and providence, enumerated in this; in which Christ has an equal concern, as in the former.

O Lord my God, thou art very great; the Messiah, who is Jehovah our righteousness, Lord of all, truly God, and the God of his people; see Joh 20:28 and who is great, and very great, in his divine Person, being the great God, and our Saviour; great in all his works of creation, providence, and redemption; great in all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; a Saviour, and a great one; the great Shepherd of the Sheep; the Man, Jehovah's Fellow.

Thou art clothed with honour and majesty; being the brightness of his Father's glory, and having on him the glory of the only begotten of the Father, and a natural majesty in him as the Son of God and King of the whole universe; and, as Mediator, he has honour and majesty laid upon him by his Father, Ps 21:5, he has all the regalia and ensigns of royal majesty; he is on a throne, high and lifted up, even the same with his divine Father; he has a crown of glory on his head, he is crowned with glory and honour; he has a sceptre of righteousness in his hand, and is arrayed in robes of majesty; and, as thus situated, is to look upon like a jasper and sardine stone; or as if he was covered with sparkling gems and precious stones, **Re 4:2** and, having all power in heaven and earth, over angels and men, honour and glory given him by both.

Psalms 104:2

Ver. 2. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment,.... Referring, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi think, to the light, which was first created; and indeed this was commanded out of darkness by God the Word, or by the essential Word of God. Light is expressive of the nature of God himself, who is light, and in him is no darkness at all, and who dwells in light {h} inaccessible, and so may be said to be clothed with it; which is applicable to Christ as a divine Person, **1Jo 1:5**. and to whom this term "light" well agrees; Light being one of the names of the Messiah in the Old Testament, Ps 43:3, and is often given him in the New Testament, as the author of the light of nature, grace, and glory, **Joh 1:9**. He is now possessed of the light and glory of the heavenly state, of which his transfiguration on the mount was an emblem, when his face shone like the sun, and his raiment was as the light, Mt 17:2.

Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain; alluding to the firmament or expanse, which, being spread out like a curtain, divided between the waters and the waters, **Ge 1:6**. Heaven is represented as a tent stretched out, with curtains drawn around it, to hide the dazzling and unapproachable light in which the Lord dwells, Isa 40:22 and it is as a curtain or canopy stretched out and encompassing this earth; the stretching of it out belongs to God alone, and is a proof of the deity of Christ, to whom it is here and elsewhere ascribed, **Job 9:8**. Here Christ dwells invisible to us at present; he is received up into heaven, retained there, and from thence will descend at the last day; and in the mean while is within the curtains of heaven, unseen by us.

{h} "Pura in luce refulsit alma parens", Virgil. Aeneid. 2. "Et paulo post, pallas insedit, nimbo effulgens".

Psalms 104:3

Ver. 3. Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters,.... Or "his upper rooms" {i}; one story over another being built by him in the heavens, **Am 9:6**, the chambers where he resides; his courts, as the Targum; his palace and apartments, his presence chamber particularly, the floor and beams of them are the waters bound up in the thick clouds; or the region of the air, from whence the rain descends to water the hills, as in Ps 104:13.

Who maketh the clouds his chariot; to ride in; in these sometimes Jehovah rides to execute judgment on his enemies, Isa 19:1 and in these sometimes he appears in a way of grace and mercy to his people,
Ex 13:21, in these, as in chariots, Christ went up to heaven; and in these will he come a second time; and into these will the saints be caught up to meet the Lord in the air at his coming, **Ac 1:9**.

Who walketh upon the wings of the wind; see Ps 18:10 which is expressive of his swiftness in coming to help and assist his people in time of need; who helps, and that right early; and may very well be applied both to the first and second coming of Christ, who came leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills, when he first came; and, when he comes a second time, will be as a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices, **So 2:8**. The Targum is,

"upon the swift clouds, like the wings of an eagle;"

hence, perhaps, it is, the Heathens have a notion of Jupiter's being carried in a chariot through the air, when it thunders and lightens {k}.

{i} wytwyle, uperwa, Sept. "coenacula sua superiora", Gejerus; so Michaelis.
{k} Vid. Horat. Camin. l. 1. Ode 34. v. 5. "Namque diespiter", &c. Et. Ode 12. v. 58. "Tu gravi curru quaties Olympum".

Psalms 104:4

Ver. 4. Who maketh his angels spirits,.... The angels are spirits, or spiritual substances, yet created ones; and so differ from God, who is a spirit, and from the Holy Spirit of God, who are Creators and not creatures; angels are spirits without bodies, and so differ from the souls or spirits of men, and are immaterial, and so die not; these are made by Christ, by whom all things are made, **Col 1:16** and so he must be greater and more excellent than they; for which purpose the passage is quoted in **Heb 1:7**. Some render it, "who maketh his angels as the winds"; to which they may be compared for their invisibility, they being not to be seen, no more than the wind, unless when they assume an external form; and for their penetration through bodies in a very surprising manner; see Ac 12:6, and for their great force and power, being mighty angels, and said to excel in strength, Ps 103:20, and for their swiftness in obeying the divine commands; so the Targum,

"he maketh his messengers, or angels, swift as the wind."

His ministers a flaming fire; angels are ministers to God, stand before him, behold his face, wait for and listen to his orders, and execute them; they are ministers to Christ, they were so at his incarnation, in his infancy, when in the wilderness and in the garden, at his resurrection and ascension, and will attend him at his second coming; and these are ministers to his people, take the care of them, encamp about them, do many good offices to them in life, and at death carry their souls to Abraham's bosom: these are made a flaming fire, or "as" flaming fire, for their force and power; so the Targum,

"his ministers strong as flaming fire;"

and for their swiftness as before; and because of their burning love to God, Christ, and his people, and their flaming zeal for his cause and interest; hence thought by some to be called "seraphim": and because they are sometimes the executioners of God's wrath; and have sometimes appeared in fiery forms, as in forms of horses of fire and chariots of fire, and will descend with Christ in flaming fire at the last day; see **2Ki 2:11**. Some invert the words, both reading and sense, thus, "who maketh the winds his angels, or messengers, and flaming fire his ministers"; so Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi; we read of stormy wind fulfilling his word, Ps 148:8, he sends out his winds at his pleasure to do his errands; as to dry up the waters of the flood, to drive back the waters of the Red sea, and make dry land, to bring quails from thence, and scatter them about the camp of Israel, and in many other instances. So flaming fire was used as his ministers in burning Sodom and Gomorrah; and multitudes of the murmuring Israelites, and the captains with their fifties; but this sense is contrary to the order of the words, and the design of them, and to the apostle's sense of them, **Heb 1:7** which is confirmed by the Targum, Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions.

Psalms 104:5

Ver. 5. Who laid the foundations of the earth,.... Or "founded the earth upon its bases" {l}; which some take to be the waters, according to Ps 24:2, others the centre of gravity in it; others the mountains; others the circumambient air, by which it is poised; rather the almighty power of God, by which it subsists; this is the work of Christ the Almighty; see **Heb 1:3**.

That it should not be removed for ever: for though it may be shaken by earthquakes, yet not removed; nor will it be until the dissolution of all things, when it shall flee away before the face of the Judge, and a new earth shall succeed, Re 20:11.

{l} hynwkm le "super bases ejus", Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so the Tigurine version, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 104:6

Ver. 6. Thou coverest it with the deep as with a garment,.... This refers not to the waters of the flood, when the earth was covered with them, even the tops of the highest mountains; but to the huge mass of waters, the abyss and depth of them, which lay upon the earth and covered it as a garment, at its first creation, as the context and the scope of it show; and which deep was covered with darkness, at which time the earth was without form, and void, **Ge 1:2** an emblem of the corrupt state of man by nature, destitute of the image of God, void and empty of all that is good, having an huge mass of sin and corruption on him, and being darkness itself; though this depth does not separate the elect of God, in this state, from his love; nor these aboundings of sin hinder the superaboundings of the grace of God; nor the operations of his Spirit; nor the communication of light unto them; nor the forming and renewing them, so as to become a curious piece of workmanship; even as the state of the original earth did not hinder the moving of the Spirit upon the waters that covered it, to the bringing of it into a beautiful form and order.

The waters stood above the mountains; from whence we learn the mountains were from the beginning of the creation; since they were when the depths of water covered the unformed chaos; and which depths were so very great as to reach above the highest mountains; an emblem of the universal corruption of human nature; the highest, the greatest men that ever were, comparable to mountains, have been involved in it, as David, Paul, and others.

Psalms 104:7

Ver. 7. At thy rebuke they fled,.... The depths of water that covered the earth fled, went off apace, when Christ, the essential Word, gave the word of command that they should; saying, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so", **Ge 1:9** and this being called a "rebuke", suggests as if there was something amiss, irregular and disorderly, and to be amended; as if these waters were not in their proper place.

At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away; ran off with great precipitancy; just as a servant, when his master puts on a stern countenance, and speaks to him in a thundering, menacing manner, hastes away from him to do his will and work. This is an instance of the mighty power of Christ; and by the same power he removed the waters of the deluge; when they covered the earth, and the tops of the highest hills; and rebuked the Red sea, and it became dry land; and drove back the waters of Jordan for the Israelites to pass through; and who also rebuked the sea of Galilee when his disciples were in distress: and with equal ease can he and does he remove the depth of sin and darkness from his people at conversion; rebukes Satan, and delivers out of his temptations, when he comes in like a flood; and rebukes the waters of affliction when they threaten to overwhelm; who are his servants, and come when he bids them come, and go when he bids them go.

Psalms 104:8

Ver. 8. They go up by the mountains, they go down by the valleys,.... The Targum is,

"they ascend out of the deep to the mountains;"

that is, the waters, when they went off the earth at the divine orders, steered their course up the mountains, and then went down by the valleys to the place appointed for them; they went over hills and dales, nothing could stop them or retard their course till they came to their proper place; which is another instance of the almighty power of the Son of God. Some render the words, "the mountains ascended, the valleys descended {m}"; and then the meaning is, when the depth of waters were called off the earth, the mountains and valleys appeared, the one seemed to rise up and the other to go down; but the former reading seems best, and emblematically describes the state of God's people in this world, in their passage to their appointed place; who have sometimes mountains of difficulties to go over, and which seem insuperable, and yet they surmount them; sometimes they are upon the mount of heaven by contemplation, and have their hearts and affections above; they mount up with wings as eagles; sometimes they are upon the mount of communion with God, and by his favour their mount stands strong, and they think they shall never be moved; at other times they are down in the valleys, in a low estate and condition; in low frames of soul, in a low exercise of grace, and in the valley of the shadow of death, of afflictive providences in soul or body: and as the waters, thus steering their course under a divine direction, and by an almighty power, at length came unto the place which, the psalmist says, thou hast founded for them, meaning the seas; which the Lord founded and prepared for the reception of them; and which collection of waters in one place he called by that name, **Ge 1:10**. So the Lord's people, through a variety of circumstances, trials, and exercises, will be all brought safe to the place appointed for them, and prepared by Christ in his Father's house; where they will be swallowed up in the boundless ocean of everlasting love.

{m} So Pagninus, Musculus, Cocceius.

Psalms 104:9

Ver. 9. Thou hast set a bound, that they may not pass over,.... The Targum adds,

"to the rolling waves of the sea."

Set doors with bolts and bars, cliffs, rocks, and shores: and, what is more surprising, sand, which is penetrable, flexible, and moveable, is set as a perpetual bound to the raging ocean and its waves, which they cannot pass over: see Job 38:8. So the Lord has set a bound to the proud waters of afflictions, and says, Thus far shall ye go, and no farther; and to the life of man, which he cannot exceed,
Job 14:5. But he has given man a law, as a rule to walk by, as the boundary of his conversation, and this he transgresses; in which he is less tractable than the raging sea and its waves. That they turn not again to cover the earth; as they did when it was first made, Ps 104:6 that is, not without the divine leave and power; for they did turn again and cover the earth, at the time of the flood; but never shall more. Some think there is no need to make this exception; since this was written after the flood, and when God had swore that the waters should no more go over the earth, Isa 54:9.

Psalms 104:10

Ver. 10. He sendeth the springs into the valleys,.... The Targum is,

"who sendeth fountains into the rivers."

Either from the waters of the sea, which being drained through the sand, become sweet and drinkable; or from the hills and mountains. This is an instance of divine goodness, that having removed the waters from the earth, and shut them up in the sea, and which, through the saltness of them, not being proper drink for men and beasts, he has been pleased to form and open springs, fountains, wells, and rivers of fresh water in the valleys, for the supply of both. Though this is not to be compared with the wells of salvation, and springs and fountains of grace, which he has opened for his chosen people. God himself is a spring or fountain of living water; his love is a river, whose streams delight the city of God; his covenant a source and spring of all blessings and promises. Christ is the fountain of gardens; his fulness is a supply for all his people: the

Spirit of God and his grace are a well of living water, springing up unto eternal life. The word and ordinances are the springs in Zion,

which run among the hills, the several congregated churches, to the watering and refreshing of them; just as springs and rivers of water run in the dales and valleys among the hills, by which they are bounded.

Psalms 104:11

Ver. 11. They give drink to every beast of the field,.... These fountains, springs, and rivers, afford water for all the beasts of the field; who are therefore said to honour and praise the Lord on account of it, Isa 43:19.

The wild asses quench their thirst; or "break" {n} it. Those creatures that live in dry and desert places, and are themselves dry and thirsty; and though so stupid as they be, yet provision of water is made for them, and they are directed where to seek for it, and find it; see Job 39:5. And if God takes care of the beasts of the field, even the most wild and stupid, will he not take care of his own people? He will, and does. He opens rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; he gives waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to his people, his chosen, Isa 41:18.

{n} wrbvy "frangent", Pagninus, Montanus; "frangunt", Vatablus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 104:12

Ver. 12. By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation,.... Another use of the springs, fountains, and rivers of water; by the sides and on the shores of these, some birds delight to be, and on trees that grow here do they build their nests; and here, having wetted their throats, they sit, and chirp, and sing: to doves, by rivers of water, is the allusion in **So 5:12**.

Which sing among the branches; of trees that grow by the sides of fountains and rivers; see Eze 17:23. To such birds may saints be compared; being, like them, weak, defenceless, and timorous; liable to be taken in snares, and sometimes wonderfully delivered; as well as given to wanderings and strayings: and to fowls of the heaven, being heaven born souls, and partakers of the heavenly calling. These have their habitation by the fountain of Jacob, by the river of divine love, beside the still waters of the sanctuary; where they sing the songs of Zion, the songs of electing, redeeming, and calling grace.

Psalms 104:13

Ver. 13. He watereth the hills from his chambers,.... The house of his superior treasures, as the Targum. The airy regions, Ps 104:3 with the clouds of heaven, by the rain which they drop down upon them; the usefulness of which blessings of nature is largely described in this and some following verses. "The hills", which are naturally dry and barren, and receive but little advantage from the springs, fountains, and rivers below, are supplied with water from above; and become fruitful, bear herbage, and are clothed with flocks. This seems to refer to the first rain that was upon the earth, **Ge 2:5** and which favour is continued to all lands, excepting some part of the land of Egypt, and in all ages since; see Ps 65:9. So ministers of the word, who are set in the first place, and are eminent in the church of God, and who water others, are watered themselves with the gifts and graces of the Spirit descending from above, as the apostles were, in an extraordinary manner, at the day of Pentecost; and as others in a more ordinary manner daily are. So likewise the churches of Christ, comparable to hills and mountains for firmness and visibility, and the several members thereof, are watered with the dews of divine favour, with the rain of the divine word; which comes down from heaven as the rain does, and drops and distils like that; and with the grace of the divine Spirit, whereby their souls become as a watered garden, whose springs fail not.

The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works; with the fruits which grow out of it by means of rain, as are after mentioned; herbs, grass, and trees, so Aben Ezra: or with the influences of the heavens, which are the work of God's hands, and by which the earth is made fruitful; or more particularly with the virtue and efficacy of the rain, so Kimchi; which is the Lord's peculiar work, Jer 14:22. This the earth drinking in, is as satisfied with as a thirsty man is with drinking a draught of water; see De 11:11. So the people of God, comparable to the good earth that drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, are satisfied with the love of God, with the blessings of his grace, with the doctrines of his Gospel, and with the ordinances of his house.

Psalms 104:14

Ver. 14. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,.... By means of rain falling upon the tender herb, and upon the mown grass, whereby provision of food is made for those creatures that live upon grass.

And herb for the service of man: some herbs being for physic for him, and others for food, and all more or less for his use. Herbs were the original food of man, **Ge 1:29** and still a dinner of herbs, where love is, is better than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith, Pr 15:17. Some render it, "and herb at the tillage of man" {o}: grass grows of itself for the use of the cattle; but the herb, as wheat and the like, which is for the use of man, is caused to grow when man has taken some pains with the earth, and has tilled and manured it: but the former sense seems best.

That he may bring forth food out of the earth; either that man may do it by his tillage; or rather that the Lord may do it, by sending rain, and causing the grass and herbs to grow. However, man's food, as well as the food of beasts, comes out of the earth, as he himself does, and to which he must return.

{o} tdbel "ad culturam", Cocceius, some in Vatablus, and Michaelis; so Gussetius, p. 572.

Psalms 104:15

Ver. 15. And wine that maketh glad the heart of man,.... That is, by means of rain watering the earth, vines are caused to grow out of it; which produce wine, that has such a virtue in it, as to cheer the heart of man, even of a miserable, distressed, and afflicted man, as the word {p} is supposed to signify, **Jud 9:13**. Of this nature are (and therefore are compared to wine, or expressed by it) the love of God and Christ; the blessings of grace, the doctrines of the Gospel, the ordinances of it; particularly that of the Lord's supper, and even the joys of heaven.

And oil to make his face to shine: or, "to make his face shine more than oil" {q}; and so it continues the account of the virtue of wine, which not only cheers the heart, but makes the countenance brisk and lively, and even shine again: but, according to our version, and others, this is a distinct effect of the rain, causing olive trees to grow out of the earth, productive of oil; which being eaten, fattens, and so makes the face to shine; as it also does by anointing with it, which was much in use for that purpose in the eastern countries, as well as for cheering and refreshing; see **Ru 3:3**. Pliny {r} says, oil purifies or clears; and particularly of oil of almonds, he says, that it makes clean, makes bodies soft, smooths the skin, procures gracefulness; and, with honey, takes spots or specks out of the face. Kimchi makes mention of another use of oil, in lighting lamps; by which the face of man is enlightened, or light is given him. So the Targum,

"to enlighten the face with oil."

To this the grace of the Spirit is often compared in Scripture, with which both Christ and his members are said to be anointed, Ac 10:38. This not only cheers and refreshes them, and is therefore called the oil of joy and gladness, Ps 45:7, but beautifies and adorns them, and even makes them fat and flourishing, and so their faces to shine; as well as causes their lamps of profession to burn clearly, and the light of their good works to shine before men to the glory of God.

And bread which strengthens man's heart: the earth being watered with rain, causes the wheat sown in it to grow up; of which bread is made for the support of man's life, and is the chief sustenance of it; and is therefore commonly called "the staff of life", and, by the prophet, "the whole stay of bread", **Isa 3:1**, by which human nature is invigorated, and the strength of man is kept up and increased; for the phrase, see Ge 18:5. Of this nature are the provisions of God's house, which go by the same name, the word and ordinances; and especially Christ Jesus himself, the true and living bread; by which the Christian's spiritual life is supported and maintained, and he is comforted and refreshed, and strengthened for every good work.

{p} vwna "mortalis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "sorry man", Ainsworth. {q} Nmvm "prae oleo", Vatablus, Gejerus; "magis quam oleum", Piscator. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 23. c. 4.

Psalms 104:16

Ver. 16. The trees of the Lord are full of sap,.... Or "satiated" {s}; that is, with rain; and through it are filled with fruits. This is to be understood not only of the tallest and largest trees; which are therefore called the trees of the Lord, as high mountains are called the mountains of the Lord, Ps 36:6 and so other things excellent in their kind: but of trees of the field and forest; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; which are not planted and cultivated by man, as trees in gardens and orchards are; but are more especially under the care and cultivation of the Lord himself, and may design such as were produced by him at the creation.

The cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted; a mountain on the borders of Judea, so called from its whiteness, through the snow on it, as the Alps are; and where grew great quantities of large and spreading cedars, which were not of man's, but of the Lord's planting: these were watered and made to grow with the rain of heaven. Rauwolff {t}, who was upon this mountain in 1574, says,

"though this hill in former ages has been quite covered over with cedars, yet they are so decreased, that I could tell, says he, no more but twenty four, that stood round about in a circle; and two others, the branches whereof are quite decayed with age."

But Thevenot {u}, who has been there since, affirms there are no more nor less than twenty three, great and small; of the largeness, thickness, and height of these trees, See Gill on "Isa 37:24". Saints are often compared to trees, which are planted by the Lord in Christ, and in his churches; and particularly to cedars, for their height, strength, and durableness; see Ps 92:13, and these, through the grace of God, are full of sap and spiritual life, and are filled with the fruits of righteousness, and are often represented as planted and growing by rivers of water; see Nu 24:6.

{s} webvy "satiantur", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; so Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis. {t} Travels, par. 2. ch. 13. p. 191. {u} Travels, par. 1. B. 2. ch. 60. p. 224.

Psalms 104:17

Ver. 17. Where the birds make their nests,.... As they do in large, tall, spreading trees: not any particular "birds", as the sparrow, to which the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and Apollinarius, restrain it: but birds in general are intended; and especially such as build in large trees, as before and after mentioned. Jarchi applies it to the Israelites dwelling among the trees in the garden of Eden: and it may be much better applied to the saints dwelling in the churches, among the trees of righteousness, under the shadow of Gospel ordinances; see Eze 17:23.

As for the stork, the fir trees are her house; where she makes her nest, and

brings up her young. Kimchi says it is a large bird, and builds its nest in high trees, as in cedars; but the bird which goes by the name of "pelargus" with the Greeks, and of "ciconia" with the Latins, and of "stork" with us, for the most part builds its nest on the tops of towers and temples {w}, and the roofs of high houses, and seldom in trees; and when it does, it is in such that are not far from the habitations of men, which it loves to be near: perhaps the reason of its not building on houses in Palestine might be because their roofs were flat and frequented, and therefore built on high trees there, as fir trees and cedars. And Olympiodorus {x} says it does not lay its eggs on the ground, but on high trees; and Michaelis on the text attests, that he himself had seen, in many places in Germany, storks nests on very high and dry oaks. It has its name in Hebrew from a word {y} which signifies "holy", "merciful", and "beneficent"; because of the great care which it takes of its dam when grown old {z}: and a like behaviour among men is called piety by the apostle, **1Ti 5:4**. But in the Chaldee tongue, and so in the Targum, it has its name from its whiteness; for though its wings are black, the feathers of its body are white: and so Virgil {a} describes it as a white bird, and as an enemy to serpents; for which reason the Thessalians forbad the killing them, on pain of banishment {b}. It was an unclean bird, according to the ceremonial law,
Le 11:19. Good men are called by the same name, holy and beneficent; and though they are unclean by nature, yet Christ, the green fir tree, Ho 14:8 is the house of their habitation; in him they dwell by faith, who receives sinners, and eats with them,
Lu 15:2. It is usual with the Latin poets to call the nests of birds their houses {c}.

{w} Vid. Turnebi Adversar. l. 8. c. 18. & Praetorii Disp. Histor. Physic. de Crotalistria, c. 6. Heldelin. in ibid. c. 11. {x} Apud Bachart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 29. col. 330. {y} hdyox a dox Buxtorf. Lexic. fol. 247. {z} Solinus, c. 53. Aelian. de Animal. l. 3. c. 23. {a} "Candida venit avis longis invisa colubris", Georgic. l. 2. {b} Plutarch. de Iside et Osir. prope finem. {c} "Frondiferasque domos avium", Lucret. l. 1. v. 19. "Antiquasque domos avium", Virgil. Georgic. l. 2. v. 209.

Psalms 104:18

Ver. 18. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats,.... Who have their name in Hebrew {d} from their climbing and ascending them. What we commonly call "a wild goose chase" should be expressed "a wild goat's chase"; for not geese, but goats, are chased; and when they are, they flee to the hills for refuge. Hence they are sometimes called the wild goats of the rocks, Job 39:1, and sometimes the rocks are called from them the rocks of wild goats, 1Sa 24:2. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it "for the harts", or deer; and so Apollinarius: but the word is not used of them.

And the rocks for the conies; who being a feeble folk, make their houses in them, to protect them from creatures of superior power and strength, Pr 30:26. Some interpret it of the "hedgehog", as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions: others of "hares", as the Syriac and Arabic, and so Apollinarius; and others of "mountain mice". Now what the hills and rocks are to the above creatures, a refuge and a habitation for them, that Christ is to those that fly to him for refuge; though weak and feeble, sinful and unworthy, he is their rock, the rock of their refuge, their strong tower, and place of defence.

{d} Myley ab hle Buxtorf. Lexic. fol. 322.

Psalms 104:19

Ver. 19. He appointeth the moon for seasons,.... Or, "he made" {e}; for the moon is the work of his hands, **Ps 8:3** as is likewise the sun. From the rain the psalmist passes to the luminaries; for this reason, as Aben Ezra thinks, because they are the cause of rain: the moon is taken notice of in the first place, because, as Kimchi observes, the night was before the day; and in the night of the fourth day were the sun, moon, and stars; but the sun rose in the morning. The moon was made for seasons as well as the sun, **Ge 1:16** or that times might be numbered by it, as the Targum, both months and years; one of its courses and revolutions making a month, and twelve of these a year; which lunar years were in use among some nations: as also it is supposed to have an influence on the ebbing and flowing of the tides; and served to regulate the festivals of the Jews, their set appointed times, as the word signifies, and is used of them, and which were governed by it. And this Jarchi takes to be the sense of the passage; though Aben Ezra more truly remarks, that it purely belongs to the work of creation, and the original design and use of this luminary. It was an emblem of the ceremonial law; which consisted, among other things, in the observation of new moons; which gave some light in the time of Jewish darkness, though but a dim one, in comparison of the Gospel; had its imperfections, was changeable, waxed old, and vanished away; and which the church is said to have under her feet, being abolished, Re 12:1. Though some think the world is meant, which is changeable and fading. It was also an emblem of the church, **So 6:10** which receives her light from Christ, the sun of righteousness; has its different phases and appearances; sometimes being in prosperity, and sometimes in adversity; has its spots and imperfections, and yet beautiful, through the grace of God and righteousness of Christ.

The sun knoweth his going down; not the going down of the moon, which is the sense of some, according to Kimchi; but his own going down; and so he knows his rising, to which this is opposed, Ps 50:1 and every revolution, diurnal or annual, he makes; and which he constantly and punctually observes, as if he was a creature endued with reason and understanding; see Ps 19:5. He knows the time of his setting, as the Targum, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and also the place where he is to set, at the different seasons of the year, and indeed every day. This luminary is an emblem of Christ, the sun of righteousness, Ps 84:11 the fountain of all light; the light of nature, grace, and glory; and of all spiritual life and heat, as well as fruitfulness. He arose at his incarnation, and set at his death, the time of both which he full well knew; and he has his risings and settings, with respect to the manifestation of himself to his people, or hiding himself from them, which depend on his pleasure.

{e} hve "fecit", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 104:20

Ver. 20. Thou makest darkness, and it is night,.... The darkness was before the light, and the night before the day, **Ge 1:2** and now the darkness and night are made by the setting of the sun before mentioned; see Isa 45:7.

Wherein all the beasts of the field do creep forth; out of their dens, and range about for their prey, as the evening wolves and others: and these are not the only creatures that choose the night and darkness; all wicked men do the same; whose deeds are evil, and do not care to come to the light, lest they should be reproved; particularly drunkards, adulterers, thieves, and murderers, **Joh 3:20**. So the Scribes and Pharisees, when they consulted to take away the life of Christ, and agreed with Judas to betray him, did it in the night: so false teachers, who are wolves in sheep's clothing, when it is a night of darkness with the church, take the advantage of it, to creep about and spread their pernicious doctrines; see **2Ti 3:6**.

Psalms 104:21

Ver. 21. The young lions roar after their prey,.... Or, "at the prey" {f}; for, according to the Scriptures, it seems as if their time of roaring was when they have got their prey, and are tearing it and feeding on it, and not till then, **Am 3:4** though naturalists tell us, that, when they are pinched with hunger, they make such a hideous roaring, as quite stupefies, as well as terrifies, other creatures; that they have no power to stir, till they come up to them, and become their prey, who otherwise could outrun them; for the lion is neither a swift creature, nor of good scent: wherefore, according to credible accounts, a creature called a "jackal", little bigger than a fox, hunts its prey for it, and secures it till it comes up to it. Young lions are rather mentioned, because their appetite is keenest, and their voice loudest and strongest. This creature is an emblem of Satan, who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, **1Pe 5:8**.

And seek their meat from God; as all creatures in their way do; as the ravens by crying, so the young lions by roaring; neither one nor other can provide for themselves, but God, in his providence, supplies them all with food; see Ps 104:27. And should not we seek and ask our meat of God too, even both temporal and spiritual? And may we not expect it from him? Does he feed the ravens, and also the young lions, and will he not take care of his own people, and feed them with food convenient for them, and especially when they ask it of him?
Ps 34:10.

{f} Prjl "ad praedam", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 104:22

Ver. 22. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together,.... Having gone some one way, some another, seeking their prey; but upon the sun's rising gather together in order to return from whence they came, abhorring the light of the sun, as some creatures do, and fearing being hunted and taken by men, the fear of whom is still in some measure upon the beasts of the field, **Ge 9:2**. So wicked men do not care for the light of the day, nor do false teachers choose to come to the light of the word; these owls and bats, these, as Tertullian calls them; and Satan himself chooses to set upon persons when they are in darkness, and in melancholy and disconsolate frames; and is afraid of believers, when they put on the armour of light, especially the shield of faith, and resist him with it, then he flees from them.

And lay them down in their dens; for rest and safety, and to feed themselves and young ones with the ravin they bring with them; see **So 4:8**.

Psalms 104:23

Ver. 23. Man goeth forth to his work,.... Having taken sleep in the night, being comfortably refreshed, and his strength recruited; he rises with the rising sun, and goes forth cheerfully and with intrepidity to his work in the field, or elsewhere, the beasts being fled and gone.

And to his labour until the evening; to till the ground, and do other services and labour, either of the head or hand; for man is born and designed for labour, and not for sloth and idleness: in his innocent state he was set to dress the garden and keep it; and, after the fall, his doom was to get his bread by the sweat of his brow; and he is to work while the day lasts, till the evening and night come on, when he betakes himself to sleep and rest again. So the believer, though the work of redemption and salvation is wrought for him, and the work of grace is wrought in him, each by another hand; yet he has work enough to do, which he is created for, and under obligation to perform; and in which he is to continue steadfast and immovable, while the day of life lasts, till the night of death comes, and no man can work; and then he rests from his labours, and his works follow him.

Psalms 104:24

Ver. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works,.... The psalmist having taken notice of many of the works of creation, stops and wonders at the number of them; though he had not gone through them all, and there were even things innumerable behind; see Ps 104:25, he admires the sum of them, how great it was; and not only the quantity but the quality of them; for so the words may be rendered, "how great are thy works" {g}, as for number, so for nature; in which there is such an amazing display of the greatness and power of God, and particularly of his wisdom, as is observed in the next clause.

In wisdom hast thou made them all not only one thing, as the heavens, Ps 136:5, but everything is wisely contrived and made; there is a most glorious display of the wisdom of God in the most minute thing his hands have made;

he has made everything beautiful in its season: a skilful artificer, when he has finished his work and looks it over again, often finds some fault or another in it: but when the Lord had finished his works of creation, and looked over them, he saw that all was good; infinite wisdom itself could find no blemish in them: what weak, foolish, stupid creatures must they be that pretend to charge any of the works of God with folly, or want of wisdom? Some by "wisdom" here understand Christ himself, the wisdom of God; and not amiss, since without him was not anything made; see **Pr 3:19**.

The earth is full of thy riches: or possessions {h}; for as the Lord is the maker, he is the proprietor and the possessor of heaven and earth, and all that is in them, and can and does dispose thereof as seems good in his sight; and whatever of the riches and good things of the earth men may have, they are only stewards, the Lord is the rightful owner and possessor of them; see Ge 14:19, with which compare Ps 33:5,
See Gill on "Ps 33:5".

{g} wbr hm "quam multa ac magna", Gejerus. {h} Knynp "possessione tua", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus; "tuis possessionibus", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Piscator, Michaelis.

Psalms 104:25

Ver. 25. So is this great and wide sea,.... One of the great and manifold works of God, made in his wisdom, and full of his riches and possessions, as the earth is; this is that collection of waters which God called seas, **Ge 1:10** and is, as Kimchi observes, great in length, and wide and spacious in breadth; or "broad of hands" {i}, as in the original; or spacious in borders, as the Targum; it washing the several parts of the continent, and encompassing and embracing the whole earth with both arms as it were. Nor is it unusual with other writers to call the sea the great sea {k}, and to speak of an arm or arms of the sea {l}, as we do. Isidore says {m}, the great sea is that which flows out of the ocean from the west, and goes to the south, and then to the north, called so in comparison of other seas that are less, and is the Mediterranean sea, This is an emblem of the world, which may be compared to the sea for the multitude of nations and people in it, as numerous as the waves of the sea; for the temper of the inhabitants of it, being like the troubled sea, restless and uneasy, casting up the mire of dirt and sin; and for the instability of it, and the fluctuating state and condition of all things in it.

Wherein are things creeping innumerable; so that it seems there are reptiles in the water as well as on land; and indeed every creature without feet, and that goes upon its belly, in the element where it is, whether earth or water, is a creeping thing; of these swimming or creeping things the number is exceeding great, especially of the latter sort; fishes increasing much more than the beasts of the earth. Their species are innumerable; so their kinds or sorts are reckoned up by some one hundred and forty four {n}, by others one hundred and fifty three {o}, and by others one hundred and seventy six {p}; the Malabarians reckon, up 900,000 fishes, and 1,100,000 creeping things {q}. These are an emblem of the common people of the world, which are innumerable; see **Hab 1:14**.

Both small and great beasts; for there are creatures in the seas which answer to those on the dry land, both of the lesser and greater sort, as sea lions, sea horses, sea cows, sea hogs, &c. these may represent the rulers and governors of the world, supreme and subordinate; it is no unusual thing for great monarchies, and persons of great power and authority, to be signified by beasts rising out of the sea, **Da 7:3**.

{i} Mydy bxr "latum manibus", Montanus; "spatiosum manibus", V. L. "amplum manibus", Vatablus. {k} Virgil. Aeneid. 5. Lucretius, l. 6. {l} "Veluti par divexum in mare brachium transitum tentaturus", Liv. Hist. l. 44. c. 35. "Nec brachia longos" &c. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 1. v. 13, 14. {m} Origin. l. 13. c. 16. {n} Origin. l. 12. c. 6. {o} Oppianus in Halienticis. Vid. Hieron. in Ezek. 47. fol. 260. {p} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 32. c. 11. {q} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 4. p. 963.

Psalms 104:26

Ver. 26. There go the ships,.... From place to place, from one end of the world to the other, for the sake of merchandise {r}; this is one of the four things that were too wonderful for Solomon, "the way of a ship in the midst of the sea", Pr 30:19 though navigation was improved in his times indeed not so much as it is now. The original of ships was doubtless Noah's ark, so that they owe their first draught to God himself. They seem to be an emblem of the church and people of God passing through the sea of this world to the haven of eternal rest. The ship is but a small vessel, and takes up but a small room in comparison of the vast ocean on which it is; and so the church of Christ is but small, a little city, and few men in it, a little flock, a small remnant: a ship is unfixed and unsettled, sometimes here and sometimes there; so the church of

Christ is sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; nor is this world the rest of God's people, nor have they any continuing city here; for, as a ship is tossed with tempests, so are they with the waves of afflictions, the temptations of Satan, and the persecutions of men; and sometimes, like Paul, and the mariners with him, have no sight of sun and stars for many days, of the sun of righteousness, or of the stars, the ministers of the word; when sailing is dangerous it bodes perilous times, through the impure lives of professors, and impious doctrines of false teachers, whereby many suffer shipwreck; yet all the Lord's people get safe ashore, having a good pilot, Christ, to conduct them; and the good anchor of hope, sure and steadfast.

There is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein; the Targum adds,

"for the righteous at the feast of the house of his habitation."

Of this creature there is an account in Job 41:1. Some take it to be the crocodile, which is both a sea and river fish; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, and so Apollinarius, call it the dragon; it is more generally thought to be the whale; Aben Ezra says it is the name of every great fish; it is a sportive creature, tumbles about in the great sea, and plays with the waters of it, which it tosses up in great quantities; and with the fishes of the sea, which it devours at pleasure; and laughs at the shaking of the spear; and to which mariners throw out their empty casks to play with, when near them, and they in danger by it; see Job 41:5. This creature is generally reckoned by the ancients a figure of Satan, it being king over all the children of pride, Job 41:34 as he is the prince of the power of the air, and god of this world; who has been playing his tricks in it from the beginning of it, not only deceiving our first parents, but all the nations of the world; nor are saints ignorant of his devices. It sometimes describes a tyrannical prince, as the kings of Babylon and of Egypt, Isa 27:1 and is a true picture of antichrist, the beast which rose out of the sea; nor is there any like him on earth; see Re 13:1

{r} So Homer calls ships nhav pontuporouv, Iliad. 3. v. 46.

Psalms 104:27

Ver. 27. These wait all upon thee,.... Or "hope in thee" {s}; not only the fishes of the sea, but the beasts of the field; for to them the psalmist returns, as Aben Ezra observes; to whom hope and expectation of their food and waiting for it at the hands of God, are ascribed; the allusion seems to be to tame creatures, who come at their certain times and wait on them that have been used to give them their food; and it may instruct us to wait on the Lord, as for our daily bread, so for our spiritual food, in prayer, and in public ordinances, where and from whom we may hope and expect to have it.

That thou mayest give them their meat in due season; or "in his time" {t}; everyone in its own time, which is natural to them, and they have been used to; at which time the Lord gives it to them and they take it; it would be well if men would do so likewise, eat and drink in proper and due time, Ec 10:17. Christ speaks a word in season to weary souls; his ministers give to everyone their portion of meat in due season; and a word spoken in due season, how good and sweet is it? **Isa 1:4**

{s} Nwrbvy "sperant", Pagninus, Cocceius, Michaelis; "sperabunt", Montanus.
{t} wteb "in tempore suo", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 104:28

Ver. 28. That thou givest them they gather,.... What God bestows upon them as a bounty of Providence they take and make use of, and in their way thankfully, and without repining; some gather it up for immediate use and service, and not into barns; others gather it up for time to come, as the ant, **Mt 6:26**. Kimchi understands this of a time of scarcity, when they gather here a little and there a little; as he does the following clause of a time of plenty.

Thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good; God, in whose hand all things are, and from whence all things come, opens his hand of providence, and liberally and bountifully gives, as this phrase signifies, De 15:11 and all his creatures are filled with his good things to their satisfaction: and thus the spiritual food which he gives his people, they gather it by the hand of faith, as the Israelites gathered the manna in the wilderness every morning, and according to their eating, what was sufficient for them; and to whom he gives liberally, even all things richly to enjoy; all things pertaining to life and godliness; Christ, and all things along with him; abundance of grace here, and glory hereafter; and they are satisfied with his good things as with marrow and fatness.

Psalms 104:29

Ver. 29. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled,.... God may be said to hide his face from the creatures when he withholds their food from them, when there is a scarcity of provisions, a famine in the land; when there is no pasture for them to feed on, nor brooks of water to drink of; then are they troubled or perplexed, as in **Joe 1:18** and know not what to do, nor where to go for help, but faint, and sink, and die. So in a spiritual sense when God hides his face from his people, removes his Shechinah, or divine Majesty and Presence, as the Targum here; and withdraws the influences of his grace and Spirit; or when they have no food for their souls, or what they have is not blessed, then are they troubled, Ps 30:7.

Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust; their original dust, from whence they sprung, as man himself does; the breath of all is from the Lord; he gives it to his creatures, and when he pleases he takes it away; and when he does, they die and become dust again.

Psalms 104:30

Ver. 30. Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created,.... Thy Holy Spirit, as the Targum, who was at first concerned in the creation of all things, the heavens and the earth, and man upon it, **Ge 1:2**
Job 26:13 which may be alluded to here; though it seems chiefly to intend the generation and production of creatures in the room of those that die off; that so their species may be preserved, and there may be a constant succession of them, as there is in all ages, **Ec 1:4**.

And thou renewest the face of the earth; by a new set of creatures of all kinds being brought upon it to fill it. As there is also a daily renewing it every morning by the rising sun, giving fresh life and vigour to all created beings; and a yearly one every spring, when the face of all nature is renewed and revived. Jarchi and Arama understand it of the resurrection of the dead; this sense Kimchi mentions as an article of their faith, but not as the sense of the text. It may be applied to the renewing work of the Spirit of God in the souls of men, by whom they are made new, and by whom they are daily renewed in the Spirit of their minds. And there are particular seasons in which God sends forth his Spirit and renews the face of things in the world, and in his churches; upon the effusion of his Spirit in the first times of the Gospels, there was a new face of things, not only in the land of Judea, but throughout the whole Gentile world, where old things passed away, and all things became new; as in the latter day, when the Spirit shall be poured forth from on high, there will be a renewing of the face of the earth again; it will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; the kingdoms of it will become Christ's; new heavens and a new earth will be created, and Jerusalem will be made a rejoicing, and her people a joy, Isa 65:17.

Psalms 104:31

Ver. 31. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever,.... The glory which arises from the works of his hands, which is due unto him, and shall be given him; this is opposed to the perishing and fading glory of all created beings: and as Christ is the person spoken of throughout the whole psalm, this may be understood of his glory as the only begotten of the Father; and which is equal to his Father's glory, and is the same yesterday, today, and for ever; and of the glory of his office as Mediator: and of all his works of nature and grace, of creation and redemption: nor will there be creatures wanting, angels and men to glorify his name, to all eternity. The Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions render it as a prayer, "let the glory of the Lord be for ever"; or, let him be for ever glorified, on account of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands; as he will and ought to be.

The Lord shall rejoice in his works; being well pleased with them, as he was with the works of creation; they appearing, on a survey of them, to be all very good, **Ge 1:31** so he rejoices in the sustaining and preservation of them; and the rather when he is glorified in them. And this should be a reason why glory should be given him, that he may rejoice in his works, and not be grieved, as he is sometimes said to be and to repent of his making them, **Ge 6:6**. Christ rejoices in the work of redemption, which he undertook and performed with pleasure; he rejoiced at the finishing it, and he rejoices in the application of it to his people and will rejoice in their complete enjoyment of it; they being the objects of his love, in whom he has an interest; whom he engaged for, are the purchase of his blood, and for whom he prays and intercedes; he rejoices in them as the work of his hands now; in their persons, who are his "hephzibah", in whom he delights; "his beulah", to whom he is married: he rejoices in his own grace wrought in them, and in the exercise of it on him; he rejoices over them to do them good, and never ceases doing good to them and for them.

Psalms 104:32

Ver. 32. He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth,.... As Sinai did when he descended on it, Ps 68:8, to which the allusion seems to be; and a look from him, a severe one, a frowning one, will make the inhabitants of the earth to tremble; a providential look, sending famine, pestilence or the sword among them. A displeased look will make the hearts of his own children tremble, as no doubt Peter's did, when the Lord looked upon him, and he remembered his word; and if a look, much more a word, an awful word, as his voice in the law, pronouncing such cursed as keep it not; and especially the tremendous sentence he will pronounce on the wicked at the last day,

go, ye cursed, &c. and if a look and a word are so terrible, what will be the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger upon those who have refused to give him glory? For the words seem to carry in them a reason why he should be glorified, taken from the consequence of not glorifying him, who has such a majesty in his looks, such a terror in his countenance, and such power in his hands.

He toucheth the hills, and they smoke; as Sinai likewise did, when he was upon it, Ex 19:18, and as other hills do, when touched with lightning; the tops of mountains, the higher they are, the sooner and the more they smoke {u}. God, with a touch of his hand, can set mountains on fire, open "volcanos", and cause them to burn for years together; as Etna, Vesuvius, Hecla, and others: and how easily can he set on fire the course of nature, burn the world, and all that is in it! It is but touching it, and it takes fire immediately: this he can as easily do as a man can light a torch or a candle; and as easily can he destroy sinners with the fire of his wrath, or cast them into everlasting fire, with the devil and his angels, which will burn to the lowest hell; and what are hills and mountains, or the greatest personages on earth, if he does but touch them, or lay his hand upon them in wrath? They are crushed as the moth; they are nothing before our great Zerubbabel.

{u} "Montis vicina cacumina coelo----Tanto "magis edita fumant", Lucret. de Rerum Natura, l. 6. v. 458, 459.

Psalms 104:33

Ver. 33. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live,.... Or, "in my life or lives {w}", throughout the whole of it. This was what the psalmist determined to do, let others do what they would; even sing songs of praise to the Lord; since he was the God of his life, who had fed him all his life long; from whom he had all the mercies of life, and by whom he had been followed with goodness and mercy all his days, and on whom his life and the comforts of it depended.

I will sing praise unto my God while I have my being: because he lived, and moved, and had his being in him; and it was continued to him, and he was upheld in it; and not only for his being, but for his well being; as for his temporal, so for his spiritual mercies, which he had from him as his God, as his covenant God; such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life: a view of God as our own God, such a view as Thomas had of Christ, when he said, "my Lord, and my God", is enough to make a man sing; and when the psalmist says he would do this as long as he lived and had a being, this is not to be understood as if this work would end with his life, or that he had no thought of praising him hereafter; but it signifies his constancy in this employment, while in the land of the living; knowing that in the grave he could not praise the Lord with his bodily organs as now; though he knew that this would be his eternal employ in the world of spirits, in his soul, during its separate state, and in soul and body after the resurrection.

{w} yyxb "in vita mea", V. L. Pagninus; "in vitis meis", Montanus.

Psalms 104:34

Ver. 34. My meditation of him shall be sweet,.... Of the glories, excellencies, and perfections of his person; of his offices, as Mediator, King, Priest, and Prophet, the Saviour and Redeemer; of his works of creation, providence, and redemption; of his word, the blessed truths and comfortable doctrines of it; of his providential dispensations, and gracious dealings with his people in the present state; which to meditate upon, when grace is in exercise, is very sweet, delightful, and comfortable. The Targum renders it as a petition,

"let my meditation be sweet before him;"

that is, grateful and acceptable to him: or, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, "let my speech", discourse, colloquy, address in prayer; see Ps 141:2, or, "let my praise", so the Arabic and Syriac versions: the spiritual sacrifices both of prayer and praise are acceptable to God through Christ; and the speech of the church, and every believer, whether in the one way or the other, is sweet to Christ, very pleasant and delightful to him, **So 2:14**.

I will be glad in the Lord: the Targum is,

"in the Word of the Lord;"

in the essential Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; in his person, the greatness, glory, beauty, and fulness of it; in his righteousness, its purity, perfection, and perpetuity; in his salvation, being so suitable, complete, and glorious.

Psalms 104:35

Ver. 35. Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth,.... Not in common, for all men are sinners, even good men are not without sin; but notorious sinners, whose lives are one continued series and course of sinning; such as will not have Christ to reign over them, and do not give him the glory due unto him; particularly antichrist, the man of sin, and his followers; they that worship the beast and his image: these will be consumed with the breath of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming, and will perish out of his land, **2Th 2:3**.

And let the wicked be no more; as the wicked one, antichrist, will be no more when consumed; there will never rise another, when the beast and false prophet are taken and cast alive into the lake of fire; there will no more of the antichristian party remain, the remnant of them will be slain with the sword; after the battle of Armageddon, there will be none left of the followers of antichrist, nor any ever rise up any more.

Bless thou the Lord, O my soul; as for his mercies, spiritual and temporal, so for the destruction of all his enemies. The psalm begins and ends alike as the preceding.

Praise ye the Lord, or hallelujah: this is the first time this word is used in this book of Psalms, though frequently afterwards: and it is observable that it is only used, in the New Testament, at the prophecy of the destruction of antichrist, Re 19:1 which may serve to confirm the sense before given; and is to be considered as a call upon the saints to praise the Lord, on account of his righteous judgments on his and his church's enemies; so Aben Ezra.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 105:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 105

This psalm was penned by David, and sung at the time when the ark was brought from the house of Obededom to the place which David had prepared for it; at least the first fifteen verses of it, the other part being probably added afterwards by the same inspired penman, as appears from 1Ch 16:1. The subject matter of the psalm is the special and distinguishing goodness of God to the children of Israel, and to his church and people, of which they were typical: the history of God's regard to and care of their principal ancestors, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, &c. and of the whole body of the people, in bringing them out of Egypt, leading them through the wilderness, and settling them in the land of Canaan, is here recited, as an argument for praise and thankfulness.

Ver. 1. O give thanks unto the Lord,.... These are the words of David, either to the singers, or rather to the whole congregation of Israel, the seed of Abraham, and children of Jacob, Ps 105:6 stirring them up to praise and thankfulness for their mercies, temporal and spiritual; for the Messiah they had hope and expectation of, typified by the ark now brought home; for the word and ordinances, and opportunities of waiting upon God in them; for heaven and happiness, figured by Canaan's land given them to enjoy. Or, "confess or celebrate the Lord" {x}; his greatness and goodness: his being and perfections; his sovereignty over all creatures: confess him as your Creator, Benefactor, covenant God and Father; or, "confess to the Lord" {y} your sins and transgressions committed against him, his great grace and kindness to you, and your unworthiness to receive any favour from him.

Call upon his name; as such may to advantage, who are thankful for what they have received from him; these may and ought to call upon him, or pray to him, in faith and fervency, with frequency and importunity, in the truth and sincerity of their souls; and at all times, especially in times of trouble. Some, as Aben Ezra, interpret it, proclaim his name, make it known to others; call upon them to serve and worship him. This sense is mentioned by Kimchi, and agrees with what follows:

make known his deeds among the people: which are the effects of his counsel, wisdom, power, and goodness; such as the works of creation and providence, and especially of grace, and salvation; and which were to be published among the Heathen, for the glory of his name: and indeed the Gospel, which is ordered to be preached to all nations, is nothing else than a declaration of what Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, have done and do.

{x} hwhyl wdwx celebrate Jehovam, Junius & Tremellius. {y} "Confitemini Domino", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Psalms 105:2

Ver. 2. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him,.... Both vocally and instrumentally, with the voice and upon instruments of music, as were used in David's time. Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, are to be sung now, even the song of Moses, and of the Lamb. The wondrous things God had done for his people were sufficient matter for a song; and these were to be put into one, to be transmitted to posterity: it was usual in ancient times to hand down the history of memorable events by a song.

Talk ye of all his wondrous works: all the works of the Lord are wonderful; what David elsewhere says of himself may be said of them, that they are wonderfully made, even the least and most inconsiderable of them; and especially his works of grace, when it is observed for whom they are performed, or on whom they are wrought; sinful creatures, enemies to God, and deserving of his wrath. These are to be talked of freely and frequently, in friendly conversation, in order to gain a further knowledge of them, and warm each others hearts with them, and to lead into adoring and admiring views of the love and grace of God in them; and all of them deserve notice, none should be omitted, all are worthy of consideration and contemplation; for so the words may be rendered, "mediate" {z} "on all his wondrous works" Here is a large field for meditation; and when the heart is in a proper frame for it, meditation on the works of God is sweet, pleasant, and profitable.

{z} wxyv "meditamini", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 105:3

Ver. 3. Glory ye in his holy name,.... In the knowledge of it, as proclaimed in Christ; in being called by his name, and in having the honour to call upon his name; in the holiness of it; and in Christ being made sanctification as well as righteousness, in whom all the seed of Israel are justified and glory; as they may also of interest in him, and communion with him.

Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord; while he may be found, and where he may be found; who seek him in Christ, and under the guidance and direction of his Spirit; who seek him with their whole hearts, diligently and constantly. The Targum is,

"who seek doctrine from the Lord."

Such may and should rejoice in him, and in him only; and that always, as they have reason to do, even in their hearts, since they that seek him find him; and whether it be at first conversion, or afterwards, or when he has for a time hid his face; it must be matter of joy to them, even to their very hearts, to find him whom they seek.

Psalms 105:4

Ver. 4. Seek the Lord and his strength,.... The ark, which is called his strength, and the ark of his strength, Ps 78:61, because he had shown his great strength by it, in dividing the waters at Jordan, throwing down the walls of Jericho, and plaguing the Philistines because of it, when among them. This was a symbol of God's presence, before which he was sought by his people; and was a type of our Lord Jesus, the man of God's right hand, whom he has made strong for himself, and who is called his strength, Ps 80:18. Some render it, and which Aben Ezra makes mention of, though he rejects it, "seek the Lord in his strength"; or "by it": God is to be sought in Christ; he is the way of access to him. Or the meaning is, seek strength from the Lord; spiritual strength; strength to assist in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; seek it from him, in whom are both righteousness and strength. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, render it, "seek the Lord, and be ye strengthened". The way to gain an increase of spiritual strength is to seek the Lord by prayer, or in his ordinances; see Ps 138:3. The Targum is,

"seek the doctrine of the Lord, and his law."

It follows:

seek his face evermore: his favour and lovingkindness; his smiling countenance, which beholds the upright; his gracious presence, and communion with him; which is always desirable, ever to be sought after, and will be eternally and without interruption enjoyed in another world.

Psalms 105:5

Ver. 5. Remember his marvellous works which he hath done,.... Which Aben Ezra interprets of the works of creation; rather they seem to design the works of Providence in favour of the children of Israel: best of all, works of grace done for his saints, none of which are to be forgotten; especially the great work of redemption and salvation, for the remembrance of which, under the New Testament, an ordinance is particularly appointed.

His wonders, and the judgments of his mouth: the above Jewish writer, by "wonders", understands the miracles in Egypt, the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians;

and by the judgments of his mouth, the laws and statutes given at Sinai: each of which were indeed to be remembered: but "his wonders" may take in all the wonderful things done in Egypt and in the wilderness, and in settling the Israelites in the land of Canaan; and "his judgments" may also intend the judgments which he threatened to bring upon the enemies of Israel, and which he did bring upon them as he said. The wonders of his grace, of his law and Gospel, his judgments and his testimonies, are not to be forgotten.

Psalms 105:6

Ver. 6. O ye seed of Abraham his servant,.... These are the persons all along before addressed; the Israelites, who descended from Abraham, were his natural seed and offspring, and who had reason to give thanks unto the Lord and praise his name, since so many and such wonderful things had been done for them; though all that were his natural seed were not the children of God; and such who have the same faith he had, and tread in the steps he did, are Christ's, and partakers of his grace; these are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise; and are under the greatest obligations to praise the Lord. Abraham is here called his servant, as also in Ps 105:42, being a true worshipper of God; though sometimes his friend, which is not inconsistent; though this character, according to the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, belongs to his seed, they rendering it in the plural, "his servants". It follows,

ye children of Jacob his chosen; this is added to distinguish the persons intended from the other seed of Abraham in the line of Ishmael; for in Isaac his seed was called, which were the children of the promise, and that in the line of Jacob, and not in the line of Esau; from whom they were called Israel or

Israelites, a people whom the Lord chose above all people on the face of the earth; for the word "chosen" may be connected with the children as well as with Jacob. The whole spiritual Israel of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, all such who are Israelites indeed, as they appear to be the chosen of God, so they are bound to praise his name.

Psalms 105:7

Ver. 7. He is the lord our God,.... Here begin the arguments to excite to praise and thankfulness; and the first is taken from what God is, and is to us; he is Jehovah, the Being of beings, a self-existent Being, the author of all beings, but receives his own from none; being undivided, independent, and self-sufficient, invariably and unchangeably the same, which is, and was, and is to come; and who has a sovereign power and authority over all creatures, whose name alone is Jehovah; nor is that name applicable or communicable to any created being; and yet this Jehovah is our God, our God in covenant, our God in Christ; our God that has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ; our God that has regenerated, adopted, and justified us; that supplies all our wants, and will be our God and our portion for ever; and therefore worthy of all praise, honour, and glory.

His judgments are all the earth: not his laws and statutes, his word and ordinances, or the revelation of his mind and will as faith and worship, which are sometimes meant by his judgments; for these were not in all the earth, were only known to the people of the Jews at this time, Ps 147:19, rather his judgments on the Egyptians, or his plagues upon them for refusing to let Israel go, the fame of which was spread throughout the world: and may take in all the judgments of God in other parts of the world, as on Sodom and Gomorrah, and especially the universal deluge, which destroyed the world of the ungodly; and by such judgments the Lord is known, **Ps 9:16** and for these he is to be praised; as they are expressive of his holiness and justice; as he will be for his judgments on antichrist, when they are made manifest,
Re 15:4. This may also respect in general God's government of the world, and his righteous judging in it; who is a God that judgeth in the earth, and governs it by his power and wisdom, and in righteousness; and this righteous Judge is our God.

Psalms 105:8

Ver. 8. He hath remembered his covenant for ever,.... Another argument of praise taken from the covenant of grace, in which he is our God, and of which he is ever mindful; he remembers his covenant ones, whom he perfectly knows, and never forgets them; he remembers his covenant promises to them, and allows them to put him in remembrance of them; he has respect unto his covenant, and the blessings of it, and bestows them on his people; gives them the sure mercies of David; and he remembers his love, which is the source and spring of all.

The word which he commanded to a thousand generations; that which is properly a covenant with Christ our head on our account, is a word of promise to us; a promise of grace and glory; a free promise, absolute and unconditional: and this he has "commanded", or ordered, decreed, and determined that it shall stand good, and be punctually performed, "to a thousand generations"; that is, for ever; for all his promises are yea and amen in Christ.

Psalms 105:9

Ver. 9. Which covenant he made with Abraham,.... Or made it known unto him, and showed him his particular interest in it; promised that he would be his God, that he would bless him; and that in his seed, the Messiah, that should spring from him, all nations of the earth should be blessed, Ge 12:2, compare with this **Lu 1:72**.

And his oath unto Isaac: he made known to Isaac the oath which he swore to Abraham, and promised to perform it, Ge 26:3, or concerning Isaac {a}; in whom his seed was to be called, and in whose line from him the Messiah was to come, the grand article of this covenant.

{a} qxvyl de Isahac, Vatablus.

Psalms 105:10

Ver. 10. And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law,.... The son of Isaac, and the grandson of Abraham, to whom it was renewed and confirmed, Ge 28:13. It is true of his posterity that go by his name, and even of all the spiritual Israel of God, to whom this covenant is confirmed and made sure: or "caused to stand" {b}, as the word is; by the faithfulness of God by his oath annexed to his word, and by the death of his Son: when this is said to be "for a law", the meaning is, not as if this covenant had the nature of a law, as the covenant of works had; indeed one of the articles of it is, that the law of God should be put into the inward part, and written on the heart; but this refers here not to men, but to God; and the sense is, that this covenant has the force of a law with respect to God, who of his condescending grace and goodness has hereby laid himself under obligation to do such and such things; which is marvellous grace indeed.

And to Israel for an everlasting covenant: for being remembered, commanded, repeated, and confirmed by the Lord, it can never be broken; and being well ordered, remains sure, and is as immovable as rocks and mountains, and more so: as it was made with Christ from everlasting, it will continue to be made good to his people to everlasting; and is a just reason for praise; it being the basis of faith and hope; the ground of joy, peace, and comfort here, and of eternal happiness hereafter.

{b} hdymey "stare fecit", Vatablus.

Psalms 105:11

Ver. 11. Saying, unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,.... To each of the above persons, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to their posterity, the children of Israel. Not that the word "saying", as Gussetius {c} well observes, signifies that the words following it are expressive of the covenant, for that is expressed Ps 105:7, the main article, sum, and substance of it, being this, that the Lord was their God; but it only signifies that this earthly promise was pronounced when that everlasting covenant was given, Ge 17:7. Besides, this must be considered as typical of the heavenly inheritance; as that was a land of promise, so is this; it is the promise, the grand promise, which God has promised; as that was a land prepared and ready furnished with houses, fields, and vineyards, so is heaven a kingdom prepared by God the Father, and by the presence and mediation of his Son; as the Israelites passing through the wilderness met with many difficulties, and fought many battles, before possessed of it, so the people of God pass through the wilderness of this world, go through many tribulations, and fight the good fight of faith before they lay hold on eternal life; and as not Moses, but Joshua, led the people into the land, so not the law, but Jesus the Saviour, the great Captain of salvation, brings the many sons to glory; and as that was a land of rest after fatiguing travels, is heaven the sabbatism or rest for the people of God, a rest from all their toil and labour; and as the one was the pure gift of God, so is the other:

to thee will I give, &c. And as the land of Canaan is here called "the lot of your inheritance", it being divided and distributed by lot to the children of Israel, who find each their proper share and portion,
Jos 14:1 so heaven is an inheritance, not purchased, nor acquired, but bequeathed by the will of God; comes through the death of the testator Christ, belongs only to children, and is, as inheritances are, for ever; this is also by lot, as the word is in **Eph 1:11**, not that it is a casual thing, for it is appointed by the Lord for his people, and they for that; it is what they are predestinated to, as in the aforementioned text; but it denotes that everyone shall have their part and portion in it.

{c} Ebr. Comment. p. 822.

Psalms 105:12

Ver. 12. When they were but a few men in number,.... Or "men of number" {d}, that might easily be numbered; see Ge 34:30, when this covenant, promise, and oath, were first made to Abraham, he was alone, and had no child; and when his posterity were increased in Jacob's time, and sojourned in Egypt, they were but few, though greatly enlarged when they came out of it: in comparison of other nations, they were the fewest of all people, and therefore had this grant of Canaan, not for their numbers any more than their goodness. And this circumstance is mentioned to show the unmerited goodness of God unto them; see **De 7:6**. And so the Lord's people, to whom he gives the kingdom of heaven, are a little flock; they are only a few that find the way to eternal life, Lu 12:32.

Yea, very few; or "as a little thing" {e}: so were the people of Israel a little contemptible body of men in the eyes of others, and in comparison of them. And such are the saints in this world; "the filth of it", and the "offscouring of all things";

yea, things that are not; that scarce deserve, in the opinion of men, to be reckoned entities or beings. And strangers in it; as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were, Heb 11:9, and so are the people of God, who are the heirs of the heavenly Canaan. These are strangers to the men of the world, who know them not; and the men of the world to them; with whom they have no conversation and fellowship in things sinful and criminal; for which they late despised by the world: yet these are the fellow citizens of heaven, and of the household of

God, which shows his discriminating grace.

{d} rpom ytm "viros numeri", Montanus; so Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis. {e} jemk "sicut parum", Montanus; so Vatablus; "aut exile aliquid", Gejerus; so Gussetius, p. 477.

Psalms 105:13

Ver. 13. When they went from one nation to another,.... From Chaldea to Mesopotamia; from thence to Canaan, and then into Egypt; and after that to Canaan again: which was the tour that Abraham took; and when in Canaan, and travelling from place to place there, might be said to go from nation to nation, since there were seven nations in that country.

From one kingdom to another people; from the kingdom of Palestine or Canaan to Egypt, which was a strange people; and of another language, as appears by the use of an interpreter between them, Ge 42:23. So Isaac, Jacob, and his posterity, journeyed from one of these kingdoms to the other. Thus the children of God are pilgrims and strangers in this world; they are unsettled in it; they are travelling through it, and a troublesome journey they have of it; they are bound to another country, to which they belong; and their hearts are there beforehand; and they look upon this world as a strange place, and at best but as an inn; where they tarry but for a time, till they get to their own country, the better and heavenly one.

Psalms 105:14

Ver. 14. He suffered no man to do them wrong,.... Though strangers and unsettled, and moving from place to place; and few in number, and weak and defenceless. Thus the herdsmen of Gerar were not suffered to do any harm to Isaac and his herdsmen; but, on the contrary, the king of the place, with some of his chief men, sought an alliance, and entered into one with Isaac. Thus Laban was not suffered to hurt Jacob, nor the Sichemites to hurt him and his sons; the terror of God falling on all the cities round about, Ge 26:20. The people of God are in this world exposed to the injuries of the men of it, being as sheep among wolves; and it is often in the power of their hands to hurt them, as it was in the power of Laban to hurt Jacob; nor do they want an inclination, there being a rooted enmity in the seed of the serpent to the seed of the woman: but God will not suffer them; though they would willingly, like

Balaam, curse them, yet they cannot curse whom God has blessed; he will not suffer them to injure them.

Yea, he reproved kings for their sakes; as Pharaoh king of Egypt, and Abimelech king of Gerar; whom he reproved, both verbally and really, with words and stripes, Ge 12:17. Kings are to be reproved by men, when they do amiss, as Herod was by John Baptist; and may expect to be reproved by the King of kings, when they do wrong, especially to his people; who are themselves kings and priests unto God, and are esteemed by him above the kings of the earth, and made higher than they.

Psalms 105:15

Ver. 15. Saying, Touch not mine anointed,.... Or, "mine anointed ones"; my Christs, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were, who, though not anointed with material oil, yet were all that, that such were, who in later times were anointed with it. They were prophets, priests, and kings; and which all met in one person, particularly in Abraham,
Ge 20:7, besides, they were anointed with the oil of grace, with an unction from the Holy One, with the Holy Ghost, and his gifts and graces, as all true believers are: they are the Lord's Christs, or his anointed ones; which stand before him, and have the name of Christians from hence. These the Lord will not have touched, so as to be hurt; they are sacred persons: they are near unto God, in union with him;

and he that toucheth him toucheth the apple of his eye; so dear are they to him.

And do my prophets no harm; so Abraham is expressly called a prophet, Ge 20:7, and so were Isaac and Jacob; men to whom the Lord spoke familiarly in dreams and visions, as he used to do with prophets; and who taught and made known the mind and will of God to others, as well as foretold things to come; they being the Lord's servants, his prophets, they were revealed unto them, Nu 12:7. These the Lord will have no harm done to them; he guards them by his power; he holds them in his right hand; and covers them under the shadow of his wing.

Psalms 105:16

Ver. 16. Moreover, he called for a famine upon the land,.... On the land of

Egypt; or rather on the land of Canaan, where Jacob and his sons sojourned; and which reached to all lands, Ge 41:56 and calling for it, it came, being a servant at the command of the Lord; see **2Ki 8:1**.

He brake the whole staff of bread; so called, because it is the support of man's life, the principal of his sustenance: as a staff is a support to a feeble person, and which, when broke, ceases to be so. The staff of bread is broken, when either the virtue and efficacy of it for nourishment is taken away or denied; or when there is a scarcity of bread corn; which latter seems to be intended here; see **Isa 3:1**.

Psalms 105:17

Ver. 17. He sent a man before them, even Joseph,.... Who, though but a lad of seventeen years of age when he was sold into Egypt, yet was a grown man when he stood before Pharaoh, and interpreted his dreams of plenty and famine to come; and advised him to lay up store in the years of plenty, against the years of famine; by which he appeared to be a wise man, as the Targum here calls him; see Ge 37:3. Him God sent before into Egypt; before Jacob and his sons went down thither, to make provision for them, to support them in the time of famine, and preserve their lives. God is said to send him, though his brethren sold him out of envy; there being such a plain hand of Providence in this matter; and which is observed by Joseph himself over and over again, Ge 45:5, in which he was a type of Christ, in whom all provisions are made, and by whom they are communicated unto his people; who all receive out of his fulness, and grace for grace.

Who was sold for a servant: either "to a servant": as to Potiphar, as Aben Ezra, who was a servant of Pharaoh's; or rather to be a servant, as Joseph was in his house: he was sold for twenty pieces of silver, as Christ, his antitype, for thirty; the price of a servant, Ge 37:28, and who not only appeared in the form of a servant, but did the work of one: and a faithful and righteous servant he was to his Father, and on the behalf of his people.

Psalms 105:18

Ver. 18. Whose feet they hurt with fetters,.... For it seems Joseph was not only cast into prison, upon the calumny of his mistress; but had fetters put upon

him, and his feet were made fast with them; and these were so close and heavy, as to pinch and gall and hurt him; which, though not mentioned in his history, was undoubtedly true; see
Ge 39:20.

He was laid in iron: or "the iron" (or, as the Targum, "the iron chain") "went into his Soul" {f}; his body; it ate into him, and gave him great pain: or rather, as it is in the king's Bible, "his soul went into the iron chain"; there being, as Aben Ezra observes, an ellipsis of the particle b, and which is supplied by Symmachus, and so in the Targum; that is, his body was enclosed in iron bands, so Buxtorf {g}. In all this he was a type of Christ, whose soul was made exceeding sorrowful unto death: he was seized by the Jews, led bound to the high priest, fastened to the cursed tree, pierced with nails, and more so with the sins of his people he bore; and was laid in the prison of the grave; from whence and from judgment he was brought, Isa 53:8.

{f} So Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus. {g} Lexic. "in voce" lzrb.

Psalms 105:19

Ver. 19. Until the time that his word came,.... Either the word of Joseph, interpreting the dreams of the butler and baker, till that came to be fulfilled; so the Syriac version, "till his word was proved by the event": or rather till the fame and report of that came to Pharaoh's ears, Ge 41:13, or else the word of the Lord, concerning his advancement and exaltation, signified in dreams to him,
Ge 37:7, as it follows:

the word of the Lord tried him: it tried his faith and patience before it was accomplished; and when it was, it purged him and purified him, as silver in a furnace, and cleared him of the imputation and calumny of his mistress; for, even in the view of Pharaoh, he appeared to be a man in whom the Spirit of God was, Ge 41:38. Some think that Christ, the essential Word, is intended, who came and visited him, tried and cleared him.

Psalms 105:20

Ver. 20. The king sent and loosed him,.... That is, Pharaoh king of Egypt sent messengers to the prison, and ordered Joseph to be loosed, as soon as ever he heard the account which the chief butler gave of him, and of his skill in interpreting dreams.

Even the ruler of the people; or "peoples": the subjects of Pharaoh's kingdom being very numerous.

And let him go free, ordered his fetters to be taken off, and him to be set at liberty, to go where he pleased; or, however, that he might come to court, whither he was brought, and which was the end of his releasement; see Ge 41:14, in this he was a type of Christ in his resurrection from the dead; who for a while was under the dominion of death, was held with the pains and cords of it, and was under the power and in the prison of the grave; but it was not possible, considering the dignity of his person, and the performance of his work as a surety, that he should be held here. Wherefore the cords and pains of death were loosed, and he was brought out of prison; God his Father, the King of kings, sent an angel from heaven, to roll away the stone of the sepulchre, and let the prisoner free; so that he was legally and judicially discharged and acquitted; as it was proper he should, having satisfied both law and justice; he was justified in the Spirit when he rose from the dead, and all his people were justified in him, for he rose again for their justification.

Psalms 105:21

Ver. 21. He made him lord of his house,.... That is, Pharaoh made Joseph lord chamberlain of his household; after he had him to court, and he had interpreted his dreams to him to his great satisfaction, and had given him such prudent advice to provide against the years of famine; see Ge 41:33. So Christ, after his resurrection, was received up into heaven, and was made and declared Lord and Christ, Lord of all, having all power in heaven and earth given to him; particularly had the care of the church committed to him, which is the house of God, of his building, and where he dwells; where his children are born, brought up, and provided for. Here Christ is as a Son over his own house, as the owner and proprietor of it; here he is King, Priest, and Prophet; and is the provider for all in it, both of food and clothing:

of him the whole family in heaven and in earth is named, **Eph 3:15**, though he makes use of under stewards, to give to everyone their portion of meat in due season.

And ruler of all his substance, or "possession" {h}; lord treasurer of all his revenue, Ge 41:40. Herein also he was a type of Christ, who, as God, is possessor of heaven and earth, being the Creator of them; but, as Mediator, he has all things delivered into his hands; all are at his dispose, to subserve the ends of his mediatorial office; he has all temporal things, gold and silver, riches and honour, to bestow upon men at pleasure; more especially all spiritual things are with him; the gifts of the Spirit, which he has without measure; and the fulness of all grace, which it has pleased the Father should dwell in him; the blessings of the everlasting covenant, and the promises of it; all the riches of grace, pardoning, justifying, and adopting grace, and all the riches of glory.

{h} wnynq "possessione sua", Pagninus, Montanus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 105:22

Ver. 22. To bind his princes at his pleasure,.... Not to lay them in prison, and bind them with fetters, as he had been bound; but to give laws unto them as he pleased, and bind and oblige them to observe them: for, according to his word, all the people of Egypt, high and low, rich and poor, were to be ruled; and, without his leave, no man was to lift up his hand or foot in all the land, Ge 41:40. All Christ's people are princes, to whom he gives laws at his pleasure, as one having authority, though they are not grievous; and these he binds, obliges, and constrains his people by love to observe, and which they do. Jarchi's note is,

"this is an expression of love like that; and the soul of Jonathan was bound unto the soul of David: when he (Joseph) interpreted the dream, they all loved him."

The Targum is,

"to bind his nobles as to his soul."

And teach his senators wisdom; his elders, his privy counsellors: he made him president of his council; where he was a curb upon them, and restrained them from taking wrong or bad measures; so Schultens {i}, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, renders it, "to bridle", or restrain his senators; which conveys an idea agreeable to the preceding clause. Nor were these the only persons he taught; he not only instructed the nobles and courtiers in politics, but the priests and men of learning in the arts and sciences; and all, no doubt, in the mysteries of the true religion, as he had an opportunity. And this is the source of the wisdom of the Egyptians, which Moses was afterwards brought up in; and for which that people were so famous, that many of the ancient philosophers, as Pythagoras, Plato, and others, travelled thither to acquire it. This they had from Joseph, and his people that dwelt in their land. Christ's senators are his apostles and ministers, the elders that rule well, and labour in the word and doctrine: these are taught wisdom by him; the knowledge of divine and spiritual things; the words and doctrines of the wise are all from him, that one Shepherd; that they, as undershepherds and pastors, may feed others with knowledge and understanding.

{i} De Defect. Hod. Ling. Heb. s. 215.

Psalms 105:23

Ver. 23. Israel also came into Egypt,.... That is, Jacob, as afterwards expressed, who had the name of Israel, from his wrestling with God and prevailing. He came into Egypt, being invited by Pharaoh, and having heard of his son Joseph being alive, and of his exaltation.

And Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham: the same with Egypt; Mizraim, from whence Egypt has its name, being the son of Ham, Ge 10:6. Hence Egypt is called by Plutarch {k} Chemia; and Diodorus Siculus {l} speaks of a city in Thebais, or Upper Egypt, which was called by the inhabitants Chemmis, interpreted by them the city of Pan; and Plutarch {m} mentions a place called Chennis, inhabited by Pans and Satyrs. The same is mentioned by Herodotus {n}, which he calls a large city of the Thebaic nome; a city of the same name is observed by Heliodorus {o}; and both Herodotus {p} and Mela {q} speak of an island called Chemmis, which the Egyptians represent as floating. In all which there are plain traces of the name of Ham, the same with Jupiter Ammon; or Amun, as Plutarch; worshipped in Egypt; and from whom all Africa was sometimes called Ammonia {r}, the country of Ammon or Ham. And Herodotus {s} speaks of a people called Ammonii, about ten days' journey from Thebes in Upper Egypt; who, according to him {t}, had their name from Jupiter Ammon, or Ham. And Pliny {u} makes mention of the oracle of Hammon, as twelve days' journey from Memphis, and of the Hammoniac nome; and the Egyptian priests are called Ammmonean {w}. Here Jacob was a sojourner, as all the Lord's people are in this world; they are sojourners, as all their fathers were; and their time here is a time of sojourning, 1Ch 29:15. They are not natives of the place where they are; they are indeed so by their first birth, but not by their new birth; being born from above, they belong to another place, are citizens of another city; their house, estate, and inheritance, are in heaven: neither their settlement nor satisfaction are here; they do not reckon themselves at home while they are in this world; they are indeed in an enemy's country, in a cursed land; or that is nigh unto cursing, and its end to be burned. Such the land of Ham was, where Jacob sojourned.

{k} De Iside. {l} Biblioth. l. 1. p. 16. {m} Ut supra. (De Iside.) {n} Euterpe sive, l. 2. c. 91. {o} Ethiopic. l. 5. c. 9. & l. 6. c. 4. {p} Ut supra, (Euterpe sive, l. 2.) c. 156. {q} De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 9. {r} Stephanus de Urb. {s} Melpomene sive, l. 4. c. 181. {t} Euterpe sive, l. 2. c. 32, 42. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 9. {w} Sanchoniatho apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 32.

Psalms 105:24

Ver. 24. And he increased his people greatly,.... God increased the people of Israel greatly in the land of Egypt; they went down few, and became a populous nation; only sixty six persons, besides Jacob's sons' wives; and when they came out from thence were six hundred thousand footmen; yea, they increased the more they were afflicted, **Ex 1:12**. So the people of God in this world sometimes increase in number, and that even amidst the persecutions of their enemies; as the Christians did in the first times of the Gospel under the Roman emperors; and they increase in grace, in every grace, and oftentimes the more they are tried and exercised by afflictions.

And made them stronger than their enemies; in their bodies, being more healthy, strong, and robust; and which was seen, observed, and owned by their enemies, **Ex 1:9**. So saints, being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, are a match for their enemies; are stronger than they, and are even more than conquerors through Christ, that has loved them.

Psalms 105:25

Ver. 25. He turned their heart to hate his people,.... Whom before they loved and esteemed: when Pharaoh and his servants heard of Joseph's father and brethren, they were greatly pleased, and invited them into Egypt; and, when come, placed them in the land of Goshen; but when a new king arose, and a new generation, which knew not Joseph, the hearts of these were turned to hate them. This is said to be of the Lord: not that he put any hatred into them, there was no need of that; there is enough of that naturally in every man's heart against good men, and all that is good: but he did not restrain that hatred, as he could have done, but suffered them to let it have vent; and moreover, he did those things which were an occasion of it, and which served to stir up their hatred; as increasing their numbers, and making them stronger and mightier than they, **Ex 1:9**.

To deal subtilly with his servants; by putting them to hard labour, and using them with great rigour, in order to weaken their strength; by commanding the midwives to kill every son that was born; and by publishing an edict, to cast every male child into the river and drown it, and so hinder the increase of them. Thus the people of God have their enemies that hate them; that are subtle and cunning, wise to do evil, full of all subtilty and wicked craft; Satan, at the head of them, has his artful methods, wiles, stratagems, and devices: but the Lord is wiser than all, and knows how to deliver his people out of the hands of all their enemies, as he did the children of Israel; of which there is an account in the following verses.

Psalms 105:26

Ver. 26. He sent Moses his servant,.... Into Egypt, to deliver his people Israel out of the hands of the Egyptians; in which, as in other things, he approved himself to be a faithful servant to the Lord; of this mission of his, see **Ex 3:10**. In this he was a type of Christ, who appeared in the form of a servant, and really was one; God's righteous servant as Mediator, though his Son as a divine Person; sent by him to redeem his people out of worse than Egyptian bondage, from sin, Satan, the law, its curse and condemnation.

And Aaron whom he had chosen; to go along with Moses, to be a mouth for him, and a prophet to him, **Ex 4:16**, who also was a type of Christ, being a priest and good spokesman, chosen and called of God, a holy and an anointed one. The Targum is,

"in whom he was well pleased."

Psalms 105:27

Ver. 27. They showed his signs among them,.... The Egyptians to whom they were sent; that is, Moses and Aaron did. In the original it is, "the words of his signs" {x}. They declared the words of God to them, that he would do such signs and wonders among them; or inflict such plagues upon them, in case they did not let Israel go: or they performed them according to the word of the Lord, as he commanded them, as well as taught the doctrines and instructions to be learned from them. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it in the singular number, though contrary to the Hebrew text, and understand it of God, "he put the words of his signs in them"; in Moses and Aaron; or gave them orders and power to perform them: he put them "in both", as the Arabic version has it; or, "he did his signs by them", as the Syriac version.

And wonders in the land of Ham; or Egypt, as in Ps 105:23, meaning the miracles of the plagues, which are next particularly mentioned, though not all of them: the plagues of the murrain, and of the boils and blains, are omitted; the reason of which, according to Aben Ezra, is, because Pharaoh did not seek to Moses to remove them; and the other eight that are mentioned are not placed in the order in which they were done, the last but one being observed first.

{x} wytwta yrbd "verba signorum suorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

Psalms 105:28

Ver. 28. He sent darkness, and made it dark,.... The land of Egypt; either he, God, or it, darkness, made it dark, or it was made dark; the Targum is,

"made them dark;"

that is, the Egyptians; darkness was a messenger of the Lord's, who forms the light and creates darkness; it came at his word and covered all the land, excepting the dwellings of Israel; even a thick darkness that might be felt, so that the Egyptians could not see one another, nor rise from their place for three days together; such as sometimes rises at sea, and is said to be so dark, that for five days together day and night are the same; this was the ninth of the ten plagues,
Ex 10:21 and was an emblem of the darkness which is on the minds of men in an unregenerate state; who are covered with gross darkness, and are even darkness itself; which is universal as to persons, and the powers and faculties of their souls concerning divine things: and it also bears some resemblance to the darkness which will be in the kingdom of the beast upon the pouring out of

the fifth vial, or plague, on spiritual Egypt, Re 16:10.

And they rebelled not against his word: the plague of darkness, and the rest of the plagues which God commanded; these, as they were his servants, were not disobedient to him, they came at his word; see
Ps 105:31, so Jarchi interprets it; or else Moses and Aaron, who were sent of God to inflict those plagues, did not refuse to obey the divine orders; though Pharaoh threatened them hard, yet they feared not the wrath and menaces of the king, but did as the Lord commanded them. Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, mention both these senses, but the latter seems most agreeable. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, leave out the word "not"; and so some copies of the Vulgate Latin version, and Apollinarius in his metaphrase, "and they rebelled against his word"; that is, the Egyptians did not hearken to the word of the Lord, nor to the signs and wonders he wrought, but their hearts were hardened, and they would not let Israel go. But this is contrary to the original text; though Arama interprets it of them, that they did not rebel, but confessed this miracle, which being the greatest of all, as he observes, is first mentioned. Dr. Lightfoot {y} thinks it is to be understood of Israel, and of some special part of obedience performed by them; which he takes to be circumcision, which they had omitted in Egypt, at least many of them, and was necessary to their eating of the passover, which was to be done in a few days, Ex 12:48 and it was a fit time to perform this service while darkness for three days was upon the Egyptians; in which they were shut up by the Lord, that they might not take the opportunity against his people, now sore through circumcision.

{y} Works, vol. 1. p. 707.

Psalms 105:29

Ver. 29. He turned their waters into blood,.... With which Egypt abounded; their streams, rivers, ponds, and pools, so that they had no water to drink; a just judgment upon them for shedding the innocent blood of infants, by drowning them in their rivers; this was the first of the ten plagues, **Ex 7:19**, with this compare the second and third vials poured out on spiritual Egypt, whereby blood will be given to antichrist, and to the antichristian states, for they are worthy, having shed so much of the blood of the saints, Re 16:3.

And slew their fish; which showed that the miracle was real, that the waters were really turned into blood, since the fish could not live in them, as they might if it had been only in appearance; the rivers of Egypt abounded with fish, this was a principal part of their food, and therefore must greatly distress them; see Nu 11:5.

Psalms 105:30

Ver. 30. Their land brought forth frogs in abundance,.... The land of Egypt, the moist, marshy, and watery places of it, the banks of the river Nile, out of the slime and mud of which these sprung; or, as Kimchi observes, wherever there were waters in the land there were frogs, for these came out of the streams, rivers, and ponds; this is the second plague, **Ex 8:3**.

In the chambers of their kings; that is, they came into the chambers of their kings; not that they were produced there; they entered not only into the kneadingtroughs, and ovens, and bedchambers of the common people, but into the chambers of the king, and his sons, and his nobles, and princes of the land, who may be called in the plural number kings; see Isa 10:8, with these compare the three unclean spirits, like frogs, under the pouring out of the sixth vial, that will go forth to the kings of the earth, and gather them to the battle of the Lord God Almighty; by whom are meant the emissaries of Rome, priests and Jesuits; so called for their impurity and impudence, for their noise and loquaciousness, and for he ways and means they use to get into the cabinet councils of princes, and prevail upon them to do things which will issue in their ruin; see Re 16:13.

Psalms 105:31

Ver. 31. He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies,.... Or a "mixture" {z} of various insects, and, as some interpret it, of wild beasts; and so Kimchi says evil beasts are meant, which were raised up to go into all their borders; the Arabic version renders it "dogflies", after the Septuagint; See Gill on "Ps 78:45", this was the fourth plague, **Ex 8:24**.

And lice in all their coasts; this is the third plague, and what the magicians could not imitate, but were obliged to own the finger of God was in it, **Ex 8:16**. God can make use of mean and despicable instruments to do his work; the weakness of God is stronger than men.

{z} bre "mixtura insectarum", Pagninus, Montanus; "colluvies insectarum", Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; "mista bestiarum", Vatablus; "colluvies animalium", Junius & Tremellius.

Psalms 105:32

Ver. 32. He gave them hail for rain,.... Egypt, at least part of it, was not used to rain, but was watered by the overflowings of the Nile; but now it had hail for rain, and a grievous hail storm it was, such as was never seen in the land of Egypt before; hail being rare, if ever there, and so frost and snow {a}; this was the seventh plague, **Ex 9:18**, compare with this the terrible storm of hail which will fall on men at the pouring out of the seventh vial on spiritual Egypt, Re 16:21.

And flaming fire in their land; for a storm of thunder and lightning went along with the hail; fire was mingled with it, and ran upon the ground, **Ex 9:23**.

{a} Horat. Carmin. l. 3. Ode 26.

Psalms 105:33

Ver. 33. He smote their vines also, and their fig trees,.... So that they died; for in Ps 78:47, it is said, he "killed" them; and it is not only used in common speech with us, but with classical writers {b} to speak of killing inanimate things, as trees, herbs, &c. That is, the hail smote them, or God by the hail; these are particularly mentioned because most useful, producing grapes and figs.

And brake the trees of their coasts: all the trees within the borders of their land, **Ex 9:25**.

{b} "----interice messes", Virgil. Georgic. l. 4. "Neque herbas crescere et interfici", Ciceron. Oeconom: ex Xenophon, l. 3.

Psalms 105:34

Ver. 34. He spake, and the locusts came,.... A great army of them, and covered the land, that it was even darkened by them; and were such as had never been seen before, or ever were since; this is the eighth plague, Ex 10:12, with these compare the locusts in **Re 9:3**.

And caterpillars, and that without number; of these no mention is made in Exodus; they seem to be one of the kinds of locusts, or a different word is here used for the same, and so Kimchi interprets it; some render it the white locust; it has its name from licking up the herbs and grass of the field; as the other name for the locust seems to be taken from its great abundance and increase.

Psalms 105:35

Ver. 35. And did eat up all the herbs in their land,.... As these creatures usually do, unless restrained, Ex 10:5. And devoured the fruit of their ground; which the hail left, Ex 10:15.

Psalms 105:36

Ver. 36. He smote also all the firstborn in their land,.... Both of men and beasts; the firstborn of the king on the throne, and of the maidservant behind the mill, and of the captive in the dungeon; this was the last plague, and which prevailed upon the Egyptians to let Israel go, Ex 11:5.

The chief of all their strength; or the first of their strength; the same in different words as before, their firstborn; see Ge 49:3.

Psalms 105:37

Ver. 37. He brought them forth also with silver and gold,.... That is, God brought forth the Israelites out of Egypt by means of the above plagues, laden with great riches, with jewels of gold and of silver, which they borrowed of the Egyptians at the command of the Lord; and so to be justified in what they did; and besides it was but just and equitable that they should be paid for their service and hard labour in Egypt for a long course of time; and this was the method in Providence they were directed to take to do themselves justice; and hereby was accomplished an ancient prophecy concerning them, that they should come out with much substance, Ge 15:14, Besides, in the passages quoted, the words should be rendered of the Israelites that they "asked", and of the Egyptians that they "gave"; the Jews, some of them, say {c} that these were given not with the will of the Egyptians, and others say not with the will of the Israelites, but neither of them true. And so in like manner will the people of God, when rescued from the tyranny of the antichristian states, enjoy great riches and honour; see Re 17:16.

And [there was] not one feeble [person] among their tribes; though there were six hundred thousand footmen, Nu 11:21, and though they had been used to hard and rigorous service in order to weaken their strength; and though they came from among a people plagued with diseases and deaths. This confronts a lying story told by some Heathen writers {d}, that the Israelites were driven out of Egypt because they had the itch, leprosy, and other diseases upon them. Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it, there was not a poor or necessitous man among them, for they abounded with gold and silver; compare with this the case of God's people in the latter day, Zec 12:8.

{c} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 9. 2. {d} Justin. e Trogo, l. 36. c. 2. Tacitus, l. 5. 3. Lysimachus apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. s. 34.

Psalms 105:38

Ver. 38. Egypt was glad when they departed,.... The Egyptians, as the Targum; they were glad when the Israelites were gone, for whose sake they had been so much and so long plagued. So wicked men are glad to be rid of the company of good men, which is very disagreeable to them; so the Gergesenes were glad when Christ departed out of their coasts, which they requested he would. So the inhabitants of the earth will rejoice, be merry, and send gifts one to another, when the witnesses are slain, the two prophets that tormented them with their doctrines and religious lives.

For the fear of them fell upon them; their firstborn being slain, they looked upon themselves as dead men; and feared that, if the Israelites stayed, their lives must go next; and therefore being seized with a panic they were urgent upon them to depart; not out of any good will to them, but through fear of them, Ex 12:33.

Psalms 105:39

Ver. 39. He spread a cloud for a covering,.... That is, the Lord spread one over their heads as an "umbrella", to protect them from the heat of the sun; this refers to the pillar of cloud, Ex 13:20, though that seems to have been in an erect posture, and to go before the children of Israel to direct them in their journey, and not a covering to them. Kimchi says it was a covering to them when they rested, but not when they journeyed: but when they rested it only covered the tabernacle, not the people, for anything we read of it, **Nu 9:21**, it looks as if there were more clouds than one, and indeed the Jews speak of many, and particularly make mention {e} of one that was over the heads of the Israelites, that the heat of the sun, and the hail and rain, might not have power over them; and of such use this cloud was, at least at certain times, if not always; a type of Christ, who is the covering and shelter of his people from the heat of the fiery law, of the flaming sword of justice, of the wrath of God, of the fiery darts of Satan, and of the fury of wicked men.

And fire, to give light in the night: this respects the pillar of fire which gave them light by night; an emblem of Christ, who is the light of his people, when it is a night season with them, as it sometimes is; a night of affliction and distress, of darkness and desertion, of temptation, of carnal security and sleepiness; when Christ arises as a light in darkness, and enlightens by his presence, by his Spirit, and by his word; as well as is as fire to warm, refresh, quicken, and comfort them when chill and cold, in such seasons.

{e} Vid. Targum in Cant. ii. 6.

Psalms 105:40

Ver. 40. The people asked, and he brought quails,.... The Targum is,

"they asked flesh, and he brought quails,"

or pheasants; some render it partridges, others locusts: that is, the people of Israel asked flesh of the Lord, and he gave them quails; which he did twice, first at the same time the manna was first given, Ex 16:13, and some years after that a second time, when the wrath of God came upon them and slew them while their meat was in their mouths, Nu 11:31, it is the first time that is here referred to, since it is mentioned among the benefits and blessings bestowed upon them; this was typical of the spiritual meat believers eat of, even the flesh of Christ, whose flesh is meat indeed. The quail was a fat and fleshy bird, delicious food, sent from heaven in the evening; so Christ came from heaven in the evening of the world, and gave his flesh for the life of his people, and on which they live by faith.

And satisfied them with the bread of heaven: the manna, called the corn of heaven; a type of Christ the hidden manna, who is soul satisfying food to believers; See Gill on "Ps 78:24",
See Gill on "Ps 78:25".

Psalms 105:41

Ver. 41. He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out,.... That is, God opened the rock, who before is said to spread the cloud, and bring the quails, for it was a miraculous affair; or Moses, by divine orders, which was done by smiting it, when waters flowed out in great abundance, sufficient to give drink to men and beasts, and which continued, Ex 17:6. This was typical of Christ the Rock,
1Co 10:4, and of the opening of his side, from whence flowed blood and water, Joh 19:34 and of his being smitten with the rod of justice, and by the law of Moses, from whom flow abundance of grace, and the blessings of it, freely to all his people; See Gill on "Ps 78:15".
See Gill on "Ps 78:16".

They ran in the dry places like a river; and did not sink and soak into them, but continued their flow, and followed the Israelites, wherever they went; see 1Co 10:4.

Psalms 105:42

Ver. 42. For he remembered his holy promise,.... It was not owing to the goodness of this people, to their obedience to the divine will, to any worthiness or merit of theirs, that such signs and wonders were wrought for them in Egypt; and that they were brought out from thence in such a manner as they were; and were protected and so plentifully provided for in the wilderness; but it was owing to the grace and goodness of God, to his covenant and promise, which he sacredly and inviolably observed; the grace and covenant of God are the source and spring of all blessings of goodness; he is ever mindful of his covenant, and therefore sends meat to them that fear him, as he did to the Israelites, Ps 111:5.

And Abraham his servant; or the promise he made to Abraham his servant; so the Targum, "which "was" with Abraham his servant;"

that is, which holy word or promise was with Abraham, was spoken to him; and was with him, that he would give him and his seed the land of Canaan; and that though they should be afflicted long in Egypt, yet should come out from thence with great substance, Ge 15:13, this he remembered, as he never forgets any promise of his, nor ever suffers his faithfulness to fail, nor his covenant to be broken. Hence it follows,

Psalms 105:43

Ver. 43. And he brought forth his people with joy,.... Or "therefore" {f}, in consequence of his promise, and the remembrance of it, he brought Israel out of Egypt with great joy to them, they coming out with so much health and wealth; having their liberty, and in hope of shortly being settled in a land flowing with milk and honey. And

his chosen with gladness: or "singing" {g}; especially when they had got through the Red sea, their enemies drowned, and they quite clear of them, Ex 15:1. And when they are called "his chosen", this opens another source of those blessings to them, not only the promise and covenant of God, but their election of God, which was free and sovereign, to choose them above all people; not because they were better or more than others, but because he loved them; and hence he did all the above things for them. In like manner when God's elect are in the effectual calling, brought out of bondage to liberty, out of darkness to light, out of an horrible pit, and have their feet set on a rock; are brought to Christ and into his church, and have a place and a name there; it is with exceeding great joy and gladness to them; and to the church above shall they at last be brought with everlasting joy on their heads, Isa 35:10.

{f} auwyw "ideo adduxit", Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis. {g} hnrb "in ovatione", Montanus; "cum jubilo", Tigurine version, Michaelis; "cum cantu", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Psalms 105:44

Ver. 44. And gave them the lands of the Heathen,.... The countries of the seven nations that dwelt in Canaan; the Lord did it, who had a right to do it, being the possessor of heaven and earth; and who was provoked unto it by the sins of these Heathens, as well as promised it to his people the Israelites.

And they inherited the labour of the people; dwelled in the houses they had built, which they found full of all good things; enjoyed the vineyards and olive trees they had planted, and possessed the wells which they had dug, **De 6:10**. In like manner the heavenly Canaan is enjoyed by the saints without any labour of theirs; this inheritance is not of the law, nor of the works of it, it is the gift of God, **Ro 4:14**.

Psalms 105:45

Ver. 45. That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws,.... All this the Lord did for them, to engage them by his goodness to them to observe the statutes he appointed them, and the laws he gave them; the contrary to which the Canaanites had done, which caused him to cast them out of the land; but on these his people he heaped benefits, thereby to influence them to a cheerful obedience to his will; and this was all he required of them, and the least that they could do, being so highly favoured by him. And this is the end of our spiritual and eternal redemption by Christ, and of our effectual calling by his grace and Spirit, that we be zealous of good works; live unto righteousness, live to him that died for us; glorify him with our bodies and spirits, which are his; and be holy in all manner of conversation.

Praise ye the Lord, all the Israelites ought to have done so, upon the remembrance of the manifold instances of the divine goodness to them, recorded in this psalm; and so the spiritual Israel of God ought to praise him for their redemption by Christ, out of a worse than Egyptian bondage, the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law; and for their calling into liberty, and to marvellous light; for their meetness for heaven, and right unto it; they should praise him now with joyful lips, as they will in the other world to all eternity.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 106:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 106

This psalm is without the name of its author, as the Syriac interpreter observes. Aben Ezra, on Ps 106:47, says, that one of the wise men of Egypt (perhaps Maimonides) was of opinion that it was written in the time of the judges, when there was no king in Israel; and another, he says, thought it was written in Babylon: but he was of opinion it was wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, or by a prophetic spirit, concerning their present captivity; and so Kimchi. The petition in Ps 106:47, "gather us from among the Heathen", has led most interpreters to conclude that it was written either in the Babylonish captivity, or, as some, in the times of Antiochus: but by comparing it with 1Ch 16:7, it appears that it was written by David, at the time of the bringing up of the ark to Zion; since the first and two last verses of it are there expressly mentioned, in the psalm he gave Asaph to sing on that occasion, Ps 106:34, who therein might have respect to the Israelites that had been taken captive by some of their neighbours, as the Philistines, and still retained; though there is no difficulty in supposing that David, under a prophetic spirit, foresaw future captivities, and represents those that were in them. As the preceding psalm treats of the mercies and favours God bestowed upon Israel, this of their sins and provocations amidst those blessings, and of the goodness of God unto them; that notwithstanding he did not destroy them from being a people; for which they had reason to be thankful.

Ver. 1. Praise ye the Lord,.... Or "hallelujah"; which, according to the Arabic version, is the title of the psalm; and so it stands in the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions. Several psalms following begin in like manner; it begins as the former ended, and ends as it begins; praise being due to God at all times, and on all occasions.

O give thanks unto the Lord: always, for all things, temporal and spiritual, since not worthy of any: or, confess unto the Lord {h}; his great goodness, and your unworthiness; and all your sins and transgressions committed against him, who only can pardon.

For he is good; essentially, solely and originally; is communicative and diffusive of his goodness; is the author of all good, and of no evil; and is gracious and merciful, and ready to forgive.

For his mercy endureth for ever; notwithstanding the sins of his people; though he may sometimes hide his face from them, and rebuke them in his providence; and though he causes grief by so doing, he still has compassion upon them, his mercy continues towards them; yea, his mercies are new every morning, as to temporal things; and spiritual mercies, the sure mercies of David, redemption, remission of sins, and sanctification, issue in eternal life; the mercy of God is from eternity to eternity: these are reasons why he should be praised, and thanks be given, to him.

{h} hwhyl wdwh "confitemini Domino", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Psalms 106:2

Ver. 2. Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord?.... Or powers {i}; to which answers the Greek word for the miracles of Christ, Mt 11:20, and Kimchi here restrains them to the wonders wrought in Egypt, and at the Red sea: but they may as well be extended to the mighty acts of God, and the effects of his power, in the creation of all things out of nothing; in the sustaining and government of the world; in the redemption of his people by Christ; in the conversion of sinners, and in the final perseverance of the saints; in all which there are such displays of the power of God as cannot be uttered and declared by mortal tongues.

Who can show forth all his praise? all those things done by him, worthy of praise, they are so many and so great? see Ps 40:5.

{i} twrwbg "potentias", V. L. Michaelis; "virtutes", Cocceius.

Psalms 106:3

Ver. 3. Blessed are they that keep judgment,.... Or "observe" {k} it; the righteous judgment of God on wicked men; by which he is known in his justice, holiness, truth, and faithfulness; and by which the inhabitants of the earth observing it, learn to do righteousness, as follows: or else it may intend the word of God, his laws, statutes, and ordinances, after called his judgments, Ps 19:9, which should be observed and kept, as the rule of our actions, walk, and conversation.

[And] he that doeth righteousness at all times; continually believes in Christ for righteousness, and puts on that as his justifying righteousness; whereby he becomes righteous as he is, **1Jo 3:7**, and performs acts of righteousness from a principle of grace, as a fruit of regeneration, and an evidence of it, **1Jo 2:29**, that does it with right views, aims, and ends; not to be justified and saved by it, but because God requires it; and it is for his glory, and to testify subjection to him, and thankfulness for favours received from him. And this is to be done at all times; we should never be weary of well doing, but be always abounding in good works; and happy are those that will be found so doing, such are

"blessed" persons: not that their blessedness lies in or arises from righteousness done by them; but this is descriptive of such that are blessed in Christ with the remission of sins, and his justifying righteousness. And these are the proper persons to show forth the mighty acts and praise of the Lord; they are most capable of it, and more likely to perform it with acceptance than any other; see
Ps 50:14.

{k} yrmv "observarent", Junius & Tremellius; "observantium", Gejerus.

Psalms 106:4

Ver. 4. Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people,.... The Lord has a special and peculiar people, whom he has chosen, taken into covenant, given to his Son, redeemed by him, who are called by grace, and brought to glory: to these he bears a peculiar favour, loves with an everlasting love; which he has shown in the choice of them; in the gift of his Son to them; in their regeneration, and eternal salvation. Now nothing can be more desirable than an interest in this favour, in which is life, spiritual and eternal; is the strength and security of believers, the source of their comfort, and the foundation of their happiness: to be remembered with this is to have a view of interest in it, a comfortable sensation of it, and an application of benefits by it.

O visit me with thy salvation; a prayer, either for the coming of Christ, as God's salvation, promised, expected, and wished for; or, however, for an application of spiritual salvation to be wrought out by him; for a view of interest in it; to have the joys and comforts of it now, and the full possession of it hereafter. A gracious and desirable visit this! The ends of such requests, or of such a visit, follow:

Psalms 106:5

Ver. 5. That I may see the good of thy chosen,.... The elect, according to the foreknowledge of God; who are chosen in Christ to holiness and happiness, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth unto salvation by him; the vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory, both of Jews and Gentiles. The "good" of those is not any goodness of their own, for there is none in them naturally; they are by nature no better than others, none are good, nor do good, no, not one: but the goodness of God laid up for them, and bestowed on them; the blessings of goodness with which Christ is preparing for them; all the good things secured for them in a well ordered covenant; which they partake of in time, and to eternity. To "see" these is not to have a superficial, notional, knowledge of them, as hypocrites may have; or a distant view of them, as Balaam, and the rich man in hell; but to have an experience of them, possess them, and enjoy them.

That I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation; all the nations of the world are the Lord's; but there is a chosen generation, an holy nation, that is peculiarly his; a nation taken out of a nation, nay, taken out of all the nations that are upon earth: and these have a joy peculiar to them, which foreigners know nothing of, and strangers intermeddle not with; a spiritual joy in the Holy Ghost; a rejoicing in Christ Jesus, in his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and in hope of the glory of God; and such joy is desirable, a joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

That I may glory with thine inheritance; the same with his chosen people and nation: for the Lord's people is his portion, and the lot of his inheritance; they are chosen for an inheritance, given to Christ as such, with which he is well pleased, esteeming them a goodly heritage; they are his purchased possession, his jewels and peculiar treasure. These "glory" not in themselves, in their strength and wisdom, their riches and righteousness; but in Christ and in his righteousness, and in what he is made unto them. And the psalmist desires to join with them, and glory in what they did, and in no other; and unite with them in giving glory to God and Christ, now and hereafter, for his salvation, and all good things from him.

Psalms 106:6

Ver. 6. We have sinned with our fathers,.... Sinned in their first father Adam; derived a corrupt nature from their immediate ancestors; sinned after the similitude of their transgressions; sinned after their example, in like manner as they did; guilty of the same gross enormities as they were: though sufficiently warned by the words of the prophets, and by punishments inflicted, they continued their sins, a constant series and course of them, and filled up the measure of their iniquities; they rose up in their stead an increase of sinful men, to augment the fierce anger of God, Nu 32:14. And this the psalmist, in the name of the people of Israel, confesses, as it was his and their duty and interest so to do, Le 26:40, and as we find it was usual with Old Testament saints, **Jer 3:25**.

We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly; this heap of words is used to denote not only the multitude of their sins, but the aggravated circumstances of them; that they had committed all manner of sins, not sins of ignorance, frailty, and infirmity only; but presumptuous sins, sins against light and knowledge, grace and mercy; sins against both tables of the law, against God and their neighbour; and these attended with many aggravations: all which a sensible sinner is ready to make a frank and ingenuous confession of, and forsake; and such an one finds mercy with a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin: this form of confession is followed by Solomon and Daniel, **1Ki 8:47**.

Psalms 106:7

Ver. 7. Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt,.... Or, "our fathers in Egypt" {l}; while they were there, they did not understand, or wisely consider and attend unto, the miracles there wrought, the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians. These were done in their sight, they saw them with their eyes; yet had not hearts to perceive them, and understand the true use and design of them: not only that these were for the destruction of their enemies, and for their deliverance from them; but that they were proofs of the power of God, and of his being the one only and true God, in opposition to the idols of the Egyptians; and that he only ought to be adhered unto, worshipped, and trusted in. Had they adverted to these things, they would not so easily have given in to a murmuring and repining spirit, to a distrust of the power and providence of God, and to idolatry, as they did; see De 29:2, something of this kind may be observed in the disciples of Christ, **Mr 6:52**.

They remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; the mercies of God bestowed on his people are many, both temporal and spiritual; there is a multitude of them; the sum of them is great, it cannot well be said how great it is: but though they are so many as not to be reckoned up in order, yet a grateful remembrance of them should be kept up; it is sinful to forget them, and argues great ingratitude. Past mercies should be remembered, both for the glory of God, and to encourage faith and hope in him, with respect to future ones, as well as to preserve from sinning against him. The stupidity and ingratitude of this people, here confessed, were the source of their rebellion against God, as follows:

but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea; or, "sea of Suph" {m}; so called, either from a city of this name, which it washed, as Hillerus {n} thinks; see Nu 21:14 or from the sedge and weeds in it, or reeds and rushes that grew upon the banks of it. When they were come hither, though just brought out of Egyptian bondage, and had seen the wonders the Lord had done; and though now in the utmost distress, the Egyptian army behind them, and the sea before them; yet neither past mercies nor present danger could keep them from rebelling against the Lord. They provoked him by their language to Moses;

because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Ex 14:11. The Targum is,

"but they rebelled against thy word."

{l} Myrumb wnytwba "patres nostri in Aegypto", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {m} Pwo Myb "in mari Suph", Pagninus, Vatablus, Schmidt; "in mare carecti", Montanus; "mare algosum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {n} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 128, 940.

Psalms 106:8

Ver. 8. Nevertheless, he saved them for his name's sake,.... Not for any worth or worthiness in them; not for their righteousness sake, for they were a rebellious and disobedient people; but for his name's sake, because his name was called upon them, and he was called the God of the Hebrews, as Aben Ezra observes; and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, their ancestors; to whom he had promised the land of Canaan, and was their covenant God; and because of his covenant, and of his divine perfections, and the glory of them, which were engaged to make it good; therefore he saved them, see Eze 20:9. And so the spiritual Israel of God are saved, not for any superior excellencies in them, for they are in no wise better than others; nor for their righteousness sake; but to display the wisdom and faithfulness of God, his grace and mercy, his justice and holiness, power, goodness, and truth. And so here it follows;

that he might make his mighty power to be known; not only among the Israelites, but among the nations of the world; who, had he not saved them, might have thought, and said, that it was for want of power, and that he could not do it; see **De 9:28**.

Psalms 106:9

Ver. 9. He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up,.... By sending a strong east wind, which drove the waters back, and made the sea a dry land, Ex 14:21.

So he led them through the depths; that is, the deep waters of the sea, which were cast up as an heap, and stood as a wall on each side, through which they passed.

As through the wilderness; or rather, "as on a plain"; for a passage through a wilderness where no roads are, and many obstructions be, is not easy; and so it is manifestly to be understood in Isa 63:13, where Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it a plain and smooth ground, a champaign country; and so the word is used for a plain, in opposition to mountains, in **Jer 9:10**, and then the sense is, that God led them through the sea, being dried up, as if they were led through a plain and open country, where was nothing to obstruct their march; an emblem of baptism, 1Co 10:1, and of the passage of the people of God through this world; See Gill on "Ps 78:13".

Psalms 106:10

Ver. 10. And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them,.... As Pharaoh and his people did, because of their numerous increase, which they endeavoured to prevent; and still more because of the plagues inflicted on them; and now because they were got away from them, and therefore pursued them in great wrath and indignation,
Ex 15:9.

And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy; the same thing in different words; so the Lord Christ has saved and redeemed his people out of the hand of all their spiritual enemies; and those that hate them and war against them, as sin, Satan, and the world, **Lu 1:71**.

Psalms 106:11

Ver. 11. And the waters covered their enemies,.... They pursuing the Israelites into the sea, the waters returned, and covered Pharaoh and all his host, and drowned them, so that they sunk as a stone, and as lead into the bottom of the sea, Ex 14:28.

There was not one of them left; to return back to Egypt, and give an account of what became of the army, Ex 14:28, an emblem this of the utter destruction of all our spiritual enemies by Christ; who has not only saved us from them, but has entirely destroyed them; he has made an end of sin, even of all the sins of his people; he has spoiled Satan and his principalities and powers; he has abolished death, the last enemy, and made his saints more than conquerors over all. Likewise it may be a representation of the destruction of the wicked at the last day, who will be all burnt up at the general conflagration, root and branch, not one will be left; see **Mal 4:1**.

Psalms 106:12

Ver. 12. Then believed they his words,.... And not till then; for this is observed, not to their commendation, but to show the slowness of their hearts to believe; they believed on sight, but not before, as Thomas did; whereas, "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed", Joh 20:29. When they saw the Egyptians dead on the sea shore, then they believed the Lord, and his servant Moses; what he said by his servant Moses, that he would save them from the Egyptians, whom they should see no more, that is, alive, Ex 14:13. The Targum is,

"and they believed in the name of his Word."

They sang his praise; Moses with the men, and Miriam with the women; the song is recorded Ex 15:1 and thus when the people of God have got the victory over the antichristian beast, they will stand on a sea of glass and sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, Re 15:2.

Psalms 106:13

Ver. 13. They soon forgat his works,.... The miracles he wrought in Egypt, the deliverance of them from thence with a mighty hand and outstretched arm, and the leading them through the Red sea as on dry land, and destroying all their enemies; all these they soon forgot, for they had gone but three days' journey into the wilderness after this, ere they began to murmur and show distrust of the power and providence of God, Ex 15:22, it is in the Hebrew text, "they made haste, they forgat his works" {o}; as soon as they were out of Egypt, they were for entering into the land of Canaan at once, and were much displeased that they were not immediately led into it.

They waited not for his counsel; they did not ask counsel of God, though it belongs to him, and he is wonderful in it, and does all things after the counsel of his own will; nor would they take it when given by Moses and Joshua; they did not choose to wait his time and way of working; they were for limiting the Holy One of Israel to their time and way; they were for being in the land of Canaan before his time; and were for eating flesh, when it was his counsel to feed on manna he provided for them every day.

{o} wxkv wrhm "festinaverunt, obliti sunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, &c.

Psalms 106:14

Ver. 14. But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,.... Or, "lusted a lust" {p} as in Nu 11:4 to which story there related this refers; they were not content with the manna they had every day, though very nourishing and of a sweet taste; they lusted after the fish and flesh of Egypt, and other things they ate there; so that this was not a natural lust, or craving after food and drink, to satisfy nature, which would not have been criminal; but a voluptuous last to gratify their appetite: it was lusting after evil tidings, as the apostle interprets it, 1Co 10:6, lust after sinful things, or any unlawful object, or after anything in an unlawful way, is sin.

And tempted God in the desert; which is expressly forbidden by a law which our Lord referred to when he was tempted by Satan in the wilderness: a very ungrateful action this, since God tempts no man to sin; a very daring impiety, a sin of the first magnitude, and which lay in making experiments, in trying whether the presence of God was among them or not; and putting God as it were on proving that he had power sufficient to provide for them in the wilderness; see Ex 17:7. It seems it was Jesus Christ whom they tempted, from whence it appears that he is truly God, 1Co 10:9. Both in this and the preceding clause an emphasis lies on the place where all this was done, the wilderness or desert, where God had done such great things for them, and where they could not help themselves, but were wholly and immediately dependent on him.

{p} hwat wwaty "concupierunt concupiscentiam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus,

&c.

Psalms 106:15

Ver. 15. And he gave them their request,.... Flesh and feathered fowl in great abundance; see Ps 78:27. So God sometimes gives to wicked men what they ask for, as much as they can desire, yea, more than heart could wish.

But sent leanness into their soul: or "body"; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, "he sent fulness into their souls"; he gave them flesh to the full, even to a nausea; they fed too heartily on it, and were surfeited with it; which not being digested brought a repletion, and issued in a consumption; or rather death, immediate death, is meant, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it; for while the flesh was in their mouths, and they were chewing it between their teeth, the wrath of God came upon them and slew them, Nu 11:33. It is true in a spiritual sense, that while the bodies of wicked men are fed and pampered, their souls are starved, and at last eternally lost; as the rich man's in the Gospel, who fared sumptuously every day: and worldly professors are very lean ones; such who mind earth and earthly things never thrive in spirituals; and either they soon drop their profession, err from the faith, and turn apostates; or, if they continue, the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word; so that it is unprofitable to them, not being mixed with faith by them; and hence leanness under the best of means: yea, there is sometimes a leanness in the souls of the people of God, when corruptions prevail, the graces of the spirit are low in exercise; when there is a want of a spiritual appetite to the word; and when they fall into bad company, or do not improve conversation with one another in a spiritual way; or are too much taken up, ensnared, and entangled with the things of the world; see Isa 24:16.

Psalms 106:16

Ver. 16. They envied Moses also in the camp,.... That he should be generalissimo there, have the sole command of the people, and be their leader and chief magistrate. Gifts qualifying men for civil government are from the Lord, and these commonly draw the envy of others upon them; who, though they pretend patriotism and the good of their country, yet seek themselves; and would be in the places of those they envy and speak against; which was the case of Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Reuben, who thought themselves as fit, and had a better right, as being the sons of Jacob's firstborn, to command, than Moses.

And Aaron the saint of the Lord; who was not only a holy good man, but was separated from his brethren, sanctified, and put into the priest's office, and this drew upon him the envy of many of the Levites, at the head of whom was Korah, a Levite; these envied that he should be the high priest, and that this office should be restrained to his family; now the envy to each of these is ascribed to the whole body of the people, though discovered only in some, because it was not opposed by them; see Nu 16:1.

Psalms 106:17

Ver. 17. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan,.... One of the heads of the conspirators against Moses and Aaron; the earth clave asunder under him and his company; opened itself, or its mouth, and devoured them at once. This was a new, marvellous, and unheard of thing, and which manifestly showed the divine displeasure and resentment at their proceedings; and served greatly to confirm the authority and office of Moses and Aaron; see Nu 16:30.

And covered the company of Abiram; another of the heads of the confederacy. Korah is not mentioned, though the earth swallowed up him and all that belonged to him, their houses and their goods; some think the reason is because it was well known that this was his case, when Dathan and Abiram are not so expressly mentioned in the history by Moses; as also because the sons of Korah were now in esteem as singers; nor is On the son of Peleth mentioned, because, as Kimchi says, he repented, and desisted from the conspiracy.

Psalms 106:18

Ver. 18. And a fire was kindled in their company,.... This seems to be the company of Korah, or however a part of it, the two hundred and fifty men that had censers, and so were of the Levitical race, as Korah was; this fire came from the Lord out of heaven.

The flame burned up the wicked; the two hundred and fifty men with censers, Nu 16:35, this was an emblem of that fire which shall consume those that hurt the witnesses; or of that vengeance of eternal fire which wicked men will suffer for ever.

Psalms 106:19

Ver. 19. They made a calf in Horeb,.... A golden one, of the earrings of gold which were in the ears of their wives, sons, and daughters; these they took and melted down, and cast into the figure of a calf, or an ox, as it is afterwards said, in imitation of the Egyptians, who worshipped the ox; a people that had used them ill, from whose bondage they were just delivered; on whom they had seen the judgments of God inflicted, and who were notoriously wicked and an idolatrous people, and yet these they imitated; and, which was still a greater aggravation, this they did in Horeb, the mountain in which God appeared in so terrible a manner, with thunder and lightnings, and in fire, out of which he spoke to them; and when he gave them a body of laws, among which were one that forbid the worshipping of graven images; and yet they made and worshipped one in this very place, from whence they received this law; as follows.

And worshipped the molten image; when fashioned with a graving tool, and made a molten calf, they said, these be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of Egypt; and they brought their burnt offerings and peace offerings, and ate and drank before it, and danced about it; all which were acts of idolatrous worship, Ex 32:1. This was so heinous a sin, that the Jews say it is not expiated to this day, and that there is no punishment comes upon them but there is an ounce of the golden calf in it {q}.

{q} T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 80. 4.

Psalms 106:20

Ver. 20. Thus they changed their glory,.... God, who is glorious in all the perfections of his nature, and is glory itself, and was the glory of these people; it was their greatest honour that they had knowledge of him, nearness to him, the true worship of him among them, and that they were worshippers of him; and who, though he is unchangeable in himself, may be said to be changed when another is substituted and worshipped in his room, or worshipped besides him; which was what the Heathen did, and in which the Israelites exceeded them, **Ro 1:23**, the Targum is, "they changed the glory of their Lord."

Into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass; which was monstrous stupidity, to leave the worship of the true God, El Shaddai, God all sufficient, all powerful, that stands in need of nothing, but upholds and supports all creatures in being, and provides them with necessaries; and worship an ox, yea, the figure of one that eats grass, that lives on hay, and is supported by that which is so weak and withering; the Targum adds,

"and makes dung;"

or defiles itself with it, as the ox does while it is eating grass; Jarchi observes, there is nothing more abominable and filthy than an ox when it is eating grass, which then makes much dung, and defiles itself; this the Targumist adds, to make the worship of such a creature the more contemptible.

Psalms 106:21

Ver. 21. They forgat God their Saviour,.... Not only forgat the works of God, Ps 106:13, but forgat God that did those mighty works; forgat that there was a God; or however forgat him that is the only true and living God, when they said of the molten image, "these are thy gods, O Israel"; and what aggravated their crime was, they forgot that God that had saved them in so wonderful a manner out of the hand of their enemies, for his own name's sake; and had led them safely through the Red sea as on dry land, and destroyed those that hated them.

Which had done great things in Egypt: meaning the ten plagues on the Egyptians, and the deliverance of the Israelites from them.

Psalms 106:22

Ver. 22. Wondrous works in the land of Ham,.... The same with Egypt; Mizraim, from whence Egypt had its name, being the son of Ham;
See Gill on "Ps 78:51".
See Gill on "Ps 105:23", and these wondrous things are the same plagues as before, so called because they exceeded the power of nature; the magicians themselves confessed the finger of God in one of them; and they were all of them such as might be truly said to be miracles.

And terrible things by the Red sea; or "in it", as the Syriac and, other versions; as the utter destruction of Pharaoh and his army, not one being left, which was doing terrible things in righteousness; and by which it appeared that with God is terrible majesty; and who shows himself to be terrible in his works, and even to the kings and princes of the earth; but all these things were soon forgot, which it might have been thought, being so amazing and terrible, would have made a lasting impression on them.

Psalms 106:23

Ver. 23. Therefore he said that he would destroy them,.... He said in his word, the Targum adds; he thought within himself he would; he seemed determined in his own mind to destroy them, being provoked at their wretched forgetfulness of him, and their idolatry; he said to Moses,

let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, Ex 32:10. The decree indeed was not gone forth, but there was such an appearance of displeasure as if ruin was determined; and a great number was destroyed, and the whole body was threatened.

Had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach; made between God and the Israelites by their sin; the allusion is either to an hedge broken down, at which a spoiler enters, unless made up, Eze 22:30, or to a breach made in the wall of a besieged city, at which the besieger enters, unless stopped by the besieged, Isa 30:13, or to the bank or dam of a river broken down, which lets in a flood of waters, **2Sa 5:20**. So Moses made up the hedge, and stood in the gap; he presented himself to God, rushing in like a man of war, and pouring out his wrath like an inundation of waters: this is to be understood of his fervent and importunate prayer to God on the behalf of this people, and which succeeded.

To turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them;
Ex 32:11 so the Targum,

"unless Moses his chosen had rose up and strengthened, or prevailed in his prayer before him to turn away his wrath from destroying."

This shows the power and efficacy of prayer, and of what avail it is with God, especially the prayer of his elect; it was Moses, his chosen, that prayed, a choice servant of his; and whom he had chosen to everlasting life, as well as to be the deliverer, guide, and governor of Israel; see Lu 18:7. Herein he was an eminent type of Christ, as in other things; as Moses was a mediator between God and the people of Israel, so is Christ between God and his people. Sin is a transgression of God's law, a breaking of his statutes, which he has set as an hedge, fence, or wall, about man; and this has made a breach between God and man; which lets in the wrath of God as a flood, and justice as an armed man: and terrible it is to consider there is no standing before him, and making up the breach; but Christ has interposed as a surety, made satisfaction to law and justice, and procured peace and reconciliation; and so, by his atonement and intercession, has made up the breach, appeased the wrath of God, and turned it away, and prevented the ruin and destruction of his people.

Psalms 106:24

Ver. 24. Yea, they despised the pleasant land,.... Or "land of desire" {r}; the land of Canaan; a very delightful and desirable country, the glory of all lands, a land that abounded with everything for necessity and pleasure. The spies themselves, that brought an ill report of it, owned it was a land flowing with milk and honey; but that there were such difficulties to possess it which they thought insuperable: and hence the people despised it, inasmuch as, when they were bid to go and possess it, they refused, and did not choose to be at any difficulty in subduing the inhabitants of it, or run any risk or hazard of their lives in taking it, though the Lord had promised, to give it them, and settle them in it; but they seemed rather inclined to make themselves a captain, and return to Egypt, when they were just on the borders of Canaan; which was interpreted as despising the land, Nu 14:1. This was a type of heaven, the good land afar off; the better country, the land of promise and rest; in which is fulness of provisions, and where there will be no hunger and thirst; where flows the river of the water of life, and stands the tree of life, bearing all manner of fruits; where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore: the most delightful company of Father, Son, and Spirit, angels and glorified saints; and nothing to disturb their peace and pleasure, neither from within nor from without. And yet this pleasant land may be said to be despised by such who do not care to go through any difficulty to it; to perform the duties of religion; to bear reproach for Christ's sake; to go through tribulation; to walk in the narrow and afflicted way, which leads unto it: and by all such who do not care to part with their sinful lusts and pleasure; but prefer them and the things of this world to the heavenly state.

They believed not his word; his word of promise, that he would be with them, and lead them into the pleasant land, and put them into the possession of it: which disbelief of his word was highly provoking to him; and therefore he swore they should not enter into his rest; and because of their unbelief they did not, Nu 14:11. This is a very heinous sin, to disbelieve God that is true, and cannot lie; it is to make him a liar; nothing can more dishonour him; it is a departure from him, very provoking to him, and of very dangerous consequence; unbelievers shall have their part and portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, Re 21:8.

{r} hdmx Urab "in term desiderii", Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 106:25

Ver. 25. But murmured in their tents,.... Throughout their tents; the murmuring was general; they murmured often; but what is here referred to seems to be their murmuring upon the report of the spies, Nu 14:2. To murmur against God and his providence is a very great evil; and which generally proceeds on one or other of these two things; either because men have not so much of the good things of this world as others have; or because they endure more afflictions, and so are ready to charge the ways of God with inequality; not considering that God is a Sovereign, and may do with his own what he pleases; and that they are deserving of nothing at his hands; and that their punishment or chastisement is less than their sins deserve.

And hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord; to go up and possess the land; they disbelieved his word, and were disobedient to his command. The use the apostle makes of this, see **Heb 3:7**, and of their other provocations, of their lust, idolatry, fornication, tempting of God, and murmuring against him, see 1Co 10:6.

Psalms 106:26

Ver. 26. Therefore he lifted up his hand against them,.... A gesture used in swearing, Ge 14:22. So the Targum understands it here,

"and he lifted up his hand with an oath, because of them:"

and so it is interpreted by Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech; and agrees with Nu 14:28. The same gesture was used by the Heathens in swearing, as by Latinus {s}. Or he lifted up his hand, in a way of judgment, to strike the blow; and which, when it lights on man with the indignation of his anger, falls heavy; see Isa 26:11. To overthrow them in the wilderness; as he did all the murmuring generation that came out of Egypt, all but Caleb and Joshua; all from twenty years and upwards, their carcasses fell in the wilderness; there they were wasted, consumed, and died, Nu 14:32.

{s} "----Tenditque ad sidera dextram--Terram, mare, sidera juro", Virg. Aeneid. 12.

Psalms 106:27

Ver. 27. To overthrow their seed also among the nations,.... Their posterity was not overthrown in the wilderness; they were spared to possess the land their fathers despised. This respects later times, as does what follows:

and to scatter them in the lands; which Kimchi explains by the discomfiture of them by the Amalekites and Canaanites, when they presumed, contrary to the will of God, to go up to the top of the hill; and by Arad's taking some of them prisoner, afterwards, Nu 14:45. But this was not done, nor to be done, in the wilderness: but the meaning is, that God lifted up his hand in the wilderness, and sware there, as Ezekiel says, Eze 20:23, that he would scatter them and disperse them among the Heathen; that is, at one time or another; which he did in part at the Babylonish captivity, and completely by the Romans: which is now their case, and is a standing proof of this prophecy, and an accomplishment of the oath of God.

Psalms 106:28

Ver. 28. They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor,.... Or to the idol Peor, as the Targum. Baal, which signifies Lord or master, was a common name for an idol in many countries; wherefore, to distinguish one from another, an additional name was used. Baalzephon was the god of the Egyptians; Baalzebub the god of the Ekronites; and here Baalpeor the god of the Moabites: for the fact referred to was committed when the children of Israel were on the borders of Moab, and when Balak sent for Balaam to curse them; who at last advised him to draw them to commit fornication with the daughters of Moab; who might then prevail upon them to commit idolatry, which would

bring the wrath of God upon them. And in this he succeeded. The above idol had its name of Peor either from the obscene actions done in the worship of it, too filthy to be related, and which, it is thought, are referred to in **Ho 9:10**. It seems to be the Priapus of the Heathens. Or, as others, from a mountain of this name, where was the house or temple in which it was worshipped: hence we read of Mount Peor, and of Bethpeor,
Nu 23:28. So Suidas {t} says, Baal is Saturn, and Peor the place where he was worshipped. Or else from some great man of this name, Lord Peor; who being of great fame and note among the Moabites, for some extraordinary things done by him, was deified and worshipped after his death; as was common among the Heathens. To this idol the Israelites joined or "yoked" themselves, as the word {u} signifies: they withdrew themselves from the yoke of the true God, whose yoke is easy, and put their necks under the yoke of an idol; which was to be unequally yoked: or they were tempted unto it; they committed spiritual whoredom with it, which is idolatry; they left their first and lawful husband, to whom they were married, and joined themselves to an idol, and cleaved to it. The phrase is expressive of their fellowship with it, and with the idolatrous worshippers of it; they devoted and gave up themselves to the worship of it; just as the true worshippers of God are said to join themselves to him, Jer 50:6, they were, as the Septuagint renders it, initiated into the rites and mysteries of this idol.

And ate the sacrifices of the dead; which were offered up to this lifeless statue. So idols are called the dead, in opposition to and distinction from the living God, **Isa 8:19**. Or they partook of the feasts which were kept in honour of their dead deified hero, Lord Peor; see the history in Nu 25:1. These were sacrifices offered to the Stygian Jupiter, or Pluto, called by the Phoenicians Mot {w}, the same with Chemosh, the god of the Moabites; and who also was Baalpeor, according to Jerom {x}.

{t} In voce beelfegwr. {u} wdmuy "conjugati sunt", Vatablus; "subdiderunt sese jugo", Gejerus. {w} Sanchoniatho apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 38. Vid. Castell. Annot. Samar. p. 13. in vol. 6. Lond. Polyglott. {x} Comment. in Esaiam, fol. 26. H.

Psalms 106:29

Ver. 29. Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions,.... Sin is an invention of man's: when our first parents sinned, they found out many inventions; and their posterity ever since have been inventors of evil things;

and man's invention is very quick at that work. All false doctrine and false worship are of men's finding out; all idolatrous practices are their inventions, and which are here intended; see Ps 106:39. And these are very provoking to God, who is jealous of his glory, and which is taken from him hereby; and even when he forgives such sins of men, he takes vengeance on their inventions, as in this case, Ps 99:8. For it follows:

and the plague brake in upon them: like an inundation of water, and carried off four and twenty thousand persons, Nu 25:9.

Psalms 106:30

Ver. 30. Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment,.... When none else would, he rose up in great zeal for the Lord of hosts; and took on him the work of a civil magistrate, and slew two persons of noble birth in the very act of fornication. The Targum is,

"he prayed"

and so the Syriac version

"he interceded with the Lord, that the plague might stop."

This he might do, as well as the other, though it is not elsewhere recorded, and in which he succeeded: but in the Talmud {y} it is observed that it is not said llpty (that is, "he prayed"), but
llpy, from whence may be learned, if it is proper to say so, that he executed judgments with his Maker. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, "he appeased"; made atonement for propitiation; and this is said of him, Nu 25:13.

And so the plague was stayed; it was restrained from proceeding further; no more execution was done by it. In this he was a type of Christ, who, by doing righteousness, by the atoning sacrifice of himself, and by his intercession, has appeased the wrath of God, and satisfied divine justice so that there is no condemnation to them that are interested in him; no evil of punishment shall befall them, nor plague come nigh them.

{y} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 82. 2.

Psalms 106:31

Ver. 31. And that was counted unto him for righteousness,.... Not for his justifying righteousness before God; for all the works of righteousness done by the best of men cannot justify them before him, much less a single action: but his executing judgment in the manner he did, or slaying the above two persons, was esteemed a righteous action by the Lord himself; who upon it caused the plague to cease, and likewise gave to Phinehas the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, and to his posterity; whereby the action had eternal honour put upon it, and was sufficiently secured from the calumny of men; who might condemn it as a rash action done by a private person, assuming the office of a public magistrate; and as being a cruel one, not giving the criminals time for repentance. But all this is set aside by the testimony of God himself, approving of it; and so it continues to be esteemed, as it is said it should,

unto all generations for evermore: whenever it is spoken of, it is spoken of with commendation, as a righteous action, as expressive of true zeal for the Lord of hosts. Moreover, the covenant made with him upon it, which confirmed the justness of it, that taking place in Zadok, a priest of his line, continued in it till the Messiah came, who is a Priest for ever: see Eze 44:15.

Psalms 106:32

Ver. 32. They angered him also at the waters of strife,.... Or, "at the waters of Meribah" {z}; that is, Meribahkadesh, as it is called in De 32:51 to distinguish it from Meribahrephidim, where also were waters of strife or contradiction; at which the people murmured and strove with the Lord, and greatly displeased him, Ex 17:7.

So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes; he was not suffered to go with them into the good land; though he most earnestly desired it, it could not be granted: but when he was just upon the borders of it, he is bid to go up to the mount, and take a view of it, and die; and all because of what was done at this place; see Nu 20:12.

{z} hbyrm ym le "super aquas Meribah", Montanus; "apud Memeriba", Tigurine version; "juxta aquas Meriba", Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 106:33

Ver. 33. Because they provoked his spirit;.... Though he was a very meek man, meeker than any upon the face of the earth, Nu 12:2, yet, being greatly provoked, let fall some passionate and undue expressions: and this was not only his sin, but the fault of those also that provoked him, and with this view it is mentioned. The Targum is,

"for they rebelled against his Holy Spirit;"

the Holy Spirit of God, as in Isa 63:10. Jarchi interprets it of Moses and Aaron provoking the Spirit of God; which sense is mentioned, by Aben Ezra and Kimchi; though they seem to prefer the former, and which seems best. Some interpret it of the Israelites, that they caused Moses and Aaron to provoke his Spirit.

So that he spake unadvisedly with his lips; that is, Moses spake,

saying, Hear now, ye rebels, must we, or "can we",

fetch you water out of this rock? Which words were spoken in an angry passionate way, calling them rebels, and expressing diffidence about getting water out of the rock; which was the thing that was so displeasing to God, because they did not believe him to sanctify him in the eyes of the children of Israel, Nu 25:10. Jarchi, as before, understands this of God, of his speaking, pronouncing, and declaring, that Moses and Aaron should not bring the congregation into the land of Canaan, Nu 25:18, and so the word "unadvisedly" may be left out, and only read, "he spake with his lips"; but the other sense is to be preferred.

Psalms 106:34

Ver. 34. They did not destroy the nations,.... Here begins an account of their sins and provocations, after they were settled in the land of Canaan. They did not destroy the inhabitants of the land, of the seven nations; whose land was given to them as an inheritance, and of which the Canaanites were dispossessed for their sins, and to be destroyed.

Concerning whom the Lord commanded them; that they should destroy them; the command is in **De 7:1**. God's commands are to be obeyed; they are neither to be added to, nor diminished from; his commands are transgressed and violated by sins of omission or commission; the Israelites might plead mercy, but this was no excuse to an express command: the same sin Saul was afterwards guilty of, with respect to one of these nations, 1Sa 15:2. Those spiritual Canaanites, the sinful deeds of the body, are to be mortified, and not indulged and spared, **Col 3:5**.

Psalms 106:35

Ver. 35. But were mingled among the Heathen,.... Not only dwelt among them, but made covenants and contracts, carried on trade and commerce, and intermarried with them, contrary to the express law of God, **De 7:2**. Nor should saints have communion with wicked men, especially in things sinful and superstitious, **2Co 6:14**.

And learned their works; not their civil works and actions, their trades and business, but their idolatrous works; of which a detail is given in the following verses: "evil communications corrupt good manners", 1Co 15:33.

Psalms 106:36

Ver. 36. And they served their idols,.... Of gold and silver, wood and stone; the works of men's hands, senseless creatures; which are nothing in the world, and bring grief and sorrow to the worshippers of them, from whence they have their name here given them; see Ps 16:4. They served "their" idols, the idols of the Canaanites, who were dispossessed of their land for their idolatries and other sins; and these Israelites were put in their place. They served those which they were ordered to destroy; they who knew the true God, whose servants they were, or ought to have been, and professed to be, and were so called; and yet served the idols of the nations driven out before them. Which were a snare unto them; either the Canaanites were, who were left in the land, with whom they mixed, and whose works they learned; these ensnared them, and drew them into idolatry, Jos 23:13, or the idols they worshipped, which were the cause of many evils and calamities, **Jud 2:3**, or the act of serving and worshipping them,
Ex 23:33. They were by these means like a bird or beast in a snare, and brought into trouble and distress, out of which they could not extricate themselves.

Psalms 106:37

Ver. 37. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils. Who have their name here given them from a word that signifies to waste and destroy, they being the destroyers of mankind. So the Targum renders it by ayqyzm, which signifies spirits noxious and hurtful; but R. Elias Levita, in his Tishbi, p. 233, says it is a mistake to derive it from the root which signifies to waste and destroy; for then he says the "daleth" should have a "dagesh"; but does not tell us from whence it is derived. De Dieu, on **Mt 9:32**, derives it from the Arabic word dav, "to rule", for these demons were heroes, princes who ruled over others, and so were reckoned among the gods. As Satan, the head of them, was a murderer from the beginning, the cause of the ruin of our first parents, and of all their posterity; and may be truly called, as the king of the locusts is, "Apollyon" or "Abaddon", **Joh 8:44** these the Israelites sacrificed unto, as the Gentiles did, Le 17:7 and not lambs and rams, sheep, goats, and bullocks, but their sons and daughters; which they not only caused to pass through the fire to Moloch, which was a lustration of them by the flame, or causing them to pass between two fires; but they sacrificed them to be devoured, and actually burned them; see **Jer 7:31**. From whence we may see of what a hardening nature sin is, and how by degrees persons may be brought to commit things the most shocking to nature, and which they some time before shuddered at. First, these Israelites mix themselves with the Heathens they spared, whom they should have destroyed; then they learn, by being among them, to do as they did, to walk in the vanity of their minds like them; and then they are enticed to serve their idols, and at last to sacrifice their sons and daughters to devils; which was no other than murder, and that of the most heinous nature: as follows.

Psalms 106:38

Ver. 38. And shed innocent blood,.... The blood of innocent persons; not that any of Adam's posterity, descending from him by ordinary generation, are strictly and properly innocent, or free from sin; self-righteous persons have thought themselves, touching the righteousness of the law, blameless; and some perfectionists have pretended to be free from sin, but are not such; they who are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and washed in his blood, are, so considered, all fair and without spot; are without fault before the throne, and unreproveable in the sight of God: but, considered in themselves, are not without sin; only the man Christ Jesus is perfectly holy and free from sin, being born of a virgin, under the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost; otherwise all descending from Adam sinned in him, are conceived in sin, and polluted with it; nor can a clean thing be brought out of an unclean, no, not one: though infants may be said to be innocent in comparison of adult persons, guilty of actual transgressions, who have lived in sin, and committed many gross iniquities; as also they may be so called as being undeserving of such barbarous and inhuman usage here mentioned.

Even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan; this was a further aggravation of their wickedness, that it was not only innocent blood, but the blood of their own children, they shed; their own flesh and blood, pieces of themselves; and their near alliance to them gave them no power over their lives; but, on the contrary, the nearer they were in blood to them, the greater and more horrid was their sin; and what still added to it was, that they were the idols of Canaan, of that people whom the Lord abhorred, and had drove out before them, and had given their land; to them they sacrificed them; so that here was a complication of wickedness in this affair.

And the land was polluted with blood; with innocent blood, the blood of their own children; with the sins of murder, as the Targum; which only can be cleansed with the blood of the murderers, Nu 35:33, even the land which the Lord separated from all others for his people; in which his tabernacle was placed, and his worship set up, and therefore called the holy land, **Zec 2:12**.

Psalms 106:39

Ver. 39. Thus were they defiled with their own works,.... Not the land only, but they themselves also; or "with their works" {a}, with the works of the Heathen they learned, Ps 106:35, or rather with their own works, the works of the flesh, especially their shocking idolatries: sin is of a defiling nature; it has defiled all men, it defiles all of men, all the faculties of their souls, and all the members of their bodies; nor can anything truly and thoroughly cleanse from it but the blood of Christ: even men's works of righteousness are as filthy rags and defiling, and much more their evil works.

And went a whoring with their own inventions; after other gods; idolatry is often in Scripture signified by whoredom; the idolatry of Israel and Judah is represented by two harlots and their lewd practices, in Eze 23:1 and hence the apostate church of Rome is compared to a whore, because of her idolatry, Re

17:1.

{a} Mhyvemb "operibus earum", Muis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 106:40

Ver. 40. Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people,.... Sin is the cause of wrath, which is compared to fire kindled by the breath of the Almighty, and is intolerable; this shows that the offence must be very great, as to incense the Lord against a people he had chosen above all others to be his peculiar people; as well as it was an aggravation, of their sin, so highly to provoke the Lord, whom they had vouched to be their God. There may be appearances of wrath for sin against those who are the Lord's people in the highest and best sense.

Insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance; the people of Israel, whom he had chosen for his inheritance, and were his portion, and the lot of his inheritance. This must be understood of the body of the people, not of every individual; not of the remnant according to the election of grace among them, of which there were some in all ages; for this would be contrary to his love, and the unchangeableness of it: and however not of the persons of his people, but of their sins; and of the appearances of his providence towards them, which look like wrath, indignation, and abhorrence; for God will not cast off his people, nor forsake his inheritance, Ps 94:14 the following verses explain this wrath and abhorrence. The Targum in the king's Bible is,

"the Word of the Lord abhorred,"

&c. see Zec 11:8.

Psalms 106:41

Ver. 41. And he gave them into the hand of the Heathen,.... In the times of the judges; as into the hands of the Mesopotamians, Moabites, Canaanites, Midianites, and Philistines, to whom they became tributaries; see the book of Judges.

And they that hated them ruled over them; as it was threatened and foretold they should, in case they did not observe the law of God, Le 26:17.

Psalms 106:42

Ver. 42. Their enemies also oppressed them,.... By taxes, and taking the increase of their fields and sustenance, which often obliged them to cry for a deliverer, who upon this was sent to them; see **Jud 2:9**.

And they were brought into subjection under their hand; or were humbled under their hand, as the Targum; they were not only made to submit to their enemies, but they were humbled before the Lord; brought to a sense of their sins, and acknowledgment of them, when the Lord appeared for their deliverance, as follows.

Psalms 106:43

Ver. 43. Many times did he deliver them,.... By means of the judges, Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, and others.

But they provoked him with their counsel; in asking a king, whom he gave in his anger, and took away in his wrath, Ho 13:11, and with their idolatries which they devised, setting up the calves at Dan and Bethel; and by taking counsel of others, and not of the Lord; seeking for help from the Assyrians and Egyptians, and trusting in them, Isa 30:1, all which was very provoking, and showed great ingratitude, after so many deliverances: or, "though they provoked him with their counsels" {b}; with their inventions, as in Ps 106:29, yet such were his grace and goodness, that he frequently wrought salvation for them.

And were brought low for their iniquity: or "when they were weakened", or "impoverished by their iniquity" {c} so that they could not help themselves; as they were particularly by the Midianites, **Jud 6:1**. Unless this should rather refer to some later times, as the times of Ahaz, when Judah was brought low for their transgressions, 2Ch 28:19 as also the time of the Babylonish captivity. Sin is of a weakening and impoverishing nature; it has weakened all mankind, and took from them their moral strength to do good; and has brought them to poverty and want; to be beggars an the dunghill; to a pit wherein is no water; and left them in a hopeless and helpless condition: yea, it brings the people of God oftentimes after conversion into a low estate, when God hides his face because of it; temptations are strong, grace is weak, and they become lukewarm and indifferent to spiritual things.

{b} hmxw "quamvis ipsi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {c} wkmyw "et attenuati essent", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Cocceius, Michaellis, Gejerus; "et in paupertatem devenerunt per suam iniquitatem", Tigurine version.

Psalms 106:44

Ver. 44. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction,.... Or "looked on them in distress" {d}; he saw their affliction, and had compassion on them; he was so far from abhorring and despising the affliction of the afflicted, that he pitied them and sympathized with them; in all their afflictions he was afflicted; he looked upon them with an eye of pity and concern, and helped them out of their troubles.

When he heard their cry; or their "prayer", as the Targum, and so other versions; crying is prayer; and it denotes vocal and vehement prayer, such as is put up to God in distress; and which he hears and answers; his ears are open to the cries of his people.

{d} Mhl rub aryw "et vidit in angustia eis", Montanus, Gejerus; so Musculus, Tigurine version.

Psalms 106:45

Ver. 45. And he remembered for them his covenant,.... At Sinai, according to Aben Ezra; rather that made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; see Ps 105:8, not their covenant who promised to hear and do all that the Lord commanded, and did it not; but his covenant, his promise of giving them the good land, and settling them in it: the Lord is ever mindful of the covenant of his grace for his people, for their good; he remembers the promises he has made, where they are in Christ; and so as to fulfil and apply them; he remembers the blessings of it, the sure mercies of David, and gives them; he remembers for whom it is made, and never forgets them; he remembers with whom it is made, with his Son, the surety, messenger, and Mediator of it; he remembers that he is their covenant God and Father, and will be so for evermore; he remembers his lovingkindness, which has been ever of old, which is the source and foundation of it.

And repented according to the multitude of his mercies; his mercies temporal and spiritual are many; and there is an abundance of mercy displayed especially in spiritual ones, in redemption, in regeneration, and in the forgiveness of sin. Or "according to the abundance of his grace", or "gracious benefits" {e}; there is an abundance of grace in his heart, in his Son, in his covenant, in salvation by Christ, and in every part of it; and which appears at conversion, as superabundant; and by this multitude of mercy, and abundance of grace, he is moved to "repent". This is sometimes denied of him; and indeed he never repents so as to change his mind, to alter his purposes, to revoke his promises or his gifts, these are all without repentance; but he sometimes changes his ways and his works, his conduct in Providence, and the course of it; and then he may be said to repent of the evil he threatened to do, or was doing, when he puts a stop to it; and instead of that bestows favours and blessings.

{e} wydox brk "secundum amplitudinem, seu multitudinem gratiarum suarum", Cocceius, Gejerus.

Psalms 106:46

Ver. 46. He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives. He not only pitied them himself, but caused them to be pitied by others, even by their enemies; he has the hearts of all men in his hands, and can turn them as he pleases; as he sometimes turned their hearts to hate his people, Ps 105:25, so he turned them to pity them, as he promised he would when they turned to him, 2Ch 30:9, so he did, by stirring up Cyrus to proclaim liberty to them, and his successors to encourage and assist in rebuilding their city and temple.

Psalms 106:47

Ver. 47. Save us, O Lord our God,.... Here the psalmist represents the people in captivity, and represents them as praying for deliverance; as well knowing that none but God could save them: and a prayer of this nature, with respect to spiritual salvation, supposes danger, and a sense of it; that they are not able to save themselves, nor any creature able to save them; only the Lord, who is both willing and able; and of this kind is the prayer of faith.

And gather us from among the Heathen; in Babylon, and other countries; See Gill on the title note "Ps 106:1".

To give thanks unto thy holy name; bring us out of captivity to our own land, to Jerusalem, to the temple there to give thanks to thy holy name for the merciful deliverance of us; see Ps 122:4.

And to triumph in thy praise; in thy salvation, in thy wondrous works, worthy of praise; or while praising thee: the word signifies to glory therein; and such who are sensible of the mercies they receive from the Lord will make their boast of him and them, and glory; see Ps 34:1.

Psalms 106:48

Ver. 48. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,.... God is to be blessed as the Father of mercies; as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and as the covenant God and Father of his people in him, of the true Israel of God: which is done by celebrating his blessedness in himself; by ascribing to him all blessedness enjoyed, as the author of it; and by giving him honour, glory, and blessing for it.

From everlasting to everlasting; here and hereafter, in time and to all eternity; from this world to that which is to come, as the Targum; and which Arama observes are the days of the Messiah.

And let all the people say, Amen; so be it; to giving thanks to God, to praising his name, and ascribing blessing to him.

Praise ye the Lord; or "hallelujah"; so these two words, "Amen, hallelujah", are joined together in Re 19:4. The psalm ends as it began; for though the greatest part of it is taken up in relating the sins of the people of Israel; yet as the Lord was merciful to them and forgave them, and notwithstanding bestowed great mercies on them, there was reason for praise and thanksgiving. Here ends the fourth part of the book of Psalms; the fifth part begins, with the following psalm.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 107:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 107

This psalm, from its style, and from its connection with the preceding psalms, seems to have been written by David. The two foregoing psalms respect the children of Israel; this is generally thought to concern all mankind, and its view to assert a general providence which attends all, in whatsoever condition and circumstance; and to encourage men in their distresses to cry unto the Lord. According to Kimchi, Aben Ezra, and others, four sorts of persons are mentioned, travellers through a wilderness, prisoners, sick persons, and such who use the seas; to which some add a fifth, husbandmen; these are instanced in, not to the exclusion of others, but from them it may be concluded that whatsoever state or condition persons may be in, they are known and taken notice of by the Lord, and are relieved by him when they call upon him. Some restrain the whole to the Israelites, as the Targum, R. Obadiah, Arama, and others, where they make any application; and others apply the psalm to New Testament times; and indeed, though the literal sense should be attended unto and preserved, yet it seems to be applicable to spiritual persons and things. The title of it in the Syriac version is pretty remarkable,

"it is said concerning Joab and Abiah the sons of Samuel, who recited the commandments of the Lord. God gathered the Jews out of captivity, and brought them out from Babylon. Also the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, gathered the Gentiles from the four corners of the world, by preaching to baptism."

Ver. 1. O give thanks unto the Lord,.... As all men should do, at all times and for all things; the psalm begins as the former does, and gives the same reasons for thanksgiving.

For he is good; and does good, and is the author of all good.

For his mercy endureth for ever; and men in every age are partakers of it.

Psalms 107:2

Ver. 2. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,.... That the Lord is good, and his mercy everlasting; since their redemption is a proof of his goodness, and an instance of his mercy; this is not to be understood of the Israelites redeemed from Egyptian bondage, or from the Babylonish captivity, though they had abundant reason to say as above; but rather of all such who are delivered from any sort of slavery, bondage, and confinement; whether from the power of a disease, or from a prison, or from wicked and unreasonable men; and from captivity in an enemy's country, where they have been used very severely; and as the providence of God is concerned in all such deliverances, thanks should be given him: it seems best to understand it of those who are spiritually redeemed by Christ, this phrase being frequently used of such, Isa 35:10, who may be said to be so, since Christ is the author of their redemption; they are redeemed, not by themselves, nor by any creature, but by the Lord; who being their God, and near kinsman, had a right to redeem them, and, being God, was able to do it, and who has effected it by his precious blood; so that he has a right unto them and a property in them, which this phrase also suggests; and for all which they have great reason to praise the Lord and his goodness, and sing the new song of redeeming love. Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy from all their sins which war against their souls; from Satan their implacable adversary, who is stronger than they; from the law, which curses and threatens them with damnation and death; from death itself, the last enemy, and indeed from the hand of all their enemies, be they who they may.

Psalms 107:3

Ver. 3. And gathered them out of the lands,.... This cannot have respect to the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt; for they were not then brought out of several countries, but from one land only: nor to the Babylonish captivity; for, though some might be gathered out of different provinces, yet not from east, west, north, and south, as here expressed. It best suits with the gathering of the redeemed in the effectual calling, and particularly the calling of the Gentiles in Gospel times; to which the title of the Syriac version before mentioned has respect. The elect of God are gathered in consequence of being redeemed, Zec 10:8, they are gathered out of the world, and from among the men of it; they are gathered to Christ, and by him; they are gathered into his churches, and to communion with them, and to a participation of all privileges and ordinances: and this is usually done by the ministering of the Gospel, which is sent into all the world for this purpose; and a distinguishing blessing of grace it is to be gathered out from the rest of the world, and favoured with such rich mercies. Such have reason to adore the grace of God, and to show forth his praise, who has called them by his grace, and separated them from others for himself.

From the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south; or, "from the sea" {f}; the southern sea, as the Targum; or the Red sea, the Arabian or Persian sea. The elect of God, and redeemed of the Lord, lie in all parts of the world; and from thence they are gathered by the ministry of the word unto Christ: this was fulfilled in the first times of the Gospel, and will be more so in the latter day; see
Isa 43:5.

{f} Mymw "et a mari", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c.

Psalms 107:4

Ver. 4. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way,.... Not the people of Israel, as the Targum. These seem not to be particularly intended, whatever allusion there may be to their passage through the wilderness to Canaan's land; but rather, in general, travellers through waste places, especially the wild deserts of Arabia; where the wind blowing the sand, covers the roads with it, so that frequently travellers lose their way, and wander about, till directed to it by one providence or another. Some compare this with the case of the Old Testament saints, mentioned in Heb 11:37 others with the church in the wilderness, and the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth,
Re 11:2. But it is certain that the redeemed and gathered are here meant; and this fitly describes their case, before and at effectual calling: they are in the wilderness of the people,
Eze 20:35, from whence they are gathered; are in a state of error and ignorance; are like straying sheep, gone out of the right way; and are as lost sheep, they have lost their way; and though there may be many ways that present unto them, and which they think bid fair to be the right way; yet the true way of peace, life, and salvation by Christ, they know not, while in a state of nature and unregeneracy; and when they come to be effectually called, they see themselves to be in a bewildered state and condition.

They found no city to dwell in; nor even to call at or lodge in, for miles together; which is the case of travellers in some parts, particularly in the deserts of Arabia. Spiritual travellers find no settlement, rest, peace, joy, and comfort, but in Christ; nor any indeed in this world, and the things of it; here they have no continuing city, Heb 13:14.

Psalms 107:5

Ver. 5. Hungry and thirsty,.... As travellers in deserts sometimes are; their provisions being spent they bring with them, and none to be had on the road; there being no inns to stop at, nor any sort of food to eat, nor springs of water to drink of. In such a condition are souls, when, like the prodigal, they come to themselves, and are thoroughly convinced of their state and condition by nature; they find themselves starving and famishing, and no provision to be had from themselves or the creature: they hunger after Christ, the bread of life, and thirst after his grace, the water of life, and the blessings of it; they hunger and thirst after his righteousness, and justification by it; after the pardon of their sins through his blood, and after salvation by him, and an interest in it; after more knowledge of him, and communion with him.

Their soul fainted in them; for want of food and drink; as men do, in a spiritual sense, for want of Christ, the blessings of his grace, particularly salvation; for want of views of interest in it, of the joys and comforts of it; see Ps 119:81. Some refer all this to the apostles and apostolic men, wandering in the Gentile world, hungry, thirsty, and without any certain dwelling place; see **1Co 4:11**.

Psalms 107:6

Ver. 6. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble,.... To be directed in their way, and for food and drink, as travellers do when in such distress. Natural men, even the very Heathens, when in distress, will cry unto God for relief, as Jonah's mariners did, **Jon 1:5**. It is a time of trouble with awakened sinners, when they are convinced of sin by the Spirit of God; when they are pricked to the heart with a sense of it; when the terrors of death and hell get hold of them; when they see themselves lost and undone, and in a wrong way, and know not what to do; when they find themselves starving and ready to perish; and then they cry, that is, pray, unto the Lord, the God of their lives, whose ears are open to their cries.

And he delivered them out of their distresses; by leading them in a right way, and by satisfying and filling their hungry souls with good things, as it is explained, Ps 107:7.

Psalms 107:7

Ver. 7. And he led them forth by the right way,.... Thus God by his providence directs travellers that have lost their way, and puts them into the right way. There is no doubt a very great concern of Providence in such a case, and which ought to be acknowledged with thankfulness. And thus the Lord leads awakened and inquiring souls to the right way of salvation; to Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life; and directs and enables them to believe in him, to walk by faith, and to continue to walk in him, as they have received him; and which is a plain and straight way, in which they shall not stumble; yea, in which men, though fools, shall not err, wander, or lose themselves: and though this way is attended with many afflictions and tribulations, and so may be said to be a narrow and a rough way; yet it is a right one, and a safe one, it brings at last to eternal life: the Syriac version renders it, "by the way of truth".

That they might go to a city of habitation; a city to dwell in; the Targum is,

"to Jerusalem, a city to dwell in:"

but any city nearest for travellers is here meant; and in a spiritual sense may be intended, either Christ, the city of refuge, where awakened sinners are directed to flee to, and where they find safety and plenty of provisions; or the church of God, the strong city, about which salvation is as walls and bulwarks; and to which they come when effectually called, and become citizens of it; or the New Jerusalem church state, in which the tabernacle of God will be, and he will dwell with men, and they with him; or the ultimate glory and happiness of the saints in heaven, that city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God; in which are everlasting habitations, and mansions of peace and rest for the people of God to dwell in, after they have gone through their troublesome passage in this wilderness.

Psalms 107:8

Ver. 8. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness,.... For his providential goodness, in providing food and drink for them, when fainting; in directing them to their right way, when they had lost it; and in bringing them safe to the place they were bound for: and particularly for his special grace and goodness, in redemption and effectual calling; for bringing out of a wilderness state and condition, and supplying them with all spiritual provisions, and putting them in the right way to eternal glory and happiness.

And for his wonderful works to the children of men! as all the above things are wonderful ones, both in providence and grace. This verse is repeated at the close of each of the instances produced; in which the goodness of God appears to persons in distress, and who being delivered, ought to acknowledge it, and be thankful for it: or "confess": that is, declare to God his goodness, and to the children of men his wonderful works; so the Targum.

Psalms 107:9

Ver. 9. For he satisfieth the longing soul,.... The soul that is hungry and thirsty, and longs for food and drink, when nature in such circumstances craves. And so such who long for Christ and his grace, for an interest in him, and fellowship with him, the Lord satisfies with these things, as with marrow and fatness.

And filleth the hungry soul with goodness; with the goodness and fatness of his house; with good things; with the good things laid up in Christ and in the covenant; with the good things of the Gospel; with the grace and goodness of God in Christ; see Ps 65:4.

Psalms 107:10

Ver. 10. Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death,.... This is the second instance of persons in distress calling on the name of the Lord; and who, being delivered, are under obligation to praise him, such as are captives and prisoners. The Targum applies it to the Israelites in the Babylonish captivity; but it is much better to interpret it of prisoners in common; whose prisons are generally dark cells or dungeons, and where they are alone, and deprived of the company of the living; and so are not only in darkness, but seem as if they were in the state of the dead; their condition is the shadow of it, and bears some resemblance to it. And it may be applied, in a spiritual sense, to the case and condition of the people of God in a state of unregeneracy, which is described in the same language, **Isa 9:2**, and which is a state of darkness and ignorance; they are darkness itself, and are ignorant of themselves and their case; of the nature of sin, and the evil of it; of the spirituality of the law; of God in Christ; of Christ, and the way of salvation by him; of the Spirit, and his work; of the Scriptures, and the doctrines of the Gospel contained in them; and, like persons in a dark prison, cannot behold the sun, nor see to read nor work; and are like those that are in the state of the dead; and indeed are dead in Adam, dead in law, dead in trespasses and sins; having no spiritual life, sense, nor motion. And here they sit, continue and

remain, during the time of their ignorance, till it pleases the Lord to enlighten, quicken, and convert them. These phrases are used of the people of God after conversion, when in darkness and desertion, and under afflictive providences, Ps 23:4. Being bound in affliction and iron; that is, with fetters of iron, which is very afflicting; see
Ps 105:18, and fitly describes the people of God in a state of nature, who are led captive by Satan, at his will; are held with the cords and fetters of their own sins, and are shut up under the law, as a ministering of condemnation and death: or, bound with affliction, as with iron; hence we read of fetters and cords of affliction, Job 36:8, with which good men may be held for their iniquities; or, however, are chastened with them for their good, Some refer all this to the state of the Christian church under the ten persecutions, **Re 2:10**.

Psalms 107:11

Ver. 11. Because they rebelled against the words of God,.... All afflictions, as captivity and imprisonment, are generally for sin; which is a rebellion against God, and a transgression of his laws. Adam rebelled against the words of God, not giving credit to them, but believing the words of the devil; and so brought himself and all his posterity into that state of darkness, captivity, and death, before described. Some understand this only of the light of nature, and the dictates of it, against which men rebel; but rather it designs any and every revelation of the will of God, either in the law or in the Gospel; disobedience to which is rebellion against the words of God, and is highly resented by him.

And contemned the counsel of the most High; the advice he gives in his law, and by his prophets, what to do, and what to avoid: and which he gives by the ministers of the word, in his Gospel and in his ordinances; which are both called his counsel, **Lu 7:30**, the contempt of which is very displeasing to him, **Pr 1:25**.

Psalms 107:12

Ver. 12. Therefore he brought down their heart with labour,.... Humbled them under his mighty hand; brought down their haughty spirits and proud stomachs by one afflictive providence or another; by which the Lord humbles men, as he did the Israelites in the wilderness, and hides pride from them: or with trouble of mind, under a conviction of sin; when pride, which is the cause of rebellion against God, and of contempt of his counsel, is brought down, and the haughtiness of man laid low; and when men, humbled under a sense of sin, are made willing to submit to Christ and his righteousness, to God's way of saving sinners by him, to the law of God, and to the Gospel of Christ.

They fell down; they threw themselves prostrate at his feet for mercy; their heart and strength failed them, as the word signifies, and is used in Ps 31:10, terrified with a sense of divine wrath, they could not stand before the Lord, nor brave it out against him.

And there was none to help; they could not help themselves, nor was there any creature that could. There is salvation in no other than in Christ; when he saw there was none to help him in that work, his own arm brought salvation to him; and when sinners see there is help in no other, they apply to him, as follows.

Psalms 107:13

Ver. 13. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble,.... Their affliction, their hearts being brought down with labour, and they being and finding themselves in a state of darkness, in the shadow of death, in affliction and iron; or in soul troubles, under a sense of sin, and in a view of wrath and displeasure; under apprehensions of imminent danger, as the disciples in the storm; and therefore cry to the Lord, as they did,

Lord, save us, we perish, **Mt 8:2**.

And he saved them out of their distresses; from all their sins; from the curse of the law; from wrath to come; from hell and death; being both able and willing. The following verse further explains this.

Psalms 107:14

Ver. 14. He brought them out of darkness,.... In which they were by nature, into marvellous light; to see their interest in Christ, and his salvation; and to have the light of joy and comfort in him.

And the shadow of death; quickening them by his Spirit and grace; causing them to live by faith upon him; entitling them to eternal life, and securing them from eternal death.

And brake their bands in sunder; their cords and fetters of affliction; or their bands of sin, and the power of it; and loosed them whom Satan had bound and kept so for many years, and brought them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Psalms 107:15

Ver. 15. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness,.... Or, "confess to the Lord his goodness or grace", or "mercy" {g}; own and acknowledge it, in delivering them from such a state of darkness and death, of thraldom and captivity; see **Ro 6:17**.

And for his wonderful works to the children of men! or, "confess" them before them; relate and declare them to them, what wonderful things he has done for them; that they may be affected with them, and that they may praise his name together; See Gill on "Ps 107:9".

{g} So Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 107:16

Ver. 16. For he hath broken the gates of brass,.... The prison doors made of brass, as sometimes of iron, for the security of the prisoners; see Ac 12:10. And cut the bars of iron in sunder; with which they were barred and secured. Hyperbolical phrases these, as Kimchi, expressing how exceeding strong the prison doors were, and the impossibility of an escape out of them, unless the Lord had delivered them; but when he works, none can let; all obstructions are easily removed by him; which is the sense of the words, see Isa 45:2. Vitringa, on Re 12:2, interprets this of the subjection of the Roman emperors to the faith and obedience of Christ.

Psalms 107:17

Ver. 17. Fools, because of their transgression,.... Or, "because of the way" {h} "of it"; their sinful course of life; for it is not for a single transgression they are afflicted, but for a continued series of sinning, which is a transgression of the law of God. By "fools" are meant not idiots, men devoid of common sense and natural understanding, but immoral persons; such who have no understanding of divine and spiritual things; are destitute of the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom; without the true knowledge of God himself; place their happiness in sensual enjoyments; seek only the gratification of their lust; scoff at religion, make a mock at sin, and have no concern about a future state, and the welfare of their immortal souls.

And because of their iniquities, are afflicted; or "afflict themselves", or "find themselves afflicted" {i}; rather "bring affliction on themselves" {k}. Not that these are the only persons that are afflicted; for many truly wise, good, and gracious persons, have a large share of afflictions; though not in a way of punishment for sin, or in wrath and hot displeasure, but in a way of fatherly chastisement, and in love: nor are fools for the most part afflicted, nor so much as others; they are not in trouble and plagued as other men; which has been a stumbling to good men: however, sometimes they are afflicted in this life, and in a way of punishment for sin; and very often are but the more hardened by it; though to some it is an ordinance for good; they are awakened by it to a sense of sin, and acknowledgment of it, and to seek for pardoning grace and mercy. This is the "third" instance of persons in distress calling on the Lord, and finding relief {l}, and being under obligation to praise him.

{h} Krdm "propter viam", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator. {i} wnety "sese adflictos sentiebant", Michaelis. {k} So Tigurine version. {l} "Flectitur iratus voce rogante Deus", Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 1.

Psalms 107:18

Ver. 18. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat,.... Not only bread and common food, but dainty meat, the most delicious fare, Job 33:20, in which they most delighted in time of health, and too much indulged themselves in; and by that means brought diseases upon them, which caused this loathing in them, as is common. Thus to those who are distempered with sin, whose taste is not changed, nor can it discern perverse things, the word of God, the Gospel of Christ, which is delicious food, is not relished by them; the doctrines of it are insipid things, they loath them as light bread, as the Israelites did the manna.

And they draw near unto the gates of death; that is, the grave; the house appointed for all living; the dwelling place of men till the resurrection; and so is said to have gates and doors; see
Job 33:22 and men sometimes are brought so low by affliction as that they

seem to be near to death, just upon the brink of eternity, ready to enter into the grave, and lie down among the dead.

Psalms 107:19

Ver. 19. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,.... A time of affliction is a time of trouble, and a proper season for prayer; and by it persons are brought to the throne of grace, when humbled under the mighty hand of God, to seek for relief. Hezekiah in his affliction prayed to the Lord, though Asa sought to the physicians only, and not to the Lord; this is to be understood of such who are convinced of their folly, brought to a sense of sin and danger, and therefore cry to the Lord for his sparing mercy, and pardoning grace.

And he saveth them out of their distresses: their afflictions, which were distressing to them, by removing their disorders and restoring them to health again; as follows.

Psalms 107:20

Ver. 20. He sent his word, and healed them,.... It was his will and pleasure they should be healed, and accordingly they were; he issued his orders for the removal of the affliction, and it was done; diseases are his servants, which come and go at his command; so Christ, in the days of his flesh, healed by speaking a word, **Mt 8:3**. This is true of Christ the essential Word, who was sent in the fulness of time, and was made flesh and dwelt among men, and went about healing all manner of diseases among the people; and who is also the physician of souls who came with healing in his wings; that is, with pardon of sin, for which his blood was shed: he is the only physician, the skilful, universal, and infallible one, and does all freely, and in a most marvellous manner, by his stripes, blood and wounds, and by an application of these to diseased persons sensible of their case. It may also be applied to the word of the Gospel; the law is the means of wounding, it is the killing letter; the Gospel is the means of healing, the doctrines of it are the leaves of the tree of life, which are for the healing of the nations; it is the doctrine of remission of sins by the blood of Christ, and by it Christ speaks peace and pardon to wounded consciences.

And delivered them from their destructions; from the destruction of the body, of the beauty and strength of it by diseases; restoring to health is a redeeming of the life from destruction; from the grave, the pit of corruption and destruction, so called because in it bodies corrupt, putrefy, and are destroyed by worms; and such who are savingly convinced of sin, and blessed with pardoning grace and mercy, are delivered from the everlasting destruction of body and soul in hell.

Psalms 107:21

Ver. 21. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness,.... Both in restoring to bodily health, which is an instance of divine goodness; and in healing the diseases of the soul, or in the pardon of sin, which is according to the multitude of his mercies, and the riches of his grace.

And for his wonderful works to the children of men; bodily health is sometimes restored in a wonderful manner, when all means used are without success, and the prescriptions of doctors fail; and pardon of sin is a wonder of grace now, and will be to all eternity; and for these things praise ought to be given to the Lord, and they should be declared to men for his glory.

Psalms 107:22

Ver. 22. And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving,.... Not legal sacrifices, but spiritual and evangelical ones, the sacrifices of praise and thankfulness which God has enjoined are well pleasing to him through Christ, glorify him, and are but our reasonable service; see Heb 13:15.

And declare his works with rejoicing: tell them to the children of men, what he has done for them, for soul and body; let them come to Zion with joy and everlasting joy on their heads; to the gates thereof, or to the public assemblies of the saints, and there declare what great things the Lord has done for them; and has had compassion upon them in healing their bodily diseases, and curing them of their soul maladies.

Psalms 107:23

Ver. 23. They that go down to the sea in ships,.... This is the fourth instance of persons in distress crying to the Lord for help, and, having it, are laid under obligation to praise him; the case of seafaring men: so the Targum introduces it,

"mariners that go down to the sea in ships;"

the same form of expression as here is used in Isa 42:10. Some affirm the sea to be higher than the earth, but by this it should be lower; besides the earth is said to be founded on the seas, which suggests superiority; and all the rivers run into the sea, which supposes a declivity; but, be it so that it is higher than the earth, yet this phrase is to be justified by the shores being higher than the sea, from whence men go down to take shipping, as Kimchi observes; though Kimchi's father is of opinion that it respects persons going down into the ship, which is deep, as Jonah is said to do, **Jon 1:3**.

That do business in great waters: which refers either to the steering and working of the ship, and everything relating to the management of the ropes and sails, and other affairs; and in a storm much business is done, all hands are employed: or else to the business they go to sea about, as catching fish, curing them, and carrying them to market; or else to traffic and merchandise of goods, they convey from place to place. The phrase is much like that, "as many as trade by sea",
Re 18:17.

Psalms 107:24

Ver. 24. These see the works of the Lord,.... In creation, the sea itself, its flux and reflux; the creatures in it, fishes of various forms and sizes: and in providence, in preserving ships and men in the most imminent danger, and even to a miracle; sometimes causing the wind to change or to subside in a moment, whereby deliverance is wrought.

And his wonders in the deep; the strange and wonderful creatures that are in the deep waters of the sea, and to be seen nowhere else; and the amazing appearances of divine providence, in delivering when in the greatest distress, and none at hand to help, and all hope of salvation gone.

Psalms 107:25

Ver. 25. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind,.... Winds are not raised by men, nor by devils, nor by angels, but by the Lord himself; who has created them, holds them in his fist, brings them out of his treasures, and sends them forth to do his will; if he speaks the word, gives but the order, a storm arises at once, and executes what he pleases, Ps 148:8.

Which lifteth up the waves thereof; that is, the waves of the sea; it comes down into it, and causes surges; which rise above the ship, and sometimes cover it, and ready to sink it; yea, even they are lifted up to the heavens, as it follows.

Psalms 107:26

Ver. 26. They mount up to the heaven,.... The waves which are lifted up by the stormy wind, and the ships which are upon them, and the men in them.

They go down again to the depths: one while they seem to reach the skies, and presently they are down, as it were, in the bottom of the sea, and are threatened to be buried in the midst of it; distress at sea is described in much the same language by Virgil and Ovid {m}.

Their soul is melted because of trouble; because of the danger of being cast away; so it was with Jonah's mariner's, and with the disciples in the storm; sea roaring, and men's hearts failing for fear, are joined together in Lu 21:25

{m} "Tollimur in coelum", Virgil. Aeneid 3. prope finem. "Coelumque aequare videtur pontus". Ovid. Metamorph. l. 12. Fab. 10.

Psalms 107:27

Ver. 27. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,.... Through the agitation of the water, and motion of the ship, not being able to stand upon deck.

And are at their wit's end; or, "all their wisdom is swallowed up" {n}; their wisdom in naval affairs, their art of navigation, their skill in managing ships, all nonplussed and baffled; they know not what method to take to save the vessel and themselves; their knowledge fails them, they are quite confounded and almost distracted. So Apollinarius paraphrases it,

"they forget navigation, and their wise art does not appear;"

so Ovid, describing a storm, uses the same phrase, "deficit ars",

"art fails."

{n} elbtt Mtmkx lk "omnis sapientia eorum absorpta est", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 107:28

Ver. 28. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,.... As in a storm seafaring persons are used to do; so did Jonah's mariners, though Heathens, everyone cried to his god. With the Romans {o} tempests were reckoned deities, and had temples erected, and sacrifices offered to them; but these persons were such as knew and owned the true Jehovah, and called upon him in their distress: so did the apostles of Christ.

And he bringeth them out of their distresses; by stilling the winds and the waves, causing them to proceed on their voyage with pleasure, and landing them safe on shore, as follows.

{o} Cicero, de Nat. Deor. l. 3. c. 20. Virgil. Aeneid. l. 5. v. 772. Horat. Epod. Ode 10. v. 23, 24. Ovid. Fast. 6. v. 193.

Psalms 107:29

Ver. 29. He maketh the storm a calm,.... As Christ did by a word speaking, **Mr 4:39**.

So that the waves thereof are still; and roar and toss no more, but subside; and the sea becomes smooth and quiet, its raging ceases: the angry sea, as Horace {p} calls it, becomes calm and peaceable; see
Ps 89:9.

{p} "Nec horret iratum mare", Horat. Epod. Ode 2. v. 6. "Nec maris ira manet", Ovid. Metamorph. l. 12. Fab. 7.

Psalms 107:30

Ver. 30. Then are they glad because they be quiet,.... The mariners are glad that the waves are quiet, and they free from danger, and at ease and in repose themselves.

So he bringeth them unto their desired haven; the port, city, border or tract of land {q}, they are bound to; which they desire to be at, and eagerly look out for, and rejoice when arrived at it. This is all the Lord's work in providence: mariners too often take it to themselves, as if it was owing to their own skill and management that they have brought home the ship safe to the appointed port; but it is owing to the secret guidance and protection of divine Providence, which should be acknowledged. The late Mr. Hussey {r} thinks, that all this is not to be understood of seamen and naval affairs in common, but is a prophecy of what should befall the disciples of Christ, when on shipboard with him; who are the persons that went "down to the sea of Galilee" in a ship;

whose business in the great waters was fishing; when, by the will of God, there came down a "stormy wind", which "lifted up the waves" of the sea, so that the ship in which they were was filled with them, and in danger of being sunk; when they went up and down, as here described, and reeled as they went along on the deck, to awake their Master their hearts melting, and they at their wit's end through fear, when they saw such wonders, what no common mariner ever did; the Godman and Mediator rising and in a majestic manner rebuked the winds and waves, and caused a calm, and so brought them to the country of the Gadarenes, whither they were bound; see **Lu 8:23**. But it may be applied, in a more spiritual manner, to the people of God in common who are embarked in the cause of Christ, and in a church state, comparable to a ship, of which Christ is the master, governor, and pilot; and who are sailing through the tempestuous sea of this world, and are tossed with tempests in it; and have business to do here, not only of a civil, but of a spiritual nature and who not only see the wondrous works of creation and providence, but of grace and redemption; the deep things of God, the mysteries of his grace and love: and who sometimes are covered with the billows and waves of affliction, and in the utmost distress; which are all under the direction and at the command of God, to whom they apply for relief; and he commands a calm in their breasts, and causes their afflictions to cease, which produce joy and gladness in them; and at last they are brought safe to heaven, their desired haven, which they are bound unto, are seeking after, and desirous of; and where they are at entire rest, brought hither by the Lord himself.

{q} Vid. Kimchii Sepher Shorash. rad. Nwx {r} Warning from the Winds, p. 21-26.

Psalms 107:31

Ver. 31. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness,.... Seafaring men particularly, before mentioned, as Jonah's mariners did, **Jon 1:16**, or all the four sorts of persons instanced in, as Kimchi thinks: and even all men whatsoever should do this, high and low, rich and poor, of every age, sex, and condition; since they all receive favours from the Lord, and should return thanks to him; and especially good men, who are blessed with spiritual blessings by him: these should all

confess to the Lord his goodness; as it may be rendered,
See Gill on "Ps 107:15", they should own the mercy received as the Lord's doing, and acknowledge their unworthiness of it, and give him the glory of it.

And for his wonderful works to the children of men! or, "confess and declare his wonderful works to the children of men": the wonderful works of creation and providence, which those that go to sea, see in the deeps, and everything of the same kind which others observe; and especially the wonderful works of grace, or what God has done in a wonderful manner for the souls of his people; see
Ps 66:16.

Psalms 107:32

Ver. 32. Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people,.... Of the people of God, who are gathered out of the world into a church state; and who gather themselves together to attend the worship and service of God in some one place; and here the Lord should be praised, and his name exalted, by those who have received favours from him; see Ps 111:1, the Targum explains it,

"in the congregation of the people of the house of Israel."

And praise him in the assembly of the elders; or, "in the seat", or "chair of the elders {s}": not of the Scribes and Pharisees, and elders of the people, that sat in Moses's chair; but rather of the four and twenty elders, who are said to have four and twenty seats round the throne, where they worship and praise God; and which are emblems of Gospel churches; the members of which, for their grace, gravity, and prudence, are called elders; and over which elders in office preside, and who rule well, and labour in the word and doctrine; see **Re 4:4**. The Targum renders it,

"the sanhedrim of the wise men."

{s} bvwmb "in cathedra", Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 107:33

Ver. 33. He turneth rivers into a wilderness,.... A country abounding with rivers, as the country round about Sodom and the land of Canaan were, Ge 13:10. Such an one is sometimes, by the just judgment of God, turned into a desert.

And the water springs into dry ground: what was like a well watered garden becomes like dry and barren earth, on which nothing grows.

Psalms 107:34

Ver. 34. A fruitful land into barrenness,.... Or, "into saltness" {t}; as Sodom and the land adjacent became a salt sea; and the land of Canaan was threatened to become brimstone, salt and burning, like Sodom; in which nothing was sown, and which bore no grass; see
Ge 14:3 and so the Targum,

"the land of Israel, which brought forth fruit, he hath destroyed, as Sodom was overthrown."

For the wickedness of them that dwell therein; this was the cause of the overthrow of Sodom, and of the destruction of that fine country, as also of Canaan afterwards; see Ge 13:13. The very Heathens had a notion that barrenness and unfruitfulness in countries were owing to the sins of men; hence the sterility and famine at Mycenas were attributed to the wickedness of Atreus {u}. This may figuratively be understood of the present state and condition of the Jews; who were once a people well watered with the word and ordinances, and had the first preaching of the Gospel among them; but, rejecting and despising it, are now become like a desert, barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of divine things: and it might be illustrated by the case of several Christian churches; the seven churches of Asia, and others, once as well watered gardens, but now are no more; and the places where they stood are destitute of spiritual knowledge, and the means of it.

{t} hxlml "in salsuginem", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Vatablus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Junius & Tremellius; "in salsam", Cocceius. {u} Hygin. Fab. 88.

Psalms 107:35

Ver. 35. He turneth the wilderness into a standing water,.... On the other hand, when it is the pleasure of God, a country uncultivated and like a desert, he makes it fruitful as one that is well watered and tilled; as this country of ours, and the land in America, once waste places, now fruitful ones.

And dry ground into water springs: which is expressive of the same thing, and may he figuratively understood of the Gentile world; which, before the coming of Christ, and the preaching of the Gospel, and the pouring down of the Spirit, was like a wilderness and dry ground; but now watered with the word and ordinances, and the grace of God, and in many places has become fruitful in grace and good works. The Targum prefaces this verse thus,

"when they return unto the law, he turneth, &c."

Psalms 107:36

Ver. 36. And there he maketh the hungry to dwell,.... In those fruitful places which they find agreeable to them, and so fix upon them as the places of their abode, and build houses, and dwell there; having all the conveniences of life, which they wanted elsewhere: so such as hunger and thirst after righteousness make to such places where the waters are, the word is preached, and ordinances administered; and here they take up their dwelling, their bread being given them, and their waters sure unto them.

That they may prepare a city for habitation; those poor necessitous persons, as they were when they first came; building houses, and others continually coming to them, by degrees form a well regulated city, which are a large number of inhabitants: which may be considered as an emblem of the church of God, often compared to a city; and is an habitation for God, and where saints desire and delight to dwell.

Psalms 107:37

Ver. 37. And sow the fields, and plant vineyards,.... And so raise a sufficient supply of corn and wine for the support of themselves and families. In a spiritual sense the "fields" are the world, and the seed which is sown is the word; the persons that sow it are the ministers of the Gospel, which, by a divine blessing, brings forth fruit, in some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold: the "vineyards" are the churches, planted by Christ and by his ministers, as his instruments; believers are the pleasant plants in them, and young converts are the tender grapes

Which may yield fruits of increase; or "fruit" and "increase"; the fields yield all sorts of grain for food, and the vineyards wine for drink. So the seed of the word being sown, and churches planted, they increase with the increase of God, and bring forth fruits of righteousness to the glory of his name.

Psalms 107:38

Ver. 38. He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly,.... Not only their fields and vineyards are blessed with an increase, but these husbandmen themselves; as man at his first creation was bid to do, being blessed of God; and as the Israelites were in Egypt, **Ge 1:28** and which may spiritually denote the great number of converts to Christian churches, especially in the latter day, Jer 30:19.

And suffereth not their cattle to decrease; their sheep and oxen, which is reckoned a great temporal happiness, Ps 144:13, and may signify that God does and will give a sufficient number of Gospel ministers, comparable to oxen for their laboriousness, that shall in all ages minister to his churches; see **1Co 9:9**.

Psalms 107:39

Ver. 39. Again they are minished,.... Or "lessened", in their families, cattle, and substance; either the same persons as before, or others. The Targum paraphrases it, "but when they sin, they are lessened:"

for sin is the cause of it, as follows:

and brought low through oppression, affliction and sorrow; either because of their oppression of the poor, the evil they do to them, and the sorrow they bring upon them; or they are brought into a low estate through the tyranny and oppression of others, and by the afflictions and sorrows they are brought into by them. This may be applied to the Jews, at their destruction by the Romans, when they were greatly lessened and brought low by their oppression of them: or rather to the Christians; not under the Heathen persecutions, for then they increased more and more; but under antichristian tyranny, when the beast had power over them, and overcame and slew them; and their numbers were so reduced, that the whole world is said to wonder after the beast, Re 13:3, and which will be the case again, when the witnesses will be slain: the number of Christians is greatly lessening now; there are but a few names in Sardis; Jacob is small, but will be smaller and fewer still.

Psalms 107:40

Ver. 40. He poureth contempt upon princes,.... That is, the Lord does, who is above them; he laughs at them, and has them in derision, when they are raging against his people, cause, and interest; he sets them up and pulls them down at his pleasure; he hurls them from their seats and thrones, and makes them contemptible to their subjects; he sometimes brings them to a shameful end, as Herod, who was eaten with worms; and wicked princes, if they are not brought to disgrace in this world, they will rise to shame and everlasting contempt in the other; and will stand with the meanest and lowest before the Judge of the whole earth; and seek to the rocks and mountains to cover them from his wrath. This particularly will be true of the antichristian princes, when the vials of God's wrath will be poured out upon them, Re 16:1.

And causeth them to wander in the wilderness; where there is no way; no beaten track or path; whither being driven out of their kingdoms, they flee for shelter, and wander about in untrodden paths; as Nebuchadnezzar, when he was driven from men, and had his dwelling with the beasts of the field: or this may be interpreted, as it is by Aben Ezra and Kimchi, the infatuation of their wisdom, and of their being left without counsel, and erring through it; being at their wits' end, not knowing what step to take, or measures to concert; being in a maze, in a wilderness, at an entire loss what they should do; see

Job 12:17.

Psalms 107:41

Ver. 41. Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction,.... On the other hand, the Lord sometimes exalteth men of low degree, raiseth men of mean extract and parentage, who have made a poor figure in life, to high places of honour, free from adversity and distress; as David from the sheepfold, and from following the ewes great with young, to be king of Israel. This may be applied to the saints and people of God, who for the most part are poor in purse, the poor of this world, whom he chooses, calls, and saves; poor knowledge, capacity, and gifts; poor as to their spiritual circumstances, having neither food nor clothing, nor money to buy either; poor in spirit, and sensible of it; and poor by reason of afflictions: these the Lord sets on high, sets them among the princes of his people, makes them kings and priests; sets them on Christ the Rock, who is higher than they, higher than the angels and than the heavens; sets them above the angels, their nature being advanced above theirs in Christ, and they being represented by him in heavenly places; and standing in the relation of sons to God, and of spouse and bride to Christ, and angels being their ministering servants; and ere long they will be set on thrones, and have a crown of glory, life, and righteousness, put upon them, and be possessed of an everlasting kingdom, and be out of the reach of affliction. They are not clear of it in this world; it is needful for them, they are appointed to it, and through it they must enter the kingdom; but then they will come out of all tribulation, and there will be no more pain, sorrow, and death: it may be rendered, "after affliction", after their time of affliction is over, then God will exalt and glorify them; see **1Pe 5:10**, this may respect the prosperity of the church in the latter day; see **Da 7:27**.

And maketh him families like a flock; that is, the Lord makes the poor families like a flock of sheep, so greatly does he increase them; this is a very apt figure that is here used, since the people of God are often compared to sheep, and to a flock of them; and these are creatures that greatly increase; and here it denotes the large number of the saints, as in the first times of the Gospel, both in Judea and in the Gentile world; and as it will be in the latter day, when they shall be multiplied and not be few, glorified and not be small; and that they should be branched out into families, or particular churches, which, like families, consist of children, young men, and fathers, of which Christ is master, and ministers stewards; so it has been from the beginning of the Gospel dispensation and will be much more so in the latter day, when the earth will be full of these families every where. The Targum introduces this verse thus,

"when they turn to the law he setteth, &c."

Psalms 107:42

Ver. 42. The righteous shall see it, and rejoice,.... Shall see the increase and prosperity of the saints, the glory of the church in the latter day, and rejoice at it; the judgments of God upon the wicked, upon antichristian princes and states, and rejoice on that account; see
Re 18:20 and the several deliverances of persons in distress before mentioned, and rejoice with them that rejoice; which is what good men ought to do, Ro 12:15.

And all iniquity shall stop her mouth; men of iniquity, very bad men, the man of sin and his followers, and all profane and atheistical persons, who will be silenced and have nothing to say against the providence of God; will be confounded, and through shame lay their hand on their mouths and be struck with admiration at the wonderful things done by the Lord for his people; nor will they have anything to say against their own condemnation.

Psalms 107:43

Ver. 43. Whoso is wise,.... Or as it may be read interrogatively, "who is wise?" as in **Jer 9:12**, that is, spiritually wise, wise unto salvation; who is made to know wisdom in the hidden part; for not such as are possessed of natural wisdom, or worldly wise men, much less who are wise to do evil, are here meant.

And will observe these things; the remarkable appearances of divine Providence to persons in distress; the various changes and vicissitudes in the world; the several afflictions of God's people, and their deliverances out of them; the wonderful works of God in nature, providence, and grace; these will be observed, taken notice of, laid up in the mind, and kept by such who are truly wise, who know how to make a right use and proper improvement of them.

Even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord; everyone of the wise men; they will perceive the kindness of God unto all men, in the several dispensations of his providence towards them, and his special love and kindness towards his own people, even in all their afflictions; they will perceive this to be at the bottom of every mercy and blessing; they will understand more of the nature and excellency of it, and know more of the love of God and Christ, which passeth knowledge. Or "the kindnesses of the Lord shall be understood": that is, by wise men; so R. Moses in Aben Ezra renders the words.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 108:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 108

A Song [or] Psalm of David. This psalm consists of several passages out of the fifty seventh and sixtieth psalms, with very little variation. Jarchi and Kimchi refer it to the times of the Messiah. The title in the Syriac version is,

"concerning the calling of the Gentiles,"

to which, no doubt, it has respect.

Ver. 1. O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise,.... From hence to Ps 108:6 the words are taken out of Ps 57:7, which see.

Even with my glory; my tongue; in Ps 57:8, it is read, "awake up my glory". See Gill on "Ps 57:7",

Psalms 108:2

Ver. 2. See Gill on "Ps 57:8".

Psalms 108:3

Ver. 3. See Gill on "Ps 57:9".

Psalms 108:4

Ver. 4. For thy mercy is great above the heavens,..... It is in
Ps 57:10, "thy mercy is great unto the heavens".
See Gill on "Ps 57:10".

Psalms 108:5

Ver. 5. See Gill on "Ps 57:11".

Psalms 108:6

Ver. 6. That thy beloved may be delivered,.... From hence to the end of the psalm the words are taken out of Ps 60:5.
See Gill on "Ps 60:5".

Psalms 108:7

Ver. 7. See Gill on "Ps 60:6".

Psalms 108:8

Ver. 8. See Gill on "Ps 60:7".

Psalms 108:9

Ver. 9. Over Philistia will I triumph,.... In Ps 60:8, it is, "Philistia, triumph thou because of me"; See Gill on "Ps 60:8".

Psalms 108:10

Ver. 10. See Gill on "Ps 60:9".

Psalms 108:11

Ver. 11. And wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?.... In

Ps 60:10, it is, "and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies". See Gill on "Ps 60:10".

Psalms 108:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "Ps 60:11".

Psalms 108:13

Ver. 13. See Gill on "Ps 60:12".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 109:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 109

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. This psalm was written by David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, concerning Judas the betrayer of Christ, as is certain from **Ac 1:16** hence it is used to be called by the ancients the Iscariotic psalm. Whether the occasion of it was the rebellion of Absalom, as some, or the persecution of Saul, as Kimchi; and whoever David might have in view particularly, whether Ahithophel, or Doeg the Edomite, as is most likely; yet it is evident that the Holy Ghost foresaw the sin of Judas, and prophesies of that, and of the ruin and misery that should come upon him; for the imprecations in this psalm are no other than predictions of future events, and so are not to be drawn into an example by men; nor do they breathe out anything contrary to the spirit of Christianity, but are proofs of it, since what is here predicted has been exactly accomplished. The title in the Syriac version is,

"a psalm of David when they created Absalom king without his knowledge, and for this cause he was slain; but to us it expounds the sufferings of the Christ of God;"

and indeed he is the person that is all along speaking in this psalm.

Ver. 1. Hold not thy peace,.... Or be not as a deaf or dumb man, or like one that turns a deaf ear and will give no answer; so the Lord seems to his people when he does not give an immediate answer to their prayers, and does not arise to help them; he seems to have forsaken them, and to stand at a distance from them; nor does he avenge them of their enemies; it is the Messiah, as man, that puts up this petition, and it agrees with Ps 22:2.

O God of my praise; worthy of all praise, because of the perfections of his nature, and for the mercies he bestows; and is and ought to be the constant object of the praise of his people, and was the object of the praise of Christ; see Ps 22:22, who praised him for his wonderful formation as man, having such a holy human nature, so suitable to his divine Person, and so fit for the service of his people; for his preservation from his enemies, and the deliverance of him from death and the grave, by his resurrection; for hearing his petitions, and for the special grace bestowed on his people; see Ps 139:14. Or, "O God of my glorying {w}"; in whom he gloried, of whom he boasted; as he often with exultation spoke of him as his God and Father: or, "the God that praises me"; for his praise was not of men, but of God, who by a voice from heaven declared him his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased, **Mt 3:17**.

{w} ytlht "gloriationis meae", Cocceius; "de quo glorior", so some in Vatablus.

Psalms 109:2

Ver. 2. For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me,.... Or "of deceit" {x} itself; most wicked and very deceitful men, who sometimes flattered and pretended friendship, as the Jews did to Christ, when they designed ill against him; though at other times their mouths were opened, and they poured out their calumnies and reproaches very freely and largely; traducing his person, and aspersing his character as a wicked man; blaspheming his miracles, as if done by the help of the devil; charging his doctrine with novelty, falsehood, and blasphemy; loading him with invidious names, as Samaritan, madman, &c; representing him as an enemy to the state, as a seditious person, and a disturber of the nation's peace; particularly their mouths were opened against him when they called for his crucifixion, and would have no denial; and especially when he was on the cross, where they gaped upon him with their mouths, and poured out their scoffs and jeers at him; see Ps 22:14.

They have spoken against me with a lying tongue, false witnesses rose up against him, and laid things to his charge he knew nothing of, and which they could not prove, Mt 26:59.

{x} hmrm yp "os doli", Vatablus, Cocceius; "os fraudis", Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 109:3

Ver. 3. They compassed me about also with words of hatred,.... They surrounded him as he hung on the cross, and expressed their malice and hatred against him; then was he enclosed with these spiteful snarling dogs, and encompassed by them as with so many bees, who everyone left their sting in him, Ps 22:16.

And fought against me without a cause: they were of an hostile spirit, enemies and enmity itself against him; fought against him both with words and blows, with their tongues and with their fists; sought his life, and at length took it away; he was attacked by the body of the Jewish nation, and by the whole posse of devils; and all this without any cause or just reason: he gave them no occasion for this enmity and malice, and opposition to him; and it was in the issue without effect, it was in vain and to no purpose; for though they gained their point in putting him to death, yet he rose again a triumphant Conqueror over them all.

Psalms 109:4

Ver. 4. For my love they are my adversaries,.... For the love that Christ showed to the Jews; to their bodies, in going about and healing all manner of diseases among them; to their souls, in preaching, the Gospel to them in each of their cities; and for the love he showed to mankind in coming into the world to save them, which should have commanded love again; but instead of this they became his implacable adversaries: they acted the part of Satan; they were as so many Satans to him, as the word signifies.

But I give myself unto prayer; or "I am a man of prayer" {y}; as Aben Ezra and Kimchi supply it; so he was in the days of his flesh, **Heb 5:7**, he was constant at it, and fervent in it; sometimes a whole night together at it: his usual method was, when at Jerusalem, to teach in the temple in the daytime, and at night to go to the mount of Olives, and there abide and pray, **Lu 6:12**. This was the armour he alone made use of against his enemies, when they fought against him, and acted the part of an adversary to him; he betook himself to nothing else but prayer; he did not return railing for railing, but committed himself in prayer to God, who judgeth righteously, **1Pe 2:23**, yea, he prayed for those his adversaries: and so Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it, that he was a man of prayer for them, and prayed for them; as it is certain Christ did, when he was encompassed by his enemies, and they were venting all their spite and malice against him, Lu 23:34.

{y} hlpt ynaw "et ego vir orationis", Pagninus, Gejerus.

Psalms 109:5

Ver. 5. And they have rewarded me evil for good,.... For the good words and sound doctrine he delivered to them; for the good works and miracles he wrought among them, to the healing of them; see Joh 10:32.

And hatred for my love; he came to seek and save that which was lost, and yet they hated him, and would not have him to rule over them, Lu 19:10.

Psalms 109:6

Ver. 6. Set thou a wicked man over him,.... Or "them", as the Syriac version; over everyone of his adversaries, and all of them: and which may be interpreted, as it is by Cocceius, of tyrannical princes and governors, set over the Jews, as Tiberius, Caius, Claudius, Nero, &c. and their deputies, Pilate, Felix, Festus, Florus; all wicked men, and which were a judgment on them for their usage of Christ. Though here some single person is designed, even Judas, notorious for his enmity and ingratitude to Christ; and by the wicked one set over him may be meant Satan, as in the next clause, as he is sometimes called, Mt 13:38, into whose hands and power Judas was put, under whose influence he was; who entered into him, took possession of him, and put it into his heart to betray his Master, Joh 13:2.

And let Satan stand at his right hand; to direct and influence him, to solicit and tempt him to do the evil he did, and to accuse him for it when done; see **Zec 3:1**.

Psalms 109:7

Ver. 7. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned,.... When he shall be arraigned at the bar of his own conscience, and be charged with the sin of which he is guilty, let conscience, which is as a thousand witnesses, rise up against him, and condemn him; so it did Judas, Mt 26:1, or when he shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ at the last day,

let him go out a wicked, or a guilty or condemned man {z}; let him hear the awful sentence, "go, thou cursed, into everlasting fire": and let him go out immediately from the presence of the Judge into eternal punishment, the condemnation of the devil: so Judas is said to go to his own place, **Ac 1:25**.

And let his prayer become sin, let it be fruitless and in vain; and so far from being heard, let it he treated as an abomination; let it be considered as an aggravation of his crime, as Haman's was, **Est 7:7**, let his prayer being without faith in the blood of Christ, be reckoned sinful, as it was; let his cries, and tears, and repentance issue in desperation, and that in sin, as it did in destroying himself,
Mt 27:5.

{z} evr auy "exeat impius", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, De Dieu, Gejerus; "damnatus", Junius & Tremellius; "condemnatus", Cocceius.

Psalms 109:8

Ver. 8. Let his days be few,.... The days of men in common are but few at most: length of days, either beyond or according to the usual term of life, is reckoned a blessing; and to be cut off in the midst of a man's days a curse; when this is by the immediate hand of God, as a visible token of his displeasure; or by the hand of the civil magistrate, for some capital offence; or by a man's own hands, which was the case of Judas; whose days were but few, in comparison of the other apostles, who outlived him many years; especially the Apostle John, who lived sixty years after, at least. The Syriac version renders it, "let their days be few"; and so it reads the whole context in the plural number, both in the verses preceding and following; and the whole may be interpreted of the Jews, as it is by Theodoret, as well as of Judas; since they were concerned in the same sin, and are equally charged as the betrayers and murderers of Christ, **Ac 7:52**, and their days as a nation and church after the death of Christ were very few; within forty years, or thereabout, their city and temple were destroyed.

And let another take his office; or bishopric, as the Septuagint version and the Apostle Peter call it; who cites this passage, and applies it to Judas, in **Ac 1:20**. His office was the office of an apostle, an high and honourable one, the chief office in the church: it was a charge, as the word signifies; a charge of souls, an oversight of the flock; which is to be taken not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre's sake, but of a ready mind. Judas took it for filthy lucre's sake, and it was taken away from him, and given to another; to Matthias, on whom the lot fell, and who was numbered with the apostles in his room, **Ac 1:21**. This is true also of the priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, who were divested of their offices in a very little time; three shepherds were cut off in one month, Zec 11:8. There being a change of the priesthood, law, and ordinances, there was a change of offices and officers; new ordinances were appointed by Christ, and new officers created, on whom gifts were bestowed suitable to their work.

Psalms 109:9

Ver. 9. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. This sometimes is the case of good men, who leave widows and fatherless children, whom the Lord shows mercy to; being the Father of the fatherless, and the Judge of the widow, Ps 68:5, but sometimes it is threatened and comes as a judgment, when the Lord shows no mercy and favour to them, Ex 22:24. And this is the case here, which very probably was literally fulfilled in Judas, who might have a wife and children; since it looks as if the other apostles had, and certain it is that one of them had a wife, even Peter, in the times of Christ; see **1Co 9:5**. And this was verified in the people of the Jews; whom the Lord divorced from himself, and wrote a "loammi" upon them, and left them as orphans and fatherless, **Ho 1:9**. This will never be the case of Christ's people, or the Christian church, Joh 14:18, though it will be of the antichristian one, Re 18:7.

Psalms 109:10

Ver. 10. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg,.... Wander from place to place, begging their bread: this is denied of the children of good men in David's time, Ps 37:25 yet was threatened to the children of Eli, **1Sa 2:36** and was very likely literally true of the children of Judas; and was certainly the case of multitudes of the children of the Jews, the posterity of them that crucified Christ, at the time of their destruction by the Romans; when great numbers were dispersed, and wandered about in various countries, as vagabonds, begging their bread from door to door; which is reckoned {a} by them a great affliction, and very distressing.

Let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places; either describing, as Kimchi thinks, the miserable cottages, forlorn and desolate houses, in which they lived, and from whence they went out to everyone that passed by, to ask relief of them; or it may be rendered,

because of their desolate places {b}; or, "after them"; so the Targum, "after their desolation was made"; when their grand house was left desolate, their temple, as our Lord said it should, and was, Mt 23:38, and all their other houses in Jerusalem and in Judea; then were they obliged to seek their bread of others elsewhere, and by begging. The Syriac version wants this verse.

{a} Mifchar Hapeninim apud Buxtorf. Florileg. Heb. p. 262, 263. {b} So De Dieu, Gejerus, and some in Michaelis.

Psalms 109:11

Ver. 11. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath,.... Or, "lay a snare for all" {c}; as the Romans did, by bringing in their army, invading the land of Judea, and besieging the city of Jerusalem; who are "the extortioner or exacter that demanded tribute of them"; which they refused to pay, and therefore they seized on all they had for it. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "the creditor"; who sometimes for a debt would take wife and children, and all that a man had; see **2Ki 4:1**. It might be literally true of Judas; who dying in debt, his wife and children, and all he had, might be laid hold on for payment.

And let the stranger spoil his labour; plunder his house of all his goods and substance he had been labouring for: which was true of the Romans, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; who came into the land, and spoiled their houses, fields, and vineyards, they had been labouring in; they took away their place and nation, and all they had, Joh 11:48.

{c} vqny "illaqueet", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Piscator, Gejerus; "iretiat", Vatablus, Michaelis.

Psalms 109:12

Ver. 12. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him,.... No pity is ever expressed at hearing or reading the sad case of Judas; and though the Jews were pitied of those that carried them captive to Babylon, Ps 106:46, yet, in their last destruction by the Romans, no mercy was shown them; the wrath of God and man came upon them to the uttermost, **1Th 2:16**.

Neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children: to bestow any benefit upon them; to relieve their wants, nor to protect their persons; no more respect shown them than to their father, being shunned and hated for their father's sake.

Psalms 109:13

Ver. 13. Let his posterity be cut off,.... As the seed of the wicked are said to be, Ps 37:28, or cut down, as a tree to the very root; as the Jewish nation was by the axe of God's judgment, which, John says, was laid to the root of the tree, and the blow just going to be given, as it was in a few years after, **Mt 3:10** or, as the Targum,

"let his end be for destruction;"

and so the Syriac version, "let their end be for destruction"; their last end, which it is said shall be cut off, and issue in death, eternal death; when the end of a good man is peace and eternal life, see Ps 37:37.

And in the generation following let their name be blotted out: or, in another age {d}; the next age, the third generation; meaning the name of the posterity of Judas, and the name of the people of the Jews, so as to be spoken of with honour and reputation; but, instead of that, they are for a taunt, a proverb, and a curse, in all places.

{d} rxa rwdb "in generatione altera", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Psalms 109:14

Ver. 14. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord,.... Not of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; who, though they had their failings, they were not

remembered, and much less punished in their posterity, but were forgiven: rather of the Amorites and Hittites; the one being said to be the father, and the other the mother, of the Jews,
Eze 16:3, they succeeding them in their land, and imitating their example, and committing the same sins they did: or rather of their wicked ancestors, who killed the prophets; and the measure of whose sins Judas and the Jews filled up in crucifying Christ, see
Mt 23:31. The iniquity of these may be said to be remembered, it not being forgiven, when it was brought to account, and punished in their posterity, doing the same wicked actions; compare with this
Re 16:19.

And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out: or forgiven; but stand as a debt to be accounted for: meaning not the sin of his mother Eve, nor of his immediate parent; but either of the Hittite as before, or of the synagogue of the Jews, or Jerusalem, which killed the prophets of the Lord.

Psalms 109:15

Ver. 15. Let them be before the Lord continually,.... And not cast behind his back, or into the depths of the sea, never to be seen more, as sins are when forgiven; but be always in sight, as loathsome and abominable, and causing those that committed them to be abhorred for them; and be before him, as a Judge, to examine them, the nature and kind of them, and to condemn and punish for them; see Ex 20:5. The Targum is,

"let them be before the Word of the Lord always;"

see **Heb 4:13**.

That he may cut off the memory of them from the earth; so that they may not be remembered with any applause, or their name spoken of with any commendation; see Job 18:17.

Psalms 109:16

Ver. 16. Because that he remembered not to show mercy,.... As Judas did not; neither to the poor, whom he cared not for, Joh 12:6 nor to Christ, whom he betrayed with a kiss to his enemies: nor had these words of Christ any effect

upon him, to move his pity and compassion, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" Mt 26:49 nor did the Jews show mercy to him: they were a merciless and hardhearted people; though mercy was one of the weightier matters of the law, this they omitted,
Mt 23:23, their want of compassion may be observed in the priest and Levite passing by the man wounded by thieves, Lu 10:30. Nor did they show any mercy to Christ, when they smote and buffeted him; nor did it move their pity when Pilate brought him forth with a crown of thorns on his head, and in a miserable condition, saying, "Behold the man"; but they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him"; and gave him gall for his meat, and vinegar to drink; and mocked him when in all his miseries and agonies.

But persecuted the poor and needy man; Christ, who became poor for our sakes, and stood in need of the ministration of others to him, **2Co 8:9** and was poor in spirit, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; him Judas and the Jews persecuted to death, as follows:

that he might even slay the broken in heart; Christ, whose heart was broken with the reproach and cruel usage of men, Ps 69:20, whose life the Jews sought to take away, and by means of Judas did.

Psalms 109:17

Ver. 17. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him,.... Judas loved that which brought a curse upon him, sin; and so he may be said to love the curse; just as sinners are said to love death, **Pr 8:36**. He was desirous of and sought after it, to bring Christ to an accursed death; and which he accomplished and pleased himself with; and therefore it was a just retaliation upon him that the curse should light on him, and he himself come to a shameful and ignominious death. The Jews loved the cursing law, the flying roll, called the curse in **Zec 5:2**, which curses every transgressor of it: they boasted of it, rested in it, and sought for righteousness by it; and submitted not unto, but despised, the righteousness of Christ; and therefore it was but just they should come under the curse of the law: they imprecated the curse on them and their children, saying, "His blood be upon us and them", Mt 27:25 and which accordingly came upon them, and remains to this day.

As he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him; Judas delighted not in the good will and good wishes of any to Christ, as appears from his dislike of the ointment being poured on his head by the poor woman, in Joh 12:4, and so the Jews were displeased at the children, and at the disciples in the temple, blessing Christ, pronouncing him blessed, and wishing blessings to him, Mt 21:15, yea, they delighted not in their own blessedness, or in that which only could give it to them; they delighted not in Christ, who was sent to bless them, but despised and rejected him; nor in the Gospel, which is full of blessings; and particularly not in the doctrine of justification by Christ's righteousness, which commonly makes a man blessed: yea, in a sense, they judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life; and therefore it was but a righteous thing that blessing should be far from Judas and the Jews, as it was; even temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings: yet there have been a sort of heretics {e}, that have highly praised and commended Judas, as doing a brave and noble action in betraying Christ, whereby the work of salvation was hastened.

{e} Epiphan. contra Haeres. l. 1. Haer. 38.

Psalms 109:18

Ver. 18. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment,.... He was full of it; his mouth was full of cursing and bitterness; it was visible in him, easy to be discerned; he took pride as well as pleasure in it, it was in his esteem an ornament to him, as his clothes were. The Syriac version renders it, "as armour"; as if it was a protection to him, or he thought it to be so.

So let it come into his bowels like water; the meaning is, let the wrath of God and the curse of the law come into his conscience, and make sad work there, and fill him with dread and terror, and that in great abundance, and with great force; like a flood of waters that carry all before it; or like the waters of jealousy which made the belly to swell and the thigh to rot; or the flying roll of the curse, which entering into the house of the sinner destroyed it, and all in it, **Nu 5:22**.

And like oil into his bones; which is more piercing and penetrating than water; and signifies the inward and quick sense he should have of his sins, and of the wrath of God for them; see Job 20:11.

Psalms 109:19

Ver. 19. Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him,.... Let him be surrounded on all sides with the wrath of God; and let it be visible to all, as a man's garment on him is: see Isa 66:24.

And for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually; let him be in the utmost straits and distress, being encompassed about with the curse and wrath of God; and let that stick close unto him as a man's belt does; and let him not be able to get clear of it, or extricate himself out of it, as no man can on whom it is.

Psalms 109:20

Ver. 20. Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the Lord,.... Who were so many Satans, as the word used signifies; and Judas particularly is called a devil; and of the same malevolent and diabolical disposition were the Jews in general, **Joh 6:70** and what is before imprecated upon them is the just recompence of reward for their hatred to Christ and ill usage of him.

And of them that speak evil against my soul; or "life" {f}; in order to take it away, as did the false witnesses that rose up against him, and the Jews who charged him with sedition and blasphemy.

{f} yvpn le "contra vitam meam", Gejerus.

Psalms 109:21

Ver. 21. But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake,.... The sense of the petition is, and which is a prayer of Christ as man, that the Lord God would take his part, be on his side, be present with him, work with him, help and assist him, and that for his own honour and glory, for his truth and faithfulness sake, who had promised him help and assistance, Ps 89:21.

Because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me; or "thy kindness" {g}; meaning the lovingkindness of God to Christ, which he always bore to him, and was eminently and superlatively good; which he makes use of as an argument for his deliverance out of all his troubles, and from death itself; see Ps 69:14.

{g} Kdox "benignitas tua", Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 109:22

Ver. 22. For I am poor and needy,.... As he was in human nature, being born of poor parents, brought up in a mean manner, had not where to lay his head, and was ministered to by others; though he was Lord of all, and immensely rich in the perfections of his nature, and in his vast empire and dominion, and the revenues arising from thence; see **2Co 8:9**. It may here chiefly respect his helpless and forlorn estate as man, at the time of his sufferings and death; see Ps 40:17.

And my heart is wounded within me; with the sins of his people on him, with a sense of divine wrath, and when under divine desertions, especially when his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,
Mt 26:38.

Psalms 109:23

Ver. 23. I am gone like the shadow when it declineth,.... When the sun is setting, and the shadow is going off; man's life is often compared to a shadow, because fleeting, momentary, and soon gone,
1Ch 29:15 and death is expressed by going the way of all flesh; and by going to the grave, the house for all living, a man's long home, Jos 23:14 and so is the death of Christ, Lu 22:22, it may be rendered, "I am made to go" {h}, denoting the violent death of Christ, who was cut off out of the land of the living, and whose life was taken away from the earth, Isa 53:8.

I am tossed up and down as the locust; or "shaken out" {i} by the wind, as the locust is by the east wind, and carried from place to place,
Ex 10:13, or when a swarm of them by a strong wind are crowded together and thrown upon one another; or like the grasshopper, which leaps from hedge to hedge, and has no certain abode: and such was the case of Christ here on earth; and especially it may have respect not only to his being sometimes in Judea and sometimes in Galilee, sometimes in the temple and sometimes in the mount of Olives; but to his being tossed about after his apprehension, when he was led to Annas, and then to Caiaphas, then to Pilate, then to Herod, then delivered to the soldiers, and by them led to Calvary, and crucified.

{h} ytklhn "cogor abire", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "abire factus sum", Gejerus, Michaelis. {i} ytren "excussus sum", Montanus, Vatablus Gejerus, Michaelis; "excutior", Tigurine version, Musculus, Cocceius.

Psalms 109:24

Ver. 24. My knees are weak through fasting,..... Either voluntary or forced, through want of food or refreshment; this was verified in Christ, when he kneeled and prayed, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground; see Ps 69:10.

And my flesh faileth of fatness; or "for want of oil" {k}; the radical moisture of his flesh being dried up like a potsherd, Ps 22:15.

{k} Nmvm di' elaion, Sept. "propter oleum", V. L. "propter defectum olei", Eth. Arab.

Psalms 109:25

Ver. 25. I became also a reproach unto them,.... Or they reproached him; not only in life, traducing his conversation, blaspheming his miracles, calling him a Samaritan, saying he had a devil, and charging him with sedition; but at the time of his death they reviled him, and treated him in the most opprobrious manner.

When they looked upon me, they shaked their heads; which was verified in the Jews as they passed by the cross of Christ, whither they came to stare upon him and scoff at him, Mt 27:39.

Psalms 109:26

Ver. 26. Help me, O Lord my God,.... Jehovah the Father is here addressed, who is the God of Christ, as Christ is man; who formed him, supported him, and glorified him; and whom Christ loved, believed in, obeyed and prayed unto; nor did he pray to a God that could not hear, but to one that was able to save him from death: as a divine Person he needed no help, being the mighty God, the most Mighty, the Almighty: but as man he did, being encompassed about with infirmities; and as Mediator help was promised him, he expected it, and he had it,
Ps 89:21.

O save me according to thy mercy; or "kindness"; as before in

Ps 109:21 from sufferings, and out of them; from death and the grave, as he was; or his people by him, who are saved not by works of righteousness, but according to the mercy of God, **Tit 3:5**.

Psalms 109:27

Ver. 27. That they may know that this is thy hand,.... Which inflicted vengeance, and executed judgments on Judas and the Jews, as before imprecated: so the Targum,

"that they may know that this is thy stroke;"

or which was concerned in all the sorrows and sufferings of the Messiah, which could never have come upon him had it not been the will of God; it was his hand and council that determined it, or men could never have effected it; see **Ac 4:28**, or which wrought deliverance and salvation as before prayed for; see Ps 118:21.

That thou, Lord, hast done it: one or other, or all the above things; the finger of God was to be seen in them; particularly in the sufferings of Christ, and in his exaltation; see **Ac 2:23**.

Psalms 109:28

Ver. 28. Let them curse, but bless thou,.... Let them curse me, as Shimei did David, the type of Christ; let them curse themselves, as they did; or my people: or "let them be cursed", as the Syriac version; cursed in life and at death, and to all eternity: but "bless thou [me]", the Messiah; as he did, when he raised him front the dead, set him at his right hand, and gave him a name above everyone, and made him most blessed for evermore; and bless my people with all spiritual blessings of grace, and with eternal glory and happiness. Or "be thou blessed"; let honour, blessing, and praise, be continually ascribed to thee; if God does but bless, it is no matter if wicked men curse, so Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it; see 2Sa 16:11.

When they arise, let them be ashamed; be suffered to do those things which may bring shame and disgrace upon them; or let them be disappointed and so confounded, as the Jews were; who though they so far gained their point as to bring Christ to the dust of death and the grave, yet to their great confusion he arose again from the dead; or let them be ashamed at the last day, as they will be when Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven and be their Judge, who will then be glad to shelter themselves in rocks and caves. This is imprecated to be done

when they shall arise: rise up against Christ to take away his life; rise up against his disciples to persecute them, against his Gospel to contradict and blaspheme it, and against his cause and interest to crush it; or against the Romans, to shake off their yoke, when they were brought to great shame and confusion; or when they shall arise at the resurrection of the dead, which will be to shame and everlasting contempt, Da 12:2.

But let thy servant rejoice; the Messiah, who appeared in the form of a servant; came not as a temporal lord and prince, to be ministered unto, but as a servant, to minister to others; and who is a servant of God's choosing, calling, and sending, and whom he faithfully served; and who, as prayed for, did rejoice in the strength of the Lord, given him as man; and in the salvation wrought for and by him, Ps 21:1, in the work of the Lord prospering in his hand; in his victory over sin, Satan, the world, and death; in the presence of God he was made glad with, and in the glory promised him, which he had with his Father before the world was, Ps 16:11.

Psalms 109:29

Ver. 29. Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame,.... This is only explanative of what is said before,

And let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle: the Arabic version is, "as with a breastplate." Some understand it as a petition of Christ, that they might be brought to repentance for their sins, and so to shame for them; which is an instance of his wondrous grace and goodness; and it is certain he prayed for the forgiveness of his enemies when on the cross, Lu 23:34.

Psalms 109:30

Ver. 30. I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth,.... Vocally, and in the highest strains.

Yea, I will praise him among the multitude: of converted persons, both Jews and Gentiles, and by them: or, "among the mighty" {l}; or great ones; the great congregation, as in Ps 22:25 among the innumerable and mighty angels in heaven; or, as the Targum,

"among the wise men;"

his own disciples, made wise unto salvation, and to win souls; being filled with the gifts of wisdom and knowledge; among and with whom Christ sung an hymn of praise after the celebration of the supper,
Mt 26:30.

{l} Mybr Kwtb "in magno coetu", Tigurine version.

Psalms 109:31

Ver. 31. For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor,.... Of the Messiah, as in Ps 109:22 at whose right hand the Lord was, to guide and direct, help and assist, protect and defend, Ps 16:8, or of his people, who are poor in every sense; but the Lord is on their side, and is a present help in time of trouble, Ps 46:1.

To save him from those that condemn his soul: the Messiah: from his judges, the high priest and Jewish sanhedrim, and Pilate the Roman governor, who condemned him to death; but he committed his spirit, or soul, to God, who received it, and raised his body from the dead; and would not suffer it to see corruption, as a testimony of his innocence: or the soul of the poor saints, which the Lord saves from the condemnation of sin, Satan, the law, and their own consciences, **Ro 8:1**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 110:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 110

A Psalm of David. This psalm was written by David, as the title shows, and which is confirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ, Mt 22:43 and by the Apostle Peter, **Ac 2:34** and was not written by anyone of the singers concerning him, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; nor by Melchizedek, nor by Eliezer the servant of

Abraham, concerning him, as Jarchi and others: for the former could not call Abraham his lord, since he was greater than he, **Heb 7:7** and though the latter might, yet he could not assign his master a place at the right hand of God; nor say he was a priest after the order of Melchizedek: and as it was written by David, it could not be concerning himself, as the Targum, but some other; not of Hezekiah, to whom some of the Jews applied it, as Tertullian {m} affirms; but of the Messiah, as is clear from the quotation by Christ, Mt 22:43 and from the references to it by the apostle, **Ac 2:34**. And that this was the general sense of the ancient Jewish church is manifest from the silence of the Pharisees, when a passage out of it was objected to them by our Lord concerning the Messiah; and is the sense that some of the ancient Jews give of it; says R. Joden {n},

"God will make the King Messiah sit at his right hand, &c:"

and the same is said by others {o}; and it is likewise owned by some of the more modern {p} ones; and we Christians can have no doubt about it. The psalm is only applicable to Christ, and cannot be accommodated to any other; no, not to David as a type, as some psalms concerning him may.

Ver. 1. The Lord said unto my Lord,.... The Targum is,

"the Lord said in his Word."

Galatinus {q} says the true Targum of Jonathan has it,

"the Lord said to his Word;"

and produces an authority for it. These are the words of Jehovah the Father to his Son the Messiah; the "Adon", or Lord, spoken of in **Isa 6:1**, the one Lord Jesus, and only Potentate; the Lord of all, the Lord of David, and of every believer; not by right of creation only, as of all mankind; but by redemption, having bought them; and by right of marriage, having espoused them; and by their own consent, they owning him to be their Lord. The words said to him by Jehovah, as follow, were said in his mind, in his eternal purpose and decree; which he, lying in his bosom, was privy, when he foreordained him to be the Redeemer; and in the council and covenant of peace, when he promised him this glory as the reward of his sufferings; and in the prophecies of the Old Testament, which speak as of the sufferings of Christ, so of the glory that should follow; and when the fact was done, when, after his death, resurrection, ascension, and entrance into heaven, he was placed, as follows:

Sit thou at my right hand; of power and majesty; expressive of the honour done to Christ, and the glory put on him in the human nature, such as angels nor any creature ever had, **Heb 1:13**, it being always accounted honourable to sit at the right hand of great personages, **1Ki 2:19**, and also of rule, and power, and authority; being upon the same throne with his Father, exercising the same government over angels and men; "sitting" is explained by "reigning" in 1Co 15:25. It also denotes having done his work, and to satisfaction; and therefore is set down, being entered into his rest, and having ceased from his work and labour, enjoying the presence of his divine Father; in which is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore: and it also signifies the continuance of regal honour and power; he sits and continues a King as well as a Priest for ever.

Until I make thine enemies thy footstool; Christ has his enemies; all the enemies of his people are his; some are overcome already by him, as sin, Satan, and the world; and the Jews, his enemies, who would not have him to reign over them, have been destroyed: but as yet all things are not put under his feet, which will be; as antichrist, and the kings of the earth that are with him, who will be overcome by him; the beast and false prophet will be taken and cast into the lake of fire; where also the old serpent, the devil, after he has been bound and loosed, wall be cast likewise; and when the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed; till that time comes, Christ reigns and will reign, and afterwards too, even to all eternity. The allusion is to the custom of conquerors treading upon the necks of the conquered; see Jos 10:24.

{m} Adv. Marcion. l. 5. c. 9. {n} In Midrash Tillim apud Yalkut in loc. {o} R. Moses Haddarsan & Arama in Galatiu. de Cath. Arean. Ver. l. 3. c. 17. & l. 8. c. 24. {p} Saadiah Gaon in Dan vii. 13. Nachman. Disput. cum Fratre Paulo, p. 36, 55. Abkath Rochel, p. 80. {q} De Cathol. Arean. Ver. l. 3. c. 5. & l. 8. c. 24.

Psalms 110:2

Ver. 2. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion,.... His royal and powerful sceptre, called the sceptre of righteousness,
Ps 45:6 and is no other than the Gospel, the power of God unto salvation; and which is mighty through him, for the reducing souls to the obedience of Christ; when it comes with power, and works effectually. This was first preached in Zion, or Jerusalem, and went out from thence into all parts of the world; the

first ministers of it had their commission there, and were sent from thence to publish it all over the world; see **Isa 2:3**, by means of which the kingdom of Christ was set up and spread in the world; with this rod and sceptre in his hand, he went forth with his ministers, conquering and to conquer, **Re 6:2**. The Jews {r} own this rod to be a rod in the hand of the Messiah, which they seem to understand literally; and have a fabulous notion of its being the same that Jacob, Judah, Moses, Aaron, David, and so every king of Judah, had, down to the destruction of the temple: the Targum in the king's Bible is,

"the Word of the Lord shall send, &c."

the essential Word.

Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies; or, "thou shalt rule", as the Targum and Arabic version; in the hearts of those who, in their unregenerate state, are enemies: but the arrows of his word being sharp in them, they are brought to submit to him; the everlasting doors are caused to open; he enters in, takes possession of their hearts, and rules there. Or this may be understood of his church in the world, which is his kingdom, and lies surrounded with enemies on all hands; but, in spite of them, and all their opposition, he will support his kingdom and interest.

{r} Jelammedenu apud Yalkut in oc. Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 224. 1. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 75. 1.

Psalms 110:3

Ver. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of that power..... Or, in the day of thine army {s}. When thou musterest thy forces, sendest forth thy generals, the apostles and ministers of the word, in the first times of the Gospel; when Christ went forth working with them, and their ministry was attended with signs, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost; and which was a day of great power indeed, when wonderful things were wrought; the god of this world was cast out, the Heathen oracles ceased, their idols were abolished, and their temples desolate; and Christianity prevailed everywhere. Or this may respect the whole Gospel dispensation, the day of salvation, which now is and will be as long as the world is; and the doctrine of it is daily the power and wisdom of God to them that are saved. Or rather this signifies the set time of love and life to every particular soul at conversion; which is a day for light, and a day of power; when the exceeding greatness of the power of God is put forth in the regeneration of them: and the people that were given to Christ by his Father, in the covenant of grace, and who, while in a state of nature, are rebellious and unwilling, are made willing to be saved by Christ, and him only; to serve him in every religious duty and ordinance; to part with their sins and sinful companions, and with their own righteousness; to suffer the loss of all things for him; to deny themselves, and take up the cross and follow him: and when they become freewill offerings to him, as the word {t} signifies; not only willingly offer up their spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, but themselves, souls and bodies, to him; as well as enter volunteers {u} into his service, and cheerfully fight his battles, under him, the Captain of their salvation; being assured of victory, and certain of the crown of life and glory, when they have fought the good fight, and finished their course. The allusion seems to be to an army of volunteers, such as described by Cicero {w}, who willingly offered themselves through their ardour for liberty.

In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning: this does not design the place where these willing subjects of Christ should appear; either in Zion, beautiful for situation; or in Jerusalem, the holy city, compact together; or in the temple, the sanctuary, in which strength and beauty are said to be; or in the church, the perfection of beauty: but the habit or dress in which they should appear, even in the beautiful garment of Christ's righteousness and holiness; the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation; the best robe, the wedding garment; gold of Ophir, raiment of needlework; and which is upon all them that believe: as also the several beautiful graces of the Spirit; the beauty of internal holiness, by which saints are all glorious within; and holiness is the beauty and glory of God himself, of angels and glorified saints. This, though imperfect now, is the new man put on as a garment; and is true holiness, and very ornamental. The phrase, "from the womb of the morning", either stands in connection with "the beauties of holiness"; and the sense is, that as soon as the morning of the Gospel dispensation dawns, these people should be born again, be illuminated, and appear holy and righteous: or, "from the womb, from the morning {x}", shall they be "in the beauties of holiness"; that is, as soon as they are born again, and as soon as the morning of spiritual light and grace breaks in upon them, and they are made light in the Lord, they shall be clad with these beautiful garments of holiness and righteousness; so, "from the womb", signifies literally as soon as men are born; see Ps 58:3 **Ho 9:11** or else with the latter clause, "thou hast the dew of thy youth": and so are rendered, "more than the womb of the morning", i.e. than the dew that is from the womb of the morning, is to thee the dew of thy youth; that is, more than the dew of the morning are thy converts; the morning is the parent of the dew, Job 38:28, but the former sense is best; for this last clause is a remember or proposition of itself,

thou hast the dew of that youth; which expresses the open property Christ has in his people, when made willing; and when they appear in the beauty of holiness, as soon as they are born of the Spirit, and the true light of grace shines in them; then those who were secretly his, even while unwilling, manifestly appear to belong unto him: so young lambs, just weaned, are in Homer {y} called ersai, "dews"; and it is remarkable that the Hebrew words for "dew" and "a lamb" are near in sound. Young converts are Christ's lambs; they are Christ's youth, and the dew of it; they are regenerated by the grace of God, comparable to dew, of which they are begotten to a lively hope of heaven; and which, distilling upon them, makes them fruitful in good works; and who for their numbers, and which I take to be the thing chiefly designed by this figure, are like to the drops of the dew; which in great profusion is spread over trees, herbs, and plants, where it hangs in drops innumerable: and such a multitude of converts is here promised to Christ, and which he had in the first times of the Gospel, both in Judea, when three thousand persons were converted under one sermon; and especially in the Gentile world, where the savour of his knowledge was diffused in every place; and as will be in the latter day, when a nation shall be born at once, and the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in. The sense given of these words, as formed upon the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, respecting the generation of Christ's human or divine nature, is without any foundation in the original text.

{s} Klyx Mwyb "in die exercitus tui", Munster, Vatablus, Piscator, Gejerus; so Ainsworth; "quum educes tuas copias", Tigurine version; "die copiarum tuarum", Junius & Tremellius. {t} twbdn "oblationes voluntariae", Junius & Tremellius; "spontanea oblatio", Cocceius, Gejerus. {u} "Milites voluntarii", Bootius. {w} Epist. l. 11. Ep. 8. {x} rxvm Mxdm "a vulya, ab aurora", Montanus. {y} Odyss. ix. v. 222.

Psalms 110:4

Ver. 4. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent,.... What he swore about, and did not repent of, was the priesthood of Christ, as follows; and which shows the importance of it, since when Jehovah swears, as it is by himself, because he can swear by no greater; so it is about matters of great moment only that are sworn to by the Lord, as this of the priesthood of Christ was; which was concerned in things pertaining to God and his glory, as well as in making reconciliation for the sins of his people: and it shows the truth, and was for the confirmation of it; since doubts might arise whether the Aaronic priesthood was changed, seeing it was given to Phinehas for an everlasting priesthood; and since so great a person as the Son of God is said to be a priest; and since, in the human nature, he was of the tribe of Judah, of which tribe nothing was said concerning the priesthood: and this oath was not so much for Christ's sake, to establish the priesthood with him, and assure him of it, as for the sake of his people; who, by two immutable things, the word and oath of God, might have strong consolation from it; and it clearly shows the validity of his priesthood; that he was called of God to this office, and invested with it, and consecrated in it with an oath; and which is expressive of the singularity of it, and of the dignity and preference of the priesthood of Christ to that of Aaron's, **Heb 7:20**. What follows was said, and this oath was made, in the council of peace, when Christ was called to this office, and he accepted of it, Ps 40:6, and of this the Lord never repented; as he never does of any of his acts of grace, Nu 23:19.

Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek; or, "according to the word of Melchizedek" {z}; that is, according to what is said of him; there being an agreement between the things said of one and of the other; so the Syriac version, "according to the likeness of Melchizedek", see **Heb 7:15** of him no mention is made elsewhere, but in
Ge 14:18 and in the epistle to the Hebrews. Various are the opinions of men concerning him: some think he was not a man, but an angel that appeared to Abraham: others, a divine power, superior to Christ, who were called "Melchizedecians": and others, that he was the Holy Ghost; and others, the Son of God himself, in an human form. On the other hand, some take him to be a mere man. The general notion of the Jews is, that he was Shem, the son of Noah; others, that he was a Canaanitish king, of the posterity of Ham: but others do not think it proper or lawful to inquire who he was, or from whom he descended; this being purposely hidden from men, that he might be more clearly a type of Christ. That there is a likeness between them is certain; the signification of his name, a title of office, King of righteousness, and King of peace, agrees with Christ the Lord, our righteousness and our peace: his being without father, mother, descent, beginning of days, and end of life, agree with the divinity, humanity, and eternity of Christ; and who is likewise King and Priest, as he was; and who blesses his people, as he did Abraham; and refreshes them with bread and wine, as he did Abraham's soldiers; See Gill on "Heb 7:2".
See Gill on "Heb 7:3". Now Christ is a Priest like him; whose office is to offer sacrifice, which he has done, even himself, for the atonement of the sins of his people; to make intercession for them, which he ever lives to do; to introduce

their persons to his Father, and present their petitions to him; and to call for every blessing for them, and answer all charges against them: in which office he continues for ever; there never will be any change in his priesthood, as there has been in Aaron's; nor will he ever have any successor: his priesthood is unchangeable, or does not pass from one to another, **Heb 7:24**, the efficacy of his blood and sacrifice always continues, and intercession is ever made by him, and the glory of his mediation is ever given him. The apostle produces this passage in proof of the change of the Aaronic priesthood, and so of the law, **Heb 7:11** and about the time Christ appeared as the high priest, the legal priesthood sensibly declined, and which the Jews themselves own; for they say,

"after the death of Ishmael Ben Phabi, the splendour of the priesthood ceased {a};"

which man was made priest by Valerius Gratus, governor of Judea, under Tiberius Caesar {b},

{z} ytrbd le "super meum verbum", Montanus; "juxta verbum", Vatablus. {a} Misn. Sotah, c. 9. s. 15. {b} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 2. s. 2. Vid. ib. l. 20. c. 7. s. 8.

Psalms 110:5

Ver. 5. The Lord at thy right hand,.... These words are either directed to Christ, at whose right hand the Lord was to help and assist him, Ps 16:8 or to the church, consisting of the Lord's willing people, at whose right hand he is to save them; is ready to help them, and is a present help to them in time of need, Ps 109:31 or rather to Jehovah the Father, at whose right hand the "Adonai", or Lord, even David's Lord, and every believer's Lord, is, as in Ps 110:1, and who is spoken of in all the following clauses; and to whom the things mentioned are ascribed, and so what immediately follows:

shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath; not only strike at them, and strike them; but strike them through, utterly destroy them. This is to be understood of the kings and princes that stood up and set themselves against him, **Ps 2:2**, which is interpreted of Herod and Pontius Pilate, **Ac 4:26**, who both died shameful deaths; as did another Herod, that set himself against the apostles and church of Christ, Ac 12:1, and also of Heathens, kings and emperors, who persecuted the Christians; as Diocletian, Maximilian, and others; who are represented as fleeing to rocks and mountains, to hide them from the Lamb, the great day of his wrath being come, **Re 6:15**, and also of the antichristian kings, that shall be gathered together to the battle of the Lord God Almighty, and shall be overcome and slain by Christ, Re 16:14 which will be a time of wrath, when the vials of God's wrath shall be poured out upon the antichristian kings and states; see Re 16:1. And may also reach the last and general judgment; when kings, as well as others, shall stand before him, and receive their awful doom from him; and shall perish when his wrath is kindled against them, **Ps 2:11**.

Psalms 110:6

Ver. 6. He shall judge among the Heathen,.... Either rule among the Gentiles, making them through his Gospel obedient by word and deed, and so reigning in their hearts by his Spirit and grace; and, by making many converts among them, enlarge his dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth: or inflict judgments on the Heathen; that is, the Papists, as they are called. These are the Gentiles to whom the outward court is given; the nations that will be angry when the time of his wrath, and to judge the dead, is come; and whom Christ will break in pieces with his iron rod; and are the Heathen that shall perish out of his land, when he is King over all the earth,
Re 11:2.

He shall fill the places with the dead bodies: the Targum adds,

"of the ungodly that are slain;"

namely, at the battle of Armageddon; when the fowls of the air shall be called to eat the flesh of kings, captains, and mighty men; of horses and their riders; of all men, bond and free, great and small,
Re 19:17.

He shall wound the heads over many countries; that is, kings over many countries; as the Targum explains it: it is to be read in the singular number, "he shall wound the heads over a large country" {c}; him who is the head over a large country; meaning either Satan, the god of this world, the wicked one, under whom the world lies; and who has deceived the inhabitants of the earth, and rules them at his pleasure; him Christ has wounded and bruised, even his head; destroyed him and all his power, policy, schemes, and works, agreeably to the first hint concerning him, **Ge 3:15** or else antichrist, who is head over a large country, or many countries; the whore that sits on many waters, which are people, nations, and tongues, and reigns over the kings of the earth; who has seven heads and ten horns; one of whose heads has been wounded already, of which it has been curing again; but ere long this beast will receive such a wound from Christ, as that he will never recover of it; when he shall consume him with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming; see Re 17:2 **2Th 2:8**. Musculus renders it, "the head of the country of Rabbah": and refers it to David's conquest of the king of the Ammonites, whose head city was Rabbah, 1Ch 20:1.

{c} hbr Ura le var "caput super terram multam", Pagninus, Montanus; "vel amplam", Piscator, Coceius; so Gejerus & Michaelis.

Psalms 110:7

Ver. 7. He shall drink of the brook in the way,.... This some understand of the sufferings of Christ, compared to a brook, a flow of waters, because of the abundance of them, as in Ps 69:1, his partaking of which is sometimes expressed by drinking,
Mt 20:22 and this was in the way of working out the salvation of his people, and in his own way to glory, Lu 24:26. If this is the sense, there may be some allusion to the black brook Kidron; over which David, the type of Christ, passed when in distress; and over which Christ himself went into the garden, where his sorrows began, 2Sa 15:23, but seeing this clause stands surrounded with others, which only speak of his victories, triumph, and exaltation, it seems to require a sense agreeable to them; wherefore those interpreters seem nearer to the truth of the text, who explain it of Christ's victory over all enemies, sin, Satan, the world, and death; and illustrate it by the passage in Nu 23:24, "he shall drink of the blood of the slain"; with which compare Isa 63:1. Others think the allusion is to the eagerness of a general pursuing a routed army, and pushing on his conquest; who, though almost choked with thirst, yet will not stop to refresh himself; but meeting with a brook or rivulet of water by the way, takes a draught of it, and hastens his pursuit of the enemy: and so this is expressive of, the eagerness of Christ to finish the great work of man's salvation, and the conquest of all his and their enemies; see **Lu 2:49**. But I think the clause is rather expressive of the solace, joy, and comfort, which Christ, as man, has in the presence of God, and at his right hand, having finished the work of our salvation; then he drank to his refreshment of the river of divine pleasure, when God showed him the path of life, and raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, and introduced him into his presence; where are

fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, Ps 16:11.

Therefore shall he lift up the head; as he did at his resurrection; he bowed it when he died, he lifted it up when he rose again, and so when he ascended on high to his God and Father; when he took his place at his right hand; where his head is lifted up above his enemies, and where he is exalted above angels, principalities, and powers, and where he must reign till all enemies are put under his feet. Or, "so shall he lift up his head", as Noldius {d} renders it; not that his sufferings, which he understands by "drinking out of the brook", were the cause of his exaltation, but the consequent of it: these two, Christ's humiliation and exaltation, though they are sometimes joined together, yet not as cause and effect, but as the antecedent and consequent; Christ having finished what, according to the divine order was to be finished, glory followed by the same order: and so the words thus taken respect not the cause, but the constitution of things, according to that writer.

{d} Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 727. No. 1941.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 111:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 111

This psalm, though without a name, is thought to be penned by David; it is composed in an artificial manner, in an alphabetical order, each clause or sentence beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in course, till the whole is finished; this perhaps was done to recommend the psalm, to make it more observed, and to help the memory; the general design of it is to excite to praise the Lord, from the consideration of his great and wonderful works.

Ver. 1. Praise ye the Lord,.... Or "hallelujah"; this is the title of the psalm, and is expressive of the subject matter of it; and so it stands in the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions; as it should, as appears from the psalm being alphabetical; for the first letter of this word is the fifth and not the first of the alphabet; it is wanting in the Syriac version, which gives the title in this manner, without a name, concerning the glorious virtues of

"the works of God; but it exhorts us to give thanks to Christ; and it is said in the person of the apostles."

I will praise the Lord with my whole heart; the psalmist excites to praise God by his own example; the object of his praise is Jehovah, the self-existent Being, the Being of beings, the author of his Being, and in whom all men live and move, and have their being; the God of their mercies, temporal and spiritual, and therefore should praise him, even Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; especially Jehovah the Messiah may be here intended, whose work of redemption is particularly attended to: the manner in which he determines to perform this service is, "with his whole heart": which ought to be engaged in every religious exercise, even the whole of it, all the powers and faculties of the soul, without being divided between other objects, and distracted or drawn off from the Lord by them; the phrase is not expressive of perfection, which is not to be expected in any duty, but of sincerity and cordial affection. The place where follows,

in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation: which may signify one and the same; even the place where upright persons assemble and gather together for divine worship, the tabernacle in David's time, and the temple afterwards; and may point at any place of worship in Gospel times, and the people that meet there; who being for the most part upright persons, or in a judgment of charity so accounted, though every individual among them may not be such, are thus called; and that because they have the uprightness, righteousness, and holiness of Christ imputed to them; and have right spirits renewed in them, and so are upright in heart; and, in consequence of this, walk uprightly according to the rules of the Gospel. It may be rendered, as it is by the Targum,

"in the secret {e} of the upright, and the congregation;"

because here the secret of the Lord is made known to his people; the mysteries of his grace are revealed; and his ordinances, which are his counsel, are administered: or it may design some particular friends and acquaintance of the psalmist's, who privately met and took sweet counsel together, and communicated their secrets to one another, as the other word "congregation" may intend the public assembly of the people; and then the sense is, that he would sincerely praise the Lord both in private and public, and that because of his works; as follows.

{e} dwob "in secreto", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 111:2

Ver. 2. The works of the Lord are great,.... His works of creation are great, being made out of nothing, are the effects of great power, and the produce of great wisdom, and which greatly display the glory of their Maker; the works of providence are great, which are daily wrought, especially such as concern the church and people of God, for whom he does great things, whereof they have reason to be glad and praise his name; the miracles of Christ he wrought here on earth were surprisingly great, some of them such as had not keen known from the creation of the world; and yet greater things were shown him, and done by him, particularly the work of redemption, a work which angels and men were unequal to, a work which none but the great God and our Saviour could effect, and is truly called the great salvation; the work of grace upon the heart is a great work, and requires the exceeding greatness of the divine power, and which is exerted in the beginning, carrying on, and finishing that work; and for all which the Lord is to be praised: and the rather since they are such as are

sought out of all them that have pleasure therein; or "sought out because of all the pleasures of them, or that are in them" {f}, which comes to much the same sense: there is a pleasure in the contemplation of the works of nature and providence; to behold the power, wisdom, and goodness of God in them, and his care over all his creatures; and particularly how he makes all things to work together for the good of his people; and especially it is delightful to observe the works of grace, how the glory of all the divine perfections is displayed in them; angels themselves take pleasure in looking into them: now these are sought and found out by those who delight in them; the works of creation are to be sought and found in the book of nature, the works of providence in the book of experience, and the works of grace in the book of God; and indeed all of them are recorded there, which are searched with pleasure by those that are inquisitive after them.

{f} Mhyupx lkl "ob omnes amabilitates eorum", Cocceius; "secundum omnia desideria eorum", Gejerus.

Psalms 111:3

Ver. 3. His work is honourable and glorious,.... Or "honour and glory" {g} itself; there is nothing mean and trifling done by him; nothing unworthy of him in nature, providence, and grace; every work of his serves to display his glory, and set off the greatness of his majesty; the heavens and the earth are full of his glory; and he does all things well and wisely in the government of the world; and whatever he does in a way of grace is for the glory of it, and tends to make his people honourable and glorious, as well as manifests his own glory, and makes for the honour of his own name.

And his righteousness endureth for ever; his justice and holiness, which appear in all his ways and works; for there is no unrighteousness in anything done by him, just and true are all his ways; there is a constant tenor of righteousness in them all; his faithfulness in fulfilling every word of promise, in making his words good by his works, is to be seen in all generations; and true evangelical righteousness, the righteousness of Christ, which is so considerable a branch of the work of redemption and salvation, is an everlasting one; it can never be abolished, it will answer for the saints in a time to come.

{g} rdhw dwh "gloria et decor", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "gloria et splendor", Musculus; "majestas et magnificentia", Piscator.

Psalms 111:4

Ver. 4. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered,.... All his works are marvellous ones; his works of creation, that they should rise out of nothing at a word of command; his works of providence, which have such a depth of wisdom and knowledge in them, are unsearchable and past finding out; and his works of redemption and grace; and these are so wrought by him, and such methods taken to continue the memory of them, that they cannot well be forgotten: all things in nature are as they were from the beginning; the sun, moon, and stars, keep their course and station; cold and heat, summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, are as they always were; remarkable providences have been carefully recorded, and memorials of them handed down to posterity. The deliverance of Israel out of Egypt was annually remembered in the passover; the feeding of them with manna in the wilderness was caused to be remembered by a pot of manna preserved in the tabernacle and temple; and the great work of our redemption by Christ is brought to remembrance in the ordinance of the Lord's supper, appointed for that purpose.

The Lord is gracious and full of compassion; so he was in eternity, and is in time; this appears in all his works, and especially in our salvation by Jesus Christ; see Ps 86:5.

Psalms 111:5

Ver. 5. He hath given meat to them that fear him,.... Or a "prey" {h}, alluding to the spoil of the Egyptians; or to the manna; corporeal food, daily bread, which they that fear him shall not want, Ps 34:9 spiritual meat, such that endures for ever; the flesh of Christ, which is meat indeed; the word and ordinances, in which are milk for babes, and meat for strong men; savoury meat does God give his people, such as their souls love, and the world knows nothing of; all is given, and freely given, and in plenty.

He will ever be mindful of his covenant; made with Abraham, and that at Sinai; and especially which he made with his people in Christ before the world was; and which is the ground and foundation of all his works of grace and redemption, and the reason why he gives food unto them; he never forgets that, his promises in it, nor the blessings of it, nor the people for whom they are made and provided, nor his love unto them; he is a covenant keeping God.

{h} Prj "praedam", Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 111:6

Ver. 6. He hath showed his people the power of his works,.... Or his works of power, his mighty works, in which his great power was shown; as to the people of Israel in Egypt, at the Red sea, in the wilderness, and in bringing them to and settling them in the land of Canaan; these he showed to them in fact, they saw them with their eyes; and he showed or declared them to them in prophecy, before they came to pass, as Kimchi observes, that it might not be said they came by chance. So he hath showed his works of power to his people in Gospel times, as the miracles of Christ, his resurrection from the dead, redemption by him, and the work of grace on the hearts of men in all ages.

That he may give them the heritage of the Heathen; the Lord did the above works of his power for the people of Israel, that he might put them into the possession of the land of Canaan, inherited by Heathens; that it might become their inheritance, and they might enjoy their houses, vineyards, and fields; and he wrought powerfully through the ministration of the Gospel, by his Spirit and grace, upon the hearts of men in the Gentile world; that the Christian church might possess the dominions of it, as it did in the times of Constantine and of others, and as it will more largely in the latter day; see **Ps 2:8**.

Psalms 111:7

Ver. 7. The works of his hands are verity and judgment,.... His works of providence are just and true, particularly these which respected the driving the Canaanites out of their land, and settling the Israelites in it; these were done according to the truth of the divine promises and prophecies, and so were "verity" or "truth"; and for the sins of the Heathen, and by him who has a right to dispose of the earth and the fulness of it to whom he pleases, and so are "judgment" or righteous; and this holds good of his work of grace upon the heart, which is the work of his hands, and is "truth in the inward parts": and is created in righteousness and true holiness; and of all his acts of grace in election, redemption, &c. which are according to the truth of the divine nature and its perfections, and in which there is no unrighteousness. Some interpret this of the two tables of stone, which were the work, writing, and engraving of God, and on which were inscribed the judgments of the Lord; and are "true and righteous altogether". Aben Ezra understands it of the law implanted in the hearts of men.

All his commandments are sure: firm, and to be believed and complied with, either to destroy the nations, or to possess their land; or rather the commands of the moral law, which are firm and sure, one jot or tittle of which shall never pass away; all have been fulfilled by Christ, and remain with him a rule of walk and conversation; or the word which the Lord has commanded to a thousand generations, Ps 105:8 the covenant which is ordered in all things and sure; the promises of which are yea and amen in Christ; and the blessings of it, the sure mercies of David; and even the doctrines of the Gospel are the commandments and testimony of the Lord, which are sure, Ps 19:8 and to be believed, being the word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation, and coming from God, who cannot lie.

Psalms 111:8

Ver. 8. They stand fast for ever and ever,.... Not only the covenant and its promises do, but both law and Gospel, the commandments of the one and the doctrines of the other; the law is an eternal law, as to the matter of it, and is not made void by faith, but established; and the Gospel is an everlasting Gospel, which lives and abides for ever, being established upon the word of God, which cannot be broken; and is continued in the church, the pillar and ground of truth, from whence it can never be removed.

And are done in truth and uprightness; either made by the Lord according to the truth of things, the moral perfections of his nature and will, and the rectitude of it; or observed by men that truly fear the Lord with great truth and sincerity.

Psalms 111:9

Ver. 9. He sent redemption unto his people,.... Or one to redeem them, who effected it; Moses to redeem Israel out of Egypt, and Christ to redeem his people from sin, Satan, and the law, and who has done it; and having obtained eternal redemption, he sent his ministers to publish it in the world, and his Spirit to apply it, and to show his people their interest in it; and make it over to them, and the blessings of it, that they may enjoy it, and all the comforts and advantages arising from it; temporal redemption, as typical of the spiritual and eternal one, is here meant.

He hath commanded his covenant for ever; which cannot be the covenant of circumcision, or that at Sinai, neither of which were for ever; but the covenant of grace made with Christ, and which stands fast with him for ever; it is everlasting, sure, and can never be removed; its blessings and promises are for ever; and it is so made and framed, and so kept and observed, as that it shall always continue, which is meant by its being "commanded": as well as it may denote the decree and resolution of God never to break and alter it; see Ps 89:3.

Holy and reverend is his name; the name of God is "holy"; it is his nature, and appears in all his works; and in which he is glorious, and so is reverend; he is to be feared and reverenced by all his creatures, and among his saints, as he is by the angels in heaven.

Psalms 111:10

Ver. 10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,.... The fear of the Lord, whose name is revered, is not a fear of his judgments here or hereafter, but of his goodness and grace; it is a reverential affection for him, a fiducial fear of him, a fear of offending so good a Being as he is; and it includes all religious worship of him, inward and outward, private and public; and at this true wisdom begins; a man begins to be wise when he fears the Lord, and not till then; this is his highest wisdom, and this is, as it may be rendered, "the chief of wisdom" {i}, the principal part of it; see **Pr 9:10**.

A good understanding have all they that do his commandments; or "that do them" {k}; the fear of the Lord and wisdom; that exercise them, that do as they oblige and direct to; so R. Moses in Aben Ezra connects the words; such have a good understanding of the Lord, know him as the object of their fear and reverence, and of their duty to him, and of their own interest, it being their wisdom to fear him; since by attending to their duty, to the word and ordinances of God, such arrive to a greater degree of knowledge and understanding of divine things. Some render it "good success {l}" or "prosperity", as Kimchi; such usually have prosperity in soul and body, in things temporal and spiritual; see **Jos 1:8**.

His praise endureth for ever; or "its praise" {m}; the praise of the fear of the Lord, of divine wisdom, and of a good understanding; just as of circumcision in the heart, **Ro 2:29** or the praise of him that does the above things, that does the commandments of God, or acts under the fear of God, and as a wise man, **1Co 4:5** or rather the praise of God, which shall be given him by angels and men now and for evermore, as it ought to be; and to stir up to which is the design of the psalm throughout; and which men are encouraged to from the works and word of God, from his name, nature, and covenant, and from his blessings and acts of grace and goodness.

{i} hmkx tyvar "caput sapientiae", Junius & Tremellius; "vel praecipuum", Cocceius; "summa", Michaelis. {k} Mhyve "facientibus ea", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremelilius, &c. {l} bwj lkv "successus optimus", Junius & Tremellius; so Ainsworth. {m} wtlht "quorum laus", Tigurine version; i.e. "uniuscujusque facientium", Gejerus, Michaelis.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 112:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 112

This psalm, also, very probably, was written by David, and is composed as the former, in an alphabetical order. The inscription of it in the Syriac version is,

"When David in it commanded Solomon his son, saying, Keep the commandments of, the Lord, and worship him: likewise the calling of the Gentiles and the righteousness of Christ."

The subject matter of the psalm are the character, conduct, usefulness, and happiness of a good man.

Ver. 1. Praise ye the Lord,.... Or, "hallelujah". This is properly the title of the psalm: Aben Ezra says it is a word of the psalmist; it shows that all that a good man is, has, or does, is from the Lord; and therefore his name is to be praised: and he is not only to be praised for his perfections and works, but for this among others, that there are any good men on earth that fear and serve him, and are useful in their day and generation.

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; not men, but the Lord; not his wrath, nor his judgments here or hereafter, but his goodness; not with a servile, but with a godly fear. This every man does not; there are but few that truly fear the Lord, only such who have the grace of God; and these are happy men: they have an interest in the heart of God, in his pity, love, and delight; great discoveries are made unto them; the secret of the Lord is with them; he shows them his covenant; and the sun of righteousness arises upon them: they are guarded and protected by the Lord; his eye of providence, as well as love, is upon them, and his angels encamp about them: they are supplied with all needful good things, temporal and spiritual; and have much goodness laid up for them hereafter. This psalm begins with what the preceding ends, the fear of the Lord; and is a further illustration and enlargement of it; See Gill on "Ps 111:10".

That delighteth greatly in his commandments: in the righteousness, purity, and holiness of them: in keeping and doing them: they are not grievous, but pleasant; a good man delights in them, after the inward man; he observes them from a principle of love, and finds peace and pleasure in them; he loves them above gold, yea, above fine gold; and esteems them concerning all things to be right,
Ps 119:97.

Psalms 112:2

Ver. 2. His seed shall be mighty upon earth,.... The Targum is,

"mighty in the law;"

as Apollos is said to be "mighty in the Scriptures", Ac 18:24. This must be understood of such of them as fear the Lord also, and love him, and delight in his commandments, according to Ex 20:6 and not in a literal sense, for not many mighty are called; but in a spiritual sense, of their being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Some understand this of the spiritual seed of Christ; and make him to be the man that feared the Lord, and greatly delighted in his commandments, as it is certain he did; he was heard in that he feared; and it was his meat and drink to do the will of him that sent him. He has a spiritual seed; and these are mighty in the sense before given; and as they will be in the latter day, when the feeble among them shall be as David, and the house of David as God, as the Angel of the Lord; when the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the saints, and, being kings and priests, they shall reign with Christ on earth. Aben Ezra thinks the note of similitude "as" is wanting, and supplies it thus, "his seed shall be as a mighty man on earth"; be known, as he is in his generation.

The generation of the upright shall be blessed; the seed of them, as before, who are the upright in heart and conversation: or the age in which upright men live is happy on their account; or a succession of upright persons: or rather a company of them dwelling together, at the same time, and in the same place; the same with the generation of them that seek the Lord, Ps 24:6, these are blessed with spiritual and eternal blessings.

Psalms 112:3

Ver. 3. Wealth and riches shall be in his house,.... In his family; if not possessed by him, yet by his posterity: though rather this signifies spiritual riches, the riches of grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ, durable riches and righteousness; seeing it is connected with an everlasting righteousness, as in the next clause.

And his righteousness endureth for ever; he is not hurt by his temporal riches, as others are, the prodigal, the covetous, and formal professor; he continues the good and righteous man he was, notwithstanding his riches. Some understand this of his liberality with his riches, as alms deeds are sometimes called righteousness; see Ps 112:9 though it rather intends either inherent righteousness, the new man which is created in righteousness, the inward principle of grace which always continues; or the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, which is an everlasting one.

Psalms 112:4

Ver. 4. Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness,.... Upright ones are sometimes in the darkness of affliction, under divine desertions, without spiritual joy, and in an uncomfortable condition; when on a sudden light arises to them, like break of day, or the morning light: they have deliverance from affliction, and enjoy prosperity; the light of God's countenance is lifted up on them; the sun of righteousness arises upon them with healing in his wings; and spiritual joy and comfort are communicated unto them. It may denote the comforts the people of God have amidst their afflictions and troubles, even while they are in them; and the light they enjoy, while darkness is round about others, like the children of Israel in Egypt: or the suddenness of deliverance from adversity, temporal or spiritual; weeping endures for a night, joy comes in the morning, and at evening time it is light, Ps 30:5.

He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous; that is, the Lord is so. Thus the Arabic version,

"the Lord God is merciful and bountiful;"

and the Ethiopic version,

"merciful and compassionate is the Lord, and righteous is our King."

And because God is the God of all grace, and is able to make it abound to his people, and is compassionate to them in distress, and is just and faithful to his promises; therefore he causes light to arise to them in darkness; and which, on such account, they may believe and expect; see **Mic 7:8**. Some understand this of the upright man and of his character; that he is "gracious", kind, and bountiful; that he is "full of compassion", tenderhearted, and shows mercy to distressed objects; and is righteous, through Christ, and lives soberly and righteously. This sense agrees both with what goes before, and follows after.

Psalms 112:5

Ver. 5. A good man showeth favour, and lendeth,.... Without usury, hoping for nothing again: he pities those that labour under difficulties, for want of a little money; and he generously lends it till they are able to pay him again; which oftentimes is of as much service as if it was given; see Ps 37:21. A good man is not only a man that has the good work of grace in him, and is ready to every good work; but one that is munificent, bountiful, and liberal; in which sense the word is used in **Ro 5:7** and so in Latin writers {n}.

He will guide his affairs with discretion; his civil and domestic affairs: he will act the part of a good economist; so that he may be able to support his family with credit and reputation, and have something to give to the relief of those in want. Some restrain this to his acts of charity. He lends to some, and gives to others: he takes care that they to whom he gives are proper objects of charity; he gives to persons seasonably, and in proportion to his own ability and their wants. It may be rendered, "he shall guide his words with judgment" {o}; take care of what he says, and before whom; and that it be at a proper time and place; and especially when speaking of spiritual and religious things.

{n} "Bonus est hic homo", Plauti Poenulus, Act. 5. Sc. 4. v. 42. "Vellet bonus atque benignus", Horat. Satyr. I. 1. Sat. 2. v. 51. "Piso bonus", Juvenal. Sat. 5. v. 109. {o} jpvmb wyrbd "verba sua in, vel cum, judicio", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus.

Psalms 112:6

Ver. 6. Surely he shall not be moved for ever,.... Out of the heart of God, and from his love and affections; out of the covenant of grace, and from an interest in it; out of the hands of Christ, or off of him the foundation; out of the house and family of God; out of a state of grace and righteousness, into condemnation: and though he may be distressed by afflictions, yet not destroyed; and though he may be so shaken, as to fall from some degree of steadfastness in the faith, and into sin, yet not so as to perish everlastingly: the saint's perseverance is a sure and certain truth, and to be depended upon.

The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance; with good men, and especially such whose names are recorded in Scripture: and even others are remembered after death; and for a long time after, their pious characters, sayings, actions, sufferings, works, and writings; and with God, who remembers his love to them, his covenant with them, his promises to them; has a book of remembrance for their thoughts, words, and actions; which will be remembered and spoken of at the last day, when forgotten by them; see Pr 10:9 &c.

Psalms 112:7

Ver. 7. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings,.... Either respecting things temporal; the death of friends, loss of substance, public calamities, wars and rumours of wars, commotions, confusions, convulsions, and revolutions in states, kingdoms, and nations,
Ps 46:1 or things spiritual; such as are brought to him by Satan; that he is an hypocrite, and the root of the matter is not in him; for he knows him to be a liar, and the father of lies; or by his own unbelieving heart: or what will befall the churches of Christ, and the interest of religion, in the latter day; as that the outward court shall be given to the Gentiles; that the witnesses shall be slain, and an hour of temptation shall come upon all the earth; and such a time of tribulation as has not yet been; for he knows that the saints, will be kept in it, and carried through it, and glorious times will follow. Or, "he shall not be afraid of an evil hearing" {p}; of an ill report raised of himself; for he knows he must go through good report and bad report; and especially when it is a false one, and for the sake of truth and righteousness, it gives him no uneasiness: nor is he afraid of hearing the report of the law, which in some sense may be called an evil hearing or report, in opposition to the hearing of faith, or the good report of the Gospel; he is not afraid of it, when it curses, those that are under it, seeing he is redeemed by Christ from the curse of it; and therefore is not afraid of its menaces and threatenings, its curse and condemnation: nor is a good man afraid of or terrified at the tidings of death; nor will he be dismayed when the last trumpet sounds, and the dead are raised; when the heavens shall melt away with a great noise; when all shall be summoned to the judgment seat, and the wicked will hear, "Go ye cursed", he will be under no fears of hearing such a sentence.

His heart is fixed; on the love of God, and is rooted and grounded in it; and is firmly persuaded of his interest in it, and that nothing can separate him from it: it is fixed on Christ the foundation; his faith is fixed and settled in him, and so are his affections; and nothing can separate from his love to him, **Ro 8:35**. Or his heart is prepared {q}; to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments: he expects tidings of evil things, and that he shall receive evil things, as well as good, at the hands of the Lord; and therefore is not afraid of them, or surprised at them when they come; as well as his heart is prepared by the Lord to serve him, and is ready to every good work.

Trusting in the Lord; in his covenant God and Father, who will never leave him nor forsake him; in his grace, which is sufficient for him in the worst of times; and who will supply all his wants: in his strength, to enable him to do his duty; to bear up under trials and exercises, and to do and suffer his will and pleasure; and in his power, to protect and preserve him, and keep him unto salvation; and in his faithfulness, to perform his promises, trusting in him for things temporal, spiritual, and eternal. The Targum is,

"trusting in the Word of the Lord;"

in Christ, the essential Word; looking to him as the author and finisher of faith; leaning upon him, laying the whole stress of his salvation on him; trusting in his person for acceptance, in his righteousness for justification, in his blood for pardon and cleansing, in his sacrifice for atonement, in his fulness for supply, and in his strength and power for assistance and protection; all which give him peace, and secure him from fear of evil tidings; see Isa 26:3.

{p} her hewmvm "ab auditione mala", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus. {q} wbl Nwkn "paratum cor ejus", V. L. Gejerus

Psalms 112:8

Ver. 8. His heart is established,.... With the doctrine of grace; which is food unto it, and by which it is strengthened and nourished; it is established in the faith of Christ, both in the grace of faith, and in the doctrine of faith, even in all the doctrines of the Gospel; so that he is not as a child, tossed to and fro with every wind; his heart is established in the exercise of grace, and he is steadfast and immovable in the discharge of duty. This being the case,

he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies; until he looks them in the face boldly and confidently; or until he sees them all slain and destroyed, as the Israelites saw the Egyptians on the sea shore. We supply "his desire"; it might be put "vengeance", as in Ps 58:10, the punishment of God on wicked men, who are the enemies of the upright; and which they shall see with pleasure, because of the glory of divine justice conspicuous therein; see Re 18:20 and even before this is brought about, while their enemies are oppressing them, insulting them, and triumphing over them, they shall not be afraid, as knowing the time is coming when the scene will be changed, and they shall triumph in their turn.

Psalms 112:9

Ver. 9. He hath dispersed,.... His money, as the Targum; scattered it here and there, as the sower scatters his seed; does not throw it all in one place, but some here and some there, and all with profusion and plenty. This denotes the bounty and liberality of the upright; and his wisdom and discretion in distributing his charity, and the numerous objects of it; see Pr 11:14.

He hath given to the poor; that stand in need of his charity, freely, cheerfully, and bountifully.

His righteousness endureth for ever; his liberality continues, he is not weary of well doing; he gives a portion to seven and to eight, and to as many and as often as there is a call and need for it;
See Gill on "Ps 112:3".

His horn shall be exalted with honour; the reproach cast upon him shall be wiped off; he shall grow more prosperous, and become more honourable among men here on earth; and in the resurrection morning shall have the dominion over the wicked, and shall appear with Christ in glory, and be with him to all eternity.

Psalms 112:10

Ver. 10. The wicked shall see it,.... The glory and happiness of the upright man: so when the witnesses shall ascend to heaven, a phrase expressive of a more glorious state of the church, their enemies shall behold them, Re 11:12.

And be grieved; at their happiness, and grudge it: the Targum is,

"and shall be angry at him;"

the upright man.

He shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away; like snow water {r}; or as a snail melteth, or as wax before the fire, Ps 58:7, shall pine away with grief and envy at the happiness and prosperity of the righteous; the wicked will weep and gnash their teeth, when they shall see them in the kingdom of heaven, and they themselves shut out,
Lu 13:28. The desire of the wicked shall perish; they shall not have their

desire, neither of good things for themselves here and hereafter, nor of evil things for the righteous.

{r} "Mens mea tabida liquescit", &c. "Liquescunt pectora", &c. Ovid. de Ponto, l. 1. Eleg. 1. v. 68. & Eleg. 2. v. 57.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 113:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 113

With this psalm begins the great "Hallel", which ends with Psalm 118; and was used to be sung at the Jewish festivals, particularly at the feast of tabernacles and of the passover; and is thought by some to be the hymn sung by Christ and his apostles, after the celebration of the Lord's supper; in which there are many things pertinent to that occasion as well as to the above feasts. This psalm is a song of praise for redemption by Christ, to be sung in Gospel times, when the name of the Lord should be known among all nations, from the rising to the setting sun. It is thought by some to be an abridgment of the song of Hannah, **1Sa 2:1**, there is an agreement.

Ver. 1. Praise ye the Lord,.... Or, "hallelujah". This is the title of the psalm, as in the two preceding, and directs to the principal matter of it.

Praise, O ye servants of the Lord; meaning not the angels, nor all men, nor the priests and Levites only; but all the saints, who are a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God; who are servants, not of sin, nor of Satan, nor of men, but of God and Christ; and who serve the Lord willingly and cheerfully, with much pleasure and delight, in righteousness and holiness, with reverence and godly fear, and without trusting to and depending on their service for salvation: and one principal branch of their service is praise, especially under the Gospel dispensation; in which all legal sacrifices are abolished, and the sacrifice of praise is continued; and which is pleasant and delightful work, and yet there is a backwardness to it; and therefore there is need of such an exhortation to excite unto it, and to repeat it, as follows:

praise the name of the Lord; not any particular name, as Jehovah; but him himself, and the perfections of his nature; his holiness, justice, truth, faithfulness, power, goodness, grace and mercy. The repetition of the exhortation denotes either the abundance of praise to be given to the Lord, or the constancy and continuance of it; which ought to be done at all times, every day, since his mercies are new every morning. Some have thought the threefold repetition respects the trinity of Persons, who are each to be praised, as in **Nu 6:24**, but this is doubtful, and perhaps not sufficient to build such a doctrine on; and especially since the first of these exhortations is the title of the psalm: however, this is a certain truth, that Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, are to be praised.

Psalms 113:2

Ver. 2. Blessed be the name of the Lord,.... Some prefix the word "saying", as directing to the matter and manner of praising the Lord, and to express themselves thus; "let the name of the Lord be blessed"; honoured, glorified, spoken well of.

From this time forth and for evermore; from the beginning of time, or as soon as time began, the Lord's name was to be praised, and was praised by the holy angels, who were present at laying the foundation of the earth, Job 38:4, and all the works of the Lord, in their way, have praised him ever since. Here it may respect the time of penning this psalm, or the time when the persons called upon commenced the servants of the Lord, the time of their conversion; a time of love, life, light, and deliverance, and therefore a time to begin to praise the Lord: or the whole time of the Gospel dispensation, to which this psalm refers; the accepted time and day of salvation, and of the Gentiles glorifying God for his mercy; in which the Lord is to be and is praised, as he will be to all eternity, by angels and glorified saints.

Psalms 113:3

Ver. 3. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same,.... Meaning not from morning tonight; for it designs not time, but place, even all the space from east to west, or that lies between the rising and setting sun; even all nations, and the inhabitants of them; and who ought to praise the Lord for the rising sun, and the benefit and advantages of it; and yet many of them have worshipped the sun, and served the creature more than and besides the Creator. All within this compass are the creatures of God, and the care of his providence, and therefore are bound to praise him and yet he has had this tribute due unto him but from a few. Here it respects Gospel times, when the Gospel should be sent into all the world; and many should be called from the east and west, from the north and south, and fear the Lord and worship him, and offer a pure offering of praise unto him; and his name be great among the Gentiles, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, **Mal 1:11**. For within this wide space

the Lord's name is to be praised; it ought to be, though it is not; and ere long it will be, when all nations shall come and worship before him, Rev 15:3.

Psalms 113:4

Ver. 4. The Lord is high above all nations,.... He is the most High in all the earth; he is higher than the highest; he is King of kings and Lord of lords: all nations are made by him, and are under his government and dominion; he is the Governor among the nations; they are in comparison of him as the drop of a bucket, as the small dust of the balance; as nothing, yea, less than nothing, and vanity. Here it seems to respect the time when the Lord shall be more visibly King over all the earth, and the kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, Zec 14:9.

And his glory above the heavens; it is above what the heavens do or can declare; they declare something of it, but not all. Christ, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, is made higher than the heavens, and has ascended far above them; and is above the angels in them, both as to nature, name, office, and place, **Heb 1:4**.

Psalms 113:5

Ver. 5. Who is like unto the Lord our God,.... Among the gods of the nations, as Kimchi; or among the angels of heaven, or among any of the mighty monarchs on earth; there is none like him for the perfections of his nature, for his wisdom, power, truth, and faithfulness; for his holiness, justice, goodness, grace, and mercy; who is eternal, unchangeable, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; nor for the works of his hands, his works of creation, providence, and grace; none ever did the like: and what makes this reflection the more delightful to truly good men is, that this God is their God; and all this is true of our Immanuel, God with us; who is God over all, and the only Saviour and Redeemer; and there is none in heaven and earth like him, or to be desired besides him.

Who dwelleth on high? in the high and holy place, in the highest heaven, which is his throne; or "who exalteth himself to dwell" {s}; so the Targum,

"he exalteth his habitation to dwell,"

suitable to the dignity and the greatness of his majesty; as he is high and above all, so he has fixed his habitation in the highest heavens; as he is self-existent, he is self-exalted, and none can exalt him as himself; he is exalted above all blessing and praise; and if it is an exaltation of him to dwell in the highest heavens, what an exaltation will it be of the saints to dwell with him there, in those mansions in his house which Christ is gone to prepare for them! This clause may be applied to Christ, who, both previous to his humiliation, and after it, dwelt in the highest heavens with his Father, in his bosom, from whence he came down on earth, and whither he is gone again, and is highly exalted there.

{s} tbvl yhybgmh "sustollens se ad habitandum", Montanus; "qui se elevat", Pagninus.

Psalms 113:6

Ver. 6. Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth. The persons the highest heavens, the angels whom he upholds in their beings, and admits into his presence; who always behold his face, and he beholds them, delights in their persons, and accepts their services; which, though pure and perfect, it is a condescension in him to do, since they are but creature services, and chargeable with folly and weakness; and who themselves are as nothing in comparison of him, and veil their faces before him; **Job 4:18**, also glorified saints are continually in his view, and favoured with intimate communion with him: and he humbles himself to look lower than this, and behold the things in the starry heavens, the sun, and moon, and stars; whom he preserves in their being, directs their courses, and continues their influence; brings out their host by number, calls them by their names, and because of his power not one fails: he looks lower still, and beholds the things in the airy heavens; there is not a meteor or cloud that flies, or a wind that blows, but he observes, guides, and directs it; nor a bird in the air but his eye is on it; he feeds the fowls of the air, and not so much as a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge and will: and he also humbles himself to behold persons and things on earth, even every beast of the forest, the cattle on a thousand hills, all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field;

and their eyes are on him, and he gives them their food in due season; he looks down from heaven and beholds all the children of men, and is the Saviour of them in a providential way; in an especial manner his eye, both of providence and grace, is on his own people, whom he beholds in Christ as fair and comely: and rejoices over them to do them good; and he has respect to their services for his sake, and condescends to dwell on earth with them. This may also be applied to Christ, who humbled himself to look upon the angels in heaven, and take them under his care and protection, be the head of them, and confirm them in that estate in which they were created: and who from all eternity vouchsafed to look with delight upon the sons of men, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, where he knew they would dwell; and in the fulness of time he humbled himself to come down on earth in human nature and dwell among men, and become very man in that nature; made himself of no reputation, and humbled himself so as to become obedient to death, the death of the cross, and be made sin and a curse for his people. This was an humiliation indeed!

Psalms 113:7

Ver. 7. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,.... Persons of mean extraction and in low life are sometimes raised by him to great honour and dignity, as Saul, David, and others; and is true of many who are spiritually poor and needy, as all men are, but all are not sensible of it; some are, and these are called poor "in spirit", and are pronounced "blessed", for "theirs is the kingdom of heaven": they are raised out of a low and mean estate, out of the dust of sin, and self-abhorrence for it, in which they lie when convicted of it.

And lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; which denotes a mean condition; so one born in a mean place, and brought up in a mean manner, is sometimes represented as taken out of a dunghill {t}: and also it is expressive of a filthy one; men by sin are not only brought into a low estate, but into a loathsome one, and are justly abominable in the sight of God, and yet he lifts them out of it: the phrases of "raising up" and "lifting out" suppose them to be fallen, as men are in Adam, fallen from a state of honour and glory, in which he was created, into a state of sin and misery, and out of which they cannot deliver themselves; it is Christ's work, and his only, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to help or lift up his servant Israel,
Isa 49:6.

{t} "Ex sterquilinio effosse", Plauti Casina, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 26.

Psalms 113:8

Ver. 8. That he may set [him] with princes,.... As all the saints are by birth, being the sons of God, the King of kings; born of him, and not of the will of man; and are of a princely spirit, have a free spirit, and offer themselves and services willingly to the Lord; have the spirit of adoption, in opposition to a spirit of bondage; and, as princes, have power with God and prevail; and are also heirs of God, heirs of salvation, heirs of a kingdom, as princes be; now such as are raised by Christ and his grace from a low estate and condition are set among those princes here; they are brought to Zion, and have a place and a name in the house of God, better than that of sons and daughters; and become fellowcitizens with the saints; and they are set among princes hereafter in the kingdom of heaven.

Even with the princes of his people; the more eminent among the people of God, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with whom they shall sit down in the kingdom of heaven; and with the prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New; and even with all the saints, who are made kings and priests unto God; see Ps 45:16.

Psalms 113:9

Ver. 9. He maketh the barren woman to keep house,.... Or "to dwell in the house", as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and other versions; or rather "to cause the house to be inhabited"; to fill the house with inhabitants, to build up the house, as the barren woman, when made fruitful, does, as Rachel and Leah built up the house of Israel, **Ru 4:11**. This may be applied to the church of God, as it is to the congregation of Israel by the Targum,

"who makes the congregation of Israel, which is like to a barren woman, that sitteth sorrowful, to dwell with the men of her house, full of multitudes."

Jarchi interprets it of Zion, who was as a barren woman; see Isa 54:1 **Ga 4:27**. It may be illustrated by the case of the primitive and apostolic church, which at first had but very few converts, but afterwards, both in Judea and in the Gentile world, had large numbers; as the church in the latter day will also have, when the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in, and the nation of the Jews born at once.

And to be a joyful mother of children; as the barren woman is when she becomes the mother of children; and indeed every woman rejoices when a man is born into the world, Joh 16:21, and so does the church of Christ and people of God, when souls are born again among them; this causes great joy among the saints; see Ps 87:4.

Praise ye the Lord; not only for the church's fruitfulness, but for all the great and good things the Lord has vouchsafed to do for his people, mentioned in this psalm.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 114:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 114

The title of this psalm in the Arabic version is "hallelujah", as in some preceding ones; it is part of the great "Hallel" sung at the passover, and with great propriety; since the subject matter of it is the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, typical of our spiritual redemption by Christ; and of the effectual calling of God's elect out of a state of nature into a state of grace; and particularly of the conversion of the Gentiles, and the bringing of them from Paganism to Christianity: the inscription of the Syriac version is,

"a psalm without a name, out of the ancient writing; concerning Moses, who sung praise at the sea; but unto us the calling of the Gospel, by which we become a new people; spiritual to God, who is incarnate; to Jesus Christ, who redeemed us by his blood from the curse of the Scripture (the law), and hath cleansed us from sin by his Spirit."

Ver. 1. When Israel went out of Egypt,.... The people of Israel in a body, publicly, openly, and not by stealth; freely and willingly, not forced and drove out; though urged by the Egyptians to go, through the hand of God upon them; and so went out with the mighty hand and outstretched arm of the Lord, and with great riches, and in health, not one feeble or sick among them.

The house of Jacob from a people of strange language; or barbarous; as every language was reckoned by the Jews but their own; the Egyptian language they did not understand; see Ps 81:5, no doubt many of them learned it during their long stay there, but in general they retained their own language. This was an emblem of the Lord's people in effectual calling, coming out of bondage into liberty, out of darkness into light, out of superstition, and idolatry and profaneness, to the service of the true God in righteousness and true holiness; and from a people of a strange language to those that speak the language of Canaan, a pure language, in which they can understated one another when they converse together, either about experience or doctrine; and the manner of their coming out is much the same, by strength of hand, by the power of divine grace, yet willingly and cheerfully, with great riches, the riches of grace, and a title to the riches of glory, and with much spiritual strength; for, though weak in themselves, yet are strong in Christ.

Psalms 114:2

Ver. 2. Judah was his sanctuary,.... Meaning not the tribe of Judah only, though that in many things had the preeminence; the kingdom belonging to it, the chief ruler being out of it, especially the Messiah; its standard was pitched and moved first; it offered first to the service of the Lord; and the Jews have a tradition, mentioned by Jarchi and Kimchi, that this tribe, with its prince at the head of it, went into the Red sea first; the others fearing, but afterwards followed, encouraged by their example: but rather all the tribes are meant, the whole body of the people; for this is not to be understood of the tabernacle or temple in the tribe of Judah, sometimes called a sanctuary; for neither of these were in being when Israel came out of Egypt; but it may be rendered, "Judah was his holiness" {u}, or was holiness to the Lord, the Lord's holy people; see **Jer 2:2**, not all internally holy; for there were many that came out of Egypt that were unholy, rebellious, and disobedient, and whose carcasses fell in the wilderness; but externally, when brought out of Egypt they were separated from all other people, and in this sense sanctified, and became a holy and special people, chosen by the Lord to be so; with whom, he made a covenant, and to whom he gave holy laws and righteous statutes: and in this they were typical of those who are effectually called by grace with an holy calling, and unto holiness; have principles of grace and holiness wrought in them, and have Holiness to the Lord written upon them; they have the sanctification of the Spirit, and Christ is made sanctification to them; and they are the Lord's sanctuary, in which he dwells.

And Israel his dominion: for, though all the world is his kingdom and his government, yet the people of Israel were in a very particular and remarkable manner his dominion; from the time of their coming out of Egypt to their having a king, their government was properly a theocracy; God was their King, and by him they were immediately ruled and governed, and had a body of laws given them from him, and were under his immediate care and protection, Ex 19:5. In this they were typical of the saints called by grace, who are then translated from the power of Satan into the kingdom of Christ; whom they acknowledge to be their Lord and King, and whose laws, commands, and ordinances, they willingly observe; the people of God are often represented as a kingdom, and Christ as King of saints; the Targum is

"the congregation of the house of Judah was united to his holiness, and Israel to his power."

{u} wvdql "sanctificatio ejus", Pagninus, Vatablus; "sanctitas ejus", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 114:3

Ver. 3. The sea saw it, and fled,.... When the Word of the Lord appeared at it, as the Targum in the king's Bible; the Red sea, to which the Israelites came when they went out of Egypt; this saw that Judah was the Lord's holy and peculiar people, and that Israel were the subjects of his kingdom; it saw the presence of the Lord among them; it saw him in the glory of his perfections, and felt his power; see
Ps 77:16, at which its waters fled and parted, and stood up as a wall to make way for Israel to pass through as on dry land,
Ex 14:21. This was typical of the nations of the Gentile world, comparable to the sea, **Da 7:2**, who saw the work of God going on among them under the ministry of the Gospel in the first times of it, whereby multitudes were turned from idols to serve the living God; this they saw and trembled at, and they and their kings fled for fear; see
Isa 41:5, and of the stop put to the ocean of sin in a man's heart, and to the torrent of wickedness that breaks out from thence, by powerful and efficacious grace, much more abounding where sin has abounded.

Jordan was driven back; this was done not at the time of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, but just before their entrance into the land of Canaan, and in order to it; and being an event similar to the former is here mentioned, and done by the power and presence of God; for as soon as the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the Lord, the symbol of the divine Presence, were dipped in the brim of the waters, the waters below were cut off from those above, and stood up on an heap, and all the Israelites passed through on dry ground, **Jos 3:13**, this was an emblem of death, through which the saints pass to glory, which is abolished by Christ, its sting and curse taken away; which when the saints come to, they find it like Jordan driven back, and have an easy and abundant passage through it; and when on the brink of it, and even in the midst of it, sing, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1Co 15:55.

Psalms 114:4

Ver. 4. The mountains skipped like rams,.... The mountains of Sinai and Horeb quaked and moved at the presence of the Lord, when he descended thereon to give the law; these saw his glory and trembled,
Ex 19:18.

And the little hills like lambs; very beautiful are the larger mountains of Sinai and Horeb compared to rams, and the motion of them to their skipping; and the little hills adjacent to them to lambs: these may represent the greater and lesser governors in the Roman empire at the time when such large conversions were made in it as before observed; and which skipped, and trembled, and fled, and were moved out of their places at the downfall of Paganism and progress of Christianity, **Re 6:14** and also may be an emblem of the difficulties which lie like mountains and hills in the way of a sinner's conversion and effectual calling, which yet give way to and are surmounted by the efficacious grace of God; all mountains become a plain before him, and when he works none can let.

Psalms 114:5

Ver. 5. What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest?.... What was the matter with thee? what appeared to thee? what didst thou see? what didst thou feel, which caused thee to flee in such haste?

Thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? what is the meaning that thou didst not continue to flow as usual? what was it that stopped thy flowing tide? that cut off thy waters? that drove them back as fast or faster than they came?

Psalms 114:6

Ver. 6. Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams,.... Not for joy, but fear; what caused these trembling motions, these violent agitations, and quakings, and movings to and fro like the skipping of rams?

And ye little hills, like lambs? what was it that disturbed you, and put you into a panic, that you skipped like frightened lambs? These questions are put, by a beautiful and poetical figure, to inanimate creatures; the Red sea, the river of Jordan, the mountains of Sinai and Horeb, and the hills about them; to which an answer is turned in the next verse.

Psalms 114:7

Ver. 7. Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,.... Or, "the earth has trembled at the presence of the Lord"; so the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; the imperative is sometimes put for the preterite or past tense, see Ps 22:9, likewise the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions thus render it, "the earth is moved at the presence of the Lord"; and then the sense is by a prosopopoeia. Is it to be wondered at, that we, the sea, the river of Jordan, the mountains and hills, have fled, or have been driven back, or have skipped like rams and lambs, when the whole earth, of which we are a part, has trembled at the presence of God? who, when he does but look, the earth trembles; and when he touches the hills, they smoke, Ps 104:32. It is at the same presence of God we have been thus moved, the power of which we have felt, even

at the presence of the God of Jacob; who brought Jacob out of Egypt, led him through the sea, and gave him the law on Sinai. This is not to be understood of the general and common presence of God, which is everywhere, and with all his creatures for this is not attended with such wonderful phenomena as here mentioned, either in the literal or mystic sense; but of the majestic, powerful, and gracious presence of God; such as he sometimes causes to attend his ministers, his word, his churches, his martyrs and confessors; and so as to strike an awe upon, and terror into, their greatest enemies, as well as to convert his own people.

Psalms 114:8

Ver. 8. Which turned the rock into a standing water,.... Both at Rephidim and at Kadesh; which being smitten, streams of water flowed out like rivers, as if the rock itself was changed into water; and which came a constant and continual supply for the Israelites, for it is said to follow them; see Ex 17:6.

The flint into a fountain of waters; referring to the same thing, the rocks were flinty ones. This was a type of Christ the Rock; who has an abiding fulness of grace in him; is the fountain of it, from whence it flows in great abundance for the supply of his people's wants, while passing through this wilderness to Canaan's land.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 115:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 115

This psalm is by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, joined to the former, and makes one psalm with it: and Kimchi says, that in some books the psalm does not begin here; but in the best and correct copies of the Hebrew, and in the Targum, it stands a distinct psalm; and the different subject matter or argument shows it to be so. It is ascribed to various persons; by some to Moses and the Israelites, when pursued by Pharaoh: by others to the three companions of Daniel, cast into the fiery furnace: by others to Mordecai and Esther, when Haman distressed the Jews: by others to the heroes at the times of Antiochus and the Maccabees; so Theodoret: by some to Jehoshaphat, when a numerous army came against him; and by others to David, which is more probable; though on what occasion is not easy to say: some have thought it was written by him, when insulted by the Jebusites, **2Sa 5:6**. The occasion of it seems to be some distress the church of God was in from the Heathens; and the design of it is to encourage trust and confidence in the Lord; and to excite the saints to give him the glory of all their mercies, and to expose the vanity of idols.

Ver. 1. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory,.... There is no glory due to men; no, not to the best of men, not to be given them on any account whatever; neither on account of things natural, civil, and temporal, nor on account of things spiritual and eternal; but all to be given to the Lord: for, as for their beings and the preservation of them, with all the mercies of life, food, raiment, &c. they are not of themselves, but of the Lord; and so are the salvation of their souls, their election and redemption, their regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, their justification and pardon; whatsoever good thing is in them, or done by them: nor have they anything for the sake of righteousness done by them; nor do they desire to take the glory of past favours to themselves; nor request deliverance from present evils for their own merits, which they disclaim; nor for their own sakes, or that they may be great and glorious; but for the Lord's sake, for his name's sake, that he may be glorified; which is the principal sense of the passage. So the Targum,

"not for our sakes. O Lord, not for our merit, but to thy name give glory."

Good men desire to glorify God themselves, by ascribing to him the perfections of his nature, and celebrating them; by giving thanks to him for mercies, spiritual and temporal; by exercising faith upon him, as a promising God; and by living to his glory: and they are very desirous that all others would give him the glory due unto his name; and that he would glorify himself, and get himself a glorious and an everlasting name. And indeed the words are addressed to him, and not to others; and particularly that he would glorify, or take the glory of the following perfections:

for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake; so very manifest in the salvation of his people, and in all their deliverances, and therefore ought to have the glory of them. His "mercy", or his "grace" {w}, as it may be rendered, is displayed in the salvation of his people by Christ, in their regeneration, justification, pardon, and eternal life: and so is his truth, or faithfulness in all his promises; and particularly in the mission of his Son as a Saviour, so long promised and expected; and who is "truth" himself, the truth of all promises and prophecies; and by whom the truth of the Gospel came, the Word, which God has magnified above every name.

{w} Krox le "propter gratiam tuam", Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 115:2

Ver. 2. Wherefore should the Heathen say,.... The nations about Israel, the nations of the world; the Gentiles in any age; the Papists in ours, sometimes called the Heathen, Ps 10:16. The church expostulates with the Lord why those should be suffered to say, in a reproachful, insulting, manner, and by way of triumph,

where is now their God? that they have boasted of would help them; in whom they have put their trust and confidence; why does not he help them, as he has promised, and they expect? Thus the church suggests, that if the Lord did not appear for them, his own glory lay at stake. Such language is generally used by their enemies, when the people of God were in any distress; see Ps 42:10.

Psalms 115:3

Ver. 3. But our God is in the heavens,.... His habitation is in the heavens, as the Targum; the Septuagint and Arabic versions add, "and in earth": he is in both, and fills both with his presence; and cannot be contained in either. He is the Maker and Possessor of heaven and earth; the one is his throne, and the other is his footstool: he dwells in the highest heaven, and overlooks all persons and things on earth, and overrules all; he is higher than the highest, and his kingdom ruleth over all.

He hath done whatsoever he pleased; in creation, in providence, and in grace: he hath made what creatures he pleased, and for his pleasure; and he does according to his will, and after the counsel of it, in heaven and in earth; and is gracious to whom he will be gracious; saves and calls men, not according to their works, but according to his own purpose and will; whose counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure; he is the most high God, and a sovereign Being; all that he wills are possible to him, and easily done by him, and which Heathens themselves own {x}.

{x} yeoi de te panta dunatai, Homer. Odyss. 10. v. 306. "Facile est omnia posse Deo", Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 1.

Psalms 115:4

Ver. 4. Their idols are silver and gold,.... The idols of the Gentiles; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions. The gods they serve and worship are not in the heavens; but the matter of which they are made is dug out of the earth: and this is the greatest excellency and value that there is in them; and such as are made of these are of the greatest worth, and yet only for the matter of them, otherwise useless and inanimate statues; such are the idols of the Papists, **Re 9:20**.

The work of men's hands; the matter of them is gold and silver, which they owe to the earth as their original; the form of them they owe to men, and therefore can not be God, **Ho 8:6**. If it is idolatry to worship what God has made, the sun, moon, and stars, it must be gross idolatry, and great stupidity, to worship what man has made: if it is sinful to worship the creature besides the

Creator, or more than him, it must be still more so to worship the creature of a creature.

Psalms 115:5

Ver. 5. They have mouths, but they speak not,.... These idols are carved with mouths, but they make no use of them; if any cry to them for they cannot answer them, nor save them from their troubles. Baal's priests cried to their idol, but was no voice heard, nor answer returned; they are rightly called dumb idols, **Hab 2:18**
1Ki 18:26, but our God in the heavens, when his people cry to him, he answers them, and sends them relief; and tells them his grace is sufficient for them, and so they find it to be.

Eyes have they, but they see not; they are made with eyes in their heads, but cannot see with them; they cannot see their worshippers, nor what they bring to them; neither their persons nor their wants, **Da 5:23**, but our God and Father in heaven, he sees in secret the persons and hearts of his people; their desires are before him, and their groanings are not hid from him; his eyes are on the righteous, and are never withdrawn from them.

Psalms 115:6

Ver. 6. They have ears, but they hear not,.... The makers of them have taken care to place a pair of ears to their heads, but could not convey the faculty of hearing to them; so that though their priests may cry from morning to noon, as Baal's worshippers did, saying, O Baal, hear us; and even tonight, and one day and night after another, nothing is heard, 1Ki 18:26. Indeed the image of Jupiter at Crete was made without ears; because it was thought unbecoming that he, who was prince and lord of all, should give ear to any {y}: but the God of heaven and earth is a God hearing prayer; his ear is not heavy, that it cannot hear; his ears are always open to the cries of his people.

Noses have they, but they smell not; the incense that is set before them, nor the sacrifices offered to them, **De 4:28**, but our God smelled a sweet savour in legal sacrifices, offered up in the faith of the Messiah; and especially he smells a sweet savour in the sacrifice of his Son, and in the prayers of his saints, which are sweet odours; and particularly as they come to him perfumed with the incense of Christ's mediation, **Ge 8:21**.

{y} Plutarch. de Isid. & Osir. prope finem.

Psalms 115:7

Ver. 7. They have hands, but they handle not,.... So as to feel any thing that is put into their hands; they cannot make use of their hands to stretch them out, and receive anything from their worshippers; nor can they give anything to them: but our God receives and accepts the sacrifices of his people, their prayers and their praises; and opens his hand, and liberally supplies their wants, both in providence and grace.

Feet have they, but they walk not; cannot stir from the place where they are, to the assistance of those that call unto them, Isa 46:7 but our God walks upon the wings of the wind, and is a present help in times of trouble; a God at hand and afar off, and makes haste to the relief of his people in distress.

Neither speak they through their throat; or make a mournful voice as a dove, as the word is used in Isa 38:14 or chirp as a bird, or chatter as a crane; or warble out any note through the throat, as birds do; and much less form any articulate sound, or utter any proper word, that may be understood.

Psalms 115:8

Ver. 8. They that make them are like unto them,.... As stupid as the matter of which they are made; as sottish and as senseless as the idols themselves, see Isa 44:9. Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it as a petition, "let them that make them be like unto them"; and so the Targum, the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions: they liked not to retain God in their knowledge, let them be given up to a reprobate mind, to a mind void of all sense and judgment; and which indeed is their case, **Ro 1:28**.

So is everyone that trusteth in them; more especially they that worship them: for an artificer may make them for gain, and have no faith in them; but a worshipper places confidence in them. Or this clause may be explanative of the former, and be rendered, even "every one", &c. for "to make" sometimes signifies to serve and worship,
Ex 32:35.

Psalms 115:9

Ver. 9. O Israel, trust thou in the Lord,.... Or, "the house of Israel hath trusted in the Lord": so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions: the Targum is,

"Israel trusteth in the Word of the Lord;"

in distinction from the Heathens, that trust in their idols. But it is better rendered as an imperative, trust thou; it being an exhortation to Israel to trust in the Lord, in opposition to idols; and may be understood of Israel, literally taken, who were God's chosen covenant people, to whom he had made a revelation of himself, and of his will; and therefore should trust in him, and in no other; and of spiritual Israel, or all the elect of God, and redeemed of the Lamb; every Israelite indeed; every wrestling Jacob, and prevailing Israel; every praying soul; every sensible sinner, Jew or Gentile. It becomes them to trust in the Lord, not in the creature; not in their own strength, wisdom, riches, righteousness, or fleshly privileges; but in the Lord, as the God of nature, providence, and grace; as a promising and covenant keeping God, who is to be trusted with all, and for every thing temporal and spiritual, and at all times.

He is their help and their shield; the help and shield of every true Israelite; of everyone that trusts in the Lord; or,

"your help and your shield, O ye Israelites;"

so Ben Balaam in Aben Ezra reads the words: which are a reason or argument encouraging trust in the Lord, since he is the help of his people; they are helpless in themselves, and vain is the help of man, for there is none in him; there is no help but in the Lord, and he is a present, seasonable, and sufficient help: Jehovah the Father has promised them help, and he is both able and faithful to make it good; he has laid help upon his Son for them; and has set up a throne of grace, where they may come for grace to help them in time of need: Christ has helped them out of the miserable estate they were fallen into by sin; he helps them on in their way to heaven, by his power and grace, and at last brings them thither: the Spirit of God helps them to the things of Christ; to many exceeding great and precious promises; and out of many difficulties, snares, and temptations; and he helps them in prayer under all their infirmities, and makes intercession for them, according to the will of God; and therefore they should trust in the Lord, Father, Son, and Spirit: and who is also "their shield", to protect and defend them from all dangers, evils, and enemies; what a shield is to the body, to secure it from hurt, that to the people of God are the love and favour of God, his power and might, his truth and faithfulness; as likewise Christ, his blood, righteousness, and salvation; and the Spirit, and his grace; see **Ps 5:12** **Eph 6:16**.

Psalms 115:10

Ver. 10. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord,.... The family of the tribe of Levi, that was separated from the rest, to minister in the priest's office, to offer gifts and sacrifices for the people, and to bless them; and therefore ought to trust in the Lord, and set a good example to others: as ministers of the word should, who are intrusted with much by the Lord, and should trust in him for much; for every supply of gifts and grace; and the rather, as they are to be examples of faith to the people: and as all the saints under the Gospel dispensation are priests unto God, they should put their trust and confidence in the Lord; since their sacrifices cannot be acceptable and wellpleasing to God, without faith in him.

He is their help and their shield; the Lord is the help and shield of everyone of Aaron's family; of the priests under the law, and of ministers under the Gospel; and of all those who are kings and priests unto God; and therefore they should trust in him. This is repeated for the certainty of it, and for the particular application of it to Aaron's house.

Psalms 115:11

Ver. 11. Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord,.... Which is said not to distinguish true saints from hypocrites, in Israel or in Aaron's house; rather to describe such who belonged to neither: but, as Aben Ezra interprets it, who feared the Lord, of every people and nation; or proselytes, as Jarchi explains it: the distinction between the people of the Jews, and the proselytes among them, under the character of those that feared the Lord, may be observed in Ac 13:26. It takes in all true worshippers of the Lord; and who are exhorted to trust in him, for faith and fear are consistent; and where there is the one, there is the other; where there is the true fear of God, not a slavish nor an hypocritical fear, but a holy reverence and a godly fear, there will be faith and confidence in him. Job was a man that feared the Lord, and yet trusted in him; these characters meet in the same persons, see

Ps 31:19.

He is their help and their shield; the help and shield of all those that fear the Lord, their protector and defender, and therefore should trust in him. The word "ezer", translated help, in this and the two preceding verses, is applied to God, and often in this book of Psalms, as a title and epithet belonging to him; and it may be observed that "Aesar", in the Etruscan language, signifies God {z}.

{z} Sueton. in Angust. c. 97.

Psalms 115:12

Ver. 12. The Lord hath been mindful of us,.... The Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord hath remembered us for good."

And is another reason why his people should trust in him: he has been mindful of his covenant with them and promises to them, and has kept them; he remembered them in their low estate, and sent redemption to them; goodness and mercy have followed them all their days. Past experiences of divine favour should encourage trust in the Lord, as well as promises of future blessings, as follow:

he will bless us; with all kind of blessings, temporal and spiritual; with blessings indeed, solid and substantial: it is certain and may be depended upon; he has promised it, and swore to it, that in blessing he will bless. Kimchi interprets it as a wish, "let him bless": the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, render it in the past tense, "he hath blessed"; but the Targum as we: and as it follows,

he will bless the house of Israel; with whom he has made his new covenant; the household of faith, the family named of Christ, the whole Israel of God.

He will bless the house of Aaron; his priests, his ministers, all that offer up spiritual sacrifices to him; he will bless them with an increase of gifts and grace, and with his presence and Spirit, and therefore they should trust in him.

Psalms 115:13

Ver. 13. He will bless them that fear the Lord,.... They shall want no good thing now, and have much goodness laid up for them to be enjoyed hereafter; the sun of righteousness rises upon them, and a book of remembrance is written on their account; the Lord delights in them, his eye is upon them; and they are blessed with more grace now, and will be blessed with glory hereafter.

Both small and great; young and old, rich and poor, high and low, lesser or greater believers; be they children, young men, or fathers; see Re 11:18.

Psalms 115:14

Ver. 14. The Lord shall increase you more and more,.... The Word of the Lord, as the Targum, shall do it; in a temporal sense, with a numerous posterity, with riches, wealth, and honour; and in a spiritual sense, with an addition of spiritual blessings; with renewed instances of divine layout: with an increase of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, as faith, hope, love, joy, patience, humility, and other graces; and with more knowledge of God and Christ, and of divine and spiritual things.

You and your children; not only they that feared the Lord of the present generation, but those that should succeed them, and be as they were, a seed to serve the Lord, and who should be accounted to him for a generation.

Psalms 115:15

Ver. 15. You are blessed of the Lord,.... The Arabic version reads it, "we are blessed"; with temporal and with spiritual blessings; being the beloved of the Lord, chosen of him; whose sins are pardoned, whose persons are justified by the righteousness of Christ; who are put among the children of God, and are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; regenerated by his Spirit, favoured with communion with God, and wrought up to some degree of conformity to Christ, and shall ever be with him.

Which made heaven and earth; and so able to bless with all kind of blessings, both heavenly and earthly; and from whom all help and assistance may be hoped for, and who may be trusted and confided in: and this, it may be, is observed to distinguish him from the idols of the Gentiles, who made not the heavens and the earth; and who are not able to bless, nor give the least relief to any of their votaries.

Psalms 115:16

Ver. 16. The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's,.... Not only the visible heavens, the airy and starry regions, which are within our sight; but the heaven of heavens, the third heaven, into which the Apostle Paul was caught, and heard and saw things not to be uttered; and which is, as the Targum expresses it,

"for the majesty of the glory of the Lord:"

he is the maker, owner, proprietor, and possessor of them all: but the third heaven is more especially the seat of his majesty; where he has prepared the throne of his glory, where he keeps court; where his ministers, his angels, wait upon him, observe his orders, and execute his will; and which he has prepared for his saints to dwell with him in to all eternity.

But the earth hath he given to the children of men; to Adam and his posterity, to dwell in it, to till it, and enjoy the fruits of it; yet so as not to leave it entirely to the care of men, and have no concern in it, and the affairs of it, as some licentious persons would from hence conclude; as if God had took the heavens to himself, and only minded the persons and things in that, and never concerned himself about the earth, and persons and things there; having disposed of it to the children of men, and left it to their conduct: for though he has given it to them for their use, yet he has still a claim upon it, and can and does dispose of it, and order all things in it, according to his pleasure; and men, from the highest to the lowest, are accountable to him, being but stewards, and at most but deputies and viceroys, under him: besides the words may be rendered, "and the earth which he hath given to the children of men" {a}; that is his also, as well as the heavens. This the Lord gives to the children of men as their portion; and sad is the case of such, when this is their all; but to his own children he gives heaven, the kingdom of heaven, eternal glory and happiness. Maimonides {b} gives the sense of the whole passage thus;

"God only perfectly knows the truth, nature, substance, form, motion, and causes of the heavens: and to man he has given, that he may understand what are under the heavens; because they are the world, and as it were his house, in which he dwells, and of which he is a part."

{a} So Junius & Tremellius. {b} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 24. p. 256.

Psalms 115:17

Ver. 17. The dead praise not the Lord,.... Not the dead in sin; such as the makers of idols, and those that trust in them, who are like unto them; men must be made spiritually alive, ere they can show forth the praises of God: nor the dead corporeally. The souls of departed saints can and do praise the Lord: these die not with their bodies, nor sleep in the grave; they go immediately to God and Christ, and are employed in the service of God continually; particularly in praising him, as do the angels with whom they join; they sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, of providence and grace; especially the song of redeeming love, with which they always praise the Lord: but they cannot praise him with their bodily organs until the resurrection, which by death are rendered useless; they can praise him no more among men on earth, as they have before done; there is no work of this kind in the grave.

Neither any that go down in silence; the grave, so called, because everything is mute and silent there {c}; the instruments of speech are no more used on any account; no noise and clamour there from wicked men; there the wicked cease from troubling; and no songs of praise from good men, all still and quiet there. So the Targum,

"not any that go down to the house of the grave of the earth;"

or the earthly grave. And therefore save us, O Lord, suffer not the enemy to destroy us; for, should he, we shall no more be capable of praising thee, as we have done and desire to do; for no such service is to be done in the grave, see **Ps 6:4**.

{c} "Silet rex ipsa silentum", Virgil. "Migrantesque domos animarum intrasse silentum". Propert. l. 3. Eleg. 12. v. 33.

Psalms 115:18

Ver. 18. But we will bless the Lord from this time forth and for evermore,.... The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it, "we who are alive"; both in a corporeal and in a spiritual sense who, as long as we live, and while we have a being, will bless the Lord; being made spiritually alive, quickened by the Spirit and grace of God, and so capable of ascribing blessing, praise, and glory to him, for all the great and good things he has done; and especially when in lively frames, or in the lively exercise of grace: and that from this time; under a sense of present favours, and outward mercies being renewed every day; yea, throughout the whole of life, and so to all eternity in the world above; see Isa 38:19.

Praise the Lord; let others do the same as we; let us join together in this work, now and hereafter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 116:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 116

Theodoret applies this psalm to the distresses of the Jews in the times of the Maccabees under Antiochus Epiphanes; and R. Obadiah interprets some passages in it of the Grecians of those times; but it rather seems to have been written by David on account of some troubles of his, out of which he was delivered; and refers either to the times of Saul, and the persecutions he endured from him, particularly when he was beset round about by him and his men in the wilderness of Maon, 1Sa 23:26, to which he may have respect Ps 116:3. The inscription of the psalm in the Syriac version is,

"the progress of the new people returning to the Christian worship, as a child to understanding: and as to the letter, it was said when Saul stayed at the door of the cave where David lay hid with his men;"

see 1Sa 24:4. But since mention is made of Jerusalem, Ps 116:19, where the psalmist would praise the Lord for his deliverance, which as yet was not in his hands nor in the hands of the Israelites, but of the Jebusites; some have thought it was written on account of the conspiracy of Absalom against him, and who, hearing that Ahithophel was among the conspirators, said the words related in Ps 116:11, it is very probable it was composed after the death of Saul, and when he was settled in the kingdom, as Jarchi observes, and was delivered out of the hands of all his enemies; and very likely much about the same time as the eighteenth psalm was, which begins in the same manner, and has some expressions in it like to what are in this. David was a type of Christ, and some apply this psalm to him.

Ver. 1. I love the Lord,.... As the Messiah, David's antitype, did; of which he gave the fullest proof by his obedience to his will; and as David, the man after God's own heart, did, and as every good man does; and the Lord is to be loved for the perfections of his nature, and especially as they are displayed in Christ, and salvation by him; and for his works of creation, providence, and grace, and particularly for his great love shown in redemption, regeneration, and other blessings of grace, as well as for what follows.

Because he hath heard my voice and my supplication; in the original text the words lie thus, "I love, because the Lord hath heard", or "will hear"; and so read the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and so the Targum; and may be rendered, "I love that the Lord should hear me", so the Syriac and Arabic versions; nothing is more desirable and grateful to good men than that the Lord should hear them; but Kimchi and others transpose the words as we do, which gives a reason why he loved the Lord; because he heard his prayers, which were vocal, put up in a time of distress, in an humble and submissive manner, under the influence of the Spirit of grace and supplication, in the name of Christ, for his righteousness sake, and through his mediation; and such supplications are heard and answered by the Lord, sooner or later; and which engages the love of his people to him; see Ps 34:1. It may be applied to Christ, who offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, and was always heard; and for which he thanked his Father and loved him, **Heb 5:7**.

Psalms 116:2

Ver. 2. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me,.... Not as hard of hearing, for his ear is not heavy that it cannot hear; he is quick of hearing, and his ears are always open to the righteous; it rather denotes his readiness to hear; he hearkens and hears, he listens to what his people say, and hears them at once, and understands them, though ever so broken and confused; when their prayers are but like the chatterings of a crane or swallow, or only expressed in sighs and groans, and even without a voice; when nothing is articulately pronounced: moreover, this shows condescension in him; he bows his ear as a rattler to a child, he stoops as being above them, and inclines his ear to them.

Therefore will I call upon him as long as I live; or "in my days" {d}; in days of adversity and affliction, for help and relief; in days of prosperity, with thankfulness for favours received; every day I live, and several times a day: prayer should be constantly used; men should pray without ceasing always, and not faint; prayer is the first and last action of a spiritual life; it is the first thing a regenerate man does, "behold, he prays"; as soon as he is born again he prays, and continues praying all his days; and generally goes out of the world praying, as Stephen did, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"; and it is the Lord's hearing prayer that encourages his people to keep on praying, and which makes the work delightful to them. Christ was often at this work in life, and died praying, **Lu 6:12**.

{d} ymyb "in diebus meis", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 116:3

Ver. 3. The sorrows of death compassed me,.... Christ, of whom David was a type, was a man of sorrows all his days; and in the garden he was surrounded with sorrow; exceeding sorrowful even unto death, in a view of the sins of his people imputed to him, and under a sense of wrath for them, he was about to bear; and his agonies in the article of death were very grievous, he died the painful and accursed death of the cross. This was true of David, when Saul and his men compassed him on every side, threatening to cut him off in a moment; when he despaired of life, and had the sentence of death in himself, and saw no way to escape; and such a case is that of the people of God, or they may be said to be compassed about with the sorrows of death, when through a slavish fear of it they are all their lifetime subject to bondage; and especially when under dreadful apprehensions of eternal death.

And the pains of hell gat hold upon me; or "found me" {e}; overtook him, and seized upon him; meaning either the horrors of a guilty conscience under a sense of sin, without a view of pardon; which is as it were a hell in the conscience, and like the pains and torments of it: or "the pains of the grave" {f}; not that there are any pains felt there, the body being destitute of life, and senseless; but such sorrows or troubles are meant which threaten to bring down to the grave, which was the case of Jacob on the loss of his children, Ge 37:35. This applied to Christ may design the wrath of God and curse of the law, which he endured in the room and stead of his people, as their surety; and which were equivalent to the pains of the damned in hell; or it may refer to his being laid in the grave, in a strait and narrow place, as the word {g} signifies; where he lay bound in grave clothes, till he was loosed from the pains and cords of death, it being not possible he should be held by them, **Ac 2:24**,
See Gill on "Ps 18:4" see Gill on "Ps 18:5"

I found trouble and sorrow; without seeking for them; they seized and took hold of him, on David, and his antitype, when in the above circumstances; and often do the saints find trouble and sorrow from a body of sin and death, from the temptations of Satan, divine desertions, and afflictive providences. Aben Ezra refers the one to the body, the other to the soul.

{e} ynwaum "invenerunt me", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {f} lav "sepulchri", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {g} yrum "augustiae", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Psalms 116:4

Ver. 4. Then called I upon the name of the Lord,.... Upon the Lord himself in prayer for speedy deliverance; or "in the name of the Lord" {h}, in the name of the Messiah, the only Mediator between God and man; "saying", as follows, and which word may be supplied,

O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul; from these sorrows and pains, from these afflictions and distresses, from death and the grave, and from wrath, and a sense of it, and fears about it.

{h} hwhy Mvb "in nomine Domini", Montanus, Musculus, Vatablus.

Psalms 116:5

Ver. 5. Gracious is the Lord,.... So the psalmist found him, calling upon him; so he is in Christ, the author and giver of all grace, to help in time of need.

And righteous; faithful to his promises, just in every dispensation of his providence, even in afflictive ones; righteous in punishing the enemies of his people, and in saving, justifying, and pardoning them for Christ's sake.

Yea, our God is merciful; compassionate, tenderhearted, a heart full of pity, as a father to his child; and sympathizes with his people under all their afflictions, and saves them out of them; see
Ps 86:5.

Psalms 116:6

Ver. 6. The Lord preserveth the simple,.... Such as have but a small degree of understanding, either in things natural or spiritual, in comparison of others; babes, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, so in the Talmud {i}; see
Mt 11:25. Such who are sensible of their lack of wisdom, and what they have they do not lean unto or trust in, but being sensible of their weakness commit themselves to the Lord; they are sincere and upright, harmless and inoffensive, artless and incautious, and so easily imposed upon by designing men; but the Lord preserves them, as from sin, from a total and final falling away by it, so from gross errors and heresies; he preserves them from the snares and pollutions of the world, and from the temptations of Satan, so as not to be overcome with them; he preserves them by his Spirit, power, and grace, safe to his kingdom and glory.

I was brought low and he helped me; the psalmist returns to his own case, and gives an instance of the divine goodness in himself; he had been brought low by affliction of body, by distress of enemies, through want of the necessaries and conveniences of life; he had been brought low as to spiritual things, through the weakness of grace, the prevalence of corruption, the temptations of Satan, and the hidings of God's face; but the Lord helped him to bear up under all this; he put underneath his everlasting arms, and upheld him with the right hand of his righteousness; he helped him out of his low estate, and delivered him out of all his troubles, when none else could; when things were at the greatest extremity, and he in the utmost distress, just ready to go down into silence and dwell there, Ps 94:17. The Targum is,

"he looked upon me to redeem me."

{i} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 110. 2.

Psalms 116:7

Ver. 7. Return unto thy rest, O my soul,.... To a quiet and tranquil state after much distress {k}; a soliloquy, an address to his own soul to return to God his resting place, as Kimchi; or to Christ, whose rest is glorious, and which lies in a cessation from a man's own works; not from doing them, but from depending on them, or from labouring for life by them; in a deliverance from the bondage of the law, its curse and condemnation, and from the dominion and tyranny of sin, and from the distressing guilt of it on the conscience; in spiritual peace and joy, arising from the application of the blood of Christ, and from a view of his righteousness and justification by it, and of his sacrifice, and of the expiation of sin by that; which is enjoyed in the ways and ordinances of Christ, and oftentimes amidst afflictions and tribulations: this is sometimes broke in upon and interrupted, through the prevalence of sin, the temptations of Satan, and divine desertions; but may be returned to again, as Noah's dove returned to the ark when it could find rest nowhere else; as the believer can find none but in Christ, and therefore after he has wandered from him he returns to him again, encouraged by the following reason.

For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee; in times past, even in an eternity past, having loved him with an everlasting love, chosen him in Christ, made a covenant with him in him, blessed him with all spiritual blessings in him, and made unto him exceeding great and precious promises; provided a Redeemer and Saviour for him, whom he had made known unto him, having enlightened, quickened, and converted him; and had laid up good things for him to come, and had done many great things for him already; all which might serve to encourage his faith and hope in him. The Targum is,

"because the Word of the Lord hath rendered good unto me."

{k} "Remigrat animus nunc denuo mihi", Plauti Epidicus, Act. 4. Sc. 1. v. 42.

Psalms 116:8

Ver. 8. For thou hast delivered my soul from death,.... From a corporeal death, when his life was in danger, surrounded by Saul's army, in the hand of the Philistines at Gath, and when his son rebelled against him; and from a spiritual death in regeneration, which is a passing from death to life; and from an eternal death, the just wages of sin: and not only so, but even

mine eyes from tears; they were sometimes full of, and shed in great plenty; he watered his couch with them; and especially when absent from the worship of the Lord, and without his presence, which his enemies sometimes reproached him with; and particularly when he fled before his rebellious son, and at the death of him; but God dried up all his tears; see **Ps 6:6**. Many are the occasions of the saints weeping as they pass through the valley of "Baca", but God will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

And my feet from falling through a "push" {l}, by an enemy, so as to fall; the people of God are liable to falling, both into sin and into calamity; it is the Lord only that keeps them; and which they may expect from their interest in his love, covenant, and promises, and from their being in the hands of Christ; see Ps 56:13.

{l} yxdm "ab impulsu", Montanus; "ab impulsione", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 116:9

Ver. 9. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. As in the sight of the omniscient God, according to his word and will, and in such manner as to please him. So Enoch's walking with God is by the apostle explained of pleasing him; compare **Ge 5:22**, and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions render it, "I will please the Lord"; or, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; "that I may please the Lord"; be grateful to him; or walk gratefully and acceptably before him, sensible of the obligations I am under to him: and this, in the strength of grace, he determined to do "in the land of the living"; in this world, where men live, and as long as he lived in it; or in the church of God, among the living in Jerusalem, with whom he resolved to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. The land of Canaan is thought by Jarchi and Kimchi to be meant; and this being a type of heaven, the meaning may be, that he should walk and dwell where living and glorified saints are to all eternity; and so it is an expression of his faith of future glory and happiness, agreeably to what follows.

Psalms 116:10

Ver. 10. I believed, therefore have I spoken,.... Here the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, begin a new psalm, but without any foundation in the original; nor is it countenanced by the Targum; and is manifestly against the connection with the preceding verses. David expresses his faith in relation to what goes before, though the particulars of it are not mentioned, but are left to be supplied from thence: he not only believed there was a God, but that this God was gracious and merciful, and that he was his God; who had made a covenant with him, ordered in all things, and sure: he believed the promises of it; and particularly the grand promise of it respecting Christ, and salvation by him: he believed the Lord would deliver him out of all his troubles; that he should walk before him, and see his goodness in the land of the living; he believed a future state of happiness he should hereafter enjoy. The Apostle Paul quotes this passage, and applies it to himself and other Gospel ministers; declaring their faith in the resurrection of the dead, and an eternal weight of glory they were looking for, **2Co 4:13**; and therefore spake so freely about these things. Faith gives boldness and freedom of speech to men; which believers use with God in prayer, in the believing views of him, as their God in Christ; and of Christ, his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice: it gives ministers boldness and freedom to speak out plainly, constantly, and boldly, the Gospel of Christ; it gives the same to private Christians, to speak freely one to another of their gracious experiences, and to declare publicly to the churches of Christ what God has done for their souls;

I was greatly afflicted; when he believed and spake, and yet nevertheless did; he might be afflicted, reproached, and persecuted for his faith, and his speaking of it; particularly as it respected his coming to the crown and kingdom of Israel. And it is no unusual thing for saints to be persecuted for their faith, and profession of it; and yet none of these things move them from it; their faith remains, and is much more precious than gold that perisheth; and they hold fast the profession of it. Many and great afflictions are the common lot of believers.

Psalms 116:11

Ver. 11. I said in my haste, all men [are] liars. The sin of lying is common to man; there is a natural proneness and propensity to it: men go astray from the womb, speaking lies; yet such who have received the grace of God "put [it] off" with the rest of "the deeds of the old man", and are "children that will not lie". Wherefore, though the greater part of mankind might deserve this character, yet all and every individual of them did not. However degenerate the age was in which David lived, and the faithful among men were few; yet there were some to whom this imputation did not belong; and therefore, on cool reflection, he owned it was said "in haste"; not with thought and deliberation, but rashly and precipitately, unadvisedly, in a passion, and under a temptation, and when off of his guard; and which he acknowledged and repented of. The Targum is,

"I said in my flight;"

when he made haste and fled from Saul, whom he might call a liar and dissembler, pretending respect to him when he had none; and also his courtiers; nay, even Samuel himself, who had anointed him, and assured him he should be king; and yet now he thought he had deceived him, and he should perish by the hand of Saul, and never come to the kingdom, 1Sa 27:1; or when he fled from his son Absalom, whom he might call a liar, who had deceived him with the pretence of a vow; and also Ahithophel and others, who proved treacherous and unfaithful to him. Some take the words in a quite different sense, as an instance of his great faith; that when he was so greatly afflicted, and obliged to fly, yet declared that every man that should say he should not come to the kingdom was a liar; so Kimchi: and others think his meaning is, that every man is a liar in comparison of God, who is true and faithful to his promises, and not a man, that he should lie. Men of both high and low degree are a lie and vanity, and not to be trusted and depended upon; but a man may safely put confidence in the Lord; to this agrees **Ro 3:4**; where the apostle seems to have some respect to this passage.

Psalms 116:12

Ver. 12. What shall I render unto the Lord?.... He considers the Lord only as the author and giver of his mercies, and has nothing to say of his own merits, nor of other persons, who might be instruments of good to him; but is for giving all the glory to God: not as though he could render anything proportional or equivalent to what he had received, but as having a grateful sense of mercies, and willing, to express it; though at a loss, in a great measure, in what manner to do it, and therefore puts this question to himself and others:

[for] all his benefits towards me; or, "all his benefits are upon me" {m}. This being a clause of itself; and shows what moved him to put the question he did; a sense of divine favours was impressed upon him, a load of benefits lay on him, and he wanted to ease himself in expressions of gratitude. These benefits were the blessings of nature and providence; his being, and the preservation of it, food, raiment, &c. and the blessings of grace; spiritual blessings, all things pertaining to life and godliness, sanctification, adoption, pardon, justification, and eternal life. These may well be called "benefits", since they spring entirely from the free grace of God; and they were many, more than could be counted and reckoned up, and set in order before the Lord; and yet he was desirous that none of them might be forgotten, but that praise might be rendered to the Lord for them all.

{m} So Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 116:13

Ver. 13. I will take the cup of salvation,.... Or "salvations" {n}; not the eucharistic cup, or the cup in the Lord's supper, which the apostle calls "the cup of blessing", 1Co 10:16; though some so think, and that the psalmist represents the saints under the Gospel dispensation; nor the cup of afflictions or martyrdom for the sake of Christ; being willing, under a sense of mercies received, to bear or suffer anything for his sake he should call him to; as knowing it would be a token to him of salvation, and work for his good: but rather an offering of praise for temporal salvation, and for spiritual and eternal salvation; in allusion to a master of a family, who at the close of a feast or meal, used to take up a cup in his hands, and give thanks; see Mt 26:27;

and call upon the name of the Lord; invocation of the name of the Lord takes in all worship and service of him, public and private, external and internal; and particularly prayer, which is calling upon the Lord in the name of Christ, with faith and fervency, in sincerity and truth: and the sense of the psalmist is, that he would not only give thanks for the mercies he had received, but continue to pray to God for more; and this was all the return he was capable of making.

{n} twewvy "salutum", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "salvationum", Musculus.

Psalms 116:14

Ver. 14. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now, in the presence of all his people. Make good the resolutions and determinations he made in the strength of divine grace, in the time of his troubles; that should the Lord deliver him out of them, he would give him all the glory, and offer thanksgiving and praise to him; and now being delivered, this he declares he would do, in a public way, before all the people of God, assembled in the house of the Lord, as witnesses of it; see
Ps 66:13.

Psalms 116:15

Ver. 15. Precious in the sight of the Lord [is] the death of his saints. The Lord has his saints or sanctified ones, who are sanctified or set apart by God the Father from all eternity; who are sanctified in Christ, their head and representative; who are sanctified by his blood, shed for the expiation of their sins; who are sanctified by his Spirit and grace, are called with an holy calling, and have principles of holiness wrought in them, and live holy lives and conversations. The word {o} used also signifies one that has received kindness and favour, and shows it: saints are such, who have received spiritual blessings from the Lord; to whom he has been kind and bountiful; and these are merciful and beneficent to others. Now these die as well as others, though holy and righteous, and though Christ has died for them; he has indeed delivered them from death as a punishment, he has abolished it in this sense; and has freed them from the curse and sting of it, but not from that itself; because it is for their good, and it is precious in the sight of the Lord. Saints are precious to him, living and dying; there is something in their death, or that attends it, that is delightful to him, and of high esteem with him; as when they are in the full exercise of grace at such a season; when they die in faith, and have hope in their death; and their love is drawn out unto him, and they long to be with him: besides, they die in the Lord, and sleep in Jesus, in union with him; with whom he is well pleased, and all in him; and they die unto him, according to his will, and are resigned unto it; and so glorify him in death, as well as in life. It is the time of their ingathering to him; at death he comes into his garden, and gathers his flowers, and smells a sweet savour in them; their very dust is precious to him, which he takes care of and raises up at the last day. The commonly received sense of the words is, that the saints are so dear to the Lord, their lives are so much set by with him, and their blood so precious to him, that he will not easily suffer their lives to be taken away, or their blood to be spilled; and whenever it is, he will, sooner or later, severely revenge it; see 1Sa 26:21. And to this sense is the Targum,

"precious before the Lord is death sent to (or inflicted on) his saints;"

that is, by men. The words will bear to be rendered, "precious in the sight of the Lord is that death", or "death itself, for his saints"; that very remarkable and observable death, even the death of his Son, which was not only for the good of his saints, for their redemption, salvation, justification, pardon, and eternal life; but in their room and stead; and which was very acceptable unto God, of high esteem with him, of a sweet smelling savour to him: not that he took pleasure in it, simply considered; for he that hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, even of a sinner, could have none in the death of his Son; but as hereby his justice was satisfied, his law fulfilled, the salvation of his people procured, and his covenant, counsels, purposes, and decrees, accomplished.

htwmh has a double h in it; one at the beginning, and the other at the end of the word; which is very emphatic, and so may point at something very remarkable; and what more so than the death of Christ? and l is sometimes used for substitution, and signifies "for", "instead", or "in the room of", another; see **Ex 4:16**.

{o} wydoxl "quos ipse benignitate prosequitur", Junius & Tremellius; so Musculus.

Psalms 116:16

Ver. 16. O Lord, truly I [am] thy servant, I [am] thy servant,.... Not merely by creation, and as obliged by providential favours; but by the grace of God, which made him a willing one: and he was so, not nominally only, but in reality; not as those who say Lord, Lord, but do not the will of God; whereas he served the Lord cheerfully and willingly, in righteousness and true holiness: and this he repeats for the confirmation of it, and to show his heartiness in the Lord's service, and his zealous attachment to him; and which he mentions, not as though he thought his service meritorious of anything at the hand of God; but that his being in this character was an obligation upon him to serve the Lord, and him only, and might expect his protection in it;

[and] the son of thy handmaid; his mother was also a servant of the Lord; and had trained him up in his infancy in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; so that he was inured to it early, and could not easily depart from it;

thou hast loosed my bonds; the bonds of affliction and death in which he was held; these were loosed, being delivered from them,
Ps 116:3; and the bonds of sin, and Satan, and the law, in whose service he had been, which was no other than a bondage; but now was freed from the servitude and dominion of sin, from the captivity of Satan, and the bondage of the law; and therefore, though a servant, yet the Lord's free man.

Psalms 116:17

Ver. 17. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving,.... For deliverance from afflictions and death; for loosing his bonds, in every sense; for all mercies, temporal and spiritual; see **Ro 6:17**; Such sacrifices are according to the will of God; are well pleasing to him, when offered up through Christ, and in faith, and are a glorifying of him. These are more acceptable than all ceremonial sacrifices; and therefore the psalmist determined to offer this, and not them;

and will call upon the name of the Lord; See Gill on "Ps 116:13".

Psalms 116:18

Ver. 18. I will pay my vows unto the Lord,....
See Gill on "Ps 116:14". And the Targum here, as there, paraphrases the latter clause,

now in the presence of all his people, thus;

"I will then declare his signs (or wonders) to all his people;"

the marvellous things he had done for him.

Psalms 116:19

Ver. 19. In the courts of the Lord's house,.... This is added by way of explanation of Ps 116:18, what he meant by "the presence of all his people"; the assembly of the saints met together in the house of the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle, in the courts of it, where the people got together to worship God;

in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem; the Lord's house or tabernacle; for as yet the temple was not built, and the courts of it were in the midst of the city of Jerusalem. And this shows, as some interpreters have observed, that this psalm must have been written after David came to the kingdom, and had got this city into his hands, whither he brought the ark of the Lord. The whole signifies that he would praise the Lord publicly, as well as privately; and he concludes the psalm thus,

Praise ye the Lord; calling upon the Lord's people, in his house and courts, to join with him in this work of praise.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 117:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 117

The inscription of this psalm in the Syriac version is,

"it is said concerning those of the house (or the companions) of Ananias, when they came out of the furnace; likewise it foretells the calling of the Gentiles by the declaration of the Gospel."

Which last is right; for the apostle has quoted it, to prove the Gentiles should glorify God for his mercy, Ro 15:9. Aben Ezra thinks it concerns only the nations subdued by David; but he quotes R. Moseh, as of opinion that all nations are comprehended: and Kimchi affirms that the psalm belongs to the times of the Messiah; and supposes there is a mystery in its consisting of two verses only; and that it intimates that in those times there will be two people that will serve the Lord; Israel, with the law; and the Gentiles, with the seven precepts of Noah. It certainly refers to Gospel times, and to the conversion of the Gentiles; and when Jews and Gentiles should make one people, and be partakers of the same privileges and blessings; receive the same doctrines, submit to the same ordinances, and be under the same law, to Christ their King.

Ver. 1. O praise the Lord, all ye nations,.... The Lord having chosen, and Christ having redeemed, some out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; and the Gospel being sent and preached to all nations, and some of each being called and converted by the Spirit of God; they are excited to praise the Lord, Jehovah, Father, Son and Spirit, for their several acts of divine grace and kindness towards them, in choosing, redeeming, and sanctifying them; and in favouring them with the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, and with his gracious presence in them; and in supplying them with his grace, and giving them a right unto and meetness for eternal glory; for all which praise should be given to the Lord;

praise him, all ye people; ye people of God in the several nations of the world; not the Jews only, but the Gentiles also: the same thing is repeated in different words, for the greater certainty and confirmation of it; that this should be, the work and exercise of the Gentiles in Gospel times, and expresses eagerness and vehemence to stir them up to it. A different word is here used for "praise" than in the former clause; and which is more frequently used in the Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic languages; and signifies the celebration of the praises of God with a high voice.

Psalms 117:2

Ver. 2. For his merciful kindness is great towards us,.... Not us Israelites only, of whom David was, but Gentiles also; or otherwise there would be no force in the reason why all people and nations should praise the Lord: but it respects the time when these should become one people, partaking of the same grace, blessings, promises, and privileges; in which the grace, mercy, and lovingkindness of God, greatly appeared; "it prevailed over us" {p}, as it may be rendered: the word is used of the prevailing of the waters of the flood over the earth, **Ge 7:18**; and so may denote the exuberance of the grace of God, of the abounding and superabounding of it. There is an abundance of it in the heart of God, in his covenant, and in his Son; and which is displayed in redemption by him; in the forgiveness of sin; and in the conversion of sinners, and their everlasting salvation: particularly there has been an inundation or deluge of it in the Gentile world, where it has flowed and overflowed; where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded; and therefore the Lord is to be praised. And another reason follows,

and the truth of the Lord [endureth] for ever; the faithfulness of God to his promises, not only made to the Jewish fathers concerning the Messiah, and redemption by him; but to the Gentiles, and concerning the blessing of all nations in the promised seed: and the faithfulness and truth of God, with respect to any of his promises, never fails; nor will his word of truth, the Gospel; nor Jesus Christ, who is the truth, and the truth of God; the truth of types, promises, and prophecies; see
Ps 43:3; for he is the same today, yesterday, and for ever.

Praise ye the Lord; for his superabounding grace, and eternal truth; even all the people of God, of all nations, Jews and Gentiles.

{p} rbg "exsuperavit", Vatablus; "invaluit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; "exuberavit", Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 118:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 118

Kimchi says their Rabbins are divided about this psalm. Some understand it of David; others of the Messiah: but, with us Christians, there ought to be no doubt of its belonging to the Messiah; since our Lord has quoted a passage out of it, and applied it to himself,
Ps 118:22; see Mt 21:42; and so has the Apostle Peter, **Ac 4:11**. Nor did the Jews of those times object thereunto, which doubtless they would have done, had the psalm respected any other but the Messiah; yea, the common people that attended Christ when he entered into Jerusalem, and the children in the temple, took their "hosanna" from hence, Ps 118:26; see Mt 21:9. It is generally thought to be written by David, after he was established in the kingdom, and had brought the ark of the Lord into the city. It concludes the great "Hallel", or hymn sung at the Jewish festivals; particularly at the feasts of tabernacle and the passover.

Ver. 1. O give thanks unto the Lord,.... For all his mercies, temporal and spiritual; as all should, who are partakers of them: this should be done always, and for all things, in the name of Christ; it is but reasonable service;

for [he is] good; in himself, and to others: is essentially and diffusively good; the fountain of all goodness, and the author of all good things;

because his mercy [endureth] for ever; in his own heart, and in his covenant; his grace and lovingkindness displayed in Christ; the blessings and promises of it, which are the sure mercies of David: these always remain, notwithstanding the unworthiness of his people; and though he hides his face sometimes from them, and chastises them; see Ps 106:1; the goodness and mercy of God were seen in setting David on the throne; and abundantly more in giving Christ to be the Saviour of his people; for both which thanks should be given, and the kindness acknowledged, by the persons mentioned in the following verses.

Psalms 118:2

Ver. 2. Let Israel now say, that his mercy [endureth] for ever. Let such who have had an experience of it acknowledge and declare it to others; not only believe in it with their hearts, and privately give thanks for it, but with the mouth make confession of it to the glory of divine grace; not only literal Israel, whom the Lord brought out of Egypt, led and fed in the wilderness, and settled in the land of Canaan; and to whom the law and the services of God, the covenants and promises, word and ordinances, belonged; and who now were so happy under the government of such a king as David; but also the spiritual Israel of God, the whole Israel of God, Jews and Gentiles, under the Gospel dispensation; the Israel whom God has chosen, Christ has redeemed, and the Spirit effectually calls and sanctifies; such who are Israelites indeed, who have been encouraged to hope in the Lord, and in his mercy, and are made partakers of it; these should speak of the grace and mercy of God, and the continuance of it, for the encouragement of others.

Psalms 118:3

Ver. 3. Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy [endureth] for ever. The priests and Levites that blessed the people, and taught them the knowledge of divine things; but not these literally, at least not only these, since the priesthood of Aaron is changed, and the law of it abrogated, and all believers are now priests unto God, and offer up spiritual sacrifices to him; and particularly the sacrifice of praise for his grace and mercy, the perpetuity of which they should publish and proclaim all abroad.

Psalms 118:4

Ver. 4. Let them now that fear the Lord say, that his mercy [endureth] for ever. Not the proselytes to the Jewish religion only, but all that feared the Lord among all people, as Aben Ezra observes; such as fear the Lord and his goodness, and have had an experience of his grace and mercy, which has caused them to fear him; and to whom the mercy of God is great, and on whom it is from everlasting to everlasting; and therefore should speak well of it, and set their seal to it, that it abides for ever; see Ps 103:11.

Psalms 118:5

Ver. 5. I called upon the Lord in distress,.... Or "out of that strait" {q}; when David was encompassed by Saul and his men, or when at the court of Achish, or when his own people talked of stoning him. As this may respect the Messiah, it may design his distresses in the garden, when surrounded with sorrow, and being in an agony prayed the more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood; and may be applied to his members, as it often is their case to be in distress, straits and difficulties, through outward afflictions and pressures, inward corruptions, temptations, and desertions, and through the low exercise of grace; when they are as it were imprisoned, and so straitened they cannot come forth in the free exercise of it; at all which seasons prayer is necessary; and nothing is more proper than to call upon the Lord, which is both duty and privilege, and often attended with success, as follows;

the Lord answered me, [and set me] in a large place; as he did David, when he delivered him from all his troubles, placed him on the throne of Israel, and gave him rest from all his enemies round about; see Ps 31:8. And so he did the Messiah, when he raised him from the dead, received him to heaven, where he sits at the right of God in human nature: this is a large place indeed, large enough for the innumerable company of angels, and for all the saints, for whom everlasting habitations and mansions of bliss are preparing by him; and which is the glories liberty of the children of God; see Ps 18:19; and these also, upon calling on the Lord in distress, are heard and answered, and brought into large places, where they walk at liberty; so at first conversion, when distressed about their souls, and cry for help, they are answered and brought out of the pit, and have their feet set upon a rock and their goings established; and when at other times their grace is drawn forth into exercise, their souls are enlarged in duty, are favoured with large views of the love of God, with an increase of spiritual light, knowledge, peace, and joy; and are delivered from their troubles, and out of the hands of their enemies. Or it may be rendered, "the Lord answered me largely" {r}; as he did Solomon, when he gave him more than he asked for; and as he does his people, when he gives them a sufficiency, and an abundance of his grace, and even not only above their deserts, but above their thoughts and expectations; see **Eph 3:20**.

{q} rumh Nm "ex ipso angore", Junius & Tremellius; "ex illa angustia", Michaelis. {r} bxrmb "in latitudine", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Musculus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 118:6

Ver. 6. The Lord [is] on my side,.... Or "for me" {s}; he was on the side of David, hence all his prosperity and victories, the wonderful things done by him, his exaltation to the throne, and the establishment of it; and so he was on the side of Christ, he was near unto him, at his right hand, to guide, direct, and assist him as man; and he is likewise on the side of his people, to fight their battles for them, to support them under all their afflictions, to supply all their wants, to deliver them from all evil, to carry on the work of grace in their souls, and to bring them to glory, The Targum is, "the Word of the Lord is for my help."

I will not fear: what can man do unto me? David did not; he was not afraid of ten thousands of men, no, not of a whole army that encamped against him, God being for him, the strength of his life, and his salvation, **Ps 3:6**; nor did the Messiah; he was not afraid of Herod when he was told he would kill him; nor of the high priests, Scribes and Pharisees, though he knew he should fall into their hands, and they would deliver him to the Gentiles, to be scourged and crucified; nor of Judas and his band of men, who came to take him; nor of Pilate his judge, who had no power against him but what was given him. Nor have the saints any reason to fear what man can do unto them, when grace is in exercise; for what is man to God, who is but flesh, and that flesh grass? Nor can he do anything without a divine permission; is often frustrated in his attempt; and what he is suffered to do is overruled for good; and the utmost he can do is to kill the body; he cannot destroy the soul, or hinder the happiness of it; see
Ps 56:4.

{s} yl "pro me", Musculus, Michaelis.

Psalms 118:7

Ver. 7. The Lord taketh my part with them that help me,.... With the four hundred men that were with David, and stood by him in his troubles, 1Sa 22:2; see Ps 54:4; and with those who ministered unto Christ as man, **Lu 8:3**. Or, "the Lord [is] for me, with" or "among my helpers" {t}; he is the principal helper, he is one for all; he is in the room and stead of other helpers; having him, there is no need of any other: the Lord is the only helper of his people, vain is the help of man; he helps them out of all their troubles and difficulties, in the exercise of every grace, and in the discharge of every duty; he helps them to all their mercies temporal and spiritual, to grace here, and glory hereafter. The Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord is to help me;"

therefore shall I see [my desire] upon them that hate me; see "vengeance" on them, as the Targum; which was desired by David, by the Messiah, and by the saints; not for the sake of that itself, but for the glory of divine justice. David saw this, Ps 54:7; so will the Messiah, when all his enemies, that will not have him to reign over them, will be slain before him; and so will the people of God, when antichrist is destroyed.

{t} yrzeb yl "pro me est cum iis qui auxiliantur mihi", Vatablus; so Cocceius, Gejerus.

Psalms 118:8

Ver. 8. [It is] better to trust in the Lord,.... This, with what follows in Ps 118:9, is the conclusion from the above premises and experience; it is good to trust in the Lord; such enjoy peace, are in safety, shall not want any good thing, nor ever be ashamed and confounded: the Targum is,

"it is better to trust in the Word of the Lord;"

than to put confidence in man; it is not good to put confidence in man at all; it is trusting to a broken staff, to a mere shadow, which can yield no support or relief: it is best to trust in the Lord; he is able to help, as well as willing; he is faithful to his word, and unchangeable in his promises; whereas man, though he may have a will to help, oftentimes has it not in his power; and when it is in his power, and has promised it, he disappoints, being changeable or unfaithful. Wherefore trust not in man, but in the Lord; yea, cursed is the man that trusts in man; see Jer 17:5.

Psalms 118:9

Ver. 9. [It is] better to trust in the Lord,.... The Targum is,

"in the Word of the Lord."

This is repeated for the sake of what follows:

than to put confidence in princes; who have greater ability to help, and whose honour should engage them to keep their word; and yet it is better to trust in the Lord than in them; see Ps 146:3. Two different words being used in this verse and Ps 118:8; for trust and confidence, Jarchi has observed, that the one signifies a lesser, the other a stronger confidence; as if the sense was this, "It is better lightly to trust in the Lord than to put the strongest confidence in men and princes." But the observation is scarcely solid enough.

Psalms 118:10

Ver. 10. All nations compassed me about,.... Not all the nations of the world, but all the neighbouring nations about Judea; as the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, and Syrians; and these not all at one time, but sometimes one, and sometimes another, whom David fought with and subdued: and these, applied to Christ, design Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel; who were gathered together against him, to do what God had determined should be done, **Ac 4:27**; see Ps 22:12. And this is sometimes the case of the church and people of God: at the first setting up of the interest of Christ, the whole world was against it; and in such circumstances was the church of Christ, when the whole world wondered after the beast, the Romish antichrist; as it will be when the kings of the earth and of the whole world will be gathered to the battle at Armageddon; and also when the Gog and Magog army shall compass the camp of the saints and the beloved city; see
Re 13:3; and so Jarchi interprets this of Gog and Magog. Yea, it is applicable to particular believers, who are attacked by Satan, the god of this world; and who are hated and persecuted by the men of it in general; and who are beset on all hands, at times, with the temptations of the devil, and the corruptions of their own hearts, and the snares of the world; that it is as if all nations compassed them about;

but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them; that is, calling upon the name of the Lord; as Asa, Jehoshaphat, and others did besides David: or trusting in the name of the Lord; and so the Targum,

"in the name of the Word of the Lord I trusted, therefore will I cut them off."

Or, going forth in the name and strength of the Lord, as David did against Goliath; and so against all nations that gathered together against him, whose armies he vanquished and destroyed, and made the nations tributary to him. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ, his antitype, as Mediator stood in the strength and in the majesty of the name of the Lord, calling upon him to glorify him; and, trusting in his help and power, he attacked all his and our enemies, and obtained an entire victory over them, to the utter demolition of them; sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell. The word {u} used has the signification of concision or circumcision; and may have a peculiar regard to the Jews, who boasted of their circumcision, and were the implacable enemies of Christ; and who were destroyed by him, when wrath came upon them to the uttermost.

{u} Mlyma "concidebam eos", Piscator; "concidam eos", Schmidt.

Psalms 118:11

Ver. 11. They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about,.... Which is repeated not only for the confirmation of, it, but to denote the frequency and fury of their attacks, and their obstinate persisting therein; See Gill on "Ps 118:10";

but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them; which also is repeated to show the strength of his faith, and the continuance of it, notwithstanding his numerous enemies, and their violent efforts against him.

Psalms 118:12

Ver. 12. They compassed me about like bees,.... In great numbers {w}; as a swarm of bees, which, being irritated and provoked, will fly upon persons in a body, and with great fury; to which the Amorites and the Assyrian army were compared, **De 1:44**. They will attack horses and kill them, as Aristotle {x} says; and places besieged have been delivered by throwing out hives of bees among the besiegers {y}: and yet as they are feeble creatures, so by striking they lose their sting; and either die very quickly, or however become useless. All which denotes the numbers of the enemies of David and of Christ, and of his church and people, and the wrath and fury of them against them, as well as their fruitless and unsuccessful attempts upon them; for though they rage, what they contrive and endeavour to put in execution are vain things, and in the issue end in their own ruin and destruction;

they are quenched as the fire of thorns; which make a blaze, a noise, for a while; but are soon consumed, and leave only a few ashes behind. Wicked men are often compared to thorns, they being like them, unfruitful in themselves, unprofitable to others, harmful to the saints, and whose end is to be burnt; and whose destruction is certain and sudden, and easily effected as the burning of thorns; see Ps 58:9 **Ec 7:6**. The Targum renders it,

"they burned as fire among thorns;"

which is easily kindled and soon quenched: and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions; as if it was expressive of their wrath and fury, which was soon over; which agrees with what follows:

for; or "but", or "verily" {z},

in the name of the Lord I will destroy them;
See Gill on "Ps 118:10" and
See Gill on "Ps 118:11".

{w} hute eynea melissa wn, Homer. Iliad. 2. v. 87, Vid. Virgil. Aeneid. 12. v. 587. {x} Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 40. {y} Vid. Dieteric. Antiqu. Biblic. p. 478. {z} yk "sed", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "certe utique", Polus; "quod certissime", Michaelis.

Psalms 118:13

Ver. 13. Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall,.... Or "pushing, thou hast pushed me {a}, that I might fall": an apostrophe to some particular enemy, as Saul was to David; who thrust sore at him to take away his life, by casting a javelin at him; speaking to his servants to kill him; sending messengers to watch his house and slay him, and by, pursuing him from place to place. And such an one was Judas to Christ, who lifted up his heel against him, and betrayed him into the hands of his enemies; or the devil in him, and by him; and who thrust sore at Christ by others; by Herod in his infancy, who sought to take away his life; and by the Scribes and Pharisees, who attempted it in different ways, and at last got him nailed to the cross; as well as Satan thrust sore at him, by his temptations in the wilderness, and when in his agonies in the garden, and when on the cross: and so the same enemy thrusts sore at the members of Christ, to cause them to fall from him, and the steadfastness of their faith in him to fail; that they may fall into temptation, and by it into sin, and that finally and totally, and into hell itself, could he obtain it;

but the Lord helped me; helped David, so that he perished not by the hand of Saul, he sometimes feared he should; helped Christ, as man and Mediator, in the day of salvation, and raised him from the dead, and gave him glory: and he helps his people against all their enemies; holds them with his right hand; helps them to fight against them; maintains his own work of grace in them, and keeps them from a total and final falling away, by his power unto salvation. The Targum is, "the Word of the Lord helped me."

{a} yntyxr hxr "impellendo impulisti me", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Michaelis; "trudendo trusisti me", Cocceius.

Psalms 118:14

Ver. 14. The Lord [is] my strength and song,.... It being in the name of the Lord the enemies of the psalmist were destroyed; and having obtained help of him when sore thrust at, he gives him all the glory, and ascribes nothing to himself. It was the Lord that strengthened him, helped him, and gave him the victory. The Lord is the author and giver of strength, natural and spiritual; he is the "strength" of the hearts and lives of his people, and of their salvation; and therefore is their "song", the matter of it: they sing of his nature and perfections, of his works of providence and grace, of his righteousness and salvation, as follows:

and is become my salvation; the author of temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation; which the psalmist saw his interest in, and was assured of, and therefore sung praise on that account; see Ex 15:2.

Psalms 118:15

Ver. 15. The voice of rejoicing and salvation [is] in the tabernacles of the righteous,.... In all the dwellings of good men, throughout the land of Israel, was heard nothing but the voice of joy, on account of David's accession to the throne; the deliverance of him from a persecuting Saul, and of them from his real administration; and the victories David obtained over all his enemies: for, "when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice", Pr 29:2. And still much more occasion is there of joy, in the dwelling places of the saints, though but cottages, and in the churches of God, the tabernacles of the most High, on account of the spiritual and eternal salvation Christ is the author of which joy is inwardly felt in the heart, and outwardly expressed by one saint to another; and in vocal prayer to God, and in singing his praises; which may be done in the houses of the saints, as well as in the house of God. What this voice, or the righteous with their voice, expressed in each of their dwelling houses, is as follows; for the word "saying" may be supplied, and the words connected thus:

[saying], the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly; or "acts powerfully" {b}; in helping and assisting David, in protecting and defending him, in raising him to the throne, and in giving him rest from all his enemies; and so in supporting the Messiah, his antitype, as man and Mediator, in his work and under his sufferings; in raising him from the dead, and exalting: him at his right hand; and which was done with his right hand, **Ac 2:33**. Jarchi refers this joy here expressed to future times, the times of the Messiah: and in an ancient {c} writing of the Jews the right hand of the Lord, three times mentioned in this verse and Ps 118:16, is interpreted of the Messiah, the sort of David.

{b} lyx hve "agit strenue", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Cocceius. {c} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Numb. fol. 64. 1.

Psalms 118:16

Ver. 16. The right hand of the Lord is exalted,.... Lifted up, very eminent and conspicuous, easily to be observed in the instances before given, and become great and glorious in power; see Ex 15:6. The power of God is superior to all enemies; and is beyond conception and expression; and is able to do for his people above all they are able to ask or think;

the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly: or "acts powerfully". This is repeated for the confirmation of it, and to show how much the righteous were affected with it, and how desirous they were of glorifying of it; "the right hand of the Lord", being three times mentioned, may have respect to the three divine Persons in the Godhead, whose right hand or power is the same: and as the right hand of the Father has done powerfully in the instances given, so the right hand of the Son has worked mightily in vanquishing all enemies, sin, Satan, death, and the world; in obtaining the salvation of his people, and in raising himself from the dead: and so the right hand of the Holy Spirit has wrought powerfully on Christ, on whom he rested as the Spirit of might, and through whom Christ offered himself to God, and by whom he was raised from the dead; and also in the conversion of sinners, and in helping, assisting, strengthening, and protecting the saints.

Psalms 118:17

Ver. 17. I shall not die, but live,.... Not that he should never die, David knew he should; but that his present afflictions would not issue in death; or he should not die by the hands of his enemies, he sometimes feared he should; but now believed he should live, as he did, to a good old age: he knew he should live spiritually and eternally, and not die a second death; and so may all true believers and members of Christ say. Yea, these words may be considered as the words of Christ; who, though he came into the world to die, and did die for the sins of his people; yet he knew he should not die before his time, nor should he continue long under the power of death; but should live again, and live for evermore, and not die; death should have no more dominion over him; see Ps 16:10;

and declare the works of the Lord; the wonderful appearances of God in a providential way, and all his marvellous works of grace; as David did, and as all the people of God more or less do; and which is the end of their living; not to eat and drink, and gratify their carnal senses, but to glorify God, by declaring what he has done for themselves and others. So the Messiah declared the name of God, his nature, perfections, mind and will, word and works, among his brethren in the great congregation, Ps 22:22.

Psalms 118:18

Ver. 18. The Lord hath chastened me sore,.... Or, "in chastening hath chastened me" {d}. David was exercised with many afflictions; and though these were sore ones to the flesh, yet they were only the chastenings of a Father, and were all in love and for his good; as are all the afflictions of God's people; for whom he loves he chastens. Indeed the chastisement of the Messiah was a proper punishment for sin, and so a sore one indeed; he being the surety of his people, on whom "the chastisement [of] their peace was laid"; that is, the punishment of their sin, Isa 53:5;

but he hath not given me over unto death; as yet, or to the power of it, so as to continue under it. This is to be understood in the sense as before; See Gill on "Ps 118:17".

{d} ynroy roy "corripiendo corripuit me", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; "castigando castigavit me", Musculus, Vatablus, Michaelis.

Psalms 118:19

Ver. 19. Open to me the gates of righteousness,.... The doors of the sanctuary or tabernacle, so called, because none but righteous persons might enter in at them, or who were clean in a ceremonial sense; and because sacrifices of righteousness were here offered. The words are addressed to the porters, or Levites, that kept the doors of the tabernacle, to open them. The Targum is,

"open to me the gates of the city of righteousness;"

Jerusalem, so called **Isa 1:26**; the gates of which were opened to David, when he took it from the Jebusites. An emblem of the church or city of God, the gates of which are opened to the righteous to enter into now; and of the New Jerusalem, and of the heavenly glory, into which the saints will have an abundant entrance hereafter; see
Isa 26:1. Moreover, these may be the words of the Messiah, requiring the gates of heaven to be opened to him by his blood, he having obtained redemption for his people; see Ps 24:7;

I will go in to them, [and] I will praise the Lord: at the gates of the tabernacle David entered, and praised the Lord for his deliverance and salvation, and for the many favours and honours bestowed on him; and in the church of God do the saints praise him, as they will do in heaven to all eternity; and where Christ, as man, is praising his divine Father, Ps 22:22.

Psalms 118:20

Ver. 20. This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter. This seems to be spoken by some other person or persons, distinct from David and the Messiah, pointing at some particular and principal gate, upon hearing the above word: by which is meant, not the gate of the house of the sanctuary of the Lord, as the Targum; but the Messiah himself, afterwards spoken of as the stone rejected by the builders, and made the head of the corner; who is the way of access to God; the door into the church or sheepfold; the strait gate that leads to eternal life; by which none but righteous persons enter into heaven; even such who are made righteous, through the imputation of his righteousness to them; see Joh 10:1.

Psalms 118:21

Ver. 21. I will praise thee, for thou hast heard me,.... Here the psalmist reassumes his part in this song, and determines to praise the Lord for hearing him when in distress, and when he was encompassed with his enemies, and for delivering him out of their hands;

and art become my salvation; the author of it, and therefore deserving of praise; and who is no other than the Messiah Jesus, who is described in the next verse.

Psalms 118:22

Ver. 22. The stone [which] the builders refused,.... This is not Zerubabel, according to the sense of some Jews, as Theodoret suggests; nor the people of Israel, as Jarchi and Kimchi; nor David, as the Targum, which paraphrases the words,

"the child the builders despised was among the sons of Jesse, and deserved to be appointed a king and a governor."

He doubtless was a type of Christ, and there was some shadow of what is here said in him: he was refused by all the tribes but Judah; Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, was set upon the throne, though afterwards all Israel and Judah united in making David king, **2Sa 2:8**. But the Messiah is intended, as some ancient Jewish writers {e} own, and Jarchi himself elsewhere {f} confesses; and which is certain from the quotation and application of this passage to Christ, in Mt 21:42 **Ac 4:11**; who is compared to a stone for his strength and duration; and because of his usefulness in the spiritual building of the church, as a foundation and corner stone; See Gill on "Mt 21:42". Him the Jewish builders refused; their political ones, their rulers, that believed not on him; the princes of this world, that rose up against him and crucified him; even those who were the support of their civil state, and the maintainers of it: but more especially their ecclesiastical builders, the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, who built the people, or directed them to build on their carnal privileges, the traditions of the elders, and their own legal righteousness. These refused to receive Jesus as the Messiah, and to believe in him; they refused to own and honour him as King of Zion; they refused his doctrines and ordinances; they refused to hear him preach, or suffer others to hear him; they refused to make use of him in the spiritual building, either to preach him themselves, or allow others to do it; they rejected him with contempt; they set him at nought, and preferred a thief and a robber to him;

is become the head [stone] of the corner; Christ is the corner stone, that unites elect angels and elect men together, Jews and Gentiles, Old and New Testament saints, saints above and below, saints in all ages and places; and he is the head stone, or chief corner stone, for strength and beauty, and the head of the corner; or of persons most eminent, who are sometimes called the corner, Jud 20:2. Christ is exalted above all; he is the head of principalities and powers, the angels; he is made higher than the kings of the earth; and is the head of the body, the church, an head both of eminence and influence.

{e} Zohar in Exod. fol. 93. 3. Vid. Tikkune Zohar, Correct. 5. fol. 15. 2. {f} Comment. in Mic. v. 2.

Psalms 118:23

Ver. 23. This is the Lord's doing,.... This stone is from the Lord, Ge 49:24; it is of his choosing, appointing, and laying: the rejection of it by the builders is through his permission and will; they did no other things than what his hand and counsel determined should be done, **Ac 2:23**; and the exaltation of it, or the making it the head of the corner, was of him; he highly exalted him at his right hand, above every name, creature, and thing;

it [is] marvellous in our eyes; the stone itself is wonderful to look at, for its beauty, strength, and usefulness; the wisdom, love, care, and power of God, in laying it, are astonishing; the distinguishing grace of God in selecting some stones out of the common quarry, making them lively stones, and building them on this foundation stone, is exceeding marvellous: and so are both the rejection and exaltation of it; that so precious a stone should be refused, and, when treated with so much neglect and contempt, should be exalted. The Targum is,

"from the Lord was this, said the builders; this is marvellous in our sight, said the sons of Jesse."

Psalms 118:24

Ver. 24. This [is] the day [which] the Lord hath made,.... Famous and remarkable for the above events. Meaning either the day of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem, in order to be delivered up to the Jews, and suffer and die in the place of his people; to which the following words agree: or the day of his resurrection {g} from the dead; when God gave him glory, and was matter of joy to those for whose justification he rose; or the Lord's day, kept in commemoration of it: or rather the whole Gospel dispensation, made a bright day by the sun of righteousness; and which is the now present day of salvation;

we will rejoice and be glad in it; because of the blessings of grace, peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation, which came through the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, and are published in the everlasting Gospel. The Targum is,

"this day the Lord hath made, said the builders; let us rejoice and be glad in it, said the sons of Jesse."

{g} So Suidas in voce auth; which he observes fell on March 25.

Psalms 118:25

Ver. 25. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord,.... Or, "we beseech thee"; for they are the words of the people, wishing all health and happiness to their king; and it is as if they had said, "vivat rex", that is, "let the king live", or, "God save the King": and no doubt these words were used by the people, when all the tribes united and made David king over all Israel, and when he became the head of the corner; which was attended with the shouts and acclamations of the people, expressing themselves after this manner, And certain it is that these words were used by the followers of Christ, and applied to him, when he made his public entry into Jerusalem, crying, "hosanna" to the son of David. The word "hosanna" is the same with "save now"; and is compounded of the two words in the text thus translated, Mt 21:9;

O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity; to our King: give him success in all his undertakings, and victory over all his enemies; may the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hands; may his Gospel run and be glorified, and be spread all over the world, and multitudes bow to the sceptre of his kingdom; may his kingdom be enlarged, and his dominion be from sea to sea; and may this spiritual building rise, and be brought to perfection, of which he is the foundation and chief corner stone. The allusion may be to the shouts usually made at the laying of the foundation or corner stone of any considerable edifice, and at the bringing in the head stone of it; see **Ezr 3:11**.

Psalms 118:26

Ver. 26. Blessed [be] he that cometh in the name of the Lord,.... These words were used by the multitude that followed Christ, as he went into Jerusalem, in order to eat his last passover, and suffer and die for his people, and are applied to him; as also by his disciples, who expressed them thus, "Blessed be the King that cometh", &c. Lu 19:38; the King Messiah, who came from heaven to earth, from his Father into this world, to save the chief of sinners; who now came to Jerusalem on that errand, and into the temple, as the proprietor of it; where he showed his power, and exercised his authority: he came not in his own name, but in his Father's name; and not to do his own will, but his; nor did he seek his own glory, but his Father's: he came as his servant to do his work; he came with a commission from him, by his order, and to obey his commands, which he did; he came with his full consent and will, and, as man and Mediator, was helped and assisted by him; and as such he is pronounced blessed: all blessing, happiness, and honour, are wished for him, and ascribed unto him, as his just due; being Lord and King, Saviour and Redeemer, of his people;

we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord; these are the words of the priests, one part of whose office it was to bless the people, **Nu 6:23**; but these were not the chief priests of the Jews in Christ's time; for they were displeased with the multitude, and with the children in the temple, for crying "hosanna" to the son of David, and wishing well to him, Mt 21:15. But the disciples of Christ, or ministers of the Gospel, who blessed the people that blessed their Lord and Master; or wished well to them, and prayed for them that wished well to him. The sense is, either we who are of the house of the Lord bless you; we who stand there, and serve him, are rulers of the household of God, and stewards of the mysteries of grace: or we bless you, and pray for your welfare, who are of the household of faith; who are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: or we bless you with provisions out of the house of God; with the goodness and fatness of his house, the word and ordinances, by administering them to you: or we pray that the Lord would bless you out of Zion, or out of the highest heavens, where he is; even with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; see Ps 134:1. The Targum of this verse Ps 118:25, is,

"We beseech thee, O Lord, "save" now, said the builders; We beseech thee, O Lord, send now prosperity, said Jesse and his wife. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord, said the builders; Let us bless you out of the house of the sanctuary of the Lord, said David."

Psalms 118:27

Ver. 27. God [is] the Lord, which hath showed us light,.... These are the words of the people, acknowledging divine favours; particularly that the Lord had caused his face to shine upon them, as the priest wished for, **Nu 6:25**. The Lord might be said to show them light, by sending the Messiah to them, who came a light into the world; by making a Gospel day, for which they expressed their gladness, Ps 118:24; by causing the light of his glorious Gospel to shine into their hearts; by making them who were darkness light, the darkness of ignorance and unbelief to pass away, and the true light to shine; by lifting up the light of his countenance upon them, and giving them hopes of the light of glory and happiness, and making them meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light; for all which they are thankful, and call for sacrifices;

bind the sacrifice with cords, [even] unto the horns of the altar; that is, the lamb, as the Targum and Aben Ezra. Take a lamb for sacrifice, and bind it with cords; and being bound, lead it to the altar; there slay it, and then pour the blood upon the horns of it; which were the usual rites in sacrifice. Or bring a large number of sacrifices bound, as many as will fill the court, even up to the horns of the altar, upon this joyful occasion: for the sacrifice was not bound to the horns of the altar; but it denotes here such a number of sacrifices as would fill the court, and reach thither; so Gussetius {h} interprets it very rightly. But we are not to think of slain beasts, but of holy and living sacrifices, even the persons of God's people; their bodies and souls, and their sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving; since this refers to Gospel times; whose hearts in such service are to be united to fear the Lord, and fixed trusting in him; and are to be drawn to it with the cords of love, which are more than all whole burnt offerings; and which sacrifices are to be brought to the altar, Christ; which is most holy, and sanctifies gifts and persons, and renders them acceptable to God; and which is to be compassed about with songs of deliverance and salvation, by persons from every quarter, the four corners of the earth. Luther renders it,

"adorn the feast with leaves;"

and others,

"bind on the feast day branches,"

of trees, as was usual on the feast of tabernacles; see Le 23:40; and it was usual with the Heathens to strew their altars with green herbs and flowers {i}, particularly vervain, put for all other sweet herbs {k}: hence Ovid {l} calls them "herbosas aras"; which the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions seem to countenance.

{h} Comment. Ebr. p. 87. {i} Martial. l. 3. Ep. 24. "virides aras". Vid. Ovid. de Trist. l. 3. Eleg. 13. "Ramis tegerem ut frondentibus aras", Virgil. Aeneid. 3. v. 25. {k} Terent. Andria, 4. 2. {l} Metamorph. l. 15. Fab. 49.

Psalms 118:28

Ver. 28. Thou [art] my God, and I will praise thee,.... These are the words of David, asserting his interest in God as his covenant God; and which is the great blessing of the covenant, and the greatest happiness of men, and will always continue; and for which there is abundant reason for praise: it is an instance of distinguishing grace, all evidence or everlasting love, and the foundation of all comfort and happiness here and hereafter;

[thou art] my God, one will exalt thee; in my heart, and with my lips; and call upon others to join with me in it, as in Ps 118:29. The Targum is,

"thou art my God, and I will confess before thee; thou art my God, and I will praise thee, said David: Samuel replied, and said, Praise, O ye congregation of Israel;"

who are addressed in the next words.

Psalms 118:29

Ver. 29. O give thanks unto the Lord, for [he is] good,.... And thus the psalm ends as it began; there having been given many instances of the divine goodness, in hearing and delivering the psalmist when in distress; saving him from his enemies, when compassed about with them; sparing his life, when in great danger; and especially in making the stone rejected by the builders the head of the corner;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; the above instances are proofs of it; and still it continues, and will for evermore. Here ends the great "Hallel", or hymn, sung at the passover and other festivals.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 119:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 119

This psalm is generally thought to be written by David, but when is uncertain; very probably towards the decline of life; and, as some think, for the sake or his son Solomon. It seems to be a collection of observations on the word of God and its precepts, the usefulness and excellency of it, he had made in the course of his life; interspersed with various petitions for the grace of God, to enable him to observe it. The psalm is a very extraordinary one; partly on account of the unusual length of it, it being more than double the length of the longest psalm in the whole book; and partly on account of its curious composition. It consists of twenty two parts, according to the number of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet; the names of which letters stand between each part; and every part consists of eight verses, all of which begin with the same letter: thus, for instance, the first eight verses begin with the letter a, "aleph", and the second eight verses begin with the letter b, "beth", and so on throughout; hence the Masorah calls this psalm the Great Alphabet. This the psalmist did, perhaps to excite attention to what he said, and also to help the memory. And it is observable that there are very few verses in the whole, not more than one or two, but what has something in it concerning the word of God, and its precepts and ordinances; there are nine or ten different words used relative to it, which signify much one and the same thing; as laws, statutes, judgments, testimonies, &c. Luther {m} observes, that neither Cicero, nor Virgil, nor Demosthenes, are to be compared with David for eloquence, as we see in the hundred nineteenth Psalm, where he divideth one sense and meaning into twenty two sorts. And it may also be remarked, that there is nothing in it concerning the tabernacle worship, or the rites and ceremonies of the legal dispensation; so that it seems to be calculated for, and is suited to, the word of God, and the ordinances of it, as we now have them in their full perfection: and the design of the whole is to show the fervent affection the psalmist had for the word of God, and to stir up the same in others.

{m} Mensal. Colloqu. c. 32. p. 365.

a, ALEPH.--The First Part.

Ver. 1. ALEPH. Blessed [are] the undefiled in the way,.... Who are in the right way to heaven and happiness, which is Jesus Christ; the strait gate, and narrow way to eternal life; the only true way of life and salvation, in which way believers walk by faith. All out of this way are altogether become filthy; but all in this way are clean, even every bit: they are without spot and blemish, blameless and unreproveable, and without fault, before the throne of God and in his sight; being washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb, and clothed with his righteousness; and even "perfect" and complete in him, as the Targum renders the word. These are also found in the way of their duty, and walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless before men, and are sincere and upright in the sight of God; and are upon all accounts happy persons:

who walk in the law of the Lord: within the boundaries and limits of it, according to its direction, as it is a rule of walk and conversation in the hands of Christ the Lawgiver; and who continue to walk in it, as in a pleasant path, with great delight; and cheerfully obey its precepts, as influenced by the love of God, and assisted by the Spirit and grace of Christ. The word "law", or "doctrine", as it signifies, may design every revelation of the divine will; and even the doctrine of Christ, which believers should abide in, and not transgress; and should walk uprightly according to the truth of it, and as becomes it, and as they are enabled to do.

Psalms 119:2

Ver. 2. Blessed [are] they that keep his testimonies,.... The whole word of God, the Scriptures of truth, are his testimonies: they testify of the mind of God, and of his love and grace in the method of salvation by Christ; they testify of Christ, his person, offices, and grace; of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; and of all the happiness that comes to the people of God thereby. The law is called a testimony, which being put into the ark, that had the name of the ark of the testimony. This is a testimony of the perfections of God, his holiness, justice, and goodness displayed in it; and of his good and perfect will, what should or should not be done. The Gospel is the testimony of Christ, of what he is, has done and suffered for his people, and of the blessings of grace by him; the ordinances of it, baptism and the Lord's supper, testify of the love of God, and grace of Christ; and all these good men keep: they keep the Scriptures as a sacred "depositum"; they hold fast the faithful word of the Gospel, that no man take it from them; and are desirous of observing both the law of God, as in the hands of Christ; and the ordinances of the Gospel, as delivered by him, from a principle of love to him; and such are happy persons in life, at death, and to all eternity;

[and that] seek him with the whole heart; that is, that seek the Lord by prayer and supplication, with a true heart, and in sincerity; that seek to know more of him, and that in good earnest; that seek for communion and fellowship with him, with the Spirit within them, with all their heart and soul; that seek Christ, and God in Christ, his kingdom, and his righteousness, and that in the first place, early, earnestly, and diligently. The Targum is,

"they seek his doctrine with the whole heart."

Psalms 119:3

Ver. 3. They also do no iniquity,.... Not that they are free from indwelling sin, nor from the acts of sin, nor that what they do are not sins; but they do not make a trade of sinning, it is not the course of their lives; nor do they do iniquity with that ease and pleasure, without reluctance and remorse, as others do: or rather as new creatures, as born again, they do not and cannot commit sin; for the new man is pure, spiritual, and holy; and nothing can come out of that, or be done by it, which is the contrary. This is a distinct I from the old man, or corrupt nature, to which all the actions of sin are to be ascribed; see **1Jo 3:9**;

they walk in his ways; in the ways of God and Christ, into which they are guided and directed, and where they are kept, and in which they find both pleasure and profit. Here end the descriptive characters of good and happy men.

Psalms 119:4

Ver. 4. Thou hast commanded [us] to keep thy precepts diligently. Here, and in the following verses, the psalmist expresses his great regard to the precepts, commandments, statutes, and judgments of God; and that as such, because they were commanded by him; were not the precepts of men, but the commands of God; who had a right to command, as Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, and King; and whose commands are not to be reckoned as indifferent things, that are at the option and choice of a creature, to be done or let alone at his pleasure; but are what God has enjoined, and are binding upon men; and which love should and does constrain the saints to have a regard unto, and to keep them diligently or vehemently; with all a man's might and strength, as the word is used in **De 6:5**. These are not at any time to be dispensed with, but, to be kept always constantly and steadily.

Psalms 119:5

Ver. 5. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!] The psalmist, sensible of his own inability, as every good man is, to keep the commands of God, prays for grace, direction, and assistance in it; that the ways of his mind, his thoughts, affections, and inclinations, might be directed to an observance of the divine precepts; knowing he could not command his thoughts, raise his affections, dispose his mind, and incline his heart thereunto; and finding a backwardness to religious exercises and spiritual duties, and that the ways and actions of his life might be guided to the same; being sensible he could not take one step aright without God and Christ; that the way of man is not in himself, and that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps; that a good man's steps are ordered by the Lord, and he directs his paths: besides the direction of the word, there is need of the Spirit and grace of God, to cause a person to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments, and do them; see Jer 10:23.

Psalms 119:6

Ver. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed,.... Of hope in God, of a profession of faith in him, and of a conversation agreeable to it before men; nor of appearing before God in his house, worshipping him there; nor at the throne of his grace, nor at the day of judgment, and before Christ at his coming;

when I have respect unto all thy commandments; or "look" {n} at them constantly, as the rule of walk and conversation; and to copy after, as a scholar looks at his copy to write after; and affectionately esteem all his precepts concerning all things to be right, and none of his commandments grievous; and practically, not in the theory only; but observing them in order to practise them, and diligently attending to them, and steadfastly continuing in them; impartially regarding them, one as another; and especially as beholding them fulfilled perfectly in Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes.

{n} yjybhb "quum intuebor", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 119:7

Ver. 7. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart,.... In the most sincere manner, in the most affectionate way, with the whole heart; sensible of great favours received, and great obligations laid under; see **Ps 9:1**;

when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments; or, "the judgments of thy righteousness" {o}: of the righteousness of God, declared in his righteous law;

which is founded upon, and is according to, the strictest rules of justice and equity; and so are all the precepts of it: and of the righteousness of Christ, revealed in the Gospel; by which God appears to be just, while he is the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. Now the precepts of the one, and the doctrines of the other, are to be learned, and learned of God, in his word and by his Spirit. The psalmist had been learning them, but was desirous of learning more of them, not being a complete proficient in them; and of learning them, not merely in the theory, but in the practice and experience of them; which, when he had attained unto, as he hoped he should, it would be matter of the most sincere praise and thankfulness.

{o} Kqdu yjpvm "judicia justitiae tuae", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Musculus, Gejerus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

Psalms 119:8

Ver. 8. I will keep thy statutes,.... This is a resolution taken up in the strength of divine grace, to answer the end of learning the judgments of God; which he did, not merely to have a notional knowledge of them, but to put them in practice; and not that he thought he could perfectly keep them, but was desirous of observing them in the best manner he could, as assisted by the grace of God; from love to God, in the faith and name of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God; without dependence upon them for life and salvation;

O forsake me not utterly; totally and finally, or not at all; otherwise as if he should say, I shall never be able to keep thy statutes; so sensible was he of the necessity of the divine Presence and grace, to assist him in the observance of them: or, "for ever", as Ben Balaam interprets it, and so the Ethiopic version; R. Moses reads the words, "O forsake me not", in a parenthesis, and joins the rest thus, "I will keep thy statutes vehemently"; or with all my strength and might; and so Kimchi reads them: but such an interpretation is very forced, and contrary to the accents.

Psalms 119:9

b, BETH.--The Second Part.

Ver. 9. BETH. Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?.... Some think

David means himself, and that he was a young man when he wrote this psalm; and which they think is confirmed by Ps 119:100; but neither of them seem conclusive; rather any young man is meant, and who is particularly mentioned, because young men are liable to sins and snares, to carnal lusts and sensual pleasures, which are of a defiling nature. Some are of opinion that a young man, or babe in Christ, is intended, that needs direction in his way, and instruction about the manner of cleansing it. But the former sense seems best, and expresses the concern of the psalmist for the education and right information of youth; which is a matter of great moment and advantage to families, neighbourhoods, and commonwealths. The question supposes the young man to be impure, as every man is by birth, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; is a transgressor from the womb, and his heart, ways, and actions, evil from his youth: and the difficulty is, how he shall be cleansed; how one so impure in his nature, heart, and ways, can be just with God, or become undefiled in the way, as in Ps 119:1; to which some reference may be had: or how he can have his heart made pure, or a clean one be created in him; or how his way, life, and conversation, may be corrected, reformed, and amended. The answer is,

by taking heed [thereto] according to thy word; that is, to his way and course of life, and steering it according to the direction of the word of God. But I think the words may be better rendered and supplied thus, "by observing [what is] according to thy word" {p}; which shows how a sinner is to be cleansed from his sins by the blood of Christ, and justified by his righteousness, and be clean through his word; and also how and by whom the work of sanctification is wrought in the heart, even by the Spirit of God, by means of the word; and what is the rule of a man's walk and conversation: he will find the word of God to be profitable, to inform in the doctrines of justification and pardon, to acquaint him with the nature of regeneration and sanctification; and for the correction and amendment of his life and manners, and for his instruction in every branch of righteousness, **2Ti 3:16**.

{p} Krbdk rmvl "observando secundum verbum tuum", Cocceius.

Psalms 119:10

Ver. 10. With my whole heart have I sought thee,.... Not himself, his own honour and applause, as formal worshippers and self-righteous persons do; but the Lord and his glory, his face, his presence, and communion with him, his grace, and fresh supplies of it, to help in time of need; his doctrine, as the

Targum; and to know more of it, and of him, and of his mind and will; and this he did in the most sincere manner, with all his heart and soul. The character of the good man, in
Ps 119:2; the psalmist applies to himself; see Isa 26:9; and uses it as an argument to obtain the following request:

O let me not wander from thy commandments; the way of them. Good men are apt to go astray, as David, Ps 119:176; their hearts, their affections, and their feet, wander from, the way of their duty: there are many things which lead them aside, and cause them to turn to the right hand or the left, at least solicit them to do so; as a corrupt nature, an evil heart, a body of sin and death, the snares of the world, and the temptations of Satan; and, what is worst of all, when God leaves them to themselves, withdraws the influences of his grace, and brings them into such circumstances as expose them to going astray, which the psalmist here deprecates; "suffer me not to wander", but uphold my goings in thy ways; preserve me by thy grace, and keep me by thy power; hold me by thy right hand, and guide and direct me. Or, "cause me not to wander" {q} &c. a like petition to those in Ps 141:3 **Mt 6:13**; with which last Kimchi compares these words.

{q} yngvt la "ne errare facias me", Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 119:11

Ver. 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart,.... Not only heard and read it, but received it into his affections; mixed it with faith, laid it up in his mind and memory for future use; preserved it in his heart as a choice treasure, where it might dwell richly, and be of service to him on many occasions; and particularly be of the following use:

that I might not sin against thee; the word of God is a most powerful antidote against sin, when it has a place in the heart; not only the precepts of it forbid sin, but the promises of it influence and engage to purity of heart and life, and to the perfecting of holiness in the fear of the Lord; and all the doctrines of grace in it effectually teach the saints to deny all sin and worldly lusts, and to live a holy life and conversation; see **2Co 7:1**.

Psalms 119:12

Ver. 12. Blessed [art] thou, O Lord,.... In himself, in his nature, persons, and perfections; the fountain of all happiness to angels and men, in time and to eternity; to whom all blessing, honour, and glory, are to be given. The psalmist takes this method of praising and ascribing blessing to God, for what he had received from him; particularly for teaching him what he had learned, Ps 119:7; in hopes of succeeding in his following request:

teach me thy statutes; the knowledge of the best is imperfect. Good men desire to know more of God, of his mind and will, even of his revealed will; and that they may have grace and strength to act in conformity to it; for it is not the bare theory of things they desire to be taught, but the practice of them; and though ministers, and the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances, may be and are means of teaching; yet there is none teaches like the Lord, Father, Son, and Spirit. The Targum and Syriac versions render it, "teach me thy decrees".

Psalms 119:13

Ver. 13. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. Not the judgments of his hand, what he executes on an ungodly world; nor the intricate dispensations of his providence; those judgments of his now unsearchable, though before long will be manifest; these the psalmist could not declare: but the revelation of the will of God, what his mouth has uttered, doctrines and precepts of righteousness and truth; these, though David had them in his heart, he did not conceal them from men; but out of the abundant experience he had of them in his heart, his lips spake of them, of their nature and excellency, and usefulness unto others: and whereas he desired to be instructed more and more in them, it was in order to teach them, and declare them to others; even all of them, in the most sincere and impartial manner; see Ac 20:27.

Psalms 119:14

Ver. 14. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies,.... The way which the Scriptures, that testify of God and Christ, direct unto; and the principal way is Christ himself, the only way of life and salvation; in which believers walk and go on rejoicing; rejoicing in his person, offices, grace, righteousness, and salvation: the lesser ways the Scriptures point unto are the ways of duty and paths of ordinances; in which truly gracious souls find a great deal of peace, pleasure, and delight;

as [much as] in all riches; or, "as above all riches" {r}: the joy that believers have in the ways of God is superior to that which any natural or worldly man has in his substance of every sort, or be it ever so great; yea, they find such riches in the ways of God, as are vastly preferable to the riches of this world; they find Christ, the pearl of great price, and his unsearchable riches, the riches of grace, and the riches of glory; and even the word of God itself, those testimonies of his, are more desirable than thousands of gold and silver, and give a greater pleasure than the increase of corn and wine.

{r} Nwh lk lek "sicut super omnibus divitiis", Pagninus; so Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis, Ainsworth.

Psalms 119:15

Ver. 15. I will meditate in thy precepts,.... In his own mind; revolve them in his thoughts; consider well the nature, excellency, usefulness, and importance of them, and the obligations he lay under to observe them. The Targum is,

"I will speak of thy precepts;"

in conversation to others, and recommend them to them; so the Arabic version:

and have respect unto thy ways; or "look" {s} unto them; take heed unto them, and walk in them, and not wander from them; make them the rule of walk and conversation; as travellers look well to their ways, that they do not miss them, and go into wrong ways; they observe the directions that have been given them, and keep unto them; and so good men refer to the ways of the Lord, which the Scriptures point out unto them; see **Jer 6:16**.

{s} hjybaw "et aspiciam", Pagninus, Montanus; "et intueor", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 119:16

Ver. 16. I will delight myself in thy statutes,.... In looking over them; in meditating on them; in obeying them, and walking according to them; as every good man does delight in the law of the Lord, after the inward man, **Ro 7:22**;

see Ps 119:24;

I will not forget thy word: he took all proper methods to fix it in his memory; he laid it up in his mind; he meditated upon it in his heart, and he talked of it with his lips, Ps 119:11.

Psalms 119:17

g, GIMEL.--The Third Part.

Ver. 17. GIMEL. Deal bountifully with thy servant,.... Which character is mentioned, not by way of plea or argument for favour, but as expressive of modesty, sense of duty, and obligation to it. He pleads not his services by way of merit; but prays that God would deal bountifully with him, in a way of grace and mercy: or "render good" unto him, as the Targum; bestow it on him as a free gift. The Lord deals bountifully with men, when he gives himself unto them as their portion and inheritance; his Son, and all things along with him; his Spirit, and the graces of it; and every daily needful supply of grace;

[that] I may live, and keep thy word; life natural is the bounty of God; he grants life and favour, he grants life as a favour, and all the mercies and blessings of it; and through the gracious dealings of God with his people, they live spiritually and live comfortably; in his favour is life; the life of faith is encouraged and invigorated in them by it; and eternal life is the free gift and bounty of God through Christ, by whom they have both a right unto it and meetness for it: and the desire of good men to live in this world is not to indulge themselves in carnal lusts and pleasures; not to live to themselves, nor to the lusts of the flesh, nor to the will of men; but to live soberly, righteously, and godly; to live by faith in Christ, and in hope of eternal life through him; and while they live to keep the word of God, and not forget it, as Aben Ezra interprets it, to lay it up for their own use, and preserve it for others, and observe its instructions, cautions, and directions.

Psalms 119:18

Ver. 18. Open thou mine eyes,.... The eyes of my heart or understanding, as Kimchi; or, "reveal mine eyes" {t}; take off the veil from them: there is a veil of darkness and ignorance on the hearts of all men, with respect to divine and spiritual things; their understandings are darkened, yea, darkness itself. This veil must be removed; the scales must drop from their eyes; their eyes must be opened and enlightened, before they can discern spiritual things contained in the word of God; and even good men need to have the eyes of their understandings more and more enlightened into these things, as the psalmist here petitions, and the apostle prays for his Ephesians, **Eph 1:17**;

that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law; the law strictly taken, which had great and excellent things in it; and was wonderful for the compendiousness of it; for the justice, holiness, and equity of its precepts; especially for its spirituality, and above all for Christ, being the end of it; the two last more particularly could only be discerned by a spiritual man: or rather the five books of Moses, the almost only Scriptures extant in David's time, in which there were many wonderful things concerning Christ; some delivered by way of promise and prophecy of him, under the characters of the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the Shiloh, and the great Prophet; and many others in dark figures, types, and shadows, which required a spiritual sight to look into; of which the rock and manna, the brasen serpent, passover, &c. are instances: but rather, as the word "law" signifies "doctrine", the doctrine of the Gospel may be meant; which contains mysteries in it, respecting the trinity of Persons in the Godhead, the person of Christ, his incarnation, sufferings and death; the blessings of grace through him; the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, eternal life, and the resurrection of the dead; with many others.

{t} ynye lg "revela oculos meos", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; "velamen detrahe oculis meis", Tigurine version.

Psalms 119:19

Ver. 19. I [am] a stranger in the earth,.... As all his fathers were, and all the saints are; not to divine and spiritual things; to God, and communion with him; to Christ, and the knowledge of him; to the Spirit, and his operations in their hearts; to their own hearts, and the plague of them; to the Gospel, and its truths; nor to the people of God, and fellowship with them: but to the world, among whom they are, not being known, valued, and respected by them; and they also behaving as strangers to the world, having no fellowship with them in their sinful works; as also not being natives here, but belonging to another city and country, an heavenly one; see 1Ch 29:15;

hide not thy commandments from me; the doctrines of the Gospel, the word which God has commanded to a thousand generations; which is pure, and enlightens the eyes, and so needful to strangers in their pilgrimage, Ps 19:8; which God sometimes hides from the wise and prudent, and which the psalmist here deprecates with respect to himself, Mt 11:25. Or the precepts of the world may be meant, which are a light to the feet, and a lamp to the paths, a good direction to travellers and strangers in the way: David, being such an one, prayed that these might not be hid from him, but be showed unto him; that he might know his way, and not go out of it; but walk as a child of light, wisely and circumspectly.

Psalms 119:20

Ver. 20. My soul breaketh for the longing,.... His heart was just ready to break, and his soul fainted; he was ready to die, through a vehement desire of enjoying the object longed for, after mentioned; "hope deferred makes the heart sick", Pr 13:1; the phrase is expressive of the greatness, vehemence, and eagerness of his mind after the thing he desired, which follows:

[that it hath] unto thy judgments at all times; not the judgments of God on wicked men, though these are desirable for the glorifying of his justice; nor his dark dispensations of providence, though good men cannot but desire and long for the time when these judgments shall be made manifest: but rather the righteous laws and precepts of God are designed, which he desired to have a more perfect knowledge of, and yield a more constant obedience unto; or, best of all, the doctrines of grace and righteousness, that should be more clearly revealed in the times of the Messiah; who was to set judgment in the earth, his Gospel; and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and glorify the justice of God; than which nothing was more earnestly and importunately wished and longed for by Old Testament saints; see Ps 119:81.

Psalms 119:21

Ver. 21. Thou hast rebuked the proud,.... Which some understand of the fallen angels, who, in proud wrath, left their habitations, because they would not be subject to the Son of God in human nature; wherefore he scattered them in the imaginations of their hearts, and cast down these mighty ones into hell, where they are reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day. Others of the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time, this psalm being suited, as is thought, to Gospel times; who were proud of their own righteousness, and despised others less holy than themselves; and submitted not to the righteousness of Christ, whom he often rebuked, and at last punished. Rather all proud atheistical persons, profane and wicked men, are meant; who, Pharaoh like, say, who is the Lord that we should obey him? who reckon, their tongues to be their own, and employ them both against God and men, and regard neither: these God resists, sets himself against, and sooner or later severely punishes; for in the things they deal proudly he is above them, Ex 18:11;

[that are] cursed which do err from thy commandments; according to the law of God, being transgressors of it, and will hear the awful sentence, "go, ye cursed", Mt 25:41. The Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, join this with the next clause: "cursed are they which do err from thy commandments"; from the way of them, not observing them; from the end of them, Christ, not looking to him for righteousness.

Psalms 119:22

Ver. 22. Remove from me reproach and contempt,.... Or, "roll [it] from me" {u}. It lay as a load, as a heavy burden upon him, which pressed him sore; and he therefore desired ease from it, being probably in a low frame of soul; otherwise saints do and should rejoice when reproached for Christ's sake; and esteem it, with Moses, more than all the treasures in Egypt, being what is common to them with their Lord;

for I have kept that testimonies; which was the reason why he was reproached and despised; for having a regard to the word of God, and embracing and professing the doctrines of it. Thus the word of the Lord was made a reproach to Jeremiah, or he was reproached for delivering it; as many good men have been vilified, and have suffered for the testimony of Jesus, Jer 20:8; and for walking according to the directions, of it; wicked men thinking it strange they do not run into the same excess of not with them, and therefore speak evil of them, **1Pe 4:3**.

{u} ylem lg "devolve a me", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 119:23

Ver. 23. Princes also did sit [and] speak against me,.... The princes in the court of Saul, who suggested to him that David sought his hurt; the princes of his own court, Absalom, his own son, a prince of the blood, and Ahithophel, a counsellor of state: or the princes of the Gentiles, as Jarchi; so the princes of the Philistines spake against him in a very disdainful manner, "make this fellow return to his place again", 1Sa 29:4. Such as these might speak against him, as they sat and rode in their chariots; when at their tables, conversing together; or at their council boards, forming schemes against him: the phrase denotes their constant practice, as Kimchi observes; see Ps 50:20; herein David was a type of Christ, whom the princes of this world conspired against, and whose life they took away, **Ps 2:2**;

[but] thy servant did meditate in thy statutes; what the princes did or said against him did not divert his mind, or take off his thoughts from the word of God, and the ordinances of it; he thought of them, he spoke and discoursed of them; he declared them, as the word {w} sometimes signifies, and so the Targum takes it here; he was not afraid nor ashamed to profess his regard unto them: as Daniel, when he knew that the presidents and princes had obtained a royal decree, and the writing was signed; yet went into his chamber, as at other times, and kneeled down and prayed to God, **Da 6:10**.

{w} xyvy "disserit", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Musculus; "loquitur", Piscator, Gejerus.

Psalms 119:24

Ver. 24. Thy testimonies also [are] my delight,.... Or "delights" {x}; exceeding delightful to me. The whole of Scripture is so to a good man; he delights in the law of God, after the inward man; the Gospel is a joyful sound to him; the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ, are very pleasant; the promises of it give more joy than the finding of a great spoil; and the precepts and ordinances of it are not grievous, but ways of pleasantness and peace;

[and] my counsellors; or, "the men of my counsel" {y}; though David took counsel with men about affairs of state; yet concerning spiritual ones, or what related to his soul, and the concerns of that, not they, but the Scriptures, were the men of his counsel. The Gospel is the whole counsel of God relating to salvation; in it Christ, the wonderful Counsellor, gives advice to saints and sinners: the whole word of God may be profitably consulted on every occasion, and in every circumstance in which a child of God may be; all

Scripture, being divinely inspired, is profitable for doctrine, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, **2Ti 3:16**.

{x} yevev "deliciae meae", Montanus, Tigurine version, Gejerus, Michaelis; "delectationes meae", Pagninus; "oblectationes meae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {y} ytue yvna "viri consilii mei", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus.

Psalms 119:25

d DALETH.--The Fourth Part.

Ver. 25. DALETH. My soul cleaveth unto the dust,.... Either to the dust of death, having the sentence of it; being almost in despair of life, upon the brink of the grave seemingly, and free among the dead: or in a very low estate of mind, in great dejection and humiliation, rolling himself in the dust, and putting his mouth in it; if there might be any hope of deliverance; but despairing of it, unless the Lord appeared; or finding a proneness in him to the corruption of nature, the body of sin and death, which was very powerful and prevalent, ensnaring and captivating; and particularly to worldly things, comparable to dust, for their lightness, emptiness, and unprofitableness; which often have an undue influence on good men, and to which their affections are too much glued; and which greatly affect the exercise of grace and religious duties, and bring a deadness upon the soul, and make the following: petition necessary:

quicken thou me according to thy word; such who are quickened together with Christ, and who are quickened by his Spirit and grace, when they were dead in trespasses and sins, have often need to be quickened again, and to have the work of grace revived in them; which is done when grace is drawn forth into lively exercise, and which is necessary to the performance of duty; and this is done both by means of the word of God, which, as it is used for the quickening dead sinners, so for the reviving of drooping saints; see Ps 119:50. And according to his word of promise, who has promised never to leave his people, nor forsake the work of his hand, but perform it until the day of Christ; Jarchi and Kimchi think reference is had to the promise in 2Sa 12:13; and Aben Ezra to De 32:39.

Psalms 119:26

Ver. 26. I have declared my ways,.... That is, to the Lord; either the ways he had chose and desired to walk in, and not wander from, and therefore entreated help and assistance, guidance and direction, in them; or his sinful ways and actions, which he acknowledged and confessed, lamented and bewailed, and entreated the forgiveness of; or all his counsels and cares, his affairs and business, in which he was concerned, and which he declared and committed to the Lord, to be directed and assisted in; or all his wants and necessities, which he spread before him at the throne of grace; which he did not as though the Lord was ignorant of these things, but partly as knowing it was the will of God that he should be inquired of by his people, to do the things for them they want; and partly to ease his own mind, and encourage his faith and hope in the Lord;

and thou heardest me: and directed him in the way he should go, and what he should do; forgave him his sins, and supplied his wants;

teach me thy statutes; which he desired to learn and obey, in gratitude for being heard and answered by him; See Gill on "Ps 119:12";

Psalms 119:27

Ver. 27. Make me to understand the way of thy precepts,.... The meaning of them, to have a more comprehensive, clear, and distinct knowledge of them; and to be led into the way they direct unto, and walk therein;

so shall I talk of thy wondrous works; the works of creation, providence, redemption, and grace; with more knowledge and understanding, with more spirit and cheerfulness, with more readiness and liberty, more to his own satisfaction, and for the good of others: or, "meditate on thy wondrous works" {z}; being in the ways of God, and freed from the distractions of the world and business of it.

{z} hxyva "meditabor", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "ut mediter", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius.

Psalms 119:28

Ver. 28. My soul melteth for heaviness,.... Like wax before the sun or fire; or flows like water; drops {a}, as the word signifies, and dissolves into tears, through grief and sorrow for sins committed; or by reason of Satan's temptations, or divine desertions, or grievous troubles and afflictions; which cause heaviness, lie heavy, and press hard;

strengthen thou me according unto thy word; to oppose corruptions, withstand temptations, bear up under trials and afflictions, and do the will of God. And the word of God is a means of strengthening his people to do these things; it is the spiritual bread which strengthens man's heart, and in the strength of which, like Elijah, he walks many days, and goes from strength to strength: and there are many gracious words of promise, which may be pleaded with God to this purpose; that he will help, strengthen, and uphold his people; that he will renew their strength, and that as their day is their strength shall be.

{a} hpld "stillavit"; Pagninus, Montanus; "distillet", Vatablus; "stillat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 119:29

Ver. 29. Remove from me the way of lying,.... Not the sin of lying to men, and a course of it, which David was not addicted to; but a "false way", or "way of falsehood" {b}; as it may be rendered, and so the Targum; and is the same with what he expresses his abhorrence of,
Ps 119:128; and is opposed to the way of truth in Ps 119:30; and designs all false doctrine and false worship, all errors and heresies, superstition and idolatry; which he desired to be at the utmost distance from, and those from him, as having a dislike and abhorrence of them; and as knowing how prejudicial they would be to him, and how contrary to the glory of God;

and grant me thy law graciously; not the fiery law, which works wrath, curses and condemns; the voice of words, which they that heard entreated they might hear no more; and which to have is no act of grace and favour, unless as fulfilled in Christ, and as it is a rule of walk and conversation in his hands: but rather "doctrine", as the word signifies; the doctrine of the Gospel, the law or doctrine of faith; which to have and understand is a gift of grace; it is the Gospel of the grace of God, the grace of God itself; and instructs in it, and shows that salvation is purely by it.

{b} rqv Krd "viam falsitatis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 119:30

Ver. 30. I have chosen the way of truth,.... Christ, who is the way and the truth, the true way to God and to eternal happiness; and to choose him is to choose the good part, which shall never be taken away; and which choice is made, not by the free will of man, as left to itself, but under the influence and by the direction of the Spirit and grace of God; whereby a soul sees a preferableness in Christ to every thing else, and which determines the choice of him: or, "the way of faith", as the Targum; the doctrine of faith, particularly the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; also each of the truths of the Gospel, a way in which believers walk with pleasure and by choice; as being preferable to, and more desirable by them, than thousands of gold and silver;

thy judgments have I laid [before me]; to be looked at continually, as being exceeding amiable and lovely, and having a strong affection for them; and as a copy to write after, and a rule to walk by.

Psalms 119:31

Ver. 31. I have stuck unto thy testimonies,.... The word of God, the Scriptures of truth, and the doctrines contained in them. These he closely adhered to, was glued unto them as it were; having firmly believed them, he steadfastly professed them; nor could he be moved from them by any temptations whatever, notwithstanding the reproach cast upon them and him for their sake, or the opposition made unto them;

O Lord, put me not to shame: or let me not be ashamed of the choice I have made, of the testimonies I adhere unto, of my hope and confidence in the Lord and his word; or suffer me not to do anything, any sinful action, that may expose me to shame and contempt.

Psalms 119:32

Ver. 32. I will run the way of thy commandments,.... Not only walk but run in it; which is expressive of great affection to the commands of God, of great readiness and cheerfulness, of great haste and swiftness in the way of them, and of great delight and pleasure therein;

when thou shall enlarge my heart; with the knowledge of God, his word, ways, worship, and ordinances; with his love more fully made known, and with an increase of love to him; with the fear of him, and a flow of spiritual joy and peace; and when delivered from straits and difficulties, from weights and pressures, and everything that may hinder walking or running; and being in circumstances which may lead and encourage to the one as to the other; see **1Ki 4:29**
Isa 60:5.

Psalms 119:33

h, HE.--The Fifth Part.

Ver. 33. HE. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes,.... Which they point unto, and direct to walk in; not only the statutes and ordinances themselves, the theory of them, but the practice of them. This is taught in the word, and by the ministers of it; but none so effectually teach as the Lord himself, **Isa 2:3**;

and I shall keep it [unto] the end; keep the way unto the end of it: or rather to the end of life, all my days, and never depart out of it, or turn to the right hand or the left; but walk on in it as long as I live: or, "I shall observe it, [even] the end" {c}; the end of the way of thy statutes or commandments. Now the end of the commandment is charity or love, which is the fulfilling of it: though that is perfectly fulfilled by none but by Christ, the end of the law for righteousness, **1Th 1:5**. The word for "end" signifies a "reward"; so Aben Ezra interprets it, and refers to Ps 19:11; but Kimchi denies the law is to be kept for the sake of reward; which is right: rather the sense is, I will keep it by way of retribution, or in gratitude for teaching the way. The Targum is,

"and I will keep unto perfection;"

which cannot be done by sinful man.

{c} bqe hnrua "et custodiam finem"; so some in Gejerus.

Psalms 119:34

Ver. 34. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law,.... A spiritual understanding; an understanding of the law, the perfection, purity, holiness, and spirituality of it; an understanding of the Gospel, and of Christ and the things of Christ; from whom grace and strength are to be had for the due observance of the law, as in his hands; which understanding must be given, and is a gift of pure, free, rich grace, to such who have it; though they cannot keep the law perfectly, as no mere man can, yet will keep it spiritually, from a principle of love and gratitude, and with a view to the glory of God and Christ, **1Jo 5:20**;

yea, I shall observe it with [my] whole heart; not only externally, and to be seen of men, and get applause from them; but doing the will of God from the heart, and with a good will and heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men; with a sincere affection for him, and with a single eye to his glory, **Eph 6:6**.

Psalms 119:35

Ver. 35. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments,.... Lead, guide, direct me in the path, and use me to it; work in me both to will and to do; give both ability and a willing mind to walk therein; by granting fresh supplies of grace, and more spiritual strength; by drawing with the cords of love, and by putting in him the good spirit of grace, to cause to walk in the statutes of the Lord, and keep his judgments and do them, Eze 36:27;

for therein do I delight; in the law of God, after the inward man; in the commandments of Christ, which are not grievous; in wisdom's ways and paths, which are pleasantness and peace.

Psalms 119:36

Ver. 36. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies,.... To read the word of God, to hear it opened and explained, to observe and keep the things contained in it; to which there is a disinclination in men naturally: but the Lord, who fashions the hearts of men, and has them in his hands, can bend and incline them by his efficacious grace to regard these his testimonies; which, as Aben Ezra observes, are more precious than all substance, and so are opposed to what follows:

and not to covetousness; not to mammon or money, as the Targum; the love of it, which is the root of all evil, and very pernicious and harmful; in hearing the word it chokes it, and makes it unfruitful, **1Ti 6:9**. Not that God inclines the heart to evil, as he does to good; but he may suffer the heart to be inclined, and may leave a man to the natural inclinations of his heart, and to the temptations of Satan, and the snares of the world, which may have great influence upon him; and this is what is here deprecated; see Ps 141:4.

Psalms 119:37

Ver. 37. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity,.... As the things of this world, the riches, honours, and pleasures of it, which are all vanity and vexation of spirit; and yet these catch the eye, and allure the heart: and all false doctrines, glided over with the specious pretence of truth; and all false worship and superstition, set off with pomp and pageantry, with which the eyes of the body or the eyes of the mind are taken, and by which the heart is ensnared; and therefore it is desirable to have the eyes turned away from such objects unto better;

[and] quicken thou me in thy way; so as to walk and even run in the path of truth, in the way of true religion and godliness; and, instead of looking upon vanity, press towards the mark for the prize; keep Christ in view, while running the race; and look to things unseen, and not things that are seen; and set the affections on things above, and serve the Lord fervently; all which is done when God quickens the hearts of his people, and the graces of his Spirit in them.

Psalms 119:38

Ver. 38. Stablish thy word unto thy servant,.... Either God's word of promise, which never fails, is firm and stable in Christ; and the sense is, that God would assure him of the fulfilment of it, and give him a strong faith and firm belief of it; for otherwise the word of the Lord cannot be surer or more stable than it is: or else the word of his grace; and then the sense is, that he might be established in it, and the truths of it, and be established by it; for the word is a means of establishment, and a good thing it is to have the heart established with grace, with the doctrine of grace, Heb 13:9;

who [is devoted] to thy fear; who served the Lord with reverence and godly fear; who feared the Lord and his goodness; that grace being a reigning one in his heart, and ever before his eyes. Or, "which is unto thy fear" {d}; that is, which word is unto thy fear; which leads unto it, and has a tendency to promote and increase it; and so is a commendation of the word of God from this effect of it.

{d} Ktaryl rva "quod ad timorem tuum", Pagninus, Montanus; "quod ad timorem tui facit", Musculus; "et ducit", Schmidt; "quod datum est ad timorem tui", Michaelis.

Psalms 119:39

Ver. 39. Turn away my reproach which I fear,.... Either for the sake of religion, which was disagreeable to him; and he might be afraid it would be too heavy for him to bear, and be a temptation to him to forsake the good ways of God: or rather by reason of sin, which brings a reproach on good men; and causes the enemy to speak reproachfully, and is therefore dreaded by them who desire to be kept from sin, for that reason as well as others; see Ps 39:8. Jarchi and Kimchi think that David has some reference to his sins, in the case of Uriah and Bathsheba; lest they should be a perpetual reproach on his name and family, which he greatly feared;

for thy judgments [are] good; the laws of God, and punishment of sin according to them; the Scriptures, and the doctrines contained in them; the ways of God, and true religion; which are evil spoken of, through the sins of the professors of them.

Psalms 119:40

Ver. 40. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts,.... After a greater degree of knowledge of them, and an opportunity of hearing them explained and enforced, and of yielding obedience to them; see
Ps 119:7;

quicken me in thy righteousness: in the way of righteousness, according to the word of righteousness, the Gospel, and with the righteousness of Christ revealed in it; and which is unto life, and quickens and comforts the heart, and from whence abundance of peace and joy flows.

Psalms 119:41

w, VAU.--The Sixth Part.

Ver. 41. VAU. Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord,.... Meaning not his providential mercies, but his special mercies and favours; his mercies of old, which were upon his heart and thoughts from everlasting; the sure mercies of David, or the blessings of the everlasting covenant; the spiritual blessings, wherewith the saints are blessed in Christ; the grace that was given to them in him, before the world was: these are desired by the psalmist to be remembered, shown, communicated, and applied unto him, and, as it were, that they might come into his heart and soul; which is done when the love of God is shed abroad there, when full flows of it come in, and all grace is made to abound, and every want is supplied;

[even] thy salvation, according to thy word; not temporal, but spiritual and eternal salvation; which God has appointed his people to, secured for them in covenant, promised them in Christ, whom he sent to work it out, and which is in him; and which in the effectual calling comes to the soul, being brought near and applied to a sensible sinner by the Spirit of God. Here a fresh view of interest in it, a fresh visit with it, and a restoration of the joys of it, are desired; and which salvation flows from the abundant mercy and free favour of God in Christ; and is, according to his word of promise, spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, from the beginning of the world; and may here respect the particular word of promise made to David, that God would put away his sin, and save him, and that he should not die, 2Sa 12:13; or his word of promise in general, to all that seek and call upon the Lord, that they shall find grace and mercy, and be saved everlastingly.

Psalms 119:42

Ver. 42. So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me,.... Saying there is no help and salvation for him in God; asking where is his God, in whom he trusted? and where is the promise of salvation, on which he depended? To which an easy and ready answer might be given, when the mercies and salvation of God came unto him, and he clearly appeared to be interested in them; see **Ps 3:2**;

for I trust in thy word: in Christ the essential Word, the object of trust and confidence; or in the written word, it being divinely inspired and dictated by the Spirit of God, and so to be depended on as true and faithful; or rather God's word of promise concerning mercy, grace, and salvation, which God that has made is faithful and able to perform, as may be believed.

Psalms 119:43

Ver. 43. And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth,.... The Scriptures, which are by divine inspiration, come from the God of truth, contain nothing but truth in them, and are called "the Scriptures of truth", Da 10:21. Or the Gospel, which is often so called, **Eph 1:13**; This comes from God, who cannot lie, and is a declaration of his mind and will concerning the salvation of men; in which Christ, who is the truth, is concerned, being the author, preacher, and substance of it; into which the Spirit of truth leads men, and makes it useful and effectual; which has many eminent and important truths in it, and nothing but truth, and stands opposed to the law, which is typical and shadowy, and to everything that is a falsehood and a lie. This the psalmist desires might not be taken out of his mouth, but kept in it as a sweet morsel there, rolled under his tongue; be eaten and fed upon by him, and be the rejoicing of his heart. Or his sense is, that he might not be left under a temptation to conceal, drop, or deny the word of truth, or be ashamed to own and confess it before men; but at all times, and upon all occasions, publicly declare it, and his faith in it: at least he desires that it might not "utterly" cease from him, or be wholly neglected by him, and he entirely apostatize. Some join the word rendered "utterly", and which signifies "exceedingly", with "the word of truth", thus: "take not out of my mouth the word of truth, [which is] exceedingly [so]"; that is, exceedingly true, to the highest degree {e};

for I have hoped in thy judgments; or, "have waited for thy judgments" {f}: either the judgments of God upon sinners, especially on apostates, which he knew would be very sore and severe, their last estate being worse than the first; or rather the last judgment, when those that confess Christ and his truths shall be confessed by him; and those that deny him and his Gospel will be denied by him: though it may be best of all to understand it of the word of God, and the doctrines of it, which the psalmist had an exceeding great regard unto, hoped, waited, and even longed for; see Ps 119:20.

{e} So Gussetius Ebr. Comment. p. 452. dam de tma rbd "verbum veritatis usque valde", Pagninus, Montanus; so Musculus, Junius & Tremellius. {f} ytlxy Kyjpvml "ad judicia tua expectavi", Pagninus, Montanus; "judicia tua expecto", Tigurine version, Musculus, Vatablus, Gejerus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 119:44

Ver. 44. So shall I keep thy law continually,.... Which denotes not the perfection of keeping the law, but the constancy of it: the psalmist was persuaded, that so long as he had the word of truth in his mouth, and the judgments of God in his view, he should be diligent and constant in the discharge of his duty, which these directed and encouraged him unto;

for ever and ever; in this life and that to come; when the law of God will be kept, and his will done perfectly by the saints, as it now is by the angels in heaven; or this may be connected with the law of God; which law is for ever and ever, being of eternal duration and obligation. The whole may be understood of the law of faith, or doctrine of the Gospel, and be rendered, "so shall I observe thy doctrine continually"; contained in the word of truth; which doctrine is for ever and ever, it is the everlasting Gospel.

Psalms 119:45

Ver. 45. And I will walk at liberty,.... Not in licentious way, but in Gospel liberty, under the influence of the free spirit; where is liberty, in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty. Or, "I will walk at large" {g}; or, "in a broad way", as Aben Ezra and Kimchi supply it: not in the broad road that leads to destruction, but in the law of God, which is exceeding broad, Ps 119:96; as the Targum,

"in the breadth of the law."

So a man walks when he walks in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord: and who also may be said to walk at large when delivered out of straits and difficulties; when he is brought into a large place, and his steps are enlarged under him; and having his heart enlarged with the love of God, and fear of him, and with spiritual joy, and having every grace in exercise, he not only walks in, but runs the way of God's commandments; see Ps 119:32; and See Gill on "Ps 118:5";

for I seek thy precepts; out of love and affection to them, to know more of them, the mind and will of God in them, and to practise them.

{g} hbxrb "in latitudine", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c.

Psalms 119:46

Ver. 46. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings,.... As very likely he did before Saul and his courtiers, before the king of Achish and the princes of the Philistines, when as yet he was not a king himself; and when he was come to the throne, such kings as came to visit him, instead of talking with them about affairs of state, he spoke of the Scriptures, and of the excellent things they bear witness of; and such a practice he determined to pursue and continue in;

and will not be ashamed; of the testimonies of God, and of the truths contained in them; and of speaking of them and for them; or of being reproached and vilified on that account. So the Apostle Paul was a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ before kings; nor was he ashamed to speak of him and of his Gospel before Nero the Roman emperor, Agrippa king of the Jews, and before Felix and Festus, Roman governors; nor ashamed of the reproaches and afflictions he endured on that account.

Psalms 119:47

Ver. 47. And I will delight myself in thy commandments,.... In perusing and practising them;

which I have loved; a good man loves the law of God, and the commandments of Christ, and delights in them after the inward man.

Psalms 119:48

Ver. 48. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved,.... Showing by such a gesture his great esteem of them, and affection for them; stretching out his hands, and embracing them with both arms, as it were: and this being a praying gesture, **2Ti 2:8**, may signify his earnest desire and request that he might have grace and spiritual strength to enable him to observe them; and it being used in swearing, Ge 14:22, may express his firm resolution in the strength of divine grace to keep them; and the phrase signifying a doing or an attempt to do anything, Ge 41:44, may denote his practical observance of the commands, his putting his hand to do them with all his might;

and I will meditate in thy statutes; and thereby get a better understanding of them, and be in a better disposition and capacity to keep them.

Psalms 119:49

z, ZAIN.--The Seventh Part.

Ver. 49. ZAIN. Remember the word unto thy servant,.... The word of promise made unto him, concerning establishing his house and kingdom for ever; which he desires God would show himself mindful of in fulfilling it, and renew and confirm his faith in it, and give him some fresh assurance of the performance of it, **2Sa 7:16**. Not that God ever forgets his promise, or is unmindful of his word; but so it seems when he delays the accomplishment of it; and when unbelief prevails and doubts arise, and faith is not in lively exercise; and he has not so clear a view of the promise, and comfortable assurance of its being performed;

upon which thou hast caused me to hope; which, when first made, he received in faith, and hoped and waited for the accomplishment of. A word of promise is a good ground of hope, let it be on what account it will; whether it relates to interest in God, as a covenant God and Father; or to pardon of sin; or to salvation by Christ; or to fresh supplies of grace and strength from him; or to eternal life through him: and the hope which is exercised on the promise is not of a man's self; it is the gift of God, a good hope through grace; which the Lord, by his Spirit and power, produces, and causes to abound in, or to exercise in a comfortable manner.

Psalms 119:50

Ver. 50. This [is] my comfort in my affliction,.... David had his afflictions, and so has every good man; none are without; it is the will and pleasure of God that so it should be; and many are their afflictions, inward and outward: the word of God is often their comfort under them, the written word, heard or read; and especially a word of promise, powerfully applied: this is putting underneath everlasting arms, and making their bed in sickness. This either respects what goes before, concerning the word of promise hoped in, or what

follows:

for thy word hath quickened me; not only had been the means of quickening him when dead in am, as it often is the means of quickening dead sinners, being the savour of life unto life; but of reviving his drooping spirits, when in affliction and distress; and of quickening the graces of the Spirit of God in him, and him to the exercise of them, when they seemed ready to die; and to the fervent and diligent discharge of duty, when listless and backward to it.

Psalms 119:51

Ver. 51. The proud have had me greatly in derision,.... Profane sinners, proud and haughty scorners, that make a jest of religion, and scoff at everything serious and good: these derided the psalmist for his piety and religion, his principles and practices; in which he was a type of Christ, who was both the song of the drunkards, and was derided by the proud and haughty Scribes and Pharisees; as all self-righteous persons are, they who trust in themselves, and despise others,
Ps 69:11;

[yet] have I not declined from thy law; from walking according to it, as a rule of life and conversation; from professing and maintaining the doctrine of the word, the truths of the Gospel, he had knowledge and experience of; and from going on in the ways of God and true religion he was directed in; and this testimony the Lord himself gave of him,
1Ki 14:8 see Ps 44:19.

Psalms 119:52

Ver. 52. I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord,.... Either the judgments of God executed on wicked men; as the bringing a flood on the world of the ungodly; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah; the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea; the cutting off of the Canaanites, and dispossessing them of their land: or the providential dispensations of God towards his own people; who sometimes chastises and corrects them, and brings them very low, and then raises them up again, as in the case of Job. These things the psalmist called to remembrance, and revolved them in his mind, which gave him pleasure and comfort:

and have comforted myself; with such thoughts as these, that that God, who had cast down the mighty from their seats, and had scattered the proud in the imaginations of their hearts, and destroyed them, could easily rebuke the proud that had him in derision; and he that had shown himself so good and gracious to his people, when brought low, could raise him out of his afflictions and distresses.

Psalms 119:53

Ver. 53. Horror hath taken hold upon me,.... Trembling, sorrow, and distress, to a great degree, like a storm, or a blustering, scorching, burning wind, as the word {h} signifies, which is very terrible;

because of the wicked that forsake thy law: not only transgress the law of the Lord, as every man does, more or less; but wilfully and obstinately despise it, and cast it behind their backs, and live in a continued course of disobedience to it; or who apostatize from the doctrine of the word of God; wilfully deny the truth, after they have had a speculative knowledge of it, whose punishment is very grievous,
Heb 10:26; and now partly on account of the daring impiety of wicked men, who stretch out their hands against God, and strengthen themselves against the Almighty, and run upon him, even on the thick bosses of his bucklers; because of the shocking nature of their sins, the sad examples thereby set to others, the detriment they are of to themselves, and dishonour they bring to God; and partly because of the dreadful punishment that shall be inflicted on them here, and especially hereafter, when a horrible tempest of wrath will come upon them. Hence such trembling seized the psalmist; and often so it is, that good men tremble more for the wicked than they do for themselves; see Ps 119:120.

{h} hpelz "procella", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt; "horror tanquam procella", Cocceius.

Psalms 119:54

Ver. 54. Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. Meaning either his unsettled state, fleeing from place to place before Saul; or, literally, his house of cedar, his court and palace, which he considered no other than as an inn he had put into upon his travels homeward; or rather the earthly house of his tabernacle, in which, as long as he continued, he was but a pilgrim and stranger; or, best of all, the whole course of his life; which Jacob calls the days of the years of his pilgrimage, Ge 47:9; so Hipparchus the Pythagorean {i} calls this life a sort of a pilgrimage; and Plato also. This world is not the saints house and home; this is not their rest and residence; they confess themselves pilgrims and strangers here; and that they belong to another city, and a better country, an heavenly one, which they are seeking and travelling to, Heb 11:13. And as travellers sing songs to themselves as they pass on, which makes the way the more easy and pleasant to them, so the psalmist had his songs which he sung in his pilgrimage state; and these were the statutes, or word of the Lord, and the things in it, which were as delightful to him as the songs of travellers to them. Or the songs he made and sung were composed out of the word of God; and which may serve to recommend the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, made by him, the sweet psalmist of Israel, to the Gospel churches, to be sung by them, **Eph 5:19**.

{i} De Anim. Tranquill. inter Fragm. Pythagor. p. 11. Ed. Gale.

Psalms 119:55

Ver. 55. I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night,.... In the night of distress and affliction, as Jarchi; or rather literally, in the night season, when on his bed and awake: while others were asleep, he revolved in his mind the greatness of the divine Being; the perfections of his nature; his wonderful works of creation, providence, and grace; his word and ordinances, by which he was made known unto the sons of men; and these he called to mind and meditated upon in the night watches, to encourage his faith and hope in the Lord, and draw out his love and affection to him;

and have kept thy law: though imperfectly, yet spiritually, sincerely, heartily, and from a principle of love and gratitude, and with a view to the glory of God, and without mercenary and sinister ends.

Psalms 119:56

Ver. 56. This I had, because I kept thy precepts. Either the comfort he had from the word, the pleasure and delight he had in it, being his songs in his pilgrimage, Ps 119:50; see Ps 119:165; or this knowledge of the name of God, and the remembrance of it, and his carefulness and diligence in it in the night season, were of the Lord, and gifts of his: or rather this he had from the Lord, that he kept the precepts and commands of God in the manner that he did; it was all owing to grace and strength received from him; for so the words may be rendered, "this was [given] unto me, that I have kept thy precepts" {k}.

{k} yk "quod", Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 119:57

x, CHETH.--The Eighth Part.

Ver. 57. CHETH. [Thou art] my portion, O Lord,.... Which he chose and preferred to all others; to the riches, honours, and profits of this world; the grant of which was made to him in the covenant of grace; the first discovery of it was from the Lord himself; and the choice and claim were made under the influence of his grace; and a great act of faith it is to assert this, and a wonderful blessing to enjoy it. This is a large portion indeed, immense and inconceivable, soul satisfying, safe, and for ever! see Ps 73:26;

I have said that I would keep thy words; keep his commandments, lay up his promises, observe his doctrines, profess and retain them; this he determined within himself to do, under a sense of the love of God to him, in being his portion and inheritance. Some render the words, in connection with the former, thus, "my portion, O Lord, I said, [is]", or "[shall be], to keep thy words" {l}; it is the part and portion of some to preach the word, and of others to hear it; and of all to keep or observe it, its precepts, promises, and truths. Aben Ezra gives the sense of them thus,

"This I said to many, perhaps they will keep thy words;"

namely, that the Lord was his portion, which he thought might induce them to an observance of them, as he had done.

{l} So Montanus, Piscator.

Psalms 119:58

Ver. 58. I entreated thy favour with [my] whole heart,.... Or, "thy face" {m}; to see it; or thy presence, to enjoy it; to have communion with God, and the light of his countenance; than which nothing is more desirable and delightful to a gracious man: as also to be remembered with the special favour of God, in which is life; to have his love shed abroad in the heart; to have large views of interest in it, and to be rooted and grounded therein; and this the psalmist entreated, not in an hypocritical manner, but with all sincerity, heartiness, and affection, having tasted that the Lord was gracious. Or, "made thy face sick" {n}; wearied him with supplications, gave him no rest until he obtained his request;

be merciful unto me, according to thy word: have compassion on me; sympathize with me in all my troubles; grant me fresh supplies of grace; and particularly show and apply thy pardoning grace and mercy to me, according to thy word of promise in the covenant of grace, in which provision is made for forgiveness of sins; see Ps 51:1; Aben Ezra and Kimchi think reference is had to Ex 33:19, but rather it is to
2Sa 12:13.

{m} Kynp "tuam faciem", Pagninus; "tuae facies", Montanus. {n} ytylx "tuum velut fatigavi vultum", Gejerus. So Horace, Carmin. l. 1. Ode. 2. v. 26. "prece qua fatigent virgines".

Psalms 119:59

Ver. 59. I thought on my ways,.... What they were, whether right or wrong; whither they led, what would be the consequences of walking in them: the Septuagint and Arabic versions read, "thy ways"; no doubt the psalmist thought of both; of his own ways, in which he had walked; and of God's ways, which he directed him to walk in: and, considering the superior pleasure and profit of the latter, he preferred them to the former. The Targum is, "I thought to mend my ways", or "make [them] good". Hence he took the following step:

and turned my feet unto thy testimonies; betook himself to the word of God, which testifies of his will, and directs to those ways he would have his people to walk in; and he steered his course of life and actions thereby; he turned from his own ways into the ways of God; under the influence of divine grace, he turned, being turned.

Psalms 119:60

Ver. 60. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments. As soon as he was sensible of his duty, he immediately complied with it; he consulted not with flesh and blood, but at once yielded a cheerful obedience to the commands of God. Instances of evangelical obedience of this kind we have in the three thousand converts, in Saul, and in the jailer and his house, **Ac 2:41**.

Psalms 119:61

Ver. 61. The bands of the wicked have robbed me,.... Very probably Saul and his ministers seized on his effects, when he fled from him; and the Amalekites plundered him of all his substance, when they took Ziklag; and Absalom and the conspirators with him robbed him, when he was obliged, because of them, to flee from his palace and court, which they entered and took possession of. But Aben Ezra rejects this sense of the word, which Jarchi and Kimchi espouse, and we follow, and renders it, "took hold of me"; and so the Targum,

"the company of the wicked were gathered together against me:"

they surrounded him and put him into fear, great numbers of them encompassing him about; see Ps 18:4;

[but] I have not forgotten thy law; this was written in his heart; he kept it in his memory, and retained an affection for it; and could not be deterred from obedience to it by the numbers and violence of wicked men, who hated and persecuted him for his attachment to it.

Psalms 119:62

Ver. 62. At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee,.... Not only send up an ejaculatory thanksgiving upon his bed, but rise up from it and shake off his sleep, and in a set, serious, solemn manner, praise the Lord. This shows a great regard to him, and affection to this work, since it is with difficulty men prevail upon themselves to rise at midnight upon any occasion; at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sung praises to God, Ac 16:25;

because of thy righteous judgments; upon the wicked, as Aben Ezra; the hands and troops of them that encompassed him about, and robbed him; but God avenged him of them, and for this he gave thanks, or for such like things. Sometimes the judgments of God have been executed at midnight; as the destruction of the firstborn in Egypt, and of Pharaoh and his host in the Red

sea, when Israel sang his praise,
Ex 12:29; and for the judgments of God upon antichrist the church will rejoice and give thanks, Re 18:20. Or rather by these may be meant the word of God, the precepts and ordinances of it, which are all just and good; such is the law of God, and such are the ordinances of Christ, Ps 19:9.

Psalms 119:63

Ver. 63. I [am] a companion of all [them] that fear thee,.... Not of the rich and mighty, much less of the wicked and ungodly; but of such who had the true fear of God upon their hearts, and before their eyes; who feared the Lord and his goodness, and truly served and worshipped him; even "all" of these, whether poor or rich, of whatsoever condition, or of whatsoever nation, being no respecter of persons. With these he was a partner in the blessings of the covenant, in the promises of it, in the graces of the Spirit, and in a right and meetness for the same eternal glory and happiness: he went in company with them to the house of God, and joined with them in all acts of religious worship; he conversed privately with them about what God had done for the souls of him and them; he delighted in their company; he sympathized with them in their troubles; and was a companion with them in their tribulation, sorrows, and sufferings, as well as in their joys and comforts;

and of them that keep thy precepts; as all such do who truly fear the Lord; for by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil, and cannot do those things that others do; cannot allow themselves in a wilful transgression of the divine precepts; but, influenced by the fear of God, observe and keep them.

Psalms 119:64

Ver. 64. The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy,.... "Goodness" or "grace" {o}; both of the providential mercy and goodness of God, which extends to all his creatures; and of his special grace and goodness to his own people, held forth in his word and ordinances; see Ps 33:5;

teach me thy statutes: as an instance of mercy, grace, and goodness; see Ps 119:12.

{o} Kdox "gratia tua", Cocceius, Gejerus.

Psalms 119:65

j, TETH.--The Ninth Part.

Ver. 65. TETH. Thou hast dealt well with thy servant,.... In a providential way, ever since he had a being; by the protection and preservation of him, by following and loading him with benefits, by raising him from a low estate to the throne of Israel, by delivering him from many dangers and enemies, and by giving him rest from them all; and in a way of special grace and mercy, by making an everlasting covenant with him, by blessing him with all spiritual blessings, by giving him an interest in salvation by Christ, and hope of eternal glory. And thus he deals with all his servants; he does all things well by them; he deals well with them even when he afflicts them; he treats them as his Davids, his beloved and chosen ones, and his children. The Syriac version renders it as a petition, "do good with thy servant"; bestow benefits on him, or deal bountifully with him, as in Ps 119:17;

O Lord, according unto thy word; thy word of promise: providential mercies are according to promise, for godliness or goodly persons have the promise of the things of this life; and so are spiritual blessings, they are laid up in exceeding great and precious promises, which are yea and amen in Christ; and so is eternal glory and happiness; it is a promise which God, that cannot lie, made before the world began; so that there is a solid foundation laid for faith and hope as to these things; and this confirms and commends the faithfulness of God to his people.

Psalms 119:66

Ver. 66. Teach me good judgment and knowledge,.... Or, "a good taste" {p}: of the Lord himself, how good and gracious he is; of his grace and love, which is better than wine; of his word and the truths of it, which are sweeter to a spiritual taste than honey or the honeycomb; and of the things of the Spirit of God, which are seventy to a spiritual man, a distinguishing taste of things; for as "the taste discerns perverse things" in food, so a man of a spiritual taste distinguishes good from evil, truth from error; discerns things that differ, and approves of those that are most excellent, and abides by them. Or, "a good sense" {q}, as it may be rendered; a good sense of the Scriptures, the true and right sense of them; and to have the mind of God and of Christ, and of the Spirit of Christ, in the word; and to have distinguishing light in it, and a well established judgment in the truths of it, is very desirable: as is also a spiritual and experimental "knowledge" of them, a growing and increasing one; a knowledge of God in Christ, and of his will; a knowledge of Christ, his person and offices, and the mysteries of his grace; which a truly gracious and humble soul desires to be taught, and is taught of God more or less;

for I have believed thy commandments; the whole word of God, and all that is said in it; that it is of God, is the word of God and not the word of man; and therefore he was desirous of being taught the true meaning of it, and to be experimentally acquainted with it; the word of God is called his commandment, Ps 19:7. Or the precepts of the word; he believed these were the commandments of God, and not of men; delivered out by him, and enforced by his authority; and therefore he gave credit to them, and loved them, and desired better to understand and do them: or the promises and threatenings annexed to them, which he believed would be punctually fulfilled upon the doers or transgressors of them; and as for himself, he cheerfully yielded the obedience of faith unto them.

{p} Mej bwj "bonitatem gustus", Piscator, Michaelis. {q} "Bonitatem sensus", Montanus; i.e. "sensum bonum", Gejerus.

Psalms 119:67

Ver. 67. Before I was afflicted, I went astray,.... From God; from his word, his ways and worship; like a lost sheep from the shepherd, the fold, the flock, and the footsteps of it; see Ps 119:176; Not that he wilfully, wickedly, maliciously, and through contempt, departed from his God; this he denies, Ps 18:21; but through the weakness of the flesh, the prevalence of corruption, and force of temptation, and very much through a careless, heedless, and negligent frame of spirit, he got out of the right way, and wandered from it before he was well aware. The word is used of erring through ignorance, **Le 5:18**; this was in a time of prosperity, when, though he might not, like Jeshurun, wax fat and kick, and forsake and lightly esteem the Rock of his salvation; or fall into temptations and harmful lusts, and err from the faith, and be pierced with many sorrows, as too much love of the world brings men into; yet he might become inattentive to the duties of religion, and be negligent of them, which is a common case;

but now have I kept thy word: having been afflicted with outward and inward afflictions, afflictions of body and mind; afflictions in person, in family and estate; afflictions in soul, through indwelling sin, the temptations of Satan, and the hidings of God's face: all this brought him back again to God, to his word, ways, and worship; he betook himself to reading and hearing the word, if he might find any thing to relieve and comfort him under his trials; he observed the doctrines of grace in it, and kept the precepts of it, and walked in all the commandments and ordinances of it, being restored by afflictions.

Psalms 119:68

Ver. 68. Thou [art] good, and doest good,.... Essentially, originally, and only good, and the fountain of all goodness to his creatures; who does good to all men in a providential way, and especially to his own people; to whom he is good in a way of special grace and mercy, in and through his Son Jesus Christ; and even he is good to them, and does good to them, when he afflicts them; he makes their afflictions work for their good, either temporal, spiritual, or eternal;

teach me thy statutes; as a fresh instance of goodness; this had been often desired, being what lay much on his mind, and was of moment and importance; see Ps 119:12.

Psalms 119:69

Ver. 69. The proud have forged a lie against me,.... Or, "sewed a lie to him" {r}; fastened a lie upon him, or sewed and added one lie to another. Either with respect to politics, as the proud and haughty courtiers of Saul, who represented David to him as a traitor, that had treasonable designs against him to take away his life, and seize his crown and kingdom, 1Sa 24:9; or with respect to religion; so some proud scornful men, that derided him for his piety, and scoffed at his seriousness, gave out that it was all grimace and hypocrisy; raised calumnies upon him, and laid things to his charge he knew nothing of; and which were all lies, forged out of their own brains, and artfully and purposely put together to blacken his character, and lessen his esteem among men: and it is no unusual thing for wicked men to speak all manner of evil falsely against the people of God;

[but] I will keep thy precepts with [my] whole heart; observe the commands of God sincerely, heartily, and affectionately, and not in show and appearance only; and so make it evident that it was a lie that was forged against him; and

this is the best way of answering such liars and defamers; see **1Pe 3:16**.

{r} wlpj "consuerunt", Tigurine version; "assuerunt", Muis.

Psalms 119:70

Ver. 70. Their heart is as fat as grease,.... Or tallow, a lump of it, fat or grease congealed. That is, the heart of the above proud persons, who abounded in riches, were glutted with the things of this world; had more than heart could wish, and so became proud and haughty: or their hearts were gross, sottish, senseless, and stupid, as persons fat at heart are; or as creatures over fat, which have little or no feeling: so these had no knowledge of the law of God, no sense of their duty, no remorse of conscience for sin; their hearts were hardened, and they past feeling, and given up to a reprobate mind; see **Isa 6:9**; The Targum is,

"the imagination of their heart is become gross as fat:"

the Septuagint is, "curdled like milk"; that is, hardened, as Suidas {s} interprets it;

[but] I delight in thy law; after the inward man; as the apostle did, **Ro 7:22**; as fulfilled in Christ; as in his hands, as King and Lawgiver; as written upon his own heart; and so yielding a ready and cheerful obedience to it; he delighted in reading the law, in meditating on it, and in observing it.

{s} In voce eturwyh.

Psalms 119:71

Ver. 71. [It is] good for me that I have been afflicted,.... The good and profit of which he had observed before; See Gill on "Ps 119:67". The following end being also answered thereby,

that I might learn thy statutes; to understand them, and to keep them. Afflictions are sometimes as a school to the people of God, in which they learn much both of their duty and of their privileges; and when they are teaching and instructive, they are for good; see Ps 94:12.

Psalms 119:72

Ver. 72. The law of thy mouth [is] better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. The word of God, the doctrines contained in it; which, coming out of the mouth of God, and spoken by him, carries in it weight and authority, commands reverence and respect; and ought to be considered as indeed the word of God and not of man; and so of more value than thousands of pieces of gold and silver; or, as the Targum, than a thousand talents of gold and silver. The truths and doctrines of the word of God are not only comparable to gold and silver for their intrinsic worth and value; but are preferable to them, and to be received before them: David had his thousands of gold and silver, but he esteemed the word of God above them all; and willingly suffered afflictions, that he might understand it better; see Ps 119:127.

Psalms 119:73

y, JOD.--The Tenth Part.

Ver. 73. JOD. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me,.... Not the psalmist himself, nor his parents, but the Lord alone: for though parents are fathers of our flesh, they are but instruments in the hand of the Lord; though man is produced by natural generation, yet the formation and fashioning of men are as much owing to the power and wisdom of God, which are his hands, as the formation of Adam was. Job owns this in much the same words as the psalmist does, Job 10:8; see
Ps 139:13. God not only gives conception, and forms the embryo in the womb, but fashions and gives it its comely and proportionate parts. Or, "covered me"; the first word may respect conception, and this the covering of the fetus with the secundine {t}; see Ps 139:13;

give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments; since he had a proper comely body, and a reasonable soul; though debased by sin, and brought into a state of ignorance, especially as to spiritual things, he desires he might have a spiritual understanding given him; of the word of God in general, the truths and doctrines of it, which are not understood by the natural man; and of the precepts of it in particular, that he might so learn them as to know the sense and meaning of them, their purity and spirituality; and so as to do them from a principle of love, in faith, and to the glory of God: for it is not a bare learning them by heart, or committing them to memory, nor a mere theory of them, but the practice of them in faith and love, which is here meant.

{t} Vid. Hackmam. Praecid. Sacr. p. 195.

Psalms 119:74

Ver. 74. They that fear thee will be glad when they see me,.... In outward prosperity, delivered from all troubles, set on the throne of Israel, and at rest from all enemies round about: and in spiritual prosperity, being illuminated by the Spirit of God, having a spiritual understanding of divine things, an obedience of faith to the commands of God, in the lively exercise of grace upon him, in comfortable frames of soul, and flourishing circumstances. Now they that fear the Lord, that have the grace of fear in their hearts, and are true worshippers of God, as they delight to meet together, and are glad to see one another; so they rejoice in each other's prosperity, especially spiritual; see Ps 34:1;

because I have hoped in thy Word; in Christ the essential Word, the hope of Israel; in the written word, which gives encouragement to hope; in the word of promise, on which he was caused to hope; and in which hope he was confirmed, and not disappointed, and so it made him not ashamed: and others rejoiced at it, because it was an encouragement to their faith and hope likewise.

Psalms 119:75

Ver. 75. I know, O Lord, that thy judgments [are] right,.... His word, the doctrines and precepts of it, they are all consistent with the holiness and righteousness of God; and so are his judgments on wicked men, they are righteous, just, and true: God is righteous in all his ways, there is no unrighteousness in any dispensation of his; and such are his corrections of his own people, and which seem to be chiefly intended here and are so called, because they are done in judgment, with moderation and gentleness, in wisdom, and to answer the best purposes; and they are all right, for the good and profit of the people of God, that they may be partakers of his holiness, and not be condemned with the world: this the psalmist knew by experience and owned and acknowledged;

and [that] thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me; in faithfulness to himself, his

covenant, and promise; that upon forsaking his law, and not walking in his statutes, he would visit sin with a rod, and transgressions with stripes, though he would not take away his lovingkindness; and in faithfulness to David, for his spiritual and eternal good, in great sincerity, heartily, cordially, with real affection and love: his rebukes were faithful; the chastisement was not above measure or desert, nor above strength to bear it; see
Ps 89:30.

Psalms 119:76

Ver. 76. Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort,.... Shown in the provision and promise of a Saviour; in the forgiveness of sins through him; a discovery and application of which yields comfort under afflictions;

according to thy word unto servant; a word of promise, in which he had assured him of his love, grace, mercy, and kindness; and that he would continue it to him, and comfort him with it: to make such a promise, and show such favour, was an instance of condescending grace to him, who was but his servant, and unworthy of his regard.

Psalms 119:77

Ver. 77. Let thy tender mercies come unto me,....
See Gill on "Ps 119:41";

that I may live; not merely corporeally; though corporeal life is a grant and favour, and the continuance of it; it is owing to the tender mercies of God that men are not consumed: but spiritually; the first principle of spiritual life is from the rich mercy and great love of God; his time of love is a time of life. Here it seems to design the lively exercise of grace, which is influenced, animated, and quickened by the love of God, as faith, hope, and love; or a living comfortably: without the love of God, and a view of it, saints look upon themselves as dead men, forgotten as they are, free among the dead, that are remembered no more; but in the favour of God is life; let but that be shown, let the tender mercies of God come in full flow into the soul, and it will be revived, and live comfortably; and such also shall live eternally, as the fruit and effect of the same love and favour;

for thy law [is] my delight; or "delights" {u}; what he exceedingly delighted in, after the inward man, and yet could not live by it, without the mercy, love, and grace of God; see Ps 119:24.

{u} yevev "deliciae meae", Montanus, Tigurine versions Cocceius; "oblectationes meae", Gejerus; so Michaelis.

Psalms 119:78

Ver. 78. Let the proud be ashamed,.... The same persons he before speaks of as accursed, who had him in derision, and forged a lie against him. Here he prays that they might be ashamed of their scoffs and jeers, of their lies and calumnies, the evils and injuries they had done him; that they might be brought to a sense of them, and repentance for them; when they would be ashamed of them in the best manner: or that they might be disappointed of their ends, in what they had done, and so be confounded and ashamed, as men are when they cannot gain their point; or be brought to shame and confusion eternally;

for they dealt perversely with me without a cause; or, "they perverted me [with] falsehood" {w}; that is, they endeavoured to pervert him with lies and falsehood, and lead him out of the right way; or they attempted, by their lies and calumnies, to make him out to be a perverse and wicked man, and pronounced and condemned him as such, without any foundation or just cause for it;

[but] I will meditate in thy precepts; he was determined, in the strength of grace, that those ill usages should not take off his thoughts from religious things, or divert him from his duty to his God: none of these things moved him; he still went on in the ways of God, in his worship and service, as Daniel did, when in like circumstances.

{w} ynwtwe rqv "mendacio me opprimere quaerunt", Tigurine version; "mendaciis", Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 119:79

Ver. 79. Let those that fear thee turn unto me,.... Whose companion he was fond of being, Ps 119:63; There were some good men, it seems, that turned from him, took the part of his enemies, and sided with them against him, which was matter of grief to him. Some think this refers to the affair of

Bathsheba; when some that feared the Lord, that had been familiar with him, did not choose to keep company with him, but abstained from his conversation, having so foully sinned, and brought forth dishonour to God and on his ways. Jarchi and Kimchi both make mention of this. Now this grieved David; and he desires of all things that they would turn to him again, and favour him with their company; who were the excellent in the earth, in whom was all his delight. The Targum is,

"turn to my doctrine;"

to hear it, receive it, profess it, and abide by it;

and those that have known thy testimonies; as such as fear the Lord do: they know them, and have a spiritual understanding of what they testify of; they know them, and love them, and delight in them; they know them, and own, acknowledge, and profess them; they know them, and keep, and observe them; and an excellent character this is.

Psalms 119:80

Ver. 80. Let my heart be found in thy statutes,.... Or "perfect", and sincere: he desires that he might have a sincere regard to the ways and worship, ordinances and commands, of God; that he might have a cordial affection for them, and observe them, not in show and appearance only, but heartily as to the Lord, and in reality and truth, like an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile;

that I be not ashamed; before men, conscious of guilt; or before God, at the throne of grace; where a believer sometimes is ashamed to come, not having had that regard to the statutes of the Lord he should have had, and that he might not be ashamed before him at the last day; but have confidence, having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and the true grace of God implanted in him; which engaged him to a regard to all his commandments.

Psalms 119:81

k, CAPH.--The Eleventh Part.

Ver. 81. CAPH. My soul fainteth for thy salvation, Either for temporal salvation and deliverance from enemies; which, being promised, was expected by him from the Lord; but not coming so soon as looked for, his spirits began to sink and faint: or for spiritual and eternal salvation, for a view of interest in it, for the joys and comforts of it, and for the full possession of is in heaven; and, particularly, for the promised Messiah, the author of it, often called the Salvation of God, because prepared and appointed by him to be the author of it: of him there was a promise, which gave the Old Testament saints reason to expect him, and for him they waited; his coming they earnestly wished for, but being long deferred, were sometimes out of heart, and ready to faint, which was here David's case;

[but] I hope in thy word; the word of promise concerning deliverance and salvation, especially by the Messiah, which supported him, and kept him from fainting; that being firm and sure, for ever settled in heaven, and has the oath of God annexed to it, for the confirmation of it; and God is faithful that has promised, and is also able to perform; so that his word lays a solid foundation for faith and hope.

Psalms 119:82

Ver. 82. Mine eyes fail for thy word,.... Either with looking for the Messiah, the essential Word, that was to be, and afterwards was made flesh, and dwelt among men; or for the fulfilment of the word of promise, on which he was made to hope; but that being deferred; and he believing in hope against hope, and looking out continually till it was accomplished, his eyes grew weary, and failed him, and he was just ready to give up all expectation of it; see Ps 77:8;

saying, when wilt thou comfort me? The people of God are sometimes very disconsolate, and need comforting, through the prevalence of sin, the power of Satan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, and a variety of afflictions; when they apply to God for comfort, who only can comfort them, and who has his set times to do it; but they are apt to think it long, and inquire, as David here, when it will be.

Psalms 119:83

Ver. 83. For I am become like a bottle in the smoke,.... Like a bottle made of the skins of beasts, as was usual in those times and countries: hence we read of old and new bottles, and of their rending, **Jud 9:13** **Mt 9:17**. Now such a bottle being hung up in a smoky chimney, would be dried and shrivelled up, and be good for nothing; so Jarchi's note is,

"like a bottle made of skin, which is dried in smoke;"

and the Targum is,

"like a bottle that hangs in smoke."

It denotes the uncomfortable condition the psalmist was in, or at least thought himself to be in; as to be in the midst of smoke is very uncomfortable, so was he, being in darkness, and under the hidings of God's face; black and sooty, like a bottle in smoke, with sin and afflictions; like an empty bottle, had nothing in him, as he was ready to fear; or was useless as such an one, and a vessel in which there was no pleasure; like a broken one, as he elsewhere says, despised and rejected of men. It may also have respect unto the form of his body, as well as the frame of his mind; be who before was ruddy, and of a beautiful countenance, now was worn out with cares and old age, was become pale and wrinkled, and like a skin bottle shrivelled in smoke;

[yet] do I not forget thy statutes; he still attended to the word, worship, ways and ordinances of the Lord; hoping in due time to meet with comfort there, in which he was greatly in the right.

Psalms 119:84

Ver. 84. How many [are] the days of thy servant?.... If this is to be understood of the days of his life, they were very few, as the days of every man be; and if of his days of joy and comfort, peace and prosperity, they were fewer still; but if of days of adversity and affliction, which seems to be the sense, they were many indeed;

when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me? good men have their persecutors; there is a judgment that will be executed on them, if not here, yet hereafter; it is a righteous thing with God to do it; it is often deferred when the saints, through zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his justice, as well as for their own deliverance and comfort, are at times somewhat impatient for it, and earnestly solicit it, as the psalmist here; see **Re 6:9**.

Psalms 119:85

Ver. 85. The proud have digged pits for me,.... Laid snares and temptations in his way, to draw him into sin, and so into mischief; they sought indeed to take away his life, and formed schemes for it. The allusion is to the digging of pits for the taking of wild beasts; which shows the ill opinion they had of David, and their ill usage of him; see **Ps 7:15**;

which [are] not after thy law; no, contrary to it; which forbids the digging of a pit, and leaving it uncovered, so that a neighbour's beast might fall into it, Ex 21:33; and if those might not be dug to the injury of beasts, then much less to the injury of men, to the hurt of the servants of the Lord, or to the shedding of innocent blood, which the law forbids.

Psalms 119:86

Ver. 86. All thy commandments [are] faithful,.... Or, "faithfulness" {x} they are made by a faithful God, who is holy, just, and true; they command faithfulness, sincerity, and uprightness; and require men to love their neighbours as themselves, and to do all they do faithfully, cordially, and affectionately; they are to be done in truth and faithfulness, in charity, out of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned; and therefore to dig pits for men must not be after, but contrary, to the law of God;

they persecute me wrongfully; without a cause, purely out of ill will and for religion's sake; which, as it is an argument with the saints to bear persecution patiently, it is used as an argument with the Lord, to arise and appear on the behalf of his persecuted ones, as follows:

help thou me; against my persecutors, and out of their hands: God is able to help his people; he has promised to do it; it may be expected from him; and he is a present help in time of trouble. This is a suitable petition in the mouths of God's people, and should be a prayer of faith.

{x} hnwma "fides", Tigurine version, Piscator; "veritas et fidelitas", Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 119:87

Ver. 87. They had almost consumed me upon earth,.... Almost destroyed his good name, wasted his substance, took away his crown and kingdom, and even his life; it was within a little of it, his soul had almost dwelt in silence; they had almost cast him down to the ground, and left him there. But all this was only on earth; they could not reach any thing that belonged to him in heaven; not his name, which was written there in the Lamb's book of life; nor his riches and inheritance there, the never fading crown of glory laid up for him there; or that eternal life, which is hid with Christ in God for him;

but I forsook not thy precepts; did not decline the service and worship of God, nor neglect his word and ordinances, though thus persecuted, and all these things came upon him for the sake of religion; see
Ps 44:17.

Psalms 119:88

Ver. 88. Quicken me after thy lovingkindness,.... According to it, and with it; let me have some discoveries of it, and of interest in it; and that will quicken me, revive and comfort me, under all the reproaches, ill usage, and persecutions of men. The love of God shed abroad in the heart comforts and supports under all sorts of afflictions; it quickens the graces of the Spirit, and brings them forth into lively exercise, as faith, hope, and love; and to a diligent and fervent discharge of every duty: it constrains to love the Lord, and live to him, to his glory, in obedience to his will;

so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth; the word of God, which comes out of his mouth, testifies of him, and of his mind and will; and which is to be received and observed, as being greater than the testimony of men, **1Jo 5:9**.

Psalms 119:89

l, LAMED.--The Twelfth Part.

Ver. 89. LAMED. For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. The Syriac version makes two propositions of these words, rendering them thus, "for ever thou art, O Lord; and thy word stands", or "is firm in heaven": and which agrees with the accents: the first of which is expressive of the eternity and immutability of God; and the other of the stability of his word: it is true of the essential Word of God, who was with God from all eternity; in time came down from heaven indeed to earth, and did his work, and then went to heaven again; where he is and will remain, until the times of the restitution of all things. The decrees and purposes of God, what he has said in his heart that he will do, these are firm and sure; these counsels of old are faithfulness and truth; they are mountains of brass settled for ever, and more unalterable than the decrees of the Medes and Persians. The revealed will of God, his word of command, made known to angels in heaven, is regarded, hearkened to, and done by them: the word of the Gospel, published in the church, which is sometimes called heaven, is the everlasting Gospel, the word of God, which lives and abides for ever; what remains and will remain, in spite of all the opposition of men and devils. The word of promise in the covenant made in heaven is sure to all the seed; everyone of the promises is yea and amen in Christ, and as stable as the heavens, and more so; "heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away", Mt 24:35; The firmness of God's word is seen in the upholding and continuing the heavens by the word of his power, by which they were first made; and the certainty of the divine promises is illustrated by the perpetuity of the ordinances of heaven; see Jer 31:35.

Psalms 119:90

Ver. 90. Thy faithfulness [is] unto all generations,.... Or "to generation and generation" {y}; to his people in every age, fulfilling his word, supplying their wants, giving them new mercies every morning and every day; never leaving and forsaking them, according to his promise: his faithfulness never fails, it endures for ever, and is exceeding great and large indeed; see **La 3:23**;

thou hast established the earth, and it abideth: laid the foundation of it so firm and sure, that it cannot be removed: and though one generation has passed after another, the earth abides where it was, and will do for ever; and as firm and stable, and never failing, is the faithfulness of God, which this is designed to illustrate. So some supply it, "as thou hast established the earth", &c. {z}; see
Ps 24:2.

{y} rdw rdl "in generationem et generationem", Gejerus; "in aetatem et aetatem", Cocceius. {z} "Quemadmodum vel sicut fundasti", Gejerus.

Psalms 119:91

Ver. 91. They continue this day according to thine ordinances,.... That is, the heavens and the earth do, before mentioned, just as they were from the beginning of the creation. The heavenly bodies have the same motion, magnitude, distance, and influence; the sun rises and sets as it did; the moon keeps her appointed seasons of full and change, of increase and decrease; the fixed stars retain their place, and the planets have their exact revolutions: and on earth things are as they were; seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night; thus they are at this day, and will continue, according to the wise order and appointment of God. Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it,

"they stand or continue unto this day to do the will of God; to execute his judgments and decrees, or observe his order and ordinances."

for all [are] thy servants; or "they", or "these all" {a}; the heavens and earth, and all that is in them, all the works of God; he called them into being, and they rose up at his command; he calls them to service, and they stand up as obedient ones to do his will; he "commandeth the sun, and it riseth not" before its time; and "he sealeth up the stars", that they shine not when he pleases; once he commanded the sun to stand still on Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, and they obeyed him; see Isa 48:13. Hence it appears that the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, ought not to be served and worshipped; but the Lord, the Maker of them, only, since they are his servants; and that men ought surely to serve the Lord, if these do, and especially such who are his chosen, redeemed, and called ones.

{a} lkh "illa omnia", Junius & Tremellius; "universa haec", Gejerus.

Psalms 119:92

Ver. 92. Unless thy law [had been] my delights,.... Not the law of works, the voice of words, which they that heard entreated they might hear no more; which is terrible, and works wrath in the conscience; is a cursing and damning law to the transgressors of it; and so not delightful, unless as considered in the hands of Christ, the fulfilling end of it: but the law of faith, the doctrine of faith, or of justification by the righteousness of Christ, received by faith, which yields peace, joy, and comfort, even in tribulation: or the whole doctrine of the Gospel, the law of the Messiah, the isles waited for; the doctrine of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by Christ, which is exceeding delightful to sensible sinners;

I should then have perished in mine affliction; referring to some particular time of affliction he was pressed with, either through the persecution of Saul, or the conspiracy of Absalom which was very great and heavy upon him, so that he almost despaired of deliverance from it; and must have perished, not eternally, but as to his comforts: his heart would have fainted in him, and he would have sunk under the weight of the affliction, had it not been for the relief he had from the word of God, the doctrines and promises of it; he was like one in a storm, tossed with tempests, one wave after another beat upon him, and rolled over him, when he thought himself just perishing; and must have given all over for lost, had it not been for the delight and pleasure he found in reading and meditating on the sacred writings.

Psalms 119:93

Ver. 93. I will never forget thy precepts,.... Not the precepts of the moral law, though he carefully observed and attended to them, laid them up in his mind, and did not forget to keep them; but the doctrines of the word, of the word which the Lord commanded to a thousand generations; these he endeavoured to remember, and not let them slip from him, since it follows:

for with them thou hast quickened me: not with the precepts of the moral law, which cannot give life, quicken a dead sinner, nor comfort a distressed saint it is the killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death: but the doctrines of the word, of the Gospel, which are spirit and life; the savour of life unto life, the means of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving drooping saints; of refreshing their spirits, and cheering their souls, when in distress: and when they are made thus useful, they are not easily forgotten, they leave impressions which do not soon wear off; and besides, saints are careful to remember such words and truths, which have been of use unto them, since they may have occasion for them again.

Psalms 119:94

Ver. 94. I [am] thine, save me,.... From all troubles and afflictions; from all enemies, temporal and spiritual; from Satan, and his principalities and powers, from sin, and all the wretched consequences of it; from hell wrath, and damnations: salvation from all which is by Christ. And this is a prayer of faith with respect to him, founded upon his interest and property in him; whose he was by choice, by covenant, by gift, by purchase, and by grace: and this is a plea for salvation; thou hast an interest in me, I am one of thine, therefore let me not be lost or perish;

for I have sought thy precepts; to understand them better, and observe them more constantly; and which sense of interest and relation, and of salvation, will influence unto.

Psalms 119:95

Ver. 95. The wicked have waited for me to destroy me,.... This is another reason why he desires the Lord would save him; because wicked men, such who feared not God, nor regarded men, sons of Belial; such as Saul's courtiers and the conspirators with Absalom were, had laid wait and were waiting an opportunity, and were hoping and expecting to have one, that they might take away his life; destroy him out of the world, as Kimchi; or eternally, as Aben Ezra thinks; by endeavouring to draw him out of the right ways of religion and godliness, into the ways of sin and wickedness, and so ruin him for ever;

[but] I will consider thy testimonies; the word of God, which testified of his power and providence, employed in the protection of his people, and so an encouragement to put trust and confidence in him; and of his mind and will, with respect to the way in which he should walk; and so making these his counsellors, as he did, Ps 119:24; and well weighing and considering in his mind what they dictated to him, he was preserved from the attempts of his enemies to destroy him, either temporally or spiritually.

Psalms 119:96

gVer. 96. I have seen an end of all perfection,.... An end, limit, or border, to every country, as the Syriac version; as there is to every kingdom and state, and to the whole world; but none to the commandment of God: or an end of all created beings, the finished works of God, the most perfect in their kind. Manythings had already fallen under the observation of the psalmist: he had seen men of the greatest strength, and of the most consummate wisdom, and that had attained to the highest degree of power and authority, of wealth and riches, and yet were all come to nothing; he had seen some of the most flourishing states and kingdoms brought to desolation; he had seen an entire end of them: he saw by the Spirit of God, and by the word of God, and faith in it, that all things would have an end, the heavens and earth, and all that is therein; for so it may be rendered, "I see an end of all perfection" {b}; or that the most perfect things will have an end, and that the end of them is at hand; see **1Pe 4:7**. Moreover, he had looked over the wisdom of this world, and the princes of it, which comes to nought; he had considered the several political schemes of government, the wisest digest and system of laws, made by the wisest lawgivers among men, and found them all to be limited, short and shallow, in comparison of the word of God, as follows: the Targum is,

"I have seen an end of all that I have studied in and looked into."

[but] thy commandment [is] exceeding broad; the word of God is a large field to walk and meditate in; it is sufficient to instruct all men in all ages, both with respect to doctrine and duty, and to make every man of God perfect; it has such a height and depth of doctrine and mysteries in it as can never be fully reached and fathomed, and such a breadth as is not to be measured: the fulness of the Scripture can never be exhausted; the promises of it reach to this life, and that which is to come; and the precepts of it are so large, that no works of righteousness done by men are adequate and proportionate to them; no righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ, is as large and as broad as those commandments; wherefore no perfection of righteousness is to be found in men, only in Christ; who is the perfect fulfilling end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes, Ro 10:4.

{b} ytyar Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius.

Psalms 119:97

m, MEM.--The Thirteenth Part.

Ver. 97. MEM. O how love I thy law!.... The whole word of God, the preceptive part of it; the commands of the moral law, which are holy, just, and good, and to be loved: but they are not loved by carnal men, whose minds are enmity to them, and therefore are not and cannot be subject to them, but despise and reject them; but to a good man, on whose heart they are written, they are delightful, and loved to admiration: though this is wholly owing to the grace of God; and marvellous it is that men so sadly depraved by sin should love the holy law of God; yet so it is, and David could appeal to God for the truth of it. So the ordinances of the Gospel, the commands of Jesus Christ, are not grievous to saints, but loved, valued, and esteemed by them; likewise the doctrinal part of the word, the truths of the Gospel, which may be more especially meant by the "thorah", or doctrine, here; which those who have had an experience of greatly love and justly value, because of the intrinsic worth of them, being comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; and for the profit and benefit of them to their souls, they being wholesome words, soul nourishing doctrines, and so more to them than their necessary food; and for the pleasure they have in them, these being sweeter to them than the honey or honeycomb: particularly the exceeding great and precious promises of the word, which are more to be rejoiced at than a great spoil; and even the whole Gospel part of the word, that containing the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life through Christ; yea, the whole Scripture, which is both profitable and pleasant to read in, and hear explained;

it [is] my meditation all the day; not only in the night, when at leisure, and free from the incumbrance of business; but in the day, and while engaged in the affairs of life, yea, all the day long; see **Ps 1:2**. Or, "it [is] my discourse" {c}; what he talked of, as well as what he thought on. Good men cannot forbear speaking of this or the other passage of Scripture, which has been of use unto them: and this is a proof of affection for the word; for what men love, persons or things, they often think of, and frequently talk of; see **De 6:6**.

{c} ytxyv "de qua meus sermo est", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Piscator; "vel colloquium meum", Cocceius; so Michaelis.

Psalms 119:98

Ver. 98. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies,.... David had his enemies, as every good man has: and these are often cunning and crafty ones, at least in wickedness; many of them are wise and prudent as to natural things, wiser in worldly things and political matters than the children of light, and often lay deep schemes and take crafty counsel against the saints; and yet they, by attending to the word and commands of God, and being under his direction and counsel, counterwork the designs of their enemies, and overturn their schemes and measures, which are brought to confusion; honesty being in the issue the best policy. However, the people of God are wiser than they in the best things; in the affair of salvation; in things relating to a future state, and their happiness there; which wisdom they attain unto through the Word of God, which is written for their learning; through the Scriptures, which are able to make men wise to salvation: these are the means, and no more; for it is God that is the efficient cause, or makes the means effectual, to make them wise, and wiser than others; it is owing to his divine teachings, to his Spirit and grace. The words may be rendered, "it hath made me wiser in thy commandments than mine enemies" {d}; that is, the law; and so is another reason why it was so greatly loved by him: or, "thy commandments", that is, everyone of thy commandments, "have made me wiser", &c. {e}. Joseph Kimchi give, this as the sense,

"by mine enemies thou hast made me wise {f}; thou hast learned me thy commandments, so that I see they cannot remove thy law from my mouth;"

for they [are] ever with me; that is, the commandments of God, or his law, and the precepts of it; they were his privy counsellors, with whom on all occasions he consulted, and so became wiser than his enemies, and outwitted them: these were always near him, in his heart and in his mouth; he was ever thinking and speaking of them, and so did not forget the instructions they gave him; they were ever before his eyes, as the rule of his conduct.

{d} So Junius & Tremellius. {e} So Cocceius, Muis, Gejerus and the Targum.
{f} "Fas est et ab hoste doceri", Ovid.

Psalms 119:99

Ver. 99. I have more understanding than all my teachers,.... Such as had been or would have been his teachers, who were bad ones in religious matters; especially such might be the religious teachers in Saul's time, when David was a young man: as the priests, whose lips should keep knowledge, and deliver it to the people, were in the times of Malachi; and as the Scribes and Pharisees, who, sat in Moses's chair, were in Christ's time; and as those legal teachers were in the apostles' times, who would be teachers of the law, not knowing what they said, nor whereof they affirmed; such as these David exceeded in spiritual understanding. Or his good teachers are meant; and though in common it is true that "a disciple is not above his master", Mt 10:24; yet there are sometimes instances in which scholars exceed their teachers in knowledge and learning; and this is no reproach to a master to have such scholars: no doubt Apollos so improved in knowledge as to excel Aquila and Priscilla, of whom he learned much; as the Apostle Paul excelled Ananias; and so David excelled his teachers: and which is said by him, not in an ostentatious way of himself, nor in contempt of his teachers; but to commend the word of God, the source of his knowledge; and to magnify the grace of God, to whom he attributes all his wisdom, as in Ps 119:98. Kimchi interprets it, "of them all I have learned and received instruction; and from them I have understood the good way, and they have taught me;"

for thy testimonies [are] my meditation; what he learned of his teachers he compared with the word, the Scriptures, which testify of the mind and will of God; he searched into them, he meditated upon them, and considered whether what his instructors taught him were agreeable to them or and by this means he got more understanding than they had.

Psalms 119:100

Ver. 100. I understand more than the ancients,.... Than those that had lived in ages before him; having clearer light given him, and larger discoveries made unto him, concerning the Messiah, his person and offices particularly, as it was usual for the Lord to do; or than aged men in his own time: for though wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, may be reasonably supposed to be with ancient men; who have had a long experience of things, and have had time and opportunity of making their observations, and of laying up a stock of knowledge; and this may be expected from them, and they may be applied to for it; yet this is not always the case; a younger man, as David was, may be endued with more knowledge and understanding than such; so Elihu; see **Job 8:8**
Job 32:6. Or, "I have got understanding by the ancients"; so Kimchi; though the other sense seems preferable;

because I keep thy precepts; keep close to the word; attend to the reading of it, and meditation on it; keep it in mind and memory, and observe to do the commands of it; and by that means obtained a good understanding, even a better one than the ancients; especially than they that were without it, or did not carefully attend unto it; see
Ps 111:10.

Psalms 119:101

Ver. 101. I have refrained my feet from every evil way,.... Of error or immorality, forbidden and condemned by the word of God; every way that is evil in itself, or leads to evil, and in which evil men walk; and though there may be many snares and temptations to walk in such a way, yet a good man cannot allow himself to walk therein, as others do; he has not so learned the word of God; he is under the influence of divine grace, and withholds himself from it; he abstains from all appearance of evil, and lays a restraint, as upon his mouth and lips, so upon his feet, or guards his walk and conversation. This shows, that as David had an affection for the word of God, and made great proficiency in knowledge by it; so it had an influence on his life and conversation, and his knowledge appeared to be not merely speculative, but practical: his end, in laying such a restraint upon his feet, was not out of vain glory, and to gain popular applause nor through fear of losing his credit among men, nor of the wrath of God; but out of love to God, and to his word, as follows:

that I might keep thy word; such was his love to it, and his regard to the honour of it; considering whose word it was, and with whose authority it was clothed, and whose glory was concerned therein; that he was careful to walk according to it, and in the way that directed to, and shun every other way.

Psalms 119:102

Ver. 102. I have not departed from thy judgments,.... From the precepts of the word, from the ways and worship and ordinances of God; he had not wickedly and on purpose departed from them; whenever he did, it was through inadvertency, the weakness of the flesh, and strength of temptation; nor from the doctrines of the word, which he held fast, knowing of whom he had learned them, as follows:

for thou hast taught me; the nature, excellency, and use of these judgments; he had taught him, by his Spirit, experimentally to understand the doctrines of the word, and practically to observe the precepts of it; and this preserved him from an apostasy from either of them.

Psalms 119:103

Ver. 103. How sweet are thy words unto my taste!.... Who had a spiritual one; and could discern perverse things, and could taste how good and gracious the Lord is: and so his words were sweet unto him; the doctrines of grace, the truths of the Gospel, were delightful and pleasant to him; like unadulterated milk, desirable by him: like good wine, that goes down sweetly; like good food, that is exceeding palatable; or like honey, and even sweeter than that, as follows. And that words "may be tasted [and] eaten", is not only agreeable to Scripture language, Jer 15:16; but to classical writers {g};

[yea, sweeter] than honey to my mouth; not only had they the nourishing nature and the refreshing virtue of honey, but the sweetness of it; yea, exceeded it in sweetness; see Ps 19:10.

{g} "Mea dicta devorato", Plauti Asinaria, Act. 3. Sc. 3. v. 59. "Edi sermonem tuum", ib. Aulularia, Act. 3. Sc. 6. v. 1. "Gustare ego ejus sermonem volo", ib. Mostellaria, Act. 5. Sc. 1. v. 15.

Psalms 119:104

Ver. 104. Through thy precepts I get understanding,.... Of the will of God; of his worship, the nature and manner of it; of his ordinances, their use and importance; and of his doctrines, and the excellency of them;

therefore I hate every false way; of worship; all superstition and will worship, the commandments and inventions of men, and every false doctrine; all lies in hypocrisy, for no lie is of the truth; every thing that is contrary to the word of God, and is not according to truth and godliness. The Targum is,

"I hate every lying man."

Psalms 119:105

n, NUN.--The Fourteenth Part.

Ver. 105. NUN. Thy word [is] a lamp unto my feet,.... The same Solomon says of the law and commandment, the preceptive part of the word, **Pr 6:23**; and the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it "law" here. This shows a man what is his duty, both towards God and man; by it is the knowledge of sin: this informs what righteousness that is God requires of men; by the light of it a man sees his own deformity and infirmities, the imperfection of his obedience, and that he needs a better righteousness than his own to justify him in the sight of God; it is a rule of walk and conversation; it directs what to do, and how to walk. The Gospel part of the word is a great and glorious light; by which men come to have some knowledge of God in Christ, as a God gracious and merciful; of Christ, his person, offices, and grace; of righteousness, salvation, and eternal life by him; and it teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly. The whole Scripture is a light shining in a dark place; a lamp or torch to be carried in the hand of a believer, while he passes through this dark world; and is in the present state of imperfection, in which he sees things but darkly. This is the standard of faith and practice; by the light of this lamp the difference between true and false doctrine may be discerned; error and immorality may be reproved, and made manifest; the way of truth and godliness, in which a man should walk, is pointed out; and by means of it he may see and shun the stumbling blocks in his way, and escape falling into pits and ditches; it is a good light to walk and work by. The Targum is,

"thy word is as a light that shines to my feet."

It follows,

and a light unto my path; the same thing in other words. Now it should be observed, that the word of God is only so to a man whose eyes are opened and enlightened by the Spirit of God, which is usually done by means of the word; for a lamp, torch, candle, or any other light are of no use to a blind man.

Psalms 119:106

Ver. 106. I have sworn, and I will perform [it],.... Or, "I have performed it" {h}. The psalmist had not only taken up a resolution in his mind, but he had openly declared with his mouth, and professed in a solemn manner, that he would serve the Lord; he had sworn allegiance to him as his King, and, through divine grace, had hitherto kept it; and hoped he ever should, and determined through grace he ever would; see
Ps 119:48;

that I will keep thy righteous judgments; the precepts of the word, the ordinances of the Lord, the doctrines of grace; all which are righteous, and to be kept, observed, and held to; though they cannot be perfectly kept unless in Christ the surety.

{h} hmyqaw "et statui"; Musculus, Muis; "idque ratum feci et implevi", Michaelis.

Psalms 119:107

Ver. 107. I am afflicted very much,.... In a temporal sense, in his body, in his family, and by his enemies; in a spiritual sense, with the corruptions of his heart, with the temptations of Satan, and with the hidings of God's face; and what with one thing or another, he was pressed above measure, and his spirits sunk under the weight of the affliction, so that he was as a dead man; and therefore prays,

quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word;
See Gill on "Ps 119:25".

Psalms 119:108

Ver. 108. Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord,.... Not sacrifices out of his flocks and herds, such as were the voluntary and freewill offerings brought to the priests under the law, though there may be an allusion to them; nor out of his substance, such as David and his people willingly offered towards the building of the temple; but these are not the freewill offerings of his hands, but of his mouth; the spiritual sacrifices of prayer praise: prayer is an offering; see Ps 141:2; and it is a freewill offering, when a man is assisted by the free Spirit of God, and can pour out his soul freely to the Lord, in the exercise of faith and love. Praise is an offering more pleasing to God than an ox or bullock that has horns and hoofs, because it glorifies him; and it is a freewill offering when it is of a man's own accord, comes from his heart; when he calls upon his soul, and all within him, to bless the Lord: and as every good man is desirous of having his sacrifices accepted with the Lord, so they are accepted by him when offered up through Christ, **1Pe 2:5**;

and teach me thy judgments; for though he was wiser than his enemies, and had more understanding than his teachers, or than the ancients; yet needed to be instructed more and more, and was desirous of being taught of God. This petition, or what is similar to it, is often put up.

Psalms 119:109

Ver. 109. My soul [is] continually in my hand,.... In the utmost jeopardy, always exposed to danger, ever delivered unto death; killed all the day long, or liable to be so: this is the sense of the phrase; see Jud 12:3; for what is in a man's hands may easily fall, or be taken out of them: so the Targum,

"my soul is in danger upon the back of my hands continually;"

the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, "in thy hands"; but wrongly;

yet do I not forget thy law; it was written on his heart, and fixed in his mind; he had a true affection for it, and a hearty desire to keep it; and no danger could divert him from his duty; as Daniel, though he carried his life in his hand, yet continued to pray to his God as usual; nor could anything move the Apostle Paul from the doctrine of the Gospel, and preaching it.

Psalms 119:110

Ver. 110. The wicked have laid a snare for me,.... To draw him into sin, and so into mischief; and even to take away his life, as they are said to dig pits for him, Ps 119:85;

yet I erred not from thy precepts: not wilfully and wickedly, though through inadvertence and infirmity, as he often did, and every good man does; and indeed his errors are so many, that they cannot be understood and numbered. The sense is, he kept on in the way of his duty; did not desist from that, or wickedly depart from his God, and his worship, to escape the snares of bad men.

Psalms 119:111

Ver. 111. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever,.... The Scriptures, which testify of Christ and of his grace, and of the mind and will of God, are a portion of themselves; and a goodly heritage they are, better than thousands of gold and silver, preferable to all worldly inheritances; as they have been to many, who have forsaken all for Christ and his Gospel. These, like an inheritance, have been transmitted from father to son, from one age of the church to another, in successive generations; nor shall they depart from her, nor from her seed and seed's seed, from henceforth and for ever; they are an inheritance which will continue for ever, De 33:4. These David chose and took, as for his counsellors, so for his portion and inheritance; and a wise and good choice he made; he chose the good part that should never be taken away;

his reason for it follows:

for they are the rejoicing of my heart; the doctrines in them, the promises of them, when read or heard explained, gave him a sensible pleasure; revived his heart, and cheered his spirits, supported him under all his troubles, and caused him to go on his way rejoicing; see
Jer 15:16.

Psalms 119:112

Ver. 112. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway,.... He had prayed to God to incline his heart to them, Ps 119:36; and by the grace of God his heart was inclined to obedience to them; and nothing but that can incline the heart, which is naturally averse unto them: the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be, until it is made so by the grace of God, **Ro 8:7**; and by this the psalmist had prevailed upon his heart to keep the statutes of the Lord, and do them, and that continually; for a good man is desirous of being steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;

[even unto] the end; the end of life, as long as he lived. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin version render it, "for a recompence"; and the Arabic version, "for an eternal recompence"; but the Ethiopic version the reverse, "not for a recompence", or benefit: which latter is the truth, though neither of them a right version; for the statutes are to be kept, not for the sake of a recompence of reward, but from love to God, and; in duty to him, without any mercenary views; though the word does sometimes signify "a reward", and may be rendered here, "for ever [there is] a reward" {i}; as there is "in", though not "for", keeping the commands; see Ps 19:11.

{i} bqe Mlwel "in aeternum est retributio", Clarius.

Psalms 119:113

o, SAMECH.--The Fifteenth Part.

Ver. 113. SAMECH. I hate vain thoughts,.... Or thoughts: evil thoughts are undoubtedly meant, no other can be the object of hatred to a good man; they are such as are contrary to the law of God, and forbidden by it, mentioned in the next clause as the object of love, in opposition to these; and which are abominable to God, and defiling to men; should be forsaken, need pardon; and, if not pardoned, will be brought into judgment, and there exposed, and men punished for them. There are multitudes of these rise up in the minds of men, not only bad men, but good men; even sometimes atheistical blasphemous thoughts, as well as proud, haughty, revengeful, lustful, impure, and worldly ones; which, when observed by a good man, give him great concern and uneasiness, and raise a holy indignation in him against them. The word is used for the "opinions" of men; the ambiguous, doubtful, wavering, and inconstant sentiments of the mind, 1Ki 18:21, and is used of branches, or the tops of trees, waved with the wind to and fro: and may be applied to all heterodox opinions, human doctrines, damnable heresies; such as are inconsistent with the perfections of God, derogate from his grace, and from the person and offices of Christ; and are contrary to the word, and which are therefore rejected and abhorred by good men. The Targum is,

"I hate those who think vain thoughts;"

and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it of persons, thinkers, or devisers of evil things; and to this sense are the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and which is approved of by Gussetius {k}; even free thinkers, such as devise things out of their own brains, and regard not the law, doctrine, or word of God;

but thy law do I love; which forbids and condemns such vain and wicked thoughts, and requires pure and Holy Ones. Or, "thy doctrine"; which comes from God, is concerning him, and reveals his mind and will, his grace and love, to men; the doctrine of Christ, concerning his person, office, and work; the doctrine of the Scriptures, which contain the whole Gospel of Christ, as well as the law of God; the doctrine according to godliness, and which is good, sound, and wholesome, and to be received in the love of it.

{k} Ebr. Comment. p. 564.

Psalms 119:114

Ver. 114. Thou [art] my hiding place,.... From temporal calamities. The perfections of God are chambers of retreat and safety to his people, where they may hide themselves and be safe, till such calamities are over, Isa 26:20. And from spiritual evils; from avenging justice, from divine wrath, from the rage of Satan, and the fury of men, Isa 32:2; and from eternal death, and being hurt by it; the spiritual and eternal life of saints being hid with Christ in God, **Col 3:3**; see Ps 32:7;

and my shield; to protect from all dangers, and preserve from every enemy: such are the love and grace, the power and strength, the truth and faithfulness of God; which are the saints' shield and buckler, **Ps 5:12**; such also the person, blood, righteousness, and salvation of Christ, who is a sun and shield; the shield of faith, or which faith holds up and defends the soul against the attacks of a powerful enemy, Ps 84:11;

I hope in thy Word; in Christ the Word, for acceptance and justification, for peace, pardon, and eternal salvation; all which are in him: in the word of promise, for all supplies of grace, strength, light, life, and comfort here, and for glory hereafter, contained therein; see Ps 119:74.

Psalms 119:115

Ver. 115. Depart from me, ye evildoers,.... The same with the evil thinkers, Ps 119:113; According to Aben Ezra, they that think evil commonly do it; as they devise it, they commit it. This describes such persons whose course of life is, and who make it their constant business to do, iniquity; such the psalmist desires to depart his presence, to keep at a distance from him, as being very disagreeable to him; and who would be a great hinderance to him in keeping the commandments of God, as follows: these same words will be spoken by David's son and antitype, at the great day of account, **Mt 7:23**;

for I will keep the commandments of my God; of God who has a fight to command, and not of men, especially when opposed to the commands of God; of God, who is the covenant God and Father of his people; and whose covenant, grace, and favour, in choosing, redeeming, regenerating, and adopting them, lay them under greater obligations still to keep his commandments; and whose commandments are not grievous: and though they cannot be perfectly kept by good men, yet they are desirous of keeping them as well as they can, and determine in the strength of divine grace so to do; and which they do out of love to God, and with a view to his glory, without any selfish or mercenary ends. The Syriac version renders it, "that I may keep", &c. to which end he desires to be rid of the company of wicked men; who are both a nuisance to good men, and an hinderance in religious duties.

Psalms 119:116

Ver. 116. Uphold me according unto thy word,.... In thy ways, that my footsteps slip not; in thine arms, and with the right hand of thy righteousness, from fainting and sinking under difficulties and discouragements, in trying circumstances; and from slipping and sliding out of the way of God; and from a total and final filling away, according to thy word of promise, that, as are the days of thy people, their strength shall be; and that thou wilt never leave them nor forsake them. The Targum is,

"uphold me in thy word;"

or by thy word, either essential or written;

that I may live; meaning not corporeally, though none so live but whom the Lord upholds in life; but, spiritually, live by faith on Christ the Saviour, live comfortably on the word of promise, and live honourably, agreeably to the word of God, in all holy conversation and godliness;

and let me not be ashamed of my hope: as men are, when they are disappointed or having and enjoying what they have been hoping and waiting for; but the grace of hope makes not ashamed, nor shall those who have it ever have any reason to be ashamed of it; since it is a good hope through grace; is an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast; is upon a good foundation, Christ, and by which men are saved; and so may rejoice, in full hope of the glory of God they shall certainly enjoy.

Psalms 119:117

Ver. 117. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe,.... As all are, and none but such, who are in the hands of Christ; enclosed in the arms of everlasting love, upheld with the right hand of Jehovah, supported by his promises and grace, surrounded by his power, sustained by his love, and preserved in Christ Jesus;

and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually; for nothing can more strongly engage a constant regard unto them than a sense of divine love, and a view of safety and security in the arms of it; or better enable to keep them than fresh communications of grace and strength: being upheld, saints hold on and out to the end; they go from strength to strength, run and are not weary, walk and faint not; and, having a supply of the Spirit, walk on in the judgments of the Lord, and keep his statutes, and do them. Or, "and I will rejoice" {l} in them, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; or, "employ myself" in them, as Jarchi.

{l} heva "solatiabor", Montanus; "delectabor", Pagninus, Musculus; so Ainsworth; "voluptatem capiam", Tigurine version.

Psalms 119:118

Ver. 118. Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes,.... That wander from the way of the Lord's commandments; that deviate from his precepts, go astray constantly and wilfully; a people that err in their hearts, and with all their hearts. These the Lord treads down, as mire in the streets, as grapes in a winepress; which shows his abhorrence of them, his indignation at them, and how easily they are subdued under him;

for their deceit [is] falsehood: or, "their hypocrisy [is] a lie" {m}: the appearance they make is a false one; they appear outwardly righteous, but are inwardly wicked; have a form of godliness, but deny the power of it: or all their deceitful doctrines are lies in hypocrisy, though dressed up with all the art and cunning they are masters of; or all their subtle schemes to corrupt and subvert the true doctrines of the word are in vain and to no purpose.

{m} So Michaelis.

Psalms 119:119

Ver. 119. Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth [like] dross,.... Which is of no worth and value, useless and unprofitable; which is cast into the fire, and separated from the choice metal. This expresses the character and state of wicked men; who are of no account with God, are of no profit and advantage to him; nor to men, but harmful and pernicious; are cast into the fire of God's judgments here, and into everlasting burnings hereafter; and will be separated from the righteous, and have no part and lot with them: these seem to be hypocrites also, who have made a show of being gold and silver, when they were nothing but dross; and being reprobate silver, were rejected of God as such;

therefore I love thy testimonies; which discover such persons when brought to be tried by them; and which require purity of heart and life, and caution against evil ways and evil men, and are a means of preserving from them.

Psalms 119:120

Ver. 120. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee,.... Not for fear of the wrath of God coming down upon himself, nor for fear of eternal damnation; but for fear of what was coming upon the wicked, for their sins and transgressions. The word {n} used signifies such a dread and horror, which seizes a man to such a degree, that it makes the hair of his flesh to stand up; as Jarchi and Kimchi observe; see Ps 119:53 **Job 4:14**;

and I am afraid of thy judgments; not of their coming down upon him, but upon the wicked; the thought of which is more awful to good men than to the wicked themselves; and especially when under any darkness, doubts, and fears; lest, being conscious to themselves of their own weakness, they should be left to join with the wicked in their sins, and so be partakers of their plagues.

{n} rmo oryotricei, Symmachus in Drusius; "horripilavit", Cajetanus apud Gejerum.

Psalms 119:121

e, AIN.--The Sixteenth Part.

Ver. 121. AIN. I have done judgment and justice,.... As king of Israel; which is the character given of him, **2Sa 8:15**; and in which he was a type of Christ, Jer 23:5; and as a private person; which is everyone's duty, and every good man especially will be desirous of performing it: it is not indeed perfectly done by any, and therefore not to be trusted to; nor was it so done by David; nor did he place his confidence in it; nor did he say this in a boasting way, but in defence of himself and his innocence against those who oppressed him with their calumnies, as appears from the next clause. The Syriac version takes it to be an address to God, and as describing him, "O thou that doest judgment and justice!" to whom the following petition is directed:

leave me not to mine oppressors; David had his oppressors, as all good men have, and power was on their side; but they could do no more, nor further exercise it, than as they were permitted by the Lord; for they had no power but what was given them from above; and he applies to God, and not men, for relief; and deprecates being given up to them, and left in their hands.

Psalms 119:122

Ver. 122. Be surety for thy servant for good,.... The psalmist was, in a like case with Hezekiah, oppressed; and therefore desires the Lord would undertake for him, appear on his side, and defend him, Ps 38:14; and if God himself is the surety of his people, and engages in their behalf, they need fear no enemy. What David prays to God to be for him, that Christ is for all his people, **Heb 7:22**. He drew nigh to God, struck hands with him, gave his word and bond to pay the debts of his people; put himself in their legal place and stead, and became responsible to law and justice for them; engaged to make satisfaction for their sins, to bring in everlasting righteousness for their justification, and to preserve and keep them, and bring them safe to eternal glory and happiness; and this was being a surety for them for good. The Syriac version is, "delight that servant with good things"; and to the same sense the Targum and Kimchi interpret it: but Jarchi and Aben Ezra take the word to have the same meaning we do; and so Aquila and Theodotion translate it: the sense Arama gives is,

"be surety for thy servant, that I may be good;"

let not the proud oppress me; the oppressors of God's people are generally proud; they are such who deal in proud wrath; it is in their pride, and owing to it, they persecute them, Ps 10:2. This has been their character in all ages, and agrees with the man of sin and his followers, who is king over all the children of pride; but wherein such men deal proudly and oppress, God is higher than they, and therefore most proper to be applied unto.

Psalms 119:123

Ver. 123. Mine eyes fail for that salvation,.... For temporal salvation or deliverance from oppressors; and for spiritual salvation, for views of an interest in it, the joys and comforts of it; and for the Messiah, the author of it; whom he was looking wistfully for, but, not coming so soon as expected, his eyes were tired and weary, and ready to fail, and his heart to faint; See Gill on "Ps 119:81";

and for the word of thy righteousness; for the word of promise, which the righteousness or faithfulness of God was engaged to perform; or for the law of God, the rule of righteousness, and which shows what righteousness God requires; and for the bringing in of that righteousness of the Messiah, which could answer its demands; or for the Gospel, and more clear administration of it, which is called the word of righteousness, **Heb 5:13**; in which the righteousness of God is revealed; the righteousness which Christ, who is God as well as man, has wrought out; and which his Father has approved of, accepted, and imputes to his people, and justifies them with; and which word also teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly.

Psalms 119:124

Ver. 124. Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy,.... Which is either general and providential, and reaches to all his creatures; and according to which David had been dealt with all his days, and which he desires a continuance of: or special; and which is in Christ, and communicated through him; and in whom he deals with his people, not according to their merits, but his own mercy; by receiving and accepting them, and admitting them into his presence, and to partake of his favours, and by pardoning their sins and saving their souls; which is not by works of righteousness they have done but according to his abundant mercy; and by giving them eternal life and happiness at the great day;

and teach me thy statutes; which is often requested; and which not only shows the need of divine teachings, and the psalmist's earnest and importunate desire to have them; but also that the mercy, grace, and kindness of God, have an influence on the holy life and conversation of the saints, and do not at all encourage licentiousness.

Psalms 119:125

Ver. 125. I [am] thy servant,.... Not only by creation, but by grace; and as he had a work to do, he desires to know what it was; and as it was proper he should know his Master's will, he applies to him for it; using this as an argument, that he was his servant, devoted to his service, and willing to perform it to the best of his knowledge and ability; and therefore prays,

give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies; the Scriptures, which testify of the will of God; which are only rightly understood by those who have their understandings opened and enlightened; or have an understanding given them, that they may understand them, so as to receive and embrace the doctrine, and do the precepts of them: and such an understanding is the gift of God, and owing to his powerful and efficacious grace; see Lu 24:45.

Psalms 119:126

Ver. 126. [It is] time for [thee], Lord, to work,.... To send the Messiah, to work righteousness; to fulfil the law, and vindicate the honour of it, broken by men. It was always a notion of the Jews that the time of the Messiah's coming would be when it was a time of great wickedness in the earth; and which seems to agree with the word of God, and was true in fact; see **Mal 2:17**. Or to arise and have mercy on Zion, for which there is a fixed time: and its seems as if it would be when religion greatly declines, and profaneness abounds; when love is waxen cold, and there is no faith in the earth; and when the days are like those of Noah and Lot, Lu 17:26; or to take vengeance on wicked men, by sending down his judgments on them now, as well as he will punish them hereafter; for which a time is appointed, though no man knows of it. The words may be rendered, "it is time to work for the Lord" {o}; so the Septuagint version; to which agrees the Targum,

"it is time to do the will of the Lord;"

and the Syriac and Arabic versions, "it is time to worship the Lord". It is proper, in declining times, for good men to bestir themselves and be in action, to attempt the revival of religion, to do all that in them lies to support the cause of God, and to vindicate his honour and glory;

[for] they have made void thy law; the whole word of God, the Scriptures; as atheists and deists, who deny the authority of them; Pharisees, who preferred their oral law to the written word, and by the traditions of the elders made it of none effect; Papists, by their unwritten traditions, and denying the common people the reading of the Scriptures in their mother tongue; and all false teachers, who wrest the Scriptures, and put false glosses on them, and handle the word of God deceitfully; and all profane sinners, who bid defiance to the law, and, as much as in them lies, abrogate it, and set up a law of their own, and frame mischief by it: or the law of faith may be meant; the Gospel of Christ, and the several truths of it, which are opposed, contradicted, and blasphemed by men of corrupt minds; and particularly the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ's righteousness; which are made void by the

doctrine of works; and even the law itself is made void by the same: for not those that maintain the doctrine of Christ's righteousness, but those that establish their own, make void the law; presenting a righteousness to it, which is not answerable to its demands, **Ro 3:31**.

{o} hwhyl twvel te "tempus est agendi pro Deo", Gussetius, p. 649. "Tempus faciendi Domino", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus.

Psalms 119:127

Ver. 127. Therefore I love thy commandments,.... Because he was the Lord's servant, as Aben Ezra; or rather because the wicked made void the law. His love was the more inflamed and increased towards it by the contempt it was had in by others; he preferred it

above gold, yea, above fine gold; or gold of Phez, a place where the best gold was, as was thought: the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it "the topaz"; and the Syriac and Arabic versions, "precious stones" or "gems"; see Ps 119:72.

Psalms 119:128

Ver. 128. Therefore I esteem all [thy] precepts [concerning] all [things to be] right,.... He had an impartial regard to all the commandments of God; and valued one as well as another, and walked according to all of them; making no difference either in his affection or practice between one and another, as being more or less necessary, just, and right: he had an equal respect to the lighter and weightier matters of the law; and, like Zacharias and Elisabeth, walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; looking upon them all, with respect to everything commanded or forbidden by them, to be just and equitable;

[and] I hate every false way; every command, institution, and ordinance of men, which are opposed to the will of God; every false way of worship, all superstition and idolatry; every false doctrine whatsoever is contrary to the testimonies and word of God: and indeed where there is a true love of the word, worship, and ordinances of God, there must be an hatred of these.

Psalms 119:129

p, PE.--The Seventeenth Part.

Ver. 129. PE. Thy testimonies [are] wonderful,.... The Scriptures, which testify of God, his mind and will, are wonderful both with respect to the author of them, the things contained in them, and the use and advantage of them. They give an account of the wonderful works of creation; of their author and matter; of the manner, order, and time of their being wrought: they relate many wonderful events of Providence, both in a way of mercy and judgment; they declare several surprising miracles, wrought by Moses and others, and exhibit many marvellous things in types and figures: are full of prophecies of extraordinary things, have been exactly accomplished, and contain many exceeding great and precious promises; and abound with doctrines abstruse and recondite, hid from the carnal sense and reason of men; the mysteries of the Gospel, and of the grace of God, such as respect the divine Persons in the Trinity; the person and grace of Christ; the wonderful love of God and Christ towards men; the amazing blessings of grace through him, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life by him;

therefore doth my soul keep them; as a rich treasure, which he laid up in the cabinet of his heart, and preserved as what was most rare and valuable: and such are the wonderful things in the word of God; and such is the efficacy of its doctrines, and the influence the truths of it have upon the minds of gracious persons; that these engage them to keep and observe the precepts it enjoins, and that heartily and sincerely, with their whole spirit and soul.

Psalms 119:130

Ver. 130. The entrance of thy words giveth light,.... The beginning of them; the first three chapters in Genesis, what light do they give into the origin of all things; the creation of man, his state of innocence; his fall through the temptations of Satan, and his recovery and salvation by Christ, the seed of the woman, the first principles of the oracles of God, the rudiments of religion, the elements of the world, the rites of the ceremonial law, gave great light into Gospel mysteries. As soon as a man enters upon reading the Scriptures, if he has any degree of understanding of the things in them, they immediately throw light into his mind; or, however, as soon as ever the word has an entrance into the heart, and through the Spirit, power, and grace of God, makes its way and has a place there, that being opened by the Lord for that purpose, light arises in darkness. It maybe rendered, "the opening of thy words giveth light" {p}; and may signify either the interpretation and explanation of the word of God by the ministers of it, which is often of singular use for enlightening and warming the hearts of men, Lu 24:32; and to this sense are the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions; the one rendering it "the declaration of thy words", the other, "the manifestation" of them; and so the Ethiopic and Arabic versions; and to this sense is the Targum;

"the impression of thy words will enlighten those that are dark."

Or it may intend the word that opens, as well as is opened, since it is the means of opening blind eyes; and so giving light to men to see their lost state by nature, and the suitableness of Christ as a Saviour, his fulness and grace, ability and willingness; to behold the wondrous things of the Gospel, the way they should walk in, and the duties of religion they should perform;

it giveth understanding unto the simple: who want understanding in the knowledge of divine and spiritual things, as all men do; and who are sensible of their want of it, ingenuously confess it, and are meek and humble; and so not above instruction, as proud and conceited persons are. Some render it "babes" {q}; and it may design such who are but of weak parts, in comparison of others, to whom the things of the Gospel are revealed, when they are hid from the wise and prudent: Christ by his Spirit opens their understandings, that they may understand the Scriptures; and by means of them gives them an understanding of himself, and of those things which make them wise unto salvation, and make for their spiritual peace and comfort, and their eternal welfare; see Ps 19:7.

{p} xtp "apertio", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Vatablus, Michaelis; "apertura", Cocceius, Gejerus; so Ainsworth. {q} Myytp nhpiouv, Sept. "parvulis", V. L. so Arab. Ethiop. Musculus.

Psalms 119:131

Ver. 131. I opened my mouth, and panted,.... As a person out of breath does, through walking or running; he stops and pants, and opens his mouth, to draw in air to his relief: or as hungry and thirsty persons pant for food and drink, and open their mouths to receive it, before it can well be brought to them. So the psalmist panted after God, and communion with him; desired the sincere milk of the word; longed for the breasts of ordinances, and even fainted for the

courts of the Lord,
Ps 42:1;

for I longed for thy commandments; for an opportunity of waiting upon God in the way of his duty; to hear his word, and attend his worship.

Psalms 119:132

Ver. 132. Look thou upon me,.... Not as in himself; a sinful creature will not bear looking upon by the Lord, especially with the strict eye of justice; but as in Christ, and clothed with his righteousness; and so not merely in a providential way, though that is a favour, but in a way of special grace and mercy. It may be rendered, "turn unto me" {r}; as it is in Ps 25:16; the Lord had turned from him, and had hid his face, which had given him trouble; and therefore he desires he would turn again to him, and show him his face and favour;

and be merciful unto me; in forgiving his sins, and admitting him to communion with him: he pleads mercy, and not merit and this shows it was not any look but a look of grace and mercy he prays for;

as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name; that is, himself: such as love the Lord have favours shown them; he shows mercy to thousands of them that love him; he loves them that love him; he manifests his love to them, and admits them to great nearness to himself. David was one of these; he loved him in sincerity, and above all others and could appeal to him for the truth of it, and desires no other nor better usage than such had; and indeed a man need not desire better, since all things work for their good now, and it is not to be conceived what God has prepared for them hereafter.

{r} yla hnp "convertere ad me", Michaelis; "turn the face unto me", Ainsworth.

Psalms 119:133

Ver. 133. Order my steps in thy word,.... Or, "by thy word" {s}, or "according" to it. Which is the rule of practice and action, as well as of faith; and happy are they who walk according to the directions of it; but it is not in the power of man to order and direct his steps: this is done by the Lord; and such who acknowledge him in their ways, and apply to him for direction, are and shall be thus favoured by him; see Jer 10:23;

and let not any iniquity have dominion over me; not only greater sins or presumptuous ones, very gross iniquities, as in Ps 19:13; but lesser ones, even the least of them. It is a sad thing to be enslaved to any lust or sin, be it what it will: sin reigns over wicked men even unto death; and it oftentimes has great power over good men, puts them upon doing that which is evil, and hinders them from doing that which is good; it carries them captive, and threatens to have the ascendant over them, and rule in them, which they deprecate; and such a prayer may be the prayer of faith, since it is promised "sin shall not have the dominion over you", **Ro 6:14**. Kimchi interprets this of the evil imagination or corruption of nature; R. Moses understands it of a wicked man; and so the Syriac version.

{s} Ktrmab "eloquio tuo", Tigurine version; "secundum eloquium tuum", Musculus.

Psalms 119:134

Ver. 134. Deliver me from the oppression of man,.... Of any man, of proud and haughty men, as in Ps 119:122; the psalmist always desired rather to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of wicked men, whose tender mercies are cruel. Some render it, "from the oppression of Adam", as Jarchi observes; and Arama interprets it of the sin of Adam, and as a prayer to be delivered or redeemed from it; as the Lord's people are by the blood of Christ: Jarchi understands it of the evil imagination or corruption of nature, which oppresses men; which sense Arama also makes mention of;

so will I keep thy precepts: being delivered out of the hands of wicked men, and free from their snares and temptations; see Ps 119:115 **Lu 1:74**.

Psalms 119:135

Ver. 135. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant,.... That is, lift up the light of thy countenance on me; favour me with thy gracious presence, and communion with thyself; manifest thyself unto me, and shed abroad thy love in my heart; cause the sun of righteousness to arise upon me, and commune with me, from above thy mercy seat; restore to me the joys of thy salvation, and let me have the comforts of thy good Spirit: this prayer is a part of the blessing of the high priest, **Nu 6:25**;

and teach me thy statutes; the more communion a man has with God, the more desirous he is of learning and doing his will. This is a frequent petition; see Ps 119:124.

Psalms 119:136

Ver. 136. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes,.... That is, "out of" them; as the Syriac version: or, "mine eyes let down rivers of waters" {t}; see **La 3:48**; that is, an abundance of tears, which flowed like a river; an hyperbolical expression, setting forth the excessiveness of grief. The reason follows,

because they keep not thy law; the persons are not mentioned, but must be understood of wicked men; whose open and impudent transgression of the law in innumerable instances, and in the most flagrant manner, gave the psalmist great distress, as it does all good men; because the law of God is despised, his authority is trampled on, his name is dishonoured, and he has not the glory which is due unto him. The gloss of Arama is,

"because Adam and Eve kept not thy law;"

which transgression brought ruin on all mankind. The Septuagint and Arabic versions very wrongly read, "because I have not kept thy law": as if his grief was on account of his own sins: and so Kimchi indeed interprets it; and both he and Ben Melech by "they" understand his eyes, from whence his tears flowed in such abundance; because they were the caterers for sin, and the cause and occasion of the transgressions of the law of God by him: and this sense is made mention of by Aben Ezra.

{t} ynye wdry "oculi mei deduxerunt", V. L. "rivos aquarum demittunt oculi mei", Gejerus.

Psalms 119:137

u, TZADDI.--The Eighteenth Part.

Ver. 137. TZADDI. Righteous [art] thou, O Lord,.... Essentially, originally, and of himself; naturally, immutably, and universally, in all his ways and works of nature and grace; in his thoughts, purposes, counsels, and decrees; in all the dispensations of his providence; in redemption, in the justification of a sinner, in the pardon of sin, and in the gift of eternal life through Christ;

and upright [are] thy judgments; they are according to the rules of justice and equity; the precepts of the word, the doctrines of the Gospel, as well as the judgments of God inflicted on wicked men, and all the providential dealings of God with his people, and also the final judgment.

Psalms 119:138

Ver. 138. Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded [are] righteous,.... The Scriptures are holy, just, and good; and what is contained in them are according to godliness; are for instruction in righteousness, and teach men to live soberly, righteously, and godly;

and very faithful; or "true" {u}: all the sayings in them are true and faithful sayings; for they are the sayings of God that cannot lie; the promises in them are faithfully performed by him that made them; they are all yea and amen in Christ. The words may be rendered, "thou hast commanded righteousness [in] thy testimonies, and truth" or faith "exceedingly": so the Arabic version. God in the law requires of men a perfect righteousness, every way agreeable to its demands; and in his Gospel he reveals the complete righteousness of his Son, which he has commanded to be published in it, to be laid hold on and received by faith as a justifying righteousness, as it is to all that believe: this, with every other truth of the Gospel, is made manifest by the Scriptures according to the commandment of the everlasting God,
Ro 16:25.

{u} dam hnwmaw "et verissimae", Vatablus, "veritas valde, i.e. prorsus verissima", Gejerus.

Psalms 119:139

Ver. 139. My zeal hath consumed me,.... Zeal for God and his glory, for his word and ordinances and worship; which is a fervour of the mind, burning love, and flaming affections for God, shown in a holy indignation against sin and sinners. This was a zeal according to knowledge, sincere and hearty, and what continued; and which was shown in embracing and defending the truths of the word, and resenting every indignity cast upon them; to such a degree, that it ate up his spirit, wore away his flesh, and almost consumed him; see Ps 69:9;

because mine enemies have forgotten thy words; not merely through an indifference to them, and inattention in hearing them; nor through want of an earnest heed to keep and retain them; nor through negligence in laying them up, and a carelessness in making use of proper means to recollect them; but through an aversion to them, an hatred of them, and a spiteful malicious contempt of them, casting them away and despising them; which stirred up the spirit of the psalmist, and raised such an emotion in him as was almost too much for him.

Psalms 119:140

Ver. 140. Thy word is very pure,.... Or, "exceedingly purified" {w}: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times, Ps 12:6; free from, all drossy matter; from any mixtures, or the corruptions and doctrines of men; and which tends and leads to purity of heart and life;

therefore thy servant loveth it; that which carnal men hate the word of God for, because it forbids and condemns all impurity of flesh and spirit, all impure thoughts, words, and actions; that a good man loves it for, and which is an evidence of a sanctified heart.

{w} dam hpwru "purificatum valde", Montanus; "liquatum, vel expurgatum valde", Gejerus.

Psalms 119:141

Ver. 141. I [am] small and despised,.... Or, "I have been" {x}. Some versions render it "young" {y}; as if it had respect to the time of his anointing by Samuel, when he was overlooked and despised in his father's family, 1Sa 16:11; but the word here used is not expressive of age, but of state, condition, and circumstances; and the meaning is, that he was little in his own esteem, and in the esteem of men, and was despised; and that on account of religion, in which he was a type of Christ, Ps 22:6; and which is the common lot of good men, who are treated by the world as the faith of it, and the offscouring of all things;

[yet] do not I forget thy precepts; to observe and keep them: the ill treatment of men on account of religion did not cause him to forsake it, or to leave the ways, word, and worship of God; see
Ps 119:83.

{x} ykna "ego fui, et adhuc sum", Michaelis. {y} ryeu newterov, Sept. "adolescentulus", V. L.

Psalms 119:142

Ver. 142. Thy righteousness [is] an everlasting righteousness,.... Or, "is for ever" {z}. The rectitude of his nature, his faithfulness in his promises, and his kindness and beneficence to his people; and particularly the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel; the righteousness of his Son, which he approves and accepts of, and imputes to him that believes. This is a righteousness that will last for ever, will never be abolished; it will answer for them that have it in a time to come; it is of use throughout the whole of life, at death, in the day of judgment, and to all eternity; see **Da 9:24**;

and thy law [is] the truth; or "thy doctrine"; or "thy word", as the Arabic version. The Scriptures are called the Scriptures of truth,
Da 10:21 they come from the God of truth, and all that is contained in them is truth; the legal part of them is truth, and so is the Gospel; that is called the word of truth, and truth itself: it is concerning Christ, who is the truth; and it is directed into and made effectual by the Spirit of truth, and contains in it many excellent truths; and is therefore deservedly valued and esteemed by all good men; see
Joh 17:17.

{z} Mlewl "in seculum", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus; "in aeternum", V. L. Michaelis.

Psalms 119:143

Ver. 143. Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me,.... Or, "found me" {a}. Outward troubles and inward distress; troubles arising from his enemies, the men of the world, that hated and persecuted him; and from a body of sin and death, from the temptations of Satan, and divine desertions; some from without, and others from within; troubles both of body and mind, which is what all good men are liable to;

[yet] thy commandments [are] my delights; so far from being grievous, that they were a pleasure to him; yea, exceedingly delighted him, and cheered and refreshed his spirits amidst all his troubles.

{a} ynwaum "invenerunt me", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 119:144

Ver. 144. The righteousness of thy testimonies [is] everlasting,.... Or, "for ever" {b}. The righteousness which they require, or which they publish; the righteousness revealed in the Gospel, which is the righteousness of Christ; See Gill on "Ps 119:142";

give me understanding, and I shall live; an understanding of the testimonies of the Lord, of the word of God, the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; an understanding of divine and spiritual things; a clearer and larger understanding of them, which is the gift of God; both that itself at first, and an increase of it here prayed for, the end, issue, and effect of which is life. Such live spiritually, and by faith; they live cheerfully and comfortably, and "for ever", as Aben Ezra and Kimchi repeat from the former clause: for "this is life eternal know the only true God and Jesus Christ"; or to have spiritual understanding of them, and of those things which relate to spiritual peace and comfort here, and eternal happiness hereafter, Joh 17:3.

{b} Mlwel "in seculum", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "in aeternum", V. L.

Psalms 119:145

q, KOPH.--The Nineteenth Part.

Ver. 145. KOPH. I cried with [my] whole heart,.... Prayer is often expressed by crying; which sometimes signifies mental, and sometimes vocal prayer; and generally supposes the person praying to be in distress, either outward or inward. This prayer of the psalmists was hearty and cordial, not with his mouth and lips only, but with his heart also; it did not proceed from feigned lips, but was put up in sincerity and truth; yea, it was with his whole heart, with all the powers and faculties of his soul employed; his affections set on God, the desires of his soul after him, and his will submitted to his; it denotes the intenseness, earnestness, and fervency of prayer;

hear me, O Lord: the prayer he had put up, and answer it. Some persons pray, and that is enough; they do not concern themselves whether their prayers are heard or not: but David desired an answer, and looked after that;

I will keep thy statutes; not in his own strength, but in the strength of the Lord; and it is to be understood not merely as a resolution what he would do; nor as a promise, which he uses as a plea, argument, or motive to be heard; but rather it expresses the end of his being heard, or the thing for which he desires to be heard: for so it may be rendered, "that I may keep thy statutes"; hear me, and give me grace and strength to enable me to observe them.

Psalms 119:146

Ver. 146. I cried unto thee; save me,.... In his distress he cried and prayed to the Lord; and this was a principal and leading petition, that he would "save" him out of all his troubles and afflictions, and out of the hands of all his enemies; and with a temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation which he knew he was able to do, and none else;

and I shall keep thy testimonies; such salvation will affect my heart, and the sense of it influence and engage me to have the utmost regard to the word of God, its truths and doctrines, precepts and ordinances, so as carefully to observe them.

Psalms 119:147

Ver. 147. I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried,.... That is, he awoke and got up, and prayed, before the day broke, the morning looked forth, or the sun arose: he was early as well as earnest in his supplications to God; see **Ps 5:3**; as Christ, his antitype, rose early in the morning, a great while before day, and went out to a solitary place, and prayed, **Mr 1:35**;

I hoped in thy word; which is a great encouragement to prayer, the grace of hope itself is, though a man can only put his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope; and especially when it is grounded on the word of promise, that God will hear and answer his people, when they call upon him in a time of trouble: and particularly hope in Christ, the essential Word, is a great encouragement; many encouraging arguments to prayer are taken from the person, office, advocacy, and mediation of Jesus Christ, **Heb 4:14**.

Psalms 119:148

Ver. 148. Mine eyes prevent the [night] watches,.... The Targum is,

"the morning and evening watches."

There were three of them; Kimchi interprets it of the second and third; the meaning is, that the psalmist was awake and employed in one religious exercise or another, praying, reading, or meditating; either before the watches were set, or however before the time that some of them took place, or at least before they were all over;

that I might meditate in thy word; he rose so early, in order to give himself up to meditation on the word of God; that he might be better instructed in the knowledge of divine things; that he might have solace and comfort from thence under his afflictions; and that he might be better furnished for the work of prayer; for the more familiar the word of God is to us, the better able we are to speak to God in his own language.

Psalms 119:149

Ver. 149. Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness,.... Not according to his own merits and deserts, or works of righteousness done by him, for the sake of which he did not present his supplications to God; nor according to his love to him, which often waxed cold, and he in a poor lukewarm frame of spirit; but according to the lovingkindness of God, which is always the same, and which is a great encouragement to faith and hope in prayer; that since God is gracious and merciful, kind and bountiful, plenteous in mercy, and ready to forgive, on a throne of grace, and full of love, yea, love itself, invariably the same, he will hear, and saints shall find grace and mercy to help them in time of need;

O Lord, quicken me according to thy judgment; either according to his word of promise, or according to his manner and wonted method he used towards his people; see Ps 119:25; This is a prayer, not for the first work of quickening grace, or the first implantation of a principle of spiritual life, which the psalmist had had an experience of; but for the reviving of the work and principle in him, that he might be refreshed and comforted, and be animated and stirred up to a lively exercise of grace and performance of duty: finding himself in dead and lifeless frames, and not able to quicken himself.

Psalms 119:150

Ver. 150. They draw nigh that follow after mischief,.... Or "evil" {c}; that which is sinful in itself, and injurious to others. Some cannot sleep unless they do mischief; they are bent upon it, and proceed from evil to evil: they are eager in their pursuit of it, as the huntsman after his sport, to which the allusion is; though it is to their ruin, even to their death, Pr 11:19; These the psalmist says "draw nigh"; not unto God, unless feignedly and with their mouths only; but to him they drew nigh, to David, in an hostile way they pursued after him, in order to take away his life, and they had very nearly overtaken him, and were just ready to seize him; his life drew nigh to those destroyers, and those destroyers drew nigh to that, so that he was in great danger; and the more as these were abandoned creatures, that neither feared God nor regarded man, as follows:

they are far from thy law; from the knowledge of it, of its equity and purity; and especially of its spirituality, and of its power and influence upon their minds; and so far from subjection and obedience to it; so far from it, that they treat it with the utmost contempt, cast it away from them and despise it, **Ro 8:7**.

{c} hmz "iniquitati", V. L. "scelus", Tigurine version; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

Psalms 119:151

Ver. 151. Thou [art] near, O Lord,.... This was the comfort of the psalmist, that though his enemies drew nigh with a mischievous design upon him, yet his God was also near, and nearer than they; he was near as to relation to him, being his God and Father; near as to union, the bond of which is his everlasting

love, which can never be dissolved; near as to communion, which he admits all his people to at one time or another; so that they are said to be "a people near unto the Lord";
Ps 148:14; and near as to his gracious presence, and the divine assistance he affords; he is a present help in time of need; he is nigh to all that call on him in truth, and in all things in which they do call upon him for, Ps 145:18;

and all thy commandments [are] truth; not only the precepts of the word of God, but his covenant, and the promises of it; the word which he has commanded to a thousand generations, Ps 105:8; and even the whole word of God, doctrines and duties; see Joh 17:17.

Psalms 119:152

Ver. 152. Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old,.... Or, "from thy testimonies, I have known of old" {d}: by carefully reading the Scriptures which testify of God, his mind an will, and frequently meditating on them, he had learned a long time ago, even from his youth, what follows,

that thou hast founded them for ever; that the things contained in them are sure and certain, established and eternal truths; the moral law and the precepts of it are eternal, and of perpetual obligation; not one jot or tittle of them shall ever fail; the Gospel, and the truths of it, are everlasting, and shall ever remain; in spite of all the opposition, craft and cunning, fury and force of men, to undermine and root them out; see Ps 119:89.

{d} Kytdem "ex obtestationibus tuis", Tigurine version; so Cocceius, Gejerus.

Psalms 119:153

r, RESH.--The Twentieth Part.

Ver. 153. RESH. Consider mine affliction, and deliver me,.... Or, "look upon mine affliction" {e}; as in Ps 25:18. The Lord seems as if he did not, when he does not grant his gracious presence to his people; or does not arise to the help and deliverance of them so soon as they desire and expect: but he always sees and beholds their afflictions; he cannot do otherwise, since he is the omniscient God; and not only so, but he is the author, appointer, and orderer of them; yea, he looks upon them with an eye of pity and compassion, which is what is here prayed for: he sympathizes with his people in all their afflictions, supports them under them, pays kind visits to them, sanctifies his hand, and in his own time delivers them out of all; which none else can but himself, and he has power to do it, and has promised it, and does perform: see Ps 50:15;

for I do not forget thy law: the precepts of it; to observe it as a rule of walk and conversation, as a lamp to the feet, and a light to the path, as a directory of the good and perfect will of God: or, "thy doctrine"; the doctrine of the word, the precious truths of it, which were his support under afflictions; and when either of them have a place in the heart, and are written there, they cannot easily be forgotten. This the psalmist mentions, not as if his not forgetting the law or doctrine of God was meritorious of deliverance from affliction, but as a descriptive character of such the Lord does deliver.

{e} har "vide", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Cocceius; "intuere", Gejerus.

Psalms 119:154

Ver. 154. Plead my cause, and deliver me,.... This shows that his affliction was chiefly from men, wicked, ungodly, and unreasonable men; such as were Saul and his courtiers, and a whole ungodly nation: his cause was a good one, and therefore he puts it into the hand of the Lord, and who otherwise would not have undertaken it; and this he did also because he could not plead it himself, nor any other for him but the Lord; his enemies that strove with him being so many, mighty, and crafty; see Ps 35:1. Christ is the advocate of his people, their Redeemer, who is mighty, and thoroughly pleads their cause against the accusations of Satan, the charges of law and justice, and the condemnation of their own hearts; as well as defends their innocence from the calumnies of wicked men, and rights their wrongs, and redresses their grievances;

quicken me according to thy word; See Gill on "Ps 119:25".

Psalms 119:155

Ver. 155. Salvation [is] far from the wicked,.... Christ, the author of salvation, is far from them: he was far from the unbelieving Jews, even though salvation was of them, and he, the Saviour, was among them; and he is far from all unconverted persons, as to knowledge of him, faith in him, or love to him; and from all those that seek for salvation elsewhere, let them make ever such pretences to religion: the word of salvation is far from them, as Kimchi; the Gospel of salvation, which they put away from them, as the Jews did in the times of Christ and the apostles; an experimental knowledge of salvation, a sense of need of it, and an application of it, are far from them; and the enjoyment of it in heaven, which, though nearer the saints than when they first believed, is far off from the wicked, and whose damnation is near: Aben Ezra interprets it,

"the days of salvation;"

for they seek not thy statutes; either to know them, or keep them: they seek not after God, to know him, his mind and will; the language of their hearts and actions is, "depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways"; no, not of life and salvation, and therefore it must be far from them, Job 21:14.

Psalms 119:156

Ver. 156. Great [are] thy tender mercies, O Lord,.... Not his providential mercies only, which are many and undeserved, and constantly repeated; but his special mercies in Christ, which flow from the tenderness of his heart; and his merciful lovingkindness to his people, and which are great or many {f}, as to quantity; there being a multitude of them, not to be reckoned up: and for quality they are wonderful beyond expression and conception; proceed from unmerited love, rich, free, sovereign grace, and last for ever;

quicken me according to that judgments; See Gill on "Ps 119:149".

{f} Mybr "multae", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Michaelis.

Psalms 119:157

Ver. 157. Many [are] my persecutors and mine enemies,.... Because they were his enemies, therefore they were his persecutors; and they became enemies to him, or hated him, because of his religion, and on that account persecuted him: and this has always been the lot and case of God's people in all ages; and whose persecutors are many, even the whole world, as well as fierce and furious;

[yet] do I not decline from thy testimonies; from reading and hearing the word

of God; and from embracing and professing the doctrines contained in it; and from the worship of God according to it, for which he was hated and persecuted: yet none of these things moved him from them, which showed that his heart was principled with the grace of God; for otherwise, when persecution arises because of the word, carnal professors are offended, and apostatize from it; see Mt 13:22.

Psalms 119:158

Ver. 158. I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved,.... Transgressors of the law of God, profane sinners; such as among whom he dwelt in Mesech and Kedar; it grieved him when he beheld their wicked life and conversation; as Lot in Sodom; and Isaiah and Jeremiah, among persons of unclean lips, and an assembly of treacherous men: and the word here used signifies "treacherous" {g} persons; and may design not the profane only, but professors also; that dealt treacherously with God and men, made a profession of religion, but walked not agreeably to it, which is matter of grief to good men; see **Php 3:18**; as well as the conduct of abandoned sinners; with whom the psalmist was grieved, not so much on his own account, being hated and persecuted by them, as on their account, because of the ruin they brought upon themselves; but chiefly because of the dishonour of God, and their disregard to his righteous law. Joseph Kimchi paraphrases it,

"I saw them prosper, and was weary of my life;"

and refers for the sense of the word to Job 10:1; as does also Aben Ezra; but David Kimchi and the Targum interpret it "I strove", or "contended" with them; that is, with the transgressors;

because they kept not thy word: did not regard the doctrines, nor observe the precepts of it; but despised, rejected, and cast them away from them.

{g} Mydgwb "perfidos", Vatablus, Cocceius, Michaelis; "perfide agentes", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 119:159

Ver. 159. Consider how I love thy precepts,.... How ardently and affectionately, how cordially and sincerely, Ps 119:127; and that was the reason why he was so grieved and distressed when wicked men transgressed and despised them;

quicken me, O Lord, according to thy loving kindness;
See Gill on "Ps 119:88".

Psalms 119:160

Ver. 160. Thy word [is] true [from] the beginning,.... Every word of promise God made from the beginning of the world, and in any period of time; as to Adam, to Abraham, to the Israelites, or to any other person or persons; was true in itself, and faithfully performed, not one ever failed; particularly the promise concerning the Messiah, made to Adam in Eden; and which has been spoken of by all the prophets which have been since the world began, **Ge 3:15**. Or it maybe rendered, as the Targum,

"the beginning of thy word is truth {h}:"

which a man finds to be so as soon as ever he enters upon the reading of it. Some refer this to the first chapter of Genesis; others to the first part of the decalogue, concerning the unity of God and his worship; so Aben Ezra, and R. Jeshua, as cited by him, and Jarchi; the same is mentioned by Kimchi as one of the senses, though the first he gives is agreeable to our version: but there is no need to restrain the sense to those particulars, or to the first part of the Scriptures, since the whole is truth; and the meaning may be, "the sum of thy word is truth" {i}: so the word here used is sometimes taken for the sum of anything, Nu 26:2; all that is contained in the word of God is truth; its promises, precepts and doctrines, histories, prophecies and proverbs, all the sayings of it are faithful and true;

and everyone of thy righteous judgments [endureth] for ever; every precept of the word, and doctrine of it; see Ps 119:152.

{h} tma Kyrbd var "principium verbi tui veritas", Pagninus, Musculus; "vel verborum tuorum", V. L. {i} "Summa verbi tui est veritas", Cocceius, Schmidt.

Psalms 119:161

v, SCHIN.--The Twenty-first Part.

Ver. 161. SCHIN. Princes have persecuted me without a cause,.... These were either the princes of the Philistines at the court of Achish; or the princes of Israel, who joined in the conspiracy with Absalom; or the princes in Saul's court, as Kimchi observes; who insinuated that David had evil designs against the king, drove him from abiding in the Lord's inheritance, and pursued him from place to place, as a partridge on the mountains, 1Sa 29:4; and all which was without any cause or reason on his part; and which, as it was an aggravation of the sin of his persecutors, so it was an alleviation of his affliction: in this he was, a type of Christ, against whom the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers took counsel together; Herod, Pontius Pilate, and others, the princes of this world, who crucified the Lord of glory, and hated him without a cause; who was holy and harmless, and never did any injury to any man's person or property, **Ps 2:2**;

but my heart standeth in awe of thy word: not in awe of the princes, but of the word of God; he had a greater regard to that than to them: when they in effect said, "go, serve other gods", 1Sa 26:19; he remembered what the word of God says, "thou shall have no other gods before me", Ex 20:3; and this was a means of preserving him from sinning. Kimchi thinks some respect is had to the word of God by Nathan the prophet, "I will raise up evil against thee out of thine house", &c. 2Sa 12:11; and he was afraid, on account of this word, lest he should fall into the hands of the princes: but it seems not to be an excruciating tormenting fear that is here meant; but a high regard for, and a holy reverence of the word of God, or a reverential affection for it; such as is consistent with the highest joy on account of it, as follows.

Psalms 119:162

Ver. 162. I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil. At having it, which is a distinguishing blessing; all are not favoured with it; and is an inestimable treasure, a field in which a treasure lies; which those that find rejoice at, and especially at the understanding of it, as Kimchi notes: for such only delight in it who spiritually understand it, or have an application of it to them; find it, and eat it, and then it is the joy and rejoicing of their hearts. The doctrines of it are matter of great joy, particularly which concern the grace of God, the person of Christ, and peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him; and each of its promises, which are exceeding great and precious; and, when opened and applied in a time of need, occasion great joy; such as is expressed at finding a great spoil, when much substance comes into the hands of the conqueror, as well as victory. The word is a part of the believer's spiritual armour, by which he overcomes his enemies; as well as it acquaints him with the conquest Christ has obtained over them, and made him a sharer in; and directs him to unsearchable riches, to things more valuable than thousands of gold and silver; so that he has great reason to rejoice at it in such a manner indeed! see **Isa 9:2**.

Psalms 119:163

Ver. 163. I hate and abhor lying,.... The sin of lying in common conversation, which owes its rise to Satan, the father of lies; is common to human nature, though very dishonourable to it; exceeding unbecoming a professor of religion; and was greatly hated by David, as it ought to be by all good men, Ps 101:7. Or "falsehood" {k}; false doctrine; everything contrary to the truth of the word of God, with all false worship, superstition, and idolatry; and this may the rather be thought to be designed, since the law or doctrine of God is opposed to it in the next clause;

[but] thy law do I love; because holy, just, and true; he being a regenerate man, and having it written on his heart, he loved both the precepts of the law and the doctrines of the Gospel: or, "thy doctrine"; the doctrine concerning God, his mind and will, his grace and love; see Ps 119:97.

{k} rqv "falsitatem", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 119:164

Ver. 164. Seven times a day do I praise thee,.... That is, very often in a day; not a day passed over his head but he praised the Lord, and often in the day; so the phrase "seven times" is used, Ps 12:6. Praise is comely for the saints, delightful and well pleasing to God, being offered up in faith and through Christ; and should be frequent, since our mercies, temporal and spiritual, are daily renewed; and therefore we should always, in everything, for everything, and at all seasons, give thanks to God, **Eph 5:20** **1Th 5:18**;

because of thy righteous judgments: either upon his enemies, the persecuting princes, as Aben Ezra; so saints may and should, and will praise the Lord, for

his righteous judgments on the enemies of his church and people, because not only of their deliverance from them, but because of the honour of his justice, and the glory of his name; see
Re 18:20; or because of the word of God, the precepts, ordinances, and doctrines of it, which are all righteous; for his knowledge of them, and for the benefit and comfort received from them; see Ps 119:7.

Psalms 119:165

Ver. 165. Great peace have they which love thy law,.... The Targum adds,

"in this world."

Great prosperity, especially prosperity of soul, inward peace, peace of conscience, peace in Christ, and from him, flowing from his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and a view of interest therein; which is usually enjoyed in a way of believing, and frequently had in the ways, worship, and ordinances of God. Such as love the law of God, his word, precepts, and doctrines, have a large share of it; a peace so great, that it passes the understanding of unregenerate men, and cannot be fully expressed by the saints themselves; there is none to the wicked, it is peculiar to them that love the Lord, and what belong to him: the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, "which love thy name";

and nothing shall offend them; the Targum is,

"in the world to come."

Nothing shall disturb their minds, and break their peace; nothing from without, though sin, temptations, and desertions do; not outward afflictions, the reproaches and persecutions of wicked men, nor the reproof of good men; nor what God does to them in a providential way: though in the world they have tribulation, in Christ they have peace, which the world can neither give nor take away. "There is no stumbling block unto them" {l}, as it may be rendered; nothing that shall cause them to be offended and depart out of the good ways of God, which is the case of carnal formal professors, Mt 13:21; such stumble not at the word, as others do, at any of the doctrines of it; and the true light shining in them, and the word without being a light unto them, there is no occasion of stumbling in them; they see their way, and what lies in it, and so avoid that at which they might stumble, **1Jo 2:10**. Moreover, such do not easily either give or take offence; they are possessed of that charity or love, which is not suspicious or easily provoked; and they endeavour to give no offence to any, but live without it, in the midst of a perverse generation, 1Co 13:5 **Php 2:15**.

{l} lwvkm wml Nya "non est ipsis offendiculum", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 119:166

Ver. 166. Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation,.... Either temporal salvation and deliverance from enemies, and from afflictions, which God had promised, and therefore he had reason to hope for; or spiritual and eternal salvation, resolved on in the mind of God, provided in covenant, promised to be wrought out by Christ, and which since has been accomplished; and therefore there is a sufficient foundation to hope for it;

and done thy commandments: this was not the cause, ground, and foundation of his hope; for then it would not have been like an anchor, sure and steadfast, but as the hope of the hypocrite, which is as the spider's web; but this was the effect of his hope; because he had a good hope of salvation, therefore he was studiously concerned to do the commandments of God; his hope prompted him to it, and encouraged him in it; see **1Jo 3:2**. Kimchi's note here is a good one; "and done thy commandments", not for hope of reward; but I have done them as thy commandments are with me and I know that I shall have salvation, and I have hoped for it.

Psalms 119:167

Ver. 167. My soul hath kept thy testimonies,.... The word of God, which he kept cordially and heartily; and in his heart, laid it up there; and with his whole soul observed the doctrines and kept the precepts of it;

and I love them exceedingly; and kept them from a principle of love, and not with mercenary and selfish views; and this love was exceeding great, not cold nor lukewarm, but ardent and fervent, love in the superlative degree.

Psalms 119:168

Ver. 168. I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies,.... Both the preceptive and doctrinal part of the word, he preserved and observed both; this is repeated for the certainty of it, and to show his great affection to them;

for all my ways [are] before thee; this is either an appeal to God for the truth of what he had said, who saw and knew all the ways in which he walked, and which he had endeavoured should be conformable to the word of God; or it is a reason why he kept the precepts and testimonies of the Lord, because he knew his eyes were upon him; the omniscience of God had an influence over him, and caused him to be more attentive to the word, as the rule of his actions; see Ps 139:1.

Psalms 119:169

t, TAU.--The Twenty-second and last Part.

Ver. 169. TAU. Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord,.... Not "my praise", as the Syriac version; but "my prayer", put up in great distress, and with great vehemence and importunity; see
Ps 119:145; and when it is desired it might "come near before" the Lord, it does not so much suppose distance of place between the petitioner and the petitioned as earth is from heaven, as Aben Ezra observes, as distance of state and condition; the petitioner being a creature, and a sinful creature, and whose sins had separated between God and him: and now the only way of access is by Christ; prayer can only pass to God through him, who is the only Mediator between God and man; by whom persons and services are brought near unto, him with acceptance. The sum of this request is, that his prayer might not be rejected and shut out; but that it might be admitted, might come up before God, and into his ears, and be regarded by him, and accepted with him;

give me understanding according to thy word; meaning not natural, but spiritual understanding; not that he was without any, as natural men are, whose understandings are darkened; for he had a large share of understanding of spiritual things; but he wanted more, he desired to know more of himself, of his wants and weaknesses; to know more of God in Christ, and of Christ, his person, offices, and grace; to know more of the doctrines of the word, and of the duties of religion; and particularly that he might have a better understanding of the business of prayer, and might know both what to pray for, and how to pray as he ought; all which is a gift from God: and he desires in all to be directed "according to the word" of God, the means of enlightening the understanding, and of increasing spiritual knowledge; or else he means the promise of God, that he would give him more knowledge and understanding; that he might be taught of God, and follow on to know him, and increase in every branch of spiritual knowledge.

Psalms 119:170

Ver. 170. Let my supplication come before thee,.... The same with his "cry" in Ps 119:169; only expressed by another word, signifying a petition for grace and favour, in an humble and submissive manner; which it is entreated might be received and accepted, as before;

deliver me according to thy word; of promise, such as that in Ps 50:15; meaning from all troubles and afflictions; out of the hands of all his enemies, and from the power of sin, Satan, and the world; and from all fears of wrath, ruin, and destruction. Kimchi observes, that this is not to be understood of a deliverance of the body from distress, but of the soul from the stumbling block of sin.

Psalms 119:171

Ver. 171. My lips shall utter praise,.... Like water flowing from a fountain, as the word {m} signifies. The heart of a good man is like a fountain of water, abounding: with good things, and his mouth is a well of life; out of the abundance of grace and good things in his heart his mouth speaks, **Joh 4:14**; and particularly his heart is filled with praise and thankfulness for the many blessings of providence and grace enjoyed; his lips show it forth; it comes flowing from him freely and readily, without force and compulsion, largely and plentifully, constantly and continually, and with great vehemence and strength, as streams from a fountain;

when thou hast taught me thy statutes: which is what the psalmist often prays for in this psalm; and signifies he should be very thankful to God for, and should sincerely praise him, could he obtain this favour; see Ps 119:7.

{m} hnebt "profundent", Vatablus, Musculus; "ebullient", Piscator, Gejerus; "scaturiunt", Cocceius; "scaturient", Michaelis.

Psalms 119:172

Ver. 172. My tongue shall speak of thy word,.... Of the word of God in general; of the truth of it, which he knew by certain experience; of the purity of it, tending to promote holiness of heart and life; of the power and efficacy of it, enlightening his mind, and working effectually in him; of the profit of it, to his learning, to his instruction, comfort, and refreshment; of the preciousness of it, being of more worth than thousands of gold and silver; and of the pleasantness of it, being sweeter than the honey or honeycomb, and more to be esteemed than one's necessary food; and of the promises of it in particular, of the worth and value of them, of their suitableness and use, and of the faithful fulfilment of them; and of the doctrines of the word, especially those which relate to the grace of God, and salvation by the Messiah; and also of the precepts of the word, as follows:

for all thy commandments [are] righteousness; not only righteous, but righteousness itself, being strictly just and equitable in the highest sense; and not only some of them, but all of them; see Ps 119:128. Aben Ezra's paraphrase of the words is,

"I will teach the children of men thy word, that they may know that thy commandments are righteousness;"

which is not amiss: and to the same sense is Kimchi's note, who observes, that author of the Masorah interprets it of praise; as if he had said, My tongue shall praise thy word, because all of it is righteousness.

Psalms 119:173

Ver. 173. Let thine hand help me,.... Let thine hand of power help me against mine enemies, and deliver me from them; and let thine hand of providence and grace communicate to me, and supply me with and help me to everything needful for me, for body and soul; for time and eternity, all grace here, and glory hereafter; let thy right hand help me on in my way, hold and uphold me, keep and preserve me safe to heaven and happiness;

for I have chosen thy precepts; not only the good part, which shall not be taken away, and the way of truth, Ps 119:30; but even the commandments of God, which he preferred to the commandments of men, and choose rather to obey the one than the other; having a most ardent affection for them, an high esteem of them, and a strong attachment to them; see Ps 119:127.

Psalms 119:174

Ver. 174. I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord,.... For temporal salvation and deliverance from enemies; and for spiritual and eternal salvation by the Messiah; and for the Messiah himself, the author of it: Kimchi interprets it of the salvation of the soul in the world to come; see Ps 119:81;

and thy law [is] my delight; or "delights" {n}; his exceeding great delight, as being pure and perfect, holy, just, and good; a transcript of the divine nature, a revelation of the divine will; as in the hands of Christ, his surety and Saviour, who had engaged to fulfil it for him; and as written in his heart; and as delivered from the curse and condemnation of it, through the suretyship engagements of Christ.

{n} yevev "deliciae meae", Montanus, Tigurine version.

Psalms 119:175

Ver. 175. Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee,.... The psalmist desires the continuance of his natural life, not for his own personal advantage, nor for the sake of his family, nor with any worldly, sinister, and selfish views; but for the glory of God, and for the sake of praising him: or his desire is, that his soul might be lively and comfortable; or that he might be in a lively and cheerful frame of spirit, and so be in fit and proper circumstances to praise the Lord; for it is the living man in both senses, natural and spiritual, that is capable of praising the Lord, Isa 38:19;

and let thy judgments help me; that is, to praise him: meaning either judgments on his enemies, as Aben Ezra; which furnish out matter and occasion of praise and thanksgiving; see Re 15:3; or the word of God, the doctrines and precepts of it; see Ps 119:164.

Psalms 119:176

Ver. 176. I have gone astray like a lost sheep,.... In desert places, as it is the nature of sheep to do {o}. A sheep he was, a sheep of Christ, given him by the Father; known by him, and that knew him; knew his voice, and followed him; a sheep of his hand, and of his pasture; one of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, who had been lost in Adam, though recovered by grace; and had gone astray before conversion, but now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls; and since conversion had gone astray from the Shepherd and fold, from the word and precepts of it, through inadvertence, the prevalence of corruption, the snares of the world, and the temptations of Satan; which he both deprecates and owns, Ps 119:10; though it may be understood, as it is by many interpreters, of his being forced, by the persecutions of his enemies, to wander from the courts of God, and from place to place:

seek thy servant; as a shepherd does his sheep when gone astray, which will not return of itself unless sought after: thou art my Shepherd, as if he should say, look me up, restore my soul; suffer me not to wander from thee, and go astray from thy word and ordinances: and when he calls himself his servant, it carries in it an argument for being looked up and sought out; since he was his servant, not by nature, but by grace; not by force, but willingly; he was his and devoted to his service. And another follows:

for I do not forget thy commandments; he retained a knowledge of them, an affection for them, and a desire to observe them; though he had gone astray from them, either in a criminal way, through the power and prevalence of sin, or against his will, through the force of persecution.

{o} So Aristotle observes, Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 3. the same word that is used for feeding sheep is also translated "wander", Num. xiv. 33. so "errant" is used by Virgil for feeding with security, Bucolic. Eclog. 2, Vid. Servium in ib.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 120:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 120

A Song of degrees. This psalm, and the fourteen following, are called "songs of degrees", or "ascents" {o}; for what reason it is not easy to say. Some think it refers to the music of them, and that this is the name of the tune to which they were set; or the first word of a song according to which they were sung, as Aben Ezra; or that they were sung with an higher voice, or an ascending note, as Saadiah Gaon. Others are of opinion that the title of them respects the ascent of persons or places, at what time and where they were sung; either when the Israelites went up to Jerusalem, at the three solemn yearly feasts; or when the Jews came up from Babylon, mention being made in some of these psalms of their being in Babylon, and of their return from their captivity there; and so the inscription of the Syriac version is,

"the first song of ascent; the people detained in Babylon pray to be delivered."

But the common opinion of the Jews, and which is embraced by many Christians {p}, and is mentioned by Jarchi, Saadiah Gaon, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, is, that these are the songs sung by the Levites, on the fifteen steps, by which they went up from the court of the women to the court of the Israelites, or came down them; and on each step sung one of these psalms {q}. Though it may be they are so called because of their excellency; a song of degrees being an "excellent" {r} song, as an excellent man is called a man of high degree, 1Ch 17:17; these being excellent ones for the matter of them, their manner of composure, and the brevity of them. It is generally thought this psalm was composed by David, on account of Doeg the Edomite, because of its likeness in some things with the fifty second psalm: and certain it is that the psalmist had been in some great distress, and at a distance from his own country and the house of God, and dwelt among wicked men when he wrote it; so that it is very probable it was composed during his exile through the persecution of Saul.

{o} twleml ryv "canticum ascensionum", Munster, Vatablus. {p} L'Empereur in Middot, c. 2. s. 5. Lightfoot's Temple-Service, c. 20. so Theodoret in loc. {q} Vid. Misn. Middot. c. 2. s. 5. Succah, c. 5. s. 4. {r} "Canticum excellentissimum", Junius & Tremellius.

Ver. 1. In my distress I cried unto the Lord,.... Being at a distance from his own country, or, however, from the house of God; persecuted by men, under the lash of their tongues; reproached, abused, and belied by them: in this his case and circumstances, he betook himself by prayer to the Lord, and importuned help and deliverance of him, knowing that none could help him as he; see Ps 18:6;

and he heard me; answered him, and delivered him. The petition he put up follows, which shows his case, and his particular distress.

Psalms 120:2

Ver. 2. Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, [and] from a deceitful tongue. Not from such lips, and such a tongue of his own, which David abhorred; though every good man desires to be kept from speaking lies and deceit; nor from the company of those who have such lips and tongues, which he was determined should not dwell with him; but from the malignity of them, from being hurt in his character and reputation by them; God can restrain them, and prevent the ill influence of them when he pleases, Ps 31:20. Such were the lips and tongues of Doeg the Edomite, Ps 52:2, and of Saul's courtiers, who insinuated to him that David sought his hurt, 1Sa 24:9; and of the Scribes and Pharisees, that flattered Christ to his face, and reproached him to the people; and of Judas, that betrayed him with "Hail, master", Mt 26:49; and of the false witnesses suborned against him; and of false teachers, deceitful workers, that lie in wait to deceive, and, by their good words and fair speeches, do deceive the hearts of the simple; and of antichrist and his followers, who, as they are given up to believe a lie, speak lies in hypocrisy; and of Satan the father of lies, and who is the old serpent, the devil, that deceives the whole world: and to be delivered from the bad effects of such lips and tongues is very desirable.

Psalms 120:3

Ver. 3. What shall be given unto thee?.... Or, "what shall [it] give unto thee?" {s} That is, what shall the deceitful tongue give unto thee, O my soul? or to thee, to anyone that hears and reads this psalm? It is capable of giving thee a deal of trouble, of doing thee a deal of mischief; and of injuring thy character, and hurting thy peace and comfort, if permitted;

or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? or, "what shall the false tongue add unto thee?" {t} it shall increase thy sorrows and distress: or rather, what gain, profit, and advantage, shall the deceitful tongue get to itself by its lies and deceit? none at all; it may do harm to others, but gets no good to itself; see Isa 28:15; Or, "what shall he (God) give unto thee?" {u} or, "what shall he add unto thee, thou false tongue?" so Jarchi. What punishment will not he inflict upon thee, who hates lying lips? what plagues will not he add unto thee, who knows all the deceit that is in thee, and spoken by thee? The answer is as follows:

{s} Kl Nty hm "quid dabit tibi", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Gejerus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {t} Kl Pyoy hmw "et quid addet tibi", Montanus, Castalio; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {u} "Quid inferat tibi (Deus) aut quem rem adhibeat tibi, O lingua dolosa?" Tigurine version.

Psalms 120:4

Ver. 4. Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper. Some think these words describe lying lips, and a false tongue; which are like arrows, sharp ones, sent out from a bow drawn with a mighty hand, which come with great force, suddenly and swiftly, and do much mischief; see Ps 11:2; and to "coals of juniper", very distressing and tormenting; the tongue being a fire, set on fire of hell, and sets on fire the course of nature; and throws out devouring words, which consume like fire, **Jas 3:6**. But rather the punishment of an evil tongue from the Lord is intended, whose sore judgments are often compared to arrows, De 32:23; because they come from above, and bring swift and sudden destruction with them; and are very sharp in the hearts of his enemies; are very severe and cutting, and come with power irresistible, being the arrows of the Almighty, **Job 6:4**; see Jer 50:9; and these may be compared to "coals of juniper", which are very vehement and strong, and very lasting and durable. Jerom {w} and Isidore {x} say they will last a whole year; and the Midrash on the place reports of two men, who had prepared food with them, and at the end of a year returned and found them burning, and warmed their feet at them. These fitly express the lake of fire and brimstone, the portion of liars; whose fire is very strong, and flames devouring, being kindled by the breath of the Lord of hosts, like a stream of brimstone: and the fire of hell is everlasting; its burnings are everlasting burnings; a worm that dieth not, a fire that is not quenched; the smoke of the torments of which ascend for ever and ever, Isa 30:23. The Targum speaks of these arrows as lightnings from above, and of the coals of juniper as kindled in hell below; and they are interpreted of hell in the Talmud {y}.

{w} Ad Fabiolam de 42. Mans. tom. 3. fol. 15. I. {x} Origin. l. 17. c. 7. Schindler. col. 1776. {y} T. Bab. Eracin, c. 3. fol. 15. 2.

Psalms 120:5

Ver. 5. Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech,.... Meshech was a son of Japheth, Ge 10:2; whose posterity are thought by some to be the Muscovites {z} and

Scythians, a barbarous sort of people: Mesech is frequently mentioned with Tubal and his brother, and with Gog and Magog, Eze 38:2; the Targum here calls them Asiatics. Rather the Cappadocians, according to Josephus {a}; and Strabo {b} makes mention of a city of theirs, called Mazaca: and the rather, since they are mentioned with the Kedarenes, or Arabian Scenites, and were nearer to the land of Judea than the former;

[that] I dwell in the tents of Kedar; Kedar was a son of Ishmael, Ge 25:13; whose posterity were Arabians, as the Targum here renders it; and Suidas {c} says, they dwelt not far from Babylon, when he wrote; they lived a pastoral life, and dwelt in tents: Pliny {d} makes mention of Arabs, called Cedrei; and also of Scenite Arabs, from the tents they dwelt in, which they could remove from place to place for the sake of pasturage. And among these David dwelt, when in the wilderness of Paran, 1Sa 25:1; though some think David never dwelt among any of those people, but among such who were like unto them for ignorance, idolatry, and barbarity. Some render the words, "woe is me, that I sojourn so long, dwelling as in the tents of Kedar" {e}; as when he was among the Philistines and Moabites; nay, even he may compare his own people to those, many of whom it was as disagreeable dwelling with as with these: and we find Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, speaking of them in their times in like manner, and making the same complaints, **Isa 6:5**. And very grieving and distressing it is to good men to have their abode among wicked men; as well as it is infectious and dangerous: to hear their profane and blasphemous talk, to see their wicked and filthy actions, and to observe their abominable conversation, is very vexatious, and gives great uneasiness, as it did to righteous Lot, **2Pe 2:7**. The first clause is rendered by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, "woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged"; to which the next words agree,
Ps 120:6.

{z} Davide de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 86. 1. 3. {a} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. {b} Geograph. l. 12. p. 370. Rufi Fest. Breviar. Vid Suidam in voce
tiberiov. {c} In voce khdar. {d} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 11. {e} Weemse's of the Ceremonial Law, c. 3. p. 8.

Psalms 120:6

Ver. 6. My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. The God of peace, against whom their carnal minds are enmity itself; Christ, the Prince of peace, the Man, the Peace, who has made peace by the blood of his cross, whom the world hates; the sons of peace, the quiet in the land, against whom the wicked devise evil things; the Gospel of peace, which the natural man abhors as foolishness; the way of peace, pardon, and salvation by Christ, which carnal men know not, and do not approve of; and the ordinances of the Gospel, which are paths of peace. In short, some are of such restless, quarrelsome, and contentious spirits, that they hate peace with any; are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest; and cannot sleep, unless they do mischief to their fellow creatures: it is very uncomfortable living, especially living long with such. The Targum is,

"my soul hath long dwelt with Edom, hating peace;"

that is, with the Romans or Christians, who are intended; for the Jews understand this psalm of their present captivity.

Psalms 120:7

Ver. 7. I [am for] peace,.... Am wholly peace; a man of peace, as Aben Ezra; of a peaceable disposition, devoted to peace; love it, seek and pursue it, as every good man does, who is called to it, and in whose heart it rules: such follow peace with all men, and the things which make for it; and, as much as in them lies, endeavour to live peaceably with all;

but when I speak, they [are] for war; make a motion for peace, and propose the terms of it, they declare against it, and for war: or when he spoke of the things of God, and of his experience of them, of the word of God, and of the truths of it, and of what he believed,
Ps 116:10; and especially when he gave good counsel and advice to them, and reproved them for their sins, they could not bear it; but hated him for it, and proclaimed war against him; and could not behave peaceably to him in any degree, but became his avowed, sworn, and implacable enemies. The Targum is,

"when I prayed;"

either prayed to God, that they did not like; or prayed for peace with them, that they would not grant; but became more imbittered against him.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 121:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 121

A Song of degrees. The inscription of the Syriac version is,

"one of the songs of ascent out of Babylon."

Aben Ezra thinks it was composed on account of Israel, when in a siege and distress; or, adds he, on account of the children of our captivity; the present state of the Jews. Grotius is of opinion it was written by David, at the time of the battle with Absalom. Some take it to be a military psalm, proper for soldiers engaged with an enemy: others, that it is suitable for travellers when on a journey; and why not for persons also, when they commit themselves to God in the night watches, and about to take rest? And indeed it is suitable at all times; when the good man may, with the psalmist, expect divine help, and be secure of protection and preservation.

Ver. 1. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,.... Not to the hills and mountains in Judea, looking about to see if the inhabitants of them, or any bodies of men, appeared upon them to his help in distress; rather to the hills of Moriah and Zion, where the ark of God, the symbol of his presence, was, and to whom he looked for assistance and deliverance: or to heaven, the holy hill of the Lord, and to him that dwelleth there; see **Ps 3:2**. The lifting up of the eyes is a prayer gesture, Joh 11:41; and is expressive of boldness and confidence in prayer, and of hope and expectation of help and salvation, Job 11:15; when, on the contrary, persons abashed and ashamed, hopeless and helpless, cannot look up, or lift up their eyes or face to God, **Ezr 9:6**. Some read the words, "I will lift up mine eyes upon the hills" {f}; standing there and looking up to the heavens, and God in the heavens; who is the most High over all the earth, higher than the highest, and above all gods. Others render them interrogatively, "shall I lift up mine eyes to the hills?" {g} to the idols worshipped on hills and mountains, and pray unto them, and expect help from them? No, I will not; salvation is not to be had from them, **Jer 3:23**; or to the kings of the nations, as R. Obadiah interprets it; and to powerful kingdoms and states he was in alliance with, comparable to mountains and hills, Ps 46:2? No, I will not; "it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes", Ps 118:9. And so the following clause may be read,

from whence shall my help come? {h} not from hills and mountains; not from men, for vain is the help of man; not from kings and princes, the great men of the earth, nor from the most powerful nations; but from the Lord, as in Ps 121:2, which may be an answer to this.

{f} Myrhh la "super montes", Vatablus, Amama; so Kimchi. {g} ynye ava "attollerem oculos meos ad illos montes?" Junius & Tremellius; "attollamne", &c. Piscator; so Gejerus and Ainsworth. {h} So Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

Psalms 121:2

Ver. 2. My help [cometh] from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. Who helps his people out of the hands of all their enemies, and out of all their troubles and afflictions; he helps them in the performance of duty, in the exercise of grace, in bearing the cross, in fighting the Lord's battles, and on in their journey; he helps them to all blessings, temporal and spiritual; to all needful supplies of grace here, and glory hereafter; and this help he gives is quick and present, suitable and seasonable, is sufficient, and sometimes with, and sometimes without means; and they have great encouragement to expect it from him, since he is able to give it, being the Maker of heaven and earth; for what is it that he cannot do, who has made both them? And besides, he has promised to help them, and he is faithful that has promised; he has laid help on Christ for them, and set up a throne of grace, where they may hope to find grace and mercy, to help them in time of need; and they have had past experiences of his help and salvation. Arama connects this with the preceding psalm, and interprets this help of help from an evil tongue.

Psalms 121:3

Ver. 3. He wilt not suffer thy foot to be moved,.... This is either an address of the psalmist to his own soul; or to any other good man, his friend and acquaintance, assuring of stability, and of final perseverance in grace to glory. The Lord keeps the feet of his saints from falling: he will not suffer them to be moved out of the spiritual estate in which they stand; nor off of the Foundation and Rock of ages, on which their feet are set, and their goings established; nor out of the house of God, where they are as pillars; nor out of his ways, where he upholds their goings; moved in some sense they may be, yet not "greatly moved"; their feet may be "almost" gone, and their steps "well nigh" slipped, and yet shall not fall finally and totally, or so as to perish; see Ps 62:2;

he that keepeth thee will not slumber; neither angels nor men are the keepers of the saints, but the Lord himself; he is the keeper of every individual saint, of every regenerate person, of everyone of his sheep, of every member of his church; he keeps them by his power, he preserves them by his grace, he holds them with his right hand; guides them by his counsel, keeps their feet from falling, and brings them safe to glory: and a watchful keeper he is, he does not so much as slumber; he keeps them night and day, lest any harm them, Isa 27:3. Gussetius reads the whole as a prayer, "let him not suffer [thy foot]", &c. "let not thy keeper slumber" {i}; to which the answer follows.

{i} Mwny la-Nty la "ne permittat--ne dormitet", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 121:4

Ver. 4. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. He that kept Israel or Jacob, when asleep, and appeared to him in a dream, and promised to keep him in all places, and did; who found his posterity in the wilderness, and kept them as the apple of his eye: he keeps his spiritual Israel, whom he has chosen, redeemed, and calls; and he that is in general their keeper, is the keeper of every particular believer, who may promise themselves the utmost safety under his care; since, though he may sometimes seem to sleep, when he withdraws his gracious presence, defers help, and does not arise so soon to the assistance of his people as they wish for and expect; yet does not in reality sleep, nor is any ways negligent of them; no, not so much as slumber, nor is in the least indifferent about them, and careless of them; see Ge 28:15. So Homer {k} represents Jupiter as not held by sleep, while other gods and men slept all night; and hence Milton {l} has the phrase of "the unsleeping eyes of God": but the Phrygians had a notion that their god slept in winter, and was awake in summer {m}.

{k} Iliad. 2. v. 1, 2. {l} Paradise Lost, B. 5. v. 647. {m} Plutarch. de Iside & Osir. prope finem.

Psalms 121:5

Ver. 5. The Lord [is] thy keeper,.... This explains more fully who it is that keeps Israel and particular believers, and confirms the same; not a creature, but the Lord; the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, in

Ps 121:7: Christ, the Word and Wisdom of God; who is the keeper of his people by the designation of his Father, who has put them into his hands to be kept by him; and by their full will and consent, who commit the keeping of their souls to him; for which he is abundantly qualified, being able as the mighty God; faithful to him that has appointed him; tender and compassionate to those under his care, whom he keeps as the apple of his eye; and diligent and constant, for he keeps them night and day, lest any hurt them: he keeps them as they are his flock, made his care and charge; as they are the vineyard of the Lord of hosts; as they are a city, which, unless the Lord keeps, the watchmen watch in vain; as they are his body and members of it, and as they are his jewels and peculiar treasure: these he keeps in the love of God; in his own hands; in the covenant of grace; in an estate of grace; and in his own ways, safe to his kingdom and glory;

the Lord [is] thy shade upon thy right hand; he is at the right hand of his people, to hold their right hand; to teach them to go, lead them into communion with himself, and hold them up safe; and to strengthen their right hand, assist them in working, without whom they can do nothing; and to counsel and direct them, and to protect and defend them against all their enemies. So a shadow signifies defence; see Nu 14:9 **Ec 7:12**; and such great personages are to others; in which sense Virgil {n} uses the word "shadow"; and much more true is this of God himself. And he is like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; or of a spreading tree, which is a protection from heat, and very reviving and refreshing; see Isa 32:2. The allusion may be to the pillar of cloud by day, which guided and guarded the Israelites in the wilderness, and was a shadow from the heat, **Isa 4:5**; as Christ is from the heat of a fiery law, the flaming sword of justice, the wrath of God, and the fiery darts of Satan.

{n} "Et magnum reginae nomen obumbrat", Aeneid. l. xi.

Psalms 121:6

Ver. 6. The sun shall not smite thee by day,.... With its rays, which it shoots forth like darts, and which fly swiftly, and pierce and hurt: hence Apollo, the same with the sun, is represented with a bow and arrows {o}; so the rays of the sun seem to be called in **Hab 2:11**;

nor the moon by night; this clause should be supplied, as a learned man {p} observes, thus, "neither shall the moon cool thee by night"; for that has no warmth in it, and cannot smite with heat, as the sun does: for even, as he observes, its rays focused by a magnifying glass will not communicate the least degree of sensible heat to bodies objected thereunto; yet some say {q} the moon is not only moist, but heats bodies as the sun. And Isaac Vossius {r} observes, that there can be no light, which, separately considered, does not contain some heat at least: and Macrobius {s} speaks of the lunar heat; and Plutarch {t} ascribes heat and inflammation to it, and asserts it to be fire. It is said {u} that some men of good credit, in a voyage to Guinea, strongly affirmed, that, in the night season, they felt a sensible heat to come from the beams of the moon. The Septuagint version is, "the sun shall not burn thee by day, nor the moon by night". And burning may be ascribed to the cold frosty air in a moonlight night, as to the north wind, as in the Apocrypha:

"20 When the cold north wind bloweth, and the water is congealed into ice, it abideth upon every gathering together of water, and clotheth the water as with a breastplate. 21 It devoureth the mountains, and burneth the wilderness, and consumeth the grass as fire." (Sirach 43)

see Ge 31:40; and our English poet {w} expresses a sentiment to this effect; yet not what affects the bodies of men, but plants, trees, &c. and this not owing to the moon, but to the air. However, these clauses are not to be understood literally; for good men may be smitten and hurt by the heat of the one and the cold of the other, as Jacob and Jonah, Ge 31:40; but mystically, of persecuting antichristian tyrants, which are sometimes signified by the sun and moon, as both in Rome Pagan and Papal, **Re 6:12**; and of persecution and tribulation itself, Mt 13:6; and is sometimes applied to the perfect state of the saints, either in the New Jerusalem, or ultimate glory, when there will be nothing more of this kind, **Re 7:15**. And there are some periods in the present state, when those entirely cease; nor are the saints ever really hurt by them, they being always for their good; or, however, not so as to affect their eternal happiness. The Targum is,

"in the day, when the sun rules, the morning spirits shall not smite thee; nor the nocturnal ones in the night, when the moon rules."

{o} Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 17. {p} Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. p. 976, 977. {q} Suidas in voce selhnh; so Theodoret. {r} De Motu Marium & Vent. c. 6. Vid. Senecae Nat. Quaest. l. 5. c. 9. {s} Saturnal. l. 7. c. 16. {t} De Facie Lunae, in tom. 2. p. 933. {u} The Second Voyage in Eden's Travels, p. 350. 2. {w} "----The parching air----Burns frore (frosty) and cold performs the effect of fire". Milton's Paradise Lost, l. 2. v. 594.

Psalms 121:7

Ver. 7. Thee Lord shall preserve them from all evil,.... The Word of the Lord, as the Targum. Not from the evil of affliction, though from that as a penal evil; or as a real one, it being made to work for good: but from the evil of sin; not from the being or commission of it; but from its dominion and damning power, or from a final and total falling away by it: and from the evil of the world; not from tribulation in it, nor from the reproach or persecution of it; but from the wickedness and lusts that are in it, and from the wicked men of it, their power, rage, and fury: and from the evil one, Satan; not from his temptations, but from sinking under them, and perishing by them; see Joh 17:12;

he shall preserve thy soul: he preserves the bodies of his people, oftentimes from diseases and disasters, and from death, till the appointed time comes; and then he preserves their dust in the grave, and raises it up at the last day; but more especially their souls, the redemption and salvation of which he undertook, and has effected; and which are preserved by him safe to his coming, kingdom, and glory.

Psalms 121:8

Ver. 8. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in,.... In transacting all the business of life, in going in and out about it; in all ways, works, and conversation; in journeying and travelling; in all affairs, civil and religious; and not only preserve, but prosper in all, **Ps 1:3**; the Lord blessing him, coming in and going out,
De 28:6; and such, with the poet {x}, are said to go with a good or prosperous foot. And such persons, in the Punic language, are called Namphanians, as Austin observes {y}; who says the word signifies a man of a good foot: and the word seems to be the contraction of wmep Men, which signifies "his good" or "pleasant foot" {z}; and so one that, wherever he comes and goes, things prosper with him, and with those that are in connection with him: such an one was Jacob in the house of Laban, whom the Lord blessed, as he says, "since my coming", or at "my foot", See Gill on "Ge 30:30"; and such a foot Joseph had wherever he went, Ge 39:5. Arama interprets it of a man's going out into the air of this world, and of his entrance into the world to come. The Targum is,

"the Lord will keep thy going out to business, and thy coming in to study in the law."

from this time forth, and even for evermore; for the Lord not only preserves his people in life and at death, but in heaven, to all eternity; in the utmost safety and peace from all molestations by men or devils, and from their wrath and malice: not only his purpose and decree, but his power and providence, are the vast gulf between the one and the other; by means of which the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest, Lu 16:26.

{x} Virgil. Aeneid. l. 8. "Adi pede sacra secundo"; & l. 10. "adsis pede diva secundo." {y} Epist. 44. {z} Vid. Sterringae Philol. Sacr. p. 169. Reinesium de Lingua Punica, c. 8. s. 10.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 122:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 122

A Song of degrees of David. This is the first of the songs of degrees that bears the name of David: and Kimchi thinks they only were written by him which have his name to them; though he, Abendana, and others, are of opinion that this psalm was composed with a view to the captives in Babylon; who are here represented, and are represented as rejoicing at their going up to Jerusalem, to the solemn feasts there. The inscription in the Syriac version is,

"a "psalm" of David, one of the psalms of ascent, when Cyrus commanded the captivity to go up; spiritually, a promise of good things."

It seems to be designed for the use of the Israelites, and to be sung by them when they went up to the feasts, three times a year. Some say {a} they sung this by the way, when they carried the firstfruits to Jerusalem.

{a} Weemse's Christ. Synagog. l. 1. c. 6. s. 4. p. 144.

Ver. 1. I was glad when they said unto me,.... Or, "I rejoiced in", or "because of, those that said unto me" {b}; or, "in what was said unto me". For it may regard not only the time when he had this pleasure of mind, but the persons who gave it, as well as the ground and reason of the things said unto him, as follows:

let us go into the house of the Lord; the house of the sanctuary, as the Targum; the tabernacle, the place of divine worship, typical of the church of God; which is an house of his building, beautifying, and repairing, and where he dwells: it has all the essentiality of a house; its materials are lively stones; its foundation Christ; its pillars ministers of the word; the beams of it stable believers; its windows the ordinances; and the door into it faith in Christ, and a profession of it. Now it is both the duty and privilege of believers to go into it; here they find spiritual pleasure, enjoy abundance of peace and comfort, and have their spiritual strength renewed, as well as it is to their honour and glory: and it becomes them to stir up one another to go thither; some are slothful and backward; some are lukewarm and indifferent; some are worldly and carnally minded; and others are conceited of their knowledge, and think themselves wiser than their teachers, and therefore need to be excited to their duty; and truly gracious souls are glad when they are stirred up to it, both on their own account, and on the account of others, and because of the glory of God.

{b} yl Myrmab "in dicentibus mihi", Montanus; so Ainsworth, Vatablus, Cocceius; "in his quae dicta sunt mihi", V. L. so Junius & Tremellius.

Psalms 122:2

Ver. 2. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Which is to be understood not merely literally of the city of Jerusalem, and of continuance in the possession of it, it being lately taken out of the hands of the Jebusites; but spiritually of the church of God, which is often called by this name; the gates of which are the same as the gates of Zion, and the gates of wisdom, the word and ordinances; attendance on which is signified by "standing": and which also denotes continuance therein: and happy are those that are within these gates, and have a comfortable assurance of their abiding there; and still more happy will they be who will be admitted within the gates of the New Jerusalem, which are said to be twelve, and every, one of them of one pearl; and through which none shall enter into the city but pure and holy persons,
Re 21:2.

Psalms 122:3

Ver. 3. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together. In David's time the upper and lower city were joined together, the streets regularly built, the houses contiguous, not straggling about, here and there one {c}. So the church of God, like that, is built in a good situation, on a rock and hill, where it is firm and visible; like a city full of inhabitants, governed by wholesome laws, under proper officers; a free city, which enjoys many privileges and immunities; a well fortified one, having salvation for walls and bulwarks about it; a royal city, the city of the great King, the city of our God, the name of which is "Jehovahshammah", the Lord is there: and this is "compact together" when its citizens are united in affection to one another; agree in their religious sentiments; join in social worships, and live in subjection to one Head and King, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jews often speak, and so some of their commentators on this passage, of a Jerusalem above and below, and of the one being made like unto the other: so the Targum,

"Jerusalem is built in the firmament as a city, as Jerusalem on earth;"

see **Ga 4:26**.

{c} Hecataeus, an Heathen writer, describes Jerusalem as a strong fortified city, fifty furlongs in circumference; and inhabited by twelve myriads, or a hundred and twenty thousand men. Vid. Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 4.

Psalms 122:4

Ver. 4. Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord,.... The twelve tribes of Israel; the males of them went up three times a year to Jerusalem to worship, at the feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; and was typical of the church of Christ, where the worship of God is carried on, his word preached, and ordinances administered; and whither saints go and attend for their own profit and the glory of God; this is the city of our solemnities, Isa 33:20;

unto the testimony of Israel; the ark of the testimony a symbol of the divine Presence. The law is called a testimony, because it testified the will of God to be done; this was put into an ark, which had its name from thence, and was typical of Christ, the end of the law for righteousness; and over the ark was the divine Presence: hither the tribes came to worship God, and to consult him;

"who (the Targum here says} testifies to Israel, that his divine Majesty dwells among them, when they go to confess unto the name of the Lord."

The Gospel is called the testimony of Christ; and it is what testifies concerning his person, office, and grace, unto the Israel of God; and who go up to the house of God in order to hear it;

to give thanks unto the name of the Lord; for all his mercies and blessings, both temporal and spiritual; and which should be acknowledged, not only in a private manner, but publicly in the house of God; see Ps 100:4.

Psalms 122:5

Ver. 5. For there are set thrones of judgment,.... In Jerusalem as the Targum; here were courts of judicature, and thrones for the judges to sit upon, to execute judgment and justice to the people;

the thrones of the house of David; the Targum is,

"thrones in the house of the sanctuary, for the kings of the house of David;"

who might sit there, as the Jews say, when others might not. In the church of Christ, the heavenly Jerusalem, every saint is a king, as well as a priest, and all have thrones and seats there; have a power of judging, not only lesser matters pertaining to this life, but such as regard the spiritual peace and welfare of the church and interest of Christ; having laws and rules given them to go by, in the admission and exclusion of members, and respecting their conduct to each other, and to their Lord and head: and in the New Jerusalem there will be thrones set, not only for the twelve apostles of Christ, and for the martyrs of Jesus, but for all the saints; there will be the thrones of God and of the Lamb, and every overcomer shall sit down on the same; this honour will have all the saints, Mt 19:28.

Psalms 122:6

Ver. 6. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem,.... This is said to the persons that solicited the psalmist to go into the house of the Lord; to the truly godly among the tribes that went thither to worship; to his brethren and companions, for whose sake he wished well to Zion; to praying souls, who should not be singular and selfish; not only pray for themselves, but for others; for all saints, and for the church of God in general; for Jerusalem, not merely literally considered; though as that was the metropolis of the nation, and many of them the psalmist addresses were inhabitants of it, it became them to seek and pray for the peace of it, their own peace being concerned in it; see Jer 29:7; but for the spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem, the church of God, and for the peace of it; that Christ, the Man, the Peace, the Peacemaker, who then was not come, might come; that the members of it might enjoy spiritual peace in their son is, and might have peace one with another, and be at peace with their enemies; and enjoy the abundance of peace and prosperity, which will be in the latter day; and will lie in freedom from persecution, in a destruction of antichrist and all the the enemies of the church; in the purity of Gospel truths and ordinances, and the spread of them; in numerous conversions of Jews and Gentiles; in the unity of the Lord's people in sentiment, worship, and affection; and in a large increase of spiritual light and holiness: all which should be earnestly prayed for by the well-wishers of the cause of Christ; see Isa 62:6. There may be an allusion to the name of Jerusalem, which signifies "they shall see peace"; and it should be prayed for that they might. The argument enforcing this duty exhorted to follows:

they shall prosper that love thee; that love Jerusalem, the church of God; that love Christ, her King; the saints, her citizens; her laws and ordinances; and the word of the Lord that goes out of her, and is ministered in her: which is shown by an attendance with her on them, and by their prayers for her prosperity and welfare: and such prosper in their outward affairs, as Obededom and his family were blessed for the sake of the ark he took in and took care of; and in their spiritual affairs their souls prosper, as Gaius's did, and as such do who are favoured with the discoveries of the love of God, with an application of pardoning grace and mercy; have a spiritual appetite for the word; when their graces are in lively exercise, their corruptions are subdued, spiritual light and zeal for truth are increased, inward strength is renewed, communion with God is enjoyed, and they are fruitful in every good work.

Psalms 122:7

Ver. 7. Peace be within thy walls,.... The word say might be supplied; for this, with the following, seem to be petitions the psalmist puts into the mouths of those he desires to pray for Jerusalem's peace; and he directs them to pray in this manner, to take with them such words as these, and pray to the Lord. Jerusalem was a walled city, and so is the church of God; God himself is a wall of fire around her; salvation by Christ is as walls and bulwarks to her; the power and providence of God protect her: within these walls the people of God have a place and a name; all the inhabitants of Zion in common are included in this petition, and peace is wished for them all; let their condition and circumstances be what they may, be they high or low, rich or poor, stronger or weaker believers, children, young men, or fathers. Some render it, "in thine army", as the Targum, and other Jewish writers; in the church's militia, all saints being soldiers and in a warfare state; and here success to their arms against sin, Satan, and the world, is wished for;

[and] prosperity within thy palaces: as there were palaces in Jerusalem for the king, the nobles, and great men in the land; so there are in the church of God, where he is known, for a refuge; even the meanest places in it are preferable to the palaces of the greatest monarchs see
Ps 48:3, And here indeed all the saints are kings, and have their palaces; but particularly there are some who are set in the first place in the church, and over others in the Lord; who are their guides and governors, and are in office relation to the church as pastors and deacons now, as there were priests and Levites before: and the prosperity of these is to be prayed for, the good of the whole church being involved therein.

Psalms 122:8

Ver. 8. For my brethren and companions' sakes,.... Who were regenerated by the spirit of God; adopted into his family, and children of the same father; stood in the same relation to Christ the firstborn, and members of the same church; and so brethren: partners in the same blessings and promises of the covenant; partakers of the same grace; joined together in religious worship; shared in the same joys and griefs; travellers together to the same heavenly country, and entitled to the same glory and happiness. So David, though a king, reckoned his meanest subjects as such, who were spiritual men; and for their sakes, through the goodwill, love, and affection he bore to them, he would set praying souls an example, and by it enforce his own exhortation, as follows:

I will now say, peace [be] within thee; now and always put up this petition, and not put it off to longer time; that peace and prosperity may always attend the church of God, as well as the city of Jerusalem, literally considered, and the inhabitants of it.

Psalms 122:9

Ver. 9. Because of the house of the Lord our God,.... Not because of his own palace, nor because of his own house and family; nor because of his own personal interest; though all were concerned in the peace of Jerusalem: but chiefly because of the sanctuary of the Lord, as the Targum; because of the worship and service of God in it; because of his great love and zeal for the house and church of the living God, which ate him up, Ps 69:9;

I will seek thy good; the good of Jerusalem, the good of the church of God; do all the good he could to it both with his purse and prayers, and by stirring up others to do the same; see Ps 51:18.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 123:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 123

A Song of degrees. This psalm is not thought to be written by David, but by some other person in later times; and at a time, as is clear, when the people of God were much exposed to the scorn and contempt of men. Dr. Patrick thinks it was written by some pious person; perhaps by Isaiah, in Hezekiah's time, when Rabshakeh poured out his contempt on God, on the king and the people. Others are of opinion, it was written by one of the Babylonish captivity, when the Jews were jeered by the Babylonians, and they tauntingly asked them to sing one of the songs of Zion; and scornfully said of Jerusalem, Is this the city men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth? So Aben Ezra says, the psalmist speaks of a great man of the generation, which was in captivity or in a siege; and Kimchi says, that he speaks in the language of the children of the captivity; to which agrees the Syriac inscription,

"it is said in the person of Zorobabel, the prince of the captives."

Others think it was composed in the times of Antiochus, the little horn prophesied of by Daniel, whose look was more stout than his fellows; who magnified himself against God and his people, profaned the sanctuary, and took away the daily sacrifice: and others are of opinion it was written a little before the coming of Christ, in the person of those who were waiting for it, and spiritual redemption and salvation by it; and who were scorned and derided by the proud Scribes and Pharisees.

Ver. 1. Unto thee lift I up mine eyes,.... Not only the eyes of his body, this being a prayer gesture; see Mt 14:19; but the eyes of his mind and understanding, opened by the Spirit of God; particularly the eye of faith, by which he looked for and expected help and salvation from the Lord. The phrase is expressive of holy confidence in God, and a comfortable hope of receiving good things from him; as, on the contrary, when persons are ashamed and confounded with a sense of their sins, and the aggravations of them, and of their own unworthiness and vileness; and, on account of the same, almost out of all hope, cannot lift up their eyes to heaven, or their face before God, **Ezr 9:6**;

O thou that dwellest in the heavens; the heaven of heavens, the third heaven, the seat of angels and glorified saints; and though the Lord is everywhere, and fills heaven and earth with his presence, and cannot be contained any where; yet here is the more visible display of his glory; here he keeps his court; this is his palace, and here his throne is prepared, and on it he sits {d}; so some render the word here; as the Judge of the whole earth, and takes a view of all men and their actions; and, as the God of nature and providence, governs and orders all things after his own will; and, as the God of grace, sits on a throne of grace, kindly inviting and encouraging his people to come unto him: and therefore the psalmist addresses him as such; see **Ec 5:2** **Mt 6:9**. The Targum is,

"O thou that sittest on a throne of glory in heaven!"

{d} ybvyh "sedens", Montanus, Gejerus; "qui sedes", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 123:2

Ver. 2. Behold, as the eyes of servants [look] unto the hand of their masters; [and] as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress,.... To direct them in their work and business, to point out unto them what they shall do; which is often done by a motion of the hand of the master or mistress, or rap of their fingers without speaking {e}, which the servant observes: or to help and assist them against their enemies, and protect them from them; servants unarmed, and molested in their masters' service, have no other to flee to for protection but them; so Aben Ezra: or to receive food and sustenance from them, as servants and maidens do, from their masters and mistresses, in whose service they are; see Pr 31:15; so Kimchi and Arama; the latter observes, that they have their food in a way of mercy, and not justice; contrary to what the apostle says, **Col 4:1**; or in order to receive their wages from them; see **Job 7:2**;

so our eyes [wait] upon the Lord our God; look unto him for direction in his service. Saints are servants, not of sin, nor of Satan, nor of men, but of the Lord; and not on the foot of creation only, but of redemption, and are made so by the grace of God; and they are willing to work, and are desirous to know what they should do; they inquire of God; they wait upon him, in his word and ordinances, for direction; and, being informed, do it with all their might, and follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes or directs them: and they look unto him for strength to assist them therein, being conscious of their own weakness; they apply to him, and wait upon him for strength, and do all they do in his name and strength; they look unto him for protection from all their enemies, which are many and mighty, and are stronger than they; and for food, both temporal and spiritual, and for all the necessaries and comforts both of a corporeal and spiritual life; and likewise for the recompence of reward, the reward of the inheritance, which is of grace, and not of debt. Joseph Kimchi thinks that the allusion is to servants, that look to the hand of their masters that correct and chastise them, and bear it patiently; and look to the hand that smites, till it shall have done, and mercy is shown them. And thus the saints look to the chastising hand of God, and humble themselves under it, and patiently endure it, till the Lord shall please to remove it from them; and this agrees with what follows:

until that he have mercy upon us; God is gracious and merciful; and he has his set time to have mercy on his people: and it becomes them to continue praying to him, and waiting on him, until he is pleased to show it to them; men should pray always, and not faint; they will find mercy in due time, Lu 18:1.

{e} Vid. Pignorium de Servis, p. 136. "Digiti crepantis signa novit eunuchus", Martial. l. 2. 82.

Psalms 123:3

Ver. 3. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us,.... Merit is not pleaded; for, though servants, they knew they were unprofitable ones: but mercy is asked; whether by the awakened sinner, under first convictions, or by the backsliding professor, for forgiveness of sins, under a sense of them, or as under the correcting: and chastising hand of God for them: and which is repeated, to show the state of their case, which requires mercy, and in haste; and the eagerness of their spirit, and the earnestness of their suit, their prayer being the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man;

for we are exceedingly filled with contempt; by reason of meanness in outward circumstances, the common lot of God's people; and therefore are reckoned the faith of the world, and the offscouring of all things: and on account of their religion, which wicked men make a jest of; reckon an engine of state, to keep people in awe of the civil magistrate; or a piece of priestcraft, to serve the lucrative views of a set of men; or as mere cant and enthusiasm, and a gloomy melancholy business, which none but fools will give into; and particularly on account of peculiar doctrines embraced, which are branded as novel, irrational, and licentious; and ordinances, which entirely depend on the sovereign will of the institutor of them. For these things, and the like, contempt was plentifully poured upon them; they had enough of it, and too much, so much that they could not bear it; it was become intolerable and loathsome, and the more, as it had been a long time continued on them. So Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret the word, rendered "exceedingly", of a long time.

Psalms 123:4

Ver. 4. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease,.... That are in easy and affluent circumstances; abound in the things of this world, and have more than heart can wish; have no outward trouble, as other men, or as the saints have; nor any uneasiness of mind, on account of sin and their eternal state: they have been at ease from their youth; Satan, that has the possession of them, keeps the goods in peace; and their consciences are seared as with a red hot iron, and they are past feeling; though they are far from having any true solid peace of mind: and such persons are generally scorners of the saints, and load them with their gibes and jeers in a most insolent manner; which makes it very irksome and grievous to bear;

[and] with the contempt of the proud: who are proud of their natural abilities; of their wealth and riches, and of their honours and high places: and such are generally scorners, and deal in proud wrath; and, through their pride, persecute the poor saints with their reproaches, and by other ways; see Pr 21:24. Some understand by these characters, "that are at ease", or "quiet" {f}, and are "proud", or "excellent" {g}, as the phrases may be rendered, such described by them as are the objects, and not the authors, of scorn and contempt; even the saints, who are the quiet in the land, and the excellent in the earth; those precious sons of Zion, who are disesteemed by the men of the world, Ps 35:20.

{f} Mynnavh "pacatorum", Montanus; "tranquillorum", Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {g} Mynwyag "excellentium", Hammond; a rad. hag "eminuit", Gejerus; so an eminent Rabbi with the Jews is called "Gaon", as R. Saadiah Gaon, &c.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 124:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 124

A Song of degrees of David. Some think this psalm was written by David, after the conquest of the Philistines and Ammonites, and other nations that rose up against him and Israel, like the proud waves of the sea, and spread themselves like a flood; and whose destruction was like the breach of many waters, **2Sa 5:18**. Others, after his deliverance from the persecution of Saul, or from the conspiracy of Absalom. Theodoret is of opinion that David wrote this by a prophetic spirit, concerning the enemies of the Jews, upon their return to their own land, from the Babylonish captivity; who envied them, and rose up against them, but the Lord delivered them. And others apply it to the times of Antiochus, when the Jewish church and state were threatened with ruin; but the Lord appeared for them, in raising up the Maccabees. Kimchi interprets it of the Jews in captivity; and drama of the deliverance of the children of Israel at the Red sea. It may be applied to any time of distress the church and people of God have been in, and he has wrought salvation for them.

Ver. 1. If [it had not been] the Lord who was on our side,.... Or, "was for us" {h}. The Syriac version is, "that rose up for us"; against their enemies, that rose up against them, as in Ps 123:2: or, "was with us", as Kimchi and Ben Melech; to help and assist, support and supply, strengthen and defend: or, "was among us", as the Arabic version; as their King, Protector, and Saviour. This implies that he was on their side; was for them, with them, and among them, and took their part against their enemies; see Ps 118:6; which if he had not done, their case would have been miserable and deplorable; or if any other had took their part, and not he, let them be who they would, angels or men. If God is on the side of us, it matters not who is against us; but if he is not on our side, or against us, it signifies nothing who is for us; see **Ro 8:31**. It suggests that the case of Israel now was so very forlorn and distressed, that none but the Lord himself could help them. Jehovah is on the side of his people in a spiritual sense, or otherwise it would be bad for them: God the Father is on their side; his love and relation to them engage him to be so; hence all those good things that are provided for them, and bestowed on them; nor will he suffer any to do them hurt, they being as dear to him as the apple of his eye; hence he grants them his gracious presence, supports them under all their trials and exercises, supplies all their wants, and keeps them by his power, and preserves them from all their enemies; so that they have nothing to fear from any quarter: Christ is on their side; he is the surety for them, the Saviour of them; has took their part against all their spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, the world, and death; has engaged with them, and conquered them; he is the Captain of their salvation, their King at the head of them, that protects and defends them here, and is their friend in the court of heaven; their Advocate and interceding High Priest there, who pleads their cause against Satan, and obtains every blessing for them: the Spirit of Jehovah is on their side, to carry on his own work in them; to assist them in their prayers and supplications; to secure them from Satan's temptations; to set up a standard for them, when the enemy comes in like a flood upon them; and to comfort them under all their castings down; and to work them up for, and bring them safe to, heaven: but were not this the case, what would become of them?

now may Israel say; this was a public case the psalmist here records, in which all Israel were concerned; and whom he calls upon to take notice of it, and directs them what to say on this occasion.

{h} wnl "pro nobis", Vatablus.

Psalms 124:2

Ver. 2. If [it had not been] the Lord who was on our side,.... This he repeats both for the confirmation of it, and to excite the attention of the Israelites to it; as well as to observe that it was not once only, but again and again, many times the Lord appeared to be on their side. The Targum renders it,

"the Word of the Lord;"

the essential Word, the Son of God; and so in Ps 123:1, in the king's Bible;

when men rose up against us; wicked men; though no hard epithet is given in the text, however just. The enemies of God's people are only called "men" by them, to show their meekness and patience; it is in the singular number, "when man rose up"; hence Aroma interprets it of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and R. Obadiah of Haman: but it might be better interpreted of the man of sin, the man of the earth; who, at the head of his antichristian party, has rose up against the saints, oppressed them, and threatened them with utter ruin, **2Th 2:4**. Though it is best to understand it of a body of men; of men not mean, but mighty; not few, but numerous; and who united as one man against the people of God, and rose up against them in an hostile manner; being full of enmity to them, and bent upon their ruin.

Psalms 124:3

Ver. 3. Then they had swallowed us up quick,.... Or "alive"; as the earth swallowed up Korah and his company; or as the fish swallowed up Jonah; or rather as ravenous beasts swallow their prey; to which the allusion is. The people of God are comparable to sheep and lambs, and such like innocent creatures: and the wicked to lions, tigers, wolves, bears, and such like beasts of prey that devour living creatures;

when their wrath was kindled against us; which is cruel and outrageous; there is no standing against it, nor before it; it is like a fierce flame of fire that burns furiously, and there is no stopping it; none but God can restrain it.

Psalms 124:4

Ver. 4. Then the waters had overwhelmed us,.... People, comparable to waters for their multitude, Strength, force, and impetuosity; which bear down all before them, and against which there is no standing; which, like the waters of the flood, overflow and destroy all they pass over. These are the floods of ungodly men, which are very destructive and terrible; see Re 17:15; together with all those reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, which come along with them; which the presence of God only can bear up his people under, and carry them through, **So 8:7**;

the stream had gone over our soul; and so deprived them of life; the whole force of the enemy; which, like a stream, flows in with great strength and rapidity, when a breach is made and spreads itself, Arama interprets it of the stream of the Egyptians, and restrains it to them, their armies and forces; but it rather designs others, and the enemies of God's people in general, which threaten their ruin, even their very souls and lives: it may be applied to the stream of corruptions, the flood of temptation and flow of persecutions, such as the flood the dragon cast out of his mouth after the woman; which, were it not for divine grace and assistance, would destroy the saints, who have no might against this great force, 2Ch 20:12.

Psalms 124:5

Ver. 5. Then the proud waters had gone over our soul. The wicked, who, through their pride, persecute the poor saints: these proud tyrants and persecutors would prevail over them, to their ruin and destruction; who, for their number, force, and strength, and especially for their pride and haughtiness, are like to the strong, boisterous, and swelling waves of the sea, were they not stopped and bounded by him who has said, Thus far shall ye go, and no farther, Job 38:11.

Psalms 124:6

Ver. 6. Blessed [be] the Lord,.... Here begins the church's thanksgiving for deliverance from all their enemies, their proud persecutors; and from all afflictions and troubles by them; which they could never have been delivered from, had not the Lord appeared for them; and therefore it is but just that he should have all the glory of it, and be blessed and praised on account thereof;

who hath not given us [as] a prey to their teeth; the teeth of wicked men are like spears and arrows, like swords and knives, to devour good men; their passions are strong, and their desires very vehement after their ruin; and, if suffered, the saints would fall an easy prey to them: but God will not give them up to them, either to Satan the devouring lion, or to any of his emissaries; nay, when they have seized them, and got them in their mouths, they shall be snatched from them, as the lamb out of the mouth of the lion and the bear by David; see
Ps 57:4 **1Pe 5:8**.

Psalms 124:7

Ver. 7. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers,.... The people of God are like little birds, being harmless and innocent, singing forth the praises of God for his goodness to them; as also because weak and unable to resist their foes; and worthless in themselves, like sparrows, as the word {i} here used signifies; and are fearful and timorous, and flee at the least apprehension of danger, Ps 102:7. Satan, and wicked men under his influence, are like fowlers who lay snares for them, to draw them into sin, into immorality and error, in order to bring them to ruin and destruction; hence we read of the snare of the devil and of wicked men, **1Ti 3:7** **2Ti 2:26**; and who form plans and lay schemes to oppress and destroy them; but through the wisdom given them to discern these devices and stratagems, and through the power of divine grace, accompanying them, they escape what was intended for their hurt, and particularly in the following manner:

the snare is broken, and we are escaped; measures concerted by wicked men are broken, their schemes are confounded, their devices are disappointed, so that they cannot perform their enterprise; and by this means the saints escape the evils designed against them, the afflictions of the world, and the temptations of Satan.

{i} rwpuk wv spouyion, Sept. "sicut passer", V. L.

Psalms 124:8

Ver. 8. Our help [is] in the name of the Lord,.... This is the conclusion the church draws from the scene of Providence in her favour; this is the instruction she learns from hence, that her help is in the Lord only, and not in any creature; and that it is right to put her trust and confidence in the Lord for it, and only to expect it from him whose name is in himself; and is a strong tower to flee unto for safety, Pr 18:10. The Targum is,

"in the name of the Word of the Lord;"

in the Messiah; in whom the name of the Lord is, his nature and perfections; and in whom help is found, being laid upon him, Ex 23:21;

who made heaven and earth; and therefore must be able to help his people, and to do more for them than they are able to ask or think: for what is it he cannot do that made the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them? see Ps 121:1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 125:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 125

A Song of degrees. Who was the penman of this psalm, and on what occasion written, is not certain. It describes the safety and security of the church and people of God; foretells the deliverance of them from the oppressions of their enemies; the blessings of goodness that should be bestowed upon them, and the vengeance that will be taken on the wicked. According to Aben Ezra, it belongs to the times of the Messiah, whom the Jews yet expect; when Israel, as they suppose, will be in safe and prosperous circumstances, and the wicked will be consumed; as Kimchi on it also observes: and, indeed, it may be very well thought to belong to the latter days of the kingdom of our Messiah; when the church will be in great safety and prosperity, and freed from the persecution and afflictions of wicked men.

Ver. 1. They that trust in the Lord [shall be] as Mount Zion,.... Who trust not in themselves, and in their own hearts; nor in anything of theirs, their strength or wisdom, riches or righteousness; nor in any creature whatever, in the mightiest or best of men; but in the Lord; in God, as the God of nature and providence, for all temporal mercies; and in him, as the God of grace, for all spiritual and eternal ones; who should be trusted in at all times, whether of affliction, temptation, or darkness; for which there is abundant reason. The Targum is,

"the righteous that trust in the Word of the Lord;"

in Christ the essential Word, who is trusted in by all that know him, and that know there is salvation in him, and in no other: these trust in him for acceptance with God, for a justifying righteousness, for remission of sin, for all supplies of grace, and for eternal life; and such are like Mount Zion for many things, being beloved and chosen of God, enjoying his presence, and the blessings of his grace; and being the joy of the whole earth, and a perfection of beauty; but here for their firmness and stability, as follows. Arama observes, that Mount Zion is made mention of, because here the prophecy was given; to which may be added, the psalmist was upon it, and had it in view, when he compared those that trust in the Lord unto it;

[which] cannot be removed, [but] abideth for ever: either, which Mount Zion is immovable, and continually abides, for which reason the church and people of God are compared unto it; or everyone of those that trust in the Lord, like that, can never be removed, but always abide: they can never be removed from the Lord, though they may be removed from his house and ordinances, as sometimes David was; and from his gracious presence, and sensible communion with him, and out of the world by death; yet never from his heart's

love, nor out of the covenant of his grace, which is sure and everlasting; nor out of his family, into which they are taken; nor from the Lord Jesus Christ, nor out of his hands and arms, nor from off his heart; nor from off him, the foundation on which they are laid; nor out of a state of grace, either regeneration or justification; but such abide in the love of God, in the covenant of his grace, in the hands of his Son, in the grace wherein they stand, and in the house of God for evermore.

Psalms 125:2

Ver. 2. As the mountains [are] round about Jerusalem,.... There was Mount Zion on the side of the north, and the mount of Olives on the east, and other mountains on the other sides of it; so that it was encompassed with them, and was naturally as well as artificially fortified. Tacitus {k} describes Jerusalem as inaccessible, walls and mountains, rocks and towers, surrounding it: and the poet Coerilus {l} makes mention of a people that spoke the Phoenician language, by whom he plainly means the Jews, oikoun d'en solumoiv oresi, "that inhabited the mountains of Solyma"; which are spoken of by Homer {m}, from whence, according to Tacitus {n}, Jerusalem had its name: yet, as Kimchi observes, this did not hinder the enemy from taking it; wherefore the Lord is a greater security to his people;

so the Lord [is] round about his people, from henceforth even for ever; he encompasses them with his favour and lovingkindness as a shield; he encircles them in the arms of everlasting love; he guards them by his providence all around, and keeps a wakeful and watchful eye over them, that nothing hurts them: he keeps them, as in a garrison, by his almighty power: these are the walls that are around them, yea, he himself is a wall of fire about them, and the glory in the midst of them, **Zec 2:5**; and so he continues; he never leaves his people, nor forsakes them, but is their God and guide even unto death. The Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord is round about his people;"

Christ, the essential Word of God.

{k} Hist. l. 5. c. 11. {l} Apud Euseb. Praerar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 9. {m} Odyss. 5. v. 283. {n} Ut supra. (Hist. l. 5. c. 11.)

Psalms 125:3

Ver. 3. For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous,.... Which, according to Kimchi, is Jerusalem; but Aben Ezra interprets it of the Israelites that inherit the land. And, the people of God are no doubt designed; the Lord's justified and chosen ones, his portion, and the lot of his inheritance; and all that belong unto them, their persons, families, estates, and good name: in all which they are sometimes oppressed and afflicted by wicked men; who are a rod of correction in the hand of the Lord, the rod of men with which he chastises them; but this shall not always continue: so the word is used for a rod of correction, Pr 22:15. It sometimes signifies a sceptre; an ensign of power and government, Ge 49:10; and here may intend the nations of the world, as Aben Ezra interprets it; or the antichristian states, prevailing and ruling over the people of God in a tyrannical manner, which shall not always last; the reign of antichrist will come to an end, and the Lord will destroy him with the rod of his mouth. It sometimes signifies a tribe; and the Syriac version seems so to take it here,

"the tribe of the wicked shall not rest in the part of the righteous;"

they shall no more dwell among them, lest, being led by their example, they should learn their works, and do as they do; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi. But rather, with Gussetius {o}, this is to be understood of a measuring rod; laid not on persons, but on lands and estates; and best agrees with the lot, inheritance, and estate of the righteous; and may signify, that though wicked men unjustly seize upon and retain the farms, possessions, and estates of good men, as if they were assigned to them by the measuring line; yet should not hold them long, or always;

lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity; for the righteous are not perfect in this life: they are not without sin, nor do they live without the commission of it; and may be under temptation, by long afflictions and oppressions, and seeing the wicked prosper, to desert their profession of religion, and forsake the ways of God, and join with the wicked, and commit iniquity as they do; and therefore, to prevent this, the Lord will not suffer them always to be under affliction and oppression; see Ps 37:8, or them and theirs to be always in the hand of the enemy.

{o} Ebr. Comment. p. 818.

Psalms 125:4

Ver. 4. Do good, O Lord, unto [those that be] good,.... That are made so by the Spirit and grace of God; for none are naturally good, but evil; only such who are regenerated and made new creatures, who have a good work of grace begun in them; who have the good Spirit of God, and his good graces, and the good word of God in them, and are filled with all goodness; and which is known by the good fruits which they bear, or the good works done by them. For these the psalmist prays the Lord would do good to them, not only in a providential way, as he does to all; but in a way of special grace, bestowing the blessings of his goodness on them, and causing all things to work for their good: and as saints should pray for one another, or supplication should be made for all saints, such a prayer as this may be the prayer of faith; for it is not to be doubted but God will do good to those he makes good. Aben Ezra says this may be considered either as a prayer or a prophecy; it may have respect unto the church in the latter day, and to the good things spoken of concerning it; which God will accomplish in due time, and should be prayed for; see Ps 51:18;

and to [them that are] upright in their hearts; which is a further description of good men, from the integrity and sincerity of their hearts; who do all they do before God and men, in the uprightness of their souls, cordially and sincerely, from right principles, and with right views.

Psalms 125:5

Ver. 5. As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways,.... The ways of sin, immorality, or error; which are crooked ways, not agreeing with the word of God, the rule of faith and practice. This seems to design not openly profane sinners, who have always lived in a course of sin and wickedness; but carnal professors, who, through affliction and persecution because of the word, are offended, and desert the good ways of God; and turn from the holy commandment, word, and ordinances, they have professionally embraced;

the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity; the Targum adds,

"to hell."

These hypocrites shall be led forth by the Lord with abandoned sinners, like malefactors to the place of execution; when he shall bid them depart from him, and they shall go into everlasting fire; and if there is any place in hell hotter than another, those shall have it; see **Mt 7:23**;

[but] peace [shall be] upon Israel; upon every true Israelite, upon the whole Israel of God; the apostle seems to have respect to this passage in **Ga 6:16**; such shall have spiritual peace in their hearts now, and eternal peace hereafter. The words may be read either as a prayer that it might be, or as a prophecy that it should be; and may have regard unto the latter day, when all the enemies of Christ and his church shall be destroyed, and there shall be abundance of peace, so long as the moon endures, Ps 72:7. Aben Ezra observes, that the psalmist prays that God would remove the wicked far off, and then there would be peace in Israel; and to the same purpose Arama and Kimchi interpret it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 126:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 126

A Song of degrees. This psalm is generally thought to have been written by Ezra, or some good man returned from the Babylonish captivity, and on account of it: the inscription in the Syriac version of it, besides observing it to be a song of degrees or ascents, and without a name, is,

"it is said of Haggai and Zechariah, who came up out of Babylon with the captives; but spiritually; and it is an expectation of good things to come."

It may have respect to redemption by the Messiah; and the conversion of the Jews in the latter day.

Ver. 1. When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion,.... Or returned the Jews from their captivity in Babylon; who are called Zion, from the city of David, built on Mount Zion, which was in Judea, and adjoined to Jerusalem, the metropolis of the kingdom; and because they were the godly who were concerned for Zion in a spiritual sense, or the church of God, and the interest of religion, whose spirits the Lord stirred up to come out of Babylon, upon the proclamation by Cyrus, when those that were more worldly and carnal stayed behind; as also because the chief mercy in returning the captives was the rebuilding the temple on Mount Zion, and the restoration of religious worship; which gave the religious captives in Babylon great concern, Ps 137:1. This deliverance of the captives, though it was by Cyrus as an instrument, yet it was the Lord's work; which he employed him in, and stirred him up to do, and therefore is ascribed to him. And though this is expressed in the past tense, yet it may be put for the future; and be considered as a prophecy of it, and which the following word seems to confirm; and especially the prayer, Ps 126:4; for the return of the captivity seems to require it should: and may not only literally respect the return of the captives in Babylon, but the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, and their deliverance from their present captivity; which is expressed sometimes by the Lord's bringing again Zion, and returning the captivity of the Jews, and their being turned to the Lord, Isa 52:8; and may be applied to spiritual and eternal redemption by Christ, of which the deliverance from Babylon was a type; and is sometimes expressed in the same language, Ps 14:7; and the people redeemed are often signified by Zion, and are by nature captives to sin, Satan, and the law; from whence they are redeemed by Christ, whose work alone it is, **Isa 1:27**;

we were like them that dream; or "shall be" {p}; that is, as persons that know not whether they are asleep or awake; and whether what they see and enjoy is in reality or only a vision, as Peter's deliverance from prison was to him, Ac 12:9; When the proclamation by Cyrus was first heard of by the Jews, and they had their liberty upon it, they could hardly tell whether it was a real thing or a vision, and could scarcely believe it for joy; it seemed too good news to be true, as the news of Joseph's being alive was to Jacob, Ge 45:26; and so the appearance of Christ, his resurrection, and redemption by him, were to the disciples, Lu 24:11. The Targum is,

"we were like the sick that are recovered;"

which sense the word has in Job 39:4; and will be the case of the Jews, when they are converted; who will be recovered out of the sick state and condition in which they now are, and have all their diseases healed, and sins forgiven; yea, their conversion will be as life from the dead, a resurrection of them from their graves, Ro 11:15. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, render it, "as those that are comforted"; and the Syriac version, "as those that rejoice"; each of the seasons mentioned being times of comfort and joy: Joseph Kimchi interprets it of the passing away and forgetfulness of affliction and trouble at the time of redemption, like a dream that flies away upon awaking.

{p} wnyyh "erimus", Musculus, Gejerus, Schmidt; so the Targum, Syr. Arab.

Psalms 126:2

Ver. 2. Then was our mouth filled with laughter,.... Who before mourned, and hung their harps on the willows, and could not sing the Lord's song in a strange land; but now, as their hearts were filled, with joy, this was externally and visibly seen in their countenances, and expressed with their mouths and by outward gestures; it was so great, they could not contain it, to which respect is had, Isa 35:10. It may be rendered, "then shall our mouth be filled with laughter" {q}; that is, when we awake, says Arama; or rather when the captivity is returned, either in a literal or in a spiritual sense, both being matter of great joy: the Midrash says, this will be in the world to come, and not in this;

and our tongue with singing; the praises of God, and the songs of Zion;

then said they among the Heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them; it was taken notice of by the Chaldeans, among whom they had been captives, and by all the nations round about: and it was wonderful to them, that Cyrus, an Heathen prince, of his own motion and will, should at once, and without any price or reward, let them go, and send them into their own country to rebuild their temple; and with them the vessels of the Lord's house, that had been taken away by the king of Babylon; and order men to help them, with gold and silver, and goods and cattle, **Ezr 1:1**. Likewise the conversion of the Jews, and the restoration of them to their own]and in the latter day, will be observed by the Gentiles with wonder, and as the work of God, Eze 36:35.

{q} almy "replebitur", Musculus, Gejerus; "implebitur", Schmidt; so the Targum, Syr. Arab.

Psalms 126:3

Ver. 3. The Lord hath done great things for us,.... These words are generally supposed to be the words of the Jews, taking up those of the Gentiles, and confirming them; acknowledging that the Lord had done great things for them indeed; which, had they not owned, they would have been exceeding ungrateful; had they been silent concerning them, the stones would have cried out, and the very Heathens condemned them. But I see not why they may not be thought to be the words of those among the Heathens continued; declaring that the great things done were not for the Jews only, but for them also; as the great redemption by Christ is of persons out of every tongue, people, and nation; for he is the propitiation, not for the Jews only, but for the sins of the whole world; and having this in view, thus they express themselves. The work of redemption is a great thing of itself; the produce of great wisdom; the effect of great love; procured at a great price, for great sinners, by a great Saviour; and is not only a deliverance from sin, Satan, and the law; but contains many great and glorious blessings in it, as justification, remission of sins, adoption, and eternal life;

[whereof] we are glad; that those great things are done without us, finished by the Redeemer himself; that they are so great and glorious, so rich and plenteous, so full and free, and suitable to us; and done for us sinners of the Gentiles, so unworthy of them, who are by nature children of wrath as others.

Psalms 126:4

Ver. 4. Turn again our captivity, O Lord,.... This prayer for the return of the captivity shows that it was not as yet: though some think that this is a petition of those that were returned from captivity, for those of their brethren that stayed behind; who, enjoying the sweets of their liberty, pray for their brethren to come and share with them, that so the mercy and blessing might be completed. This may very well be considered as a petition; either for the coming of the Redeemer, and redemption by him from the captivity of sin and Satan, and the law; or for the conversion of the Jews in the latter day. Either of which would be

as the streams in the south; as great and wonderful a work as causing rivers to be in dry places, and as grateful and acceptable as brooks and streams of water in southern countries: or like streams produced by the south wind, which brings rain, and melts the snow from the hills; which, running into the valleys, cause flows of water in great abundance: and so may denote the abundance of those that should share in the blessings of conversion, redemption, and salvation; as well as the wonderfulness and acceptableness of them; see Isa 41:18. The Targum seems to understand it of the change made upon them, like that made on the earth by those; paraphrasing the words,

"as the land is turned, when streams of water flow out in a time of drought."

The allusion seems to be to Judea, lying south of Babylon; and to the southern parts of Judea, which were dry; see Jos 15:19.

Psalms 126:5

Ver. 5. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. A proverbial expression, encouraging faith in prayer put up for the return of the captivity, whether in a literal or spiritual sense. Praying or seeking the Lord is sowing in righteousness, Ho 10:12; which is often attended with tears and weeping; the issue of them is not always seen soon: these, like seed, lie buried under the clods, but take effect and will rise up in due time: saints should wait patiently for a return of them, as the husbandman for the fruits of the earth; in due time they will produce a large crop of blessings, a plentiful harvest, which the praying saint will reap with joy; as those that prayed and waited for the redemption in Jerusalem; and as those that pray for the latter day glory, the conversion of the Jews, the fulness of the Gentiles, and the destruction of antichrist; the souls under the altar have been sowing in tears, but before long they will reap in joy, **Re 6:9**. It may be applied to the state and condition of saints in common in this life; now is their sowing time, and careful they should be that they sow not to the flesh, but to the spirit: and a sorrowful time it is, on account of inward corruptions, Satan's temptations, divine desertions, and the imperfection of their services; but before long they will reap life everlasting, reap in joy, and be in the fulness of it; now they weep, then they shall rejoice; now they mourn, then they shall be comforted.

Psalms 126:6

Ver. 6. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed,.... Which he sows in tears. This is but a repetition and confirmation of what is before expressed in different words; and may be applied, as to a praying saint, so to a faithful preacher of the word. The word is the precious seed which he bears, which he takes out of the granaries of the Scriptures; and carries from place to place, and scatters and sows, **Lu 8:11**; compared to seed, because of its meanness in the eyes of those that know it not; because of its generative virtue and increase, which it has from God, and which, unless sown in the earth, produces no fruit: and it is called "precious seed", because either bought at a great price, when grain is dear; or because it usually is the choicest wheat that is the sowing seed; and so may denote the preciousness and value of the Gospel, dispensed by Christ's faithful ministers, which is called a sowing of spiritual things, **1Co 9:11**; which should be done plentifully and constantly, and with the same sort of seed or doctrine, and which requires art and skill; and is often performed weeping or with tears, because of their own insufficiency, through fear of success, and through want of it; and because of the badness of the ground, the hardness of men's hearts they have to do with. The allusion seems to be to a poor husbandman, that has got but little seed to sow, and this bought at a dear price; and which he buries under the clods, and fears it will rise no more; and weeps as he sows, because of the badness of the weather, or of the soil, doubting of success. Aben Ezra, by the words rendered "precious seed", or, as they may be, "a draught of seed" {r}, understands the vessel in which the sower carries his seed, the seed basket, from whence he draws and takes out the seed, and scatters it; see **Am 9:13**; so the Targum,

"bearing a tray of sowing corn;"

shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves [with him]; the seed he has been to and fro in sowing springs up under a divine blessing; and, beyond his expectation and fears, produces a large and plentiful crop; which he reaps, and returns home, not with his arms full of sheaves only, but with his cart laden with them: so a faithful minister, sooner or later, is blessed with converts, who will be his joy and crown of rejoicing another day: see **Joh 4:35** **1Th 2:19**.

{r} erzh Kvm "tractionem seminis", Montanus, Piscator, Gejerus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 127:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 127

A Song of degrees for Solomon. This psalm was written for Solomon; that is, for the sake of Solomon, as Aben Ezra interprets it; of concerning Solomon, as Jarchi: and so the Syriac title,

"it was said by David concerning Solomon."

Perhaps it was composed by David, after Nathan had informed him, that not he, but his son Solomon, should build a temple for the Lord; and when he had made provision of gold and silver, and other things, for it, and had given the pattern of it to his son; and encouraged and animated him to it, assuring him that the Lord would be with him until he had finished it; and prayed that God would give him a perfect heart to do it; for he knew the whole success depended upon the Lord, notwithstanding all the preparations he had made: hence the psalm begins, "except the Lord build the house"; see 1Ch 28:20. Theodoret is of opinion it was written for Zerubbabel, and respects the building of the second temple by him; who is called Solomon, because he descended from him, and restored his work; but Zerubbabel, though he was of the house of David, yet not in the line of Solomon, but of Nathan, **Lu 3:27**. The inscription of the Syriac version seems to agree with this conjecture; which adds, to what is before observed,

"and it is also said concerning Haggai and Zechariah, who were solicitous for the building of the temple."

And Arama the Jew says, that it is possible it may be said of the building of the second temple, and the walls of Jerusalem. But others think it is a composition of Solomon himself; who might set out upon the building of the temple with this song, as he made a prayer at the dedication of it when finished: and the Targum renders it,

"a song by the hand of Solomon;"

and our translators for the most part render the particle of, which they here translate "for", as "of David", in many places. And so accordingly it may be rendered here "of Solomon" {s}, or Solomon's, and be one of the thousand and five songs he made; which, besides that called the Song of Solomon, is the only one extant: and the doctrine of it agrees with many things in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; that all things depend upon the providence and blessing of God, without which all the endeavours of men are in vain. Kimchi thinks the Messiah is meant, who is often called Solomon in the book of Canticles, **So 3:7**; and to whom many passages in it may be applied.

{s} hmlvl "Salomonis", V. L. Tigurine version, Musculus, Muis, Cocceius, Gejerus; so Ainsworth; "ipsius Selomoh", Vatablus.

Ver. 1. Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it,.... Whether it be understood literally of an artificial house, as Solomon's own house; or the house of the Lord, or any other: let a man be ever so bent upon building one, or have ever so much skill in drawing the plan of it, or be ever so well provided to go through the expense of it, or have ever so many hands employed in it, yet, if the Lord does not give success, it will all be in vain; the building will fall down, or be consumed by fire before it is finished; or by one providence or another he will be obliged to desist from it, as in the case of the builders of the tower and city of Babel. Or whether it be understood of a family, which is built up by an increase and multiplication of children; so Leah and Rachel built up the house of Israel, **Ru 4:11**; this depends upon the providence of God; for, as it is after said, "children are an heritage of the Lord", Ps 127:3. Or whether it be understood, figuratively and mystically, of the church God, the house of the living God; the house of Christ, a spiritual one; a Gospel church, whose materials are lively stones, or true believers. Now there are builders in this house, some indeed very bad ones; and it is no wonder that they labour in vain, who reject and lay aside the foundation and corner stone, Christ; who deny his deity, despise his righteousness; or mix grace and works, law and Gospel, together, and pluck down with one hand what they build with another: and though there are others that are good ones, and lay the foundation, Christ; and build on this foundation precious truths, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; minister the word, and administer the ordinances, truly and faithfully; and in all direct to Christ for grace, strength, peace, comfort, and eternal life; speak to edification, and are the means of reviving the graces of God's people, and of establishing their souls; as well as of the conversion of sinners, whereby the house of God is built up; yet if the Lord does not prosper their work, all is in vain. For the principal builder is God, Father, Son, and Spirit; this is mostly applied to the second Person, the Word and Wisdom of God, **Pr 9:1**; but not to the exclusion of the Father, who has laid in Zion a foundation, a precious corner stone, and builds souls on it; nor of the Spirit, through whom saints are built up an habitation for God, Isa 28:16. The Targum here is,

"if the Word of the Lord does not build the city."

It follows,

except the Lord keep the city; the city Jerusalem, as the Targum; who also here makes mention of the Word of the Lord: or any other city: God, with the Heathens {t} was called polieuv, the keeper of cities; this title is given to Minerva by Pindar {u}, and is one of Jupiter's titles {w};

the watchman waketh [but] in vain; to preserve it from riots, robberies, fires, &c. This may be applied to the church of God, the city of the living God, of which saints are fellow citizens: now in this city there are watchmen, some indeed that are blind and asleep, and so quite unfit for this office; but there are others who are awake and diligent, and watch in all things; and for the souls of men, and the good of the city, the church, to prevent heresies, errors, and immoralities; and yet all their watchfulness is in vain, unless the Lord keep it, who watches over his people for good, and that none hurt them; he wakeful, never slumbers nor sleeps, and constant night and day; and keeps his people by his power, and as tenderly as the apple of his eye.

{t} Aristotel. de Mundo, c. 7. Apuleius de Mundo, prope finem. Phurnutus de Natura Deor. c. 9. {u} Olympiad. Ode 5. {w} Pausaniae Attica, sive l. 1. p. 43, 53. Vid Theoph. ad Autolye. l. 1. p. 76.

Psalms 127:2

Ver. 2. [It is] vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late,.... A description of an industrious and laborious person, who takes great pains to get a livelihood, or increase his substance; see Ps 104:23; which, yet, as in the former instances, depends upon the blessing of divine Providence, Pr 10:4. For, after all, it may come to nothing more at last than

to eat the bread of sorrows; that is, to eat bread gotten with much sorrow and labour; such get bread, and that is all, and not that without the providence of God;

[for] so he giveth his beloved sleep; that is, the Lord: such who are partakers of his grace, that fear and love him; to them, thus diligent and industrious, he gives not only bread to eat, but sleep, which to a labouring man is sweet; and having food and raiment, he gives them contentment, quietness, and satisfaction of mind, which is the greatest blessing of all. Sleep, even bodily sleep, was reckoned with the very Heathens a divine gift {x}. Some think respect is had to, Solomon, whose name was Jedidiah, and signifies the beloved of the Lord,
2Sa 12:24; to whom God gave peace, rest, and safety all around; or, as others, the kingdom without labour, when Absalom and Adonijah toiled for it: Christ, who is the Beloved of the Lord, the Son of his love, his well beloved Son, may be thought of, whose rest is glorious; his sleep in the grave, where his flesh rested from his labours and sufferings, in hope of the resurrection of it: and it may be applied to all the Lord's beloved ones; to whom he gives spiritual rest in this world, sleep in the arms of Jesus at death, and an everlasting rest in the world to come; all which depends not on their endeavours, but on his grace and goodness.

{x} "----prima quies--dono divum gratissima serpit", Virgil. Aeneid. l. 2. v.

264, 265. upnou dwron, Homer. Iliad. 7. v. 482. & 9. v. 709. & Odyss. 16. v. ult.

Psalms 127:3

Ver. 3. Lo, children [are] an heritage of the Lord,.... As all success, safety, and the blessings of life, depend on the providence of God; so this very great blessing is a gift of his; having children, and those good ones, as the Targum interprets it; for of such only can it be understood: so, in a spiritual sense, the children of Christ, the antitypical Solomon, are the gifts of his heavenly Father to him; his portion and inheritance, and a goodly heritage he esteems them;

[and] the fruit of the womb [is his] reward; "fruit" {y} is the same with "children" in the preceding clause; see **Lu 1:42**; a reward he gives to good men, not of debt, but of grace; the Targum,

"a reward of good works:"

so regenerate persons are a reward to Christ, of his sufferings and death, Isa 53:10.

{y} "Nascitur ad fructum mulier", Claudian. in Eutrop. l. 1. v. 331.

Psalms 127:4

Ver. 4. As arrows [are] in the hand of a mighty man,.... Are shot out with great strength; come with much force, and do execution, and do not return in vain; with which men defend themselves, and annoy their enemies; see Jer 50:9;

so [are] children of the youth: not young children, or children in their youth; but such who are born to their parents when they are in their youth; and which are generally healthful and strong, and their parents live to see them grown up; and who are useful to protect them, and defend their persons and properties from enemies when grown old and feeble, and unable to defend themselves: whereas children born to them in old age are generally unhealthy and weak; and besides, their parents rarely live to see them brought up, or to be helpful to them. So Christ's spiritual seed and offspring, who are the dew of his youth, are strong, and overcome the evil one; and are serviceable in the defence of his cause and interest.

Psalms 127:5

Ver. 5. Happy [is] the man that hath his quiver full of them,.... That is, his house full of them; called a quiver, referring to arrows before mentioned, this being the case in which they are put up: to have many children was always reckoned a great temporal blessing and happiness; see **Job 1:2**. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it, "that fills his desire" has as many as he desires or wishes for: the Targum,

"who fills his school of them:"

so Jarchi interprets the children, of the disciples of the wise men. It may be applied to young converts, the children of Christ and of the church; which, when numerous, is a blessing to him and her; see Isa 49:20;

they shall not be ashamed; the father and his children, as Aben Ezra; parents rather are meant, who are not ashamed when they have many children: with the Romans {z}, those that had wives and children were preferred in honour to senior persons that had none; and they that had most to those that had fewest; and so with the Persians; See Gill on "Es 5:11";

but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate: where courts of judicature were kept; and so the Targum,

"in the gate of the house of judgment."

The sense is, that their children should stand and plead the cause of their parents against their adversaries in courts of judicature; or publicly before the eyes of all, as Aben Ezra: and spiritually may design such of Christ's seed who are set for the defence of the Gospel, are valiant for the truth on earth, and earnestly contend for it; meet the enemy in the gate, publicly oppose him, and behave themselves like men, and are strong.

{z} A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 2. c. 15.

Psalms 128:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 128

A Song of degrees. This psalm very probably was written by the same hand as the former, and seems to have some connection with it; as that shows that all things depend on the providence and goodness of God; and that all blessings, particularly children, are the gift of God; this points out the blessings, civil and religious, that belong to good men; and, among the rest, a numerous offspring. According to the Syriac version,

"it is said concerning Zerubbabel, prince of Judah; and the care of the building: and it intimates in it the calling of Gentiles."

Manythings in it may be applied Christ and his church.

Ver. 1. Blessed [is] everyone that feareth the Lord,.... Be he who he will; of whatsoever nation, Jew or Gentile; of whatsoever sex, age, or condition, high or low, rich or poor, Ac 10:35; such an one is blessed now, and will be hereafter; See Gill on "Ps 112:1";

that walketh in his ways: which God has prescribed and directed his people to walk in, his ordinances and commands; which, to walk in, is both pleasant and profitable: it supposes life, requires strength and wisdom; and is expressive of progression, or going on and continuance in them: and where the true fear of God is, which includes every grace, and the whole of religious worship, there will be a conscientious regard to the ways of God: such avoid evil, and do good, because of the fear of God, **Job 1:1**.

Psalms 128:2

Ver. 2. For thou shall eat the labour of thine hands,.... That is, thou that fearest the Lord, and walkest in his ways. It is an apostrophe, or address to such, even to everyone of them; instancing in one part of the blessedness that belongs to them, enjoyment of what their hands have laboured for; which may be understood both in a literal and spiritual sense: man must labour and get his bread with the sweat of his brow; he that will not work should not eat, he that does should; and a good man may have a comfortable enjoyment of the good of his labour; than which, as to temporal blessings, there is nothing better under the sun, **Ec 5:18**; and, in a spiritual sense, good men labour in prayers at the throne of grace, there lifting up holy hands to God, wrestling with him for a blessing, which they enjoy; they labour in attendance on the word and ordinances, for the meat which endures to everlasting life; and they find the word and eat it, and Christ in it, whose flesh is meat indeed; and feed by faith on it, to the joy and comfort of their souls;

happy [shall] thou [be], and [it shall be] well with thee; or, to thy soul, as the Syriac version; happy as to temporal things, and well as to spiritual ones: such having an apparent special interest in the love, grace, mercy, and delight of God; in his providence, protection, and care; in the supplies of his grace, and in his provisions for his people, in time and eternity. It is well with such that felt God, in life and at death, at judgment and for ever: and the Targum is,

"thou art blessed in this world, and it shall be well with thee in the world to come;"

and so Arama.

Psalms 128:3

Ver. 3. Thy wife [shall be] as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house,.... The vine being a weak and tender tree, which needs propping and supporting; and often is fastened to the sides of a house, to which the allusion here is; whereunto it cleaves, and on which it runs up, and bears very agreeable fruit; it is properly used to express the weakness and tenderness of the female sex, their fruitfulness in bearing children, and their care of domestic affairs, being keepers at home; see **1Pe 3:7**. Kimchi observes, that the vine is the only tree men plant within doors; which, when it is grown up, they bring out at a hole or window of the house without, to have the sun and air; and so its root is within the house, and the branches without: and he observes, that a modest woman is within the house, and does not go without, and is only seen by her husband; but her children, like the branches of the vine, go out to work. This may be applied to Christ and his church; to him the other characters agree: he, as man, is one that feared the Lord; the grace of fear was in him; the spirit of fear rested on him; and he was in the exercise of it, and walked in all the ways of the Lord, Isa 11:1; he now sees and enjoys the travail or labour of his soul to satisfaction, and is made most blessed for evermore, Isa 53:11. The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife, the spouse of Christ; and may be compared to a vine for her weakness in herself, her fruitfulness in grace and good works, and in bringing forth souls to Christ, through the ministry of the word; all which is pleasant and grateful to him; see Ps 80:14;

thy children like olive plants round about thy table; a numerous offspring was always accounted a very great blessing; and it must be very pleasant to a parent to see his children round about his table, placed in their proper order according to their age, partaking of what it is furnished with: Job, in his time of prosperity, had many children; and, next to the presence of the Almighty with him, he mentions this of his children being about him; see **Job 1:2**. This may be applied to the spiritual seed and offspring of Christ, which are like to olive trees or olive plants; to which David is compared, Ps 52:8; the two anointed ones in **Zec 4:11**; the two witnesses in Re 11:4; and all true believers in Christ may; because of their excellency, these being choice plants; because of their fruitfulness and beauty; because of their fatness, and having oil in them; and because of their perpetuity, being ever green; see Jer 11:16. Now Christ has a table, which he has well furnished, at which he himself sits, and places these his children all around; and whom he welcomes to the entertainment he makes, and takes delight and pleasure in them, **So 1:12**. Kimchi observes, the olive trees do not admit of a graft from other trees; see Ro 11:24; and so this denotes the legitimacy of those children, being free from all suspicion of being spurious, being born of such a wife as before described; and being green and moist all the year long, denotes their continuance in good works.

Psalms 128:4

Ver. 4. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. In the manner before described, and in the instances already given, as well as in the following; this is said to raise attention, and fix a sense of the blessedness of such persons; and who are further addressed, and pronounced happy, in the next verses.

Psalms 128:5

Ver. 5. The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion,.... The church of God, where he dwells, out of which he shines, even the Word of the Lord, as the Targum in the king's Bible; and where he commands his blessings of grace to descend on his people, even life for evermore, Ps 133:3. Here he blesses them with his word and ordinances, which are the goodness and fatness of his house, and with his presence in them; so that the man that fears God is blessed, not only in his person, and in his family, but in the house of God; see Ps 118:26;

and thou shall see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life; the goodness of God in Jerusalem, which is another name for the church of God; the beauty of the Lord in his house and ordinances; his power and his glory in the sanctuary: or should see the church of God in prosperous circumstances all his days; true religion flourish, the power of godliness in the professors of it; the word and ordinances blessed to the edification of saints, and many sinners converted and gathered in. This may be applied to Christ, Isa 53:11.

Psalms 128:6

Ver. 6. Yea, thou shall see thy children's children,.... A numerous race of descendants from him, which are the crown and glory of old men, Pr 17:6; this is also true of Christ's spiritual children by his church in successive ages, Isa 59:21;

[and] peace upon Israel: all kind of prosperity, temporal and spiritual; peace, and abundance of it; as will be in the latter day, in the spiritual reign of Christ, Ps 72:8. It may be considered as a wish or prayer, with which the psalm is concluded; let "peace be upon Israel" {a}, as in Ps 125:5; see **Ga 6:16**.

{a} larvy le Mwlv "pax sit super Israele", Cocceius; so Gejerus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 129:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 129

A Song of degrees. This psalm was written in later times, after many of the distresses of Israel; very probably upon the Jews return from the Babylonish captivity, by Ezra, or some other godly person. Aben Ezra says the psalmist speaks in the language of Israel in captivity; and the same is the sense of Kimchi and Arama. The Syriac inscription is,

"a psalm without a name, concerning the distress of the people; but as to us, it intimates to us the victory and triumph of the worshippers."

Ver. 1. Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth,.... That is, the enemies of Israel, afterwards called "ploughers". This may be understood of literal Israel, the posterity of Jacob; whose youth was the beginning of their constitution as a nation and church, or the first times of it; when they were greatly distressed by their enemies, and from thenceforward; as in Egypt, where, and in places near it, they were afflicted four hundred years, according to a prophecy given to Abraham their ancestor, and where their lives were made bitter with hard bondage; and in the times of the Judges, by several neighbouring nations, which was the time of their youth, or their settlement in Canaan; and afterwards in the times of their kings, particularly in the times of Ahaz king of Judah, by the Edomites and Philistines, and by Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria; and in the times of Hoshea, king of Israel, by Salmaneser, who carried away captive, ten tribes; and in the times of Jeconiah and Zedekiah, kings of Judah, by Nebuchadnezzar, who carried captive to Babylon the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. And the psalmist, by a spirit of prophecy, might have a further respect to the distresses of Israel in the times of Antiochus and the Maccabees, when the temple was profaned, the altar demolished, and the daily sacrifice made to cease, and many good men lost their lives; to which times the apostle may be thought to have regard, Heb 11:35; and also to their last affliction by the Romans, the greatest of all; and their present captivity, and deliverance from it;

may Israel now say; this now refers to the time of redemption, as Arama observes, whether at their return from Babylon, or at their future conversion; then reviewing their former troubles ever since they were a people, may say as before. This may be applied to mystical Israel, or to the church of God in Gospel times, which, in its infancy, and from its youth upwards, has been afflicted, many a time, and by many enemies; first, by the unbelieving Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus, and persecuted his apostles and members; then by Rome Pagan, under the ten persecutions of so many emperors; and afterwards by Rome Papal, the whore of Babylon, who many a time been drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. Yea, this may be applied to the Messiah, one of whose names is Israel, Isa 49:3; who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs all his days, even from his youth, Isa 53:3; he was the "Aijeleth Shahar", the hind of the morning, Ps 22:1, title; hunted by Herod in his infancy, **Mt 2:13**; and obliged to be carried into Egypt for safety when a child, from whence he was called, Ho 11:1; and ever after was more or less afflicted by his enemies, men or devils, in mind or body; and at last endured great sufferings, and death itself. It may moreover be applied to every Israelite indeed, to every true believer and member of Christ; conversion is their time of youth; they are first newborn babes, and then young men; as soon as regenerated, they are afflicted with the temptations of Satan, the reproaches and persecutions of men; which are many, though no more than necessary, and it is the will of God should be, and all for their good.

Psalms 129:2

Ver. 2. Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth,.... This is repeated for the confirmation of it, to excite attention to it, and to express the vehement affection of the speaker;

yet they have not prevailed against me; the Egyptians could not prevail against literal Israel; the more they were afflicted, the more they grew and multiplied; in the times of the Judges, one after another were raised up as deliverers of them; neither the Assyrians, Chaldeans, nor Romans, nor any other, have been able to cut them off from being a nation; they continue to this day: the enemies of the church of Christ, even the gates of hell, have not been able to prevail against it, being built upon a rock, so as to extirpate and destroy it, neither by open and cruel persecutors, nor by secret and fraudulent heretics; nor could the enemies of the Messiah prevail against him, for though they brought him to the dust of death, they could not hold him in it; and they themselves, through his death, were conquered by him, as sin, Satan, the world, and death itself; nor can the enemies of the saints prevail against them, God being on their side, Christ making them more than conquerors, the Spirit in them being greater than he that is in the world.

Psalms 129:3

Ver. 3. The ploughers ploughed upon my back,.... "Sinners", as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it; such that plough iniquity, and sow wickedness, **Job 4:8**; which may be understood of their carrying Israel captive, when they put yokes and bonds upon their necks, as upon oxen when they plough, as Arama interprets it; or it may design the destruction of their high places, signified by the back, such as the temple, the royal palace, and houses of their nobles, burnt with fire; yea, it was predicted that Zion should be ploughed as a field, **Mic 3:12**; and the Jews say that Turnus Rufus, the Roman general, as they call him, did plough up Jerusalem. The Syriac version is, "they whipped" their whips or scourges; with which many of the Israelites were scourged in the times of the Maccabees, Heb 11:36. And the Messiah himself, who gave his back to the smiters, and was buffeted and scourged by them, Isa 50:6; and many of his apostles and followers, Mt 10:17. The Targum renders it

"upon my body;"

and Aben Ezra says the phrase is expressive of contempt and humiliation, and compares with it Isa 51:23;

they made long their furrows; which signify afflictions, and the pain their enemies put them to, and the distress they gave them; as no affliction is joyous, but grievous, but like the rending and tearing up the earth with the plough; and also the length and duration of afflictions; such were the afflictions of Israel in Egypt and in Babylon, and of the church of God under Rome Pagan and Papal; but, as the longest furrows have an end, so have the most lasting afflictions. The Syriac version is, "they prolonged their humiliation", or "affliction"; Kimchi says the meaning is,

"they would give us no rest from servitude and bondage."

Psalms 129:4

Ver. 4. The Lord [is] righteous,.... Or gracious and merciful; hence acts of mercy are called righteousness in the Hebrew language; the Lord has compassion on his people under their afflictions, and delivers them; or is faithful to his promises of salvation to them, and just and righteous to render tribulation to them that trouble them, and take vengeance upon them;

he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked: alluding to the cords with which the plough is fastened to the oxen, which being cut, they cannot go on ploughing; or to the cords of whips, which when, cut cannot be used to any purpose: it designs the breaking of the confederacies of wicked men against the people of God; the confounding their counsels and schemes, and disappointing their devices; so that they cannot perform their enterprises, or carry their designs into execution, or go on with and finish their intentions. The Targum renders it,

"the chains of the wicked;"

see **Isa 5:18**.

Psalms 129:5

Ver. 5. Let them all be confounded,.... Or "ashamed": as all the enemies of God's people will be sooner or later, either in this world, or however when Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven; or let them be disappointed of their views, aims, and ends, when they will be confounded, as disappointed persons are;

and turned back; from pursuing their designs and accomplishing them; as the Assyrian monarch was, who had a hook put into his nose, and a bridle in his lips, and was turned back by the way he came, Isa 37:29;

that hate Zion; the inhabitants of Zion, who are called out of the world, and separated from the men of it, and therefore hated by them; the King of Zion, the Messiah, whom they will not have to reign over them; the doctrines of the Gospel, the word that comes out of Zion, to which they are utter enemies; and the laws and ordinances of Zion, the discipline of God's house, which they cannot bear to be under and submit unto.

Psalms 129:6

Ver. 6. Let them be as the grass [upon] the housetops,.... The tops of the houses in Judea were flat, and so grass grew upon them, being covered with plaster of terrace; though it was but small and weak, and being on high was exposed to the scorching sun, and soon withered {b}; and Menochius says {c} he saw such roofs in the island of Corsica, flat, and having earth upon them, smoothed and pressed, on which grass grew of its own accord; but being burnt up in summertime by the sun, soon withered, as here said. But what Olaus Magnus {d} relates is somewhat extraordinary; that, in the northern Gothic countries, they feed their cattle on the tops of houses, especially in a time of siege; he describes their houses as built of stone, high and large, and covered with rafters of fir and bark of birch; upon which is laid grass earth, cut out of the fields foursquare, and sowed with barley or oats, so that their roofs look like green meadows; and that what is sown, and the grass that grows thereon, might not wither before plucked up, they very constantly and diligently water it; but in the eastern countries, which are hot, and have but little rain, grass could not retain its verdure long, as follows;

which withereth afore it groweth up; to any height, the usual height of grass:

or, "before it is plucked up", as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; and so Jarchi. And this was their usual way of gathering in their corn; and which continues to this day, as Mr. Maundrell {e} affirms, who was an eyewitness to it in many places; where they plucked it up by handfuls from the roots, leaving the most fruitful fields as naked as if nothing had grown on them; and this they did for the sake of the straw, which was generally very short, and necessary for the sustenance of cattle; to which he thinks there is here a manifest allusion; but not corn, but grass, is here spoken of. The Targum is,

"before it flourisheth, an east wind cometh, blows upon it, and it is withered;"

and to the same purpose the Syriac version,

"which when the wind comes upon it, it fades and withers."

This expresses the high and elevated state and condition of wicked men, the pride and haughtiness of their hearts; yet their weakness and frailty, and the danger they are exposed unto, through the wrath and vengeance of God upon them; when they consume and wither away like grass on the housetops, and never come to the happiness they are hoping and wishing for; see Isa 37:27.

{b} See Shaw's Travels, p. 210, 211. {c} De Republica Heb. l. 7. c. 5. p. 666. {d} De Ritu Gent. Septent. l. 9. c. 12. {e} Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 144. Ed. 7.

Psalms 129:7

Ver. 7. Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand,.... Such grass never rises high enough to be mowed, nor is of that account to have such pains taken with it; nor the quantity so large as to fill a mower's hand, and carry it away in his arms;

nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom; when corn is mowed or reaped, the binders come and gather it up in their arms, and bind it in sheaves, and then bring it into the barn; but nothing of this kind is done with grass on the housetops. This represents the insignificancy and worthlessness of wicked men; who, when the harvest comes, the end of the world, will not be gathered in by the reapers, the angels, into Christ's garner into heaven as the wheat, the righteous will; but like the tares and chaff will be cast into unquenchable fire,

Mt 3:12.

Psalms 129:8

Ver. 8. Neither do they which go by say, the blessing of the Lord [be] upon you,.... As was usual with passengers, when they went by where mowers, and reapers, and binders, were at work in the field in harvest time; who used to wish the presence and blessing of God with them, and upon their labours; and who returned the salutation, as may be seen in Boaz and his reapers, Ru 2:4;

we bless you in the name of the Lord; which is either a continuation of the blessing of the passengers, or the answer of the reapers to them; so the Targum,

"nor do they answer them, "we bless you"," &c.

The sense is, that those wicked men would have no blessing on them, from God nor men; that no God speed would be wished them; but that they were like the earth, that is covered with briers and thorns; which is nigh unto cursing, and its end to be burned.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 130:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 130

A Song of degrees. This psalm is by some thought to have been written by David either when persecuted by Saul, and in great distress, and fearful he should perish by him; or else when in great distress of mind because of sin, after the affair of Bathsheba; and it is reckoned therefore among the penitential psalms. Though others think it was written by Ezra, or some other godly person in the captivity; and Aben Ezra and R. Obadiah interpret it of Israel in captivity. The Syriac inscription is,

"one of the psalms of ascension: it is said concerning Nehemiah the priest (or rather the prince or governor, since Nehemiah was no priest); and it intimates in it the prayer of the martyrs."

It may be applied to any person in distress, outward or inward; applying to

God for help and deliverance, for pardoning grace and mercy; encouraging himself and others to hope for it.

Ver. 1. Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Out of deep waters, out of the depths of the sea; not literally, as Jonah, who really was there, and from thence cried unto the Lord, **Jon 2:2**; but figuratively; meaning that he had been in the depths of sin, or brought into a low estate by it, as all men are: they are brought into debt by it, and so to a prison, the prison of the law, to be under its sentence of curse and condemnation; to a ditch, a horrible pit, a pit wherein is no water, and out of which men cannot extricate themselves; to a dunghill, to the most extrem poverty and beggary; to a dungeon, a state of thraldom, bondage, and captivity; into an hopeless and helpless condition. The depths the psalmist was now in were a deep sense of sin, under which he lay, and which brought him low; as every man is low in his own eyes, when he has a thorough sense of sin; then he sees himself unworthy of any favour from God, deserving of his wrath and displeasure; as a polluted guilty creature, loathsome and abominable; as wretched and undone in himself; as the chief of sinners, more brutish than any man, and as a beast before the Lord: but then, though the psalmist was in the depths of distress for sin, yet not in the depths of despair; he cried to God, he hoped in him, and believed there was pardon with him: or he might be in the depths of afflictions; which are sometimes, because of the greatness of them, compared to deep waters; to the deep waters of the sea, which threaten to overflow and overwhelm, but shall not; see Ps 42:7; and in such circumstances the psalmist cried to God for help and deliverance; not to man, whose help is vain; but to God, who is able to save, and is a present help in time of need. Theodoret understands this of the psalmist's crying to God from the bottom of his heart, in the sincerity of his soul; and so his cry is opposed to feigned and hypocritical prayers.

Psalms 130:2

Ver. 2. Lord, hear my voice,.... His prayer, which was vocal: God is a God hearing prayer; sometimes his people think he does not hear them; but he always does, and in his own time answers; for to hear prayer with him is to answer it; which he does likewise in his own way as well as time; and not always in the way and at the time his people would have him;

let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications; his prayers put up in an humble suppliant manner, for grace and mercy; not pleading merit and righteousness: these he desires God would hearken to and hear, listen unto, bow and incline his ears, as he is sometimes said to do; which is a wonderful instance of his condescension.

Psalms 130:3

Ver. 3. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities,.... Or "observe" {f} them. Not but that God does observe the sins of men: he sees all the evil actions of bad men done in the dark, which cannot hide them from him; and all the iniquities of good men, so as to correct and chastise for them, but not with his eye of vindictive justice. Or "keep" {g} them; should he keep a watchful eye over them, make strict inspection into them, enter into a critical examination of them, and of all their aggravated circumstances; should he keep them in mind and memory, retain them in the book of his remembrance; should he lay them up, and keep them sealed among his stores, in order to be brought to light, and brought out as charges another day, and to the condemnation of men; should he set them before him in the light of his countenance, and not cast them behind his back and into the depths of the sea; should he visit for them in a way of wrath, or enter into judgment on account of them, with men in their own persons; demanding satisfaction for them at their own hands, without any regard to the sacrifice and satisfaction of his Son; all a man's righteousness, repentance, humiliation and tears, would stand him in no stead, would not answer for him, or atone for his sins; still his iniquities would remain marked before God; the consequence of which would be eternal damnation, **Jer 2:22**;

O Lord, who shall stand? Not one; since all are sinners. The Arabic version adds, "before thee"; in his presence; in the house and courts of God, there to minister before him; to pray and praise, to preach and hear: or at his bar hereafter, with any boldness and confidence; so as to litigate the point with him in his court of judicature, before angels and men, and so as to carry the cause; the wicked shall not stand in judgment, **Ps 1:5**. Or who can stand before his vindictive justice, or bear his wrath and vengeance? No one can. See **Na 1:6** **Mal 3:2**.

{f} rmvt "observaveris", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis. {g} "Serves", Cocceius; "servaveris", Muis.

Psalms 130:4

Ver. 4. But [there is] forgiveness with thee,.... And with God only; not with angels, nor any of the sons of men; and which flows from his grace and mercy, through the blood of his Son. It appears to be with him by his promise of it in covenant; by appointing his Son to shed his blood for it, and exalting him as a Saviour to give it; by proclaiming it in the Gospel; and by the numerous instances of it, both under the Old and under the New Testament. Or, there is "a propitiation with thee"; as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it: God had found out Christ to be the propitiatory sacrifice for sin, and the ransom of his people; and set him forth in his purposes and decrees for that end; and which was made known by the sacrifices of the law, typical of it; and in the fulness of time he sent him to be the propitiation for it, and he is become so; and has made reconciliation for sin, and reconciled his people to God by the sufferings of death; and reconciled all the divine perfections of justice and holiness, grace and mercy, together, in the salvation of men; and is now an advocate the Father for them, pleading the propitiatory sacrifice of himself before him;

that thou mayest be feared; were it not for pardon, and the hope of it, men would be desperate; and, having no hope, would resolve upon taking their swing of sin, and be entirely negligent of the worship and service of God: was there no forgiveness of sin, there would be no more fear of God among men than there is among devils, for whom there is no forgiveness; there might be dread and trembling, as among them, but no godly fear: yea, if God was strictly to mark iniquity, and not pardon it, there would be none to fear him, all must be condemned and cut off by him; but, in order to secure and preserve his fear among men, he has taken the step he has to pardon sin through the propitiatory sacrifice of his Son; and a discovery, and an application of his grace, teaches men to fear to offend him; influences them to serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear, and engages them to fear him and his goodness, and him for his goodness's sake, **Tit 2:11** **Ho 3:5**.

Psalms 130:5

Ver. 5. I wait for the Lord,.... For his gracious presence and the light of his countenance, being in darkness, as well as in the deep; for his salvation and deliverance out of the depths of distress; for an answer of prayer, having cried unto him for application of pardoning grace he had some view and hopes of; and for the performance of promises the Lord had made to him; and for eternal glory and happiness: all which are to be patiently and quietly waited for, God having his set time to do them; and may be confidently expected, since he is gracious and merciful, wise and powerful, faithful and immutable. David might also be waiting for the coming of Christ, as all the Old Testament saints did; through whom all the above are enjoyed;

my soul doth wait; which shows that this was not mere bodily service or waiting upon God and for him in an external way; but expresses the intenseness of his mind, the earnest desires of his heart after God, his affection for him, and the exercise of all other graces on him; his whole soul, and all the powers of it, were engaged in this work;

and in his word do I hope: both in his essential Word the Messiah, who was the Hope of Israel as well as the Saviour of them; the object, ground, and foundation of hope, of all blessings, of grace and of glory: and in his word of promise concerning the coming of Christ, and salvation by him; concerning the pardon of sin through him, and eternal life by him; as well as in many other special and particular promises made to David, concerning himself, his family, and his kingdom. Arama and Kimchi interpret it of the promise of deliverance from captivity made to the Jews.

Psalms 130:6

Ver. 6. My soul [waiteth] for the Lord,.... This is repeated for the confirmation of it, and to show the vehement and constant disposition of his mind towards the Lord; as well as for the sake of what follows:

more than they that watch for the morning: [I say, more than] they that watch for the morning; or, "more than the morning watchers, that watch for or until the morning" {h}; than watchmen of cities, or the keepers of the wails, as Aben Ezra; those who are upon the last morning watch, and are looking out for the morning light; that they may go off from duty, and lie down and sleep: or than those that sit up with sick persons; who, being solitary and melancholy, as well as want sleep, long for the morning, that they may have some refreshment: or rather than the priests and Levites that watched in the temple, that waited for the morning, that they might be relieved by others; or else than those of that function, who were very diligent to observe the break of day, that they might enter upon their morning sacrifices; of which are many instances in the Misnah {i}. So the Targum,

"more than they that observe the morning watches, which they observe to offer up the morning sacrifice:"

and Kimchi's paraphrase is,

"who rise in the morning watches to pray."

The coming of Christ is said to be as the morning; and the light of God's countenance is comparable to the morning light; the discoveries of pardoning grace are through the bright shining of the sun of righteousness, and is the healing that is in his wings; and salvation and deliverance from any distress Is light that breaks forth as the morning: all and each of these are more desirable, and more to be waited for, than the natural light of the morning; see 2Sa 23:4 **Ho 6:3**.

{h} So Junius & Tremellius, Musculus, Cocceius. {i} See Misn. Yoma, c. 3. s. 1. & Tamid, c. 3. s. 2.

Psalms 130:7

Ver. 7. Let Israel hope in the Lord,.... The psalmist having himself hope in the Lord and in his word, through a view of forgiveness with him, exhorts and encourages others to do so likewise, even every Israelite indeed; and such may comfortably hope in him for salvation, which was designed, contrived, promised, and now wrought out for sinners, the chief of sinners, and to be had freely; and the Gospel declaration is, that whosoever believes in Christ shall be saved; as well as for the remission of sin, which God has promised in covenant; proclaimed in Christ, whom he has sent to obtain it, and exalted to give it; and has declared in the Gospel that whoever believes in him shall have it; and also for eternal life and happiness, which is the gift of God through Christ; is in the hands of Christ, and of which the Spirit of God is the earnest and pledge. Arguments encouraging hope follow:

for with the Lord [there is] mercy; which is natural and essential to him; as displayed, is either general, and over all his works, and towards all his creatures; or special, only shown to whom he will: this flows through Christ, and is very large and abundant; and appears in various instances, in the covenant, in the mission of Christ, and redemption by him; in regeneration, the forgiveness of sins, and in salvation; as well as it is bestowed on innumerable objects: and this nerves much to encourage hope, since there is plenty of it, and God is plenteous in it; and it is kept for many, for thousands, and even the vilest of sinners, share in it; God has set up a throne of grace and mercy for men to apply to, and he delights in showing mercy, and in those that hope in it:

or, there is "grace" {k} with him; an abundance of it in his heart; a fulness of it in his son; and large aboundings of it through Christ, in conversion, pardon, and other things;

and with him [is] plenteous redemption; the purpose of it was in him; the scheme of it was drawn by him; the covenant of it was made with Christ; the promise of it was published, and now the thing itself is done, and is with Christ the author of it: and this is "plenteous", if we consider the number of persons redeemed from among men, being such as no man can number; what of them is redeemed, even all of them, their souls and bodies; what they are redeemed from, from all sin, the law, its curse and condemnation, from death and hell, from Satan and all enemies; the several blessings included in it, or connected with it, pardon of sin, justification of persons, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life; the great price paid for it, the blood, the life of Christ, yea, himself: and the large display of love, grace, and mercy, wisdom, power, justice, and holiness, made in it. Kimchi interprets this of redemption from Egypt, Babylon, &c.

{k} doxh "gratia", Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 130:8

Ver. 8. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities. The Lord shall do it; in whom Israel is encouraged to hope; with whom grace and redemption were; or who was appointed to be the Redeemer. Redemption was then future, when these words were said, but certain, by the promise of God and agreement of Christ; and would be of the whole Israel, or elect of God; and that from "all" their iniquities, original and actual; sins, secret and open, of heart, lip, and life: and which is no small encouragement for Israel to hope in the Lord, for the sake of which this is added; as well as for the further illustration of the nature of redemption by Christ; which is complete, and now obtained, and is an eternal one.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 131:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 131

A Song of degrees of David. This psalm was written by David in his younger days, before he came to the throne; while he was in Saul's court, or persecuted by him. The occasion of it, as is generally thought, was a calumny cast upon him, as if he had some ill designs against Saul; was ambitious of the crown, and aspiring to the throne, and was plotting and forming measures to get the government into his hand; see 1Sa 24:9; with respect to all which he declares himself as innocent as a weaned child; and was as far from any such ambitious views as he was when in such a state; for the truth of which he appealed to God. Kimchi thinks that David, by his example, taught the Jews how to behave in captivity; that as he behaved, so should they, in great humility. The Syriac inscription is,

"it is said concerning Jesus the son of Josedech the high priest; and concerning humility."

But the psalm no doubt was written by David of himself.

Ver. 1. Lord, my heart is not haughty,.... The heart of every man is naturally so, and everything in civil life tends to make it more so; as riches and honour, birth and blood, wisdom, knowledge, and learning, strength and beauty, especially where there is a superiority of those to others; and in religious if persons have not the true grace of God, their hearts will be haughty; if they have a notion of the purity of human nature, and the goodness of their hearts, and are pure in their own eyes, and of the power of their free will to do this and the other, and of their perfection in good works, and are full of their own righteousness, and have some external gifts, and some degree of notional knowledge; but if the heart is made truly contrite under a sense of sin, and is melted with discoveries of pardoning love, it will be humble and not haughty: and those have such hearts who have seen the haughtiness of their hearts, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; their impotency to that which is spiritually good; their imperfection in all they do; the excellency and suitableness of Christ's righteousness, and that all their salvation is of grace, and that grace is entirely free; and the more spiritual knowledge and experience they have, the more humble they are: and this was David's case, and what he here said was no doubt true, since he hated lying; and besides he speaks this in the presence of and to God the searcher of hearts; though he had been anointed by Samuel, and knew that he was to be successor in the kingdom, yet his heart was not elated with it;

nor mine eyes lofty; or "lifted up" {l}, they were lifted up to God in prayer often, out not above his fellow creatures; he behaved himself humbly as well as wisely in Saul's court, where he was raised to great dignity, which gained

him the affections of the court, and of all Israel; but there are too many whose eyes are lofty, and their eyelids lifted up, who disdain to look upon those that are inferior to them, as the rich on the poor, the Pharisee on the publican; see Pr 30:13. This is the character of antichrist, that his look is more stout than his fellows, and is abominable in the sight of God, even a proud look as well as a proud heart, **Pr 6:17**. But this was not David's case; as he could not bear this in others he would not suffer it in himself,
Ps 101:5;

neither do I exercise myself in great matters; or, "walk" {m} in them; these were not the subject of his employment and conversation; he did many great things, in killing the lion and the bear that came into his father's flock; in slaying Goliath with a sling and stone only; in leading out the armies of Israel, and slaying his ten thousands; and he exercised himself in the great things of the law, which he was careful to observe, and studied the great things of the Gospel, which he had the highest esteem of, and desired to understand; but he did not seek human greatness, or the great things of this world, for himself; he had no ambitious views, or was desirous of the kingdom he was anointed to, before the proper time; see 1Sa 18:18;

or in things too high for me: or "too wonderful" {n}; see Job 42:3. He contemplated the wonderful make and frame of his body, the texture, symmetry, and use of each of its parts; he observed the wonderful providences of God towards him ever since he had a being; and particularly he took notice of the wonderful love of God to him, and remembered and talked of, and declared, the wonderful works of grace and redemption; but not things above his capacity, out of his reach, and which are secret, or not clearly revealed: and such things we should be content to be ignorant of, or not to have adequate ideas of, or be capable of accounting for; as the being and perfections of God, particularly his immensity and eternity; the mode of subsisting of the Persons in the Godhead; the generation of the Son and procession of the Spirit; the incarnation of Christ, and the union of the two natures in him; present providences, unsearchable and past finding out; and future things, especially the times and seasons of them; see Ps 139:6.

{l} wmr "elati", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c. {m} ytklh "ambulavi", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Cocceius, &c. {n} ynmm twalpnb "in mirabilibus prae me", Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 131:2

Ver. 2. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself,.... Or "my soul" {o}; behaved quietly and peaceably towards all men, even his inferiors in Saul's court and elsewhere, and had given no tokens of a restless, turbulent, and ambitious spirit; as well as behaved patiently under all his troubles and afflictions, reproaches and calumnies: or "if I have not" {p}, being in the form of an oath or imprecation, as Kimchi and Aben Ezra observe; if I have not thus behaved, let it come to me so and so, or let me be as a weaned child. Noldius renders it by way of interrogation, "have I not composed and quieted myself?" &c. The Targum is,

"if I have not put the hand to the mouth, and caused my soul to be silent, until it heard the words of the law;"

as a child that is weaned of his mother: and, for the further confirmation of it, it is added,

my soul [is] even as a weaned child; innocent and harmless, had no more ill designs against Saul than a weaned child; humble, meek, and lowly, and had no more aspiring and ambitious views than such an one; like that, weaned from the world, the riches, honours, pleasures, and profits of it; as well as from nature, from self, from his own righteousness, and from all dependence on it; and as a child that is weaned from the breast wholly depends on its nurse for sustenance, so did he wholly depend upon God, his providence, grace, and strength; and as to the kingdom, he had no more covetous desires after it than a weaned child has to the breast, and was very willing to wait the due time for the enjoyment of it. The Targum,

"as one weaned on the breasts of its mother, I am strengthened in the law."

This is to be understood not of a child while weaning, when it is usually peevish, fretful, and froward; but when weaned, and is quiet and easy in its mother's arms without the breast.

{o} yvpn "animam meam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {p} al Ma "si non", Montanus; "male sit mihi si non", Tigurine version.

Psalms 131:3

Ver. 3. Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever. What he did

himself, and found it good for him to do, that he knew was good for others, and therefore exhorts and encourages to it, to hope in the Lord and wait for his salvation; and which should be done constantly, and to the end of life, or till the thing hoped for is enjoyed; see **Heb 3:6**. Perhaps some respect is here had to the people of Israel, especially the friends of David, who were weary of Saul's government, and impatient to have David on the throne; whom he advises to wait patiently, and not take any indirect steps to bring it about, but leave it with God, and hope and trust in him; compare with this
1Sa 24:7;
See Gill on "Ps 130:7".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 132:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 132

A Song of degrees. Some think this psalm was written by Solomon, since Ps 132:8, are much the same with which he concluded his prayer at the dedication of the temple, **2Ch 6:41**; on account of which it is supposed to be written; though he might borrow these words from hence, as he sometimes did recite the words of his father, **Pr 4:4**. Others are of opinion that it was written by David, either when he brought the ark from Baale or Kirjathjearim to the house of Obededom, and from thence to Zion, **2Sa 6:1**; or when he had that conversation with Nathan the prophet, in which he expressed such a strong desire to build a house for God, **2Sa 7:1**; or, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi think, after he had numbered the people, which brought the pestilence on them; and when he and the elders of Israel were in distress on that account, and he was ordered to build an altar in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite, 1Ch 21:18; by which it appeared to him that this was the place for the house of the Lord God he had been so desirous of building, 1Ch 22:1. It seems by Ps 132:6, that more persons than one were concerned in this psalm, at least the psalmist represents more; and Theodoret takes it to be a prayer of the captives in Babylon, and a prophecy of the Saviour of the world; and this is favoured by the Syriac inscription, which is,

"an anonymous psalm, when they would build the house of the Lord of hosts; and a prayer of David, and a revelation of Christ."

And certain it is that Christ is spoken of in it, if not principally designed.

Ver. 1. Lord, remember David, [and] all his afflictions. Which prayer might be put up by David on his own account, as Nehemiah does, Ne 13:22; and be considered as a petition to the Lord that he would remember his mercy and lovingkindness to him, and him with the favour he bears to his own people, as he elsewhere prays; that he would remember his covenant with him, and his promise to him, on which he had caused him to hope; and sympathize with him, and support him under all his trials and exercises, in his kingdom and family. Or, if it is considered as Solomon's, it may be a request that the Lord would remember the promise he had made to David, that his son should build a house for him, which he desired he might be enabled to do; that he would remember the covenant of royalty he had made with him, that he should not lack a son to sit upon his throne; and particularly that he would remember the promise of the Messiah, that should be of his seed. Also "his afflictions", his toil and labour of mind, his great anxiety about building a house for God; the pains he took in finding out a place for it, in drawing the pattern of it, in making preparations for it, and in the charges he gave his son concerning it: the Septuagint and other versions render it "his humility" {q}; which agrees with the subject of the preceding psalm, and may particularly respect what he expressed to Nathan when this affair of building the temple was much upon his mind, **2Sa 7:2**. Moreover, respect in all this may be had by the authors of this psalm, or those herein represented, to the Messiah, who is the antitype of David; in his name, which signifies "beloved"; in his birth, parentage, and circumstances of it; in the comeliness of his person, and in his characters and offices, and who is often called David, Ps 89:3; see Jer 30:9 **Ho 3:5**; and so is a petition that God would remember the covenant of grace made with him; the promise of his coming into the world; his offering and sacrifice, as typified by the legal ones; and also remember them and their offerings for his sake; see Ps 20:3. Likewise "all his afflictions" and sufferings he was to endure from men and devils, and from the Lord himself, both in soul and body; and so as to accept of them in the room and stead of his people, as a satisfaction to his justice. Or, "his humility" in the assumption of human nature, in his carriage and behaviour to all sorts of men, in his ministrations to his disciples, in seeking not his own glory, but his Father's, and in his sufferings and death, which was foretold of him, **Zec 9:9**.

{q} wtwne praothtov autou, Sept. "mansuetudinis ejus", V. L. so Syr. Arab. Ethiop.

Psalms 132:2

Ver. 2. How he sware unto the Lord, [and] vowed unto the mighty [God] of Jacob. Whom Jacob called so, Ge 49:24; and to whom he vowed a vow, and is the first we read of that did make one, and it was concerning the house of God, Ge 28:17; and who had an experience of the might and power of God in protecting and defending him from his brother Esau: of this oath and vow of David no mention is made elsewhere, but no doubt they were made; see Ps 119:106; of the Messiah's swearing, though upon another account, to whom this may be applied, see Isa 45:23.

Psalms 132:3

Ver. 3. Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house,.... The new house and palace David built for himself after he came to the throne, made of cedar, **2Sa 5:11**; not that he should never enter into it till he had found a dwelling for God, but that he should not go into it with pleasure till that was done; for this and what follows are hyperboles, as Kimchi observes, and signify that he should have no peace nor satisfaction of mind till this was accomplished. It may be applied to our Lord's ascension to heaven, which was not till after he had purchased the church with his blood, which is the temple and habitation of God;

nor go up into my bed; or "the bed that made for me" {r}; the royal bed, a bed of down, with soft pillows, fit for a person of such dignity to lie down on. Ainsworth renders it "the pallets of my bed"; the phrase of going up agrees with the custom of the eastern countries, who have galleries in their chambers where they are set; at one end of each chamber in their houses there is a little gallery raised three, four, or five feet above the floor, with a balustrade in the front of it, with a few steps likewise leading up to it; here they place their beds {s}; so that when they went to bed they might with great propriety be said to go up to it; but this David could not do with pleasure, so long as there was no place and habitation for God.

{r} yewuy vre "lectum strati mei, vel stratorum meorum", Gejerus, Michaelis.
{s} Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 209. Ed. 2.

Psalms 132:4

Ver. 4. I will not give sleep to mine eyes, [or] slumber to mine eyelids. Not that he never would or did take any sleep till this thing was brought about he had so much at heart; but that he could not and would not suffer himself to sleep comfortably and quietly because of it. Aben Ezra interprets it of sleep at noon; the phrases express his great desire and solicitude to have this affair accomplished, and his eager and diligent pursuit of it; see **Pr 6:4**; of the eager desire of Christ to suffer and die for his people, that they might be brought near to God, and be his dwelling place, see Lu 12:50.

Psalms 132:5

Ver. 5. Until I find a place for the Lord,.... To build a house on for the Lord; which it seems was unknown till the times of David; for though mention had been made of a place the Lord would choose to cause his name to dwell in, yet the particular place was not pointed out,
De 12:11. David was very solicitous to find it out, and did,
1Ch 22:1;

an habitation for the mighty [God] of Jacob; See Gill on "Ps 132:2"; or "habitations", or "tabernacles" {t}; the temple, which is meant, consisting of three parts, the court, the holy place, and the holy of holies; this was typical of the human nature of Christ, the temple of his body, the tabernacle of God's pitching, **Joh 2:19**; in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells, the glory of God is seen, and through whom he grants his presence to his people; and also of the church of God, the temple of the living God, where he dwells and is worshipped: and that this might be a fit habitation for God was the great desire of the Messiah, and not only the end and issue of his sufferings and death, but also the design of his preparations and intercession in heaven, Joh 14:2.

{t} twnkvm "habitacula", Pagninus, Montanus; "tabernacula", Musculus, Vatablus, Cocceius.

Psalms 132:6

Ver. 6. Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah,.... Either of the ark which David and others had heard of, that it formerly was at Shiloh,
Jos 18:1; here called Ephratah, as some think; so the Ephraimites are called Ephrathites, Jud 12:5; and Elkanah of Ramathaimzophim, of Mount Ephraim, is said to be an Ephrathite, **1Sa 1:1**; but this tribe the Lord chose not, but the tribe of Judah, for his habitation; and rejected the tabernacle of Shiloh, and removed it from thence,

Ps 78:60;

we found it in the fields of the wood; at Kirjathjearim, which signifies the city of woods; being built among woods, and surrounded with them: here the ark was twenty years, and here David found it; and from hence he brought it to the house of Obededom, and from thence to Zion, **1Sa 7:1**. Or else the place where the temple was to be built; which was not known till the times of David, who was of Ephratah or Bethlehem: here he was born and brought up; and here he was, as Arama supposes, when it was revealed to him where the temple should be built. According to R. Moses, the sense is, We have heard of it by the hand of David, who was of Ephratah: but Aben Ezra thinks the meaning is, that in former times men used to say, We have heard from the mouths of the prophets that the chosen place was near to Bethlehem Ephratah; only the precise place was not known, whether to the east or west, or north or south, of Bethlehem. Some think that not any particular city is intended, but a country, even all the neighbourhood of Bethlehem Ephratah; and took in Jerusalem, where the temple was built, it being but a few miles from the place; so Adrichomius {u} says, the country round about Ephratah had its name from thence; see 1Ki 11:26. Now the place found for the building of the temple was "the fields of the wood", or the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite, and was on Mount Moriah; David found by the order he had to build an altar here, and by the acceptance of his sacrifices, that this was the place for the house of God, 1Ch 22:1; and here Solomon built the temple, **2Ch 3:1**; and which was formerly a woody place, as mountains generally are; and this seems to have been when Abraham offered his son on it, who then spied a ram caught in the thickets, Ge 22:2. The Targum is,

"we found it in the field of the forest of Lebanon, the place where the ancient fathers prayed;"

the temple being built of the wood of Lebanon. But all this is to be understood of the Lord, the mighty God of Jacob, who was heard of at Ephratah; the Shechinah, of divine Majesty; so Kimchi, Arama, and Ben Melech. And indeed the Messiah is meant, the antitype of the ark and temple; of whom the saints or believers in him, a chorus of which is here introduced, had heard that he should be born at Ephratah, which is Bethlehem; see Ge 35:19. And if this psalm was written by the captives in Babylon, they might have heard of this from the prophecy of Micah, **Ps 5:2**; the shepherds heard from the mouths of the angels that Christ was born there; and we Christians have heard the same, and know and believe it, **Lu 2:4**. And he has been "found in the fields of the wood"; in a low, mean, abject state, as this phrase signifies; Eze 16:5. The shepherds found him rejected from being in the inn, there being no room for him, and lying in a manger, **Lu 2:7**; the angels found him in the wilderness, among the wild beasts of the field, **Mr 1:13**; nor had he the convenience even of foxes, and birds of the air; had no habitation or place where to lay his head, **Mt 8:20**; And he is to be found in the field of the Scriptures, where this rich treasure and pearl of great price lies hid, Mt 13:44; and being preached among the Gentiles, after his incarnation, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension, who are compared to wildernesses, and desert places, was found by many of them, Isa 35:1; and which serves to set off with a foil his glory; being like the apple tree among the trees of the wood, **So 2:3**.

{u} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 41.

Psalms 132:7

Ver. 7. We will go into his tabernacles,.... The tabernacles of him that was heard of at Ephratah; born in Bethlehem, and found in the ministry of the word among the Gentiles: enter into his churches, raised and formed there, which are the tabernacles or dwelling places of Christ; where he has his residence, takes his walks, and dwells; and which are very lovely, amiable, and pleasant, and so desirable by believers to go into; because of the presence of God in them, the provisions there made for them, the company there enjoyed; the work there done, prayer, praise, preaching, and hearing the word, and administration of all ordinances. Some render it as a mutual exhortation, "let us go into his tabernacles" {w}; see **Isa 2:2**;

we will worship at his footstool; any place of worship on earth may be called the footstool of God, with respect to heaven his throne, Isa 66:1; particularly the ark is so called, 1Ch 28:2; in which the law was; over which was the mercy seat, and over that the cherubim of glory, and between them the Majesty of God dwelt; so that the ark was properly his footstool: and all this being typical of Christ may direct us to observe, that all religious, spiritual, and evangelic worship, is to be performed in his name, and in the faith of him, and by the assistance of his grace and Spirit; see Ps 99:5.

{w} So Tigurine version, Vatablus, Musculus, Gejerus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 132:8

Ver. 8. Arise, O Lord, into thy rest,.... Which words, and what follow, were used by Solomon at the dedication of the temple; and with which he concluded his prayer, **2Ch 6:41**; and so may be a request to the Lord, that he would take up his residence in the temple built for him, where he would have a firm and stable place of rest; who, from the time of Israel's coming out of Egypt, had not dwelt in a house; but had walked in a tent or tabernacle from place to place, **2Sa 6:6**; and that he would take up his abode in his church, the antitype of the temple, and rest in his love there, and cause his people to rest also; see Ps 132:13;

thou, and the ark of thy strength; the Targum is,

"thou, and the ark in which is thy law."

This is sometimes called the strength of the Lord; because by it he showed his great strength in destroying the enemies of his people, the Philistines and others; see Ps 78:61. It was a type of Christ, who is the power of God, and the mighty God; and, as man, made strong by the Lord; and, as Mediator, has all strength in him for his people. And so the words may be considered as a request to him, either to arise and enter into his rest in heaven, having done his work of redemption and salvation here on earth, for which he became incarnate; or to grant his presence with his church, and take up his rest there, and give them spiritual peace and rest for their souls.

Psalms 132:9

Ver. 9. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness,.... In **2Ch 6:41**; it is, "with salvation", as in Ps 132:16. Either the ministers of the word; who may be said to be clothed with righteousness when they perform their work righteously, and faithfully dispense the word, keep back nothing that is profitable, and administer the ordinances according to the rules of Christ; and when their lives and conversations are agreeable to the Gospel they preach; see Job 29:14; or else all true believers; who are priests as well as kings unto God; and who are clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness; and with the internal graces of the Spirit, the new man created in righteousness and true holiness; and with conversation garments, becoming the Gospel, and their profession of it;

and let thy saints shout for joy; the Levites; thy Holy Ones, as the Targum; so Kimchi, Arama, and others; the singers in the temple: but rather the Lord's sanctified ones, true believers under the Gospel dispensation, are meant; who shout for joy, and have reason so to do, at the incarnation of Christ, at his ascension to heaven, at the Gospel preached by his ministers, and at the robe of righteousness with which they are clothed. In **2Ch 6:41** it is, "rejoice in goodness"; in the goodness of the Lord; in the good things bestowed on them, or promised to them.

Psalms 132:10

Ver. 10. For thy servant David's sake,.... Not for any virtues, or excellencies or merits, of David, literally understood; rather for the sake of the covenant and promises made with him: but for the sake of the antitypical David, the Messiah, the son of David according to the flesh, and the servant of the Lord as Mediator; for whose sake, and in whose name, prayers and supplications are made and presented;

turn not away the face of thine anointed; not David; rather Solomon, as the Targum expresses it; so Jarchi: but any of the Lord's anointed, every Christian, or believer in Christ, is an anointed one; and has received the unction from the Holy One, the oil of true grace. And the request is, that God would not turn such away from him, and cause them to depart from his throne of grace, ashamed and disappointed; but hear and answer their petitions, for his Son's sake. In **2Ch 6:42**; it is added, "remember the mercies of David thy servant"; the kind and good things promised to him, and perform them.

Psalms 132:11

Ver. 11. The Lord hath sworn [in] truth unto David,.... By Nathan the prophet; when he assured him that his house, kingdom, and throne, should be established for ever, **2Sa 7:5**; and though there is no mention made of the oath of God, no doubt there was one; or however his word was his oath, as Kimchi observes: besides, the Apostle Peter is express for it that there was one, which was added to his word for the confirmation of it; who is said to swear by himself, because there is no greater; and sometimes by one or other of his perfections, as by his holiness elsewhere; so here in or by his truth, his faithfulness, being the God of truth that cannot lie. Or it may be rendered, "the Lord hath sworn truth unto David" {x}; that which is truth: and we may be assured he could not possibly assert or swear anything else; see
Ps 89:3;

he will not turn from it; change his mind, repent of his oath; make it void, or not fulfil it; for he is unchangeable in his perfections, purposes, and promises; whatever he says and swears to he will certainly perform;

of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne; a king upon thy throne, as the Targum: meaning not Solomon; though it is true that the Lord chose him, above all the sons of David, to be his successor in the kingdom, and did place him upon his throne before his death; but a greater than Solomon is here, even the Messiah; as is clear from the testimony of the Apostle Peter, **Ac 2:30**, by which it appears not only that this promise and oath relate to the Messiah; but that David knew they did, and so understood them; and which have been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth: who, as he was notoriously the fruit of David's body according to the flesh, or his human nature; or was of his seed, being born of the Virgin Mary, who lineally descended from him; so he was set upon the throne of David, as it was foretold both by the prophet Isaiah, and by the angel to the virgin, he should, **Isa 9:6** **Lu 1:32**; not in a literal sense; for though he was no doubt right heir to the throne of David so understood, yet his kingdom was not of this world; but he was set as King over God's holy hill of Zion, the church; and reigned over the house of Jacob, the whole Israel of God; the mystical and spiritual Israel, consisting of Jews and Gentiles: his throne, or the seat of his kingdom, is the church; his sceptre the Gospel; his crown the glory true believers in him give him; his laws, by which he rules, are its his word, and written in the hearts of his subjects; and his kingdom shall continue for ever.

{x} tma-ebvn "juravit veritatem", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 132:12

Ver. 12. If thy children will keep my covenant, and my testimony that I shall teach them,.... The former part of the promise and oath is absolute, respecting the Messiah; but this is conditional, and relates to the seed of David, both immediate, and in succeeding generations; proposing their observance of the law of God, as the condition of their enjoying the kingdom after him. By the "covenant" and "testimony" are meant the same thing; the law, which was given to the people of Israel in the form of a covenant, and was a testimony of the will of God to them: in this the kings of Israel were to read continually, and conduct according to it in their personal walk and conversation, and by it to rule the people they were set over; and which the Lord promises to teach them by his prophets, whose business it was not to promulgate new laws, but to explain what were given. Now in case this was attended to, and the instructions of prophets observed, then thus it would be,

their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore; but, the condition not being fulfilled, this did not take place: Solomon, his immediate successor, fell into idolatry in the latter part of his life; and Rehoboam, his son, slighted the advice of the old men, founded upon the laws of God, and ten tribes revolted from him: several succeeding kings of Judah, of the house of David, were very wicked princes; and the race of them ended in Zedekiah, who was carried captive into Babylon. Indeed all this is true of Christ and his spiritual offspring; he kept the covenant of grace made with his divine Father; and the law or testimony; and fulfilled it in the room and stead of his people; and did the whole will and work of his Father, and in all things pleased him: and his children also lay hold by faith on the covenant and the promises of it; and receive, observe, and retain the testimony of the Gospel; and shall reign with Christ, on the same throne with him, for ever and ever.

Psalms 132:13

Ver. 13. For the Lord hath chosen Zion,.... Not only to build upon it the temple in a literal sense, and for the place of his worship; but also for the seat of his majesty, and over which he has set his Son as King; and all this from the love he bears to Zion, which, in a figurative and spiritual sense, is his church; whom he has chosen to privileges, to grace and glory, and for his service and honour; see
Ps 78:67;

he hath desired [it] for his habitation; heaven is the habitation of his holiness and glory; Christ is his dwelling place, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily: yet his desire is to his church and people; his heart is set upon them, and upon their salvation; his delight is in them, and he takes pleasure in walking with them, and dwelling among them; they being built up an habitation for God through the Spirit; see Ps 68:16.

Psalms 132:14

Ver. 14. This [is] my rest for ever,.... The rest of my majesty, as the Targum;

the place of his rest: and this being for ever shows that not Mount Zion literally, nor the temple, are meant; but the church and people of God, in whom he rests in his love, and rejoices over with joy; who are the objects of his delight, and with whom he abides for ever; for this phrase is expressive of pleasure and delight, and of permanency and perpetuity;

here will I dwell, for I have desired it; not merely by his omnipresence, in which sense he dwells everywhere, both in heaven and in earth; nor only by his omnipotence, by which he upholds all creatures in their being, and so is present with them all; and they all live and move, and have their being, in him: but by his Spirit and grace reviving and refreshing the hearts of his people with his gracious presence; which is enjoyed in his house and ordinances, and makes them lovely and delightful; and may be expected there, since he has promised it, and it is so desirable and agreeable to himself to dwell there.

Psalms 132:15

Ver. 15. I will abundantly bless her provision,.... The provision of Zion, the church of God, the word and ordinances, of which Christ is the sum and substance; the Gospel is milk for babes, and meat for strong men; the ordinances are a feast of fat things; Christ's flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink deed; the whole provision is spiritual, savoury, salutary, strengthening, satisfying, and nourishing, when the Lord blesses it; as he does to those who hunger and thirst after it, and feed upon it by faith; so that their souls grow thereby, and they become fat and flourishing; grace increases in them, and they are fruitful in every good work: and this the Lord promises to do "abundantly", in a very large way and manner; or "certainly", for it is, in the original text, {y} "in blessing I will bless", that is, will surely bless, as this phrase is sometimes rendered. Arama observes that the second blessing is because of the greatness of it; and says, that their Rabbin's understand it of the fertility of the land of Israel in the time to come, when there will be no poor in it; but all is to be understood spiritually of the church in Gospel times;

I will satisfy her poor with bread; Zion has her poor; persons may be poor and yet belong to Zion, belong to Zion and yet be poor; there are poor in all the churches of Christ: our Lord told his disciples that they had the poor, and might expect to have them always with them; and particular directions are given to take care of Zion's poor under the Gospel dispensation, that they may not want bread in a literal sense: though by the "poor" are chiefly designed the Lord's afflicted and distressed ones; or who in a spiritual sense are poor, and sensible of their spiritual poverty, and seek after the true riches; or are poor in spirit, to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs: these the Lord promises to satisfy, to fill them to the full with the bread of the Gospel, made of the finest of the wheat, of which there is enough and to spare in his house; and with Christ the bread of life, of which those that eat shall never die, but live for ever.

{y} Krba Krb "benedicendo benedicam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus.

Psalms 132:16

Ver. 16. I will also clothe her priests with salvation,.... With the garments of salvation, as the Targum; in answer to the petition, Ps 132:9; but more is promised than prayed for, "salvation" including "righteousness" and all other blessings; and may be interpreted, as there, either of the ministers of the Gospel clothed with the doctrine of salvation by Christ, coming forth full fraught with it, openly publishing and proclaiming it; salvation being made public and manifest by them as a garment, as Aben Ezra observes: moreover Gospel ministers are instruments of saving others; the Gospel preached by them being the power of God unto salvation, as well as they themselves are saved in the same way, **1Ti 4:16**; besides, they are kept by the power of God, and in the hands of Christ, who protects them, and as it were covers them with the garment of salvation, while they are publishing it to the world, to whose reproaches and insults they are exposed: or else this may be interpreted of the people of God in common, who are all kings and priests to God, and are all clothed with the garments of salvation, Isa 61:10. Salvation by Christ is brought near to them, is applied to them, and put upon them as a garment; it is from Christ, and without them, though upon them; it is their clothing and their ornament, as well as their security from sin, law, death, and hell; see Ps 149:4;

and her saints shall shout aloud for joy; not only "shout", as is entreated, Ps 132:9; but "shout aloud"; it shall be a jubilee time with them on account of the Gospel of salvation, the joyful sound sounded in their ears by the ministers of it clothed with it; and on account of the salvation itself, so great, so suitable, so free, so complete and full, and in which the glory of God is so much displayed; and on account of the application of it to themselves, being clothed with it and possessed of the joys of it. These the Jewish writers generally understand of the Levites.

Psalms 132:17

Ver. 17. There will I make the horn of David to bud,.... Which the Targum interprets "a glorious" King; and both Kimchi and Ben Melech, and also Arama, understand it of the Messiah, and very rightly; called the horn of the Lord's Anointed, and the horn of salvation, **1Sa 2:10** **Lu 1:69**; expressive of his power and strength, in allusion to the horns of cattle, with which they push their enemies and defend themselves; so horns are interpreted kings, **Da 7:24**; and is fitly applied to Christ, raised up of the seed of David, the man of God's right hand, made strong for himself, who is a mighty King and an able Saviour; as appears by what he has done and suffered, by the deliverance and salvation of his people, and by the destruction of all their enemies: and it is here promised that God would make this horn to "bud" or branch out, in allusion to another name of the Messiah, the "branch"; and it is the same as raising up to David a righteous branch, or causing the Messiah to spring forth as a branch out of his roots, for which reason he is called the Lord's servant, the branch, and the man the branch; see Jer 23:5; and it should be further observed that the Lord says, "there" will I do it; that is, either at Ephratah, which is Bethlehem, the place where the Messiah was to be born, and was born; or else at Zion or Jerusalem, where he appeared and showed himself, where he taught his doctrines and wrought many of his miracles, and near to which he suffered and died; and this shows that the Messiah must be come, that this horn of David must have budded, or the man the branch brought forth, since Bethlehem and Jerusalem are long ago demolished;

I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed; which Jerom understands of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, who was a burning and shining light, but was not "that light", that famous light, that was to come, but was sent to bear witness of it; he being but as a candle, as the word here used signifies, in comparison of the sun of righteousness; but rather it means a son and successor of David, the Lord's anointed; in which sense the phrase is often used,
1Ki 11:36; and here the famous and illustrious Son and successor of his, the Messiah, the light which lightens every man with the light of reason; and who is the light of the world of his people, enlightening them with the light of grace, and will be the light of the New Jerusalem state, and of the ultimate glory; him God has "ordained" as such, even foreordained him before the foundation of the world; this lamp, or light, he prepared in eternity, and it dwelt with him, and therefore was desired to be sent out from him, **Da 2:22**;

which places are to be understood of the Messiah; See Gill on "Da 2:22" and See Gill on "Ps 43:3".

Psalms 132:18

Ver. 18. His enemies will I clothe with shame, With the garments of shame, as the Targum; very different from the clothing of Zion's priests; all that are incensed against Christ as a King and Saviour shall sooner or later be ashamed; either here, when brought to a sense of their evil, to repentance for it, and faith in him; or hereafter, at the resurrection, when they will rise to shame and everlasting contempt, and when they shall see him come in the clouds of heaven, in power and great glory, to judge the world in righteousness, Isa 45:24;

but upon himself shall his crown flourish; being crowned with glory and honour, as he now is at the right hand of God, he reigns, and will reign, till all his enemies become his footstool; his throne is for ever and ever, and his kingdom an everlasting one; and will be very flourishing in the latter day, when his subjects shall be many, and when there shall be an abundance of peace and prosperity, and of that no end; the crown of the Messiah shall flourish on him as a king, shine out and be very conspicuous, as Aben Ezra and Jarchi interpret the word used; and so his crown as a priest; the same word is used of the holy crown of the priests put upon the mitre, on which Holiness to the Lord was inscribed; and the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, render it, "my holiness"; and, as his own crown is a never-fading one, such an one he will give to his ministers, and all that love him appearing, **1Pe 5:4**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 133:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 133

A Song of degrees of David. This psalm was penned by David, as some think when all the tribes of Israel united and chose and anointed him king over them, **2Sa 5:1**; but, according to others, when the rebellion of his son Absalom was quelled, and all the tribes of Israel strove who should first bring back the king, and show the greatest zeal and loyalty to him, 2Sa 19:9; Theodoret supposes it to be prophetic, and to have respect to the union of the tribes after the

Babylonish captivity, who had been disunited in the times of Rehoboam, but now were no more two nations and kingdoms, but one; see Eze 37:16; and others carry it further still, even to the first times of the Gospel, when the Christians were of one heart and of one soul, **Ac 4:32**; it may indeed be applied to any community, civil or religious, that is in peace and unity: and no doubt the design of David was to promote peace and harmony among his subjects; and love and affection in his family, among his children, brethren one of another, and of Solomon; who was to be his heir and successor, and under whose government it would be well for them to live peaceably and quietly. Kimchi and Ben Melech refer the psalm to the times of the Messiah, and take it to be a prediction of the peace and concord between the King Messiah and the priest, of which Zerubbabel and Joshua were types; see **Zec 6:13**. The inscription of the Syriac version is,

"it is said of Moses and of Aaron, who dwelt in the tabernacle, in the house of the Lord; and there is an intimation in it of the perfect people,"

the Christians in Gospel times.

Ver. 1. Behold, how good and how pleasant [it is],.... Aben Ezra thinks the word thing should be supplied; the thing is what follows;

for brethren to dwell together in unity: which the Targum interprets of Zion and Jerusalem, as two brethren; Aben Ezra of the priests; Kimchi of the King Messiah and the priest; and Jarchi, and Kimchi's father, of the Israelites; which is best of all, especially of those who are Israelites indeed; for this is not to be understood of all mankind, who are in some sense brethren, being all of one blood, and among whom peace is to be cultivated; nor merely of those of the same nation, under one and the same government, who should endeavour to live peaceably and quietly; nor of brethren in a strict natural state, who belong to the same family, and are of the same parents, and should be kindly affectioned one to another; but rather of such who are so in a spiritual sense, who have God for their fatherly adoption and regeneration, are related to Christ the firstborn among many brethren, and are members one of another, in the same church state; all which are a reason why they should love as brethren, and endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, Mt 23:8 **1Pe 2:17**; and "to dwell together in unity"; even as one man, as if one soul actuated them all; it is not only to dwell and abide in the house of God, where they have all a name and a place; but to associate together there, to go up to the house of God in company, and with delight to join together in acts of religious worship; to serve the Lord with one consent, with one mind and mouth to glorify God, and to be of one accord, having the same love; and to do all kind and good offices one to another in the most hearty and cordial manner; serving each other in love, bearing one another's burdens, sympathizing with each other in all circumstances, forgiving each other offences committed, praying with one another, and building up each other in their most holy faith, stirring up one another to love and to good works: now this is both "good" and "pleasant"; it is good, as being according to the will of God, the new command of Christ; what evidences the truth of regeneration, and of being the disciples of Christ; what makes the communion of saints comfortable and edifying, and without which a profession of religion is good for nothing: and it is pleasant to God and Christ, to angels and men, to the ministers of the Gospel, and to all about them and in a connection with them; and it is this which makes any particular dispensation in time delightful and agreeable; as the first times of the Gospel, and the latter day glory, the Philadelphian church state, which has its name from brotherly love; yea, it will be the glory and delight of heaven. Now this is ushered in with a note of attention and admiration, "behold", and with a note of exclamation, "how"; the psalmist pointing at some instance or instances of this kind, which were very amiable, and worthy of imitation; and suggesting that such a case is rare and wonderful, and inexpressibly good, profitable, and pleasant. Gussetius {z} renders it, "how good is the sabbatism of brethren, even gathered together"; for the exercise of religion, prayer, praise, &c.

{z} Ebr. Comment. p. 829.

Psalms 133:2

Ver. 2. [It is] like the precious ointment upon the head,.... The composition which Moses was ordered to make of the principal spices, and therefore called precious; and which was poured on the heads of kings and priests, when they were anointed with it, Ex 30:23;

that ran down upon the beard, [even] Aaron's beard; this was put upon the head of Aaron when he was anointed, and so on any other high priest, and trickled down to his beard; see Ex 29:7. The reasons Kimchi and Ben Melech give, why the anointing of Aaron and other priests is mentioned, and not the anointing of a king, or of David himself, are, because the anointing of Aaron was first, and also more public and better known by the people;

that went down to the skirts of his garments; or, "the mouth" or "opening of his garments" {a}; not the extremity of them, as our version inclines to; for not so

great a quantity of oil was poured upon him; nor would it have been decent to have his clothes thus greased from top to bottom: but the upper part of his garment, the top of the coat, on which the beard lay, as Jarchi; the neck or collar of it, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; the hole in which the head went through when it was put on, about which there was a band, that it might not be rent,
Ex 28:32; where the Septuagint use the same word as here. Suidas {b} says, David means the superior aperture of the garment, that which we call the neck or collar band; and so Theodoret: and the Arabic version renders it, the "aperture", or opening of it; and hitherto the ointment came. This was typical of the grace of the Spirit, the unction from the Holy One; which has been poured on Christ, the head of the church, without measure; and with which he has been anointed above his fellows; and from him it is communicated to all his members; to every one of which is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ; and who from his fulness receive, and grace for grace: and particularly brotherly love is compared to this ointment; because of the preciousness of it, which is true of every grace; and because of the extensiveness of it, reaching to head and members, to Christ and all his saints, the meanest and lowest of them; and because of its fragrancy and sweet odour to all that are sensible of it; and because of its delightful, cheering, and refreshing nature; like ointment and perfume it rejoices the heart; yea, the worst things said, or reproofs given, in brotherly love, are like oil, pleasant and useful, Pr 27:9; and is as necessary for the saints, who are all priests unto God, to offer up their spiritual sacrifices; particularly that of prayer, which should be "without wrath", as well as without doubting; and to do all other duties of religion, which should spring from charity or love; as the anointing oil was to Aaron and his sons, in order to their officiating in the priest's office.

{a} yp le epi thn wan, Sept. "super os", Montanus, Piscator; "super os, vel aperturam", Michaelis; "in capitium", Tigurine version; "upon the collar of his garments", Ainsworth. {b} In voce wa.

Psalms 133:3

Ver. 3. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion,.... Hermon was a very high hill beyond Jordan; the Sidonians called it Sirion, and the Amorites Shenir, **De 3:8**; hence Shenir and Hermon are mentioned together, **So 4:8**; and sometimes Sion or Seon, **De 4:48**; and is the Zion here intended; for the dew of Hermon could never descend on the mountain of Zion near Jerusalem, which was a hundred miles distant; besides Zion was but one mountain, these many. Hermon was remarkable for its dew, which still continues: a traveller {c}, one of our own country, and whose fidelity is to be depended on, lying in tents near this hill one night, says,

"we were sufficiently instructed by experience what the holy psalmist means by the dew of Hermon; our tents being as wet with it as if it had rained all night."

The mountains of Zion were those that were near to Zion, and not the mountain itself, those that were round about Jerusalem, on which the dew also fell in great plenty; and to which unity among brethren is here compared, because it comes from God in heaven, as the dew does. Saints are taught of God to love one another; contentions and quarrels come from lusts within, but this comes from above, from the Father of lights; and, because of its gentle nature, this makes men pure, and peaceable, and gentle, and easy to be entreated; as the dew falls gently in a temperate and moderate air, not in stormy and blustering weather: and because of its cooling nature; it allays the heats and animosities in the minds of men; and because it makes the saints fruitful, and to grow and increase in good works;

for there the Lord commanded the blessing; either in the mountains of Zion; so Kimchi: and if Mount Zion is meant by it, the church, often signified thereby, is the dwelling place of the Lord; here he records his name and blesses; here his word is preached, which is full of blessings; and here ordinances are administered, which are blessed of God to his people. Theodoret thinks some respect is had to the pouring down of the Spirit on the apostles in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost: but rather the sense is, where brethren dwell together in unity, there the God of love and peace is; the Gospel of the grace of God is continued; and the ordinances of it made beneficial to the souls of men, they meeting together in peace and concord; see 2Co 13:11. God is said to "command the blessing" when he promises it, and makes it known to his people, or bestows it on them, Ps 105:8;

[even] life for evermore: the great blessing of all, which includes all others, and in which they issue, the promise of the covenant, the blessing of the Gospel; which is in the hands of Christ, and comes through him to all his people; to the peacemakers particularly, that live in love and peace; these shall live for ever in a happy eternity, and never die, or be hurt of the second death.

{c} Maundrell's Travels, p. 57. Ed. 7.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 134:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 134

A Song of degrees. This is the last of the psalms called "songs of degrees"; of which See Gill on "Ps 120:1", title. It is thought to be written by David, either when he brought the ark to Zion, **2Sa 6:17**; or rather when he numbered the Levites, and appointed them their service, 1Ch 23:26. So the Syriac inscription,

""a psalm" of David, concerning the priests, whom he appointed to wait on the ministry of the Lord in the nights; but, spiritually, an instruction of life."

Aben Ezra connects it with the preceding psalm,

"as the dew of Hermon ye shall be that bless; behold, therefore, ye are bound to bless the Lord?"

Ver. 1. Behold, bless ye the Lord, all [ye] servants of the Lord,.... All men are of right the servants of God being his creatures; and are under obligation, through his providential goodness, to bless and praise him; though they are not all in fact so: but all good men are, being made so by the power of divine grace; which frees them from the servitude of sin, Satan, and the world, and makes them willing to serve the Lord; as they do in righteousness and holiness, with reverence and godly fear, heartily and willingly, and with great pleasure; and yet have no dependence on any service they perform: and as these are under the highest obligations to bless the Lord; the is, to ascribe greatness to him, to give him the glory of his works, and thanks for his mercies, temporal and spiritual; so they do in this way, and for those things, bless and praise him, to which they are here excited;

which by night stand in the house of the Lord: according to Kimchi, these were the wise and holy men, that rose from their beds in the night, and went to pray in the temple, and to praise the Lord; and such a holy person was Anna, **Lu 2:37**; according to R. Obadiah and Arama, they were such who continued in the chambers of the temple in the night season to study in the law and in the expositions of it: but it is generally interpreted of the priests and Levites, who watched in the temple by night, that it might not be profaned nor plundered; and they were obliged to stand, for none might sit in the temple but a king of the house of David {d}. The priests watched in three places, and the Levites in twenty one, according to the Jewish Misnah {e}. The Targum is,

"who stand in the watch house of the sanctuary of the Lord, and praise in the nights;"

which was one part of their service, **1Ch 9:33**. Under the Gospel dispensation all the saints are priests, and they have a place in the house of the Lord; where they wait upon him in his ordinances, and serve him, and which they do continually. Some understand, by "nights", times of affliction, darkness, and desertion.

{d} Maimon. Beth Habbechirah, c. 7. s. 6. {e} Middot, c. 1. s. 1.

Psalms 134:2

Ver. 2. Lift up your hands [in] the sanctuary,.... Which Aben Ezra interprets of the priests lifting up their hands to bless the people; but Kimchi, better, of lifting up of the hands to God in prayer; see
Ps 141:2; which should be done "with holiness", as the Targum renders it, in a holy manner; and is the same with lifting up holy hands, **1Ti 2:8**; or towards the holy place; the oracle in the holy of holies, and the ark of the covenant, typical of Christ; see **1Ki 8:29**
Ps 28:2; so Kimchi; or rather, according to Arama, unto the holy name of God, to whom prayer is to be directed;

and bless the Lord; which is repeated, to show the importance of the work, that it might not be forgotten and neglected; this being a principal part of spiritual service, and greatly acceptable to God.

Psalms 134:3

Ver. 3. The Lord, that made heaven and earth, bless thee out of Zion. These are not the words of the priests blessing the people in this form, as some; but rather, as others, the wish of the servants of the Lord, that he would bless him that exhorted them to this service; whether one of the priests, or the captain of the temple, or the psalmist: though, according to Kimchi, and which seems agreeable, they are the words of the psalmist, promising a blessing from the Lord to those that blessed him; as an encouragement to them, to everyone of them, to be constant and diligent in this service. For so it may be rendered, "the Lord shall bless thee" {f}; all blessings come from the Lord, whether spiritual or temporal; and are to be asked of him, and expected from him: and the blessings here promised or asked for are blessings out of Zion, the church, where God blesses his people with his word and ordinances, with his presence, and with communion with himself. Wherefore it is good to be there waiting on him and worshipping him, praying to him and praising of him; and he that made heaven and earth is able to bless both with heavenly and earthly things: and this description of the Lord is no doubt given to encourage faith in him; for, what is it he cannot do?

{f} Kkrby "benedicet tibi", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 135:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 135

This psalm was written very probably by the same hand as the former. It begins in much the same manner; it has some likeness with Psalm 113 and 114. It begins and ends with "hallelujah"; and is throughout an exhortation of praise to God, on account of his name, nature, and perfections; and because of his works of creation, providence, and grace, many of which are enumerated. The Syriac interpreter says, there is an intimation in it of the conversion of the people of the Messiah unto the faith.

Ver. 1. Praise ye the Lord,.... Or hallelujah; which may be considered as the title of the psalm; as in the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions:

praise ye the name of the Lord; that is, the Lord himself, and the perfections of his nature; his greatness, goodness, grace, and mercy; his holiness, justice, power, truth, and faithfulness; and also his word, by which he makes known himself, and is a distinguishing blessing to his people, and to be praised for it; see Ps 48:1;

praise [him], O ye servants of the Lord; priests and Levites, and ministers of the word, and all the people of God; who once were the servants of sin, Satan, and the world, but now by the grace of God become his servants; see **Ro 6:17**. Some observe that the word praise is here used three times, which is thought not to be without a mystery; and may have regard to the three divine Persons in the Godhead, who are each to be praised; the Father for electing grace, the Son for redeeming grace, and the Spirit for regenerating and sanctifying grace.

Psalms 135:2

Ver. 2. Ye that stand in the house of the Lord,.... That have a place and standing there, and go not out, being sons as well as servants;
See Gill on "Ps 134:1" and
See Gill on "Ps 84:4";

in the courts of the house of our God; alluding to the courts in the temple, the court of the priests, where they stood and ministered, slaying and offering their sacrifices; and the great court, where all the Israelites stood and worshipped, **2Ch 4:9**. So this may describe the worshippers of God in common, who should praise him: and happy are they that have a place here; see Ps 84:1.

Psalms 135:3

Ver. 3. Praise ye the Lord, for the Lord [is] good,.... Essentially and communicatively; he is good, and he does good, in a providential way, to all men; and in a way of special grace to his own people; for whom he has laid up and to whom he has promised good things, and on whom he bestows them; as pardon, righteousness, and eternal life; both grace and glory; and therefore they should praise him;

sing praises unto his name, for [it is] pleasant; either the work of singing praise is pleasant, being the employment of angels and glorified saints; the subject matter of it delightful, the blessings of grace flowing from the everlasting love of God it leads unto, which is excellent and better than life; and it must be pleasant work to a saint, because it is pleasing to God; and especially when the presence of God is enjoyed in it, and melody is made in the heart as well as with the mouth. Or the sense is, "his name is pleasant"; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it: for though it is holy and reverend in itself, and fearful and terrible to sinners; yet as it is proclaimed in Christ, it is exceeding delightful, and in whom all the perfections of God are glorified; particularly the name of God, as a covenant God and Father in Christ, blessing, with all spiritual blessings in him, is exceeding pleasant; as are all the names of Christ, and therefore to be praised.

Psalms 135:4

Ver. 4. For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself,.... To be his own special people, and not another's; for his own service, and for his glory; and to be an habitation for himself, and to be for ever with him. This is not to be understood personally of Jacob, though a chosen vessel of mercy; nor of his natural posterity as such, though chosen as a nation to outward favours; for not all they, only some of them, were chosen to special grace and glory, a remnant according to the election of grace: but mystical and spiritual Jacob and Israel are meant, even the whole church and people of God, whether Jews or Gentiles; these God has chosen, of his own free grace and good will, to all the blessings of grace and glory, and that from all eternity; which choice will remain firm and immutable, in time and for ever; and therefore is worthy of praise and thanksgiving, now, and to all eternity;

[and] Israel for his peculiar treasure; by whom they are accounted as such; even as the peculiar treasure of kings, as silver, gold, jewels, and precious stones; as his inheritance, his portion, and peculiar people; see Ex 19:5.

Psalms 135:5

Ver. 5. For I know that the Lord [is] great,.... Jehovah the Father is great in his perfections; in his power, wisdom, faithfulness, grace, and goodness; and in his works of creation, providence, and grace: and so is Jehovah the Son, who seems chiefly designed, who is called "our Lord" or "Adon" in the next clause; he is great, having the same perfections his Father has; and doing the same works, besides the miracles he wrought here on earth, and the great work of our redemption: he is the great God and our Saviour, and a great Saviour he is; and indeed he is great in all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King: and so is the blessed Spirit, who is equal to the Father and Son, and greater than he that is in the world. Now all this the psalmist could say from his own knowledge; he knew the Lord was great, from the consideration and meditation of his wondrous works; he knew the greatness of Christ, from the revelation made to him of his person, offices, and grace; he knew the greatness of the divine Spirit, from the inward experience of his upon his heart, as well as from his being divinely inspired by him; and because of this greatness of the Lord, as well as his goodness, he is to be praised; it is mentioned as a reason of it;

and [that] our Lord [is] above all gods; the Lord our righteousness; Immanuel, God with us: our Lord, not only by right of creation, but of redemption; he is above all that the Heathens called gods, even the greatest of them; not the idols their hands made only, but the heavens and all the host of them, the sun, moon, and stars; his glory is above them, being the Maker of them, as God; and he is made higher than they, as man and Mediator: he is above civil magistrates, princes, and kings of the earth, called gods, Ps 82:5; he is King of kings, and Lord of lords, he is higher than they; by him they reign, and to him they are accountable; and he is above the angels, sometimes called "Elohim", or gods, **Ps 8:5**; he has a more excellent name and nature than they; he is the Creator of them, the object of their worship, to whom they minister, whose servants they are; and he is now exalted above them in the human nature, at the right hand of God; see **Heb 1:4**.

Psalms 135:6

Ver. 6. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, [that] did he,.... In creation, producing into being what creatures he thought fit; in providence, doing according to his will in heaven and in earth; in grace, predestinating men to grace and glory, according to the good pleasure of his will, and calling by his grace whom he pleased: so Christ quickens whom he will; and the Spirit dispenses his gifts and grace severally to men as he pleases. Sovereignty, or acting according to will and pleasure, is peculiar to the Lord; the heavens, the sun, moon, and stars, are at his direction, and act by the laws of creation, which are at his control; angels do his will, and not their own: the most arbitrary and despotic princes cannot do everything they please; but the Lord can and does, even everything;

in heaven and in earth, in the seas and all deep places; in the formation of them, and filling them with inhabitants, and fitting them to perform the several ends and uses for which they were designed; as well as performing many wonderful things in them out of the ordinary course of nature, as did our Lord, or as were done when he was here on earth: a wonderful star appeared in the heavens, which guided the wise men to the place of his birth; unusual voices were heard from heaven at his baptism, transfiguration, and other times; the Spirit, with his extraordinary gifts, descended from hence after his ascension thither: surprising miracles were done by him on earth; the great work of redemption was finished here, where he glorified his divine Father; and throughout it he sent his apostles to publish his everlasting Gospel. He did wonders in the mighty waters; more than once he made the boisterous sea a calm, and walked upon the surface of it: and as of old he broke up the fountains of the great deep, and drowned the world; and at another time dried up the sea, and led his people through the depths, as through a wilderness; so he will hereafter bind the old serpent the devil, and cast him into the abyss, into the great deep, into the bottomless pit; where he will continue during the thousand years' reign of Christ with his saints.

Psalms 135:7

Ver. 7. He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth,.... Up to the heavens. Aben Ezra interprets this of the mist which went up out of the earth, and watered it, **Ge 2:6**; and still vapours are exhaled out of the earth by the force of the sun, and carried up into the air, and form various things, as wind, rain, &c. The Targum, Kimchi, and others, explain it of the "clouds", so called from their elevation on high: these rise up out of the sea, the borders, and boundaries, and uttermost parts of the earth; see 1Ki 18:44. Jerom interprets these clouds, spiritually and mystically, of the apostles and prophets, raised from a low and mean estate; and so may be applied to the ministers of the word, who are clouds full of water; of good doctrine, which they are sent to carry about the world, and publish in it; see **Isa 5:6**;

he maketh lightnings for the rain: for the descent of the rain, as the Targum; by lightning oftentimes the clouds are broke, and so pour down rain; see Job 28:26; or, "lightnings with the rain" {g}; as Kimchi: these frequently come together, which is very surprising, that two such different elements should meet together as fire and water; and yet the fire not quenched by the water, nor the water heated by the fire: these the above ancient Christian writer interprets of the light of knowledge, and the rain of doctrine; see **Zec 9:14**;

he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries; as he has his treasuries for the snow and hail, Job 38:22; so for the winds: not the caverns of the earth, thought to be the repositories of the wind {h}; nor are there proper repositories of it: but the air, as Suidas {i}; which, when without wind, is easily moved by the wise hand of God; so Theodoret, from whom he seems to have taken this hint. In Scripture only mention is made of four winds, Eze 37:9; and so the ancient Greeks only reckoned four cardinal winds, but at length they added four more; and at Athens was a marble temple, built by Andronicus Cyrrhestes, called "the temple of the eight winds": this was an octagon, and on each side were engraven the images of every wind; and on the top of it was a Triton of brass, with a rod in his right hand, which being moved about by the wind, pointed to that which then blew {k}: but now, through the great improvement of navigation, the winds are divided and subdivided in the points of the compass; and, besides the four cardinal ones, there are twenty eight collateral ones, in all thirty two; but be they reckoned as many as they may, they are all in the hands of God, and disposed of at his pleasure. Jerom here interprets them of the angels; perhaps it might be better to apply them to the gifts and graces of the Spirit, sometimes compared to wind, which are treasured up in Christ; see **Joh 3:8**.

{g} rjml Myqrb "fulgura cum pluvia", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; so Ainsworth. {h} "Vasto rex Aeolus antro----luctanteis ventos fraenat." Virgil. Aeneid. l. 1. {i} In voce yhsauroi. {k} Vid. Vitruvium de Architect. l. 1. c. 6.

Psalms 135:8

Ver. 8. Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast. Which was the last of the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians; and is particularly mentioned, because, by means of it, they were made willing to let the children of Israel go out of their land: and so this includes the deliverance of the Israelites, God's firstborn, when he slew the firstborn of Egypt; and who were typical of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; and the deliverance of them, through the blood of the passover, was an emblem of the deliverance of those by the blood of Christ; see Ex 12:22.

Psalms 135:9

Ver. 9. [Who] sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt,.... Or, "signs and wonders". Meaning the other extraordinary plagues sent among the Egyptians, before that of slaying their firstborn; and which have some likeness to the vials of God's wrath, which will be poured out on the city called spiritually Sodom and Egypt,
Re 11:8;

upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants: his courtiers: some of them are particularly observed to affect him and his court; as the plagues of the frogs, and slaying the firstborn: and he and his princes must be more or less affected with them all, as well as the common people; who were an emblem either of Satan and his principalities, as Jerom interprets it; or rather of antichrist and his followers; to whom the tokens of God's wrath and displeasure will be sent in a wonderful way and manner.

Psalms 135:10

Ver. 10. Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings. Or "many nations" {1}. The seven nations of the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites; the kings of which were mighty and many, even thirty one in number, Jos 12:1. This the Lord did by Joshua, a type of Christ; who has overcome the world by his sufferings and death, and delivered his people from it; who went forth conquering and to conquer, into the Roman Pagan empire, called the whole world, and subdued it by his Spirit and word; and will show his power in all the kingdoms of this world, either by converting or destroying them; and at last will judge all the nations and kings of the earth. Aben Ezra interprets this of the kings of Midian, or of those next mentioned, which is best.

{1} Mybr Myywg "gentes multas", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus; "plurimas gentes", Tigurine version; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 135:11

Ver. 11. Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan,.... These are particularly named, because they were the first that were slain, and were the most mighty and powerful; see **De 3:11**. These the Lord slew by the hand of Moses, a type of Christ; who has destroyed the god and prince of this world, that had the power of death, the devil; and has spoiled all his principalities and powers;

and all the kingdoms of Canaan; thirty one of them. These words explain the former; as the two kings mentioned point at the mighty kings slain, these kingdoms show who the great nations were that were smitten.

Psalms 135:12

Ver. 12. And gave their land [for] an heritage,.... The land of the two kings before mentioned, which was given to the Reubenites, and Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, **De 3:12**; and the lands belonging to the several kingdoms of Canaan were given to the rest of the tribes;

an heritage unto Israel his people; a type of the heavenly Canaan, the glorious, incorruptible, undefiled, and eternal inheritance; which is of God's free grace, chosen, prepared, and given; even a right unto it, and meetness for it, to the true and spiritual Israel of God, to his special people, his chosen, redeemed, and called ones.

Psalms 135:13

Ver. 13. Thy name, O Lord, [endureth] for ever,.... The Lord himself endures for ever, in his nature, being, and perfections; and the fame of him, the fame of those acts of power and goodness before mentioned: the name of Christ endures for ever; his person and offices, his Gospel, which is his name; his children and people, who are called by his name, and in whom his name is perpetuated; the fame of his wondrous works in nature, providence, and grace; and especially of his great work of redemption and salvation;

[and] thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations; or "the remembrance of them to, generation and generation"; to every age; the love of Christ is remembered by his people in every age, the blessings of his grace in redemption, justification, pardon, &c. and cannot be forgotten as long as his Gospel is preached, the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper administered, and he has a people in the world, all which will be as long as the sun and moon endure, there will be a memorial of him.

Psalms 135:14

Ver. 14. For the Lord will judge his people,.... Rule and govern, protect and defend them; plead their cause, and avenge them of their enemies; judge between them, distinguish them by his care and providence, make them visible, so that others shall see the difference between them; especially at the last day, when he will judge them, and, as the righteous Judge, give them the crown of righteousness. Or "though the Lord judges his people" {m}; chastises them in a fatherly way, that they may not be condemned with the world;

and, or "yet" {n};

he will repent himself concerning his servants; of the evil of affliction he has brought upon them; he will change the course of his providential dealings with them, according to his unchangeable will; and turn their adversity into prosperity, and their mourning into joy: some render it, "he will be entreated for his servants" {o}; he will hear prayer on their account, and save them out of their afflictions; or, as others, "he will comfort himself concerning his servants" {p}; take pleasure in them and their prosperity, comfort them, and take delight in so doing. The Targum of the whole is,

"for the Lord will judge the judgment of his people by his word, and to his righteous servants will return in his mercies."

{m} yk "quod si", Junius & Tremellius; "nam etsi", Piscator. {n} "Tamen", Piscator; "mox", Junius & Tremellius. {o} Mxnty "deprecabitur", V. L. "sinet se deprecari", Tirinus. {p} "Solatium reportabit", Tigurine version.

Psalms 135:15

Ver. 15. The idols of the Heathen [are] silver and gold,.... This, with what follows, is observed, to show that when God judges his people, and takes vengeance on their enemies, the idols they serve will not be able to protect them, and deliver them out of his hands; and also to prove what is before asserted, that our Jehovah is great above all gods, Ps 135:5; the matter of which they are made is at best gold and silver, which are the dust and metals of the earth, or what the prophet calls thick clay, **Hab 2:6**; and are the creatures of Jehovah, and at his dispose, who says, the silver and the gold are mine, **Hag 2:8**; and who is infinitely above them in value and worth; even the knowledge of him, and the words of his mouth, doctrines, and precepts, are better than gold and silver, **Pr 3:14**;

the work of men's hands; which they form out of gold and silver into such shapes and figures, and therefore can never have deity in them; and a most stupid thing it is to imagine that the Godhead is like to gold and silver, graven by art and man's device, Ac 17:29;
See Gill on "Ps 115:4".

Psalms 135:16

Ver. 16. They have mouths, but they speak not,.... Return no answer to the request and petition of their votaries; See Gill on "Ps 115:5";

eyes have they, but they see not; the same is observed in the above place, which see.

Psalms 135:17

Ver. 17. They have ears, but they hear not,....
See Gill on "Ps 115:6";

neither is there [any] breath in their mouths; they are lifeless statues, they have not so much as what the brute creatures have, breath; our Jehovah, as the living God, is rightly opposed to them, who gives life, and breath, and all things, unto man; and yet what amazing stupidity is it, that any of them should worship such as gods, who have not what they themselves have.

Psalms 135:18

Ver. 18. They that make them are like unto them,.... Are as blind, stupid, and senseless as they; or "let them that make them", &c. {q}; so some versions and interpreters; See Gill on "Ps 115:8";

[so is] everyone that trusteth in them; alike ignorant and sottish: and so are all such that set up idols and lusts in their own hearts, and serve them; or trust to their own righteousness; even all unregenerate and self-righteous persons: they cannot speak a word for God and his grace, for Christ and his righteousness, for the Spirit of God, and his work upon their hearts, of all which they are ignorant; they are blind and have no sight and sense of their sin and misery, and of their need of Christ and his righteousness; they are deaf to his Gospel, and the charming voice of it; they are lifeless and breathless, are dead in trespasses and sins, and have no pantings and desires after spiritual things.

{q} So V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Sept. Syr. Arab. Ethiop.

Psalms 135:19

Ver. 19. Bless the Lord, O house of Israel,.... Who are chosen by the Lord to be a special people to him above all others; redeemed from Egyptian bondage; through a variety of surprising providences brought into and settled in the land of Canaan; distinguished by various blessings, favoured with the word, worship, and ordinances of God, and not left to worship idols of gold and silver, as other nations; and therefore had great reason to bless the Lord: as also the spiritual Israel, or the household of God and of faith, the family of Christ; and that because they are of his family, because of the love of God to them, his choice of them, his covenant with them, their redemption by Christ, their effectual calling; or for being made Israelites indeed, and the provisions made for them in the house of God for their spiritual welfare;

bless the Lord, O house of Aaron: who were separated from their brethren to minister in the priest's office; to offer gifts and sacrifices for the people, and to bless them, Ex 28:1; which was a very sacred and honourable employment, and they were under obligation to bless the Lord, who had called them to it, and put this honour on them; as are the ministers of the Gospel, who have received gifts from Christ; whom he has counted faithful, and put into the ministry; made stewards of the mysteries of his grace, and ambassadors in his stead; and especially if made useful for edification and conversion: and indeed all the Lord's people, who are all made priests unto God, and have nearness unto him, liberty and boldness to enter into the holiest of all, as Aaron once a year into the most holy place; and who have better sacrifices to offer than he, the living sacrifices of their own bodies and souls, and not slain beasts; spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise; and, above all, the sweet smelling sacrifice of Christ they bring in the arms of faith, and so enter into the courts of God.

Psalms 135:20

Ver. 20. Bless the Lord, O house of Levi,.... These were of the same tribe with the house of Aaron, but inferior ministers; they ministered to the priests, and had the charge of things in the tabernacle and temple; many of them were porters in the latter, and others were singers, and of these Kimchi interprets the words; whose work it was to give thanks morning and evening, and so are with great propriety called upon to bless the Lord, **Nu 3:6**; and may mystically design inferior officers in the church, who are helps and assistants to ministers in the government and discipline of it, and have the care of its secular affairs; and who, when they behave well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and boldness in the faith; and even doorkeepers in the house of the Lord have reason to bless his name for a place there; and all the saints are the sweet singers of Israel, have the new song of electing, redeeming, and calling grace, put into their mouths, and therefore should bless the Lord;

ye that fear the Lord, bless the Lord; these are distinct from the Israelites, priests, and Levites, and design the proselytes among them of other nations that truly feared God, as Jarchi notes; and all such persons, whoever and wherever they are, have reason to bless the Lord for the fear of him they have, which is not from nature, but from grace; and for the layouts shown them, the blessings bestowed upon them, the good things laid up for them, and the guard that is about them, which the Scriptures abundantly declare, and experience confirms.

Psalms 135:21

Ver. 21. Blessed be the Lord out of Zion,.... This, according to Aben Ezra, was the formula of blessing to be used by the houses of Israel, Aaron, and Levi, and all that feared God; or a direction to them in what manner they should bless him; and may both point out the persons that were to bless, and the place where; those that were inhabitants of Zion, where praise waited for the Lord, and was his due; and the blessings and benefits he was to be praised for, such as came out of Zion, strength from the Lord there, the rod of his strength, the word of the Gospel, and the Saviour himself;

which dwelleth at Jerusalem; in the temple there; and which distinguishes him from the idols of the Heathens before mentioned; and who dwells in the heavenly Jerusalem, in Gospel churches; and will dwell in the New Jerusalem, where his tabernacle will be with men,
Re 21:3;

praise ye the Lord; or "hallelujah"; and so the psalm ends as it begun, being from first to last an exhortation to praise.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 136:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 136

This psalm was very probably composed by David, and given to the Levites to sing every day, 1Ch 16:41. Solomon his son followed his example, and made use of them in singing at the dedication of the temple, **2Ch 7:3**; as Jehoshaphat seems to have done when he went out to war against his enemies, 2Ch 20:21. The subject of it is much the same with the preceding psalm; its composition is very singular; the half of every verse: in it is, "for his mercy endureth for ever"; this is the burden of the song; and the design of it is to show, that all blessings of every kind flow from the grace, goodness, and mercy of God, which is constant and perpetual; and to impress a sense of it upon the minds of men: the inscription of the Syriac version is,

"it is said of Moses and Israel praising the Lord for those who were delivered; and concerning the deliverance of souls out of hell from Pharaoh, the devil, by Christ our Saviour, the Redeemer of them."

R. Obadiah says it is an exhortation to the children of God in the days of the Messiah to praise the Lord.

Ver. 1. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he [is] good,.... In himself, and to all his creatures; and especially to his chosen people, who therefore should give thanks to him daily in the name of Christ, for all blessings temporal and spiritual, in faith and fervency, and in the sincerity of their souls, with their whole heart;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; it is the same with his love, which is from everlasting to everlasting; and continues notwithstanding the sins of his people, the hidings of his face from them, and his chastisements of them; the covenant which is founded on mercy, and all the blessings of it, which are the sure mercies of David, last for ever; and hence the vessels of mercy shall certainly be saved, and not lost; see Ps 106:1.

Psalms 136:2

Ver. 2. O give thanks unto the God of gods,.... Not only of the gods of the Gentiles, who are by name and not by nature gods; or of civil magistrates, who are so called, and seem to be designed in the next verse; but the angels, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi. Christ, our Immanuel, is the God of them, the object of their worship and adoration, being their Creator and Preserver, Ps 97:7. So the Heathens say {r} of the Maker of all things, him you may properly call the God of gods, the Supreme and Best; this title Janus has with them {s};

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; in the preservation of those excellent creatures from apostasy, when many of their species fell; and in the continuance and confirmation of them in the state in which they were created; and in making use of them as ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation; and as a guard about them while they live, and at death to convey their souls to heaven.

{r} Hierocles in Carm. Pythagor. p. 10. {s} Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 9.

Psalms 136:3

Ver. 3. O give thanks to the Lord of lords,.... Which is not only the title of the God of Israel, as the former, De 10:17; but of the Messiah, Re 19:16; who is the Prince of the kings of the earth; under whom they are, by whom they reign, and to whom they are accountable, being higher than they; as nature, so by office, **Re 1:5**
Ps 89:27;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; in putting it into the hearts of kings and princes, which he has in his hands, to show favour to his people, even to be their nursing fathers; and in curbing the power, restraining the wrath, of oppressors; and protecting his people from their rage and violence.

Psalms 136:4

Ver. 4. To him who alone doeth great wonders,.... As in the works of creation at first, having no help from angels or men; so in the works of providence, many of which are unsearchable, and past finding out, and in which he has no assistance from creatures; and in the works of grace, redemption, and salvation, which his own arm has wrought out; as well as what he did when here on earth in our nature; the miracles then wrought by his omnipotent arm alone; and even all the wonders which Moses and Elijah did under the Old Testament, and the apostles of Christ under the New, were done, not by their power, but by his alone; who will do still greater wonders, when he shall create all tidings new, raise the dead, and summon all nations before him, and render to everyone according to his works;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever: towards his people, for whose sake all these wonders are wrought.

Psalms 136:5

Ver. 5. To him that by wisdom made the heavens,.... In such a curious manner, in such a proper and delightful situation, with such furniture, and for such uses, **Pr 3:19**;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; which appears in the continued influences of the heaven; the dew, rain, and snow, that descend from it on the earth to water and make it fruitful, and to produce those rich and valuable blessings called the "precious things of heaven",
De 33:13; and which are of the utmost importance for the service of man and beast: and, besides, God has of his infinite mercy, which continues, provided an inheritance in the heavens, a house eternal in the heavens, mansions of bliss and glory there, which Christ is now preparing for his saints, that they may dwell with him in them for evermore.

Psalms 136:6

Ver. 6. To him that stretcheth out the earth above the waters,.... Or, "besides the waters" {t}, close by them, and yet secures the earth from being covered with them; see Ps 24:2;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; it was in mercy he caused the waters to go off the earth which first covered it; that trees, plants, and herbs, might spring up out of it, and that it might be a fit habitation for man; and though for the sins of the old world these waters were let in upon it, which drowned it, and destroyed man and beast upon it, except a few that were in mercy preserved; yet the Lord has promised and swore to it, that these waters shall no more go over the earth to destroy it; he has set a bound for the sea that it cannot pass, by a decree of his; even the sand on the shore, which, as weak as it may seem to be, is a bound unpassable; though they may toss and rage and roar, they shall not prevail, nor pass over it, which is a perpetual miracle of mercy, **Jer 5:22**.

{t} Mymh le "juxta aquas", Tirinus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 136:7

Ver. 7. To him that made great lights,.... For the inhabitants of the world to walk and work by, to do all the business of life in a comfortable manner; and which is an instance of mercy and goodness; see **Ge 1:14**;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; these lights continuing for the benefit of mankind.

Psalms 136:8

Ver. 8. The sun to rule by day,.... Which is the greater light, **Ge 1:16**;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever: this great light, so beneficial to the earth and the inhabitants of it, which was made near six thousand years ago, still continues, and will to the end of time; enlightening the world, warming the air and earth, imparting its light and heat to all creatures on it, and influencing the earth to bring forth a variety of things for the use and delight of mankind, called "the precious things [brought] forth by the sun", De 33:14; an emblem of a more beneficial light, in which the rich grace and mercy of God appear, and for which we have reason to give thanks; even the sun of righteousness, the Messiah, the light of the world, the author of the light of nature, grace, and glory; and who will continue as long as the sun, and when that shall be no more, **Mal 4:2**.

Psalms 136:9

Ver. 9. The moon and stars to rule by night,.... The lesser lights, and which indeed receive all their light Front the sun, **Ge 1:16**;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; in continuing these lights, so useful to men, as well as in making of them: the moon and stars have their benign influences upon the earth, to produce things out of it useful to men; see De 33:14; and are of singular service to benighted travellers, and to those that go down to the sea in ships; see Ac 27:20. The moon is an emblem of the church, that receives her light from Christ, the sun, and which will continue for ever; and, stars are emblems of Gospel ministers, who are the means of enlightening dark souls, and of refreshing disconsolate saints; and are a continued mercy to an ignorant world, as well as to the church, and will be continued as long as it stands; see **So 6:10** **Mt 5:14**.

Psalms 136:10

Ver. 10. To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn,.... In a tender part, in the dear part of themselves, in their sons and heirs, and who were to inherit their lands and estates, and perpetuate their names; this was an act of justice for using ill the Lord's firstborn, the people of Israel, slaying their sons, and refusing to let them go, **Ex 1:13**; and yet there was mercy in it, for which thanks were to be given to God;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; the Israelites, in a very merciful manner, were distinguished by the blood sprinkled on their door posts, when the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt to destroy their firstborn; and when they were destroyed, it was owing to the kind providence of God that the Egyptians did not rise as one man to cut off the Israelites in vengeance; and yet not a dog was suffered to move his tongue against them when the dismal cry was made; yea, this was the means of their deliverance, which could not be obtained by all the other plagues; but now they not only bid them go, but were urgent upon them to be gone, Ex 11:5.

Psalms 136:11

Ver. 11. And brought out Israel from among them,.... A wicked and idolatrous people, among whom they suffered great hardships; and this was done by means of God's judgments on them, and especially that before related; and was an instance of the mercy of God, as follows, for which thanks should be given;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; and this is a proof of it, bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt, the house of bondage; when they cried unto him by reason of it, and he sent them a Saviour to deliver them out of their distress, **Ex 2:23**; an emblem of the grace and mercy of God, in delivering his people from a worse than Egyptian bondage; from the bondage of sin, Satan, the law, and through fear of death, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Psalms 136:12

Ver. 12. With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm,.... Exerting his power in a very open manner, and continuing it till he had effected the work; bringing his people out of Egypt, which is always ascribed to his great strength and mighty power, Ex 13:3. The redemption of the mystical Israel of God is by a mighty Redeemer, the Lord of hosts; who has redeemed them out of the hands of their enemies, that were stronger than they, and too strong for them: the conversion of them is by the power of the grace of God, even by the exceeding greatness of his power, and yet both acts of grace and mercy;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; it was mercy put the Lord on stretching out his arm, and showing the strength of his right hand, in delivering Israel out of Egypt; and in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, Isa 63:9. It is owing to the tender mercies of our God, and is a performing the mercy promised to the fathers, that Christ, the dayspring from on high, was sent to visit and redeem us, **Lu 1:68**; and the regeneration, quickening, and conversion of sinners, are acts of mercy as well as of power, **Eph 2:4**.

Psalms 136:13

Ver. 13. To him which divided the Red sea into parts,.... Into two parts, so that the waters of it stood as a wall on the right and left hand of the Israelites, as they passed through; this was done by means of a strong east wind, Ex 14:21. The Jews have a tradition, which Jarchi, Kimchi, and Arama, make mention of, that the sea was divided into twelve parts, according to the twelve tribes of Israel, and every tribe had a path by itself to walk in; but for this there is no foundation: however, the dividing it into parts was a wonderful work, and a rich display of mercy to Israel;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; the children of Israel were encompassed about, and in the utmost distress: the rocks were on each side, Pharaoh and his host behind them, the Red sea before them; and so no visible way of escape; but the Lord cut a way for them through the sea, and saved them. The sea is an emblem of this world, which is like a tempestuous troubled sea; where everything is restless, fluctuating, and passing away; where the people of God are tossed with tempests; and where afflictions, like the waves and billows of the sea, come over them one after another; and through which they must pass and enter the kingdom: and God, that wills, orders, and appoints them, sets these proud waves of the sea their bounds, or makes them a calm; and, sooner or later, makes a way through them and out of them, which is owing to his enduring mercy, 1Co 10:13.

Psalms 136:14

Ver. 14. And made Israel to pass through the midst of it,.... Willingly, without reluctance; with great spirit and courage, fearless of danger, and with the utmost safety, so that not one was lost in the passage; see Ps 78:53; and thus the Lord makes his people willing to pass through afflictions, he being with them; and able to bear them, he putting underneath the everlasting arms, even when in the valley of the shadow of death; and carries safely through them, so that they are not hurt by them; the waters do not overflow them, nor the fire kindle upon them; nor are any suffered to be lost, but all come safe to land;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; to which, and to his never failing compassion, it is owing that they are not consumed, **La 3:22**.

Psalms 136:15

Ver. 15. But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea,.... In the same sea which was parted for the Israelites, and through which they passed safely as on dry land; into which Pharaoh and his army entering in pursuit of them in their chariots, the Lord "shook" {u} him and them out of them, as the word signifies; and causing the waters to return and cover them; they were drowned in them, Ex 14:28. This was an emblem of the destruction of Satan, and of his principalities and powers, by Christ, who thereby has saved his spiritual Israel out of their hands; and of the casting of the sins of God's people into the depths of the sea, never to be seen more, or to appear any more against them to their condemnation; and of the everlasting ruin and perdition of ungodly men;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; it was in mercy to Israel that Pharaoh and his host were destroyed, who threatened them with ruin; and therefore they sung of judgment and of mercy, and gave thanks to God for this instance of his vengeance on their enemies, and of goodness to them, Ex 15:1.

{u} ren "excussit", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 136:16

Ver. 16. To him which led his people through the wilderness,.... Where there was no path. This the Lord did by going before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night, to show them the way in which they should go, Ex 13:21; see Ps 78:14;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; among the manifold mercies of God, shown to Israel in the wilderness, this is one taken notice of by Nehemiah, **Ne 9:19**; that the pillar of cloud and fire, to direct them, never departed from them while in it: and this act of "leading" them not only includes the guidance of them in the way, but the provision made for them; of water out of the rock, and of manna that fell about their tents every day; and of flesh and feathered fowl, like dust, so that they wanted nothing; and also the protection of them from their enemies: all which were proofs of his constant care over them, and continual mercy to them; see Ps 78:15.

Psalms 136:17

Ver. 17. To him which smote great kings,.... Either the thirty one kings in the land of Canaan; or those who are after particularly mentioned; which seems best, since the kings of Canaan were petty kings, when these were greater ones;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; the smiting of those kings were in mercy to Israel; both to preserve them from falling into their hands, and that they might possess their countries, as is later declared.

Psalms 136:18

Ver. 18. And slew famous kings,.... Famous for their power and strength, their courage and valour who were not only smitten and discomfited, but slain in battle;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; towards his own people, for whose sake these kings were slain.

Psalms 136:19

Ver. 19. Sihon king of the Amorites,.... A strong and warlike people, and their king a great and mighty one; see Ps 135:11;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; since this king would not suffer Israel to go through his borders, but came out and fought against them; and had not the Lord smote him, they must have fallen a prey into his hands, Nu 21:23.

Psalms 136:20

Ver. 20. And Og the king of Bashan,.... A country large and fruitful, and the king of it of a gigantic stature, see Ps 135:11;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; for this mighty king came out against Israel, and threatened their destruction, and it was of the Lord's mercies they were not consumed by him. And it may be observed, whenever tyrannical princes and oppressors are cut off, it is in mercy to the inhabitants of the earth, and especially to the people of God.

Psalms 136:21

Ver. 21. And gave their land for an heritage,.... This was taken away from them and their subjects by the Lord, who has the disposing of kingdoms, and given to another people, for an inheritance;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; while his justice is exercised on some, in a strict manner, with severity and rigour, his mercy is shown to others.

Psalms 136:22

Ver. 22. [Even] an heritage unto Israel his servant,.... The land of those that served idols, the Lord took and gave to Israel for an inheritance, who served him, the true God. Thus the Lord rewards his servants in a way of grace and mercy, though not as of debt; for it follows,

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; Aben Ezra and Kimchi make the mercy to lie in this peculiarly, that the lands of these kings were not in the covenant with Abraham; only the seven nations or kingdoms of Canaan, which are not here mentioned, as in Ps 135:11; but the Amorites were given in the covenant, Ge 15:21; and the one as the other were given as an inheritance to Israel, and equally owing to the mercy of God; see Ps 135:11. And thus the heavenly glory, of which Canaan was a type, is an inheritance owing to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, **Jude 1:21**.

Psalms 136:23

Ver. 23. Who remembered us in our low estate,.... The Israelites; either in Egypt, as Jarchi, when in bondage and distress there, and sent them a deliverer; or in the times of the Judges, whom God raised up one after another, to save his people out of the hands of their enemies, by whom they were oppressed; or in the Babylonian captivity, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi: though the latter thinks their present captivity is rather intended; but as yet they are not remembered in a gracious way and manner. This may be applied to the people of God in a spiritual sense; who, before conversion, are in a low estate through sin, which has brought them into deep poverty, into debt they are not able to discharge, but are liable to a prison; it has stripped them of their original righteousness, instead of which at best they are clothed with filthy rags; it has left them, starving and famishing, to feed on ashes, sensual lusts and pleasures; it has brought them to a dunghill, from whence they are taken as beggars; yea, to a ditch, a pit wherein is in no water; even an horrible pit, the mire and clay of corrupt nature. Man, that was lord of all, is by sin reduced to the utmost slavery to it, and to Satan; and is in the greatest distress and misery; filled with diseases, loathsome and incurable by him; quite lost and undone, helpless, and hopeless, and under the sentence of condemnation and death: but the Lord has remembered his chosen people, and provided a Saviour for them; who has paid all their debts; brought in an everlasting righteousness to clothe them; given his flesh for the life of them; healed all their diseases; delivered them from thraldom and bondage; saved them from condemnation and death, and raised them to sit in heavenly places with him: and not only so, but he sends down his Spirit to convince and convert them, renew and sanctify them; to bring them from death to life; out of darkness into marvellous light; from bondage to liberty; from fellowship with wicked men, into communion with Christ and his people; and to make them meet for heaven and happiness. These are sometimes in a low estate after conversion; when corruptions prevail, and the temptations of Satan are strong; when grace is weak; or God hides his face; or they are grown carnal and secure, lukewarm and indifferent to spiritual things; yet the Lord remembers them again, his lovingkindness, his covenant and promises; and with everlasting kindness has mercy on them, heals their backslidings, and loves them freely Ho 14:4. The Targum is,

"he hath remembered his covenant with us;"

so Kimchi;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; which appears in the mission of his Son to save; in giving his Spirit to regenerate and quicken when dead in sin, and to revive and restore when backslidden.

Psalms 136:24

Ver. 24. And hath redeemed us from our enemies,.... Temporal enemies, tyrants, and oppressors: and spiritual ones, sin, Satan, the world, the law, death, and hell;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; as is clearly seen in redemption by Jesus Christ, where mercy and truth have met together; and which is a distinguishing mercy to the sons of men, not granted to angels.

Psalms 136:25

Ver. 25. Who giveth food to all flesh,.... To all creatures; the beasts of the field, and fowls of the air, the young ravens that cry, Ps 145:15. To all men their daily food; to Jews and Gentiles, good men and bad men, **Mt 6:11**; and spiritual food to all that belong to Christ, who are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; even himself, the bread of life, the wholesome truths of the Gospel, and its refreshing ordinances;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; he continues to have compassion on his creatures, and opens his hand of providence, and supplies their wants; he is ever mindful of his covenant of grace and mercy, and therefore gives meat to them that fear him, Ps 111:5.

Psalms 136:26

Ver. 26. O give thanks unto the God of heaven,.... the Maker of it, in which the glory of his wisdom and power is displayed; the possessor of it, where he dwells, has his throne, and keeps his court; from whence all blessings, temporal and spiritual, come and where he has prepared glory and happiness for his people hereafter, a house eternal in the heavens, an inheritance reserved there, a better and a more enduring substance;

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; for though the above character is expressive of his sovereignty and dominion, yet he exercises it in a way of grace and mercy to the sons of men; and therefore they have reason to give thanks unto him and praise him for his kindness and favours shown to them on earth.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 137:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 137

The occasion of this psalm was the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and the treatment they met with there; either as foreseen, or as now endured. Aben Ezra ascribes this psalm to David; and so the Syriac version, which calls it,

"a psalm of David; the words of the saints, who were carried captive into Babylon."

The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, make it to be David's, and yet add the name of Jeremiah; and the Arabic version calls it David's, concerning Jeremiah: but, as Theodoret observes, Jeremiah was not carried into Babylon, but, after some short stay in or near Jerusalem, was forced away into Egypt; and could neither be the writer nor subject of this psalm: and though it might be written by David under a spirit of prophecy; who thereby might foresee and foretell the Babylonish captivity, and what the Jews would suffer in it; as the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah did, many years before it came to pass; yet it seems rather to have been written by one of the captivity, either while in it, or immediately after it.

Ver. 1. By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,.... If by Babylon is meant the country, then the rivers of it are Chebar, Ulai, Tigris, Euphrates, and others; see **Eze 1:1**; but if the city itself, then only Euphrates, which ran through it; and is expressed by rivers, because of the largeness of it, and because of the several canals cut out of it, for the service of the city; hence Babylon is said to dwell upon many waters, Jer 51:13; upon the banks whereof the captive Jews were; either through choice, where they could be alone, and mourn their fate, indulge their sorrows, and give vent to their grief; or by the order of these who carried them captive, there to be employed, either in taking goods from ships here unloaded, or to repair and maintain the banks of the rivers, or to do some servile work or another; see **Eze 1:1**; and where they would sometimes "sit down" pensive, as mourners used to do, and lament their case, **Job 2:8**. Or this phrase may express their residence here, and the continuance and length of their captivity, which was seventy years: yea, Babylon itself may be meant by the waters of it; just as Thebes, in Pindar {w} is called the Dircaean waters, near to which it was;

yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion; they imitated the flowing stream by which they sat, and swelled it with their tears; they wept for their sins, which brought them thither; and it increased their sorrow, when they called to mind what privileges they had enjoyed in Zion, the city of their solemnities; where they had often seen the tribes of Israel bowing before and worshipping the God of Israel; the daily sacrifices and others offered up; the solemn feasts kept; the songs of Zion, sung by the Levites in delightful harmony; and, above all, the beauty of the Lord their God, his power and glory, while they were inquiring in his sanctuary: and also when they reflected upon the sad condition and melancholy circumstances in which Zion now was; the city, temple, and altar, lying in heaps of rubbish; no worship and service performed; no sacrifices offered, nor songs sung; nor any that came to her solemn feasts; see **La 1:2**.

{w} Pythia, Ode 9. d. v. 6.

Psalms 137:2

Ver. 2. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. These were musical instruments, used in the temple service by the Levites, who seem to be the persons here speaking; who took care of them, and preserved them from the plunder of the enemy; and carried them with them to Babylon, in hope of returning with them to use them as before, or to solace themselves and others in captivity; though now they had no heart to make use of them, their sorrow was so great, and therefore hung them upon the willows as useless things: these willows grew upon the banks of the rivers where they were, as such trees usually do; hence called willows of the brook {x}, and willows by water courses, Le 23:40; and particularly upon the banks of the river Euphrates, which ran through the midst of Babylon, with which the phrase here agrees; and therefore Babylon itself is thought to be called "the brook", or "valley, of the willows", Isa 15:7. And, according to Ovid {y}, not only reeds and poplars, but willows, grew on the banks of the Euphrates. Now the state of these people was an emblem of the case of the backsliding children of God; who, through the prevalence of corruption, the force of temptation, and the snares of the world, are brought into a kind of captivity to the law of sin and death, though not willingly; nor is it pleasing to them when sensible of it, **Ro**

7:23; who, though they are called out of the world, and are not of it; yet sometimes are so overcome with it, and immersed in the things of it, that they are as it were in Babylon. An emblem of this world, of the confusion in it, as its name signifies; of the fading glories of it, and the wickedness and idolatry it abounds with: and here they sit by the rivers of carnal pleasures in it for a while, till brought to themselves; and then they weep over their sins, and lament them; especially when they remember what opportunities they have formerly had in Zion, and what a low condition she is now in through the conduct of themselves and others: these make use of their harps when Zion is in good and prosperous circumstances, Re 14:1; but when there are corruptions in doctrine, neglect or abuse of ordinances, animosities and divisions prevail, declensions in the life and power of religion, and the lives of professors disagreeable; then they hang their harps on willows, and drop their notes.

{x} "Amnicolae salices", Ovid. Metamorph. l. 10. Fab. 2. v. 96. "Fluminibus salices", Virgil. Georgic. l. 2. v. 110. {y} "Venit ad Euphratem----Populus et cannae riparum summa tegebant, spemque dabant salices----". Ovid. Fasti, l. 2.

Psalms 137:3

Ver. 3. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song,.... Or, "words of a song" {z}. To repeat the words of one of the songs of Zion, as it is afterwards expressed: this the Babylonians did, as the Targum; who were they that carried the Jews into captivity; and this is given as a reason why they hung their harps on willows, and were so sorrowful, because such a request as this was made;

and they that wasted us [required of us] mirth: the Chaldeans, who plundered them of their substance, and reduced their city and temple to heaps of rubbish, as the word {a} used signifies; or who heaped reproaches upon them, as Jarchi: these insisted not only on having the words of a song repeated to them, but that they should be set to some tune and sung in a manner expressing mirth, or would provoke unto it: or "our lamentations", according to Kimchi; that is, the authors of them {b}, so barbarous were they;

[saying], sing us [one] of the songs of Zion; which used to be sung in Zion in the temple, called the songs of the temple, Am 8:3; this demand they made either out of curiosity, that they might know something of the temple songs and music they had heard of; or rather as jeering at and insulting the poor Jews in their miserable and melancholy circumstances; as if they had said, now sing

your songs if you can: or in order to make themselves sport and diversion with them, as the Philistines with Samson. The spiritual songs of Zion are the songs of electing, redeeming, calling, pardoning, and justifying grace; which natural men neither understand, nor can learn, but scoff at and despise.

{z} ryv yrbd "verba cantici", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; "verba earminis", Cocceius. {a} wnyllwt "qui veluti in acervos nos redegerunt", Tigurine version, Grotius. {b} Vid. Stockium, p. 447.

Psalms 137:4

Ver. 4. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?] This is the answer returned by the Jews to the above request or demand; it may be, particularly, by the Levites, whose business it was to sing these songs: so the Targum,

"immediately the Levites said, how shall we sing the hymns of the Lord in a strange land?"

This they said, not merely on account of their unsuitable circumstances, being in distress and affliction, and so not disposed for such work; nor as if unlawful to them, being forbidden: for, though sacrifices were not to be offered but at Jerusalem, yet songs of praise might be sung elsewhere, on proper occasions, as David did,
Ps 18:49; but as wondering at their insolence, and complaining of their cruelty and inhumanity, thus to insult them and jeer at them: or rather, because it was "the Lord's song" they required, and so sacred, and not to be sung in any place, or at any time, and in any company; which would be but casting pearls before swine, and giving that which was holy to dogs, **Mt 7:6**; or it may be they required this to be done in one of their temples, and to their idols, just as these songs were sung in the temple at Jerusalem, and to the honour of Jehovah; and therefore they refused to do it: for it may be rendered, or however interpreted, "in the land of a strange god" {c}; as it is by Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech: they required them to sing with mirth and joy, which they could not do in their present case; see Ps 137:2.

{c} rkn tmda le "in terra peregina, sc. Dei", Muis, Michaelis.

Psalms 137:5

Ver. 5. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,.... This was said by one or everyone of the Levites; or singers, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; or by the congregation of Israel, as Jarchi; by one of them, in the name of the rest; or by the composer of the psalm. The Targum is,

"the voice of the Spirit of God answered and said, "if I forget", &c."

that is, to weep over the calamities of Jerusalem; which might be thought, if the songs of Zion were sung; or to pray for the restoration of her prosperity and peace; as the church of Christ may be said to be forgotten, when men forget to mourn over its breaches, and show no concern for the reparation of them; or at the death of principal persons, which they lay not to heart; or at the great decay of religion in those that survive; or at the sins of professors, and their disregard to the word and ordinances: also when they forget to pray for her happiness in general; for the good of her members in particular; and especially for her ministers, that they may have assistance and success; and for a blessing on the word and ordinances, and for the conversion of sinners; and when they forget the worship of the Lord in it, and forsake the assembling of themselves together;

let my right hand forget [her cunning]; her skill in music, particularly in playing on the harp; see 1Sa 16:16; the harp was held in the left hand, and struck with the right; and that more softly or hardly, as the note required, in which was the skill or cunning of using it. Or let this befall me, should I so far forget Jerusalem as to strike the harp to one of the songs of Zion in a strange land: or let it forget any of its works; let it be disabled from working at all; let it be dry and withered, which, Aben Ezra says, is the sense of the word according to some; and Schultens {d}, from the use of it in Arabic, renders it, let it be "disjointed", or the nerve loosened; see
Job 31:22. Or the sense is, let everything that is as dear as my right hand he taken from me: or, as it may be rendered, "my right hand [is] forgotten" {e}; that is, should I forget Jerusalem, it would; for that is as my right hand; so Arama. Some choose to translate the words thus, "may thou (O God) forget my right hand" {f}; that is, to be at my right hand; to be a present help to me in time of need; to hold me by it, and to be the shade of it.

{d} Animadv. Philol. p. 181. {e} ynymy xkvt "oblita est nostra dextra", Castalio. {f} "Oblivisceris (O Domine) dexterae meae", Gejerus; so some in Michaelis.

Psalms 137:6

Ver. 6. If I do not remember thee,.... In prayer, in discourse, in conversation; this is the same as before, to forget, repeated for the confirmation of it;

let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; as is the case of a person in a fever, or in a violent thirst, which is to be in great distress, Ps 18:6; the sense is, let me have no use of my tongue; let me be dumb and speechless, and never sing a song or speak a word more, should I be so forgetful of the deplorable state of Jerusalem as to sing songs at such a season, and in an enemy's country;

if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy; meaning not God his exceeding joy, Ps 43:4; as his Creator, preserver, and benefactor, and much less as his covenant God and Father; as having loved him with an everlasting love; as the God of all grace unto him, and as his portion and exceeding great reward: nor Christ, the object of joy unspeakable and full of glory; joy in the greatness, glory, and fulness of his person; in the blessings and promises of his grace; in what he has done and suffered; as risen, ascended, exalted, and who will come a second time: nor the joy of the Holy Ghost in a way of believing, and in hope of the glory of God; but all worldly joy, or matter of it; and this not in things sinful, nor merely such as worldlings have in the increase of their substance; but a lawful joy, such as in the health, happiness, and prosperity of a man's family, wife, and children, and his own; which is the greatest outward joy a man can have; and yet the church of God and interest of Christ are preferred by a good man to these; see **1Sa 4:19**; which appears when all a man has that is matter of joy is sacrificed for the public good and interest of religion; when he can take no comfort in any outward enjoyment because of the sad case of Zion, **Mal 2:3**; when joy for its good is uppermost, and is first in his thoughts and words; when this is the "head" or "beginning" {g} of his joy, as it may be rendered. So Pindar {h} calls the chief, principal, and greatest part of joy, aglaiav arca, the beginning of joy, the top and perfection of it.

{g} ytxmv var "caput laetitiae meae", Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus. {h} Pythia, Ode 1. v. 4.

Psalms 137:7

Ver. 7. Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem,.... Of her visitation, calamity, and destruction, how they behaved then, and them for it; who, though the children of Esau and brethren of the Jews, as well as their neighbours, yet hated them; the old grudge of their father, because of the birthright and blessing, as well as the old enmity of the serpent, continuing in them; and who rejoiced at their ruin, helped forward their affliction, and were assistants to the Babylonians in the plunder and destruction of them, **Ob 1:11**. The Targum is,

"Michael, the prince of Jerusalem, said, remember, O Lord, the people of Edom who destroyed Jerusalem."

Many Jewish writers, as Aben Ezra observes, interpret this of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans:

who said, rase [it], rase [it even] to the foundation thereof: or "make [it] naked" or "bare {i} to the foundation"; pull down its walls, lay them level with the ground; root up the very foundation of them, and let nothing be left or seen but the bare naked ground; so spiteful and malicious were they.

{i} wre "nudate", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Psalms 137:8

Ver. 8. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed,.... By the determinate counsel and decree of God, and according to divine predictions; see Jer 50:1; so mystical Babylon, antichrist, and the man of sin, who therefore is called the son of perdition, **2Th 2:3**; because appointed to destruction, and shall certainly go into it,
Re 17:8; or "O thou destroyer", as the Targum, which paraphrases it thus,

"Gabriel, the prince of Zion, said to the Babylonish nation that spoileth or destroyeth;"

which is true of literal Babylon, called the destroying mountain,
Jer 51:25; and of mystical Babylon, the destroyer both of the bodies and souls of men, Re 11:18;

happy [shall he be] that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us; meaning Darius the Mede, as Kimchi; or rather, or however who must be added, Cyrus the Persian, as R. Obadiah; who were ordered by the Lord to retaliate her, and do as she had done to others, Jer 50:15; and in so doing pronounced happy, being

the Lord's shepherd, raised up in righteousness to perform his pleasure, Isa 44:28; and here wished success by the godly Jews. In like manner the Christian princes will reward mystical Babylon, and be the happy instruments of her ruin,
Re 18:6.

Psalms 137:9

Ver. 9. Happy [shall he be] that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones. That takes the infants from their mothers' breasts, or out of their arms, and dashes out their brains against a "rock", as the word {k} signifies; which, though it may seem a piece of cruelty, was but a just retaliation; the Babylonians having done the same to the Jewish children, and is foretold elsewhere should be done to theirs, Isa 13:16. Nor is this desired from a spirit of revenge, but for the glory of divine justice, and that such a generation of cruel creatures might be rooted out of the earth; see **Re 2:2**. Some allegorically understand this of crushing and mortifying the first motions of sin in the heart; but such a sense seems to have no place here.

{k} elo la "ad petram", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. "ad repem", Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 138:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 138

A Psalm of David. This psalm is generally thought to have been written by David upon his being advanced to the throne; on account of which he praises the Lord, who had supported him under many exercises, and had made good his promise to him, at least in part; and he firmly believed the accomplishment of the rest, that he would perfect what concerned him, Ps 138:8. It seems as if this psalm was composed between his being king over Judah and over all Israel. Though Theodoret understands the psalm as a thanksgiving of the Jews upon their return from Babylon, which David prophesied of. The Syriac version calls it a thanksgiving with a prophecy; as indeed it is a prophecy of the Messiah's kingdom, and of the calling of the Gentiles in the latter day, as appears from Ps 138:4.

Ver. 1. I will praise thee with my whole heart,.... Cordially and sincerely, in the uprightness and integrity of his heart; which denotes not the perfection of his service, but the sincerity of it; his heart was in it, and his whole heart; all the powers and faculties of his soul were engaged in it, being deeply sensible of the great favours and high honours bestowed upon him; and though the object of praise, to whom he was obliged for them, is not so fully expressed; yet is easily understood to be Jehovah, the Being of beings, the Father of mercies, even Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, and especially the Messiah; see Ps 111:1;

before the gods will I sing praise unto thee; before the princes, as Jarchi; before the kings, as the Syriac version; with which agrees Ps 119:46; and who would join therein, Ps 138:4; or before the judges, as the Targum, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech; or civil magistrates, who are sometimes called gods, Ps 82:1; and they are the powers ordained of God, and represent him on earth; or the sanhedrim, as the Midrash; or before the gods of the Gentiles, those fictitious deities, above whom Jehovah is; and over whom the psalmist triumphs, having conquered the nations where they were worshipped; and therefore in their presence, and notwithstanding them, or in opposition to them, praised the Lord; see Ps 18:49; or rather before the ark, the symbol of the presence of the true God; or, as Gussetius {l} interprets it, "before thee, O God, will I sing praise"; or I will sing praise to thee, the Son the Messiah, one divine Person before another; the Son before God the Father, and it may be added before God the Holy Spirit, the two other divine Persons; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it, "before the angels", who are sometimes called gods, **Ps 8:5**; and who attend the assemblies of the saints and churches of Christ, 1Co 11:10.

{l} Comment. Ebr. p. 50.

Psalms 138:2

Ver. 2. I will worship towards thy holy temple,.... Not the temple at Jerusalem, which was not yet built, though, when it was, the Jews in their devotions at a distance looked towards it, **1Ki 8:38**; but rather the tabernacle of Moses, in which was the ark, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe; and over that the mercy seat and cherubim, between which Jehovah dwelt; and this being a type of Christ's human nature, which was perfectly holy, and is called by himself a temple, and is the true tabernacle God pitched, and not man, **Joh 2:19**; he may be designed, and to him, as Mediator, should we look, and with him deal in all our devotions for acceptance with God; see **Jon 2:4**; unless heaven itself is meant, which is the palace of Jehovah, the habitation of his holiness, his temple where he dwells, Ps 11:4;

and praise thy name, for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth; which may primarily regard the goodness and grace of God in promising David the kingdom, and his faithfulness in making good the promise, and for both which he was under obligation to praise the name of the Lord; and holds good with respect to all other promises: and it may also signify the free favour and love of God to his people, which is from everlasting, is the source of all blessings, and is better than life; and the faithfulness of God to himself, his perfections, purposes and promises, council and covenant: it may be rendered, "for thy grace, and for thy truth" {m}, which both come by Christ, **Joh 1:17**; grace may intend both the doctrine of grace, the Gospel of the grace of God preached by Christ, and the blessings of grace which come through him; as justification, pardon, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life, which are all of grace, and by Christ: and truth also may signify the word of truth, or solid substantial blessings, in distinction from typical ones; or the good things that come by Christ our High Priest, of which the law was only a shadow; and these are all of them things the name of the Lord is to be praised for;

for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name; or "above every name of thine" {n}; which Aben Ezra interprets of the glorious name Jehovah; the word God spake to Moses, the name in which he made himself known to him, and to the Israelites, he had not to their fathers, **Ex 3:14**; but rather it is to be understood of God's word of promise, and his faithfulness in fulfilling it; which, though not a greater attribute than any other, yet is made more known and more illustrious than the rest; and particularly may regard the promise of the coming of the Messiah, and of the blessings of grace by him; Jarchi interprets it particularly of the pardon of sin. It may with propriety be applied to Christ, the essential Word, that was made flesh, and dwelt among men; whom God has highly exalted, and not only given him a name above every name of men on earth, but also above any particular name or attribute of his: or however he has magnified him "according" {o} to every name of his, it being his will that men should honour the Son as they honour the Father; or "with" {p} every name along with each of them; or "besides" {q} every name; for all these senses the word will bear. Some render them, as Ben Melech, "thou hast magnified above all things thy name" and "thy word"; or, as others, "thy name [by] thy word" {r}; see **Ps 8:1**; The Targum is,

"the words of thy praise above all thy name;"

or "over all thy name": everything by which he has made himself known in creation and providence; "thou hast magnified thy word", all being done according to the word said in himself, his decrees and purposes; or declared in his word and promises, whereby he has glorified it.

{m} So Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {n} Kmv lk le "super omne nomen tuum", Cocceius, Michaelis. {o} "Secundum omne nomen tuum", Gejerus. {p} "Cum toto nomine tuo", Junius & Tremellius. {q} "Vel praeter omne nomen tuum", Piscator. {r} "Nomen tuum sermone tuo"; so some in Piscator.

Psalms 138:3

Ver. 3. In the day when I cried thou answeredst me,.... When in distress through Saul's persecution, he cried to the Lord, and he immediately answered him, and delivered him out of his troubles; and such immediate answers of prayer are to be remembered with thankfulness: see Ps 18:6;

[and] strengthenedst me [with] strength in my soul; put him good heart and spirit, when before ready to faint; strengthened his heart and grace in it, particularly faith, and drew it forth into lively act and exercise so that he sunk not under the weight of affliction and trouble, but was filled with courage to withstand his enemies, and with strength to do the will and work of God; this is to be understood of inward spiritual strength; see **Eph 3:16**.

Psalms 138:4

Ver. 4. All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord,.... Or "let [them] confess", or "praise thee" {s}; a wish or prayer. Not only the kings known to David, as Kimchi limits it; or that lived in his days, as Hiram and others; but in the latter day, when they shall come to Zion, the church, and be nursing fathers to it, and shall serve and worship the King Messiah, Isa 49:23;

when they hear the words of thy mouth; either the promises of it fulfilled not only with respect to David; but the Messiah, and his church and people, in the latter day, even the glorious things spoken thereof: or the doctrines of the Gospel, which are the words of his mouth, and more desirable than thousands of gold and silver; and which, when kings shall hear so as to understand, they will praise the Lord for them; see Isa 52:15. The Targum is, "the words of thy praise."

{s} Kwdwy "confiteantur tibi", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Psalms 138:5

Ver. 5. Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord,.... Which are all mercy and truth; ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace: so the eunuch went on his way, and in the ways of the Lord rejoicing, **Ac 8:39**; Or, "they shall sing of the ways of the Lord" {t}; of the excellency, pleasure, and usefulness of them;

for great [is] the glory of the Lord; shown in the works of creation; more especially in the person of Christ, and in the glorious work of redemption and salvation by him; and of which there will be a great display throughout the earth in the latter day, by means of the Gospel, the great spread of it, and the multitude of persons converted by it; which will make the ways of the Lord still more pleasant; see **Isa 6:3**.

{t} hwhy ykrdb "de viis Jehovae", Piscator, Schmidt; so some in Vatablus.

Psalms 138:6

Ver. 6. Though the Lord [be] high,.... Above all the earth, and all the nations of it, and the highest of men in it; above the heavens, and the angels there, who are his creatures and at his command; above all the blessings and praises of his saints: the perfect knowledge of him is so high as not to be attained; and his thoughts and ways are higher than ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth; he is indeed the most High, higher than the highest; see Ps 113:4. According to Arama, here begins the song,

"the kings of the earth shall sing in the ways of the Lord?"

yet hath he respect unto the lowly; for good, as the Targum; that are low in their own eyes, humbled under a sense of sin, convinced, of the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them, and made to submit to the righteousness of Christ; ascribe the whole of their salvation to the free grace of God; patiently and quietly bear every afflictive providence; think the worst of themselves, and the best of others; and, being the followers of the lowly Jesus, learn of him, imitate him, and become like unto him: these the Lord has a

gracious respect unto; he looks upon them with a look of love; he has respect to their persons in Christ, and to their sacrifices for his sake, which are those of a broken and contrite heart; he regards their prayers, though low and destitute, and gives more grace unto them; yea, he condescends to dwell with them, and in due time highly exalts them; see
Isa 57:15. David may have in view his own low state and condition as a shepherd, in which he was when the Lord took him, and raised him to the throne of Israel;

but the proud he knoweth afar off; the Targum adds,

"to destroy them:"

such who are proud of themselves and what they have; of their wisdom and knowledge, of their strength or beauty, of their wealth and riches; or of their righteousness and holiness; of the purity and goodness of their hearts, and power of their free will, they vainly think themselves possessed of; and despise others below them in these things, or the practice of them: these the Lord takes notice of, and looks upon them at a distance with scorn and contempt; nor will he admit them to nearness to him, nay, opposes himself to them, and sooner or later abases them; see **Pr 3:34**. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, "high things he knoweth afar off"; things too high for creatures, that are out of their reach; he sees and knows all persons and things, whether in heaven or in earth. Others render them, "and the high One knoweth afar off" {u}; knows the lowly, owns and acknowledges them for his own; takes care of them, provides for them, and protects them: and then the sense is the same with the preceding clause.

{u} So Pagninus; "quamvis", Junius & Tremellius.

Psalms 138:7

Ver. 7. Though I walk in the midst of trouble,.... Trouble attends the best of men; both outward and inward trouble, from sin, Satan, and the world; yea, they are in the midst of it, surrounded with it; and it is a way in which they walk through this world, and enter the kingdom of heaven; it is continued unto them; it is a long walk, and yet will have an end; see Ps 23:4;

thou wilt revive me; preserve his life amidst all his troubles, support him under them, make him cheerful and fearless; revive his work of grace in him, quicken him to the lively exercise of grace, and fervent discharge of duty: this the Lord does by his gracious presence, by the discoveries of his love, and by the application of precious promises;

thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies; to stop and restrain it; which he can easily do, when most violent and outrageous, Ps 76:10. Or, "against the nose of mine enemies" {w}; strike them on the nose, as men do unruly horses to stop them: or give a slap on their face with the left hand, as Arama observes, the right being after mentioned;

and thy right hand shall save me; for that has saving strength in it, Ps 20:6. This may be understood of Christ, who is not only the man of his right hand, but is the right hand of his righteousness; by whom he saves his people with a spiritual and eternal salvation, as well as with a temporal one, Isa 41:10.

{w} ybya Pa le "super nasum inimicorum meorum", Montanus, Tigurine version; so Gussetius; "in faciem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 138:8

Ver. 8. The Lord will perfect [that which] concerneth me,.... Or "will", or "may the Lord perform for me" {x}: all things in providence; all that he had appointed for him, that would be for his good and his own glory, Ps 57:2; and particularly what concerned him as a king. He had made him king over the house of Judah; he had begun to fulfil his promise concerning the kingdom; and he would perfect it, by setting him over all the tribes of Israel. Also he believed he would perfect what concerned him as a saint, even the good work of grace upon his heart; which is but a begun work, is imperfect, is gradually carried on, and will be completed; God is able to do it, and none can hinder him; he has promised to do it, and he is faithful who will do it; and his glory is concerned in it; and it may be depended on it will be finished; he is a rock, and his work is perfect; see **Php 1:6**;

thy mercy, O Lord, [endureth] for ever; a phrase often used by the psalmist, with which his heart was affected; and here used, both as an argument by which he concluded God would perfect his begun work, and as an encouragement to make the following request:

forsake not the works of thine own hands; as are all the works of providence and grace: the work of grace upon the heart may be expressed in the plural

number, because of the several branches of it; which are all so many works, as the work of faith, labour, of love, &c. **1Th 1:3**; and which is the Lord's handiwork; and a curious work it is, a new creation work, a work of almighty power; and which he will never cease from, or be remiss in, as the word {y} signifies, until he has accomplished it, **2Th 1:11**. It is a prayer of faith, and may be most confidently believed: and some indeed render it as an expression of faith, "thou wilt not forsake the works of thine hands" {z}; David himself was the work of God's hands, as Kimchi observes, as a creature, as a king, and as a saint; and so are all the people of God,
Isa 45:11; and whom he will never leave nor forsake; for they are his church, his chosen, his children, his portion and inheritance,
Ps 94:14.

{x} ydeb rmgy "perficiet pro me", Montanus, Musculus; "perficiat pro me", Junius & Tremellius. {y} Prt la "ne dimittas", Pagninus, Montanus. {z} "Non deseres", Musculus, Piscator.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 139:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 139

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. This psalm was written by David, when he lay under the reproach and calumnies of men, who laid false things to his charge; things he was not conscious of either in the time of Saul's persecution of him, or when his son Absalom rebelled against him: and herein he appeals to the heart searching and rein trying God for his innocence; and, when settled on his throne, delivered it to the master of music, to make use of it on proper occasions. According to the Syriac title of the psalm, the occasion of it was Shimei, the son of Gera, reproaching and cursing him as a bloody man, 2Sa 16:5. Theodoret takes it to be a prophecy of Josiah, and supposes that he is represented as speaking throughout the psalm. Aben Ezra observes, that this is the most glorious and excellent psalm in all the book: a very excellent one it is: but whether the most excellent, it is hard to say. It treats of some of the most glorious of the divine perfections; omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence. Arama says, the argument of it is God's particular knowledge of men, and his providence over their affairs.

Ver. 1. O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known [me]. The omniscience of God reaches to all persons and things; but the psalmist only takes notice of it as respecting himself. God knows all men in general, and whatever belongs to them; he knows his own people in a special manner; and he knows their particular persons, as David and others: and this knowledge of God is considered after the manner of men, as if it was the fruit of search, to denote the exquisiteness of it; as a judge searches out a cause, a physician the nature of a disease, a philosopher the reason of things; who many times, after all their inquiries, fail in their knowledge; but the Lord never does: his elect lie in the ruins of the fall, and among the men of the world; he searches them out and finds them; for be knows where they are, and the time of finding them, and can distinguish them in a crowd of men from others, and notwithstanding the sad case they are in, and separates them from them; and he searches into them, into their most inward part, and knows them infinitely better than their nearest relations, friends and acquaintance do; he knows that of them and in them, which none but they themselves know; their thoughts, and the sin that dwells in them: yea, he knows more of them and in them than they themselves, Jer 17:9. And he knows them after another manner than he does other men: there are some whom in a sense he knows not; but these he knows, as he did David, so as to approve of, love and delight in, **Mt 7:23**.

Psalms 139:2

Ver. 2. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,.... Here the psalmist proceeds to observe the particular circumstances and actions of his life, which were known to God; as his "downsitting", either to take rest, as weary persons do. Schultens {a} explains it of the quiet rest in sleep; this the Lord knew when he betook himself to it, and to whose care he committed himself and family; under whose protection he laid himself down, and on whom he depended for safety, **Ps 4:8**. Or, since lying down to sleep is afterwards mentioned, this may respect sitting down at table to eat and drink; when the Lord knows whether men use the creatures aright, or abuse them; whether they receive their food with thankfulness, and eat and drink to the glory of God: or else this downsitting was to read the word of God, and meditate upon it; so the Targum paraphrases it,

"my sitting down to study the law."

When men do this, the Lord knows whether in reading they understand what they read, or read attentively and with affection; whether it is to their comfort and edification, and for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness; whether their meditation on it is sweet, and is attended with profit and pleasure. "Uprising" may respect either rising from bed, when the Lord knows whether the heart is still with him, Ps 139:18; what sense is had of the divine protection and sustentation, and what thankfulness there is for the mercies of the night past; and whether the voice of prayer and praise is directed to him in the morning, as it should be, **Ps 3:5**; or else rising from the table, when the Lord knows whether a man's table has been his snare, and with what thankfulness he rises from it for the favours he has received. The Targum interprets this of rising up to go to war; which David did, in the name and strength, and by the direction, of the Lord;

thou understandest my thought afar off; God knows not only his own thoughts, but the thoughts of men, which none but themselves know; by this Christ appears to be truly God, the omniscient God, being a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, **Mt 9:3** **Heb 4:12**. God knows what thoughts his people have of him, and of his lovingkindness in Christ; what thoughts they have of Christ himself, his person, offices, and grace; what thoughts they have of themselves, their state, and condition: he knows all their vain thoughts, and complains of them, and which also they hate; and all their good thoughts, for they come from him. And he knows them "afar off", or "of old" {b}, even before they are; so Aben Ezra interprets it, a long time past, and compares it with Jer 31:3; where the same word is rendered "of old": God knows the thoughts of his people, as well as his own, from all eternity; see Isa 25:1; as he knew what they would say and do, so what they would think; he knows thoughts that are past long ago, and forgotten by men, or were unobserved when thought; how else should he bring them into judgment? or though he is afar off in the highest heavens, yet he sees into the hearts of men, and is privy to all their thoughts.

{a} Animadv. Philol. p. 181. {b} qwxrm "q. d. dum illa longe abest", Piscator; "longe ante quam incidat in animum meum", Gejerus, & Campensis in Ibid.

Psalms 139:3

Ver. 3. Thou compassest my path and my lying down,.... The Targum adds,

"to study in the law."

His walk in the daytime, and every step he took, and his lying down at night. It denotes his perfect knowledge of all his actions, day and night; he surrounds every path of man, that they cannot escape his knowledge. Or, "thou winnowest", as some render the word {c}; he distinguishes actions; he discerns and separates the good from the bad, or the goodness of an action from the evil and imperfection of it, as in winnowing the wheat is separated from the chaff. Or, "thou measurest my squaring" {d}; all his dimensions, his length and breadth, as he lay down in his bed;

and art acquainted [with] all my ways; the whole of his life and conversation, all his works and doings: God knows all the evil ways and works of his people; he takes notice of them, and chastises for them; and all their good works, and approves and accepts of them; he knows from what principles of faith and love they spring, in what manner they are performed, and with what views, aims, and ends; see **Re 2:2** **Ps 1:6**.

{c} tyrz "ventilasti", Pagninus, Montanus; so Tigurine version and Ainsworth.
{d} yebr "quadraturam meam spithama mensurasti", Gussetius, p. 775. "spithama metiris", Cocceius.

Psalms 139:4

Ver. 4. For [there is] not a word in my tongue,.... Expressed by it or upon it, just ready to be spoken; or, as the Targum,

"when there is no word in my tongue:"

so Aben Ezra,

"before it was perfect in my tongue:"

before it is formed there; while it is in the mind, and not expressed, and even before that;

[but], lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether; the whole of it, from whence it springs; the reason of it, what is designed, or the ends to be answered by it. The Lord knows the good words of his people, which they speak to him in prayer, even before and while they are speaking them; and what they say to one another in private conversation,
Isa 65:24. See an instance of words known by Christ before spoken, in Lu 19:31.

Psalms 139:5

Ver. 5. Thou hast beset me behind and before,.... Art on every side of me, all around me, like one besieged in a strait place; so that there is nothing I can think, say, or do, but what is known unto thee. The two Kimchis, father and son, render the word, "thou hast formed me": and interpret it of the formation of his body, of which, in
Ps 139:14; see Job 10:8 but it denotes how God compasses men with his presence and providence, so that nothing escapes his knowledge;

and laid thine hand upon me; not his afflicting hand, which sometimes presses hard; though the Targum thus paraphrases it,

"and stirred against me the stroke of thine hand:"

but rather his hand of power and providence, to preserve, protect, and defend him. Or it signifies that he was so near to him that his hand was upon him, and he was perfectly known; as anything is that is before a man, and he has his hand upon.

Psalms 139:6

Ver. 6. [Such] knowledge [is] too wonderful for me,.... Meaning either the knowledge of himself, such as God had of him, which was vastly superior to what he had of himself; and especially the knowledge of other persons and things, whether visible or invisible, in heaven, earth, or hell; things past, present, and to come; or else the manner in which God knew all this was amazing to him, and quite impenetrable by him; that he did know him, his thoughts, his words and actions, and so those of all others, was easy of belief; but how he should know all this was past his conception, and struck him with the profoundest admiration;

it is high; sublime, out of his reach, beyond his comprehension;

I cannot [attain] unto it; neither to such knowledge, nor to comprehend what it is in God; and how he should have it, and in what manner he exercises it. Kimchi, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra, connect the words with the following, as if the matter of his wonder and astonishment was the omnipresence of God, or where he should find a place to flee from him.

Psalms 139:7

Ver. 7. Whither shall I go from thy spirit?.... Or, "from thy wind?" which some interpret literally, the wind being God's creature; which he brings out of his treasures, and holds in his fists, and disposes of as he pleases; this takes its circuit through all the points of the heavens, and blows everywhere, more or less. Rather God himself is meant, who is a Spirit, **Joh 4:24** not a body, or consisting of corporeal parts, which are only ascribed to him in a figurative sense; and who has something analogous to spirit, being simple and uncompounded, invisible, incorruptible, immaterial, and immortal; but is different from all other spirits, being uncreated, eternal, infinite, and immense; so that there is no going from him, as to be out of his sight; nor to any place out of his reach, nor from his wrath and justice, nor so as to escape his righteous judgment. It may signify his all-conscious mind, his all-comprehending understanding and knowledge, which reaches to all persons, places, and things; compare Isa 40:13; with Ro 11:34; though it seems best of all to understand it of the third Person, the blessed Spirit, which proceeds from the Father and the Son; and who is possessed of the same perfections, of omniscience, omnipresence, and immensity, as they are; who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and pervades them all; and is the Maker of all men, and is present with them to uphold their souls in life, and there is no going from him; particularly he is in all believers, and dwells with them; nor do they desire to go from him, but deprecate his departure from them;

or whither shall I flee from thy presence? which is everywhere, for God's presence is omnipresence; his powerful presence and providence are with all his creatures, to support and uphold them in being; he is not far from, but near to them; in him they live, move, and have their being: and so there is no fleeing from him or that; and as to his gracious presence, which is with all his people, in all places at the same time; they do not desire to flee from it, but always to have it; and are concerned for it, if at any time it is removed from them, as to their apprehension of it. Or, "from thy face" {e}; that is, from Christ, who is the face of Jehovah; the image of the invisible God, the express image of his person, in whom all the perfections of God are displayed; and such a likeness, that he that has seen the one has seen the other; he is the Angel of his face or presence, and who always appears before him, and in whom he is seen. Now there is no fleeing from him, for he is everywhere; where God is, his face is: and a sensible sinner desires to flee to him, and not from him; for there is no other refuge to flee unto for life and salvation but to him; and gracious souls desire to be always with him now, and hope to be for ever with him hereafter; they seek him, the face of God, now, and expect to see it more clearly in the world to come.

{e} Kynpm "a facie tua", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 139:8

Ver. 8. If I ascend up into heaven, thou [art] there,.... No man hath ascended or can ascend to heaven of himself; it is an hyperbolical expression, as are those that follow; none but Christ has ascended to heaven by his own power, who descended from it; saints hope to go there at death, and, when they do, they find God there; that is his habitation, his throne is there, yea, that is his throne; here he keeps court and has his attendants, and here he will be seen and enjoyed by his people to all eternity;

if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou [art there]; which, if understood of the place of the damned, is a place of torment, and a very unfit one to make a bed in, being a lake burning with fire and brimstone; and where the smoke of their torment ascends for ever, and they have no rest day nor night; their worm never dies, and their fire is not quenched; and even here God is: hell is not only naked before him, and all its inhabitants in his view; but he is here in his powerful presence, keeping the devils in chains of darkness; turning wicked men daily into it, pouring out his wrath upon them, placing and continuing an unpassable gulf between them and happy souls: though rather this is to be understood of the grave, in which sense the word is often used; and so Kimchi, Aben Ezra, and Arama, interpret it of the lowest parts of the earth, as opposed to heaven; the grave is a bed to the saints, where they lie down and rest, and sleep till the resurrection morn, Job 14:12; and here the Lord is watching over and keeping their dust, and will raise it up again at the last day. The Targum is,

"there is thy Word."

Psalms 139:9

Ver. 9. [If] I take the wings of the morning,.... And fly as swift as the morning light to the east, to the extremity of it, as Ben Melech; as far as he could go that way, as swiftly as the wings of the morning could carry him thither; so the morning is represented by the Heathens as having wings {f}; or as the rays of the rising sun, called wings for the swiftness of them, **Mal 4:2**;

[and] dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; in the most distant isles of it, in the farthest parts of the world, the sea being supposed the boundary of it: or "in the uttermost parts of the west" {g}, as opposed to the morning light and rising sun, which appear in the east; and the sea is often in Scripture put for the west, the Mediterranean sea being to the west of the land of Palestine; and could he go from east to west in a moment, as the above writer observes, there would God be. The Heathens represent Jupiter, their supreme god, as having three eyes, because he reigns in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth {h}.

{f} Vid. Cuperi Apotheos. Homeri, p. 177. {g} My tyrxab "in novissimo occidentis", Pagninus. {h} Pausan. Corinthiaca, sive l. 2. p. 129.

Psalms 139:10

Ver. 10. Even there shall thy hand lead me,.... For he could not get there with all the assistance of the wings of the morning, could they be had, without the leadings of divine Providence; and when there, being a good man, should experience the leadings of divine grace; let the people of God be where they will, he heads them as a parent his child, teaching him to go; and as a shepherd his flock, into green pastures, and to fountains of living water; he leads to himself, and to his Son by his Spirit; into communion and fellowship with them, and to a participation of all blessings grace; guides them with his counsel, and directs all their ways and going;

and thy right hand shall hold me; the Lord lays hold on his people, and apprehends them for himself, and claims his interest in them; he holds them in his ways, that they slip and fall not; he upholds them with the right hand of his righteousness, and they are safe; and he holds them from going into or on in wrong ways to their hurt.

Psalms 139:11

Ver. 11. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me,.... The darkness of a cloud or of the night, so that my actions shall not be seen; that is, if I entertain such a thought in my mind, that what I do in the dark will escape the sight and knowledge of God, and so be emboldened to commit it;

even the night shall be light about me; and make all my works manifest, as light does.

Psalms 139:12

Ver. 12. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee,.... Any thing that is done by men in it; or "darkeneth not from thee" {i}, or causeth such darkness as to hinder the sight of any action committed. The Targum is,

"from thy Word;"

see **Heb 4:12**;

but the night shineth as the day; or "enlightens as the day" {k}, gives as much light with respect to God as the day does;

the darkness and the light [are] both alike [to thee]; as is the one, so is the other: the day gives him no more light than the night, and the night no more darkness than the day; he sees as well, as clearly and distinctly, in the one as in the other. The psalmist expresses the same thing in different words three or four times, as Kimchi observes, to show that so the Lord is, that thus it is with him; he has as clear a discerning of all things done in the darkest night as at bright noon day; see Job 34:21.

{i} Kmm Kyvxy al "non obscurabit a te", Montanus; "non obtenebrant", Gejerus; so Michaelis. {k} ryay "illustrat", Junius & Tremellius; "illuminabit", Gejerus Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 139:13

Ver. 13. For thou hast possessed my reins,.... His thoughts and counsels, the reins being the seat of instruction and counsel; hence God is called the trier of the reins, and searcher of the hearts of the children of men; he is the possessor or master of their most secret thoughts, and thoroughly knows them; see **Ps 7:9**; they are also the seat of the affections, which are naturally sinful and inordinate, and set upon carnal and earthly things; but the Lord possesses and engrosses the affections of his people in the best sense, Ps 73:25; moreover the reins are the seat of lust, the bed in which it is conceived and brought forth, and God knows the first motions of it there; and that the imagination of the thought of man's heart is evil continually, **Ge 6:5**;

thou hast covered me in my mother's womb; with the secundine, or afterbirth, in which he carefully wrapped him, a proof of his knowledge of him, and care for him in the womb; or with skin and flesh he covered his bones with as they grew there; see Job 10:11; or the sense is, he protected and defended him in his embryo state, and when ripe for birth took him out from thence, and held him up ever since, Ps 22:9; he had his eye on him when no other eye could see him, not even his mother that bare him, and before ever he himself saw light. The Targum is,

"thou hast founded me in my mother's womb."

Psalms 139:14

Ver. 14. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully [and] wonderfully made,.... the formation of man is not of himself, nor of his parents, but of God, and is very wonderful in all its parts; it has been matter of astonishment to many Heathens, as Galen and others, who have, with any carefulness, examined the structure and texture of the human body, the exact symmetry and just proportion of all its parts, their position and usefulness; holy every bone, muscle, artery, nerve and fibre, are nicely framed and placed to answer their designed end; particularly the eye and ear, the exquisite make of them for sight and sound, have filled the most diligent inquirers into nature with amazement and wonder, and are a full proof of the wisdom and knowledge of God; see
Ps 94:9; no man has cause to reproach his parents, nor blame the Former of all things for making him thus, but on the contrary should praise the Lord, as David did, who has given him life and breath, and all things; or own and confess {1}, as the word may be rendered, that he is in various surprising instances a wonder of nature; see
Isa 45:9. R. Moses in Aben Ezra thinks David is speaking of the first father, or the first Adam; who was wonderfully made of the dust of the earth, and had a living soul breathed into him; was made after the image of God, holy and upright: but rather he speaks of Christ, the second Adam, his antitype, who as man is a creature of God's make, and was wonderfully made, even of a virgin, without the use and knowledge of man; is the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, the tabernacle which God pitched and not man; was produced by the power of the Holy Ghost, was born without sin, which no man is, and united personally to the Son of God, and is the great mystery of godliness; and his name is justly called Wonderful, **Isa 9:6**. Cocceius interprets this passage of God's separating act of David, and so of others in election; which is a

wonderful setting apart of than for himself, as the word is used **Ps 4:3**; it is the effect of amazing love, and to be ascribed to the sovereignty of God, and the unsearchable riches of his grace; but this seems not to be intended here, though it is a marvellous act, as all the works of God are, as follows; rather, since the word may be rendered, "I am wonderfully separated" {m}, it may be interpreted of his being separated in his mother's womb from the rest of the mass and matter of her blood, and formed from thence; which was done in a secret, unknown, and marvellous way and manner;

marvellous [are] thy works; of creation, providence, sustentation of all creatures, the government of the world, the redemption of mankind, the work of grace and conversion, the perseverance of the saints, and their eternal salvation;

and [that] my soul knoweth right well: having diligently sought them out, and having such a distinct knowledge of them as to be capable of talking of them, and of showing them to others, and pointing out the wonders, beauties, and excellencies of them; see Ps 111:2; however, he well and perfectly knew, or knew so much of them that they were very wonderful and amazing: some connect the word rendered "right well", which signifies "greatly", or "exceedingly", not with his knowledge, but with the marvellous works known; and take the sense to be, that he knew them to be greatly or exceedingly wonderful; so R. Moses in Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech.

{l} Kdwa "confitebor tibi", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "confiteor", Tigurine version, Cocceius, Michaelis. {m} ytalpn "tremendis modis separatus sum", Cocceius; so Gussetius, p. 676, 677.

Psalms 139:15

Ver. 15. My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret,.... Or "my bone" {n}; everyone of his bones, which are the substantial parts of the body, the strength of it; and so some render it "my strength" {o}; those, though covered with skin and flesh yet, being done by the Lord himself, were not hid from him; nor the manner of their production and growth, which being done in secret is a secret to men; for they know not how the bones grow in the womb of her that is with child, Ec 11:5; but God does;

[and] curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth; or formed in my mother's womb, as the Targum, and so Jarchi, like a curious piece of

needlework or embroidery, as the word {p} signifies; and such is the contexture of the human body, and so nicely and curiously are all its parts put together, bones, muscles, arteries, veins, nerves, and fibres, as exceed the most curious piece of needlework, or the finest embroidery that ever was made by the hands of men; and all this done in the dark shop of nature, in the "ovarium", where there is no more light to work by than in the lowest parts of the earth. The same phrase is used of Christ's descent into this world, into the womb of the virgin, where his human nature was curiously wrought by the finger of the blessed Spirit, **Eph 4:9**.

{n} ymue "os meum", V. L. Vatablus, Gejerus, "ossa mea", Piscator; "apparatio ossium meorum", Cocceius. {o} "Robur meum", Tigurine version; "vis mea", Junius & Tremellius. {p} ytmqr "velut opere phrygio effingerer", Tigurine version; "velut acupictur sum", Grotius.

Psalms 139:16

Ver. 16. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect,.... The word {q} for "substance" signifies a bottom of yarn wound up, or any rude or unformed lump; and designs that conglomerated mass of matter separated in the womb, containing all the essentials of the human frame, but not yet distinguished or reduced into any form or order; yet, even when in this state, the eyes of the Lord see it and all its parts distinctly;

and in thy book all [my members] were written: [which] in continuance were fashioned, when [as yet there was] none of them; in the book of God's eternal mind, and designs, the plan of the human body was drawn, all the parts of it described, and their form, places, and uses fixed, even when as yet not one of them was in actual being; but in due time they are all exactly formed and fashioned according to the model of them in the mind of God; who has as perfect knowledge of them beforehand as if they were written down in a book before him, Or "in thy book are written all [of them], what days they should be fashioned"; not only each of the members of the body were put down in this book, but each of the days in which they should be formed and come into order: "when" as yet there was "none of them"; none of those days, before they took place, even before all time; the Targum is,

"in the book of thy memory all my days are written, in the day the world was created, from the beginning that all creatures were created."

{q} ymlg "informe meum", Montanus; "glomus meam", Michaelis.

Psalms 139:17

Ver. 17. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!.... The word {r} signifies that which is scarce and rare, and not to be attained and enjoyed; see **1Sa 3:1**; the thoughts and counsels of God are impenetrable and unsearchable; he knows our thoughts, as Aben Ezra observes, but we do not know his, Ps 139:2; as well as it likewise signifies the worth and value of them; God's thoughts are infinitely beyond ours, and infinitely more valuable and more important, and are concerning our welfare and happiness: it is marvellous that God should think of us at all; it is more so that his thoughts should not be thoughts of evil, to bring that evil upon its we deserve, but thoughts of peace and reconciliation in and by his Son, in whom he was reconciling the world to himself; thoughts of salvation and eternal life, and of the way and means of bringing it about; thoughts to provide for our present supply in this world, and to lay up for us for the world to come; see Jer 29:11. It may be interpreted of the thoughts which David had of God in his meditations of him, which were sweet, precious, and comfortable to him; of his lovingkindness to him, covenant grace, precious promises, and gracious dealings with him; but the former sense seems best. The Targum is,

"to me how precious they that love thee, the righteous, O God!"

and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it, "thy friends";

how great is the sum of them! or "the heads of them"; that is, not the chief of thy friends, but the sum of thy thoughts, these in the bulk, in the general, are not to be counted; and much less the particulars of them, these are not to be entered into or described.

{r} wrqy "difficiles", Cocceius; "quam rarae"; so some in Vatablus.

Psalms 139:18

Ver. 18. If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand,...., That is, if I should attempt to do it, it would be as vain and fruitless as to attempt to count the sands upon the seashore, which are innumerable; Ps 11:5.

So Pindar says {s}, that sand flies number, that is, is not to be numbered; though the Pythian oracle boastingly said {t}, I know the number of the sand, and the measures of the sea; to which Lucan {u} may have respect when he says, measure is not wanting to the ocean, nor number to the sand; hence geometricians affect to know them; so Archytas the mathematician, skilled in geometry and arithmetic, is described and derided by Horace {w} as the measurer of the earth and sea, and of the sand without number; and Archimedes wrote a book called qammithv {x}, of the number of the sand, still extant {y}, in which he proves that it is not infinite, but that if even the whole world was sand it might be numbered; but the thoughts of God are infinite;

when I wake, I am still with thee; after I have been reckoning them up all the day, and then fall asleep at night to refresh nature after such fatiguing researches; when I awake in the morning and go to it again, I am just where I was, and have got no further knowledge of God and his thoughts, and have as many to count as at first setting out, and far from coming to the end of them: or else the sense is, as I was under thine eye and care even in the womb, before I was born, so I have been ever since, and always am, whether sleeping or waking; I lay myself down and sleep in safety, and rise in the morning refreshed and healthful, and still continue the care of thy providence: it would be well if we always awaked with God in our thoughts, sensible of his favours, thankful for them, and enjoying his gracious presence; as it will be the happiness of the saints, that, when they shall awake in the resurrection morn, they shall be with God, and for ever enjoy him.

{s} Olymp. Ode 2. in fine. {t} Apud Herodot. Clio, sive l. 1. c. 47. {u} Pharsal. l. 5. v. 182. {w} Carmin. l. 1. Ode. 28. v. 1, 2. {x} Vid. Turnebi Advers. l. 26. c. 1. {y} Fabrit. Biblioth. Gr. l. 3. c. 22. s. 8.

Psalms 139:19

Ver. 19. Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God,.... Since he is God omniscient, and knows where they are, what they have done, are doing, and design to do; and God omnipresent, at hand to lay hold upon them; and God omnipotent, to hold them and inflict due punishment on them; this is a consequence rightly drawn from the above perfections of God. Or "if thou wilt slay the wicked" {z}, then, when I awake, I shall be with thee, as Kimchi connects the words; that is, be at leisure to attend to thy works and wonders, and daily employ myself in the contemplation of them, having no wicked persons near me to molest and disturb me. The word is singular in the original

text, "the wicked one"; meaning either Saul, who was David's enemy without a cause, and did very wickedly and injuriously by him, whom he might expect God in due time would take out of the world; though he did not choose to lay his hand on the Lord's anointed, when he was in his power. Jarchi interprets it of Esau, by whom he means Edom or Rome, in the Rabbinic language, that it, the Christians; if he meant no more than the Papal Christians, he may be much in the right; the man of sin, the son of perdition, the wicked one, whom the Lord will slay with the breath of his lips, may be intended, the common enemy of Christ and his cause,
Isa 11:4. Though it may design a collective body of wicked men; all the followers of antichrist, all the antichristian states, on whom the vials of God's wrath will be poured; and even all the wicked of the earth, all Christ's enemies, that would not have him to reign over them, and none but they; the justice of God will not admit of it to slay the righteous with the wicked, and the omniscience of God will distinguish the one from the other, and separate the precious from the vile;

depart from me therefore, ye bloody men; men guilty of shedding innocent blood, and therefore by the law of God should have their blood shed; such particularly are antichrist and his followers, who deserve to have blood given them to drink, because they have shed the blood of the saints, Re 16:6; these and such as these the psalmist would have no company or fellowship with, lest he should be corrupted by them, fall into sin, and partake of deserved plagues with them, Re 18:4. Some consider these as the words of God, and in connection with the former, and by way of wish, thus, "O that thou wouldest slay the wicked, O God" {a}; and wouldest say, "depart from me, ye bloody men"; which will be said to the wicked at the last day, and even to such who have made a profession of the name of Christ, **Mt 7:23**.

{z} ljqt Ma "si occideris", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, &c. {a} So some in Vatablus.

Psalms 139:20

Ver. 20. For they speak against thee wickedly,.... Against his being, his perfections, his purposes, his providences, his doctrines, ordinances, ministers, and people; or "they speak of thee for wickedness" {b}, they made mention of the name of God to cover their wickedness, pretending to fear God and love him, to have a reverence of him and serve him, putting on a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;

[and] thine enemies take [thy name] in vain: either by profane swearing, or by false swearing. The Targum interprets both clauses of swearing deceitfully and vainly; or "he", that is, everyone that is "lifted up to vanity [are] thine enemies" {c}, whose hearts are lifted up to vanity, idols, riches, self-righteousness, sensual lusts and pleasures; these are the enemies of God, are estranged from him, hold friendship with the world, harbour his enemies, love what he hates, hate what he loves, and commit acts of hostility against him. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, "they take thy cities in vain".

{b} Or "to a mischievous purpose"; so Ainsworth. {c} Kyde awvl awvn "qui elatus est ad vanitatem, hostes tui sunt", De Dieu.

Psalms 139:21

Ver. 21. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?.... Wicked men are haters of God; of his word, both law and Gospel; of his ordinances, ways, and worship; of his people, cause, and interest; and therefore good men hate them: not as men, as the creatures of God, and as their fellow creatures, whom they are taught by the Gospel to love, to do good unto, and pray for; but as haters of God, and because they are so; not their persons, but their works; and for the truth of this the omniscient God is appealed unto;

and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? as wicked men do, in their hearts, in their words, and in their actions. They rebel against God, and contend with him, which is folly and madness; and this is grieving to good men, because of their insolence and impudence, the ruin and destruction they expose themselves to, and the dishonour done to God: and this arises from their great love and strong affection for him, not being able to bear such behaviour to him; as a man is filled with grief and indignation when another rises up against his father or his friend; see Ps 119:136.

Psalms 139:22

Ver. 22. I hate them with perfect hatred,.... Heartily and really; not in word only, but in deed and in truth; "odio vatiniano", with consummate hatred: this is an answer to his own question;

I count them mine enemies; being the enemies of God: the friends of God were David's friends, as angels and good men, and God's enemies were his; their friends and enemies, were common; so closely allied and attached were they to each other, as God and all good men are.

Psalms 139:23

Ver. 23. Search me, O God, and know my heart,.... He had searched him, and knew his heart thoroughly;

try me, and know my thoughts; he had tried him, and knew every thought in him, Ps 139:1. This therefore is not said for the sake of God; who, though he is the trier of hearts, and the searcher of the reins, is indeed a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart at once, and knows immediately what is in man; and needs no testimony of him, nor to make use of any means in order to know him and what is within him: but David said this for his own sake, that God would search and make known to him what was in his heart, and try him by his word, as gold is tried in the fire; or by anything difficult and self-denying, as he tried Abraham; or by any afflictive providence; or in any way he thought fit to make him acquainted thoroughly with himself. His sense is this, that if he knew his own heart and thoughts, and the inward frame and disposition of his soul, it was as he had expressed it; that he was grieved with sinners, and hated those that hated the Lord, even with a perfect hatred, and reckoned them as his enemies; but if it was otherwise, he desired to be searched and tried thoroughly, that it might be discovered: and he might say this also on account of others, who charged him falsely with things he was not conscious of; that never entered into his thoughts, and his heart knew nothing of, and could not accuse him with; and therefore he appeals to the heart searching God, that he would so lay open things that his integrity and innocence might appear to all; see Ge 22:1.

Psalms 139:24

Ver. 24. And see if [there be any] wicked way in me,.... Not that David thought himself free from wickedness, or that there was none to be found in his heart and life; and therefore said this in a boasting way, he knew otherwise; see Ps 19:12; but he is desirous it might be thoroughly looked into and seen whether there was any such wicked way in him he was charged with; as that he had a design upon the life of Saul, and to seize his throne and kingdom, which never entered into his mind, 1Sa 24:9. Or, "any way of grief" {d}; what tended to wound and grieve his own soul, or to grieve the hearts of God's people; or to grieve the Holy Spirit of God; and which he ought to grieve for and repent of: suggesting, that upon the first conviction he was ready to relinquish any such wicked way, and express his abhorrence of it, and testify true repentance for it. Some render it, "the way of an idol" {e}; because a word from the same root signifies an idol: every carnal lust in a man's heart is an idol; and whatsoever engrosses the affections, or has more of them than God himself has, or is preferred to him, Eze 14:4. The Targum is,

"and see if the way of those that err is me;"

and lead me in the way everlasting; or, "in the way of old" {f}: the good old way, the ancient path, in which the patriarchs before and after the flood walked, Or, "in the perpetual way" {g}; the way that endures for ever; in opposition to the way of the wicked, that perishes, **Ps 1:6**; or in the way that leads to everlasting life, to eternal peace and rest, and endless pleasures; as opposed to the way of grief and sorrow. It designs Christ, the true and only way to eternal life, the path of faith, truth, and godliness, **Mt 7:13**; in which the Lord leads his people, as a father does his child, and as the shepherd his flock. The Jewish commentators, Aben Ezra and Kimchi, interpret it the way of the world; and take it to be the same with the way of all flesh, death, or the grave; which is called man's world, or home, Jos 23:14; and make the sense to be this: If thou seest any evil in me, take me out of the world; kill me at once, let me die But this seems to be foreign from the text; for the word "lead" designs a blessing or benefit, as Calvin well observes. The Targum is,

"lead me in the way of the upright of the world;"

the way in which upright men walk.

{d} bue Krd "via doloris", Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth. {e} "Via idoli"; so some in Vatablus. {f} Mlwe Krdb "per viam sepiternam", Pagninus, Vatablus; "per viam antiquam", Gussetius; so Ainsworth. {g} "In via perpetua", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 140:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 140

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. This psalm, A ben Ezra says, was composed by David before he was king; and Kimchi says, it is concerning Doeg and the Ziphites, who calumniated him to Saul; and, according to our English contents, it is a prayer of David to be delivered from Saul and Doeg. The Syriac inscription is,

"said by David, when Saul threw a javelin at him to kill him, but it struck the wall; but, spiritually, the words of him that cleaves to God, and contends with his enemies."

R. Obadiah says, it was made at the persecution of David by Saul, which was before the kingdom of David; as the persecution (of Gog) is before the coming of the Messiah. It is indeed before his spiritual coming, but not before his coming in the flesh; and David may be very well considered in the psalm as a type of Christ, for he was particularly so in his sufferings, as well as in other things.

Ver. 1. Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man,.... Either Saul; so Theodoret; or rather Doeg, according to R. Obadiah: but Jarchi interprets it of Esau; by whom he means Edom, or Rome, or rather the Christians in general. Were his sense confined to the Papists, he might be thought to be much in the right; for this is applicable enough to the man of sin, and his followers: for it may be understood collectively of a body of evil men; all men are evil by nature, their hearts, thoughts, words, works, and ways. David's enemies were evil men; and so were Christ's; as Herod, Judas in particular, and the Jews in general: and such are the enemies of God's people; the world, profane sinners, persecutors, and false teachers; and to be delivered from such is desirable, and to be prayed for, and an happiness when enjoyed; see **2Th 3:2**;

preserve me from the violent man: or, "the man of violences" {h}; of a violent spirit, that breathes out slaughter and death; of a fierce countenance, of blustering words, and furious actions. Such a man was Doeg; who loved evil, and all devouring words, devised mischief, and boasted in it, Ps 52:1; and Herod, who in his wrath, being disappointed, ordered sit the infants in and about Bethlehem to be slain; and the Jews, who were violently set on the death of Christ, and vehemently desired it: and such are all violent persecutors of the church of God, who clothe themselves with the garment of violence, and drink the wine of it; and to be preserved from such is a great mercy.

{h} Myomx vyam "a viro violentiarum", Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 140:2

Ver. 2. Which imagine mischiefs in [their] heart,.... This shows that not a single person barely is meant but more, as Saul's courtiers; who were secretly and continually meditating mischief against David, traducing him to Saul, and devising things to take away his life. Such were the Jews to Christ, who were always plotting to entangle him, or contriving to kill him; and so wicked men are ever devising mischief against the quiet in the land, which is very abominable to God; and rightly observed here, to prevail upon the Lord to preserve from them, **Ps 2:1**;

continually are they gathered together [for] war; so Saul gathered together three thousand men, and went in pursuit of David, as an enemy, to take him. So Herod and Pontius Pilate joined together, though before enemies, in the prosecution of Christ; and Jews and Gentiles gathered together against him: so the saints, being in a warfare state, have their enemies, who often combine against them, and attack them, and will not suffer them to be at rest and peace; as sin, Satan, the world, and false teachers; see Ps 120:7.

Psalms 140:3

Ver. 3. They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent,.... Which Kimchi says it does before it bites. Aristotle {i} observes, that the tip or extreme point of a serpent's tongue is as small as a hair, and so exceeding sharp and piercing. Arama interprets this of the sharpness and cunning of the serpent; and particularly the serpent that deceived Eve, and spake cunningly to her. "For God knoweth", &c. and may design the calumnies and detractions, which were sharp as a razor; as swords, and spears, and arrows, and as the tongue of a serpent, Ps 57:4; and the subtlety of false teachers, and deceitful workers; and the sharp and cutting words of wicked men against Christ and his people, **Jude 1:15**;

adder's poison is under their lips; which may signify the malignity of sin in wicked men, which comes from the old serpent the devil; is latent in men; very infectious, like poison, and deadly and incurable, but by the grace of God, and blood of Christ: and may describe particularly the mischief of the tongue, which is a little member, as the asp is a little creature; but very mischievous, full of deadly poison, which lurks in it, lies under it, and which spitting out, it stupifies and kills insensibly; as do the calumnies of wicked men, and the doctrines of false teachers; see **Ro 3:13**. The Targum is,

"the poison of the spider;"

though it is said {k} the spider is not venomous.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{i} Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 17. {k} Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 800. & vol. 5. par. 1. p. 24.

Psalms 140:4

Ver. 4. Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked,.... From falling into their hands, and the weight of them}; and from their laying hands on him, being men of power and authority;

preserve me from the violent man: or men, everyone of them;
See Gill on "Ps 140:1";

who have purposed to overthrow my goings: to supplant him; to cause him to stumble and fall, to his disgrace and reproach; and that they might take an advantage of him, and an occasion against him. Arama interprets it, to drive me out of the land of Israel; see 1Sa 26:1. So Christ's enemies thought to have supplanted him, and have found something against him, to accuse him of to Caesar, Mt 22:15.

Psalms 140:5

Ver. 5. The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords,.... These were the Ziphites, according to Arama; see Ps 119:85; the character well agrees with the Scribes and Pharisees, who were proud boasters, and despised others, and often laid snares for Christ to take away his life; and with the enemies of the church and people of God; who, through their pride, persecute them, and are insidious, and use artful methods to ensnare them; as the fowler lays his snare for the bird, and has his cords to draw it to him when it is taken in the snare, to which the allusion is;

they have spread a net by the wayside: they waylaid him; knowing the way he would go, they lay in wait for him, to seize him at once as he went along; see Joh 18:1; the word "cords" in the preceding clause should be connected with this, and be read, "and with cords they have spread a net by the wayside": it being usual, as Jarchi observes, to fasten a long cord at the top of the net; and when the fowler sees the birds under the net, he draws the cord, and the net falls upon the fowls;

they have set gins for me; all these expressions design the insidiousness, and the private, secret, artful methods, the enemies of David, of Christ and his people, took and do take to ensnare them. Arama interprets the "snare and cords" of the watching of David's house; the "net by the wayside" of posting themselves at the gates of the city, and surrounding it; and gins of spies; see 1Sa 19:11.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

Psalms 140:6

Ver. 6. I said unto the Lord, thou [art] my God,.... He said this to the Lord himself; claimed his covenant interest in him, and expressed it in the strength of faith: and this he did when in the midst of trouble and distress; in danger of falling into the hands of evil and violent men; they imagined mischief against him; were bent on his ruin, and laid nets, snares, gins, and traps for him; when he applied to his God, who only could deliver him; and being his covenant God, he had reason to believe he would; see Ps 31:14;

hear the voice of my supplications, O Lord; the requests he put up in an humble manner for deliverance and salvation; and which he expressed vocally, and entreated they might be heard and answered; and nothing could tend more to strengthen his faith in this than that it was his own God and Father he prayed unto; see Ps 28:2; Thus Christ, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying; and in the midst of his troubles, and surrounded with enemies, declared his faith in God as his God, **Heb 5:7**.

Psalms 140:7

Ver. 7. O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation,.... Temporal and spiritual, which he was able to effect; the mighty God and mighty Saviour: and this encouraged David to believe he should have deliverance; and this secured, confirmed, and established it to him; and to which he was the more induced by what experience he had had of the divine goodness to him, as follows:

thou hast covered my head in the day of battle; with the helmet of salvation, as Kimchi, Aben Ezra, and Arama observe; which, in a spiritual sense, is to a believer the hope of salvation, **Eph 6:17** **1Th 5:8**; a defensive weapon to him; and protects him while he is engaging with his spiritual enemies in this his state of warfare, sin, Satan, and the world. Perhaps David may have respect to the divine protection of him, when he fought with Goliath. Salvation was Christ's helmet, when he engaged with all his and our enemies; even with all the powers of darkness, and obtained deliverance for us, Isa 59:16.

Psalms 140:8

Ver. 8. Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked,.... Of Doeg, as the Targum, and of other wicked men, who were desirous both of taking him, and of taking away his life: but the desires of such men are under the restraints of the Lord; nor can they fulfil them unless they have leave from him, which is here deprecated. The psalmist entreats he might not be delivered up to their will, or they have their will of him; see Ps 27:12. Jarchi interprets it of Esau, as in Ps 140:1; and it is applicable enough to antichrist and his wicked followers; who, could they have their desires, would root the Gospel, and the interest of Christ and his people, out of the world;

further not his wicked device: or, "let not his wicked device come forth" {l}, or proceed to execution, or be brought to perfection; let him be disappointed in it, that he may not be able to perform his enterprise, or execute his designs; which cannot be done without the divine permission. The Rabbins, as Jarchi and others, render it, "let not his bridle come out" {m}; the bridle out of his jaws, with which he was held by the Lord, and restrained from doing his will; let him not be left to his liberty, and freed from the restraints of divine Providence; see Isa 37:29;

[lest] they exalt themselves. Grow proud, haughty, and insolent to God and man; see De 32:27. Or, "let them not be exalted" {n}; upon the ruin of me and my friends.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{l} qpt la "ne facias prodire", Vatablus; "ne sinas exire", Cocceius, Michaelis. {m} "Vel frenum ejus ne sinas exire", Cocceius. {n} wmwry "ne exaltentur", Vatablus, Gejerus.

Psalms 140:9

Ver. 9. [As for] the head of those that compass me about, let the, mischief of their own lips cover them. Meaning either their natural head, put for their whole persons; and the sense is, let the mischief they have contrived for others fall upon themselves; see **Eze 9:10** **Ps 7:16**; or some principal person, the head and leader of them, as the word is sometimes used, **Isa 9:14**; and designs either Saul, who at the head of three thousand men surrounded the hill where David and his men were; or Doeg the Edomite, who was over the servants of Saul, and accused David to him; so Kimchi: or Ahithophel, who was at the head of the conspirators against him; so the Targum paraphrases it,

"Ahithophel, the head of the sanhedrim of the disciples of wickedness."

If we understand this clause of Christ, the antitype of David, it may design Judas; who was the guide to them that sought Jesus, and, at the head of a band of men, enclosed and took him: or if of the church and people of God, the man of sin may be intended, the pope of Rome; the head over many countries, the antichristian nations, Ps 110:6. The word is used of the gall and poison of asps, Job 20:14; and if so taken here, as Arama interprets it, it will make the sense agree with
Ps 140:3; and may be read in connection with the following clause, thus: "let the poison of those that compass me about, [even] the mischief of their lips, cover them" {o}; or the labour of them {p}: let the lies and calumnies they have so industriously spread, and took so much pains to propagate to the hurt of others, like deadly poison, cover them with shame and confusion; and the mischief they have boasted of, and gave out that they would do, let it come upon them on all sides, and utterly ruin and destroy them.

{o} So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {p} wmytpv lme "labor labiorum eorum", Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 140:10

Ver. 10. Let burning coals fall upon them,.... From heaven, as the Targum,

Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, by way of explanation; alluding to the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire from thence: and may design both the terrible judgments of God in this life, and everlasting burnings in hell; so Jarchi interprets it of the coals of hell; see
Ps 11:6;

let them be cast into the fire; into the fire of divine wrath, and have severe punishment inflicted on them in this world; and into the fire of hell hereafter, as the Targum, which is unquenchable and everlasting; and into which all wicked men, carnal professors, the followers of antichrist, the devil and his angels, will be cast: of the phrase of casting into hell, see **Mt 5:29**;

into deep pits, that they rise not up again; meaning either the grave, the pit of corruption; from whence the wicked will not rise to eternal life, as the Targum adds, for though they will rise again, it will be to everlasting shame and damnation, Da 12:2; or else the pit of hell, the bottomless pit, from whence there will be no deliverance; where they must lie till the uttermost farthing is paid, and that will be for ever. Arama refers this to Korah, who was burnt and swallowed up, and rose not again in Israel.

Psalms 140:11

Ver. 11. Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth,.... One that sets his mouth against the heavens, and speaks evil of God; of his being, perfections, purposes, and providences: whose tongue walks through the earth, and speaks evil of all men, even of dignities; and especially of the saints of the most High, and of the Gospel and ways of Christ. Or, "a men of tongue" {q}; that uses his tongue in an ill way, in detractions and slanders {r}; in blaspheming God, his name and tabernacle, and those that dwell therein, as antichrist, Re 13:5; a man that calumniates with a triple tongue, so the Targum; like a serpent, whose tongue seems to be so sometimes. Kimchi applies this to Doeg, and Jarchi to Esau. The request is, that such an one might not be established in the earth; in the land of the living, as the Targum; might not increase and flourish in worldly substance, or be continued in his posterity; but be rooted out of the earth, and he and his be no more; see **Ps 3:4**;

evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow [him]; or "to impulsions" {s}: to drive him from evil to evil, as Kimchi. The sense is, that the evil of punishment shall hunt him, as a beast of prey is hunted; it shall closely pursue him and overtake him, and seize on him, and thrust him down to utter ruin and destruction. The Targum is,

"the injurious wicked man, let the angel of death hunt, and drive into hell."

Of the violent man, see Ps 140:1; he who purposed to overthrow David, he was persuaded would be overthrown himself. This clause teaches us how to understand the rest; for though they are delivered out as wishes and imprecations, yet are prophetic, and are strongly expressive of the certainty of the things imprecated.

{q} Nwvl vya "vir linguae", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {r} So the word "tongue" is used in Cicero, "Si linguas minus facila possimus", Epist. l. 9. 2. {s} tphdml "ad impulsiones", Montanus.

Psalms 140:12

Ver. 12. I know,.... Here is a double reading: the "Keri", or marginal reading, is, "thou knowest"; an appeal of the psalmist to God, who knew the thoughts of the wicked concerning him, and their devices against him; as Kimchi: but the Scripture reading is, I know; expressing his full persuasion and assurance

that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, [and] the right of the poor; of his poor and afflicted people, that are afflicted within and without, by men and devils; and who are poor as to the things of this world, and poor in spirit, and sensible of their spiritual poverty, but rich in grace: the cause of these God will maintain against their oppressors, and right their wrongs, and avenge their injuries; this the psalmist knew, and was assured of from the word of God, from instances and examples in former times, and from his own experience, **Ps 9:4**.

Psalms 140:13

Ver. 13. Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name,.... The same with the poor and the afflicted; who, though traduced by men, and evil spoken of and ill used by them, are righteous in the sight of God; being justified by the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to them, and received by faith, in consequence of which they live soberly and righteously: these the psalmist knew and was assured they would give thanks to the Lord, and praise his holy name, for the righteousness by which they are made righteous, and for every

other blessing of grace and mercy of life; for maintaining their cause and their right, and for the ruin and destruction of their enemies; see
Re 18:20;

the upright shall dwell in thy presence; under his care and protection; in his gracious presence, enjoying the light of his countenance here; and in his glorious presence hereafter, where is fulness of joy: these upright ones are such who are upright in heart; whose hearts are right with God, sincere in his service and worship, and walk uprightly according to the rule of his word. These, as some render it, "shall sit before [him]" {t} or "in his presence": as children before a father, in whom he delights; or as disciples before a master, to be taught and instructed. The Targum is,

"shall return to pray before thee:"

and so Aben Ezra interprets it of their dwelling, or sitting before God, in the house of prayer; and Kimchi adds, by way of explanation,

"to seek thee, and know thy ways."

Jerom reads it, "shall dwell with thy countenance or face" {u}; and understands it of dwelling with Christ, the face of God, **Heb 1:3**; with whom they shall dwell for evermore.

{t} wbvy "considebunt", Junius & Tremellius; "sedebunt", Cocceius; so Ainsworth and Syriac version. {u} So Sept. V. L. Arabic version, and Pagninus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 141:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 141

A Psalm of David. This psalm was written about the same time, and upon the same occasion, as that going before and what follows after; even when David was persecuted by Saul, and when he was in great danger of his enemies, and snares were laid for his life.

Ver. 1. Lord, I cry unto thee,.... With great earnestness, importunity, and fervency, being in distress; and knowing vain was the help of man, and that none could deliver him but the Lord, and therefore continued crying unto him for help {w};

make haste unto me; which shows he was in a desperate condition; that he could not help himself, nor could any creature, only the Lord; and he was at a distance from him, as it seemed to him, and he delayed assistance; and therefore desires he would immediately draw nigh and be a present help in his time of need, and work speedy deliverance for him, his case requiring haste;

give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee; a request the psalmist frequently makes, not contenting himself with prayer, without desiring and looking for an answer to it.

{w} "Auxilium vocat, et duros conclamat agrestes", Virgil.

Psalms 141:2

Ver. 2. Let my prayer be set forth before thee [as] incense,.... Which was offered every morning on the altar of incense, at which time the people were praying, Ex 30:1; and was an emblem of it, even of pure, holy, and fervent prayer; which being offered on the altar Christ, which sanctifies every gift, and by him the High Priest; through whom every sacrifice is acceptable unto God; and through whose blood and righteousness, and the sweet incense of his mediation and intercession, it becomes fragrant and a sweet odour to the Lord; and being directed to him, it goes upwards, is regarded by him, and continues before him as sweet incense; which is what the psalmist prays for; see **Mal 1:11**;

[and] the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice; the burnt sacrifice of the evening, according to Ben Melech, the lamb slain every evening; or else the minchah, as the word is; the meat, or rather the bread offering made of fine flour, with oil and frankincense on it, which went along with the former, Ex 29:38; and so the Targum,

"as the sweet gift offered in the evening."

This only is mentioned, as being put for both the morning and the evening sacrifice; or because the incense was offered in the morning, from which it is distinguished: or it may be, as Kimchi thinks, this psalm was composed in the evening; and so the inscription in the Syriac version is, "a psalm of David, when he meditated the evening service."

Or because this was the last sacrifice of the day; there was no other after it, as Aben Ezra observes; and the most acceptable; to which may be added, that this was the hour for prayer, **Ac 3:1**. Wherefore "lifting up of [the] hands" was a prayer gesture, and a very ancient one both among Jews and Gentiles {x}; Aristotle {y} says, all men, when we pray, lift up our hands to heaven; and it is put for that itself, **1Ti 2:8**; and is desired to be, like that, acceptable unto God; as it is when the heart is lifted up with the hands, and prayer is made in the name and faith of Christ.

{x} Vid. Barthii Animadv. in Claudian. ad Rufin. l. 2. v. 205. {y} De Mundo, c. 6. Vid. Plutarch. in Vita Camilli. "Sustulit ad sidera palmas", Virgil. Aeneid. 2. so Ovid. Fasti, l. 3.

Psalms 141:3

Ver. 3. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth,.... While praying, as Jarchi and Kimchi; that he might not utter any rash, unguarded, and unbecoming word; but take and use the words which God gives, even the taught words of the Holy Ghost; or lest, being under affliction and oppression, he should speak unadvisedly with his lips, and utter any impatient murmuring and repining word against God; or express any fretfulness at the prosperity of the wicked, or speak evil of them; especially of Saul, the Lord's anointed, for the ill usage of him;

keep the door of my lips; which are as a door that opens and shuts: this he desires might be kept as with a bridle, especially while the wicked were before him; lest he should say anything they would use against him, and to the reproach of religion; and that no corrupt communication, or any foolish and filthy talk, or idle and unprofitable words, might proceed from them. The phrase signifies the same as the other; he was sensible of his own inability to keep a proper watch and guard over his words, as was necessary, and therefore prays the Lord to do it; see Ps 39:1.

Psalms 141:4

Ver. 4. Incline not my heart to [any] evil thing,.... Or "evil word" {z}, as the

Targum; since out of the abundance of that the mouth speaketh, Mt 12:34; or to any sinful thing, to the commission of any evil action: not that God ever inclines men's hearts to sin by any physical influence, it being what is repugnant to his nature and will, and what he hates and abhors; for though he hardens the hearts of wicked men, and gives them up to the lusts of them; yet he does not move, incline, or tempt any man to sin, **Jas 1:13**; but he may be said to do this when he suffers them to follow their own sinful inclinations, and leaves them to be inclined by the power and prevalency of their own corruptions, and by the temptations of Satan, which is here deprecated; see Ps 119:36. So as

to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity; to join with those that make a trade of sinning; the course of whose life is evil, in their unfruitful works of darkness; and do as they do, even commit crimes the most flagitious and enormous: he seems to have respect to great persons, whose examples are very forcible and ensnaring; and therefore it requires an exertion of the powerful and efficacious grace of God, to preserve such from the influence of them, whose business is much with them;

and let me not eat of their dainties; since their table was a snare to themselves, it might be so to him; and be a means of betraying him unawares into the commission of some sins, which would be dishonourable and grieving to him: the psalmist desires not to partake with them at their table; but chose rather a meatier table and coarser fare, where he might be more free from temptation; see Pr 23:1. Or this may be understood of the dainties and sweet morsels of sin; which are like stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret, to a carnal heart: though the pleasures of it are but imaginary, and last but for a season, and therefore are avoided by a gracious man; by whom even afflictions with the people of God are preferred unto them, Heb 11:25. The Targum interprets it of the song of the house of their feasts; which is ensnaring.

{z} er rbdl "ad verbum malum", Montanus.

Psalms 141:5

Ver. 5. Let the righteous smite me, [it shall be] a kindness,.... Or, "smite me in kindness" {a}. In love; in a loving and friendly manner, which makes reproofs the more agreeable and effectual. Not the righteous God, as Arama; though he does sometimes smite his people for their sins, Isa 57:17; that is, reproves, corrects, and chastises them, and that in love and for their good; and therefore

such smitings and corrections should be taken in good part by them, and received as fatherly chastisements, and as instances of his paternal care of them, and love to them; but rather righteous and good men; who, when there is occasion for it, should reprove and rebuke one another; but then it should be in a kind and tender manner, and with the spirit of meekness; and such reproofs should be as kindly received: "for faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful",
Pr 27:6. Or, "let the righteous beat me with kindness" or "goodness" {b}; with precepts of goodness, by inculcating good things into him; which he should take, as if he overwhelmed and loaded him with benefits; even though it was like striking with a hammer, as the word signifies;

and let him, reprove me; which explains what is meant by smiting;

[it shall be] an excellent oil, [which] shall not break my head; give no pain nor uneasiness to his head or his heart, but rather supple and heal the wounds sin reproved for has made. The Targum is,

"the oil of the anointing of the sanctuary shall not cease from my head;"

with which he was anointed king; and signifies that he should enjoy the dignity, and continue in it. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "the oil of the ungodly", or "sinners": meaning their flattering words, which, though smooth as oil, were deceitful; and therefore he deprecates them, "let not the oil of the wicked", &c. as being hurtful and pernicious;

for yet my prayer also [shall be] in their calamities; that is, when the righteous, that smote and reproved him for his good, should be in any distress; such a grateful sense should he retain of their favour in reproving him, that he would pray for them, that they might be delivered out of it; which would show that he took it kindly at their hand. Or, "in their evils", or "against them" {c}; which some understand of the evil practices of wicked men; which the psalmist prayed against, and that he might be kept and delivered from.

{a} en eleei, Sept. "in misericordia", V. L. "benigne ac clementer", Michaelis. {b} dox "benignitate", Tigurine version; "bonitate", Gejerus; "seu praeceptis bonitatis", Gussetius, p. 212. {c} Mhytwerb "in malis eorum", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "adversus mala eorum", Musculus, Michaelis; so some in Vatablus.

Psalms 141:6

Ver. 6. When their judges are overthrown in stony places,.... The judges of David's adversaries, the workers of iniquity; meaning Saul, Abner, &c. Arama refers this to Saul and his sons being slain on the mountains of Gilboa, 1Sa 31:1; which might be here prophetically spoken of. Or, as it is by some rendered, "when their judges are let down by the sides of the rock" {d}; or let go free, as Saul was by David more than once; when it was in the power of his hands to have taken away his life, which his principal friends urged him to do, 1Sa 24:2. Some render the words as an imprecation or wish, "let their judges be cast down" {e}; or as a prophecy, they "shall be cast dozen in stony places", or "by the sides of a rock": so the word is used of casting or throwing down, **2Ki 9:33**; and may allude to the manner of punishment used in some places, by casting down from a precipice, from rocks and hills; see 2Ch 25:12. Or, "when they slip by the sides of the rock" {f}; endeavouring to get up it; as ambitious men are desirous of getting to the top of honour, power, and authority, but stand in slippery places, and often slip and fall. And when this should be the case of these judges, then should David be raised up on high; the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel. And then

they shall hear my words, for these are sweet: that is, the common people should hear them, and be pleased with them, who had been set against him by their judges; by which they would easily perceive that he had no enmity nor malice, nor ill design against Saul. This may respect either his very affectionate lamentation at the death of Saul and his sons, **2Sa 1:17**; or what he delivered at the several times he spared the life of Saul, when he could have taken it away,
1Sa 24:9; and it is especially true of all the words which David spoke by inspiration, or the Spirit of God spake to him; particularly in his book of Psalms, concerning the Messiah, the covenant of grace, and the blessings of it; of the rich experiences of grace he had, and the several doctrines of the Gospel declared by him; which were sweet, delightful, and entertaining to those who have ears to hear such things; or whose ears are opened to hear them, so as to understand them and distinguish them; but to others not.

{d} elo ydyb wjmvn "demittentur per loca saxosa", Tigurine version; "demissi sunt in manus petrae", Montanus; "dimittunt se in lateribue petrarum", Piscator. {e} "Praecipitentur", Munster; "dejiciantur", Gejerus; "praecipites dentur", Musculus; so Kimchi. {f} "Lubricati sunt per latere petrae", Cocceius.

Psalms 141:7

Ver. 7. Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth,.... Into which they were not suffered to be put, but lay unburied; or from whence they were dug up, and lay scattered about; which is to be understood of such of David's friends as fell into the hands of Saul and his men, and were slain: perhaps it may refer to the fourscore and five priests, and the inhabitants of Nob, slain by the order of Saul, 1Sa 22:18. Though the phrase may be only proverbial, and be expressive of the danger David and his men were in, and their sense of it, who looked upon themselves like dry bones, hopeless and helpless, and had the sentence of death in themselves, and were as it were at the mouth of the grave, on the brink of ruin;

as when one cutteth and cleaveth [wood] upon the earth: and the chips fly here and there, and are disregarded; such was their case: or as men cut and cleave the earth with the plough, and it is tore up by it, and falls on each side of it, so are we persecuted, afflicted, and distressed by our enemies, and have no mercy shown us; so the Targum,

"as a man that cuts and cleaves with ploughshares in the earth, so our members are scattered at the grave's mouth."

The Syriac and Arabic versions understand it of the ploughshare cutting the earth.

Psalms 141:8

Ver. 8. But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord,.... Not only the eyes of his body, lifted up to God in prayer, this being a prayer gesture, Joh 11:41; but the eyes of his mind, or understanding, especially the eyes of faith and love; for it is expressive of his affection to God, his holy confidence in him, and humble hope and expectation of good things from him, in this his time of distress: his eyes were to him and him only, both for temporal food for himself and his men; and for spiritual food, for all supplies of grace, for wisdom and direction, for strength and assistance, for protection and deliverance;

in thee is my trust; not in himself, nor in his friends, nor in any creature, prince or potentate, but in the Lord, as the God of nature, providence, and grace; to which he was encouraged by his lovingkindness to him; by the everlasting strength in him; by what he had done for others and for him in times past; by the provisions he has made in his covenant and promises for those that trust in him, who are of all men most happy;

leave not my soul destitute; of daily food, of help and assistance, of the presence, spirit, and grace of God; or "naked" {g}, and defenceless, but let it be surrounded or protected by almighty power and grace; or "pour not out my soul" {h}, that is, unto death; suffer me not to be taken by enemies and slain; see Isa 53:12. The Targum is,

"in the Word (of the Lord) I trust, do not empty my soul,"

or "evacuate" {i} it, as Aben Ezra; that is, out of his body; for he observes, that the soul fills the body.

{g} ret la "ne nudes", Junius & Tremellius; so Piscator. {h} "Ne effandas", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus. {i} "Ne evacues", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 141:9

Ver. 9. Keep me from the snare [which] they have laid for me,.... Either Saul, who gave him a wife to be a snare to him, and set men to watch his house and take him; or the Ziphites, who proposed to Saul to deliver him into his hands; see 1Sa 18:21.

and the gins of the workers of iniquity; the transgressions of wicked men are snares to others, by way of example; and so are the doctrines of false teachers, and the temptations of Satan, from all which good men desire to be kept, Pr 29:6; and it is the Lord alone that keeps and preserves from them, or breaks the snare and delivers them, Ps 124:7.

Psalms 141:10

Ver. 10. Let the wicked fall into their own nets,.... Which they have laid for others, as they very often do; see **Ps 7:15**; or "into his net" {k}, either Saul into his own net, and others with him, so Kimchi and Ben Melech; or the wicked into the net which God has laid for them; see Eze 12:13;

whilst that I withal escape; or "whilst I together escape", or "pass over" {l};

that is, while he, together with his companions, passed over the net laid; or,

"till I pass over safe and sound,"

will all mine, as Noldius {m}; not only pass over and escape the snares of the wicked, but pass out of this world into a state of happiness and glory in another.

{k} wyrmkmb "in retiacula ejus", Pagninus, Montanus; "in retia ejus", Vatablus, Cocceius; so Ainsworth. {l} dxy "simul transeam", Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus; "una cum meis transiturus sum", Piscator. {m} Concord. Partic. Ebr. Chald. p. 363. No. 1279. so Michaelis.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 142:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 142

Maschil of David; A Prayer when he was in the cave. Of the word "maschil", See Gill on "Ps 32:1", title. This psalm is called a prayer, as some others are, the ninetieth and hundred second psalms: and was composed by David when either in the cave of Adullam, 1Sa 22:1; or rather in the cave at Engedi, where he cut off Saul's skirt, 1Sa 24:3; as Jarchi and Kimchi think. The psalm represents the troubles of David, and of the Messiah his antitype, and is applicable to the church of God, or to any particular soul when in distress.

Ver. 1. I cried unto the Lord with my voice,.... With the voice of his soul, in the language of his mind, mentally, as Moses and Hannah cried unto the Lord when no voice was heard, or articulate sounds expressed, since this prayer was put up to the Lord in the cave where Saul was; though it might have been delivered before he came into it, while he and his men were at the mouth of it, which threw David into this distress; besides the cave was so large as to hold David and his six hundred men without being seen by Saul, and who could discourse together, as David and his men did, without being heard by Saul while he was in it; and so this psalm or prayer might be spoken vocally, though he was there;

with my voice unto the Lord did I make, my supplication: the same thing in other words; "crying" is explained by making "supplication", which is praying to the Lord in an humble manner for grace and mercy, and not pleading merit and worthiness.

Psalms 142:2

Ver. 2. I poured out my complaint before him,.... Not a complaint of the Lord and of his providences, but of himself; of his sins, and particularly his unbelief; and also of them that persecuted and afflicted him; which he "poured" out from the abundance of his heart, and in the bitterness of his soul; denoting the fulness of his prayer, his freedom in it, the power and fervency of it, and which he left before the Lord, and submitted to his will; see Ps 102:1, title;

I showed before him my trouble; the present trouble he was in, being pursued and surrounded by Saul and his army; not as if the Lord was ignorant of it, and did not see and observe it, but to affect his own soul with it, to exercise grace under it, and ease his burdened and distressed mind; the best of men have their troubles both within and without, and the way to be rid of them is to carry them to the Lord.

Psalms 142:3

Ver. 3. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me,.... Ready to sink and faint under the present affliction, being attended with the hidings of God's face, and with unbelieving frames; which is sometimes the case of God's people, and with which they are as it were covered and overwhelmed, as well as with a sense of sin, and with shame and sorrow for it; see Ps 61:2;

then thou knewest my path: the eyes of the Lord are upon all men, and he knows their goings, none of them are hid from him; and he sees and approves of the way, of the life and conversation of his people in general; and particularly observes what way they take under affliction, which is to apply to him for help and deliverance, **Ps 1:6**. R. Moses in Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it of the path he walked in, which was right and not evil, for which he could appeal to God, that knows all things; it may literally intend the path David took to escape the fury of Saul, that pursued him from place to place;

in the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me; let him take which way he would, there were spies upon him, or men that were in ambush to take him; and snares were everywhere laid for him to entrap him; see Ps

140:5.

Psalms 142:4

Ver. 4. I looked on [my] right hand, and beheld,.... On the left, so Kimchi supplies it, and after him Piscator; he looked about him every way to the right and left, to see if he could get any help, or find out any way of deliverance. To this sense the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions render the words; and so Kimchi and Aben Ezra understand them: but some render them in the imperative, "look on the right hand, and behold" {n}; and consider them; either as spoken to his own soul, to stir up himself to look around him for help and relief; or as an address to God, to look and behold, as in
Ps 80:14; and R. Obadiah reads them, "look, O right hand"; O right hand of God, that does valiantly: but looking cannot properly be ascribed to the right hand; and besides it is not the Lord the psalmist is speaking to, or looking after, but men, as follows;

but [there was] no man that would know me; take notice of him, and acknowledge and own him, or show him any favour, or even own that they had any knowledge of him; which is often the case when men are in affliction and distress, their former friends, acquaintance, yea, relations, keep at a distance from them; so it was with Job, the Messiah, and others; see Job 19:13;

refuge failed me; as he could get no help from men, so there was no way open for his escape, or by which he could flee and get out of the hands and reach of his enemies; in these circumstances he was when in the cave;

no man cared for my soul; or "life" {o}; to save it, protect and defend it, that is, very few; otherwise there were some that were concerned for him, as the men that were with him, and Jonathan, Saul's son; but none of Saul's courtiers, they were not solicitous for his welfare, but on the contrary sought his life, to take it away. This is an emblem of a soul under first awakenings and convictions, inquiring the way of salvation, and where to find help, but at a lois for it in the creature.

{n} harw Nymy jybh "respice dexteram et vide", Montanus; "vel ad dexteram", Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis. {o} yvpn "vitam meam", Junius & Tremellius.

Psalms 142:5

Ver. 5. I cried unto thee, O Lord,.... Finding no help from man, he turns to the Lord, and directs his prayer to him in his distress;

I said, thou [art] my refuge; as he was, from all his enemies that were in pursuit of him, and from the storm of calamities he apprehended was coming upon him: and a refuge the Lord is to all his people in time of trouble; and where they always meet with sustenance, protection, and safety; he being a strong habitation, a strong hold, a strong refuge, to which they may resort at all times; and such is Christ to all sensible sinners that flee unto him, **Heb 6:18**;

[and] my portion in the land of the living; and a most excellent one he is, a large, immense, and inconceivable portion; he and all his perfections, purposes, promises, and blessings, being included in it; a soul-satisfying one, and which will never be taken away nor consumed; it is a portion in the present life; it will last as long as life lasts, and continues unto death, and at death, and for evermore,
Ps 73:26.

Psalms 142:6

Ver. 6. Attend unto my cry,.... His prayer and supplication for help in his distress, which he desires might be hearkened unto and answered;

for I am brought very low; in his spirit, in the exercise of grace, being in great affliction, and reduced to the utmost extremity, weakened, impoverished, and exhausted; wanting both men and money to assist him, Ps 79:8;

deliver me from my persecutors; Saul and his men, who were in pursuit of him with great warmth and eagerness;

for they are stronger than I; more in number, and greater in strength; Saul had with him three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, ablebodied men, and expert in war; veteran troops, and in high spirits, with their king at the head of them; David had about six hundred men, and these poor mean creatures, such as were in distress, in debt, and discontented, and in want of provisions, and dispirited; see
1Sa 22:2. So the spiritual enemies of the Lord's people are stronger than they,

Jer 31:11.

Psalms 142:7

Ver. 7. Bring my soul out of prison,.... Not out of purgatory, to which some Popish writers wrest these words very absurdly; nor out of the prison of his body, as Joseph Ben Gorion {p}; knowing that none but God had a power of removing it from thence; but out of the cave, where he was detained as in a prison, while Saul and his men were about the mouth of it; or rather out of all his straits, distresses, and difficulties, which surrounded and pressed him on all sides, as if he was in a prison;

that I may praise thy name; this release he desired not so much for his own sake, that he might be at ease and liberty, but that he might have fresh occasion to praise the Lord, and an opportunity of doing it publicly, in the assembly and congregation of the people;

the righteous shall compass me about; in a circle, like a crown, as the word {q} signifies; when delivered, they should flock to him and come about him, to see him and look at him, as a miracle of mercy, whose deliverance was marvellous; and to congratulate him upon it, and to join with him in praises unto God for it. The Targum is,

"for my sake the righteous will make to thee a crown of praise."

And to the same purpose Jarchi,

"for my sake the righteous shall surround thee, and praise thy name."

Aben Ezra interprets it,

"they shall glory as if the royal crown was on their heads;"

for thou shalt deal bountifully with me; in delivering him from his enemies, settling him on the throne, and bestowing upon him all the blessings of Providence and grace; see Ps 116:7; and thus the psalm is concluded with a strong expression of faith in the Lord, though in such a low estate.

{p} Hist. Heb. l. 6. c. 20. p. 610. {q} wrtky "coronabunt", Pagninus, Montanus; "vel in me tanquam eoronati triumphabunt", Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 143:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 143

A Psalm of David. This psalm was composed by David when he fled from Absalom his son, according to the title of it in Apollinarius, the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions; so R. Obadiah Gaon: and of the same opinion is Theodoret and others. The sense he had of his sins, and his deprecating God's entering into judgment with him for them, seems to confirm it; affliction from his own family for them being threatened him, 2Sa 12:9; though Kimchi thinks it was written on the same account as the former, and at the same time, namely, when he was persecuted by Saul; and what is said in Ps 142:2, seems to agree with it. The Syriac inscription is,

"when the Edomites came against him;"

which is very foreign, since these were subdued by him.

Ver. 1. Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications,.... With these requests David begins the psalm; for it was to no purpose to pray and were heard; and for which he always appears to be concerned, as every good man will, and not to be heard only, but to be answered, as follows;

in thy faithfulness answer me, [and] in thy righteousness; he does not plead his own faith, with which he believed in God, as rama interprets it; though the prayer of faith is very effectual; but the faithfulness of God to his promises; he had promised to hear, answer, and deliver such as called on him in a time of trouble; and he is faithful that has promised, nor will he suffer his faithfulness to fail; he cannot deny himself; and on this the psalmist relied for an answer, as well as desired and expected it; not on account of his own righteousness, but either on account of the goodness and grace of God, sometimes designed by righteousness, or because of the righteousness of Christ, or for the sake of Christ, the Lord our righteousness; on whose account God is just and faithful to forgive sin, the blessing the psalmist wanted, as appears from Ps 143:2.

Psalms 143:2

Ver. 2. And enter not into judgment with thy servant,.... The house of judgment, as the Targum, or court of judicature; God is a Judge, and there is and will be a judgment, universal, righteous, and eternal; and there is a day fixed for it, and a judgment seat before which all must stand, and a law according to which all must be judged; but the psalmist knew he was but a man, and could not contend with God; and a sinful creature, and could not answer him for one of a thousand faults committed by him; and though his servant, yet an unprofitable one; his nature, his heart, his thoughts, words, and actions, would not bear examining, nor stand the test of the holy law of God; nor was he able to answer the demands of divine justice in his own person; and therefore pleads for pardon and acceptance through Christ and his righteousness, and entreats that God would not proceed against him in a judicial way, now nor hereafter;

for in thy sight shall no man living be justified; in a legal sense, so as to be acquitted in open court, and not condemned; that is, by the deeds of the law, as the apostle explains it, **Ro 3:20**; by obedience to it, by a man's own works of righteousness; because these are imperfect, are opposed to the grace of God, and would disannul the death of Christ, and encourage boasting; and much less in the sight of God; for, however men may be justified hereby in their own sight, and before men, in their esteem and account, yet not before God, the omniscient God; who sees not as man sees, and judges not according to the outward appearance, and is perfectly holy and strictly just; and none but the righteousness of Christ can make men righteous, or justify them before him; and this can and does, and presents men unblamable and irreprovable in his sight.

Psalms 143:3

Ver. 3. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul,.... Which is to be connected with Ps 143:1; and is a reason why he desires his prayer might be answered, seeing his enemy, either Saul, or Absalom his own son, persecuted him, or pursued him in order to take away his soul, or life; or Satan, the enemy and avenger, who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; or persecuting men, who are his emissaries and instruments, whom he instigates to persecute the Lord's people, and employs them therein;

he hath smitten my life down to the ground: brought him into a low, mean, and abject state, and near to death; had with a blow struck him to the ground, and left him wallowing in the mire and dirt, just ready to expire. The phrase is expressive of a very distressing state and condition. Some render it "my company" {r}; meaning the men that were with him, his soldiers, who were reduced to a low condition with him, and greatly enfeebled and dispirited;

he hath made me to dwell in darkness: in the sides of the cave, as Kimchi; see 2Sa 24:3; or in great affliction of body and mind, frequently signified by darkness, as prosperity is by light; he was not only obliged by his enemy to hide himself in woods and wildernesses, and in caves and dens, but was filled with gloomy apprehensions of things, Ps 88:6;

as those that have been long dead; or "of old" {s}, an age or two ago, who are out of mind and forgotten, and of whom there is no hope of their coming to life again until the resurrection; or who are "dead for ever" {t}; will remain so till that time comes; signifying hereby his hopeless, helpless, and forlorn state and condition; see
Ps 31:12.

{r} ytyx "catervam meam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {s} Mlwe "olim", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {t} So Syriac and Arabic versions.

Psalms 143:4

Ver. 4. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me,.... Covered over with grief, borne down with sorrow, ready to sink and fail;
See Gill on "Ps 142:3";

my heart within me is desolate; destitute of the spirit and presence of God, and with respect to the exercise of grace, and filled with fears and misgivings; or "astonished" {u}, at the providence he was under, like one stunned and filled with sore amazement, not knowing what to make of things, or what the issue of them would be; so David's antitype was "sore amazed" in the garden, when his troubles and agonies came upon him, Mr 14:33.

{u} Mmwtvy "attonitum est", Vatablus; "stupuit", Tigurine version; "stupet", Cocceius, Michaelis; "obstupuit", Gejerus.

Psalms 143:5

Ver. 5. I remember the days of old,.... Former times he had read and heard of, in which the Lord appeared for his people that trusted in him; or the former part of his own life, his younger days, when the Lord delivered him from the lion and bear, and from the uncircumcised Philistine, whom he slew; and made him victorious in battles, and preserved him from the rage and malice of Saul. If this was written on account of Absalom, those times of deliverance he called to mind, in order to encourage his faith and hope, and cheer his drooping spirits;

I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands; the works of creation and providence, in order to observe the instances of divine power, wisdom, and goodness in them; and from thence fetch arguments, to engage his trust and confidence in the Lord: he both thought of these things within himself, and he "talked" {w} of them to his friends that were with him, as the last of these words used may signify; and all this he did to cheer his own spirit, and the spirits of the men that were with him, in the time of distress and danger.

{w} xxwva "loquor", Piscator; "sermocinatus sum", Cocceius; "aut colloquor", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 143:6

Ver. 6. I stretch forth my hands unto thee,.... In prayer, as the Targum adds; for this is a prayer gesture, **1Ki 8:38**; both hands were stretched forth, earnestly imploring help, and ready to receive and embrace every blessing bestowed with thankfulness;

my soul [thirsteth] after thee as a thirsty land. As a dry land, which wants water, gapes, and as it were thirsts for rain, which is very refreshing to it; so his soul thirsted after God, after his word and ordinances, after communion with him in them, after his grace and fresh supplies of it; particularly after pardoning grace and mercy, after the coming of Christ, and the blessings of grace by him; as reconciliation, atonement, righteousness, and salvation; after more knowledge of God and Christ, and divine truths; and after the enjoyment of them in heaven to all eternity. Some copies read, "in a thirsty land" {x}, and so some versions; see Ps 42:1.

Selah; on this word, See Gill on "Ps 3:2".

{x} Urab Cod. Heb. Bomberg. Venet. "in terra siticulosa", Musculus, Tarnovius.

Psalms 143:7

Ver. 7. Hear me speedily, O Lord: my spirit faileth,.... Ready to sink, swoon, and faint away, through the weight of the affliction on him, by reason of the persecution of his enemy, and for want of the divine Presence; hence the Targum renders it,

"my spirit desireth thee;"

see So 5:6; and therefore entreats that God would hear and answer him quickly; or, "make haste to answer" him, and not delay, lest he should be quite gone. Wherefore it follows,

hide not thy face from me; nothing is more desirable to a good man than the "face" or presence of God, the light of his countenance, and sensible communion with him; which may be said to be "hid" when he withdraws his gracious presence, and withholds the discoveries of his love, and the manifestations of his free grace and favour; which he sometimes does on account of sin, and is the case at times of the best of saints; and is consistent with the love of God, though very grieving to them, and therefore here deprecated: the Targum is,

"cause not thy Shechinah to remove from me;"

lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit; either the house of the grave, as the Targum; look wan and pale, become lifeless and spiritless, or like a dead man; for as in the favour of God is life, his absence is as death: or the pit of hell, the pit of destruction; that is, be in such horror and despair, and under such apprehensions of divine wrath, as the damned feel.

Psalms 143:8

Ver. 8. Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning,.... Not only externally in the ministry of the word; but internally by the Spirit, so as to feel and perceive, and have some sensible experience of it; which he desired he might have in the morning, early, speedily, by the next morning; it being now night perhaps when he was in this distress, and put up this prayer; see 2Sa 18:1; Jarchi interprets it, when the redemption arises or springs out; meaning the deliverance of the Jews from their present captivity: and so Kimchi, of the time of salvation; as a time of distress is called the evening;

for in thee do I trust: alone for salvation; being encouraged by his loving kindness, and the goodness of God being for such that trust in him, Ps 36:7; the Targum is,

"in thy Word do I hope;"

cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; either literally, which way he should take to escape his enemies, and get out of danger; or the way and course of his life and conversation, according to the will of God; the way or truth, and path of faith; the way of righteousness and holiness, the way of God's commandments and ordinances; which he desired to have a more distinct knowledge of, and grace to enable him to walk therein;

for I lift up my soul unto thee; "in prayer", as the Targum adds, which this phrase is expressive of; and unless the heart is lifted up to God, and the affections of the soul, and the desires of it, are drawn out unto him, and grace is in exercise on him in prayer, the lifting up of the hands will be of no avail; see Ps 25:1.

Psalms 143:9

Ver. 9. Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies,.... Either Saul and his courtiers, or Absalom and the conspirators along with him; who were many, and lively and strong, stronger than he; and therefore God only could deliver him, and to him he sought for it, and not to men; and so deliverance from spiritual enemies is only from the Lord;

I flee unto thee to hide me; from their rage and fury; who was the only asylum or place of refuge for him, where he could be safe. It may be rendered, "with thee have I hid" {y}; that is, myself: so Arama gives the sense,

"I have hid myself with thee."

Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, interpret it to this purpose, "I have hid my affairs, my straits and troubles, my difficulties and necessities, from men; and have revealed them unto thee, who alone can save."

The Targum is,

"I have appointed thy Word to be (my) Redeemer."

{y} ytok Kyla "ad te abscondi me", Montanus; "apud te", Tigurine version; "ad te texi", Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 143:10

Ver. 10. Teach me to do thy will,.... Revealed in the word; which saints desire a greater knowledge of in order to do it, and in which they delight; and also are desirous of being taught, and to practise submission to the will of God under afflictions; which was now the case of the psalmist;

for thou [art] my God; his covenant God; and from whom all his afflictions came in a covenant way, and therefore desires to be instructed by him in them; see Jer 31:18;

thy Spirit [is] good; thy holy good Spirit, as the Targum; the Spirit of thy holiness, as the Arabic version: the Holy Spirit of God is meant, the third Person in the Trinity; who is "good" essentially, being of the same nature and essence with the Father and Son, with God, who is only good; and effectively is the author of the good work of grace upon the heart, and of the several particular graces there implanted, and who performs many good offices to the saints;

lead me into the land of uprightness; or, "let thy good Spirit lead me into the land of uprightness" {z}: either into a right land, as the Targum, where honesty prevails, and honest and upright men live; or, "through a plain way" {a}, easy to be found, in which he should not err, and where would be no occasion of stumbling; or, "through the way of life", as the Syriac version; the way to eternal life, to heaven and happiness; the land where only truly righteous and upright persons dwell: such will be the new heavens and the new earth, as well as the ultimate state of glory, **2Pe 3:13**; and to this the Spirit of God is the leader and guide of his people, Ps 48:14.

{z} So the Tigurine version, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {a} rwvym Urab "per terram planam", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 143:11

Ver. 11. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake,.... Being like one dead, Ps 143:3; that is, revive and cheer his drooping spirit, ready to fail, being overwhelmed within him, Ps 143:4; as well as revive the work of grace in him; and quicken his soul to the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; and this he desires not only for his own soul's good, but for the glory of God, that his name might be honoured, and not blasphemed;

for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble; for as he had his bodily troubles and other outward affliction, he had soul troubles, through the corruptions of his nature, the temptations of Satan, and the hidings of God's face; which beset him around, and greatly straitened and afflicted him, and filled him with doubts and fears; from all which he desires deliverance, for the sake of the righteousness of God, or his faithfulness to his promise, that he would deliver his people in distress when they called upon him;
See Gill on "Ps 143:1". This interprets the meaning of the petition in Ps 142:7.

Psalms 143:12

Ver. 12. And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies,.... Which, though an act of vindictive justice, and terrible righteousness to them, would be an act of grace and mercy to him, who thereby would be delivered from them: or, "for thy grace" {b}; for the sake of it, for the honour of it, do this; those being, as Cocceius thinks, despisers of the grace of God;

and destroy all them that afflict my soul; by their persecutions, reproaches, and blasphemies. These clauses, with those in Ps 143:11, are read in the future tense, "thou shalt quicken--bring out--cut off--destroy", in the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; and so may be considered as a prophecy of what would be the case of David and his enemies, or of the Messiah and his, here typified; as well as a prayer for those things;

for I [am] thy servant; by creation, by redemption and grace; and by office, being set upon the throne for the service of God and his people, and therefore pleads for his protection and help; and the rather, as he was the servant of God; and not they, his enemies, as Kimchi observes.

{b} Kdoxk "propter misericordiam tuam", Pagninus; "propter benignitatem tuam", Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "pergratiam tuam", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 144:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 144

A Psalm of David. This psalm was written by David; not on account of the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, by a spirit of prophecy, as Theodoret; but on his own account, after he was come to the throne, and was king over all Israel; and was delivered from the was between him and Israel, and from the war of the Philistines, as Kimchi observes, having gained two victories over them: or it was written between the two victories, and before he had conquered all his enemies; since he prays to be delivered from the hand of strange children, Ps 144:7. R. Obadiah thinks it was written on the account of his deliverance from Absalom and Sheba; but the former is best. Some copies of the Septuagint, and also the Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, have in their titles these words,

"against Goliath;"

and so Apollinarius; as if it was written on account of his combat with him, and victory over him; but this clause is not in the Hebrew Bibles; nor could Theodoret find it in the Septuagint in the Hexapla in his time. The Syriac inscription is still more foreign to the purpose,

"a psalm of David, when he slew Asaph the brother of Goliath."

R. Saadiah Gaon interprets this psalm of the times of the Messiah; and there are several things in it which are applicable to him.

Ver. 1. Blessed [be] the Lord my strength,.... The author and giver of his natural strength of body, and of the fortitude of his mind, and of all the spiritual strength he had, to exercise grace, to bear up under afflictions and trials, to perform duty, and withstand enemies. It may be applied to Christ, the antitype of David, the man of God's right hand, he has made strong for himself. It may be rendered, "my rock" {c}; to whom the psalmist fled for shelter, when in distress and overwhelmed; and on whom he built his faith, and hope of eternal salvation, as well as depended on him for all supplies of grace and strength, and for help and succour in all times of need. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it, "my God": and so the word "rock" is used for God, De 32:30;

which teacheth my hands to war, [and] my fingers to fight; he took him from being a shepherd, and made him a soldier; and from being the leader of a flock of sheep, to be a general of armies; and all his military skill in marshalling of troops, in leading them on to battle, and bringing them off as well as all his courage and success, were from the Lord: he whose hands and fingers had been used to the shepherd's crook, and to the handling of the harp and lyre, were taught how to handle the sword, the bow, the shield, and spear. God is a man of war himself; and he teaches the art of war, as he does husbandry and other things; see Ex 15:3; and so the Lord furnishes his people, who are here in a militant state, with spiritual armour, to fight against their spiritual enemies; he teaches them how to put it on, and directs them how to make use of every piece of it; as well as gives them boldness to face their enemies, and victory over them.

{c} yrwu "rupes mea", Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c. so Ainsworth.

Psalms 144:2

Ver. 2. My goodness,.... Not only good, but goodness itself; the donor of all the blessings of goodness to him; the author of all goodness in him; the provider of all goodness for him, laid up to be used hereafter. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it my mercy, properly enough; that is, the God of "my mercy", as in
Ps 59:10; who is all mercy, full of mercy, rich and plenteous in it; which is abundant, and from everlasting to everlasting. Or, "my grace" {d}; the God of all grace, the giver of every grace, and who is able to make all grace to abound; and from whom every blessing of grace, and every particular grace, as faith, hope, and love, and all the supplies of grace, as well as every good and perfect gift, come: Christ is prevented with all the blessings of goodness; in him all fulness of grace dwells, and with him God keeps his mercy for evermore;

and my fortress; garrison or strong hold: what fortresses or fortifications are to cities, whether natural or artificial, that is God to his people; all his perfections are on their side; and particularly they are kept by his power, as in a garrison, through faith unto salvation, **1Pe 1:5**;

my high tower: the name of the Lord, which is himself, is a strong tower, where his righteous ones that flee to him are safe; and is an "high" one, where they are out of the reach of all their enemies,
Pr 18:10;

and my deliverer; that delivered him from his temporal enemies; and from his spiritual ones, from sin, Satan, and the world; from all afflictions and temptations, from wrath and ruin, death and hell;

my shield; that protected him from all evil and danger; whose favour encompassed him as a shield; whose salvation was a shield to him; and more particularly the person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of his Son, called the shield of faith, **Eph 6:16**;

and [he] in whom I trust; not in men, no, not in princes; but in the Lord only; in his Word, as the Targum; for things temporal and spiritual; for the blessings of grace here, and glory hereafter; of these several titles, see more on Ps 18:2;

who subdueth my people under me; the people of Israel, all the tribes; whose hearts the Lord inclined to make him king over them all, **2Sa 5:1**. Or, "the people" {f}; so the Targum, Syriac, and Arabic versions; the Heathen people, the Philistines, Ammonites, Edomites, Moabites, and Syrians; see **2Sa 8:1**. The former reading seems best, and is followed by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and other versions: and this may be typical of the subduing of Christ's people under him; who are made willing, in the day of his power, to receive and own him as their King; profess subjection to his Gospel, and submit to his ordinances.

{d} ydox "gratia mea", Cocceius, Gejerus. {f} yme "pro" Myme "populos", Piscator.

Psalms 144:3

Ver. 3. Lord, what [is] man, that thou takest knowledge of him?.... Man, that is at most and best but a creature, made of the dust of the earth, is but dust and ashes; yea, a sinful creature, that drinks up iniquity like water: and yet the Lord not only knows him, as he is the omniscient God, but takes notice of him in a way of providence, and in a way of grace. His chosen people are no other nor better than others, of the same original, and of the same character; and yet he owns and acknowledges them as his peculiar people, and makes himself known unto them: and so it is rendered by the Septuagint version, "that thou shouldest be known unto him?" or, "appear to him?" as the Arabic; reveal thyself to him, not only by the light of nature and works of creation, but in Christ, and by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him;

[or] the son of man, that thou makest account of him? as the Lord does, especially of some of the sons of men; whom he reckons as his portion and inheritance, his jewels and peculiar treasure, and who are as dear to him as the apple of his eye; whom he "magnifies", as in **Job 7:17**; makes them kings and priests; raises them from the dunghill, and sets them among princes, to inherit the throne of glory; on whom he sets his heart, and loves them with an everlasting love: or, "that thou shouldest think of him?" {g} thoughts of peace, and not of evil; so as to provide a Saviour for men, and send down the Spirit of his Son into their hearts to quicken them; so as to bless them with all spiritual blessings, and at last to glorify them. David no doubt had a special respect to himself; and wondered at the goodness of God to him, in taking him from a family of little or no account, from a mean employ, from a shepherd's cottage, and raising him to the throne of Israel; and especially in making him a partaker of grace, and an heir of glory; see **Ps 8:4**; which is applied to Christ, **Heb 2:6**.

{g} whbvxtw "quod cogites de eo", Tigurine version, Vatablus.

Psalms 144:4

Ver. 4. Man is like to vanity,.... Is vanity itself, in every age, state, and condition; yea, in his best estate, Ps 39:5; or, "to the breath" {h} of the mouth, as Kimchi; which is gone as soon as seen almost: or, to a vapour {i}; to which the life of man is compared, **Jas 4:14**;

his days [are] as a shadow that passeth away; as the former denotes the frailty and mortality of man, this the shortness of his duration; his days fleeing away, and of no more continuance than the shadow cast by the sun, which presently declines and is gone.

{h} lbhl "halitui", Muis; so Kimchi. {i} "Vapori", Cocceius; so the Syriac and Arabic versions

Psalms 144:5

Ver. 5. Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down,.... The heavens, which the Lord has made, and where he dwells; and which are under his influence, and he can cause to incline or bow at his pleasure: and which literally may be said to bow, particularly the airy heavens, when these are filled with clouds heavy with rain, and hang low, ready to fall upon the earth, and being rent, let down showers on it: and mystically may design storms of wrath gathering over the heads of ungodly men, and revealed from heaven against them. Or rather, as connected with the phrase, "and come down", denotes some appearance or manifestation of God; either for the help and assistance of his people; or in a way of vengeance against their enemies; or both: and which descent must be understood in consistence with the omnipresence of God; and supposes his habitation to be on high, and is expressive of regard to the persons and affairs of men on earth; and is by some considered as a prayer for the incarnation of Christ, which is sometimes signified by coming down from heaven; not by change of place, nor by bringing an human nature, soul or body, down with him from heaven; but by the assumption of our nature; and which was greatly wished, prayed, and longed for, by the Old Testament saints The Targum is,

"O Lord, bow the heavens, and manifest thyself;"

see Ps 18:9;

touch the mountains, and they shall smoke; as Mount Sinai did when the Lord descended on it, Ex 19:18; see Ps 104:32; These, according to Kimchi, signify mighty kings, strong as mountains: so kingdoms are sometimes called; as the Babylonian empire is called a mountain, a destroying and burnt mountain, **Zec 4:7**. Such kings and kingdoms rose up like mountains against Christ, when here incarnate; and against his Gospel, and the ministry of it by his apostles; as the kingdom and nation of the Jews, and the whole Pagan empire: but these, by a touch of his almighty power, have vanished into smoke, **Ps 2:1** **Re 8:8**.

Psalms 144:6

Ver. 6. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them,.... The mountains, the kings and kingdoms of the earth; the enemies of David, and of Christ, and of his people; particularly the Jews, who have been scattered all over the earth by the judgments of God upon them; cast forth like lightning, which is swift, piercing, penetrating, and destructive;

shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them; or, "trouble them" {k}; as the Targum, Septuagint, and Arabic versions, nearer to the Hebrew: these also design the sore judgments of God, the arrows of famine, pestilence, and sword; which fly swiftly, pierce deeply, cut sharply, and, like fiery darts, give great pain and trouble. So Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret them of the decrees which come down from heaven, as Aben Ezra does Ps 144:5: by "lightning" Arama understands the flame of fire which comes out with thunder; and by "arrows" the thunderbolt, which he calls a stone hardened in the air like iron.

{k} Mmhtw "ac turba eos", Tigurine version; "et conturba eos", Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 144:7

Ver. 7. Send thine hand from above,.... From the high heavens, as the Targum; that is, exert and display thy power in my deliverance, and in the destruction of my enemies; as follows:

rid me, and deliver me out of great waters; out of great afflictions, which, for quantity and quality, are like many waters, overflowing and overwhelming; see Isa 43:2; or out of the hands of enemies, many, mighty, and strong, whom he compares to waters; as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech observe: and so the Targum,

"deliver me from the multitudes or armies, that are like to many waters;"

see Re 17:1. It may be applied to the sorrows and sufferings of Christ, the antitype of David, with which he was overwhelmed; to the billows of divine wrath which went over him; to the floods of ungodly men that encompassed him; and to the whole posse of devils, Satan, and his principalities and powers, that attacked him; see Ps 18:4;

from the hand of strange children; which explains what is meant by "great waters": wicked men chiefly; either Gentiles, the children of a people of a strange nation, and of a strange language, and of strange sentiments of religion, and that worship a strange god: such as the Edomites, Moabites, Philistines, &c. who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise: or else the Israelites, who were degenerated from their ancestors, such of David's subjects that rebelled against him; so the Ziphims are called strangers that rose up against him, Ps 54:3; and such were the enemies of Christ, both the Romans, who were Heathens and aliens; and the people of the Jews, his own countrymen, who were a generation of vipers; see **Ac 4:27**; such as Juvenal calls {l} "filii morum", who inherited the vices of their fathers.

{l} Satyr. 14. v. 52.

Psalms 144:8

Ver. 8. Whose mouth speaketh vanity,.... Vain words, lies, flatteries, and deceit, Ps 12:2; when they speak loftily of themselves, and contemptuously of others; when they deliver out threatenings against some, and make fair promises to others; it is all vanity, and comes to nothing;

and their right hand [is] a right hand of falsehood; their strength and power to perform what they boast of, threaten, or promise, is fallacious, is mere weakness, and cannot effect anything; or their treaties, contracts, and covenants, they enter into and sign with their right hand, are not kept by them; they act the treacherous and deceitful part. The Latin interpreter of the Arabic version renders it, "their oath is an oath of iniquity"; and Ben Balaam in Aben Ezra, and R. Adnim in Ben Melech, say the word so signifies in the Arabic language; and Schultens {m} has observed the same: but the word in that language signifies the right hand as well as an oath, and need not be restrained to that; it is better to take it in the large sense, as Cocceius {n} does; whether they lifted up the hand to pray, or to swear; or gave it to covenant with, to make contracts and agreements; or stretched it out to work with; it was a right hand of falsehood.

{m} Observat. Philolog. p. 195. {n} Lexicon, col. 312.

Psalms 144:9

Ver. 9. I will sing a new song unto thee, O God,.... The author of his being, the Father of mercies, temporal and spiritual, and therefore to him praise is always due; a new song of praise is to be sung for new mercies; and as these are new every morning, and are renewed day by day, new songs should be sung continually: or this is a song suited to New Testament times, in which all things are become new; there is a new covenant of grace; and a new and living way to the throne of grace; a newly slain sacrifice; redemption newly wrought out, and therefore the new song of redeeming grace must be sung. Arama suggests that this refers to the days of the Messiah;

upon a psaltery, [and] an instrument of ten strings, will I sing praises unto thee; such instruments of music were used in the Old Testament dispensation, and were typical of the hearts of God's people; which are the harps they now strike upon, and where they make melody to the Lord; see Ps 33:2.

Psalms 144:10

Ver. 10. [It is he] that giveth salvation to kings,.... Which is the reason of singing the new song to the Lord, or this is the matter of it. The Lord is the Preserver of men and beasts, the Saviour of all men, and especially of them that believe; who are in a spiritual sense kings and priests unto God; and in a temporal sense he saves high and low, rich and poor: but there is a particular providence respecting kings; who, as they are the powers ordained of God, and are his vicegerents on earth, and represent him, so they are preserved by him; were they not, there would soon be an end to all public order and government: they cannot save themselves; nor are they saved by their bodyguards about them; nor is any king saved by the multitude of his host, but by the Lord, Ps 33:16. Or, "he that giveth victory to kings"; over their enemies; which is not obtained by the strength and force of their armies, and by their military skill valour; but by the right hand and arm of the Lord: and therefore, whenever this is the case, a new song should be sung to him; see Ps 98:1. David no doubt has regard to himself, and to the many salvations God had wrought for him, and the victories he had given him; as also to the King Messiah, whom God heard and helped, as man and Mediator, in the day of salvation, and gave it to him, and in which he rejoiced, Isa 49:8;

who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword; David literally, the servant of the Lord by creation, redemption, and grace, as well as by his office, as king of Israel; him the Lord delivered from the sword of Goliath, as the Targum; from the sword of Saul, as Jarchi and Kimchi; and from the sword of strange children, as Arama; of all his enemies he had been or was engaged with in war: and David mystically, Christ the son of David, God's righteous servant, he chose, called, upheld; and in whom he was glorified, by doing his work diligently, faithfully, and completely; him he delivered from the sword of justice, when he had satisfied it; and from wicked men, like a sword; and from all his enemies, and death itself, when he raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; see Ps 22:20. Aben Ezra thinks there is a defect of the copulative "and": and that it should be read, "from the sword and evil"; every evil person or thing; and observes, that some take it for an adjective, and understand it of an evil camp or company.

Psalms 144:11

Ver. 11. Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children,.... This is repeated from Ps 144:7; and is done to show the vehemency and importunity of the request, and the danger David was in, and his sense of it; See Gill on "Ps 144:7";

whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand [is] a right hand of falsehood. See Gill on "Ps 144:8".

Psalms 144:12

Ver. 12. That our sons [may be] as plants grown up in their youth,.... The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, "whose sons [are as] plants", &c. as if this and what follows were a description of the families, estates, substance, and outward happiness of wicked men, the enemies of David, the strange children he desired to be delivered from, agreeably to Job 21:7; and if the word "saying", or "who say", be supplied, as by some {o}, and connected with "that our sons are", &c. they may express the vain boastings of these men, and explain what is meant by the vanity their mouth spake; as well as furnish out another reason for the repetition of the above requests, namely, for the sake of introducing those vain boasts to which the happiness of good men is opposed, who have an interest in God as their God, Ps 144:15; but we with other versions take them to be a petition of the psalmist; that as he would deliver him personally out of the hands of his enemies, so he would bless his subjects with all prosperity and happiness in their families and estates; like a good prince concerned for the real welfare of his people, and wishes that their sons might be as plants, young, tender, well nursed, and taken care of, that were healthful, thriving, flourishing, and promising much fruit; so they might he of healthful constitutions, well educated in all useful knowledge, natural and religious, and grow both in wisdom and stature, and appear to be of promising parts for usefulness in the church and state; and especially that they might be the plants of the Lord, pleasant ones to him, and profitable to others; be planted in Christ, and in his house, and grow in grace and in the knowledge of him, and grow up to him their bead in all things. The Targum is,

"that our sons may be as plants of the dactyles (or palm trees, Ps 92:12), nourished up in the doctrine of the law from their youth;"

see Ps 128:3;

[that] our daughters [may be] as corner stones, polished [after] the similitude of a palace; or "temple"; tall, beautiful, and in good proportion; children have their name in Hebrew from a word which signifies to "build" {p}, because by them families are built up, **Ru 4:11**; and by marriage divers families are connected together, so that they are as corner stones to them; thus Plautus {q} speaks of children as a building, and parents as the fabricators of them; laying the foundation of them, raising them up and polishing them, and sparing no cost to make them useful to the commonwealth: or "as corner pillars" {r}, which support the house and continue in it; so they guide the house, take care of the affairs of it, and be keepers at home, **1Ti 5:14**; and like such as are in temples or in kings' palaces, finely graved and beautifully polished, be adorned with grace and good works, particularly with modesty, meekness, and humility, **1Th 2:9**; and grow up into an holy temple in the Lord, being parts of the spiritual building, and being laid on the foundation, of which Jesus Christ is the corner stone. The Targum is,

"our daughters splendid and fit for the priests that minister in the midst of the temple."

The Syriac version,

"their daughters as spouses adorned like temples."

{o} So Schmidt. {p} hnb "aedificavit, unde" Mynb & twnb "filii et filiae". {q} Mostellaria, Act. 1. Sc. 2. {r} tywzk "sicut angulares lapides, aut columnae", Michaelis.

Psalms 144:13

Ver. 13. [That] our garners [may be] full, affording all manner of store,.... Or "our corners" {s}, the corners of their houses, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; the nooks that were in them might be full of provisions for the supply of the family; or that their barns and granaries might be full of all kind of corn, as wheat, rye, barley, &c. which might be sufficient from year to year, as the Targum; plenty of all food is intended, in opposition to a scarcity, dearth, and famine, **Pr 3:9**; that so there might be enough for increasing families. Spiritually it may design that large provision of grace in the churches of Christ, and the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel the ministers of it come forth with, bringing out of their treasure things new and old, in the ministration of the word and administration of ordinances;

[that] our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets; or millions; in which lay the riches of men formerly, and indeed in our nation now, where wool is the staple commodity of it; and these are creatures that breed and increase much; when they stand well, a few soon become a thousand, and these thousands produce ten thousands or millions, more. The Hebrew word Nau, "sheep", seems to be derived from the Arabic word "tzana", which signifies to be "fruitful", whether in men or beasts: "tzana": "foecunda fuit, et multos liberos hubuit mulier-----idem significat, et multa habuit pecora", Golius, col. 1428; and though for the most part they bring but one at a time, yet Aristotle {t} says, sometimes two, three, and four; and in India, Aelianus {u} says, they bring four, and never less than three. It is a beautiful sight to see them driven in such numbers through the streets of cities to markets, or to pasture. Or rather this may design the country towns and villages, where large flocks of them are kept. The people of God resemble these in their meekness, harmlessness, innocence, and other things; and who not only increase in grace and gifts, and spiritual knowledge, and in all goodness, which is desirable, but also in numbers, as they did in the first times of the Gospel, and will in the last, when they shall be increased as a flock; the fulness of the Gentiles, the other sheep, shall be brought in, and the nation of the Jews called at once.

{s} wnywzm "anguli nostri", Pagninus, Vatablus, Cocceius, Michaelis. {t} Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 19. {u} De Animal. l. 4. c. 32.

Psalms 144:14

Ver. 14. [That] our oxen [may be] strong to labour,.... To draw carriages, to plough with, and to tread out the corn: or "may be burdened" {w}; fit to carry burdens; or burdened with flesh, be plump and fat, and in good condition to work; or burdened with young, as some {x} understand it, and then it must be meant of cows, as the word is used, **De 7:13**; and so here an increase of kine is wished for, as of sheep before. Ministers of the word are compared to oxen for their patience in suffering, and their laboriousness in working, **1Co 9:9** **1Ti 5:17**; and happy is it for the churches of Christ when their ministers are laborious ones; are strong to labour, and do labour, in the word and doctrine; stand fast in the faith, and quit themselves like men, and are strong;

[that there be] no breaking in: of the enemy into the land to invade it, into cities and houses to plunder and spoil them;

nor going out: of the city to meet the enemy and fight with him, peace and not war is desirable; or no going out of one's nation into captivity into a foreign country, as Kimchi; or no breaking in to folds and herds, and leading out and driving away cattle, to the loss of the owners thereof. Some {y} understand both these of abortion, of any violent rupture of the womb, and an immature birth;

that [there be] no complaining in our streets; on account of famine, pestilence, the sword, violence, and oppression; or no crying {z}, no mournful cry or howling and shrieking on account of the enemy being at hand, and just ready to enter in, or being there, killing, plundering, and spoiling.

{w} Mylbom "onusti", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus; "onerarii", so some in Vatablus; "onerati", Schmidt; "loden", Ainsworth, {x} So Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 295. {y} Ibid. {z} hxwu "clamor", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Musculus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 144:15

Ver. 15. Happy [is that] people that is in such a case,.... Whose families are in good order and behave well; who enjoy plenty of all good things; whose flocks and herds increase, and who live in peace and prosperity; these are temporal blessings highly valuable, and for which those who have them should be thankful, as being happy in comparison of others that are destitute of them, De 28:3; and especially who besides these are blessed with spiritual blessings, signified by them, and of which these were typical;

[yea], happy [is that] people, whose God [is] the Lord; whose God the Lord is, not only by creation, and as he is a common benefactor and preserver, but as their God in covenant, their covenant God and Father in Christ; whom he has loved, chosen, redeemed, adopted, justified, pardoned, regenerated, and sanctified; all which appears to them in effectual calling, is manifested by the application of covenant grace to them, and is witnessed to their spirits by the spirit of God, and which their faith claims an interest in: and these are happy, thrice happy persons; for all that God has are theirs; all his perfections are on their side and for their good; he is their portion, shield, reward, and their all in all; his covenant, its blessings and promises, are all theirs; they have enough, having all things, and can want no good thing; nor need they fear any enemy; the Lord takes care of them, sets a guard about them, resents all injuries done them, prevents the designs of their enemies, makes all things work together for their good, provides all things necessary for them for time and eternity, and will be their God and guide even unto death; covenant interest always continues, and therefore such must be ever happy.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 145:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 145

David's [Psalm] of praise. This psalm is rendered by Ainsworth "a hymn of David"; and the whole book of Psalms is from hence called "the Book of Hymns"; see **Eph 5:19**; It seems to have been a psalm David took great delight in, and it may be that he often repeated and sung it, as it was made by him with great care and contrivance, in a very curious manner, as well as he was assisted in it by divine inspiration; for it is wrote in an alphabetical order, each verse: beginning with the letter of the alphabet in course, and goes through the whole, excepting one letter; and very probably it was composed in this form that it might be the more easily committed to memory, and retained in it. The Jews have a very high opinion of it; their Rabbins say, that whoever says this psalm thrice every day may be sure of being a child of the world to come. This is mentioned by Arama and Kimchi; and which the latter explains thus, not he that says it any way, but with his mouth, and with his heart, and with his tongue. It seems to have been written by David after the Lord had granted him all his requests put up in the preceding psalms, and had given him rest from all his enemies; and when he turned his prayers into praises; for this psalm is wholly praise from one end to the other; and so are all the five following ones; they begin and end with "hallelujah": nor is there a single petition in them, as I

remember; so that it may in some sense be said, "here the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended". It no doubt, as Cocceius observes, belongs to the Messiah and his kingdom, which is everlasting,
Ps 145:13.

Ver. 1. I will extol thee, my God, O King,.... Or "the King" {a}, the King Messiah, who is by way of eminency called "the King", as in
Ps 21:1. This is the foundation of this whole psalm, as Aben Ezra observes; and shows who is intended and who is the subject of it that is spoken of throughout, even the Messiah, who is the King of the world, the King of the kings of it, the King of Zion, of his church and people, the King of saints, of all believers in him, by the appointment of God, by the conquest of his grace, over whom he reigns by his Spirit and grace; for this his kingdom is spiritual, is in righteousness, and everlasting: and this great King is not a creature, but God, the mighty God, David's Lord and God, and the Lord and God of every saint; whom David loved as such, believed in, looked unto for salvation; from whom he received grace and expected glory, and knew and claimed his interest in him, which is the great privilege of believers in him; see
Joh 20:28; and therefore they, as David, will extol him above all created beings, he being God over all; extol him above all men, even the best and greatest, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, Abraham, or any other, who are his creatures, his children, and his subjects; and even as man he is to be extolled above all men; being chosen out from among the people, fairer than the children of men, and the chiefest among ten thousand; and above the angels, having a more excellent name and nature than they; they being his creatures and servants, and he their Creator and the object of their worship: Christ is extolled by his people when they ascribe deity to him, magnify him in his offices, and make use of him in them all; attribute their whole salvation to him, think and speak highly of him, and declare him extolled and exalted at the right hand of God, as he now is, and as the Old Testament saints, as David and others, had a foresight of and rejoiced in, Ps 110:1; the Septuagint, Syriac, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, have it, "my King"; see **Zec 9:9**;

and I will bless thy name for ever and ever; by pronouncing him the Son of the Blessed, God over all blessed for ever; and by ascribing blessing, honour, glory, and power, unto him; by adoring and celebrating the perfections of his nature, which are his name, by which he is known; by expressing a high value and esteem for every precious name of his, as Immanuel, God with us; Jesus, a Saviour, &c. and a regard to his everlasting Gospel, which is his name, bore by his ministering servants throughout the world; see **Ps 8:1**.

{a} Klmh "rex", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Psalms 145:2

Ver. 2. Every day will I bless thee,.... For new mercies had every morning; for fresh supplies of grace every day, which all come from the fulness of Christ, to whom all grace is given, and from whence it is received, and in whom all spiritual blessings are, and by whom they are bestowed;

and I will praise thy name for ever and ever; as long as he lived in this world, and to all eternity in the world to come. David understood the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, and knew he should not be an apostate and blasphemer of the name of Christ, but a praiser of it as long as he had a being; and that his principal service, and that of all the saints in the other world, will be praise; not praying, nor preaching, nor hearing the word, and attendance on other ordinances, which will be no more, but adoring and magnifying the riches of divine grace, Ps 104:34.

Psalms 145:3

Ver. 3. Great [is] the Lord, and greatly to be praised,.... Christ is the great God as well as our Saviour; great in all the perfections of his nature, of great wisdom, power, faithfulness, holiness, grace, and goodness; great in his person as God-man, God manifest in the flesh; great in all his offices and relations he bears and stands in to his people; and great in all his works of creation, providence, and redemption, in which he is concerned; and upon all which accounts he is to be praised, and greatly to be praised, by his people, even to the utmost of their capacities, here and hereafter; see Ps 48:1;

and his greatness [is] unsearchable; the greatness of his nature, and the perfections of it, these are past finding out; and so are his ways and works, and the riches of his grace, Joh 11:7. The Targum is,

"and of his greatness there is no end."

So the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Psalms 145:4

Ver. 4. One generation shall praise thy works to another,.... The works of providence done in one age shall be told by the father to the son with praise to the great Performer of them, and so be transmitted to the latest posterity; for in every age there are new and strange things done in Providence, the memory of which is not lost, but they are recorded for the glory of God and the use of men; and the works of grace and salvation wrought by Christ should be, have been, and will be told from age to age; and published in every age by his faithful ministering servants, to the glory of his grace, and the praise of his great name; see Ps 22:30;

and shall declare thy mighty acts; his mighty acts of nature, in creating all things out of nothing, and upholding all things by the word of his power; his mighty acts of grace, in redeeming his people out of the hands of him that is stronger than they; and from all their sins, and from the curse and condemnation of the law, and wrath to come; and the victories which he has obtained over sin, Satan, the world, and death: or thy powers {b}; the powers of the world to come, **Heb 6:5**; the miracles wrought by Christ on earth, and by his disciples in Gospel times, sometimes called mighty works; as the raising of the dead, &c. Mt 11:5.

{b} Ktwrwbg "potentias tuas", Vatablus; "potentia facta tua", Piscator; "praepotentias tuas", Cocceius.

Psalms 145:5

Ver. 5. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty,.... Of the majesty of the divine Person of Christ; of the honour due unto him; of the glory of him as of the only begotten of the Father, as he is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; of his glory as Mediator, and the honour that belongs to him as such, with which he is now crowned at the right hand of the Majesty on high, angels, authorities, and powers, being subject unto him as the Lord and King of glory;

and of thy wondrous works; in becoming incarnate, in dying for the sins of his people, in rising from the dead the third day, in ascending to heaven and receiving gifts for men; in pouring down the spirit on them, in governing his church throughout all ages of the world, and judging the world at last.

Psalms 145:6

Ver. 6. And [men] shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts,.... The terrible things of Christ, which his right hand has taught him, and his mighty power has performed; such as the destruction of a disobedient and ungodly world by a flood, to whom he preached by his Spirit in the days of Noah; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah by raining on them fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven; and the dreadful things he did in Egypt and at the Red sea by the hands of Moses; these, men or saints of the former dispensation, in, before, and after the times of David, could speak of: there are others done by him on the cross, as the bruising the serpent's head, destroying his works, and him himself with his principalities and powers; and at the time of his sufferings, when the sun was darkened at noon day, the earth quaked, the rocks were split, the vail of the temple rent in twain, and graves opened, which threw the centurion and his soldiers into a panic that watched Jesus on the cross; and at his resurrection, when was a great earthquake also, and angels appeared, which made the keepers shake and tremble; and in a few years followed the terrible destruction of the Jewish nation, city, and temple, for the rejection of the Messiah; as also of Rome Pagan in a few ages after that; which are things besides the others that men under the Gospel dispensation can speak of: and there are others yet to be done, terrible to the kings of the earth, as the destruction of antichrist and all the antichristian states, the burning of Rome, the fall of the tenth part of the great city, or Romish jurisdiction, and also of the cities of the nations by an earthquake, and the downfall of all kingdoms and states, to make way for the everlasting kingdom of Christ. Now the power of Christ, as the mighty God, is seen in all these things, which show his eternal power and Godhead, and that with him is terrible majesty; and these are to be spoken of by good men to the terror of the wicked, and to command a proper awe and reverence of Christ in the minds of others;

and I will declare thy greatness; the greatness of his person, offices, and grace, as well as he could, being unsearchable,
See Gill on "Ps 145:3".

Psalms 145:7

Ver. 7. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness,.... Not only his essential goodness, or the perfections of his nature; nor his providential goodness only; but his special grace and goodness to his own people in becoming their surety, in assuming their nature, in laying down his life for them, in working out their salvation, in paying their debts, and providing for them food and raiment, and all things pertaining to life and godliness: which goodness is "great", inexpressibly great, and passing knowledge; if we consider the spring of it, his good will and free favour, and not the works and merits of men; the multitude of persons it reaches to, all the elect of God, a number which no man can number, out of every people and nation; and the many benefits bestowed on them through it, all the blessings of goodness he himself is prevented with, even all spiritual blessings that are in him. Now this will be remembered by the saints, and not forgotten; in "the memory" of which they are assisted by the Spirit of God, who brings this goodness to their remembrance; and under the Gospel dispensation an ordinance is appointed to refresh the memory of the saints with it; and with such helps they are enabled at times "abundantly" to "utter" it, or to speak of it in a very free and flowing manner; it comes from them like water from a flowing fountain, as the word {c} signifies; out of the abundance of their hearts, and the great sense they have of his goodness, their mouth speaketh;

and shall sing of thy righteousness; his essential righteousness as God, the same with his divine Father's; his righteousness as Mediator, or his righteous and faithful performance of his office, as such; and his justifying righteousness, which he undertook to work out and bring in: and those that know it, and have an interest in it, have great reason to sing, because it is commensurate to the demands of law and justice; and so large a robe of righteousness as to enwrap and cover all their persons, and justify them from all things; and because it is so beautiful, rich, and glorious, and makes them appear so; and because it is so well-pleasing to God, and so comfortable and beneficial to them; securing them from wrath, and entitling them to eternal life. Aben Ezra adds the word "saying", as if what follows was, the subject matter of the song.

{c} weyby "eructabunt", Montanus, Piscator; "scaturient", Cocceius.

Psalms 145:8

Ver. 8. The Lord [is] gracious,.... These are the epithets of our Lord Jesus Christ, and may be truly and with great propriety said of him; he is "gracious", kind, and good, in the instances before mentioned; he is full of grace, and readily distributes it; his words are words of grace; his Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are doctrines of grace; his works are works of grace, all flowing from his wondrous grace and mercy:

and full of compassion: or "merciful" {d}, in the most tender manner; hence he came into the world to save sinners, and in his pity redeemed them; and when on earth showed his compassion both to the bodies and souls of men, by healing the one and instructing the other; and particularly had compassion on the ignorant, and them that were out of the way; pitying those that were as sheep without a shepherd, as the blind Jews under their blind guides were; and is very compassionate to his people under all their temptations, afflictions, trials, and exercises; see **Heb 2:17**;

slow to anger; to the wicked Jews, though often provoked by their calumnies and reproaches, and by their ill behaviour to him in various instances; yet we never read but once of his being angry, and that was through grief at the hardness of their hearts, **Mr 3:5**; and likewise to his own disciples, who were often froward and perverse, and of bad spirits, very troublesome and afflictive to him, yet he patiently bore with them:

and of great mercy; a merciful High Priest, typified by the mercy seat, where we may find grace and mercy at all times; through whom God is merciful to sinners, and to whose mercy we are to look for eternal life.

{d} Mwxr "misericors", V. L. Tigurine version, Musculus, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 145:9

Ver. 9. The Lord [is] good to all,.... Which is to be understood not of the general and providential goodness of God to all men, to all his creatures, and the works of his hands; but of the special goodness of Christ before mentioned, Ps 145:7; which extends to all the chosen people of God; who are all loved by Christ, redeemed by him, justified and glorified by him; and to Gentiles as well as Jews; for whom he tasted death, laid down his life a ransom for them, and became the propitiation for their sins. Hence his Gospel has been sent to both; and some of each have been effectually called by his grace, and more will. This shows this psalm belongs to Gospel times, in which the grace of Christ appears more large and extensive:

and his tender mercies [are] over all his works; meaning not all the creatures his hands have made; though he has a tender regard to them, and is kind and merciful to them all; but such as are made new creatures in him and by him, who are eminently called his workmanship, the work of his hands; these, all of them, share in his special mercy and goodness; see **Eph 2:10**.

Psalms 145:10

Ver. 10. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord,.... Not all his works or creatures in general; though these do objectively praise him, or are the cause rather of others praising him on their account: but those who are in a special manner the works of his hands, of his powerful and efficacious grace; when he has formed for himself, that they may show forth his praise; such as are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people: these in an eminent sense, in the best way and manner, praise their blessed Saviour and Redeemer; see Isa 43:21;

and thy saints shall bless thee: which are mentioned last, not as distinct from the former; but as explanative of them, as well as of their work: these are they that are set apart by the Lord, on whom his favours are bestowed; to whom Christ is made sanctification, and who are sanctified by his blood, and also by his Spirit; and, being sensible of the blessings of grace they receive from him, rise up and call him blessed, and ascribe blessing, honour, glory, and praise to him, for ever and ever.

Psalms 145:11

Ver. 11. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom,.... That is, the saints who are his special workmanship, in the celebration of his praise; and, while they are blessing him, will take particular notice, and make particular mention of his kingdom, and the glory of it; not only his kingdom of nature and providence, which ruleth over all, angels and men, good and bad; which deserves the notice of the saints, and is matter of great joy unto them, that their King reigns in the world, but also, and rather, his kingdom of grace, in which he rules by his Spirit and grace in the hearts of his people; which is not worldly, but spiritual; is not with outward observation, but lies within the heart, and makes the Lord's people all glorious within; consisting of peace, righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and is what can never be removed. The church is Christ's kingdom, in which he reigns; and all the subjects of it are kings and priests unto God: here proper laws are made and observed, and officers appointed to explain them, and see them put in execution; glorious ordinances are administered, in which Christ the King is seen in his beauty;

and the glorious Gospel, which is his sceptre, is held forth, and by which he rules in the midst of his enemies. More especially this may regard the glorious kingdom of Christ in the latter day; both in his spiritual reign, in which there will be a great display of glory; as a large effusion of the Spirit; much spiritual light and knowledge; great holiness of heart and life; an abundance of peace, temporal and spiritual; great purity of Gospel doctrine, worship, and ordinances: and also in his personal reign; when he will appear glorious, and reign before his ancients gloriously, and his saints will appear with him in glory; the New Jerusalem will have the glory of God upon her; a glory there will be then both upon the bodies and souls of the saints Christ will have with him in that state:

and talk of thy power; not only as exerted in creation and providence; but of his power in working out the salvation of men; and in conquering and subduing all the spiritual enemies of his people, sin, Satan, the world, and death; in raising himself from the dead, as he will all his saints by the same power at the last day; in going forth into the Gentile world in the ministry of the word, conquering and to conquer, making it powerful and effectual to the conversion of thousands: and also of his power in heaven and in earth, given him as Mediator; and which he has exercised and does exercise on the behalf of his church, and for its protection and welfare: and especially of the more open display of it in the latter day, when he shall take to himself his great power and reign; then will his saints talk of it with great pleasure and thankfulness; see Re 11:15.

Psalms 145:12

Ver. 12. To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts,.... As in Ps 145:4; the acts of his power in providence and grace; in the salvation of his people, and the destruction of their enemies; which, with others, are made known in the ministry of the word, to those who were strangers to them, to those without the church, who wait at Wisdom's gates, and at the posts of her door; Aben Ezra interprets it of little ones, or children that knew them not, whose parents would make them known to them: rather it designs the common people, instructed by the word and the ministers of it:

and the glorious majesty of his kingdom; the majesty of him as King, and the glory of his kingdom, Ps 145:5; and the perpetuity of it, as follows.

Psalms 145:13

Ver. 13. Thy kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom,.... So it is opposed to all other kingdoms and monarchies, which have had or will have an end; as the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman; with all other states which will be on the spot when this kingdom is set up in its glory, and will continue for ever, **Da 2:44**; and the King of it is opposed to all other kings, who die, and their kingdoms are no more to them; but he never dies, he lives for evermore; he is the living God, and so an everlasting King: nor will his kingdom cease at the end of the thousand years, nor when delivered to the Father; only it shall be in a different place and form, and shall remain for ever; for his saints will reign for ever and ever, and he with them. Or it may be rendered, "a kingdom of all worlds" {e}, or "ages"; Christ's kingdom reaching to all worlds; heaven, earth, and hell: or which, according to Arama, takes in the world above, below, and middle; and regards all times past, present, and to come:

and thy dominion [endureth] throughout all generations: in this world, and that to come; there is no end of it, **Isa 9:7**. This psalm is written alphabetically, as is observed on the title of it; but the letter "nun" is here wanting, the reason of which Kimchi professes his ignorance of: but Jarchi gives a reason for it, such an one as it is, which he has from the Talmud {f}; because David, by a spirit of prophecy, foresaw the grievous fall of the people of Israel, the prophecy of which begins with this letter, **Am 5:2**. Nor is the order always strictly observed in alphabetical psalms; in the thirty-seventh psalm the letter "ain" is wanting, and three in the twenty-fifth psalm. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, supply this defect here, by inserting these words, "the Lord is faithful in all his words, and holy in all his works", as if they were begun with the word Nman, but they seem to be taken from Ps 145:17, with a little alteration.

{e} Mymle lk twklm "reguum omnium seculorum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {f} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 4. 2.

Psalms 145:14

Ver. 14. The Lord upholdeth all that fall,.... Not all that fell in Adam, as all mankind did; nor all that fall into sin, as every man does; and therefore not those that fall into hell: but this is to be understood of the subjects of Christ's kingdom, of which the psalmist is speaking; who does that which no mortal king can do, as Aben Ezra observes: another king raises up one, and depresses another; supports one, and lets another fall: but the Lord upholds all his people and subjects with the right hand of his righteousness; though they are liable to fall into sin, and in many instances do fall, and into various temptations and afflictions; yet he sustains and upholds them, that they shall not fall finally and totally by sin, nor be overwhelmed and crushed by their heavy afflictions. Or, "all that are falling" {g}; he either upholds and keeps them that they shall not fall, at least so as to perish; or he holds them by his right hand when they are fallen, and raises them up again; and bears them up under all their exercises, so that they are not utterly cast down and destroyed, Ps 37:24;

and raiseth up all [those that be] bowed down: with a body of sin, under which they groan, being burdened, and which presses them sore; with Satan's temptations, like the woman in the Gospel, bound together by him; and with various troubles and afflictions; but the Lord raises and bears them up under all, and comforts and refreshes them.

{g} Mylpnh lkl "emnes cadentes", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 145:15

Ver. 15. The eyes of all wait upon thee,.... Not of all creatures, the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea, and fowls of the air, as in Ps 104:27; but of all the Lord's people, who are subject to fall and be depressed: these, as they look unto him for deliverance and salvation, and wait upon him for it, and expect it from him; so their eyes are directed to him for their spiritual food, as well as for their temporal bread, and ask it of him, and wait to have it from him:

and thou givest them their meat in due season; the meat which endures to everlasting life; the flesh of Christ, which is meat indeed; the doctrines of the Gospel, which, as some of them are milk for babes, others are meat for strong men, or strong meat for experienced believers: and these are given forth under Christ's direction, by his ministering servants, who are his wise and faithful stewards, that give to everyone of the family their portion of meat in due season, which is the word fitly spoken; and, when it is so, how good it is! Lu 12:42. This is food convenient for them, given out "in his time" {h}, as in the original; either in the Lord's time, which he sees best; or in their time, as the Syriac version, when they most need it, and it will do them most good.

{h} wteb "suo tempore", Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 145:16

Ver. 16. Thou openest thine hand,.... Not of providence, but of grace, in which all things are, and from whence they come; and which the Lord opens liberally and bountifully, and gives out all things richly to enjoy; all things pertaining to life and godliness; grace here, with all the supplies of it, and glory hereafter:

and satisfiest the desire of every living thing; not of every savage creature; every lion, bear, wolf, &c. for then there would be no living in some parts of the world: nor of every carnal, lustful, worldly, and covetous man; who never say they have enough, or are ever satisfied: but of everyone that is made spiritually alive, quickened by the Spirit and grace of God; these desire spiritual things, spiritual food, more grace and more communion with God, and conformity to Christ; and these desires are before the Lord; and sooner or later they are satisfied, they have what they desire; especially this will be their case, when they awake in the divine likeness. The words may be rendered, "and satisfies every living one with that which is acceptable [with] favour" {i}; with good will; with lovingkindness; which is better than life: so Naphtali is said to be "satisfied with favour",
De 33:23; as all living saints are or will be.

{i} Nwur "re acceptabili", Gussetius, p. 803. "benedictione", V. L. "beneplacito", Piscator, Gejerus; "benevolentia", Cocceius.

Psalms 145:17

Ver. 17. The Lord [is] righteous in all his ways,.... Christ is righteous in all the ways of providence, in which he is jointly concerned with his Father: there are some of the ways of providence, which are now intricate and perplexed, are unsearchable and past finding out, and cannot be easily reconciled to the justice and faithfulness of God, respecting the prosperity of the wicked and the afflictions of the righteous; but these will before long be made manifest, and they will appear to be just and true. And so in all his ways of grace, in all his decrees; in the choice of some to everlasting life, and the leaving of others; with respect to either of these, there is no unrighteousness in him: nor in the redemption of men, for which an adequate price is given; and in which mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, meet together; nor in the justification of a sinner, which is not done without a righteousness, but in such manner that God is just while he is the justifier of him that believes in Jesus; nor in the pardon of sin, which is upon the foot of a satisfaction made to the justice of God, by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; nor in eternal life, the gift of God through Christ, which none inherit but righteous ones. Christ is righteous in all his suretyship engagements, which he has punctually performed, and in the execution of all his offices; in doing which, righteousness and faithfulness are the girdle of his loins and reins: and so likewise he is and will appear righteous in his judgments on his and his people's enemies, in the destruction of antichrist and his followers. And, moreover, he is righteous in all the ways he prescribes for his people to walk in, in all his commandments and ordinances; which are all holy, just, and good;

and holy in all his works; in all his works of providence; doing no evil, though he suffers it for wise ends, and overrules it for good: and in all his works of grace; in election, which is through holiness and to it; in the redemption of his people, which is from a vain conversation, and that they might be a peculiar people, zealous of good works; in the calling of them with an holy calling, and to holiness; in bringing them to glory, which is through regeneration and sanctification. It may be rendered, is "merciful" or "bountiful in all his works" {k}; all he does flowing from his grace, mercy, and goodness.

{k} dyox "misericors", Pagninus, Montanus, so Ainsworth; "benignus", Tigurine version, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus.

Psalms 145:18

Ver. 18. The Lord [is] nigh unto all them that call upon him,.... He is not only nigh unto them in relation, being their near kinsman, brother, father, husband, and head, but with respect to place and presence; not in a general way, as he is the omnipresent God, and so nigh to all, and from whose presence there is no fleeing; but in a special way, he is so nigh to them as he is not unto others, **De 4:7**. He is in their hearts, and dwells there by faith, and they dwell in him; his blood is sprinkled in their consciences, and his righteousness is unto them and upon them; his salvation is brought near to them, to their very hearts, and they are nearer that than when they first believed; he is nigh to them that call upon him, for Christ is equally called upon as the Father; see **1Co 1:2**; so as to give them what they ask of him, and to help them in all their times of need;

to all that call upon him in truth; in faith and with fervency, constantly and importunely, and in the sincerity and uprightness of their hearts; with true hearts, cordially and affectionately; their hearts and mouths agreeing together, as Kimchi observes.

Psalms 145:19

Ver. 19. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him,.... That have the true fear of God put into their hearts; that fear him not with a servile, but godly fear; that fear the Lord and his goodness, and are true worshippers of him in a spiritual and evangelic manner; for the fear of God includes the whole worship of him, private and public: and the Lord grants to such whatever they desire of him, in his fear, under the direction of his spirit, according to his will, and in submission to it. Do they desire good things of him, temporal or spiritual? there is no want of any good thing to them that fear him; how should there, when such great goodness is laid up for them? Do they desire his presence, and the discoveries of his love? the sun of righteousness arises on them that fear his name, and his secrets are with them, and his mercy is upon them from everlasting to everlasting. Do they desire his protection from enemies? the Angel of the Lord encamps round about them, and the Lord himself is their, help and their shield;

he also will hear their cry, and will save them; that is, he will hear and answer their prayer, which they put up to him in their distress: they cry to him either mentally or vocally, in their troubles, and his ears are open to their cries, and they enter into them; and he regards them, and saves them out of them; out of their temporal and out of their spiritual troubles; he saves them with a temporal and with an eternal salvation.

Psalms 145:20

Ver. 20. The Lord preserveth all them that love him,.... All do not love Christ, none but those that are born again, and believe in him: love to Christ is a fruit of the Spirit, and accompanies faith in him; it flows from the love of Christ shed into the heart, and from a view of his loveliness, and a sense of his benefits; and, where it is true and genuine, it is superlative and sincere, and shows itself by a regard to its truths and ordinances, to his people, ways, and worship: and such the Lord preserves often in times of public calamity; and from the evil of sin, the dominion of it; from Satan's temptations, from being devoured and destroyed by him; and from a final and total falling away; he preserves them to his kingdom and glory, which is promised to them that love him;

but all the wicked will he destroy; he will consume them from off the earth, so that the wicked shall be no more; he will destroy the man of sin, and all his adherents; all the enemies of Christ, those that do not love him, but oppose him, his Gospel, kingdom, and interest; the beast and false prophet, with all that attend them, shall be cut off; the day of the Lord, like an oven, shall burn up all that do wickedly, and shall leave them neither root nor branch: this will especially be true at the day of judgment, when the wicked shall be ordered to everlasting fire; and they shall go into eternal punishment, when they shall be turned into hell; and all the nations that forget God. Kimchi interprets this of future time, when there shall not be a wicked man left in the world, and compares it with **Mal 4:1**.

Psalms 145:21

Ver. 21. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord,.... Always, at all times, as long as he lived; and particularly when all the Lord's people shall be brought safe to glory, and the wicked destroyed; when, as Kimchi observes, he should live again with the dead that shall be raised;

and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever; not every animal, or irrational creature; not carnal men, but spiritual men; such as are praying ones, that come to a God hearing prayer: these should be praising ones; such who have hearts of flesh given them, and are sensible of divine favours, as well as of their sinfulness and unworthiness; Jews and Gentiles, all sorts of men called by grace, all flesh on whom the Spirit of God is poured; these are all excited to praise and bless the holy name of the Redeemer, with the words and by the example of the psalmist. And thus the psalm ends as it begun, with praise and blessing.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 146:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 146

This psalm is entitled by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, "hallelujah", of Haggai and Zechariah; and by Apollinarius, the common hymn of them: and the Syriac inscription is still more expressive,

"it was said by Haggai and Zechariah, prophets, who came up with the captivity out of Babylon."

Theodoret says this title was in some Greek copies in his time; but was not in the Septuagint, in the Hexapla: nor is it in any other Greek interpreters, nor in the Hebrew text, nor in the Targum; though some Jewish commentators, as R. Obadiah, take it to be an exhortation to the captives in Babylon to praise the Lord: and Kimchi interprets it of their present captivity and deliverance from it; and observes, that the psalmist seeing, by the Holy Spirit, the gathering of the captives, said this with respect to Israel; and so refers it to the times of the Messiah, as does also Jarchi, especially the Ps 146:10; and which, though they make it to serve an hypothesis of their own, concerning their vainly expected Messiah; yet it is most true, that the psalm is concerning the Messiah and his kingdom, to whom all the characters and descriptions given agree.

Ver. 1. Praise ye the Lord,.... Or, "hallelujah"; which, in the Greek and Vulgate Latin versions, is the title of the psalm; but is rather the beginning of it; and is an exhortation to men, especially to the saints, to praise the Lord, the Lord Christ, the Lord of the world, who has created it and upholds it; the Lord of lords, David's Lord; and the Lord of all his people, by creation, redemption, and grace; and from whom they receive all blessings and mercies, temporal and spiritual, and are therefore under the highest obligations to praise him;

praise the Lord, O my soul; the psalmist does not put others upon that he does not choose to do himself; but, as the sweet psalmist of Israel, and prophet of the church, leads the way and sets and example; and not only strikes his harp and psaltery, and with his tongue, mouth, and lips, shows forth the praise of the Lord; but engages his heart, his soul, in this work; which, as it was capable of it, so most agreeable to the Lord, who requires the heart in his service, and to be worshipped in spirit and in truth: and this being the better and more noble part of man, making melody in it to the Lord, and engaging all the powers and faculties of it in such an employment, must be acceptable to him.

Psalms 146:2

Ver. 2. While I live will I praise the Lord,.... As he had good reason to do, since he had his life from him, and was upheld in it by him; who also favoured him with the mercies and comforts of life; and that every day, being renewed to him every morning, and continued all the days of his life; which determined him throughout the whole of it to praise the Lord: nay, he had his spiritual life from him, with all the blessings of it; which are lasting, everlasting ones, and had hope of eternal life with him;

I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being; or "while I am" {l}; not only in this world, but in the world to come; for men have a being or existence after death, and the saints have a most comfortable and happy one then; and will be more capable of singing praises to their incarnate God, and which will be their work to all eternity; see
Ps 104:33.

{l} ydweb "dum fuero", Pagninus; "in adhuc me", Montanus; "quamdiu ero", Cocceius; ewv uparcw, Sept. "quamdiu sum", Schmidt, Ethiopic version; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 146:3

Ver. 3. Put not your trust in princes,.... Not in foreign princes, in alliances and confederacies with them; nor in any at home. David did not desire his people to put their trust in him, nor in his nobles and courtiers; but in the Lord Christ, who, as he is the object of praise, is also the proper object of trust. Princes, though ever so liberal and bountiful, as their name signifies, and therefore called benefactors,
Lu 22:25 or ever so mighty and powerful, wise and prudent, yet are not to be depended upon; they are changeable, fickle, and inconstant; and oftentimes not faithful to their word, but fallacious and deceitful; "men of high degree are a lie", Ps 62:9; wherefore it is better to trust in the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength; who gives all things richly to enjoy; who is unchangeable, and ever abides faithful; see Ps 118:8;

[nor] in the son of man, in whom [there is] no help; or "salvation" {m}: not in any mere man born of a woman; not in Abraham, the father of the faithful, of whom the Jews boasted, as the Midrash; nor in Moses, as Arama; nor in Cyrus, as R. Obadiah; no, nor in David himself, nor in any of the princes; for how great soever they look, or in whatsoever honour and esteem they may be, they are but sons of men; are frail mortal men, and die like men, though they may be called gods, as they are by office: but no man or son of man, let him be

what he will, is to be trusted in; there is a curse on him that does it, Jer 17:5. There is indeed a Son of man that is to be trusted in, the Lord Jesus Christ; but then he is God as well as man, the true God, the great God, God over all, blessed for ever; were he not, he would not be the proper object of trust, for there is no "help" or "salvation" in a mere creature; even kings and princes cannot help and save themselves oftentimes, and much less their people; their salvation is of God, and not from themselves, or from their armies, Ps 33:16. There is help in Christ, on whom it is laid, and where it is found; there is salvation in him, but in no other; he is the author and giver of it, and therefore he, and not another, is to be trusted in.

{m} hewvt "salus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Psalms 146:4

Ver. 4. His breath goeth forth,.... That is, the breath of a son of man, of any and everyone of the princes; it goes forth continually, and is drawn in again as long as a man lives; but at death it goes forth, and returns no more till the resurrection: the breath which the Lord breathed into man, and which is in his nostrils while he lives, and is very precarious. And when it is taken away, he dies, and

he returneth to his earth; from whence he was taken, and of which he was made; upon which he lived, where he dwelt, and in which he took delight and pleasure, minding earth and earthly things, and which is now all he has; who, though he may have had many large estates and possessions, nay, have ruled over many kingdoms and countries, yet his property of earth is now no more than the length and breadth of a grave; he returns to earth as soon as he dies, becoming a lump of clay; and particularly when he is interred in it, and when by corruption and worms he is turned into it;

in that very day his thoughts perish; in the day, hour, and moment he dies: not that the soul ceases, or ceases to think at death; it is immortal, and dies not; and, as it exists in a separate state after death, it retains all its powers and faculties, and, among the rest, its power of thinking; which it is capable of exercising, and does, as appears from the case of the souls under the altar, **Re 6:9**. But the meaning is, that at death all the purposes and designs of men are at an end; all their projects and schemes, which they had formed, and were pursuing, now come to nothing; whether to do good to others, or to aggrandize themselves and families; and therefore such mortal creatures are not to be depended upon, since all their promises may fail; nay, even their good designs may be frustrated; see Job 17:12.

Psalms 146:5

Ver. 5. Happy [is he] that [hath] the God of Jacob for his help,.... The God of the patriarch Jacob, the Messiah, who is that God that fed him all his life, the Angel that redeemed him from all evil, with whom in the form of a man he wrestled, when he had power over God, and saw him face to face; the God of the posterity of Jacob, the Angel of Jehovah's presence, who went before them by day and night in the wilderness, and saved and carried them all the days of old; the God of spiritual Jacob, or Israel, the church of the chosen, redeemed, and called ones; the God of every Israelite indeed, of every true believer, as he was Thomas's Lord and God: now happy is that man that has him for his help, who helps his servant Israel, all his people out of the sad estate of sin and misery into which they are brought; helps them to all the blessings of grace, and to all the supplies of it in their time of need; helps them under all their infirmities, temptations, and afflictions; helps them in all their way to heaven, and against every enemy of their souls; and at last helps them to everlasting glory and happiness;

whose hope [is] in the Lord his God; in Immanuel, God with us, God manifest in the flesh; Christ the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof; who is our hope, and in all his people the hope of glory; not only the author and giver of the grace of hope, but the object, ground, and foundation of it: now happy is that man whose hope alone is in him; who hopes for salvation, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, through him, and him only; such are safe and secure, who, as prisoners of hope, turn to him their strong hold; those shall want no good thing that hope and trust in him; they have peace now through his blood and righteousness, and shall be saved with an everlasting salvation; see
Jer 17:7.

Psalms 146:6

Ver. 6. Which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein [is],.... This and the following verses are a description of that divine Person, even Christ, who is the help and hope of his people; and every character of him is a reason for faith and hope in him; all things are made by him, which are in the whole compass of creation, the heaven, earth, and sea, and all in them; the fowls of the airy heaven; the sun, moon, and stars, the hosts of the starry heavens; and the angels, the inhabitants of the third heaven; the beasts of the field, and cattle of a thousand hills; and man, the chief of God's works on earth; and the innumerable fishes of the sea, great and small; and he that made all these, what is it he cannot do? he must be the mighty God, and a mighty Saviour, and the proper object of trust and hope; see **Joh 1:1**;

which keepeth truth for ever; the truth of doctrine, who as Mediator is full of it, and by whom it came; and, as the Prophet of the church, concealed it not, from the great congregation, the law of truth being in his lips, as the antitype of Levi; the truth of the promises, which are all yea and amen in him; every promise being made to him, and being in him, as the promise of eternal life, with all others, which are safely kept by him, and he will see them performed; the truth of all his engagements with his Father, as the surety of his people; to take their nature, obey, suffer, and die for them, which he has truly and punctually made good, being faithful to him that appointed him; and the truth of all his sayings, concerning his presence with his church and ministers unto the end of the world, and of whatsoever should befall them, from his resurrection and ascension to his second coming.

Psalms 146:7

Ver. 7. Which executeth judgment for the oppressed,.... All judgment being committed to Christ as Mediator, he executes it on the behalf of his oppressed ones, and breaks in pieces their oppressors; being oppressed with sin, and lying under the power of it, he condemned it in his flesh, wrought out a righteousness to justify from it, and redeemed them from all their iniquities; being oppressed by Satan, and led captive by him, he took them as a prey from the mighty, and led captivity captive; and, when oppressed by the world, he is on their side and takes their part, and thoroughly pleads their cause, and suffers no weapon formed against them to prosper; and will before long destroy antichrist and his followers, and bring down his judgments on them, so that men of the earth shall no more oppress; and especially at the last judgment, he, the righteous Judge, will render tribulation to them that have troubled his people, and set the crown of righteousness on their heads; see Ps 10:18;

which giveth food to the hungry: in a literal sense he gave manna and quails to the hungry Israelites in the wilderness, fed five thousand with five loaves and two small fishes, and four thousand with seven loaves and a few fishes, when here on earth; and in a spiritual sense, to such as are in a starving and famishing condition, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, he gives himself, the bread of life, and his grace, the water of life; he gives them to eat of the hidden manna, and of the tree of life; he gives them his word, his Gospel, which is milk for babes and meat for strong men; he gives them his ordinances, which are a feast of fat things, and so he tills and satisfies their hungry souls;

the Lord looseth the prisoners: such as were bound by diseases and infirmities of body, he loosed in the days of his flesh here; and some that were held with the cords of death he raised from the dead,
Lu 13:11; and his people, who are in a spiritual sense prisoners of sin, Satan, and the law, being shut up and held under by them, he proclaims liberty to them, and the opening the prison to them that are bound; he opens the prison doors, and says to the prisoners, Go forth; he delivers them from the power of sin, the slavery of Satan, and the bondage of the law, and brings them into a state of liberty,
Isa 61:1; yea, all the prisoners in the grave he will loose at the last day; he has the key of hell and death, and will open those prisons and set them free; they shall come forth, some to the resurrection of life, and others to the resurrection of damnation.

Psalms 146:8

Ver. 8. The Lord openeth [the eyes of] the blind,.... Who are corporeally blind; the eyes of many such were opened by Christ when here on earth, and one who was born blind; and such who are spiritually blind as to any knowledge of divine things, of God in Christ, of the way of life and salvation by Christ, of the Spirit and his operations, of their state and condition by nature, or of the things of the Gospel; the eyes of many such he opens so as to see their sin and danger, their want of righteousness, and need of Christ, and salvation by him; this is usually done by means of the ministry of the word, which is as an eye salve; but the work is Christ's, and a work of almighty power it is; see Isa 35:4;

the Lord raiseth [them that are] bowed down; as he did in a literal sense the poor woman that was bowed together, Lu 13:11, and as he does in a spiritual sense such as are heavy laden with sin, and pressed with the burden of it; that are depressed with Satan's temptations, and labour under sore afflictions and exercises; all which he supports his people under, and delivers them out of;

and cheers and refreshes their souls with discoveries of his love and grace unto them; see Ps 145:14;

the Lord loveth the righteous; not self-righteous persons; these are not loved by God the Father, who preferred a publican to one of them; nor by Christ, who came not to call them to repentance; nor by the Spirit, who reproves and convinces men of self-righteousness; nor by angels, who rejoice at one sinner that repents more than over ninety and nine just persons who in their own opinion need no repentance: but such who are righteous through Christ's righteousness imputed to them, and there are none righteous in any other way; and these Christ loves, not for any righteousness in them, or done by them; nor does his love flow from his own righteousness upon them, for he loved them from all eternity; and his engaging and undertaking to work out a righteousness for them, and the bringing in of that righteousness, were the fruits and effects of his love to them, and evidences of it; he suffered for them when they were in themselves unjust; he died for them when sinners, ungodly, and enemies; nevertheless, as they are clothed with his perfect righteousness, and are introduced unto him and presented before him in this raiment of needle work, this clothing of wrought gold, this fine linen clean and white; he takes delight and pleasure in them, and they appear a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Psalms 146:9

Ver. 9. The Lord preserveth the strangers,.... The life of them, as he did the daughter of: the Greek, a Syrophenician woman, and a Samaritan, by healing them of their diseases, **Mr 7:26**; and in a spiritual sense he preserves the lives and saves the souls of his people among the Gentiles, who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise; for these he laid down his life a ransom, and became the propitiation for their sins; to these he sends his Gospel, which is the power of God to salvation unto them;

he relieveth the fatherless and widow; in their distresses and troubles, who have no helper; a wonderful instance of his relieving a widow, in the most disconsolate circumstances, we have in raising the widow of Nain's son to life, and restoring him to his mother, **Lu 7:12**; in him "the fatherless", and all that in a spiritual sense are destitute of help in the creatures, and see they are so, "find mercy"; nor will he leave his people comfortless, or as orphans and fatherless ones, but will and does come and visit them, relieve and supply them with everything convenient for them; though his church here on earth may seem to be as a widow, he being in heaven at the right hand of God, yet he cares for her in the wilderness, and provides for her support, where she is nourished with the word and ordinances, and will be until he comes again; see Ho 14:3;

but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down; so that they cannot find it; nor their hands perform their enterprise; their schemes and counsels are all confounded and blasted by him, and all their policy and power are not able to prevail against his church and people; see **Ps 1:6**.

Psalms 146:10

Ver. 10. The Lord shall reign for ever,.... The Messiah, who is King of kings and Lord of lords; and in this he is superior to, them, they reign but for a while, but he for evermore; the throne of majesty and glory on which he sits is for ever and ever; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; of his government, and the peace of it, there will be no end; he is King of saints now, and reigns in their hearts, and in his churches, and in the world; and he will reign with his people, and they with him, a thousand years on earth; and then they will reign together to all eternity; see Ps 14:6. Both Jarchi and Kimchi refer this to the Messiah and his kingdom; the note of the former is,

"he shall confirm his kingdom in the redemption or salvation of his children;"

and of the latter,

"it shall be said he is King over all, after he has executed judgment on the wicked in the valley of Jehoshaphat;"

[even] thy God, O Zion, unto, all generations; he who is Zion's God is Zion's King, head over all things to the church; and this is her joy and comfort in every age, that her God and her King reigns, and will reign for evermore; and especially in a glorious manner in the latter day; see Isa 52:7; and as all this is a solid ground and foundation of truth in the Lord, and serves to encourage saints to make him their help and hope; and shows how happy they are that have him as such; so it is matter of praise and thanksgiving: hence it follows,

praise ye the Lord; or "hallelujah"; and so the psalm ends as it began.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 147:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 147

This psalm is thought to be written by David, and according to Theodoret predicts the return of the Jews from Babylon, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem by Zerubbabel, which seems to be grounded on Ps 147:2; though the words there agree well enough with the times of David; hence the title in the Septuagint, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Syriac versions, and Apollinarius, is as the preceding; the Syriac adds,

"concerning Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest, and Ezra, who were solicitous and diligent in building Jerusalem."

Aben Ezra and other Jewish writers think it foretells the future rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the Jews from their present captivity, and refer it to the times of the Messiah; and so far it may be right, that it respects Christ and the praise of him, on account of his nature and works; and may take in the conversion of the Jews. It seems to be written by the same person, and on the same account, as the preceding psalm.

Ver. 1. Praise ye the Lord,.... When he shall reign, as Kimchi connects this psalm with the preceding; the arguments used to engage men to this work are taken partly from the nature of it, as in the next clauses; and partly from what the Lord is and does, as in the following verses;

for [it is] good to sing praises unto our God; it being agreeably to his revealed will, what he enjoins, approves of, and accepts, and is profitable to his people, as well as makes his glory; see Ps 92:1. Some render it, "because [he is] good", as in Ps 106:1; but the accents, and what follows, will not admit of this sense;

for it [is] pleasant; to our God; with which the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, join this clause; the sacrifice of praise is more pleasing to the Lord than any ceremonial sacrifice, especially when offered from a grateful heart in the name of Christ, and with a view to his glory; and it is pleasant to saints themselves, when grace is in exercise, and they make melody in their hearts to the Lord;

[and] praise is comely: is due to the Lord, and becomes his people to give it to

him; it is but their reasonable service, and a beautiful and lovely sight it is to see the chosen, redeemed, and called of the Lamb, harping with their harps, and singing the song of redeeming love.

Psalms 147:2

Ver. 2. The Lord doth build up Jerusalem,.... Literally, after the Babylonish captivity, according to some; or rather when taken from the Jebusites by David; or spiritually the church, which is often called Jerusalem, even the Gospel church, of which Christ is the builder, his ministers are instruments, his people are the materials, and which, though now greatly fallen to decay, will be rebuilt by him in the latter day; when his work will be revived among his saints, his Gospel more powerfully preached, his ordinances more purely administered, and multitudes of souls converted; and which will be matter of praise and thanksgiving, as it is now matter of prayer; see Ps 51:18;

he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel; the exiles from Babylon, as some; or rather such who in the times of the judges had been carried captive by their neighbours, or fled from their cities, in the times of Saul for fear of the Philistines, and who were gathered to their own country, cities, and houses, when David began to reign. Spiritually this regards the whole Israel of God, the elect of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, and the outcasts of them; so called, not because ever cast out or cast off by the Lord, being received into his favour, covenant, and church; but either because cast out of the company of profane men, as evil and unworthy; or cast out of Israel, the church of God, very justly, for offences given; but, being brought to repentance, are restored and gathered in again: or rather this may represent the Lord's people as in a state of nature, like the wretched infant cast out into the open field, scattered up and down in the world, in a state of distance from God, Christ, and his people; these are gathered by Christ in redemption, who came to seek and collect them together; and by his spirit in conversion, when he gathers them to himself, and into his fold; and this, as it is an occasion of joy to angels and saints, is matter of praise and thanksgiving to the outcasts themselves, thus gathered in. The Septuagint render it, to the dispersion or dispersed of Israel; see **Joh 7:35**.

Psalms 147:3

Ver. 3. He healeth the broken in heart,.... Christ is a physician; many are the diseases of his people; he heals them all by his blood, stripes, wounds; and among the rest their broken hearts, which none can cure but himself; hearts broken by the word, as a hammer, accompanied with a divine power; which have a true sense of sin, and godly sorrow for it; are truly contrite, such as the Lord has a respect unto, dwells with, and accepts of; and these he heals, and only he, by pouring in oil and wine, as the good Samaritan; or by applying pardoning grace and mercy to them, streaming through his blood;

and bindeth up their wounds; or "griefs" {n}; and so gives them ease, health, and peace, for which they have abundant reason to call upon their souls to bless his name and sing his praise; see Ps 103:1; compare with this Isa 61:1.

{n} Mtwbuel "dolores eorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus.

Psalms 147:4

Ver. 4. He telleth the number of the stars,.... Which no man can do exactly; see Ge 15:5; the ancient astronomers pretended to tell them, as Aratus and Eudoxus {o}, and fixed their number at a thousand and some odd; but then these were only such as were of some magnitude and influence, and such as commonly appeared; but since the use of telescopes many are seen which were not before; and especially those clusters of them in the Milky Way cannot be distinctly discerned and told; but the Lord that made them can tell their exact number. Aben Ezra thinks this is said with respect to the outcasts of Israel scattered throughout the whole earth, as the stars are in the upper orb; and that as the Lord knows the one, he knows the other; which is not amiss, especially spiritually understood;

he calleth them all by [their] names; not that he calls one Jupiter and another Verus, &c. as the Heathens have done; but the sense is, that he has as perfect, distinct, and exact knowledge of them, as we have of any persons or things that we can call by name, and more so; see Isa 40:26. This may be applied to the saints, who are like to stars for the light they receive from Christ the sun of righteousness, and are a number which no man can number; but Christ knows them all distinctly and exactly, and can call them by name, and holds them in his right hand, and will preserve them; and they shall shine for ever like stars, yea, like the sun in the kingdom of his Father; so Arama interprets this of the righteous, who are compared to stars; see Da 12:4.

{o} Vid. Augustin de Civ. Dei, l. 16. c. 23.

Psalms 147:5

Ver. 5. Great [is] our Lord, and of great power,.... "Our Lord" is our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of the whole earth; the Lord of his own people by creation, by redemption, by marriage, and by the conquest of his grace, and their voluntary submission to him; he is "great" in his person, offices, and grace, and therefore greatly to be praised; see Ps 145:3; and particularly his "power" is very "great", as appears in the creation of all things out of nothing by him; in the sustaining and support of the world and all things in it: in the redemption of his people from the hand of their powerful enemies; in beginning, carrying on, and perfecting a work of grace on their hearts by his Spirit and power; and in the preservation of them unto eternal life, through a thousand dangers and difficulties: at his resurrection all power in heaven and earth were given him as Mediator; and in the latter day he will take to himself his great power and reign; and in the last day will raise the dead out of their graves;

his understanding [is] infinite; it reaches to all things, not to the stars of heaven only, as in Ps 147:4, but to the fowls of the air, to the beasts of the field, and cattle upon a thousand hills; to all on the surface of the earth, or in the bowels of it; and to the fishes of the sea: it reaches to all men, and to all the thoughts of their hearts, the words of their mouths, and the actions of their lives; it reaches to all things past, that have been, to everything present, and to whatsoever is to come; it includes not only the knowledge of all things that are, or certainly will be, but of all things possible, or which he could bring into being if he would; it is concerned not only with the quality and nature of things it perfectly understands, but with the quantity of them; even all things in creation and providence, which are without number and past finding out by men; and so his understanding is without number, and cannot be declared, as the word signifies.

Psalms 147:6

Ver. 6. The Lord lifteth up the meek,.... The lowly and humble souls, such as are made so by the Spirit of God; he shows them their sinfulness, and want of righteousness; the insufficiency of their own, and need of Christ's; blowing a blast upon all their goodliness, so bringing down their natural pride and haughtiness, and causing them to submit to Christ, that he alone might be exalted; such as learn of him, who is meek and lowly, and become the followers of the humble Jesus; who being partakers of his grace, have low thoughts of themselves, as if the least of saints and chief of sinners; and higher thoughts of others; who ascribe all they have and are to the grace of God; and who make no boast of nor place any trust in anything they do; who quietly submit to every adversity; patiently bear all the injuries, affronts, and reproaches of men; and are silent under every afflictive dispensation of Providence: these humble ones the Lord exalts in due time; he lifts up their spirits, he cheers and refreshes their souls; raises them to a high estate of grace, sets them among princes, gives them honour here, and a crown and kingdom hereafter; these shall inherit the new earth, in which will dwell righteousness; see **Mt 5:5**;

he casteth the wicked down to the ground; or "humbles them to the ground" {p}; he abases the proud and brings them into a low estate, sometimes in this world; however in the next he casts them down to hell, even into the lowest hell, which is the portion of all wicked men, of all proud and haughty sinners; see Isa 26:5; compare with these expressions **Lu 1:51**. Aben Ezra by the "meek" understands the outcasts of Israel, and by the "wicked" the kings of the Gentiles, subject to Israel.

{p} lypvm "humiliaus", V. L. Montanus; "humiliat", Pagninus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Psalms 147:7

Ver. 7. Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving,.... These are the words of the psalmist unto the Israelites, according to Aben Ezra and Kimchi; but may be an exhortation to all men, especially good men; who are capable of observing the following things concerning providential goodness and special grace, on account of which they are called upon to "sing unto the Lord": or to "answer" {q}; to sing alternately, or by responses; the word is used for singing, **Ho 2:15**; see Ex 15:21; and intends vocal singing, as the next clause instrumental singing, as Kimchi observes. However, the Lord is the object of it, to whom praise is to be sung for all the great and good things done by him, and that "with thanksgiving" to God for them; which, though a distinct thing from singing, and may be done without it, as in prayer; yet singing ought never to be without that; see **Eph 5:19**;

sing praise upon the harp unto our God; an instrument of music used in the times of the Old Testament; an emblem of the heart, and of making melody in it to the Lord: the hearts of believers are the harps of God, on and with which they sing unto him, when they sing aright, and these are in proper tune.

{q} wne "respondete", Montanus, Cocceius; "alternis canite", Tigurine version, Piscator, Michaelis.

Psalms 147:8

Ver. 8. Who covereth the heaven with clouds,.... Which are exhalations of vapours out of the earth, and of waters out of the sea, by the sun, and formed into clouds; which are carried about in the air, and let down in showers of rain upon the earth, in proper places, for the good of the inhabitants; and sometimes, when necessary, the heavens are covered and become black with them, as in the times of Ahab, 2Ki 18:35; and though they look dark, dull, and melancholy, yet are for great usefulness: hereby, as it follows, rain is prepared for the earth, to make it fruitful, to bring forth an increase for men and beasts; and is a wonderful display of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, for which he is to be praised. This may be either an emblem of afflictive dispensations of Providence, which sometimes make a dark and cloudy day, a day of clouds and thick darkness; especially when the Lord covers himself with a cloud, or hides his face from his people; their sins, as clouds interposing between him and them; and yet these afflictions and desertions, though not joyous, but grievous, tend to make the saints more holy, humble, and fruitful: or else of the churches being supplied with Gospel ministers; the "heaven", and so the "kingdom of heaven", often signifies the church of God or Christ; consisting of men, partakers of the heavenly calling, being born from above; and in which the Gospel and ordinances, that come from heaven, are ministered; and which, for the communion had with God, and the privileges of it, is as it were the suburbs and gate of heaven. Ministers of the word are "clouds" full of the rain of heavenly and evangelic doctrine, which they drop and distil as the rain and dew upon the mown grass; and the covering the heavens with them may denote the plenty of them, or a sufficient number of them, as in the first times of the Gospel: all which are of God, who gives to his churches pastors after his own heart; and commands and directs those where to drop the rain of doctrine, and where not, for which he is to be praised; see **Isa 5:6**;

who prepareth rain for the earth; which is purely his preparation, production, and gift, to water the earth and make it fruitful, and is what none of the vanities or idols of the Gentiles could give; and what he prepares in the clouds, the heavens are covered with: to this the word of God and the evangelic doctrine is compared, because of its original; it is of God, and from heaven; it is dispensed and falls by divine direction, and sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; and often in great plenty, as at the first, so in the last times of the Gospel dispensation; and brings many blessings of grace and goodness with it; and, like rain, is cooling, softening, refreshing, and fructifying; and this is prepared of God, and ordained by him before the world was, for the good of his people; see De 32:2 **1Co 2:6**;

who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains; which would be otherwise dry and barren; but, by the clouds letting down rain upon them, grass grows on them for the cattle on a thousand hills. "Mountains", in a figurative sense, signify churches, high, strong, well-rounded, visible, and where God makes a feast of fat things for his people,
Isa 25:6; "grass" denotes true believers, they of the city which flourish like grass; to which they are like, for their weakness in themselves, their number, verdure, and fruitfulness, and for their growth in the church; which is greatly owing to the Gospel and ordinances as means, the ram of Gospel doctrine, the pure, sincere, and unadulterated word of God; by which souls grow in grace, and in the knowledge of divine things; see Ps 72:16.

Psalms 147:9

Ver. 9. He giveth to the beast his food,.... Through the plenty of grass growing upon the mountains, by the rain falling from the clouds of heaven upon them: these cannot provide for themselves, but the Lord feeds them; and they wait upon him for their food, and receive it of him, Ps 104:27. How much more will he feed his own people, both with temporal and spiritual food; though in their fallen state they are become like the beasts, of which they are sensible when called by grace, and own and acknowledge it! Ps 49:12;

[and] to the young ravens which cry: which are particularly mentioned, because contemptible creatures, and of no use and service to men, and by the ceremonial law were impure to the Jews; and the rather, because, as naturalists observe, they are very early turned out of their nests, or forsaken by their dams: and this particular instance of the care of Providence is elsewhere observed, Job 38:41. Arama takes notice of the preservation of this creature in

the ark, and the use of it to Elijah. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions, render it, "that call upon him"; that is, upon God and to him; they are expressly said to cry, Job 38:41. The ancient fathers interpret this figuratively; and by the "ravens" understand the Gentiles; and by their "young ones" Christians that spring from them, who call upon the true God.

Psalms 147:10

Ver. 10. He delighteth not in the strength of the horse,.... It has been his will and pleasure to give the horse strength for the use and service of men, both for labour and war; and as this is a creature of his, and the work of his hands, it must be agreeable to him, Job 39:19 yet a horse, though prepared for the battle, is a vain thing for safety, which is only of the Lord; neither can it deliver any by its great strength; nor are a king and his country saved by the multitude of an host, or by a large cavalry: nor are these what the Lord delights in, nor does he save men for the sake of them; though a well-mounted cavalry may be a pleasing sight to men, and they may raise their expectations, and promise themselves great things from them; yet these are of no account with God, who can save as well without them as with them, Pr 21:31. The Targum is,

"he delighteth not in the strength of those that ride on horses;"

that are well mounted, and pride themselves in it; and are equipped for war, and are mighty to engage in it, and prepared to make their escape in danger: Kimchi's note is,

"he delighteth not in man, who puts his confidence in the strength of the horse;"

see Ps 20:8;

he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man; in which his strength lies, and of which he is apt to glory; but should not, it being displeasing to God; who delights not therein, but in lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, **Jer 9:23**; not in the legs of a man of war, as Arama; which are strong to stand his ground, or swift to flee away when hard-pressed; see **Am 2:14**; so the Targum,

"he takes no pleasure in the legs of men that run;"

that are swift to run races, or to flee in battle; to this sense are the notes of

Jarchi and Kimchi. It seems to intend the infantry in an army, as the cavalry before; and both intimate that neither horse nor foot are to be trusted in for safety, how pleasing or promising they may be, since God seeth not as man does: or reference may be had to athletic exercises of horse and foot races, of wrestling, combats, &c. men may delight in, but God does not. What are pleasing to him are exercises of a spiritual kind; such as fleeing to Jesus, the strong tower; running the Christian race, to obtain the incorruptible crown; wrestling against principalities and powers, and such acts of grace as are next mentioned.

Psalms 147:11

Ver. 11. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him,.... With a filial and godly fear; that serve and worship him, privately and publicly, with reverence and love: as, appears by the goodness he lays up for them; the good things he communicates to them; the discoveries of his love, covenant, and grace, they have from him; the guard he sets about them; his eye of providence and grace over them; and his heart full of love, pity, and compassion to them; see Ps 33:18;

in those that hope in his mercy; not general, but special; not in the absolute mercy of God, but as displayed in Christ; and great encouragement there is to hope in it, from the plenty of it in his heart, from the instances of it among men, and from the blessings of grace and salvation that spring from it: and in such the Lord takes pleasure; hope is his own grace, and mercy is his delight; and he is pleased with those that exercise hope upon it: not that the graces of fear and hope, and the exercise of them, are the cause and motives of God's delight in his people, which, as they were considered in Christ, was before the world was, or those graces were in them; but these describe and point out the persons who are openly and manifestly the objects of his delight and pleasure. Plutarch {r}, an, Heathen writer, seems to have been acquainted with this and Ps 147:10, and to refer to them, when he says,

"it is somewhere said, that God is not a lover of horses, nor of birds, but of men, and desires to dwell with those that are eminently good; nor does he refuse nor despise the familiar converse of a man divine and wise."

{r} In Vita Numae, vol. 1. p. 62.

Psalms 147:12

Ver. 12. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem,.... The inhabitants of it, as Kimchi; not Jerusalem in a literal sense, for this respects future time, as Aben Ezra; the world to come, the times of the Messiah: and intends the spiritual Jerusalem, as Arama; that which is free, the mother of us all; the Gospel church, and the members of it; which have great reason to praise the Lord, for their special blessings and peculiar privileges; see **Ga 4:26**;

praise thy God, O Zion; not the house and family of David, as R. Obadiah; nor the priests and Levites in the temple, as others; but the same as before, the church and people of God; the Mount Zion God has loved and chose for his habitation; the city of our solemnities in Gospel times; the perfection of beauty and joy of the whole earth; whose God and King is Christ; and whom Zion and all her children should praise, being her incarnate God, Immanuel, God manifest in the flesh. With this verse, the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, begin the psalm.

Psalms 147:13

Ver. 13. For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates,.... Of Jerusalem, of Zion the church of God. Gates are for the letting in of persons into the city of our God; which are Christ, faith in him, and a profession of it; see Isa 26:1, "bars" are for the security of those that, are in it, and to keep out the enemy: and these, "strengthened", denote the utmost safety of the true members of Christ and his church; who have nothing to fear from their spiritual enemies, sin, law, Satan, the world, death, and hell: God is on their side; Christ is the munition of rocks unto them the Holy Spirit is in them, who is greater than he that is in the world; and angels are guards about them; all which is matter of praise, and a sufficient reason for it;

he hath blessed thy children within thee; multiplied them and made them fruitful, increased the number of them; even the spiritual children of the church, brought forth to Christ by her; born in her, through the ministry of the Gospel; and brought up by her, with the ordinances of it. These in the first times of the Gospel were very numerous, and will be so again in the latter day, like the drops of the morning dew; and are and will be blessed with all spiritual blessings, with pardoning, justifying, adopting, and sanctifying grace, and with eternal life; for which the Lord's name is to be praised.

Psalms 147:14

Ver. 14. He maketh peace [in] thy borders,.... Which are usually most infested by enemies, It may denote the universality of peace throughout the land, in all the parts and borders of it; and be understood of the outward peace of the church with her enemies, and of the abundance and continuance of it in the latter day; and of that concord and harmony that shall be among the members of it; and also of that inward spiritual conscience peace each enjoy through believing; and which is in and from Christ, and flows from his blood and righteousness, applied for pardon and justification; and is another reason for praising the Lord;

[and] filleth thee with the finest of the wheat; or, "fat of the wheat" {s}; the best of it; see De 32:14; which is the choicest of grain, and makes the best of bread, and especially the finest flour of it; and to be filled and satisfied with this, or to have enough of it, is a great temporal blessing. Here it may be understood spiritually of the Gospel, which may be compared to wheat, and the finest of it, for its excellency and purity, for its solidity and substantiality; with which the chaff of human doctrine is not to be mentioned, Jer 23:28; and for its salutary nourishing and strengthening virtue; and especially of Christ, the sum and substance of it, sometimes compared to a corn of wheat, Joh 12:24; for his superior excellency to all others, and the purity of his nature; for his great fruitfulness, and for being suitable food to his people; the bread of life, for which he is prepared by his sufferings and death; which may be signified by the beating out of the corn, and grinding the wheat, and making it into bread, fit for use: and for this spiritual food believers are abundantly thankful, and have reason to praise the Lord.

{s} blx "adipe", Montanus, Pagninus, Tigurine version, Musculus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Psalms 147:15

Ver. 15. He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth,.... Which Kimchi interprets of rain, which causes the wheat to grow; since afterwards mention is made of snow, and of hoar frost and ice. Aben Ezra understands it of the decree of God, which he executes on earth. The Targum, of the "Memra", or Word of the Lord; the essential Word, the Messiah; whom the Lord sent on earth to perform the great work of redemption and salvation; and who came speedily, and tarried not when the fulness of time was come, as follows. It may design God's word of providence, which answers to his word of power in the first creation of all things; and which orders everything done in the earth, and is instantly obeyed; which agrees with Ps 147:18. Or rather the word of the Gospel; the doctrines and ordinances of divine revelation, agreeably to Ps 147:19; and so may have respect to the mission of the apostles of Christ, and ministers of the word, to go into all the earth, and preach the Gospel to every creature;

his word runneth very swiftly; so the Gospel did in the first times of it, like lightning, from one end of the heaven to the other; the words of it went into all the world, and the sound of it unto the ends of the earth; it had a free course, and was glorified: and so it will in the latter day, when many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased; see Ro 10:18.

Psalms 147:16

Ver. 16. He giveth snow like wool,.... For colour as white as wool; so the Targum and Kimchi: and for the manner of its falling, lightly and gently as a lock of wool; which for its thinness and fineness it also resembles. Hence the ancients used to call snow eriwdev udwr, "woolly water" {t}; and Martial {u} gives it the name of "densum veilus aquarum", "a thick fleece of waters": so another poet {w} calls clouds flying fleeces of wool, to which they sometimes seem like; Pliny {x} calls it the from of the celestial waters. And it is like wool for its usefulness to the earth; for as wool covers the sheep, and clothes made of it cover men, and keep them warm; so snow filling upon the earth covers it and keeps it warm, and secures the wheat and other fruits of the earth from the injuries of the cold: and this lies among the treasures of the Lord, and he brings it out from thence, and commands it to be on the earth; and it is an useful gift of his providence, for which his name is to be praised; see Job 37:6. The Jews have a saying, as Arama observes, that one day of snow is better than five of rain. In the third year of Valens and Valentinianus, with the Atrebates (a people in the Netherlands), real wool fell from the clouds, mixed with rain {y}. Several blessings of grace are signified by this figure; as pardon of sin, the justifying righteousness of Christ, and the efficacy of the word of God, Ps 51:7;

he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes; which is the dew congealed by the intense cold of the air in the night season {z}: this for its colour looks like ashes, and for its infinite number of particles may be compared to them; which are spread here and there, and everywhere; over gardens, fields, lands, herbs, plants, and trees, as if they were strewed with ashes. And to hot ashes it may be compared, because of its burning nature, shrivelling up leaves, herbs, and plants, as if burnt; hence called "pruina" in the Latin tongue {a}. The manna is compared to this for its smallness, Ex 16:14; which was typical of Christ, the hidden manna, and of the ministry of the Gospel; little, mean, and contemptible, in the eyes of carnal men; torturing and tormenting to them, as the fire that came out of the mouths of the witnesses; and is the savour of death unto death to some, while it ii the savour of life unto life to others.

{t} Eustathius in Dionys. Perieget. p. 91. {u} Epigram. l. 4. Ep. 3. {w} Aristoph. Nubes, p. 146. {x} Nat. Hist. l. 17. c. 2. {y} Orosii Hist. l. 7. c. 32. p. 131. {z} Isidor. Origin. l. 13. c. 10. {a} "Frigora nec tantum cana concreta pruina", Virgil. Georgic. l. 2. v. 376.

Psalms 147:17

Ver. 17. He casteth forth his ice like morsels,.... Divided like morsels, as the Targum; cut into pieces, like morsels of bread. This seems to have respect to hail stones, which sometimes fall like pieces of ice, and are very prejudicial to the fruits of the earth: this was one of the ten plagues of Egypt; and whereby also many of the Canaanites were destroyed in the times of Joshua, **Ex 9:23**; and there is an exceeding great storm of hail yet to come, very dreadful; see Re 16:21. This is expressive of the wrath, vengeance, and judgments of God upon men, by which he is known in various perfections of his nature; as his power, justice, and holiness, for which he is celebrated, Isa 30:30;

who can stand before his cold? which he has purposed and promised shall be; for he has said, that "cold and heat [shall not] cease, [as long as] the earth remains"; and which he appoints and orders to be, for "by the breath of God frost is given", **Ge 8:22**; and this is sometimes and in some places so very vehement, that it is intolerable; men are obliged to keep within doors, to make them fires, and put on more clothes; and the "hands" of every man are sealed up from business; even "the beasts go into [their] dens, [and] remain in their places", or get what shelter they can; see Job 37:7. And if there is no standing before his cold, who can stand before the heat of his anger, or his furious wrath and indignation, when it is poured out like fire? see Ps 76:7.

Psalms 147:18

Ver. 18. He sendeth out his word, and melteth them,.... The snow, the hoar frost, and ice: this he does by a word of his, who can freeze the earth and waters, and thaw them at his pleasure; by ordering the sun to break forth with great heat, or rain to fall in great plenty; of both which Kimchi interprets his word; as well as by causing a warm wind to blow, as follows,

he causeth his wind to blow, [and] the waters to flow: the south wind particularly; then the waters, which were still and motionless, flow as before, or more abundantly. Thus the hearts of men in a state of nature are like frozen earth or waters; they are cold, and without the heat of love, and affection to God and Christ, and spiritual things; they are as hard as a stone, and without any motion or desire after things divine and heavenly: but when the Lord sends his word, attended with a divine power and efficacy, it breaks and melts them; when the south wind of the blessed Spirit blows upon them, or his grace becomes effectual in convincing them of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and when the sun of righteousness arises on them with healing in his wings; with which being warmed, they are loosened, and flow to the Lord and his goodness for all spiritual blessings.

Psalms 147:19

Ver. 19. He showeth his word unto Jacob,.... From the things of nature and providence, the psalmist passes to the blessings of grace and goodness; for which the Lord is to be praised, particularly for his word and ordinances. The Targum interprets this of the words of the law; and indeed the law, or decalogue, was given only to the Israelites, the posterity of Jacob; as also the ceremonial and judicial laws; and even the whole Scripture, the oracles of God, were committed to them in a very peculiar manner: all which distinguished them from the Gentiles, and gave them the preference to them; see **De 4:6** **Ro 3:1**. But the Gospel part of the word is also included; the word of grace, peace, reconciliation, righteousness, eternal life, and salvation, which was first published to the Jews: it was "shown" unto them, for it cannot be known by any without a revelation; the Gospel, and the things of it, are hidden things to natural men, and could never have been discerned by any, had they not been shown by the Lord; as they are externally in the ministration of the word, and internally and effectually by the Spirit of God; who is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of divine things;

his statutes and his judgments unto Israel; the ordinances of divine worship under the former dispensation, which were peculiar to literal Israel; and those of the Gospel dispensation, which belong to the spiritual Israel, Jews and Gentiles; and which are shown and directed to in the word, to be observed by them; and both the Gospel and the ordinances of it are instances of divine favour, for which the Lord is to be praised.

Psalms 147:20

Ver. 20. He hath not dealt so with any nation,.... Or "every nation" {b}; or all the nations under the heavens; only with the Jewish nation: these only for many hundreds of years were favoured with the divine revelation, with the word and ordinances of God; with the law, and with the Gospel, and with the service and worship of God; as well as with promises and prophecies of Christ, and good things to come by him. These were not communicated to anyone nation or body of people besides them; only now and then, to one here and there among the Gentiles: the Gospel was first preached to them at the coming of Christ, and after them to the Gentiles, when rejected by them;

and [as for his] judgments, they have not known them; by which are meant, not the providential dispensations of God, which are unsearchable, and past finding out, till made manifest; nor punishments inflicted on wicked men, unobserved by them; but the word of God, and the ordinances of it, which the Gentile world for many ages were unacquainted with; see Ps 19:9;

praise ye the Lord: as literal Israel had reason to do, for those distinguishing instances of his favour and goodness; and as the spiritual Israel of God everywhere have; and particularly our British ones, who are highly favoured with the privileges of having the word of God purely and powerfully preached, and his ordinances truly and duly administered; at least in some parts of it, and that more than in any other nation under the heavens.

{b} ywg lkl "omni genti", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus; "omni nationi", V. L.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 148:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 148

This psalm seems to have been written about the same time, and by the same person, as the preceding; even by the psalmist David, when he was in profound peace, and at rest from all his enemies; and the kingdom of Israel was in a well settled and prosperous condition, both with respect to things civil and ecclesiastical, as appears from Ps 148:14. And as it may respect future time, the times of the Messiah, of whom David was a type, it will have its accomplishment in the latter day, when there will be just occasion for all creatures, in heaven and earth, to praise the Lord; and which the Evangelist John, in vision, saw and heard them doing, **Re 5:11**. Aben Ezra says, this psalm is exceeding glorious and excellent, and has deep secrets in it; in which the psalmist speaks of two worlds, the upper and the lower. As for the title of this psalm, the Septuagint, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and Apollinarius, entitle it as the two preceding.

Ver. 1. Praise ye the Lord,.... Or, hallelujah: which, in some versions, and with some interpreters, is the title of the psalm; expressive of the subject matter of it, the praise of the Lord; and is an exhortation of all creatures to it;

praise ye the Lord from the heavens; that is, those that are of the heavens; let their praises of the Lord, of his perfections, works, and benefits, resound from thence; the angels of heaven particularly, who have their habitation and residence there, and sometimes descend from thence on special business, by the order and appointment of their great Creator and Master: so the Targum,

"praise the Lord, ye holy creatures from heaven."

Though some take the phrase, "from heaven", to be descriptive of the Lord, the object of praise, who is the Lord from heaven; the character of Christ, the second Adam, 1Co 15:47; who is from above; came down from heaven to do the will of God; and was in heaven, as to his divine Person, while here on earth in human nature, working out the salvation of men; for which he justly deserves the praise of all in heaven and in earth. But as all creatures are distinguished in this psalm into celestial and terrestrial, called upon to praise the Lord; this seems to be the general character of the celestial ones, persons, bodies, and things; as the phrase "from the earth", Ps 148:7, includes all in the terraqueous globe;

praise him in the heights; either in the highest heavens where he dwells, or with the highest notes of praise that can be raised; see Ps 149:6. The Targum is,

"praise him, all the hosts of angels on high:"

or the high hosts of angels: but these are particularly mentioned in Ps 148:2.

Psalms 148:2

Ver. 2. Praise ye him, all his angels,.... The Targum adds, who minister before him: the ministering spirits, the angels of Jehovah, even of Christ, who are his creatures, and at his command; and whom he sends forth to minister to others, **Heb 1:7**. And great numbers there are of them, thousands and tens of thousands, yea, an innumerable company; and all of them are under obligation to praise the Lord for their creation: for invisible spirits, as well as visible bodies, even the celestial thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, were created by him, by Christ, **Col 1:16**. And for their preservation in their beings, and confirmation in that happy estate in which they were created; being chosen and secured in Christ, the head of all principality and power, and so stood while others fell: and also for the various excellent powers, and faculties and properties, they are endowed with; they excel in strength, are possessed of great agility and swiftness; have a large share of knowledge, of things natural, civil, moral, spiritual, and evangelical; are perfectly holy, and without sin; and happy in the enjoyment of God, in whose presence they always are, and whose face they continually behold; and will ever remain in this state, being immaterial and immortal beings. And as praise is their duty, it is their work; in this they were employed at the creation of all things, then these sons of God and morning stars sang and shouted for joy; and at the incarnation of Christ, when they worshipped him; at the conversion of every sinner; and frequently join the church in this service, and will be concerned in it to all eternity: and when the psalmist calls upon them to engage in it, it does not suppose that they were deficient in it, or backward to it, or that he had any authority over them to require it of them; but it shows his great desire that the Lord might be praised by the noblest creatures, and in the best manner that could be, and how much his heart was in this work; and he does it to stir up himself and others the more unto it, from this consideration; that if those heavenly creatures should praise the Lord, then much more such as he and others, who were so very unworthy of the divine favours, and so much beholden to the Lord for them;

praise ye him, all his hosts; meaning either the angels as before, sometimes called the hosts of heaven, and the heavenly host; there being armies and legions of them, and these encamping about the saints in a military way; see 2Ki 19:35; or else the celestial bodies, the sun, moon, and stars, as follow,

sometimes called the host of heaven; and who are represented as militant, **Ge 2:1**
2Ki 21:3.

Psalms 148:3

Ver. 3. Praise ye him, sun and moon,.... The sun praises the Lord, the Creator of it, by doing the work constantly it is appointed to do; to rule by day, and give light and heat to the earth, and the inhabitants of it; and so is the cause of man's praising the Lord for the benefits they receive from it; for its enlightening, warming, and refreshing rays; and for the precious fruits brought forth by it and so the moon likewise doing its office, ruling by night, and reflecting the light of the sun upon the earth, and producing precious fruits, also praises its Maker, and is the occasion, of others praising him; see Ps 136:1;

praise him, all ye stars of light; which are very beneficial in the night season, especially to mariners and travellers, and shed their benign influences upon the earth and things in it; which are a means of praising the Lord, and in their way they do it, Ps 136:1. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read it, "stars and light", wrongly; the stars are luminous bodies, and shine in their own light {c}, though the moon with a borrowed light from the sun.

{c} Macrob. in Somn. Scipion. l. 1. c. 19, 20.

Psalms 148:4

Ver. 4. Praise him, ye heaven of heavens,.... All the heavens, the airy and starry heavens; and the third heaven, the residence of God, angels and saints: these are made by the Lord, and declare the glory of his power, wisdom, and goodness, and show forth his handiwork,
Ps 19:1. A voice was heard from heaven, praising Jehovah the Son, when on earth in our nature; a cloud of the lower heavens received him when he went from hence, and in the clouds thereof he will come again: the highest heavens opened to receive him, and will retain him until the restitution of all things; and from hence he will descend to judge the world in righteousness, **Mt 3:16**;

and ye waters that [be] above the heavens; divided by the firmament from the waters below; and are no other than the thick clouds, in which the waters are bound up, and not rent, but at the pleasure of God, **Ge 1:7**; so Seneca {d} calls the clouds the celestial waters. And these give men occasion to praise the Lord, that those vast bodies of water that are over their heads are not let down in such large quantities upon them as would destroy them; and that are carried about from place to place, and let down and gentle showers, to water and refresh the earth, and make it fruitful, so that it brings forth food for man and beast. The Targum is,

"ye waters, that by the Word (of the Lord) hang above the heavens;"

in which is displayed the glory of amazing power, wisdom, and goodness. The most ancient Syrians and Arabians were thoroughly persuaded, that beyond the bounds of the visible heavens there was a great sea, without any limits; which some {e} suppose to be the waters here meant.

{d} Nat. Quaest. l. 3. c. 23. {e} Vid. Steeb. Coelum Sephirot. Heb. c. 7. s. 3. p. 126, 127. and Gregory's Works, p. 110.

Psalms 148:5

Ver. 5. Let them praise the name of the Lord,.... Set forth the glory of the nature and perfections of God, and celebrate the praise of them; even all celestial creatures, the angels, the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars; the heavens, and the haven of heavens, and the waters above them; and that for the following reasons;

for he commanded, and they were created; they are all his creatures, and therefore should praise him: he is the "Father of spirits", of angelic spirits, as well as the spirits of men; and the "Father of lights", of all the luminaries of the heavens; and he has made the heavens themselves, and all their hosts, and the firmament dividing the waters above and below; and all this by an almighty "fiat", at a word of command; he spoke, and they came into being at once, Heb 12:9 **Jas 1:17**.

Psalms 148:6

Ver. 6. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever,.... The angels are made immortal, and shall never die; and they are confirmed in their state of happiness by Christ, and shall always continue in it; the hosts of heaven being created by him, consist in him, and will remain as long as the world does; hence the duration and never-failing state of other things, even of good men and their felicity, are expressed by them; see Ps 72:5;

he hath made a decree which shall not pass; concerning those creatures and their duration, which shall never pass away, or be frustrated or made void; but shall always continue and have its sure and certain effect; see Jer 31:35; and is true of every decree of God, which is eternal and not frustrable, and is always fulfilled,
Isa 14:27.

Psalms 148:7

Ver. 7. Praise the Lord from the earth,.... Let his praise resound from all creatures on earth, and reach him in the highest heavens; this phrase comprehends all terrestrial beings afterwards particularly mentioned; all in the terraqueous globe, all that arise from it, are upon it, or within it;

ye dragons, and all deeps; either land dragons, or rather sea dragons, the water or sea being the proper place of them, Ps 44:19; these, as cruel, as poisonous, and pernicious as they are, are made to honour and praise the Lord, Isa 43:20; and such as are mystically signified by, them, as Satan, tyrannical and persecuting princes, and antichristian ones, as Pharaoh king of Egypt, Rome Pagan and Papal; out of whom the Lord has or will get himself praise in the deliverance of his people from them, and in the destruction of them, and in the confessions they have been obliged to make of him,
Re 12:3; these seem to be set in contrast with the angels. The word is used for the great whales the Lord made, which are thought to be the same with the "leviathan" of Job; of whom so many things are said, which declare the power and wisdom of God in the formation of it, **Ge 1:21**, &c. and these may be put for the innumerable creatures in the sea, which in their way show forth the praise and glory of God, Ps 102:24; as "all deeps" do, deep waters, especially the depths of the sea, and the inhabitants of them; where the wonders of God are to be seen, and give occasion to those that go down to the sea in ships to praise his name,
Ps 107:23.

Psalms 148:8

Ver. 8. Fire, and hail,.... These, and what follow in this verse, are in the air, but are what are exhaled or drawn up from the earth or water; "fire" is lightning, which is very swift in its motion, and powerful in its effects; this is the fire which consumed Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain; which in Elijah's time came down and destroyed the captains and their fifties; and which attended the Lord's appearance on Mount Sinai; when "the voice of his thunder was in the heaven, the lightnings lightened the world, and the earth trembled and shook", Ps 77:18; and by which the power, majesty, and glory of God are greatly displayed; see Ps 29:3; "hail", which is water frozen in the air and congealed; this was one of the plagues of Egypt; and with hailstones many of the Canaanites were slain in the times of Joshua; and by these God has shown his power, and has got himself praise from his people by destroying their enemies, though they have blasphemed his name on account of them, as they will when the great hailstorm of all shall fall, Re 16:21;

snow, and vapour; the former is a gift of God, and very beneficial to the earth, and the cause of praise and thankfulness to God;
See Gill on "Ps 147:16"; the word {f} for "vapour" signifies smoke, and is what rises out of the earth like smoke, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; and is hot and dry, and forms lightnings and winds, and has its place among things that occasion praise;

stormy wind fulfilling his word; which is raised up by a word of his command; he creates it, brings it out of his treasures, holds it in his lists, and lets it go out at his pleasure to fulfil his will; either, as at some times in a way of mercy, as to dry up the waters of the flood, to make a way for Israel through the Red sea, to bring quails to them in the wilderness, and rain to the land of Israel in Ahab's time; and sometimes in a way of judgment, to drown Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, to break the ships of Tarshish, to fetch Jonah the disobedient prophet back, and to distress him afterwards; see Ps 107:25; to do all this is an argument of divine power, and a proof of deity, as it is of our Lord's, **Mt 8:27**. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, read it in the plural number, "which do his word"; referring it not to the stormy wind only, but to fire and hail, snow and vapour; but the Hebrew text restrains it to the stormy wind.

{f} rwjyq "vapor seu fumus", Piscator, Muis, Gejerus.

Psalms 148:9

Ver. 9. Mountains, and all hills,.... Which are originally formed by the Lord, and set fast by his power and strength; these are the highest parts of the earth, and are very ornamental and useful; they include all in them and upon them, the trees and herbage that grow upon them, gold, silver, brass, and iron in them; all very beneficial to mankind, and afford matter of praise to God for them; see Isa 55:12;

fruitful trees, and all cedars; trees bearing fruit are the fig trees, pomegranates, vines, and olives, with which the land of Canaan abounded; and such as bear lemons, oranges, plums, pears, apples, cherries, &c. which produce fruit for the use, pleasure, and delight of man, and so a means of praising God: and "cedars", the trees of the Lord which he hath planted; though they bear no fruit, yet very useful in building, and were of great service in the temple at Jerusalem; and which are put for all others of like usefulness, and minister just occasion of praise; see Ps 96:12.

Psalms 148:10

Ver. 10. Beasts, and all cattle,.... Wild and tame; the beasts of the field, and the cattle on a thousand hills, which are all the Lord's, made, supported, and supplied by him; he gives them their food and drink, which they wait for and receive from him, and in their manner praise him for the same; and these are useful to men for labour or for food, and therefore should praise the Lord for them; see Isa 43:20;

creeping things, and flying fowl: of "creeping things" some belong to the sea and others to the land; see Ps 104:25; and there is not the least creature on the sea or land, the meanest reptile or worthless worm, but is of such exquisite workmanship as gives praise and glory to the Creator; and so do every fly and every insect, as well as "flying fowl" of the greatest size, as the eagle, vulture, &c. these, though they fly in the air, had their original from the waters, **Ge 1:20**.

Psalms 148:11

Ver. 11. Kings of the earth, and all people,.... The order of the creation is pretty much observed throughout the whole of this account; and as man was made last of all, so here he is called upon last to praise the Lord; and the chief among men are begun with, "the kings of the earth", of the several nations of the earth divided into kingdoms, over which some are set as supreme: and these have reason to praise the Lord, who has raised them to such dignity, for promotion comes not by chance, but by the Lord, who sets up kings and puts them down at his pleasure; and also for those gifts bestowed upon them, qualifying them for government, for it is by him kings reign and princes decree justice; and likewise for the preservation of them, for it is he that gives salvation to kings, and continues them for usefulness, notwithstanding all plots and conspiracies against them, Ps 144:9; see Ps 75:6; "and all people"; their subjects, as they should submit unto them and pray for them, so should praise the Lord on their account, when they rule well, protect and defend them in their persons, property, and liberties, Pr 29:2;

princes, and all judges of the earth: the sons of kings, princes of the blood, heirs of the crown; or nobles, ministers of state, counsellors, and, all subordinate magistrates, who are in high places of honour, profit, and trust, and so should praise the Lord, by whom they are brought to such honour; and when they fill up their places, and discharge their trust aright, the people have reason to be thankful for them; and especially for the "judges of the earth", when they are men fearing God and hating covetousness, and impartially minister justice and judgment; see **Ps 2:10**.

Psalms 148:12

Ver. 12. Both young men, and maidens,.... These should praise the Lord, the one for their strength, the other for their beauty; and both should remember their Creator in the days of their youth, and fear, serve, and worship him; so they will praise and glorify him, as did Obadiah, Josiah, Timothy, and the four daughters of Philip the evangelist;

old men, and children; the former have had a large experience of the providential goodness of God, and, if good men, of the grace of God, and are under great obligation to praise the Lord for all that he has done for them; for they have known him that is from the beginning, and have seen many of his wonderful works, which they should not forget to declare to their children, to the honour and glory of God; and even out of the mouth of "children", of babes and sucklings, who have less knowledge, and less experience, God sometimes does ordain strength and perfect praise to himself; see **Ps 8:2**; compared with Mt 21:15.

Psalms 148:13

Ver. 13. Let them praise the name of the Lord, His nature and perfections, and celebrate the glory of them; and his wonderful works, and the blessings of his goodness, both of providence and grace; even all the above creatures and things, celestial and terrestrial, for the following reasons;

for his name alone is excellent; the name of the Lord is himself, who is excellent in power, wisdom, goodness, truth, and faithfulness, and in all other perfections of his nature; his works, by which he is known, are excellent, both of nature and of grace, and proclaim his glory; his Son, in whom his name is, and by whom he has manifested himself, is excellent as the cedars; and so are all his precious names by which he is called; and such is the Gospel, by which he is notified to the world: nay, the Lord's name is alone excellent; all creature excellencies are nothing in comparison of him, in heaven or in earth, those of angels and men; and therefore should be praised by all, and above all;

his glory [is] above the earth and heaven; there is the glory of celestial and terrestrial bodies, which differ; the glory of the sun, moon, and stars, and of one star from another; but the glory of the divine Being, the Creator of them, infinitely exceeds the glory of them all: his glorious Majesty resides above heaven and earth; the heaven is the throne be sits upon, and the earth the footstool he stands on; and Christ, who is sometimes called his glory, and is the brightness of it,
Ps 63:2; is exalted above every name on earth, and is made higher than the heavens, and so is exalted above all blessing and praise; see **Ps 8:1**.

Psalms 148:14

Ver. 14. He also exalteth the horn of his people,.... Which is done when he increases their strength, their spiritual strength especially; makes them strong in the Lord, in his grace, and in the power of his might; when their dominion and authority is enlarged, and victory given over all their enemies; particularly when the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to them, and when they shall reign with Christ on earth; for this phrase denotes the honourable as well as the safe state of the people of God; the horn being an emblem of power, authority, and dominion, on; the Targum renders it, the glory of his people; see Ps 75:10. Some interpret this of Christ the Horn of David, the Horn of salvation, and the author of it, Ps 132:17; who is King over his people, as a horn signifies; and is the strength, safety, and security of them; has gotten them the victory over all their enemies, and is now exalted in heaven at the right hand of God, and that "for his people" {g}, as it may be rendered; he is both raised up and exalted for them;

the praise of all his saints; that is, the Lord is the object of the praise of all his saints, to whom he has showed favour and kindness, and on whom he has bestowed the blessings of his grace; it is matter of praise that they are saints, set apart by God the Father, sanctified by the blood of Christ, and by the Spirit of God; and that their horn is exalted, or they raised to dignity and honour; and that Christ is raised and lifted up as an horn for them, **1Co 1:30** **Lu 1:68**;

[even] of the children of Israel; not literal but spiritual Israel, such who are Israelites indeed, whether Jews or Gentiles;

a people near unto him; in respect of union, being one with him, in the bond of everlasting love; in respect of relation, being near akin, he their father, they his children, not by creation only, but by adopting grace; and Christ their near kinsman, nay, their father, brother, head, and husband; in respect of access unto him, which they have through Christ, with boldness and confidence, being made nigh and brought near by the blood of Christ; in respect of communion and the enjoyment of his gracious presence; and in respect of inhabitation, God, Father, Son, and Spirit, dwelling in them, and making their abode with them: or, as it may be rendered, "the people of his near one" {h}; that is, of Christ, who is near to God his Father, is one with him, was with him from everlasting, was as one brought up with him, yea, lay in his bosom, drew nigh to him as the surety of his people, and offered himself a sacrifice to him as their Priest, and now is set down at his right hand as their King; and where he also appears for them, is their advocate, and ever lives to intercede for them;

praise ye the Lord: even all creatures, especially his saints, his people, the children of Israel, the last spoken of.

{g} wmel Nrq "cornu populo suo", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Michaelis. {h} wbrq Me "populo propinqui sui", Cocceius, Schmidt.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 149:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 149

This psalm is thought by Calvin and others to have been written for the sake of the Jews that returned from the Babylonish captivity; and is a prediction of great and famous things done in the times of the Maccabees to Heathens and their princes, so Theodoret; the Syriac version entitles it,

"concerning the new temple;"

that is, the second temple, built by Zerubbabel, and the things done under that; but it rather seems to have been written by David in the beginning of his reign, when he obtained victories over the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Syrians; and refers to the times of the Messiah, as Kimchi, R. Obadiah Gaon, and others think; not of the Jews' vainly expected Messiah, but of the true Messiah, who is come, and will come again, spiritually and personally; and there are many things in it applicable both to the first and latter part of his days.

Ver. 1. Praise ye the Lord,.... Or "hallelujah"; the title of the psalm, according to many;

sing unto the Lord a new song; for a new mercy received, a new victory obtained, or a new salvation wrought; more particularly the new song of redeeming grace through Jesus Christ, the song of the Lamb, in distinction from the old song of Moses and the children of Israel at the Red sea, on account of their deliverance, which was typical of salvation by Christ, the oldest, being the first song we read of; but this is a new one, which none but the redeemed of the Lamb can sing; a song suited to Gospel times, in which all things are new, a new church state, new ordinances, a new covenant, and a new and living way to the holiest of all; a song proper for renewed persons to sing, who have new favours continually to bless and praise the Lord for;

[and] his praise in the congregation of saints: such who are partakers of the blessings of divine goodness; are separated and distinguished from others by the grace of God; are sanctified and brought into a Gospel church state; and who gather and assemble together to worship God, and attend upon him in his word and ordinances, and in such assemblies the praises of God are to be sung; which being done socially, the saints are assisting to one another in this service; and it is done with greater solemnity, and is more to the public honour and glory of God; thus Gospel churches are called upon to sing the praises of God among themselves, **Eph 5:19**; and have Christ for an example going

before them, Ps 22:22.

Psalms 149:2

Ver. 2. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him,.... Or, "in his Makers" {i}, Father, Son, and Spirit; as in Job 35:10; see also Ec 12:1; for all three Persons had a concern in the creation of man at first, "let us make man", &c. **Ge 1:26**; and have in the formation of every individual man; of the Israelites as men, and of them as a body politic and ecclesiastic, being raised up, constituted, and formed by the Lord in their civil and church state, and therefore had reason to rejoice in him, De 32:6; and so have all the spiritual Israel of God, whom he has chosen, redeemed, and called; every Israelite indeed, all who are the workmanship of God, the people he has formed for himself, and to show forth his praise: these should rejoice in God the Father, who has chosen them in Christ, blessed them with all spiritual blessings in him, sent him to redeem them, has justified them by his righteousness, pardoned their sins through his blood, adopted them and made them heirs of glory; and in the Son of God their Redeemer, they should rejoice in his person, in his righteousness, sacrifice, and fulness; and in the Holy Spirit, who has regenerated and sanctified them, is their Comforter, and the earnest of their future glory;

let the children of Zion be joyful in their King: not in David, unless as a type, but in his Son, the King Messiah, who is King of Zion; and therefore the children of Zion, the church, who are born of her, the mother of us all, and born in her through the ministry of the word, and brought up there by means of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; such as are regenerate persons, sons of God, and members of Gospel churches, should rejoice in Christ, the King of saints; that they have such a King over them, who is the greatest of Kings, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; so righteous in the administration of his government, so wise in making laws for them, so powerful to protect and defend them; and who must reign tilt all enemies are put under his feet, even for ever and ever. Every appearance of Christ's kingdom is matter of joy to saints; his first coming was as a King, though in a mean and lowly manner; yet joyful to Zion and her children, **Zec 9:9**; his ascension to heaven, when he was declared Lord and Christ; the pouring forth of his Spirit, and the success of his Gospel in the Gentile world, to the overthrow of Paganism in it, Re 12:10; and especially it will be an occasion of great joy to his subjects, when he takes to himself his great power, and reigns, Re 11:15.

{i} wyveb "in factoribus suis", Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 149:3

Ver. 3. Let them praise his name in the dance,.... In a chorus of saints, joining together in their expressions of joy, by words and gestures; an ancient practice that went along with singing praises,
Ex 15:20; or rather, "with the pipe" {k}, as some render it; a musical instrument used in former times in the worship of God, in this part of it, praising his name, with those that follow;

let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp; the former of these was a vessel of brass, a drum or tabret, on which they beat, perhaps like one of our kettle drums; the other was a stringed instrument of music much used, and in playing on which David was very skilful: the music of these was typical of the spiritual melody made in the heart to the Lord in singing his praises, to which there are allusions in Gospel times; though the instruments themselves are now laid aside, being only suited to the church in her infant state, when under tutors and governors; see Ps 68:25.

{k} lwxmb "cum tibia", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Amama.

Psalms 149:4

Ver. 4. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people,.... Not all mankind; though they are all his people by creation, and are under the care of his providence; yet they are not all acceptable to him; some are abhorred by him for their sins and transgressions: but these are a special and peculiar people, whom he has foreknown and chosen, taken into the covenant of his grace, and provided in it blessings for them; whom he has given to Christ, and he has redeemed; and who are called by the Spirit and grace of God, whereby they appear to be his people. These the Lord loves with a love of complacency and delight; he takes pleasure in their persons, as considered in Christ, in whom they are accepted with him; as they are clothed with his righteousness, and made comely through his comeliness; as washed in his precious blood, and adorned with the graces of his spirit: yea, he takes pleasure in their services done in faith, and from love, and to his glory; in their sacrifices of prayer and praise, as offered up through Christ; in the company of them and communion with them; and in their prosperity and happinesS, here and hereafter;

he will beautify the meek with salvation; humble and lowly souls, who have been truly humbled under a sense of sin; brought to submit to the righteousness of Christ, and to depend upon the grace of God for salvation; are subject to the yoke of Christ, and patiently submit to the will of God under every dispensation of Providence; are not easily provoked to wrath; are free from envy and malice; have mean thoughts of themselves, and high ones of other saints; these the Lord beautifies now with more grace, with which salvation is connected; with the robe of Christ's righteousness, and the garments of his salvation, which are beautiful ones; and he will beautify them with eternal salvation, with the white robes of immortality and bliss, when they will shine as the sun in the kingdom of heaven.

Psalms 149:5

Ver. 5. Let the saints be joyful in glory,.... In the glory put upon them now, being beautified with salvation; in the righteousness of Christ on them, and the grace of Christ in them, which makes them all glorious within; and in the glory they expect to have hereafter, both upon their bodies and souls, and in the hope of that, **Ro 5:2**. Some copies of the Ethiopic version render it, "in his glory"; in the glory of Christ, asa divine Person and as Mediator, seen now in the glass of the Gospel, and will be the object of the beautiful vision hereafter; and now is, and then will be, matter of joy unspeakable, **2Co 3:18**. Or "gloriously" {l}, in a glorious manner; as saints do rejoice, when they ascribe all the glory of salvation to the free grace of God and death of Christ, and rejoice on that account; saints have reason to rejoice, and indeed none but they; who being regenerated and sanctified, are meet for and shall partake of eternal glory;

let them sing aloud upon their beds; while others are taking their rest and ease, let them meditate on the word of God; commune with their own hearts about their state and condition; remember the Lord, and his goodness to them; all which give an occasion to give thanks unto him, and sing aloud his praise, Ps 63:5; and when they awake on their beds in a morning, after sound sleep and a good repose, it becomes them to praise the Lord, who gives his beloved sleep; and who only makes them sleep, and dwell in safety, **Ps 4:8**. And the phrase denotes the safe and secure state of the saints upon their beds, lying down and sleeping comfortably, having nothing to fear, the Lord sustaining them; and so may and should sing upon their beds, **Ps 3:5**; Yea, saints may sing upon their sick beds; since the Lord is with them there, and strengthens them on a bed of languishing, and makes all their bed in their sickness, Ps 41:3; and even upon

their death beds may sing aloud the triumphant song, "O death, where is thy sting?" &c.
1Co 15:55. Saints in a future state are on beds; the grave is a bed, where their flesh rests in hope; and the bosom and arms of Jesus are the bed in which their souls rest; and where they are, not in a state of insensibility and inactivity, but are walking and talking, and singing aloud the praises of electing, redeeming, and calling grace,
Isa 57:1. So Arama interprets the saints on their beds, those that lie in the grave, when they shall rise from thence,

{l} dwbkb "gloriose", Castalio.

Psalms 149:6

Ver. 6. [Let] the high [praises] of God [be] in their mouth,.... Or "throats" {m}; loudly declared by them. The word "praises" is not in the text, and so may be read, "the high things of God" {n}; or, "the heights of God", as the Septuagint: and these are the perfections of God; as his omniscience, which is knowledge too high for a creature to attain unto, and even to conceive of; his omnipotence, for high is his right hand; his omnipresence, this is higher than heaven, deeper than hell, its measure is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea; his love, grace, and mercy, which are in the heavens; and his truth and faithfulness, which reach to the clouds; his eternity, immutability, and other attributes; all which should be often talked of and celebrated: also the high acts and works of God, those more inward and secret; as the thoughts of his heart, which are higher than ours, as the heavens than the earth; the everlasting love of God, which has an height not to be reached; the eternal choice of persons to grace and glory, before all time; the covenant of grace, which exceeds the mountains for height, as well as duration; and the glorious scheme of our peace, reconciliation, and redemption, contrived in the divine mind, and formed in Christ from everlasting: and others more outward, open, and manifest; as the works of creation and providence; of redemption by Christ; the operations of the Spirit, and the powerful success of the Gospel among Jews and Gentiles. The Vulgate Latin version and others render it, "the exaltations of God" {o}; Father, Son, and Spirit: Jehovah the Father should be exalted in the mouths of his saints, for his love to them, choice of them, covenant with them, the mission of his Son on their account, and the regeneration of them according to his abundant mercy; and Jehovah the Son should be exalted by them with their mouths and lips, as well as in their hearts, in his person, by honouring him as they do the Father, in his offices, kingly, priestly, and prophetic; and the Holy Spirit should be exalted, by ascribing the work of grace to him, the beginning, carrying on, and finishing of it;

and a twoedged sword in their hand; which is no other than the word of God, **Eph 6:17**; one of its edges is the law, which sharply reproves and menaces for sin, threatening with curses, condemnation, and death; and which, in the Spirit's hand, cuts deep into the hearts of men, lays open the corruption of their nature, and the swarms of sin which are in them; it causes pain and grief, working wrath in the conscience; it wounds and kills, and is therefore called the letter that kills, **2Co 3:6**. The other edge is the Gospel, which cuts in pieces the best of men; all their works of righteousness, which it removes from their justification and salvation; and all their wisdom, holiness, freewill power, and creature abilities; and it cuts down the worst in man, his sinful as well as his righteous self; it teaches him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; it is useful to refute errors, and defend truth: and it is an instrument, and only a passive instrument, used by the Lord, as his power unto salvation; it is a sword, but only effectual as it is the sword of the Spirit; it is a part of the weapons of our warfare, and it is mighty, but only through God; it can do nothing of itself, but as it is in the hand of another; and it should be in the hands of all the saints in common, as well as in the hands of Gospel ministers, to withstand error, maintain truth, and repel the temptations of Satan. The Targum is,

"the praises of God in their throats, and as twoedged swords in their hands;"

making the praises of God and the twoedged swords to be the same: and so Jarchi and R. Jeshuah in Aben Ezra interpret them.

{m} Mnwrgb "in gutture eorum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, &c. {n} la twmmwr ai uqwseiv tou yeou, Sept. "celsitudines", Schmidt. {o} "Exaltationes Dei", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Musculus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 149:7

Ver. 7. To execute vengeance upon the Heathen,.... Either upon the Gentile world, in the first times of the Gospel; when the apostles, going there with the twoedged sword of the word, vehemently inveighed against the idolatry of the Heathens, and exhorted them to turn from their idols to serve the living God; and divine power going along with their ministry, multitudes were turned from them; through the success of the Gospel, the oracles of the Heathen were struck dumb, their priests were despised, their idol temples were forsaken, and idols rejected; now were the judgment of the Heathen world, and the prince of it, cast out, and vengeance in this way taken upon it, or their disobedience to God revenged, Joh 12:31. Or else upon the Papists, as will be in the latter times of the Gospel; who are sometimes called Heathens and Gentiles, Ps 10:16; on whom vengeance will be taken for all their idolatry, superstition, and bloodshed of the saints; and they will be smitten and slain by the twoedged sword, proceeding out of the mouth of Christ, and as in the hands of his servants, Re 19:15;

[and] punishments upon the people; or "reproofs" {p}; sharp and piercing ones; such as the convictions the word of God will strike in the minds of men, and will be very distressing and afflicting to them; as the fire out of the mouths of the witnesses, which is their doctrine, will be to their enemies the Papists; and will torment and kill them, and be the savour of death unto death unto them, Re 11:5.

{p} twxkwt "increpationes", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "redargutiones", Cocceius, Michaelis; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 149:8

Ver. 8. To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron. Which is thought to allude to what was done to the Canaanitish kings, in the times of Joshua; and to the princes of Midian by Gideon; and to Agag by Saul; and to the Ammonites, Syrians, and others, by David: but it refers either to the first times of the Gospel, and the influence of the sword of the Spirit over the hearts of men; and on some very great personages, as kings and nobles, brought to Christ and his churches, in chains of powerful and efficacious grace, declaring a ready and cheerful subjection to his Gospel and ordinances; such as Constantine, Theodosius, and others; and who were instruments in subduing, conquering, and destroying tyrannical and persecuting emperors and princes, as Maximilian, Licinius, and others; see Isa 45:14; and more instances of the power of the Gospel, and the influence of divine grace on such persons, there will be in the latter day; see Isa 49:23. It may also respect the use of the Gospel ministry, compared to a twoedged sword on the hearts of men in common; whereby Satan, the strong man armed, who keeps the palace as a king or prince, is dispossessed; and sin, which reigns like a king unto death, is dethroned, and grace is set up as a governing principle. But it may chiefly regard the destruction of antichristian kings and nobles, and their states, through the prevalence of the Gospel and the power of Christ, and the twoedged sword coming out of his mouth, Re 17:14.

Psalms 149:9

Ver. 9. To execute upon them the judgment written,.... In the law, according to the Targum; either upon the seven nations of the land of Canaan, **De 7:12**; or upon all the enemies of God and his people,
De 32:41; or rather in the Gospel; which declares, that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved, but whoever believes not shall be damned, Mr 16:16. And according to this twoedged sword or word of God, and the sentence pronounced by it, and judgment written in it, things will everlastingly take place. Or it may principally have regard to the judgment upon antichrist in the latter day, written in the word of God; and which will be executed by the saints, with the twoedged sword in their hands, Re 16:6;

this honour have all his saints; which is spoken of throughout the psalm; as to be acceptable unto God, and well pleasing in his sight; to be adorned with grace, and beautified with salvation; to have the high praises of God in their mouths, and a twoedged sword in their hands, and to do the execution with it above mentioned;

praise ye the Lord; even all his saints; who of all men have most reason to do it, for the grace that is given them, and the honour put upon them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Psalms 150:1

INTRODUCTION TO PSALM 150

This psalm is of the same kind and upon the same subject with the two preceding ones; and very probably was written by the same hand, and about the same time; and is a very proper psalm to conclude this book with, being all praise. Some say {q} this psalm was sung by the Israelites, when they came with their firstfruits into the sanctuary, with the basket on their shoulders. "Thirteen" times in this short psalm is the word "praise" used; not on account of thirteen properties or perfections in God, as Kimchi thinks: but it is so frequently and in every clause used, to show the vehement desire of the psalmist that the Lord might be praised; and to express his sense of things,

how worthy he is of praise; and that all ways and means to praise him should be made use of, all being little enough to set forth his honour and glory. And not the Levites only, whose business it was in the temple service to praise the Lord with musical instruments, are here exhorted to it, as R. Judah the Levite thinks, but all people; not the people of Israel only, as Kimchi; but the Gentiles also, even all that have breath,
Ps 150:6. For, as R. Obadiah Gaon observes, this psalm belongs to the times of the Messiah; to the Gospel dispensation, to the latter part of it, especially when Jews and Gentiles shall be converted; and when all will praise the Lord, as they will have reason for it.

{q} Weemse's Christ. Synagog. l. 1. c. 6. s. 4. p. 145.

Ver. 1. Praise ye the Lord,.... Or, "hallelujah"; which, in the Targum, Septuagint, and Vulgate Latin versions, is the title of the psalm; and expresses the subject of it, the praise of the Lord;

praise God in his sanctuary; in the temple, the house of his sanctuary as the Targum and R Judah; or in heaven, as R. Moses, his holy place, where he is praised by holy angels and glorified saints; or in the church below, of which the sanctuary or temple was a type. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and the eastern versions, render it, "in his Holy Ones"; among his saints, in the assembly of them, where he is to be feared and praised: it may be translated, "in his Holy One" {r}; and be understood of Christ, as it is by Cocceius; who is holy in both his natures, and is often called God's Holy One, and the Holy One of Israel; and whose human nature is a tabernacle or temple, wherein the fulness of the Godhead dwells; and in, and through, and for whom, the Lord is to be praised. Some render it, "for" or "because of his holiness" {s}; the perfection of holiness in him; in which he is glorious and fearful in the praises of, and which appears in all his works of providence and grace;

praise him in the firmament of his power; the heaven above us, so called, **Ge 1:6**; which, in the Hebrew language, has its name from its being spread and expanded over the earth; and, in the Greek and Latin tongues, from the firmness and stability of it; and which is a work of mighty power, and therefore so called; it particularly respects the starry heavens; for the sun, and moon, and stars, were placed in the firmament, **Ge 1:14**; or the air and atmosphere about us, that presses upon us, and keeps all firm and stable. And now as this shows forth the glory of God, and his handiwork, Ps 19:1; not only all in it should and do in their way praise the Lord; but especially men on earth, who enjoy the benefit of it. R. Judah understands this of the ark in the temple, called the ark of the Lord's strength.

{r} wvdqb "in sancto habitaculo suo", Vocceius; "in sancto ejus", Gejerus; en tw agiw autou, Symmachus apud Drusium. {s} "Ob sanctitatem ejus", Tirinus, Muis; "ob insignem sanctitatem ipsius", Campensis apud Gejerum.

Psalms 150:2

Ver. 2. Praise him for his mighty acts,.... The creation of all things out of nothing; the sustaining of all beings; the government of the world; the redemption of man by Christ, and the wonderful works done by him on earth; the work of grace upon the hearts of his people, and the preservation of them in grace to glory;

praise him according to his excellent greatness; or, "according to the multitude of his greatness" {t}; which appears in his nature, perfections, and work, and these both of providence and grace; and in proportion hereunto, and according to the abilities of creatures, angels, and men, is he to be praised; which is giving him the honour due unto his name; see Ps 96:8.

{t} wldg brk "secundum multudinem magnitudinie ejus", V. L. Montanus, Gejerus; so Ainsworth.

Psalms 150:3

Ver. 3. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet,.... Which was used in calling the assembly together, for worship and on other occasions; and at the feast of blowing of trumpets, and in the year of jubilee,
Nu 10:1; and by the priests in temple service,
1Ch 16:6; and was typical of the Gospel, which gives a certain and joyful sound, and is the cause and means of praising God, Isa 27:13;

praise him with the psaltery; to which psalms were sung;

and harp; which were instruments of music, both used in divine worship under the former dispensation; and in which David was well skilled and delighted, and appointed proper persons to praise with them,
1Ch 15:20. They were typical of the spiritual melody made in the hearts of God's people, while they are praising him in psalms, hymns, and spiritual

songs, under the Gospel, **Eph 5:19**.

Psalms 150:4

Ver. 4. Praise him with the timbrel and dance,.... Or "pipe" {u};
See Gill on "Ps 149:3";

praise him with stringed instruments; or divers "kinds" {w} of instruments not named, as R. Saadiah Gaon; and which, as Aben Ezra says, had all one sound or note; what they were is not known, as also many of them that are particularly mentioned;

and organs; which have their name from the loveliness of their sound; these are of ancient original and use, **Ge 4:21**; but were not of the same kind with those now in use, which are of much later invention.

{u} lwxmw "et tibia", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus. {w} Mynmb "varia symphonia", Cocceius.

Psalms 150:5

Ver. 5. Praise him upon the loud cymbals,.... Or "cymbals of hearing" {x}; that were heard with pleasure and delight, and afar off: the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, "well sounding cymbals", which give a grateful sound to the ear; these were made of brass, 1Ch 15:19; to which the apostle alludes, 1Co 13:1;

praise him upon the high sounding, cymbals; or "cymbals of shouting" {y}, ovation or triumph; which were used on joyful occasions, as victories, deliverances, and the like; and were used also in the temple service, see 1Ch 16:5; according to the Targum and Septuagint version, these were three stringed instruments; for so they render the word them in 1Sa 18:6. Now these several instruments of music are named, not as to be used in Gospel times; but, being expressive of the highest praise and joy shown in former times, are mentioned to set forth the highest strains and notes of praise in New Testament saints; as well as to denote their heartiness, agreement, and unanimity in this service, Ro 15:6.

{x} emv ylulub "in cymbalis auditus", Montanus, Vatablus. {y} hewrx ylulub "in cymbalis jubilationis", V. L. Musculus, Cocceius; "in cymbalis ovationis", Montanus.

Psalms 150:6

Ver. 6. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord,.... Even the brute creatures, as in a preceding; but more especially man, in whom God has breathed the breath of life, and is become not only a living but a rational soul; and more especially spiritual men, converted persons, whether Jews or Gentiles; on whom the Spirit of the Lord has breathed, and whom he has quickened; and who breathe in prayer after divine things; and who also have abundant reason to bless and praise his name for what he has bestowed upon them, and has in reserve for them; and for which they should praise him as long as they have breath; see **Re 5:13**;

praise ye the Lord; all before mentioned, and in the manner as directed, and that in time and to all eternity. Thus ends the book of Psalms.

There is another psalm added in the Septuagint, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in the metaphrase of Apollinarius; but is owned to be a supernumerary one, and not to be found in all copies; and is said to be written by David, when he fought with Goliath, and conquered him, and is as follows.

1. I was little among my brethren, and a youth in my father's house; I fed my father's sheep. 2. My hands made (or used) the organ; and my fingers fitted (or played on) the psaltery or harp: 3. And who hath declared to my Lord? he is Lord, he hath heard. 4. He sent his angel, and took me from my father's sheep; and anointed me with the oil of his anointing, 5. My brethren were goodly and great; and the Lord delighted not in them. 6. I went forth to meet the stranger (the Philistine), and he cursed me by his idols: 7. And I threw at him three stones into his forehead, by the power of the Lord, and laid him prostrate {z}. 8. I drew out the sword from him; I cut off his head, and took away reproach from the children of Israel.

{z} This verse is only in the Arabic version.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS

This book is called, in some printed Hebrew copies, "Sepher Mishle", the Book of Proverbs; the title of it in the Vulgate Latin version is,

"the Book of Proverbs, which the Hebrews call "Misle":"

in the Septuagint version it has the name of the writer, the Proverbs of Solomon; and so in the Syriac version, with the addition of his titles,

"the son of David, king of Israel."

This and Ecclesiastes are both of them by the Jews {a} called Books of Wisdom: and it is common with the ancient Christian writers {b} to call the book of Proverbs by the names of "Wisdom" and "Panaretos"; names they give also to the apocryphal books of Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon; and therefore this is to be carefully distinguished from them. The author of this book was King Solomon, as the "first" verse, which contains the inscription of it, shows; for he was not a collector of these proverbs, as Grotius is of opinion, but the author of them, at least of the far greater part; and not only the author, but the writer of them: the Jews {c} say that Hezekiah and this men wrote them; it is true indeed the men of Hezekiah copied some, Pr 25:1; but even those were written by Solomon. R. Gedaliah {d} would have it that Isaiah the prophet wrote this book; but without any foundation. At what time it was written is not certain; the Jewish writers generally say {e} it was written by Solomon, as were the books of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs, in his old age, when near the time of his death; though some think it was written before his fall: and it may be it was not written all at once, but at certain times, when these proverbs occurred unto him and were spoken by him, and as occasion served: however, it is not to he doubted but that they were written under the inspiration of God. The Jews once thought to have made this book of Proverbs an apocryphal one, because of some seeming contradictions in it; but finding that these were capable of a reconciliation, changed their minds, as became them {f}. Among Christians, Theodore of Mopsuest, in the sixth century, denied the divine authority of this book, and attributed it merely to human wisdom; which opinion of his was condemned in the second council at Constantinople: and in later times it has been treated with contempt by the Socinians, and particularly by Father Simon and Le Clerc; but the authority of it is confirmed by the writers of the New Testament, who have cited passages out of it; see Ro 12:20 from Pr 25:21. The book consists of "five" parts; "first", a preface or introduction, which takes up the first "nine" chapters; the "second", the proverbs of Solomon, put together by himself, beginning at the tenth chapter to the twenty-fifth; the "third", the proverbs of Solomon, copied by the men of Hezekiah, beginning at the twenty-fifth chapter to the thirtieth; the "fourth", the words of Agur, the thirtieth chapter, the "fifth", the instruction of Solomon's mother, Bathsheba, the thirty-first chapter.

{a} Gloss. in T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. {b} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 22. 26. {c} T. Bab. Ibid. fol. 15. 1. {d} Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 55. 1. {e} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 15. p. 41. {f} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 30. 2.

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 1

After the inscription, which gives the title of the book, and describes the author by his name, descent, and dignity, **Pr 1:1**, follows the scope and design of it, which is to teach men wisdom and knowledge; even such as are simple and foolish, and particularly young men; nay, hereby wise men may grow wiser, and attain to an higher degree of learning, **Pr 1:2**; and the "first" doctrine taught in it is the fear of the Lord, or devotion to God; which is the beginning of knowledge, though despised by fools, **Pr 1:7**. The next is obedience to parents; whose instructions, attended to, are more ornamental than chains of gold, **Pr 1:8**. And then follows a dissuasive from bad company; in which the arguments made use of by wicked men to draw in others with them, and the danger of compliance, are most strongly and beautifully represented, **Pr 1:10**. When Wisdom, who is the instructor and teacher throughout the whole, is introduced as calling upon the simple and the scorners to leave their sins and turn to her, with a promise of the Spirit to them, **Pr 1:20**; but they slighting and rejecting her call, are threatened with just and irrevocable rum and destruction, **Pr 1:24**. And the chapter is closed with a promise of safety and rest to those that hearken to her, **Pr 1:33**.

Ver. 1. The proverbs of Solomon,.... Who is said to make three thousand proverbs, **1Ki 4:32**; but whether any of them are contained in this book cannot be said: however, it is certain that they are not all in it, since, if you except the first "nine" chapters, which are the introduction to the Proverbs, there are but six hundred and fifty-nine verses in it; and if they are taken in, they make but nine hundred and fifteen, which are not a third part of the proverbs said to be made by him: however, here are as many and such as God thought fit should be preserved for instruction in all future ages. It was usual with the ancients in all countries, when any truth was found, and established by experience, to wrap it up in a few apt words, with or without a figure; that it might be the better understood and more easily retained, and which were always venerable

and greatly attended to: and of this kind are these proverbs; only with this difference, that these are of divine inspiration, and the others not. The word used for them comes from one which signifies "similitude" and "dominion" {g}; because many of them are similes or comparisons, and are delivered out in figurative expressions, in metaphors and allegories, and the like; and have all of them a commanding power, authority, and influence upon the mind, obliging to an attention to them. The name of Solomon is put to them, the more to recommend them; who had a wise and understanding heart, as large as the sand of the sea, and was wiser than all men, **1Ki 4:29**; and was an eminent type of Christ, who spake in proverbs also,
Joh 16:25. He is further described by his pedigree and office,

the son of David, king of Israel; a wise son of a wise father, and king over a wise and understanding people. These titles are added for the further commendation of the book; and it may be observed that they are such as belong to the Messiah, Solomon's antitype, one that is greater than he, **Mt 1:1**.

{g} A rad. lvm "dominatus est----lvmn comparatus, similis, consimilis factus est", Buxtorf. "Mirum est quod radix lvm significans antoritatem cum imperio, significat etiam parabolas vel sermones figuratos----verba quae Mylvm vocantur, habent autoritatem, nobis ideam immittunt, dicentis ut nos supereminentis, saltem sapientia, ingenio, doctrina; nos persuadent et pondere suo, quasi imperio noe ducunt". Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 845.

Proverbs 1:2

Ver. 2. To know wisdom and instruction,.... That is, these proverbs were made, and written, and published, to make known or to teach men wisdom and knowledge; not only in things moral, and therefore these proverbs are by some called Solomon's "ethics"; and indeed they do contain the best system of morality in the whole world; nothing like it is to be extracted out of all the writings of the Heathen poets and philosophers: nor only in things civil; for which reason they may be called his "politics", seeing they are instructive to kings and civil magistrates, and to subjects; and also his "economics", seeing they furnish out rules for husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, worthy of their attention and observance: but also they are a means of and are designed to teach spiritual and evangelical wisdom and knowledge; things relating to Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, and the way of life and salvation by him, the knowledge of which is life eternal. These words, with others that follow, seem to be synonymous, and signify much one and the same thing; and are used to show that the most consummate wisdom and comprehensive knowledge may be attained by means of this book; which, like the rest of Scripture, with a divine blessing, is able to make a man "wise unto salvation"; and is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness", **2Ti 3:15**; where the apostle seems to allude to this text: since "wisdom" here may stand for "doctrine" in general; and "instruction" may signify the means of attaining to it; and it may be observed, that the word is used for "discipline" and "correction", as well as "instruction". If these words are to be distinguished, the first, "wisdom", may design a wise scheme and plan of truths, and the theory of them and the latter, "instruction", the learning it and putting it into practice; and for both theory and practice this book is useful;

to perceive the words of understanding; which flow from a good understanding, and give a right understanding of things; so that a man may be able to distinguish between light and darkness, truth and error, right and wrong; particularly the doctrines of the Gospel may be meant, which are eminently so, and exceed the understanding of a natural man, and which are only understood by a spiritual man; the means of knowing which are the Scriptures, under the guidance and direction of the Spirit of God.

Proverbs 1:3

Ver. 3. To receive the instruction of wisdom,.... Or "prudence" {h}; of wise and prudent men; and especially of Christ himself, who bears those names, whose instructions this book is full of; and the design of which is to engage the attention of men to them, and prevail upon them to receive them, and act conformably to them. Which instructions respect the following things; and which are added by way of illustration and amplification, viz.

justice, and judgment, and equity; that which is just in itself, and according to the nature of God and his will; and is judged so by right reason; and is equitable between man and man, and agrees with the law of God. These three, R. Levi Ben Gersom says, signify one and the same thing; true righteousness, doing that which is just to God and man; which the doctrines of grace, or the instructions of wisdom, teach men to do; concerning which many rules may be collected from this book.

{h} lkvh "prudentiae", Munster, Vatablus.

Proverbs 1:4

Ver. 4. To give subtlety to the simple,.... Men of mean abilities, weak capacities, shallow understandings, incautious, credulous, and easily imposed upon: these, by attending to what is herein contained, may arrive to a serpentine subtlety; though they are simple and harmless as doves, may become as wise as serpents; may attain to an exquisite knowledge of divine things and know even more than the wise and sage philosophers among the Gentiles, or any of the Rabbins and masters of Israel; or any of the princes of this world, whose wisdom comes to nought; and become very cautious and circumspect how they are drawn aside by the old serpent the devil, or by such who lie in wait to deceive; and perform their duty both to God and man;

to the young man knowledge and discretion; or "thought" {i}; who wants both: this book will teach him the knowledge of things moral, civil, and religious: to think and act aright; how to behave and conduct himself wisely and discreetly before men; and be a means of forming his mind betimes for piety and religion; and of furnishing him with rules for his deportment in future life, in all the periods of it; and in whatsoever state and condition he may come into. A "young man [may] cleanse his way", Ps 119:9, reform his manners, behave with purity and uprightness, by taking "heed" to the things herein contained.

{i} hmzm "cogitationem", Pagninus, Mercerus; "bonam cogitationem", Michaelis.

Proverbs 1:5

Ver. 5. A wise [man] will hear,.... With great attention, and hearken to the proverbs and wise sayings herein delivered; for here are many things entertaining to men of years and wisdom, as well as instructive to young men and simple ones;

and will increase learning; or "add" {k} to his stock of learning; or, as the Targum,

"will add knowledge;"

see **2Pe 1:5**; or, "will be wiser", as the Vulgate Latin version. This is said to show the excellency of this book, and the extensive usefulness of it; indeed wise men will get knowledge where fools cannot, and increase learning where others can get none: there are few books but a wise man will get something out of; and especially such a book as this, and as the Scriptures are;

and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels; a man of a spiritual understanding arrives to the knowledge of the wise counsels of God; the doctrines of the Gospel, which are the "whole counsel" of God; are recondite wisdom, the hidden wisdom of God, which no wisdom of man is comparable to. It is the wisest scheme that was ever formed, and which the wit of man could never have devised, even salvation by Jesus Christ; and which was laid in God's "counsels of old", which are "faithfulness" and "truth"; the knowledge of which is attained unto by one that is spiritually wise. Moreover, a man that thoroughly understands the things contained in this book is fit to be a counsellor of others in things human and divine; in things moral, civil, and spiritual: he is fit to be in the cabinet council of princes, to be a counsellor of kings; yea, to have the reins of government in his hands. "He shall possess government"; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions: or, "he shall possess the helm" {l}; sit as a pilot there, as the word may signify, and steer the ship aright in which he is; whether it be his family, or the church of God, or a city or corporation, or a kingdom: this book, rightly understood by him, will furnish him with rules to do all things well and wisely.

{k} Powy "addet", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens. {l} hnqy twlbxt "gubernacula possidebit", V. L. "metaphora a nauclero desumpta", Schultens.

Proverbs 1:6

Ver. 6. To understand a proverb, and the interpretation,.... This may be connected either with the first verse, "the proverbs of Solomon", &c. are written, as for the above ends and purposes, so for these; or with **Pr 1:5**, a wise and understanding man, by hearkening and attending to what is here delivered, will not only attain to wise counsels, but to the understanding of proverbial sayings, and to see into the "elegancy" {m}, the eloquence and beauty of them, as the word signifies; and be able to interpret them to others in a clear, plain, way and manner;

the words of the wise, and their dark sayings; the words and doctrines, not of the wise philosophers and sages of the Heathen world, but of men truly wise and good; and especially of the wise inspired writers of the Scriptures, whose words come from one Shepherd, Ec 12:11; and the enigmas or riddles contained in their writings, which are so to a natural man, obscure phrases and expressions, things hard and difficult to be understood, yet to a spiritual man, that judgeth all things, plain and easy, **1Co 2:14**.

{m} huylm "facundiam", Montanus; "eloquentiam", Tigurine version; "elocutionem", Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 1:7

Ver. 7. The fear of the Lord [is] the beginning of knowledge,.... Here properly the book begins, and this is the first of the proverbs, and an excellent one; it is such an one as is not to be found in all the writings of the Heathens. By "the fear of the Lord" is not meant a servile fear, a fear of punishment, of hell, wrath, and damnation, which is the effect of the first work of the law upon the conscience; but a filial fear, and supposes knowledge of God as a father, of his love and grace in Christ, particularly of his forgiving love, from whence it arises, Ps 130:4; it is a holy, humble, fiducial fear of God; a reverential affection for him, and devotion to him; it includes the whole of religious worship, both internal and external; all that is contained in the first table of the law, and the manner of performing it, and principle of acting: this is the first of all sciences to be learned, and it is the principal one; it is the basis and foundation of all the rest, on which they depend; and it is the head, the fountain, the root an source, from whence they spring; and unless a man knows God, knows God in Christ, and worships him in his fear, in spirit and in truth, according to his revealed will, he knows nothing as he ought to know; and all his knowledge will be of no avail and profit to him; this is the first and chief thing in spiritual and evangelical knowledge, and without which all natural knowledge will signify nothing; see Job 28:28;

[but] fools despise wisdom and instruction; the same with "knowledge" before; they do not desire the knowledge of God, and of his ways and worship, but despise it, make no account of it, but treat it with contempt; especially the knowledge of God in Christ, in which lies the highest wisdom, for this is "life eternal", Joh 17:3; they despise Christ "the Wisdom of God", and the Gospel, and the truths of it, which are "the hidden wisdom" of God; and all "instruction" into it, and the means of it; they despise the Scriptures, which are able to make a man "wise unto salvation"; and the ministry of the word, and the ministers of it: such sort of "discipline" {n} was this, as the word signifies, they dislike and abhor; and especially "correction" or "chastisement" {o},

which is also the sense of it; suffering reproach and affliction for the sake of wisdom, a profession of Christ and his Gospel; and they are fools with a witness that despise all this; such fools are atheists, deists, and all profane and wicked men. The Septuagint render it, "the ungodly"; and such sort of men are all along meant by "fools" in this book.

{n} rowm "disciplinam", Tigurine version, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens, {o} "Castigationem, correctionem", Vatablus.

Proverbs 1:8

Ver. 8. My son, hear the instruction of thy father,.... This is not to be understood of God the Father of mankind, and of that law which he has given them, as Jarchi and Gersom interpret it, but of Solomon and his son in a literal sense; and of anyone that came to him for instruction, any pupil, hearer, or reader of his; and it is a direction to all children to hearken to the instruction of their parents, and obey their commands; so, next to the fear and worship of God, he exhorts to obedience to parents, and proceeds just in the same order and method in which the decalogue or ten commands were written; the first table respects God and his worship, and the second follows, which begins with "honour thy father and thy mother", &c. Ex 20:12, which, the apostle says, is "the first commandment with promise", **Eph 6:1**;

and forsake not the law of thy mother; meaning not the congregation of Israel, the old synagogue, or Jewish church, as Jarchi; and so in the Talmud {p} it is interpreted of the congregation of Israel, as is "thy father" in the former clause of the divine Being; nor the operative faculty of the human understanding, as Gersom; but the mother of Solomon's son; and any and every mother of a child, who having an equal or greater tenderness for her offspring, and a true and hearty regard for their welfare, will instruct them in the best manner she can, give the best rules, and prescribe the best laws she can for their good; and which ought to be as carefully attended to and obeyed as those of a father; and she is particularly mentioned, because the law of God equally enjoins reverence and obedience to both parents, which human laws among the Gentiles did not; and because children are too apt to slight the directions and instructions of a mother; whereas they carry equal authority, and have in them the nature of a law, as those of a father.

{p} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 102. 1.

Proverbs 1:9

Ver. 9. For they [shall be] an ornament of grace unto thy head,.... The instructions and laws of parents being attended unto and obeyed by children, render them more lovely and amiable than any beautiful ornament whatever that can be put upon their heads;

and chains about thy neck; be that unto them as chains of gold are to the neck, beautify and adorn them; so good works, done in obedience to God and parents, are ornaments of great price, and preferable to any outward adorning whatever; see **1Ti 2:9**. The allusions are unto, and the metaphors taken from, those things which are most pleasing and acceptable to children, as fine top knots and golden chains.

Proverbs 1:10

Ver. 10. My son, if sinners entice thee,.... Endeavour to seduce thee from thy parents, and draw thee aside from them, from listening to their instructions, advice, and commands; and make use of all plausible arguments to persuade thee to join with them in the sins they are addicted unto, and are continually employed in: for this is not to be understood of such who are sinners by nature, and through infirmity of the flesh, as all men are; but of notorious sinners, who are guilty of the grossest enormities, who live in sin, and give up themselves to work all manner of wickedness; sin is their trade and business, and the constant course of their lives; they are hardened, impudent, and daring, and not content to sin themselves, but do all they can to draw in others; and to preserve youth from filling into such bad company is this exhortation given in this tender, affectionate, and moving manner; next to the fear of God, and regard to parents, is this caution given to shun the company of wicked men, which young men are liable to be drawn into, and is of fatal consequence;

consent thou not; yield not to their persuasions, listen not to their solicitations, show no liking and approbation of them, assent neither by words nor deeds; do not say "thou wilt"; say "I will not", and abide by it; be deaf to all their entreaties, and proof against all their persuasions.

Proverbs 1:11

Ver. 11. If they say, come with us,.... Leave your father's house, and the business of life in which you are; make one of us, and become a member of our society, and go along with us upon the highway;

let us lay wait for blood; lie in ambush under some hedge or another, waiting till a rich traveller comes up and passes that way, and then rise and shed his blood in order to get his money; and the same word signifies both "blood" and "money", and wait is laid for one for the sake of the other;

let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause; or "let us hide" {q}, the Vulgate Latin version adds "snares"; so Vatablus and others, as the fowler does for birds; or "let us hide ourselves" {r}; in some private place, waiting "for the innocent", the harmless traveller, who has done no injury to any man's person or property; thinks himself safe, and is not aware of any design upon him; going about his lawful business, and having done nothing to provoke such miscreants to attempt his life or take away his property: and which they do "without cause" as to him; "freely" {s} as to themselves; and "with impunity" {t}, as they promise themselves and one another; all which senses the word used will bear.

{q} hnpun "abscondamus", Michaelis. {r} "Abscondamus nos", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "abscondamus nosmetipsos", Baynus. {s} Mnx "gratis", Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis, Schultens. {t} "Impune", Junius & Tremellius, Amama.

Proverbs 1:12

Ver. 12. Let us swallow them up alive as the grave,.... The innocent person, and those that are with him, his servants; our gang is so numerous that we can very easily dispatch him and all his attendants, and bury them out of sight at once, as if they were swallowed up alive in a grave, and so no more to be seen or heard of; and consequently we shall be in the utmost safety and security, there being no traces of what is done, nor any left to make a relation of it, or to give any information of us, or to pursue us;

and whole, as those that go down into the pit; who though whole and in perfect health, shall in a moment be destroyed and cast into the pit, being first plundered of all the riches they have about them; for this swallowing them up alive and whole, which is an allusion to a beast of prey swallowing up another creature all at once, not only intends their cruelty in taking away life, but their rapaciousness in seizing upon their substance.

Proverbs 1:13

Ver. 13. We shall find all precious substance,.... Among one or another we meet with; gold and silver and precious stones, everything that is valuable; not considering that hereby they were in danger of losing the more precious substance, their immortal souls; and the most precious substance of all, the enjoyment of God, and happiness with him to all eternity, which is the "more enduring substance": the things of this world, properly speaking, are not substance, though wicked men so judge them; they are things that are not; nor are they "precious", in comparison of spiritual and heavenly things; but they are what carnal men set a high price and value upon, and risk the loss of their name, lives, and souls for;

we shall fill our houses with spoil; Aben Ezra interprets this of garments; but it may not only design the garments taken from the persons robbed and killed; but also their money, commodities, and goods they were travelling with, which in time would be so large as to fill everyone of their houses; covetousness lies at the bottom of all this wickedness; the love of money is the root of all evil.

Proverbs 1:14

Ver. 14. Cast in thy lot among us,.... Or "thou shall cause thy lot to fall among us" {u}; though just entered, as soon as any booty is taken thou shalt cast lots with us, and have thy full share with those that have been longer engaged;

let us all have one purse; or "we will all have one purse" {w}; will throw all our booty, taken by us into one common stock, and live upon it comfortably and merrily. Jarchi represents it as putting it to the young man's option, to do which he would, either to cast lots and take his share separately, or let it be put altogether, and so partake jointly with the rest. According to Gersom the sense is, that there should be such an exact division made, that there should not be more in one purse than in another; their shares should be equally divided by lot, and their purses should be alike; one should not have more than another: these are the arguments used by wicked men to allure and ensnare young men to join with them in their sinful ways and practices; from which they are dehorted, as follows.

{u} lypt Klrwg "sortem tuam conjicies", Junius & Tremellius; "projicies", Mercerus, Baynus; "jacies", Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens. {w} wnlkl hyhy "erit nobis omnibus", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version; so Cocceius, Schultens, and the Targum.

Proverbs 1:15

Ver. 15. My son, walk not thou in the way with them,.... In the same way as they do, which is the broad way that leads unto destruction; set not one foot in it; make no trial of it, whether it will be pleasant and profitable walking in it; the experiment will be dangerous;

refrain thy foot from their path; their manner and course of life; do not follow it, nor join them in it; when there is an inclination or a temptation to it, withstand it; stop in time, do not proceed, but draw back, and go on in the way thou hast been trained up in, and remember the instructions of thy parents.

Proverbs 1:16

Ver. 16. For their feet run to evil,.... To the evil of sin, to commit robberies and murder, and all manner of iniquity; they are eager upon it, and in haste and swift to do it, **Pr 6:18** {x}; being carried away with their inordinate affections, which are as feet to the soul; and drawn aside with their lusts, and pushed on by Satan, and, encouraged by one another, and so rush on headlong to the evil of punishment also; and which is a reason why their ways and paths should be abstained from, because they bring upon them swift destruction; it is to their own hurt they run, as Jarchi interprets it; though the first sense seems best to agree with what follows;

and make haste to shed blood; the blood of innocent persons, in order to get their substance, to cover their iniquity and shame, and that no information may be given of them; this is mentioned as having something very horrible in it, in order to deter from joining with them.

{x} "Velox ad facinus", Claudian. in Rufin. l. 1. v. 240.

Proverbs 1:17

Ver. 17. Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. Or "without cause" {y}, as the word is rendered in **Pr 1:11**; and so the words are an illustration of the preceding; showing that the blood of innocent persons is shed without cause, no injury being done by them to those that do it, but is shed without any provocation at all; just as the net is spread for the innocent bird, which has done no harm to the fowler that seeks to take it; so Gersom: or else the sense is, that though the net is spread by the fowler even in the sight of the bird, yet it is in vain to the bird, though not to the fowler; it is so intent upon the corn that is spread about, that it takes no notice of the net, and so is caught in it; and thus it is with those men that are bent upon their sinful practices, upon theft and murder, though their ruin and destruction are before their eyes; and they daily see their companions in iniquity come to an untimely end; they know that they are liable to suffer death by the hand of the civil magistrate, and to be followed by the justice and vengeance of God, and suffer eternal punishment; yet take no warning hereby, but rush on to their own ruin, as follows.

{y} Mnh "sine causa", Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 1:18

Ver. 18. And they lay wait for their [own] blood,.... While they lie in wait for the blood of others, they lie in wait for their own; and when they shed the blood of innocent persons, it in the issue comes upon their own heads, and is the cause of their own blood being shed; vengeance pursues them, and justice will not suffer them to live;

they lurk privily for their [own] lives: while they are lurking in secret places to take away, the lives of others, they are laying snares for their own souls; and the consequence of it will be, that they will be brought to a shameful and untimely end here, or, however, to everlasting ruin and destruction hereafter.

Proverbs 1:19

Ver. 19. So [are] the ways of everyone that is greedy of gain,.... That is set upon getting riches in an unlawful way, by robberies and murder; his ways will end in the loss of his own blood and life, and in the loss of his immortal soul; this will be what his wicked ways and course of life will bring him to, and what will his gain profit him then? it would be of no use and service to him could he have gained the whole world;

[which] taketh away the life of the owners thereof: or who, even every one of those that are greedy of gain, and will be rich at any rate; such stick not to take away the life of the proper owners of that gain, or money they are greedy of, in order to get it into their own possession; and such wicked practices cannot fail of meeting with a just recompence of reward: or "which" covetous gain, or gain gotten in such a wicked manner, will be the cause of the life of the injurious masters and wrong possessors of it being taken away from them, either by the hand of the civil magistrate, or by God himself. These sins of robbery and murder are particularly instanced in, not only because other sins lead unto them, as sabbath breaking, drunkenness, and lewdness, and issue in temporal and eternal ruin; but because they were very common among the Jews at the time that Wisdom, or Christ, was here on earth: to which time the whole passage refers, as appears from the following verses; and that those sins were frequent then is manifest both from Scripture; see Mt 27:38; and from the confessions of the Jews, who say {z} that forty years before the destruction of the temple the sanhedrim were obliged to remove from place to place, because that murderers increased, and they could not judge and condemn them, for fear of being murdered themselves; and it was because of this great increase they were obliged to stop the beheading of the red heifer {a}.

{z} T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 8. 2. {a} Misnah Sotah, c. 9. s. 9.

Proverbs 1:20

Ver. 20. Wisdom crieth without,.... Here the person instructing throughout this whole book is represented under the name of "Wisdom"; by which we are to understand not the attribute of divine wisdom displayed in the works of creation; nor the light of nature in man; nor the law of Moses given to the Israelites; nor the revelation of the divine will in general, as it is delivered out in the sacred Scriptures; nor the Gospel, and the ministry of it, in particular; but our Lord Jesus Christ; for the things spoken of Wisdom, and ascribed to it in this book, especially in the eighth and ninth chapters, show that a divine Person is intended, and most properly belong to Christ; who may be called "Wisdoms" {b}, in the plural number, as in the Hebrew text, because of the consummate and perfect wisdom that is in him; as he is a divine Person, he is "the Logos", the Word and Wisdom of God; as Mediator, "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge [are] hid" in him, **Col 2:3**; and, as man, "the Spirit of Wisdom" rests upon him without measure, Isa 11:2. This, with what follows to the end of the chapter, is a prophecy of the ministry of Christ in the days of his flesh, and of the success of it; and of the calamities that should come upon the Jews for the rejection of him: and Wisdom is here said to "cry", as Christ did, **Joh 7:28**; the word signifies to cry both in a sorrowful way, as Jesus did when he cried to Jerusalem, weeping over it, Mt 23:37; and in a joyful one, which well suits with the Gospel, as preached by him; a joyful sound expressed by piping, in opposition to John's ministry, which was a mournful one, Mt 11:17; for crying here means no other than the preaching of the word; which is such a cry as that of heralds, when they publicly proclaim peace or war; so Wisdom or Christ, is said to "proclaim liberty to the captives", and "the acceptable year of the Lord", Isa 61:1. This cry was made "without" the city of Jerusalem, and without that part of the country which was properly called Jewry; Christ first preached in the land of Galilee; or this may mean the Gentile world, where Christ preached, though not in person, yet by his apostles, whom he sent into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature;

she uttereth her voice in the streets: of the city of Jerusalem, and other places; nor is this contrary to Mt 12:19; which is to be understood of crying in a bawling and litigious way, of lifting up the voice in self-commendation, neither of which Christ did; and yet might cry and utter his voice in the streets, that is, publicly preach his Gospel there, as he did; and he also sent his servants into the streets and lanes of the city to call in sinners by the ministry of the word,
Lu 14:21; which perhaps may be meant of places in the Gentile world; nor is this sense to be excluded here; it may be figuratively understood of the public ministration of the word and ordinances in the church called the streets and broad ways of it, **So 3:2**.

{b} twmkx "sapientiae", Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Proverbs 1:21

Ver. 21. She crieth in the chief place of concourse,.... Where a multitude of people meet together; the Targum is,

"on the top of palaces;"

but rather it is to be understood of the synagogues of the Jews, where Christ frequently preached; and which, from hence, they build in the highest part of the city {c}; and best of all the temple, whither the tribes of Israel went up to

worship in great bodies, and to which the Jews daily resorted; here Christ taught publicly, as he himself says,
Joh 18:20;

in the opening of the gates; either of the city, at which people went in and out in great numbers; or of the temple, where they passed and repassed continually on account of worship; see Joh 10:23; in allusion hereunto the public worship of God's house is signified by the gates of Zion, and also of Wisdom, Ps 87:2;

in the city she uttereth her words; the doctrines of the Gospel; even in the city of Jerusalem literally, and in other cities of Judea and Galilee, the singular being put for the plural; and figuratively in the church of God, often compared to a city; and so all these expressions of "without", in the "streets", in the "chief place of concourse", "the opening of the gates", and "the city", may denote in general the openness and publicness of the Gospel ministry, both by Christ in his apostles, in Judea, and in the Gentile world; more especially the former;

[saying], as follows.

{c} Maimon. Hilchot Tephillah, c. 11. s. 2.

Proverbs 1:22

Ver. 22. How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?.... Simple foolish things, agreeably to their character, being weak simple men, men of weak capacities and shallow understandings; and such were the first persons that were called by Christ through the ministry of the word, even effectually; they were babes and sucklings in comparison of others, by whom they were despised as illiterate and ignorant of the law; see Mt 11:25; though it may respect the Jews in general, who were externally called by Christ, and were a simple and foolish people, addicted to silly customs and usages, to the traditions of the elders, and loved the folly and darkness of them, and to continue in them, rather than the light of the Gospel, **Joh 3:19**;

and the scorners delight in their scorning; at Christ, because of the meanness of his parentage and education; at his disciples and followers, at his doctrines and miracles, sufferings and death;

and fools hate knowledge? the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ; the knowledge of the Gospel, and the truths of it; they hated the light of it, and did not care to come to it, but rather loved the darkness of the law, and even of error and infidelity; they hated Christ, the teacher of true and useful knowledge; they hated his person, though without a cause; they hated him in his offices, as a Prophet to instruct them, as a Priest to be the propitiation for them, and as a King to rule over them; such "fools" were they, and who are therefore expostulated with by Wisdom or Christ; which expostulations show their continuance in these things, and the danger they were in by them, the pity and compassion of Christ as man and a minister of the word, and the fervour and importunity of his ministrations.

Proverbs 1:23

Ver. 23. Turn ye at my reproof,.... Or rather "to my reproof", for the words are not an exhortation to the conversion of the heart, or to him repentance; but to an attendance to the external ministry of the word preached, which reproves of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and does not design the turning of the heart to it, which is God's work, but the turning of the face and ears to hear it; and so the Targum,

"turn your face to my reproof,"

and not your backs, as they did, showing a dislike of it; or, as Aben Ezra,

"turn ye to hear my reproof;"

turn your ears and listen to it, and do not pull away the shoulder, or stop your ears that you may not hear it;

behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you; not "upon you", but "unto you": for the Holy Spirit of God is not here designed, and the effusion of his gifts, ordinary and extraordinary, or of his special grace; but the mind of Wisdom, or Christ, as the word is used in Pr 29:11. Some interpret it, "here, my will" {d}; the external revelation of his will made in the ministry of the word, by whom "grace and truth", the doctrines of grace and truth, "came" in their full extent, **Joh 1:17**; for as the doctrines of "grace [were] poured into [his] lips", Ps 45:2, so they were poured out by them again, out of his heart, as out of a fountain or well, as the word {e} here used signifies; which denotes the large and abundant revelation of the Gospel by Christ, and is mentioned as an encouragement to men to attend unto it; which sense is confirmed by what follows;

I will make known my words unto you; the doctrines of the Gospel, words of grace and wisdom, and such as never man spake as Christ did, his enemies being witnesses; the words of peace and reconciliation, of life and righteousness, and of eternal salvation, which were made known in a ministerial way by Christ and his apostles; but the Jews were such fools as to hate and despise the knowledge of these things; wherefore it follows:

{d} So some in Ben Melech. {e} heyba "fluere, vel scaturire faciam", Baynus; "scatebrae instar effundam", Cocceius, Michaelis; "scaturiam", Gussetius; "ebulliam", Schultens; so Ben Melech.

Proverbs 1:24

Ver. 24. Because I have called, and ye refused,.... This is to be understood not of the internal call of Wisdom, or Christ, which is by the special grace of his Spirit; is according to an eternal purpose, the fruit of everlasting love, peculiar to God's elect, and by a divine power; and is also a call to special blessings of grace, and to eternal glory; and which is always effectual, unchangeable, and irreversible, and can never be refused, rejected, and resisted, so as to become void and of no effect: but of the external call by the word, to the natural duties of religion, and to an attendance on the means of grace; which may be where no election goes before, no sanctification attends, nor salvation follows, Mt 20:16; and this may be refused and rejected, as it often is; as when men, notwithstanding that call, do not attend on the ministry of the word, or, if they do, it is in a negligent careless way; or, they show an aversion to it, despise, contradict, and blaspheme it, as the Jews did, who were the persons first called to hear it; see Mt 22:2;

I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; this is a gesture of persons calling to others, as orators and preachers, requiring silence and attention; and when eager and fervent, and importunate in their discourses; it is attributed to Christ, Isa 65:2; but, notwithstanding all Wisdom's eagerness, zeal, warmth, and importunity, expressed by words and gestures, it was all disregarded; no attention was given to it, which is here complained of.

Proverbs 1:25

Ver. 25. But ye have set at nought all my counsel,.... The same with "the counsel of God", Ac 20:27. The whole Gospel, and all the truths of it; the entire scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ, which is the produce of divine wisdom, and is according to the counsel of the divine will, and his eternal purpose in Christ Jesus; this the Jews set at nought, made no account of, but despised and rejected, as they did Christ, the author of it, **Ac 4:11**; as also his ordinances, which go by the same name, because of the wisdom and will of God in them; particularly baptism, rejected by the Scribes and Pharisees, **Lu 7:30**;

and would none of my reproof; would not hearken to it, nor take it, nor receive any instruction from it nor caution by it; did not like it, but contemned it, and trampled upon it; see Mt 23:37.

Proverbs 1:26

Ver. 26. I also will laugh at your calamity,.... By way of retaliation, measuring measure for measure; even as they scorned him, and delighted in their scorning, now he in his turn will "laugh" at them and their distress; which act is ascribed to the Lord by an anthropopathy; see **Ps 2:4**; signifying that he should not at all pity them, show no compassion to them, and have no mercy upon them; but rather express a pleasure and delight in displaying the glory of his justice in their destruction: the plain sense is, that no favour would be shown them, Isa 27:11. The word translated "calamity" signifies a "vapour" {f}, or cloud; denoting it would be a very dark dispensation with the Jews, as it was when "wrath came upon them to the uttermost", **1Th 2:16**; even on their nation, city, and temple; as in their last destruction by the Romans, which is here intended;

I will mock when your fear cometh; which is the same thing in different words; for by "fear" is meant the dreadful calamity on which brought dread, terror, and consternation with it, and of which they had fearful apprehensions beforehand: wherefore this is mentioned among the signs of Jerusalem's destruction, "men's hearts failing them for fear",
Lu 21:26.

{f} dya "significat vaporem", Vatablus, Mercerus, Amama.

Proverbs 1:27

Ver. 27. When your fear cometh as desolation,.... When such will be the calamity that will occasion this fear, that it shall be like some desolating judgment, as famine, sword, and pestilence, which lays all waste: and such was the destruction of the Jews by the Romans; it not only laid Jerusalem and the temple waste, but the whole country of Judea. These are the "desolations" said to be "determined", or "the consummation and that determined", which should be "poured upon the desolate", **Da 9:26**;

and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; suddenly and unthought of, fierce, and boisterous, throwing down and carrying all before it: so the said destruction did; it threw down the walls and houses of the city of Jerusalem, and the temple, and its fine buildings, so that not one stone was left upon another not thrown down, Mt 24:2;

when distress and anguish cometh upon you; as they did at that time with a witness, when Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans: what with the sword of the enemy without, and the famine within; together with the vast number of cutthroats and seditious persons among themselves; it was such a time of distress and tribulation as never was from the beginning of the world, nor ever will be, Mt 24:22. Josephus's history of those times is a proper comment on these words.

Proverbs 1:28

Ver. 28. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer,.... As he called them, and they refused to answer to his call, **Pr 1:24**; so it was just in him to return no answer to them, when they called on him to deliver them from the Romans, and save them from ruin: for this was what they called out for, and what they expected, that the Messiah would come and deliver them; this was what they buoyed themselves up with, and made them so desperate to the last;

they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; this is the very thing that Christ told the Jews, and much in the same words with these, **Joh 7:34**; for when he was gone, and they were in distress, then they sought after the Messiah, in the desert, and in the secret chambers, and in this and the other place, where they were told he was; but, alas! they could not find him: the true Messiah, whom they had rejected, was come and gone, and would return no more, until his second coming to judgment; or, however, till he came in his kingdom and power, to their ruin and destruction; of which coming of his the

Scriptures often speak.

Proverbs 1:29

Ver. 29. For that they hated knowledge,.... Spiritual and evangelical; the knowledge of the Scriptures, of the promises and prophecies of them respecting the Messiah, though they were called upon and exhorted to "search" them; the knowledge of the Messiah, his person, offices, and grace; the knowledge of his Gospel, and the doctrines of it; see **Pr 1:22**;

and did not choose the fear of the Lord; which is the beginning of knowledge, **Pr 1:7**; instead of choosing, they cast off the fear of the Lord; and by their rejection of the Messiah, and their usage of him, it plainly appeared that the fear of God was not before their eyes nor upon their hearts; nor did they choose or care for the pure, spiritual, and evangelical worship of God, introduced in the Gospel dispensation; the ordinances of Christ they did not choose to submit to; and would neither go into he kingdom of God or Gospel church state themselves, nor suffer those that were entering to go in, Mt 23:13; but rather chose their superstition and will worship, according to the tradition of the elders, by which they made the word and worship of God of none effect.

Proverbs 1:30

Ver. 30. They would none of my counsel,.... Neither his doctrines nor his ordinances; nor would they attend to the wholesome counsel and advice he gave them in his sermons upon the mount, and in other discourses of his at other times and places;

they despised all my reproof; for their hypocrisy, uncleanness, covetousness, and other sins they were addicted to; see Mt 23:1; but they "derided" him for it, Lu 16:14; where the same word is used as is by the Septuagint here. These things are repeated from **Pr 1:25**, to observe their ingratitude, and how just was their ruin, and what the true cause of it.

Proverbs 1:31

Ver. 31. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way,.... Their evil ways; be punished according to their deserts, and receive the just reward of their iniquities; see **Isa 3:10**;

and be filled with their own devices; or "counsels" {g}: their device and counsel was to put Christ to death; to deliver him to the Roman governor, that he might be crucified, as he was: and they afterwards had their bellyful of crucifixion, as the word {h} used signifies; such vast numbers of them were crucified by the Romans before the walls of the city, five hundred a day, and sometimes more; insomuch that room was needed for crosses, and crosses for bodies {i}.

{g} Mhytuewmm "de consiliis suis", Pagninus, Montanus; "ex consiliis suis", Junius & Tremellius, &c. {h} webvy "saturabuntar", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c. {i} Josephus de Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 11. s. 1.

Proverbs 1:32

Ver. 32. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them,.... Or be the cause of their being slain; even their turning away from Christ, their aversion to him; their turning their backs on him, and a deaf ear to him; their turning away from his Gospel, and putting it from them, thereby judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life: in all which they showed themselves to be the "simple" and "foolish" persons they were; and for which wrath and ruin came upon them, and they were slain with the sword and famine, and by one another. Some render it, as Aben Ezra, "the rest" or "quietness of the simple" {k}, &c. taking up their rest in themselves, and in their observance of ceremonies and traditions; and crying Peace, peace, when sudden destruction was at hand: or a stubborn hardened rest in sin, a seared conscience; having no sense of guilt, nor fear of punishment; living in carnal security till death should seize upon them;

and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them; that is, the abuse of it; leading them to commit sins, which bring destruction upon them; or, seeing sinners live with impunity, and prosper in the world, take encouragement from thence to indulge themselves in sin, which is their ruin; or, being in prosperity, think it will always be well with them, and therefore put away the evil day far from them, which comes upon them at an unawares; which was the case of the Jews.

{k} tbwvm "requies", Vatablus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "quies", Junius & Tremellius; so some in Ben Melech.

Proverbs 1:33

Ver. 33. But whoso hearkeneth unto me,.... To Wisdom, or Christ; to the cry and call above; to the voice of his Gospel, not only externally, but internally; so as spiritually and experimentally to understand it, to distinguish it from the voice of a stranger; so as to approve of it, and receive it in the love of it, and to delight and take pleasure in it; so as to feet the power of it, and believe it; not only give an assent unto it, but by faith receive it, and appropriate the things of it to a man's self: and also to the voice of his precepts, his ordinances; so as to yield a cheerful obedience to them, from a principle of love, with a view to his glory, and without trusting to and depending upon it. Such

shall dwell safely; as they must indeed, since they dwell in God; in his heart, "the secret place of the most High"; and in his everlasting and unchangeable love, wherefore they are not consumed; and in the covenant of his grace, which is firm, and sure, and immovable; and in his power, by and in which they are kept, as in a garrison, fortress, or strong hold: and they dwell in Christ the Rock of ages, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, and on which their souls are built; and so remain safe amidst the floods, storms, and tempests, that beat upon them; the refuge to which they flee, the strong hold to which they turn, and whither they run and are safe; the ark in which they ride safely, amidst all the waves and billows of affliction and tribulation; their place of defence, where they are safe from Satan; and are in his hands out of which none can pluck them, the Lord their righteousness, by whom Judah is saved, and under whom Israel dwells safely; being by his righteousness secure from divine justice, from the curse of the law, and from wrath to come: besides, such have the Spirit dwelling in them, who is greater the he that is in the world; who when he, the enemy, comes in upon them as a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him; angels are their guardians, encamp about them; and they are the inhabitants of a strong city, which has salvation for walls and bulwarks; and especially they will dwell safely in the other world, in those mansions and everlasting habitations in Christ's Father's house he is preparing for them; which are sure dwellings, as well as quiet resting places, as follows;

and shall be quiet from fear of evil; as they may be in the present life, under a comfortable sense of the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ: which, when applied and laid hold on by faith, speak peace to the conscience, and yield quietness of mind; so that such have no reason to be afraid of the evil one, Satan, who cannot devour and destroy them; nor of the evil of sin; for, though they may and should be afraid to commit it, yet not of being conquered by it, and coming under the dominion of it, nor of being brought by it into a state of condemnation; nor of the evil of judgments upon a wicked world; nor of death and a future judgment; nor of hell, and everlasting damnation: and hereafter such will enter into peace, and be free from all evils, natural, moral, or spiritual; and from the fear of them, being out of the reach of them all. The safety and protection of those that hearken to Christ, and believe in him, here promised, had a remarkable accomplishment in the believing Jews; who, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, were warned to go out from thence to a place called Pella, beyond Jordan {l} as they did, and where they were safe.

{l} Euseb. Eccel. Hist. l. 3. c. 5.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 2

This chapter directs to the means of attaining to the knowledge of divine things, and shows the profit and advantage arising from thence. The means are, embracing the doctrines of the Gospel, and retaining in memory and affection the ordinances of it, **Pr 2:1**; and an inclination of the ear and an application of the heart to the knowledge of these things, **Pr 2:2**. An earnest and importunate desire, expressed by prayer, after the same, **Pr 2:3**; and a diligent and unwearied search for them, as for silver and hid treasure, **Pr 2:4**. The advantages are, that such shall attain to the fear and knowledge of God; which may be concluded from these being the gift of God to his people, and from their being laid up for them, whom he carefully keeps and preserves, **Pr 2:5**; and not only so, but such learn to do that which is just and right among men, **Pr 2:9**. And, besides, such is the nature of divine wisdom, that, when it has once got a place in the heart and in the affections, it will be a means of preserving both from the ways of evil men, **Pr 2:10**; who are described, **Pr 2:13**. And from the evil woman, whose character is given, **Pr 2:16**; whose vicious course of life, and the ways she leads persons into, are represented as very dangerous, **Pr 2:18**. And, on the contrary, such is the usefulness of true wisdom, that it leads into the way of good men, who will be happy and safe, when the wicked shall be destroyed, **Pr 2:20**.

Ver. 1. My son,.... These are either the continuation of the words of Solomon to his son Rehoboam; or to anyone that came to him for instruction, or was within the reach of being taught by him; whom he addresses in this tender and affectionate manner, in order to gain his attention to what he was about to say: or else they are the words of Wisdom, or Christ, continued, thus bespeaking: his children and people; and giving them some very wholesome counsel and advice, backed with the most powerful and prevailing arguments;

if thou wilt receive my words; or doctrines: the doctrines of the Gospel, relating to the person, office, and grace of Christ, and salvation by him; such as the words of peace, pardon, righteousness, and life; which are to be received, not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and with all readiness of mind and willingness, as they were by the Bereans; and most gladly, as by the three thousand pricked to the heart under Peter's sermon; and as they are and will be by every sensible sinner;

and hide my commandments with thee; in the heart; so as to have a high esteem of them, and a hearty affection and value for them; retain them in memory, and frequently think of them and meditate upon them, and constantly observe them; see Ps 119:11.

Proverbs 2:2

Ver. 2. So that thou incline thine ear unto Wisdom,.... Hearken to Wisdom, that is, Christ; or rather to the instruction of Wisdom, which is the Gospel; so called, because it is the produce of divine wisdom, what the wisdom of man could never have devised, and which it opposes; and in which there is a most glorious display of the wisdom of God, in the justification and salvation of his people by Christ, **1Co 2:6**; and is worth listening unto with the greatest attention, which is what is designed by this expression;

[and] apply thine heart to understanding; to a spiritual and experimental understanding of the Gospel, and the truths of it: for an inclination of the ear, without an application of the heart, which signifies the intenseness of the mind, an earnest and hearty desire after knowledge, will signify nothing; a hypocrite may seemingly hear with great attention, and show much affection, and yet his heart be after the world and the things of it, Eze 33:31; see Ps 119:112.

Proverbs 2:3

Ver. 3. Yea, if thou criest after knowledge,.... Of God, Christ, and the Gospel; not only bow the ear and bend the mind to these things, but importunately and fervently pray for them; not only attend the ministry of the word by men, but cry to God to give the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of divine and spiritual things; which supposes some sense of a want of it, an hearty desire for it, having some apprehension of the worth and value of it; and that it is to be had, as there is indeed great reason to hope for and expect it, **Jas 1:5**;

[and] liftest up thy voice for understanding; for Christ, who is understanding as well as wisdom, **Pr 8:14**; or rather for an understanding of the Gospel and the mysteries of it, which men do not naturally understand; and for which there must be an understanding given, or the eyes of the understanding must be enlightened; or Christ, by his spirit and grace, must open the understanding, that it may understand these things; which is granted to those who lift up their voice in prayer for it.

Proverbs 2:4

Ver. 4. If thou seekest her as silver,.... That is, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding; which all signify and relate unto one and the same thing, expressed here by "her": namely, the doctrine of wisdom, or Christ; that is, the Gospel, and a spiritual and experimental knowledge and understanding of it, and the truths thereof; which are as desirable and valuable as silver, and more so; and which may be fitly compared to it, and be preferred before it, for their purity, solidity, and duration; see Ps 119:72; and are to be sought after with as much and more eagerness, affection, and diligence, as silver is by those who are most covetous of it, **Pr 8:10**;

and searchest for her as [for] hid treasures; the Gospel is a treasure, **2Co 4:7**; an accumulation of riches. It contains rich truths, things valuable for their antiquity; for being far fetched and dearly bought, coming from heaven, and sealed by the blood of Christ, and the holy martyrs of Jesus; and for the abundance of them; there are treasures of wisdom and knowledge in the Gospel, and in Christ the sum and substance of it, who is full of truth as well as grace, **Col 2:3**. It contains rich blessings of grace, such as are spiritual, solid, and substantial, sure and irreversible; and a multitude of them, Ro 15:29; and also rich promises, exceeding great and precious ones; which are absolute and unconditional, suited to the various cases of God's people, and sure to all

the seed: and it reveals the riches of God's goodness, his special goodness in Christ; the unsearchable riches of Christ; and the riches both of grace and glory. And under this notion of a treasure is it to be searched for, and as an hid treasure; in allusion to what is laid up in the cabinets of princes, or lies in the bowels of the earth, as precious stones: Pliny {m} says, that "topazin", in the language of the Troglodytes, has the signification of seeking, because "topazes" are diligently sought for and searched after; See Gill on "Job 28:19". The Gospel, and the truths of it, were greatly hid under the former dispensation from the Gentile world, and very much from the Jews themselves; being wrapped up in dark prophecies, obscure hints, and shadowy types and sacrifices; and are now, and always were, entirely hid from the wicked and reprobate part of the world, from them that are lost, and from God's own elect before conversion. This is "the fellowship of the mystery" that was "hid in God", in his heart, from all eternity, **Eph 3:9**: the truths of it are the "treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid" in Christ, **Col 2:3**; and likewise the "treasure hid [in the] field" of the Scriptures,
Mt 22:44; which therefore are to be searched into for them, with like labour and resolution with which men dig into the earth, to find the rich ore that is in the bowels of it: and this should be done by diligent reading them; by frequent and deep meditation on them; by constant hearing the truths of the Gospel preached; by earnest prayer for the illumination of the divine Spirit to understand them; and by all the help of the writings of good men, and conversation with them, that can be had. These are things to be sought for and searched after, in the first place, in the early time of life; and with the utmost diligence and labour, as being of the greatest moment and importance.

{m} Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 8.

Proverbs 2:5

Ver. 5. Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord,.... The grace of fear, and the exercise of it: which is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge, and is a treasure itself, **Pr 1:7**. By means of the Gospel the Lord works it in the hearts of his people by his Spirit; and by the same leads them into the riches of his special grace and "goodness", which they are influenced by to "fear", and the Lord for the sake of it: and particularly they are led hereby to the pardoning grace and mercy of God, which is with him, that he may "be feared"; and it is the Gospel which induces and encourages a true filial fear of God, by which men "depart from evil"; for that teaches them to deny all manner of sin, and to live a godly life and conversation: so that through a diligent search after the knowledge of the Gospel, and an attaining it, men come to have a spiritual, experimental, and practical understanding of the fear of God as a grace; and also, as it includes the whole worship of God, by means of Gospel light, they come to understand what sort of worship that is God is to be worshipped with; that it is pure, spiritual, and evangelical, suited to his nature and will: what the ordinances of divine service are; and that these are to be kept as they were delivered, and in the exercise of faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory, of God, without trusting to them or depending on them for salvation. And this is the advantage arising from a diligent search after the doctrine of wisdom, or the Gospel, and a knowledge and understanding of it; and is used as an argument encouraging to it; and another follows;

and find the knowledge of God; such a knowledge of God as is not to be found by the light of nature, in the whole volume of the creatures, and in all the writings of the philosophers; no, nor in the law of Moses; for though much of God and his perfections may be seen and known by the things that are made, and much of the will of God by the law he gave; yet by neither of these is the knowledge of God in Christ, which is "life eternal". This only is to be found in the Gospel, and by means of it; here only it is brought to light; and through this men not only find it, but increase more and more in it: herein is a glorious display of his persons and perfections, of his counsels and purposes, of his covenant and promises, of his mind and will, with respect to doctrine and worship; and of the way of peace, life, and salvation, by Jesus Christ; which must serve greatly to engage and excite persons to a diligent search and pursuit after it. And all that is here said is designed to encourage a diligent search after divine things; for, as the poet {n} says, there is nothing so difficult but by searching may be found out.

{n} Terent. Heautont. Act. 4. Sc. 1.

Proverbs 2:6

Ver. 6. For the Lord giveth wisdom,.... Natural wisdom in all its branches, with all its improvements, and in its utmost latitude and perfection; and spiritual wisdom, which lies in the knowledge of a man's self, his own folly, impurity, impotence, and misery; being wise unto salvation; in the knowledge of Christ, as the only way of salvation, and of God in Christ; in partaking of the true grace, which is wisdom in the hidden part; in being acquainted experimentally with the doctrines of the Gospel; and in walking wisely and circumspectly, and as becomes it, which is practical wisdom: and all this is the gift of God; as is also Christ, who is wisdom, and is given to be wisdom to his people. He is the gift of God to them, in all characters he bears, and relations he stands in; he is a very large comprehensive gift, an unspeakable one; which is given freely and liberally, and is never taken away again. Now this is said, partly to caution such who search after wisdom, and find it, not to attribute it to their diligence and industry, but to the grace of God; and partly as a direction where to go for it; and as an encouragement to hope to have it, since the Lord freely gives it, **Jas 1:5**;

out of his mouth [cometh] knowledge and understanding; by the prophets of the Old Testament who came with a "Thus saith the Lord", and were the mouth of the Lord to the people; from whence flowed the knowledge of divine things; of the will of God; of the Messiah, his person and offices; of his coming, sufferings, death and salvation by him: and by his Son, by whom he has spoke in these last days, and has declared all his mind; and by whom the doctrines of grace and truth, and the knowledge of them, are come fully and clearly, **Heb 1:1**; and by the Scriptures of truth, both of the Old and of the New Testament, which are the word of God; what are breathed by him and come out of his mouth, and are able to make men wise unto salvation: and by the ministers of the Gospel, who speak in the name of the Lord, and the Lord by them; and by means of whom he imparts much spiritual and evangelical knowledge to the sons of men; the mouth of a Gospel minister, who is the month of God to men, "speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment", Ps 37:30. This clause is added, to encourage to a search after wisdom in the use of means; namely, by attending on the word, and the ministry of it.

Proverbs 2:7

Ver. 7. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous,.... In order to give it to them that seek for it; which is another encouragement to search after it. By "sound wisdom" may be meant, not the law, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; so called, because it endures for ever, when all beings are defective and come to nothing; but the Gospel, which is sound doctrine, pure and not corrupt; true and real wisdom, in opposition to that which has only the show of wisdom, and is science falsely so called; and this was hid in God, in Christ, and laid up as a treasure in the sacred Scriptures: or else the true grace of God, in distinction from that which is counterfeit; and is that goodness of his, which he has laid up in his heart, and in the covenant of his grace; and the fulness of grace which he has laid up in Christ for them Ps 31:19; or eternal glory and happiness. The word here used signifies "essence", "substance" {o}; that which really is, and is solid and substantial; and such are the glories of the other world the crown of righteousness, the hope laid up in heaven, and the inheritance reserved there, **Col 1:5**. These are real things, though invisible, and are rich and valuable; and have substance and solidity in them, in opposition to earthly riches, which are a vain show, and are things that are not, and at best temporal and perishing; but these are an enduring substance, **Pr 8:21**. The Septuagint render it by "salvation", and the Targum by a word which signifies "glory" and "honour"; all which may well be understood of eternal life which is laid up and reserved "for the righteous": not for such who are only so in show and imagination, but for those who are really and truly so; not for those who are legally, but evangelically righteous; or not for such that seek righteousness by the law, but by faith in Christ; for such who are made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and by faith receive it, and lay hold on it as their righteousness; and in consequence of this live soberly and righteously: for these only eternal life is prepared; they only have a right unto it, and a meetness for it, and shall enjoy it;

[he is] a buckler to them that walk uprightly; who are sincere in their deportment before God and men; who walk according to the rule of the divine word; who walk by faith on Christ, and walk on in him as they have received him; and go on living by faith on his righteousness, which is walking in his uprightness, till they come to be with him for ever in heaven. To these the Lord is a "buckler" or shield; he covers them with the "shield of faith", his own Son, his blood righteousness, and sacrifice; which faith lays hold on and uses as a shield against Satan's fiery darts; and gives them "the shield of salvation" which secures them from sin and wrath and every enemy; and encompasses them about with his "favour", as a "shield", which is immutable and invariable; and keeps them by his power through faith unto salvation, **Eph 6:16**; with this compare Ge 15:1 **Ps 3:3**. Some {p} read these words by way of apposition, and understand them of sound wisdom; that that is a buckler or shield to the persons here described; see **Ec 7:12**.

{o} hyvwt "essentiam", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus; "quicquid revera est", Junius & Tremellius; "solidam firmamque substantiam", Baynus; "solidum, vel solidam rem", Schultens. {p} So Mercerus, Piscator, Schultens. Gussetius chooses to take the word Ngm for a verb, and renders it, "he delivers it"; that is, sound wisdom to them that walk uprightly; Ebr. Comment. p. 454.

Proverbs 2:8

Ver. 8. He keepeth the paths of judgment,.... That is, the Lord keeps them; he does that which is just and right himself, in the course of his providence, and in the methods of his grace; and as he guides the feet of his people in the ways of righteousness and holiness, he keeps them there from turning out of them. The words may be rendered, "to keep the paths of judgment" {q}; and so expresses the end, fruit, and effect of the Lord's being a buckler to them, as he is said to be in **Pr 2:7**: he is their shield and protection, so as either to keep them in the right ways in which they should go; or that they might studiously observe them, and keep walking therein, without stumbling in them, or declining from them;

and preserveth the way of his saints; to whom he has been kind and bountiful; or who have been merciful, liberal, and generous to others; who having partook of the grace of God themselves, are useful to men: the Targum calls them "righteous ones". These the Lord preserves by his power and grace, in the way in which he has led them, and which is his own way, safe to his kingdom and glory: for none of his saints, his holy and righteous ones, shall ever perish; the way in which he directs them, and in which he keeps them, leads to everlasting life; see **1Sa 2:9**.

{q} runl "ad custodiendum", Pagninus, Montanus; "ad servandum", Baynus, Schultens.

Proverbs 2:9

Ver. 9. Then shalt thou understand righteousness and judgment,.... This is another fruit and effect of the Gospel, and of a spiritual understanding of it; that besides the knowledge of God, and how to behave with reverence towards him, **Pr 2:5**; it leads men into a notion of doing that which is right and just among men; it gives them not only a theoretic but a practical understanding of justice, and a true judgment of what is right and wrong; or gives such an understanding thereof as that they practise it; for it teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly, **Tit 2:11**. It is not only a revelation and ministration of the righteousness of Christ as the only matter of a sinner's justification before God; and informs a man's judgment so that he can distinguish between truth and error, right and wrong, good and bad notions and practices; but it influences his actions, life, and conversation, and engages him to do works of righteousness from the best principles, upon the best motives, and with the best views;

and equity; [yea], every good path; that is, so to understand equity, as to do that which is equitable between man and man; and to understand every good path which the word of God directs to, even all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, so as to walk in them; these things the Gospel acquaints men with, and urges them to observe: or the words may be rendered, either "the rectitude" or "equity of fall good paths", as the Syriac version; how just, and right, and plain, and equitable, everyone is, and therefore ought to be walked in; or "plainnesses", or "most plain", is or shall be "every good path" {r}, to them that have a spiritual and experimental knowledge of the Gospel; and by it an understanding of their duty. One word signifies "plain" and "straight", and another "round" {s}, and both are true of the path of righteousness; for though it is a circle of duty saints walk in, yet straight and plain.

{r} So Schmidt. {s} Myrvym "complanationes", Schultens; lgem "orbitam", Montanus; "ab lge rotundus", Gejerus.

Proverbs 2:10

Ver. 10. When wisdom entereth into thine heart,.... Either Christ, the Wisdom of God; who enters there at conversion, and sets up a throne in the heart, and dwells there by faith: or else the Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery; which enters not into the head only, as in hypocrites and formal professors; nor into the natural affections, as in the stony ground hearers; but into the heart, opened by the Spirit of God to receive it, so as to have a spiritual understanding of it; which is done when the Gospel comes not in word only, but in the demonstration and power of the Spirit; when a man truly understands it, approves of it, loves it, believes it; and it has a place in his heart, and richly dwells there;

and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; which the Gospel thus entering gives; even the knowledge of God in Christ, as the God of all grace, as gracious and merciful, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the knowledge of Christ, as the only Redeemer and Saviour; and the knowledge of Gospel truths, which lead and relate unto him: all which is pleasant to a gracious soul, and affords unspeakable delight to the mind; and is sweeter, as every truth of the Gospel is, than the honey or the honeycomb; see Pr 16:24.

Proverbs 2:11

Ver. 11. Discretion shall preserve thee,.... Which wisdom or the Gospel gives, or the Lord by the means of it; for the Gospel makes a man wise and discreet in the business of salvation, and in his conduct and deportment; and the discretion it gives him will put him upon his guard, and direct him to watch against every error, and every false way. And so the words may be rendered, "discretion will watch over thee"; to keep thee from everything pernicious in doctrine and practice. The Septuagint version renders it, "good counsel"; which wisdom gives, and the Gospel is full of; and which, if attended to, is a means of the preservation of the saints;

understanding shall keep thee; which is only the same thing expressed in other words. The Septuagint version renders it, "an holy thought"; and the Arabic version, "a just thought shall preserve thee in thy last times". What these are a means of keeping and preserving from is explained in the following verses.

Proverbs 2:12

Ver. 12. To deliver thee from the way of the evil [man],.... Who is so by nature and practice, who is hardened in sin and abandoned to it, whose course of life is evil, and who endeavours to draw others into the same evil practices; now the Gospel, and a spiritual knowledge of it, are a means of preserving men from following the examples of such persons, and from walking with them in the ways of sin: or from "the evil way" {t}, from every evil way, from a vicious course of life; not from idolatry only, as some interpret it, though this may be included, and chiefly designed; but from all manner of sin, from everything that is contrary to the law of God and sound doctrine;

from the man that speaketh froward things; perverse things, things contrary to the light of nature, to divine revelation, to the word of God, both law and Gospel; if a single man is meant, he might be thought to be the man of sin, antichrist, who has a mouth speaking blasphemies against God, his name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell therein,
Re 13:5; and the Gospel delivers men from following him, and falling in with his perverse doctrines and practices; but the word seems to be a collective one, and to be understood of all wicked men, to whom the description agrees, as it is explained in the following verses in the plural number; who out of their evil hearts, and the abundance of wickedness there, speak evil things, tending to debauch the minds and manners of others; to be delivered from whom is a

singular mercy. Jarchi restrains this to heretics, and such as caused Israel to apostatize to idolatry, and turned the law into evil. The Gospel is undoubtedly a means of preserving from error and heresy.

{t} er Krdm "a via mala", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 2:13

Ver. 13. Who leave the paths of uprightness,.... Or "righteousness", or the "right [and plain] ways" {u}; which the light of nature and the law of God, and especially the Gospel of Christ, direct to; and in which they have been trained up, having had a religious education; for it supposes them to have been externally in these ways, since they are said to leave them; for though persons do not easily and ordinarily leave the ways they have been brought up in, yet sometimes they do; and there are instances of it, and such generally are the worst of men;

to walk in the ways of darkness: sin, ignorance, and infidelity; in which they that walk know not where they are, nor whither they are a going, and which must be very uncomfortable as well as dangerous; in which only works of darkness are done, and which lead to blackness of darkness, the darkness of hell; a miserable choice, a sad change this! So Schultens renders it, "ways of horrid darkness".

{u} rvy twxra "semitas rectas", Mercerus; "itinera recta", Piscator; "itinera planissima", Schultens.

Proverbs 2:14

Ver. 14. Who rejoice to do evil,.... At the doing of it, or when they have done it; they are glad of an opportunity of doing mischief, and glory when they have done it; it is a sport and pastime to them,
Pr 10:2; they take pleasure in the act of sin, and have no remorse of conscience afterwards; they speak of it in an exulting manner, and boast of it, and glory in their shame;

[and] delight in the frowardness of the wicked: of the wicked man, as Aben Ezra and Gersom supply it; in the perversities and contradictions of every

wicked man; they not only take pleasure in their own sins, but in the sins of others, and in them that commit them; which is an aggravation of their wickedness, **Ro 1:32**; they delight to hear a man speak froward and perverse things; things against God, and Christ, and religion, against all good men, and everything that is good; against the Gospel, the doctrines and ordinances of it; and they delight to see him do things perverse and contrary to the will of God. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "they exult in the worst things".

Proverbs 2:15

Ver. 15. Whose ways [are] crooked,.... Which swerve from and are not agreeably to the rule of the divine word, either the law of God or the Gospel of Christ; sin is an aberration, a straying from the rule of God's word, a transgression of his law; and a walk in it is unbecoming the Gospel of Christ; it has many serpentine windings and turnings in it; full of distortions and excursions, and many retrograde actions; see Ps 125:5;

and [they] froward in their paths; declining here and there, sometimes going one way and sometimes another, but always following that which is evil, and resolute to continue therein.

Proverbs 2:16

Ver. 16. To deliver thee from the strange woman,.... As the Gospel of Christ and its doctrines, or the instructions of wisdom, are a means of delivering persons from the evil man, his company, ways, and works; so from a naughty woman, an adulteress, called a "strange" woman; not because of another nation, or unknown, but because she belongs to another person, and not to him whom she entices into her embraces. Gersom interprets this of the sensitive appetite, and Jarchi of idolatry; as others do also of superstition and all false doctrine, and everything that is contrary to true wisdom; and the whole that is here and afterwards said may well enough be applied to the whore of Rome, from whose fornication, or spiritual adultery, that is, idolatry, will worship, and antichristian doctrines, the Gospel delivers men; see **Pr 7:5**, &c.

[even] from the stranger [which] flattereth with her words; that useth smooth and soft words to work upon the passions, move the affections, and win the hearts of men; and ensnare them and draw them to commit wickedness with her; see **Pr 5:3**; and so antichrist, and all false teachers and heretics, with good

words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple, Ro 16:18.

Proverbs 2:17

Ver. 17. Which forsaketh the guide of her youth,.... Not God, the God of her life, and who had provided for her from her youth up; nor her parent that had taken care of her in her infancy, and had been the guardian of her virgin state; but her husband, to whom she was married in her youth, and to whom she gave up herself to be guided and directed, ruled and governed, by: and as it is an aggravation of evil in a man to deal treacherously against the wife of his youth, and the wife of his covenant, **Mal 2:14**; so it is in a woman to forsake "the friend" or "companion of her youth" {w}, as the phrase may be rendered; who loved her and espoused her in his youthful age, and with whom he had lived long in love and friendship, and in great happiness, but now forsakes him; her affections being alienated from him, leaves his company and bed, and associates with others. Gersom interprets this of the human understanding, appointed to govern the other powers and faculties of the soul;

and forgetteth the covenant of her God: not the covenant made with Noah, in which adultery, as well as other things, were forbidden; nor the law of Moses, or covenant at Sinai, in which it was condemned; but the marriage covenant, which she entered into with her husband when espoused to him, and when they mutually obliged themselves to be faithful to one another: and this is called "the covenant of God"; not only because God is the author and institutor of marriage, and has directed and enjoined persons to enter into such a contract with one another; but because he is present at it, and is a witness of such an engagement, mid is appealed unto in it; which, as it adds to the solemnity of it, makes the violation of it the more criminal. So the church of Rome has forsook Christ, who was her guide in her first settlement, and her husband she professed to be espoused to, as a chaste virgin; and has followed other lovers, and become the mother of harlots; so false teachers leave their guide, the Scriptures, and bring in damnable heresies, and deny the Lord that bought them, **2Pe 2:1**.

{w} hyrwen Pwla "amieum adolescentiae suae", De Dieu, Michaelis; "socium juventutis suae", Schultens.

Proverbs 2:18

Ver. 18. For her house inclineth unto death,.... Bends, verges, and points that way; it lies in the way to death, and brings unto it, and sinks into it as into a ditch; or all that are in her house, that are familiar with her, live and dwell with her, and commit wickedness with her; these incline or are liable to lose, and do lose, their name, character, and reputation, which is a death upon them; and bring diseases upon their bodies, which issue in corporeal death; or are in danger of dying by the hand of the injured husband, or the civil magistrate; and also are exposed unto eternal death: or "she inclines to death, which is her house" {x}, so Aben Ezra and Kimchi; and to which the Targum agrees,

"for in the pit of death is her house:"

that is, the house she at last comes to and must dwell in, and all that are ensnared by her; see **Pr 5:5**; and the second death will be the portion of the whore of Rome and all her followers,
Re 14:10;

and her paths unto the dead; that is, her evil ways in which she walks, and into which she draws others to join with her; these lead both her and them to the "damned" {y} in hell, to keep company with them, and be punished as they are: the word "rephaim", here used, sometimes signifies "giants", and so the Targum renders it here; and may refer to the giants of the old world, who were cut off for their debauchery and uncleanness, **Ge 6:4**; and with whom such persons shall be for ever.

{x} hytb twm la "ad mortem quoad domum suam", Cocceius; "ad mortem domum suam", Gejerus; "quod ad domum suam", Michaelis. {y} Myapr la "ad damnatos", Tigurine version; "ad orcinos", Schultens.

Proverbs 2:19

Ver. 19. None that go unto her return again,.... That is, those that commit whoredom with her return not again by repentance, and to a sober and chaste way of living, at least but very few; hence some of the ancients thought adultery was the unpardonable sin; but it is certain that some have been recovered by the power of divine grace, and have been brought to repentance for their impure manner of life, and have truly believed in Christ, and lived sober and godly lives afterwards; but, as the Targum adds, they do not return "in peace", but with great distress of mind, remorse of conscience, and bitterness of soul; and these instances are rare; generally speaking, such as are ensnared by an adulterous woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and whose hands are as bands, are held so fast by her that they seldom get out again, though some few may escape, **Ec 7:26**. The words may be rendered, "all that go into her {z} shall not return again"; no, very few of them. And it is a very rare thing, when men are fallen into idolatry, superstition, will worship, and heresy, that they are recovered out of this snare of the devil; there is a peradventure they may, but it is not often that they be loosed from it, **2Ti 2:25**;

neither take they hold of the paths of life; Christ, and the ways of Christ, which lead to eternal life; few there be that find these paths and walk in them, **Mt 7:14**; and especially such as are drawn aside by an impure woman, they are held so fast by her alluring charms, and so bewildered by her art of deceiving, that they are like persons that are led out of their way, and cannot find it again.

{z} hyab lk "omnes ingredientes eam", Pagninus, Montanus.

Proverbs 2:20

Ver. 20. That thou mayest walk in the way of good [men],.... Who are not so by nature, but made so by the grace of God; such as the saints, prophets, and patriarchs of old; and who walked in the way of righteousness, holiness, and truth; being directed therein by the Spirit and word of God: now the use and profit of wisdom's instructions, or of the Gospel of Christ, and the doctrines of it, and a spiritual understanding of them, are not only to deliver men from the wicked man and the naughty woman, but also to influence and engage them to follow the examples of good men, and to walk in the same good old paths as they have done, **Heb 6:12**;

and keep the paths of the righteous; not only observe them and walk in them, but continue therein, even in the paths of faith and holiness; for righteous men, such as are made righteous by the righteousness of Christ, and are anew created unto righteousness and true holiness, and in consequence thereof live righteously; these walk by faith on Christ, and as becomes his Gospel; and in all the ordinances of it, and in all the duties of religion; and the Gospel teaches all those that receive and profess it to do the same.

Proverbs 2:21

Ver. 21. For the upright shall dwell in the land,.... Such as are upright in heart, who have a right spirit renewed in them; whose hearts are right with God, have the truth of grace in them; whose faith is unfeigned, their love without dissimulation, and their hope without hypocrisy; and who are upright in their lives and conversations; these being Israelites according to the flesh, as well as Israelites indeed in a spiritual sense, shall dwell in the land of Canaan, which the Lord promised to such, and which good men enjoyed by virtue of it: or the sense is, that such shall dwell peaceably and quietly in the world, and possess the good things of it, though in a small quantity, in such a comfortable manner, with the love of God and a sense of it, as wicked men do not; or else they shall inhabit the world to come, as Jarchi interprets it; not only a future state of happiness in heaven, but the Messiah's kingdom on earth, the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, **2Pe 3:13**;

and the perfect shall remain in it; or "be left in it" {a}; or shall be "strengthened" {b}, confirmed, and established in it; or they shall dwell in it as a tent or tabernacle, bound with strong cords; see Isa 33:20; or continue there, when others should have no place in it, as follows. By the "perfect" are meant such as have all grace seminally implanted in them, though it is not come up to maturity; who have a perfection of parts, but not of degrees; are properly men in Christ, though they are not arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; are perfectly holy in Christ, though not in themselves; and are perfectly justified by his righteousness, and perfectly comely through his comeliness, though as yet imperfect in themselves; and those that shall dwell in the new heavens and new earth, and remain there a thousand years, shall be entirely perfect in soul and body, wholly without sin; and complete in knowledge, holiness, and peace: the Targum renders it, who are "without spot", undefiled persons; such who are not defiled with women, with the strange woman before mentioned; whose garments are not defiled, and who are free from the pollution of false doctrine, will worship, superstition, and idolatry, **Re 3:4**.

{a} wdtwy "superstites erunt", Tigurine version, Mercerus; "superstitabunt", Cocceius; "reliqui fient", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "relinquentur", Michaelis. {b} "Nervabuntur", Schultens.

Proverbs 2:22

Ver. 22. But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth,.... Suddenly by death; or in a judicial way by the hand of the civil magistrate, before they have lived out half their days; and shall not enjoy the good things of the earth they have

been seeking for, and laying up, and promising themselves a long and quiet possession of; but, on the contrary, like unfruitful trees, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire; and, however, shall not dwell in the second Adam's earth, in the new earth, but shall perish out of his land, Ps 10:16; see
Ps 37:2;

and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it; such as have acted treacherously and perfidiously {c}, and are opposed to upright men; as the wicked are to the righteous, pure, and spotless; these shall not only be cut off as trees to the stump, but be rooted up, and have neither root nor branch left them; they shall have no posterity to succeed them, and their memory shall utterly perish; see **Mal 4:1**; or "shall be scraped off", or "swept away" {d}, as the dust and dross of the earth, and the offscouring of all things.

{c} Mydgwb "perfide agentis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "perfidi", Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens. {d} wxoy "eradentur", Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "everrentur", Schultens.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 3

In this chapter, Wisdom, or Christ, delivers out some fresh lessons and instructions to his children; as not to forget his doctrine, but heartily attend to his precepts and ordinances, seeing these are the means of lengthening out their days, and of enjoying peace, **Pr 3:1**; as well as had the promise of the mercy and truth of God, and the continuance of them, annexed to them; and therefore are exhorted to keep close to them, and show the greatest value and affection for them, which was the way to find favour with, and to be taken notice of by, God and man, **Pr 3:3**; and then he proceeds to exhort them to a hearty trust in the Lord, without dependence on themselves; and to seek direction from him in every step they took, which they might expect to have, **Pr 3:5**; to humility and the fear of God, and fleeing from evil, which they would find would much contribute to their health, **Pr 3:7**; to liberality in supporting the worship of God, and the interest of religion, which would turn to account and profit to them, **Pr 3:9**; to patience in bearing the chastisement of the Lord, as coming from a loving father, **Pr 3:11**; then follows a commendation of wisdom, and the happiness of the man possessed of it is declared, **Pr 3:13**; from the profit, preciousness, pleasure, and usefulness of it,

Pr 3:14; and from its concern in the works of creation and providence, **Pr 3:19**; and from that comfort, honour, safety, and security, which come by the doctrines and instructions of Wisdom, and a steady regard to them, **Pr 3:21**; and the chapter is concluded with exhortations to beneficence, charity, concord, and peace with neighbours, **Pr 3:27**; and to shun the ways of wicked men, urged from the different state and condition of wicked men and fools, and of the just, the lowly, and wise, **Pr 3:31**.

Ver. 1. My son, forget not my law,.... Or, "doctrine" {e}; the doctrine of Christ, the Gospel, and the several truths of it; which, being of the utmost moment and importance, should be kept in memory, and not let slip, or be in the least slighted and neglected; see **Heb 2:1**;

but let thine heart keep my commandments; as the ark, or chest, kept the two tables of the law put into it; it denotes a cordial affection for the commandments and ordinances of Christ, a hearty attention and obedience to them, and a constant and cheerful observance of them, flowing from love and gratitude to him, Joh 14:15.

{e} ytrwt "doctrinae meae", Piscator, Michaelis; "institutionem meam", Schultens; "doctrinam meam", Cocceius.

Proverbs 3:2

Ver. 2. For length of days, and long life,.... Or, "years of life", or "lives" {f}; a long life of usefulness and comfort here, and eternal life hereafter: the law of Moses promised a long life to the observers of it; but the Gospel of Christ brings an immortal life to light and promises to all believers in him that they shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. "Length of days for ever and ever" was asked by Christ of his Father, Ps 21:4, and given him, and is in his right hand, **Pr 3:16**; it is in his power to give, and he does give it to all his children, people, and followers, Ps 21:4;

and peace shall they add to thee; the Gospel is the Gospel of peace, which not only proclaims peace by the blood of Christ; but the doctrines of it, such as justification by the righteousness of Christ, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, are the means of giving and increasing spiritual peace in the hearts of believers; and so are the ordinances of Christ, which in **Pr 3:17**; are called, for that reason, "paths of peace"; see **Ro 5:1**.

{f} Myyx twnv "annos vitarum", Montanus.

Proverbs 3:3

Ver. 3. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee,.... Or, forsake not them, and the exercise of them; show "mercy" to fellow creatures, to sinful men, to the bodies of men, by relieving their wants; and to their souls, by pitying and praying for them, and by giving them wholesome counsel and advice: to fellow Christians, sympathize with them in their troubles, put on bowels of compassion, be tenderhearted, and forgive offences; and, in a spirit of meekness, restore backsliders, for God will have mercy, and not sacrifice. Attend to "truth"; exercise faith on the Lord; cast not away your confidence; speak truth to your neighbour and brother; and hold fast the truth of the Gospel, and never depart from it. Though many interpreters understand this by way of promise, and as an encouragement to regard the doctrines and ordinances of Christ, rendering the words, "mercy and truth shall not forsake thee" {g}; meaning the mercy and truth of God; the "mercy" of God in forgiving sin, in sympathizing under affliction, in helping in time of need, in supplying with all needful grace, and in bringing to eternal life; for the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him, Ps 103:17; the "truth" of God, his faithfulness in performing promises, never fails; the unbelief of man cannot make it of no effect; though we believe not, he abides faithful and true to every word of his; not one shall fail, or pass away; all shall be fulfilled; see Ps 89:33; "all [his] paths [are] mercy and truth", and he never goes out of them,
Ps 25:10;

bind them about thy neck; as chains for ornament: not mercy and truth, just before mentioned, as may seem at first sight; but the law and commandments of wisdom, **Pr 3:1**; or the doctrines and ordinances of Christ; see **Pr 1:8**; reckon it as your greatest honour, glory, and beauty, that you steadfastly adhere to these things; nothing makes a believer look more lovely in conversation than a close regard to the truths of Christ, and a constant walking in his ordinances;

write them upon the table of thine heart; do not forget them, keep them in memory, and always retain a hearty affection for them; it is the Spirit's work to write them in the heart; and when they are there written, it is the work of saints, under a divine influence, to copy them over in life, and to show by their conduct and behaviour that they are written there; see Jer 31:33. The allusion, in both phrases, is to the directions given about the law of Moses, **De 6:8**; and to the writing of his law on tables of stone: and it was usual with the ancients, in later times, to write on tables of wood; Solon's laws were written on tables of wood {h}; and such were the "tabellae et pugillares" of the Romans, made of box, beech, and other sorts of wood, covered with wax, on which they wrote; See Gill on "Hab 2:2"; but Solomon would have his law written on the fleshly tables of the heart, **2Co 3:3**.

{g} Kbzey la "non derelinquent te", Piscator; "non deserent te", Michaelis; so Aben Ezra and Gersom. {h} Laert, Vit. Solon. A. Gell. Noet. Attic. l. 2. c. 12.

Proverbs 3:4

Ver. 4. So shall thou find favour,.... Or "grace" {i}; the grace of God, and larger measures of it; as Noah did, **Ge 6:8**; which are communicated to men when in the way of their duty: or good will, esteem, and respect, among men; as Joseph had with Potiphar, and the keeper of the prison, Ge 39:4;

and good understanding in the sight of God and man; as Christ, as man, had in the sight of both, **Lu 2:52**; that is, to be taken notice of, regarded, and approved by both. Some render it "good success" {k}; prosperity in things temporal and spiritual; see Ps 111:10. There is something lovely, and of good report, in a close attention to the doctrines and duties of religion; which make a man amiable in the sight of others, and which is followed with a blessing from the Lord.

{i} Nx "gratiam", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c. {k} bwj lkv "successum optimum", Junius & Tremellius.

Proverbs 3:5

Ver. 5. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart,.... Not in a creature, the best, the holiest, and the highest; not in any creature enjoyment, as riches, strength, and wisdom; nor in any outward privilege, arising from natural descent and education; not in a man's self, in his own heart, which is deceitful; nor in any works of righteousness done by him; not in a profession of religion, or the duties of it, ever so well performed; not in frames, nor in graces, and the exercise of them; no, not in faith or trust itself: but in the Lord, the object of all grace, and in him only; in Jehovah the Father, as the God of nature and providence, for all temporal blessings; and as the God of all grace, for all spiritual blessings, and all the needful supplies of grace; and for eternal happiness, which he has provided, promised, and freely gives. Trust in him at all times; in times of affliction, temptation, and darkness: there is a great deal of reason for it; all power and strength are in him to help; his love, grace, and mercy, move him to it, and are always the same: the consideration of what he has done for others that have trusted in him, and for ourselves in times past, should induce and encourage to it; as also the happiness of those that trust in him, who enjoy peace and safety; and his displeasure at those that show any diffidence of him, or distrust him. Trust in Jehovah the Son; in his person for acceptance; in his righteousness for justification; in his blood for pardon; in his fulness for supply; in his power for protection and preservation; and in him alone for salvation and eternal life. Trust in Jehovah the Spirit, to carry on and finish the work of grace upon the heart; of which a saint may be confident that where it is begun it will be completed. And this trust in Father, Son, and Spirit, should be "with all the heart", cordial and sincere. The phrase denotes not so much the strength of faith as the sincerity of it; it signifies a faith unfeigned; it is not saying, or professing, that a man believes and trusts in the Lord; but it is with the heart, and with his whole heart, that he believes unto righteousness, if he believes aright; see Ro 10:10;

and lean not unto thine own understanding; or trust not to that; for it stands opposed to trusting in the Lord. Men should not depend upon their own wisdom and understanding, in the conduct of civil life, but should seek the direction and blessing of Providence, or otherwise will meet with disappointment; and, when they succeed, should ascribe it not to their own prudence and wisdom, but to the goodness of God; for "bread" is not always "to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding", **Ec 9:11**; and much less should men lean to their own understanding in matters of religion; a natural man has no understanding of spiritual things, of the things of the Gospel, nor indeed any practical understanding of things moral, **Ro 3:11** **Jer 4:22**. The understanding of man is darkened by sin; yea, is darkness itself; it is like the first earth, covered with darkness, till light is let into it, and therefore not to be leaned unto and depended on, **Eph 4:18**. There is a necessity of a new heart and spirit, of an understanding to be given, in order to understand spiritual and divine things, Eze 36:26; for though these are not contrary to the reason and understanding of men; yet they are above them, and cannot be discovered, reached, comprehended, and accounted for by them, Mt 16:17. Nay, there are some things in the Gospel, which, though plain to an enlightened understanding by the word of God, yet the manner how they are cannot be apprehended: as the doctrines of a trinity of Persons; of the generation of the

Son of God; the procession of the Spirit; the union of the two natures in Christ; the resurrection of the dead, &c. In short, not our reason and understanding at best, and much less as carnal and unsanctified, but the word of God only is our rule of judgment, and the standard of our faith and practice; and to that we should have recourse and be directed by it, and not lean to our own understandings.

Proverbs 3:6

Ver. 6. In all thy ways acknowledge him,.... Or "know him" {l}; the Lord: set him before thee; have him always in view; consider him as ever present with thee, observing every step thou takest; and take not one step without his leave, and without his advice; ask wisdom of him who gives liberally; consult his word, and make the Scriptures thy counsellors, or the men of thy counsel, as in Ps 119:24; take him as your guide; observe the footsteps of his providence; follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes; walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; when things go cross and adverse, and not to your mind, submit to his sovereignty; and be still and know that he is God, that does all things right, for his own glory and his people's good, Ps 46:10; and when things succeed, give him the glory of all; own his hand in it, and the bounty of it; acknowledge that all you have, in providence and grace, come from him;

and he shall direct thy paths; man cannot direct his own; no, not a man: this is a blessing from the Lord; who steps of his people, keeps the feet of his saints, and directs them aright in things temporal and spiritual, Jer 10:23.

{l} whed "scito eum", Pagninus, Montanus.

Proverbs 3:7

Ver. 7. Be not wise in thine own eyes,.... So as to act independently of God; not to trust in him, nor acknowledge him, nor seek to him for help and direction; nor ask nor take the advice of others; but, being conceited and self-sufficient, lean to thine own understanding, as being wise enough to conduct all affairs in life by thy own discretion; and in matters of religion wiser than thy teachers, and even than the Scriptures, being wise above that which is written; pleasing thyself with thine own wisdom, as exceeding others; glorying in it as thine own acquisition, and not ascribing it to God, so far as it any ways deserves the name of wisdom; though for the most part that which men glory

in, and are conceited of, is not wisdom, but folly; and at least it is their folly to boast of it and be elated with it; see **Isa 5:21**
Ro 12:16;

fear the Lord; which is true wisdom; and, where this is not, there is none, let men be ever so conceited; and where this is there is humility; these two go together, and make a man wise, rich, and honourable, Pr 22:4. The fear of the Lord is opposed to pride, high-mindedness, and vain conceit, Ro 11:20; this includes reverence of God, faith in him, dependence on him, acknowledgment of him, seeking to him for direction, and carefulness not to offend him;

and depart from evil; from the evil of self-confidence and self-conceit, and from all other evil; the fear of God influences men to avoid sin, and abstain from all appearance of it; by means and through the exercise of it men forsake it, and keep at a distance from it, Pr 16:6. Nehemiah could not do as others did, because of the fear of the Lord; and Job was a man that feared God, and therefore he avoided that which was evil, **Ne 5:15**.

Proverbs 3:8

Ver. 8. It shall be health to thy navel,.... That part of the body which is the knot of the intestines; and may be put for the bowels and inward parts, which being sound, the body is in health; and these may be put for the whole body: and so the Septuagint version renders it, "to thy body"; and this may be put for the whole person. And the sense is, either wisdom, as Jarchi; the doctrine of wisdom, the Gospel; which teaches men to trust in the Lord, and not in themselves, to apply to him for wisdom, and not lean to their own understanding; this contributes much to a man's spiritual health and welfare: or else the fear of the Lord is of this use to men, both in soul and body; since by it they depart from those sins which bring diseases upon the body; and are influenced by it to the exercise of such graces, and the discharge of such duties, as are the means of keeping the soul in good plight;

and marrow to thy bones; or, "watering" {m} to them: that which irrigates and moistens them, and makes and keeps them strong and solid: see Job 21:24. What marrow is to the bones, that is wisdom, or the fear of God, to the souls of men; the means of establishing and strengthening them against sin, and snares and temptations, and to do the will and work of God.

{m} ywqv "irrigatio", V. L. Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Junius &

Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Amama, Schultens.

Proverbs 3:9

Ver. 9. Honour the Lord with thy substance,.... Or, "out of thy substance" {n}; for as it should be a man's own that he gives, and not another's, and therefore called "thy substance"; or, as the Septuagint version, "out of thy just labours", what is righteously and lawfully gotten, and not by fraud and oppression; so it is only a part of it, and not all, that is required; what in proportion to his substance can be prudently spared, and is sufficient and suitable to the call in Providence. A man's "substance" are his wealth and riches; his "mammon", as the Targum; which, in comparison of heavenly things, indeed have no substance in them: yet these are worldly substance, and of account; and as with these God has honoured men, they should honour him with them again, by giving to the poor, especially his poor saints; for as an oppressing of them is a reproaching of him, so having mercy on them is honouring him, Pr 14:31; and especially by contributing to the support of his worship, the keeping up the interest and credit of religion, and for the spread of the Gospel; and chiefly by communicating to the ministers of it, giving them the "double honour" which is due to them, and which, when given them, the Lord takes as done to himself, as an honouring him, **1Ti 5:17**;

and with the firstfruits of all thine increase; or, "out of the chief of all thine increase" {o}; God must have the best, and in the first place. The allusion is either to the maintenance of the priests and Levites under the law, and the manner of doing it; which, among other things, was out of the annual produce of the earth, and the firstfruits of it; and may respect the comfortable support of Gospel ministers under the present dispensation; see **1Co 9:13**; or to the firstfruits of every kind offered to the Lord, and to the feast kept sacred to him at the ingathering the fruits of the earth,
Le 23:10; and even among the Heathens formerly were something of the same kind. Aristotle says {p} the ancient sacrifices and assemblies were instituted as firstfruits, after the gathering of the fruits, at which time especially they ceased from working.

{n} Knwhm "e substantia tua", Montanus; "de substantia tua", Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "de divitiis tuis", Mercerus, Gejerus; "de opibus tuis", Tigurine version, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens. {o} Ktawbt lk tyvarm "de praecipuo totius proventus tui", Junius & Tremellius. {p} Ethic. l. 8. c. 11.

Proverbs 3:10

Ver. 10. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty,.... With plenty of corn; so that there will be a sufficient provision of bread for the eater for the ensuing year, and of seed for the sower when the time of sowing returns; so far should they be, it suggests, from being losers by honouring the Lord with their substance, that they should be gainers by it; instead of having less, should have abundantly more;

and thy presses shall burst out with new wine; not that they should really burst {q} for then the wine would be spilled, which would be a loss; but that they should be so full, that they should be ready to burst or run over: and so the Targum, and the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "and thy presses shall overflow with new wine". As the former clause denotes plenty of eatables, so this of drinkables; and both fulness of all sorts of provisions, promised to the liberal man; and may be an emblem of the large provisions of grace and glory, which the Lord has made for and bestows upon such that honour him.

{q} A like figure see in Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. v. 49. "---ruperunt horrea messes".

Proverbs 3:11

Ver. 11. My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord,.... This seems to be introduced to prevent an objection that may be made to the above promise of plenty; seeing the children of God are often afflicted in this world; even the wise and pious, and those that fear the Lord, and honour him; which is accounted for, and the reason of it given, in **Pr 3:12**. These words are cited in Heb 12:5, and are represented as an exhortation, spoken unto children, the children of God; by which it appears, that not any single person is meant by "my son"; and, as not here, so neither elsewhere in this book, where the same phrase is used. It is not to be limited to any son of Solomon's according to the flesh; nor to any person or persons, that applied to him for instruction, and were taught by him; nor to all the people of God in his time: but it has respect to the Jews in the times of the apostles; and even to all the children of God in all ages, who more or less endure afflictions, here called "the chastening of the Lord", because they are from him; whatever concern men or devils, or second causes, may have in them, they are originally from the Lord, either sent or suffered by him; they are indeed by his appointment, and are ordered, limited, and restrained by him, and are overruled for his glory and his people's good: they are not chastisements in a way of vindictive wrath and justice, which would be contrary to the satisfaction of Christ, the justice of God, his everlasting and unchangeable love, and to his word and oath; but they are in love; they are the chastisements of a father, in which he deals with them as with children; and uses them for the good discipline and instruction of them, as the word {r} here signifies; and therefore not to be "despised", or loathed and abhorred, as disagreeable food or physic be; or as if they were unnecessary and unprofitable, or unworthy of notice and regard; or as little, slight, and trifling things, without considering from whence they come and for what they are sent; but, on the contrary, should be regarded as useful and serviceable; see **Job 5:17**;

neither be weary of his correction; "rebuke" or "reproof" {s}; so in Heb 12:5; "when thou art rebuked of him", not in wrath and fury, but in love, as before. The same thing is meant by correction as chastening; and supposes a fault to be committed by him that is corrected, for God corrects none but for sin; and authority in the corrector, which he, as the Father of spirits, and as our covenant God and Father in Christ, has a right to do: he corrects by his Spirit, by his word, by his ministers, and by his providences, afflictive ones, which last is here meant; and it is always for good, at a proper time, and when necessary, in measure and with judgment: and of this the children should not be "weary", as grievous and intolerable; and especially should not be weary of their lives on account of it, in which sense the word is used in Ge 27:46 which has been the case of Job and others; but should bear it quietly and peaceably, and with patience, without fretting and murmuring; or should not "faint", as it is rendered in Heb 12:5; or sink under the weight, but cheerfully support under it. The two extremes, which men are apt to run into, are here guarded against; on the one hand, to make little or nothing of an affliction; to outbrave it, not to be affected with it, nor humble under the mighty hand of God; nor consider the rod, and him that has appointed it: and, on the other hand, to aggravate an affliction, as if no sorrow was like theirs, and to be quite dejected and overwhelmed with it.

{r} rowm "disciplinam", V. L. Cocceius, Schultens; "eruditionem", Junius & Tremellius. {s} wtxkwtb "ad increpationem ejus", Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus; "redargutionem ejus", Cocceius; "sub redargutione ejus", Schultens.

Proverbs 3:12

Ver. 12. For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth,.... This is a reason why the children of God should not despise corrections, nor be weary of them; since they spring from love, are given in love, nor is there any abatement of it in them: when the Lord chastens and corrects, he does not take away his lovingkindness from them; yea, it is because he loves them that therefore he thus deals with them; wherefore they ought to be patiently bore, and kindly taken by them;

even as a father the son [in whom] he delighteth; as a father chastens and corrects his son, whom he dearly loves, and has the greatest pleasure in, so the Lord chastens and corrects his people; see **De 8:5**. There is such a relation subsisting between them as that of father and son, which flows from the inexpressible love of God to them; and which is a love of complacency and delight in them, and is invariable and unchangeable, and continues the same under all their afflictions; as appears by what he does for them in them, and by the issue of them; he knows their souls in adversity, and chooses them in the furnace of affliction; he pays love visits to them, and comforts them under all their tribulation; he sympathizes with them, and supports them; he makes their bed in their affliction, and delivers out of it, or takes them to himself: the issue is always his own glory, and their good.

Proverbs 3:13

Ver. 13. Happy [is] the man [that] findeth wisdom,.... Some connect these words with the preceding; as if the sense was, a good man, though he is chastened by the Lord, yet is a happy man; not only because his chastenings are in love and for good, but because he improves in spiritual knowledge and understanding by them; see Ps 94:12. Aben Ezra connects them with the former, but in a different manner, thus; "happy is the man that findeth wisdom", for by it he keeps from sinning, that chastisements may not come upon him. But rather the argument in praise of wisdom, and the advantages of it, insisted on in the preceding chapter, is resumed here and enlarged upon; and by wisdom is meant Christ, and a saving knowledge of him by means of his Gospel; and "finding" him supposes seeking him; which does not arise from nature, but the grace of God, and follows upon the sight of the need and worth of Christ; and is done in the use of means, as reading, praying, and attendance on the word and ordinances: and finding him is no other than an enjoyment of him by faith; which is a seeing him, a taking hold on him, and possessing him; who is to be found in the covenant of grace, being the Mediator, surety, and messenger of it; in the Gospel, which is full of him; in the promises of it, which hold him forth, and the blessings of his grace; in the ordinances, which direct unto him, and where he shows himself: for he is not to be found by the light of nature, nor by carnal reason, nor by the law of Moses; but by means of the Gospel, attended with the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; and a happy finding this, which fills the possessor with inexpressible joy! see **Joh 1:41**;

and the man [that] getteth understanding; Christ, and a spiritual understanding of him: this is not a proper acquisition of a man's own; an interest in Christ is not gotten by anything of man's; not by his good works, which are the fruits of grace; nor by faith and repentance, which are gifts of grace themselves; but it is given unto a man: and "getting" here signifies, as before, possession and enjoyment of Christ, as God's pure gift; as a man that is said to obtain the favour of God, when he enjoys it, and the effects of it, in consequence of finding Christ, **Pr 8:35**; where the same word is used as here. The word signifies to "draw out" {t}; as metals are drawn out of the earth by searching and digging for, or as water out of a well; thus Christ, and the knowledge of him, are drawn out of the mines and fountains of the Scriptures, by such that seek after him aright. Aben Ezra interprets it, that draws or brings it out from another, and learns it; the true believer in Christ hears and learns of the Father, and so comes to Christ, and enjoys him, **Joh 6:45**. The Targum is,

"who causes understanding to spring up;"

as water out of a well or fountain; out of his heart, as Gersom; or, as Jarchi, who has learned wisdom, that it is ready to break out, at his mouth; out of the abundance of it in his heart, his mouth speaketh; as such that know Christ cannot but speak to others of the things they have heard and seen, Mt 12:34.

{t} qypy "educet", Montanus; "eruit", Tigurine version, Vatablus.

Proverbs 3:14

Ver. 14. For the merchandise of it [is] better than the merchandise of silver,.... The believer is a spiritual merchant; faith is a trading with and for Christ, and for spiritual and heavenly things by him; and because there is a parting with something for Christ, as a man's sinful lusts and pleasures, his own righteousness, his friends and relations, when set in opposition to or competition with him, and even life itself, when called for; and because he runs a risk of suffering reproach, afflictions, and death itself; therefore this concern with him, and enjoyment of him, is called a "merchandise", which is "better than [that] of silver", or than silver which is got by merchandise: for Christ, and the things of Christ, are more valuable than silver, and to be preferred unto it; more useful and profitable than silver is, which a man may have a large abundance of, and lose his soul, whereas by Christ is the salvation of it; more satisfying than silver is, with which a man is never satisfied, whereas he that has Christ has enough, having all things; more pleasant in obtaining, and more safe in enjoying; a great deal of anxiety and vexation attend the one, and inexpressible pleasure the other; and more durable and lasting than that, the enjoyment of Christ is for ever;

and the gain thereof than fine gold; the doctrines and ordinances of Christ are more to be desired than gold, yea, than fine gold; the blessings of grace by Christ, such as redemption, pardon of sin, &c. are not obtained by corruptible things, as silver and gold, but are more precious than they; and even the graces of Christ in the hearts of his people, as faith, hope, and love, are more precious than gold that perisheth; and much more preferable must he himself be, and the gain that accrues to a believer by him, which is cent per cent an hundred fold, even in this world, and in the world to come everlasting life: it is all clear gain a believer gets by Christ and trading with him; he has him, and all with him, without money and without price; he has that which is more worth than the gain of the whole world, even the salvation of his immortal soul; the riches he has by Christ are immense and unsearchable, the riches of grace and glory; it cannot be said how great this gain is.

Proverbs 3:15

Ver. 15. She [is] more precious than rubies,.... Or "pearls" {u}, as some; which were formerly esteemed above all precious stones; the eastern were the more valuable {w}, which Solomon had most knowledge of; Christ is the pearl of great price, of more value than any pearl, or all put together, Mt 13:46; See Gill on "Job 28:18"; or "carbuncles" {x}, as others. The Targum and Septuagint render it in general terms "precious stones"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "than all riches"; there is a beautiful gradation in this and **Pr 3:14**, wisdom is first preferred to silver, then to "fine gold" {y}, and here, to "precious stones" Christ is precious, exceeding precious in his names and titles, Messiah, Jesus, Immanuel, &c. in his divine nature, and the perfections of it, which show his condescension and grace to become a Saviour, assure of his ability to save, and render his mediatorial performances valuable; in his person as God and man; in the beauty, fulness, and fitness of it; in his power, wisdom, grace, &c. in his offices, his priestly office; in his satisfaction, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, are precious; in his intercession, which is ever acceptable and prevalent; in his prophetic office, his Gospel is precious, every truth and promise of it; in his kingly office, all his ordinances and appointments, his commandments are more to be loved than gold, yea, than fine gold; in all his relations and characters, and in everything that belongs to him; he is so to them that believe, and to none else; **1Pe 2:7**; these see the need and worth of him, receive much from him, and live upon him; and especially he is precious to them at first conversion; and so he is after desertions, and long absence; and under temptations and afflictions, losses and disappointments; and in the hour of death: and he is superlatively precious, "more precious than rubies", or any precious stones; of a superior lustre and glory to them, being "the brightness of his Father's glory"; and of more intrinsic worth and value, of greater price than any pearls, and more enriching to his possessors, for such possess all things;

and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her; this takes in a very great compass: there are many things that are very desirable, and the desires of man's heart are very extensive, and not easily satisfied; there are the precious things of heaven, brought forth by the sun and moon; and the precious things of the earth, which are either upon it or in it, in the bowels of it, and upon the plains, and hills; but none of equal worth with Christ; there are many precious and excellent, and desirable persons in the world, neighbours, friends, relations, and acquaintance; saints on earth, and angels in heaven; yet none to be valued with Christ, and compared to him; see Ps 73:25.

{u} Mynynpm "prae margaritis", Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis. {w} De Boot. Hist. Gemm. l. 2. c. 39. {x} "Carbunculis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {y} "Vilius argentum est auro, virtutibus aurum", Horat. Ep. l. 1. Ep. 1. v. 52.

Proverbs 3:16

Ver. 16. Length of days [is] in her right hand,.... Wisdom is here represented as a queen, as indeed she is above all kings and queens; see **Pr 8:15**; holding in one hand, instead of a sceptre, "length of days"; and in the other, instead of a globe, riches and honour: the allusion is thought by some on this clause to be to an ancient custom of numbering things, and the ages of men, by the hand and fingers, beginning with the left hand, and when they came to a hundred went to the right {z}; so that in that might be truly said to be "length of days", few arriving to that number: or rather the reference is to what Solomon received of the Lord, who, asking wisdom, had not that only, but a long life, and riches and honour; see **1Ki 3:11**. Some think that only temporal blessings are here meant, and, because health and long life are preferable to wealth and honour, the former are said to be in the right hand, and the latter in the left; but seeing in the preceding verses the advantages of wisdom are superior to silver, gold, and precious stones, it can hardly be thought that she should be represented as only having temporal blessings in her hands to bestow on her followers. Others are of opinion that spiritual and eternal blessings are the right hand ones, being the principal; and temporal blessings are the left hand ones, as being the less valuable, **Mt 6:33**; but to me they seem all of one sort, all spiritual and eternal ones, even those of the left hand, by comparing this passage with **Pr 8:18**. By "length of days" is meant "length of days for ever and ever", Ps 21:4; or eternal life, a life of vision or enjoyment of God; a life of perfect knowledge, holiness, and pleasure; being free from all the imperfections, difficulties, and distresses of the present one, and which will last for ever; this is in the hand of Christ, not the promise and grant of it only, but the thing itself, in consequence of his asking it of his Father: and which he has in a covenant way, and so has a right and power to bestow it: and it being in his hands shows both the valuableness and the security and safety of it; and also that it is to be had from him, and is in his gift, and in no other; and is a pure gift of his grace; wherefore happy is the man that finds Wisdom, or Christ, since he finds and has eternal life in him;

[and] in her left hand riches and honour; by "riches" are meant not temporal riches, for these are not always to the wise, nor to the children of Wisdom, nor of Christ; and all that have these are not happy, nor are they durable: but spiritual riches are intended, the riches of grace; of pardoning, justifying, and sanctifying grace, and of all supplies of grace; and also the riches of glory, which are solid and satisfying, immense and unsearchable, lasting and durable: and by "honour" is designed not the honour which comes from men, or the honour of this world; for such who find Christ, and are possessed of him, and profess him, have but a small share of this, being, generally speaking, accounted the faith and offscouring of the world; but yet they are the children of God, and so have that name which is better than to be the sons and daughters of the greatest monarch; they are the spouse of Christ, and so his queen that stands at his right hand in gold of Ophir; they are made kings and priests unto God, and shall reign with Christ for evermore; this honour have all the saints, and is what is in the hands of Christ to give, and does give, to all that believe in him: or "glory" {a}, as the word signifies; the glory of God,

eternal glory; this as well as grace is Christ's gift, Ps 84:11.

{z} Vid. Nebrissens. Quinquagena, c. 16. & Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier l. 1. c. 14. to which Juvenial refers, when speaking of Nestor, "----suos jam dextra computat annos", Satyr. 10. v. 249. {a} dwbk "gloria", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Cocceius, Schultens.

Proverbs 3:17

Ver. 17. Her ways [are] ways of pleasantness,.... The "ways" and methods which Christ took to bring about the salvation of his people; some in eternity, as engaging as a surety for them, entering into a covenant with his father on their account, taking the care and charge of their persons, grace, and glory; others in time, as the assumption of their nature, obedience to the law, suffering and dying in their room and stead, rising again, ascending to heaven, and interceding for them; calling them by his grace, clothing them with his righteousness, and keeping them by his power unto salvation, and at last introducing them into his kingdom and glory. These are "pleasant", to view the love of Christ in them, the success that attended them, the glory of God brought about hereby, and the salvation of his people; which is exceedingly pleasant, being agreeable to all the perfections of God; suitable to the case of sinners, full and complete in itself, free to them, and of an everlasting duration; it is this which makes Christ so pleasant to souls, and the Gospel also: or else the ways which Christ has prescribed and directed his followers to walk in are here meant; as himself, who is the principal way, and the only way to the Father, and to heaven and happiness; also the ways of faith, holiness, and truth, the ways of Christ's commandments, and all the ordinances of the Gospel and institutions of religion; which are "pleasant", when the presence of God and Christ is enjoyed in them; when the heart is enlarged with the love of God and Christ; when assisted therein by the Spirit of God, having good food and refreshment in them, and good company with them; and which, though attended with much tribulation, end in eternal pleasure;

and all her paths [are] peace; the "paths" which Christ has trod in to procure the peace of his people; he appeared in the council of peace, and assisted in it; he entered into a covenant of peace with his Father; he assumed the nature of his people, in order to be their peacemaker; he took the chastisement of their peace upon him; he obtained it by the blood of his cross; he sends his ministers to publish it, and his Spirit into the hearts of men to reconcile them to this way of peace and salvation by him; and the result of all this is, that an honourable "peace" is made for sinners, and peace of conscience is enjoyed, which passeth all understanding, flowing from the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and the whole issues in eternal peace in the world to come. Likewise all those "paths" which Christ instructs his people to walk in; as the paths of faith and obedience, these lead to the enjoyment of "peace" here and hereafter; there is much peace had in a way of believing, and great peace have they which love the law of God, and the commandments of Christ, and obey them; they may meet with much uneasiness at times in their own spirits, by reason of sin, temptation, and desertion; they may bring the malice of the world upon them, and have much trouble from it, and too, too often, disagree among themselves; and yet, after all, they have that peace which others have not while they live; and, when they die, they depart in peace, and enter into eternal peace. Now all this is true, not of unregenerate persons, who desire not the knowledge of Christ, and to whom there is no peace, but of true believers in him.

Proverbs 3:18

Ver. 18. She [is] a tree of life,.... Or "lives" {b}; so Christ is called, **Re 2:7**; in allusion to the tree of life in the garden of Eden, **Ge 2:9**; he being the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; which souls may come at, and pluck and eat of the fruit which is upon him in great plenty and variety, even all the blessings of grace and glory;

to them that lay hold upon her; which is expressive of an act of faith on Christ, **Heb 6:18**; faith lays hold on the person of Christ as a Saviour, and will have him and no other; it comes to the blood of Christ, and deals with it for pardon and purification; it lays hold on his skirt, who is a Jew, on the robe of his righteousness, and puts it on; it lays hold on his strength, and goes forth in it, in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; it lays hold on his covenant, the blessings and promises of it, and takes them to itself: and this act supposes danger without him, safety in him, a view of suitable provisions for food and clothing with him; some strength of grace, and some degree of resolution; also condescension on Christ's part to suffer himself to be handled by them; and likewise that he first took hold on them and brought them out of a state of nature to himself: great encouragement there is for sensible sinners to lay hold on Christ; he is set before them in the Gospel to be laid hold on; he never discourages any from so doing, nor casts out any that come to him; he is able to bear the stress of their salvation they lay upon him; multitudes of lost sinners have been saved by him: and he is a tree of life, as the text says, to such persons; they have spiritual life, and the support and comfort of it, from him now, and may expect everlasting life from him hereafter;

and happy [is everyone] that retaineth her; or "holds her fast" {c}; see **So 3:4**; as such may be said to do who constantly apply to him for fresh communications of grace; who walk on in him as they have received him, and hold fast the profession of their faith in him. The phrase is expressive of great affection to him, and strong faith in him; faith keeps its hold of Christ through great darkness and many difficulties; oftentimes the soul walks in darkness, and yet stays itself on Christ, and, Abraham-like, believes in hope against hope. Faith is sometimes very low, and yet lets not go its hold; it fails not, through the prevalent intercession of Christ; it cannot so let go its hold as that there is a parting; a partial departing there may be, but not a total one: however, it is sometimes very difficult for faith to keep fast hold of the Redeemer; it is for the honour and comfort of believers so to do; and it is their mercy that interest in Christ, and salvation by him, do not depend on acts of faith; for, though "we believe not, [yet] he abides faithful", **2Ti 2:13**; nevertheless happy are they that retain him, or are steadfast in their faith on him; they have much communion with him now, and shall live with him for evermore hereafter.

{b} Myyx Ue "lignum vitarum", Montanus. {c} hykmt "significatur hoc verbo, firmitas et constantia in tonendo", Michaelis; so Mercerus.

Proverbs 3:19

Ver. 19. The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth,.... He has created all things, and made the world by his Son, the Wisdom of God, **Eph 3:9** **Heb 1:2**; not using him as an instrument; but, he being an efficient cause with him, to him, as to the first cause, the creation of all things is ascribed, **Joh 1:1**; and particularly the laying the foundation of the earth, **Heb 1:10**; and though this is true of the divine perfection of wisdom, Jer 10:12; yet from the context it appears best to understand it of the essential Wisdom of God, Christ Jesus; the Jerusalem Targum of **Ge 1:1**; is, "by wisdom God created", &c. and this serves greatly to set forth the dignity and excellency of Wisdom, or Christ, and so the happiness of that man that finds him; with this the account of him is closed and crowned;

by understanding hath he established the heavens: or prepared, adorned, and beautified them, by placing the luminaries in them, and directing their station, motion, and influence; the making of the heavens, with all the host of them, is ascribed to the essential Word or Wisdom of God, Ps 33:6.

Proverbs 3:20

Ver. 20. By his knowledge the depths are broken up,.... From whence fountains and rivers flow, and whereby that great cavity was made which holds that large confluence of waters called the sea, **Ge 1:9**. Some refer this to the breaking up the fountains of the great deep at the flood, **Ge 7:11**; and others to the dividing of the waters of the Red sea when Israel came out of Egypt, Ps 78:13; all wonderful works of divine wisdom, and show the greatness of him, in whom are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge", **Col 2:3**, by whom they were done;

and the clouds drop down the dew; which makes the earth fruitful, and is put for all the blessings of nature, Ge 27:28; the drops of dew are begotten by the Lord, they have no other father but him; the vanities of the Gentiles cannot produce them; he who fills the clouds with them, from whence they descend, is no other than the mighty God; and such is Christ the Wisdom of God. Some understand this in a mystical sense of Gospel ministers, and of the dew of Gospel doctrine, dropped and distilled by them under the influence and direction of Christ; see
De 32:2; but the literal sense is best.

Proverbs 3:21

Ver. 21. My son, let not them depart from thine eyes,.... Meaning not the things done by Wisdom; though it is good to contemplate his works of creation and providence, which serve to set forth the glory of Christ, and lead into adoring and admiring views of him, and to thankfulness to him; but wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, whereby these things are done, which are but so many names of Christ: we should always set him before us, keep him always in view, be ever looking to him by faith, and never suffer him to depart from our eyes; we should always have in sight his divine Person for our acceptance with God, the greatness and glory of it to encourage our faith and hope in him; we should keep in view his righteousness for our justification, and which we should ever make mention of at the throne of grace, and hold it forth in the hand of faith against all charges and accusations of law and justice, Satan, or our own hearts; we should be continually looking to his blood for peace and pardon, healing and cleansing; and our eyes should be at all times on his fulness, for fresh supplies of grace, for spiritual food, or the daily bread of our souls, and for spiritual strength and comfort; we should always consider him as the Saviour, and be exercising faith on him as such, for there is no other; and should always look upon him as the Mediator between God and man, and make use of him; and he should be ever before us as our example, both in the exercise of grace and performance of duty, to copy after; and we should always keep sight of him while running our Christian race, as the forerunner for us entered, and as the mark for the prize of the high calling of God. And not only Wisdom, or Christ, but all the things that are said of him in the context, we should never lose sight of; the exceeding great gain got by him, the superlative preciousness of him, the fulness of blessings in both his hands, the pleasantness and peaceableness of his ways, the usefulness of him as a tree of life to those that lay hold upon him and retain him, and the works of nature and providence done by him, **Pr 3:14**. Moreover, this may include all the truths and doctrines of Wisdom, or Christ; for, if the law and its precepts were to be upon the hands and as frontlets between the eyes of the Israelites, and so be ever in sight, then much more the doctrines of the Gospel, **De 6:8**. It is observable that the Septuagint here makes use of the same word the apostle does in **Heb 2:1**; speaking of Gospel truths; See Gill on "Heb 2:1"; these are meant in the next clause; and some by a transposition place them thus, "let not sound wisdom and discretion depart from thine eyes, keep" them; for by

sound wisdom is meant sound doctrine, the wholesome words of Christ, the solid and substantial truths of the Gospel. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "keep the law"; but the Syriac version, much better, "keep my doctrine", the doctrine of the Gospel; which also is meant by

discretion, or "counsel" {d}, as some render the word, and as the Gospel is called, Ac 20:27; this should be kept; the doctrines of it should be held fast and not let go, or be departed from; and the ordinances of it should be observed and kept, as they were delivered, from a principle of love, and a view to the glory of Christ; the advantages arising from them follow.

{d} hyvwt, boulhn, Sept. "consilium", Arabic version.

Proverbs 3:22

Ver. 22. So shall they be life unto thy soul,.... Give it a better life than it naturally has, though immortal; Christ is both the spiritual and eternal life of the souls of those that look unto him by faith; and his Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are the means of reviving drooping saints, and of quickening them to the discharge of their duty; wherefore both he and they should be kept in continual view, and held fast;

and grace to thy neck; an ornament to that and to the whole man; how ornamental is Christ and his righteousness to a believer! how lovely is the person that is steady in his principles, and regular in his practices! who stands fast in the truths of the Gospel, and whose conversation is as becomes it! see **Pr 1:9**.

Proverbs 3:23

Ver. 23. Then shall thou walk in thy way safely,.... In the way of thy duty and business, without fear of any enemy; having in sight the Captain of salvation gone before, and walking in such ways of pleasantness and peace as Wisdom's are; and having such a lamp to the feet, and such a light unto the paths, as the Gospel and its doctrines be;

and thy foot shall not stumble; at the word and the truths of it, as some men do, being thereunto appointed; and at Christ, the stumbling stone laid in Zion, particularly at his justifying righteousness; see **1Pe 2:8**.

Proverbs 3:24

Ver. 24. When thou liest down thou shalt not be afraid,.... That is, when thou liest down on thy bed at night in order to take sleep, having committed thyself into the hands of a faithful Creator and covenant God and Father, and of Christ the Redeemer and Wisdom of God; thou shalt not be afraid of thieves breaking in to hurt thy person or rob thee of thy property, or of fire to consume thy dwelling and substance, and of nocturnal apparitions and diabolical spectres deceiving thy sight and disturbing thy mind: or when thou art "asleep" {e}, for so the word also signifies; thou shall not be surprised out of it with any of the above things, or terrified in it with uneasy imaginations, anxious cares, and distressing dreams;

yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet; free of all uneasy thoughts and cares, sound and refreshing, pleasant and comfortable, like that of the labouring man, **Ec 5:12**; see **Ps 4:8**. This epithet of "sweet" is often given to "sleep" in poetic writings {f}.

{e} bkvt "dormieris", V. L. "eum dormies", Vatablus. {f} glukuv upnov, Homer. Odyss. 7. v. 289. & 19. v. 511. Theocrit. Idyll. 11. v. 22, 23.

Proverbs 3:25

Ver. 25. Be not afraid of sudden fear,.... Of anything terrible that comes unawares, unthought of, by any of the above things mentioned in the preceding note; or by any rumours and reports of danger being near at hand; always think thyself safe in the arms of Wisdom, and under the care of Israel's keeper, who neither slumbers nor sleeps;

neither of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh; either of the desolation which wicked men threaten to bring, and are suffered to bring, upon the godly for the sake of religion; either on their persons or goods, since suffering at their hands in such a cause is to the honour of saints, and for the glory of God; or of the desolation which comes upon the godly, for God is able to deliver him from it, as Noah and his family from the universal deluge, and Lot and his family from Sodom and Gomorrah; or if they promiscuously fall in it, nevertheless it will be well with them to all eternity.

Proverbs 3:26

Ver. 26. For the Lord shall be thy confidence,.... The object of it, in whom thou shall put thy confidence, and be safe and secure from all fear and danger: or "the Lord shall be in thy confidence" {g}; shall support thee in it, and maintain that, so that thou shalt not cast it away; the word used has sometimes the notion off oily in it, and Jarchi, from the Jerusalem Talmud, produces a sense agreeable to it;

"the Lord shall be in things in which thou art foolish;"

which, how absurd it may seem to be, will admit of a good interpretation; that the Lord will be with Wisdom's followers in things which may seem foolishness to the world; as Christ, the things of Christ, and the things of the Spirit of Christ, the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are. The Targum is,

"the Lord shall be thine help,"

in all times of distress, difficulty, and danger;

and shall keep thy foot from being taken; in the snares of sin, temptation, and mischief; in those which Satan and the world lay for God's people; from these the Lord preserves them; wherefore happy are those that have an interest in Christ, who find and enjoy him.

{g} So Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 3:27

Ver. 27. Withhold not good from them to whom it is due,.... Honour, reverence, and tribute, to civil magistrates, Ro 13:7; just payment of debts to creditors, and alms to the poor, which, by what follows, seems to be chiefly intended; and the Septuagint render it,

"do not abstain to do well to the needy;"

and Aben Ezra interprets it of the poor; to them alms are due because of their wants, and by the appointment; of God; hence called "righteousness", in some copies of **Mt 6:1**; so money kept from the poor "mammon of unrighteousness", Lu 16:9. They are, as the word in the Hebrew text signifies, "the owners thereof" {h}: rich men are not so much proprietors of good things as they are God's alms givers or stewards to distribute to the poor; and, as often as men have opportunity, they should do good in this way to all, especially to the household of faith, **Ga 6:10**; this will hold true, as of temporal good things, so of spiritual; as good advice, exhortation, and doctrine. The Vulgate Latin version is, "do not forbid him to do well that can"; which sense is favoured by Jarchi: and as we should not abstain from doing good ourselves, so neither should we forbid, hinder, or discourage others; but the former sense is best;

when it is in the power of thine hand to do [it]; not to hinder others, as Jarchi, but to do good; when a man has a sufficiency in his hands to do good with; has not only enough for himself and his family, but something to spare; when he has both opportunity and ability; and when he can do it at once and without delay, as follows.

{h} wylebm "a dominis suis", Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 3:28

Ver. 28. Say not unto thy neighbour,.... Either to whom thou art indebted, and who comes for the payment of a just debt; or to any poor and indigent person that applies for alms:

go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; go home, and come tomorrow, and I will pay thee what I owe thee; or do not trouble me now, come another time, and perhaps I may relieve thy wants: this should not be said, because a man cannot be sure of tomorrow that he shall ever see it; nor may it be in the power of his hands, should he live unto the morrow, to do as he promises; his substance may be taken from him; and besides, in the mean time, the poor object may perish for want of relief;

when thou hast it by thee; money to pay thy debts with, or to give alms to the poor; and therefore should give readily and at once, and not make any excuses and delays; "bis dat, qui cito dat". Some make this to be part of the covetous man's words, saying, "and there is with thee"; or thou hast enough, thou hast no need to ask of me; thou hast what thou askest; thou art not in want; thou art richer than I; but the other sense is best. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add,

"for thou knowest not what the day following may bring forth;"

or may happen on it.

Proverbs 3:29

Ver. 29. Devise not evil against thy neighbour,.... Or, "plough not evil" {i}; turn not up thy heart to find evil against thy neighbour, as the earth is turned up by the plough; see Ho 10:13. Do not contrive and form schemes in thy mind and thoughts to do him any injury, in his name and character, in his person, property, or family: a good man should devise all the good he can to his fellow creatures, but not evil to any; especially to his neighbour, and as described in the next clause;

seeing he dwelleth securely by thee; having a good opinion of thee, and not suspecting any ill design against him, thinks himself, goods, and family, in safety; and is under no concern to provide for his security, placing his confidence in thee, and perhaps to such a degree as to entrust with his secrets.

Now to project evil against such a man is exceeding base; it is doubly sinful; this is an aggravation of the iniquity.

{i} vrtt "ne ares", Amama.

Proverbs 3:30

Ver. 30. Strive not with a man without cause, Either by words, in a wrangling, quarrelsome, and contentious way, for mere trifles; when there is no foundation for it, no just reason given to form a complaint, or pick a quarrel upon; or by deeds, by lawsuits, when there is nothing to proceed upon; or it is so trifling, that it is not worth while to litigate it or contend about: such, who strive either way, are far from following the example of Wisdom or Christ, and from taking his advice, Mt 12:19;

if he have done thee no harm; no real hurt to thy person, nor injury to thy substance; if he has not abused nor defrauded thee, nor taken any thing from thee by force or fraud, nor withheld from thee what is thy right and due. But otherwise the laws of God and man ought to take place; right may be sought for, and justice should be done.

Proverbs 3:31

Ver. 31. Envy thou not the oppressor,.... The man that gets wealth and riches by acts of injustice, by oppressing the poor, by rapine and violence; do not envy his prosperity, and the substance he is possessed of; do not wish to be in his place and circumstances, to enjoy his affluence and ease; do not look upon his happiness with an envious eye and a fretting heart; he is far from being a happy man; his end will be bad; see Ps 37:1;

and choose none of his ways; which he has used to get his riches in; do not follow him in them; for should you do as he has done, and get ever so much, since this would be with the loss of your souls, of what advantage would it be? He makes the best choice that chooses the "good part" that shall not be taken away, Lu 10:42; Christ, and the ways of Christ.

Proverbs 3:32

Ver. 32. For the froward [is] abomination to the Lord,.... The perverse man, that pleases not God, and is contrary to all men, as the Jews were; one froward in his words and actions: "who transgresses the law", as the Arabic version renders it; one that acts contrary to the nature, will, and word of God; and such an one is not only abominable in his sight, but an "abomination" itself; it is sin, which is that abominable thing that God hates, that makes him so: and the Targum is,

"for iniquity is abominable before the Lord;"

but his secret [is] with the righteous: not such who are outwardly so to others, or trust in themselves that they are righteous, or seek for righteousness by their own works; but such who are justified by the righteousness of Christ, which faith receives from him, and in consequence of which a man lives soberly and righteously: with these the "secret" of the Lord is; of his love, grace, and favour, which was from everlasting, and is manifested in regeneration; of his purposes of grace, with respect to election, redemption, calling, and adoption, which is made known in effectual calling; of his covenant, as that he is their covenant God, Christ is their covenant head and Mediator, and that they have an interest in all the grace, blessings, and promises of it; of the Gospel, and the several mysteries of it, which are so to carnal men; of his providences, what he is doing, or what he is about to do, and will do hereafter, **Am 3:7**; and of communion and fellowship with him. The phrase denotes friendship and familiarity; God deals with the righteous as a man does with his intimate friend, converses freely with him, and discloses his secrets to him: and the word is rendered "confabulation" by the Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions; see
Job 29:4.

Proverbs 3:33

Ver. 33. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked,.... The wicked man, being a transgressor of the law, is under the curse of it; and all that he has, his house, his substance, his very blessings are curses; see **Mal 2:2**; he is accursed amidst his greatest affluence, and sometimes from a plentiful estate is reduced to penury and want: and Aben Ezra interprets it, "the curse of want"; and the Vulgate Latin version is, "want from the Lord is", &c.

but he blesseth the habitation of the just; the righteous man, as before described; he is blessed himself, having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and his sins forgiven him for his sake; and what he has of worldly substance, though it be ever so little, he has it with a blessing; and therefore it is better than the riches of many wicked men; his house, though it is but a courage, as the word {k} here signifies, is blessed with the presence of God in it; his family, his children, and servants, are blessed, having his instructions and example, and especially when made effectual by the grace of God; as the house of Obededom was blessed for the sake of the ark, so is a just man's house, being a "bethel", an house of God, blessed on account of his worship in it; see **2Sa 6:11**.

{k} hwn "tugurio", Montanus; "tugurium, vel casam pastoritiam", Gejerus.

Proverbs 3:34

Ver. 34. Surely he scorneth the scorners,.... That make a mock at sin, a jest of religion, that scoff at the doctrines of the Gospel and the professors of it; these the Lord looks upon, laughs at, and has them in derision. The Greek version and two apostles render it, "he resisteth the proud", **1Pe 5:5**. Such who are haughty and arrogant, that exalt themselves and despise others; as those of a pharisaical spirit are and do, are abhorred and despised by the Lord; he sets himself against them, is their enemy, "and scatters [them] in the imagination of their hearts", **Lu 1:51**. L'Empereur observes {l} that this version is quite agreeable to the Hebrew text and the sense of Jewish writers: R. Alshech says, that Myul, rendered "scorners", are such who will not look upon the divine Being, but go on boldly in sin, as if there was no God; and Kimchi explains the word by Myagtm, who exalt themselves, or are proud; and because proud men yield to none, but resist others, hence the verb is used, by the Septuagint, to resist; agreeably to which the Targum is,

"he shall drive away;"

and Alshech,

"he shall destroy;"

and Gersom,

"God shall make others mock them;"

which is, to resist them;

but he giveth grace unto the lowly; or humble souls; such who are made truly sensible of sin, and lie low in their own sight on account of it; who, sensible of the imperfection and insufficiency of their own righteousness, submit to the righteousness of Christ; ascribe their salvation, and all the blessings of it, to the free grace of God; own the deficiency of their duties, and disclaim all merit in them; think the worst of themselves, and the best of others; and humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and are patient under every adverse dispensation of Providence; knowing what their deserts are, how undeserving of any favour, and how deserving of the divine displeasure. Now God first gives grace to these persons to make them thus humble and lowly which they are not naturally, and then he gives them more grace, according to his promise; and it is in proof of God's giving more grace to such persons that the Apostle James produces this passage, **Pr 4:6**. Grace is God's gift, first and last, what is had in first conversion, in after supplies, and for perseverance to the end: sanctifying, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace, are the pure gifts of God, of his own favour and good will, without any merit, motive, or condition in the creature; and which he gives liberally and bountifully; for not favour with men is here meant, as some think, but the grace of God.

{l} Not. in Mos. Kimchi odoiporia, p. 34, 35.

Proverbs 3:35

Ver. 35. The wise shall inherit glory,.... The wise are the same with the just and lowly before mentioned, to whom God gives grace, and to these he gives glory. The "wise" are such who are so, not in a natural, civil, or notional sense, or that are wise in the things of nature, in civil affairs and in speculative matters of religion; but in a spiritual sense, who are wise unto salvation; who know themselves, the sinfulness of their nature, their inability to do that which is good, and their want of righteousness to justify them before God; who are sensible of the sickness and diseases of their souls, their spiritual poverty, and their great folly and ignorance with respect to things of a spiritual nature; who know Christ, and him crucified, the way of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him; that know him, not only notionally, but so as to apply unto him, and rest on him for salvation; who build it on him the foundation, on him only, and give him all the glory of it; and who have also a competent knowledge of the Gospel, and a comfortable experience of the truths of it; and who take up a profession of religion upon such an experience, and hold it fast without depending on it, and have a conversation becoming it, walking circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. Now these shall "inherit glory"; not the glory of this world, or honour among men in it; but the glory of another, of which the glory of this world, and of, he most excellent things in it, is but a faint resemblance: it is unseen, inconceivable, and incomparable; it is an eternal glory which Christ is entered into, and the same the Father has given him; and will lie in the vision of God, and communion with him; in beholding the glory of Christ, and in having a glory put upon them both in soul and body: and this they shall enjoy as an inheritance; not by purchase or acquisition, but by free gift; as a bequest of their Father; which comes to them as children, through the death of Christ the testator, and will be possessed for ever, as inheritances run;

but shame shall be the promotion of fools; not fools in a natural, but in a religious sense; such who know not themselves, nor the way of salvation; who mock at sin, and scoff at religion: these and everyone of these "shall take" or "lift up shame" {m}, as their part and portion, alluding to the heave offering under the law, in opposition to the glory the wise shall inherit and possess. Or, "shame shall lift up fools" {n}; hold them forth, and make them manifest and conspicuous: all the promotion they shall be raised unto will be only shame and confusion, if not in this world, yet in that to come; for, when they shall rise from the dead, it will be "to shame and everlasting contempt", Da 12:2. The Targum is,

"fools shall receive tribulation;"

that shall be their inheritance in the other world.

{m} Nwlq Myrm Mylok "unusquisque stultorum suscipit, vel sustinet, ignominiam", Vatablus. {n} "Stolidos vero tollit ignominia", Junius & Tremellius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 4

In this chapter Solomon advises to seek after wisdom, to avoid bad company, and to continue in the right paths of goodness and truth: he excites attention to what he had to say, from the relation he stood in to the persons addressed; from the nature of his instructions, which were good and profitable; and from his own example, in attending to those his parents gave him, **Pr 4:1**; He exhorts above all things to get wisdom, from the superior excellency of it, and from the preservation, promotion, and honour, to be had by it, **Pr 4:5**; and he further enforces big exhortations, from their being the means of a comfortable life, and of the prolongation of it, and of leading in a right way without straitness or stumbling, **Pr 4:10**. And then proceeds to caution against bad company, and going into a bad way of life; which is enforced from the mischief done by those that walk in it, and from the darkness of it, to which the path of the just is opposed, **Pr 4:14**. And the exhortation to attend to and observe his instructions, and keep them, is repeated, from the consideration of their being life and health to them, **Pr 4:20**; and that they might be preserved, and not departed from, direction's are given about ordering the heart, mouth, lips, eyes, and feet, **Pr 4:23**.

Ver. 1. Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father,.... Either of God their father, as Gersom interprets it; or rather of Solomon their father: and so he recommends his instruction from the relation he stood in to them; for, since he was their father, he would give them no bad instruction; and, since they were his children, they ought to receive it: by whom are meant, not his children in a natural sense, or the children of his body; but his disciples, such who applied to him for knowledge, and whom he undertook to learn;

and attend to know understanding; what would serve to enlighten, enlarge, improve, and inform their understandings; what would lead them into the knowledge and understanding of things divine and spiritual, and which would be worth knowing; and of having their understandings stored and enriched with.

Proverbs 4:2

Ver. 2. For I give you good doctrine,.... Whose author, matter, use, and tendency, are good, and therefore should be received; so the Gospel is called, **1Ti 4:6**; and no other is here meant: it is the doctrine concerning Wisdom or Christ, as the following verses show; which serves to exalt him, and makes for the good and welfare of immortal souls; and such is the doctrine of the Scriptures, of Christ and his apostles, even all the doctrines and truths of the Gospel;

forsake you not my law; or "doctrine" {o}; not the law given on Mount Sinai, as Gersom interprets it; but the doctrine of Christ, which goes out from Mount

Zion: this the children of Wisdom should not neglect, relinquish, drop, or depart from; but should keep it, and abide by it.

{o} ytrwt "doctrinam meam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Amama; "instructionem meam", Schultens.

Proverbs 4:3

Ver. 3. For I was my father's son,.... Or, "a son to my father" {p}; so Solomon was to God, his heavenly Father, **2Sa 7:14**; which Jarchi observes, and gives as the sense of this place: but his father David is meant, whose son he was; though he was not his only one, he had others besides him. But the sense is, that he was his darling, his beloved son, whom he loved above the rest; as he was beloved of the Lord, and therefore his name was called Jedidiah, so he was beloved of his father; and, because he had a peculiar love for him, he took a particular care of his education;

tender and only [beloved] in the sight of my mother; his mother Bathsheba, who had a most affectionate regard to him; and therefore in his tender age, as soon as he was susceptible of instructions, gave them to him, which being received, made deep and lasting impressions on him; see Pr 31:1. The marginal reading is, "to the sons of my mother"; for Bathsheba had more sons, **1Ch 3:5**; both readings may be retained, "beloved in the sight of my mother's sons". Gersom interprets this of the people of Israel, who were sons to God their Father; and were the only nation that received the law, and which they received at the time of their coming out of Egypt, in the days of their youth.

{p} ybal ytyyh Nb "filius fui patri meo", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Cocceius, Schultens.

Proverbs 4:4

Ver. 4. He taught me also, and said unto me,.... The Targum is,

"they taught me,"

his father and his mother; and so the Septuagint version,

"who said and taught me;"

and the Arabic version,

"they both taught me, and said unto me;"

but in the Hebrew it is singular, and is restrained to the father. He taught him when he was very young, and also gave him instructions when he was older, and a little before his own death; see 1Ch 28:8; he taught him by the several psalms he wrote; some of which are called "maschil", instructive or causing to understand; two of them particularly were written for him, the seventy-second and the hundred twenty-seventh psalms; he taught him in the following words. How far the words of David his father reach is not agreed on, on all hands; some think they end with **Pr 4:5**; others with **Pr 4:6**, others with the **Pr 4:9**, and the words of Solomon begin at **Pr 4:10**: some will have it that they take in the whole chapter, which is not probable; nay, others say that the whole of the book following is his, which can by no means be agreed to: it seems most likely to me that they end at **Pr 4:6**, and at most are not to be carried beyond **Pr 4:9**;

let thine heart retain my words: says David to his son: the instructions he gave him by word of mouth, concerning his moral behaviour, relating to political things, the government of the people; and especially such as concerned the everlasting welfare of his soul, or were about Wisdom or Christ, and the knowledge of divine and spiritual things; these he would have him lay up in his heart, and keep them there, as a rich treasure, to have recourse unto upon all occasions;

keep my commandments, and live: which commandments may respect him both in his private and public capacity, and in a religious and political one; how he should behave as a man, a king, and one that feared God: as well as they may respect his orders for the building of the temple, and settling and establishing the worship of God in it; by observing which he would live comfortably and honourably, and to a good old age.

Proverbs 4:5

Ver. 5. Get wisdom, get understanding,.... Not only moral and political wisdom and understanding, but that which is spiritual and evangelical; Christ, and the knowledge of him; he being the only happy man that has an interest in him, and is possessed of him by faith, which is the meaning of getting him;

See Gill on "Pr 3:13"; by which it appears, that what Solomon had before delivered, and afterwards repeats and urges, was the same his father David, that wise, great, and good man, taught him; and which he mentions, the more to recommend the getting of wisdom and understanding to others;

forget [it] not; when gotten, keep it in remembrance; be continually meditating on Wisdom, or Christ, his glories and excellencies; the fulness of grace and truth in him; the blessings of goodness which come by him; the great use and profit of having and enjoying him;

neither decline from the words of my mouth; the above instructions, and all others he gave unto him.

Proverbs 4:6

Ver. 6. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee,.... That is, Wisdom, or Christ. Men may be said to forsake Christ when they forsake the assembly of his church and people, which are his other self; when they forsake his ministers, his ambassadors, and representatives; when they forsake his word and ordinances; when they drop the doctrines of the Gospel, or depart from them; when they quit the profession they have formerly made. Nominal believers and formal professors may forsake him finally and totally; true believers only partially and for a time, through the weakness of the flesh, the temptations of Satan, the snares of the world, and the prevalence of corruption; and therefore such an exhortation is necessary, and ought to be regarded. To forsake Christ is a very great evil; it is against a man's own interest, and is of dangerous consequence, and therefore to be guarded against; to abide by him, his truths and ordinances, is very commendable; such shall be "preserved" by him safe to his kingdom and glory;

love her, and she shall keep thee; Christ is to be loved for the excellencies and perfections of his nature; for the loveliness of his person; for the love he has showed to his people; for what he in love has done and suffered for them, and is now doing; for the fulness of his grace and salvation, and the suitableness of them to them; for the communion he indulges them in with himself; for the relations of an head, husband, father, brother, and friend, he stands in to them: and also under the character of Wisdom, he being the only wise God and their Saviour, the Wisdom of God and Wisdom to them; and whose Gospel is the Wisdom of God in a mystery. He is to be loved, all of him and that belong unto him, and above all creatures and things, ardently, sincerely, and constantly; and such lovers of him shall be "kept" by him from the evil of the world; from the power and dominion of sin, and condemnation by it; from being destroyed by Satan, and his temptations; and from a final and total falling away, so as not to perish everlastingly; they are kept in his own hands, in his Father's love and his own, in the everlasting covenant; and in a state of grace, of sanctification, justification, and adoption. Not that loving Christ, and cleaving to him, are the causes of this preservation; but his love, grace, and power; yet these are descriptive of the persons kept and preserved: and the preservation and keeping of them is used as an argument to love him, and cleave unto him.

Proverbs 4:7

Ver. 7. Wisdom [is] the principal thing,.... Or principal, one; the principal of persons and things; the principal of persons, angels or men: Christ is superior to angels, having a more excellent name and nature than they; he is the God, the Creator, and head of them, and is above them in the human nature; he is superior to men, to the greatest of men, he is King of kings and Lord of lords, and to the best of men the saints. Are they kings? he is their King: are they priests? he is the great High Priest: are any of them prophets, teachers, shepherds? he is the great Prophet in Israel; a Teacher, that never any taught or spoke like him; the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls: is the church a family? he is the Master of it: is it a body? he is the Head: is it a building? he is the Foundation and Corner Stone; yea, the chief Master Builder. He is the beginning and chief of all God's ways, and the chief in them; in election, in the council of peace, and covenant of grace; in redemption and salvation, in grace and glory; he is all in all. Or the words may be rendered, "Wisdom [is] the beginning" {q}; so Christ is called, **Col 1:18**; a phrase expressive of his eternity, and of his being the first cause and author of all things, both in the old and new creation. Or thus, that which is "the beginning of wisdom get" {r}, &c. which is the fear of the Lord; see **Pr 1:7**;

[therefore] get wisdom; not an interest in Christ, but a knowledge of it; and make use of all means to obtain a greater knowledge of him, and of interest in him, which is what the apostle calls "winning" Christ; by which he means, not getting an interest in him, that he had already, but gaining a greater degree of knowledge of him, as the context shows, **Php 3:8**; or, "buy wisdom" {s}; that is, without money and without price; so Christ advises to buy gold and white raiment of him, his grace and righteousness, **Re 3:18**;

and with all thy getting get understanding; another name for Christ; see **Pr 8:14**; Or, "along with all thy getting" {t}, or "above all"; let not Christ be wanting; he is the one thing needful, the good and better part and portion, which, if missing, all other substance signifies little: or part with all for this pearl of great price, Wisdom, and prefer it to all worldly substance; look upon all but dross in comparison of Christ and the knowledge of him: all other gettings or substance are only for the body, this for the soul, and the eternal welfare of it; they are only for a time, this for eternity; they are not satisfying, but, having this, a soul has enough, has all things; Christ being his, all things are his; he possesses all things, and all other things are not blessings without him.

{q} hmkx tyvar "principium sapientiae", Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus. {r} "Principium sapientiae est hoc, comparas sapientiam", Michaelis; "quae est caput sapientiae eam acquire", &c. Junius & Tremellius. {s} hmkx hnq "eme sapientiam", Pagninus, Cocceius. {t} Knynq lkl "in omne possessione tua", V. L. "in omne acquisitione tua", Montanus; "prae universis quae possides", Tigurine version, Vatablus.

Proverbs 4:8

Ver. 8. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee,.... Christ is to be exalted in his person, by asserting his proper deity; by ascribing all divine perfections to him; by allowing him to be the author of all divine works; by giving him divine worship and homage; by owning his divine and eternal sonship, and distinct personality: he is to be exalted in all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, and as the only Redeemer and Saviour; by trusting in him, embracing his Gospel, and submitting to his ordinances, and such that exalt him, he will "promote" them here and hereafter; of which more in the next clause. According to the Talmudists {u}, the word for "exalt" signifies a diligent search, by turning things about to find out what is sought; and so the Septuagint interpret the word in the sense of "searching",
Jer 50:26;

she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her: by faith: for this is an act of faith, and a very considerable one, and is expressive of great nearness to Christ, of much intimacy and familiarity with him, of strong love and affection to him, of a good degree of boldness used with him, and of joy and exaltation in him; for such an action is used by persons near akin, and are very familiar with, and have a very great affection for one another, and use much freedom with each other, and rejoice at meeting together. Now such who embrace Christ, in the arms of their faith, as their alone Saviour, such he promotes and "brings to honour"; not to honour among men, for to embrace Christ and exalt him is the way to disgrace, though the disgrace is an honour, and will be before long rolled off; but to honour hereafter. Such will be set at his right hand, and be owned by him before his Father and his angels; and they will be placed on the same throne with him, and will reign with him for ever and ever; see **1Sa 2:30**.

{u} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 26. 2.

Proverbs 4:9

Ver. 9. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace,.... This, and the following clause, explain what that honour is Christ promotes and brings his followers to here and hereafter: he gives them grace and more grace; "an increase of grace", so the Vulgate Latin version renders it; and some think James refers to this passage, **Pr 4:6**. The grace that Christ gives is very ornamental to his people: justifying grace greatly beautifies and adorns them; it not only covers the nakedness of their souls, and all their spots and imperfections, and through it all their sins are caused to pass from them; but they are made exceeding beautiful, perfectly comely through this comeliness, a perfection of beauty by it; and which is often signified by that which is very ornamental, rich, and costly, as fine linen, clothing of wrought gold, raiment of needlework, a Wedding garment, stuck with jewels and precious stones: sanctifying grace, which also is Christ's gift, is very ornamental; it is called "the beauty of holiness"; it is that by which a man is made like to God, and conformed to the image of Christ; it is the curious workmanship of the Spirit of God; or what makes a man beautiful, and makes him meet for heaven and happiness: every grace is ornamental; faith, hope, love, humility, &c. these are like rows of jewels, and chains of gold, about the neck. And when this ornament is said to be given "to the head", it is not to be understood of the natural head of a man, but of his whole person, it gives a comeliness to; and may denote the visibility of it, as it appears in the life and conversation;

a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee; by which is meant eternal glory and happiness, called a "crown", an ensign of royal dignity, which, belongs to such as are made kings and priests unto God; and is given to conquerors, even who are more than conquerors through Christ, and as a reward of diligence and faithfulness, **Re 2:10**. It is sometimes called a crown of life, a crown of righteousness, an incorruptible and never-fading one, and, as here, "a crown of glory"; the saints in heaven will have a glory put upon them, both in soul and body; they will appear with Christ in glory, and be crowned with glory and honour, as he is; they will be clothed and surrounded with it: and so some render it,

"she will compass thee about with a crown of glory as with a shield" {w};

see **Ps 5:12**. This Christ is said to "deliver"; it is in his hands, laid up in him, and is safe with him; he has power to dispose of it, and it may be expected from him; see **2Ti 4:8**.

{w} Kngmt uperaspish sou, Sept. "proteget te", V. L. "muniet te", Montanus, Tigerine version; "cinget te", Gejerus.

Proverbs 4:10

Ver. 10. Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings,.... Some think David is still speaking to his son Solomon, or Solomon continues relating what his father said to him; though I rather think these are Solomon's words to his son, to everyone of his children that came to him for instruction, or he took upon him to teach; whom he advises to listen to what he had further to say, and to embrace, and not reject, his doctrines;

and the years of thy life shall be many; see **Pr 3:1**; long life here, and length of days for ever and ever, or eternal life hereafter; which must be a very forcible argument to engage attention to his sayings.

Proverbs 4:11

Ver. 11. I have taught thee in the way of wisdom,.... In the way that leads to it, or is concerning it; in the Gospel, which is the wisdom of God in a mystery, the manifold wisdom of God, and which directs to Christ and the knowledge of him, who is true wisdom; this is another reason or argument why the wise man's instructions should be attended to;

I have led thee in right paths; in paths of righteousness, holiness, and truth; in such as are agreeable to the will and word of God, and which lead right on to the city of habitation; and therefore such teachings and leadings should be followed, and such ways walked in.

Proverbs 4:12

Ver. 12. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened,.... By enemies, or attended with difficulties and obstructions, or subject to dangers, but be at freedom and liberty in walking; for though saints do not walk in the broad road with sinners, yet they are brought into a large place, and their steps are enlarged under them, and their hearts are enlarged to run the way of God's commandments; and a wide field of truth and duty such have to walk in, who are taught and led in the ways of wisdom and righteousness, Ps 18:19;

and when thou runnest, thou shall not stumble; such that make haste to keep the commandments of God, that run with alacrity and cheerfulness in their Christian race, and in the way of their duty, shall not stumble, through the deceitfulness of sin, the snares of the world, and the temptations of Satan, so as to fall and perish.

Proverbs 4:13

Ver. 13. Take fast hold of instruction,.... Not the law, as Jarchi and Gersom interpret it; but the instruction of wisdom, the doctrine of Christ or the Gospel; see **Pr 8:1**; which is an instruction into the mind and will of God, concerning the salvation of men; into the grace of God, showing that salvation, in all its branches, is of pure grace; into the person and offices of Christ, and into the business of salvation through him; into the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by him. This should be "taken fast hold of"; in order to which, men should take heed unto it, attentively hear it; they should come with a cordial affection to it, and an eager desire after it, or they will never lay fast hold on it; for taking fast hold, as it supposes a careful attention to the Gospel, so a reception of it in the love of it, and an eagerness to be possessed of it: such may be said to take fast hold on it, who receive it into their hearts, and not into their heads only; head knowledge of the Gospel instruction is not hold fast enough, it must be heart knowledge of it; it is taken fast hold on when it is mixed with faith when heard; when it is digested and incorporated as it were into men, and becomes the ingrafted word; when men are led experimentally and practically into it, and are not hearers only, but doers of it; and, being thus taken fast hold of, let [her] not go; the instruction of wisdom, or the Gospel of Christ; do not drop it, nor depart from it, nor waver about it; nor be languid in a profession of it, nor indifferent to it: "be not remiss" {x}, as the word signifies; or let not thine hand be remiss, or let not thine hand go; having, as it were with both hands, took fast hold of the Gospel, hold it fast, neither drop it through negligence and carelessness, nor suffer it to be taken from thee by fraud or force;

keep her, for she [is] thy life; which may be understood either of the Gospel, Wisdom's instruction, which should be kept as a rich treasure, and not parted with at any rate; since it is the means of quickening dead sinners; of showing sensible ones the way of life by Christ; of producing faith in them, by which they live upon him; and of maintaining and supporting the spiritual life in them, and of reviving and comforting them under the most drooping and afflictive circumstances; a man would as soon part with his life surely as part with this! Or else, seeing the feminine gender is here used, which does not agree with the word translated "instruction", but with "wisdom", mentioned **Pr 4:11**; so Aben Ezra; therefore Christ may be here meant, who is to be kept as the pearl of great price, being more precious than rubies and all desirable things, and especially since he is the "life" of his people: he is the author and maintainer of their spiritual life; he is their life itself, it is hid with him; and because he lives, they live also: all the comforts and supplies of life are from him, and he is their eternal life; it is given through him and by him, and ties greatly in the enjoyment of him.

{x} Prt la "ne remittas", Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 4:14

Ver. 14. Enter not into the path of the wicked,.... Which leads to eternal death; join not with them in their wicked ways and practices; have no fellowship, keep no company, with them; do not set one foot in the path they tread, lest thou shouldest be tempted to proceed to more ungodliness; you do not know where and when there will be a stop, when once you begin, therefore enter not. The Vulgate Latin version is, "do not delight in the paths of the ungodly": but this supposes not only entrance, but progress and continuance in them, whereas the first is dehorted from in these words:

and go not in the way of evil [men]; if tempted and prevailed upon to take a step and make a trial, do not proceed; withdraw at once, do not go on. Some render it, seeing the word used has sometimes the signification of blessedness in it, "do not esteem the way of evil men blessed" {y}; nor reckon thyself or them happy that walk in such ways; they are far from it: hence the Targum, Septuagint, and Syriac versions are, "do not envy the ways of wicked men"; their seeming pleasure will end in bitterness: the Arabic version is, "do not imitate" them; do not follow their example, and do as they do.

{y} Myer Krdb rvat "in via malorum ne te beatum existimes", Tiguriue version; "ne beatam praedices viam malorum", Michaelis.

Proverbs 4:15

Ver. 15. Avoid it,.... As dangerous and pernicious, as abominable and detestable; or, "flee from it", as the Vulgate Latin version: Jarchi and Gersom interpret it, "make it void"; cause it to cease, destroy it, do all you can to hinder the wicked from accomplishing their designs;

pass not by it; do not come near it; keep at a distance from it, that you may not be drawn into it; abstain from all appearance of evil, and everything that may lead to it;

turn from it, and pass away; the Targum adds, "from them", from wicked men. This heap of words is used to show the danger of bad company; to dissuade from the least approach to it; and to express the vehement desire of the wise man to preserve his son, and all well inclined persons, from it.

Proverbs 4:16

Ver. 16. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief,.... Or they cannot sleep, as Jarchi and Gersom interpret it. Oftentimes they cannot sleep on their beds for devising mischief, their thoughts are so intensely set on contriving wicked schemes; and when they have so done, they cannot sleep until they have executed them; they are continually restless and uneasy day and night, like the troubled sea, constantly casting up mire and dirt. Who would keep such company as these?

and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause [some] to fall; into the snares and traps they lay for them, or into sin and calamity by it; the former of which they endeavour by all means to draw men into, and the latter is the unavoidable consequence of it. They imitate their father the devil, both delight in sin, and in the ruin of their fellow creatures; it is a sport to thereto do mischief, and they have no pleasure without it; see Pr 11:23. What company are such!

Proverbs 4:17

Ver. 17. For they eat the bread of wickedness,.... Either that is gotten by wicked and unlawful means, or wickedness itself is bread unto them; it is that to their minds as bread is to their bodies; they feed upon it with as much eagerness, appetite, gust, and pleasure; it is a sweet morsel to them; it is meat, drink, sleep, and everything to them; they take the highest satisfaction and the utmost delight in it;

and drink the wine of violence: either that which is obtained by rapine and violence; or they as greedily commit such acts of oppression and injury as a man drinks a glass of wine; they do not drink up iniquity like water only, but even like wine, the most generous and delicious. Wherefore all society with such men should be avoided.

Proverbs 4:18

Ver. 18. But the path of the just [is] as the shining light,.... The "just" man is one that is made righteous through the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; and who is created anew in Christ, in righteousness and true holiness; and, under the influence of divine grace, lives soberly, righteously, and godly: the "path" he is directed to walk in, and does, is Christ himself, the way, the truth, and the life; through whose blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, he goes to God for grace and mercy, for peace, pardon, and acceptance, for fresh supplies of grace, and in order to enjoy communion with him; and who also is the way of salvation, and to eternal life and happiness: and, besides this grand and principal path, there are the paths of truth, righteousness, and holiness; the path of duty and obedience; the way of the commandments of God, and ordinances of Christ: and this path he walks in, whether of grace or duty, is "as the shining light"; or of the morning, when the day first dawns, or at least when the sun rises. Such is the light beamed in at first conversion, which directs men to walk in the above mentioned paths; it is a light after a night of darkness, as such is the state of unregeneracy; which, though at first is but glimmering, yet afterwards is clear and shining; especially when Christ the sun of righteousness appears, or is revealed, as the hope of glory. The first grace in conversion is a "true light [that] shines", **1Jo 2:8**, by which a soul sees its own vileness and filthiness, the insufficiency of its own righteousness; and the fulness, suitableness, and ability Christ as a Saviour, and has some discerning of Gospel truths;

that shineth more and more unto the perfect day; or "going and shining" {z}, or "enlightening": it shines clearer and clearer, so does true grace; it grows and increases more and more, every grace does, faith, hope, love, patience, humility, &c. the light of the knowledge of Christ the way, though it is imperfect, yet capable of being increased, and is increased by means of the ministry of the word and ordinances; which increase God has promised, saints pursue after, and attain unto. Light into the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, increases yet more and more; whereby a soul walks pleasantly, comfortably, and safely, in right path, "until the perfect day" of glory comes, a day without clouds; when there will be nothing to interpose between God and them; when there will be no more clouds of darkness, unbelief, doubts, and fears; when the sun will always be seen, no more withdrawn, eclipsed, or set; even Christ, the sun of righteousness, whose glory will always be beheld by the righteous to all eternity: when there will be no more night of affliction, desertion, and death; when the light of knowledge will be clear and perfect, and saints shall see face to face, and know as they are known; and when not only the light of the righteous shall be so clear, distinct, and perfect, but they themselves shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of God. The words may be rendered, "the prepared day" {a}; appointed in the decrees of God, and firmly established by them: the invisible glories of the heavenly state, which make this everlasting day, are things which God has prepared for his people; the kingdom and glory itself, the inheritance of the saints in light, is prepared for them from the foundation of the world. And, since such is the path of the just, who would walk in the ways of the wicked? which are the reverse of this, as the following words show.

{z} rwaw Klwh "vadens et illuminans", Montanus; "ambulans et lucens", Gejerus; "pergens et lucens", Michaelis; "procedens et lucens", Schultens. {a} Mwyh Nwkn de "usque ad paratum diem", Pagninus, Montanus.

Proverbs 4:19

Ver. 19. The way of the wicked [is] as darkness,.... They are in the darkness of sin, ignorance, error, and unbelief; their works are works of darkness; the way in which they are leads to eternal darkness, ruin, and misery, and so must be most uncomfortable and dangerous;

they know not at what they stumble; they stumble at the word, which they are ignorant of, and at Christ, whom they have no knowledge of; and through the temptations of Satan and snares of the world, which they are not aware of, nor upon their guard against.

Proverbs 4:20

Ver. 20. My son, attend to my words,.... Which go before and which follow after, his doctrines, instructions, cautions, and exhortations;

incline thine ear unto my sayings; stoop and bow the ear; listen attentively to what is said, as being of the greatest moment and importance.

Proverbs 4:21

Ver. 21. Let them not depart from thine eyes,.... Commit them to writing, frequently read them over; let them be always in sight, as a rule and directory to steer the course of life by. Some understand this of the wicked, as if the sense was, let not them, the wicked, cause them to depart from thine eyes; nor thee to neglect them, by their bad advice, solicitations to sin, and ill examples; See Gill on "Pr 3:21";

keep them in the midst of thine heart; lay them up there, and ponder them; often meditate upon them, and do not forget them; show the most affectionate regard unto them, and look upon them as a most inestimable treasure, for which no place is so fit a repository as the heart.

Proverbs 4:22

Ver. 22. For they [are] life unto those that find them,.... The words or doctrines of Christ, whose type Solomon was, are to be found in the field of the Scriptures, by diligent searching for them; and being found, they are the means of spiritual life, and of maintaining it, and of showing the way, and bringing unto eternal life; see **Joh 6:63**;

and health to all their flesh; the whole man, soul and body, as they are the means of preserving the body from many diseases, which intemperance, lust, and luxury, lead unto, and are curbed by these; so of healing the various diseases of the soul; and, however, of directing to a panacea for them, to the blood of Christ, which is the true balm of Gilead, and he the physician of souls. Moreover, the doctrines of the Gospel are the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus; they are sound, salutary, and healthful, and serve to keep the soul in good plight, and the body too. The Septuagint render it, "to all flesh": that is, to all men; but this is not true in fact; for to some the Gospel of Christ, through contempt and rejection of it, is the savour of death unto death.

Proverbs 4:23

Ver. 23. Keep thy heart with all diligence,.... The mind from vanity, the understanding from error, the will from perverseness, the conscience clear of guilt, the affections from being inordinate and set on evil objects, the thoughts from being employed on bad subjects; and the whole from falling into the hands of the enemy, or being the possession of Satan: great diligence had need be used in keeping it, since it is naturally so deceitful and treacherous; a strict eye is to be kept upon it; all the avenues to it to be watched, that nothing hurtful enters, or evil comes out; it is to be kept by all manner of means that can be thought of, by prayer, hearing, reading, meditation; and, above all, by applying to Christ for his grace and Spirit to sanctify, preserve, and keep it. Or, "above all keeping, keep thine heart" {b}; though other things are to be kept, and care taken of them, as kingdoms and cities, and towns and families, and treasures and riches; yet the heart above all:

for out of it [are] the issues of life; of natural life: it is the seat of it, from whence all actions of life are derived; it is, as philosophers say, the first that lives, and the last that dies; and it is the seat of spiritual life the principle of it is formed in it; from whence all spiritual and vital actions flow, and which lead unto and issue in eternal life: as is a man's heart, such is his state now, and will be hereafter; if the heart is quickened and sanctified by the grace of God, the man will live a life of faith and holiness here, and enjoy everlasting life hereafter: and if the heart is right, so will the actions of men be; they are regulated and denominated by it; they will then spring from right principles, and be directed to right ends, and performed with right views; great care therefore should be taken of the heart, since so much depends upon it, and it is so well known to God the searcher of it.

{b} rmvm lkm "prae omni custodia", Vatablus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens; so Aben Ezra and Ben Melech.

Proverbs 4:24

Ver. 24. Put away from thee a froward mouth,.... A mouth speaking froward and perverse things; things contrary to right reason, to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; blasphemies against God or men; every thing that is untrue, unchaste, unjust, foolish, and filthy; all swearing, lying, and everything that is repugnant to truth and justice. Some understand it of men that are liars, blasphemers, and froward persons, who are to be shunned and avoided, and to be debarred the houses and society of good men;

and perverse lips put far from thee; do not make use of them thyself, nor keep company with men of such a character. Much the same thing is meant as before.

Proverbs 4:25

Ver. 25. Let thine eyes look right on,.... To the path of truth and holiness, without turning or looking to the right hand or left, as it is afterwards expressed; to the word of truth, as the rule to walk by; to Christ, the author and finisher of faith, from whom all grace, and the supplies of it, are to be had; and to the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God;

and thine eyelids look straight before thee; to the precepts of the word, to observe them; to the promises of it for encouragement; to the examples of the saints gone before, as motives to excite diligence, and to exercise patience, faith, and hope; to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life, and to the blessed hope laid up in heaven.

Proverbs 4:26

Ver. 26. Ponder the path of thy feet,.... Consider well what path it is, whether right or wrong; or weigh it in the balances of thought, as Aben Ezra; or rather in the balances of the word, and see whether it agrees with that or not. The Septuagint version is, "make straight paths for thy feet"; to which the author of the epistle to the Hebrews seems to have respect, Heb 12:13;

and let all thy walls be established; so as to walk on steadily, constantly, uniformly, and not be easily moved out of the ways of religion and truth. Or, "let all thy ways be prepared", or "directed", or "disposed" {c}; according to the rule of the divine word. Some render it as a promise, "and all thy ways shall be established" {d}; when care is taken to look well into them; see 2Ch 20:20.

{c} wnky "dirigantur", Tigurine version, Mercerus; "recte apparentur aut disponantur", Vatablus. {d} "Stabilientur", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "constabilientur", Schultens.

Proverbs 4:27

Ver. 27. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left,.... Either into the road of immorality and profaneness, or into that of error, superstition, and false worship; but attend to the way of holiness and truth, directed to in the word of God; see Isa 30:21; nor be moved out of it by threatenings and menaces, nor by flatteries and promises; neither be cast down with adversity, nor be lifted up with prosperity; but keep on in an even way, attending to that which is just and right; leaving all events with God, as knowing you are in the way of your duty, and in which he would have you walk;

remove, by foot from evil; from walking in evil ways and along with evil men, and from doing evil things; abstain from all appearance of evil, keep at a distance from it; the evil of sin brings on the evil of punishment. There are two verses added in the Septuagint, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin versions, which are not in the Hebrew text;

"for the ways which are on the right hand God knoweth; but those that are on the left are perverse. He will make thy paths right, and promote thy goings in peace."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 5

The general instruction of this chapter is to avoid whoredom, and make use of lawful marriage, and keep to that. It is introduced with an exhortation to attend to wisdom and understanding, **Pr 5:1**; one part of which lies in shunning an adulterous woman; who is described by her flattery, with which she deceives; by the end she brings men to, which is destruction and death; and by the uncertainty of her ways, which cannot be known, **Pr 5:3**. Wherefore men are advised to keep at the utmost distance from her, **Pr 5:7**; lest their honour, strength, wealth, and labours, be given to others, **Pr 5:9**; and repentance and mourning follow, when too late, **Pr 5:11**. And, as a remedy against whoredom, entering into a marriage state is advised to, and a strict regard to that; allegorically expressed by a man's drinking water out of his fountain, and by his wife being as a loving hind and pleasant roe to him, the single object of his affections, **Pr 5:15**. As also the consideration of the divine omniscience is proposed, to deter him from the sin of adultery, **Pr 5:20**; as well as the inevitable ruin wicked men are brought into by it, **Pr 5:22**.

Ver. 1. My son, attend unto my wisdom,.... Not the wisdom of the world or of the flesh, worldly wisdom and carnal policy; but spiritual and evangelical wisdom; such as one that is greater than Solomon has in him, even Christ; "for in him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge", **Col 2:3**; and which he teaches and communicates to others, even all proper instructions for conduct in life: the Gospel, and each of the doctrines of it, which are "the wisdom of God in a mystery", **1Co 2:7**: these every child of God, and disciple of Christ, ought carefully and diligently to attend unto;

[and] bow thine ear to my understanding: listen attentively to those things which I have, and give an understanding of, even things divine and spiritual; the understanding of which is of the utmost moment and importance.

Proverbs 5:2

Ver. 2. That thou mayest regard discretion,.... Observe it; retain it in thine heart, as Aben Ezra adds, and use it; think, speak, and act discreetly, and so avoid the bad woman afterwards described: the Vulgate Latin version is, "that thou mayest keep the thoughts"; and so Gersom interprets the word; "good thoughts", according to the Septuagint version; the thoughts of the heart are to be observed. A man of spiritual wisdom will take notice of them; evil thoughts, which lead to uncleanness, are to be repressed and kept in; good ones to be cherished and improved; wise and sagacious ones (such the word here used signifies) are to be attended to, as being of great advantage in the various affairs and business of life; and spiritual and evangelical wisdom helps to such thoughts, and directs to the observance and exercise of them;

and [that] thy lips may keep knowledge; may be able to speak of things worthy to be known, and communicate the knowledge of them to others; by which means useful knowledge will be kept and preserved, and be continued in successive ages; see **Mal 2:7**; even the knowledge of God and of Christ, and of the Gospel and its doctrines; and which will be a means of preserving men, as from false doctrine, error, and heresy, so from profaneness and immorality; and particularly from the adulterous woman, next described.

Proverbs 5:3

Ver. 3. For the lips of a strange woman drop [as] an honeycomb,.... "Mulsa dicta", "honey words", as is Plautus's {e} expression. The Septuagint and Arabic versions premise something here which is not in the Hebrew text,

"do not give heed to a wicked woman;"

and the Vulgate Latin version,

"to the fallacy of a woman:"

but there is no need to connect the words by such a supplement; since, as they lie, they give a reason why it was necessary to attend to wisdom and understanding, in order to act discreetly and speak knowingly; since there is so much danger of being drawn aside by a wicked woman, a lewd and adulterous one; the kisses of whose lips, her confabulations and songs, are as pleasing to the carnal senses of men as honey is sweet to the taste; she promises them a great deal of pleasure in her embraces, and in the enjoyment of her: so the poet {f} describes an agreeable voice to be sweeter than the honeycomb;

and her mouth [is] smoother than oil; her fair speeches, enticing words, and flattering fawning language, and amorous expressions, easily find their way and slide into the hearts of men, to prevail upon them to listen to her, and yield to her temptations. Gersom interprets this strange woman of the imaginative faculty; and Jarchi of heresy: it is applicable enough to the whore of Rome; who, by the blandishments of pomp and grandeur, and the allurements of wealth and riches, draws many into her idolatrous practices; which are spiritual adultery, signified by her golden cup, Re 17:4.

{e} Rudens, Act. 2. Sc. 3. v. 84. Poenulus, 1, 2. v. 112. {f} fwna glukerwtera h melikhrw, Theocrit. Idyll. 21.

Proverbs 5:4

Ver. 4. But her end is bitter as wormwood,.... Which is opposed to the honeycomb her lips are said to drop; so that, as Juvenal says {g}, "plus aloes quam mellis habet": the end which she brings persons to, or the issue of complying with her, is bitterness; such as loss of credit, substance, and health, remorse of conscience, and fear of death, corporeal and eternal; see **Ec 7:26**;

sharp as a twoedged sword; which cuts every way; as committing sin with an harlot hurts both soul and body; and the reflection upon it is very cutting and distressing, and destroys all comfort and happiness. This is the reverse of her soothing and softening speech, which is as oil. Such also will be the sad case of the worshippers of the beast, or whore of Rome; who will gnaw their tongues for pain, and be killed with the twoedged sword that proceedeth out of the mouth of Christ,
Re 16:10.

{g} Satyr. 6. v. 180. "Lingua dicta dulcia dabis, corde amara facilis", Plauti Truculentus, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 77. Cistellaria, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 70, 71, 72.

Proverbs 5:5

Ver. 5. Her feet go down to death,.... The ways in which she walks, and in which she leads others, issue oftentimes in corporeal death; and always in eternal death, if grace prevent not; and unless men are brought to a sense of sin, to repent of it and leave it. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "the feet of imprudence" or "folly", in opposition to wisdom; that is, the feet of the foolish woman, such an one the harlot is; and such is the whore of Rome, notwithstanding all her boasted knowledge and wisdom. And into perdition, or the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, she goes herself, and hither she brings all that follow her idolatrous practices, Re 17:8;

her steps take hold on hell; make sure of it; hell is the certain portion of the harlot, and of all those that follow her lewd courses, unless reclaimed by the grace of God; and this will be the case of the worshippers of antichrist, or who give into the idolatries of the church of Rome, or commit fornication with her, Re 14:9. Or, "her steps support hell" {h}; keep it up, and fill it with inhabitants; millions are carried into it by her means: or, reach unto hell; she stops not till she comes there, and her followers with her. The word may be rendered "the grave", and may respect such whores who haunted burying places, and prostituted themselves among the graves; and were called from hence "bustuariae moechae" {i}.

{h} wkmty "sustentabunt", Montanus; "sustinant", Vatablus; "sustentent", Mercerus, Gejerus. {i} Vid. Turnebi Adversar. l. 13. c. 19. & Sept. vers. in Jer. ii. 23.

Proverbs 5:6

Ver. 6. Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life,.... Consider and meditate which is the way to get out of her hands and ways, and escape death, and obtain eternal life; lest those she has drawn into her wicked course of life should be religiously inclined, and think of quitting such a course, and inquire after the way of life and salvation; and be weighing in their minds which is most eligible, to continue with her whose feet lead to death, or to take the path of life: to prevent all this, if possible,

her ways are movable: she appears in different shapes; changes her dress and habitation; makes use of a thousand arts to ensnare men, to entangle their affections, and retain them in her nets; she first puts them upon one thing, and then on another; she leads them into various mazes and labyrinths of sin, till they have lost all sense of religion, and sight of the path of life;

[that] thou canst not know [them]; her ways, arts, and devices. Or, "thou canst not know" {k}; that is, the way of life, or how to get out of her ways into that. Or, "thou knowest not"; where she goes, whither she leads thee, and what will be the end and issue of such a course of life. The Targum understands it, and so some other interpreters, of the harlot herself, paraphrasing the whole thus;

"in the way of life she walks not; her ways are unstable, and she knows not"

the way of life, nor where her ways will end; or, "cares not" {l} what becomes of her. And so, in like manner, the former part of the verse is understood and interpreted, "lest she ponder the path of life" {m}; or as others, "she does not ponder the path of life" {n}; The ways of the antichristian harlot are with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; and her chief care is to keep persons in ignorance, and from pondering the path of life or true religion, and to retain them in her idolatry, **2Th 2:9**.

{k} edt al "non scires", Cocceius; "non cognosces", Baynus. {l} "Haud curat", Schultens. {m} olpt Np Myyx xra "iter vitae ne forte libraverit", Schultens. {n} "Viam vitae non appendit, vel ponderat", Gejerus; so Luther; "iter vitae non expandit", Noldius, p. 249. No. 2008.

Proverbs 5:7

Ver. 7. Hear me now therefore, O ye children,.... Since such is the character, this the wretched end, and these the ways of the adulterous woman; those that are young in years, and liable to be ensnared by her, should hear what Solomon, or Christ, here says, for their caution and instruction; and especially such who are, or profess themselves to be, the children of God and of Christ; and therefore, as dear children, should be followers of them, and not of an harlot;

and depart not from the words of my mouth; the warnings, directions, and exhortations given to avoid the whorish woman; the doctrines of Christ, the truths of the Gospel: these should not be forsaken, but abode by; and also his precepts and ordinances, which should be closely attended unto.

Proverbs 5:8

Ver. 8. Remove thy way far from her,.... The way of the mind, walk, and conversation; keep at the greatest distance from her; neither come where she is, nor look at her, nor converse with her; shun her, as one would the pest or a loathsome carcass; go a good way about rather than come near her, or be within sight of her, or so as to be in any danger of being ensnared by her;

and come not nigh the door of her house; not only not enter her chamber, but go not to her house; no, not over the threshold of the door, nor near the door; but avoid her house, as one would a house that has the plague in it. Men should not go in the way of temptation, trusting to their own strength; they may be entangled and overcome before they are aware; is good to keep out of the way of it. And as it becomes the children of Wisdom to wait at her gates, and at the posts of her door, to gain knowledge and understanding of divine things; so they should not go within the doors of false teachers, nor near them, nor admit them within theirs. It is a complaint against the church at Thyatira, that she suffered the woman Jezebel, the Romish harlot, to teach and seduce the servants of Christ, or connived at their attendance on her, **Re 2:20**.

Proverbs 5:9

Ver. 9. Lest thou give thine honour unto others,.... To strumpets, their children, attendants, servants, and friends; that is, either wealth or riches, which make men honourable; or their three, credit, and reputation, which are lost by keeping company with such persons; or the outward comeliness of the body, and inward rigour of the mind, which are impaired by adulterous practices. The Targum renders it, "thy strength"; and so the Syriac version, "thy strength of body", which is enervated by such impurities; see Pr 31:3; compare with this the kings of the earth that commit fornication with the whore of Rome, giving their power and strength to the beast, Re 17:2. Jarchi's note is,

"lest thine heart has respect to other gods, to give them the glory of thine honour and praise;"

and so understands it not of corporeal but of spiritual adultery or idolatry: the Septuagint and Arabic versions are, "thy life"; which agrees with what follows;

and thy years unto the cruel; youthful years, the flower of age, consumed by the cruel lust of uncleanness, which preys upon and wastes both body and substance, and cuts them off in the prime of days; and deprives of years which otherwise, according to the course of nature, and in all probability, might be arrived unto: so harlots, in Plautus {o}, are said to sup the blood of men, and to deprive of goods, light, honour, and friends {p}. And the harlot herself may be here meant; who, when she has got what she can, has no pity on the man she has ruined, and even will not stick to take away his life upon occasion; as well as is the cause and means of the damnation of his soul: or the jealous husband of the adulterous woman, who will not spare the adulterer when taken by him; or her brethren, her relations and friends; or her other gallants and co-rivals, who, when they have opportunity, will avenge themselves; or the civil magistrate, who executes judgment without mercy on such delinquents, this being a sin punished with death. Jarchi interprets the "cruel" of the prince of hell, the devil; and so the Midrash of the angel of death. The character well agrees with the antichristian beast, the whore of Rome; who, by her sorceries and fornications, has destroyed millions of souls.

{o} Bacchides, Act. 3. Sc. 1. v. 5. & Sc. 3. v. 67. {p} Truculentus, Act. 2. Sc. 7. v. 20.

Proverbs 5:10

Ver. 10. Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth,.... The adulteress, her husband, children, friends, bawds, and such like persons she is concerned with; these share the wealth of the adulterer, abound with it, and live profusely on it, until he is stripped quite bare and destitute: or, "with thy strength"; See Gill on "Pr 5:9". Jarchi interprets it of the prophets of Baal, that exact money by their falsehoods; it may well enough be applied to the fornicating merchants of Rome, who wax rich through the abundance of her delicacies and adulteries, Re 18:3; persons, strangers indeed to God and Christ, and all true religion;

and thy labours [be] in the house of a stranger; that is, wealth gotten by hard labour, with toil and sweat, grief and trouble, as the word used {q} signifies; and yet, after all, not enjoyed by himself and his lawful wife and children, but by the strange woman and her accomplices, and spent in maintaining whores, bawds, and bastards; hence the fable of the Harpies eating and spoiling the victuals of Phineus, who were no other than harlots that consumed his substance {r}: and sometimes they are carried into a strange country, and possessed by foreigners. These are the wretched effects and miserable consequences of adultery, and therefore by all means to be shunned and avoided. Jarchi understands it of the house of idolatry, or an idol's temple; and everyone knows what vast riches are brought into the temples or churches of the Papists by idolatry.

{q} Kybue "dolores tui", Montanus, Cocceius, Michaelis. {r} Heraclitus de Incredibil. c. 3.

Proverbs 5:11

Ver. 11. And thou mourn at the last,.... Or roar as a lion, as the word {s} signifies; see Pr 19:12; expressing great distress of mind, horror of conscience, and vehement lamentations; and yet not having and exercising true repentance, but declaring a worldly sorrow, which worketh death. This mourning is too late, and not so much on account of the evil of sin as the evil that comes by it; it is when the man could have no pleasure from it and in it; when he has not only lost his substance by it, but his health also, the loss of both which must be very distressing: it is at the end of life, in his last days; in his old age, as the Syriac version, when he can no longer pursue his unclean practices;

when thy flesh and thy body are consumed; either in the time of old age and through it, as Gersom; or rather by diseases which the sin of uncleanness brings upon persons, which affixes the several parts of it; the brain, the blood, the liver, the back, and loins, and reins; and even all the parts of it, expressed by flesh and body. This may express the great tribulation such shall be cast into that commit adultery with the Romish Jezebel, **Re 2:22**.

{s} tmhn "rugies", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Baynus, Gejerus, Amama, Michaelis.

Proverbs 5:12

Ver. 12. And say, how have I hated instruction,.... To live virtuously, and avoid the adulterous woman; this he says, as wondering at his stupidity, folly, and madness, that he should hate and abhor that which was so much his interest to have observed. Gersom interprets it of the instruction of the law; but it is much better to understand it of the instruction of the Gospel; which the carnal mind of man is enmity unto, and which they are so stupid as to abhor; when it is of so much usefulness to preserve from error and heresy, superstition, will worship, and idolatry;

and my heart despised reproof; for following the whorish woman; and which was secretly despised in the heart, and heartily too, if not expressed with the mouth: it is one part of the Gospel ministry to reprove for false doctrine and false worship, though it generally falls under the contempt of the erroneous and idolatrous.

Proverbs 5:13

Ver. 13. And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers,.... Parents, tutors, masters, and ministers of the word; neither regarded the advice of parents, nor the instructions of tutors, nor the commands of masters, nor the sermons of ministers: these are all lost on some persons; they are proof against them all; these make no impressions upon them, and are of no use to them;

nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! or to my masters, as the

Targum and Vulgate Latin version; turned away the ear from them, stopped it to them, and would not hear what they had to say; at least would not receive it, and act according to it.

Proverbs 5:14

Ver. 14. I was almost in all evil,.... Scarce a sin but he was guilty of; contempt of private and public instructions, the instructions of parents and ministers of the Gospel, and following lewd women, commonly lead to the commission of all other sins, even the most atrocious. Some understand this, not of the evil of sin, but of the evil of punishment; and that the sense is, that there is scarce any calamity, distress, or misery, that a man can be in, but his profaneness and lewdness had brought him into; and he was just upon the brink of hell itself: and so Jarchi paraphrases it,

"there was but a step between me and hell."

Aben Ezra observes, that the past is put for the future, "I shall be"; and then the meaning is, in a little or in a short time I shall be in complete misery; and so they are the words of one under consciousness of sin, despairing of mercy;

in the midst of the congregation and the assembly; that is, either be despised and neglected the instructions which were given in a public manner; or he committed all the evil he did openly; not only in company with wicked men, which he frequented, but even in the presence and before the people of God; yea, before the civil magistrates, the great sanhedrim, which is sometimes designed by the last word here used: or when he was in the house of God, attending public worship, his eyes were full of adultery, and his heart of impure lusts; and neither place, service, nor people of God, where he was, commanded any awe and reverence in him, nor in the least restrained his unclean thoughts and wanton desires; and which is mentioned as an aggravation of guilt. Or else the sense is, that his calamities and miseries were as public as his crimes; he was made a public example of, and all the people were witnesses of it; which served to spread his infamy, and make his punishment the more intolerable: both the sins and punishment of those that commit fornication with the whore of Rome will be public and manifest, Re 18:5.

Proverbs 5:15

Ver. 15. Drink waters out of thine own cistern,.... Arguments being used to dissuade from conversation with an adulterous woman, taken from the disgrace, diseases, poverty, and distress of mind on reflection, it brings a man to; the wise man proceeds to direct to marriage, as a proper antidote against it: take a wife and cleave to her, and enjoy all the pleasures and comforts of a marriage state. As every man formerly had his own cistern for the reception of water for his own use, 2Ki 18:31; so every man should have his own wife, and but one: and as drinking water quenches thirst, and allays heat; so the lawful enjoyments of the marriage bed quench the thirst of appetite, and allay the heat of lust; for which reason the apostle advises men to marry and not burn, **1Co 7:9**; and a man that is married should be content with his own wife, and not steal waters out of another cistern. The allusion may be to a law, which, Clemens of Alexandria {t} says, Plato had from the Hebrews; which enjoined husbandmen not to take water from others to water their lands, till they themselves had dug into the earth, called virgin earth, and found it dry and without water;

and running waters out of thine own well; the pure, chaste, and innocent pleasures of the marriage state, are as different from the embraces of an harlot, who is compared to a deep ditch and a narrow pit, Pr 23:27; as clear running waters of a well or fountain from the dirty waters of a filthy puddle; see **Pr 9:17**. Some interpret these words, and what follows, of persons enjoying with contentment the good things of life they have for the support of themselves and families; and of a liberal communication of them to the relief of proper objects; but not to spend their substance on harlots. Jarchi understands by the "cistern", the law of Moses: but it may be better applied to the Scriptures in general, from whence all sound doctrine flows, to the comfort and refreshment of the souls of men; and from whence all doctrine ought to be fetched, and not elsewhere.

{t} Stromat. l. 1. p. 274.

Proverbs 5:16

Ver. 16. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad,.... Or "shall abound", as the Targum; that is, streams of water from fountains; which Aben Ezra interprets of a multitude of children, namely, that are lawfully begotten: the "fountains" are the man and his wife in lawful marriage; the streams are their offspring lawfully procreated by them; which may be said to be "dispersed abroad", when being grown up they are disposed of in marriage in other families, and so become fountains to others, and public blessings;

[and] rivers of waters in the streets; meaning a numerous posterity as before; and such as a man is not ashamed publicly to own, whereas he is ashamed of such as are unlawfully begotten; but these are to his honour in the streets, and for public good; and particularly to those to whom they are given in marriage; see Isa 48:1. Jarchi interprets this of multiplying disciples, and of teaching them the law publicly, and of getting a name thereby; but it might be interpreted much better of spreading the doctrines of the Gospel, and of the public ministry and profession of that, for the good of others.

Proverbs 5:17

Ver. 17. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee. Or "they shall be thine own" {u}, as the Targum; meaning not the cistern, the well, or the wife, but the fountains and rivers, or the children; by a man's cleaving to his own wife, who is a chaste and virtuous woman, he is satisfied that the children he has by her are his own, and not another's; whereas if he has to do with a common harlot, it is uncertain whose children they are, she prostituting herself to many: it may be applied to the peculiar possession and steadfast retention of the truths of the Gospel, in opposition to all divers and strange doctrines propagated by others; see **Re 2:25**.

{u} Kl wyhy "erunt tui", Mercerus, Cocceius; "erunt tibi", Baynus; "existent tibi", Schultens.

Proverbs 5:18

Ver. 18. Let thy fountain be blessed,.... Thy wife; make her happy by keeping to her and from others; by behaving in a loving, affable, and respectful manner to her; by living comfortably with her, and providing well for her and her children: or reckon her a happiness, a blessing that God has bestowed; or

"thy fountain shall be blessed,"

as the Targum; that is, with a numerous offspring, which was always reckoned a blessedness, and was generally the happiness of virtuous women, when harlots were barren;

and rejoice with the wife of thy youth; taken to be a wife in youth, and lived with ever since; do not despise her, nor divorce her, even in old age, but delight in her company now as ever; carry it not morosely and churlishly to her, but express a joy and pleasure in her; see **Ec 9:9**. Jarchi interprets this of the law learned in youth; but it might be much better interpreted of the pure apostolic church of Christ, "the beulah", to whom her sons are married, Isa 62:4; to whom they should cleave with delight and pleasure, and not follow the antichristian harlot.

Proverbs 5:19

Ver. 19. [Let her be as] the loving hind and pleasant roe,.... That is, the wife of youth; let her always appear to thee as amiable and lovely as these creatures are; or let her be loved by thee as these are by princes and great men {w}, who used to keep them tame, keep them clean, wash, comb them, and adorn them, and play with them; or rather, as these creatures are loving to their mates, let thy love be single, chaste, pure, and fervent, as theirs; see **So 2:9**. The pure church of Christ is very different from the apostate church of Rome; the one is compared to a loving and lovely creature, innocent and chaste; the other to a cruel and savage beast, Re 13:1;

let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; even as it were to be inebriated therewith, and so as not to seek out elsewhere to strange women for satisfaction; see **So 1:13**. The church's breasts are the ordinances of the Gospel, which are said to be like young roes, and afford great pleasure, satisfaction, and refreshment to true believers, **So 4:5**;

and be thou ravished always with her love; greatly delighted with it, both in loving her and being loved by her; and let this always continue in old age as well as in youth; or now as well as formerly, and not for a short time, but for continuance: or, "err thou always in her love" {x}; if any error is committed by thee, let it be on the side of love, in loving her too much; better err in loving her than in loving a strange woman.

{w} "Cervus erat forma praestanti", &c. Virgil. Aeneid l. 7. {x} hgvt "errabis", Montanus, Raynus, Cocceius; "hallucinaberis", Vatablus; "errato", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Proverbs 5:20

Ver. 20. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman,.... Or "err with her" {y}; after all those inconveniences and miseries that follow upon a conversation with a harlot, and all those advantages of a marriage state set before thee; why wilt thou be, so foolish and mad as to have a fondness for an harlot and dote upon her, and neglect entering into a marriage state, or forsake the wife of youth? and yet though things are so clearly stated and aptly represented, and the expostulation made in the most tender and affectionate manner; it is suggested as if after all it would not be attended unto, but a harlot be preferred to a wife of youth, a filthy beast to a loving hind, and dirty puddles of water in a ditch to running streams from a well or fountain;

and embrace the bosom of a stranger? that is not thy wife; a description of unlawful love and impure embraces, which are dissuaded from.

{y} "Errares", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "aberrares", Cocceius.

Proverbs 5:21

Ver. 21. For the ways of a man [are] before the eyes of the Lord,.... Both good and bad; the ways of a chaste and virtuous man, who cleaves to his own wife and shuns the harlot, which are approved of by the Lord; and the ways of a lewd man, all the impure thoughts, desires, and contrivances of his mind, and all the steps he takes to commit lewdness, and all the filthy actions he is guilty of, these are all open and naked to the omniscient God: the adulterer seeks the twilight, and flatters himself with secrecy, not considering that the eye of God is upon him; there are many, that, were their filthy actions known to men, they would be ashamed of them; and this consideration greatly deters from them, and puts them upon secret ways of committing them; much more should the consideration of the divine omniscience weigh with them to avoid them; which is the argument here made use of;

and he pondereth all his goings; he not only sees them, but takes notice of them, and observes them, and ponders them in his mind, and lays them up there, in order to bring to an account for them hereafter; yea, he weighs them in the balance of justice, and will proportion the punishment unto them, according to the rules of it; when it must go ill with those that follow such lewd practices, Heb 13:4.

Proverbs 5:22

Ver. 22. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself,.... As in a snare or net, as Gersom observes; in which the adulterer is so entangled that he cannot extricate himself; he may fancy that when he grows old his lusts will be weakened, and he shall be able to get clear of them, and have repentance for them, but he will find himself mistaken; he will become but more and more hardened by them and confirmed in them, and will have neither will nor power to repent of them, and shake off those shackles with which he is bound: and it may be understood of the guilt and punishment of his sins; that the horrors of a guilty conscience shall seize him, there will be no need of any others to arrest him, these will do that office; or diseases shall come upon him for his sins, and bring him to the dust of death, and so to everlasting destruction;

and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins; which he has been all his life committing and twisting together, and made as it were cords of, which by constant practice become strong as such; with the guilt of which he is bound as a malefactor, and will be brought to justice, being reserved in these cords, as the angels that sinned in their chains, unto the judgment of the great day; the phrase denotes the strength of sin, the impotency of man to get rid of it, and the sure and inevitable ruin that comes by it.

Proverbs 5:23

Ver. 23. He shall die without instruction,.... Into the evil of sin, and the danger he is in, and so without repentance for it; for instruction is the means of repentance, and productive of it when blessed, Jer 31:19; but it is but just that those who have hated and rejected it in health and life, that when they come to die should have none given them about the evil of sin, the danger of their state, and the way of salvation; or rather "because of instruction" {z}; because they would not bear and receive, but neglected, rejected, and despised it, so Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom; or "without correction" {a}, or discipline and amendment by it;

and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray; being left to the exceeding great folly of his mind, he shall continue to go astray as he has done from God and his good ways, from the precepts of his law, and the rules of his word; going after his own heart's lusts, which will drown him in perdition. This "folly" may be understood either of his fornication and adultery, which is egregious folly; or of his imagining that he should be able to repent of sin when he pleased, and free himself from the bondage of it, and escape the punishment due unto it.

{z} rowm Nyab "eo quod non audivit eruditionem", Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "propter neglectam institutionem", Piscator; "propter non admissam disciplinam", Noldius, p. 181. {a} "Sine correctione et emendatione", Vatablus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 6

In this chapter the wise man dissuades from rash suretyship; exposes the sin of idleness; describes a wicked man; makes mention of seven things hateful to God; exhorts to attend to parental instructions and precepts, and cautions against adultery. Suretyship is described, **Pr 6:1**; and represented as a snare and a net, in which men are taken, **Pr 6:2**; and advice is given what to do in such a case, for safety in it, and deliverance from it, **Pr 6:3**; The sin of slothfulness is exposed, by observing the industry of the ant, **Pr 6:6**; by expostulating with the sluggard for his continuance in sloth, and by mimicking him, **Pr 6:9**; and by the poverty it brings upon him, **Pr 6:11**. Then a naughty wicked man is described, by his mouth, eyes, feet, fingers, and heart, whose ruin is sudden and inevitable, **Pr 6:11**. The seven things hateful to God are particularly named, **Pr 6:16**. And next the exhortation in some preceding chapters is reassumed, to attend to the instructions of parents; which will be found ornamental, pleasant, and useful, **Pr 6:20**. Especially to preserve from the lewd woman cautioned against, **Pr 6:24**; whose company is dissuaded from; on account of the extreme poverty and distress she brings persons to, and even danger of life, **Pr 6:26**; from the unavoidable ruin such come into, **Pr 6:27**; from the sin of uncleanness being greater than that of theft, **Pr 6:30**; from the folly the adulterer betrays; from the destruction of his soul, and the disgrace he brings on himself, **Pr 6:32**; and from the rage and irreconcilable offence of the husband of the adulteress, **Pr 6:34**.

Ver. 1. My son, if thou be surety for thy friend,.... To another; hast engaged thyself by promise or bond, or both, to pay a debt for him, if he is not able, or if required; or hast laid thyself under obligation to any, to see the debt of another paid;

[if] thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger; or "to" him {b}; whom thou knowest not, and to whom thou owest nothing; and hast given him thine hand upon it, as well as thy word and bond, that what such an one owes him shall be paid; a gesture used in suretyship for the confirmation of it, Pr 17:18; or, "for a stranger" {c} And the sense is, either if thou art become bound for a friend of thine, and especially if for a stranger thou knowest little or nothing of, this is a piece of rashness and weakness; or, as Gersom, if thou art a surety to thy friend for a stranger, this also is a great inadvertency and oversight. It is a rash and inconsiderate entering into suretyship that is here cautioned against; doing it without inquiring into, and having sufficient knowledge of the person engaged for; and without considering whether able to answer the obligation, if required, without hurting a man's self and family; otherwise suretyship may lawfully be entered into, and good be done by it, and no hurt to the surety himself and family. Jarchi interprets it of the Israelites engaging themselves to the Lord at Sinai, to keep his commandments.

{b} rzl "extraneo", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Cocceius, Schultens. {c} "Pro alieno", Tigurine version; "pro alio peregrino", Michaelis.

Proverbs 6:2

Ver. 2. Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth,.... Got into a snare out of which an escape is not easy; art no longer free, and thine own man, but under obligation to pay the debt if required; by the verbal agreement made and confirmed by striking hands, and this before witnesses;

thou art taken with the words of thy mouth; as in a net, and held fast therein and thereby, and cannot get loose without paying the debt, if the debtor does not, or without the leave of the creditor.

Proverbs 6:3

Ver. 3. Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself,.... Take the following advice, as the best that can be given in such circumstances, in order to be freed from such an obligation, or to be safe and easy under it;

when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; or, "because or seeing thou art fallen into the hand of thy friend,"

as the Targum; or

"though thou art," &c.

as Aben Ezra; which may be understood either of the creditor to whom a man is bound, or of the debtor for whom he is bound, or of both; for a surety is in the hands or power of both: he is in the hands of the creditor, who may demand payment of the debt of him; and he is in the hands of the debtor, who, if a careless or crafty and deceitful man, may leave him to the payment of it. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are,

"for thou art come into the hands of evil men for thy friend;"

and the Syriac version,

"seeing for thy friend thou art fallen into the hands of thine enemy;"

and therefore must make the best of it thou canst, and in the following way:

go, humble thyself; that is, to the creditor, prostrate thyself before him; lie down upon the ground to be trodden on, as the word {d} signifies; fall down on thine knees, and entreat him to discharge thee from the bond, or give longer time for payment, if up; for thou art in his hands, and there is no carrying it with a high hand or a haughty spirit to him; humility, and not haughtiness, is most likely to be serviceable in such a case;

and make sure thy friend; for whom thou art become a surety, as the Syriac and Arabic versions add; solicit him, as the former of these versions render it; stimulate him, as the Septuagint; stir him up, urge him to pay off the debt quickly, and discharge the bond, or give thee security and indemnity from it. Or, "magnify thy friend" {e}; that is, to the creditor; speak of him as a very able and responsible man, and as an honest and faithful one, that will pay in due time. Some render it "magnify", and speak well of the debtor to thy friend, which may please and appease him: or, "multiply thy friends" {f}; get as many as thou canst to intercede for thee, and get thee discharged from the obligation by some means or another; to this purpose Jarchi.

{d} oprth "praebe conculcandum te", Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis. {e}

Kyer bhr "evehe proximum tuum", Tigurine version; "magnifica", so some in Vatablus. {f} "Multiplica amicos tuos", so some in Bayne.

Proverbs 6:4

Ver. 4. Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids. Until the above things are done; which denotes of what consequence and importance they are; and that persons in such circumstances should not be careless, dilatory, and unconcerned; but should use great diligence, and leave no stone unturned, or method untried, to extricate themselves; see Ps 132:4.

Proverbs 6:5

Ver. 5. Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand [of the hunter],.... As such a creature, which is very swift, when it is got into the hand of the hunter, will strive and struggle to get out; so should a man try all ways and means to get out of his suretyship engagements, especially when he finds himself liable to danger by it; this he should do "immediately" and "out of hand" {g}, as the phrase here used sometimes signifies with the Jewish writers;

and as a bird from the hand of the fowler; another metaphor, signifying the same thing.

{g} dym "statim", De Dieu; "subito", Noldius, p. 859. No. 1630. "ilico, repente", so some in Eliae Tishbi, p. 143.

Proverbs 6:6

Ver. 6. Go to the ant, thou sluggard,.... That art become surety for another, and got into a snare and net, and yet takest no pains to get out. Or this may be directed, not to the surety, but the debtor; who, through his slothfulness, has contracted debts, and uses no industry to be in a capacity to pay them. Or, it may be, this has no connection with the former; but the wise man proceeds to a new subject, and to dissuade from idleness, which brings ruin on families, and leads to all sin; and, for the instruction of idle and slothful men, proposes the example of the ant, and sends them to it to learn industry of it {h};

consider her ways; what diligence and industry it uses in providing its food;

which, though a small, weak, feeble creature, yet will travel over flints and stones, climb trees, enter into towers, barns, cellars, places high and low, in search of food; never hinder, but help one another in carrying their burdens; prepare little cells to put their provisions in, and are so built as to secure them from rain; and if at any time their corn is wet, they bring out and dry it, and bite off the ends of it, that it may not grow. These, with others, are taken notice of by Frantzius {i}; and some of them by Gersom on the place;

and be wise; learn wisdom of it, and be wiser than that, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions: this is a mortification of proud men, that would be reckoned wise, to be sent to so despicable a creature to get wisdom from.

{h} So Horace gives it as an example of labour----"Parvula (nam exemplo est) magni formica laboris", &c. Sermon. l. 1. Sat. 1. v. 33, 34, 35. & Phocylides, v. 152-159. {i} Hist. Animal. Sacr. par. 5. c. 8. Vid. Aelian. Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 25. & l. 6. c. 43.

Proverbs 6:7

Ver. 7. Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler. None to guide and direct her what to do; nor any to overlook her, to see that she does aright, or to oblige her to work, and keep her to it; nor any to call her to an account, and correct her for doing amiss; and nevertheless diligent and industrious, doing everything of herself, by the instinct of nature, readily and willingly: and yet how slothful are men; who, besides the dictates of nature, reason, and conscience, have parents, masters, ministers, and magistrates, to guide, direct, exhort, instruct, and enforce! so Aristotle {k} says of the ant, that it is
agarcov, without any ruler or governor.

{k} Hist. de Animal. l. 1. c. 1.

Proverbs 6:8

Ver. 8. Provideth her meat in the summer,.... Against the winter, of which it is mindful, when it never comes out of its place, having in the summer time got a sufficiency laid up in cells for its use: she toils in the heat of summer to get in her provision for the winter, being sensible that nothing is to be gotten then; she works at it night and day while the season lasts; so diligent is it in laying up its stores at the proper opportunity {l};

[and] gathereth her food in the harvest; the time when corn is ripe, and is shed on the earth; this it gathereth, and lays up in its repositories against a time of need. The seeds it gathers and lays up; it bites off the chit or bud end of them, that they may not grow, as Pliny {m} and others observe, but be a winter store; hence its name in Hebrew is "nemalah", from "namal", "to cut off"; it being done by biting. Yea, according to Aelianus {n}, it seems to have some sense of futurity with respect to famine, which being near, it will work exceeding hard to lay up food, fruits, and seed; and, according to Virgil {o} and others, it seems to presage old age, and therefore provides against it. An instruction this to work, while persons are in health, and have youth on their side; that they may have not only a sufficiency for present use, but to lay up against a time of sickness and old age. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add,

"or go to the bee, and learn what a worker she is, and what an admirable work she performs; whose labours kings and private persons use for health: she is desirable to all, and famous; and though weak in strength, honouring wisdom is advanced."

But this is not in the Hebrew text; but perhaps being written in the margin of some copy of the Septuagint as a parallel instance, was by some unskilful copier put into the text of the Greek version, from whence the Arabic version has taken it; it crept in very early, for Clemens of Alexandria makes mention of it {p}.

{l} "Ac veluti ingentem formicae farris acervum", &c. Virgil. Aeneid. l. 4. v. 402, &c. So Horat. Satyr. 1. v. 36. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 30. Plutarch. vol. 2. de Solert. Animal. p. 968. {n} Vat. Hist. l. 1. c. 12. {o} "Inopi metuens formica senectae", Georgic. l. 1. v. 186. So Horace, ut supra. Juvenal. Satyr. 6. v. 360. {p} Stromat. l. 1. p. 286.

Proverbs 6:9

Ver. 9. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?.... Or "lie" {q} in bed, indulging in sloth and ease; while the industrious ant is busy in getting in its provisions, even by moonlight, as naturalists {r} observe;

when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? and be about thy lawful calling? doing the duties of religion, and the business of life; providing things honest in the sight of all men; things necessary for thyself and family, and wherewith to do good to others; exercising a conscience void of offence both to God and men. Time should not be slept away, to the neglect of the affairs of life, nor of the concerns of the immortal soul and a future state; men should not be slothful in things temporal or spiritual: whatever may be the proper time to awake and arise out of sleep in a morning, which seems to be according to a man's circumstances, health and business; it is always high time for the sinner to awake out of the sleep of sin, and arise from the dead; and for the drowsy saint to arise out of his lethargy and carnal security.

{q} bkvt "jacebis", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus; "cubabis", Piscator, Cocceius. {r} Aelian. de Animal. l. 4. c. 43.

Proverbs 6:10

Ver. 10. [Yet] a little sleep, a little slumber,.... Or, "little sleeps, little slumbers" {s}. These are the words of the sluggard, in answer to the call of him to awake and arise, desiring he might not be disturbed, but be suffered to sleep on longer: there is a very beautiful climax or gradation in the words, aptly expressing the disposition and actions of a sluggard; he first desires a "few sleeps" more, some sound sleeps one after another; which is quite agreeable to his character: and if he cannot be allowed them, then he requests a "few slumbers" at least, some dozings, till he can get himself thoroughly awake; and if these cannot be granted, yet he prays however that this might be admitted,

a little folding of the hands to sleep; or, "to lie down" {t}; a few tossings and tumblings upon the bed more, with his hands folded about his breast; a sleeping gesture, and the posture of sluggards. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "a little thou wilt embrace the breast with the hands"; and the Syriac version, "and a little thou wilt put thine hand upon thy breast". The Jewish commentators understand this as a direction and command to sleep and slumber but little, since a little sleep is sufficient for nature; or otherwise poverty will come, &c. but the former sense is best.

{s} twmwnt jem twnv jem "parvis somnis, parvis dormitationibus", Pagninus; "pauculis somnis, pauculis dormitationibus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {t} bkvl "cubando", Junius & Tremellius; "cubare", Piscator; "ad cubandum", Cocceius.

Proverbs 6:11

Ver. 11. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth,.... Either swiftly and suddenly, as a traveller makes haste to get to his journey's end, and comes upon his family or friends at an unawares; or though he moves gradually, by slow paces and silent steps, yet surely: and so it signifies that poverty should come upon the sluggard very quickly, and before he was aware: and though it might come by degrees, yet it would certainly come;

and thy want as an armed man; or, "thy wants as a man of shield" {u}: denoting many wants that should come rushing in one upon another, like a man armed with shield and buckler; appearing with great terror and force, not to be resisted. It denotes the unavoidableness of being brought into penury and want by sloth, and the terribleness of such a condition. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, add,

"but if thou art not slothful, thy harvest shall come as a fountain (as the inundation of a fountain, Arabic); but want shall flee as an evil racer (as an evil man, Arabic; far from thee, Vulgate Latin):"

but this is not in the Hebrew text.

{u} Nnm vyak "tanquam vir clypei", Montanus; "vir clypeatus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Proverbs 6:12

Ver. 12. A naughty person, a wicked man,.... Or, "a man of Belial, a man of iniquity" {w}. The former signifies an unprofitable man, a man good for nothing, that is of no use to God or man; or one that is lawless, that has thrown off the yoke of the law, and will not be subject to it; Belial is the name of the devil; and here it may design such as are his children, and will do his lusts: the latter phrase signifies one that is wholly given up to work wickedness. The characters well agree with the anomov, the lawless one, the man of sin and son of perdition, antichrist, **2Th 2:3**. Who

walketh with a froward mouth; speaking perverse things, things contrary to the light of nature and reason, to law and Gospel; uttering lies, and deceit, and blasphemies against God and man; to which he has used himself, and in which he continues, as the word "walketh" signifies: so antichrist has a mouth opened in blasphemies against God and his saints, Re 13:5.

{w} Nwa vya leylb "homo Belijahal, vir iniquitatis", Montanus, Vatablus, Baynus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 6:13

Ver. 13. He winketh with his eyes,.... Not through natural infirmity, but purposely and with design; with one of his eyes, as Aben Ezra, as is usual with such persons: it is the air and gesture of a sneering and deceitful man, who gives the wink to some of his friends, sneering at the weakness of another in company; or as signifying to them some secret design of his against another, which he chooses not to declare in any other way;

he speaketh with his feet; the motions of the feet have a language; the stamping of the feet expresses rage; here it seems to intend the giving of a him to another, by privately pressing his foot with his, when he should be silent or should speak, or do this or the other thing he would have him do;

he teacheth with his fingers; by stretching them out or compressing them; and so showing either scorn and contempt {x}, or rage and fury. The whole of it seems to design the secret, cunning, artful ways, which wicked men have to convey their meanings to one another, without being understood by other persons; they have a language to themselves, which they express by the motions of their eyes, feet, and fingers: and this character of art and cunning, dissimulation and deceit, fitly agrees with the man of sin, **2Th 2:10**. So mimics are said to speak with their hands; some have been famous in this way {y}.

{x} "In hunc intende digitum", Plauti Pseudolus, Act. 4. Sc. 7. v. 45. "----aliis dat digito literas", Ennius. {y} Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. de Consul. Mallii Paneg. v. 311.

Proverbs 6:14

Ver. 14. Frowardness [is] in his heart,.... Or perverse things; evil habits and principles of sin; all manner of wickedness, errors and heresies; things contrary to right reason, repugnant to the will and law of God, and the reverse of sound doctrine; all evil thoughts and evil things; see Mt 15:19;

he deviseth mischief continually; against his neighbours, and especially against good men; he is continually planning schemes, contriving methods, ways, and means, how to disturb, distress, and ruin men; being a true child of Belial, or of the devil, his heart is the forge where he is continually framing wickedness in one shape or another; and the ground which he is always ploughing up and labouring at to bring forth sin and wickedness, and with which it is fruitful;

he soweth discord; or "strifes" {z}: the Syriac version adds, "between two"; which Jarchi interprets between a man and his Maker; rather between a man and his neighbour; between one friend and another; between husband and wife, parents and children, brethren and brethren, magistrates and subjects; between kings and princes of the earth in which sort of work the man of sin, antichrist, has been very busy. The Targum is, "he casteth out strifes", as firebrands among men. The words in the Hebrew text are, "he sendeth out discord", or "strife" {a}; these are the messengers sent out by him to make mischief.

{z} Myndm "contentiones", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus; "jurgia", V. L. "lites", Baynus, Cocceius; "litigia", Schultens. {a} xlvy "mittet", Pagninus, Montanus; "immittit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Schultens, Michaelis.

Proverbs 6:15

Ver. 15. Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly,.... Unthought of and unexpected: he that deviseth mischief to others secretly shall have no warning of his own ruin, nor time and means of preventing it; the destruction of antichrist will be sudden, and of all wicked men at the coming of Christ, **1Th 5:3**;

suddenly shall he be broken without remedy; or, "and there shall be no healing" {b}: his bones will be broken to pieces, and there will be no cure for him; or he shall be like an earthen vessel, which, when broke, cannot be put together again. The ruin of wicked men is sudden, inevitable, and irreparable; so antichrist will "come to his end, and none shall help him", Da 11:45.

{b} aprm Nyaw "et non sanitas", Pagninus, Montanus; "curatio", Junius & Tremellius; "medicina", Piscator, Cocceius.

Proverbs 6:16

Ver. 16. These six [things] doth the Lord hate,.... That is, the six following, which are all to be found in a man of Belial, a wicked man before described. There are other things besides these that God hates, and indeed more so; as sins against the first table, which more immediately strike at his being, horror, and glory; these being such as are against the second table, but are mentioned, as more especially appearing in the character of the above person; and must be hateful to God, as contrary to his nature, will, and law;

yea, seven [are] an abomination unto him; or, "the abomination of his soul" {c}; what his soul abhors, or he abhors from his very heart: meaning not seven others, but one more along with the six, which make seven; a like way of speaking, see in Pr 30:15. Nor is the word "abomination" to be restrained to the "seventh", or "hatred" to the "sixth"; but they are all to be supposed to be hateful and abominable to the Lord; though some think the cardinal number is put for the ordinal, "seven" for the "seventh"; as if the seventh, which is sowing discord among brethren, was of all the most abominable, **Pr 6:19**; it being what was last mentioned in the character of the wicked man, **Pr 6:14**; and which seems to have given occasion to, and for the sake of which this enumeration is made.

{c} wvpn twbewt "abominatio ejus animae", Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 6:17

Ver. 17. A proud look,.... Or, "eyes elated" {d}; scorning to look down upon others; or looking upon them with disdain; or reckoning them as unworthy to be looked upon, having an high opinion of their own worth and merit. Pride is the first of the hateful things mentioned; it being the first sin committed, as is probable, the sin of the angels, and of the first man; and is a predominant evil in human nature, and is directly opposite to God and to his nature, and against which he sets himself; for "he resisteth the proud", **Jas 4:6**; the pride of the heart shows itself in the eyes, or by the looks of a man; Gersom says, the phrase denotes impudence and haughtiness;

a lying tongue; that is the second of the hateful things; a tongue speaking falsehood, knowingly and willingly, with an intention to deceive others; to hurt the character of a neighbour, or to flatter a friend, is a most detestable evil; it ought to be so to men, it must be so to God, who is a God of truth: nor is there anything in which a man more resembles the devil, who is the father of lies;

and hands that shed innocent blood; human blood; and that of persons who have not been guilty of any capital sin, for which they ought to die by the laws of God or men, and yet shed or poured out as common water; such hands must be defiled, and such men must be hateful to God, they destroying his image, and being like to the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning. These "three" sins are plainly to be seen in the son of Belial, antichrist, who exalts himself above all that is called God, the kings and princes of the earth; he and his followers speak lies in hypocrisy; and is the whore that is drunk with the blood of the saints, **2Th 2:4**.

{d} twmr Mynye "oculi clati", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

Proverbs 6:18

Ver. 18. An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,.... Or, "thoughts of wickedness" {e}; which are framed and formed in the heart: and this being the source and fountain of all wickedness, is placed in the midst of these hateful and abominable things; See Gill on "Pr 6:14"; evil thoughts and designs, both against God and men, are intended, which are forged and fabricated in the wicked heart of man; and may respect the depths of Satan in the antichristian beast of Rome, **Re 2:24**;

feet that be swift in running to mischief; to commit all manner of sin with greediness, especially murder; see **Pr 1:16**.

{e} Nwa twbvxm "cogitationes iniquitatis", Montanus; "cogitationes vanitatis", Cocceius.

Proverbs 6:19

Ver. 19. A false witness [that] speaketh lies,.... Or, "that speaketh lies, [even] a false witness" {f}; and so this is distinguished from a lying tongue, the second of these evils: this is the sin of bearing false witness against one's neighbour, a breach of the eighth command. It may be rendered, "he that bloweth lies" {g}; that raises lies, and spreads them abroad, and swears to them, to the damage of others. This makes the sixth; and the seventh follows, and him that soweth discord among brethren; whether in a natural relation, or in a civil society, or in a religious community.

{f} So Vatablus, Mercerus, &c. {g} Mybzk xypy "qui efflat mendacia", Piscator, Michaelis.

Proverbs 6:20

Ver. 20. My son, keep thy father's commandment,.... These are not the words of David to Solomon continued from **Pr 4:4**; but the words of Solomon to his son; and not to his son only, in a strict natural relation, but to everyone that came to him for and put himself under his instruction; and to everyone that stood in such a relation to a religious father; for not the divine Being, the Father of all, is here meant, according to some Jewish writers; though the commandment no doubt is the commandment of God taught by godly parents; or such a system of precepts that is founded upon and agrees unto the revealed will of God, and which being so should be laid up and kept in the heart, and not forgotten; and should be observed and attended to and obeyed throughout the whole course of life, as if it was the commandment of God himself; and indeed it is no other than that which pious parents train up their children in the knowledge of, instil into them, and urge upon them the observance of;

and forsake not the law of thy mother; the same as before, and which is mentioned to show that the same respect is to be had to a mother as to a father, the commandment and law of them being the same, and they standing in the same relation; which yet children are apt to make a difference in, and while they stand in awe of their father and his precepts, slight their mother and her directions, which ought not to be. Some understand this of the congregation of Israel, as some Jewish writers; and others of the church of God, the mother of us all.

Proverbs 6:21

Ver. 21. Bind them continually upon thine heart,.... Not upon the head or arm, as the words of the law were to be bound, **De 6:3**; to which there seems to be an allusion; and which may confirm the sense of the words given, that this respects the law of God itself, and the precepts of it, instructed in by parents; but they should be bound upon the heart, and have an abiding place in the understanding, affections, memory, and will;

[and] tie them about thy neck; as an ornament, instead of a necklace of pearl, or chains of gold; they should be so far from being thought burdensome and troublesome, that they should be reckoned comely and graceful; see **Pr 1:9**.

Proverbs 6:22

Ver. 22. When thou goest, it shall lead thee,.... The law of God taught by parents; this directs man in the path of duty and business of life; teaches him what way to shun, and which to walk in; it leads out of the paths of sin, and into the way in which he should go, which is most conducive to his good, and to the glory of God; it will lead him safely, so that he shall not stumble, **Pr 3:3**;

when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; from terrifying dreams, evil spirits, dangers by fire or thieves; one that observes it conscientiously may lie down and sleep, secure of the guardianship of divine Providence, and not fear any evil; or "shall watch over thee" {h} in the night season;

and [when] thou awakest, it shall talk with thee; familiarly; and instruct what to do, and how to behave the day following; or "it shall go out with thee" {i}, into the fields for a morning's walk, and assist in meditation. Jarchi interprets this of sleeping by death, and of awaking at the resurrection of the dead.

{h} Kyle rmvt "excubabit apud te", Cocceius; "excubias aget super te", Michaelis, Schultens. {i} Kxwvt ayh "illa ipsa spatiabitur tecum", Schultens.

Proverbs 6:23

Ver. 23. For the commandment [is] a lamp,.... The law of God is a lamp or candle to see to work by and to walk by; it enlightens the eyes and directs the feet, and makes working more pleasant, and walking more comfortable; and indeed wit, bout it a man knows not rightly what to do or where he should walk, or where he is walking; see Ps 119:105;

and the law [is] light; it makes things clear and manifest, what is right and what is wrong; it enlightens the eyes of the understanding, whereby persons come to see both their sin and their duty; and it directs them to avoid the one and do the other; see Ps 19:8;

and reproofs of instruction [are] the way life; kind reproofs given by parents agreeable to the word of God, which instruct what should be shunned and what should be performed, when attended to, put men in the way of an honourable and useful life; and are the means of preserving them from a scandalous and useless one.

Proverbs 6:24

Ver. 24. To keep thee from the evil woman,.... This is one use of the profit arising from attending to the instructions of parents, and to the law of God, as taught by them; to preserve from fornication and adultery, one of its precepts expressly forbidding adultery and all corporeal uncleanness; and the whole of it directing to an observance of all duties respecting God and our neighbour, which requires diligence and industry, and prevents idleness, that inlet to all sin, and especially to uncleanness {k};

from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman; the same with the evil woman, the lewd and adulterous one; see **Pr 2:16**. Jarchi interprets this of idolatry; the character well agrees with the idolatrous church of Rome, or antichrist, represented by a whore,
Re 17:1; as this woman is called "the woman of evil" {l}, for so it may be rendered, one very evil, given up and abandoned to sin; so antichrist is called "the man of sin", **2Th 2:3**; and as this woman is said to have the "smoothness of a strange tongue" {m}, as the words may be translated, and are by the Targum; so the religion of this false church is delivered in a strange language the people understand not, by which they are kept in ignorance and deception; now the word of God read and explained in the mother tongue, and especially the Gospel part of it, the doctrine of wisdom, is a means of preserving persons from the errors and heresies, superstition and idolatry, of the church of Rome, and from being carried away with their false glosses, and gaudy worship, and all its deceivable ways of unrighteousness.

{k} "Otia si tollas periere cupidinis arcus", Ovid. de Remed. Amor. l. 1. v. 139. Quaeritur Aegistheus, "quare sit factus adulter?--in promptu causa est, desidiosus erat". Ibid. v. 161, 162. {l} er tvam "a muliere mali", Baynus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {m} hyrkn Nwvl tqlxm "a lenitate linguae extraneae", Montanus; "a laevitate linguae peregrinae", Michaelis; "ex lubrica glabritie linguae peregrinae", Schultens.

Proverbs 6:25

Ver. 25. Lust not after her beauty in thine heart,.... Do not look upon it with the eye, nor dwell upon it in the thought; the one will lead on to and kindle last in the heart, and the other will cherish it and blow it up into a flame; and lust thus conceived and nourished in the heart is no other than committing adultery, **Mt 5:28**;

neither let her take thee with her eyelids; let her not take thee from instruction with them, so Aben Ezra, from attending to that; or let her not take thy wisdom from thee, so Jarchi; or rather let her not take thee as in a net, with the sparkling of her eyes, with the wanton and amorous glances of them; so the Syriac version, "let her not captivate thee", &c. which applied to the antichristian church, may signify the outward pomp and grandeur of it, its pretensions to antiquity, to the apostolic see, to infallibility, miracles, great devotion, &c. which are taking to men, and are the Circean cup with which she bewitches and allures, Re 17:4. The Targum is,

"let her not seduce thee," &c.

Proverbs 6:26

Ver. 26. For by means of a whorish woman [a man is brought] to a piece of bread,.... To be glad of one, and to beg for one, for the least morsel; it is expressive of the extreme poverty and want which harlots bring men to, who strip them of all their substance, and then send them going to get their bread as they can; thus the prodigal, having spent his substance with harlots, was so reduced as to desire the husks which swine ate, Lu 15:13; so spiritual fornication or idolatry leaves men without bread for their souls, brings them into spiritual poverty, and even to desperation and death;

and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life; or "soul" {n}; not content with his precious substance, his jewels, his gold and silver; having stripped him of his goods and livelihood, though some think that is here intended; she lays snares for him, and draws him into those evils which bring him into the hands of her husband, who avenges himself by slaying the adulterer; or into the hands of the civil magistrate, by whom this sin of adultery was punished with death; nay, is the occasion of the ruin of his precious and immortal soul to all eternity: the precious souls of men are part of the wares of antichrist, Re

18:13.

{n} vpn "animam", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Proverbs 6:27

Ver. 27. Can a man take fire in his bosom,.... A whore is compared to fire, and is so called by the poets {o}; and it is a saying of Pythagoras,

"it is a like thing to fall into fire and into a woman {p};"

the Hebrew words va, "esh", "fire", and hvya, "ishah", "a woman", have some affinity in sound; and the phrase of taking it "into the bosom" fitly expresses the impure embraces of a harlot;

and his clothes not be burned? he cannot, it is impossible; and equally vain is it to think that a man can commit whoredom and it not be known, or he not hurt by it in his name and substance, or in his body, soul, and life.

{o} Plauti Bacehides, Act. 4. Sc. 9. v. 15. "Accede ad ignem hunc", Terent. Eunuehus, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 5. {p} to eiv pur kai eiv gunaika, apud Maximum, Eclog. c. 39.

Proverbs 6:28

Ver. 28. Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?] He cannot; if he sets his feet upon them, and continues them ever so little on them, they will be burnt, and much more if he walks upon them; and so if a man gives way to the burning lusts of his heart after a whorish woman, and commits adultery with her, though not with frequency, he will not escape punishment in one shape or another; and much more if he continues such a lewd course of life; such practices are extremely dangerous {q}, and there is no possibility of being unhurt by them: see Job 31:12; the lake of fire and brimstone, everlasting burnings, will be the portion of those that commit fornication with the whore of Rome, Re 14:10.

{q} "Periculosae plenum opus aleae tractas: et incedis per ignes suppositos cineri doloso", Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode. 1.

Proverbs 6:29

Ver. 29. So he that goeth into his neighbour's wife,.... To converse with her, or lie with her, as the Targum; for it means not barely going into her house or chamber, or into her company, though without any ill design at first, which yet may be dangerous; but committing adultery with her, as this phrase is often used, Ge 19:31;

whosoever toucheth her; by impure dalliances, and especially by carnal copulation with her, in which sense it is used, See Gill on "1Co 7:1";

shall not be innocent; or free {r} from disgrace and infamy, from loss of substance or health; from punishment in this life, either by the jealous husband or civil magistrate; and in the world to come by the Lord himself; for "whoremongers and adulterers God will judge",
Heb 13:4.

{r} xqny al "non insons, vel immunis", Schultens; so Gejerus.

Proverbs 6:30

Ver. 30. [Men] do not despise a thief, if he steal,.... They do not discommend or reproach him for it, or fix a mark of infamy upon him, or expose him to public shame by whipping him; but rather excuse him and pity him when it appears what his case is, what put him upon it, and that he had no other intention in it than to do as follows;

to satisfy his soul; his craving appetite for food, having nothing to eat, nor no other way of getting any: the words should be supplied thus, "for he does this to satisfy his soul"; or, as the Syriac version, "for he steals to satisfy his soul": and so they are a reason why men do not despise him, nor use him ill, because it is done with no other view; not with a wicked design to hurt his neighbour, nor with a covetous intent to increase his own substance in an unlawful way, but only to satisfy nature in distress; and another reason follows, or the former confirmed;

when he is hungry; or for "he is hungry" {s}; pressed with famine; the temptation is great, nature urges him to it; and though it is criminal, men in such cases wilt not bear hard upon him for it. The Targum is, "it is not to be wondered at in a thief that he should steal to satisfy his soul when it is hungry."

The Vulgate Latin version is,

"it is not a great fault when anyone steals, for he steals to fill a hungry soul;"

it is a fault, but it is not a very heinous one, at least it is not so heinous as adultery, for the sake of which it is mentioned, and with which it is compared: the design of the instance is to show the adultery is far greater than that; and yet in our age we see that the one is severely punished even with death for trifling things, when the other goes unpunished.

{s} ber yk "quia esurit", Cocceius, Michaelis.

Proverbs 6:31

Ver. 31. But [if] he be found, he shall restore sevenfold,.... According to the law in Ex 22:1; in case of theft double was to be restored, if the theft was found alive in his hand; and in some cases fourfold and fivefold. Aben Ezra observing that double and fivefold being near together in the law, joins them, and so makes sevenfold. Some think Solomon has reference to a law in other nations, which obliged to a sevenfold restoration; or that the penalty was increased in his time, but neither appears; rather the meaning is, that a thief should make restoration according to law as often as he is found guilty, be it seven times, or seventy times seven, Mt 18:21; or the sense is, that be should make perfect restoration, full restitution as the law requires: but then this finding: him is not to be understood of finding him in the fact, stealing to satisfy hunger, for then to insist upon a legal restitution, as it is incompatible with such a man's circumstances, so would contradict what is before said, that such an one is not usually reproached and found fault with; but the sense is, if it should be found otherwise, or it should be found that he has food to satisfy his soul, as Gersom observes, and has no need to steal; or if he is found in a man's house, then he shall make restitution as the law directs, even a full one, Ex 22:2;

he shall give all the substance of his house: to pay the sevenfold, or to make full restitution; nay, if necessary, he himself may be sold, as the above law requires.

Proverbs 6:32

Ver. 32. [But] whoso committeth adultery with a woman,.... Which is a greater degree of theft than the former, it being the stealing of another man's wife;

lacketh understanding; or "an heart" {t}; the thief lacks bread, and therefore steals, but this man lacks wisdom, and therefore acts so foolish a part; the one does it to satisfy hunger, the other a brutish lust;

he [that] doeth it destroyeth his own soul; is liable to have his life taken away by the husband of the adulteress; so according to Solon's law {u} the adulterer taken in the act might be killed by the husband: or by the civil magistrate; for according to the law of. Moses he was to die, either to be strangled or stoned, See Gill on "Joh 8:5"; and besides, he not only ruins the natural faculties of his soul, besotting, corrupting, and depraving that, giving his heart to a whore, but brings eternal destruction on it; yet so foolish is he, though it issues in the ruin of his precious soul; "he does this" {w}, for so the first part of this clause, which stands last in the original text, may be rendered.

{t} bl rox "deficit corde", Pagninus, Montanus; "caret corde", Mercerus, Gejerus; so Michaelis. {u} Plutarch. in Vita Solon. p. 90. {w} hnvey awh "ipse faeiet illud", Montanus; "ipse faciet hoc", so some in Vatablus; "is id faciet, sive facit", Cocceius; "ille facit id", Michaelis; "is patrabit illud", Schultens.

Proverbs 6:33

Ver. 33. A wound and dishonour shall he get,.... A wound, stroke, or blow, either from the husband of the strumpet, as was often the case {x} in later times; or from the civil magistrate, being ordered by him to be beaten {y} or stoned; or from God himself inflicting diseases on him; see Ge 12:17; where the same word is used as here: and "dishonour" from men; for though they do not despise a thief in circumstances before related, yet they will despise an adulterer, and speak reproachfully of him, whenever they have occasion to make mention of him;

and his reproach shall not be wiped away; as long as he lives, though his life may be spared; yea, it shall even continue after death; and though he may repent of his sin and reform, as in the case of David.

{x} "Secat ille cruentis verberibus", Juvenal. Satyr. 10. v. 316. Vid. A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 17. c. 18. Horat. Satyr. l. 1. Sat. 2. v. 41, 42. {y} Valer. Maximus, l. 6. c. 1. s. 13.

Proverbs 6:34

Ver. 34. For jealousy [is] the rage of a man,.... Fills a man with rage against him of whom he is jealous; which keeps boiling within him, till he has an opportunity of venting it: and very severe it is; it is strong as death, and cruel as the grave;

therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance; when he has an opportunity of avenging himself; whenever he finds the adulterer in his house, or catches him and his wife in bed together, he spares not to take away his life, and sometimes the life of both of them; instances of this nature history furnishes us with: or he will spare no cost and pains to prosecute him before a civil magistrate, and bring him to public justice; prayers and entreaties, bribes and gifts, wilt be of no avail, as follows.

Proverbs 6:35

Ver. 35. He will not regard any ransom,.... So that his case is much worse than, a thief's; if he is taken, he makes restitution according to law, and he is freed, and no more is said and done to him; and, at most, it is but parting with all the goods in his house; but in this case it will not do. In the Hebrew text it is, "he will not accept the face of any ransom" {z}; that is, as the Targum paraphrases it,

"he will not accept the face of anyone that gives a gift:"

he will have no respect unto him for the sake of the gift; whatever gift is offered, be it what it will, for the ransom of his life from death, it will be disregarded;

neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts; increase them, and keep continually giving; nothing but the life of the adulterer will satisfy him, which he will either take away himself, or obtain it in a way of legal prosecution. How foolish therefore is the man that will expose his name and credit, his health and substance, his life in this world, and his soul in another, to utter ruin, for the sake of gratifying a sordid lust! This may be interpreted of God, who is a jealous God in matters of worship, and will not suffer idolatry to go unpunished, which is spiritual adultery.

{z} ynp avy al "non accipiet facies", Montanus; "non acceptabit faciem ullius redemptionis", Mercerus, Gejerus; "ullius lytri", Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 7

The sum of this chapter is to exhort men to attend to the doctrines and precepts of Wisdom, in order to avoid the adulterous woman; the exhortation to keep them with care, affection, and delight, in order to answer the end, is in **Pr 7:1**. A story is told, of Solomon's own knowledge, of a young man ensnared and ruined by a lewd woman; it begins **Pr 7:6**. The young man is described as foolish, and as throwing himself in the way of temptation, **Pr 7:7**; the harlot that met him is described by her attire, her subtlety, her voice, her inconstancy, her impudence, and pretensions to piety, **Pr 7:10**. The arguments she made use of to prevail upon him to go with her are taken partly from the elegance of her bed, the softness of it, and its sweet perfume, and satiety of love to be enjoyed in it, **Pr 7:15**; and partly from the absence of her husband, who was gone a long journey, and had made provision for it for a certain time, **Pr 7:19**. By which arguments she prevailed upon him to his utter ruin: which is illustrated by the similes of an ox going to the slaughter, a fool to the stocks, and a bird to the snare, **Pr 7:21**. And the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to hearken to the words of Wisdom, and to avoid the ways and paths of the harlot, by which many and mighty persons have been ruined; they being the direct road to hell and death, **Pr 7:24**.

Ver. 1. My son, keep my words,.... Doctrines and instructions; which, as a father to a son, or a master to his scholars, he had delivered; these he would have him observe and attend to;

and lay up my commandments with thee: as a treasure in his heart, to be brought out upon occasion; to be kept as valuable, and made use of as an antidote against and a preservative from sinning; see Ps 119:11. The

Septuagint and Arabic versions add, what is not in the Hebrew text,

"son, honour the Lord, and thou shalt be strong;"

the Arabic adds,

"and he shall strengthen thee; and fear none besides him."

Proverbs 7:2

Ver. 2. Keep my commandments and live,.... Not the commandments of the law only, but the commandments of Christ; and even the doctrines of Christ are so called, as faith in him, and love to the saints, **1Jo 3:23**; which is the way to live comfortably, peaceably, pleasantly, and honourably;

and my law as the apple of thine eye; the doctrine of Christ, the law of the Lord, that goes out of Zion; which should be as dear to men as the apple of their eye, and as carefully preserved, that the least injury is not done to it; it should be kept inviolate.

Proverbs 7:3

Ver. 3. Bind them upon thy fingers,.... Let the above words and doctrines be as ready and familiar as if they were at the fingers' ends; or let them be always fresh in memory, as a piece of thread is tied about the fingers, to put in mind of anything to be done; or let them be as rings upon the fingers, both memorial and ornamental: or put into practice the things taught and commanded; the fingers being the instruments of action, and especially of doing things nicely and accurately;

write them upon the table of thine heart; that they may be strong in the memory, deep in the affection, and abiding in the understanding and will; see **Pr 3:3**.

Proverbs 7:4

Ver. 4. Say unto wisdom, Thou art [my] sister,.... Intimately acquainted, greatly beloved, and highly delighted in: this may be understood both of the

Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, which men should be conversant with, be strongly affected to, and take delight and pleasure in; and of Christ, the essential Wisdom of God, and who stands in the relation of a brother to his people, and should be respected as such;

and call understanding [thy] kinswoman; or "kinsman" {a}; such Christ is in our nature, our "goel", our near kinsman, partaker of the same flesh and blood, and therefore is not ashamed to call us brethren, nor should we be ashamed to call him kinsman: moreover, his Word and Gospel, and the understanding of it, should be familiar to us; it should be well "known" {b} by us, as the word used signifies, and dwell richly in us.

{a} edm "cognatum", Piscator. {b} "Notam", Montanus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 7:5

Ver. 5. That they may keep thee from the strange woman,.... Nothing has a greater tendency than Christ and his Gospel, and an intimate acquaintance with them, and a retention of them, to keep from all sin, from all fleshly lusts, from the sin of uncleanness; and also from all the errors, heresies, idolatry, superstition, and will worship, of the whore of Rome; a stranger to God and true godliness, to Christ and his truths, the Spirit and his operations;

from the stranger [which] flattereth with her words;
See Gill on "Pr 2:16",
see Gill "Pr 5:3", and
see Gill "Pr 6:24".

Proverbs 7:6

Ver. 6. For at the window of my house,.... This is either an historical account of a matter of fact known to Solomon, or a parable made by him, setting forth the cunning artifices of an harlot, the folly and weakness of a young man ensnared, and the ruin he is brought into by her. As Solomon was a public magistrate, he is here represented as a private observer of the behaviour of his subjects, as sitting in his palace at a window, at the small windows of it, as the Targum, where he could see and not be seen himself; near to which was an harlot's house; for they generally get about the courts of princes, where they make their prey;

I looked through my casement; or "lattice" {c}; the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions: understand this of the harlot looking out of the window of her house and through the casement, when she spied a young man, as follows; but this agrees not with the Hebrew text, which carries it to Solomon; though a greater than he may be designed, the omniscient God, who looks through the windows and lattice of heaven, and beholds all the actions of the children of men; those that are most private, and done in the dark; and Christ the Son of God, whose "eyes [are] like unto aflame of fire", to look through all the darkness of Popery, represented by the Thyatirian church state; into all the intrigues of the Romish harlot, and behold all the follies of those that commit fornication with her, **Re 2:18**.

{c} ybnva deb "per cancellum meum", Montanus; "per cancellos", Tigurine version, Michaelis.

Proverbs 7:7

Ver. 7. And beheld among the simple ones,.... Such as are easily persuaded and drawn into sin; simple and foolish in things moral and spiritual, and not arrived to any ripeness of understanding in things natural and civil; have seen but little of the world, and know less of religion, and are easily imposed upon and carried away with the company they keep; such simple foolish creatures are the followers of antichrist; see **2Ti 3:6**;

I discerned among the youths; or "children" {d}; at least in understanding, the children Jezebel, **Re 2:23**;

a young man void of understanding; or "wanting a heart" {e}; to know and fear the Lord, and not in the way to learn and improve; but in company like himself, and so in a fair way to continue foolish and simple, and destitute of the true understanding of things, and exposed to the snares delusions of such that lie in wait to deceive.

{d} Mynbb "inter filios", Pagninus, &c. {e} bl rox "carentem corde", Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "destitutum corde", Schultens.

Proverbs 7:8

Ver. 8. Passing through the street near her corner,.... The house of the harlot that stood in a corner to take in persons that came both ways; to come near which is dangerous; this was putting himself in the way of temptation; or the corner of the street where she stood to pick up young men; it could be with no good design to walk the streets in the night, and to go where harlots haunt, and where they dwell or stand; or, however, it was exposing himself to danger, and, had he took the wise man's advice, would not have done it, **Pr 5:8**; we should abstain from all appearance of evil, and from everything that leads to sin; and as to immorality and uncleanness, so to false doctrine and false worship; the synagogues of Satan and Popish chapels should be avoided;

and he went the way to her house; that led directly to her house, which shows a bad intention; and if his design was not to commit fornication, yet to gratify his lusts by looks, dalliances, and impure discourse with her; and hither he went in a set, stately manner, as the word {f} signifies; with an air pleasing to the harlot, as a beau and fop of the town; and by which air and gait he was known by her to be a proper person to attack.

{f} deuy "intelligitur incessus, compositus et pomposus", Piscator; "magnis et patheticis possibus", Michaelis; "est aliquid grande et audax in verbo", Schultens.

Proverbs 7:9

Ver. 9. In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night. Which is the usual time adulterers take to commit their works of darkness in, by which they think to conceal them; they being such as they themselves do not care should be seen and known, Job 24:15; their works will not bear the sun and daylight, therefore they take the twilight and when the sun is set; and choose the night, and not light nights neither, but the blackest and darkest nights, as fittest for their purpose; most likely to meet with harlots, and less liable to be seen by their neighbours; but always to be seen by the omniscient God, with whom the darkness and the light are both alike. Perhaps these several words may express the time from the young man's first setting out to his drawing nigh to the harlot's house, and his being attacked and ensnared by her; when he first set out from his own or his father's house, it was "twilight", the sun was declining; by that time he had got good part of his way the sun set, and then it was "evening"; and when he came near the harlot's house it was "black [and] dark night": and this may represent the gradual and progressive growth of Popery; there was first a "twilight", a decline of the purity of Gospel light and knowledge, and then the sun of the Gospel set, which brought on an "evening", and issued in the gross "darkness" of Popery, represented by the Thyatirian church state, as before observed; since that, the "morning star" of the Reformation has appeared, but this is become obscure, we are in a twilight again; it is neither day nor night with us as yet, but a dark black night is hastening on; and it is easy to observe how many, like this foolish young man, are marching on in a stately manner to the harlot's house, or are verging to Popery, whether they design it or not.

Proverbs 7:10

Ver. 10. And, behold, there met him a woman,.... A married woman, and an adulteress, as the following account of her shows; as soon as ever she discerned the young man before described, who she knew, by his air, walk, and dress, was a fit person for her turn, she at once set out from her house, or the corner where she stood, and met him; she did not wait till he came up and made his suit to her, but she went out, and first attacked him; wherefore the word "behold" is prefixed as a note of admiration at the impudence of the woman, and as a note of attention to observe the consequence of this affair. This woman represents the woman on a scarlet-coloured beast, the mother of harlots, who, though she pretends to be the spouse of Christ, is an arrant whore,
Re 17:3;

[with] the attire of a harlot; not with her face veiled, as Tamar was,
Ge 38:14; for though that might be the sign of a harlot in the daytime, yet not in the night, as this was; rather with showy gaudy garments, such as the Athenian whores wore, or short ones, as the Romans; the word signifies one fitted to her body, neat and well shaped, to recommend her: so the woman, the whore of Rome, is said to be arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls; signifying the outward pomp and splendour of the Romish religion, designed to captivate weak and unwary minds,
See Gill on "Re 17:4";

and subtle of heart; mistress of all artful and intriguing methods to seduce and ensnare {g}; or, "reserved of heart" {h}, cautious and wary what she said, told everything that was encouraging, but kept back what was discouraging; or she kept her own heart to herself, while she stole the hearts of others; so the Targum renders it, "which takes away the hearts of young men;"

and to the same purpose are the versions of the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic: the subtlety of the popes, priests, jesuits, and other emissaries of Rome, to deceive the hearts of the simple, is well known; the coming of antichrist was after the working of Satan, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, **2Th 2:9**.

{g} "Fallendique vias mille ministret amor", Tibullus ad Junonem, 6. v. 12.
{h} bl trun "cauta corde", Tigurine version, Mercerus: Gejerus; "retento corde", Cocceius.

Proverbs 7:11

Ver. 11. She [is] loud and stubborn,.... "Loud"; not that her voice may be heard, and so be found by those that seek her in the dark, as Aben Ezra interprets it; but rather clamorous, noisy, and talkative, when she has got her gallant with her; pouring out foolish and unchaste words to allure and entice him; unless it is to be understood of her bawling and scolding, when within doors, at her husband, in order to get him out, and be rid of him; to whom she is "stubborn" or "rebellious", as the Targum, breaking covenant with him, and disobeying his commands; and departing from him, declining out of the way, as Jarchi; speaking rebellion, as Aben Ezra: all which agree with the whore of Rome, who is rebellious against Christ, whose spouse she professes to be; is perfidious to him, disobedient to his commandments; is gone out of the way of his truths and ordinances, and publishes and encourages everything that is contrary thereunto; as well as has a mouth speaking blasphemies, Re 13:5;

her feet abide not in her house; to attend the business of it; but site is gadding abroad to seek her lovers, and bring them in; it is the character of good women that they are keepers at home, but it is the sign of a harlot to gad abroad, which is enlarged upon in **Pr 7:11**.

Proverbs 7:12

Ver. 12. Now [is she] without,.... The word for whore is sometimes rendered in the Targum {i} one that goes abroad, or without her house; sitting or standing at the door of it, in an idle posture, and in order to invite her lovers in; and if she can get none this way, or quickly, grows impatient: she is

now in the streets; takes her walks abroad in the streets of the city, to see who she can light of, to pick up and bring home;

and lieth in wait at every corner; of the street, where more ways meet, sometimes at one corner, and sometimes at another, that she may take all that comes; sometimes she is "without" in the fields, and in the country, to see what she can meet with there; and sometimes in the "streets" of the city, and in the populous places of it, in the markets, and courts, and in every private corner, trying all ways to gain lovers, and satisfy her lust {k}: all which may represent the diligence and industry, art and cunning, of the Romish emissaries to gain proselytes to their idolatrous worship, who everywhere lie in wait to deceive.

{i} Targ. Onk. in Gen. xxxiv. 31. {k} "Mille modi veneris", Ovid de Arte Amandi, l. 3. prope finem.

Proverbs 7:13

Ver. 13. So she caught him, and kissed him,.... The young man that went near her corner where she was plying, or in the way to her house, where she was sitting, or standing, waiting and watching for such an opportunity, for such a person, as a prey to fasten on; and no sooner she saw him, and come up to him, but, without any ceremony or address, she laid hold upon him, as the word {l} signifies, threw her arms about his neck, and embraced him in them; and, what is unusual for women to do, kissed him, in order to stir up wanton affections and impure desires in him;

[and] with an impudent face; or, "and she strengthened her face" {m}; rubbed her forehead, put on a brasen face, a whore's front; see **Jer 3:3**. And

said unto him; accosted him in the following manner, without shame or blushing.

{l} wb hqyzxh "apprehendit eum", Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens. {m} hynp hzeh "et roboravit facies suas", Montanus; "vultumque suum obfirmavit", Schultens, so Michaelis; "obfirmabat", Cocceius.

Proverbs 7:14

Ver. 14. [I have] peace offerings with me,.... Meaning at her house. These peace offerings were of the eucharistic kind; they were offered by way of thanksgiving for favours received; the greatest part of which, all excepting the fat on the kidneys, the rump of the sheep, the breast and right shoulder, which were the priest's, were returned to the offerers to feast upon with their friends, and were to be eaten the same day, **Le 7:11**. This she said to show that she was no common strumpet, or that prostituted herself for gain; that she was a sufficient housewife, had a considerable affluence of life, her substance greatly increased, for which she had made her thank offering that day; that she wanted nothing of him but his company, and the enjoyment of him; and that she had good cheer to regale him with. She was properly hvdq, "a holy" religious harlot, as the word sometimes signifies; and such is the church of Rome, which makes great pretensions to devotion and religion, yet is the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth, Re 17:5;

this day have I paid my vows; not on account of the young man, and for his health, and for meeting with him; for those vows were not now made to be paid, but were made and paid already: but her vows of peace offerings and thanksgivings, which, as she had promised, she had performed. Under this point may be reckoned the vows of virginity and celibacy, through a show of which the most shocking iniquities are committed by the members of the church of Rome.

Proverbs 7:15

Ver. 15. Therefore came I forth to meet thee,.... Having so much good cheer at home, and none to eat of it with her; and having so fond and affectionate a regard to this young man, as she pretended; he being the only person in her thoughts, whom she hoped to meet with, and whose company she desired, and his only; though, had she met any other, she would have said the same things to them. Aben Ezra, upon **Pr 7:14**, says, she told him lies; probably that might be true; but this was no doubt a lie; and it is no unusual thing for the whore of Rome to speak lies in hypocrisy, **1Ti 4:2**;

diligently to seek thy face; which of all faces she desired to see, being most lovely to her; with the comeliness of which she was exceedingly taken and ravished, and got up betimes in the morning, as the word {n} signifies, even before day, to seek for him;

and I have found thee; which she speaks with a rapture and ecstasy of joy; blessing herself on this happy occasion, that she should come out so opportunely, and find him so quickly; intimating, that it was a kind providence, and that the thing was of God: so conversions to the antichristian church, which are the artifice of hell, are ascribed to the divine Being.

{n} rxvl "ad quaerendum mane", Montanus.

Proverbs 7:16

Ver. 16. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry,.... Made use of by the ancients {o} for bed clothes: beautiful ornaments, as Gersom; and precious garments, as Jarchi. She had adorned her bed with curtains and clothes, very delightful to the eye, and inviting; and had well corded it, as some interpret it, with cords of fine linen, and all to allure her lovers; she soon discovered her lustful inclinations, what her heart was upon, and says this, and more, to fire the young man's lust, and cause him to follow her: so the church of Rome adorns her places of worship in the most pompous manner; which are the beds in which she commits adultery, **Re 2:22**; and also her images to strike the minds of people, and draw them into her idolatrous worship;

with carved [works]; perhaps the bed's head, tester, and posts, were all carved, and cut out of cedar wood and others, as Gersom observes; though some think: this refers to the variety of work in tapestry, which look like incisions and carvings, or the network, and agnet holes made therein: this may be very well applied to the carved work, and carved images, set up in the Romish churches;

with fine linen of Egypt; the sheets, pillows, and bolsters, made thereof, and so soft to lie upon; which was reckoned the best and finest, though not the strongest. Pliny says {p}, of the linen of Egypt, that it had less strength and firmness in it (it being so fine); but bore the best price, and was the most gainful and profitable. The word used is not what is elsewhere met with, even when the linen of Egypt is mentioned, and indeed is nowhere else used: the Targum renders it, an Egyptian covering; and so most of the Oriental versions interpret it of bed coverings of tapestry painted, brought out of Egypt. The word is used in the Chaldee language for cords; and may here signify threads of linen twisted together, or linen cords, with which the harlot's bed was corded, and looked beautiful. Pliny {q} says, there were four sorts of linen in Egypt; Tanitic, Pelusiac, Butic, and Tenterytic; so called from the names and provinces where they were cultivated; and perhaps the Etun of Egypt may be the Tanitic: the fine linen, called "byssus", was brought out of India into Egypt; and is said to grow upon a tree as high as the poplar, and its leaves like a willow {r}. Egypt is very properly made mention of in this account; it being one of the names of the city of Rome, of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, and equal to both for lust and luxury, Re 11:8.

{o} Vid. Homer. Odyss. 4. c. 299. & Odyss. 7. prope finem. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 19. c. 1. {q} Ibid. {r} Philostrat. Vit. Apollen. l. 2. c. 9.

Proverbs 7:17

Ver. 17. I have perfumed my bed,.... As she had made it entertaining to the senses of seeing and feeling, it being showy and gaudy, soft and easy; so to the sense of smelling; and all to provoke lust, and draw into her embraces; by censing it with incense, as Donesh in Jarchi; or by sprinkling {s} a liquor, made of the following spices, on the head, posts, and sides of the bed, to remove all ill scents, and make it more acceptable; so the Targum, Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions, render it, "I sprinkled my bed": or, it may be, by suffumigation, which women are said to use with their garments and bed clothes {t}. Even this the harlot did,

with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon; all odorous, and of a sweet smell: Horace {u} speaks of the anointed beds of such persons; and of the above spices ointments were made, with which the harlot's bed might be perfumed. Cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, are reckoned among the wares of Babylon, or the church of Rome, Re 18:13.

{s} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 1. {t} Clemens Alex. Paedagog. l. 2. c. 8. p. 177. {u} "Uctis cubilibus pellicum", Epod. Ode. 5. v. 69, 70.

Proverbs 7:18

Ver. 18. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning,.... Taking him by the hand, and pulling him along, she says, "come"; let us not stand here in the streets, but let us go within, and after supper to bed; and there enjoy ourselves, till "inebriated" with love, as the word {w} signifies: so the poet {x} speaks of "ebrios ocellos", "eyes drunk", that is, with love; and so continue till the morning light, the night being the fittest season for those works of darkness: this expresses the insatiableness of her lust;

let us solace ourselves with loves; mutual love, not lawful, but criminal; more properly lusts; denoting the abundance of it, and the pleasure promised in it, which is very short lived, and bitterness in the end.

{w} hwrn "inebriemur", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens. {x} Catullus de Acme, Ep. 43. c. 11.

Proverbs 7:19

Ver. 19. For the good man [is] not at home,.... Or, "for the man is not in his house" {y}. She does not say, "my man", or "my husband"; though the Septuagint. Syriac, and Arabic versions so render it; lest this should throw some difficulty in the young man's way, or remind herself of her conjugal obligation; but "the man", by way of contempt, as disowning him for her husband, or, however, having no regard for him in comparison of others: and this she says to encourage the young man to go with her; since her husband was gone, and show as alone, and mistress of the house;

he is gone a long journey; or, "a way afar off" {z}; into a distant country, and therefore need not fears return of him that night; she was prepared to answer all objections. The good man of the house may be understood of Christ, who is gone into a far country, to heaven, to take a kingdom to himself, and return, Lu 19:12; and in the mean while the church of Rome, who professes herself the true church and spouse of Christ, is committing fornication with the kings of the earth; and has set up another in his room and stead, whom she calls Christ's vicar on earth; and flatters herself and her lovers with impunity, from his distance from her, and his vicar having a right to do as he pleases.

{y} wtybb vyah Nya yk "quia non est vir in domo suo", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, &c. {z} qwxwm Krdb "in via longinqua", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Schultens; "in via a longinquo", Montanus.

Proverbs 7:20

Ver. 20. He hath taken a bag of money with him,.... Or, "in his hand" {a}; either for merchandise, as Gersom; or for defraying: the charges of his journey; and both suppose length of time: if for merchandise, it required time to purchase goods, and see them packed up and sent away; or if for his journey, since it was not a few pieces of money he put in his pocket to defray expenses, but a bag of it he carried in his hand, it shows that he should be out a considerable time;

[and] will come home at the day appointed; and not before: Aben Ezra interprets it, at the beginning of the month, at the new moon, when the moon is covered {b}, which Horace {c} calls "tricessima sabbata": but rather it is to be understood of the full moon, as Aquila and the Vulgate Latin version render it; when it is light all night, and so a proper time for travelling home again. Gersom takes it to mean the beginning of the year, when the holy blessed God, parabolically speaking, sits upon a throne to judge the world in righteousness: the Targum calls it the day of the congregation; some fixed festival day, when the congregation meets together; and at such a festival, or appointed time, this good man had fixed for his return, and when, and not before, he would. This she says to remove all fears from the young man of being surprised and caught by her husband. There is an appointed time for Christ's second coming, when he will certainly come, and not before; and which is supposed to be at a great distance of time: and therefore wicked men and seducers, and such as the apostate church of Rome make use of to encourage themselves in their wickedness, in hopes of impunity, put the evil day far away from them; but in the appointed time Christ will come, and call his servants to an account, good and bad.

{a} wdyb "in manu sua", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis. {b} aokh Mwyl "in die plenae lunae", V. L. Michaelis; "novilunii", so some in Vatablus, Piscator; "ad diem interlunii", Cocceius, Schultens. {c} Satirar. l. 1. Sat. 9. v. 69.

Proverbs 7:21

Ver. 21. With her much fair speech she caused him to yield,.... Or, "to decline" from the right way: or, "inclined him" {d}; his ear to listen to her, and his heart to go after her and along with her. This she did, by using a great many words, by her prolixity, and by some taking and striking expressions; lewd women are generally very talkative {e}. It may be rendered, "by her much doctrine" {f}, as the word is in **Pr 4:2**; so Jezebel calls herself a prophetess, and sets up for a teacher of men; and, by her false doctrine, deceives some that are called the servants of Christ to commit fornication, and eat things sacrificed to idols, **Re 2:20**;

with the flattering of her lips she forced him; to go along with her, not against his will, but with it: though at first there was some reluctance, conscience rose up and opposed; but her words, which were smoother than oil, found a way into his heart, and prevailed upon him to yield to her entreaties; he could no longer withstand her attacks, but surrendered to her; her charming voice, and flattering lips, had more effect upon him than her kisses; notwithstanding these he was reluctant, but could stand it out no longer against her alluring words and soothing language. With this compare the deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish through antichrist, **2Th 2:10**.

{d} wtjh "declinare facit eum", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus; "flexit", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelin; "inclinavit illum", Cocceius. {e} "Verbosa gaudet Venus Ioquela", Catullus ad Camer. Ep. 53. v. 20. {f} hxql brb "multitudine discipline suae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "doctrinae suae", Michaelis.

Proverbs 7:22

Ver. 22. He goeth after her straightway,.... Or "suddenly" {g}; and inconsiderately, giving himself no time to think of what would be the sad consequences of it;

as an ox goeth to the slaughter; as senseless and stupid as that; and as ignorant of the issue as that is, led by the butcher, as if it was going to a pasture, when it is going to the slaughter house. So such persons as are ensnared by harlots; they follow them in a view of pleasure, but it ends in ruin; if not in the loss of bodily life, by the revengeful husband or civil magistrate; yet in the destruction of their immortal souls;

or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; a drunken besotted fool, who, while he is leading to the stocks, is insensible whither he is going; but when he has been there awhile, and is come out of his drunken fit, then he is sensible of his punishment and his shame. Or, "as the stocks are for the correction of a fool" {h}: or, as a man goes to "the stocks, to the correction of a fool" {i}; so the young man went after the harlot: or, as "one fettered" {k}, goes thither, bound hand and foot; he cannot help himself, nor avoid the shame. It denotes both the power of sin, there is no withstanding its allurements and blandishments, when once given way to, and the shame that attends or follows it. The Targum is, "as a dog to a chain;"

and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

{g} Matp "subito", Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis. {h} lywa rowm la okek "sicut compes ad castigationem stulti", Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus. {i} "Abiens post cam, quasi veniens ad compedes ad castigationem stultorum", Gejerus. {k} "Velut compeditus", Junius & Tremellius; "velut in compede ibat", Michaelis; "tanquam constricto ad pedes capite", Schultens.

Proverbs 7:23

Ver. 23. Till a dart strike through his liver,.... The fountain of blood, and so of life; which, being pierced through and poured out, is certain death, **La 2:11**; the meaning is, till he is slain either by the hand of God, or by the civil magistrate, or by the jealous husband; and be thrust through by him, as Zimri and Cozbi were by Phinehas. The "liver" may be particularly mentioned, not only for the reason before given, but because it is the seat of lust {l}; so he is stricken in the part where his lust begins, where he has been smitten by Cupid's darts: or this dart through the liver may denote some disease, infecting the blood through sinful lust. The Targum is,

"as an hart into whose liver an arrow flies;"

or is wounded by an arrow in the liver, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions: and so the meaning is, that this young man went as swiftly after the harlot as a hart does when it is wounded;

as a bird hasteth to the snare; it has its eye upon the bait, and flies swiftly to that, insensible of the snare that is laid for it;

and knoweth not that it [is] for his life; the bird knows not that the snare is set for its life, as Jarchi; or the fool knows not that it is for his soul; that it shall die, which hates correction, as Aben Ezra. The man that goes after the harlot knows not, or does not consider, that it is to the destruction of his precious and immortal soul; so the Targum,

"he knows not that it tends to the death of his soul;"

and to the same sense the Syriac and Arabic versions; the second death, which adulterers and idolaters shall have their part in, Re 21:8. The souls of men, and the ruin of them, are what the whore of Rome deals in, Re 18:13; she goes into perdition, into the bottomless pit, herself, and carries all her worshippers with her, Re 17:8.

{l} "Spleu ridere facit, cogit amare jecur", Ovid. "Si torrere jecur quaeris idoneum", Horat. Carmin. l. 4. Ode 1. v. 12. "Cum tibi flagrans amor et libido saeviet circa jecur ulcerosum". Ibid l. 1. Ode 25. v. 13, 15.

Proverbs 7:24

Ver. 24. Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children,.... The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, read, in the singular number, "my son", in the same manner as the chapter begins; but it is in the plural number in the Hebrew text; and so read the Targum and Syriac version, "children", the children of Solomon; not only those of his own body, but all such that put themselves under his instruction, or were willing to take his advice: it may be extended to all the children of men, for all are interested herein; especially such who profess to be the children of God and of Christ, the followers of wisdom. This is the epilogue, or application of the above story. Since this is the case, that young men are in danger of being ensnared and brought to ruin by this harlot, therefore take the advice of the wisest of men, even of Wisdom herself;

and attend to the words of my mouth; the doctrines of Christ; the best preservative from the allurements of the whore of Rome.

Proverbs 7:25

Ver. 25. Let not thine heart decline to her ways,.... Or turn not aside from the right way, the path of truth and holiness, to those of the whorish woman, that lead to ruin and destruction; do not so much as think of going out of the one into the other; let there not be the least wandering thought, affection, or disposition of the mind thereunto; stop and check the first motion of the heart, which leads to a compliance with her, and seems to be directed to her ways, or to betray any love and liking of them;

go not astray in her paths; for whoever walks in her paths goes astray from

God and his law; from Christ and his Gospel; and from the true church of God; and from the right paths of faith, duty and worship.

Proverbs 7:26

Ver. 26. For she hath cast down many wounded,.... Wounded in their name, character, and reputation; in their bodies by diseases; and in their souls by guilt, shame, and horror, through a compliance with her sinful lusts: these she "cast down" from the honours they were possessed of, from the health they enjoyed, and from the peace and tranquillity of mind they formerly felt within them. And not a single person, as the young man instanced in, or a few only, but "many"; great multitudes, hundreds and thousands, and those not weak, and foolish, and inconstant, as he might be thought to be; but such as were "great" {m} and mighty, as the word also signifies; men of great riches, and wisdom, and courage; as soldiers {n}, mighty men of war, such as wound and kill others; which seems the true sense of the word here used: and therefore none ought to trust in themselves, nor trust themselves in her company, nor in the least decline to her ways; and especially such as are weak and unskilful, and ignorant of her devices, as the "children" here addressed;

yea, many strong [men] have been slain by her; men famous for martial exploits, as Samson and others, have been overcome by her: some of great fortitude of mind have not been able to withstand her, she has prevailed over them; and others of robust constitutions have been weakened by diseases, contracted through incontinency with her; and some have suffered death by her means, either from her husband, or her gallants, or the civil magistrate: and of these there have been "innumerable" instances; so the word {o} for "strong men" sometimes signifies; and so it is here rendered in the Septuagint and Arabic versions, "and innumerable are they whom she has slain". All the world have wondered after the whore of Rome; kings of the earth and mighty men have committed fornication with her; high and low, rich and poor, have been ruined by her; thousands have gone to hell by her means; and some of the sycophants of Rome have even said, that if the pope of Rome should send thousands to hell, of which they seem themselves to be conscious, no one should say to him, What dost thou?

{m} Mybr "multos magnosque", Gejerus. {n} See Dr. Kennicott's Dissert. 1. p. 110. {o} Mymue anariymhtoi, Sept. so Arab. "numerosi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Amama, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens; so Bootius, Animadv. l. 4. c. 11. s. 2.

Proverbs 7:27

Ver. 27. Her house is the way to hell,.... Or "ways" {p}; the broad highway to it; either to the grave, as "sheol" often signifies; or to hell itself, the place of the damned: to go into her house, and commit wickedness with her, is to take a step to destruction, a large stride towards hell; and, if grace prevent not, will bring a man thither. Who would go into such a house, and much less dwell there, which is the very suburbs of hell?

going down to the chambers of death; to enter her chamber, to step into her bed, howsoever decked and adorned, entertaining and inviting it is, not only leads to the chambers of the grave, as the Targum; but to the lowest and innermost parts of hell; the apartments of the second death, the lot of all unclean and idolatrous persons, without repentance and faith. The Phoenicians called Pluto, the god of hell, by the name of Moth {q}, a word similar to this used here; and so those chambers are no other than the chambers of hell. Plautus {r} also calls the gate of a whore's house the gate of hell; which agrees with the first clause of the verse.

{p} ykrd "viae", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c. {q} Sanchoniatho apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 38. {r} "Januam hane orci", Bacchides, Act. 3. Sc. 1. v. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 8

This chapter contains the instructions of Wisdom or Christ; showing the excellency of them, and the author of them, in opposition to the harlot and her allurements, in the preceding chapter. Christ, under the name of Wisdom, is represented as an herald, publishing the Gospel in the ministry of the word, either in person or by his servants, **Pr 8:1**. The places where this proclamation is made are described, **Pr 8:2**; the persons to whom, **Pr 8:4**. The excellency of the things delivered, being right things; truth, agreeably to the word of God, plain and easy to be understood, and of more worth than gold, silver, and precious stones, **Pr 8:6**. And then Wisdom, or Christ, is commended and recommended by his consummate prudence and knowledge, by his hatred of evil, and by his influence on the political affairs of kings and princes, **Pr 8:12**; and the advantages of those that are early seekers of him are pointed out; their enjoyment of his favour, of his riches, honour and righteousness; and their being led by him in right paths now, and inheriting eternal glory hereafter, **Pr 8:17**. And next follows an account of his existence from eternity as a divine Person, illustrated by a variety of phrases, **Pr 8:22**; and of his being with the Father; of his great affection for him, and complacency in him; and of Christ's wonderful delight and pleasure in the sons of men, **Pr 8:30**. And the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to them to hearken to his instructions; setting forth the happiness of those that wait on him in public ordinances, and find him; and the misery of those that hate and reject him.

Ver. 1. Doth not wisdom cry?.... Christ, who is the Wisdom of God;
See Gill on "Pr 1:20"; and which clearly appears from his subsistence with the Father, his eternal existence, and from many personal properties, characters, and actions ascribed to him throughout the whole of this chapter, and in the following. "Crying" is here attributed to him, which signifies proclaiming, publishing, preaching the everlasting Gospel, which directs men in the right way of enjoying peace, comfort, honour, and eternal happiness; the allusion is to an herald that this up his voice aloud at noon day in the public streets when he proclaims; and is opposed to the whispers of a harlot, at night, in a corner; truth seeks no corner, its voice is heard at noon day, it will bear the light. Now, "does not" or "shall not Wisdom cry", or Christ preach; verily he does or will, in his word, by his prophets under the former dispensation; in his own person, and by his apostles and ministers, under the present; who then would hearken to the alluring voice of a harlot, or hear Jezebel the wicked prophetess teach, when Christ himself preaches, or however by his faithful ministers?

and understanding put forth her voice? the same with Wisdom, or Christ, see **Pr 8:14**; by whose voice the Gospel is meant, which is the voice of Christ, which is heard and followed by the sheep of Christ, and not the voice of a stranger; and "putting it forth", giving or uttering it, signifies the publication of it.

Proverbs 8:2

Ver. 2. She standeth in the top of high places,.... To be both seen and heard, for which reason Christ went up into a mountain and preached, **Mt 5:1**;

by the way; the roadside, to instruct and direct passengers as they go along, to show them the right way, and caution them against taking wrong ways; so did Christ, Mt 16:6;

in the places of the paths; or, "between the paths" {s}; where more ways than one met together, and so difficult to know which was the right path to take; here Christ stands in the ministry of the word to direct, and says, "this is the way, walk ye in it", Isa 30:21; and as there are many ways which are proposed to men to walk in, some of open profaneness and impiety, and others that have a show of religion and devotion, but both lead men wrong; the ministers of Christ show, and he by them, the way of salvation, and how to avoid such as lead to destruction, Ac 16:17.

{s} tbytn tyb "in mediis semitis", V. L. "inter semitas", Tigurine version, Baynus; so some in Vatablus; "in mediis compitis", Schultens; to the Targum, Sept. and Arabic versions.

Proverbs 8:3

Ver. 3. She crieth at the gates,.... Of the temple, or of the city, where the courts of judicature were, and persons met on civil accounts; and where people were continually passing and repassing;

at the entry of the city; meeting those that came out of the country to the city upon trade and business;

at the coming in at the doors; of the temple, or city, or private houses; all these expressions denote the publicness of the Gospel ministry, both by Christ himself, who spake openly to the world, always taught in the synagogues and temple, and in secret said nothing; and who ordered his disciples to preach what they heard and received from him upon the house tops, Joh 18:20; so did the Apostle Paul,
Ac 20:20.

Proverbs 8:4

Ver. 4. Unto you, O men, I call,.... Not angels, the fallen angels; for, as they had nothing to do with Christ, he had nothing to do with them, or say unto them, **Mt 8:29**; nor the brutes, irrational creatures; for, though the Gospel is to be preached to every creature, yet only to rational ones, Mr 16:15, "men", whom God has loved and Christ has redeemed; these are by the Gospel called, and called effectually. There are some men indeed who are only externally called; but there are others who are also called with an holy calling, of which See Gill on "Pr 1:24". Some think men of eminence are here meant, as rich men, so Aben Ezra; or men of wisdom and knowledge, such as the Scribes and Pharisees, and learned doctors among the Jews; but it rather seems to design men indefinitely, of whatsoever rank or order, state or condition;

and my voice [is] to the sons of men; which some interpret of the poor, as Aben Ezra; or those who are more illiterate, or the common people; so that high and low, rich and poor, have the Gospel preached unto them; but the phrase seems to intend the same as before, the same thing is said in different words.

Proverbs 8:5

Ver. 5. O ye simple, understand wisdom,.... The Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, particularly the doctrine of salvation by Christ; it is the highest wisdom to know Christ and him crucified: and they are "the simple" who are weak and easy to be imposed upon, who are here called unto; and generally speaking such are they to whom the mysteries of grace are made known, while they are hid from the wise and prudent;

and ye fools, be of an understanding heart; or "cause the heart to understand"; or "get an understanding heart" {t}; make use of all means to get spiritual wisdom and understanding; all men, let them be what they will in other respects, are fools as to a spiritual and experimental knowledge of divine things; and that man can only be said to have truly an understanding heart that knows his own folly, the plague of his heart, his need of Christ, the worth of him; and has an understanding given him to know him and his interest in him.

{t} bl wnybh "facite cor intelligere", Baynus, Mercerus; "facite ut cor vestrum intelligat", so some in Vatablus; "acquirite animum sapientem", Gejerus.

Proverbs 8:6

Ver. 6. Hear; for I will speak of excellent things,.... Such are the things of the Gospel; they not only excel what the light of nature dictates and directs to, but even what the law of Moses commands and requires; the doctrines of the

Gospel are excellent in their author, nature, and use; particularly those which respect the love, grace, and mercy of God, the person and offices of Christ, the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and the great salvation which he has wrought out. These are the doctrines of grace which proceed out of Wisdom's mouth, and are such as never man spake the like; they are to be approved of, being what differ from others, and to be preferred unto them, **Php 1:9**; or "princely things" {u}, as the word may be rendered; which became him who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, and the Prince of peace to speak; and are worthy to be received by princes, though little known and valued by the princes of this world; and are embraced and, esteemed by those who are the princes of the Lord s people: or they are "principal" ones, or "leading" truths {w}; of the greatest importance, interesting ones; "praiseworthy", as Aben Ezra, or "honourable", as Gersom, and to be had in the highest esteem and veneration;

and the opening of my lips [shall be] right things: agreeable to right reason, though above it; consonant to the righteous law of God, and even to the perfection of God's righteousness, which is greatly glorified by the obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ, and redemption through him; and these are the excellent and principal doctrines of the Gospel, even justification by Christ's righteousness, atonement by his sacrifice, and redemption through his blood; all which are consistent with and greatly display the justice of God: nor are any of the doctrines of the Gospel licentious ones, but on the contrary teach men to live soberly and righteously; as well as they are plain and easy to such who are conversant with them, as is often expressed, and may be the sense of the word here used also.

{u} Mydygn "principalia, i.e. digna principibus", Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "ducalia", Gussetius, p. 485. {w} "Praecipua quaedam", Tigurine versions.

Proverbs 8:7

Ver. 7. For my mouth shall speak truth,.... And nothing but the truth; and nothing more or less can be spoken by Wisdom, or Christ, who is truth itself; nothing else can come out of his mouth, or drop from his lips; all the doctrines of Christ are agreeable to the Scriptures of truth, and are what the Spirit of truth leads into; and the whole is called "the word of truth": there are many very particular and special truths, but the principal one is salvation by Jesus Christ;

and wickedness [is] an abomination to my lips; the sin of lying more especially, as opposed to truth; this is detestable to wisdom, what Christ never suffered his lips to utter; for no lie is of the truth, but of Satan the father of lies; and, as it is abhorred by Christ, it ought to be by all good men.

Proverbs 8:8

Ver. 8. All the words of my mouth [are] in righteousness,.... Or "with righteousness" {x}; are connected with it, are agreeable to it; are righteous ones, consistent with righteousness, with the righteous nature, will, and law of God: or "are concerning righteousness" {y} the necessity of righteousness in order to eternal life; the insufficiency of man's own righteousness to entitle to it; the need, worth, and excellency of the righteousness of Christ for that purpose; and of the propriety and usefulness of a life of righteousness and holiness, which the grace of God instructs men in;

[there is] nothing froward or perverse in them; that is contrary to right reason, or to the law of God, or to the Scriptures of truth, or to the analogy of faith; nor is there any contradiction in the doctrines of the Gospel one to another, but an entire harmony and uniformity in them; they are not "yea" and "nay".

{x} qdub "cum justitia", Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis;
meta dikaiosunhv, Sept. {y} "Gloriatio de justitia sua, vel invitatio ad accipiendam justitiam per fidem", Cocceius.

Proverbs 8:9

Ver. 9. They [are] all plain to him that understandeth,.... Whose understanding is enlightened by the Spirit of God; who is a spiritual man, that has a discerning, and can judge of spiritual things: as for the carnal man, let him have what natural knowledge or wisdom he will, he cannot know these things; for they are spiritually discerned, and can only be discerned by spiritual men. The Bible is a sealed book to others, learned or unlearned; the mysteries or doctrines of the Gospel are hid in parables from such; but those to whom Christ has given an understanding to know him, these know them, and they are plain unto them: for though there are some things hard to he understood in the Scriptures, as in Paul's epistles, and some sublime truths in the Gospel; yet those which are necessary to salvation are easily understood; that faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners, is a very plain one;

and right to them that find knowledge; a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ and his truths. The Targum is,

"to them who desire knowledge;"

and so the Syriac version; that seek for it heartily and diligently, in a right way, in the use of proper means, under the direction and by the assistance of the Spirit of God.

Proverbs 8:10

Ver. 10. Receive my instruction, and not silver,.... Not but that silver may be desired, sought after and received, consistent with the instructions of wisdom; though an anxious, immoderate, sinful pursuit after it, hinders the reception of them; and when they are in competition, the one is to be preferred to the other: the doctrines of the Gospel are of more worth, and more to be desired, than thousands of gold and silver; and therefore the meaning is, that the instruction of wisdom should be received rather than silver; it should have the preference; so Gersom interprets it, and with which agrees the following clause:

and knowledge rather than choice gold; that is, the knowledge of Christ, and the knowledge of God in Christ; the knowledge of the Gospel, and the truths of it; a spiritual and experimental knowledge of these things is of more value than the finest gold, than the gold of Ophir; see Ps 19:10.

Proverbs 8:11

Ver. 11. For wisdom [is] better than rubies,.... A sort of precious stones: or, "than precious stones" {z} in general; so the Targum and Septuagint, Arabic and Syriac versions; even than all of them, as the Vulgate Latin version; or, than "pearls" {a}, or "carbuncles" {b}: there are none equal to it, nor is it to be procured by them; see
Job 28:16;

and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it;
See Gill on "Pr 3:15".

{z} Mynynpm "gemmis", Baynus; "prae gemmis politis", Schultens. {a} "Margaritas", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "unionibus", Cocceius. {b} "Carbunculis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Proverbs 8:12

Ver. 12. I Wisdom dwell with Prudence,.... Here Wisdom begins to speak in her own person, and continues to do so unto the end of the chapter; or Christ describes himself, pencils out and draws his own picture, and a most lovely one it is. In this clause Christ is described by the habitation in which he dwells, "I Wisdom inhabit Prudence" {c}; so the words may be rendered; that is the house in which I dwell: or by his companion with whom he dwells, "with Prudence"; that is my companion with whom I am familiarly conversant. The phrase, taken both ways, shows that Christ is very largely, yea, fully possessed of prudence; as a man that dwells in a house is the proprietor and possessor of it, so prudence is Christ's; it belongs to him, he enjoys it; he dwells in prudence, and prudence dwells in him; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him, and the Spirit of wisdom rests upon him: and also it shows that prudence is natural to him, and not adventitious; it does not come from abroad, nor does he go abroad for it; he and Prudence are as it were born and brought up together in one and the same house: and likewise that there is an intimacy and familiarity between them; Prudence is most present with Christ, is always near him, and ready at hand to be exercised by him; as it was when he was incarnate on earth; he "dealt prudently", as it was prophesied he should, Isa 52:13; which appeared in his disputation with the doctors in the temple at twelve years of age; by his prudent answers to the ensnaring questions of his enemies; and throughout the whole of his ministry, both as to the manner and matter of it and particularly at the time of his seizure, arraignment, trial, and crucifixion. Or by "prudence" may be meant prudent men, such as are possessed of this quality or virtue, and with such Wisdom, or Christ, dwells; not with the wise and prudent of this world; nor with such who are so in their own conceit; but with such who are sensible of their folly; who are humbled under a sense of sin, and are made wise unto salvation; who believe in Christ, which is a point of the highest prudence; and who walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; such as these have the presence and company of Christ;

and find out knowledge of witty inventions; the word twmzm is sometimes used in an ill sense, and is rendered "wicked devices", Pr 12:2; and may be taken in this sense here. Christ, who is God omniscient, knows all that is in the hearts of men; all their thoughts, schemes, and devices; he found out, he scented the knowledge of them when here on earth; he was privy to the secret thoughts and wickedness of men's hearts; he knew all the hypocritical designs and views of the Pharisees, when they tempted him with ensnaring questions; he was apprised of all the ways and methods they devised to take away his life before the time, and so escaped them; he found out the knowledge of Judas's wicked scheme to betray him, and spoke of it to him and others before it was executed; and he knew all the wicked devices and stratagems of Satan against himself, in tempting him in the wilderness, and in putting it into the heart of Judas to betray him; and he knows all his wiles and artful schemes to decoy his people, and makes them known unto them, so that they are not ignorant of his devices. Moreover, it may be understood and interpreted in a good sense, of the thoughts, devices, and purposes of God's heart, as in Jer 23:20; and particularly as relating to man's redemption and salvation: this is a device or "invention" of God; sin is man's invention, by which he fell; but the recovery of man is the invention of God; he found out the persons to be saved in his eternal decrees; and the person that should be the Saviour of them in his council and covenant, and appointed him for the work; and he found out the way and manner of saving men by him, even by the ransom and sacrifice of himself: and this is a "witty" invention, wherein God has abounded in all wisdom and prudence; as appears by settled upon so proper a person to be the Saviour as his own Son; by bringing it about in a way so agreeable to all his perfections, to the satisfaction of his justice, and the honour of his law; and in making such partakers of it, and in such a way, as most glorifies the riches of his grace. And this scheme Christ has full knowledge of, being in the bosom of his Father, as one brought up with him; and was the Angel of the great council, and present when the design was formed; and besides he has found it to his cost, even at the expense of his precious blood; and so has "obtained", or "found redemption" for us, as the phrase is in **Heb 9:12**, and having found it, and the knowledge of it, he makes it known to others by his Spirit, word, and ministers. Likewise these "witty inventions" may be interpreted of the whole Gospel, and the doctrines of it; the Gospel is an "invention", not of men, but of God; not a scheme and device of men, but of God; it is not taught by men, and learned of them, or of them only, but of God; and a "witty" one it is, it is the wisdom of God, the manifold wisdom of God, though esteemed foolishness by men. This Christ has "found out the knowledge of"; he has full and perfect knowledge of it, it is hid in him; it came and was preached by him, as it never was before or since; and he communicated, and still does communicate the knowledge of it; and blessed are they that know the joyful sound!

{c} hmre ytnkv "habito astutim", Cocceius; "prudentiam", Michaelis; "solertiam", Schultens.

Proverbs 8:13

Ver. 13. The fear of the Lord [is] to hate evil,.... All evil in general, evil thoughts, evil words, evil actions, evil company, evil worship, and evil doctrines; and by "the fear of the Lord", which shows itself in an hatred of evil, because of the loathsome nature of it, and being contrary to God and his will, and as it appears in the glass of the law, and especially in the glass of pardoning love, is meant not the fear of his judgments and wrath, or a distrust of his grace and goodness, much less an hypocritical fear, or a mere show of devotion; but a reverential affection for him, which is peculiar to children; a filial, godly fear, which is consistent with strong faith, great joy, and true courage; and is opposite to pride and self-confidence, and is accompanied with real holiness; it takes its rise from the grace of God, and is greatly increased and promoted by the discoveries of his love and goodness: this is brought into the account and description of wisdom, to distinguish it from carnal wisdom; to commend wisdom from its holiness; for this the beginning of wisdom, yea, wisdom itself,
Job 28:28;

pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate; these are the particulars of evil, which Wisdom, or Christ, declares his hatred of. "Pride", which appears in men in thinking too highly of themselves, in speaking too well of themselves, in despising others, in setting up and trusting to their own righteousness for salvation, and in crying up the purity and power of human nature; this is very contrary to the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus, and must be hateful to him: "arrogancy" differs little from pride, and the two words in the Hebrew are very much the same, very little differ; it is an ascribing that to a man's self which does not belong to him, whether in things natural, civil, or spiritual; when men attribute their justification and salvation to their own works, it is arrogancy, and must be hateful to Christ; who been at so much pains and expense to bring in everlasting righteousness, and work out salvation for men: it is the height of arrogancy in a man to conceit he a power to regenerate, renew, and convert himself, and, with the haughty Arminian, Grevinchovius, to say, he has made himself to differ from others; this must be hateful to Christ, by whose Spirit and grace this only is done: and it is a piece of arrogancy when men ascribe all the good works done by them to their own power, when without Christ they can do nothing; which therefore must be displeasing to him. "The evil way", as Aben Ezra observes, is an evil custom and course of sinning; a man's own way, which he chooses and delights in, and which leads to destruction: "and the froward mouth" is the mouth that speaks perverse things; things contrary to a man's own heart, contrary to truth, to the rule of the divine word, to the Gospel, to Christ and his people, and to all men; which must be hateful and abominable to him who is truth itself.

Proverbs 8:14

Ver. 14. Counsel [is] mine, and sound wisdom,.... The words and sentiments in this and the following clause are the same with those in Job 12:13; and scent to be taken from thence, which are spoken of God; and being here applied to Wisdom, show that a divine Person is meant; and are very applicable to him who the Wisdom of God, and the power of God; and on whom rests the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel, and of might, and of the fear of the Lord, **1Co 1:24**. "Counsel" belongs to him, and is used and exercised by him, as concerned with the Father and Spirit, both in the words of nature and grace; to whom all the purposes and counsels of God are known; and who was consulted in the creation of man, and in his redemption, reconciliation, and salvation; the council of peace being between them both: and it belongs to him, and is used by him with respect to his people; he is council to them; he gives them counsel and advice, he being the wonderful Counsellor; he gave it in person when here on earth, both to sinners and to saints, and which continues on record: the Gospel is the counsel of Christ, and it is very suitable and seasonable, hearty, sincere, and faithful; is freely given, and, being taken, infallibly succeeds; see **Re 3:18**. And he is council for them; he appears for them in court; introduces their persons, and presents their petitions to his Father; pleads their cause, is their advocate, answers to all charges and accusations; and calls for and requires, in point of law and justice, every blessing of goodness for them. "Sound wisdom" belongs to Christ; "wisdom", from whence he has his name in this book; "sound" wisdom, such as is solid and substantial, real and true, in opposition to the wisdom of the world, to knowledge falsely so called, to carnal, sensual, and earthly wisdom. The Gospel may be meant, which is the wisdom of God in a mystery; sound doctrine, a form of sound words, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus: both grace and glory may be intended, which are both in the gift of Christ; grace is that "wisdom" which he makes his people to "know in the hidden part"; and glory is that "sound wisdom" laid up for the righteous, the better and more enduring substance in heaven. The word here used signifies essence or substance; and some render it, "whatsoever is" {d}; whatever has a being, that is Christ's; all creatures are his, the earth and the fulness of it, and they that dwell therein;

I [am] understanding; essentially as a divine person; his understanding is infinite; there is no searching of it; it reaches to all persons and things: as Mediator, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding rests on him without measure, by which he was furnished for his prophetic office; as man, his understanding was amazing to all that knew him, and heard him. Christ not only has an understanding, but he is understanding itself; he is the fountain, author, and giver of understanding; of all the natural understanding there is in men; of the light of nature and reason, of those intellectual faculties which men are possessed of; and of all the spiritual understanding in divine things, which his people are partakers of, **1Jo 5:20**;

I have strength; as the mighty God; which appears in his creation of all things out of nothing, in his upholding all things by his power, and in his government of the world. As Mediator, he has the Spirit of might upon him; all power in heaven and earth is given him; his strength is manifest in the salvation of his people, when he came travelling in the greatness of it to save them; by fulfilling the law for them; by bearing their sins, and the punishment due to them; and by destroying all their enemies: and in his plucking them out of the hands of Satan, out of the burning, out of the mire and clay at conversion; in bearing and supporting them under all their burdens, afflictions, and temptations, and in preserving them safe to his kingdom and glory; and in giving them strength in the mean time to bear the cross, to withstand temptations and corruptions, to exercise the graces of the spirit, and perform the duties of religion.

{d} hyvwt "essentia", Montanus, Tigurine version; "quicquid est", Junius & Tremellius; "realitas", Michaelis; "soliditas", Schultens.

Proverbs 8:15

Ver. 15. By me kings reign,.... Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; they are made kings by him, and are under him; he sets them up, and deposes them at pleasure; they have their kingdoms, crowns, and sceptres from him, and are accountable to him. The Syriac version renders it, "for me"; it is for the sake of Christ they reign; and they ought to seek his glory, and the good of his kingdom and interest. Moreover, as it is by him they are set up as kings and governors, and are preserved and continued in their governments by him; so it is by him that they rule well who do so, that they reign justly, wisely, happily, and successfully; all the wisdom which appears in their administrations is all from him; all those wise laws, which are enacted by them for the good of their subjects, is owing to the wisdom and prudence he gives them;

and princes decree justice; these may design such who are under kings, are assisting to them in government; who are of their privy council, and give advice in making laws, and putting them into execution. Here it particularly regards their making just and righteous laws for the good of the state, in which they are employed by kings; or their advising to them, and assisting in drawing them up: and now all the wisdom that is necessary hereunto, and which is conspicuous herein, is all from Christ; who has the spirit of princes in his hands, and orders and directs them as he pleases. The Targum is,

"I anoint princes with justice."

Proverbs 8:16

Ver. 16. By me princes rule,.... All governors of provinces and cities, who are under the king as supreme; the discharge of whose office in a right manner requires much wisdom, prudence, justice, and integrity; all which they have from Christ, as well as their power of ruling, that rule well;

and nobles, [even] all the judges of the earth; the word {e} for nobles signifies persons of a "free" spirit, generous, bountiful men; such as are called "benefactors", Lu 22:25; so one of the Ptolemys, king of Egypt, was called Evergetes. Such who govern, not in a cruel and rigorous manner, but with clemency and gentleness; who, as they are "free" and noble themselves, their subjects are a free people, and enjoy their privileges and liberties fully and quietly. And "the judges of the earth" are such, as sit on benches of justice, hear and try causes, and pass sentence on men; which requires great skill and knowledge, and much faithfulness and integrity, which all that perform their office aright have from Christ. How great therefore must he be! how wise and just! from whom all rulers, supreme and subordinate, have their power; prudence, generosity, and justice!

{e} Mybydn "munifici sive liberales", Vatablus; "ingenui", Junius &

Tremellius, Gejerus; "munifici", Piscator; "generosi", Schultens.

Proverbs 8:17

Ver. 17. I love them that love me,.... Those that love Christ are such who are born again, and have a spiritual and experimental knowledge of him; that believe in him, have seen his loveliness, have had his love shed abroad in their hearts, and a view of his fulness and suitableness; some comfortable apprehensions of their relation to him, and interest in him, and are indulged with communion with him: the love with which such souls love Christ springs from their very hearts, is cordial and sincere; it gives him the preference to all objects, to all creatures, angels or men, and to all creature enjoyments; it is drawn out to all of Christ, and to all that belong to him, or are his; and though it may be lost, become remiss and abate in its fervency, it cannot be lost; and is what is very acceptable to Christ, and highly esteemed of by him: it shows itself by a high veneration for the truths and doctrines of his Gospel; by a strict regard to his commands and ordinances; by a hearty affection for his people; by parting with and bearing all for his sake; a carefulness of offending him, and losing his company; by an earnest desire after his presence, and delight in it, and by a concern at his absence; by a diligent inquiry after him in the use of means until he is found, and by the joy expressed at finding of him: now such Christ loves; not that he begins to love his people when they begin to love him, for he loved them from everlasting; as appears by his espousing their persons, undertaking their cause, and taking the care and charge of their persons, grace, and glory, so early; and by his assumption of their nature in time, and by his suffering and dying for them; all which were before they had any love to him: but this points out and describes the persons, who may be assured of the love of Christ to them, since their love to him springs from his to them; besides, it designs some fresh manifestations of his love, and the continuance of it; as well as suggests that he has future blessings to bestow on such, as fresh marks of his affection, and instances of his love to them; such as granting them his gracious presence, giving them more grace; causing all things, even afflictions, to work together for their good; preserving and keeping them from falling, and at last giving them eternal glory and happiness; see
Joh 14:21;

and those that seek me early shall find me: and they are such who see their need of Christ, and know the worth of him; and those seek to him in the use of means, the word and ordinances, and as assisted by his Spirit and grace, for pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation, which are only to be had in him: and

they may be said to "seek [him] early", or "morning him" {f}, who seek him in the morning of youth, or in the first place, above all things else, and that with the greatest eagerness and earnestness, diligence and importunity; and such always are successful; they "find" Christ, and life, righteousness, and salvation in him, and every blessing, and therefore are happy,
See Gill on "Pr 3:13".

{f} yrxvm "quaerentes diluculo me", Montanus; "qui me mane quaerunt", Tigurine version, Michaelis.

Proverbs 8:18

Ver. 18. Riches and honour [are] with me,.... By "riches" are meant not the riches of Christ's person, the perfections of his nature, his works, and his vast empire over all creatures, and the revenues arising from thence, which though durable, yet not communicable; not temporal riches, which, though with him, and at his dispose, yet these, at least a large share of them, and in common, is not given to his people, nor are they durable; but the riches of grace, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, and sanctifying grace, are intended, and the riches of glory in another world: and so "honour" designs not that which he has as a divine Person, or as Mediator, which is incommunicable; much less temporal honour, for though this is with him and from him, as appears **Pr 8:15**; yet it is not usually given to his followers, who are not the great and noble, but generally reckoned the offscouring of all things; nor is such honour durable; but the honour he gives his people lies in their being espoused to him, in being the sons of God through him, in being made by him kings and priests unto God, and in reigning with him here and for ever;

[yea], durable riches and righteousness; which last some understand as another adjunct and epithet of riches, and represent them in opposition to mammon of unrighteousness, or to riches either ill-gotten or ill-managed; and expresses another property of Christ's riches of grace and glory, as being what are come by in a way of righteousness into his hands, and are distributed faithfully by him; though rather it respects a distinct thing which is with Christ, and in his hands to give, even his justifying righteousness, consisting of his active and passive obedience, which he has wrought out, is in him, and given by him to his people; and is what is called the righteousness of God and of faith; which secures from condemnation and entitles to eternal life; and is an everlasting one, as durable as his riches are, which are his fulness that ever continues with him: pardon is "simul" and "semel" {g}, and for ever; sanctifying grace, as

faith, hope, and love, always abide; and about the riches of glory there can be no doubt of the permanency of them; and the same may be said of honour both here and hereafter.

{g} "At once" and "once for all".

Proverbs 8:19

Ver. 19. My fruit [is] better than gold, yea, than fine gold,.... This is said in allusion to the fruit that grows on trees, Wisdom, or Christ, being a tree of life, See Gill on "Pr 3:18"; and so he is compared to other trees, **So 2:3**. His "fruit" are the blessings of grace, such as redemption, reconciliation, pardon, justification, adoption, and eternal life; these are his by covenant, are procured by him, and are communicated from him; also the graces of his Spirit called fruits, as faith, hope, love, &c. of which he is the author and object; and even good works, the fruits of his grace; they are done in virtue of union to him, by his strength, and are directed to his glory: and all these, especially his grace and the blessings of it, are preferable to the finest gold; they are more valuable as to their intrinsic worth and excellency; they are more useful and profitable, being for the good and welfare of immortal souls; and they are more satisfying and more lasting, and which cannot be obtained with such a corruptible thing as gold is;

and my revenue than choice silver; as the former word refers to fruits that grow on trees, this to such as spring from seed sown in the earth; see Le 23:39, where the same word is used as here, and is also rendered "revenue" in Jer 12:13; Christ himself is compared to seed, and so his word, Joh 12:24; and the fruit or revenue thereof is the same as before: or else the allusion is to the profit arising from riches, from estates, and their annual rent; or from money put out to use, or improved by commerce, and so signifies the same with the gain and merchandise of wisdom, See Gill on "Pr 3:14". Aben Ezra construes the words thus, "my revenue is choicer than silver"; but our version is best.

Proverbs 8:20

Ver. 20. I lead in the way of righteousness,.... As a king his subjects, a shepherd his flock; as a guide to persons that are ignorant and out of the way; as parents their children, teaching them to go; or as a master his scholars: and the way Wisdom, or Christ, leads his people in, is "the way of righteousness";

the doctrine of righteousness, or the way and manner of a sinner's justification in the sight of God; all men are out of the way of it, and are ignorant of the right way; Christ leads them into it: he leads them off of their own righteousness by showing that it does not deserve the name of one; that it is unacceptable to God, unprofitable to him, and insufficient to justify them before him; and he leads them to his own righteousness, which he has wrought out; and shows them that this is answerable to the demands of law and justice, is acceptable to God, and imputed by him without works; and this he does in his word and by his Spirit: and in this way of righteousness he leads them into his Father's presence with acceptance; to himself, in which he beholds them with pleasure; and to eternal glory, which gives them a title to it: he also leads into the practice of righteousness; he teaches them, and they learn of him works of righteousness; he goes before them by way of example, and he gives them his Spirit and grace to enable them to perform them; and which may more especially be intended in the next clause;

in the midst of the paths of judgment: of truth and holiness; in his commandments and ordinances; in all which they are led not against their wills but with them; and not only walk but run with the greatest cheerfulness in those ways and paths of his.

Proverbs 8:21

Ver. 21. That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance,.... Substantial blessings, blessings indeed, as all spiritual ones are; and substantial grace, as every grace is; and substantial communion with God and Christ, which is a real thing, and had in the way of righteousness; also substantial happiness hereafter, as eternal life is; which being expressed by "substance", or "that which is" {g}, as the word used signifies, denotes the reality of it; it being not only actually promised, prepared, and laid up for the saints, but is what is known by them now, and of which they have the earnest and pledge; as also the solidity of it, being opposed to the vain and shadowy things of this life; as well as the riches, valuableness, and continuance of it; it is enduring substance, which cannot be wasted nor taken away; which is in its own nature incorruptible, and the saints will always continue to enjoy it. God himself may be meant, who is most eminently
vy, that which is, a self-existent Being, and the Being of beings, essence itself, and of whom the saints are heirs, and who will be their portion now and for ever, **Ro 8:17**; and such that shall enjoy this inheritance are those that "love" Christ; to them it is promised, for them it is prepared, and to them it will be

given, **Jas 1:12** **1Co 2:9**, not that their love to Christ is the meritorious cause of so valuable a blessing; but this describes the persons that shall have it, and points out a proper disposition for it, without which none would be fit to enjoy it; and besides there is a connection between grace and glory; to which may be added, that this shows that Christ does not love in word only, saying, "I love them that love me", **Pr 8:17**; but in deed also; and how much he esteems the love of his people; and it is designed to encourage the faith and hope of weak believers, who, though they do not so strongly believe in Christ, yet truly love him. And be it further observed, that this substance is enjoyed by way of inheritance; it is not purchased, nor acquired, but bequeathed and given to the children of God by their heavenly Father, and comes to them through the death of Christ the testator, and is for ever, as inheritances are; and so Aben Ezra observes, that it signifies an eternal possession;

and I will fill their treasures; the treasures of their hearts, Mt 12:35; Christ now fills their understandings with spiritual knowledge, their souls with grace, their minds with peace and joy, and their hearts with food and gladness; and hereafter he will fill them to full satisfaction with knowledge, holiness, and joy, and will be all in all to them.

{g} vy "quod est", Junius & Tremellius; "rem solido vereque subsistentem", Gejerus; "solidum illud", Schultens.

Proverbs 8:22

Ver. 22. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way,.... Not "created me", as the Targum and the Septuagint version; which version Arius following gave birth to his pernicious doctrine; who from hence concluded Christ is a creature, and was the first creature that God made, not of the same but of a like nature with himself, in some moment or period of eternity; and by whom he made all others: the Word, or Wisdom of God is never said to be created; and if as such he was created, God must have been without his Wisdom before he was created; besides, Christ, as the Word and Wisdom of God, is the Creator of all things, and not created, **Joh 1:1**; but this possession is not in right of creation, as the word is sometimes used, **Ge 4:1**; it might be more truly rendered, "the Lord begat me", as the word is translated by the Septuagint in Zec 13:5; it denotes the Lord's having, possessing, and enjoying his word and wisdom as his own proper Son; which possession of him is expressed by his being with him and in him, and in his bosom, and as one brought forth and brought up by him; as he was "in the beginning of his way" of creation, when he went forth in his wisdom and power, and created all things; then he did possess his Son, and made use of him, for by him he made the worlds: and "in the beginning of his way" of grace, which was before his way of creation; he began with him when he first went out in acts of grace towards his people; his first thoughts, purposes, and decrees concerning their happiness, were in him; the choice of their persons was made in him; God was in him contriving the scheme of their peace, reconciliation, and salvation; the covenant of grace was made with him, and all fulness of grace was treasured up in him: the words may be rendered, "the Lord possessed me, the beginning of his way" {h}; that is, who am the beginning, as he is; the beginning of the creation of God, the first cause, the efficient of it, both old and new; see **Col 1:18**. So Aben Ezra, who compares with this Job 40:19. This shows the real and actual existence of Christ from eternity, his relation to Jehovah his Father, his nearness to him, equality with him, and distinction from him: it is added, for further illustration and confirmation's sake,

before his works of old; the creation of the heavens and the earth; a detail of which there is in the following verses.

{h} wkrd tyvar ynnq "possidet me principium viae suae", Pagninus, Michaelis, Schultens; "habuit me principium viae suae", Cocceius.

Proverbs 8:23

Ver. 23. I was set up from everlasting,.... I, a person, and not a quality; a person, and not a nature; the person of Christ as the Son of God, and not the human nature of Christ, which then did not exist; this phrase designs the ordination and constitution of Christ in his office as Mediator. So the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "I was ordained"; Christ was foreordained to be the Redeemer and Saviour of men, to be the propitiation for their sins, to be the head of the church, and the Judge of the world. It intends likewise his inauguration into his office, and his investiture with it; and because anointing with oil was used in installing persons into the offices of prophet, priest, and king; hence Christ's instalment into his office as Mediator is here expressed by an anointing; for the words may be rendered, "I was anointed" {i}; it takes in all that goes to his constitution as Mediator, his call, appointment, and investiture; and the whole of his office, every part and branch of it; and chiefly his kingly office, with reference to which the same word is used **Ps 2:6**; and so Gersom paraphrases it, "and there were given to me power, dominion, and greatness;"

all which suppose the eternity of his person; for had he not existed from everlasting, he could not have been set up, and anointed as Mediator, or invested with his office as such;

from the beginning, or ever the earth was; or from the first of the earth, or the original of it; that is, before all time, before the earth or anything was created; this further confirms the eternal existence of Christ's person, the antiquity of his office, the early provision of grace in him as Mediator for his people, and may lead to entertain high and honourable thoughts of him.

{i} ytkon "uncta sum", Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens; "inuncta fui", Gejerus.

Proverbs 8:24

Ver. 24. When [there were] no depths, I was brought forth,.... Not only in the decree of God, as the head of the elect; foreordained to be the Redeemer of them, and to be the propitiation for their sins; and appointed the Judge of the world, and heir of all things; but "was begotten", as the Targum and Syriac version; the Septuagint is, "he begot me"; and so it is to be understood of the eternal generation and sonship of Christ; for the word ytllwx is used of generation,
Job 15:7. Christ is the firstborn of every creature, begotten, born, and brought forth before any creature was in being; see **Ps 2:7**; before the depths of the great sea were formed, for they were made by him, Ps 95:1; when there were no depths, but the infinite being and perfections of God, and the thoughts and purposes of his heart, which are his deep things, Job 11:7;

when [there were] no fountains abounding with water; or "heavy", or "honoured" {k} with it; when the fountains of the great deep were not; and when there were no other fountains which form rivers, and water the earth; when there were none but God the fountain of living waters; then was Christ as the only begotten son of God; and who was also set up as the fountain of all grace, life, and salvation for his people.

{k} ydbkn "aggravati", Pagninus; "praegravati", Vatablus; "gravati", Michaelis; "honorabiles", Gejerus.

Proverbs 8:25

Ver. 25. Before the mountains were settled,.... "Plunged" {l}, or fixed in the earth; and which was done by the great strength of the Lord, upon their proper bases, Ps 65:6; and which were "aborigine", or from the beginning of the world, and therefore called the ancient mountains, De 33:15; to be before the mountains is a periphrasis of eternity, and is a phrase expressive of God's eternity; and being here used of the Son's, shows his eternity is the same with his Father's,
Ps 90:2;

before the hills was I brought forth; which is repeated partly to show the importance of it; this being a matter of infinite moment and concern, and deserving of the strictest attention and observation; and partly to show the certainty of it; the eternal generation of Christ being an article of faith most surely to be believed.

{l} webjh "defixi", Montanus; "mergerentur", Tigurine version; "immersi", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius.

Proverbs 8:26

Ver. 26. While as yet he had not made the earth,.... That is, the Lord, who possessed Wisdom, or Christ, and by whom he was set up; he as yet had not made the earth, when this was done; this shows that the earth had a beginning, contrary to those philosophers who asserted the eternity of it; that Christ was before that was, for it was made by him; and consequently he must be eternal, and was before any man was, since the earth was made before man; and that he was not of the earth, earthy, as was the first man;

nor the fields; the plain parts of the earth, in opposition to the mountains and hills before mentioned; the valleys and meadows that lay between them, full of grass, flowers, and fruits; pleasant to behold, and profitable to be enjoyed; so the word is also rendered **Job 5:10**; and "valleys", by the Targum here: or the "out parts" {m}; the extremities of the earth, the two poles of it; the uninhabitable parts of the earth, as distinct from the habitable part of it afterwards mentioned: or all with out it; the ambient and spacious ether;

nor the highest part of the dust of the world: meaning, not the mountains and hills, which are before mentioned, and are the highest part of the earth; but rather "the chief of the dust of the earth" {n}, as the words may be rendered; these are the metals and minerals within it; the gold, silver, and precious stones, of which we read very early, **Ge 2:12**; or the "beginning", the first and chief, the "prima materia", even the dusts of the world, out of which man and all the creatures were made, **Ge 2:6**. Dr. Lister {o} was of opinion that sand was once the most exterior and general cover of the surface of the whole earth; partly because all our northern mountains are covered with it, more or less, at this day; and partly because of its great hardness, durableness, and unalterable quality; and the higher the mountains be, he says, still the more and coarser the sand is; and if so, this might with propriety be called the highest part of the dust of the earth. But Christ was before any of them, as well as is more excellent than they. Or it may be man is designed, who was made of the dust of the earth; even the first man Adam, so Jarchi, **Ge 2:7**; before whom Christ was: yea, the human nature of Christ himself may be meant, which is fairer than any of the children of men, and the chief of all the individuals of human nature; being without sin, and united to the Son of God, and also the curious workmanship of the Spirit of God. Now Christ, as the Son of God, as the only begotten of the Father, existed before his human nature did, or before he was the Son of man.

{m} twuwx "quae extra sunt", Tigurine version, Vatablus; "exteriora", Cocceius, Michaelis. {n} var "caput", Montanus, Tigurine version; "summam", Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens. {o} In Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 452, 453.

Proverbs 8:27

Ver. 27. When he prepared the heavens, I [was] there,.... Made, beautified, and adorned them; when he gave them their form, figure, magnitude, and motion; when he garnished them with the sun, moon, and stars; then was Christ present, not as a mere spectator, but as a co-worker; see **Heb 1:10**; and even the third heaven, the place and state of glorified saints, prepared for them from the foundation of the world, Mt 25:34;

when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: or "compassed the waters with bounds", as Job says, Pr 26:10; or made the earth with the sea globular, which make one terraqueous globe: or "made a circle" {p}; all around it, called the circle of the earth, on which he sits,
Isa 40:22; this compass may design the vast expanse or firmament of heaven, which is stretched and drawn around the terraqueous globe as a canopy or

curtain. Christ was with his Father on the first day's creation of the heavens; and on the second day, when the firmament was made, and was before them both.

{p} gwx wqxb "describendo circulum", Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 8:28

Ver. 28. When he established the clouds above,.... In which the waters are bound, and yet are not rent under them; and where, in the thin air, they hang heavy with them; where they are weighed by measure, and a decree made for them when they shall fall; and when they do, the Lord makes small the drops of water, which the clouds do drop and distil on men abundantly; the spreadings of which are beyond understanding, and are unaccountable, and must be referred to the power of God; who has settled and established them in the heavens, and the laws of them,
Job 26:8;

when he strengthened the fountains of the deep; gave them strength, and still continues it, to cast out their waters, which run into the main sea, and feed and fill it, and return to their place again; which strength of flowing and reflowing can be attributed to nothing else but to the great power of God, **Ge 7:11**.

Proverbs 8:29

Ver. 29. When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment,.... A perpetual decree, which never has been altered nor never will: he has placed the sand for the bounds of the sea everywhere, which it cannot pass, though its waves toss, foam, and roar; this is his decreed place, with which he has shut it up, as with doors, bars, and bolts; so that those proud waves may come hitherto and no further, **Jer 5:22**;

when he appointed the foundations of the earth; which are laid on the seas and floods; nay, the earth is hung like a ball in the air upon nothing; and yet its foundations are such as that it shall not be removed; being the purpose and decree, the power and might, of the Lord himself, Job 26:7. Now Christ was present when those were laid, for he was concerned in the laying of them himself, **Heb 1:10**. The Lord asks Job where he was then, Job 38:4; he was not theft in being, but Christ was.

Proverbs 8:30

Ver. 30. Then I was by him, [as] one brought up [with him],.... He was then, and from all eternity, "by him", or "with him" {q}; which denotes his co-existence with God, and his relation to him as his Father; his nearness to him, his equality with him, and his distinction from him: he was by him when the names of God's elect were put down in the book of life; he was by him and with him in the council and covenant of grace and peace; and so in the creation of all things, and has been ever since; not as a onlooker, but as a party concerned; and not as subordinate and inferior to his Father, but equal with him. The word
Nwma, translated "brought up", is differently rendered; Symmachus and Theodotion render it "strengthened"; as Christ was set up in his mediatorial office, he was strengthened in it by his Father; and was in his view, council, and covenant, the man of his right hand, made strong for himself: the Targum renders it "faithful", so the Tigurine version; as Christ was to him that appointed him, faithful to all he promised and was intrusted with. Many translate it an "artificer" or "workman" {r}, as Nma in **So 7:1**; and so Christ was a co-worker, a worker with God in the making of all things, the heavens, earth, and sea, and all in there; not as an instrument, but as a co-efficient cause of them; which is a proof of his proper deity, and equality with God. But others think the word has the sense of nursing, or being nursed, educated, or brought up. Some {s} take it actively, as in **Ru 4:16** **Es 2:7**; and interpret it of Christ's nursing the creation, or cherishing, supporting, and preserving all creatures in their being when made; particularly of his nourishing and cherishing the church and people of God committed to his care. Others {t} passively, of his being "brought up", as our version; and so the Latin interpreter of the Targum renders it "nursed up at his side"; which expresses the tender regard of his Father to him, as his begotten Son; in whose bosom he lay and was bore, as a nursing father bears his son in his bosom,
Nu 11:12; and by whom, as Mediator, he was trained up in the performance of his office;

and I was daily his delight; or "delights" {u}; exceeding delightful to him. The Father loved the Son from all eternity, with a love of complacency and delight, Joh 17:24; this delight was founded in relation to him, in sonship; and in likeness, he being the express image of his person; in sameness of nature, he being of the same nature and perfections with his Father: and he delighted in him as a workman, in the works which he did, being the same he saw him do; and in him as Mediator, in his constitution as such, and in engaging as a surety, to obey and suffer in the stead of his people, Isa 42:1; he not only delighted in him day by day, throughout the six days of the creation, when he was by him as a workman, but before, and even from the days of eternity; from the date of his commencement as Mediator; in the foreviews of his human nature, obeying and suffering in it; and of the salvation of the elect by him, and of his own glory in it;

rejoicing always before him; being always in his presence, and acceptable to him; rejoicing in having the same nature and perfections with him, and in the relation he stood in to him; and also in the view of the works of creation and redemption he would be jointly concerned in with him; which joy always did and ever will continue. There is a mutual pleasure and delight which the Father and Son have in each other, and in all that they are concerned; and especially in what respects the salvation of the chosen people. The allusion in the word used in this clause is to children's playing in the presence of their parents; which is a diversion to the one, and a pleasure to the other.

{q} wlua "cum eo", V. L. "apud eum", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c. {r} Nwma armazousa, Sept. "cuneta componens", V. L. "artifex vel opifex", Gejerus; so Schindler, col. 90. {s} "Nutritius", Montanus, Pagninus, Baynus; "educans", Junius & Tremellius. {t} "Alumnus", Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus; "alumna", Schultens; "in sinu gestatus filius", Cocceius; so Gussetius, p. 77. and Noldius, p. 379. No. 1884. and Stockins, p. 71. {u} Myewvev "deliciae", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; "obleclationes", Schultens.

Proverbs 8:31

Ver. 31. Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth,.... In that part of the earth which is habitable; in filling it with inhabitants; in preserving and sustaining it in being, and the inhabitants of it; in governing it, and ordering all things in it for the best, according to his infinite wisdom and the counsel of his will; in bestowing the bounties of his providence, and in being the light and life of men: all which were done by him with the greatest ease, as well as pleasure and delight; it was a kind of sport or play unto him, as the word used signifies {w}; and so in **Pr 8:30**, which shows the allusion is to a nurse child. Moreover, this may have a peculiar view to the saints and people of God, and to those particular spots of ground in God's earth where they should dwell; for as the earth was made, and is continued on their account; so the very place of their birth and abode, as well as of their conversion, were afore appointed and fixed by the Lord, which Christ in his eternal mind had a foreview of, and took a pleasure in: besides, they themselves are the habitation of God, and Christ, and the blessed Spirit; the church of God is his dwelling place on earth, where he delights to dwell, over whom he rejoices to do good, and whom he makes glad; so some read the words, "making glad the habitable part of his earth" {x}. Once more, the new earth, which will be after this is passed, away, may be truly called his, or the second Adam's earth; and in which only righteous persons shall dwell, and with whom the tabernacle of God shall be, or with whom Christ shall dwell a thousand years; and in the foreview of this he may be thought to take delight and pleasure, even before the world was. The human nature of Christ may not be amiss thought of, which was formed in the lower parts of the earth, and therefore he is called the fruit of the earth, Ps 139:15 **Isa 4:2**; and may be said to be habitable, in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells, and the Word tabernacled, and is the true tabernacle; in the foreview of which the Son of God rejoiced, as to be produced without sin by the Holy Spirit, and adorned with his graces, and to be united to his person; in which he was to work out the salvation of his people, and be glorified; and his, joy, in the foreview of it, appears by his frequent appearances in a human form before his actual incarnation, as "preludiums" of it;

and my delights [were] with the sons of men; or of Adam, of fallen Adam; not with angels, but with men; not with all men, only some; and those as considered as the objects of his own and his Father's love; as beheld in the glass of his Father's decrees; as chosen in him, and given him by his Father; as his children, and as his spouse and bride. The word for "delights" is not only in the plural number, but its two first radical letters are doubled, which, in the Hebrew language, increases the signification of the word; and so expresses the exceeding great delight and pleasure which Christ took in his people from everlasting; his love was then a love of the utmost complacency and delight, and continued, notwithstanding their fall in Adam, though by nature children of wrath, and transgressors from the womb. This appears by his early engagement as a surety for them; by his espousing their persons and their cause; by assuming their nature in time; by suffering and dying in their room and stead, and working out salvation for them; by bearing them on his heart in heaven, and there interceding for them; by taking them out of a state of nature; by visiting them with his grace and presence; and by bringing them, through a variety of trials, safe to his kingdom and glory.

{w} tqxvm "ludens", V. L. Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius; "ludebam", Pagninus; "ludo", Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus; "lusitans", Michaelis, Schultens. {x} "Laetificans in orbe habitabili terram ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Amama; "ridens, vel faciens ridere alios", Baynus.

Proverbs 8:32

Ver. 32. Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children,.... Children of his and his Father, with whom his delights were; predestinated to the adoption of children; children of the covenant and promise, given to him as such in the covenant; for whom he became man, suffered and died, to gather together regenerated ones, by which they appear to be the children of God: these Wisdom here addresses in the most affectionate manner; Christ, having finished the account and description of himself, reassumes his former exhortation, **Pr 8:5**; and enforces it by the several particulars in the above description. From the consideration of his wisdom, riches, eternity, nearness to God, and his delights with men, he exhorts them to "hearken" to him, to his voice in the Gospel, and to what he says there; such who see themselves lost and perishing, the hungry and thirsty, the naked and weary, the disconsolate and afflicted, the poor and indigent; and also to his voice in his precepts and commands, to embrace his doctrines, and submit to his ordinances;

for blessed [are they that] keep my ways; it is a happiness to be in the ways of Christ, to be kept in them, and to keep them; Christ has promised and does vouchsafe his presence in them; there is a pleasure enjoyed in observing them; and though not for keeping, yet in keeping Christ's commands, there is great reward, Ps 19:11.

Proverbs 8:33

Ver. 33. Hear instruction,.... The instruction of wisdom, the Gospel of Christ; which instructs men in things relating to God the Father; as that he is the God and Father of his people, the God of all grace, the giver and sender of Christ, and all good things by him; in things respecting Christ, his person, office, grace, and righteousness; in things that appertain to the Spirit of God, his deity, personality, and operations of grace on the souls of men; in the knowledge of themselves, their impurity, impotence, and unrighteousness; and in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, and therefore to be hearkened to;

and be wise; this is the way to be wise to that which is good, both as to the knowledge and practice of it; to be wise unto salvation, and with respect to everlasting things and a future state; and the Gospel instruction teaches men to behave wisely, to walk in wisdom towards them that are without;

and refuse it not; for this is not to be wise, but to act the part of fools; and such as do so despise their own souls, show that they have no care of them, or concern for their eternal welfare, **Pr 1:7**; for, if this is rejected, there is no escaping eternal damnation, **Heb 2:3**.

Proverbs 8:34

Ver. 34. Blessed [is] the man that heareth me,.... Christ in his Gospel, as speaking by his ministers; for hearing them is hearing him, Lu 10:16; they have their commission from him; are his ambassadors, and represent him; receive their gifts from him; speak according to his mind and will, revealed in his word, and preach him himself. This shows with what attention and reverence the Gospel should be heard; what credit should be given unto it; how it ought to be put in practice; this accounts for the efficacy of it on the souls of men, it being no other than the word of Christ, or Christ himself speaking; and from hence it appears how sad and dreadful will be the case of such that despise it: to hear it is the way to have the knowledge of Christ, and an increase of it; faith in Christ, and a growth therein; the joy of faith, and a furtherance of it; love to Christ, and aboundings in it; and to have spiritual food and nourishment; wherefore it is both the duty and privilege of persons to hear the Gospel of Christ, since these things come by it;

watching daily at my gates; the gates of Wisdom's house, the church of Christ, which are the public ordinances thereof; called in Scripture the gates of Zion, Ps 87:2; in allusion to the gates of cities, where Wisdom cries, or the ministers of Christ preach, **Pr 1:21**; see Isa 26:1; or to the gates of kings, palaces, where courtiers watch to be admitted and received as favourites, or to give in their petitions for themselves or others, **Es 6:10**. The church is the palace of the great King; it is an honour to be admitted here, to have a name and a place here, and to sit with the King at his table. Or to the door of the tabernacle, where the people of Israel assembled for worship; or to the gates of the temple, where the priests and Levites watched, Ex 29:42. "Watching" is opposed to sleep, both to bodily sleep and to sleepy frames of soul; and to intemperance, not only by eating and drinking, but with the cares of this life; and it denotes circumspection, diligence, and attention. Here sensible sinners watch in the ministry of the word and ordinances, if anything drops that they can catch at, suitable to their case and circumstances; as Benhadad's servants did, 1Ki 20:33; and here souls, under darkness and desertion, watch for spiritual light and comfort, as they that watch for the morning; and here every believer watches for his spiritual edification and establishment in the truth; and which should be "daily" or "day after day", one Lord's day after another; taking all opportunities, in season and out of season, consistent with the duties of their calling, to hear the word; and so they are to continue to the end of life; for happy is he that shall be found thus watching when his Lord cometh, Lu 12:37;

waiting at the posts of my doors; either in allusion to scholars, who wait the opening of the school doors to go in first, as Jarchi observes: Christ is a teacher; sensible souls are his disciples or scholars; the church is the school where they learn of him, and learn him; and waiting at the door posts of it shows early seeking to Christ, and eagerness for instruction from him, Lu 21:38. Or the allusion may be to clients, waiting at the doors of counsellors {y}, for counsel, and for patronage and protection, to plead their cause for them; Christ is the wonderful Counsellor, the Advocate with the Father, the Redeemer, mighty and strong, to plead the cause of his people; and therefore it is right to wait at his doors, with whom are counsel and sound wisdom: or else to beggars, that wait at the door for alms; who knock, and wait until the door is opened; tell their case, and wait for relief; receive repulses, and wait still; and will not depart till something is given. So saints should wait at the throne of grace, and upon the word and ordinances, for answers of prayer, performance of promises, and the presence of God and Christ: and so should sinners wait on the outward ministry of the word, remembering the ease of the poor man at the pool, who waited long, and at last had a cure, **Joh 5:5**; since faith comes hereby; the Spirit and his graces, Christ and the knowledge of him, are had by such means, as follows.

{y} "Sub galls cantum consultor ubi ostia pulsat", Horat. Sat. l. 1. Sat. 1. v. 10.

Proverbs 8:35

Ver. 35. For whoso findeth me findeth life,.... Of finding Christ,
See Gill on "Pr 3:13". Such that find Christ find "life" or "lives" {z}, life spiritual and eternal; till they are found of Christ, and find him in effectual calling, they are dead; but, when called by his grace and converted, they live a life of justification and sanctification; they live a life of faith on Christ, of holiness from him, and communion with him: and such that find life in this

sense find spiritual food in and from Christ, to support this life; and spiritual clothing, a justifying righteousness, called the justification of life, and which is the comfort of it; and rest in him, which makes life pleasant and delightful. Such an one finds that which of all things is most valuable, the life of his immortal soul; and which he can find nowhere else; and which, being found, can never be lost, for he finds eternal life in him; and has both a right unto it, and a meetness for it; yea, has the beginning, pledge, and earnest of it, **1Jo 5:11**;

and shall obtain favour of the Lord; by which is meant, not favour among men, though that is had from the Lord, it is he that gives it; nor temporal blessings, for in this sense favour is not to men of spiritual skill and wisdom; rather spiritual blessings, an access to God, acceptance with him; the presence of God, and communion with him; peace of conscience, and every needful supply of grace: but it seems most principally to design the love, grace, and good will of God, the spring and fountain of all blessings: and "obtaining" it does not intend getting an interest in it, for that is free and sovereign; nor is there anything in men, or done by them, which can procure it; but an enjoyment of it. The word {a} used signifies a drawing it out, as water out of a well; and denotes that it is before it is drawn out or manifested; that it is in the heart of God, and lies hid there, from whence it flows as from a well or fountain; and is enjoyed in the exercise of the grace of faith; when the Lord remembers his people, and encompasses them about with it; or draws it out in great lengths, or grants continued and comfortable manifestations of it; see Ps 36:10.

{z} Myyx "vitas", Montanus. {a} qpy "educet", Pagninus, Montanus; "hauriet", V. L. "haurit", Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "depromit", Schultens.

Proverbs 8:36

Ver. 36. But he that sinneth against me,.... Or misses the mark, as the word {b} signifies; and which is observed by Aben Ezra; see Jud 20:16. Christ is the mark and scope of the counsels of God; of the covenant of grace; of the Scriptures; of the Gospel, the truths and promises of it; of the graces of the Spirit, and of all spiritual duties and services; and to whom we are to look for heaven and eternal happiness, **Php 3:14**; and such miss the mark who look for salvation elsewhere, either by the light of nature; or by the law of Moses; or by any moral performances, or any religious exercises; or by a mere profession of religion, even the best. The word is frequently used for sinning; which is an aberration or straying from, or missing, the mark of the law. Some sin against Christ doctrinally, who say he is not come in the flesh, or that Jesus is not the Christ; who deny his proper deity, his divine and eternal Sonship; and treat his blood, righteousness and salvation, with any degree of contempt: they sin against him practically that slight his Gospel, neglect his ordinances, transgress his laws, and evilly treat his people. Sinning against him is very aggravating; it is against him in whom all grace and mercy is, and from whom it comes to the sons of men; who is the Saviour of men from sin, and in whom alone salvation is. Wherefore everyone that thus sins against him

wrongeth his own soul; is injurious to it, and to the spiritual and eternal welfare of it; all sin is hurtful to the souls of men, especially sins against Christ; since there is no other Saviour but him, no other sacrifice for sin but his; and therefore to such there can be no other than a fearful looking for of judgment, that trample him under foot, and treat his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, in a contemptuous manner, Heb 10:26;

all they that hate me; as do the seed of the serpent, the whole world that lies in wickedness, all unregenerate persons, and even many professors of religion; they hate him privately, being without love to him, or loving others more than him; and positively and practically, by despising his Gospel, or not walking worthy of it; by disclaiming doctrines, casting off his yoke, and maltreating his people; all which arise from the corruption of their nature; for this hatred or enmity is original and natural; it is deeply rooted in their minds, and irreconcilable without the grace of God, and is always undeserved. Wherefore such are said to

love death; not formally and intentionally, for death in any shape cannot be desirable; not a corporeal death, and much less an eternal one; but interpretatively and consequentially, as they love that which brings death upon them both in body and soul, and so are reckoned to love death itself.

{b} wajx "qui vero aberraverit a me", Michaelis.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 9

In this chapter, Wisdom, or Christ, is represented as having built a stately house or palace for the entertainment of his guests, **Pr 9:1**; as having made large and suitable provisions for them, **Pr 9:2**; and as having sent his servants to invite them to come and partake of them, and quit all other company but his, **Pr 9:3**; When it is observed who are and who are not to be reproved, with the reasons of it, **Pr 9:7**; and what is the sum and substance of true wisdom; and what the advantages of it both here and hereafter, **Pr 9:10**; And the chapter is concluded with the description of the foolish woman, the opposite of Wisdom; who is represented as clamorous, simple, and ignorant, **Pr 9:13**; and plying passengers that go by her door, and inviting them in to partake of her provisions, **Pr 9:14**; the consequence of which is sure and certain death and destruction to her guests, **Pr 9:18**.

Ver. 1. Wisdom hath builded her house,.... Or "Wisdoms": of which see **Pr 1:20**; Christ, the Wisdom of God, is meant, in whom and from whom all wisdom is. Various are the opinions concerning this house built by him. Some take it to be the whole circle of sciences, and the seven pillars to be the seven liberal ones, as Aben Ezra; though rather, as others, it may design the schools of the prophets, in which young men were trained up in the knowledge of divine and spiritual things. Some would have the whole universe to be meant, and the seven pillars to be the seven days of creation, as Jarchi; or the seven planets, as others: it is an odd notion of Grotius, that the human body is intended, with its five senses; and, to make up the number seven, adds the voice and memory: rather the human nature of Christ, which is a temple, a tabernacle, a house in which the Godhead dwells, is built by Wisdom, made without the hands of men; and then its seven pillars are the graces of the Spirit, by which it was supported and adorned; see
Isa 11:2; Some understand it of the temple of a regenerate man's heart; in which God, Father, Son and Spirit, dwell. But there are two other senses, which bid fairest one of them to be right; either the heavenly glory, the house not made with hands, Christ's Father's house, in which are many mansions for his people; and which is a city whose builder and maker is God, and is prepared by Christ; and stands firm upon the promises of God, the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, and the grace of the blessed Spirit: or rather the church of Christ on earth, the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth; this is built by Christ upon himself, the rock and foundation; the materials of it are true believers, precious and lively stones; built up a spiritual house, and a fit and suitable habitation for God through the Spirit. Such a house there was under the Old Testament, and such an one there is under the New; and which is continually building up by Christ by means of the word and ordinances, and will continue to the end of the world; see **1Ti 3:15**;

she hath hewn out her seven pillars; ministers of the Gospel, compared to pillars for strength and stability, and for their being instrumental in supporting the interest and church of Christ; in allusion to the pillars in Solomon's temple, Jachin and Boaz; see **Ga 2:9**. These are said to be "hewn", being polished, beautified, and adorned with the gifts and graces of the Spirit by Christ, and thereby fitted for their work and service; and said to be "seven", because there is a complete and sufficient number of them, which Christ has provided, and always will provide for his churches, as long as they continue in the world. Though it may be these seven pillars may denote in general the firmness and solidity of this spiritual building, the church, and the continuance of it by the power of God; or they may have respect to the seven states of the church in so many periods of time, to last to the end of all things, signified by the seven churches in the book of the Revelation; so Cocceius {c}.

{c} Vid. Lexic. Heb. col. 623.

Proverbs 9:2

Ver. 2. She hath killed her beasts,.... Or, "her sacrifice" {d}: a crucified Christ, the principal of the provisions in Wisdom's house, or the church of Christ. The death of Christ was prefigured by the slaying of beasts for sacrifice under the old law; was foretold in prophecy, and is expressed by "killing" him in the New Testament; and which shows his death not to be natural, but violent. It is commonly ascribed to the Jews as a wicked action of theirs; but was not without the counsel and determination of God, and the will and consent of Christ; and this death was as a victim to justice, by way of sacrifice and satisfaction for sin, and was vicarious; was offered up in the room and stead of his people, to make atonement for their sins; and which is no other than himself, his soul and body, as in union with his divine person; a sacrifice voluntarily offered up by himself, exceeding acceptable, and well pleasing to God; effectual to the purposes for which it was offered, and so never to be repeated: and his death, being a sacrifice, becomes a feast; a crucified Christ is suitable food for faith, as he is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, as though he had been slain; he is evidently set forth in the Gospel as crucified, and as such is spiritual and savoury food to his people, nourishing and strengthening, quickening and comforting, and extremely satisfying: thus the Gospel feast, in which the slain Lamb of God makes the chiefest part, is expressed in the same language as here, "my oxen and my fatlings are killed", Mt 22:4;

she hath mingled her wine; which also makes a considerable part in a banquet or feast, **Es 5:6**; and the church is called a banqueting house, or a house of wine, **So 2:4**. The love of Christ is compared to wine, **So 1:2**; to old wine for the antiquity of it, being more ancient than ours to him, or than ourselves, even as old as eternity; to wine, on the lees well refined, for the purity of it, being free from all motives and conditions in the creature; to strong generous wine, which exhilarates and refreshes the weak, the weary, and distressed. The Gospel of Christ is also compared to wine, **So 7:9**; to old wine, for the ancient doctrines of it; and to neat wine, for the purity of it; and to generous wine, for the pleasure, joy, and comfort it gives: the blessings of grace which it exhibits may be so called from their comforting and refreshing nature, which are had freely, Isa 55:1; and so are the joys of heaven, Mt 26:29. Now the "mingling" of this wine is in allusion to the mixture of wine, either with something richer, as spice, **So 8:2**; or rather with water, as Jarchi observes, which was usual in those hot countries, to make it fit and suitable drink for the bodies of men: the mixture was no doubt according to the strength of the wine; the wine of Sharon, being strong wine, was mixed two parts water and one wine {e}; which, with the ancients {f}, before three parts water and two wine; though, according to Plutarch {g}, they had three ways of mixing, which they called by three different names; the one was three parts water and two wine, the other three parts water and one wine, the third was one wine and two water; the first of them was reckoned the best mixture {h}: one Cerassus is said to be the inventor of mixing wine with water {i}; others ascribe it to Melampus {k}, and others to Amphictyon. And this, spiritually understood, does not design any impurity or degeneracy, such as is complained of, **Isa 1:22**; for the love of Christ is pure and sovereign; the Gospel of Christ is free of all mixtures of human doctrines; the blessings of grace are all of free grace, without the mixture of men's works, and so is eternal life; salvation is all of free grace, and not by works of righteousness done by men mixed with it. But this may design the various displays of the love of Christ in the several acts of it, before time, in time, and now in heaven; or the joint display of the love of Father, Son, and Spirit, in the salvation of men, and the harmony and agreement of the divine perfections therein; and the publication of the Gospel, and the accommodation of the truths of it to the capacities of men: and perhaps some respect may be had to the blood and water that issued from the side of the slain Lamb of God, here prophetically and figuratively held forth;

she hath also furnished her table; which seems to design the ministration of the word, and the administration of ordinances in Gospel times; especially the ordinance of the supper, called the table of the Lord, 1Co 10:21; a well-furnished table has a variety of excellent provision upon it: and such is the ministry of the Gospel, which is signified by various sorts of food, as bread, meat, milk, honey, and delicious fruits; and Christ, who is the sum and substance of it, is expressed by several things that are eatable, as by a slain lamb, a fatted calf, the hidden manna, the bread of God and of life, whose flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; and so is he held forth in the ordinances, particularly in the ordinance of the supper; the tame he sits at, and welcomes his guests; encourages them to eat and drink, and sups with them himself. Here his broken body, and his blood shed, are presented to the faith of his people, to be eaten and drank in a spiritual manner; a table richly furnished indeed!

{d} hxbj "victimam suam", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Baynus, Mercerus, so Ben Melech. {e} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 77. 1. & Nidda, fol. 19. 1. {f} Suidas in voce poma. {g} Apud Philander. in Vitruv. de Architect. l. 16. c. 5. p. 281. {h} Aristoph. Equi, Act. 3. Sc. 1. p. 355. & Scholia in ib. {i} Hygin Fab. 274. {k} Athenaei Deipnosophist. l. 2. c. 6. p. 45. & l. 4. c. 27. p. 179.

Proverbs 9:3

Ver. 3. She hath sent forth her maidens,.... Not moral virtues, or good works, which subserve the interest of Christ and religion, adorn the Gospel and its professors; nor the liberal arts and sciences, said to be handmaids to divinity; nor angels, ministering spirits to Christ; but the ministers of the Gospel, who being so called does not suppose or encourage women's preaching; but have the name to keep up the decency of the parable, and the propriety of the allegory: for since Wisdom is represented as a lady, a princess or queen, it is proper that her attendants should be maidens, or that she should employ such in inviting her guests; as Rebekah, Pharaoh's daughter, Esther, and others, are said to have their maidens to wait upon them: and besides, it very fitly expresses the character of Gospel ministers; as that they are the servants of Christ, followers of him, obsequious to him, humble and modest, incorrupt in doctrine, pure in conversation, and whose voice is soft, pleasant, and delightful: being not the rough voice of the law, but the still, small, musical voice of the Gospel; a voice of love, grace, and mercy; of peace, pardon, and righteousness, liberty, life, and salvation; very charming, alluring, and drawing. These Christ has a property in; he chooses and calls them, and fits them for his service; and they give up themselves to him, and willingly engage in it. And these he "sends forth": from him they have their mission and commission to preach the Gospel; to invite persons to the Gospel feast, to partake of the provisions he has made: he sends them forth publicly into the world, into all places where his people are, into the streets and lanes; yea, to the hedges and highways, to invite, and even to compel them to come in. And this supposes superiority in him, and authority given to them;

she crieth upon the high places of the city; this is to be understood of the preaching of the Gospel, both by Christ himself in person, in the city of Jerusalem, in the temple, and other public places; and by his ministers, and by him speaking in them there or elsewhere; and which is not a mere whisper, but a cry, a proclamation made aloud, and to be delivered with fervency and earnestness: the "city" may mean the church of God, and the "highest places" the ordinances thereof; and may in general denote the publicness of them; which are in the church, as the wings or pinnacles of the higher parts or buildings of a city are in that, as the word {l} signifies.

{l} ypg le "super alas"; Montanus, so Ben Melech; "super pinnis", Piscator, Amama; "in pinnnaculis": Cocceius; "super convexitatibas", Schultens.

Proverbs 9:4

Ver. 4. Whoso [is] simple, let him turn in hither,.... Into Wisdom's house, so well built and furnished; the church of Christ, as a house of instruction; a school, where such who are "simple", weak, and foolish, may learn. Here are many instructors; saints instruct one another; ministers of the word are teachers; yea, Father, Son, and Spirit, here teach and instruct, and none teach like them. Here many lessons are to be learned concerning themselves, concerning Christ, and concerning their duty to God and men; all sorts of persons may learn here, such who know ever so much or ever so little. Or let him turn in here, as into an inn, into which passengers or travellers turn for accommodations; see **Pr 9:15**. The saints are travellers here, at a distance from their Father's house, and need refreshment by the way; the church of God is an inn of good accommodations; here is room enough to entertain them; here are good lodgings for rest and safety, and good provisions, and all of free cost. And now these are the words of Wisdom, or Christ, either in person, or by his maidens, his ministers, inviting such who are "simple" to turn in hither, and partake of the provisions in it; that is, not such who are quite stupid and insensible, sottish, incorrigible, and irreclaimable; but who are sensible of their folly and simplicity; who are but of weak capacities, apt to be credulous, and so easily imposed upon and deceived;

[as for] him that wanteth understanding; not the natural faculty of the understanding, nor an understanding of things natural and civil; but of things

spiritual and evangelical, as of the grace of God; of salvation by Christ; of the work of the Spirit; of themselves and their state; of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; and who are sensible of their ignorance and want of understanding; which is the first thing the Spirit of God convinces men of; or who are so in comparison of others, are weak in knowledge and experience. Now these Christ does not despise, but invites them into his house for instruction; and where can they be better? and who so fit and proper to be here, and be with Wisdom, than such as these?

she saith to him: as follows.

Proverbs 9:5

Ver. 5. Come, eat of my bread,.... Which stands for all the provisions of Christ's house; it designs the Gospel, which to a believer is more than his necessary food; and the ordinance of the supper, one of the symbols of which is bread; and more especially Christ himself, the bread of God, the living bread that came down from heaven, which is to be eaten by faith; and this only, for everything else is that which is not bread; and this daily, as the Israelites ate their manna; this is the believer's daily bread; and largely and freely, to which they are welcome by Christ; and with gladness and singleness of heart, joyfully and with sincerity;

and drink of the wine [which] I have mingled; of the love of Christ; or of the love of the Father, Son, and Spirit, which meet and mingle together: to "drink" of this is to partake of it by faith, and be persuaded of interest in it; this may be drank largely of, for there is enough, a river of it; and without danger, it is not intoxicating as wine, wherein is excess; and it may be had freely, without money and without price, **So 1:2**.

Proverbs 9:6

Ver. 6. Forsake the foolish,.... Foolish men and their company; not men of weak abilities in things natural and civil, or who are reckoned foolish by the world; for so the saints are, whose company is not to be neglected and forsaken; but such who are wickedly foolish, who are ignorant of divine things, and make a mock at sin and at religion; such company is very unsuitable for Wisdom's guests; such as turn in to her house ought to forsake these; it is quite out of character for Wisdom's followers to be the companions of fools; it is very unprofitable to keep company with such vain men, yea, very pernicious and hurtful, and of very bad consequence; it corrupts good manners, and causes grief, and breaks peace, sooner or later; it is quite unbecoming them to converse with them; they are called out from among them by Christ, and should obey: and, besides, they have better company to attend unto: and they should also forsake "foolish" {m} things; the Septuagint version renders it, "foolishness"; and the Arabic version, "imprudence"; the Targum and Syriac version, "want of understanding", or "judgment"; foolish lusts, which are hurtful, and war against the soul, and which should be denied and abstained from; and all foolish ways, their own or others', which are dangerous and lead to ruin; and all foolish doctrines, such as are contrary to the Scriptures, to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; that tend to degrade any of the Persons of the Trinity, to obscure or lessen the grace of God in man's salvation, or to exalt the creature; all such are to be forsaken, shunned, and avoided, and by no means countenanced and encouraged;

and live; which may be considered either as an exhortation, as the foregoing; live on the provisions of Wisdom's house, on her bread and her wine; live on Christ himself by faith; live not as the foolish do, but as the wise; live not to yourselves, nor to the lusts of men, but to the will and glory of God; live not in sin, but unto righteousness; live not to the flesh, nor after it, but to and after the spirit: or as a promise by way of encouragement, and as enforcing the preceding exhortation, "and ye shall live" {n}; honourably, and not scandalously, as they do that keep company with the foolish; comfortably and delightfully, as they do that turn into Wisdom's house, and are her guests; such live in communion with Christ, and with his people; they live a spiritual life now, and shall live an eternal one hereafter;

and go in the way of understanding; as such do that quit the conversation of foolish men, and become the guests of Wisdom; such are in, and go in the way of understanding, who frequently attend the throne of grace, and ask wisdom of the Father of lights; the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of divine things, which they that ask have; Solomon got all his wisdom and understanding this way: such are in the way of it, and go in the way of it, who constantly and carefully read the Scriptures, which are able to make a man wise unto salvation; who go up to the house of the Lord as often as they have opportunity, that they may be taught by trim; who sit under the ministry of Gospel preachers, that feed men with knowledge and understanding; who submit to Gospel ordinances, and keep the commandments of Christ; for such are said to have a good understanding; they show that they have, and by these means get and increase it; see

Ps 111:10; and who also converse with knowing and experienced Christians; for "he that walketh with wise men shall be wise",
Pr 13:20.

{m} Myatp "imperitiam", Tigurine version; "stultitias", Vatablus; "fatuitates", Piscator, Schultens; "stoliditates", Gejerus, Gussetius, p. 703. {n} wyxw "et vivetis", Pagninus, Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 9:7

Ver. 7. He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame,.... Intimating, that though the simple, and such as want understanding, and of whom there is hope of doing them good, are to be invited into Wisdom's house; yet not the haughty scorner, the abandoned sinner, the scoffer at all religion, who walks after his own lusts, and is quite irreclaimable; it is but casting pearls before swine, and giving that which is holy to dogs, to reprove and exhort such persons; though the Gospel is to be preached to every creature, yet when men despise it, and make a mock at it, they are to be turned from, and no more is to be said to them; as the Jews of old, they were the first invited to the Gospel feast, the same that is described in the context; they made light of it, contradicted and blasphemed the word, and so judged themselves unworthy of it; wherefore Wisdom's maidens, or Christ's ministers, were bid to turn from them, and go to the Gentiles, and preach it to them; for it is to no purpose to address such persons; "shame" is the sure consequence of it, because a man is disappointed of the end he has in view, which is doing good;

and he that rebuketh a wicked [man getteth] himself a blot; this shows who is meant by a scorner, a very profligate man, bent on his wicked ways, and quite incorrigible; to rebuke such an one is not only labour lost, and in vain, but the rebuker getteth himself an ill name, and is sure to have the dirt of reproach and scandal cast upon him; though this a man might patiently bear, if there was any hope of doing good.

Proverbs 9:8

Ver. 8. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee,.... For wicked men are apt to hate those that publicly rebuke them, **Am 5:10**. Hence minister's of the word are of all men most hated; though this also should be bore with, could it be thought, or there was any reason to believe, that the reproof would be of any service. The scorner here, and in the preceding verses, may not only design profane sinners, sensualists, and atheists, that despise all religion, and scoff at all that is good; but also proud scornful Pharisees, such who derided Christ himself, and trusted in themselves, and despised others, Christ and his apostles, and their ministrations, Lu 16:14; and such, as Christ came not to call them himself, so he bid his disciples let them alone, **Mt 9:13**;

rebuke a wise [man], and he will love thee; as David did Nathan; and who was determined to take kindly the reproof of any righteous man,
Ps 141:5. Such who are spiritually wise will be thankful for the reproof of Gospel ministers, and even of private Christians, and will love and esteem them for their faithfulness and uprightness, and for the good which they themselves receive hereby.

Proverbs 9:9

Ver. 9. Give [instruction] to a wise [man],.... In the Hebrew text it is only "give to a wise man"; give him reproof, correction, chastisement, doctrine, or instruction, be it what it will, he will be the better for it. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "give occasion"; to him of showing his wisdom and of improving in it:

and he will be yet wiser; he will learn something by every him that is given him, whether it be by way of rebuke, or by way of instruction;

teach a just [man]; one that is truly so, that has seen the insufficiency of his own righteousness, and has renounced that, and does not trust in it; and who has learned Christ, as the Lord his righteousness; has seen the glory, fulness, and suitableness of his righteousness, and trusts unto it and depends upon it; and in consequence of this lives soberly, righteously, and godly; teach such a man the doctrines of the Gospel, and every lesson of obedience and duty,

and he will increase in learning; he will grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ and all divine things; see Mt 13:12.

Proverbs 9:10

Ver. 10. The fear of the Lord [is] the beginning of wisdom,.... This shows who the wise men are, and in what true wisdom lies; no man is wise till he fears the

Lord, and he that does so is a wise man, at least then he begins to be one; this is the principal part of wisdom, **Pr 1:7**; and is at the first of it; it is the beginning of grace; it is the first act of wisdom, or grace; or which appears as soon as a man is converted and caused to know wisdom in the hidden part; as repentance, faith, and love, quickly show themselves in one act or another, so does the fear of God; for the former are never without the latter; for fear is an awe and reverence of the divine Being, joined with love to him, trust in him, and a desire to serve and worship him in a right manner; no sooner is a man converted, but presently there is in him a fear of offending God, from a principle of love to him; for not a slavish but a filial fear is here intended;

and the knowledge of the Holy [is] understanding: either the knowledge of the Holy Ones, as the three divine Persons in the Godhead, who are so called, Jos 24:19; the knowledge of God the Father, who is holy in his nature and works; not a mere natural knowledge of him by the light of nature; nor a mere notional knowledge of him by revelation; not a legal knowledge of him as a lawgiver, and an offended Judge; but an evangelical knowledge of him in Christ, as his God and Father; and as the God of all grace in him; so as to have faith and hope in him, access unto him, and communion with him; this is right understanding: so the knowledge of Christ, God's Holy One; a knowledge of him in his person, offices, and grace; an inward knowledge of him, a spiritual acquaintance with him, so as to approve of him, believe in him, and appropriate him to one's self; this is to attain to a good degree of understanding: as likewise the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, the author of sanctification; of his person, and operations of grace; as a convincer and comforter; as a Spirit of illumination and faith, of regeneration and sanctification; and as the Spirit of adoption, and the earnest of glory; this is another branch of spiritual understanding. Moreover, such knowledge which holy men have, and which makes them so; and which holy men of God, moved by the Holy Ghost, have communicated in the sacred Scriptures, of which they are the penmen. The knowledge of holy things may also be meant; of the holy mysteries of religion, of the holy doctrines of the Gospel, which are all according to godliness, and teach men to live in a holy manner: the faith once delivered to the saints is a most holy faith, encourages and promotes holiness of heart and life; as the doctrines of God's everlasting love; eternal election; the unconditionality of the covenant of grace; redemption by Christ; conversion by efficacious grace; justification by Christ's righteousness; pardon by his blood; satisfaction by his sacrifice; and perseverance by his power: and now a knowledge of these things, not notional, but experimental, is understanding indeed; as well as a knowledge of holy and gracious experiences.

Proverbs 9:11

Ver. 11. For by me thy days shall be multiplied,.... These are the words of Wisdom, and contain a reason and argument why her call and advice in the preceding verses should be listened unto, since she gives long life to her followers. She is a tree of life unto them, the author and giver of spiritual and eternal life; by means of her bread and her wine spiritual life is maintained, promoted, and preserved; and length of days, for ever and ever, is the gift of her right hand; see **Pr 3:16**. The Targum is,

"for by it thy days shall be multiplied;"

which seems to refer it to the fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom, in **Pr 9:10**, to which long life is attributed; see
Pr 10:27;

and the years of thy life shall be increased; or, "they shall add years of life to thee" {o}; wisdom and understanding, the fear of the Lord, and the knowledge of the Holy; if not in this world, yet in the world to come, which will be without end.

{o} Myyx twnv Kl wpyowy "et addent tibi annos vitae", Baynus, Cocceius.

Proverbs 9:12

Ver. 12. If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself,.... He is wise that harkens to Wisdom's advice, that obeys her call, turns in to her house, and becomes her guest; and such an one is wise for himself, it is for his own good, profit, and advantage; for the good of his soul, for his present peace and comfort, and for his future bliss and happiness. It is not for her own sake that Wisdom presses her exhortations, and is so urgent on men to take her counsel and advice; it is for their own good; their wisdom is not profitable to her, but to themselves; they, and they only, reap the advantage and usefulness of it; see Job 22:2. The Syriac and Arabic versions add, "and unto thy friends"; and the Septuagint version is, "if thou becomest wise to thyself, thou wilt be wise to neighbours"; they will receive some profit by it;

but [if] thou scornest, thou alone shall bear [it]; the evil, as the Vulgate Latin;

the sin of scorning, and the punishment due unto it; it will bring no real hurt to Wisdom, or Christ, nor to his ministers, nor to his Gospel and ordinances, scoffed at; all the hurt will redound to the scoffer himself; and he alone shall bear it, and feel the smart of it, and all the dreadful consequences following upon it. The Septuagint version here adds the following clause,

"he that trusteth in lies, he feedeth on winds; the same pursues birds flying; for he forsakes the ways of his own vineyard; he wanders from the paths of his own husbandry; he passes through a desert without water, and a land destined to thirst, and he gathers unfruitfulness with his hands;"

and which are retained in the Syriac and Arabic version, but are not in the Hebrew text.

Proverbs 9:13

Ver. 13. A foolish woman [is] clamorous,.... Some by this woman understand folly itself, as opposed to wisdom; others blind reason, ignorant of divine things; others carnal sensual pleasure, which entices and draws men to that which is evil; others heresy and superstition; others the old serpent, the devil; she seems to be the same with the strange woman and harlot before described, **Pr 2:16**, &c. and being set in direct opposition to Wisdom, or Christ, seems to design antichrist, who is described in the book of the Revelation as the great whore; and all the characters here agree with the same. Antichrist is represented as a "woman", Re 17:3; and is "foolish"; for whatever worldly cunning and craft, and wicked subtlety, there may be in the Romish antichrist, yet he is destitute of all spiritual wisdom and knowledge; and is "clamorous" and noisy, has a mouth speaking great swelling words of vanity and blasphemy, boasting of infallibility, works of supererogation, merits, miracles, wealth, and riches; and very pressing and importunate to gain proselytes to his religion; the priests and Jesuits are compared to noisy, clamorous, croaking frogs, Re 16:13;

[she is] simple, and knoweth nothing; a woman of follies, extremely foolish and simple, and most grossly ignorant; knows nothing that is good, as the Targum; that is, spiritually good; knows not God aright; is without the fear and love of him, and faith in him; nor knows Christ, and the way of righteousness and life by him; nor the Spirit of God, and the operations of his grace upon the heart; nor the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; nor the ways, worship, and ordinances of God. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are, "she knows not

shame"; but is bold and impudent, having a whore's forehead, and on it written, "Mystery, Babylon, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth", Re 17:5.

Proverbs 9:14

Ver. 14. For she sitteth at the door of her house, &e.] Idle and inactive, looking out for her prey; not active and laborious, as Wisdom, building her house, killing her beasts, furnishing her table, and sending out her maidens to call in her guests; but exposing herself in the most public manner, and being at the utmost ease, sitting as a queen; see Re 18:7; and as it follows,

on a seat, or "throne" {p}; the same seat, or throne, power, and authority, which the dragon gave to the beast, or antichrist, placed at Rome, where this woman reigns; see Re 13:2;

in the high places of the city; the city of Rome, and its jurisdiction, the high places of which are their temples, or churches; where this foolish woman is noisy and clamorous, proclaims her folly, and endeavours to seduce and raw persons to her superstition and idolatry. "Merome", the word for "high places", has some affinity with Rome, and comes from the same root {q}.

{p} aok le "super solium", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; "super solio", Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens; "in thronum", Cocceius. {q} From Mwr "altus"; hence that of Virgil--"altae moenia Romae", Aeneid. l. 1. v. 7.

Proverbs 9:15

Ver. 15. To call passengers who go right on their ways. Who have been religiously educated, and trained up in the principles of true Christianity; and who walk outwardly according to the rule of the divine word, and are in a fair way for heaven and eternal happiness. These she has her eye upon as they pass along, and calls unto them, and endeavours to turn them aside out of the way they are going, to make them proselytes to her antichristian religion; which, when she succeeds in, she glories and boasts of; just as harlots are very desirous of seducing and debauching chaste, innocent, and virtuous persons; see **Re 2:20**. Saying as follows:

Proverbs 9:16

Ver. 16. Whoso [is] simple, let him turn in hither,.... The harlot's house, Popish chapels and churches. She uses the same form of words that Wisdom does, **Pr 9:4**; having a form of godliness, a show of religion, but without the power of it; her priests are wolves in sheep's clothing, and speak lies in hypocrisy: and such that she fixes upon as proper persons to work on are the simple, the credulous and unwary; who are not on their guard, and are easily persuaded and imposed on;

and [as for] him that wanteth understanding; is not well grounded in the principles of Christianity he professes; has not a spiritual and experimental understanding of them:

she saith to him; addresses him in such language as follows:

Proverbs 9:17

Ver. 17. Stolen waters are sweet,.... Wells and fountains of waters in those hot countries were very valuable, and were the property of particular persons; about which there were sometimes great strife and contention; and they were sometimes sealed and kept from the use of others; see Ge 26:18; now waters got by stealth from such wells and fountains were sweeter than their own, or what might be had in common and without difficulty, to which the proverb alludes. By which in general is meant, that all prohibited unlawful lusts and pleasures are desirable to men, and sweet in the enjoyment of them; and the pleasure promised by them is what makes them so desirable, and the more so because forbidden: and particularly as adultery, which is a sort of theft {r}, and a drinking water out of another's cistern, **Pr 5:15**; being forbidden and unlawful, and secretly committed, is sweeter to an unclean person than a lawful enjoyment of his own wife; so false worship, superstition, and idolatry, the inventions of men, and obedience to their commands, which are no other than spiritual adultery, are more grateful and pleasing to a corrupt mind than the true and pure worship of God;

and bread [eaten] in secret is pleasant; or, "bread of secret places" {s}; hidden bread, as the Targum, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; that which is stolen and is another's {t}, and is taken and hid in secret places, fetched out from thence, or eaten there: the sweet morsel of sin, rolled in the mouth, and kept under the tongue; secret lusts, private sins, particularly idolatry, to which men are secretly enticed, and which they privately commit, De 13:6; the same thing is designed by this clause as the forager.

{r} "Furtiva Verus", Ovid de Arte Amandi, l. 1. "Furta Jovis, furtiva munuscula", Catullus ad Mantium, Ep. 66. v. 140, 145. So Propertius, l. 2. eleg. 30. v. 28. gluku ti kleptomenon melhma kupridov, Pindar; for which he was indebted to Solomon, according to Clemens of Alexandria, Paedagog. l. 3. p. 252. {s} Myrto "latebraram", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis. {t} "Quas habeat veneres aliens pecunia nescis", Juvenal. Satyr. 13.

Proverbs 9:18

Ver. 18. But he knoweth not that the dead [are] there,.... In the house of this foolish and wicked woman, into which she invites passengers to turn; the simple, that is persuaded by her, does not consider that there are none there to be his companions, but such who are dead in a moral or spiritual sense; that, though they live in pleasure, they are dead while they live. Aben Ezra refers this to "hell" in the next clause; where her guests are, and where those that are slain by her have their everlasting abode; and where the giants are, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; or the mighty ones she has cast down there, as the Targum; so the word "rephaim" sometimes signifies: and some think that reference is had to the giants of the old world, that corrupted their way on earth, and brought a deluge on it; see **Pr 7:26**;

[and that] her guests [are] in the depths of hell; not only in the way to it, and on the brink of it, but in the very midst of it: there are many in hell she has invited into her house, and persuaded to turn in there, and commit fornication with her; and all that worship the beast, or commit spiritual adultery with the whore of Rome, will go down to perdition with her, and have their portion in hell fire, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; which they do not consider that are drawn into her idolatrous practices, Re 14:9.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 10

From this chapter to the "twenty fifth" are various proverbial sentences, without any very apparent connection or coherence with each other; describing righteous and wicked men; setting forth their different temper, conduct, and actions, and the fruits and effects of them. It should be observed, that frequently in the preceding chapters two persons are represented as women; one goes by the name of "Wisdom", the other is called the "foolish" woman and a "harlot"; the former is clearly to be understood of Christ; and the latter, being opposed to him, must be antichrist, the whore of Rome, and mother of harlots: now in the following part of this book two sorts of persons are spoken of; the one as wise, righteous, good, &c. and the other as foolish, wicked, &c. who are no other than the followers of Christ and antichrist; which observation is a key to the whole book.

Ver. 1. The proverbs of Solomon,.... This title is repeated from **Pr 1:1**; and very properly stands here; since here begin those pithy sentences of Solomon, which bear the name of proverbs; the preceding chapters being a sort of preface or introduction to them; in which Solomon recommends the study of wisdom, shows the profit and advantage of it, gives directions about it, and prepares for the reception of those wise sayings that follow; which are for the most part independent of each other, and consist generally of clauses set in a contrast to one another, and often expressed by similes and metaphors;

a wise son maketh a glad father; as Solomon made glad his father David: for no doubt there were appearances of his wisdom before he came to the throne, though greater afterwards; which made David rejoice that he was placed on the throne before his death, to whom he had committed the charge of building the house of the Lord;

but a foolish son [is] the heaviness of his mother; brings grief and trouble to her, as perhaps Rehoboam did to his mother: though all this is to be understood conjunctly of both parents, and not separately of each; not as if a wise son only was matter of joy to his father, who may be thought to be a better judge of his wisdom, and more abroad to hear the fame of it, and to observe the effects of it; or as if a foolish son only caused grief to his mother, because more at home, and more privy to his foolish behaviour; but as being equally joyous or afflicting to both parents. Nor is this to be understood of such who are wise and foolish as to their natural capacities only; but who are so in a moral sense, either virtuous or vicious, good or wicked. Wherefore parents should be concerned for the education of their children, whose behaviour much depends upon it; and children for their conduct towards their parents and in the world, since their joy and grief are influenced by it. Some interpret the words mystically, the "father", of God; the "mother", of the church; and, the "sons", of the children of them both: and so may fitly describe the different followers of Christ and antichrist; the one being wise, the other foolish; the one acceptable to God, the other not.

Proverbs 10:2

Ver. 2. Treasures of wickedness profit nothing,.... By which are meant either a large abundance of riches in general, which for the most part are enjoyed by wicked men, and abused to wicked purposes, Pr 11:4; or an affluence of them, obtained in a wicked way, by fraud, oppression, and the like; see **Mic 6:10**; Or are either not used at all, or put to wicked uses: what are not used profit not the possessors of them, for they are "kept to the hurt of the owners" of them; and those which are got by ill means, or put to an ill use, "perish by evil travel", **Ec 5:13**. Nor can anyone by his riches either redeem himself or his brother from destruction, or give to God a ransom for him; nor can he by them save himself from a corporeal death one year, one month, one day, one hour, one moment; nor will they be of any service to him in the day of judgment, when wrath comes forth against him;

but righteousness delivereth from death; either that which is righteously got, though it be ever so little, is a means of preserving life, and keeps their souls from famishing, Pr 10:3; or else what is liberally dispensed, for alms are called "righteousness", Ps 112:9 **Da 4:27**. These are oftentimes the means of saving the lives of persons ready to perish, on whom they are bestowed, and who will venture their lives to save their benefactors; and such liberal persons are oftentimes blessed with long life, and are kept alive when threatened with death, Ps 41:1; and though their good deeds are not meritorious of eternal life, yet they are rewarded with it in a way of grace, Mt 25:34. Moreover, righteousness may be considered as legal and evangelical; a legal righteousness, or the righteousness of men in obedience to the law, cannot deliver from the sentence of death the law has passed; it is not properly a righteousness; it is imperfect, cannot justify, save, or bring to heaven, or entitle to life; notwithstanding this a man must die: but there is an evangelical righteousness; and this is either imparted and implanted in men, is the new man, which is created in righteousness and holiness; and this delivers from a moral or spiritual death, a death in trespasses and sins men are in; for by it they are quickened, live a life of faith on Christ, and have communion with God; have his image stamped on them, and live to him, and to Christ, and to righteousness, being freed from the servitude and dominion of sin; living in which is no other than death: or this righteousness is imputed, which is the righteousness of Christ; wrought out for them, reckoned to them, received by them, and by which they are justified; this delivers them, though not from a corporeal death, yet from the sting and curse of it, and from it as a penal evil, or as a punishment for sin: and it delivers from a legal death, or from the sentence and condemnation of the law, and from the second and eternal death, and entities them to life everlasting.

Proverbs 10:3

Ver. 3. The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish,.... Or to perish by famine: not but that good men may be afflicted with it, as Jacob and his sons were, when the famine was in Egypt and in other lands; and as the apostles, particularly the Apostle Paul, were often in hunger and thirst, yet not so as to be destroyed by it; for in "famine" the Lord redeems such from death; though the young lions lack and suffer hunger, they that fear the Lord shall not want any good thing; at least whatever they may suffer this way does not arise from the wrath of God, nor does it nor can it separate from the love of God and Christ, **Job 5:20**. Moreover, the souls of such shall not be famished for want of spiritual food; shall not have a famine of the word and ordinances; their souls shall be fed, as with marrow and fatness, with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock: the church, though in the wilderness, is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, Re 12:14;

but he casteth away the substance of the wicked; that which is got in a wicked way; as sometimes he causes it to diminish by little and little; at other times he forcibly and suddenly drives it away, and causes it to take wings and fly away; though it has been swallowed down with great greediness and in great abundance, he makes them throw it up again, and casts it out of their belly, whether they will or not, so that it does not profit them, Job 20:15.

Proverbs 10:4

Ver. 4. He becometh poor that dealeth [with] a slack hand,.... That is either remiss in giving to the necessities of others, according to his abilities, and as cases require; or that is negligent and slothful in his business. Or, "that worketh with a deceitful hand"; or, "with a hand of deceit" {u}, as it may be rendered; who pretends to work, but does not; makes a show as if he did, but acts deceitfully; or who uses many tricking and deceitful ways and methods to live, as usually slothful persons do. Aben Ezra observes, it may be rendered and interpreted, "he becomes poor that makes a deceitful balance"; thinking to enrich himself by such fraudulent practices: or, as others, "a deceitful balance maketh poor" {w}; such seldom or ever thrive, or it does not long prosper with them who use such unlawful methods;

but the hand of the diligent maketh rich; that is, with the blessing of God along with it, as in Pr 10:22; such who are "sharp" {x} and acute, as the word signifies; who are careful and industrious, mind their business, and do the honest part; these, with a divine blessing, frequently grow rich: or rather who are like those that dig in the earth for gold, who search for it with great eagerness and diligence; for from this root is a word often used for gold, **Pr 3:14**. All this is true in a spiritual sense; such who are slothful in attendance on the means of grace, the word and ordinances, are slack and negligent in duty, bring a spiritual poverty upon them; and like the Laodicean church, who, through her lukewarmness and carnal security, became poor and wretched, blind and naked: on the other hand, such who are diligent in the use of means are frequent at the throne of grace, forsake not the assembly of the saints, constantly wait at Wisdom's gates; these grow rich in grace and in all good works.

{u} hymr Pk "vola doli", Montanus; "fraudulenta manu", Tigurine version, Cocceius, Schultens; so Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis. {w} So Mercerus. {x} Myuwrx "acuti", Bochart. Hierizoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 55. col. 668.

Proverbs 10:5

Ver. 5. He that gathereth in summer [is] a wise son,.... Which is the time of gathering the fruits of the earth, and laying them up against winter, as the ant is said to do, **Pr 6:8**;

[but] he that sleepeth in harvest [is] a son that causeth shame; to himself, and to his parents and relations. The sum of the proverb is, that, in the time of health and youth, persons should be active and industrious in their several callings and stations, and provide against a time of sickness and old age; and that they should lose no opportunities, neither in a natural nor spiritual way, of doing or receiving good.

Proverbs 10:6

Ver. 6. Blessings [are] upon the head of the just,.... That seeks for righteousness, not by the works of the law, but by faith; that lives by faith upon the righteousness of Christ, and is justified by it, made, accounted, and reckoned just through it; and, in consequence of his faith, does justly, and lives soberly, righteously, and godly: upon his "head", who is Christ, blessings are; for he is "the head of every [such] man", 1Co 11:3; not the pope of Rome, but Christ, is head of the church; he is the representative and federal head of all the elect, both in eternity and time; he is a political head to them, as a king is to his subjects; an economical one, as the husband is the head of the wife, a father the head of his family, and a master the head of his servants; and he is in such sense a head to them as a natural head is to its body; he is of the same nature with them, superior to them, a perfect, only, everliving, and everlasting head. Upon him all the blessings of grace and goodness are; his people are blessed with them in him, their head, **Eph 1:3**; and from him they descend to them, the members of his body, just as the oil on Aaron's head ran down his beard to the skirts of his garments. So in an ancient writing of the Jews {y}, this passage being mentioned, it is asked, Who is the head of the righteous? The answer is, the middle pillar; by whom they seem to mean a middle person, the Mediator, the Messiah. Or else, a part being put for the whole, the meaning is, that blessings are upon the persons of righteous ones, as the word is used in Pr 11:26; the Targum renders it,

"the heads of the righteous."

All covenant blessings, spiritual ones, such as are blessings indeed, solid and substantial, irreversible, and for ever; particularly a justifying righteousness, from whence they are denominated just; pardon of sin, peace of soul, every sanctifying grace, the blessing of adoption, and a right to eternal life: these being said to be on the "head" of them, may denote that they come from above, and descend in a way of grace upon them; that they are visible and manifest; that they reside, continue, and remain upon them; that they are as an ornament and crown unto them; and that they are a security of them that no wrath and vengeance can fall upon them. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, read, "the blessing of the Lord [is] upon the head of the just"; and such are all the blessings before mentioned;

but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked; that is, either his violent dealings are open and manifest, and are a scandal to him, as well as entail a curse on him; or rather the fruit and effect of his violence and oppression, the punishment due thereunto, is so righteously inflicted on him, that his mouth is stopped, and he has not one word to say against the just judgments of God upon him, for his violent usage of men, whether here or hereafter; see Ps 107:42. Some render the words, "the mouth of the wicked covereth violence" {z}; palliates and excuses it, and calls it by another name; or hides and conceals that which is in the heart, and does not utter it; see Pr 10:18. The Targum is,

"in the mouth of the wicked rapine is covered;"

as a sweet morsel under their tongue, though in the end bitterness.

{y} Tikkune Zohar. Correct. 47. fol. 87. 2. {z} omx hoky Myevr yp "os impiorum operiet injuriam", Montanus, Baynus; "operit iniquitem", Vatablus, Mercerus.

Proverbs 10:7

Ver. 7. The memory of the just [is] blessed,.... Men to whom he has been useful, either in temporals or spirituals, bless him, or wish all blessings to him while alive, whenever they make mention of his name; and after death they speak well of him, and pronounce him blessed; for such are had in everlasting remembrance; the memory of them is sweet and precious; their name is famous and valuable, and always spoken of with honour and commendation; see Ps 112:6. The Jewish writers take it for a command, and render it, "let the memory of the just be blessed"; and say, that he that transgresses it breaks an affirmative precept; they make an abbreviation of the word by the initial letters, and join them to the names of their celebrated men;

but the name of the wicked shall rot; shall be forgotten, be buried in oblivion, and never mentioned: and though they may call their houses, lands, and cities, by their own names, in order to transmit their memory to posterity; yet these, by one means or another, are destroyed, and their memorials perish with them; see **Ec 8:10**; and if their names are mentioned after they are gone, it is with detestation and abhorrence, as things putrefied are abhorred; so they leave an ill savour behind them, when the good name of the righteous is as precious ointment, **Ec 7:1**. It is a saying of Cicero {a}, that

"the life of the dead lies in the memory of the living."

{a} Orat. 51. Philip. 9.

Proverbs 10:8

Ver. 8. The wise in heart will receive commandments,.... Such who have true wisdom in the hidden part of the heart, of which the fear of the Lord is the beginning: these will not only, as good subjects, honour their king, and attend to his lawful commands; and, as dutiful children, regard those of their parents; and, as faithful servants, hearken to those of their masters; but, as such that fear the Lord, will receive and cheerfully obey the commandments of God and Christ;

but a prating fool shall fall; like Diotrephes, that prated against the Apostle John and other saints. Or, "a fool of lips" {b}; whose folly is proclaimed and made known by his lips; who, out of the abundance of it in his heart, speaks and pours it out by his lips: such an one falls into sin and into mischief; he falls into disgrace in this world, and into hell in the next. The Targum is,

"the fool by his lips shall be taken;"

as in a snare.

{b} Mytpv lywa "stultus labiis", Montanus, &c.

Proverbs 10:9

Ver. 9. He that walketh uprightly walketh surely,.... Or, "that walketh in perfection" {c} as the Targum. Not that walks without sin, no man does that; but that walks in the sincerity, integrity, and uprightness of his heart, both before God and men; who worships God in spirit and in truth, and speaks the truth in his heart to his neighbour; who is an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile; who walks uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel; who makes the word of God the rule of his life and actions; who walks by faith on Christ, using him as the way to the Father; believing in him for salvation; walking on in him as he has received him, and especially dealing with his uprightness or righteousness for his justification before God; who walks, as Christ did, in imitation of him; who walks in love, as he did, and in all humility, meekness, patience, and self-denial; who walks in and after the Spirit of Christ; and in the truths of the Gospel, and in all the ordinances thereof; and in all holy conversation and godliness, studying to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and men. Such a man "walks surely", or securely, safely, confidently, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, interpret the word. Such an one has nothing to fear in his walk; he walks on "terra firma", on good ground, in a good way, which leads to life eternal: he has a good guide, the Spirit of God, which goes before him, and will be his guide even unto death, and lead him in the way everlasting, unto the land of uprightness; he has a good guard about him, not only the angels of God that encamp around him, but God himself is a wall of fire to him, and his power surrounds and protects him; he has many precious promises to support him; not only that the Lord will be a buckler to him, but will withhold no good thing from him, **Pr 2:7**; he has the gracious and supporting presence of God, when he passes through the fire and water of afflictions, and even through the valley of the shadow of death, so that he has nothing to fear; and has moreover the testimony of a good conscience; and having a good hope through grace, he "walks in hope", as the Targum is; yea, rejoices in hope of the glory of God, and holds fast that rejoicing to the end;

but he that perverteth his ways shall be known; who does not walk in a plain, direct, and even path, according to the rule of the word, as the upright man; but winds about here and there, goes into crooked paths, walks in craftiness as deceitful workers, whose folly shall be made manifest; though they think to hide it, and deceive men, they and their wickedness shall be exposed, their tricks and artful methods shall be laid open, and they be known to be what they are; if not in this life, yet at the last judgment, **1Ti 5:24**. Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe another sense of the word, "he shall be broken", and compare with it **Jud 8:16**.

{c} Mwtb Klwh "qui ambulat perfecte", Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 10:10

Ver. 10. He that winketh with the eye,.... The Syriac and Arabic versions add, "with fraud". A descriptive character of a wicked man, **Pr 6:13**; who so does, either to draw and allure persons to go along with him, and join him in his evil practices; or by way of scorn and contempt of others; or as a token to another of its being the proper time to circumvent his neighbour, or do him an injury. Such an one

causeth sorrow; to himself in the issue, however he may for the present please himself with his evil doings; and to others, whom he allures and deceives. The Arabic version is, "heaps afflictions" or "sorrows on men"; whom he corrupts and draws into his evil company and conversation;

but a prating fool shall fall; or, "be taken", as the Targum; or "beaten", as the Vulgate Latin; See Gill on "Pr 10:8".

Proverbs 10:11

Ver. 11. The mouth of a righteous [man is] a well of life,.... Like a fountain of living water, continually running and flowing with water, wholesome, reviving, and refreshing; so the righteous man's mouth, out of the abundance of his heart, overflows with good things, which minister grace to the hearers, and are for the use of edifying; things that are pleasant and profitable, grateful and acceptable, comforting, refreshing, and pleasing, and which tend to the good of the life that now is, and that which is to come;

but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked; so that nothing comes out of it but what is pernicious and hurtful; what savours of rapine and violence; nothing but lying and deceit, cursing and swearing, and such like filthy and corrupt communication; See Gill on "Pr 10:6". The Targum is, "the mouth of the ungodly covers injury"; which is meditated in the heart; so the Vulgate Latin version.

Proverbs 10:12

Ver. 12. Hatred stirreth up strifes,.... A man, whose heart is full of hatred and malice against his neighbour, will stir up, or awake, as the word {d} signifies, contentions and quarrels which were happily laid asleep; these he renews by tale bearing, and whisperings, and evil surmises; by raising lies, spreading false reports and calumnies, and by virulent reproaches and slanders;

but love covereth all sins; not its own, but others; in imitation of the pardoning love and grace of God, which covers all the sins of his people with the blood and righteousness of his Son. Love spreads its mantle over the sins of its fellow creatures and Christians, and forgives them, even all of them: instead of exposing them, hides and conceals them; and, instead of loading and aggravating the infirmities of others, puts the best constructions on them, hopes and bears, and believes all things, 1Co 13:7; see **1Pe 4:8**; where the apostle seems to have respect to this passage. This is not to be understood as conniving at or suffering sin upon others, or as contrary to Christian reproofs and rebukes for it.

{d} rrwet.

Proverbs 10:13

Ver. 13. In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found,.... He that has an understanding, especially of divine, spiritual, and evangelic things, which is the pure gift of God; wisdom will be found in his lips, his mouth will speak of it; not of mere natural wisdom, but spiritual wisdom; of the wisdom of God in his works; of Christ, the Wisdom of God; of the Gospel, the hidden wisdom; of inward experience of the grace of God, wisdom in the inward part, Ps 37:30; from his lips will drop wise sayings, very instructive and informing; which those that seek for and observe may find to their profit and advantage, and to the great credit and honour of the understanding man; while the foolish man gets both stripes and disgrace, as follows;

but a rod [is] for the back of him that is void of understanding; or, "wants a heart" {e}: that has no understanding of spiritual things in his heart, and so utters nothing but what is foolish and wicked, and, sooner or later, is chastised for it. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read this clause in connection with the former, thus; "he that brings forth wisdom out of his lips smites with a rod him that is void of understanding".

{e} bl rox "carcutis corde"; Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 10:14

Ver. 14. Wise [men] lay up knowledge,.... Which they get by reading, prayer, meditation, hearing the word of God, and conversation with good men: this they lay up in their hearts, minds, and memories, that they may not forget it, and as a rich treasure they highly value it; that they may bring it forth at proper times, and on proper occasions, for the benefit of others; see Mt 12:35; or hide {f} it; conceal it; do not boast and brag of it, as foolish men do;

but the mouth of the foolish [is] near destruction: who rashly and unguardedly utters things which bring swift and sudden destruction on himself and others; or terror and consternation, as the word {g} also signifies. The Vulgate Latin version is, "but the mouth of the foolish is near to confusion"; he boasts of his knowledge, betrays his ignorance, and so brings himself to shame and confusion.

{f} wnpuy "abscondent", Pagninus, Montanus; "abscondunt", V. L. "occultant", Michaelis. {g} htxm "terrorem accersit", Tigurine version; "consternatio propinqua", Cocceius; "terror", Vatablus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 10:15

Ver. 15. The rich man's wealth [is] his strong city,.... What a fortified city is to persons in time of war, that is a rich man's wealth to him; by it he can defend himself from the injuries of others, and support himself and family in times of public calamity; for money is a defence, and answers all things, **Ec 7:12**. Or his wealth is so in his own apprehension and conceit; he puts his trust and confidence in it, and thinks himself safe and secure by it; when he is trusting to uncertain riches, which will fail him; these may fly away from him in life, and leave him exposed to distress and danger; and, however, will not secure him at death from the wrath of God and everlasting destruction. Or he is lifted up with his riches, is in high spirits, and despises others; thinking himself safe, as in a strong castle, and fears nothing, distresses, diseases, or death;

the destruction of the poor [is] their poverty: or their poverty is their consternation, as the word {h} signifies, it frightens them; they, knowing their circumstances, are afraid of everybody and of every thing; not being able to defend themselves against their enemies, or support themselves in times of public calamity, as war, famine, or pestilence.

{h} htxm "consternatio", Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 10:16

Ver. 16. The labour of the righteous [tendeth] to life,.... To natural life, and the support of it; all that he labours for is to get a livelihood for himself and family; that is all he desires, nor does he seek great things for himself: or to spiritual life; so his spiritual exercises in praying, reading, and hearing the word, and waiting upon ordinances, have a tendency to promote and maintain a spiritual life in him: or to eternal life; not that the works of a righteous man (so the Targum, Septuagint, and Arabic versions, render it in the plural number) are meritorious of eternal life; for life and righteousness are not to be had by the works of men, but by the grace of God; yet, as the righteous man labours for the meat which endures to everlasting life, given by the Son of God, his labour may be said to tend to life eternal, **Joh 6:27**;

the fruit of the wicked to sin; whatever he enjoys, whether got by labour; though the word seems purposely omitted, as some observe, to signify that is not intended; or whether left him as an inheritance; or whatever way acquired, lawfully or unlawfully; all his revenues and riches, the increase of his substance and fields, are all used to sinful purposes, to pride, luxury, and wantonness; and so tend to death, even death eternal, the just wages of sin.

Proverbs 10:17

Ver. 17. He [is in] the way of life,.... Of eternal life, which is truly, properly, and by way of eminency, "life", Mt 19:17; and which is a life of glory; a life of perfection, of perfect holiness, knowledge, obedience, love, peace, and joy; a life free from all the inconveniences of the present life, animal or spiritual; a life of pleasure, and which will last for ever: the "way" to it is not by works of righteousness done by men, since by these the law is not fulfilled, nor justice satisfied; and therefore no justification of life by them, or what entitles to eternal life; it is sinful, dangerous, and a vain thing, to seek for eternal life in this way; Christ is the only true way to it; who, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, has opened the new and living way; and through his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, way is made for all that believe in him to enter into eternal life: and such are in the way to it who are in Christ, secretly in election, openly in the effectual calling; when they are made new creatures, are quickened by the Spirit and grace of Christ, and have that principle in them which is a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life; who have a sight of Christ, and come unto him by faith; who truly believe in him, with which eternal life is connected. Particularly he is in the way unto it

that keepeth instruction; the instruction in righteousness which the Scriptures give, especially the Gospel part of them; which is an instruction into the mind and will of God about man's salvation; into the grace of God, as displayed therein; into the person and offices of Christ, and salvation by him; into the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, and life, through him. Now he to whom this instruction comes with power, and is the savour of life unto life; who receives it in the love of it; who "observes" {i} it, as the word here used signifies; takes notice of and follows its direction, pointing out Christ as the way of salvation, instructing to look to him and believe in him, and be saved;

and who retains and holds fast such instruction, and abides by it; and finds the word of the Gospel, and eats it, and is nourished by it unto everlasting life; he is most assuredly in the way of it;

but he that refuseth reproof erreth; that is, from the way of life. He that rejects the counsel and advice, the admonitions and reproofs, given in the word of God, by the ministers of it; or by parents and masters, friends or relations, that wish him well; he wanders far off from the way that leads to life, and goes into the paths of sin, and consequently is in the way of death. Some render it, "causeth to err" {k}; either others, as Aben Ezra; or both himself and others, as Jarchi: and then it may be understood of him "that forsaketh reproof" {l}, as it may be rendered; that is, that declines giving reproof, when it lies in his way, and is his duty to do it. Aben Ezra reads this clause in connection with the former, as said of one and the same person,

"he is in the way of life that keepeth instruction, and forsakes or rejects the reproof of him that causeth to err."

{i} rmwv "observat", Tigurine version; "servat", Cocceius; "observans", Schultens. {k} hetm "faciens errare", Montanus, Gejerus; "seduceus sese", Tigurine version; "errare facit", some in Vatablus; "facit oberrare", Cocceius. {l} txkwt bze "qui relinquit increpationem", Pagninus; "deserens", Montanus, Schultens; "derelinquit", Piscator; "deserit", Cocceius.

Proverbs 10:18

Ver. 18. He that hideth hatred [with] lying lips,.... Or he whose "lying lips hide hatred", which is much the same; who pretends to be a friend, and outwardly behaves as one, but inwardly nourishes and cherishes hatred in his heart, which he covers and conceals, till he has a proper opportunity of showing it; as Absalom to Ammon, Joab to Amasa, the men of Anathoth to Jeremiah, and Judas to Christ; see
Pr 26:24. Or, "he that hideth hatred [is a man of] lying lips" {m}; he is a liar, as the person next described is a fool. And he that uttereth slander is a fool; that brings it out by wholesale, and hides it not; who openly defames his neighbour, and in the most public manner; and with a multitude of words detracts from his good name, credit, and reputation, and loads him with calumny and reproach; such a man is a fool, a very wicked man: yea, not only the public slanderer, but the secret dissembler, who thinks himself a cunning man because he hides himself; each of these is a fool, the one as well as the

other. Gersom thinks there is a comparison made between the dissembler and the slanderer; the one being a liar, and the other a fool; and that the former is more abominable and pernicious than the latter.

{m} "Est vir laborium falsitatis", Piscator, "vel fallacium", Gejerus.

Proverbs 10:19

Ver. 19. In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin,.... Where a great deal is said, without care and forethought, there will not only be many weak things uttered, but much falsehood, and at least many idle things, which cannot be excused from sin; not but that much and long speaking may be to great profit and advantage, when it is with care and judgment, and founded on close meditation and study. Or, "sin ceaseth not" {n}; along with a torrent of words is a flow of sin, which ceases not as long as that continues: it is a saying of the Jewish Rabbins,

"he that multiplies words brings on or brings unto sin;"

but he that refraineth his lips [is] wise; lays a restraint on his mouth, bridles his tongue; does not suffer his lips to utter anything rashly and inconsiderately; is sparing of his words and is careful of what he says, that it is true and proper to be spoken; and considers well the time when, place where, and persons to whom he speaks; and, all circumstances weighed, conducts accordingly: such a man is a wise, prudent, and understanding man; see Pr 17:27.

{n} ldxy al "non cessabit", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis; "non cessat", Piscator.

Proverbs 10:20

Ver. 20. The tongue of the just [is as] choice silver,.... Which utters things precious, pure, pleasant, and profitable; things for worth and value as choice silver; the doctrines of the Gospel, the power of which he has felt upon his heart; the precious promises of it, which have been applied unto him; and the rich experience of grace he has been favoured with: things pure and incorrupt, like silver free from dross; as the doctrines of grace, fetched out of the mines of the sacred Scripture, free from the dross of error, without any human mixture; consistent and all of a piece, and which tend to purity of heart and life; things the reverse of a corrupt communication, nothing filthy and unclean; a pure language, the language of Canaan; the language of repentance, faith, and love, of prayer and thankfulness: things which are grateful and acceptable, are with grace, and minister grace to the hearers; things profitable and edifying; for the righteous man's mouth speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of judgment; and his lips feed many, as in Pr 10:21; see Ps 37:30;

the heart of the wicked [is] little worth; good for nothing, as the Vulgate Latin version. The righteous man's tongue is better than the wicked man's heart; there is no good thing in his heart naturally; all manner of evil is in it, and comes out of it; no sin can be named but what is in his heart; all that is in it is sinful; the thoughts of it, and the imagination of his thoughts, are only evil, and that continually; the affections are inordinate, and set on sinful lusts and pleasures; the mind and conscience are defiled with sin; the understanding is darkened with it, and the will is obstinate and perverse, and bent upon it: his heart is wicked, and exceedingly wicked; it is wickedness itself, very wickedness, desperately wicked, incurably so without the grace of God. Such therefore know not their hearts who say they have good hearts; and they are fools that trust in them: this shows the necessity of regeneration, and that powerful and efficacious grace is requisite to it.

Proverbs 10:21

Ver. 21. The lips of the righteous feed many,.... Not their bodies; words are but wind, and will not feed; it is not enough to say to the distressed, "be ye warmed and filled", and give nothing; unless this can be understood of obtaining food for others by their prayers, as Jarchi interprets it: but the souls of many; these the righteous feed, by communicating the spiritual knowledge and understanding of divine things they are partakers of; by setting before them the bread of life, the honey and milk of the Gospel, they have under their tongue; and by the good counsel and advice, comforts and admonitions, they give them; see **Jer 3:15**;

but fools die for want of wisdom: not a corporeal death, which is common to men of every rank and quality; wise men die even as fools; but they continue under the power of a spiritual death, for want of enlightening and quickening grace, and so die an eternal death: not for want of natural wisdom, which they may have a greater share of than those who live spiritually and eternally; but for want of spiritual wisdom and knowledge; the knowledge of Christ, and the way of life and salvation by him, and the knowledge of God in Christ; and not always for the want of the means of such wisdom and knowledge; as the Scriptures, which are able to make a man wise unto salvation; and the Gospel, which is the wisdom of God in a mystery; but through the neglect and contempt of them: though sometimes men perish through want of the means of knowledge, and the neglect of those who should instruct them, **Ho 4:6**.

Proverbs 10:22

Ver. 22. The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich,.... In the diligent use of means; see Pr 10:4; riches are from the Lord, and should be acknowledged as such, and not attributed to the industry, diligence, sagacity, and merit of men; but should be looked upon as had through the blessing of the Lord upon the labours of men; and when they come this way they come as a blessing, and with one: it may be understood of being made rich in a spiritual sense; it is the blessing, good will, and favour of God, that makes men rich in Christ; that bestows upon them his unsearchable riches; that enriches them with all spiritual blessings in him; that makes them rich in faith and in good works, and with the riches of grace and of glory;

and he addeth no sorrow with it; no sorrow goes along with the blessing, but what is a blessing itself, as one observes; riches enjoyed through the blessing of God are not attended with that sorrow in getting, keeping, and losing them, as the riches of wicked men unlawfully gotten are; see **1Ti 6:9**; for as the good man comes by them easily, without any anxious care and sinful solicitude, he seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things are added to him, over and above, without much thought about them, or expectation of them, **Mt 6:33**; so it is with great delight, pleasure, and cheerfulness, he enjoys them, and readily communicates them to others; while the wicked man is full of anxiety, distress, and sorrow; see **Ec 5:12**. This is eminently true of spiritual riches; there is no sorrow attending them; the fruit and effect of them are peace, joy, and comfort.

Proverbs 10:23

Ver. 23. [It is] as sport to a fool to do mischief,.... To do any injury to the persons and properties of men; which shows a most wicked and malicious spirit, a very depraved nature indeed: or rather "to commit sin" {o} of any sort, which he has devised in his own heart; it is as a "laughing" {p}, as the words may be rendered; it is a laughing matter to him, he commits sin, and, when he has done it, laughs at it; instead of being ashamed of it, and humbled for it, he makes a mock at it, and a jest of it, as well as of all religion, and of the reproofs and admonitions of good men. Sin is pastime, he takes as much delight and pleasure in it as men do in their sports, and commits it as openly and freely; yea, not only takes pleasure in doing it himself, but in them that do it; see Pr 14:9;

but a man of understanding hath wisdom; to avoid sin, and not to do it, which is true wisdom, Job 28:28; for he has, as it may be rendered, from the use of the word in the Arabic language {q}, a "bridle" or "restraint" upon him, that he cannot do mischief and delight in it, as the fool does: or "so [is] wisdom to a man of understanding" {r}; that is, to do it; as it is a pleasure to a feel to commit sin, so it is a delight to an understanding man to do that which is wise and good; it is "meat and drink" to do the will of God, see **Joh 4:34**; he takes as much pleasure in it as men can do in their sports and pastimes; he has a truer pleasure and a better relish than they have; he delights in the law of God after the inward man; and Wisdom's ways, or the ways of Christ, are pleasantness to him; he runs the ways of his commandments with great alacrity and cheerfulness.

{o} hmz twve "facere scelus", Montanus, Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Michaelis; "perpetrare scelus", Piscator; "patrare facinus", Schultens. {p} qwxvk "veluti risus", Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis. {q} Vid. Schultens de Defect. Hod. Ling. Heb. s. 216. {r} So some in Gejerus.

Proverbs 10:24

Ver. 24. The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him,.... What he dreads in his own mind will be his unhappy case, sooner or later it comes upon him; his fear of distresses, calamities, and judgments in this life, and of eternal wrath and vengeance hereafter; for the most profligate and abandoned wretches, the greatest atheists, who endeavour to work themselves up to a disbelief of a God and a future state, have at times their frights and fears about these things; and as are their fears of God, so will his wrath be, Ps 90:11. Jarchi illustrates this in the instance of the builders of Babel, who were afraid of being scattered upon the face of the earth, which thing feared came upon them through and for their building of the tower; and so it sometimes is, that the very thing which men fear comes upon them by the means which they take to prevent it; so the Jews were afraid that if their people believed in Jesus of Nazareth, the Romans would come and seize their city and nation, and therefore endeavoured to persuade them to reject him; for which rejection of him the thing they feared came upon them;

but the desire of the righteous shall be granted; or "he shall give" {s}; that is, God shall give it; who has it in his hands or power to give it, as Jarchi's note is: what a righteous man desires from right principles, and with right views; what is for his own good and the glory of God; what he asks in faith, and with submission to the divine will, and is according to it, is sooner or later, in God's own time and way, granted unto him: particularly his desires after righteousness; after the righteousness of Christ, and to be found alone in that, living and dying; after holiness of heart and life, that he might be cleansed and kept from sin, and preserved to the coming of Christ; after more grace, an increase of it, and fresh supplies from Christ; after more communion with God and Christ, and conformity to them; after glory and happiness, and a being with them to all eternity. Some understand this of the righteous man's desire upon the wicked; that his fear might come upon him, and the glory of divine justice appear in his swift and sudden destruction; as expressed in Pr 10:25; so Aben Ezra.

{s} Nty "dabit", Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus; "justis dat quod cupiunt", Tigurine version; "dabit Deus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis; "dat Deus", Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 10:25

Ver. 25. As the whirlwind passeth, so [is] the wicked no [more],.... The wicked themselves are like a whirlwind, noisy, boisterous, and blustering; such is the man of sin, who speaks like a dragon, breathing out slaughter and threatening against the saints; and so are his followers, fierce and heady, and like a whirlwind, pernicious and destructive, bearing down, carrying away, and destroying all before it; so the locusts of the bottomless pit, under their king Abaddon, or Apollyon, the destroyer; and all tyrannical persecutors, who are as the boar out of the forest, and the wild beast of the field: and these "pass away" like a whirlwind, swiftly, suddenly, and at once; now they are seen in great power and authority, and anon they are not any more, **Jer 4:13**; as the whirlwind, which digs up the earth, makes a circle and buries itself in it; so the wicked dig a pit for others and fall into it themselves, **Ps 7:14**; and as a whirlwind passes away to the joy of men, so when the wicked perish there is shouting; as will be at the destruction of antichrist more especially, Pr 11:10; and it is in the whirlwind and storm of divine wrath, which falls upon the head of the wicked, by which they are caused to pass away, Jer 23:19; so that they are "not": not that they are annihilated at death, they will rise again and come to judgment, and live in torment for ever; when they pass away, they are somewhere; they are "not" indeed in the land of the living, in their own houses, as formerly, which will know them no more; they are not in their grandeur and prosperity, enjoying their riches and honour; but they are in their own place, in hell they lift up their eyes, though they wish they had no being;

but the righteous [is] an everlasting foundation; he is in a firm and stable state here and hereafter; interested in everlasting love; in which he is rooted and grounded; secured in an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; having a share in everlasting salvation, and eternal redemption wrought out by Christ; being justified by his everlasting righteousness, which will answer for him in a time to come; and a partaker of those graces of the Spirit, faith, hope, and love, which are a well of living water springing up to everlasting life; and having everlasting strength and everlasting consolation in Christ, and a title to eternal life through him. Or, "but the righteous [has] an everlasting foundation" {t}; the sense is the same; which foundation is not external privileges of birth and education, or a mere outward profession of religion, or works of righteousness done; these are not everlasting, but sandy foundations; but Christ is the righteous man's foundation, and he is the only one, **1Co 3:11**. Some take the sense to be, the "righteous", that is, Jesus Christ the righteous, "is an everlasting foundation"; he is the foundation of the church, the rock on which it is built; he is the foundation of the apostles and prophets, on which they were laid, and by whom they are saved; he is the foundation of every particular believer, they are rooted and built up on him; he is the foundation of their faith, hope, love, peace, joy, and comfort, and of their eternal glory and happiness: and an "everlasting one" he is; he is so in his person as God-man; in his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; in the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and is a foundation which is sure, and will never fail: he has been the foundation of his people in all ages; and he is the same today, yesterday, and for ever. Hence, though the wicked pass away as the whirlwind, and by one, the righteous shall not; they are on a foundation, and cannot be blown off of it by the storms and tempests of Satan's temptations, their own corruptions, the persecutions of men, the errors of the wicked, or by the whirlwind of divine wrath and vengeance. Some render it, "the righteous [is] the foundation of the world" {u}; the pillar and support of it; as the righteous are the salt of the earth, they are the stay of it: the whirlwind of God's wrath would tear up the course of nature, dissolve the earth, and all things in it, were it not for the sake of the righteous; and, when they are called and gathered in, there will be a general dissolution of all things, **2Pe 3:9**.

{t} Mlwe dwoy qyduw "atjusti fandamentum perpetuum est", Tigurine versions; "justo vero sit, vel est fundamentum perpetuum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {u} "Fundamentum mundi", Hebraei in Mercer. Maimonides apud Grotius.

Proverbs 10:26

Ver. 26. As vinegar to the teeth,.... Which, with its coldness and sourness, blunts the teeth, and makes it troublesome to eat: the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it,

"as the sour grape is hurtful to the teeth;"

sets them on edge;

and as smoke to the eye; dims the sight, causes the eye to water, and is very pernicious and vexatious:

so [is] the sluggard to them that send him: that is, the slothful messenger, as the Targum explains it; who, being sent on an errand, is dilatory, does not make haste to bring back the answer; which is very vexatious to those that send him, raises their passions, makes them fretful and very angry, be it on what account it will: so slothful and unprofitable servants, to whom talents are given for usefulness, which they hide or use not, are very provoking to Christ, and whom he will order into outer darkness; those who have gifts for sacred service ought not to be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Mt 25:26.

Proverbs 10:27

Ver. 27. The fear of the Lord prolongeth days,.... Not beyond the time fixed in the unalterable purposes and decrees of God, Job 14:5; but longer than some others, or than those that fear the Lord expect to live; or longer than, according to the course of nature, and the weakness of their constitutions, it could be thought they should live. Long life is promised to them that fear the Lord; godliness has the promise of this life and of that to come; the fear of the Lord is the means of preserving persons from those things which are pernicious to the health of men, and so of prolonging their days; as well as it has length of days, for ever and ever, even eternal life, annexed to it; see Ps 34:11;

but the years of the wicked shall be shortened; through diseases, which their sins bring upon them, which cut them off before they have lived out half their days; or by means of which, their sins, they come into the hand of the civil magistrate, and die before their time; or are taken off in their full strength by the immediate judgment of God, as were Ananias and Sapphira; and so they die in the midst of their days; and before the time, which, according to the course of nature, and the common period of life, in all human probability they might have arrived unto, Ps 55:23.

Proverbs 10:28

Ver. 28. The hope of the righteous [shall be] gladness,.... Or, "[is] gladness" {w}; it is now attended with joy; he has a pleasure in the exercise of the grace of hope as to future things; he rejoices in hope of the glory of God, and is enabled to hold fast the rejoicing of his hope firm unto the end, **Ro 5:2**; and the issue of his hope will be an abundant entrance into the joy of his Lord; a being brought into his presence, in which is fulness of joy; he is not ashamed of his hope now, and he will not be disappointed hereafter;

but the expectation of the wicked shall perish; his hope and expectation, either of riches, and honour, and pleasure in this world, or of a long life in it; or of happiness in the other, and of escaping the wrath of God, and the vengeance of eternal fire; all which, being grounded on a wrong bottom, shall be frustrated; see **Job 8:13**.

{w} "Est", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

Proverbs 10:29

Ver. 29. The way of the Lord [is] strength to the upright,.... Who are upright in heart and life; who have the uprightness or righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and right spirits renewed in them; in consequence of which they walk uprightly, Pr 10:9. To these "the way of the Lord [is] strength"; both the way which he himself takes, and the way which he prescribes and directs his people to walk in: the way in which he walks in providence towards them is the strength of them; he is their shade on their right hand; he shows himself strong on their behalf; he is their fortress and strong tower, as the God of providence, even a wall of fire round about them: and the way he takes in the discoveries of his love; in the communications of his grace; in the application of precious promises; by granting the influences of his Spirit; and by leading to his Son, the than of his right hand, made strong for himself and them, is very strengthening unto them: so likewise the way in which he leads his people, the way of his word and ordinances; which, as it is pleasant, so strengthening; the more they walk in them, the stronger they are; they go from strength to strength, they grow stronger and stronger by them; while they are waiting on the Lord in them, their spiritual strength is renewed: moreover, walking in the way of the Lord gives them spirit and courage, and makes them bold and intrepid; so that they fear no enemy, nor any dangers and difficulties, but go on their way cheerfully and pleasantly;

but destruction [shall be] to the workers of iniquity; not to all that do iniquity, for no man lives without sin; but to those who give up themselves to it, make a trade of it; whose course of life is sinful, and do nothing else but sin; this their way leads to ruin; destruction and misery are now in all their ways, and will be the certain issue of them, even destruction of both soul and body; which will be swift and sudden, come upon them before they are aware, and will be everlasting; it will continue for ever, and there will be no deliverance from it. The Word {x} signifies terror and consternation; and such seize on a wicked man at death, to whom death is the king of terrors; and which will still more strongly possess him when in hell he lifts up his eyes; and also at the day of judgment, when he shall see the Judge coming in the clouds of heaven, sitting on a fiery throne, and shall hear him pronounce him cursed. The clause may be rendered, but the way of the Lord is "terror to the workers of iniquity" {y}; the way of the Lord in his works of providence, in which he oftentimes does terrible things in righteousness; and he is very terrible to men in his judgments here, and will be more so in his awful procedure at the last judgment.

{x} htxm "pavor", V. L. Pagninus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus; "consternatio", Vatablus, Cocceius, Michaelis. {y} So Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 10:30

Ver. 30. The righteous shall never be removed,.... They may be removed from place to place in this world, through the persecutions of their enemies, or through one providence or another, as they often are; they may be removed from a state of outward prosperity to a state of adversity, as Job was; they may be removed from spiritual and comfortable frames of soul to carnal or

uncomfortable ones; for good frames are very precarious and uncertain things; and they will be removed out of this world into another; here they have no continuing city: but they shall never be removed from the love of God, nothing can separate them from that; they are set as a seal on his heart, and are engraven on the palms of his hands, and there is no removing them from thence; they may be waiver about their interest in the love of God; they may be without the manifestations and discoveries of it to their souls; they may be under the hidings of God's face; they may be at a distance from his house and ordinances, or may not enjoy the presence of God in them for a time; yet not separated from his affections; they shall never be removed out of the hands of Christ, into which they are put for security, and out of which none can pluck them, men or devils; how should they, since they are in those hands that made the heavens and the earth, support all in being, and hold the reins of government? Was it possible they could be removed from hence, it would impeach the wisdom of God, who has put them there; argue weakness in Christ, and suppose danger to them. Nor can they be removed out of the family of God; sons of God abide in his house for ever; they are no more foreigners and strangers; once children, no more servants; they may be corrected and chastised, yet be children; they may judge themselves unworthy of the relation, and be ready to conclude that their spots are not the spots of God's children, and fear they are none of them, and yet the relation continues: nor will they ever be removed from their state of justification, by which they are denominated righteous, into a state of condemnation; for full satisfaction is given to law and justice for them; their justification is complete, it is from all sin; the righteousness by which they are justified is everlasting, and even their faith which receives it shall never fail; to which may be added, that they are secured from wrath to come, and entitled to eternal life. In a word, they are on the sure foundation of electing grace; they are in the immovable covenant of grace; they are on the Rock of ages, Christ Jesus; all the divine Persons and perfections are on their side; they are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation; see
Ps 55:22;

but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth; but a very little while, as Gersom observes; and the time of their abode on earth is so short, as scarce to be called an inhabitation of it. Moreover, they shall not inhabit the earth the righteous will, even the new earth, which none but righteous persons shall inhabit, **2Pe 3:13**; see
Ps 37:9.

Proverbs 10:31

Ver. 31. The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom,.... As the earth brings forth its increase, and a tree brings forth its fruit; hence speech is called the fruit of the lips; wisdom is good fruit; a good man is comparable to the fruitful earth, and to a good tree; whose mouth brings forth wise things in abundance, which are very pleasant and profitable; not worldly wisdom, much less devilish; not merely natural wisdom, but spiritual and evangelical; see Ps 37:30;

but the froward tongue shall be cut out; or "cut down" {z}; as an unprofitable tree, which brings forth nothing but perverse things; things contrary to God and good men, to truth and right reason, to the light of nature, the law of God, and Gospel of Christ. Such "a tongue of perversities" {a}, as it may be rendered, that brings forth blasphemies against God, his tabernacle and his saints, as the tongue of antichrist does, deserves to be cut out, as the tongue of a blasphemer.

{z} trkt "succidetur", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus. {a} twkpht Nwvl "lingua perversitatum", Montanus, Junius & Tremeilius, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 10:32

Ver. 32. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable,.... To God and man; what is well pleasing to, God, and what ministers grace to the hearers, or what is grateful: and such things they will deliver out; they are used and accustomed to them; not only the righteous know in their judgment what is acceptable, but they use themselves to say those things; they not only know them in theory, but practise them: some men know what is acceptable, but their lips do not know it; they are not used to it, but the contrary;

but the mouth of the wicked [speaketh] frowardness; or perverse things, as before. Or, "the mouth of the wicked [knoweth] frowardness" {b}; or perverse things; or is used only to speak froward things; things contrary to truth and righteousness, and which they know to be so; their mouth speaks things contrary to their hearts; their hearts and mouths do not agree, when they both flatter and lie.

{b} "Novit tantum perversa", Michaelis,

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 11:1

Ver. 1. A false balance [is] abomination to the Lord,.... Under which are included all false weights and measures, and all fraudulent practices in commerce and dealing; which are forbidden by the Lord, and are abominable to him, as being injurious to the estates and properties of men: and more especially must be abominable in professors of religion, as being contrary to the grace of God; for though there may be common honesty where there is not the grace of God, yet there cannot be the true grace of God where there is not honesty; for the grace of God teaches to deny all such worldly lusts;

but a just weight [is] his delight; or a "perfect stone" {c}; the ancient practice being to make use of stones for weights; Now to give just weight, and also just measure, and to do justly in all civil dealings with men, is what God requires, and is well pleasing in his sight {d}; see Le 19:35. This may be understood of balances and weights in religious affairs; the balance of the sanctuary is the word of God, with which all doctrines are to be weighed, and, if found wanting, they are to be rejected; this is agreeable to the will of God: false balances are abominable to him; such as carnal reason, vain philosophy, and the traditions of men, used by antichrist and his followers; the harlot, described in some preceding chapters, opposed to Wisdom or Christ, who directs to the search of the Scriptures, and the use of them to try doctrines by, **Joh 5:39**; see Ac 17:11.

{c} hmlv Nba "lapsis perfectus", Montanus, Gejerus. {d} metra nemein ta dikaia, &c. Phocylid. Poem. Admon. v. 12, 13.

Proverbs 11:2

Ver. 2. [When] pride cometh, then cometh shame,.... The one follows the other, or rather keep pace together; as soon as one comes, the other comes; as in the case of the angels that sinned, Adam and Eve, Haman, Nebuchadnezzar, and others; and will be the case of the Romish antichrist, who, while vaunting and priding himself in his glory and grandeur, will fall into shame, disgrace, and destruction, Re 18:7;

but with the lowly [is] wisdom; or wisdom shall come, as Jarchi: the consequence of which is honour and glory; as with Christ, who is meek and lowly, are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; so with his humble followers, who reckon themselves the least of saints, and chief of sinners, and own that it is by the grace of God they are what they are, is true wisdom; they are wise unto salvation, and in the way to honour and glory; such humble souls shall be exalted, Lu 14:11.

Proverbs 11:3

Ver. 3. The integrity of the upright shall guide them,.... The Spirit of God is the best guide of an upright man; he leads into all truth, and unto the land of uprightness, and continues to be a guide, even unto death; and it is right to walk after him, and not after the flesh: and besides him, the upright man has the word of God as a lamp to his feet, and a light to his paths, which he does well to take heed to; and next to that is the sincerity and uprightness of his heart, which will not suffer him, knowingly and willingly, to go aside into crooked paths, or to do amiss: integrity of heart and innocency of hand go together; such are the followers of the Lamb, as described,
Re 14:4; see Ps 25:21;

but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them; the perverse ways, words, and actions of such as transgress the law of God, deal treacherously with God and men, as the word {e} signifies, shall be their ruin: the perverse doctrines and worship of the man of sin, and his followers, shall bring destruction upon them, **2Th 2:4**. The word for "perverseness" is only used here and in Pr 15:4; and there plainly signifies the perverseness of the tongue or speech, and so may have respect to corrupt doctrine.

{e} Mydgb "perfidosorum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "perfidorum", Cocceius, Michaelis.

Proverbs 11:4

Ver. 4. Riches profit not in the day of wrath,.... When God takes away the soul, and summons to judgment, and brings to it; and as riches profited not Rome Pagan, in the day of the Lamb's wrath upon it; so neither will they profit Rome Papal, when it will come in remembrance before God, to give it the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; see **Re 6:15**;

but righteousness delivereth from death; from the curse of a corporeal death; from the power of a spiritual one; and from dying the second or an eternal one; See Gill on "Pr 10:2"; the Targum is,

"from an evil death."

Proverbs 11:5

Ver. 5. The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way,.... Or "make [it] plain" {f}; that is, the righteousness of those who are perfect in Christ, complete in him, perfectly justified by his righteousness; that righteousness makes their way plain; it is the direct way, the highway, the pathway to eternal life and happiness; see
Pr 12:28;

but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness; or, "in his wickedness" {g}: in his own wicked way, which he has chosen and delights to walk in; he shall stumble therein, and fall into ruin and destruction, into hell and damnation: or by means or because of it he will fall; his wickedness will be the cause of his fall; as it will be the cause of the fall of Babylon, Re 18:2.

{f} rvyt "rectam facit", Cocceius; "complanat viam ejus", Schultens. {g} wtevrb "in impietate sua", Tigurine version, Montanus, Baynus, Michaelis; "improbitate sua", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "in injustitia sua", Cocceius; "in improbitate sua turbulenta", Schultens.

Proverbs 11:6

Ver. 6. The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them,.... From death, as in Pr 11:4; and from falling by sin, totally and finally; or into it, so as to perish eternally; as well as it shall deliver those out of Babylon, who are the Lord's people, that will be found therein when that is about to fall; see Re 18:4;

but transgressors shall be taken in [their own] naughtiness; in the very act of sin, and be punished for it; taken in it as in a net, and which they have spread for others, or as in a pit, which they have dug for others; taken as wild beasts are taken, to be destroyed; and that in the very midst of their wickedness, when fighting against God and the Lamb, as the beast and false prophet will, Re

19:20.

Proverbs 11:7

Ver. 7. When a wicked man dieth, [his] expectation shall perish,.... His expectation of a longer life, of getting more riches, attaining to more honour, enjoying more pleasure here, and of having happiness hereafter, and of being delivered from wrath to come; he will then find, when he comes to die, that his expectations in this world are vain, and those which respect happiness in another world are ill-grounded; or when he dies, the expectation of others that depended on him, trusted in him, and looked for great things from him, will then be at an end;

and the hope of unjust [men] perisheth; which is as the giving up of the ghost, and expires when a man does; it is only in this life, or however it ceases when that does; he has no hope in his death, as the righteous man has; if he does not live without hope in the world, he has none when he goes out of it, or that will be of any use unto him: moreover, the hope of "unjust" men to oppress and injure others ceases when they die, **Job 3:17**. The word rendered unjust men is by some {h} understood of strength, substance, riches; and so the meaning may be, that such a hope that is placed in strength and riches perishes at death. Jarchi interprets it of children, which are a man's substance; as if the sense was, that the hope of the children of such persons is then cut off.

{h} Mynwa tlxwt "expectatio virium", Gejerus; "spes in viribus collocata", Michaelis; "spes confidentium in divitiis", Munster; so some in Vatablus; "divitiarum", Pagniaus, Baynus; "roborum", Montanus, Amama.

Proverbs 11:8

Ver. 8. The righteous is delivered out of trouble,.... One after another he comes into, if not in this life, yet at death; which is to him a perfect deliverance out of all tribulation; see **Re 7:14**; or when the wicked die, as in Pr 11:7, then the righteous are delivered from the trouble they gave them, or designed to give them; though it seems rather to design deliverance from trouble in the first sense, since it follows,

and the wicked cometh in his stead; as Haman did in the room of Mordecai, and was hanged upon the gallows the other was delivered from, and he had prepared for him, **Es 7:10**; and as Daniel was delivered from the lion's den, and his enemies thrown into it, **Da 6:24**; and as in the latter day the righteous will be delivered from all their persecutors, and antichrist will be destroyed with the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming; and then they that destroyed the earth shall be destroyed themselves, Re 11:18.

Proverbs 11:9

Ver. 9. An hypocrite with [his] mouth destroyeth his neighbour,.... Deceives him with his flatteries and lies, and draws him into destructive schemes and practices; or "corrupts" him, as the word {i} signifies, and as the Targum renders it, with false doctrines; so, with fair words and good speeches, such who lie in wait to deceive impose upon the simple and credulous; and false teachers, with their damnable heresies, bring swift destruction on men; and particularly antichrist and his emissaries, through speaking lies in hypocrisy, corrupt and destroy many, **1Ti 4:1**;

but through knowledge shall the just be delivered; from the hypocrite and deceitful worker, and from being corrupted and destroyed by the words of his mouth: Jarchi says, through the knowledge of the law, which warns against him; but rather through the knowledge of the Gospel, which the just man has; for as by this such escape the pollutions of the world, so likewise they are delivered, are kept and secured, from the error of the wicked: through a man's knowledge of himself, of his descent from Adam, of the corruption of his nature, of the plague of his heart, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; of his lost and undone state; of his impotency to that which is good, of his incapacity to fulfil the law, and atone for sin; and of the insufficiency of his own righteousness to justify him before God; he is delivered and preserved from giving into the notions of the purity of human nature, the power of free will, and the doctrine of justification by works: through his knowledge of the person of Christ; of his offices and relations; of him as a Saviour; of the efficacy of his blood, the excellency of his righteousness, and the completeness of his sacrifice; and through the knowledge of God in Christ, and of the Spirit and of his operations of grace, as well as of the sacred Scriptures in general; he is safe from being carried away with any errors concerning any of the divine Persons, particularly concerning the deity, sonship, and satisfaction of Christ; in short, as ignorance is the mother of devotion, superstition, and error, in the church of Rome, spiritual experimental knowledge of the above things is the best preservative from all errors and heresies which corrupt and destroy the souls of men, to be found in that apostate church, or elsewhere.

{i} txvy "corrumpet", Schultens; so Pagninus, Montanus; "corrumpit", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 11:10

Ver. 10. When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth,.... As it always does, even in the worst of times; in times of public calamity and distress, and when enemies rise up on all hands; it is well with them in life, in death, and to all eternity; see **Isa 3:10**; but there are particular times when it goes well with them, which is matter of joy to others; when they prosper in the worm, increase in riches and honour, and are advanced to places of authority and trust; just magistrates in a city or commonwealth are a blessing, and so cause joy; see Pr 29:2; and when it goes well with them in spiritual things, they increase in gifts and grace, the humble hear of it and are glad; the city or church of God, the community of the saints, rejoice: and as it went well with them in Constantine's time, when Paganism was destroyed and persecution ceased; and at the time of the reformation, when the pure doctrines of the Gospel were revived, which were both times of joy to the city of God; so in the latter day, when the Lord's people will be righteous, the church will be the joy of many generations; and when the kingdom shall be given to the saints of the most High, and the kingdoms of the world become the Lord's and his Christ's, there will be great voices in heaven, rejoicings in the church, and a new song sung, Isa 60:21;

and when the wicked perish, [there is] shouting; as there will be great rejoicings, shoutings, and hallelujahs, when Babylon is fallen, Re 18:20.

Proverbs 11:11

Ver. 11. By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted,.... That is, either by the blessings with which they are blessed; and these are either temporal or spiritual: when good men are blessed with temporal blessings, the place where they live is the better it; and especially the poor, for they do not eat their morsel alone; and where there are many of these, and in prosperous circumstances, it is the exaltation and glory of a city taken in a literal sense; and which is the more blessed for their sakes, as well as they themselves are a blessing to it: and as the upright are blessed with spiritual blessings, with blessings indeed, with the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God; when they are fruitful and flourishing in grace, the city or church of God is in an exalted state: or rather this is to be understood of the blessings with which the upright bless others; and may be interpreted of the blessed deeds or good works which they do, and which are profitable to men; or of their blessed counsel and advice which they give on emergent occasions, and which proves salutary, and for the good of the city; or rather for their blessed prayers which they put up for the peace and prosperity of it, and which succeed. So by the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, or by the blessed doctrines of his apostles, those upright and sincere ministers of the word, the city of the living God was greatly exalted in their times; as it also was in the times of Constantine, and at the reformation; and this now is a reason why the city rejoices at its going well with the righteous, whether in temporals or spirituals. So Aben Ezra thinks the words have a connection with the former;

but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked; by the corrupt communication which proceeds out of their months; by their obscene and filthy talk the inhabitants of a place are corrupted; evil communications corrupt good manners; by their swearing and cursing, their oaths and imprecations, by their lying and perjury, they bring the judgments of God upon a city, to the overthrow of it. So by false doctrines, as the faith of particular persons is subverted, so whole cities, or visible congregated churches, have been corrupted and destroyed, as with the Arian heresy and others.

Proverbs 11:12

Ver. 12. He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour,.... Not only in his heart, but by giving him opprobrious language; he speaks contemptibly of him, either because he thinks he is wiser than his neighbour, and therefore calls him fool at every turn; as those who are most destitute of wisdom conceit they have the largest share of it, and despise others; or else because he is richer than his neighbour, as the poor is generally despised by the rich; or because he fancies he is holier than he, as the Pharisee who trusts in himself that he is righteous, and despises others: or a man "that wants a heart" {k}, as it may be rendered; that wants a good one, or wants grace in his heart; he despises the counsel and advice, the admonitions and instructions, which his neighbour gives him for his good;

but a man of understanding holdeth his peace: and will not despise his neighbour, or give him ill language, because he is not so wise, or so rich, or so righteous as he; if he cannot speak any good of him, he will not speak evil of him; or he holds his peace, is silent, and will not answer the man void of wisdom, that despises and reproaches him; he will not render railing for railing; when he is reviled he will revile not again; and by so doing he shows himself to he a man understanding, or of intellects; a wise and prudent.

{k} bl rox "carens corde", Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "destitutus est corde", Schultens.

Proverbs 11:13

Ver. 13. A talebearer revealeth secrets,.... The Arabic version adds, in the congregation, openly and publicly; that goes about with tales from place to place, who is like a walking merchant or peddler, as the word {l} signifies; who takes up his wares at one place, and exposes them to sale, and vends them at another; so a talebearer, he goes from house to house, and picks up tales at one place and carries them to another and tells them; and as by his going about he gets into the secrets of persons and families, or is intrusted with them, his character not being known, he reveals them to others, and so breaks the trust committed to him see **1Ti 5:13**. The Targum and Syriac version render it "an accuser"; and the same name is given to the devil in the New Testament, and indeed such a man is no better;

but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter; that is "faithful" to his friend, that trusts him with his secrets, of which there are but few; he "conceals the matter" he is entrusted with: "the things", as the Septuagint version; the secrets which are imparted to him; or "the word" {m} that he has heard, and has been spoken to him in privacy, and in strict friendship: or he "covers the matter" {n} or thing; he hides the infirmities of his friend and neighbour, and does not expose them as the talebearer does; see **1Pe 4:8**.

{l} lykr Klwh "obambulat ut mercator", Tigurine version; "qui incedit nundinator", Schultens. {m} rbd "verbum", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Baynus. {n} rbd hokm "tegit rem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "velat negotium", Schultens.

Proverbs 11:14

Ver. 14. Where no counsel [is], the people fall,.... Where there is no wise and prudent, sound and good counsel, as the word signifies; where that is not, there had as good be none, or better; a people, a kingdom, a commonwealth, nation, or city, fall into ruin and destruction, or into schemes which bring them to it; they are like a ship without a pilot, or without a helm, or one to steer it: the Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions, render it,

"where there is no governor;"

and the Arabic version,

"they that have no providence (or forecast) fall as a leaf falls;"

and so the Septuagint version,

"they that have no government fall as leaves,"

as leaves fall in autumn; and the word signifies the helm of government {o}, in allusion to a ship;

but in the multitude of counsellors [there is] safety; because what one may miss another may hit upon; and, if they agree in their advice, it may be the more depended upon; and, if not, yet their different sentiments being compared together, and the reasons of them, a person may the better judge which is best to follow, and what is fit to be done: it may be rendered, "in the greatness" or "largeness of a counsellor" {p}, for the word is in the singular number; that is, in the large capacity or endowments of a counsellor; in one that is abundantly qualified for a counsellor; whose abilities are not to be questioned; in the advice of such an one a man may safely confide; and who that answers to this character as Jesus Christ, the wonderful Counsellor? in whose counsel we may rest with the greatest safety; and which may be found in his word, in the Scriptures, which David says should be the men of his counsel, Ps 119:24; see **Isa 9:6**.

{o} twlbxt "gubernationes", Schultens. {p} Uewy brb "in amplitudine consiliarii", Junius & Tremellius.

Proverbs 11:15

Ver. 15. He that is surety for a stranger shall smart [for it],.... Or in "breaking shall be broken" {q}, ruined and undone; he engaging or becoming a bondsman for one whose circumstances he knew not; and these being bad bring a load upon him, such an heavy debt as crushes him to pieces. Mr. Henry observes that our Lord Jesus Christ became a surety for us when we were strangers, and he smarted for it, he was bruised and wounded for our sins; but then he knew our circumstances, and what the consequence would be, and became a surety on purpose to pay the whole debt and set us free; which he was capable of doing: without being broken or becoming a bankrupt himself; for he was not broken, nor did he fail, Isa 42:4. Jarchi's note is,

"the wicked shall be broken, to whose heart idolatry is sweet;"

and he that hateth suretyship is sure; or those "that strike" {r}, that is, with the hand, used in suretyship; see **Pr 6:1**; such an one is safe from coming into trouble by such means. The Targum is,

"and hates those that place their hope in God."

{q} ewry er "frangendo frangetur", Michaelis; so Pagninus and others. {r} Myeqwt "complodentes", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "defigentes", Mercerus.

Proverbs 11:16

Ver. 16. A gracious woman retaineth honour,.... Or "a woman of grace" {s} one that has the grace of God in her heart, and is of a virtuous conversation, and by both amiable and lovely to others; as she receives honour or glory from them, which she deserves, so she retains the same. The Targum is,

"a gracious woman divides glory;"

that is, between herself and her husband; to which the Arabic version agrees, which renders it,

"a gracious woman raises up glory to her husband."

Jarchi interprets it of the congregation of Israel; his note is,

"the congregation of Israel continually draws nigh to the glory of God and his law;"

and it may be applied to the true church of Christ, which seeks the glory of Christ, and retains the glory of Gospel doctrines, of Gospel ordinances, of Gospel discipline, and of Gospel conversation, when the harlot, the apostate church, has lost all honour of these things;

and strong [men] retain riches: some render it, "as strong men retain riches" {t}; as they, when they have got them into their possession, keep them, it being in the power of their hands so to do, against all that would take them from them; so a gracious woman is as tenacious of her honour for chastity, modesty, wisdom, and conduct: or by those "strong men", or "terrible [and] violent" ones, as the word {u} signifies, may be meant the beast of Rome and his followers, cruel persecutors; whose principal care it is to amass the riches and wealth of others, which, when they have got, they hold fast.

{s} Nx tva "mulier gratiae", Montanus, Baynus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "quae gratia praedita est", Tigurine version; "uxor gratia pollens", Schultens. {t} w "ut", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens. {u} Myuyre "violenti", Piscator, Schultens; "formidabiles", Gejerus.

Proverbs 11:17

Ver. 17. The merciful man doeth good to his own soul,.... Or "to himself": a man of mercy or grace, a liberal bountiful man, he comfortably enjoys what God has given him, **Ec 5:18**; and he does good to others with it, and thereby does good to himself also; as well as he is solicitous in a spiritual sense for the good and welfare of his immortal soul;

but [he that is] cruel troubleth his own flesh; a sordid avaricious man withholds from himself that which is meet, will not allow himself the necessaries of life, nor will he provide that which is fit and convenient for his family; he hides himself from his own flesh, and will not communicate to the wants of his nearest friends and relations, and shuts up his bowels of compassion against his own brother; all which may be called a troubling his own flesh; see Isa 58:7. R. Levi Ben Gersom interprets this of such who place religion in afflicting and macerating the body by fasting, which the law does not require; and it may fitly be applied to the Papists, who do this by penances and fastings, and whippings and scourgings; and which the apostle calls a neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh, **Col 2:23**.

Proverbs 11:18

Ver. 18. The wicked worketh a deceitful work,.... Such a wicked man as before described; that neither enjoys the good things of life he has, nor suffers others to enjoy them; and all to accumulate riches, which are deceitful and perishing; and who abstains from meats, which God has created for use, under a pretence of religion, and so deceives his own soul; and indeed every sin which a wicked man commits is a deceitful work; it promises him that pleasure, or profit, or liberty, which it does not give him, and in the issue is the ruin of him; and so all false doctrines, propagated by deceitful workers, are deceitful works, by which they deceive the simple, and at last themselves; they "obtain a deceitful reward of [their] work", as Gussetius {w} renders it;

but to him that soweth righteousness; does acts of beneficence and liberality; see **2Co 9:9**; and all other good works, or works of righteousness,

[shall be] a sure reward; according to what a man sows, and the manner in which he sows, so shall he reap, **2Co 9:6**; or, "a reward of truth"; instead of being given up to believe a lie, he shall receive the love of the truth, and abide in it, which will bring him to eternal glory and happiness; he being chosen to it through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, **2Th 2:10**; and, instead of a deceitful reward, shall have a true, real, solid, and substantial one.

{w} Ebr. Comment. p. 692.

Proverbs 11:19

Ver. 19. As righteousness [tendeth] to life,.... Or, is unto life: not mere outward acts of moral righteousness; these may be done where there is no principle of spiritual life, and are no other than dead works, and will never bring to everlasting life; indeed the best righteousness of man's is no justification of life, nor can it entitle to it, nor is meritorious of it. Godliness, or true holiness, has the promise of this life and that to come, **1Ti 4:8**; and so here in the Hebrew text it is, "unto lives" {x}, in the plural number. Internal grace, or powerful godliness, which is the new man that is created in righteousness, gives a meetness for everlasting life, and issues in it; particularly the righteousness of Christ, as that is a perfectly justifying one; it makes a man alive in a law sense, and gives a title and claim to eternal life;

so he that pursueth evil [pursueth it] to his own death; or, it is "to his own death"; it issues in that: not he that is overtaken in a fault, or falls into sin through the infirmity of the flesh and the force of temptation, but such who eagerly follow after it and overtake it; who give up themselves unto it, weary themselves in committing it, draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope; these often by their sins bring diseases upon them, which end in a corporeal death; or by means of which they come into the hand of the civil magistrate, and are capitally punished; and, however, die the second death, or an eternal one, the just wages of sin, **Ro 6:23**.

{x} Myyxl "ad vitas", Montanus.

Proverbs 11:20

Ver. 20. They that are of a froward heart [are] abomination to the Lord,.... Such as are men of perverse dispositions and principles; that are contrary to the light of nature, the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; who, like the Jews of old, please not God, and are contrary to all men, to all good men; as antichrist and his followers, these work abomination, and make a lie, and speak lies in hypocrisy; are double hearted men, hypocrites, that say one thing and mean another; and, under the pretence of religion, do the vilest things: such of all men are abominable in the sight of God, and will have their portion in the lake of fire, in the hottest place in hell, as hypocrites will,
Re 21:8;

but [such as are] upright in [their] way [are] his delight; or, "in the way"; there being no need of a supplement: such as are in the way, Christ, and walk by faith in him, and in the paths of truth and holiness, in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless, who are the "undefiled in the way", as in Ps 119:1, where the same words are used as here: or, are "perfect" in Christ; though not in faith, nor in their walk and conversation; yet are sincere, Israelites indeed, and walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel. These the Lord takes delight and pleasure in; he is well pleased with their persons in Christ; and in their walk and works, as they flow from right principles, and are directed to right ends, and being upright in all; see Ps 84:11.

Proverbs 11:21

Ver. 21. [Though] hand [join] in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished,....

Though they give the hand to one another, unite in their counsels, enter into combinations, confederacies, and strict alliances, and join all their force and strength together; or though with both hands, with all their might and main, endeavour to secure themselves, yet they shall not go unpunished. This may be exemplified in the kings of the earth, that will join each other, and gather their armies together, to make war against Christ; when they will be conquered, taken, and slain, Re 19:19. Jarchi interprets it, "from hand to hand", and explains it thus; from the hand of God into their hand shall come the reward of their work, and shall not go unpunished: to which may be added, even though there may be a succession of parents and children, and their substance may be handed down from the one to the other, yet at last just punishments will take place. To which is opposed,

but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered; these are the seed of the church in all successive ages; the seed that are accounted of by the Lord for a generation; particularly the remnant of the woman's seed, that keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ; against whom the dragon, the old serpent the devil, was wroth, and went forth to make war, in order utterly to destroy them; but they escaped his hands, were delivered from him, and preserved by the power and grace of God, as a seed to serve him, Re 12:17.

Proverbs 11:22

Ver. 22. [As] a jewel of gold in a swine's snout,.... The allusion seems to be to the ringing of swine, to prevent their rooting up the earth; which is usually done by putting an iron ring into their snout; which is much more proper and suitable than a gold ring, or a jewel set in gold, which is very unbecoming such a creature; and is soon had to the dunghill, or to some miry place, and there defiled;

[so is] a fair woman which is without discretion; or, "has departed from taste" {y}; from a taste of virtue and honour; lost all sense of modesty and chastity; forsaken her husband, and given up herself to the embraces of others. As her beauty is fitly expressed by a "jewel of gold", which is valuable and desirable, and, rightly placed and used, is ornamental; so she is properly represented by a swine, wallowing in the impurities of lust; to which her beauty was the snare, and whereby it is quickly sullied and lost. Jarchi applies this to a disciple of a wise man, or a scholar that departs from the good way, or from the law; which he explains by taste or sense: but it may be better applied to the scarlet whore,

or apostate church of Rome; which has departed from Christ, once her professed husband; from the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; from all taste and savour of true religion; and even from common sense and right reason, as in the affair of transubstantiation, and other things; and may be fitly compared to a swine with a jewel of gold in its snout, being "decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls"; and yet "drunk with the blood of the saints", and "martyrs of Jesus"; and wallowing in all the faith of fornication, of idolatry, and superstition; as well as in all manner of other sins and iniquities, Re 17:4.

{y} Mej trow Heb. "recedens a gusta", Piscator; "cujus recessit sapor", Schultens.

Proverbs 11:23

Ver. 23. The desire of the righteous [is] only good,.... Or, "what is good" {z}; only good is the object of it. His desire is to do good, and that only; though be does not always do what he would do: as he delights in the law of God, after the inward man; as he is a righteous, holy, and good man, and would be conformable thereunto, and serves it with his mind, will, and affections; his desires are to the Lord, and to the remembrance of his name; he desires his favour, the discoveries of his love, communion with him, and communications of grace from him; he desires all spiritual good things, and everything that is good, for himself and others, and which he desires in submission to the will of God; and all things do work for and issue in his good. Good is what he is continually desirous of, wishing and praying for; and good is what he has eventually here and hereafter: though there may be many irregular and unlawful desires in him at times, and all things he has may not seem good; yet acting as a good man, his desires are only good, and there is nothing attends him but what is for his good;

[but] the expectation of the wicked [is] wrath; what he is desirous of, wishing, and looking for, is wrath and vengeance upon all that displease him, and he is angry with; he desires no good to them, but evil; he desires and hopes for nothing but what is offensive to God, and will bring upon him his fierce wrath and sore displeasure; so that eventually nothing else will be the fruit and consequence of his expectation and hope; and some are so shockingly profane, and so dreadfully hardened, that they wait for hell, as Jarchi on the place observes; they look for damnation and expect it, and are easy about it.

{z} bwj Ka "tantummodo bonum quid est", Michaelis; "tantum bonum", Cocceius; "nihil cupiunt quod bonum non sit", Mercerus; "tamen bonum quid", Gussetius, p. 39.

Proverbs 11:24

Ver. 24. There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth,.... That scattereth "his own", as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions add: that disperses his money here and there, among many poor objects, plentifully and liberally; and his substance is so far from being lessened by such a conduct, that, by the blessing of God, it is increased more and more; or "become richer", as the Vulgate Latin; see Ps 112:9. So he that disperses and dispenses the word of God, and spreads the truths of the Gospel, and freely and fully preaches them, increases himself in spiritual knowledge and understanding;

and [there is] that withholdeth more than is meet; or, "right" or "just" {a}, by the, laws of God and men; from himself, from his family, from his friends and relations, and from the poor of the church and of the world; and from the cause and interest of Christ, and what is necessary to support that, according to his ability;

but [it tendeth] to poverty, or "want" {b}: such a man is often brought to beggary; there is a moth and rottenness sent into his substance, which secretly consume it: so he that withholds any truth or doctrine, that keeps back anything that may be profitable to the saints; this tends to the impoverishing: of his soul, and the souls of them that attend on his ministry.

{a} rvym "plus aequo", Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "plus quam aequum est", Cocceius; "prae quam rectum est, seu plus aequo", Michaelis. {b} rwoxml "ad egestatem". Junius & Tremellius, Picator; "ad penuriam", Cocceius; "ad rasam egestatem", Schultens.

Proverbs 11:25

Ver. 25. The liberal soul shall be made fat,.... Or, "the soul of blessing" {c}: that is, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "the soul which blesseth"; not that merely prays for a blessing upon others, and wishes them well, and gives them good words; but bestows blessings on them, gives good things unto them liberally, cheerfully, and plentifully; and so is a blessing to the poor, and receives a blessing from them again; as such also do from the Lord, by whom they are "made fat"; or are blessed with temporal and spiritual blessings; and are in thriving and flourishing circumstances, both in soul and body. So he that comes full fraught with the blessing of the Gospel of Christ to others is enriched with it himself, and becomes more and more flourishing in gifts and grace;

and he that watereth shall be watered also himself; he that largely shares with others, like a flowing fountain of water, shall have an abundance communicated to him again from God, the inexhaustible fountain of mercies. Watering the plants in Christ's vineyard is one part of the work of a Gospel minister; "I have planted, Apollos watered", &c. **1Co 3:6**; and such who do their work well are watered, rewarded, refreshed, and comforted of God, being largely taught and richly furnished for such service by him; so the Targum,

"and he that teacheth, also he himself shall learn."

{c} hkrb vpn "anima benedictionis", Montanus, Baynus, Cocceius, Michaelis; "anima benedictioni dedita", Schultens.

Proverbs 11:26

Ver. 26. He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him,.... That hoards it up for a better price, in hopes of a better market; and does not bring it out, and expose it to sale, when there is a scarcity of it; so the Targum adds, "in famine"; or, "in straits", as the Syriac version; in a time of distress through, famine: this will bring the curse of the poor upon him, who will imprecate the most dreadful things on him and his family. Jarchi interprets it of the law, and of withholding the teaching of it; but it may be better applied to the Gospel, and the withholding the ministration of that, and so causing a famine, not of bread and of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord; which is done by the Papists, by prohibiting Gospel ministers preaching the word; forbidding the people to read it in their own language; locking it up from them in a language they understand not; and so starve the souls of men, which brings upon them a curse;

but blessing [shall be] upon the head of him that selleth [it]; at a moderate price, so that the poor may be able to come at it; such will have their blessing; they will wish all happiness to them and their families, here and hereafter. Or, "that breaks" {d} it; separates it from the heap, breaks and grinds it into flour, and then sells it: or imparts it freely; so the Septuagint version, "that communicates": and the Arabic version, "that gives"; and may be fitly applied to a faithful minister of the Gospel, who breaks the bread of life, and freely and plentifully imparts it to the souls of men; and who has the hearty prayers and good wishes of the people to whom he ministers. The master of a family used to break the bread, as Christ often did.

{d} rybvm "frangentis", Montanus.

Proverbs 11:27

Ver. 27. He that diligently seeketh good,.... Or "early"; who rises early in the morning, as the word {e} signifies, and seeks both to do good, and to enjoy it all the day; who, in the first place, seeks the kingdom of God and his righteousness; who, in the morning of his youth, inquires after the best things; and diligently pursues what is for his own good and welfare, and that of others, and for the glory of God:

procureth favour, both of God and men: or, "seeketh favour" {f}; or that which is acceptable and well-pleasing unto God;

but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him; that seeks to do hurt to others; that which he seeks to do to them shall come upon himself; see **Ps 9:15**; so antichrist, that leads into captivity, shall go into captivity; and that kills with the sword, shall be killed by it, Re 13:10.

{e} rxv "qui mane quaerit", Vatablus; "quarens mane", Montanus; "qui mane vestigat", Schultens; "bene consurgit diluculo", V. L. so the Targum and Ben Melech. {f} Nwur vqby "quaerit favorem, beneplacitum", Vatablus, Michaelis; "benevolentiam", Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 11:28

Ver. 28. He that trusteth in his riches shall fall,.... As leaves in autumn, which are withered and dry. To trust in riches is to trust in uncertain things; things not to be depended on, being here today and gone tomorrow; it is like leaning upon a broken staff, which giving way, the person falls: and so the fall of Babylon will be, while she is trusting in and boasting of her riches and grandeur, Re 18:7;

but the righteous shall flourish as a branch; that abides in the tree, is alive and green, full of leaves, and laden with fruit: so the righteous are as branches in Christ, and receive life and nourishment from him, and abide in him; and bring forth fruit and flourish, like palm trees and cedars, in the house of the Lord, and grow in every grace, and in the knowledge of Christ; see Jer 17:7.

Proverbs 11:29

Ver. 29. He that troubleth his own house,.... His family, his wife, and children, and servants; by being bitter to the one, and by provoking the others to wrath, and continually giving out menacing words to the rest; or through idleness, not providing for his family; or through an over worldly spirit, pushing on business, and hurrying it on beyond measure; or through a niggardly and avaricious temper, withholding meat and drink, and clothes convenient for them; see
Pr 15:27; or through profuseness and prodigality. Such an one

shall inherit the wind; nothing but vanity and emptiness; he shall come to nothing, and get nothing; and what he does, be shall not keep, and on which he cannot live;

and the fool [shall be] servant to the wise of heart; he who has both got and lost his substance in a foolish way shall be so reduced as to become a servant to him who has pursued wise measures, both in getting and keeping what he has; and to whom perhaps the fool formerly stood in the relation of a master. Such a change will be with respect to antichrist and the saints, **Da 7:25**.

Proverbs 11:30

Ver. 30. The fruit of the righteous [is] a tree of life,.... Either the fruit which grows upon Christ, the tree of life, and which they receive from him; even all the blessings of grace, peace, pardon, righteousness, and life, **Re 2:7**; or the fruits which the righteous bring forth under the influence of divine grace; they are trees of righteousness, and are filled with the fruits of righteousness by Christ, and have their fruit unto holiness, and their end everlasting life. Aben Ezra interprets it,

"the fruit of the righteous is as the fruit of the tree of life;"

that is, lovely, beautiful, desirable, salutary, and issues in life;

and he that winneth souls [is] wise; antichrist trades in the souls of men, that is one part of his wares, Re 18:13; but his negotiations about them are to the loss, and not to the saving of them: whereas wise and faithful ministers of the word, such as are here described, use all prudent methods to gain and save the souls of men, **1Co 9:19**; even their precious immortal souls, which are of more worth than a world, are the immediate production of God, made after his image, which by sin they come short of; and having sinned, are liable to eternal death; the redemption of which is precious; the charge of which Christ has taken, and therefore is called the Shepherd and Bishop of souls; and which he commits to the care of his under shepherds, who watch for them, as they that must give an account. To "win" them is to teach them, for the word {g} has the signification of teaching or doctrine; see **Pr 4:2**; the ministers of Christ are teachers, qualified and sent by him as such; and their business is to teach men their state by nature, how sinful, miserable, and helpless they are; and also Christ, and the way of life by him; that salvation is in him, and in no other; that justification is only by his righteousness, peace and pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice: they also teach various other things; as the fear of God, faith in Christ, love to him, and obedience to all his commands. To win souls is to proselyte them and convert them to the true religion; to bring them into a love and liking of it, and to embrace it: the souls that Abraham got or made in Haran are supposed to be such; and the same with those trained or instructed in his house, whom he armed for the rescue of Lot, Ge 12:5; the former of which texts Jarchi compares with this, as explanative of it. The phrases of "turning many to righteousness", done by the "wise": and of "converting a sinner from the error of his way", whereby a "soul is saved from death", Da 12:3, are a proper comment on these words: which, moreover, may be rendered, "he that taketh souls" {h}; as a fort or castle is taken, and which is sometimes expressed by "winning"; see 2Ch 32:1. The soul of man is a hold, and a strong hold, of foul spirits; it is Satan's palace or castle, which he keeps and holds against Christ, but is won and taken by him; which is usually done by means of the word, and the ministry of it, which are made effectual to the pulling down of strong holds, 2Co 10:4. Or the allusion is to the taking or catching of birds in a snare, or fishes in a net. The souls of men are got into the snare of the devil, and they are taken out from hence by breaking this snare; by which means they escape the hands of the fowler, Satan, and come into better hands: the old serpent laid a bait for our first parents, by which he gained his point, and that was the fruit of the forbidden tree; but the bait which wise men lay to catch souls is the fruit of the tree of life, mentioned in the former clause, the blessings of grace in Christ. Again, Christ's ministers are called "fishers" of men, and are said to "catch" men, **Mt 4:19**; which they do by casting and spreading the net of the Gospel; the Gospel is the net; the world is the sea into which it is cast; where natural men are in their element, as fishes in the sea: the casting of the net is the preaching of the Gospel; and by means of this souls are caught and gathered in to Christ and his churches, Mt 13:47. Once more, the words are by some rendered, "he that allures souls" {i}; which is done, not by the terrors of the law, but by the charming voice of the Gospel; by which souls are drawn to God and Christ, and brought among his people: and one that is an instrument of all this had need be "wise", and so he appears to be; he that teacheth men the knowledge of divine and spiritual things had need to be as he is, as a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God; he who is to be the instrument of converting sinners must have a mouth and wisdom to address them in a proper manner; as he that wills a castle, or takes a fort, ought to have military skill as well as courage; and to cast a net well requires art as well as strength.

{g} xql "qui docet", Pagninus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus. {h} "Capit", Vatablus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "capit salutari doctrina", Michaelis. {i} "Allicit", Drusius, Gejerus.

Proverbs 11:31

Ver. 31. Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth,.... Which Aben Ezra understands of the recompence of their good works. There is a reward for the righteous, and which they have now in keeping, though not "for" keeping, the commandments of God; they have the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come, and which is made good to them; they have every good thing now which is proper and convenient for them; and they shall be recompensed in the new earth, in which only righteous persons will dwell. But it seems better, with Jarchi, to interpret it of the recompence of their sins and transgressions; that is, of their chastisements and afflictions, with which they are chastised by their heavenly Father, when they sin against him; which are all in love and for their good; and which they have only here on earth, while they are in this world; they will be all over in another, when there will be no more sin, and no more chastisement for it, much less condemnation; see 1Co 11:32;

much more the wicked and the sinner; who shall not only be punished on earth as they often are, but in hell to all eternity. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render the whole thus; "if the righteous be scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Which words are used by the Apostle Peter, to show, that if judgment or chastisement begin at the house of God, or with the righteous, that the end of the wicked must be very bad; which entirely agrees with the sense of this passage; see **1Pe 4:17**; a "behold" is prefixed to the whole, as a note, either of admiration, or rather of attention to what is sure and certain, and worthy of regard and consideration. The Targum is,

"behold, the righteous are strengthened in the earth; but the wicked and the sinners shall be consumed out of the earth;"

which seems to agree with Aben Ezra's sense of the words; see
Ps 104:35.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 12:1

Ver. 1. Whose loveth instruction loveth knowledge,.... That loves the instruction of Wisdom, or Christ, **Pr 4:13**; the means of instruction, the Scriptures, which are profitable for instruction in righteousness, and are written for our learning; the Gospel, which instructs into the person, office, and grace of Christ; the ministers of the word, who are so many instructors in Christ; and even the rod of afflictions, by which men are taught their duty, and the will of God: and these are to be loved; and he that loves them clearly shows that he loves knowledge; since the means of instruction, making use of them, and getting instruction by them, are attended with labour, trouble, and difficulty; which a man would not choose, had he not a love unto and a desire after knowledge, and an increase of it; as the knowledge of God, of Christ, and of his truths. Aben Ezra inverts the words;

"he that loves knowledge loves instruction;"

but the sense is much the same;

but he that hateth reproof [is] brutish; or a "beast" {k}: as the man that is willing to be instructed, in order to gain knowledge, shows himself to be a wise and understanding man; so he that hates the reproof the word of God gives, or the ministers of it, or God by them, appears to be no better than a brute, than the horse or mule that want understanding: so the man of sin hates

the Scriptures, the Gospel, and the ministers of it, and the reproofs and convictions they give of his idolatry, superstition, and will worship; nor does he care that his doctrines and practices should be brought to this test, or that the people should have knowledge of them; but keeps them from them, and sets up his own infallibility as the rule of judgment; and it is one character of his followers, that they "receive not the love of the truth", **2Th 2:10**; and both he and they are represented by a beast,
Re 13:1; and are more brutish than any man; see **Pr 5:11**.

{k} reb "instar bruti indocilis est", Michaelis.

Proverbs 12:2

Ver. 2. A good [man] obtaineth favour of the Lord,.... One that is made so by the grace of God, for no man is so naturally; there is none good, nor does good, no, not one, until some good thing is put into him, or the good work of grace is begun in him. And such a man obtains favour or good will from the Lord; that is, as Gersom explains it, what he himself wills, for the will of God is his will; or rather the good will of God, his grace, and layout; fresh manifestations and discoveries of which he obtains and enjoys, not by merit, through any goodness of his own, or by means of his obedience but he draws it out, as the word {l} signifies, as out of a fountain, by prayer and supplication, and by fresh repeated acts of faith upon it; which may be said to be ad and enjoyed, when it is remembered to him, he is encompassed with it, or it is shed abroad in his heart, or his heart is directed into it; and he also obtains and enjoys all the blessings, of grace here, and glory hereafter, as springing from it;

but a man of wicked devices will he condemn; whose thoughts, and the imaginations of his heart, are evil continually; who is always contriving mischief to others: such a man shall be so far from enjoying the favour of God, that he shall be pronounced guilty of death, and condemned to it; he shall be banished from the presence of the Lord, and be punished with everlasting destruction. As the man of sin is continually devising wicked things against God, against Christ, against his interest and people; he shall be condemned by the Lord, consumed with the breath of his mouth; go into perdition, and be cast into the lake burning with fire and brimstone: and this will be the portion of all his followers, that join with him in forming and executing his wicked devices.

{l} qypy "educet", Pagninus, Montanus, "hauriet", V. L. "haurit", Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 12:3

Ver. 3. A man shall not be established by wickedness,.... Not any man, though he may be established in his wickedness, so as not to be rooted out of it; yet he cannot be so established by it as not to be removed from a prosperous state and condition into an unhappy and distressed one; he may seem to be in a firm and settled state of prosperity, amidst all his wickedness; be like a green bay tree, spreading itself, and seemingly immovable, when on a sudden it is blown down and rooted up, and is no more: so Babylon will seem to be in a settled state of grandeur, ease, and rest, and say, "I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow"; when in one day, and in one hour, her destruction shall come upon her, Re 18:7;

but the root of the righteous shall not be moved; they are rooted and grounded in the love of God, which is immovable; they are rooted and built up in Christ, and so are as Mount Zion, which can never be removed; the root of the matter, or of grace, is in them, which can never be lost; while others wither away, because they have no root in them, these abide; and though they may be shaken with the persecutions of men, the temptations of Satan, the errors of the wicked, and their own corruptions, yet they afresh take root again downward, and bring forth fruit upward.

Proverbs 12:4

Ver. 4. A virtuous woman [is] a crown to her husband,.... One that is loving and chaste, constant and faithful, obsequious and submissive to him; that is diligent in the affairs of her house, takes care of her family, brings up her children, and keeps up a good order and decorum among her servants, is an honour and credit to her husband. Such is the true church of Christ, who is compared to a woman, Re 12:1; to a woman of purity and chastity, whose members are virgins, not defiled with the corruptions, errors, and superstition of the apostate church; to a woman of fortitude and courage, as the word {m} signifies, who resists sin, temptation, error, heresy, and idolatry, even unto blood; and whose true members love not their lives unto death, but freely lay them down in the cause of truth; such an one is an honour to Christ her husband;

but she that maketh ashamed; makes her husband ashamed, by her levity and wantonness, her negligence and slothfulness, so that he is ashamed to be seen with her, or to be known that he stands in such a relation to her; she

[is] as rottenness in his bones; a constant grief to his mind, a pressure upon his spirits, a wasting of his body, and a consumption of his estate; she is, as the Targum has it, "as a worm in wood", which rots and consumes it {n}; so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. Thus the apostate church of Rome, that professes to be the spouse of Christ, has made him ashamed of her; as being the Jezebel, that seduces his servants to fornication or idolatry; and whose doctrine and superstition eat, like a canker, the vitals of religion.

{m} lyx tva "mulier virtutis", Montanus, Vatablus; "uxor strenua", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "mulier fortis", Pagninus, Gejerus. {n} Such as are called Cossi, Tabani, Teredines, Thrypes; Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 1. c. 33. & l. 16. c. 41.

Proverbs 12:5

Ver. 5. The thoughts of the righteous [are] right,.... Or "judgment" {o}. The thoughts of men's hearts are naturally evil, nor can any think a good thought of themselves; but the thoughts of the righteous are directed and influenced by the grace of God, and are formed according to that Word which is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; their thoughts concerning God and religion, concerning Christ and his Gospel, his ways and worship, his truths and ordinances, they are judiciously framed according to the rule of God's word, the revelation he has made, and so are right; and such are their resolutions and designs to serve the Lord their God, and him only, and to cleave to him with full purpose of heart

[but] the counsels of the wicked [are] deceit; the designs, schemes, and contrivances of wicked men, are to trick, and overreach, and defraud their neighbours in civil affairs; and of false teachers, to deceive the hearts of the simple in religious ones. The coming of the man of sin was with all deceivableness; and all the gaudy show and pageantry he makes, and pretended miracles he works, are to deceive the inhabitants of the earth; and by his sorceries all nations are deceived, **2Th 2:10**.

{o} jpvm "judicium", Pagninns, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus.

Proverbs 12:6

Ver. 6. The words of the wicked [are] to lie in wait for blood,.... Which some understand of perjury and false witness, as Jarchi, whereby the lives of innocent persons are taken away: or it may be interpreted either of the smooth words and fair speeches, and secret artifices, antichrist and his emissaries make use of to entrap the innocent, and draw them into their net, to their ruin; see Ps 10:7; as the Jews attempted to deal with Christ, Lu 20:20; or of the laws and edicts of the beast, that such should be killed who would not worship his image; and with the blood of these innocent ones the whore of Rome is said to be drunk, Re 13:15;

but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them: the innocent laid in wait for; either by their prayers to God, which are of great avail with him, and through whose importunity he will avenge his elect, and deliver them; or through their apologies for them, and defences of them, as in the times of Pagan persecution; or rather through the doctrines of the reformation, whereby many simple and unwary souls were delivered, who were in danger of being ensnared; and whereby the eyes of many princes were opened, and were stirred up to protect those innocent ones, and prevent their blood being shed.

Proverbs 12:7

Ver. 7. The wicked are overthrown, and [are] not,.... With such an overthrow as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. The kingdom of the beast shall not only be full of darkness, as at the pouring of the fifth vial, and be in the utmost confusion, but it shall be brought to ruin and destruction; which stands opposed to "the house of the righteous", in the next clause: the ten kings, the supporters of antichrist, shall be overcome by the Lamb, with whom they will make war; the beast, and the false prophet, shall be taken by him, and destroyed; and Babylon shall sink like a millstone into the sea, and be no more; the wicked shall be consumed out of the earth; these Heathens shall be no more in the land; the man of sin shall never revive again;

but the house of the righteous shall stand; not his material dwelling house; nor the earthly house of his tabernacle, his body; nor his family, as the generality of interpreters, for the family of the righteous may be extinct, and especially not continue as righteous; but the church of God, as the gloss upon the text, the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth; the church which is built on the Rock, Christ; the mountain of the Lord's house, which shall be established upon the top of the mountains in the latter day, when the kingdom of antichrist shall be overthrown, and be no more. This is the same with the household of faith, and the household of God, and here called "the house of the righteous"; because they dwell in it, have a place and a name in it better than sons and daughters; and indeed none but they ought to be in it, that have on the wedding garment, the robe of Christ's righteousness; and who walk uprightly, and work righteousness. Now this house shall stand; its foundation, which is Christ, is sure, an everlasting one; its pillars are firm and stable, the ministers of the word, who will be to the end of the world; the ordinances of it will continue till Christ's second coming; the doctrines of it are the word of God, which standeth for ever, when all flesh is as grass. This house stands, notwithstanding all the persecutions of men; it has stood against all the fury of Rome, Pagan and Papal, and still will continue, notwithstanding the craft of false teachers to undermine it; and though it may sometimes be in a waste and ruinous condition seemingly, yet the Lord will raise it up again, and glorify this house of his glory, and make it beautiful and honourable: it shall stand, because it is the Lord's house, of his building, and where he delights to dwell in; because it is the house of Christ, which he, Wisdom, has built; and where he presides as a Son, as a Prophet, Priest, and King; and because it is the house where his people are born and brought up, and therefore shall continue tilt everyone are brought in; and because it is built on a rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, Mt 16:18; compare with this **Mt 7:24**.

Proverbs 12:8

Ver. 8. A man shall be commended according to his wisdom,.... Not according to his birth and pedigree; not according to his riches and wealth; not according to the places of honour and trust he may be in; but according to his wisdom, which he discovers in his words and actions, in his life and conversation: not according to the wisdom that is earthly, sensual, and devilish; not according to the wisdom of the world, which comes to nought, either natural or civil; especially that which lies in sophistry and subtlety, in wicked craft and cunning, whereby men trick, overreach, and defraud one another; but according to that which is spiritual and evangelical; which lies in the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ, and of those things which belong to salvation; the beginning of which is the fear of the Lord, and which comes from above, and is pure and peaceable. A man possessed of this is commended by all wise and good men, and by the Lord himself; as the wise man is by Christ, **Mt 7:24**; who builds his house on a rock; for which reason it stands, as in the preceding verse;

but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised; and which appears by the perverse words he speaks against God and Christ; against his people, ways, and worship, as antichrist and his followers do; and by his perverse actions, which are contrary to the light of nature, to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ: and such vile persons are contemned in the eyes of all good men, and are had in abhorrence by the Lord himself; for such who despise him are lightly esteemed; see Pr 18:3.

Proverbs 12:9

Ver. 9. [He that is] despised, and hath a servant,.... Meaning not the same person as before, but one in mean circumstances of life; and because he has not that substance as others have, at least does not make that show and figure in the world as some; and mean in his own eyes, as Jarchi; and does not affect grandeur, and to look greater than he is; has just sufficiency to keep a servant to wait upon him; or, as some render it, is "a servant to himself" {p}; to this purpose the Septuagint; and so Jarchi and Gersom interpret it, who does his own work at home and abroad, in the house and in the field, and so gets himself a competent living. He

[is] better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread; that boasts of his pedigree, and brags of his wealth; dresses out in fine clothes, keeps a fine equipage, makes a great figure abroad, and has scarce bread to eat at home, and would have none if his debts were paid; the former is much the better man on all accounts, and more to be commended; see Pr 13:7. And so, as Cocceius observes, the least shepherd (under Christ) that has ever so few sheep, one or two under his care, whom he brings to righteousness, and by whom he is loved, is preferable to the pope of Rome, who is adored by all; and yet neither has nor gives the bread of souls; and without the offerings of others has not anything to eat.

{p} wl dbe "servus sibiipsi", Montanus; "suiipius", Vatablus; "sibimet", Schultens.

Proverbs 12:10

Ver. 10. A righteous [man] regardeth the life of his beast,.... Or "knoweth" it {q}; knows the worth of it and values it, and takes care of it, and is concerned for the preservation of it; he provides sufficient food for it, and gives it; he does not overwork it, but allows it proper rest from labour; and, if in any disorder, will make use of all suitable means to heal it; see an instance of the care of Jacob, that righteous man, of his cattle, Ge 33:14; and, on the other hand, see an instance of a wicked man's cruelty to his beast in Balaam, for which he was reproved, Nu 22:28; by various laws and rules which God has given, it is his will that men should be merciful to their beasts, De 25:4; and such who are so will be more especially pitiful and tenderhearted to their fellow creatures;

but the tender mercies of the wicked [are] cruel; or "[are] the mercies of a cruel one" {r}; the most tender things which are expressed or done by them are nothing but cruelty; and what then must be their more severe expressions and actions? so the most tender concern which antichrist and his followers show to the souls of men breathes nothing but cruelty; the compassionate methods they take to convert heretics, as they call them, are dark dungeons and stinking prisons, racks and tortures, fire and faggots; these are their wholesome severities; this their kindness to men, to deliver them up to the secular power, to inflict pains and punishments on them the most grievous to save their souls. Thus, while the beast of Rome looks like a lamb, he speaks like a dragon, and exercises all the cruelty of the first beast, Rome Pagan,
Re 13:11.

{q} edwy "novit", Mercerus, Michaelis; so Vulgate Latin. {r} yrzka "sunt miserationes crudelis", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Aben Ezra in Mercerus, so some Jewish writers in Vatablus.

Proverbs 12:11

Ver. 11. He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread,.... This was man's work in innocence; this he was doomed to do with the sweat of his brow after his fall; every man has his land to till, or some calling, work, or business, to be employed in, either civil or sacred; and it becomes him to be diligent therein, and such as are shall not want bread, but shall have a sufficiency of it;

but he that followeth vain [persons is] void of understanding: that neglects his business, loiters away his time, spends it in the company of vain, empty, and unprofitable persons; as he shows himself by such a choice that he is void of understanding, or "wants a heart" {s}, to improve his time and talents; so before long it is much if he does not want a piece of bread. Thus he that is concerned to have the fallow ground of his heart ploughed up, and righteousness, truth, and holiness, sown therein, that it may bring forth fruit; or who is careful about the welfare and salvation of his immortal soul, and makes diligent use of all means to promote its spiritual good, shall be filled with the bread of life, shall find it and eat it, to the joy and rejoicing of his heart; and, on the contrary, he that associates himself with vain persons, empty of all that is spiritually good, that have only empty notions of religion; or who attend to the profane and vain boastings of antichrist, and all false teachers; and give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, whose words eat as do a canker; these, as they show themselves to want wisdom, so they are and will be brought into starving and famishing circumstances in a spiritual sense. Jarchi interprets the former clause of a man that is studious in his doctrine, that revolves it in his mind, that he may not forget it; and the Arabic version renders the last clause,

"they that run after false demons, their minds are deficient;"

see **Re 9:20**.

{s} bl rox "deficiens corde", Pagninus; "carens corde", Montanus; "deficitur corde", Schultens.

Proverbs 12:12

Ver. 12. The wicked desireth the net of evil [men],.... To be master of all the wicked arts and methods evil men use to ensnare and oppress others; to get them and their substance into their hands; or "desireth the evil net", as the Targum; the evil net of antichrist, which he lays for the poor, whom he draws into it and catches them; see Ps 10:9. Jarchi understands it of "hunting" {t} and of wicked men desiring to be fed and nourished with what evil men get by hunting; compare with this
Eze 13:18. Some render it the "fortress" or "strong hold" {u} of evil men, in which they fortify and secure themselves to do mischief to others, and to prevent any besieging them, so Gersom; and this is what all wicked men are desirous of;

but the root of the righteous yieldeth [fruit]; or "shall give" {w} that; that security and protection from real evil and mischief which the wicked cannot obtain; or he, that is, God, "shall give the righteous root" {x}, firmly fix them that they shall not be moved; or as we supply it, and so Aben Ezra, "yieldeth fruit", much more desirable than the net of evil men the wicked covet: righteous men are compared to trees, they are called "trees of righteousness", Isa 61:3; these have a root in the love of God, in the person of Christ, and in the grace of the Spirit, and this root yieldeth fruit; the love of God is the root and source of all good things, of all the blessings of grace, of the fruit of grace, faith, hope, and love, and of evangelical obedience; the person of Christ is the source of all spiritual blessings, of salvation and eternal life; the righteous have their being in him as a root; they are bore by him, have all their life, grace, holiness, fruitfulness, and perseverance therein, from him; and the grace of the Spirit in the heart, which is the root of the matter, the hidden man of the heart, from hence are fruits meet for faith and repentance, and good works, which are both pleasant and profitable. The Targum is,

"the root of the righteous shall remain, or be established;"

see Pr 12:3.

{t} dwum "venationem", Munster, Schultens; "venatum", Tigurine version. {u} "Praesidium", Mercerus, Junius & Tremelllus, Piscator. {w} Nty "dabit", Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus, Mercerus. {x} "Radicem justorum dabit Deus", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 12:13

Ver. 13. The wicked is snared by the transgression of [his] lips,.... A wicked man often brings himself into trouble by giving his tongue too great a liberty, and by making free with the characters of others; sometimes by treasonable speeches against his sovereign; sometimes by bearing false Witness, and by lies and perjuries, of which he is convicted in open court; and by calumnies, reproaches, detraction, and scandal raised by him, and cast on his neighbour, who sues him for these things: or "in the transgression of the lips [is] an evil snare"; or "the snare of an evil man" {y}; by the wicked things they say they lay a snare for others, which the simple and incautious are taken in; so heretics ensnare men by their good words and fair speeches, and plausibility of their doctrines; so antichrist, by lies in hypocrisy, and by his deceivableness of unrighteousness;

but the just shall come out of trouble; or escape it; he escapes the snare that is laid for him, and so the trouble consequent upon it; a just man escapes trouble by not giving his tongue the liberty wicked men do; and when he by any means falls into trouble, he gets out of it again by giving good words to those in whose hands he is; and by his prayers and supplications unto God. The righteous are sometimes in trouble, and in such sort of trouble as others are not; by reason of their own corruptions, Satan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, as well as various outward afflictions; out of all which the Lord delivers them sooner or later, in life or in death, Ps 34:19. Jarchi exemplifies this in the case of righteous Noah, who escaped the flood, when the world of the ungodly were destroyed by it, for the transgression of their lips, saying, as in Job 21:15, "what is the Almighty?" &c.

{y} er vqwm Mytpv evpb "in praevaricatione labiorum laqueos malus", Montanus, Michaelis, Schultens, so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "vel laqueus hominis mali", Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 12:14

Ver. 14. A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of [his] mouth,.... The wholesome advice, the good instruction, and sound doctrine he delivers to others, which are the fruit of his lips, and come forth by them from his heart; these redound to his own advantage, are not only a satisfaction to his mind upon reflection, but because of these he is filled with good things, even to satiety, both in this life and that to come; see **1Ti 4:6**; or a "man shall be satisfied with good from the fruit of the mouth"; or "be satisfied from the fruit of the mouth of a man" {z}; that is, of another man; either of a private man, by his prayers, by the account he gives of his own experience, by the conversation he has with him about the truths of the Gospel; or of a faithful minister of the word, who is the means of feeding the souls of men with good things, even to satisfaction, with the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the sincere milk of the word, with the bread of life, even with the finest of the wheat;

and the recompence of a man's hand shall be rendered unto him; if his words turn to his account, much more his works; if he is filled with good things for the sake of the one, much more will he be recompensed in a way of grace on account of the other; and not for the one without the other, nor for words without works: or "the recompence of a man's hands", or of his works which his hands do, "he shall render to him" {a}; that is, God, who renders to every man according to his works; which serves not to establish the doctrine of merit, but to show the goodness and grace of God in taking notice of and accepting the imperfect works of men through Christ, and for his sake.

{z} vya yp yrpm "de fructu oris viri", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Schultens. {a} wl bwvy "reddet ei", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "restituet ei", Munster, so Aben Ezra; "ei refundet", Schultens.

Proverbs 12:15

Ver. 15. The way of a fool [is] right in his own eyes,.... Whether it be the way of open profaneness, or self-righteousness, it appears to him to be the right way; it seems to him a very plain one, and he finds it pleasant; and, trusting to carnal sense, corrupt reason, and a false judgment, and having a high opinion of himself and his own knowledge, never asks after the right way, nor takes the advice of others;

but he that hearkeneth unto counsel [is] wise; that asks advice and takes it of such who are men of age and experience, men of longer standing, and are wiser than himself; who consults the word of God about the right way of walk, worship, and salvation, and makes the testimonies of God the men of his counsel, which are able to make him wise unto salvation; who hearkens to the counsel of Gospel ministers, and obeys it; and especially to Jesus Christ the wonderful Counsellor, and to the advice he gives, **Re 3:18**; and who not only hears his words, but does them; such an one is a wise man, **Mt 7:24**.

Proverbs 12:16

Ver. 16. A fool's wrath is presently known,.... Having no command of himself, he cannot repress it, nor keep it in; no sooner is he provoked but he shows it in his countenance, and by his words and actions; it is to be seen in the fire of his eyes, in the frowns of his face, in the gnashing of his teeth, and in the stamping of his feet, as well as in the bitter expressions of his mouth: or "a fool's wrath in that day is known" {b}; in the same day in which the provocation is given; yea, in the same hour, and in the same moment; he cannot defer showing it for the least space of time; or it is openly known, it is to be seen and observed by everyone: or thus, "a fool is presently known by his wrath" {c}; see **Ec 7:9**;

but a prudent [man] covereth shame; conceals his anger and resentment at any injury done him by words or actions, which if suffered to break out would bring shame and disgrace to him; or he covers the injury itself, the disgraceful words that are spoken of him, and the shameful actions done unto him; he puts up with the contempt that is cast upon him, and bears it patiently; takes no notice of the offence given him, and much less seeks revenge; in which he acts a prudent part, for by so doing he creates less trouble to himself, and gains more credit and reputation from others.

{b} Mwyb "eo die quo irritatur", Tigurine version; "eodem die", Junius & Tremellius; so Banyus, Merceras, Gejerus. {c} "Cognoscitur ex ira sua", Munster.

Proverbs 12:17

Ver. 17. [He that] speaketh truth showeth forth righteousness,.... He that "blows" or "breathes out truth" {d}, as the word signifies; that utters it freely and fully without any hesitation; that speaks nothing but truth, and speaks out the whole truth without any reserve; such a man upon every occasion will declare that which is just and right, and show himself to be an honest and upright man; he that uses himself to speak truth in common conversation, will, in a court of judicature, whether upon his oath or not, testify that which is just and the real matter of fact; there is a connection between truth and righteousness, for though they are distinct things they go together, what is true is just, and what is just is true; so he that speaks the truth of the Gospel, or is a faithful preacher of it, will show forth righteousness, what is the righteousness of the law, and what is the righteousness of faith; how insufficient a man's own righteousness is to justify him in the sight of God; the necessity of the righteousness of Christ, how free and full, excellent and glorious, suitable and useful it is, **Ro 1:17**;

but a false witness deceit; that is, one that is used to lying, when he is called to give testimony upon any affair in judgment, he will declare that which is false and deceitful, having no regard to truth and justice. So a false teacher, instead of showing men the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and directing them to the righteousness of Christ for justification, will utter deceitful doctrine, and build up their hopes upon the sandy and deceitful foundation of their own works; as Popish teachers, and such as verge towards them.

{d} xypy "effiat", Junius & Tremellius; "spirat", Schultens.

Proverbs 12:18

Ver. 18. There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword,.... Whose words are like sharp swords, cutting, wounding, dividing, killing; see Ps 57:4; such are the words of false witnesses, who by their false testimonies and perjuries are as guilty of the murder of men as cutthroats; such are the words of slanderers, backbiters, and talebearers, who grieve the innocent, wound their characters, destroy their good name and credit, and separate chief friends; and such are the words of antichrist, who looks like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon, Re 13:11;

but the tongue of the wise [is] health; or "healing" {e}; by giving a faithful testimony which sets matters right; by clearing and defending the character of those who are falsely accused and wrongfully charged; by making up differences, and reconciling persons at variance through the detracting and lying insinuations of others; and by speaking comfortable, cheerful, and refreshing words to the injured and abused; especially the tongue of a wise minister of the Gospel is health, or healing, to wounded souls, to whom he ministers the Gospel of the grace of God, which directs to Christ for healing, peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life.

{e} aprm "medicinae", Junius & Tremellius; "medicina", Piscator, Cocceius; "sanatio", Michaelis; "sanatrix", Schultens.

Proverbs 12:19

Ver. 19. The lip of truth shall be established for ever,.... The man that speaks truth is and will be established in his credit and reputation among men; he is uniform and all of a piece, and what he says is believed; truth, though it may be opposed, will prevail against lies and falsehood; the word of truth, the Gospel of Christ, will stand for ever; the ministers of truth and righteousness will be continued to the end of the world; Christ, who is truth itself, abides the same to day, yesterday, and for ever;

but a lying tongue [is] but for a moment; if a liar speaks truth for once, he does not continue in it long, but quickly returns to his former course; or rather the lie he tells is very short lived, it is soon discovered, and he comes into contempt and disgrace, and loses all his credit and reputation among men of honour and honesty, and is sometimes suddenly snatched away by death, as Ananias and Sapphira; all error and heresy in a short time will cease and be no more; and antichrist, whose coming is with lying wonders, the direct opposite of the lip of truth, will be brought to ruin in a moment. Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, who are followed by some Christian interpreters, as Montanus, and some in Vatablus, render it, "but", or "for ever, I will cause the lying tongue to cease", or "be at rest" from speaking; as if they were the words of God, threatening to cut off the lying tongue; but Jarchi and Gersom render it "for a moment", or a very short time, as we and others do; or, "whilst one winks" {f}, in the twinkling of an eye; so soon is such a person removed.

{f} heygra de "at dum nictem", Schultens.

Proverbs 12:20

Ver. 20. Deceit [is] in the heart of them that imagine evil,.... That secretly devise mischief in their hearts against their neighbours; that plough evil, as the word {g} signifies, and sow discord among men; and by many artful and deceitful methods promote contention and division, in order to answer some base designs of theirs; but sooner or later they are deceived themselves, are disappointed of their views, the consequence of which is vexation and sorrow;

but to the counsellors of peace [is] joy: such who consult the good of others, who advise to peace, concord, and unity; who seek to cultivate it in their families and neighbourhoods, and in the church of God, in which, if they succeed, they have joy and pleasure; if not, they have a satisfaction, in their own minds and consciences that they have done what is right and good; such have a conscience peace now, and an eternal one hereafter; or, as Aben Ezra calls it, the joy of salvation; see **Mt 5:9**.

{g} yvrx.

Proverbs 12:21

Ver. 21. There shall no evil happen to the just,.... The evil of sin: no iniquity, as the Targum; which, and the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, interpret of sin not being agreeable, convenient, suit able, and pleasing to a righteous man. Moreover, the Lord, by his Spirit and grace, weakens the power of sin in them; and, by his providence, prevents and removes occasion of sinning; and by his power preserves from it, from being overcome and carried away with it, at least finally and totally. Or the evil of punishment is here meant; no penal evil shall befall them; the punishment of their sin has been inflicted on Christ their surety, and therefore shall never be laid on them; and whatever afflictions may happen to them, which have the name and appearance of evil, these work together for their good, spiritual and eternal; so that, in reality, no evil thing, properly speaking, happens to them; see Ps 91:10. Or whatever does come to them comes not by chance unto them, but by the decree and will of God, and is overruled for good;

but the wicked shall be filled with mischief; or "with evil" {h}, the evil of sin; with malice and wickedness, with all impiety and unrighteousness, with ignorance and error; with all kind of sins, both against the first and second table of the law, and so with all the consequences of sin: with the evil of punishment; with an evil conscience, with the terrors of it; with many distresses here, and with everlasting destruction hereafter. Some understand it of the mischief they devise to others, which they are full of and big with; and "though" they are, as Aben Ezra interprets the word, yet no evil shall happen to the righteous; the mischief contrived by them shall fall upon themselves.

{h} er "malo", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 12:22

Ver. 22. Lying lips [are] abomination to the Lord,.... Such that speak lies in common talk; and that deliver out doctrinal lies, false doctrines, lies in hypocrisy, as are the doctrines of Rome; these are abominable unto God; as being contrary to his nature as the God of truth; contrary to the Scriptures of truth he has endited; contrary to the truth of the Gospel he has published; contrary to his Son, who is truth itself; and to the Spirit of truth, which leads into all truth, as it is in Jesus; wherefore an abomination and a lie are joined together, Re 21:27;

but they that deal truly [are] his delight; or the objects of "his good will" and pleasure, as the word {i} signifies; they are grateful and acceptable to him; he is well-pleased with them, and delights in them. Not only such that speak the truth, but "do the truth" {k}, as the words may be rendered; whose words and actions, doctrine and life, agree together: it is not enough to embrace, profess, or preach the truth, but he must practise it; see **Joh 3:21**; he must deal truly with God and men, or faithfully, as the Targum and Vulgate Latin version; he must be true to his word and promises, and faithfully perform what he has agreed unto. Or, "that work faith"; that work the work of faith, that faith which works by love; that live on Christ and his righteousness; such are well pleasing to God; without which faith it is impossible to please him, Heb 11:6.

{i} wnwur "est beneplacitum ejus", Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "accepti sunt ei", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {k} hnwma yve "facientibus veritatem", Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "facientes veritatem", Montanus; "qui faciunt veritatem", Cocceius.

Proverbs 12:23

Ver. 23. A prudent man concealeth knowledge,.... Of things natural or divine, which he is furnished with; not but that he is willing to communicate it, as he should, at proper times, in proper places, and to proper persons; but he does not needlessly and unseasonably speak of it; he does not make a show of it, or boast and brag of it: he modestly forbears to speak of what he knows, but when there is a necessity for it, even of that which may be lawfully divulged; which is a point of prudence and modesty; otherwise it is criminal to reveal secrets, or publish what should be kept private or should not be known. Aben Ezra interprets it of a wise man's hiding his knowledge in his heart, that he may not forget it;

but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness; that which they have in their hearts and minds, and which they take for deep knowledge, profound and recondite learning, they proclaim with their mouths in a noisy and clamorous way; and while they declare their ill shaped notions, their incoherent and unconnected ideas of things, they betray their ignorance and folly, as ostentatious men do.

Proverbs 12:24

Ver. 24. The hand of the diligent shall bear rule,.... "Shall become rich", so Jarchi interprets it, according to Pr 10:4; Through diligence men get riches, and through riches they arrive to power and authority over others: from apprentices and journeymen workmen they become masters of their business; diligent men become masters of families, and have servants and workmen under them; become magistrates in cities, and bear rule over their fellow citizens, and are advanced to places of power and authority in the commonwealth; see Pr 22:29;

but the slothful shall be under tribute; the "slothful" or "deceitful hand" {l}, for so it may be rendered and supplied; for usually such who are slothful, and do not care for business, get their living by deceitful methods, by tricking and sharping; and such become subject to others, to them that are diligent; hence said to be "under tribute", or tributary; because those that are tributary are in subjection to those to whom they pay tribute.

{l} "Manus fraudulentiae", Michaelis; "dolosa", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus; "fraudulenta", Tigurine version, Vatablus.

Proverbs 12:25

Ver. 25. Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop,.... Either an anxious care and solicitude about living in the world, as the word {m} signifies; when it seizes a man's spirits, it depresses them, and keeps them down: or a fear and dread of adversity, or sorrow and grief, on account of some calamity and distress; when it gets into a man's heart, it sinks and bows it down, that it cannot take any pleasure or comfort in anything. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, a "terrible word troubles the heart of a just man"; or "troubles the heart of man", as the Syriac version; the Targum is,

"a word of fear in the heart of man causes fear:"

such is the law, which is a word of terror; which speaks terrible things to men; fills the mind with terror; works wrath in the conscience, and induces a spirit of bondage to fear; bows and keeps under the spirits of men, through a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation;

but a good word maketh it glad; a comforting, cheering, and encouraging word from any friend, that compassionates their distressed case; this lifts up the heart and inspires it with joy; so a word in season, spoken by a Gospel minister, raises up a soul that is bowed down, and gives it comfort and joy: such a good word is the Gospel itself; it is good news from a far country, which is like cold water to a thirsty soul, very refreshing and reviving. The Septuagint and Arabic versions here render it, "a good message", and such the Gospel is; which, when brought to the heart of a poor sinner, depressed with the terrors of the law, causes joy in it; such is the word of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by Christ; such is the word that he himself spoke, **Mt 9:2**. Kimchi instances in Ps 55:22.

{m} hgad "solicitudo", Tigurine version, Montanus, Piscator, Michaelis; "solicitudo anxia", Mercerus, Gejerus; "solicita anxietas", Junius &

Tremellius; "anxietatem", Schultens.

Proverbs 12:26

Ver. 26. The righteous [is] more excellent than his neighbour,.... Not than his neighbour who is righteous also; for though one may have more excellent gifts than another, or a larger measure of grace; one righteous man may have more faith than another, yet not more righteousness; every truly righteous man is justified by the same righteousness, even the righteousness of Christ; and therefore one cannot be more excellent, considered as righteous: but the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, who is ungodly and unrighteous, or however who has no other righteousness than his own; though his neighbour may be of more noble birth, and have even the title of "his excellency" given him; though he may have a larger share of wealth and riches; and though he may have attained a greater degree of natural wisdom and understanding, be a man of brighter parts, and of a larger capacity; yet, being righteous, he is more excellent than he: his superior excellency lies in his righteousness, from whence he is denominated; the righteousness of Christ, imputed to him, is far better than the best righteousness of his neighbour; it being the righteousness of God, his is the righteousness of a creature; a perfect righteousness, whereas his is imperfect; a splendid and glorious one, his filthy rags; a very extensive one, by which all the seed of Israel are justified, his such as not one individual person can be justified by it; an everlasting one, that will answer for him that has it in a time to come, his like the morning cloud and early dew that passes away; yea, the inherent righteousness of a righteous man, or the grace of Christ, imparted to him and implanted in him, that principle of holiness in him is greatly better than the righteousness of his neighbour a Pharisee; for this is true and real holiness, truth in the inward part, whereas the other's is only a shadow of holiness, a form of godliness without the power; this has the Spirit of God for its author, it is his workmanship, and a curious piece it is, whereas the other is only the produce of nature; this makes a man all glorious within, and gives him a meetness for heaven, whereas, notwithstanding the other, the man is inwardly full of all manner of iniquity, and has neither a right nor meetness for eternal glory. Nay, the external works of righteousness done by a truly righteous man are preferable to his neighbour's, destitute of the grace of God; the one being a course of obedience to the will of God, and a respect to all his commandments; when the other consists only of a little negative holiness, and of an observance of a few rituals of religion: the one spring from a heart purified by the blood of Christ, and the grace of the Spirit, and from principles of grace and love, and are done to the glory of God; whereas the other do not arise from a pure heart, and faith unfeigned; nor are they done sincerely, with a view to the glory of God: only to be seen of men, and gain credit and reputation among them; and in these respects the righteous man is more excellent as such than his neighbour, who at most and best is only externally and morally righteous: his superior excellency does not lie in nature, in which they are both alike; nor in outward circumstances, in which they may differ; nor in the opinion of men, with whom the saints are the offscouring of all things; but in the, esteem of Christ, and through his grace and righteousness; see Ps 16:3; Some render the words, "the righteous explores [his way] more than his neighbour" {n}; seeks and finds out a better way than he does; and is careful that he is not seduced and carried out of the why, and perish;

but the way of the wicked seduceth them; or causes them to err; it deceives, by promising the honour, pleasure, and profit, which it does not lead unto and give, and which they find not in it; and hereby they are led to wander from the way of the righteous, by which they attain a superior excellency to them.

{n} qydu wherm rty "justus explorat viam suam prae socio suo", Gejerus; "explorat pro compascuo suo justus", Schultens; "explorate ducit proximum suum justus", Cocceius.

Proverbs 12:27

Ver. 27. The slothful [man] roasteth not that which he took in hunting,.... Because he takes none. The slothful man takes no pains to get anything for a livelihood, by hunting or otherwise; and though he loves to live well, and eat roast meat, yet what he roasts is not what he has got himself, but what another has laboured for. It is observed {o} that fowlers burn the wings of birds taken by them, that they may not fly away; to which the allusion may be. Or, "the deceitful" {p} man, as it may be rendered; though he may get much in a fraudulent way, yet it does not prosper with him, he does not enjoy it; it is taken away from him before he can partake of it, or receive any comfort from it, or advantage by it; just as a man that has took anything in hunting, he cannot keep it; it is taken away from him, perhaps by a dog or some man, before he can roast it, and make it fit for eating. Ben Melech, from Joseph Kimchi, observes, that fowlers, when they catch fowls, burn the top of their wings, that they may not fly away at once; and they do not cut their wings off, that they may be left, and appear beautiful to them that buy them: but the slothful or deceitful man does not let the fowl remain in his hands till he burns it; for before that it flies out of his hands, and it is lost to him; which is figuratively to be understood of riches and wealth, gathered by violence and deceit, and lost suddenly. What is ill gotten does not spend well; it does not last long, it is presently gone; there is no true enjoyment of it. Or he will not shut it up within lattices {q} and reserve it, but spend it directly; see **So 2:9**;

but the substance of a diligent man [is] precious; what is gotten by industry and diligence, and in an honest way, is valuable; it comes with a blessing; there is comfort in the enjoyment of it, and it continues. Some render it, "the substance of a precious man [is] gold" {r}; so the Targum,

"the substance of a man is precious gold;"

and to the same purpose the Vulgate Latin version: a diligent man grows rich; and what he gets spends well, and his substance is daily increasing.

{o} Vid. Schindler. Lexic. col. 653. {p} hymr "vir dolosus", Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "fraudulentus", Montanus. {q} Vid. Stockium, p. 388. {r} Uwrx rqy Mda Nwh "substantia hominis pretiosi est aurum", De Dieu, so some in Mercerus; "substantia hominis praestantis est aurum", Gussetius, p. 255.

Proverbs 12:28

Ver. 28. In the way of righteousness [is] life,.... The life of the soul, or spiritual life, as Aben Ezra; and eternal life, as Gersom. One that is in the true way of righteousness is one that is instilled by the righteousness of Christ, which justification is the justification of life: such an one is made alive, and reckons himself alive in a law sense; and enjoys true spiritual peace and comfort, arising from the love and favour of God, and acceptance with him, in which he sees his interest, and in which is life; and this righteousness, by which he is justified before God, entitles him to eternal life; to which the path of holiness, he is directed and enabled to walk in, leads; though it is a narrow way, and a strait gate, **Mt 7:14**. Christ, and righteousness and holiness in and by him, are the way, the truth, and the life, or the true way to eternal life; and all in this way now live spiritually, and shall live eternally, Joh 14:6;

and [in] the pathway [thereof there is] no death; no condemnation to them that are in Christ, the way, and are justified by his righteousness; the law's sentence of death shall not be executed on them, though it passed upon them in Adam;

spiritual death shall not again prevail over those who are passed from death to life; nor shall they be hurt at the second death; they shall never die that death, it shall have no power over them; life and immortality are the sure effects of being in the way of righteousness. The Targum renders it, "the way of the perverse": and the Septuagint version, "of those that remember evil": and the Syriac and Arabic versions, "the way of angry men is unto death": and so the Vulgate Latin version,

"the out of the way path leads to death:"

and so some Hebrew copies read, instead of "no death, unto death"; but the most read as we do, and which the Jewish commentators follow.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 13:1

Ver. 1. A wise son [heareth] his father's instruction,.... As he should, and has good reason to do; since it must be cordial, faithful, and disinterested, as well as the effect of age and experience. He "asks for it" and "loves" it, as Jarchi supplies the text; he likes and approves of it, is well pleased with it, and delights in it; seeing it tends to his profit and advantage; he "receives" it, as the Targum, so Ben Melech; he listens to and obeys it, and acts agreeably to it, which shows him to be wise; and this is the way to be wiser and wiser. So one that is spiritually wise will attend to and receive the instruction of Wisdom or Christ; who stands in the relation of an everlasting fin, her to his children; whose instruction is the doctrine of the Gospel; which a wise man hears, so as to understand it; to love and like it, and approve of it; cordially to embrace and obey it, and put it in practice; see **Mt 7:24**. The word also signifies "correction" {s}, because instruction often comes by it; and he that is a wise man will hear the rod and him that has appointed it, and learn to know his mind by it, and receive instruction from it: or is "chastised by his father" {t}, and takes it well, **Mic 6:9**;

but a scorner heareth not rebuke; that is, a son who is a scorner, as the Targum and Aben Ezra; one that makes a mock at sin, and scoffs at religion: such a man will be so far from hearing, attending to, and receiving the rebuke and reproof of his father, that he will scoff also at that; such as were the sons in law of Lot, and the sons of Eli and Samuel. So scornful men, that make a jest of everything that is sacred, will not hearken to the reproof of God's word, to the rebukes of Gospel ministers, or even to the rebukes of Providence, which will issue in their destruction, **Pr 5:11**.

{s} rowm "obedivit castigationem", Baynus, so Gejerus. {t} "Castigatur a patre, vel castigatus patris", Scultens, so De Dieu.

Proverbs 13:2

Ver. 2. A man shall eat good by the fruit of [his] mouth,.... Or, "of the mouth"; either another's or his own, since the word his is not in the text; though it is supplied by the Targum, Aben Ezra, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, as by us. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "shall eat of the fruits of righteousness". I should choose to translate the whole thus: "a good man shall eat of the fruit of his mouth": so Aben Ezra interprets it, "a good man shall eat"; and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it. The sense is, that a good man brings forth good things out of the good treasure of his heart by his mouth; which not only minister grace to the hearers, and are for the use of edifying to others, but also to himself; while he gives wholesome counsel and advice to others, it is of service to himself; while he comforts others, he comforts himself; and while he teaches and instructs others, he teaches and instructs himself: so a good minister of Jesus Christ, while he feeds others with knowledge and understanding, he himself is nourished up with the words of faith and good doctrine; so Jarchi refers it to a man's doctrine, and the reward of it here and hereafter;

but the soul of the transgressors [shall eat] violence; Jarchi interprets it,

"the delight of transgressors is violence;" {u}

that is, what their souls desire, choose, will, and take pleasure in, even using violence, and doing mischief to others; and to the same purpose is the note of Gersom: but Aben Ezra supplies it from the former clause, as we do; and the sense is, that the same measure they mete out to others shall be measured out to them again; what they give others to eat, they shall eat themselves, even the bread of violence; see **Pr 4:16**. And this will be the case of all perfidious and treacherous ones, as the word {w} used signifies; of false teachers and cruel persecutors; and of Babylon, of whom it will he said, "reward her as she rewarded you", Re 18:6.

{u} "Anima cupido praevaricatorum est violentis", Gussetius, p. 524. {w} Mydgb "perfidiosorum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "perfidorum", Cocceius, Schultens.

Proverbs 13:3

Ver. 3. He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life,.... He that keeps his mouth shut keeps it as with a bridle; keeps it from speaking things of other persons, particularly of such as are in high places, of kings and princes, and civil magistrates: he keeps himself quiet and comfortable; keeps himself from many troubles, which otherwise he would come into; keeps his life from danger, to which it would be exposed, should he speak evil of dignities, or give himself the freedom, as some do, whereby they are brought to an untimely end; see Pr 18:21; besides, persons ought to be careful of their words, since by them a man will either be justified or condemned hereafter, Mt 12:37;

[but] he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction; or "consternation" {x}: he that is rash and inconsiderate, hasty with his lips, a talkative man; that speaks freely everything that comes into his mind, regardless of the characters of men, or consequences of things; is often brought into frights and fears, through the menaces and threatenings of men in power, whose characters he has made too free with, and oftentimes is brought to ruin and destruction: so he, whose throat is as an open sepulchre, belching out filthy words, horrid oaths, curses, and imprecations, destruction is near him, even in all his ways; and the man of sin, that opens his mouth in blasphemy against God, and his tabernacle, and his saints, shall go into perdition,
Re 13:5.

{x} htxm "consternatio", Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis; "terrebitur", Tigurine version.

Proverbs 13:4

Ver. 4. The soul of the sluggard desireth, and [hath] nothing,.... He desires knowledge, but does not care to be at any pains to get it, and so has it not; he desires riches, but chooses not to make use of the means, to be diligent and industrious, and so he is without them; he desires to wear good clothes and rich raiment, but is unwilling to labour for them, and therefore is clothed with rags; he desires food, and plenty of it, but refuses to work for it; and he that will not work should not eat, and therefore he has it not, but starves and famishes: and, in spiritual things, the sluggard desires heaven and happiness, but does not care to do the duties of religion; he would die the death of the righteous, but is unwilling to live his life; to abstain from sin, and live soberly and righteously, is too hard service for him; he does not choose to do or suffer anything for the cause of Christ and true religion. Jarchi's note is, that

"in the future state he shall see the glory of the wise man, and desire it; but shall not attain to it;"

but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat; become rich; increase in temporal things, and have great plenty and prosperity; and so, in spiritual matters, such who are diligent in the use of means, constantly attend on the word and ordinances, and labour for the meat which endures to everlasting life; such are filled and satisfied, as with marrow and fatness; and become fat and flourishing, and fruitful in every good word and work; and shall at last arrive to that state where there will be no more hunger and thirst.

Proverbs 13:5

Ver. 5. A righteous [man] hateth lying,.... Or, "a word of falsehood" {y}; as being contrary to honour, truth, and conscience. He hates it in himself and others; he hates all sorts of lies, lies in common conversation, religious lies, doctrinal ones, false doctrines, lies spoken in hypocrisy; such as the followers of antichrist spread, being given up unto them that they might be damned, **1Ti 4:2**; these are an abomination to God and all good men, Re 21:27;

but a wicked [man] is loathsome, and cometh to shame; or, "causes" or "spreads a stink" {z}: all wicked men are loathsome and abominable, being very corrupt in principle and practice; all over defiled with sin, and covered with wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores, from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet; and especially liars, who are often brought to shame and confusion in this life, and will hereafter come to everlasting shame and contempt. Or, "makes himself to stink" {a}; in the nostrils of all good men, and so brought to shame: or "digs"; a metaphor, as Cartwright thinks, from those that dig in the earth, where such as are covered with shame would gladly put their heads.

{y} rqv rbd "verbum falsitatis", Montanus, Michaelis; "verbum fuci", Schulteus. {z} vyaby "foetere facit", Vatablus, Mercerus; "foetere faciet", Montanus; "foetere fecit foetorem", Gussetius, p. 114. "foetorem spargit", Schultens. {a} "Se ipse foetere facit", Coccei Lexic. col. 77. "foetidum se reddit", Piscator.

Proverbs 13:6

Ver. 6. Righteousness keepeth [him that is] upright in the way,.... Men of uprightness and integrity, whose hearts are sincere in the ways of God; the principle of grace and righteousness in them keeps them in those ways, and will not suffer them to turn aside into crooked paths; the word of righteousness, the doctrine of the Gospel, is a means of preserving them from sin, and of keeping them in the right way; particularly the doctrine of Christ's righteousness, and justification by it, is a great antidote against sin, and a powerful motive and incentive to the performance of good works, and all the duties of religion: it engages men to observe every command of Christ, to walk in all his ways; and is a great preservative from false doctrine and antichristian worship;

but wickedness overthroweth the sinner; it is the cause of his utter overthrow, of his being punished with everlasting destruction. It is, in the Hebrew text, "sin" {b} itself; the sinner is so called, because he is perfectly wicked, as Jarchi observes; he is nothing but sin, a mere mass of sin and corruption. Aben Ezra renders it, "the man of sin"; and it may be well applied to him, who is emphatically called so, and is likewise the son of perdition; who, for his wickedness, will be overthrown and destroyed at the coming of Christ, and with the brightness of it, **2Th 2:3**.

{b} tajx "peccatum"; Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius, Michaelis; "lapsationem", Schultens.

Proverbs 13:7

Ver. 7. There is that maketh himself rich, yet [hath] nothing,.... Some persons make a great show of riches, and would be thought to be rich; put on fine clothes, live at a high rate, and appear in great pomp, and yet not worth a farthing; which they do to gratify their pride and ambition, and to draw in others to trust them with their substance. So in spirituals; some persons, as hypocrites, would be thought to be rich in grace, and to be possessed of all the graces of the Spirit, faith, hope, and love; and yet have nothing of true grace, only what is counterfeit; the root of the matter is not in them; no principle of life and grace, only a name to live; nothing of the power, only the form, of godliness; no oil of grace in the vessels of their hearts, only the lamp of an outward profession: some, as the Pharisees, would be thought to be rich in good works, when they have no good thing in them, and do nothing that is spiritually good; either what they do is not done according to the revealed will of God, as many things done by the Pharisees formerly, and by the Papists now, or they do not flow from love; nor i are they done in faith, nor in the name and strength of Christ, nor to the glory of God by him: some, as the same persons, would be thought to be rich in righteousness, when they have no true righteousness at all; not the righteousness of the law, which requires perfection of obedience; not the righteousness of faith, which is the righteousness of another; the righteousness of God is imputed, and is without the works of men; they have no righteousness that can justify them, or save them, or bring them to heaven: some, as the Arminians, would be thought to be rich in spiritual strength, and in the power of their free will, when they have neither will nor power to do anything spiritually good; neither to regenerate and convert themselves, nor to come to Christ, nor to do any good work: some, as the Perfectionists, would be thought to be so rich as to be free from sin, and perfect in grace, when they have none at all, as says the apostle, **1Jo 1:8**; their picture is drawn in Ephraim, and their language spoke by him, Ho 12:8. The apostate church of Rome would be thought rich with the merits of saints, and works of supererogation, when she has no merit at all; nor is it possible for a creature to, merit anything at the hands of God; compare with all this **Re 3:17**;

[there is] that maketh himself poor, yet [hath] great riches; there are some, on the other hand, who greatly degrade themselves; live in a very mean way, as though they were very poor; either through covetousness, or because they would not draw upon them the envy of their neighbours, or encourage their friends to borrow of them, or invite thieves to steal from them, or for some low end or another: the pope of Rome sometimes affects to seem poor, though at other times, and in other respects, he would be thought rich; at the Lateran procession the newly elected pope scatters pieces of brass money among the people, saying, as Peter, whose successor he pretends to be, did, "Silver and gold have I none", **Ac 3:6**; yet comes into great riches. These words may be applied spiritually, in a good sense; there are some who are sensible of their spiritual poverty, and own it; they ingenuously express the sense they have of their own nothingness and unworthiness; they declare they have nothing, and can do nothing; they renounce all their own works in the business of salvation, and ascribe it wholly to the grace of God; they have very mean thoughts, and speak very meanly of themselves, as less than the least of saints, and the chief of sinners: yea, some carry the matter too far in the expressions of their poverty; will not be persuaded that they have the true riches of grace, at least will not own it; but give way to their doubts and fears about it, when they are possessed of much; to whom some think these words are applicable. However, they are to such who are "poor in spirit", **Mt 5:3**, as before described; who have, notwithstanding, "great riches", the riches of justifying grace, the riches of Christ's righteousness: the riches of pardoning grace, a large share thereof, much being forgiven them; the riches of sanctifying grace, faith, more precious than that of gold that perisheth, with all other graces; the riches of spiritual knowledge, preferable to gold and silver: they have Christ, and all things along with him; they have God to be their portion, and exceeding great reward; they have a large estate, an incorruptible inheritance, in heaven; they have a better and a more enduring substance there; "theirs is the kingdom of heaven", **Mt 5:3**; it is prepared for them, and given to them; compare with this **2Co 6:10**.

Proverbs 13:8

Ver. 8. The ransom of a man's life [are] his riches,.... As Benhadad's were to him, when he was in the hands of the king of Israel, 1Ki 20:34; and as the treasures the ten men had in the field were to them, for the sake of which Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, slew them not, Jer 41:8. This is the advantage of riches when a man is taken captive in war, or by pirates, or is in the hands of thieves and robbers, he can redeem himself by his money; or when his life is in danger by diseases, he can procure healing medicines; or by famine, he can get food to preserve it, when a poor man cannot: but this is not to be done always, and is only to be understood of a temporal life; for, as to the spiritual and eternal redemption of the soul of man, that requires a greater ransom price than such corruptible things as silver and gold; nothing short of the precious blood of Christ is sufficient for that, Job 36:18. Moreover, these words may not so much design the convenience as the inconvenience of riches to men; since these often invite thieves to assault their persons, and break into their houses, and threaten their lives; and put wicked men upon forming schemes, and drawing up charges and accusations against them, purely to get their money; which bring their lives into danger, and which they can only redeem by their riches;

but the poor heareth not rebuke; no charge and accusation is brought against him; no rebuke or reproof is given him; no notice is taken of him, because nothing is to be got from him; he may sleep with his door unlocked, thieves will give him no disturbance; he may travel upon the road without being bid to stand {c}. Jarchi interprets this of him that is poor in the law; that hearkens not to reproofs and admonitions, given him to depart from evil: but rather it may be applied to the poor in spirit; who trust not in themselves and their own righteousness, but in the grace of God and righteousness of Christ; who indeed hear the rebukes of good men, and take them kindly; and of bad men, and return not revilings for them; and also the rebukes of Providence, or the chastisements of their heavenly Father, yet they will never hear any rebuke in wrath from him here or hereafter; when the rich in their own conceit, who trust in their riches and righteousness, and think to ransom their souls from death by them, will have rebukes with flames of fire.

{c} "Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator", Juvenal. Sat. 10. v. 23.

Proverbs 13:9

Ver. 9. The light of the righteous rejoiceth,.... The light of joy and gladness, which is sown for them, and arises to them; the light of spiritual knowledge and experience they have; the light of sound doctrine; the light of good works, and a Gospel conversation; all this, as it is delightful to themselves and others, so it is increasing more and more to the perfect day, and it continues: so the Septuagint and Arabic versions, "light [is] always for the righteous"; especially it will be in the latter day, and particularly in the New Jerusalem state, when there will be no night, Re 21:23;

but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out; the light of the righteous is like that of the sun, bright and pleasant; but the light of the wicked is like that of a lamp, lesser and not so agreeable, nor will it last; their prosperity is short lived, their joy is but for a moment; the pleasures of sin are but for a season; their candle soon goes out; it is put out in obscure darkness, and they themselves are reserved to blackness of darkness, Job 18:5; as prosperous and flourishing as the kingdom of antichrist has been or is, it will be full of darkness, Re 16:12.

Proverbs 13:10

Ver. 10. Only by pride cometh contention,.... Though it comes by other things, yet by this chiefly, and there are no contentions without it: or "truly", "verily", "certainly {d}, by pride", &c. Unless the words may be better rendered, "an empty man through pride will give contention" {e}, or make it; such as are empty of knowledge and wisdom; and such are generally the most proud, and are very apt to raise contentions, and foment divisions: contentions in families, in neighbourhoods, in towns, cities, and countries, and in churches, are generally owing to pride; what contentions and confusions has the pride of the pope of Rome brought into kingdoms and states, into councils, and into the church of God!

but with the well advised [is] wisdom: such who are humble and modest will seek counsel of God; will consult the sacred oracles, and ask advice of those who are superior to them in knowledge and understanding; and so will neither raise contentions themselves, nor join with those that make them, but do all they can to lay them; these show that true wisdom is with them.

{d} qr "certe", Vatablus; "vere", Pagninus, Montanus, Merecrus. {e} "Levis per superbiam dabit contentionam", Gejerus.

Proverbs 13:11

Ver. 11. Wealth [gotten] by vanity shall be diminished,.... In an unjust or unlawful way, either by robbery and theft, as Aben Ezra; or by fraud and tricking, by overreaching and circumventing others; or by vain practices, as by cards or dice, and by stage playing and the like; or by curious and illicit arts, as necromancy, judiciary astrology, and such like things; whatever is gotten in a wicked way very seldom lasts long; it lessens by little and little till it comes to nothing {f}; see
Jer 17:11; and sometimes very quickly and suddenly, all at once; thus that mass of riches which the church of Rome has got together by her vain and wicked practices, by her idolatry, pardons, and indulgences, will in one hour come to nought, Re 18:17;

but he that gathereth by labour shall increase, or "that gathereth by the hand" or "in [it]" {g}; by hand labour in an honest way, or with the diligent hand, which maketh rich; who labours with his hand and gets by in sufficient to support himself and his family, and to give to the necessities of others; who does not lay it up in coffers, but keeps it in his hand to distribute; such generally thrive and flourish: some copies read it, "he that gathereth, de, unto the hand" {h}, that gathers and puts it into the hands of others; that liberally communicates to the poor; he shall increase, as commonly liberal persons do; so the Targum,

"he that gathereth and giveth to the poor shall increase in substance."

{f} "De malo quaesitis vix gaudet tertius baeres", Herat. {g} dy le "in manu", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "super manu", Gussetius, p. 310. "super manum", Michaelis, Schultens. {h} "Usque ad manum", Montantus.

Proverbs 13:12

Ver. 12. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick,.... That is, the object hoped for; if it is not enjoyed so soon as expected, at least if it is delayed any length of time, the mind becomes uneasy, the heart sinks and fails, and the man is dispirited and ready to despond, and give up all hope of enjoying the desired blessing; whether it be deliverance from any evil, or the possession of any good;

but [when] the desire cometh, [it is] a tree of life; when that which is hoped and wished for, and has been long expected and desired, comes; when there is an accomplishment of men's wishes, it is as grateful to him as the tree of life was in Eden's garden; it gives him an unspeakable pleasure and delight. This may be applied to many things in a spiritual way, as to the first coming of Christ; and some have thought this is greatly regarded and chiefly intended; this was the object of the hope of Old Testament saints; and it was hoped for on a good foundation, on the promise of God, which was frequently repeated, enlarged, and confirmed; yet this promised and hoped for blessing was deferred a long time; from the first promise of it to its accomplishment were four thousand years; though not deferred longer than the appointed time, yet longer than the saints expected, and which sometimes made their hearts sick; they became weak and feeble, fearful and dispirited, lest it should never come to pass, which occasioned fresh promises and assurances to them; see Isa 35:3 **Mal 3:1**; but when "the desire" came, Christ the desired object; and who is desirable for the excellencies of his person, his mediatorial qualifications, the work of redemption and salvation he came about, and the blessings he brought with him; and who is the "desire of all nations" that was to come, **Hag 2:7**; it was exceeding joyful and delightful to all that expected him, and were looking for redemption in Israel, or Christ; "the coming desire" {i}, as it may be rendered, is "a tree of life", or "lives", the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; see **Pr 3:18**. It may be applied also to the spiritual presence of Christ, and communion with him; this is what believers, being sometimes without, hope and wait for; and sometimes it is deferred a long time, at least they think it so, which makes them very uneasy, and even sick of love, as the church was, **So 5:8**; but when what they so earnestly desire is granted them, it is as if they were in Eden's garden, or rather in the paradise above, plucking the fruit of the tree of life: likewise it may be applied to eternal glory and happiness; this is the object of hope in the present state; it is sometimes impatiently expected and desired, and the language of the soul is, "Why is his chariot so long in coming?" , "come, Lord Jesus, come quickly", **Jud 5:28**; and when this desired happiness is enjoyed, how sweet will it be! and the sweeter for having been so much longed and wished for; and when the saints will be in the paradise of God, and eat of the tree of life in the midst of it, and never hunger more.

{i} hab hwat "desiderium venieus", V. L. Pagninus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 13:13

Ver. 13. Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed,.... The word of God. Either Christ, the essential Word; which must be a great evil, considering the dignity of his person; great ingratitude, considering the grace of his office; very dangerous, considering what a quick, sharp, and powerful Word he is: and such may be said to despise him who despise his ministers, and the Gospel preached by them; and which may be meant by the word, that being the word of God and of truth, the word of righteousness, peace, life, and salvation; and is to them that perish foolishness; and to whom it is so, they shall perish, and be punished with everlasting destruction, for their contempt of it, and disobedience to it. Or the written word may be meant, the Scriptures, which are given by inspiration of God, and therefore ought to be had in the greatest reverence; and yet are greatly slighted and despised by the man of sin and his followers; who set up and prefer their unwritten traditions to them, and so make them of none effect: such are all false teachers, that despise or abuse them, they bring destruction to themselves; for so the words may be rendered, "shall bring destruction to himself", or shall receive detriment from it: so the Targum, from the word itself; the Syriac version, "by it"; and the Arabic version, "by the commandment itself"; by the threatenings in it, and according to them: or, "because of it"; because of the contempt of it;

but he that feareth the commandment; receives the word with reverence, trembles at it; fears God, and keeps his commandments, and fears to break them: he

shall be rewarded; with good, as the Targum adds; for in keeping the commandments of God there is great reward: or, "shall enjoy peace", or "be in safety" {k}; for great peace have they which love the law of God, and serve it: or, "shall be sound, [and] in health" {l}; when those that despise it "shall be corrupted" {m}; as the word in the preceding clause may be rendered.

{k} Mlvy "in pace versabitur", V. L. "fruetur pace", Vatablus; "donatur pace", Junius & Tremellius; "pacabitur", Cocceius; "salvabitur", Syriac version. {l} ugiainei, Sept. {m} lbxy "corrumpetur"; Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.

Proverbs 13:14

Ver. 14. The law of the wise [is] a fountain of life,.... Or "doctrine" {n}; the doctrine of those who are taught by the word, and are wise unto salvation; the words or doctrines of the wise, which are given forth by one Shepherd; the instructions of such who are like Scribes, well instructed themselves unto the kingdom of heaven: these are as a fountain of living water; which are the means of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving and refreshing the souls of weary saints; and bring life and immortality to light, and point and lead to eternal life: and so direct souls

to depart from the snares of death; the snares of sin, Satan, and the world, to shun and avoid them; with which men being entangled, are brought to destruction and death.

{n} trwt "doctrina", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens.

Proverbs 13:15

Ver. 15. Good understanding giveth favour,.... A good understanding in things natural and civil gives favour among men; and so a good understanding in divine and spiritual things gives a man favour among religious people, makes him taken notice of by them, and acceptable to them: and such an understanding no man has, unless it be given him; and such appear to have one that do the commandments of God, Ps 111:10. The Israelites, for having and keeping the statutes of the Lord, were accounted by others a wise and an understanding people; and Christ, as man, when he increased in wisdom, grew in favour with God and men. It may be rendered, "good doctrine", as the Vulgate Latin version, or "right doctrine", as the Arabic version, "gives grace" {o}; is the means of conveying grace into the hearts of men, and of increasing it. What if it should be rendered, "grace gives a good understanding" {p}? since it is certain, that an understanding to know God and Christ is a gift of grace, **1Jo 5:20**;

but the way of transgressors [is] hard; ungrateful and unpleasant to themselves and others; it is a rough and rugged way, in which they stumble and fall; and cannot walk with pleasure themselves, when their consciences are awakened, and they are loaded with guilt, and filled with terror; and must be very disagreeable to those who have seen the evil of them.

{o} Nx "gratiam", Pagninus, Montanus. Vatablus. Mercerus. Drusius, Michaelis, Schultens. {p} "Successum bonum dat gratia", Junius & Tremellius.

Proverbs 13:16

Ver. 16. Every prudent [man] dealeth with knowledge,.... In order to get more, and with men of knowledge for the same purpose; all he does is with knowledge and discretion; he does not meddle with things, nor has he to do with persons, he knows nothing of; he both acts and speaks with knowledge, cautiously, wisely, considering well time, place, and persons: and every wise and good man deals with evangelical knowledge, and studies to grow in the knowledge of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; in the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ; the issue of which is life eternal;

but a fool layeth open [his] folly; or "spreads" {q} it; and exposes it to the view of everyone, by his foolish talk and indiscreet actions.

{q} vrpy "expandit", Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 13:17

Ver. 17. A wicked messenger falleth into mischief,.... That does not do his errand right, nor deliver his message faithfully; such an one falls from the degree of honour in which he was into disgrace; he loses his master's favour that sent him; he is degraded from his post and office: he falls "by evil", or "into evil" {r}; by the evil of sin, into the evil of punishment. So wicked ministers and false teachers, such who transform themselves into the apostles of Christ and into angels of light, who corrupt the word of God, and handle it deceitfully; these shall receive their just condemnation; since they do a deal of mischief to the souls of men, and therefore shall fall into mischief themselves, even into everlasting perdition;

but a faithful ambassador [is] health; or, "an ambassador of truths" {s}; one that performs his embassy well and truly, he is salutary, useful, and profitable to himself, and to them that send him: the word for ambassador is translated an "hinge", Pr 26:14; and he is so called, because upon his negotiations abroad the hinge of political affairs turn at home. An ambassador of Christ, who does his work faithfully, keeps back nothing that is profitable, but declares the whole counsel of God; the sound doctrines he delivers are health to the souls of men; as well as he is approved of God and Christ; and so it turns to his own health and advantage, who will hear one day said unto him, "Well done, good and faithful servant", Mt 25:23.

{r} erb "in malum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Pisccator, &c. {s} Mynwma ryu "legatus veritatum", Montanus, Vatablus.

Proverbs 13:18

Ver. 18. Poverty and shame [shall be to] him that refuseth instruction,.... Of parents, masters, and ministers of the word; the instruction of wisdom, the instruction of the Gospel, in things relating to their present spiritual peace, and to their eternal welfare: such generally come to poverty and disgrace in this life, and to everlasting shame and contempt in another; see **Pr 5:11**;

but he that regardeth reproof; the reproof of the word, and of the ministers of it, and of all good men, and takes it kindly, and acts according to it,

shall be honoured; with riches and reputation; if not with the riches of this world, yet with the riches of grace and glory; and shall have honour among the saints, and from the Lord himself; who will honour those that honour him, as they do who regard the reproof and instruction of his word, **1Sa 2:30**.

Proverbs 13:19

Ver. 19. The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul,.... Whether the desire be after riches and honour, after wisdom and knowledge; or after the best things, the knowledge of God, and communion with him; an interest in Christ, and the blessings of his grace, as pardon, righteousness, &c. and a right and title to eternal glory and happiness, and the enjoyment of that: and how sweet are these things the soul desires, when they are possessed! see Pr 13:12; such are "the desires of the godly", as the Septuagint render the word;

but [it is] abomination to fools to depart from evil; they cannot bear the thoughts of parting with their lusts; they are so delightful to them, not knowing anything of the sweetness of the things before mentioned; and which they can never enjoy without departing from sin, to which they are exceedingly averse.

Proverbs 13:20

Ver. 20. He that walketh with wise [men] shall be wise,.... Who is a companion of them that fear the Lord; converses frequently with them in private about spiritual and experimental things, and walks with them in public in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; he by those means grows wiser and wiser, gains a large stock of spiritual knowledge and experience; for this holds good both in natural and spiritual wisdom, a man of any capacity at all will improve by keeping wise company;

but a companion of fools shall be destroyed; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "shall become like them"; be a fool as they are, and grow still more and more foolish. The Septuagint version is, "shall be known"; known by the company he keeps to be a fool also: or rather, "shall be broken" {t}; ruined and destroyed, "evil communications corrupt good manners", 1Co 15:33, and so bring to ruin and destruction.

{t} ewry "conteretur", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus; "conquassabitur", Cocceius; "fragetur", Michaelis; "infringetur", Schultens, so Ben Melech.

Proverbs 13:21

Ver. 21. Evil pursueth sinners,.... They pursue the evil of sin, and the evil of punishment pursues them, and at last overtakes them; their damnation, though it may seem to slumber and linger, it does not; it is upon the full speed after them, and will quickly seize upon them. Some understand this of the evil of sin in the conscience, which pursues the sinner, and fills him with terror;

but to the righteous good shall be repaid; or, "he shall recompense the righteous with good" {u}, or "good to the righteous"; that is, God shall do it; for all the good things they have done, from a right principle, and to a right end; which good works of theirs will pursue and follow them; and for all the ill things they have suffered for righteousness's sake, a reward of grace, though not of debt, will be given them; as they have had their evil things here, they shall have their good things hereafter; as well as are often recompensed in this life, either in themselves or in their posterity, as follows.

{u} bwj Mlvy Myqydu taw "et justis reddet bonum", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "justes remunerabit Deus bono", Michaelis; "justis autem bonum rependet", Tigurine version, Piscator, so Cocceius.

Proverbs 13:22

Ver. 22. A good [man] leaveth an inheritance to his children's children,.... He not only has a sufficiency for the present support of himself and family; but is so prospered and succeeded, as to leave an inheritance after him; and which is continued to and enjoyed, not only by his immediate offspring, but theirs also; for being got honestly, it wears well; see Pr 13:11;

and the wealth of the sinner [is] laid up for the just; the riches which wicked men get are laid up in the purposes of God for good men; and in his providence they are translated from the one to the other: so the riches of the Egyptians were designed for the Israelites, and by the providence of God were put into their hands; see Job 27:16.

Proverbs 13:23

Ver. 23. Much food [is in] the tillage of the poor,.... The poor are generally employed in tilling land; from whose labours in ploughing and sowing much food arises to men, bread to the eater, and seed to the sower: or a poor farmer, that has but a small farm, a few acres of land, to till; yet through his diligence and industry, with the blessing of God upon it, he gets a comfortable livelihood for himself and family; much food, or a sufficiency of it for the present year, and seed to sow land again the following year;

but there is [that is] destroyed for want of judgment; or discretion in tilling his land, and managing the affairs of husbandry, which is God's gift, Isa 28:26; or, "through injustice" {w}, as some render it; for want of doing that which is right and just; not paying his labourers their hire and wages, as he ought, and so it is blasted, and comes to ruin. This may be spiritually applied. By the "poor" may be understood the poor ministers of the Gospel; who, though poor, make many rich, **2Co 6:10**; much spiritual food is to be had under their labours and ministrations, they being employed in cultivating the churches: or else the poor saints and poor churches themselves may be meant; who are tilled by them, among whom is plenty of spiritual provisions; as in the poor Protestant churches, who, though in the wilderness, are nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, when there is no food in the apostate church of Rome: and so by the "tillage" may be meant the church of Christ itself, which is "God's husbandry", **1Co 3:9**; his agriculture, his tillage, his arable land; which he has separated and distinguished from the wide world, and employs his power and care about. For he is the husbandman, Joh 15:1; it is he that breaks up the fallow ground of men's hearts; that makes the ground good which he tills; who sows the seed of the word, and the seed of his grace there; who waters it with the dews of his grace, and causes his people to grow as the corn, and ripens them for glory: and when the harvest is come, the end of the world or of life, he sends his reapers, his angels, to gather them, the wheat, into his garner. And he employs the ministers of the word as under husbandmen, as labourers under him and with him; these are the ploughmen that hold the plough of the Gospel, and manage that; these are his sowers that go forth, bearing the precious seed of the word, and sow it under his direction; and these water the ground that is sown and planted; their doctrines distil as the rain and dew upon it; and these bring in their sheaves with joy at last. And now in this tillage is much spiritual food; in God's husbandry, the church, are the word and ordinances, in which are milk for babes, and meat for strong men, salutary, wholesome, nourishing, and strengthening food; here Christ, the best food, is set forth to faith to feed upon; true and real food, meat and drink indeed, spiritual, savoury, satisfying food; soul reviving, refreshing, and nourishing food; here is plenty of it, enough and to spare: and yet there are some that are destroyed for want of spiritual judgment and discerning; who take the poison of false teachers instead of the food to be had under a Gospel ministry; so the followers of the man of sin are given up to believe a lie and be damned; for want of judgment, they receive the grossest absurdities, and perish; as others also give in to damnable heresies, denying the deity, satisfaction, and righteousness of Christ, and other soul destroying notions; see **Ho 4:6**.

{w} jpvm alb "ob non jus", Vatablus; i.e. "ob injustitiam", Michaelis; "sine justitia", Gejerum.

Proverbs 13:24

Ver. 24. He that spareth his rod hateth his son,.... Who withholds or withdraws his rod of correction, which is in his hand, which he has power to use, and ought to exercise at proper times; he, instead of loving his son, may be said to hate him; for such fond love is no better than hatred; and, if he really hated him, he could scarcely do a more ill thing by him than not to correct him for a fault; which was the sin of good old Eli, and both he and his sons suffered for it;

but he that loveth him; that has a true love for his son, and a hearty concern for his welfare and future good; he will regulate his affections by his judgment, and not give way to a fond passion, to the prejudice of his child: but he

chasteneth him betimes, or "in the morning" {x}; in the morning of his infancy, before vicious habits are contracted, or he is accustomed to sinning, and hardened in it; or as soon as a crime is perpetrated, before it is forgot or repeated: or every morning, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; that is, continually, as often as it is necessary, or as faults are committed.

{x} wrxv "mane castigat eum", Munster; "matutinat ei disciplinam", Michaelis.

Proverbs 13:25

Ver. 25. The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul,.... He is blessed with a sufficient competency to live upon; and he is contented with what he has, and uses it moderately; he has enough to eat, and is contented with his portion, and eats no more than sufficeth; he eats to the satisfying of his appetite, and no more; he does not indulge to luxury and excess: and so as to spiritual things; he eats to the satisfying of his soul, with the goodness and fatness of God's house, with the word and ordinances, with the promises of the Gospel, and with Jesus Christ, the bread of life; with these he is satisfied, as with marrow and fatness;

but the belly of the wicked shall want; not only spiritual food, which he has no appetite for, but corporeal food; he shall starve in the midst of plenty, not having a heart to put that food into his mouth, and fill his belly with it, as nature requires, through his covetousness; or, having spent his substance in rioting and wantonness, wants bread to satisfy the craving of his appetite.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 14:1

Ver. 1. Every wise woman buildeth her house,.... Not only by her fruitfulness, as Leah and Rachel built up the house of Israel; but by her good housewifery, prudent economy; looking well to the ways of her household; guiding the affairs of her house with discretion; keeping all things in a good decorum; and bringing up her children in virtue, and in the fear and admonition of the Lord. So Christ, who in this book goes by the name of "Wisdom", or the wise woman, builds his house upon himself, the Rock; and all his people on their most holy faith, by means of the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances: he guides and governs his house, where he is, as a Son in it and over it; and of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, taken care of, and wisely and plentifully provided for: and so Gospel ministers, who are wise to win souls, being well instructed in the kingdom of God; these "wise women" {y}, so it is in the original text, or wise virgins; these wise master builders lay the foundation Christ ministerially, and build souls on it; and speak things to the edification of the church and people of God, and the building of them up in faith and holiness;

but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands; the Vulgate Latin version adds, "being built"; this she does by her idleness and laziness; by her lavish and profuse way of living; by her negligence and want of economy; by her frequenting playhouses, and attention to other diversions; and so her family and the affairs of it go to wreck and ruin. Thus the apostate church of Rome, who is called a "woman", and may be said to be a "foolish" one, being a wicked one and a harlot; see Re 17:2; pulls down the true church and house of God with both hands, as much as in her lies, by her false doctrines, and superstitious worship and idolatry; and by her murders and massacres of the saints, with the blood of whom she is said to be drunk; nay, not only pulls it down with her hands, but treads upon it with her feet, Re 11:2. So likewise all false teachers do as this foolish woman does, by their impure lives and impious doctrines, defile the temple of God, subvert the faith of many; by means of whom the tabernacle of David, or house of God, is fallen down; the ruins and breaches of which Christ will repair in the latter day.

{y} Myvn twmkx "sapientes mulieres", Munster, Baynus; so the Septuagint and Arabic versions.

Proverbs 14:2

Ver. 2. He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord,.... It is plain that the fear of the Lord is upon the heart and before the eyes of such that walk according to the word of God, with a sincere desire to glorify him; for it is by the fear of the Lord that men depart from evil, and because of that they cannot do what others do; and therefore when a man walks uprightly, and his conversation is in all holiness and godliness, it shows that the fear of God has a place in his heart, which influences his outward behaviour;

but [he that is] perverse in his ways despiseth him; either God himself, whom the upright walker fears; for he that acts perversely, contrary to the law of God, or transgresses that, and goes out of the way, despises God the lawgiver, tramples upon his authority, stretches out his hand, and commits acts of hostility against him; and he that perverts the Gospel of Christ despises his ministers, and despises Christ himself, and him that sent him. Or else the meaning is, that such a perverse walker despises him that fears the Lord; so Aben Ezra interprets it; and such are generally the contempt of wicked men: to this sense is the Vulgate Latin version,

"he that walks in a right way, and fears God, is despised by him that walks in an infamous way;"

but the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "is despised": meaning the perverse man.

Proverbs 14:3

Ver. 3. In the mouth of the foolish [is] a rod of pride,.... A proud tongue, or a tongue speaking proud and haughty things; with which foolish or wicked men smite others and wound and hurt their reputation and credit, and in the issue hurt themselves also; their tongue is not only a rod to others, but a scourge to themselves, or is the cause of evil coming upon them; such was the tongue of Pharaoh, as Jarchi on the place observes, **Ex 5:2**; and of those the psalmist speaks of,
Ps 73:9; and particularly of antichrist, whose mouth is opened in blasphemies

against God, and his tabernacle, and his saints,
Re 13:5;

but the lips of the wise shall preserve them; from speaking such proud and haughty things against God and men; or from being hurt by the tongues of men or their own; yea, what coaxes out of their mouth is confounding and destructive to their enemies, Re 11:5.

Proverbs 14:4

Ver. 4. Where no oxen [are] the crib [is] clean,.... Or "empty" {z}, so Jarchi and Aben Ezra. Oxen were used in Judea in several parts of husbandry; in ploughing the land, bringing home the corn, and in threshing or treading it out, De 22:10. Now where these are not, or not used, where husbandry is neglected, there is no straw in the crib for beasts, and much less food for men; or rather, no corn or "wheat" {a} on the "threshingfloor" {b}, or in the barn, granary, or storehouse; for so the same word is rendered, Jer 50:26; and in this manner it is interpreted by Gersom here, as also by Kimchi {c}: the word translated "clean" is used for "wheat", **Am 8:5**. By supplying the negative particle, the whole may be rendered thus; "where no oxen are, the threshingfloor", "granary", or storehouse, "is without wheat"; or there is no wheat "on the floor", or "in the barn", &c. the note of Jarchi on the text is,

"where there are no scholars of the wise men, there is no instruction in the constitutions."

But much better is the mystical sense, thus; that where there are no ministers of the Gospel, there is no food for souls. Oxen are an emblem of faithful and laborious ministers. The ox was one of the emblems in the cherubim, which design Gospel ministers; the names by which oxen are called agree with them. Here are two words used of them in the text; the one comes from a root which signifies to "teach", "lead", "guide", and "govern"; and the same word for "oxen" signifies "teachers", "leaders", "guides", and "governors"; names which most properly belong to ministers of the word: the other word comes from a root which signifies to "see", to "look"; because these creatures are sharp sighted. Ministers are seers, overseers, and as John's living creatures in **Re 4:6**; one of which was an ox, were full of eyes, within, and before, and behind. So ministers of the word had need to have good sight, to look into the Scriptures, and search them; to look to themselves and to their flock, and to look out to discover enemies, and danger by them; and to look into their own experience, and into things both past and to come. There is a likeness in ministers to these creatures, as to the nature of them; they are clean, creatures, as such should be that minister in holy things; and chew the cud, as such should revolve in their minds and constantly meditate upon divine things; and, like them, are patient and quiet under the yoke; and are not only strong to labour, but very laborious in the word and doctrine; submit to the yoke, draw the plough of the Gospel; bring home souls to Christ, to his church, and to heaven; and tread out the corn, the mysteries of grace, out of the sacred writings. Now where there are no such laborious and diligent ministers of the word, as there are none in the apostate church of Rome, there is no spiritual food for the souls of men; but a famine of the word, and men perish for lack of knowledge;

but much increase [is] by the strength of the ox; as there is a large increase of the fruits of the earth, through the tillage of it by proper instruments; as by the strong and laborious ox, whose strength is employed in ploughing the ground {d} and treading the corn; which is put for all means of husbandry, where that is used or not: so through the unwearied labours of Gospel ministers, the blessing of God attending them, there is much spiritual food; see Pr 13:23. There is an increase of converts, a harvest of souls is brought in; and an increase of gifts and of grace, and of spiritual light and knowledge, and plenty of provisions; which spiritual increase, through the ministry of the word, is owing to God, **1Co 3:6**.

{z} rb "vacuum", V. L. Munster, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Amama; so the Syriac version. {a} "Triticum", Baynus. {b} owba "area", Gussetius, p. 14. Michaelis, Schultens. {c} Sepher Shorash. rad oba & R. Joseph Kimchi in Abendana in loc. {d} "Fortis arat valido rusticus arva bove", Tibullus, l. 2. Eleg. 2. v. 14.

Proverbs 14:5

Ver. 5. A faithful witness will not lie,.... For that would be contrary to his character as faithful; and as he will not witness to a falsehood upon oath in a court of judicature, so neither will he tell a lie in common conversation. This may be applied to Gospel ministers, who are witnesses of Christ; the Gospel they preach is a testimony concerning him, and they bear a faithful witness to the truth; nor will they, knowingly and willingly, deliver out a falsehood, or a doctrinal lie, since "no lie is of the truth", **1Jo 2:21**; the character of a faithful witness is given to Christ, **Re 1:5**; who is a "witness" of his father's love and grace, of his mind and will, and of the doctrines of the Gospel relating to himself, and the method of salvation by him; and he is "faithful" to him that appointed him; nor can he nor will he lie, for he is "truth" itself;

but a false witness will utter lies; or "blow" {e} them out, and spread them abroad in great plenty; he will not stick to tell them, and, having no conscience, will utter them as fast as he can, with all boldness and confidence; for one that fears not to bear testimony to a falsehood upon oath, will not scruple to lie in common talk. Or the words, "nay" be rendered, "he that uttereth lies [will be] a false witness"; he that accustoms himself to lying, in his conversation with men in private company, will become a false witness upon occasion in a public court of judicature: such an one is not to be depended on; lesser sins lead to greater, lying to perjury. So false teachers, and the followers of the man of sin, speak lies in hypocrisy, doctrinal ones, which they are given up to believe; and such as do so are false witnesses, deceivers, and antichrist.

{e} xypy "efflabit", Montanus; "efflat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Proverbs 14:6

Ver. 6. A scorner seeketh wisdom, and [findeth it] not,.... So the scornful Greeks, that scoffed at the plainness and simplicity of the Gospel, sought natural wisdom, and thought they found it, and professed they had; but professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and with all their wisdom knew not God; and false teachers, that boasted of their evangelical wisdom, and of their great attainments in Gospel light, and derided others, were ever learning, and never came to the knowledge of the truth; and the scornful Jews, that mocked at the true Messiah, would seek him, the Wisdom of God, as they have done, and find him not; see **Joh 7:34**; Men often seek for wisdom in a wrong way and manner, in the use of wrong means; and seek it of wrong persons, and to wrong ends and purposes, and so seek amiss and find not; and some seek for wisdom, even evangelical wisdom, in a scornful manner, in a jeering sarcastic way, as the scoffing Athenians did, Ac 17:18; and find it not, nor Christ the substance of it, and so perish for lack of knowledge of him;

but knowledge [is] easy unto him that understandeth; the knowledge of Wisdom, or of Christ, is easy to him that has a spiritual understanding given him; the knowledge of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, is easy to him to whom it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; there is nothing perverse or froward in the words and doctrines of Christ; they are all plain to man whose understanding is opened by the Spirit of God; especially such as relate to the glory of Christ's person, and to the way of life and salvation by him; see **Pr 8:8**.

Proverbs 14:7

Ver. 7. Go from the presence of a foolish man,.... A wicked one; avoid him, shun his company, depart from him, have no fellowship with him, it, being dangerous, infectious, and hurtful;

when thou perceivest not [in him] the lips of knowledge; when it is observed that his lips pour out foolishness, what is corrupt and unsavoury, unchaste and filthy; what does not minister grace to the hearers, nor is for the use of edifying, nor any ways improving in useful knowledge, but all the reverse: the Targum is,

"for there is no knowledge in his lips,"

in what is expressed by them; some understand this ironically, and render the words thus, "go right against a foolish man" {f}; join in company with him, "and thou shalt not know the lips of knowledge", or learn anything by him; if you have a mind to be ignorant, keep company with a foolish man; so Jarchi and Gersom: or rather to this sense the words may be rendered, "go to a foolish man, seeing thou knowest not the lips of knowledge" {g}, since thou dost not approve of wise and knowing men, whose lips would teach knowledge; and despisest the Gospel, and Gospel ministers the pope of Rome, as Cocceius on the text serves, and hear him, what his holiness and infallibility says; or some other false teacher.

{f} lyok vyal dgnm kl "e regione viri stulti", De Dieu; so Gussetius, p. 495. and Schultens {g} "Abi ut stes cora in viro stolido", Cocceius.

Proverbs 14:8

Ver. 8. The wisdom of the prudent [is] to understand his way,.... The way of his calling, in which he should abide, and how to manage it in the best manner; the way of his duty, that he may walk inoffensively both towards God and men; and the way of life and salvation, which is by Jesus Christ, which to understand and to walk in is the highest wisdom and prudence;

but the folly of fools [is] deceit: or "the wisdom of fools", which the opposition requires, and is meant, and is what the Holy Ghost calls "folly", as elsewhere, **1Co 3:19**; this is itself "deceit"; it is science, falsely so called; it lies in tricking and deceiving; and the issue of it is, not only the deceiving of others, but themselves also: such is the folly of the man of sin and followers, which lies in deceiving the inhabitants of the earth with their sorceries and superstitions, with their lying wonders and miracles; see **2Th 2:10**
Re 13:14.

Proverbs 14:9

Ver. 9. Fools make a mock at sin,.... At sinful actions, their own or others; they make light of them, a jest of them, call evil good, and good evil; take pleasure in doing them themselves, and in those that do them; yea, sport themselves with the mischief that arises from them unto others; they make a mock at reproofs for them, and scoff at those that instruct and rebuke them; and laugh at a future state, and an awful judgment they are warned of, and in a scoffing manner say, "where is the promise of his coming?" Some, as Aben Ezra observes, render it "a sin offering"; and interpret it of the sin offerings and sacrifices under the law, as derided by wicked men; but may be better applied to the sin offering or sacrifice of Christ, who made his soul an offering for sin, to make satisfaction and atonement for the sins of his people; this is mocked at by false teachers, who deny it; and is exposed to derision and contempt by the Papists, by their bloodless sacrifice of the mass, and by their merits and works of supererogation, which they prefer to the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ. The words may be rendered, "sin makes a mock of fools" {h}; it deceives them, it promises them pleasure, or profit, or honour, but gives them neither, but all the reverse;

but among the righteous [there is] favour: they enjoy the favour of God and man; or "there is good will" {i}, good will towards men; they are so far from making a mock at sin, and taking delight in the mischief that comes by it to others, that they are willing to do all good offices unto men, and by love to serve their friends and neighbours: or "there is acceptance" {k}; they are accepted with God upon the account of the sin offering, sacrifice, and satisfaction of Christ, which fools mock and despise.

{h} Mva Uyly Mylywa fronav cleuazei plhmmeleia, Aquila & Theodotion in Drusius; "delictum illudit fatuos", Gejerus. {i} Nwur "benevoleatia", Montanus, Baynus, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus. {k} "Acceptatio", Cocceius, Gussetius.

Proverbs 14:10

Ver. 10. The heart knoweth his own bitterness,.... Or "the bitterness of his soul" {l}, the distress of his conscience, the anguish of his mind; the heart of man only knows the whole of it; something of it may be known to others by his looks, his words, and gestures, but not all of it; see **1Co 2:10**; bitterness of soul often arises from outward troubles, pains, and diseases of body, losses, crosses, and disappointments, **1Sa 1:10**. Sometimes it is upon spiritual accounts; but this is not the case of every heart; men may be in the gall of bitterness, and have no bitterness of soul on account of it; the sensualist and voluptuous worldling feels nothing of it, nor the hardened and hardhearted sinner; only such who are awakened and convinced by the Spirit of God; to these, as sin is a bitter thing in itself, it is so to their taste; it makes hitter work for repentance in them; it brings trembling and astonishment on them; fills them with shame and confusion of face, causes self-loathing and abhorrence, and severe reflections upon themselves; seeing sin in its own colours, they are cut to the heart and killed with it; they are pressed down with the guilt of sin, and the load of it; and, having no views of pardon, are in that distress and bitterness of soul which no tongue can express nor heart conceive but what has felt the same;

and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy; or "mingle himself with it" {m}; he does not share in it or partake of it; this is more especially true of spiritual joy, which, as it is unspeakable to the man that possesses it, it passes the understanding of a natural man; he can form no true idea of it: spiritual joy is what a sensible sinner partakes of upon the Gospel, the joyful sound of salvation, reaching his ears and his heart, at the revelation of Christ in him and to him, as a Saviour; when an application of pardoning grace is made to his soul, and he has a view of the complete righteousness of Christ, and his interest in it, and can see all his sins expiated and stoned for by his sacrifice; when he is favoured with a sight of the fulness of grace in Christ, and of the spiritual and eternal salvation he has wrought out for him; and likewise when he is indulged with a visit from him, and enjoys communion with him; and when he has a glimpse of eternal glory, and a well grounded hope of right unto it, and meetness for it: now a stranger, one that is a stranger to God and godliness, to Christ and the way of salvation by him, to the Spirit and his work of grace upon the heart, to the Gospel and the doctrines of it, to his own heart and the plague of it, to the saints and communion with them; knows nothing at all of the above joy, nor can he interrupt it, nor take it away.

{l} wvpn trm "amaritudine animae suae", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {m} brety al "non immiscet se", Michaelis, so Tigurine version; "non miscebit sese", Baynus; "non intermiscet se", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Proverbs 14:11

Ver. 11. The house of the wicked shall be overthrown,.... Houses built to perpetuate their names and eternize their memory; and which, though built high and stately, strong and firm, yet by one accident or another shall come to ruin, when they imagined they would continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations, Ps 49:11; or their families shall become extinct, none to be their heirs and inherit their estates, and transmit their name to posterity; or the substance of their house, their riches and wealth, especially that gotten dishonestly, shall waste away: and in a spiritual sense the house or hope of such, as to eternal salvation, being built on the sand, or something of their own, their external duties, or an outward profession of religion, shall not stand; though they lean upon it and would hold it fast, but it shall fall, and great shall be the fall of it; and particularly the apostate church of Rome, that synagogue of Satan, that habitation of devils, that hold of every foul spirit, and cage of every unclean bird, shall be overthrown with an utter overthrow, shall fall and never rise more, Re 18:2;

but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish: their low and mean cottages, which are put up quickly, like tents movable from place to place, yet shall be established, Pr 15:25; their families shall become numerous like a flock of sheep, Ps 107:41; and their substance increase; they shall flourish in worldly things and grow rich, or however in spirituals, in girls and grace; shall flourish in the courts of the Lord, and tabernacles of the most High, like palm trees and cedars; for the allusion is to the flourishing of trees, Ps 92:13; especially they will be in such flourishing circumstances in the latter day, when antichrist will be destroyed, and when the tabernacle of God will be with men, Ps 72:8.

Proverbs 14:12

Ver. 12. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man,.... As the way of sin and wickedness does, it promising much carnal pleasure and mirth; there is a great deal of company in it, it is a broad road, and is pleasant, and seems right, but it leads to destruction; so the way of the hypocrite and Pharisee that trusts to his own righteousness, and despises others, and even the righteousness of Christ; or however does not submit to it, but tramples upon him, and counts the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and so is deserving of sorer punishment than the profane sinner; yet on account of his good works, as he calls them, fancies himself to be in a fair way for heaven and happiness; so Popery, through the pomp and grandeur and gaudiness of worship, through the lying miracles of the priests, and the air of devotion that appears in them, seems to be a right way;

but the end thereof [are] the ways of death; which lead unto eternal death; for that is the wages of sin, let it appear in what shape it will.

Proverbs 14:13

Ver. 13. Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful,.... As Belshazzar's was in the midst of his feast and jollity, when he saw the writing on the wall; so sin may stare a man in the face, and guilt load his conscience and fill him with sorrow, amidst his merriment; a man may put on a merry countenance, and feign a laugh, when his heart is very sorrowful; and oftentimes this sorrow comes by sinful laughter, by mocking at sin and jesting at religion;

and the end of that mirth [is] heaviness: sometimes in this life a sinner mourns at last, and mourns for his wicked mirth, or that he has made himself so merry with religious persons and things, and oftentimes when it is too late; so the end of that mirth the fool in the Gospel promised himself was heaviness, when his soul was required of him; this was the case of the rich man who had his good things here, and his evil things hereafter.

Proverbs 14:14

Ver. 14. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways,.... One that is a backslider at heart, whose heart departeth from the Lord; in whom there is an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; and indeed apostasy begins at the heart, and shows itself in the life and conversation: there may be a backsliding when the heart does not wickedly depart from God; but is through the infirmity of the flesh and the force of temptation; from which backslidings the Lord's people are recovered, and which are healed by his grace; but here such an one is meant who willingly and heartily backslides; and such shall have the reward of their hands and actions given them, or the full and due punishment of their sins; they shall have their bellyful of their own wicked ways and works, the just recompense of reward for them;

and a good man [shall be satisfied] from himself; shall eat the fruit of his own doings, shall be blessed in his deeds, and have peace and satisfaction therein; though not salvation by them, or for them: he shall be satisfied with the grace of God bestowed on him and wrought in him; and, from a feeling experience of the grace of God within him, shall be satisfied that he has in heaven a better and an enduring substance; or he shall be satisfied "from above himself" {m}, from the grace that is in Christ, out of the fulness which is in him; and shall be filled with all the fulness of God he is capable of; and especially in the other world, when he shall awake in his likeness. The Targum is,

"a good man shall be satisfied with his fear;"

and so the Syriac version, with the fear of his soul; it may be rendered, as by the Vulgate Latin version, "a good man shall be above him" {n}; that is, above the backslider; shall be better tilled, and be more happy than he.

{m} wylem "de super eo", Montanus; "de super semet", Schultens. {n} "Et super cum erit vir bonus", V. L. De Dieu.

Proverbs 14:15

Ver. 15. The simple believeth every word,.... Every thing that is said to him every story that is told him, and every promise that is made him; and so is easily imposed upon, and drawn in to his hurt: every word of God, or doctrine of his, ought to be believed; because whatever he says is true, he cannot lie; every word of his is pure, free from all error and falsehood; it is a tried word, and found to bear a faithful testimony, and, if we receive the witness of then, the witness of God is greater; besides, his word is profitable for instruction, and for the increase of peace, joy, and comfort, and is effectual to saving purposes: every word of Christ is to be believed, who is a teacher sent from God; whose mission is confirmed by miracles, and whose doctrine is not his own as man, but his Father's; he is the faithful witness, and truth itself; his words are more than human, and besides are pleasant and wholesome: and every word and doctrine of his apostles, who received their mission

commission, and doctrines from him, is also to be believed; but every spirit, or everyone that pretends to be a spiritual man, and to have spiritual gifts, is not to be believed; but the words and doctrines of ordinary men and ministers are to be first tried by the unerring rule of the sacred Scriptures; yea, the doctrines of the apostles were examined by them; see **1Jo 4:1**; they are "simple", weak, silly, foolish persons, that believe all they hear, whether right or wrong, true or false, good or hurtful; they are children in knowledge, who are tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, and are deceived with good words and fair speeches, **Eph 4:14**
Ro 16:18. This truly describes the followers of the man of sin; who give heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; who believe as the church believes; that believe with an implicit faith; believe every word and doctrine the pope and councils say they should, though ever so absurd; as, for instance, the doctrine of transubstantiation: these are "simple" or fools with a witness, who give up their understandings, and even their senses unto, and pin their faith upon, another;

but the prudent [man] looketh well to his going; or "its going" {o}; to the course and tendency of the word he hears, or the doctrine which is proposed to his faith; he considers well whether it is agreeable or is contrary to the perfections of God; whether it derogates from the glory of any of the divine Persons; whether it makes for the magnifying the riches of God's grace, and for the debasing of men; or for the depreciating of the one, and setting up of the other; and whether it is a doctrine according to godliness, or not, that tends to promote holiness of heart and life, or to indulge a loose conversation; and according to these criteria he judges and determines whether he shall believe it or not. Or, "to his going"; that is, to the going of the deceiver and impostor; he observes narrowly the methods he takes, the artifices he makes use of, the cunning sleight by which he lies in wait to deceive; how craftily he walks, and handles the word of God deceitfully; and he takes notice of his moral walk and conversation, and, as our Lord says, "ye shall know them by their fruits", **Mt 7:16**. Or else the meaning is, and which seems to be the sense of our version, that he looks well unto, and carefully observes, his own goings; he takes heed to his ways, that they are right; that he is not in ways of his devising and choosing, but in God's ways; in the way of life and salvation by Christ; in the path of faith on him, and in the way of holiness; that he has chosen the way of truth, and walks in that; and that every step he takes in doctrine is according to the word of truth; and that whatever he does in worship is agreeably to the divine rule; and that every path of duty he treads in is according to the same, and as he has Christ for a pattern, and the Spirit for a guide; and that his walk is as becomes the Gospel, worthy of the calling wherein he is called, and that it is circumspect and wise; and such a man may be truly said to be a "prudent" man: the Targum is,

"he attends to his good;"

and so he does.

{o} wrval "gressum illius, sc. sermonis", Baynus, so some in Mercerus.

Proverbs 14:16

Ver. 16. A wise [man] feareth, and departeth from evil,.... He fears God, and is careful not to offend him; wherefore he departs from sin, stands at a distance from it, abstains from all appearance of it; being influenced by the goodness and grace of God unto him, he fears the Lord and his goodness, and therefore avoids all occasions of sinning against him: his motive is not merely fear of punishment, as Jarchi, but a sense of goodness; and now, as it is through the influence of divine fear that men depart from evil; so to do this shows a good understanding, and that such a man is a wise man, Pr 16:6;

but the fool rageth, and is confident; he fears neither God nor men, he sets his mouth against both; he "rages" in heart, if not with his mouth, against God and his law, which forbid the practice of such sins he delights in; and against all good men, that admonish him of them, rebuke him for them, or dissuade him from them: and "is confident" that no evil shall befall him; he has no concern about a future state, and is fearless of hell and damnation, though just upon the precipice of ruin; yet, as the words may be rendered, "he goes on confidently", nothing can stop him; he pushes on, regardless of the laws of God or men, of the advices and counsels of his friends, or of what will be the issue of his desperate courses in another world.

Proverbs 14:17

Ver. 17. [He that is] soon angry dealeth foolishly,.... A man that is quick and short, of a hasty spirit, and presently discovers anger and resentment in his face; he says and does many foolish things, which he afterwards is sorry for, and repents, and is ashamed of; and he is to be pitied and forgiven;

and a man of wicked devices is hated; one that hides his anger, covers his resentment, contrives schemes to revenge himself, and waits an opportunity to put them in execution, is justly hateful to God and men.

Proverbs 14:18

Ver. 18. The simple inherit folly,.... It is natural and hereditary to them, they are born like wild asses colts; the foolish sayings and proverbs, customs and practices, of their ancestors, though they have been demonstrated to be mere folly, yet these, their posterity, approve them; they love, like, and retain them as their patrimony, Job 11:12. Such are the foolish traditions, customs, principles, and doctrines, of the church of Rome, handed down from father to son; and because Popery is the religion they have been bred and brought up in, though so foolish and absurd, they will not relinquish it;

but the prudent are crowned with knowledge; natural, civil, and spiritual, especially the latter; evangelical knowledge, the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ, and of Gospel truths; they are honoured with an acquaintance with them; and they esteem the knowledge of these above all things else, and reckon all things else but loss and dung in comparison of them; they are as a crown unto them, and the knowledge of them is the way to the crown of life; yea, is itself life eternal, **Php 3:8**. Or, they "crown themselves with knowledge" {p}; they labour after it, pursue it with eagerness, follow on to know the Lord, and attain to a large share of it; surround, encompass, and lay hold upon it, and gird themselves about with this girdle of truth. Or, "they crown knowledge" {q}; do honour to that, by putting it in practice; by adding to it temperance, and every virtue, and by bringing others to it; and are an ornament to it in their lives and conversation; they adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour.

{p} ted wrytky "imponent coronam sibi scientiam", Montanus; "coronant se scientia", Piscator, so Ben Melech. {q} "Coronabunt scientiam", Baynus; "ornant scientiam", Drusius.

Proverbs 14:19

Ver. 19. The evil bow before the good,.... Wicked men before good men. This, as Jarchi observes, respects future time; even the latter day glory, or the spiritual times of the Messiah, when the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the saints of the most High: for though there may have been some

few instances of this kind, as Haman bowing before Mordecai, and the Heathen emperors before Constantine; and there may be some now, in some cases where obligation requires; yet this is far from being general, as it will be in the spiritual reign of Christ; when the sons of those that afflicted the church will come bending to her, and they that have despised her shall bow themselves down at the soles of her feet; and even great personages too shall bow down and lick the dust of her feet; the kings of the earth, who before have been in confederacy with antichrist, and have persecuted the saints, now shall hate the whore, and honour the true church of Christ: this will be in the Philadelphian state, which is the same with the spiritual reign of Christ; such who called themselves Jews, and are not, shall come and worship before the feet of the church, and own that she and her members are the favourites of heaven, **Da 7:27**
Isa 49:23;

and the wicked at the gates of the righteous; or, "come to the gates of the righteous", as the Syriac version supplies it; they come and knock there, stand and wait, or lay themselves down; become prostrate and humble supplicants for relief and protection, as beggars do. This may also respect their attendance at Wisdom's gates, at the gates of Zion, on public ordinances, for counsel and instruction, which before they despised, **Pr 8:34**. The Septuagint version is, "shall serve thy gates"; that is, at them; see Isa 60:11.

Proverbs 14:20

Ver. 20. The poor is hated even of his own neighbour,.... As well as of strangers; that is, he is shy of him; he does not care to take any notice of him, or be friendly with him, lest he should be burdensome to him. Poverty brings a man into contempt and disgrace; the same man, in affluence and indigence, is respected or disrespected: this is true, as Gersom observes, of a man that is poor, whether in money or in knowledge, in his purse or in his understanding;

but the rich [hath] many friends; or, "many [are] the lovers of the rich" {r}: for the sake of their riches; either for the sake of honour or profit, or because the rich want nothing of them, or because they themselves may gain something by them: this also is observed by the above Jewish commentator to be true of the rich in substance or in wisdom; but the former sense is best; for a wise man, if poor in the world, is but little regarded.

{r} Mybr ryve ybhaw "et amatores divitiis spissi", Schultens; "dilectores autem divitis multi sunt", Piscator. "Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos", Ovid. Trist. Eleg. 8. "Dat census honores, census amicitias", ib. Fasti, l. 1. so Phocylides, v. 925, 926.

Proverbs 14:21

Ver. 21. He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth,.... He that despiseth his neighbour in his heart, speaks slightly of him, overlooks him, is not friendly to him, will neither converse with him, nor relieve him in his necessity; for it seems to be understood of his poor neighbour; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "he that despiseth the poor"; that despises him for his poverty; because of his pedigree and education, and the low circumstances he is in; or on account of his weakness and incapacity, or any outward circumstance that attends him; such an one sins very greatly, is guilty of a heinous sin; and he will be reckoned and dealt with as a sinner, and be condemned and punished, and so be unhappy and miserable;

but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy [is] he; or,

"that gives to the poor,"

as the Targum; who has compassion on him in his distress, and shows it by relieving him: he that shows favour to the meek and humble ones, as the word {s} may be rendered, and as they generally are that are in affliction and poverty, for these tend to humble men; and such who regard them in their low estate are "happy" or blessed; they are blessed in things temporal and spiritual, and both here and hereafter; see Ps 41:1.

{s} Mywne "modestorum", Montanus, Mercerus; "mansuetos", Cocceius.

Proverbs 14:22

Ver. 22. Do they not err that devise evil?.... Certainly they do; they go astray from the right way, from the word of truth, from the Gospel of Christ, who contrive schemes to commit sin, and do mischief to their neighbours; or who "plough" {t} it, and sow it, and expect a fine harvest; but they will be mistaken, and find it will not turn to account, and that they have took a wrong course, and have gone out of the way: none more mischievous devisers or contrivers of evil than the Papists, and none more sadly and fatally err;

but mercy and truth [shall be] to them that devise good; who devise liberal things, to do good to the poor and needy; to their neighbours, their fellow creatures and fellow Christians: such receive grace and "mercy" at the hands of God, and his "truth" will appear in making good all promises to them; mercy and truth will preserve them from the evil way, and guide them in the right way, so that they shall not err as others do; neither from the doctrines of grace and truth, nor from the practice of them.

{t} vrx "arant", Baynus; "arantibus", Amama; "verbum proprie significat arare", Piscator.

Proverbs 14:23

Ver. 23. In all labour there is profit,.... Or "abundance" {u}; much is got by it, food, raiment, riches, wealth, wisdom, honour; either with the labour of the hands or head, and nothing is to be got without labour; and he that is laborious in his calling, whether it be by manual operation, working with his hands that which is good; or by hard study, much reading, and constant meditation, is like to gain much for his own use and the good of others;

but the talk of the lips [tendeth] only to penury; or "want" {w}, of food and raiment, the common necessaries of life; a man that spends his time in idle talk, boasting of what he can do and does, and yet does nothing, is in a fair way to come to beggary: so all talk about wisdom, and knowledge, and religion, without making use of the proper means of improvement, tends to the poverty of the mind; and generally they are most empty of knowledge, natural or spiritual, that talk and brag most of it; empty casks make the greatest sound; good discourse, wholesome words, sound doctrine, thoroughly digested, tend indeed to edification, to the enriching of the mind; but vain words, the enticing words of men's wisdom; logomachies, striving about words to no profit; and all great swelling words of vanity, which are all mere lip labour; they tend to spiritual poverty and leanness of soul.

{u} rtwm "abundantia", Tigurine version, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus. {w} rwoxml "ad defectum", Pagninus, Montanus; "ad egestatem", Tigurine version, Piscator, Cocceius.

Proverbs 14:24

Ver. 24. The crown of the wise [is] their riches,.... Riches being used by them to increase and improve their knowledge and wisdom, and for the good of men, are an honour to them, and give them credit and reputation among men of sense and goodness; see **Ec 7:11**;

[but] the foolishness of fools [is] folly; mere folly, extreme folly, just the same as it was; riches make them never the wiser; yea, their folly is oftentimes made more manifest through the ill use they make of their riches; spending them in the gratification of their sinful lusts; and making no use of them for their own improvement in knowledge, or for the good of their fellow creatures. The Targum is,

"the glory of fools is their folly;"

and that is no other than their shame, and in which they glory; such fools are wicked men.

Proverbs 14:25

Ver. 25. A true witness delivereth souls,.... Or, "a witness of truth" {x}: one that witnesses truth upon oath in a court of judicature, he "delivers souls"; men, not one man only, but many; a whole family, or more, in danger of being ruined; he delivers them, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions add, "from evils"; from evil charges and accusations brought against them; from the oppression of their enemies, from the loss of their good name, and from ruin and destruction, that otherwise would have come upon them; he delivers their "lives" {y}, as it may be rendered, in danger of being lost by false accusations: so a witness of the truth of Christ, or a faithful minister of the Gospel, not only saves himself, but them that hear him; and is an instrument of delivering the souls of men from error and damnation;

but a deceitful [witness] speaketh lies; boldly, openly, by wholesale; he blows them out {z}, to the ruin of the good names and characters, and to the destruction of the lives, of the innocent; and so a false teacher, one that lies in wait to deceive, speaks lies in hypocrisy, doctrinal lies, to the ruin of the souls of men. The Targum is,

"he that speaketh lies is deceitful;"

he is "deceit" {a} itself, as in the Hebrew text. Such is the man of sin, and such are his emissaries.

{x} tma de "testis veritatis", Montanus, Cocceius, Schultens. {y} twvpn "vitas; animam pro vita usurpari notum", Gejerus. {z} xypy "efflat", Tigurine version, Piscator, Gejerus; "spirat", Schultens; "efflabit", Monatnus. {a} hmrm "dolus", Montanus, Vatablus; "fraus", Cocceius.

Proverbs 14:26

Ver. 26. In the fear of the Lord [is] strong confidence,.... Such who fear the Lord may be confident that he has a love to them, a delight in them; that his eye is upon them, and his heart towards them; and will communicate every needful good to them, and protect and defend them: or the Lord himself that is feared, who is the object of fear, called the fear of Isaac, Ge 31:42; he is a strong tower, a place of defence to those that fear him and trust in him, Pr 18:10;

and his children shall have a place of refuge; the children of God, as those that fear him are; the Lord is a place of refuge to them, from the avenger of blood, from the vindictive justice of God; from the storm and tempest of divine wrath, and from the curses of a righteous law; as well as from the rage and persecutions of men.

Proverbs 14:27

Ver. 27. The fear of the Lord [is] a fountain of life,.... Where the true fear of God is, there is a real principle of grace, which is "a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life", **Joh 4:14**; eternal life is connected with it; it makes meet for it, and issues in it: or the Lord, who is the object of fear, he is the fountain of life: as of natural, so of spiritual and eternal life; spiritual life springs from him, is supported and maintained by him, the consequence of which is life everlasting;

to depart from the snares of death; sins, transgressions, as Aben Ezra interprets it; these are the works of men's hands, in which they are snared; these are the cords in which they are holden, and so die without instruction; the wages of them are death, even death eternal: likewise there are the snares of the world and of the devil, temptations to sin, with which being ensnared, lead to death;

now the fear of the Lord is a means of delivering from and of avoiding those snares, and so of escaping death.

Proverbs 14:28

Ver. 28. In the multitude of people [is] the king's honour,.... For it is a sign of a good and wise government, of clemency and righteousness being exercised, of liberty and property being enjoyed, of peace, plenty, and prosperity; which encourage subjects to serve their king cheerfully, and to continue under his reign and government peaceably; and which invites others from different parts to come and settle there also; by which the strength and glory of a king are much increased. This is true of the King of kings, of Jesus Christ, who is King of saints; his honour and glory, as Mediator, lies in a large number of voluntary subjects, made "willing" to serve him "in the day of [his] power" upon them, as numerous as the drops of the morning "dew", Ps 110:3; such as he had in the first times of the Gospel, both among the Jews and among the Gentiles; and as he will have more especially in the latter day, when those prophecies shall be fulfilled in Isa 60:4; and so this is interpreted of the King Messiah, in an ancient writing {b} of the Jews;

but in the want of people [is] the destruction of the prince; or, "the consternation" {c} of him; if his people are destroyed in wars his ambition or cruelty has led him to; or they are driven out from his kingdom by persecution or oppression; hence follows a decay of trade, and consequently of riches; lack of cultivation of land, and so want of provision: in course of time there is such a decrease, that, as there are but few to carry on trade and till the land, so to fight for their prince, and defend his country; wherefore, when attacked by a foreign power, he is thrown into the utmost consternation, and is brought to destruction. This will be the case of the prince of darkness, the man of sin, antichrist; who, though however populous he may be, or has been, ruling over tongues, people, and nations, yet before long he will be deserted by them; one nation after another will fall off from him; they and their kings will hate him, make him bare and desolate, and burn him with fire, Re 17:15. Some render it, "the consternation of leanness" {d}; such consternation as causes leanness in a king.

{b} Zohar in Exod. fol. 67. 3, 4. {c} ttxm "formidat princeps", Tigurine version; "consternatio", Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens. {d} "Consternatio macici", Gussetius, p. 785. "consternatio tabifica", Schultens; "contritio maciei", Gejerus; "terror tenuitatis", Mercerus, Gersom.

Proverbs 14:29

Ver. 29. [He that is] slow to wrath [is] of great understanding,.... Or "long in wrath" {e}; it is long before he is angry; he is longsuffering, bears much and long, is very patient; such an one appears to understand himself and human nature, and has a great command over his passions; which shows him to be a man of great wisdom and understanding;

but [he that is] hasty of spirit exalteth folly; or is "short of spirit" {f}; is soon angry; presently discovers resentment in his words, looks, and gestures; such an one "exalts folly", prefers it to wisdom, sets it above himself, and makes it his master: or he "lifts" it {g} up; exposes his folly to public view, so that it is seen of all men to his disgrace.

{e} Mypa Kra "longus iris", Vatablus; "longus naribus", Montanus; "longus narium", Schultens. {f} xwr ruq "brevis spiritu", Montanus, Vatblus. Cocceius, Merceus, Michaelis; "curtus spiritu", Schultens. {g} Mwrm "attollit", Mercerus, Piscator; "alte proclamat", Schultens; "elevat", Baynus.

Proverbs 14:30

Ver. 30. A sound heart [is] the life of the flesh,.... A heart made so by the grace of God, in which are sound principles of truth, righteousness, and holiness; these preserve from sin, and so from many diseases; whereby the life of the flesh or body is kept safe and sound, or that is kept in health and vigour; or a "quiet heart" {h}; a heart free from wrath, anger, and envy, and such like passions and perturbations; this contributes much to the health of the body, and the comfort of life: or a "healing heart", or "spirit" {i}; that is humane, kind, and friendly; that pities and heals the distresses of others, and makes up differences between persons at variance: such an one is "the life of fleshes" {k}, as in the original text; or of men, of the same flesh and blood; the life of others, as well as of his own flesh; such an one contributes to the comfortable living of others as well as of himself;

but envy the rottenness of the bones; a man that envies the happiness and prosperity of others, this preys upon his own spirits, and not only wastes his flesh, but weakens and consumes the stronger parts of his body, the bones; it is as a "moth" within him, as the Arabic version: the Targum is,

"as rottenness in wood, so is envy in the bones;"

hence Ovid {l} calls it "livor edax", and so Martial {m}.

{h} aprm bl "cor leve", Baynus; "cor lene", Mercerus; "cor lenitatis", Gejerus, so Ben Melech. {i} "Animus sanans", Junius & Tremellius, so the Tigurine version; "sanator", Gussetius, p. 800. {k} Myrvb yyx "vitae carnium", Montanus; "vita carnium", V. L. Pagninus, Michaelis. {l} Amorum, l. 1. Eleg. 15. v. 1. & de Remed. Amor. l. 1. in fine. {m} Epigr. l. 11. Ep. 21.

Proverbs 14:31

Ver. 31. He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker,.... That does him any injury, either by scoffing at him, and reproaching him for his poverty; or by vexatious law suits; or by withholding from him his wages; or not giving him that relief which he ought: such an one not only injures the poor man; but reproaches God that made him, not only a man, but a poor man; and who is the Maker of the rich man also,
Pr 22:2;

but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor; he that is desirous of honouring God, and glorifying him, will give of his substance to the poor; having compassion on him in his necessitous circumstances, will relieve him; and in so doing he honours God, whose image the poor man bears, and who has commanded him so to do. The words may be rendered, "he that hath mercy on the poor honoureth him"; that is, his Maker: so the Targum,

"he that hath mercy on him that suffers injury honoureth him."

Proverbs 14:32

Ver. 32. The wicked is driven away in his wickedness,.... That is, at death, as the opposite clause shows; he is driven out of the world, his heart is so much set on; from all the good things of it, which are his all, his portion; from the place of his abode, which will know him no more; and from all his friends and acquaintance, with whom he has lived a merry and jovial life; he shall be driven out of light into darkness, even into outer darkness; into hell, which is a place of torment, a prison, a lake burning with fire and brimstone; he shall be driven as a beast is, driven: and such is the man of sin, who shall go into perdition; and such are his followers, and that will be their end, Re 13:1; he shall be driven sore against his will; the righteous depart, and desire to depart; but the wicked are driven, and go unwillingly, with reluctance; they would fain flee out of the hand of God, and yet they have no power to withstand; go they must, they are driven forcibly and irresistibly: and it may also denote the suddenness of their death, and the swiftness of their destruction. The driver is not mentioned; it may be understood of the Lord himself, who, in and by a storm of his wrath, hurls them out of their place; or of death, as having a commission from him, when a man has no power over his spirit to retain it; or of angels, good or bad, employed by the Lord in driving their souls to hell upon their separation from their bodies. The circumstance, "in his wickedness", may denote their dying in their sins, unrepented of, unforgiven, and without faith in Christ; in the midst of them, in their full career of sin, under the power, faith, and guilt of it; and as sometimes, in the horror of a guilty conscience, in black despair, without any hope or view of pardon, the reverse of the righteous man; and so will have all their wickedness to answer for, it being not taken away, but found upon them: or this may be expressive of the cause of the wicked man's being driven away, namely, his wickedness; for so it may be rendered and interpreted, "because of his wickedness" {n} it is for that he shall die and go to hell: or it may be rendered, "into his evil" {o}; and so denote the everlasting punishment into which he shall go, being driven;

but the righteous hath hope in his death; not in the death of the wicked man, as Aben Ezra, when he shall be delivered, and he can do him no more hurt; but in his own death; he dies as other men; his righteousness, though it delivers him from eternal death, yet not from a corporeal one; though the death of a righteous man is different from others; he dies in Christ, in the faith of him, and in hope of eternal life by him; and to die his death is very desirable: he has a hope of interest in the blessings of grace and glory; which is a good hope through grace; is wrought in him at regeneration; and is founded on that righteousness from whence he is denominated righteous, even the righteousness of Christ; and is of singular use and advantage to him in life: and this grace he exercises at death; it carries him through the valley of death, and above the fears of it; he hopes, though he dies, he shall rise again; and he hopes to be in heaven and happiness, immediately upon his dissolution, and to all eternity; he hopes to see God, be with Christ, angels and good men, for evermore. Jarchi's note is,

"when he dies, he trusts he shall enter into the garden of Eden, or paradise."

{n} wterb "propter suam malitiam", Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus. {o} "In malam suum", Junius & Tremellius, Amama, so some in Mercerus.

Proverbs 14:33

Ver. 33. Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding,.... It is in his heart, as the treasury where it is laid up, and where it is kept in safety; here it lies hid and undiscerned, unmolested and undisturbed; no noise is made about it, or any ostentation of it; it dwells quietly and constantly there;

but [that which is] in the midst of fools is made known; the least share of knowledge which such persons have, or think they have, does not lie long in the midst of them; they take every opportunity of showing it to others, or of letting others know what they have attained to; and thereby, instead of getting the character of wise and prudent men, obtain that of fools; for, though a prudent man is communicative of his knowledge to others, it is at proper times, and in proper places, and to proper persons, which fools do not observe; but, without any manner of judgment or discretion, or regard to persons, places, and seasons, vainly thrust out their knowledge, and so proclaim their folly. The Syriac version is,

"in the heart of fools it shall not be known;"

it has no place there.

Proverbs 14:34

Ver. 34. Righteousness exalteth a nation,.... Administered by the government, and exercised by subjects towards one another; doing justice between man and man: this exalts a nation, as it did the people of Israel, while practised among them; this sets a people above their neighbours, and high in the esteem of God and men; and is attended with privileges and blessings, which make a nation great and honourable. Some understand this of aims deeds, or beneficence to the poor; which, both in the Hebrew and Greek languages, is called righteousness;
See Gill on "Mt 6:1". It may be put for the whole of true religion, which is an honour to a nation, where it obtains; and is what makes the holy nation, and peculiar people, so truly illustrious; and particularly the righteousness of Christ

makes such who are interested in it really great and noble, and promotes and exalts them to heaven and happiness;

but sin [is] a reproach to any people; where vice reigns, iniquity abounds, profaneness, impiety, and immorality of all sorts prevail, a people become mean and despicable; they fall into poverty and contempt; are neither able to defend themselves, nor help their neighbours, and so are despised by them. The word rendered "reproach" most commonly signifies "mercy" or goodness; and some render it, "and the mercy of a people is a sin offering" {p}; or as one: or it is so "to the nations"; it is as good as a sacrifice for sin, of which the word is sometimes used, or better, more acceptable to God, "who will have mercy, and not sacrifice", **Mt 9:13**; even beneficence and kindness to the poor, the same with righteousness, as before. I think it may be as well rendered, "the piety" or religion "of the nations is sin" {q}; it being idolatry, as Aben Ezra observes: such is the religion of the antichristian nations, who worship idols of gold and silver; and though they may afflict themselves, as Gersom remarks of the idolatrous nations, with fasting and penance, with whippings and scourgings; yet it is nothing else but sin, will worship, and superstition.

{p} tajx Mymal dox "beneficentia expiatio est populi", Grotius; "sacrificium expiatorium", Tigurine version; "velut sacrificium pro peccato", Vatablus, Gejerus; "gratuita beneificentia nationibus est aliquid sacrificium peccati expiatorium", Gussetius, p. 74. {q} "Pietas nationum est peccatium", Munster, Mercerus; "studium nationum peccatum", Cocceius.

Proverbs 14:35

Ver. 35. The king's favour [is] toward a wise servant,.... Who does his prince's business well, committed to him; manages all his affairs wisely and prudently; is diligent and careful to do everything for the king's honour, and the good of his subjects; such an one has a share in royal favour, a place in the affections of his master; and is sure to be promoted to honour by him, and exalted to higher places of trust and profit, as well as to be protected and defended by him: so Christ, the King of kings, shows favour to his wise and faithful servants,
Lu 12:42;

but his wrath is [against] him that causeth shame; who neglects his business, or does it foolishly; in such a manner as his prince is ashamed of him, and which brings shame and disgrace to himself; all which provokes the anger of his master, who discharges him from his service, and this fixes a mark of infamy upon him; see Lu 12:45.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 15:1

Ver. 1. A soft answer turneth away wrath,.... Mild words, gentle expressions, delivered with kindness and tenderness, humility and submission; these will work upon a man's passions, weaken his resentments, and break and scatter the storm of wrath raised in his breast, just breaking forth in a very boisterous and blustering manner; so high winds are sometimes laid by soft showers. Thus the Ephraimites were pacified by Gideon's mild answer; and David by Abigail's very submissive and respectful address, **Jud 8:1**;

but grievous words stir up anger; such as are rough and menacing, scornful and sneering, reproachful and reviling, proud, haughty, and overbearing; like those of Jephthah to the Ephraimites; and of the Ephraimites to the Gileadites; and of Nabal to David's servants, concerning him; and of Rehoboam, who answered the people roughly: in all which instances anger was stirred up, and either were or like to have been attended with bad consequences, Jud 12:1. Or a "word" causing, or rather expressing, "grief" {r}; upbraiding others with being the cause of grief to them.

{r} bue rbd "verbum vel sermo doloris", Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis; vid. Gussetius, p. 177.

Proverbs 15:2

Ver. 2. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright,.... As the heart of a wise and good man is filled with useful knowledge, civil, moral, spiritual, and evangelical; so he takes care to communicate it, at proper times and seasons, in proper places, and to proper persons; adapting it to their case and circumstances, so as it may be for their comfort, edification, and instruction, and minister grace unto them; which is using knowledge "well", as the word {s} signifies: such an use of it recommends it, and makes it appear beautiful and lovely, decorates and adorns it. Thus every good man, out of the good treasure of knowledge in his heart, brings forth his good things seasonably, to the use of edifying; in like manner, ministers of the word, scribes well instructed in the things of God, bring forth both new and old, to the profit of those to whom they minister; so Christ, as man and Mediator, had the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to weary souls;

but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness; their knowledge, as they take it to be, but it is no other than folly; this they throw out in great plenty, in a hurry, without fear or wit; they "babble" it out, as the word {t} signifies, as water out of a fountain; their hearts are full of it, and their mouths proclaim it, Pr 12:23.

{s} byjyh "utitur bene", Castalio; "pulchre", Vatablus. {t} eyby "effutit, ebullit, fundit", Vatablus; "eructat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ebullit", V. L. Tigurine version, Schultens; "scaturire facit", Michaelis.

Proverbs 15:3

Ver. 3. The eyes of the Lord [are] in every place,.... Which are expressive of his omniscience, of the full, clear, distinct, and perfect knowledge, which he has of all creatures and things; so that nothing is hid from him, but all open and manifest to him; as they are to Christ the essential Word, **Heb 4:13**; and also of the providence of God with respect to all persons in general, and to his own people in particular; and as he is infinite and immense, omnipresent and in all places of the world, so his omniscience and providence reach everywhere, to places most distant and secret, and to persons in them, who cannot be concealed from him, since he fills heaven and earth,
Jer 23:23;

beholding the evil and the good; meaning not evil things and good things, though that is true; the one he beholds with dislike, the other with pleasure; but evil men and good men: he beholds them as from a watch tower, as the word {u} signifies, from above, from heaven, where he is; see Ps 33:13. By "evil" men may be meant both profane sinners and carnal professors; such as are more openly wicked, and declare their sin, as Sodom, or more secretly so; he sees into all the wickedness there is in their hearts, all their secret devices against his people; the works done by them in the dark, as well as their more open ones; and his eyes are upon all of them, to bring them into judgment at the last day: his eyes are particularly on the proud, to abase them; such as are under a disguise of religion, and have a form of godliness, he has his eyes upon; he sees through all their disguises; he knows on what foot they took up their profession; he discerns between that and true grace; he sees how they retain their lusts with their profession; observes the springs and progress of their apostasy; and will fix his eyes on the man without a righteousness, not having on the wedding garment, and order him into outer darkness. He also beholds "good" men; he sees all their bad things, their sins, and corrects them for them; their good things, their graces, and the exercise of them; their good works, the fruits of his own grace; their weaknesses, and supports and strengthens them; their wants, and supplies them; their persons, and never withdraws his eyes from them: these are on them continually, to protect and defend them; nor will he leave them till he has brought them safe to heaven; see 1Ch 16:9.

{u} xwpwu "prospectantes velut a specula", Michaelis; "speculatores", Schultens; "speculantes", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "speculatur", Cocceius.

Proverbs 15:4

Ver. 4. A wholesome tongue [is] a tree of life,.... A tongue that delivers out salutary instructions, wholesome advice and counsel; a "healing tongue" {w}, as it may be rendered, which pacifies contending parties, and heals the divisions between them; to have the benefit of such a man's company and conversation is like being in paradise. Such is the tongue of a Gospel minister, which delivers out the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ; sound speech and doctrines, which cannot be condemned; healing truths to wounded consciences, such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and atonement by the blood of Christ. These are the means of quickening dead sinners, reviving and comforting distressed ones, and show the way of eternal life unto them;

but perverseness therein [is] a breach in the spirit; impure, unchaste, unsavoury, and corrupt language, does mischief to the spirits of men; evil communications corrupt the heart and manners, defile the soul and the conversation; these and unsound doctrines eat as a canker; and as they make the heart of God's people sad, whom he would not have made sad; so they bring distress and despair into the spirits of others, and make sad wounds and breaches there, which are never healed, and that both in the spirits of speakers and hearers; for damnable heresies bring swift destruction on the propagators of them, and them that receive them.

{w} aprm "sanans", so some in Vatablus.

Proverbs 15:5

Ver. 5. A fool despiseth his father's instruction,.... They are fools that despise any instruction that is wise, good, and profitable; and especially a father's instruction, whose love, tender affection, and care, will not suffer him, knowingly, to give any but what is good and wholesome: wherefore to despise it is not only a contempt of his authority, but a slight of his love; which are both very aggravating, and sufficiently demonstrate his folly; and of which he may be himself convinced when it is too late, and say, "how have I hated instruction [and] despised reproof?" **Pr 5:12**. He is a fool that despises the instruction of anyone superior to him in years and experience; of ministers of the word; and especially of our Father which is in heaven, declared in the sacred Scriptures, which are written for instruction in righteousness;

but he that regardeth reproof is prudent; the reproof of a father, whose corrections are to be submitted to, and received with reverence; and especially of the Father of spirits, whose rebukes are in love, and for profit and advantage; yea, he is a wise man that regards the reproof of the word of God, and the ministers of it; and indeed of any Christian, whether his superior, equal, or inferior, as David did,
Ps 141:5.

Proverbs 15:6

Ver. 6. In the house of the righteous [is] much treasure,.... God sometimes blesses the righteous with great riches, as he did Abraham; or, however, if they have but little, it is better than the riches of many wicked; because they have what they have with a blessing, and they are content with it: and they have abundance of spiritual treasure; they have God for their portion; Christ, and all good things along with him; the rich graces of the Spirit; a rich experience of the grace of God; and all this is but a pledge and earnest of what they shall possess hereafter;

but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble; they have much trouble in getting their riches, by which they pierce themselves through with many sorrows; they have much trouble in keeping them; cannot rest nor sleep because of their abundance, lest it should be taken away from them; and they have much trouble in parting with them, when they are, by one providence or another, stripped of them; and, besides, they have them with a curse, and are ever attended with uneasiness, on one account or another.

Proverbs 15:7

Ver. 7. The lips of the wise disperse knowledge,.... Scatter it about for the benefit of others; they are communicative and diffusive of it unto others, that fruit may abound to their account: so the first ministers of the Gospel diffused the savour of the knowledge of Christ and his Gospel in every place; their words went into all the earth, and their sound to the end of the world; and so every Gospel minister will speak according to the oracles of God, and according to the abilities and measure of the gift which he has received; and to the utmost of his power feeds souls with knowledge and understanding;

but the heart of the foolish [doth] not so; does not disperse knowledge, for he has no solid substantial knowledge in him: or, "the heart of the foolish [is] not right" {x}; it is full of folly and wickedness: or "the heart of the foolish [does] not [disperse that which is] right" {y}; true and right things, and the knowledge of them; but, on the contrary, as in Pr 15:2, "pours out foolishness".

{x} Nk al "non erit rectum", Pagninus, Baynus; "non est rectum", Piscator, Mercerus. {y} "Spargit quod abest a recto", Junius & Tremellius, Amama; "eventilant non rectum", Schultens, Cocceius.

Proverbs 15:8

Ver. 8. The sacrifice of the wicked [is] an abomination to the Lord,.... Even those sacrifices which were of divine appointment under the former dispensation, when offered by wicked men, without faith in Christ, without any sense of sin, repentance for it, and reformation from it; when these were used as a cloak for sin, under which they sheltered and satisfied themselves, and went on in sin; when they brought them "with a wicked mind", as in Pr 21:27; when either what they brought were not according to the law, the lame and the blind; or were not their own, but robbery for burnt sacrifice; or supposing that these would atone for their sins of themselves; when either of these, or all this, was the case, it was an abomination to the Lord; see **Isa 1:11**. Wherefore much more must Pagan sacrifices be an abomination to him; which were not of his appointing, and were offered to devils, and not to him; and which were many of them very inhuman and shocking; as giving a man's firstborn for his transgression, and the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul: and so likewise Papal sacrifices, the sacrifice of the mass; the bloodless sacrifice, the offering up again of the body and blood of Christ, they pretend to; which, as it is wicked and blasphemous, is an abomination to the Lord, and perhaps is chiefly intended. Sacrifice may stand for every religious duty performed by a wicked man, being hypocritically done, and with no good view; and all their good works, which seem to be so; and are either not according to the word and will of God, being never commanded by him, of which sort are many among the Papists; or they are not done in faith, and so sin, and do not spring from love to God; but are done with a heart full of enmity to him, and are not directed to his glory: in short, whatever is done by them, let it have ever such an appearance of devotion and goodness; yet if it is placed in the room of Christ, and used to the setting aside of his righteousness, satisfaction, and sacrifice, it is an abomination to the Lord;

but the prayer of the upright [is] his delight: the prayer of such, whose hearts are right with God; who have right spirits renewed in them; are Israelites indeed; have the truth of grace and root of the matter in them; are honest, sincere, and upright in heart: the prayer of such, which is an inwrought one, wrought in his heart by the Spirit of God, and so comes from God, and is his own breathing in him, must be well pleasing to him; that which is fervent, earnest, and importunate, which cometh not out of feigned lips, but from the heart, and is put up with a true heart, in the sincerity of it; the prayer of faith, the cry of the humble; the prayer which is addressed to God as a Father, in the name of Christ the Mediator, which comes perfumed with the incense of his mediation, introduced with the celebration of the divine perfections, contains humble confessions of sin and unworthiness, ascribes all blessings to the grace of God, and expresses thankfulness for favours received, is very acceptable and delightful to God; though it is the prayer of a poor, mean, despicable creature in his own eyes, and in the eyes of others, Ps 102:17. This stands opposed to the pompous rites and ceremonies, the gaudy worship and costly sacrifices, of wicked men; such as used by the Papists.

Proverbs 15:9

Ver. 9. The way of the wicked [is] an abomination unto the Lord,.... The way his heart devises, which he chooses and delights in, in which he walks; nor will he leave it, nor can he be diverted from it, but by the powerful grace of God. This is a way not good, but evil, and so an abomination to the Lord; and the whole tenor and course of his life, which is meant by his way being evil: hence his sacrifices, and all his external duties of religion performed by him, are abominable to the Lord; for, while he continues in a course of sin, all his religious exercises will be of no avail, cannot be pleasing and acceptable to God;

but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness; either after a justifying righteousness; not the righteousness of the law, which the carnal Jews followed after, but did not attain unto; nor is righteousness to be had by the works of the law, nor any justification by it, nor can a man be acceptable to God on account of it; but the righteousness of Christ, which he has wrought out, and is revealed in the Gospel: to follow after this supposes a want of one; a sense of that want; a view of the glory, fulness, suitableness, and excellency of Christ's righteousness; an eager desire after it, sometimes expressed by hungering and thirsting after it, as here by a pursuit of it; which means no other than an earnest and importunate request to be found in it: and such, as they shall be satisfied or filled with it, so they are loved by the Lord, and are acceptable to him through the righteousness they are seeking after: or else it may be understood of following after true holiness of heart and life, without which there is no seeing the Lord; and though perfection in it is not attainable in this live, yet a gracious soul presses after it, which is well pleasing in the sight of God.

Proverbs 15:10

Ver. 10. Correction [is] grievous unto him that forsaketh the way,.... The right way, the way of God; the way of his commandments: the Vulgate Latin version is, "the way of life"; the same with the way of righteousness, which apostates, having known and walked in, turn aside from; see **2Pe 2:15**. And such deserve severe correction, the chastisement of a cruel one, correction in wrath and hot displeasure; which, when they have, is very disagreeable to them; they behave under it like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, and yet they are but dealt righteously with. Or the words may be rendered, "he [has had] bad discipline" or "instruction {z} that forsakes the way"; due care has not been taken of him; he has not been properly instructed, nor seasonably corrected; had he, he would not easily have departed from the way in which he should go; see Pr 22:6. The Targum is,

"the discipline of an evil man causes his way to err;"

or him to err from his way;

[and] he that hateth reproof shall die; that hates the reproof of parents, masters,

and ministers of the word; as he may be said to do that neglects and rejects it, and does not act agreeably to it: and such a man, dying in impenitence and without faith in Christ, dies in his sins; and sometimes shamefully, or a shameful death, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions, or an untimely one; as well as dies the second death, an eternal one.

{z} er rowm "fuit illi mala disciplina, vel castigatio", Baynus.

Proverbs 15:11

Ver. 11. Hell and destruction [are] before the Lord,.... Or "the grave" {a}, which is the pit of destruction; where bodies being put, putrefy, and are destroyed by worms: this is known by the Lord, even the grave of everyone from the beginning; the graves of Adam, Abel, Abraham; he knows where their dust lies, and will raise it up again at the last day. Hades, or the invisible state of the departed, as the Septuagint has it, is manifest before him; he knows where departed spirits are; what their condition and employment be; and so the place and state of the damned, known by the name of "hell"; and may be called "destruction", where soul and body are destroyed by the Lord with an everlasting destruction; and is the destruction which the broad way of sin leads unto. Now though we know not where this place is, who are there, and what the torments endured in it; yet all is before the Lord, and known to him: "tophet" is ordained of old; everlasting fire is prepared by the Lord for devils and wicked men; see Job 26:6;

how much more then the hearts of the children of men? which, though desperately wicked, are known by him; who is the searcher of the hearts and the trier of the reins of the children of men: he to whom hell is naked, and can look into that outer darkness, the blackness of darkness, can look into a man's heart, a second hell, in which all manner of wickedness is, and observe it all; he needs no testimony of man; he knows what is in man, all his secret thoughts, wicked purposes, designs, and devices; see Jer 17:9.

{a} lwav "sepulchrum", Munster, Piscator, Mercerus, so Ben Melech.

Proverbs 15:12

Ver. 12. A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him,.... He that makes a jest of religion; scoffs at godliness and godly men; treats the Gospel and the ministers of it with contempt; makes a mock at good men, and all that is good; a pestilent fellow, as the Vulgate Latin version: such an one not only does not love, for more is intended than is expressed; but hates him that reproves him, and especially if publicly, **Am 5:10**; he thinks ill of him; bears him a grudge, and abhors him; and speaks evil of him, and reproaches him; and does all he can to the injury of his person and name; hence the advice of the wise man, **Pr 9:7**. Some render it, he "loves not reproving himself", or "to reprove himself" {b}; he does not care to look into his own heart and ways, or to call himself to an account for what he does; nor to check himself in the pursuit of sin, nor argue with and reprove himself for it;

neither will he go unto the wise; to the private houses of wise and good men; nor to the house of wisdom, or place of public instruction, where wise dispensers of the word give good advice and counsel; scorners do not choose to go to either, lest they should be reproved for their evil ways, and be advised leave them; neither of which is agreeable to them; see **Joh 3:20**.

{b} wl xkwh "corripere", Gejerus.

Proverbs 15:13

Ver. 13. A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance,.... Or, a "joyful heart" {c}; that is joyful in the God of its salvation; that rejoices in Christ Jesus; is filled with joy and peace through believing in him, in his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; that has a comfortable view of his justification by his righteousness, of peace and pardon by his blood, of the atonement of his sins by his sacrifice; to whom he has said, "be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee", **Mt 9:2**; who has peace in him, though tribulation in the world: as such a man's heart must be made glad, this will make his countenance cheerful, or cause him to lift up his head with joy; as it is in natural things, so it is in spiritual ones;

but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken; a man is dejected, his spirits sink, and it is seen in his countenance: there is a great sympathy between the body and mind, the one is much affected by the other; when the heart is full of sorrow, the animal spirits are low, the nerves are loosened, the whole frame, of nature is enfeebled, and the body emaciated; this is often the case through outward troubles {d}: physicians say {e} that grief weakens the strength, and destroys the spirits, more than labour does. "The sorrow of the world worketh death", **2Co 7:10**; and sometimes, through spiritual troubles, a sense of sin and

guilt of it, a legal sorrow, which produces a legal contrition of spirit; and such "a wounded spirit who can bear?"
Pr 18:14. This is the effect of a mere work of the law upon the conscience; and stands opposed to the spiritual joy, and the effects of it, the Gospel brings.

{c} xmv bl "cor gaudens", V. L. Baynus. {d} "Frangit fortia corda dolor", Tibullus, l. 3. Eleg. 2. v. 6. {e} Fernel. Method. Medendi, l. 7. c. 9. p. 54.

Proverbs 15:14

Ver. 14. The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge,.... He that has in his heart an understanding of divine and spiritual things, of the Gospel and of the truths of it, will seek earnestly and diligently in the use of proper means after more knowledge; as he will desire to know more of Christ, his person, offices, and grace, he will follow on to know him, and not be content with the present degree of knowledge he has attained unto; he will hear and read the word, and pray and meditate, in order to come to a more perfect knowledge of the son of God, and of those things which relate to his spiritual peace and eternal welfare;

but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness; on foolish talking and jesting; on foolish and unlearned questions; on foolish and false doctrines; on foolish and hurtful lusts; on wind and ashes, a deceived heart having turned them aside: they take pleasure and satisfaction in those things; feed their fancy with them and feast upon them, which shows what fools they are; and such all unregenerate men be.

Proverbs 15:15

Ver. 15. All the days of the afflicted [are] evil,.... And some are afflicted all their days, from their youth up; so that not only the days of old age are evil days, in which they have no pleasure, but even the days of their youth; all their days, as Jacob says, "few and evil have the days of the years of my life been", Ge 47:9; because they had been filled up with affliction and trouble of one sort or another. Or, "all the days of the poor" {f}; either in purse, who want many of the good things of life; or in knowledge, as Gersom and Aben Ezra observe;

but he that is of a merry heart [hath] a continual feast; a heart that has "the kingdom of God" in it, which lies "not [in] meat and drink, but [in] righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost", Ro 14:17: which has the love of God shed abroad in it by the Spirit, where Christ dwells by faith; and that lives by faith on him, and on the provisions of his grace; all this is a constant continual feast to a gracious soul, made joyful hereby.

{f} yne "pauperis", V. L. Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 15:16

Ver. 16. Better [is] little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. Not that a "little" is better than "much" of that which is good, as the things of this world are in themselves; poverty is not better than riches, simply considered; but as these are attended with different circumstances: if a man has but little of worldly substance, yet if he has "the fear of God" in his heart, and before his eyes; that fear which has God for its author and for its object, and which is itself a treasure; and may be here put for all grace, for the riches of grace saints are partakers of; such a man's little is better than another man's abundance without the fear of the Lord, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it: for such a man, though he has but little, which is the common portion of good men, yet he does not lack; be has enough, and is content; what he has he has with a blessing, and he enjoys it, and God in it, and has communion with him; and has also other bread to eat, the world knows nothing of: and particularly having the fear of God, the eve of God is upon him with pleasure; his heart is towards him, and sympathizes with him in all his troubles; his hand communicates unto him both temporal and spiritual meat, which is given to them that fear the Lord; his angels encamp about him, his power protects him; his secrets are with him, and inconceivable and inexpressible goodness is laid up for him: wherefore he is better off with his little, having the fear of God, than another with his great abundance and affluence, being destitute of it: and besides, having a great deal of "trouble" along with his treasure; trouble in amassing and getting it together; trouble in keeping it from being lost, or taken away by thieves and, robbers, for fear of which he cannot sleep; trouble through an insatiable desire of having more; he has no rest nor peace because he has not so much as he would have, or others have. Besides, he has what he has with curse; God sends upon him cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all he sets his hand to, De 28:2; where the same word is used as here: and he has it also with the cry of the poor; so some render the word, "a noise" or "tumult" {g}; and interpret it of the cries and tears of those that are oppressed and injured; so Jarchi and Gersom; or, "with terror" {h}, as some render it; with the terrors of a guilty conscience, with the fear of hell and everlasting damnation. Better have a little with a good conscience, than ever so much attended with such circumstances; it is not any man's little, but the good man's little, that is preferable to the wicked man's much; see Ps 37:16.

{g} hmwhm "tumultus", Tigurine version, Montanus, Vatablus; "strepitus", Mercerus. {h} "Terror", Aben Ezra.

Proverbs 15:17

Ver. 17. Better [is] a dinner of herbs, where love is,.... What Plautus {i} calls "asperam et terrestrem caenam", "a harsh and earthly supper", made of what grows out of the earth; which is got without much cost or care, and dressed with little trouble; a traveller's dinner, as the word {k} signifies, and a poor one too to travel upon, such as is easily obtained, and presently cooked, and comes cheap. Now, where there are love and good nature in the host that prepares this dinner; or in a family that partakes of such an one, having no better; or among guests invited, who eat friendly together; or in the person that invites them, who receives them cheerfully, and heartily bids them welcome: such a dinner, with such circumstances, is better

than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith; than an ox kept up in the stall for fattening; or than a fatted one, which with the ancients was the principal in a grand entertainment; hence the allusion in Mt 22:4. In the times of Homer, an ox was in high esteem at their festivals; at the feasts made by his heroes, Agamemnon, Menelaus, and Ajax, an ox was a principal part of them, if not the whole; the back of a fat ox, or a sirloin of beef, was a favourite dish {l}. Indeed in some ages, both among Greeks and Romans, an ox was abstained from, through a superstitious regard to it, because so useful a creature in ploughing of the land; and it was carried so far as to suppose it to be as sinful to slay an ox as to kill a man {m}: and Aratus {n} represents it as not done, neither in the golden nor silver age, but that in the brasen age men first began to kill and eat oxen; but this is to be confuted by the laws of God, **Ge 9:3**; and by the examples of Abraham and others. Now if there is hatred, either in the host, or in the guests among themselves, or in a family, it must stir up strifes and contentions, and render all enjoyments unpleasant and uncomfortable; see Pr 17:1; but where the love of God is, which is better than life, and the richest enjoyments of it; which sweetens every mercy, and cannot be purchased with money; and secures the best of blessings, the riches of grace and glory, and itself can never be lost; where this is, the meanest diet is preferable to the richest and most costly banquets of wicked men; who are hated and abhorred by the Lord, for their oppression and injustice, their luxury, or their covetousness; for poor men may be loved of God, and the rich be abhorred by him, Ps 10:4.

{i} Capteivei, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 80. &. 3. Sc. 1. v. 37. {k} txra "viaticum", Montanus, Amama; "commeatus", Cocceius. {l} Iliad. 7. v. 320, 321. Odyss. 4. v. 65. & 8. v. 60. Vid. Suidam in voce omhrov. Virgil. Aeneid. 8. v. 182. {m} Aelian. l. 5. c. 14. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 45. {n} Phoenomena, v. 132.

Proverbs 15:18

Ver. 18. A wrathful man stirreth up strife,.... A man of a wrathful disposition, of a furious spirit, of an angry temper; that is under the power and dominion of such a passion, and indulges it, and takes all opportunities to gratify it; he stirs up strife and contention where there was none, or where it was laid; as a man stirs up coals of fire and raises a flame; see Pr 26:21. He stirs up strife in families, sets one relation against another, and the house in an uproar; he stirs up contentions in neighbourhoods, and sets one friend and neighbour against another, whence proceed quarrels and lawsuits: he stirs up strife in churches, breaks brotherly love, and causes animosities and divisions; he stirs up strife in kingdoms and states, whence come wars and fightings, confusion, and every evil work;

but [he that is] slow to anger appeaseth strife: a man of a quiet and peaceable disposition, possessed of the true grace of charity; who is not easily provoked, longsuffering, bears and endures all things; he allays the heat of anger; he quenches the coals of contention; he calms the storm and makes it quiet, as the word {o} signifies; he

"mitigates strifes raised,"

as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; he composes differences, reconciles the parties at variance, and makes all hush and still; and so prevents the ill consequences of contention and strife.

{o} jyqvy "faciet quiescere", Pagninus, Montanus; "sedat", Mercerus, Michaelis; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; "sedabit", Schultens.

Proverbs 15:19

Ver. 19. The way of the slothful [man is] as an hedge of thorns,.... Or, "strewed with thorns", as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; the Targum is,

"the ways of the slothful are briers and thorns."

Either really being made so by his own conduct; who, by his slothfulness, has implicated and entangled himself in such difficulties, that he cannot extricate himself; his way is not passable, at least not very easily; it is as it were hedged up with thorns; see **Ho 2:6**; or in his own apprehensions; who raises such difficulties about doing business, which to him seem insurmountable; at least which discourage him from attempting it, it being like breaking through thorns and briers; hence he will not plough because of the cold, nor go abroad because there is a lion in the streets,
Pr 20:4; or the way of his duty, especially of virtue and religion, is as troublesome and disagreeable to him as breaking through a thorn hedge, or treading upon briers and thorns; to attend the duties of public worship, prayer, and hearing the word, is very irksome to him; to be present at family worship, at prayer, and hearing the Scriptures or religious discourses read, is like sitting upon thorns unto him. This, as Aben Ezra observes, is to be understood of a wicked man, as the opposition in the next clause shows;

but the way of the righteous [is] made plain: it is a castup way, as the word {p} signifies; a causeway, a highway, and a plain one, in which a truly righteous and good man finds no difficulty; yea, it is so plain, that men, though fools in other respects, shall not err therein,
Isa 35:8; nor is it grievous and troublesome, but, on the contrary, very delightful, as the ways of Christ and wisdom are; his commandments are not grievous, his yoke is easy, and his paths pleasant; and the righteous man walks at liberty and with pleasure in them; and without offence or stumbling, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it.

{p} hllo "aggestum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "eleveta", Mercerus, Gejerus; "strata", Montanus.

Proverbs 15:20

Ver. 20. A wise son maketh a glad father,....
See Gill on "Pr 10:1";

but a foolish man despiseth his mother; that bore him and brought him up, and perhaps was too indulgent to him; which aggravates his sin and her sorrow; See Gill on "Pr 10:1"; or causes her to be despised by others, as Jarchi interprets it; such a man's sin, which is great folly, and shows him to be a foolish man, is highly resented by the Lord, and will be severely punished; see Pr 30:17. The Targum is,

"a foolish son despises his mother;"

and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, which makes the antithesis more clear; and the Hebrew text designs one grown up to man's estate.

Proverbs 15:21

Ver. 21. Folly [is] joy to [him that is] destitute of wisdom,.... Or "that wants a heart" {q}, a wise and understanding one; by "folly" is meant sin, for all sin is folly; and that is very pleasing and joyous to a wicked he chooses it and delights in it; instead of being ashamed of it, and sorry for it, he glories in it, and makes his boast of it; and not only takes pleasure in committing it himself, but also in those that do it; see Pr 10:23;

but a man of understanding walketh uprightly; he who has his understanding enlightened by the Spirit of God; who has an understanding given him by the Son of God; who has a spiritual and experimental understanding of the Gospel, and the truths of it: he walks according to the rule of the divine word; he walks as he has Christ for an example, and by faith on him; and after the spirit, and not after the flesh: or "directs himself in walking" {r}, his goings, as the Vulgate Latin version, according to the above rule, example, and guidance, by the assistance of the spirit and grace of God; otherwise it is not in man that walketh of himself to direct his steps,
Jer 10:23.

{q} bl roxl "carenti corde", Montanus; "ei qui deficitur", Schultens. {r} tkl rvyy "diriget seipsum ambulando", Montanus; "diriget ambulare, vel ad ambulandum", Vatablus; "diriget viam suam ad ambulandum", Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 15:22

Ver. 22. Without counsel purposes are disappointed,.... If a man determines and resolves upon a matter, and at once hastily and precipitately goes about it, without mature deliberation, without consulting with himself, and taking the advice of others in forming a scheme to bring about his designs, it generally comes to nothing; see
Lu 14:28; or "without a secret" {s} without keeping one; if a man divulges his intentions, it is much if they are not frustrated; so the Targum,

"vain are the thoughts (or designs) where there is no secret;"

if a man makes no secret of what he designs to do, he is easily counterworked, and his purposes disappointed;

but in the multitude of counsellors they are established; his purposes are, as in Pr 20:18; having the advice of others, and these many, he is confirmed that he is right in what he has thought of and purposed to do; and therefore goes about it with the greater spirit and cheerfulness, and is most likely to succeed, and generally does; see
Pr 11:14.

{s} dwo Nyab "in non secreto", Montanus; "cum non sit secretum", Baynus; "quum nullum est arcanum", Schultens; "ubi non est secretum", Cocceius.

Proverbs 15:23

Ver. 23. A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth,.... When his advice is asked, and he gives good and wholesome counsel, and that being taken succeeds; it is a pleasure to a man that he is capable of assisting his friend, and doing him service, or a common good, whether it be in things natural, civil, or religious; when his speech is with salt, seasoned with grace, and he knows how he ought to answer every man; when that which is good proceeds from him, and is to the use of edifying, and ministers grace to the hearers, and is acceptable to them; when with readiness he gives an answer to every man that asks him a reason of the hope that is in him, with meekness and fear, **Col 3:6 Eph 4:29**;

and a word [spoken] in due season, how good [is it]? whether by way of advice and counsel to such who stand in need of it, or of exhortation and instruction to those that want it, or of comfort to those that are distressed; such is a word of promise spoken and applied by the Spirit of God to the hearts of his people in a time of need; and such is the Gospel of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation, as spoken by Christ and his ministers to weary and wounded souls; it cannot be well and fully expressed how sweet, how good, how suitable, as well as seasonable, it is: see Pr 25:11.

Proverbs 15:24

Ver. 24. The way of life [is] above to the wise,.... Of "the way of life"; See Gill on "Pr 10:17"; this is said to be "above", or it tends "to [what is] above"; it leads to heaven and happiness above; the life itself it is the way of or to is above, it is hid with Christ in God; eternal life, glory, and happiness, is above; it is a house eternal in the heavens, an inheritance reserved there, and will be there enjoyed by the saints: the way to it is above; Christ is the way, and he is in heaven, at the Father's right hand, through whom only men can come at this life; wherefore those who are in the way of it have their thoughts, their hearts, their affections and conversations, above, **Mt 6:21**. Faith, which deals with Christ the way, and by which men walk in him, is signified by soaring aloft, mounting up with wings as eagles, by entering within the vail, and dwelling on high, and by looking upwards, and at things unseen, and being the evidence of them. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "the way of life is above the learned man", or wise man; the man that has no other than natural learning and wisdom, this way of life and salvation by Christ lies out of his knowledge; it is what the most sagacious and penetrating man could never discover; it is hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes; or this is only known to such who are truly wise unto salvation; it is plain to them, and they highly esteem it, and choose to walk in it; it is an "ascent to him that understands", as the Syriac version renders it; it is a going up hill, it is an ascending upwards and heavenwards; such a man is continually looking upwards unto Christ, the author and finisher of his faith; pressing towards him, the mark for the prize; keeping his eye, not on things on earth, things temporal, which are seen here below, but on things above, things unseen, which are eternal in the heavens;

that he may depart from hell beneath; not from the grave, as "sheol" sometimes signifies: for wise men die as well as fools, and come to the grave, which is the house appointed for all living; even those who are in the way of life that is above do not escape death and the grave: but such are secured from everlasting ruin and destruction, from being destroyed soul and body in hell; they steer quite a different course and road from that; every step they take upwards carries them so far off from hell; which is the contrary way; the broad road of sin is the lower way, or what leads to hell and destruction beneath; the narrow way of faith in Christ is the upper way, and that leads to eternal life above.

Proverbs 15:25

Ver. 25. The Lord will destroy the house of the proud,.... To whom he has the utmost aversion; he sets himself against them and resists them, and will not only destroy them, but their stately houses too, which their have fancied shall continue for ever; and also their families, their children and posterity; these shall be as stubble, and shall be burnt up in his wrath, and neither root nor branch left. Moreover, the man of sin, the son of perdition, may be more especially intended, that exalts himself above all that is called God, with all the sons of pride supported by him; his house, which is the house of the foolish and adulterous woman, the idolatrous church of Rome, shall be rooted up; the city of Rome, the seat of the beast itself, where his house or palace is, shall be destroyed, and all that belong unto him, even all they that have destroyed the earth, Re 11:18;

but he will establish the border of the widow; whose advocate, judge, and defender he is; when men, rich, proud, and oppressive, attempt to remove the landmark of the widow's border, and so lessen her land and enlarge their own, God will not suffer it to be done, but will establish it in its place; that is, such who are weak and helpless, as widows are, and cannot defend themselves and their property, he will protect them and secure it for them. So the church of Christ, during the reign of antichrist, being obliged to flee into the wilderness, looks like a widow deprived of her husband, and has but "little strength" to support and defend herself, as is said of the church of Philadelphia, **Re 3:8**; yet the Lord will secure and preserve her, and firmly settle and establish her, yea, enlarge her borders, and make them of pleasant stones; spread the kingdom of Christ from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. Frequent mention is made of the establishing of the church in the latter day, Ps 48:8 **Isa 2:2**.

Proverbs 15:26

Ver. 26. The thoughts of the wicked [are] an abomination to the Lord,.... They are known unto the Lord, who is the searcher of the heart, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of it; he knows they are vain and sinful, yea, that they are only evil, and that continually, and therefore are hateful and abominable to him; it may be rendered "the thoughts of evil", as by the Targum; or evil thoughts, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and the Oriental versions; but Aben Ezra interprets as we, the thoughts of a wicked man, which are never otherwise but evil; whereas in a good man, though there are many evil thoughts which are abominable to himself, yet there are some good thoughts, and which are pleasing to the Lord, as follows;

but [the words] of the pure [are] pleasant words; that is, unto the Lord; which are the same with their thoughts, and are the effect of them, and so stand opposed to the thoughts of the wicked; these, expressed either in a way of prayer or of praise, are sweet and pleasant, and acceptable unto God through Christ; as likewise their words and discourse in religious conversation, which also minister grace unto the hearer, and are very delightful and pleasing to saints; the words may be supplied thus, "but [the thoughts] of the pure", of such who are pure in heart, whose hearts are purified by faith in the blood of Christ, are "words of pleasantness", so Gersom; there is a language in thought which is known to a man's self, and by the Lord; there is the meditation or discourse of the heart, and this being about divine and spiritual things is pleasing to God; he hearkens to it, and writes a book of remembrance for them that fear him, and have thought on his name; see Ps 19:14.

Proverbs 15:27

Ver. 27. He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house,.... Or "that covets a covetousness" {t}, an evil one, as in **Hab 2:9**; that seeks riches by unlawful means, that gathers the mammon of falsehood, or unrighteousness, as the Targum; he entails a curse and brings ruin and destruction upon his family; the Septuagint and Arabic versions are, he "destroys himself"; or "his own soul", as the Syriac version; it may be understood of a man that is over anxious and eager to be rich, and hurries on business, and gives his servants no proper time for food and rest; See Gill on "Pr 11:29";

but he that hateth gifts shall live; that rejects them with abhorrence, when offered to bribe him to pervert judgment, or to do an unjust thing; otherwise gifts may be lawfully received from one friend by another; the sin is when they are given and taken for the sake of doing what is base and sinful; and a man that shakes his hand from receiving gifts on such a basis, he and his family shall prosper and increase in worldly things; and, doing this from a right principle of grace, shall live comfortably in a spiritual sense, and thrive and flourish in his soul, and live an eternal life hereafter; see Ps 16:5.

{t} eub euwb "appetens concupiscentiam", Montanus; "qui avaritiam inhiat" Tigurine version; "concupiscens concupiscentiam", Vatablus.

Proverbs 15:28

Ver. 28. The heart of the righteous studieth to answer,.... He thinks before he speaks, meditates what he shall say, what answer to give to men; whether in things civil, natural, or religious; and what to return to the Lord when he is reproved by him; or what to say in prayer to him, or by way of thankfulness for mercies received from him; see **Pr 3:6**; though our Lord advises his disciples, when summoned before their persecutors, not to meditate beforehand what they should answer, since they should have immediate assistance, Lu 21:14; but this was in extraordinary cases; in common ones the observation of the wise man should be attended to. A Jewish {u} writer renders the words, "the heart of the righteous meditates wormwood", or bitter things; see **Pr 5:4**; as the judgment of God, death, and hell; this sense is mentioned by Aben Ezra, but rejected;

but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things; without any previous thought and consideration, without fear or wit; in great abundance, as water out of a fountain; thus an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil things readily and at once, having no concern about the consequences of things, Mt 12:25;
See Gill on "Pr 15:2".

{u} Kabvenaki.

Proverbs 15:29

Ver. 29. The Lord [is] far from the wicked,.... Not as to his essence or powerful presence, which is everywhere, for he is God omnipresent; but with respect to his favour and good will, he is far from helping in distress, and from hearing their cries when they apply unto him in desperate circumstances; nor does he admit them to nearness and communion with him now, as he does the righteous; nor will he receive them to himself at the last day, but bid them depart from him; they are far from him and from his law, and from all righteousness; and he is far from them, and keeps them at a distance from him;

but he heareth the prayer of the righteous; they draw nigh to him, and he draws nigh to them; he is nigh to all that call upon him in truth; and there is none like them that has God so nigh them as they have; his eyes are upon them, and his ears are open to their cries; he is a God hearing and answering their prayers, and bestows upon them the favours they ask for, and stand in need of.

Proverbs 15:30

Ver. 30. The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart,.... Not so much the visive power, the faculty of seeing, a strong and clear eyesight; though this is a great mercy, and from the Lord, and to be prized, and does give joy of heart; but rather the objects seen by the light of the eyes, as Jarchi; as green gardens, flowing rivers, pleasant meadows, rising hills, lowly vales, herbs, plants, trees, birds, beasts, and creatures of every kind; nor is the eye ever satisfied with seeing; especially light itself beheld rejoiceth the heart, and particularly that grand luminary and fountain of light, the sun. "Light is sweet", says the wise man, Ec 11:7, "and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun", which is a proper comment on this text: and much more pleasant and delightful, cheering and rejoicing, must be the spiritual light of the eyes of the understanding, when opened by the Spirit of God at conversion; it is marvellous light souls are then called into, and wonderful things do they then behold, which rejoice their hearts; as Christ the sun of righteousness himself, the light of the world, the glories of his person and office, the fulness of grace that is in him, pardon of sin by his blood, justification by his righteousness, and free and full salvation through him for the worst and chief of sinners: in the light which is thrown into them they see light; the light of God's countenance, his face and favour, which put gladness into them; the light of the divine word, and the precious truths of it; yea, the light, joy, and happiness of the world to come, in the hope of which their hearts rejoice. Jarchi mystically interprets this of the light of the eyes in the law; but it is much better to understand it of the light of the eyes in the Gospel, and the mysteries of it;

[and] a good report maketh the bones fat; or "a good hearing" {w}; not the sense of hearing, or a quick exercise of that, though a very great blessing; but things heard. Some understand this of a good or "fame" {x}, which is sometimes the sense of the phrase; either a good report which a man hears of himself, which makes his spirit cheerful; and this affects his body and the juices of it, which fill his bones with marrow, and cover them with fatness; or which he hears of his friends, and is pleasing to him, as it was to the Apostle

John that Demetrius had a good report of all men, **3Jo 1:12**. But rather this is to be understood of the good news, or good hearing, from a far country, as the same phrase is rendered in Pr 25:25; and here in the Arabic version is so translated, even the Gospel, which is a report; see
Isa 53:1; a report concerning God, the perfections of his nature, the purposes of his heart, the covenant of his grace, his love, grace, and mercy towards men in Christ Jesus; a "report" concerning Christ, concerning his person and offices, concerning his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death; concerning his resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of God, intercession for his people, and second coming to judgment; and concerning salvation, peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by him; a report concerning the good land, the heavenly Canaan, and the glories of it, the way unto it, and the persons that shall possess it: and this is a "good" report; it is good tidings of good things, a report of good things laid up in covenant, which are come by Christ the great High Priest, which saints are interested in, and shall partake of here and hereafter; it is a true report, and to be believed, since it is made by God himself, by Jesus Christ the faithful witness, and by the apostles of Christ, who were eye and ear witnesses of the things they reported; and such a report being heard, received, and embraced, greatly contributes to the spiritual health and prosperity of the children of God, it makes them fat and flourishing; such pleasant words are as the honeycomb, sweet to the soul, make glad the heart, and are marrow and health to the bones; see **Pr 3:8**.

{w} hbwj hewmv "auditus bona", Vatablus; "auditio bona", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius. {x} "Fama bona", V. L. Tigurine version, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 15:31

Ver. 31. The ear that heareth the reproof of life,.... That is given according to the word of life, in a warm, fervent, and lively manner, with zeal, and in good earnest; which reproves the life of another by his own, as well as by words; and which tends to the spiritual and eternal life of the person reproved; being taken, a man that diligently hearkens to, kindly and cordially receives, and cheerfully obeys such reproof given him,

abideth among the wise; he not only chooseth to be among them, that he may have the advantage of their wise counsels and reproofs, but he becomes wise himself thereby, and attains to the character of a wise man, and is numbered among them; such a man abides in the house of wisdom, the church of God, and attends upon and has conversation with the wise dispensers of the word, and shall have a part with them in the church above, in the kingdom of heaven, where the wise will shine as the firmament; the word here used does not denote a lodging for a night, as it sometimes signifies, but a perpetual abiding.

Proverbs 15:32

Ver. 32. He that refuseth instruction,.... The instruction of parents, masters, ministers, and of God himself; or "correction" {y}, instruction either by the word or by the rod; he that withdraws himself from it, will not be in the way of it, that shuns, neglects, and despises it, or carelessly and contemptuously attends it:

despiseth his own soul; shows that he makes no account of it, has no regard for it or care about it, when it is so precious a jewel, and the loss of it irreparable; not that a man can strictly and properly despise his soul, but comparatively, having a greater regard for his body, and especially for his carnal lusts and pleasures, than for that; or as a man diseased and refuses proper medicines may be said to despise his health;

but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding; or "a heart" {z}; he gets understanding by listening to reproof, and behaving according to it; he better understands himself and his case, what he should shun and avoid, what he should receive, embrace, and do; instead of losing his soul, as the man that refuses correction does, he finds the life of it, and possesses it, and with it a large share of experience and spiritual wisdom.

{y} rowm "correctionem", Pagninus, Vatablus; "qui abstrahit se a castigatione", Piscator. {z} bl "cor", Pagninus, Piscator, Schultens, Michaelis.

Proverbs 15:33

Ver. 33. The fear of the Lord [is] the instruction of wisdom,.... It is "the beginning of wisdom", **Pr 9:10**; it leads unto it, instructs a man in it; by means of it he attains to true spiritual and evangelical wisdom; it teaches him to abstain from sin, and to serve the Lord; and to seek the salvation of his soul in the way God has appointed, which is by his Son Jesus Christ, which to do is the highest wisdom;

and before honour [is] humility; the fear of God and humility go together, where the one is the other is; and as the one is the way to wisdom, the other is the way to glory; Christ's humiliation was before his exaltation; men are first humbled and laid low in their own eyes, and then they are raised out of their low estate, and are set among princes; and shall inherit the throne of glory, being made kings and priests unto God; it is a frequent saying of Christ's, "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted", Lu 14:11; such an one is raised to a high estate of grace, and at last to eternal glory.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 16:1

Ver. 1. The preparations of the heart in man,.... The sense of these words, according to our version, depends upon the next clause, and the meaning of the whole is, that a man can neither think nor speak without God: the "orderings" or "marshallings of the heart" {a}, as it may be rendered; that is, of the thoughts of the heart, which are generally irregular and confused; the ranging them in order, as an army in battle array, or as things regularly placed on a well furnished table; the fixing them on any particular subject, though about things civil and natural, so as closely to attend to them, and proceed in a regular manner in the consideration of them, are not without the concurrence of divine Providence: and whereas the thoughts of men's hearts are evil, and that continually, and nothing but evil thoughts naturally proceed from thence; the ordering and marshalling of them, and fixing them to the attention and consideration of divine and spiritual things, are not without the supernatural grace of God; for we cannot think a good thought of ourselves, nor indeed anything of ourselves in a spiritual manner, **2Co 3:5**; all preparations for religious service and duty, whether it be to pray unto God, or to preach in his name, are from the Lord; it is he that works in men both "to will and to do"; that gives them the willing mind, or a suitable frame for service, as well as ability to perform it; that pours out the Spirit of grace and supplication on them, and disposes and directs their minds to proper petitions, and furnishes his ministering servants in their studies with agreeable matter for their ministrations, Ps 10:17;

and the answer of the tongue [is] from the Lord; who made man's mouth, and teaches him what to say, both before God and man; what he shall say in prayer to him, or in preaching to others; for the "door of utterance" in either service is from him, as well as the preparation for it: most versions and interpreters make these clauses distinct, the one as belonging to men, the other to God; thus, "to men [belong] the preparations of the heart, but from the Lord is the answer" or "[speech] of the tongue"; the former is said by way of concession, and according to the opinion of men; and the sense may be, be it so, that man has the marshalling and ordering of his own thoughts, and that he can lay things together in his mind, and think pertinently and properly on a subject, and is capable of preparing matter for a discourse; yet it is as easy to observe, that men can better form ideas of things in their minds, the they can express their sense and meaning; and though they may be ever so well prepared to speak, yet they are not able to do it, unless the Lord gives them utterance, and assists their memories; they lose what they had prepared, or deliver it in a disorderly and confused manner, and sometimes think to say one thing, and say another; their tongues are overruled by the Lord to say what they never intended, as in the cases of Balaam and Caiaphas. The Targum is,

"from man is the counsel of the heart, and from the Lord is the speech of the tongue."

{a} bl ykrem "dispositiones sive ordinationes", Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis; "instructiones adversae aciei in corde", Schultens.

Proverbs 16:2

Ver. 2. All the ways of a man [are] clean in his own eyes,.... All right and well, not only some, but all, having a high opinion of himself; for this is to be understood of a self-righteous man, who is pure in his own eyes, though not cleansed from his filthiness, and so fancies every way he walks in, and everything he does, is pure; this is owing to want of knowledge of the impurity of his nature; was he sensible of this, he would see that his best righteousness is as filthy rags and to his ignorance of the spirituality of the law, which, was he acquainted with, he would find, on comparing himself with it, that he and all he did was polluted and unclean: some read the words, "all the ways of a pure man [are] before his eyes": the eyes of the Lord, he sees them, and approves of them; so Aben Ezra; and to this agrees the Septuagint version, "all the works of an humble man [are] manifest with God"; and the Arabic version, "all the works of an humble man are clean before God"; but the former reading and sense seem best;

but the Lord weigheth the spirits; searches and tries the hearts; he sees, knows, and observes the principles of all actions, and can as exactly adjust the nature and quality of them, as a man, with a pair of scales in his hands, can tell precisely the weight of anything put into them; the Lord weighs the spirits, or hearts, from whence all actions flow, by his omniscience, and accordingly judges of them by that, and not by the outward appearance; and he weighs all actions by his law, in the balance of the sanctuary, where they are found wanting, and come greatly short of that purity and perfection pharisaical persons imagine there is in them.

Proverbs 16:3

Ver. 3. Commit thy works unto the Lord,.... Natural, civil, or religious; seek to him for strength and assistance in all, and leave the success of all with him: or "roll thy works on" or "unto the Lord" {b}; devolve all upon him, cast all care upon him and his providence for supply, support, and sustenance in life; and commit the business of the salvation of thy soul, and the important affairs of it, wholly to him, who is able, willing, and faithful, to keep what is committed to him; and, having so done, may sit down easy and satisfied, as one that is rid of a burden by casting it on another, better able to bear it, or more equal to the work committed to him: the Targum is, "reveal thy works to God"; and so the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions, "reveal thy works to the Lord"; thy case, condition, and circumstances; thy wants and necessities; seek and ask for a supply of him, make known thy requests to him; for though he is not ignorant of the affairs of his people, yet he will be sought unto to do the things for them he intends to do, and they stand in need of;

and thy thoughts shall be established; when a man has, by faith and in prayer, committed himself, his case, his ways and works, to the Lord, his mind is made easy, his thoughts are composed and settled, and he quietly waits the issues of things; he says, the will of the Lord be done; he knows that he causes all things to work together for good; and whatever is for his good and God's glory shall be brought to pass; and this makes him calm, sedate, and easy; and he is in a fair way of having his designs, desires, and endeavours accomplished; see Ps 37:5.

{b} Kyvem hwhy la lg "devolve in Jehovam facta tua", Junius & Tremellius; "negotia tua", Piscator; "volve in Dominum quae tibi facieuda sunt", Michaelis; "volve ad Jehovam opera tua", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; so Mercerus, Gejerus, Schultens, Tigurine version.

Proverbs 16:4

Ver. 4. The Lord hath made all [things] for himself,.... This is true of the Lord with respect to the creation of all things by him. All things are made by him, the heaven, earth, and sea; and all that are in them, angels, men, beasts, birds, fishes, and all creatures: and these are made for himself, and not another; not for the pure or good men, as Aben Ezra, though all things are for the elect's sake; but for God himself, besides whom there was no other before the creation, nor is there any other God but him, who is the first cause and last end of all things: nor were those all things made for him, through any want he had of them, being God all sufficient and blessed for evermore, but to show his greatness, and communicate his goodness; they are made for his service, which all creatures are obliged unto, and whom all in their way obey, and for his honour and glory. It is also true of his works of providence, and of his ordering and disposing of all things in the course of that, to answer ends of his own glory; his kingdom of providence rules over all; there is a general providence, which respects all creatures and things; and there is a particular providence attending the Lord's own people; and in all the glory of his wisdom, justice, truth, and goodness, is conspicuous: but this is chiefly, if not solely, to be understood of God's decrees and purposes; and of his ordering and appointing all things to bring about his own glory. Every thing is appointed of God; he has foreordained whatever comes to pass; there is a purpose for everything under the heavens, and a time fixed for the execution of it. Junius restrains it to "all men"; but it is true of all creatures and things, though especially men: all things are appointed by the Lord, respecting the temporal estate of men; their birth, and the time of it, with all the circumstances attending it; the place of their abode, their calling, station of life, and usefulness; all adverse and prosperous dispensations; their death, with all the events leading to it: and so likewise all things respecting their spiritual and eternal estate; the choice of them to salvation; their redemption by Christ; the time of his coming, sufferings, and death, and the circumstances thereof; the conversion of God's elect, the time, place, and means; these are all according to the purpose of God; as are also all their times of affliction, temptation, desertion, and of joy and comfort. In a word, the final state of all men, good and bad, is fixed by the Lord; and all this is "for himself", which some render, "to answer to himself" {c}; all creatures are made to answer to his original design in making them, to the laws of their creation, and to answer his ends and purposes; and which is ultimately his own glory: or for his praise, as Jarchi; for his will and pleasure, as R. Isaac; for the thing in which he is well pleased, as R. Jonah or for his own sake, as Kimchi; and all which agree, as with the sense of the words, so with **Re 4:11**. The Targum and Syriac version very wrongly render them, "all the works of God, or the Lord, are for them that obey him;"

yea, even the wicked for the day of evil; this is added to illustrate the general proposition in the preceding clause, and to obviate an objection, that might be taken from the destruction of the wicked, against all things being for the glory of God; for even the destruction of the wicked, which is under a divine appointment, is for his glory. It is not the sense of this text, nor of any other passage of Scripture, that God made man to damn him; nor is this to be inferred from the doctrine of predestination: God made man, neither to damn him, nor to save him, but for his own glory; and that is secured, whether in his salvation or damnation; nor did or does God make men wicked; he made man upright, and he has made himself wicked; and, being so, God may justly appoint him to damnation for his wickedness, in doing which he glorifies his justice. "The day of evil", or "evil day", is the day of wrath and ruin, unto which wicked men are reserved by the appointment of God, agreeably to the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. This is true of wicked angels, wicked men, and particularly of that wicked one, the man of sin and son of perdition, antichrist; the word here used is in the singular number.

{c} whneml "ad responsum suum", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaells; "ad responsum proprium ejus", Gussetius, p. 623. "ad responsum sui", Schultens.

Proverbs 16:5

Ver. 5. Every one [that is] proud in heart [is] an abomination to the Lord,.... Though he may dissemble his pride, and not discover it in his looks, by his words and gestures; yet the Lord sees and knows the heart, the naughtiness of it, and the pride that is in it: and only a proud look, but a proud heart, is abominable to him: everyone that is so arrogant as to arraign the decrees of God, and quarrel with him about them, to whom the apostle says, "Nay, but, O man", O proud vain man, "who art thou, that repliest against God?" **Ro 9:19**; every proud Pharisee, that trusts in himself that he is righteous, and despises others, that justifies himself before men, is an abomination in the sight of God, Lu 18:9; particularly antichrist, who has not only a proud look, a look more stout than his fellows, but a proud heart; exalts himself above all that is called God; and not only speaks big words against the most High, but has it in his heart to change times and laws; and proudly imagines he shall always continue in his grandeur and prosperity, **Da 7:25**;

[though] hand [join] in hand, he shall not be unpunished; though he endeavours with both hands, with all his might and main, to secure himself and prevent his ruin, he shall not be able to do it; though he enters into confederacy with, and calls in the kings of the earth to his assistance, it will be of no avail, both he and they shall be destroyed; or out of hand, immediately, his destruction will come upon him, Re 16:14;
See Gill on "Pr 11:21"; The Targum is,

"from evil he shall not be cleared;"

and the Syriac version,

"he that stretcheth out his hand against his neighbour shall not be cleared from evil."

Proverbs 16:6

Ver. 6. By mercy and truth iniquity is purged,.... Or "expiated" {d}, and atoned for: not by the mercy and truth of men; not by alms deeds or showing mercy to the poor; nor by speaking truth and keeping promises, and doing justice between man and man; for, though these are duties to be performed, they will not atone for sin; and may be done by persons destitute of the grace of God, and whose iniquities are not purged or pardoned: but by the mercy and truth of God; through his "mercy", in sending Christ to be the propitiation for sin; and through his "truth", in fulfilling his promises concerning Christ; and particularly concerning pardon on the foot of his sacrifice and satisfaction, where mercy and truth have met together: or through the grace and truth come by Jesus Christ; or through his atoning sacrifice, by which he has finished transgression, made an end of sin, and made reconciliation for iniquity; in which there is a rich display of his own and of his father's grace and mercy, truth and faithfulness;

and by the fear of the Lord [men] depart from evil; having that put into their hearts, and excited and influenced by the grace and goodness of God, men are engaged to abstain from evil, and the appearance of it; it teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and godly in this world.

{d} rpky "expiabitur", Montanus, Vatablus; "expiatur", Tigurine version, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 16:7

Ver. 7. When a man's ways please the Lord,.... As they do when a man walks according to the rule of his word; when he walks as he has Christ for an example; when he walks after the Spirit, and not after the flesh; when he walks by faith, and does all he does in faith; without which it is impossible to please God, Heb 11:6; and when all his ways and actions are directed to the glory of God;

he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him; as Abimelech with Isaac, Esau with Jacob; and the enemies of the church and people of God with then, in the latter day, **Re 3:9**.

Proverbs 16:8

Ver. 8. Better [is] a little with righteousness,.... Gotten in a righteous way, held by a righteous claim, used in a righteous manner, attended with a life of righteousness and holiness; and also along with an interest in the righteousness of Christ, which renders acceptable unto God, yields peace and comfort, and entitles to eternal glory and happiness. A truly righteous man may have but little of this world's goods; but his small pittance is better

than great revenues without right; obtained in an unjust way; detained from the right owner of them, and used in an unrighteous manner, in a course of sin and wickedness: or, "without judgment" {e}; how to make use of them aright, and without a righteousness that will justify them at the day of judgment; See Gill on "Pr 15:16". A little the true church of Christ enjoys in the wilderness; having Christ and his grace, Christ and his righteousness, is better than all the revenues of the church of Rome gotten by the unlawful methods they are; and which, in one hour will come to nought, Re 18:17.

{e} jpvm alb "absque judicio", Pagninus, Montanus.

Proverbs 16:9

Ver. 9. A man's heart deviseth his way,.... This is to be understood, not of a wicked man, in whose heart is frowardness, and who devises mischief and evil imaginations continually, **Pr 6:14**; for such are an abomination to the Lord;

nor will he direct their goings, or prosper and succeed them in their ways: but of a good man, or righteous man, as Aben Ezra; who thinks of the way in which he should go, and desires to walk in a right way, as Jarchi; and who is influenced by the Spirit and grace of God to think and act in this manner; for otherwise the way of man is not in himself; it is not of his own devising and finding out; nor is his disposition to walk in it of himself; and it is only such a man, a good man, whose steps are ordered by the Lord, as follows; see Jer 10:23;

but the Lord directeth his steps: to go right on, and not turn to the right hand or the left; and to walk safely and surely, through a variety of troubles and difficulties, to his kingdom and glory.

Proverbs 16:10

Ver. 10. A divine sentence [is] in the lips of the king,.... Or "divination" {f}, as the word signifies; or what is like to divination, as Aben Ezra and Gersom interpret it {g}. What be says is as an oracle, and should be strictly true. Some understand it of the sagacity and penetration of kings, as was in Solomon, and appeared in his judging the two harlots; but such is not to be found in kings in common: rather therefore this expresses and designs what should be, and not what is, in kings. These, as the kings of Israel, ought to have the book of God before them, and read in it, and judge and pronounce sentence in every case according to it; they should speak as the oracles of God; and, when they do, a divine sentence may be said to be in their lips. But it is best to understand this of the King of kings, of the King Messiah; into whose lips grace is poured, and from whence none but words of wisdom, grace, and truth, flow; who taught the way of God in truth; who had the word of God in his heart and in his month continually; and on whom the Spirit of wisdom without measure dwelt; and is the wisdom and word of God, as well as the power of God;

his mouth transgresseth not in judgment; this cannot be said of any earthly king; they ought not indeed to transgress in judgment with their mouths, but it is notorious that they too often do: could this be applied to kings in common, they would have a better claim to infallibility than the pope of Rome has. But this is true of Christ, the King of saints; who is a King that reigns in righteousness, and decrees judgment; sits upon his throne, to order and establish it with judgment: nor does his mouth ever transgress in judgment, or ever say, or he do, a wrong thing; his sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness.

{f} Moq "divinatio", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens. {g} So Vatablus, Mercerus, Piscator.

Proverbs 16:11

Ver. 11. A just weight and balance [are] the Lord's,.... These are of his devising; what he has put into the heart, of men to contrive and make use of, for the benefit of mankind, for the keeping and maintaining truth and justice in commercial affairs; these are of his appointing, commanding, and approving, Le 19:35;

all the weights of the bag [are] his work; or, "all the stones" {h}; greater or smaller, which were formerly used in weighing, and were kept in a bag for that purpose; these are by the Lord's appointment and order. This may be applied to the Scriptures of truth, which are of God; are the balance of the sanctuary, in which every doctrine is to be weighed and tried; what agrees with them is to be received, and what is found wanting is to be rejected. The Targum is,

"his works, all of them, are weights of truth."

{h} ynba "lapides", Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 16:12

Ver. 12. [It is] an abomination to kings to commit wickedness,.... The Targum is,

"the abomination of kings are they that work wickedness."

It should be an abomination to kings to commit wickedness themselves, and those that do it should be abhorred by them, or they should show their resentment at it by removing them from their presence, or by punishing them: and though there have been such kings as David, Ps 101:4; yet there are but few such; this is not true of kings in common; and therefore rather expresses what they should be than what they are; but is perfectly applicable to Christ, who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, Ps 45:7;

for the throne is established by righteousness; this is the support, strength, and security of every kingdom, and of the thrones of kings; and it is with judgment and righteousness that the throne of Christ is established; yea, justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, **Isa 9:7**.

Proverbs 16:13

Ver. 13. Righteous lips [are] the delight of kings,.... Such that speak truth and righteousness, and advise to the administration of justice and judgment, and to do that which is most for their own true honour and the people's good, are, or ought to be, highly valued and esteemed by kings: but the contrary is too often the case; kings hearken to those that speak lies, that flatter them, and gratify their pride, ambition, and love of power, to the hurt of their subjects;

and they love him that speaketh right: agreeably to right reason; which makes for the honour of kings, and the good of those over whom they rule. Christ loves and delights in those that deliver out his doctrines in the taught words of the Holy Ghost, without any mixture or corruption; that explain, inculcate, and enforce his laws and commands; and faithfully declare the whole counsel of God, both with respect to faith and practice; all which is for his glory, as King of saints, and to the profit and advantage of those who submit to the sceptre of his kingdom.

Proverbs 16:14

Ver. 14. The wrath of a king [is as] messengers of death,.... Or, "angels of death", as the Targum. As the wrath of Ahasuerus was to Haman; when it is either discovered in the countenance of a king, or expressed by his words, or signified by a messenger; it sometimes has been immediate death to a person, and often as terrible as if a messenger brought the sentence of death; yea, it is as if one messenger after another was sent on such an errand, and therefore the word is in the plural number. How terrible is the wrath of the King of kings; and even to kings themselves, who are represented as flying to rocks and mountains to hide them from it! **Re 6:15**;

but a wise man will pacify it; by a proper acknowledgment of the offence committed; or by a prudent representation of his case, or the case of his friends; by soft answers and strong arguments, as Jonathan pacified the wrath of King Saul his father against David. He is a wise man that believes in Christ, and pleads his propitiatory sacrifice for the expiation of his sin, at the same time frankly acknowledging it.

Proverbs 16:15

Ver. 15. In the light of the king's countenance [is] life,.... When he looks with a pleasant smiling countenance on a person that has been under his displeasure, and especially if under a sentence of death, it is as life from the dead: so the light of the countenance of God, the King of kings; the discoveries of his love, the manifestations of himself, his gracious presence, communion with him, the comforts of his Spirit, the joys of his salvation, are life unto his people, invigorate their graces, quicken their souls, and make them cheerful; see Ps 30:5. And how delightful and pleasant is the countenance of Christ; which is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; and is as the sun when it shineth in its strength; and who himself is the sun of righteousness, that arises on his people with healing in his wings! How reviving his love! how comfortable fellowship with him! his absence is as death, his presence gives life;

and his favour [is] as a cloud of the latter rain: which falling a little before harvest, as was usual in Judea, revived the corn and filled it: and such is the favour of God in Christ, which is free, distinguishing, and undeserved, as rain is; the objects of it are very unworthy; and it is given often unasked for, as well as undeserved, in great abundance, and causes great cheerfulness and fruitfulness: and such is the layout of Christ, in coming into the world in the last days to save sinners his coming is said to be as the former and the latter rain, **Ho 6:3**. He came from heaven, as that does; is the free gift of God, as that is; is in consequence of a decree, as that; and came suddenly, and with great acceptance to those, who knew him and waited for him; and his spiritual coming unto his people, and the discoveries of his love and free favour to them, are very reviving, cheering, and refreshing; see Ps 72:6.

Proverbs 16:16

Ver. 16. How much better [is it] to get wisdom than gold?.... To obtain and possess Christ, the fountain of wisdom, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which treasures are infinitely preferable to thousands of gold and silver; to gain the knowledge of him, and of God in him, with which eternal life is connected, and in comparison of which all things are loss and dung; to have wisdom in the hidden part, or grace in the heart, which is much more precious than gold that perisheth; to have a spiritual experimental knowledge of the Gospel, and the truths of it, which are more to be desired than gold, yea, than fine gold; all which are to be got by diligent search and inquiry, by prayer and asking for, and to be had or bought without money and without price; and the getting of them is above all other gettings; such wisdom is more valuable in itself, has a greater intrinsic worth in it than gold; it is more profitable and useful, more solid and satisfying; it is not only better, but it is abundantly better, it is inexpressibly so; it cannot be well said how much better it is, and therefore it is put by way of question and admiration; see **Pr 3:13**;

and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver? the same thing is designed as before, expressed in different words; a spiritual understanding of Christ and the Gospel, and an experience of the grace of God; though some, as Gersom, think that wisdom is something better than understanding, as gold, to which it is preferred, is better than silver. The Septuagint render it,

"nests of wisdom, and nests of understanding;"

and the Arabic version,

"buds of wisdom, and buds of understanding."

Proverbs 16:17

Ver. 17. The highway of the upright [is] to depart from evil,.... Upright persons, such who are upright in heart, and walk uprightly; these walk in the highway of holiness, in which men, though fools, shall not err; in the King's highway, the highway of the King of kings; in the plain beaten path of God's commandments; and so shun the bypaths of sin, and abstain from all appearance of it: this is their common constant course of life; they are studiously concerned to walk herein, and take delight in so doing; whereby they escape many evils others fall into;

he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul, that keeps on in his way, the way in which the upright walk; whose eyes look right on, and his eyelids straight before him; who ponders the path of his feet, and turns neither to the right hand nor the left; who walks circumspectly and carefully; observes the road he is in, to keep in it, and not go out of it; such a man preserves his soul from many snares and temptations, troubles, dangers, and evils, which he would be otherwise liable to. Here the Masorites put the word yux, signifying that this is the half or middle of the book.

Proverbs 16:18

Ver. 18. Pride [goeth] before destruction,.... As it did in the angels that sinned, who, through pride, fell into condemnation, not being able to bear the thought that the human nature, in the person of the Son of God, should be advanced above theirs; and as it did in our first parents, who, not content with their present state and circumstances, and ambitious of being as gods, knowing good and evil, ruined themselves and all their posterity; and as it has done in many of their sons, as in Haman, Nebuchadnezzar, and others;

and a haughty spirit before a fall; or, "a high spirit", or "height of spirit" {i}; a man that carries his head high; looks upwards, and not to his goings, sees not at what he may stumble, and so falls: moreover, the bigger a person or thing is, the greater is the fall; and very often when a man has got to the height of his riches and honour, and is swelling with pride and vanity on account of it, he is on the precipice of ruin, and his fall is immediate; which was the case of Nebuchadnezzar, who while he was expressing himself in the haughtiness of his spirit, being in the height of his glory, his kingdom departed from him, **Da 4:30**; and this will be the case of the man of sin, or antichrist, Re 18:7.

{i} xwr hbg "elitio spiritus", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "altitudo spiritus", Piscator; "celstudo aniimi", Cocceius; "altifrons elatio spiritus", Schultens.

Proverbs 16:19

Ver. 19. Better [it is to be] of an humble spirit with the lowly,.... The followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, whose spirits are humbled under a sense of sin; have mean thoughts of themselves and their own righteousness, and submit to the righteousness of the Son of God, and wholly trust in him for salvation; and ascribe all they have and are to the free grace of God; humble themselves under the mighty hand of God; are resigned to his will, and patiently bear all afflictions without murmuring, and think better of others than themselves: these are not in so much danger of falling as the proud and haughty, and are more grateful to men, and acceptable to God; with these he vouchsafes to dwell; to these he gives more grace, and they shall inherit the earth. Wherefore it is better to be of such a spirit, and be ranked among and keep company with the meek and lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud; the spoils of the poor with proud oppressors; or spoils gotten in war with proud and ambitious princes; or the spoils of kingdoms and states with antichrist, divided by him among his proud followers: it is better to be the followers of Christ, and have but little, than to be his, and have ever so much.

Proverbs 16:20

Ver. 20. He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good,.... That frames and composes his discourse well on any subject he takes in hand; or manages his affairs prudently and discreetly, in which he is concerned; or that wisely attends to the affair of humility, as Aben Ezra: or rather to the word, that is, to the word of God; is not a careless, negligent, unconcerned hearer of the word, but a diligent and attentive one; whose heart is opened by the Spirit of God to attend to what is spoken in it; who lays it up in his heart, and makes it the rule of his conduct in life: such a man finds good things; things which are for his profit, edification, and instruction; good truths, good doctrines, good counsel and advice, good directions and instructions; promises of good things, things for his present comfort and future happiness;

and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy [is] he; not to his own wisdom; nor in his own strength; nor in his riches, nor righteousness; nor in the favour of men, no, not of princes; but in the Lord, and in his Word; he shall want no good thing, he is kept in perfect peace; he is in the utmost safety, is like Mount Zion, that can never be removed,
Jer 17:7.

Proverbs 16:21

Ver. 21. The wise in heart shall be called prudent,.... He that has true wisdom in the inward part; who knows his heart and the haughtiness of it; who has the fear of God in it, which is the beginning of wisdom; who is wise unto salvation, not only knows the scheme of it, but is experimentally acquainted with it; who has not head knowledge and wisdom only, but heart knowledge and wisdom, and behaves wisely in his life and conversation; who is so wise and endued with knowledge, as, out of a good conversation, to show his works with meekness of wisdom; such a man is called, reckoned, accounted, and spoken well of, as a prudent man among all wise and knowing persons;

and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning; who, besides a wise heart and a knowing head, have the gift of elocution; can deliver themselves in a flowing easy style; can clothe their thoughts with proper words, and convey their ideas in clear expressions, in a very edifying and instructive manner: these communicate knowledge to others, and increase it in themselves: for, while they are improving others, they improve themselves and learning also, whether it be divine or human; these are such who are "apt to teach", **1Ti 3:2**; and if they have proper hearers to attend them, they will "increase in learning", as a just man does, **Pr 9:9**.

Proverbs 16:22

Ver. 22. Understanding [is] a wellspring of life unto him that hath it,.... "The master" or "owner of it" {k}. As he only is to whom an understanding is given; for, whatever understanding men may have of natural and civil things, they have none of things spiritual and divine, unless it be given them by Christ. This is no other than the grace of the Spirit of God, who is a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ; and this is a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life, and it issues in it; with the knowledge of Christ, and God in Christ, eternal life is connected, **Joh 4:14**; and as this knowledge and understanding of things is communicated by wise and knowing men, they are the means and instruments of the spiritual life of those to whom they minister, and are made useful;

but the instruction of fools [is] folly; the best instruction they are capable of giving is downright folly, and issues in death.

{k} wyleb "domini sui", Pagninus; "domino suo", Mercerus, Gejerus; "dominorum suorum", Michaelis.

Proverbs 16:23

Ver. 23. The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth,.... That is, a man that is wise in heart, as in Pr 16:21; his heart will teach his mouth what to say, when to say it, and before whom; it will prompt him to matter, that he shall not be at a loss what to say, nor how to say; it will furnish him with words and things; out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, Mt 12:34;

and addeth learning to his lips: so that he does not deliver out mere words, but solid learning along with them, instructive to himself and others. The Targum is,

"and by his lips he addeth doctrine;"

or increases knowledge.

Proverbs 16:24

Ver. 24. Pleasant words [are as] an honeycomb,.... Jarchi interprets it of the words of the law; but it may be much better understood of the doctrines of the Gospel; such as the doctrines of God's everlasting love, eternal election, the covenant of grace, the person of Christ as God-man; of peace and reconciliation by his blood; of remission of sins through his atoning sacrifice; of justification by his righteousness; of life and salvation by his obedience, sufferings, and death; all the doctrines of grace, which show that salvation in all its parts is owing entirely to the free grace of God; these are all pleasant to the ear of him that knows the joyful sound, and to the taste of everyone that has tasted that the Lord is gracious. The precious promises of the Gospel may be meant; which are free and unconditional, irrevocable, and immutable, never fail of accomplishment; are yea and amen in Christ, and are suited to the various cases of God's people; these are very pleasant and delightful, when they are fitly spoken, and seasonably applied. Moreover, the speech of such as are wise in heart, true believers in Christ; their words, whether expressed in prayer or in praise, are pleasant to the Lord, and very grateful and acceptable to him: so their speech one to another, when about spiritual things; when it is with grace, then it ministers grace, and is very pleasant. Now all these, and especially the doctrines of the Gospel, are as "an honeycomb"; they are like unto it for the manner of its production; it is wrought and filled by the laborious bee, which goes from flower to flower, and gathers honey, and brings it into the hive, and there disposes of it: so laborious ministers of the Gospel gather their doctrines from the sacred Scriptures, which they diligently search, and go from one to another, and gather something from each; and, being richly laden with the fulness of the blessing Of the Gospel of Christ, bring it into the hive of the church, and there feed men with knowledge and understanding: and the doctrines of the Gospel are like unto the honeycomb for the manner of its communication, by dropping freely, gradually, and constantly; so Gospel ministers drop the pleasant words of the Gospel freely, and without pressing, having no other constraint but love to Christ and the souls of men; they do it gradually, as men are able to bear; and constantly preach the word, in season and out of season: and as the honey which drops from the honeycomb is the choicest honey, called "life honey"; such are the truths of the Gospel, they are excellent things, the most excellent. Likewise these are as the honeycomb for the honey in it; they are like the honey out of the rock the Israelites ate of; and like that out of the lion Samson fed upon; and like that which Jonathan tasted, that enlightened his eyes. The Gospel flows from Christ, the Rock; and is to be found in him, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and as slain, and has an enlightening virtue in it; and particularly these pleasant words are said to be as the honeycomb for its sweetness and healthfulness, as follows:

sweet to the soul, and health to the bones; they are "sweet" to the "soul" of him that understands them, and that has a spiritual taste of them; not to a natural and unregenerate man, whose natural taste remains in him, and is not changed; who calls evil good, and good evil; puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; to him the doctrines of the Gospel are insipid, tasteless, and disagreeable things: nor are they sweet to a carnal professor; who, though he may express some value for them, has no spiritual gust and relish of them; but to them that believe, to whom Christ is precious, who have tasted that he is gracious; to these they are sweet, even sweeter than the honey or the honeycomb, Ps 19:10. And they are "health to the bones"; they are the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus; they are the means of curing the diseases of the mind; of healing wounded spirits, and broken hearts, and broken bones; they make the bones which were broken to rejoice; what heals the bones strengthens the whole man, a man's strength lying much in his bones; these strengthen the inward man, cause believers to go from strength to strength, and to hold on and persevere to the end.

Proverbs 16:25

Ver. 25. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof [are] the ways of death. The same is said in Pr 14:12, and is here repeated because of the excellence, importance, and usefulness of the observation, and to excite an attention to it; that men may be more diligent to look into their ways, and be more cautious where and how they walk, and be more considerate and thoughtful of the issue of them. See Gill on "Pr 14:12".

Proverbs 16:26

Ver. 26. He that laboureth, laboureth for himself,.... Man is born for labour; it is a part of the curse inflicted on him for sin; and his condition and circumstances are such as make it necessary, for such who will not work ought not to eat; and it is labouring for food and raiment which is here meant, and that is for a man's self; for if he labours to be rich and lay up money, and purchase estates, these are more for others than himself, and indeed he knows not for whom he labours. It is indeed in the original, "the soul of him that labours {l}, labours for himself"; and it may be understood of the labour of, the soul for spiritual things, for spiritual food, for that meat which endures to everlasting life; and may intend the various exercises of religion in which men employ themselves, that they may have food for their souls, and grow thereby; such as praying, reading the Scriptures, attending on the ministry of the word and ordinances: and this labouring is for themselves; for the good and welfare of their immortal souls, for their spiritual prosperity, for the nourishing of them up unto everlasting life. It may be applied to Gospel ministers, who labour in the Lord's vineyard, in the word and doctrine; and though in the first place they labour to promote the glory of God and the interest of Christ, and the good of souls, yet it also turns to their own account; and indeed they labour to be accepted of the Lord, and at last shall hear, "Well done, good and faithful Servant; enter into the joy of thy Lord", Mt 25:23. Some render the words, "he that is troublesome is troublesome to himself" {m}, as such an one is, not only to others, but to himself also; he is the cause of great disquietude to his own mind;

for his mouth craveth it of him: that he should labour, in order to satisfy his appetite; for "all the labour of man is for his mouth", to feed that and fill his belly, **Ec 6:7**; or "his mouth boweth unto him" {n}; it is as it were an humble supplicant to him, entreating: him to labour to get food for it, and satisfy its wants; or as a beast bows down to feed itself; or "boweth upon him" {o}; it obliges him, as the Vulgate Latin version; it compels him, whether he will or not, to work, its necessities are so pressing: and this holds good in spiritual things; a man's mouth, or spiritual appetite, puts him upon the use of means of spiritual exercises, without which he must otherwise be in a starving condition; and is true of the ministers of the word, whose mouth obliges them; as it were; they cannot but speak the things they have heard and seen: or "his mouth reflects upon him"; upon the man that has been troublesome to himself and others; the Targum is,

"for from his mouth humiliation shall come to him;"

or his destruction, as the Syriac version.

{l} lme vpn "anima laborantis", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "anima laboriosi", Cocceius. {m} "Ipse molestus molestiam affert sibi", Junius & Tremellius. {n} whyp wyle Pka "incurvavit se ei os suum", Pagninus; "incurvat se ei os suum"; Mercerus, Gejerus. {o} "Inflexit se super eum os suum", Montanus; "innititur super cum", Vatablus.

Proverbs 16:27

Ver. 27. An ungodly man diggeth up evil,.... Or "a man of Belial" {p}, a worthless unprofitable man; a man without a yoke, not obedient to the law of God; such a man digs for sin as for a treasure; nor need he go far for it, he has enough in his own heart, out of the evil treasure of which he brings forth evil things; though he is more solicitious and diligent to search into the sins of others, and dig up them, which have long lain buried; as the Manichees raked up the sins of Austin in his youth; and as the Papists served Beza: but perhaps the evil of mischief is here rather intended, which a wicked man contrives and devises; a ditch he digs for others, though oftentimes he falls into it himself; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "digs evils for himself"; not intentionally but eventually; see **Ps 7:15**;

and in his lips [there is] as a burning fire; his tongue is a fire, it is set on fire of hell, and it sets on fire the course of nature; and with its lies, calumnies, and detractions, devours and consumer the good names, characters, and credit of men; and deserves no other than sharp arrows of the Almighty, and coals of juniper; even the everlasting fire and flames of hell, **Jas 3:6**.

{p} leylb vya "vir Belijahal", Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus.

Proverbs 16:28

Ver. 28. A froward man soweth strife,.... Or "a man of perversenesses" {q}; in whose heart is frowardness and perverseness; and whose mouth speaketh froward and perverse things, contrary to reason, law, and Gospel; and who has a spirit of contradiction, and is contrary to all men in his principles and practices; such a man sows discord and strife wherever he comes, in families, in neighbourhoods, in churches, in commonwealths, in civil and religious societies; and he seldom fails of finding a soil fit for his purpose, or ground susceptive of the seed he sows, where it takes root and thrives; see **Pr 6:19**;

and a whisperer separateth chief friends; one that goes from place to place, from house to house, carrying tales, whispering into the ears of persons things prejudicial to the characters of others, mere lies and falsehoods; such a man by his conduct separates one friend from another, even chief friends, that have been for a long time in the closest and most intimate friendship; he alienates their minds one from another, so that they will not come near one another, or keep up any correspondence as before. The word for "chief friends" is in the singular number, and signifies a prince or leader; and such men, according to the station they are in, and the influence they have, separate princes, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, from their subjects, and stir up the latter to rebel against them; at least alienate their affections from them; and pastors of churches from their flocks, and husbands from their wives: and such a man, at last, when found out, separates his best friends from himself, as well as from one another; who drop him as a worthless person, yea, as dangerous to converse with; so sin, that whisperer and agitator, separates between God and men, Isa 59:2.

{q} twkpht vya "vir perversitatum", Montanus, Baynus, Schultens; "vir perversitatibus deditus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Proverbs 16:29

Ver. 29. A violent man enticeth his neighbour,.... As false teachers do, who are grievous wolves, not sparing the flock, and who by good words and fair speeches deceive the heart of the simple; and as the man of sin, that has shed the blood of the saints, and been drunk with the same, deceives with his miracles and sorceries them that dwell on the earth;

and leadeth him into the way [that is] not good; yea, into one that is very bad; so far are false teachers from leading their neighbours into the good old way of truth and righteousness, that they lead them into pernicious ways, by whom the way; of truth is spoken evil of; they lead them into a ditch, and into destruction hereafter; as does the man of sin and violence his followers.

Proverbs 16:30

Ver. 30. He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things,.... Or "perverse" or "contrary things" {r}; he shuts his eyes, that his thoughts might not be disturbed and distracted by visible objects, but might be more free and composed, and intent upon the things he is meditating and devising; or he shuts his eyes against light, against Scripture evidence, which he does not care to come to, lest his principles and practices should be reproved; he shuts his eyes, and will not look into the Scriptures, that he may form and devise schemes of doctrine and worship contrary to them. Some render it, he winks with his eyes, as in **Pr 6:13**; so the Targum; he gives the hint thereby to his companions, when is the proper time to circumvent an innocent person, and to put in execution the scheme he had devised;

moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass; either as persons in deep thought used to do; or as a token to others to set about the evil designed and contrived; or rather as acting a deceitful part, as a false teacher; not speaking out his mind freely, but muttering out his words, handling the word of God deceitfully, and not by manifestation of the truth commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, as a faithful minister does; and by such artful methods brings his evil designs to pass. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "biting his lips"; so a wicked man does through indignation at a good man, and through desire of revenge; and when he plots against him, he gnashes at him with his teeth, Ps 37:12. The Targum is,

"threatening with his lips;"

he gives out menaces of evil things, and performs them; which is true of the man of sin, Re 13:5.

{r} twkpht "perversitates", Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "res perversas", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "perversa", Michaelis.

Proverbs 16:31

Ver. 31. The hoary head [is] a crown of glory,.... Gray hairs, white locks through age are very ornamental; look very beautiful, bespeak gravity, wisdom, and prudence, and command reverence and respect; with the ancient Romans {s}, greater honour was paid to age than to family or wealth; and the elder were revered by the younger next to God, and in the stead of parents; See Gill on "Le 19:32";

[if] it be found in the way of righteousness; that is, if such who are old and

stricken in years are like Zacharias and Elisabeth, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; when they are found in Christ, having on his righteousness; and when they live soberly, righteously, and godly; when they walk in the ways of God and true religion; keep up family worship, and private devotion; as well as constantly attend the ministry of the word and ordinances; then are they very venerable and respectable; their old age is a good old age; and in a short time they shall have the crown of glory which fadeth not away: but otherwise a sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed; an old man in the open ways of sin and vice, laden with iniquity, is a very contemptible and shocking sight.

{s} Vid. A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 2. c. 15.

Proverbs 16:32

Ver. 32. [He that is] slow to anger is better than the mighty,.... Than a mighty warrior or conqueror; as Alexander who conquered his enemies, and even all the world, and yet in his wrath slew his best friends: a man that is slow to anger is esteemed by the Lord, respected by men, and is happy in himself; and is preferable to the strongest man that is not master of himself and of his passions;

and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city; one that has the command of his temper, that can govern himself, and not suffer his passions to exceed due bounds, is superior in strength to him that can storm a castle or take a fortified city; it is easier to do the one than the other; courage of mind joined with wisdom, and assisted by a proper number of persons, may do the one; but it requires the grace of God, and the assistance of his spirit, thoroughly to do the other. Cicero says {t}, in all ages

"fewer men are found who conquer their own lusts than that overcome the armies of enemies."

{t} Epist. l. 5. Ep. 4.

Proverbs 16:33

Ver. 33. The lot is cast into the lap,.... Of a man's garment, or into his bosom, or into a hat, cap, urn, or whatsoever he has in his lap, and from whence it is taken out; which used to be done in choosing officers, civil or ecclesiastical; in dividing inheritances, and determining doubtful cases; and making up differences, and putting an end to strife and contentions, which otherwise could not be done: and this ought not to be used in trivial cases, or to gratify curiosity, or for the sake of gain, or rashly and superstitiously; but seriously and religiously, with prayer, and in faith, and with a view to the divine direction, and submission to it; for a lot has the nature of an oath, and is an appeal to the omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent Being;

but the whole disposing thereof [is] of the Lord; or "the judgment" {u} of it; the judgment that is to be made by it concerning persons or things; it being so directed and ordered by him as to fall upon the person it should; or to make known the thing in doubt and debate according to his will, in which all parties concerned should acquiesce. This is to be ascribed, not to blind chance and fortune, to the influence of the stars, or to any invisible created being, angel or devil, but to the Lord only; there is no such thing as chance, or events by chance; those events which seem most fortuitous or contingent are all disposed, ordered, and governed, by the sovereign will of God.

{u} wjpvm "judicium ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Schultens; "judicium eorum", Tigurine version.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 17:1

Ver. 1. Better [is] a dry morsel, and quietness therewith,.... A small quantity of bread; a broken piece of bread, as the word {w} signifies; which has been long broken off, and become "dry" {x}; a dry crust of bread; old bread, as the Arabic version; an old, mouldy, dry piece of bread: and the word used has the signification of destruction in it: bread that has lost its taste and virtue; or, however, a mere piece of bread is meant, without anything to eat with it, as Gersom, butter, cheese, or flesh: this, with quietness and peace among those that partake of it, peace in the family, in a man's own mind, especially if he has the peace of God, which passeth all understanding; this is better

than a house full of sacrifices [with] strife; than a house ever so well furnished with good cheer, or a table ever so richly spread; or where there is plenty of slain beasts for food, or for sacrifice, which were usually the best, and part of which the people had to eat, and at which times feasts used to be made; but the meanest food, with tranquillity and contentment, is preferable to the richest entertainment where there is nothing but strife and contention among the guests; for, where that is, there is confusion and every evil work: peace and joy in the Holy Ghost are better than meats and drinks. Mr. Dod used to say,

"brown bread and the Gospel are good fare;"

see Pr 15:17.

{w} tp "frustrum", a ttp, "fregit", Gejerus. {x} hbrx "siccum frustum panis", Tigurine version; "cibi sicci" Junius & Tremellius; "brucella sicca", V. L. Mercerus, Piscator; "buccea sicca", Cocceuis; "frustum sicci, sc. cibi", Michaelis, "frustum siccae buccellae, Schultens, so Ben Melech.

Proverbs 17:2

Ver. 2. A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame,.... That does wicked and shameful actions: that is slothful, and will not attend to instruction or business; that is prodigal, wasteful, and luxurious, and causes shame to his parents, who blush at his conduct. Now a servant that behaves well and wisely in a family is observed and respected by his master, and he puts his wicked and extravagant son under him, makes him a tutor to him, and sets him to watch over him, and obliges his son to obey his orders. Jarchi illustrates this in Nebuchadnezzar ruling over the children of Israel;

and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren; be appointed by his master's will to a share in his estate among his children, for his faithful service to him in life, and to encourage him to take care of his family, his children, and his affairs, after his death; or through gifts in his lifetime shall have what is equal to what his sons have; or growing rich shall purchase a part of theirs, as Gussetius {y}: or "shall part the inheritance among the brethren" {z}; being a wise man, his master shall leave him executor of his will, to divide his substance among his children, and see that everyone have their proper portion and equal share; but it rather is to be understood of his being a co-heir with them. So the Gentiles, through the will of the Lord, become fellow heirs of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ with the Jews, and share in the same inheritance with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their children; nay, when the children of the kingdom shall be shut out; see **Eph 3:6**. Jarchi gives an ancient exposition of it thus,

"a proselyte of righteousness is better than a wicked native; and in time to come he shall divide the spoil and the inheritance in the midst of the children of Israel, at it is said in Eze 47:23;"

{y} Ebr. Comment. p. 263. {z} qlxy "dividet", Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Syriac version and the Targum; "partitur", Junius & Tremellius; "partieur", Piscator.

Proverbs 17:3

Ver. 3. The fining pot [is] for silver, and the furnace for gold,.... Refiners of silver have their fining pots, in which they purify the silver from the dross; and goldsmiths have their crucibles to melt and purify their gold, by which assays of the worth and value of it may be made;

but the Lord trieth the hearts; there is no vessel, as Gersom observes, in which they can be put and tried by creatures; a man does not know, nor can he thoroughly search and try his own heart, and much less the hearts of others; God only knows and tries them, Jer 17:9; The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it by way of similitude, "as the fining pot is for silver", &c. as silver is refined in the pot, and gold in the furnace, so are the hearts of God's people, and their graces tried and purified by him in the furnace of affliction; the variety of troubles they are exercised with are made useful for the purging away of the dross of sin and corruption, and for the brightening of their graces, **1Pe 1:7**.

Proverbs 17:4

Ver. 4. A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips,.... A man of an ill spirit, of a mischievous disposition, that delights in doing wickedness; he carefully attends to such as speak falsehood; he listens to lies and calumnies, loves to hear ill reports of persons, and takes pleasure in spreading them to the hurt of their characters; and men of bad hearts and lives give heed to seducing spirits, to false teachers, to inch as speak lies in hypocrisy, who sooth and harden them in their wickedness;

[and] a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue: or, "to a tongue of destruction" {a}; a culumniating, backbiting tongue, which destroys the good name and reputation of men; and he that is given to lying is made up of lying, or is a lie itself, as the word signifies; who roves and makes a lie, as antichrist and his

followers; such an one hearkens diligently to everything that may detract from the character of those especially he bears an ill will to: or it may be better rendered, "he that hearkens to a lie [gives heed] to a naughty tongue" {b}; for a lying tongue is a naughty one, evil in itself, pernicious in its effects and consequences.

{a} twh Nwvl le "perniciosae linguae", Tigurine version; "linguae confractionum calamitatum, injuriarum", Vatablus; "ad linguam exiliorum", Michaelis. {b} So Michaelis.

Proverbs 17:5

Ver. 5. Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker,.... He that mocks the poor for his poverty, Upbraids him with his mean appearance, scoffs at the clothes he wears or food he eats, such an one reproaches his Creator; or, as the Targum,

"provokes his Creator to anger;"

him who is his own Creator as well as the poor man's; him who made the poor man, both as a man and as a poor man; and who could have made him rich if he would, as well as the man that mocks at him; whose riches are not of himself, but of God; and who can take them away, and give them to the poor man if he pleases; and therefore rich men should be careful how they mock the poor; for, as Gersom observes, he that derides a work derides the workman;

[and] he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished; or "at calamity" {c}; at the calamity of another, as the Vulgate Latin; and so Gersom; for no man rejoices at his own calamity; at the calamity of the poor, as Aben Ezra; or of his neighbour or companion, as the Targum; or at the calamity of any of his fellow creatures, as the Edomites rejoiced at the calamity of the Jews, but were in their turn destroyed; and as the Jews rejoiced when the Christians were persecuted by Nero, and at length were destroyed themselves by the Romans; and as the Papists will rejoice when the witnesses are slain, and quickly after seven thousand men of name will be slain of them, and the rest frightened, Re 11:10.

{c} dyal "ad calamitatem", Schultens; "ob calamitatem", Cocceius; "calamitate", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Proverbs 17:6

Ver. 6. Children's children [are] the crown of old men,.... Ancient parents. Grandfathers with the Jews are called old men, as Buxtorf {d} observes. A numerous progeny was reckoned a great blessing to a man; to have his table surrounded with children, as olive plants; to be encircled with a large family was a crown of glory {e}; and to live to see children's children, a large number of grandchildren, was still a greater glory; and especially, as Jarchi observes, when these children, or children's children, were walking in a good way, in the good ways of religion and godliness, they trained them up in. Christ is the Ancient of days, the everlasting Father; and it is his glory, as Mediator, to see his seed, to have a numerous off spring; and which will endure for ever, as the days of heaven: ministers of the Gospel are spiritual fathers; and those who have been converted under their ministry wilt be their joy and "crown of rejoicing" at the last day, **1Th 2:19**;

and the glory of children [are] their fathers; who are wise, as Aben Ezra observes; and righteous, as Jarchi: if they are wise and good men, it is an honour to their children that they descend from them; nor are they ashamed to own their relation to them, but glory in it, as the Jews did in Abraham, saying, "We have Abraham for our father", **Mt 3:9** **Lu 3:8**: but, on the contrary, if their fathers are foolish or wicked, their children are ashamed of them, and do not care to acknowledge their descent from them; and such parents, who are an honour to their children, their children should be careful to tread in their steps, that they reflect no dishonour on them; particularly as it is our great honour and glory to have God for our father, to be his adopted sons and daughters, we should be followers of him as dear children, and be obedient ones.

{d} In Lex. Talmud. col. 684. {e} "Te felix natorum turba coronat", Claudian. de Raptu Prosperp. l. 1. v. 109.

Proverbs 17:7

Ver. 7. Excellent speech becometh not a fool,.... A wicked man. Eloquence, or a sublime grand way of speaking, a copiousness and fluency of expression, become not such; because hereby he may be capable of doing more mischief; or such a style is unsuitable to the subject of his discourse, which is nothing but folly and wickedness. The Gospel is excellent speech, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; it treats of excellent things; concerning the person, office, and grace of Christ, and salvation by him; and very unfit is a wicked man to take it into his mouth, talk of it, and declare it;

much less do lying lips a prince; they rather become a fool, as excellent speech does a prince; who neither should speak lies himself, nor encourage, but abhor them in others. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "a just man": but the word more property signifies a liberal man, as it is rendered in Isa 32:8; where it stands opposed to a churl or covetous man: and some Jewish {f} writers think by the "fool" is meant such an one to whom a "lip of abundance" {g}, as it may be rendered, is very unsuitable; or to talk of his abundance, when he makes no good use of what he has for himself or others; and so, on the other hand, it is very disagreeable to the character of an ingenuous and liberal man to promise and not perform, and never intended it. It is true of such who are made a "willing" people in the day of Christ's power, Ps 110:3; where the same word is used as here; of his volunteers; that to speak lies one to another very ill becomes them; or to receive, or to speak, or profess false doctrines; for no lie is of the truth.

{f} Kabvenaki in Mercer. in loc. {g} rty tpv "labium abundantiae".

Proverbs 17:8

Ver. 8. A gift [is as] a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it,.... Or "is a stone of grace" {h}, the note of similitude being wanting. It is an ornament of grace, adorns the person that wears it, makes him look lovely and amiable; is very grateful and desirable in itself, attracts and dazzles the eyes, and fills the mind with pleasure; so is a gift in the eyes of him that has it, that is the owner of it; either that has it in his possession to give, is the giver of it, as Aben Ezra; which, as it is valuable in his own eyes, he judges it to be so with others, and thinks he can do what be pleases with it, and engage persons by it to do as he would have them: or that is the receiver of it, as the Targum; who, having it given him, is master of it, and is so acceptable to him, and has such an influence upon him, as to do anything for it the giver of it directs him to, as follows:

whithersoever it turneth it prospereth: to whatsoever cause, or to whatsoever persons, judge or jury, it is given and received; it succeeds far better than the most eloquent orations, or learned pleadings in law, or appeals to statutes, and the production of them. Money answers all things; a gift blinds the eyes; it is like a diamond, so sparkling and dazzling, so charming and attracting, that the person to whom it is offered cannot resist it; and it draws him to do whatever is desired of him; it carries the cause, it succeeds according to the wish of the giver: or, as the Arabic version renders it,

"he shall find his business plain;"

done as he would have it. Jarchi applies the proverb thus;

"when a man comes before the Lord, and bribes him with words, and returns unto him, it is a precious stone in his eyes; and in all that he asks of him he prospers."

{h} Nx Nba "lapsis gratiae", Montanus, Baynus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 17:9

Ver. 9. He that covereth a transgression seeketh love,.... He that hides the transgression of another, or of his friend, committed against himself or against another, which he is privy to; but the matter being made up, and the offence forgiven, he forgets it, and no more speaks of it to his friend, or upbraids him with it, nor spreads it among others: such a man shows that he loves his friend, and is desirous that love and friendship should be continued; and this is the way to continue it; and a man that thus seeks it finds it. Or it may be rendered, "he covereth a transgression who seeketh love" {i}; for "love covereth all things", Pr 10:12;

but he that repeateth a matter; the matter of the transgression, the thing that has given the offence; that rakes it up again, when it has been covered; upbraids his friend with it, when it has been passed over and forgiven; will frequently hit him on the teeth with it, and talk of it wherever he comes, and spread the knowledge of it in all places: he

separateth [very] friends; he sets the best of friends at variance one with another by such a practice; for this pursued, friendship cannot subsist long among men: he separates his best friend from himself, and himself from him. The word signifies a prince, leader, or governor;
See Gill on "Pr 16:28"; and Jarchi interprets it thus;

"he separates from himself the Governor of the world, the holy blessed God."

{i} So Cocceius.

Proverbs 17:10

Ver. 10. A reproof entereth more into a wise man,.... A single verbal reproof, gently, kindly, and prudently given, not only enters the ear, but the heart of a wise and understanding man; it descends into him, as the word {k} signifies; it sinks deep into his mind; it penetrates into his heart, and pierces his conscience; brings him easily to humiliation, confession, and reformation. Or, "reproof is more terror to a wise man"; as Jarchi interprets it, and the Tigurine version; it awes and terrifies him more; a single word has more effect upon him, entering more easily into him,

than an hundred stripes into a fool; or, "than smiting a fool a hundred times" {l}: a word to a wise man is more than a hundred blows to a fool, will sooner correct and amend him; a word will enter where a blow will not; stripes only reach the back, but not the heart of a fool; he is never the better for all the corrections given him; his heart is not affected, is not humbled, nor brought to a sense of sin, and acknowledgment of it; nor is he in the least reformed: or a single reproof to a wise man is of more service than a hundred reproofs to a fool; which are sometimes expressed by smiting, "let the righteous smite me", &c. Ps 141:5.

{k} txt "descendet", Montanus; "descendit", Vatablus, Mercerus, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus. {l} ham lyok twkhm "magis quam si percuties stolidum centies", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, so Pagninus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 17:11

Ver. 11. An evil [man] seeketh only rebellion,.... For he seeks nothing but what is evil; and all sin is rebellion against God, a contempt of his laws, and a transgression of them; a trampling upon his legislative power and authority; an act of hostility against him, and a casting off allegiance to him. Or rather the words may be rendered, "rebellion", that is, "the rebellious man", so the Targum, the abstract for the concrete, "verily" or "only seeketh evil" {m}; a man that is rebellious against his prince, that is of a rebellious disposition, is continually seeking to do mischief in the commonwealth; he is continually plotting and contriving destructive schemes, and stirring up sedition, and causing trouble; and so a rebel against God is always seeking that which is sinful, which is evil in its own nature, and contrary to the law and will of God; and in the issue brings the evil of punishment on himself;

therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him: if a rebel against his lawful sovereign, a messenger shall be sent by him to take him into custody, who will show him no mercy; or an executioner to dispatch him, who will not spare to perform his orders: and if a rebel against God, some judgment of God shall fall upon him in a very severe manner; or his own conscience shall accuse him, and shall be filled with dreadful apprehensions of divine vengeance; or Satan, the angel of death, shall be let loose upon him, to terrify or destroy him; or death itself, which spares none. The Septuagint and Arabic versions ascribe this to God as his act, rendering it, "the Lord shall send", &c. and so Aben Ezra; who also refers the former clause to him, and gives it as the sense of it; that he shall seek to do the rebellious man evil, inflict on him the evil of punishment for the evil of sin.

{m} er vqby yrm Ka "profecto rebellio quaeret malum", Montanus; so Schultens, Piscator, Tigurine version, Cocceius.

Proverbs 17:12

Ver. 12. Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man,.... A bear is a very fierce and furious creature, especially a she bear; and she is still more so when robbed of her whelps, which she has just whelped, and been at great pains to lick into shape and form, by which her fondness to them is increased; and therefore, being stripped of them, is full of rage; and ranging about in quest of them, falls furiously upon the first she meets with. Jerom {n} observes, that those who have written of the nature of beasts say, that, among all wild beasts, there is none more fierce than a she bear, when she has lost her whelps, or wants food. And yet, as terrible and as dangerous as it is, it is safer and more eligible of the two, to meet an enraged bear in those circumstances,

rather than a fool in his folly; in the height of his folly, in a paroxysm or fit of that; in the heat of his lusts, and the pursuit of them, in which there is no stopping him, or turning him from them; especially in the heat of passion and anger, which exceeds that of a bear, and is not so easily avoided. Jarchi applies it to such fools as seduce persons to idolatry, whom to meet is very dangerous: such are the followers of the man of sin, who have no mercy on the souls of men they deceive, and whose damnation they are the cause of; and who are implacably cruel to those who will not join with them in their idolatrous worship; the beast of Rome, his feet are as the feet of a bear, Re 13:2; and one had better meet a bear than him and his followers.

{n} Comment, in Hos. xiii. 8. So Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 18.

Proverbs 17:13

Ver. 13. Whoso rewardeth evil for good,.... As the enemies of David and Christ rewarded them, Ps 35:12; this is base ingratitude, contrary to the law and light of nature; worse than beastly, is really devilish;

evil shall not depart from his house; from him and his family; they shall be continually visited with one disease and calamity or another; so hateful and offensive is the sin of ingratitude to God, and therefore ought to be carefully avoided. This might be illustrated by the judgments of God on the nation of the Jews, for their ingratitude to Christ.

Proverbs 17:14

Ver. 14. The beginning of strife [is as] when one letteth out water,.... As when a man makes a little hole in the bank of a river, or cuts a small passage in it, to let the water into an adjoining field; by the force of the water, the passage is widened, and it flows in, in great abundance, to the overflow and prejudice of the field; nor is it easily stopped: so a single word, spoken in anger, with some warmth, or in a way of contradiction, has been the beginning and occasion of great strife and contention. The words in the Hebrew text lie thus; "he that letteth out water [is] the beginning of strife" {o}; which some understand of letting out water into another man's field, which occasions contentions, quarrels, and lawsuits; but the former sense is best: the Targum is,

"he that sheddeth blood as water stirreth up strifes;"

therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with; cease from it as soon as begun; leave it off before it is well entered: or "before one mixes himself" {p} with it, or is implicated with it; got so far into it, that it will be difficult to get out of it: or "before thou strivest with any openly"; which sense the word has in the Arabic language, as Schultens {q} observes; that is, before you come to open words and blows, put an end to the contention; do not suffer it to proceed so far; since it cannot be known what will be the consequence of it: or rather, leave it off, as the same learned writer in his later thoughts, in his commentary on the place, by the help of Arabism, also renders it, "before the teeth are made bare": or shown, in quarrelling, brawling, reproaching, in wrath and anger.

{o} Nwrm tyvar Mym rjwp "qui aperit aquam, vel aperiens aquas (est) principium contentionis", Pagninus, Montanus. {p} elgth ynpl "antequam sese immisceat", Junius & Tremellius. {q} Animadv. p. 931.

Proverbs 17:15

Ver. 15. He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just,.... That absolves and clears the guilty, and pronounces him righteous in open court, where he stands arraigned, accused, and the fact proved; and that adjudges an innocent man to condemnation; or passes the sentence of it upon him, when it is a clear case he is not guilty;

even they both [are] abomination to the Lord: being contrary to law and justice, to the declared will of God, and the orders and instructions given by him to judges, De 25:1; such an abominable action were the Jews guilty of in desiring Barabbas, a wicked man, to be released, and Christ, the just One, to be condemned; and Pilate in complying with them. From this passage we learn, that the word "justify" is used in a forensic sense, for pronouncing persons just in a court of judicature; and in which sense it is used in the article of a sinner's justification before God: by which act, though it is an ungodly person that is justified, yet it is through the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and is quite agreeable to law and the justice of God; and not at all inconsistent with this passage, which represents the justification of a wicked man as an abomination: it is so where there is no righteousness, but not where there is; agreeably to which is the saying of an Heathen {r} poet,

"it is not righteous, neither rashly to condemn bad men good, nor good men bad."

{r} Sophoclis Oedipus Tyrann. v. 622, 623.

Proverbs 17:16

Ver. 16. Wherefore [is there] a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom,....

Natural wisdom and knowledge. By this "price" may be meant money, riches, worldly substance, of which a foolish man is possessed; by means of which he might purchase useful books for the improvement of his mind, and procure himself instructors that might be very useful to him; but instead of seeking after that which he most wants, and making use of his substance to furnish him with it, he spends it on his back and belly, in fine clothes and luxurious living; in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, at balls and plays, in taverns and brothel houses: or spiritual wisdom and knowledge; the means of which are reading the word, hearing the Gospel, frequent opportunities of attendance on a Gospel ministry, in season and out of season, and conversation with Gospel ministers and other Christians; but, instead of making use of these, he neglects, slights, and despises them. And it is asked, with some degree of indignation and admiration, why or to what purpose a fool is favoured with such means;

seeing [he hath] no heart [to it]? to wisdom; he does not desire it, nor to make use of the price or means, in order to obtain it; all is lost upon him; and it is hard to account for it why he should have this price, when he makes such an ill use of it.

Proverbs 17:17

Ver. 17. A friend loveth at all times,.... A true, hearty, faithful friend, loves in times of adversity as well as in times of prosperity: there are many that are friends to persons, while they are in affluent circumstances; but when there is a change in their condition, and they are stripped of all riches and substance; than their friends forsake them, and stand at a distance from them; as was the case of Job,
Job 19:14; it is a very rare thing to find a friend that is a constant lover, such an one as here described;

and a brother is born for adversity; for a time of adversity, as Jarchi: he is born into the world for this purpose; to sympathize with his brother in distress, to relieve him, comfort and support him; and if he does not do this, when it is in his power to do it, he does not answer the end of his being born into the world. The Jewish writers understand this as showing the difference between a friend and a brother: a cordial friend loves at all times, prosperous and adverse; but a "brother [loves when] adversity [is] born" {s}, or is, so Aben Ezra; he loves when he is forced to it; when the distress of his brother, who is his flesh and bone, as Gersom observes, obliges him to it: but this may be understood of the same person who is the friend; he is a brother, and acts the part of one in a time of adversity, for which he is born and brought into the world; it being so ordered by divine Providence, that a man should have a friend born against the time he stands in need of him {t}. To no one person can all this be applied with so much truth and exactness as to our Lord Jesus Christ; he is a "friend", not of angels only, but of men; more especially of his church and people; of sinful men, of publicans and sinners; as appears by his calling them to repentance, by his receiving them, and by his coming into the world to save them: he "loves" them, and loves them constantly; he loved them before time; so early were they on his heart and in his book of life; so early was he the surety of them, and the covenant of grace made with him; and their persons and grace put into his hands, which he took the care of: he loved them in time, and before time began with them; thus they were preserved in him, when they fell in Adam; were redeemed by his precious blood, when as yet they were not in being, at least many of them: he loves them as soon as time begins with them, as soon as born; though impure by their first birth, transgressors from the womb, enemies and enmity itself unto him; he waits to be gracious to them, and sends his Gospel and his Spirit to find them out and call them: and he continues to love them after conversion; in times of backsliding; in times of desertion; in times of temptation, and in times of affliction: he loves them indeed to the end of time, and to all eternity; nor is there a moment of time to be fixed upon, in which he does not love them. And he is a "brother" to his people; through his incarnation, he is a partaker of the same flesh and blood with them; and through their adoption, they having one and the same Father; nor is he ashamed to own the relation; and he has all the freedom, affection, compassion, and condescension, of a brother in him: and now he is a brother "born"; see **Isa 9:6**; born of a woman, a virgin, at Bethlehem, in the fulness of time, for and on the behalf of his people; even "for adversity"; to bear and endure adversity himself, which he did, by coming into a state of meanness and poverty; through the reproaches and persecutions of men, the temptations of Satan, the ill usage of his own disciples, the desertion of his father, the strokes of justice, and the sufferings of death; also for the adversity of his people, to sympathize with them, bear them up under it, and deliver them out of it. The ancient Jews had a notion that this Scripture has some respect to the Messiah; for, to show that the Messiah, being God, would by his incarnation become a brother to men, they cite this passage of Scripture as a testimony of it {u}.

{s} dlwy hrul xaw "et fater diligit quando tribulatio nascitur", Munster; so some in Vatablus. {t} "Nihil homini amico est opportuno amicus", Plauti Epidicus, Act. 3. Sc. 3. v. 43. {u} Mechilta spud Galatin. Cathol. Ver. Arcan. l.

3. c. 28.

Proverbs 17:18

Ver. 18. A man void of understanding striketh hands,.... With his friend's creditor, and becomes surety for him; and thereby acts a very unwise part, and shows himself to want understanding, by taking such a step, which may prove the ruin of himself and family: for though a man may and should love his friend at all times; yet he is not obliged, under a notion of friendship, to injure himself and his family, or to run the risk of it; if he does, it is a plain case he wants wisdom and discretion, see **Pr 6:1**;

[and] becometh surety in the presence of his friend; not the creditor, but the debtor; and to pass his word for him, when he is present, shows that his own word will not be taken; and that he is either thought to be in bad circumstances, and incapable of payment at the proper time; or else that he is a bad man, of dishonest principles, and will not; and in either case it is not advisable to become surety for such a man: and besides, doing it in his presence may make him more careless and unconcerned about making good his payment or contract at the appointed time, when he knows his friend is engaged him.

Proverbs 17:19

Ver. 19. He loveth transgression that loveth strife,.... For strife is transgression, when it flows from a malignant spirit, is with bad views, about things to no profit, and for contention's sake; otherwise to contend earnestly for the truth; to strive together for the faith of the Gospel, for matters of moment and importance, and not mere words; to strive lawfully in a cause that is just, and for truth and justice, is commendable and praiseworthy;

[and] he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction; that opens the door of his lips, and speaks proudly, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it; who compare it with **Mic 7:5**; who set their mouths against heaven, and God in it; and whose tongue walks through the earth, and spares none there, Ps 73:8; as antichrist, who opens his mouth in blasphemy against God and his tabernacle, and exalts himself above all that is called God; and such, sooner or later, bring destruction on themselves, and find it as surely as if they sought for it. Or this may be understood of proud ambitious persons, that build houses more

magnificent than their substance will allow of, the gate being put for the whole; by which means they bring themselves to ruin. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, have it in Pr 17:16, "he that buildeth his house high"; or who behaves proudly.

Proverbs 17:20

Ver. 20. He that hath a froward heart findeth no good,.... Who is of a perverse spirit, meditates and devises evil things; is not ingenuous and sincere, but false and deceitful to God and men: such an one gets no good from either; he obtains not the favour of God, nor a good name, credit, and reputation among men;

and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief; or "that turns himself", or "is turned in his tongue" {w}; whose tongue is changeable, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; who sometimes says one thing, and sometimes another, and is not consistent with himself; as well as is contrary to all men: sooner or later he falls into mischief, into a pit, which he himself has dug for others; see **Jas 3:6**.

{w} wnwvlb Kphnw "qui verterit se", Pagninus; "et verteus se in lingua sua", Montanus; "qui vertitur in lingua sua". Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 17:21

Ver. 21. He that begetteth a fool [doth it] to his sorrow,.... As it proves in the issue; though it was joy to him when a man child was born, and took delight in him while in infancy and childhood, and promised himself much happiness in him when at years of discretion; but, instead of that, he departs from his education principles, despises all parental counsels and advice, and goes into all the extravagance of sin and folly; which is an heartbreaking to his godly and religious parents; for this is to be understood; not of an idiot, but of a wicked son, taking bad courses;

and the father of a fool hath no joy; in his son, but sorrow, and has scarce any joy or pleasure in anything else in all his enjoyments; the trouble he is filled with on his account embitters all he has, that he can take no satisfaction, or have any comfort of life; the concern for his son is uppermost in his thoughts, and hinders him from taking that pleasure which otherwise he might enjoy.

Proverbs 17:22

Ver. 22. A merry heart doth good [like] a medicine,.... Does the body good, makes it healthful and vigorous. Cheerfulness of spirit has a great influence upon the body, and much contributes to the health and welfare of it; see **Ec 9:7**; and especially a heart full of spiritual joy, peace of conscience, flowing from the blood of Christ, joy in the Holy Ghost, a rejoicing in Christ Jesus and his righteousness, and in hope of the glory of God, much affect even the outward man. Or, "a merry heart makes a good medicine" {x}; it is a good medicine of itself; raises the spirits, invigorates the body, and fits it for service and business: or, "does a medicine good" {y}; makes that operate kindly, and to a good purpose: or, as Jarchi, makes the countenance shine well, makes a serene countenance; which Schultens approves, and, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, confirms;

but a broken spirit drieth the bones; a spirit broken with sorrow, whether on spiritual or temporal accounts; as it weakens the nerves, it dries up the marrow in the bones, and emaciates the body, and reduces it to a skeleton: the joy or grief of the mind, those passions of the soul, have a very great influence upon the body, either for its good or hurt.

{x} hhg bjyy xmv bl "cor hilare bonam facit sanationem", Michaelis. {y} So R. Joseph Kimchi; "bonificat sive meliorem reddit medicinam", some in Valablus; "bene medicinam facit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Proverbs 17:23

Ver. 23. A wicked [man] taketh a gift out of the bosom,.... Of another, of a rich man, who takes it out from thence, and offers it to him as a bribe. This he takes in the most secret manner, that it might not be seen by others; though the Arabic version renders it, "he that receives a gift in his own bosom commits iniquity"; it is true of both the giver and the receiver; the one gives out of his bosom, and the other takes if from thence, and puts it into his own, and both are wicked. And the words are by some rendered, though it seems contrary to the accents, "a gift out of the bosom of the wicked he will take" {z}; the unjust judge, who is bribed with it:

to pervert the ways of judgment; to turn the course of justice, and hinder it from taking place; favouring a bad cause, and pronouncing a wrong sentence, which is wresting judgment.

{z} xqy evr qyxm dxv "munus de sinu impii accipiet", Baynus.

Proverbs 17:24

Ver. 24. Wisdom [is] before him that hath understanding,.... Is near him, to direct and assist him; it is before him as a rule to walk by, and it is the mark he aims at. A man of spiritual understanding has the book of wisdom before him, the Scriptures of truth, which are able to make a man wise to salvation; and he steers his course according to them; he sets Christ, the Wisdom of God, always before him; and keeps his eye on the mark for the prize, all the while he is running his Christian race: or, "in the face of an understanding man is wisdom" {a}; it is to be seen in his countenance, which is grave and composed;

but the eyes of a fool [are] in the ends of the earth; where wisdom is not to be found, it is far off from him; his mind is wandering after every object, is unsettled and unfixed to anything; and which may be discerned in his eyes, which are rolling about and turning, first one way and then another; and which shows the levity and inconstancy of his mind.

{a} hmkx Nybm ynp ta "in facie prudentis (lucet) sapientia", V. L. so Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Piscator, Noldius, p. 140. No. 665. "in vultu intelligentis sapientia", Schultens

Proverbs 17:25

Ver. 25. A foolish son [is] a grief to his father,.... Because of his folly and wickedness, and the ruin he is bringing himself to;

and bitterness to her that bare him; a cause of bitterness of soul to his mother, more distressing than the bitter pains with which she brought him forth into the world. Jarchi, by the father, understands the blessed God; and by her that bare him, the congregation of Israel; to whom Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, was bitterness, who caused Israel to sin; see Pr 10:1.

Proverbs 17:26

Ver. 26. Also to punish the just [is] not good,.... It is evil, and an abomination to the Lord, Pr 17:15. Evildoers indeed should be punished; but to punish the righteous also, as well as them, is far from being commendable;

[nor] to strike princes for equity: to strike princes, judges, civil magistrates, for doing the duty of their place and office, for doing that which is just and equitable among men, is very criminal, who ought to be encouraged and supported therein. Or it may be rendered, nor "that princes should strike for [that which is] right" {b} or cause men to be stricken, scourged, and whipped for doing well. The Targum is,

"nor to smite the righteous, who say right things;"

and so the Syriac version renders it, "righteous ones"; and the word signifies ingenuous liberal persons, good men, such as princes are or ought to be; and who should neither be stricken in the due discharge of their office, nor strike others that do well.

{b} rvwy le Mybydn twkhl "principes percuiere ob rectitudinem", Mercerus; "propter recta facta", Piscator, Gataker.

Proverbs 17:27

Ver. 27. He that hath knowledge spareth his words,.... Or, "he that knows knowledge" {c}; one that is very knowing, has a fund of knowledge in him, "spareth his words"; is generally a man of few words, he thinks much and says little; and though he may be communicative of his knowledge to proper persons, and at proper times, yet never speaks of it in a boasting and ostentatious way: or, he "restrains his words" {d}; he puts a bridle on them; and suffers not himself to speak hastily and angrily, and in a reproachful manner, when he is provoked to it;

[and] a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit; here is a various reading; the "Cetib" is rqw, "of a cool spirit" {e}; in opposition to a warm fiery spirit; such as was that of the apostles, who were for calling for fire from heaven on those that slighted their master, and, as he told them, knew not what spirits they were of; but a cool spirit is one that is not soon angry, calm, sedate, and not easily provoked to wrath: the "Keri", or marginal reading, is rqy, "of an excellent" or "precious spirit" {f}; and such an one is a right spirit; a spirit of

faith and love, and of a sound mind; and of such a spirit is a man of understanding in things divine and spiritual; to have a spirit of prayer, and to be tenderhearted, and of a sympathizing and forgiving spirit, is to be of an excellent spirit. The Targum is,

"humble in spirit;"

and a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price; the Lord has a great regard to such who are of an humble and contrite spirit: with these he dwells, to these he gives more grace; these are like to Christ, and have the fruits of his Spirit, and are very useful and ornamental. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it, "patient" or "longsuffering"; and to be of a patient spirit is to be of an excellent spirit: such bear afflictions and reproaches quietly; wait God's own time for hearing and helping them, and live in the comfortable expectation of heaven and happiness; and such show themselves to be wise and understanding men.

{c} ted edwy "qui scit scientiam", Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercerus. {d} wyrma Kvwx "qui cohibet sermones suos", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {e} xwr rqw "frigidus spiritu", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {f} xwr rqy "pretiosus spiritu", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Baynus.

Proverbs 17:28

Ver. 28. Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise,.... Not only one that is sparing of his words, and is really a man of knowledge and understanding; but even a feel, if he is but silent, and does not betray his folly by his words, will be reckoned a wise man by those that do not know him; and, whatever fool he may be in other respects, yet in this he acts the wise part, that he holds his peace and says nothing;

[and] he that shutteth his lips [is esteemed] a man of understanding; and keeps them shut, lest he should say anything rashly and hastily; a man that has so much command of himself as not to speak unadvisedly, through the heat of his own passions, and through the provocations of others, will pass for a man that understands himself, and knows how to behave well before others.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 18:1

Ver. 1. Through desire a man having separated himself, seeketh,.... Or, "a separated man seeketh desire" {g}; his own desire, will, and pleasure. This is either to be understood in a good sense, of one that has a real and hearty desire after sound wisdom and knowledge, and seeks in the use of all proper means to attain it; and in order to which he separates himself from the world and the business of it, and retires to his study, and gives up himself to reading, meditation, and prayer; or goes abroad in search of it, as Aben Ezra: or of a vain man that affects singularity; and who, through a desire of gratifying that lust, separates himself, not only from God, as Jarchi interprets it, pursuing his evil imagination and the lust of his heart; and from his friends, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; but from all men, like the Jews, who "please not God, and are contrary to all men"; so such a man sets himself to despise and contradict the sentiments and opinions of others, and to set up his own in opposition to them. This is true of the Pharisees among the Jews, who had their name from separating themselves from all others, having an high opinion of their own Wisdom and sanctify; and also of the Gnostics among the Christians, who boasted of their knowledge, and separated themselves from the Christian assemblies; and were sensual, not having the Spirit, being vainly puffed up with their fleshly mind;

[and] intermeddleth with all wisdom; the man who is desirous of being truly wise and knowing grasps at all wisdom, every branch of useful knowledge; would gladly learn something of every art and science worthy of regard; and he makes use of all means of improving himself therein; and covets the company and conversation of men of wisdom and knowledge, that he may attain to more; he intermingles himself with men of wisdom, as Aben Ezra interprets it, and walks and converses with them. Or if this is to be understood of a vain glorious person, the sense is, "he intermeddles" or "mingles himself with all business" {h}, as it may be rendered; he thrusts himself into affairs that do not concern him, and will pass his judgment on things he has nothing to do with; or he monopolizes all knowledge to himself, and will not allow any other to have any share with him. Jarchi interprets this clause thus,

"among wise men his reproach shall be made manifest;"

and observes, that their Rabbins explain it of Lot separating from Abraham, following the desires of his heart: but R. Saadiah Gaon better interprets it of an apostate from religion; that objects to everything solid and substantial, in a wrangling and contentious manner; and "shows his teeth" {i} at it, as

Schultens, from the use of the Arabic word, renders it.

{g} So the Targum. {h} elgty hyvwt lkb "immiscet se omni negotio", Munster; "omnibus quae sunt immiscet se", Junius & Tremellius. {i} "Et in omne solidum dentes destringei", Schultens.

Proverbs 18:2

Ver. 2. A fool hath no delight in understanding,.... In natural understanding, and in the improvement of his mind in it; he delights not in books, nor in the conversation of men of learning and sense: or in spiritual understanding, in the understanding of spiritual things; these are foolishness to a natural man; nor does he delight in reading the Scriptures, nor in hearing the word, and attendance on it in the house of God, but is weary of such exercises;

but that his heart may discover itself; and the folly that is in it: such men only desire to have some knowledge and understanding, to make a show of it, that they may be thought to be wise, and to be capable of talking of things as if they understood them, when it is only to the exposing of themselves and their ignorance; some persons attain to no more learning and knowledge than just to be capable to show that they are fools. Or, "but in the discovery of his heart" {k}; he delights in discovering that; not the wisdom, but the folly that is in it.

{k} wbl twlgthb Ma yk "sed in patefacere cor ejus", Vatablus; "sed in detectione cordis sui", Piscator; "sed sane ut enudet cor suum", Schultens.

Proverbs 18:3

Ver. 3. When the wicked cometh, [then] cometh also contempt,.... When he comes into the world, as Aben Ezra; as soon as he is born, he is liable to contempt, being born in sin; but this is true of all: rather, as the Vulgate Latin, and with which the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions agree, when he cometh into the depth of sin, or to the height of his wickedness; he commences a scoffer at, and condemner of all that is good: when he comes into the house of God, it may be said, "there comes contempt"; for he comes not to hear the word, in order to receive any profit by it, but to contemn it, and the ministers of it;

and with ignominy reproach: or, "with the ignominious man reproach" {l}: he that despises all that is good, and treats divine things in a ludicrous way, will not spare to reproach the best of men, and speak evil of them falsely, for the sake of religion. Or the meaning of the whole is, that wicked men, sooner or later, come into contempt, ignominy, and reproach, themselves; they that despise the Lord are lightly esteemed by him; and a vile person is contemned in the eyes of a good man: such bring shame and disgrace upon themselves and families while they live; and, when they die, they are laid in the grave with dishonour; an infamy rests upon their memories, and they wilt rise to everlasting shame and contempt.

{l} hprx Nwlq Me "viro ignominioso, venit opprobriunu", Pagninus; "cum ignominioso probrum", Junis & Tremeilius; "cum probroso opprobrium", Schultens, so Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 18:4

Ver. 4. The words of a man's mouth [are as] deep waters,.... The words of a great and mighty man; of an excellent and valuable man, as Jarchi; or of a wise man, as Aben Ezra. The doctrines which such a man has imbibed, and his heart is full of and his mouth utters, are like to "waters", pure, purifying, and refreshing; to "deep waters", which make no noise, and cannot be easily fathomed: such are the deep mysteries of grace, the wisdom of God in a mystery, spoken among them that are perfect; of which a good man makes no boast, but humbly declares; out of the abundance of his heart, his mouth speaks;

[and] the wellspring of wisdom [as] a flowing brook; there is a spring of spiritual wisdom and knowledge in him; a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life; and from thence it flows freely and constantly; communicating itself liberally unto others, and ministering grace to the hearers, for their edification.

Proverbs 18:5

Ver. 5. [It is] not good to accept the person of the wicked,.... For a judge to have respect to a wicked man in a cause before him, and to favour him, because he is a rich man, or a relation, or he has received some kindness from him; none of these things should have any influence upon him to overthrow the righteous in judgment: though he may be a poor man and a stranger, and to whom the judge is under no private and personal obligation; yet justice ought to be done without any respect to persons; to do otherwise is not only not good, but very bad, very sinful and criminal; it is contrary to law and justice; it is doing injury to men, and is repugnant to the will of God, and offensive to him, Le 19:15.

Proverbs 18:6

Ver. 6. A fool's lips enter into contention,.... That is, between others, when he has nothing to do with it; but he must be meddling, and make himself a party in the contention, which is an argument of his folly; he says things which occasion disputes, raise contentions among men, and provoke to wrath and anger. The Septuagint version is, "the lips of a fool lead him to evils": for, as they lead him to contention and strife, the issue of that is confusion and every evil work;

and his mouth calleth for strokes: as he stirs up and encourages contention, so he proceeds to blows, and excites others to them; from words he goes to blows, and, by the ill and provoking language of his mouth, gets many a blow to himself. Jarchi seems to understand it of chastisement, from the hand of God; see Pr 26:3.

Proverbs 18:7

Ver. 7. A fool's mouth [is] his destruction,.... The cause of it; for his contentions, and quarrels, and evil speaking, lawsuits are commenced against him, which bring ruin upon himself and his family now; as well as for his idle and wicked words he will be condemned hereafter, Mt 12:35; there is a world of iniquity in the mouth and tongue of a wicked man, which bring destruction upon himself and others, **Jas 3:6**;

and his lips [are] the snare of his soul; from speaking in his own defence, he says things which should not be said, and by which he is entangled yet more and more; he is caught by his own words and condemned by them; or his loquacity, in which he delights, is a snare unto him to say things which neither become him, nor are for his advantage, but the contrary; see Pr 12:13.

Proverbs 18:8

Ver. 8. The words of a talebearer [are] as wounds,.... Or rather they are wounds; they wound the credit and reputation of the person of whom the tale is told; they wound the person to whom it is told, and destroy his love and affection to his friend; and in the issue they wound, hurt, and ruin the talebearer himself. Or, they are "as of those that are wounded" {m}; they pretend to be affected with the case they tell, and to be grieved for the failings and infirmities of those they are secretly exposing, when at the same time they rejoice at them: or, they are "secret" hidden ones, as Aben Ezra interprets it; they are spoken secretly, and wound secretly, in a backbiting way: or, they are "smooth" or flattering {n}, as Kimchi; they are smoother than oil, and glide easily into the minds of others: rather, "are greedily swallowed down" {o}, as the word in the Arabic language signifies; as Schultens has shown, and so renders it. Hence it follows:

and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly; go down pleasantly, and sink deep into the hearts of those to whom they are told; where they have a place and remain, both to the injury of the persons that receive them, and of them of whom they are told; and, though pleasing at first, they are as wounds in the inner parts, which are mortal.

{m} Mymhltmk "similia sunt verbis eorum, qui saepenumero contusi sunt", Junius & Tremellius; "ut contusorum", Cocceius. {n} "Ut lenientia", Montanus; "velut blanda", Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "quasi blandientia", Schmidt, so Ben Melech. {o} "Tanquam avide deglutita crustula", Schultens.

Proverbs 18:9

Ver. 9. He also that is slothful in his work,.... Remiss in it; hangs down his hands, and does not care to make use of them, but neglects his business:

is brother to him that is a great waster: a prodigal man, who spends his substance in riotous living: the sluggard and the prodigal are brethren in iniquity; for, though they take different courses, they are both sinful, and issue in the same manner; both bring to poverty and want. Or, "brother to a master that wastes" {p}; a slothful servant and a wasteful master are near akin, and come into the same class and circumstances. Jarchi interprets it,

"he that separateth from the law, though a disciple of a wise man, is a brother to Satan;"

whose name is Apollyon, the waster and destroyer. A man that is slothful in spiritual things, though a professor of religion, and has a place in the house of God, is brother to him that is a waster and persecutor of it; see Mt 12:30.

{p} tyxvm lebl "domino devaststionis", Gejerus; "domino dissipanti", Mercerus.

Proverbs 18:10

Ver. 10. The name of the Lord [is] a strong tower,.... By "the name of the Lord" may be meant, either the attributes and perfections of God, by which he is made known, and which are the strength and security of his people; his goodness, grace, and mercy, are their defence; his favour encompasses them about, as a shield; his justice protects them from all injuries and insults; his truth and faithfulness preserve them; they are kept by his power, as in a garrison; and his unchangeableness is a reason why they are not consumed: or else the Lord himself; his name is put for himself, Ps 20:1; and may be well interpreted of the Messiah, as it is by the ancient Jew, {q}; in and by whom God is manifested unto men as the God of grace; in whom he proclaims his name, a God gracious and merciful; whose name is in him, and who has the same nature and perfections with him; his name is Jehovah, our righteousness; Immanuel, God with us; the mighty God, and Prince of peace; and who is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins, and so is their security from eternal destruction. What a strong tower is to them that are within it, against an enemy without, that is the power, strength, and might of Christ to his people; as a divine Person, he is strong and mighty, the most mighty, the Almighty; as man, he is the man of God's right hand, made strong for himself and us; as Mediator, he has all power in heaven and earth: in him is everlasting strength for his people; he is their Betzer, their fortified place, or city of refuge, to flee unto on all occasions; he is the strong hold, whither prisoners of hope are directed to turn to; he is their place of defence, and the munition of rocks; a strong tower, inexpugnable; so deeply founded, no enemy can work under it; and plant a mine to blow it up; so highly built; no scaling ladders can reach it; so fortified, no cannon balls can break through it, or demolish any of its walls and bulwarks, which are his salvation; the gates of hell cannot prevail against it; it is not to be taken by storm, or by the most violent attack of the whole posse of men and devils;

the righteous runneth into it; not self-righteous persons, they run from Christ and his righteousness, not to him and that; but such who see their own righteousness will not justify them; who indeed are sinners, know and acknowledge themselves to be such; as sinners go to Christ, who, as such, receives them; and these are righteous through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and live soberly, righteously, and godly: and it is the continual business or employment of their faith to betake themselves to Christ upon all occasions; they are continually coming to him, and exercising faith upon him, as the Lord their righteousness, which is meant by "running" to him; this supposes knowledge of him, as the strong tower and city of refuge; of the way unto him, and of the reception by him which may be expected; it supposes a principle of spiritual life, and some degree of spiritual strength; a sense of danger or of want in themselves, and of safety and fulness in Christ; it is expressive of haste, readiness, and cheerfulness, and is owing to the drawings of efficacious grace;

and such an one that thus runs

is safe; from the avenging justice of God; from the curse and condemnation of the law; from sin, and all its dreadful consequences; from Satan, and all spiritual enemies; from wrath to come, hell, and the second death: or is "set aloft" {r}; is on high; for this tower, as it is a strong one, it is a high one; a rock of refuge, higher than men, or angels, or heaven itself; and such who are in it are out of the reach of all danger and every enemy.

{q} Midrash Tillim in Psal. xviii. 50. fol. 18. 1. {r} bgvnw "et exaltabitur", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus; "erit in loco alto et tuto", Vatablus; "et exaltatur", Michaelis; "in celsoque aget", Schultens.

Proverbs 18:11

Ver. 11. The rich man's wealth [is] his strong city,.... In which he dwells, over which he presides; in which he places his trust and confidence, and thinks himself safe from every enemy and from all trouble: as one {s} observes,

"the abundance of a rich man's wealth he conceives to be as it were the abundance of people in a "city"; the telling of his money he imagines to be the walking of people up and down the streets; his bags standing thick together to be so many houses standing close one to the other; his iron barred chests to be so mary bulwarks; his bonds and bills to be his cannons and demi-cannons, his great ordinance; and in the midst of these he thinketh himself environed with a "great wall", which no trouble is able to leap over, which no misery is able to break through."

As it follows;

and as a high wall in his own conceit: which not only separates and distinguishes him from others; but, as he imagines, will secure him from all dangers, and will be abiding, lasting, and durable: but all this is only "in his own conceit", or "imagery" {t}; in the chambers of his imagery, as Jarchi, referring to **Eze 8:12**; where the same word is used; for this wall shall not stand; these riches cannot secure themselves, they take wing and fly away; and much less the owner of them, not from public calamities, nor from personal diseases of body, nor from death, nor from wrath to come.

{s} Jermin its loc. {t} wtykvmb "in imaginatione ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Schultens; "in imagine sua", Mercerus.

Proverbs 18:12

Ver. 12. Before destruction the heart of man is haughty,.... Lifted up with his riches. Rich men are apt to be highminded, and therefore are to be charged and cautioned against it; they are apt to look above their poor neighbours, and with contempt upon them; and very often this haughtiness of theirs is a presage of their ruin and destruction: and those haughty airs are put on from the pride of their hearts, when a "breach" is near, as the word {u} signifies, or when they are ready to break; however, their haughty spirits are, sooner or later, humbled by one distressing providence or another; see Pr 16:18;

and before honour [is] humility; See Gill on "Pr 15:33".

{u} rbv ynpl "ante confractionem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens.

Proverbs 18:13

Ver. 13. He that answereth a matter before he heareth [it],.... Who is impatient, and cannot wait to hear it out, but breaks in upon the speaker before he has finished what he has to say; or is rash and precipitate, and returns an answer at once, without weighing and considering, and thoroughly understanding, what is said:

it [is] folly and shame unto him; his answer must be a foolish one, and bring shame and confusion upon him; men should be "swift to hear", and "slow to speak", **Jas 1:9**.

Proverbs 18:14

Ver. 14. The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity,.... The spirit of a mighty man, as Jarchi; a man of spirit, that has a spirit of fortitude, even of natural fortitude, and especially of Christian fortitude; that has a spirit of might upon him, of power, and sound mind; a man of a Christian spirit, that is renewed in the spirit of his mind; who is a spiritual man, and has the Spirit of God in him, as well as a rational soul, an immaterial, immortal, and never dying substance. Such a man will bear up under many trials and exercises of life; will support under bodily infirmities; will take patiently the loss Of friends and of substance; endure reproach, and the loss of a good name, credit, and reputation, cheerfully, for righteousness's sake; and suffer persecution for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, with an undaunted and unbroken spirit: the peace of conscience he feels within; the presence of God with him; the love of God shed abroad in his heart; seeing all his afflictions flowing from love, and working for his good; and having in view the glories of another world; he bears up under and goes through all afflictions with ease and pleasure; his conscience is clear, his heart is whole, his mind is easy; his wounds being healed, his sins pardoned, and his soul saved in Chris;

but a wounded spirit who can bear? or a "smitten" {w} one, smitten by the Lord; by the word of the Lord, which he uses as a hammer to break rocky hearts in pieces; by the law of God, which produces wrath, and a looking for of fiery indignation; by the Spirit of God, awakening the conscience, and convicting it of sin, righteousness, and judgment; which smitings are very grievous, though they tend to bring to repentance; are in order to healing, and are in love. Or, "a broken spirit" {x}, as in Pr 17:22; broken with a sense of sin, and with an excess of sorrow for it; when a man becomes lifeless and hopeless, has no hope of life and salvation, and is in the utmost confusion; all his measures and purposes are broken, as well as his heart; he knows not what to do, nor what way to take; he is disconsolate, and refuses to be comforted; and which for the present is intolerable: though the Lord has a regard to such, is nigh unto them; has sent his son to bind up their broken hearts; yea, has himself been broken for them; and happy it is for them that they fall on him and are broken, and not he on them. Or, "a wounded spirit"; with a view of sin, as committed against the omniscient and omnipotent Being, a pure and holy God; a righteous one, whose nature is infinite; and so sin committed against him requires an infinite satisfaction, which a creature cannot give; and a God also, who is the author of their beings, and the Father of their mercies; all which makes sin against him the more cutting and wounding: likewise they are wounded with a view of the evil nature of sin, and the aggravated circumstances that attend it; and with the terrors of the law, that are set in array against them. And such a spirit "who can bear?" not without the sight of a wounded Saviour; or without a view of atonement by his sacrifice; or without the discoveries and applications of pardoning grace; or without a sense of peace and reconciliation made by the blood of Christ; or without some hope of salvation by him; and unless the good Samaritan pours in oil and wine into the wounds, and binds them up.

{w} hakn "percussum", Pagninus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "perculsum", Vatablus, Cocceius. {x} "Contritum", Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "fractum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Proverbs 18:15

Ver. 15. The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge,.... More knowledge; for he must have some, and a considerable share, to be denominated "prudent", whether in things natural, civil, or spiritual: and such will be heartily desirous of more, and make use of all means to attain it, by which they do come at a large share of it;

and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge; a wise man seeks to get it by hearing; he listens to what others say, and especially such that are wiser and more knowing than himself: so such as are wise to salvation, as they desire to know more of Christ and of divine things, and make use of all means for that purpose; among the rest, hearken to what Christians, of a superior class to themselves, drop in private conversation; and particularly they constantly attend to the ministry of the word; and thus seeking it, they find an increase of it.

Proverbs 18:16

Ver. 16. A man's gift maketh room for him,.... Or "enlarges him" {y}; brings him out of prison, or, or out of straits and difficulties with which he, has, been pressed; or it makes way for him to a judge, and for a favourable hearing of his cause; or it enlarges his acquaintance, and gains him respect among men;

and bringeth him before great men; it opens a way for him into the presence and company of great men, being a fee to their servants; or with it he procures a place to wait on them. It is not necessary to understand it of a gift by way of bribe; but to introduce a person to another, and render him acceptable, and appease anger; as in the cases of Jacob and Abigail, Ge 32:20.

{y} byxry.

Proverbs 18:17

Ver. 17. He that is first in his own cause [seemeth] just,.... As perhaps Tertullus did, before Paul made his defence; and as Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant, before his master detected him: this often appears true in telling a tale, in private conversation, in lawsuits before a judge and a court of judicature, and in theological controversies;

but his neighbour cometh, and searcheth him; his neighbour comes into the house, where he is telling his tale, and reports it in another manner, and shows the falsehood of his relation; or he comes into a court of judicature, and sets the cause in quite another light; or he comes out into the worm by public writing, and exposes the errors of a man engaged in a wrong cause, and refutes his arguments. It is generally understood of judicial affairs, that the first that opens a cause is very apt to prejudice the judge and court in his favour, and they are ready to thing at first hearing that he is in the right; but it is not proper to be hasty in forming a judgment till the other side is heard; for his antagonist comes and traverses the point, unravels the whole affair, shows the weakness of his cause, the vanity of his pretences, and makes void all his allegations; and then "he", the judge, so some interpret it, "searcheth"; inquires more narrowly into the case, in order to find out truth, and pass a right judgment and sentence.

Proverbs 18:18

Ver. 18. The lot causeth contentions to cease,.... When a case cannot be determined among parties at variance in a private way, nor in a court of judicature, the lot is cast, and that puts an end to all strife, and makes each party easy; they submit to it, and acquiesce in it;

and parteth between the mighty; the kings and princes of the earth; men of great power and authority, and of great riches and affluence; and so in a capacity of contending with each other, and of prolonging the contention, which may be attended with bad consequences; and who are not easily dissuaded from it: or it may intend such who most vehemently disagree; persons of great spirits, who are obstinate and stubborn, and will by no means yield, and there is no parting them by arguments or legal decisions; these the lot parts, and causes them to cease from their quarrels and contentions, and to rest satisfied with the distributions the lot makes to them; as the children of Israel were with their portion of the land of Canaan, assigned them by lot.

Proverbs 18:19

Ver. 19. A brother offended [is harder to be won] than a strong city,.... A fortified city may sooner be taken by an enemy, than one brother offended can be reconciled to another; their resentments against each other are keener than against another person that has offended them; and their love being turned into hatred, it is more bitter; and it is more difficult to compose differences between brethren than between enemies; wherefore such should take care that they fall not out by the way: this is true of brethren in a natural sense; as the cases of Abel and Cain, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brethren, Amnon and Absalom, and others, show; and of brethren in a spiritual sense, as Paul and Barnabas, Luther and Calvin, and others;

and [their] contentions [are] like the bars of a castle: which cannot be easily broken or cut asunder: so contentions, especially those among brethren, are with great difficulty made to cease, and their differences composed; they will stand it out against one another as long as a strong city, or a barred castle, against an enemy.

Proverbs 18:20

Ver. 20. A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth,.... With his own words and discourses, when they are prudent, pious, and savoury; when they are with grace, and minister it; they are satisfying to himself, to his own mind and conscience, and to his family; to all within his house, which is, as it were, his belly; but, if otherwise, it will not be profitable nor satisfying to either; and therefore, if a man would keep conscience easy, and be useful to others, he ought to take care what he says; see Pr 12:14;

[and] with the increase of his lips shall he be filled; the same thing as before, expressed in different words, alluding to the sowing, of seed in the earth, and the increase of it; as a man sows he reaps, and enjoys the fruits of his labour; according to what a man sows with his lips, such is his harvest he is afterwards a partaker of.

Proverbs 18:21

Ver. 21. Death and life [are] in the power of the tongue,.... Of witnesses, according to the testimony they bear; of judges, according to the sentence they pass; of teachers, according to the doctrine they preach; of all men, who, by their well or ill speaking, bring death or life to themselves and others. Some, by their tongues, by the too free use of them, or falsehood they utter, are the cause of death to themselves and others; and some, by their silence, or by their prudent speech and prevalent intercession, secure or obtain life for themselves and others; yea, judgment at the last day will proceed according to a man's words, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned", Mt 12:37; the tongue is the instrument either of a great deal of good, or of a great deal of evil;

and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof; that delight to be talkative; that love to use the tongue, whether in a good or in a bad way, shall accordingly be recompensed; shall enjoy the advantages or disadvantages arising from it.

Proverbs 18:22

Ver. 22. [Whoso] findeth a wife,.... A good one; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, supply it; and so the Targum, though it leaves out the word good in the last clause; and no other can be meant, even a good natured one, wise, prudent, careful, and industrious; a proper helpmeet, a virtuous woman, as in Pr 31:10; whoso seeks after such an one, and finds one, especially one that has the grace of God, which he should seek after among his friends, and by their assistance, and by prayer to God:

findeth a good [thing]; that will be good for him, both upon a civil and spiritual account; the Septuagint version adds,

"he that casts out a good wife casts out good things, but he that retains a whore is foolish and ungodly;"

which is followed by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, but is not in the Hebrew text. Jarchi interprets it of the law in a mystic sense, but, according to the literal sense, of a good wife;

and obtaineth favour of the Lord; it is from the Lord, and under his direction and guidance in seeking, that he finds a good wife; and which he ought to esteem as a favour from the Lord, and as an evidence of his favour to him, and may encourage himself to hope for others of him {z} Hesiod says, a man cannot obtain anything better than a good wife.

{z} Opera & Dies, l. 2. v. 323.

Proverbs 18:23

Ver. 23. The poor useth entreaties,.... Or "supplications" {a}; he is an humble supplicant to others for favours he asks in a submissive and lowly manner; he does not demand anything, nor prescribe what shall be done for him, but modestly tells his case, and submits it; so such who are poor in spirit are humble supplicants at the throne of grace;

but the rich answereth roughly; being proud and haughty, lifted up with their riches, and in fear of none, they answer others with hard and rough words, especially their inferiors, and particularly the poor. This is not what ought to be, but what commonly is. This verse and
Pr 18:24 are not in the Arabic version.

{a} Mynwnxt "supplicationes", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 18:24

Ver. 24. A man [that hath] friends must show himself friendly,.... Friendship ought to be mutual and reciprocal, as between David and Jonathan; a man that receives friendship ought to return it, or otherwise he is guilty of great ingratitude. This may be spiritually applied; a believer is "a man of friends" {b}, as it may be rendered; he has many friends: God is his friend, as appears by his early love to him, his choice of him, and provisions of grace for him; by sending his son to save him; by visiting him, not only in a way of providence, but of grace; by disclosing his secrets, showing his covenant to him, and by making him his heir, and a joint heir with Christ. Christ is his friend, as is evident from his visiting him at his incarnation; and in a spiritual way, by the communication of his secrets to him; by his hearty counsel and faithful reproofs; by his undertaking and doing for him what he has; and especially by suffering and dying in his room and stead. The Holy Spirit is his friend, which he has shown by discovering to him his woeful estate by nature, and the way of salvation by Christ; by working all his works in him; by acting the part of a Comforter to him; by revealing divine things to him, by helping him under all his infirmities; by making intercession for him according to the will of God; and by making him meet for eternal glory and happiness: angels are his friends, as is plain by their well pleasedness with the incarnation of Christ for men; and which they express at their conversion; by their ministering to them, their protection of them, and the good offices they do them both in life and at death; and saints are friends to one another: and such should show themselves friendly to God, their covenant God and Father; by frequently visiting him at the throne of grace; by trusting in him; by a carefulness not to offend, but please him; and by a close and faithful adherence to his cause and interest: to Jesus Christ their Redeemer, by a ready obedience to his commands; by owning and using him as their friend; by taking notice of his friends, and showing them respect, his ministers and poor saints; by cleaving to him, and renouncing the friendship of his enemies: and likewise to the Holy Spirit, by not grieving, quenching, and despising him; but by making use of him, and giving up themselves to his influence and direction; and by acknowledging him as the author of all their grace: also to angels, by speaking well of them, owning their good offices, and reckoning it an honour that they are come and joined to such a company; and to the saints, by Christian conversation with them, by sympathizing with them in all conditions, by hearty counsel, faithful reproofs and admonitions, and by helping them in every distress, inward and outward;

and there is a friend [that] sticketh closer than a brother; who is to a man as his own soul, De 13:6; and so are of one heart and soul, as Jonathan and David, and the first Christians, were; this is true of Christ, and may be expressive of the close union between him and his people; and of his close adherence to their cause and interest; and of his constancy and continuance as a friend at all times; and of his faithfulness and unchangeableness as such; see Pr 17:17. The

Heathens had a deity which presided over friendship, which they called Jupiter Philios {c}: the character best agrees with the true God, who is a friend to men himself, and loves friendship among them.

{b} Myer vya "vir amicorum", Montanus, Vatablus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "vir sodalium", Cocceius, Schultens. {c} Aristoph. Acharn. Act. 3. Sc. 2. v. 2. Pausan. Arcadica sive, l. 8. p. 506.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 19:1

Ver. 1. Better [is] the poor that walketh in his integrity,.... In the uprightness of his heart before God and men; who is sincere in the worship of God, and in the profession of his name, and walks in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; and is upright, harmless, and inoffensive in his conversation with men; and studies to exercise a conscience void of offence to both, and continues herein. A man may be a poor man with respect to worldly things, and yet be rich towards God; may be a truly gracious good man, honest, sincere, and upright in heart and life: and such an one is better

than [he that] is perverse in his lips, and is a fool; that is, than a rich man, as the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions supply it, and as the antithesis requires; "that is perverse in his lips", or "whose ways are perverse", as the Syriac version; that acts the deceitful part both by words and actions towards those that are about him, not being honest and plain hearted as the poor man is; and who uses those beneath him very roughly; and concerning oppression speaks loftily, and lets his tongue run both against God in heaven and man on earth, by which he shows he is a fool: for his riches do not give him wisdom; and his words and actions declare he wants it; men may be poor, and yet wise; and a matt may be rich, and yet a fool: or is confident {d}; that is, trusts in his riches, and is opposed to a poor man, so R. Saadiah Gaon. This verse and Pr 19:2 are not in the Septuagint and Arabic versions.

{d} lyok "confidens divitiis", Cocceii Lexic. col. 384.

Proverbs 19:2

Ver. 2. Also, [that] the soul [be] without knowledge, [it is] not good,.... Without knowledge of things natural and civil, especially without the knowledge of God and Christ, and divine and spiritual things; to be without this is not good, yea, very bad; for men without such knowledge and understanding are, like the beasts that perish, and for lack of it do. Jarchi interprets it, without the law. Or, "to be without the knowledge of the soul is not good" {e}; so the Targum, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions,

"he that knoweth not his soul, it is not good for him;"

that does not know he has a soul, or however takes no more care of it than if he had none; who knows not the worth and value of it, its state and condition, and the danger it is in, and the only way of attaining the salvation of it;

and he that hasteth with [his] feet sinneth; who engages in anything ignorantly and rashly, he misses the mark, and fails in the performance of it, for want of due consideration and care. The Targum is,

"he that is swift with his feet to evil is a sinner;"

whose feet run to evil, to commit robbery, as Aben Ezra; or to shed blood; see **Pr 1:16**.

{e} So Vatablus; or "without care of it", Schultcns.

Proverbs 19:3

Ver. 3. The foolishness of man perverteth his way,.... The sinfulness of his heart and nature; the folly which is bound up in it causes him to go astray out of the way in which he should go, or makes things go cross with him; so that the ways he takes do not prosper, nor his schemes succeed; but everything goes against him, and he is brought into straits and difficulties;

and his heart fretteth against the Lord; laying all the blame on him; and ascribing his ill success, not to his own sin and folly, but to divine Providence, which works against him; and therefore frets and murmurs at him; and, instead of charging his own ways with folly, charges the ways of God with inequality; see Eze 18:25.

Proverbs 19:4

Ver. 4. Wealth maketh many friends,.... Or "adds" {f}; it increases the number of them: so the poet {g}, "donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos"; and to this agrees what the wise man says,
Pr 14:20;

but the poor is separated from his neighbour; or "friend" {h}; he will not visit him as he did in his prosperity, nor suffer him to come into his house or company, or come near him; he is separated from his affection, friendship, and presence: so another poet {i},

"if thou art rich, thou wilt have many friends; but, if poor, few."

{f} Pyoy. "addit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {g} Ovid. {h} wherm "ab amico sua", Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus, Junius & Tremeliius, Piscator, Michaelis; "a sodali sua", Schultens. {i} Theognis.

Proverbs 19:5

Ver. 5. A false witness shall not be unpunished,.... He that bears false witness against his neighbour in an open court of judicature; though be may not be detected by men, and so escape the punishment due to such offenders by the laws of God and men; yet God, who knows all hearts and actions, will not suffer him to go with impunity; if not punished in this world, he shall be in the world to come; for bearing false witness, or perjury, is a grievous offence to God;

and [he that] speaketh lies shall not escape; even he that useth himself to lying in private conversation shall not escape the reproach of men; for nothing is more scandalous than lying; nor the wrath of God, such shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, Re 21:8.

Proverbs 19:6

Ver. 6. Many will entreat the favour of the prince,.... Or of the liberal and bountiful man; as kings and princes generally are,
Lu 22:25; such have many to wait upon them, and are humble petitioners to them. Aben Ezra and Gersom interpret the many of great and honourable men, who are courtiers to kings and princes; who wait upon them, ask favours of them, and seek for places under them. The Targum is,

"there are many that minister before a prince;"

he has many servants, and some of them nobles;

and every man [is] a friend to him that giveth gifts; or "to a man of gift" {k}: who has it in his power to give, and has a heart to it; who is both a rich man and a liberal man; who is both able and willing to communicate to the necessities of others: such a man not only has the poor his friends, but others will speak well of him, and will make application to him on account of the poor; and, for the sake of doing good to them, will court his friendship and acquaintance. Bayne interprets this "man of gift" of Christ, who ascended on high, and received gifts for men, and gives them to men.

{k} Ntm vyal "viro doni", Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 19:7

Ver. 7. All the brethren of the poor do hate him,.... They despise him on account of his poverty; they neglect him, and do not take care of him; they reckon him a reproach unto them, and do not choose to own him; all which may be interpreted an hatred of him;

how much more do his friends go far from him? or "his friend", every one of his friends; or "his neighbour" {l}: for if his brethren, who are his own flesh and blood, show so much disrespect unto him; much more will those who are only his neighbours, or were in friendship with him while in prosperity; these wilt stand at a distance from him, and not come near him, now he is poor and in distress; see Job 19:13;

he pursueth [them with] words; [yet] they are wanting [to him]; or, "they [are] not" {m}; he presses them with earnest entreaties to relieve him; he urges their own words and promises, and fetches arguments from them, and uses them as far as they will go; but all signifies nothing; his own words and petitions are to no purpose; and their words and promises are all smoke and vapour, vain and empty. Some understand this, as Gersom, not of the poor man that follows vain words {n} and empty promises, and buoys himself up with them that such an one and such an one has promised to be his friend, of which nothing comes; but of the friend that separates from the poor man, and pursues him with words of accusation, charging it on him as hit own fault that he is poor; which accusations are not true. This is one of the fifteen places observed by the Masoretes, in which it is written al, "not", and read wl, "to him": both may be retained, and read, "they [are] not to him" {o}; not profitable to him; either his own words, his petitions; or the words of others, their promises.

{l} wherm "amicus ejus", Vatablus; "ominis amicus", Cocceius; i.e. "quisque amicorum ejus", Michaelis. {m} hmh al "non sunt ii", Junius & Tremillius; "et non sunt, Mercerus. {n} "Nihil illa", Cocceius, Schultens. {o} Vid. Amamae Antibarb. Bibl. l. 3. p. 742.

Proverbs 19:8

Ver. 8. He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul,.... Wisdom and knowledge in things natural and civil; and especially in things divine, spiritual, and evangelical; particularly he that gets Christ, the Wisdom of God, and a saving knowledge of him; see **Pr 3:13**. Or, "he that getteth a heart" {p}; a good heart, as the Targum explains it; which is a new heart, and a new spirit; a clean heart and a right spirit; a heart of flesh, a soft, tender, and contrite one, in opposition to a hard heart, a heart of stone: a wise and understanding heart, such an one as Solomon had; a heart to know the Lord, and to fear him; in which his laws are written, the graces of his Spirit are implanted; and in which God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, dwell: he who is desirous of such a he art seeks after it, prays for it, and uses all means to obtain it; and who, through the grace of God; does possess it, as the word signifies; he by all this shows that he has a regard to the good and welfare of his immortal soul; when such, who indulge to ignorance and a wicked heart, wrong and hate their own souls; see
Pr 29:24;

he that keepeth understanding shall find good; retains the wisdom he has got; holds fast instruction, and keeps it, which is committed to him; abides by the doctrines of the Gospel, and does not depart from them; keeps the ordinances of it, which it is his wisdom and understanding to do; see **De 4:6**; he finds his account in all this; he finds that which is good, good for him now and hereafter; he finds Christ, and life in him; peace, joy, and comfort in this world: and, in the world to come, glory, honour, and happiness.

{p} bl "cor", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, &c.

Proverbs 19:9

Ver. 9. A false witness shall not be unpunished,....
See Gill on "Pr 19:5";

and [he that] speaketh lies shall perish; or "be lost", shall be undone for ever; he shall not enter into the holy city, but have his part in the lake of fire: they that speak lies in hypocrisy, doctrinal ones, and are given up to believe and profess them, such shall be damned, **2Th 2:11**.

Proverbs 19:10

Ver. 10. Delight is not seemly for a fool,.... Such an one as Nabal, whose name and nature were alike; and whose prosperity ill became him, and the mirth and delight he had in it, 1Sa 25:25; for, as the wise man elsewhere says, "the prosperity of fools shall destroy them", **Pr 1:26**; they do not know how to make a right use of their prosperity; nor to moderate their enjoyments, pleasures, and delights. Some understand this of spiritual delight in the Lord; in his ways and ordinances, which wicked men are strangers to: and a very uncomely thing it is for such persons to talk of spiritual joy and delight, and of their communion with God, when they live in sin;

much less for a servant to have rule over princes; this was a sight which Solomon had seen, but was very disagreeable to him; and was one of the four things the earth cannot bear; the insolence of a servant, when he becomes master over his superiors, is intolerable; see Pr 30:22. It may be spiritually applied to such who are servants of sin; to whose sensual appetites and carnal affections the more noble and princely powers of the soul, the understanding and mind, become subject; which is very improper and unseemly.

Proverbs 19:11

Ver. 11. The discretion of a man deferreth his anger,.... That he does not show it immediately; but takes time to consider of the offence given him, and makes use of a proper time to resent what is fit should be resented; he is a wise and discreet man that is slow to anger, Pr 14:29. He is most like to God, who is "longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth", Ex 34:6; and it is to the honour of his "name" that he "defers [his] anger", and "refrains from" cutting off those that offend him, Isa 48:9;

and [it is] his glory to pass over a transgression; to forgive an offence committed; it is the duty and interest of a man to do so, and it is to his honour; as the contrary greatly reflects dishonour on him, and tends to his disgrace and reproach, if not to his ruin; see
Mt 18:32.

Proverbs 19:12

Ver. 12. The king's wrath [is] as the roaring of a lion,.... Which is very terrible when hungry, and is after its prey, and has got it. Kings, especially tyrannical ones, are compared to lions; as Nebuchadnezzar by Jeremiah, **Jer 4:17**; and Nero by the Apostle Paul, **2Ti 4:7**; and the rage of such is very dreadful, as Ahasuerus's was to Haman. Jarchi interprets the king, of the holy blessed God. It may be applied to Jesus Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah; who is said to cry with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and whose wrath is terrible to wicked men, and even to the kings of the earth, **Re 5:5**;

but his favour [is] as dew upon the grass; which refreshes and revives it, and causes it to grow and flourish: and so the favour and good will of a king to his subjects delights them, and causes joy and cheerfulness in them; and such an effect has the love of God and Christ on the children of men, Ho 14:6.

Proverbs 19:13

Ver. 13. A foolish son [is] the calamity of his father,.... Or, "the calamities of his father" {q}; he brings them to him. A very great affliction he is, and which has many distresses and sorrows in it; as loss of reputation and credit in his family, which is sunk by his behaviour, instead of being supported and increased; loss of substance, through extravagance and riotous living, and the ruin of his soul and body by his wicked practices; see Pr 10:1;

and the contentions of a wife [are] a continual dropping; or like the dropping of rain, in a rainy day, into a house out of repair, and which is very uncomfortable to, the inhabitants of it; see Pr 27:15. Such are the contentions of a peevish, ill natured, and brawling wife, who is always scolding; and which is a continual vexation to a man, and renders him very uneasy in life: such a continual dropping was Xantippe to Socrates, who teased him night and day with her brawls and contentions {r}. A great unhappiness each of these must be!

{q} twwh "calamitates", Vatablus; "aerumnae", Piscator, Michaelis; "causa aerumnarum", Junius & Tremellius. {r} A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 1. c. 17.

Proverbs 19:14

Ver. 14. Houses and riches [are] the inheritance of fathers,.... Which they are careful to provide and leave to their children. This they may and often do, build or purchase houses, and procure great riches, and put their children into the possession of them;

and, or but,

a prudent wife [is] from the Lord; one that behaves well to her husband, massages the affairs of her house with wisdom, and brings up her children in all orderly manner: such a wife no man has from the care and provision of his parents; nor so much from his own good choice and industry as from the kind providence of God, to which he should ascribe it; his parents may give him houses and lands, but it is God that gives him a wise and discreet woman to be an helpmeet to him; see
Pr 18:22.

Proverbs 19:15

Ver. 15. Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep,.... Slothful persons are generally sleepy, and are very desirous of sleep, and indulge themselves in it; they spend their time, day and night, in sleep and drowsiness; and are quite careless and unconcerned about either their temporal or eternal good; see **Pr 6:9**;

and an idle soul shall suffer hunger; and perish with it, both in a temporal and spiritual sense: an idle person, that will not work, ought not to eat; and an idle soul, or one that is unconcerned about his soul, and the spiritual food of it, shall perish for want of it.

Proverbs 19:16

Ver. 16. He that keepeth the commandment,.... Either of parents, as children ought to do; or of masters, as servants should; or of kings and princes, as is the duty of subjects in all things lawful: or rather of God; every command of his, whether of a moral or positive nature, which, though they cannot be perfectly kept, yet should as much as in man lies, in faith, from a principle of love, and to the glory of God: and such a man

keepeth his own soul, or "observes" {s} it; he shows that he has a concern for its welfare and peace; for though peace does not arise from keeping the commandments of God, yet such have great peace of soul who do love and keep the law of God; though there is no reward for, yet there is a reward in keeping the divine commands; though salvation is not hereby, yet blessed are they that do his commands; by which it appears they have a right to enter into the city, into eternal happiness, Ps 119:165;

[but] he that despiseth his ways: which are at and proper for him to walk in, as Aben Ezra observes; or who is negligent of his ways, does not care in what ways he walks, or what is the issue of them; he walks in the ways of his own heart, and in the sight of his eyes; has his conversation according to the course of this world; walks with a multitude, with a crowd, to do evil, in the broad road which leads to destruction, and yet is quite careless about it: or that despises the ways of the commandment or word of God, which that directs to; for that is a lamp and a light, which men would do well to take heed to, as it shows them the ways in which they should walk; but these they neglect and contemn: or he that despises the ways of God, the ways he himself takes in the salvation of men, all whose ways are mercy and truth; that despises the ways of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Jesus Christ: he

shall die; he is dead in sins already, and he shall die the second death, that neglects and despises so great salvation, and all the ways of the Lord, **Heb 2:3**. There is a "Keri", or marginal reading, which we follow; but the "Cetib", or written text, is, "he shall be killed", or put to death; and so the Syriac version; immediately, by the hand of heaven, by the Lord himself, before his time; or by the judges and civil magistrates; his sins being openly known, as Aben Ezra.

{s} rmv "observat".

Proverbs 19:17

Ver. 17. He that hath pity unto the poor lendeth unto the Lord,.... A man, whose heart is full of compassion to the poor, and whose hands distribute to their necessities, from a true principle of love and charity to men, and with a view to the glory of God, and not from any selfish principle and with a end; such a man's gift to the poor is a loan to the Lord; it is not cast away upon the creature, but is a "depositum" in the hands of God, and shall be returned with advantage;

and that which he hath given will, he pay him again; either in this life, in things temporal and spiritual, increasing his worldly substance, blessing his posterity, granting him larger measures of grace, indulging him with his gracious presence, and giving him peace of mind, which passeth all understanding; or in the world to come; not as a reward of debt, but of grace; see Ec 11:1.

Proverbs 19:18

Ver. 18. Chasten thy son while there is hope,.... Of guiding and keeping him in the right way, as long as corrections are or can be hoped to be of use; while in a state of infancy, childhood, and youth; while under parental government; and before habits in sin are grown strong, and the case become desperate, and he is hardened, and proof against all instruction and discipline;

and let not thy soul spare for his crying; the noise he makes, the tears he sheds, the entreaties he uses to keep off the rod; let not a foolish pity and tenderness prevail to lay it aside on that account the consequence of which may be bad to parent and child; see
Pr 13:24. The Targum is,

"but unto his death do not lift up thy soul;"

or to the slaying of him {t}, as the Vulgate Latin version; and this sense Jarchi gives into: and then the meaning is, that though parents should be careful to give due correction to their children, so long as there is hope of doing them good, yet not in a brutal and barbarous manner, to the endangering of their lives: as some parents are too indolent, mild, and gentle, as Eli was; others are too wrathful and furious and use no moderation in their corrections, but unmercifully beat their children; such extremes ought to be avoided. Gersom interprets the word of crying, as we do.

{t} wtymh la "ad interficiendum cum", Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "ad occidendum sum", Piscator, Cocceius, Tigurine version, Michaelis, Schultens, Gussetius, p. 534.

Proverbs 19:19

Ver. 19. A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment,.... Either a child that is of a wrathful disposition, and provokes his parent to wrath; or a parent that chastises his child in wrath; each shall suffer for it; or any man that gives way to wrath and anger and is continually quarrelling, he involves himself in trouble; and is punished, as his offence requires, according to law, either in his person or estate;

for if thou deliver [him], yet thou must do it again; if he is got out of one broil, he will get into another quickly; if he clear of one lawsuit, another will be commenced against him in a short time; if he is discharged and freed from a penalty he is justly subject to, it must be done again and again; he will fall into the same evil, and there is no end of appearing, for him and serving him; a wrathful man brings himself into great trouble, as may be seen in Shimei, 2Sa 16:7 **1Ki 2:46**.

Proverbs 19:20

Ver. 20. Hear counsel, and receive instruction,.... Of parents, masters, and ministers; especially the counsel and instruction of Wisdom, of Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of God, the wonderful Counsellor; and of his Gospel and of the Scriptures, which are able to make a man wise unto salvation;

that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end; in the latter end of life, at death; that then it may appear a man has been so wise as to be concerned for a future state, for the good of his soul in another world; by listening to the counsel and instruction of Christ, in his word; by looking to him, and believing in him, for life and salvation; by leaning and living upon him; and committing the affairs of his soul, and the salvation of it, to him.

Proverbs 19:21

Ver. 21. [There are] many devices in a man's heart,.... Some about civil things; to get wealth and riches: to obtain honour and glory among men; to attain to a long life, and to perpetuate their memories after death: some about sinful things; to gratify their carnal lusts and sensual appetites; and to do mischief to others, particularly the people of God, and the cause and interest of Christ: some about religious things; coming new doctrines, devising new ordinances and modes of worship; contriving other methods of salvation than by Christ; as by the light of nature; by the law of Moses; by mere morality, civility, and external justice between man and man; by keeping to the religion they were born and brought up in; and by a mere outward profession of religion, and submission to ordinances, and performance of duties, and a multitude more of the like kind;

nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand; and can never be frustrated by the devices of man's heart, though there are many, and that but one; see Ps 33:10. This may be applied to the Gospel, and the scheme of salvation in it, called the whole counsel of God, Ac 20:27; it being the fruit of infinite wisdom, and the effect of a divine council between the eternal Three, and full of the best advice and instructions to the sons of men; and which has stood, and shall stand, notwithstanding the persecutions of wicked men, the craft of false teachers, and the ridicule of a profane world; it will continue till all the elect are gathered in, even, to the end of the world; and so will the ordinances of it, which are also called the counsel of God, **Lu 7:30**; and which will continue till the second coming of Christ. Moreover, the purposes of God, his counsels of old, or his eternal decrees, may be here meant; which are wisely formed in his own breast, and are not frustrable; and according to which counsel of his will all things are done in nature, providence, and grace; all things in this world are ordered as he pleases, and all things are done as he has ordered them; all his purposes are or will be fulfilled; his designs will be accomplished in the world and in his church, in spite of all the schemes, contrivances, and opposition of men and devils.

Proverbs 19:22

Ver. 22. The desire of a man [is] his kindness,.... Either the grace and kindness of God, which is, desirable by every sensible man, as being most excellent, and better than life and anything in it; or it is his desire to show kindness. A good man is desirous of riches, that he might have it in the power of his hands to do good to others; and a beneficent man, who has it in his power, is desirous of an opportunity of showing kindness to his fellow creatures and friends; and such a disposition and conduct render a man very desirable and amiable; it is the beauty of a man, as Ben Melech; yea, a man that is not able to do a kindness to another, yet has a desire to do it, his good will is his kindness, and the will is taken for the deed. Gersom takes the word in the sense of "reproach", as it is sometimes used; and understands it of the sinful desires of the heart, the imaginations of the thoughts of the heart, which are evil continually, and so matter of reproach;

and a poor man [is] better than a liar; who is a rich man, as the Septuagint and Syriac versions add; who denies that he has ability to relieve the poor, when he has; or promises to do it, and does it not; such men of high degree are a lie indeed! and the poor man, whom he should relieve, is a better man than he; or that would relieve another, but it is not in his power to do it.

Proverbs 19:23

Ver. 23. The fear of the Lord [tendeth] to life,.... "Godliness", of which the fear of the Lord is a principal part, has "the promise of this life and that to come", **1Ti 4:8**: the fear of God is the beginning of a spiritual life; and it leads to eternal life, as Gersom observes, and is connected with it;

and [he that hath it] shall abide satisfied; with his lot and portion in this life; with the good things of it he has, being content therewith and "godliness with contentment is great gain", **1Ti 6:6**: such a man has enough; he has all things in a spiritual sense; he is full of the blessings of goodness; he is blessed with all spiritual blessings; his mouth is satisfied, and his mind is filled with good things; and so he rests and abides night after night, and day after day;

he shall not be visited with evil; nothing shall hurt him; all his afflictions, his worst things, his evil ones: work together for his good; and they shall never separate from the love of God, nor anything that befalls him in this life, **Ro 8:28**; see Ps 91:10.

Proverbs 19:24

Ver. 24. A slothful [man] hideth his hand in [his] bosom,.... In cold weather to keep it warm, and at other times, as unwilling to use it in labour; it is the proper posture and just attitude of a slothful man. The word for "bosom" is sometimes used for a "pot" or "platter" {u}; and then the sense is, that he puts his hands under a pot over a fire to warm them; or in one removed at some distance from the fire, as Jarchi; or rather it may signify his putting his hand into a plate of food, and yet so slothful, as it follows,

and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again; so sluggish, that he will rather starve than be at the pains to feed himself; he will not take his hand out of his bosom, to take food out of the dish to feed himself with; and even when his hand is in the dish, he will not take it from thence again, and lift it to his mouth; an hyperbolical expression. Gussetius {w} thinks, it may have respect to such slothful men, who are careless and negligent to their souls; who, though they have the holy Scriptures in their hands, like a vessel full of wholesome food for the soul, yet will not make use of the least mite out of them, that they may receive eternal life.

{u} txlub "in patinam", Tigurine version; "in lebete", Mercerus, Michaelis; "in patinia", Cocceius; "in paropsidem", Schultens. {w} Ebr. Comment. p. 715.

Proverbs 19:25

Ver. 25. Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware,.... That is, give reproof to a man that scoffs at religion, and makes a jest of all that is good; for though it may be of no use to him who will despise it, yet it may be observed, and be useful to another that hears it; who, though void of understanding, yet not hardened in impiety as the other, but open to conviction, "will become cunning" {x}, as it may be rendered; or learns wisdom, and becomes hereby a knowing and understanding man; he hears another reproved, and fears, and becomes a wise man; so that though reproof may be lost on one, it succeeds in another, which is an encouragement to give it;

and reprove one that hath understanding, [and] he will understand knowledge; he will grow wiser and wiser; he will improve in the knowledge of things; see **Pr 9:8**.

{x} Mrey "astutus efficetur", Pagninus, Montanus; "astutus fiet", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius; "astutior fiet", Michaelis; "solertiam parabit", Schultens.

Proverbs 19:26

Ver. 26. He that wasteth [his] father,.... His father's substance, which he gave him first as his portion, and afterwards by paying his debts, and getting him out of prison and out of broils, and that wastes his spirits and his health, and brings his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave;

[and] chaseth away [his] mother: alienates her affections from him, who once had too great a fondness for him; causes her to quit her house, not being able to bear the sight of him and of his actions:

[is] a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach; causes shame to his parents, as well as to himself; and a reproach upon them, as well as on his own character. It may be read thus,

"a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach, wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother {y}."

{y} So Gejerus, Schultens.

Proverbs 19:27

Ver. 27. Cease, my son, to hear the instruction,.... The counsel of bad men, or the doctrine of false teachers. The words are spoken either by Solomon to his son; or by Wisdom, that is, Christ, to everyone of his children, to beware of false prophets, and take heed what they hear; see **Mt 7:15**; such as the doctrines of the church of Rome; concerning the Scriptures, forbidding the people to read them; setting unwritten traditions upon a level with them, and making the pope an infallible interpreter of them; concerning merit, works of supererogation, indulgences, pardons, penance, purgatory, &c. such as the instruction of the Arians, Sabellians, Socinians, Pelagians, and Arminians, concerning the Trinity, the deity of Christ, his satisfaction, imputed righteousness, the power and purity of human nature, and man's free will;

[that causeth] to err from the words of knowledge; the words of the living God, the Scriptures of truth; which communicate knowledge, and are profitable for instruction in righteousness; are the means of the true knowledge of God; that there is one, and that he is possessed of all perfections: particularly that he is gracious and merciful, and pardons all manner of sin; that he is in Christ, the God of all grace; that he is the God and Father of Christ, and the covenant God and Father of all his people in him; they give knowledge of his mind and will concerning the salvation of men, and of his ways and worship. The wholesome words of our Lord Jesus, the salutary doctrines of the Gospel, may be here meant; those words of grace, wisdom, and knowledge, which come from him, and give knowledge of his person, offices, relations, incarnation, and blessings of grace by him; from whence they are called the word of peace and reconciliation, the word of righteousness, the word of life, and the word of salvation. Now these are all words of knowledge; and are the means of a spiritual, experimental, and fiducial knowledge of Christ, which is preferable to all other knowledge, and even to everything in the world; and therefore care should be taken, and everything avoided that tends to cause to err from these words and doctrines, which convey, promote, and improve this knowledge. Jarchi and Aben Ezra transpose the words, thus;

"cease, my son, to err from the words of knowledge, to or that thou mayest hear instruction and the latter makes mention of such an interpretation, cease, my son, from the words of knowledge, if thou wouldest hear instruction, and after that err:"

that is, better never hear and know at all, than to turn from those doctrines and instructions; see **2Pe 2:20**.

Proverbs 19:28

Ver. 28. An ungodly witness scorneth judgment,.... Or, "a witness of Belial" {z}. A false witness is not awed by the place of judgment where he is; nor by the judge before whom he is; nor by the law, the rule of judgment, nor by the punishment of perjury; he scorns all these, and scoffs at them, and proceeds in bearing a false testimony: or he covers that which is right and just, and eludes judgment by specious and sophistic arguments and pretences. Or this may be understood of a false teacher, that scorns the rule of judgment, or colours over things, to make them plausible, and seem to be agreeable to it;

and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity; greedily, and with pleasure commits it; as a hungry man takes in his food; or a thirsty man drinks down water: and in like manner are false doctrines imbibed by men of perverse minds.

{z} leylb de "testis Belijahal", Montanus, Tigurine version, Baynus.

Proverbs 19:29

Ver. 29. Judgments are prepared for scorners,.... Either by the civil magistrate, or by the Lord, and indeed by both; and if they miss the one, they will certainly meet the other; though they mock at present punishment and a future judgment, yet everlasting fire is prepared for them, Mt 25:41;

and stripes for the back of fools; as scorners are; which shall be inflicted on them sooner or later; if they are not stricken with the stripes of men, they shall endure the strokes of divine justice and vengeance hereafter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 20:1

Ver. 1. Wine [is] a mocker, strong drink [is] raging,.... Wine deceives a man; it not only overcomes him before he is aware, but it promises him a pleasure which it does not give; but, on the contrary, excessive drinking gives him pain, and so mocks him; yea, it exposes him to reproach and disgrace, and to the mockery and derision of others; as well as it sets him to scoff at his companions, and even to mock at religion, and all that is good and serious; see **Ho 7:5**; and strong drink not only disturbs the brain, and puts the spirits in a ferment, so that a man rages within, but it sets him a raving and quarrelling with his company, and everybody he meets with; such generally get into broils and contentions, and get woe, sorrow, and wounds, Pr 23:29. Aben Ezra gives this as the sense of the words,

"a man of wine"

(that is, one that is given to wine, a wine bibber), so Ben Melech,

"is a mocker, and he cries out for strong drink, that it may be given him;"

which is not a bad sense of the words.

and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise; whosoever gives himself to it, is not on his guard against it, but is overcome by it, does not act a wise but an unwise part: wine besots as well as deceives men. This may be applied to the wine of fornication, or to the false doctrine and superstition of the church of

Rome; with which the nations of the earth are deceived and made drunk, and which puts them upon blaspheming God, deriding his people, and using cruelty to them,
Re 17:2.

Proverbs 20:2

Ver. 2. The fear of a king [is] as the roaring of a lion,.... The wrath and displeasure of a king, which causes fear; see Pr 19:12; kings should be terrors to evil works and workers, though not to good ones, Ro 13:3. This is true of the King of kings, who one day will be terrible to the drunkards, the mockers, and murderers of his people, before spoken of;

[whoso] provoketh him to anger sinneth [against] his own soul; he exposes his life to danger: the Targum supplies it as we do. It may be rendered, his "soul sinneth" {a}; he is guilty of sin, as well as is in danger of punishment; see **Pr 8:36**.

{a} wvpn ajwx.

Proverbs 20:3

Ver. 3. [It is] an honour for a man to cease from strife,.... As Abraham did, Ge 13:7; when engaged in a quarrel with his neighbour, or in a lawsuit, or in a religious controversy, especially when he finds he is in the wrong; and indeed, if he is in the right, when he perceives it is like to issue in no good, and is only about words to no profit, it is an honour to drop it;

but every fool will be meddling; with things he has no concern in, or is not equal to; yet will carry on the debate, though it is to his disgrace; see Pr 17:14.

Proverbs 20:4

Ver. 4. The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold,.... Or, "in the cold"; in the time of cold, as Aben Ezra; in the time of autumn, which is the time of ploughing, when it begins to be cold weather, and winter is drawing on: and this is discouraging to the sluggard, who does not care to take his hands out of his bosom to feed himself, and much less to plough; see Pr 19:24;

[therefore] shall he beg in harvest, and [have] nothing; he shall ask of those who have ploughed and sowed, and are now reaping and gathering in their increase at harvest time; but they shall give him nothing; for such as will not work should not eat; and if a man will not plough and sow, he cannot expect to reap, nor should he be encouraged in begging. This holds good in spiritual things; such who have been slothful and sluggish about their spiritual affairs, unconcerned for the grace of God, and indolent in the use of means, or performance of duty, will ask when too late, or of wrong persons, and shall not have it; as the foolish virgins ask oil of the wise, when the bridegroom is come; and the rich man for water from Abraham, when in hell, Mt 25:8.

Proverbs 20:5

Ver. 5. Counsel in the heart of man [is like] deep water,.... Pure and undisturbed, but secret, hidden, and hard to be come at: such are the things of the spirit of a man, the thoughts of his mind, the devices of his heart; which, though easily known by the searcher of hearts, are not easily penetrated into by men; or it is not easily got out of them what is in them, especially in some men, who are very close and reserved. This is true of wicked men, who seek sleep to hide their counsel; and of good men, especially studious men, who have got a great deal of wisdom and knowledge in them, but not very communicative, being slow of speech, and silent in conversation;

but a man of understanding will draw it out; he will find ways and means to discover the secret designs of wicked men, whether against church or state; and, by asking proper questions, an understanding man will get out useful things from men of knowledge, the most reserved: some men must be pumped, and a good deal of pains must be taken with them, to get out anything of them, as in getting water out of a deep well, and which when got is very good; and so is that wisdom and knowledge which is gotten by an inquisitive man from another of superior knowledge, but not very diffusive of it.

Proverbs 20:6

Ver. 6. Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness,.... As the Pharisee did, in Lu 18:11; and as the Pharisees in common did; who did all their works to be seen of men, and made clean the outside of the cup and platter; and were very careful to appear outwardly righteous to men, Mt 23:5. And indeed this is the general cast of men; everyone is proclaiming his goodness to others, and would be thought to be good men; and cannot be easy with doing a good action, unless it is known, and particularly acts of beneficence and alms deeds; and are like the Pharisees, who, on such occasions, sounded a trumpet before them, **Mt 6:2**. And the word may be rendered, "his mercy" {b}, or his kindness to the poor: the Targum renders it,

"many of the children of men are called merciful men;"

and so the Vulgate Latin version; and they like to be so called and accounted, whether they are so or not;

but a faithful man who can find? who answers to the character he gives of himself, or others upon his own representation give him; who is as good as his word, and, having promised assistance and relief, gives it; and who, having boasted that he has done a kindness to such an one and such an one, does the same likewise to another when applied to; or who sticks to his friend, and does not forsake him in his adversity, but supports and supplies him whom he knew in prosperity; it is hard and rare to find such a man; see Ps 12:1. Or, though every man is talking of his good works, and boasting of his goodness, it is difficult to find an Israelite indeed, in whom the true grace of God is.

{b} wdox "misericordiam suam", Pagninus, so some in Vatablus; "unius cujusque misericordiam", Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 20:7

Ver. 7. The just [man] walketh in his integrity,.... This is the faithful and upright man, who is made righteous by the obedience of Christ; and walks by faith in him, and according to the truth of the Gospel;

his children [are] blessed after him; with temporal blessings; and, walking in the same integrity as he does, they are blessed with spiritual blessings here, and eternal blessedness hereafter; see
Ps 37:26. It is an observation of an Heathen poet {c}, that good things befall the children of the godly, but not the children of the ungodly.

{c} Theoerit. Idyll. 27. v. 32.

Proverbs 20:8

Ver. 8. A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment,.... That executes judgment himself, as David and Solomon did; who ascends the throne, and sits personally there, and hears and tries causes himself, and not by his servants:

scattereth away all evil with his eyes; all evil men, as the Targum; everyone that is evil, as Aben Ezra: he will easily and quickly discern who is evil, or who is in a bad cause before him, and will pass sentence on him, and drive him away from him with shame and disgrace, and to receive deserved punishment; or he will terrify persons from coming before him with false witness against their neighbour, or with a wrong cause. This may be applied to Christ, the King of kings, and Judge of all; whose eyes are as a flame of fire; who will clearly see into all hearts and actions, when he shall sit on his throne of judgment; and shall pass the righteous and definitive sentence, and shall drive the wicked into hell, into everlasting punishment.

Proverbs 20:9

Ver. 9. Who can say, I have made my heart clean,.... The heart of than is naturally unclean, the mind, conscience, understanding, will, and affections; there is no part clean, all are defiled with sin; and though there is such a thing as a pure or clean heart, yet not as made so by men; it is God that has made the heart, that can only make it clean, or create a clean heart in men; it is not to be done by themselves, or by anything that they can do; it is done only by the grace of God, and blood of Christ: God has promised to do it, and he does it; and to him, and to him only, is it to be ascribed;

I am pure from my sin? the sin of nature or of action: such indeed who are washed from their sins in the blood of Christ; whose sins are all pardoned for his sake, and who are justified from all things by his righteousness; they are pure from sin, none is to be seen in them, or found upon them in a legal sense: they are all fair and comely, and without fault in the sight of God; their iniquities are caused to pass from them; and they are clothed with fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints: but then none are pure from indwelling sin, nor from the commission of sin; no man can say this, any more than the former; if he does, he is an ignorant man, and does not know the plague of his heart; and he is a vain pharisaical man; yea, a man that does not speak the truth, nor is the truth in him, **1Jo 1:8**.

Proverbs 20:10

Ver. 10. Divers weights, [and] divers measures,.... Or, "a stone and a stone, and an ephah and an ephah" {d}. Stones being in old time used in weighing, and an "ephah" was a common measure among the Jews; and these ought not to be different; one stone or weight for buying, and another for selling; and one measure to buy goods in with, and another to sell out with; the one too heavy, the other too light; the one too large, and the other too scanty; whereby justice is not done between man and man; whereas they ought to be just and equal, Le 19:35;

both of them [are] alike abomination to the Lord; who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, and requires of men to do justly; and abhors every act of injustice, and whatever is detrimental to men's properties; see Pr 11:1.

{d} So Montanus, Schulteus.

Proverbs 20:11

Ver. 11. Even a child is known by his doings,.... As well as a man; "ye shall know them by their fruits", **Mt 7:16**; professors and profane. So a child soon discovers its genius by its actions; it soon shows its inclination and disposition; and some shrewd guesses may be made how it will turn out, a wise man or a fool, a virtuous or a vicious man; though this does not always hold good, yet something may be observed, which may be a direction to parents in the education of their children, and placing them out to what is proper and suitable for them. Some observe, that the word has a quite contrary meaning, that "a child carries himself a stranger by his doings" {e}; so that he is not known by them: he so conceals and disguises himself, he acts so fraudulently and deceitfully, and plays the hypocrite, and puts the cheat on men, that they cannot tell what he is, nor what he will be; and if children can thus dissemble, as not to be known by their actions, then much more grown persons;

whether his work [be] pure, and whether [it be] right; not what his present work is, or actions are, but what his later life and conversation will be; which in some measure may be judged of, though not with certainty and exactness; see Pr 22:6; especially when he acts a covert and deceitful part.

{e} rknty "ignotus erit", i.e. "non facile cognoscitur", Vatablus; so R. Joseph Kimchi; "simulat se alium esse", Gussetius, p. 413. "dissimulatorem agit", Schultens.

Proverbs 20:12

Ver. 12. The hearing ear, and the seeing eye,.... There may be an ear that hears not, and an eye that seeth not, and which men may make; the painter can paint an ear and an eye, and a carver can carve both; but they are ears that hear not, and eyes that see not, Ps 115:5; but such as can hear and see are of the Lord's own make;

the Lord hath made even both of them; they are the effects of his wisdom, power, and goodness; see **Ex 4:11**; they are both senses of excellent use and service; great mercies and blessings of life, for which men should be abundantly thankful, and pray for the continuance of, and make use of to the best purposes; they are means of conveying much knowledge to the mind, and by which it may be cultivated and improved in it. The words may be considered in a figurative as well as a literal sense. Some by "the seeing eye" understand the civil magistrate, who is that to the body politic as the eyes are to the natural body, eminent in it, overlook it, watch and provide for its good, and against its hurt; see Nu 10:31; and by "the hearing ear" the obedient subject, that hearkens to the laws and directions of his governors, and cheerfully obeys them, and both these are of the Lord's making; civil magistracy is his ordinance, and civil magistrates are ordained by him; and from him they have their qualifications fitting them for their office; and it is owing to the overruling providence of God on the hearts of men that they are inclined to yield subjection to them. Others think that by the "seeing eye" are meant the ministers of the word, who are set in the highest place in the church; whose business it is to inspect, take the oversight of, and watch the souls of men; to pry and search into the truths of the Gospel, and show them to others: and by the "hearing ear" the hearers of the word, that receive it readily in the love of it, and heartily obey it. I am rather of opinion that one and the same sort of persons are intended; converted ones, who have the "hearing ear", who try what they hear by the word of God; understand what they hear, know it experimentally; can distinguish truth from error, approve and love the Gospel, receive it with all gladness and readiness, with eagerness and pleasure; keep it when they have it, and practise what they hear, and bring forth fruit to the glory of God: this they have not of themselves, being naturally averse to and dull of hearing, and even stop their ears to the truth; but it comes by the word, and is the Lord's work, and owing to his mighty power, who opens their ears, gives them new ears, which they have in regeneration; when they hear spiritually, profitably, pleasantly, comfortably, and to their great astonishment: these also have the "seeing eye", a sight of themselves, their sinful and lost estate; of the plague of their own hearts, their want of righteousness, and impotence to do anything that is good; a sight of Christ, of the loveliness of his person, of the fulness of his grace, of their need of him, and of his suitableness as a Saviour and Redeemer; and this is not of themselves, who are dark and darkness itself, but they are made light in the Lord; he opens their eyes by his spirit and by means of his word, which is a work of almighty power.

Proverbs 20:13

Ver. 13. Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty,.... Sleep is a very great natural blessing; it is a gift of God, what nature requires, and is desirable; it is to be loved, though not immoderately; it is sweet to a man, and what he should be thankful for; yet should not indulge himself in to the neglect of the proper business of life; nor to be used but at the proper time for it; for the eye is made for sight, and not for sleep only, as Aben Ezra observes, connecting the words with the preceding; and therefore should not be kept shut and inattentive to business, which must necessarily end in poverty and want; see **Pr 6:9**; and so spiritual sleep and slothfulness bring on a spiritual poverty in the souls of men, both as to the exercise of grace and the performance of duty;

open thine eyes, [and] thou shall be satisfied with bread; that is, open thine eyes from sleep, awake and keep so, and be sedulous and industrious in the business of thy calling; so shalt thou have a sufficiency of food for thyself and family; see Pr 12:11. It may be applied to awaking out of sleep in a spiritual sense, and to a diligent attendance to duty and the use of means, whereby the souls of men come to be satisfied with the goodness of the Lord, and the fatness of his house; see **Eph 5:14**.

Proverbs 20:14

Ver. 14. [It is] naught, [it is] naught, saith the buyer,.... When he comes to the shop of the seller, or to market to buy goods, he undervalues them, says they are not so good as they should be, nor so cheap as he can buy them at;

but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth; after he has brought the seller to as low a price as he can, and has bought the goods, and gone away with them, and got home among his friends; then he boasts what a bargain he has bought, how good the commodity is, how he has been too many for the seller, and has outwitted him; and so glories in his frauds and tricks, and rejoices in his boasting, and all such rejoicing is evil, **Jas 4:16**. Jarchi applies this to a man that is a hard student in the law, and through much difficulty gets the knowledge of it, when he is ready to pronounce himself unhappy; but when he is got full fraught with wisdom, then he rejoices at it, and glories in it.

Proverbs 20:15

Ver. 15. There is gold, and a multitude of rubies,.... A man may have a large quantity of either, or of both of thorn, as some men have; for there is much of them in the world, not only in mines and quarries, but in the houses and cabinets of men;

but the lips of knowledge [are] a precious jewel; knowledge even of things natural, and a gift of elocution to express it by, are a rare jewel, and much more precious than gold and rubies, than a multitude of them; these are not to be mentioned with it, it is not equalled by them, it is greatly superior to them; see Job 28:12; and much more spiritual knowledge, and a capacity of expressing that to the edification of others; and especially Christ, the Wisdom of God, and the knowledge of him, who is more precious than rubies, and all desirable things, in comparison of which all things are loss and dung, **Pr 3:14**.

Proverbs 20:16

Ver. 16. Take his garment that is surety [for] a stranger,.... Which a man is cautioned against, **Pr 6:1**; but if a man will be so weak and foolish, others ought to take care of him, and be cautious how they trust him; for he is in danger of being ruined by his suretyship, and therefore nothing should be lent him without a pledge, without a proper security; for though it was not lawful to take the garment of a poor man for a pledge, at least it was not to be kept after sunset,
Ex 22:26; yet it was right to take such a man's garment who had or would be

thought to have such an abundance as to be surety for a stranger. Some think these words are to be taken as a prophecy of what would be the case of such a man that is a surety for a stranger; in the issue he will be stripped of all he has, and have not a coat to put on. It has been applied to our Lord Jesus Christ, who became a surety for such who were foreigners and strangers, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; and who had the garment of his human nature taken from him and which was a pledge and ransom for the sins of his people;

and take a pledge of him for a strange woman; a harlot; such as have to do with lewd women are not to be trusted; for they are in a fair way for ruin, and therefore should not be intrusted with anything without a pledge; all in connection with such creatures lose their credit; it is dangerous having any concern with them in trade for they are liable to be brought to a piece of bread; and therefore persons should be cautious how they trade with them, and should observe to secure themselves.

Proverbs 20:17

Ver. 17. Bread of deceit [is] sweet to a man,.... Which may be understood of sin in general, which is bread to the sinner, he eats it: it is called "the bread of wickedness", **Pr 4:17**; but it is but poor bread, no other than ashes Isa 44:20; it is "bread of deceit"; there is a deceitfulness in all sin; it is in appearance fair and pleasant to the eye, like the fruit our first parents ate of; or like the apples of Sodom, of which it is reported that they are very beautiful to look at, but when touched drop into ashes; sin promises pleasure, profit, honour, liberty, peace, and impunity, yet gives neither; but the reverse, pain, loss, shame, servitude distress, and destruction; and yet it is sweet to an unregenerate man, one of a vicious taste, or whose taste remains unchanged; it is natural to him and he takes as much delight in it as in eating and drinking; and especially such sins as are called constitution ones, which he is not easily prevailed upon to part with; wickedness is sweet in his mouth, he rolls it and keeps it as a sweet morsel under his tongue, and forsakes it not,
Job 20:12. It may be applied to particular sins, as to adultery, as it is by Jarchi, and with which may be compared **Pr 9:17**; and to riches unlawfully gotten; see Job 20:15; and to the cruel usage and persecution of the people of God, called the bread of wickedness and wine of violence, which wicked men take as much delight in as in eating and drinking, **Pr 4:17**; particularly the cruelty of the church of Rome, who has made herself drunk with the blood of the saints, in which she delights, and will be bitter to her in the end,
Re 17:6. It may be interpreted of false doctrine; so the doctrine of the

Pharisees and Sadducees is signified by leavened bread, Mt 16:6; this is not true bread, does not strengthen, nourish, and refresh, as the Gospel does, but eats as a canker; it is not solid and substantial, but mere chaff, it is bread of falsehood and lying; false teachers lie in wait to deceive, their doctrines are lies in hypocrisy, and, yet these are sweet unto, and taken down greedily by carnal persons; particularly the doctrine of justification by works: this is the bread some men live on, but it is only husks which swine eat; it is feeding on wind, and filling the belly with east wind, which swells and vainly puffs up the fleshly mind; it is contrary to the, Gospel, and is not of the truth, and will deceive persons that trust to it; and yet it is sweet to a natural man; his own righteousness, and to trust to it, is natural to him; it is his own, and what he has laboured for, and is fond of; it affords room for boasting, and he does not care to part with it;

but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel; with that which will be ungrateful, uncomfortable, and distressing to him; the conscience of a sinner, who has been taking his fill of sin and pleasure in it shall be filled with remorse and distress; and with bitter reflections upon himself; with a dreadful sense of divine wrath, and fearful apprehensions of it now; and destruction and damnation will be his portion hereafter; and this will be the consequence of all false doctrine, and of a man's trusting to his own righteousness and despising Christ's; see **2Pe 2:1**.

Proverbs 20:18

Ver. 18. [Every] purpose is established by counsel,.... Or "the thought" {f} of a man, everyone of them, what he has thought to do, formed a scheme of in his mind, and resolved upon, by taking advice of his friends, and especially by asking counsel of God, who gives, wisdom liberally, and upbraids not; he is confirmed in his good designs; and he cheerfully pursues them, and they are ordered and directed to the glory of God, his own good and the good of others; for this can only be understood of wise and good thoughts and purposes;

and with good advice make war; this should not be entered upon rashly, without first considering whether there is a just and lawful cause of it; and without consulting the necessary charge and expense of it; whether there is a sufficiency of men and money to carry it on; and what may probably be the issue of it. It is right in a king to advise with his privy council, or with the chief council of the nation; but, above all, both he and his people should seek advice of the Lord on such an occasion; see Lu 14:31. This may be applied to our spiritual warfare with sin, Satan, and the world; not that it should be any doubt with whether we should engage in such a war; but we should advise with experienced soldiers, and especially with God and his word, what weapons to take, and how to use them; and consider in whose name and strength we are to fight; and inquire and learn the force, methods, and designs of the enemy, and where to guard against them or attack them. Jarchi interprets it of making war with Satan by repentance, prayer, and fasting.

{f} twbvxm "cogitationes", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus; "unaquaeque cogitationum", Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 20:19

Ver. 19. He that goeth about [as] a talebearer revealeth secrets,.... Or, "he that revealeth secrets goeth about as a talebearer"; a man that has really got the secrets of others out of them respecting themselves and families, and the affairs of them, or however pretends he master of them; goes about telling his tales from house to house, to the great prejudice of those whose secrets he is entrusted with, or pretends to be; and to the great prejudice of those to whom he tells them, as well as to his own; this is contrary to the law of Moses, and the rules of Christianity, Le 19:16;

therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips; or "mingle not with him" {g}; do not associate with him, do not keep him company, have nothing to say to him or do with him; for when he flatters you, and highly praises and extols you, he has a design upon you to get what he can out of you, in order to expose you elsewhere; therefore suspect him, be upon your guard, shun him and avoid him. It may be applied to false teachers, and their deceptions with good words and fair speeches; the word used signifies to deceive with the lips; see Ro 16:18; and well agrees with the parasites of Rome, Re 18:23.

{g} brett al "non miscebis te", Pagninus, Montanus; "ne misceas te", Baynus, Mercerus; "ne admisceto te", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ne commiscearis", Michaelis; "ne admisceas te", Schultens.

Proverbs 20:20

Ver. 20. Whoso curseth his father or his mother,.... This is dreadful indeed! a person must be got to a great pitch of wickedness to do this; to curse his parents, one or other of them, that have been the instruments of his being, and by whom he has been brought up and put out into the world; to slight them, despise them, and mock at them, is highly base and criminal, but to curse them is shocking! what can such expect but the curse of God upon them?

his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness; he shall be deprived of his natural sight; see Pr 30:17; or the very light of nature shall be extinct in him; and indeed such an one acts as if not guided by it, nor under its influence; or whatsoever favour from the Lord he has enjoyed, it shall be taken from him; his lamp or candle of outward felicity shall be quenched, and burn no longer; see Job 18:5; or his soul, the candle of the Lord, in him, Pr 20:27; shall be removed; or he "shall die", not only a corporeal but an eternal death; see Ex 21:17; "blackness of darkness" {h} as the words may be rendered, are reserved for him in the world to come, and which will be his portion, **Jude 1:13**.

{h} Kvx Nwvyab "in obscuritate tenebrarum", Pagninus, Mercerus; "in nigredine tenebrarum", Michaelis.

Proverbs 20:21

Ver. 21. An inheritance [may be] gotten hastily at the beginning,.... Of a man's setting out in the world in trade and business; and which sometimes is got lawfully, and this must be excepted from this proverb; but generally what is got hastily and in a short time is got unlawfully, and so does not prosper. Some Jewish interpreters, as Gersom, understand it of an inheritance which comes to persons from their friends, without any labour or industry of theirs; and which they are not careful to keep, but, as it lightly comes, it lightly goes: here is a various reading; our version follows the marginal reading, and which is followed by the Targum, Jarchi, and Gersom, and by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions; but the written text is, "an inheritance loathsome" or "abominable"; an ill gotten one, so the word is used in Zec 11:8. Schultens, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, which signifies to be covetous, renders it "covetously got" or "possessed" {i}; and so the Arabic version is, "an inheritance greedily desired", obtained through covetousness and illicit practices; but in his late commentary on this book he renders the passage, by the help of Arabism, "an inheritance smitten with the curse of sordidness", as being sordidly got and enjoyed;

but the end thereof shall not be blessed; it will not continue, it will be taken away from them, and put into some other hands. Jarchi illustrates it by the tribes of Gad and Reuben making haste to take their part on the other side Jordan before their brethren, and were the first that were carried captive.

{i} Animadv. ad V. T. p. 248.

Proverbs 20:22

Ver. 22. Say not thou, I will recompense evil,.... With evil; do an injury to one that has done one to you; private revenge is not to be taken, but should be left to God, to whom vengeance belongs,
De 32:35;

[but] wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee; commit thyself and cause to God; leave it with him to avenge thy wrongs; wait upon him in the way of thy duty, and wait his own time to do thee justice; he will at the proper season, and in his own way, save thee from thine enemy, and make a righteous retribution to him.

Proverbs 20:23

Ver. 23. Divers weights [are] an abomination unto the Lord,....
See Gill on "Pr 20:10"; which is here repeated for the further confirmation of it, and that it might be taken notice of and avoided; and perhaps this sin of using false weights and measures was common with the Jews;

and a false balance [is] not good; in the sight of God; but an abomination, as in Pr 11:1; nor is it good for men in the issue; for though they may gain by it at present, it will prove a loss to them in the end, since it will bring a curse on all they get.

Proverbs 20:24

Ver. 24. Man's goings [are] of the Lord,.... In a natural and literal sense, the instruments of going are of the Lord; the act of motion from place to place is not without the concourse of his providence; as in him we live, and move, and have our being, so "in and by him we move"; he preserves our going out and coming in; and as the preservation, so the success and prosperity of journeying are owing to his providence, and the whole is under his care and direction: and so likewise, in a civil sense, all the civil concerns, business, and actions of life, are guided by his providence; there is a time for every purpose under heaven, and the success of all depends on a divine blessing; and things are with every man in civil life according to the providence of God, and as it is his pleasure they should be; and it is by him they are directed to take this and the other step, the issue of which is according to his will: and this may be applied to men's goings in a spiritual and religious sense; faith, which is properly a man's going to Christ as a perishing sinner for pardon and cleansing, for righteousness and life, for food and rest, and eternal salvation, is not of a man's self, it is of God; it is his gift, and of his operation; no man can go to Christ in this way unless it be given him of God, or he is drawn by his grace, **Joh 6:35**; and all spiritual actions which flew from hence are by the grace of God, and under his influence and direction; as walking in the path of truth, it is the Lord that teaches it, causes to choose it, leads into it, and preserves there; walking in the statutes and ordinances of the Lord, and in the ways of righteousness and holiness, is of him, and owing to his Spirit puts within his people; and indeed all good works done by them, which may be called their goings, he has foreordained that they should walk in them; it is by the grace of God, and in the strength of Christ, and with the assistance of the blessed Spirit, they walk on in them; and their perseverance in faith and holiness, or their going from strength to strength, is all of the Lord;

how can a man then understand his own way? even of a journey in a literal sense, what will be the issue and event of it, when or whether ever he shall return to his own house again, since all is under the direction and providence of God; and also of his civil affairs, he knows his beginning, and how he goes on for the present; but what will be the end he knows not; and a natural and unregenerate man knows not what way he is in, where he is going, and what his last end will be; being in darkness, in which he was born, brought up, and continues, he does not rightly understand what is his duty, what he should do, what is the good and perfect will of God, what the way is in which he should go, and which is for his good; nor the way everlasting, which leads to eternal life, few find this way. Or it may be understood of the way of the Lord, "how can a man then understand his way?" the Lord's way, not man's; the way of the Lord in providence, which is as the deep, and unsearchable; and the way of life and salvation by Christ, which is of the Lord's devising and resolving on; this way of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, is not known by the natural man; and when it is externally revealed in the word, and by the outward ministry of it, it is not understood so as to be approved of, but is despised, unless God gives a heart to know it, or a spiritual and experimental understanding of it.

Proverbs 20:25

Ver. 25. [It is] a snare to the man [who] devoureth [that which is] holy,.... Which is separated to sacred uses, is devoted to the Lord, as firstfruits, tithes, offerings, &c. which if a man converts to his own use is sacrilege, and this is a sin and a snare, and brings ruin on him; see **Mal 3:8**;

and after vows to make inquiry: that is a sin and a snare also; a man should first inquire before he vows, whether it is right for him to make a vow, and whether he is able to keep it; it is too late after the vow is made to inquire about the lawfulness or expedience of it, and how to find out ways and means to dissolve it and be clear of it; for it is better not to vow, than to vow and not pay, **Ec 5:4**; when a thing is in a man's own hands, he may do what he will; but when he has devoted it to another use, it is no longer in his power; as the case of Ananias and Sapphira shows, **Ac 5:1**.

Proverbs 20:26

Ver. 26. A wise king scattereth the wicked,.... Or "fans [them] away" {i}; separates them from his good counsellors, courtiers, and subjects; scatters them from his presence and court, and breaks their counsels and confederacies one with another; he discovers, discountenances, and discourages them; See Gill on "Pr 20:8";

and bringeth the wheel over them; alluding to the custom of the eastern nations turning a cart wheel over the grain in threshing it out, and agreeably to the metaphor in the preceding clause; see Isa 28:27. Though some think it refers to a sort of punishment inflicted on malefactors in those times and countries, by putting them under harrows drawn on wheels, as breaking upon the wheel has been since used; see
2Sa 12:31. The Arabic version understands it of exile. Jarchi interprets the wise king of the Lord, and the wicked of Pharaoh and his host, on whom he brought the wheel, or gave measure for measure, and punished in a way of

retaliation; and to this sense it is by some {k} interpreted,

"as the wheel turns over, just in the same place, so as the wicked hath done, it shall be done to them."

It may be applied to Christ, the wise King, who scatters all his and our enemies; whose fan is in his hand, and he wilt thoroughly purge his floor, **Mt 3:12**.

{i} hrzm "ventilat", Junius & Tremellius, Schultens. {k} Vid. Schindler. Lexic. col. 109. & Weemse's Christ. Synagog. l. 1. c. 6. s. 8. p. 187.

Proverbs 20:27

Ver. 27. The spirit of man [is] the candle of the Lord,.... The rational soul of man is a light set up in him; this is what is commonly called the light of nature; it was a bright and burning light at first, but through sin is become a very feeble one; by which men have only a glimmering view of divine things, of God and his worship, and of what he would have done, or not done; by this light men do but grope after him, if happily they may find him and know his will; it is but like a candle light at best, in comparison of divine revelation, or the Gospel of the grace of God, which has shone out like the sun in its meridian glory; and especially in comparison of the sun of righteousness, Christ Jesus, and the light of the divine Spirit; yet this is a light set up by the Lord, a candle of his; it comes from the Father of lights, he is the author and maintainer of it; it is a spirit and understanding which is by the inspiration of the Almighty; see **Ge 2:7**;

searching all the inward parts of the belly; or heart; the thoughts, intents, and purposes of it; which are the things of a man that only the spirit of man knows; by this candle, or light, he can look into his own heart, the inmost recesses of it, and reflect upon his thoughts and schemes, and judge in some measure whether right or wrong; there is a conscience in man, which, unless seared, passes sentence on what is in man, or done by him, and either excuses or accuses; see **1Co 2:10** **Ro 2:14**.

Proverbs 20:28

Ver. 28. Mercy and truth preserve the king,.... Which are two good qualifications in a prince; not ruling his subjects with rigour and cruelty, but with tenderness and clemency; easing them as much as he can of burdens and pressures; showing compassion to the distressed, and pardoning delinquents when the case will admit of it; as also being faithful to his word, promises, and engagements; inviolably adhering to the laws and constitution of the nation, and steady in his administrations of justice; these preserve him in the affections of his people, and make him safe and secure on his throne; and because of these the Lord preserves him from his enemies. It maybe rendered, "grace and truth" {l}; and applied to Christ, who is full of both, and which are said to preserve him, Ps 40:11;

and his throne is upholden by mercy; this explains what is meant by the preservation of him, and what is the security of his throne and kingdom, which is clemency and goodness to his subjects.

{l} tmaw dox "gratis et veritas", Cocceius.

Proverbs 20:29

Ver. 29. The glory of young men [is] their strength,.... That is the excellent thing in them, and it is to their honour when it is employed in the service of their king and country, and especially in the service of God and religion; though it does not become them to glory in it, **Jer 9:23**;

and the beauty of old men [is] the gray head; an index of wisdom and prudence; see Job 12:12. The design of the proverb is to show that both have their excellencies and usefulness, young men and old men, and should not despise one another; nor either of them be despised in a commonwealth, both being useful in it, the one for strength, the other for counsel; and so in the church of Christ; see **1Jo 2:13**.

Proverbs 20:30

Ver. 30. The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil,.... Rubs it off and scours it away, as the word {m} signifies, or is a clearing and rubbing it off; some men must be beaten black and blue, or must have very sore correction, before they can be reclaimed and reformed from their evil ways; so some interpret it of the evil man {n}: sanctified afflictions to God's people are the means of purging away their iniquities, their dross, and their sin; but there is nothing so effectually cleanses from sin as the blood of Jesus, or heals or cures of it as his blue wounds and stripes; see Isa 27:9;

so [do] stripes the inward part of the belly; or heart and conscience; by means of corrections and chastisement men are brought to an inward sense of sin; they are shown their transgressions wherein they have exceeded, and are commanded to return from iniquity, Job 36:9; they lament and mourn over sin, confess it and forsake it; and then may the inwards of the heart, the mind and conscience, defiled with them, be said to be cleansed from them; especially when led by these stripes and corrections to the stripes, wounds, and blood of Christ which, being applied, cleanse from all, sin inwardly and outwardly.

{m} qyrmt "abstesio", Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius; "detersio", Montanus, Michaelis; "effricatio", Schultens. {n} erb "in malo, sub, homine", Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "in malo (homine nequam)", Schultens, so Aben Ezra.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 21:1

Ver. 1. The king's heart [is] in the hand of the Lord, [as] the rivers of water,.... The heart of every king, and all that is in it, his thoughts, counsels, purposes, and designs; the hearts of bad kings, as Pharaoh, whom the Lord hardened and softened at pleasure; the antichristian kings, into whose hearts he put it to give their kingdoms to the beast, Re 17:17; the hearts of good kings, as David, Solomon, Cyrus, and others: and if the hearts of kings are in the hands of the Lord, which are full of things of the greatest importance with respect to the government of the world; and which are generally more untractable and unmanageable; and who are more resolute and positive, and will have their own wills and ways, especially arbitrary princes; then much more the hearts of other persons. And which are as "rivers of water"; for so the words may be rendered, as rivers of water is "the heart of a king", which is "in the hand of the Lord"; unstable, fluid, and fluctuating; and yet the Lord can stay and settle, and fix them, and keep them steady and within bounds: or which, like a torrent of water, comes with force and impetus; and so the Septuagint render it, "the force of waters"; and bears all before it, as do the wills of despotic kings; and yet these the Lord can stop and bound, and rule and overrule: or like rivers of water, reviving and refreshing, so is the heart of a good king, full of wisdom and prudence, of integrity and faithfulness, of clemency and goodness; the

streams of whose bounty and kindness flow among his subjects, to their great pleasure and profit; so Christ, the King of kings, is said to be as "rivers of water",
Isa 32:2. The allusion is to gardeners, that make channels for the water to run in, to water their gardens; or to husbandmen, that cut aqueducts from rivers, to water their fields; or to the turning of the course of rivers, as Euphrates was by Cyrus, when he took Babylon. The heart of a king is as much at the dispose of the Lord, and can be turned by him as easily as such canals may be made, or the course of a river turned; for it follows:

he turneth it whithersoever he will; contrary to their first designs, and to answer another purpose; oftentimes towards his people, and for the good of his cause and interest, which they never designed; and to bring about such things as were out of their view. And so, in conversion, the Lord can turn the hearts of men as he pleases; their understanding, will, and affections, are in his hands: he can make the understanding light which was darkness, and so turn it from darkness to light; he can take off the stiffness of the will, and turn it from its bias and bent, and make it willing to that which is good in the day of his power: he can turn the channel and course of the affections from sinful lusts and pleasures, to himself, his son, his truths, word, worship, ordinances, and people; he can take out of the heart what he pleases, its ignorance, hardness, enmity, unbelief, pride, and vanity; and he can put in what he pleases, his fear, his laws, his Spirit, and the gifts and graces of if; he can change and turn it just as he will; he that made the heart can operate upon it, and do with it as seems good in his sight. The Heathens very wrongly call one of their deities Verticordia {o}, from the power of turning the heart they ascribe to it; however, this shows their sense, that to turn the heart is the property of deity.

{o} Valer. Maximus, l. 8. c. 15. s. 12. Vid. Ovid. Fasti, l. 4. v. 158.

Proverbs 21:2

Ver. 2. Every way of a man [is] right in his own eyes,.... This is repeated, from Pr 16:2; for the confirmation of it; and that it might be observed and taken notice of, and men be brought under a conviction of it; which is not easily done, it being what affects all men: every man is conceited of himself and his own way, and is not easily persuaded off of it; his sinful ways are agreeable to him promising him pleasure, profit, or honour; and his self-righteous ways suit with the vain opinion he has of himself, whereby he promises himself eternal life and happiness. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it to this sense,

"every man seems righteous to himself;"

but the Lord pondereth the hearts: weighs them in the balance of righteousness and truth; considers them, having a perfect knowledge of them, and all the springs of action in them; and knows that every way of man is not right, though they may seem so to him.

Proverbs 21:3

Ver. 3. To do justice and judgment,.... The moral duties of religion, what is holy, just, and good, which the law requires; what is agreeably to both tables, piety towards God, and justice to men; that which is just and right between man and man; which, especially if done from right principles and with right views,

[is] more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice; not than any sacrifice; than the sacrifice of a broken heart, or the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, or of acts of goodness and beneficence, or of a man's whole self to the Lord; but than ceremonial sacrifices; which, though of divine institution, and typical of Christ, and when offered up in the faith of him, were acceptable to God, while in force; yet not when done without faith and in hypocrisy, and especially when done to cover and countenance immoral actions; and, even when compared with moral duties, the latter were preferable to them; see 1Sa 15:22.

Proverbs 21:4

Ver. 4. An high look, and a proud heart,.... The former is a sign of the latter, and commonly go together, and are both abominable to the Lord; see Ps 101:5. A man that looks above others, and with disdain upon them, shows that pride reigns in him, and swells his mind with a vain opinion of himself; this may be observed in every self-righteous man; the parable of the Pharisee and publican is a comment upon it; sometimes there may be a proud heart under a disguise of humility; but the pride of the heart is often discovered by the look of the eyes. It may be rendered, "the elevation of the eyes, and the enlargement of the heart" {p}; but not to be understood in a good sense, of the lifting up of the eyes in prayer to God, with faith and fear; nor of the enlargement of the heart with solid knowledge and wisdom, such as Solomon had; but in a bad sense, of the lofty looks and haughtiness of man towards his fellow creatures, and of his unbounded desires after filthy lucre or sinful lusts: the Targum renders it,

"the swelling of the heart,"

with pride and vanity;

[and] the ploughing of the wicked [is] sin; taken literally; not that it is so in itself; for it is a most useful invention, and exceeding beneficial to mankind, and is to be ascribed to God himself; and of this the Heathens are so sensible, that they have a deity to whom they attribute it, and whom they call Ceres {q}, from vrx, to plough; it only denotes that all the civil actions of a wicked man, one being put for all, are attended with sin; he sins in all he does. Or, metaphorically, for his schemes, contrivances, and projects, which are the ploughing of his mind; these are all sinful, or tend to that which is so. Some understand this particularly of his high look and proud heart, which are his ploughing and his sin; Ben Melech; and others of his ploughing, or persecuting and oppressing, the poor. The word is sometimes used for a lamp or light, and is so rendered here by some, "the light of the wicked [is] sin" {r}; their outward happiness and prosperity leads them into sin, involves them in guilt, and so brings them to ruin and destruction: and this way go the Targum: Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

{p} bl bxrw Mynye Mwr "elatio oculorum et latitudo cordis", Piscator, Michaelis, Cocceius, Schultens. {q} "Prima Ceres ferro mortales vertere terram instituit", Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. {r} Myevr rn "Incerna impiorum", V. L. Mercerus, Gejerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 21:5

Ver. 5. The thoughts of the diligent [tend] only to plenteousness,.... A man that is thoughtful and studious, and wisely forms schemes in his mind, and diligently pursues them; the issue of it is, generally speaking, prosperity and plenty: such a man is usually thriving and flourishing; and this holds good in things spiritual, as well as in things temporal, Mt 25:29;

but of everyone [that is] hasty only to want; that is in haste to be rich, and is resolved to be so, right or wrong, he comes at last to poverty and want: or he who is rash and precipitate in acting, who never thinks before he acts, but rashly engages in an affair; or, however, does not give himself time enough to think it over, but, as soon as ever it has entered his thoughts, he immediately attempts to put it in execution; a man so thoughtless and inconsiderate, so rash and hasty, brings himself and family to poverty; see Pr 20:21.

Proverbs 21:6

Ver. 6. The getting of treasures by a lying tongue,.... By telling lies in trade; by bearing false witness in a court of judicature; or by preaching false doctrines in the church of God:

[is] a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death: such treasures, though ever so great, are like any light thing, smoke or vapour, straw, stubble, chaff, or a feather, tossed about the wind; which is expressive of the instability uncertainty of riches ill gotten; they do not last long, but are taken away and carried off by one providence or another; and they are likewise harmful and pernicious; they issue in death: and those that seek after them, and obtain them in a bad way, are said to "seek death": not intentionally, but eventually; this they certainly find, if grace prevent not; see **Pr 8:36**. Jarchi reads it, they are the "snares of death" to him; and so the Septuagint version.

Proverbs 21:7

Ver. 7. The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them,.... Or cut them, so Ben Melech: dissect or "saw" {s} them; cut them to the heart; that is, when the sins they have been guilty of, in robbing God of his due, or doing injury to men in their properties, cheating them or stealing from them, are set home on their consciences, they are in the utmost agonies and distress; it is as if a saw was drawn to and fro over them, and will be their case for ever without true repentance: this is the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched; this is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and is very just and righteous;

because they refuse to do judgment; to do that which is just between man and man, to let everyone enjoy his own property: as it is true of private robbers, so of men in public offices, whose business it is to defend men in the quiet possession of property; which, if they refuse to do, as it is a refusal to do judgment, it is in effect a robbery of them; and will be charged on their consciences at one time or another.

{s} Mrwgy "dissecabit eos", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "serrabit eos", Aben Ezra & Kimchi in Mercer. Michaelis; "gravem ipsis uterum trahit", Schultens.

Proverbs 21:8

Ver. 8. The way of man [is] froward and strange,.... Not the way of any and every man; not the way of righteous and good men, of believers in Christ; who know him, the way, and walk in him and after him, and being led by him; who have his spirit to be their guide, and do walk in his ways, and find pleasure in them; the way of such is not froward or perverse, but upright and even, and is not strange, for the Lord knows and approves of it: but the way of wicked and impure men, as may be learned from the opposition in the next clause; the way of unregenerate men, who are gone out of the good way, and turned to their own way, which is according to the course of the world, and after the prince of it, and according to the flesh, and dictates of corrupt nature, which is the common and broad road that leads to destruction. This is a "froward" or perverse way, a way contrary to reason and truth; contrary to the word of God, and the directions of it; it is a crooked distorted path; it is not according to rule; it is a deviation from the way of God's commandment, and is a "strange" one; the Scriptures know nothing of it, and do not point and direct unto it; it estranges a man from God, and carries him further and further off from him. It may be rendered, "perverse [is] the way of a man, even of a stranger" {t}; of one that is a stranger to God and godliness; to Christ and his Gospel; to the Spirit, and the operations of his grace on the heart; to his own heart, and his state and condition by nature; and to all good men, and all that is good;

but [as for] the pure, his work [is] right. God is pure, purity itself, in comparison of whom nothing is pure; and his work in creation, providence, and grace, is right; there is no unrighteousness in him; and this sense is favoured by the Septuagint and Arabic versions: or rather every good man, who, through the pure righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and through his precious blood being sprinkled on him, or rather through being washed in it, and through the grace of God bestowed on him, is pure, wholly cleansed from sin; has a pure heart, speaks a pure language, and holds the mystery of faith in a pure conscience or conversation: and his work, or the work of God upon him, is right and good; or his work of faith, which he exercises on God, is hearty and genuine: and even his works, as the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and

Arabic versions, have it in the plural number; all his good works are right; being done from love, in faith, in the name and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God.

{t} rzw "et alieni", Pagninus, Montanus; "et extranei", Vatablus; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech.

Proverbs 21:9

Ver. 9. [It is] better to dwell in a corner of the housetop,.... The roofs of houses in Judea were that, encompassed with battlements, whither persons might retire for solitude, and sit in safety: and it is better to be in a corner of such a roof alone, and be exposed to scorching heat, to blustering winds, to thunder storms and showers of rain,

than with a brawling woman in a wide house; large and spacious, full of rooms, fit for a numerous family: or, "an house of society" {u}; where many families might dwell and live sociably with each other; or a house where a man, his wife and family, might dwell together, and have communion with each other; it is opposed to the corner of the housetop, and the solitariness of it; as the scolding of the brawling woman, or "a woman of contentions" {w}, who is always noisy and quarrelsome, her violent passions, her storming language, and thundering voice, are to the inclemencies of the heavens, to which a man on the housetop is exposed; and yet these are more eligible than the other; see
Pr 21:19.

{u} rbx tybw "domo societatis", Montanus, Vatablus, Baynus, Mercerus, Michaelis, "et domus societatis", Schultens. {w} Mynwdm tvam "prae muliere contentionum", Montanus, Schultens.

Proverbs 21:10

Ver. 10. The soul of the wicked desireth evil,.... The evil of sin, it being natural to him; he chooses it, delights in it, craves after it, under a notion of pleasure or profit: or the evil of mischief; it is a sport and pastime to him to do injury to others; see Pr 10:23; he desires both the one and the other with all his soul; his heart is in it, he is set upon it, which shows him to be a wicked man;

his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes; not only he delights to do mischief to an enemy or a stranger, but even to a neighbour and friend; he will do him no kindness, though he asks it of him; he will show him no mercy, though an object of it; he will spare him not, but do him an injury, if he attempts to hinder or dissuade him from doing mischief, or reproves him for it.

Proverbs 21:11

Ver. 11. When the scorner is punished,.... Either by the immediate hand of God, or by the civil magistrate; he who scoffs at Deity, blasphemes the most High, mocks at all religion, despises dominion, and speaks evil of dignities:

the simple is made wise; who is weak and foolish, easily persuaded and drawn into sin, yet not hardened in it, but open to reproof and conviction; he takes notice of the punishment of scorners, and takes warning from it, and behaves more wisely and cautiously for the future; see Pr 19:25;

and when the wise is instructed; by others, superior to him in wisdom; by the ministers of the Gospel, by reading and hearing the word of God, and the writings of good men; or by corrections and chastisements:

he receiveth knowledge; the wise man receives it, he attends to the instruction given him, and improves in knowledge: or rather the simple man gains knowledge by the instructions given to wise men; he learns by them, as well as by what he is taught himself. It is by some rendered, "when the wise prospers, he receiveth knowledge" {x} the simple man learns much both from the adversity and prosperity of others; and to this sense is the note of Gersom,

"when he sees how the ways of a wise man prosper, then he studies to get knowledge."

{x} So Munster, and some in Mercer.

Proverbs 21:12

Ver. 12. The righteous [man] wisely considereth the house of the wicked,.... Not so much the stately palace he lives in, and the furniture of it, as the glory, splendour, riches, and largeness of his family; the flourishing condition he and they are in: he considers how they came into it, the short continuance of it, and what the end will be, which in a short time wilt be ruin and destruction; and therefore be does not envy their present happiness, or fret at it. Gersom renders it,

"the righteous maketh the house of the wicked to prosper;"

as Joseph did Potiphar's, and Jacob Laban's; or rather the Lord made them to prosper for their sakes. Jarchi interprets the righteous of God himself; who gives his heart, or has it in his heart to cut off the house of the wicked, as follows;

[but God] overthroweth the wicked for [their] wickedness; or removes them into evil, as the Targum; into the evil of punishment, for the evil of sin. Aben Ezra supplies the word "God", as we do; and understands it of God's destroying wicked men for their sins, though they have flourished for a while in this world: but some interpret it of the righteous man, even of a righteous magistrate, who is prudent and diligent in his office; who looks into the houses of wicked men, and inquires who they are that are in them, and how they live; and what they have in their houses, whether stolen goods, the properties of others; or arms, either for treasonable practices or for robberies; and takes them and punishes them according to the laws of God and men.

Proverbs 21:13

Ver. 13. Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor,.... For want of bread; or, "of the weak", as the Septuagint and other versions; for want of help and protection, when in the greatest distress; and, with the most pressing importunity, entreats his assistance, and yet refuses to hear him out: or, if he does, will not relieve him, which is all one as if he heard him not, or denied him a hearing;

he also shall cry himself; the Targum and Syriac version add, "unto God". The sense is, that even such an one shall be brought into the like distressed circumstances, when he shall make application to God, and to his fellow creatures, for relief and assistance:

but shall not be heard; a deaf ear will be turned to him by both: the same measure he has measured shall be measured to him again; no mercy shall be shown to an unmerciful man, either by God or man; see **Jas 2:13**.

Proverbs 21:14

Ver. 14. A gift in secret pacifieth anger,.... Appeases an angry man; humbles and "brings [his anger] down" {y}, as Aben Ezra and Gersom observe the word signifies; which before rose very high, and showed itself in big words and disdainful looks, as proud wrath does; or extinguishes it, as the Targum and Vulgate Latin version render it, and very fitly. Anger is a fire in the breast; and a restraining or causing it to cease is properly expressed by an extinguishing of it: this a gift or present does, as it did in Esau from Jacob, in David from Abigail; but then it must be secretly given, otherwise it may more provoke; since it may show vanity in the giver, and covetousness in the receiver; and the former may have more honour than the latter. Some understand this of a gift for a bribe to a judge, to abate the severity of the sentence; and others of alms deeds to the poor, to pacify the anger of God {z}: Jarchi interprets it of alms; and the Jews write this sentence upon the poor's box, understanding it in this sense; but the first sense is best;

and a reward in the bosom strong wrath: the same thing in different words; the meaning is, that a reward or gift, secretly conveyed into the bosom of an angry man, pacifies his wrath, when at the greatest height. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, understand it in a quite different sense, of a gift retained in the bosom, and not given, and render it thus, "he that spareth gifts stirreth up strong wrath".

{y} hpky "deprimit", Piscator; so some in Mercerus; "subigit", Cocceius; "pensat nasum", Schultens. {z} "Munera (crede mihi) placant hominesque deosque", Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 3.

Proverbs 21:15

Ver. 15. [It is] joy to the, last to do judgment,.... It is with pleasure he does it; he delights in the law of God, after the inward man, and finds much peace of mind and joy in the Holy Ghost in keeping it, and observing its commands, which are holy, just, and good; yea, it gives him pleasure to see justice done by others; both by private persons in their dealings with one another; and especially by judges putting the laws in execution, as their office requires; whereby much good comes to a nation in general, and to particular persons;

but destruction [shall be] to the workers of iniquity; that make a trade of sinning; whose whole life is a continued series of sin and iniquity; who take much pains in committing sin, and are constant at it; everlasting destruction is in their ways, and they lead unto it: or, "terror" {a} shall be to them; terror of mind now at times, in opposition to the joy and peace a good man finds; and dreadful horror at death and to all eternity: or, as it is joy to a just man to see public justice done, and good laws put in execution, it is a terror to evildoers, Ro 13:3.

{a} htxm "pavor", V. L. "horror", Tigurine version; "terror", Vatablus, Mercerus; "consternatio", Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 21:16

Ver. 16. The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding,.... The way of getting understanding, the good ways and word of God; that wanders from the house of God, the assembly of the saints, where the Gospel is preached, and the ordinances are administered; that, instead of attending on them, where he might gain the understanding of divine and spiritual things, wanders about in the fields, gets into bad company, walks with them in their ways, and turns to his own, as a sheep that goes astray: he

shall remain in the congregation of the dead; among those that are spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins; such an one he himself is, and such he is like to continue, and not be written among the living in Jerusalem; or among those who die the second and eternal death, among the damned in hell; so Jarchi interprets it of the congregation of hell; and a large congregation that will be, but dreadful to have an abode with them. The words are rendered by the Septuagint, and the versions that follow that, "shall rest in the congregation of the giants"; which some interpret of devils, and others of the giants of the old world {b}, damned spirits: resting with them does not design peace and quietness, for there will be none there; but a fixed settled abode, in opposition to wandering, in the preceding clause.

{b} See Mede's Discourse 7. p. 32.

Proverbs 21:17

Ver. 17. He that loveth pleasure [shall be] a poor man,.... Or "sport" {c} and pastime, music and dancing, cards and dice, hunting and hawking, and other sensual gratifications; a man that indulges himself in these things, and spends his time and his money in such a way, is very likely to be a poor man, and generally is so in the issue;

he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich; that is, that loves them immoderately; otherwise in moderation they may be both loved and used; "wine" and "oil" are put for high living, luxurious feasts, costly entertainments; which being so, and continually made, will not suffer a man to be rich. The sense is, that an epicure, one that makes a god of his belly, that is both a winebibber and a glutton, that indulges to rich eating and drinking, in course lessens his substance, and leaves little for his heir: and this holds good with respect to spiritual as to temporal things; such persons are poor, and not rich in spiritual things, that indulge to carnal pleasure, and the gratification of their sensual appetite.

{c} hxmv "laetitiam", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schultens.

Proverbs 21:18

Ver. 18. The wicked [shall be] a ransom for the righteous,.... Not to make satisfaction for them, as Christ is a ransom for his people; but as a ransom is in the room of another, so the wicked cometh in the stead of the righteous, and into the trouble he is delivered from; as Haman for Mordecai, which instance Jarchi mentions; see Pr 11:8; or when a body of people are threatened with divine vengeance; and this falls upon the wicked, whose sins caused it, and the righteous are delivered from it; as in the case of Achan, and the seven sons of Saul, **Jos 7:26**. And sometimes God turns the wrath of the princes of the earth from his own people, and causes it to fall upon the wicked, and so they are a ransom for them; as Sennacherib intended the destruction of the Jews, but was called off in providence to fall upon the Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Sabeans, and therefore they are said to be a ransom for them; see Isa 43:3; and sometimes wicked men are the means of a ransom or deliverance of the righteous, as Cyrus was of the Jews: and it may be considered, as the word used signifies a "cover" {d}, whether it will not bear this sense, that the wicked are a cover for the righteous, and oftentimes protect and defend them; so the earth helped the woman, Re 12:16;

and the transgressor for the upright; which are but different characters of the same persons, bad and good men; and the sense is the same as before.

{d} rpwk.

Proverbs 21:19

Ver. 19. [It is] better to dwell in the wilderness,.... Where persons live without shelter, and are not only exposed to storms and tempests, but to beasts of prey; where is want of the necessaries of life, and no society; where no "speech" is, as the word {e} for wilderness may signify; yet it is better to dwell in such a place, where no human voice is heard,

than with a contentious and an angry woman; that is always brawling and scolding, ever in a quarrelsome and angry disposition, and provoking to anger all about her; See Gill on "Pr 21:9". In a mystical sense, it is better to be with the church in the wilderness, Re 12:14; than with the furious, bloodthirsty, and persecuting church of Rome, in all its worldly glory and splendour.

{e} rbdm "a" rbd "loqui".

Proverbs 21:20

Ver. 20. [There is] a treasure to be desired,.... Gold, silver, jewels, and precious stones; all sorts food, as Aben Ezra explains it, and rich and costly, raiment; all which may be lawfully desired and sought after, and, when obtained, laid up for future use; which may be spared for their own service and that of posterity: but there are riches of grace, a pearl of great price and treasure in heaven, more desirable than these, **Mt 6:19**;

and oil in the dwelling of the wise; which is particularly mentioned, because a principal blessing of the land of Canaan; much used for food, and was for delight and refreshment: and something of this was in the house of every wise, provident, and industrious man, for the use of him and his family; even though he lived but in a "cottage", as the word {f} signifies this is an emblem of the grace of God, which is sometimes compared to oil; which a wise man is chiefly concerned, that it may be in his heart, in his house, and in his family;

but a foolish man spendeth it up; the oil; he swallows it up at once, as soon as he has got it, and wastes and lavishes away what his wise father had provided for him. This may refer not to oil only, but to the desired treasure, wealth, riches, substance of every sort, he is heir to and becomes possessed of; and which, in a spiritual sense, may be applied to a foolish wicked man, who misspends his time, neglects the means of grace, and all opportunities by which men grow rich and wise in spiritual things; see Mt 25:1.

{f} hwn "tuguirolum", Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 21:21

Ver. 21. He that followeth after righteousness and mercy,.... Is eager, diligent, and fervent in his pursuit of these things: "after righteousness"; not a legal righteousness, such as the Jews followed after, but did not attain to; because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, **Ro 9:31**; by which there is no righteousness or justification before God; but an evangelical righteousness, the righteousness of Christ; see Isa 51:1. To follow after it is to seek, desire, and thirst after it, **Mt 5:6**; which supposes a want of righteousness, a sense of that want; a view of a righteousness without them, even in Christ; a love and liking of it, and therefore follow after it; it being pure, perfect, agreeably to the law and justice of God, which justifies now, and will answer for them in a time to come. And such follow after "mercy" or "grace" {g}; seeing themselves miserable by sin, and having no merit of their own, apply to God for pardoning grace and mercy; and seek for righteousness in a way of grace, as a free gift; and for the whole of salvation in the same way, as well as for all grace and fresh supplies of it: it may be understood, in consequence of the former, of a diligent and eager performance of works of righteousness and mercy, and an earnest desire after both. And such a man

findeth life, righteousness, and honour; which is more than he is said to follow after: "life" spiritual, which he has from Christ by his Spirit, and which is owing to the grace and mercy of God; and eternal life, through the righteousness of Christ, in whom it is only to be found, and from whom all the blessings of life come; who has it in his hands to give, and does give it to all his people: "righteousness" also he finds, not in himself, nor by the works of the law, but in Christ; being directed to him by the Spirit and word of God; and an excellent finding this is; a robe of righteousness, which he lays hold upon, puts on, and rejoices in: and likewise "honour", through relation to God and Christ; through grace received from them; by enjoying the presence of them, and being made a king and priest to God; and hereafter will be placed at

Christ's right hand, inherit the kingdom of glory, sit on the same throne with Christ, and wear the crown of life and righteousness.

{g} dox "gratiam", Cocceius.

Proverbs 21:22

Ver. 22. A wise [man] scaleth the city of the mighty,.... Which makes good what is elsewhere said, that "wisdom is better than strength", **Ec 9:16**; and sometimes more is done by prudence and wisdom, by art and cunning, by schemes and stratagems, than by power and force; especially in military affairs, and particularly in besieging and taking fortified cities; when one wise man, by his wisdom, may so order and manage things, as to be able, with a few under his command, to mount the walls of a city and take it, though defended by a mighty garrison in it. This may be applied to, our Lord Jesus Christ entering into the city of a man's heart, possessed by the strong man armed; overcoming him, taking from him his armour, and dividing his spoil, Lu 11:21; compare with this **Ec 9:14**;

and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof; the strong walls, bulwarks, and such fortifications, in which the mighty in the city placed their confidence: and the like does Christ, when he enters into the heart of a sinner by his word and spirit; he destroys all its former strong confidences, and brings it into subjection to himself, 2Co 10:4.

Proverbs 21:23

Ver. 23. Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue,.... Guards the one and bridles the other; is careful of what he says, that it is truth, and without dissimulation and guile; and is not injurious to the characters of men, and is not offensive and provoking; who abstains from ill and wrathful language, and which tends to stir up wrath and contention. Aben Ezra distinguishes between the mouth and tongue, and interprets it, that keeps his mouth from eating, that is, immoderately and intemperately; and his tongue from speaking evil: but it is best to understand both of the same thing, of speech or language, which when a man is careful of, he keepeth his soul from troubles; his conscience clear of guilt and distress, and his person from being concerned in quarrels, contentions, and lawsuits, which such who give their tongues too much liberty are involved in.

Proverbs 21:24

Ver. 24. Proud [and] haughty scorner [is] his name,.... He shall be called a proud fool, a haughty fellow, a scornful blockhead; he shall get himself an ill name, and be treated with contempt;

who dealeth in proud wrath; whose pride shows itself in wrathful expressions and actions; who is proud and passionate in all his dealings with men, and who as it were makes a trade of pride and passion: to none is this character more applicable than to antichrist, the man of sin, that sits in the seat of the scornful; exalts himself above all that is called God, has a mouth speaking blasphemies, and a look more stout than his fellows, and deals in proud wrath against the saints of the most High.

Proverbs 21:25

Ver. 25. The desire of the slothful killeth him,.... His desire after food and raiment, and riches; for because he cannot have what he desires, being unwilling to work for them, it frets and vexes him to death, or puts him upon unlawful methods to obtain them, which bring him to a shameful death; see Pr 13:4;

for his hands refuse to labour; when he is ordered by his superiors, or his wants are such as call for labour; and he seems to be willing and desirous of it, necessity obliging to it, yet he cannot bring his hands to it; these do in effect say, as Aben Ezra observes, Thou shall not do it. Maimonides says this is to be understood of sloth in seeking wisdom {h}.

{h} Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 34. p. 47.

Proverbs 21:26

Ver. 26. He coveteth greedily all the day long,.... The slothful man does, as he has nothing to do to employ his time and his thoughts with; he is always craving something to eat and drink, or wishing he had such an estate, or so much wealth and riches, that he might live as such and such persons do; and this is what his head runs upon all the day long;

but the righteous giveth and spareth not; not gives to the slothful, which does not restrain his desire, as Aben Ezra interprets it; but to the poor and necessitous, to proper objects; a good man will work with his hands, that he may have a sufficiency for himself and his family, and may have something to give to others that are in want; and "he spares not", or withholds not his hands, neither from working nor from giving.

Proverbs 21:27

Ver. 27. The sacrifice of the wicked [is] abomination,.... That is, to the Lord, as in Pr 15:8; and as it is here added in the Septuagint and Arabic versions;

how much more, [when] he bringeth it with a wicked mind? the Arabic version is, "with a mind alien from the law"; or when it is not brought according to law; when it is a corrupt thing, that which is torn, lame, or sick, or robbery for burnt sacrifice; when it is done with an evil intention, to cover sin, to atone for without repenting of it or forsaking it; that they may go on in sin with impunity, and be allowed to commit it; for which cause Balak and Balsam offered sacrifices, which is the instance Jarchi produces; and indeed every religious action not done in faith, and love, and sincerity, and with a view to the glory of God, but in hypocrisy and with selfish views, in order to procure acceptance with God and justification in his sight; setting aside the righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction of the son of God, is done with a wicked mind, and is an abomination to the Lord. Some render it, "even though he brings it diligently", or "with great art and skill" {i}; is constant at his devotion, and carries it so artfully, and with such a show of religion, as to deceive men, yet he cannot deceive the Lord.

{i} hmzb "solerter", De Dieu.

Proverbs 21:28

Ver. 28. A false witness shall perish,.... As witness he shall perish in his reputation, no credit shall be given him, he shall not be admitted an evidence, or a witness in any cause, being found a false one; and as a man, he shall be punished in body or estate by the civil magistrate, and his soul shall perish eternally, unless he has true repentance for his sin: or, a witness of lies shall perish {k} it may be applied to any teacher of false doctrine; and to the man of sin, and his followers, that speak lies in hypocrisy; everyone that loves and makes a lie shall die the second death, and be excluded from eternal happiness, Re 21:8;

but the man that heareth; before he speaks, and speaks what he hears, and does not devise things himself; but witnesses the truth, and nothing else, to the best of his knowledge:

speaketh constantly; invariably and consistently, what is all of a piece, and by which he ah, des; or "continually", as Jarchi; or "for ever"; he is made use of as a witness as long as he lives, whenever there is occasion for him; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "he speaks victory"; his testimony, being true and valid, carries the cause: it, nay be applied to a faithful teacher, who hearkens to the word of God, and speaks according to that; such an one speaks out, he doctrine of the word constantly, boldly, with certainty, without any hesitation or staggering.

{k} Mybzk de "testis mendaciorum", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 21:29

Ver. 29. A wicked man hardeneth his face,.... Against all corrections and reproofs of parents, masters, ministers, and others; he blushes not at sins committed, and is not ashamed of them, but glories in them: or, he "strengthens with his face" {l}; he puts an impudent face upon his words, and confirms them by his impudence; if he tells the most notorious lies, and says things the most shameful and scandalous, his countenance does not alter, by which he would be thought to have spoken what is right and true;

but [as for] the upright, he directeth his way; or "his ways" {m}; according to the various reading; the man that is upright in heart, and walks uprightly, he directs his way according to the word of God; and, if he does amiss, when sensible he is ashamed of it, and amends.

{l} wynpb zeh "roborat vultu suo", Baynus; "in faciebus suis", Montanus. {m} wykrd ta odouv autou, Sept. "vias suas", Baynus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 21:30

Ver. 30. [There is] no wisdom nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord. No human schemes whatever, formed with the greatest wisdom and prudence, can ever prevail against God, or set aside or hinder the execution of any design of his; nothing that is pointed against his church, his cause, and interest, his truths and ordinances, in the issue shall succeed; all that are found fighters against him shall not prosper, let them be men of ever so much sagacity and wisdom; though there may be ever so many devices in a man's heart, and these ever so well planned, they shall never defeat the counsel of the Lord; see Pr 19:21. The Targum is,

"there is no wisdom, &c. as God's;"

and so the Syriac version, "as the Lord's"; there is none like his, there is none to be compared with his; there is none of any value and worth but his; all is folly in comparison of that: or there is none "before the Lord" {n}; no wisdom of the creature can stand before him, it presently vanishes and disappears.

{n} hwhy dgnl "in conspectu Jehovae", Gejerus; "coram Domino", Gussetius, p. 495.

Proverbs 21:31

Ver. 31. The horse [is] prepared against the day of battle,.... The horse is a warlike creature, and was much used formerly, as now, in war; these are prepared against the day of battle, to mount the cavalry with; and men are apt to put too great confidence in them: this is mentioned instead of all other military preparations and instruments of war;

but safety [is] of the Lord; a horse is a vain thing for safety, Ps 33:17; victory is only of the Lord; salvation depends upon him; it is he that covers men's heads in the day of battle, and gives them victory over their enemies: or "salvation [is] of the Lord" {o}; this is true of spiritual and eternal salvation, as well as of temporal salvation; it is of the Lord, Father, Son and Spirit; and so is the safety of the saints; and their final perseverance to eternal glory, which is owing to the love of God, covenant interest, security in Christ, the grace of the Spirit, and the power of God; see Ho 14:3.

{o} hewvth hwhyl "a Domino autem (datur) salus". Tigurine version; "Domino est salvatio", Cocceius; "Jehovae est salus", Schultens; so Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 22:1

Ver. 1. A [good] name [is] rather to be chosen than great riches,.... The word "good" is not in the text, but is rightly supplied, as it is by the Targum, Septuagint, and Vulgate Latin versions; for it is not any name that is more eligible than riches; nor is it a need name among any sort of persons; for to have a good name with some turns to a man's reproach rather than to his credit; but a good name among good men, a name in the house of God, which is better than sons and daughters; a new name, the name of the children of God, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it; this is to be preferred to a multitude of riches: it is not to be procured by them, and is where they are not, or are lost, but this continues; see **Ec 7:1**;

[and] loving favour rather them silver and gold; favour with God and man, especially with God, whose loving kindness is better than life, and all the enjoyments of it: or, as it may be rendered, "grace [is] better than silver and gold" {p}; the grace of God through Christ, the grace of Christ, in whom all fulness of it dwells, the grace of the Spirit of Christ; faith is more precious than gold that perisheth; and if a man would give all the substance of his house for love it would be contemned; the Spirit and his grace are not to be purchased for money.

{p} bwj Nx "gratia melior", Munster, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis; so Schultens.

Proverbs 22:2

Ver. 2. The rich and poor meet together,.... In an hostile way, as some; they rush upon one another; the rich despise the poor, and the poor envy the rich; they cannot speak well one of another, as the Arabic version; or they are dependent on one another, they cannot do without each other; as in the natural body one member cannot say to another, I have no need of thee; so, in the body politic, the rich and the poor cannot say they have no need of one another; the rich stand in need of the poor to till their land, to plough and sow, and do all other servile works for them; and the poor have need of the rich to employ them; have need of their money as their wages for their work, to support themselves and families with: or they sometimes change conditions, and so meet; the poor grow rich, and the rich become poor; the one goes uphill and the other downhill, and so meet in their passage. They meet together in all places of the earth; go where you will, there are rich and poor. The godly rich and poor meet together in one place to worship God; they meet together in a Gospel church state, enjoying the same privileges and ordinances; and will all meet the Lord, and all meet together at his judgment seat; and they will meet in heaven, and be together to all eternity, where the distinction will cease: and the wicked rich and poor meet together to commit sin; and they meet together in the grave {q}, where there is no difference; and they will meet at the bar of God at the last day, and in hell, where they will be together for evermore;

the Lord [is] the Maker of them all: not only as men, but as rich men and poor men; God gives riches to whom he pleases, and poverty to whom he pleases; riches and poverty are according to the order of divine Providence; and he can and does change scenes at his pleasure; wherefore the rich should consider themselves as dependent on him, and not despise and crush the poor; and the poor should be content with their state, as being allotted to them by the Lord, who can alter it when he thinks fit.

{q} "Victor cum victis pariter miscebitur umbris--Lydus Delichio, non ditat Croesus ab Iro", Propert. l. 3. Eleg. 5. v. 15, 17.

Proverbs 22:3

Ver. 3. A prudent [man] foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself,.... A wise man, whose eyes are in his head, who looks about him and before him, and is cautious and careful of his conduct and behaviour; he foresees the evil of sin he is liable to be drawn into by such and such company, snares, and temptations; and therefore he keeps from them, and abstains from all appearance of evil, or what would lead him to it; and he foresees the evil of punishment, or the judgments of God that are coming on for sin; and he betakes himself to the Lord, to those hiding places and chambers of retreat and protection he has provided for his people, till the indignation be overpast; see Isa 26:20;

but the simple pass on, and are punished: foolish persons, devoid of the grace of God and the fear of him, go on careless and unconcerned in their sinful course of life, transgressing the law of God; they proceed from evil to evil, from lesser to greater sins; they go on in the broad road to destruction, and are punished with temporal judgments here, and with everlasting destruction hereafter.

Proverbs 22:4

Ver. 4. By humility [and] the fear of the Lord,.... Some render it, "the reward of humility, which [is] the fear of the Lord" {r}; so the Targum; an humble man is blessed with it. Jarchi's note is,

"because of humility, the fear of the Lord comes;"

humility leads on to the fear of the Lord; he that behaves humbly towards man comes at length to fear the Lord, and be truly religious: though these are rather to be considered as the graces of the Spirit of God, which go together where there is one, there is the other; he that is humbled under a sense of sin, and his own unworthiness, fears the Lord; and he that fears the Lord, and his goodness, will walk humbly before him; they both flow from the grace of God, are very ornamental, and attended with the following happy consequences;

[are] riches, and honour, and life; spiritual riches, the riches of grace and glory; honour with God and men now, and everlasting life in the world to come.

{r} hwhy tary hwne bqe "praemium mansuetudinis, quae est reverentia Jehovae", Schultens; "merces humilitatis timor Domini", Baynus; "praemium humilitatis est timor Domini": Tigurine version; so Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceius.

Proverbs 22:5

Ver. 5. Thorns [and] snares [are] in the way of the froward,.... Who walks contrary to the will and law of God; such a man meets with troubles, which are as thorns, grieving and distressing to him; and is taken in snares, and brought into difficulties, out of which he is not easily extricated; the thorns of affliction, and the snares of Satan: by the one his way is hedged up, and in the other his feet are taken;

he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them; he that is concerned for the good of his soul, is careful for the welfare of that, and takes heed to his ways where and how he walks, will be far both from the way of the froward, and from the thorns and snares which are in his way.

Proverbs 22:6

Ver. 6. Train up a child in the way he should go,.... As Abraham trained up his children, and those born in his house, in the way of the Lord, in the paths of justice and judgment; which are the ways in which they should go, and which will be to their profit and advantage; see Ge 14:14; and which is the duty of parents and masters in all ages, and under the present Gospel dispensation, even to bring such who are under their care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, **Eph 6:4**; by praying with them and for them, by bringing them under the means of grace, the ministry of the word, by instructing them in the principles of religion, teaching them their duty to God and man, and setting them good examples of a holy life and conversation; and this is to be done according to their capacity, and as they are able to understand and receive the instructions given them: "according to the mouth of his way" {s}, as it may be literally rendered; as soon as he is able to speak or go, even from his infancy; or as children are fed by little bits, or a little at a time, as their mouths can receive it;

and when he is old he will not depart from it; not easily, nor ordinarily; there are exceptions to this observation; but generally, where there is a good education, the impressions of it do not easily wear off, nor do men ordinarily forsake a good way they have been brought up in {t}; and, however, when, being come to years of maturity and understanding, their hearts are seasoned with the grace of God, they are then enabled to put that in practice which before they had only in theory, and so continue in the paths of truth and holiness.

{s} wkrd yp le "super os viae suae", Montanus; "ad os viae ejus", Schultens.
{t} "Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem testa diu", Horat. l. 1. Ep. 2. v. 69.

Proverbs 22:7

Ver. 7. The rich ruleth over the poor,.... Usurps a dominion over them, and exercises it in a rigorous, oppressive, and tyrannical manner; otherwise they are generally the rich that rule, and if they rule well, in a lawful, gentle, and righteous manner, it is commendable;

and the borrower [is] servant to the lender; being under obligation to him, he is forced to be subject to him, and comply with his humours, and do and say as he would have him; it was a happiness promised to the Israelites, that they should lend to many nations, but not borrow,
De 15:6; compare with this **Ne 5:4**.

Proverbs 22:8

Ver. 8. He that soweth iniquity {u} shall reap vanity,.... He that practises sin, and is frequent in the commission of it; indulges to it in a profuse way, as the sower plentifully scatters his seed; such shall reaper possess nothing but sin and wickedness; for, what a man sows, that shall he reap; he shall eat the fruit of his doings, and have the reward of his works; see **Job 4:8**; or "nothing" {w}, mere emptiness; it shall not answer; he shall have in the end neither pleasure nor profit, but the contrary; "shall reap evil things", as the Septuagint, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin versions render it;

and the rod of his anger shall fail; with which he has ruled and smitten others in an angry and cruel manner; this shall be taken from him; his authority shall fail, and he shall become subject to others, and be used in like manner; see Isa 14:4. R. Joseph Kimchi interprets it of "the rod of the increase" of the earth, or the rod or flail with which the fruits of the earth are threshed or beaten out, which should fail before they were reaped; and Schultens {x} has reference to the same, and gives the sense, that a wicked man that sows iniquity, when he thinks his harvest is ripe, shall be beaten with the flail, by which he shall be consumed; and he that threshed others shall be threshed himself.

{u} So, "serere fallaciam", in Plauti Poenulo, l. 1. v. 67. {w} Nwa "inanitatem ac nihilum", Michaelis. {x} "Et virga in eum desaevitura, erit decretoria".

Proverbs 22:9

Ver. 9. He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed,.... Or "a good eye" {y}; who looks about him for proper objects to do good unto; looks pleasantly on them, and deals out cheerfully and bountifully to them; he shall be blessed with an increase of temporal good things, with spiritual blessings, and with eternal glory and happiness; when he does what he does from principles of grace, with a view to the glory of God, not depending on what he does, but upon the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ;

for he giveth of his bread to the poor; what is his own and a part of it; not all, for he reserves some as he ought for himself and his; but he does not eat his morsel alone, he gives of it to the necessitous; his beneficent hand is a proof of his bountiful eye and liberal heart.

{y} Nye bwj "bonus oculus", Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius; "bonus oculo", Junilus & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 22:10

Ver. 10. Cast out the scorner,.... That makes a mock at sin, a jest at religion, and scoffs at all good men, and everything serious and spiritual; cast such an one out of all company and conversation; out of the family, as mocking Ishmael was cast out of Abraham's family; and out of the church, and all religious societies. Jarchi interprets it of the evil imagination or corruption of nature; but this will continue with a man as long as he lives, and, though it may be weakened and subdued, it is not cast out;

and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease; which are caused by the scorner, who stirs up contention and strife in all company where he is, in families, and churches; and is continually casting reproach on good men and things; but, when he is cast out, everything of this nature ceases, and peace and love take place.

Proverbs 22:11

Ver. 11. He that loveth pureness of heart,.... Though man's heart is naturally impure, and all that is in it, the thoughts, affections, mind, conscience, understanding, and will; yet there is such a thing as pureness of heart; as where the grace of God is; where there it pure love to God, Christ, and to holy and heavenly things and persons; where there is pure and unfeigned faith in Christ, and a purifying hope of eternal life by him; where the Holy Spirit dwells as a sanctifier, and Christ dwells by faith; where there is sincerity and integrity; and where the heart is sprinkled by the blood of Christ from an evil conscience: and, though none are entirely free from impurity of flesh and spirit, yet every good man hates the impurity that is in him, and loves purity, and is desirous of it, and makes use of all means for it; and he loves a man of a pure heart, as Aben Ezra interprets it; he loves pureness of heart in himself and others. Some versions understand this of God: the Septuagint and Arabic versions are, "God loveth holy hearts"; and so the Targum,

"God loveth the pure in heart:"

the Syriac version differs,

"he loves God that is pure in heart;"

but all wrong; the sense is as before given;

[for] the grace of his lips; or, "grace [is in] his lips"; or, "his lips [are] grace" {z}, or gracious; as the lips of Christ, though in a greater measure and degree, Ps 45:2; as is a man's heart, so are his lips, A man of a pure heart will speak a pure language; a good man will talk of good things; a wise man of wisdom, and a gracious man of the grace of God; of the doctrines of grace he has received; of the blessings of grace bestowed on him; of the promises of grace applied unto him; of the experiences of grace he has been favoured with; of things grateful and acceptable to others, which minister grace, and are to the use of edifying;

the king [shall be] his friend; carry himself friendly to him, admit him to familiarity with him, take him into his court, and make him of his privy council; this is what a king should do, and what a wise and good king will do, and it is his interest so to do: a man of an upright heart, and of a graceful speech, is or should be regarded by princes; as Hushai the Archite by David; and Daniel even by Nebuchadnezzar, a Heathen king. Jarchi's note is,

"the holy blessed God loves and embraces him;"

and this sense may very well be received: the Lord loves purity of heart; he is good to them that are of a clean heart; he loves graceful lips, or lips speaking grace, in prayer, praise, or Christian conversation: he is a friend to such; to the pure he shows himself pure; the pure in heart shall see him, and ever dwell with him: Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, loves purity and righteousness, and hates iniquity; the lips of his people are pleasing to him, they are like a thread of scarlet; he loves to hear their voice, especially speaking of his own grace; he is a friend unto them, one that loves at all times, and sticks closer than a brother.

{z} wytpv Nx "gratia sunt labia ejus", De Dieu, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens; "cujus labia sunt grata", i.e. "gratiosa", Mercerus; "gratia in labiis ejus est", some in Vatablus.

Proverbs 22:12

Ver. 12. The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge,.... That is, the providence of God, whose eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth; these preserve the knowledge of himself, even among the Heathens in some measure; for what may be known of God is manifest in them, and showed to them: more particularly his providence has preserved the Scriptures, the means of knowledge, which men would have destroyed; and preserves men of knowledge, as Aben Ezra interprets it, the ministers of the word, the stars he holds in his right hand; and he preserves spiritual and experimental knowledge in the hearts of his people, and causes it to increase; and continues his Gospel and a Gospel ministry in the world, till they all come to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God. Or his eyes observe, look unto with delight and pleasure, knowledge and men of knowledge, that know him, and do his will;

and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor; the perfidious, treacherous man; the false teacher, that corrupts the word of God, and handles it deceitfully: the doctrines of such he overthrows, and confutes, and brings to nothing, by his Spirit in his faithful ministers; and causes truth to prevail, and all iniquity to stop its mouth: particularly the words and doctrines of the great transgressor, the lawless and wicked one, the man of sin, antichrist; these have been exposed and overthrown already, and will be more and more so in God's due time.

Proverbs 22:13

Ver. 13. The slothful [man] saith, [there is] a lion without,.... Or, "in the street". This he says within himself; or to those who call out to him, and put him on doing the business of his proper calling, whether in the field or elsewhere, which, through his slothfulness, he has a disinclination to; and therefore frames excuses, and suggests this and that difficulty or danger in the way, expressed by a "lion without"; and which shows the folly and weakness of his excuses, since lions do not usually walk in cities, towns, and villages, and in the streets of them, but in woods and mountains;

I shall be slain in the streets; by the lion there; or I shall never be able to get over the difficulties, and through the dangers, which attending to business will expose me to. Some apply this to the difficulties that slothful persons imagine in the learning of languages, arts, and sciences; as Jarchi applies it to the learning of the law.

Proverbs 22:14

Ver. 14. The mouth of strange women [is] a deep pit,.... The mouth of harlots; the kisses of their mouth, their fair speech and flattering words, their amorous talk, and lascivious and wanton language, ensnare and draw unwary persons to commit lewdness with them, which bring them into a pit of ruin and destruction; a filthy one, and very deep, out of which it is not easy nor usual to be extricated: the allusion is to beasts taken in a pit dug for them; and these are as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed;

he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein; who has been guilty of other sins, and such as have caused the Lord to abhor him, and therefore leaves him to fall into this: one sin not only leads on to another, but is the punishment of another; men are seldom guilty of this sin of whoredom, but who have been first abandoned to other vices very provoking to. God; see **Ec 7:26**. Jarchi interprets all this of idolatry; and it may be very well applied to the whore of Rome, and the harlots she is mother of; who, by her fair words and false doctrines, by her mouth speaking blasphemies and lies in hypocrisy, by her golden cup in her hand full of abomination and filthiness of fornication, and by her sorceries, have deceived many, and brought them into the pit of perdition and ruin: and these are such whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life; but are rejected of God, and given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned, Re 17:4.

Proverbs 22:15

Ver. 15. Foolishness [is] bound in the heart of a child,.... That is, sin, the greatest of all folly; this is naturally in the heart of man; it is in the heart of a child, it is in him from his infancy; it is bound in his heart, it is rooted and riveted in him, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; it is what cleaves close to him, and he has a strong affection for and desire after: the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, **Ge 8:21**; so that he is not easily brought off of sin, or becomes wise;

[but] the rod of correction shall drive it far from him; the rod used by parents, for the correction of sin and folly, is a means of making children wise, and of restraining the folly that is bound up in them; and of reclaiming them from those sinful ways, which the folly of their hearts leads them to, and so in some measure of driving it far from them.

Proverbs 22:16

Ver. 16. He that oppresseth the poor to increase his [riches],.... By taking away from them the little they have; by keeping back their hire, defrauding them of the just wages of their labours; or by usury and extortion, or any other unjust method, whereby they distress the poor, and enrich themselves;

[and] he that giveth to the rich [shall] surely [come] to want: that gives to those that are richer than he; or that are in greater power and authority, that they may protect him in the possession of his ill gotten riches; yet, after all, it shall not thrive and prosper with him, it will all issue in poverty and want: or, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "he shall give to one more rich, and shall want"; he shall be forced to give it to another richer than he, and of greater power, and so shall get nothing by his oppression of the poor; but as he has served the poor, so shall he be served himself, and be brought to beggary and want; see Pr 21:13.

Proverbs 22:17

Ver. 17. Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise,.... Here begins a new part or division of this book. According to some, the "third"; the "first" ending with **Pr 9:18**, the "second" at Pr 22:16, and a "third", beginning here, and ending with Pr 24:34. It is certain that what follows from hence to the end of that is written in another style, by way of exhortation, caution; and instruction, and is directed to particular persons: as here an exhortation is made to Solomon's son, or to those that attended his instruction; or rather to the children of Wisdom, that is, Christ; to listen attentively to "the words of the wise"; of Solomon, and other wise men before him, or contemporary with him; or rather of Wisdom and her maidens, Christ, and the wise men sent by him; who are made wise to salvation, and furnished for every good work by him, from whom the words of the wise come; and who speak the wisdom of God in a mystery; and whose doctrines are to be heard and received, not as the word of men, but as the word of God;

and apply thine heart unto my knowledge; the knowledge of divine and spiritual things Christ instructs in, and the knowledge of himself; which is preferable to all other knowledge, and to thousands of gold and silver; and in comparison of which all things are but loss and dung; and therefore should be applied unto with intenseness of mind, and cordially received.

Proverbs 22:18

Ver. 18. For [it is] a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee,.... Or, "in thy belly" {a}. That is, in thine heart, in the inmost recesses of it; where the words or doctrines of the wise should be received in the love of them, and carefully laid up and retained; which will upon reflection yield much pleasure, like Ezekiel's roll, which was in his belly as honey for sweetness; and which also is very profitable as an antidote against sin, Ps 119:11;

they shall withal be fitted in thy lips; become them, and be suitable and graceful to them: or, "shall be ordered [and disposed] in" or "by thy lips" {b}; being received into the heart, and digested there, they shall easily and freely go off the tongue, which shall be as the pen of a ready writer; they shall be delivered in a regular manner, with great liberty and facility; by a good digestion of Gospel truths, and a comfortable experience of them, persons become apt to teach others.

{a} Knjbb "in ventre tuo", V. L. Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens. {b} wnwk "disponantur", Vatablus.

Proverbs 22:19

Ver. 19. That thy trust may be in the Lord,.... By means of the words of the wise, or doctrines of the Gospel, faith in Christ is first had; men are directed and encouraged hereby to believe in him; and by the same means faith is increased, confirmed, and established. This is the end of penning the Scriptures, and of the Gospel ministry, as follows:

I have made known to thee this day, even to thee; the said words and doctrines in the ministry of the word, by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of them; giving not only a notional, but a spiritual and experimental knowledge of them. The Lord has particular persons to whom he will make known these things in a saving way; it is "to thee, even to thee"; and to everyone whom God has chosen, and Christ has redeemed: and he has particular times and seasons for it, "this day"; which is a time of life and love; when darkness is removed, and the light of grace shines, and makes it day; and may respect the whole Gospel dispensation, which is the accepted time and day of salvation.

Proverbs 22:20

Ver. 20. Have not I written to thee excellent things,.... In the Scriptures. Some render it, "three things" {c}; and think that Solomon refers to the three divisions of the Scriptures among the Jews, the law, the prophets, and holy writings; so Jarchi; but some of those writings then were not: or to the three books wrote by him; the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. Others render it, "in a threefold way" {d}, as the Targum and several versions; that is, in various ways, in different forms and styles, in order the better to inform and instruct. But it is best, with Kimchi, Gersom, and Ben Melech, to render it, "excellent things", as we do; such are the truths of the Gospel; they are more excellent than those that are only known by the light of nature, or by the law of Moses: such as suspect the love and grace of God; the person and offices of Christ; peace, pardon, righteousness, atonement, life and salvation, by him. And these are said to lie

in counsels and knowledge; in disclosing the counsels of God, according to which they are; in giving the best of counsels to men; to perishing sinners, to look to Christ for salvation; to naked ones, to buy of him white raiment, or the robe of his righteousness; to guilty and filthy ones, to apply to his blood for pardon and cleansing; to hungry and thirsty ones, to come unto him for food, the bread of life, and water of life; and to weary ones, to him for rest; and all to do their duty both to God and men: and they also respect knowledge; the knowledge of divine and heavenly things; the knowledge of God in Christ, and of his perfections, as displayed in his salvation; the knowledge of Christ, what he is in himself, what he has done for his people, and is unto them; and especially the knowledge of salvation by him; all which the Gospel is a means of.

{c} Myvlv "terna", Montanus, Vatablus, so Jarchi. {d} triarwv, Sept. "tripticiter", V. L. and Arabic version; "tribus vicibus", Baynus, Targum and Syriac version; "triplici filo et nexa", Schultens; "triplicata", Cocceius.

Proverbs 22:21

Ver. 21. That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth,.... Such are the doctrines of the Gospel; they are "the words of truth"; are written in the Scriptures of truth; come from the God of truth; the subject matter of which is Christ, who is the truth, and which the Spirit of truth leads into: there is a "certainty" in these; they are in the sure word of prophecy; are contained in the inspired and infallible word of God, and are no other than the Gospel of God; nothing is more sure than that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and truly and properly God; and that salvation is alone by him; and that whoever believes in him shall be saved; with many other things, which ministers of the word should affirm with boldness and assurance; and which others may come to a certain knowledge of, even to the riches of a full assurance of understanding; and which is the end of their being written in the word, and made known in the ministry of it;

that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee; or, "return" {e} them to those that send to know what are the words of truth; that inquire concerning them with meekness and fear, and to whom a reason of the hope is to be given; as such are capable of, who have had the certainty of these words made known unto them, or who have been assured of the truth of them: and so Jarchi interprets it, to them that ask of thee instruction; as if it was written, as Lyra says it should, Kylawvl, "to them that inquire of thee". It may be rendered, "to them that send thee" {f}; to search for those things, and get the knowledge of them, in order to communicate them, which, when obtained, may be done. Unless God, Father, Son, and Spirit, should be intended, who are concerned in the sending of ministers to preach the Gospel to men; to whom they are to return an account of the words of truth, and of their dispensation of them to the souls of men; which when faithfully done, and success, they give up their account with joy, and not with grief.

{e} byvhl. {f} Kyxlvl "qui miserunt te", V. L. "mittentibus te", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis, so Aben Ezra; "missoribus tui", Schultens.

Proverbs 22:22

Ver. 22. Rob not the poor, because he [is] poor,.... And cannot help himself; cannot go to law with him that has injured him, and defend his own cause; which the other knowing, is the more emboldened to spoil and defraud him, which is an aggravation of his sin: or, "for he is poor" {g}; to rob any man is an evil and an injurious thing; but to rob the poor is cruel and barbarous; rather something should be given them, and not anything taken from them: or, "though he is poor" {h}; let not that be an inducement to injure him, but the contrary;

neither oppress the afflicted in the gate; or "the poor" {i}; the same as before, only a different word used: when he comes into a court of judicature, which was usually held in the gates of a city, **Ru 4:1**; and applies for redress of any grievance, do not crush him in the gate, or oppress him in judgment; nor wrest his cause, and do him wrong; but let him have justice done him, though poor. Some understand this of using the poor ill, when they come to their gates to beg; which sense is favoured by the Septuagint version; but the former is best. One might have expected, after such a preface or introduction as in the preceding verses, that something of more importance, something more spiritual and evangelical, would have followed: this shows the great regard the Lord has to the poor, and how much they are on his mind, and how near they lie to his heart; especially the poor of the flock, worried and spoiled by antichrist; see Zec 11:7.

{g} awx ld yk "nam tenuis est", so some in Mercerus. {h} "Etsi"; so some in Mercerus; "quamvis", Lutherus. {i} yne "inopem", Schtultens, so Cocceius; "pauperem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Proverbs 22:23

Ver. 23. For the Lord will plead their cause,.... If counsellors at the bar will not, he will; if judges on the bench will not do them justice, he will; he will judge the poor of the people; he will plead their cause, and plead it thoroughly, till he has brought forth judgment unto victory: woe to the man against whom Jehovah pleads; happy the poor on whose side he is; for their Redeemer is mighty, the Lord of hosts is his name, Ps 72:4;

and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them; they could only spoil the poor of their goods, but the Lord can and will spoil and destroy the souls of the spoilers in hell: or, "spoil them that spoiled their soul" or "life" {k}; that is, who spoiled them of their goods, and took away that small pittance they had, which was their life or livelihood; they shall be spoiled themselves that spoil others; the same measure they have meted out shall be measured out to them again; God will destroy them that destroy the earth, even antichrist and his followers, the oppressors of Christ's poor on earth, Re 11:18.

{k} vpn mhyebq ta ebqw "et vim faciet illis, qui animae eorum vim intulerunt", Munster, Vatablus; "et spoliabit eos qui spotiant ipsos anima", Michaelis.

Proverbs 22:24

Ver. 24. Make no friendship with an angry man,.... Do not associate with him; contract not a familiarity with him; make him not a companion; take him not into an intimacy, or use him as a particular friend and acquaintance: a man should be courteous, and carry it civilly to all men; but he should take care whom he admits as his bosom friend; he should be cautious in his choice of a familiar friend, and not receive any; and, among the rest, avoid an angry and passionate man, one who is much given to passion himself, and stirs it up in others; for there can be no lasting peace and pleasure in such a man's company and conversation;

and with a furious man thou shall not go: not take a walk with him, much less a journey; or shall not be frequently together. It may be rendered, "unto a man of wraths", or of great wrath and "fury, thou shall not come"; not enter into his house, nor seek his company, and court his conversation, which rather should be shunned.

Proverbs 22:25

Ver. 25. Lest thou learn his ways,.... And be as wrathful and furious, as quarrelsome and contentious, as he is. Evil works and ways are soon learned; men are more ready to imitate what is evil than what is good: Joseph learned to swear in Pharaoh's court; and the Israelites learned the works of the Heathen, among whom they were mingled; "evil communications corrupt good manners", 1Co 15:33. Many men, naturally mild and gentle, tenderhearted and compassionate, by being brought up among or conversing with bloodthirsty Papists, and imbibing their cruel notions and sentiments, have become fierce, and as furious persecutors of others;

and get a snare to thy soul; be drawn into sin, by speaking passionate words, or doing rash actions, which will bring on punishment, either in this world, or in that to come, or in both; which may affect the soul or life here; the taking of it away, or the eternal damnation of the soul hereafter.

Proverbs 22:26

Ver. 26. Be not thou [one] of them that strike hands,.... Or "among them" {m}, of the number of them, that do as they do, give their hand or their bond for others; he surety for them, as it is explained in the following clause; see **Pr 6:1**;

[or] of them that are sureties for debts; contracted by others; that engage for the payment of them, in case the principal fails: and it is much if persons that keep indifferent company, angry and furious men, who are often in broils and quarrels, and spend their time and substance in strife and contention, are not drawn into engagements of this kind.

{m} b "inter", Pagninus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 22:27

Ver. 27. If thou hast nothing to pay,.... When the debtor this, and the creditor demands the debt of the surety: it is weakness in a man to be a surety for another, when he knows he is not able to pay the debt he is bound for, since it may be an injury to himself and family; but it is a piece of wickedness to engage for the payment of a debt, in case of insolvency, which he knows he is not able to answer; for this is deceiving and imposing upon the creditor; and therefore it is no wonder, being provoked by such ill usage, if he goes to extremity, as follows:

why should he take away thy bed from under thee? as in all likelihood he will, being irritated by such a conduct; and as he might, notwithstanding the law in Ex 22:26; for that respects a pledge, and not a debt; and raiment pledged, the covering of a man when in bed, and not the bed itself; for even wife and children might be taken for debt, **2Ki 4:1**. This is said to deter from suretyship, especially in such circumstances; since a man may bring himself into such a condition as not to have a bed to lie on; yea, to have it taken from under him when upon it; and be turned out from house and home, naked and destitute.

Proverbs 22:28

Ver. 28. Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set. Or, "the ancient border" or "boundary" {n}; by which lands, estates, and inheritances, were marked, bounded, and distinguished; set by ancestors in agreement with their neighbours; which to remove was contrary to a law, and a curse is denounced upon those that did it,
De 19:14; and was always reckoned a very heinous crime in early times; See Gill on "Job 24:2". This was so sacred a thing among the Romans, that they had a deity which presided over those bounds, and had its name from them. Some apply this, in a political sense, to laws of long standing, and customs of long prescription; and others interpret it, in a theological sense, of doctrines and practices settled by the fathers of the church; which, if understood of Christ and his apostles only, will be allowed; but if of the ancient fathers of the church that followed them, it should not be received; since they were but fallible men, and guilty of many errors and mistakes, both in doctrine and practice.

{n} Mlwe lwbg "terminum antiquum", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 22:29

Ver. 29. Seest thou a man diligent in his business?.... In the business of his calling, be it what it will, whether for himself or his master; constant in it, swift, ready, and expeditious at it; who industriously pursues it, cheerfully attends it, makes quick dispatch of it; does it off of hand, at once, and is not slothful in it, nor weary of it; when you have observed and taken notice of such a man, which is not very common, you may, without a spirit of prophecy, foresee that such a man will rise in the world;

he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean [men], or "obscure persons" {o}; he shall not continue in the service of ignoble persons, or keep company with them; but he shall be taken into the service of princes and noble men, and be admitted into their presence, and receive favours from them; as Joseph, who was industrious and diligent in his business in Potiphar's house, was in process of time advanced, and stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt, Ge 39:4. This may be spiritually applied. Every good man has a work or business to do in a religious way; some in a higher sphere, as officers of churches, ministers and deacons; the work of the one lies in reading, study, meditation, and prayer, in the ministration of the word and ordinances, and other duties of their once; and the business of the others in taking care of the poor, and the secular affairs of the churches; others in a lower way, and common to all Christians, which lies in the exercise of grace, and performance of all good works, relative to themselves, their families, and the church of God. Now ministers that are diligent in teaching and ruling; and deacons that do their office well; and private Christians, who are steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; are ready to every good work, heartily engaged in it, and constantly at it; shall not be company for the sons of darkness, unregenerate men, who are in the dark, and darkness itself; what communion has light with darkness, with works of darkness, they should be not workers of? or have any fellowship with the prince of darkness, from whose power they are delivered; but shall have society with the saints, who are made kings and priests unto God; shall be admitted into the presence of the King of kings now, and have communion with him; and shall stand before him at the great day with confidence, and not be ashamed; shall stand at his right hand, and shall be for ever with him. So the Jews {p} interpret this place, "he shall not stand before dark ones", in hell; "he shall stand before kings", in the garden of Eden, in paradise; that is, in heaven.

{o} Mykvx ynpl "ante obscuros", Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "coram obscuris", Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; "in conspectu obscurorum", Schultens. {p} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 104. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 23:1

Ver. 1. When thou sittest to eat with a ruler,.... Either a supreme ruler, a king, or a subordinate ruler, a nobleman, a judge, a civil magistrate, a person of honour, dignity, and authority; and to sit at table with such is sometimes allowed, and is always reckoned an honour; this particularly diligent and industrious persons are admitted to, who not only are brought to stand before kings and great persons, but to sit at table with them, and eat food with them. And now the wise man advises such how to behave themselves when this is the case:

consider diligently what [is] before thee; or, "considering consider" {q}: take special notice of the food and drink set upon the table, and consider well which may be most proper and safe to eat and drink of; for though a man may lawfully eat of whatsoever is set before him; every creature of God being good, if it be received with thanksgiving, and sanctified by the word of God and prayer; yet it is a piece of wisdom to make use of that which is most conducive to health, and less ensnaring; and to observe moderation in all, and not indulge to gluttony and drunkenness: and he should consider also who is before him, which sense the words wilt bear; the ruler that has invited him, and sits at the table with him, and take care that he says or does nothing that may give him offence; and also the noble personages that are guests with him, and behave towards them suitably to their rank and dignity; observe their words and conduct, and imitate the same; yea, even he should consider the servants and waiters that attend, lest, behaving in an indecent and disorderly manner, they should report it to his disadvantage to their ruler or others. But how much greater an honour is it to sit at table with the King of kings, and with his princes, and sup with him! when it becomes the saints, who have this honour, to consider what is set before them; the richest dainties, a feast of things, the body and blood of Christ, which should he spiritually discerned by faith; and not the elements of bread and wine only: likewise the persons before whom they are should be considered; Christ, who sits at his table, and the princes of his people with him; and therefore should not feed without fear, and in a disorderly and indecent manner, as the Corinthians are charged, but with all reverence and humility.

{q} Nybt Nyb "considerando considera", Pagninus, Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 23:2

Ver. 2. And put a knife to thy throat,.... Refrain from too much talk at the table; give not too loose to thy tongue, but bridle it, considering in whose presence thou art; do not use too much freedom, either with the ruler or fellow guests; which, when persons have ate and drank well, they are too apt to do, and sometimes say things offensive to one or the other; it is good for a man to be upon his guard; see **Ec 5:2**. Or restrain thine appetite; deny thyself of some things agreeable, that would lead thee to what might be hurtful, at least if indulged to excess: put as it were a knife unto thine appetite, and mortify it; which is the same as cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye **Mt 5:29**. Or while thou art at such a table, at such a sumptuous entertainment, consider thyself as in danger, as if thou hadst a knife at thy throat; and shouldest thou be too free with the food or liquor, it would be as it were cutting thine own throat;

if thou [be] a man given to appetite; there is then the more danger; and therefore such a person should be doubly on his guard, since he is in the way of temptation to that he is naturally inclined to. Or, "if thou art master of appetite" {r}: so the Targum,

"if thou art master of thy soul;"

if thou hast power over it, and the command of it, and canst restrain it with ease; to which agrees the Vulgate Latin version: but the former sense is more agreeable to the Hebrew idiom.

{r} vpn leb "dominus animae", Vatablus, Mercerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 23:3

Ver. 3. Be not desirous of his dainties,.... His savoury food, which is very grateful to the taste, his rich provisions and royal dainties; do not lust after them, as the word {s} signifies, in an immoderate way, as the Israelites lusted after the fleshpots in Egypt: these may be lawfully desired, but not sinfully lusted after; and in feeding on them nature may be satisfied, and not the sensual lusts gratified in such a manner they crave, which would be criminal;

for they [are] deceitful meat; or, "bread of lies" {t}: through the pleasant and agreeable taste of them, they lead on to luxury and excess before a man is aware, and so deceive him; they promise him a great deal of pleasure, but, being too much indulged to, they produce sickness and nauseousness. Some think they are called so, from the intention and issue of them; being designed to draw out secrets, which men are very apt to divulge, when they have ate and drank freely. Some apply this to false doctrines, which are framed sometimes in a very plausible manner, and deceive the simple; are bread of lies, lies in hypocrisy, and are very pernicious; such words eat, as do a canker, instead of yielding solid nourishment.

{s} watt la "ne concupiscas", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Schultens; "ne coucupiscito", Piscator. {t} Mybzk Mxl "panis mendaciorum", Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; "cibus mendaciorum", Piscator, Schultens.

Proverbs 23:4

Ver. 4. Labour not to be rich,.... In an immoderate over anxious way and manner, to a weariness, as the word {u} signifies, and even as to gape for breath men ought to labour, that they may have wherewith to support themselves and families, and give to others and: if they can, lay up for their children; but then persons should not toil and weary themselves to heap up riches when they know not who shall gather them and much less make use of indirect and illicit methods to obtain them; resolving to be rich at any rate: rather men should labour for durable riches, lay up treasure in heaven, seek those things which are above, and labour to be accepted of God both here and hereafter; which only is in Christ. The Targum is,

"do not draw nigh to a rich man;"

and so the Syriac version; to which agree the Septuagint and Arabic versions;

cease from thine own wisdom; worldly wisdom in getting; riches, as if this was the highest point of wisdom; do not be always laying schemes, forming projects, inventing new things in order to get money; or do not depend upon thine own wisdom and understanding and expect to be rich by means thereof; for bread is not always to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, **Ec 9:11**. The Targum is, "but by thine understanding depart from him;"

the rich man; and to the same purpose the Syriac and Arabic versions.

{u} egyt la "ne fatiges", Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius; "ne hiascas", Schultens.

Proverbs 23:5

Ver. 5. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?.... The Vulgate Latin version is,

"do not lift up thine eyes to riches which thou canst not have;"

riches no doubt are intended, and which may be said to be "not"; they are not the true riches, have only the shadow and appearance of riches; they are not lasting and durable; in a little time they will not be; they are perishing things, they have no substance or solidity in them; they are not satisfying; they do not make them happy; they are rather nonentities than realities; and therefore the eyes of the mind and the affections of the heart should not be set on them: it may be rendered, "wilt thou cause thine eyes to fly upon that which is not?" {w} denoting the intenseness of the mind, and the eagerness of the affections, and with what rapidity and force they move towards them. The Targum is,

"if thou fixest thine eyes on him, he shall not appear to thee;"

meaning the rich man: and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. Ben Melech makes mention of other senses very different; according to R. Judah, the word signifies darkness, "wilt thou make thine eyes dark?" two according to others, signifies light, "wilt thou make thine eyes to shine?" and, according to Jarchi, "wilt thou double?", or shut thine eyes?

for [riches] certainly make themselves wings; or, "it in making makes itself wings" {x}; even that which is not, on which men cause their eyes to fly; no sooner are their eyes upon that, but that flies away from them like a bird with wings; see **Ho 9:11**. Either men are taken from that, or that from them, and sometimes very swiftly and suddenly;

they fly away as an eagle towards heaven; the eagle flies very swiftly, none more swiftly; it flies towards heaven, out of sight, and out of reach, and out of call; so riches flee away to God, the original giver of them, from whence they came, and who is the sole disposer of them; they own him as the proprietor and distributor of them; and they flee to heaven as it were for fresh orders where they should be, and into whose hands they should come next; they flee away, so as not to be seen any more, and be recovered by those who have formerly enjoyed them.

{w} Pyeth "numquid involare facies", Michaelis; "ut involent", Junius & Tremellius; "ut volent", Piscator; "ad sineves volare", Cocceius. {x} hvey hve yk "quis faciendo faciet", Montanus, Baynus.

Proverbs 23:6

Ver. 6. Eat thou not the bread of [him that hath] an evil eye,.... A sordid covetous man, that grudges every bit that is eaten, in opposition to a man of a good eye, or a bountiful one, that is liberal and generous, Pr 22:9; if he invites to a meal, do not accept of it, sit not down at his table to eat with him:

neither desire thou his dainty meats; or savoury food, so as to lust after it; See Gill on "Pr 23:3".

Proverbs 23:7

Ver. 7. For as he thinketh in his heart, so [is] he,.... He is not the man his mouth speaks or declares him to be, but what his heart thinks; which is discovered by his looks and actions, and by which he is to be judged of, and not by his words;

eat and drink, saith he to thee, but his heart [is] not with thee; he bids you eat and drink, but he does not desire you should, at least but very sparingly; it is only a mere compliment, not a hearty welcome.

Proverbs 23:8

Ver. 8. The morsel [which] thou hast eaten, shalt thou vomit up,.... It shall turn in thy stomach, thou shall not be able to keep it, when thou understandest thou art not welcome; or thou wilt wish thou hadst never eaten a bit, or that thou couldest vomit up what thou hast; so disagreeable is the thought of being unwelcome, or when this appears to be the case;

and lose thy sweet words; expressed in thankfulness to the master of the feast, in praise of his food, in pleasantry with him, and the other guests at table; all which are repented of when a man finds he is not welcome.

Proverbs 23:9

Ver. 9. Speak not in the ears of a fool,.... For it is only beating the air, and speaking to the wind; it is casting pearls before swine, and that which is holy to dogs. By the "fool" is meant a wicked man, one abandoned to sin, and hardened in it; that scoffs at all admonitions and reproofs, that derides the word, and the preachers of it, and makes a mock at all good men, and everything they say; and therefore what is serious and sacred should not be said to them, since it only becomes the object of their banter and ridicule;

for he will despise the wisdom of thy words; not only the words of doctrine, reproof, and correction, but the "wisdom" of them; or let them be ever so wisely spoken; for if the wisdom of God and his words, the truths of the Gospel, are foolishness with such, and despised by them, then much more the wisdom even of the best of men, and the wisest things they say; yea, when they deliver the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, the Gospel of Christ, which therefore should be spoken among them that are perfect, **1Co 1:24**.

Proverbs 23:10

Ver. 10. Remove not the old landmark,.... See Gill on "Pr 22:28";

and enter not into the fields of the fatherless; to carry off the increase of them, to reap their wheat, or mow their grass, or turn in cattle to eat it; or to encroach upon them, take in any part of them, or join the whole to their own; for if there is a woe to them that lay field to field, much more to them that enter into and take the fields of the fatherless, and join them to their own, **Isa 5:8**.

Proverbs 23:11

Ver. 11. For their Redeemer [is] mighty,.... As he must needs be, since the Lord of hosts is his name; who sympathizes with them, has mercy on them, is their father, and their friend; see Jer 50:34;

he shall plead their cause with thee; or "against thee", as the Vulgate Latin version; and will certainly carry it for them, and against thee; for, when he undertakes a cause, he pleads it thoroughly.

Proverbs 23:12

Ver. 12. Apply thine heart unto instruction,.... To the instruction of parents, and to the instruction of ministers of the word; to the Scriptures, which are profitable to instruction in righteousness; to the instruction of wisdom, or to the Gospel of Christ, which instructs in things relating to him, and to salvation by him: or, "bring in thine heart to instruction" {y}; not only bring thy body to the place of instruction, the house of God, but bring thine heart thither also;

and thine ears to the words of knowledge; the doctrines of the Gospel, which are the means of the knowledge of God and Christ, and of all divine, spiritual, and heavenly tidings; and of a growth in the knowledge of them; and therefore should be diligently hearkened and cordially attended to.

{y} haybh "adduc", Piscator; "vel fac ingredi", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus; "adduc et quasi praesens siste", Michaelis,

Proverbs 23:13

Ver. 13. Withhold not correction from the child,.... When he has committed a fault, and correction is necessary; for to spare it is the ruin of the child, and no proof of true affection in the parent, but the reverse; see Pr 13:24;

for, [if] thou beatest him with a rod, he shall not die; if he be beaten moderately, there is no danger of his dying under the rod, or with the stripes given him; besides, such moderate and proper corrections may be a means of preserving him from such crimes as would bring him to a shameful and untimely death, and so he shall not die such a death; and by such means, through the grace of God, he may escape the second, or eternal death.

Proverbs 23:14

Ver. 14. Thou shall beat him with the rod,.... Or, correct him with the stripes of the children of men, in a moderate and suitable manner, proportionable to the fault committed; and as he is able to bear it, both as to body and mind;

and shalt deliver his soul from hell; be a means of preventing those sins which would bring to hell and destruction; and of bringing to repentance for those committed; and so of saving his soul, which should be the chief thing parents should have in view in chastising their children; the salvation of whose souls should be dear unto them, as it is to all truly gracious and thoughtful ones.

Proverbs 23:15

Ver. 15. My son, if thine heart be wise,.... To that which is good; so as from it to understand in a spiritual and experimental manner things divine and heavenly; he may be said to have a wise heart who knows in some measure what his heart is, the wickedness, the original depravity and corruption, of it; the plague of his own heart; the weakness and inability of it to do that which is good; the insufficiency of his own righteousness to justify him before God; the poverty of his spirit, and the folly of his mind: and who also is wise unto salvation; that knows the way of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; and who applies to him for the same; builds on him, the foundation; prizes and values him; rejoices in him, and gives him the glory of his salvation; receives his doctrines, and obeys his commands; takes up and makes a profession of him on right principles, and walks wisely, becoming his character and profession;

my heart shall rejoice, even mine; it shall certainly and greatly rejoice; these words are spoken either by Solomon, who had a wise heart himself, and that either to his son, for whom he desired the same, nothing being more rejoicing to pious parents than to see their children becomes wise, especially in spiritual things; or else to those that attended on him for instruction, who was a preacher in Jerusalem; and what is the joy and crown of rejoicing of ministers but their converts, and to see them walking in the truth? **1Th 2:19** **3Jo 1:4**; or these words are spoken by Wisdom, that is, by Christ, to his children; who rejoices when he has found them, or when they are converted, and become wise in a spiritual sense, and walk worthy, whereby Wisdom is justified of her children, Lu 15:5; yea, there is joy in heaven, joy among the angels there, and even in the father of Christ, and of his people, Lu 15:7.

Proverbs 23:16

Ver. 16. Yea, my reins shall rejoice,.... Which is only another phrase expressive of the same thing, and confirming the greatness of joy on the above occasion; not only his heart rejoiced, which was affectionately concerned for his son, near which he lay, the desires of which were frequently drawn out for his good, but his reins also; the seat of the afflictions rejoiced at it; showing how vehement, sincere, and hearty the joy was;

when thy lips speak right things; as they will, when the heart is wise; things agreeably to right reason, to the Scriptures of truth, the oracles of God; to the law and to the testimony; to the Gospel of Christ, and the doctrines of it; and such things as are savoury, pleasant, and profitable, and minister grace to the hearers. The Targum is,

"when my lips speak right things;"

see **Pr 8:6**.

Proverbs 23:17

Ver. 17. Let not thine heart envy sinners,.... Their present prosperity and happiness, the pleasure, profit, and honour, they seem to enjoy; all which is but a shadow, fading had temporary; and yet good men are apt to envy it in their hearts, if they do not express it with their lips; and are ready to murmur and think it hard that they should be in straitened circumstances while the wicked are in flourishing ones; and inwardly fret and are uneasy at it, which they should not,
Ps 37:1; or do not "emulate" or "imitate" {z} them, or do as they do, thinking thereby to enjoy the same prosperity and happiness; choose not their ways, nor desire to be with them, to have their company, or be ranked among them, **Pr 3:31**;

but [be thou] in the fear of the Lord all the day long; let the fear of God be always before thine eyes and in thine heart; be continually in the exercise of fear, which is attended with faith and trust in the Lord; with love and affection to him, and joy and delight in him; be constantly employed in the duties of religion, private and public, which the fear of God includes; and this will be a preservative from envying, murmuring, and fretting at the outward happiness of wicked men; and from joining with them in their evil ways. Aben Ezra, and who is followed by some others, render it, "but [emulate or imitate] the men that fear the Lord all the day long" {a}; be followers of them, and do as they do; let their constant piety and devotion stir up a holy emulation in thee to copy after them and exceed them; but the former sense is best.

{z} anqy la "ne aemuletur", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius et Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis. {a} "Aemulare virum timentem, Jehovam", Vatablus.

Proverbs 23:18

Ver. 18. For surely there is an end,.... Both of the prosperity of the wicked, which is but for a short time; and of the afflictions of the righteous, which are but as it were for a moment; and therefore there is no reason to envy the one, nor to be fretful under the other; the end to a good man will be peace and prosperity for ever: there is a "reward" {b}, as some render it here, for the righteous, though not of debt, but of grace; upon which account they have ground to expect much here and hereafter;

and thine expectation shall not be cut off; or "hope" {c}; as an hypocrite's is; for the hope of a saint is well founded upon the person and righteousness of Christ, and is an anchor sure and steadfast; his expectation of grace, and every needful supply of it, while in this life, and of eternal glory and happiness in the world to come, shall not perish; but he shall enjoy what he is hoping, expecting, and waiting for.

{b} tyrxa "merces", Pagninnus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; so Ben Melech. {c} Ktwqt "spes tua", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 23:19

Ver. 19. Hear thou, my son, and be wise,.... Hear the instruction of a father, of the word of Wisdom, of the ministers of the Gospel, which is the way to be wise unto salvation; faith comes by hearing; spiritual wisdom, and an increase of it; the Spirit of God, and his gifts and graces;

and guide thine heart in the way; in the way of the Lord, in the way of wisdom and understanding, in the way of truth and faith, in the way of religious worship, in the way of the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; in all which the heart should be guided and directed, or otherwise it will be of no avail.

Proverbs 23:20

Ver. 20. Be not amongst winebibbers,.... Who drink to excess, otherwise wine may be drank, provided moderation is used; but it is not good to be in company with, excessive drinkers of it, lost a habit of excessive drinking should be acquired;

among riotous eaters of flesh; flesh may be lawfully eaten, but not in a riotous manner, so as to indulge to gluttony and surfeiting; nor should such persons be kept company with that do so, lest their ways should be learned and imitated.

Proverbs 23:21

Ver. 21. For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty,.... They consuming their substance upon their bellies, in eating and drinking; see Pr 21:17;

and drowsiness shall clothe [a man] with rags; excessive eating and drinking brings drowsiness on men, unfits them for business, and makes them idle and slothful; and spending all on their bellies, they have nothing for their backs, and are clothed in rags; see Pr 24:33.

Proverbs 23:22

Ver. 22. Hearken unto thy father that begat thee,.... And who has a true and hearty affection for thee, and whatever he says is for thy good and welfare, which he studies and has at heart; and who therefore also has an authority over thee, and what he enjoins ought to be strictly regarded; and, having lived longer in the world, must be thought to have a larger experience and knowledge of things, and therefore should be hearkened unto;

and despise not thy mother when she is old; despise not her counsels, instructions, and advice, though she is old; and because she is so, do not reject them as old wives' fables, or as the silly talk of an old woman, as young men are too apt to do.

Proverbs 23:23

Ver. 23. Buy the truth, and sell [it] not,.... Evangelical truth, the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation, which comes from the God of truth; has Christ, who is the truth, for the stem and substance of it; men are directed and led into it by the Spirit of truth; the whole matter of it is truth; truth, in opposition to the law, that was typical and shadowy; to the errors of false teachers, to everything that is fictitious, or another Gospel; and to that which is a lie, for no lie is of the truth: there are several particular doctrines of the Gospel which are so called; those which respect the knowledge of one God, and three Persons in the Godhead; the deity and sonship of Christ, his incarnation and Messiahship, salvation alone by him, a sinner's justification by his righteousness, and the resurrection of the dead; the whole of which is truth, and is an answer to Pilate's question,
Joh 18:38; and this men should "buy", not books only, as Aben Ezra interprets it, such as explain and confirm truth, though these should be bought; and especially the Bible, the Scriptures of truth; yet this does not reach the sense of the text: nor is it merely to be understood of persons supporting the Gospel ministry with their purses, by which means truth is preserved, propagated, and continued: no price is set upon it, as being above all; it should be bought or had at any rate, let the expense be what it will: "buying" it supposes a person to have some knowledge of it, of the excellency, usefulness, and importance of it; and shows that he sets a value upon it, and has a high esteem for it: it is to be understood of his using all means and taking great pains to acquire it; such as reading the word, meditating upon it, attending on the public ministry, and fervent and frequent prayer for it, and a greater degree of knowledge of it; yea, it signifies a person's parting with everything for it that is required; as with his former errors he has been brought up in, or has imbibed; with his good name and reputation, being willing to be accounted a fool or a madman, and an enthusiast, or anything for the sake of it; and even with life itself, when called for; and such a man will strive and contend for it, stand fast in it, and hold it fast, and not let it go, which is meant by "selling" it; truth is not to be sold upon any account, or for any thing whatever; it is not to be slighted and neglected; it should not be parted with neither for the riches, and honours, and

pleasures of this life, nor for the sake of a good name among men, nor for the sake of peace, nor for the avoiding of persecution; it should he abode by, and not departed from, though the greater number is against it, and they the riots, the wise, and learned; and though it may be traduced as novel, irrational, and licentious, and be attended with affliction;

[also] wisdom, and instruction, and understanding; that is, buy these also, and sell them no; "wisdom" is to be prized above everything; it is the principal thing, and should be got; all means should he used to obtain it; it may be bought without money; it should be asked of God, who gives it liberally, and, being had, should be held fast: the "instruction" the Scriptures give, the instruction of the Gospel, the instruction of Wisdom, should be valued above gold and silver, and diligently sought after; should be laid fast hold on and not parted with: "understanding" of divine and spiritual things is to be gotten; happy is the man that gets it; and above all gettings this should be got, and all means made rise of to improve and increase it. The Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions, connect these with the word sell only, thus, "buy the truth, and sell not wisdom, and instruction, and understanding"; but as buying and selling both refer to truth, so likewise to these also. The whole verse is wanting in the Septuagint and Arabic versions.

Proverbs 23:24

Ver. 24. The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice,.... Or "in rejoicing shall rejoice" {d}, in his son; not that he is rich, but righteous, truly righteous, internally and externally; having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and righteousness and true holiness wrought in him, and so lives soberly, righteously, and godly: this must be understood of a father who is himself righteous; for otherwise wicked men, if their sons do but thrive in the world, they are unconcerned about their character as righteous, or their state and condition God-ward;

and he that begetteth a wise [child] shall have joy of him; especially if he is wise in the best things; if he is wise unto salvation; he may be wise and knowing in things natural, have a good share of wit and sense, and be wise in worldly things, which may yield a pleasure to a natural man his parent; but, if he is a good man, he will have greater joy of his son if he is wise in the first sense. The mother and grandmother of Timothy had no doubt great joy of him, who, from a child, knew the holy Scriptures; and so had the elect lady of her children, who were walking in the truth; and so has our heavenly Father of his children, who are righteous and wise through his grace.

{d} lwgy lwg "exultando exultabit", Paguinus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "gaudendo gaudebit", Cocceias.

Proverbs 23:25

Ver. 25. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad,.... That, is when thou art righteous and wise; see Pr 10:1; or "let thy father and thy mother be glad" {e}; do everything that may make their hearts glad, and their lives easy and comfortable in their old age; by ministering to their necessities, if in any; by treading in their steps, and following their examples; by living soberly and righteously, and behaving wisely; by not only honouring them, but by seeking the honour and glory of God; showing a regard to religion, and supporting it to the utmost of their power; these are things which make the hearts of pious parents glad;

and she that bare thee shall rejoice; thy mother particularly, who bore and brought thee forth with so much pain, and brought thee up with so much care and trouble, will think it an to much recompence for all, if thou art truly wise and religious. Some accommodate this to God our heavenly Father, and to the church, the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all.

{e} xmvy "guadeat", V. L. "laetetur", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "fac ut laetetur", Mercerus, Gejerus; "exhilaretur", Schultens.

Proverbs 23:26

Ver. 26. My son, give me thine heart,.... These words are not the words of Solomon to his son, for a greater than Solomon is here; besides, the claim and possession of the heart do not belong to a creature, but to God; but they are the words of Wisdom, or Christ, to everyone of his sons, the children the Father has given him in covenant; who are adopted through him, regenerated by his Spirit and grace, begotten by his word and ministers as instruments, and born and brought up in his church, and to whom he stands in the relation of the everlasting Father. The heart of a wicked man is little worth, and not worth having; Satan has the possession of it, and fills it, and influences and draws it at his pleasure; the world is set in it, and there is no room for any other; sensual lusts and pleasures, whoredom, wine, and new wine, take away the heart, **Ho 4:11**; and it is to those this exhortation is opposed, as appears from the following verses; and the sense is, give not thine heart to women, nor to wine, but to me. Christ should have the hearts and affections of his people, and he only; he is to be loved with the whole heart, sincerely, and above all things else; and it is a good man's heart he desires; a broken and a contrite heart is not despised by him, he binds it up; a heart purified by faith in his blood, a new heart and a new spirit, in which his laws are put and written; a heart to know him, fear him, love him, and believe in him: and as he requites the heart in the exercise of every grace, as faith, fear, and love; so in the performance of, every duty, which, without the heart, is of no avail; as in prayer, singing of praise, and hearing the word, and other religious services. And it is but reasonable service, that Christ should have the hearts of his children, since he stands in such near relations to them; as father, husband, friend, and brother; is all in all unto them; is so lovely a person himself, and has so loved them, and given himself, his life, his blood, his all, for them;

and let thine eyes observe my ways; the ways which Wisdom, or Christ, took in eternity and time, in order to bring about the salvation of his people; his steps in the covenant of grace, as their surety; his coming down from heaven to earth, to do the will of his Father; his going away from hence, by submitting to the accursed death of the cross, thereby making peace and reconciliation for sin; his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, where he ever lives to intercede for us; the various methods of his grace, in calling and visiting his people, supplying their wants, protecting their persons, and preserving them safe to his kingdom and glory: these should be observed, with attention and wonder, to the encouragement of faith, and for the magnifying of the riches of grace: also the ways which he prescribes and directs his children to walk in; as himself, who is the way to the Father, the way of life and salvation; the way of faith in him, the way of truth concerning hath; the way of holiness and righteousness he leads in; the ways of his commandments; the ways in which he himself walked; all which should be observed by the enlightened eyes of the understanding, and be imitated, and copied after, and walked in; respect should be had unto them all; they should be observed and kept, as they are directed to, and in faith and love, without depending on them. Some render the words, "let thine eyes run through my ways" {f}: take a thorough and exact view of them. There is a letter transposed in the word rendered "observe", which occasions a different reading; "as is a man's heart, so are his eyes"; if his heart is to Christ, his eyes will be in his ways; and, where Christ's ways are not observed, the heart is not given to him.

{f} hnurt "currant", Mercerus; "currere edomentur", Schultens.

Proverbs 23:27

Ver. 27. For a whore [is] a deep ditch,.... Or, "as a deep ditch", so Aben Ezra; to which she may be compared for the filthiness of her whoredoms, and for her insatiable lust, as well as for her being never satisfied with what she receives from her lovers. Plautus compares {g} her to the sea, which devours whatever you give, and yet nothing appears; and another {h} calls a whore Charybdis, from her swallowing up and devouring all a man has. She is as a ditch that has no bottom, into which those that fall are ever sinking deeper and deeper, till they get into the bottomless pit; for there is seldom any recovery from this dreadful evil;

and a strange woman [is] a narrow pit; or "well" {i}; into which when men fall, they bruise themselves in a terrible manner, by beating from side to side; and out of which they cannot extricate themselves; at least not easily, but with great difficulty, if ever. This may very well be applied to the whore of Rome, and the filthiness of her fornications; and the dreadful state of those who are drawn in to commit fornication with her.

{g} Truculaetus, Act. 2. Sc. 7. v. 16, 17. "Lucuculetum coenum", Bacchides, Act. 3. Sc. 1. v. 11. "Lutea meretrix", Trucul. Act. 4. Sc. 4. v. 11. {h} Sydonius Apollinar. l. 9. Ep. 6. {i} rab "putens", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 23:28

Ver. 28. She also lieth in wait as [for] a prey,.... At the door of her house, in the corner of the streets, in the dark of the night; laying her snares, and spreading her nets, for unwary persons, to make a prey of their virtue and of their money. Or, "as [a man of] prey" {k}; a thief and robber, so Gersom; thus she watches and takes all opportunities to seize on persons, and rob them of their substance, health, and credit; or rather "as [a beast of] prey"; ravenous, devouring, and insatiable; so the Targum,

"as a beast ravening, she lies in wait with her eyes;"

and increaseth the transgressors among men; there is none that occasions wore sin, or makes more sinners, than a whorish woman; swearing, lying, drunkenness, thieving, stealing, housebreaking, robbing on the highway, &c. are the sins she leads into. Or, "increaseth treacherous" {l} persons; to God, to their king, to their wives, to their master's; and all that they may consume, what they can get by perfidious practices, upon them, or,

"perfidious persons among men, she adds "to herself" {m};"

she gets a parcel of abandoned wretches about her, whom she employs as her panders for her lust, or as bullies to spoil her gallants of their substance, or murder them for the sake of it.

{k} Ptxk "tanquam vir praedae", Vatablus; "ut praedator", Mercerus, Gejerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ut raptor", Cocceius; "velut praedo", Michaelis; "ut harpago", Schultens. {l} Mydgwb "perfidos", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens. {m} Pyowt "adjungitque sibi", Tigurine version.

Proverbs 23:29

Ver. 29. Who hath woe?.... In this world and in the other, in body and soul; diseases of body, distress of mind, waste of substance, and all manner of evils and calamities; if any man has these, the drunkard has: from whoredom, the Holy Ghost proceeds to drunkenness, which generally go together; and dissuades from it, by observing the mischiefs that come by it;

who hath sorrow? through pains of body, with the headache, &c. or through the agonies of the mind, and tortures of conscience, for sin committed; or through poverty and want, so Aben Ezra derives the word from one that signifies "poor"; and so it may be rendered, "who hath poverty" {n}? the drunkard; see Pr 23:21;

who hath contentions? quarrels and lawsuits, which often come of drunken bouts;

who hath babbling? or "loquacity" {o}? which drunkards are subject to; much vain babbling, foolish talk, scurrilous language, scoffs, jeers, especially at religion and religious men; and sometimes such men are full of talk about religion itself, and make great pretensions to it, and the knowledge of it, in their cups, when out of them they think and talk nothing about it;

who hath wounds without cause? from words, oftentimes, drunkards go to blows upon the most frivolous accounts; fight with one another for no reason at all, and get themselves beaten and bruised for nothing;

who hath redness of eyes? the drunkard has, inflamed with wine or strong drink; which, drank frequently and to excess, is the cause of sore eyes, as well as of weakening the sight; or, however, leaves a redness there, and in other parts of the face, whereby those sons of Bacchus may be known: so it is observed {p} of Vitellius the emperor, that his face was commonly red through drunkenness. Hillerus renders it, "blackness of eyes"; such as comes from blows received; taking the word to be of the same signification with the Arabic word lxk, which so signifies: this agrees with the preceding clause; and is countenanced by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

{n} ywba yml "cui egestas", Montanus, Amama; "cuinam penuria", Vatablus. {o} xyv "loquacitas", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus; so the Targum. {p} Sueton. Vita ejus, c. 17.

Proverbs 23:30

Ver. 30. They that tarry long at the wine,.... At drinking it. Do not care to stir from it when at it; spend whole days and nights in it, and are overcome by it, and so bring upon them all the above evils;

they that go to seek mixed wine, not wine mixed with water, as used commonly by temperate people in hot countries; but either mixed with spices, to make it more palatable, or with different sorts of wine, some very strong, and more heady and intoxicating; or mere wine meant; wine "poured out", as the word {q} signifies, where there is plenty of it; and such as are given to wine go and seek out such places, and where the best is to be had. So the Targum,

"they go and seek the house of mixture, or mixed wine;"

or, as the Syriac version,

"the house of feasting;"

and so the Arabic:

"where there are junketing and drinking bouts,"

as the Septuagint.

{q} Komm "calicibus epotandi", V. L.

Proverbs 23:31

Ver. 31. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,.... Or, "because it is red" {r}; or shows itself red. Which was the only wine used in the land of Canaan, or, however, the most esteemed of, and that most of art which had the best colour; when it had a good, bright, red colour, or sparkled, and looked bright and beautiful, so the word signifies; and then it should not be looked upon: not that it is unlawful to look upon the colour of wine, and thereby judge of its goodness; but it should not be looked upon with a greedy eye, so as vehemently to desire it, which will lead to an intemperate use of it; just as looking upon a woman, so as to lust after her, is forbidden, **Mt 5:28**;

when it giveth his colour in the cup: or, its eye in the cup {s}; such a bright, brisk, and beautiful colour, as is like a bright and sparkling eye. Here is a various reading; it is written in the text, "in the purse" {t}; it is read in the margin, "in the cup"; and Jarchi's note takes in both,

"he that drinks wine sets his eye on the cup; and the vintner sets his on his purse;"

[when] it moveth itself aright; sparkles in the glass, or goes down the throat pleasantly; or rather looks well to the eye, and appears right and good, and promises a great deal of satisfaction and delight.

{r} yk "quia", some in Mercerus, Gejerus. {s} wnye "oculum suum", Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis. {t} oykb "in crumena, vel marsupio", Mercerus.

Proverbs 23:32

Ver. 32. At the last it biteth like a serpent,.... Though it goes down sweetly, yet it leaves a sting behind it, intemperately drank; a nausea in the stomach, a stink in the breath, pains and giddiness in the head, weakness in the eyes, trembling in the members of the body, palsy, gout, and other distempers, very painful and grievous to be bore; and, what is worse, if the conscience is awakened, sharp and cutting reflections there; and, without true repentance, torments intolerable in the world to come;

and stingeth like an adder; or "spreads" {u}, or separates and scatters; that is, its poison. So the Vulgate Latin version, "diffuseth poisons as a basilisk", or "cockatrice"; the Targum and Syriac version,

"as a serpent which flies;"

it signifies the same as before.

{u} vrpy "jecur diffindet", Schultens.

Proverbs 23:33

Ver. 33. Thine eyes shall behold strange women,.... Being inflamed with wine, shall look upon women, other men's wives, and lust after them; or harlots, whom seeking after or meeting with, when in their cups, are drawn into their embraces; excess of wine leads to whoredom {w}. So Aben Ezra supplies the word "women", and Jarchi interprets it to this sense; but the Targum renders it, "strange things"; and so many others: a drunken man, through the lunges and vapours that ascend into his brain, fancies he sees strange sights; he sees things double; imagines that he sees trees walk, and many such like absurd and monstrous things;

and thine heart shall utter perverse things; or the mouth, from the abundance of the heart, and imagination of it, shall utter things contrary to sense and reason, contrary to truth and righteousness, contrary to chastity and good manners, contrary to their own honour and credit, contrary to God and men; the mouth then utters all that is in the heart, which it at other times conceals. It may have a particular respect to the unchaste, filthy, and obscene words, uttered to strange women, into whose company men fall when in liquor.

{w} "Vina parant animos Veneri", Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 1.

Proverbs 23:34

Ver. 34. Yea, thou shall be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea,.... Not in the open sea, and the waves of it, there fluctuating and tossed about; nor in an island encompassed by sea; but in a ship at sea, a drunken man reels and tumbles about, just as a ship does at sea; hence the motions and agitations of it, and of the men in it, are compared to the reeling and staggering of a drunken man,
Ps 107:26;

or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast: where the motion is the greatest. Or all this may be expressive of the dangers which a drunkard is exposed unto, and of his stupidity and insensibility; for though he is in as great danger as one in the circumstances described, in a storm at sea, yet is not sensible of it; which agrees with what follows.

Proverbs 23:35

Ver. 35. They have stricken me, [shalt thou say, and] I was not sick,.... Or "grieved not" {x}; or was not wounded or skin broken {y}; see **Jer 5:3**. The drunken man is here represented as saying, that though his companions, with whom he quarrelled and fought in his drunken frolics, beat him very much, yet he was not sensible of the pain and smart; and it had left no sickness nor disorder upon him; he did not find himself much the worse for it;

they have beaten me; as with hammers {z}; battered and bruised him terribly, laying very hard and heavy strokes upon him;

[and] I felt [it] not; or "knew it not" {a}; did not perceive it, was not sensible of it, when the blows were given, or who gave them; and thus feeling no more, and coming off so well, as he thinks, he is so far from being reclaimed from this vice, that he is more strengthened in it, and desirous of it;

when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again: that is, the wine and his boon companions, though he has been so used. So the Vulgate Latin version, "when shall I awake, and again find wines?" being heavy with sleep through intemperance, and yet thirsty, is desirous of shaking off his sleep, that he may get to drinking again, and "add drunkenness to thirst", De 29:19; so the Septuagint version,

"when will it be morning, that going I may seek with whom I may meet?"

{x} ytylx lb "non dolui", Tigurine version, Michaelis. {y} Schultens Orig. Heb. l. 1. c. 9. s. 20. {z} ynwmlh "contuderunt me, velut malleis", Michaelis; so Grotius. {a} ytedy lb "non cognovi", Pagninus, Montanus; "non novi", Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 24:1

Ver. 1. Be not thou envious against evil men,.... Or, "men of evil" {b}. Such who are addicted to evil, and given up to it, whose principles and practices are bad; such as are before described in the preceding chapter; gluttons and drunkards, men given to women and wine: envy not their present prosperity, or seeming pleasure they have in the gratification of their sensual appetites; since woe and sorrow, wounds and strife, now attend them, and poverty and want will follow them; as well as everlasting ruin and destruction will be their portion hereafter; See Gill on "Pr 23:17"; and compare with this Pr 24:21;

neither desire to be with them; to be in their company; to have any conversation and fellowship with them, which is very infectious, dangerous, and pernicious; nor even to be in the same state, condition, and circumstances they are in; much less to do as they do, and imitate them in their sinful courses; as you would not choose to be with them in hell hereafter, do not desire to be with them here.

{b} her yvnab "viros mali", Baynus, Michaelis.

Proverbs 24:2

Ver. 2. For their heart studieth destruction,.... To others; to good men, that separate from them, and reprove them, or are in their way; or any ways hinder them in the prosecution of their wicked designs; as Haman's heart studied the destruction of the Jews: or their hearts study to draw men into their destructive methods of living, and therefore should be shunned and avoided. Moreover, their hearts study destruction to themselves; they study what they shall eat and drink, which they pursue to intemperance; and how they shall compass their lewd designs, and which issue in their ruin; destruction and misery are in all the ways they devise and walk in;

and their lips talk of mischief; which they study in their hearts against others; as are their hearts, so are their lips; out of the abundance of the wickedness of their hearts their mouths speak mischievous things; and which, though they design for others, oftentimes fall upon themselves.

Proverbs 24:3

Ver. 3. Through wisdom is a house builded,.... A family is built up, furnished and supplied with the necessaries and conveniences of life, and brought into flourishing and prosperous circumstances, by wise and prudent management, by diligence and industry, through the blessing of God upon them, without taking such methods as evil men do. The house of God, the church of the living God, is built by Wisdom, that is, by Christ; on a good foundation, a rock, upon himself, against which the gates of hell can never prevail; see **Pr 9:1**. Every good man's house, himself, his soul, and the eternal salvation of it, are built on the same; and he is a wise man that builds his house through wisdom; that builds on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the one and only foundation which God has laid, which is Jesus Christ;

and by understanding it is established; the prosperity of a man's family is continued and secured by his prudent conduct. The church of God is established by Christ, who is understanding as well as wisdom; see **Pr 8:14**; and every true believer is established in Christ, and in the faith of him; and that as he has more and more an understanding of him and of divine things.

Proverbs 24:4

Ver. 4. And by knowledge shalt the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. That are both of worth, value, and usefulness, and for ornament and delight; the more private and retired parts of a man's dwelling house, as well as his shops, warehouses, barns, and granaries, shall be filled with all kind of valuable substance, through his knowledge in improving trade or husbandry, in which he is concerned. This may be understood spiritually, of the fulness which the church has from Christ, and of those unsearchable riches of his she receives from him; and of those treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which the chambers of the soul of a believer are filled with by him; and of all the riches put into them, which are both precious and pleasant; such as precious promises, pleasant doctrines, the valuable truths of the Gospel, and blessings of grace.

Proverbs 24:5

Ver. 5. A wise man [is] strong,.... He can do that sometimes by his wisdom, and which requires strength and courage too, which another cannot do by his strength; see Pr 21:22. This may be understood of one that is spiritually wise, wise unto salvation, wise for another world, is made to know true wisdom in the hidden part. The Stoic philosophers say much of their wise man; that he is happy, and rich, and mighty, and even a king; all which may be said more truly of a good man; he is strong, not absolutely, but comparatively, in comparison of what he himself was; and wicked men are without strength, and do not seek for any elsewhere; nor do they, nor can they do, that which is spiritually good, and are ignorant of their weakness: but so is not a wise man; he has some spiritual strength; he seeks to Christ for more, and, through Christ strengthening him, does all things; and is sensible of his own weakness, and finds that when he is weak he is strong: one eminently wise is strong, in comparison of less knowing and more feeble saints; some are children in knowledge, weak in faith and in conduct, more easily drawn into sin and temptation than others; and, in comparison of these, some are strong, who are to bear with and support the weak, and restore them. A wise man is strong, not in and of himself; he cannot think a good thought, nor do a good action, nor preserve himself from sin and Satan; but he is strong in Christ, and in the power of his might, and in his grace; and, through spiritual strength communicated to him, his heart is strengthened, and the work of grace in his heart; he is strengthened to exercise grace more strongly, to perform the duties of religion, to bear the cross of Christ, to withstand temptations, and to oppose his own corruptions. It may be rendered, "a wise man [is] in strength" {c}; he is in Christ the strong hold, whither, as a prisoner of hope, he has fled and turned into; he is in the strong tower, into which he has run and is safe; he is surrounded with the might and power of God on all sides, by which he is kept;

yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength; a spiritual man, a man endued with spiritual knowledge, with the knowledge of Christ, and salvation by him; as he has a degree of spiritual strength, he increases therein; he grows stronger and stronger, he goes from strength to strength; the more he knows of Christ, the more strongly he trusts in him and loves him, and the more able he is to resist Satan's temptations; and is a better match for false teachers who deceive the hearts of the simple: spiritual strength is increased by means of the word of God, by the promises of the Gospel, and by the ordinances of it.

{c} zweb "in fortitudine", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "in robore", Michaelis.

Proverbs 24:6

Ver. 6. For by wise counsel thou shall make thy war,.... Counsel, as well as strength, is necessary for war: kings and states, before they enter on a war, should not only well consider the justness of their cause, but should consult whether they have a sufficiency of men and money to carry it on; and should concert the wisest methods to attack the enemy, or defend themselves; and, above all, should ask counsel of God; see 2Ki 18:20. And this is true of our spiritual warfare with sin, Satan, the world, and false teachers; which requires not only strength to wage war with them, but wise counsel, that we may be able to understand and guard against their cunning, wiles, and stratagems: and this is principally to be asked of God, who is wonderful in counsel; and of good and experienced men, skilled in those matters;

and in the multitude of counsellors [there is] safety; to take the advice of wise counsellors, and many of them, even among men, is safe for princes and states, in the above case and in all others; and especially to ask and take counsel of God, who gives wisdom liberally to them that ask it; and of Christ, the wonderful Counsellor; and from the Scriptures, whom David made his counsellors; and from old experienced Christians, and ministers of the word, with whom are wisdom, counsel, and understanding; See Gill on "Pr 11:14".

Proverbs 24:7

Ver. 7. Wisdom [is] too high for a fool,.... It is out of his reach, he cannot attain it; natural wisdom, or the knowledge of many things in nature; at least it seems so to himself, and therefore will not take any pains, or make use of any means, to obtain it; as the knowledge of human laws; of medicine, of philosophy, of languages, or of any of the liberal arts and sciences; or he has not really a capacity for it. This is more especially true of spiritual wisdom, or of the knowledge of divine things in a spiritual way; or of the things Of the Spirit of God, which a natural man cannot know, because they are spiritually discerned; it is God only makes men to know this kind of wisdom in the hidden part, **1Co 2:14**; for as a "fool" here denotes a wicked man, let his natural parts be what they will; so wisdom spiritual knowledge, and experience of divine things, which is too high for an unregenerate man to reach; see a like phrase in Ps 139:6;

he openeth not his mouth in the gate; he is not qualified far it; and if he has any knowledge of himself, he will not venture to speak in a public assembly, in the house of parliament, in a court of judicature, or in the company of men of knowledge and sense; and indeed it is his highest wisdom to keep silence, and not betray his ignorance: and so with regard to spiritual things; a man that wisdom is too high for, and he has no share of it, shall not or ought not to open his mouth where Wisdom cries; even in the gates of the cities, or in the public assemblies of the saints, **Pr 1:21**.

Proverbs 24:8

Ver. 8. He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person] To do evil is natural to men, all are prone to it; being conceived and born in sin, and, from the womb, more or less commit it: but for a man to sit down and contrive evil, as some men are inventors of evil things; contrive new sins, or at least new methods of sinning, such as new oaths, new games, new ways of tricking and deceiving men; and are always studying and devising ways and means of committing sin, and doing that which is evil in the sight of God and men. Such a man, with great propriety, may be called, and will be called by those that know him, a mischievous man, a very pernicious one, and to be shunned and avoided as such; men will reckon him and call him a "master" or "author {d} of evil devices", as it may be rendered; a name agreeable to his character.

{d} twmzm leb "patronum malarum cogitationum", Montanus; "dominum", Mercerus, Gejerus; "auctorem", Michaelis.

Proverbs 24:9

Ver. 9. The thoughts of foolishness [is] sin,.... The thought of sin is sin {e}, before it comes into action; the motions of sin in the mind, the workings of corrupt nature in the heart, the sinful desires of the flesh and of the mind: these are forbidden and condemned by the law of God as sin, which says, "Thou shall not covet", Ex 20:17, and stand in need of pardoning grace and mercy; see **Ro 7:5**. Or, "the thoughts of a foolish man are sin" {f}; that is, of a wicked man; in all whose thoughts God is not, but sin is; the imagination of the thoughts of his heart is evil, and that continually; he thinks of nothing else but sin, **Ge 6:5**;

and the scorner [is] an abomination to men; who not only thinks ill of divine things, and despises them in his heart, which is only known to God; but scoffs at them with his lips, makes a jest of all that is good, derides religion and religious men; and to such he is an abomination: and indeed one that is proud and haughty, scorner is his name, and that deals in proud wrath, and scorns all around him, in whatsoever company he comes, and that ridicules every person, and every thing that is said in conversation, is usually hated and abhorred by all sorts of men.

{e} "Nam scelus intra se tacitum qui cogitat ullum, facti crimen habet", Juvenal. Satyr. 13. v. 209, 210. {f} tlwa "stulti", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Piscator, Gejerus.

Proverbs 24:10

Ver. 10. [If] thou faint in the day of adversity,.... When under bodily afflictions, stripping providences, reduced to great straits and wants; or under the violent persecutions of men, which is sometimes the case of the people of God; whose times are in his hands, times of adversity, as well as prosperity; and which are appointed by him, when they shall come, and how long they shall last; which is but for a short time, it is but a "day", and yet they are apt to "faint" under them, through the number and continuance of their afflictions; and especially when they apprehend them to be in wrath; when they have a sense of their sins at such a time, and no view of pardon; when they are under the hidings of God's face, their prayers do not seem to be heard, and salvation and deliverance do not come so soon as they expected; which, notwithstanding, shows the truth of what is next observed;

thy strength [is] small; such who are truly gracious are not indeed at such times wholly without strength; they are in some measure helped to bear up; but yet their sinkings and faintings show that they have but little strength: they have some faith that does not entirely fail, Christ praying for it; yet they are but of little faith; they have but a small degree of Christian fortitude and courage; there is a want of manliness in them; they act the part of children and babes in Christ; they do not quit themselves like men, and much less endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ, as they should; they are, Ephraim like, without a heart, a courageous one, **Ho 7:1**. Some think the words have reference to what goes before, and the sense to be this, "if thou art remiss" {g}; that is, if thou art careless and negligent in time of health and prosperity, in getting wisdom, as thinking it too high for thee, Pr 24:7; "in the day of adversity thy strength [will be] small"; thou wilt not have that to support thee which otherwise thou wouldest have had. Aben Ezra connects the sense with the following, "if thou art remiss", in helping and delivering thy friend in affliction, Pr 24:11; "in the day of adversity", or "of straitness, thy strength shall be strait"; thou shalt be left in thy distress and difficulties, and have none to help thee.

{g} typrth "si remiseris", Tigurine version; "remissus fuisti", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "si remisse te geras", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Michaelis.

Proverbs 24:11

Ver. 11. If thou forbear to deliver [them that are] drawn unto death,.... Or "taken for or unto death" {h}, in a violent way; who are taken by thieves and robbers, and used in a barbarous manner, as the man in the parable, whom the priest and Levite took no notice of, and was helped by the good Samaritan; or who are unjustly sentenced and appointed to death by the civil magistrate; if any know their innocency, it becomes them to do all they can to save their lives, by bearing a testimony for them; for "a true witness delivereth souls", Pr 14:25; or by interceding for them, and giving counsel and advice concerning them, or by any lawful way they can; as Reuben delivered Joseph, Jonathan interceded for David, and Ahikam and Ebedmelech for Jeremiah. Life is valuable, and all means should be taken to save it, and to prevent the shedding of innocent blood; and a man should not forbear or spare any cost, or pains, or time, to such service: likewise such as are drawn into snares and temptations, into immorality or heresy, which tend to the ruin of the souls of men, and bring them to eternal death; all proper, methods should be taken to restore such persons, to recover them out of the snare of the devil, which is saving souls from death, and covering a multitude of sins; see **2Ti 2:25** **Jas 5:19**;

and [those that are] ready to be slain; or {i} "bending to slaughter"; are within a little of being executed, or put to death, upon a false accusation; for about others that suffer righteously there need not be that concern here pressed, or whose works and ways incline to destruction and lead to it, of which they seem not very far off.

{h} twml Myxql "captos ad mortem", Montanus. Piscator, Schultens. {i} grhl myjm "inclinantes ad necem", Mercerus; "nutantes ad occasionem", Montanus, Coeccius; "nutantes ad lanienam", Schultens.

Proverbs 24:12

Ver. 12. If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not,.... The danger the person was in; or the innocency of his cause; or what method to take to deliver him; or that it was in our power to do anything for him; so the Vulgate Latin version, "if thou sayest, strength is not sufficient": or "we knew him not" {k}, who he was or what he was; had no knowledge of him, or acquaintance with him, and so did not think ourselves under any obligation to regard his case; such excuses will not do;

doth not he that pondereth the heart consider [it]? he that searches the heart and tries it, and weighs every thought of it, and excuse it makes, considers and understands whether it is a mere excuse or not; though such excuses may appear plausible to men, yet to God that knows the heart they are of no avail; for he knows it to be a mere shift, and that it was unwillingness to help the distressed, and a neglect of their case; and that all that is said on their own behalf is a vain pretence;

and he that keepeth thy soul, doth [not] he know [it]? he that upholds it in life, and whose visitation preserves it, and therefore should be careful of the life of another; and if not, may justly fear the Lord will withdraw his care and preservation of them; he knows perfectly well what regard a man has to the welfare of another, or to the preservation of another man's life when in danger; and whether what he says on his own behalf is well founded: or "he that observeth thy soul" {l}; all the inward motions of it, the thoughts, affections, purposes, and inclinations; he knows whether what is said is true or not;

and shall [not] he render to [every] man according to his works? and behave towards him according to the law of retaliation; the same measure he measures to others, he will measure to him again; and who having shown no mercy in saving the lives of others, when he could have done it, shall have judgment executed on him without mercy, when he is in distress.

{k} hz wnedy al, ouk oida touton, Sept. "non noverimus istum", Gejerus; "non novimus hunc", Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis. {l} Kvpn runw "et qui observat animam tuam", Michaelis, Schultens; "observator animae tuae", Tigurine version, Gejerus.

Proverbs 24:13

Ver. 13. My son, eat thou honey, because [it is] good,.... It is good for food; there was plenty of it in Palestine, and it was eaten for food, not only by children, but grown persons; and was very nourishing, strengthening, and refreshing to them, as Samson, Jonathan, John the Baptist, and others; and is good for medicine, is healthful and salutary, and useful in many diseases: it is said {m} to conduce much to prolong life and preserve from diseases; it has been observed that those who have much used it have lived to a great age;

and the honeycomb, [which is] sweet to thy taste; because it is so, as all honey is, and especially that which is immediately squeezed or drops from the honeycomb; this is said not so much on account of honey, and the eating of that, as for what follows concerning the knowledge of wisdom, which is comparable to it for pleasure and profit; see
Pr 16:24 {n}.

{m} Athenaei Deipnosophist. l. 2. c. 7. p. 46, 47. so Pierius Valerian. apud Steeb. Coelum Sephirot Heb. c. 7. s. 5. p. 132. {n} Vid. Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 30. p. 37.

Proverbs 24:14

Ver. 14. So [shall] the knowledge of wisdom [be] unto thy soul,.... Or let it be taken in as greedily and with as good an appetite; as pleasant, useful, delightful, and profitable; even the knowledge of Christ, the Wisdom of God, which is preferable to all things else, and more desirable than the most pleasant and profitable things in the world; and of the Gospel of Christ, the wisdom of God in a mystery, than which nothing is more sweet and comfortable to a truly gracious soul; it is like Ezekiel's roll, which was in his mouth as honey for sweetness, **Eze 3:3**;

when thou hast found [it], then there shall be a reward; for though there may be some difficulty and trouble to attain it, in the use of means, by reading, bearing, prayer, and meditation, yet, being enjoyed, it carries its own reward with it; a man is abundantly recompensed for all his pains in the pursuit of it, by the pleasure and profit it yields him now and hereafter; for it is the beginning of life eternal, and will issue in it, Joh 17:3; see **Pr 2:3**;

and thy expectation shall not be cut off; or "hope" {o}; as the hope of the hypocrite will, **Job 8:14**, the hope of eternal life, as founded on Christ and his righteousness, where such that know Wisdom place their hope; and this hope will not make them ashamed; they will not be disappointed, their expectation shall not perish, they will have what they are waiting and hoping for, and what is promised unto them,
See Gill on "Pr 23:18". The Targum is,

"which if thou findest, the last shall come better than the first, and thy hope shall not be consumed."

{o} Ktwqt "spes tua", Mercerus.

Proverbs 24:15

Ver. 15. Lay not wait, O wicked [man], against the dwelling of the righteous,.... The church of God, which is the righteous man's dwelling place, and where he desires and delights to dwell; or his own dwelling house; it may be rendered, "at the dwelling of the righteous" {p}; lay not wait at his door to observe who goes in and out, and what is done there; and to watch for his halting, and take notice of his infirmities, slips, and falls, and improve them to his disadvantage; and so the Vulgate Latin version, "and lay not wait and seek ungodliness in the house of the righteous"; or lay not wait there for him, as Saul set men to watch the house of David to kill him,
1Sa 19:11; or to take an opportunity and get into it and plunder it, as follows;

spoil not his resting place: by pulling it down, or stripping it of its furniture; by robbing him of the substance in it, and thus disturbing his rest, and destroying the place of it; or the place where he lies down as a sheep in its fold, or as the shepherd in his cottage, of which the words in the text are used; and so denote that as the righteous man is like a sheep, harmless and innocent, those that lay in wait for him and spoil him are no other than wolves.

{p} hwnl "habitaculo", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus; "habitationi", Michaelis; "mansioni", Cocceius, Schultens.

Proverbs 24:16

Ver. 16. For a just [man] falleth seven times, and riseth up [again],.... This is to be understood of a truly just man; not of one that is only outwardly and seemingly so, or of temporary believers and nominal professors; but of such who are thoroughly convinced of their own unrighteousness, and believe in Christ for righteousness, and have it applied and imputed to them; as well as have principles of grace and righteousness implanted in them, and live righteously in this evil world; these often fall either into troubles or into sins, and indeed into both, and the one is the cause of the other; and both senses may be retained: the former seems more agreeable to the context, and runs thus, lay not wait to a just man's dwelling to do him any hurt; for though he should be ensnared, and stumble, and fall into distress and calamity, yet he will rise again out of it, and so all attempts upon him are vain and fruitless; many are the righteous man's afflictions he falls into, but the Lord delivers out of all; he delivers him in six troubles, and even in seven, Ps 34:19; or in many, one after another; he rises out of them all; he comes out of great tribulations, and at last safely enters the kingdom of heaven; and therefore it is to no purpose to lie in wait for him: and this sense is strengthened by the words following, "rejoice not when thine enemy falleth", Pr 24:17; but the latter sense of falling into sin has been anciently received, and not to be rejected; and which generally precedes and is the cause of falling into trouble. A just man, though he does not fall from his righteousness, which is an everlasting one, nor from the grace of God; yet he may fall into temptation, and by it he may fall into sin, as every just man does; "for there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not", **Ec 7:20**; and that frequently, even every day; and therefore stands every day in need of fresh application of pardoning grace, for which he is directed to pray daily; and he may be left to fall foully into very gross sins, as David, Peter, and others; but not totally and finally, so as to perish; being on the heart of God, in the hands of Christ, on him the foundation, united to him, and kept by the power of God, he shall and does rise again sooner or later; not by his own power and strength, but by the strength of the Lord; he rises by renewed repentance, and under the fresh discoveries of pardoning grace and mercy to heal his backslidings;

but the wicked shall fall into mischief; or "evil" {q}; into the evil of sin, and there lie and wallow in it, as the swine in the mire, and never rise out of it; and into the evil of punishment, into hell itself, from whence there will be no deliverance; and oftentimes they fall into mischief in this world, into trouble and distress, into poverty and want, in which they live and die, and never recover out of it; to which agrees what follows.

{q} herb "in malum", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 24:17

Ver. 17. Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth,.... These words are spoken not to the wicked man, Pr 24:15; but to the just man, or Solomon's son, or the children of Wisdom; for by the "enemy" is meant such who are at enmity with the people of God, as the seed of the serpent, and those after the flesh, are: and when these "fall", saints should not "rejoice"; as when they fall into sin; for so to do would be to act as wicked "charity [which] rejoiceth not in iniquity", 1Co 13:6: or rather when they fill into calamity and distress; for this is also the part which wicked men act towards the people of God, and should not be imitated in; see **Ob 1:12**. Joy may be expressed at the fall of the public enemies of God and his people, as was by the Israelites at the destruction of Pharaoh and his host, Ex 15:1; and as will be by the church at the destruction of antichrist, and which they are called upon to do, Re 18:20; partly on account of their own deliverance and safety, and chiefly because of the glory of God, and of his justice displayed therein; see Ps 58:10; but as private revenge is not to be sought, nor acted, so joy at the calamity and ruin of a private enemy, or a man's own enemy, should not be expressed; but rather he is to be pitied and helped; see Pr 25:21; for to love an enemy, and show regard to him, is the doctrine both of the Old and of the New Testament;

and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth; even secret joy should not be indulged, gladness in the heart, though it does not appear in the countenance, and is not expressed in words; no, not at the least appearance of mischief, when he only stumbles and is ready to fall; and much less should there be exultation and rejoicings made in an open manner at the utter ruin of him.

Proverbs 24:18

Ver. 18. Lest the Lord see [it], and it displease him,.... Who sees all things, not only external actions, but the heart, and the inward motions of it; and though men may hide the pleasure they feel at the misery of an enemy from others, they cannot hide it from the Lord; nor is this said by way of doubt, but as a certain thing; and which the Lord not barely sees, but takes notice of, and to such a degree as to resent it, and show his displeasure at it by taking the following step;

and he turn away his wrath from him; remove the effects of it, raise him out of his fallen and distressed condition, and restore him to his former prosperous one; and not only so, but turn it upon thee, as Gersom supplies the words, and not amiss; so that there is a strange and sudden change of circumstances; thou that was pleasing thyself with the distress of thine enemy art fallen into the same, and he is delivered out of it; which must be a double affliction to such a man; so that by rejoicing at an enemy, he is doing his enemy good and himself hurt; see Pr 17:5.

Proverbs 24:19

Ver. 19. Fret not thyself because of evil [men],.... Because of their outward prosperity and worldly happiness, any more than rejoice at their adversity; neither do the one nor the other; where the one prevails, the other does also; by the frequent repetition of this advice, it looks as if this evil is what good men are prone to, and which was very common in Solomon's time, and in the time of his father David, from whom he seems to have borrowed these words, Ps 37:1; see Pr 23:17;

neither be thou envious at the wicked; though they may stand when thou fallest, or be in prosperity when thou art in adversity; the reasons follow.

Proverbs 24:20

Ver. 20. For there shall be no reward to the evil [man],.... No reward of good things, such as is for the righteous in a way of grace; but he shall have a reward of evil things, a just recompence of reward for his sins: of "no end" {r};

there will be an end of his life in this world, and there will be an end of his prosperity; but, as the Targum is, there will be no "good end" to him; his end will not be like that of the perfect and upright man, for it will be cut off, Ps 37:37; or, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "the wicked have no hope of future things"; no good hope of everlasting happiness; they have their good things now, and their evil things hereafter; and therefore are not to be fretted at and envied. Aben Ezra interprets it, they shall have no offspring or issue, son or nephew; the word is sometimes used for posterity;

the candle of the wicked shall be put out; meaning not the dim light of nature in them, nor the light of life before their time, so Aben Ezra; but their prosperity, riches, splendour, and glory, which candle is often put out while they live, and always at death; after which they have no more light, honour, and happiness; even not so much as the light of a candle, to which their prosperity in this life is compared, it being at best but small, and of a short continuance; see
Job 18:5; and therefore should not be the object of the envy of good men, who are in a more happy and stable condition than they.

{r} tyrxa "finis", Pagninus, Vatablus, Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 24:21

Ver. 21. My son, fear thou the Lord, and the king,.... First the Lord, and then the king; and such as fear the Lord are generally loyal to their king; the fear of God includes love to him, reverence of him, faith in him, submission to him, and the whole worship of him, inward and outward, attended with holiness of life and conversation: and the king, who is under God, is to be feared also, with a fear suitable to him; he is to be loved and reverenced, to be trusted in and submitted to, in everything consistent with the fear of God and obedience to him; in whatever is not contrary to his laws, commands, and ordinances; see **1Pe 2:13**;

[and] meddle not with them that are given to change; in political things; that are for new laws, new forms of government, a new ministry, and a new king; never easy with the government under which they are, but are continually entering into plots, conspiracies, and rebellions, who, instead of fearing God and the king, change the laws and commandments of God and the king, and

therefore to be shunned. Some render it, "with rebels"; the Targum and Syriac version, "with fools"; as all such persons are, and should be avoided as scandalous and dangerous: mix not with them, as the word {s} signifies; keep no company, and have no conversation with them, lest you be brought into danger and mischief by them. Or who are given to change in religious things; make innovations in doctrine and practice, always love to hear or say some now thing; turn with every wind, and shift as that does; are tossed about with every wind of doctrine, fickle and inconstant, carried about like meteors in the air, with "divers and strange doctrines"; such as disagree with the perfections of God, the doctrines of Christ and his apostles, the Scriptures of truth, the analogy of faith, anti form of sound words; and so the word here used signifies "divers", and is so rendered **Es 3:8**; and may design such who hold doctrines and give into practices divers and different from the faith once delivered to the saints, and from the institutions and appointments of Christ; innovations in doctrine and worship ought not to be admitted of; and such who are for introducing them should not be meddled or mixed with; they should not be countenanced and encouraged; they should not be attended upon or given heed unto; have no fellowship, and join not in communion with them. This is interpreted by some of such who repeat {t} their sins after repentance, or who return a second time to their wickedness after they have repented, as Ben Melech observes.

{s} brett la "ne misceas te", Pagninus, Montanus; "ne commisceto te", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, so Michaelis, Schultens. {t} Mynwv Me "cum iterantibus", Pagninus, Montanus; "sub iniquitates suas"; so some in Vatablus, Baynus.

Proverbs 24:22

Ver. 22. For their calamity shall rise suddenly,.... And come upon those that fear not God, and rebel against the king and the state, and innovate in matters of religion; and especially that bring in damnable heresies, and, while they cry Peace, peace, and are pleasing themselves with their new schemes and prosperous success, swift and sudden destruction comes upon them, **2Pe 2:1**;

and who knoweth the ruin of them both? of those that fear not the Lord, nor the king; or of those who are given to change, and innovate in things civil and religious; and of those who meddle with them and join themselves to them: the ruin of themselves and families, in a civil sense, is great and inexpressible, who rebel against their prince, and endeavour to change and subvert the present government; and the ruin of the souls of men, both of the deceivers and the deceived, is beyond all conception and expression.

Proverbs 24:23

Ver. 23. These [things] also [belong] to the wise,.... Both what is said before concerning fearing God and the king; these belong to the wise and unwise, rich and poor, great and small; particularly judges and civil magistrates, and all subordinate governors, who have, or ought to have, a competency of wisdom; these ought to fear God and the king, as well as private subjects; and also what follows after, especially in this verse and Pr 24:24. Some render the words, "these things also [are the sayings] of wise men" {u}; not of Solomon, but of other wise men in his time, or who lived after him, and before the men of Hezekiah copied out the proverbs in the following chapters; see Pr 25:1; but it seems more than probable that what follows to the end of the chapter are the words of Solomon, as Pr 24:33 most clearly are, compared with **Pr 6:10**;

[it is] not good to have respect of persons in judgment; in trying causes in a court of judicature, no regard should be had to the persons of men by the judge on the bench, as the rich more than to the poor; or to a relation, a friend, an intimate acquaintance, more than to a stranger; but the justice of the cause ought to be attended to, and sentence given according to it, let it fall as it will: God does not accept persons, nor regard the rich more than the poor; nor should they that stand in his stead, and who in some sense represent him, Le 19:15 **De 1:17**; nor should Christians in their communities act such a partial part, **Jas 2:1**.

{u} Mymkxl hla Mg "haec quoqne sapientum sunt", Tigurine version; "etiam haec sapientibus profecta sunt", Piscator; "etiam haecce sapientum", Cocceius, Schultens, so Grotius.

Proverbs 24:24

Ver. 24. He that saith unto the wicked, Thou [art] righteous,.... Not in a private way, or as giving his opinion or character of a man that is wicked, whom either through ignorance or flattery another may call righteous; which may be done and not resented by people and nations; but in an open court of judicature pronounced by the judge, justifying the wicked for reward, and condemning the just, which is an abomination unto the Lord; see Pr 17:15; nor should the ministers of the Gospel flatter the wicked, and call them righteous and good men, and strengthen their hands in their wickedness, promising them life though they continue in their evil ways; for though God justifies the ungodly, man should not; nor does he justify them in, but from, their ungodliness; see Eze 13:2;

him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him; the people of the land shall curse him as an unjust judge, as a patron of wickedness aunt wicked men; as an enemy to justice, and a discourager of truth and honesty, and all good men; and even nations that have not so immediate a concern in the affair, yet hearing of it shall express their indignation at him and abhorrence of him.

Proverbs 24:25

Ver. 25. But to them that rebuke [him] shall be delight,.... That is, such that rebuke in the gate, or openly, in a court of judicature; that reprove delinquents, such as are found guilty of malpractices, and punish them as they ought to be, according to the laws of God and man; they shall have delight in themselves, peace and pleasure in their own minds; or the people shall delight in them, and speak well of them, and think themselves happy under such a just administration; or the Lord shall delight in them, the beauty or sweetness of the Lord shall come unto them, as Aben Ezra explains it; the Lord shall be sweet and delightful to them, and they shall have pleasure in him;

and a good blessing shall come upon them; or "a blessing of good" {w}; a blessing of good things, temporal and spiritual, here and hereafter; the blessing of a good God, and a blessing from him; and a blessing of good men, as opposed to the curse of the people in Pr 24:24.

{w} bwj tkrb "benedictio boni", Baynus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens; "benefactio cujusque boni": Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Proverbs 24:26

Ver. 26. [Every man] shall kiss [his] lips that giveth a right answer. Either as a witness to a question put to him in court, to which he answers aptly and uprightly; or rather as a judge, who, having heard a cause, answers and gives his opinion of it faithfully, and pronounces a righteous sentence; everyone will love and respect him, and hearken to him and obey him; both affection and obedience are signified by a kiss; see **Ps 2:12**.

Proverbs 24:27

Ver. 27. Prepare thy work without,.... As Solomon did for the building of the temple; timber and stones were prepared, hewed, squared, and fitted for the building before brought thither, **1Ki 5:18**; or diligently attend to thy business without doors, whatever it is, that thou mayest provide for thyself and family the necessaries and conveniences of life, which are in the first place to be sought after;

and make it fit for thyself in the field; let nothing be wanting in managing the affairs of husbandry, in tilling the land, in ploughing and sowing, and reaping, and gathering in the increase, that there may be a sufficiency for the support of the family;

and afterwards build thine house; when, though the blessing of God upon thy diligence and industry, thou art become rich, or however hast such a competent substance as to be able to build a good house, and furnish it in a handsome manner, then do it; but first take care of the main point, that you have a sufficiency to finish it; see the advice of Christ, Lu 14:28; necessaries are first to be sought after, before things ornamental and superfluous; first take care to live, and then, if you can, build a fine house. Jarchi interprets this of a man's first getting fields, vineyards, and cattle, something beforehand in the world, and then take a wife, when he is able to maintain her, whereby his house may be built up; see **Ru 4:11**.

Proverbs 24:28

Ver. 28. Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause,.... Unless forced unto it, except there is some urgent reason for it; not upon any trivial account, or in any frivolous matter; never appear forward and eager to bear witness against him, and, whenever obliged to it, be not a false witness, but speak truth, whether thy neighbour be a friend or a foe;

and deceive [not] with thy lips; by bearing a false testimony, the judge, thy neighbour and thyself; for though men may be deceived, God cannot: or, shouldest thou do so, "thou wouldest break" and cut him to pieces "with thy lips" {x}; which is the sense of the words according to R. Judah, as Ben Melech relates.

{x} Kytpvb tytyphw "et ne atteras labiis tuis", Vatablus; "et ne comminuas eum labiis tuis", Syriac version.

Proverbs 24:29

Ver. 29. Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me,.... He has falsely accused and reproached me, and bore a false testimony, or suborned false witnesses against me, and I will do the same to him, now an opportunity serves; but as private revenge itself is sinful, so especially when it is pursued in a wicked way;

I will render to the man according to his work; this should be left to the Lord, whose prerogative it is; see Pr 24:19.

Proverbs 24:30

Ver. 30. I went by the field of the slothful,.... This very probably was a real matter of fact; King Solomon's way lay at a certain time by the field of a slothful man, who never went into it himself, there being a lion in the way; and which he took no care of to manure and till, to plough and sow, but let it lie waste and uncultivated; an emblem of a carnal and worldly professor, and especially an unregenerate man, neglecting the affairs of his soul, his heart remaining like the fallow field unopened and unbroken, hard, obdurate, and impenitent; nothing sown in it, no seed of grace; nor has the seed of the word any place in it, but falling on it lies like seed by the wayside, caught up by every bird;

and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; as the slothful man is, that takes no care to plant and dress it, that it may bring forth fruit to his own profit and advantage; and as every unregenerate man is, who is unconcerned about his soul, and the welfare of it; whatever understanding he may have of things natural and civil, he has no knowledge of spiritual things, of God in Christ, of himself, his state and condition; of Christ, and the way of peace, life, and salvation by him; of the Spirit, and his work of grace upon the heart; and of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; and so has no regard to the vineyard of his soul, and the plantation and fruitfulness of it; see **So 1:6**.

Proverbs 24:31

Ver. 31. And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns,.... Or "thistles" {y}; which grow up of themselves, are the fruit of the curse, and the effect of slothfulness;

[and] nettles had covered the face thereof; so that nothing was to be seen but thorns and thistles, nettles and weeds; and such is the case of the souls of men when neglected, and no concern is had for them; so it is with carnal and worldly professors, who are overrun with the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, comparable to thorns and nettles for their piercing and stinging nature, and the unfruitfulness and unprofitableness of them; such are the thorny ground hearers, Mt 13:22; and such is the case of all unregenerate persons, whose souls are like an uncultivated field, and a neglected vineyard; in which grow naturally the weeds of sin and corruption, comparable to thorns and nettles for their spontaneous production, for the number of them, for their unfruitfulness, and for the pain and distress they bring when conscience is awakened; and because as such ground that bears thorns and nettles is nigh to cursing, and its end to be burned, which is their case; see **Heb 6:8**;

and the stone wall thereof was broken down; the fence about the fields, the wall about the vineyard, to keep out men and beasts; see **Isa 5:2**; which through slothfulness, and want of repair and keeping up, fell to decay, Ec 10:18; and thus carnal professors and unregenerate men, having no guard upon themselves, are open and exposed to every sin, snare, and temptation; Satan has free egress and regress; the evil spirit can go out and come in when he pleases, and bring seven evil spirits more wicked than himself: indeed such is the evil heart of man that it needs no tempter; he is drawn aside of his own lust, and enticed; he is liable to every sin, and to fall into the utmost ruin; he has nothing to protect and defend him; not the Spirit, nor grace, nor power of God.

{y} Mynwvmq "chamaeleones", Junius & Tremellius; "cardui", Piscator, Cocceius; "carduis", Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 24:32

Ver. 32. Then I saw, [and] considered it well,.... Or, "when I saw, I considered it well"; or "set my heart it" {z}; when he saw as he passed along the field and the vineyard, he, considered who was the owner and proprietor of them; what a sluggish and foolish man he was, and what a ruinous condition his field and vineyard were in.

I looked upon [it, and] received instruction; looked at it again, and took a thorough view of it, and learned something from it; so great and wise a man as Solomon received instruction from the field and vineyard of the slothful and foolish man; learned to be wiser, and to be more diligent in cultivating his own field, and dressing his own vineyard: so from the view and consideration of the slothfulness and folly of unregenerate man, and of the state and condition of his soul, many lessons of instruction may be learned; as that there is no free will and wisdom in men with respect to that which is good; the ruinous state and condition of men, as being all overspread with sin and corruption, in all the powers and faculties of their souls; and that there is nothing in them agreeable to God, but all the reverse; also the necessity of divine grace to put them into a good state, and make them fruitful; moreover, the distinguishing grace of God, which makes others to differ from them; and likewise it is teaching and instructive to good men to use more diligence themselves in things relating to their spiritual good, and to the glory of God.

{z} ybl tyva ykna hzxaw "quum ergo contemplatus essem, adjunxi animum meum", Mercerus; "cum intuerer, apposui cor meum", Gejerus; "cum igitur viderem ego, adponebam cor meum", Michaelis.

Proverbs 24:33

Ver. 33. [Yet] a little sleep, a little slumber,.... The sight of the field and vineyard of the slothful put Solomon in mind of an observation he had made before, which fitly describes the disposition and gesture of the sluggard, by which means his field and vineyard came to ruin; while he should be up and tilling his field and planting his vineyard, he is in his bed; and awaking, instead of rising, craves for and indulges himself in another little doze, and which he repeats again and again;

a little folding of the hands to sleep; which ought to have been employed another way; See Gill on "Pr 6:10".

Proverbs 24:34

Ver. 34. So shall thy poverty come [as] one that travelleth,.... Swiftly and suddenly, both in a temporal and spiritual sense;
See Gill on "Pr 6:11";

and thy want as an armed man; irresistibly. Here ends according to some the "second", according to others the "third" part of this book of Proverbs, another beginning with the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 25:1

Ver. 1. These [are] are also proverbs of Solomon,.... These that follow to the end of the book, as well as those which go before. Here begins a "third", some say a "fourth" part of this book. The Targum and Syriac version read,

"these are also the deep proverbs of Solomon;"

and the Arabic version adds,

"the exposition of which is difficult;"

which the men Hezekiah king of Judah copied out; out of the writings of Solomon; out of his three thousand proverbs, it, nay be; or out of the public records, which contained an account of his words and deeds. Who these men were is not certain; perhaps his ministers of state, Eliakim, Sheban, and Joah; or the prophets of his time, Isaiah, Micah, and Hosea: the Targum and Syriac version call them his "friends". Whoever they were, no doubt they were employed by Hezekiah; and which is recorded to his honour, that he was so careful to preserve such useful sayings, and annex them to those that were already collected and put together as above. This verse, it is likely, was written by one of the copiers. The proverbs begin in Pr 25:2.

Proverbs 25:2

Ver. 2. [It is] the glory of God to conceal a thing,.... Secret things belong unto him, and they are kept so by him: many things which he does reveal, yet the "modus" or manner of them remains hidden; as what relates to his own being, and manner of subsisting; the trinity of Persons in the Godhead; the filiation or the Son, and the procession of the Spirit; the incarnation of Christ, and the like: the predestination of men to life and death, though that there is such a thing is certain, yet who they are is not known; the purposes and decrees of God, all that he determines to do, or shall be done, are known unto him from eternity; but then the times and seasons in which they will be accomplished are kept in his own power; the day and hour of the last judgment none knows but himself: his judgments, and ways in providence, are unsearchable and past finding out; there are many things in it unaccountable to men; nor does he give an account of them to the sons of men; these are at present secrets in his own breast, his judgments will be made manifest. Now it is his glory to conceal them; they are all known to him, and the reasons of them; he is the omniscient all wise God, and stands in no need of the advice of creatures; nor are they taken into his privy council. Some apply this to his pardoning sin, which is sometimes expressed by "covering" it; and in which the glory of his grace and mercy is greatly displayed. Jarchi interprets it of the history of the work of creation, and Ezekiel's vision of the wheels, the understanding of which is very difficult; and which the Jews forbid the reading of, as also Solomon's Song, until men are come to ripeness of years;

but the honour of kings [is] to search out a matter; to investigate everything relating to civil government, and that may be of use to them in the exercise of it; particularly to search into the word of God, and observe the laws in it, and rule according to them; or make such laws as are agreeably to it, and execute them: and to inquire diligently into all causes that are brought before them, that they may find out the truth of things, and pass judgment accordingly; and be able to give reasons for what they do in the public affairs of government, and make it appear that they are according to the rules of truth and justice; and to do so will gain them immortal honour! see
Job 29:16.

Proverbs 25:3

Ver. 3. The heaven for height, and the earth for depth,.... These are eminent for what are ascribed to them; nothing is higher than the heavens, nor anything deeper than the earth; the height of the heavens cannot be reached, and the centre of the earth cannot easily be got unto; the heavens above cannot be measured, and the foundation of the earth cannot be searched beneath; at least not by common persons, whatever may be done in their way by astronomers and geometricians. And thus, as the heavens and the earth are immeasurable, Jer 31:37; so

the heart of kings [is] unsearchable; especially such an one as Solomon was, who had largeness of heart as the sand on the seashore: and this must be understood of such who have the art of governing; for some are so weak in their conduct, and so much expose themselves, that it is easy to see what is in their hearts, and what are the springs of their actions. Wise princes lay their schemes deep, and conceal their designs, and keep their reasons of state secret, so that it is not an easy thing to penetrate into their councils and views: for this does not so much respect the multitude of business they have upon their hearts and hands, as Jarchi and others understand it, as the privacy and secrecy in which they are managed, and the reasons of which are kept from common persons, Who therefore are not proper judges of them; and who yet will often take upon them to censure and condemn, when they are ignorant of the true cause of such conduct.

Proverbs 25:4

Ver. 4. Take away the dross from the silver,.... By putting it into the furnace, and purging it from it:

and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer; not out of the furnace, a vessel formed and shaped, but pure silver shall come out of it for the refiner; of which a vessel may be made, very honourable, beautiful, and fit for use: the application of it is in Pr 25:5.

Proverbs 25:5

Ver. 5. Take away the wicked [from] before the king,.... Wicked ministers and counsellors; they are the "dross", worthless and useless; yea, hurtful and pernicious. The king is the "refiner", for whom the vessel is; the kingdom is the silver vessel refined; and which becomes much the better, when wicked men are removed from the court and cabinet council of kings; as well as the king is the happier, and his throne more firm and secure, as follows:

and his throne shall be established in righteousness; which he shall execute, wicked ministers being removed from him, who advised him to take unrighteous measures; and others being put in their room, who counsel him to do acts of justice; whereby his throne is secured, and he sits firm upon it, which before was tottering and shaking, and lie in great danger of being removed from it.

Proverbs 25:6

Ver. 6. Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king,.... Intrude not thyself into his presence; or rush not into it in a rude and irreverent way; or be not ambitious to be a courtier: or "do not appear glorious", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; or "honour thyself" {a} as the word signifies; do not appear too gay at court, or make too splendid an appearance, above thy fortune and station; and which may seem to vie with and outdo the king himself, which will not be well taken; princes love not to be equalled, and much less excelled;

and stand not in the place of great [men]; where the king's family or his nobles should stand, his ministers and counsellors of state, and those that wait upon him.

{a} rdhtt la "ne tibi assumas honorem", Cocceius; "ne honores teipsum", Michaelis; "ne magnificum te facias", Schultens; "ne magnifices te", Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 25:7

Ver. 7. For better [it is] that it be said unto thee, Come up hither,.... It is much more to thine honour and credit to seat thyself in a place rather beneath than above thee; which being observed by some of the officers at court, or by him whose business it is to look after such things, he will beckon or call to thee to come up to a higher and more honourable place:

than that thou shouldest be put lower, in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen; than that thou shouldest be thrust away with a severe rebuke for thy boldness and arrogance, in approaching too near the king's person, and taking the place of some great man, which did not become thee, and be forced down to a lower place, to thy great mortification; and the more, as this will be in the presence of the prince thou hadst the curiosity of seeing, and the ambition of making thyself acceptable to, by a gay and splendid appearance;

and now with great disgrace turned out of his presence, or at least driven to a great distance from him. Our Lord seems to refer to this passage, in Lu 14:8.

Proverbs 25:8

Ver. 8. Go not forth hastily to strive,.... To go to law with a neighbour; think well of it beforehand; consider the nature of the cause, whether right or wrong; or whether it is a matter of such moment as to go to law about; whether it will not be deemed a frivolous and vexatious suit; whether able to bear the expenses of it, and what may probably be the success of it;

lest [thou know not] what to do in the end thereof; for a livelihood, having spent all thy substance in the lawsuit, and so reduced to poverty as not to know how to live, or how and where to show thy face, through the disgrace that shall fall upon time by losing the cause;

when that neighbour hath put thee to shame; in open court, and proved himself to be in the right, and that thou art in the wrong; himself an honest man, and thee a litigious person.

Proverbs 25:9

Ver. 9. Debate thy cause with thy neighbour [himself],.... Between thee and him alone; lay the matter before him, and hear what he has to say for himself, by which you will better judge of the nature of the cause; try to compromise things, and make up the difference between you, which is much better than to commence a lawsuit; at least such a step should be taken first; see **Mt 5:25**;

and discover not a secret to another; if the thing in controversy is a secret, do not acquaint another person with it; keep it among yourselves, if the affair can be made up without bringing it into a court of judicature; besides, by communicating it to others, you may have bad counsel given, and be led to take indirect methods: or, "the secret of another", or, "another secret do not discover" {b}; if you know anything scandalous and reproachful of your neighbour and his family, you are contending with, which does not concern the cause in hand, do not divulge it, as persons from a spirit of revenge are apt to do, when they are quarrelling or litigating a point with each other.

{b} rxa dwo "secretum alterius", Pagninus, Montanus; "arcanum alterius", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis, Schultens, so Cocceius, Gejerus; "arcanum aliud", Munster; "alienum", Syriac version.

Proverbs 25:10

Ver. 10. Lest he that heareth [it] put thee to shame,.... Or, "reproach thee" {c} with treachery and deceit. Either the person of whom it is told, or the person to whom it is told; who may make thee ashamed, either by fixing the odious character of a defamer, a whisperer, and backbiter, on thee; or by making a retaliation, and in his turn make known some secret things concerning thyself, which before were not known, and, now published, will be to thy disgrace;

and thine infamy turn not away; it shall stick so close to thee, that thou shalt never get clear of it as long as thou livest, or ever retrieve thy credit; the brand of infamy shall ever be upon thee.

{c} Kdoxy "probris afficiat te", Pagniuus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "probro afficiet te", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

Proverbs 25:11

Ver. 11. A word fitly spoken,.... Or, "a word spoken on its wheels" {d}: that proceeds aright, keeps due order, is well circumstanced as to matter, method, time, place, and persons; a discourse well put together, properly pronounced, roundly, easily, and fluently delivered to proper persons, and adapted to their circumstances; and "seasonably" spoken, as the Targum and many versions render it:

[is like] apples of gold in pictures of silver; either like apples made of gold, and so valuable and precious; or as apples, called golden from their colour, as golden pippins, and golden rennets; or oranges, which are sometimes called golden apples: either of these in silver cases and enclosures, as Aben Ezra and Gersom interpret the word, or in a silver cup, as the Syriac version, or in silver lattices, as Maimonides, through which they may be seen, look very pleasant and delightful. The words may design, as some think, silver baskets of network {e}; into which golden apples or oranges being put, and placed on a table, look very beautiful; and to such a word fitly spoken is compared. This may be

applied to the word of the Gospel, as spoken by Christ, the great Prophet of the church; who has the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to weary souls, Isa 50:4; and by his ministers, who publish the Gospel, that faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation: this being the word of salvation, is fitly spoken to all sensible sinners, and must be exceeding agreeable to them; since it is of salvation from all sin, and for the chief of sinners, and entirely of free grace; includes all blessings in it, and is for ever; and since it is a proclamation of pardon of all sorts of sins and sinners, and of all their sins, and according to the riches of grace; and is also the word of reconciliation, and publishes peace to rebels, who could not make their own peace with God; and yet this is done by the blood of Christ, as the Gospel declares: and, seeing it is likewise the word of righteousness, which reveals the righteousness of Christ as justifying, when a man's own righteousness will not acquit him; and invites weary souls to Christ for rest, and therefore must be grateful to all such persons, and be esteemed as valuable as balls or apples of gold; and as pleasant and delightful to see and hear of as those set in silver baskets of network; and be as refreshing and comfortable, and as grateful to the taste, as real apples of the best kind; see **So 2:2**. It may also be applied to the promises of grace, seasonably spoken, and suitably applied by the Spirit of God; who takes the promises which are in Christ, and shows and opens them to souls in distress, at the most proper and seasonable time; and which are exceeding great and precious, yield abundance of pleasure and delight, and are very comfortable. Yea, this may be applied to the words of good men, in private conversation, either by way of counsel, or comfort, or admonition; and to every word that is with grace, and ministers grace to the hearer, and is for the use of edifying, when time, place, persons, and circumstances, are observed. Maimonides {f} thinks the external sense of the word is meant by the silver, and the internal sense by the gold; which latter is seen through, and is much better than the former.

{d} wynpa le "super rotis suis", Montanus, Piscator, so Kimchi and Ben Melech; "super rotationibus suis". Schultens. {e} twykvmb "in thecis transparentibus", Montanus; "cancellis", Baynus; "cancellaturis, sive retiaculis", Glassius; "in speciosis calicibus", Cocceius. {f} Praefat. Moreh Nevochim.

Proverbs 25:12

Ver. 12. [As] an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold,.... As a golden earring, when first put on, gives pain and uneasiness; but, being well hung and fixed, is very ornamental, being of fine gold, and especially when any jewels are upon it; which may be meant by the ornament, as the word is rendered, **So 7:1**;

[so is] a wise reprover upon an obedient ear; such is the reproof of a wise man, which is seasonably given, in a fit and proper manner; and which appears to proceed from love, and is designed for good, and done in great affection and faithfulness: this, though it may be a little grating to the ear at first, yet, when well considered and received, instead of leaving any infamy or reproach on the person reproved, it is an ornament to him, as well as reflects honour upon the reprover. It may be rendered, "[so is] he that reproveth a wise man, upon" or "with an obedient ear" {g}; a wise man that has an obedient or hearing ear, who is so wise as to altered to reproofs given him, and which he takes kindly, and receives profit and advantage from them; see **Pr 9:8**.

{g} Mkx xykwm "qui arguit sapientem", V. L. Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 25:13

Ver. 13. As the cold of snow in the time of harvest,.... As water as cold as snow; or as a breeze of air, such as in a time of snow; and so Jarchi,

"as the cold of the days of snow, which a man desires in summer, and not snow simply, for snow itself is not good in the time of harvest;"

see Pr 24:1. Or rather "as a shield" or "covering of snow" {h}, as the word signifies: perhaps, as Gussetius {i} thanks, a vessel in such a form, in which snow was kept in summer, is meant; and the same word, the two first radical letters being doubled, is used for the pot, or urn, in which the manna was kept, Ex 16:33. As snow, that in those hot countries used to be kept in vessels, in places underground, to cool their drink with in summertime; just as ice is kept with us, in like places, for the same purpose; and then the sense is, as drink cooled with snow is very agreeable, and exceeding refreshing to those that labour in the field in the time of harvest;

[so is] a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters: such an one that is sent with a message, and faithfully executes it, while he is gone, the mind of his master is very thoughtful about the it sue and success of it; but when he returns and gives him an account of it, and especially when he succeeds to his wish; it "restores" and settles his mind, as

the word {k} signifies; and gives him a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction, and renders the messenger dear and valuable to him. Christ is the messenger, one of a thousand, sent by his divine Father on a message of grace and salvation, in which he has succeeded being faithful to him that appointed him; and so exceeding acceptable to him, his servant, his elect, in whom his soul delighteth! Gospel ministers are messengers, and faithful ones, whose feet are beautiful, and their words acceptable to souls to whom they are sent, and are a sweet savour to him that sent them; and who will commend them as good and faithful servants, and appoint them rulers over many cities, and introduce them into his joy.

{h} glv tnuk "sicut scutum ex nive", some in Gejerus, so Aben Ezra; "sicat tectio nivis", Michaelis. {i} Comment. Ebr. p. 718. {k} byvy "restituit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "faciet reqiuiescere", Pagninus, Baynus.

Proverbs 25:14

Ver. 14. Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift,.... Of his charity and alms deeds; bragging of great things he does this way, when he does nothing; or who is very vain in making large promises of what he will give, when he does not perform; either not having it in his heart, or in the power of his hands, to give what he promises; Satan like, who offered to give all the kingdoms of this world to Christ, if he would worship him, when nothing of it belonged unto him, or was in his power to give: and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "a glorious man"; that is, a vainglorious man, and "not fulfilling promises". It may very well be applied to false teachers, who boast of their gifts and spiritual knowledge, when they have none; speaking great swelling words of vanity, when they are empty of all that is good, and are as follow:

[is like] like clouds and wind without rain; which make a show and appearance of rain, promise much, but produce none; see **2Pe 2:17** **Jude 1:12**.

Proverbs 25:15

Ver. 15. By long forbearing is a prince persuaded,.... To come into measures, and do that which his council and ministry advise him to, and to which he may seem at first very averse; but by a mild and gentle representation of things, by an humble submission of them to him, and by frequent remonstrances and patient waiting, his mind is softened, bent, and inclined to take their advice, and pursue the measures suggested to him; which, had they been pressed with heat, haughtiness, and haste, would have been rejected;

and a soft tongue breaketh the bone; or "hardness", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; soft words, or words delivered in soft language, remove hardness and roughness from the minds of men; and work upon, influence, and bend men, whose wills are obstinate and stubborn, and make them pliable and tractable: so David, with a soft tongue, wrought upon Saul, his enemy; and Abigail, by her soft language, turned the mind of David, who was bent upon the destruction of Nabal,
1Sa 24:16; see Pr 15:1. Jarchi interprets this soft tongue of prayer and supplication, by which severe things against sinners are removed from them; and so he understands the former clause of the forbearance of God, which gives encouragement to sinners, to persuade him in their favour by repentance and prayer; see Mt 18:26.

Proverbs 25:16

Ver. 16. Hast thou found honey?.... Of which there was great plenty in Judea; and was to be found in fields and woods, 1Sa 14:25;

eat so much as is sufficient for thee; to satisfy appetite, without overcharging the stomach; what may be conducive to health, and no more;

lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it; that is, overfilled; filled to a loathing of it, so as to cause a casting of it up this is not merely to be understood in a literal sense; something more is intended, as in Pr 24:13; and according to the sense there, that which Maimonides {l} gives of this seems agreeable; that it respects the getting of wisdom and knowledge, which, like honey, is sweet and desirable, and excellent, and nourishing, moderately used: but then persons should take care to keep within due bounds, and not seek to be too wise; or to exercise themselves in things too high for them, and aim at that which is above their capacity; but should content themselves with what is within their reach and compass: and so Gersom understands it. Some think that moderation in the use of worldly things and lawful pleasures is here recommended: and others that the words refer to what follow; that when a man has got a pleasant and delightful friend, he should not visit him too often; lest, too much familiarity bringing contempt, he should lose his friend: so Jarchi connects the words, {l} Moreh. Nevochim, par. 1. c. 32, p. 41.

Proverbs 25:17

Ver. 17. Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house,.... Not but that it is commendable to be neighbourly and friendly, or for one neighbour to visit another; but then it should not be very frequent; a man should not be always or often at his neighbour's house. So the words may be rendered, "make thy foot precious" or "rare at thy neighbour's house" {m}; be seldom there;

lest he be weary of thee, and [so] hate thee; or, "lest he be sated with thee" {n}; filled with thy company to a loathing of it, as the stomach with eating too much honey, and so his friendship be turned into hatred.

{m} rqx "rarum fac", Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Cocceius; Heb. "praetiosum fac", Piscator. {n} Kebvy Np "ne forte satictur tui", Schultens; so Montanus; "saturatus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Proverbs 25:18

Ver. 18. A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour,.... In whose house he has often been, and whom he has frequently visited; and, observing what was done there, not only discovers and tells abroad the secrets of his family, but even things which are false; yea, in a court of judicature, appears a witness against him, and swears falsely to his hurt and prejudice. Such a man

[is] a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow; that is, to his neighbour, against whom he bears false witness; and, by so doing, he mauls his fame, his credit, character, and reputation; and, as with a sword, takes away his life; and against whom there is no more guarding than against a sharp arrow, that comes from afar, suddenly and swiftly.

Proverbs 25:19

Ver. 19. Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble,.... It is not good to put confidence in any man, not in princes, nor in the best of men; much less in an unfaithful, prevaricating, and treacherous man; and especially in a time of distress and trouble, depending on his help and assistance, which is leaning on a broken reed, and trusting to a broken staff. Or, "the confidence of an unfaithful man in time of trouble" {o}; that which he puts confidence in; who trusts in his riches, or in his righteousness, or in his own heart, all which are vain and deceitful:

[is like] a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint; which are so far from being of any use, the one in eating food, and the other in walking, that they are both an hindrance to those actions, and cause pain and uneasiness: or, "a bad tooth", so the Targum and Syriac version; a rotten one.

{o} dgwb xjbm "fiducia praevaricatoris", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "fiducia perfidi", Cocceius, Michaelis.

Proverbs 25:20

Ver. 20. [As] he that taketh away a garment in cold weather,.... Either takes it off of himself, or another person, when it would be rather more proper to put another garment on, and so is exposed to the injury of cold weather;

[and as] vinegar upon nitre: nitre was found in Egypt, beyond Memphis, as Strabo says {p}; there were two mines of nitre, which produced much, and thence it was called the Nitriotic Nome: others say, nitre has its name from Nitria, a town in Egypt {q}, which gives name to the Nitrian desert, where there is a lake called Latron; from the bottom of which, that sort of nitre, called Natron, arises to the top, as is apprehended, and there, by the heat of the sun, condenses into this kind of substance {r}, which will react with an acid; and so vinegar poured upon it will irritate and disturb it, cause it to react, and make a noise and a hissing. This must be understood only of this sort of nitre, of the nitre of the ancients; not of the moderns, which is no other than saltpetre; for though this will ferment with vinegar, saltpetre will not {s}: nitre is dissolved by a liquid, but not any, only that which is cold, as Aristotle observes {t}, as is vinegar; and therefore, with great propriety, this is joined to what goes before;

so [is] he that singeth songs to a heavy heart; rather distresses and afflicts him the more; as he cannot sing himself, he cannot bear to hear others sing; such rather should be condoled and wept with than to have songs sung to them. Some understand the words in a sense the reverse; the word rendered taketh away, in the first clause, has the signification of adorning with a garment;

hence they render it, "as he that putteth on a garment {u} for ornament in cold weather, and as vinegar to nitre, so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart"; that is, as an additional garment drives away cold, and vinegar dissolves nitre, so singing songs to a heavy hearted man drives away sorrow; as in the case of Saul, such an effect had music on him, 1Sa 16:21; or rather, to put on a thin garment for ornament in cold weather is as absurd and unseasonable as to put vinegar to nitre, or to a wound, as Schultens, and to sing songs to a heavy heart; all absurd.

{p} Geograph. l. 17. p. 552. {q} Isidor. Origin. l. 16. c. 2. {r} Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 530. {s} Ibid. p. 532. Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. p. 1009, 1010. {t} Meteorolog. l. 4. c. 6. {u} dgb hdem "ornans vestem suam", Gussetins, p. 880. "ornata veste instruens"; Schultens.

Proverbs 25:21

Ver. 21. If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat,.... Which includes all manner of food; whatever persons may have in their houses, that they should bring out and feed the hungry with, even though an enemy;

and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; which was what was usually and in common drank in those countries. These two, bread and water, take in all the necessaries of life; and giving them is expressive of all acts of beneficence and humanity to be performed to enemies; see **2Ki 6:22**; or "drink to him", so Pagninus and Montanus; which is still more expressive of respect and kindness.

Proverbs 25:22

Ver. 22. For thou shall heap coals of fire upon his head,.... Not to increase his punishment and damnation, the more aggravated by kindness shown him; but to bring him by such means to a sense of former injuries, and to shame for them, repentance of them, and love of the person injured, and carefulness for the future of doing him any further wrong;

and the Lord shall reward thee: with good things, for all the good done to thine enemy, whether it has the desired effect on him or not; or whether he rewards thee or not; see Ro 12:20.

Proverbs 25:23

Ver. 23. The north wind driveth away rain,.... So the geographer {w} says, the swift north wind drives away the moist clouds; which usually come from the opposite quarter, the south. The word used has the signification of conceiving, and begetting, and bringing forth; hence some {x} render it to a different sense, and so the Targum,

"the north wind bringeth forth rain;"

and in this sense Gersom interprets it, and says,

"the north wind produces rain in Jerusalem, because it brings there the vapours that ascend from the sea, which lies north unto it;"

and the philosopher {y} says, that in the northern parts of the world the south wind produces rain; and in the southern parts the north wind produces it, as in Judea. But in Job 37:22, fair, fine, golden, serene, "weather", is said to "come out of the north"; agreeably to which, the north wind is by Homer {z} called aiyrhgenethv, the producer of serene weather; and by Virgil {a} "clarus aquilo", i.e. what makes serene. The Arabic version reads it, "the south wind"; and that does bring rain, and, as that version has it, excites the clouds. But the first reading and sense of the words seem best {b}, and agree with what follows:

so [doth] an angry countenance a backbiting tongue; drives it away, discourages and silences it. When a man puts on a stern countenance, a frowning and angry look, on such who bring him slanderous reports and idle tales of their neighbours, and reproach and backbite them, it checks them, and puts a stop to their practices; whereas listening to them, and especially with an air of pleasure, encourages them in them; were there not so many that take pleasure in hearing those talebearers and backbiters, were they more roughly dealt with, as the blustering north wind does with the rain, there would not be so much of this evil practised.

{w} Dionysii Perieg. v. 532. {x} llwxt "parturiet", Montanus; "gignit", Junius & Tremellius; "parturit", Schultens. {y} Aristot. Metaphysic. l. 2. {z} Iliad. 19. v. 358. Odyss. 5. v. 295. {a} Georgic. l. 1. prope finem. {b} "Ventorum frigidissimi quos a septentrione diximus spirare, et reliquos compescunt, et nubes abigunt", Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 47.

Proverbs 25:24

Ver. 24. [It is] better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house. See Gill on "Pr 21:9".

Proverbs 25:25

Ver. 25. [As] cold waters to a thirsty soul,.... Water is naturally cold; and is by classic writers expressed by "cold" itself {c}, and is very refreshing to one athirst through heat: or, "to a weary soul" {d}; to one wearied with labour; or to a traveller weary with travelling, especially in hot countries, as in the deserts of Arabia, or in places where it is rare to meet with a brook, stream, or fountain of water; which, when he does, it is exceeding pleasant and agreeable to him;

so [is] good news from a far country; so acceptable is it to hear from a friend in a distant part of the world, and particularly to hear good news of him. Such is the Gospel; it is good news, and glad tidings of good things; it brings the good news of the grace, and favour, and good will of God to men; of his appointment and provision of a Saviour for them; of the incarnation of Christ; of salvation being wrought out by him for the chief of sinners, which is free, full, and for ever; and of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, through him, And this comes "from a far country"; from heaven, the better country than Canaan, which was a type of it, or any country in this world, and which is afar from hence; the Gospel comes from God in heaven, and it is a report concerning that; it is good news to saints, of an estate they have there, an inheritance, a house, a city and kingdom prepared for them there: this news is brought by the prophets of the Old Testament, who diligently inquired of salvation by Christ; by the angels at Christ's incarnation; by John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ; by Christ himself, who was anointed to preach good tidings to the meek; and by his apostles, and all the faithful ministers of the word: and the message they bring is good news; not to carnal and self-righteous persons, but to sensible sinners; and to them it is as cold waters to a weary or thirsty soul; it assuages the heat of the law, and the wrath that works in the conscience; it quenches the thirst of carnal things, and after a man's own righteousness; it revives and refreshes his weary drooping spirits, and fills him with a joy unspeakable and full of glory; as Jacob's spirits were revived on hearing the good news of Joseph, Ge 45:26.

{c} "Perfundit gelida", Horat. Sermon. l. 2. Sat. 7. v. 91. {d} hpye "lassa", Montanus; "lasso", Tigurine version, so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

Proverbs 25:26

Ver. 26. A righteous man falling dozen before the wicked,.... Either falling into calamity and distress by means of the wicked man, through his malice and cunning, and which be seeing, rejoices at; or crouching unto him, bowing before him, yielding to him, not daring to oppose or reprove him; or falling into sin in his presence, which he ever after reproaches him for, and openly exposes him, so that his usefulness is lost; and especially if he joins with the wicked man in his course of living; and particularly if a civil magistrate, and acts unrighteously in his office: he

[is as] a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring; like a spring or fountain muddied with the feet of men or beasts; so that; he who was before as a clear spring of flowing water, a fountain of justice to his neighbours, from whom good doctrine and wholesome advice flowed, is now of no use by instruction or example, but the contrary.

Proverbs 25:27

Ver. 27. [It is] not good to eat much honey,.... That is too much otherwise it is good to eat, Pr 24:13; but too much is hurtful, it surfeits the stomach increases choler {e} and creates loathing; and indeed, too much of anything is bad {f};

so [for men] to search their own glory [is not] glory: to set forth their own excellencies, to sound forth their own praises to seek honour of men, to use all methods to gain popular applause; this is not glorious and praiseworthy, but dishonourable; or it may be rendered as it literally lies in the original, "but to search out", or "the searching out of their glory [is] glory" {g}; either the glory of righteous men, as Aben Ezra interprets it, such as stand and do not fall before the wicked; to search out their excellencies and virtues, and follow their example, is glorious and honourable: or to search the glory of the knowledge of divine things, comparable to honey, is commendable and glorious; for though a man may eat too much honey, yet he cannot have too much knowledge of divine and spiritual things, or be satiated and overfilled with them; to which the Septuagint version agrees, "but we ought to honour glorious words": the glorious truths of the word of God ought to be had in great esteem, and to search out the glory of them is honourable; our Lord directs to a search of the Scriptures, because they testify of him, **Joh 5:39**; and we can never know too much of him, or of the precious doctrines of the Gospel; unless this is to be understood of such things as should not be curiously inquired into; men should not be wise above what is written nor search into those things which God has concealed; as his own nature and perfections, the mode of subsisting of the three Persons in the Godhead, his secret purposes and decrees, and unsearchable judgments. To which sense agrees the Vulgate Latin version,

"so he who is the searcher of majesty shall be oppressed by glory;"

he shall be bore down by it, and not able to bear the glory of it: and the Targum is,

"to eat much honey is not good, nor to search glorious words."

Jarchi takes the words in this sense; and illustrates them by the work of creation, Ezekiel's vision of the wheels, the decrees of God, and the reasons of them.

{e} Suidas in voce mouli. {f} "Vitiosum est ubique quod nimium est", Seneca de Tranquilitate, c. 9. {g} dwbk Mdbk rqx "investigatio gloriae illorum (est) gloria", Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis; "scrutatio gloriae ipsorum est gloria", Cocceius.

Proverbs 25:28

Ver. 28. He that [hath] no rule over his own spirit,.... His affections and passions, puts no restraint, unto them, as the word signifies; no guard against them, no fence about them, to curb his curiosity, to check his pride and vanity, to restrain his wrath and anger and revenge, and keep within due bounds his ambition and itch of vainglory;

[is like] a city that broken down [and] without walls; into which the may go with pleasure, and which is exposed to the rapine and violence of everyone; and so a man that has no command of himself and passions, but gives the reins to them, is exposed to the enemy of souls, Satan and is liable to every sin, snare and temptation.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 26:1

Ver. 1. As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest,.... Which were very undesirable and unseasonable, yea, very hurtful to the fruits of the earth; and a great obstruction to the labourers in the harvest, and a hinderance to the gathering of it in; and were very rare and uncommon in Judea; it was even a miracle for thunder and rain to be in wheat harvest, 1Sa 12:17;

so honour is not seemly for a fool: for a wicked man; such should not be favoured by kings, and set in high places of honour and trust; "folly set in great dignity", or foolish and bad men set in honourable places, are as unsuitable and inconvenient as snow and rain in summer and harvest, and should be as rare as they; and they are as hurtful and pernicious, since they discourage virtue and encourage vice, and hinder the prosperity of the commonwealth; such vile persons are contemned in the eyes of good men, and are disregarded of God; he will not give, theft, glory here nor hereafter; the wise shall inherit it, but shame shall be the promotion of fools, **Pr 3:35**; see Ec 10:6.

Proverbs 26:2

Ver. 2. As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying,.... As a bird, particularly the sparrow, as the word {h} is sometimes rendered, leaves its nest and wanders from it; and flies here and there, and settles nowhere; and as the swallow flies to the place from whence it came; or the wild pigeon, as some {i} think is meant, which flies away very swiftly: the swallow has its name in Hebrew from liberty, because it flies about boldly and freely, and makes its nest in houses, to which it goes and comes without fear;

so the curse causeless shall not come; the mouths of fools or wicked men are full of cursing and bitterness, and especially such who are advanced above others, and are set in high places; who think they have a right to swear at and curse those below them, and by this means to support their authority and power; but what signify their curses which are without a cause? they are vain and fruitless, like Shimei's cursing David; they fly away, as the above birds are said to do, and fly over the heads of those on whom they are designed to light; yea, return and fall upon the heads of those that curse, as the swallow goes to the place from whence it came; it being a bird of passage, **Jer 8:7**; in the winter it flies away and betakes itself to some islands on rocks called from thence "chelidonian" {k}. According to the "Keri", or marginal reading, for here is a double reading, it may be rendered, "so the curse causeless shall come to him" {l}; that gives it without any reason. The Septuagint takes in both,

"so a vain curse shall not come upon any;"

what are all the anathemas of the church of Rome? who can curse whom God has not cursed? yea, such shall be cursed themselves; see
Ps 109:17.

{h} rwpuk "sicat passeris", Mercerus, Gejerus; "ut passer", Piscator; Schultens.
{i} Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 8. {k} Vid. Strabo. Geograph. l. 14. p. 458. Dionys. Perieg. v. 506, 507. {l} wl "in quempiam", V. L.

Proverbs 26:3

Ver. 3. A whip for the horse,.... One that is dull of going, or refractory and wants breaking;

a bridle for the ass; not to curb and restrain it from going too fist, asses being generally dull; but to direct its way and turn it when necessary, it being stiffnecked and obstinate; though the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it a "spear" or "goad", something to prick with, and excite it to motion; and so the Targum; or otherwise one would have thought the whip was fitter for the ass and the bridle for the horse;

and a rod for the fool's back; suggesting that the fool, or wicked man, is like the horse or the mule; though not without understanding of things natural, yet of things divine and moral; and as stupid as the ass, however wise he may conceit himself to be, being born like a wild ass's colt; and instead of honour being given him, stripes should be laid upon him; he should be reproved sharply, and corrected for his wickedness, especially the causeless curser, Pr 19:29.

Proverbs 26:4

Ver. 4. Answer not a fool according to his folly,.... Sometimes a fool, or wicked man, is not to be answered at all; as the ministers of Hezekiah answered not a word to Rabshakeh; nor Jeremiah the prophet to Hananiah; nor Christ to the Scribes and Pharisees; and when an answer is returned, it should not be in his foolish way and manner, rendering evil for evil, and railing for railing, in the same virulent, lying, calumniating, and reproachful language;

lest thou also be like unto him; lest thou also, who art a man of understanding and sense, and hast passed for one among men, come under the same imputation, and be reckoned a fool like him.

Proverbs 26:5

Ver. 5. Answer a fool according to his folly,.... The Targum is,

"but speak with a fool in thy wisdom;"

and the Syriac version,

"yea, speak with a fool according to thy wisdom;"

which would at once remove the seeming contradiction in these words to the former, but then they are not a true version; indeed it is right, and must be the sense, that when a fool is answered, as it is sometimes necessary he should, that it be done in wisdom, and so as to expose his folly; he is to be answered and not answered according to different times, places, and circumstances, and manner of answering; he is to be answered when there is any hope of doing him good, or of doing good to others; or of preventing ill impressions being made upon others by what he has said; when the glory of God, the good of the church, and the cause of truth, require it; and when he would otherwise glory and triumph, as if his words or works were unanswerable, as follow;

lest he be wise in his own conceit; which fools are apt to be, and the rather when no answer is given them; imagining it arises from the strength of their arguments, and their nervous way of reasoning, when it is rather from a neglect and contempt of them.

Proverbs 26:6

Ver. 6. He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool,.... Who knows not how to deliver it in a proper manner, and is incapable of taking the answer, and reporting it as he should; or unfaithful in it, and brings a bad or false report, as the spies did upon the good land;

cutteth off the feet; he may as well cut off his feet before he sends him, or send a man without feet, as such an one; for prudence, diligence, and faithfulness in doing a message, and bringing back the answer, are as necessary to a messenger as his feet are;

[and] drinketh damage; to himself; his message not being rightly performed, and business not done well; which is a loss to the sender, as well as to his credit and reputation with the person to whom he sends him; he hereby concluding that he must be a man of no great judgment and sense to send such a fool on his errand. Such are the unskilful ambassadors of princes; and such are unfaithful ministers, the messengers of the churches; see Pr 10:26. The words in the original are three sentences, without a copulative, and stand in this order, "[he] that cutteth off feet; [he] that drinketh damage; [he] that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool"; that is, they are alike.

Proverbs 26:7

Ver. 7. The legs of the lame are not equal,.... Or as "the lifting up the legs by one that is lame" {m}, to dance to a pipe or violin, is very unseemly, and does but the more expose his infirmity, and can give no pleasure to others, but causes derision and contempt;

so [is] a parable in the mouth of fools; an apophthegm, or sententious expression of his own, which he delivers out as a wise saying, but is lame and halts; it is not consistent with itself, but like the legs of a lame man, one higher than the other: or one of the proverbs of this book, or rather any passage of Scripture, in the mouth of a wicked man; or any religious discourse of his is very unsuitable, since his life and conversation do not agree with it; it is as disagreeable to hear such a man talk of religious affairs as it is to see a lame man dance; or whose legs imitate buckets at a well, where one goes up and another down, as Gussetius {n} interprets the word.

{m} hopm Myqwv wyld "elevatio crurum a claudo facta", Gejerus, Michaelis.
{n} "Femora claudi imitantur situlas", Gussetius, p. 188. "situlas agunt crura ex claudio", Schultens; "instar binarum sitularum in puteo alternatium adscendentium ac descendentium", Gejerus.

Proverbs 26:8

Ver. 8. As he that bindeth a stone in a sling,.... That so fastens it to it that it cannot be slung out of it, it becomes useless and does not answer the end for which it is put there; or that places it there that it may be cast out, and is cast out, and so is thrown away, and of no more use; or that puts a precious stone, so some interpret it, in a heap of common stones, even in such a heap as is used at the stoning of malefactors; or increases the heap of stones on such, which the more exposes them, and the greater reproach they are loaded with; so the more a fool is praised, it does but bring to mind his folly, and issues in his greater disgrace, so Gussetius {o}: or rather it has respect to a precious stone put in such a heap of stones, as Luther; or else, according to Schultens, to such an one put into a heap of sepulchral stones; or, as Aben Ezra, that binds up a stone, a common stone, in purple, which to do is ridiculous, so R. Joseph Kimchi; the Vulgate Latin version renders it,

"as he that casts a stone to Mercury's heap;"

a Heathen deity, called by the eastern people Mertholin and Margenah {p}, which last is near the same with the Hebrew word here used; whose statue was set up where two or more ways met, to direct travellers; and who therefore out of respect to the deity, and to show gratitude to him, used to cast a stone to the heap for the support of it; and which stones, set up in such doubtful places, were dedicated to him, and were called after his name {q}; and not only travellers did this in honour of the deity, and to make his statue more manifest {r}, but also for profit, to clear the way from stones; and this custom obtained with the Indians, Arabs, Saracens, and now does with the Mahometans {s}: and such heaps of stones were also placed in cities, and at the doors of houses, in honour of Mercury, and were called from him Hermae {t}; these stones were also erected for borders of countries {u}. But it is not probable that this custom obtained in Solomon's time; and yet some Jewish writers interpret it to this sense, as if he that gives honour to a fool is like him that casts a stone to

Mercury; and Jarchi in the text observes it as the sense of some of their Rabbins,

"that he that teacheth the law to a disciple that is not fit, is as he that casts a stone to Mercury;"

and to cast a stone to Mercury is with them the same as to commit idolatry {w}; but either of the former senses is best;

so [is] he that giveth honour to a fool; it is all thrown away and lost, as a stone out of a sling; or as unseemly as to put a precious stone among a heap of stones, or a common stone in purple;
See Gill on "Pr 26:1".

{o} Ebr. Comment. p. 777. {p} D. Herbert de Chefbury d. Relig Gent. c. 7. p. 58. {q} Suidas in voce ermaion. {r} Phurnutus de Natura Deorum, p. 33. {s} Vid. D. Herbert de Cherbury, ut supra, p. 59. {t} Cornel. Nepot. Vit. Alcibiad. l. 7. c. 3. {u} Pausan. Corinth. sive, l. 2. p. 157. {w} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. s. 6. & Maimon. in ib.

Proverbs 26:9

Ver. 9. [As] a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard,.... And he perceives it not; or being in his hand he makes an ill use of it, and hurts himself and others with it;

so [is] a parable in the mouth of fools, a proverbial sentence respecting religious matters; or a passage of holy Scripture which either he understands not, and has no spiritual perception of, any more than the drunkard has of the thorn in his hand; or which being used as a pun, or by way of jest, as it is the manner of some to pun upon or jest with the Scripture, hurts himself and others, wounds his own conscience, and ruins the souls of others; for it is dangerous meddling with edge tools, and hard to kick against the pricks; so to do is like a drunken man's handling thorns, which he does without judgment, and to his own prejudice and others. Gussetius {x} understands this of a fish hook coming up into the hand of a drunkard empty, without taking any thing by it, and so alike useless is what is said by a fool.

{x} Ebr. Comment. p. 244.

Proverbs 26:10

Ver. 10. The great [God], that formed all [things],.... That made the heavens, earth, and sea, and all that are in them; who is great in the perfections of his nature, and in the works of his hands, and greatly to be praised;

both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors; according to their works; every transgression of the law receiving its just recompence of reward, whether a man transgresses it ignorantly or wilfully; as his transgressions are, whether through error or presumption, so shall his punishment be; though some understand this, as Kimchi, of the Lord's doing good in a providential way, to the wise and unwise, the righteous and the wicked: the words are by some rendered to another sense, "a great one grieveth all, and he hireth the fool, and he hireth the transgressors" {y}; that is, a great man, a tyrannical prince, grieves all his good subjects; or, as Hottinger {z}, from the use of the word in the Arabic tongue, changes all things, inverts their order, or administers all at his will, that is, wrongly; when he hires fools and wicked men to do those bad things for him which others would not, to the great detriment of the commonwealth; and rewards them for it, putting them into posts of honour and trust, to the great grief and trouble of all his best subjects.

{y} So Mercerus, Piscator. {z} Smegm. Oriental. l. 1. c. 2. p. 171.

Proverbs 26:11

Ver. 11. As a dog returneth to his vomit,.... Who being sick with what he has eaten, casts it up again, and afterwards returns unto it and licks it up;

[so] a fool returneth to his folly, or "repeats" {a} it, time after time, many times, as Ben Melech; or a wicked man turns to his wickedness, who, having had some qualms upon his conscience for sin, for a while forsakes it; but that fit being over, and he forgetting all his former horror and uneasiness, returns to his old course of life: a wicked man is here compared to a dog, as he is elsewhere for his impudence and voraciousness in sinning; and the filthiness of sin is expressed by the vomit of a dog, than which nothing is more nauseous and loathsome; and the apostasy of the sinner, from an external course of righteousness into open profaneness is signified by the return of this creature to it. This is said to be a "true proverb", **2Pe 2:22**, where it is quoted and

applied.

{a} hnwv "qui iterat", Tigurine version, Michaelis; "iterans", Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus; "duplicans", Schultens.

Proverbs 26:12

Ver. 12. Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit,.... Or "in his own eyes" {b}; as multitudes may be seen, by looking round; man is a creature but of small knowledge in things natural, civil, mechanical, philosophical, moral, or divine; yet greatly conceited for the most part of his knowledge and wisdom. As by a "fool" in this book is generally understood a wicked profane man, so by a wise man is meant a good and righteous man, and may be so understood here; and many there are who are good and righteous only their own conceit and esteem, not truly so; they place their righteousness in outward things, in the observance of external duties; and though there may be some little imperfection in them, yet they think, as they mean well, God will accept the will for the deed: and some have imagined they have arrived to perfection; and such are generally conceited, proud, and haughty, and despise others; all which flows from ignorance; for, though they fancy themselves to be wise, they are very ignorant of themselves; of the plague of their own hearts; of the law of God, and the spirituality of it, and the extensiveness of its demands; of the strict justice and righteousness of God, which will not admit of an imperfect righteousness in the room of a perfect one; and also of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the nature and necessity of that to justify: and this being their case, they are in very dangerous circumstances; they are building on a sand; they are liable to fall into a ditch; they cannot be justified nor saved by their own works; they oppose themselves to God's way of justifying and saving sinners; and he sets himself against them, he resisteth the proud. Wherefore

[there is] more hope of a fool than of him; of a profane sinner than of a self-righteous person; for Christ came to save sinners, to call them to repentance, and he receives them as such; but not self-righteous persons; and, humanly speaking, there is a greater likelihood and greater hopes of convincing sinners, and bringing them to repentance and to forsake their sins, than there is of convincing a self-righteous man of the insufficiency of his righteousness, and the folly of trusting to it, and of bringing him to repent of such a confidence, and to forsake it; for it is most natural to him; it is his own, and the effect of great labour and pains; and encourages vanity and boasting, which would be excluded should he part with it; see Mt 21:31.

{b} wynyeb "in oculis suis", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, &c.

Proverbs 26:13

Ver. 13. The slothful [man] saith,.... Within himself; or to such that excite him to diligence and industry, to go about the business of his calling, to till his field, and dress his vineyard. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add, "being sent into the way"; ordered by his master to go out to work, when he makes the following excuse:

[there is] a lion in the way; a lion [is] in the streets; in the way to his field or vineyard, and in the streets, where his business lies or leads unto it: a very idle excuse this; since lions are usually in woods, forests, and desert places, and not in public roads, and much less in streets of cities; see Pr 22:13. This may be applied to a man slothful in the duties of religion; the "way" and "streets" may denote public ordinances, which are the ways of God's appointing, prescribing, and directing to; and in which good men walk, and find pleasure and profit; and are the streets where Wisdom cries, or Christ is preached, and where he is sought for and found: but many are the excuses some men make not to attend them; see Lu 14:17; though they are vain, frivolous, and foolish, as this here; for in these ways and streets may true seen the feet of the messengers of peace; here the turtle's voice, the joyful sound of salvation by Christ, may be heard; here the Lamb of God is directed to, to be looked at, as taking away the sins of men, having been slain, and having shed his blood for the redemption of them: and though the terrible voice of the law may be sometimes heard, which is necessary to arouse and awaken sleepy sinners, and unhinge self-righteous persons from a dependence on the works of the law; yet, afterwards comes the still small voice of the Gospel, proclaiming freedom from the curse and condemnation of the law by Christ. Indeed, in some ages, there have been violent persecutors, comparable to lions; and informers have been in the way and in the streets, to terrify saints from their duty; but none of these could move them from it, nor separate fully gracious souls from their love to Christ: though carnal slothful professors are offended, when tribulation or persecution arise because of the word, these are lions to them; and, in times of peace and liberty, they can paint lions, very terrible to themselves, and raise such difficulties as are insuperable to them; a slight disorder of body, a small inclemency of the weather, little danger of catching cold, and the like, shall be a lion to them: not considering they have a devouring lion nearer them in their houses, chambers, and on their beds with them; even Satan, in whose clutches they are, who keeps their goods in peace, by whom they are led captive, and to whom they fall a prey: nor fearing the wrath of the King of kings, which is as the roaring of a lion: the wrath of God and of the Lamb, who is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and whose day of wrath will be such as none will be able to bear.

Proverbs 26:14

Ver. 14. [As] the door turneth upon his hinges,.... And moves this way and that way, and opens and shuts, and yet hangs where it did, is not moved from its place:

so [doth] the slothful upon his bed; he turns himself from side to side, but is still on his bed, and does not move out of it, and go about his business. Aben Ezra makes mention of another reading and sense, "the door turneth upon his hinges", and is opened to let men out, one and another, to his work; "but [yet] the slothful man [is] upon his bed"; though one and another rise and go about business, and he hears the door open again and again, he stirs not, but keeps his, bed. So profane sinners lie on the bed of sinful lusts and sensual pleasures, indulge themselves in chambering and wantonness, and do not care to rise from hence, and walk honestly as in the daytime; and though their consciences are sometimes jogged by inward pricks, and they are moved a little by the reproofs of their friends, or awakened by the judgments of God; yet these are quickly over, and they give themselves a turn and go to sleep again: sometimes there are some motions in them, some thoughts and resolutions of amendment, some purposes to do good works; but, alas! their slothfulness is so great, and the habits and customs of sin so strong, that they cannot break through them, shake off their sloth, and come out, but remain as they were: and so it is with carnal professors, resting in their own works, and in a round of duties; and after ten, twenty, thirty years' profession, or more, they are just where they were; have no spiritual knowledge, judgment, and experience.

Proverbs 26:15

Ver. 15. The slothful hideth his hand in [his] bosom,.... To keep it warm; Jarchi's note is, "he puts his hand in a hot basin, because of the cold."

The word {c} for "bosom" does sometimes signify a "pot" or basin. Or he hides it under his "arm holes", as some render it, not caring to make use of it for labour; or covers it out of sight in his bosom, pretending some weakness or ailment in it, which hinders him from working; see Pr 19:24;

it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth; from under his arm holes, or out of his bosom, or even out of the platter, where his food is; an hyperbolical expression, setting forth his excessive sloth; and such an one ought not to eat, but starve indeed. It may be rendered, "he is weary"; it is a "weariness" {d} to him; it is even a labour too much for him to feed himself, so great is his sloth: and such is the sloth of carnal men; it is a weariness to them to hear the word, and attend on ordinances, and to lift up their hands in prayer to God; or to make use of any means, that they may have food for their souls; praying, hearing, and reading, are a burden to them; and therefore it is but just with God to send them a famine of the word, and take away the whole stay and staff of bread and water.

{c} txlub "in patina vel olla", Vatablus; "in patinam", Tigurine version; "lebete", Mercerus; "in paropside", Cocceius; "in paropsidem", Schultens. {d} haln "fatigatur", Mercerus, Gejerus; "defessus fit", Michaelis; "defetiscitur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens.

Proverbs 26:16

Ver. 16. The sluggard [is] wiser in his own conceit,.... It is a sort of a solecism, a kind of a contradiction in terms for a sluggard to be wise, who is so slothful as to make no use of the means of getting wisdom and knowledge. And it must be a mere conceit in him that he is wise, and especially that he is wiser

than seven men that can render a reason; not alluding to the number of a king's counsellors, who return him an answer to what he inquires of them, as Aben Ezra thinks; such as were the "seven" princes of the king of Persia, **Es 1:14**. Since to have such an exact number might not obtain in Solomon's time, either in Persia, or in his own court, or elsewhere: but it signifies a large number, many wise men, as Gersom observes, that render a reason to everyone that asks it of them; who, having been diligent and industrious, have got such a competency of knowledge, that they are able to give a proper reason of what they say, believe, or do: and such are they, who, by the blessing of grace in the use of means, are wise in a spiritual sense; know themselves, and Christ Jesus, and the way of salvation by him; have an understanding of the Scriptures, and of the doctrines of the Gospel; have their spiritual senses exercised, to discern between truth and error; are of established judgments, and capable of teaching others good judgment and knowledge; and of giving a reason of their faith, hope, and practice; see **1Pe 3:15**. Now such is the conceit of an ignorant sluggard, that he is wiser than ten thousand or ever so many of these; he thinks himself the wisest man, inasmuch as he enjoys ease and quiet in his stupid sottish way, while they are toiling and labouring, and taking a great deal of pains to get knowledge; and that he sleeps in a whole skin, and escapes the censure and reproaches of men, which they endure for being precise in religious duties, and constant in the performance of them; and fancies he can get to heaven in an easier way, without all this care and toil and trouble, only by saying, Lord, have mercy on me, at last.

Proverbs 26:17

Ver. 17. He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife [belonging] not to him,.... One that going along the streets, and passing by the door, where two or more persons are quarrelling, and he thrusts himself in and intermeddles in the affair he has no concern in; and interests himself in the cause of the quarrel he has nothing to do with, on account of acquaintance, relation, or office; and especially when, instead of being a mediator and peacemaker, he takes on one side, and acts the angry part, as Aben Ezra interprets the word rendered "meddleth"; blows things up into a greater flame, and enrages the one against the other. Such a man

[is like] one that taketh a dog by the ears; which are short, and difficult to be held, and tender; and therefore cannot bear to be held by them, especially to be pulled and lugged by them, and which is very provoking; and as such a man has work enough to do to hold him, so he is in danger of being bitten by him, at least when he is forced to let go his hold: and so it is with a man that interferes in a quarrel in a furious manner; it is much if one or other of the contending parties do not fall upon him and abuse him. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "as he that holdeth the tail of a dog."

Proverbs 26:18

Ver. 18. As a mad [man], who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death. Or the instruments of death, as Aben Ezra; or the sharp arrows of death, as the Targum and Syriac version; who casts firebrands into the houses and barns of his neighbours, to consume them; or arrows at their persons and cattle, to destroy them; or any other instruments of death, which none but a mad man, or one wickedly mad, would do. Or, "as one that makes himself mad" {e}; that feigns himself mad, and, under colour of this, does mischief to his neighbour's person and property: or, "as one that hides himself" {f}; that casts firebrands, arrows, and other deadly things, in a private way, so as not to be seen, and that it may not be known from whence they come: or, "as one that wearies himself" {g}, so Jarchi; in doing mischief in such a way. The word in the Arabic language signifies to play and be in sport; and so it means one that does these things in sport, as it is a sport to a fool to do mischief; which sense agrees with what follows.

{e} hlhltmk "ut se habet qui iunsanum ne simulat", Piscator; "ut qui se insanire fingit", Cocceius. {f} "Sicut abscondit se", Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus. {g} "Ut sese fatigat", Tigurine version.

Proverbs 26:19

Ver. 19. So [is] the man [that] deceiveth his neighbour,.... By telling him a lie; or by reporting false things concerning him; or by cheating him in trade and commerce; or by taking his goods privately from him; and, when caught in either of these,

and saith, Am not I in sport? do not be angry, I designed no hurt; it is all in jest, a mere joke: but, had he not been apprehended, it would have been in earnest, as he was. This is only an excuse, and as absurd an one as if a man should set fire to his neighbour's house and barns, or throw arrows at him, or strike him with any instrument of death, as the sword, &c. and then say he was only in jest, or pretend madness.

Proverbs 26:20

Ver. 20. Where no wood is, [there] the fire goeth out,.... Or "woods" {h}; where there is a large quantity of wood or fuel, the fire is kept up; but where there is little, scarce any or none at all, it goes out of course;

So where [there is] no talebearer, the strife ceaseth; or is silent {i}: men cease to quarrel one with another; they hold their peace and are silent, when there are none to bring tales from one to another, or any whisperer or backbiter to suggest evil things of each other; or when such are discouraged on both sides, and their tales are not listened to; or when they are detected and thrust out of doors, as they deserve, then strife subsides, and peace ensues. Contention is like a fire, the flame of which is blown up by talebearers and whisperers, who are as incendiaries, and as such are to be treated.

{h} Myue opab "deficientibus lignis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "in deficientia lignorum", Michaelis; "quum expirarunt ligna", Schultens. {i} qtvy "silebit", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "silet", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "consilescit", Cocceius, Schultens.

Proverbs 26:21

Ver. 21. As coals [are] to burning coals, and wood to fire,.... As brands, wood half burnt, or dead coals put to live and burning ones, soon take fire and become like them, and fit and proper fuel for them, and add to their heat:

so [is] a contentious man to kindle strife; or "a man of contentions" {k}; who is given to it, is full of it; it is agreeable to his natural temper and disposition; he is in his element when at it; such a man is as fuel to the fire, as a dead coal to a living one, which increases the heat of it; so does he, he kindles and spreads the flame of contention and strife.

{k} Mynwdm vya "vir contentionum", Montanus, Baynus, Piscator, Gejerus.

Proverbs 26:22

Ver. 22. The words of a talebearer [are] as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. These expressions are the same with those in Pr 18:8; and are here repeated, as being found along with others by the men of Hezekiah, Pr 25:1; as some others likewise are; and also because of the importance of them; and to impress the minds of men with a sense of the evil of such a practice, that they may shun it, and avoid those that are given to it. See Gill on "Pr 18:8".

Proverbs 26:23

Ver. 23. Burning lips, and a wicked heart,.... Either burning with wrath and malice; breathing out threatenings and slaughter; pursuing men with reproaches and slanders, arising from a wicked heart: or rather, burning with profession of love to God, and affection to good men; with great pretensions of kindness, and promises of good things, when their hearts are wicked, and they design noticing less; say one thing with their lips, with the greatest show of affection and sincerity, and mean another in their hearts. These

[are like] a potsherd covered with silver dross: which at a distance, or to less discerning persons, looks like silver, and is taken for it; when the covering is only dross, and what is within is only a potsherd, Or a piece of an earthen vessel, good for nothing: such are the specious professions and deceitful words, which flow from a wicked heart.

Proverbs 26:24

Ver. 24. He that hateth dissembleth with his lips,.... He that bears a grudge in his mind, and retains hatred in his heart against any person, hides it all he can, till he has an opportunity of showing it as he would; he pretends a great deal of friendship with his lips, that his hatred might not be known; he would be thought to be a friend, when he is really an enemy; he does not choose as yet to make himself known what he is. Some render it to a sense the reverse, "the enemy", or "he that hateth, is known by his lips" {l}; so the Targum, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions: if you carefully watch him, mark his words, and observe what he says, you will find out the hatred that lies in his heart; he cannot forbear saying something, at one time or another, which betrays the malignity of his mind;

and layeth up deceit within him; or, "though {m} he layeth up", &c. hides it as much as he can, yet it will show itself in some way or another.

{l} rkny "agnoscetur", Montanus, Vatablus; "cognoscetur", Tigurine version; "cognoscitur", Amama, so Luther. {m} w "quamvis", Luther. apud Gejerus, Baynus.

Proverbs 26:25

Ver. 25. When he speaketh fair, believe him not,.... Gives good words, flatters with his lips, pretends great kindness and favour, expresses himself in a very gracious and amiable manner, in order to gain attention and respect; or when he delivers himself in a submissive and suppliant way, with great humility and deference; or in a mournful and pitiful strain, as if he had the most tender affection and concern; be not too credulous; do not suffer yourselves to be imposed upon by him; be upon your guard, distrust him, suspect a snake in the grass;

for [there are] seven abominations in his heart; a multitude of wicked purposes, schemes, and designs, which he has formed there against you, and which he only waits a proper time to put in execution; things abominable to God and men. Aben Ezra thinks reference is had to the seven abominations in **Pr 6:16**.

Proverbs 26:26

Ver. 26. [Whose] hatred is covered by deceit,.... The hatred of whose heart is covered by deceitful words, and strong expressions of love and esteem; so that those to whom they are made are deceived by them. Or, whose "hatred is covered in a waste or desert place" {n}; it being not seen; as what is done in desert places is not obvious to view, being little frequented; which agrees with what follows, and keeps up the antithesis between the two clauses: Schultens renders it, with a tumultuous noise, with loud and public acclamations; see **Zec 4:7**;

his wickedness shall be showed before the [whole] congregation; in an open court of judicature, where he shall be brought, arraigned, and tried for his wickedness; which, though covertly done, shall be exposed and proved upon him: or before the church of God, where he shall be convicted by the word, and be obliged to acknowledge his sin; and, in a member, be reproved before all, and rejected: or however, at the great day of judgment, before angels and men, when all will be convened together; and where every secret work will be brought, and will be brought to light, and receive its just reward.

{n} Nwavmb "in desolatione", Montanus; "in solitudine", Baynus, Vatablus; "in vastatione", Tigurine version; "in vastitate", Mercerus, Piscator, so Ben Melech.

Proverbs 26:27

Ver. 27. Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein,.... That devises mischief against others, it shall come upon himself. The allusion is to the digging of pits for catching wild beasts, which are slightly covered with earth; and which sometimes the pursuers, through inadvertency, fall into themselves; the passage seems to be taken from **Ps 7:15**;

and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him; that rolls a stone up hill, if he does not take care, it will return back, and fall with great force upon himself; so the mischief which a wicked man labours hard at, as men do in digging a pit, or rolling a stone, in time rolls back upon themselves; the measure they mete out to others is measured to them. Jarchi makes mention of an "hagadah", or exposition, which illustrates this passage, by the case of Abimelech; who slew threescore and ten persons on one stone, and was himself killed with a piece of a millstone cast upon him, **Jud 9:18**; this may put in mind of the fable of Sisyphus {o}, feigned in hell to roll a great stone to the top of a mountain, which presently falling down on his head, made his labour fruitless.

{o} "Aut petis aut urges ruitum, Sisyphe, saxum", Ovid. Metamorph. l. 4. v. 460.

Proverbs 26:28

Ver. 28. A lying tongue hateth [those that are] afflicted by it,.... That is, a man of a lying tongue, that is given to lying, hates those that are hurt and crushed by his lies; the reason why he hurts them with his lies is because he hates them; and, having hurt them, he hates them, being made his enemies, and from whom he may expect and be in fear of revenge: moreover, he hates those that are troubled at and disturbed with his lies; or the "contrite" {p} and humble men: or those who "smite" or "strike" {q} him, as some render the word, actively; that is, reprove him, and bring him to shame for lying. The words are by some translated, a "contrite" person, or everyone of "the contrite ones, hateth a lying tongue" {r}; such as are of a broken and of a contrite spirit, and that tremble at the word of God, or are hurt by lies, these abhor a liar. The Targum is, "a lying tongue bates the ways of truth;"

and the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "a lying tongue hate truth"; and so the Vulgate Latin version, "a lying tongue loves not truth"; for nothing is more contrary to a lie than truth;

and a flattering mouth worketh ruin; both to itself and to the persons flattered by it: or, "makes an impulse" {s}; a pushing, a driving away; it drives away such as cannot bear its flatteries: and pushes on such that are taken with it, both into sin and into ruin.

{p} wykd "contritos suos", Montanus, Michaelis. {q} "Percutientes", Gejerus. {r} "Linguam falsitatis odit quisque contritorum ejus", Cocceius Lexic. col. 158. "quisque contritorum ab ea", ibid. version. {s} hxdm "expulsionem", Pagninus, Montanus; "impulsum sive lapsum", Vatablus; "impulsionem", Tigurine version, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 27:1

Ver. 1. Boast not thyself of tomorrow,.... Or, "of tomorrow day" {t}. Either of having a tomorrow, or of any future time; no man can assure himself of more than the present time; for, however desirable long life is, none can be certain of it; so says the poet {u}: for though there is a common term of man's life, threescore years and ten, yet no one can be sure of arriving to it; and, though there may be a human probability of long life, in some persons of hale and strong constitutions, yet there is no certainty, since life is so frail a thing; the breath of man is in his nostrils, which is soon and easily stopped; his life is but as a vapour, which appears for a little while, and then vanishes away; all flesh is as grass, which in the morning flourishes, in the evening is cut down, and on the morrow is cast into the oven: man is like a flower, gay and beautiful for a season, but a wind, an easterly blasting wind, passes over it, and it is gone; his days are as a shadow that declineth towards the evening; they are as a hand's breadth; yea, his age is as nothing before the Lord. Death is certain to all men, as the fruit of sin, by the appointment of God; and there is a certain time fixed for it, which cannot be exceeded; but of that day and hour no man knows; and therefore cannot boast of a moment of future time, or of a tomorrow, nor of what he shall enjoy on the morrow {w}; for, what he has today he cannot be certain he shall have the next; he cannot assure himself of health and honour, of pleasures, riches, and friends; he may have health today, and sickness tomorrow; be in honour today, and in disgrace on the morrow: he may bid his soul eat, drink, and be merry, seeing he has much goods laid up for many years, and vainly say, tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant, when this night his soul may be required of him; he may have his wife and children, friends and relations, about him now, and before another day comes be stripped of them all; he may be in great affluence, and gave great substance for the present, and in a short time all may be taken from him, as Job's was; riches are uncertain things, they make themselves wings and flee away. Nor should a man boast of what he will do on the morrow; either in civil things, in trade and business; to which the Apostle James applies this passage, **Jas 4:13**; or in acts of charity, so Aben Ezra explains it, boast not of an alms deed to be done tomorrow; whatever a man finds to be his duty to do in this respect, he should do it at once, while he has an opportunity: or in things religious; as that he will repent of his sins, and amend his life on the morrow; that he will attend the means of grace, hear the Gospel, the voice of Christ; all which should be to day, and not be put off till tomorrow. Nor should true believers procrastinate the profession of their faith; nor should any duty, or exercise of religion, be postponed to another season; but men should work while it is day, and always abound in the work of the Lord, and be found so doing; see Isa 56:12;

for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth; time is like a teeming woman, to which the allusion is, big with something; but what that is is not known till brought forth: as a woman, big with child, knows not what she shall bring forth till the time comes, whether a son or a daughter, a dead or a living child; so the events of time, or what is in the womb of time, are not known till brought forth; these are the secret things which belong to God, which he keeps in his own breast; the times and seasons of things are only in his power, **Ac 1:6**. We know not what the present day, as the Targum renders it, will bring forth; and still less what tomorrow will do, what changes it will produce in our circumstances, in our bodies and in our minds; so that we cannot be certain what we shall be, what we shall have, or what we shall do, on the morrow, even provided we have one.

{t} rxm Mwyb "in die crastino", Pagninus, Montanus. {u} Sophoclis Oedipus Colon. v. 560. "Nemo tam divos habuit faventes, erastinum ut possit sibi polliceri", Senco. Thyest. v. 617, 618. {w} "Quid sit futurum eras, fuge quaerere", Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 9.

Proverbs 27:2

Ver. 2. Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth,.... Men should do those things which are praiseworthy; and should do them openly, that they may be seen and praised for them: for it is honourable to have such a character as Demetrius had, who had a good report of all men; and as the brother had, whose praise in the Gospel was in all the churches. To be commended by others, by any but a man's self, is to his credit and reputation; but nothing more hurtful to it than self-commendation; see 2Co 10:18; in some cases it is right for a man indeed to commend himself, when the glory of God, the credit of religion, the cause of truth and self-vindication, require it; as the prophet Samuel, the Apostle Paul, and others, have been obliged to do, 1Sa 12:3, &c.

a stranger, and not thine own lips; a stranger means any other than a man's self; and if it is one that he knows not, or has little acquaintance with; or if a foreigner, that does not personally know him, only has good testimonies of him, or has read his works; and especially if in other respects an enemy; it is greatly to his honour to be praised by him: and such a commendation comes with much better grace than from himself, and from whom indeed it would not come with any.

Proverbs 27:3

Ver. 3. A stone [is] heavy, and the sand weighty,.... As was the stone which was at the well's mouth, where Laban's flocks were watered, which could not be rolled away till all the shepherds were gathered together, Ge 29:2; and like the burdensome stone Jerusalem is compared to Zec 12:3; and as that at the sepulchre of Christ, rolled away by the angel, Mt 28:2. And sand is a very ponderous thing; difficult to be carried, as the Septuagint render it, as a bag of it is; and to which heavy afflictions are sometimes compared, **Job 6:2**;

but a fool's wrath [is] heavier than them both; it cannot be removed, it rests in his bosom; it is sometimes intolerable to himself; he sinks and dies under the weight of it, as Nabal did: "wrath killeth the foolish man", **Job 5:2**; and it is still more intolerable to others, as Nebuchadnezzar's wrath and his fiery furnace were.

Proverbs 27:4

Ver. 4. Wrath [is] cruel, and anger [is] outrageous,.... Or "an inundation" {x}; it is like the breaking in of the sea, or a flood of mighty waters, which know no bounds, and there is no stopping them: so cruel and outrageous were the wrath and anger of Simeon and Levi, in destroying the Shechemites; of Pharaoh, in making the Israelites to serve with hard bondage, and ordering their male children to be killed and drowned; and of Herod, in murdering the infants in and about Bethlehem;

but who [is] able to stand before envy? which is secret in a man's heart, and privately contrives and works the ruin of another, and against which there no guarding. All mankind in Adam fell before the envy of Satan; for it was through the envy of the devil that sin and death came into the world, in the Apocrypha:

"Nevertheless through envy of the devil came death into the world: and they that do hold of his side do find it." (Wisdom 2:24)

Abel could not stand before the envy of Cain; nor Joseph before the envy of his brethren; nor Christ before the envy of the Jews, his bitter enemies; and, where it is, there is confusion and every evil work, **Jas 3:14**. An envious man is worse than an angry and wrathful man; his wrath and anger may be soon over, or there may be ways and means of appeasing him; but envy continues and abides, and works insensibly.

{x} Pjv "inundatio", Michaelis, so Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, "exundatio", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "inundatio salcans", Schultens.

Proverbs 27:5

Ver. 5. Open rebuke [is] better than secret love. This is to be understood, not of rebuke publicly given; though Aben Ezra thinks public reproof is meant, which, arising from love, is better than that which is done in secret, though in love, as being more effectual; for rebuke among friends should be given privately, according to our Lord's direction, Mt 18:15; but it signifies reproof given faithfully and plainly, with openness of heart, and without mincing the matter, and palliating the offence; but speaking out freely, and faithfully laying before a person the evil of his sin, in all the circumstances of it, as the Apostle

Paul did to Peter, when he withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed, **Ga 2:11**. Now such kind of reproof is better than such love to a person as will not suffer him to tell him of his faults, for fear of grieving him, or losing his friendship; or than such love as does not show itself in deeds, and particularly in faithful reproofs; for so to act is to hate a person, and suffer sin to be upon him, Le 19:17.

Proverbs 27:6

Ver. 6. Faithful [are] the wounds of a friend,.... That is, friendly reproofs; which, though they may be severe, at least thought so, and may grieve and wound, and cause pain and uneasiness for the present, yet, proceeding from a spirit of love, faithfulness, and integrity, and designed for the good of the person reproved, ought to be kindly received; see Ps 141:5;

but the kisses of an enemy [are] deceitful; flow from a deceitful heart, and not to be confided in, as the kisses of Joab and Judas. It may be rather rendered, "are to be deprecated" {y}; prayed against, as real evils, hurtful and pernicious; and so the Targum renders it, "are evil". Good is the advice of Isocrates {z},

"reckon them faithful, not who praise everything thou sayest or doest, but those that reprove what is amiss."

{y} twrten "deprecanda", Junius & Tremillius, Piscator, Cocceius, Amama.
{z} Ad Nicoclem, p. 38.

Proverbs 27:7

Ver. 7. The full soul loatheth an honeycomb,.... Or "tramples upon" it {a}, as the word signifies, and most versions render it, expressive of contempt and abhorrence; and suits will the situation of the honeycomb, which was usually in trees and rocks in Palestine: and so might drop from thence, and be trampled upon by passengers; and especially such as are here described, whose appetites have been sated with dainties, and their stomachs heave at the most delicious food. Jarchi interprets this of one that has no desire after the doctrines of the law; and so the senses of it are not esteemed by him; whereas he that has a desire for it, even the things which come to him with bitterness and labour are sweet to him. But it may be better applied to a self-sufficient man, that is full of himself: of his own wisdom and knowledge in divine things; of his strength, and the power of his free will; of his purity, holiness, goodness, and righteousness; who loathes the Gospel, comparable to the honeycomb for its sweetness; see Pr 16:24; it being disagreeable to his taste, and as insipid as the white of an egg to him; and as being against him, which makes him out an arrant fool, blows a blast on all his goodness and goodliness, strips the creature of his righteousness, and excludes boasting;

but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet; that is in want of provision, has an appetite for it; anything, though ever so mean and disrelishing to others, is sweet to such an one; as was barley bread to Artaxerxes king of Persia, and country bread made of bran to Ptolemy Lagus king of Egypt, when in great distress for food {b}: Seneca says {c}, hunger will make bad bread fine food. And so is the Gospel, and every doctrine of it, to a sensible sinner; that is in want, and knows its wants, and has desires after spiritual things created in it; hungers and thirsts after the word and ordinances; after Christ, the bread of life; after the blessings of grace in him; particularly after the pardon of sin, and justifying righteousness and salvation by him; and after more knowledge of him, and communion with him. Now, though, here is nothing bitter in the Gospel, properly speaking, as in the law; yet, that which is bitter to others, and had been bitter to the above persons, is now sweet, and which are disagreeable to the flesh; as the denial of sinful, civil, and righteous self, which the Gospel teaches; and even that which is the most contemptible to men; as the preaching of the cross, or the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ; the doctrines of electing grace, imputed righteousness, the satisfaction of Christ, &c. How sweet are these to the taste of a hungry soul! and even though they are attended with bitter afflictions, the reproaches, revilings, and persecutions of men; as the paschal lamb, a type of Christ, was eaten with bitter herbs. This may also be applied to the hearing of the word; where and when there is plenty of means, men grow weary of the word, sick of it, and surfeit upon it and loath it; or, however, are very curious and nice, and cannot take up with plain preaching, but must have something suited to their palate, dressed up in a very elegant manner: but when the word of the Lord is precious or rare, and where there are few opportunities of hearing it, sensible souls, that have spiritual appetites, are glad of it; and it is sweet unto them, though not so nicely dressed and though brought to them in a homely manner.

{a} owbt "calcabit", Pagninus, Montanus; "caleat", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus; "conculcat", Cocceius; "proculcat", Michaelis, Schultens. {b} "Jejunus stomachus raro vulgaria temnit", Horat. Sermon. l. 2. Sat. 2. {c} Epist. 123.

Proverbs 27:8

Ver. 8. As a bird that wandereth from her nest,.... To seek for food for herself and her young; or that leaves it without returning to it, and so her eggs or her young are exposed, and she herself liable to fall into the hands of birds of prey, or of the fowler, when she would be safe in her nest; as there was a law in Israel in her favour,
De 22:6; or as one that is forced out and obliged to wander from place to place, Isa 16:2;

so [is] a man that wandereth from his place; who, in time of famine and distress, goes into other parts for bread, as Jacob's sons went down into Egypt; and such are they in a spiritual sense who leave all, and follow Christ for food for their souls; or who are forced to flee from place to place, and wander about in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth, because of the persecution of their enemies; or rather it is to be taken in an ill sense and applied to such who abide not in the calling whereunto they are called; dislike, and are unsatisfied with, their present business of life, and seek new employments, which oftentimes is to the hurt and detriment of themselves and families; and also to such who wander from the way of spiritual understanding, from the place of divine worship, from the word, ordinances, and commandments of the Lord; see Pr 21:16.

Proverbs 27:9

Ver. 9. Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart,.... Meaning not the holy anointing oil for sacred use, or the perfume or incense offered on the altar of incense; but common oil or ointment used at entertainments, poured on the heads of the guests; and incense in censing of rooms, which were very delightful, pleased the senses, and so exhilarated the heart;

so [doth] the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel; so the sweet and pleasant words, the wise and cordial counsel of a man's friend, rejoice his heart; he takes it well, he is highly delighted with it; he receives it kindly, and pursues it to advantage: or "by counsel of soul" {c}, such as relates to the welfare of the soul here and hereafter; such is the counsel Christ gives, to buy of him gold tried in the fire, white raiment eye salve; and such as the

Scriptures give, which, with the saints, are the men of their counsel, as they were David's; and which ministers of the Gospel give, who are therefore like ointment and perfume, "a sweet savour of life unto life": some render the words, and they will bear it, "so the sweetness of a man's friend, more than the counsel of his soul" {d} or than his own; that is, the sweet counsel of a friend is better than his own, and more rejoices his heart, and gives him more pleasure than that does; and this way go the Jewish commentators.

{c} vpn tuem "a consilio animae", Montanus; "propter consilium animae", Pagninus, Gejerus, Michaelis. {d} "Magis quam consilium animae, sub. propriae", Vatablus, Baynus; "quam consilium proprium", Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Amama.

Proverbs 27:10

Ver. 10. Thine own friend, and thy father's friend forsake not,.... Who have been long tried and proved, and found faithful; these should be kept to and valued, and not new ones sought; which to do is oftentimes of bad consequence. Solomon valued his father's friend Hiram, and kept up friendship with him; but Rehoboam his son forsook the counsel of the old men his father's friends and counsellors, and followed the young mien his new friends, and thereby lost ten tribes at once. Jarchi interprets this of God, the friend of Israel and of their fathers, who is not to be forsaken, and is a friend that loves at all times; and to forsake him is to forsake the fountain of living waters;

neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity; poverty and distress, to tell him thy case, expecting sympathy relief, and succour from him; but rather go to thy friend and father's friend, who sticks closer than a brother; see Pr 18:24;

[for] better is a neighbour [that is] near than a brother far off: a neighbour that is a fast and faithful friend, and who is not only near as to place but as to affections is more serviceable and, useful to a man in time of distress than a brother though near in blood, yet as far off in place, so much more in affection, and from whom a man can promise nothing, and little is to be expected. The phrase in the preceding clause signifies a cloudy day, and such a day of distress through poverty is; in which sense it is used by Latin {e} writers, when a man is alone, and former friends care not to come nigh him.

{e} "Tempora si fuerunt nubila, solus eris", Ovid. Trist. 1. Eleg. 8.

Proverbs 27:11

Ver. 11. My son, be wise, and make my heart glad,.... That is, show thyself to be a wise man by thy words and actions; endeavour to get a good share of wisdom and knowledge, and make a good use of it, and that will rejoice my heart; as nothing more gladdens the heart of a parent than the wisdom and prudent behaviour of his son; see
Pr 10:1;

that I may answer him that reproacheth me; with begetting a foolish son, or a wicked man; or making him such by ill examples; or through neglect of education; or by using too much severity in it.

Proverbs 27:12

Ver. 12. A prudent [man] foreseeth the evil,....
See Gill on "Pr 22:3"; or "seeth the evil" {f}; the evil of sin, as it is contrary to the nature, will, and law and abominable in his sight; and not only the evil of gross actions of sin, but of indwelling lust; and such an one, who is wise to that which is good, sees the sad work sin has made in the world, and in himself; how it has defaced the image of God in man, stripped him of his righteousness, and defiled all the powers and faculties of his soul; upon which sight of it he is filled with shame, reflects upon himself for his past conduct, loathes sin, and himself for it, repents of it, confesses and forsakes it: he likewise sees the evil of punishment for sin, the just demerit of it, the curse of the law, the wrath of God, the second and eternal death, a separation from God, a sense and feeling of divine vengeance, anguish, and distress intolerable, and that for ever;

[and] hideth himself; not in secret places, that he may not be seen by the Lord; nor in his own works of righteousness, to secure him from the wrath of God: nor is it to he understood of his hiding himself from sinners and their company, and so escaping the pollutions of the world; but of his betaking himself to Christ, who is the city of refuge, the stronghold, the rock, in the clefts of which the people of God hide themselves; even in his wounds, or in him as a suffering crucified Saviour, and who is the hiding place from the wind, and covert from the storm of divine wrath; such are redemption by him, his sacrifice and satisfaction, his blood and righteousness, and intercession; see

Isa 32:2; also
See Gill on "Pr 22:3";

[but] the simple pass on, [and] are punished; such who are thoughtless and foolish, have no sight nor sense of sin and danger, go on in their sinful course of life without any care or concern, without any fear or dread, till their feet stumble on the dark mountains of eternity; and they fall into the bottomless pit of perdition, from whence there is no recovery.

{f} har "videns", V. L. Tigurine version, Piscator; "vidit", Pagninus, Montanus; "videt", Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Schultens.

Proverbs 27:13

Ver. 13. Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman. See Gill on "Pr 20:16", where the same proverb is, and is expressed in the same words as here.

Proverbs 27:14

Ver. 14. He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice,.... So as not only to be heard by him, but by others; who is extravagant in his praises and commendations of him; who exceeds all bounds of modesty, truth, and decency; who affects pompous words, and hyperbolical expressions; and shows himself to be a real sycophant and flatterer, having some sinister end to serve by it;

rising early in the morning; lest any should be before him, and get the benefit he seeks by his flattery; or as if he had not time enough in the day to finish his encomium, unless he began early in the morning, and continued it all the day; and so it denotes his being incessant at this work, always harping on this string, or expressing himself in this adulatory way; or, as some think, this is mentioned as an aggravation of his sin, that he should be acting this low, mean, and criminal part, when he should be employed in devotion and prayer to God;

it shall be counted a curse to him; either to the flatterer, by his friend whom he blesses, and by all wise men that hear him, who will despise him all one as if he cursed him: the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it to this sense, that such an one nothing differs, or nothing seems to differ, from one that curses: or else to the person blessed, whom others will curse or however detract from his character, because of the profuse praises bestowed upon him; nay, sometimes God himself curses such a man, who listens to, is fond of, and receives the fulsome flatteries of wicked men, as in the case of Herod, Ac 12:22.

Proverbs 27:15

Ver. 15. A continual dropping in a very rainy day,.... That is, through the roof of a house which is not well covered, or which lets in rain by one means or another; so that in a thorough rainy day it keeps continually dropping, to the great annoyance of those within, and which is very uncomfortable to them: it is observed {g} that rain is called by the name in the text, because a man is shut up under a roof falls; and continuing long he is shut up within doors and cannot come out;

and a contentious woman are alike; troublesome and uncomfortable; as in a rainy day, a man cannot go abroad with any pleasure, and if the rain is continually dropping upon him in his house he cannot sit there with any comfort; and so a contentious woman, that is always scolding and brawling, a man has no comfort at home; and if he goes abroad he is jeered and laughed at on her account by others; and perhaps she the more severely falls upon him when he returns for having been abroad; see Pr 19:13.

{g} David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 107. 3.

Proverbs 27:16

Ver. 16. Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind,.... Whoever attempts to stop her brawls and contentions, to repress and restrain them, and hinder her voice being heard in the streets, and endeavours to hide the shame that comes upon herself and family, attempts a thing as impossible as to hide the wind in the palm of a man's hand, or to stop it from blowing; for as that, by being restrained or pent up by any methods that can be used, makes the greater noise, so, by all the means that are used to still a contentious woman, she is but the more noisy and clamorous, and becomes more shameful and infamous;

and the ointment of his right hand, [which] bewrayeth [itself]: or "will call" or "calls" {h}, and says, in effect, Here am I; for the smell of it, which cannot be hid when held in a man's hand, betrays it; and the faster he holds it, and the more he presses and squeezes it, and the more it is heated hereby, the more it diffuses its savour, and is known to be where it is; and so all attempts to stop the mouth of a brawling woman does but cause her to brawl the louder.

{h} arqy "clamabit", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Mercerus; "vocabit", Baynus; "clamat", Piscator, Michaelis; "praeconem agit", Schultens.

Proverbs 27:17

Ver. 17. Iron sharpeneth iron,.... A sword or knife made of iron is sharpened by it; so butchers sharpen their knives;

so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend; by conversation with him; thus learned men sharpen one another's minds, and excite each other to learned studies; Christians sharpen one another's graces, or stir up each other to the exercise of them, and the gifts which are bestowed on them, and to love and to good works. So Jarchi and Gersom understand it of the sharpening of men's minds to the learning of doctrine; but Aben Ezra, takes it in an ill sense, that as iron strikes iron and sharpens it, so a wrathful man irritates and provokes wrath in another. Some render the words, "as iron delighteth in iron, so a man rejoiceth the countenance of his friend", {i}: by his company and conversation.

{i} dxy "laetatur", a hdx "laetari; ferrum in ferro laetatur, et virum laetificant ora socii ejus", Gussetius, p. 242. "ferrum ferro hiluratur, et vir exhilarat vultum sodalis sui", Schultens.

Proverbs 27:18

Ver. 18. Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof,.... That takes care of a fig tree, either his own or another's, planted in his garden or vineyard; see Lu 13:6; who cultivates it, digs about and dungs it, and prunes it, and does everything necessary to it; when it brings forth fruit, and that is ripe and fit to eat, he eats of it, as it is but just he should; see **1Co 9:7**;

so he that waiteth on his master; or "that keeps his master" {k}, his person from danger, and his goods faithfully committed to his trust; or "that observes his master" {l}, that looks to his hand, observes his motions, directions, and commands;

shall be honoured; as Joseph was in Potiphar's house, and elsewhere; and as all those are who observe the commandments of God, and are the servants of Christ; see **1Sa 2:30**.

{k} rmv "qui custodit", Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "custodiens", Montanus; "qui custos est domini sui", V. L. {l} "Observat", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis; "observans", Cocceius, Schultens.

Proverbs 27:19

Ver. 19. As in water face [answereth] to face,.... As water is as a looking glass, in which a man may behold his own face and another's; or as the face in the water answers to the face of a man, and there is a great likeness between them. All things through water appear greater, as Seneca {m} observes, and so more clear and plain;

so the heart of man to man; one man's heart may be seen and discerned in some measure by another, as by his countenance; for though, as the poet {n} says, "frontis nulla fides", yet the countenance is often the index of the mind, though not an infallible one; wrath and anger in the breast may be seen in the face, as were in Cain's; thus Jacob saw some resentment at him in the mind of Laban, and judged he had some design of mischief against him by the change of his countenance; also what is in the heart of man is discerned by what comes out of it, by his words, and also by his actions; yea, a man may know in a good measure what is in another man's heart, by what he finds in his own: the word of God is a glass, or medium of vision, and like water, in which a man's face is seen, through which a man sees his own heart; the law is a glass, in which an enlightened person sees not only the perfections of God, the nature of righteousness, but also his sin, and the sinfulness of it; this glass mother magnifies nor multiplies his sins, but sets them in a true light before him, by which he discerns heart sins, and sees and knows the plague of his heart; and the Gospel is a glass, wherein he beholds the glory of Christ, sees and can discern whether Christ is formed in him, and he has the grace of the Spirit of God wrought in his soul, as faith, hope, love, repentance, humility, self-denial, &c. moreover, as the face seen in the water is similar to a man's face, so the hearts of men are alike, not merely in a natural sense, see Ps 33:15; but in a moral and spiritual sense the hearts of unregenerate men are alike, and answer to each other; for they are all equally corrupted, one and depraved; the heart of every man is desperately wicked; the imaginations of the thoughts of the hearts or wicked men, one and all of them, are only evil, and that continually; their affections are inordinately the same, they love and hate the same persons and things; their minds and consciences are all defiled; their understandings are darkened; their wills are averse to that which is good, and bent on that which is evil: and so the hearts of good men are alike; they have all one heart and one way given them; their experiences agree as to the work of grace and conversion; they are all made sensible of sin, the evil of it, and danger by it; they are all brought off of their own righteousness, and are led to Christ to depend on him alone for righteousness, pardon, and eternal life; they are partakers of the same promises in the Gospel, and have the same enemies to grapple with, and the same temptations, trials, and exercises from sin, Satan, and the world; and they have the same things put into their hearts, the laws of God, the doctrines of Christ, and the several graces of the Spirit of Christ; so that there cannot be a greater likeness between a man's face and that seen in the water, than there is between the heart of one saint and another; the hearts of Old and New Testament saints, and of all in all ages and places, answer to one another. The Targum paraphrases it to a sense quite the reverse,

"as waters and as faces which are not like one to another, so the hearts of the children of men are not like one to another;"

and to the same sense are the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

{m} Nat. Quaest. l. 1. c. 6. {n} Juvenal. Satyr. 2. v. 8.

Proverbs 27:20

Ver. 20. Hell and destruction are never full,.... The grave, as the word used often signifies; and which may be called "destruction", because bodies laid in it are soon corrupted and destroyed; and though bodies are cast into it and devoured by it, it is ready for more; it is one of the four things which never have enough. The place where Gog is said to be buried is called Hamongog, the multitude of Gog, Eze 39:11; and by the Septuagint there Polyandrion, which is the name the Greeks give to a burying place, because many men are buried there; and with the Latins the dead are called Plures {o}, the many, or the more; and yet the grave is never satisfied with them, Pr 30:16. Or hell, the place of everlasting damnation and destruction, is meant, which has received multitudes of souls already, and where there is room for more, nor will it be full until the last day;

so the eyes of man are never satisfied; as not the eyes of his body with seeing corporeal objects, but still are desirous of seeing more, and indeed everything that is to be seen, and are never glutted, **Ec 1:8**; so neither the eyes of the carnal mind, or the lusts of it, which are insatiable things, let the objects of them be what they will; as in an ambitious man, a covetous person, or an unclean one.

{o} Plauti Trinum, Act. 2. Sc. 2. v. 14.

Proverbs 27:21

Ver. 21. [As] the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold,.... For the trying, proving, and purifying these metals; see Pr 17:3;

so [is] a man to his praise; or "according to the mouth of his praise" {p}; if his own mouth praises him, as in Pr 27:2;, he is known to be what he is, a foolish and vainglorious person: or "so a man is proved by the mouth of him that praises him", as the Vulgate Latin version; or "of them that praise him", as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and so the Targum: the meaning is, either a man is known by the persons that praise him, according to what their characters are; if he is praised by good and virtuous men, he may be thought to be so himself; and if by wicked men, he may be concluded to be so likewise; see Pr 28:4; or he is known by the effect that praise has upon him; if it swells him with pride, and makes him haughty, conceited, and overbearing, he will appear to be a weak and foolish man; but if he continues modest and humble, and studious and diligent to answer his character, thankful to God for what he has, and to whom he gives all the glory, he will approve himself a wise and good man.

{p} wllhm ypl "ad os laudis suae", Gejerus.

Proverbs 27:22

Ver. 22. Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle,.... As the manna was, Nu 11:8; and as wheat beat and bruised in a mortar, or ground in a mill, retains its own nature; so, let a wicked man be used ever so roughly or severely, by words, admonitions, reproofs, and counsels; or by deeds, by corrections and punishment, by hard words or blows, whether publicly or privately; in the midst of the congregation, as the Targum and Syriac version; or of the sanhedrim and council, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions;

[yet] will not his foolishness depart from him; his inbred depravity and natural malignity and folly will not remove, nor will he leave his course of sinning he has been accustomed to; he is stricken in vain, he will revolt more and more, **Isa 1:5**. Anaxarchus the philosopher was ordered by the tyrant Nicocreon to be pounded to death in a stone mortar with iron pestles {q}, and which he endured with great patience.

{q} Laert. in Vit. Anaxarch. l. 9. p. 668.

Proverbs 27:23

Ver. 23. Be thou diligent to know the state of flocks,.... In what condition they are; what health they enjoy; how fat and fruitful they be; what pasturage they have; and that they want nothing fitting for them that can be had and is necessary; and also the number of them. The calling of the shepherd is here particularly mentioned, because valiant, honourable, innocent, and useful; but the same diligence is to be used in all other callings and business men are employed in, that they may provide for themselves and their families. It is in the original text, "the face of thy flocks" {r}; perhaps the allusion is to the exact and distinct knowledge some very diligent careful shepherds might have, so as to know each sheep in their flocks distinctly; see Joh 10:3; The Septuagint version renders it, the souls of thy flock, as if it was an instruction to spiritual pastors or shepherds, who have the care of the souls of men: and certain it is, that if it is the duty of shepherds in common to be diligent in looking after their sheep, and doing everything the duty of their office requires; then it must become the indispensable duty of pastors of churches to take heed to the flock of God committed to them, and to look into their state and condition, and provide for them, and feed them with knowledge and understanding, Ac 20:28;

[and] look well to thy herds; or, "put thy heart" {s} to them: show a cordial regard for them, and take a hearty care of them, that they have everything

needful for them; and which is for the owner's good as well as theirs.

{r} Knau ynp "faciem pecoris tui", Tigurine version, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens; "vultum", V. L. Pagninus; "facies", Montanus. {s} Kbl xyv "pone cor tuum", Pagninus, Montanus; "adverte cor", Cocceius; "adverte animum tuum", Michaelis; "apponere cor tuum", Schultens.

Proverbs 27:24

Ver. 24. For riches [are] not for ever,.... A man cannot be assured of the continuance of them; they are uncertain things, here today and gone tomorrow: wherefore, though a man has a considerable share of them, yet should follow one calling or another; particularly husbandry is recommended, or keeping sheep and cattle, which are increasing; by which means his substance will be continued and augmented, which otherwise is not to be depended on, but in a diligent attendance to business;

and doth the crown [endure] to every generation? the royal crown, that is not to be depended upon; a king that wears a crown is not sure he shall always wear it, or that it shall be continued to his family one generation after another. And it is suggested, that it is not even beneath such persons to have a regard to their flocks and herds, and the increase of their riches in this way: the Chinese kings, many of them, formerly employed themselves in husbandry, and set examples of industry and diligence to their subjects {t}; King Hezekiah provided himself possessions of flocks and herds in abundance, 2Ch 32:28.

{t} Vid. Martin. Hist. Sinica, p. 92, 93, 326.

Proverbs 27:25

Ver. 25. The hay appeareth, and the tender grass showeth itself,.... Some think this is mentioned to illustrate the uncertainty of riches, which soon vanish away; as the tender grass shows itself, and is presently cut down and quickly appears hay, and that soon consumed; but rather this contains an argument to take to the pastoral life and calling, since it may be performed with so much ease; for the earth, the valleys and hills, are covered with grass for the cattle; so that there is no further trouble than to drive the flocks into the pastures, and feed them there; or to cut down the grass, and make hay of it, and lay it up against the winter for fodder for them. The first clause, I think, may be rendered, "the hay removes" {u}, or is carried off; the grass being fit to cut, is mowed and made hay of, and that is carried off and laid up for the winter: "and the tender grass showeth itself"; springs up after the hay is carried off and so makes a second crop; or, however, becomes good pasture for cattle to feed on;

and herbs of the mountains are gathered; for the present use of the cattle; or being made hay of, are laid up for future use; or are gathered for medicine; many of this kind grow on mountains.

{u} hlg "migrat", Cocceius; "cum migraverit", Michaelis.

Proverbs 27:26

Ver. 26. The lambs [are] for thy clothing,.... This is another argument, exciting to diligence in the pastoral calling, taken from the profit arising from it: the wool of the lambs, or rather "sheep", as many versions render it; of it cloth is made, and of that garments to be worn, to keep decent, warm, and comfortable; see Job 31:20;

and the goats [are] the price of thy field: these, being brought up and sold, furnish the husbandman with money to purchase more fields to feed his cattle on. The Targum is,

"the goats are for negotiation;"

with the price of them a man may purchase any of the necessaries of life for himself and family; these are negotiated, Eze 27:21; the Syriac version is, "the goats are for thy food"; and so, between both the sheep and goats, man has both food and raiment; though his food is particularly mentioned in Pr 27:27.

Proverbs 27:27

Ver. 27. And [thou shalt have] goats' milk enough for thy food,.... The word for "goats", in Pr 27:26, signifies he goats, which were sold to buy fields, pay servants or rent, or purchase the necessaries of life; and this here signifies she goats, which were kept for their milk; and which was daily used for food in some countries, and is still in use for the same purpose in some parts of our kingdoms; and in medicine it has been preferred by some physicians above others, next to the milk of women {w}: and the diligent husbandman is promised not only plenty of this his own eating, at least a sufficiency of it, but for his family;

for the food of thy household; his wife and children:

and [for] maintenance for thy maidens: or "the lives" {x} of them, on which they should live; for, though menservants might require strong meat yet the maidens might live upon milk; besides, Athenaeus {y} speaks of most delicious cheese made of goats' milk, called "tromilicus". The design of the whole is to show that a man diligent in his business shall have a sufficiency for himself and his family; and, though it may be but the meaner sort of food and clothing he may get, yet, having food and raiment, he should therewith be content.

{w} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 28. c. 9. Vid. Scheuehzer. Physic, Sacr. vol. 5. p. 1016. {x} Myyxw "vitas", Montanus; "ad vitam", Gejerus; "life" is often put for "bread"; or for that by which life is maintained, both in Greek and Latin writers; so biov, in Hesiod. Opera, l. 1. v. 31, 328. and "vita", in Plaut. Stichus, Act. 3. Sc. 2. v. 9. Trinum, Act. 2. Sc. 4. v. 76. {y} Deipnosoph. l. 14. c. 22. p. 658. see also l. 1. c. 8. p 10.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 28:1

Ver. 1. The wicked flee when no man pursueth,.... Through the terrors of a guilty conscience, as in Cain and others; who fear where no immediate cause of fear is, are frightened with their own shadows; and as Gaal was with the shadow of the mountains, he took for an army of men, as his friend told him, **Jud 9:36**; they are chased with the sound of a shaken leaf, and fancy men are at their heels to destroy them, and therefore with all haste flee to some place of safety; see Le 26:17;

but the righteous are bold as a lion; which turns not away from any creature it meets with, nor mends its pace when it is pursued, but walks on intrepidly, and oftentimes lies down and sleeps in open places, and as securely as in woods and dens, being devoid of all fear; hence the heart of a valiant man is said to be as the heart of a lion,
2Sa 17:10; see Pr 30:30; so Pindar {z} compares a courageous man to a lion for boldness. Now righteous men are as bold as this creature, or more so; some

of them have stopped the mouths of lions, and have dwelt securely in the midst of them, as righteous Daniel: and all righteous men are or may be as fearless as the lion; fear God they do, but have no reason to fear any other; and many of them are fearless of men, of their menaces and reproaches, or of anything they can do to them; since not only angels are their guardians, but God is on their side, and Christ has overcome the world for them: they are fearless of Satan and his principalities; they are delivered out of his hands; they know he is a coward, though a roaring lion, and when resisted will flee from thorn; yea, that he is a chained, conquered, enemy: and, though they are afraid of committing sin, yet are fearless of the damning power of it; Christ having bore their sins, made satisfaction for thong; for whose sake they are pardoned; and whose righteousness justifies and blood cleanses from all sin: they are fearless of death; its sting being removed, itself abolished as a penal evil, and become a blessing, and is the righteous man's, gain: they are fearless of wrath to come; Christ having delivered them from it, and they being justified by his blood: they are courageous as the lion in fighting the Lord's battles with sin, Satan, and the world, and in enduring hardiness as good soldiers of Christ; knowing their cause is good, that Christ is the Captain of their salvation, their spiritual armour is proved, and they are sure of victory and of a crown They are "confident" {a} as the lion, as the word may he rendered; they are confident of the love of God, of their interest in Christ, of the grace of God in their hearts, and that all things work together for their good; and that it is, and always will be, well with them, let things go how they will in the world, and so are secure. They are bold and undaunted, both before God and men; before God in prayer, knowing him to be their covenant God in Christ, having in view the blood and righteousness of Christ, and being assisted by his Spirit: and they are undaunted before men; if the righteous man is a minister of the word, he speaks it boldly, as it ought to be spoken, fearing the faces of none, knowing it to be the Gospel of Christ, the truth, as it is in him, and the power of God to salvation; and if a private Christian, he is a public professor of Christ, this word and ordinances, which he is not ashamed to own before all the world; in short, the righteous are bold in life and in death, and will be so in the day of judgment; and it is their righteousness which makes them so, from which they are denominated righteous, even not their own, but the righteousness of Christ.

{z} Isthm. 4. antistroph. 3. col. 1. v. 5. {a} xjby "confiduat", Mercerus, Gejerus, Trigurine version; "confidet, vel confidere solet", Baynus; "confidit", Michaelis.

Proverbs 28:2

Ver. 2. For the transgression of a land many [are] the princes thereof,.... Either together; that is, reigning princes, such as lay claim to the crown, and usurp it; otherwise it is a happiness to a nation to have many princes of the blood, to inherit in succession, to support the crown in their family, and defend a nation, and study the good of it; but it is a judgment to a nation when many rise up as competitors for rule, or do rule, as at Athens, where thirty tyrants sprung up at once; by which factions and parties are made, and which issue in oppression, rapine, and murder: or successively, very quickly, one after another, being dethroned the one by the other: or removed by death, as in the land of Israel, in the times of the judges, and of the kings of Israel and Judah, after the revolt of the ten tribes; which frequent changes produce different administrations, new laws, and fresh taxes, disagreeable to the people; and oftentimes children come to be their princes, which is always reckoned an infelicity to a nation; see Ec 10:16; and all this is usually for some national sin or sins indulged to, which draw upon a people the divine resentment, and provoke God to suffer such changes among there;

but by a man of understanding [and] knowledge the state [thereof] shall be prolonged, either by a set of wise and understanding, good and virtuous men, who will oppose the growing vice and immoralities of a people, and form themselves into societies for the reformation of manners; the word "man" being taken collectively for a body of men: or by a wise and prudent minister or ministry, or a set of civil magistrates, who will show themselves to be terrors to evildoers, and a praise to them that do well: or by a wise and prudent prince, who seeks to establish his throne by judgment and mercy; who will take care that justice and judgment be executed in the land, and that vice and profaneness be discouraged; by means of such, the state of a kingdom, which seemed near to ruin, will be prolonged, and the happiness and prosperity of it secured and established; and God, in mercy to it, may long preserve the life of their king, will being a good one, a long reign is always a happiness to a nation. And to this sense is the Vulgate Latin version, "the life of the prince shall be longer"; and the Targum, which is,

"and the sons of men that understand knowledge shall endure;"

see **Ec 9:15**.

Proverbs 28:3

Ver. 3. A poor man that oppresseth the poor,.... Either one that is poor at the time he oppresses another like himself, either by secret fraud or open injury; from whom the oppressed can get no redress, as sometimes he may and does from a rich man: or rather one that has been poor, but now become rich, and got into some place of authority and profit, who should remember what he had been; and it might be expected that such an one would put on bowels of compassion towards the poor, as knowing what it was to be in indigent circumstances; but if, instead of this, he exercises his authority over the poor in a severe and rigid manner, and oppresses them, and squeezes that little out of them they have: he

[is like] a sweeping rain which leaveth no food: like a violent hasty shower of rain; which, instead of watering the seed, herbs, and plants, and causing them to grow, as moderate rain does, it washes away the very seed sown in the earth, or beats out the ripe corn from the ears, or beats it down, so that it riseth not up again; the effect of which is, there is no bread to the eater, nor seed to the sower, and consequently a famine. The design of the proverb is, to show how unnatural as well as intolerable is the oppression of the poor, by one that has been poor himself; even as it is contrary to the nature and use of rain, which is to fructify, and not to sweep away and destroy; and which when it does, there is no standing against it or diverting it.

Proverbs 28:4

Ver. 4. They that forsake the law praise the wicked,.... Who are like them; who forsake and transgress the law, as they do; every like loves its like; wicked men delight in sin, the transgression of the law, and in those that do it. One covetous man will bless and praise another, whom the Lord abhors, and commend his covetousness as frugality and good husbandry: one proud man will call another happy, and praise him as a man of spirit, that will not debase himself, but keep up his authority, rank, and dignity, and not condescend to men of low estates; the workers of wickedness are set up and extolled, and tempters of God, men of atheistical and deistical principles, are not only delivered from the punishment they deserve, but are commended for their bold spirits; see Ps 10:3. Or, "every wicked man praises those that forsake the law", so Schultens;

but such as keep the law contend with them; that is, with them that forsake it and praise the wicked; they are displeased with them, and show their resentment at them; they tend with them by arguments, and endeavour to convince them of their folly and wickedness; they prove them for it, even though they may be in high places, as John the Baptist reproved Herod. The Targum is,

"they contend with them, that they may return,"

or be converted; they strive and take pains with them, to convince them and bring them to repentance, and to a change of sentiments, life, and manners.

Proverbs 28:5

Ver. 5. Evil men understand not judgment,.... Or, "men of wickedness" {b}; that are under the governing power of it; who are given up and give up themselves unto it; who, like Ahab, sell themselves to work wickedness: these know not what is just and right between man and man, at least not to do it; they know it not practically; they are wise to do evil, but to do good have no knowledge, **Jer 4:22**; they know not the law of God, the rule of judgment, justice, and equity; at least not the extensiveness and spirituality of it, **Jer 8:7**; and much less the Gospel of Christ, which is sometimes so called, Isa 42:1. Nor do they notice, as they should, to the judgments of God in the earth; they do not consider his work, and the operation of his hand; the vengeance he takes on wicked men, so Jarchi interprets it; nor do they take any notice of the judgment to come, at which they must appear, and into which they will be brought, and all things done by them;

but they that seek the Lord understand all [things]; this character describes all good men that seek the Lord, in private and in public, that seek him by prayer and supplication, that wait upon him in the ordinances of his house; and all sensible sinners, who seek to Christ for righteousness, for rest, for life and salvation, for more grace from him, for more communion with him, for a greater degree of knowledge of him, and for immortality and eternal life, his kingdom and glory. And such "understand all things"; not in the most full and absolute sense; for this is proper and peculiar to God: nor all things natural and civil, which truly righteous persons, generally speaking, have the least share of, as arts, sciences, languages, trade and commerce in all its branches; and indeed universal knowledge of these things does not belong to anyone alan: nor all things in a religious sense; not all the difficult passages of Scripture, in which there are many things hard to be understood; but all things necessary to salvation; all things relating to their fallen, depraved, and miserable state and condition by nature, and to the way and means of their recovery and salvation by Christ; all things relating to a spiritual and saving knowledge of God in Christ; and to the knowledge of the person, offices, and grace of Christ; and to the work of the Spirit of God upon the heart; and of the doctrines of the Gospel, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, and so as to be food for their souls: and which understanding is given them, and they attain unto and increase in, by seeking the Lord, and using the means of knowledge, the word and ordinances; see **1Co 2:15**. The Targum and Syriac version render it,

"that understand all good things;"

and so Aben Ezra interprets it: the Arabic version is, "they understand it in all things"; that is, judgment, justice, and equity, in all its branches, and practise it.

{b} er yvna "viri mali, (in genitivo casu)", Mercerus; "vel malitiae", Baynus, Gejerus.

Proverbs 28:6

Ver. 6. Better [is] the poor that walketh in his uprightness,....
See Gill on "Pr 19:1";

than [he that is] perverse [in his] ways, though he [be] rich; or, "in [his] two ways" {c}: that halts between two ways, or makes use of both; sometimes turns to the one, to the right hand, and sometimes to the other, to the left hand; or that pretends to the one, and walks in the other; would be thought to be a virtuous and religious man, and to walk in the paths of righteousness and truth, when he walks in those of sin and wickedness. And now a poor man that walks evenly and uprightly, according to the word of God and truth of the Gospel, in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, and in the paths of faith and holiness, is better than he; more honourable, more comfortable, and happy in life and in death; he has grace now, and will have glory hereafter.

{c} Mykrd Heb. "duabus viis", Piscator, Cocceius; "pervertens duas vias", Baynus; "duplici via", Michaelis; "gemina via", Schultens, so Ben Melech.

Proverbs 28:7

Ver. 7. Whoso keepeth the law [is] a wise son,.... That observes the law of God; for, though he cannot perfectly keep it, yet he delights in it after the inward man; and with his spirit serves it, from a principle of love, in faith, and with a view to the glory of God, without mercenary and sinister ends. Such a man enjoys peace, and has a reward "in" though not "for" keeping the commands of it; so that it is his wisdom to observe it; and he may be truly called a wise man, **De 4:6**; Or that observes the law or commandments of his parents, which they enjoin him; see **Pr 6:20**; and particularly the law of God, which requires honour and obedience to be given to parents, and which turns to the account of children; it is well with them, and their days are prolonged on earth, and therefore they are wise that keep it, **Eph 6:1**; and such a wise son makes a glad father, as the contrary brings shame to him, as in the next clause;

but he that is a companion of riotous [men] shameth his father: that keeps company with gluttons, and indulges his sensual appetite with them; that "feeds" {d} such persons and himself, as some render the word; that gives up himself to an epicurean life: he brings himself at last to disgrace and poverty, and so causes shame to his father; who will be charged with neglecting his education, and indulging him in such a luxurious way of living; see Pr 10:5.

{d} her "qui pascit", V. L. Pagninus, Piscator, Gejerus, Schultens; "pascitar", Michaelis; "pascens", Montanus.

Proverbs 28:8

Ver. 8. He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance,.... By biting and oppressing the poor; letting him have money at an exorbitant interest, and goods at an exorbitant price, and so increases his substance in this scandalous manner; hence usury is in Le 25:36, called "increase", and by the Greeks tokov, a "birth", because money is the birth of money, as Aristotle {e} observes; and so by the Latins "foenus", as if it was "foetus" {f}, "a birth". The word for usury here signifies biting; and so usury, with classical writers {g}, is said to bite; and while it increases the substance of the usurer, it lessens and devours that of others;

he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor; not for himself, nor for his posterity; but for such, though not intentionally but eventually, as will make a good use of it, and distribute it to the necessities of the poor. The meaning is,

that things should be so overruled by the providence of God, that what such an avaricious man gets in his dishonest way should not be enjoyed by him or his; but should be taken out of his hands, and put into the hands of another, that will do good with it, by showing mercy to the poor; see
Job 27:16.

{e} Politic. l. 1. c. 10. {f} A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 16. c. 12. {g} Plauti Pseudolos, Act. 4. Sc. 7. v. 23, 24. "Habet argentum jam admordere hune mihi lubet", Lucan. l. 1. v. 131. "Vorax usura."

Proverbs 28:9

Ver. 9. He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law,.... Not merely the moral law, but the word of God in general, and any and every doctrine of it; though the law is to be heard and attended to, what it commands and forbids, its precepts, menaces, and curses: indeed the Spirit of God is not received by the hearing of the law, nor does faith come by that; but by hearing the word of God, particularly the Gospel; which yet then turn away their ears from, and are turned to fables, and choose to hearken to anything rather than that; and, like the deaf adder, stop their ears to the voice of the charmer, charming ever so wisely; the folly and sad effects of which will be seen when too late;

even his prayer [shall be] abomination; that is, to God; not only his ungodly actions, but even his outward exercises of religion, which carry in them some show of goodness and holiness; and particularly his prayer to God, which in upright persons is the delight of the Lord; yet in such an one it will be abhorred by him; when he is in distress, and shall pray to the Lord, he will not only turn a deaf ear to him, as he has to his law or word, but he will despise and abhor him and his prayer; because he has set at nought his counsel, and despised his reproof, **Pr 1:24**.

Proverbs 28:10

Ver. 10. Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way,.... That is, who attempts to deceive them, and draw them into errors or immoralities, and so into a snare, into mischief and ruin; first into the evil of sin, in order to bring them into the evil of punishment; I say, who attempts to do it; for it is not possible that God's elect, those who are truly righteous and good, should be totally and finally deceived, Mt 24:24;

he shall fall himself into his own pit; which he had dug and prepared for the righteous, who through the grace and goodness of God is preserved from it; the mischief intended for the good man falls upon himself in righteous, judgment, **Ps 7:15**;

but the upright shall have, good [things] in possession; or "shall inherit good things" {h}; they are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and shall inherit all things; they have all good things in Christ, with him and from him now; nor can they be taken from them, or they be caused to lose them by all the policy and craft of men and devils, who seek to draw them into sin and snares with that view; but, notwithstanding all their efforts, they shall keep possession of their good things here, the grace of the spirit, and the blessings of grace, and shall enjoy glory hereafter.

{h} bwj wlxny "haereditate accipient bonum", Pagninus, Montanus; "haereditabunt bonum", Michaelis; so Mercerus, Cocceius; "haereditatem cernent ubertatem boni", Schultens.

Proverbs 28:11

Ver. 11. The rich man [is] wise in his own conceit,.... Ascribing his getting riches to his great sagacity, wisdom, and prudence; and being flattered with it by dependents on him;

but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out: a man of good understanding, whether in things natural, civil, moral, or spiritual, though poor, as a man may be poor and yet a wise man; such an one, when he comes into company with a rich man, wise in his own conceit, he soon by conversation with him finds him out to be a very foolish man, and exposes him as one; for riches are not always to men of understanding, or all that have them are not such; and better is a poor wise man than even a foolish king; see **Ec 9:11**.

Proverbs 28:12

Ver. 12. When righteous [men] do rejoice, [there is] great glory,.... When it is well with them; when they are in prosperous circumstances; when they are countenanced and encouraged by the government under which they are; when they have the free exercise of their religion; and especially when they are advanced to places of profit, honour, and trust, which must make them cheerful and joyful; it is a glory to a land, it adds greatly to the glory of it, and a fine prospect there is of the increase and continuance of it;

but when the wicked rise: to honour and dignity, and are set in high places, and are in great power and authority, which they exercise to the distress of the righteous and all good men:

a man is hidden: a good man; he hides himself, as in Pr 28:28; he withdraws himself from court, from city, from company, from commerce, and business, because of the tyranny and persecution of wicked men; and flees to distant places, and wanders in deserts and mountains, in caves and dens of the earth; as some saints, under the Old Testament, did, and as the Church, in Gospel times, fled from the tyranny of antichrist into the wilderness, to hide herself: or, "a man is" or "shall be sought for" {i}, and searched out; as wicked persecutors are very diligent to search for and find out such persons that hide themselves, and fetch them out of their hiding places, and cruelly use them.

{i} vpxy "investigabitur", Pagninus, Montanus; "exploratur", Tigurine version; "explorabitur", Baynus; "pervestigatur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

Proverbs 28:13

Ver. 13. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper,.... God may cover a man's sins, and it is an instance of his grace, and it is the glory of it to do it, but a man may not cover his own: it is right in one good man to cover the sins of another, reproving him secretly, and freely forgiving him; but it is wrong in a man to cover his own: not that any man is bound to accuse himself before a court of judicature, or ought to expose his sins to the public, which would be to the hurt of his credit, and to the scandal of religion; but whenever he is charged with sin, and reproved for it by his fellow Christian, be should not cover it, that is, he should own it; for not to own and acknowledge it is to cover it; he should not deny it, which is to cover it with a lie, and is adding sin to sin; nor should he justify it, as if he had done a right thing; nor extenuate or excuse it, or impute it to others that drew him into it, as Adam, which is called a covering transgression, as Adam, Job 31:33; for such a man "shall not prosper"; in soul or body, in things temporal or spiritual; he shall not have peace of mind and conscience; but, sooner or later, shall feel the stings it; he shall not succeed even in those things he has in view by covering his sins; he shall not be able to cover them long, for there is nothing covered but what shall be revealed; if not in this life, which yet often is, however at the day of judgment, when every secret thing shall be made manifest; nor shall he escape the shame and punishment he thought to avoid by covering it, as may be observed in the case of Achan, **Jos 7:11**; in short, he shall have no mercy shown him by God or man, as appears by the antithesis in the next clause;

but whoso confesseth and forsaketh [them] shall have mercy; who confesses them to men privately and publicly, according to the nature of the offences, from whom they find mercy; but not to a priest, in order for absolution, which no man can give; sin is only in this sense to be confessed to God, against it is committed, and who only can pardon it; and though it is known unto him, yet he requires an acknowledgment of it, which should be done from the heart, with an abhorrence of the sin, and in the faith of Christ, as a sacrifice for it; and it is not enough to confess, there must be a forsaking likewise, a parting with sin, a denying of sinful self, a leaving the former course of sin, and a quitting the company of wicked men before used to, and an abstaining from all appearance of evil; as is and will be the case, where there is a true sight and sense of sin, and the grace of God takes place: and such find "mercy", pardoning grace and mercy, or pardon in a way of mercy, and not merit; for though the sinner confesses and forsakes it, it is not that which merits pardon and mercy in God, who is rich in it, delights in showing it, and from whom it may be hoped for and expected by all such persons; see
Ps 32:5. So the Targum and Syriac version, God will have mercy on him.

Proverbs 28:14

Ver. 14. Happy [is] the man that feareth alway,.... Not men, but the Lord; there is a fear and reverence due to men, according to the stations in which they are; but a slavish fear of man, and which deters from the worship of God and obedience to him, is criminal, and brings a snare; and a man, under the influence of it, cannot be happy: nor is a servile fear of God intended, a fear of wrath and damnation, or a distrust of his grace, a continual calling in question his love, and an awful apprehension of his displeasure and vengeance; for in such fear is torment, and with it a man can never be happy; but it is a reverence and godly fear, a filial one, a fear of God and his goodness, which he puts into the hearts of his people; a fear, indeed, of offending him, of sinning against him, by which a man departs from evil, and forsakes it, as well as confesses it; but is what arises from a sense of his goodness: and it is well when such a fear of God is always before the eyes and on the hearts of men; in their closets and families, in their trade and commerce, in all companies into which they come, as, well as in the house of God and the assembly of his saints, where he is to be feared; as also in prosperity and adversity, even throughout the whole course of life, passing the time of their sojourning here in fear: and such a man is happy; the eye of God is on him, his heart is towards him, and he delights it, him; his secret is with him, he sets a guard of angels about him, has laid up goodness for him, and communicates largely to him;

but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief; that hardens his heart from the fear of the Lord; neither confesses his sin, nor forsakes it; bids, as it were, defiance to heaven, strengthens and hardens himself in his wickedness, and by his hard and impenitent heart treasures up to himself wrath against the day of wrath; he falls "into evil" {k}, as it may be rendered, into the evil of sin yet more and more, which the hardness of his heart brings him into, and so into the evil of punishment here and hereafter.

{k} herb "in malum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens.

Proverbs 28:15

Ver. 15. [As] a roaring lion, and a ranging bear,.... Which are both terrible; the lion that roars for want of food, or when it is over its prey; and the hear, when it runs from place to place in quest of provision, being "hungry [and very] desirous" of food, has a keen appetite, as some think the word {l} signifies. The Targum and Jarchi take it to be expressive of the cry and roaring it makes at such a time, as well as the lion; see Isa 59:11; so the Tigurine version. "Roaring" is the proper epithet of a lion, and is frequently given it in Scripture, and in other writers {m}; and the bear, it is to have its name, in the Oriental language, from the growling and murmuring noise it makes when hungry; hence that of Horace {n};

[so is] a wicked ruler over the poor people; one that rules over them in a tyrannical manner, sadly oppresses them, takes away the little from them they have, which is very cruel and barbarous; when he ought to protect and defend them, against whom they cannot stand, and whom they dare not resist; and

who therefore must be as terrible to them, being as cruel and voracious as the above animals. Tyrants are frequently compared to lions, **Jer 4:7**; and the man of sin, the wicked ruler and great oppressor of God's poor people, is compared to both; his feet are as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion, Re 13:2.

{l} qqwv "avidus", Pagninus, Montanus; "famelicus", Castalio, Schultens; "esuriens", V. L. Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Bochart; "adpetens", Michaelis. {m} "Leo fremit", Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16. "Spumat aper, fluit unda, fremit leo, sibilat anguis"; Licentius de Protheo. {n} "Nec vespertinus circumgemit ursus ovile", Epod. Ode 16. v. 51.

Proverbs 28:16

Ver. 16. The prince that wanteth understanding [is] also a great oppressor,.... Or, "much in oppressions" {o}; he multiplies them, and abounds in them; he distresses his subjects in a variety of ways and methods he uses to extort money from them by which he shows his want of understanding: he is a wise prince that uses gentle methods, and gains the affections of his people, and who cheerfully supports his crown and government with honour and glory; but he is a foolish prince that uses them with rigour. It may be rendered, "and a prince that wanteth understanding, and is much", or "abounds, in oppressions"; in laying heavy burdens and taxes on his people, in an arbitrary manner; "shall shorten, and not prolong his days" {p}, as it may be supplied from the next clause; either his subjects will rise up against him, and dethrone him, and destroy him; or God, in mercy to them, and in judgment to him, will remove him by death;

[but] he that hateth covetousness shall prolong [his] days; to hate covetousness is a good qualification of a civil magistrate, prince, or ruler, Ex 18:21. This sin is the cause of a wicked prince oppressing his subjects; but where it is hated, which is seen by moderation in government, and easing of the people as much as possible; such a prince, as he has the hearts of his subjects, is well pleasing to God, by whom he reigns; and such an one, through the prayers of the people for him, and the goodness of God unto him, lives long, and reigns prosperously; and dies, as David, in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour.

{o} twqvem br "multus oppressionibus", Montanus, Junius & Tremeilius, Piscator, Mercerus, Baynus, Michaelis, Schultens. {p} So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, and some Jewish writers in Vatablus.

Proverbs 28:17

Ver. 17. A man that doeth violence to the blood of [any] person,.... That sheds the blood of any in a violent manner; that lays violent hands upon a club, and takes away his life, contrary to the law in **Ge 9:6**. Or, "that is pressed because of the blood of any person" {q}; pressed in his own mind; filled with horror, and tortured in his conscience, for the innocent blood he has shed: the letter "daleth" in the word "Adam" is lesser than usual; and Vitringa, on Isa 34:6; observes, that it signifies a man red with blood, oppressed in his conscience, and depressed by God, which this minute letter is a symbol of; and thinks it applicable to Edom or Rome: or it signifies one pressed, pursued, and dose followed by the avenger of blood;

shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him; support or help him. When such a murderer flees, and is pursued, and unawares falls into a pit, or is like to do so, let no man warn him of it, or help him out of it; or if he flees to a pit to hide himself, let no man hold him or detain him there, or suffer him to continue in such a lurking place, but discover him or pluck him out; or, if he is a fugitive and a vagabond all his days, as Cain, the murderer of his brother, was, till he comes to the pit of the grave, let no man yield him any support or sustenance.

{q} Mdb qve "pressus propter sanguinem animae", Amama, Cartwright; so R. Joseph Kimchi in D. Kimchii Sepher Shorash rad. qve.

Proverbs 28:18

Ver. 18. Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved, Or "be safe" {r} from those that seek his life, plot against him, shoot at him, as the wicked do at the upright in heart, but the Lord protects him; and it is even well with him in times of public calamities; the Lord has his chambers and hiding places for him; and he is safe from falling, as may be gathered from the opposite clause; for he walks surely, and is in the hands of Christ, and is kept by him from a final and total falling away: and he shall be saved also with an everlasting salvation; from sin, and all the effects of it; from the curse of the law, from wrath to come, from hell and damnation. Not that his upright walk is the cause of this; the moving cause of salvation is the grace of God; the procuring cause, our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Author of it: but this is a descriptive character of the persons that are and shall be saved; it is a clear case that such have the grace of God, and therefore shall have glory; See Gill on "Pr 10:9";

but [he that is] perverse [in his] ways; "in his two ways", as in Pr 27:6; or many ways, and all perverse and wicked:

shall fall at once; his destruction shall come suddenly upon him, when he is not aware of it, and when he cries, Peace, peace, to himself: or in one of them; in one or other of his perverse ways.

{r} evwy "erit salvus", Pagninus, Montanus, V. L. Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus.

Proverbs 28:19

Ver. 19. He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread,.... Or, "shall he filled" or "satisfied with bread" {s}: shall have bread enough, and to spare; provisions of all sorts, and in great plenty;
See Gill on "Pr 12:11";

but he that followeth, after vain [persons]; empty idle persons; keeps company and spends his time with them, when he should be about the business of his calling:

shall have poverty enough; or be "filled with [it]" {t}; he shall be exceeding poor, reduced to the utmost distress, be clothed in rags and destitute of daily food.

{s} Mxl ebvy "saturabitur pane", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Schultens. {t} ebvy "satiabitur", Tigurine version, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis; "saturabitur", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Schultens.

Proverbs 28:20

Ver. 20. A faithful man shall abound with blessings,.... Or, "a man of faithfulness" {u}. A very faithful man, that is truly so; that is so in a moral sense; true to his work, makes good his promises, fulfils his contracts, abides by the obligations he lays himself under; is faithful in every trust reposed in him, be it greater or lesser matters, in every station in which it is, and throughout the whole course of his life. Such a man abounds with the blessings and praises of men; all value him, and speak well of him: and with the blessings of divine Providence; he is "much [in] blessings" {w}, as it may be rendered; as in receiving blessings from God, so in giving them to men; such a man is usually charitable and beneficent. And it may be understood of one that is faithful, in a spiritual and evangelic sense; for of such characters are the followers of the Lamb, Re 17:14. It is in the original, "a man of truths" {x}; one that has the truth of grace in him; that knows the grace of God in truth; with whom the truth of the Gospel is; who has learnt it, known it, embraced it, values it, and abides by it; and who has a concern with Christ, who is the truth, who is formed, lives, and dwells in his heart; of whom he has made a good profession, and holds it fast, and whom he cleaves unto. The character of "faithful" belongs both to the true ministers of Christ, who preach the pure Gospel, and the whole of it; who seek not to please men, but God; and not themselves, and their own glory, but the things of Christ, and his glory; and continue to do so in the face of all opposition: and to private Christians, the faithful in Christ Jesus; who truly believe in him, stand by his truths, abide by his ordinances, and are faithful to one another, and continue so till death: these abound with the blessings of the covenant of grace, with all spiritual blessings in Christ, with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; they have an abundance of grace in them, given them in conversion, faith, hope, love, humility, and many other graces, in the exercise of which they are made to abound; and they have an abundance of blessings of grace bestowed on them, pardon of sin, a justifying righteousness, adoption, meetness for and right unto eternal life; they have Christ, and all things along with him; so that they may be truly said to have all things, and abound;

but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent; he that is over anxious, and immoderately desirous of being rich, and pursues every method of obtaining his desires, with all his might and main; that labours night and day for it; though he takes no criminal nor unlawful methods, properly so called, nor does he do anything injurious to others, yet he is not innocent; that too much anxiety in him is criminal; nor is he free from covetousness; see Pr 23:4; and if he uses any unjust and unlawful means to acquire wealth, and resolves to be rich, right or wrong, "per fas, per nefas", he shall not be innocent, neither before God nor men: so the Targum renders it,

"he that runs into iniquity, that he may be rich;"

and indeed when a man hastily, or in a short time, becomes rich, though he cannot be directly charged with fraud and injustice, yet he is not innocent in the minds of men, or free from their suspicious and jealousies of him. A man that makes haste to be rich is opposed to him that is faithful and true to his word and contracts, and is the same that Juvenal {y} calls "avarus properans"; see **1Ti 6:9**.

{u} twnwma vya "vir fidelitatum", Vatablus, Merceras, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis. {w} twkrb br "multus benedictionibus", Montanus, Vatablus, Baynus, Michaeiis. {x} "Vir veritatum", Montanus. {y} Satyr. 14. v. 178.

Proverbs 28:21

Ver. 21. To have respect of persons [is] not good, &c, In courts of judicature, to give a cause or pass sentence in favour of a person, because he is rich, or is a relation, a friend, an acquaintance, or has done a kindness; and against another, because of the reverse, Le 19:15; nor in religious assemblies, making a difference between the rich and the poor, **Jas 2:1**; this is not good in itself, nor productive of good effects, and cannot be well pleasing to God, who himself is no respecter of persons;

for for a piece of bread [that] man will transgress; the laws of God and men; having used himself to such unrighteous methods of proceeding, he will do any base action for a small gain, he will stick at nothing, and do it for anything; as Cato used to say of M. Coelius the tribune,

"that he might be hired, for a morsel of bread, to speak or hold his peace;"

see Eze 13:19.

Proverbs 28:22

Ver. 22. He that hasteth to be rich,.... As every man that is eagerly desirous of riches is; he would be rich at once {z}, and cannot wait with any patience in the ordinary course of means:

[hath] an evil eye; on the substance of others, to get it, right or wrong; is an evil man, and takes evil methods to be rich {a}; see **1Ti 6:9**; or an envious

one; is an envious man; as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; he envies others, as the Vulgate Latin version, the riches of other men; he grudges everything that goes beside himself; and that makes him in haste to be rich, that he may be equal to or superior to others: or he is a sordid, avaricious, illiberal man, that will not part with anything for the relief, for others, and is greedy of everything to amass wealth to himself; an evil eye is opposed to a good or bountiful one, that is, to a man that is liberal and generous, Pr 22:9;

and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him; for wealth gotten hastily, and especially wrongfully, diminishes, wastes, and comes to nothing in the end; it sometimes flies away as fast as it comes; it has wings to do the one, as well as the other: this the man in haste to be rich does not consider, or he would have taken another method; since this is not the true way of getting and keeping riches, but of losing them, and coming to want; see Pr 13:11.

{z} "Nam dives qui fieri vult, et cito vult fieri", Juvenal. Satyr. 14. v. 176. {a} "Sed quae reverentia legum? quis metus, ant pudor est unquam properantis avari?" Juvenal, ib.

Proverbs 28:23

Ver. 23. He that rebuketh a man,.... His friend and acquaintance, for any fault committed by him; which reproof he gives in a free and faithful manner, yet kind, tender, and affectionate. The word rendered "afterwards", which begins the next clause, according to the accents belongs to this, and is by some rendered, "he that rebuketh a man after me" {b}; after my directions, according to the rules I have given; that is, after God, and by his order; or Solomon, after his example, who delivered out these sentences and instructions. The Targum so connects the word, and renders the clause,

"he that rebukes a man before him;"

openly, to his thee: but rather it may be rendered "behind"; that is, as Cocceius interprets it, apart, alone, privately, and secretly, when they are by themselves; which agrees with Christ's instructions,
Mt 18:15;

afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue; for though the reproofs given him may uneasy upon his mind at first, and may be cutting and wounding, and give him some pain, and so some dislike to the reprover; yet when he coolly considers the nature and tendency of the reproof, the manner in which it was given, and the design of it, he will love, value, and esteem his faithful friend and rebuker, more than the man that fawned upon him, and flattered him with having done that which was right and well; or, as the Targum, than he that divideth the tongue, or is doubletongued; and so the Syriac version; see Pr 27:5.

{b} yrxa "post me", Montanus, Tigurine version, Baynus; so some in Vatablus and Michaelis, R. Saadiah Gaon; "ut sequatur me", Junius & Tremellius.

Proverbs 28:24

Ver. 24. Whoso robbeth his father or his mother,.... As Micah did of eleven hundred shekels of silver, Jud 17:2;

and saith, [it is] no transgression; what is his father's or his mother's is his own, or as good as his own, it will come to him at their death; and if he wants it before, he thinks he ought to have it; and if they are not willing to give it him, it is with him no sin to rob them of it; and this he says within himself, to quiet his conscience when he has done it; or to others who may charge him with it: but, whatever such a man thinks, sins against parents are greater than against others; as parricide is a greater sin than any other kind of murder, so robbing of parents is greater than any other kind of theft; it is more aggravated, especially when parents are aged, and cannot work for themselves, but depend on what they have for their livelihood; whereas a young man can, and ought, and should rather give to his parents than rob them of what they have;

the same [is] the companion of a destroyer; of a murderer; either he has got into such company which have put him upon such wicked practices; or he will soon get into such a society, and, from a robber of his father and mother, become a robber on the highway, and a murderer; and he has wickedness enough to be a destroyer of the lives of his parents, as well as of their substance; and sometimes the one sin leads to the other.

Proverbs 28:25

Ver. 25. He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife,.... Or, of a "large heart" {c}, or has an enlarged one; not with useful knowledge and understanding, as Solomon had; nor a heart enlarged with love and affection to the souls of men, as the Apostle Paul had; but either has a covetous one, who enlarges its desire as hell, and is never satisfied with what he has, and so is continually contending with his neighbours, engaging in lawsuits for their property, or unwilling to pay his lawful debts; or of a proud spirit, and despises all around him, and cannot bear opposition and contradiction; and is of a wrathful and revengeful spirit, and always at variance with his neighbours and quarrelling with them; see Pr 18:15;

but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat; that trusts in the Lord, both for things temporal and spiritual; does not covet his neighbour's goods, nor disturbs his peace, nor injures his person or property to increase his own, but depends upon the Lord for a supply of necessary good things; such an one shall be fat and flourishing, both in his temporal and spiritual estate; all he does shall prosper; he shall want no good thing, Ps 84:11.

{c} vpn bxr "latus animo", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version; "amplus animo suo": Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "latus anima", Mercerus, Cocceius.

Proverbs 28:26

Ver. 26. He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool,.... Since the thoughts and imaginations of the thoughts of the heart are only evil, and that continually; they are vain and vague, sinful and corrupt; the affections are inordinate, the conscience defiled, the understanding darkened, and the will perverse; there is no good thing in it, nor any that comes out of it, but all the reverse; it is deceitful and desperately wicked: he must be a fool, and not know the plague of his heart, that trusts in it; and even for a good man to be self-confident, and trust to the sincerity of his heart, as Peter did, or to the good frame of the heart, as many do, is acting a foolish part; and especially such are fools as the Scribes and Pharisees, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, when a man's best righteousness is impure and imperfect, and cannot justify him in the sight of God; it is moreover a weak and foolish part in men to trust to the wisdom and counsel of their heart, to lean to their own understanding, even it, things natural and civil, and not to ask wisdom of God, or take the advice of men, and especially it, things religious and sacred; see **Pr 3:5**;

but whoso walketh wisely; as he does who walks according to the rule of the divine word; who makes the testimonies of the Lord his counsellors; who consults with his sacred writings, and follows the directions of them; who walks as he has Christ for his pattern and example, and makes the Spirit of God his guide, and walks after him, and not after the flesh; who walks with wise men, and takes their advice in all matters of moment, not trusting to his own wisdom and knowledge; who walks as becomes the Gospel of Christ, and in all the ordinances of it; who walks inoffensively to all men, and so in wisdom towards them that are without, and in love to them who are within; who walks circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time;

he shall be delivered; he shall be delivered from the snares of his own deceitful heart, which he will not trust; and from the temptations of Satan; and from all afflictions and troubles he meets with in the way; and from a final and total falling away; and from eternal death and destruction: "he shall be saved", as some versions render it, even with an everlasting salvation. The Targum is,

"he shall be protected from evil."

Proverbs 28:27

Ver. 27. He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack,.... That gives alms unto them, relieves them in their distress, supplies them with money, food, or clothes, and does it cheerfully, largely, and liberally, as the case requires; such an one shall not want any good thing; he shall not be the poorer for what he gives; he shall not miss it, nor his substance be diminished; he shall not come to poverty and want, yea, he shall be enriched, and his substance increased, for more is intended than is expressed. Jarchi interprets this of a wise man not restraining doctrine from a disciple, but giving it to him liberally;

but he that hideth his eyes; that is, from the poor, as the Targum and Syriac version add; that does not care to see his person, to behold his miseries, or know his case, lest his heart should be moved with compassion, and should draw out anything from him; see Isa 58:7. Such an one

shall have many a curse; not only from the poor he hardens himself against, but from other persons, who observe his miserable and covetous disposition; and from the Lord himself, who abhors such persons, and curses their very blessings now, and will bid them depart from him as accursed persons hereafter.

Proverbs 28:28

Ver. 28. When the wicked rise, men hide themselves,.... When wicked men are raised to places of power and authority, rich men hide themselves, lest they should become a prey to them; and good men hide themselves, that they may not be put to death by them; or as ashamed to behold their evil actions; See Gill on "Pr 28:12";

but when they perish; wicked men, either by a natural or violent death; or perish as to their authority and power, being turned out of their places:

the righteous increase; such who before hid themselves appear, and, being put into the places of the wicked, encourage truth and righteousness, by which means the number of good men is multiplied; and which is a great happiness to a nation, and shows the usefulness and advantage that good magistrates are of unto it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 29:1

Ver. 1. He that being often reported hardeneth [his] neck,.... Or "a man of reproofs" {d}; either a man that takes upon him to be a censurer and reprover of others, and is often at that work, and yet does those things himself which he censures and reproves in others; and therefore must have an impudent face and a hard heart a seared conscience and a stiff neck; his neck must be an iron sinew and his brow brass: or rather a man that is often reproved by others by parents by ministers of the Gospel, by the Lord himself, by the admonitions of his word and Spirit and by the correcting dispensations of his providence; and yet despises and rejects all counsel and admonition, instruction and reproofs of every kind, and hardens himself against them and shows no manner of regard unto them. The metaphor is taken from oxen, which kick and toss about and will not suffer the yoke to be put upon their necks. Such an one

shall suddenly be destroyed; or "broken" {e}; as a potter's vessel is broken to pieces with an iron rod, and can never he put together again; so such persons shall be punished with everlasting destruction, which shall come upon them suddenly, when they are crying Peace to themselves notwithstanding the reproofs of God and men;

and that without remedy; or, "and there [is] no healing" {f}; no cure of their disease, which is obstinate; no pardon of their sins; no recovery of them out of their miserable and undone state and condition; they are irretrievably lost; there is no help for them, having despised advice and instruction; see **Pr 5:12**.

{d} twxkwt vya "vir increpationum", Vatablus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "vir correptionum", Piscator, Michaelis; "vir redargutionum", Schultens. {e} rbvy "conteretur", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c. "confringetur", Schultens; so Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {f} aprm Nyaw "et non (erit) sanitas", Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus; "non sit curatio", Junius & Tremellius; "medicina", Piscator.

Proverbs 29:2

Ver. 2. When the righteous are in authority,.... Or "are increased" {g}; either in number or in riches, or in power and dominion; are set in high places, and have the exercise of civil government and the execution of the laws in their hands; for the protection of good men in their civil and religious privileges, and for the punishment of evil men; for the encouraging of all that is good, and for the discouraging of everything that is bad;

the people rejoice; the whole body of the people, because of the public good; a state is happy under such an administration; everyone feels and enjoys the advantage of it; see **1Ki 4:20**;

but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn; or "groan" {h}, or "will groan", under their tyranny and oppression, and because of the sad state of things; the number of good men is lessened, being cut off, or obliged to flee; wicked men and wickedness are encouraged and promoted; heavy taxes are laid upon them, and exorbitant demands made and cruelty, injustice, and arbitrary power exercised; and no man's person and property safe; see Pr 10:11.

{g} twbrb "cum augentur", Junius & Tremellius; "cum multiplicati fuerit, vel multiplicantur", Vatablus, Baynus, Cocceius, Michaelis; "in multiplicari justos", Montanus. {h} xnay "gemet", Pagninus, Montanus, V. L. "gemit", Michaelis; "ingemiscit", Schultens; so the Tugurine version, Mercerus; "suspirat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Proverbs 29:3

Ver. 3. Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father,.... He that is a philosopher, especially a religious one, that not only loves and seeks after natural wisdom, but moral wisdom and knowledge; and more particularly evangelical wisdom, Christ the Wisdom of God, who is to be valued and loved above all things; the Gospel of Christ, which is the wisdom of God in a mystery; and the knowledge of it which is the wisdom which comes from above and is pure and peaceable; and which lies much in the fear of God, and in the faith of Jesus Christ, attended with all the fruits of righteousness: such a son makes glad his father, both because of his temporal good, since he does not waste but improve the substance he has given him; and because of his spiritual and eternal welfare; and since instead of being a reproach he is an honour to him; see Pr 10:1;

but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth [his] substance: his father has given him, and comes to want and beggary; all which is a grief to his parents: or, "that feeds harlots" {i}; who live in a riotous and voluptuous manner, and soon drain a man of his substance, and bring him to a morsel of bread; see Lu 15:13; and such a son grieves his father, seeing he spends his substance and damns his soul.

{i} her "nutrit", V. L. "pascit", Pagninus, Piscator, Gejerus, Schultens; "pascitur", Michaelis; "pascens", Montanus, Mercerus.

Proverbs 29:4

Ver. 4. The king by judgment establisheth the land,.... By executing, judgment and justice among his subjects, he establishes the laws of the land, and the government of it; he secures its peace and prosperity, and preserves his people in the possession at their properties and privileges; and makes them rich and powerful, and the state stable and flourishing, so that it continues firm to posterity; such a king was Solomon, **2Ch 9:8**;

but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it; that, is, a king that does so; Gersom observes that he is not called a king, because such a man is not worthy of the name, who takes gifts and is bribed by them to pervert judgment and justice; whereby the laws of the nation are violated, and the persons and properties of his subjects become the prey of wicked men; and so the state is subverted and falls to ruin: it is in the original text, "a man of oblations" {k}; the word is generally used of the sacred oblations or offerings under the law; hence some understand it of a sacrilegious prince who of his own arbitrary power converts sacred things to civil uses. The Targum, Septuagint, Syriac and Arabic versions render it, a wicked and ungodly man; and the Vulgate Latin version, a covetous man; as such a prince must be in whatsoever light he is seen, whether as a perverter of justice through bribes, or as a sacrilegious man; though it may be rendered, "a man of exactions" {l}, for it is used of the oblation of a prince which he receives from his people, Eze 45:9; as Aben Ezra observes; and so it may be interpreted of a king that lays heavy taxes upon his people, and thereby brings them to distress and poverty, and the state to ruin.

{k} twmwrx vya "vir oblationam", Montanus, Baynus, Grotius, Gejerus, Schultens. {l} "Vir exactionum", Mercerus; "qui levat exactiones", Munster; "qui tributa imponit", so some in Vatablus; "qui tribbuta extorquet", Tigurine version.

Proverbs 29:5

Ver. 5. A man that flattereth his neighbour,.... That speaks smooth things to him gives him flattering titles, speaks fair to his face, highly commends him on one account or another:

spreadeth a net for his feet; has an idle design upon him, and therefore should be guarded against; his view is to draw him into a snare and make a prey of him; he attacks him on his weak side, and hopes to make some advantage of it to himself; wherefore flatterers should be avoided as pernicious persons; or he spreads a net for his own feet, and is taken in the snare which he had laid for his neighbour; or falls into the pit he dug for him, as Gersom observes; see Ps 140:5.

Proverbs 29:6

Ver. 6. In the transgression of an evil man [there is] a snare,.... Or, according to the accents in some copies, "in the transgression of a man is an evil snare", as Aben Ezra observes the words may be read; there is a snare in sin to man himself; one sin leads on to another, and a man is snared by the works of his own hands, and is implicated and held in the cords of his own iniquity, and falls into the snare of the devil, out of which he is not easily recovered; and the transgression of one man is a snare to another; he is drawn into sin by ill examples; and, by indulging himself in sin, the evil day comes upon him unawares as a snare; and sooner or later he is filled with horrors of conscience, anguish, and distress;

but the righteous doth sing and rejoice; not at the snares of others, their sin or punishment; for such a man rejoices not in iniquity, though he sometimes does at the punishment of sinners, because of the glory of the divine justice; and Gersom thinks this is here meant; see
Ps 58:10; but rather, as he also observes, the righteous man rejoices at his deliverance from the snares of sin and Satan, and of the world; he rejoices in the righteousness by which he is denominated righteous; not his own, but the righteousness of Christ, it being so rich and glorious, so perfect and complete; he rejoices in salvation by him it being so suitable, so, real, so full, so free, and so much for the glory of God; he rejoices in the pardon of his sins through the blood of Christ, and in the expiation of them by his sacrifice; he rejoices in his person, in the greatness, fitness, fulness, and beauty of it; he rejoices in all his offices he bears and executes, and in all the relations he stands in to him; he rejoices in his word and ordinances, in the prosperity of his cause and interest, in the good of his people, and in hope of the glory of God; and even sings for joy in the view of electing, redeeming, and calling grace, and eternal life and happiness; he has peace of conscience now, fears no enemy, nor any danger, and expects a life of glory in the world to come; and oftentimes sings on the brink of the grave, in the view of death and eternity.

Proverbs 29:7

Ver. 7. The righteous considereth the cause of the poor,.... Not his poverty and distress, so as to relieve him, which yet he does,
Ps 41:1; nor the person of the poor in judgment, and which he ought not to do; for as he should not regard a rich man's person, and favour him, because he is rich; so neither a poor man, because he is poor, through an affectation of mercy, Le 19:15; but the cause of the poor, and the justice of that, and do him justice, though a poor man. This is to be understood chiefly of a civil magistrate, a judge righteous; who will take notice of and regard a poor man's cause, and take a good deal of pains and care that he is not injured. Or, "knoweth the judgment of the poor" {m} he acquaints himself with his case, makes himself thoroughly master of it, searches out his cause as Job did,
Pr 29:16;

[but] the wicked regardeth not to know [it]; or, "does not understand knowledge" {n} of the poor man's cause and case; and there being no money to be had, he does not care to consider it, and look into it, and get knowledge of it, and do him justice; he will not take his cause in hand, or plead it.

{m} Myld Nyd qydu edy "novit justus causan pauperum", V. L. "cognoscit", Pagninus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c. "novit et curat justus judicum pauperum", Michaelis; "cognoscit justus litem tenuiem", Schultens. {n} ted Nyby al "non intellilget scientiam", Paguinus, Montanus; "intelligit", Mercerus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 29:8

Ver. 8. Scornful men bring a city into a snare,.... Such as despise dominion, speak evil of dignities; proud and haughty men, that speak Loftily, and with a contempt of their superiors; or who make a mock at religion, and scoff at all that is good and serious; these bring the inhabitants of a city into a snare, to rebel against their governors, and so into mischief and ruin: or, they "burn a city", as the Septuagint and Syriac versions {o}; they inflame it, or blow it up into a flame; raise a combustion in it, and fill it with strifes and contentions; and bring down the wrath of God upon it, like fire: or, they "blow upon a city" {p}; raise storms and tempests in it; turn all things upside down, and throw it into the utmost confusion, or blow it up;

but wise [men] turn away wrath; the wrath of men, by their wise counsels and advice, and appease tumults and seditions, and restore things to a quiet and settled state; or the wrath of God, by interposing with their prayers between him and a sinful people, as Moses did, Ps 106:23.

{o} "Inflammant urbem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {p} hyrq wxypy "suffiant, vel periflant civitatem", Gejerus; "diffiant civitatem", Gussetius, p. 667. "exsuffiant civitatem", Cocceius, Schultens.

Proverbs 29:9

Ver. 9. [If] a wise man contendeth with a foolish man,.... Enters into a controversy with him, either by word or writing, in order to convince him of his folly and wickedness, of his errors and mistakes;

whether he rage or laugh, [there is] no rest; that is, either whether the fool is angry with the wise man, and rages at him and abuses him, and calls him names, or laughs at him, and scoffs at all his arguments, reasons, and advice; yet the wise man does not cease from proceeding in the contest with him; or he is not dejected and cast down, and discouraged; or, as the Targum is,

"he is not broken;"

but patiently bears his wrath fury, his scoffs and jeers: or else whether the wise man deals roughly or gently with the feel, in a morose or in a mere jocose way: it has no upon him; he is never the better for it; he does not acquiesce or rest in what he says like the Pharisees in Christ's time, who are compared to surly children: who, when "piped to, danced not"; and, when "mourned to, lamented not",
See Gill on "Mt 11:16", and
See Gill on "Mt 11:17". The design of the proverb is to show, that all labour to reclaim a fool from his folly is lost, let a man take what methods he will, Pr 27:22.

Proverbs 29:10

Ver. 10. The bloodthirsty hate the upright,.... Cain did Abel; and as the wicked world hate all good men, and persecute them, even unto death;

but the just must seek his soul; either the soul of the bloodthirsty, and that either the good of their souls; seek their spiritual welfare, and pray for it, even though they are so cruel and inhuman: or just magistrates will seek after such persons, to punish them for shedding the blood of the upright. Or else the meaning is, that just persons seek the soul of the upright, and make inquisition for the blood of such, to punish for it; which comes to the same sense, as Aben Ezra observes: or rather, such seek to defend and preserve the soul or life of upright men from those that hate and persecute them. Jarchi illustrates it by 1Sa 22:23; the Targum is,

"men that shed blood hate integrity; but the upright seek it."

Proverbs 29:11

Ver. 11. A fool uttereth all his mind,.... At once; tells all he knows, all that is in his breast; whatever he thinks, and all that he intends to do; what or whom he loves or hates. Or, "a fool brings out all his wrath"; so the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions: he cannot restrain it, nor hide it; it breaks out at once, even all of it, and is soon known, as in Pr 12:16;

but a wise [man] keepeth it in till afterwards; reserves his mind, and thoughts, and designs, to himself; and does not discover them until a proper opportunity offers, when to disclose them is most to advantage; or he restrains his wrath and anger, defers showing it to a proper time, when it may answer a better purpose, and he may do it without sin.

Proverbs 29:12

Ver. 12. If a ruler hearken to lies,.... To men that tell them in order to soothe and flatter him, or to hurt the character and reputation of others, that they may raise their own: rulers should not listen to and encourage such sort of persons; for, as lying lips do not become a prince, so it is not right to have liars about him; David would not suffer such to dwell in his court, Ps 101:7;

all his servants [are] wicked; or the greatest part of them: for a ruler of such a disposition will take none but such into his service, that flatter him, and calumniate others; and such a conduct, being pleasing and agreeable to him, is a temptation to his ministers to act the same wicked part; as is a prince, such are his courtiers; his example has a great influence upon them.

Proverbs 29:13

Ver. 13. The poor and the deceitful man meet together,.... Or "the usurer" {q}; who by usury, by fraud and deception, is possessed of the mammon of unrighteousness, and is become rich; he and the poor man meet together; and so the sense is the same as in Pr 22:2;
See Gill on "Pr 22:2";

the Lord lighteneth both their eyes; with the light of natural life, and with the light of natural reason, **Joh 1:4**; and so is the same as being "the Maker of them all", in the above place; or he bestows his providential favours on both;

causes his sun to shine upon the rich and poor, the wicked and the righteous, **Mt 5:45**. Or it may be understood of the light of grace; for though, for the most part, God chooses and calls the poor of the world, and lightens their eyes with the light of his grace, when not many wise and noble are called and enlightened; yet this is not restrained wholly to men of one and the same condition of life; yea, God sometimes calls and enlightens publicans, tax gatherers, and extortioners, as Matthew and Zacchaeus.

{q} Mybkt vya "vir usurarum", Mercerus; "foenerator", Piscator, Tigurine version; "usurarius", Munster.

Proverbs 29:14

Ver. 14. The king that faithfully judgeth the poor,.... That truly executes justice and judgment among all his subjects, particularly the poor, who are too often neglected, because they cannot afford persons to plead their cause: such a king was Solomon; and especially the Messiah, of whom he was a type, Ps 72:1;

his throne shall be established for ever; be secure to him as long as he lives, and to his posterity after; justice to all men, and mercy to the poor, are the support of a prince's throne; see Pr 20:28.

Proverbs 29:15

Ver. 15. The rod and reproof give wisdom,.... Are the means of giving wisdom to a child, reproved by its parent with the rod; and of driving out foolishness from him, and of making him wiser for the time to come; he shunning those evils for which he was before corrected, Pr 22:15; So the children of God grow wiser by the corrections and chastisements of their heavenly Father, which are always for their good; and he is a man of wisdom that hearkens to the rod, and to him that has appointed it, and learns the proper instructions from it, **Mic 6:9**;

but a child left to [himself] bringeth his mother to shame; a child that has the reins thrown upon his neck, is under no restraint of parents, but suffered to take his own way, is left to do his own will and pleasure; he does those things which his parents are ashamed of, one as well as another; though the mother is only mentioned, being generally most fond and indulgent, and most criminal in suffering children to have their own wills and ways; and so has the greater share in the shame that follows on such indulgences.

Proverbs 29:16

Ver. 16. When the wicked are multiplied,.... Or "are in authority" {r}; as the word is rendered, Pr 29:2;

transgression increaseth; among the common people, being encouraged by their wicked rulers, whose examples they follow; or as the wicked themselves increase, in numbers, in age, in power, and riches, their sins increase too;

but the righteous shall see their fall, from their places of authority and power, of honour, riches, and grandeur, into a low and despicable condition, into ruin and destruction; and that with pleasure, because of the glory of God, his wisdom, justice, truth, and faithfulness, displayed therein; see Ps 58:10.

{r} twbrb "dominantibus impiis"; some in Mercerus; "quum praesunt impii", Tigurine version.

Proverbs 29:17

Ver. 17. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest,.... Ease of mind, satisfaction and contentment, freedom from all anxious thoughts and cares; the correction being taken in good part, and succeeding according to wish and design;

yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul; by his tenderness to his parents, obedience to them, and respect for them; by his prudent behaviour among men; by his sobriety, diligence, and industry in his calling; by his fear of God, and walking in his ways; than which nothing can give a greater delight and pleasure to religious parents.

Proverbs 29:18

Ver. 18. Where [there is] no vision, the people perish,.... That is, "no prophecy", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; and which is often the sense

of the word, as the vision of Isaiah is the prophecy of Isaiah; and, in the New Testament, prophesying is often put for preaching; and here vision, or prophecy, signifies the public ministering of the word and ordinances, and want of persons to administer them; no expounder, as the Septuagint version; or interpreter, as the Arabic. This was the case in the latter end of Eli's life, **1Sa 3:1**; in Asa's times, and before, 2Ch 15:3; in the Babylonish captivity, **Eze 7:26**; in the times of Antiochus,
Ps 74:9; when John the Baptist and Christ first came preaching the word, **Mt 9:36**; and now is the case of the Jews, and will be till the time of their conversion. So it was in the Gentile world, before the Gospel was brought into it, Ac 17:30; and so it now is in those places where the seven churches of Asia were; and in all Asia, which once heard the word of the Lord, even all that large country; and now it is not heard at all in it, but covered with Mahometan darkness. And this is the case in all Popish countries, subject to the see of Rome, where the word of God is not preached to the people, nor suffered so much as to be read by them; and even in reformed churches, for the most part, only a little morality is preached, and not the Gospel of Christ; so that here the people are perishing for lack of knowledge, **Ho 4:6**; and when the witnesses will be slain, who now prophesy in sackcloth, there will he an entire stop put to prophesying or preaching for a while; but, when they shall rise, the earth will be filled with the knowledge of God, through the ministry of the word. Now, where there is no preaching, men perish in their sins; the word being the ordinary means of grace, of regeneration, conversion, faith, and salvation; without which, men know nothing of Christ, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by him: and where there is preaching, yet it not being of the right kind, there is no spiritual knowledge spread by it, no food for souls under it; they perish with hunger, as the prodigal did, or are in starving and famishing circumstances; no comfort for the people of God, who perish in their comforts under such a ministry, **1Co 8:11**; and poison is spread among others; false doctrine eats as a canker, and destroys souls. Again, where there is right vision and prophecy, or true preaching of the word, and that is despised and neglected, men perish notwithstanding; as the Jews of old, and all deniers and contemners of the word now, Ac 13:41; and this seems to be intended here, as appears by the following clause. The word translated "perish" has various senses, which agree with the text. It may be rendered, "the people become idle", or "cease" {s}; from the performance of good works, grow dissolute in their manners, and licentious in their practices: or "they become refractory" {t}; fierce, obstinate, and ungovernable, and rebel against their superiors: or they are "made naked" {u}; stripped of their ornaments; of their privileges, civil as well as religious, which is often the case where no vision is; as well as of all virtue and morality, and of the blessing and protection of God;

but he that keepeth the law, happy [is] he: not the moral law, which no man can keep perfectly, but the law of faith. It may be rendered, "happy is he that observes doctrine" {w}; the doctrine of the Gospel, where it is preached; that attends to it, values and esteems it, receives it by faith, and with meekness; blessed is he, blessed are his eyes and ears; he sees wondrous things out of this law or doctrine, and he hears and knows the joyful sound, which brings salvation and eternal life unto him!

{s} erpy "feriabitur", Montanus. {t} "Rebellis erit", Pagninus; "retroagitur", Mercerus; "defecit, recedit", Vatablus; "refractarius", Gejerus. {u} "Nadatur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis; "denudatur", Cocceius; "cessabit et otiosus erit, deficiet et retrocedit atque denudatur", Baynus. {w} hrwt rmv "qui observat legem", i. e. "verbum Dei", Cocceius; "doctrinam", Amama.

Proverbs 29:19

Ver. 19. A servant will not be corrected by words,.... Not by them only, especially one that is of a servile, surly, and untractable disposition; otherwise a good servant, and well disposed to his master, and willing to serve him, and promote his interest, a word is sufficient for such an one; when he is bid to go, he goes; or to come, he comes, **Mt 8:9**; or if he has done wrong, and his fault is told him, he will amend another time; whereas a rough ill natured servant will not regard words, but must have blows to correct him;

for though he understand; what his master says, and what is his will, and knows he has done wrong, and ought to do otherwise, which is an aggravation of sin:

he will not answer; own his fault and promise to do better for the future; through the surliness of his nature, and contempt of his master, whom he does not think worthy of an answer: so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "he despises to answer"; thus Job was used by his servants, Job 19:16; There is an answering which is forbidden servants, **Tit 2:9**; but this what becomes them, and is expressive of their respect and reverence to their masters, and their ready, hearty, and cheerful obedience to them; and which especially should be in Christian servants to Christian masters, **1Ti 6:1**.

Proverbs 29:20

Ver. 20. Seest thou a man [that is] hasty in his words,.... Swift to speak either before God or men; that takes upon him to speak upon a subject, or return an answer to a question, before he has thoroughly thought of it, and well considered it, and digested what he should say; see Ec 5:2; or "hasty in matters" {x}; in his business; runs rashly and precipitately into things, without duly considering within himself what is right and proper to be done, and without taking the advice of others;

[there is] more hope of a fool than of him; of one that has not the gift of elocution, or not so much sagacity in business, and yet takes time to think, and advises with others.

{x} wyrbdb Ua "praecipitem in negotiis suis", Vatablus, Piscator; "in rebus suis", Mercerus.

Proverbs 29:21

Ver. 21. He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child,.... In a very tender and affluent way uses him with great familiarity; makes him sit at table, with him, feeds him with dainties, and clothes him in the most handsome manner, as if he was one of his own children:

shall have him become [his] son at the length: he will expect to be used as a son; he will not care to do any servile work, or anything, especially that is hard and laborious; he will be for supplanting the son and heir, and think to inherit all himself; or, however, become proud, haughty, and saucy. Jarchi interprets this of the evil imagination, or the corruption of nature, which is in a man from a child; which, if cherished and not subdued, wilt in the issue rule over a man: and some apply it to the body; which, if delicately pampered, and not kept under, will be master of the soul, instead of servant to it, and its members be instruments of unrighteousness.

Proverbs 29:22

Ver. 22. An angry man stirreth up strife,.... In families, neighbourhoods, communities, churches, and commonwealths; that is, one that is given to anger, and gives way to it, in whom it prevails and rules;

and a furious man aboundeth in transgression; or, "a master of wrath or fury" {y}; one much addicted to it: or, "the husband of wrath": wedded to it, as a man to his wife: or, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "who is easy to be angry"; is easily provoked, wrath rises up in him at once; this leads him on to many sins, as cursing, swearing, murder,

{y} hmx leb "dominus furoris", so Vatablus, Piscator, Michaelis.

Proverbs 29:23

Ver. 23. A man's pride shall bring him low,.... As the pride of Adam, in affecting to be as gods, knowing good and evil; he lost the image of God; was brought into a state of darkness and ignorance, into debt and to a dunghill, to beggary and rags; filled with loathsome diseases, and left in thraldom and bondage to sin and Satan; and so all his posterity were brought into the same low estate. This might be exemplified in particular persons, in Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, and others; and, as will be in that monster of pride, the man of sin and antichrist; who will be humbled and brought low in the midst of his pride and boasting,
Re 18:7;

but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit; not who are humble in appearance only, or merely in words, having a show of humility, a voluntary and affected one; but really in their hearts; whose spirits are humble and contrite; who are so in spiritual things, and are made so by the Spirit of God: they are such who are truly sensible of sin; of their folly, and want of spiritual knowledge; of their impotence, and weakness to do anything that is spiritually good; of their spiritual poverty, and want of righteousness; who see that salvation is all of grace; and that whatever they have is owing to the grace of God; that they are deficient in all their duties, and these insufficient to justify them before God; who submit to the righteousness of Christ, and give all the glory of salvation to the grace of God. These, as they are honourable, being clothed with humility, which is itself an ornament of great price; so they are honoured with more grace from the Lord; they are beautified with the garments of salvation; they have the honour to have the spiritual and gracious presence of God, and fellowship with him, who dwells with such as are of an humble spirit: these are the meek and lowly, that shall inherit the new earth, and reign as kings with Christ in it; and the poor in spirit, to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs: and this honour is durable, they shall always abide in it; the grace they have, which makes them glorious, springs up unto eternal life; and the glory they shall have is an eternal weight of glory, a crown of glory that fadeth not away: for so the words may be rendered, "the humble in spirit shall lay hold on glory" {z} or "honour"; possess it and enjoy it: or rather "shall retain" {a} it; shall hold it fast, as the word is translated in **Pr 3:18**; The sum of the proverb, in both parts, is the same with the words of Christ, often used by him, Mt 23:12.

{z} Kwbk Kmty "assequetur gloriam", Montanus; "potietur gloria", Vatablus.
{a} "Tenebit honorem", Piscator; "tenebit gloriam", Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis; "apprehendit gloriam", Shultens.

Proverbs 29:24

Ver. 24. Whoso is partner with a thief,.... That robs and steals, and raises away another man's property; which to do is sinful and contrary to the law of God, and punishable by it; and so it is to join with him in the theft, or to devise, or consent unto it; or to receive the stolen goods, or to hide and conceal them; or to hide the thief, or the theft, and not declare them; see Ps 50:18. Such an one

hateth his own soul; that is, he is not careful of it, he is not concerned for its welfare as he should be; for otherwise no man, properly speaking, hates his own flesh or body, and much less his soul; but he is negligent of the good of it, and, for the sake of the mammon of unrighteousness, runs the risk of the ruin of it; by which he shows that he loves the world more than his own soul; when the profit of the whole world is nothing to the soul of man, Mt 16:26; see **Pr 8:36**;

he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth [it] not; or "does not declare it" {b}; he heareth the cursing of those that have lost their goods, and yet he does not declare where they are, and who is the author of the theft, though he knows; or, being suspected of being concerned in it, or, at least, of knowing who did it, be is had before a civil magistrate, and an oath is given him, which he takes, and yet he conceals the matter: which is an aggravation of his sin, and brings ruin to his soul. So the Targum,

"an oath is determined (or brought to him) and he confesseth not."

Some understand this of a distinct evil, of hearing cursing and swearing, and taking the name of God in vain, and blasphemy against him; yet, through fear of incurring the displeasure of men, and being reckoned a busy body, or through indifference and want of zeal for the glory of God, do not discover it, or inform of it, to a proper person, for the punishment of such; see **Le 5:1**; and render the words {c}, as "he that is partner with a thief hateth his own soul; [so] he that heareth cursing, and betrayeth it not."

{b} dygy alw "et non indicat", Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schultens, Michaelis. {c} So Gejerus.

Proverbs 29:25

Ver. 25. The fear of man bringeth a snare,.... Either that which is subjectively in man; not a divine fear, or the fear of God, that grace which is put into the heart, for that leads to no snare, but tends to life; but a human fear, a servile one, a distrust of the power and providence, grace and goodness, of God, which has torment in it; which brings into bondage, and into many distresses and difficulties, and is opposed to trust in the Lord: or objectively, which has man for its object; a fear of losing the favour and friendship of men, of not having honour and applause from them; and a fear of their reproaches and reviling; of the wrath of men, of persecution from them, and of sufferings by them, even death itself; which has been sometimes a snare to ministers of the word, to drop or conceal some truths of it; and to professors of religion, not to embrace, own, and profess them; as many, through fear of the Jews, would not profess Jesus to be the Messiah, though they knew he was, **Joh 7:13**; yea, such a fear has been a snare to the best of men, and leads into temptation and sin; as particularly Abraham and Peter, Ge 12:12;

but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe; that trusts in the Lord as the God of nature and providence, and the God of all grace, for all mercies, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, and leaves himself and case with him; such an one is safe from men, and the fear of them, and from snares and temptations, and sin and mischief, which come by them: or, "shall be lifted up on high" {d}; he is upon a high rock, firm and sure; he dwells on high, his place of defence is the munition of rocks; he is in a high tower which is impregnable, in a city of refuge where he is safe; he is as immovable as Mount Zion; he is above the fear of man, or danger from him; he is out of the reach of all his enemies, men or devils; see Pr 18:10.

{d} bgvy "sublevabitur", V. L. "elevabitur", Pagninus, Montanus; "exaltabitar", Vatablus; "in edito collocatur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "sublimabitur", Cocceius, Michaelis; "celsa in arce locabitur", Schultens, so Ben Melech.

Proverbs 29:26

Ver. 26. Many seek the ruler's favour,.... Or "face" {e}; are very desirous of being admitted into his presence, and of having his company and conversation; of having an opportunity to ask a favour of him, and of receiving honour from him, and of gaining him on their side, to take their part in a cause depending; see Pr 19:6;

but [every] man's judgment [cometh] from the Lord; who has the hearts of kings and rulers in his hand, and directs them in bestowing their favours, and in determining causes; so that all things are ultimately from the Lord; and therefore it is best to seek unto him, and trust in him: or the state and condition and circumstances of men, as to riches and honour, and the like, are all from the Lord, according as he sees fit; who sets up one and pulls down another, according to his pleasure.

{e} ynp "faciem", V. L. Pagninus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, so Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 29:27

Ver. 27. An unjust man [is] an abomination to the just,.... Not his person, but his actions, his unrighteous actions, his ungodly life and conversation; which a man, holy, just, and good, loathes and abhors, and cannot forbear expressing his abhorrence of; and therefore shuns his company, and will have no fellowship with him. And, on the other hand,

[he that is] upright in the way [is] abomination to the wicked; that man that is upright in heart and life, that walks according to the rule of the divine word, in the path of holiness, in the way of truth and righteousness, he is abhorred by a wicked man; he cannot have any pleasure in his company; he is under some awe and restraint which is disagreeable to him; and he cannot bear the reproofs he gives him; besides, if he is silent, his whole life and conversation carries in it a tacit reproof, conviction, and condemnation of him. There always has been a mutual enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, **Ge 3:15**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 30:1

Ver. 1. The words of Agur the son of Jakeh,.... Here begins, according to Aben Ezra, the fourth part of this book; though, according to others, it is the fifth; See Gill on "Pr 22:17"; Who this Agur was is a matter of doubt; some of the Jewish writers, as Jarchi and Gersom, and likewise some Christian writers {f}, take him to be Solomon himself, who calls himself Agur, which is said to signify "a gatherer"; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "the words of the gatherer, the son of the vomiter"; just as he calls himself Koheleth, or "the caller", or "preacher", **Ec 1:1**. The reason given of this name is, because he gathered wisdom and the law {g}; or, as Jarchi, he gathered wisdom, and vomited it; that is, delivered it out to others; so he did, he sought after and attained to more wisdom than any before him, for he was wiser than all men; and it may be added, that he "gathered" silver and gold, and the treasure of kings, and increased in riches more than any before him, **Ec 1:13**. But then all this does not agree with the person whose words these are; for he speaks of himself as being very ignorant, and as not having learned wisdom, Pr 30:2; and desires neither poverty nor riches, Pr 30:8; besides, the word "Agur" signifies not "a gatherer", but "gathered", as Hillerus {h} renders it; and so Cocceius, who thinks also that Solomon is meant, yet not for the above reasons, but translates the clause thus, "the words of the recollected son of the obedient"; as if it described Solomon the son of David, the obedient one, the man after God's own heart, when he was restored by repentance; but it seems better, with Aben Ezra, to understand this of some very good, knowing, and worthy man, who lived in those times, either before the times of Solomon, or in the same, whose pithy sayings and sentences he had a great regard for, and joined them to his own; or who lived in the times of Hezekiah, or before, whose proverbs were collected by his men, and added to those of Solomon's they had copied in the preceding chapters; see Pr 25:1;

[even] the prophecy; or "burden" {i}, as many of the prophecies are called; it designs something received from the Lord, taken up and carried to others; so Balaam is said to "take up his parable",
Nu 23:7. Here it does not design a prediction of future events, unless it can be thought that there is in the following words a prophecy of the Messiah; but an

instruction, a declaration of things useful and profitable; so preaching in the New Testament is called prophesying often, 1Co 14:1. This is a part of the word of God, of the prophecy which came not by the will of man, but by the inspiration of God, **2Pe 1:19**; which prophecy

the man spake, this excellent good man Agur, who was divinely inspired; see Nu 24:3;

unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal; who were either the children of Agur, whom he instructed in the knowledge of divine things; or they were, as Aben Ezra, either his companions with whom he conversed about sacred things, or his disciples who inquired of him about these things, and learned them of him. Some think {k} these are titles of God himself, to whom Agur directs his speech, and acknowledges his ignorance of the divine Being, whom he might justly call Ithiel and Ucal, that is, "God with me", and "the mighty One"; and certain it is that Agur does direct a prayer to God, Pr 30:7; And some read these words themselves as a prayer, "let God be with me, and one shall prevail" {l}, that is, over all mine enemies; for, if God is on the side of his people, who shall be against them? or, "I shall be able" to do all things through the Lord's strength, **Ro 8:31**; But I rather think the words should be read, as Jarchi observes, "concerning Ithiel and Ucal" {m}; that is, concerning the Messiah, to whom these names agree. Ithiel, or "God with me", is very similar to a phrase used by Christ himself in the days of his flesh, **Joh 8:29**. God was with him as the eternal Word, and his only begotten Son, from all eternity, which denotes his co-existence, nearness of union, equality of nature, and distinction of persons; he was with him as Mediator before the world began, in the council of peace, which was between them both; in the covenant of grace made with him, in which all things were agreed upon respecting the salvation of his people; he was with him in the beginning of time down to his incarnation; he was with him in the creation of all things, in the sustentation of them; in the works of providence, and in the government of the church; he was with him during his state of humiliation; in his infancy, to protect him from the malice of Herod; he was with him when disputing with the doctors in the temple, to direct him; he was with him at his baptism, transfiguration, and other times; he was with him throughout his public ministry, from the beginning to the end of it; he did good and healed all manner of diseases, and wrought amazing miracles, God being with him, **Joh 3:2**
Ac 10:38; and he was with him in his sufferings and at his death; and so he is with him in his exalted state; he raised him from the dead, set him at his own right hand, and ever attends to his prevalent intercession; and will be with him in raising the dead and judging the world. "Ucal", which has the signification

of being able, strong, mighty, and powerful, agrees with Christ, who is the mighty God the most mighty, the Almighty; and which appears by the works he did before his incarnation, as the creation of all things out of nothing, the preservation of all things, and the several wonderful events in which he was; concerned, as the confusion of languages, the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, the conducting the children of Israel through the wilderness, with others; also what he did when here on earth, the mighty works and miracles done by him, and especially the great work of man's redemption, and also the raising of himself from the dead: moreover, what he now does and will do for his people show him to be the mighty One; taking the care of all the churches and providing for them; supplying all the wants of his people, bearing all their burdens, supporting them under all their temptations, and delivering them out of them; strengthening them for his service, protecting them from their enemies, keeping them from falling, raising their dead bodies, and bringing all the sons of God to glory: or if the word should be rendered, as it may, "eaten" or "consumed" {n}, it is true of Christ, whose zeal ate him up, Ps 69:9; and who is the antitype of the sacrifice consumed by fire.

{f} De Dieu, Cocceius, Teelman. Specimen. Explicat. Parabot. p. 378. {g} Jelammedenu apud Buxtorf. Lex. Rab. col. 26. {h} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 39. {i} avmh "onus", Mercerus; "prophetia gravis", Tigurine version. {k} Jermin in loc. {l} See Trapp in loc. {m} So Junius & Tremellius, Aamama, Calovius, Cartwright. {n} Vid. Teelman. Specimen. Expliicat. Parabol. p. 391.

Proverbs 30:2

Ver. 2. Surely I am more brutish than [any] man,.... "Every man is [become] brutish in his knowledge"; man in his original state was a knowing creature but sinning lost his knowledge, and "became like the beasts that perish"; hence we read of the "brutish among the people": but Agur thought himself not only brutish among the rest, but more brutish than any. So Plato {o} says of some souls living on earth, that they are yhriwdeiv, of a brutish nature; see Jer 10:14. Or I think the words may be rendered, "a brute [am] I [rather] than a man" {p}; have more of the brute than of the man, especially in the sight and presence of God; a very beast before him, or in comparison of other wise, holy, and good men; or with respect to the knowledge of spiritual, divine, and heavenly things, Ps 73:22; or "a brute [was] I from [the time]", or "[ever since I was] a man" {q}; as soon as be was born, being born in sin, and like a wild ass's colt, Job 11:12;

and have not the understanding of a man; or "of Adam" {r}; who was made after the image of God, which consisted in knowledge as well as holiness; who knew much of God, his nature, perfections, and persons; of the creatures, and the works of his hands and of all things in nature; but affecting more knowledge than he should lost in a great measure what he had, and brought his posterity in and left them in a state of blindness and ignorance, one of whose sons Agur was: or his meaning is, that he had not the understanding, as not of Adam in innocence, and of prophets and other eminent men of God, so not of ordinary men of those who had, he least share of the knowledge of divine things. Aben Ezra, who takes Ithiel and Ucal to be scholars or companions of Agur, supposes, that they asked him questions concerning the divine Being, nature, and perfections, to which he answers in this strain; showing his insufficiency to give them any instruction or satisfaction in such matters, or to discourse on such sublime subjects: or rather his view was to show the blindness and ignorance of human nature with respect to divine things he was about to treat of; and particularly to observe, that the knowledge of a Saviour, and salvation by him, were not from nature, and attainable by that; and that a man must first know himself, his own folly and ignorance, before he can have any true knowledge of Ithiel and Ucal, the mighty Saviour and Redeemer; of the need of him, and of interest in him. Some think his view is to prove that his words, his prophecy, or what he was about to say, or did say, must be owing entirely to divine inspiration; since he was of himself; and without a divine revelation, so very blind, dark, and ignorant; it could not be owing to any natural sagacity of his, who was more brutish than any; nor to any acquired knowledge, or the instruction of men, since he had none, as follows; and so yk, with which the words begin, may be rendered "for" or "because" {s}, as it usually is, "for I am more brutish, than any man", &c.

{o} De Leg. l. 10. p, 959. {p} vyam ykna reb "bardus sum prae viro", Mercerus; "brutus ego prae viro", Cocceius, Schultens. {q} "Nam brutus sum ex quo vir sum", Junius & Tremellius, so Cartwright. {r} "Nec est mihi intelligentia Adami", Cartwright. {s} yk "nam", Junius & Tremellius; "quia", Pagninus, Montanus; "quoniam", Michaelis.

Proverbs 30:3

Ver. 3. I neither learned wisdom,.... Natural wisdom or philosophy, so as to understand the nature of things, and reason about them in a philosophical manner; or political wisdom, so as to know how to govern states, and manage the affairs of kingdoms; or in a lower sphere to transact the affairs of life to any peculiar advantage; he had not a polite or liberal education: or spiritual and evangelical wisdom; that is, not of himself through the mere strength and force of his genius and natural capacity, or of others; he was not the son of a prophet, nor brought up in the schools of the prophets; he did not learn it, nor was he taught it by men; for this is not acquired by human teaching; it is what comes from above, from heaven, and by the revelation of God;

nor have the knowledge of the holy; or "holies" {s}; either of holy persons, such knowledge as holy men of God had; or of the holy angels, not of their nature, capacities, influence and operations; nor such as they have: or rather of the holy Persons in the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit; their nature modes of subsisting, perfections, purposes, and the like; at least not a full and comprehensive one: or of holy things, of the holy Scriptures, and the holy doctrines of them; however, not what is perfect and complete. It may be rendered, "but I have the knowledge of the holy" {t}, though he had not the advantage of human literature, nor had ever been under the instructions of men on one account or another, and therefore what he knew, or was about to discourse of, was from God. Some understand this verse and Pr 30:2 of Ithiel, or Christ {u}, as in the esteem of men, **1Co 1:23**.

{s} Myvdq "sanctorum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Cocceius, Schultens. {t} eda Myvdq tedw "ad cognitionem sanctorum novi", Michaelis; "expers sum humanarnm artium, et divinarum guarus sum", Vatablus in Gejerus. {u} Teelman. Specimen. Explicat. Parabol. p. 391.

Proverbs 30:4

Ver. 4. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?.... That has been thither to fetch knowledge of God and divine things, and has returned to communicate it. Enoch was taken up to heaven before this time: and Elijah, as is very probable, after; but neither of them returned again, to inform mortals what was to be seen, known, and enjoyed there: since, the Apostle Paul was caught up into the third heaven, and came back again; but then the things he heard were such as it was not lawful for a man to utter: and indeed, since the coming of Christ there is no need of any further revelation to be made nor of any such expedition, in order to obtain it, Ro 10:6. And, properly speaking, there never was any besides him, whose names are Ithiel and Ucal, that ever did this: he lay in the bosom of the Father, and was privy to his whole mind and will; he descended from heaven to earth not by local motion, but, by assumption of nature; and when he had made known his Father's will, and done his work, he ascended far above all heavens, and received gifts for men; to fill his churches and ministers with them, in order to communicate and improve spiritual and divine knowledge; and therefore, with great propriety and pertinence, he applies these words to himself, **Joh 3:13**;

who hath gathered the wind in his fists? not any mere creature; not any man or set of men; it is not in the power of any, either men or angels, to restrain or let loose the winds at pleasure; nor has Satan, though called the prince of the power of the air, that is, of the devils in the air, any such command of them; none but he that made them can command them to blow, or be still; even he who brings them out of his treasures, and his own son, whom the wind and seas obeyed; see
Ps 135:7; The Heathens {w} themselves are so sensible of this, that the power of the winds only belongs to God, that they have framed a deity they call Aeolus; whom the supreme Being has made a kind of steward or store keeper of the winds, and given him a power to still or raise them as he pleases {x};

who hath bound the waters in a garment? either the waters above, which are bound in the thick clouds as in a garment which hold them from pouring out; or the waters of the sea, which are as easily managed by the Lord as an infant by its parent, and is wrapped about with a swaddling band, Job 26:8. But can any creature do this? none but the mighty God; and his almighty Son the Ithiel and Ucal, who clothes the heavens with blackness, and makes sackcloth their covering: even he who is the Redeemer of this people, and has the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to them Isa 50:2;

who hath established all the ends of the earth? fixed the boundaries of the several parts of the world, Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, and the several countries in them? settled the foundations of the earth, and secured the banks and borders of it from the raging of the sea? None but these next mentioned; see Job 38:4;

what [is] his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell? if thou surest it is a mere man that does all these things tell his name; or, if he be dead, say what is the name of his son or of any of his family; so Jarchi and others interpret it: or rather, since it is the Lord alone and his own proper Son, to whom these things can he ascribed say what is his name; that is, his nature and perfections which are incomprehensible and ineffable; otherwise he is known by his name Jehovah and especially as his name is proclaimed in Christ and manifested by him and in his Gospel: and seeing he has a son of the same nature with him, and possessed of the same perfections, co-essential, and co-existent, and every way equal to him, and a distinct person from him, say what is his nature and perfections also; declare his generation and the manner of it; his divine filiation, and in what class it is; things which are out of the reach of human capacity, and not to be expressed by the tongue of men and angels; see Mt 11:27. Otherwise, though his name for a while was a secret, and he was only called the seed of the woman and of Abraham, **Ge 3:15**; yet he had many names given him under the Old Testament; as Shiloh, Immanuel, the Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and Prince of peace; the Lord our righteousness, and the Man, the Branch: and under the New Testament, Jesus the Saviour, Christ the Anointed; the Head of the church, the Judge of the world; the Word of God, and King of kings, and Lord of lords. This Scripture is a proof of Christ's being the eternal Son of God; of his equality with his divine Father as such, their name and nature being alike ineffable; of his co-existence with his Father as such; and of his omnipresence and omnipotence, expressed by the phrases here used of ascending, &c. and of his distinct personality from the Father; the same question being distinctly put of him as of the Father. Some render the last clause, "dost thou know?" {y} thou dost not know God and his Son, their being and perfections are not to be known by the light of nature, only by revelation, and but imperfectly.

{w} keinon gar tamihn anemwn, &c. Homer. Odyss. 10. v. 21, 22. "Aeole, namque tibi divum pater atque hominum rex, et mulcere dedit fluctus, et tollere vento", Virgil Aeneid. l. v. 69, 70. {x} See a Sermon of mine, called "Christ the Saviour from the Tempest", p. 17, 18. {y} edt yk "ad nosti?" Noldius, p. 393. No. 1337.

Proverbs 30:5

Ver. 5. Every word of God [is] pure,.... The whole word of God. "All Scripture", given by inspiration of God, to which Agur directs, as giving the best account of God, of his name, nature, and perfections; of his Son, person, offices, and grace; being pure, very pure, "purified" {z} like silver, purified in a furnace of earth. The whole of Scripture is pure, free from all falsehood and error; coming from the God of truth, who cannot lie, and therefore called "the Scriptures of truth": every promise is pure as well as precious, made without dissimulation, faithfully performed, and all yea and amen in Christ; every doctrine is pure, free from the mixtures and inventions of men; the sincere

milk of the word; consistent and all of a piece, not yea and nay; and tending to promote purity of heart and life; wholesome words, and doctrines according to godliness; see
Ps 12:6;

he [is] a shield unto them that put their trust in him; not the word, but God, whose the word is; and which represents him as a proper object of trust, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual, at all times; and as a shield to protect such, by his power and grace, from all their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, and also from all errors and false doctrines; see **Ps 3:3**.

{z} hpwru "purgatus", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Gejerus; "purgatissimus", Junius & Tremellius; Heb. "conflatus", Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schultens.

Proverbs 30:6

Ver. 6. Add thou not unto his words,.... To the words of God; as the Jews did, by joining their oral law, or the traditions of the elders, to the written word, and preferring them before it; and as the Papists, by making their unwritten traditions, and the sense and determinations of their church, equal to the Scriptures; and as all enthusiasts do, who set up their pretended dreams, visions, revelations, and prophecies, upon a foot with the word of God, or as superior to it; whereas that is, and that only, the rule and standard of faith and practice, and is a sufficient and perfect one; see **De 4:2**;

lest he reprove thee; that is, God; either by words or by blows, by threatenings and denunciations of his wrath and displeasure; or by chastisements and corrections for such daring pride, blasphemy, and wickedness; those who add to his words, he threatens to add plagues unto them, Re 22:18;

and thou be found a liar; a forger, speaker, and spreader of doctrinal lies, such doctrines as are contrary to the word of truth; not being built on that, but upon human inventions, and additions to it.

Proverbs 30:7

Ver. 7. Two [things] have I required of thee,.... Or, "have asked of thee {a}, O

God"; as may be supplied, for the words are addressed to him. The following is a prayer made unto him, which contains the two requests here referred to; his requests are not many, his words are few; he did not make long prayers, or expect to be heard for much speaking;

deny me [them] not before I die; not that he thought he was near his end; nor is it his sense that he desired some time or other, at least before he died, that he might have these two requests granted him after mentioned; for what are poverty and riches, or convenient food, to a man just dying? but his meaning is, that he might be thus favoured as long as he lived; that all the while he was in the world, he might be kept from sin, and be free from anxious worldly thoughts and cares, having a moderate competency of good things: faith in prayer will have no denial; a wrestling Jacob will not let the angel go without a blessing; importunity in prayer gets much from the hands of God; "the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much", **Jas 5:16**.

{a} Ktam ytlav "postulavi a te", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus; "peto ab te", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "petii a te", Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 30:8

Ver. 8. Remove far from me vanity and lies,.... This is the "first" request, to be preserved from sin, in general; which is a vain, lying, and deceitful thing; promising pleasure, profit, liberty, and impunity, which it does not give. Agur desires to have vain thoughts removed out of his mind, vain words from his mouth, and vain actions from his life and conversation; to have his eyes turned from beholding vanity, and his feet from walking in it; and his affections taken off from the vain things of the world, the lusts, pleasures, profits, and honours of it; as well as to be kept from all errors and false doctrines, which are lies in hypocrisy; with which men that lie in wait to deceive would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect: Agur conscious of his own weakness, and proneness to evil, desires the Lord would not lead him into temptation, but deliver him from all evil, doctrinal and practical. Some understand this of the forgiveness of sin; which is sometimes expressed by a putting or removing it away, **2Sa 7:13**
Ps 103:12;

give me neither poverty nor riches; this is the "second" request, not to be extremely poor nor too rich; but to be in a middle state between both, neither rich nor poor; which Horace {b} calls the golden mean, and which Agur wisely judged to be the happiest state; most free from care, least liable to temptation, and the best situation to serve the Lord in: a like wish was made by Theognis {c}, I neither love to be rich,

"nor desire it; but to live on a little, having no evil;"

so Martial {d}. Both riches and poverty are of God; men are rich or poor, as the Lord pleases; he suffers poverty in some, and gives riches to others: Agur deprecates both, as having their separate, peculiar, snares and temptations; though no doubt this request was made with submission to the will of God; and not as considering either of them as evils in themselves, but as they might be attended with bad consequences, and what is next mentioned being more eligible;

feed me with food convenient for me; not merely what was agreeable to his palate, suitable to his constitution, and sufficient for nature; nor for him personally, but for his family also; and what was proper and suitable to the condition and circumstances in which he was, and to the rank and quality he held, whether in a more private or in a more public capacity. Some render it, "the food of my allowance" {e}; what is allotted and appointed for me It seems to be the same which Job calls his "necessary food", and Christ "our daily bread": it takes in both food and raiment, which having, men should be contented with; see
Job 23:12. The allusion seems to be to the stated measure of food allowed to servants by the day, or rather by the month, called "demensum", and which was but small and scanty {f}; yet with this Agur could be content.

{b} Camin. l. 2. Ode 10. v. 5. {c} Sententiae, v. 1151, 1152. {d} "Nunquam divitias deos rogavi, contentus modicis, meoque laetus; paupertas, veniam dabis, recede", Epigr. l. 4. Ep. 65. {e} yqx Mxl "panem statuti mei", Montanus; "demensi mei", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens. {f} Vid. Juvenal. Sat. 14. v. 126. & Not. in ibid.

Proverbs 30:9

Ver. 9. Lest I be full, and deny [thee],.... This is the dangerous consequence of riches, and the temptation they expose men unto; who, being full of the things of this world, are tempted to deny the Lord; not his being and perfections directly, but chiefly his providence; to deny that what they have, they have received of him, but attribute it to their own care, diligence, and industry; and now think they can live without him, without any dependence on his providence, having a large affluence of the things of life: yea, they may be said to deny him, when they forget the bounties of his providence; are not thankful to him for them; that flatter themselves with a continuance of them, without any regard to him, as if he had no concern in the affairs of life; see De 32:15;

and say, Who [is] the Lord? as Pharaoh did, **Ex 5:2**. I am not obliged to him; I can live without him, I have enough of my own;

or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God [in vain]; this is the snare that attends poverty; men, for want of food and raiment, are tempted to steal from their neighbours, which is a sin against the law of God, the eighth command; and then to cover the theft, when an oath is offered to purge them from the charge and suspicion of it, they take it, and so are guilty of false swearing, or taking the name of God not only in vain, but falsely, and so become guilty of the breach of the third command. Agur, a good man, is desirous he might not be exposed to temptations to such evils, and especially which so affected the honour and glory of God.

Proverbs 30:10

Ver. 10. Accuse not a servant unto his master,.... Wrongly, rashly, and without any foundation, nor for any trifling thing; unless it be in a case of moment and importance, when his master's business is sadly neglected, or he is injured in his property by him: especially care should be taken not to calumniate a servant, to abuse him with the tongue, as the word {g} signifies; the circumstance he is in should be considered, as a servant; and how severe masters are apt to be towards them, and therefore little matters should be hid from them; and much less should they be aggravated, and least of all should falsehoods be told of them. So Doeg the Edomite accused David to Saul, and the Pharisees accused the disciples of Christ to their Master, 1Sa 22:9; the apostle's advice is good, and agrees with Agur's,
Ro 14:4;

lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty; or, "and thou shouldest sin" {h}; that is, afterwards; and so the curse come upon thee he has wished for: or the sense is, lest he should curse thee before men, and hurt thy character and reputation; or imprecate a curse from the Lord, which he may suffer to come upon thee for sin. Aben Ezra interprets this of a servant, that flies from Heathen countries to the land of Israel, to be made a proselyte of; who should not be discovered, and returned to his old master.

{g} Nvlt la "ne crimineris lingua", Montanus. {h} tmvaw "et delinquas", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "q. d. peccabis", Vatablus.

Proverbs 30:11

Ver. 11. [There is] a generation [that] curseth their father,.... A sort of men that neither fear God nor regard men; and are so inhuman as to be without natural affections to their parents; have no reverence of them, love to them, nor give them any honour or obedience; so far from it, that they curse their father that begot them; imprecate on him all the evils in life they can think of, and wish him out of the world;

and doth not bless their mother; cannot give her a good word, who bore them, and brought them up in the most tender and indulgent manner; yea, so unnatural as to curse her also, for that is intended by this way of speaking; see Pr 30:17.

Proverbs 30:12

Ver. 12. [There is] a generation [that are] pure in their own eyes,.... Not in the eyes of God, who sees the heart, and all the impurities of it, as well as of life and conversation; nor in the eyes of others, though such may appear outwardly righteous before men; but in their own eyes, in their own conceit and imagination, trusting in themselves that they are righteous: but such have not their eyes opened or enlightened to see the plague of their own hearts, the spirituality of the law of God, the perfection of righteousness that requires; nor the righteousness and holiness of God himself; nor the imperfection and insufficiency of their own; did they, they would not seem pure and righteous to themselves. No man is pure by nature, or through anything done by them; but by the grace of God, and through the blood and righteousness of Christ; and such are far from being pure in their own eyes, or as considered in themselves: but those who are pure neither by nature nor by grace, yet think they are so. There were some such in Agur's time, and such were the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time; there were a generation of them; and there are of the same sort

in our days, as Papists, Perfectionists, and all self-justiciaries; see
Lu 18:9;

and [yet] is not washed from their filthiness; their native, original, and universal pollution by sin they have from their birth, and which is increased by numerous actual transgressions; and from which none are or can be washed but those who are born of water and of the Spirit, or are washed with the washing of regeneration; and are washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb, whose blood cleanses from all sin; and are arrayed with the fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints, which is the righteousness of Christ imputed to them: whatsoever is short of these leaves men unwashed from their filthiness, whatever opinion they may have of themselves; see **Job 9:30** **Jer 2:22**.

Proverbs 30:13

Ver. 13. [There is] a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. Above others, on whom they look with scorn and contempt; as those do who have more riches than others, and boast of them; they despise their poor neighbours, and disdain to look upon them: and such also who have more knowledge and wisdom than others, or at least think so; they are puffed up in their fleshly minds, and say of the illiterate or less knowing, as the proud Pharisees did, "this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed": and likewise those who fancy themselves more holy and righteous than others; these, in a scornful manner, say, "stand by thyself, I am holier than thou"; and thank God they are not as other men are, as publicans and sinners; see Pr 19:4. Hence Pliny {i} says, that in the eyebrows there is a part of the mind; those especially show haughtiness; that pride has a receptacle elsewhere, but here it has its seat; it is bred in the heart, but here it comes and here it hangs: wherefore Juvenal {k} calls pride and haughtiness, "grande supercilium"; and proud haughty persons are said to be supercilious.

{i} Nat. Hist. 1. 11. c. 37. {k} Satyr. 6. v. 168.

Proverbs 30:14

Ver. 14. [There is] a generation whose teeth [are as] swords,.... As sharp as swords; like such the beasts of prey have; cruel, barbarous, and inhuman creatures; see Ps 57:4;

and their jaw teeth as knives; exceeding sharp and biting:

to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from [among] men: by their tyranny, oppression, and cruelty, to deprive them of the little they have; and even to take away their lives from them, and utterly destroy them; of this disposition are all tyrants and persecutors: such were Rome Pagan, compared to a red dragon in the times of the ten Heathen persecutions; and such is Rome Papal, signified by a beast, like a leopard, bear, and lion; and which has been drunk with the blood of the saints.

Proverbs 30:15

Ver. 15. The horse leech hath two daughters, [crying], Give, give,.... Or "the blood sucker" {l}; so it began to be called in the times of Pliny {m}, to which the last generation of men may well be compared; blood thirsty creatures, that never have enough, and are not satisfied with the flesh of men, nor with their blood; and such particularly the Papists are: and not only this generation of men, but there are three or four things besides, which resemble the horse leech for its insatiableness; for the horse leech has not two daughters only, but more. Some, by her two daughters, understand the two forks of its tongue, which some naturalists say it has; though later ones, and more diligent inquirers into those things, find it has not; but either with its three teeth, or by the compression of its mouth on all sides, sucks the blood, and will not let go until it is filled with it {n}: others have proposed the two sorts of leeches as its daughters, the sea leech, and that which is found in fenny and marshy places. But it is best, by its daughters, to understand such that resemble it, and are like unto it; as those that are of like nature and quality, and do the same things as others, are called their children; see Mt 23:31 **1Jo 3:10**; and so the number of its daughters, which are always craving and asking for more, and are never satisfied, are not only two, but more, as follows;

there are three [things]; or, "[yea], there are three [things]"

[that] are never satiated: [yea], four [things] say not, [It is] enough; not two only, but three, and even four, that are quite insatiable and are as follow. The Syriac version renders the whole thus,

"the horse leech hath three beloved daughters; three, "I say", they are, which are not satisfied; and the fourth says not, It is enough."

Some, as Abendana observes, interpret it of hell, by a transposition of the letters; because everyone that perverts his ways descends thither. Bochart {o} interprets it of fate, and so Noldius {p}: and Schultens renders the word, the most monstrous of evils; it signifying in the Arabic language, as he observes, anything monstrous and dreadful; such as wood demons, serpents, and dragons, which devour men and beasts. Suidas {q}, by the "horse leech", understands sin, whose daughters are fornication, envy, and idolatry, which are never satisfied by evil actions, and the fourth is evil concupiscence.

{l} hqwlel "sanguisugae", V. L. Pagninus, Tigurine version. Mercerus, Gejerus. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 10. {n} "Non missura cutem nisi plena cruoris hirudo", Horat. de Arte Poet. fine. {o} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 19. col. 801. {p} Concord. Ebr. Par. p. 467. No. 1425. {q} In voce bdella.

Proverbs 30:16

Ver. 16. The grave,.... Which is the first of the four daughters, or insatiable things, which resemble the horse leech: the grave is the house appointed for all living; it stands ready for them, it is open to receive them when dead; and though such multitudes have been put into it, since death reigned in the world, yet it is not full, it waits for more; nor will its mouth be shut till the last enemy, death, is destroyed; see Pr 27:20; This is an emblem of a covetous man, who enlarges his desire as hell or the grave; and is never satisfied with gold, silver, and increase of substance he has, but is always craving more;

and the barren womb; the second daughter, that cries, Give, give, as Rachel, "give me children, or I die", Ge 30:1: barren women are oftentimes impatient for children, as she was; and importunate, as Hannah; and as the Israelitish women were before the coming of the Messiah, each hoping he might be born of them; especially before it was so clearly known that he should be born of a virgin: though it may be rather the barren womb of harlots is here meant, and who are generally barren, and whose lust is insatiable; and this may be an emblem of lust, which is never satisfied; whether it be a lust of riches, or of honour, or of uncleanness, or of sensual pleasures;

the earth [that] is not filled with water; which is dry and parched, and opens and gapes; and though large quantities of rain may fall upon it, which it greedily drinks in; yet is not seen, nor is it filled with it, but it thirsts for more: this may be an emblem of good men, that have received abundance of the grace of God; and though they thirst not after sin, as they before did, and others do; yet thirst after God, more knowledge of him, and communion with him, and for more grace, like the dry and thirsty land, and cannot have enough of it; see **Joh 4:13**; or rather of wicked men, who drink up iniquity like water, and yet never have their fill of it to their satisfaction. This is the third thing, and the fourth follows:

and the fire [that] saith not, [It is] enough; but let what fuel will be cast into it, it devours it, and still wants more: by the Egyptians, as Herodotus {r} relates, fire is reckoned an animated beast, which devours all it can lay hold on; and when it is filled with food, it dies with that which is devoured by it. Such is the fire of divine wrath, hell fire, in which sinners are, as thorns and briers; and which is unquenchable, everlasting, burns for ever and ever; the Tophet, ordained of old, deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and much wood, kindled by the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone,
Isa 30:33. These are the four daughters of the horse leech which resemble that in its insatiableness. Jarchi makes mention of some that interpret the horse leech of "sheol", or the state of the dead; and the two daughters, of paradise and hell; the one says, "Give me the righteous"; and the other says, "Give me the wicked." Aben Ezra applies these four to the four generations before spoken of; the grave, into which are cast the generation of those that curse their father, and die before their time; the barren womb, the generation of those that are not washed from the filthiness of whoredom, and have no children; the earth not filled with water, the proud and haughty, who are humbled by famine; and the fire is that which descends from heaven, to consume the generation that destroy the poor and oppress the needy, as fire came down upon them in the days of Elijah. Jarchi takes notice of a Midrash, which applies these four things to the four monarchies; as it does also all the four things after mentioned.

{r} Thalia sive, l. 3. c. 16.

Proverbs 30:17

Ver. 17. The eye [that] mocketh at [his] father,.... At his advice, admonitions, and instructions; looks upon him with scorn and disdain, and treats him as a weak, silly, old man: here Agur returns to the first generation he had observed;

and despiseth to obey [his] mother; her orders and commands: or, "the obedience of his mother" {s}; her discipline and instruction, having no regard to it. The word is rendered "gathering" in Ge 49:10; and Jarchi interprets it of the gathering of wrinkles in her face: and so the Targum, Arabic, and Syriac versions render it, "the old age of his mother"; despising her as an old foolish woman; see Pr 23:22; qhl, in the Ethiopic language, signifies to "grow old", from whence the word here used, by a transposition of letters, may be derived; and Mr. Castell {t} observes, that the royal prophet, among others, seems to have taken this word from the queen of Sheba;

the ravens of the valley, shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it; it signifies, that such persons shall come to an untimely end, and an ignominious death; either be drowned in a river, when floating upon it, or cast upon the banks of it, the ravens that frequent such places, and are most cruel and voracious, should feed upon them: or they should be hanged on a tree, or be crucified {u}, where birds of prey would light upon them; and particularly pick out their eyes and eat them, as being softest and sweetest to them; therefore first aim at them, and of which birds, and especially ravens, are very fond {w}; and is a just retaliation for their scornful and disdainful looks at their parent. This may figuratively design the black devils of hell, the posse of them in the air, who are sometimes compared to the fowls thereof; to whom such unnatural and disobedient children shall become a prey; see Mt 13:4.

{s} Ma thqyl "obediantiam matris", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis; "doctrinam", Vatablus, Tigurine version; "disciplinam", Castalio; "obsequium matris", Schultens. {t} Lexic. col. 1960. {u} "Non pasces in cruce corvos", Horat. Ep. 16. ad Quinctium, v. 48. {w} "Hic prior in cadaveribus oculum petit", Isidor. Origin. l. 12. c. 7. "Effossos oculos vorat corvus", Catullus ad Cominium, Ep. 105. v. 5.

Proverbs 30:18

Ver. 18. There be three [things which] are too wonderful for me,.... Which were above his reach and comprehension; what he could not find out, nor account for, nor sufficiently admire;

yea, four things which I know not; the way of them; as follows.

Proverbs 30:19

Ver. 19. The way of an eagle in the air,.... And so of any other bird; but this is mentioned, because it flies swiftest, and soars highest: but the way in which it goes is not known, nor can it be seen with the eye; it cuts the air, and passes through it, but leaves no track behind it which may be pointed to, and it may be said, that is the way the eagle took and flew towards heaven out of sight;

the way of a serpent upon a rock; a smooth hard rock; and wonderful it is that it should creep up it without legs; and where it leaves no impression, no footsteps by which it can be traced, as it may in soft and sandy places;

the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; it is marvellous that such a vessel should be supported upon the sea; that it should weather the storms and tempests of it; that it should be steered through the trackless ocean to distant countries; and, particularly, though it makes furrows in the waters, and divides the waves; yet these quickly close again, and there is no path to be seen in which it goes; there is no beaten road made by it, nor by the vast numbers which go the same way, which a man can see with his eyes or follow;

and the way of a man with a maid; or "to a maid" {x}; the many artful ways and methods he uses to get into her company, who is kept recluse; and to convey the sentiments and affections of his heart unto her, to gain her love to him, and obtain her in an honourable way of marriage; or to decoy and deceive her, and draw her into impure and unlawful embraces: it may design the private and secret way of committing fornication with her; which sense seems to be confirmed by Pr 30:20. Some of the ancients, particularly Ambrose {y}, interpreted the whole of this verse of Christ: "the way of an eagle in the air", of his ascension to heaven, with men his prey, taken out of the jaws of the enemy; and which is such as is beyond the comprehension of men, that one of so great majesty should vouchsafe to come down from heaven, or ascend thither: "the way of a serpent upon a rock" he understands of the temptations of Satan, the old serpent, with which he attacked Christ, the Rock; but could imprint no footsteps of his malice and wickedness on him; could find nothing in him to work upon, nor leave any sign behind him, as upon Adam: "the way of a ship in the midst of the sea" he interprets of the church; which though distressed with storms and tempests of persecution and false doctrine, yet cannot suffer shipwreck, Christ being in it: and the last clause he renders as the Vulgate Latin version does, "and the way of a man in youth"; which he explains of the journeys which Christ took, and the ways of virtue he pursued, to do good to the bodies and souls of men, which are so many as not to be numbered. But it may be better interpreted of the wonderful incarnation of Christ, his conception and birth of a virgin; which was a new and unheard of thing, and the way and manner of it quite inscrutable, and more hard and difficult to be understood than any of the rest; for the words may be rendered, "the way of a man in a maid" or "virgin"; that is, the conception of Geber, the mighty man, in the virgin; see Jer 31:22. Gussetius {z} gives the mystical sense of the whole, as referring to the ascension of Christ; his coming out of the stony grave; his conversation among the people, like the tumultuous waves; and his incarnation of a virgin.

{x} hmleb "ad virginem", Glassius, Gejerus, Noldius, p. 144. No. 678. {y} De Salomone, c. 2, 3, 4, 5. {z} Ebr. Comment. p. 195.

Proverbs 30:20

Ver. 20. Such [is] the way of an adulterous woman,.... It is equally unknown as the way of a man with a maid; it is difficult to detect her, she takes so much care and caution, and uses so many artful methods to conceal her wickedness from her husband; though she lives in adultery, it is in a most private manner, and carried on so secretly and artfully that she is not easily discovered;

she eateth, and wipeth her mouth; like one that eats what he should not, wipes his mouth that it might not be known or suspected he had ate anything; so such an adulteress commits the sin of adultery; and when she has done looks as grave and demure, and carries it so to her husband and all her friends, as if she was the chastest person upon earth. The allusion may be to harlots, who after an impure congress used to wash themselves {a}, and had servants to wait upon them and serve them with water, called from hence "aquarioli" {b};

and saith, I have done no wickedness; she says by her behaviour, by her demure looks; and if suspected and challenged with it utterly denies it. This is an emblem of the antichristian whore of Rome, who, though the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth; though guilty of the foulest adultery, that is, the grossest idolatry, yet pretends to be the pure and chaste spouse of Christ; and, under the guise of purity and holiness, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, seduces the minds of many; see Re 17:1.

{a} "Dedecus hoc sumpta dissimulavit aqua", Ovid. Amor. l. 3. Eleg. 6. in fine. {b} Tertull. Apolog. c. 43. Vid. Turnebi Adversar. l. 14. c. 12.

Proverbs 30:21

Ver. 21. For three [things] the earth is disquieted,.... The inhabitants of it are made very uneasy;

and for four [which] it cannot bear; they are a load and burden upon it, and are intolerable to those that dwell on it, and make them very uncomfortable.

Proverbs 30:22

Ver. 22. For a servant, when he reigneth,.... Being unfit for it through his education, not having been trained up in and learned the arts of government and maxims of it; and through the disposition of his mind, which is mean, abject, and servile; and as he has been used himself when a servant, so he will use others {c} and through his circumstances, being poor, he will take oppressive methods to become rich; and being raised from a low estate, he is the more imperious, proud, and haughty {d}; all which and more make his reign intolerable; see Pr 19:10. This may be applied to antichrist, the "servus servorum", who in a haughty, tyrannical, and insolent manner, exalts himself above all that is called God: and reigns over the kings of the earth, at least has done so, and that in such a manner as was unbearable; deposing kings at pleasure, disposing of their kingdoms, and trampling upon their necks, and making their subjects his vassals; see **2Th 2:4**;

and a fool, when he is filled with meat; as Nabal at his feast, when he behaved so intolerably in his cups towards David and his messengers, that he determined on his destruction, had not Abigail interposed, 1Sa 25:10; and there are many such fools, who having their bellies full of food, and their heads full of liquor, are very overbearing in company, and give their tongues such a loose as is very disturbing: or this may intend such fools, or wicked men, who are full of wealth and riches, and being purse proud, are exceeding haughty and insolent; set their mouths against the heaven, and blaspheme God that is in it; and their tongues walk through the earth, and spare none, but lash all in an insufferable manner. These disquiet families, neighbourhoods, communities, and commonwealths; see Ps 73:7.

{c} "Nec bellua tetrior ulla est, quam servi rabies in libera colla furentis", Claudian. in Eutrop. l. 1. v. 183, 184. {d} "Asperius nihil est humili, cum surgit in altum", Claudian. ib. v. 181.

Proverbs 30:23

Ver. 23. For an odious [woman], when she is married,.... Odious for her person, her ugliness, and the deformity of her body; or rather for the ill qualities of her mind, which, while single, she endeavours to conceal, but, being married, hides them no longer; but becomes imperious, proud, scornful, and malicious, and behaves in an ill natured way to her husband and all about her, to such a degree, that there is no bearing the place where she is;

and an handmaid, that is heir to her mistress; that has got so much into her affections that she leaves all she has to her when she dies, which makes her insufferably proud and vain; or she marries her master after the death of her mistress, and so coming into her place enjoys all she had, but only her wisdom and humility; which being wanting, she behaves in such a manner as to make the whole family uneasy. This might be exemplified in the case of Hagar, the bondmaid of Sarah, a type of those that are under the law of works, and seek the inheritance by it; and who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others, Ge 16:4.

Proverbs 30:24

Ver. 24. There be four [things which are] little upon the earth,.... Small in bulk, that have little bodies, are the lesser sort of animals;

but they [are] exceeding wise; show a great deal of art and wisdom in what they do; or "but they are wise, made wise" {e} by the instinct of nature, by the direction of Providence, by which they do things that are surprising. Some versions, that have no regard to the points, read the words, "but their are wiser than the wise" {f}; than even wise men; wise men may learn much from the least of creatures; see Job 12:7.

{e} Mymkxm Mymkx "sapientia, sapientia imbuta"; Heb. "sapientificata", Piscator, Gejerus. {f} "Sapientiora sapientibus", so Sept. V. L. Arabic and Syriac versions; "sapientia superant, vel prudentissimos", Tigurine version.

Proverbs 30:25

Ver. 25. The ants [are] a people not strong,.... Far from it; what is weaker than an ant? a multitude of them may be destroyed at once, with the crush of a foot. Pliny calls it "minimum animal", the least animal; and the Arabians use it as a proverb, to call a weak man one weaker than an ant: and there is one sort of ants called "dsar", so small that one hundred of them will not weigh more than a barley corn {g}: they are called a people, because they associate together in great numbers; though small in bulk, and weak as to power and strength; and which is a figure elsewhere used in the sacred Scriptures; see **Joe 1:6**; and by profane writers, as Homer and Virgil, who speak of bees as a people and nation {h}; and of nations of flies, and of flying birds, geese, cranes, and swans {i};

yet their prepare their meat in the summer; build granaries with great art and wisdom, carry in grains of corn with great labour and industry, in the summer season, when only to be got, and lay them up against winter. Phocylides {k} the poet says much the same things of them; he calls them a tribe or nation, small but laborious, and says, they gather and carry in their food in summer for the winter, which is a proof of their wisdom. Cicero {l} says, the ant has not only sense, but mind, reason, and memory. Aelianus {m} ascribes unspeakable wisdom to it; and Pliny {n} discourse and conversation; See Gill on "Pr 6:6", See Gill on "Pr 6:7";
See Gill on "Pr 6:8". It is a pattern of industry and diligence both as to temporal and spiritual things, **Ec 9:10**.

{g} Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 22. col. 598. {h} eynea melissawn Iliad. 2. v. 87. "Et populos et proelia dicam", Georgic. l. 4. v. 4, 5. {i} Iliad. 2. v. 459, 469. & 15. v. 690, 691. {k} Poem. Admon. v. 158, 159. {l} De Natura Deorum, l. 3. {m} De Animal. l. 16. c. 15. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 30.

Proverbs 30:26

Ver. 26. The coneys [are but] a feeble folk,.... Or "rabbits"; though some think these creatures are not intended, because they are not so little as those with which they are ranked, the ant, the locust, and spider; and because of the places in which they burrow and make their houses, which though in holes and caverns of the earth, yet not in rocky but sandy places; rather therefore it is

thought that the mountain mouse, or bear mouse {o}, as Jerom calls it, is meant; of which, he says {p}, there were great numbers in Palestine, and which had their habitations in the holes of rocks; though if Spain has its name from Npv, as some say, because of the multitudes of coneys in it; and hence that part of Spain called Celtiberia is called by Catullus {q} Cuniculosa; the coney may be thought to be meant by this word, and so it is translated in Le 11:5; the only places where it is elsewhere used; and the word may be derived either from
Npo, to "cover", by a change of the letters v and o; or from
Pwv, which has the signification both of breaking, and of hiding and covering, **Ge 3:15**; and this creature breaks the earth and hides itself in it {r};

yet make they their houses in the rocks; it is usual with other writers to call the receptacles of any creatures, beasts, birds, or insects, their houses so we read of the house of the ant, and of the tortoise and snail {s}; and which, because it carries its house era its back, it is called by Cicero {t} "domiporta"; see Ps 104:17; the coneys make theirs in the rocks, to cure themselves from their more potent enemies; and thus what they want in strength is made up in sagacity, and by their wise conduct they provide for their safety and protection. These are an emblem of the people of God, who are a weak and feeble people, unable of themselves to perform spiritual duties, to exercise grace, to withstand the corruptions of their nature, resist the temptations of Satan, bear up under afflictive providences, and grapple with spiritual enemies, or defend themselves from them: but such heavenly wisdom is given them, as to betake themselves for refuge and shelter to Christ, the Rock of Israel; the Rock of salvation, the Rock that is higher than they; a strong one, on which the church is built, and against which the gates of hell cannot prevail: and here they are safe from the storms of divine wrath, and the avenging justice of God; from the rage and fury of men, and the fiery darts of Satan; here they dwell safely and delightfully, and have all manner of provision at hand for them; they are the inhabitants of that Rock, who have reason to sing indeed! see Isa 33:16.

{o} Mynpv oi coirogrullioi, Sept. "choerogryllii", Vatablus; "mures montani", Junius & Tremellius, Cartwright; "arctomyes", Schultens. {p} Epist. ad Sun. & Fretelli, fol. 30, C. tom. 3. {q} Cuniculosa Celtiberia, Epigram. ad Contubernales, 35. v. 18. {r} Gaudet "in effossis habitare cuniculus antris", Martial. Epigr. l. 13. Ep. 58. {s} Phaedri Fab. 37, 80. {t} De Divinat. l. 2. c. 64. and so by Hesiod and Anaxilas in Athenaei Deipnosoph. l. 2. c. 22. p. 63.

Proverbs 30:27

Ver. 27. The locusts have no king,.... These are small creatures also, yet very devouring ones; and consume the fruits of the earth, wherever they come and light; see Ex 10:13; they are very numerous, and move in large bodies, and yet with great regularity and order; which shows the wisdom there is in them by natural instinct, though they have no king to command, guide, and direct them: in this the mystical locusts differ from them, who have a king, whose name is Abaddon, **Re 9:11**;

yet they go forth all of them by bands; the Targum is,

"they are all gathered together as one."

They get together in one place; they associate and join themselves in bands, and keep together, though they have no ruler over them; an emblem of unity, concord, and harmony, let the form of government be what it will, as the best security to a people: and these creatures, when they move from place to place, they move in a body, in a very regular manner; "in precise order" {u}, as the words may be rendered, with great exactness, everyone in his proper place, all in rank and file; and though they have no general to marshal them, yet are in, and march in as good order as the most regular army does. So the Arabic version,

"yet in their army, their affairs and manner are in a beautiful disposition;"

indeed they are God's army, as they are called, **Joe 2:25**; and it is he that gives them their wisdom, instructions, directions, and commission. It is rendered by some, "everyone cutting"; that is, as Kimchi {w} interprets it, cutting the green grass and trees; or, "every one dividing" {x}; that is, to himself, the prey or spoils, as kings do; see Isa 33:4.

{u} Vid. Hilier. Onomastic. Sacr. p. 187. {w} Sepher Shorash. rad. Uux; so Stockius, p. 377. "exeidens omnia, herbas, scil. et fruges", Schindler. col. 633. so Ben Melech. {x} wlk Uux "unaquaeque sibi dividens", Bochart; so Schultens.

Proverbs 30:28

Ver. 28. The spider taketh hold with her hands,.... On the thread she spins, or on the flies and bees she catches in her web. This is a small creature, yet very wise; what a curious thread does she spin! what a fine web does she weave! with what exactness and proportion is it framed! as if she understood the rules of mathematics and architecture;

and is in kings' palaces; as well as in the houses of poor people, and in temples also; we read {y} of one in the temple of Ceres, which drew its web over the face of the image: and though her webs are oftentimes destroyed, especially in kings' palaces; yet such is her constancy and assiduity, and her unwearied application to business, that, as fast as they are destroyed, she attempts to restore them. This creature is an emblem of diligence in things temporal and spiritual; which those that use in the former sense shall stand before kings, and not before mean men; and in the latter sense shall have the presence of the King of kings, and dwell in his palace here and hereafter: also of worldly minded men, who labour to be rich; spend their time, and take a great deal of pains for mere trifles; weave curious webs, and, after all, only catch flies; and those they cannot hold, uncertain riches, which make themselves wings and fly away. Likewise this creature may resemble hypocrites, whose hope and trust are as the spider's web, built upon their own righteousness, spun out of their own hearts; a fine, thin, slender thread, which cannot bear one stroke of the besom of divine justice; such as these are in the palaces of Christ the King, are in his churches, hypocrites in Zion; see **Job 8:13**. Aben Ezra interprets it of the ape: the same David de Pomis {z} observes, and Mr. Weemse {a}, who seems to incline to this sense; and this creature King Solomon, no doubt, had in his palace, since his navy brought many of these, every three years, from those parts to which it was sent,
1Ki 10:22; and to these hands more properly belong than to spiders, and are taken into king's palaces for their pleasure and diversion; but to these there is one objection, that this creature is not a little one. Others understand it of the "lizard", that sort which is called "stellio"; but it is a question whether this is to be found in king's palaces. Bellonius {b} makes mention of a kind of lizard, which creeps into walls and catches flies, and is called by the Greeks "samiamiton", a name very near the Hebrew word here used: and Pliny {c} speaks of the "stellio", or lizard, as being in doors, windows, and chambers; and as a very fraudulent and deceitful creature to men, none more so; and also as poisonous, as this creature in the text by its name seems to be: and Austin {d} makes mention of the lizard as a domestic animal; which catches flies as the spider, with whom he joins it. The Targum, Jarchi, and Gersom, take it to be the spider, as we do; which may be thought most likely, since the creature here meant seems to have its name from the Arabic word "sam", which signifies poison {e}; though it is affirmed {f} the spider is not poisonous; as is well known by persons who have frequently swallowed them, without any

more harm than happens to hens, robin red breasts, and other birds, who make them their daily food; and so men have been bit by them, without any ill consequence: wherefore it is still thought by some that the lizard is more probably meant; since some sorts of them are poisonous {g}, though not all, for some are eatable; See Gill on "Le 11:30".

{y} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 57. {z} Lexic. fol. 216. 1. {a} Exercitat. l. 1. exercitat. 4. p. 31. {b} Apud Dieteric. Antiqu. Biblio. p. 470. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 3o. c. 10. {d} Confess. l. 10. c. 35. {e} Golius, col. 1208. Hottinger. Smegin Oriental. l. 1. c. 7. p. 199. {f} Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 800. and vol. 5. part. 1. p. 24. {g} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 22. c. 25. & l. 29. c. 4.

Proverbs 30:29

Ver. 29. There be three [things] which go well,.... In a very orderly and composed manner; with constancy and cheerfulness, with great stateliness and majesty, intrepidly, and without fear;

yea, four are comely in going; very beautiful and lovely to look at as they walk.

Proverbs 30:30

Ver. 30. A lion, [which is] strongest among beasts,.... For what is stronger than a lion, or more courageous and undaunted? it walks with great majesty, very slowly, step by step, the left foot first; shaking its shoulders as it goes, as the philosopher {h} describes its going, and as here intended, and this without fear;

and turneth not away for any; it does not go out of its way for any creature it meets with; nor does it hasten its pace when pursued, nor show the lest sign of fear; nor does it turn its back to any; which is observed and confirmed by Aristotle {i}, Aelianus {k}, Pliny {l}, and other naturalists; particularly what Homer {m} and Virgil {n} say of this animal agrees with this account of Solomon. This creature is an emblem of Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who is stronger than the strong man armed; who never turned his back to any of his enemies; nor turned aside from the way of his duty, or the work of his office, on account of any; not Herod the fox, who threatened to kill him; nor

Satan, the roaring lion, when he knew he was on the march to meet him; nor any of those, who, though they had a band of soldiers, that came to take him; see Lu 13:31; and also it is an emblem of righteous men, who are as bold as a lion; and cannot be moved from their duty by anything they meet with, but remain steadfast and constant in it; see Pr 28:1.

{h} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 1. & Physog. c. 5. {i} Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 44. {k} De Animal. l. 4. c. 34. {l} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16. {m} euste lewn oresitrofov, &c. Iliad. 12. v. 299. {n} "Ceu saevum turba leonem", &c. Aeneid. l. 9. prope finem.

Proverbs 30:31

Ver. 31. A greyhound,.... So Gersom interprets the word; but Jarchi owns he does not know what is meant; and Aben Ezra only says, it is the name of a living creature, but does not say what; but observes, that some interpret it of the "bee", and others of the "eagle". The words of the original text only describe something "girt about the loins" {o}: and Kimchi {p} observes, that some say it is a hunting dog so called, because it is thin about the loins, as if it was bound and girt; and Aristotle {q} describes hunting dogs as well girded about their loins: but others, as Kimchi in the same place observes, interpret it of the leopard, which is small, and strong in its loins; and others of a bird called the starling; but he owns he cannot understand the meaning of its loins being girt: David de Pomis {r} interprets it of a cock; others, he says, interpret it a hunting dog; others, a leopard; and some, a species of an unclean bird; perhaps he means the starling, as before; and so the word is used for that bird in the Talmud {s}, and in the Arabic language {t}. Most likely the "horse" is meant; which is a very stately and majestic creature in its going, and is very comely when it has its harness girt on; and especially a war horse, with all its warlike accoutrements, when it proceeds to battle, and stalks on in it; this creature, one should think, could not be omitted among the four, which is described in so magnificent a manner in Job 39:19; and is called the goodly horse in the battle, Zec 10:3; unless a fine slender bodied race horse should be meant: the horse bids fairer than any other creature named to be what is designed. The third creature follows, which goes well, and is comely in going:

an he goat also; which with its long beard walks very gravely, and in a stately manner, before the flock; and the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions add, "going before the flock"; see Jer 50:8. This stately walk of the goat is very particularly taken notice of by, Aelian {u}; he observes, that the she goat disdains to be last in a flock of sheep, but declares by her walk that she ought to be first; he adds, that the he goat goes before the she goats, glorying in his beard; and, by a kind of wonderful instinct in nature, judges the male is to be preferred to the female {w}. Kings, rulers, and governors, are compared to this creature; as Alexander the great is in **Da 8:5**; see Zec 10:3; especially such resemble it who rule well, and set good examples to their subjects: and to such, ministers of the Gospel are like; who go before their flocks, guide and direct them, and are examples to them: and likewise all believers; who strive to go before others in good works, and who then are comely in their going. The fourth is,

and a king, against whom [there is] no rising up; no insurrection, no opposition; who is not to be resisted or withstood; a lawful king, in the lawful administration of government, who rules in the fear of God, and according to his word, and the good and wholesome laws of a nation, ought not to be resisted, Ro 13:1; and a powerful, successful, and victorious king cannot be resisted, withstood, and prevailed over; he drives all before him, and subdues all under him, as David, Cyrus, Alexander, and others. But to none can this better be applied than to Christ, the King of kings; against whom there is no rising, before whom none can stand, against whom the gates of hell can never prevail; who, even in his state of humiliation, conquered and subdued all his and our enemies; destroyed the tyrant, sin; spoiled Satan, and his principalities and powers; overcame the world; abolished death, the last enemy; and delivered his people out of the hands of all, and made them more than conquerors: and who went forth in the ministry of the Gospel, into the Gentile world, conquering and to conquer; bearing down all opposition before him, and subduing the people under him; and who, in the latter day, will engage with his antichristian enemies, the beast, false prophet, and kings of the earth, and shall overcome them, and clear the world of them. And this is King who is comely in his going; as he was in his goings of old from everlasting; when he drew nigh to his divine. Father, and became the surety of his people; and in his coming into this world, by the assumption of our nature, to save lost perishing sinners: and so he is in his spiritual visits to his saints; in his goings in the sanctuary, and walks he takes amidst the golden candlesticks, his churches; as he will be also when he comes a second time in the clouds of heaven: it will be a glorious appearing; he will come with all the saints, and be attended with his mighty angels; he will come in their glory, in his own, and in the glory of his Father; and will be comely in his going indeed it will be with great stateliness and majesty. The learned Dr. Pococke {x}, from the use of the word "alkum" in the Arabic language, renders the words thus, "and a king with whom the people is"; who agree together; the one rules well, and the other obey cheerfully; such a king walking with majesty is comely to his people, and terrible to his enemies. The Targum is,

"and a king, who stands and speaks in the house of his people."

{o} Mynxm ryzrz "accinctus lumbis equus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cartwright, Glassius, Bochart, Buxtorf; "infibulatus lumbos equus", Schultens. {p} Sepher. Shorash. in voce ryzrz. {q} De Physiognom. c. 6. {r} Lexic. fol. 28. 1. {s} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 92. 2. {t} Golius, col. 1092. {u} De Animal. l. 7. c. 26. {w} "Dux pecoris hircus, duxerat hircus oves", Tibullus, l. 2. Eleg. 1. v. 58. {x} Specimen. Arab. Hist. p. 203. So "kuma" is used for people in the Alcoran, Surat. Joseph. v. 9.

Proverbs 30:32

Ver. 32. If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself,.... Against a king, against whom there is no rising up; by speaking evil of him, or rebelling against him; which is acting a foolish part, since it brings a man into troubles and difficulties inextricable; or by self-commendation, which is the height of folly, and the fruit of pride; or carried it in such a haughty and overbearing manner to others, as to provoke to wrath and anger;

or if thou hast thought evil; purposed and designed it, and contrived the scheme of doing it, though not yet put in execution; though folly is not actually committed, yet since the thought of it is rain, care should be taken to prevent it;

[lay] thine hand upon thy mouth: think again before the thing resolved on is done; as studious and thoughtful men put their hand to their mouth, when they are deeply considering any affair before them: or put a stop to the design, let it go no further; what has been thought of in the mind, let it never come out of the mouth, nor be carried into execution; stifle it in the first motion: or if this respects a foolish action done, as it also may, since it stands connected with both clauses, then the sense is, be silent; do not pretend to deny the action, nor to excuse it; nor to say one word in the defence of it; nor to lay the blame upon others; and much less to calumniate and reproach such who faithfully reprove for it; take shame to thyself in silence, and repent of the iniquity done. Aben Ezra thinks these words are said to Ithiel and Ucal; but rather, to any and everyone, to all that should hear and read these proverbs. The Targum is,

"do not lift up thyself, lest thou be foolish; and do not stretch out thine hand to thy mouth."

Proverbs 30:33

Ver. 33. Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter,.... Or the pressing of it. This is a thing well known and certain, that of milk, when pressed out of the udder, and put into a churn, and there is shook together, by a constant violent agitation or motion, called churning, butter is produced; and cheese is sometimes called pressed milk {y}, and is pressed with the runnet, and by the hand also {z};

and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: a too violent compression of it, or forcible blowing of it, in order to purge it from any impurity in it; instead of doing which it may break the tender skin, and bring forth blood, which may be of bad consequence;

so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife; irritating the passions of men, and provoking them by scurrilous and reproachful words to wrath and anger, produce contentions, feuds, and lawsuits, which are not soon and easily ended; and therefore such a conduct should be carefully avoided. The same word is used in the three clauses, and signifies pressing, squeezing, forcing.

{y} "Pressi copia lactis", Virgil. Bucolic. eclog. 1. v. 82. "Et lactia massa coacti", Ovid. Metamorph. l. 8. v. 666. {z} "Causem bubulum manu presssum", Sueton. in Octav. c. 76.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Proverbs 31:1

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 31

This chapter contains the last part of the book of Proverbs; which some reckon the fifth, others the sixth. It contains the instructions of the mother of a prince, whose name was Lemuel, which she gave unto him; and which are so valuable, as to be annexed to the proverbs of Solomon. The preface or introduction to them is in Pr 31:1; the address to her son, Pr 31:2. The vices she cautions him against are uncleanness and intemperance; which she dissuades from, because of the pernicious consequences of both to kings and to their subjects, Pr 31:3. Advises rather to give wine and strong drink to poor people, such as are in distress; as being more useful to them, at least less prejudicial, Pr 31:6; and exhorts her son to the duties of his office; by pleading the cause of the poor and injured, and administering justice to them, Pr 31:8. And then at large describes a virtuous woman; perhaps designed as an instruction to her son in the choice of a wife, Pr 31:10; though more than that may be intended by it.

Ver. 1. The words of King Lemuel,.... Not what were spoken by him, but what were spoken to him; or declaring what his mother said, as what follows shows; of this king we have no account elsewhere under this name. Grotius thinks that King Hezekiah, whose mother Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah, whom he supposes to be a wise man, from whom she had learned much, instructed her son in the following manner; but gives no other reason for this conjecture but that this chapter follows the collection of proverbs made by the men of Hezekiah; but they are expressly said to be Solomon's, and the words of Agur more immediately follow them; and besides Hezekiah does not appear ever to be addicted to the vices this prince was; much more probable is the conjecture of Bishop Patrick, that he was a prince of another country, perhaps in Chaldea, since a Chaldee word is three times used in his mother's address to him, and another word in a Chaldee termination; and he supposes his mother to be a Jewish lady, that taught her son the lessons herein contained. But the general sense of Jewish and Christian writers is, that Solomon himself is meant; whose name Lemuel is either a corruption of his name Solomon, a fond pretty name his mother Bathsheba gave him when young, and he thought fit to write it just as his mother spoke it; as mothers often do give such broken names to their children in fond affection to them: or it was another name of his, as it appears he had more than one; it signifies "to God", one that was devoted to him, as he was by his parents and by himself; or one that belonged to God, was his, as Solomon was; he was beloved of God, and therefore called Jedidiah, 2Sa 12:24; one to whom God was a father, and he a son to him; and he was chosen and appointed by him to succeed his father David in the kingdom, **2Sa 7:13**. Hillerus {a} makes the word to signify "over against God", or "before the face of the first", or of God and was a type of the "angel of faces", or of God's presence, Isa 63:9;

the prophecy that his mother taught him; either in his youth, or when he was come to the throne; to whom she had access, and with whom she used freedom; and particularly when she saw he was inclined unto, or going into, the vices she cautions him against. Her instruction is called a "prophecy", because she delivered it on a foresight of the sins her son would be tempted with, and liable to fall into; and this foresight was either through her natural sagacity, or under a spirit of prophecy; or rather it is so called, because any wise saying, or doctrine of moment and importance, and especially if it was by divine inspiration, was so called; see Pr 30:1; as Solomon tells us what his father David taught him, so here what his mother Bathsheba instructed him in; and it would have been well if he had taken the advice she gave him, and he gave to his son; see **Pr 4:3**.

{a} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 268.

Proverbs 31:2

Ver. 2. What, my son?.... What shall I call thee? though thou art a king, can I address thee in more suitable language, or use a more endearing appellative than this, and what follows? permit me, thy mother, to speak unto thee as my son: and what shall I say to thee? I want words, I want wisdom; O that I knew what to say to thee, that would be proper and profitable; or what is it I am about to say to thee? things of the greatest moment and importance, and therefore listen to me; and so the manner of speaking is designed to excite attention: or what shall I ask of thee? no part of thy kingdom, or any share in the government of it; only this favour, to avoid the sins unbecoming a prince, and to do the duty of a king, later mentioned. The Targum and Syriac version represent her as exclaiming, reproving, and threatening; as, Alas my son! is this the life thou designest to live, to give up thyself to wine and women? fie upon it, my son, is this becoming thy birth, education, and dignity? is this the fruit of all the pains I have taken in bringing thee up? consider the unbecoming part thou art acting;

and what, the son of my womb? whom I bore in sorrow, brought forth in pain, and took so much care and trouble to bring up in a religious way, and form for usefulness in church and state? not an adopted son, but my own flesh and blood; and therefore what I say must be thought to proceed from pure affection to thee, and solely for thy good; see
Isa 49:15;

and what, the son of my vows? whom I asked of God, and promised to give up to him again, and did; for which reason she might call him Lemuel, as Hannah called her son Samuel, for a like reason, **1Sa 1:28**; a son for whom she had put up many prayers, for his temporal and spiritual good; and on whose account she had made many vows, promises, and resolutions, that she would do so and so, should she be so happy as to bring him into the world, and bring him up to man's estate, and see him settled on the throne of Israel.

Proverbs 31:3

Ver. 3. Give not thy strength unto women,.... Strength of body, which is weakened by an excessive use of venery {b} with a multiplicity of women; see, **Pr 5:9**; and strength of mind, reason, and wisdom, which is impaired by conversation with such persons; whereby time is consumed and lost, which should be spent in the improvement of knowledge: or "thy riches", as the Septuagint and Arabic versions, thy substance, which harlots devour, and who bring a man to a piece of bread, as the prodigal was, **Pr 6:26**; and even drain the coffers of kings and princes;

nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings; do not give thy mind to take such courses, and pursue such ways and methods, as bring ruin on kings and kingdoms, as conversation with harlots does; see **Pr 7:26**. Some think the design of this advice is to warn against any ambitious views of enlarging his dominions by invading neighbouring countries, and making war with neighbouring kings, to the ruin of them; but the former sense seems best. The Targum is,

"nor thy ways to the daughters of kings."

Solomon was given to women, who proved very pernicious to him, 1Ki 11:1. Some render it, "which destroyeth counsel" {c}; for whoredom weakens the mind as well as the body.

{b} "Venus enervat vireis", Avienus. {c} Don Joseph apud Schindler. col. 990.

Proverbs 31:4

Ver. 4. [It is] not for kings, O Lemuel,.... It is not fit for them, it is very unbecoming them; it is dishonourable to them, to such as Lemuel was, or was likely to be; or far be it from kings, let no such thing be do ne by them, nor by thee;

[it is] not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink; it is lawful for kings to drink wine in a moderate manner, and for princes, counsellors, and judges, to drink strong drink; meaning not such as is made of malt, which in those times was not used; but of honey, dates, pomegranates, and such like things; but then it was very unbecoming for either of them to drink any of these to excess; it is very disgraceful to any man to drink immoderately, to make a beast of himself, and much more a king or judge, who, of all men, ought to be grave and sober; both that they may perform their office well, and maintain the grandeur and dignity of it, which otherwise would become useless and despicable, yea, pernicious, as follows. Solomon, notwithstanding this advice, gave himself unto wine as well as women, **Ec 2:3**. The Targum is,

"take care of kings, O Lemuel, of kings who drink wine, and of princes that drink strong drink."

So the Syriac version, keep no company with them, nor follow their example; see Ec 10:17; The last clause may be rendered, "nor for princes [to say], where is strong drink" {d}? where is it to be had? where is the best? as drunkards do; which is according to the marginal reading; but the "Cetib", or writing, is wa, "or" {e}; but some render it as a noun, "the desire of strong drink" {f}: it does not become princes to covet it.

{d} rkv ya "ubi sechar?" Montanus, Vatlablus; "ubi (est) sicera?", Cocceius, Michaelis; so Ben Melech. {e} rkv wa "siceram", Cocceius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gussetius. p. 20. Schultens. {f} "Nunc vino pellite curas", Horat. Carmin, l. 1. Ode 7. v. 31. "Tu spem reducis", &c. ib. l. 3. Ode 21. v. 17.

Proverbs 31:5

Ver. 5. Lest they drink, and forget the law,.... The law of God by Moses, which the kings of Israel were obliged to write a copy of, and read over daily, to imprint it on their minds, that they might never forget it, but always govern according to it, De 17:18; or the law of their ancestors, or what was made by themselves, which through intemperance may be forgotten; for this sin stupefies the mind and hurts the memory, and makes men forgetful;

and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted; a king on the throne, or a judge on the bench, drunk, must be very unfit for his office; since he must be incapable of attending to the cause before him, of taking in the true state of the case; and, as he forgets the law, which is his rule of judgment, so he will mistake the point in debate, and put one thing for another; and "change" {g} and alter, as the word signifies, the judgment of the afflicted and injured person, and give the cause against him which should be for him; and therefore it is of great consequence that kings and judges should he sober. A certain woman, being undeservedly condemned by Philip king of Macedon, when drunk, said,

"I would appeal to Philip, but it shall be when he is sober;"

which aroused him; and, more diligently examining the cause, he gave, a more righteous sentence {h}.

{g} hnvy "mutet", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; "demutet", Schultens. {h} Valer. Maxim l. 6. c. 2. extern. 1.

Proverbs 31:6

Ver. 6. Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish,.... Thou, O Lemuel, and other kings and judges, rather than drink strong drink yourselves, least to excess; give it out of your great abundance and liberality to poor persons in starving circumstances, who must perish, unless relieved; it will do them good, moderately used; and should they drink too freely, which they ought not, yet it would not be attended with such bad consequences as if kings and princes should;

and wine to those that be of heavy heart; of melancholy dispositions, under gloomy apprehensions of things; pressed with the weight of their affliction and poverty: or, "bitter in soul" {i}; such as God has dealt bitterly with, as Naomi says was her case, and therefore called her own name Marah, which signifies bitter; of such a sorrowful spirit, and one thus bitter in soul, was Hannah; and so Job, and others; persons in great affliction and distress, to whom life itself is bitter; see **Ru 1:20**; now wine to such is very exhilarating and cheering; see **Jud 9:13**.

{i} vpn yrml "his qui amaro sunt animo", V. L. Pagninus, Tigurine version:

"amaris animo", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; "amaris animus", Vatablus, Piscator.

Proverbs 31:7

Ver. 7. Let him drink, and forget his poverty,.... Which has been very pressing upon him, and afflicting to him; let him drink till he is cheerful, and forgets that he is a poor man; however, so far forgets as not to be troubled about it, and have any anxious thoughts how he must have food and raiment {k};

and remember his misery no more; the anguish of his mind because of his straitened circumstances; or "his labour" {l}, as it may be rendered; so the Septuagint and Arabic versions, the labour of his body, the pains he takes to get a little food for himself and family. The Targum is,

"and remember his torn garments no more;"

his rags, a part of his poverty. Such virtue wine may have for the present to dispel care, than which it is said nothing can be better {m}; and to induce a forgetfulness of misery, poverty, and of other troubles. So the mixed wine Helena gave to Telemachus, called Nepenthe, which when drunk, had such an effect as to remove sorrow, and to bring on forgetfulness of past evils {n}; and of which Diodorus Siculus {o} and Pliny {p} speak as of such use. The ancients used to call Bacchus, the god of wine, the son of forgetfulness; but Plutarch {q} thought he should rather be called the father of it. Some, by those that are "ready to perish", understand condemned malefactors, just going to die; and think the Jewish practice of giving wine mingled with myrrh or frankincense, or a stupefying potion to such that they might not be sensible of their misery {r}, such as the Jews are supposed to otter to Christ, Mr 15:23; is grounded upon this passage; but the sense given is best: the whole may be applied in a spiritual manner to such persons who see themselves in a "perishing", state and condition; whose consciences are loaded with guilt, whose souls are filled with a sense of wrath, have a sight of sin, but not of a Saviour; behold a broken, cursing, damning law, the flaming sword of justice turning every way, but no righteousness to answer for them, no peace, no pardon, no stoning sacrifice but look upon themselves lost and undone: and so of "heavy hearts"; have a spirit of heaviness in them, a heaviness upon their spirits: a load of guilt on them too heavy to bear, so that they cannot look up: or are "bitter in soul"; sin is made bitter to them, and they weep bitterly for it: now to such persons "wine", in a spiritual sense, should be given; the Gospel, which is as the best wine, that, goes down sweetly, should be preached unto them; they should be told of the love of God and Christ to poor sinners, which is better than wine; and the blessings of grace should be set before them, as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, by Christ, the milk and wine to be had without money and without price; of these they should drink, or participate of, by faith, freely, largely, and to full satisfaction; by means of which they will "forget" their spiritual "poverty", and consider themselves as possessed of the riches of grace, as rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom; and so remember no more their miserable estate by nature, and the anguish of their souls in the view of that; unless it be to magnify and adore the riches of God's grace in their deliverance.

{k} "Tunc dolor a curae rugaqae frontis abit", Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 1. {l} wlme "laboris sui", Pagninus, Montanus. {m} Cyprius poeta apud Suidam in voce oinov. {n} Homer. Odyss. 4. v. 220, 221. {o} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 87, 88. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 21, c. 21. {q} Symposiac. l. 7. Probl. 5. p. 705. {r} Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, s. 10. fol. 198. 4.

Proverbs 31:8

Ver. 8. Open thy mouth for the dumb,.... Not who are naturally so, but who cannot speak in their own behalf, either through want of elocution, or knowledge of the laws; or who are bashful, timorous, and fearful, being overawed by the majesty of a court of judicature, or by their prosecutors; or who, as they have not a tongue, so not a purse, to speak for them, the fatherless and the widow; which latter has her name, in the Hebrew language, from dumbness. Here Lemuel's mother advises him to open his mouth freely, readily, boldly, and intrepidly, and plead for such persons. Even

in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction; whose destruction is resolved on by their accusers and prosecutors; and who are in danger of it, being charged with capital crimes; unless some persons of wisdom, power, and authority, interpose on their behalf. It may be rendered, "in the cause of all the children of change", or "passing away" {s}; the children of the world, which passeth away with all things in it, as Kimchi; or orphans, whose help passeth away, as Jarchi; or rather strangers, as others, who pass from place to place and whose state and condition is liable to many changes who may be ignorant of the laws of the country where they are, and may stand in need of persons to plead for them.

{s} Pwlx ynb "filiormn transitus", Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "transeuntis, sub. seculi", Vatablus, so Ben Melech; "filiorum mutationis loci", Piscator; "filii mutationis, h. e. hujus mundi", Baynus.

Proverbs 31:9

Ver. 9. Open thy mouth, judge righteously,.... Having heard the cause, pronounce a righteous sentence; deliver it freely and impartially, with all readiness and boldness, not caring for the censures of wicked and unjust men;

and plead the cause of the poor and needy; who are oppressed by the rich, cannot plead for themselves, nor fee others to plead for them; do thou do it freely and faithfully. Thus as Lemuel's mother cautions him against women and wine, she advises him to do the duties of his office in administering impartial justice to all, and particularly in being the advocate and judge of the indigent and distressed.

Proverbs 31:10

Ver. 10. Who can find a virtuous woman,.... This part of the chapter is disjoined from the rest in the Septuagint and Arabic versions; and Huetius {t} thinks it is a composition of some other person, and not Lemuel's mother, whose words he supposes end at Pr 31:9; but it is generally thought that what follows to the end of the chapter is a continuance of her words, in which she describes a person as a fit wife for her son. Some think that Bathsheba gave the materials, the sum and substance of this beautiful description, to Solomon; who put it in the artificial form it is, each verse beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in order till the whole is gone through; though rather it seems to be a composition of Solomon's, describing the character and virtues of his mother Bathsheba. But, be this as it will, the description is drawn up to such a pitch, and wrote in such strong lines, as cannot agree with any of the daughters of fallen Adam, literally understood; not with Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon; nor with the Virgin Mary, as the Papists, who, they fancy, was immaculate and sinless, of which there is no proof; nor indeed with any other; for though some parts of the description may meet in some, and others in others, yet not all in one; wherefore the mystical and spiritual sense of the whole must be sought after. Some by the "virtuous woman" understand the sensitive soul, subject to the understanding and reason, as Gersom; others the

Scriptures, as Lyra, which lead to virtue, contain much riches in them, far above rubies; in which men may safely confide as the rule of their faith and practice; and will do them good, and not evil, continually. Others, "Wisdom", who in the beginning of this book is represented as a woman making provision for her household, and said to be more precious than rubies; and is to be understood of Christ; which I should have readily given into, but that this virtuous woman is said to have a husband, Pr 31:11; which cannot agree with Christ, who is himself the husband of his church and people, which church of his, I think, is here meant; nor is this a novel sense of the passage, but what is given by many of the ancient Christian writers, as Ambrose, Bede, and others; and whoever compares Pr 31:28, with **So 6:8**, will easily see the agreement; and will be led to observe that Solomon wrote both, and had a view to one and the same person, the church of Christ, who is often represented by a "woman", Isa 54:1; a woman grown and marriageable, as the Gospel church may be truly said to be, in comparison of the Jewish church, which was the church in infancy; a woman actually married to Christ; a woman fruitful, bringing forth many children to him; a woman beautiful, especially in his eyes, with whom she is the fairest among women; a woman, the weaker vessel, unable to do anything without him, yet everything through him: a "virtuous" one, inviolably chaste in her love and affection to Christ, her husband; steadfast in her adherence, to him by faith, as her Lord and Saviour; incorrupt in doctrine, sincere and spiritual in worship, retaining the purity of discipline, and holiness of life; and holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience: or a "woman of strength" {u}, valour, and courage, as the word signifies, when used of men, 1Sa 16:18; The church is militant, has many enemies, and these powerful and mighty, as well as cunning and crafty; yet, with all their power and policy, cannot overcome her; the gates of hell cannot prevail against her; she engages with them all, and is more than a conqueror over them; she is of great spiritual strength, which she, has from Christ, to fight the Lord's battles, to withstand every enemy, to exercise grace, and do every good work; and all her true members persevere to the end: or a "woman of riches" {w}; that gets wealth and, riches by her wisdom and prudence, so Aben Ezra; a woman of fortune, as is commonly said: such is the church of Christ, through his unsearchable riches communicated to her; riches of grace she now possesses, and riches of glory she is entitled to. But "who can find" such an one? there is but one to be found {x}; though there are many particular churches, there is but one church of the firstborn, consisting of God's elect, of which Christ is the head and husband, **So 6:9**; and there is but one that could find her: even her surety, Saviour, and Redeemer; compare with this **Re 5:3**. This supposes her lost, as she was in Adam; Christ's seeking of her, as he did in redemption, and does in effectual calling; and who perfectly knows her, and all her members, and where they are; and whom he finds out, and bestows on them the blessings of grace and goodness;

for her price [is] far above rubies; showing the value Christ her husband puts upon her, the esteem she is had in by him; who reckons her as his portion and inheritance; as preferable to the purest gold, and choicest silver; as his peculiar treasure; as his jewels, and more valuable than the most precious stones: this appears by his undertaking for her; by doing and suffering what he has on her account; the price he has paid for her is far above rubies; she is bought with a price, but not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ; the ransom price paid for her is himself, who is more precious than rubies, and all the things that can be desired, **1Pe 1:18**.

{t} Demonstrat. Evangel. Prop. 4. p. 234. {u} lyx tva "mulierem fortem", V. L. Pagninus, Mercerus; "mulierem virtutis", Montanus, Vatablus; "strenuam", Junius & Tremellus, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens. {w} "Mulierem opum", so Aben Ezra. {x} "Conjux dea contigit uni", Ovid. Metamorph. l. 11. fol. 6. v. ult.

Proverbs 31:11

Ver. 11. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her,.... Christ her Maker is her husband, who has asked her in marriage, and has betrothed her to himself in righteousness; and of whose chaste love, and inviolable attachment to him, he is fully satisfied, as well as of her fidelity in keeping what he commits unto her; he trusts her with his Gospel and ordinances, which she faithfully retains and observes; and with his children born in her, who are nursed up at her side, to whom she gives the breasts of ordinances, bears them on her sides, and dandles them on her knees, as a tender and careful mother does,
Isa 60:4;

so that he shall have no need of spoil; he shall never want any; by means of the word preached in her, prey and spoil shall be taken out of the hands of the mighty, and he shall divide the spoil with them; or have souls snatched out of the hands of Satan, and translated into his kingdom, Isa 53:12. The Septuagint version understands it of the virtuous woman, and not of her husband; "such an one as she shall not want good spoils"; now, prey or spoil sometimes signifies food, as in

Ps 111:5; and so Jarchi interprets it here; and then the sense is, she shall not want spiritual provisions; she shall have plenty of them from her husband, who reposes such confidence in her; or shall not want excellent treasures, as the Arabic version, which also understands it of her; such are the word and ordinances, and particularly precious promises, which are more rejoicing than a great spoil, Ps 119:162; and so Ambrose interprets {y} it of the church, who needs no spoils because she abounds with them, even with the spoils of the world, and of the devil.

{y} Enarrat. in loc. p. 1099. tom. 2.

Proverbs 31:12

Ver. 12. She will do him good, and not evil,.... Or, repay good unto him, give him thanks for all the good things bestowed by him on her; will seek his interest, and promote his honour and glory to the uttermost; all the good works she does, which she is qualified for, and ready to perform, are all done in his name and strength, and with a view to his glory; nor will she do any evil willingly and knowingly against him, against his truths and ordinances; or that is detrimental to his honour, and prejudicial to his interest, 2Co 13:8;

all the days of her life; through which she desires to serve him in righteousness and true holiness; and to be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in his work, **Lu 1:74**.

Proverbs 31:13

Ver. 13. She seeketh wool and flax,.... To get them, in order to spin them, and work them up into garments; she stays not till they are brought to her, and she is pressed to take them; but she seeks after them, which shows her willingness to work, as is after more fully expressed. It was usual in ancient times for great personages to do such works as these, both among the Grecians {z} and Romans: Lucretia with her maids were found spinning, when her husband Collatinus paid a visit to her from the camp {a}: Tanaquills, or Caia Caecilia, the wife of King Tarquin, was an excellent spinster of wool {b}; her wool, with a distaff and spindle, long remained in the temple of Sangus, or Sancus, as Varro {c} relates: and a garment made by her, wore by Servius Tullius, was reserved in the temple of Fortune; hence it became a custom for maidens to accompany newly married women with a distaff and spindle, with wool upon them {d}, signifying what they were principally to attend unto; and maidens are advised to follow the example of Minerva, said to be the first that made a web {e}; and, if they would have her favour, to learn to use the distaff, and to card and spin {f}: so did the daughters of Minyas, in Ovid {g}; and the nymphs, in Virgil {h}. When Alexander the great advised the mother of Darius to use her nieces to such employments, the Persian ladies were in great concern, it being reckoned reproachful with them for such to move their hands to wool; on hearing which, Alexander himself went to her, and told her the clothes he wore were wrought by his sisters {i}: and the daughters and granddaughters of Augustus Caesar employed themselves in the woollen manufacture by his order {k}; and he himself usually wore no other garment than what was made at home, by his wife, sister, daughter, and granddaughter {l}. The Jews have a saying {m}, that there is no wisdom in a woman but in the distaff; suggesting, that it is her wisdom to mind her spinning, and the affairs of her household: at the Roman marriages, the word "thalassio" was often repeated {n}, which signified a vessel in which spinning work was put; and this was done to put the bride in mind what her work was to be. Now as to the mystical sense of these words; as of wool outward garments, and of flax linen and inward garments, are made; by the one may be meant external, and by the other internal, acts of religion; both are to be done, and not the one without the other: outward acts of religion are, such as hearing the word, attendance on ordinances, and all good works, which make up a conversation garment that should be kept; and they should be done so as to be seen of men, but not for that reason: and internal acts of religion are, the fear of God, humility, faith, hope, love, and other graces, and the exercises of them, which make up the new man, to be put on as a garment; and these should go together; bodily exercise, without powerful godliness, profiteth little; and pretensions to spirituality and internal religion, without regard to the outward duties of religion, are all vain. Hence Ambrose, on the text, observes that one may say,

"It is enough to worship and serve God in my mind; what need have I to go to church, and visibly mingle with Christians? Such a man would have a linen, without a woollen garment, this woman knew not; she does not commend such works."

She sought all opportunities of doing good works externally, as believers do; and sought after the kingdom of God, inward godliness, which lies in peace, righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Not that such garments are to be joined with Christs robe of righteousness, to make up a justifying one; a garment mingled with linen and woollen, in this sense, is not to come upon the saints, Le 19:19;

and worketh willingly with her hands; or, "with the pleasure of her hands" {o}; as if her hands took delight in working, as the church and all true believers do; who are made willing in the day of the Lord's power upon them, to serve him, as well as to be saved by him; in whose hearts he works, both to will and to do; and these do what they do cheerfully: these do the work of the Lord, not by the force of the law, nor through fear of punishment, but in love; not by constraint, but willingly, having no other constraint but the love of God and Christ; and not with mercenary selfish views, but with a view to his glory; and they find a pleasure and delight in all they do; Christ's ways are ways of pleasantness; his commandments are not grievous, his yoke is easy.

{z} Vid. Homer. Iliad 3. v. 125. & 6. v. 490, 491. & 22. v. 440. Odyss. l. v. 357. & 5. v. 62. {a} "Cujus, ante torumn calathi, lanaque mollis erat", Ovid. Fasti, l. 2. prope finem. {b} Valerius Maximus, l. 10. p. 348. {c} Apud Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 48. {d} Plin. ibid. {e} Pomponius Subinus in Virgil. Cyrin, p. 1939. {f} "Pallade placata, lanam mollire puellae discant, et plenas exonerare colos", Ovid. Fast. l. 3. prope finem. {g} Metamorph. l. 4. Fab. 1. v. 34, 35. {h} Georgic. l. 4. {i} Curt. Hist. l. 5. c. 2. {k} Sueton. in Vit. August. c. 64. {l} lbid. c. 73. {m} Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Rabbin. col. 1742. {n} Varro apud Chartar. de Imag. Deorum, p. 88. {o} hypk Upxb "cum voluptate altro neis manibus", so some in Vatablus, Tigurine version; so Cocceius, Michaelis, Piscator, Gejerus, Schultens.

Proverbs 31:14

Ver. 14. She is like the merchant ships,.... Not like a single one, but like a navy of them, that cross the seas, go to foreign parts, and come back laden with rich goods: so the church of Christ, and her true members, like ships of burden, trade to heaven, by prayer and other religious exercises, and return with the riches of grace and mercy, to help them in time of need; and though they have often difficult and dangerous passages, are tossed with tempests, and covered with billows; yet, Christ being their pilot, faith their sail, and hope their anchor, they weather the seas, ride out all storms, and come safe home with their merchandise;

she bringeth her food from afar: from a far country, from Egypt particularly, from whence corn for bread, as the word here used signifies, was fetched and carried in ships to divers parts of the world {p}; to which the allusion may be: in a spiritual sense, it may mean that the church brings her food or bread from heaven, the good land afar off; where God her father, Christ her husband, and her friends the angels are; with whom she carries on a correspondence, and from hence she has her food for her family; not from below, on earth; not dust, the serpent's food; nor ashes, on which a deceitful heart feeds; nor husks, which swine eat; but the corn of heaven, angels' food, the hidden and heavenly manna; the bread of life, which comes down from heaven; the Gospel of the grace of God, the good news from a far country.

{p} Bacchylides spud Athenaei Deipnosoph. l. 2. c. 3. p. 39.

Proverbs 31:15

Ver. 15. She riseth also while it is yet night,.... That is, before the ascent of the morning, as Aben Ezra explains it, before break of day; a great while before day, as Christ is said to rise to pray, **Mr 1:35**; while it was yet dark; so the church here: which shows her affection for her family, her care of her children, and fervent zeal for her husband's interest and good; a different frame of spirit this from that of hers in **So 5:2**;

and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens; in allusion to a daily stated allowance {q} of food given to such; and spiritually may be meant, by her "household" or family, the same with the family of Christ, that is named of himself, which consists of various persons, fathers, young men, and children; and by her "maidens" the ministers of the word; see **Pr 9:3**; who are stewards in the family, and have the food for it put into their hands to dispense; it is by these the church gives meat to her household feeds them with knowledge and understanding, with the wholesome words of Christ, with the good doctrines of the Gospel; these have a certain portion given them, and they rightly cut and divide the word of truth, and give to everyone their portion of meat in due season, according to their age and circumstances; milk indeed to babes and meat to strong men; see Lu 12:42. The Targum renders the word for "portion [by] service": understanding not a portion of food, but of work, a task set them, and so the word is used in **Ex 5:14**. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "works", which may be very well applied to the work and service of the Gospel ministry, and the several parts of it.

{q} "Gauldetque diurnos, ut famulae, praebere cibos", Claudian. de Bello Gild. v. 71, 72.

Proverbs 31:16

Ver. 16. She considereth a field, and buyeth it,.... The field are the Scriptures, in which are hid the rich treasures of Gospel doctrines and promises; and the church, and all truly enlightened persons, consider to what use this field may be put, to what account it will turn; how profitable the Scriptures are, for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness; what a rich mine and valuable treasure is in them; things more desirable, and of greater worth, than thousands of gold and silver; and therefore will buy this field at any rate, and not sell it; will part with all they have before they will part with that; even life itself, which in an improper sense is called buying of it, though it is without money and without price; see Mt 13:44;

with the fruit of her hand she planteth a vineyard; her own vineyard, whose plants are an orchard of pomegranates, **So 1:6**; who through the ministry of the word, are planted in the house of the Lord, and flourish there; this the church is said to do by her ministers, who plant and water, as Paul and Apollos did, **1Co 3:6**. And it is observable, that in the Hebrew text there is a double reading; the "Keri", or marginal reading, is feminine; but the "Cetib", or writing, is masculine; to show that she did it by means of men, she made use of in her vineyard for that service; it being, as Aben Ezra observes, not the custom and business of women to plant vineyards, but men. It may be rendered, "he planted", and be applied to her husband, Christ; who, through the ministry of the word in his church, plants souls in it; and happy are they who are the planting of the Lord! trees of righteousness, that he may be glorified, Isa 61:3.

Proverbs 31:17

Ver. 17. She girdeth her loins with strength,.... Showing her readiness to every good work; and with what cheerfulness, spirit, and resolution, she set about it, and with what dispatch and expedition she performed it: the allusion is to the girding and tucking up of long garments, wore in the eastern countries, when any work was set about in earnest, which required dispatch; see Lu 17:8; the strength of creatures being in their loins, Job 40:16; the loins are sometimes put for strength, as in Plautus {r}; and the sense is much the same with what follows;

and strengtheneth her arms; does all she finds to do with all her might and main, as the church does; not in her own strength, but in the strength of Christ; to whom she seeks for it, and in whose strength she goes forth about her business; by whom the arms of her hands are made strong, even by the mighty God of Jacob; and because she thus applies to him for it, she is said to do it herself, Ge 49:24; here she plays the man, and acts the manly part, 1Co 16:13.

{r} "Lumbos defractos velim", Stichus, Act. 2. Sc. 1. v. 37.

Proverbs 31:18

Ver. 18. She perceiveth that her merchandise [is] good,.... That it turns to good account; that her trading to heaven is of great advantage; that she grows rich hereby; that her merchandise with Wisdom, or Christ, is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereby than fine gold; and though her voyages are attended with trouble and danger, yet are profitable, and therefore she is not discouraged, but determined to pursue them; she is like the merchant man, seeking goodly pearls, who finds a pearl of great price, worth all his trouble; See Gill on "Pr 31:14" and see **Pr 3:14**;

her candle goeth not out by night; or "lamp" {s}; her lamp of profession, which is always kept burning, Lu 12:35; or the glorious light of the Gospel, which always continues in the darkest times the church ever has been in; or her spiritual prosperity, which, though it may be damped, will never be extinct; when the candle of the wicked is often put out, Job 21:17; It may denote her diligence in working; who, as she rises early in the morning, Pr 31:15, so sits up late at night, and is never weary of well doing, night and day. Ambrose interprets it of the lamp of hope, which burns in the night, and by and for which men work, **Ro 8:24**.

{s} hrn "lucerna ejus", V. L. Tigurine version, Michaelis, Schultens.

Proverbs 31:19

Ver. 19. She layeth her hands to the spindle,.... As Penelope and her maidens did {t}. Or spinning wheel, more properly, the wheel itself, which is laid hold on by the right hand, and turned round;

and her hands hold the distaff; the rock, stick, or staff, about which the wool is wrapped, which is spun, and is held in the left hand; for though hands are mentioned in both clauses, yet it is only with one hand the wheel is turned, and the distaff held with the other. Not only wool and flax were sought by her, Pr 31:13; but she spins them, and works them up into garments her web is not like the spider's, spun out of its own bowels, on which it hangs; to which the hope and trust of a hypocrite are compared, and whose webs do not become garments to cover them, **Job 8:14**; but the church's web is both for ornament, to the adorning of her profession, and for defence and protection from the calumnies of the world; for by these are meant good works, as Ambrose interprets them.

{t} Homer, Odyss. 1. v. 357. & 21. v. 351.

Proverbs 31:20

Ver. 20. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor,.... Her liberality is very extensive, reaches to many, and at a distance; it is done with great cheerfulness and readiness; to do good and communicate, she forgets not, it being acceptable to her Lord and husband, Heb 13:16;

yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy; she gives with both hands, liberally and largely. It may be applied to the church, giving spiritual food by her ministers to those who are poor in spirit, spiritually poor and needy, and who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Proverbs 31:21

Ver. 21. She is not afraid of the snow for her household,.... That her family should suffer through the rigour of a cold season, when it is frost and snow;

for all her household [are] clothed with scarlet: the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "with double" {u}, that is, with double garments; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions, joining the words to a following verse; and this, by some, is thought to be the better rendering of the words; since the scarlet colour is no fence against cold, no more than any other, whereas double garments are; and which may be applied to the garment of justification, or the robe of Christ's righteousness, as one; and to the garment of sanctification, internal and external, as the other; the one, even the righteousness of Christ, or Christ the Lord our righteousness, is an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the storm; a sufficient shelter from the cold of snow, and all inclemencies of the weather; by which the vindictive wrath and justice of God may be signified: and the other is a screen from the malicious insinuations and reproaches of men. But had the word been designed to signify "double", it would have been in the "dual" number; as it is not, and is always used in this form for "scarlet"; and so the Targum, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra interpret it; which colour is an emblem of the blood of Christ, by which the church is justified, **Ro 5:9**; and all the household of faith, the whole family of Christ and household of God, are all justified by the same righteousness of Christ, consisting of his active and passive obedience, for the whole of which his crimson blood is put; it is a garment down to the feet, which covers all his people; they are all made righteous by the one obedience of Christ; they are all clothed in scarlet alike, all kings and priests unto God, all alike justified, and shall be glorified alike. The literal sense is, that if her household are clothed in scarlet in common; much more may it be thought that coarse and suitable garments would be provided for them, to protect them from the cold in winter {w}.

{u} Mynv "indigitat vestem duplo crassiorem, Stockius, p. 1122. "duplicibus, V. L. Paguinus, Tigurine version, Gataker, Gejerus; "penulis duplicibus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "duplicatis", Cocceius: such as Homer describes, made by ths wife of Hector, Iliad 22. v. 440, 441. see Odyss. 19. v. 225, 226, 241. "change of raiment", David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 218. 1. {w} Vid. Braunium de Vest. Sacredot. Heb. l. 1. c. 15. p. 309.

Proverbs 31:22

Ver. 22. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry,.... For the furniture and ornament of her house, or for her bed; which may signify the ordinances of the Gospel, and the decent, orderly, and beautiful administration of them, wherein the church has communion with her Lord; see **So 1:16**. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "garments of divers colours", such as was Joseph's coat, Ge 37:3; and, in a spiritual sense, may be applied to the above mentioned garments, and agrees with what goes before and follows;

her clothing [is] silk and purple; the Tyrian purple, which, Strabo says {x}, is the best; or purple silk, silk of a purple colour: or rather fine linen of this colour; a dress suitable to a queen, as the church is, who is represented as clothed with clothing of wrought gold, with raiment of needlework, Ps 45:9;

see Eze 16:10. This is not her own natural clothing, for she has none by nature that deserves the name; nor of her own working, not works of righteousness done by her; nor of her own putting on, but what Christ has wrought out for her, and clothes her with; and which is very rich in itself, the best robe, very ornamental to her; her wedding garment, and which will last for ever; see Isa 61:10.

{x} Geograph. l. 16. p. 521.

Proverbs 31:23

Ver. 23. Her husband is known in the gates,.... Of the city, where courts of justice were kept, and causes heard and tried by the judges, the elders of the land, later mentioned; among whom the husband of the virtuous woman was, where he was known, taken notice of, and celebrated; not so much for the beautiful garments she made him, as Jarchi; but rather for his wisdom, as Gersom, and for being the husband of such a woman; who, taking such care of his domestic affairs, he was more at leisure to attend public business, and transact it with reputation. Christ is the husband of the church in general, and of particular churches, and of every private believer; he fell in love with them, asked them of his Father, and betrothed them to himself; and is a kind, tender, loving, and sympathizing husband to his church and people; that nourishes and cherishes them, and provides all things for them, and interests them in all he has: and he is "known" by them, in the dignity of his person, in the excellency of his offices, and the fulness of his grace; he is known by them in the relation of an husband; he is well known in the church of God, in the assembly of his saints, Ps 76:1; he is known in the gates of Zion, in the public ministering of the word and ordinances; his name is celebrated, it becomes great and famous, wherever his Gospel is preached in the world; he is,

"known in the provinces,"

as the Targum; or,

"among the cities,"

as the Syriac version; among the nations of the world, in the cities of the Gentiles; as he will be, even from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, **Mal 1:11**;

when he sitteth among the elders of the land; when he sits in his house, at his table, circled by his saints, his ancient ones; or as King, head, and husband of his people, on his throne in the church, encompassed with, the four and twenty elders, the representatives of Gospel churches, **Re 4:2**. And especially when he shall take to himself his great power, and reign gloriously before his ancients, the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and all his saints, which will come with him; whom he has loved with an everlasting love; who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and had grace given them, in him, before the world began, Isa 24:23; and when he shall come to judge the world, and will appear in great glory, and be seen and known of all; and shall sit on his throne of glory, and his elders also, sitting on twelve thrones, judging the tribes of Israel, Mt 19:28; so Ambrose interprets it of the universal judgment.

Proverbs 31:24

Ver. 24. She maketh fine linen, and selleth [it],.... She not only seeks wool and flax, and spins it, but makes it up into fine linen, which she disposes of to advantage to herself and family. Kimchi says {y}, the word signifies coverings for the night, as well as day he seems to design linen sheets: the Arabic version adds, and "sells it to the inhabitants of Bosra." This, in the mystic sense, may signify either the good works the church does, and which she proposes as a pattern and example to her members; or divine instruction, as others, the preaching of the Gospel, and the truths of it; which she sells, and others buy, though both without money and without price; for, as she freely receives, she freely gives: or the righteousness of Christ, which is called fine linen and white raiment; which, properly speaking, is made by Christ, and sold by him, or bought of him, as before, without money; see Re 19:8; yet this the church makes her own, by laying hold upon it by faith, and which she holds forth freely to others in the Gospel; which is therefore called "the ministration of righteousness", **2Co 3:9**;

and delivereth girdles unto the merchant; to dispose of them for her; either to sell to others, to the Egyptian priests which wore them; or for their own use, to put their money in, girdles being used for that purpose, See Gill on "Mt 10:9". Or, "a girdle to the Canaanite" {z}; the Canaanites or Phoenicians being generally merchants, the word is put for one. By these may be meant ministers of the word; for, as the priests of Rome are called the merchants of the earth and false teachers are said to make merchandise men, Re 18:3; so faithful ministers, who trade for the good of souls, and seek not theirs, but them, and not their own things, but Christ's, may be called merchants: and to these "the girdle of truth" is given; and these the church exhorts to gird their loins with it, as well as all her members, that they may be ready to every good work, and particularly prepared to preach the Gospel of peace, **Eph 6:14**.

{y} Sepher. Shorash. rad zdo {z} ynenkl "Chananaeo", V. L. Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus; "negotiatori Phoenicio", Schultens.

Proverbs 31:25

Ver. 25. Strength and honour [are] her clothing,.... Strength, not of body, but of mind. The church is clothed with strength, as her Lord, head, and husband, is said to be, Ps 93:1; and which she has from him; for though she is the weaker vessel, and weak in herself, yet is strong in him; and is able to bear and do all things, with a fortitude of mind to withstand every enemy, and persevere in well doing: and she is clothed with "honour"; with honourable garments, suitable to her rank and dignity; in cloth of gold, in raiment of needlework; with the garments of salvation, and the robe of righteousness;

and she shall rejoice in time to come; Aben Ezra interprets it of old age, or of the world to come; and Jarchi and Gersom of the day of death: having fulness of food and clothing, she is not afraid of want in old age, or in any time of distress that may come; and having a good name, laughs at death, and departs in peace; so these interpreters. The church of Christ fears no want at any time, nor need any of her members; they have a clothing that never waxes old, a righteousness that will answer for them in a time to come; their bread is given, and their waters are sure; they shall want no good thing; all their need is supplied from Christ; they have hope in their death, and rejoice then and sing, "O death, where is thy sting?" 1Co 15:55; they will have confidence in the day of judgment, and not be ashamed; shall come to Zion with everlasting joy; and shall rejoice with Christ, angels and saints, to all eternity.

Proverbs 31:26

Ver. 26. She openeth her mouth with wisdom,.... When she opens her mouth, for it is not always open, she expresses herself in a discreet and prudent manner; as well as speaks of things not foolish and trifling, but of moment and importance, and of usefulness to others: or "concerning wisdom" {a}; the church and people of Christ talk of the wisdom of God in the works of creation, providence, and redemption; of Christ, the Wisdom of God, and as made so to them; of the Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom; and of wisdom in the hidden part, or the truth of grace in their souls; of their gracious experiences; nor will they suffer any foolish, filthy, and corrupt communication to proceed out of their mouths, but speak the pure language of Canaan; what is for the use of edifying, and being taken out of the Scriptures is profitable for instruction in righteousness; see Ps 37:30;

and in her tongue [is] the law of kindness; or "the law of love" {b}, grace and mercy; which is the law of Christ, **Ga 6:2**; speaking kindly and tenderly to everyone, exhorting to acts of mercy and kindness, and doing them herself: or "the doctrine of grace [is] in her tongue" {c}; the Gospel, which is called the Gospel of the grace of God, and the grace of God itself; it is the doctrine of the grace and love of God the Father towards men in Christ, as it appears in their election in him and redemption by him; of the grace of Christ in his incarnation, sufferings, and death; and of the grace of the Spirit in regeneration, conversion, and sanctification; and which contains various doctrines of grace, as of justification, pardon of sin, and effectual calling; and of salvation itself, which is all of grace: and this doctrine of grace, in the several branches of it, the church, and all gracious souls, cannot forbear speaking of; it is often in their mouths, it dwells upon their tongues; and careful are they in other respects that their speech be seasoned with grace, and be such that ministers grace to the hearers, **Eph 4:29**.

{a} hmkxb "de sapientia", Mercerus. {b} dox trwt "lex misericordiae", Montanus. {c} "Instructio gratiae", Gejerus; "lex, vel doctrina gratiae", Cocceius, so the Targum; "doctrina benigniatis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Proverbs 31:27

Ver. 27. She looketh well to the ways of her household,.... The business of her house, her domestic affairs; that her children and servants have convenient food, and in due season; that they have proper clothing, and keep their garments close about them, and unspotted; that everyone does the business of his calling, her several officers, and private members; that a good decorum is kept, that all things are done decently and in order; that the rules of her lord and husband are observed; that the conversations of all in her house are according to the word of God, and becoming their character: she takes care of the sick and weak, comforts the feeble minded, and supports the infirm; she cannot bear them that are evil, whether in principle or practice; that are immoral in their lives, or unsound in their faith; but admonishes them according to the nature of their offences, and casts out the obstinate or incorrigible. The words may be rendered, "she looks well to the ways of her house" {d}; that lead unto it, so Gersom; either her house below, the way or entrance into which is by faith in Christ, and a profession of it; and she takes care that none be admitted but such who have it: or the ways in it, the commands, ordinances, appointments, and constitutions of Christ, called the ways of Zion; and concerned she is that all in her family walk in them, and observe them: or her house above, which is eternal in the heavens; Christ's Father's house and, hers, in which are many mansions, and everlasting habitations; the way to this also is Christ, who is the true way to eternal life, the strait gate and narrow way that leads to it; without his imputed righteousness, and the regenerating grace of his Spirit, there is no entrance into it: besides this, there are lesser paths which agree and coincide; as the paths of faith, truth, and holiness, and the ways of Christ's commandments, which issue in it, and which the church and her true members are careful to look unto and observe. The Arabic version renders it, "the paths of her house are strait"; with which compare **Mt 7:13**. Jarchi interprets these ways of the law, which teaches the good way, and to separate from transgression;

and eateth not the bread of idleness; of an idle woman, as Aben Ezra; or she being idle does not eat bread; she does not eat it without labour; it is "the bread of labour", of many labours she eats, as in
Ps 127:2; she labours for the meat which endures to everlasting life, **Joh 6:27**; the Gospel, that bread which strengthens man's heart, refreshes his spirit, is made of the finest of the wheat, contains the wholesome words of Christ, and by which men are nourished up unto everlasting life; and which particularly directs to Christ the true bread, the bread of life, of which if a man eat he shall never die, but live for ever; and on which true believers feed by faith; but though this is prepared for them, and is the gift of God to them, yet must be laboured for; it is not eaten without labour: believers read, hear, and pray, and diligently attend all ordinances for the sake of this food.

{d} htyb twkylh "vias domus suae", Paginius, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; "ambulationes domus suae", Cocceius.

Proverbs 31:28

Ver. 28. Her children arise up,.... As olive plants around her table; grow up to maturity of age, and ripeness of judgment, and so capable of observing things, and doing the work here ascribed to them: or they rise up in reverence of her, and respect to her, suitable to the relation they stand in to her: or rather it signifies their readiness to show a regard unto her, and their setting about the work of commendation of her in earnest: or else their earliness in doing it; they rise in the morning, as Aben Ezra's note is; her lamp not being extinct in the night. Jarchi interprets these "children" of disciples; but they are to be understood of regenerate persons, young converts, born in Zion, and brought up by her; the children of that Jerusalem that is the mother of us all, Isa 54:1;

and call her blessed; bless God for her, for such a mother, and wish themselves as happy as she is; they pray for her blessedness, peace, and prosperity, as all Zion's children should, Ps 122:6; they pronounce her blessed, as well they may, since she is blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ; and so are all in her family that truly belong to her, her children and her servants, Ps 84:4; see **So 6:9**;

her husband [also], and he praiseth her; that is, he is ready also to rise up and speak in her praise and commendation. Jarchi says this is the holy blessed God. Christ is the church's husband, who is her Maker;
See Gill on "Pr 31:23"; he praises her for her beauty, though she owes it all to him; for her comely parts and gracefulness, which he describes with wonder; for her dress, her garments, though they are his own; for her faith, love, humility, and other graces, though they are his gifts; see **So 1:8**.

Proverbs 31:29

Ver. 29. Many daughters have done virtuously,.... This, according to Aben Ezra and Gersom, is what was said by her husband and children, and which seems to be right; especially they may be thought to be the words of her husband. By these "daughters" may be meant false churches, such as the church of Rome and her daughters, who is the mother of harlots, Re 17:17. These are "many", when the true church of Christ is but one, to whom she is opposed, **So 6:8**. These may do many virtuous things externally; may make a great show of religion and devotion; may have a form of godliness, without the power of it; and a name to live, and be dead. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "many daughters have gathered riches"; or "have possessed riches", as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and so

the Targum; and in this sense the phrase is sometimes used for getting riches and wealth; see **De 8:17**; and may well be applied to the false churches, the church of Rome and her daughters, who possess great riches and large emoluments, which yet in a short time will come to nothing,
Re 18:17;

but thou excellest them all; in real beauty, in true riches, in purity of doctrine, in simplicity of worship, in holiness of life and conversation, in undefiled religion, in doing good works, properly so called. Christ's church is "the fairest among women", **So 1:8**. So Ambrose interprets the daughters of heresies and heretics.

Proverbs 31:30

Ver. 30. Favour is deceitful, and beauty [is] vain,.... A well favoured look, a graceful countenance, symmetry and proportion of parts, natural or artificial beauty, are vain and deceitful; oftentimes under them lies an ill natured, deformed, and depraved mind; nor is the pleasure and satisfaction enjoyed as is promised along with these; and particularly how do they fade {e} and consume away by a fit of illness, and through old age, and at last by death? And so vain and deceitful are the favour and beauty, the artificial paintings, of Jezebel, that whore of Rome; all her meretricious deckings, dressings, and ornaments; her gaudy pomp and show in her worship, and the places of it; see Re 17:4. Jarchi interprets this of the grandeur and glory of the kings of the nations;

[but] a woman [that] feareth the Lord, she shall be praised; any single individual, man or woman, that fears the Lord; or a collective body of them, a society consisting of such persons, as the true church of Christ does; who have the grace of fear in their hearts, which is the beginning of wisdom, and includes the whole of religious worship, internal and external, private and public: such are taken notice of and highly valued by the Lord; his eye is upon them; his hand communicates to them much grace; and many benefits are bestowed upon them here, and great honour is conferred upon them, and great goodness is laid up for them.

{e} "Forma bonum fragile est", Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 2.

Proverbs 31:31

Ver. 31. Give her of the fruit of her hands,.... According to Aben Ezra, these are the words of her husband to her children; exhorting them to give her the praise and glory that is due unto her. Jarchi interprets it of the world to come; at which time, it is certain, the graces of the church, and of all believers, which are the fruits of the Spirit in them, and of their hands, as exercised by them, such as faith, hope, love, humility, patience, and others, will be found to honour and praise; and every such person shall have praise of God, **1Pe 1:7**; and also of men and angels; to whom these words may be an exhortation to give it to them;

and let her own words praise her in the gates; where her husband is known, in public assemblies; before angels and men, in the great day; when her works will follow her, and speak for her, and she will be publicly praised by Christ, as all the faithful and righteous will,
Re 14:13. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "let her husband be praised in the gate"; see Pr 31:23; so Ambrose, who interprets it of the happiness of the saints in heaven.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ecclesiastes 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES, OR THE PREACHER

This book has been universally received into the canon of the Scriptures, by Jews and Christians. The former, indeed, had once some controversy {a} about it; and they thought to have hid it, or put it among the apocryphal books; because, at first sight, some things seemed contradictory to each other {b}, and to incline to heresy {c}, atheism, and epicurism, and to assert the eternity of the world {d}: but they better considered of it; and when they observed those passages were capable of a good sense, and that the whole agreed with the law of God, they changed their minds {e}. And so likewise it has been rejected by some heretical persons, of the Christian name, as Theodore and Mopsuest, and others; and by deists, and some deistically inclined. But it carries in it such internal evidences of a divine original, as cannot well be denied; it delivers out and inculcates such divine instructions, concerning the duties of men to God, and one another; concerning the contempt of the world, and the carnal pleasures of it; the fear and worship of God, and a future judgment; as none but the wisdom of God could suggest. There are various things in it which seem to be referred to by Christ and his apostles; at least there is an entire agreement between them: among the many things that might be observed, compare Ec 11:5 with **Joh 3:8**; and Ec 11:9 with **2Co 5:10**; and **Ec 7:20** with **1Jo 1:8**. As to the author of it, there are evident marks of its being written by Solomon; yet, by some Jewish writers, it is ascribed to Isaiah {f}, which seems exceeding strange; for though he was a great prophet, and an evangelical preacher, yet no king in Jerusalem; whatever may be said for his being of the house of David, and of the royal family, as some have thought: and, besides, there is no agreement in style between this book and the writings of Isaiah. Others of them ascribe it to Hezekiah and his men {g}: Hezekiah was indeed the son of David, and David in expressly called his father; and he was a prince of great character, both with respect to religion, and to wealth and grandeur; see 2Ch 29:2; which might induce them to such a conceit; though it seems to take its rise from Hezekiah's men being the copiers of some of Solomon's proverbs, Pr 25:1; but the proof from thence must be exceeding weak; that because they were the transcribers of some of his proverbs, therefore were the writers of this book; and especially King Hezekiah; for, whatever may be said of his character, it falls greatly short of Solomon's wisdom or riches; and such things are said, with for respect to both, in this book, as cannot agree with him: and, on the other hand, it does not appear that he was addicted to wine and women, and gave himself a loose to carnal pleasures, as the writer of this book had formerly done. Grotius thinks it was written by some persons in the times of Zerubbabel, and published under the name of Solomon, as a penitent; which is quite shocking, that an inspired writing should have a false title put to it, and be imposed upon the church of God under a wrong name: besides, the name of Solomon is never mentioned in it; though this, by the way, betrays a conviction that he is intended in the title of it: nor are many persons concerned in it; it appears throughout the whole to be the work of a single person, who often speaks as such in it. That Zerubbabel should be meant by the one shepherd, Ec 12:11, is a mere fancy; it is better interpreted, as by many, of Jesus Christ: his chief argument for this conjecture is, because there are three or four Chaldee words in it, as he supposes; which yet does not appear, and are nowhere to be found but in Daniel, Ezra, and the Chaldee interpreter: and so there are in the book of Proverbs, Pr 31:2; but it does not follow, that because these words, or others, are but once used in Scripture, that they are not originally Hebrew; since the language was more extensive and better understood in Solomon's time than now, when we have only the copy of the Old Testament in which it is preserved. In short, what is said of the descent and dignity of the writer of this book, of his wisdom, wealth, riches, and grandeur, of his virtues and of his vices, agrees with none as with Solomon; to which may be added, that there is one passage in it, the same he used in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, **Ec 7:20**; compared with **1Ki 8:46**. As to the time in which it was written by him, it seems to have been in his old age, as the Jewish writers observe {h}; after his sin and fall, and recovery out of it, and when he was brought to true repentance for it: it was after he had made him great works, and built houses, his own house and the house of God, which were twenty years in building; it was after he had acquired not only vast riches and treasures, which must require time, but had gotten knowledge of all things in nature; and had seen all the works that are done under the sun, and had made trial of all pleasures that were to be enjoyed; see **Ec 1:1**; it was after he had been ensnared by women, which he confesses and laments, **Ec 7:26**; and his description of old age seems to be made, not merely upon the theory of it, but from a feeling experience of the evils and infirmities of it, Ec 12:1. The general scope and design of it is to expose the vanity of all worldly enjoyments; to show that a man's happiness does not lie in natural wisdom and knowledge; nor in worldly wealth; nor in civil honour, power, and authority; nor in the mere externals of religion; but in the fear of God, and the worship of him. It encourages men to a free use of the good things of life in a moderate way, with thankfulness to God; to submit with cheerfulness to adverse dispensations of Providence; to fear God and honour the king; to be dutiful to civil magistrates, and kind to the poor; to expect a future state, and an awful judgment; with many other useful things.

{a} Misn. Yadaim, c. 3. s. 5. T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 7. 1. {b} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 30. 2. {c} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 60. 4. Vajikra Rabba, s. 28. "in principio", fol. 168. 4. {d} Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, c. 28. p. 262. {e} T. Bab. Sabbat, ut supra. (fol. 30. 2.) {f} R. Gedaliah in Shalshelt. Hakabala, fol. 55. 1. R. Moses Kimchi & alii. {g} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. {h} Peskita Rabbati apud Yalkut in Kohelet, l. 1. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 2. 3. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 15. p. 41. R. Gedaliah in Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 8. 2.

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES 1

After the title of the book, which describes the author of it, by his office, as a preacher; by his descent, as the son of David; and by his dignity, king in Jerusalem, **Ec 1:1**; the principal doctrine insisted on in it is laid down, that the world, and all things in it, are most vain things, **Ec 1:2**. Which is proved in general, by the unprofitableness of all labour to attain them, be they what they will, wisdom, knowledge, riches, honours, and pleasures, **Ec 1:3**; by the short continuance of men on earth, though that abides, **Ec 1:4**; by the constant revolution, going and returning, of the most useful creatures, the sun, winds, and water, **Ec 1:5**; by the unfruitful and unsatisfactory labour all things are full of, **Ec 1:8**; by the continual repetition of the same things, and the oblivion of them, **Ec 1:9**; and by Solomon's own experience in one particular thing; his search after, and acquisition of, knowledge and wisdom, which he attained a large share of; and which he found attended with labour, difficulty, and little satisfaction; nay, was vanity and vexation of spirit; for, as his knowledge increased, so did his grief and sorrow, **Ec 1:12**.

Ver. 1. The words of the preacher,.... Or the preacher's sermon. The whole book is one continued discourse, and an excellent one it is; consisting not of mere words, but of solid matter; of things of the greatest importance, clothed with words apt and acceptable, which the preacher sought out, Ec 12:10. The Targum is,

"the words of the prophecy, which the preacher, who is Solomon, prophesied."

According to which this book is prophetic; and so it interprets it, and owns it to be Solomon's. The word "Koheleth", rendered "preacher", is by some taken to be a proper name of Solomon; who, besides the name of Solomon, his parents gave him, and Jedidiah, as the Lord called him, had the name of Koheleth; nay, the Jews say {i}, he had seven names, and to these three add four more, Agur, Jake, Ithiel, and Lemuel; the word by many is left untranslated {k}; but it seems rather to be an appellative, and is by some rendered "gathered", or the "soul gathered" {l}. Solomon had apostatized from the church and people of God, and had followed idols; but now was brought back by repentance, and was gathered into the fold, from whence he had strayed as a lost sheep; and therefore chooses to call himself by this name, when he preached his recantation sermon, as this book may be said to be. Others rather render it, "the gatherer" {m}; and was so called, as the Jewish writers say {n}, either because he gathered and got much wisdom, as it is certain he did; or because he gathered much people from all parts, to hear his wisdom, **1Ki 4:34**; in which he was a type of Christ, Ge 49:10; or this discourse of his was delivered in a large congregation, got together for that purpose; as he gathered and assembled together the heads and chief of the people, at the dedication of the temple, **1Ki 8:1**; so he might call them together to hear the retraction he made of his sins and errors, and repentance for them: and this might justly entitle him to the character of a "preacher", as we render it, an office of great honour, as well as of great importance to the souls of men; which Solomon, though a king, did not disdain to appear in; as David his father before him, and Noah before him, the father, king, and governor of the new world, Ps 34:11. The word used is in the feminine gender, as ministers of the Gospel are sometimes expressed by a word of the like kind; and are called maidens, Ps 68:11; to denote their virgin purity, and uncorruptness in doctrine and conversation: and here some respect may be had to Wisdom, or Christ, frequently spoken of by Solomon, as a woman, and who now spoke by him; which is a much better reason for the use of the word than his effeminacy, which his sin or his old age had brought him to. The word "soul" may be supplied, as by some, and be rendered, "the preaching soul" {o}; since, no doubt, he performed his work as such with all his heart and soul. He further describes himself by his descent,

the son of David; which he mentions either as an honour to him, that he was the son of so great, so wise, so holy, and good a man; or as an aggravation of his fall, that being the descendant of such a person, and having had so religious an education, and so good an example before him, and yet should sin so foully as he had done; and it might also encourage him, that he had interest in the sure mercies of David, and in the promises made to him, that when his children sinned, they should be chastised, yet his lovingkindness and covenant should not depart from them.

King of Jerusalem; not of Jerusalem only, but of all Israel, for as yet no division was made; see **Ec 1:12**. In Jerusalem, the city of Wisdom, as Jarchi observes, where many wise and good men dwelt, as well as it was the metropolis of the nation; and, which was more, it was the city where the temple stood, and where the worship of God was performed, and his priests ministered, and his people served him; and yet he, their king, that should have set them a better example, fell into idolatry!

{i} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 2. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 60. 3. {k} tlhq "Koheleth", Broughton, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius. Rambachius. {l} h quch h episunagomenh, "anima congregata", Cocceius, {m} "Collector", Arabic version; "congregator, q. d. sapientia congregatrix", Amama, Rambachius; "the gathering soul, either recollecting itself, or by admonitions gathering others", Lightfoot, vol. 2. p. 76. {n} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 2. 3. & Jarchi, Aben Ezra, & Baruch in loc. Pesikta Rabbati apud Yalkut, ut supra. (in Kohelet, l. 1.) {o} "Concionatrix anima", Vatablus, Piscator.

Ecclesiastes 1:2

Ver. 2. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher,.... This is the preacher's text; the theme and subject he after enlarges upon, and proves by an induction of particulars; it is the sum of the whole book;

vanity of vanities, all [is] vanity; most extremely vain, exceedingly so, the height of vanity: this is repeated, both for the confirmation of it, men being hard of belief of it; and to show how much the preacher was affected with it himself, and to affect others with the same. The Targum reads, "vanity of vanities [in] this world"; which is right as to the sense of the passage; for though the world, and all things in it, were made by God, and are very good; yet, in comparison of him, are less than nothing, and vanity; and especially as become subject to it through sin, a curse being brought upon the earth by it; and all the creatures made for the use of men liable to be abused, and are abused, through luxury, intemperance, and cruelty; and the whole world usurped by Satan, as the god of it. Nor is there anything in it, and put it all together, that can give satisfaction and contentment; and all is fickle, fluid, transitory, and vanishing, and in a short time will come to an end: the riches of the world afford no real happiness, having no substance in them, and being of no long continuance; nor can a man procure happiness for himself or others, or avert wrath to come, and secure from it; and especially these are vanity, when compared with the true riches, the riches of grace and glory, which are solid, substantial, satisfying, and are for ever: the honours of this world are empty things, last a very short time; and are nothing in comparison of the honour that comes from God, and all the saints have, in the enjoyment of grace here, and glory hereafter: the sinful pleasures of life are imaginary things, short lived ones; and not to be mentioned with spiritual pleasures, enjoyed in the house of God, under the word and ordinances; and especially with those pleasures, for evermore, at the right hand of God. Natural wisdom and knowledge, the best thing in the world; yet much of it is only in opinion; a great deal of it false; and none saving, and of any worth, in comparison of the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ; all the forms of religion and external righteousness, where there is not the true fear and grace of God, are all vain and empty things. Man, the principal creature in the world, is "vain man"; that is his proper character in nature and religion, destitute of grace: every than is vain, nay, vanity itself; high and low, rich and poor, learned or unlearned; nay, man at his best estate, as worldly and natural, is so; as even Adam was in his state of innocence, being fickle and mutable, and hence he fell, Ps 39:5; and especially his fallen posterity, whose bodies are tenements of clay; their beauty vain and deceitful; their circumstances changeable; their minds empty of all that is good; their thoughts and imaginations vain; their words, and works, and actions, and their whole life and conversation; they are not at all to be trusted in for help, by themselves or others. The Targum is, "when Solomon, king of Israel, saw, by the spirit of prophecy, that the kingdom of Rehoboam his son would be divided with Jeroboam, the son of Nebat; and that Jerusalem, and the house of the sanctuary, would be destroyed, and the people of the children of Israel would be carried captive; he said, by his word, Vanity of vanities in this world, vanity of vanities; all that I and my father David have laboured for, all is vanity!"

Ecclesiastes 1:3

Ver. 3. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?] This is a general proof of the vanity of all things, since there is no profit arises to a man of all his labour; for, though it is put by way of question, it carries in it a strong negative. All things a man enjoys he gets by labour; for man, through sin, is doomed and born unto it, **Job 5:7**; he gets his bread by the sweat of his brow, which is a part of the curse for sin; and the wealth and riches got by a diligent hand, with a divine blessing, are got by labour; and so all knowledge of natural and civil things is acquired through much labour and weariness of the flesh; and these are things a man labours for "under the sun", which measures out the time of his labour: when the sun riseth, man goeth forth to his labour; and, by the light and comfortable warmth of it, he performs his work with more exactness and cheerfulness; in some climates, and in some seasons, its heat, especially at noon, makes labour burdensome, which is called, bearing "the heat and burden of the day", Mt 20:12; and, when it sets, it closes the time of service and labour, and therefore the servant earnestly desires the evening shadow, **Job 7:2**. But now, of what profit and advantage is all this labour man takes under the sun, towards his happiness in the world above the sun? that glory and felicity, which lies in super celestial places in Christ Jesus? none at all. Or, "what remains of all his labour?" {p} as it may be rendered; that is, after death: so the Targum,

"what is there remains to a man after he is dead, of all his labour which he laboured under the sun in this world?"

nothing at all. He goes naked out of the world as he came into it; he can carry nothing away with him of all his wealth and substance he has acquired; nor any of his worldly glory, and grandeur, and titles of honour; these all die with him, his glory does not descend after him; wherefore it is a clear case that all these things are vanity of vanities; see **Job 1:21**. And, indeed, works of righteousness done by men, and trusted in, and by which they labour to establish a justifying righteousness, are of no profit and advantage to them in the business of justification and salvation; indeed, when these are done from right principles, and with right views, the labour in them shall not be in vain; God will not forget it; it shall have a reward of grace, though not of debt.

{p} wlme lkb Nwdty hm "quid habet amplius homo?" V. L. "quid residui?" Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Rambachius; "quantum enim homini reliquum est, post omnem saum laborem?" Tigurine version.

Ecclesiastes 1:4

Ver. 4. [One] generation passeth away, and [another] generation cometh,.... This shows that a man can have no profit of all his labour under the sun, because of his short continuance; as soon almost as he has got anything by his labour, he must leave it: not only particular persons, but families, nations, and kingdoms; even all the inhabitants of the world, that are contemporaries, live together in the same age, in a certain period of time; these gradually go off by death, till the whole generation is consumed, as the generation of the Israelites in the wilderness were. Death is meant by passing away; it is a going out of time into eternity; a departure out of this world to another; a quitting of the earthly house of this tabernacle for the grave, the house appointed for all living; it is man's going to his long home: and this is going the way of all the earth; in a short time a whole race or generation of men go off the stage of the world, and then another succeeds {q}; they come in by birth; and men are described from their birth by such as "come into the world"; for which there is a set time, as well as for going out, **Joh 1:9**; and these having been a while in the world, go off to make room for another generation; and so things have been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end of it. Homer {r} illustrates this by the succession of leaves of trees; as is the generation of trees, he says, such is that of men; some leaves, the wind sheds them on the ground; others the budding forest puts forth, and they grow in their room in the springtime; so is the generation of men; one is born, and another ceases. Now death puts an end to all a man's enjoyments got by labour, his riches, honour, and natural knowledge; these all cease with him, and therefore he has no profit of all his labour under the sun;

but the earth abideth for ever; for a long time, until the dissolution of all things; and then, though that and all in it will be burnt up, yet it will rather be changed than destroyed; the form of it will be altered, when the substance of it will continue; it will not be annihilated, but renewed and refined. This is mentioned to show that the earth, which was made for man, of which he is the inhabitant and proprietor, is more stable than he himself; he soon passes off from it, but that continues; he returns to the earth, from whence he came, but that remains as it did; he dies, and leaves the earth behind him, and all his acquisitions in it; and therefore what profit has he of all his labours on it? Besides, that remains to have the same things transacted on it, over and over again, as has been already; God, that made it for men to dwell in, has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of men's habitations in it; he has appointed who shall dwell on it, and where, in successive generations; and till all these men are born and gone off, age after age, the earth shall continue, and then pass through its last change. The Targum is,

"the earth stands for ever, to bear the vengeance that is to come upon the world for the sins of the children of men."

The Midrash Tanchuma, as Jarchi observes, interprets it of all the righteous of Israel, called the earth; and he himself, of the meek that shall inherit the earth: says R. Isaac {s},

"one kingdom comes, and another goes, but Israel abideth for ever."

{q} "Nihil enim semper floret, aetas succedit aetati", Cicero. Orat. Philip. 11. {r} Iliad. 6. v. 146, &c. So Musaeus apud Clement. Stromat. l. 6. p 649. "Ut silvae foliis", &c. Horat. de Arte Poctica, v. 60. {s} Apud R. Joseph. Titatzak in loc.

Ecclesiastes 1:5

Ver. 5. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The sun rises in the morning and sets at evening in our hemisphere, according to the appearance of things; and then it makes haste to go round the other hemisphere in the night: it "pants", as the word {t} signifies; the same figure is used by other writers {u}; like a man out of breath with running; so this glorious body, which rejoiceth as a strong man to run his race, and whose circuit is from one end of the heavens to the other, Ps 19:5; is in haste to get to the place where he rose in the morning, and there he makes no stop, but pursues his course in the same track again. By this instance is exemplified the succession of the generations of men one after another, as the rising and setting of the sun continually follows each other; and also sets forth the restless state of things in the world, which, like the sun, are never at a stand, but always moving, and swiftly taking their course; and likewise the changeable state of man, who, like the rising sun, and when at noon day, is in flourishing circumstances, and in the height of prosperity, but as this declines and sets, so he has his declining times and days of adversity. Moreover, like the rising sun, he comes into this world and appears for a while, and then, like the setting sun, he dies; only with this difference, in which the sun has the preference to him, as the earth before had; the sun hastens and comes to its place from whence it arose, but man lies down and rises not again till the heavens be no more, and never returns to his place in this world, that knows him no more, **Job 7:10**. The Jews {w} say, before the sun of one righteous, man sets, the sun of another righteous man rises.

{t} pawv "anhelus", Montanus, Tigurine version; "anhelat", Drusius, Piscator, Cocceius, Amama; "anhelaus est", Rambachius; "doth he breathe", Broughton. {u} "Placebits anhelat", Claudian. Epigrarm. "Equis oriens afflavit anhelis", Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. v. 250. Aeneid, l. 5. {w} Apud R. Joseph. Titatzak in loc. Midrash Kohelet in loc.

Ecclesiastes 1:6

Ver. 6. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north,.... The word "wind" is not in this clause in the original text, but is taken from the next, and so may be rendered, "it goeth towards the south", &c. that is, the sun {x} before mentioned, which as to its diurnal and nocturnal course in the daytime goes towards the south, and in the night towards the north; and as to its annual course before the winter solstice it goes to the south, and before the summer solstice to the north, as interpreters observe. And the Targum not only interprets this clause, but even the whole verse, of the sun, paraphrasing the whole thus,

"it goes all the side of the south in the daytime, and goes round to the side of the north in the night, by the way of the abyss; it goes its circuit, and comes to the wind of the south corner in the revolution of Nisan and Tammuz; and by its circuit it returns to the wind of the north corner in the revolution of Tisri and Tebet; it goes out of the confines of the east in the morning, and goes into the confines of the west in the evening."

But Aben Ezra understands the whole of the wind, as our version and others do, which is sometimes in the south point of the heavens, and is presently in the north;

it whirleth about continually; and the wind returneth again according to his circuits; which may be meant of the circuits of the sun, which has a great influence on the wind, often raising it in a morning and laying it at night; but it is the wind itself which whirls and shifts about all the points of the compass, and returns from whence it came, where the treasures of it are. Agreeably to Solomon's account of the wind is Plato's definition of it,

"the wind is the motion of the air round about the earth {y}."

This also exemplifies the rotation of men and things, the instability, inconstancy, and restless state of all sublunary enjoyments; the unprofitableness of men's labours, who, while they labour for riches and honour, and natural knowledge, labour for the wind, and fill their belly with east wind, which cannot satisfy, **Ec 5:16**; as well as the frailty of human life, which is like the wind that passes away and comes not again; and in this respect, like the rest of the instances, exceed man, which returns to its place, but man does not, **Job 7:7**.

{x} Jarchi, Alshech, and Titatzak, interpret it of the sun; so Mercerus, Varenius, Gejerus; accordingly Mr. Broughton renders it "he walketh to the south." {y} Definition. p. 1337. Ed. Ficin.

Ecclesiastes 1:7

Ver. 7. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea [is] not full,.... Which flow from fountains or an formed by hasty rains; these make their way to the sea, yet the sea is not filled therewith, and made to abound and overflow the earth, as it might be expected it would. So Seneca says {z} we wonder that the accession of rivers is not perceived in the sea; and Lucretius {a} observes the same, that it is wondered at that the sea should not increase, when there is such a flow of waters to it from all quarters; besides the wandering showers and flying storms that fall into it, and yet scarce increased a drop; which he accounts for by the exhalations of the sun, by sweeping and drying winds, and by what the clouds take up. Homer {b} makes every sea, all the rivers, fountains, and wells, flow, from the main ocean. Hence Pindar {c} calls the lake or fountain Camarina the daughter of the ocean But Virgil {d} makes the rivers to flow into it, as the wise man here; with which Aristotle {e} agrees. So Lactantius {f} says, "mare quod ex fluminibus constat", the sea consists of rivers. Both may be true, for, through secret passages under ground, the waters of it are caused to pass back again to their respective places from whence they flowed, as follows;

unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again; this also illustrates the succession of men, age after age, and the revolution of things in the world, their unquiet and unsettled state; and the unsatisfying nature of all things; as the sea is never full with what comes into it, so the mind of man is never satisfied with all the riches and honour he gains, or the knowledge of natural things he acquires; and it suggests that even water, as fluctuating a body as it is, yet has the advantage of men; that though it is always flowing and reflowing, yet it returns to its original place, which man does not. And from all these instances it appears that all things are vanity, and man has no profit of all his labour under the sun.

{z} Nat. Quaest. l. 3. c. 4. {a} De Rerum Natura, l. 6. {b} Iliad. 21. v. 193, &c. {c} Olymp. Ode 5. v. 4. {d} "Omnia sub magna", &c. Georgic. l. 4. v. 366, &c. {e} Meterolog. l. 1. c. 13. {f} De Orig. Error. l. 2. c. 6.

Ecclesiastes 1:8

Ver. 8. All things [are] full of labour,.... Or "are laborious" {g}; gotten by labour, and attended with fatigue and weariness; riches are got by labour, and those who load themselves with thick clay, as gold and silver be, weary themselves with it; honour and glory, crowns and kingdoms, are weighty cares, and very fatiguing to those that have them; much study to acquire knowledge is a weariness to the flesh; and as men even weary themselves to commit iniquity, it is no wonder that religious exercises should be a weariness to a natural man, and a carnal professor;

man cannot utter [it]; or declare all the things that are laborious and fatiguing, nor all the labour they are full of; time would fail, and words be wanting to express the whole; all the vanity, unprofitableness, and unsatisfying nature of all things below the sun; particularly

the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing; both one and the other require new objects continually; the pleasure of these senses is blunted by the same objects constantly presented; men are always seeking new ones, and when they have got them they want others; whatever curious thing is to be seen the eye craves it; and, after it has dwelt on it a while, it grows tired of it, and wants something else to divert it; and so the ear is delighted with musical sounds, but in time loses the taste of them, and seeks for others; and in discourse and conversation never easy, unless, like the Athenians, it hears some new things, and which quickly grow stale, and then wants fresh ones still: and indeed the spiritual eye and ear will never be satisfied in this life, until the soul comes into the perfect state of blessedness, and beholds the face of God, and sees him as he is; and sees and hears what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard below. The Targum is,

"all the words that shall be in the world, the ancient prophets were weary in them, and they could not find out the ends of them; yea, a man has no power to say what shall be after him; and the eye cannot see all that shall be in the world, and the ear cannot be filled with hearing all the words of all the inhabitants of the world."

{g} Myegy "laboriosae", Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Schmidt.

Ecclesiastes 1:9

Ver. 9. The thing that hath been, it [is that] which shall be,.... The thing that has been seen and heard is no other than what shall be seen and heard again; so that what is now seen and heard is only what has been seen and heard before; it is but the same thing over again; and that is the reason why the eye and ear are never satisfied; the same objects, as the visible heavens and earth, and all therein, which have been from the beginning, these are they which shall be, and there is nothing else to be seen and heard, and enjoyed;

and that which is done, [is] that which shall be done; what is done in the present age, nay, in this year, month, or day, shall be done over again in the next;

and [there is] no new [thing] under the sun; which is to be understood of things natural, as the works of creation, which were finished from the beginning of the world, and continue as they were ever since, **Heb 4:3**; the various seasons of day and night, of summer and winter, of spring and autumn, of heat and cold, of seed time and harvest, come in course, as they always did; these ordinances never fail, **Ge 8:22**. The things before mentioned, the constant succession of men on earth, who are born into the world and die out of it, just as they always did; the sun rises and sets at its appointed time, as it did almost six thousand years ago; the winds whirl about all the points of the compass now as formerly; the rivers have the same course and recourse, and the sea its ebbing and flowing, they ever had; the same arts and sciences, trades and manufactures, obtained formerly as now, though in some circumstances there may be an improvement, and in others they grow worse; see **Ge 4:2** Ex 31:3; and even such things as are thought of new invention, it may be only owing to the ignorance of former times, history failing to give us an account of them; thus the art of printing, the making of gunpowder, and the use of guns and bombs, and of the lodestone and mariner's compass, were thought to be of no long standing; and yet, according to the Chinese histories, that people were in possession of these things hundreds of years before; the circulation of the blood, supposed to be first found out by a countryman of ours in the last century, was known by Solomon, and is thought to be designed by him in Ec 12:6; and the like may be observed of other things. The emperor Mark Antonine {f} has the very phrase ouden kainon, "nothing new": so Seneca {g},

"nothing new I see, nothing new I do."

This will likewise hold good in moral things; the same vices and virtues are now as ever, and ever were as they are; men in every age were born in sin, and were transgressors from the womb; from their infancy corrupt, and in all the stages of life; there were the same luxury and intemperance, and unnatural lusts, rapine and violence, in the days of Noah and Lot, as now; in Sodom and Gomorrah, and in the old world, as in the present age; and there were some few then, as now, that were men of sobriety, honesty, truth, and righteousness. There is nothing to be excepted but preternatural things, miraculous events, which may be called new, unheard of, and wonderful ones; such as the earth's opening and swallowing men alive at once; the standing still of the sun and moon for a considerable time; the miracles wrought by the prophets of the Old and the apostles of the New Testament, and especially by Christ; and particularly the incarnation of Christ, or his birth of a virgin, that new thing made in the earth; these and such like things are made by the power of, he divine Being, who dwells above the sun, and is not bound by the laws of nature. Spiritual things may also be excepted, which are the effects of divine favour, or the produce of efficacious grace; and yet these things, though in some sense new, are also old; or there have been the same things for substance in former ages, and from the beginning, as now; such as the new covenant of grace; the new and living way to God; new creatures in Christ; a new name; the New Testament, and the doctrines of it; new ordinances, and the new commandment of love; and yet these, in some sense, are all old things, and indeed are the same in substance: there is nothing new but what is above the sun, and to be enjoyed in the realms of bliss to all eternity; and there are some things new {h}, new wine in Christ's Father's kingdom, new glories, joys, and pleasures, that will never end.

{f} De Orig. Error. l. 2. c. 6. {g} Myegy "laboriosae", Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Schmidt. {h} Vid. R. Alshech in loc.

Ecclesiastes 1:10

Ver. 10. Is there [any] thing whereof it may be said, see, this [is] new?.... This is an appeal to all men for the truth of the above observation, and carries in it a strong denial that there is anything new under the sun; and is an address to men to inquire into the truth of it, and thoroughly examine it, and see if they can produce any material objection to it; look into the natural world, and the same natural causes will be seen producing the same effects; or into the moral world, and there are the same virtues, and their contrary; or into the political world, and the same schemes are forming and pursuing, and which issue in the same things, peace or war; or into the learned world, and the same languages, arts, and sciences, are taught and learned; and the same things said over again {i}: or into the mechanic world, and the same trades and businesses are carrying on: or the words may be considered as a concession, and carry in them the form of an objection, "there is a thing {k} whereof it may be said", or a man may say, "see, this is new"; so the Targum; there were some things in Solomon's time it is allowed that might be objected, as there are in ours, to which the answer is,

it hath been already of old time which was before us; what things are reckoned new are not so; they were known and in use in ages past, long before we had a being. R. Alshech takes the words to be an assertion, and not an interrogation, and interprets it of a spiritual temple in time to come, which yet was created before the world was.

{i} "Nullum est jam dictum, quod non dictum sit prius", Terent Prolog. Eunuch. v. 41. {k} rbd vy "est quidpiam", Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "est res", Drusius, Cocceius, Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 1:11

Ver. 11. [There] is no remembrance of former [things],.... Which is the reason why some things that are really old are thought to be new; because either the memories of men fail them, they do not remember the customs and usages which were in the former part of their own lives, now grown old; or they are ignorant of what were in ages past, through want of history, or defect in it; either they have no history at all, or what they have is false; or if true, as there is very little that is so, it is very deficient; and, among the many things that have been, very few are transmitted to posterity, so that the memory of things is lost; therefore who can say with certainty of anything, this is new, and was never known in the world before? and the same for the future will be the case of present things; see **Ec 2:16**;

neither shall there be any remembrance of [things] that are to come with [those] that shall come after; this will be the case of things present and future, that they will be buried in oblivion, and lie unknown to posterity that shall come after the things that are done; and if any person or persons should rise up and do the same things, they may be called new, though they are in fact old, for want of knowing that they were before. The Targum is,

"there is no remembrance of former generations; and even of later ones, that shall be, there will be no remembrance of them, with the generations of them that shall be in the days of the King Messiah."

R. Alshech interprets it of the resurrection of the dead.

Ecclesiastes 1:12

Ver. 12. I the preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. Solomon having given a general proof of the vanity of all things here below, and of the insufficiency of them to make men happy, proceeds to particular instances, and begins with human wisdom and knowledge, which of all things might be thought to be most conducive to true happiness; and yet it falls short of it: he instances in himself for proof of it; and he could not have pitched on anyone more proper and pertinent to the purpose, who had all the advantages of obtaining wisdom, was assiduous in his pursuit of it, and made a proficiency in it above all mankind; wherefore he must be owned to be a proper judge, and whatever is concluded by him may be taken for granted as certain; and this is the sum of the following verses to the end of the chapter. Now let it be observed, that he was a "preacher", not a private person, and must have a good share of knowledge to qualify him for teaching and instructing others; and, more than this, he was a king, and did not want money to purchase books, and procure masters to instruct him in all the branches of literature; and when he entered upon the more profound study of wisdom, and especially when he said this, it was not in his infancy or childhood, or before he came to the throne, but after; even after he had asked, wisdom of God to govern, and it had been given him; yea, after he had been a long time king, as he now was; though the Jewish writers, as the Targum, Jarchi, and others, conclude from hence that he was not now a king, but become a private person, deposed or driven from his throne, which does not appear: moreover, he was king of Israel, not over a barbarous people, where darkness and ignorance reigned, but over a "wise and understanding people", as they are called **De 4:6**; and he was king over them in Jerusalem too, the metropolis of the nation; there he had his royal palace, where were not only the temple, the place of divine worship, but a college of prophets, and a multitude of priests, and an abundance of wise and knowing men, whom he had opportunity of conversing with frequently; to which may be added, his large correspondence abroad; persons from all kings and kingdoms came to hear his wisdom, as the queen of Sheba; and by putting questions to him, and so exercising his talents, not a little contributed to the improvement of them. Now a person so qualified must be a judge of wisdom, and what he says deserves attention; and it may be observed, that what he says, as follows, is "in verbo regis et sacerdotis", on the word of a king and preacher, who would never risk his honour, or forfeit his character, by saying an untruth.

Ecclesiastes 1:13

Ver. 13. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom,.... As he had all advantages and opportunities, so he did not want for industry and application to obtain knowledge; he gave his mind to it; he took up a resolution not to be discouraged by any difficulties, but to break through them, if possible; he set about the work with great readiness and cheerfulness; he had a price in his hand to get wisdom, and he had a heart unto it; see Pr 17:16; and he pursued it with all diligence, with all his might and main: nor did he content himself with a superficial knowledge of things; but "searched" after the most recondite and abstruse learning, and penetrated into the utmost recesses of it, to find out all that was to be known; and this he did "by" using all the "wisdom" and sagacity, the light and strength of reason, and all those bright natural parts, which God had given him in a very extraordinary manner. And his inquiry was very extensive; it was

concerning all [things] that are done under heaven; into the nature of all things, animate and inanimate; trees, herbs, plants, fossils, minerals, and metals; beasts, birds, fish, and all creeping things; see **1Ki 4:33**; with everything else in nature: he sought to make himself master of all arts and sciences; to get knowledge of all trades and manufactures; to understand everything in politics, relating to kingdoms and states, and the government of them; to observe all the actions of men, wise and foolish, that he might know the difference, and be a judge of what was right and wrong. And his observation upon the whole is,

this sore travail hath God given to the sons of men, to be exercised therewith: he found by experience it was a heavy task, which God had put upon the children of men, to get wisdom and knowledge in the way it was to be gotten; which was very burdensome and wearisome to the flesh; nay, he found it was an {l} "evil business", as it may be rendered; or there was something sinful and criminal, which God suffered men in their pursuit after knowledge to fall into, and which their studies exposed them to; as to indulge a vain and sinful curiosity, to pry into things unlawful, and to be wise above what is written; or to be too anxious in attaining natural knowledge, to the neglect of things of great importance; or to abuse or trust in knowledge attained unto, or be vainly elated and puffed up with it. Or this may be understood of the evil of punishment, which God inflicts on men for the sin of eating of the tree of knowledge; and that as he is doomed to get his bread, so his knowledge, with the sweat of his brow, that is, with great pains and labour; which otherwise would have been more easily obtained: but this God has done to "afflict" or "humble" {m} men, as the word may be rendered; to afflict or punish them for sin; and to humble them by showing them how weak are the powers and faculties of their minds, that so much pains must be taken to get a small share of knowledge. The Targum is,

"and I saw all the works of the children of men obnoxious to an evil business; the Lord gave to the children of men, to be afflicted with it."

{l} er Nyne "occupationem malam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Amama, Gejerus. {m} twnel "ad affligendum", Montanus, Gejerus; "ut affligent se in ea", Vatablus, Rambachius; "ut ea humlies redderet", Tigurine version.

Ecclesiastes 1:14

Ver. 14. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun,.... All things done by the Lord, that were on the earth, and in it, and in the sea; he considered them, and endeavoured to search into the nature of them; and did attain to a very great knowledge of them, so that he could speak of them to the instruction of others; see **1Ki 4:33**; and all that were done by men, by their head, or by their hands; all that were written or wrought by them; all their philosophical works and experiments, and all their mechanic operations; as well as all their good and bad works, in a moral sense; so the Targum,

"I saw all the deeds of the children of men, which are done under the sun in this world;"

and, behold, all [is] vanity and vexation of spirit; not only the things known, but the knowledge of them; it is mere vanity, there is nothing solid and substantial in it, or that can make a man happy; yea, on the contrary, it is vexatious and distressing; it is not only a weariness to the flesh to obtain it, but, in the reflection of it, gives pain and uneasiness to the mind: it is a "breaking of the spirit" {n} of the man, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Alshech, interpret the phrase; it wastes and consumes his spirit, as well as his time, and all to no purpose; it is, as some ancient Greek versions and others render it, and not amiss, a "feeding on wind" {o}; what is useless and unprofitable, and like labouring for that; see Ho 12:1 **Ec 5:16**; and so Aben Ezra.

{n} xwr twer "affiictio spiritus", V. L. Junius & Tremellius; "contritio spiritus", so some in Vatablus. {o} nomh anemou, Aquila; "pastio venti", Mercerus, Piscator, Gejerus, Amama.

Ecclesiastes 1:15

Ver. 15. [That which is] crooked cannot be made straight,.... By all the art and cunning, wisdom and knowledge of man, that he can attain unto; whatever he, in the vanity of his mind, may find fault with in the works of God, either of nature of providence, and which he may call crooked, it is not in his power to make them straight, or to mend them; see **Ec 7:13**. There is something which, through sin, is crooked, in the hearts, in the nature, in the principles, ways and works, of men; which can never be made straight, corrected or amended, by all the natural wisdom and knowledge of men, which shows the insufficiency of it: the wisest philosophers among men, with all their parade of wit and learning, could never effect anything of this kind; this only is done by the Spirit and grace of God; see Isa 42:16;

and that which is wanting cannot be numbered; the deficiencies in human science are so many, that they cannot be reckoned up; and the defects in human nature can never be supplied or made up by natural knowledge and wisdom; and which are so numerous, as that they cannot be understood and counted. The Targum is,

"a man whose ways are perverse in this world, and dies in them, and does not return by repentance, he has no power of correcting himself after his death; and a man that fails from the law and the precepts in his life, after his death hath no power to be numbered with the righteous in paradise:"

to the same sense Jarchi's note and the Midrash.

Ecclesiastes 1:16

Ver. 16. I communed with my own heart,.... That is, looked into it, examined it, and considered what a stock and fund of knowledge he had in it, after all his researches into it; what happiness accrued to him by it, and what judgment upon the whole was to be formed upon it; and he spoke within himself after this manner:

saying, lo, I am come to great estate; or become a great man; famous for wisdom, arrived to a very great pitch of it; greatly increased in it, through a diligent application to it;

and have gotten more wisdom than all [they] that have been before me in Jerusalem; or, "that before me were over Jerusalem" {p}; governors of it, or in it; not only than the Jebusites, but than Saul, the first king of Israel, or than even his father David; or, as Gussetius {q}, than any princes, rulers, and civil magistrates in Jerusalem, in his own days or in the days of his father; and also than all the priests and prophets, as well as princes, that ever had been there: and indeed he was wiser than all men, **1Ki 4:30**; and even than any that had been in Jerusalem, or any where else, or that should be hereafter, excepting the Messiah; see **1Ki 3:12**. And seeing this is said of him by others, and even by the Lord himself, it might not only be said with truth by himself, but without ostentation; seeing it was necessary it should be said to answer his purpose, which was to show the vanity of human wisdom in its highest pitch; and it was nowhere to be found higher than in himself;

yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge; or, "saw much wisdom and knowledge" {r}; he thoroughly understood it, he was a complete master of it; it was not a superficial knowledge he had attained unto, or a few lessons of it he had committed to memory; some slight notions in his head, or scraps of things he had collected together, in an undigested manner; but he had made himself thoroughly acquainted with everything worthy to be known, and had digested it in his mind.

{p} Mlvwry le "super Jerusalaim", Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt; "qui praefueriut ante me Jeruscthalamis", Junius & Tremellius. {q} Comment. Heb. p. 604. {r} tedw hmkx hbrh har "vidit multum sapientiae et scientiae", Montanus, Amama; "vidit plurimam sapientiam et scientiam", Tigurine version.

Ecclesiastes 1:17

Ver. 17. And I gave my heart to know wisdom,.... Which is repeated, for the confirmation of it, from **Ec 1:13**, and that it might be taken notice of how assiduous and diligent he had been in acquiring it; a circumstance not to be overlooked;

and to know madness and folly: that he might the better know wisdom, and learn the difference between the one and the other, since opposites illustrate each other; and that he might shun madness and folly, and the ways thereof, and expose the actions of mad and foolish men: so Plato {s} says, ignorance is a disease, of which there are two kinds, madness and folly. The Targum, Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions, interpret the last word, translated "folly", by understanding, knowledge, and prudence; which seems to be right, since Solomon speaks of nothing afterwards, as vexation and grief to him, but wisdom and knowledge: and I would therefore read the clause in connection with the preceding, thus, "and the knowledge of things boasted of", vain glorious knowledge; "and prudence", or what may be called craftiness and cunning; or what the apostle calls "science falsely so called", **1Ti 6:20**; see Pr 12:8;

I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit;

See Gill on "Ec 1:14"; the reason follows.

{s} In Timaeo, p. 1084.

Ecclesiastes 1:18

Ver. 18. For in much wisdom [is] much grief,.... In getting it, and losing it when it is gotten: or "indignation" {t}, at himself and others; being more sensible of the follies and weakness of human nature;

and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow: for, the more he knows, the more he would know, and is more eager after it, and puts himself to more pains and trouble to acquire it; and hereby becomes more and more sensible of his own ignorance; and of the difficulty of attaining the knowledge he would come at; and of the insufficiency of it to make him easy and happy: and besides, the more knowledge he has, the more envy it draws upon him from others, who set themselves to oppose him, and detract from his character; in short, this is the sum of all human knowledge and wisdom, attained to in the highest degree; instead of making men comfortable and happy, it is found to be mere vanity, to cause vexation and disquietude of mind, and to promote grief and sorrow. There is indeed wisdom and knowledge opposite to this, and infinitely more excellent, and which, the more it is increased, the more joy and comfort it brings; and this is wisdom in the hidden part; a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ, and of divine and evangelical truths; but short of this knowledge there is no true peace, comfort, and happiness. The Targum is,

"for a man who multiplies wisdom, when he sins and does not turn by repentance, he multiplies indignation from the Lord; and he who increases knowledge, and dies in his youth, increases grief of heart to those who are near akin to him."

{t} oek br "multa ira", Pagninus, Montanus; "indignatio", V. L. Tigurine version, Vatablus, Drusius; "multum indignationis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ecclesiastes 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES 2

Solomon, having made trial of natural wisdom and knowledge in its utmost extent, and found it to be vanity, proceeds to the experiment of pleasure, and tries whether any happiness was in that, **Ec 2:1**. As for that which at first sight was vain, frothy, and frolicsome, he dispatches at once, and condemns it as mad and unprofitable, **Ec 2:2**; but as for those pleasures which were more manly, rational, and lawful, he dwells upon them, and gives a particular enumeration of them, as what he had made full trial of; as good eating and drinking, in a moderate way, without abuse; fine and spacious buildings; delightful vineyards, gardens, and orchards; parks, forests, and enclosures; fish pools, and fountains of water; a large retinue, and equipage of servants; great possessions, immense riches and treasure; a collection of the greatest rarities, and curiosities in nature; all kinds of music, vocal and instrumental, **Ec 2:3**; in all which he exceeded any that went before him; nor did he deny himself of any pleasure, in a lawful way, that could possibly be enjoyed, **Ec 2:9**. And yet on a survey of the whole, and after a thorough experience of what could be found herein, he pronounces all vanity and vexation of spirit, **Ec 2:11**; and returns again to his former subject, wisdom; and looks that over again, to see if he could find real happiness in it, being sadly disappointed in that of pleasure, **Ec 2:12**. He indeed commends wisdom, and prefers it to folly, and a wise man to a fool; **Ec 2:13**; and yet observes some things which lessen its value; and shows there is no happiness in it, the same events befalling a wise man and a fool; both alike forgotten, and die in like manner, **Ec 2:15**. And then he takes into consideration business of life, and a laborious industry to obtain wealth; and this he condemns as grievous, hateful, and vexatious, because, after all a man's acquisitions, he knows not to whom he shall leave them, whether to a wise man or a fool, **Ec 2:17**. And because a man himself has no rest all his days, nothing but sorrow and grief, **Ec 2:22**; wherefore he concludes it is best for a man to enjoy the good things of this life himself; which he confirms by his own experience, and by an, antithesis between a good man and a wicked one, **Ec 2:24**.

Ver. 1. I said in mine heart,.... He communed with his heart, he thought and reasoned within himself, and came to this resolution in his own mind; that since he could not find happiness in natural wisdom and knowledge, he would seek for it elsewhere, even in pleasure; in which, he observed, some men placed their happiness; or, however, sought for it there: or, "I said to my heart", as the Syriac version;

Go to now; or, "go, I pray thee" {u} listen to what I am about to say, and pursue the track I shall now point out to thee;

I will prove thee with mirth; with those things which will cause mirth, joy, and pleasure; and try whether any happiness can be enjoyed this way, since it could not be had in wisdom and knowledge. Jarchi and Aben Ezra render it, "I will mingle", wine with water, or with spices; or, "I will pour out", wine in plenty to drink of, "with joy", and to promote mirth: but the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, interpret it as we do, and which sense Aben Ezra makes mention of;

therefore enjoy pleasure; which man is naturally a lover of; he was so in his state of innocency, and this was the bait that was laid for him, and by which he was drawn into sin; and now he loves, lives in, and serves sinful pleasures; which are rather imaginary than real, and last but for a season, and end in bitterness: but such sordid lusts and pleasures are not here meant; Solomon was too wise and good a man to give into these, as the "summum bonum"; or ever to think there could be any happiness in them, or even to make a trial of them for that purpose: not criminal pleasures, or an impure, sottish, and epicurean life, are here intended; but manly, rational, and lawful pleasures, for no other are mentioned in the detail of particulars following; and, in the pursuit of the whole, he was guided and governed by his wisdom, and that remained in him, **Ec 2:3**. It may be rendered, "therefore see good" {w}; look upon all the good, pleasant, and delectable things of life; and enjoy them in such a manner as, if possible, happiness may be attained in them;

and, behold, this also [is] vanity; it will be found, by making the experiment, that there is no solid and substantial happiness in it, as it was by himself.

{u} an hkl "age, quaeso", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Rambachius. {w} bwjb harw "et vide in bonum", Montanus; "et vide bonum", Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus; "fraere bono", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Amama, Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 2:2

Ver. 2. I said of laughter, [it is] mad,.... The risible faculty in man is given him for some usefulness; and when used in a moderate way, and kept within due bounds, is of service to him, and conduces to the health of his body, and the pleasure of his mind; but when used on every trivial occasion, and at every foolish thing that is said or done, and indulged to excess, it is mere madness, and makes a man look more like a madman and a fool than a wise man; it lasts but for a while, and the end of it is heaviness, **Ec 7:6**. Or, "I said to laughter, [thou art] mad" {x}; and therefore will have nothing to do with thee in the excessive and criminal way, but shun thee, as one would do a mad man: this therefore is not to be reckoned into the pleasure he bid his soul go to and enjoy;

and of mirth, what doth it? what good does do? of what profit and advantage is it to man? If the question is concerning innocent mirth, the answer may be given out of Pr 15:13; but if of carnal sinful mirth, there is no good arises from that to the body or mind; or any kind of happiness to be enjoyed that way, and therefore no trial is to be made of it. What the wise man proposed to make trial of, and did, follows in the next verses.

{x} llwhm ytrma qwxvl "risui dixi, insanis", Mercerus, Drusius, Amama; "vel insanus es", Piscator, Schmidt, Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 2:3

Ver. 3. I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine,.... Not in an immoderate way, so as to intoxicate himself with it, in which there can be no pleasure, nor any show of happiness; but in a moderate, yet liberal way, so as to be innocently cheerful and pleasant, and hereby try what good and happiness were to be possessed in this way. By "wine" is meant, not that only, but everything eatable and drinkable that is good; it signifies what is called good living, good eating and drinking: Solomon always lived well; was brought up as a prince, and, when he came to the throne, lived like a king; but being increased in riches, and willing to make trial of the good that was in all the creatures of God, to see if any happiness was in them; determines to keep a better table still, and resolved to have everything to eat or drink that could be had, cost what it will; of Solomon's daily provision for his household, see **1Ki 4:22**; the Midrash interprets it, of the wine of the law. It may be rendered, "I sought in mine heart to draw out my flesh with wine", or "my body" {y}; to extend it, and make it fat and plump; which might be reduced to skin and bones, to a mere skeleton, through severe studies after wisdom and knowledge. The Targum is, "I sought in my heart to draw my flesh into the house of the feast of wine;"

as if there was a reluctance in him to such a conduct; and that he as it were put a force upon himself, in order to make the experiment;

(yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom); or, "yet my heart led [me] in wisdom" {z}: he was guided and governed by wisdom in this research of happiness; he was upon his guard, that he did not go into any sinful extravagancies, or criminal excesses in eating and drinking;

and to lay hold on folly; that he might better know what folly was, and what was the folly of the sons of men to place their happiness in such things; or rather, he studiously sought to lay hold on folly, to restrain it, and himself from it, that it might not have the ascendant over him; so that he would not be able to form a right judgment whether there is any real happiness in this sort of pleasure, or not, he is, speaking of; for the epicure, the voluptuous person, is no judge of it;

till I might see what [was] that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life; where the "summum bonum", or chief happiness of man lies; and which he should endeavour to seek after and pursue, that he might enjoy it throughout the whole of his life, while in this world: and that he might still more fully know it, if possible, he did the following things.

{y} yrvb ta Nyyb Kwvml "ut diducerem vino carnem meam", Piscator; "ut protraherem, et inde distenderem carnem meam", Rambachius. {z} hmkxb ghn yblw "et cor meam ducens in sapientia", Montanus; "interim cor meum ducens in sapientiam", Drusius.

Ecclesiastes 2:4

Ver. 4. I made me great works,.... He did not spend his time in trifling things, as Domitian {a}, in catching and killing flies; but in devising, designing, directing, and superintending great works of art and skill, becoming the grandeur of his state, and the greatness of his mind: the Midrash restrains it to his great throne of ivory, overlaid with gold, 1Ki 10:18, but it is a general expression, including all the great things he did, of which the following is a particular enumeration;

I builded me houses; among which must not be reckoned the house of God, though that was built by him, and in the first place; yet this was built, not for his own pleasure and grandeur, but for the worship and glory of God: but his own house and palace is chiefly meant, which was thirteen years in building; and the house of the forest in Lebanon, which perhaps was his country seat; with all other houses and offices, for his stores, for his servants, his horsemen, and chariots; see **1Ki 7:1**; and in fine spacious buildings men take a great deal of pleasure, and promise themselves much happiness in dwelling in them, and in perpetuating their names to posterity by them; see Ps 49:11. The Targum is,

"I multiplied good works in Jerusalem; I builded me houses; the house of the sanctuary, to make atonement for Israel; the king's house of refreshment, and the conclave and porch; and the house of judgment, of hewn stones, where the wise men sit and do judgment; I made a throne of ivory for the royal seat;"

I planted me vineyards; perhaps those at Engedi were of his planting; however, he had one at Baalhamon, and no doubt in other places, **So 1:14**; the Targum makes mention of one at Jabne, planted by him; these also add to the pleasure of human life; it is delightful to walk in them, to gather the fruit and drink of the wine of them; see **So 7:12**.

{a} Sueton. Vit. Domitian. c. 3. Aurel. Victor. De. Caesar. & Epitome.

Ecclesiastes 2:5

Ver. 5. I made me gardens and orchards,.... Of the king's garden, we read Jer 39:4. Adrichomius {b} makes mention of a royal garden in the suburbs of Jerusalem, fenced with walls; and was a paradise of fruit trees, herbs, spices, and flowers; abounded with all kind of fruit, exceeding pleasant and delightful to the senses: and, as Solomon was so great a botanist, and knew the nature and use of all kinds of trees and herbs, **1Ki 4:33**; no doubt but he has a herbal garden, well stocked with everything of that kind, curious and useful; see 1Ki 21:2. Gardens are made for pleasure as well as profit; Adam, as soon as created, was put into a garden, to add to his natural pleasure and felicity, as well as for his employment, **Ge 2:8**; and the pleasure of walking in a garden, and partaking of the fruits of it, are alluded to by Solomon, **So 4:12**;

and I planted trees in them of all [kind of] fruits; which, as before observed, he had thorough knowledge of, and many of which were brought him from foreign parts; and all served to make his gardens, orchards, parks, forests, and enclosures, very pleasant and delectable. The Targum adds,

"some for food, others for drink, and others for medicine."

{b} Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 170.

Ecclesiastes 2:6

Ver. 6. I made me pools of water,.... For cascades and water works to play in, as well as to keep and produce fish of all kinds: mention is made of the king's pools, **Ne 2:14**; the fish pools at Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim, perhaps belonged to Solomon, **So 7:4**; Little more than a league from Bethlehem are pools of water, which at this day are called the fish pools of Solomon; they are great reservatories cut in the rock, the one at the end of the other; the second being a little lower than the first, and the third than the second, and so communicate the water from one to another when they are full {c}; and of which Mr. Maundrell {d} gives the following account:

"They are about an hour and a quarter distant from Bethlehem, southward; they are three in number, lying in a row above each other, being so disposed, that the waters of the uppermost may descend into the second, and those of the second into the third; their figure is quadrangular; the breadth is the same in all, amounting to above ninety paces; in their length there is some difference between them, the first being about an hundred sixty paces long; the second, two hundred; the third, two hundred twenty; they are all lined with a wall, and plastered, and contain a great depth of water."

And to these, he observes, together with the gardens adjoining, Solomon is supposed to allude, **Ec 2:5**. There are to be seen, he says {e}, some remains of an old aqueduct, which anciently conveyed the waters from Solomon's pools to Jerusalem; this is said to be the genuine work of Solomon, and may well be allowed to be in reality what it is pretended for. So Rauwolff {f} says,

"beyond the tower of Ader, in another valley, not far from Bethlehem, they show still to this day a large orchard, full of citron, lemon, orange, pomegranate, and fig trees, and many others, which King Solomon did plant in his days; with ponds, canals, and other water works, very pleasantly prepared, as he saith himself, **Ec 2:5**; this is still in our time full of good and fruitful trees, worthy to be seen for their sakes, and ditches there: wherefore I really believe it to be the same Josephus {g} makes mention of, called Ethan, about twelve mile from Jerusalem; where Solomon had pleasant gardens and water pools, to which he used to ride early in a morning."

Mr. Maundrell {h} also makes mention of some cisterns, called Solomon's cisterns, at Roselayn, about an hour from the ruins of Tyre; of which there are three entire at this day; one about three hundred yards distant from the sea, the other two a little further up; and, according to tradition, they were made by that great king, in recompence to King Hiram, for supplying materials towards building the temple: but, as he observes, these, though ancient, could not be built before the time of Alexander; since the aqueduct, which conveys the water from hence to Tyre, is carried over the neck of land, by which he joined the city to the continent. Jarchi interprets these pools in this text of places to keep fish alive in, and so the Midrash understands by them fish pools; though they seem to be canals made in the gardens, orchards, and parks;

to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees; the young nurseries, which in time grew up to large fruit bearing trees; which, being numerous and thick, looked like a wood or forest, as the word is; and which canals and nurseries both added greatly to the delight and pleasure of those places. In this manner the Indians water their gardens; who commonly have in them a great pit, or kind of fish pool, which is full of rain water; and just by it there is a basin of brick, raised about two feet higher than the ground: when therefore they have a mind to water the garden, it is filled with water from the fish pool, or pit; which, through a hole that is at the bottom, falls into a canal, that is divided into many branches, proportionable in size to their distance from the basin, and carries the water to the foot of each tree, and to each plot of herbs; and when the gardeners think they are watered enough, they stop up, or turn aside, the canals with clods of earth {i}. The beauty of a plant, or tree, is thus described by Aelianus {k};

"branches generous, leaves thick, stem or trunk firm and stable, roots deep; winds shaking it; a large shadow cast from it; changing with the seasons of the year; and water, partly brought through canals, and partly coming from heaven, to water and nourish it; and such beautiful, well watered, and flourishing trees, contribute much to the pleasure of gardens."

{c} Thevenot's Travels, B. 2. ch. 47. p. 202. {d} Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 88. edit. 7. {e} Ibid. p. 90. {f} Travels, part 3. ch. 22. p. 322.

Vid. Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 367, 368. {g} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. s. 13. {h} Ut supra, p. 50, 51. (Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, edit. 7.) {i} Agreement of Customs between the East Indians and Jews, Art. 21. p. 78. {k} Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 14.

Ecclesiastes 2:7

Ver. 7. I got [me] servants and maidens,.... Menservants, and maidservants; the Targum adds,

"of the children of Ham, and of the rest of the strange people;"

these were such as he hired, or bought with his money;

and had servants born in my house; and these were all employed by him; either as his retinue and equipage, his attendants and bodyguards; or to take care of his household, his gardens, and pools; or for his horses and chariots, and for various offices; see **1Ki 4:26** **Ezr 2:58**. Villalpandus computes the number of his servants to be forty eight thousand; if there were any pleasure and happiness in such a numerous attendance, Solomon had it;

also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me; oxen, cows, horses, asses, camels, mules, &c. also sheep and goats; which, as they were profitable, so it was pleasant to see them grazing on the hills and valleys, in the fields, mountains, and meadows.

Ecclesiastes 2:8

Ver. 8. I gathered me also silver and gold,.... In great quantities: the weight of gold which came to him in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents; see **1Ki 9:14**;

and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces; whatsoever was valuable and precious, such as is laid up in the cabinets of kings, as jewels and precious stones; and everything rare and curious, to be found in all provinces of the earth, or which were brought from thence as presents to him; the Targum is, "and the treasures of kings and provinces, given to me for tribute:"

wherefore, if any pleasure arises from these things, as do to the virtuosi, Solomon enjoyed it. Moreover, among the treasures of kings were precious garments of various sorts, as were in the treasury of Ahasuerus {l}; and when Alexander took Shushan, he found in the king's treasures, of Hermionic purple, to the value of five thousand talents, which had been laid up there almost two hundred years {m}; and to such treasure Christ alludes, **Mt 6:19**;

I got me men singers and women singers; the harmony and music of whose voices greatly delight; see 2Sa 19:35; the Targum interprets it both of instruments of music for the Levites to use in the temple, and of singing men and women at a feast: and such persons were employed among other nations {n}, on such occasions, to entertain their guests; and are called the ornaments of feasts {o}; as were also "choraules", or pipers {p};

and the delights of the sons of men; [as] musical instruments, and that of all sorts; such as David his father invented; and to which he might add more, and indeed got all that were to be obtained; see **Am 6:5**. The two last words, rendered "musical instruments, of all sorts", are differently interpreted; the Targum interprets them of hot waters and baths, having pipes to let out hot water and cold; Aben Ezra, of women taken captive; Jarchi, of chariots and covered wagons; the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, of cup bearers, men, and women, that pour out wine and serve it; and the Vulgate Latin version, of cups and pots, to pour out wine. It seems best to understand it of musical instruments, or of musical compositions {q}; sung either with a single voice, or in concert; which, according to Bochart {r}, were called "sidoth", from Sido, a Phoenician woman of great note, the inventor of them or rather from giving unequal sounds, which, by their grateful mixture and temperament, broke and destroyed {s} one another.

{l} Targum Sheni in Esther vi. 10. {m} Plutarch. in Alexandro, p. 686. Vid. Homer. Iliad. 24. v. 224-234. {n} Vid. A. Geli. Noct. Attic. l. 19. c. 9. Homer. Odyss. 8. v. 62, 73, 74. & 9. v. 5-7. {o} Homer. Odyss. 21. v. 430. {p} Vid. Gutberleth. Conjectanea, &c. p. 162, &c. {q} Vid. Gusset. Comment. Heb. p. 832. {r} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 6. c. 13. col. 847. {s} Buxtorf. in voce ddv, See Weemse's Christian Synagog. p. 144.

Ecclesiastes 2:9

Ver. 9. So I was great,.... Became famous for the great works wrought by him before mentioned;

and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; the Targum adds, "in riches"; but it seems rather to respect his fame and glory among men; though in general it may include his increase of wealth, power, and honour, and everything that contributed to his external happiness;

also my wisdom remained with me; the Targum adds, "and it helped me"; which he exercised and showed in the government of his kingdom, in the conduct of his family, in his personal deportment and behaviour; amidst all his pleasures, he did not neglect the study of natural knowledge, nor give himself up to sordid and sinful lusts; and so was a better judge of pleasure, whether true happiness consisted in it or not.

Ecclesiastes 2:10

Ver. 10. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them,.... Though this sense is only mentioned, all are designed; he denied himself of nothing that was agreeable to him, that was pleasing to the eye, to the ear, to the taste, or any other sense; he indulged himself in everything, observing a proper decorum, and keeping himself within the due bounds of sobriety and good sense;

I withheld not my heart from any joy: the Targum says, "from all joy of the law"; but it is to be understood of natural pleasure, and of the gratifications of the senses in a wise and moderate manner;

for my heart rejoiced in all my labours; he took all the pleasure that could be taken in the works he wrought for that purpose before enumerated;

and this was my portion of all my labour; pleasure was what he aimed at, and that he enjoyed; this was the fruit and issue of all his laborious works; the part allotted him, the inheritance he possessed, and the thing he sought after.

Ecclesiastes 2:11

Ver. 11. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do,.... He had looked at them, and on them, over and over again, and had taken pleasure therein; but now he sits down and enters into a serious consideration of them, what prodigious expenses he had been at; what care and thought, what toil and labour of mind, he had taken in contriving, designing, and bringing these works to perfection; what pleasure and delight he had found in them, and what happiness upon the whole arose from them: he now passes his judgment, and gives his sentiments concerning these things, having had it in his power to make himself master of everything delightful, which he did; was a competent judge, and thoroughly qualified to give a just estimate of matters; and it is as follows;

and, behold, all [was] vanity and vexation of spirit; nothing solid and substantial in the whole; no true pleasure and real joy, and no satisfaction or happiness in that pleasure; these pleasing things perished with the using, and the pleasure of them faded and died in the enjoyment of them; and instead of yielding solid delight, only proved vexations, because the pleasure was so soon over, and left a thirst for more, and what was not to be had; at most and best, only the outward senses were fed, the mind not at all improved, nor the heart made better, and much less contented; it was only pleasing the fancy and imagination, and feeding on wind;

and [there was] no profit under the sun; by those things; to improve and satisfy the mind of man, to raise him to true happiness, to be of any service to him in the hour of death, or fit him for an eternal world. Alshech interprets the labour mentioned in this text of the labour of the law, which brings no reward to a man in this world.

Ecclesiastes 2:12

Ver. 12. And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly,.... Being disappointed in his pursuit of pleasure, and not finding satisfaction and happiness in that, he turns from it, and reassumes his study of natural wisdom and knowledge, to make a fresh trial, and see whether there might be some things he had overlooked in his former inquiries; and whether upon a revise of what he had looked into he might not find more satisfaction than before; being convinced however that the pursuit of pleasure was less satisfying than the study of wisdom, and therefore relinquished the one for the sake of the other: and in order, if possible, to gain more satisfaction in this point, he determined to look more narrowly, and penetrate into the secrets of wisdom, and find out the nature of it, and examine its contraries; that by setting them in a contrast, and comparing them together, he might be the better able to form a judgment of them. Jarchi interprets "wisdom" of the law, and "madness" and "folly" of the punishment of transgression. Alshech also by "wisdom" understands the wisdom of the law, and by madness external wisdom, or the knowledge of outward things. But Aben Ezra understands by "madness" wine, with which men being intoxicated become mad; and by "folly" building houses, and getting riches;

for what [can] the man [do] that cometh after the king? meaning himself; what can a man do that comes after such a king as he was, who had such natural parts to search into and acquire all sorts of knowledge; who was possessed of such immense riches, that he could procure everything that was necessary to assist him in his pursuit of knowledge; and who wanted not industry, diligence, and application, and who succeeded above any before or after him? wherefore what can any common man do, or anyone that comes after such a person, and succeeds him in his studies, and treads in his steps, and follows his example and plan, what can he do more than is done already? or can he expect to outdo such a prince, or find out that which he could not? nay, it is as if he should say, it is not only a vain thing for another man to come after me in the search of knowledge, in hopes of finding more than I have done; but it is a fruitless attempt in me to take up this affair again; for, after all that I have done, what can I do more? so that these words are not a reason for his pursuit of wisdom, but a correction of himself for it; I think the words may be rendered, "but what [can] that man do [that] comes after the king?" so the particle is sometimes used {t}; meaning himself, or his successor, or any other person; since it was only going over the same thing again, running round the circle of knowledge again, without any new improvement, or fresh satisfaction, according to the following answer;

[even] that which hath been already done; it is only doing the same thing over again. The Targum and Jarchi interpret it of the vain attempt of a man to supplicate a king after a decree is passed and executed. The Midrash by the king understands God himself, and interprets it of the folly of men not being content with their condition, or as made by him. So Gussetius renders it, "who made him" {u}; that is, the king; even God, the three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit; the word being plural.

{t} Vid. Noldii Concordant. Partic. Ebr. p. 404, {u} whwve rva "qui fecerunt euum", vid. Ebr. Comment. p. 605.

Ecclesiastes 2:13

Ver. 13. Then I sat that wisdom excelleth folly,.... However, this upon a review of things he could not but own, that natural wisdom and knowledge, though there was no true happiness and satisfaction in them, yet they greatly exceeded folly and madness;

as far as light excelleth darkness; as the light of the day the darkness of the night; the one is pleasant and delightful, the other very uncomfortable; the one useful to direct in walking, the other very unsafe to walk in: light sometimes signifies joy and prosperity, and darkness adversity; the one is used to express the light of grace, and the other the darkness of sin and ignorance; now as the natural light exceeds darkness, and prosperity exceeds adversity and calamities, and a state of grace exceeds a state of sin and wickedness, so wisdom exceeds folly.

Ecclesiastes 2:14

Ver. 14. The wise man's eyes [are] in his head,.... And so are the eyes of every man; but the sense is, he makes use of them, he looks about him, and walks circumspectly; he takes heed to his goings, he foresees the evil, and avoids it; or the danger he is exposed unto, and guards against it. Some understand it, in a more spiritual and evangelical sense, of Christ, who is the head of the body the church, and of every true believer; of everyone that is wise unto salvation, whose eyes are on him alone for righteousness, salvation, and eternal life; or on whom Christ's eyes are; who is said to have seven eyes, with which he guides, guards, and protects his people;

but the fool walketh in darkness; his eyes are to the ends of the earth; he walks incautiously, without any circumspection or guard; he knows not where he is, nor where he is going, nor where he shall set his foot next, nor at what he may stumble; wherefore a wise man is to be preferred to a fool, as wisdom is to folly. The Midrash interprets the wise man of Abraham, and the fool of Nimrod;

and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all; the wise man and the fool; or, "but I myself perceived" {w}, &c. though it is allowed that a wise man is better than a fool; yet this also must be owned, which Solomon's experience proved, and every man's does, that the same things befall wise men and fools; they are liable to the same diseases of body, and disasters of life; to poverty and distress, to loss of estate, children, and friends, and to death itself.

{w} yteryw "sed agnovi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "sed cognovi", Rambachius; "but I saw", Broughton.

Ecclesiastes 2:15

Ver. 15. Then said I in my heart, as it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me,.... The wisest of kings, and the wisest of men; that is, he looked over things in his mind, and considered what had befallen him, or what were his present circumstances, or what would be his case, especially at death; and said within himself, the same things happen to me, who have attained to the highest pitch of wisdom, as to the most errant fool; and therefore no true happiness can be in this sort of wisdom. The Targum paraphrases it thus,

"as it happened to Saul the son of Kish, the king who turned aside perversely, and kept not the commandment he received concerning Amalek, and his kingdom was taken from him; so shall it happen to me;"

and why was I then more wise? the Targum adds, than he, or than any other man, or even than a fool; why have I took so much pains to get wisdom? what am I the better for it? what happiness is there in it, seeing it gives me no advantage, preference, and excellency to a fool; or secures me from the events that befall me?

Then I said in my heart, that this also [is] vanity; this worldly wisdom has nothing solid and substantial in it, as well as pleasure; and it is a vain thing to seek happiness in it, since this is the case, that the events are the same to men that have it, as to one that has it not.

Ecclesiastes 2:16

Ver. 16. For [there is] no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever,.... The Targum interprets it, in the world to come; but even in this world the remembrance of a wise man, any more than of a fool, does not always last; a wise man may not only be caressed in life, but may be remembered after death for a while; the fame of him may continue for a little time, and his works and writings may be applauded; but by and by rises up another genius brighter than he, or at least is so thought, and outshines him; and then his fame is obscured, his writings are neglected and despised, and he and his works buried in oblivion; and this is the common course of things. This shows that Solomon is speaking of natural wisdom, and of man's being wise with respect to that; and his remembrance on that account; otherwise such who are truly good and wise, their memory is blessed; they are had in everlasting remembrance, and shall never be forgotten in this world, nor in that to come, when the memory of the wicked shall rot; whose names are only written in the dust Jer 17:13, and not in the Lamb's book of life;

seeing that which now [is], in the days to come shall all be forgotten: what now is in the esteem of men, and highly applauded by them; what is in the mouths of men, and in their minds and memories, before long, future time, after the death of a man, as the Targum, or in some time after, will be thought of no more, and be as if it never had been, or as if there never had been such men in the world. Many wise men have been in the world, whose names are now unknown, and some their names only are known, and their works are lost; and others whose works remain, yet in no esteem: this is to be understood in general, and for the most part; otherwise there may be some few exceptions to this general observation.

And how dieth the wise [man]? as the fool; they are both liable to death; it is appointed for men, rinse or unwise, learned or unlearned, to die, and both do die; wisdom cannot secure a man from dying; and then wise and fools are reduced to the same condition and circumstances; all a man's learning, knowledge, and wisdom, cease when he dies, and he is just as another man is; in that day all his learned thoughts perish, and he is upon a level with the fool. Solomon, the wisest of men, died as others; a full proof of his own observation, and which his father made before him, Ps 49:10. But this is not true of one that is spiritually wise, or wise unto salvation; the death of a righteous man is different from the death of a wicked man; both die, yet not alike, not in like manner; the good man dies in Christ, he dies in faith, has hope in his death, and rises again to eternal life. The Targum is,

"and how shall the children of men say, that the end of the righteous is as the end of the wicked?"

Ecclesiastes 2:17

Ver. 17. Therefore I hated life,.... Not strictly and simply understood, since life is the gift of God; and a great blessing it is, more than raiment, and so dear to a man, that he will give all he has for it: but comparatively, in comparison of the lovingkindness of God, which is better than life; or in comparison of eternal life, which a good man desires to depart from this world, for the sake of enjoying it. The sense seems to be this, that since the case of wise men and fools was equal, he had the less love for life, the less regard to it, the less desire to continue in it; no solid happiness being to be enjoyed in anything under the sun: though some think that he was even weary of life, impatient of it, as Job, Jonah, and others have been. The Targum is,

"I hate all evil life:"

Alshech interprets it of the good things of this world, which were the cause of hurt unto him; and Aben Ezra understands, by life, living persons;

because the work that is wrought under the sun [is] grievous unto me; which was either wrought by himself; particularly his hard studies, and eager pursuits after knowledge and wisdom, which were a weariness to his flesh; or which were done by others, especially evil ones: so the Targum,

"for evil to me is an evil work, which is done by the children of men under the sun in this world;"

for all [is] vanity and vexation of spirit; See Gill on "Ec 1:14".

Ecclesiastes 2:18

Ver. 18. Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun,.... The great works he made, the houses he built; the vineyards, gardens, and orchards he planted, &c. what he got by his labour, his riches and wealth; and what he also got, not by the labour of his hands, but of his mind. Some understand this of the books he wrote; which were a weariness to his body, and fatigue to his mind; and which he might fear some persons would make an ill use of: Aben Ezra interprets it of his labour in this book. All which he had no great regard unto, since it was to be left to another;

because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me; because he could not enjoy the fruits of his labour himself, at least but a very short time: but must be obliged to leave all to another, his possessions, estates, riches, and treasure; which a man cannot carry with him when he dies, but must leave all behind him, to his heirs and successors {x}. The Targum is,

"because I shall leave it to Rehoboam my son, who shall come after me; and Jeroboam his servant shall come and take ten tribes out of his hands, and possess half the kingdom."

{x} "Rape, congere, aufer, posside, relinquendum est." Martial. Epigr. l. 8. Ep. 43.

Ecclesiastes 2:19

Ver. 19. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise [man] or a fool?.... The king that should be after him, as the Targum, that should be his successor and heir; and so whether he would make a good or bad use of what was left; whether he would keep and improve it, or squander it away; suggesting, that could he be sure he would be a wise man that should come into his labours, it would be some satisfaction to him that he had laboured, and such a man should have the benefit of it; but as it was a precarious thing what he would be, he could take no pleasure in reviewing his labours he was about to leave. Some think that Solomon here gives a hint of the suspicion he had, that his son Rehoboam, his successor and heir, would turn out a foolish man, as he did;

yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have showed myself wise, under the sun; be he what he will, all will come into his hands; and he will have the power of disposing of all at his pleasure; not only of enjoying it, but of changing and altering things; and perhaps greatly for the worse, if he does not entirely destroy what has been wrought with so much care and industry, toil and labour, wisdom and prudence; the thought of all which was afflicting and distressing: and therefore he adds,

This [is] also vanity; and shows there is no happiness in all that a man does, has, or enjoys; and this circumstance, before related, adds to his vexation and unhappiness.

Ecclesiastes 2:20

Ver. 20. Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair,.... Of ever finding happiness in anything here below. He "turned about" {y}, as the word signifies dropped his severe studies of wisdom, and his eager pursuits of pleasure; and desisted from those toilsome works, in which he had employed himself; and went from one thing to another, and settled and stuck at nothing, on purpose to relax his mind, as the Syriac version renders it; to divest it of all anxious thought and care, and call it off from its vain and fruitless undertakings; and be no more concerned about or thoughtful

of all the labour which I took under the sun; and what will be the consequence and issue of it; but quietly leave all to an all wise disposing Providence; and not seek for happiness in anything under the sun, but in those things that are above it; not in this world, but in the world to come.

{y} ytwbow "versus sum", Montanus; "et ego verti me", Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

Ecclesiastes 2:21

Ver. 21. For there is a man whose labour [is] in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity,.... Who does all he does, in natural, civil, and religious things, in the state, in his family, and the world, and whatsoever business he is engaged, in the wisest and best manner, with the utmost honesty and integrity, according to all the rules of wisdom and knowledge, and of justice and equity; meaning himself; the Midrash interprets this of God;

yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it [for] his portion; to his son, heir, and successor; who never took any pains, or joined with him, in acquiring the least part of it; and yet all comes into his hands, as his possession and inheritance: the Targum interprets this of a man that dies without children; and so others {z} understand it of his leaving his substance to strangers, and not to his children.

This also [is] vanity, and a great evil; not anything sinful and criminal, but vexatious and distressing.

{z} R. Joseph Titatzak in loc.

Ecclesiastes 2:22

Ver. 22. For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart?.... What profit has he by it, when there is so much vexation in it, both in getting it, and in the thought of leaving it to others? What advantage is it to him, when it is all acquired for and possessed by another; and especially of what use is it to him after his death? Even of all

wherein he hath laboured under the sun? the Targum adds, "in this world"; though he has been labouring all his days, yet there is not one thing he has got by his labour that is of any real advantage to him, or can yield him any solid comfort and satisfaction, or bring him true happiness, or lead him to it.

Ecclesiastes 2:23

Ver. 23. For all his days [are] sorrows, and his travail grief,.... All his days are full of sorrows, of a variety of them; and all his affairs and transactions of life are attended with grief and trouble; not only the days of old age are evil ones, in which he can take no pleasure; or those times which exceed the common age of man, when he is got to fourscore years or more, and when his strength is labour and sorrow; but even all his days, be they fewer or more, from his youth upward, are all evil and full of trouble, Ge 47:9;

yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night; which is appointed for rest and ease; and when laid down on his bed for it, as the word signifies; yet, either through an eager desire of getting wealth, or through anxious and distressing cares for the keeping it when gotten, he cannot sleep quietly and comfortably, his carking cares and anxious thoughts keep him waking; or, if he sleeps, his mind is distressed with dreams and frightful apprehensions of things, so that his sleep is not sweet and refreshing to him.

This is also vanity; or one of the vanities which belong to human life.

Ecclesiastes 2:24

Ver. 24. [There is] nothing better for a man [than] that he should eat and drink,.... Not in an immoderate and voluptuous manner, like the epicure and the atheist, that disbelieve a future state and the resurrection of the dead, and give up themselves to all sinful and sensual gratifications; but in a moderate way, enjoying in a cheerful and comfortable manner the good creatures of God, which he has given; being contented with them, thankful for them, and looking upon them as the blessings of divine goodness, and as flowing from the love of God to him; and thus freely using, and yet not abusing them. Some render it, "it is not good for a man to eat" {a}, &c. immoderately and to excess, and to place his happiness in it: or, "there is no good with man" {b}; it is not in the power of man to use the creatures aright. Jarchi renders it by way of interrogation, "is it not good?" which comes to the same sense with ours, and so the Vulgate Latin version;

and [that] he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour; not leave off labouring; nor eat and drink what he has not laboured for, or what is the fruit of other men's labour; but what is the effect of his own, and in which he continues; and this is the way to go on in it with cheerfulness, when he enjoys the good, and reaps the benefit and advantage of it; which is certainly preferable to a laying up his substance, and leaving it to he knows not who.

This also I saw, that it [was] from the hand of God; not only the riches a man possesses, but the enjoyment of them, or a heart to make use of them; see **Ec 5:18**. The Midrash interprets this eating and drinking, of the law and good works: and the Targum explains it, causing the soul to enjoy the good of doing the commandments, and walking in right ways; and observes, that a man that prospers in this world, it is from the hand of the Lord, and is what is decreed to be concerning him.

{a} bwj Nya "non est igitur bonum", Vatablus. {b} "Non est bonum penes hominem", Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Gussetius.

Ecclesiastes 2:25

Ver. 25. For who can eat?.... Who should eat, but such a man that has laboured for it? or, who has a power to eat, that is, cheerfully, comfortably, and freely to enjoy the good things of life he is possessed of, unless it be given him of God? see **Ec 6:1**;

or who else can hasten [hereunto] more than I? the word "chush", in Rabbinical language, is used of the five senses, seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, and tasting: and R. Elias says {c}, there are some that so interpret it here, "who has [his] sense better than I?" a quicker sense, particularly of smelling and tasting what be eats, in which lies much of the pleasure of eating; and this is of God; which interpretation is not to be despised. Or, "who can prepare?" according to the Arabic sense of the word {d}; that is, a better table than I? No man had a greater affluence of good things than Solomon, or had a greater variety of eatables and drinkables; or had it in the power of his hands to live well, and cause his soul to enjoy good; or was more desirous to partake of pleasure, and hasten more to make the experiment of it in a proper manner; and yet he found, that a heart to do this was from the Lord; that this was a gift of his; and that though he abounded in the blessings of life, yet if God had not given him a heart to use them, he never should have really enjoyed them.

{c} In Tishbi, p. 109. {d} Vid. Rambachium in loc.

Ecclesiastes 2:26

Ver. 26. For [God] giveth to a man that [is] good in his sight,.... No man is of himself good, or naturally so, but evil, very evil, as all the descendants of Adam are; there are some that are good in their own eyes, and in the sight of others, and yet not truly good; they are only really good, who are so in the sight of God, who sees the heart, and knows what is in man; they are such who are made good by his efficacious grace; who are inwardly, and not merely outwardly so; who are good at heart, or who have good hearts, clean hearts, new and right spirits created in them; who have a good work of grace upon their hearts, and the several graces of the Spirit implanted there; who have the good Spirit of God in them, in whose heart Christ dwells by faith; and who have the good word of Christ dwelling in them, and have a good treasure of rich experience of the grace of God; and who, in one word, are born again, renewed in the spirit of their minds, and live by faith on Jesus Christ. The phrase is rendered, "whoso pleaseth God", **Ec 7:26**; and he is one that is accepted with God in Christ, his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased; who is clothed with his righteousness, made comely through his comeliness, and so is irreprovable in his sight; and who by faith looks to and lays hold on this righteousness, and does all he does in the exercise of faith, without which it is impossible to please God. To such a man God gives

wisdom, and knowledge, and joy; wisdom to acquire knowledge, to keep, use, and improve it; and joy, to be cheerful and thankful for the good things of life: or rather this may design, not natural wisdom, but spiritual wisdom, wisdom in the hidden part, so as to be wise unto salvation, and to walk wisely and circumspectly, a good man's steps being ordered by the Lord; and knowledge of God in Christ, and of Christ, and of the things of the Gospel, and which relate to eternal life; and so spiritual joy, joy and peace in believing, in the presence of God, and communion with him; joy in Christ, and in hope of the glory of God, even joy unspeakable, and full of glory; all which, more or less, at one time or another, God gives to those who are truly good; and which is not to be found in worldly wisdom, pleasure, riches, power, and authority: the Targum is,

"to the man, whose works are right before God, he gives wisdom and knowledge in this world, and joy with the righteous in the world to come;"

but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up; to gather mammon, and to heap up a large possession, as the Targum; to gather together a great deal of riches, but without wisdom and knowledge to use them, without any proper enjoyment of them, or pleasure in them; all he has is a deal of trouble and care to get riches, without any comfort in them, and he has them not for his own use: the Midrash illustrates this of the good man and sinner, by the instances of Abraham and Nimrod, of Isaac and Abimelech, of Jacob and Laban, of the Israelites and Canaanites, of Hezekiah and Sennacherib, and of Mordecai and Haman. But

that he may give to [him that is] good before God; so it is ordered by divine Providence sometimes, that all that a wicked man has been labouring for all his days should come into the hands of such who are truly good men, and will make a right use of what is communicated to them.

This also [is] vanity, and vexation of spirit; not to the good man, but to the wicked man: so the Targum,

"it is vanity to the sinner, a breaking of spirit;"

it grieves him that such a man should have what he has been labouring for; or it would, if he knew it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES 3

The general design of this chapter is to confirm what is before observed, the vanity and inconstancy of all things; the frailty of man, and changes respecting him; his fruitless toil and labour in all his works; that it is best to be content with present things, and cheerful in them, and thankful for them; that all comes from the hand of God; that such good men, who have not at present that joy that others have, may have it, since there is a time for it; and that sinners should not please themselves with riches gathered by them, since they may be soon taken from them, for there is a time for everything, Ec 3:1; of which there is an induction of particulars, Ec 3:2; so that though every thing is certain with God, nothing is certain with men, nor to be depended on, nor can happiness be placed therein; there is no striving against the providence of God, nor altering the course of things; the labour of man is unprofitable, and his travail affliction and vexation, Ec 3:9; and though all God's works are beautiful in their season, they are unsearchable to man, Ec 3:11; wherefore it is best cheerfully to enjoy the present good things of life, Ec 3:12; and be content; for the will and ways and works of God are unalterable, permanent, and perfect, Ec 3:14; and though wicked men may abuse the power reposed in them, and pervert public justice, they will be called to an account for it in the general judgment, for which there is a time set, Ec 3:16; and yet, such is the stupidity of the generality of men, that they have no more sense of death and judgment than the brutes, and live and die like them, Ec 3:18; wherefore it is best of all to make a right use of power and riches, or what God has given to men, for their own good and that of others, since they know not what shall be after them, Ec 3:22.

Ver. 1. To every [thing there is] a season,.... A set determined time, when everything shall come into being, how long it shall continue, and in what circumstances; all things that have been, are, or shall be, were foreordained by God, and he has determined the times before appointed for their being, duration, and end; which times and seasons he has in his own power: there was a determined time for the whole universe, and for all persons and things in it; a settled fixed moment for the world to come into being; for it did not exist from everlasting, nor of itself, nor was formed by the fortuitous concourse of atoms, but by the wisdom and power of God; nor could it exist sooner or later than it did; it appeared when it was the will of God it should; in the beginning he created it, and he has fixed the time of its duration and end; for it shall not continue always, but have an end, which when it will be, he only knows: so there is a determined time for the rise, height, and declension of states and kingdoms in it; as of lesser ones, so of the four great monarchies; and for all the distinct periods and ages of the world; and for each of the seasons of the year throughout all ages; for the state of the church in it, whether in suffering or flourishing circumstances; for the treading down of the holy city; for the prophesying, slaying, and rising of the witnesses; for the reign and ruin of antichrist; for the reign of Christ on earth, and for his second coming to judgment, though of that day and hour knows no man: and as there is a set time in the counsels and providence of God for these more important events, so for every thing of a lesser nature;

and a time to every purpose under the heaven; to every purpose of man that is carried into execution; for some are not, they are superseded by the counsel of God; some obstruction or another is thrown in the way of them, so that they cannot take place; God withdraws men from them by affliction or death, when their purposes are broken; or by some other way; and what are executed he appoints a time for them, and overrules them to answer some ends of his own; for things the most contingent, free, and voluntary, fall under the direction and providence of God. And there is a time for every purpose of his own; all things done in the world are according to his purposes, which are within himself wisely formed, and are eternal and unfrustrable; and there is a time fixed for the execution of them, for every purpose respecting all natural and civil things in providence; and for every purpose of his grace, relating to the redemption of his people, the effectual calling of them, and the bringing them to eternal glory; which are the things that God wills, that he takes delight and pleasure in, as the word {e} signifies. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, "to everything under the heaven there is a time"; and Jarchi observes that in the Misnic language the word used so signifies. The Targum is,

"to every man a time shall come, and a season to every business under heaven."

{e} Upx lkl "omni voluntati", Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius; i.e. "rei proprie capitae ac desideratae", Drusius

Ecclesiastes 3:2

Ver. 2. A time to be born,.... The Targum is,

"to beget sons and daughters;"

but rather it is to bear them, there being a time in nature fixed for that, called the hour of a woman, Job 14:1;

and a time to die; the time of a man's coming into the world and going out of it, both being fixed by the Lord {f}: this is true of all men in general, of all men that come into the world, for whom it is appointed that they shall die; and particularly of Christ, whose birth was at the time appointed by the Father, in the fulness of time; and whose death was in due time, nor could his life be taken away before his hour was come, **Joh 7:30**; and this holds good of every individual man; his birth is at the time God has fixed it; that any man is born into the world, is of God; no man comes into it at his own pleasure or another's, but at the will of God, and when he pleases, not sooner nor later; and the time of his going out of the world is settled by him, beyond which time he cannot live, and sooner he cannot die, Job 14:5; and though no mention is made of the interval of life between a man's birth and death, yet all events intervening are appointed by God; as the place of his abode; his calling and station of life; all circumstances of prosperity and adversity; all diseases of body, and what lead on to death, and issue in it: the reason why these two are put so close together is, to show the certainty of death; that as sure as a man is born, so sure shall he die; and the frailty and shortness of life, which is but an hand's breadth, passes away like a tale that is told, yea, is as nothing; so that no account is made of it, as if there was no time allotted it, or that it deserved no mention; and also to observe that the seeds of mortality and death are in men as soon as they are born; as soon as they begin to live they begin to die, death is working in them;

a time to plant; a tree, as the Targum, or any herb;

and a time to pluck up [that which is] planted; a tree or herb, as before, when grown to its ripeness, and fit for use; or when grown old, barren, and unfruitful; there are particular seasons for planting plants, and some for one and some for another. This may be applied in a civil sense to planting and plucking up kingdoms and states; see **Jer 1:10**; as it is by the Jews, particularly to the planting and plucking up of the kingdom of Israel; the people of Israel were a vine brought out of Egypt and planted in the land of Canaan, and afterwards plucked up and carried captive into Babylon; and afterwards planted again, and then again plucked up by the Romans; and will be assuredly planted in their own land again; see Ps 80:8; It may be illustrated in a spiritual sense by the planting of the Jewish church, sometimes compared to a vineyard; and the plucking it up, abolishing their church state and ordinances; and by planting Gospel churches in the Gentile world, and plucking them up again, as in the seven cities of Asia; or removing the candlestick out of its place; and by planting particular persons in churches, and removing them again: some indeed that are planted in the house of the Lord are planted in Christ, and rooted and grounded in the love of God; are plants which Christ's Father has planted, and will never be rooted up; but there are others who are planted through the external ministry of the word, or are plants

only by profession, and these become twice dead, plucked up by the roots; and there are times for these things,
Ps 92:14.

{f} "Stat sua cuique dies, breve et irreparabile tempus omnibus est vitae"; Virgil. Aeneid. l. 10.

Ecclesiastes 3:3

Ver. 3. A time to kill, and a time to heal,.... A time to kill may be meant of a violent death, as a time to die is of a natural one; so the Targum,

"a time to kill in war;"

or else, by the hand of the civil magistrate, such who deserve death. Aben Ezra interprets it "to wound", because of the opposite "to heal"; and so there is a time when wounds and diseases are incurable, and baffle all the skill of the physician, being designed unto death; and there is a time when, by the blessing of God on means, they are healed; the wound or sickness not being unto death: so the Targum paraphrases the last clause,

"to heal one that lies sick."

This may be applied in a civil sense to calamities in kingdoms, and a restoration of peace and plenty to them; which is the property of God alone, who in this sense kills and makes alive in his own time,
De 32:39; And in a spiritual sense to the ministers of the word, who are instruments of slaying souls by the law, which is the killing letter, and of healing them by the Gospel, which pours in the oil and wine of peace and pardon through the blood of Christ, and so binds up and heals the broken hearted; and there is a time for both;

a time to break down, and a time to build up; to break down a building, and build a waste, as the Targum; to break down cities and the walls of them, as the of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; and to build them up: as in the times of Nehemiah and Zerubbabel: and so in a spiritual sense to break down the church of God, the tabernacle of David, and to raise up and repair the breaches of it; to build up Zion, and the walls of Jerusalem, or to restore the Gospel church state to its glory, for which there is a set time; see **Am 9:11**.

Ecclesiastes 3:4

Ver. 4. A time to weep, and a time to laugh,.... There is a time for these things, as it goes ill or well with persons, as to their health, estate, or friends; and as it goes ill or well with kingdoms and states. The Jews wept when they were in Babylon, and their mouths were filled with laughter when their captivity was returned,
Ps 137:1; and as it goes ill or well with the church of Christ, when there are corruptions in doctrine and worship, a neglect of ordinances, declensions in faith and practice, few instances of conversion, and there are divisions and contentions, it is a time for the mourners in Zion to weep but when God creates Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy, or makes her an eternal excellency, and the praise of the whole earth, then it is a time to rejoice and be glad, Isa 61:3; and as it is, with believers, when Christ is withdrawn from them, it is a time to lament, but, when the bridegroom is with them, it is a time of joy; when it is a night of darkness and desertion, weeping endures, but when the morning comes, the day breaks, and the sun of righteousness arises, joy comes with it, **Mt 9:15**
Joh 16:19. Now in the present state is the saints' weeping time; in the time to come they will laugh, or be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, **Lu 6:21**;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance; to mourn at funerals, and to dance at festivals; in a spiritual sense, God sometimes turns the mourning of his people into dancing, or joy, which that is expressive of; see Ps 30:11.

Ecclesiastes 3:5

Ver. 5. A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together,.... To cast stones out of a field or vineyard where they are hurtful, and to gather them together to make walls and fences of, or build houses with; and may be understood both of throwing down buildings, as the temple of Jerusalem, so that not one stone was left upon another; of pouring out the stones of the sanctuary, and of gathering them again and laying them on one another; which was done when the servants of the Lord took pleasure in the stones of Zion, and favoured the dust thereof. Some understand this of precious stones, and of casting them away through luxury, wantonness, or contempt, and gathering them again: and it may be applied, as to the neglect of the Gentiles for a long time, and the gathering of those stones of which children were raised to Abraham; so of the casting away of the Jews for their rejection of the Messiah, and of the gathering of them again by conversion, when they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign on his land, **Zec 9:16**;

a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing: or "to be far from" {g} it; it may not only design conjugal embraces {h}, but parents embracing their children, as Jacob did his; and one brother embracing another, as Esau Jacob, and one friend embracing another; all which is very proper and agreeable at times: but there are some seasons so very calamitous and distressing, in which persons are obliged to drop such fondnesses: it is true, in a spiritual sense, of the embraces of Christ and believers, which sometimes are, and sometimes are not, enjoyed, **Pr 4:8**.

{g} qxrl te "tempus elongandi se", Pagninus, Montanus; "tempus longe fieri", V. L. {h} "Optatos dedit amplexus", Virgil. Aeneid. 8. v. 405.

Ecclesiastes 3:6

Ver. 6. A time to get, and a time to lose,.... To get substance, as the Targum, and to lose it; wealth and riches, honour and glory, wisdom and knowledge: or, "to seek, and to lose" {i}; a time when the sheep of the house of Israel, or God's elect, were lost, and a time to seek them again; which was, lone by Christ in redemption, and by the Spirit of God, in effectual calling;

a time to keep, and a time to cast away; to keep a thing, and to cast it away, into the sea, in the time of a great tempest, as the Targum; as did the mariners in the ship in which Jonah was, and those in which the Apostle Paul was, **Jon 1:5**; It may be interpreted of keeping riches, and which are sometimes kept too close, and to the harm of the owners of them; and of scattering them among the poor, or casting them upon the waters; see **Ec 5:13**.

{i} vqbl te "tempus quaerendi", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 3:7

Ver. 7. A time to rend, and a time to sew,.... To rend garments, in case of blasphemy, and in times of mourning and fasting, and then to sew them up when they are over; see Isa 37:1; This the Jews apply to the rending of the ten tribes from Rehoboam, signified by the rending of Jeroboam's garment, 1Ki 11:30; the sewing up or uniting of which is foretold, Eze 37:22. Some interpret it of the rending of the Jewish church state, signified by the rending of the vail, at the death of Christ; and of the constituting the Gospel church state among the Gentiles;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak {k}; when it is an evil time, a time of calamity in a nation, it is not a time to be loquacious and talkative, especially in a vain and ludicrous way, **Am 5:13**; or when a particular friend or relation is in distress, as in the case of Job and his friends, **Job 2:13**; or when in the presence of wicked men, who make a jest of everything serious and religious, Ps 39:1; and so when under afflictive dispensations of Providence, it is a time to be still and dumb, and not open the mouth in a murmuring and complaining way, Le 10:3. And, on the other hand, there is a time to speak, either publicly, of the truths of the Gospel, in the ministry of it, and in vindication of them; or privately, of Christian experience: there is a time when an open profession should be made of Christ, his word and ordinances, and when believers should speak to God in prayer and praise; which, should they not, the stones in the wall would cry out.

{k} wrh men polewn muywn, wrh de kai upnou, Homer. Odyss. 11. v. 378.

Ecclesiastes 3:8

Ver. 8. A time to love, and a time to hate,.... For one to love his friend, and to hate a man, a sinner, as the Targum; to love a friend while he continues such, and hate him, or less love him, when he proves treacherous and unfaithful; an instance of a change of love into hatred may be seen in the case of Amnon, 2Sa 13:15. A time of unregeneracy is a time of loving worldly lusts and sinful pleasures, the company of wicked men, and all carnal delights and recreations; and a time of conversion is a time to hate what was before loved, sin, and the conversion of sinners, the garment spotted with the flesh, the principles and practices, though not the persons, of ungodly men; and even to hate, that is, less love, the dearest friends and relations, in comparison of, or when in competition with, Christ;

a time of war, and a time of peace; for nations to be engaged in war with each other, or to be at peace, which are continually revolving; and there is a time when there will be no more war. In a spiritual sense, the present time, or state of things, is a time of war; the Christian's life is a warfare state, though it will be soon accomplished, in which he is engaging in fighting with spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world: the time to come, or future state, is a time of peace, when saints shall enter into peace, and be no more disturbed by enemies from within or from without. In the Midrash, all the above times and seasons are interpreted of Israel, and applied to them.

Ecclesiastes 3:9

Ver. 9. What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?] That is, he has none. This is an inference drawn from the above premises, and confirms what has been before observed, **Ec 1:3**; Man has no profit of his labour, since his time is so short to enjoy it, and he leaves it to another, he knows not who; and, while he lives, is attended with continual vicissitudes and changes; sometimes it is a time for one thing, and sometimes for its contrary, so that there is nothing certain, and to be depended on; and a man can promise himself nothing in this world pleasant or profitable to him, and much less that will be of any advantage to him hereafter. The Targum adds,

"to make treasures and gather mammon, unless he is helped by Providence above;"

though it is man's duty to labour, yet all his toil and labour will be fruitless without a divine blessing; there is a time and season for everything in providence, and there is no striving against that.

Ecclesiastes 3:10

Ver. 10. I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men,.... The pains and trouble they are at to get a little wisdom and knowledge, **Ec 1:13**; and so to obtain riches and honour, peace and plenty, which sometimes they do obtain, and sometimes not; and when they do, do not keep them long, for there is a time for everything. This the wise man had observed, in a variety of instances; and he considered the end of God in it, which was for men

to be exercised in it, or "by it"; or "to afflict" or "humble [them] by it" {l}; to let them see that all their toil and labour signified little; all depended on a

divine blessing, and no happiness was to be had in the creatures; all was vanity and vexation of spirit;
See Gill on "Ec 1:13".

{l} wb twnel "ad affligendum se in ea", Montanus; "ut eos adfligat in ea, sc. per eam", Rambachius; "ut ea redderet humiles", Tigurine version.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

Ver. 11. He hath made every [thing] beautiful in his time,.... That is, God has made everything; as all things in creation are made by him, for his pleasure and glory, and all well and wisely, there is a beauty in them all: so all things in providence; he upholds all things; he governs and orders all things according to the counsel of his will; some things are done immediately by him, others by instruments, and some are only permitted by him; some he does himself, some he wills to be done by others, and some he suffers to be done; but in all there is a beauty and harmony; and all are ordered, disposed, and overruled, to answer the wisest and greatest purposes; everything is done in the time in which he wills it shall; be done, and done in the time most fit and suitable for it to be done; all things before mentioned, for which there is a time, and all others: all natural things are beautiful in their season; things in summer, winter, spring, and autumn; frost and snow in winter, and heat in summer; darkness and dews in the night, and light and brightness in the day; and so in ten thousand other things: all afflictive dispensations of Providence; times of plucking up and breaking down of weeping and mourning, of losing and casting away are all necessary, and seasonable and beautiful, in their issue and consequences: prosperity and adversity, in their turns, make a beautiful checker work, and work together for good; are like Joseph's coat, of many colours, which was an emblem of those various providences which attended that good man; and were extremely beautiful, as are all the providences of God to men: and all his judgments will be, when made manifest; when he shall have performed his whole work, and the mystery of God in providence will be finished; which is like a piece of tapestry; when only viewed in parts no beauty appears in it, scarce any thing to be made of it but when all is put together, it is most beautiful and harmonious. The words may be rendered, "the beautiful One hath made all things in his time" {m}; the Messiah; who, as a divine Person, is the brightness of his Father's glory; as man, is fairer than the sons, of Adam; as Mediator, is full of grace and truth; is white and ruddy, altogether lovely, exceeding precious to his people: this fair and lovely One has made all things in creation; works with his Father in the affairs of providence; and has done all things well in grace and redemption, **Joh 1:2**;

also he hath set the world in their heart; so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end; not a sinful love of the world, and the things of it; not a criminal desire after them, and a carking care for them, whereby persons have no heart and inclination, time and leisure, to search into and find out the works of God; for though all this is in the heart of the sons of men, yet, not placed, there by the Lord: nor an opinion of living for ever; of a long time in this world, the word for "world" having the signification of perpetuity in it; so that they regard not, the work of the Lord, nor the operations of his hands, tomorrow being with them as this day, and much more abundant; but this sense meets with the same difficulty as the former. Rather the meaning is, that God hath set before the minds of men, and in them, the whole world of creatures, the whole book of nature, in which they may see and read much of the wisdom power, and goodness of God in his works; and to some he gives an inclination and desire hereunto; but yet the subject before them is so copious, there is such a world of matter presented to them, and their capacity so small, and life so short, that they cannot all their days find out the works of God, either of creation or providence, to perfection; or find out what God works, from the beginning of the world to the end of it; for, of what he has wrought, but a small portion is known by them, and they know less still what shall be done hereafter: some of God's works of providence are set on foot and but begun in the life of some men; they do not live to see them finished, and therefore cannot find them out; and others are so dark and obscure, that they are obliged to say, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" see **Ro 1:19**; and though everything is beautiful in its time, yet till they are made manifest, and all viewed together; they will not be perfectly understood, or the beauty of them seen, Re 15:4. For God has put something "hidden", or "sealed up", in the midst of them, as it may be rendered {n}, so that they cannot be perfectly known.

{m} wteb hpy hve lkh ta "haec omnia facit pulcher in tempore suo, i.e. Messias"; so some in Rambachius. {n} Vid. Schultens de Defect. Hod. Ling. Heb. s. 180.

Ecclesiastes 3:12

Ver. 12. I know that [there is] no good in them,.... In these things; as the Arabic version; in the creatures, as Jarchi; in all sublunary enjoyments; in everything the wise man had made a trial of before, as natural Wisdom and knowledge, worldly pleasure, riches, and wealth; the "summun bonum", or happiness of men, did not lie in these things; this he knew by experience, and had the strongest assurance of it: or in them, that is, the children of men, as the Targum: there is no real good thing in them, nor comes out of them, nor is done by them; they cannot think a good thought, nor do a good action, of themselves. Or rather the sense is, I know there is nothing better for them than what follows:

but for [a man] to rejoice; not in sin and sinful pleasures, in a riotous, voluptuous, and epicurean manner; but to be cheerful, and enjoy the blessings of life in a comfortable way, and with a thankful heart; and especially to rejoice in spiritual things, and above all in Christ; and not in any self-boastings or carnal confidences, all such rejoicing is evil; see **Ec 9:7**. The Targum is,

"but that they rejoice in the joy of the law;"

but it is much better to rejoice in the things of the Gospel, which is indeed a joyful sound;

and to do good in his life: to himself and family, by making use of the good things of life, and not withholding and hoarding them up; and to others, to all men, as opportunity offers, and especially to the household of faith; and not only by liberality and alms deeds, but by doing all good works, from right principles and to right ends, and that always, as long as he lives, **Ga 6:9**.

Ecclesiastes 3:13

Ver. 13. And also that every man should eat and drink,.... Not to excess, but in moderation; and yet freely, plentifully, and cheerfully; and not alone, but giving the poor a portion with him; and in all having in view the glory of God, 1Co 10:31;

and enjoy the good of all his labour; take the comfort of what he has been labouring for, and not lay it up for, and leave it to, he knows not who: the Targum is,

"and see good in his days, and cause his children, at the time of his death, to inherit all his labour;"

it [is] the gift of God; not only to have, but to enjoy, and make a proper use of the mercies of life. This is the same doctrine which is delivered **Ec 2:24**.

Ecclesiastes 3:14

Ver. 14. I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever,.... Which some, as Jarchi, understand of the works of creation, the heavens and the earth, which are however of long standing and duration; and though they shall be dissolved and perish, as to their form and quality, yet not as to the substance of them: the earth particularly is said to abide for ever, **Ec 1:4**; the sun and moon, and stars, keep their course or station; and the several seasons of the year have their constant revolution, and shall as long as the earth endures; see **Ge 8:22**; the several kinds of creatures God has made, in the earth, air, and sea, though the individuals die, their species remain; and man, the chief of creatures, though he dies, shall live again, and live for ever; so the Arabic version,

"I have learned that all the creatures which God hath made shall perpetually remain in the same order and condition:"

though Abarbinel {o} interprets this of the continuance of the world for a certain time, and then of the destruction of it; which he thinks is supported by **Ec 3:15**, and which is to be understood of the creation of one world after another; and that which is past he explains of the world that is destroyed. But rather this is to be understood of the decrees of God, which are his works "ad intra"; the thoughts of his heart, that are to all generations; the counsel of his will, which always stands, and is performed; his mind, which is one, the same always, and invariable, and which he never changes; his pleasure he always does; his purposes and appointments, which are always accomplished, never frustrated and made void: for he is all wise in forming them, all knowing, and sees the end from the beginning, so that nothing unforeseen can turn up to hinder the execution of them; he is unchangeable, and never alters his will; and all powerful, able to effect his great designs; and faithful and true, cannot deny himself, nor ever lie nor repent. To this sense is the Targum,

"I know, by a spirit of prophecy, that all which the Lord does in the world, whether good or evil, after it is decreed from his mouth, it shall be for ever."

This holds good of all his works, and acts of grace; election of persons to eternal life stands firm, not on the foot of works, but of grace, and has its certain effect; it can never be made void, nor be surer than it is; it will ever take place, and continue in its fruit and consequences: the covenant of grace, as it is made from everlasting, continues to everlasting; its promises never, fail, its blessings are the sure mercies of David: redemption by Christ is eternal; such as are redeemed from sin, Satan, and the law, are ever so, and shall never be brought into bondage to either again: the work of grace upon the heart being begun, shall be performed and perfected; the graces wrought in the soul, as faith, hope, and love, ever remain; the blessings of grace bestowed, as pardon, justification, adoption, and salvation, are never reversed, but ever continue; such as are regenerated, pardoned, justified, adopted, and saved, shall be ever so; and the work of God, as it is durable, so perfect;

nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; the works of nature have been finished and perfected from the foundation of the world; the decrees of God are a complete system of his will, according to which he does all things invariably, in providence and grace; the covenant of grace is ordered in all things, and nothing wanting in it; the work of redemption is completely done by Christ, who is a rock, and his work is perfect; and the work of grace on the heart, though at present imperfect, shall be perfected; nor is it in the power of men to add anything to it, nor take anything from it;

and God doth [it], that [men] should fear before him; his works of creation being done in so much wisdom, and giving such a display of his power and goodness, command art awe of him in his creatures,
Ps 33:6; his works of providence, being all according to his wise purposes and decrees, should be patiently and quietly submitted to; and men should be still, and know that he is God, and humble themselves under his mighty hand: his decrees, respecting the present or future state of men, do not lead to despair, nor to a neglect of means, nor to a dissolute life, but tend to promote the fear of God and true holiness, which they are the source of; and the blessings of grace have a kind influence on the same; particularly the blessing of pardoning grace, which is with God, that he may be feared, Ps 130:4; and one principal part of the work of grace on the heart is the fear of God; and nothing more strongly engages to the whole worship of God, which is often meant by the fear of him, than his grace vouchsafed to men; see Heb 12:28. The Targum refers this to the vengeance of God in the world: and Jarchi, to the unusual phenomena in it; as the flood, the sun's standing still and going backward, and the like.

{o} Miphalot Elohim Tract. 8. c. 7. fol. 57. 4.

Ecclesiastes 3:15

Ver. 15. That which hath seen is now; and that which is to be hath already been,.... That which has been from the beginning now is; that which cometh, and what shall be in the end of days, has been already, as the Targum. Jarchi interprets this of God and his attributes, which are always the same; he is the "I am that I am", **Ex 3:14**; the immutable and eternal Jehovah, which is, and was, and is to come, invariably the same. Or rather it designs his decrees and purposes; what has been decreed in his eternal mind is now accomplished; and what is future has been already in his decrees; nor does anything come to pass but what he has appointed. So it is interpreted, in an ancient tract {p} of the Jews, of

"what was before it came into the world, so that there is nothing new under the sun; now it is obliged to come into this world, as it is said, "before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee", **Jer 1:5**."

This will also hold true of natural things, and of the identity of them; of some individuals, as the sun, moon, and stars, which are as they always were, and will be; the sun rises and sets as it used to do; and the moon increases and decreases, as it always has done; and the stars keep the same station or course, and so they ever will, as they have: the same seasons are now in their turn as heretofore, and such as will be have been already; as summer, winter, spring, autumn, seedtime, harvest, cold, heat, night, and day: the same kinds and species of creatures, that have been, are; and what will be have been already; so that there is no new thing under the sun; the same thing is here expressed as in **Ec 1:9**;

and God requireth that which is past; his decrees and purposes to be fulfilled, which are past in his mind; the same seasons to return which have been; and the same kinds and species of creatures to exist which have already. The words may be rendered, "and God seeketh that which is pursued", or "persecuted" {q}: and accordingly the whole will bear a different sense; and the preacher may be thought to have entered upon a new subject, which he continues in some following verses, the abuse of power and authority: and the meaning then is, the same acts of injustice, violence, and persecution, have been done formerly as now, and now as formerly; and what hereafter of this kind may be, will be no other than what has been; from the beginning persecution was; Cain hated and slew his brother, because of his superior goodness; and so it always has been, is, and will be, that such who are after the flesh persecute those who are after the spirit; but God will make inquisition for blood, and require it at the hands of those that shed it; he will seek out the persecuted, and vindicate him, and, avenge his persecutor. This way the Midrash, Jarchi, and Alshech, and the Septuagint version, render the words; and so the Syriac version, "God seeketh him that is afflicted, who is driven away"; and to this agrees the Targum,

"and in the great day which shall be, the Lord will require the mean and poor man of the hands of the wicked that persecute him."

And what follows seems to confirm this sense.

{p} Tikkune Zohar Correct. 69. fol. 104. 2. {q} Pdrn ta vqby Myhlaw "Deus quaerit propulsum, seu quod persecutionem veluti passum est", Gejerus, Schmidt.

Ecclesiastes 3:16

Ver. 16. And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment,.... Courts of judicature, where judges sit, and, causes are brought before them, and are heard and tried; such as were the Jewish sanhedrim, of which the Midrash and Jarchi interpret it;

[that] wickedness [was] there, wicked judges sat there, and wickedness was committed by them; instead of doing justice they perverted it; condemned the righteous, and acquitted the wicked; and oppressed the widow, fatherless, and stranger, whose cause, being just, they should have defended. So the Targum,

"in which lying judges condemn the innocent."

Well does the wise man say he saw this "under the sun", for there is nothing of this kind above it; nor approved of by him that is above it;

and the place of righteousness, [that] iniquity [was] there; this signifies the same as before, only it is expressed in different words. The Midrash and Jarchi interpret this of the middle gate in Jerusalem, where Nergal Sharezer, and other princes of the king of Babylon, sat, and which Solomon foresaw by a spirit of prophecy; but the better sense is, that Solomon had observed a great deal of this kind in reading the histories and annals of nations; knew that much of this sort was practised in other countries, and had seen a great deal of it in his own, done in inferior courts, and by subordinate officers; and though he was a wise and righteous prince, yet was not able to rectify all these abuses, for want of sufficient proof, which yet he lamented, and it gave him a concern; compare with this **Isa 1:21**.

Ecclesiastes 3:17

Ver. 17. I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked,.... This he considered in his mind, and set it down for a certain truth, and which relieved him under the consideration of the sad perversion of justice; and made him easy under it, and willing to leave things to him that judgeth righteously, and wait his time when everything that was now wrong would be set right: he knew from reason, from tradition, and from the word of God, that there was a judgment to come, a general, righteous, and eternal one; that this judicial process would be carried on by God himself, who is holy, righteous, just, and true, omniscient, and omnipotent; and, being the Judge of all the earth, would do right; when he would vindicate the righteous, and clear them from all calumnies and charges; acquit and justify them, and condemn the wicked, pass a just sentence on them, and execute it;

for [there is] a time there for every purpose, and for every work; or "then", as Noldius; in the day of the great judgment, as the Targum adds; and which continues to paraphrase the words thus,

"for a time is appointed for every business, and for every work which they do in this world they shall be judged there;"

there is a time fixed, a day appointed, for the judgment of the world; though of that day and hour knows no man; yet, it is settled, and will certainly come, Ac 17:31; and when it is come, every purpose, counsel, and thought of men's hearts, will be made manifest, as well as every work, good or bad, open or secret, yea, every idle word, and men will be judged according to these; see **1Co 4:5**
Mt 12:36.

Ecclesiastes 3:18

Ver. 18. I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men,.... He thought of the condition of the children of men, their sinful and polluted state; he weighed and considered in his mind their actions, conversation, and course of life; and was concerned how it would go with them at the day of judgment on account of the same. Some render it, "I said in mine heart after the speech of the children of men" {r}; speaking in their language, and representing the atheist and the epicure, as some think the wise man does in the following verses; though he rather speaks his own real sentiments concerning men, as they are in their present state, and as they will appear in the day of judgment;

that God might manifest them; or "separate them" {s}; as the chaff from the wheat, and as goats from the sheep; as will be done at the day of judgment, **Mt 3:10**; or "that they might clear God" {t}; as they will, when he shall judge and condemn them;

and that they might see that they themselves are beasts; as they are through the fall, and the corruption of nature, being born like the wild ass's colt, stupid, senseless, and without understanding of spiritual things; nay, more brutish than the beasts themselves, than the horse and the mule that have no understanding, Ps 32:9; "mulo inscitior", as is Plautus's {u} phrase; see Ps 49:12 **Isa 1:3**; this is now made manifest to the people of God by the word and Spirit; is seen, known, and acknowledged by them,
Ps 73:21; and the wicked themselves will see, know, and own what beasts they are and have been, at the day of judgment; how they have lived and died like beasts; how like brute beasts they have corrupted themselves in things they knew naturally; and that as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, spoke evil of things they understood not, and perished in their own corruption, **Jude 1:10** **2Pe 2:12**; and that they have been beasts to themselves, as Jarchi renders and interprets it; made beasts of themselves by their brutish gratifications; have been cruel to themselves, ruining and destroying their own souls; or among themselves, and to one another, "homo lupus homini"; hence wicked men are compared to lions, foxes, evening wolves, vipers, and the like. So Mr. Broughton renders it, "how they are beasts, they to themselves."

{r} Mdah ynb trbd le "super verbum filiorum Adam", Montanus; "verbis hominum", Arabic and Syriac versions. {s} Mrbl oti diakrinei autouv "ut discernat illos", Cocceius; "quia delegit eos", some in Vatablus; so Aben Ezra and Ben Melech. {t} "Ut ipsi expurgent Deum", Anglic. in Reinbeck; some in Rambachius render it thus, "ut seligant ipsi (homines) Deum"; so Varenius. {u} Cisteilaria, Act. 4.

Ecclesiastes 3:19

Ver. 19. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts,.... Aben Ezra says this verse is according to the thoughts of the children of men that are not wise; but rather the wise man says what he does according to his own thoughts, and proceeds to prove the likeness and equality of men and beasts;

even one thing befalleth them; the same events belong to one as to another; the same diseases and disasters, calamities and distresses: Noah's flood carried away one as well as another; they both perished in it; several of the plagues of Egypt were inflicted on both; and both are beholden to God for their health, preservation, and safety; see **Ge 7:21**;

as the one dieth, so dieth the other; the Targum compares a wicked man and an unclean beast together, in the former clause; and paraphrases this after this manner,

"as an unclean beast dies, so dies he who is not turned to repentance before his death:"

he dies unclean in his sins, stupid, senseless; no more thoughtful of his future state, and of what will become of his precious and immortal soul, than a beast that has none; see Ps 49:14; perhaps unjust judges, persecuting tyrants, may particularly be regarded: who, though princes, shall not only die like men, but even like beasts, Ps 82:7;

yea, they have all one breath; the same vital breath, or breath of life, which is in the nostrils of the one as of the other; they breathe and draw in the same air, and have the same animal and vegetative life, and equally liable to lose it, **Ge 2:7**;

so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: he has reason and speech, which a beast has not; which gives him a preference to them, did he make a right use of them; but, as an animal, he has no preeminence, being liable to the same accidents, and to death itself: the Targum excepts the house of the grave, man being usually buried when he dies, but a beast is not: yea, in some things a beast has the preeminence of a man; at least some have, in strength, agility, quickness of the senses, &c.

for all [is] vanity; all the gratifications of the senses; all riches, honours, pleasures, power, and authority, especially when abused.

Ecclesiastes 3:20

Ver. 20. All go unto one place,.... The earth {w} from whence they came;

all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again; Adam's body was made of the dust of the earth, and so all his posterity, all of them; in which they agree with beasts, who are made of the dust also; and, when they die, return to it; see **Ge 2:7**.

{w} "Magna parens terra est", Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 7.

Ecclesiastes 3:21

Ver. 21. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward?.... There is indeed a difference between a man and a beast; though they have one breath, they have not one spirit or soul; man has a rational and immortal soul, which, when he dies, goes upwards to God that gave it; to be judged by him, and disposed of by him, in its proper apartment, until the day of the resurrection of the body;

and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? when the beast dies, its spirit goes down to the earth, from whence it came, and is resolved into it, and is no more. But who is it that sees, or can see and know with the eyes of his body, the difference of these two spirits, or the ascent of the one, and the descent of the other?, Or who knows by the dint of reason, by the strength of his own understanding, without a divine revelation, that man has an immortal soul which goes upwards at death, when that of a beast goes downwards? No man, clearly and fully, as appears from the doubts and half faith of the wisest Heathens concerning it: or rather who knows and considers this difference between the spirit of a man and the spirit of a beast, and thinks within himself what a precious and immortal soul he has, and is concerned for the salvation of it? Very few; and hence it is they live and die like beasts, as they do. The Midrash interprets this of the souls of the righteous that go up to heaven, and of the souls of the wicked that go down to hell.

Ecclesiastes 3:22

Ver. 22. Wherefore I perceive that [there is] nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works,.... The Targum is, "in his good works"; not as justifying him before God, but as vindicating him before men, from unjust censures and charges: rather the sense is, that this is the wise man's conclusion, and this his sentiment, upon the whole; that there is nothing better for a man, than cheerfully to enjoy the fruit of his labours; to eat and drink in moderation, freely, joyfully, and thankfully; and make use of his riches, power, and authority, for his own good, the good of his family for the present, and the good of his fellow creatures; see **Ec 2:21**;

for that [is] his portion; what is allotted to him, and thus enjoyed, is a very good one, and for which he has reason to be thankful;

for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him? to see who shall succeed him, and what use they will make of what he leaves them; he shall never return after death to see anything of this kind, nor shall any acquaint him with it; he shall not be able to know when he is dead what shall befall his sons, whether they will prosper or rio, so Jarchi; wherefore it is best for him to enjoy his substance himself in a comfortable way, and be beneficial to others, and not oppressive to them. The Midrash illustrates it thus,

"who shall bring David to see what Solomon did? and who shall bring Solomon to see what Rehoboam did?"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ecclesiastes 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES 4

In this chapter the wise man reassumes the consideration of the case of the abuse of power, to show that there is no happiness in this world, in grandeur and authority enjoyed; since, as he had observed before, on the one hand, the oppressor shall be judged and condemned at the great day of account; so, on the other hand, the oppressed have their lives made so uncomfortable, that the dead are preferred unto them, and unborn persons to them both, **Ec 4:1**; Another vanity he observes, that whereas men expect to be happy by their diligence and industry, this brings upon them the envy of others, **Ec 4:4**; hence some, on the other hand, place their happiness in sloth and ease, which is another vanity, **Ec 4:5**; and others again in covetousness; who are described by their unsocial life, toilsome labour, unsatisfied desires, and withholding good things from themselves, **Ec 4:7**; upon which some things are said, to show the benefits of a social life, **Ec 4:9**. And the chapter is concluded with exposing the vanity of the highest instance of worldly power and grandeur, royal dignity, through the folly of a king; the effects of which are mentioned, **Ec 4:13**; and through the fickleness of the people, who are soon weary of a prince on the throne, and court his successor, **Ec 4:15**.

Ver. 1. So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun,.... The wise man, according to Aben Ezra, returned from the thought, which he had expressed in the latter part of the preceding chapter, that it was good for a man to rejoice in his works, and called it in; since he could not rejoice, when he considered the oppression and violence that were in the world; but it does not appear that he did call it in, for he afterwards repeats it: or rather he returns to his former subject, the abuse of power and authority, mentioned **Ec 3:16**; and from whence he had digressed a little by the above observation; and takes a review of all kinds of oppressions which are done, and of all sorts of "oppressed" {x} ones, as some render it, which become so, under the sun; subjects by their prince; the stranger, widow, and fatherless, by unjust judges; the poor by the rich; servants and labourers by their masters; and the like. Moreover, he saw by the Holy Ghost, as Jarchi paraphrases it, all oppressions by a spirit of prophecy; he foresaw all the oppressions that would be done under the sun; as all the injuries done to the people of Israel in their several captivities; so to the church of Christ in Gospel times; all the persecutions of Rome Pagan, and also of Rome Papal; all that has or will be done by antichrist, the man of the earth, who before long will oppress no more, Ps 10:18; the Targum restrains these oppressions to those which are done to the righteous in this world: and it is well observed by the wise man, that they are such as are under the sun, for there are none above it, nor any beyond the grave, **Job 3:17**;

and behold the tears of [such as were] oppressed; which their eyes poured out, and which ran down their cheeks, and were all they could do, having no power to help themselves: it is in the singular number, "and behold the tear" {y}; as if it was one continued stream of tears, which, like a torrent, flowed from them; or as if they had so exhausted the source of nature by weeping, that the fountain of tears was dried up, and scarce another could drop; or it was as much as could be, that another should drop from them: and this the wise man could not well behold, without weeping himself; it being the property of a good man to weep with them that weep, especially with good men oppressed;

and they had no comforter; to speak a comfortable word to them; not so much as to do that which would be some alleviation of their sorrow, much less to help them, no human comforter; and this is a very deplorable condition, **La 1:2**; indeed, when this is the case, good men under their oppressions have a divine Comforter; God comforts them under all their tribulations; one of the names of the Messiah is "the Consolation of Israel", **Lu 2:25**; and the Spirit of God is "another Comforter", Joh 14:16; and such are well off, when all other comforters are miserable ones, or other men have none;

and on the side of their oppressors [there was] power; to crush them and keep them under, or to hinder others from helping or comforting them: or there was no "power [to deliver them] out of the hand of their oppressors" {z}; so some render and supply the words; with which sense agrees the Targum,

"and there is none to redeem them out of the hand of their oppressors, by strength of hand and by power."

It may be rendered, "out of the hand of their oppressors [comes] power", or violence; such as the oppressed are not able to withstand; so the Arabic version;

but they had no comforter: which is repeated, not so much for confirmation, as to excite attention and pity, and to express the affliction of the oppressed, and the cruelty of others; and this following on the other clause, leads to observe, that the power of the oppressor is what hinders and deters others from comforting. Jarchi interprets this whole verse of the damned in hell, punished for their evil works, weeping for their souls oppressed by the destroying angels; and so, he says, it is, explained in an ancient book of theirs, called Siphri.

{x} Myqveh "oppressos", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Drusius, Schmidt, Rambachius, so Broughton; "fraudatos", Cocceius. {y} temd "lachryma", Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Rambachius. {z} xk Mhyqve dymw "et quia deest facultas se vindicandi e manu opprimentium ipsos", Tigurine version; "aut evadendi e manu opprimentium se virtus", Junius & Tremellius; "nec vires ad evadendum a manu opprimentium ipsos", Piscator.

Ecclesiastes 4:2

Ver. 2. Wherefore I praised the dead, which are already dead,.... Truly and properly so; not in a figurative sense, as dead sinners, men dead in trespasses and sins; nor carnal professors, that have a name to live, and are dead; nor in a civil sense, such as are in calamity and distress, as the Jews in captivity, or in any affliction, which is sometimes called death: but such who are dead in a literal and natural sense, really and thoroughly dead; not who may and will certainly die, but who are dead already and in their graves, and not all these; not the wicked dead, who are in hell, in everlasting torments; but the righteous dead, who are taken away from the evil to come, and are free from all the oppressions of their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world. The Targum is,

"I praised those that lie down or are asleep, who, behold, are now dead;"

a figure by which death is often expressed, both in the Old and New Testament; sleep being, as the poet {a} says, the image of death; and a great likeness there is between them; Homer {b} calls sleep and death twins. The same paraphrase adds,

"and see not the vengeance which comes upon the world after their death;"

see Isa 57:1. The wise man did not make panegyrics or encomiums on those persons, but he pronounced them happy; he judged them in his own mind to be so; and to be much

more happy

than the living which are yet alive: that live under the oppression of others; that live in this world in trouble until now, as the Targum; of whom it is as much as it can be said that they are alive; they are just alive, and that is all; they are as it were between life and death. This is generally understood as spoken according to human sense, and the judgment of the flesh, without any regard to the glory and happiness of the future state; that the dead must be preferred to the living, when the quiet of the one, and the misery of the other, are observed; and which sense receives confirmation from **Ec 4:3**: otherwise it is a great truth, that the righteous dead, who die in Christ and are with him, are much more happy than living saints; since they are freed from sin; are out of the reach of Satan's temptations; are no more liable to darkness and desertions; are freed from all doubts and fears; cease from all their labours, toil, and trouble; and are delivered from all afflictions, persecutions, and oppressions; which is not the case of living saints: and besides, the joys which they possess, the company they are always in, and the work they are employed about, give them infinitely the preference to all on earth; see Re 14:13.

{a} "Stulte, quid est semnus gelidae nisi mortis imago?" Ovid. Plato in Ciceron. Tuscul. Quaest. l. 1. c. 58. {b} Iliad. 16. v. 672, 682. Vid. Pausan. Laconica, sive l. 3. p. 195.

Ecclesiastes 4:3

Ver. 3. Yea, better [is he] than both they which hath not yet been,.... That is, an unborn person; who is preferred both to the dead that have seen oppression, and to the living that are under it; see **Job 3:10**. This supposes a person to be that never was, a mere nonentity; and the judgment made is according to sense, and regards the dead purely as such, and so as free from evils and sorrows, without any respect to their future state and condition; for otherwise an unborn person is not happier than the dead that die in Christ, and live with him: and it can only be true of those that perish, of whom indeed it might be said, that it would have been better for them if they had never been born, according to those words of Christ,
Mt 26:24; and is opposed to the maxim of some philosophers, that a miserable being is better than none at all. The Jews, from this passage, endeavour to prove the pre-existence of human souls, and suppose that such an one is here meant, which, though created, was not yet sent into this world in a body, and so had never seen evil and sorrow; and this way some Christian writers have gone. It has been interpreted also of the Messiah, who in Solomon's time had not yet been a man, and never known sorrow, which he was to do, and has, and so more happy than the dead or living. But these are senses that will not bear; the first is best; and the design is to show the great unhappiness of mortals, that even a nonentity is preferred to them;

who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun? the evil works of oppressors, and the sorrows of the oppressed.

Ecclesiastes 4:4

Ver. 4. Again I considered all travail, and every right work,.... The pains that men take to do right works. Some apply themselves, with great diligence and industry, to the study of the liberal arts and sciences; and to attain the knowledge of languages; and to writing books, for the improvement of those things, and the good of mankind: and others employ themselves in mechanic arts, and excel in them, and bring their works to great perfection and accuracy; when they might expect to be praised and commended, and have thanks given them by men. But instead thereof, so it is,

that for this a man is envied of his neighbour; who will be sure to find fault with what he has done, speak contemptibly of him and his work, and traduce him among men. This is also true of moral works; which are right, when done from a right principle, from love to God, in faith, and with a view to the glory of God; and which when done, and ever so well done, draw upon a man the envy of the wicked, as may be observed in the case of Cain and Abel, **1Jo 3:12**; though some understand this, not passively, of the envy which is brought upon a man, and he endures, for the sake of the good he excels in; but actively, of the spirit of emulation with which he does it; though the work he does, as to the matter of it, is right; yet the manner of doing it, and the spirit with which he does it, are wrong; he does not do it with any good affection to the thing itself, nor with any good design, only from a spirit of emulation to outdo his neighbour: so the Targum paraphrases it,

"this is the emulation that a man emulates his neighbour, to do as he; if he emulates him to do good, the heavenly Word does good to him; but if he emulates him to do evil, the heavenly Word does evil to him;"

and to this sense Jarchi; compare with this, **Php 1:15**.

This [is] also vanity, and vexation of spirit; whether it be understood in the one sense or the other; how dissatisfying and vexatious is it, when a man has taken a great deal of pains to do right works for public good, instead of having thanks and praise, is reproached and calumniated for it? and if he does a right thing, and yet has not right ends and views in it, it stands for nothing; it has only the appearance of good, but is not truly so, and yields no solid peace and comfort.

Ecclesiastes 4:5

Ver. 5. The fool foldeth his hands together,.... In order to get more sleep, or as unwilling to work; so the Targum adds,

"he folds his hands in summer, and will not labour;"

see **Pr 6:10**. Some persons, to escape the envy which diligence and industry bring on men, will not work at all, or do any right work, and think to sleep in a whole skin; this is great folly and madness indeed:

and eateth his own flesh; such a man is starved and famished for want of food, so that his flesh is wasted away; or he is so hungry bitten, that he is ready to eat his own flesh; or he hereby brings to ruin his family, his wife, and children, which are his own flesh, Isa 58:7. The Targum is,

"in winter he eats all he has, even the covering of the skin of his flesh."

Some understand this of the envious man, who is a fool, traduces the diligent and industrious, and will not work himself; and not only whose idleness brings want and poverty on him as an armed man, but whose envy eats up his spirit, and is rottenness in his bones, **Pr 6:11**. Jarchi, out of a book of theirs called Siphri, interprets this of a wicked man in hell, when he sees the righteous in glory, and he himself judged and condemned.

Ecclesiastes 4:6

Ver. 6. Better [is] a handful [with] quietness,.... These are the words of the fool, according to Aben Ezra; and which is the sense of other interpreters, particularly Mr. Broughton, who connects this verse with **Ec 4:5** by adding at the end of that the word "saying"; making an excuse or an apology for himself and conduct, from the use and profitableness of his sloth; that little had with ease, and without toil and labour, is much better

than both the hands full [with] travail and vexation of spirit; than large possessions gotten with a great deal of trouble, and enjoyed with much vexation and uneasiness; in which he mistakes slothful ease for true quietness; calls honest labour and industry travail and vexation; and supposes that true contentment lies in the enjoyment of little, and cannot be had where there is much; whereas it is to be found in a good man in every state: or else these words express the true sentiments of Solomon's mind, steering between the two extremes of slothfulness, and too toilsome labour to be rich; that it is much more eligible to have a competency, though it is but small, with a good conscience, with tranquillity of mind, with the love and fear of God, and a contented heart, than to have a large estate, with great trouble and fatigue in getting and keeping it, especially with discontent and uneasiness; and this agrees with what the wise man says elsewhere, Pr 15:16. The Targum is, "better to a man is a handful of food with quietness of soul, and without robbery and rapine, than two handfuls of food with robbery and rapine;"

or with what is gotten in an ill way.

Ecclesiastes 4:7

Ver. 7. Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun. Another vanity besides what he had taken notice of, and is as follows. Aben Ezra's note is,

"I turned from considering the words of this fool, and I saw another fool, the reverse of the former."

Ecclesiastes 4:8

Ver. 8. There is one [alone], and [there is] not a second,.... According to Aben Ezra, either no friend or companion, or no servant, or no wife, which last sense he prefers; no friend or companion he chooses, because friendship and fellowship lead to expenses; and no servant who would be chargeable to him; and no wife, which would be more expensive, and bring on a family of children; wherefore, to save charges, he chooses to have neither of these; for this is a covetous man who is here desert bed;

yea, he hath neither child nor brother; to inherit his substance, as the Targum adds; some worldly men, whose bellies are filled with hidden treasures, having enjoyed much, when they die, leave the rest of their substance to their babes; but the man here described has no children, nor any relations to leave his wealth unto;

yet [is there] no end of all his labour; when he has executed one scheme to get riches, he forms another; and having finished one work, he enters upon another; he rises early and sits up late, and works and toils night and day, as if he was not worth a dollar, and had a large and numerous family to provide for; or there is no end of what he labours for, or gets by his labour; there is no end of his treasures, **Isa 2:7**; he is immensely rich, so Aben Ezra interprets it;

neither is his eye satisfied with riches: with seeing his bags of gold and silver, though he takes a great deal of sure in looking upon them too, without making use of them; yet he is not satisfied with what he has, he wants more, he enlarges his desire as hell, and like the grave never has enough; see **Ec 5:10**;

neither [saith he], for whom do I labour? having neither wife nor child, nor relation, nor friend, and yet so wretchedly stupid and thoughtless as never once to put this question to himself, Who am I toiling for? I am heaping up riches, and know not who shall gather them; it is a vexation to a worldly man to leave his substance behind him, and even to a man that has an heir to inherit it, when he knows not whether he will be a wise man or a fool; but for a man that has no heir at all, and yet to be toiling and labouring for the world, is gross stupidity, downright madness, and especially when he deprives himself of the comfort of what he is possessed of;

and bereave my soul of good? instead of richly enjoying what is given him, he withholds it from himself, starves his back and belly, lives in pinching want amidst the greatest plenty; has not power to eat of what he has, and his soul desireth; see **Ec 6:2**.

This [is] also vanity, yea, it [is] a sore travail; a very vain and wicked thing; "an evil business", as it may be rendered; a very great sin and folly indeed; it is thought by some divines to be the worst species of covetousness, most cruel and unnatural.

Ecclesiastes 4:9

Ver. 9. Two [are] better than one,.... The wise man takes occasion, from the solitariness Of the covetous man before described, to show in this and some following verses the preferableness and advantages of social life; which, as it holds true in things natural and civil, so in things spiritual and religious; man is a sociable creature, was made to be so; and it was the judgment of God, which is according to truth, and who can never err, that it was not good for man to be alone, **Ge 2:18**. It is best to take a wife, or at least to have a friend or companion, more or less to converse with. Society is preferable to solitariness; conversation with a friend is better than to be always alone; the Targum is,

"two righteous men in a generation are better than one;"

such may be helpful to each other in their counsels and comforts, and mutual aids and assistances in things temporal and spiritual. The Midrash interprets this of the study in the law together, and of two that trade together, which is better than studying or trading separately;

because they have a good reward for their labour; the pleasure and profit they have in each other's company and conversation; in religious societies, though there is a labour in attendance on public worship, in praying and conferring together, in serving one another in love, and bearing one another's burdens, yet they have a good reward in it all; they have the presence of Christ with them, for, where two or three are met together in his name, he is with them; and whatsoever two of them agree to ask in his name they have it; and if two of them converse together about spiritual things, it is much if he does not make a third with them; besides they have a great deal of pleasure in each other's company, and much profit in their mutual instructions, advices, and reproofs; they sharpen each other's countenances, quicken and comfort each other's souls, establish one another in divine truth, and strengthen each other's hands and hearts.

Ecclesiastes 4:10

Ver. 10. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow,.... That is, if anyone of them fall, the other will lift him up, as they are travelling together, in whatsoever manner; if one falls from his horse, or out of his carriage, or into a ditch, the other will endeavour to raise him up again: this, as it is true in a natural, so in a figurative and metaphorical sense, with religious persons especially;

"if one of them falls upon the bed, and lies sick,"

as the Targum paraphrases it, his friend and brother in a religions community will visit him, and sympathize with him, and speak a word of comfort to him, and pray with him, which may issue in his restoration. So the Targum,

"the other will cause his friend to rise by his prayer;"

or if he fall into outward distress, poverty, and want, his spiritual friend or friends will distribute to his necessity; if he falls into errors, as a good man may, such as are of the same religious society with him will take some pains to convince him of the error of his way, and to convert him from it, and to save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins; and if he falls into sin, to which the best of men are liable, such as are spiritual will endeavour to restore him in a spirit of meekness;

but woe to him [that is] alone when he falleth! for [he hath] not another to help him up; no companion to raise him up when fallen; no Christian friend to visit and comfort him when sick, to relieve him under his necessities, when poor and afflicted, or to recover him from errors in judgment, or immoralities in practice; and especially if he has not Christ with him to raise him up, keep, and uphold him.

Ecclesiastes 4:11

Ver. 11. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat,.... The Targum adds, in the winter; when it is a cold season, they warm one another by lying together. The Targum interprets it of a man and his wife; it is true of others; see **1Ki 1:1**;

but how can one be warm [alone]? not soon, nor easily, in time of cold weather. This is true in a spiritual sense of persons in a Christian communion and religious society; when they are grown cold in their love, lukewarm in their affections, and backward and indifferent to spiritual exercises, yet by Christian conversation may be stirred up to love and good works: so two cold flints struck against each other, fire comes out of them; and even two cold Christians, when they come to talk with each other about spiritual things, and feel one another's spirits, they presently glow in their affections to each other, and to divine things; and especially if Christ joins them with his presence, as he did the two disciples going to Emmaus, then their hearts burn within them.

Ecclesiastes 4:12

Ver. 12. And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him,.... If an enemy, or a thief, or a robber, attack anyone of them, in friendship and fellowship together, and is more than a match for him; both joined together will be able to resist him; so that he shall not succeed in his enterprise, and do the mischief he designed; see
2Sa 10:11; Thus, when Satan attacks a single believer, which he chooses to do when alone; so he tempted Eve in the garden, and Christ in the wilderness; and one or more fellow Christians know of it, they are capable of helping their tempted friend, by their advice and counsel, they not being ignorant of Satan's

devices; and by striving together in their prayers to God for him: so when false teachers make their efforts, as they usually do, Satan like, upon the weaker sex, and, when alone, they too often succeed; but when saints stand fast in one spirit, and strive together for the faith of the Gospel, they stand their ground, withstand the enemy, and maintain truth;

and a threefold cord is not quickly broken; or "in haste" {c}; as two are better than one, so three or more united together, it is the better still; they are able to make head against an enemy; and to conquer him, "vis unita fortior est": if a family, community, city, or kingdom, are divided against themselves, they cannot stand; but, if united, in all probability nothing can hurt them. This doctrine is taught in the fable of the bundle of sticks the old man gave to his sons to break; which, while fastened together, could not be done; but, when art bound, and took out singly, were easily snapped asunder; teaching them thereby unity among themselves, as their greatest security against their common enemy. The same instruction is given by this threefold cord; while it remains twisted together, it is not easily broke, but if the threads are untwisted and unloosed, they are soon snapped asunder: so persons in religious fellowship, be they more or fewer, while they keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, they are terrible, as an army with banners, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against them. And if this is true of the united love and affections of saints, it must be much more so of the love of Father, Son, and Spirit; that threefold cord, with which the saints are drawn and held; and of which it may be said, that it not only is not quickly broken, but that it cannot be broken at all; and therefore those who are held by it are in the utmost safety. Some apply this to the three principal graces, faith, hope, and love, which are abiding ones; and, though they may sometimes be weak and low in their acts and exercise, can never be lost.

{c} hrhmb "in festinatia", Montanus; "in celeritate", Vatablus; "in festinatione", Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 4:13

Ver. 13. Better [is] a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king,.... The wise man proceeds to show the vanity of worldly power and dignity, in the highest instance of it, which is kingly; and, in order to illustrate and exemplify this, he supposes, on the one hand, a person possessed of royal honour; who has long enjoyed it, is settled in his kingdom, and advanced in years; and who otherwise, for his gravity and dignity, would be venerable; but that he is foolish, a person of a mean genius and small capacity; has but little knowledge of government, or but little versed in the arts of it, though he has held the reins of it long in his hand; and, which is worst of all, is vicious and wicked: on the other hand, he supposes one that is in his tender years, not yet arrived to manhood; and so may be thought to be giddy and inexperienced, and therefore taken but little notice of; and especially being poor, becomes contemptible, as well as labours under the disadvantage of a poor education; his parents poor, and he not able to get books and masters to teach him knowledge; nor to travel abroad to see the world, and make his observations on men and things; and yet being wise, having a good genius, which he improves in the best manner he can, to his own profit, and to make himself useful in the world; and especially if he is wise and knowing in the best things, and fears God, and serves him; he is more happy, in his present state and circumstances, than the king before described is in his, and is fitter to take his place, and be a king, than he is; for though he is young, yet wise, and improving in knowledge, and willing to be advised and counselled by others, older and wiser than himself; he is much to be preferred to one that is old and foolish;

who will no more be admonished; or, "knows not to be admonished any more" {d}: he neither knows how to give nor take advice; he is impatient of all counsel; cannot bear any admonition; is stubborn and self-willed, and resolved to take his own way. The Jews, in their Midrash, Jarchi, and others, interpret it, allegorically, of the good and evil imagination in men, the principle of grace, and the corruption of nature; the one is the new man, the other the old man; the new man is better than old Adam: the Targum applies it to Abraham and Nimrod; the former is the poor and wise child, that feared God, and worshipped him early; the latter, the old and foolish king, who was an idolater, and refused to be admonished of his idolatry; and so the Midrash.

{d} dwe rhzhl edy al "non novit moneri adhuc", Montanus; "nescit admoneri amplius", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 4:14

Ver. 14. For out of prison he cometh to reign,.... That is, this is sometimes the case of a poor and wise child; he rises out of a low, mean, abject, obscure state and condition, to the highest dignity; from a prison house, or a place where servants are, to sit among princes, and even to have the supreme authority: so

Joseph, to whose case Solomon is thought to have respect, and which is mentioned in the Midrash; who was but a young man, and poor and friendless, but wise; and was even laid in prison, though innocent and guiltless, from whence he was fetched, and became the second man in the kingdom of Egypt; so David, the youngest of Jesse's sons, was taken from the sheepfold, and set upon the throne of Israel: though Gussetius {e} interprets this of the old and foolish king, who comes out of the house or family, Mydwoh, of degenerate persons, as he translates the word, with a degenerate genius to rule; the allusion being to a degenerate vine; which sense agrees with **Ec 4:13**, and with what follows;

whereas also [he that is] born in his kingdom becometh poor; who is born of royal parents, born to a kingdom; is by birth heir to one, has it by inheritance, and has long possessed it; and yet, by his own misconduct, or by the rebellion of his subjects, he is dethroned and banished; or by a foreign power is taken and carried captive, and reduced to the utmost poverty, as Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar, and others: or if born poor, so Gussetius; with a poor genius, not capable of ruling, and so loses his kingdom, and comes to poverty. Or it may be rendered, "although in his kingdom he is born poor" {f}; that is, though the poor and wise child is born poor in the kingdom of the old and foolish king; yet, out of this low estate, in which he is by birth, he comes and enjoys the kingdom in his room to such a strange turn of affairs are the highest honours subject: or, "for in his kingdom he is born poor" {g}; even the person that is born heir to a crown is born a poor man; he comes as naked out of his mother's womb as the poorest man does; the conditions of both are equal as to birth; and therefore it need not seem strange that one out of prison should come to a kingdom. But the first sense seems best.

{e} Ebr. Comment. p. 553. {f} Mg yk "quamvis etiam", Gejerus. {g} "Nam etiam", Tigurine version, Cocceius; "quia etiam", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt, Rambachius, so Aben Ezra.

Ecclesiastes 4:15

Ver. 15. I considered all the living which walk under the sun,.... All men that were then alive, who were capable of walking upon the earth; even all of them that were under the heavens, in every land and nation, under whatsoever dominion or government: these, and their manners, Solomon had particularly observed, and made his remarks upon, by which it appeared how fickle the minds of the populace were under every government, and how precarious and uncertain were the honour and dignity of princes;

with the second child that shall stand up in his stead: the heir and successor or every prince, that shall rise up and take the throne of his father or predecessor, and reign in his stead. The wise man observed how the people commonly behaved towards him; how that they generally stood best affected to him, than to the reigning prince; worshipped the rising sun, courted his favour and friendship, soothed and flattered him; expressing their wishes to see him on the throne, and treated with neglect and contempt their lawful sovereign. Some, contrary to the accents, connect this with the word "walk" {h}; that walk with the second child, join themselves to him, converse with him, and show him great respect and honour: and there are others that, by this second child, understand the poor and wise child, that succeeds the old and foolish king, whom yet, in time, the people grow weary of; such is the levity and inconstancy of people, that they are not long pleased with princes, old or young, wise or foolish. The Targum interprets this of the foresight Solomon had, by a spirit of prophecy, of those that rebelled against his son Rehoboam, and of those that cleaved unto him, who was his second, and reigned in his stead. Noldius {i} thinks Solomon refers to the history of his friend Hiram, king of Tyre, whose kingdom, in his and in his son's time, was very large, flourishing, and opulent, but in a following reign not so; and he renders and paraphrases the words thus,

""I saw all the works under the sun; [with] Baleazarus, the son of a friend" (Hiram, for ynv, rendered "second", is the same as rbx, "a friend"), "who shall stand" or "reign after him: there is no end of all the people"," &c.

the kingdom in those two reigns being flourishing; yet posterity shall not rejoice in him, in Abdastratus, the grandson of Hiram, destroyed by the four sons of his nurse {k}.

{h} So the Tigurine version, Vatablus, Cocceius, Gejerus. {i} Concord. Part. Ebr. No. 1023. {k} Meander apud Joseph. Contr. Apion. l. 1. s. 18.

Ecclesiastes 4:16

Ver. 16. [There is] no end of all the people, [even] of all that have been before them,.... Before the present generation, the living that walked under the sun; a vast number they were that lived before them, and they were of the same restless temper and disposition; changeable in their affection and behaviour towards their governors; no end of their number, nor any stable affection for, nor settled satisfaction in, their rulers; but this itch of novelty, of having new princes over them, went from age to age, from generation to generation. Some understand this of the king and his son, the predecessor and successor, and of those that went before them; and of their behaviour to the kings that reigned before them; the people have not their end or satisfaction in their governors, but are restless: which comes to the same sense;

they also that come after shall not rejoice in him; that come after the present generation, and after both the reigning prince, and even after his successor; they will not rejoice long in him that shall be upon the throne after them, any more than the present subjects of the old king, or those that now pay their court to the heir apparent; they will be so far from rejoicing in him, that they will loath and despise him, and wish him dead or dethroned, and another in his room.

Surely this also [is] vanity and vexation of spirit; to a king, to see himself thus used by his subjects; for a short time extolled and praised, and then despised and forsaken.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ecclesiastes 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES 5

This chapter contains some rules and directions concerning the worship of God; how persons should behave when they go into the house of God; concerning hearing the word, to which there should be a readiness, and which should be preferred to the sacrifices of fools, **Ec 5:1**. Concerning prayer to God; which should not be uttered rashly and hastily, and should be expressed in few words; which is urged from the consideration of the majesty of God, and vileness of men; and the folly of much speaking is exposed by the simile of a dream, **Ec 5:2**. Concerning vows, which should not be rashly made; when made, should be kept; nor should excuses be afterwards framed for not performing them, since this might bring the anger of God upon men, to the destruction of the works of their hands, **Ec 5:4**; and, as an antidote against those vanities, which appear in the prayers and vows of some, and dreams of others, the fear of God is proposed, **Ec 5:7**; and, against any surprise at the oppression of the poor, the majesty, power, and providence of God, and his special regard to his people, are observed, **Ec 5:8**. And then the wise man enters into a discourse concerning riches; and observes, that the fruits of the earth, and the culture of it, are necessary to all men, and even to the king, **Ec 5:9**; but dissuades from covetousness, or an over love of riches; because they are unsatisfying, are attended with much trouble, often injurious to the owners of them; at length perish, and their possessors; who, at death, are stripped quite naked of all, after they have spent their days in darkness and distress, **Ec 5:10**; and concludes, therefore, that it is best for a man to enjoy, in a free manner, the good things of this life he is possessed of, and consider them as the gifts of God, and be thankful for them; by which means he will pass through the world more comfortably, and escape the troubles that attend others, **Ec 5:18**.

Ver. 1. Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God,.... The house of the sanctuary of the Lord, the temple built by Solomon; and so any place of divine worship, where the word of God is preached, and his ordinances administered. The wise man, having observed many vanities under the sun, directs men to the house of God, where they might learn the nature of them, and how to avoid them; though if care was not taken, they would find or introduce vanity there; which, of all vanities, is the worst, and ought to be guarded against. Wherefore, when men go to any place of divine worship, which to do is their duty and interest, and for their honour, pleasure, and profit, they should take care to "keep [their] feet", for the singular is here put for the plural, not from going into it; nor does it signify a slow motion towards it, which should be quick, in haste, showing earnestness, fervency, and zeal; but they should keep their feet in proper case, in a suitable condition. The allusion is either to the pulling off of the shoes off the feet, ordered to Moses and Joshua, when on holy ground, **Ex 3:5**; and which the Jews observed, when they entered the temple on their festivals and sabbaths, even their kings, as Juvenal {k} jeers them: not that such a rite should be literally used now, or what is analogous to it; putting off of the hat, in a superstitious veneration of a place; but what was signified by it, as the putting off of the old man, with his deeds, laying aside depraved affections and sordid lusts; two apostles, James and Peter, have taught us this, when we come to the house of God to hear his word, **Jas 1:21**; or the allusion is to the custom of persons in those eastern countries dressing or washing their feet when they visited, especially those of any note; and entered into their houses on any business, as Mephibosheth, when he waited on David, 2Sa 19:24; or to the practice of the priests, who washed their feet when they went into the tabernacle of the Lord, Ex 30:19. Schindler {l} says that hence (because of this text) the Jews had before their synagogues an iron fixed in the wall (which we call a "scraper"), on which they cleaned their shoes before they went into the synagogue. All which may denote the purity and cleanness of the conversation of the true worshippers of God; for, as the feet are the instruments of the action of walking, they may intend the conduct and behaviour of the saints in the house of God, where they should take care to do all things according to his word, which is a lamp to the feet, and a light unto the path: moreover, what the feet are to the body, that the affections are to the soul; and these, when a man enters into the house of God for worship, should be set on divine and spiritual things, and not on the world, and the things of it, which will choke the word heard, and make it unprofitable; the thoughts should be composed, sedate, and quiet, and the mind attentive to what is spoken or done; or otherwise, if diverted by other objects, the service will be useless;

and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools; there are sacrifices to be offered unto God in his house, which are acceptable to him; the sacrifices of beneficence and alms deeds to the poor, with which he is well pleased; and the presentation of the bodies of men, as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice unto him; and especially their hearts, and those as broken and contrite, which are the sacrifices of God; as also the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, which are acceptable to him through Jesus Christ: and under the former dispensation, while sacrifices were in use by divine appointment, when they were offered up in the faith of the sacrifice of Christ, they were well pleasing to God; but when they were not done in faith, and were without repentance for sin and reformation of life; when men retained their sins with them, and made these a cover for them, and thought by them to make atonement for their crimes, they were no other than the sacrifices of fools, and abominable unto God; see **Isa 1:11**; when these sacrifices were performed in the best manner, moral duties, as hearing and obeying the word of the Lord, and showing mercy to men, and offering up the spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, were preferred unto them,
1Sa 15:22; and much more to the sacrifices of fools. To be ready, or near {m}, is to hear the word of the Lord, as Jarchi interprets it; though Aben Ezra understands it of God being near to hear his people, when they call upon him in truth. The word of the Lord was not only read publicly in the temple and synagogues, but was explained by the priests and prophets, the ecclesiastical rulers of the people; see **Mal 2:7**; so the Targum,

"draw near thine ear to receive the doctrine of the law, from the priests and wise men:"

and so the people of God should draw near to hear the word; be swift to hear it, attentive to it, and receive it with all reverence, humility, love, and affection; and should not take up with mere outward forms, which is but the sacrifice of fools;

for they consider not that they do evil; or "know not" {n}; they think they are doing well, and doing God good service, when they are doing ill; they know not truly the object of worship, nor the spiritual nature of it, nor the right end and true use of it: or, "they know not, [only] to do evil", so Aben Ezra supplies it: to do good they have no knowledge: or, "they know not to do the will", or "good pleasure" {o}; that is, of God; this sense of the word Aben Ezra mentions.

{k} "Observant ubi festa mero pede sabbata reges", Satyr. 6. v. 158. {l} Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 1692. {m} bwrq "propinquus", Montanus; "propinquior", Mercerus, Schmidt. {n} Myedwy Mnya "non ipsi scientes", Montanus; "nesciunt", Pagninus, Mercerus, Cocceius; "scire nolunt", Schmidt. {o} er twvel "facere veluntatem ejus", Pagninus, Mercerus.

Ecclesiastes 5:2

Ver. 2. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter [any] thing before God,.... In private conversation care should be taken that no rash and unadvised words be spoken in haste, as were by Moses and David; and that no evil, nor even any idle word he uttered, since from, the abundance of the heart the mouth is apt to speak, and all is before, the Lord; not a word in the tongue but is altogether known by him, and must be accounted for to him, Ps 106:33. Jerom interprets this of words spoken concerning God; and careful men should be of what they say of him, of his nature and perfections, of his persons, and of his works; and it may be applied to a public profession of his name, and of faith in him; though this should be done with the heart, yet the heart and tongue should not be rash and hasty in making it; men should consider what they profess and confess, and upon what foot they take up and make a profession of religion; whether they have the true grace of God or no: and it will hold true of the public ministry of the word, in which everything that comes uppermost in the mind, or what is crude and undigested, should not be, uttered; but what ministers have thought of, meditated on, well weighed in their minds, and properly digested. Some understand this of rash vows, such as Jephthah's, is supposed to be, which are later repented of; but rather speaking unto God in prayer is intended. So the Targum, "thy, heart shall not hasten to bring out speech at the time thou prayest before the Lord;"

anything and everything that comes up into the mind should not be, uttered before God; not anything rashly and hastily; men should consider before they speak to the King of kings; for though set precomposed forms of prayer are not to be used, yet the matter of prayer should be thought of beforehand; what our wants are, and what we should ask for; whether for ourselves or others; this rule I fear we often offend against: the reasons follow;

for God [is] in heaven, and thou upon earth; his throne is in the heavens, he dwells in the highest heavens, though they cannot contain him; this is expressive of his majesty, sovereignty, and supremacy, and of his omniscience and omnipotence; he is the high and lofty One, that dwells in the high and holy place; he is above all, and sees and knows all persons and things; and he sits in the heavens, and does whatever he pleases; and therefore all should stand in awe of him, and consider what they say unto him. Our Lord seems to have respect to this passage when he directed his disciples to pray, saying, "Our Father, which art in heaven", **Mt 6:9**; and when we pray to him we should think what we ourselves are, that we are on the earth, the footstool of God; that we are of the earth, earthly; dwell in houses of clay, which have their foundation in the dust; crawling worms on earth, unworthy of his notice; are but dust and ashes, who take upon us to speak unto him;

therefore let, by words be few; of which prayer consists; such was the prayer of the publican, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner", Lu 18:13; and such the prayer which Christ has given as a pattern and directory to his people; who has forbid vain repetitions and much speaking in prayer, **Mt 6:7**; not that all lengthy prayers are to be condemned, or all repetitions in them; our Lord was all night in prayer himself; and Nehemiah, Daniel, and others, have used repetitions in prayer, which may be done with fresh affection, zeal, and fervency; but such are forbidden as are done for the sake of being heard for much speaking, as the Heathens; and who thought they were not understood unless they said a thing a hundred times over {p}; or when done to gain a character of being more holy and religious than others, as the Pharisees.

{p} "Ohe jam desine deos obtundere----Ut nihil credas intelligere, nisi idem dictum eat centies." Terent. Heautont. Act. 5. Sc. 1. v. 6, 8.

Ecclesiastes 5:3

Ver. 3. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business,.... Or, "for as a dream" {q}, so Aben Ezra; as that comes through a multiplicity of business in the daytime, in which the mind has been busied, and the body employed; and this brings on dreams in the night season, which are confused and incoherent; sometimes the fancy is employed about one thing, and sometimes another, and all unprofitable and useless, as well as vain and foolish;

and a fool's voice [is known] by multitude of words; either his voice in conversation, for a fool is full of words, and pours out his foolishness in a large profusion of them; or his voice in prayer, being like a man's dream, confused, incoherent, and rambling. The supplement, "is known", may be left out.

{q} ab yk "ut prodit somnium", Junius & Tremellius; "nam ut venit", Piscator; "quia sicut venit", Mercerus, Ramabachius, so Broughton.

Ecclesiastes 5:4

Ver. 4. When thou vowest a vow unto God,.... Or "if thou vowest" {r}, as the Vulgate Latin version; for vows are free and indifferent things, which persons may make or not; there is no precept for them in the word of God; instances and examples there are, and they may be lawfully made, when they are in the power of man to perform, and are not inconsistent with the will and word of God; they have been made by good men, and were frequent in former times; but they seem not so agreeable to the Gospel dispensation, having a tendency to ensnare the mind, to entangle men, and bring on them a spirit of bondage, contrary to that liberty wherewith Christ has made them free; and therefore it is better to abstain from them: holy resolutions to do the will and work of God should be taken up in the strength of divine grace; but to vow this, or that, or the other thing, which a man previous to his vow is not obliged unto, had better be let alone: but however, when a vow is made that is lawful to be done,

defer not to pay it; that is, to God, to whom it is made, who expects it, and that speedily, as Hannah paid hers; no excuses nor delays should be made;

for [he hath] no pleasure in fools; that is, the Lord hath no pleasure in them, he will not be mocked by them; he will resent such treatment of him, as to vow and not pay, or defer payment and daily, with him. So the Targum, "for the Lord hath no pleasure in fools, because, they defer their vows, and do not pay;"

pay that which thou hast vowed; precisely and punctually; both as to the matter, manner, and time of it.

{r} rdt rvak "si quid vovisti", V. L.

Ecclesiastes 5:5

Ver. 5. Better [is it] that thou shouldest not vow,.... For a vow is an arbitrary thing; a man is not bound to make it, and while he vows not, it is in his own power, and at his option, whether he will do this or that, or not; but when he has once vowed, he is then brought under an obligation, and must perform; see **Ac 5:4**; and therefore it is better not to vow; it is more acceptable to God, and, it is better for a man;

than that thou shouldest vow and not pay; for this shows great weakness and folly, levity and inconstancy, and is resented by the Lord.

Ecclesiastes 5:6

Ver. 6. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin,.... That is, himself, who is corrupt and depraved; either by making a rash vow, which it is not in his power to keep; or such is the corruption of his nature, and the weakness of the flesh, that he cannot keep it; or by making sinful excuses after he has made the vow, and so is guilty of lying, or false swearing, or other sins of the flesh. Jarchi by "flesh" understands his children, on whom his iniquity may be visited and punished; and the Targum interprets this punishment of the judgment or condemnation of hell; see Pr 20:25;

neither say thou before the angel that it [was] an error; that it was done ignorantly and through mistake: that it was not intended, and that this was not the meaning of the vow; and therefore desires to be excused performing it, or to offer a sacrifice in lieu of it. Interpreters are divided about the angel before whom such an excuse should not be made. Some think angel is put for angels in general, in whose presence, and before whom, as witnesses, vows are made;

and who were signified by the cherubim in the sanctuary, where they were to be performed, and who are present in the worshipping assemblies of saints, where these things are done, **1Ti 5:21**; others think the guardian angel is meant, which they suppose every man has; and others that Christ, the Angel of the covenant, is designed, who is in the midst of his people, sees and knows all that is done by them, and will not admit of their excuses; but it is most probable the priest is intended, called the angel, or messenger, of the Lord of hosts, **Mal 2:7**; to whom such who had made vows applied to be loosed from them, acknowledging their error in making them; or to offer sacrifice for their sin of ignorance, **Le 5:4**;

wherefore should God be angry at thy voice; either in making a rash and sinful vow, or in excusing that which was made;

and destroy the work of thine hands? wrought with success, for which the vow was made; and so, instead of its succeeding, is destroyed, and comes to nothing. Vows made by the Jews were chiefly about their houses, or fields, or cattle; see Le 27:28; and so the destruction suggested may signify the curse that God would bring upon any of these, for excusing or not performing the vow made.

Ecclesiastes 5:7

Ver. 7. For in the multitude of dreams, and many words, [there are] also [divers] vanities,.... Or as, "in a multitude of dreams, [there are] many vanities, [so] also in a multitude of words" {s}; as dreams are vain things, or there are abundance of vain things that come into the mind in dreams; so vain and idle are the many excuses which are made for the non-performance of vows; or there are many vain things which are uttered in making of them, or in long prayers to God; or in discourses concerning him; to all which is opposed the fear of God;

but fear thou God; give no heed to dreams, nor to the many words of men, which are vain and foolish; but keep close to the word of God, and worship him internally and externally, in spirit and in truth; for herein lies the sum and substance of religion; see Ec 12:13; The Targum is,

"for in the multitude of the dreams of the false prophets believe not, nor in the vanities of the authors of enchantments, and the many speeches of ungodly men; but serve the wise and just, and of them seek doctrine, and fear before the

Lord;"

see Jer 23:28;

{s} So Luther, Broughton, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus.

Ecclesiastes 5:8

Ver. 8. If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of justice in a province,.... Which is a very disagreeable sight, but often seen; the poor are oppressed, and judgment and justice perverted, and that in a very violent and flagrant manner, in open courts of judicature, in the several provinces and kingdoms of the world;

marvel not at the matter; as though it was some strange and uncommon thing, when nothing is more common: or "marvel not at the will" or "pleasure" {t}; that is, of God, who suffers such things to be. So the Targum, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra, interpret it; stumble not at it, nor arraign the wisdom and justice of God; let not that temptation prevail in thee as it has done in some good men, who have been tempted from hence to think there was nothing in religion, nor no providence attending the affairs of this world; do not be frightened and astonished, and hurried into such a thought; nor be distressed at the calamities and oppressions of poor and innocent men;

for [he that is] higher than the highest regardeth: that is, God, who is the most high in all the earth; higher, than the kings of the earth, and all high and haughty oppressors; higher indeed than the heavens, and the angels there: he "regards" all his people, his eyes are on them, and he never withdraws them from them; he regards their cries, and hears and answers them; he regards their oppressors, and their oppressions; and will, in his own time, deliver them; or he "keeps" {u} his people as the apple of his eye, in the hollow of his hand, night and day, lest any hurt them; he keeps them by his power through faith unto salvation. It may be rendered, "the high One from on high observes" {w}; God, who is the high and lofty One, looks down from the high heavens where he dwells, and takes notice of all the sons of men, and considers all their works; see Ps 33:13;

and [there be] higher than they; either the holy angels, who are higher than tyrannical oppressors, higher in nature, and excel in strength and power; and these are on the side of the oppressed, have the charge of saints, and encamp about them; and, whenever they have an order, can destroy their enemies in a moment: or rather the three divine Persons are meant, by the plural expression used, Father, Son, and Spirit; Jehovah the Father is above men, the greatest of men, in the things in which they deal proudly; be is greater than all, and none can pluck his sheep out of his hands, and worry them: Christ, the Son of the Highest, is higher than the kings, of the earth; he is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and able to deliver and save his people; and the Holy Spirit is the power of the Highest, and is greater than he or they that are in the world, the avowed enemies of the saints. Aben Ezra interprets it of the secret of the name of God, which he says is inexplicable. So the Midrash understands it of the holy blessed God; and in another tract it is said, on mention of this passage, there are three superiors above them in the way of emanation, and of them it is said {x}, "there be higher than they."

{t} Upxh le "super voluntate", Montanus, Cocceius; "de divina volantate", Pagninus, Mercerus; "divinam voluntatem", Tigurine version; "de ista voluntate", Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus. {u} rmv "custodiens", Montanus; "custodit", Pagninus; "custos", Tigurine version. {w} "Observat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus; "observans, observator est", Rambachius. {x} Tikkune Zohar Correct. 69. fol. 114. 1.

Ecclesiastes 5:9

Ver. 9. Moreover, the profit of the earth is for all,.... Or, "the excellency of the earth in" or "above all things [is] this" {y}; that God most high rules over all the earth, and is higher than the kings of it, and all oppressors in it; or in all respects there is a preference, a superior excellency in the country as opposed to the city, especially in this, that there are not so many tumults, riots, and oppressions there; though this is mostly understood of the preference and superior excellency of agriculture, or tillage of the earth. So the Targum,

"the excellency of the praise of tilling the earth is above all things:"

and to the same purpose Jarchi and Aben Ezra; and the profit arising from it is enjoyed by all; it is for all, even the beasts of the field have grass from hence, as well as man has bread corn, and all other necessaries;

the king [himself] is served by the field; his table is served with bread corn, and flesh, and wine, and fruits of various sorts, the produce of the earth, which spring from it, or are nourished by it; were it not for husbandry the king himself and his family could not subsist; and therefore it becomes kings to encourage it, and not oppress those who are employed in it: or "the king [is a] servant to the field" {z}; some kings have addicted themselves to husbandry, and been great lovers of it, as Uzziah was, 2Ch 26:10; and some of the Chinese emperors, as their histories {a} show; and the kings of Persia {b}: Vulcan, in the shield of Achilles, represented the reapers, gatherers, and binders of sheaves at work in the field, and a king standing among the sheaves with a sceptre in his hand, looking on with great pleasure, while a dinner is prepared by his orders for the workmen {c}; many of the Roman generals, and high officers, were called from the plough, particularly Cincinnatus {d}; and these encouraged husbandry in their subjects, as well as took care of their own farms. There is another sense of the words given, besides many more;

"and the most excellent Lord of the earth (that is, the most high God) is the King of every field that is tilled; (that is, the King of the whole habitable world;) or the King Messiah, Lord of his field, the church, and who is the most eminent in all the earth {e}."

The Midrash interprets it of the holy blessed God.

{y} ayh lkb Ura Nwrtyw "et praestantia terrae in omnibus ipsa", Montanus; "porro excellentia terrae prae omnibus est", Vatablus; "et praecellentia terrae in omnibus est", Gejerus. {z} dben hdvl Klm "rex agro sit servus", Montanus, Piscator, Gejerus; "rex agro servit", Mercerus, so some in Drusius. {a} Vid. Martin. Sinic. Histor. l. 2. p. 36. & l. 4. p. 92. & l. 3. p. 287. {b} Xenophon. Oeconom. p. 482. {c} Homer. Iliad. 18. v. 550-558. {d} Flor. Hist. Roman. l. 1. c. 11. {e} So Schmidt Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 5:10

Ver. 10. He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver,.... The tillage of the earth is necessary, a very laudable and useful employment, and men do well to busy themselves in it; without this, neither the common people nor the greatest personages can be supplied with the necessaries of life; but then an immoderate love of money is criminal, which is here meant by loving silver, one kind of money, which when loved beyond measure is the root of all evil; and besides, when a man has got ever so much of it, he is not satisfied, he still wants more, like the horse leech at the vein cries Give, give; or he cannot eat silver, so Jarchi; or be "fed with money", as Mr. Broughton renders it; and herein the fruits of the earth, for which the husbandman labours, have the preference to silver; for these he can eat, and be filled and satisfied with them, but he cannot eat his bags of gold and silver;

nor he that loveth abundance with increase; that is, he that coveteth a great deal of this world's things shall not be satisfied with the increase of them, let that be what it will; or, he shall have "no increase" {f}, be ever the better for his abundance, or enjoy the comfort and benefit of it: or, "he that loveth abundance [from whence there is] no increase" {g}; that loves to have a multitude of people about him, as manservants and maidservants; a large equipage, as Aben Ezra suggests, which are of very little use and service, or none at all;

this [is] also vanity: the immoderate love of money, coveting large estates and possessions, and to have a train of servants. Jarchi allegorically interprets silver and abundance, of the commands, and the multitude of them.

{f} hawbt al "non erit proventus illi", Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; "nullum fructum percipit", Tigurine version. {g} "Qui amat copiam, sc. multitudinem ex qua non est sperandus profectus", Schmidt, so Gussetius.

Ecclesiastes 5:11

Ver. 11. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them,.... When a man's substance increases by trade, or otherwise, very often so it is that his family increases, and he has more mouths to feed, and backs to clothe; or his estate growing larger, if he lives suitably to it, he must keep more servants; and these, as they have but little work to do, are described by their eating, rather than by their working; and besides, such a growing man in the world has more friends and visitors that come about him, and eat with him, as well as the poor, which wait upon him to receive his alms: and if his farms, and his fields, and his flocks, are enlarged, he must have more husbandmen, and labourers, and shepherds to look after them, who all must be maintained. So Pheraulas in Xenophon {h} observes,

"that now he was possessed of much, that he neither ate, nor drank, nor slept the sweeter for it; what he got by his plenty was, that he had more committed to his keeping, and more to distribute to others; he had more care and more business, with trouble; for now, says he, many servants require food of me, many drink, many clothing, some need physicians, &c. it must needs be, adds he, that they that possess much must spend much on the gods, on friends, and on guests;"

and what good [is there] to the owners thereof, saving the beholding [of them] with their eyes? he can go into his grounds, his fields, and his meadows to behold his flocks and his herds, and can say, all these are mine; he can go into his chambers and open his treasures, and feed his eyes with looking upon his bags of gold and silver, his jewels, and other riches; he can behold a multitude of people at his table, eating at his expense, and more maintained at his cost: and, if a liberal man, it may be a pleasure to him; if otherwise, it will give him pain: and, excepting these, he enjoys no more than food and raiment; and often so it is, that even his very servants have in some things the advantage of him, as follows. The Targum is,

"what profit is there to the owner thereof who gathers it, unless he does good with it, that he may see the gift of the reward with his eyes in the world to come?"

Jarchi interprets it after this manner,

"when men bring many freewill offerings, the priests are increased that eat them; and what good is to the owner of them, the Lord, but the sight of his eyes, who says, and his will is done?"

{h} Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 26.

Ecclesiastes 5:12

Ver. 12. The sleep of a labouring man [is] sweet, whether he eat little or much,.... Or "of a servant" {i}, who enjoys sleep equally as a king; a tiller of the ground, as Jarchi; who also interprets it of one that serves the Lord, as likewise the Targum; a beloved one of his, to whom he gives sleep, Ps 127:2. A refreshing sleep is always reckoned a great mercy and blessing, and which labouring men enjoy with sweetness {k}; for if they have but little to eat at supper, yet coming weary from their work, sleep is easily brought on when they lie down, and sound sleep they have, and rise in the morning lively and active, and fit for business; or, if they eat more plentifully, yet through their labour they have a good digestion, and their sleep is not hindered: so that should it be answered to the above question, what has the master more than the servant, though he eats and drinks more freely, and of the best, and lives voluptuously? yet it may be replied, that, in the business of sleep, the labouring man has the preference to him; which must be owned to be a great blessing of life, and is often interrupted by excessive eating and drinking;

but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep; either the abundance of food which he eats, which loads his stomach, and fills his head with vapours, and makes him restless, so that he can get no sleep, or what he does get is very uncomfortable: or the abundance of his riches fills him with cares, what he shall do with them, and how to keep and increase them; and with fears, lest thieves should break in and take them away from him, so that he cannot sleep quietly {l}. The Targum is,

"sweet is the sleep of a man that serves the Lord of the world with a perfect heart; and he shall have rest in the house of his grave, whether he lives a few years or more, &c;"

and much to the same purpose Jarchi; and who says, it is thus interpreted in an ancient book of theirs, called Tanchuma.

{i} dbeh tou doulou, Sept. "servi", Arab. "i.e. agricolae", Drusius, Rambachius; "qui par regi famuloque venis", Senec. Hercul. Fur. v. 1073. {k} "Somnus agrestium lenis", &c. Horat. Carmin. l. 3. Ode 1. v. 21, 22. {l} "Ne noctu, nec diu quietus unquam eam", Plauti Aulularia, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 23. "Aurea rumpunt tecta quietem", Senec. Hercul. Oet. v. 646.

Ecclesiastes 5:13

Ver. 13. There is a sore evil [which] I have seen under the sun,.... Or "an evil sickness" {m}. A sinful disease in the person with whom it is found, and very disagreeable to others to behold; it is enough to make one sick to see it; and what he is about to relate he himself was an eyewitness of:

[namely], riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt; laid up in barns and granaries, as the fruits of the earth; or in chests and coffers, as gold and silver, for the use and service of the owners of them; and which yet have been to their real injury; being either used by them in a luxurious and intemperate way, so have brought diseases on their bodies, and damnation to their souls; or not used at all for their own good, or the good of others, which brings the curse of

God upon them, to their ruin and destruction, both here and hereafter: and oftentimes so it is, and which no doubt had fallen under the observation of Solomon, that some who have been great misers, and have hoarded up their substance, without using them themselves, or sharing them with others, have not only been plundered of them, but, for the sake of them, their lives have been taken away in a most barbarous manner, by cutthroats and villains; sometimes by their own servants, nay, even by their own children. Riches ill gotten and ill used are very prejudicial to the owners; and if they are well got, but ill used, or not used at all, greatly hurt the spiritual and eternal state of men; it is a difficult thing for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and a covetous man cannot; if a professor, the word he hears is choked and made unprofitable; he errs from the faith, and pierces himself through with many sorrows now, and is liable to eternal damnation hereafter. The Targum interprets it of a man that gathers riches, and does no good with them; but keeps them to himself, to do himself evil in the world to come.

{m} hlwx her "morbus malus", Tigurine version, Vatablus.

Ecclesiastes 5:14

Ver. 14. But those riches perish by evil travail,.... Or, "by an evil business or affair" {n}. That is, such riches as are not well got, or are not used as they should be, these waste away and come to nothing; either by the owner's bad management, and misconduct in trade and business; or by fire, tempest, thieves, and robbers, and many other ways and means: these are very certain things; and there are various ways by which they make themselves wings and flee away, under the direction of a divine providence;

and he begetteth a son, and [there is] nothing in his hand; the riches he had hoarded up, he designed for his son; but being stripped of them by one means or another, when he comes to die, has nothing to leave his son: or if his riches do not perish in his own lifetime, yet they are quickly consumed by his son, who, in a short time, has nothing to live upon; and so being brought up a gentleman, and in no business, is in a worse condition than such who have been brought up to work for their living, and in no expectation of an estate after the decease of their friends. The Targum understands it in this latter sense, paraphrasing the words thus,

"and those riches, which he shall leave his son after his death, shall perish, because he hath gotten them in an evil way; and they shall not remain in the hand of the son whom he hath begotten; neither shall anything remain in his hand."

{n} er Nyneb "occupatione, negotio, vel casu malo", Gejerus.

Ecclesiastes 5:15

Ver. 15. As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came,.... This may be understood either of the covetous rich man, or of his son; and that supposing what is before said should not be the case of either of them, but they should possess their substance as long as they live; yet, when they come to die, they will be stripped of them all; of their gold and silver, their plate and jewels, and rich household furniture; of their cattle and possessions, farms and estates, which are no longer theirs; and even of their very clothes, and be as naked as they were when they came into the world; and which is indeed the case of every man, **Job 1:21**; and is used as an argument, and a very forcible one, against covetousness;

and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand; nothing of his substance, which he has got by his labour, and hoarded up with great care; not the least portion of it can he carry away with him when he dies; not any of his jewels, nor bags of gold and silver; and if any of these should be put into his grave, which has been sometimes done at the interment of great personages, these are of no manner of use and service to him, either to comfort and refresh his body, or to save his soul from hell, and procure it an entrance into the heavenly glory; see **1Ti 6:7**. The Targum allegorizes this in a very orthodox way, not very usual, in favour of original sin, and against the doctrine of merit;

"as he goes out of his mother's womb naked, without a covering, and without any good; so he shall return to go to the house of his grave, indigent of merit, as he came into this world; and no good reward shall he receive by his labour, to take with him into the world to which he goes, that it may be for merit in his hand."

Ecclesiastes 5:16

Ver. 16. And this also [is] a sore evil, [that] in all points as he came, so shall he go,.... This seems not to be an evil or vanity, distinct from the former; but the same repeated and confirmed, and expressed, if possible, in stronger terms, that a man is in all respects alike, when he goes out of the world, as when he came in. A man's birth is signified by "coming", that is, out of his mother's womb, and into the world; and which is a description of every man born into it, **Joh 1:9**; he is of the earth, earthly; comes forth like a flower, and springs up as grass; he comes not of himself, nor casually, but by means of his parents; and according to the determinate will of God, and to answer some end or other: and his death is signified by "going": a going the way of all flesh; a going out of the world; a going to the grave, the house of all living, a man's long home; it is like going from one house to another; for death is not an annihilation of man, but a remove of him from hence elsewhere; and a man's birth and death are in all points alike. This is to be understood of natural and civil things; of riches and honours, which men cannot carry with them; and with respect to them, they are as they were born, naked and stripped of them; and with respect to the body, the parts of it then are the same, though more grown; it is as naked as it was born; and a man is as much beholden to his friends for his grave as for his swaddling clothes; it becomes what it was at first, earth and dust; and as a man comes not into the world at his own will and pleasure, so neither does he go out of it at his will, but the Lord's. The Midrash interprets it thus,

"as a man comes into the world, with crying, weeping, and sighing, and without knowledge, so he goes out."

Likewise this is only true of natural and unregenerate men as to moral things; as they are born in sin, they die in sin; with only this difference, an addition of more sin; as they come into the world without the image of God, without a righteousness, without holiness, and without the grace of God, so they go out of it without these things: but this is not true of saints and truly gracious persons; they come into the world with sin, but go out of it without it; being washed in the blood of Christ, justified by his righteousness, and all their sins expiated and pardoned through his sacrifice: they are born without a righteousness, but do not die without one; Christ has wrought out an everlasting righteousness for them; this is imputed to them; is received by faith; given them; they are found in it, living and dying; and this introduces them into heaven and happiness: they are born without holiness, but do not live and die without it; they are regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God, and at the moment of death made perfectly holy. This only therefore is true of men, as natural, and with respect to natural and civil things: the Targum interprets it, "as he comes into this world void of merit, so he shall go into that;"

and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind? for riches, which are as unsatisfying as the wind; which are as shifting, and as swift to flee away, as that; and can no more be held, when it is the will of God they should go, and especially at death, than the wind is to be held in the fist of men; and which are as unprofitable as that in the hour of death. Particularly, what profit has a man of all his riches, which he has got by labour, when he neither makes use of them in life for his own good, nor the good of others; and when he comes to die, they leave him and stand him in no stead; and especially having been unconcerned about his immortal soul; and having been wholly taken up in the pursuit of such vain and transitory things? see Mt 16:26.

Ecclesiastes 5:17

Ver. 17. All his days also he eateth in darkness,.... To all that has been said is added another evil, that attends such whose hearts are inordinately set on riches; that all their days, throughout the whole of their lives, they live a most uncomfortable life; for eating is here put for their whole manner of living: such not only eat coarse bread, and very mean food of any sort, but wear sordid apparel, and live in a poor cottage, in a very obscure and miserable manner. Aben Ezra understands it literally of the night, to which time such a man defers eating, that he might lose no time in his labour; and that it might not be seen what sort of food he eats, and how sparingly, and that others might not eat with him; and what he does eat is not eaten freely, but grudgingly, and with anguish and distress of mind, without any real pleasure and joy; and much less with the light of God's countenance, the discoveries of his love, and communion with him: the Targum is,

"all his days he dwelleth in darkness, that he may taste his bread alone;"

and [he hath], much sorrow and wrath with his sickness; either the sickness of his mind, his covetousness; or the sickness of his body, emaciated by withholding from himself the necessaries of life: or when he comes upon a sick bed, he is filled with sorrow and indignation, that he must live no longer, to accumulate more wealth, and accomplish his projects and designs; and that he must leave his wealth, he has been at so much pains to gather together. Or, "and he is much angry" {o}; when things do not answer in trade according to his wishes; when his substance diminishes, or, however, does not increase as he desires; when he is cheated by fraudulent men, or robbed by thieves: "and he hath sickness" {p}; either of body or mind, or both, because matters do not succeed as he would have them; and through fretfulness at losses and crosses, and disappointments; and through cares in getting and keeping what he has: "and wrath"; at all about him, whom he is ready to charge with slothfulness or unfaithfulness to him; and even at the providence of God, that does not give him the desired success; so that he has no manner of pleasure and comfort in life.

{o} hbrh oekw "et irascitur multum", Vatablus, Drusius; "et indignatus fuit, vel indignatur multum", Piscator, Rambachius. {p} wylxw "et agritudo ei fuit, vel est", Piscator, Drusius; "vel fuerit", Gejerus.

Ecclesiastes 5:18

Ver. 18. Behold that which I have seen,.... Observed, considered and approved of, and which he recommended and excited attention to, and is as follows;

[it is] good and comely [for one] to eat and to drink; to make use of the creatures God has given for service in a free and liberal manner, without excess, and with moderation; and not deprive a man's self of those things he may lawfully partake of, and are necessary for him: to do this is good for himself, and for the health of his body; and is right in the sight of God, and is comely before men; it is not only lawful, but laudable. There is another version and sense of the words, "it is good to eat and drink him that is fair" {q}, or comely; Christ, who is fairer than the children of men; to live by faith on him, to eat his flesh, and drink his blood; but this, however true, spiritual, and evangelical, it seems foreign to the text. It follows,

and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him; this last clause, "which God giveth him", is not to be connected with "the good of all his labour"; though it is true, that whatever good is got by labour is the gift of God; but with "all the days of his life"; for the life of man, and all the days of it, be they more or fewer, are the gift of God, and according to his determinate will and pleasure; and throughout this time a man should enjoy, in a comfortable way, with thankfulness to God, the good things he has gotten by his labour and industry, through the blessing of God along with them. This Solomon frequently inculcates; Aben Ezra says, this is the third time, but it seems to be the fourth; see Ec 2:24;

for it [is] his portion; that is, in this life; for otherwise, if a good man, he has a better portion in another: this is the part which God has allotted to him here; and it is his duty, and for his good and comfort, to make use of it.

{q} "Bonum est, cum qui pulcher est, edere et bibere, h. e. Christo per fidem frui; nova et singularis expositio", Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 5:19

Ver. 19. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth,.... Which include the whole of a man's substance; all his estate, personal and real; and all his goods and possessions, movable and immovable, as gold, silver, cattle, fields, and farms; which are all the gift of God, by whatsoever means they may be acquired or possessed;

and hath given him power; or, "caused him to have dominion" {r}, over his wealth and riches, and not be a slave to them, as many are: but to have so much command of them and of himself, as

to eat thereof; comfortably enjoy them; and dispose of them to his own good, the good of others, and the glory of God. It follows,

and to take his portion; which God hath allotted him; to take it thankfully, and use it freely and comfortably;

and to rejoice in his labour; in the things he has been labouring for, in a cheerful use of them; blessing God for them, and taking the comfort of them;

this [is] the gift of God; to have such power over his substance, and not be a slave to it, and to enjoy the fruits of his labour, in a cheerful and comfortable manner; this is as much the gift of God as riches themselves {s}.

{r} wjylvh "eumque dominari eum fecerit", Tigurine version; "imperare fecit eum", Gejerus; "dominari eum fecerit", Rambachius. {s} "Di tibi divitias dederunt, artemque fruendi", Horat. Ep. l. 1. Ep. 4. v. 7.

Ecclesiastes 5:20

Ver. 20. For he shall not much remember the days of his life,.... Be they more or fewer, as Jarchi: he will not think life long and tedious; nor dwell upon, and distress himself with, the troubles he has met with, or is likely to meet with; but, being content with the good things God has given him, and freely and cheerfully enjoying them, he passes away his time delightfully and pleasantly. Some, as Aben Ezra observes, and which he approves of, and is agreeably to the accents, render the words, "if he [has] not much, he remembers the days of his life" {t}; if he has but little of the good things of this life, he remembers how few his days are he has to live; and doubts not he shall have enough to carry him to the end of his days, and therefore is quite easy and content; he calls to mind how he has been supplied all his days hitherto, and is persuaded that that God, who has provided for him, will continue his goodness to him, and that he shall not want any good thing; and therefore does not distress himself with what is to come;

because God answereth [him] in the joy of his heart; he calls upon God for a blessing on his labours, asks of him his daily food, and desires what may be proper and sufficient for him, or what he judges is necessary and convenient; and God answers his prayers and petitions, and good wishes, by filling his heart with food and gladness; and giving him that cheerfulness of spirit, and thankfulness of heart, in the enjoyment of every blessing; and especially if along with it he lifts up the light of his countenance, and grants him joy in the Holy Ghost; he will go on so pleasantly and comfortably as to forget all his former troubles; and it will dissipate his doubts and fears about how he shall live for the future.

{t} rkzy hbrh al yk "quod si non multum recordabitur dierum vitae suae", Junius & Tremellius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ecclesiastes 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES 6

The wise man goes on to expose the vanity of riches, as possessed by a covetous man, who makes no use of them; an evil, and a common one under the sun, **Ec 6:1**; Who is described by the good things he has; which he has not a power to enjoy, but a stranger enjoys them, **Ec 6:2**; by his numerous offspring and long life; yet neither is he satisfied with good in life, nor has he a burial at death; wherefore an abortive is preferred unto him, **Ec 6:3**; For though many things may be said of that which are disagreeable, yet worse of him, and that has more rest than he; and besides, they both go to one place, the grave, **Ec 6:4**; and the vanity of an anxious labour for riches is further argued from the use of them, at most and best, which is only for the body, and the sustenance of it, but cannot satisfy the mind or soul, **Ec 6:7**; and this use a fool can make of, them, as well as a wise man; and a poor man, that is knowing, diligent, and industrious to live, as well as the rich, **Ec 6:8**. Wherefore it is best to enjoy and be content with present mercies, than to let loose the wandering desires after what may never be had, **Ec 6:9**; and especially it should be considered, that let a man be in what circumstances he will, he is but a man; and these circumstances are determined and appointed by God, which he cannot alter; and therefore it is both vain and sinful to contend with him, **Ec 6:10**. And, after all, a man is never the better for his carking cares and wandering desires, since there are so many things that increase vanity, **Ec 6:11**; and a man is so ignorant of what is good for him for the present, and of what shall be after him, **Ec 6:12**.

Ver. 1. There is an evil which I have seen under the sun,.... The Vulgate Latin version reads it, another evil; but wrongly, for the same is considered as before, the evil of covetousness; which is one of the evil things that come out of the heart of man; is abominable to the Lord, contrary to his nature and will, and a breach of his law, which forbids it, and is the root of all evil; this is an evil under the sun, for there is nothing of this kind above it; and it fell under the observation of Solomon in various instances;

and it [is] common among men; or, "great over men" {u}; or "over the man", the covetous man: it spreads itself over them; few were free from it, even so long ago, in those early times, and in such times in which silver was made no account of, and was like stones in Jerusalem, as common as they; and yet the sin of covetousness, of hoarding up money and making no use of it, for a man's own good, and the good of others, was very rife among men, 1Ki 10:27.

{u} Mdah le ayh hbrw "et multum ipsum super hominem", Montanus; "et magaum est illud super hominem istum", Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 6:2

Ver. 2. A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour,.... By "riches" may be meant gold and silver, things which a covetous man is never satisfied with; and by "wealth", cattle, with which farms and fields are stocked: the wealth of men, especially in former times, and in the eastern countries, lay very much in these, as did the wealth of Abraham and Job, Ge 13:2; and all these, as they are reckoned glorious and honourable in themselves; so they create honour and glory among men, and raise to high and honourable places; and these, as they go, they are usually put together, and are called by the name of honour and glory itself; see **Pr 3:16**. And they are all the gifts of God, which he either as blessings bestows upon men, or suffers men to attain unto, though a curse may go along with them; which is the case here, for no man whatever is possessed of them but by the will of God or his divine permission; see 1Ch 29:12; and which a man may, and sometimes has, such a plentiful portion of;

so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth: he has not only for the supply of his wants, what is necessary for his daily use and service, but even what is for delight and pleasure; yea, as much as he could reasonably wish for; nay, more than heart could wish,
Ps 73:7;

yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof; the Targum adds, "because of his sin"; either he takes it away from him, he making no use of it; or his appetite is taken away, that he has no desire to it; or rather he has no heart to enjoy what he has, and scarce any part of it; not to eat and drink, and wear suitably to his circumstances, but grudges whatever he lays out on his back or belly, or in housekeeping in his family; for though God gives him a large substance, yet not a heart to make use of it, without which he cannot enjoy it; and therefore it would have been as good, or better for him, to have been without it; see **Ec 5:19**;

but a stranger eateth it; the Syriac version adds, "after him"; enjoys it, not only a part of it, but the whole; one that is not akin to him, and perhaps was never known by him; and yet, by one means or another, either in a lawful or unlawful way, comes into the possession of all he has; this has been always reckoned a great unhappiness, **La 5:2**. Hence it follows,

this [is] vanity, and it [is] an evil disease; it is a vain thing to be possessed of great substance, and not enjoy anything of it in a comfortable way, through the sin of covetousness; which is a spiritual disease, and a very bad one; very prejudicial to the soul, and the state of it, and is rarely cured. Juvenal {w} calls it frenzy and madness for a man to live poor, that be may die rich; he is like the ass that Crassus Agelastus saw, loaded with figs, and eating thorns.

{w} "Cum furor dubius", &c. Satyr. 14. v. 136. exposed by Persius, Sat. 6. v. 69, &c. "unge puer caules", &c.

Ecclesiastes 6:3

Ver. 3. If a man beget an hundred [children],.... Sons and daughters, a certain number for an uncertain. Some have had many children, and almost this number; Rehoboam had twenty eight sons and threescore daughters; and Ahab had seventy sons, how many daughters is not said, 2Ch 11:21; this was reckoned a great honour and happiness to have many children; happy was the man that had his quiver full of them, Ps 127:3; such a case is here supposed;

and live many years, so that the days of his years be many; or "sufficient", as Jarchi interprets it; he lives as long as life is desirable; lives to a good old age, to the full age of men, threescore years and ten; yea, supposing he was to live to be as old as Methuselah,

and his soul be not filled with good; does not enjoy the good things he has; has no pleasure nor satisfaction in the temporal good things of life, has not the comfort of them, and is always uneasy, because he has not more of them; and especially if his soul is not filled with spiritual good things, the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ;

And also [that] he have no burial; as Jezebel, Jehoiakim, and others; who is either destroyed by robbers and cutthroats, for the sake of his substance, and cast into a ditch or a river, or some place, where he is never found to be interred; or else, being of such a sordid disposition, he provides not for a decent burial, suitably to his circumstances, or forbids one; or, being despised and disesteemed by all men, his heirs and successors either neglect or refuse to give him one; see Jer 22:29;

I say [that] an untimely birth [is] better than he; an abortive is to be preferred unto him; it would have been better for him if he had never been born, or had been in such a case.

Ecclesiastes 6:4

Ver. 4. For he cometh in with vanity,.... The Targum adds, "into this world." Some understand this of the abortive, and render it, "though he cometh in with vanity" {x}, yet is to be preferred to the covetous man: others interpret it of the covetous man himself; and scrape of both: or, however, they may be compared together in these instances; the abortive comes into the world in vain, for nothing, and answers no purpose, as can well be observed; and the same may be said of a covetous rich man; he walks in a vain show, and is altogether vanity, in his coming in, in his life, and going out;

and departeth in darkness; or, "into darkness" {y}; goes out of the world without any notice taken of him; and goes down to the dark grave, where he lies in obscurity;

and his name shall be covered with darkness; the abortive has no name, and is never spoken of; and so the name and memory of such a man as is here described rot and perish: and in this respect the abortive has the preference to him; for though he is covered with darkness, yet no ill is ever spoken of him; whereas the name of the wicked covetous man is cursed.

{x} ab yk "quamvis venit", Drusius. {y} Kvxb "in tenebrositatem", Montanus; "in tenebras", Tigurine version, Mercerus, so Broughton.

Ecclesiastes 6:5

Ver. 5. Moreover, he hath not seen the sun,.... This must be spoken of the abortive, and seems to confirm the sense of the former text, as belonging to it; and whereas it has never seen the light of the sun, nor enjoyed the pleasure and comfort of it, it is no ways distressing to it to be without it. The Targum is,

"the light of the law he seeth not; and knoweth not between good and evil, to judge between this world and that to come:"

so the Vulgate Latin version, "neither knows the difference of good and evil";

nor known [anything]; not the sun, nor anything else: or "experienced" {z} and "felt" the heat of the sun, and its comfortable influences; which a man may, who is blind, and has never seen it, but an abortive has not; and indeed has known no man, nor any creature nor thing in this world, and therefore it is no concern to it to be without them; and besides, has never had any knowledge or experience of the troubles of lifts, which every living man is liable to. Wherefore this is certain,

this hath more rest than the other; that is, the abortive than the covetous man; having never been distressed with the troubles of life, and now not affected with the sense of loss.

{z} edy alw "ueque expertus est", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Rambachius, so Broughton.

Ecclesiastes 6:6

Ver. 6. Yea, though he live a thousand years twice [told],.... Or two thousand years, which no man ever did, nor even one thousand years; Methuselah, the oldest man, did not live so long as that; this is than twice the age of the oldest man: there is one sort of the Ethiopians, who are said {a} to live almost half space of time longer than usual, called from thence Macrobii; which Pliny {b} makes to be one hundred and forty years, which is just double the common term of life. This here is only a supposition. Aben Ezra interprets it, "a thousand thousand", but wrongly; so the Arabic version, "though he lives many thousand years";

yet hath he seen no good, not enjoyed the good of his labour, what he has been labouring for and was possessed of; and therefore has lived so long as he has to very little purpose, and with very little comfort or credit; and especially he has had no experience of spiritual good;

do not all go to one place? that is, the grave; they do, even all men; it is the house appointed for all living, Job 30:23; and hither go both the abortive, and the covetous rich man; so that he has in this no pre-eminence to it. Jarchi interprets it of hell, the one place, whither all sinners go; but the former sense is best.

{a} Mela tie Situ Orbis, l. 3. c. 9. {b} Nat. Hist. 1. 7. c. 2.

Ecclesiastes 6:7

Ver. 7. All the labour of man [is] for his mouth,.... For the food of his mouth, as the Targum; for the sustenance of his body, for food and clothing, part being put for the whole: all that a man labours for is to get this; and if he does not enjoy it, his labour is in vain; meats are for the belly, which are taken in by the mouth, and for these a man labours; and if he does not eat them, when he has got them, he labours to no purpose;

and yet the appetite is not filled; even the bodily or sensual appetite; no, not even by those who eat the fruit of their labour; for though their hunger is allayed for the present, and the appetite is satisfied for a while, yet it returns again, and requires more food, and so continually: or, "the soul is not filled", or "satisfied" {c}; it is the body only that is filled or satisfied with such things, at best; the mind of man grasps after greater things, and can find no contentment or satisfaction in earthly or sensual enjoyments. This seems to be a new argument, proving the vanity of riches, from the narrow use of them; which only reaches to the body, not to the soul.

{c} almt al vpnh "anima non implebitur", Pagninus, Montanus; "anima non expletur", Mercerus, Gejerus; "non impletur", Cocceius, so Broughton; "non satiatur", Drusius.

Ecclesiastes 6:8

Ver. 8. For what hath the wise more than the fool,.... More delight and pleasure, in gratifying his senses, by eating and drinking: the wise man enjoys no more than the fool; the fool finds as much pleasure in the labour of his hands, which is for his mouth, as the wise man does; and the wise man can get no more satisfaction to his mind, from these outward gratifications, than the fool;

what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living? either, what does the poor man want more than the rich man, that knows how to get his bread, and is diligent and industrious among men to live, and does get a livelihood for himself and family; he enjoys all the sweets and comforts of life, as well as the rich man: or what hath the poor knowing man? as Aben Ezra interprets it, according to the accents; what has he more or does he enjoy more, than the poor foolish man, provided he has but sense enough to behave himself among men, so as to have bread to eat, and clothes to wear; which is as much as any man can enjoy, be he ever so rich or so wise?

Ecclesiastes 6:9

Ver. 9. Better [is] the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire,.... By "the sight of the eyes" is not meant the bare beholding outward riches, as in **Ec 5:11**; but the enjoyment of present mercies; such things as a man is in the possession of, and with which he should be content, Heb 13:5; and by "the wandering of the desire", the craving appetite and insatiable lust of the covetous mind, which enlarges its desire as hell, after a thousand things, and everything it can think of; such a mind roves through the whole creation, and covets everything under the sun: now it is better to enjoy contentedly things in sight and in possession, than to let the mind loose in vague desires, after things that may never be come at, and, if attained to, would give no satisfaction;

this [is] also vanity and vexation of spirit: a most vain thing, to give the mind such a loose and liberty in its unbounded desires after worldly things; and a vexation of spirit it is to such a craving mind, that it cannot obtain what it is so desirous of.

Ecclesiastes 6:10

Ver. 10. That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it [is] man,.... Which may be understood of the first man Adam, who has been, has existed, was produced by the immediate power of God, creating and forming him out of the dust of the earth; was made after the image, and in the likeness of God, a wise and knowing creature, a rich and powerful one, the figure of him that was to come, being the head and representative of all his posterity; and he has been named already, he had his name from the Lord himself, suitable to his nature and formation; he called his name Adam, from "Adamah", the earth, from whence he was taken; and though he was so wise and great, and even affected deity, which was the snare laid for him by his enemy, it is well known he was but a man, of the earth, earthly, and returned to it again. Some have applied this to the second man, the Lord from heaven, as the ordinary gloss, and Jerom; and render it, "that which shall be", so the Vulgate Latin version; as yet he was not man, though he had agreed to be and was prophesied of that he should; however be was named already the seed of the woman, Shiloh, Ithiel, the Messiah, or Anointed; hence by Solomon, in allusion to this name, his "name is [said to be] as ointment poured forth", **So 1:3**; and as it was known that he should be man, so it is now known that he is really and truly man; though not merely so, but God as well as man; yet as to his human nature his Father is greater and mightier than he; but this sense some interpreters despise and laugh at: and indeed though the whole of it is truth, it does not seem to be the truth of the text, nor suitable to the context: rather the words are to be understood of mankind in general, of all men, not only that have been, but that are or shall be; these were all appointed to come into being by the Lord; they have been in his eternal purposes and decrees, and their names are written or not written in the Lamb's book of life; and they have all one common name, that of "man", weak, frail, mortal, wretched man; they are, as is said of the Egyptians, men and not God, Isa 31:3; particularly this is true of persons the most famous that have been in the world; such who have been in ages past, and their names have been called, or they have obtained a name among men, men of renown, that are on the list of fame; such who have been the most famous for wisdom, for riches, for strength, or for power and authority, and have even had deity ascribed to them, and divine worship given them; yet it has been notorious that they were but men, and not God, so Jarchi; and died as such; see **Ps 9:20**. Moreover, this may be understood of all things relating to men; that all that has been, is, or shall be, has been already named of God, determined and appointed by him; so the Targum renders it,

"all is the decree of the Word of the Lord;"

all things relating to the temporal affairs of men, as to their birth and place of abode, their callings and stations of life; so to their circumstances of poverty or riches, which with all their craving desires and carking cares it is impossible for them to alter, or make them otherwise than they are; which is observed, to check the wandering and insatiable desires of men after worldly things;

neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he; the Lord of the world, as the Targum; not the angel of death, as Jarchi; the devil, which had the power of death, and is stronger than men; nor death itself, as others, against which there is no standing, **Ec 8:8**
Isa 28:15; but God himself, who is mightier than men, and with whom a creature should not strive or contend; either about his being and the make of it, or concerning his circumstances in the world, that they are not, greater and better than they be; or about God's decrees concerning these or other things; but quietly submit to his will, and be content in whatsoever circumstances they are, considering that he is the Creator, and a sovereign Being, they are creatures, and dependent on him; and let their circumstances be what they will, wise or unwise, rich or poor, they are but men, and can never rise higher; see **Job 9:3**. It is observed by the Masorites that this is just the middle of the book.

Ecclesiastes 6:11

Ver. 11. Seeing there be many things that increase vanity,.... As appears by all that has been said in this and the preceding chapters; such as wisdom and knowledge, wealth and riches, pleasure, power, and authority. Man is a poor vain creature himself, all he is and has is vanity; and these serve but to increase it, and make him vainer and vainer still;

what [is] man the better? for these things? not at all, rather the worse, being more vain; there is no profit by them, no excellency arises to him from them, no happiness in them, nothing that will be of any service to him, especially with respect to a future state, or when he comes to die. It may be rendered, as it is in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, "seeing there are many words that multiply vanity"; as all such words do that are used with God by way of murmur and complaint concerning a man's lot and condition in this world, and as expostulating and contending with him about it; these increase sin, and by them men contract more guilt, and therefore are not the better for such litigations, but the worse; and so the words stand in connection with **Ec 6:10**: but the former sense seems best, this being the conclusion of the wise man's discourse concerning vanity. So the Targum and Jarchi understand it of things, and not words.

Ecclesiastes 6:12

Ver. 12. For who knoweth what [is] good for man in [this] life?.... To be in a higher or lower station of life, to live in grandeur or meanness, to be rich or poor, learned or unlearned; since that which seems most agreeable to human nature is at, ended with so much vanity, the occasion of so much sin, and often issues in ruin and misery, that no man knows what is best for him; and therefore it is the wisest way to be content with what a man has, and enjoy it in the most comfortable manner, and use it to the best ends and purposes he can. The Targum is,

"for who is he that knows what is good for a man in this world, but to study in the law, which is the life of the world?"

so the Midrash,

all the days of his vain life, which he spendeth as a shadow? or "the number of the days of vain life, which he makes as a shadow" {d}; that is, which God makes as a "shadow", as Cocceius observes; makes to pass away swiftly: this is a description of the vanity, brevity, and uncertainty of human life; it consists of days, rather than of months and years; and those such as are easily numbered, and which pass away suddenly and swiftly, like a shadow that has no substance and reality in it, and leaves nothing behind it; or like a bird that flies away, as Jarchi, and is seen no more; such is the life of man, a most vain life, vanity itself; so it may be rendered, "the number of the days of the life of his vanity" {e}; since therefore he has so short a time to enjoy anything in, it is hard to say what is best for him to have, and the rather since he is quite ignorant of what is to come;

for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun? he does not know himself, nor can any man inform him, what will become of his wealth and riches after his death, which he has got together; who shall enjoy them, and how long and what use will be made of them, either to their own good, or the good of others.

{d} luk Mveyw "et facit eos at umbram", Cocceius. {e} wlbh yyx ymy rpom "numero dierum vitae", ("vitarum", Montanus), "vanitatis suae", Pagninus, Rambachius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ecclesiastes 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES 7

The wise man having exposed the many vanities to which men are subject in this life, and showed that there is no real happiness in all outward enjoyments under the sun; proceeds to observe what are remedies against them, of which he had interspersed some few hints before, as the fear and worship of God, and the free and, moderate use of the creatures; and here suggests more, and such as will protect from them, or support under them, or teach and instruct how to behave while attended with them, and to direct to what are proper and necessary in the pursuit of true and real happiness; such as care of a good name and reputation, **Ec 7:1**; frequent meditation on mortality, **Ec 7:2**; listening to the rebukes of the wise, which are preferable to the songs and mirth of fools, **Ec 7:5**; avoiding oppression and bribery, which are very pernicious, **Ec 7:7**; patience under provocations, and present bad times, as thought to be, **Ec 7:8**; a pursuit of that wisdom and knowledge which has life annexed to it, **Ec 7:11**; submission to the will of God, and contentment in every state, **Ec 7:13**; shunning extremes in righteousness and sin, the best antidote against which is the fear of God, **Ec 7:15**; such wisdom as not to be offended with everything that is done, or word that is spoken, considering the imperfection of the best of men, the weakness of others, and our own, **Ec 7:19**; and then the wise man acknowledges the imperfection of his own wisdom and knowledge, notwithstanding the pains he had taken, **Ec 7:23**; and laments his sin and folly in being drawn aside by women, **Ec 7:26**; and opens the cause of the depravity of human nature, removes it from God, who made man upright, and ascribes it to man, the inventor of evil things, **Ec 7:29**.

Ver. 1. A good name [is] better than precious ointment,.... The word "good" is not in the text, but is rightly supplied, as it is by Jarchi; for of no other name can this be said; that which is not good cannot be better. Some understand this of the name of God, which is God himself, who is the "summum bonum", and chief happiness of men, and take it to be an answer to the question **Ec 6:12**; this and this only is what is a man's good, and is preferable to all outward enjoyments whatever; interest in him as a covenant God; knowledge of him in Christ, which has eternal life annexed to it; communion with him; the discoveries of his lovingkindness, which is better than little; and the enjoyment of him to all eternity. This is true of the name of Christ, whose name Messiah which signifies anointed, is as ointment poured forth, and is preferable to it, **So 1:3**; so his other names, Jesus a Saviour; Jehovah, our righteousness; Immanuel, God with us; are exceeding precious to those who know the worth of him, and see their need of righteousness and salvation by him; his person, and the knowledge of him; his Gospel, and the fame and report it gives of him; infinitely exceed the most precious and fragrant ointment; see **2Co 2:14**. So the name or names given to the people of God, the new names of Hephzibah and Beulah, the name of sons of God, better than that of sons and daughters; and of Christians, or anointed ones, having received that anointing from Christ which teacheth all things, and so preferable to the choicest ointment, Isa 56:5. Likewise to have a name written in heaven, in the Lamb's book of life, and to have one's name confessed by Christ hereafter before his Father and his holy angels; or even a good name among men, a name for a truly godly gracious person; for love to Christ, zeal for his cause, and faithfulness to his truths and ordinances; such as the woman got, better than the box of ointment poured on Christ's head; and which the brother had, whose praise in the Gospel was throughout the churches; and as Demetrius, who had good report of all then, and of the truth itself, Mt 26:13 **3Jo 1:12**. Such a good name is better than precious ointment for the value of it, being better than all riches, for which this may be put; see Isa 39:2; and for the fragrancy of it, emitting a greater; and for the continuance of it, being more lasting, Ps 112:6. The Targum is,

"better is a good name the righteous get in this world, thin the anointing oil which was poured upon the heads of kings and priests."

So Alshech,

"a good name is better than the greatness of a king, though anointed with oil;"

and the day of death than the day of one's birth; some render it, in connection with the preceding clause, "as a good name is better, &c. so the day of death than the day of one's birth" {f}; that is, the day of a man's death than the day of his birth. This is to be understood not of death simply considered; for that in itself, abstracted from its connections and consequences, is not better than to be born into the world, or come into life, or than life itself; it is not preferable to it, nor desirable; for it is contrary to nature, being a dissolution of it; a real evil, as life, and long life, are blessings; an enemy to mankind, and a terrible one: nor of ether persons, with whom men have a connection, their friends and relations; for with them the day of birth is a time of rejoicing, and the day of death is a time of mourning, as appears from Scripture and all experience; see Joh 16:21. It is indeed reported {g} of some Heathenish and barbarous people in Thrace, and who inhabited Mount Caucasus, that they mourned at the birth of their children, reckoning up the calamities they are entering into, and rejoiced at the death of their friends, being delivered from their troubles: but this is to be understood of the persons themselves that are born and die; not of all mankind, unless as abstracted from the consideration of a future state, and so it is more happy to be freed from trouble than to enter into it; nor of wicked men, it would have been better indeed if they had never been born, or had died as soon as born, that their damnation might not have been aggravated by the multitude of their sins; but after all, to die cannot be best for them, since at death they are cast into hell, into everlasting fire, and endless punishment: this is only true of good men, that have a good name living and dying; have a good work of grace upon them, and so are meet for heaven; the righteousness of Christ on them, and so have a title to it; they are such who have hope in their death, and die in faith and in the Lord: their death is better than their birth; at their birth they come into the world under the imputation and guilt of sin, with a corrupt nature; are defiled with sin, and under the power of it, liable in themselves to condemnation and death for it: at the time of their death they go out justified from sin through the righteousness of Christ, all being expiated by his sacrifice, and pardoned for his sake; they are washed from the faith of sin by the blood of Christ, and are delivered from the power and being of it by the

Spirit and grace of God; and are secured from condemnation and the second death: at their coming into the world they are liable to sin yet more and more; at their going out they are wholly freed from it; at the time of their birth they are born to trouble, and are all their days exercised with it, incident to various diseases of the body, have many troubles in the world, and from the men of it; many conflicts with a body of sin and death, and harassed with the temptations of Satan; but at death they are delivered from all these, enter into perfect peace and unspeakable joy; rest from all their labours and toils, and enjoy uninterrupted communion with God, Father, Son, and Spirit, angels, and glorified saints. The Targum is,

"the day in which a man dies and departs to the house of the grave, with a good name and with righteousness, is better than the day in which a wicked man is born into the world."

So the Midrash interprets it of one that goes out of the world with a good name, considering this clause in connection with the preceding, as many do.

{f} So Schmidt, and some in Vatablus. {g} Herodot. Terpsichore, sive l. 5. c. 4. Valer. Maxim. l. 2. c. 6. s. 12. Alexander ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 25.

Ecclesiastes 7:2

Ver. 2. [It is] better to go to the house of mourning,.... For deceased relations or friends, who either lie unburied, or have been lately inferred; for the Jews kept their mourning for their dead several days afterwards, when their friends visited them in order to comfort them, as the Jews did Martha and Mary, Joh 11:31. So the Targum here,

"it is better to go to a mourning man to comfort him;"

for at such times and places the conversation was serious and interesting, and turned upon the subjects of mortality and a future state, and preparation for it; from whence useful and instructive lessons are learned; and so it was much better to be there

than to go to the house of feasting: the Targum is,

"than to the house of a feast of wine of scorners;"

where there is nothing but noise and clamour, luxury and intemperance, carnal mirth and gaiety, vain and frothy conversation, idle talk and impure songs, and a jest made of true religion and godliness, death and another world;

for that [is] the end of all men; not the house of feasting, but the house of mourning; or mourning itself, as Jarchi; every man must expect to lose his relation and friend, and so come to the house of mourning; and must die himself, and be the occasion of mourning: death itself seems rather intended, which is the end of all men, the way of all flesh; for it is appointed for men to die; and so the Targum,

"seeing upon them all is decreed the decree of death;"

and the living will lay [it] to his heart; by going to the house of mourning, he will be put in mind of death, and will think of it seriously, and consider his latter end, how near it is; and that this must be his case shortly, as is the deceased's he comes to mourn for. So the Targum interprets it of words concerning death, or discourses of mortality he there hears, which he takes notice of and lays to his heart, and lays up in it. Jarchi's note is,

"their thought is of the way of death."

Ecclesiastes 7:3

Ver. 3. Sorrow [is] better than laughter,.... Sorrow, expressed in the house of mourning, is better, more useful and commendable, than that foolish laughter, and those airs of levity, expressed in the house of feasting; or sorrow on account of affliction and troubles, even adversity itself, is oftentimes much more profitable, and conduces more to the good of men, than prosperity; or sorrow for sin, a godly sorrow, a sorrow after a godly sort, which works repentance unto salvation, that needeth not to be repented of, is to be preferred to all carnal mirth and jollity. It may be rendered, "anger [is] better than laughter" {h}; which the Jews understand of the anger of God in correcting men for sin; which is much better than when he takes no notice of them, but suffers them to go on in sin, as if he was pleased with them; the Midrash gives instances of it in the generation of the flood and the Sodomites: and the Targum inclines to this sense,

"better is the anger, with which the Lord of that world is angry against the righteous in this world, than the laughter with which he derides the ungodly."

Though it may be better, with others, to understand it of anger in them expressed against sin, in faithful though sharp rebukes for it; which, in the issue, is more beneficial than the flattery of such who encourage in it; see Pr 27:5;

for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better: when the sadness is not hypocritical, as in the Scribes and Pharisees, but serious and real, arising from proper reflections on things in the mind; whereby the heart is drawn off from vain, carnal, and sensual things; and is engaged in the contemplation of spiritual and heavenly ones, which is of great advantage to it: or by the severity of the countenance of a faithful friend, in correcting for faults, the heart is made better, which receives those corrections in love, and confesses its fault, and amends.

{h} qwxvm oek bwj "melior est ira risu", Pagninus, Mercerus; "melior est indigatio risu", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius.

Ecclesiastes 7:4

Ver. 4. The heart of the wise [is] in the house of mourning,.... When his body is not; when it does not suit him to go thither in person, his mind is there, and his thoughts are employed on the useful subjects of the frailty and mortality of human nature, of death, a future judgment, and a world to come; which shows him to be a wise man, and concerned for the best things, even for his eternal happiness in another state;

but the heart of fools [is] in the house of mirth; where jovial company is, merry songs are sung, and the cup or glass passes briskly round, and all is gay and brilliant: here the fool desires to be oftener than he is, and when he cannot; which shows the folly of his mind, what a vain taste he has, and how thoughtless he is of a future state, and of his eternal welfare.

Ecclesiastes 7:5

Ver. 5. [It is] better to hear the rebuke of the wise,.... To listen to it diligently, receive it cordially, and act according to it; though it may be disagreeable to the flesh, and give present pain, yet the effect and issue will be good, and show that man to be wise that hears it, as well as he that gives it; see Ps 141:1;

than for a man to hear the song of fools; the vain and impure songs that foolish men sing in the house of mirth; or the flatteries of foolish men, which tickle and please the mind, as music and songs do: or, "than a man that hears the song of fools" {i}, and is pleased with it.

{i} Mylyok ryv emv vyam "quam vir audiens canticum stultorum", Montanus, Mercerus; "prae viro audiente canticum stultorum", Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 7:6

Ver. 6. For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so [is] the laughter of the fool,.... As thorns are weak, useless, and unprofitable; yea, hurtful and pernicious, and only fit for burning; so are foolish and wicked men, 2Sa 23:6; and as the noise and sound of the one under a pot is very short, they make a blaze for a while, and is soon over; so though the laughter of a fool is loud and noisy, it makes no melody, no more than the noise of thorns; and is but for a moment, and will be soon changed for weeping and howling, which will last for ever; see Job 20:5;

this also [is] vanity; the carnal mirth of wicked men.

Ecclesiastes 7:7

Ver. 7. Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad,.... Which is to be understood either passively, when he is oppressed by others, or sees others oppressed; it raises indignation in him, disturbs his mind, and he is ready to pass a wrong judgment on the dispensations of Providence, and to say rash and unadvised things concerning them,
Ps 73:2; or actively, of oppression with which he oppresses others; when he gives into such measures, his wisdom departs from him, his mind is besotted, he acts the part of a madman, and pierces himself through with many sorrows. Some understand this of wealth got in an ill way; or of gifts given to bribe men to do injury to others; and which the following clause is thought to explain;

and a gift destroyeth the heart; blinds the eyes of judges other ways wise; perverts their judgment, and causes them to pass a wrong sentence, as well as perverts justice: or, "and destroys the heart of gifts" {k}; a heart that is possessed of the gifts of wisdom and knowledge; or a munificent heart, a heart disposed to give bountifully and liberally, that oppression destroys and renders useless.

{k} hntm bl ta dbayw "et frangit cor dotibus praeclaris ornatum", Tigurine version; so some Jewish writers in Mercerus.

Ecclesiastes 7:8

Ver. 8. Better [is] the end of a thing than the beginning thereof,.... If the thing is good, other ways the end of it is worse; as the end of wickedness and wicked men, whose beginning is sweet, but the end bitter; yea, are the ways of death, **Pr 5:4**; and so the end of carnal professors and apostates, who begin in the Spirit, and end in the flesh, **Ga 3:3**; but the end of good things, and of good men, is better than the beginning; as the end of Job was, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual, **Job 8:7**; see
Ps 37:37;

[and] the patient in spirit [is] better than the proud in spirit; patience is a fruit of the Spirit of God; and is of great use in the Christian's life, and especially in bearing afflictions, and tends to make men more humble, meek, and quiet; and such are highly esteemed of God; on them he looks, with them he dwells, and to them he gives more grace; when such who are proud, and elated with themselves, their riches or righteousness, are abominable to him; see Lu 16:15.

Ecclesiastes 7:9

Ver. 9. Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry,.... With men, for every word that is said, or action done, that is not agreeable; encourage not, but repress, sudden angry emotions of the mind; be not quick of resentment, and at once express anger and displeasure; but be slow to wrath, for such a man is better than the mighty, **Jas 1:19**
Pr 16:32; or with God, for his corrections and chastisements; so the Targum,

"in the time that correction from heaven comes upon thee, do not hasten in thy soul to be hot (or angry) to say words of rebellion (or stubbornness) against heaven;"

that advice is good,

"do nothing in anger {l};"

for anger resteth in the bosom of fools; where it riseth quick, and continues long; here it soon betrays itself, and finds easy admittance, and a resting dwelling place; it easily gets in, but it is difficult to get it out of the heart of a fool; both which are proofs of his folly,
Pr 12:16; see **Eph 4:26**; the bosom, or breast, is commonly represented as the seat of anger by other writers {m}.

{l} Isocrates ad Nicoclem, p. 36. {m} "In pectoribus ira considit", Petronius; "iram sanguinei regio sub pectore cordis", Claudian. de 4. Consul. Honor. Panegyr. v. 241.

Ecclesiastes 7:10

Ver. 10. Say not thou, what is [the cause] that the former days were better than these?.... This is a common opinion, that in all ages prevails among men, that former times were better than present ones; that trade flourished more, and men got more wealth and riches, and lived in greater ease and plenty; and complain that their lot is cast in such hard times, and are ready to lay the blame upon the providence of God, and murmur at it, which they should not do;

for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this: this is owing to ignorance of former times; which, if rightly inquired into, or the true knowledge of them could be come at, it would appear that they were no better than the present; and that there were always bad men, and bad things done; frauds, oppressions, and violence, and everything that can be complained of now: or if things are worse than they were, this should be imputed to the badness of men; and the inquirer should look to himself, and his own ways, and see if there is not a cause there, and study to redeem the time, because the days are evil; and not arraign the providence of God, and murmur at that, and quarrel with it; as if the distributions of it were unequal, and justice not done in one age as in another

Ecclesiastes 7:11

Ver. 11. Wisdom [is] good with an inheritance,.... It is good of itself. Or, "is as good as an inheritance" {n}, as it may be rendered; it is a portion of itself, especially spiritual and divine wisdom. The Targum interprets it, the wisdom of the law, or the knowledge of that; but much more excellent is the wisdom of the Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom; the knowledge of which, in an experimental way, is preferable to all earthly inheritances: but this with an inheritance is good, yea, better than without one; for wisdom, without riches, is generally overlooked and despised in men; see **Ec 9:16**; when wealth, with wisdom, makes a man regarded; this commands respect and attention; as well as he is in a better condition to do good, if willing to share, and ready to distribute;

and [by it there is] profit to them that see the sun; mortals in this present state, who are described as such that see the sun rise and set, and enjoy the heat and light of it, receive much advantage from men who are both wise and rich: or, "and [it is] an excellency to them that see the sun"; it is an excellency to mortals and what gives them superiority to others, that they have both wisdom and riches.

{n} hlxn Me "aeque ac haereditas", Gejerus, Schmidt.

Ecclesiastes 7:12

Ver. 12. For wisdom [is] a defence, [and] money [is] a defence,.... Or, a "shadow" of refreshment and protection, under which men sit with pleasure and safety; a man by his wisdom, and so by his money, is able to defend himself against the injuries and oppressions of others, and especially when both meet in one and the same man. Jarchi renders and interprets it,

"he that is in the shadow of wisdom is in the shadow of money, for wisdom is the cause why riches come;"

and so the Targum,

"as a man is hid in the shadow of wisdom, so he is hid in the shadow of money, when he does alms with it;"

compare with this Lu 16:9; see **Ec 7:19**. Theognis {o} has a saying much like this,

"riches and wisdom are always inexpugnable to mortals;"

but the excellency of knowledge [is, that] wisdom giveth life to them that have it; or, "the excellency of the knowledge of wisdom giveth life" {p}, &c. not of natural wisdom, or the knowledge of natural and civil things, the vanity of this is exposed, before by the wise man; but the knowledge of God in Christ; the knowledge of Christ, who is the Wisdom of God; and of the Gospel, and of all divine and spiritual things: this is a superior excellency to riches, which often expose a man's life to danger, cannot preserve him from a corporeal death, much less from an eternal one. When this is the excellency of spiritual knowledge, that spiritual life goes along with it; such as are spiritually enlightened are spiritually quickened; live by faith on Christ, whom they know; and, through the knowledge of him, have all things pertaining to life and godliness, and have both a right and meetness for eternal life; yea, this knowledge is life eternal,
Joh 17:3; see **2Pe 1:3**; and this is the pure gift of Wisdom, or of Christ, and not owing to the merit of men, or works done in obedience to the law, which cannot give this life; see Joh 17:2 **Ro 6:23**.

{o} Sententiae, v. 1153. {p} hyxt hmkxh ted Nwrtyw "et praestantia scientiae sapientiae vivificabit", Montanus.

Ecclesiastes 7:13

Ver. 13. Consider the work of God,.... This is dressed to those who thought the former days better than the present, and were ready to quarrel with the providence of God, **Ec 7:10**; and are therefore advised to consider the work of God; not the work of creation, but of providence; which is the effect of divine sovereignty, and is conducted and directed according to the counsel of his will, and is always wisely done to answer the best ends and purposes: everything is beautiful in its season; contemplate, adore, and admire the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, displayed therein; it is such as cannot be made better, nor otherwise than it is;

for who can make [that] straight which he hath made crooked? or which seems to be so, irregular and disagreeable? No man can mend or make that better he finds fault with and complains of; nor can he alter the course of things, nor stay the hand, nor stop the providence of God: if it is his pleasure that public calamities should be in the world, or in such a part of it, as famine, pestilence, or the sword; or any affliction on families, and particular persons, or poverty and meanness in such and such individuals, there is no hindering it; whatever he has purposed and resolved, his providence effects, and there is no frustrating his designs; it signifies nothing for a creature to murmur and complain; it is best to submit to his will, for no alteration can be made but what he pleases. Some understand this of natural defects in human bodies, with which they are born, or which attend them, as blindness, lameness, &c. so the Targum,

"consider the work of God, and his strength, who made the blind, the crooked, and the lame, to be wonders in the world; for who can make straight one of them but the Lord of the world, who made him crooked?"

Others, of spiritual defects in such who walk in crooked ways, and are hardened in them; who can correct them, and make them other ways, if God does not give them his grace to convert them, and soften their hard hearts? he hardens whom he will, and who hath resisted his will? Jarchi's paraphrase is,

"who can make straight after death what he has made crooked in life?"

See Gill on "Ec 1:15". Alshech interprets it of the first man Adam.

Ecclesiastes 7:14

Ver. 14. In the day of prosperity be joyful,.... Or, "in a good day" {q}. When things go well in the commonwealth, in a man's family, and with himself, health, peace, and plenty, are enjoyed, a man's circumstances are thriving and flourishing; it becomes him to be thankful to God, freely and cheerfully to enjoy what is bestowed on him, and do good with it: or, "be in good" {r}; in good heart, in good spirits, cheerful and lively; or, "enjoy good", as the Vulgate Latin version; for what God gives to men is given them richly to enjoy, to make use of themselves, and be beneficial unto others; so the Targum,

"in the day the Lord does well to thee be thou also in goodness, and do good to all the world;"

see **Ga 6:10**; Jarchi's paraphrase is, "when it is in thine hand to do good, be among those that do good;"

but in the day of adversity consider; or, "in the day of evil" {s}; consider from whence affliction comes; not out of the dust, nor by chance, but from God, and by his wise appointment; and for what it comes, that sin is the cause of it, and what that is; and also for what ends it is sent, to bring to a sense of sin, and confession of it, and humiliation for it; to take it away, and make good men more partakers of holiness: or, "look for the day of adversity" {t}; even in the day of prosperity it should be expected; for there is no firmness and stability in any state; there are continual vicissitudes and changes. The Targum is,

"that the evil day may not come upon thee, see and behold;"

be careful and circumspect, and behave in a wise manner, that so it may be prevented. Jarchi's note is,

"when evil comes upon the wicked, be among those that see, and not among those that are seen;"

and compares it with Isa 66:24; It may be observed, that there is a set time for each of these, prosperity and adversity; and that the time is short, and therefore called a day; and the one is good, and the other is evil; which characters they have according to the outward appearance, and according to the judgment and esteem of men; otherwise, prosperity is oftentimes hurtful, and destroys fools, and adversity is useful to the souls of good men;

God also hath set the one over against the other; they are both by his appointment, and are set in their proper place, and come in their proper time; succeed each other, and answer to one another, as day and night, summer and winter, and work, together for the good of men;

to the end that man should find nothing after him; should not be able to know what will be hereafter; what his case and circumstances will be, whether prosperous or adverse; since things are so uncertain, and so subject to change, and nothing permanent; and therefore can find nothing to trust in and depend upon, nothing that he can be sure of: and things are so wisely managed and disposed, that a man can find no fault with them, nor just reason to complain of them; so the Vulgate Latin version, "not find just complaints against him"; and to the same purpose the Syriac version, "that he may complain of him"; the Targum is, "not find any evil in this world."

{q} hbwj Mwyb "in die bono", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus. {r} bwjb hyh "esto in bono", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Rambachius. {s} her Mwyb "in die mala", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus. {t} har "praecave", V. L. "praevide, aut provide ac prospice", Drusius; so Gussetius, p. 766.

Ecclesiastes 7:15

Ver. 15. All [things] have I seen in the days of my vanity,.... Or, "all these things" {u}. What goes before and follows after, the various changes men are subject unto, both good and bad; these he had made his observations upon, throughout the course of his life, which had been a vain one, as every man's is, full of evil and trouble; see **Ec 6:12**; perhaps the wise man may have some respect to the times of his apostasy; and which might, among other things, be brought on by this; observing good men afflicted, and the wicked prosper, which has often been a stumbling to good men;

there is a just [man] that perisheth in his righteousness; not eternally; no truly just man ever perished, who is made so by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; for though the righteous man is said to be scarcely saved, yet he is certainly saved: it can be true only in this sense of one that is only outwardly righteous, that trusts to his own righteousness, in which he may perish; but this is to be understood temporally and corporeally; one that is really just may perish in his name, in his substance, as well as at death, and that on account of his righteousness; he may lose his good name and character, and his substance, for righteousness's sake; yea, his life also, as Abel, Naboth, and others; this is the case "sometimes", as Aben Ezra observes, not always: or a just man, notwithstanding his righteousness, dies, and sometimes lives but a short time; which sense the antithesis seems to require;

and there is a wicked [man] that prolongeth [his life] in his wickedness; is very wicked, and yet, notwithstanding his great wickedness, lives a long time in the world; see Job 21:7.

{u} lk ta "illa omnia", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tigurine version, Gejerus; "omnia haec", Mercerus; "universa haec", Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 7:16

Ver. 16. Be not righteous over much,.... This is not meant of true and real righteousness, even moral righteousness, a man cannot be too holy or too righteous; but of a show and ostentation of righteousness, and of such who would be thought to be more righteous and holy than others, and therefore despise those who, as they imagine, do not come up to them; and are very rigid and censorious in their judgment of others, and very severe in their reproofs of them; and, that they may appear very righteous persons, will do more than what the law requires of them to do, even works of supererogation, as the Pharisees formerly, and Papists now, pretend, and abstain from the lawful use of things which God has given to be enjoyed; and macerate their bodies by abstinence, fastings, pilgrimages, penance, scourges, and the like, as the Eremites among the Christians, and the Turks, as Aben Ezra on the place observes; and many there be, who, by an imprudent zeal for what they judge right, and which sometimes are mere trifles, and by unseasonable reproofs for what is wrong, expose themselves to resentment and danger. Some understand this of political and punitive justice, exercising it in too strict and rigorous a manner, according to the maxim, "summum jus saepe summa injuria est" {w}; and Schultens {x}, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, renders it, "be not too rigid"; and others, in a contrary sense, of too much mercy and pity to offenders. So the Midrash; and Jarchi illustrates it by the case of Saul, who had mercy on the wicked, and spared Agag. The Targum is,

"be not over righteous at a time that a sinner is found guilty of slaughter in thy court of judicature, that thou shouldest spare and not kill him;"

neither make thyself over wise; above what is written, or pretend to be wiser than others. So the Arabic version, "show not too much wisdom"; do not affect, as not to be more righteous than others, so not more wise, by finding fault with present times, or with the dispensations of Providence, or with the manners and conduct of men; setting up for a critic and a censurer of men and things; or do not pry into things, and seek after a knowledge of them, which are out of your reach, and beyond your capacity;

why shouldest thou destroy thyself? either by living too strictly and abstemiously, or by studying too closely, or by behaving in such a manner to men, as that they will seek thy destruction, and bring it on thee: or "why shouldest thou", or "whereby", or "lest, thou shouldest be stupid" {y}; lose thy sense and reason, as persons who study the knowledge of things they have not a capacity for: or why shouldest thou become foolish in the eyes of all men by thy conduct and behaviour? or, "why shouldest thou be desolate" {z}; alone, and nobody care to have any conversation and acquaintance with thee?

{w} Terent. Heautont. Act. 4. Sc. 4. {x} De Defect. Hod. Ling. Heb. s. 230. {y} Mmwvt hml "ut quid obstupesces?" Vatablus, Amama; "cur obstupesces?" Mercerus; "cur in stuporem te dares?" Cocceius; "qua teipsum stupidum facies?" Tigurine version; "ne obstupescas", V. L. so Sept. and Syriac versions. {z} "Ne quid desolaberis?" Pagninus, Montanus; "quare desolationem tibi accerseres?" Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus.

Ecclesiastes 7:17

Ver. 17. Be not over much wicked,.... Not that a man should be wicked at all; but some, observing that wicked men prolong their days in wickedness, are encouraged to go into greater lengths in sin than they have yet done, and give up themselves to all iniquity; and run into excess of not, into the grossest and most scandalous enormities. Some render it, "do not disturb" or "frighten thyself" {a}, distress and distract thyself with the business of life, bustling and stirring, restless and uneasy, to get wealth and riches; but be easy and satisfied with what is enjoyed, or comes without so much stir and trouble; this is the original sense of the word. The meaning seems to be, either do not multiply sin, add unto it, and continue in it; or do not aggravate it, making sins to be greater and more heinous than they are, and a man's case worse than it is, and so sink into despair; and thus it stands opposed to an ostentatious show of righteousness;

neither be thou foolish; or give up thyself to a profligate life, to go on in a course of sin, which will issue in the ruin of body and soul; or in aggravating it in an excessive manner;

why shouldest thou die before thy time? bring diseases on thy body by a wicked course of living, which will issue in death; or fall into the hands of the civil magistrate, for capital offences, for which sentence of death must pass and be executed, before a man comes to the common term of human life; see Ps 55:23; or, as Mr. Broughton renders it, "before thy ordinary time"; not before the appointed time {b}. The Targum is,

"be the cause of death to thy soul;"

or through despair commit suicide.

{a} evrt la "ne paveas", Pagninus; "ne te occupes multum, aut distrahas te, sive inquietes", some in Vatablus; so Aben Ezra and Ben Melech. {b} "Ante diem", Virgil. Aeneid. 4. prope finem. Vid. Servium in ib. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 4.

Ecclesiastes 7:18

Ver. 18. [It is] good that thou shouldest take hold of this,.... This advice, as the Arabic version, in the several branches of it; neither to be over much righteous or wicked, and over much wise or foolish; to avoid the one and the other, to keep clear of extremes, and pursue the path that is safest; such advice as this it is right to lay hold on, embrace, and hold fast;

yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand; from what follows concerning the fear of God; or "this [and] this" may be rendered "this [and] that" {c}, and the sense be, lay hold on this, that is, the last part of the advice, not to be over much wicked or foolish, which is often the cause of an immature death; and do not slacken or be remiss in regarding that other and first part of it, not to be over much righteous or wise;

for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all; or escape them all; the phrase is become Rabbinical, that, is, he shall be free or exempt from them all; from over much righteousness and over much wisdom, and over much wickedness or over much folly; the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom, is the best preservative from, and antidote against, these things; for a man that fears God is humble, and renounces his own righteousness, and distrusts his own wisdom; he fears to commit sin, and shuns folly.

{c} So Broughton, Rambachius, and others.

Ecclesiastes 7:19

Ver. 19. Wisdom strengtheneth the wise,.... Against such extremes as before mentioned; it is a guard about him, as well as a guide unto him; it is a defence unto him, as before observed, **Ec 7:12**; and is better than strength of body, or weapons of war, **Ec 9:16**; and a wise man does greater things by it than a strong man with them, and is safer with it than he can be by them. Some understand this of Christ, the Wisdom of God, without whom a good man can do nothing, but all things through him strengthening him; and who being a strong tower and place of refuge to him, he is safer in him than if he was in the strongest garrison, and under the protection of ever so large a number of valiant men: Christ, and grace from him, strengthen

more than ten mighty [men] which are in the city; that is, than many mighty men, or men of war, which guard a city; the city of Jerusalem, or any other. The Targum applies this to Joseph, and paraphrases it,

"the wisdom of Joseph the son of Jacob helped him to make him wiser than all his ten righteous brethren."

Ecclesiastes 7:20

Ver. 20. For [there is] not a just man upon earth,.... Or "although", or "notwithstanding" {d}, wisdom is so beneficial, and guards and strengthens a good man, yet no man has such a share of it as to live without sin; there was not then one on earth, there never had been, one, nor never would be, nor has been, excepting the man Christ Jesus; who indeed, as man, was perfectly just, while here on earth, and went about doing good, and never sinned in all his life; but this cannot be said of any other, no, not of one that is truly and really just; not externally and in his own opinion only, but who is made so by the obedience of Christ, or by his righteousness imputed to him, while he is here on earth; otherwise in heaven, where the spirits of just men are made perfect, there it may be said of them what follows, but nowhere else;

that doeth good, and sinneth not; it is the character of a just man to do good, to do that which is according to the will of God, from a principle of love to him, through faith in him, in the name and strength of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God; to do good in such a sense wicked men cannot; only such who are made good by the grace of God, are regenerated and made new creatures in Christ, are quickened by his Spirit, and are true believers in him; who appear to be what they are, by the fruits of good works they bring forth; and this not in a mercenary way, or in order to obtain life and righteousness, but as constrained by the grace of God, by which they are freely justified; and yet these are not free from sin, as appears by their confessions and complaints, by their backslidings, slips, and falls, and their petitions for fresh discoveries of pardoning grace; and even are not without sin, and the commission of it, in religious duties, or while they are doing good; hence their righteousness is said to be as filthy rags, and mention is made of the iniquity of holy things, Isa 64:6. The Targum is,

"that does good all his days, and sins not before the Lord."

Aben Ezra justly gives the sense thus,

"who does good always, and never sins;"

and observes that there are none but sin in thought, word, or deed. The poet {e} says,

"to sin is common to all men;"

no man, though ever so good, is perfect on earth, or free from sin; see **1Ki 8:46**. Alshech's paraphrase is,

"there is not a righteous man on earth, that does good, and sins not; awhh bwjb, "in that good";"

which is the true sense of the words.

{d} yk "quamvis", Junius & Tremelllus, Amama, so Broughton; "attamen", Grotius. {e} Sophoclis Antigone, v. 1140.

Ecclesiastes 7:21

Ver. 21. Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken,.... Seeing so it is, that imperfection attends the best of men, no man is wise at all times, foolish words and unguarded expressions will sometimes drop from him, which it is better to take no notice of; they should not be strictly attended to, and closely examined, since they will not bear it. A man should not listen to everything that is said of himself or others; he should not curiously inquire what men say of him; and what he himself hears he should take no notice of; it is often best to let it pass, and not call it over again; to feign the hearing of a thing, or make as if you did not hear it; for oftentimes, by rehearsing a matter, or taking up words spoken, a deal of trouble and mischief follows; a man should not "give [his] heart" {f} to it, as it is in the Hebrew text; he should not give his mind to what is said of him, but be careless and indifferent about it; much less should he lay it up in his mind, and meditate revenge for it. The Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, restrain it to words spoken by wicked men, whose tongues are their own, and will say what they please; among these may be ranked, more especially, detractors, whisperers, backbiters, and talebearers, who should not be listened unto and encouraged; though there is no necessity of thus limiting the sense, which is more general, and may include what is said by any man, even good men, since they have their infirmities; it seems chiefly to have respect to defamatory words, by what follows;

lest thou hear thy servant curse thee; speak slightly, scoffingly, and reproachfully of thee, as Shimei of David; which must be very disagreeable and vexatious to hear from one so mean and abject, and who is dependent on him, earns his bread of him, and gets his livelihood in his service; and to whom, perhaps, he has been kind, and so is guilty of base ingratitude, which aggravates the more; or, if not, if what he says is just, to hear it must give great uneasiness.

{f} Kbl Ntt la "ne des tuum cor", Montanus.

Ecclesiastes 7:22

Ver. 22. For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth,.... Or "thy conscience", as the Vulgate Latin version, which is as a thousand witnesses; which, if a man attends to, he will be convinced of his own faults, failings, and infirmities, he is frequently in the commission of. Particularly,

that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others; either in heart, or with the tongue; thought ill of them, wished ill to them; spoke contemptibly of them, reviled and reproached them; called them by bad names, and abused them; and said some very hard and severe words concerning them, in a passionate fit, being provoked; and afterwards repented of it, being better informed of the state of the case, or being convinced of the evil of passion and rash speaking; and therefore such should consider the like passions and infirmities of others, and pass over them, and forgive them: so Alshech,

"if thou hast cursed others, and dost desire men should forgive thee, so do thou also forgive;"

see **Mt 6:14**. The word "oftentimes", in the first clause, is to be connected, not with the word "knoweth", as if a man often knew this, but with the word "cursed"; suggesting, that a man may be often guilty of this himself, and therefore should be more sparing of his censures of others; see **Mt 7:1**.

Ecclesiastes 7:23

Ver. 23. All this have I proved by wisdom,.... Referring either to all that he had been discoursing of hitherto in this book, concerning the vanity of natural wisdom and knowledge, of pleasure, power, and riches; or to the several useful instructions given in this chapter, particularly concerning patiently bearing everything from the hands of God or men, **Ec 7:8**. This, by the help and use of that wisdom which God had given him, he had made trial of, and found it to be right, and therefore recommended it to others; though he acknowledges that, with all his wisdom, he was from perfection;

I said, I will be wise; but it [was] far from me; he determined, if possible, to attain to the perfection of wisdom, and made use of all means to come at it; that he might know all the works of God in creation, the nature, use, and excellency of them; in providence, his different dispensations towards the sons of men, and the causes of them; and in grace, the redemption and salvation of men, and the mysteries thereof; but the more he knew, the more he was convinced of his own ignorance, and seemed further off from the summit of knowledge than he was before; and plainly saw, that perfection in wisdom is not attainable in this life. The Targum restrains this to the wisdom of the law; but it is better to understand it in a more general sense.

Ecclesiastes 7:24

Ver. 24. That which is far off,.... Or, "far off [is] that which has been" {g}. That which has been done by God already, in creation and providence, is out of the reach of men, is far from their understandings wholly to comprehend or account for; and likewise that which is past with men, what has been done in former ages, the history of past times, is very difficult to come at: or rather, according to Schmidt, and Rambachius after him, what was of old is now afar off or absent; the image of God in man which consisted of perfect wisdom, and was created at the same time with him, is now lost, and that is the reason why wisdom is far from him;

and exceeding deep, who can find it out? the primitive perfect wisdom is sunk so deep and gone, that no man can find it to the perfection it was once enjoyed; see Job 28:12. This may respect the knowledge of God, and the perfections of his nature; which are as high as heaven, and deeper than hell, Job 11:7; and of his thoughts, counsels, purposes, and decrees, which are the deep things of God; as well as the doctrines of the Gospel, and the mysteries of grace, **1Co 2:10**; and even his providential dispensations towards the sons of men, Ro 11:33. The Targum of the whole is,

"Lo, now it is far off from the children of men to know all that has been from the days of old; and the secret of the day of death, and the secret of the day in which the King Messiah shall come, who is he that shall find it out by his wisdom?"

{g} hyhv hm qwxr "remotum (est) illud quod fuit", Montanus, Mercerus, Vatablus, Drusius, Gejerus.

Ecclesiastes 7:25

Ver. 25. I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom,.... Or, "I and my heart turned about" {h}; took a circuit, a tour throughout the whole compass of things; looked into every corner, and went through the circle of knowledge, in order to search and find out what true wisdom is; which is no other than Christ, and a spiritual knowledge of him; a variety of words is used to express his eager desire after wisdom, and the diligent search he made, from which he was not discouraged by the difficulties he met with; see **Ec 1:13**;

and the reason [of things]; either in nature or providence: or the estimation {i} of them; the excellency of them, how much they are to be accounted of, esteemed, and valued; as Christ, the Wisdom of God, and all things relating to him, should;

and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness [and] madness; the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the folly and madness that are in it; sin is the effect of folly, and the excess of it, and a spiritual madness; it is true of all sin in general, but especially of the sin of uncleanness, which Solomon seems to have in view by what follows; see **Ec 1:17**; and may chiefly intend the wickedness of his own folly, and the foolishness of his own madness.

{h} yblw yna ytwbo "circuivi ego et cor meum", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus. {i} Nwbvx "estimationem rerum", Mercerus.

Ecclesiastes 7:26

Ver. 26. And I find more bitter than death the woman,.... This was the issue of his diligent studies and researches, and the observations he had made; this was what he found by sad and woeful experience, and which he chose to take particular notice of; that he might not only expose this vanity among others, and caution men against it, even the love of women, which at best is a bitter sweet, as the poet {k} calls it, though here adulterous love is meant; but having this opportunity, might express his sincere repentance for this folly of his life, than which nothing had been more bitter to him, in the reflection of his mind upon it: death is a bitter thing, and terrible to nature, 1Sa 15:32; but to be ensnared by an adulterous woman is worse than that; it brings not only such diseases of body as are both painful and scandalous, but such horrors into the conscience, when awakened, as are intolerable, and exposes to eternal death; see **Pr 5:3**. By "the woman" is not meant the sex in general, which was far from Solomon's intention to reflect upon and reproach; nor any woman in particular, not Eve, the first woman, through whom came sin and death into the world; but an adulterous woman: see **Pr 5:4**. Some interpret this of original sin, or the corruption of nature, evil concupiscence, which draws men into sin, and holds them in it, the consequence of which is death eternal; but such who find favour in the eyes of God are delivered from the power and dominion of it; but obstinate and impenitent sinners are held under it, and perish eternally. Jarchi, by the woman, understands heresy; and so Jerom and others interpret it of heretics and idolaters: it may very well be applied to that Jezebel, the whore of Rome, the mother of harlots, that deceives men, and leads them into perdition with herself, Re 17:4; and who is intended by the harlot, and foolish and strange woman, in the book of Proverbs, as has been observed;

whose heart [is] snares and nets, [and] her hands [as] bands; all the schemes and contrivances of a harlot are to ensnare men by her wanton looks and lascivious gestures; which are like snares laid for the beasts, and likeness spread for fishes, to take them in; and when she has got them, she holds them fast; it is a very difficult thing and a very rare one, ever to get out of her hands; so Plautus {l} makes mention of the nets of harlots: the same holds true of error and heresy, and of idolatry, which is spiritual adultery; the words used

being in the plural number, shows the many ways the adulterous woman has to ensnare men, and the multitudes that are taken by her; see
Re 13:3;

whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her: or, "who is good before God", or "in his sight" {m}; See Gill on "Ec 2:26"; to whom he gives his grace and is acceptable to him; such an one as Joseph was shall escape the snares and nets, the hands and bands, of such a woman; or if fallen into them, as Solomon fell, shall be delivered out of them, as it is observed by various interpreters: nothing but the grace of God, the true fear of God, the power of godliness and undefiled religion, can preserve a person from being ensnared and held by an impure woman; not a liberal nor religious education, not learning and good sense, nor any thing else; if a man is kept out of the hands of such creatures, he ought to esteem it a mercy, and ascribe it to the grace and goodness of God;

but the sinner shall be taken by her; a hardened and impenitent sinner, that is destitute of the grace and fear of God; who is habitually a sinner, and gives up himself to commit iniquity; whose life is a continued series of sinning; who has no guard upon himself, but rushes into sin, as the horse into the battle; he becomes an easy prey to a harlot; he falls into her snares, and is caught and held by her; see
Pr 22:14.

{k} Musaeus, v. 166. Vid. Barthii ad Claudian. de Nupt. Honor. v. 70. {l} Epidicus, Act. 2. Sc. 2. v. 32. "Illecebrosius nihil fieri potest", ib. Bacchides, Sc. 1. v. 55. Truculentus, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 14-21. {m} Myhlah ynpl bwj "bonus coram Deo", Pagninus, Mercerus, Drusius, Amama, Rambachius; "qui bonus videtur coram Deo ipso", Junius & Tremellius.

Ecclesiastes 7:27

Ver. 27. Behold, this have I found,.... That a harlot is more bitter than death; and which he found by his own experience, and therefore would have it observed by others for their caution: or one man among a thousand, **Ec 7:28**;

(saith the preacher); of which title and character see **Ec 1:1**; it is here mentioned to confirm the truth of what he said; he said it as a preacher, and, upon the word of a preacher, it was true; as also to signify his repentance for his sin, who was now the "gathered soul", as some render it; gathered into the church of God by repentance;

[counting] one by one, to find out the account; not his own sins, which he endeavoured to reckon up, and find out the general account of them, which yet he could not do; nor the good works of the righteous, and the sins of the wicked, which are numbered before the Lord one by one, till they are added to the great account; as Jarchi, from the Rabbins, interprets it, and so the Midrash: but rather the sense is, examining women, one by one, all within the verge of his acquaintance; particularly the thousand women that were either his wives or concubines; in order to take and give a just estimate of their character and actions. What follows is the result.

Ecclesiastes 7:28

Ver. 28. Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not,.... He was very earnest and diligent in his inquiry; he took a great deal of pains, and was exceedingly solicitous; he sought with great intenseness of mind, and with an eager desire, to find out a chaste and virtuous woman among them all, but could not;

one man among a thousand have I found; it is a great rarity to find a good man {n}, truly wise and gracious; there are many that walk in the broad way, and but few that find the strait gate and narrow way, and are saved; they are but as one to a thousand; see **Jer 5:1**. Or rather, by this one of a thousand, is meant the, Messiah, the Wisdom of God, he sought for, **Ec 7:25**; and now says he found; to whom he looked for peace, pardon, and atonement, under a sense of his sins; who is the messenger, an interpreter, one among a thousand; yea, who is the chiefest among ten thousands, Job 33:23; who is superior to angels and men, in the dignity of his person; in the perfection, purity, and holiness of his nature; in the excellency of his names; in his offices and relations; and in his concern in the affairs of grace and salvation; and who is to be found by every truly wise and gracious soul that seeks him early and earnestly, in the word and ordinances, under the illumination and direction of the blessed Spirit. If it is to be understood of a mere man, I should think the sense was this; of all the men that have been ensnared and taken by an adulterous woman, but one of a thousand have I observed, and perhaps Solomon has respect to himself, that was ever recovered out of her hands;

but a woman among all those have I not found; that is, among all the harlots and adulterous women I ever knew or heard of, I never knew nor heard of one that was ever reclaimed from her evil ways, and reformed or became a chaste and virtuous woman: he may have respect to the thousand women that were either his wives and concubines, and, among all these, he found not one that deserved the above character; for this is not to be understood of women in general, for Solomon must have known that there have been good women in all ages, and perhaps more than men; and that there were many in his days, though those with whom his more intimate acquaintance was were not such, which was his unhappiness; and his criminal conversation with them is what he lamented and repented of. It may be interpreted thus, One man, the Messiah, among all the sons of men, have I found, free from original sin; but one woman, among all the daughters of Eve, I have not found clear of it. The Targum is,

"there is another thing which yet my soul seeketh, and I have not found; a man perfect and innocent, without corruption, from the days of Adam, till Abraham the righteous was born; who was found faithful and just among the thousand kings who were gathered together to build the tower of Babel; and a woman among all the wives of those kings, as Sarah, I found not."

{n} "Vir bonus et sapiens, qualem vix reperit unum, millibus e multio hominum, consultus Apollo." Auson. Idyll. 16. v. 1, 2.

Ecclesiastes 7:29

Ver. 29. Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright,.... The first man Adam, as the Targum and Jarchi interpret it; and not Adam only, but Eve also with him; for these were both made by the Lord, and on the same day, and in the same image, and had the same common name of Adam given them, **Ge 1:27**; And they were both made "upright"; which is to be understood, not of the erectness of their bodies, but of the disposition of their minds; they were

"right and innocent before him,"

or in the sight of God, as the Targum; which is best explained by their being made in the image and likeness of God, **Ge 1:26**; and which, according to the apostle, lay in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, **Eph 4:24**; agreeably to which Plato {o} make likeness to God to be righteous and holy, with prudence: for this likeness of Adam and Eve to God; lay not in the shape of their bodies, for God is a spirit, and not a corporeal being, as the Anthropomorphites imagined, and so fancied men to be made like unto him in this respect; but in their souls, and it consisted of knowledge; of the knowledge of the creatures, their nature, use, and ends for which they were made, and put under their government; and of God, and his perfections, as made known in the creatures; and of his mind and will, and manner of worshipping him, he revealed unto them; and they might know the trinity of Persons in the Godhead, who were concerned in the making of them, though they seem not to have known Christ, as Mediator and Saviour, which was not necessary previous to their fall; nor evangelical truths suited to a fallen state: also this image lay in righteousness and true holiness, which was original, natural, and created with them; it was with them as soon as they were; not acquired, but infused; not a habit obtained, but a quality given; and this not supernatural, but natural; it was perfect in its kind, and entirely agreeable to the holy, just, and good law of God; it had no defects in it, yet was but the righteousness of a creature, and loseable, as the event showed; and so very different from the righteousness of Christ, man is justified by. Likewise, this uprightness is no other than the rectitude of human nature, of all the powers and faculties of the soul of man, as they were when he was created; his understanding clear of all errors and mistakes, either about divine or human things; his affections regular and ordinate, no unruly passion in him, no sinful affection, lust, and desire; he loved God with all his heart and soul, and delighted in him, and communion with him; the bias of his will was to that which is good; the law of God was written on his heart, and he had both power and will to keep it; and, during his state of integrity, was pure and sinless; yet he was not impeccable, as the confirmed angels and glorified saints are; nor immutable, as God only is; but being a creature, and changeable, he was liable to temptation, and subject to fall, as he did. Now Solomon, with all his diligent search and scrutiny, could not find out the infinity of sin, the boundless extent of it among mankind, the exceeding sinfulness of it, which he sought after, **Ec 7:25**; yet this he "found" out, and this "only", the fountain of all sin, the origin of moral evil; namely, the corruption of human nature through the fall of Adam: this he found by reading the Scriptures, the three first chapters of Genesis; and by consulting human nature he found some remains of the image of God, and of the law that was in man's heart; whereby he perceived that man was once another man than he is now; and that this corruption is not owing to God, who is not the author of any thing sinful, he made man upright; but to himself, his own sin and folly: and this he found confirmed by sad experience; in himself and others, and by observing the history of all ages, from the times of the first man; and as this was notorious, it was worth knowing and observing, and therefore he calls upon others to take notice of it; lo, behold, consider it, as well as what follows;

but they have sought out many inventions; that is, Adam and Eve, not content with their present knowledge and happiness, they sought out new ways and means of being wiser and happier than God made them, or it was his will they should be. "They sought out the inventions of the many", or "great things", or "of the mighty and great ones" {p}, as it may be rendered, the eternal Three in One; they sought to be as wise as God himself; or, however, as the great and mighty ones, the angels, who excelled them, as in strength, so in knowledge; see **Ge 3:5**; or they sought out thoughts of sin, as Jarchi says it is interpreted in the Midrash. Sins are the inventions of men, and these are many and numerous; they sought to gratify their senses, on which followed innumerable evils; and then they sought for shifts and evasions to excuse themselves; the man shifting it from himself, and throwing the blame upon the woman, and the woman upon the serpent: and so sinning, they lost the knowledge they had; their righteousness and holiness, the rectitude of their nature; the moral freedom of their will to that which is good, and their power to perform it; and they lost the presence of God, and communion with him: and so their posterity are not only inventors of evil things, of sins, but of new ways of happiness; some placing it in riches; others in honours; others in pleasures; and some in natural wisdom and knowledge; and some in their own works of righteousness; the vanity of all which Solomon has before exposed.

{o} Theaeteto, p. 129. {p} Mybr twnbvx "cogitationes magnatum", De Dieu; "ratiocina multarum, magnarumque rerum", so some in Rambachius; see Luke x. 41, 42.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ecclesiastes 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES 8

The preacher begins this chapter with the praise of wisdom, from its excellency and usefulness, **Ec 8:1**; and advises men, if they would live quietly and comfortably, to honour and obey the king that rules over them, and not be rebellious against him, since he has great power and authority, **Ec 8:2**; and not be anxious about things to come, since there is a set time for everything, and future things cannot be known nor frustrated; and, particularly, there is no avoiding the hour and stroke of death, **Ec 8:6**; Though there are times wherein wicked men rule over others, it is to their own hurt, and they must die; and though they may be pompously buried, yet are soon forgotten, **Ec 8:9**; and the reason of their insolence is the delay of justice; yet there will come a time when it shall be well with them that fear God, and ill with the wicked, though they may live long in wickedness; and for the present it may befall good then what wicked men deserve, and wicked men may have that which might, be thought more proper for good men, **Ec 8:11**; wherefore this should give no uneasiness; but men should cheerfully and freely enjoy what they have with thankfulness, there being nothing better than that under the sun, **Ec 8:15**; and the chapter is concluded with observing the unsearchableness of divine Providence, **Ec 5:16**.

Ver. 1. Who is as the wise [man]?.... Who is as the first man, that was made upright, and was a wise man? not one of his sons. Or who is as the wise man, meaning himself? no man; he was the wisest of men; and yet he could not find out wisdom, and the reason of things, and the wickedness of folly, **Ec 7:25**; how therefore should any other man? what can the man do that comes after the king? Or who is like to a wise man, to he compared to him for honour and dignity? none; not those of the highest birth and blood, of the greatest wealth and riches, or in the highest places of power and authority; a wise man is above them, they being without wisdom; and especially such as are wise to salvation; these are the excellent in the earth, and the most worthy among men. Or who is a truly wise man? is there really such a person in the world, that has got to the perfection of wisdom? not one; and very few they are that can, in a true and proper sense, be called wise men. The Targum is,

"who is a wise man, that can stand against the wisdom of the Lord?"

and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? or "a word" {q}? the word of God, which is not of private interpretation? none know it rightly, but such who have the Spirit of God, the enditer of the word: Christ is the interpreter, one among a thousand; and, next to him are those who have his mind, and rightly divide the word of truth. The Targum is,

"and to know the interpretation of the words in the prophets:"

this may be understood of the solution of any difficulties in things natural or civil; and of the interpretation of any of the works of God, either in nature or providence, as well as of his word; and he is a wise man, that not only has wisdom in himself, but is able to teach others, and make them wise; can solve doubts, remove difficulties, interpret nature, the works and word of God. Aben Ezra repeats the note of similitude from the former clause, and so it may be rendered, "Who is as he that knows the interpretation of a thing", or "word?" such an one as Solomon was, **Pr 1:6**;

a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine: as Moses, when he came down from the mount, full fraught with the knowledge of the will of God, Ex 34:29; and as Stephen, whose wisdom and spirit, by which he spoke, were irresistible, **Ac 6:10**; wisdom, which discovers itself in a man's words and actions, gives comeliness to his person, makes him look amiable and lovely in the eyes of others: or, it "enlightens his face" {r}; by it he is able to see the difference between truth and falsehood, and what is to be done and not done; what way he should walk in, and what he should shun and avoid;

and the boldness of his face shall be changed; the ferocity and austerity of his countenance, the impudence and inhumanity that appeared in him before, through his wisdom and knowledge, are changed into meekness, gentleness, and humanity; of an impudent, fierce, and badly behaved man, he becomes meek, modest, affable, and humane; this effect natural wisdom and knowledge has on men {s}; and much more spiritual and evangelical wisdom, which comes from above, and is first pure, then peaceable and gentle, **Jas 3:17**. Some read it, "the strength of his face shall be doubled", or "renewed" {t}; he shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory; his spiritual strength shall be renewed, and his light and knowledge increase yet more and more, **2Co 3:18**. But Gussetius {u} renders it, his "boldness", or impudence, "shall be hated".

{q} rbd "verbi", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus. {r} wynp ryat "illustrati", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus; "illuminat", Cocceius, Gejerus, Rambachius, so Broughton. {s} "Adde quod ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes, emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros", Ovid. de Ponto, l. 2. Eleg. 9. {t} anwvy "duplicatur", Junius & Tremellius, Varenius; "instauratur", Cocceius, Gejerus. {u} Ebr. Comment. p. 595. so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Ecclesiastes 8:2

Ver. 2. I [counsel thee] to keep the king's commandment,.... Or, "to observe the mouth of the king" {w}; what he says, and do according to it when it is agreeably to the law of God, and according to the laws of the kingdom, by which he is to govern; for kings are to be honoured, obeyed, and submitted to, in the lawful discharge of their office: and such counsel and advice as this is wholesome; and, being taken, contributes much, as to the honour of kings, so to the good of kingdoms and states, and to a man's own peace and comfort. Aben Ezra supplies it, "I command thee, or I admonish thee;"

for it may be either a charge, or art advice, respecting this and what follows. Jarchi supplies and paraphrases it thus,

"I have need, and am prepared, to observe the mouth (or keep the commandment) of the King of the world;"

and so Alshech,

"observe that which goes out of the mouth of the King of the world."

And indeed, to understand it, not of an earthly king, but of the King of kings, as it is understood by other interpreters also, suits better with what is said of this King in the following verses; whose commandments, which are not grievous, but to be loved above fine gold, should be kept from a principle of love, without mercenary and selfish views, as they are delivered out by him, and to his glory; and such a charge as this should be attended to, and such counsel be received;

and [that] in regard of the oath of God; who has swore, that if his children forsake his law, and walk not in his statutes, he will visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes; and therefore should be careful to keep his commandments, Ps 89:30. Those who interpret this of an earthly king, by the oath of God understand the oath of allegiance and fidelity to him, taken in the name and presence of God, and therefore for conscience's sake should obey him: or render it, "but [so that thou observest] the manner of the oath of God" {x}; or takest care to obey him; or do nothing in obedience to kings, which is contrary to the will of God; for God is to be obeyed rather than men, **Ac 4:19**; especially, and above all things, that is to be regarded.

{w} rmv Klm yp "os regis observes", Tigurine version, Pagninus, Mercerus; "observa", Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Rambachius. {x} Myhla tewbv trbd lew "sed, ita quod ad Deum attinent, observes rationem juramenti Dei", Varenius; "attamen, supra serve verbum juramenti Dei", Gussetius, p. 605.

Ecclesiastes 8:3

Ver. 3. Be not hasty to go out of his sight,.... But of the sight of the King of kings. Do not think to hide thyself from him, for there is no fleeing from his presence, Ps 139:7; it is best, when under some consternation, as the word {y} signifies, or under some fearful apprehension of his wrath and indignation, to fall down before him, acknowledge the offence, and pray for pardon: and to this purpose is the Targum,

"and in the time of the indignation of the Lord, do not cease to pray before him; being terrified (or troubled) before him, go and pray, and seek mercy of him;"

and with which agrees the note of Jarchi,

"be not troubled, saying that thou wilt go and free from his presence, to a place where he does not rule, for he rules in every place."

Such who interpret this of an earthly king suppose this forbids a man going out from the presence of a king in a pet and passion, withdrawing himself from his court and service in a heat, at once;

stand not in an evil thing; having done it, continue not in it; but repent of it, acknowledge and forsake it, whether against God or an earthly king;

for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him; which best agrees with the King of kings, who does what he pleases, in heaven above and in earth below, both in nature, providence, and grace; see Job 23:13; though earthly kings indeed have long hands, as is usually said, and can reach a great way, and do great things, especially despotic and arbitrary princes, and it is very difficult escaping their hands. The Targum is,

"for the Lord of all worlds, the Lord will do what he pleases."

{y} lhbt la "ne consterneris", Gejerus, and some in Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 8:4

Ver. 4. Where the word of a king [is, there is] power,.... Or "dominion" {z}. Authority goes along with his word of command; and there is an inferior magistracy, a subordinate power under him, ready to execute his will upon the rebellious and disobedient. Jarchi interprets it, the word of the holy blessed

God; and the Targum, the word of that King who rules over all the world; where his word of doctrine comes, not in word only, it is with power: his written word is quick and powerful; the word of his Gospel preached is the power of God to salvation; or is accompanied with power to enlighten dark minds, quicken dead sinners, unstop deaf ears, soften hard hearts, and deliver men from the slavery of sin and Satan; it makes men, of enemies, friends to God, Christ, and good men; transforms them by the renewing of their minds, and comforts and establishes saints; all which is attributed to the word; and are the effects of almighty power, **Heb 4:12**; his word of command also comes with power, being clothed with his authority; and is submitted to by his people in the day of his power upon them, who readily and cheerfully obey it;

and who may say unto him, what dost thou? call him to an account for, or complain of any of his works of creation, providence, or grace? This best agrees with God than with an earthly king; and is said of him elsewhere, **Job 9:12**.

{z} Nwjlv "imperium", Montanus, Rambachius; "dominatio", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius.

Ecclesiastes 8:5

Ver. 5. Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing,.... Either the commandment of an earthly king, which should be kept, when agreeably to the laws of the nation, and not inconsistent with the commands of God; and such as do observe it "know no evil" {a}, as it may be rendered, or no sorrow; they live peaceably and quietly, and enjoy the favour and protection of the government under which they are, and have praise of men; see Ro 13:3; or the commandments of the heavenly King, the singular being put for the plural; so the Targum,

"whoso keepeth the commandments of the Lord shall know no evil in the world to come."

Nor in this world neither; no evil befalls them; what may be thought to be so is for their good; though they know and are conscious of the evil of sin, and commit it, yet not willingly, and with love to it, and so as to make it the work of their lives; but lament it, repent of it, and forsake it, and do not feel the evil of punishment for it; yea, such enjoy much good; have much communion with God; large discoveries of his love; dwell in him, and shall at last dwell with him in the heavenly city; see Joh 14:21;

and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment; he knows not only what is his duty to do, both with respect to God and men, to a temporal prince or the King eternal; but he knows also the most fit and convenient time of doing it; and lays hold on every opportunity that offers, and which may be called "redeeming time", **Ga 6:10**; and he knows the right manner in which it should be performed, with all the agreeable circumstances of it, which he carefully observes; or he knows the judgment that will be passed, or the punishment that will be inflicted on delinquents, either by God or men; and therefore is careful to keep the commandment, and avoid it: and especially he remembers there is a judgment to come, when everything will be brought to an account; and, though he does not know the precise day and hour, yet he knows there will be such a time; so some render it, "the time of judgment" {b}: the Targum is,

"and the time of prayer, and of judgment, and of truth, is known by the heart of the wise."

{a} edy al "non cognoscet", Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Rambachius, Cocceius. {b} jpvmw tew kairon krisewv, Sept. so some in Drusius.

Ecclesiastes 8:6

Ver. 6. Because to every purpose there is time and judgment,.... There is a fit season, and a right and proper manner of doing everything that is to be done; see **Ec 3:1**; which a wise man discerns; and which when a man hits upon, it prevents a great deal of mischief, which for want of it comes upon men, as the following clause shows; some refer this to the punishment of the wicked, and to a future judgment. So the Targum,

"to every business there is a time good and evil, and according to the judgment of truth the whole world is judged;"

and to the same purpose Jarchi,

"there is a time fixed for the visitation of the wicked, and there is judgment before the Lord; this is vengeance or punishment;"

therefore the misery of man [is] great upon him; he not observing the right time and manner of doing what he ought, brings much trouble upon himself; his days are few and full trouble, and every day has a sufficiency of evil in because of the evil of sin, the evil of misery presses upon him, and is a heavy burden on him Jarchi's note is,

"when the wickedness of a man is great, then cometh his visitation."

Ecclesiastes 8:7

Ver. 7. For he knoweth not that which shall be,.... Or that "it shall be" {b}; that he ever shall have the opportunity again he has lost, nor what is to come hereafter; what shall be on the morrow, or what shall befall him in the remaining part of his days; what troubles and sorrows he shall meet with, or what will be the case and circumstances of his family after his death;

for who can tell him when it shall be? or "how it shall be" {c}? how it will be with him or his; no one that pretends to judicial astrology, or to the art of divination, or any such devices, can tell him what is to come; future things are only certainly known by God; none but he can tell what will certainly come to pass; see Ec 3:22; Jarchi interprets it of a man's not considering for what God will bring him to judgment, and that no man can tell him the vengeance and punishment that will be inflicted.

{b} hyhyv hm "quod futurum est", Pagninus, Montanus. {c} hyhy rvak "quo modo", Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus, Rambachius, so Broughton.

Ecclesiastes 8:8

Ver. 8. [There is] no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit,.... Which is not to be understood of the wind, which the word used sometimes signifies, and of men's having no power to restrain that, or hinder it from blowing; for to what purpose should Solomon mention this? rather it may be considered as a check upon despotic and arbitrary princes not to stretch their power too far; since they had none over the spirits or minds of men, and could not hinder them from thinking ill of them, and wishing ill to them, nor restrain their hatred of them; whatever power they had or exercised over their bodies and estates, they had none over their spirits, or their consciences; no lawful power to restrain them from their to God, nor to oblige them to do that which

he has forbidden; nor to compel them to anything against conscience; nor to bind their consciences in matters indifferent: or as an argument with subjects to obey the commands of their sovereign; since it is not in their power to restrain the spirit and wrath of princes, which is as the roaring of a lion, and as: he messengers of death, Pr 16:14; particularly to be careful that they do not commit any capital offence, for which sentence may be passed to take away life; when it will not be in their power to retain it; nor rescue themselves out of the hands of justice and the civil magistrate, but must submit. Or else it is to be understood of every man's spirit at the hour of death, and of the unavoidableness of it, as the next clause explains it; and by "spirit" is meant, either the sensitive soul, the same with the spirit of a beast, without which the body is dead, and is like the wind that passeth away, and ceaseth when the breath is stopped; or the rational soul, the spirit that is committed to God, and returns to him at death, Lu 23:43. This a man has not power over to dismiss or retain at pleasure; he cannot keep it one moment longer when it is called for and required by the Father of spirits, the Creator of it; he has not power "to restrain" {d} it, as in a prison, as the word signifies, as Alshech observes; whence Aben Ezra says, that the spirit or soul in the body is like a prisoner in a prison; but nothing, that attends a man in this life, or he is in possession of, can keep the soul in this prison, when the time of its departure is come; not riches, nor honours, nor wisdom and leaning, nor strength and youth, nor all the force of medicine; the time is fixed, it is the appointment of God, the bounds set by him cannot be passed, **Ec 3:2**
Job 14:5. The Targum is,

"no man has power over the spirit of the soul to restrain the soul of life, that it might not cease from the body of man;"

and to the same sense Jarchi,

"to restrain the spirit in his body, that the angel of death should not take him;"

neither [hath he] power in the day of death; or "dominion" {e}; death strips a man of all power and authority, the power that the husband has over the wife, or parents over their children, or the master over his servant, or the king over his subjects; death puts down all power and authority: it is an observation of Jarchi's, that David after he came to the throne is everywhere called King David, but, when he came to die, only David, **1Ki 2:1**; no king nor ruler can stand against death any more than a beggar; up man is lord of death any more than of life, but death is lord of all; all must and do submit to it, high and low, rich and poor; there is a day fixed for it, and that day can never be adjourned, or put off to another; and as man has not power to deliver himself in the day of death, so neither his friend, as the Targum, nor any relation whatever;

and [there is] no discharge in [that] war; death is a warfare as well as life, with which nature struggles, but in vain; it is an enemy, and the last that shall be destroyed; it is a king, and a very powerful one; there is no withstanding him, he is always victorious; and there is no escaping the battle with him, or fleeing from him; a discharge of soldiers in other wars is sometimes obtained by interest, by the entreaty of friends, or by money; but here all cries and entreaties signify nothing; nor does he value riches, gold, or all the forces of strength; see 2Sa 12:18; under the old law, if a person had built a new house, or married a wife, or was faint hearted, he was excused and dismissed; but none of these things are of any avail in this war, De 20:5; captives taken in war are sometimes dismissed by their conquerors, or they find ways and means to make their escape; but nothing of this kind can be done when death has seized on the persons of men. Some render it, there is "no sending to" or "in [that] war" {f}; there is no sending forces against death to withstand him, it is to no purpose; there is no sending a message to him to sue for a peace, truce, or reprieve; he will hearken to nothing; there is no sending one in the room of another, as Jarchi observes,

"a man cannot say, I will send my son, or my servant;"

no surrogation is allowed of in this case, as David wished for, 2Sa 18:33. Aben Ezra interprets it, no armour, and so many interpreters; and so the Targum;

"nor do instruments of armour help in war;"

in this war: in other wars a man may put on a helmet of brass and a coat of mail, to protect and defend him, or throw darts and arrows; but these signify nothing when death makes his approach and attack;

neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it; or "the masters of it" {g}; that is, from death; neither Satan the wicked one, as Jerom, who is wickedness itself, and with whom wicked men are confederate, can deliver them from death; nor sinners the most abandoned deliver themselves, who have made a covenant with it, and an agreement with hell, Isa 28:15; such who are masters of the greatest wicked craft and cunning, and who devise many ways to escape other things, can contrive none to escape death; nor will riches gotten by wickedness deliver the owners of them from death; see Pr 10:2; This sense is mentioned by Aben Ezra, and not to be despised.

{d} awlkl "ut coerceat", Piscator; "ad coercendum", Cocceius. {e} Nwjlv "dominatio", Junius & Tremellius, Vatablus; "dominium", Rambachius. {f} hmxlmb txlvm Nya "non est missio ad illud praelium", Varenius apud Gejerum. {g} wyleb ta "dominos suos", Drusius.

Ecclesiastes 8:9

Ver. 9. All this have I seen,.... Observed, taken notice of, and thoroughly considered; all that is said above, concerning the scarcity of good men and women, the fall of our first parents, the excellency of wisdom, the necessity and advantage of keeping the king's commandment, the time and manner of doing it, the evil consequences that follow an inattention to these things, ignorance of what is to come, and the unavoidableness of death;

and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun; not so much to mechanic works and manual operations performed by men, as to moral or immoral works, and chiefly the work of Providence with respect to good and bad men, the consequence of which were the following observations;

[there is] a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt; or "the man ruleth over men" {h}; for this is not to be understood of private rule in families, of the parent over his children, or master over his servant, but of a king over his subjects; who is the man, the principal man in the kingdom; and such a man ruling in an arbitrary and tyrannical way is to his own detriment in the issue. So Rehoboam; by his oppressive government, lost ten tribes out of twelve. Some have lost their whole kingdoms, and come to an untimely end; as well as ruined their immortal souls. Some render it "to his hurt" {i}; to the hurt of those that are ruled, when it should be for their good, the protection of their persons and properties; but instead of that they lay heavy burdens upon them, take away their property, and injure and insult their persons. So the Targum,

"to do ill to him."

But Jarchi interprets it of the king himself. Some take it in both senses; and so it is usually in fact, that wicked princes rule to their own hurt, and the hurt of their subjects.

{h} Mdah "homo", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, &c. {i} wl erl "in ipsus perniciem", Tigurine version; "in noxam ipsi", Cocceius.

Ecclesiastes 8:10

Ver. 10. And so I saw the wicked buried,.... Or "truly" {k}, verily, as the Targum, this is matter of fact; or "then I saw", as Aben Ezra and others, upon applying his heart to every work; or when be observed particularly wicked magistrates, he took notice that some of them continued in their power until death, and died in their beds, and were carried to their graves in great pomp and state, and interred in a very magnificent manner, when they deserved no burial at all, but, as King Jeconiah, to be buried with the burial of an ass;

who had come and gone from the place of the holy; which most understand of the same persons, of wicked magistrates buried, who kept their posts of honour and places of power and authority as long as they lived; and went to and came from the courts of judicature and tribunals of justice, in great state and splendour; where they presided as God's vicegerents, and therefore called the place of the holy, Ps 82:1; or though they were sometimes deposed, yet they were restored again to their former dignity; or though they died and were buried, yet in a sense rose again in their children that succeeded them, so Aben Ezra: but it seems better to understated it of other persons, and render the, words thus, "and they came, and from the place of the holy", or "the holy place they walked" {l}; that is, multitudes came to attend the funeral of such rich and mighty men, and walked after or followed the corpse; and ever, the priests and Levites from the temple made a part of the funeral procession, and walked in great solemnity from thence to the place of interment, which was usually without the city;

and they were forgotten in the city where they had done; all their evil deeds were forgotten, their acts of oppression and injustice, as if they had never been done by them. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions are, "and they were praised in the city"; panegyrics upon them were written and rehearsed, monuments were erected to their honour, with large encomiums of them; and so it may be read by the change of a letter; and Jarchi says, do not read "forgotten", but "praised"; and so he says it is interpreted by their Rabbins. The whole may be considered in a very different view thus "but then I saw", &c. such arbitrary rulers die, and laid in the grave, one after another, and their names have been buried in oblivion, and never remembered more in the city where they have exercised so much power and authority. The latter part of the text is by many understood of good men, and rendered thus, "and" or "but [on the contrary] they were forgotten in the city where they had done right" {m}; their persons and their good deeds were remembered no more; but this seems contrary to Ps 112:6. The Targum paraphrases the whole thus;

"and in truth I have seen sinners that are buried and destroyed out of the world, from the holy place where the righteous dwell, who go to be burned in hell; and they are forgotten among the inhabitants of the city; and as they have done, it is done to them;"

this [is] also vanity; the pompous funeral of such wicked magistrates.

{k} Nkbw "et vere", Vatablus. {l} wklhy vwdq Mwqmmw waby "et venerunt, immo ex ipso etiam loco sancti itabant", Rambaschius. {m} So Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 8:11

Ver. 11. Because sentence [against] an evil work is not executed speedily,.... Any evil work done by magistrates, or others, against which the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, and is threatened with his vengeance; the decree is gone forth, the sentence is passed, God is determined upon punishment; but there is a delay of it, he exercises patience and longsuffering to answer some end of his, both towards his own people and the wicked; as well as to display some of his own perfections; but because so it is, the judgment comes not at once;

therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil; or their "heart is full to do evil" {n}; they have not only a fulness of sin in them naturally as is in every man's heart; but they are filled with resolution, boldness, and courage, to commit sin, promising themselves impurity from the seeming delay of justice; such an abuse do they make of the patience and forbearance of God; they become more and more hardened in sin and bent upon the commission of it.

{n} er twvel alm "plenum ad faciendum malum", Pagninus, Montanus; "praegnano ad faciendum malum", Gussetius, p. 469.

Ecclesiastes 8:12

Ver. 12. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times,.... That is ever so many times, a certain number for an uncertain; though he lives in a continued course of sin, being resolved upon the above consideration to give himself a swing to his lusts. The Targum renders it a hundred years; though be should live so long in sin, yet at last should be accursed Isa 65:20. This and what follows are said to check the boldness and presumption of the sinner upon the patience of God; and to make the people of God easy under the delay of justice, and the prosperity of the wicked;

and his [days] be prolonged: or rather, "and he prolongs unto him" {o}; that is, God prolongs unto him, not days only, but the execution of the sentence against his evil works; or defers his wrath and punishment; so Jarchi,

"and the holy blessed God prolongs to him, and does not take vengeance on him;"

and to this purpose is the Targum,

"and from the Lord is given to him space to return;"

yet surely I know; from the word and promise, and from experience, having observed it in a multitude of instances, which have abundantly confirmed the truth;

that it shall be well with them that fear God; not with a servile but filial fear, with a holy, humble, fiducial, affectionate, and an obediential fear; not through any terrible apprehension of his majesty, his judgment, his wrath now and hereafter; but under a sense of his being and perfections, and especially his mercy, grace, and goodness: it is well with such persons in all things; with respect to things temporal they shall not want what is proper for them; and with respect to things spiritual they are interested in the love, grace, and mercy of God; have much made known to them; are remembered by him; the sun of righteousness rises upon them; the eye of God is on them, and his heart towards them, and his hand communicates every needful supply to them; and they are guarded, not only by his angels, but by himself; and it is well with them at all times; in times of public calamity they are either taken from it beforehand, or preserved in it; all afflictions are for their good; it goes well with them at death and judgment; and they will be happy both in the millennium state and in the ultimate glory, So the Targum,

"it shall be well in the world to come with them that fear the Lord;"

see Ps 34:7; with this compare **Isa 3:10**; it is added,

which fear before him: whose fear is not hypocritical, but sincere and hearty; not in show only, but in reality; not the precepts of men, and as before them, but as the sight of God; having always a sense of omniscience and omnipresence before them; and especially this fear is exercised by them when they are his house, in the assembly of his saints, attending his word and ordinances: or "which fear at his presence"; which fills them with a holy awe, as wall as with joy and gladness. The Targum is,

"which fear before him, and do his will."

{o} wl Kyram "et prolongans ei", Montanus; "et prolongat in Deus dies", Pagninus; so Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, supply it; "et prorogat dei Deus poenam", Piscator; "et differt Deus iram suam propter illium", Vatablus.

Ecclesiastes 8:13

Ver. 13. But it shall not be well with the wicked,.... It shall be ill with him; more is designed than is expressed, **Isa 3:11**; in life they have no solid peace and comfort; at death they will be turned into at judgment they will hear the awful sentence, "Go, ye cursed", and will be in torment to all eternity, Mt 25:41;

neither shall he prolong [his] days, [which are] as a shadow: wicked men sometimes do not live out half their days, which, according to the course of nature, and common term of life, they might be thought to live; or if they prolong their days in wickedness, as sometimes they do, **Ec 7:15**; yet their days at longest are but a shadow which declines, and is quickly gone; or, however, they do not attain to eternal life, which is sometimes meant by prolonging days, and is length of days for ever and ever, Isa 53:10; this they never enjoy; but when the righteous go into life lasting, they go into everlasting punishment. The reason of this is,

because he feareth not before God; the fear of God is not before his eyes, nor in his heart; he goes on in sin without fear of him, boldly and openly commits it, and instead of taking shame for it, or repenting of it, glories in it; stretches out his hand against God, and bids defiance to him, and desires not the knowledge of him, and refuses to obey him The Targum of the whole is,

"and it shall not be well with the wicked, and he shall have no space in the world to come; and in this world his days shall be cut off, and they shall flee and pass away as a shadow, because he fears not God."

Ecclesiastes 8:14

Ver. 14. There is a vanity which is done upon the earth,.... Transacted in this lower world under the sun, through the permission and direction of divine Providence; not that it is a vanity on the part of God, who has wise ends to answer by it, for the good of his people, the trial of their graces, &c. or to bring sinners to repentance, or harden them in sin; but this shows the vanity and uncertainty of all worldly things, and that there is no happiness to be had in them;

that there be just [men], unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked: to whom evil comes, as the Targum and Jarchi; who are treated as if they were wicked men, and dealt with in providence as sinners would be, if they had the just desert of their wicked works; being attended with poverty, sickness, and disgrace, and other calamities of life, as Job, Asaph, Lazarus, and others, and yet truly righteous and good men;

again, there be wicked [men] to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous; to whom good things come, as the Targum and Jarchi; who have an affluence of good things, all the outward blessings of life, as health, wealth, honour, long life, &c. as if they had lived the best of lives, and were the most righteous persons upon earth; see
Job 21:7;

I said, that this also [is] vanity; this is said, as some think, according to the judgment of corrupt nature; or as it is apprehended by such who do not rightly consider the judgments of God and the wisdom of Providence in the ordering of things to answer good purposes; or rather the sense is, this is one of the miseries and infelicities of this life, and which demonstrates the emptiness of all things here below, and that the chief good and supreme happiness is not to be had here; but there is and must be a future state, when all things will be set right, and everyone will have and enjoy his proper portion.

Ecclesiastes 8:15

Ver. 15. Then I commended mirth,.... Innocent mirth, a cheerfulness of spirit in whatsoever state condition men are; serenity and tranquillity of mind, thankfulness for what they have, and a free and comfortable use of it; this the wise man praised and recommended to good men, as being much better than to fret at the prosperity of the wicked, and the seemingly unequal distribution of things in this world, and because they had not so much of them: as others; who yet had reason to be thankful for what they had, and to lift up their heads and be cheerful, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God in another world. The Targum interprets it of the joy of the law;

because a man hath no better thing under the sun than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry; of earthly things there is nothing better than for a man freely and cheerfully, with moderation and thankfulness, to enjoy what God has given him; this is what had been observed before, **Ec 2:24**; and is not the language of an epicure, or a carnal man, who observing that no difference is made between the righteous and the wicked, that it is as well or better with the wicked than the righteous, determines to give up himself to sensual lusts and pleasures; but it is the good and wholesome advice of the wise man, for men to be easy under every providence, satisfied with their present condition and circumstances, and be cheerful and pleasant, and not distress themselves about things they cannot alter;

for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun; man's present life is under the sun, and is continued as long as it pleases God; though it is but short, rather to be counted by days than years, and is a laborious one; and all that he gets by his labour, enjoyed by him, is to eat and drink cheerfully; and this he may expect to have and continue with him as long as he lives, even food and raiment, and with this he should be content.

Ecclesiastes 8:16

Ver. 16. When I applied mine heart to know wisdom,.... The nature and causes of things; the wisdom of God in his providence, and the grounds and reasons of his various dispensations towards the children of men: the Targum interprets it, the wisdom of the law;

and to see the business that is done upon the earth; either the business of Providence, in dealing so unequally with the righteous and the wicked, before observed; and which is a business very afflictive and distressing for curious persons to look into, not being able to account for it: or the labour and toil of men to get wealth and riches, and to find happiness in them;

(for also [there is that] neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes); or has any sleep in his eyes, through his eager pursuit after worldly things, or, however, has but little; he rises early and sits up late at his business, so close and diligent is he at it, so industrious to obtain riches, imagining a happiness in them there is not: or else this describes persons curious and inquisitive into the affairs of Providence, and the reasons of them; who give themselves no rest, day nor night, being so intent upon their studies of this kind; and perhaps the wise man may design himself.

Ecclesiastes 8:17

Ver. 17. Then I beheld all the work of God,.... Not of creation, but of Providence; took notice of it, contemplated on it, considered it, and weighed it well; viewed the various steps and methods of it, to find out, if possible, at least, some general rule by which it proceeded: but all so various and uncertain,

that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: he can find out that it is done, but not the reason why it is done: the ways of God are in the deep, and not to be traced; they are unsearchable and past finding out; there is a bayov, a depth of wisdom and knowledge, in them, inscrutable by the wisest of men, Ps 72:19;

because, though a man labour to seek [it] out, yet he shall not find [it]; Noldius and others render it "although"; not only a man that, in a slight and negligent manner, seeks after the knowledge of the works of divine Providence, and the reasons of them; but even one that is diligent and laborious at it is not able to find them out; they being purposely concealed by the Lord, to answer some ends of his;

yea, further, though a wise [man] think to know [it], yet shall he not be able to find [it]; a man of a great natural capacity, such an one as Solomon himself, though he proposes to himself, and determines within himself to find it out, and sets himself to the work, and uses all the means and methods he can devise, and imagines with himself he shall be able to find out the reasons of the divine procedure, in his dispensations towards the righteous and the wicked; and yet, after all, he is not able to do it. The Targum is,

"what shall be done in the end of days;"

wherefore it is best for a man to be easy and quiet, and enjoy what he has in the best manner he can, and submit to the will of God.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ecclesiastes 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES 9

Though the wise man, with all his wisdom, search, and labour, could not find out the causes and reasons of divine Providence, in the branches and methods of it; yet some things he did find out, and observe, in making this inquiry, and which he declares; as that good and wise men, more especially their persons and their affairs, were in the hand of God, under his guidance, government, and direction; and that an interest in his love and hatred was not to be known by the outward estate of men, **Ec 9:1**; That the same events happen to good and bad men, who are variously described; that the hearts of wicked men are full of sin and madness as long as they live, and that they all must and do die, **Ec 9:2**; and then the state of such dead is described, as being without hope, knowledge, reward, or memory; and without love, hatred, or envy, or any portion in the things of this life, **Ec 9:4**. Wherefore good men are advised to live cheerfully, in a view of acceptance with God, both of persons and services; and eat and drink, and clothe well, according to their circumstances, and enjoy their friends and families; since nothing of this kind can be done in the grave, **Ec 9:7**. Then the wise man observes another vanity; that success in undertakings is not always to persons who bid fair, and might hope for it, but looks like the effect of chance, **Ec 9:11**; which want of success is often owing to their ignorance of the proper time of doing things, and to their want of foresight, thought, and care, to prevent evils; for which reason they are compared to fishes and birds, taken in a net or snare, **Ec 9:12**. And concludes with a commendation of wisdom, illustrated by an example of it, in a certain person that delivered a city by it, **Ec 9:13**; and though the man's wisdom was despised, yet it is preferable to strength, or weapons of war, or the noise of a foolish ruler, who destroys much good, **Ec 9:16**.

Ver. 1. For all this I considered in mine heart,.... What goes before, in the latter end of the preceding chapter, concerning the various providences of God, the difficulty of finding out the reasons of them, and the fruitlessness of attempting it; and also what follows, the work of Providence: Solomon gave his mind unto, attended it with great application, and strictly considered and examined it, in order to find it out, but could not; and if he could not, no other man could. And he had a good intention in all; his views were,

even to declare all this; for the end of search and inquiry should be, to make known what is found for the good of others, **Job 5:27**; and as the wise man had done before, **Ec 7:25**; or "to purge", or "purify", as the word {p} signifies; to make dark providences clear, and consistent with the perfections and promises of God; to free and vindicate them from all charges of unrighteousness and partiality, and to set them in a clear light to others: now though he failed in his attempt, yet having made some discoveries, he imparted them, as follows: and the observations he made were,

that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, [are] in the hand of God; that those who are truly "righteous" in the sight of God; are so, in an evangelical sense, made so by the obedience of Christ; and who believe in him for righteousness, and live soberly, righteously, and godly: and who are "wise", not for the things of this world but another, who are wise unto salvation; and are concerned for the truth of grace, as well as an outward profession, and walk wisely in the world; these, their persons, are under the special care of divine Providence; they receive from the hand of God what is needful and proper for them, and they are preserved and protected by him, **1Ti 4:8**; and their "works", or affairs; all events relating to them, are all appointed, ordered, and directed by the hand of God, and all for their good. In a more evangelic sense, their persons are in the hands of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; in the hands of the Father of Christ, being engraven there: he looks at them, and upon them; with delight and pleasure, and never forgets them; he has a high and honourable esteem of them, they are a crown of glory, and a royal diadem in his hand; he directs and guides them, holds them, and upholds them with his right hand; and keeps them, by his power, through faith unto salvation, Joh 10:29. They are in the hands of Christ; put there by his Father, as the effect of his love, care, and wisdom; where they are in his possession, the objects of his delight; and are under his guidance and direction, his care and protection, De

33:3. And they are in the hands of the Spirit, who begins and carries on his own work in them; leads them to Christ, and into all truth, and guides them safe to glory, Joh 16:8. And so their "works" also are in the hands of God; the work of grace upon the soul is in the hand of the Spirit, to carry it on and finish it; good works done by them are done by the assistance of divine grace, the strength of Christ, and the aid of the blessed Spirit; are received and accepted with God through Christ; and will not be forgotten, but are retained, and will be remembered another day; see **Ec 9:7**;

no man knoweth either love or hatred [by] all [that is] before them; no man knows his own love and hatred, his passions are so fickle and inconstant; what he loves now, he presently hates, as may be seen in the instances of Ammon, Ahasuerus, and others: or he knows not that what he loves and hates shall befall him, all depending on divine Providence; or he does not know the love and hatred of others, who are his friends or his foes, there is such deceitfulness in men: or rather, he does not know the love and hatred of God, with respect to himself or others, by the outward conduct of Providence; since the same things happen to one as to another; as health and strength, wealth and riches, honour and fame, wisdom and learning, long life, and the like: good men may know that they are loved of God, by his love being shed abroad in them, by the blessings of grace bestowed on them, and the witnessings of the Spirit to them; and know that sin is abominable to God, and wicked men are hated by him; and living and dying in sin, will be eternally damned; but who is an elect person, and who a reprobate, is not to be known by the outward estate of men, as to the things of life. Some render it, "even love and hatred" {q}, in connection with the preceding clause; that is, these are in the hands of God also; his love to his people is purely sovereign, according to his own will; not through any motives in them, as their love, loveliness, or good works; and his hatred of others, or the punishment of them for sin, and appointment of them to it; for the same is also as he pleases; see **Ro 9:11**; or the love and hatred of men; for God has the hearts and passions of all men in his hand, and at his command, and can raise or restrain them at his pleasure, Pr 21:1; the love and hatred of good men; he works in them love to himself and all divine things, and hatred of that which is evil; and also of bad men, he can make them love his people, and he can restrain their wrath when he pleases, Pr 16:7; and then the last clause is rendered, "no man knoweth all [that is] before them" {r}; either before Elohim, the three divine Persons, to whom all things are manifest, or that were before decreed, as Aben Ezra; the purposes and decrees of God, which are the secret and deep things of God, and cannot be known but by his promises or providences: or man is so short sighted, that he cannot discern the things that are plain and manifest before him; and much less things future, that are yet to come. But the words, according to the accents, may be better rendered, as by Munster, "neither love nor hatred man knows"; whether the love professed to him is sincere, and what secret hatred is bore to him: "but all things are before him"; Elohim, the three divine Persons.

{p} rwbl "purgare", Gejerus, Gouge. {q} hanv Mg hbha Mg "etiam amor, etiam odium", i.e. "in manu Dei", De Dieu, Gouge, Gussetius, p. 150, 873. {r} Mhynpl lkh Mdah edwy Nya "non norunt homines quicquam corum quaea ante se sunt", De Dieu; "non est homo quisquam qui cognoscat omnes qui sunt coram ipsi", Gussetius, p. 873.

Ecclesiastes 9:2

Ver. 2. All [things come] alike to all,.... That is, all outward things in this life, good and bad men share in alike; which proves that neither love nor hatred can be known by them: so the emperor Mark Antonine, in speaking of life and death, of honour and dishonour, of pain and pleasure, riches and poverty, says {s}, all these things happen alike to good men and bad men;

[there is] one event to the righteous and to the wicked; the same prosperous ones happen to one as to another, as riches, honour, health, wisdom and learning, fame and reputation: if Abraham was rich in cattle, gold, and silver, so was Nabal, and the rich fool in the Gospel; if Joseph was advanced to great dignity in Pharaoh's court, so was Haman in the court of Ahasuerus; if Caleb was as hearty and strong at fourscore and five as ever, it is true of many wicked men, that there are no bands in their death, and their strength is firm to the last; if Moses, Solomon, and Daniel, were wise men, and of great learning, so were the idolatrous Egyptians, and so are many God is not pleased to call by his grace; if Demetrius had a good report of all men, so had the false prophets of old: and the same adverse things happen to one as to another as the instances of Job, Lazarus, and the good figs, the Jews carried into captivity, show; of whom the Midrash, and Jarchi from that, interpret this and the following clauses: "to the righteous and to the wicked": to Noah the righteous, and to Pharaoh, not Necho, as Jarchi, but he whose daughter Solomon married, who, the Jews say, were both lame;

to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; who are "good", not naturally, and in and of themselves, but by the grace of God; and who are "clean", not by nature, nor by their own power, but through the clean water of divine grace being sprinkled on them, and through the blood and righteousness of Christ applied to them; and who are "unclean", through the corruption of nature, and the pollution of actual sins, they live in. Some understand this of a ceremonial cleanness and uncleanness. The above Jews apply these characters to Moses, who was good; to Aaron, who was clean; and to the spies, who were unclean; and the same thing happened to them all, exclusion from the land of Canaan;

to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: that serves and worships the Lord, and who does not, one branch of service and worship being put for all; and whether they offer themselves, their contrite hearts and spiritual sacrifices, or not. The Jews exemplify this Josiah, who sacrificed to the Lord; and in Ahab, who made sacrifice to cease; and both were slain with arrows;

as [is] the good, so [is] the sinner; alike in their outward condition and circumstances, whether as to prosperity or adversity;

[and] he that sweareth, as [he] that feareth an oath; the common swearer, or he that is perjured, and has no reverence of God, nor regard to truth, nor any concern to make good his oath; and he that is cautious about taking one does it with awe and reverence of the divine Being, and is careful of keeping, it, even to his own hurt. The Jews stance in Zedekiah and Samson; the former broke his oath with the king of Babylon, and the latter was a religious observer of an oath; and yet both had their eyes put out; but it does not appear that Samson ever took an oath: the opposition in the text seems to be between one that is ready to take an oath on every occasion, without considering the solemnity of one, and without due care of what he swore to; and one that is cautious about taking an oath, and chooses to be excused from taking one, on any account, could he be excused; preferring such advice as is given, **Mt 5:34**, "swear not at all"; the counsel about swearing, which Isocrates {t} gives, seems worthy of notice;

"take an oath required on two accounts; either to purge thyself from a foul crime charged with, or to save friends in danger, and deliver them out of it; but on account of money (or goods) swear not by any deity, no, not even if thou canst take an oath safely; for by some thou wilt be thought to be perjured, and by others to be covetous."

The word in Hebrew for swearing is always passive, because a man should not swear, unless obliged; and the same form of language is used by Latin writers {u}; and the Hebrew word for it comes from a root which signifies "seven", in allusion, as some think, to seven witnesses required to an oath; the Arabians, when they swore, anointed "seven" stones with blood; and, while anointing them, called on their deities {w}; see Ge 21:30. It may be observed, that all men are here divided into good and bad; this has been the distinction from the beginning, and continues, and ever will.

{s} De scipso, l. 2. c. 11. {t} Paraenes Demonic. p. 10. {u} "Juratus sum", Plauti Corculio, Act. 3. v. 88. "Fui juratus", ib. Act 4. Sc. 4. v. 10. "Non tu juratus mihi es? juratus sum", ib. Rudens, Act. 5. Sc. 3. v. 16, 17. {w} Herodot. Thalia, sive l. 3. c. 8.

Ecclesiastes 9:3

Ver. 3. This [is] an evil among all [things] that are done under the sun, that [there is] one event unto all,.... A very great evil, a very sore one, the worst of evils. Not an evil, as the providence of God is concerned with it, who does no evil; nor is there any unrighteousness in him; he is righteous in all his ways: but this is an evil, and distressing thing, to the minds of good men; see Ps 73:2; and is what bad men make an ill use of, to harden themselves in sin, and to despise religion as an unprofitable thing,
Job 21:14;

yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil: they are naturally full of evil, of all unrighteousness and wickedness, what comes out of them show it; and because the same things happen to good and bad men, and the wicked pass with impunity, and are outwardly happy as others, or more so, their hearts are fully set in them to do evil, **Ec 8:11**;

and madness is in their heart while they live; or "madnesses" {x}: every sin is madness; for who but a madman would stretch out his hand against God, and strengthen himself against the Almighty, and run upon him? who but a madman would rush into sin in the manner he does, and expose himself to dangers and death, even eternal death? Wicked men are mad upon their lusts, and mad against the saints, and all that is good; this insanity is in their hearts, and shows itself in their lives, and continues with them as long as they live, unless called by grace;

and after that [they go] to the dead; after all the madness of their lives, they die and go into the state of the dead, and are among which refers not so much to the interment of bodies in the grave, as the company with which their separate spirits are; they go not to the righteous dead, but to the wicked; see **Pr 2:18**; so Alshech; they go to the dead; not to the righteous, who, in their death, or when dead are called living, but, as Jarchi observes, at their end they go down to hell. The Targum is,

"after the end of a man, it is reserved for him that he be corrected with the dead, according to the judgment (or desert) of sins."

{x} twllwh "insaniae", Montanus, Mercerus, Drusius, Amama, Gejerus, Rambachius; "omnis insania", Junius & Tremellius.

Ecclesiastes 9:4

Ver. 4. For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope,.... That is, who is among the living, is one of them, and, as long as he is, there is hope, if his circumstances are mean, and he is poor and afflicted, that it may be better with him in time; see Job 14:7; or of his being a good man, though now wicked; of his being called and converted, as some are at the eleventh hour, even on a death bed; and especially there is a hope of men, if they are under the means of grace, seeing persons have been made partakers of the grace of God after long waiting. There is here a "Keri" and a "Cetib", a marginal reading and a textual writing; the former reads, "that is joined", the latter, "that is chosen"; our version follows the marginal reading, as do the Targum, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions: some, following the latter, render the words, "who is to be chosen" {y}, or preferred, a living, or a dead man? not a dead but a living man: "to all the living there is hope"; of their being better; and, as Jarchi observes, there is hope, while alive, even though he is a wicked man joined to the wicked; yea, there is hope of the wicked, that he may be good before he dies;

for a living dog is better than a dead lion; a proverbial speech, showing that life is to be preferred to death; and that a mean, abject, and contemptible person, living, who for his despicable condition may be compared to a dog, is to be preferred to the most generous man, or to the greatest potentate, dead; since the one may possibly be useful in some respects or another, the other cannot: though a living sinner, who is like to a dog for his uncleanness and vileness, is not better than a dead saint or righteous man, comparable to a lion, who has hope in his death, and dies in the Lord.

{y} rxby rva ym "quisquis eligatur", Montanus, so Gejerus.

Ecclesiastes 9:5

Ver. 5. For the living know that they shall die,.... Death is certain, it is the demerit of sin, the appointment of God and the time of it is fixed; it may be known that it will be, from the word of God that assures it, from all experience which confirms it, and from the decline of nature, and the seeds of death in men. This "the living" know that live corporeally, even the wicked themselves, though they put the evil day far from them; and so good men, that live spiritually, being quickened by the Spirit and grace of God, and live a life of faith and holiness; they know they shall die, though Christ died for them, and has abolished death, as a punishment and a curse, and took away its sting, and made it a blessing; wherefore it is desirable to them, as being for their good: but there are some things about death they ordinarily know not; they do not know the time of their death; nor the place where they shall die; nor of what death they shall die; nor in what circumstances, both outward and inward: of these the Targum understands the passage;

"for the righteous know that if they sin, they shall be reckoned as dead men in the world to come, therefore they keep their ways, and sin not; but if they sin, they return by repentance;"

but the dead know not anything; this is not to be understood of their separate spirits, and of the things of the other world; for the righteous dead know much, their knowledge is greatly increased; they know, as they are known; they know much of God in Christ, of his perfections, purposes, covenant, grace, and love; they know much of Christ, of his person, offices, and glory, and see him as he is; they know much of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; and of angels, and the spirits of just men, they now converse with; and of the glories and happiness of the heavenly state; even they know abundantly more than they did in this life: and the wicked dead, in their separate spirits, know there is a God that judgeth; that their souls are immortal; that there is a future state; indeed they know and feel the torments of hell, the worm that never dies, and the fire that is not quenched: but this is to be interpreted of their bodily senses now extinct, and of worldly things they have now nothing to do with; they know not any thing that is done in this world, nor how it fares with their children and friends they have left behind them; see Job 14:21; nor therefore are they to be prayed unto, and used as mediators with God. The Targum is, "and sinners know not any good, so that they do not make their works good while they live; and they know not any good in the world to come;"

neither have they any more a reward; not but that there will be rewards in a future state, in which everyone shall have his own reward; there will be a reward for the righteous; they will receive the reward of the inheritance, though it will be, not of debt, but of grace; and particularly in the millennium state, Ps 58:11; and every transgression of the wicked will receive a just recompence of reward; to whom the reward of their hands will be given them, **Heb 2:2**; but the sense is, that after death there will be no enjoyment of a man's labours; he will not have the use, profit, and advantage of them, but his heirs that succeed him, **Ec 4:9**;

for the memory of them is forgotten; not the memory of the righteous with God, for whom a book of remembrance is written, and whose names are written in heaven; these are had in everlasting remembrance, and their memory blessed: but the memory of wicked men; who, though they take pains to perpetuate their names, which they give to their lands, yet the Lord causes their memory to cease, and they are forgotten in the place where they lived; not only among the righteous, as the Targum, but among others, Isa 26:14; even among those that enjoy the fruit of their labour; they will scarce think of them any more, or, however, in a little time they will be quite forgotten by them.

Ecclesiastes 9:6

Ver. 6. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished,.... Not that the separate spirits of the dead are without their affections, or these unexercised; the spirits of just men made perfect will love God and Christ, and angels, and good men, and all that is good, more intensely; love will continue after this life, and be in its height, and therefore said to be the greatest grace, 1Co 13:13; they will hate sin, Satan, and all the enemies of Christ, and be filled with zeal for his glory; so the word {z} for envy may be rendered; see **Re 6:9**; and the spirits of the wicked dead will still continue to love sin, and hate the Lord, and envy the happiness of the saints; and will rise again with the same spite and malice against them; see Eze 32:27; but this respects persons and things in this world; they no more love persons and things here, nor are loved by any; death parts the best friends, and the most endearing and loving relations, and puts an end to all their mutual friendship and affection; they hate their enemies no more, nor are hated by them; they no more envy the prosperity of others, nor are envied by others; all such kind of love and hatred, enmity and envy, active or passive, cease at death; out of the world, as the Targum adds;

neither have they any more a portion for ever in any [thing] that is under the sun: the worldly man's portion is only in this life, and when he dies, he carries nothing of it with him; whose ever his possessions will be at death, they are no more his, nor will he ever return to enjoy them any more; his houses, his lands, his estates, his gold and silver, and whatever of worth and value he had, he has no more lot and part in them: but the good man has a portion above the sun; God is his portion, heaven is his inheritance for ever and ever. The Targum understands it of the wicked;

"and they have no good part with the righteous in the world to come; and they have no profit of all that is done in this world under the sun."

{z} Mtanq "aemulatio ipsorum", Cocceius, Gejerus; "aelus eorum", Drusius, Amana, Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 9:7

Ver. 7. Go thy way,.... Thou righteous man, as Jarchi paraphrases it; and indeed epicures and voluptuous persons have no need of the following exhortation, and the reason annexed is not suitable to them; but the whole agrees better with religious persons, who under distressing views of Providence, and from gloomy and melancholy apprehensions of things, and mistaken notions of mortification, deny themselves the free and lawful use of the good things of life; and seeing there is no enjoyment of them in the grave, and after death, therefore let the following advice be taken, than which of worldly things nothing is better for a man to do;

eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; which includes all things necessary and convenient, and which should be used and enjoyed freely and cheerfully; not barely for refreshment, but recreation; not for necessity only, but for pleasure; yet with moderation, not to excess; and with thankfulness to God; and the rather joy and mirth should mix with these things, since to a good man they are in love. It may be observed that it is said "thy bread [and] thy wine", thine own and not another's; what is got by labour, and in an honest way, and not by rapine and oppression, as Alshech observes; what

God in his providence gives, our daily food, what is convenient for us, or is our portion and allotment. The Targum interprets it figuratively of the joys of heaven;

"Solomon said, by a spirit of prophecy from the Lord, the Lord of the world will say to all the righteous, in the face of everyone, eat thy bread with joy, which is laid up for thee, for thy bread which thou hast given to the poor and needy that were hungry; and drink thy wine with a good heart, which is laid up for thee in paradise, for the wine which thou hast mingled for the poor and needy that were thirsty;"

see Mt 25:34;

for God now accepteth thy works; both the persons of righteous and good men are accepted of God in Christ, and their works done in faith and love, and with a view to his glory; and since they are acceptable in his sight, as appears by his blessing on their labours, and bestowing the good things of life upon them, so it is well pleasing in his sight to make a free and cheerful use of them.

Ecclesiastes 9:8

Ver. 8. Let thy garments be always white,.... That is, neat and clean, not vile and sordid; what is comely and decent, and suitable to a man's circumstances; this colour is particularly mentioned because much used in the eastern countries, and in Judea; hence we so often read of washing garments, and of fullers that whitened them; and especially on festival days and days of rejoicing, to which Horace {a} refers; and here it signifies that every day should be like a festival or day of rejoicing to a good man, to whom God has given the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, Isa 61:3; and though there may be times for mourning, and so of putting on other apparel, yet, in common and ordinarily, this should be the habit, decent and comely apparel. The ancient Jews in Aben Ezra, and so Jarchi, interpret it of an unblemished conversation; and Kimchi {b} of repentance and good works; and so the Targum,

"let thy garments be white (or washed) from all filth of sin;"

or be without any spot of sin, as Alshech; the conversation garments of the saints are made white in the blood of Christ, and his righteousness is fine linen, and white; and even eternal glory and happiness is signified by walking with him in white, **Re 7:14**;

and let thy head lack no ointment: which used to be poured plentifully on the heads of guests at feasts {c}, for the refreshment of them, which gave pleasure, and a sweet odour and fragrancy, and was much in use in those hot countries; see Ps 23:5; and is opposed to a gloomy and melancholy carriage and deportment, **Mt 6:17**; hence we read of the oil of joy and gladness, Ps 45:7. The Jews before mentioned interpreted this of a good name better than ointment, **Ec 7:1**. So the Targum,

"and a good name, which is like to anointing oil, get; that blessings may come upon thy head, and thy goodness fail not."

{a} "Ille repotia natales aliosque dierum, festos albatus celebret". Satyr. l. 2. Sat. 2. v. 60, 61. "Cum ipse epuli Dominus albatus esset", Cicero in Vatin. c. 13. {b} Comment. in lsa. lxv. 13. {c} "Coronatus nitentes malabathro Syrio capillos", Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode 7. v. 7, 8. "et paulo post: funde capacibus unguenta de conchis", v. 22, 23. "Unguentum (fateor) bonum dedisti convivis", Martial. l. 3. Epigr. 11.

Ecclesiastes 9:9

Ver. 9. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest,.... Or "see", or "enjoy life" {d}: this is one of the ways of enjoying life comfortably, and one of the principal ones; that if a man has a wife whom he ought to love as himself as his own flesh, to take delight in her company, be pleasant with her, and rejoice in her, **Pr 5:18**; and this here may be put for all that pleasure and satisfaction which may be lawfully had in the enjoyment of all other relations and friends; which adds no small part to the comfort of a man's life;

all the days of the life of thy vanity; a wife is for life, and not after a while to be divorced; and to be lived joyfully with, not for a short time only, but all the days of life;

which he hath given thee under the sun; that is, either which wife God has given thee; for a wife is the gift of God, **Ge 3:12**; and which is a gift under the sun; for above it, or in heaven, and in a future state, there is no marrying nor giving in marriage, Lu 20:35; or which days he hath given thee, so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions. It is added, all the days of thy vanity; which is repeated, that it might be observed that the life of man is but a vain life, a vapour that soon vanishes away, and man in it, at his best estate, is vanity; and that notwithstanding all the enjoyments of life in the most comfortable manner here directed to, yet still the doctrine he set out with must be remembered, that all is vanity, **Ec 1:2**;

for that [is] thy portion in [this] life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun; this is all the outward happiness of a man in this life, and all the use, profit, and advantage of his labours, to eat and drink cheerfully, to clothe decently, to debar himself of nothing of lawful pleasure, particularly to live joyfully with his wife, and enjoy his friends; this is the utmost of outward felicity he can partake of, and this he should not deny himself. Ben Melech restrains this portion to a wife, and joyful living with her; but it is best to include all that goes before.

{d} Myyx har "vide vitam", Pagninus, Vatablus, Drusius, Mercerus, Cocceius; "vel vitas", Montanus; "perfruere vita", V. L. "fracre vita", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Rambachius; so Broughton.

Ecclesiastes 9:10

Ver. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do,.... Not anything that is evil, which is near at hand, and easy to be found, and is in the power of men's hands to do, **Ro 7:21**; for this is forbidden of God, abominable to him, and hurtful to men; but whatsoever is good; so the Targum,

"to do good and alms to the poor;"

even all good works in general, which God requires of men, and it is their duty to do; though they are not meritorious of anything at his hands, nor is there justification or salvation by them; yet should be done in obedience to the will of God, in gratitude to him for mercies received, and for his glory; as also for the profit of men, and for our own good; for the evidence of grace, and to preserve our characters from the insults and reproaches of men. Whatever is found written in the book of God should be done; not what is of a ceremonial kind, and now abolished, but everything of a moral nature, and of positive institution, under Gospel times; as all Gospel ordinances, and whatever falls within a man's calling: for every man has a work to do; in every station, as

magistrates and subjects; in every relation, as husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants; in every business of life men are called to; which they should attend, for the good of themselves and families, the relief of the poor, and the support of the interest of religion: and in religious things everyone has his work to do; the minister, in preaching and administering ordinances; the deacon, in taking care of the poor; private Christians, in praying in their closets and families, in hearing the word, making a profession of religion, and attending on ordinances; and, as opportunity serves, should do good to all men, especially to the saints, **Ga 6:10**; and whatsoever is in the power of their hands, as this phrase signifies,
Le 12:8. Aben Ezra refers it to the delights and pleasures of life, such as before mentioned; which may be allowed, when used in a lawful and moderate manner;

do [it] with thy might; or "strength"; for though men have no might or strength of their own to do good, which is lost by sin; yea, even good men, of themselves, and without Christ, his spirit and grace, can do nothing spiritually good; yet there is strength in him, and to be had from him; and who should be applied to for it, and who gives it,
Isa 40:29; the phrase denotes intenseness of spirit, vigour of mind, activity and fervency; doing that which is good, cheerfully and diligently, and not in a negligent careless manner; see **De 6:5**;

for [there is] no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest; this, and not then, is our working time; good men at death cease from their labours in the grave, as the night in which no man can "work", Re 14:13; then the liberal man can no more "devise" liberal ways and means of doing good; his purposes of doing good are broken off; and no more plans can be laid, or designs formed, for the glory of God and the good of fellow creatures: and no more "knowledge" of objects to do good unto; nor any improvement in any kind of knowledge, natural or spiritual: nor "wisdom" and prudence in the management of affairs, to answer some good ends and purposes; nor opportunity of attaining that wisdom by the Scriptures, and by the ministry of the word, which make men wise unto salvation: and now, since every man is going to the grave, his long home, the place appointed for all living, and this, is the way of all flesh; and every step he has taken, and does take, is a step to the grave; therefore it is incumbent on him to do all the good he can in life.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

Ver. 11. I returned, and saw under the sun,.... The wise man returned to his former subject, concerning the same events happening to all sorts of persons, righteous and wicked, wise and unwise, Ec 10:1; and enlarged upon it in his mind; and took notice of various things done under the sun, and made the following remarks: and whereas he had exhorted men to use all their might in doing the duties of their calling while they lived here; he suggests, that they should not depend upon, and promise themselves, anything from their own strength and wisdom; but have a regard to the providence of God, that superintends all affairs, and gives or withholds success as he pleases; since it may be observed,

that the race [is] not to the swift; swiftness oftentimes is of no service to a man to escape dangers, as may be seen in the case of Asahel and others, **2Sa 2:18**; so the Targum,

"men who are swift as eagles are not helped by running to escape from death in battle."

Or the sense may be, that the swift are not always made use of in running a race; or, if they are, they do not always win the prize, something or other happens to hinder them; they fall, or become lame, when one more slow gets the advantage of them, **1Co 9:24**; and so in spiritual things, one that is ready to halt, as David says of himself, gets to heaven, and is saved, Ps 38:17; when others, at first starting or setting out in a profession, run well for a while, as the Galatians did, **Ga 5:7**; but afterwards drop and fall short; for "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, that sheweth mercy", **Ro 9:16**;

nor the battle to the strong: as not to the Midianites, nor to Goliath, nor to Abner, in whom Jarchi instances; victory is not always on the side of the mighty and the many, but oftentimes on the side of the weak and few; see 2Ch 14:9; so in spirituals, such who go forth in their own strength against an enemy, trusting in it, fall; while weak believers, depending on the grace and strength of Christ, wrestle with principalities and powers, and come off victorious;

neither yet bread to the wise: the Targum adds, in a time of famine, when their wisdom cannot help them; but the sense rather is, that skilful artificers, in any trade or business, do not always get the best livelihood, yea, sometimes want the necessaries of life, or eat the bread of sorrow, when persons of meaner capacities shall thrive and flourish; and even the wisest of men sometimes have been obliged to others for bread, as was the case of David, 1Sa 21:3; and even of a wiser than he, our Lord himself, **Lu 8:2**; and as for the wise men of this world, the bread of life, Christ Jesus, is neither enjoyed nor sought after by them;

nor yet riches to men of understanding; mention is afterwards made of a wise man that was poor, Jarchi instances in Job; and, on the other hand, sometimes fools are rich, as Nabal and others; and as for the riches of grace, and treasures of spiritual knowledge, they are not usually given to the wise and prudent Mt 11:25; Nor yet favour to men of skill; to men of knowledge and learning, whose genius and abilities might be thought sufficient to recommend them to the favour, affection, and applause of men, and yet oftentimes fall herein; such who have the art of address and persuasion are not always able to ingratiate themselves, and gain the esteem of men: Jarchi interprets it of the favour of God, and instances in Moses; than whom there was not a more knowing and understanding man in Israel, yet could not by his prayer find grace and favour to enter into the land: but the Targum is better;

"neither they that know understanding are helped by their knowledge to find favour in the eyes of a king;"

but time and chance happeneth to them all; to the swift and strong, the wise, understanding, and skilful; or to the swift and slow, to the strong and weak, to the wise and unwise; everything befalls them just as it is ordered by divine Providence; for there is a certain "time" fixed by the Lord for every event; and whatever seems casual and contingent to man, and which he is ready to call "chance", is noticing but "decree" with God, firm and unalterable; Plato {e} has the same expression. The word signifies "occurrence" {f}, or event, which is under the wise direction and order of the providence of God, with respect to whom nothing comes by chance; and it is rendered "occurrent", **1Ki 5:4**; and so it is here, by the Septuagint version, "occurrence" or "event"; and in the Targum, event by their star, which is fate: and Aben Ezra interprets it hnwyle hkremh, the "superior ordination"; it is something we meet, or meets us, by divine appointment. Aben Ezra and Kimchi, who are followed by others, think that, from Ec 10:4; to this, Solomon is speaking in the person of epicures and atheists; which is not likely, since it is not in character for such persons to talk of God's acceptance of men's works; of living joyfully with a wife; of this life being a life of vanity; and of death and the grave; and of diligence in working while the present life lasts.

{e} meta yeou tuch kai kairov, Plato de Leg. l. 4. p. 827. {f} egp "occursus", Montanus; "sive eventus", Mercerus, Rambachius; "occurrent", Broughton,

Ecclesiastes 9:12

Ver. 12. For man also knoweth not his time,.... Though it is fixed and settled by the Lord, yet times and seasons are kept in his own power, and not known by men; not the time of his death, nor of any calamity and distress coming upon him, nor the proper season and opportunity of doing himself good, and avoiding evil;

as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; as fishes are suddenly taken in a net, unhappy for them, which is at once east over them, while they are sporting and playing in the water, and catching at the bait; and as birds, being decoyed, are unawares taken in a snare; that is, both of them know not the time of their being caught;

so [are] the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them; they are no more able to guard against a time of adversity and calamity, and the evil of it, which comes at once upon them, than the poor fishes or silly birds are to avoid the net and snare; and are, like them, at such a time, in the utmost security, indulging themselves in ease and pleasure: so the day of death, and of judgment, will come like a thief in the night; or like a snare upon men, when they think nothing of it, but are giving up themselves to their lusts and pleasures; see **1Th 5:2**; for pleasure, as Plato says, is the bait of evils, with which men are caught, as fishes with the hook {g}.

{g} Apud Ciceronem de Senectute, c. 12. "Hic ubi saepe occultum visus decurrere piscis ad hamum", Horat. Epist. l. 1. Ep. 8. v. 73, 74.

Ecclesiastes 9:13

Ver. 13. This wisdom have I seen also under the sun,.... Or, "this also I have seen under the sun, even wisdom" {h}: besides those things he had, just now observed, he took notice that there was such a thing as wisdom among men; though success did not always attend the wise, the understanding, and skilful; and though there was so much ignorance in men, of their own time, and were so easily and suddenly ensnared in an evil time;

and it [seemed] great unto me; Solomon had a high value for wisdom, and he still retained the same sentiments of it he had before, in **Ec 2:13**, of which he gives the following instance.

{h} vmvh txt hmkx ytyar hz Mg "Hoc etiam vidi sub sole, nempe sapientiam", Tigurine version; "etiam hoc vidi, sapientiam sub sole", Cocceius; "etiam hoc vidi, videlicet, sapientiam sub sole", Gejerus.

Ecclesiastes 9:14

Ver. 14. [There was] a little city, and few men within it,.... Which some take to be a piece of history, a real matter of fact; that as the city of Abel, when besieged by Joab, was delivered by the counsel of a wise woman, 2Sa 20:15; so there was a city, which Solomon had knowledge of, which was delivered from the siege of a powerful king, by the wise counsel of a poor wise man: though others think it is only a fiction, fable, or parable; the moral of which is, that political wisdom, even in a poor mean person, is sometimes very useful and serviceable, though it does not meet with its proper merit. Many of the Jewish writers understand the whole allegorically and figuratively; so the Targum, by "the little city", understands the body of man; by "few men in it", the little righteousness there is in the heart of man; though, according to the Midrash, Jarchi, and Alshech, they are the members of the body; by "the great king", the evil imagination, or corruption of nature, which is great to oppress, and besieges the heart to cause it to err; and by "the poor wise man", the good imagination or affection, which prevails over the other, and subdues it, and delivers the body from hell, and yet not remembered; and so the Midrash, and the ancient Jews in Aben Ezra, though he himself understands it according to its literal sense. Some Christian interpreters explain it to better purpose, concerning the church attacked by Satan, and delivered by Christ, who, notwithstanding, is unkindly and ungratefully used: the church is often compared to a city, it is the city of God, and of which saints are fellow citizens; it is but a "little" one in comparison of the world, and, in some periods and ages of the world, lesser than in others; it is little and contemptible in the eyes of the world, and the inhabitants of it are mean and low in their own eyes; they are a little flock, Lu 12:32; and "few" in number that are "within it": some are only of it, but not in it, or are external members only, which sometimes are many; or outward, not inward, court worshippers; they are few, comparatively, that belong to the invisible church, that are chosen, redeemed, called, and saved, Mt 20:16; there are but few able men, especially such as are capable of defending the church against its enemies.

and there came a great king against it; Satan, the prince of devils and of the posse of them in the air, the god and prince of the world of the ungodly, who works in their hearts, and leads them captive at his will who may be said to be "great" with respect to the numbers under him, legions of devils, and the whole world that lies in wickedness, or "in" or "under" the wicked one: and on account of the power he exercises, by divine permission, over the bodies and minds of men; and in comparison of the little city, and few men in it, being stronger than they,
Mt 12:24; he comes from the region of the air, where his posse are; or from going to and fro in the earth; or from hell, into which he is cast down: he comes by divine permission; in the manner evil spirits do, by temptation; in a hostile way, against the church and people of God, to destroy and devour them, if possible;

and besieged it; surrounded it on all sides, as the Gog and Magog army trader him will encompass the camp of the saints, and the beloved city,
Re 20:9;

and built great bulwarks against it; such as are called strong holds,
2Co 10:4. Satan's first attack was upon the elect of God, in Adam; when he brought them, through sin, under a sentence of condemnation and death, though then they were preserved in Christ; and ever since he has been attacking the church by persecution, in order to take it by storm; and by spreading errors and heresies, such as tend to raze the foundation, and to pull down the superstructure of grace; and by promoting schisms, and laying such large principles of church communion, as tend to take away ordinances and discipline, the fence of the city; and by throwing in hand grenades of strife and contention, to raise a civil war among the citizens themselves; and, by various temptations to sin, to gain deserters: these are some of his bulwarks, batteries, and engines.

Ecclesiastes 9:15

Ver. 15. Now there was found in it a poor wise man,.... Christ, who is man, though not a mere man, but God as well as man; who was so in purpose, covenant, and promise, before his incarnation, since truly and really so; and "poor", as it was foretold he should be, and who became so for the sake of his church and people, **Zec 9:9**; yet "wise", even as man, being filled with wisdom, in which he increased, and gave such evident proofs of; on whom the spirit of wisdom rested, and in whom the treasures of it were hid, **Lu 2:40** **Col 2:3**; he was found here by God his Father, who exalted one chosen out of the people, and made him Head over the church, who is the firstborn among many brethren, Ps 89:19; Or "and", or "but he found in it" {i}; that is, Satan, the great king, found him here, contrary to his expectation, and to his great regret;

and he by his wisdom delivered the city; the church, from all enemies; from Satan and all his principalities and powers; from the world, the men and things of it; from sin, and all its sad consequences; from the law, its curse and condemnation; and from the second death, ruin and destruction: and though this deliverance was both by power and by price, yet also by wisdom; for the deliverance and redemption of the church by Christ is the fruit of infinite wisdom; it is a wise scheme to glorify all the divine perfections; to mortify Satan, and save sinners, and yet condemn sin; see **Eph 1:7**;

yet no man remembered that same poor man: before the deliverance wrought, as Aben Ezra and others; it never once entered into their thoughts that he could ever be their deliverer; they never imagined he had a capacity to advise, direct, or assist, in such service, or bring about such an affair: so Christ, when he appeared in the world, the Jews saw nothing that was promising in him; they could not believe that he was sent to be the Saviour and deliverer of them, and therefore rejected him, **Isa 3:2**; Or, "after it", so the Vulgate Latin version, "no man hereafter remembered", &c. took no notice of him after he had wrought this deliverances; bestowed no honour upon him, nor returned him thanks for what he had done; but he continued to live and die in obscurity and meanness: thus Christ, though he ought to be remembered and spoken well of, and the glory of salvation should be ascribed unto him, and thanks should be given him for it; yet there are none comparatively, or; but a few, who, like the Samaritan, glorify him on account of it. But if any choose to understand these words of political wisdom, and the use of it, by which sometimes a mean and obscure person does more good than others can by their power and strength, though he meets with no reward for it, I am not averse to it; and which agrees with what follows.

{i} hb aumw "et invenit in ea", Mercerus, Drusius, Amama; "sed invenit in ea", Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 9:16

Ver. 16. Then said I, wisdom [is] better than strength,.... Wisdom of mind, even in a poor man, is better than strength of body, even of the, most potent prince and powerful army, as may be concluded from the above instance; since the poor wise man could do more by his wisdom than the great king with his mighty army; who was obliged to break up the siege, in consequence of the counsel given, or the methods directed to, or taken, by the poor man;

nevertheless, the poor man's wisdom [is] despised, and his words are not heard; notwithstanding such a flagrant instance and example as this just mentioned; yet men still retain their prejudices against a poor man, and despise his wise counsels and advice, for no other reason but because he is poor, and will not attend to what he says: or, "though the poor man's wisdom", &c. {k}, as Aben Ezra; Solomon drew the above conclusion from that instance; though this is usually the case, that men despise the wisdom of a poor man, and will not listen to his advice, this did not lessen the wise man's opinion of it. The words may be rendered, "even the poor man's wisdom despised, and his words not heard" {l}; these are better than outward force and strength, and more serviceable and useful; which the Septuagint version favours: the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "how is the poor man's wisdom despised!" &c. as wondering at it that so it should be, when so much profit and advantage arose to the city from it.

{k} tmkxw "quamvis sapientia", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Amama; "etsi", Drusius. {l} "Et pauperis sapientiam contemptam", &c. Tigurine version.

Ecclesiastes 9:17

Ver. 17. The words of wise [men are] heard in quiet,.... That is, by some persons and at some times, though not by all persons and always; or they are to be heard, or should be heard, though they seldom be, even the words of wise men that are poor: these are to be heard quietly and patiently, without any tumult and contradiction; or should be heard, being delivered with a low and submissive voice, without any noise, or blustering pride, or passion, sedately and with great humility, submitting them to the judgment of others; which sense the comparison seems to require;

more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools; more than the noisy words of a foolish governor; or than the dictates of an imperious man, delivered in a clamorous and blustering way; by which he obtains authority among such fools as himself, who are influenced more by the pomp and noise of words than by the force of true wisdom and reason; but all right judges will give the preference to the former. The Targum interprets it of the silent prayer of the wise being received by the Lord, more than the clamour of the wicked.

Ecclesiastes 9:18

Ver. 18. Wisdom [is] better than weapons of war,.... And does what they cannot do; of which the wisdom of the poor wise man is a full proof, which delivered the city from a potent prince, when weapons of war could not: see **Ec 7:10**;

but one sinner destroyeth much good: his own soul by his sins, and the souls of others by his counsels, example, and conversation, which corrupt good manners; so does one sinner in a family, neighbourhood, and town; as one poor wise man does much good, one sinner mars much; one Achan in a camp or army, one bad counsel for in a cabinet, one false teacher in the church, will do a great deal of mischief, as well as one debauchee in a town or city. The Vulgate Latin version is, "who sins in one"; offends or sins in one, as in **Jas 2:10**; so the Syriac version, "one sin destroys much good", or many good things; and to the same purpose the Arabic version, "he that committeth one sin".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ecclesiastes 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES 10

This chapter treats of the difference between wisdom and folly; and of the preferableness of the one, to the other, especially in civil government: folly is compared to a dead or deadly fly; a little of which as much hurts a wise man's reputation, as that does the most precious ointment, Ec 10:1. A wise man and a fool differ in the situation of their heart; which is in the one on the right hand, in the other on the left, Ec 10:2; the folly of the latter lies not only in his heart, but betrays itself throughout the whole of his conversation, Ec 10:3. And it is one part of wisdom in a subject to bear patiently the anger of his prince, and

not in a passion and at once leave his service, Ec 10:4. And, among the follies of princes, this is a great one; to bestow their honours and favours on improper persons, to the neglect of such as are deserving, Ec 10:5. And several proverbial expressions are used, as cautions to a wise man against plotting mischief to others; breaking in upon the constitution and laws of a commonwealth; weakening the strength of the state by an methods, and making discord in it, and carrying thin by mere strength and force; when, if wisdom used, it would direct to proper ways and means, by which things would be managed to the best advantage, Ec 10:8. Then the babbling of fools against a government is exposed, which is like the secret bite of a serpent, Ec 10:11; and the difference between the words of wise men, which express grace and kindness, and are amiable and acceptable to men; and those of fools, which destroy themselves, begin in folly, and end in mischief; are noisy, and without meaning; do not direct to things most plain and easy, but wearisome and fatiguing to themselves and others, Ec 10:12. Next the unhappiness of a land is observed, when the governors of it are childish, intemperate, slothful, and prodigal; the happiness of a country when it is the reverse, Ec 10:16; and the chapter is concluded with advice not to curse a king, or any great personage; no, not in the most private and secret manner; since, by one means or another, it will be discovered
Ec 10:20.

Ver. 1. Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour,.... Such, as Jarchi observes, are in the winter season, which are weak and near to death, and get into precious ointment, prepared after the best manner, where they die, and corrupt and spoil it: or, "flies of deaths" {m}; deadly ones, which have something in their nature poisonous and pernicious; which, when they light upon the most sweet and savoury ointment, give it an ill smell;

[so doth] a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom [and] honour; a good name is like precious ointment, valuable and fragrant; sin, which is folly, is like a dead fly; not only light and mean, and base and worthless, but hurtful and pernicious, deadly, and the cause of death; and what may seem little, a peccadillo, or, however, one single act of sin, may injure the character of a wise and honourable man, and greatly expose him to shame and contempt, and cause him to stink in the nostrils of men, Ge 36:20; and to be reproached by men, and religion and government to be reproached for his sake. Thus the affair of Bathsheba and Uriah, what a slur did it bring on the character of David, so famous for wisdom and honour, for religion and piety? and the idolatry of Solomon, the wisest of men; Jehoshaphat, that good king, entering

into affinity with Ahab; and pious Josiah going to war with the king of Egypt, contrary to the word of the Lord; with many other instances. This teaches how careful men eminent for gifts and grace should be of their words and actions; since the least thing amiss in them is easily discerned, and soon taken notice of, as the least speck in a diamond, or spot in fine linen, clean and white; and there are wicked and envious persons enough watching for their halting, glad to have an occasion against them, and improve everything to the uttermost: this is a caution to wise magistrates, honourable ministers of the word, and eminent professors more especially. The Targum is,

"evil concupiscence, which dwells at the gates of the heart, is as a fly, and is the cause of death in the world; and corrupts a good name, which was before like to anointing oil, perfumed with spices:"

and to the same purpose the Midrash. One of the names of Satan is Beelzebub, the lord of a fly; who, by his temptations, solicits to sin and folly, which produce the effect here mentioned, and therefore to be shunned as a deadly fly in the ointment, Mt 12:24. Gussetius {n} renders it,

"that which is precious and worthy of honour "proceeds" from wisdom; and folly "comes" from glory, "worldly glory", in a little time."

{m} twm ybwbz "muscae mortis", Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Amama, Cocceius, Rambachius. {n} Ebr. Comment. p. 344.

Ecclesiastes 10:2

Ver. 2. A wise man's heart [is] at his right hand,.... This is not designed to express the direct position and situation of the heart of man, wise or foolish, which is the same in both; and which, according to anatomists, is in the middle of the body, inclining to the left side; but the understanding and wisdom of men, as Aben Ezra observes; which, with a wise man, is ready a hand to direct and assist him in any affair; and which under the influence of it, he goes about with great readiness and dexterity, and performs it with great ease and facility, without sinister ends and selfish views; it inclines him to pursue the true way to honour, heaven, and happiness, which lies to the right; to seek things that are above, at the right hand of God; and, in all, his honour and glory;

but a fool's heart [is] at his left; he is at a loss for wisdom and understanding to direct him, when he has an affair of any moment upon his hand; which he goes about in an awkward manner, as left handed persons do, and has sinister ends in what he does; and he is to every good work reprobate and unfit, and seeks earth and earthly things, which lie to the left, and in all himself. The Targum is,

"the heart of a wise man is to get the law, which was given by the right hand of the Lord; and the heart of a fool to get the goods of gold and silver:"

so Jarchi,

"his wisdom is ready to incline him (the wise man) to the right hand way for his good; but the heart of a fool to pervert him from it."

The ancients {o} used to call things wise and prudent the right hand and things foolish the left hand.

{o} Suidas in voce dexia.

Ecclesiastes 10:3

Ver. 3. Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way,.... The king's highway, the common road; as he passeth along the streets, going to any place, or about any business:

his wisdom faileth [him]; or "his heart" {p}; he appears by his gait, his manner of walking, to want a heart, to be a fool; walking with a froward mouth, winking with his eyes, speaking with his feet, and teaching with his fingers; all which shows the frowardness and folly of his heart, **Pr 6:12**; or he discovers it throughout his conversation, in all the actions of it, in whatsoever business he is concerned, and in all the affairs of life. The Targum is,

"when he walketh in a perplexed way;"

then his wisdom fails him; he does not know which way to take, whether to the right or left: this can never be understood of the highway of holiness, in which men, though fools, shall not err, Isa 35:8;

and he saith to everyone [that] he [is] a fool; his folly is manifest to all; he betrays it, by his words and actions, to every man he has to do with; his sins and transgressions, which are his folly, he hides not, they are evident to all; and, as the Targum expresses it,

"all say he is a fool:"

though indeed he himself says this of every other man, that he is a fool; for, according to the Vulgate Latin version, he, being a fool himself, thinks everybody else is so.

{p} wbl "cor ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Ecclesiastes 10:4

Ver. 4. If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee,.... The wrath of the civil magistrate, the chief ruler of the land, the sovereign prince or king, to whom men are and should be subject: if his wrath on any occasion breaks out in a furious manner, and, like a storm and tempest, is very blustering and threatening:

leave not thy place; at court; thine office under the prince, do not throw it up in a passion, and quit his service upon it; and much less forget thy duty and allegiance to him, and go into disloyalty and rebellion; see **Ec 8:3**;

for yielding pacifieth great offences; bearing his anger patiently, submitting to his displeasure quietly, making no returns, or at least giving soft answers, and behaving in a modest and humble manner; in time his wrath will subside, and he will be pacified, and forgive the offences committed; or be convinced that there were none, or however not so great as to require such resentment; see Pr 15:1. The Targum is,

"if a spirit of evil concupiscence rules over thee; thy good place, in which thou wert used to stand, leave not:"

some understand this of a man's having a spirit of rule and government coming upon him, or of his being advanced to power and authority, that then he should not forget the low estate in which he had been. Jarchi interprets it of the spirit of the governor of the world, strictly inquiring into the actions of men; and healing their sins by chastisements, which cause them to leave them.

Ecclesiastes 10:5

Ver. 5. There is an evil [which] I have seen under the sun,.... Which Solomon had observed in the course of his life, practised in some kingdoms and by some princes on earth, under the sun; for there is nothing of the like kind, as after mentioned, done in heaven, above the sun;

as an error [which] proceedeth from the ruler; from the supreme ruler of a nation, the king of it; and it is not only as an error, or like one, a seeming one; but it is a real error, bestowing places of honour and profit on undeserving persons: which error proceeds from ignorance of the persons; or from affection to them, and from friendship cultivated with them in the younger time of life, being educated with them; or through the misrepresentation and imposition of those about him, who have ends to serve by their promotion; or through his own lusts and passions, which these men indulge him in. It may be understood of God, the supreme ruler, who suffers such things to be; and which may seem to some an error in providence, though it is not: but the other sense is best.

Ecclesiastes 10:6

Ver. 6. Folly is set in great dignity,.... Or "in great heights" {q}; in high places of honour and truest; even foolish and wicked men; men of poor extraction, of low life, and of mean abilities and capacities; and, which is worse, men vile and vicious, as Doeg the Edomite, Haman the Amalekite, and others;

and the rich sit in low places; men not only of fortune and estates, and above doing mean and little actions, and so more fit for such high places; but men rich in wisdom and knowledge, of large capacities and of great endowments of mind, and so abundantly qualified for posts in the administration of government; and, above all, men rich in grace, fearing God, and hating coveteousness, as rulers ought to be, Ex 18:21; and yet these sometimes are neglected, live in obscurity, who might otherwise be very useful in public life. The Targum interprets this and the following verse of the Israelites in exile and poverty among the Gentiles for their sins; so Jarchi.

{q} Mybr Mymwrmb en uqesi megaloiv, Sept. "in celsitudinibus amplis", Piscator, Amama, Gejerus; "in sublimitatibus amplis", Cocceius; "in altitudinibus magnis", Rambachius; "in great height", Broughton.

Ecclesiastes 10:7

Ver. 7. I have seen servants upon horses,.... Which being scarce in Judea, were only rode upon by princes and great personages, or such as were in affluent circumstances; and therefore it was an unusual and disagreeable sight to see servants upon them, which was a token of their being advanced upon the ruin and destruction of their masters; a reigning servant is not only uncomely, but one of the things by which the earth is disquieted, and it cannot bear, Pr 30:21; the Parthians and Persians distinguished their nobles and the vulgar, freemen and servants, by this; the servants went on foot, and the freemen rode on horses {r};

and princes walking as servants upon the earth; degraded from their honour; banished from their thrones and palaces, or obliged to leave them, and reduced to the lowest state and condition: so David, when his son rebelled against him, and he was forced to flee from him, and walk on foot, 2Sa 15:30; Alshech thinks it may be a prophecy of the captivity of Israel, when they walked as servants on the earth, and the Gentiles rode on horses.

{r} Justin. e Trogo, l. 41. c. 3. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 19.

Ecclesiastes 10:8

Ver. 8. He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it,.... This and the three following clauses are proverbial expressions, teaching men to be wise and cautious, lest by their conduct they bring mischief upon themselves; as it often is, the one that digs a pit for another, falls into it himself, as the wise man's father before him had observed, **Ps 7:15**; as kings that lay snares for their people, and subjects that plot against their sovereign; or courtiers that form schemes for the rain of those that are in their way; or any man that devises mischief against another, frequently so it is, that the same befalls them; as Haman, who prepared a gallows for Mordecai, was hanged on it himself;

and whoso breaketh an hedge a serpent shall bite him; which often lies hid in fences, in old walls, and rotten hedges {s}, **Am 5:19**; so he that breaks down the hedges and fences of kingdoms and commonwealths, and breaks through the fundamental laws of a civil constitution, and especially that transgresses the laws of God, moral or civil, may expect to smart for it. Jarchi interprets this hedge of the sayings of their wise men, which those that transgress shall suffer death by the hand of heaven: but it would be much better to apply it to the doctrines contained in the word of God, which are a hedge and fence to the church of God, and whoever transgress them will suffer for it; see **2Jo 1:8**; The Targum, by the "serpent", understands an ungodly king, who bites like a serpent, into whose hands such transgressors shall be delivered: and some have thought of the old serpent the devil, as Alshech, who deceived Adam and Eve.

{s} Nicander apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 1. c. 4. col. 26.

Ecclesiastes 10:9

Ver. 9. Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith,.... That carries them from the quarry, where they are dug; or takes them from a heap, where they lie; or that attempts to pull them out of a building, where they are put; or removes them from places, where they are set as boundaries and landmarks; all which is troublesome, and by which men get hurt; the stones fall upon them, or are too heavy for them, or they do what they should not do, and so bring themselves into trouble; as do all such persons who are for removing the boundaries of commonwealths and communities, and for changing laws, and altering constitutions;

[and] he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby; of cutting himself: so he that soweth discord among brethren, that makes divisions in families, neighbourhoods, kingdoms, and churches; see **Pr 6:16**
Ro 16:18. Jarchi renders it, "shall be warmed" or "heated", according to the sense of the word, as he thinks, in **1Ki 1:2**; though he understands it of being profited by studying in the law and the commandments; of which he interprets the clause; and Ben Melech observes, that the word so signifies in the Arabic language; and Mr. Broughton renders it, "shall be heated thereby". The Targum paraphrases it,

"shall be burnt with fire, by the hand of the Angel of the Lord:"

or, however, he may be overheated and do himself hurt, as men, that kindle the flame of contention and strife, often do.

Ecclesiastes 10:10

Ver. 10. If the iron be blunt,.... With which a man cleaves wood: the axe, made of iron:

and he do not whet the edge; with some proper instrument to make it sharper, that it may cut the more easily;

then must he put to more strength; he must give a greater blow, strike the harder, and use more force; and yet it may not be sufficient, or; it may be to no purpose, and he himself may be in the greatest danger of being hurt; as such are who push things with all their might and main, without judgment and discretion;

but wisdom [is] profitable to direct; this is the "excellency" of wisdom, that it puts a man in the right way of doing things, and of doing them right; it directs him to take the best methods, and pursue the best ways and means of doing things, both for his own good and the good of others; and so it is better than strength, **Ec 9:16**.

Ecclesiastes 10:11

Ver. 11. Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment,.... See **Jer 8:17**. Or rather, "without a whisper" {t}; without hissing, or any noise, giving no warning at all: so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "in silence"; some serpents bite, others sting, some both; see
Pr 23:32; some hiss, others not, as here;

and a babbler is no better; a whisperer, a backbiter, a busy tattling body, that goes from house to house, and, in a private manner, speaks evil of civil governments, of ministers of the word, and of other persons; and; in a secret way, defames men, and detracts from their characters: such an one is like a venomous viper, a poisonous serpent or adder; and there is no more guarding against him than against such a creature that bites secretly.

{t} vxl alb "absque susurro", Pagniuus; "absque sibilo", Tigurine version.

Ecclesiastes 10:12

Ver. 12. The words of a wise man's mouth [are] gracious,.... Or "grace" {u}.

He speaks kind and good things in favour of the characters of men, and not as the babbling detractor: he speaks well of civil magistrates and rulers in the state; of the ministers of the word in the church; and of all his fellow creatures, as far as can with truth be said: and a truly good and gracious man, who is Solomon's wise man, in opposition to a fool and wicked man; his discourse will run upon the grace of God, upon the doctrines of grace, and upon the experience of the truth of grace on his heart: upon the grace of God the Father, in loving and choosing men; in contriving their salvation; in making a covenant of grace with them in Christ; in sending him to die for them, and in accepting his satisfaction and righteousness for them: and on the grace of the Son, in becoming their surety; assuming their nature, dying in their room and stead, interceding for them, taking care of them, and supplying them with grace out of his fulness: and on the grace of the Spirit, in regeneration and sanctification; working in them faith, hope, and love; applying precious promises to them, and sealing them up to the day of redemption: of these things they speak often one to another, and cannot but talk of the things they have felt and seen: and such words and discourses are gracious, graceful, and grateful to truly pious souls, and minister grace unto them; and are also well pleasing and acceptable to God and Christ, as well as gain them favour among men; see Pr 22:11;

but the lips of a fool swallow up himself; his words are not only able and displeasing to others, but bring ruin upon himself; by talking too freely of rulers and others, he brings himself into trouble, and plunges himself into difficulties, out of which he cannot easily get; yea, is swallowed up in them, and destroyed. Or, his "lips swallow up him" {w}; the wise man, whose words are gracious; and, by his calumny and detraction, his deceit and lies, brings him into disgrace and danger: or, "swallows it up", or "that" {x}; the grace of the wise man, or his gracious words; and hinders the edification of others by them, and the good effects of them. Though the first sense seems best.

{u} Nx "gratia", Montanus, Mercerus, Drusius, Cocceius, Rambachius. {w} wnelbx "deglutiet eum", Montanus; "absorbent eum", Piscator, Rambachius. {x} "Illam", Munster, Cocceius; "quam labia stulti velut absorbendo sufferunt", Tigurine version.

Ecclesiastes 10:13

Ver. 13. The beginning of the words of his mouth [is] foolishness,.... As soon as ever he opens his mouth, he betrays his folly; the first word he speaks is a foolish one; or it is from the abundant folly in his heart that he speaks, which is the source and spring of all his foolish talk;

and the end of his talk [is] mischievous madness; to himself and others; as he goes on, he appears more and more foolish, and yet more confident of his own wisdom; and is resolutely set on having his own way and will; grows warm, and is violently hot, to have his own words regarded; and, if contradicted, is like a madman, scattering arrows, firebrands, and death; his talk from first to last is a circle of folly; and, though it begins with something weak, and may seem innocent, yet it ends and issues in wickedness and madness, in rage and wrath, in oaths and curses.

Ecclesiastes 10:14

Ver. 14. A fool also is full of words,.... Or, "multiplies words" {y}. Is very talkative, says the same thing over and over again; uses an abundance of waste words, that have no meaning in them; utters every thing that comes uppermost, without any order or judgment; affects to talk on every subject, whether he knows anything of it or not; and will engross all the conversation to himself, though of all in company the most unfit for it;

a man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him who can tell him? what the fool is talking of; what is the drift of his discourse; or where it will end, and what he will bring it to, it is so noisy, confused, and incoherent: or no man can tell future things, or what will come to pass; nor can any man inform another of future events; and yet a fool boasts and brags of what he shall do, and what he shall have, as if he was master of the future, and knew for certain what would come to pass, which the wisest of men do not.

{y} hbry "multiplicabit", Pagninus, Montanus; "multiplicat", Vatablus, Mercerus, Drusius, Amama, Gejerus, Rambachius, Cocceius.

Ecclesiastes 10:15

Ver. 15. The labour of the foolish wearieth everyone of them,.... The labour of fools, both in speaking and doing, weary those who have any concern with them, and themselves likewise, since all their labour is vain and fruitless;

because he knoweth not how to go to the city; to any city, the road to which is usually broad, and plain and easy to be found, and yet cannot be found by the foolish man; showing, that he that talks of abstruse things, things too high and wonderful for him, which he affects to know, must needs be a stranger to them, since things the most easy to be understood he is ignorant of, and wearies himself to find; or he does not know how to behave himself in a city, among citizens, in a civil and polite manner. The Targum is,

"he learns not to go to the city, where wise men dwell, to learn instruction from it."

Some interpret it of the city of Jerusalem, where were the temple, sanhedrim, synagogues, schools, &c. but it may be better applied to the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, which fools or wicked men know not the way unto, nor do they seek after it; see Ps 107:7; so Alshech interprets it of heaven.

Ecclesiastes 10:16

Ver. 16. Woe to thee, O land, when thy king [is] a child,.... Not so much in age; though it is sometimes an unhappiness to a nation to be governed by a minor, especially if the young king has not good tutors, guardians, ministers, and counsellors, about him; but, if otherwise, a nation may be very happy under a minority, or the government of a young prince; such were Solomon, Joash, Uzziah, Josiah, and our Edward VI: but it rather respects one that is a child in understanding and judgment, in manners and conduct; that minds his pleasures, as children their play; is fickle and changeable, passionate and self-willed, unskilful in government, and yet will not be advised. The Targum applies this to the land of Israel, and instances in wicked Jeroboam, who made the morning sacrifice to cease; see **Isa 3:12**. From considering the bad effects of folly in men in general, in private persons and in subjects, the wise man proceeds to observe the ill consequences of it to a nation, in kings and princes, in civil magistrates: Jerom or Bede interprets this allegorically: Woe to the land whose king is the devil, who is always desirous of new things, **2Co 4:4**;

and thy princes eat in the morning; as soon as they are up, children like; and not only eat, which may be convenient and lawful to do; but eat to excess, in a riotous and intemperate manner, and so unfit themselves for any service all the day: the "morning" is particularly observed, because the fittest time for consultation about the affairs of government; and was the usual time of sitting in judgment and trying causes, Jer 21:12; and also for acts of religion and devotion. And so the Targum,

"and thy princes eat bread before they offer the daily morning sacrifice."

Sad is the case of a nation, when not only their king is a minor, or a foolish one; but when his tutors and guardians, or his ministers of state and counsellors, give up themselves to sensual pleasures, and neglect public affairs; and, instead of being in the council chamber, or in a court of judicature, or at their early devotions, are indulging themselves in riotous eating and drinking.

Ecclesiastes 10:17

Ver. 17. Blessed [art] thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles,.... Or "heroes" {z}, called "Hhorim" in the Hebrew, which signifies "white"; either from the white garment they wore, or rather from the purity and ingenuity of their minds and manners; being illustrious persons, not only by birth and education, but in their lives and actions. Now a land is happy when it is governed by a king that is not only descended from a race of heroes and illustrious men, and has a princely and liberal education; but that imitates his ancestors, and treads in their steps, and is famous himself for wisdom, virtue, and real piety, in which true nobility consists; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "whose king is noble"; who is of an ingenuous mind, has princely virtues and qualifications; who is wise and prudent, skilful in the affairs of government, and assiduous and industrious therein; for as, on the one hand, kings may, as they commonly do, descend from illustrious progenitors, and yet be base and wicked, ignoble and infamous, in their administration; and, on the other hand, persons may be raised from a low estate to royal dignity, as David and others, and yet behave with great prudence and ingenuity. The Targum applies this to the land of Israel also, and instances in Hezekiah, a man mighty in the law;

and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness; that is, eat their meals at proper times, and that after they have been at business; to refresh nature, and recruit their strength, that they may be fit for further service; and do not indulge themselves, and spend their time, in rioting and drunkenness; which would render them very unfit for public business, to sit in council, or in any court of judicature: according to the Targum, the time was four o'clock, that is, ten o'clock in the morning. Or, "not unto drinking" or "drunkenness" {a}; they do not eat so as to cause an appetite, or eager desire for drinking to excess: or, not "with drinking" {b}; their eating is not attended with excessive drinking; they eat and drink moderately. The Egyptians had a law, which fixed such a measure of wine to be allowed their kings daily, and no more {c}; and it was Solon's law, given to the Athenians, that if a prince was found drunk, death was his punishment {d}; and, with the Indians, if a woman killed a drunken king, her reward was to marry his successor {e}: all which show how odious drunkenness was with the Heathens, and especially in their kings and princes; see Pr 31:4. So Plato observes {f}, that

"drunkenness ought to be abstained from; and rather it should be allowed to any than to a keeper, (that is, of a city and its laws, a Civil magistrate), for it would be ridiculous for a keeper to need a keeper."

Jerom, as before observed, interprets this figuratively, "blessed is the land", of the church; whose "King" is Christ, the son of nobles, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and whose "princes" are the apostles, who seek not pleasure in this world, but shall eat in the world to come.

{z} Myrwx "heroum", Montanus. {a} ytvb alw non "autem ad compotationem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Gejerus, Rambachius; so Broughton. {b} "Non cum ingurgitatione", Cocceius; "non eum compotatione", Schmidt. {c} Plutarch. de Iside & Osir. "in principio". Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 11. {d} Laert. Vit. Solon. p. 38. {e} Strabo. Geograph. l. 15. p. 488. {f} De Republic. l. 3. p. 621.

Ecclesiastes 10:18

Ver. 18. By much slothfulness the building decayeth,.... Or, "by slothfulnesses" {g}, The word is in the dual number, and so may signify the slothfulness of the hands, as Aben Ezra, of both hands, and of both feet; or the various kinds of slothfulness, as the Arabic version, slothfulness both of body and mind; or of all sorts of persons, superiors and inferiors, princes and subjects; and with respect to all things present and future: and, as through slothfulness a material building decays; or a "beam", as the word signifies, the raftering of a house, the roof, which consists of rafters and beams joined together when the tiling is decayed by winds and rains, or any breaches made in the rafters, and no care taken to repair, the whole falls in, and the house is in ruins: so figurative buildings, families, churches, and kingdoms, come to nothing, through the sluggishness of masters of families, ministers of the word, and civil magistrates; to the latter of which more especially this is to be applied, who give up themselves to luxury and sloth;

and, through idleness of the hands, the house droppeth through; or, "through the letting" or "hanging down of the hands" {h}; the remissness of them, as is to be observed in idle persons, who will not lift them up to work; particularly to repair a breach in a house, by means of which the rain drops through it, and makes it uncomfortable and unsafe being in it; and, in process of time, that itself drops to the ground: and this expresses the same thing, how, through the neglect of the civil magistrate, a commonwealth comes to nothing; or, however, the members of it become wretched and miserable.

{g} Mytlueb "in pigritiis", Montanus; "per duplicem pigritiam", Tigurine version; "pigritia amborum", Junius & Tremellius. {h} twlqvb "per remissionem", Tigurine version; "demissione", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; so Cocceius, Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 10:19

Ver. 19. A feast is made for laughter,.... Or, "who make bread for laughter" {i}. Not bakers, who make bread for common use, and for all sorts of persons, sorrowful ones as others; but luxurious men, particularly such princes as are before described; they "make bread", that is, a feast, as the phrase is used, **Da 5:1**; not for mere refreshment, but to promote mirth and gaiety to an excessive degree; being attended with rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, with revellings and dancing;

and wine maketh merry; or, "and [they prepare] wine" {k}; which is provided in plenty at feasts; and which is sometimes put for a feast itself, and called a banquet of wine, **Es 7:2**; which wine makes merry, and men drink of it till they become drunk with it, at such profuse feasts: or, "which maketh life cheerful" {l}; as it does, when moderately used: "cheers the living"; so Aben Ezra;

but money answereth all [things]; is in the room of all things, and by it men obtain everything they want and wish for; it answers the requests of all, and supplies them with what they stand in need of, or can desire: particularly such expensive feasts, and sumptuous entertainments, are made by means of money; and, in this luxurious way, the coffers of princes are drained, and they are obliged to raise new levies, and impose new taxes upon their subjects, to the oppression of them. Or else the sense may be, that princes should consider, and not be so profuse in their manner of living, but be more frugal and careful of the public money, and lay it up against a time of need; since it is that that answers all things, is the sinew of war when that arises, and will procure men and arms, to secure and protect them from their enemies, and obtain peace and safety for them and their subjects, which otherwise they cannot expect.

{i} Mxl Myve qwxvl "ad risum facientes panem", Montanus; "faciunt panem", Paganinus, Mercerus, Piscator. {k} Nyyw "et vinum, repete, parant", Piscator. {l} Myyx xmvy "et vitam exhilaret", Tigurine version; "exhilarare solet vitam", Mercerus; "quod exhilarare debebat vitam", so some in Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 10:20

Ver. 20. Curse not the king; no, not in thy thought,.... Though he is a child, and unskilful in government, gives himself to his passions and pleasures, and neglects the affairs of the kingdom; yet be so far from rebelling against him, and doing him any injury, or speaking ill of him, as not even to wish him any ill; or, within thine own breast, imprecate any evil upon him, but rather pray for him, wish him well, and do everything to promote the welfare of his person and government, and this both for the Lord's sake, and for conscience's sake; and therefore curse him not "in thy conscience" {m}, as some render it. Jarchi interprets this of God the King of the world; see **Job 2:9**; and Jerom of Christ; who should not be blasphemed, lest the angels, that go about the earth, should carry it to heaven;

and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber; subordinate rulers and magistrates, the king's ministers and counsellors, who are commonly rich; even those luxurious princes, before described, who give up themselves to eating and drinking, and spend the public money in profuse feasts and entertainments: yet a man should be careful how he speaks against them; and not only be cautious of what he says about them, in a vilifying way, in companies and clubs where disaffected persons speak their minds freely; but even in his own house, where his servants may hear him; nay, even in his bedchamber where only his wife and children are;

for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter; an hyperbolical expression; showing that, by some strange and unthought of ways and means, treason, though so very secret, should be brought to the knowledge of the king and his ministers; as if a bird, sitting at the window, or flying by at the same time, should hear and carry it to them: sometimes this is by means of spies and informers, that kings have in all places, to bring them news of the behaviour and sentiments of men, of whom such understand the passage; or by means of such, that bear an ill will to them, or are faithful subjects to the king. With the Persians were certain officers, called the king's ears, and the emperor's eyes; by means of whom the king was believed to be a god, since, by the ears and eyes of others, through those spies, he knew all that was done everywhere {n}. Some interpret it of angels, good or bad: Jarchi, of the soul of man, which at last flies to heaven, which he thinks is the bird of the air; and of an angel that is associated to him, his guardian angel; meant, as he supposes, by that which hath wings, or "the master of wings" {o}.

{m} Kedmb en suneidhsei sou, Sept. "in conscientia tua", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Cocceius, Gejerus. {n} Apuleius de Mundo. {o} Mypgkh leb "dominus alarum", Piscator.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ecclesiastes 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES 11

This chapter begins with an exhortation to liberality to the poor, enforced by several reasons and arguments, and the objections to it removed; and the whole illustrated by various similes, Ec 11:1; and then it is observed, that a life attended with outward prosperity and inward peace, and spent in doing good, is very delightful, and very desirable it is to have it continued; yet it should be remembered this will not be always, that many days of darkness in the grave will come; and after all the whole of a man's life is vanity, as is often inculcated, Ec 11:7; and the chapter is closed with an ironic address to young men, designed to show them the folly and danger of sinful courses, to reform them from them, and to put them in mind of a future judgment, Ec 11:9.

Ver. 1. Cast thy bread upon the waters,.... As the wise man had often suggested that nothing was better for a man than to enjoy the good of his labour himself, he here advises to let others, the poor, have a share with him; and as he had directed in the preceding chapter how men should behave towards their superiors, he here instructs them what notice they should take of their inferiors; and as he had cautioned against luxury and intemperance, he here guards against tenacity and covetousness, and exhorts to beneficence and liberality: that which is to be given is "bread", which is put for all the necessaries of life, food and raiment; or money that answers all things, what may be a supply of wants, a support of persons in distress; what is useful, profitable, and beneficial; not stones or scorpions, or what will be useless or harmful: and it must be "thy" bread, a man's own; not independent of God who gives it him; but not another's, what he owes another, or has fraudulently obtained; but what he has got by his own labour, or he is through divine Providence in lawful possession of; hence alms in the Hebrew language is called "righteousness": and it must be such bread as is convenient and fit for a man himself, such as he himself and his family eat of, and this he must cast, it must be a man's own act, and a voluntary one; his bread must not be taken and forced from him; it must be given freely, and in such a manner as not to be expected again; and bountifully and plentifully, as a man casts seed into the earth; but here it is said to be "upon the waters"; bread is to be given to such as are in distress and affliction, that have waters of a full cup wrung out unto them, whose faces are watered with tears, and foul with weeping, from whom nothing is to be expected again, who can make no returns; so that what is given thorn seems to be cast away and lost, like what is thrown into a river, or into the midst of the sea; and even it is to be given to such who prove ungrateful and unthankful, and on whom no mark or impression of the kindness is made and left, no more than upon water; yea, it is to be given to strangers never seen before nor after, like gliding water; so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "passing waters": or else to such who may be compared to well watered ground, or "moist ground", as Mr. Broughton renders it; where the seed cast will grow up again, and bring forth fruit, and redound to the advantage of the sower, as what is given to the poor does; they are a good soil to sow upon, especially Christ's poor, who are partakers of his living water, grace; see Isa 32:20; though it may be the multitude of persons to whom alms is to be given are here intended, which are sometimes signified by waters, Re 17:15; as Ec 11:2 seems to explain it. The Targum is,

"reach out the bread of thy sustenance to the poor that go in ships upon the thee of the water;"

and some think the speech is borrowed from navigation, and is an allusion to merchants who send their goods beyond sea, and have a large return for them;

for thou shalt find it after many days; not the identical bread itself, but the fruit and reward of such beneficence; which they shall have unexpectedly, or after long waiting, as the husbandman for his seed; it suggests that such persons should live long, as liberal persons oftentimes do, and increase in their worldly substance; and if they should not live to reap the advantage of their liberality, yet their posterity will, as the seed of Jonathan did for the kindness he showed to David: or, however, if they find it not again in temporal things, yet in spirituals; and shall be recompensed in the resurrection of the just, and to all eternity. So the Targum,

"for after the time of many days, then thou shall find the reward of it in this world (so it is in the king's Bible), and in the world to come;"

see Lu 12:12. Jarchi instances in Jethro. Noldius {p} renders it "within many days", even before many days are at an end; for seed sown by waters in hot climates soon sprung up, and produced fruit; see
Da 11:20.

{p} Ebr. Concord. Partic. p. 155. No. 704.

Ecclesiastes 11:2

Ver. 2. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight,.... Or, a "part" {q}; not the whole of a man's substance, for he must have to support himself and his family; he that does not take care of that is worse than an infidel; a man may bestow all his goods on the poor, and not have charity; though no doubt there was true charity, or love, in the poor widow that threw in all her substance into the treasury, which was an extraordinary case, **1Ti 5:8**; but a man is to give of such things that he has, ordinarily, and not all that he has, Lu 11:41; he is to give according to his ability, and what he can spare from the service of himself and family; and this is to be distributed, and given in parts to the poor, according to their necessities; not all to one, but something to everyone, "to seven, and also to eight": if seven persons apply, give them everyone a part; and, if an eighth person comes, send him not away empty; give to every one that asketh, **Lu 6:30**; compare with this phrase **Mic 5:5**; Some think this respects time, so Aben Ezra; that a man should give constantly and continually, should be daily giving, all the seven days of the week, and when the eighth day comes, or the week begins again, go on in the same course. The Targum is,

"put a good part of seed in thy field in Tisri (the seventh month), and do not cease from sowing even in Casleu,"

the eighth month;

for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth; what calamities shall come upon it, which may sweep away all a man's substance; it may be destroyed by fire, or washed away by a deluge of water, or plundered by an enemy; or, however, the day of death may quickly come, as it certainly shall, and then it will be no longer in a man's power to do good with what he has. Moreover, the arguments which covetous men use against liberality, the wise man uses for it; they argue that bad times may come, and they may sustain great losses; or have a greater charge upon them, a growing family; or they may live to old age, and want it themselves: be it no, these are reasons why they should give liberally while they can; that when these things they fear shall come upon them, they may be relieved and supplied by others; for those that show mercy shall find mercy; and this is the way to make themselves friends in a time of need, and against it; see Lu 16:9.

{q} qlx "partem", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Ecclesiastes 11:3

Ver. 3. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty [themselves] upon the earth,.... They do not retain it; sad would it be for the earth if they did; but they let it down softly and gently, in plentiful showers upon each of the parts of the earth without distinction, by which it is refreshed, and made fruitful; nor are they losers by it, for they draw up great quantities again out of the ocean, and so constantly answer the ends for which they are appointed. And so rich men, who are full of the good things of this world, should not keep them to themselves, and for their own use only; but should consider they are stewards under God, and for others, and should be like the full clouds, empty themselves; and give to those who want of what God has given them, freely and cheerfully, bountifully and plentifully, and that without respect of persons, imitating their God and Creator, who sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust, **Mt 5:45**; and such in the issue are no losers, but gainers; they fill again as fast as they empty;

and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be; where the seed falls, and it grows up into a plant, and to a tree, there it continues, whether to the north or to the south; and so accordingly brings forth fruit, and such as it is men partake of it; to which purpose Jarchi, and who applies it to the disciple of a wise man, who is profitable in the place where he is, not only in life, but after death: or where the fruit of a tree fall, "there they are", so Aben Ezra reads the last clause in the plural number; that is, there are persons enough to gather the fruit; and so where a rich man is, there are poor enough about him to partake of his bounty: or as when a tree is cut down, let it fall where it will, there it abides, and is no more fruitful; so when a man is cut off by death, as he was then, so he remains; if a gracious and good man, and has done good, he is like a tree that falls to the south, he enters into the paradise of God, the joys of heaven; and if not a good man, and has not done good, he is like a tree that falls to the north, he goes into a state of darkness, misery, and distress; see Re 22:11; or however, be this as it will, he is no more useful in this world; and therefore it becomes men to do all the good they can in health and life, for there is none to be done in the grave where they are going: or else the sense is, that as when a tree falls, whether it be to the south or to the north, it matters not to the owner, there it lies, and is of the same advantage to him; so an act of beneficence, let it be done to what object soever, a worthy or an unworthy one, yet being done with a view to the glory of God and the good of men, it shall not lose its reward: and so this is an answer to the objection of some against giving, because they do not know whether the object proposed is deserving: though some think the same thing is intended by these metaphorical expressions, as is suggested in the latter part of Ec 11:2, that evils or calamities may come upon men like heavy showers of rain, which wash away things; or like storms and tempests of rain, thunder and lightning, which break down trees, and cause them to fall to the north or to the south; and thus in like manner by one judgment or another men may be stripped of all their substance, and therefore it is right to make use of it while they have it.

Ecclesiastes 11:4

Ver. 4. He that observeth the wind shall not sow,.... Who before he sows his seed is careful to observe where the wind is, from what corner it blows, and forbears sowing until it is down or changes, lest it should be troublesome unto him in sowing, or blow away his seed, and waits for a better season; such a man may lose his seedtime and never sow at all, and his grain in his barn may be devoured by vermin, or be destroyed by one accident or another, and so he may lose both his seed and his crop;

and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap; which are uncertain signs of weather; and if a man gives heed to them, and puts off his sowing from time to time, for the sake of better weather, as he may never sow, so it is impossible that he should reap; and if he sows, and when his grain is ripe and forbears to reap because of the clouds, lest his grain should be wet, may never reap at all: and so it is with respect to liberality; if a man will raise difficulties, and make objections, and attend unto them; if he puts off giving till such an affliction is removed from him and his family, or that is grown up; or such an estate is obtained, or he has got to such an amount of riches, or till more proper and deserving objects present, with twenty things more of the like kind; if he defers giving on such accounts, or through fear of want, which may possess his mind for various reasons, he may never give nor get, yea, never do any good work; for, if nothing is done till all difficulties are removed, no good thing will ever be done.

Ecclesiastes 11:5

Ver. 5. As thou knowest not what [is] the way of the spirit,.... If indeed a man could foresee and be assured of seasonable weather for sowing and reaping, or a proper opportunity for doing good, all circumstances agreeing, it would be right to wait for it, and take it; but as these things are not in our power, nor within the compass of our knowledge, we should take the first opportunity of doing good, and leave the issue to divine Providence: as in many things in nature we are and should be content to be ignorant of them, and leave them with God, who brings them about by his secret power and providence: as, for instance, we know not "the way of the spirit", or "of the wind" {r}, as some render it; from whence it comes and whither it goes, where and when it will subside, or what wind will blow next; or of the spirit or soul of man, how it enters into the body. So the Targum,

"how the spirit of the breath of life goes into the body of an infant:"

whether it is by traduction, as some, which is not likely; or by transfusion, or by creation out of nothing, or by formation out of something pre-existent, and by an immediate infusion of it: or, "what is the way of the breath"; of the breath of a child in the womb, whether it breathes or not; if it does, how? if not, how does it live? or what is the way of the soul out of the body, how it goes out of it when the body dies;

[nor] how the bones [do grow] in the womb of her that is with child; or is "full", pregnant, big with child: or "in the womb that is full" {s}; full of

liquids, and yet bones are separated from them, grow out of them, and in them, and are hardened; all which how it should be is unknown: "bones" are mentioned because they are the more solid and substantial parts of the body, the basis and strength of it; and because it may seem more difficult how any part of the seed should harden into them, while other parts are converted into skin and flesh;

even so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all; the Targum adds, in wisdom; as men are ignorant of many of the works of nature, so of those of Providence, especially which are future; as whether men shall be rich or poor, have days of prosperity or adversity; what their latter end will be, whether they shall not stand in need of the assistance of others, it may be of them or theirs to whom they now give; or what will be the issue of present acts of beneficence and liberality; these, with many other things of the like kind, should be left with God. Some understand this of the work of grace and conversion, which is a secret and difficult work, only wrought by the power and grace of God; and may be begun, or shortly will, in a poor person, judged an unworthy object of charity for supposed want of it, a thing unknown.

{r} xwrh "venti", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Mercerus, Amama, Cocceius, Gejerus, Rambachius; so Broughton, and the Syriac and Arabic versions. {s} halmh Njbb "in utero pleno", Mercerus, Gejerus, Gussetius, p. 936. "in ventre pleno", Cocceius, so Aben Ezra.

Ecclesiastes 11:6

Ver. 6. In the morning sow thy seed,.... Do all good works early and diligently, which is expressed by sowing in righteousness, Ho 10:12; particularly alms deeds, often signified by sowing seed, Ps 112:9 **2Co 9:6**; this should be in the morning of youth, that persons may be inured to it betimes as Obadiah was; and in the morning of prosperity, as soon as ever Providence smiles on men, and puts it into the power of their hands, who should honour the Lord with the firstfruits of their increase;

and in the evening withhold not thine hand; from sowing seed, from doing good, particularly acts of charity, in the evening of old age, as Jarchi, like old Barzillai; an age in which men are apt to be more tenacious and covetous, and withhold more than is meet; yea, in the evening of adversity do not leave off doing good as much as can be; but do as the Macedonian churches, whose deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality in a great trial of affliction, **2Co 8:2**; in short, good is to be done at all times, as opportunity offers, throughout the whole of life, and in all conditions and circumstances;

for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that; the seed sown in the morning or in the evening, which good work shall best succeed; therefore do both, try all ways, make use of all opportunities;

or whether they both [shall be] alike good; acceptable to God, and useful to men; and if so, a man will have no occasion to repent of what he has done both in youth and old age.

Ecclesiastes 11:7

Ver. 7. Truly the light [is] sweet,.... Here begins a new subject, as most think; and some here begin the twelfth and last chapter, and not improperly. This is true of natural light, which is exceeding pleasant, useful, and beneficial; by which men discern objects, behold the things of nature with pleasure, walk in the way without stumbling, and do the work and business of life: and also of civil light or prosperity; for, as afflictions are expressed by darkness, and adversity by night; so the comforts and good things of life by light and day, which are very desirable and delectable: and here "life" itself may be meant, for light is sometimes put for life, which is the light of the living; and what sweeter and more desirable than that, especially a life attended with prosperity and peace? see Job 33:28. The Targum and Jarchi interpret it of the light of the law; and which is indeed a light, and so is the whole word of God, **Pr 6:23** **2Pe 1:19**; but may be better applied unto the Gospel, which is a great and glorious light, **Isa 9:2**; and a means of enlightening dark minds; not only of showing men their sinfulness, as the law does; but the insufficiency of their righteousness, of all their own goodness and good works to justify; it reveals Christ, and the glories of his person; it sets him forth evidently, as crucified and slain, for the worst of sinners; it makes manifest his fulness, ability, and willingness, as a Saviour; righteousness, peace, pardon, and salvation by him; it makes known things not to be discerned by the light of nature, even things wonderful and marvellous, as well as what is the way a man should walk in: and this light is sweet and pleasant, not to a blind and carnal man, who despises it, and reckons it foolishness, but to those who are enlightened by the Spirit of God; and to these it is very delightful, even to all their senses; it is sweet to their taste, a joyful sound to their ears, and beautiful to their sight are the feet of them that bring its good tidings. The light of grace, which appears in first conversion, and comes from God suddenly, which at first is small, but increases, is exceeding pleasant, strikes the soul with delight and wonder; it is marvellous light, **1Pe 2:9**; and so is the light of joy and gladness to believers, when it arises to them after a time of darkness, or the light of God's countenance, **Ps 4:6**; and such will be the light of the latter day glory, and more especially the light of the heavenly state;

and a pleasant [thing it is] for the eyes to behold the sun; the natural sun, shining at noon day, which is a luminous and glorious body, communicating light and heat to all the world: which is so glorious and so pleasant to behold, that Anaxagoras, the philosopher, being asked what he was born for, answered,

"to see the heavens, the sun, and the moon {t};"

and Eudoxus, another philosopher, said,

"he could be content to perish, could he get so near to the sun as to learn the nature of it {u}."

To "see the sun", in the language of this book, is to live in this world, and to enjoy the light of the sun, and the comforts of life; see **Ec 7:11**; and now a life, attended with outward prosperity and inward peace, that is spent in doing and enjoying good, is a very desirable and delightful one; though such a man should not think of living always, but of death, and the days of darkness, as in Ec 11:8. This may he applied to Christ, the sun of righteousness, Ps 84:11; the fountain of all spiritual light and heat; the brightness of his Father's glory; and who is superior to angels and men; and is to be beheld by faith, and in his own light, as the sun is; and whom to look upon with an eye of faith is exceeding pleasant and delightful, and fills with joy unspeakable and full of glory, **1Pe 1:8**.

{t} Laert. in Vita Anaxag. p. 95. Lactant. de Fals. Sap. l. 3. c. 9. {u} Plutarch, vol. 2. p. 1094.

Ecclesiastes 11:8

Ver. 8. But if a man live many years,.... Enjoying light and life, and beholding the sun with much delight and pleasure. The days of men on earth, or under the sun, are but few at most; but some live many days, in comparison of others; they come to a good old age, as Abraham did; and to their graves like a shock of corn fully ripe; and arrive to, or beyond, the common term of human life;

[and] rejoice in them all; in and throughout the many years he lives, even all his days; that is, is blessed with a plentiful portion of the good things of life, and enjoys them in a free and comfortable manner, with moderation and thankfulness; partakes of the good of his labour, and rejoices in his works, in the fruit and effects of them, through the blessing of divine Providence; not only is blessed with many days, but those days good ones, days of prosperity: such a man is in a happy case; and especially if he is possessed of spiritual joy, of joy in the Holy Ghost; if he rejoices in Christ, and in what he is to him, and has done for him; and having professed him, and submitted to his ordinances, goes on his way, rejoicing. Some render it, "let him rejoice in them all" {w}; a good man has reason to rejoice always, throughout the whole course of his life; because of the goodness of divine Providence to him; because of the blessings of grace bestowed on him; and because of his good hope of eternal glory and happiness. The Targum is,

"in all these it becomes him to rejoice, and to study in the law of the Lord;"

yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many; or, "they may be" {x}; meaning either, that though persons may live long, and enjoy much health and prosperity; yet, in the midst of all, they should consider, that it is possible that days of adversity and distress may come upon them, and continue; and therefore should not please themselves, as Job did, that they shall die in their nest in the height their prosperity, since they know not what days of evil may come, and how long they will last; or, however, they should remember the night of death, that is hastening, the land of darkness, and the shadow of death, they are going to; the dark grave, they will soon be laid in, where they will remain many days; many more than those in which they have lived, enjoying the light of the sun, even till the heavens shall be no more; though these days will not be infinite, they will have an end, and there will be a resurrection from the dead: and particularly if a man is a wicked man, that has lived a long and prosperous life, he should not only remember the above things; but also that outer darkness, that blackness of darkness reserved for him, the darkness of eternal death, which will be his portion for evermore. The Targum is,

"he shall remember the days of the darkness of death, and shall not sin; for many are the days that he shall lie dead in the house of the grave."

All that cometh [is] vanity; Aben Ezra interprets this of every man that comes into the world, as in **Ec 1:2**; whether high or low, rich or poor, in prosperity or adversity; man, at his best estate, is vanity: let a man therefore be in what circumstances he will, he should not take up his rest here; all that comes to him, everything that befalls him, is vanity. The wise man keeps in view the main thing he proposed, to prove that is vanity, all in this life; for what is to come hereafter, in a future state of happiness, cannot come under this name and character.

{w} xmvy Mlkb "in eis omnibus laetetur", Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus. {x} hyhy hbrh yk "quia multi sint", Amama, so some in Drusius; "quod multi futuri sint", Piscator, Gejerus, Rambachius.

Ecclesiastes 11:9

Ver. 9. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth,.... This advice may be considered as serious; and either as relating to natural, corporeal, and temporal delight and pleasure, under due limitations; that as mirth and cheerfulness, or a free use of the creatures of God, with moderation and temperance, is allowable to all men in common, and is spoken of throughout this book as commendable, and is healthful and profitable to men; so it is particularly suitable to the youthful age, whose natural desires may be enjoyed, and their outward senses may be gratified, in a lawful way, so far as is consistent with the fear of God, and the expectation of a future judgment: or it may be considered with respect to religious and spiritual exercises; as young men should remember their Creator in the days of their youth, as it follows; so they should rejoice in God their Maker, Ps 149:2; they should rejoice not to do evil, to which human nature is inclined, especially in youth, but to do good; should rejoice, not in the ways of sin, but in the ways of wisdom; not in any outward attainment of beauty, wit, strength, or riches, but in the grace of God; not in themselves, or their boastings, but in Christ, his person, righteousness, and salvation; not in the things of time and sense, but in hope of the glory of God;

and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; here is a different word for youth than the former, which Alshech distinguishes thus; the first designs the time to the age of thirteen, and this from thence to twenty. Or, "let thine heart do thee good", so the Septuagint. The Targum is,

"and let thine heart be good in thee."

Symmachus renders it, "and let thine heart be in good"; the thoughts of thine heart be employed about that which is good, spiritual, heavenly, and divine; the affections of thine heart set thereon; and the will and desires of thine heart be drawn out after such things: let thine heart prompt and put thee on doing that which is good, with delight and pleasure; but, in order, to all this, the heart must be made good by the spirit and grace of God;

and walk in the ways of thy heart; being created a clean one, sprinkled, purged, and purified by the blood of Christ; in which the fear of God is put; the laws of God are written; where Christ is formed, and his word dwells richly, and he himself by faith, where the Spirit of God and his graces are: and then to walk in the ways of such a heart is to walk in the fear of God, according to his word, as Christ is an example; and to walk after the spirit, and not after the flesh. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are, "and walk in the ways of thine heart unblamable": the Targum,

"and walk in humility in the ways of thine heart:"

which all agree with the sense given: so Alshech interprets the ways of the heart; of the ways of the good imagination of good men;

and in the sight of thine eyes; as enlightened by the Spirit of God, directing and guiding in the way in which a man should walk; looking unto Jesus, all the while he is walking or running his Christian race; and walking in him, as he has received him; pressing towards him, the mark, for the prize of the high calling. The Targum is,

"and be cautious of the sight of thine eyes, and look not upon evil."

The Septuagint and Arabic versions insert the negative; "and not in the sight of thine eyes". Most interpreters understand all this its an ironic concession to young men, to indulge themselves in carnal mirth, to take their swing of sinful pleasures, to do all their corrupt hearts incline them to; and to gratify their outward senses and carnal lusts to the uttermost; even the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, which young men are most addicted to: do all this, as if it was said, and see what will be the issue of it; or, do all this if you can, with this one thing bore in mind, a future judgment; like those expressions in 1Ki 22:15; and to this sense the following clause is thought most to incline: and the rather, as the above phrases are generally used in a bad sense;

but know thou, that for all these [things] God will bring thee into judgment; not temporal, but eternal; not in this present life, but in the world to come; the judgment that will be after death, the last and awful judgment; and which is certain, may be known; of which a man may be assured from the light of nature, and from divine revelation;
See Gill on "Ec 3:17"; into which all men will be brought, even whether they will or not; and every work shall be brought into it, good or bad, open or secret, Ec 12:14. Wherefore "these things" may respect either; and the consideration of a future judgment should influence the lives of men, and engage them both to perform acts of piety and religion in youth, and throughout the whole of life, and to shun and avoid everything that is evil. Herodotus {y} speaks of a custom among the Egyptians, at their feasts; that, just at the close of them, one carries about in a coffin the image of a dead man, exactly like one, made of wood, the length of a cubit or two, showing it to all the guests; saying, look upon it, drink, and take pleasure, for such shalt thou be when dead.

{y} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 78.

Ecclesiastes 11:10

Ver. 10. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart,.... Worldly sorrow, as opposed to lawful mirth and cheerfulness, and especially to spiritual joy: or "anger" {z}, as the word may be rendered, and often is; either at the providence of God, or at the correction of friends; all perturbations of the mind; all fierceness of spirit, and fiery passions, to which youthful age is subject: or all those things, as Jarchi observes, that provoke God to anger; sinful lusts and pleasures, the end and issue of which also is sorrow to men; and which agrees with our version;

and put away evil from thy flesh; or body; such as intemperance and uncleanness, to which young men are addicted: the advice is much the same, in both clauses, with that of the apostle's, "flee youthful lusts", **2Ti 2:22**. Jarchi interprets this of the evil concupiscence;

for childhood and youth [are] vanity; which quickly pass away; come into manhood, and soon slide into old age, and are gone presently, and all things within that compass: all actions done in that age are for the most part vain and foolish; and all the delights, joys, and pleasures thereof, vanishing and transitory. The last word {a}, used to express the juvenile age, either is akin to a word which signifies the "morning"; youth being the morning and dawn of man's age, and increases as that; and as soon as it is peep of day with him, or he enters into life, he possesses vanity: or as having the signification of "blackness"; because, as Jarchi observes, the head of a young man is black: and so the Targum,

"childhood, and the days of blackness of hair, are vanity;"

whereas the hair of an aged man is gray.

{z} oek "iram", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus; "indignationem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; "God's anger", Broughton. {a} twrxvh "ortus" Junius & Tremellius; "aurora", Cocceius, Gejerus, so Aben Ezra and Ben Melech; "dies nigredinis pili"; so the Targum, and Abendana.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ecclesiastes 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES 12

This chapter begins with advice to young men, which is continued from the preceding; and particularly to remember their Creator in the days of their youth; enforced from the consideration of the troubles and inconveniences of old age, Ec 12:1; which, in an allegorical way, is beautifully described, Ec 12:2; and from the certainty of death, when it would be too late, Ec 12:7. And then the wise man returns to his first proposition, and which he kept in view all along, that all is vanity in youth or old age, Ec 12:8; and recommends the reading of this book, from the diligence, pains and labour, he used in composing it; from the sententious matter in it; from the agreeable, acceptable, and well chosen words, in which he had expressed it; and from the wisdom, uprightness, truth, efficacy, and authority of the doctrines of it, Ec 12:9; and from its preference to other books, which were wearisome both to author and reader, Ec 12:12. And it is concluded with the scope and design, the sum and substance of the whole of it, reducible to these two heads; the fear of God, and obedience to him,
Ec 12:13; and which are urged from the consideration of a future judgment, into which all things shall be brought, Ec 12:14.

Ver. 1. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,.... Or "Creators" {b}; as "Makers", Job 35:10; for more than one were concerned, as in the creation of all things in general, so of man in particular, **Ge 1:26**; and these are neither more nor fewer than three; and are Father, Son, Spirit; the one God that has created men, **Mal 2:10**; the Father, who is the God of all flesh, and the Father of spirits; the former both of the bodies and souls of men, Jer 31:27; the Son, by whom all things are created; for he that is the Redeemer and husband of his church, which are characters and relations peculiar to the Son, is the Creator, Isa 43:1; and the Holy Spirit not only garnished the heavens, and moved upon the face of the waters, but is the Maker of men, and gives them life, Job 33:4. Now this God, Creator, should be "remembered" by young men; they should remember there is a God, which they are apt to be forgetful of; that this God is a God of great and glorious perfections, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, holy, just, and true; who judgeth in the earth, and will judge the world in righteousness, and them also; and that he is in Christ a God gracious, merciful, and pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin: they should remember him under this character, as a "Creator", who has made them, and not they themselves; that they are made by him out of the dust of the earth, and must return to it; that he has brought them into being, and preserved them in it, and favoured them with the blessings of his providence, which are all from him that has made them: and they should remember the end for which they are made, to glorify him; and in what state man was originally made, upright, pure, and holy; but that he now is a fallen creature, and such are they, impure and unrighteous, impotent and weak, abominable in the sight of God, unworthy to live, and unfit to die; being transgressors of the laws of their Creator, which is deserving of death: they should remember what God their Creators, Father, Son, and Spirit, must have done or must do for them, if ever they are saved; the Father must have chosen them in Christ unto salvation; must have given his Son to redeem, and must send his Spirit into their hearts to create them anew; the Son must have been surety for them, assumed their nature, and died in their room and stead; and the Spirit must regenerate and make them new creatures, enlighten their minds, quicken their souls, and sanctify their hearts: they should remember the right their Creator has over them, the obligations they are under to him, and their duty to him; they should remember, with thankfulness, the favours they have received from him, and, with reverence and humility, the distance between him, as Creator, and them as creatures: they should remember to love him cordially and sincerely; to fear him with a godly fear; to worship him in a spiritual manner; to set him always before them, and never forget him. And all this they should do "in the days [their] youth"; which are their best and choicest day in which to serve him is most desirable by him, acceptable to him; who ordered the first of the ripe fruits and creatures of the first year to be offered to him: and then are men best able to serve him, when their bodies are healthful, strong, and vigorous; their senses quick, and the powers and faculties of their souls capable of being improved and enlarged: and to delay the service of him to old age, as it would be very ungrateful and exceeding improper, so no man can be sure of arriving to it; and if he should, yet what follows is enough to determine against such a delay;

while the evil days come not; meaning the days of old age; said to be evil, not with respect to the evil of fault or sin; so all days are evil, or sin is committed in every age, in infancy, in childhood, in youth, in manhood, as well as in old age: but with respect to the evil of affliction and trouble which attend it, as various diseases; yea, that itself is a disease, and an incurable one; much weakness of body, decay of intellects, and many other things, which render life very troublesome and uncomfortable {c}, as well as unfit for religious services;

nor the years draw nigh, when thou shall say, I have no pleasure in them; that is, corporeal pleasure; no sensual pleasure; sight, taste, and hearing, being lost, or in a great measure gone; which was Barzillai's case, at eighty years of age: though some ancient persons have their senses quick and vigorous, and scarce perceive any difference between youth and age; but such instances are not common: and there are also some things that ancient persons take pleasure in, as in fields and gardens, and the culture of them, as Cicero {d} observes; and particularly learned men take as much delight in their studies in old age as in youth, and in instructing others; and, as the same writer {e} says,

"what is more pleasant than to see an old man, attended and encircled with youth, at their studies under him?"

and especially a good man, in old age, has pleasure in reflecting on a life spent in the ways, work, and worship of God; and in having had, through the grace of God, his conversation in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity; as also in present communion with God, and in the hopes and views of the glories of another world: but if not religious persons, they are strangers to spiritual pleasure, which only is to be had in wisdom's ways; such can neither look back with pleasure on a life spent in sin; nor forward with pleasure, at death and eternity, and into another world; see 2Sa 19:35.

{b} Kyarwb "Creatorum tuorum", Drusius, Gejerus, Rambachius; so Broughton. {c} Plautus in Aulular. Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 4. Menaechm. Act. 5. Sc. 2. v. 6. calls old age, "mala aetas"; and the winter of old age, Trinummus, Act.

2. Sc. 3. v. 7. And Pindar, ghrav oulomenon, Pyth. Ode 10. so Theognis, v. 272, 776, 1006. And Homer, ghrav
lutrov, Iliad. 10. v. 79. &. 23. v. 644. "Tristis senectus", Virgil. Aenid. 6. {d} De Seuectute, c. 14, 15. {e} Ibid. c. 8.

Ecclesiastes 12:2

Ver. 2. While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened,.... The wise man proceeds to describe the infirmities of old age, and the troubles that attend it; in order to engage young men to regard God and religion, before these come upon them, which greatly unfit for his service. This the Targum and Midrash, and, after them, Jarchi, interpret of the splendour of the countenance of man, of the light of his eyes, and the beauty of his cheeks, and other parts of his face; which decrease and go off at old age, and paleness and wrinkles succeed: and others of the adversities and calamities which attend persons at such years; which are sometimes in Scripture signified by the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars, Isa 13:10; but some choose to understand this, more literally, of the dimness of sight in old men; by whom the light of the sun, moon, and stars, is scarcely discerned: but as this infirmity is afterwards described, I rather think with others, that by the "sun", "light", and "moon", are meant the superior and inferior faculties of the soul, the understanding, mind, judgment, will, and affections; and, by the "stars", those bright notions and ideas raised in the fancy and imagination, and fixed in the memory; all which are greatly impaired or lost in old age: so Alshech interprets the sun and moon of the soul and spirit, and the stars of the senses; "light" is not in the Syriac version;

nor the clouds return after the rain; which some understand of catarrhs, defluxions, and rheums, flowing at the eyes, nose, and mouth, one after another, which frequently attend, and are very troublesome to persons in years; but may be more generally applied to the perpetual succession of evils, afflictions, and disorders, in old age; as soon as one is got over, another follows, billow after billow; or, like showers in April, as soon as one is gone, another comes. The Targum paraphrases it of the eyebrows distilling tears, like clouds after rain.

Ecclesiastes 12:3

Ver. 3. In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble,.... By the "house" is meant the human body; which is a house of clay, the earthly house of our tabernacle, in which the soul dwells, **Job 4:19** **2Co 5:1**. The Targum interprets the keepers of the house, of the knees and the trembling of them; but the Midrash and Jarchi, much better, of the ribs; man being fenced with bones and sinews, as Job says,
Job 10:11; though trembling cannot be well ascribed to them, they being so fixed to the backbone: rather therefore, as Aben Ezra, the hands and arms are meant; which work for the maintenance of the body, and feed it with food, got and prepared by them; and which protect and defend it from injuries; for all which they are fitted, and made strong by the God of nature. The Arabic version renders it, "both keepers"; and, doubtless, respects both hands and arms; and which, in old age, are not only wrinkled, contracted, and stiff, but attended with numbness, pains, and tremor. Some, not amiss, take in the head; which is placed as a watchtower over the body, the seat of the senses; which overlooks, guards, and keeps it, and which often through paralytic disorders, and even the weakness of old age, is attended with a shaking;

and the strong men shall bow themselves; it is strange the Targum and Midrash should interpret this of the arms, designed in the former clause; Jarchi and Aben Ezra, more rightly, of the thighs; it takes in thighs, legs, and feet, which are the basis and support of the human body; and are strengthened for this purpose, having stronger muscles and tendons than any other parts of the body; but these, as old age comes on, are weakened and distorted, and bend under the weight of the body, not being able, without assistance, to sustain it;

and the grinders cease because they are few; the Targum is,

"the teeth of the mouth:"

all agree the teeth are meant; only the Midrash takes in the stomach also, which, like a mill, grinds the food. There are three sorts of teeth; the fore teeth, which bite the food, and are called "incisores": the eye teeth, called "canini", which bruise and break the food; and the double teeth, the hindermost, which are called "dentes molares", the grinding teeth; and which being placed in the upper and nether jaw, are like to millstones, broad and rough, and rub against each other and grind the food, and prepare it for the stomach: these, in old age, rot and drop out, and become few and straggling, one here and another there; and, not being over against each other, are of no use, but rather troublesome;

and those that look out of the windows be darkened; the eyes, as the Targum and Ben Melech; and all agree that those that look out are the eyes, or the visive rays: the "windows" they look through are not spectacles; for it is questionable whether they were in use in Solomon's time, and, however, they are not parts of the house; but either the holes in which the eyes are, and so the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, to which the Targum agrees, paraphrasing it, the strong bounds of the head; and which are no other than what oculists call the orbits of the eye: or else the eyelids, which open and shut like the casement of a window, and through which, being opened, the eyes look; or the humours of the eye, the watery, crystalline, and glassy, which are transparent, and through which the visive rays pass; or the tunics, or coats of the eye, particularly the "tunica aranea" and "cornea"; as also the optic nerves, and especially the "pupilla", or apple of the eye, which is perforated or bored for this purpose: now these, in old age, become weak, or dim, or thick, or contracted, or obstructed by some means or another by which the sight is greatly hindered, and is a very uncomfortable circumstance; this was Isaac's case, Ge 27:1; but Moses is an exception to the common case of old men, De 34:7.

Ecclesiastes 12:4

Ver. 4. And the doors shall be shut in the streets,.... The Midrash and Jarchi interpret these of the holes of the body; in which they are followed by our learned and ingenuous countryman, Dr. Smith; who, by them, understands the inlets and outlets of the body; and, by the "streets", the ways and passages through which the food goes, and nourishment is conveyed; and which may be said to be shut, when they cease from their use: but it seems much better, with Aben Ezra and others, to interpret them of the lips; which are sometimes called the doors of the mouth, or lips, Ps 141:3; which are opened both for speaking and eating; but, in aged persons, are much shut as to either; they do not choose to speak much, because of the disagreeableness of their voice, and difficulty of speech, through the shortness of breath, and the loss of teeth; nor do they open them much to eat, through want of appetite; and while eating, are obliged, for want of teeth, to keep their lips close, to retain their food from falling out; they mumble with their lips both in speaking and eating; and, particularly in public, aged persons care not to speak nor eat, for the reason following: though some understand it, more literally, of their having the doors of their houses shut, and keeping within, and not caring to go abroad in the streets, because of their infirmities so the Targum, "thy feet shall be bound from going in the streets;"

when the sound of the grinding is low; which the above Jewish writers, and, after them, Dr. Smith, understand of the stomach, grinding, digesting, and concocting food, and of other parts through which it is conveyed, and the offices they perform; but sound or voice does not seem so well to agree with that; rather therefore this is to be understood, as before, of the grinding of the teeth, through the loss of which so much noise is not heard in eating as in young men, and the voice in speaking is lower; the Targum is,

"appetite of food shall depart from thee;"

and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird; that is, the aged person, the least noise awakes him out of sleep; and as he generally goes to bed soon, he rises early at cock crowing, or with the lark, as soon as the voice of that bird or any other, is heard; particularly the cock, which crows very early, and whose voice is heard the most early, and is by some writers {f} emphatically called the bird that calls men to their work;

and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; either those that make music, and are the instruments of it, as the lungs, the throat, the teeth, mouth, and lips, so the Targum and Midrash; or those that receive music, as the ears, and the several parts of them, the cavities of them, particularly the tympanum and auditory nerve; all which, through old age, are impaired, and become very unfit to be employed in making music, or in attending to it: the voice of singing men and singing women could not be heard with pleasure by old Barzillai,
2Sa 19:36. These clauses are expressive of the weakness which generally old age brings on men; very few instances are there to the contrary; such as of Caleb, who, at eighty five years of age, was as strong as at forty; and of Moses, whose natural force abated not at an hundred and twenty; nor indeed as of Cyrus, who, when seventy years of age, and near his death, could not perceive that he was weaker then than in his youth {g}.

{f} "Inque suum miseros excitat ales opus", Ovid. Amorum, l. 1. Eleg. 6. v. 66. "Cristatus ales", ib. Fast. l. 1. v. 455. {g} Cicero in Catone Majore, sive de Senectute, c. 8.

Ecclesiastes 12:5

Ver. 5. Also when they shall be afraid of [that which is] high,.... Not of the most high God, before whose tribunal they must shortly appear, as some; but rather of high places, as high hills, mountains, towers, &c. which aged persons are afraid to go up, because of the feebleness and weakness of their limbs, their difficulty of breathing, and the dizziness of their heads;

and fears [shall be] in the way; they do not care: to go abroad, being afraid of every little stone that lies in the way, lest they should stumble at it, and fall: some understand this of their fears of spirits, good or bad; but the former sense is best;

and the almond tree shall flourish; which most interpret of the hoary head, which looks like an almond tree in blossom; and which, as it comes soon in the spring, whence it has its name of haste in the Hebrew language; see **Jer 1:11**; and is a sure sign of its near approach; so gray hairs, or the hoary head, sometimes appear very soon and unexpected, and are a sure indication of the approach of old age; which Cicero {h} calls "aetas praecipitata",

"age that comes hastily on;"

though the hoary head, like the almond tree, looks very beautiful, and is venerable, especially if found in the way of righteousness,
Le 19:32;

and the grasshopper shall be a burden; meaning either, should a grasshopper, which is very light, leap upon an aged person, it would give him pain, the least burden being uneasy to him; or, should he eat one of these creatures, the locusts being a sort of food in Judea, it would not sit well, on his stomach: or the grasshopper, being a crumpled and lean creature, may describe an old man; his legs and arms emaciated, and his shoulders, back, and lips, crumpled up and bunching out; and the locust of this name has a bunch on its backbone, like a camel {i}: Bochart {k} says, that the head of the thigh, or the hip bone, by the Arabians, is called "chagaba", the word here used for a locust or grasshopper; which part of the body is of principal use in walking, and found very troublesome and difficult to move in old men; and Aben Ezra interprets it of the thigh: the almond tree, by the Rabbins, as Jarchi says, is interpreted of the hip bone, which stands out in old age: and the Targum, of this and the preceding clause, is, "and the top of thy backbone shall bunch out, through leanness, like the almond; and the ankles of thy feet shall be swelled."

Some, as Ben Melech observes, understand it of the genital member, and of coitus, slighted and rejected, because of the weakness of the body; all desires of that kind being gone, as follows;

and desire shall fail; the appetite, for food, for bodily pleasures, and carnal delights; and particularly for venery, all the parts of the body for such uses being weakened, The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "the caper tree shall be dissipated", or "vanish", or "[its fruit] shall shrink"; so Dr. Smith, who understands it of the decrease of the fluids, as he does the former clause of the solid parts of the body; and the berries of this tree are said to excite both appetite and lust {l}: and so Munster {m} interprets the word of the berries of the caper tree;

because man goeth to his long home; the grave, as the Targum, the house appointed for living, where he must lie till the resurrection morn; his eternal house, as Cicero calls it {n}; and so it may be rendered here, "the house of the world", common to all the world, where all mankind go: or, "to the house of his world" {o}; whether of bliss or woe, according as his state and character be, good or bad: Theognis {p} calls it the dark house of "hades", or the invisible state; and then this must be understood with respect to his separate soul, and the mansion of it; and Alshech says, every righteous man has a mansion to himself; see Joh 14:2;

and the mourners go about the streets; the relations of the deceased; or those that go to their houses to comfort them; or the mourning men and women, hired for that purpose.

{h} Fam. Epist. l. 11. Ep. 58. {i} R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 83. 1. {k} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 8. col. 494. {l} Avicenna spud Schindler. Lexic. col. 10. {m} Dictionar. Chaldaic. p. 13. {n} Tusculan. Quaest. l. 2. prope finem. {o} wmle tyb la "ad domum seculi sui", Pagninus. Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus. {p} gnwmai v. 1008. vid. v. 244.

Ecclesiastes 12:6

Ver. 6. Or ever the silver cord be loosed,.... As the above are the symptoms and infirmities of old age; these in this verse are the immediate symptoms of death, or what attend it, or certainly issue in it. Some by "the silver cord" understand the string of the tongue; and to this purpose is the Targum,

"before thy tongue is dumb from speaking;"

and it is observed {q} in favour of this sense, that the failing of the tongue is no fallacious sign of death, of which there is no mention at all in this account, unless here; and the tongue may not unfitly be called a "cord", both from the notation of the word because it binds, and because it scourges like a cord, **Job 5:21**; and is compared to silver, Pr 10:20, and in this verse rather the head than the back is treated of. But best, the bond of union between soul and body is meant: the Midrash and Jarchi, and the Jewish writers in general, interpret it of the "spina dorsi", or backbone; or rather of the marrow of it, which descends like a cord from the brain through the neck, and down the backbone to the bottom of it; from whence spring the nerves, fibres, tendons, and filaments of the body, on which the life of it much depends: this spinal marrow may be called a "cord" for the length of it, as well as what arise from it; and a silver cord, from the colour of it {r}, this being white even after death; and for the excellency of it: and this may be said to be "loosened" when there is a solution of the nerves, or marrow; upon which a paralysis, or palsy, follows, and is often the immediate forerunner of death;

or the golden bowl be broken; the Targum renders it the top of the head; and the Midrash interprets it the skull, and very rightly; or rather the inward membrane of the skull, which contains the brain, called the "pia mater", or "meninx", is intended, said to be a bowl, from the form of it; a "golden" one, because of the preciousness of it, and the excellent liquor of life it contains, as also because of its colour; now when this "runs back", as the word {s} signifies, dries, shrinks up, and breaks, it puts a stop to all animal motion, and hence death;

or the pitcher be broken at the fountain; not the gall at the liver, as the Targum, which the ancients took to be the fountain of blood; but by the "fountain" is meant the heart, the fountain of life, which has two cavities, one on the right side, the other on the left, from whence come the veins and arteries, which carry the blood through the whole body; and here particularly it signifies the right ventricle of the heart, the spring and original of the veins, which are the pitcher that receives the blood and transmits it to the several parts of the body; but when thee are broke to shivers, as the word {t} signifies, or cease from doing their office, the blood stagnates in them, and death follows;

or the wheel broken at the cistern; which is the left ventricle of the heart, which by its "diastole" receives the blood brought to it through the lungs, as a cistern receives water into it; where staying a while in its "systole", it passes it into the great artery annexed to it; which is the wheel or instrument of rotation, which, together with all the instruments of pulsation, cause the circulation of the blood, found out in the last age by our countryman Dr. Harvey; but it seems by this it was well known by Solomon; now, whenever this wheel is broken, the pulse stops, the blood ceases to circulate, and death follows. For this interpretation of the several preceding passages, as I owe much to the Jewish writers, so to Rambachius and Patrick on these passages, and to Witsius's "Miscellanies", and especially to our countryman Dr. Smith, in his "Portrait of Old Age", a book worthy to be read on this subject; and there are various observations in the Talmud {u} agreeable hereunto.

{q} Vid. Castel. Lexic. Hept. col. 3662. {r} Vid. Waser. de Num. Heb. l. 1. c. 13. {s} Urt "recurrat", V. L. "excurrit", Junius & Tremellius. {t} rbvt. {u} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 151. 2. & 152. 1.

Ecclesiastes 12:7

Ver. 7. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was,.... The body, which is made of dust, and is no other in its present state than dust refined and enlivened; and when the above things take place, mentioned in Ec 12:6, or at death, it returns to its original earth; it becomes immediately a clod of earth, a lifeless lump of clay, and is then buried in the earth, where it rots, corrupts, and turns into it; which shows the frailty of man, and may serve to humble his pride, as well as proves that death is not an annihilation even of the body; see **Ge 3:19**;

and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it; from whom it is, by whom it is created, who puts it into the bodies of men, as a deposit urn they are entrusted with, and are accountable for, and should be concerned for the safety and salvation of it; this was originally breathed into man at his first creation, and is now formed within him by the Lord; hence he is called the God of the spirits of all flesh; see **Ge 2:4**. Now at death the soul, or spirit of man, returns to God; which if understood of the souls of men in general, it means that at death they return to God the Judge of all, who passes sentence on them, and orders those that are good to the mansions of bliss and happiness, and those that are evil to hell and destruction. So the Targum adds, "that it may stand in judgment before the Lord;"

or if only of the souls of good men, the sense is, that they then return to God, not only as their Creator, but as their covenant God and Father, to enjoy his presence evermore; and to Christ their Redeemer, to be for ever with him, than which nothing is better and more desirable; this shows that the soul is immortal, and dies not with the body, nor sleeps in the grave with it, but is immediately with God. Agreeably to all this Aristotle {w} says, the mind, or soul, alone enters yurayen, from without, (from heaven, from God there,) and only is divine; and to the same purpose are the words of Phocylides {x},

"the body we have of the earth, and we all being resolved into it become dust, but the air or heaven receives the spirit."

And still more agreeably to the sentiment of the wise man here, another Heathen {y} writer observes, that the ancients were of opinion that souls are given of God, and are again returned unto him after death.

{w} De Generat. Animal. l. 2. c. 3. {x} swma gar ek gaihv, &c. Poem. Admon. v. 102, 103. So Lucretius l. 2. "cedit item retro de terra", &c. {y} Macrob. Saturnal. l. I. c. 10.

Ecclesiastes 12:8

Ver. 8. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher,.... The wise man, or preacher, set out in the beginning of the book with this doctrine, or proposition, which he undertook to prove; and now having proved it by an induction of particulars, instanced in the wisdom, wealth, honours, pleasures, and profit of men, and shown the vanity of them, and that the happiness of men lies not in these things, but in the knowledge and fear of God; he repeats it, and most strongly asserts it, as an undoubted truth beyond all dispute and contradiction, that all things under the sun are not only vain, but vanity itself, extremely vain, vain in the superlative degree;

all [is] vanity; all things in the world are vain; all creatures are subject to vanity; man in every state, and in his best estate, is altogether vanity: this the wise man might with great confidence affirm, after he had shown that not only childhood and youth are vanity, but even old age; the infirmities, sorrows, and distresses of which he had just exposed, and observed that all issue in death, the last end of man, when his body returns to the earth, and his soul to God the giver of it.

Ecclesiastes 12:9

Ver. 9. And moreover,.... Or "besides" {z} what has been said; or "as to what remains" {a}; or "but what is better", or "more excellent" {b}, is to "hear the conclusion of the whole matter", the sum and substance of the whole book in a few words, Ec 12:13; to which Ec 12:9; are a preface; and in which the wise man recommends the reading of this book, and other writings of his, and of other wise men inspired of God; and his own he particularly recommends, from his character as wise and industrious, in this verse; and from the subject matter of them, their nature, use, and excellency, and their efficacy and authority, in the two next;

because the preacher was wise; he was a "preacher", a royal one, an extraordinary preacher, and to be regarded; he urges not his title as a king, but his character as a preacher, to recommend what he had written: every good preacher should be regarded; not such who are ignorant preachers of the law, but faithful ministers of the Gospel, who are sent of God, and have felt and experienced what they deliver to others; and especially who are wise as well as faithful, as Solomon was; he had much wisdom given him at first, **1Ki 3:12**; and in which he improved; and though he turned to folly in his old age, he recovered from that, and gained more wisdom through his fall, and to which he here seems to have reference; for "Koheleth", which some render the "gatherer", because he gathered much wisdom, and much people to hear it; others render "gathered", that is, into the flock and fold again, the church of God, from which he had strayed;
See Gill on "Ec 1:1"; and having seen through the follies and vanities of life, and being recovered and restored, was a fitter person to teach and instruct others; see Ps 51:12;

he still taught the people knowledge; or "again", as the Targum; after his fall and recovery he was communicative of his knowledge; he did not hide his talent in the earth, nor in a napkin; but having freely received he freely gave, and kept back nothing from his people, the people of the house of Israel, as the Targum, that might be profitable to them; he taught them the knowledge of themselves, as fallen men, impure, impotent, and unrighteous; the knowledge of the creatures, and the vanity of them, of riches, honours, and pleasures; and of works of righteousness to save men; the knowledge of Christ the Wisdom of God, the antiquity of his person, his glories, excellencies, and beauties, as in the books of Proverbs and Canticles; the knowledge of God, his fear and worship, mind and will; and the knowledge of a future state, and of the general judgment, as in this book; and in proportion to his own knowledge so he taught: for thus the words with the preceding may be rendered, that "the more that the preacher was wise, the more he taught the people knowledge" {c}; he taught according to the abilities he had received, as preachers should; the more he grew in grace and knowledge, the more largely be shared with others; and this he did "daily", as Aben Ezra renders the words, constantly, continually, incessantly, in season and out of season, as faithful Gospel ministers do;

yea, he gave good heed; to what he heard and to what be read, to which the apostle's advice agrees, **1Ti 4:13**; or he caused others to hear, and give good heed to what is said, as Aben Ezra; he engaged their attention by his enlivening discourses; or, as Kimchi, he weighed things in his own mind, and in the balance of the sanctuary; and thoroughly considered and digested them before he delivered them to others;

and sought out; was very diligent in investigating truth, he searched into the mines of knowledge for it, the sacred writings, as one would for gold and silver, and as he himself directs, **Pr 2:4**;

[and] set in order many proverbs; three thousand of them, **1Ki 4:32**; particularly those which are in the book of that name, penned by him; he selected the most choice, pithy, and sententious sayings, of his own and others; and these he huddled not up, or threw them together in a disorderly and confused manner; but put them together in proper order and method, under proper heads, as well as in a correct style, that they might be more received, and more easily retained. The Targum is,

"he attended to the voice of the wise men, and searched the books of wisdom; and by a spirit of prophecy from the Lord composed books of wisdom, and very many proverbs of understanding."

{z} rtyw "praeterea", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Schmidt. {a} "Quod reliquum est", Piscator, Gejerus, Amama. {b} "Quamobrem potius", Junius & Tremeillius; "and this is a matter of excellency", Broughton, {c} Mercerus and Cocceius.

Ecclesiastes 12:10

Ver. 10. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words,.... Not mere words, fine and florid ones, the words which man's wisdom teacheth, an elegant style, or eloquent language; not but that it is proper for a preacher to seek out and use words suitable and apt to convey right ideas to the minds of men of what he says; but doctrines are rather here meant, "words of desire", "delight", and "pleasure" {d}, as the phrase may be rendered; even of God's good will and pleasure, so Alshech; for the same word is sometimes used of God in this book and elsewhere: see **Ec 3:1**; and so may take in the doctrine of God's everlasting love to his people, and his delight and pleasure in them; of his good will towards them in sending Christ to suffer and die for them, and save them; in pardoning their sins through his blood, in which he delights; in regenerating and calling them by his grace, and revealing the things of the Gospel to them, when he hides them from others, which is all of his own will and pleasure, and as it seems good in his sight: or words and doctrines, which are desirable, pleasing, and acceptable unto men; not that Solomon did, or preachers should, seek to please men, or seek to say things merely for the sake of pleasing men, for then they would not be the servants of Christ; nor are the doctrines of the Gospel pleasing to carnal men, but the reverse: they gnash their teeth at them, as Christ's hearers did at him; the preaching of a crucified Christ is foolishness, and the things of the Spirit of God are insipid things, to natural men; they are enemies to the Gospel: but to sensible sinners they are very delightful, such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation, by Christ, **1Ti 1:15**; for the worth of them, they are more desirable to them than gold and silver, and are more delightful to the ear than the best of music, and more acceptable to the taste than honey or the honeycomb, Ps 19:10;

and [that which was] written [was] upright; meaning what was written in this book, or in any other parts of Scripture, which the preacher sought out and inculcated; it was according to the mind and will of God, and to the rest of the sacred word; it was sincere, unmixed, and unadulterated with the doctrines and inventions of men; it showed that man had lost his uprightness, had none of himself, and where it was to be had, even in Christ; and was a means of making men sound, sincere, and upright at heart; and of directing them to walk uprightly, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the world;

[even] words of truth; which come from the God of truth, that cannot lie, as all Scripture does; of which Christ, who is the truth, is the sum and substance; and which are inspired by the Spirit of truth, and led into by him, and made

effectual to saving purposes; and which holds good of the whole Scripture, called the Scripture of truth, Da 10:1; and of the Gospel, which is the word of truth, and of every doctrine of it, Joh 17:17.

{d} Upx yrbd "verba complacentiae vel beneplaciti", Vatablus; "verba desiderii", Amama, Rambachius; "verba delectabilia", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Mercerus, Gejerus; so Broughton; "verba voluptatis", Cocceius.

Ecclesiastes 12:11

Ver. 11. The words of the wise [are] as goads,.... As the goad teacheth the ox; so the Targum. Not the words of the wise philosophers of that age, or of ages before, or since; but of the inspired penmen of the Scriptures, as Moses, David, Solomon, and of others since; and of all good men, whose doctrines are agreeably to them; these are like "goads" or "pricks", sharp pointed sticks or staves, with which men push and prick their cattle, when driving them from place to place, or ploughing with them: and of a similar use are the doctrines of the word, when attended with a divine efficacy; these are a means of pricking sinners to the heart; and of laying open their vileness and sinfulness to them; and of repentance and contrition; and of awakening them from a sleep in sin to a sense of their danger; and even of killing them, as to their own sense and apprehension of things, and, with respect to their hopes of life, by their own works; as the Philistines were slain by Shamgar with an ox goad, **Jud 3:31**; see **Ac 2:37**; and these are also of use to the saints, as goads, to stir them up, when slothful, to the discharge of duty; and to awaken them, when drowsy, out of their carnal security; and to correct them for their faults, by sharp reproofs and rebukes; as well as to excite them to go on to perfection, who are apt to sit still and lie down; and to direct them to walk straight on, without turning to the right hand or left;

and as nails fastened [by] the masters of assemblies; like these are the truths and doctrines of the word, when they have a place in the heart, and become the "ingrafted word" there; when they are "planted" {e} in the soul, as the word signifies; when they are fixed in the mind and memory, and dwell and abide there: and when as nails, driven into anything, fasten what they are drove into; so these are the means of fastening souls; of causing them to cleave to God and Christ; to the church, and his people, and to one another; and to the Gospel, and their profession of it; hence they are not like children, tossed to and fro, wavering and unstable: of all which "the masters of the assemblies" are the instruments; that is, ministers and pastors of churches. As there were assemblies for religious worship under the law, in which the prophets, priests, and Levites, assisted; so there are assemblies or churches under the Gospel dispensation, which are gathered and meet together for the service of God, and over these the ministers of the word preside; these are set over the churches in the Lord, and have the rule of them; though they are not to lord it over God's heritage, or have the dominion over their faith; but are helpers of their joy, and useful in the above things, through their ministry. Some choose to render "masters of collections", or "gatherings" {f}; and think it may respect their gathering truths out of the sacred writings, as the bee gathers honey out of the flowers; in allusion to those that gathered together the choice and pithy sentences and sayings of others, like the men of Hezekiah, Pr 25:1; or to undershepherds, gathering the sheep into the fold {g}, by the order of the principal one; who made use of goads, to drive away thieves or wild beasts; and nails, to preserve the sheepfold whole. And others think that not the words, but the of the assemblies themselves, are compared to "nails", and read them, "and the masters of the assemblies [are] as nails fastened" {h}; are well established, firm and sure; see Isa 22:23; and others take it to be no other than an epithet of the nails themselves, and render it, "as nails fixed, which are binders"; that is, great binding nails, which, being fixed in boards, bind, compact, and hold them together; to which the words of the wise may be compared, being the means of compacting and holding together the church of God, comparable to a sheepfold; hence mention is made of the shepherd in the next clause: or of fixing the attention of the minds of men unto them, and of retaining them in memory, and to which they speak of as first principles, and never swerve from them {i}; but, that not ministers, the instruments, but the principal and efficient cause, may have the glory, is added,

[which] are given from one Shepherd; not Zerubbabel, as Grotius; nor Moses, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Alshech; but Christ, the one Shepherd, set over the flock; and under whom the masters of assemblies, or pastors of churches, are, Eze 37:23; from whom they have their gifts and qualifications, their mission and commissions; and are given to the churches, as pastors and teachers, to feed them, **Eph 4:10**; and from whom they have their food, the Gospel and the doctrines of it, to feed the flocks with, assigned to their care, Joh 17:8; though this is to be understood not to the exclusion of God, the Father of Christ, by whom all Scripture is inspired; nor of the Spirit, by whom holy men of God spake as they were moved, **2Ti 3:16**.

{e} Myewjn "plantati", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Rambachius.

{f} twpoa yleb "auctores, vel dominos collectionum", Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus. {g} Vid. Lightfoot, vol. 2. p. 575. {h} "Veluti clavi. infixi sunt domini, vel magistri congregationum", Schmidt. {i} Vid. De Dieu & Cocceium in loc. & Vitringam de Synag. Vet. l. 1. par 2. c. 8. p. 377. & Hyde Not. in Peritzol. Itinera Mundi, p. 94.

Ecclesiastes 12:12

Ver. 12. And further, by these, my son, be admonished,.... Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, may be intended, for whose sake, more especially, this book might be written; though it may take in every hearer of this divine preacher, every disciple of this teacher, every subject of his kingdom, as well as every reader of this book, whom he thus addresses, and for whom he was affectionately concerned as a father for a son; that they might be enlightened with divine knowledge, warned of that which is evil, and admonished and advised to that which is good; "by these" words and writings of his own, and other wise men; and by these masters of assemblies, who, and their words, are from the one and chief Shepherd; to these they would do well to take heed, and to these only or chiefly. It may be rendered, "and what is the more excellent of these, he admonished" {k}; to observe what is mentioned in Ec 12:13, and lies in a few words, "Fear God", &c. and especially Jesus Christ, the "Alpha" and "Omega", the sum and substance of the whole Bible; of what had been written in Solomon's time, and has been since: he is the most excellent part of it; or that which concerns him, in his person, offices, and grace: or thus; "and what is above", or "more than these, beware of" {l}; do not trouble thyself with any other writings; these are sufficient, all that is useful and valuable is to be found in them; and as for others, if read, read them with care and caution, and only as serving to explain these, and to promote the same ends and designs, or otherwise to be rejected;

of making many books [there is] no end; many books, it seems, were written in Solomon's time; there was the same itch of writing as now, it may be; but what was written was not to be mentioned with the sacred writings, were comparatively useless and worthless. Or the sense is, should Solomon, or any other, write ever so many volumes, it would be quite needless; and there would be no end of writing, for these would not give satisfaction and contentment; and which yet was to be had in the word of God; and therefore that should be closely attended to: though this may be understood, not only of making or composing books, but of getting them, as Aben Ezra; of purchasing them, and so making them a man's own. A man may lay out his money, and fill his library with books, and be very little the better for them; what one writer affirms, another denies; what one seems to have proved clearly, another rises up and points out his errors and mistakes; and this occasions replies and rejoinders, so that there is no end of these things, and scarce any profit by them; which, without so much trouble, may be found in the writings of wise men, inspired by God, and in which we should rest contented;

and much study [is] a weariness of the flesh; the study of languages, and of each of the arts and sciences, and of various subjects in philosophy and divinity, particularly in writing books on any of these subjects; which study is as fatiguing to the body, and brings as much weariness on it, as any manual and mechanic operation; it dries up the moisture of the body, consumes the spirits, and gradually and insensibly impairs health, and brings on weakness, as well as weariness. Some render it, "much reading", as Jarchi, and so Mr. Broughton; and Aben Ezra observes, that the word in the Arabic language so signifies: the Arabic word "lahag" signifies to desire anything greedily, or to be greedily given and addicted to anything {m}; and so may denote such kind of reading here, or such a person who is "helluo", a glutton at books, as Cato is said to be. And now reading books with such eagerness, and with constancy, is very wearisome, and is to little advantage; whereas reading the Scripture cheers and refreshes the mind, and is profitable and edifying. Gussetius {n} interprets it of much speaking, long orations, which make weary.

{k} hmhm rtyw "potius inquam ex istis", Junius & Tremellius; "quod potissimum ex istis", Gejerus. {l} "Et amplius his, fili mi, cave", Mercerus. {m} Vid. Castell. Lexic. col. 1874. who gives an instance of the use of this word in, the following sentence; ghlw "he that reads with mouth, but his heart is not with it"; and so Kimchi, in Sepher Shotash, fol. 74. fol. 2. explains the word here, "learning without understanding". {n} Ebr. Comment. p. 431.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

Ver. 13. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter,.... Or "the end" {o} of it. The sum and substance of it, what it all tends to and issues in; even the whole of what is contained in this book, and in all offer divinely inspired writings of Solomon or others; of all that were now written, or before, or since: this the preacher calls upon himself, as well as his hearers, to attend unto. Or it may be rendered, "the end of the whole matter is heard" {p}; here ends this book; and you have heard the whole of what deserves regard, and it lies in these few words,

fear God, and keep his commandments: "the fear of God" includes the whole of internal religion, or powerful godliness; all the graces of the Spirit, and the exercise of them; reverence of God, love to him, faith in him, and in his Son Jesus Christ; hope of eternal life from him; humility of soul, patience and submission to his will, with every other grace; so the Heathens call religion "metum Deorum" {q}, the fear of God: and "keeping of the commandments", or obedience to the whole will of God, is the fruit, effect, and evidence of the former; and takes in all the commands of God, moral and positive, whether under the former or present dispensation; and an observance of them in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God;

for this [is] the whole [duty] of man; or, "this is the whole man" {r}; and makes a man a whole man, perfect, entire, and wanting nothing; whereas, without this, he is nothing, let him have ever so much of the wisdom, wealth, honour, and profits of this world. Or, "this is the whole of every man" {s}; either, as we supply it, the duty, work, and business of every man, of every son of Adam, be he what he will, high or low, rich or poor, of every age, sex, and condition; or this is the happiness of every man, or that leads to it; this is the whole of it; this is the "summum bonum", or chief happiness of men: Lactantius {t} says, the "summum bonum" of a man lies in religion only; it lies in this, and not in any outward thing, as is abundantly proved in this book: and this should be the concern of everyone, this being the chief end of man, and what, as Jarchi says, he is born unto; or, as the Targum, such should be the life of every man. The Masoretes begin this verse with a larger letter than usual, and repeat it at the end of the book, though not accentuated, to raise the attention of the reader {u}; that he may make a particular observation of what is said in it, as being of the greatest moment and importance.

{o} lkh rbd Pwo "finis verbi omnis", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus; "finis universi negotii", Tigurine version, so Vatablus. {p} emvn "auditus est", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Mercerus. {q} Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 35. v. 36. {r} Mdah lk hz "hoc (est) omnis homo", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus; "omnium hominum perfectio", Tigurine version; "hoc est totus homo", Cocceius; "this is all the man", Broughton. {s} "Hoc est omnium hominum", Piscator, Gejerus; "hoc est totum hominis", Junius & Tremellius. {t} De Fals. Sap. l. 3, c. 10. {u} Vid. Buxtorf. Tiberius, c. 14. p. 38.

Ecclesiastes 12:14

Ver. 14. For God shall bring every work into judgment,.... Not in this life, but in the day of the great judgment, as the Targum explains it; that is, whatever has been done by men, from the beginning of the world, or will be to the end; all being observed and taken notice of by the omniscient God, who has registered them in the book of his remembrance, and, being Judge, will be able to bring them all into account at that awful day: which is here given as a reason why men should fear God, and keep his commandments;

with every secret thing; that has been committed in secret by men, and is unknown to others, even every secret thought of the heart; see **1Co 4:5**; or, "with every secret" or "hidden man" {w}; whose works are hidden from men, and are not known to be what, they are, and who thought to hide themselves from, God; but these, with their works, shall be brought into open court in judgment;

whether [it be] good, or whether [it be] evil: it shall then be examined according to the rule of the word, and be judged, and declared to be what it truly is, good or evil; and so be either rewarded in a way of grace, or punished: or, "whether [the man, the hidden man, be] good or evil" {x}, so Alshech; all mankind, everyone, will he bring into judgment, whether he be good or evil. This is the last end of all things, and in which every man will be concerned. This shows, as well as many other things in this book. Solomon's belief of a future state and judgment; and that there is nothing in it to encourage the epicure and atheist: which being observed by the ancient Jews, they readily admitted it into the canon of Scripture.

{w} Mlen lk le "super omnem occultum, sc. hominem", Schmidt. {x} "Sive bonus fuerit, sive malus", Schmidt.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Song of Solomon 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO THE SONG OF SOLOMON

This book is entitled, in the Hebrew copies, "Shir Hashirim", the Song of

Songs. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions call it, "the Song"; and the title of it in the Syriac version, is,

"the Wisdom of Wisdoms of the same Solomon;"

that is, the same who wrote the two preceding books. It has always been received and esteemed by the ancient Jews as a valuable part of the sacred writings, calling it "the Holy of Holies" {a}; forbidding their children to read it, because of the sublimity and mysteriousness of it, until they were at years to understand it: nor was there ever any controversy among them about the authenticity of it; but all their writers {b}, ancient and more modern, agree that it was written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The ancient Christian fathers and councils have held it as a part of the holy Scriptures, and have continued it in the canon of them; and it has been received as canonical by Christians in all ages, except a very few, as Theodore of Mopsuest, condemned calling it in question by the second council at Constantinople, in 553; and Castalio, in later times, who for the same was censured and exiled by the senate at Geneva; and Mr. Whiston, in our age, whose objections to it I have attempted to answer, in my larger Commentary on this book, published in 1728, and since republished: and I am very sorry I am obliged to take notice of an objection to the antiquity of it, and to its being Solomon's, made by a learned {c} man, very lately; who observes, that the word David, from its first appearance in Ruth, where it is written dwd, without the "yod", continues to be so written through the books of Samuel, Kings, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; but appears with a "yod", dywd, in the books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Zechariah; wherefore he suggests, that if it was customary to write this word without a "yod" till the captivity, and with one after it; then he thinks a strong argument may be drawn from hence against the antiquity of the Canticles, and its being made by Solomon, since this name is written with a "yod" in **So 4:4**; the only place in it in which it is used: but in answer to this it must be said, that it is not fact that the word is invariably without a "yod" in the books mentioned, particularly the book of Kings: for the authors of the Masorah have observed, on **1Ki 3:14**, that it is five times written in that book full, as they call it, that is, with a "yod", dywd; three of the places I have traced out, **1Ki 3:14**; and have found it so written in all the printed copies I have seen; and so it is read by the eastern Jews, in Eze 37:24. This learned man is aware that it is so written, once in Hosea, and twice in Amos, books written two hundred years before the captivity; but then he observes, that in the two last places, in Bomberg's edition, it has a little circle (o) to mark it for an error, or a faulty word, though none over the word in Hosea: but it should be known, that that circle, in hundreds of places, is not used to point out

anything faulty in the copy; but is only a mark referring to the margin, and what is observed there; and be it that it does point out an error, or a faulty word, the same circle is over the word in Canticles, and consequently shows it to be faulty there, and to be corrected and read without the "yod", as it was originally without it there; which observation destroys the argument from it: and so it is read in that place in the Talmud {d} without it, and in the ancient book of Zohar {e}; and indeed it seems as if it was read without the "yod" in the copies seen by the authors of the Little Masorah; since in their note on **1Ki 3:14**; besides the five places in the Kings, where it is written full, or with the "yod", they say, it is so written throughout the Chronicles, the twelve minor prophets, and Ezra, which includes Nehemiah; but make no mention of Solomon's Song, which, one would think, they would have done, had it been so written there in the copies before them: so that, upon the whole, the argument, if it has any force in it, turns out for, and not against, the antiquity of Solomon's Song. This book of Canticles has plain marks of a divine original, and proofs of its being of divine inspiration: it was written by, one that was inspired of God, as appears by the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, written by him; the greatness of the matter contained in it, the dignity, sublimity, and majesty of its style, show it to be no human composure; the power and efficacy which it has had over the hearts of men, in reading it, and hearing it explained, is another evidence of its being the word of God, which is quick and powerful; the impartiality of it, the bride, who is introduced speaking in it, confessing and proclaiming her own failings and infirmities, is no inconsiderable proof of the same; to which may be added the agreement between this and other portions of Scripture, as particularly
Ps 45:1; and there seem to be many allusions and references to various passages of this book in the New Testament; see **Mt 9:13**, &c. **Joh 3:8** **Col 2:17**; compared with **So 1:3** **So 5:1**. In what time of Solomon's life this book was written is not agreed on: some of the Jewish writers say the book of Proverbs was written first, then the Song of Songs, and last of all Ecclesiastes; others, that the Song was written first, then Proverbs, and then Ecclesiastes {f}; though their chronologer {g} says they were all written in his old age, as indeed the last book seems to be; but the Song rather seems to have been written in the middle part of his life, when in the most flourishing circumstances as to body, mind, and estate. Dr. Lightfoot {h} is of opinion it might be written in the thirtieth year of his reign, about ten years before his death, after he had built his summer house in Lebanon, to which he supposes respect is had in **So 4:8**; and upon his bringing Pharaoh's daughter to the house prepared for her, **1Ki 9:24**; but be this at it may, it was not a celebration of the amours between Solomon and her, since the literal sense, in many places, would be monstrous and absurd; and besides it must be written twenty years at

least after that, if the house of the forest of Lebanon is referred to in the above places; nor does it set forth their amours, and the marriage between them, as typical of the inexpressible love and marriage union between Christ and his church; though there is a resemblance between natural and spiritual marriage, and the love of persons in such a relation to one another, and to which there may be an allusion in some passages. Nor is this book historical and prophetic, expressing either the state of the people of Israel, from the times of Abraham to Solomon, and so to the Messiah; in which way go many Jewish interpreters, as the Targum, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and others: nor is it to be considered as describing the state of the church: of God, whether legal, from the times of David and Solomon, and before, in and after the captivity, to the birth and death of Christ; or the Gospel church, in its beginning, progress, various changes, and consummation, as Brightman and Cotton nor as setting forth the several ages and periods of the Christian church, in agreement with the seven churches of Asia, as Cocceius, and those that follow him, Horchius, Hofman, and Heunischius; which latter, particularly, makes this distribution of them:

(1) The Ephesian church, **So 1:5**; from the ascension of Christ to heaven, A. C. 33, to 370. (2) The Smyrnaean church, **So 2:1**; from A. C. 371, to 707; (3) The church at Pergamos, **So 3:1**; from A. C. 708, to 1045. (4) The Thyatirian church, **So 4:1**, from A. C. 1046, to 1383. (5) The Sardian church, **So 5:2**, from A. C. 1384, to 1721. (6) The church at Philadelphia, **So 6:9**, from A. C. 1722, to 2059. (7) The Laodicean church, **So 8:1**, from A. C. 2060, and onwards.

But these senses are very arbitrary, uncertain, and precarious, and limit the several parts of it to certain periods; whereas it is applicable to believers in all ages of time. The whole is figurative and allegorical; expressing, in a variety of lively metaphors, the love, union, and communion, between Christ and his church; setting forth the several different frames, cases, and circumstances of believers, in this life; so that they can be in no case and condition spiritual whatever, but there is something in this Song suitable to them; and which serves much to recommend it, and shows the excellency of it; and that it justly claims the title it bears, the Song of Songs, the most excellent. M. Bossuet {i} is of opinion, that whereas the nuptial feast with the Hebrews was kept seven days, this Song is to be distributed into seven parts, a part to be sung, one each day, during the celebration: The first day, **So 1:1**. The second day, **So 2:7**. The third day, **So 3:1**. The fourth day, **So 5:2**. The fifth day, **So 6:10**. The sixth day, **So 7:12**. The seventh day, **So 8:4**. The thought is ingenious, but seems too fanciful, and without foundation.

{a} Misnah Yadaim, c. 3. s. 5. Shir Hashirim Rabba, fol. 2. 4. Abarbinel in 1. Reg. iii. 12. fol. 209. 2. {b} Zohar in Exod. fol. 59. 3. Shir Hashirim Rabba, fol. 2. 4. Targum, Jarchi, & Aben Ezra in loc. {c} Dr. Kennicott's Dissert. 1. p. 20, &c. {d} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 30. 1. {e} In Gen. fol. 114. 3. {f} Shir Hashirim Rabba, fol. 3. 3. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 28. 3. {g} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 15. so Shir Hashirim Rabba, fol. 3. 3. {h} See his Works, vol. 1. p. 76. {i} Vid. Lowth de Sacr. Poesi Heb. Praelect. 30. p. 393, 394. & Not. Michaelis in ibid. p. 156-159.

INTRODUCTION TO SONG OF SOLOMON 1

In this chapter, after the general title of the book, **So 1:1**, the church expresses her strong desires, and most ardent wishes, for some fresh discoveries of the love of Christ to her, and for communion with him; having tasted of his love, smelt a sweet savour in his grace, and enjoyed fellowship with him in his house, **So 1:2**. She observes her blackness and uncomeliness in herself; the trials and afflictions she met with from others; and her carelessness and negligence of her own affairs, **So 1:5**; and entreats her beloved to direct her where she might meet with him, feeding his flocks, and giving them rest, to which he returns a kind and gracious answer; gives her proper instructions where to find him, **So 1:7**; and commends her beauty; sets forth her amiableness and loveliness, by various metaphors; and makes promises of more grace and good things to her, **So 1:9**. And then she declares what a value she had for Christ, her beloved; and how precious he was unto her, like a bundle of myrrh, and a cluster of camphire, **So 1:12**. Christ again praises her beauty; and particularly takes notice of her eyes, and her modest look, **So 1:15**; and she returns the encomium back to him, and expresses her pleasure and satisfaction in the house he had built for her, and the furniture of it, **So 1:16**.

Ver. 1. The Song of songs, which [is] Solomon's. Wrote by Solomon, king of Israel, as the "amanuensis" of the Holy Ghost; and not by Hezekiah and his men, as the Jews say {k}: or, "concerning Solomon" {l}; Christ, of whom Solomon was a type; see **So 3:7**; of his person, excellencies, love to his church, care of her, and concern for her; and of the nearness and communion he admitted her to, and indulged her with the Jews have a saying {m}, that wherever the word Solomon is used in this song, the Holy One is meant, the holy God, or Messiah: it is called "the Song of songs", because the most excellent, as the Holy of holies, King of kings, &c. which, with the Hebrews, express a superlative; this being more excellent than the one hundred and five songs, written by Solomon, or than any human composure whatever; yea, preferable to all Scriptural songs, as to subject, manner of style, and copiousness of it.

{k} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. {l} hmlvl "de Solomone", Cocceius. {m} Maimon. Yesode Hatorah, c. 6. s. 12.

Song of Solomon 1:2

Ver. 2. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,.... That is, Solomon; Christ, the antitype of Solomon, the church's beloved; or it is a relative without an antecedent, which was only in her own mind, "let him"; him, whom her thoughts were so much employed about; her affections were so strongly after; and whose image was as it were before her, present to her mind: and "the kisses of his mouth", she desires, intend some fresh manifestations and discoveries of his love to her; by some precious word of promise from his mouth, applied to her; and by an open espousal of her, and the consummation of marriage with her. It may be rendered, "with one of the kisses of his mouth" {n}; kisses with the ancients were very rare, and used but once when persons were espoused, and as a token of that; and then they were reckoned as husband and wife {o}: on which account, it may be, it is here desired; since it was after this we hear of the spouse being brought into the nuptial chamber, and of the keeping of the nuptial feast, So 1:4;

for thy love [is] better than wine; or "loves" {p}; which may denote the abundance of it; the many blessings of grace which flow from it; and the various ways in which it is expressed; as well as the high esteem the church had of it. This is said to be "better than wine"; for the antiquity of it, it being from everlasting; and for the purity of it, being free from all dregs of dissimulation and deceit on the part of Christ, and from all merit, motives, and conditions, on the part of the church; for its plenty, being shed plenteously in the hearts of believers, and who may drink abundantly of it; and for its freeness and cheapness, being to be had without money and without price; and it is preferable to wine for the effects of it; which not only revives and cheers heavy hearts, but quickens dead sinners, and comforts distressed saints; and of which they may drink plentifully, without hurt, yea, to great advantage.

{n} whyp twqyvnm "uno tantum, vel altero de osculis oris sui", Michaelis; so Gussetius, p. 446. {o} Salmuth. in Pancirol. Memorab. Rer. par. 1. tit. 46. p. 215. {p} Kydd "amores tui", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Song of Solomon 1:3

Ver. 3. Because of the savour of thy good ointments,.... It was usual for lovers to anoint themselves, their hair, garments, &c. to commend themselves to each other; and it was common to commend each other's ointments, and the grateful smell of them {q} none being like them, or so agreeable as theirs: by these ointments may be meant the grace of Christ, the fulness of it, the oil of gladness with which he is anointed above his fellows, and without measure; and which so greatly recommends him to his church and people, Ps 45:7;

thy name [is as] ointment poured forth; which emits the greater odour for its being poured forth out of the box. The very names of lovers are dear to one another, sweeter than nectar itself {r}; the very mention of them gives an inexpressible pleasure. This may respect not merely the fame of Christ spread abroad in the world through the ministry of the word; nor the Gospel only, which is his name, **Ac 9:15**; and is like a box of ointment broke open, which diffuses the savour of his knowledge everywhere; but some precious name of his, as Immanuel, God with us; Jesus, a Saviour; but more particularly his name Messiah, which signifies anointed, the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King of his church;

therefore do the virgins love thee: for the preciousness of his person, the fulness of grace in him, and the truths of his Gospel: and which love shows itself in a desire of his presence, and communion with him; in a regard to his word and worship, to his truths and ordinances; and to his people, to conversation and communion with them. By these virgins are meant either congregational churches that strictly adhere to Christ, and to his pure worship; or particular believers, for their inviolate attachment to him; for the singleness and sincerity of their love to him; for their uncorruptness in the doctrine of faith; for the truth and spirituality of their worship; for the purity of their lives and conversations; for their beauty and comeliness through Christ; for their colourful and costly attire, being clothed with his righteousness; and for their modest behaviour, having the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.

{q} "Nam omuium unguentum odos prae tua nautea est", Plauti Curculio, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 5. {r} "Nomen nectari dulcius beato", Martial. l. 9. Epigr. 9.

Song of Solomon 1:4

Ver. 4. Draw me,.... With the cords of love, for what draw lovers to each other more strongly? under the influence of that they cannot bear to be without each other's company. Aben Ezra takes these words to be spoken by the virgins, who everyone of them said this, promising upon it to follow after the drawer; but they are rather the request of the church, desirous of nearer and more intimate communion with Christ; for this is not to be understood of drawing at first conversion, as the fruit of love, and under the influence of grace, Jer 31:3; but of being brought nearer to Christ, and to enjoy more of him;

we will run after thee; the church and the virgins, she and her companions, or particular believers; everyone of them in their respective stations would act with more rigour upon such drawings; would run in a way of duty, follow Christ, and walk in his steps; and as they had him for an example, and according to his word, and in the ways of his commandments: or "that we may run after thee" {s}; intimating that there is no running without drawing; no following Christ, at least no running after him with alacrity and cheerfulness, without being drawn by his love, and influenced by his grace;

the King hath brought me into his chambers: the blessing she sought after, and was so solicitous for in the preceding verses; namely, to have the marriage consummated, to be owned by Christ as his spouse and bride, by taking her home, and introducing her into the nuptial chamber; by putting her into the enjoyment of himself, and the possession of his substance: and this being done by him as King of saints, yea, of the world, showed great condescension on his part, and great honour bestowed on her; since by this act, as he was King, she was declared queen!

we will be glad and rejoice in thee: she and her bridesmaids, the virgins that attended her; that is, "when he should introduce" her into his chambers, as some {t} render the words; then they should express their joy and gladness on that occasion; and that in the greatness, glory, and fitness of his person; in the fulness of grace in him; in the blessings of grace from him; in what he has done for, and is to his church and people; in the offices he bears, and in the relations he stands in to them; and particularly that of a husband, now declared;

we will remember thy love more than wine: which, upon the introduction of the bride to the bridegroom, might be plentifully drank; of the preferableness of Christ's love to wine, See Gill on "So 1:2"; it may design more particularly the love of Christ, expressed at this time of solemnizing the marriage between him and his church in an open manner, **Ho 2:19**; and which would never be forgotten: Christ's love is remembered when thought of and meditated upon; when faith is exercised on it, and the desires of the soul are drawn after it, and the affections set upon it; and when it is often spoken of to others, being uppermost in the mind; saints under the Gospel dispensation have an ordinance for this purpose, to, commemorate the love of Christ;

the upright love thee; or "uprightnesses" {u}; men of upright hearts and conversations, who have right spirits renewed in them; or Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile; who have the truth of grace in them, walk uprightly according to the rule of God's word, and the Gospel of Christ; and do all they do sincerely, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God; such love Christ superlatively, sincerely, fervently, and constantly; and "love [him] rightly", or "most uprightly", as some {w} render the phrase.

{s} huwrn "ut carramus", so some in Marekius. {t} "Quum introduxerit me", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, so Schmidt. {u} Myrvym euyuthv, Sept. "rectitudines", Montanus, Vatablus, Marekius, Michaeilis, so some in Vatablus. {w} Junius & Tremellius; so Cocceius and Jarchi.

Song of Solomon 1:5

Ver. 5. I [am] black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,.... The church having obtained of Christ, what she wanted, turns to the daughters of Jerusalem, the same perhaps with the virgins her companions; they seem to be young converts, it may be not yet members of the visible church, but had a great respect for the church, and she for them; and who, though they had but a small knowledge of Christ her beloved, yet were desirous of knowing more of him, and seeking him with her; see **So 3:9**; to these she gives this character of herself, that she was "black" in herself {x}, through original sin and actual transgression; in her own eyes, through indwelling sin, and many infirmities, spots, and blemishes in life; and in the eyes of the world, through afflictions, persecutions, and reproaches, she was attended with, and so with them the offscouring of all things: "but comely" in the eyes of Christ, called by him his "fair one", the "fairest among women", and even "all fair", **So 1:8**; through his comeliness put upon her, the imputation of his righteousness to her; through the beauties of holiness upon her; through, the sanctifying influences of his Spirit; and, being in a church state, walking in Gospel order, attending to the commands and ordinances of Christ; and so beautiful as Tirzah, and comely as

Jerusalem, **So 6:4**; and upon all accounts "desirable" {y} to Christ, and to his people, as the word may be rendered;

as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon: each of which are thought by some to refer to both parts of her character; and suppose that the tents of Kedar, though they might look poor on the outside, were full of wealth and riches within; and Solomon's curtains, or hangings, might have an outward covering not so rich and beautiful as they were on the inside; but rather the blackness of the church is designed by the one, and her comeliness by the other. With respect to her blackness, she compares herself to the tents of Kedar, to the inhabitants of those tents, who were of a black or swarthy complexion; Kedar signifies the name of a man whose posterity these were, that dwelt in tents, even of Kedar the second son of Ishmael, and who inhabited some part of Arabia; and, their employment being to feed cattle, moved from place to place for the sake of pasturage, and so dwelt in tents, which they could easily remove, and hence were called Scenites; and the tents they dwelt in being made of hair cloth, and continually exposed to the sun and rain, were very black, and yet a number of them made a fine appearance, as Dr. Shaw relates {z}; though black, yet were beautiful to behold; he says,

"the Bedouin Arabs at this day live in tents called "hhymes", from the shelter which they afford the inhabitants; and "beet el shaar", that is, "houses of hair", from the materials or webs of goats' hair whereof they were made; and are such hair cloth as our coal sacks are made of; the colour of them is beautifully alluded to, **So 1:5**; for nothing certainly can afford (says he) a more delightful prospect than a large extensive plain, whether in its verdure, or even scorched up by the sunbeams, than, these movable habitations pitched in circles upon them; of which (he says) he has seen from three to three hundred."

And for her comeliness the church compares herself either to the curtains of Solomon, about his bed, or to the rich hangings of tapestry in the several apartments of his palace, which no doubt were very costly and magnificent.

{x} "Nigra per naturam, formosa per gratiam", Aug. de Tempore, serm. 201. p. 354. tom. 10. "Fusca per culpam, decora per gratiam", Ambros. in Psal. cxviii. octon. 2. col. 881. tom. 2. {y} hwan "optabilis", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus; so Aben Ezra. {z} Travels, p. 220. edit. 2. See Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. Solin. Polyhist. c. 46.

Song of Solomon 1:6

Ver. 6. Look not upon me,.... Meaning not with scorn and disdain because of her meanness; nor as prying into her infirmities to expose her; nor with joy at her trials and afflictions; neither of these can be supposed in the daughters of Jerusalem addressed by her: but rather, not look on her as amazed at her sufferings, as though some strange thing had befallen her; not at her blackness only, on one account or another, lest they should be stumbled; but at her beauty also;

because I [am] black; or "blackish" somewhat black {a}, but not so black as might be thought, or as she was represented: the radicals of the word being doubled, some understand it as diminishing; but rather it increases the signification; see Ps 14:2; and so it may be rendered "very black" {b}, exceeding black; and this she repeats for the sake of an opportunity of giving the reason of it, as follows;

because the sun hath looked upon me; and had burnt her, and made her black; which effect the sun has on persons in some countries, and especially on such who are much abroad in the fields, and employed in rural services {c}; as she was, being a keeper of vineyards, as in this verse, and of flocks of sheep, as in the following. This may be understood of the sun of persecution that had beat upon her, and had left such impressions on her, and had made her in this hue, and which she bore patiently; nor was she ashamed of it; nor should she be upbraided with it, nor slighted on account of it, see Mt 13:6;

my mother's children were angry with me; by whom may be meant carnal professors, members of the same society, externally children of the same mother, pretend to godliness, but are enemies to it: these were "angry" with the church for holding and defending the pure doctrines of the Gospel; for keeping the ordinances as they were delivered; and for faithful reproofs and admonitions to them and others, for their disagreeable walk: and these grieved the church, and made her go mourning, and in black; and more blackened her character and reputation than anything else whatever: though it may be understood of any carnal men, who descend from mother Eve, or spring from mother earth, angry with the church and her members preciseness in religion; and particularly violent persecutors of her, who yet would be thought to be religious, may be intended;

they made me the keeper of the vineyards; this is another thing that added to her blackness, lying abroad in the fields to keep the "vineyards" of others, by which may be meant false churches, as true ones are sometimes signified by them; and her compliance with their corrupt worship and ordinances, which was not voluntary, but forced; they made me, obliged her, and this increased her blackness; as also what follows;

[but] mine own vineyard have I not kept; which made her blacker still; her church state, or the spiritual affairs of her own, her duty and business incumbent on her {d}, were sadly neglected by her: and this sin of hers she does not pretend to extenuate by the usage of her mother's children; but ingenuously confesses the fault was her own, to neglect her own vineyard and keep others, which was greatly prejudicial to her, and was resented by Christ; upon which it seems he departed from her, since she was at a loss to know where he was, as appears from the following words. With the Romans, neglect of fields, trees, and vineyards, came under the notice of the censors, and was not to go unpunished {e}.

{a} trxrxv "paululum denigrata", Pagninus, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; so Ainsworth and Aben Ezra. {b} "Valde fusca", Bochart; "prorsus vel valde, et teta nigra", Marckius, Michaelis. {c} "Perusta solibus pernicis uxor", Horat. Epod. Ode 2. v. 41, 42.
aliokauston Theocrit. Idyll. 10. v. 27. {d} So Horace calls his own works "Vineta", Epist. l. 2. Ep. 1. v. 220. {e} A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 4. c. 12.

Song of Solomon 1:7

Ver. 7. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth,.... With all her heart, cordially and sincerely; for, notwithstanding her sinful compliance with others, and neglect of her own affairs, she had not lost her love to Christ; and, being sensible of her sin and folly, whereby she was deprived of his company, and communion with him, applies to him to guide, direct, and restore her wandering soul; and particularly inform her

where, says she,

thou feedest; that is his flock, like a shepherd: for this phrase supposes him to be a shepherd, as he is, of God's choosing, appointing, and setting up, the chief, the good, the great, and only Shepherd of the sheep; and that he has a flock to feed, which is but one, and a little one, is his property, given him by God, purchased by his blood, called a flock of slaughter, and yet a beautiful one, he has undertook to feed; and feeding it includes the whole business of a shepherd, in leading the sheep into pastures, protecting them from all enemies, restoring them when wandering, healing their diseases, watching over them in the night seasons, and making all necessary provisions for them. Or, "tell me how thou feedest" {f}; the manner of it, and with what; which he does by his ministers, word, and ordinances; with himself, the bread of life; with the doctrines and promises of the Gospel, and with the discoveries of his love;

where thou makest [thy flocks] to rest at noon, either at the noon of temptation, when Satan's fiery darts fly thick and fast; when Christ is a shadow and shelter in his person, grace, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, Isa 25:4; or the noon of affliction, when he makes their bed in it, and gives them rest from adversity; or the noon of persecution, when Christ leads his flocks to cooling shades, and gives them rest in himself, when troubled by others: the allusion, is to shepherds, in hot countries, leading their flocks to some shady place, where they may be sheltered from the scorching heat of the sun; which, as Virgil says {g}, was at the fourth hour, or ten o'clock, two hours before noon; we read of probatia meshmbriazonta {h}, sheep nooning themselves, or lying down at noon, under a shade, by a fountain, asleep;

for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? not real associates with Christ, that keep company with him, and are attached to his word and ordinances; but false friends, hypocrites and heretics {i}, rivals with him, who set up schemes of worship and doctrine in opposition to his; such as Papists, Socinians, &c. now such false teachers have had their flocks in all ages, such as have followed them, and have formed separate societies; and therefore the church, sensible of their craftiness, and her own weakness, and liableness to go astray, desires she might not be under, and left to such a temptation, as to apostatize from Christ, and join to such persons and their flocks, or seem to do so: or, "be as one that covereth herself", or "is covered" {k}; as a harlot; so Tamar,
Ge 38:14; or as a widow in mourning; she chose not to be, or to be thought to be, either as one that left her husband, an unchaste woman; or had lost her husband, or as if she had none, when neither was the case: or, "as one that spreads the tent" {l}; by the flocks of such; as if in communion with them, and joining with them in feeding their flocks; and therefore desires she might speedily know where Christ was, and go to him, that such an aspersion or suspicion might at once be wiped from her.

{f} hert hbya "quomodo pascas?" Tigurine version; so the Syriac version and Jarchi; see Ainsworth. {g} "Inde, ubi quarta sitim coeli collegetit hora", Virgil.

Georgic. l. 3. v. 327. {h} Platonis Phaedrus, p. 1230. {i} So Stockius, p. 302. {k} hyjek "quasi operiens se", Piscator; "ut obnubens", Cocceius; "sicut obvelans se", Marckius; "velut operta", Michaelis. {l} So Junius & Tremellius.

Song of Solomon 1:8

Ver. 8. If thou know not,.... Or, "seeing thou knowest not" {m}; the saints in this imperfect state know but in part, are ignorant of many things, and in some measure of themselves; for though they know much of the sinfulness and deceitfulness of their hearts, yet they know not all; and of their imperfection and weakness, yet not the whole of it; and some render the words, "if thou know not to thee", or, "for thyself", as Ainsworth; or "know [not thyself]" {n}, as others; hence Ambrose {o} observes, that "nosce teipsum" was not originally from the Pythian oracle; Solomon had it before that, and he from Moses, **De 4:9**; Saints have not a perfect knowledge of Christ and his truths, and are sometimes at a loss to know where he is, his word is purely preached, and his ordinances faithfully administered;

O thou fairest among women; these are not the words of the daughters of Jerusalem, as some think, who were not capable of giving her the following advice and directions; but of Christ himself, to whom the church applied for it; who, though black in her own eyes, and in the eyes of others, yet was fair, surpassingly fair, fairer than all others in his eye, even notwithstanding her late sinfulness and negligence; which shows the invariableness of his love; who directs her as follows;

go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock; not "from the footsteps" {p}; as if it was an exhortation to depart from false teachers, their doctrine and worship, and the abettors of them, she was tempted to turn aside to; but the "footsteps" are the rule and mark by which she was to go, and on which she was to keep her eye, and steer her course by, in seeking after Christ: for by "the flock" is meant the flock of Christ; and by the "footsteps" of it the ways and ordinances in which saints walk in obedience to Christ; and who are to be followed so far as they follow him; their steps are to be trod in; and this is the readiest and most likely way to find Christ, even where saints meet together, the word is preached, and ordinances administered;

and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents; the faithful ministers of the word, who are Christ's undershepherds, have their mission and commission from

him, and are qualified by him to feed his flocks, and do feed them by the pure administration of the word and ordinances; and by the tents are meant the places of public worship, where they usually preach the Gospel, and administer ordinances. The allusion is to the tents of shepherds pitched for the convenience of feeding their flocks; and "by" or "near" {q} these the church is directed to "feed [her] kids", young converts weak in the faith; men of "little faith", as Aben Ezra interprets it; called "kids" or young goats, lascivious {r}, and of an ill smell; because of sin in them, of an ill smell to themselves and others; and of whom the world have an ill opinion; and such on all accounts need encouragement from the church and ministers. It was common in the eastern countries, as Philo says {s} of the Arabs, not for men only to keep flocks, but women also, and young virgins; and not the common people only, but nobles; of women keeping flocks see
Ge 29:9; This verse and **So 1:7** show this song to be a pastoral; since the bridegroom and bride, the principal persons in it, are represented in it as a shepherd and shepherdess.

{m} Ma "quandoquidem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {n} So the Septuagint, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions. {o} Hexaemeron. l. 6. c. 6. & in Psal. cxviii. octon. 2. p. 883. {p} So Junius & Tremellius. {q} "Juxta", V. L. Piscator, Michaelis; apud, Mercerus, Cocceius. {r} "Hoedi petulci", Virgil. Georgic. l. 4. v. 10. "Lasciva capella", Bucol. Eclog. 2. v. 64. Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode 15. v. 12. {s} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 610. Vid. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 2. c. 11. s. 2.

Song of Solomon 1:9

Ver. 9. I have compared thee, O my love,.... The church having taken the direction of Christ, had now found him, and was with him; and when for her encouragement and comfort he greets her as his love, an appellation very usual among lovers; and in the chastest sense between husband and wife; the church was Christ's love, being both the object and subject of it; to whom he had showed love, and whose love was shed abroad in her heart; or "my friend" {t}, another name used among lovers; there is a mutual friendship between Christ and his people; they are Christ's friends, and he is theirs, **So 5:1**. The Septuagint render it "my neighbour", whom Christ loves as himself; and they dwell near each other; he dwells in them, and they in him, **Joh 6:56**; and here are compared by him to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots; or "I have likened thee", or reckoned thee like {u}; formed such an image of thee in my mind, with regard to some peculiar excellencies in her which agreed therewith: or to "my mare" {w}, as some translate the word, which ran in one of his chariots, called Pharaoh's chariot; because perhaps it was made a present of to him by Pharaoh king of Egypt, his father in law, for which he had a particular regard, as Alexander for his Bucephalus; nor is such a comparison of a woman a disagreeable one, since, as Marckius observes, many women have had their names from the horse, because of some celebrated excellency in them {x}; and Theocritus {y} compares Queen Helena to a Thessalian horse in a chariot; and it is thought he took the hint from this song, as admiring it; so, by others {z}, persons are compared to mares for their beautiful form. Christ's church and people be compared to "the horse" for their strength, majesty, and comeliness; they are strong in Christ, and in his grace, and of an undaunted courage in bearing hardships, reproaches, and persecutions for his sake, and in fighting the Lord's battles; and are stately and majestic, especially a company of them in Gospel order, **So 6:4**; and are very comely and beautiful in their trappings, clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and the graces of his Spirit; and to a "company" of them, a collection of goodly ones, as Egyptian ones, reckoned the best; and those in Pharaoh's chariot best of all; choice, costly, well fed, and well taken care of; and not wild and loose, but coupled and joined together in a chariot, all drawing one way. Christ's church and people are a choice and select company, distinguished from others by the grace of God; cost a great price, the blood of Christ; are well fed with the finest of the wheat; and are under the care both of angels and Gospel ministers; and look very beautiful as under the yoke of Christ, and joined together in Gospel bonds, being of the same faith and judgment; drawing one way, striving together for the faith of the Gospel, and endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

{t} ytyer "amica mea", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Michaelis. {u} Kytymd "similem te judico", Tigurine version. {w} ytool th ippw mou, Sept. "equae meae", Pagninus, Montanus, Gussetius, p. 551. so Aben Ezra, Syriac and Arabic versions; "equabus", Piscator. {x} As Hippo, Hippe, Hippia, Hippodomia, Hippothoe, Hipponoe, Mercippe, Alcippe, Archippe. {y} Idyll. 18. v. 29. {z} ippov egw kalh, Theognis Sententiae, v. 257. h d'ippou-eido
aristh, Phocylides. So by Plato in Hippias Major, p. 1250. & Horat. Carmin. l. 3. Ode 11. v. 9.

Song of Solomon 1:10

Ver. 10. Thy cheeks are comely with rows [of jewels],.... Or "beautiful as turtledoves", as the Septuagint; or it may be rendered "with turtles", since the word "jewels" is not in the text; not with images of turtles on the bridles of the horses before mentioned, as Aben Ezra; but rather some ornaments of women having such images on them may be meant, called "turtles", or "turturellas"; they seem to me to be the same with the earrings, which being fastened to a thin plate of gold or silver, which went across the forehead, or to a ribbon bound on it, as Aben Ezra on Ge 24:22; observes, hung down by the ears in rows on both sides of the cheeks, and made but one ornament; as they did when another jewel from the same plate or ribbon hung down from the forehead to the nose, called a nose jewel, Eze 16:12; {a}; and such an ornament, consisting of these several parts, Abraham's servant is said to put upon the face or cheeks of Rebekah, Ge 24:47; and these may respect the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, with which the church is ornamented; and are many and various, and are orderly and regularly disposed, and make very comely and lovely, and may be further described in the next clause;

thy neck with chains [of gold]; the word "gold" not being in the text, the chains may be understood, as they commonly are by the Jewish writers, of precious stones; as pearls bored and strung, which make a necklace; so Stockius {b} interprets it of an ornament of pearls and precious stones, orderly disposed and put about the neck, in use with great personages; so the eldest daughter of Priamus had, "collo monile baccatum" {c}, a pearl necklace, which Aeneas made a present of to Dido; such was the chain of gold, beset with amber, presented to Penelope by her suitors, which shone like the sun {d}. The church has her golden chain, or pearl necklace; which are either the graces of the Spirit, so linked together, that where there is one there are all; and which consists of those ten links, or pearls, faith, hope, love, repentance, humility, patience, self-denial, contentment in every state, spiritual knowledge, longsuffering, or forbearance; sincerity goes through them all. Or else the spiritual blessings of the covenant of grace, with which the church and all the saints are blessed in Christ at once, and with one and all; and which golden chain of salvation, one link of which cannot be broken, is excellently described by the apostle in **Ro 8:30**.

{a} Vid. Hieronym. in ibid. {b} Clavis Ling. S. p. 387. {c} Virgil. Aeneid. 1. v. 650. {d} Homer. Odyss. 18. v. 295.

Song of Solomon 1:11

Ver. 11. We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver. Christ here in his own name, and in the name of the other two divine Persons, promises to the church a greater glory than as yet she had enjoyed; and seems to have respect to the Gospel dispensation; for by "golden borders" studded with "silver" may be meant the ordinances of the Gospel, preferable to those under the law; and therefore said to be of "gold [and] silver", for their glory, splendour, and durableness: or else the doctrines of the Gospel, being of more worth than thousands of gold and silver; and being called "borders", or rather "rows" {e}, may denote their orderly disposition and connection, their harmony and agreement with and dependence on each other: and the Gospel is full of silver "specks" or "studs" of exceeding great and precious promises; a variety of them useful and pleasant; a greater measure of the grace of the Spirit may be here promised: or the "borders" may intend the groundwork of the church's faith and hope, the justifying righteousness of Christ, more clearly revealed; and the "studs of silver" the curious work of sanctification, more enlarged and increased; and so take in both Christ's righteousness imputed to her, and his grace implanted in her; but perhaps these phrases may be best of all understood of the New Jerusalem state, and of the ultimate glory of the saints in heaven, sometimes set forth by such similes, Isa 54:11. Both grace and glory are given by Christ, and in which all the three divine Persons are concerned; for not angels, nor the daughters of Jerusalem, are here the speakers, to whom such things promised cannot agree; nor God, speaking after the manner of men, and for honour's sake, is designed: but the trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, are meant; the ordinances are of their institution, and administered in their name, Mt 28:19; they have all a concern it, the Gospel and the doctrines of it, which is called the Gospel of God, and the Gospel, of Christ, and the ministering of the Spirit; the grace of God, in regeneration and conversion, is sometimes ascribed to one and sometimes to another; and an increase of it in the heart is wished for from all three, **Re 1:4**; and they have a hand in all the glory the saints shall enjoy hereafter: the Father has prepared the kingdom from the foundation of the world; the Son has made way for it by his obedience, sufferings, and death; and the Spirit is the earnest of it, makes meet for it, and introduces into it.

{e} yrwt "ordines", Marckius, Michaelis.

Song of Solomon 1:12

Ver. 12. While the King [sitteth] at his table,.... These are the words of the church, relating what influence the presence of Christ, her Lord and King, had upon the exercise of her graces, while he was keeping the nuptial feast, on account of his marriage with her. He was anointed King of saints from eternity, before his incarnation, when he was rejoicing before God his Father, as if at a feast; and while he was thus distant, the faith, hope, desire, and expectation of the saints, were exercised on him, as their Lord and King, that was to come: when he did come, he came as a King, as was foretold of him, though his kingdom was not of this world; and while he was here, the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven was preached, and emitted a sweet savour in Judea: and when he went up to heaven, after his resurrection, he was declared Lord and Christ, and sat down at the right hand of God, "in his circuit" {f}, or at his round table; alluding to such the ancients used, and great personages fed on, peculiar to themselves {g}; being encircled by angels and glorified saints: and in the mean while, before his second coming as King, when he will appear as such in a more glorious manner, he sits down at his table, in the ordinance of the supper, feasting with, entertaining, and welcoming his church and people. When as follows, she says,

my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof: or "nard", of which there are many sorts; but that which grows in spikes is reckoned the best, and from thence is called "spikenard": it was a chief ingredient in ointments, as Pliny says {h}; see Joh 12:3; and was much used at festivals, to anoint guests with; and with which their head and hair being anointed, gave a fragrant smell, and therefore used to make them acceptable {i}: in Syria, at royal banquets, as this here was, it was usual to go round the guests, to sprinkle them with Babylonian ointment {k}. This may have respect to the grace of the Spirit in the church, comparable to the most excellent ointment; and which grace being in exercise in her, both before and after the incarnation of Christ, and since his ascension to heaven, and while he grants his presence in Gospel ordinances, is very delightful and acceptable to Christ; or this spikenard, according to some {l}, may be meant of Christ himself, just as he is said to be "a bundle of myrrh" in **So 1:13**, and "a cluster of camphire", in **So 1:14**; and as ointments were used at feasts, and the church was at one with Christ, and as he was both master and feast, so he was the ointment of spikenard to her; and it is as if she should say, my beloved is at table with me; he is my food, and he is my spikenard {m} I need no other; he is instead of spikenard, myrrh, cypress, or any unguents made of these: his person is exceeding precious; his graces, of ointments, have a delightful savour in them; his sacrifice is of a sweet odour; his garments of righteousness and salvation smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; he is all in all.

{f} wbomb "in circuitu suo", Montanus, Piscator, Michaelis. {g} Vid. Cuperi Observ. l. 1. c. 2. p. 13. {h} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 12. {i} "Illius puro destillant tempora nardo", Tibullus, l. 2. Eleg. 2. v. 7. & 1. 3. Eleg. 7. v. 31. "Madidas nardo comas", Martial. l. 3. Ep. 56. "tinge caput nardi folio", ibid. "Assyriaque nardo potemus uncti", Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 11. v. 16, 17. Vid. Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 3. {k} Athenaei Deipnosoph. l. 15. c. 13. p. 692. {l} Theodoret, Sanctius, and Marckius. {m} "Tu mihi stacte, tu cinnamomium", &c. Planti Curculio, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 6.

Song of Solomon 1:13

Ver. 13. A bundle of myrrh [is] my well beloved unto me,.... These are the words of the church continued; expressing her great delight in Christ, and her strong love and affection for him, and therefore calls him "my well beloved"; which is expressive both of the greatness of Christ's love to her, and of the strength of her affection to him, as well as of her faith of interest in him; hence she says, he was as "a bundle of myrrh" to her. Some think {n} sweet marjoram is meant, or an herb of a sweet smell, very much like it, called "marum"; but myrrh is commonly understood; and not twigs or branches of it but sprigs, or the flowers of it, bound up as a nosegay, and carried in the bosom; or better, liquid myrrh, or "stacte", as the Septuagint render it, put in a bag {o} or bottle, as the word is rendered, Job 14:7; the allusion being to persons that carry smelling bottles in their bosoms, for refreshment or for pleasure. Now what these were to such, that, and much more, is Christ to his church; like sweet smelling myrrh, exceeding delightful and reviving, and make him very acceptable; his very garments smell of myrrh: and "a bundle" of this, or a bag of it, denotes the abundance of the odours of divine grace in Christ, who is full of it, which he communicates in great plenty: and now Christ is all this, not to any and everyone; but to his church and people, to whom alone he is precious, "my beloved is unto me"; which expresses not only the strength of her affection to Christ, and the value she had for him, and the delight she had in him; but the particular application of him to her own soul by faith;

he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts; "it" or "he"; the bundle of myrrh, or Christ, which comes to the same sense: by her "breasts" are meant her heart, where Christ dwells by faith, which is the best room the church has, and where she desires Christ might lodge; so Alshech explains it of being in her heart: and the time in which she would have him continue here is "all night"; meaning the night of affliction, temptation, &c. or rather the whole time of this life, until the everlasting day breaks; and so it is a desire of Christ's presence with her, and of her having communion with him, as long as she lived in the world; and between her breasts, and in her bosom she desires he might be for an ornament to her, like sweet flowers, and for her delight and pleasure, refreshment and comfort; and that he might be always in her sight, and never be forgotten by her.

{n} Vid. Fortunat. Schace. Eleochrism. Sacr. I. 1, c. 51. p. 256, 257. {o} rwru "folliculus", Cocceius; "sacculum", Marckius; "fasciculus, vel sacculus", Michaelis.

Song of Solomon 1:14

Ver. 14. My beloved [is] unto me [as] a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi. Engedi was a place near Jericho, and famous for palm trees, as that was, hence called Hazazontamar, 2Ch 20:2. Pliny {o} sneaking of this place, which he calls Engadda, says, it is second to Jerusalem for fertility and groves of palm trees; and Josephus {p} observes, that there grew the best palm trees and opobalsam; wherefore Aben Ezra, and other Jewish writers, think that dates, the fruit of the palm trees, which grow in clusters, are here meant: and because the balsam tree also, grew in this place, as observed before from Josephus, and grew in the manner of vines, as others {q} assert; and this being said to, be in vineyards, some have thought that that might be in, tended; but what is valuable in it is a gum or tear, that drops from it, and not fruit in clusters, which it bears not: nor can it be supposed that what we call "camphire" should be meant, which grows not in clusters, and was unknown to the ancients; nor the "cyperus", or "cypirus", as Cocceius and others. The Septuagint version readers it "cyprus": and there was a tree of this name which grew in Askelon in Judea, which, according to Pliny {r}, bore a white flower of a sweet smell; and which, in Italy, was called "ligustrum", the privet tree, commended by the poets {s} for its peculiar whiteness; and the cypress tree is reckoned by Josephus {t} among the odoriferous trees which grew about Jericho, near to which Engedi was. The word here used is to be found in the Misnah {u}; and the commentators {w} on it say, it is the same which, in Arabic, is called "alhena", the cypress tree, and refer to this place; of which Dr. Shaw {x} says, "this beautiful and odoriferous plant, "alhenna", if it is not annually cut, and kept low, grows ten or twelve feet high, putting out its little flowers in clusters, which yield a most grateful smell, like camphire."

But, after all, perhaps the Cyprus vine is here meant, which, according to Pliny {y}, was the best and largest of vines; and which, though it grew in Cyprus, from whence it had its name, yet some plants of it might be obtained by Solomon, and planted in the vineyards of Engedi; or there were such there like them, and were called by the same name: Jarchi, from an ancient exposition of theirs, relates, that the vineyards of this place brought forth fruit four or five times a year; Alshech says seven. Now as Christ compares himself to a vine, Joh 15:1; the church may compare him to a cluster of the grapes of the Cyprus vine, reckoned the best; there being a cluster of all perfections, divine and human, in him; and of all the spiritual blessings of the everlasting covenant, and of all the precious promises in it; and of all the grace of the Spirit, and the fulness of it, which is in him. The Jews calls a man, eminent for virtue, and a large share of knowledge, "clusters" {z}; and they interpret "eschol", a cluster, by wh lkhv vya, "a man that has all things in him" {a}: such an one is Christ, in the highest sense, having all perfections, excellencies, and virtues, in him. Some leave the word untranslated, "copher" {b}, and which has the signification of atonement and propitiation; and so well agrees with Christ, who is the propitiation for sin, and has made atonement for it. Bishop Patrick observes, that the ancient Hebrew doctors, by dividing the first word "eschol", found out the mystery of the Messiah; considering it as if thus read, rpwk lk vya, "my beloved is unto me the man that propitiates" or "expiates all things"; that is, all sins and transgressions: in the Talmud {c} it is explained,

"he, whose all things are, has atoned for my iniquity;"

which Christ has done for his church and people; and which makes him precious, and is matter of joy and gladness to them, **Ro 5:11** **1Jo 2:2**.

{o} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 17. {p} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 1. s. 2. {q} Justin. e Trogo, l. 36. c. 3. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 25. Vid. Foliot in loc. {r} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 29. {s} Virgil. Eclog. 2. v. 18. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 13. Fab. 8. {t} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. s. 3. {u} Sheviith, c. 7. s. 6. {w} Maimon. & Bartenora in ibid. {x} Travels, p. 113, 114. edit. 2. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 14. c. 1. {z} Misnah Sotah, c. 9. s. 9. {a} T. Bab. Temurah, fol. 15. 2. Jarchi, & Ez Chaysim in Sotah ibid. {b} rpk "copher", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Marckius. {c} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 2.

Song of Solomon 1:15

Ver. 15. Behold, thou [art] fair, my love,.... These are the words of Christ, commending the beauty and comeliness of the church, expressing his great affection for her, and his high esteem of her; of her fairness and beauty, See Gill on "So 1:5",
See Gill on "So 1:8"; of the title of Christ's love, as given her by him, See Gill on "So 1:9"; a "behold" is prefixed to this account her, as a note of attention, to consider her complete comeliness in Christ, and not pore on her own blackness; and as a note of admiration, that she who was so black and uncomely in herself should be so fair and beautiful in his eyes, through his blood, righteousness, and grace; and as a note of asseveration, assuring her of the truth of it, which she might be apt to call in question; and, to prevent which, it is also repeated,

behold, thou [art] fair; exceeding fair, really so, both inwardly and outwardly; both with respect to justification and sanctification;

thou [hast] doves' eyes; or "eyes like doves" {d}; these are taken notice because much beauty lies in the eyes, either in the size or colour of them {e}; similes taken from doves are frequently used in this sacred poem, both with respect to the bride and bridegroom; see **So 2:14**; and it may easily be observed, that this creature furnishes much matter for poets {f}, which they apply to lovers: and here the eyes of the bride are compared to the eyes of doves; meaning either the ministers of the Gospel, who are to the church what eyes are to the body; are set in the more eminent part in the church, to order, guide, and direct the members of it; to watch over them, lest any hurt come to them, and give warning of danger; to hold forth the word of light to them, and instruct them how to behave in the church and in the world: and they may be compared to the eyes of doves, for their clearness and perspicuity in discerning Gospel truths; and for their sincerity and simplicity, uprightness and faithfulness, in preaching them; and for the dove like gifts of the Spirit, whereby they are qualified for it; and for, their meekness and humility; or rather the eyes of her understanding are meant, being spiritually enlightened; and particularly the eye of faith by which believers take a view of Christ, of his glory, fulness, and suitableness, and look to him alone for life and salvation. And it may be compared to the eyes of doves for the clearness and quickness, of it, being the evidence of things not seen; and, for its singleness and chastity, the dove looks only to its mate, and destroys those that look with lustful eyes on others {g}; believers, being espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ, look only to him as their beloved, to him only for acceptance, righteousness, pardon, and eternal life; and for its modesty and humility, excluding all boasting in the creature, and giving all glory to Christ; and for its beautifulness in the sight of Christ, so that he is even ravished with it, **So 4:9**.

{d} Mynwy Kynye "oculi tui veluti columbarum", Pagninus, Munster, so Ben Melech. {e} So Juno is called "the large-eyed Juno", and Minerva "the blue-eyed goddess", and Chryseus "the black-eyed maid", Homer. Iliad. 1. v. 99, 206, 551. {f} Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. in Nupt. Honor. Ode 4. v. 21. {g} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 34. Aelian. Hist. Animal. l. 3. c. 5. p. 44.

Song of Solomon 1:16

Ver. 16. Behold, thou [art] fair, my beloved,.... These are the words of the church, giving back to Christ his commendation of her, and much in the same words, as more properly belonging to him than her; he calls her "my love", she calls him "my beloved": he says that she was "fair"; the same she says of him, with a like note of wonder, attention, and asseveration, he had prefixed to the commendation of her; suggesting, that his fairness and beauty were essential, original, and underived, but hers was all from him; and therefore he only ought to have the character: he, as man, is "fairer" than the children of men; as Mediator, is full of grace and truth, which makes him look lovely in the eyes of his people; and, as a divine Person, is the brightness of his Father's glory. To which she adds,

yea, pleasant; looks pleasantly, with a smiling countenance on his people, being the image of the invisible God; pleasant to behold, as the sun of righteousness, and Saviour of men; pleasant in all his offices and relations; the doctrines of his Gospel are pleasant words; his ways, his ordinances, are ways of pleasantness; and especially having his presence, and communion with him in them; and which may be designed in the next clause;

also our bed [is] green; the same with "his bed which is Solomon's"; his by gift and purchase; the church's, by having a right through him, and an admittance to all the privileges of it: where the word is preached, ordinances administered, souls are begotten and born again, there Christ and his church have fellowship with each other; said to be "green", in allusion to the strewing of beds with green herbs and leaves, and branches of trees {h}; particularly the nuptial bed, called from thence "thalamus" {i}: and it may denote the fruitfulness of the saints in grace and holiness, like green olive trees, in the house of God: or else numerous converts in the church, a large spiritual seed and offspring of Christ and the church, as were in the first times of the Gospel, and will be in the latter day: a green bed is an emblem of fruitfulness in the conjugal state; so the Targum and Jarchi interpret it.

{h} Vid. Alstorph. de Lectis Veterum, c. 1. p. 2. s. 9, 10. "Viridante toro consederat herbae", Virgil. Aeneid. 5. v. 388. "In medo torus est de mollibus ulvis impositus lecto", Ovid. Metamorph. 8. v. 685. {i} Alstorph. ibid. c. 13. p. 73, 74.

Song of Solomon 1:17

Ver. 17. The beams of our house [are] cedar,.... Or "houses" {k}; where their bed was, and where they had fellowship and communion together. By which may be meant particular congregations or churches, in which houses Christ has a property, being of his building and beautifying; where he takes up his rest and residence, and where he feeds and feasts with his people, and to the privileges of which all the saints have a right: and by the "beams" of these houses may be intended the ministers of the word, who are pillars here, as James, John, and Cephas, were; and who are the means of supporting and strengthening such communities, by their excellent doctrines and exemplary lives: or common saints may be meant, who are also beams and pillars in the churches of Christ; and serve greatly to support, strengthen, and cement the spiritual building, fitly framed together: and these being of "cedar" wood, of a pleasant smell, and durable, may denote their gratefulness and acceptableness to Christ and his church, in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; and of their continuance and perseverance therein, having in them the incorruptible and immortal seed of divine grace; see Ps 92:12;

[and] our rafters of fir; which Pliny says {l} is the best and strongest wood for roofing and raftering: by these may be meant the ordinances of the Gospel, which are that to the churches as "rafters" are to a house, the means of supporting and strengthening it; so by the ordinances saints are supported in their spiritual state, and by them their spiritual strength is renewed; and these being said to be of "fir", which is a pleasant and lasting wood, may signify the delight that is had in ordinances, and the continuance of them. Some render the word by "cypress" {m}; which is also of a pleasant smell {n}, and very

durable, never admits of worms, nor ever rots, nor is ever sensible of old age {o}; and so may denote the pleasure that saints take in ordinances, and the long continuance of them, as of the present ones, which will remain until the second coming of Christ. Some think the "brutine" tree {p} is meant, which Pliny calls "bruta" {q}; and is near in sound to the word here used, is much like the cypress, and of a sweet smell, like cedar; it grows beyond Pasitigris, on Mount Zagras. Some will have it to be the tree of paradise; and, so applied to ordinances, may signify the same as before. The word for "rafters" is elsewhere rendered "gutters" and "troughs" for water; and some {r} render it so here, and are so called from water running in them: and as the grace of God is often expressed by water, this is commonly conveyed in the use of ordinances; these are the canals in which it runs. Moreover the same word is translated "galleries", in **So 7:5**; which, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, were buildings in high houses in which men walked from house to house, or from one end of the house to the other; and might be called by this name, from their droning along the sides of houses, and seem to be like our "balconies": now ordinances are the galleries or "walking places" {s}, where Christ and his people walk and converse together.

{k} wnytb "domorum nostrarum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. "aedium nostrarum", Marckius. {l} Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 42. {m} Mytwrb kuparissoi, Sept. "cypressina", V. L. Tigurine version; so David de Pomis, and others. {n} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 33. euwdei kuparissw, Theocrit. Epigram. 4. v. 7. {o} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 33. 40, 49. {p} "E brutis", Junius & Tremellius, Ainsworth, Brightman, Marckius; "brutiua", Cocceius, Michaelis. {q} Nat. Hist. l. 19. c. 17. {r} wnyjhr "canales nostri"; so some in Vatablus, Tigurine version; "impluvium nostruim", Hiller. de Keri & Kethib, p. 84. {s} "Ambulachra nostra", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Marckius, Michaelis.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Song of Solomon 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO SONG OF SOLOMON 2

Here begins a new colloquy between Christ and his church; in which they alternately set forth the excellencies of each other; and express their mutual affection for, and delight and pleasure they take in, each other's company. Christ seems to begin, in an account of himself and his own excellencies, and of the church in her present state, **So 2:1**; then she, in her turn, praises him, and commends him above all others relates some choice proofs she had had of his love to her, and of communion with him in his house and ordinances, to such a degree as to overcome her, **So 2:3**; and then either he or she gives a charge to the daughters of Jerusalem, not to disturb either the one or the other in their sweet repose, **So 2:7**. Next the church relates how she heard the voice of Christ, and had a sight of him on the hills and mountains, at some distance; then more nearly, behind her wall, and through the lattices, **So 2:8**; and expresses the very words in which he spake to her, and gave her a call to come away with him; making use of arguments from the season of the year, the signs of which are beautifully described, **So 2:10**; and requests that she would come out of her solitude, that he might enjoy her company, whose countenance and voice are so delightful to him; and gives a charge to her and her friends, to seize on such as were harmful and prejudicial to their mutual property, **So 2:14**. And she closes the chapter with expressing her faith of interest in Christ; and with a petition for his speedy approach to her, and continued presence with her, **So 2:16**.

Ver. 1. I [am] the rose of Sharon, [and] the lily of the valleys. Whether Christ, or the church, is here speaking, is not certain: most of the Jewish writers {t}, and some Christian interpreters {u}, take them to be the words of the church, expressing the excellency of her grace, loveliness, and beauty, she had from Christ; and intimating also her being in the open fields, exposed to many dangers and enemies, and so needed his protection. The church may be compared to a "rose", for its beautiful colour and sweet odour {w}, and for its delight in sunny places, where it thrives best, and is most fragrant. This figure is exceeding just; not only the beauty of women is expressed by the colour of the rose {x}, as is common in poems of this kind; to give instances of it would be endless {y}; some have had the name of Rhoda from hence; see Ac 12:13. No rose can be more beautiful in colour, and delightful to the eye, than the church is in the eyes of Christ, as clothed with his righteousness, and adorned with the graces of his Spirit: nor is any rose of a more sweet and fragrant smell than the persons of believers are to God and Christ, being considered in him; and even their graces, when in exercise, yea, their duties and services, when performed in faith; and, as the rose, they grow and thrive under the warming, comforting, and refreshing beams of the sun of righteousness, where they delight to be. The church may also be compared to a "lily of the valleys", as she is, in the next verse, to one among thorns. This is a very beautiful flower; Pliny {z} says it is next in nobleness to the rose; its whiteness is singularly excellent; no plant more fruitful, and no flower exceeds it in height; in some countries, it rises up three cubits high; has a weak neck or body, insufficient to bear the weight of its head. The church may be compared to a lily, for her beauty and fragrance, as to a rose; and the redness of the rose, and the whiteness of the lily, meeting in her, make her somewhat like her beloved, white and ruddy; like the lily, being arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints; and like it for fruitfulness, as it is in good works, under the influence of divine grace, and grows up on high into her head, Christ Jesus; and though weak in herself, yet strong in him, who supports her, and not she him: and the church may be compared to a "lily of the valleys"; which may not describe any particular lily, and what we now call so; but only expresses the place where it grows, in low places, where plants are in danger of being plucked and trodden upon; though they may have more moisture and verdure than those in higher places; so the church of Christ is sometimes in a low estate, exposed to enemies, and liable to be trampled and trodden under foot by them, and to be carried away with the flood of persecution, were it not guarded by divine power; and, being watered with the dews of grace, it becomes flourishing and fruitful. But the more commonly received opinion is, that these are the words of Christ concerning himself; and which indeed best become him, and are more agreeable to his style and language, Joh 14:6; and suit best with the words in the **So 2:2**, as one observes {a}; nor is it unfitly taken by the bridegroom to himself, since it is sometimes given by lovers to men {b}. Christ may be compared to a rose for its colour and smell; to the rose for its red colour: and which may be expressive of the truth of his humanity, and of his bloody sufferings in it; and this, with the whiteness of the lily, finishes the description of him for his beauty, **So 5:10**; and for its sweet smell; which denotes the same things for which he is before compared to spikenard, myrrh, and camphire. The rose, as Pliny says {c}, delights not in fat soils and rich clays, but in rubbish, and roses that grow there are of the sweetest smell; and such was the earth about Sharon {d}; and to a rose there Christ is compared, to show the excellency and preferableness of him to all others. The word is only used here and in Isa 35:1. Where it is in many versions rendered a "lily": it seems to be compounded of two words; one which signifies to "cover" and hide, and another which signifies a "shadow"; and so may be rendered, "the covering shadow": but for what reason a rose should be so called is not easy to say; unless it can be thought to have the figure of an umbrella; or that the rose tree in those parts was so large, as to be remarkable for its shadow; like that Montfaucon {e} saw, in a garden at Ravenna, under the shadow of the branches of which more than forty men could stand: Christ is sometimes compared to trees for their shadow, which is pleasant and reviving, as in **So 2:3**. Some render it, "the flower of the field" {f}; which may be expressive of the meanness of Christ in the eyes of men; of his not being of human production; of his being accessible; and of his being liable to be trampled upon, as he has been. And as he is compared to a rose, so to a "lily", for its colour, height, and fruitfulness; expressive of his purity in himself, of his superiority to angels and men, and of his being filled with the fruits and blessings of grace; and to a lily of the valleys, denoting his wonderful condescension in his low estate of humiliation, and his delight in dwelling with the humble and lowly: some render the words, "I am the rose of Sharon, with the lily of the valleys" {g}; by the former epithet meaning himself; and by the latter his church, his companion, in strict union and communion with him; of whom the following words are spoken.

{t} Zohar in Gen. fol. 46. 2. Targum, Aben Ezra, & Yalkut in loc. {u} Ainsworth, Brightman, Vatablus; Cocceius; Michaelis. {w} The rose, by the Arcadians, was called euomfalon, that is, "sweet-smelling", Timachidas apud Athenaei Deipnosophist. l. 15. c. 8. p. 682. and "rosy" is used for "beautiful"; "rosea cervice refulsit", Virgil. Aeneid. l. 1. Vid. Servium in ibid. {x} So Helena, for her beauty, is called rodocrwv elena, in Theocrit. Idyll. 19. The rose was sacred to Venus, Pausaniae Eliac. 2. sive l. 6, p. 391. {y} Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. de Nupt. Honor. v. 247. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 21. c. 5. {a} Durham in Ioc. {b} "Mea rosa", Plauti Bacchides, Sc. 1. v. 50. Asinaria, Act. 3, Sc. 3. v. 74. Curculio, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 6. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 21. c. 4. {d} Misnah Sotah, c. 8. s. 3. {e} Diar. Italic, c. 7. p. 100. {f} anyov tou pediou, Sept. "flos campi", V. L. Pagninus, Mercerus. {g} "Ego rosa Sharon lilio vallium", Marckius.

Song of Solomon 2:2

Ver. 2. As the lily among thorns, so [is] my love among the daughters. These are manifestly the words of Christ concerning his church, whom he calls "my love", See Gill on "So 1:9"; and was his love still, though in such company, and in such an uncomfortable condition. In what sense she is comparable to a lily has been shown in **So 2:1**; but here she is compared to one among "thorns": by which may be meant wicked men, comparable to thorns for their unfruitfulness and unprofitableness; for their being hurtful and pernicious to good men; and for their end, which is to be burned; especially persecutors of religion, who are very distressing to the saints who dwell among them; see 2Sa 23:6; and her being among such serves for a foil, to set off her excellency the more: and the simile is designed, not so much to observe that Christ's lily grows among thorns, as to show that the church is as preferable to such persons as a lily is to thorns; which is justly remarked by Carolus Maria de Veil; and which sense the comparison requires, as appears by the reddition, so is "my love among the daughters": the nations and men of the world, and even carnal professors, members of the visible church, whom she as much exceeds in beauty, grace, and fruitfulness, as the lily exceeds thorns. Ainsworth thinks the "woodbind" or "honeysuckle" is meant, which grows in thorn hedges, and is sometimes called "lilium inter spinas", as Mercer observes; this is indeed of a sweet smell, yet very weak, and cannot support itself; and therefore twists and wraps itself about other trees, their twigs and branches, "convolvens se adminiculis quibuscunque", as Pliny {h} says; hence we call it "woodbind", and for the same reason its name in Greek is "periclymenon"; so saints are of a sweet fragrance to Christ, and, weak in themselves, cannot support themselves; yet they twine about Christ, lean on him, and are upheld by him, and depend on him for all good things. But it is the same word as in **So 2:1**, and may be rendered "lily" here as there; and not a "rose", as it is in the Targum, from which it is there distinguished. The lily is often mentioned in this love song; it is said to be the delight of Verus {i}. Some call it "ambrosia".

{h} Nat. Hist. l. 27. c. 12. {i} Nicander apud Athenaeum, l. 15. c. 8. p. 683.

Song of Solomon 2:3

Ver. 3. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so [is] my beloved among the sons,.... As the apple tree, in a garden or orchard, excels and is preferable to the wild barren trees of a forest {k}, especially it appears so when laden with choice fruit; so the church, who here returns the commendation to Christ, asserts, that he as much excels all the "sons", the creatures of God, angels or men: angels, as the Targum, who, though sons of God by creation, Christ is the Son of God, in a higher sense; he is their Creator, and the object of their worship; they are confirmed by him in the estate they are, and are ministering spirits to him; and he is exalted above them in human nature: men also, the greatest princes and monarchs of the earth, are sometimes compared to large and lofty trees; but Christ is higher than they, and is possessed of far greater power, riches, glory, and majesty. All the sons of Adam in general may be meant; wicked men, who are like forest trees, wild, barren, and unfruitful; yea, even good men, Christ has the pre-eminence of them, the sons of God by adopting grace; for he is so in such a sense they are not; he is their Creator, Lord, Head, Husband, and Saviour, and they have all their fruit from him; and so ministers of the word have their gifts and grace from him, and therefore Christ excels all that come under this appellation of sons. Christ may be compared to an apple tree, which is very fruitful; and, when full of fruit, very beautiful; and whose fruit is very cooling, comforting, and refreshing. Christ is full of the fruits and blessings of grace, which are to be reached by the hand of faith, and enjoyed; and as he is full of grace and truth, he looks very beautiful and glorious in the eye of faith; and which blessings of grace from him, being applied to a poor sensible sinner, inflamed by the fiery law, and filled with wrath and terror, sweetly cool, refresh, and comfort him. The apple tree has been accounted an hieroglyphic of love, under which lovers used to meet, and sit under its delightful shade, and entertain each other with its fruit; to which the allusion may be; see **So 8:5**; the apple was sacred to love {l}. The Targum renders it, the pome citron, or citron apple tree; which is a tree very large and beautiful; its fruit is of a bitter taste, but of a good smell; always fruit on it; is an excellent remedy against poison, and good for the breath, as naturalists {m} observe; and so is a fit emblem of Christ, in the greatness of his person, in the fulness, of his grace, in the virtue of his blood, and righteousness and grace, which are a sovereign antidote against the poison of sin; and whose presence, and communion with him, cure panting souls, out of breath in seeking him; and whose mediation perfumes their breath, their prayers, whereby they become grateful to God, which otherwise would be strange and disagreeable;

I sat down under his shadow with great delight: under the shadow of the apple tree, to which Christ is compared; whose person, blood, and righteousness, cast a shadow, which is a protecting one, from the heat of divine wrath, from the curses of a fiery law, from the fiery darts of Satan, and from the fury of persecutors, Isa 25:4; and is a cooling, comforting, and refreshing one, like the shadow of a great rock to a weary traveller, Isa 32:2; and though the shadow of some trees, as Pliny {n} observes, is harmful to plants that grow under them, others are fructifying; and such is Christ; "they that dwell under his shadow shall revive and grow", &c. Ho 14:7. "Sitting" here supposes it was her choice; that she preferred Christ to any other shadow, looking upon him to be a suitable one in her circumstances, **So 1:6**; it intimates that peace, quietness, satisfaction, and security, she enjoyed under him; it denotes her continuance, and desire of abiding there, Ps 91:1; for the words may be rendered, "I desired, and I sat down" {o}; she desired to sit under the shade of this tree, and she did; she had what she wished for; and she sat "with great delight": having the presence of Christ, and fellowship with him in his word and ordinances, where Christ is a delightful shade to his people;

and his fruit [was] sweet to my taste; the fruit of the apple tree, to which the allusion is. Solon {p} advised the bride to eat a quince apple before she went into the bridegroom, as leaving an agreeable savour; and intimating how graceful the words of her mouth should be. By "his fruit" here are meant the blessings of grace, which are Christ's in a covenant way, come through his sufferings and death, and are at his dispose; such as peace, pardon, justification, &c. and fresh discoveries and manifestations of his love, of which the apple is an emblem: and these are sweet, pleasant, and delightful, to those that have tasted that the Lord is gracious; whose vitiated taste is changed by the grace of God, and they savour the things of the Spirit of God.

{k} "Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi", Virgil. Bucolic. Eclog. 1. v. 26. "Lenta salix", &c. Eclog. 5. v. 16. {l} Scholiast. in Aristoph. Nubes, p. 180. The statue of Venus had sometimes an apple in one hand, and a poppy in the other, Pausan. Corinth. sive l. 2. p. 103. {m} Athenaei Deispnosoph. l. 3. c. 7. p. 83. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 53. & 12. c. 3. Solin. Polyhistor. c. 59. Macrob. Saturnal. l. 3. c. 19. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 17. c. 12. {o} ytbvyw ytdmx "concupivi, et sedi", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Marckius. {p} Plutarch. Conjug. Praecept. vol. 2. p. 138.

Song of Solomon 2:4

Ver. 4. He brought me to the banqueting house,.... Or "into" it {q}. The "house of wine" {r}, as it is literally in the original; either the "wine cellar" {s}, as some, where stores of it were kept; or, the "place of fasting" {t}, as others, and, as we render it, a "banqueting house"; where it was distributed and drank; a banquet of wine being put for a feast, and here the nuptial feast; and may design the Gospel feast in the house of God, where there is plenty of the wine of Gospel truths, and provisions of rich food, with which believers are sweetly refreshed and delightfully regaled: and to be brought hither, under the drawings and influences of divine grace, is a special privilege, a distinguishing layout; and show a great condescension in Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, to take his people by the hand, as it were, and introduce them into his house, so well furnished, and to a table so well spread: and so the church relates it as an instance of divine favour, and as a fresh token of Christ's love to her; which further appears by what follows: the covenant of grace and the Scriptures of truth may be thought of as a banqueting house, well stored with blessings, and promises, and rich provisions; which, to be led and let into, is a singular kindness;

and his banner over me [was] love; signifying, that she was brought into the banqueting house in a grand, stately, and majestic manner, with flying colours; the motto on which inscribed was "love"; the allusion may be to the names of generals being inscribed on the banners of their armies; so Vespasian's name was inscribed on the banners throughout his armies {u}. Christ's name, inscribed on his, was "love", his church's love; and by which his company or band was distinguished from all others, even by electing, redeeming, calling love. It may signify the security and protection of the saints, while in the house of God, and enjoying communion with him, being under the banner of love, with which they are encompassed as a shield; and it may denote the very manifest and visible displays of it, which the church now experienced.

{q} la "in", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Marckius, Michaelis. {r} Nyyh tyb "domum vini", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {s} "Cellam vinariam", Tigurine version. {t} "Locum convivii", Junius & Tremellius. {u} Suetonii Vita Vespasian. c. 6.

Song of Solomon 2:5

Ver. 5. Stay me with flagons,.... Of wine, which is a supporter of the animal spirits {w}. The church was now in a house of wine, where was plenty of it; even of the love of Christ, compared to wine, and preferred unto it, **So 1:2**; the church though she had had large discoveries of it, desired more; and such that have once tasted of this love are eagerly desirous of it, and cannot be satisfied until they have their fill of it in heaven: the flagons, being vessels in which wine is put, and from thence poured out, may signify the word and ordinances, in which the love of Christ is displayed and manifested; the church desires she might be stayed and supported hereby, while she was attending on Christ in them;

comfort me with apples; with exceeding great and precious promises; which, when fitly spoken and applied, are "like apples of gold in pictures of silver", Pr 25:11; and are very comforting: or rather, with fresh and greater manifestations of his love still; for the apple is an emblem of love, as before observed; for one to send or throw an apple to another indicated love {x}. It may be rendered, "strew me with apples" {y}; in great quantities, about me, before me, and under me, and all around me, that I may lie down among them, and be sweetly refreshed and strengthened: the words, both in this and the former clause, are in the plural number; and so may be an address to the other two divine Persons, along with Christ, to grant further manifestations of love unto her, giving the following reason for it:

for I [am] sick of love; not as loathing it, but as wanting, and eagerly desirous of more of it; being, as the Septuagint version is, "wounded" {z} with it; love's dart stuck in her, and she was inflamed therewith: and "languished" {a}; as the Vulgate Latin version is; with earnest desires after it; nor could she be easy without it, as is the case of lovers.

{w} "Vino fulcire venas cadentes", Senecae Ep. 95. {x} "Malo me Galatea petit", Virgil. Bucolic. Eclog. 3. v. 64. Vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 3. v. 10. & Idyll. 6. v. 6, 7. & Suidam in voce
mhlon. {y} ynwdpr "sternite ante me", so some in Vatablus; "substernite mihi", Tigurine version, Piscator. {z} tetrwmhnh, Sept. {a} "Langueo amore", V. L. so Michaelis; "aegrotus" is used in this sense, in Terent. Heautont. l. 1.

Song of Solomon 2:6

Ver. 6. His left hand [is] under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. The church, having desired to be stayed, supported, strengthened, and comforted, presently found her beloved with her, who with both hands sustained her; which shows his tender love to her, care of her, and regard for her; and is expressive of the near and intimate communion she had with him, as the effect of union to him, often enjoyed in his house and ordinances; likewise of blessings of every kind she received from him; temporal, mercies, or left hand blessings, which are necessary to support and carry through this wilderness; and spiritual, or right hand blessings, as justification, pardon, adoption, &c. and, moreover, may denote the safety and security of the church, being encircled in the arms of her beloved, sustained by Christ's left hand, and embraced by his right hand, out of whose hands none can pluck. Some read the words prayer wise, "let his left hand be", &c. {b}; still desiring further tokens of his love to her, and more and nearer communion with him: others read it in the future, "his left hand will be", &c. {c}; "his right hand shall embrace", &c. expressing the strength of her faith that she should for the future enjoy his gracious presence; and that he would support her, that she should not sink and faint.

{b} Tigurine version, some in Mercer. Marckius; so Ainsworth. {c} V. L. Pagninus Montanus.

Song of Solomon 2:7

Ver. 7. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,.... Of whom, see **So 1:5**. There is some difficulty in these words, whether they are spoken by the church, or by Christ: according to our version, they are the words of the church, and bids fair to be the sense; since they are spoken to the virgins, her companions, that waited on her; and the manner of speech is not by way of command, as by way of adjuration; and the matter, style, and language of it, Christ being the church's love; and the phrase, "till he please", best agrees with his sovereignty and authority, who is at liberty to stay with, and remove from, his people at pleasure; and the context and scope of the place seem to confirm it; the church, enjoying communion with Christ, chooses not that he should be disturbed, and by any means be caused to depart from her. Others think they are the words of Christ, and not without reason; since it was the church that was in Christ's arms, and fallen asleep in them; and the phrase, "my love", is used by Christ concerning his church, **So 7:6**; and not this, but another, is used by her concerning him; and besides, both the word for "my love", and that which is rendered "he please", are feminine, and best agree with her, "that ye stir not up, the" or "this love, until she please"; so Michaelis {d} interprets and renders the word for "love [by] this lovely one"; the word is very emphatic, the love, the famous love, the well known love {e}: add to which, the following words seem to confirm this sense, "the voice of my beloved", which she had heard, adjuring the daughters of Jerusalem. This charge is made,

by the roes, and by the hinds of the field; not that either Christ or his church swore by them; but the words may be descriptive of the persons addressed by the creatures, among whom they were feeding their flocks, or whom they delighted to hunt {f}; or were loving and lovely creatures, as they: and the charge is, that they would continue among them, and mind their business, and give no disturbance to Christ or the church; or these creatures are called as witnesses to this charge, which, if not observed, would be brought against them: or the charge is made by all that is dear, these being pleasant and lovely creatures, that they would not interrupt the mutual communion of Christ and his church; or it may be a severe threatening, that, should they disregard the charge, they should become food as common as roes and hinds; and that they should be as cautious of stirring up and awaking the person meant as they would be of starting those timorous creatures. The charge is,

that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please; or, "till she please"; if it is the charge of the church, it may lead to observe, that Christ is the object of the church's love; and that she is his resting place; that he may not be disturbed and raised up from it by an unfriendly behavior toward him, or by animosities among themselves; that saints should be very careful that they do not provoke

Christ to depart from them; and that communion with him is entirely at his pleasure, when and how long it shall continue; it depends as much upon his sovereign will as the first acts of his grace towards them. But if this is the charge of Christ, not to disturb his church, then it may be observed, that the church is the object of Christ's love, and always continues so; that the church sleeps and takes her rest in Christ's arms; which is not to be understood of a criminal drowsiness and sleep, but of comfortable repose and rest, Christ gives his beloved ones, in communion with himself; that he loves and delights in the company of his people, and would not have them disturbed in their fellowship with him; and though, while grace is in exercise, saints are desirous of enjoying Christ's presence always; yet, when it is otherwise, they become indifferent to it, which provokes Christ to depart from them; and therefore it is said, "till she please": and as this charge is given to the "daughters of Jerusalem", young converts, or weak believers; it suggests, that they are apt to disturb both Christ and his church; to disturb Christ by their impatience and frowardness, like children; hence the church acts the part of a mother charging her children to be quiet, and not disturb her loving husband, while she enjoyed his company; and to disturb the church, through their weakness, not being able to bear the sublime doctrines of the Gospel, and through their ignorance of Gospel order.

{d} Not. in Lowth Praelect. de Poes. Heb. p. 158. {e} So lovers are frequently called "Amor et Amores", "love and loves", vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 2. & Ovid. Briseis Achilli, v. 12. Plauti Curculio, Act. 2. Sc. 3. v. 78. Miles, Act. 4. Sc. 8. v. 67. Poenulus, Act. 5. Sc. 3. v. 49. Mostell. arg. v. 1. Persa, arg. v. 1. {f} "Virginibus Tyriis mos est gestare pharetram", Virgil. Aeneid. l. 1.

Song of Solomon 2:8

Ver. 8. The voice of my beloved!.... So says the church, who well knew Christ her beloved's voice; which is known by all believers in him, and is distinguished by them from the voice of others; by the majesty and authority of it; by the power and efficacy of it; by its directing them to himself, and by the pleasure it gives them: and she speaks of it as being very delightful to her; it being the voice of him whom she loved, and a voice of love, grace, and mercy, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation; and, being observed before, what follows shows that Christ is heard before he is seen; he is first heard of in the Gospel, before he is seen, by an eye of faith: and such would have others observe the voice of Christ as well as they, for here the church speaks to the daughters of Jerusalem; and it seems by this, that, by some means or another, Christ had been disturbed, and had departed from the church for a while, and was now upon the return to her, which made his voice the more joyful to her;

behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills; this may be, understood, either of Christ's first coming in the flesh, much prophesied of, long expected, and was very welcome: this was attended with many difficulties, comparable to mountains and hills; that he the Son of God should become man; that he should obey, suffer, and die for men, fulfil the law, satisfy justice, atone for sin, and save from all enemies; but those which seemed insuperable were easily surmounted by Christ: or of his spiritual coming; sometimes he withdraws himself, and then returns again, and faith, spying him at a distance, rejoices at his nearer approach; for impediments in his way, occasioned by the unbelief, carnality, lukewarmness, backslidings, and ingratitude of his people, are removed and got over by him, nothing being able to separate from his love; and his coming, either way, is with all readiness, swiftness, speed, and haste. And a "behold" is prefixed to this, as a note of admiration and attention; and is so, whether applied to the one or other. Christ's incarnation was matter of wonder, "behold, a virgin", &c. **Isa 7:14**; and so his manifestation of himself to his people, and not to others, is marvellous, "Lord, how is it", &c. Joh 14:22; and both comings are visible, glorious, and delightful. Ambrose {g} has these remarkable words, by way of paraphrase, on this passage,

"Let us see him leaping; he leaped out of heaven into the virgin, out of the womb into the manger, out of the manger into Jordan, out of Jordan to the cross, from the cross into the tomb, out of the grave into heaven."

The allusion is to the leaping of a roe, or a young hart, as in **So 2:9**, which is remarkable for its leaping, even one just yeaned {h}; so a young hart is described, by the poet {i}, as leaping to its dam the leap of one of these creatures is very extraordinary {k}.

{g} Enarrat. in Psal. cxviii. octon. 7. p. 917. {h} Vid. Dionys. Perieg. v. 843, 844. {i} nebrov aloito, &c. Theocrit. Idyll. 8. prope finem. {k} "The hart is said to leap sixty feet at a leap", Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 3. c. 17. col. 882.

Song of Solomon 2:9

Ver. 9. My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart,.... The church, upon the swift and speedy approach of Christ unto her, compares him to these creatures; which are well known for their swiftness {l} in running, and agility in leaping, as before observed: and, besides these things, Christ may be compared to them on other accounts; they are pleasant and lovely, choice and valuable; bear an antipathy to serpents, which they easily overcome; are very good for food, and very agreeable, and are long lived creatures {m}; Christ is lovely and amiable in his person, and high in the esteem of his divine Father, angels and men; is choice and excellent in his nature, offices, and grace; bears an antipathy to the old serpent, the devil, whose works and powers he came to destroy, and has got an entire victory over them; and is very agreeable food to faith; his flesh is meat indeed, and the more so through his sufferings and death; as the flesh of those creatures is said to be the more tender and agreeable, by being hunted; and Christ, though dead, is alive, and lives for evermore;

behold, he standeth behind our wall; not the middle wall of the ceremonial law, behind which, Christ, under the Old Testament dispensation, stood, showing himself to believers; nor the wall of our humanity he partook of, when he came in the flesh, and under which his glorious deity was in some measure covered and hid; but rather the wall of our hearts, **Jer 4:19**; the hardness, infidelity, and carnal reasonings of it, which are so many walls of separation between Christ and his people; behind which he stands, showing his resentment of them, and in order to demolish them, and get admittance: he is represented here, as nearer than when she first saw him, even at her very home;

he looketh forth at the windows; this is coming nearer still; for, by the manner of the expression, it seems that he was within doors, since he is said, not to look through the windows, but to look forth at them, meaning the ordinances; which are that to the church as windows to a house, the means of letting in light into the souls of men; and where Christ shows himself, in his glory and beauty, as kings and great personages look out at windows to show themselves to their people: though Christ may also be said to look in at, those windows, to observe the behaviour of his people in his house and ordinances, with what attention, affection, faith, and reverence, they wait upon him in them;

showing himself through the lattice; by which may be meant the same things, only a larger and clearer discovery of Christ in them, of which ordinances are the means; and yet, unless Christ shows himself through them, he cannot be seen in them: and a "behold" being prefixed to these gradual discoveries of himself, show them to be wonderful! a glance of him behind the wall is surprising; his looking in at the windows still more so; but his showing himself, in all his glories and excellencies, through the lattice, is enough to throw into the greatest rapture, to fill with joy unspeakable and full of glory! Some render the word "flourishing" {n}, like a rose or lily, or like a vine, or jessamine; which grow up by a window or lattice, and, seen through them, took very pleasant and delightful. But the allusion is rather to the quick sighted roe, or young hart; which, as it is remarkable for its swiftness, referred to, **So 2:8**, so for the sharpness of its sight; Pliny {o} says it is never dim sighted; it has its name "dorcas", in Greek, from its sight.

{l} "Cervi veloces", Virgil. Aeneid. 5. v. 253. {m} Vid. Pausaniae Arcad. sive l. 8. p. 472. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 32. Aelian de Animal. l. 2. c. 9. Solin. Polyhistor. c. 31, Frantz. Animal, Sacr. par. 1. c. 15. {n} Uyum "efflorescens", Piscator, Michaelis, so Ainsworth. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 28. c. 11.

Song of Solomon 2:10

Ver. 10. My beloved spake, and said unto me,.... Christ, the church's beloved, being so near her, she could distinctly hear and understand what he spoke, and relate the very words: or, "he answered to me" {p}; to a secret petition, put up to him for a more full enjoyment of him; for there is mental as well as vocal prayer, which Christ, as God omniscient, knows full well, and gives answer to: of this may be an answer to her petitions in **So 2:5**; and as some in **So 2:6**; however, Christ said something after related, that she well knew he spake, and not another, and to her in particular. What he said follows:

Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away; the affectionate and endearing titles of "love" and "fair one", have been met with and explained, on **So 1:5**; and are repeated to show his ardent love to her, notwithstanding the frame she was in, which was very probably a slothful one, by the exhortations given; and to remove her discouragements, arising from her present state; and to prevail upon her to get up from her bed of carnal sloth and security, at least to shake off her indolence; and to quit her seat and company, and go along with him, or where he should direct, since it would be to her own advantage: for the words may be rendered, "rise up for thyself, and come away for thyself" {q}; it will turn to thy account, and to do otherwise will be detrimental to thee. The arguments follow.

{p} hne "respondit", Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator, Marckius, Michaelis. {q}

Kl yklw Kl ymwq "surge tibi, et abi tibi", Montanus, Cocceius, so Vatablus, Marckius.

Song of Solomon 2:11

Ver. 11. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over [and] gone. A season of the year which keeps persons within doors, makes going abroad unsafe, unpleasant, and uncomfortable; very unfit for travelling, roads bad, rivers impassable, and journeying very difficult; but now this season being over, and the spring come, the weather fair, and every thing gay and pleasant, it is inviting to be abroad; winter is by some writers {r} used not for the season of the year, but for a storm or tempest. Thus the winter and rain may be descriptive of the state and condition of Jews and Gentiles before the coming of Christ {s}, and which then ceased; it having been a stormy dispensation with the one, and a time of darkness and ignorance with the other, Heb 12:18; or rather it may in general represent the state of God's people both before and after conversion; before conversion it is a time of darkness, coldness, barrenness, and unfruitfulness; and which are removed by the powerful and efficacious grace of Christ: and after conversion it is often a winter season with them, through the blustering winds of Satan's temptations; the storms of impending wrath for sin, as they imagine; the nipping blasts of persecution, and sharp and severe afflictions they are at times exposed unto: moreover, they are often in great darkness of soul, clouds interpose between Christ and them; a great deal of coldness attends them, their hearts are frozen up and hard, and no impression made on them by the preaching of the word, or by the providences of God; there is a coolness in their love to God and Christ, his people, ordinances, cause, and interest; great barrenness and unfruitfulness in them, they look like trees in winter, and no appearance of fruit on them; their hands are sealed up from working, and they become indolent and inactive; and by all these fellowship with Christ is greatly interrupted: but, when the spring returns again, light breaks in upon them, and their hearts are melted with a sense of love; they become lively in their frames, and in the exercise of grace, and are fruitful in good works; and enjoy much calmness and serenity, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost: sometimes they think the winter is not over when it is, and fear more storms are behind, even of divine wrath and vengeance, though without reason; since Christ has bore all wrath for them, and has satisfied law and justice, and has delivered them from wrath to come; and he that has done this says, "the winter is past", &c.

{r} "Grandaevumque patrem supplex, miseranda rogabo unam hyemem", Statii Achill. l. 1. v. 50, 51. Vid. Valer. Flacc. l. 1. v. 197. {s} "Ante adventum Christi hyems erat, venit Christus, fecit aestatem", Ambros. Enarrat. in Paul. cxviii. octon. 7. p. 821.

Song of Solomon 2:12

Ver. 12. The flowers appear on the earth,.... One of the first signs of the spring being come {t}; and make the season delightful and pleasant; the sun returning with its warming influences, herbs and plants are quickened and spring up; fields and meadows, as well as gardens, are covered with a variety of beautiful flowers, which make walking abroad very delightful. By these "flowers" may be meant either the graces of the spirit in the saints, which, when a wintertime with them, seem to be dead, at least are hid; but, upon a return of the sun of righteousness, revive and are seen again: or the saints themselves, when in a flourishing condition, and in the exercise of grace; who may be compared to the flowers of the field for the production of them in the spring, which is a kind of re-creation of them, Ps 104:30; and fitly expresses the renovation of the Holy Ghost, to which the revival of them is owing; and for the fragrancy of them, their persons and services being of a sweet savour through the grace and righteousness of Christ; and for their beauty and ornament to the fields in which they grow, as saints are through Christ in themselves, and to the churches and interest of Christ; and for the gaiety and cheerfulness in which the flowers appear in the spring season, and so a proper emblem of the joy and consolation of the saints; where grace revives, Christ returns, and they are favoured with communion with him. It may not be improper to observe, that this may represent the large conversions of souls to Christ, and the numerous appearance of so many beautiful flowers in the church of Christ in the first ages of Christianity, after a long winter of Jewish and Gentile darkness;

the time of the singing [of birds] is come; another sign of spring, and suits the Gospel dispensation, in which the churches of Christ, and the members of them, sing the praises of the Lord in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; and particularly young converts, those little birds that sing in warbling notes and tuneful lays the songs of electing, redeeming, calling, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace, to the glory of God, and to their mutual comfort and edification. Some render it, "the time of the branch" {u}, of the vine putting forth its branches; or "the time of cutting" {w}, of pruning vines, of lopping trees, and cutting off unfruitful branches; as in the Gospel dispensation, when the Jewish branches were broken off, and the Gentiles were ingrafted in, and being pruned brought forth more fruit; and this agrees with the season of the year, the spring being the time of cutting and pruning vines {x}; though this is by some objected to as unseasonable;

and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; so one part of rural pleasures is described by the poet {y}, not only by the singing of birds of various kinds, but particularly by the note of the turtle; which is a kind of dove that lies hid in the wintertime, or is gone, being a bird of passage, and appears and returns at the spring, when its voice is heard again {z}; see **Jer 8:7**; for its voice is never heard in winter, unless on a fine day {a}; by which may be meant, not the voice of the law, as the Jewish writers {b}, rather of the Gospel, the joyful sound, which for a while was heard only in the land of Judea, called by way of specialty "our land": but either of the voice of the Messiah himself {c}, preaching the everlasting Gospel in the land of Israel when here on earth; or of John the Baptist his forerunner; and so Alshech interprets it of Elijah, who was to come before the Messiah, and refers to **Mal 4:5**. It may design the voice of all the apostles of Christ, and first ministers of the Gospel {d}; or of the Holy Ghost, as the Targum, who appeared as a dove at Christ's baptism; and whose voice in the hearts of his people, speaking peace and pardon, and witnessing their adoption, causes joy and gladness; or of the church itself, compared to a turtledove for its harmlessness, meekness, chastity, &c. whose voice in prayer and praise is heard, and is acceptable to Christ, **So 2:14**.

{t} "Ver praebet flores", Ovid. de Remed. Amor. l. 1. v. 188. "Omnia tum florent", ibid. Metamorph. l. 15. Fab. 9. So flowers are called tekna earov, "the children of the spring", in Athenaei Deipnosoph. l. 13. c. 9. p. 608. "Vernus sequitur color, omnis in herbas turget humus", Claudian. de Rapt. Proserp. l. 2. v. 90. {u} rymzh te "tempus palmitis", Gussetius, p. 231. {w} kairov thv tomhv, Sept. "tempus putationis", V. L. Pagninus; so the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions. {x} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 17. c. 22. Hesiod. Opera & Dies, l. 2. {y} estene trugwn, Theocrit. Idyll. 7. {z} Plin. ut supra, l. 18. c. 28. {a} Myndius apud Athenaeum in Deipnosophist. l. 9. c. 11. p. 394. So Pliny, "hyeme mutis, vere vocalibus", l. 10. c. 35. Vid. l. 18. c. 28. {b} In Zohar in Gen. fol. 121. 3. {c} So Pesikta in Yalkut in loc. {d} Vid. Stockium, p. 1181.

Song of Solomon 2:13

Ver. 13. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs,.... Another sign of spring being come, nay, of its being pretty much advanced, since Christ makes this a

token of summer being at hand, Mt 24:32. Theopompus {e} speaks of figs in the middle of the spring. This tree puts forth its fruit at once, and does not flower or blossom {f}, wherefore **Hab 3:17** is wrongly translated;
See Gill on "Hab 3:17": though Arianus {g} speaks of its flowering: Aben Ezra thinks the word signifies the sweetening of the figs, and so points at the time when they are sweet and eatable. By the "fig tree" may be meant the saints putting forth their grace in exercise on Christ, who may be compared to fig trees for their leaves and fruit, and for the putting forth the latter before the former {h}; for the fig tree is a tree full of large leaves, which may be an emblem of a profession of religion, and of a conversation agreeably to it, which yet are no covering, only the righteousness of Christ is that, yet ought to be and are ornamental; and for the fruit of it, which is wholesome, pleasant, and delightful, as are the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of grace and righteousness, fruits meet for repentance, which ought to appear before a profession of religion is made. If the Egyptian fig tree is meant, that is a very fruitful tree; it is said to bear fruit seven times a year, but ripens no other way than by scratching it with iron hooks {i}; and its wood cut down and cast into water, being dry, sinks, but when thoroughly wet will swim. Saints should bear fruit always, and ever continue to do so, even to old age; nor do any ever become fruitful until their hearts have been pricked and cut by the word of God; and they never grow better, or are more fruitful, than when attended with afflictions and tribulations; when they first enter into the waters of affliction, like Peter, they sink, but, when more used to them, they lift up their heads above them, and bear up with great courage and resolution. By the "green figs" may be meant the beginnings of grace in the soul, some stirrings of affection to Christ, desires of knowledge of him, pantings and breathings after his ordinances, love to his people; all which appear soon, are very imperfect, and, like unripe figs, liable to be shaken off; and it is a miracle of grace that the first impressions of it are not destroyed by the force of corruption and temptation; and it may be observed, that grace in its first appearance, though but small, is not despised, but taken notice of by Christ: yea, he makes use of it as exercised by young converts to stir up old professors, as here the church, to be more active and vigorous in it;

and the vines [with] the tender grape give a [good] smell; or "being in flower give a good smell" {k}, as the word is used in the Targum in Isa 18:5; and that vines do flower appears from the same place, and from Ge 40:10; as well as is observed by naturalists and others {l}; and these flowers, and not the tender grapes, emit a sweet smell; and, as some say {m}, not in the vineyards only, but in the country round about; and these are fitly mentioned next to figs, since the black fig is by some called the sister of the vine {n}. By the vines may be intended distinct congregated churches of Christ, or particular believers; vines are very weak; and cannot bear up of themselves, must be fixed to some place, and be supported by something else; and being supported, will run up a great height, and bring forth much fruit. So saints are weak in themselves, and cannot support themselves; their strength is in Christ, and they are upheld by him, and have their dependence on him; and being supported by him they grow up to the stature of the fulness of Christ; and through their grafting into him, and abiding in him the true vine, bring forth much fruit to the glory of God, and such as is not to be found in others. The wood of the vine is of very little worth or use, Eze 15:2; and yet is very lasting. Pliny {o} ascribes a sort of an eternity to it. Believers in Christ, however weak and worthless they are in themselves, as are their best works and services, yet being in Christ they shall abide in him for ever, and never perish, but have everlasting life. And by the "tender grapes", or "flowers", may be designed either the graces of the spirit, as before; or rather young converts, the fruit of Christ's vines, the churches, who, though weak and tender, yet are dear to Christ; and when there is a large appearance of them, it is a great encouragement to churches, and promises a glorious vintage. And the "smell" of these vines, with their grapes and flowers, may intend the fragrancy, of believers through the righteousness of Christ on them, and the odour of their graces, as exercised on him; and the sweet savour of their godly conversation, observed by all about them.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; repeated from **So 2:10**; which shows sluggishness on the part of the church, that she needed one exhortation after another; and great love on the part of Christ, that notwithstanding this he persists in calling her; and even importunity in him, that he will have no denial {p}: and it may be observed, that what is entertaining to most of the senses is mentioned to engage the church to arise and go along with her beloved; the flowery fields would be pleasing to her eye, the chirping birds to her ear, the sweet and ripening figs to her taste, and the refreshing odour of the vines to her smell.

{e} Apud Atheanei Deipnosoph. l. 3. c. 4. p. 77. {f} Plutarch. Sympos. l. 6. problem. 9. Macrob. Saturnal. l. 3. c. 20. {g} In Epictet. l. 16. c. 15. {h} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 26. {i} lbid. l. 13. c. 7. Athenaei Deipnosoph. l. 2. c. 11. p. 11. Solin. Polyhistor. p. 45. {k} rdmo "in flore constitutae", Mercerus, Michaelis; "vitis pars florens", Munster; "vineae florentes", Tigurine version; "nihil gratius florentis odore vitis", Ambros. Hexaemeron, l. 3. c. 12. {l} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 25. & l. 17. c. 22. "Si bene floruerit vinea", &c. Ovid. Fasti, l. 5. so Horat. Epod. Ode 16. v. 44. {m} Danaeus in Hos. xiv. 7. Levini Lemn.

Herb. Biblic. c. 2. {n} Hipponax apud Athenaei Deipnosoph. l. 3. c. 4. p. 78. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 14. c. 1. {p} "Odit verus amor, nec patitur moras", Senecae Hercul. Fur. v. 587.

Song of Solomon 2:14

Ver. 14. O my dove,.... An epithet sometimes used by lovers {q}, and is a new title Christ gives to his church, to express his affection for her and interest in her; and to draw her out of her retirement, to go along with him. The dove is a creature innocent and harmless, beautiful, cleanly, and chaste; sociable and fruitful, weak and timorous, of a mournful voice, and swift in flying; all which is suitable to the church and people of God: they are harmless and inoffensive in their lives and conversations; they are beautiful through the righteousness of Christ on them, and the grace of the Spirit in them; they are clean through the word Christ has spoken, and having their hearts purified by faith; they are as chaste virgins espoused to Christ, and their love to him is single and unfeigned; they cleave to him, are fruitful in grace and good works; and the church being espoused to Christ brings forth many souls unto him in regeneration; saints carry on a social worship and delight in each other's company; they are weak and timorous, being persecuted and oppressed by the men of the world; and mourn for their own sins and others, and often for the loss of Christ's presence; and are swift in flying to him for safety and protection. Under this character the church is said to be

in the clefts of the rock, the usual place where the dove makes its nest, Jer 48:28; or retires to it for safety {r}. Adrichomius says {s}, there was a stone tower near Jerusalem, to the south of the mount of Olives, called "petra columbarum", "the rock of the doves", where often five thousand were kept at once, to which there may be an allusion here; or else it may have respect to the place where doves are forced to fly when pursued by the hawk, even into a hollow rock, as described by Homer {t}; and may be expressive of the state of the church under persecution, when obliged to flee into holes and corners, and caves of the earth; when the Lord is a hiding place to her, in his love, and grace, and power; and particularly Christ is the Rock of his people, so called for height, strength, and duration, and they are the inhabitants of this Rock; and who was typified by the rock in the wilderness, and particularly by that into the clefts of which Moses was put, when the glory of the Lord passed before him: moreover, the clefts of this rock may design the wounds of Christ, which are opened for the salvation of men; and where saints dwell by faith, and are secure from every enemy {u}. The Ethiopic version is, "in the shadow of the rock", to which Christ is compared, Isa 32:2; and so the Septuagint version, "in the covering of the rock", which is no other than the shade of it. Likewise the church is said to be

in the secret [places] of the stairs; Christ is the stairs or steps by which saints ascend up to God, have access to and communion with him; and the secret places may have respect to the justifying righteousness of Christ, and atonement by him, hidden to other men, but revealed to them; and whither in distress they betake themselves, and are sheltered from sin, law, hell, and death, and dwell in safety. Though as such places are dark and dusty, and whither the dove, or any other creature, may in danger betake itself, so upon the whole both this and the preceding clause may design the dark, uncomfortable, and solitary condition the church was in through fear of enemies; in which situation Christ addresses her, saying,

let me see thy countenance, or "face"; and encourages her to appear more publicly in, his house and courts for worship, and present herself before him, and look him full in the face, and with open face behold his glory, and not be shamefaced and fearful; not to be afraid of any thing, but come out of her lurking holes, and be seen abroad by himself and others, since the stormy weather was over, and everything was pleasant and agreeable;

let me hear thy voice; in prayer to him and praise of him, commending the glories and: excellencies of his person, and giving thanks to him for the blessings of his grace;

for sweet [is] thy voice; pleasant, harmonious, melodious, having a mixture of notes in it, as the word signifies; and so exceeds the voice of a natural dove, which is not very harmonious: Herodotus {w} makes mention of a dove that spoke with a human voice; and such a voice Christ's dove speaks with, and it is sweet; that is, pleasant and delightful to him, who loves to hear his people relate the gracious experiences of his goodness, and speak well of his truths and ordinances; prayer is sweet music to him, and praise pleases him better than all burnt offerings;

and thy countenance [is] comely; fair and beautiful, and therefore need not cover her face, or hang down her head, as if ashamed to be seen, since she was in the eye of Christ a perfection of beauty.

{q} "Mea columba", Plauti Casina, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 50. Doves were birds of

Venus; her chariot was drawn by them, Chartar. de Imag. Deor. p. 218. Vid. Apulci Metamorph. l. 6. {r} "Quails spelunca subito commota columba, cui domus et dulces latebroso in pumice nidi", Virgil. Aeneid. 5. v. 213. {s} Theatrum Terrae S. p. 171. {t} Iliad. 21. v. 493, 494. {u} "In tegimento petrae", i.e. "tuta praesidio passionis meae et fidei munimento", Ambros. de Isaac, c. 4. p. 281. {w} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 55.

Song of Solomon 2:15

Ver. 15. Take us the foxes,.... Of which there were great numbers in Judea; see Jud 15:4; these words are directed not to angels, nor to civil magistrates, but to ministers of the word; but whether the words of Christ, or the church, is not easy to determine; some think they are the words of the church, who had hitherto been relating what Christ said to her, and who, having neglected her vineyard, **So 1:6**; and now stirred up by Christ to a greater care of it, expresses her concern for its flourishing; and therefore calls upon her attendants and companions, to assist in taking and destroying those which were harmful to it: but rather they seem to be the words of Christ continued; since they not only show the care of his vines, the churches; but express power and authority over those they are spoken to: and perhaps they may be the words of them both jointly; since the church, with Christ, and under him, has a right to stir up her officers to do their work, and fulfil their ministry, they have received of Christ for her service. By foxes may be meant false teachers, to whom the false prophets of old were compared, Eze 13:3; foxes are crafty and subtle creatures, malignant and mischievous, hungry and voracious, full of deceit and dissimulation, are of an ill smell, and abominably filthy; so false teachers walk in craftiness, use good words and fair speeches, and thereby deceive the hearts of the simple; their doctrines are pernicious, their heresies damnable, and they bring destruction on themselves and others; they are hungry after worldly substance, are greedy of it, and can never have enough; devour widows' houses, and make merchandise of men, to enrich themselves; they put on sheep's clothing, transform themselves into angels of light, mimic the voice of Gospel ministers, use their phrases and expressions, that they may not be easily discovered; and are abominable in their principles and practices, and to be shunned by all good men. Now ministers of the Gospel are ordered to take these, to detect them, and refute their errors, and reprove them sharply for them; and, after proper steps taken, to reject them, to cast them out of the vineyards, the churches, and keep them out. Even the little foxes; heresies and heretics are to be nipped in the bud, before they increase to more ungodliness; otherwise errors, which may seem small at first, soon grow larger and spread themselves, and become fatal to the churches:

that spoil the vines; as foxes do, by gnawing the branches, biting the bark, making bare the roots, devouring the ripe grapes, and infecting all with their noxious teeth and vicious breath {x}: so false teachers make divisions and schisms in churches; disturb their peace; unsettle some, and subvert others; sap the foundation of religion, and corrupt the word of God; and therefore by all means to be taken, and the sooner the better;

for our vines [have] tender grapes: or "flowers";
See Gill on "So 2:13". The "vines" are the churches; the "tender grapes", or "flowers", young converts, which Christ has a particular regard unto, Isa 40:11; and these, having but a small degree of knowledge, are more easily imposed upon and seduced by false teachers; and therefore, for their sakes, should be carefully watched, and vigorously opposed, since otherwise a promising vintage is in danger of being spoiled. Christ, in this address, intimates, that not only he and the church, but, he ministers also, had an interest in the vines and tender grapes, as they have; see **So 8:11**; and therefore should be the more concerned for their welfare; hence he calls them "ours"; interest carries a powerful argument in it.

{x} Vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 1. v. 48, 49. & Idyll. 5. v. 112, 113. So soldiers are compared to foxes, because they eat the grapes in the countries they come into, Aristoph. Equites, Act 3. Sc. 1. p. 350.

Song of Solomon 2:16

Ver. 16. My beloved [is] mine, and I [am] his,.... These are the words of the church; who, having had such evidences of Christ's love to her, and care of her, expresses her faith of interest in him, and suggests the obligations she lay under to observe his commands. The words are expressive of the mutual interest had property Christ and his church have in each other: Christ is the church's, by the Father's gift of him to her, to be her Head, Husband, and Saviour; and by the gift of himself unto her, to be her Redeemer and ransom price; and by marriage, having espoused her to himself, in righteousness and lovingkindness; and by possession, he living and dwelling in her, by his Spirit and grace: the church also acknowledges herself to be his, as she was, by the

Father's gift of her to Christ, as his spouse and bride, his portion and inheritance; and by purchase, he having bought her with his precious blood; and by the conquest of her, by his grace in effectual calling; and by a voluntary surrender of herself unto him, under the influence of his grace: hence all he is, and has, are hers, his person, fulness, blood, and righteousness; and therefore can want no good thing. Moreover, these words suggest the near union there is between Christ and his church; they are one in a conjugal relation, as husband and wife are one; which union is personal, of the whole person of Christ to the whole persons of his people; it is a spiritual one, they having the same Spirit, the one without measure, the other in measure; it is a vital one, as is between the vine and its branches; and it is a mysterious one, next to that of the union of the three Persons in the Godhead, and of the two natures in Christ; it is an indissoluble one, the everlasting love of Christ being the bond of it, which call never be dissolved; and from this union flow a communication of the names of Christ to his church, conformity to him, communion with him, and an interest in all he has. Likewise these phrases express the mutual affliction, complacency, and delight, Christ and his church have in each other; he is beloved by his church, and she by him; she seems to have a full assurance of interest in him, and to make her boast of him; excluding all other beloveds, as unworthy to be mentioned with him: of whom she further says,

he feedeth among the lilies; which is either an apostrophe to him, "O thou that feedest", &c. thou only art my beloved; or is descriptive of him to others, inquiring who he was, and where to be seen: the answer is, he is the person that is yonder, feeding among the lilies; either recreating and delighting himself in his gardens, the churches, where his saints are, comparable to lilies; See Gill on "So 2:1", and
See Gill on "So 2:2"; or feeding his sheep in fields where lilies grow: and it may be observed, it is not said, he feedeth on, or feeds his flock with lilies, but among them; for it is remarked {y}, that sheep will not eat them: or the sense may be, Christ feeds himself, and feeds his people, and feeds among them, as if he was crowned with lilies, and anointed with the oil of them; as was the custom of the ancients at festivals {z}, thought to be here alluded to by some who read the words, "that feeds"; that is, sups in or with lilies, being anointed and crowned with them. The lily is a summer flower {a}; the winter was now past, **So 2:11**.

{y} Tuccius in Soto Major in loc. {z} Vid. Fortunat. Schacc. Eleochrysm. Sacr. l. 1. c. 28. p. 137. {a} Theophrast. apud Athenaeum in Deipnosoph. l. 15. c. 7. p. 679.

Song of Solomon 2:17

Ver. 17. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away,.... Which may be connected with **So 2:16**; either with the former part, "my beloved is mine", &c. **So 2:16**; and then the sense is, as long as night and day continue, and God's covenant with both stands sure; so long union to Christ, and covenant interest in him, will abide: or with the latter part, "he feedeth among the lilies until", &c. even until his second coming: or with the next clause in this verse,

turn, my beloved; and so is a prayer for Christ's speedy coming to her, and continued presence with her, until the day should break: which may be understood either of the Gospel day made by the rising of Christ, the sun of righteousness, at his first coming in the flesh; when the shadows of the ceremonial law disappeared, Christ, the body and substance of them, being come, and the darkness of the Gentile world was scattered, through the light of the Gospel being sent into it: the words may be rendered, "until the day breathe", or "blow" {b}; and naturalists observe {c}, that, upon the sun's rising, an air or wind has been excited, and which ceases before the middle of the day, and never lasts so long as that; and on Christ's, the sun of righteousness, arising with healing in his wings, some cool, gentle, and refreshing breezes of divine grace and consolation were raised, which were very desirable and grateful: or this may be understood of Christ's second coming; which will make the great day of the Lord, so often spoken of in Scripture: and which suits as well with the Hebrew text, and the philosophy of it, as the former; for, as the same naturalists {d} observe, the wind often blows fresh, and fine breezes of air spring up at the setting as well as at the rising of the sun; see **Ge 3:8**; and may very well be applied to Christ's second coming, at the evening of the world; which will be a time of refreshing to the saints, and very desirable by them; and though it will be an evening to the world, which will then come to an end, with them there will be no more night of darkness, desertion, affliction, and persecution; the shadows of ignorance, infidelity, doubts, and fears, will be dispersed, and there will be one pure, clear, unbeclouded, and everlasting day; and till then the church prays, as follows:

turn, my beloved; that is, to her; who seemed to be ready to depart from her, or was gone; and therefore she desires he would turn again, and continue with her, until the time was come before mentioned: or, "turn about" {e}; surround me with thy favour and lovingkindness, and secure me from all enemies, until the glorious and wished for day comes, when I shall be out of fear and danger; or, "embrace me" {f}; as in **So 2:6**; during the present dispensation, which was as a night in comparison of the everlasting day;

and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether; the same with Bethel, according to Adrichomius {g}; where were mountains, woody, set with trees, full of grass and aromatic plants; and so may be the same with the mountains of spices, **So 8:14**; where the Ethiopic version has Bethel; and so that and the Septuagint version, in an addition to **So 2:9**; here; see **2Ki 2:23**; unless Bithron is meant, **2Sa 2:29**; a place in Gilead, beyond Jordan, so called, because it was parted from Judea by the river Jordan: and the words are by some rendered, "the mountains of division or separation" {h}; which, if referred to Christ's first coming, may regard the ceremonial law, the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, broke down by Christ, and the two people divided by it, which were reconciled by him; if to his spiritual coming, the same things may be intended by them as on **So 2:9**; but if to his second coming, the spacious heavens may be meant, in which Christ will appear, and which now interpose and separate from his bodily presence; and therefore the church importunately desires his coming with speed and swiftness, like a roe or a young hart, and be seen in them; see Re 22:10.

{b} xwpyv de ewv ou diapneush, Sept. "donec, vel dum spiret", Mercerus, Cocceius; "aspirat", Marckius; "spiraverit", Michaelis. {c} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 47. Senecae Nat. Quaest. l. 5. c. 8. {d} lbid. Aristot. Problem. s. 25. c. 4. "Adspirant aurae in noctem", Virgil. Aeneid. 7. v. 8. {e} bo "circui", Montanus, Sanctius; "circumito"; some in Michaelis. {f} "Complectere", Marckius. {g} Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 16. {h} rtb yrh le "in montibus divisionis", Vatablus, Piscator; "scissionis", Cocceius; "dissectionis", Marckius; "sectionis vel separationis", Michaelis.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Song of Solomon 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO SONG OF SOLOMON 3

In this chapter an account is given of an adventure of the church, in quest of her beloved; of the time when, and places where, and the persons of whom she sought him; and of her success upon the whole; with a charge she give to the daughters of Jerusalem, **So 3:1**; by whom she is commended, **So 3:6**; and then

Christ, her beloved, is described by her; by his bed, and the guard about it, **So 3:7**; by the chariot he rode in, **So 3:9**; and by the crown he wore on his coronation day, **So 3:11**.

Ver. 1. By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth,.... The day being not yet broke, the night of Jewish darkness still on the church, and the shadow of the ceremonial law as yet stretched upon her; and having some knowledge of Christ by types and prophecies, desires more, and seeks it in the use of means: though the words may be taken in a more large sense, and represent the state and condition of the church and of all true believers in any age, and at one time as well as another; who, when their beloved is absent, it is "night" with them; as Christ's presence makes day, his absence makes night; and it was now night with the Church, either of affliction, or of darkness and desertion, and indeed of both. The word is plural, "by nights" {i}; one night after another, successively, she sought her beloved; which both expresses the continuance of her state, and her diligence and constancy in seeking Christ. The place where she sought him was "her bed"; not the same as in **So 1:16**; which was both Christ's and hers, and where a different word is used; but this was purely her own: either a bed of affliction, when good men usually seek the Lord, Isa 26:16 **Ho 5:15**; or rather of carnal ease and security, in which she continued, and rose not up from it to seek her beloved; which shows the cold, lukewarm, lazy frame she was in, and formal manner in which she sought him, and so succeeded not: however, he was stilt the person "whom [her] soul loved", cordially and sincerely, though not so fervently as she had done; true love, though it may be abated, cannot be lost;

I sought him, but I found him not; because she sought him not aright; not timely, nor fervently and diligently, nor in a proper place; not in her closet, by prayer, reading, and meditation, nor in public ordinances, she afterwards did; but on her bed.

{i} twlylb en nuxin, Sept. "per noctes", V. L. Junius & Tremeilius, Piscator; "in noctibus", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine versions, Marckius, Michaelis.

Song of Solomon 3:2

Ver. 2. I will rise now,.... Perceiving she had taken a wrong method, and therefore unsuccessful, she fixes on another; and, in the strength of divine grace, determines to pursue it, and "now", at once, immediately, without any delay, "rise" from her bed of sloth and ease, and forego her carnal pleasures, in pursuit of her beloved; which showed the sincerity of her love to him;

and go about the city; not the city of Jerusalem, though there may be an allusion to it; but the spiritual city, of which saints are fellow citizens, where they dwell, and where the word is preached, and the ordinances are administered: and "going about" it, as she proposed, showed her diligence and industry in seeking him: and the night being an unseasonable time to walk about a city, especially for women, this is a further proof of her great love to Christ, in that she not only exposed herself to reproach and scandal, but to harm and danger also; but being fired with love, and fearless of danger {k}, and set on finding her beloved, she resolved to proceed, whatever she suffered. Hence she sought him

in the streets, and in the broad ways; that is, of the city, such as commonly are in cities; so Troy is described {l} as a city, having broad ways in it; and also Athens {m}: meaning the public ordinances of the Gospel, where he takes his walks, and often shows himself; in seeking him here, she was right, though she did not succeed;

I will seek him whom my soul loveth; her love was still the same, not abated, more likely to be increased through disappointment; nor was she discouraged, but was determined to go on seeking, till she found him;

I sought him, but I found him not; this was to chastise her for her former negligence; to try her faith, love, and patience; and to show that even the best means, though to be used, are not to be depended on; and that Christ has his own time and way to make himself known to his people, which depends on his sovereign will.

{k} "Audacem faciebat amor". Ovid. Metamorph. l. 4. Fab. 4. {l} Homer. Iliad. 2. v. 29, 66, 141, 329. & 14. v. 88. Odyss. 22. v. 230. {m} Ib. Odyss. 7. v. 80.

Song of Solomon 3:3

Ver. 3. The watchmen that go about the city found me,.... By whom are meant the ministers of the Gospel; who are called watchmen, as the prophets were under the Old Testament, Isa 52:8; in allusion to watchmen in cities; and are so called in regard to themselves, it being their duty to watch over themselves;

and to their doctrine, and all opportunities to preach it, and the success of it: their business with respect to others is to give the time of night; to point out the state and condition of the church; to give notice of danger to sinners in the broad road to destruction; and to saints, through the prevalence of error, heresy, and immorality; all which require sobriety, vigilance, prudence, courage, and faithfulness; and show the necessity and utility of the Gospel ministry, and the awfulness of it; and the care Christ takes of his churches, in providing such officers in them. These are said to "go about the city", denoting their industry and diligence; and being in the way of their duty, they "found" the church, fell upon her case in their ministry, and hit it exactly; which shows the efficacy of the word under a divine direction; which finds out sinners, and their sins; saints, and their particular cases, unknown to ministers; and the church, having met with something suitable to her case under their ministry,

[to whom I said], took an opportunity privately to discourse with them, and put this question to them,

Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? meaning Christ; who was still the object of her love, and uppermost in her thoughts; whom she thus describes, without mentioning his name, as if he was the only "Him" in the world worthy of any regard; which shows how much he was in her mind, how much the desires and affections of her soul were towards him, and that these ministers needed no other description of him. No answer is returned to her question that is recorded; not because they were not able to give one, nor because they did not; and if they did not, it might be owing to her haste, not waiting for one; and if they did, she not being able to apply it to her case, no notice is taken of it: however, though she did not find immediate relief by them, yet she met with something from them that was of use to her afterwards, as appears by what follows.

Song of Solomon 3:4

Ver. 4. [It was] but a little that I passed from them,.... Either a small moment of time, as the Targum and Aben Ezra; or a little distance of place, that is, from the watchmen or ministers, from whom she passed; not through disrespect to them, much less contempt of them; nor because she received no benefit at all from them; but her going on shows she did not rest in means, but looked beyond them, and went on further in the exercise of her faith, and hope of finding her beloved: and meeting with him a little after she had passed from the ministers suggests that Christ is not far from his ministers and ordinances;

for it follows,

but I found him whom my soul loveth; which she expresses with the utmost exultation and pleasure, which meeting with him must give her, after such long and fruitless searches, and so many disappointments; see **Joh 1:41**; and for Christ to show himself, without which there is no finding him, is a proof of the greatness of his love, and of the freeness and sovereignty of it; and that means, though to be used, are not to be depended on; nor should we be discouraged when they fail, since Christ can make himself known without them, as he did here to the church; who says,

I held him, and would not let him go; which on the part of the church is expressive of her faith in him, signified by laying hold on him, his person, righteousness, grace, and strength, **Pr 3:18**; and of her strong affection to him, grasping and embracing him in her arms of faith and love; and of her fear and jealousy lest he should depart from her again; and of her steady resolution to hold him, whatever was the consequence of it: and, on his part, it intimates a seeming offer to be gone; and a gracious allowance to lay hold on him; and his wonderful condescension to be held by her; and the delight and pleasure he took in the exercise of her faith upon him; for it was not against but with his will he was held by her; and this she determined to do, and not let go her hold,

until, says she,

I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chambers of her that conceived me; the allusion is to the tents and apartments women had in former times, distinct from their husbands, Ge 24:67; and all this may be understood either of the visible church, and the ordinances of it, the mother of all true believers, where they are born again, brought up and nourished; and where Christ may be said to be brought, when his name is professed, his Gospel is embraced, and his ordinances are submitted to; and here the church is desirous of introducing Christ, that she with others might magnify him, and praise him for all the instances of his grace and goodness, and have communion with him: or else the heart, and the inmost recesses of it, may be meant; where the incorruptible seed of divine grace is cast; where the new creature; conceived, born, and brought up, until it becomes a perfect man; and where Christ is desired to be, and to dwell by faith, and saints may have uninterrupted communion with him: unless the heavenly mansions are intended, the house of the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all; where saints long to be with Christ, enjoy him, and never lose his presence more; till then the church resolves to hold him fast in the arms of faith, hope, and love, and not let him go.

Song of Solomon 3:5

Ver. 5. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,.... Which are either the words of Christ, adjuring the young converts not to disturb the church; who had now Christ in her arms, taking repose with him, being wearied with running about in search of him: or they are the words of the church; who having experienced a long absence of Christ, and having been at much pains in search of him, and now had found him, was very unwilling to part with him; and fearing these young converts should by any unbecoming word or action provoke him to depart, she gives them a solemn charge;

by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please; See Gill on "So 2:7".

Song of Solomon 3:6

Ver. 6. Who [is] this that cometh out of the wilderness,.... This is said by the daughters of Jerusalem, adjured in **So 3:5**; who, upon the happy meeting of Christ and his church, saw a greater glory and beauty in her than they had seen before; and therefore put this question, not as ignorant of her, but as admiring at her. By the wilderness she is said to "come out" of is meant either a state of nature, as Theodoret; in which all the elect of God are before conversion, and out of which they are brought by efficacious grace; called a wilderness, because of the barrenness and unfruitfulness of persons in such a state; and because of the perplexed ways and tracks in it, which bewilder a man that he knows not which to take; and because of the want of spiritual provisions in it; and because of the danger men are exposed unto through holes and pits, and beasts of prey: in such a state God finds his people, convinces them of it, and brings them out of it; which is an instance of surprising and distinguishing grace: or else the world itself may be meant, the wilderness of the people, Eze 20:35; so called because of the roughness of the way, the many tribulations the saints pass through in it; and because of the traps and snares that are in it, through evil men, the lusts of the flesh, and the temptations of Satan; because of the many evil beasts in it, ungodly men, false teachers, and Satan the roaring lion; and because of the plentiful table God furnishes here for his people, feeding them in the wilderness with Gospel doctrines and spiritual ordinances, Re 12:14; and because of the many windings and turnings of Providence in it, through all which they are led in a right way to the city of their habitation: now though they are in the world, they are not of it; they are called out of it, and quit as much as may be the company and conversation of the men of it; and through the grace of God are more and more weaned from it, and long after another and better world; all which may be intended by their coming out of this: or else this may design a state of sorrow and distress when under desertion, and without the presence of Christ; which had lately been the case of the church, who had been in a bewildered condition, and not knowing where her beloved was, ran about here and there in quest of him, like one in a wood, seeking him and calling after him; but now having sight of him, and some communion with him, is represented as coming out of that state. She is further described as being

like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense; her heart being inflamed with love to Christ, her affections moved upwards, heavenwards, and were set on things above; and which were sincere and upright, rose up in the form of palm trees, as the word {n} signifies, a very upright tree; and these moved steadily towards Christ, and could not be diverted from him by the winds of temptation, affliction, and persecution; and though there might be some degree of dulness and imperfection in them, hence called "pillars of smoke"; yet being perfumed with the sweet smelling myrrh of Christ's sacrifice, and the incense of his mediation, became acceptable to God. It is added,

with all powders of the merchant: odorous ones, such are the graces of the Spirit, which Christ the merchantman is full of; and makes his people, their affections and prayers, of a sweet smelling savour with. Ben Melech interprets it of garments perfumed with spices; see
Ps 45:8; Some render the words, "above" or "more excellent than all powders of the merchant" {o}, druggist or apothecary {p}; no such drug nor spice to be found in their shops, that smell so sweet as Christ, his grace and righteousness.

{n} twrmytk "ut columnae ad formam palmae assurgntes", Buxtorf; "ut palmae", Mercerus, Cocceius; "instar palmarum", Tigurine version, Michaelis. {o} so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt. {p} lkwr mureqou, Sept. "pigmentarii", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "pharmacopolae", Tigurine version; "seplasiarii", Mercerus, Cocceius; "aromatarii", Junius & Tremellius, Marckius.

Song of Solomon 3:7

Ver. 7. Behold his bed which [is] Solomon's,.... Not Solomon the son of David, and penman of this song, but a greater than he, the antitype of him; so it is interpreted of the Messiah by many Jewish writers {q}: they were both sons of David and sons of God, and kings and preachers in Jerusalem. Solomon was a type of Christ in his wisdom and wealth, in the largeness and peaceableness of his kingdom; in his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, and in building the temple, a figure of the church: and by his bed is meant the place where saints meet together for religious worship, his church visible, which is his resting and dwelling place; where souls are begotten and born again, and have fellowship with Christ; and which he has a property in by gift and purchase: and a behold is prefixed to it as a note of attention, directing the daughters of Jerusalem to turn off the discourse from her, and from commendation of her, to consider the greatness of Christ her beloved; who might conclude, that if his bed was so stately as after described, bow great must he himself be; and as a note of admiration, to show how much she was affected with the greatness of his grace to her, and the privileges she enjoyed of having nearness to him, and fellowship with him;

threescore valiant men [are] about it, of the valiant of Israel; ministers of the Gospel, such as are Israelites indeed, faithful and upright; and who are valiant, and heartily concerned for the good and welfare of Christ's people, and are careful that nothing hurt them, nor disturb their rest and repose. In the number of them, the allusion may be to the guard about Solomon's bed; which might consist of so many, partly for the security of his royal person, and partly for grandeur and majesty: and were just double the number of his father's worthies, he excelling him in greatness and glory; though it may be a certain number is put for an uncertain; and this is a competent and sufficient one.

{q} Targum, Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, Ben Melech, and Abendana.

Song of Solomon 3:8

Ver. 8. They all hold swords,.... Or a "sword" {r}; the word is singular, which designs the word of God, called the sword of the Spirit, and said to be sharper than a twoedged sword, **Eph 6:17** **Heb 4:12**; which everyone of the ministers of the Gospel hold in their hands; and which denotes not only their apprehension, but their retention of it, and firm adherence to it; it cleaves to them, and they to that; they and their sword cannot be parted, as Gussetius {s} observes the word signifies; these ministers could not be prevailed upon to drop it, or part with it, but retained it to the last; which shows them to be valiant men;

[being] expert in war; in military straits, in the spiritual war against sin, Satan, and the world, in common with other Christians; and in fighting the good fight of faith, against all opposers of the doctrines of the Gospel; knowing how to use to the best advantage the spiritual sword, the Scriptures of truth, to defend the Gospel, and refute error;

every man [hath] his sword upon his thigh; as a preparation for war, and an indication of readiness to engage in it, Ps 45:3; for, being on the thigh, it is near, easy to come at, at once upon occasion, and so always in a posture of defence; all which expresses the familiar acquaintance ministers have with the word of God, its nearness, so that they can easily come at it, and furnish themselves with a sufficient proof of truth, and with proper arguments for the refutation of error. And this is done

because of fear in the night: when there is most danger; hence Cyrus considering that men are most easily taken when eating and drinking, and in the bath, and in bed, and in sleep, looked out for the most faithful men to be his bodyguard {t}. By "night" or "nights" {u} may be meant the nights of desertion, temptation, affliction, and persecution; when saints are in fear of their spiritual enemies, and of being overcome and destroyed by them: now Christ has provided a guard for his people, to prevent or remove these fears, and defend them from such as would make inroads upon their faith and comfort; namely, his ministers, that by their ministerings they may be a means of securing their peace and comfort, and of freeing them from all terrible apprehensions of things; which, as it shows the safety and security of the saints, so the tender care and concern of Christ for them.

{r} romfaian Sept. "gladium", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius. {s} Ebr. Comment. p. 23. {t} Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 6. c. 29. {u} twlylb "in noctibus", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Marckius, Michaelis.

Song of Solomon 3:9

Ver. 9. King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. The word translated chariot is only used in this place; some render it a bride chamber {u}; others a nuptial bed {w}, such as is carried from place to place; it is used in the Misnah {x} for the nuptial, bed, or open chariot, in which the bride was carried from her father's house to her husband's. The Septuagint render it by foreion, a word near in sound to that in the Hebrew text, and was the "lectica" of the ancients, somewhat like our "sedan"; some of which were adorned with gold and precious stones, and had silver feet {y}, or pillars, as follows: it seems upon the whole to be the nuptial chariot in which, according to Pausanias {z}, three only were carried, the bride, who sat in the middle, then the bridegroom, and then the friend of the bridegroom: something of this kind is the "palki" or "palanquin" of the Indians, in which the bride and bridegroom are carried on the day of marriage on four men's shoulders {a}: and by this "chariot" may be meant either the human nature of Christ, in which he descended and ascended to heaven; or his church, in which he shows himself to his people in his ordinances, where he rides in triumph, conquering and to conquer, by his Spirit and grace, in his word; or the covenant of grace, in which Christ shows the freeness and sovereignty of his love in being the Mediator, surety, and messenger of it; and in which his people are bore up and supported under and carried through many trials and exercises in this life, and are brought triumphantly to heaven; or rather the Gospel, and the ministration of it, in which Christ shows himself as in a chariot, in the glory of his person, offices, grace, and love; in this he is carried up and down in the world, **Ac 9:15**; and by it is conveyed to the souls of men; and in it he triumphs over his enemies, and causes his ministers to triumph also: and he is the subject, sum, and substance of it, and the alone author of it; for he is the Solomon here spoken of that made it; it is not a device of men's, but a revelation of his, and therefore called "the Gospel of Christ"; and which he gives to men to preach, a commission to preach it, and qualifications for it: and this he does "for himself", to set forth the glories of his person and office, to display the riches of his grace, and to show himself to be the only way of salvation to host sinners: and this chariot being said to be "of the wood of Lebanon", cedar, which is both incorruptible and of a good smell; may denote the uncorruptness of the Gospel, as dispensed by faithful ministers, and the continuance and duration of it, notwithstanding the efforts of men and devils to the contrary; and the acceptableness of it to the saints, to whom is the savour of life unto life; and it being a nuptial chariot that seems designed, it agrees with the Gospel, in the ministry of which souls are brought to Christ, and espoused as a chaste virgin to him, 2Co 11:2.

{u} Nwyrpa "thalamum sponsarum", Montanus. {w} So Schmidt, Marckius, David de Pomis, Kimchi in Sopher Shorash. rad. hrp & Ben Melech in loc. {x} Sotah, c. 9. s. 14. & Jarchi in ibid. {y} Vid. Alstorph. de Lecticis Veter. c. 3. {z} Vid. Suidam in voce zeugov. {a} Agreement of Customs between the East Indians and Jews, artic. 17. p. 68.

Song of Solomon 3:10

Ver. 10. He made the pillars thereof [of] silver,.... The truths and doctrines of the Gospel are the "pillars" of it; which, like pillars, are solid and substantial, and continue firm and immovable, and are of great use to support the children of God under the several trials and exercises they are attended with; and, for their utility, value, and duration, are said to be of "silver", and are as carefully to be sought for and into as that is, and even to be preferred to it, being of more worth than "thousands of gold and silver"; the ministers of the Gospel are sometimes compared to pillars, and the church itself is said to be the pillar and ground of truth, **Ga 2:9**;

the bottom thereof [of] gold; Christ, the golden bottom of the Gospel, the sum and substance of it, the principal subject in it to be insisted on; he is laid in it as the bottom, ground, and foundation of faith and hope, and of everlasting life and salvation; and for its richness, firmness, and duration, may be said to be of gold, as the street of the New Jerusalem, Re 21:21; or its "pavement" {b}, as the word here signifies. The Septuagint render it, a "reclining" {c} place, to sit and rest, or lean upon; such is Christ;

the covering of it [of] purple; or the top of it; the word signifies a chariot itself: it may respect such doctrines of the Gospel which relate to redemption, pardon of sin, and justification through the blood of Christ; and all under the purple covering of the blood of Christ are secure from wrath to come, and go safe to heaven;

the midst thereof being paved [with] love, for the daughters of Jerusalem; the carpet wrought with lovely figures or with love stories: the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel are full of love, of God in Christ, in providing Christ as a Saviour, and sending him to be one; and of the love of Christ in assuming human nature, and suffering and dying in it for sinners, even for Jerusalem sinners; the Gospel sets forth the heart of Christ as "inflamed" {d}, as the word here used signifies, with love to the daughters of Jerusalem, his dear children, which moved him to do all he did and suffered for them; and could his heart be looked into, the very images of these persons would be seen upon it: the ordinances of the Gospel are designed both to set forth, in the most striking manner, the love of Christ to his sons and daughters, for whose sake he became man and suffered death, and to draw forth their love to him; so the words may be rendered, "paved with love by the daughters of Jerusalem" {e}, or "with the love of them" {f} how delightful must it be to ride in such a chariot, or sit under such a ministry, where there is nothing but love! moreover, the whole description of the "bride chamber", which some choose to render the word for "chariot" by, well agrees with the New Jerusalem state, as given in Re 21:1, where the church being as a bride prepared for her husband, will be introduced, the nuptial feast will be kept, and Christ will be seen by the daughters of Zion in all his regal glory, with the royal diadem on his head, as he is described in **So 3:11**.

{b} wtdypr "pavimentum ejus", Vatablus, Grotius. {c} anakliton, Sept. "reclinatorium ejus", Arabic interpreter. {d} Pwur "succcensum", Montanus, Marckius; "accensum, sive exustum", some in Vatablus, so Aben Ezra. {e} twnbm "a filiabus", Montanus, Cocceius; so Sept. "a puellis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {f} "Amore foeminarum", Tigurine version; "amore filiarum", Vatablus, Mercerus.

Song of Solomon 3:11

Ver. 11. Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion,.... The same with the daughters of Jerusalem; the reason of the variation is, because Christ, here so gloriously described, is King of Zion, and they his subjects; these the church observing, being intent on looking at the bed and chariot she had described, calls them from those objects to look at a more glorious one; to whom Solomon in all his glory, on his coronation or marriage day, to which the allusion is, was not equal; wherefore she invites them to "go forth" and look at him, as people are forward to go out of their houses to see a crowned king pass along the streets, especially on his coronation day; and men never see any glory and excellency in Christ, until they go out of themselves, and look off of every other object to him alone;

and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals; alluding to a custom with the Jews {g} and other nations {h}, to put nuptial crowns on the heads Of married persons, both men and women, on the marriage day: Christ is undoubtedly here meant by Solomon, who is King of Zion, King of saints;
See Gill on "So 3:7"; by whose mother is meant either the church, the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all, of Christ mystical; or else every believer, who is not only his brother and sister, but his mother,
Mt 12:50; and this may refer to the time when Christ is first made known unto

and held by a sensible sinner, in the glory of his person, and the fulness of his grace, as sitting and riding in the chariot of the everlasting Gospel; when such honour him, and crown him by venturing on him, and believing in him; for every act of faith on Christ is putting the crown upon his head; and every submission to his ordinances is an acknowledging him King of saints; and every ascription of salvation to him and his grace by any, is casting their crowns at his and setting one on his head; and such a time is the time of his open espousals to them, when such consent to be his for ever, and give up their whole selves to him; there was a secret espousal of all the elect to Christ, upon the Father's grant of them to him in eternity; and there is an open espousal of them to him personally, at their conversion under the ministry of the word, when they are espoused as chaste virgins to Christ; at which time there is a large breaking forth of Christ's love to them, and of theirs to him: hence it is called "the love of their espousals"; see 2Co 11:2; and here

the day of the gladness of his heart; when Christ gladly and cheerfully receives such souls into his embraces, and rejoices over them as the bridegroom over the bride: now the church would have the daughters of "Jerusalem behold", look at this glorious person with an eye of faith and love, with attention and admiration; see **Zec 9:9**; there being such astonishing, incomparable, and transcendent excellencies in him, which require such looks as these;

{g} Misnah Sotah, c. 9. s. 14. {h} Vid. Paschalium de Coronis. l. 2. c. 16. p. 126. & Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian de Raptu Proserp. l. 2. v. 148. "Magnisque coronis conjugium fit", Claudian. Laus Serenae, v. 189, 190.
stefov
gamhlion, Bion. Idyl. 1. prope finem.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Song of Solomon 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO SONG OF SOLOMON 4

In this chapter is contained a large commendation of the church's beauty by Christ; first, more particularly, by an enumeration of several parts, as her eyes, hair, teeth, lips, temples, neck, and breasts, **So 4:1**; and more generally, **So 4:7**; And having observed where he himself was determined to go, he invites her to go with him; which he enforces, partly from the danger she was exposed unto where she was **So 4:6**; and partly from the comeliness of her person and graces in his esteem; with which he was ravished, and therefore was extremely desirous of her company, **So 4:9**; And then enters into some new descriptions of her; as a garden and orchard, as a spring and fountain, **So 4:12**; all which she makes to be owing to him, **So 4:15**; And the chapter is closed with an order from Christ to the winds to blow on his garden, and cause the spices of it to flow out; and with an invitation of the church to Christ, to come into his garden, and relax there, **So 4:16**.

Ver. 1. Behold, thou [art] fair, my love; behold, thou [art] fair,.... The same as in **So 1:15**; here repeated by Christ, to introduce the following commendation; to express the greatness of his love to his church; and show that he had the same opinion of her, and esteem for her, notwithstanding what had passed between that time and this;

thou [hast] doves' eyes within thy locks; the same comparison,
See Gill on "So 1:15"; only with this difference, here her eyes are said to be "within [her] locks": which, whether understood of the ministers of the Gospel; or of the eyes of the understanding, particularly of, the eye of faith, as has been observed on the above place; do not seem so much to design the imperfection of the sight of the one or of the other, in the present state, as eyes within or under locks and in some measure covered with them, hinder the sight of them; as the modesty of either of them; locks being decently tied up, as the word signifies {i}, is a sign thereof, as the contrary is a sign of boldness and wantonness. Doves' eyes themselves are expressive of modesty and humility, and, this phrase added to them, increases the idea; such ministers, who have the largest gifts, greatest grace, light, and knowledge, are the most humble, witness the Apostle Paul; and this phrase expresses the beauty of them, not only in the eyes of Christ, but in the eyes of those to whom they publish the good tidings of salvation: and so it may denote what an exceeding modest grace faith is, which receives all from Christ, and gives him all the glory, and takes none to itself; and what a beauty there is in it, insomuch that Christ is ravished with it, **So 4:9**; and seems rather to be the sense here;

thy hair [is] as a flock of goats; like the hair of goats, so Ben Melech. Hair adds much to the comeliness of persons, and is therefore frequently mentioned, both with respect to the bride and bridegroom, in this song, **So 5:1**; and so in all poems of this kind {k}; and one part of the comeliness of women lies in their hair;

"let a woman, says Apuleius {l}, be adorned with ever such fine garments, and decked with gold and jewels, yet, without this ornament, she will not be pleasing; no, not Verus herself."

The women {m} in Homer, are described by their beautiful hair; nor is it unusual to compare the hair of women, and represent it as superior to a fleece of the choicest flock {n}. And here the church's hair is said to be like the hair of goats, for that is the sense of the expression; and which is thought to be most like to human hair,
1Sa 19:13; and it is compared to that, not so much for its length and sleekness, as for its colour, being yellowish; which, with women formerly, was in esteem, and reckoned graceful {o}; this being the colour of the hair of some of the greatest beauties, as Helena, Philoxena, and others, whose hair was flaxen and yellow; hence great care was taken to make it look so, even as yellow as gold {p}: the Jewish women used to have their perukes, or false hair, of goats' hair, and still have in some places to this day {q}; and it should seem the Roman women also had, to which the poet {r} refers. And the church's hair here is said to be like the hair of a flock of goats,

that appear from Mount Gilead; or rather "on Mount Gilead", as Noldius: Gilead was a mountain in the land of Israel, beyond Jordan, famous for pasturage for cattle, where flocks of goats were fed, as was usual on mountains {s}; and, being well fed, their hair was long, smooth, neat, and glistering; and so to spectators, at a distance, looked very beautiful and lovely; especially in the morning at sun rising, and, glancing on them with its bright and glittering rays, were delightful. So R. Jonah, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, which signifies the morning, interprets it, which "rise early in the morning"; and which, as Schultens {t} observes, some render,

"leading to water early in the morning;"

the Vulgate Latin version is, "that ascend from Mount Gilead", from a lower to a higher part of it; which is approved of by Bochart {u}. Now the hair of the church may be interpreted either of believers, the several members of the church of Christ; the hairs of the head are numerous, grow upon the head, and have their nourishment from it; are weak in themselves, but depend upon the head, and are an ornament to it: so the saints, though few in comparison of the world, yet by themselves are a great number, which no man can number; these grow upon Christ, the Head of the church, and receive their nourishment from him; and, though weak in themselves, have strength from him, and have their dependence on him; and are an ornament and crown of glory to him; and who are cared for and numbered by him, so that no one can be lost; see **Eze 5:1**. Or rather it may be interpreted of the outward conversation of the saints; hair is visible, is a covering, and an ornament, when taken care of, and managed aright, and has its dependence and is influenced by the head: the good conversation of the church and its members is visible to all, as the hair of the head, and as a flock of goats on Mount Gilead; and is a covering, though not from divine justice, yet from the reproaches of men; is ornamental to believers, and to the doctrine they profess; especially when their conversation is ordered aright, according to the weird of God, and is influenced by grace, communicated from Christ, the Head.

{i} Ktmul "intra ligamina tua", some in Vatablus; "vittam suam", Cocceius; "constrictam comam tuam", Michaelis, so Jarchi. Vid. Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode 11. v. 23, 24. {k} Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. Nupt. Honor. Ode 1. v. 12. {l} Metamorph. l. 2. {m} Juno, Iliad. 10. v. 5. Diana, Odyss. 20. v. 80. Minerva, Iliad. 6. v. 92. Latona, Iliad. 1. v. 36. & 19. v. 413. Circe, Odyss. 10. v. 136, 220, 310. Calypso, Odyss. 5. v. 30. Helena, Iliad. 3. v. 329. & passim; Thetis, Iliad. 18. v. 407. & 20. v. 207. Ceres, Odyss. 5. v. 125. Nymphs and others, Odyss. 6. v. 222, 238. & 12. v. 132. & 19. v. 542. So Venus is described by Claudian. de Nupt. Honor. v. 99. "Casariem tunc forte Venus subnixa corusco fingebat solio". {n} "Quae crine vincit Boetici gregis vellus", Martial. l. 5. Ep. 38. {o} "Nondum illi flavum", &c. Virgil. Aeneid. 4. prope finem. Vid. Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 5. v. 4. Martial. Epigr. l. 5. Ep. 65. {p} "Aurea Caesaries", Virgil. Aeneid. 8. v. 659. Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. de Rapt. Proserp. l. 3. v. 86. {q} Vid. Braunium de Vest. Sacerdot. l. 1. c. 9. p. 201. {r} "Hoedina tibi pelle", &c. Martial. Epigr. l. 12. Ep. 38. {s} Theocrit. Idyll. 3. v. 1, 2. {t} Animadv. in loc. {u} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 5. col. 628.

Song of Solomon 4:2

Ver. 2. Thy teeth [are] like a flock [of sheep],.... That is, like the teeth of a flock of sheep; as her eyes were like the eyes of doves, and her hair like the hair of goats: and Galen long ago observed, that human teeth are much like the teeth of sheep, in figure, order, and structure, as well as are small and white; neatly set, innocent and harmless, not ravenous and voracious, cropping herbs and grass only {w}; the whiteness of the teeth is chiefly intended, in which the beauty of them lies, for which they are sometimes compared {x} to Parian marble for whiteness. The Targum interprets these teeth of the priests and Levites; but it is much better to understand them of the ministers of the Gospel: teeth are bony, solid, firm, and strong, sharp to cut and break the food, and prepare it for the stomach: all which well agree with ministers; who are strong in the Lord, and in his grace, to labour in the word and doctrine; to oppose gainsayers, withstand Satan's temptations; bear the reproaches of the world, and the infirmities of weaker saints; and remain firm and unmoved in their ministry; unshaken by all they meet with, from without and from within: they are sharp to rebuke such who are unsound in the faith, or corrupt in their morals, and to penetrate into Gospel truths; to cut and rightly divide the word of truth, and break the bread of life to others, and so chew and prepare spiritual food for souls; not raw and crude; not hard and difficult of digestion, but plain and easy to be understood. And they are like to a flock of sheep,

[that are even] shorn; on which no wool is left, sticking out here and there; which is another good property of teeth, that are of equal size and bigness, do not stand out, nor rise up one above another; and are as if they had been "cut [and] planed, [and made] alike" {y}, as some render the word: which may denote the equality of Gospel ministers in power and authority; one having no superiority over another; all having the same mission and commission, employed in the same work, preaching the same Gospel; and though their gifts are different, yet there is a harmony and agreement in the doctrines they preach;

which came up from the washing; white and clean, which is another property of good teeth; as the teeth of sheep be, and they themselves are, when just come up out of the washing pit: this may signify the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which are necessary to ministers of the word, in order to preach it; and more especially the purity of their lives and conversations, in which they should be examples to the flock;

whereof everyone bear twins, and none [is] barren among them; the figures are just and beautiful; it is common with sheep to bear twins, or more, in the eastern countries, as the philosopher observes {z}; frequent mention is made of goats bearing twins {a}: these may answer to the two rows of teeth, and the word for "teeth" is in the dual number; and when these are white and clean, and equal, are well set, and not one wanting, none rotten, nor shed, nor fallen out, look very beautiful. This may express the fruitfulness and success of Gospel ministers, in bringing many souls to Christ; and was particularly true of the apostles, and first ministers of the Gospel, who were instrumental in the conversion of many; and who bore twins to Christ, Jews and Gentiles; and none were without their usefulness. Likewise all this may be understood of believers in general, and of meditation and faith in them; by meditation they feed upon Christ, his Gospel, doctrines, and promises; they chew the end, and ruminate on the word of God; and are equal, alike partakers of the same grace, and blessings of it; and are sanctified, and, in some measure, cleansed, from the pollution of their minds and actions; ascend heavenwards in their thoughts, desires, and affections; and are not "barren" and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ and his Gospel; and generally, through meditation, bring forth the "twins" of prayer and praise: by faith also they feed on Christ and his grace; and which is "alike", precious faith in all, as to nature and quality; is "pure", sincere, and unfeigned; is always fruitful, and bears the "twins" of love to Christ, and of love to his saints; and is not "barren", but attended with the fruits of righteousness.

{w} In Salazar apud Marckium in loc. {x} Theocrit. Idyll. 6. v. 37, 38. {y} twbwuq "caesae vel dedolatae", Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. I. 2. c. 45. col. 493. "aequarum", Junius & Tremellius; "statura aequalium", Cocceius. {z} Aristot. de Animal. Hist. l. 6. c. 19. {a} Theocrit. Idyll. 1. v. 25. & 3. v. 34. & 5. v. 54. & 8. v. 44.

Song of Solomon 4:3

Ver. 3. Thy lips [are] like a thread of scarlet,.... To a "thread" for thinness, to "scarlet" for colour; thin red lips being beautiful, as well as white teeth; so the beautiful Aspasia had red lips {b}, and teeth whiter than snow; hence we read of red and purple lips {c}. Now as lips are the instruments of speech, the words of the church, and of all true believers, may be designed; what is said by them in their prayers, which are filled, not with great swelling words of vanity, exalting themselves, and magnifying their works, like the Pharisee; but with humble confessions of sin, and acknowledgments of their unworthiness of mercy; and they are constant, like one continued thread, they go on praying all their days: and the scarlet colour may denote the fervency of them, whereby they become available with God; and the acceptableness of them to God, through the mediation of Christ, whose blood, and not any worthiness of theirs, is pleaded in them: their words of praise also may be signified hereby; which are not filled with big swollen encomiums of themselves, and of what they have done; but with expressions of the goodness and grace of God to them; and with thankfulness for all mercies, both temporal and spiritual, bestowed upon them; and these are hearty and sincere, coming from a heart inflamed with the love of God, which make such lips look like scarlet; and that being in great esteem may intimate the acceptableness of them to God, through the blood and sacrifice of Christ. To which may be added, that the doctrines of the Gospel, delivered by the ministers of the church, who are her lips, may be taken into the sense of this clause; which are like a "thread", spun out of the Scriptures, and are harmonious and all of a piece, consistent and closely connected; the subject and matter of which are the blood, sufferings, and death of Christ, and the blessings that come thereby; and which also, like scarlet, are valuable and precious;

and thy speech [is] comely; which explains the preceding clause; and shows, that by her lips her speech is meant, which is "comely", that is, graceful and amiable; as it is when believers speak of Christ, of his person, offices, and grace; and for him, in vindication of his truths and ordinances; when they speak to him, in prayer or in praise; and when, in common conversation, their speech is with grace;

thy temples [are] like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks; not like a piece of the tree, but of the fruit, when the shell of it bursts of itself, through the abundance of liquor in it; such the Israelites found at one of their stations, and therefore called it "Rimmonparez", the pomegranate of rupture, or the bursted pomegranate; and in the tribe of Zebulun was a city called Remmonmethoar, the beautiful pomegranate, Jos 19:13; now the rind being broken {d} it appears full of grains or kernels, of a white colour, interspersed with a reddish purple juice, like blood, as Pausanias remarks {e}, and looks very beautiful; and is aptly used to set forth the church's beauty, who, like her beloved, is "white and ruddy", **So 5:10**: by which may be meant ecclesiastical officers, placed on an eminence in the church; to take care, among other things, of the discipline of it, according to the laws of Christ, **1Ti 5:17**; The temples, in the Hebrew tongue {f}, have their name from the thinness and tenderness of them, having but little flesh on them, and covered with a thin skin; and, in the Greek tongue {g}, from the evident beating of the pulse in them; and their situation is between the ear and the eye: all which denote, that such officers should be spiritual men, and have as little carnality in them as may be; that they should use great tenderness in the administrations of their office, particularly in giving admonitions and reproofs: and, as by the beating of the pulse the state of a constitution is discerned, whether healthy or not; so the state of the church may be judged of by the discipline of it; if that is neglected, it is in a bad state, and in a declining condition; but if strictly observed, it is in a healthful and flourishing one: and the temples being between the eye and the ear may teach, that, in the management of church affairs, the officers are to make use of both; their ears are to be open to all; and they are not to shut their eyes against clear and plain evidence: and being said to be "within [her] locks", may be expressive of the meekness and humility of such officers, who are not to lord it over God's heritage; and of the private manner in which admonitions are to be given, in case of private offences; and of the affairs and concertos of a church being kept private, and not blazed abroad. And these may be compared to "a piece of a pomegranate", because of their being full of gifts, and grace, and good works, visible to men; and for their harmony and union among themselves, and with the church and its members; and the strict regard that, in all things, is had to the rules and laws of Christ; all which make the officers of the church, and the discipline of it, acceptable to him. It may be further observed, that the temples, taken largely, include the "cheeks" also; and so some render the word {h} here; and the purple juice of the pomegranate well expresses the colour of them; hence we read of purple cheeks {i}: and this may denote the beauty and modesty of the church; whose blushing looks, and ruddy cheeks, made her extremely beautiful in the eye of Christ.

{b} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 1. {c} ceilea purra, Theocrit. Idyll. 15. "Purpureis labellis", Ovid. Amor. l. 3. Eleg. 13. {d} xlpk wv lepuron, Sept. "sicut fragmen", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; "pars vel frustum", Michaelis. {e} Boeotica, sive l. 9. p. 578. {f} Ktqr "tenuis faciei pars", Marckius; "tenuior", Michaelis. Vid. Kimchii Sepher Shorash. rad. qqr. {g} krotafoi para to krotein thn afhn. {h} mhlon sou, Sept. "genae tuae", Pagninus, Cocceius. {i} "Purpureas genas", Ovid. Amor. l. 1. Eleg. 4. Statii Thebaid. l. 1. v. 538. Ausonii Parental. 23. v. 16. "Purpurissatae buccae", Plauti Trucul. Act. 2. Sc. 2. v. 35. "genre", Apulei Apolog. p. 239.

Song of Solomon 4:4

Ver. 4. Thy neck [is] like the tower of David, builded for an armoury,.... This was either the strong hold of Zion; or some tower erected by David for an armoury, wherein his worthies or mighty men bring up their shields; Mr. Sandys {k} says, it stood aloft in the utmost angle of a mountain, whose ruins are yet extant: though the neck is compared to this, not for its height, seeing a high and outstretched neck is a token of pride and haughtiness with the Jews, **Isa 3:16**; see
Ps 74:5; and so the phrase is used in Latin writers {l}; but for its being ornamented with spoils hung up in it, as golden shields after mentioned, as the neck is with pearls, jewels, and chains of gold, **So 1:10**; The word for "armoury" is from "alaph" , "to teach"; not as being a pattern to teach artificers, as Jarchi; nor to show passengers their way, as R. Jonah and others, who think this tower was built as a "pharus", for such a purpose {m}; but it

was as an arsenal, in which young learners of the art of war laid up their weapons, as well as what were taken from an enemy; or what were made and laid up here, as a store in time of need. By the church's neck may be meant either the ministers of the word, set in the highest part of the body, the church, next to Christ the Head, and in subjection to him; to whom they hold, and whose name, cause, and interest, they bear up and support in the world; and are the means of conveying spiritual food from him to the souls of men; and are adorned with the gifts and graces of the Spirit: and may be compared to the "tower of David", for their integrity and uprightness, and for their strength and immovableness, standing firm and unmoved against the batteries of Satan and the world, and for the defence of the Gospel; and to that "built for an armoury", they being furnished with the whole armour of God. An ancient writer {n} supposes the Apostle Paul is particularly meant; that eminent exalter of Christ the Head, and who was set for the defence of the Gospel: or it may be rather the Scriptures themselves are meant; which point out and hold forth Christ the Head, and make him manifest to the sons of men; and are a means of conveying spiritual breath; when attended with a divine power, then are they spirit and life; and of conveying food to the souls of men, very nourishing and satisfying; and are bespangled with glorious truths and precious promises; where every truth is a golden link, and every promise a pearl, to a believer: and they may be compared to the "tower of David" for their sublimity, being out of the reach and above the capacity of a natural man; and for their firmness and immovableness, which Satan and all his emissaries will never be able to remove out of the world; and like to that as "built for an armoury",

whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men: no other armour is mentioned, as in this armoury, but shields; they being a principal part of armour, and are especially {o} so called, as in the Septuagint version of 1Ki 14:26; these shields are armour of mighty men; mighty, through God and his grace, to perform mighty actions, and do great exploits; being furnished from the spiritual armoury with the whole armour of God, to repel Satan's temptations, to defend the Gospel, and refute error; particularly the ministers of the word are those mighty men; though it is applicable to all saints.

{k} Travels, p. 139. Vid. Adrichom. Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 168. {l} Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. in Rufin. l. 1. v. 53. & l. 2. v. 294. {m} Vid. Castell. Lexic. col. 3904. so Pagninus and Tigurine version. {n} Psellus in ioc. {o} Vid. Cuperi Observ. l. 1. c. 7. p. 42. & Gutberleth. de Saliis, c. 12. p. 69.

Song of Solomon 4:5

Ver. 5. Thy two breasts [are] like two young roes that are twins,.... Or, "two fawns, the twins of a doe": Providence, as Plutarch observes {p}, has given to women two breasts, that, should they have twins, both might have a fountain of nourishment; and are fitly compared to twins of the doe. The hind, for the most part, brings but one roe at a time; but there are some, the philosopher says {q}, bring twins; by which the beauty of the breasts is expressed: "young roes" may point at the smallness of them, large breasts are not accounted handsome; and "twins", at their equal size and shape, not one larger nor higher than the other, that would be a deformity; twins are generally alike;

which feed among the lilies; and are fat and plump: the allusion may be to the putting of lilies in the bosom, between the breasts, as other flowers; lilies are reckoned among the decorations of women, in the Apocryha:

"And pulled off the sackcloth which she had on, and put off the garments of her widowhood, and washed her body all over with water, and anointed herself with precious ointment, and braided the hair of her head, and put on a tire upon it, and put on her garments of gladness, wherewith she was clad during the life of Manasses her husband." (Judith 10:3)

or rather to the creatures mentioned, the roes and hinds, which feed among lilies, in fields where lilies grow; for these grow in fields as well as in gardens, and are called the "lilies of the field", **Mt 6:28**; and we read {r} sometimes of harts and hinds among lilies. By "breasts" may be meant, either the ministers of the word, who impart "the sincere milk of the word", and who deliver out the nourishing doctrines of grace, like milk out of the breast, **1Co 3:2**; and may be like to "roes" for their affection to those who are under their ministry; and pleasant to them, to whom they are made useful; and for their sharp sightedness and penetration into the mysteries of grace; and for their quick dispatch in doing their work, though through many difficulties, which, like young roes, they leap and skip over: and "two" of them show a sufficient number of them Christ provides for his church; and being "twins" express their equal authority, and harmony of doctrine; and feeding "among lilies" is where Christ himself feeds, **So 2:16**; where Christ feeds they feed, and where they feed Christ feeds, even among his saints, comparable to lilies, **So 2:2**; or these "breasts" may design the two Testaments, the Old and New, which contain the whole sincere milk of the word; are like "young roes", pleasant and delightful to believers; and, as "twins", are alike, agree in their doctrines concerning

Christ, and the blessings of grace through him; the types, figures, prophecies, and promises of the one, have their completion in the other; and both abound with the lilies of Gospel doctrines and promises: though rather these "breasts" may point at the two ordinances of the Gospel, baptism, and the Lord's supper; which are breasts of consolation to believers, out of which they suck, and are satisfied; and through feeding on Christ in both, they receive much nourishment and strength; and are very amiable and lovely to the saints, when they enjoy the presence of Christ in them, and have the discoveries of his love to them; and may be said to be "twins", being both instituted by Christ, and both lead unto him, and require the same subjects; and are received and submitted to by saints, comparable to lilies, as before.

{p} De Liberis Educand. vol. 2. p. 3. {q} Aristot. de Animal. l. 6. c. 29. {r} "En aspicis ilium, candida qui medius cubat inter lilia, cervum?" Calphurnius apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 24. col. 924.

Song of Solomon 4:6

Ver. 6. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away,.... Until the day of grace breaks on every elect sinner, and the shadows of darkness, ignorance, and unbelief, are in a great measure fled and gone; or until the everlasting day breaks, and there will be no more night, nor any darkness of affliction, nor any more desertion, doubts, and fears; see So 2:17. They are the words of Christ, declaring whither he would go till that time came, as follows:

I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense: the allusion may be to the mountains and hills where these odoriferous plants grew. It is said of Pompey the great, that when he passed over Lebanon (later mentioned, So 4:8) and by Damascus, he went through sweet smelling groves and woods of frankincense and balsam {s}; and Lebanon is thought, by some {t}, to have its name from the frankincense that grew upon it; though rather from the whiteness of the snow continually on it. By this "mountain" and "hill" may be meant the church of Christ, gathered together in Gospel order, so called for its visibility and immovableness, Isa 2:2; and for the trees of righteousness which are planted and flourish there, the saints; and for the fragrancy of their graces; and for the sweet smelling odour of their sacrifices of prayer and praise; and because of the delight and pleasure Christ takes in his people, and they in him here; where they have mutual communion, so that it is to them both a mountain of myrrh and a hill of frankincense: particularly, here Christ delights to be, and here he resolves to dwell until his second coming.

{s} Florus de Gest. Roman. l. 3. c. 5. {t} Vid. Gabr. Sionita de Orient. Urb. c. 6. p. 14.

Song of Solomon 4:7

Ver. 7. Thou art all fair, my love,.... Being justified by the righteousness of Christ, washed in his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit; of the title, my "love", see **So 1:9**. The church is often said by Christ to be "fair", his "fair one", and the "fairest among women", **So 1:8**; but here "all fair", being a perfection of beauty, and perfectly comely through his comeliness: this is said to show her completeness in Christ, as to justification; and that, with respect to sanctification, she had a perfection of parts, though not of degrees; and to observe, that the church and "all" the true members of it were so, the meanest and weakest believer, as well as the greatest and strongest. It is added,

[there is] no spot in thee; not that the saints have no sin in them; nor any committed by them; nor that their sins are not sins; nor that they have no spots in them, with respect to sanctification, which is imperfect; but with respect to their justification, as having the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and covered with that spotless robe, they are considered as having no spot in them; God sees no sin in them, so as to reckon it to them, and condemn them for it; and they stand unblamable and unreproveable in his sight; and will be presented by Christ, both to himself and to his father, and in the view of men and angels, "not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing", **Eph 5:27**, upon them.

Song of Solomon 4:8

Ver. 8. Come with me from Lebanon, [my] spouse, with me from Lebanon,.... This is a new title given the church, my "spouse"; here first mentioned, because the day of espousals was over, **So 3:11**; and having on the wedding garment, in which she was so fair and spotless, as before described, she looked somewhat like a bride, and the spouse of Christ; and is chiefly used by Christ, to prevail upon her to go with him, which relation, duty, and affection, obliged her to do. The invitation is to come with him from Lebanon, which is repeated, to show earnestness and vehemency; not Lebanon, literally taken, a mountain to the north of the land of Canaan, famous for odoriferous trees, and where to be was delightful; but figuratively, the temple, made of the wood of Lebanon, and Jerusalem, in which it was, which in Christ's time was a den of thieves, and from whence Christ called out his people; or this being a pleasant mountain, may signify those carnal sensual pleasures, from which Christ calls his people off. Some render the words, "thou shalt come with me", &c. {u}, being influenced by the powerful grace of Christ, and drawn by his love; and what he invites and exhorts unto, he gives grace to enable to perform;

look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards; Amana is thought by some to be the mountain which divided Cilicia from Syria, taken notice of by several writers {w}; but it seems too distant from Lebanon; perhaps it is the same with Abana, from whence was a river of that name, **2Ki 5:12**; where, in the "Keri" or margin, it is read Amana; so the Targum here explains it of the people that dwelt by the river Amana, which washed the country of Damascus: Jarchi takes it to be the same with Hor, a mountain on the northern border of Israel; and indeed, wherever mention is made of this mountain, the Targum has it, Taurus Umanus; and, according to Ptolemy {x}, Amanus was a part of Mount Taurus, with which it is joined by Josephus {y}; and with that and Lebanon, and Carmel, by Aelianus {z}, Shenir and Hermon were one and the same mountain, called by different names; Hermon might be the common name to the whole; and that part of it which belonged to the Sidonians was called by them Sirion; and that which the Amorites possessed Shenir, **De 3:9**; Now all these mountains might be called "dens of lions", and "mountains of leopards"; both because inhabited by such beasts of prey; hence we read of the lions of Syria {a}, and of leopards {b} in those parts; in the land of Moab, and in the tribe of Gad, were places called Bethnimrah, and the waters of Nimrim, which seem to have their names from leopards that formerly haunted those places, Nu 32:36; or because inhabited by cruel, savage, and tyrannical persons; particularly Amana, in Cilicia or Syria, as appears from Strabo {c}, Lucan {d}, and Cicero {e}; and Shenir and Hermon were formerly, as Jarchi observes, the dens of those lions, Og king of Bashan, and Sihon king of the Amorites: unless rather these were the names of some places near Lebanon; for Adrichomius {f} says,

"the mountain of the leopards, which was round and high, was two miles from Tripoli northward, three from Arce southward, and one from Lebanon."

Now these words may be considered as a call of Christ to his people, to come out from among wicked men, comparable to such creatures; and he makes use of two arguments to enforce it: the one is taken from the nature of such men, and the danger of being with them; who are like to lions, for their cruel and persecuting temper; and to leopards, for their being full of the spots of sin; and for their craftiness and malice, exercised towards those who are quiet in the land; and for their swiftness and readiness to do mischief; wherefore it must be both uncomfortable and unsafe to be with such persons: the other argument is taken from their enjoyment of Christ's company and presence, which must be preferable to theirs, for pleasure, profit, and safety, and therefore most eligible. Besides, Christ chose not to go without his church; she was so fair, as before described, and so amiable and lovely in his sight, as follows.

{u} yawbt "venies", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius. {w} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 22. Mela de Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 12. Solin. Polyhistor. c. 51. {x} Geograph. l. 5. c. 8. {y} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. s. 1. {z} De Animal. l. 5. c. 56. {a} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 3, Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16. {b} Vid. Ignatii Epist. ad Roman. p. 58. Brocard. in Cocceii Lexic. p. 123. {c} Geograph. l. 14. p. 465. & l. 16. p. 517. {d} Pharsalia, l. 3. v. 244. "vencre feroces, et cultor", Amana. {e} Ad Attic. l. 5. Ep. 20. {f} Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 186.

Song of Solomon 4:9

Ver. 9. Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, [my] spouse,.... Here another new title is given to the church, "my sister", with the repetition of the former, my "spouse": for one and the same person, with the Hebrews, might be sister and spouse; see **1Co 9:5**. And this may be used in a love strain, and so not improper in a love poem, as this was {g}; see **So 8:8**; likewise the church may be called Christ's sister, because of his incarnation, in virtue of which he is not ashamed to call his people his brethren, and so his sisters, **Heb 2:11**; and on account of their adoption; in which respect, he that is Christ's Father is theirs; and which is evidenced in regeneration; when they, through grace, do the will of his Father, and so are his brother, and sister, and mother, Mt 12:50. And, upon the whole, it is used to express the great affection of Christ for the church, and his high esteem of her; and which appears by his saying, "thou hast ravished my heart"; which is but one word in the Hebrew text, and nowhere else used, and is variously rendered: the Vulgate Latin version is, "thou hast wounded my heart" {h}: with one of love's darts, **So 2:5**; "thou hast drawn my heart unto thee", so some Jewish writers {i}; which is surprising, since no love nor loveliness are in her of herself; this shows how free and unmerited the love of Christ is; according to the use of the word with the Talmudists {k}, the sense is, "thou hast coupled mine heart with thine"; the heart of Christ and his church are so closely knit and joined together in love, that they are but one heart, and can never be separated: others, "thou hast seized my heart"; or, "claimed it for thyself" {l}; thou art master over it; it is no more mine, but thine The Septuagint version is, "thou hast unhearted us"; Father, Son, and Spirit; particularly the second Person: or thou hast stolen away my heart; I have no heart left in me; which, as it is the case through fear, is sometimes through love: this sense is approved by Aben Ezra. Some render it just the reverse, "thou hast heartened me" {m}; put heart into me, animated me, made me of good cheer; so the word is used in the Syriac version of **Mt 9:2**. The sense may be, that such was the love of Christ to his church, and so much was he charmed by her, that the thought of his having her company in heaven to all eternity animated him to endure all sufferings he did for her sake, Heb 12:2; The Targum is,

"thy love is fixed upon the table of my heart;"

where the church herself was fixed, **So 8:6**;

thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes; the allusion may be to the custom of the eastern women; who, when they walked abroad or spoke to any, showed but one eye, the other, with the rest of the face, being covered with a veil {n}: the eyes of women are ensnaring to lovers {o}; the church has more eyes than one. Mention is made of the eyes of the understanding, **Eph 1:18**; faith is one of them, and may he here chiefly intended; by which a soul looks on Christ, the glories of his person, and the fulness of his grace; and looks so him for the blessings of grace now, and eternal glory hereafter: and with this Christ's heart is ravished; even with "one look" from it, or "glance" of it, as some {p} render it;

with one chain of thy neck; with the several graces of the Spirit, linked together as in a chain; which were about the neck of the church, and as ornamental to her as a pearl necklace, **So 1:10**; and with every link in this chain Christ's heart is ravished and delighted. The Vulgate Latin version is, "with one lock of hair of thy neck": which hung down in it, and looked very beautiful; and with which lovers are sometimes taken {q}.

{g} "Sive tibi conjux, sive futura soror", Tibullus. {h} yntbbl "vulnerasti cor meum", V. L. so Ben Melech; and Kimchi Sepher Shorash. rad. bbl. {i} Jarchi, David de Pomis, Lexic fol. 69. 3. {k} "Cor copulasti mihi", Buxtorf. Hottinger.

Smegma, p. 164. Vid. Misn. Sabbat, c. 5. s. 2. {l} "Occupasti", Lutherus, Marckius; "vendicasti", Tigurine version. {m} "Animasti me", Cocceius, Schmidt. {n} Tertuilian. de. Virg. Veland. c. 17. Le Bruyn's Voyage to the Levant, ch. 40. p. 157. {o} See Prov. vi. 25. So the poet says of Helena, tav pantev ep'
ommasin imeroi enti, Theocrit. Idyll. 18. "Perque tuos oculos qui rapuere meos", Ovid. Amor. l. 3, Eleg. 10. Vid. Barthii ad Claudian. Nupt. Honor. v. 6. {p} Kynyem dxab "uno aspecto oculorum tuorum", Junius & Tremellius, so Ainsworth. {q} lipara par' aucena seiet' eyeira, Theocrit. Idyll. 5.

Song of Solomon 4:10

Ver. 10. How fair is thy love, [my] sister, my spouse!.... Of these titles, See Gill on "So 4:8";
See Gill on "So 4:9"; and of the love of the church to Christ,
See Gill on "So 1:3"; here said to be "fair", lovely and delightful, grateful and acceptable; as it is to Christ, in the several acts and effects of it, and therefore the word is plural, "thy loves" {r}; being exceeding beautiful in his eye, and extremely well pleasing to him; therefore says, "how fair!" as admiring it, it being hard to say how fair it was; and this appears from the large manifestations of Christ's love to those that love him; and from his causing all things to work together for the good of such; and from his preparing and laying up things, unseen and unheard of, for them;

how much better is thy love than wine! which is saying the same thing of her love to him she says of his to her, **So 1:2**; her love to Christ is more pleasant, more cheering, and more acceptable to him, than the wine of legal sacrifices, or than all burnt offerings; or than any duty whatever, unless that is the principle from whence it flows,
Mr 12:33;

and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! the same with Christ's ointments, commended **So 1:3**; namely, the graces of the Spirit, which are in Christ without measure, and from him communicated to his people; and when exercised by them, are very delightful to him, and preferred by him to "all spices": even to all those used in the holy anointing oil, typical of them, Ex 30:23.

{r} Kydwd "amores tui", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Song of Solomon 4:11

Ver. 11. Thy lips, O [my] spouse, drop [as] the honeycomb,.... Words, for sweetness, delight, and pleasure, like that; so the speech of persons, flowing from their mouth and tongue, is said to be sweeter than the honeycomb {s}; and lovers are said to be sweeter to one another than the sweet honey {t}: so the lips or words of the church in prayer, as the Targum; or in praise of Christ, and thankfulness to him; or in the ministration of the doctrines of the Gospel, which are pleasant words; or in common conversation, are pleasing to Christ; when, like the honey, they drop freely and without constraint; gradually, at proper seasons and opportunities, as prudence directs; and continually, more or less, ever dropping something to the glory of divine grace, and the good of souls;

honey and milk [are] under thy tongue; rolled, as a sweet morsel, there: the ancients had a sort of food of this mixture, a cake made of honey and milk, called by the Greeks "meligala" {u}, and sometimes "candylos" {w}, which was the same composition; Galen {x} says, it was not safe to take goats' milk without honey; Jove is said {y} to be nursed with such a mixture: and this being very grateful to the taste, the speech of the church for pleasantness is compared unto it; so Pindar {z} compares his hymn or ode to honey mixed with milk, as being sweet and grateful; and in Plautus {a},

"your words are honey and milk:"

and, it may be further observed, that such a mixture of milk and honey, with poppies in it, was given to the newly married bride, and drank when brought home to her husband {b}; which was now the case of the church. The doctrines of the Gospel may be meant, comparable to honey and milk; to "honey", for their sweetness and acceptableness: for their nourishing nature; and for, their being gathered out of the choice flowers of the Scriptures, by the laborious ministers of the word, who are like to bees; see Ps 19:10; to "milk", for the purity of them and the nourishment had by them; for their being easy of digestion, when mixed with faith; and for their being of a cooling nature, to allay the heat of a fiery law in the conscience; and for the recovery and restoration of souls by them, in a declining condition; see **1Pe 2:2**; these may be said to be "under the tongue", when they have a place in the heart, are the subject of constant meditation, a sweetness is tasted in them; and they are had in readiness to speak of them upon all occasions;

and the smell of thy garments [is] like the smell of Lebanon; the ancients formerly scented their garments; Calypso gave to Ulysses sweet smelling garments {c}: such are Christ's robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, which are said to "smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia"; with which the saints being arrayed, the smell of their raiment is as "the smell of a field the Lord has blessed", and so like the smell of Lebanon, a mountain abounding with odoriferous trees and plants; see Ps 45:8. Or the outward conversation garments of the saints may be designed, the mention of which fitly follows the lips and tongue; for when works go along with words, and practice with profession; when to lips dropping the doctrines of the Gospel, like the honeycomb, are joined the sweet smelling garments of an agreeable life and conversation; the Christian is very much ornamented, and becomes lovely and amiable.

{s} Vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 21. v. 26, 27. Homer. Iliad. 1. v. 249. {t} Plauti Asinaria, Act. 3. Sc. 3. v. 24. {u} Vid. Cohen de Lara, Ir David, p. 52. The word is used in T. Hieros. Challah, fol. 57. 4. {w} Athenaeus, l. 1. c. 8. p. 9. & l. 14. c. 13. p. 644. Suidas in voce,
kandulov. Aristoph. Pax, & Florent. Christian. in ibid. p. 633. {x} Lib. de Bono Sapore, c. 4. {y} Lactant. de Fals. Relig. l. 1. c. 22. See Isa. vii. 15. {z} Nemea, Ode 3. d. 10, 11. {a} Trucul. Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 75, 76, {b} "Nec pigeat tritum niveo cum lacte papaver sumere, et expressis, mella liquata favis", Ovid. Fasti, l. 4. v. 149, 150. {c} eimata yuwdea, Homer. Odyss. 5. v. 264. & 21. v. 52.

Song of Solomon 4:12

Ver. 12. A garden enclosed [is] my sister, [my] spouse,.... At a little distance from Bethlehem are pools of water, and below these runs a narrow rocky valley, enclosed on both sides with high mountains which the friars, as Mr. Maundrell says {d} will have to be the enclosed garden here alluded to; but it is more likely that the allusion is to a garden near Jerusalem, called the king's garden, Adrichomius {e} makes mention of, which was shut up, and only for the king's use and pleasure: to which the church may be compared; for its being distinguished from the world's wide waste, by the sovereign grace of God; and for the smallness of it in comparison of that; and for its pleasantness and fruitfulness, having pleasant and precious plants of great renown; or consisting of persons of different gifts and graces; in whose hearts these are not naturally, or do not grow there of themselves; but are sown or planted and raised up by the Spirit of God, for which the fallow ground of their hearts is thrown up: and that everything may be kept in good order, as in a garden, the plants are watered with the grace of God; the trees of righteousness are pruned by Christ's father, the vinedresser; the fences are kept up, and the whole is watched over night and day; and here Christ, the owner of it, takes his delightful walks, and grants his presence with his people. And the church is like an "enclosed" garden; for distinction, being separated by the grace of God, in election, redemption, effectual calling, &c. and for protection, being encompassed with the power of God, as a wall about it; and for secrecy, being so closely surrounded, that it is not to be seen nor known by the world; and indeed is not accessible to any but to believers in Christ; and is peculiarly for his use, who is the proprietor of it; see **So 4:16**;

a spring shut up, a fountain sealed; the allusion may be to the sealed fountains great personages reserved for their own use; such as the kings of Persia had, of which the king and his eldest son only might drink {f}; and King Solomon might have such a spring and fountain in his garden, either at Jerusalem or at Ethan, where he had pleasant gardens, in which he took great delight, as Josephus {g} relates: and near the pools, at some distance from Bethlehem, supposed to be his, is a fountain, which the friars will have to be the sealed fountain here alluded to; and, to confirm which, they pretend a tradition, that Solomon shut up these springs, and kept the door of them sealed with his signet, to preserve the waters for his own drinking; and Mr. Maundrell {h}, who saw them, says it was not difficult so to secure them, they rising underground, and having no avenue to them, but by a little hole, like to the mouth of a narrow well. Now the church may be thus compared, because of the abundance of grace in her, and in each of her members, which is as a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life, **Joh 4:14**; and because of the doctrines of the Gospel, called a fountain, **Joe 3:18**; with which Gospel ministers water the plants in Christ's garden, the members of the church; whereby they are revived, refreshed, and flourish; and their souls become as a watered garden, whose springs fail not. Though some read this clause in connection with the former; "a garden enclosed [art thou], with a spring" or flow of water "shut up, [and] with a fountain sealed" {i}; meaning Christ and his fulness; from whence all grace is received by the church and its members; and with which they are supplied, and their souls are watered: and the phrases, "shut up" and "sealed", which, whether applied to the doctrines of grace and truth, in and from Christ, may denote the secrecy and safety of them from the men of the world; or to the grace of Christ, communicated by him to the saints, may denote the security of it, the invisible operations of it, and the sole exercise of it on him: for these phrases denote the inviolable chastity of the church to Christ, in her faith, love, service, and worship; see **Pr 5:15**; and are used in the Jewish writings {k}, to express the chastity of the bride. Ambrose affirms {l}, that what Plato {m} says concerning Jove's garden, elsewhere called by him the garden of the mind, is taken out of Solomon's Song.

{d} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 89. Edit. 7. {e} Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 170. {f} Theatrum Deipnosoph. l. 12. c. 2. p. 515. {g} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. s. 3. Vid. Adrichom. p. 170. {h} Journey from Aleppo &c. p. 88, 89. {i} "Cum fluctu obserato, cum fonte obsignato", Marckius, so some in Michaelis. {k} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 75. Apud Wagenseil. Sota, p. 240. Seder Tephillot, fol. 203. 1. Ed. Basil. vid. Targum, Jarchi & Aben Ezra in loc. {l} De Bono Mortis, c. 5. {m} In Sympos. p. 1194.

Song of Solomon 4:13

Ver. 13. Thy plants [are] an orchard of pomegranates,.... These plants are the members of the church, true converts, believers in Christ; pleasant plants, plants of renown, planted in the church by Christ's heavenly Father, and shall never be plucked up; or, thy gardens, as it may be rendered {n}; particular churches, well taken care of and watered; these make an orchard, or are like one, even a paradise, as the word {o} signifies: it is generally thought to be a Persic word; see **Ne 2:8**; but Hillerus {p} derives it from rrp, to "separate", it being a garden, separated and enclosed as before; one like Eden's garden, exceeding pleasant and delightful: and not like an orchard of any sort of trees, but of "pomegranates", of which there were plenty in Canaan, hence called a "land of pomegranates", **De 8:8**; many places in it had their names from thence, Jos 15:32. To which believers in Christ may be compared, for the various sorts of them {q}, for their largeness, fruitfulness, and uprightness; saints have gifts and grace, differing from one another as to size, but all pomegranates, trees of righteousness; some are larger, and excel others, are full of all the fruits of righteousness; but all are, more or less, fruitful and upright in heart: and so the saints of the higher class may be here designed, as those of a lower are by other trees and spices after mentioned;

with pleasant fruits; that are valuable, precious, and desirable, of which an enumeration follows:

camphire, with spikenard; or "cypresses", or "cyprusses with nards" {r}; both in the plural number: the former may intend cypress trees, so called on account of their berries and fruits growing in clusters; see **So 1:14**; and the latter, because there are different sorts of them, as "nardus Italica", "Indica", and "Celtica": to these saints may be compared, because pleasant and delightful, of a sweet smell, and rare and excellent.

{n} Vid. Guisium in Misn. Sheviith, c. 2. s. 2. {o} odrp paradeisov, Sept. "paradisus", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Marckius, Michaelis. {p} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 291. {q} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 19. {r} So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Song of Solomon 4:14

Ver. 14. Spikenard and saffron,.... The former is the best sort of nard, and therefore mentioned and repeated, to which saints may be compared, because of the graces of the Spirit in them; which, when exercised, give a sweet odour, and are exceeding grateful to Christ; see **So 1:12**; and the latter, according to Schindler {s}, seems to have been read "carcos", the same with "crocus", and is a plant well known by us for its cheering nature; and has its name from the Arabic, "zaffran", because of its yellow or golden colour; but "crocus", from "Corycus" {t}, a mountain in Cilicia, where it grew; it is properly joined with spikenard, since itself is a "spica", and is sometimes called "spica Cilissa" {u}. Next follow

calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; "calamus" is the sweet cane in Isa 43:24; "cinnamon" is the rind or bark of a tree; both grow in India {w} and in Arabia {x}; as also trees of "frankincense", which are only in Arabia; hence one of the Arabias is called "thurifera" {y}, for they do not grow in all Arabia: the two first were ingredients in the holy anointing oil, and the latter in the holy perfume, Ex 30:23;

myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices; Solomon's gardens might be furnished with all these; and with the above trees, plants, and spices, from Arabia Felix, where, as Appianus {z} says, "cassia" grew in marshy places; myrrh and frankincense were gathered from trees, cinnamon from shrubs, and their meadows naturally produced nard; hence called "aromatifera", the spicy country {a}: myrrh was also an ingredient in the anointing oil; and aloes, according to the Targum, is the same with lign aloes; see Nu 24:6; not the herb which has a very bitter juice, but the tree of a sweet odour, which Isidore {b} distinguishes, and is what is meant in Ps 45:8; and were both of a very fragrant smell. Now all these trees, plants, and spices, signify truly precious souls, possessed of the graces of the Spirit; comparable to them for their valuableness and excellency, their sweet smell, and the reviving and refreshing nature of them; which make the subjects of these graces very agreeable to Christ, and to one another. What a garden is the church thus planted!

{s} Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 910. {t} "Corycii pressura croci", Lucan. Pharsal. l. 9. v. 809. {u} Ovid. Fast. l. 1. v. 76. in Ibin, v. 200. Propert. l. 4. Eleg. 6. v. 74. {w} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 19, 22. Strabo, l. 15. p. 478. {x} Herodot. Thalia, c. 107. "Cinnamoni et multi pastor odoris Araba", Propert. l. 3. Eleg. 13. v. 8, 9. {y} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 14. {z} Apud Schindler. Lexic. col. 1192. {a} Strabo. Geograph. l. 16. p. 538. Vid. p. 535. {b} Origin. l. 17. c. 8, 9.

Song of Solomon 4:15

Ver. 15. A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. Some {c} take these words to be the words of Christ continued, speaking still of his church, and explaining and enlarging upon what he had said of her, **So 4:12**; but they are rather the words of the church; who, upon hearing herself commended, and knowing that all her fruitfulness, and the flourishing condition she was in, were owing to the grace of Christ, breaks forth in these words, and ascribes all to him, saying, "O fountain of gardens, O well of living waters", &c. for so the words may be rendered in the vocative case {d}. By the "gardens" may be meant particular distinct churches, such as were gathered in the first times of the Gospel, and since, as the churches of Asia, &c. separated from the world, and planted with trees of righteousness, such as are before described: and though there are many gardens or churches, there is but one "fountain" which supplies them all with gifts and grace, and that is Christ, and his fulness, the fountain from whence flow all grace, and the blessings of it: who also is the "well of living waters"; a well deep and large, fathomless and bottomless, dug by sovereign grace, and full of all grace; signified by "waters", for the abundance of it; and said to be "living", because by it dead sinners are quickened, and drooping saints revived; and is ever running {e}, ever flowing and overflowing; so that there is always a supply for all Christ's gardens, and for all believers in all ages; who, with the bucket of faith, draw water with joy out of this well, or wells of salvation, Isa 12:3; and the flows of grace from hence are like "streams from Lebanon", because of the abundance of it; the constant and continued supplies of it; the rapidity and force with which it comes, bearing down all obstacles in its way, and for the pleasure it gives, the flows of it being as delightful and grateful as streams of water in hot countries. Respect seems to be had to several places called by these names; there was one, called "the Fountain of Gardens", which flowed from Lebanon, six miles from Tripoli, and watered all the gardens, whence it had its name, and all the country that lay between these two places {f}; and there was another, called "the Well of living Waters", a little mile to the south of Tyre; it had four fountains, from whence were cut various aqueducts and rivulets, which watered all the plain of Tyre, and all its gardens; which fountains were little more than a bow's cast from the main sea, and in which space six mills were employed {g}: and there is a rupture in Mount Lebanon, as Mr. Maundrell {h} says, which runs up it seven hours' travelling; and which, on both sides, is steep and high, and clothed with fragrant greens from top to bottom; and everywhere refreshed with "fountains", falling down from the rocks, in pleasant cascades, the ingenious work of nature; and Rauwolff {i}, who was on this mountain in 1575, relates;

"we came (says he) into pleasant groves, by delightful "rivulets" that arose from "springs", that made so sweet a noise, as to be admired by King Solomon, **So 4:15**;"

and these streams gave rise to some rivers, as Jordan, Eleutherus, &c. {k} to which the allusion is here. There were two cities, one in the tribe of Judah, and the other in the tribe of Issachar, called Engannim, the fountain of gardens, Jos 15:34.

{c} So Cocceius, Schmidt, Heunischius, Marckius, Michaelis. {d} So Ainsworth, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Marckius. {e} "Flumine vivo", Virgil. Aeneid. l. 2. v. 715, "Semper fluenti", i.e. "naturali", Servius in ibid. {f} Adrichom. Theatrum Terrae Sanctum, p. 107, 108. {g} Ibid. p. 6. {h} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 142, 143. {i} Travels, part. 2. ch. 12. p. 187, 188. Ed. Ray. {k} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 20. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 5. c. 3. s. 1.

Song of Solomon 4:16

Ver. 16. Awake, O north wind,.... These words, according to some {l}, are the words of the church continued, praying for the spirit; to which sense the order and connection of the words seem to incline; though the language suits best with Christ, who has the command of the winds, and a right and property in the garden, the church: nor does it seem so agreeable, that the church should petition Christ to let loose the north wind upon her, if by that are meant afflictive dispensations of Providence; but agrees well enough with Christ, since these come not without his will and order, and by him made to work together for good; by which he nips the corruptions of his people, tries their graces, and causes them to come forth into exercise: though some {m} think this is a command to the north wind to remove, and be gone, and blow no longer, since it was spring, **So 2:11**; and would be harmful to the plants in the garden; and the verb "blow" is singular, and only in construction with the south wind; and, besides, winds diametrically opposite {n} cannot blow together in the same horizon, with a continued blast: though others {o} are of opinion, that both winds are designed, being both useful to gardens; the one to scatter the clouds, and make the air clear and wholesome, and restrain the luxuriance of the plants; and the other, being moist and warming, of use to bring plants and fruits to maturity; and both may design the Spirit of God, in his different operations and effects, through the law and the terrors of it, and by the Gospel and its comforting doctrines;

and come, thou south, blow upon my garden; the church, Christ's property, as she asserts in the latter part of the verse: the Spirit of God is intended by the "south", or south wind; who is compared to the "wind", because it blows like that, freely, and as he pleases, when, where, and on whom, and imperceptibly, powerfully, and irresistibly, **Joh 3:8**; and to the "south wind", because it is a warm wind, brings serenity, and makes fruitful with showers of rain: so the Spirit of God warms the cold heart of a sinner; thaws his frozen soul, and comforts with the discoveries of divine love; brings quietness and peace into the conscience; and makes fruitful in grace and good works, by causing the rain of Gospel doctrines to descend and distil upon men. The end to be answered is,

[that] the spices thereof may flow out; the spices in the garden, the odoriferous plants, might emit a fragrant smell; though Virgil {p} represents the south wind as harmful to flowers; so it might be in Italy, where it dried them up, as Servius on the place observes; and yet be useful to them in Palestine, where it blew from the sea, and is sometimes so called, Ps 107:3. Spices denote the graces of believers, rare, precious, and odorous; and their "flowing out" the exercise of them, their evidence, increase, and the ripening of them; when they diffuse a sweet odour to Christ and others, and make it delightful to walk in his garden; as it is to walk in one after a delightful shower of rain, and when the wind gently blows upon it. And hence what is prayed for being granted, the church speaks again, and invites Christ, saying;

let my beloved come into his garden; which "coming" is to be understood, not of Christ's first, nor of his second coming; but of his spiritual coming, to visit his people, grant his presence, and manifest his love; which is very desirable by them; and, when granted, is reckoned a great favour, and is an instance of the condescending grace of Christ, Joh 14:22; the church is "his garden" by his own choice, his Father's gift, the purchase of his blood, and the power of his grace: and here he is invited to come,

and eat his pleasant fruits; meaning either the graces of the Spirit, which are his fruits; and called Christ's, because they come from him, and are exercised on him, and he is the author and finisher of them: or the good works of believers, which are performed by virtue of union to him, and abiding in him; are done in his strength, and designed for his glory: and both are "pleasant", that is, well pleasing and acceptable to him; the graces of the Spirit, when in exercise, as appears from **So 4:9**; and good works, when done in faith, from a principle of love, and to his glory: and he may be said to eat them when he expresses his well pleasedness with them, and acceptation of them.

{l} So Cocceius, Marckius, Michaelis. {m} Foliot, Sanctius, & Tig. Not. in loc. So Ambrose is Psal. i. 5. p. 686. {n} Aristot. Meteorolog. l. 2. c. 6. {o} Jarchi & Aben Ezra in loc. {p} "Floribus austrum perditus", Bucolic. Eclog. 2. v. 58.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Song of Solomon 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO SONG OF SOLOMON 5

This chapter begins with Christ's answer to the church's request; in which he informs her, that he was come into his garden, as she desired, and gives an account of what he had done there; and kindly invites his dear friends to feast with him there, **So 5:1**; Then she relates her case and circumstances, which followed upon this, her sleepy frame, and ungrateful carriage to her beloved; which he resenting, withdrew from her, and this gave her sensible pain, **So 5:2**; what treatment she met with from the watchmen; her charge to the daughters of Jerusalem; and the questions they asked about her beloved, **So 5:7**; which put her upon giving a large description of him, by each of his parts, head, hair, &c. **So 5:10**; And the chapter is concluded with a general commendation of him and his loveliness, and a claim of interest in **So 5:16**.

Ver. 1. I am come into my garden, my sister, [my] spouse,.... This verse should rather have concluded the preceding chapter, being Christ's answer to the church's request, which was speedily and exactly granted as she desired; which shows it was according to the will of Christ, and of which he informs her; for sometimes he is present, when it is not known he is: of the titles used, see **So 4:8**; and of Christ's coming into his garden, **So 4:16**. What he did, when come into it, follows:

I have gathered my myrrh with my spice: to make an ointment of, and anoint his guests with, after invited, as was usual in those times and countries, **Lu 7:38**; "oil of myrrh" is mentioned, **Es 2:12**; These may designs, either the sufferings of Christ; which, though like myrrh, bitter to him, are like spice, of a sweet smelling savour, to God and to the saints; the fruits of which, in the salvation of his people, are delightful to himself, and which he is now reaping with pleasure: or the graces of his Spirit in exercise in them, in which Christ delights; see **So 4:13**; and testifies by his presence; and having got in his harvest, or vintage, as the word {q} used signifies, he makes a feast for himself and friends, as was the custom of former times, and now is;

I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey: bread with honey, as the Septuagint version, dipped in honey, or honey put upon it; see
Eze 16:13; or the sugar cane with the sugar, as Jarchi, approved by Gussetius {r}: the meaning may be, he plucked up a sugar cane and ate the sugar out of it, which is called by Arrianus, meli kalaminon, as Cocceius observes; or rather a piece of an honeycomb, full of honey, just taken out of the hive, had in great esteem with the Jews; see
Lu 24:42; the word for "honeycomb" properly signifies wood honey, of which there was plenty in Judea, 1Sa 14:25; though this was in a garden, where they might have their hives, as we have. By which may be meant the Gospel and its doctrines, sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb; and, being faith fully dispensed, is pleasing to Christ;

I have drunk my wine with my milk; a mixture of wine and milk was used by the ancients {s}; and which, Clemens Alexandria says {t}, is a very profitable and healthful mixture: by which also may be intended the doctrines of the Gospel, comparable to wine and milk; to the one, for its reviving and cheering quality; to the other, for its nourishing and strengthening nature; see Isa 55:1; and
See Gill on "So 4:11", and

See Gill on "So 7:9". Here is feast, a variety of sweet, savoury, wholesome food and drink; and all Christ's own, "my" myrrh, "my" spice, &c. as both doctrines and graces be: with which Christ feasts himself, and invites his friends to eat and drink with him:

eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved; the individuals, of which the church consists, are the "friends" who are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, and to himself by his Spirit and grace; and whom he treats as such, by visiting them, and disclosing the secrets of his heart to them, Joh 15:14; and "beloved", beloved of God, and by Christ and by the saints there is a mutual friendship and love between Christ and his people: and these he invites to eat of the provisions of his house, of all the fruits of his garden, to which they are welcome; and of his love and grace, and all the blessings of it, which exceed the choicest wine; and of which they may drink freely, and without danger; "yea, be inebriated with loves" {u}, as the words may be rendered; see **Eph 5:18**. With the eastern people, it was usual to bid their guests welcome, and solicit them to feed on the provisions before them; as it is with the Chinese now, the master of the house takes care to go about, and encourage them to eat and drink {w}.

{q} ytyra etrughsa, Sept. "messui", V. L. {r} Comment. Ebr. p. 179, 337. {s} "Et nivei lactis pocula mista mero", Tibullus, l. 3. Eleg. 5. v. 34. {t} Paedagog. l. 1. c. 6. p. 107. {u} Mydwd wrkvw "et inebriamini amoribus", Mercerus, Schmidt, Cocceius, so Ainsworth. {w} Semedo's History of China, par. c. 1. 13.

Song of Solomon 5:2

Ver. 2. I sleep, but my heart waketh,.... Like persons that are half awake, half asleep, whom Cicero {x} calls "semisomni". Christ and the church having feasted together at his invitation, she soon after fell asleep, as the disciples did after a repast with their Lord; yet not so fast asleep but that she was sensible of it; for this was not the dead sleep of sin, in which unconverted men are, and are insensible of; nor a judicial slumber some are given up unto, and perceive it not, yet a frame of spirit unbecoming saints, and displeasing to Christ; though consistent with grace, which at such a time is not, or very little, in exercise; they are slothful in duty, and backward to it; the phrase is sometimes used to describe a sluggish, slothful man {y}; they are indifferent and lukewarm about divine things, content themselves with the bare externals of religion, without the lively exercise of grace, and without fervency and spirituality in them, and seem willing to continue so; See Gill on "Mt 25:6"; but the church here was not so overcome with sleep but her "heart was awake". Jarchi, and some ancient Jewish writers {z}, interpret this and the former clause of different persons; the former, "I sleep", of the bride; this, "my heart waketh", of the bridegroom; and then the sense is, though I am in a sleepy frame, he who is "my heart", a phrase used by lovers {a}, my soul, my life, my all, he never slumbers nor sleeps, he watches over me night and day, lest any hurt me; but both clauses are rather to be understood of the same person differently considered, as having two principles of grace and corruption, as the church has, which are represented as two persons; see **Ro 7:18**; as the carnal part in her prevailed, she was the "sleeping I"; as the new man, or principle of grace appeared, her "heart [was] awake"; for, notwithstanding her sleepy frame, she had some thoughts of Christ, and stirring of affection to him; Some convictions of her sin, and some desires of being in her duty perhaps, though overpowered by the fleshly part; the spirit was willing, but the flesh weak. Christ's response to his church in this case follows, and is observed by her; he spoke to her so loud, that though sleepy she heard him, and owns it,

[it is] the voice of my beloved: in the ministration of the Gospel, which is to be distinguished from the voice of a stranger, even when dull and sleepy under hearing it, and little affected with it. Christ was the church's beloved still, had an affection for him, though not thoroughly awaked by his voice, but sleeps on still; this method failing, he takes another, or repeats the same with an additional circumstance,

that knocketh, saying, "open to me": which is to be understood not so much of his knocking by the ministry of the word to awaken her out of sleep, but in a providential way, by taking in his hand the rod of affliction, or scourge of persecution, and lashing therewith in order to bring her out of her carnal security; see **Re 3:20**; and he not only knocked but called,

[saying], open to me, open the door unto me, and let me in; so lovers are represented as at the door or gate to get admittance, and know not which to call most hard and cruel, the door or their lover {b}: there is an emphasis on the word "me"; me, thy Lord, thy head, thy husband, thy friend, that loves thee so dearly; to whom her heart was shut, her affections contracted, her desires towards him languid; wherefore he importunes her to "open" to him, which denotes an enlarging of her affections to him, an exercise of grace on him, an expression of the desires of her soul unto him; which yet could not be done without efficacious grace exerted, as in **So 5:4**; but, the more to win upon her,

he gives her good words, and the most endearing titles, expressive of love and relation,

my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, which are all made use of before, excepting the last; see **So 1:9**; that is, "my undefiled", which she was, not as a descendant of Adam, nor as in herself, but as washed in the blood of Christ, justified by his righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit; and as having been enabled by divine grace to preserve her chastity, and keep the "bed undefiled", Heb 13:4; not guilty of spiritual adultery among all her infirmities, even idolatry and superstition; see Re 14:4; or "my perfect one" {c}; not in a legal, but in an evangelical sense, being completely redeemed, perfectly justified, fully pardoned, and sanctified in every part, though not to the highest degree; and perfect in Christ, though not in herself: other arguments follow to engage her attention to his request;

for head is filled with dew, [and] my locks with the drops of the night; through standing so long at the door, in the night season, waiting to be let in; so lovers represent their case in such circumstances, as dealt very hardly with {d}: by which may be meant the sufferings of Christ, either in the persons of his ministers, who are exposed to the rage and reproach of men for ministering in his name to the church; or which he endured in his own person, in his estate of humiliation; and particularly in the night he was betrayed, and during the time of darkness he hung upon the cross, when he bore the sins of his people, and his Father's wrath; compared to "dew", and "drops of the night", because of the multitude of them he endured in soul and body, and because so uncomfortable to human nature; though as dew is useful and fructifying to the earth, so were these the means of many fruits and blessings of grace, and of bringing many souls to glory; now though these arguments were expressed in the most strong, moving, and melting language, yet were ineffectual.

{x} Familiar. Epist. l. 7. Ep. 1. {y} "Qui vigilans dormiat", Plauti Pseudolus, Act. 1. Sc. 3. v. 151. {z} Pesikta in Jarchi, & Tanchama in Yalkut in loc. {a} "Meum mel, meum cor", Plauti Poenulus, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 154, 170, 175. "Meum corculum, melliculum", ibid. Casina, Act. 4. Sc. 4, v. 14. {b} "Janua vel domina", &c, Propert. Eleg. 16. v. 17, 18, 19. {c} ytmt teleia mou, Sept. "perfecta mea", Montanus, Tigurine version, Marckius; "integra mea", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis. {d} "Me mediae noctes", &c. Propert. ut supra. (Eleg. 16.) v. 22, &c.

Song of Solomon 5:3

Ver. 3. I have put off my coat,.... In order to lie down on her bed at night, and take her ease; meaning her conversation garments, which she had not been careful of to keep, but had betook herself to carnal ease and rest, and was off her watch and guard, **Ne 4:23**; and being at ease, and free from trouble, affliction, and persecution, was unwilling to arise and go with her beloved, lest she should meet with the same trials and sufferings as before, for the sake of him and his Gospel; which may be greatly the sense of her next words;

how shall I put it on? which suggests an apprehension of difficulty in doing it, it being easier to drop the performance of duty than to take it up again; and shows slothfulness and sluggishness, being loath and not knowing how to bring herself to it; and an aversion of the carnal and fleshly part unto it; yea, as if she thought it was unreasonable in Christ to desire it of her, when it was but her reasonable service; or as if she imagined it was dangerous, and would be detrimental to her rest, and prejudicial to her health;

I have washed my feet; as persons used to do when come off of a journey, and about to go to bed {e}, being weary; as she was of spiritual exercises, and of the observance of ordinances and duties, and so betook herself to carnal ease, and from which being called argues,

how shall I defile them? by rising out of bed, and treading on the floor, and going to the door to let her beloved in; as if hearkening to the voice of Christ, obeying his commands, and taking every proper step to enjoy communion with him, would be a defiling her; whereas it was the reverse of these that did it: from the whole it appears, that not only these excuses were idle and frivolous, but sinful; she slighted the means Christ made use of to awaken her, by calling and knocking; she sinned against light and knowledge, sleeping on, when she knew it was the voice of her beloved; she acted a disingenuous part in inviting Christ into his garden, and then presently fell asleep; and then endeavoured to shift the blame from herself, as if she was no ways culpable, but what was desired was either difficult, or unreasonable, or unlawful; she appears guilty of great ingratitude, and discovers the height of folly in preferring her present ease to the company of Christ.

{e} Homer. Odyss. 19. v. 317.

Song of Solomon 5:4

Ver. 4. My beloved put in his hand by the hole [of the door],.... To remove the bolt or bar which kept him from entering in. By the "door" is meant the door of her heart, which was in a great measure shut against Christ, through the prevalence of corruption; and the "hole" in it shows that it was not entirely shut up, there was a little love broke out from her to him; a little light broke in from him upon her; but her heart was much narrowed and straitened, her grace low in exercise, yet there were some faith, some love, &c. wherefore Christ takes the advantage of the little hole or crevice there was, and "put in his hand"; which is to be understood of powerful and efficacious grace, and the exertion of it on her; which is as necessary to awake a drowsy saint, and reclaim a backsliding professor, and to quicken to the exercise of grace, and performance of duty, as to the conversion of a sinner, Ac 11:22; and this is a proof of the greatness of Christ's love to his church; that notwithstanding her rude carriage to him, he does not utterly forsake her, but left something behind that wrought upon her; as well as of his mighty power, in that what calls, knocks, raps, good words, and melting language, could not do, his hand did at once;

and my bowels were moved for him; the passions of her soul; her grief and sorrow for sin, in using him in so ill a manner; her shame for being guilty of such ingratitude; her fear lest he should utterly depart from her; her love, which had been chill and cold, now began to kindle and appear in flames; her heart, and the desires of it, were in motion towards him; and a hearty concern appeared that he should be used so unfriendly by her; that his company and communion with him should be slighted, who had so greatly loved her, and endured so much for her; other effects follow.

Song of Solomon 5:5

Ver. 5. I rose up to open to my beloved,.... As soon as touched by the hand of mighty grace, she not only resolved to rise, but actually rose, and that directly, not being easy to lie any longer on her bed of carnal security; being now made heartily and thoroughly willing to let in her beloved, who she supposed was still at the door; but in that she was mistaken; however she met with a rich experience of his grace and goodness;

and my hands dropped [with] myrrh, and my fingers [with] sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock; when she put her hand upon it to draw it back, and let her beloved in; the myrrh, which he had gathered, **So 5:1**, and left there when he put in his hand at the hole of the door: the allusion seems to be to lovers shut out, who used to cover the threshold of the door with flowers, and anoint the door posts with sweet smelling ointment {f}: as by the "door" is meant the heart of the church, so by the "lock", which fastened and kept it shut, unbelief may be designed; and by the "handles" of it lukewarmness and sluggishness, which strengthen unbelief, and keep the heart closer shut against Christ; and by her "hands" and "fingers", faith in exercise, attended with the fruits of it, attempting to draw back the lock of unbelief; which while the church was trying to do, she met with some fresh experience of the grace of Christ: her "hands [and] fingers dropped with sweet smelling myrrh, passing" or "current" {g}; such as weeps and drops from the tree of itself, and, being liquid, runs upon and overflows the hands and fingers; and being excellent and valuable, is passing or current as money; and the odour of it diffusive, it passes afar off: now this is either to be understood of myrrh brought by the church, a pot of ointment of it to anoint her beloved with, who had been long waiting at her door in the night season, to refresh him with it; and this pot being broke unawares, or designedly, or being in a panic her hands shook, the myrrh run over her hands and fingers as she was drawing back the lock; which may denote that her grace was now in exercise and on the flow, in great abundance; which put her on her duty, and which became odorous and acceptable to Christ: or it may signify myrrh brought and left there by Christ; and may express the abundance of grace from him, communicated by him, to draw and allure her to him, to supple and soften her hard heart, to take off the stiffness of her will, and the rustiness of her affections, and make the lock of unbelief draw back easier, and so open a way for himself into her heart; and to excite grace in her, her faith and love, and cause her to come forth in exercise on him: and her hands and fingers "dropping" herewith shows that all the grace a believer has is from Christ, from whom, in the way of his duty, he receives a large measure of it: while the church was on her bed of sloth there was no flow of sweet smelling myrrh; but, now she is up and doing her duty, her hands and fingers are overflowed with it.

{f} "At lachrymans exclusus amator,----posteisque superbos unguit amaracino", Lucret. l. 4. prope finem. {g} rbe rwm "myrrham transeuntem", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. "probam", Tigurine version; "lachrymantem", Bochart; "quam Dioscorides vocat Myrrham Galiraeam".

Song of Solomon 5:6

Ver. 6. I opened to my beloved,.... Which was what he desired, and was done in virtue of his putting in his hand by the hole of the door; or by the exertion of his efficacious grace, working in her both to will and to do, without which it would not have been done; namely, her heart dilated, the desires and affections of her soul enlarged towards Christ, and every grace drawn forth and exercised on him; and though the heart of a believer is sometimes shut to Christ, yet when it is opened, it is only patent to him; the church thought Christ was still at the door, and might be the more confirmed in it by what she found on the handles of the lock; but lo her mistake,

but my beloved had withdrawn himself, [and] was gone: a sad disappointment this! she expected to have seen him, and been received in his arms and embraced in his bosom; but instead of that, he was gone out of sight and hearing: this withdrawing was to chastise her for her former carriage, and to show her more the evil of her sin, and his resentment of it; to try the truth and strength of her grace to inflame her love the more, and sharpen her desires after his presence, to prize it more when she had it, and be careful not to lose it: her using two words of the same import, "he turned himself" {h}, and was gone, signifies that he was really gone, and not in her imagination only; and that he was gone suddenly, at an unawares, and, as she might fear, would never return; and these words being without a copulative, "had withdrawn himself, he was gone", show her haste in speaking, the confusion she was in, thee strength of her passion, the greatness of her disappointment and sorrow; it is as if she was represented wringing her hands and crying, He is gone, he is gone, he is gone;

my soul failed when he spake; or "went out" {i}; not out of her body, but she fell into a swoon, and was as one dead; for a while; and this was "at" or "through his word" {k}, as it may be rendered; through what he said when he turned about and departed, expressing his resentment at her behavior; or rather at the remembrance of his kind and tender language he used when he first called her to arise, "saying, open to me, my sister, my spouse", &c. **So 5:2**; and when she called to mind how sadly she had slighted and neglected him, it cut her to the heart, and threw her into this fainting fit;

I sought him, but I could not find him; in the public ordinances of his house; See Gill on "So 3:2";

I called him, but he gave me no answer; called him by his name as she went along the streets and broad ways of the city, where she supposed he might be; praying aloud, and most earnestly and fervently, that he would return to her;

but had no answer, at least not immediately, and thus be treated her in the same manner she had treated him; he had called to her and she disregarded him, and now she calls to him, and he takes no notice of her; but this was not in a way of vindictive wrath and punishment, as in **Pr 1:24**; but of chastisement and correction.

{h} qmx "verteret se", Pagninus; "circuerat", Montanus. {i} hauy exhlyen, Sept. "egressa est", Pagninus, Montanus, Marckius. {k} wrbdb en logw autou, Sept. "in loquela ejus", Marckius.

Song of Solomon 5:7

Ver. 7. The watchmen that went about the city, found me,.... Of the city and the watchmen in it, and of their finding the church,
See Gill on "So 3:2";
See Gill on "So 3:3";

they smote me, they wounded me; taking her for a night walker, they gave her ill words and hard blows this was not very becoming watchmen to use those of the city in this manner; for, as Plato {l} says, keepers of cities should be mild and gentle towards their own, but to enemies rough and severe: if these were true ministers of Christ, this they did by reproaching her for and upbraiding her with her lukewarmness and unkindness to Christ, sharply reproving her for them; and, instead of comforting her with the doctrines of grace, cut and wounded her with the terrors of the law; or else hearing some sweet discourses from them concerning the person and grace of Christ, her heart was smitten and wounded therewith; and hence she charges the daughters of Jerusalem, in **So 5:8**, that if they found her beloved, that they would tell him, that she was "sick of" or "wounded with love": but as they rather appear to be false teachers, since the church would have shunned them, nor did she make any application to them, nor any inquiry of them about her beloved, and met with cruel and unkind usage from them, they may be said to smite and wounded her by their false doctrines and scandalous lives, by the divisions they made, and by the censures and reproaches they cast upon her, the odious names they gave her, and by stirring up the civil magistrates against her; all which agree with antichristian ministers;

the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me; there were two sorts of watchmen in a city, one that went about to see that all was right and safe within; and others placed on the walls of it, who kept their stand, and whose business it was to give notice of an enemy approaching, and to defend the city from outward attacks upon it; and such are the ministers of the word, Isa 62:6; but here false teachers are meant as before, as appears from their abuse of the church, taking away her veil from her, such as women wore for ornament, or as a sign of modesty or as a token of subjection to their husbands, **Isa 3:23** Ge 24:65; and may here design either their falsely accusing her good conduct, which was her outward covering; or their attempt to take away from her the doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness, which is her covering, the wedding garment, the nuptial robe, as Gregory Nyssene {m} calls the veil here: and such a veil was given by the bridegroom with the Romans, and was called "flammeum", from its being of a flame colour {n}, either yellow or red, expressive of the blushing modesty of the newly married bride {o}; and the like custom might obtain with the Jews.

{l} De Legibus, l. 2. p. 602. {m} Homil. 12. in Cant. p. 651. {n} "Non timidum nuptae leviter tinctura padorem, lutea demissos velarunt flammea vultus", Lucan. Pharsal. l. 2. v. 360, 361. Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 21. c. 8. "Uti tibi corycio glomerarem flammea luto", Virgil. Cyris. Vid. Barthii ad Claudian. Fescen. Ode 4. v. 4. {o} Vid. Chartarium de Imag. Deorurn, p. 84, 89. & Kipping. Antiqu. Roman. l. 4. c. 2. p. 693, 694.

Song of Solomon 5:8

Ver. 8. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,.... Young converts, as before observed; who, upon the hideous outcry the church made in the streets, came to her to know what was the matter, whom she addressed as after related; this shows the humility and condescension of the church, in desiring the assistance of weaker saints in her present case, and her earnestness and resolution to make use of all ways and means she could to find her beloved; and it becomes saints to be assisting to one another; and conversation with one another, even with weak believers, is often useful. And these the church "adjures", or "causes to swear" {p}; charged them on oath, as they would answer it to God; which shows the strength of her love, her sincerity, and seriousness in her inquiry after him:

if ye find my beloved; who had but little knowledge of him, and communion with him, since at present he was yet to be found by them; and it was possible, notwithstanding, that they might find him before she did, as Christ showed himself to Mary Magdalene, before he did to the disciples. The charge she gave them is,

that ye tell him that I [am] sick of love; or, "what shall ye", or "should ye tell him?" {q} not her blows and wounds, the injuries and affronts she had received from the watchmen and keepers of the wall; nor many things, only this one thing, which was most on her heart, uppermost in her mind, and under which she must die, if not relieved, "tell him that I [am] sick of love"; and that for him, through his absence, and her eager longing after him, and the discoveries of his love to her; and which, though not incurable, nor a sickness unto death, for Christ suffers none to die through love to him, yet is a very painful one; and is to be known by a soul's panting after Christ, and its prodigious jealousy of his love, and by its carefulness, diligence, and industry, to enjoy the manifestations of it. Of this love sickness, See Gill on "So 2:5".

{p} ytebvh wrkisa, Sept. "adjuro", V. L. Pagninus, &c. {q} wl wdygt hm "quid narrabitis ei?" Pagninus, Michaelis; "quid indicabitis ei?" Montanus, Marckius.

Song of Solomon 5:9

Ver. 9. What is thy beloved more than [another] beloved, O thou fairest among women?.... The same title Christ gives her, **So 1:8**; and from whom these daughters seem to have taken it; and, in giving it to her, might be assured they were right, since he, who knew her perfectly well, so calls her; in what sense she was so fair,
See Gill on "So 1:8": and this they used, to show their esteem of her, and that they were willing to do all the service they could for her; and what made them so attentive to her charge, and so desirous of knowing her beloved; since they concluded he must be some extraordinary person that one so fair and beautiful as she was should make the object of her love and choice: for this question they put, not in a scornful and disdainful way; nor to shift off any trouble from themselves, through the charge she gave them; nor as altogether ignorant of her beloved, for some knowledge they had, though but small; but as desirous of knowing more of him, and of hearing his excellencies set forth, and especially those which distinguished him from the beloveds of all others: with some, the world, its riches and grandeur, are their beloved; with others, the sinful lusts and pleasures of this life; with others, the praises and applause of men; and with others near and dear relations; and, with all, self: but with a true believer in Christ, he is preferable to them all; to riches, pleasures, honours; to

all creatures, and creature enjoyments; and self, in every sense of it, is parted with for him; he is fairer, wiser, and richer, than all others. And this question is repeated by the daughters,

what [is] thy beloved more than [another] beloved? to show their surprise it the charge given them; the suspicion they had of peculiar excellencies in her beloved; and to declare their seriousness and earnestness to know more of Christ; and their importunity to have a speedy answer; and the rather for what follows:

that thou dost so charge us? so awfully and solemnly, so seriously and strictly, with so much warmth and vehemence.

Song of Solomon 5:10

Ver. 10. My beloved [is] white and ruddy,.... This, and the following verses, contain the church's answer to the question of the daughters; she first gives a general description of her beloved, and then descends to particulars: the description of him in general is, that he is "white and ruddy"; having the whiteness of the lily, and the redness of the rose, **So 2:1**; which make a perfect beauty. Some understand this of the two natures in Christ, divine and human; with respect to his divine nature, "white", expressive of his simplicity, purity and holiness; which colour, Cicero says {r}, is chiefly becoming God, it being simple, and having no mixture and composition in it: with respect to his human nature, "red", being a partaker of the same flesh and blood with his people. Others, only of the human nature; "white" denoting the purity and holiness of it, being without either original or actual sin; "red", or "ruddy", his bloody sufferings in it for the sins of his people. But it may denote, in general, his fairness, beauty, and glory; being, as a divine Person, the brightness of his Father's glory; as man; fairer than the children of men; as the Mediator, full of grace and truth; and in all his offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King, and in all the relations he stands in to his, as Father, Husband, Brother, and Friend, he appears most lovely and amiable;

the chiefest among ten thousand; whether angels or men; he is the Creator of angels, the object of their worship; and has a more excellent name and nature than they, to whom they are subject, and are ministering spirits; he is superior to men, good and bad, high and low; Lord of all, King of kings, and Head of saints, and has the pre-eminence over all creatures. The Septuagint version is, "chosen out of" or "from ten thousand"; Christ, as man, is chosen of God, from among the myriads of the individuals of human nature, to union with the divine Word, or Son of God; see Ps 89:19; as God-man and Mediator, to be the alone Saviour and Redeemer of his people; to be the Head of the body, the church; and to be the Judge of quick and dead; and he is chosen by sensible sinners to be the object of their love; to be their only Saviour; and to be their Ruler and Governor, whose laws, commands, and ordinances, they choose to obey; see Ps 73:24; The words may be rendered, "the standard bearer", or "one standarded by" or "over ten thousand" {s}; the church is militant, and has many enemies; in the name of the Lord, she sets up her banners against them, and the banner over her is the "love" of Christ, **So 2:4**; and he is the standard bearer, who has a multitude of angels and saints under his standard; and how stately and majestic does he look, and what a noble sight is it to see him bearing the standard before such a company! **Re 7:9**. Or the sense is, Christ is a more excellent standard bearer than all others {t}; there may be ten thousand persons that carry a flag, but none to be compared with him, for comeliness, strength, and courage: or he is lifted up, as a standard, above others, angels and men; as he was upon the cross, and now, in the ministry of the word, that souls may gather unto him, and enlist themselves in his service; see Isa 11:10.

{r} De Legibus, l. 2. {s} hbbrm lwgd "vexillatus a decem millibus", Montanus; "sub signis habens exercitum decem millium", Tigurine version. {t} "Insignis prae decem millibus", Pagninus, so Cocceius, Marckius.

Song of Solomon 5:11

Ver. 11. His head [is as] the most fine gold,.... Here the church enters into a particular description and commendation of her beloved, which continues to the end of the chapter; and she begins with his "head", which she compares to the most fine gold. Some think that some ornament of the head is meant, as a diadem or crown of gold; or else the hair of the head, which, though afterwards said to be black, yet being powdered with gold dust, looked of the colour of gold, especially in the rays of the sun upon it; as did the hair of Solomon's youths that attended him, being thus decorated, as Josephus {u} relates; and which custom of powdering the hair with gold dust was used by some of the Roman emperors {w}. The gold here is called "gold of Phaz", or "Uphaz", as in Da 10:5. "Fez", with the Arabs, signifies gold; the city of Fez had its name from hence; in a place where it was built, a quantity of gold was found in it, which gave it its name {x}: according to Schultens {y}, gold is called "phaz", from its leaping as it were out of the clods of the earth, and shining forth and glistering after a shower of rain falling on the earth, where there is a mine of it, by which means it is discovered; and of such gold, as the finest and purest, Diodorus Siculus {z} speaks, as found in Arabia; and which, from the purity of it, was called "apyron", because it needed no purifying by fire: and this being the best and finest, is used to express the superlative excellence of Christ; for it may be rendered, "the gold of gold" {a}, there is none like it. By Christ's "head" some understand the Father of Christ, said to be the Head of Christ, 1Co 11:3 not as Christ is a divine Person, but as man and Mediator; who, as such, was subject to his Father, supported and upheld by him; and who, for his excellent glory, is compared to the most fine gold, there being no glory like his. Or else the divine nature in Christ may be meant, which is the head, the chief and principal nature in him; which puts a glory on him, and an efficacy in all he did and suffered; and which is like pure, fine, shining gold, in which all the perfections of deity shine resplendently. Or rather the headship of Christ over his church is meant; as Nebuchadnezzar's monarchy is represented by a head of gold, **Da 2:32**; so Christ's, because his kingdom is great and glorious, pure and spiritual, solid and substantial, lasting and durable, yea, everlasting;

his locks [are] bushy, [and] black as a raven; which figures are used to set forth the beauty and comeliness of Christ: thick, bushy, well set hair, or "pendulous" {b}, as some render the word, hanging down upon the forehead and cheeks in a beautiful manner, makes very comely; and black hair was reckoned comely {c}; and the blackness of a raven is accounted a very fine black: and naturalists {d} say, that the eggs, brains, and blood of ravens, have been used to make the hair black. By these "bushy [and] black locks" of Christ some understand the thoughts and purposes of God, the Head of Christ; which, like hair, and like black bushy hair, are intricate, dark, and obscure, unsearchable and incomprehensible; and yet, so far as known, are beautiful and delightful; especially as they appear in the scheme of salvation, drawn in the eternal mind: or rather, as by others, believers in Christ are meant, for their numbers, dependence on Christ, and nourishment from him; See Gill on "So 4:1"; and, being like "locks" of hair beautifully set, as when congregated and united together in Gospel order, are an ornament to Christ the Head, and afford a delightful sight to spectators, **Col 2:5**; and these being like "crisped" or "curled" hair {e}, as some render the word, may denote the hardiness and strength of believers, to perform duty, withstand enemies, and endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ; curled hair being the hardest and strongest {f}. But it seems best to understand by them the administrations of Christ's kingly office; which are executed with the utmost prudence, vigour, and strength; for curled hair is a sign of a dry brain {g}, which produces acuteness and sharpness of wit, as well as of vigour, strength, and courage; and which, how dark and obscure they may seem to be, and to carry in them severity to enemies; yet being managed with wisdom, as before observed, and also according to the rules of justice and equity, look very beautiful when made manifest, and are admired by the saints, Re 15:3.

{u} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. s. 3. {w} Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 9. col. 154. {x} Leo African. Descript. Africae, l. 3. p. 273. {y} Comment. in Prov. viii. 19. & xxi. 5. {z} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 133. & l. 3. p. 179. {a} zp Mtk "aurum auri", Mercerus. {b} Myltlt "penduli", Arabic, Bochart, so Jarchi. {c} "Spectandum----nigroque capillo", Horat. de Arte Poet. v. 37, "nigroque crine decorum", ib. Sermon. l. 1. Ode 32. v. 11. {d} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 29. c. 6. Aelian de Animal. l. 1. c. 48. {e} "Crispi", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius; "crispaturae", Buxtorf. Marckius. {f} Aristot. de Gen. Animal. l. 5. c. 3. {g} Ibid.

Song of Solomon 5:12

Ver. 12. His eyes [are] as [the eyes] of doves,.... the church's eyes are said to be, **So 1:15**; which are her ministers, endowed with dove like gifts in measure, as Christ is without measure, in fulness; but these are Christ's eyes, which may signify his omniscience, who has seven eyes, **Zec 3:9**; especially as that has respect unto and is concerned with his people in a way of grace and mercy, and so must look very beautiful in their view: his eyes are like "doves' eyes"; not fierce and furious, but loving and lovely; looking upon his people, under all their trials and afflictions, with sympathy and concern, to deliver them out of them: and like the eyes of doves

by rivers of waters: Sanctius thinks the allusion is to the humours in which the eye is enclosed, and, as it were, swims in; hence the eyes are called "natantia lumina", by Virgil {h}; but it denotes eyes like those of doves, quick and lively, as clean as milk white doves, as if they had been "washed in milk"; clear and perspicuous, sharp sighted, and behold all persons and things, in all places, and at once; and as doves look only to their mates, so Christ's eyes of love are only on his church; he looks to none but her with his eye of special and peculiar love. Moreover, his eyes are like the eyes of doves "by the rivers of waters"; which denotes the fixedness and constancy of them: doves, by the river side, keep their eyes fixed on the purling streams, and in drinking, as Pliny {i} observes, do not erect their necks, and lift up their heads, but,

keeping their eyes upon the water, drink a large draught, in the manner the beasts do; and they delight in clean water, of which they drink, and with which they wash {k}: Christ, being greatly delighted with his people, has fixed his eyes on them, and he never withdraws them from them; for these waters may point at the object of Christ's love, even Gospel churches, consisting of such as are justified and sanctified by his grace, compared to "clean water"; among whom the doctrines of the Gospel are powerfully preached, the ordinances purely administered, the waters of the sanctuary flow, by which souls are delighted and refreshed; and to these Christ looks,
Isa 66:2; and his eyes being like doves' eyes,

washed with milk, may denote the purity of them, being purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and the meekness and mildness of them, not red and wrathful, but full of mercy, pity, and compassion, as if they had been washed with milk. And they are said to be,

fitly set; or "sitting in fulness" {l}; such as exactly fill up their holes; are set neither too, high nor too low; neither sunk in too much, nor stand out too far; but are like precious stones, in an enclosure of gold or silver, to which the allusion is; as diamonds set in a ring; or as the precious stones in the high priest's breast plate, which exactly filled the cavities made for them, and hence are called "stones of fulness", Ex 25:7; or, "set by fulness" {m}; that is, by full channels of water, where doves delight to be; and may denote the fulness of grace, and the flows of it, by which Christ sits and dwells, and leads his people to, **Re 7:17**; or, "setting upon fulness" {n}; on the world, and the fulness of it, which is his, and he gives as much of it to his people as he think fit; and on the vast numbers of persons and things in it, and the vast variety of actions done therein; which shows the extensiveness of his omniscience: and on the "fulness" of time, fixed by him and his Father, for his coming into the world, to do the great work of redemption in it; and which, before it came, he was looking, waiting, and watching, and as it were longing till it came: and on his "fulness", the church, which is the fulness of him that filleth all in all, until he has gathered them all in, and filled them with all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, designed for them: and on the "fulness" of the Gentiles, until they are all brought in: and on his own "fulness"; both personal, "the fulness of the Godhead", which he had his eyes upon, when he undertook the work of redemption, and which supported him in it, and carried him through it; and upon his dispensatory "fulness", or fulness of grace, as Mediator, to supply the wants of his people, under all their straits and difficulties, temptations and afflictions: all which must make him exceeding lovely in the eyes of his people.

{h} Aeneid. l. 5. So Ovid. Fast. l. 6. "animique oculique natabant". {i} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 34. {k} Varro de Rustic. c. 3. s. 7. {l} talm le "siti insitione", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {m} "Ad plenitudinem", Tigurine version, Bochart; "juxta plenitudinem", Vatablus; so some in Brightman; "juxta fluenta plenissima" V. L. Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. {n} "Super plenitudinem", Montanus, Mercerus.

Song of Solomon 5:13

Ver. 13. His cheeks [are] as a bed of spices, [as] sweet flowers,.... Which may intend the presence of Christ with his people in his word and ordinances; often called his "face", which he shows, and they seek after, than which nothing is more desirable; walking in the light of his countenance is preferable to walking among spicy beds, where fragrant plants and odoriferous flowers grow: or the cheeks, being the seat of modesty and blushing, may denote the great humility of Christ, seen in his assumption of our nature, throughout the whole course of his life, and especially at his death, and which renders him very delightful to his people; how lovely does the meek and lowly Jesus look! how beautiful are those blushing cheeks of his, who, being equal with God, took upon him the form of a servant! The cheeks may intend not bare cheeks, but with the hair growing upon them, the hair of the beard; which puts forth itself, and grows upon the cheeks or "jaws" {o}, as it may be rendered, which makes a man look graceful and majestic; so Aben Ezra interprets the word of the beard, and so many Christian {p} interpreters, which puts out like aromatic plants on spicy beds. This was literally true of Christ, who was a grown man when he suffered, and gave his cheeks to the smiters, and who plucked off the hair of his beard: and in a mystical sense it may intend either believers in Christ, who are the hair of his cheeks, as well as of his head; and who, like spicy beds and fragrant flowers, are odoriferous to Christ and to one another; or "[as] towers of perfumes" {q} as some, which ascend upwards in the exercise of faith, hope, and love: or rather the graces of the Spirit in Christ, as man and Mediator; which, like the hair of the beard, are in Christ, in great numbers, without measure, and make him very lovely and graceful; and are like beds of spices and sweet flowers, for the variety and sweet smelling savour of them. Though it seems, best of all, to be expressive of the manliness, courage, prudence, gravity, and majesty of Christ; of which the beard, thick set and well grown, is an indication; all which appeared in the whole conduct and deportment of Christ among men; in his ministry, in his life and conversation, at his apprehension, arraignment, condemnation, sufferings, and death. The cheeks rising, and being a little elevated, are fitly described by beds in a garden, by "towers of perfumes", or fragrant flowers and fruit trees, reared up in the form of towers, or pyramids; or by a dish of fruit preserves, placed in such a figure: and the hair of the cheeks, or beard, are aptly represented by spices, rising up from a bed of them; and all denote the beauty, savour, and majesty of Christ. Or, as the Vulgate Latin version, "as beds of spices set by confectioners"; not as aromatic plants, set in rows by the gardener; but the spices themselves, set in rows by the confectioner in vessels {r}, placed in his shop in rows to be sold; which being of various colours, especially white and red, the cheeks, for colour and eminence, are compared unto them;

his lips [like] lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh; by which are meant the words of Christ, which drop from his lips; which are like lilies, for their purity, thinness, and beautiful colour: the words of Christ are pure words, free from all pollution, deceit, and human mixtures; nor are his lips big with his own praises, but with expressions of regard for his Father's glory; and are very pleasant, gracious, and graceful. But then the comparison is not between them and white lilies, for not white, but red lips, are accounted the most beautiful; see **So 4:3**; wherefore rather red or purple lilies are respected, such as Pliny {s}, and other writers {t}, speak of; such as grew in Syria {u}, a neighbouring country; and also in Egypt {w} grew lilies like to roses. Some {x} think the allusion is to crowns, made of red or purple lilies, wore at nuptial festivals, on which were poured oil of myrrh, and so dropped from them; but the phrase, "dropping sweet smelling myrrh", is not in construction with "lilies", but with "lips": signifying, that the lips or words of Christ were like to lilies; not so much or not only for their thinness and colour, as for the sweet smell of them, very odorous, grateful, and acceptable; as are the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation, to sensible souls, delivered in the ministry of the word: the manner of which delivery of them is expressed by "dropping"; gradually, by little and little, as Christ's church and people can bear them; seasonably, and at proper times, as their wants require constantly, as while Christ was here or, earth, so now he is in heaven, by his ministers, in all ages, to the end of the world; and yet sweetly and gently refreshing, and making fruitful; see De 32:2. Moreover, the kisses of Christ's lips, or the manifestations of his love, may be taken into the sense of this clause; which together with the grateful matter and graceful manner of his words, render him very acceptable to his church; see **So 1:2**; and such a sentiment is expressed, in much the same language, by others {y}.

{o} wyyxl "maxillae ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Marckius, Michaelis. {p}

Sanctius, Cocceius, Ainsworth, Marckius, Michaelis. {q} Myxqrm twldgm "turribus pigmentorum", Marckius; "condimentorum", Schmidt, Michaelis. {r} Vid. Fortunat. Scacchi Eleochrys. Sacr. l. 1. c. 18. p. 90. {s} Nat. Hist. l. 21. c. 5. {t} Theophrast. apud Athenaei Deipnosophist. l. 15. c. 8. p. 681. Maimon. in Misn. Sheviith, c. 7. s. 6. & Alshech in loc. Midrash Esther, s. 4. fol. 91. 1. {u} Dioscorides, l. 1. c. 163. Apud Fortunat. Scacch. ut supra, (Eleochrys. Sacr.) l. 1. c. 27. p. 134. {w} Herodot. Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 92. {x} Scacch. ibid. l. 1. c. 28. p. 138, 139. {y} "Olent tua basia myrrham", Martial. Epigr. l. 2. Ep. 10.

Song of Solomon 5:14

Ver. 14. His hands [are as] gold rings, set with the beryl,.... Beryl is with great propriety mentioned, because it was usual to wear it on the fingers {z}. This was one of the precious stones in the breastplate of the high priest, a type of Christ, Ex 28:20; one of the pearl foundations of the New Jerusalem, Re 21:20; the appearance of the wheels in Ezekiel's vision was like it, **Eze 1:16**; the body of the glorious person, seen by Daniel, is said to be as that, Da 10:6; so that it is no wonder the hands of Christ should be compared to gold rings set with it. The word "tarshish", here rendered by "beryl", is sometimes used for the "sea"; and naturalists {a} tell us, that the best beryl is that which most resembles the colour of the sea; so all the three Targums, on Ex 28:20; call it amy Mwrk, from its sea colour; and some versions have it here, "the sea coloured beryl" {b}. Some think the chrysolite is meant, so called from Tarshish, a city in the Indian sea, from whence it was brought, 1Ki 10:22; which is a precious stone, of a golden colour. Others take it to be the "hyacinth", or "jacinth", which is of a violet or purple colour. Cocceius is of opinion that the "sardonyx" in intended, a composition of the "sardius" and "onyx" stones; and is of a white and ruddy colour, and much resembles the nail of a man's hand; which it was usual to set in rings wore on the hand; and a hand adorned with a ring set with a sardonyx, Martial calls "sardonychata manus" {c}. Now Christ's hands, which are the instruments of action, may be compared to "gold rings", set with one or other of these stones; because of the variety of his works in nature, providence, and grace; and because of the preciousness and value of them; and because of their perfection and completeness; the circular form being reckoned the most perfect: and never do the hands of Christ appear as thus described, and look more beautiful and lovely, than when he is beheld as grasping, holding, and retaining his people in his hands, out of which they never be plucked; and who are as so many gold rings, jewels, pearls, and precious stories, in his esteem; and as holding the bright stars, the ministers of the word, in there, who sparkle in their gifts and graces, like so many gems there: and particularly this may be expressive of the munificence and liberality of Christ, in the distribution of his gifts and graces to his people, so freely and generously, so largely and plenteously, and so wisely and faithfully, as he does; and a beautiful sight it is, to the eye of faith, to behold him with his hands full of grace, and a heart ready to distribute it;

his belly [is as] bright ivory, overlaid [with] sapphires: which most of the ancient interpreters understand of the human nature of Christ, described by one part of it, because of its frailty and weakness in itself; and is compared to bright ivory, partly because of its firmness and constancy in suffering, and partly because of its purity, holiness, and innocence; and is said to be "overlaid with sapphires", because of its exaltation and glory at the right hand of God. The words may be rendered, "his bowels are as bright ivory", &c. {d}; as in **So 5:4**; and may express the love, grace, mercy, pity, compassion of Christ to the sons of men; compared to "ivory", or the elephant's teeth, for the excellency of it, Christ's love being better than life itself; and for the purity and sincerity of it, there being no hypocrisy in it; and for the firmness, constancy, and duration of it, it being from everlasting to everlasting, without any change or variation; and to an overlay or enamel of "sapphires", for the riches, worth and value of it, it being preferable to all precious stones, or that can be desired. Some interpreters are of opinion, that not any part of the body, the belly or bowels, are here meant, but rather some covering of the same; for seems not so agreeable with the rules of decency, nor consistent with the spouse's modesty, to describe her beloved by those parts to the daughters of Jerusalem; nor with the scope of the narration, which is to give distinguishing marks and characters, by which they might know him from another. Aben Ezra thinks the girdle is meant; which either may be his royal girdle, the girdle of righteousness and faithfulness; or his priestly girdle, said to be of gold; see Isa 11:5; or his prophetic girdle, the girdle of truth. The allusion may be to the embroidered coat of the high priest: in the holes and incisures of which, as Jarchi says, were put jewels and precious stones: or rather to the ephod with the breastplate, in which were twelve precious stones, and among these the sapphire; and which may represent Christ, as the great High Priest, bearing all his elect upon his heart in heaven; having entered there, in their name, to take possession of it for them, until they are brought into the actual enjoyment of it.

{z} "Et solitum digito beryllum adederat ignis", Propert. l. 4. Eleg. 7. v. 9. {a} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 5. Solin. Polyhistor. c. 65. Ruaeus de Gemmis, l. 9. c. 8. De Boot Hist. Gemm. l. 2. c. 70. bhrullou
glaukhn liyon, Dionys. Perieg. v. 1012. {b} vyvrtb "beryllo thalassio", Junius

& Tremellius, Piscator. {c} Epigr. l. 2. Ep. 25. {d} wyem "viscera ejus", Marckius, Michaelis.

Song of Solomon 5:15

Ver. 15. His legs [are as] pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold,.... The allusion may be to the "femoralia", or garments on the thighs of the high priest when he ministered in holy things, who was a type of Christ; which were made of thee twined linen, and, as the Rabbins say {e}, of thread six times doubled; and so must sit very full and stiff, and be like pillars of marble, for colour, firmness, and stiffness; and below which was the hem of the holy robe: and, round about that, were pomegranates and golden bells, and which may be alluded to in the next clause, "set upon sockets of fine gold"; or else the allusion may be to the custom {f} of the eastern countries, where they sandals, bound about the feet with golden ribbons; or had their shoes adorned with gold and precious stones; or were made of gold, as were those which Demetrius wore: snow white feet, with golden knots, as Manilius {g} expresses it, must look very beautiful; and marble legs or feet, as the poet {h} calls them, with golden shoes, suggest the same idea. Now if a covering of the thighs is alluded to, this may respect the pure and spotless righteousness of Christ, and the glory and excellency of it; which covers the nakedness of saints; hides all their impurities, their sins, original and actual; and renders them acceptable in the sight of God: or the legs of Christ being thus compared may denote the strength and power of Christ, to bear up and support what has been or is laid upon him; as the whole universe, the earth, and all that is in it; the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises, which he is the basis and foundation of; the whole church, the persons of all the elect, whom he represented in eternity, and now in time; all their sins and transgressions, laid upon him and bore by him, in his body on the cross; the government of his people on his shoulder; their burdens, and them under all their trials, temptations, and afflictions; and as all the vessels, so all the glory of his Father's house: and these may set forth also the power of Christ, in treading under and trampling upon all his and his people's enemies, both when on the cross, and now in heaven, where he must reign until all enemies are put under his feet. Or legs, being the instruments of walking, may intend either his ways of love, grace, and mercy, in the covenant before time, in favour of his people; and which, like marble pillars, are pure, firm, and constant, and like such, in golden sockets, glorious and excellent: or his walk and conversation, when incarnate and in his state of humiliation; which was always upright, even, and constant; and upon which were a beauty, glory, and lustre, answerable to the metaphors here used: or his walks in the churches, his golden candlesticks; among whom he delights to be, and to whom his presence is desirable, beautiful, and glorious: or his providential dispensations towards his people; which are straight, upright, and equal, holy and righteous, firm and sure; the basis of which are his eternal purposes and decrees;

his countenance [is] as Lebanon: his shape, form, personage, appearance, and mien; which was a goodly mountain on the north of Judea, high, pleasant, and set with fruitful and fragrant trees, and made a very delightful appearance; to which Christ may be compared for his height, being higher than the kings of the earth, than the angels of heaven, and than the heavens themselves; and for pleasantness, being more glorious and excellent than that or any other mountain; and for the fruitful and fragrant trees of righteousness that grow upon him, have their root in him, and their fruitfulness from him; and which diffuse a grateful odour, by their graces and good works, to Christ and his saints; and who himself more especially, like this mountain, emits a fragrant smell, in his person, grace, righteousness, and sacrifice, to all passers-by, and true believers in him. It is added,

excellent as the cedars; which grew on Lebanon; being the choicest, and preferable to all others: to which Christ may be compared, for tallness, stateliness, fragrancy, and durableness {i}; especially the former, which is always thought to add gracefulness and majesty to men;
See Gill on "1Sa 9:2".

{e} Kimchi Sepher Shorash. rad. rzv, Maimon. Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. s. 14. Jarchi in loc. {f} Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 35. & l. 37. c. 2. {g} De Margaritis, l. 5. {h} "Litora marmoreis pedibus signanda puellae", Ovid. Amor. l. 2. Eleg. 11. v. 5. {i} "Et cedro digna locutus", Persii Satyr. 1. v. 42.

Song of Solomon 5:16

Ver. 16. His mouth [is] most sweet,.... Or sweetness itself {k}; yea, "sweetnesses" {l}; exceeding sweet. That is, the words of his month, the doctrines of the Gospel, the precious promises of it, the kind invitations given, and the comfortable things spoken in it; yea, the commands of Christ in his word are not grievous, but pleasant and delightful: or the kisses of his mouth may be meant, the sensible manifestations of his love, So 1:2; Some think the voice of Christ is intended, and the sound of it {m}, whether the word be translated "mouth", "throat", or "roof of the mouth", as it may signify either; all which are instruments of the voice, and nothing is more common with lovers than to admire each other's voice; see **So 2:14**; and may be applied to the voice of the Gospel, which is sweet, delightful, charming, and alluring, being a voice of love, grace, and mercy, peace, pardon, life, and salvation. The word may be rendered "taste", as in **So 2:3**; and which may be taken, either actively, for the distinguishing taste of Christ between things perverse and good, and between carnal and spiritual ones, and so for the provision of savoury food he makes for his people; or passively, of his being, in his person, offices, and grace, sweet to the taste of a believer. Some interpret it of the breath of his mouth; which being "most sweet", recommends him to the affections of his people; and may design the expressions of his love to them, and his intercession for them;

yea, he [is] altogether lovely; in his person, offices, people, word, and ordinances; his loveliness is perfect, nothing wanting in it; he is so to all, to his Father, angels, and saints: or, he is "all desires" {n}; exceeding desirable, having all excellencies, perfections, and fulness in him; and being so in all his characters, offices, and relations, he stands in to his people; to whom he is all things {o}, even all in all; they desire none but him. And now, by this description of him, the daughters of Jerusalem could not be at a loss to know who he was, and that he must be preferable to all other beloveds. And the church closes the account by claiming interest in him; her faith in him, and love to him, being increased, while she was speaking of him:

this [is] my beloved; whom she had often called so; and still was her beloved; for though she had suffered much for him, nothing could separate from her love to him: and she adds another endearing character,

and this [is] my friend: which appeared by his espousal of her; by his becoming a surety for her; by his assumption of her nature, and suffering in her room and stead; by paying her debts, and purchasing her person; by entering into heaven in her name, taking possession of it for her, and acting the part of an advocate on her account; by gracious visits to her, and familiar converse with her; by granting her large supplies of grace, and affording her help and relief in, all times of need; by giving good and wholesome counsel to her, and by disclosing the secrets of his heart unto her, Joh 15:15; and he is such a friend that sticks closer than a brother; that loves at all times; is constant and faithful, and always to be confided in; he is a rich, powerful, everlasting, and unchangeable friend. All this the church says, in the strength of faith, with the greatest affection, in the most exulting strains, and as glorying in him, and boasting of him: and now, as if she should say,

O ye daughters of Jerusalem, is not this enough to describe my beloved to you, to distinguish him from all others? can you blame me for my affection to him, making such a strict inquiry after him, and giving such a solemn charge to you concerning him? is it not enough to draw out your love unto him, and set you a seeking after him with me? And such an effect it had upon them, as appears from the following chapter.

{k} So glukeron stoma is used of lovers by Solon in Plutarch. in Erotica, p. 751. and in Apulei Apolog. p. 192. {l} Myqtmm "dulcedines", Pagninus, Montanus, Marckius, Michaelis. {m} adu ti stoma &c. Theocrit Idyll. 8. v. 82. {n} Mydmxm wlkw "et totus ipsa desideria", Marckius, Michaelis. {o} "Omnia Caesar erat", Lucan. Pharsal. l. 3. v. 108. "Id unum dixero, quam ille omnibus omnis fuerit", Paterculus, l. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Song of Solomon 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO SONG OF SOLOMON 6

The discourse between the church and the daughters of Jerusalem is continued in this chapter: they inquire whither her beloved was gone, in order to seek him with her, So 6:1; she tells them where he was gone, and for what purpose he went thither, and what he was doing there; and claims and asserts her interest in him, So 6:2; Then follows a commendation of the church by Christ, who admires her beauty, and describes her by her eyes, hair, &c. So 6:4; and prefers her to all others; being a singular and choice one to him, and the praise of others, So 6:8; and next he gives an account of his going into his garden, and his design in it, and of what happened to him there, So 6:11. And the chapter is concluded with a charge to the Shulamite, to turn herself, that she might be looked upon; which occasions a question, to which an answer is returned, So 6:13.

Ver. 1. Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?.... The title is the same used by them, and by Christ before them, So 1:8; and here repeated, to assure her that they were serious in asking this question, and that it was in great respect to her they put it; and which, to the same sense, in other words, is expressed,

whither is thy beloved turned aside? which way did he take? on what hand did he turn, to the right or left, when he went from thy door? They ask no longer who or what he was, being satisfied with the church's description of him; by which they had gained some knowledge of him, and had their affections drawn out unto him; and were desirous of knowing more of him and of being better acquainted with him, and to enjoy his company and presence; though as yet they had but little faith in him, and therefore could not call him "their" beloved, only "her" beloved: and this question is put and repeated in this manner, to show that they were serious and in earnest; yea, were in haste, and impatient to know which way he went; say they,

that we may seek him with thee; it was not mere speculation or curiosity that led them to put the above questions; they were desirous to go into practice, to join with the church in the search of Christ, to seek him with her in the word and ordinances; upon which they were determined, could they get any hint from her whither he was gone, and where it was most likely to find him: for so the words may be rendered, "and we will seek him with thee" {p}; this they had resolved on among themselves, and only wanted directions which way to steer their course, or a grant to go along with the church in quest of her beloved.

{p} wnvqbn zhthsomen, Sept. "quaeremus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Marckius, &c.

Song of Solomon 6:2

Ver. 2. My beloved is gone down into his garden,.... Which may be said by Solomon, in allusion to what he himself was wont to do, as Josephus {q} relates; who used to go very early in a morning in great pomp to Etham, about two miles from Jerusalem, a pleasant place, abounding with gardens and flows of water: or respect may be had to the king's gardens nearer Jerusalem, which were at the descent of Mount Zion, and reached to the lower pool {r}; see **Ne 3:15**; and which lying lower than the king's palace, he might be said to go down to it. And this may point at the low estate of the people of God on earth, depressed with sorrows, afflictions, and persecutions; and the condescension of Christ, in visiting them in their low estate, and granting them his gracious presence: of the garden of Christ, and of his coming into it,

See Gill on "So 4:12";
See Gill on "So 4:16";
See Gill on "So 5:1"; and the church might remember what he said, "I am come into my garden", **So 5:1**; though she soon fell asleep and forgot it, and now calls it to mind, and so could direct the daughters where he was. She adds,

to the beds of spices; of odoriferous plants; to which particular believers, planted regularly in the churches of Christ, may be compared, for the excellency and fragrancy of their graces; and among whom Christ delights to be; see **So 4:13**. Gussetius {s} thinks the words, both here and in **So 5:13**, should be rendered "rivers of spices"; an hyperbolical expression, showing that a man walking by rivers of waters, where aromatic plants and fragrant flowers grow, perceives such a sweet odour, that, while he is refreshed with the moisture of the waters, he seems to be walking by rivers of spices. The end of her beloved's going thither is,

to feed in the gardens; to feed his flocks there: not on commons and in fields, but in gardens, which is unusual: and by which are meant particular churches, where Christ feeds his people, by his Spirit and by his ministers, word and ordinances, with himself, the bread of life; with the discoveries of his love, better than wine; and with the doctrines and promises of the Gospel: or to feed himself, or that "he [himself] might be fed" {t} there; by beholding with pleasure how the plants grow, and the spices flow out; by tasting the pleasant fruits of the garden; and by observing with delight the graces of the Spirit in his people in lively exercise;

and to gather lilies; to crop them with the hand {u}; lilies are liable to be cropped, hence Horace {w} calls the lily "breve lilium", the short lived lily: to these saints may be compared, for the glory, splendour, and beauty, they receive from Christ; see **So 2:2**; there was a gathering of these at the death of Christ, **Eph 2:10**; and there is a gathering of them in effectual calling, and into a church state, and into nearer communion with Christ; but here it seems to signify a gathering them by death, when fully ripe, to enjoy everlasting fellowship with him.

{q} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. s. 3. {r} See Lightfoot's Chorograph. Inquiry on John, c. 5. s. 4. p. 509. {s} Ebr. Comment. p. 642. {t} twerl "ut ubi pascatur", V. L. Munster, Mercerus. {u} eupnoa leiria kersoi, Theocrit. Idyll. 19. v. 32. {w} Carmin. l. 1. Ode 36, v. 16.

Song of Solomon 6:3

Ver. 3. I [am] my beloved's, and my beloved [is] mine,.... Expressive of interest in Christ, and union to him, and of her faith therein; which still continued, notwithstanding her unbecoming behavior toward Christ, and her many infirmities, **So 5:2**. Aben Ezra connects the words with the preceding, "my beloved is gone", &c. but though he is, and I am left alone, I know I am his, and he is mine; which throws a beauty upon the words, and declares the excellency and strength of her faith; for herein lies the glory and excellency of faith, to believe in an unseen Christ: though it may be the Shechinah was with her, as the Targum has it; or Christ had now appeared to her, and was found by her, and therefore, like Thomas, says, "my Lord and my God";

he feedeth among the lilies; See Gill on "So 2:16".

Song of Solomon 6:4

Ver. 4. Thou [art] beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah,.... These are the words of Christ, who had been absent for some time, and till now silent; but, like another Joseph, could not refrain any longer, but makes himself known to his church, and bursts out in strong expressions of love to her, and in high commendations of her; for, notwithstanding her behavior toward him, she was his love still, and as "beautiful" and as comely in his sight as ever: and for which he compares her here to Tirzah; which is either the name of some beautiful woman, well known in those times; so one of the daughters of Zelophehad is called by this name, Nu 27:1; but whether from her beauty is nowhere said: or rather a city of this name is here meant, since, in the next clause, the church is compared to the city of Jerusalem for the same reason. There was a city in the land of Canaan, called Tirzah, formerly the seat of one of the ancient kings of Canaan, and, in later times, of Jeroboam and some of his successors; and which, no doubt, was a very pleasant and delightful place, as its name imports, either from its situation or buildings, Jos 12:24. Adrichomius {x} says, it was an heroic city, situated on a high mountain. In some of the Greek versions, it is read as an appellative, and tendered, as "good will" or "good pleasure" {y}, and so may respect the sweetness of her temper and disposition; which is heightened by using the abstract, she was all good nature and good will; not only sweet, as the Vulgate Latin version, but "sweetness" itself, as she says of him, **So 5:16**; and this may be said of her, as she was the object of God's good will and pleasure in election, of Christ's in redemption, and of the Spirit's in effectual calling; and as she was the subject of good will, bearing one to God, to Christ, to his people, word, worship, ways, and ordinances. The word comes from a root which signifies to be "grateful [and] accepted": and so Jarchi interprets the word here "acceptable": and so some ancient writings of the Jews {z}: and may denote the acceptableness of the church in Christ, with whom God is well pleased in him for his righteousness's sake, in which she appears exceeding fair and lovely. And for the same reason is said to be

comely as Jerusalem; the metropolis of Judea, and seat of the kings of it; and, as Pliny {a} says, was far the most famous of any of the cities of the east; it was a city well built and compact together, beautiful for situation, very rich in Solomon's time, the place of divine worship, and was strongly fortified by nature and art: and hence the church of God often bears this name, both in the Old and New Testament, Isa 40:2, being the city of the great King, built on Christ, the Rock; consisting of saints, fitly and closely united together; rich with the unsearchable riches of Christ; where the several parts of spiritual and evangelic worship are performed; possessed of many privileges, and well secured by the power and salvation of God. Yet

terrible as [an army] with banners; to her enemies, though so lovely to Christ. This shows that not a single person is meant all along, who could not with propriety be compared to an army; but a collective body, as the church is: and that the church on earth is militant, and, like a well disciplined army, in good order, and provided with proper officers and suitable armour, and in a posture of defence, and ready to fight when attacked; and so "terrible" to her enemies, Satan and his principalities, wicked men and false teachers; who are terrified by their having such a General at the head of them as Christ, and being under such banners as his, and provided with such good weapons of warfare, as are mighty through God; by their close union to one another; and by the constancy, undauntedness, and invincibleness of their faith; and are awed by their pious conversation and good examples. Perhaps some respect may be had by Christ to the church's courage and constancy in seeking after him; the force of whose faith and love he felt, which he could not withstand, and therefore says as follows:

{x} Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 74. {y} hurtk wv eudokia, Sept. eudokhth, Symmachus. {z} Siphri in Jarchi, & Shir Hashirim Rabba in loc. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 14.

Song of Solomon 6:5

Ver. 5. Turn away thine eyes from me,.... Her eyes of faith and love; not through dislike of them, but as ravished with them; his passions were so struck by them, and his heart pierced with them, that he could stand it out no longer against her; see **So 4:9**. Some render the words, "turn about thine eyes over against me" {b}; this being the first time of meeting, after her ungrateful treatment of him, she might be filled with shame and confusion for it, and therefore hung down her head, or looked on one side; wherefore he encourages her to look him full in the face, with a holy confidence; for such looks of faith are very agreeable to Christ; see **So 2:14**;

for they have overcome me; that is, her eyes, they had made a conquest of his heart; which does not imply weakness in Christ, but condescending grace, that he should suffer himself, as it were, to be overpowered by the faith and love of his people, who has conquered them and all their enemies. This clause is very differently rendered: by some, "they have strengthened me" {c}; his desire towards his church, and the enjoyment of her company: by others, the reverse, "are stronger than me", or "have taken away my strength" {d}; so that he was spiritless, and as one dead, or in an ecstasy: by others, "they have made me fly away" {e}; that is, out of himself; so that he was not master of himself, could not bear the force and brightness of her eyes: by others, "they have lifted me up" {f}; revived, cheered, and comforted him, through sympathy with her, in virtue of their near union: by others, "they have made me proud", or "prouder" {g}; see **Isa 3:5**. Christ has a kind of pride as well as pleasure in his church; he is proud of the beauty he has put upon her, of the graces he has wrought in her; and especially of her faith, when in exercise; see **Mt 8:10**; and by others, "they have made me fiercer" {h}; not with anger and indignation, but with love; there is a force, a fierceness in love, as well as in wrath: "love [is] strong as death, [and] jealousy [is] cruel as the grave", **So 8:6**; it is so in the church, much more in Christ. All which shows the power of faith, to which mighty things are ascribed, Heb 11:1; and here the conquest of Christ himself;

thy hair [is] as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead; from Mount Gilead, See Gill on "So 4:1".

{b} ydgnm apenantion mou, Sept. "ex adverso mei"; Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Marckius; so Montanus and Ainsworth. {c} ynbyhrh "corroborant me", Marckius; so Kimchi, and Ben Melech. {d} "Fortiores fuerunt me", Pagninus; so Aben Ezra. {e} So the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions. {f} Mercerus, Ainsworth. {g} Tigurine version, Piscator; so Jarchi. {h} Montanus, Cocceius.

Song of Solomon 6:6

Ver. 6. Thy teeth [are] as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof everyone beareth twins, and [there is] not one barren among them]. See Gill on "So 4:2".

Song of Solomon 6:7

Ver. 7. As a piece of a pomegranate [are] thy temples within thy locks. The same descriptions are given in **So 4:3**;
See Gill on "So 4:3"; and these are repeated, to show the reality of the church's beauty, and for the sake of confirmation; and that it still continued the same, notwithstanding her failings and infirmities; and that Christ had the same esteem of her, and love to her, he ever had. That part of the description, respecting the church's lips and speech, in **So 4:3**; is here omitted, though added at the end of **So 6:6**; by the Septuagint; but is not in the Hebrew copies, nor taken notice of in the Targum; yea, the Masorah, on **So 4:2**, remarks some words as only used in that place, and therefore could not be repeated here in the copies then in use.

Song of Solomon 6:8

Ver. 8. There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. In this verse and **So 6:9** the church is commended as she stood related to others; and is compared with them, and preferred to them. The words may be considered either as an assertion, "there are", &c. or as a supposition, "though there be", &c. yet Christ's church is but one, and excels them all. "Queens" are principal and lawful wives of kings; "concubines", secondary or half wives, as the word {i} signifies; who were admitted to the bed, but their children did not inherit: "virgins", unmarried persons, maids of honour, who waited on the queen. The allusion is to the custom of kings and great personages, who had many wives, and more concubines, and a large number of virgins to wait on them; see 1Ki 11:3; or to a nuptial solemnity, and the ceremony of introducing the bride to the bridegroom, attended with a large number of persons of distinction; and so Theocritus {k} speaks of four times sixty virgins attending the nuptials of Menelaus and Helena; see Ps 45:9. By all which may be meant either the kingdoms and nations of the world; by "queens", the more large, rich and flourishing kingdoms; by "concubines", inferior states; and by "virgins without number", the vast multitudes of inhabitants that fill them; but all, put together, are not equal to the church; see **So 2:2**; or else false churches; by "queens", such who boast of their riches and number, as the church of Rome, Re 18:7; by "concubines", such as are inferior in those things, but equally corrupt, as Arians, Socinians, &c. and by "virgins without number", the multitudes of poor, weak, ignorant people, seduced by them; and what figure soever these make, or pretensions to be the true churches of Christ, they are none of his, his spouse is preferred to them all. Or rather true believers in Christ, of different degrees, are here meant; queens, those that have the greatest share of gifts grace, most nearness to Christ, and communion with him; by "concubines", believers of a lower class, and of a more servile spirit, and yet sometimes are favoured with, fellowship with Christ; and by "virgins", young converts, who have not so large an experience as the former; and this distribution agrees with **1Jo 2:13**; and the rather this may be the sense, since each of these are said to praise the church in **So 6:9**, who is preferable to them, and includes them all.

{i} Myvglyp "secundariae uxores", Michaelis. {k} Idyll. 18. v. 24.

Song of Solomon 6:9

Ver. 9. My dove, my undefiled, is [but] one,.... Of these titles, see **So 2:14**. Christ's church is called one, in distinction from the many before mentioned; and either designs her small number, in comparison of the nations of the world, and of false churches, like one to sixty or eighty, and even to an innumerable company; see **Ec 9:14**
Lu 12:32; or else her unity in herself, being but one general assembly and church of the firstborn, made up of various particular congregated churches; and "one body", consisting of various members, united together in affection, and partakers of the same grace, blessings, and privileges; actuated by "one Spirit", the Spirit of God, **Eph 4:4**; and having but "one Head", Christ Jesus, **Eph 4:15**: and it may signify that the church is the spouse of Christ; that though other princes may have sixty queens, and eighty concubines, and virgins without number, to wait on them, **So 6:8**; Christ had but one, and was well pleased with her, and desired no other;

she [is] the [only] one of her mother; the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all: or the sense is, she was to Christ as a mother's only child, most tenderly beloved by him;

she [is] the choice one of her that bare her; esteemed and loved best of all her mother's children. The word may be rendered, "the pure" or "clean one" {l}; so the church is, as clothed in "clean" linen, the righteousness of Christ; cleansed from sin in his blood; sprinkled with the clean water of the covenant, and of an unspotted conversation.

The daughters saw her, and blessed her; [yea], the queens and the concubines, and they praised her: it may seem strange that concubines should praise a queen; but it was not unusual in the eastern countries; with the Persians, as the queen admitted of many concubines by the order of her lord the king, so the queen was had in great veneration, and even adored by the concubines {m}: which may respect either the great esteem the church had, or should have, in the world, even from the great men of it, as she will have in the latter day, Isa 49:23; or which young converts have for her; who may more especially be meant by the "daughters" and "virgins", who, in **So 6:1**, call the church the "fairest among women": these blessed her, and pronounced her happy, and wished all happiness to her; they "praised her", spoke well of her, and commended her for her beauty; which was pleasing to Christ, and therefore observed by him.

{l} hrb "munda", Montanus, Mercerus; "pura", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Marckius, Michaelis. {m} Dinon in Persicis apud Athenaei Deipnosoph. l. 13. c. 1. p. 556.

Song of Solomon 6:10

Ver. 10. Who is she [that] looketh forth as the morning?.... These words may be connected with the preceding, by a supplement of the word "saying"; and so may express what the daughters said, when they blessed and praised the church, wondering at her beauty, it being like the rising morning; so Helena is said to show her beautiful face, awv
antelloisa, as the morning, when it springs forth {n}: there was a city in the tribe of Reuben, called Zarethshahar, the beauty or splendour of the morning, Jos 13:19. Homer often describes the morning by her rosy fingers {o}, and as

clothed with a saffron garment {p}, and as beautiful and divine {q}, and fair haired {r}; and as on a golden throne and beautiful {s}. And as these words describe the progressive gradations of light, so they may set forth the state and condition of the church in the several ages of the world; its first state in this clause, which may reach from the first dawn of light to Adam, **Ge 3:15**; increasing in the times of the patriarchs, Noah, Abraham, and Jacob, and in which and to whom were various displays of Gospel light and grace; to the time of the giving of the law by Moses, when the church might be said to be

fair as the moon; which, though it receives its light from the sun, yet splendour and brightness are ascribed to it, Job 31:26; and, by other writers {t}, is represented as fair and beautiful; and the beautiful form of persons is expressed by it {u}: and very fitly is the state of the church under the law signified by the moon, by which the ceremonial law seems intended, in Re 12:1; that lying much in the observation of new moons, by the which the several festivals under the law were regulated; and which law gave light in the night of Jewish darkness, into the person, offices, and grace of Christ; and though it was imperfect, variable, waxed old, and at length vanished away, yet the church under it was "fair"; there being a beauty and amiableness in the worship of that dispensation, Ps 27:4. The next clause, "clear as the sun", may describe the church under the Gospel dispensation; when the "sun of righteousness" arose, and made the famous Gospel day; when the shadows of the old law fled away, Christ, the substance, being come; when there were more light and knowledge, and a clear discerning of spiritual and evangelic things: and, in all those periods, the church was "terrible as [an army] with banners"; to her enemies, being in a militant state; See Gill on "So 6:4". The whole of this may be applied to particular believers; who, at first conversion, "look forth as the morning", their light being small, but increasing; and, as to their sanctification, are "fair as the moon", having their spots and imperfections, and deriving all their light, grace, and holiness, from Christ; and, as to their justification,

clear as the sun, being clothed with Christ, the sun of righteousness, Re 12:1; and so all fair and without spot;

[and] terrible as [an army] with banners, fighting the good fight of faith, under the banners of Christ, against all spiritual enemies.

{n} Theocrit. Idyll. 18. v. 26. {o} rododaktulov hwv, Iliad. 1. v. 477. & passim. {p} hwv krokopeplov, Iliad. 8, v. 1. & 19. v. 1. {q} Iliad. 18. v. 255. {r} Odyss. 5. v. 390. {s} Odyss. 15. v. 56, 250. {t} "Tanto formosis, formosior omnibus illa est", Ovid. Leander Heroni, v. 73. "Pulchrior tanto tua forma lucet", Senecae Hippolylus, Act. 2. chorus, v. 740. {u} Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. de Nupt. Honor. v. 243.

Song of Solomon 6:11

Ver. 11. I went down into the garden of nuts,.... This is very properly taken notice of in this song of love; it being usual for newly married persons to get nuts, and throw them among children, to make pastime; to signify, among other things, that they now renounced childish things {u}. These are the words of Christ, declaring to the church where he went, and what he employed himself about, when he departed from her; see **So 6:2**. Of the garden, as it intends the church, See Gill on "So 5:12"; into which he was invited to come, and did, as here; see **So 4:16**; here it is called a "garden of nuts", which may design a spot in it destined for this fruit; by which some understand "nutmegs", which is not very likely, since such grew not in those parts: rather "walnuts", which the Arabs call "gauz" or "geuz", which is the same word that is here used; Pistacia nuts were well known in Syria {w}, which joined to Judea. And by "nuts", which grew in the garden, the church, true believers, may be designed; who, like them, have a mean outward appearance, but are valuable within, having the true grace of God in them; and because of their divers coverings, their outward conversation garments, the robe of Christ's righteousness, and the internal sanctification of the Spirit, which answer to the husk and shell, and the thin inward skin over the nut; and because of their hardiness in enduring afflictions and troubles, the shell may represent; and because of their best and most excellent parts being hidden, even grace, the hidden man of the heart, signified by the kernel, and which will not fully appear until the shell or tabernacle of the body is broken down; and because of their safety from harm and pollution, amidst the storms of afflictions, persecutions, and temptations, and pollutions of the world, the principle of grace, like the kernel, remains unhurt and undefiled; and because of the multitude of believers, united and cleaving together, which is delightful to behold, like clusters of nuts in a nut garden. Some render it, "the pruned garden", or "garden of pruning" {x}; whose plants, trees, and vines, are pruned and kept in good order, by Christ's father, the husbandman and vinedresser; see **So 2:12**. The ends of Christ in going into it were,

to see the fruits of the valley; to observe the graces of his Spirit; the actings, exercise, and growth of them in humble souls, among whom he delights to be, Isa 57:15; the Septuagint version is, "the shoots of the brook" or "river": and may denote the fertile soil in which believers are planted, even by the river of divine love; with which being watered, they flourish, **Ps 1:3**;

[and] to see whether the vine flourished; particular churches, or believers, compared to vines; who may be said to flourish, when they increase in numbers, and are fruitful in grace and good works; see **So 2:13**;

[and] the pomegranates budded; of which, see **So 4:13**; the budding, of them may design the beginnings, or first putting, forth, of grace in the saints; which Christ takes much notice of, and is highly pleased with.

{u} Vid. Chartarium de Imag. Deorum, p. 89. & Kipping. Antiqu. Rom. l. 4. c. 2. p. 697. "Sparge marite nuces", &c. Virgil. Bucolic. Eclog. 8. v. 30. "Da nuces pueris", Catuili Juliae Epithal. Ep. 59, v. 131. {w} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 5. Athenaei Deipnosophist. l. 14. c. 17. p. 649. {x} zwga tng "hortos putatos", Junius & Tremellius; Heb. "tonsionis", Piscator; "hortum putationis", Marckius.

Song of Solomon 6:12

Ver. 12. Or ever one was aware, my soul made me [like] the chariots of Amminadib. These are either the words of the church or of Christ, saying, "I know not" {y} as the first clause may be rendered: if the words of the church, the sense may be, that though she knew not where her beloved was gone, when he went from her, yet she ran about in search of him as swiftly as the chariots of Amminadib; and when she did know that he was gone down into the garden, immediately, on a sudden, at an unawares, such was the strength of her love and affection to him, the she moved as swiftly after him as if she had been in one of those chariots; and this may signify also her courage and resolution, that, notwithstanding all difficulties and discouragements she met with, she drove on as briskly and as courageously after him as ever Amminadib did, in one of his chariots, in the field of battle: or, "I know not"; whether in the body or out of the body; such was the rapture and ecstasy she was in, when she heard her beloved say, "I went down into the garden of nuts", &c. or, when she heard the daughters' commendations of her, she did not think that such belonged to her, and therefore said, "I know not"; however, this caused her to make the greater haste to answer such characters, and to enjoy the company of her beloved. But rather they are the words of Christ, who was now in his garden, observing the condition it was in, and says, "I know not", or do not perceive {z}, that it was in a fruitful and flourishing case, and therefore took

all the speedy methods he could to bring it into a better; or being in a transport of love to his church, it caused him speedily to return unto her, and grant her his presence; offer all necessary assistance, and be as chariots to her, to carry her through difficulties, and to protect and defend her from all enemies: and this his soul caused him to do, not her worth and worthiness, love and loveliness, but his own good will and pleasure, and cordial affection for her. Many take Amminadib to be the proper name of a person, who was one of Solomon's chariot drivers, that understood his business well, and drove swiftly, and with success, to whom Christ compares himself, when returning to his church with haste: but I rather think, with Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and others, that it is an appellative, consisting of two words, "ammi", my people, and "nadib", willing or princely, and may be rendered, "the chariots of my willing" or "princely people" {a}; meaning, not angels, nor ministers, but the people of Christ themselves, to whom he is as chariots; for so I should choose to translate the words, "my soul made me as chariots to my willing" or "princely people"; and so describes the persons who share in this instance of his grace; they are such who are made willing by Christ, in the day of his power on them, to be saved by him, and serve him,
Ps 110:3; and who are of a free, princely, and munificent spirit, **Ps 2:12**; being princes, and the sons and daughters of a prince, **So 7:1**; to these Christ makes himself as chariots, as he now was to the church, and took her up along with him to enjoy his presence, she had sought for and desired. Wherefore the daughters of Jerusalem, who had accompanied her hitherto in search of him, perceiving she was going from then, say what follows.

{y} ytedy al ouk egnw, Sept. "nescivi", V. L. "non novi", Montanus. {z} "Nondum percipientem haec", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {a} bydn yme "populi mei spontanei", Pagninus; "voluntari", Piscator, Cocceius, Marchius, Michaelis.

Song of Solomon 6:13

Ver. 13. Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return,.... By whom the church is meant, so called from her being the spouse of Christ, the true Solomon; it being common for the wife to have the same name with her husband; thus, with the Romans, if the man's name was Caius, the woman's name was Caia: is the name of Christ Solomon? the church's name is Shulamite; see Jer 23:6. The word from which this is derived signifies both perfection and peace; and the church may be called the Shulamite from her perfection, not in herself, but in

Christ, in whom she is complete, and perfectly comely through his righteousness; and is also denominated from the peace which she has from Christ, and he has made for her through his blood, and he gives unto her by his Spirit; and from what she does or should enjoy in her members, and from what she will be possessed of to all eternity. Now the church, the Shulamite, is very importunately desired by the daughters of Jerusalem to return; which is said no less than four times, which shows how vehemently desirous they were of her company: and perceiving she was about to go from them, most earnestly press her to return, or to "turn" {b}; to turn herself, that her beauty and comeliness might be more plainly seen; for this is the end proposed by them,

that we may look upon thee; that they might still have more opportunity of viewing her, and more narrowly to examine her beauty, for which she was so much commended; and that they might enjoy more of her company and conversation, which had been, and they might hope would be, more useful and instructive to them. A question upon this follows,

What will ye see in the Shulamite? which question is put, either by the daughters among themselves; some wishing for her return, and others asking what they expected to see in her, should she return: or rather it is put by the church herself; who asks the daughters, what they expected to see in her, a poor, mean, unworthy creature, not fit to be looked on, having nothing extraordinary, nor indeed valuable or of worth, in seeing of her? Which question is thus answered,

As it were the company of two armies: either by the daughters, declaring what they expected to see in the church; either such a glorious and joyful meeting between Christ and her, as is often between great persons, attended with singing and dancing; so the word for company is rendered by the Septuagint {c} "choroi", a "company" of those that dance and sing; see Ps 68:24; or such an appearance as an army makes at the reception of their prince, when it is divided into two bands, for the sake of greater honour and majesty. Or rather this answer is returned by the church herself; signifying that nothing was to be seen in her but two armies, flesh and Spirit, sin and grace, continually warring against each other; which surely, she thought, could be no desirable and pleasing sight to them; see **Ro 7:23**.

{b} ybwv epistrefe, Sept. "convertere", Sanctius, Marckius. {c} tlxmk wv coroi, Sept. "sicut chorus", Vatablus, Marckius, Michaelis, & alii.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Song of Solomon 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO SONG OF SOLOMON 7

In this chapter Christ gives a fresh commendation of the beauty of his church, in a different order and method than before; beginning with her "feet", and so rising upwards to the "hair" of her head, and the roof of her mouth, **So 7:1**; And then the church asserts her interest in him, and his desire towards her, **So 7:10**; and invites him to go with her into the fields, villages, and vineyards, and offers various reasons, by which she urges him to comply with her invitation, **So 7:11**.

Ver. 1. How beautiful are thy feet with shoes,.... It is no unusual thing to describe the comeliness of women by their feet, and the ornaments of them; so Hebe is described by Homer {d} as having beautiful feet, and Juno by her golden shoes: particular care was taken of, and provision made for, the shoes of queens and princesses in the eastern countries; Herodotus {e} tells us, that the city of Anthylla was given peculiarly to the wife of the king of Egypt, to provide her with shoes; which custom, he says, obtained when Egypt became subject to Persia; See Gill on "Es 2:18". Shoes of a red, or scarlet, or purple colour, were in esteem with the Jews; and so the Targum here is,

"purple shoes:"

the word used is thought by some {f} to signify a colour between scarlet and purple; see Eze 16:10; and also with the Tyrian virgins {g}; and so with the Romans {h}; and with whom likewise white shoes {i} were much in use. That this is said of the church, is plain from the appellation of her,

O Prince's daughter! the same with the King's daughter, Ps 45:13; the daughter of the King of kings; for, being espoused to Christ, his Father is her Father, and his God her God: besides, she is born of him who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, **1Jo 2:28**; she is both a Prince's wife and a Prince's daughter. It may be rendered, "O noble", or "princely daughter" {k}! being of a free princely spirit, in opposition to a servile one, Ps 51:12; of a bountiful and liberal spirit, as in, Isa 32:5; in distributing temporal things to the necessities of the poor; and in communicating spiritual things to the comfort and edification of others. Some take these to be the words of the daughters of Jerusalem, wondering at the church's beauty, on turning herself to them as they desired:

but they are rather the words of Christ; who, observing the church speak so meanly of herself, in order to encourage her, gives a high commendation of her in this and some following verses, and begins with her "feet"; not her ministers, who are "shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace", **Eph 6:15**, and who appear beautiful in the eyes of those who have any knowledge of the good things they publish and proclaim; for they are set in the highest place in the church: but here the lowest and meanest members of the church are meant; whose outward walk, the feet are the instruments of, may be said to be "beautiful with shoes", when they are ready to every good work; when their conversation is ordered aright, is agreeably to the word of God, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ; and which, like shoes, is a fence against the briers and thorns, the reproaches and calumnies, of the world; and when there is such a lustre upon it that it cannot but be seen and observed by spectators, by which they are excited to glorify God, it is so beautiful in the eyes of Christ, that to such he shows the salvation of God;

the joints of thy thighs [are] like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman; a skilful artificer, a goldsmith or jeweller: the allusion seems to be to some ornaments about the knees or legs, wore by women in those times; see **Isa 3:18**; and this may serve to set off the lustre and beauty of the church's conversation. And since it seems not so decent to describe the parts themselves mentioned, the words may rather design the "femoralia", or garments, with which they were covered; and may signify the garments of salvations and robe of Christ's righteousness, whereby the church's members are covered, so that their nakedness is not seen; but with them are as richly adorned bridegroom and bride with their ornaments and which are not the bungling work of a creature, but of one that is God as well as man, and therefore called the righteousness of God. Some have thought that the girdle about the loins is meant, the thighs being put for the loins,
Ge 46:26; and so may intend the girdle of truth, mentioned along with the preparation of the Gospel of peace the feet are said to be shod with, **Eph 6:14**; and the metaphor of girding is used when a Gospel conversation is directed to, Lu 12:35. But it seems best by these "joints", or "turnings of the thighs" {l}, by which they move more orderly and regularly, to understand the principles of the walk and conversation of saints, as one observes {m}; without which it cannot be ordered aright; for principles denominate actions, good and bad; and the principles of grace, by which believers move in their Christian walk, are as valuable and as precious as jewels, such as faith and love, and a regard to the glory of God; and which are curiously wrought by the finger of God, by his Holy Spirit, who "works [in them] both to will and to do of his good pleasure", **Php 2:13**.

{d} Odyss. 11. v. 602, 603. "Auratos pedes", Ovid. Amor. l. 3. Eleg. 12. {e} Euterpe, sivw l. 2. c. 98. {f} Vid. Braunium de Vest. Sacerd. Heb. l. 1. p. 295, 306. {g} "Virginibus Tyrriis mos est", &c. Virgil. Aeneid. 1. {h} Vid. Persii Satyr. 5. v. 169. Virgil. Bucolic. Eclog. 7. v. 32. {i} "Pes maslus in niveo", &c. Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 3. Vid. Martial. l. 7. Epigr. 27. {k} bydn tb "puella nobills", Castalio; "filia voluntarie", Marckius; "principalis, nobills, et ingenua virgo, sc. filia", so some in Michaelis. {l} yqwmx "vertebra", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "signat illam agilem versatilem juncturam, qua capite femorum in suis foraminibus expedite moventur", Brightman. {m} Durham in loc.

Song of Solomon 7:2

Ver. 2. Thy navel [is like] a round goblet,.... According to some, not the navel itself is meant; but a covering of it, a jewel or plate of gold in the shape of it; and because the word for "round", in the Chaldee language, signifies the "moon", and so Ben Melech interprets it, some have thought of the "round tire like the moon", **Isa 3:18**; though that was rather an ornament about the neck. Bishop Patrick is of opinion that it refers to "the clothing of wrought gold", Ps 45:13; which had, on the part that covered the belly, a raised embossed work, resembling a heap or sheaves of wheat; about which was an embroidery of curious flowers, particularly lilies; and, in the midst of the whole, a fountain or conduit, running with several sorts of liquor, into a great bowl or basin: and Fortunatus Scacchus {n} interprets it of a garment, covering this part, embroidered with lilies. All which may represent the beautiful robe of Christ's righteousness the church is adorned with. But rather the part itself is meant, and designs the ministers of the Gospel; who, in the administration of the word and ordinances, are that to the church as the navel is to a human body; that is in an eminent part of it, is the strength of the intestines, conduces much to the health of the body, and by which the child in the womb is supposed to receive its nourishment: ministers are set in the highest place in the church; are strong in themselves, through the grace and power of Christ and the means of strengthening others; and of keeping the church a good plight and healthful state, by the wholesome words and sound doctrines they preach; and also of nourishing souls in embryo, and when new born, with the sincere milk of the word: and as the navel is said to be like a "round goblet", cup, bowl, or basin, this aptly describes that part; and may express the perfection of Gospel ministers, their gifts and grace, not in an absolute, but comparative sense, the round or circular form being reckoned the most perfect; and also the workmanship bestowed on them, the gifts and grace of the Spirit, a round goblet being turned and formed by some curious artist; and likewise their capacity to hold and retain Gospel truths. And they are compared, not to an empty one, but to one

[which] wanteth not liquor; meaning the large and never failing supplies of gifts and grace from Christ; so that they never want the liquor, the oil and wine of Gospel truths, to communicate to others, **Zec 4:12**. The word used signifies a "mixture", or a "mixed liquor" {o}, as of wine and milk, **So 5:1**; or rather of wine and water, much used in the eastern countries; so the wine of Sharon used to be mixed, two parts water and one wine {p}: and this designs, not a mixture of divine truths and human doctrines, which ought not to be made; but the variety of Gospel truths ministers deliver to others, and that in a manner they are most capable of receiving them. Some {q} render the words as a wish, "let there not want", &c. and so they declare the tender concern of Christ, that his church might have a continual supply in the ministry of the word;

thy belly [is like] a heap of wheat; which denotes the fruitfulness of the church in bringing souls to Christ, comparable to a pregnant woman; and whose fruit, young converts born in her, are compared to "a heap of wheat" for their number, choiceness, and solidity, being able to bear the fan of persecution: it was usual with the Jews to scatter wheat on the heads of married persons at their weddings, three times, saying, "increase and multiply" {r}; see Isa 66:8. This heap of wheat is said to be "set about", or "hedged, with lilies" {s}; which suggests, that it was not a heap of wheat on the corn floor which is meant, but a field of standing wheat, enclosed and fenced, not with thorns, but lilies; and these lilies may signify grown saints, who are often compared to lilies in this book, by whom young converts are encompassed and defended; or the beauties of holiness, in which they appear as soon as born again, Ps 110:3.

{n} Eleochrysm. Sacr. l. 3. p. 1016. {o} gzmh krama, Sept. "mixtio", Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "mixtura", Marckius, Michaelis. {p} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 77. 1. Nidda, fol. 19. 1. {q} So Junius & Tremellius, Ainsworth. {r} Vid. Selden. Uxor. Heb. l. 2. c. 15. p. 195. {s} hgwo pefragmhnh, Sept. "vallatus", V. L. "circumseptus", Tigurine version, Michaelis; "septus", Pagninus, Montanus, Brightman, Cocceius, Marckius, & alii.

Song of Solomon 7:3

Ver. 3. Thy two breasts [are] like two young roes [that are] twins.
See Gill on "So 4:5".

Song of Solomon 7:4

Ver. 4. Thy neck [is] as a tower of ivory,.... Two things recommend the neck, erectness and whiteness; both are here expressed, the one by a "tower", the other by "ivory"; hence a fine beautiful neck is called an ivory one {t}; and for the same reason it sometimes has the epithet of "snowy" {u}, and sometimes of "marble" {w}. Of the church's neck, as it may design either the ministers of the word, or the Scriptures of truth, See Gill on "So 4:4"; where it is compared to "the tower of David", and here to "a tower of ivory": Marckius conjectures that they may be the same, or that this is the name of, vine ancient structure known at this time; however, it is used as expressive of the purity of the lives of Gospel ministers, and the evenness of their doctrines, and of the purity, beauty, glory, axial harmony of the Scriptures;

thine eyes [like] the fish pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim; Heshbon was formerly the seat of Sihon, king of the Amorites, Nu 22:26; of which Bathrabbim was one of its gates; so called, either because it led to Rabbath, a city near it, and mentioned with it, Jer 49:3; or because of the great numbers that went in and out by it; for it may be rendered, "the daughter of many", or "of great ones" {x}: near this gate, it seems, were very delightful fish pools, to which the eyes of the church are compared. In the Hebrew language, the word for eyes and fountains is the same; the eyes having humours in them, and so fitly compared to fish pools. Of the eyes of the church, as they may design either the ministers of the word, or the eyes of her understanding, particularly faith, See Gill on "So 1:15"; here they are said to be like "fish pools", whose waters are clear, quiet, constant and immovable; and, seen at a distance, between trees and groves, look very beautiful: and, if applied to ministers, may denote the clearness of their sight in discerning the truths of the Gospel; and their being filled with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; and their being blessings to the churches of Christ, and to the souls of men the word for "fish pools" comes from a word which signifies "to bless" {y}; and such being observed as were near the gate of Bathrabbim, may have respect to the multitude that attend their ministry, and receive benefit by it; in which they are constant and invariable, and all of a piece, and appear very beautiful to those to whom they are useful. And if applied to the church's eyes of understanding, those of faith and knowledge, may denote the perspicuity of them, in the discernment of spiritual things; and the fixedness and immovableness of them on the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; looking alone to him, and off of every other object, and so very attractive to him, and beautiful in his sight, as well as their abounding with the waters of evangelic repentance and humiliation; see **So 4:9**;

thy nose [is] as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus; a tower on that part of Mount Lebanon which faced Damascus, which lay in a plain, and so open to view, as well as exposed to winds; hence called, by Lucan {z}, Ventosa Damascus; which tower was so high, as Adrichomius {a} says, that from thence might be numbered the houses in Damascus: by which also may be meant the ministers of the word; nor need it seem strange that the same should be expressed by different metaphors, since the work of ministers is of different parts; who, as they are as eyes to see, so like the nose to smell; and having a spiritual discerning of Gospel truths, both savour them themselves, and diffuse the savour of them to others; and are both the ornament and defence of the church: the former is signified by the "nose", which is an ornament of the face, and the latter by the "tower of Lebanon", and this is looking towards Damascus, the inhabitants of which were always enemies to the people of Israel; and so may denote the vigilance and courage of faithful ministers, who watch the church's enemies, and their motions, and, with a manful courage, face and attack them. Moreover, this description may respect the majesty and magnanimity of the church herself; the former may be intimated by her nose, which, when of a good size, and well proportioned, adds much grace and majesty to the countenance; and the latter by its being compared to the impregnable tower of Lebanon, looking towards Damascus, signifying that she was not afraid to look her worst enemies in the face: or the whole may express her prudence and discretion in spiritual things: by which she can distinguish truth from error, and espy dangers afar off, and guard against them.

{t} "Eburnea cervix", Ovid. Epist. 20. v. 57. "Eburnea colla", ib. Metamorph. l. 3. Feb. 6. v. 422. & l. 4. Fab. 5. v. 335. {u} Ovid. Amor. l. 2. Eleg. 4. v. 41. {w} Ib. Fasti, l. 4. v. 135. Virgil. Georgic. 4. in fine. {x} Mybr tb yugatrov pollwn Sept. "filiae muititudinis", V. L. "magnatum", Montanus; "nobilium", Pagninus. {y} twkrb a rad. Krb "benedixit". {z} Pharsal. l. 3. v. 215. {a} Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 100.

Song of Solomon 7:5

Ver. 5. Thine head upon thee [is] like Carmel,.... Set with hair, thick and long, as Carmel with plants and trees. Now Christ is the church's Head in various senses; he is her federal and representative Head in eternity and time; her political Head, as a King to his subjects; an economical Head, as the husband to the wife, as parents to their children, and a master to servants; and, as such, may be compared to Carmel; for the multitude dependent on him, whom he represents, and is connected with under various relations; for his height, being higher than the kings of the earth, and all other heads; and for fruitfulness, all the fruits of the church, and of all true believers, coming from him. Some render the word, "as crimson", or "scarlet" {b}; which may set forth his royal dignity and majesty, this colour being wore by kings and great personages; or the ardent love of Christ to his body, the church, and the members of it; or his bloody sufferings for them;

and the hair of thine head like purple; purple coloured hair has been in great esteem. Of this colour was the hair of King Nysus, according to the fable {c}; and so the hair of Evadne, and of the Muses {d}, were of a violet colour; the hair of Ulysses is said {e} to be like to the hyacinth flower, which is of a purple or violet colour; and Milton {f} calls the first Adam's hair hyacinthine locks; and here, in a figurative sense, the second Adam's hair is said to be like purple. By which believers that grow on Christ, the Head of the church, nay be meant, who have their dependence on him, and their strength and nourishment from him; see **So 4:1**; and these may be said to be like "purple", because of their royal dignity, being made kings unto God by Christ; and because of their being washed in the purple blood of Christ; and because of the sufferings they endure for his sake; and especially such may be so compared, who have spilt their blood and laid down their lives on his account;

the king [is] held in the galleries; the same with the Head of the church, the King of Zion, and King of saints, whose kingdom is a spiritual and everlasting one: and by the "galleries" in which he is held may be meant the ordinances of the Gospel; where Christ and his people walk and converse together; where he discloses the secrets of his heart to them, leads them into a further acquaintance with his covenant, and the blessings and promises of it; and from whence they have delightful views of his person and fulness; see the King in his beauty, and behold the good land which is afar off: the same word as here is rendered "rafters", and by some "canals", in **So 1:17**;
See Gill on "So 1:17". Now Christ being said to be "held in [these] galleries" may signify his fixed habitation in his house and ordinances; where he has

promised to dwell, and delights to be; and where he is as it were fastened to them, and hatred in them.

{b} lmrkk "veluti coccinum", Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercerus; "simile est coccineo", Junius & Tremellius; "est ut coccus", Piscator; so Ainsworth; "sicut carmesinum", Schindler. {c} Ovid. Metamorph. l. 8. Fab. 1. v. 301. De Arte Amandi, l. 1. & de Remed. Amor. l. 1. v. 68. Hygin. Fab. 198. Pausan. Attica, p. 33. {d} Pindar. Olymp. Ode 6. Pyth. Ode 1. v. 2. {e} Homer. Odyss. 6. v. 231. & 23. v. 155. {f} Paradise Lost, Book 4.

Song of Solomon 7:6

Ver. 6. How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!] These are the words of the King in the galleries, wondering at the church's beauty, it being incomparable and inexpressible, it could not be said well how great it was; and expressing the strength of his love to her, which was invariably the same as ever. Of the "fairness" of the church, and of this title, "love", see **So 1:9**; and here she is said also to be "pleasant" to him, as his spouse and bride, in whom he takes infinite delight and pleasure, loving her with a love of complacency and delight; and therefore adds, "for delights", which he had in her before the world was, **Pr 8:31**. She was all delight {g} to him; her words, her actions and gestures, her comely countenance, her sweet and pleasant voice in prayer and praise, her ravishing looks of faith and love, her heavenly airs, and evangelic walk; in all which she appeared beautiful and delightful, beyond all human thought and expression.

{g} "Meae deliciae", Plauti Stichus, Act. 5. Sc. 5.

Song of Solomon 7:7

Ver. 7. This thy stature is like to a palm tree,.... Made up of the above parts commended, and others had in view, as appears from the relative "this". The word for "stature" properly signifies height, tallness, and erectness; and which were reckoned agreeable in women, as well as men; See Gill on "1Sa 9:2"; hence methods are often made use of to make them look taller, as by their head dresses, their shoes, and by stretching out their necks, **Isa 3:16**; and the simile of a tree is not an improper one: and so Galatea is, for height and tallness, compared to an alder and to a plane tree {h}; and Helena, to a cypress tree in a garden {i}, on the same account; and here the church to a palm tree: the Egyptian palm tree is said to be the best {k}; and if Solomon here has any reference to Pharaoh's daughter, his wife, he might think of that, which is described

"of body straight, high, round, and slender {l},"

and fitly expresses a good shape and stature. The church's stature is no other than the "stature of the fulness of Christ", **Eph 4:13**; which will be attained unto when all the elect are gathered in, and every member joined to the body, and all filled with the gifts and graces of the spirit designed for them, and are grown up to a just proportion in the body; and in such a state Christ seems to view his church, and so commends her by this simile: saints are oftentimes compared to palm trees in Scripture on other accounts; see Ps 92:12;

and thy breasts to clusters [of grapes]; on a vine which might be planted by and run up upon a palm tree, as Aben Ezra suggests: though rather clusters of dates, the fruit of the palm tree, are designed, since this fruit, as Pliny {m} observes, grows in clusters; and to clusters of the vine the church's breasts are compared in **So 7:8**. And by these "breasts" may be meant either the ministers of the Gospel, who communicate the sincere milk of the word to souls; and may be compared to clusters for their numbers, when there is plenty of them, which is a great mercy to the church; and for their unity, likeness, and agreement in their work, in their ministrations, and in the doctrine they preach, though their gifts may be different; or else the two Testaments, full of the milk of the word; and comparable to "clusters" of grapes or dates, because of the many excellent doctrines and precious promises in them; which, when pressed by hearing, reading, meditation, and prayer, yield both delight and nourishment to the souls of men. Some think the two ordinances of the Gospel, baptism and the Lord's supper, are intended, which are breasts of consolation; and, when the presence of Christ, and the manifestations of his love, are enjoyed in them, they afford much pleasure and satisfaction; and as those breasts are full in themselves, they are beautiful in the eye of Christ, and as such commended; See Gill on "So 4:5".

{h} Ovid. Metamorph. l. 13. Fab. 8. {i} Theocrit. Idyll. 18. v. 30. {k} A. Gellii Nect. Attic. l. 7. c. 16. Vid. Strabo. Geograph. l. 17. p. 563. {l} Sandys's Travels, l. 2. p. 79. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 4.

Song of Solomon 7:8

Ver. 8. I said, I will go up to the palm tree,.... Which is easy of ascent; having, in the bark of the trunk or body of the tree, rings like steps, whereby the eastern people climb it with incredible swiftness, as Pliny {n} relates: these steps are made by the lower boughs being lopped off, whose knots, or "pollices", as Dr. Shaw {o} calls them, being gradually left upon the trunk of the tree, serve, like so many rungs of a ladder, to climb up the tree; either to fecundate it, or to lop it, or to gather the fruit; and Lucian says {p},

"those that have seen how men get up into palm trees, in Arabia, Egypt, and other places, must needs understand what he says about climbing the Phalli, in the temple of Hierapolis in Syria, he is describing."

By the "palm tree" may be meant the church militant, who yet gets the victory over all her enemies, of which the palm tree is an emblem; and Christ's "going up" to it is expressive of his right to it, and property in it, which he has by his Father's gift, his own purchase, and the power of his grace, and may go up to it when he pleases; also of his presence with his church, and of the delight he takes in her, viewing her stature, fruit, and flourishing circumstances;

I will take hold of the boughs thereof; either to crop them, the tops of them, which, of the first year's growth, are very tender and sweet, and may be eaten {q}; the top of the palm tree is said to be very sweet {r}; and which some call the "cerebrum", or brain of it, and is spoken of as very pleasant and nourishing {s}: or to gather the fruit on them; his own grace in exercise, and good works performed under the influence of it; see **So 4:16**; or to prune them; which he does by the ministry of the word, reproving sin, and refuting error; and, by afflictive providences, purging away sin; and by suffering persecution to befall his churches, whereby he clears them of carnal professors, and lops off withered and fruitless branches;

now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine; round, full, soft, and succulent, like the berries of the vine tree, the grapes that grow in clusters on it; of these, See Gill on "So 7:7";

and the smell of thy nose like apples; See Gill on "So 7:4". Here it may denote the inward constitution and outward conduct of the church, which were sound and healthful; she had an inward principle of grace, from whence proceeded a savoury conduct, a savoury breath, a holy breathing after divine and spiritual things: or it may intend the things she had a savour of, as divine truths and excellent doctrines, comparable to "apples", So 2:5; and all spiritual and heavenly things, when they have the presence of Christ, and the quickening influences of his Spirit.

{n} Ibid. So Sandys's Travels, l. 2. p. 79. {o} Travels, tom. 1. p. 142. Edit. 2. {p} De Dea Syria. {q} Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. in rad. rwq col. 2005. {r} Plutarch. de San. Tuend. vol. 2. p. 133. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 4. {s} Athenaei Deipnosophist. l. 2. c. 28. p. 71.

Song of Solomon 7:9

Ver. 9. And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine,.... Which may intend, either her taste, as the word is rendered in So 2:3; by which she can distinguish good wine from bad, truth from error; or her breath, sweet and of a good smell, like the best wine; the breathings of her soul in prayer, which are sweet odours, perfumed with the incense of Christ's mediation; or rather her speech, the words of her mouth; the roof of the mouth being an instrument of speech; the same word is sometimes rendered "the mouth", So 5:16; and may denote both her speech in common conversation, which is warming, refreshing, comforting, and quickening; and in prayer and praise, which is well pleasing and delightful to Christ; and especially the Gospel preached by her ministers, comparable to the best wine for its antiquity, being an ancient Gospel; for its purity, unadulterated, and free from mixture, and as faithfully dispensed; its delight, flavour, and taste, to such who have their spiritual senses exercised; and for its cheering, refreshing, and strengthening nature, to drooping weary souls. It follows,

for my beloved, that goeth [down] sweetly; is received and taken down with all readiness, by those who have once tasted the sweetness and felt the power of it. Or, "that goeth to righteousnesses" {t}; leading to the righteousness of Christ for justification, and teaching to live soberly and righteously: or, "that goeth to my beloved, straightway" or "directly" {u}; meaning either to his Father, Christ calls his beloved, to whose love the Gospel leads and directs souls, as in a straight line, as to the source of salvation, and all the blessings of grace; or to himself, by a "mimesis", whom the church calls so; the Gospel leading souls directly to him, his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, for peace, pardon, justification, and atonement: or, "that goeth to my beloved to uprightnesses" {w}; that is, to the church, who is Christ's beloved, consisting of upright men in heart and life, whom Christ calls his beloved and his friends, **So 5:1**; and whom Christ treats with his best wine, his Gospel; and which is designed for them, their pleasure, profit, comfort, and establishment:

causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak; either such who are in the dead sleep of sin; who, when the Gospel comes with power, are quickened by it; and it produces in them humble confessions of sin; causes them to speak in praise of Christ, and his grace, and of the salvation which he has procured for lost sinners; it brings them to Zion, to declare what great things God has done for them: or else drowsy professors, in lifeless frames, and much gone back in religion; who, when aroused and quickened by the Gospel, and brought out of their lethargy, are ready to acknowledge their backslidings with shame; to speak meanly and modestly of themselves, and very highly of Christ and his grace, who has healed their backslidings, and still loves them freely; none more ready to exalt and magnify Christ, and speak in praise of what he has done for them. Some render the words, "causing the lips of ancient men to speak" {x}; whose senses are not so quick, nor they so full of talk, as in their youthful days: wherefore this serves to commend this wine; that it should have such an effect as to invigorate ancient men, and give them a juvenile warmth and sprightliness, and make them loquacious, which is one effect of wine, when freely drunk {y}; and softens the moroseness of ancient men {z}: wine is even said to make an ancient man dance {a}.

{t} Myrvyml "ad rectitudines", Montanus; "ad ea quae roetissima sunt", Tigurine version. {u} "Directe", Mercerus; "rectissime", Brightman. {w} "Ad rectitudines", i.e. "rectos homines", Marckius, Michaelis. {x} Mynvy "veterum", Pagninus; "antiquorum", Vatablus. {y} Philoxenus apud Athenaei Deipnosoph. l. 2. c. 1. p. 25. Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 38. 1. {z} Philoxenus apud Athenaei Deipnosoph. l. 11. c. 3. p. 463. {a} Ibid. l. 4. c. 4. p. 134. l. 10. c. 7. p. 428.

Song of Solomon 7:10

Ver. 10. I [am] my beloved's,.... These are the words of the church, strongly expressing the assurance of faith she had of her union to Christ, and interest in him; which shows that "that" grace is attainable, and that there may be a continuation of the exercise of it; it may be expressed again and again, as it is by the church in this Song, **So 2:16**; and that the exercise of it often follows, upon the enjoyment of Christ's presence, as here, upon his going tap to the palm tree; and that this grace has no tendency to licentiousness, but excites to duty, and makes more careful in it, of which **So 7:11** is a proof, "Come, let us go forth", &c. Moreover, these words may be considered as a modest acknowledgment of the church's, that all she were and had were Christ's, and came from him; all the beauty he had commended in her; all fruitfulness in grace, and strength in the exercise of it; her light and knowledge in divine truths; her zeal and courage to defend them; her upright stature, and holy walk and conversation, and every good thing else, were owing to his grace. And here she also makes a voluntary surrender of all to him again; as she received all from him, she devotes all to him:

and his desire [is] towards me; and only to her, as his spouse and bride: it was towards her from everlasting, when he asked her of his Father, and he gave her to him; and so it was in time, to procure her salvation; hence he became incarnate, and suffered and died in her stead: his desire is towards his people before conversion, waiting to be gracious to them; and, after conversion, to have their company, and their grace exercised on him, and to behold their beauty; nor will his desires be fully satisfied until he has got them all with him in glory. And this phrase not only signifies the conjugal relation of the church to Christ, he being her husband, and she his wife, the desire of his eyes, as a wife is called, Eze 24:16; but takes in the whole care and concern of Christ for her, as her husband; who sympathizes with her under all her distresses; protects her from all dangers and enemies; and provides everything necessary for her, for time and eternity. Some render the words, "seeing his desire is towards me" {b}; therefore she expresses her faith in him, and gives up herself to him.

{b} So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Song of Solomon 7:11

Ver. 11. Come, my beloved,.... The word come is often used by Christ, and here by the church, in imitation of him; see **So 2:10**. This call is the call of the church upon Christ, to make good his promise, **So 7:8**; and is an earnest desire after the presence of Christ, and the manifestations of his love; which desire is increased the more it is enjoyed; and it shows the sense she had of her own insufficiency for the work she was going about: she knew that visiting the several congregations of the saints would be to little purpose, unless Christ was with her, and therefore she urges him to it; not that he was backward and unwilling to go with her, but he chooses to seem so, to make his people the more earnest for his presence, and to prize it the more when they have it; and it is pleasing to him to hear them ask for it. The endearing character, "my beloved", is used by the church, not only to express her affection for Christ, and faith of interest in him, but as an argument to engage him to go along with her. Her requests follow;

let us go forth into the field; from the city, where she had been in quest of Christ, and had now found him, **So 5:7**; into the country, for recreation and pleasure: the allusion may be to such who keep their country houses, to which they retire from the city, and take their walks in the fields, to see how the fruits grow, and enjoy the country air. The church is for going abroad into the fields; but then she would have Christ with her; walking in the fields yields no pleasure unless Christ is there; there is no recreation without him: the phrase expresses her desire of his presence everywhere, at home and abroad, in the city and the fields; and of her being with him alone, that she might tell him all her mind, and impart her love to him, which she could better do alone than in company it may also signify her desire to have the Gospel spread in the world, in the barren parts of it, which looked like uncultivated fields, the Gentile world; and so, in one of the Jewish Midrashes {c}, these "fields", and the "villages" in the next clause, are interpreted of the nations of the world;

let us lodge in the villages; which, though places of mean entertainment for food and lodging, yet, Christ being with her, were more eligible to her than the greatest affluence of good things without him; and, being places of retirement from the noise and hurry of the city, she chose them, that she might be free of the cares of life, and enjoy communion with Christ, which she would have continued; and therefore was desirous of "lodging", at least all night, as in **So 1:13**. Some {d} render the words, "by", "in", or "among [the] Cyprus trees"; see **So 1:14**; by which may be meant the saints, comparable to such trees for their excellency, fragrancy, and fruitfulness; and an invitation to lodge by or with these could not be unwelcome to Christ, they being the excellent in the earth, in whom is all his delight.

{c} Shir Hashirim Rabba in loc. {d} Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Brightman, Michaelis.

Song of Solomon 7:12

Ver. 12. Let us get up early to the vineyards,.... After a night's lodging in the fields, or among the "Cyprus trees". By which "vineyards" may be meant particular churches, gathered according to Gospel order, and distinguished from the world, planted with fruitful vines, and fenced by almighty power: hither the church proposes to "get up early", very early in the morning; being willing to take the first and most seasonable opportunity of visiting the saints, to know their state and condition; and, that her visit might not be in vain, she is for taking Christ along with her;

let us see if the vine flourish; true believers in Christ; who, though weak and worthless in themselves, yet being ingrafted in Christ, the true vine, bring forth fruit, and become flourishing in grace and good works; of the flourishing or flowering of the vine,
See Gill on "So 2:13";

[whether] the tender grape appear; or when "the flower of the vine opens" {e}, and goes off, and the small grape appears: by which young converts may be meant, who are tender, and have but a small degree of faith and knowledge; and yet these are not overlooked, much less despised, by Christ and his church, but are delighted with the promising appearance they make;

[and] the pomegranates bud forth; stronger believers, taller and more fruitful than the former; see **So 4:13**; the actings and exercise of whose grace are signified by "budding forth", in an open and visible manner: the church is concerned for the good and welfare of the saints of all ranks and sizes; of vines and pomegranates, as well as tender grapes; and of the budding of the one, as well as of the opening and flowering of the other. And seeing these ends proposed by her are the same with Christ's, **So 6:11**; she might conclude they would prevail upon him to go with her, particularly what follows:

there will I give thee my loves; in the fields, villages, and vineyards, when alone, and observing the state and condition of particular churches and saints; and having communion with Christ, the church might hope and expect to have her heart enlarged, and drawn forth in love to Christ more abundantly; and that she should be able to manifest it more largely to him, and give clearer and fuller proofs of it: and this she observes in order to gain her point, and get him to go along with her; knowing that her love, in the actings and exercise of it, was very acceptable to him, **So 4:10**; I see not why the word for "loves" may not be rendered "my lovely flowers"; as a word nearly the same, in **So 7:13**, is by some rendered, "these lovely flowers give a good smell", which seems to refer to the flowers here; such as were to be met with in plenty, in fields and vineyards, among vines and pomegranates, as lilies, violets, &c. and may be an allusion to lovers, who used to give to those they loved sweet smelling flowers {f}; and here may signify the graces of the Spirit, and the actings of them, which are fragrant, and acceptable to Christ.

{e} rdmoh xtp "num si, vel gemmas suas aperuerit flos vitis", Michaelis; to the same sense Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius. {f} "Naias amat Thyrsin, Glauce Almona, Nisa Theonem; Nisa rosas, Glauce violas, dat lilia Nais". Cythereus Sidonius apud Auson.

Song of Solomon 7:13

Ver. 13. The mandrakes give a smell,.... Or, "those lovely flowers", as Junius and Tremellius, and Piscator, translate the words; even those the church proposed to give to her beloved, when in the fields Some take them to be violets; others, jessamine; others, more probably, lilies {g}; as the circumstances of time and place, when and where they flourished, and their fragrant smell, and figure like cups, show. Ravius {h} contends, that the word signifies, and should be rendered, "the branches put forth their sweet smelling flowers"; and thinks branches of figs are meant, which give a good smell, agreeably to **So 2:13**; and which he supposes to be the use of the word in Jer 24:1; and to his sense Heidegger {i} agrees; only he thinks the word "branches" is not to be restrained to a particular species, but may signify branches of sweet smelling flowers, and fruits in general. Ludolphus {k} would have the fruit the Arabians, call "mauz", or "muza", intended; which, in the Abyssine country, is as big as a cucumber, and of the same form and shape, fifty of which grow upon one and the same stalk, and are of a very sweet taste and smell; from which cognation of a great many on the same stalk he thinks it took the name of "dudaim", the word here used, and in Ge 30:14. But the generality of interpreters and commentators understand by it the mandrakes; and so it is rendered by the Septuagint, and in both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, on Ge 30:14; but it is questionable whether the same plant that is known among us by that name is meant, since it is of a strong ill scented and offensive smell; and so Pliny says {l} of it: though Dioscorides, Levinus, Lemnius {m}, and Augustine {n} (who says he saw the plant and examined it), say it is of a very sweet smell; which though it does not agree with the plant that now bears the name, yet it does with that here intended; for though it is only said to give a smell, no doubt a good one is meant, and such Reuben's mandrakes gave. And by them here may be intended, either the saints and people of God, compared to them for their fragrancy, being clad with the garments of Christ, which smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, and are anointed with the savoury ointments of the grace of the Spirit; whose prayers are sweet odours; and their works, with their persons, accepted with God in Christ: or rather the graces of the Spirit in lively exercise may be meant; such as those lovely flowers of faith, hope, love, repentance, patience, self-denial, humility, thankfulness, and others;

and at our gates [are] all manner of pleasant [fruits]; in distinction from the mandrakes and flowers in the fields Ge 30:14; and in allusion to a custom, in many countries, to garnish the posts of the door of newly married persons with branches of trees, and fruits, and flowers; and at other festivals, besides nuptial ones {o}, which made it inviting to enter in: and these "all manner of pleasant [fruits]" may denote the plenty, variety, and excellency of the blessings of grace, and of the graces of the Spirit, believers have from Christ; and of the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, which are for their use; and may be said to be "at our gates", as being ready at hand, in the hearts of saints, and in the mouths of Gospel ministers; and open and visible, held forth to public view in the word and ordinances; and which are administered at Wisdom's gates, the gates of Zion, where they are to be met with and had. And which are

new and old; denoting the plenty of grace and blessings of it, of old laid up in Christ, and from whom there are fresh supplies continually: or rather the doctrines of the Old and New Testament; which, for matter and substance, are the same; and with which the church, and particularly her faithful ministers, being furnished, bring forth out of their treasure things new and old, Mt 13:52;

[which] I have laid up for thee, O my beloved; Christ, whom her soul loved; for though the above fruits, the blessings, promises, and doctrines of grace, which she laid up in her heart, mind, and memory, to bring forth and make use of at proper times and seasons, were for her own use and benefit, and of all believers, yet in all for the honour and glory of Christ, the author and donor of them. Respect may be had to a custom with lovers, to lay up fruits for those they love; at least such custom may be compared with this {p}.

{g} Pfeiffer. Dubia Vexata, cent. 1. loc. 59. p. 79. {h} Dissert. de Dudaim. {i} Hist. Patriarch. tom. 2. exercit. 19. s. 9, 15. {k} Hist. Ethiop. l. 1. c. 9. {l} Nat. Hist. l. 25. c. 13. {m} Herb. Bibl. Explic. l. 2. {n} Contr. Faustum, l. 22. c. 56. {o} Vid. Plutarch. Amator. vol. 2. p. 755. & Barthium ad Claudian. de Nupt. Honor. v. 208. "Longos erexit janua ramos", Juvenal. Satyr. 12. v. 91. "Necte coronam postibus", Satyr. 6. v. 51, 52. "Ornantur postes", v. 79. "Ornatas paulo ante fores", &c. v. 226, 227. "Junua laureata", Tertull. ad Uxor. l. 2. c. 6. {p} "----Sunt poma gravantia ramos Sunt auro similes longis in vitibus uvae, Sunt et purpureae, tibi et has servamus et ilias". Ovid. Metamorph. l. 13. Fab. 8.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Song of Solomon 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO SONG OF SOLOMON 8

This chapter begins with an ardent wish of the church for a free and intimate converse with Christ; declaring what she would do to him, and for him, should she have such an interview with him, **So 8:1**; what familiarity should be between them, **So 8:3**; charging the daughters of Jerusalem not to give him any disturbance, **So 8:4**. Upon which they inquire who she was that was in such a posture they saw her in, **So 8:5**; when the church, instead of giving them an answer, says some things concerning her beloved, on whom they saw her leaning; and makes some requests to him for more nearness to him, and manifestations of his love to her; urged from the strength her love and affections to him, which was invincible, **So 8:6**. Next follows a speech of the church about her little sister; expressing a concern for her, and what she would do to her and with her, **So 8:8**; and the answer of the little sister, declaring what she, was, and what she enjoyed, **So 8:10**; then the words of the church again, concerning her husband's vineyard; the place, keepers, and profit of it, **So 8:11**. And the chapter, and with it the Song, is concluded with a request of Christ to the church, that he might hear her voice, **So 8:13**; and with a petition of hers to him, that he would come quickly to her, **So 8:14**.

Ver. 1. O that thou [wert] as my brother,.... Or, "who will give thee as a brother to me?" {q} an usual form of wishing, **De 5:29**
Ps 14:7. The church here not only requests that Christ would be like a brother to her, but appear to be really one, and to act the part of one towards her; with whom she might as freely converse as brother and sister may. Several Jewish {r} writers own, that the King Messiah is intended here; and in such a relation Christ does stand to his church and people, by virtue of his incarnation, **Heb 2:11**; hence many of the ancients take this to be a wish of the Jewish church, for the coming of Christ in the flesh; and also through their adoption, he and they having one Father, Joh 20:17; and by being of a like nature, disposition, and practice, Mt 12:50; as well as on the score of love and friendship, Pr 18:24; and this relation Christ fills up, by the intimacy and familiarity he uses them with; by his compassion on them, and sympathy with them, in all their

afflictions; by the help, aid, and relief, he gives them; by his condescension to their weaknesses, and by his great love and affection for them. As a further description of him as a brother, it is added,

that sucked the breasts of my mother; which may denote the truth and reality of Christ's incarnation, being a sucking infant: and the near relation of Christ to his people, being a brother by the mother's side, reckoned the nearest, and their affection to each other the strongest: by her "mother" may be meant Jerusalem above, the mother of us all; and, by her "breasts", the ordinances, of which Christ, as man, partook when on earth, and now may be said to suck, as formed in the hearts of his people;

[when] I should find thee without; or, "in the street" {s}; in public ordinances, where Christ is to be found; or outside of Judea, in the Gentile world, where, after his coming in the flesh, his Gospel was preached, the ordinances administered, and he was there to be found; or in the most public place and manner, where she should not be ashamed to own him, his truths and ordinances, before men;

I would kiss thee; not only with a kiss of approbation, Pr 24:16; but of love and affection, of faith and confidence, of homage and subjection, of worship and adoration; see **Ps 2:12**; this is an usage with relations and friends, brothers and sisters, at meeting; hence Heunischius refers this to the time when the saints shall meet Christ in the clouds, who will be admitted to the nearest embraces of him, with unspeakable pleasure, and enjoy him to all eternity;

yea, I should not be despised; for taking such freedom with Christ, her brother. Or, "they would not despise me" {t}; neither men nor angels, for such an action, and still less God, the Father, Son, and Spirit; which she might conclude from the relation between them, it being no more unseemly than for a sister to use such freedom with an own brother, even in the street; and from the reception she had reason to believe she should meet with from Christ: who would not turn away his face from her, when she offered to kiss him, which would occasion shame and blushing. The whole expresses her boldness in professing Christ, without fear or shame, in the most public manner.

{q} Knty ym "quis det te?" Pagninus, Montanus, Marckius. {r} Targum in loc. Zohar in Gen. fol. 104. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 73. 3. Caphtor Uperah, fol. 5. 2. {s} Uwxb "in platen", Montanus, Brightman, Marckius; "in publico", Cocceius, Michaelis. {t} yl yzby al "non contemnent, vel contemnerent me", Montanus, Brightman, Marckius.

Song of Solomon 8:2

Ver. 2. I would lead thee, [and] bring, thee into mother's house,.... The general assembly and church of the firstborn is mother to the church visible, to particular churches and believers, where they are born, educated, and brought up; for which they have a great affection, as persons usually have for the place of their nativity and education. And here the church desires to have Christ with her; either to consummate the marriage between them, Ge 24:67; or to have the knowledge of him spread among her relations, those of her mother's house, who belonged to the election of grace; or to enjoy his presence there, with great delight and pleasure: the act of "leading" thither shows great familiarity with him, great love and respect for him, a hearty welcome to her mother's house; and was treating him becoming his majesty, great personages being led, Isa 60:11; all which is done by prayer, in the exercise of faith: and the act of "bringing" denotes on her part the strength of faith in prayer; and on his part great condescension; see **So 3:4**. Her end in all was, as follows,

[who] would instruct me; meaning her mother; the allusion may be to a grave and prudent woman, who, taking her newly married daughter apart, teaches her how to behave towards her husband, that she may have his affections, and live happily with him: the house of God is a school of instruction, where souls are taught the ways of Christ, the doctrines of the Gospel, and the duties of religion; nor are the greatest believers above instruction, and the means of it. Some render the words, "thou shalt", or "thou wouldest teach me" {u}; meaning Christ, who teaches as none else can; he teaches by his Spirit, who leads into all truth; by the Scriptures, which are profitable for instruction; by his ministers, called pastors and teachers; and by his ordinances administered in his house; where the church desired the presence of Christ; and might expect instruction from him, being in the way of her duty; and to hear such marriage precepts, as in Ps 45:10. In return, the church promises Christ,

I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate; or, "wine of my pomegranate" {w}; of which mention is made in Jewish writings {x} and by other authors {y}: there was a city in the tribe of Dan, called "Gathrimmon", Jos 21:24; the winepress of the pomegranate, or where they made pomegranate wine. Spiced wine was much used by the ancients, and in the eastern countries: so Phoenician wine, or wine of Byblis, is said to be odoriferous {z}; so the wine of Lebanon, Ho 14:7; the Babylonians had a wine they called nectar {a}: spiced wine was thought less inebriating {b}, and therefore the ancients sometimes put into their wine myrrh and calamus, and other spices {c}; sometimes it was a mixture of old wine, water, and balsam; and of wine, honey, and pepper {d}. Now these sorts of wine being accounted the best and most agreeable, the church proposes to treat Christ with them; by which may be meant the various graces of the Spirit, and the exercise of them in believers; which give Christ pleasure and delight, and are preferred by him to the best wine; see **So 4:10**. With the Hebrew writers, pomegranates are said to be a symbol of concord {e}: the pomegranate was a tree of Venus {f}.

{u} yndmlt "docebis me", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, & alii; "doceres me", Brightman, Michaelis. {w} ynmr oyoem "de vino dulci mali granati mei", Montanus. {x} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 143. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Maacolot Asurot, c. 7. s. 7. {y} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 14. c. 16. {z} biblinon euwda Theocrit. Idyll. 14. v. 15, 16. {a} Athenaei Deipnosophist. l. 1. c. 95. p. 32. {b} Ibid. l. 11. c. 3. p. 464. {c} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 14. c. 13, 16. Plauti Persa, Act. 1. Sc. 3. v. 7, 8. {d} Munster. Dictionar. Chaldaic. p. 22, 27. {e} Apud Chartar. de Imag. Deorum, p. 139. {f} Athenaeus, ut supra (Deipnosophist.), l. 3. c. 8. p. 84.

Song of Solomon 8:3

Ver. 3. His left hand [should be] under my head, and his right hand should embrace me. That is, when she should have the presence of Christ in her mother's house. Or the words are a petition that so it might be, "let his left hand", &c. {g}; or a declaration of what she did enjoy, "his left hand is under my head", &c. {h},
See Gill on "So 2:6".

{g} Tigurine version, Marckius, some in Michaelis. {h} Mercerus, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Song of Solomon 8:4

Ver. 4. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up,
nor awake [my] love, until he please. The phrase, "by the roes [and] by the hinds of the field", used in **So 2:7**; is here omitted; not as if the charge was less vehement and earnest here, for the form of expostulation seems rather to express more earnestness: for the words may be rendered, "why will ye", or

"why should ye stir up, and why awake my love?" {i} being apprehensive they were about to do it; and which she dissuades from, as unreasonable and dangerous, and might be prejudicial to them as well as to her. The allusion is to virgins, that sung songs at marriages; one in the evening, lulling to sleep; and another in the morning, awaking and stirring up from it {k}.

{i} hm, "cur", Montanus, Schmidt. {k} Vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 18.

Song of Solomon 8:5

Ver. 5. (Who [is] this that cometh up from the wilderness?.... Which words are spoken by the daughters of Jerusalem, occasioned by her charge to them, by which they were excited to look more earnestly at her, whom Christ had indulged with so much nearness to him; at which they express their surprise, and describe her by her ascent "from the wilderness"; that is, of the world, out of which she was chosen and called; and from a state of nature, out of which she was brought; and was rising up in a state of grace to a state of glory;
See Gill on "So 3:6";

leaning upon her beloved); faith in Christ, whom her soul loved, and who loved her, is signified hereby; see Isa 50:10; which is the grace by which believers lean on the person of Christ, for acceptance with God; on his righteousness, for justification; on his fulness, for the supply of their wants; and trust in his blood for pardon and cleansing, The word is only used in this place, and is differently rendered: by some, "casting herself" {l} on him; as sensible sinners do at first conversion, when they venture their souls on Christ, commit the care and keeping of them to him, and trust their whole salvation with him: by others, "joining, associating" {m}; cleaving to him, keeping company with him, from the use of the word {n} in the Arabic tongue; so such souls give up themselves to Christ; cleave to him, with full purpose of heart; walk with him, and walk on in him, as they have received him: by others, "rejoicing" or "delighting" {o} herself in him; in the view of his personal glory, transcendent excellencies, inexhaustible fulness, and searchable riches: the Septuagint version is, "strengthened", or "strengthening herself on her beloved"; deriving all her strength from him, to exercise grace, perform duty, withstand temptation, and persevere to the end, conscious of her own weakness; faith, in every sense of the word, is intended;

I raised thee up under the apple tree; not the words of Christ concerning the church, since the affixes are masculine; but what the church said concerning Christ, when leaning on his arm as she went along with him: so the words may be connected with the preceding, by supplying the word "saying", as Michaelis observes; relating a piece of former experience, how that when she was under the apple tree, sat under the shadow of it, **So 2:3**; that is, under the ordinances of the Gospel; where, having no sensible communion with Christ for some time, he being as it were asleep, she, by her earnest prayers and entreaties, awaked him, and raised him up, to take notice of her; whereby she enjoyed much nearness to him, and familiarity with him;

there thy mother brought thee forth, there she brought thee forth [that] bare thee; which may be said either concealing the Old Testament church, who conceived hope of the coming of Christ, waited for it, and was often like a woman in pain until he was brought forth, which at length was done, to the joy of those that looked for him; or of the New Testament church, hoping, looking, waiting for the second coming of Christ, in the exercise of faith and prayer, and is like a woman in travail, and will be until he makes his appearance; and both may be meant, the one by the former, the other by the latter phrase, and may be the reason of the repetition of it. It may be applied to the apostles of Christ, who travailed in birth, until Christ was brought forth into the Gentile world, through the preaching of the Gospel; and so to all Gospel ministers, who are in like case until Christ be formed in the souls of men; which is no other than the new birth, and is attended with pain like that of a woman in travail; and every regenerate person may be said, in this sense, to be Christ's mother, as well as his brother and sister, Mt 12:50; and each of the above things are usually done under and by the means of the word and ordinances; which may be signified by the apple tree, or, however, the shadow of it.

{l} tqprtm "injiciens se", Cocceius. {m} "Adjungens se", Montanus; "associans se", Brightman, Schmidt, Marckius, Michaelis; so Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Joseph Kimchi, & R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel. Moed, fol. 19. 1. {n} "Raphak, comes fuit; rephik, comes itineris; socius", Golius, col. 1018, 1019. {o} "Deliciis affluens", V. L. "delicians", some in Mercerus, so Kimchi.

Song of Solomon 8:6

Ver. 6. Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm,.... These are still the words of the church, speaking to Christ as she walked along with him, as the affixes in the Hebrew text show; in which she desires to have a fixed abiding place in his heart; to continue firmly in his love, and to have further manifestations of it; to be always remembered and supported by him; to be ever on his mind, and constantly under his care and protection; and to have a full assurance of interest in his love, and in his power, which is the sealing work of his Spirit, **Eph 1:13**. The allusion seems to be to the high: priest, a type of Christ, who had the names of the children of Israel engraved on precious stones, and bore by him on his shoulders, and on his heart, for a memorial before the Lord continually; or to the names of persons, engraved on jewels, wore by lovers on their arms or breasts, or to their pictures put there; not to signets or seals wore on those parts, but to the names and images of persons impressed on them: the Ethiopians {p} understand it of something bound upon the arm, by which persons might be known, as was used in their country. The church's desire is, that she might be affectionately loved by Christ, be deeply fixed in his heart, be ever in his view, owned and acknowledged by him, and protected by the arm of his power. Her reasons follow:

for love [is] strong as death; that is, the love or the church to Christ, which caused her to make the above requests: death conquers all; against it there is no standing; such was the love of the church, it surmounted all difficulties that lay in the way of enjoying Christ; nothing could separate from it; she was conquered by it herself {q}; and could not live without him; a frown, an angry look from him, was as death unto her; yea, she could readily part with life and suffer death for his sake; death itself could not part her from him, or separate him from her love {r}; so that her love was stronger than death;

jealousy [is] cruel as the grave: the jealousy she had of Christ's love to her which was her weakness; and yet it was very torturing and afflicting, though at the same time it showed the greatness of her love to Christ: or "envy", that is of wicked men, she was the object of, which exceeds cruel wrath and outrageous anger, Pr 27:4; or rather her "zeal" {s}, which is no other than ardent love for Christ his Gospel, cause, and interest; which ate up and consumed her spirits, as the grave does what is cast into it. Ps 119:139. Virgil {t} gives the epithet of "cruel" to love;

the coals thereof [are] coals of fire; which expresses the fervency of her love to Christ, and zeal for the honour of his name: which, though sometimes cold and languid, is rekindled, and becomes hot and flaming; and is, like fire, insatiable, one of the four things that say, "It is not enough", Pr 30:16;

[which hath] a most vehement flame; nothing is, nor, common with other writers {u}, than to attribute flame to love, and to call it a fire; here a most vehement flame. Or, "the flame of Jah" or "Jehovah" {w}; an exceeding great one: the Hebrews use one or other of the names of God, as a superlative; so the mountains of God, and cedars of God, mean exceeding great ones; and here it expresses the church's love in the highest degree, in such a flame as not to be quenched, as follows: or it signifies, that the flame of love in her breast was kindled by the Lord himself {x}, by his Spirit, compared to fire; or by his love, shed abroad in her heart by him, Hence it appears to be false, what is sometimes said, that the name of God is not used in this Song; since the greatest of all his names, Jab or Jehovah, is here expressed.

{p} Apud Ludolph. Lexic. Ethiopic. p. 341. {q} "Omnia vincit amor, et nos cedamus amori", Virgil. {r} "Nostros non rumpit funus amorea", Lucan. Pharsal. l. 5. v. 761, 762. {s} hanq "zelus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Marckius. {t} "Crudelis amor", Bucolic. Eclog. 10. v. 29. {u} Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. de Nutpt. Honor. v. 16. & Laude Stilico, v. 74. So love is said to kindle a more vehement flame than at Vulcan's forge, Theocrit. Idyll. 2. prope finem. {w} hy-tbhlv "flamma Domini", Montauus, Mercerus; "Dei", Tigurine version, Cocceius; "Jah", Vatablus, to Marckius. {x} So the Tigurine version, Castalio.

Song of Solomon 8:7

Ver. 7. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it,.... The love of the church to Christ, which is inextinguishable and insuperable, by the many waters and floods of wicked and ungodly men; neither by their flattery and fair promises; nor by their cruel edicts, force and persecution; by neither can they withdraw the love of the saints from Christ, nor tempt them to desert his interest: nor by all the afflictions God is pleased to bring upon them; rather their love is increased thereby, which they consider as effects of the love, wisdom, and faithfulness of God, as designed for their good: nor even by their sins and corruptions; for though, through the aboundings of these, their love may wax cold, yet it never becomes extinct; it may be left, but not lost; its fervency may be abated, but that itself remains: nor by Satan's temptations, who sometimes comes in like a flood, threatening to carry all before him; but the Spirit lifts up a standard against him, and maintains his own work of faith and love,
Isa 59:19; nor by the terrors of the law, and the apprehensions of divine wrath, they are sometimes pressed with, signified by waves and floods, Ps 88:6; nor

by all the hardships and difficulties, scoffs and reproaches, which attend believers in their Christian race; which are so far from alienating their affections from Christ, that they rather endear him the more unto them, and make heaven, and the enjoyment of him there, the more desirable;

if [a] man would give, all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned; it is true of the love of Christ to his people, as also what is said before; but is rather to be understood of the love of the church to Christ; which is a grace so valuable, as not to be purchased with money: if this, or any other grace, is to be bought, it is to be bought without money and without price; it is to be had freely of Christ; and, where possessed, will not be parted with for anything that may be offered; if a rich man's whole estate was offered for it, to a lover of Christ; yea, the riches of the Indies, or the vast treasures of the whole globe, on condition of his parting with him, and deserting his cause and interest, and dropping or neglecting his love to him, it would be treated by him with the, almost disdain and contempt; see **Php 3:8**. Now all this is used by the church as an argument to gain her request, "set me as a seal", &c. **So 8:6**; since my soul is all in flames of love to thee, which cannot be quenched by all I suffer on thy account; nor will be parted with for all that the world can give me. This love of the church reaches to Christ, and to all that belong to him, even to a little sister, as in **So 8:8**.

Song of Solomon 8:8

Ver. 8. We have a little sister,.... Which seems to be the Gentile church, so called by the Jewish church; for as the church catholic, or universal, with respect to its parts, is called a mother, as often in this Song; so these parts, with respect to each other, as the Jewish and Gentile churches, may be called sisters; and the rather, as they belong to the same Father and family, are partakers of the same grace, and are of the same faith and religion as to the substance of them; and the object and nature of their worship the same, though as to circumstances different: and it may be observed that the Gentile church is not only sister to the Jewish church, but to Christ, and therefore she says, not I, but we, have such a sister; of which relation, see **So 4:9**; also that she stood in this relation to Christ and to the Jewish church before the coming of Christ, and before the Gospel was preached to her, and she was called and separated from the world; as elect Gentiles are also called the sheep of Christ, and children of God, before that time, Joh 10:16. This church is described as a "little sister", younger in age than the Jewish church, and in some respects less honourable, **Ro 3:1**; the same with the younger son and brother, in the parable of the prodigal; little in esteem among men, especially the Jews, **Eph 2:11**; little in stature, light, knowledge, and faith, at first conversion; and but few in number, particularly at first, and in comparison of the world: and so the church of Christ, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, is called a little flock, Lu 12:32. As a further description of her, it is added,

and she hath no breasts: is not arrived to years of ripeness, nor marriageable; see Eze 16:7; the time of her open espousal to Christ was not yet come: at this time she had no ministers nor ordinances, from whence she could have the sincere milk of the word, or share it with others; and it was some time after the Gospel came among the Gentiles before they had a settled ministry;

what shall we defer our sister? or, "what shall be done for her?" being moved with pity to her, in her forlorn and helpless condition, like a little infant, Eze 16:4; and willing to do anything for her that lay in her power, though seeming at a loss to know what to do for her: the believing Jews were very assisting to the Gentiles, in carrying the Gospel among them at first; and in supplying them with ministers, and with money too, to carry on the interest of Christ among them. The Jewish church here is not forgetful of the chief and principal agent, Christ, and therefore says, what shall we do? she was willing to do what she could; but she knew all would be insignificant without Christ, his agency and blessing. The time she was concerned what should be done for her in is,

in the day when she shall be spoken for, or "with", or "unto" {y}: when she should be wooed or treated with for marriage, by the ministers of the word, at the first preaching of the Gospel to her; or be spoken to by her enemies, by fair words, or severe menaces, to desert the faith. Or, "be spoken of" {z}; the fame of her be spread abroad, far and near, for her light, knowledge, and faith; for her profession, and her sufferings for it; and the concern is, how she should behave under all the noise and talk about her: or, "be spoken against" {a}; as she would be by unbelieving Jews, and by ignorant Heathens, for embracing the Christian religion, for receiving the Gospel of Christ, submitting to his ordinances, and professing his name, Ac 28:22. Now the old church might be concerned, that she might stand firm to her faith and the profession of it, notwithstanding the reproaches and persecutions of men.

{y} hb rbdyv "alloquenda est", V. L. "fiet sermo cum ea", Pagninus; "in colloquendum", Tigurine version. {z} "Sermo fiet de ea", Brightman, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis, so Cocceius. {a} So the Targum, Shir Hashirim Rabba, & Jarchi in loc. Bereshit Rabba, s. 39. fol. 34. 1.

Song of Solomon 8:9

Ver. 9. If she [be] a wall,.... Built upon a sure foundation; and firmly established in her faith on Christ, and love to him; and is constant therein, and stands as a wall against the attacks of enemies {b};

we will build upon her a palace of silver; though at first but as a side wall, yet should become a complete habitation, even a palace for Christ, the King of kings, and, being designed for so illustrious an inhabitant, should be a "silver" one, denoting its worth, value, and splendour; the builders of it are the church and her ministers; though Christ is the principal builder, **Zec 6:12**. Or, "a tower of silver" {c}, signifying, that she should be well fortified, and be put into a posture of defence against her enemies: the Gentile church at first had but a very small appearance of a building, a foundation just laid, a side wall erected; but, in a short time, a noble structure, a stately tower, a silver palace, were built for God;

and if she [be] a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar; if the door of the Gospel was opened among the Gentiles, it should be succeeded to the building a holy temple to the Lord; which should be not only ornamented, but so well fenced, that it should not be in the power of their enemies to deface and demolish it: or if the door of their hearts was opened, to receive Christ, and his glorious train of grace, they should be adorned and beautified with a larger measure of them; or if being come into a church state, and the door of it was set open to receive good men, and exclude bad men, this would be to their honour comfort and safety: or this phrase is expressive of the finishing of the building, the gate or door being set up; though it rather seems to intend the low and mean estate of the Gentile church at first, when there was but little appearance of a building, only a door set up; which afterwards grew up into a stately and magnificent palace, like that of Solomon's, built of cedar boards of the wood of Lebanon; which may denote her fragrancy, perpetuity, and incorruptibleness.

{b} So Ajax is called the wall of the Grecians, Homer. Iliad. 6. v. 5. & 7. v. 211. {c} Pok tryj "propugnaculum argenteum", Tigurine version; "arcem argenteam", Mercerus; "castellum argenti", Michaelis.

Song of Solomon 8:10

Ver. 10. I [am] a wall,.... The words of the little sister, or Gentile church; either wishing she was what was supposed, and desiring to be in a well settled state, "O that I was a wall!" or as asserting {d} that she was in such a state, well walled; God was a wall of fire about her; salvation was appointed as walls and bulwarks to her; she was one of the two walls Christ was a cornerstone unto, and cemented together; and was a wall built up of lively stones, of true believers, built on Christ, the foundation; and established in the doctrine of grace; and constant and immovable in her love to Christ;

and my breasts like towers; round, plump, and high; signifying that she was now marriageable; and the time of her being presented as a chaste virgin to Christ, and of her open espousals to him, was now come: of ministers of the word, of the Scriptures, and of the ordinances of the Gospel, as signified by breasts, See Gill on "So 4:5"; which may be said to be "like towers": ministers of the word, because set for the defence of the Gospel; the Scriptures, because an armoury from whence saints are supplied with armour, to repel Satan's temptations, refute errors, and defend truth; and the ordinances of the Gospel, because they stand firm and immovable against all the efforts of men to subvert and abolish them; and these are peculiar to the Gentile church, under the Gospel dispensation;

then was I in his eyes as one that found favour; from the time that the Gentile church became a wall, firmly built on Christ, and was formed into a church state, and had a settled ministry and Gospel ordinances, she became acceptable to Christ, and was admitted to near communion with him; and not only her person, but her services, met with a favourable acceptance from him; and these privileges and blessings were the fruit of his love, layout, and good will, he bore to her; which before was secret and hidden, but now her breasts being fashioned, her time was a time of love, of the open love of Christ to her, and of her espousals to him: and when, as the words may be rendered, she was "as one that found peace" {e}; peace being made by the blood of Christ, and the partition wall broken down between Jew and Gentile, and they peaceably joined together in a Gospel church state; and when she enjoyed inward peace and tranquillity of mind, which is found in Christ, the word and ordinances; even all kind of prosperity, which peace, with the Hebrews, includes; every spiritual blessing, as reconciliation, justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life, which are all the fruits and effects of divine favour, good will, grace, and love.

{d} "Hoc est, nolite dubitare ultrum murus sum", Ambros. Enarrat. in Psal. cxviii. octon. 22. p. 1087. {e} Mwlv eirhnhn, Sept. "pacem", Pagninus, Montanus, Marckius, Michaelis.

Song of Solomon 8:11

Ver. 11. Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon,.... The little sister, or Gentile church, goes on to give an account of the success of the Gospel, the planting of churches, and the establishment of the interest of Christ in the Gentile world, together with the advantages that accrued to Christ from it; for not Solomon literally, but a greater than he, is here, Christ, the antitype of him, the Prince of peace;
See Gill on "So 3:7". By the "vineyard" is meant the church, especially under the New Testament dispensation; so called, because separated from the world by sovereign grace; planted with precious and fruitful plants, which Christ has a property in, by his Father's gift and his own purchase; and therefore receives of the fruit of it; takes delight and pleasure to walk in it; and takes care to keep it in order, and to protect and preserve it: this is said to be at Baalhamon; perhaps the same with Baalgad, the names signifying much the same, and where Solomon might have a vineyard, Jos 11:17; the word signifies "the master", or "lord of a multitude" {f}; the Gentile world, consisting of a multitude of nations; and in which were many churches, and consisting of many persons;

he let out the vineyard unto keepers; to his apostles, and to ministers of the Gospel in succeeding times; and who have their employment in it; some to plant, others to water; some to prune, to reprove and correct for bad principles and practices, and others to support and uphold weak believers; and others to defend truth, and preserve the church from innovation in doctrine and worship: the "letting" it out to these agrees with the parables in Mt 20:1; where there seems to be an allusion to this passage. Christ is the proprietor of the vineyard, and the principal vinedresser; yet he makes use of his ministers to take the care of it, watch and keep it in order; for which purpose he lets, or "gives" {g}, it to them, as the word is, for he makes them in some sense owners; and they have an interest in the churches, and their life and comfort, greatly lie in the fruitfulness and well being of them; the vines are called "ours", **So 2:15**;

everyone for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand [pieces] of silver; or shekels, amounting to about an hundred and fifty pounds; which shows the fruitfulness of the vineyard, that its produce should be worth so much; and the great usefulness of the Gospel ministry, in bringing souls to Christ; the fruit of his labour is as dear to him as pieces of silver, Lu 15:8. Christ's ministers are his rent gatherers, and the collectors of his fruit, Joh 15:16; and though they have different talents and success, yet, being honest and faithful, the meanest are reckoned to bring in the same as others, or what make for Christ's delight, pleasure, and glory; as will appear when the reckoning day comes, and an account will be given in, Mt 25:19.

{f} Nwmh lebb "in ea quae habet populos", V. L. "in domino multitudinis", Piscator. {g} Nty edwken, Sept. "dedit", Marckius, Michaelis.

Song of Solomon 8:12

Ver. 12. My vineyard, which [is] mine, [is] before me,.... These are either the words of Christ, asserting and confirming his right and property in his vineyard, the church; and which he distinguishes from and prefers to all others; and which being said to be before him denotes his exact knowledge of every vine in it, not a plant escaping his watchful eye; his presence in it, his care of it, the delight and complacency he has therein: or else the words of the church, expressing her care, watchfulness, and diligence in the vineyard, and her concern for the welfare of the several vines and plants in it; see **So 1:6**; And certain it is that the next clause is spoken by her:

thou, O Solomon, [must have] a thousand; a thousand pieces or shekels of silver, as before: the church is willing Christ should have all he desires and demands, his whole due and full revenue of glory from his people; for he is meant, and not Solomon literally, as many Jewish writers {h} acknowledge. And the church being now in his presence, and using familiarity with him, thus addresses him,

and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred; by which may be meant an honourable maintenance for themselves and families, and much esteem and respect among the people to whom they minister; this is the double honour in **1Ti 5:17**. Christ has the greatest share, as in reason he should, being the proprietor of the vineyard, and having the chief care and oversight of it, and gives it its increase: however, faithful ministers have their reward, which lies greatly in the conversion of sinners, and edification of saints; for that is their joy, and crown of rejoicing; and in eternal happiness they shall enjoy hereafter, **1Th 2:19**.

{h} Shir Hashirim Rabba, & Alshech in loc. R. Abendamae Not. in Miclol Yophi in Psal. lxxii. 20.

Song of Solomon 8:13

Ver. 13. Thou that dwellest in the gardens,.... These are the words of Christ to the church, describing her by her habitation, and may be rendered, "O thou, inhabitress of the gardens" {i}; the word used being in the feminine gender, which determines the sense of it, as belonging to the church: but the Septuagint version renders it by a word in the masculine gender; and so Ambrose {k}, who interprets the words as spoken by the church to Christ; though he observes that Symmachus and Aquila interpret them as the words of Christ to the church. By the "gardens" are meant particular congregations, the dwelling places of the church, and where she has work to do by her ministers, to plant, water, prune, and dress the gardens; and of particular believers, whose business it is to attend on the ministry of the word, and other ordinances; and dwelling here may denote diligence and constant attendance here, and which is approved of by Christ, and well pleasing to him: and it is honourable, as well as profitable and delightful, to have a place in these gardens, and especially an abiding one; and indeed those, to whom Christ gives a place and a name here, are in no danger of being turned or driven out, as Adam was from Eden;

the companions hearken to thy voice; meaning either the divine Persons, the Father and the Holy Ghost, as Piscator; the companions of Christ, of the same nature, perfections, and glory with him; who listen to what the church and true believers say to them and to one another, **Mal 3:16**; or the angels, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, the friends of Christ and his people, who hearken to the conversation of believers, in private and public; and especially to the Gospel, preached in the assembly of the saints, **Eph 3:10**; or rather the daughters of Jerusalem, who all along attend the bride in this Song, and are the virgins her companions, Ps 45:14; and it is a title that belongs to all truly gracious souls, Ps 122:8; who hearken to the voice of the church, to the Gospel, preached by her ministers; which is a joyful sound, and gives great delight and pleasure;

cause me to hear [it]; that is, her voice; so sweet and charming to him, as in **So 2:14**; her voice in prayer and praise; in speaking of him, his person, offices, and grace, to others, and confessing his name before men. Some render the words, "preach me" {l}; and then the sense is, seeing the companions flock unto thee, and listen with great attention and pleasure to thy voice, take the opportunity of preaching me unto them; let my person, righteousness, and grace, be the subject of thy ministry: and which was done in the first times of the Gospel, by the apostles; has been, more or less, ever since, by faithful ministers; and will be continued until the second coming of Christ, prayed for in **So 8:14**.

{i} tbvwyh "quae habitas", V. L. Pagninus, Brightman, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis; "quae sedes", Cocceius. {k} Enarrat. in Psal. lxxii. octon. 22. p. 1068. {l} yneymvh "in praedica me", Junius & Tremellius.

Song of Solomon 8:14

Ver. 14. Make haste, my beloved,.... These are the words of the church, to Christ, calling him her "beloved"; a title often used in this Song, see **So 1:13**; and is continued to the last; for Christ was still the object of her love; and she had now a comfortable sense of her interest in him, and claimed it; and makes use of this title, not only to distinguish him from others, but to obtain her request the more easily, that he would "make haste", and come; which may either be understood of his speedy coming in the flesh, and appearing on Mount Zion and in the temple, where the spicy and sweet smelling incense was offered; or of his spiritual presence, in his house and upon the mountains, and in all the assemblies of Zion, where the prayers and praises of the saints go up to God, as sweet odours, perfumed with the incense of Christ's mediation: or the petition may respect the first spread of the Gospel throughout the Gentile world; which, being like a box of ointment opened, would diffuse the savour of the knowledge of Christ everywhere: or rather it expresses the breathings of the New Testament church after the second coming of Christ, being the last petition of the church in this Song; and with which she closes it, as John does the Revelation, and with it the whole canon of Scripture in like manner, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus", that is, come quickly: and when the church says "make haste", she does not desire Christ to come before the appointed time, nor will he; his coming may and will be hastened indeed, yet in his own time; but it shows her eager and earnest desire after it, being as it were impatient for it. The word, may be rendered, "flee away" {m}; not that the church desired Christ to depart from her; she valued his presence at another rate; but she being weary of a sinful troublesome world, and breathing after everlasting rest in another, desires him to remove from hence, and take her with him to heaven, where she might enjoy his presence without any disturbance;

and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices;

where spices and aromatic plants grow, as on Lebanon: of Christ, compared to a roe or a young hart, See Gill on "So 2:9". These creatures being remarkable for their swiftness {n} in running upon mountains and other high places, see **Hab 3:19**; the church desires that Christ would be as swift in his motion as those creatures, and come quickly and speedily, and take her with him to the "spicy mountains", the heavenly state, and all the joys and glories of it; and there have everlasting and uninterrupted communion with Christ; be out of the reach of every troublesome enemy; be in the utmost safety and security; and in the possession of pleasures that will never end. This state may be expressed by "mountains of spices": because of the height and sublimity of it; and because of the permanency and everlasting duration of it; and because of its delightfulness and pleasantness; where will be fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.

{m} hrb fuge, Sept. "fuge", V. L, Pagninus, Montanus, & alii. {n} "Veloces cervos", Virgil. Aeneid. l. 5. Vid. Plauti Poenulum, Act. 3. Sc. 1. v. 26, 27.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 64:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 64

The prayer of the church is continued in this chapter; in which she prays for some visible display of the power and presence of God, as in times past, Isa 64:1, and the rather, since unheard of and unseen things were prepared by the Lord for his people; and it was his usual way to meet those that were truly religious, Isa 64:4, and she acknowledges her sins and transgressions; the imperfections of her own righteousness, and remissness in duty, Isa 64:5, pleads relation to God, and implores his mercy, Isa 64:8, represents the desolate condition of Judea, Zion, Jerusalem, and the temple, and entreats divine commiseration, Isa 64:10.

Ver. 1. O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down,.... Before, the church prayed that the Lord would look down from heaven and behold, Isa 63:15, now that he would open the heavens, and descend from thence; not by change of place, for he fills heaven and earth with his presence; but by some visible display of his power, in destroying her enemies, and delivering her from them. Some take this to be a prayer for the first coming of

Christ from heaven to earth, by his incarnation, in order to redeem and save his people; and others that it is for his second coming to judgment, to take vengeance on his adversaries, when his wrath will burn like fire; but rather it is for his spiritual coming, to avenge his church and people on antichrist, and the antichristian states. She had seen him, as a triumphant conqueror, stained with the blood of his enemies; and now she prays for the accomplishment of what she had seen in vision and prophecy:

that the mountains might flow down at thy presence; kings and princes of the earth, and kingdoms and states governed by them, compared to mountains for their seeming firmness and stability; yet these will melt like wax, and flow like water, tremble and disappear at the presence of the King of kings, when he comes forth in his great wrath against them; as it is explained in the next verse,

that the nations may tremble at thy presence; see Re 16:20. Here ends the sixty third chapter in the Targum.

Isaiah 64:2

Ver. 2. As when the melting fire burneth,.... Or, "the fire of melting" {k}; a strong vehement fire, as Kimchi, such as is used under a furnace for melting metals; though De Dieu thinks a slow gentle fire is intended, such as is sufficient to keep the liquor boiling; which he concludes from the use of the word in the Arabic language, which, according to an Arabic lexicographer {l} he quotes, so signifies; and to the same purpose Hottinger {m}, by the help of the Arabic language, interprets the word of a small low noise, the hissing of a boiling pot; though, as Vitringa observes, could it be granted, which can not, that a slow fire raises great bubbles in water, such as when it boils; yet the fire, with which God consumes his enemies, in a figurative sense, is represented as most vehement and noisy. It seems much better, with R. Jonah, quoted by Kimchi, to understand it of "dry stubble", which makes a great blaze and noise, and causes water to boil and rise up in bubbles; and with this agree some other versions, which render it by "bavins" {n}, dry sticks and branches of trees; which being kindled,

the fire causeth the waters to boil; as the fire, under the pot, causes the waters to boil in it; the church here prays that the wrath of God might break forth upon his and her enemies, like fire that melts metals, and boils water. The figures used seem to denote the fierceness and vehemency of it. The Targum is,

"as when thou sendedst thine anger as fire in the days of Elijah, the sea was melted, the fire licked up the water;"

as if the allusion was to the affair in 1Ki 18:38, but rather the allusion is, as Kimchi and others think, to the fire that burnt on Mount Sinai, when the Lord descended on it, and the cloud which flowed with water, as the above writer supposes, and which both together caused the smoke:

to make thy name known to thine adversaries; his terrible name, in the destruction of them; his power and his glory:

that the nations may tremble at thy presence; as Sinai trembled when the Lord was on it; and as the antichristian states will when Christ appears, and the vials of his wrath will be poured out; and the Lord's people will be delivered, and the Jews particularly converted.

{k} oyomh va "ignis liquefactionum", Calvin, Vatablus; "igne liquationum", Cocceius. {l} Eliduri in Lexico Arabico tradit omh, "significare quemvis lenem et submissum strepitum", De Dieu. {m} "Quemadmodum accenso igne fit lenis submissusque strepitus, sibilus et stridor ferventis ollae, et ignis excitat bullas", Hottinger. Smegma Orientale, I. 1. c. 7. p. 146. {n} "Quemadmodum conflagrante igne cremia", Junius & Tremellius; "nam quum accendit ignis cremia", Piscator; "sicut ardente igne ex ramalibus", Grotius; "ut ignis cremia consumens strepero motu exsilit", Vitringa.

Isaiah 64:3

Ver. 3. When thou didst terrible things, which we looked not for, thou camest down,.... Referring to the wonderful things God did in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, and particularly at Mount Sinai, things that were unexpected, and not looked for; then the Lord came down, and made visible displays of his power and presence, especially on Mount Sinai; see Ex 19:18:

the mountains flowed down at thy presence; not Sinai only, but others also; Kimchi says Seir and Paran; **Jud 5:4**.

Isaiah 64:4

Ver. 4. For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear,.... Not only the things unexpected, undesired, and undeserved, had been done for the Lord's people of old; but there were other things, unheard of and unseen, which God, in his secret counsels, had prepared for them; and for which reason his appearance in his providential dispensations was the more to be desired and entreated. The Apostle Paul has cited this passage in **1Co 2:9** and applied it to Gospel times, and to evangelical truths, which are not discoverable by the light of nature; had there not been a revelation from God, the ears of men had never heard them, nor the eyes of men ever seen them:

neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee; and though there is a revelation made, yet, unless God gives men eyes to see, and ears to hear, divine truths will remain unknown to them; and those who have knowledge of them, it is but imperfect; perfect knowledge of them is reserved to another state. These are mysteries and, though revealed, remain so; the modes of them being unknown, or the manner how they are is inscrutable; such as the mode of each Person's subsisting in the Trinity; and how the two natures, human and divine, are united in the person of Christ. Moreover, under the Old Testament dispensation, these things were not so clearly revealed as now; they were the fellowship of the mystery hid in God, the treasure of Gospel truths hid in the field of the Scriptures; they were wrapped up in the dark figures and shadows of the ceremonial law, and expressed in obscure prophecies; they were kept secret since the beginning of the world, from ages and generations past, and, not so made known, as now, to the holy apostles and prophets; a more full and clear knowledge of them was reserved to Gospel times. This may also include the blessings of grace, more peculiarly prepared and provided for the church of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, especially in the latter part of it, as the promise of the Spirit; more spiritual light and knowledge; peace in abundance, and such as passeth all understanding; and particularly what will be enjoyed in the personal reign of Christ, described in so pompous a manner, Re 20:1 and it may be applied to the glories of the future state, which are such as the eye of man has never seen, nor his ear heard; and, as the apostle adds, have not entered into the heart of man to conceive of; and, as Jarchi paraphrases the words here,

"the eye of any prophet hath not seen what God will do for him that waits for him, except thine eyes, thou, O God;"

having cited a passage of their Rabbins out of the Talmud {o}, which interprets the words of the world to come,

"all the prophets say, they all of them prophesied only of the days of the Messiah; but as to the world to come, eye hath not seen, &c."

Some read the words, "neither has the eye seen God besides thee who will do for him that waiteth for him" {p}; that is, none besides thee, O Christ, who lay in the bosom of the Father, and was privy to all, **Joh 1:18**: what

he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him; the apostle quotes it, "for them that love him"; which describes the same persons; for those that wait for the Lord love him, and those that love him will wait for him; as Old Testament saints did for the first coming of Christ, and as New Testament saints now wait on him, in the ministry of his word and ordinances, for his spiritual presence, and also are waiting for his second coming, and for the ultimate glory; and for such persons unseen and unheard of things are prepared in the counsels and purposes of God, and in the covenant of his grace; Christ, and all things with him; the Gospel, and the truths of it, ordained before the world was; and all the blessings of grace and glory. The Targum is,

"and since the world was, ear hath not heard the voice of mighty deeds, nor hearkened to the speech of trembling; nor hath eye seen, what thy people saw, the Shechinah of the glory of the Lord, for there is none besides thee, what thou wilt do to thy people, the righteous, who were of old, who wait for thy salvation."

{o} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 63. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1. {p} wl hkxml hvey Ktlwz Myhla htar al Nye "nono oculus vidit Deum praeter te, faciat expectanti ipsum", Montanus; "qui faciat sic expectanti se", Pagninus, Munster.

Isaiah 64:5

Ver. 5. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth,.... Not in a carnal way, nor in a sinful manner, nor in a hypocritical one, or in vain boastings, all such rejoicing is evil: but in the Lord, in the person of Christ; in the greatness, glory, and fullness of his person; at the promise, and in the view, of his coming in the flesh, as Abraham did; in the grace of God displayed in him, and in hope of the glory of God by him; such a frame of spirit is agreeable to the Lord:

and worketh righteousness; a truly gracious soul is not idle, but works; not in his own strength, nor for life, or anything but what is just and right; no man indeed can work out a perfect righteousness, nor should men attempt to work out one for justification before God; but should lay hold by faith on the righteousness of Christ, which is the evangelical and best way of working righteousness; and such do works of righteousness in faith, which is doing them in the best manner, and the course of life of such is righteous; and these are regarded by the Lord, especially such who rejoice to work righteousness, or do it, in a cheerful joyful manner, which perhaps is the sense of the words: now such the Lord "meeteth", or has been used to meet, in former ages, in all generations, even in a way of love, grace, and mercy; and prevents them with the blessings of his goodness; indulges them with communion with himself through his Son, typified by the mercyseat; and at the throne of his grace, and in his house and ordinances. The Jewish commentators understand this phrase in a different manner. R. Jonah and Jarchi interpret it of God's meeting the righteous, and removing them out of the world by death, according to **1Ki 2:25** and Aben Ezra of his receiving their prayers and intercessions for others, according to Isa 47:3. Kimchi joins both senses together,

"the righteous, who were doing thy commandments with joy, are not now in the world, to stand in the gap for us."

Those that remember thee in thy ways; they remember there is a God, and worship him; the perfections of his nature, and adore them; his works of providence, and admire them; and his blessings of grace and goodness, and are thankful for them: they remember him "in [his] ways"; in the ways of his providence, which are unsearchable, and past finding out; in the ways of his grace and mercy, so the Targum; or "for" or "because" {q} of these, and praise his name; and in the ways of his commandments, which they observe.

Behold, thou art wroth, and we have sinned; or because we have sinned {r}; as for us, we have sinned, and justly incurred the displeasure of God; and it is no wonder he hides his face from us, and does not meet us, as he has been used to meet his people formerly. The people of God sin, and this is taken notice of by him, and resented; and which is the cause of all their afflictions, in which the Lord appears to be "wroth" with them; not that he is properly so, for afflictions to them are not in vindictive wrath; but he seems to be wroth with them, he carries it towards them as if he was, when he chastises them, and hides his face from them. In those is continuance, and we shall be saved: or "in these we have been of old" {s}; that is, in these sins; we are old sinners, sinners in Adam, sinners from our birth, and so in these sins is continuance: saints indeed do not continue in a course of sin, yet sin continues in them, and they are continually sinning in thought, word, or deed; yet nevertheless there is salvation from all their sins in Christ, in whom they shall be saved: or there is continuance in works of righteousness, and in the cheerful performance of them; the principle of well doing continues in believers, which is the grace of God, and spiritual strength, by which they do well; and through the grace of Christ they persevere in faith and holiness, and, persevering herein, shall be saved. Or rather there is continuance in the ways of God, in the ways of his grace and mercy; in them there is constancy, perpetuity, and eternity, as the word signifies; his love is an everlasting love; his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, and endures for ever; he is unchangeable in his grace and promises, and hence his people shall not be consumed in their sins by his wrath, but shall be everlastingly saved; which is entirely owing to his permanent and immutable grace, and not to their works of righteousness, as appears by what follows.

{q} Kykrdb "propter vias tuas", Piscator. {r} ajxnw "quia [vel] nam peccavimus", Vatablus, Grotius, Forerius, Gataker. So some in Munster, w, "vau", is often causal. {s} Mlwe Mhb "in his [peccatis] consenuimus", Tigurine version some in Munster; "in ipsis [peccatis] semper [fuimus]", Forerius.

Isaiah 64:6

Ver. 6. But we are all as an unclean thing,.... Or "we have been" {t}; so all men are in a state of nature: man was made pure and holy, but by sinning became impure; and this impurity is propagated by natural generation, and belongs to all, none are free from it; and there is no cleansing from it but by the grace of God and blood of Christ: all are not sensible of it; some are, as the church here was, and owns it, and the universality of it, and compares herself and members to an "unclean thing", on account of it; so men, defiled with sin, are compared to unclean creatures, dogs, and swine, and to unclean persons; to such as are covered with loathsome diseases, and particularly to leprous persons, and who may be chiefly intended here; they being defiled and defiling, loathsome and abominable, their disease spreading and continuing, and incurable by physicians; hence they were separated from the company of men; and the words may be rendered, "as an unclean person" {u}, as such were by the law: or we are, in our own sense and apprehension of things; and this may respect not only the impurity of nature, but a general corruption in doctrine and manners among the professors of religion; such as was in the Jewish church about the time of Christ's coming.

And all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; which is to be understood not of the righteousness of some persons in the church, which lay in outward rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices, which were no righteousness before God, and could not take away sin; and were indeed on many accounts, as they were performed, loathsome and abominable; see **Isa 1:11**, or of others that lay in outward legal duties and works of the law, which were not done from right principles, as well as not perfect; and so, because of the impurity, imperfection, pride, and vanity, that appeared in them, were abominable to the Lord: but of the righteousnesses of the church herself; not of the righteousness of Christ, which was made hers by imputation; for this is not rags, but a robe, the best robe, and wedding garment; much less filthy, but pure and spotless, beautiful and glorious, as well as a proper covering; but then, though this is the church's, and all true believers', by gift, by imputation and application, yet its is properly Christ's and is in him, and is opposed to their own righteousness; which is what is intended here, even the best of it; such works of righteousness as are done by them in the best manner; they are "rags", not whole, but imperfect, not fit to appear in before God, and by which they cannot be justified in his sight; they are "filthy" ones, being attended with imperfection and sin; and these conversation garments need continual washing in the blood of Jesus; this is the language not of a natural man, or of a Pharisee, but of a sensible sinner, a truly gracious soul. The words may be rendered, "as a menstruous cloth" {w}, as some; or "as a garment of spoil or prey" {x}, as Aben Ezra, rolled in blood, either in war, or by a beast of prey; or as a foul plaster or cloth taken off a sore, with purulent matter on it {y}, as others; or any other impure and nauseous thing. Hottinger {z} thinks the word has some affinity with the Arabic
dde, which signifies "running water", such as the water of a fountain or well; so that the sense may be, that the church's righteousness was like a cloth, so polluted and spotted that it could not be washed out clean but with clear and running water; and, in every sense in which it may be taken, it serves to set forth the impurity and imperfection of the best righteousness of men, and to show that their works are not the cause of salvation, the church had an assurance of in the preceding verse:

and we all do fade as a leaf; or "fall" {a} as one; as leaves in autumn: this is to be understood of a great part, and perhaps of the greater part, of the visible members of the church; not of true believers and real members, for these are rooted in the love of God, and in Christ, and have the root of the matter in them, the true grace of God; and therefore, though they meet with many blustering storms, yet do not cast their leaf of profession; indeed there may be, as there often are, decays and declensions in them; but rather this is to be interpreted of carnal professors, with which, at this time, the church abounded, who had no true grace in them; and so dropped their profession, and became like trees whose fruit withered, were without fruit; or like trees, in the fall of the year, which are without fruit, and shed their leaves, **Jude 1:12**:

and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away; as a leaf falling from the tree is carried away with the wind, which it is not able to withstand; so formal and carnal professors are carried away, through their sins, with the wind of persecution, and apostatize: or rather for their sins the Jews were carried captive, as before, to Babylon; so now by the Romans into various countries, where they are dispersed at this day; to which this passage may have some respect. "Iniquities" are put for the punishment of them; so the Targum,

"and, because of our sins, as the wind we are taken away."

{t} yhg "fuimus", V. L. Montanus. {u} amjk "ut immundus", V. L. Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "tanquam impuruss", Cocceius, Vitringa, {w} Myde rgbk "ut vestimentum menstruatum, sive menstruatae", Drusius; a ade "removit", so V. L. Syr. and Ar. "ut vestis remotionum", Cocceius. {x} "Vestes praedae", Forerius; a de "praeda", Gen. xlix. 27. {y} Pittacium, Grotius. So Kimchi, whose interpretation and sense of the word is preferred by Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 581. {z} Smegma Orientale, I. 1. c. 7. p. 181. {a} lbnw "et decidimus", V. L. So Ben Melech interprets it of falling.

Isaiah 64:7

Ver. 7. And there is none that calleth upon thy name,.... Upon the Lord himself, who is gracious and merciful, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, and all sufficient, a God hearing and answering prayer, and the Father of his people; all which should engage to call upon him: or, "there is none that prays in thy name", as the Targum; none that prays to God in the name of his Son, the only Mediator between God and men; he is the way of access to the Father; his name is to be used and made mention of in prayer; acceptance is only through him, and all favours are conveyed by him; see Joh 14:13, not that there were absolutely none at all that prayed to God, and called upon or in his name, but comparatively they were very few; for that there were some it is certain, since this very complaint is made in a prayer; but the number of such was small, especially that prayed in faith, in sincerity, with fervency and importunity; and, when this is the case, it is an argument and evidence of great declension:

that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; to exercise faith on God, as their covenant God; to lay hold on the covenant itself, the blessings and promises of it, and plead them with God: or to pray unto him, which is a wrestling with him, when faith lays hold upon God, and will not let him go without the blessing; and is an entreaty of him not to depart when he seems to be about it; or a detaining of him, as the disciples detained Christ, when he seemed as if he would go from them; and is also an importunate desire that he would return when he is departed; and an earnest request not to strike when his hand is lifted up: faith in prayer does, as it were, take hold of the hands of God, and will not suffer him to strike his children; just as a friend lays hold on a father's hand when he is about to give his child a blow with it for his correction; and such is the amazing condescension of God, that he suffers himself to be held after this manner; see Ge 32:26, now, to "stir up" a man's self to this is to make diligent use of the means in seeking the Lord; particularly a frequent use of the gift of prayer, and a stirring of that up; a calling upon a man's soul, and all within him, to engage therein; to which are opposed slothfulness, &c. cold, lukewarm, negligent performance of duty, which is here complained of; there were none, or at least but few, that stirred up or "aroused" {b} themselves. God's professing people are sometimes asleep; and though it is high time to awake out of sleep, yet no one arouses himself or others.

For thou hast hid thy face from us: or removed the face of thy Shechinah, or divine Majesty from us, as the Targum; being provoked by such a conduct towards him, as before expressed: for it may be rendered, "therefore thou hast hid"; &c.; or "though", or "when" {c}, this was the case, yet no man sought his face and favour, or entreated he would return again:

and hast consumed us because of our iniquities; by the sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity.

{b} rrwetm "seipsum exsuscitat", Forerius; "excitans se", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius. So the Targum, "that awakes". {c} yk "quamvis", Gataker; "cum", Junius & Tremellius; "quando", Forerius.

Isaiah 64:8

Ver. 8. But now, O Lord, thou art our father,.... Notwithstanding all that we have done against thee, and thou hast done to us, the relation of a father continues; thou art our Father by creation and adoption; as he was in a particular manner to the Jews, to whom belonged the adoption; and therefore this relation is pleaded, that mercy might be shown them; and so the Targum,

"and thou, Lord, thy mercies towards us "are" many (or let them be many) as a father towards "his" children."

We are the clay, and thou our potter: respecting their original formation out of the dust of the earth; and so expressing humility in themselves, and yet ascribing greatness to God, who had curiously formed them, as the potter out of the clay forms vessels for various uses: it may respect their formation as a body politic and ecclesiastic, which arose from small beginnings, under the power and providence of God; see De 32:6:

and we all are the work of thy hand; and therefore regard us, and destroy us not; as men do not usually destroy their own works: these relations to God, and circumstances in which they were as creatures, and as a body civil and ecclesiastic, are used as arguments for mercy and favour.

Isaiah 64:9

Ver. 9. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord,.... They knew not how to deprecate the displeasure of God entirely; having sinned so greatly against him, they were sensible they deserved his wrath; but entreat it might not be hot and very vehement, and carried to the highest pitch, which would be intolerable:

neither remember iniquity for ever; to afflict and punish for it, but forgive it, for not to remember sin is to forgive it; and not inflict the deserved punishment of it, but take off and remove the effects of divine displeasure, which as yet continued, and had a long time, as this petition suggests; and therefore suits better with the present long captivity of the Jews than their seventy years' captivity in Babylon.

Behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people; look upon all our troubles and distresses, and upon us under them, with an eye of pity and compassion;

and consider that we are thy people, not only by creation, but by covenant and profession; even everyone of us; or we are all the people thou hast, the Jews looking upon themselves to be the special and peculiar people of God, and the Gentiles as having no claim to such a relation; this is the pure spirit of Judaism. The Targum is,

"lo, it is manifest before thee that we are all of us thy people."

Isaiah 64:10

Ver. 10. Thy holy cities are a wilderness,.... Meaning either Zion, the city of David, and Jerusalem; the one called the upper, the other the lower city; now uninhabited, and a mere wilderness: or else the other cities of Judea, in which were formerly synagogues for religious service, and in which dwelt many godly families where the worship of God was kept up; but now a desert, at least quite devoid of true religion and godliness.

Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation; which are either explanative of the holy cities in the preceding clauses, or are mentioned as distinct from them; the account proceeding from the lesser to the metropolitan cities, which fared no better than they did, but equally lay desolate; and which fulfilled the prophecy in **Mic 3:12** and was the case of those cities, at the destruction of them by Titus; and to this day are in a ruinous condition in the hands of the Turks.

Isaiah 64:11

Ver. 11. Our holy and our beautiful house,.... Meaning the temple, the house of God, as Aben Ezra: called "holy", because dedicated to holy uses; where the holy sacrifices were offered up, the holy service of God performed; and where the holy God granted his presence, and where were the symbols of it: and "beautiful", in its building, as the first temple was that was built by Solomon; but here the second temple is meant, built by Zerubbabel, which being repaired and beautified by Herod, was a very beautiful building; and the Jews say {d}, that

"he who has not seen the building of Herod has never seen a beautiful building;"

or it may be rendered, "the house of our holiness, and of our glory" {e}; where their holy services were performed, and which was the glory of their nation, and on which they gloried and boasted:

where our fathers praised thee: with psalms and songs; the singers in the temple, as Aben Ezra; and the priests and all the people also, who, by their various services, as well as songs, gave praise and glory to God in this place; they do not mention their own services and praises, which they had been very negligent of, or not sincerely performed; but their fathers, which had been acceptable to the Lord, and therefore would bear mentioning when theirs would not: now this place, in which the glory of God and the interest of his people were concerned,

is burnt up with fire; this is true, as Kimchi observes, both of the first and second temple; the first was burnt with fire by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Jer 52:13, and the second by the Romans under Titus the man emperor, as Josephus {f} relates:

and all our pleasant things are laid waste; their pleasant land, and pleasant cities, and especially Jerusalem, the palaces of their princes and nobles, and all the riches and grandeur of them, the temple, and all the rich vessels and utensils in it.

{d} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1. & Succa, fol. 51. 2. {e} wntraptw wnvdq tyb "domus sanctitatis nostae, et gloriae nostrae", Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Forerius. {f} De Bello Judaeorum, l. 6. c. 4. sect. 2.

Isaiah 64:12

Ver. 12. Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Lord?.... From delivering us out of our troubles and miseries, and taking vengeance on our enemies, and showing thy zeal for thine own glory; or, as Kimchi paraphrases it,

"how canst thou contain thyself for these things, and not have mercy?"

how canst thou bear to see Judea, and all its cities, a wilderness; Jerusalem, and the temple of it, in ruins?

wilt thou hold thy peace? or, "be silent"; and not plead thine own cause, and the cause of thy people?

and afflict us very sore? exceedingly, even to extremity; or for ever, as the Targum, thinking it long, as well as heavy. Jerom observes, that the Jews say these words in their synagogues every day; which show that they look upon this prophecy to respect their present case.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH

This book is called, in the New Testament, sometimes "the Book of the Words of the Prophet Esaias", **Lu 3:4** sometimes only the "Prophet Esaias", **Ac 8:28** and sometimes, as here, the "Book of the Prophet Esaias", **Lu 4:17**. In the Syriac version the title is, "the Prophecy of Isaiah the Son of Amos": and in the Arabic version, "the Beginning of the Prophecy of Isaiah the Prophet". It stands first of all the prophets; though the order of the prophets, according to the Jews {a}, is, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the twelve. But it is here placed first, not because Isaiah prophesied before the other prophets; for Joel, Jonah, Hosea, and Amos, begun before him, namely, in or before the days of Jeroboam the Second; but because of the excellency of the matter contained in it. Isaiah is called by Ben Syra {b} the great prophet, and by Eusebius {c} the greatest of the prophets; and Jerom {d} a says, he should rather be called an evangelist than a prophet, since he seems rather to write a history of things past, than to prophesy of things to come; yea, he styles him an apostle, as well as an evangelist {e}: and certain it is that no one writes so fully and clearly of the person, offices, grace, and kingdom of Christ; of his incarnation and birth of a virgin; of his sufferings and death, and the glory that should follow, as he does. John, the forerunner of Christ, began his ministry with a passage out of him concerning himself, **Mt 3:3**. Our Lord preached his first sermon at Nazareth out of this book, **Lu 4:17** and it was in this the eunuch was reading when Philip came up to him, who from the same Scripture preached to him Christ, **Ac 8:28**. And there are more citations in the New Testament made out of this prophecy than any other book, excepting the book of Psalms, as Musculus observes. To which may be added, as another reason, the elegance and sublimity of his style in which he exceeds the greatest of orators, Demosthenes among the Greeks, and Tully among the Romans; and this is observed both by Jews and Christians. Abarbinel {f} says, that the purity, and elegance of his diction is like that of kings and counsellors, who speak more

purely and elegantly than other men: hence their Rabbins, he says, compare Isaiah to a citizen, and Ezekiel to a countryman. And Jerom {g} observes, that Isaiah is so eloquent and polite, that there is nothing of rusticity in his language; and that his style is so florid, that a translation cannot preserve it. Moreover, another reason of this book being placed first may be the bulk of it; it being larger, and containing more chapters, than any of the greater prophets, and almost as many as all the lesser prophets put together. That Isaiah was the writer of this book is not to be questioned; many of the prophecies in it are by name ascribed to him, Mt 13:14 though some others might be the compilers of it, collect his prophecies, and digest them in order: so the Jews say {h}, that Hezekiah and his company wrote Isaiah, &c. At what time, and in whose days he prophesied, may be learnt from **Isa 1:1** by which it appears that he prophesied long, and lived to a good old age. He began to prophesy about A. M. 3236, and about seven hundred and seventy years before Christ. Abulpharagius, an Arabic writer, says {i}, he lived an hundred and twenty years, eighty five of which he prophesied. It is a generally received tradition with the Jews, that he lived to the time of Manasseh, and that he was sawn asunder by him; and which has been embraced by the ancient Christian writers, and is thought to be referred to in Heb 11:37.
See Gill on "He 11:37". But Aben Ezra on **Isa 1:1** observes, that had he lived to the time of Manasseh, it would have been written, and is of opinion that he died in Hezekiah's time. According to the Cippi Hebraici {k}, he was buried at Tekoah, over whose grave a beautiful monument was erected; though Epiphanius {l}, or the author of the Lives of the Prophets that go by his name, says he was buried under the oak of Rogel, near the fountain of Siloam; and it is a tradition with the Syriac writers, that his body lay hid in the waters of Siloah; See Gill on "Joh 5:4" but these are things not to be depended on; and alike fabulous are all other writings ascribed to him, besides this prophecy; as what are called the ascension of Isaiah, the vision of Isaiah, and the conference of Isaiah. This book contains some things historical, but chiefly prophetic; of which some relate to the punishment of the Jews, and other nations; but for the most part are evangelical, and concern the kingdom and grace of Christ; of which some are delivered out more clearly and perspicuously, and others more obscurely, under the type of the deliverance of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity.

{a} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. {b} Ecclesiasticus, ch. xlviii. ver. 22. {c} Demonstrat, Evangel. l. 5. c. 4. inscript. p. 225. {d} Adv. Ruffinum, fol. 76. D. tom. 2. ad Paulam & Eustechium, fol. 8. M. tom. 3. {e} Prooem. in Es. fol. 2. B. tom. 5. {f} Comment. in Proph. Poster. fol. 1. 2. {g} Ad Paulam, ut supra, (& Eustechium, fol. 8. M. tom. 3.) {h} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. {i}

Hist. Dynast. p. 43. {k} P. 11. Ed. Hottinger. {l} De Vitis Prophet. c. 7. & Isidor. Hispalens. de Vit. & Mort. Sanct. c. 37.

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 1

This chapter, after the inscription, contains a charge of aggravated sin against the Jews; God's rejection of their ceremonial sacrifices and service; an exhortation to repentance and obedience, with a promise of pardon; a restoration from their sad estate; a prophecy of their restoration to a better; and of the destruction of idolatrous sinners. The inscription is in **Isa 1:1** in which are the title of the prophecy, a vision; the writer of it described by his name, his descent, and the times in which he prophesied; and the subject of the prophecy is Judah and Jerusalem. The charge against the Jews is rebellion against the Lord, and the heavens and earth are called as witnesses of it; which is aggravated by the relation they stood in to God, and by the favours bestowed upon them, **Isa 1:2** by their more than brutish stupidity, **Isa 1:3** by the multitude of their sins, which were of a provoking nature, **Isa 1:4** by the uselessness of chastisements, the whole body of the people, from the highest to the lowest, being afflicted without being the better for it, and so generally depraved, that no regard was had to any means of reformation, **Isa 1:5** and by the desolation it brought upon them, which is illustrated by several similes, **Isa 1:7** and by the grace and goodness of God in reserving a few, or otherwise they must have been for their punishment, as they were for their sins, like Sodom and Gomorrah, **Isa 1:9** wherefore both rulers and people are called upon under those names to hearken to the law of God, and not trust in and depend upon their sacrifices and other rites of the ceremonial law, together with their hypocritical prayers; all which were abominable to the Lord, since they were guilty of such dreadful immoralities, **Isa 1:11** when they are exhorted to repentance for sin, to the obedience of faith, and washing in the blood of Christ, whereby their crimson and scarlet sins would become as white as wool and snow, otherwise destruction must be expected, **Isa 1:16** and then a lamentation is taken up concerning the deplorable state of Jerusalem, representing the difference between what it was now, and what it was formerly, and the sad degeneracy of the people, rulers, and judges, **Isa 1:21** upon which the Lord foretells what he thought to do: to avenge himself of his enemies; to purge his church and people; to restore them to their former uprightness and integrity; and to redeem them with judgment and righteousness, **Isa 1:24** and the chapter is concluded with a denunciation of utter destruction upon wicked men, who are described and pointed at as idolaters; which will cover them with shame and confusion, **Isa 1:28** and which is illustrated by the fading of the leaves of an oak, and by a garden parched with drought, **Isa 1:30** and it is suggested that it will be by burning with fire unquenchable, **Isa 1:31**.

Ver. 1. The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz,.... This is either the particular title of the prophecy contained in this single chapter, as Jarchi and Abarbinel think; seeing the second chapter **Isa 2:1** begins with another title, "the word that Isaiah saw", &c. or rather it is the common title of the whole book; since it is the vision which Isaiah saw in the reign of four kings, as is later affirmed; and so is no other than in general "the prophecy of Isaiah", as the Targum renders it; called a "vision", because it was delivered to him, at least the greatest part of it, in a vision; and because he had a clear perception of the things he prophesied of, as well as delivered them in a clear and perspicuous manner to others: hence the Jews say {m}, that Moses and Isaiah excelled the other prophets, seeing they understood what they prophesied of. The name of Isaiah, the penman of this book, signifies either "the Lord shall save", according to Hilleras {n}; or "the salvation of the Lord", as Abarbinel, Jerom, and others; and is very suitable to the message he was sent with to the people of God; to acquaint them that the Lord had provided a Saviour for them, and that he would come and save them. He is said to be "the son of Amoz"; not of Amos the prophet; the names differ; the name of the prophet that stands among the twelve lesser prophets is owme, "Amos"; the name of Isaiah's parent is Uwma, "Amoz". It is a tradition with the Jews {o}, that Amoz, the father of Isaiah, was brother to Amaziah, king of Judah, so that Isaiah was of the royal family. Abarbinei endeavours to confirm it from that greatness of mind, freedom and boldness, he used in reproofs, and from his polite and courtly way of speaking; and this is mentioned by Aben Ezra as a reason why the Jews did not harm him, as they did Jeremiah: but this tradition is not equally regarded by the Jewish writers; and though Kimchi takes notice of it, yet he says the genealogy of Isaiah is not known, nor of what tribe he was. If he was of the seed royal, this is an instance of God's calling some that are noble, not only by his grace, but to office in his church; and it is with a view to this tradition, no doubt, that Jerom {p} calls him "vir nobilis", a "nobleman". It is also a rule with the Jews {q}, that where the name of a prophet's father is mentioned, it is a sign that his father was a prophet; and so they say this Amoz was, though the king's brother; and that he is the same with the man of God that came to Amaziah {r}, 2Ch 25:7 but Aben Ezra suggests, that this rule does not always hold good.

Which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem; that is, chiefly and principally; for though Ephraim, or the ten tribes of Israel, are mentioned, yet very rarely; and though there are prophecies concerning other nations in it, yet these relate to the deliverance of the Jews from them, or to God's vengeance on them for their sake. Judah is put for the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and is particularly mentioned, because the Messiah, so much spoken of in this book, was to spring from thence, whose title is the Lion of the tribe of Judah; and though Jerusalem was in it, yet that is also particularly taken notice of, because not only the temple, the place of divine worship, was in it, and it was the metropolis of the land; but because the Messiah, when he came, was often to appear here, and from thence the Gospel was to go forth into all the world; and this was a figure of the Gospel church state to the end of the world, which often bears this name: and many things are said in this prophecy not only concerning the coming of Christ, but of the Gospel dispensation, and of various things that should come to pass in it; concerning the glory of the church in the latter day, the calling of the Gentiles, the conversion of the Jews, the destruction of antichrist, and the new heavens and new earth.

In the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, [and] Hezekiah, kings of Judah: if Isaiah began to prophesy in the first year of Uzziah's reign, as Kimchi and Abarbinel think, relying pretty much on
2Ch 26:22 and lived out the reign of Hezekiah, as he must, if he was put to death by Manasseh, according to the tradition of the Jews, he must prophesy a hundred and twelve or thirteen years; for Uzziah reigned fifty two years, Jotham sixteen, Ahaz sixteen, and Hezekiah twenty nine; but as this seems to begin his prophecy too soon, since so small a part of it was in or concerns Uzziah's reign; so it seems too late to fix the date of his prophecy from the year that King Uzziah died, when he had the vision in **Isa 6:1** and desired to be sent of the Lord; which is the opinion of Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and others; but Dr. Lightfoot's opinion is more probable, who places the beginning of his prophecy in the twenty third year of Uzziah; though perhaps it may be sufficient to allow him only ten years of Uzziah's reign: and as he lived through the two reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, so it is certain that he lived through more than half of the reign of Hezekiah; his whole reign was twenty nine years; and therefore it was when he had reigned fourteen years that he was taken sick, and then fifteen years more were added to his days; and the year after this came the messengers from Babylon to congratulate him on his recovery; all which Isaiah gives an account of Isa 38:1 but how long he lived and prophesied after this cannot be said: had his days been prolonged to the times of Manasseh, it would have been written, as Aben Ezra observes, and who pays but little regard to the tradition of the Jews concerning Isaiah's being put to death by Manasseh; if the thing, says he, is "cabala", a tradition, it is truth; but he seems to call in question its reality; however, it is not to be depended on.

{m} R. Eleazar in Yalkut, pars 2. fol. 118. 2. {n} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 319. {o} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 10. 2. & Sota, fol. 10. 2. & Seder Olam Zuta, p. 104. Juchasin, fol. 12. 1. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 11. 2. {p} Ad Paulam, fol. 8. M. tom. 3. {q} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 15. 1. {r} Kimchi in 2 Chron. xxv. 7.

Isaiah 1:2

Ver. 2. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth,.... To what the Lord was about to say of his controversy with his people, which was to be managed openly and publicly before them as spectators and witnesses; this designs either strictly and properly the heavens and the earth, or figuratively the inhabitants of them, angels and men. The address is solemn, and denotes something of moment and importance to be done and attended to: see De 32:1. The Targum is,

"hear, O ye heavens, that were moved when I gave my law to my people; and hearken, O earth, that trembleth before my word."

For the Lord hath spoken: not only by Moses, and the prophets that were before Isaiah, but he had spoken to him the words he was now about to deliver; for they were not his own words, but the Lord's: he spoke by the inspiration of God, and as moved by the Holy Ghost; and therefore what he said was to be received, not as the word of man, but as the word of God:

I have nourished and brought up children; meaning the Jews;

"my people, the house of Israel, whom I have called children,"

as the Targum paraphrases it; see **Ex 4:22** to these, as a nation, belonged the adoption; they were reckoned the children of God; the Lord took notice and care of them in their infant state, brought them out of Egypt, led them through the wilderness, and fed them in it; brought them into Canaan's land, drove out the nations before them, and settled them there; gave them his laws and ordinances, distinguished them from all other nations by his favours, and raised them to a high estate, to much greatness and prosperity, especially in the days of David and Solomon. The words may be rendered, "I have magnified", or "made great, and have exalted children" {s}; not only brought them up, but brought them to great honour and dignity; and even unto man's estate, unto the time appointed of the Father, when they should have been under tutors and governors no longer, but under the King Messiah; but they were rebellious, as follows:

and they have rebelled against me, their Lord and King; for the Jews were under a theocracy; God, who was their Father, was their King, and they rebelled against him by breaking his laws, which rebellion is aggravated by its being not only of subjects against their king, but of children against their father; the law concerning a rebellious son, see in De 21:18. The Targum paraphrases it, "they have rebelled against my Word"; the essential Word, the Messiah; the Septuagint version is, "but they have rejected me" {t}; and the Vulgate Latin version {u}, "but they have despised me": so the Jews rejected and despised the true Messiah when he came, would not have him to reign over them, would not receive his yoke, though easy, but rebelled against him. The Jews were a rebellious people from the beginning, in Moses's time, and in the prophets, and so quite down to the times of the Messiah.

{s} ytldg "magnificavi", Montanus, Vatablus; ytmmwrw "exaltavi", Munster; "extuli", Jun. & Tremel. uqwsa, Sept. {t} me hyeghsan. {u} "Spreverunt me".

Isaiah 1:3

Ver. 3. The ox knoweth his owner,.... Knows his voice, when he calls him, and follows him where he leads him, whether to plough in the field, or feed in the meadows;

and the ass his masters crib, or "manger"; where he is fed, and to which he goes when he wants food, and at the usual times. Gussetius {w} interprets the words; the ass knows the floor where he treads out the corn, and willingly goes to it, though it is to labour, as well as to eat; and so puts Israel to shame, who were weary of the worship of God in the temple, where spiritual food was provided for them, but chose not to go for it, because of labour there.

[But] Israel doth not know; his Maker and Owner, his King, Lord, and Master, his Father, Saviour, and Redeemer; he does not own and acknowledge him, but rejects him; see **Joh 1:10**.

My people doth not consider; the Jews, who were the people of God by profession, did not stir themselves up to consider, nor make use of means of knowing and understanding, divine and spiritual things, as the word used {x} signifies; they would not attend to the word and ordinances, which answer to the crib or manger; they would not hear nor regard the ministry of the word by Christ and his apostles, nor suffer others, but hindered them as much as in them lay; see Mt 23:13. The Targum is,

"Israel does not learn to know my fear, my people do not understand to turn to my law."

In like manner the more than brutal stupidity of this people is exposed in **Jer 8:7**.

{w} Comment. Ling. Ebr. p. 13, 14. {x} Nnwbth a Nzk "intellexit". So Gussetius says it signifies a spontaneous application, by which you stir up yourself to understand; which is an action leading to wisdom, and without which no man can be wise, Comment. Ling. Ebr. p. 121.

Isaiah 1:4

Ver. 4. Ah sinful nation,..... Or "sinning nation" {y}; that was continually sinning, doing nothing else but sin, the reverse of what they were chosen to be, **De 7:6**. These words are said, either as calling and crying to them, to cause them to hear and hearken to what is said, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe, and as ywh is used in
Isa 55:1 or by way of complaint and lamentation, as Jarchi thinks, because of their general and continued wickedness, see
1Ki 13:30, or by way of threatening, as in **Isa 1:24** and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"woe to them who are called a holy people, and have sinned:"

and so the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it, "woe to the sinning nation"; their ruin is at hand:

a people laden with iniquity; full of sin; they multiplied offences, as in the Chaldee paraphrase: they were "heavy" with them, as the word {z} signifies, yet felt not, nor complained of, the burden of them:

a seed of evil doers; this is not said of their fathers, but of themselves, as Jarchi observes; they had been planted a right seed, but now were degenerate, a wicked generation of men.

Children that are corrupters; of themselves and others, by their words and actions; who had corrupted their ways, as the Targum adds; and so Kimchi and Aben Ezra.

They have forsaken the Lord; the worship of the Lord, as the Targum interprets it; the ways and ordinances of God, forsook the assembling of themselves together, neglected the hearing of the word, and attendance on the worship of the Lord's house:

they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger; by their numerous sins, both of omission and commission:

they are gone away backward; were become backsliders and revolters, had apostatized from God and his worship, turned their backs on him, and cast his law behind them. The characters here given not only agree with the Jews in the times of Isaiah, but also with those in the times of Christ and his apostles, Mt 12:39.

{y} ajx ywg "gens peccatrix", Sept. V. L. Syr. Ar. {z} Nye dbk "gravi iniquitate", V. L.

Isaiah 1:5

Ver. 5. Why should ye be stricken any more? .... Or "for what are ye stricken again" {a}? with afflictions and chastisements, with which God smites his people by way of correction for their sins,
Isa 57:17 and the sense is, either that they did not consider what they were afflicted for, that it was for their sins and transgressions; they thought they came by chance, or imputed them to second causes, and so went on in sin, and added sin to sin; to which sense the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, incline: or the meaning is, that the chastisements that were laid upon them were to no purpose; had produced no good effect, were of no avail, and unprofitable to them; and which is mentioned as an aggravation of their sins, obstinacy, and impenitence; see **Jer 5:3**.

Ye will revolt more and more, or "add defection" {b}; go on in sin, and apostatize more and more, and grow more obdurate and resolute in it; unless afflictions are sanctified, men become more hardened by them:

the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; which may be understood either of their chastisements, which were universal, and had reached all sorts and ranks of men among them, without any reformation, and therefore it was in vain to use more; or of their sins and transgressions which abounded among them, even among the principal of them; their civil rulers and governors, meant by the "head"; and the priests, who should feed the people with knowledge and understanding, designed by the "heart"; but both were corrupted, and in a bad condition.

{a} wkt hm le "super quo", V. L. "ad quid", Ar. {b} hro wpyowt "addentes prevaricationem", Sept. V. L.

Isaiah 1:6

Ver. 6. From the sole of the foot even unto the head [there is] no soundness in it,.... Every member of the body politic was afflicted in one way or another, or sadly infected with the disease of sin; see Ps 28:3. So the Targum,

"from the rest of the people, even unto the princes, there is none among them who is perfect in my fear;"

see **Da 9:8**

[but] wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores; to which either public calamities on a city or nation may be compared, **Ho 5:13** or the sins and transgressions both of single persons, and of whole bodies of men, Ps 38:5. The Targum is,

"they are all stubborn and rebellious, they are defiled with sins as an ulcerous plaster."

They have not been closed; that is, the wounds and sores have not been healed; or "they have not been pressed" or "squeezed" {c}, in order to get the purulent matter out of them:

neither bound up; with bands, after the matter is squeezed out, and a plaster laid on:

neither mollified with ointment; which is used for the supplying and healing of wounds; see Lu 10:34. The sense either is, that they were not reformed by their afflictions; or that they did not repent of their sins, nor seek to God for healing and pardon, nor make use of any means for their more healthful state and condition. The Targum paraphrases the words thus,

"they do not leave their haughtinesses, nor are they desirous of repentance, nor have they any righteousness to protect them."

{c} wrz al "non expessa fuere a" rwz "exprimere humorem, hoc significari clarum est ex" Jud. vi. 38. Gusset. Comment. Ling. Ebr. p. 227. So Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 1:7

Ver. 7. Your country [is] desolate,.... Or "shall be"; this is either a declaration in proper terms of what is before figuratively expressed, or rather a prophecy of what would be their case on account of transgressions; and which had its accomplishment partly in the Babylonish captivity, and fully in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; when not only their city and temple, called their house,
Mt 23:38, were left unto them desolate, but the whole land; and they were carried captive, and scattered among the nations, where they have been ever since:

your cities [are, or shall be,

burned with fire; as, Jerusalem has been, and other cities in Judea, Mt 22:7

your land, strangers devour it in your presence; before their eyes, and it would not be in their power to prevent it; meaning either the Babylonians or the Romans, or both, and especially the latter, who were strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel:

and [it is] desolate, as overthrown by strangers; who ravage, plunder, and destroy all they meet with, and spare nothing, not intending to settle there, as those who are near do, when they conquer a neighbouring nation. Some think this prophecy was delivered in the times of Ahaz, and refers to the desolation in his time,
2Ch 28:17 but rather, as Joel and Amos prophesied before Isaiah, he may refer

to those desolating judgments, they speak of, by the locusts, caterpillars, and fire, **Joe 1:4** but to consider the words as a prediction of what should be in after times seems best; and so the Arabic version reads the words, "your land shall be desolate, your cities shall be burnt with fire, and your country strangers shall devour before you"; or shall be as overthrown by strangers, being overflown with a flood or storm of rain; so Abendana {d}.

{d} As if it was Mrz, which signifies a flood, or overflowing of water, Hab. iii. 10. to which sense Aben Ezra inclines; so Schultens in Job xxiv. 8.

Isaiah 1:8

Ver. 8. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in the vineyard,.... The Targum is,

"after they have got in the vintage."

A cottage in the vineyard was a booth, as the word {e} signifies, which was erected in the middle of the vineyard for the keeper of the vineyard to watch in night and day, that the fruit might not be hurt by birds, or stolen by thieves, and was a very, lonely place; and when the clusters of the vine were gathered, this cottage or booth was left by the keeper himself: and such it is suggested Jerusalem should be, not only stand alone, the cities all around being destroyed by the besiegers, but empty of inhabitants itself, when taken.

As a lodge in a garden of cucumbers: the Targum adds here also,

"after they have gathered them out of it."

A lodge in a garden of cucumbers was built up for the gardener to watch in at night, that nobody came and stole away the cucumbers, and this was also a lonely place; but when the cucumbers were gathered, the gardener left his lodge entirely; and such a forsaken place would Jerusalem be at the time of its destruction; see Lu 19:43

as a besieged city; which is in great distress, and none care to come near it, and as many as can make their escape out of it; or "as a city kept"; so Gussetius {f}, who understands this, and all the above clauses, of some places preserved from the sword in the common desolation.

{e} hkok wv skhnh, Sept. {f} hrwun ryek "ut urbs custodita", Gusset. Comment. Ling. Ebr. p. 529. "Observata vel observanda", Forerius.

Isaiah 1:9

Ver. 9. Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant,.... This is an instance of the super abounding goodness of the Lord of hosts, as the Targum expresses it; that he should, in those very wicked and calamitous times, leave and reserve a few from being defiled with the sins of the age, and from being involved in the general calamity of it; which was true of the Christian Jews at the time of Jerusalem's destruction; for that this prophecy belongs to these times is clear from the application of it by the Apostle Paul, **Ro 9:29** and which confirms the sense given of the above passages: "the very small remnant" are the remnant according to the election of grace, the little flock, the few that entered in at the strait gate and are saved, or the few that believed in Christ, and so were saved from that untoward generation; these were "left", reserved, distinguished, and secured in the grace of election, being a remnant according to it, in the hands of Christ to whom they were given, and in whom they were preserved; in redemption by him, that they might be a peculiar people; in providence till called, in which the Lord watched over them to do them good, and waited to be gracious to them, and saved them to be called; and in effectual calling, in which he separated them from the rest of the world, and kept them by his power through faith unto salvation. And this was done "unto us"; for the sake of his church, that that might continue, and he might have a seed to serve him: and by "the Lord of hosts", of the hosts of heaven, the sun, and moon, and stars, and of the angels there, and of the inhabitants of the earth; which shows great condescension in him to regard this remnant, and great grace to them; since he could not stand in need of them, having the host of heaven on his right hand and on his left; nor was there any thing in them that could deserve this of him; but it was, as Jarchi observes, in his mercy, and not for their righteousness: to which may be added, that since he is the Lord of hosts, he was able to protect and preserve this remnant, notwithstanding all the opposition of men and devils, as he did; and had he not taken such a method as this,

we should have been as Sodom, [and] we should have been like unto Gomorrah: cities that were infamous for their sins, and notorious for the punishment of them, being consumed by fire from heaven, Ge 13:13 and not only the Jews, but any and every nation, even the whole world, would have been like these cities, both for sin and punishment, had it not been for the distinguishing grace of God, in leaving and reserving a few for his glory, and the support of his interest. All the holiness that ever was, is, or will be in the world, is owing to electing, redeeming, and efficacious grace: there had not been a holy man nor a holy woman in the world, in any age, if God had not taken such methods of grace; and it is owing to, and for the sake of, this small remnant, that temporal judgments are often averted from a nation and people, and that the conflagration of the world is not yet; this is kept back till they are gathered in; and were it not for this distinguishing grace, every individual of mankind would have been cast into hell, and must have suffered the vengeance of eternal fire, which the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah, was an example of.

Isaiah 1:10

Ver. 10. Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom,.... Not literally, but mystically, meaning the governors of Judea; they and their people having sinned in like manner, and as openly, as the rulers of Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof; see **Isa 3:9** and so the Targum paraphrases the words,

"receive the word of the Lord, ye governors, whose works are evil like the governors of Sodom."

These are called to attend to the word of the Lord; either the Scriptures, which should be the rule of faith and practice, from which they had swerved; or to the word which now came to them by the prophet, and is contained in the following verses; or rather to the Gospel preached to them by John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, see **Isa 2:3** which being rejected by them as it was, it is declared that it would be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for them, Mt 11:24

give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah; the inhabitants of Judea; for as were both the civil and ecclesiastical rulers, so were the people both in Isaiah's time, and in the times of Christ and his apostles. The Targum is,

"hearken to the law of our God, ye people whose works are like to the people of Gomorrah."

And by "the law of our God" is meant, not so much the law of Moses, which these people had not hearkened to, but had broken it, and cast it away from them, as the doctrine of the grace of God, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our God; which was first sent and preached to this wicked people, for the sake of the small remnant, according to the election of grace left among them; see **Isa 2:3**.

Isaiah 1:11

Ver. 11. To what purpose [is] the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord,.... These people, though they neglected the weightier matters of the law, and the more substantial duties of religion, as did the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time,
Mt 23:23 yet were very diligent in the observance of the ceremonial law, and repeated their sacrifices almost without number, on which they placed all their trust and dependence; wherefore, to take off their confidence in these things, the Lord observes to them the unprofitableness of them; they could be of no avail to them, for they could not expiate their sins, or atone for them; and they could not be profitable to God, for he had no need of them; see Ps 50:10.

I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; to the loathing of them, and therefore would no more eat their flesh, and drink their blood, or accept of them in sacrifice,
Ps 50:13 "rams" were used for burnt offerings, Ex 29:18 **Le 1:10** and the fat of any creature offered in sacrifice was burnt, and forbidden to be eaten by men, **Le 1:8** **Le 1:15**

and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats: as he did in moral services, in acts of beneficence and mercy, and in sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, 1Sa 15:22 **Ho 6:6** much less did he delight in the sacrifices of these creatures, as offered by such wicked hands and without faith in the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and still less when these were superseded and abrogated by Christ; for this prophecy belongs to the times of the apostles, as appears from **Isa 1:9** see Ps 40:6. The several creatures mentioned were used in sacrifice, and their blood was sprinkled round about the altar, **Le 3:2** and before the vail, **Le 4:6**.

Isaiah 1:12

Ver. 12. When ye come to appear before me,.... At the grand festivals of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, at which times all the males in Israel appeared before God, Ex 23:17

who hath required this at your hand; either to appear at such times, these feasts being no more to be observed; or to offer the above sacrifices; these were not required of the Israelites when they first came out of Egypt, **Jer 7:22** nor were they necessary to appear before God with, or to introduce them to the throne of his grace, **Mic 6:6** and much less under the Gospel dispensation, being abolished by the sacrifice of Christ; or this relates to what follows,

to tread my courts? in that unbecoming and hypocritical way they did, and with such wicked hearts and bloody hands. "Courts" are mentioned, because, as Kimchi observes, the Israelites stood in the courts of the Lord's house, and did not go into the temple, only the priests.

Isaiah 1:13

Ver. 13. Bring no more vain oblations,.... As all such were, which were offered up without faith in Christ, in hypocrisy, and with dependence on them for pardon and atonement, and particularly when put an end to by the sacrifice of Christ; see Mt 15:9. The Targum renders it, "an oblation of robbery"; see Isa 60:8

incense is an abomination to me; instead of being of a sweet smell. This was burnt on the altar of incense, and put upon the sacrifices, Ex 30:1 was typical of prayer, Ps 141:2 but now under the Gospel dispensation to be disused, and so disagreeable to God, that it is as if an idol was blessed, Isa 66:3

the new moons; the feasts kept on the first day of the month, at the appearance of the moon:

and sabbaths; observed every seventh day, every seventh year, and every seven times seventh year:

the calling of assemblies; or "the new moon and sabbath, do not call a congregation". These assemblies called were the holy convocations on the seventh day sabbath, at the feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, at the blowing of the trumpets, and on the day of atonement, Le 23:3 &c. Nu 28:26. The words, I cannot away with or "bear", may be joined with the following word, "iniquity"; and the meaning is, that the Lord could not bear the iniquity that was in their hearts when they had their solemn assemblies and holy convocations:

[it is] iniquity, even the solemn meeting: or cessation from work on any of the above festivals; particularly the feast of weeks, or pentecost, was called true, "Atzareth", by the Jews {g}, the same word with this here {h}.

{g} Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 4. {h} The whole verse, agreeably to the accents, is thus rendered by Reinbeck. de Accent. Heb. p. 377, 378.

"Do not go on to offer oblation of vanity; incense of abomination is it to me; [do not go on, I say], on the new moon, and sabbath, to call a convocation: I cannot [bear] iniquity, together with the most solemn congregation."

Isaiah 1:14

Ver. 14. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth,.... The Targum is,

"my Word abhorreth;"

the Messiah, the essential Word. These are the same as before.

They are a trouble unto me; as they were kept and observed, either when they should not, or in a manner unbecoming:

I am weary to bear [them]; because of the sins with which they made him to serve, Isa 43:24.

Isaiah 1:15

Ver. 15. And when ye spread forth your hands,.... That is, in prayer, this being a prayer gesture: hence the Targum paraphrases it,

"and when the priests spread out their hands to pray for you."

I will hide mine eyes from you; will not look upon them, nor regard their prayer; see **La 3:42**

yea, when ye make many prayers; as the Scribes and Pharisees did in Christ's time, and thought to be heard for their much speaking, like the Gentiles, **Mt 6:7**

I will not hear; so as to give an answer, or fulfil their requests: the reason follows,

your hands are full of blood; of the prophets of the Lord, of Christ and his followers, whom they put to death.

Isaiah 1:16

Ver. 16. Wash ye, make you clean, &c. These two words are to be regarded as one, since they intend the same thing, and suppose the persons spoken to to be unclean, as they were, notwithstanding their legal sacrifices and ceremonial ablutions; and are designed to convince them of it, to bring them to a sense of their inability to cleanse themselves, to lead them to inquire after the proper means of it, and so to the fountain of Christ's blood to wash in, which only cleanses from it:

put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; the exhortation is not barely to put away their doings, but the evil of them, and that not from themselves, but from before the eyes of God, from the eyes of his vindictive justice, which is only done by the sacrifice of Christ; and the use of this exhortation is to show the necessity of putting away sin to salvation, and the insufficiency of the blood of bulls and goats to do it, since, notwithstanding these, it remains untaken away; and to direct to the sacrifice of Christ, which effectually does it.

Cease to do evil; either from ceremonial works done with a wicked mind, or from outward immoralities, such as shedding innocent blood, oppressing the fatherless and widow, things mentioned in the context; it denotes a cessation from a series and course of sinning, otherwise there is no ceasing from sin in this life.

Isaiah 1:17

Ver. 17. Learn to do well,.... Which men are naturally ignorant of; to do good they have no knowledge; nor can they that are accustomed to do evil learn to do well of themselves; but the Lord can teach them to profit, and of him they should ask wisdom, and desire, under the influence of his grace, to learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, and particularly to do acts of beneficence to all men, and especially to the household of faith; and also, the following ones,

seek judgment; seek to do justice between man and man in any cause depending, without respect of persons:

relieve the oppressed; the poor that are oppressed by their neighbours that are richer and mightier than they, right their wrongs, and deliver them out of the hands of their oppressors {i}:

judge the fatherless; do justice to them who have none to take care of them, and defend them:

plead for the widow; that is desolate, and has none to plead her cause.

{i} Misn. Sabbat, c. 9. sect. 3. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 67. 1,

Isaiah 1:18

Ver. 18. Come now, and let us reason, together, saith the Lord,.... These words stand not in connection either with the preceding or following, but are to be read in a parenthesis, and are thrown in for the sake of the small remnant God had left among this wicked people, in order to comfort them, being distressed with sin. These, seeing their sins in their dreadful colours, and with all their aggravating circumstances, were ready to conclude that they were unpardonable; and, seeing God as an angry Judge, dared not come nigh him, but stood at a distance, fearing and expecting his vengeance to fall upon them, and therefore put away the promises, and refused to be comforted; when the Lord was pleased to encourage them to draw near to him, and come and reason with him: not at the bar of his justice; there is no reasoning with him there; none can contend with him, or answer him, one of a thousand; if he marks iniquity in strict justice, none can stand before him; there is no entering the lists with him upon the foot of justice, or at its bar: but at the bar of mercy, at the throne of grace; there the righteous may dispute with him from his declarations and promises, as well as come with boldness to him; and at the altar and sacrifice of Christ, and at the fountain of his blood: here sinners may reason with him from the virtue and efficacy of his blood and sacrifice; and from the Lord's proclamation of grace and mercy through him; and from his promises to forgive repenting and confessing sinners: and here God reasons with sensible souls from his own covenant promises and proclamations to forgive sin; from the aboundings of his grace over abounding sin; from the righteousness of Christ to justify, his blood to cleanse from sin, and his sacrifice to atone for it; and from the end of his coming into the world to save the chief of sinners: saying,

though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Every sin is a transgression of the law, and hateful and abominable to God; no sin is venial in itself, but deserving of the wrath of God, and the curses of the law; all sin is mortal, the wages of it is death: but all are not alike; some are greater, others lesser; some are attended with aggravating circumstances, as when the persons that commit them have, besides the light of nature, also the law of Moses, or the Gospel of Christ; have had the advantage of a religious education; have sat under a Gospel ministry, and received much speculative light and knowledge; yea, have been under convictions of sin time after time, and yet have been ringleaders and encouragers of others in sin, guilty of very enormous crimes, which in themselves are comparable to "scarlet" and "crimson": and perhaps reference may be had to the sin of murder, since the persons, among whom these dwelt, their hands were full of blood; and may respect the crucifiers of Christ, among whom there were some savingly convicted and converted. Moreover, they may be signified hereby on account of the effects of them, they defile men, provoke God to wrath, and, through the law, work wrath in their consciences; and may signify, that they are sins of a deep dye, and which have such a place in their hearts and consciences, that nothing can remove them but the blood of Christ: and besides are open, flagrant, and notorious to all, and especially to God; yet these, through the grace and blood of Jesus, become as white as wool and as snow: not that pardon of sin takes sin out of the hearts and natures of men, nor changes the nature of sin, or causes it to cease to be sin; but this is to be understood of the persons of sinners, who hereby are made so white, yea, whiter than this, Ps 51:1 as they are considered in Christ, washed in his blood, and clothed with his righteousness, which is fine linen, clean and white; God, seeing no iniquity in them, has thus graciously dealt with them, and they being without fault, spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. It was with respect to this Scripture that the Jews in later times were wont to tie a scarlet thread to the head of the scapegoat, when he was sent into the wilderness; though at first they fastened it to the door of the outward porch, and then to the door of the inward porch, and, if it turned white, it was a sign their sins were forgiven them, but, if not, otherwise {k}; and it is owned by them, that it belongs to future time, the time of the Messiah {l}.

{k} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 89. 2. {l} Gussetius observes, that Uwmx signifies not "oppressed", but infected with leaven, and so Uwmx yrva means, reduce to a right way him that is corrupt with the leaven of vice, by hindering him that he may not go on to hurt the fatherless. Comment. Ebr. p. 265.

Isaiah 1:19

Ver. 19. If ye be willing and obedient,.... The Targum adds, "to my Word": the Word made flesh, and dwelling among them; who would have gathered the inhabitants of Jerusalem to his ministry, to attend his word and ordinances, but their rulers would not:

ye shall eat the good of the land; the land of Canaan; as the Jews held the possession of that land, before the times of Christ, by their obedience to the laws of God, which were given them as a body politic, and which, so long as they observed, they were continued in the quiet and full enjoyment of all the blessings of it; so, when Christ came, had they received, embraced, and acknowledged him as the Messiah, and been obedient to his will, though only externally, they would have remained in their own land, and enjoyed all the good things in it undisturbed by enemies.

Isaiah 1:20

Ver. 20. But if ye refuse and rebel,.... The Targum is, "and do not receive my Word"; the Messiah, when come, neither his person, nor his doctrines and ordinances:

ye shall be devoured with the sword; of the Roman armies, as they were under Titus Vespasian; see Mt 22:7

for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken [it]; now, by Isaiah, as well as in former times, Le 26:25.

Isaiah 1:21

Ver. 21. How is the faithful city become a harlot!.... The city of Jerusalem, in which were the temple, and the pure worship of God, and was in the tribe of Judah, which ruled with God, and was very faithful with the saints when the ten tribes revolted, and fell in with the sin of Jeroboam; but now, in Isaiah's time, was become like a treacherous wife to her husband, unfaithful to the Lord, went after other lovers, committed spiritual adultery, that is, idolatry, with stocks and stones; and in the times of Christ were a wicked and an adulterous generation, corrupting the word and worship of God; see Mt 12:39

it was full of judgment; strict justice was exercised privately between man and man, as well as in the public courts of judicature;

righteousness lodged in it; that is, righteous men, who walked in all the commandments of the Lord, and lived soberly, righteously, and godly; see **2Pe 3:13**

but now murderers: of the prophets whom they stoned, who were sent unto them, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom they were the betrayers and murderers; see Mt 23:37.

Isaiah 1:22

Ver. 22. Thy silver is become dross,.... Meaning either that such persons, who had the appearance of goodness, looked like genuine silver, were now become reprobate, and, as the wicked of the earth, like dross, **Jer 6:30** or that the word of God, which is as silver purified seven times, was now corrupted with false glosses and human traditions, which were as dross:

thy wine mixed with water {m}; the wine of the divine word, which was mixed and blended with the inventions of men, as before; so the roof of the church's mouth, which is no other than the ministry of the word, is compared to the best wine, **So 7:9**.

{m} It being usual to mix water with wine, and drink it, and this being not at all reproachful, but commendable, Gussetius thinks such a version does not express the sense of the words; he therefore thinks that lhm is the same as llwhm contracted, which signified "infatuated"; and so the words should be rendered, "thy wine is infatuated into water"; is degenerated, and has lost its spirit and sprightliness, and is become insipid and tasteless. So Jarchi mentions a Midrash, which interprets it by the same word in **Ec 2:2**. It is a word only used in this place. Joseph Kimchi says that in the Arabic, language has the signification of mixture, but without giving any instance. Indeed, according to Castel, it is used for the lees of oil.

Isaiah 1:23

Ver. 23. Thy princes [are] rebellious,.... Stubborn and obstinate, refused to receive and acknowledge the Messiah; such were the Jewish rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, in the times of Christ.

And companions of thieves: who devoured widows' houses; made the temple, which was a house of prayer, a den of thieves; and took away the key of knowledge from the people, and would not suffer them to attend the ministry of the Gospel, Mt 21:13

everyone loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards. The Targum paraphrases it,

"everyone says to his neighbour, do me a favour in my cause, I will return "it" to thee in thy cause;"

and so justice was perverted:

they judge not the fatherless; that is, either they do not take their cause in hand at all, or, if they do, do not do them justice, but wrong them of their goods and estates, which, of right, belong to them:

neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them; there being no money to be got by undertaking it; see the case of the unjust judge, a picture of judges in those times, Lu 18:2.

Isaiah 1:24

Ver. 24. Therefore, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel,.... All these names and titles, which are expressive of the majesty, power, and authority of God, are used to give the greater solemnity and weight to what follows; and to show that he is able to accomplish what he determines and threatens to do.

Ah! which is a particle, either expressive of grief at their wretched and miserable condition, or of indignation at their provoking sins and transgressions:

I will ease me of mine adversaries; or, "I will take comfort {n} of" them, by destroying them; expressing the pleasure and satisfaction he should take in avenging his justice on them: they had been a trouble to him, and had wearied him with their sins, and now he will ease himself of them by removing them. The Targum is,

"I will comfort the city of Jerusalem;"

not taking the sense of the words:

and avenge me of mine enemies; the Jews, who were enemies to Christ and his Gospel, and would not have him to reign over them, and which was the cause of the destruction of their city, temple, and nation; see Lu 19:14.

{n} Mxna "consolationem capiam", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. "Consolabor me", Cocceius.

Isaiah 1:25

Ver. 25. And I will turn my hand upon thee,.... The remnant, according to the election of grace, left in Jerusalem, **Isa 1:9** meaning not his afflicting hand, no, not even as a fatherly chastisement; though the Lord sometimes, by such means, purges away the iniquity of his people, as follows; see Isa 27:9 much less his hand of wrath and vengeance, the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger; but his hand of efficacious grace in conversion, with which he plucks sinners as brands out of the burning; delivers them from the power of Satan; turns their hearts to himself; opens them, to attend unto and understand divine things; breaks them in pieces with the hammer of his word; works grace in them, and carries on the good work in their souls: all which is owing to his mighty hand of grace upon them, and to the exertions of the exceeding greatness of his power towards them. This was accomplished in part in the conversion of a large number of the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and afterwards; and will be more fully accomplished in the latter day, when that people shall turn to the Lord, in consequence of his hand of powerful grace being turned on them. The phrase is used of the display of divine grace and mercy, in Zec 13:7

and purely purge away thy dross; which the Targum rightly interprets of "ungodliness" or wickedness; it means the sins of converted ones, which, at conversion, they are purely purged from; not that sin, as to the being of it, is removed from them; that dwells in them, abides with them; and, like dross, is a heavy burden, a dead weight upon them, and will be while they are in this tabernacle, and makes them groan, being burdened; so far from it, that in their view it rather increases; they see the plague of their own hearts; and such innumerable swarms of corruption they never saw before; sin revives, and they die; but in conversion grace superabounds it, deluges over it, keeps down the force and power of it, so that it has not the dominion; the old man is put off concerning the former conversation, which ceases to be a series, a course of sinning: besides, through the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all the dross and filth of sin, the guilt is removed from the conscience, and perfect peace and full pardon take place; all iniquity is caused to pass from them, and they are clothed with change of raiment, the righteousness of Christ, by which they are justified from all things, and are pure, spotless, and without fault before the throne:

and take away all thy tin. The Targum also interprets this of iniquity, rendering it, "I will take away all thy sin"; but it is better to understand it of self-righteousness; which, as tin is of more worth than dross, and looks like silver; so this has the appearance of some good in it, and was what the Jews were fond of, trusted in, and depended on, and which they followed after, and endeavoured to establish and hold fast; but this in conversion is all taken away: the Lord, by his Spirit; convinces of the weakness and insufficiency of it, to justify in his sight; shows that it is not a righteousness, and will be of no service in that respect; yea, takes away these filthy rags, and clothes with the righteousness of Christ; causes the soul to drop and renounce its own righteousness, and put on that; and not only to renounce works before conversion, but all after it, as a profession of religion, subjection to Gospel ordinances, and all works, though done in faith, and in a right manner; a glaring instance we have of all this in one of that little remnant, the Apostle Paul, **Php 3:6**. Moreover, by "dross" and "tin", or "tins", in the plural number, may be meant persons; wicked and profane men, by the former, who should be put away like dross, Ps 119:119 and self righteous persons, by the latter; who shine like silver, make a show of religion, appear outwardly righteous; but these, as well as the other, should be separated from the people of God, when the precious and the vile should be distinguished.

Isaiah 1:26

Ver. 26. And I will restore thy judges as at the first,.... This refers not to the times after the Babylonish, captivity, when the Jews had judges and rulers, such as Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, as they had in the times of Moses, Joshua, and the judges, or as in the times of David and Solomon; but it refers, as Kimchi observes, to the times of the Messiah; and is true of the apostles of Christ, who were set on twelve thrones, had power and authority from Christ to preach his Gospel, and to judge the twelve tribes of Israel in a doctrinal way, Mt 19:28 for which they were abundantly qualified, having the spirit of counsel and of judgment resting upon them, as the prophets of old; and will be again verified in the ministers of the Gospel, at the time of the Jews' conversion, when the watchmen shall see eye to eye, have a clear discerning and judgment of things as at the first, Isa 52:8

and thy counsellors as at the beginning; which is to be understood of the same persons; the apostles at Jerusalem gave advice and counsel in matters of difficulty, and were consulted on special occasions, of which there is an instance in Ac 15:1 and ordinary ministers of the word are qualified, and especially will be in the latter day, to give advice both to sensible sinners, inquiring the way of salvation, and to saints when under desertion, and have lost their beloved, or have any matters of difficulty upon them, whether with respect to faith or practice.

Afterward thou shall be called the city of righteousness: when many shall be converted through the hand of the Lord turned upon them, and become incorporated into a church state, and having the apostles and other ministers of the Gospel among them, with proper officers over them, as the first Christian church at Jerusalem had; and the members of it were righteous persons, such as were justified by the righteousness of Christ, and lived righteously, walking in the ordinances of the Lord, and as became the Gospel of Christ, and will be the case of the churches of Christ in the latter day:

the faithful city; to Christ, his Gospel, ordinances, and one another, as the first

Christians at Jerusalem were; see **Ac 2:12**. A true church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, who keep the ordinances as they were delivered; stand first in the faith of the Gospel; take care that the laws of Christ's house are put in execution; and do not suffer sin upon one another, nor bear them that are evil, whether in doctrine or practice; and which in the latter day will be the case of the churches of Christ in a remarkable manner, when they will justly bear this character.

Isaiah 1:27

Ver. 27. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment,.... The blessing of redemption by Christ is the source and foundation of the other blessings of grace, before mentioned, the little remnant are favoured with, as justification, pardon of sin, and conversion, **Isa 1:18** **Isa 1:25** it is of a spiritual nature; the redemption of the soul is a deliverance from the captivity of sin, Satan, and the law, and is plenteous and eternal; the objects of redeeming grace are "Zion"

and her converts; not the world, but the church is redeemed by Christ; for by Zion is meant, not a place, but people, even the church and people of God, who frequently bear the name of Zion in this prophecy, and in other passages of Scripture, both of the Old and of the New Testament; see Isa 49:14 compared to Mount Zion for its height and holiness; for being the object of God's love, the instance of his choice, the place of his habitation; where his worship is, he grants his presence, and distributes his blessings; for its being a perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth, well fortified and immovable: and the redemption of the church by Christ is

with judgment; with the judgment and vengeance of God on Christ, and through the condemnation of him as her Head and representative; with the judgment of God, which is according to truth, in whose judgment she is truly redeemed by the blood of Christ, and really delivered from her bondage, according to his justice and holiness, which are glorified by it: but here the redemption of Zion seems to mean a more glorious state of the church, a restoration of her to her former glory, or to a greater, which will be in the latter day, and may be discerned as drawing near by the signs of the times fulfilling, Lu 21:28 whereby the truth and faithfulness of God, in his promises concerning it, will be honoured, and he will appear to be a God of judgment:

and her converts with righteousness; so called, not because converted by the church, for conversion is God's work, and not man's; no man can effect his

own conversion, he is passive in it; nor can any others, not their nearest friends and relations; they can only pray for it, as Abraham did for Ishmael, and bring them under the means; nor are ministers sufficient, only instruments of conversion neither Zion's ministers nor members can convert one sinner: but they are so called, either because converted "in" her, through the ministry of the word as a means, preached in the midst of her, Ps 87:5 or because converted "to" her, Isa 60:5 being made to submit to the ordinances of the church, and to join themselves to it. "Converts" are the objects of redemption by Christ; all that are redeemed are, sooner or later, converted; and all that are converted are redeemed; and the redemption of them by his blood is consistent "with" the "righteousness" of God; for hereby sin is fully condemned and punished; the justice of God has all its demands, and the law is completely fulfilled; and so the end of God is answered, which is to declare his righteousness by it. Moreover, in the latter day, when there, will be a redemption and deliverance or the church out of all her troubles and distresses, her converts will manifestly appear to be all righteous, being justified with the spotless righteousness of Christ,
Isa 60:21.

Isaiah 1:28

Ver. 28. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners [shall be] together,.... Of the beast and false prophet, of the followers of antichrist, the man of sin, who are transgressors of the law of God, and sinners against the Lord; the destruction of these, or the breaking of them into shivers, as the word {o} signifies, see **Re 2:27** will be at the time of Zion's redemption, and make a part of it; and it shall be all at once and together; these sinners will be all together consumed out of the earth, and these wicked antichristian ones will be no more in it, Ps 104:35

and they that forsake the Lord; his word, his worship and ordinances; as the Papists have manifestly done, by setting up their own unwritten traditions against the word of God, by adulterating his ordinances, and introducing new ones, and by worshipping images of gold, silver, brass, and wood;

wherefore they shall be consumed; with the breath of Christ's mouth, and with the brightness of his coming, **2Th 2:8**.

{o} rbv "contritio sive confractio", Syr.

Isaiah 1:29

Ver. 29. For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired,.... Though there is a change of persons in the words, the same are intended; and design such, who being convinced of the idolatries of the church of Rome they have been fond of, and delighted in, will be ashamed of them, and relinquish them, and come out of Babylon a little before the destruction of it; for under oaks, and such like green trees, idolatry used to be committed, to which the allusion is; see **Jer 2:20** and so the Targum interprets it of "trees of idols"; that is, under which idolatry was practised:

and ye shall be confounded for the gardens ye have chosen; where also idolatrous practices were used, see Isa 65:3 and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"and ye shall be ashamed of the gardens of idols, from whom ye have sought help."

The sense is the same as before; unless both clauses should rather be understood of the destruction of sinners, before spoken of, who at that time will be filled with shame and confusion, they in vain praying to their idols for help; which sense the following words incline to.

Isaiah 1:30

Ver. 30. For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth,.... Shall be stripped of all their dependencies and self confidence, and be as naked and as bare as an oak that has cast its leaves; or thus, in a way of just retaliation, since they have desired oaks, and sacrificed under them, they shall be like them as in the wintertime, stripped of all their riches, honour, substance, and desirable things; see
Re 18:12

and as a garden that hath no water; in which the herbs and plants are dried up and withered: it signifies the uncomfortable condition such shall be in, as before.

Isaiah 1:31

Ver. 31. And the strong shall be as tow,.... Nwoxh, "that strong one", who is eminently so; the little horn, whose look is more stout than his fellows, **Da 7:20** the beast who had great power and authority given by the dragon, Re 13:2 who shall be cast alive into the lake of fire; when he will be like tow in those devouring flames, easily, quickly, and irrecoverably consumed, **Da 7:11** Re 19:20

and the maker of it as a spark, or "his work"; so the Targum,

"and the work of their hands shall be as a spark of fire;"

or like the embers and ashes of a coal, which are blown away and lost at once: so antichrist, and all his evil works, as well as all his evil workers under him, will be entirely consumed: or, as it may be rendered, "he that wrought him": that is, Satan, for his coming is after the working of Satan; he has his seat, power, and authority, from the dragon, the old serpent, and the devil, and may be truly called a creature of his, **2Th 2:9**

and they shall both burn together; both the pope and the devil in the lake of fire and brimstone, into which they will both be cast,
Re 20:10

and none shall quench [them]; that fire will be unquenchable and everlasting; they will be tormented for ever and ever, and so will all the worshippers of the beast, Mt 25:41. The Chaldee paraphrase is,

"so the wicked shall be consumed, and their evil works, and there shall be no mercy upon them."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 2

This chapter contains a vision or prophecy of the enlargement of Christ's kingdom and interest, and of the glory of his church in the latter day, by the calling of the Gentiles, and the numerous conversions of them to it, and of the abolition of idolatry, and the destruction of the antichristian party. The inscription to it is in **Isa 2:1** the prophecy itself follows; the date of it is the last days; the subject matter of it, the kingdom, interest, and church of Christ, signified by the mountain of the Lord's house; its glorious estate is expressed by its establishment on the mountains; by its exaltation above the hills; and by the great numbers that should flock to it, and should encourage one another to go up to it, in order to learn the ways of God, and walk in them; the means of which is the Gospel preached, that should go out of Jerusalem; the effect of that is peace among the nations: hence the house of Jacob is exhorted to walk in the light held forth by it, **Isa 2:2** and then the reasons are given of God's rejecting and forsaking some that bear the Christian name, called the house of Jacob; namely, their Heathenish superstition, idolatry, covetousness, and confidence in their riches; who are sarcastically called upon to hide themselves in the rocks for fear of the Lord, **Isa 2:6** when the judgments of God are denounced on the proud and lofty, comparable to cedars, oaks, mountains, hills, high towers, fenced walls, and ships of the ocean, at which time, Christ, and he alone, will be exalted, and idolatry utterly abolished; the consequence of which will be the utmost dread and terror to all idolaters, **Isa 2:11** and the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to such to cease from the man of sin, and have him in no account, **Isa 2:22**.

Ver. 1. The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw,.... That is, the vision which he saw, for a new one here begins, though agreeable to what goes before; or the prophecy of future things, which he had given to him in a visionary way. The Targum paraphrases it,

"the word of prophecy, which Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prophesied:"

or the thing, the "decree", as some choose to render it, the purpose of God concerning things to come, which was revealed to the prophet, and he here declares:

concerning Judah and Jerusalem; the church and people of God, and what should befall them and their enemies in the latter day: this inscription stands for this and the three following chapters.

Isaiah 2:2

Ver. 2. And it shall come to pass in the last days,.... The days of the Messiah, as Aben Ezra rightly interprets it; and it is a rule laid down by Kimchi and Ben Melech, that wherever the last days are mentioned, the days of the Messiah are intended. The days of the Messiah commenced in the latter part of the Old

Testament dispensation, or Jewish world, towards the close of their civil and church state, at the end of which he was to come, **Hab 2:3** and accordingly did, which is called the end of the world, and the last days; that is, of that state, **Heb 1:2** and ushered in the world to come, or Gospel dispensation, which is properly the days of the Messiah, reaching from his first to his second coming; the first of which were the times of John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles; the latter days of that dispensation take in the rise and reign of antichrist, **1Ti 4:1** the last days of it are those which bring in the perilous times, the spiritual reign of Christ, and the destruction of antichrist, and which will precede the personal coming of Christ, **2Ti 3:1** and these are the days here referred to.

[That] the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains; by "the mountain" of the Lord's house is meant, not Mount Moriah, on which the temple was built, as Kimchi interprets it; nor the temple itself, as the Targum; though in the last days of it, and at the first coming of the Messiah, that had a greater glory than ever it had before, through the personal presence of Christ in it; through the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles there, on the day of Pentecost; and through the Gospel being first preached here by Christ and his apostles, from whence it went forth into all the world, as is afterwards predicted it should; but the kingdom of Christ, which is his church, is here designed; called "the Lord's house", because of his building, and where he dwells, and which he will at this time beautify and glorify; the materials of it are lively stones, or true believers; laid on Christ the foundation, into which there is no right entrance but through faith in him, who is the door, and where is plenty of provisions; the pillars and beams of it are the ministers of the Gospel, and its windows are the ordinances: here Christ is as a Son over his own house; he is the Master of it, the High Priest and Prophet in it; and his servants are the stewards of it, to give to everyone their portion; and happy are they that have a name and a place in it: and it is called "the mountain", in allusion to Mount Zion, on which the temple stood; because of its immovableness, being secured in the everlasting and electing love of God, and in the unalterable covenant of grace, founded on the Rock Christ, and guarded by the mighty power of God. This is "established in the top of the mountains"; in Christ, who is higher than the kings of the earth, signified by mountains, Re 17:9 who is the Head of all principality and power; not in their first head, or in themselves, is the establishment of the saints, but in Christ, **2Co 1:21** he is the stability of their persons, of their grace, and of their life, spiritual and eternal. Here it seems to denote the superiority of the kingdom and interest of Christ to all civil and religious states; the settlement and security of it; its standing above them, and continuance when they shall be no more, even all antichristian states, both Papal, Pagan, and Mahometan,

Re 16:19

and shall be exalted above the hills; Mount Zion is above Mount Sinai, or the Gospel dispensation is preferable to the legal one. It is an observation of Jarchi, that it shall be exalted by a greater sign or miracle that shall be done in it than was done in Sinai, Carmel, and Tabor; the law was given on Sinai, and many wonders wrought; but on Zion the Messiah himself appeared, and his Gospel was published, and miracles wrought by him. And in the latter day, when Christ, and he alone, shall be exalted, as he will at the time this prophecy refers to, **Isa 2:11** the church will be exalted; the glory of the Lord will be risen upon her; the interest of Christ will exceed all other interests; his religion will be the prevailing one; the kingdoms of this world will become his; and his dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the end of the earth. This may also denote the visibility of the kingdom and church of Christ; it will be as a city on a hill; and however obscure the church is now, being in the wilderness, it will at this time be visible to all:

and all nations shall flow unto it; that is, many out of all nations shall be converted, and come freely and willingly to join themselves to the church of Christ; they shall come in great numbers, in company together, and that continually, like flowing streams; they shall first flow to the Lord, and to his goodness, and then to his church and ordinances; see Isa 60:4.

Isaiah 2:3

Ver. 3. And many people shall go and say,.... This is a prophecy of the numerous conversions among the Gentiles in the latter day, and agrees with **Zec 8:20** and even the author of the old Nizzachon {p} interprets it of the gathering of the people to the Messiah.

Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; the church of Christ, so called;
See Gill on "Isa 2:2". This expresses the concern that truly gracious souls have for the house of God, and his worship in it; they go up to it, considering it both as their duty and their privilege; and which they do frequently and constantly, with much spiritual pleasure, though sometimes with difficulty, finding their account in it, and knowing it is for the glory of God; and not content with so doing themselves, they encourage others to do so likewise; either professors of religion with them, who are negligent and backward through a spirit of slumber and slothfulness on them; through lukewarmness, coldness, and

leaving their first love; through an over love to the world, and the things of it; and through a vain conceit of themselves, as being as knowing as their teachers, or wiser than they: or else such who have made no profession, who are quite ignorant of divine things, these they endeavour to bring with them, out of love to their souls, that they may be under the means of grace, in order to their conversion; and such as are inquiring the way to Zion, with their faces toward it, these they encourage to join with them in holy fellowship; and in all they set an example by a constant attendance themselves; they do not stir them up to go alone, either one or other, but propose to go with them. See Ps 122:1

and he will teach us of his ways: that is, the Lord the God of Jacob, the covenant God and Father of his church and people, who often in this prophecy go by the name of Jacob; he is the teacher, and there is none teacheth like him; and happy are they who are taught of God, and who have heard and learnt of the Father, and come to Christ: he taught men by his Son, when here on earth; who was a teacher that came from God, taught the way of God in truth, and with authority, as the Scribes and Pharisees did not: and then by his Spirit, sent after him to teach all things, and bring all things to remembrance; and since by his apostles and ministers, who have gifts, and a commission to teach men; though all human teachings are of no avail, without a divine blessing, unless accompanied with the anointing, which teacheth all things; and which will be abundantly bestowed in the latter day, when all the children of Zion, and that come to the house of the Lord, will be taught of God. Kimchi says, the teacher here is the King Messiah; the "us" to be taught are Gentiles, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, whom Christ, under the Gospel dispensation, has given his ministers a commission to teach; and here design such as are humble souls, and sensible of their ignorance, and who know something of Christ, and believe in him; yet, as they know but in part, they desire to know more. The things taught them are the "ways" of the Lord; his ways of love, grace, and mercy, in the salvation of men; the steps he took in eternity towards it, by consulting and contriving the best method of it, forming it in his Son, and agreeing with him in covenant about it, and choosing the persons in him he designed to save: and also his goings forth in time, by sending his Son into this world, to obtain salvation for them, and his Spirit into their hearts, to apply it to them; likewise the ways which he prescribes and directs his people to walk in, such as the ordinances of the Gospel, and every path of duty: and the place where these are taught is the church of God, and to this school all that desire to learn should go; and there is ever something more and more of these ways to be learnt; for they are not all learnt at once, only part of his ways; and it is but a small portion, we know of these in the present state, which God has taken in order to bring about our salvation.

And we will walk in his paths; in Christ, the way, by faith, and in all his ordinances and paths of duty, according to the rule of his word; in imitation of him, and as he walked; in a dependence on his wisdom, grace, and strength, continuing therein; for walking is a progressive motion, and designs a series and course of obedience and perseverance in it:

for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; by which is meant the law or doctrine of the Messiah, Isa 42:4 for the Hebrew word hrwt signifies any doctrine, and so the evangelical one, the law or doctrine of faith, of justification by faith in Christ's righteousness, **Ro 3:27** together with all other doctrines of the same kind; called the "word of the Lord", which the Lord Christ is the author, preacher, sum, and substance of; the word of righteousness, peace, reconciliation, life, and salvation by him. This first began according to his commission and direction to be preached at Jerusalem, and from thence it went forth into all the world; and it is in Zion, in the church of God, it is now preached, and will be more clearly and fully in the latter day; and so is an argument and an encouraging reason to engage persons to go up thither and hear it.

{p} Apud Wagenseil. Tela ignea, p. 29.

Isaiah 2:4

Ver. 4. And he shall judge among the nations,.... Or, "it shall judge"; either the mountain of the Lord's house, as Abarbinel thinks, that is, the church; for in the spiritual reign of Christ, in the latter day, the judgment shall be given to the saints of the most High, and they shall possess the kingdom; the power of civil government will be in their hands, and they shall judge the world; for kings will then be nursing fathers to them, and queens nursing mothers. Or the law and word of the Lord, the Gospel, which judges men now, and declares who are condemned, and who are not; and will judge them at the last day: or, "he shall judge", that is, the Messiah, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech interpret it; he shall be King over all the earth; the kingdoms of this world will become his, and his dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the end of the earth:

and shall rebuke many people; either the church shall rebuke by her ministers, whose work it is to reprove and rebuke for and to convince of both immorality and error; or, the word preached by them, which is the means of the conviction and conversion of sinners; or, Christ by his Spirit, whose office it is to reprove and convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. It is a prophecy of numerous conversions among the Gentiles, in the latter day:

and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: instruments of war shall be no more used, but shall be turned into instruments of husbandry, much more advantageous and useful to mankind.

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. This clearly proves that this prophecy belongs to future times; for this has never yet had its accomplishment in any sense; not in a literal sense; for though there was an universal peace all the world over, at the birth of Christ, in the times of Augustus Caesar, yet there afterwards were, as our Lord foretold there would be, wars, and rumours of wars, and nation should rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and so it has been, more or less, ever since; nor in a spiritual sense, for though Christ has made peace by the blood of his cross, and came and preached it by his ministers, and wherever the Gospel of peace takes place, it makes men of peaceable dispositions, and reconciles them, as to God and Christ, and the way of salvation by him, so to one another; and it is peace saints are called to, and, when grace is in exercise, it rules in their hearts; and yet there have been sad contentions and quarrels among the people of God, and which yet still continue; but in the latter day glory, or spiritual reign of Christ, this prophecy will be fulfilled in every sense; for after the hour of temptation is over, that shall try all the earth, after the slaying of the witnesses and their rising, after the battle at Armageddon, when the beast and false prophet will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire, there will be no more wars in the world, nor any persecution of the saints; and then will the peaceable kingdom of Christ appear, and all his subjects, and the members of his church, will live in the utmost unity and harmony together; they shall no more envy and vex one another; and of this peace there will be no end,
Ps 72:7 these words are applied to the times of the Messiah, both by ancient {q} and modern {r} Jews.

{q} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 63. 1. {r} R. Nachman. Disputat. cum fratre Paulo, p. 41. R. Isaac. Chizzuk Emuna, par. 1. cap. 1. p. 43, 44. Kimchi in Isa. lxv. 19.

Isaiah 2:5

Ver. 5. O house of Jacob,.... This is either an exhortation of the prophet to the men of his generation, to attend to the light of the law, which the Lord had given them, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; or rather, as the Targum and Jarchi suggest, an exhortation of the nations to the people of Israel, and are indeed the words of the converted Gentiles to the people of the Jews, being concerned for their conversion and spiritual welfare, as will appear in the latter day; when they will not only encourage one another to go up to the house of the Lord, as in the preceding verses, but will be very solicitous that the Jews, the posterity of Jacob, share with them in all that light and glory that shall be risen upon Zion; as follows:

come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord; meaning either Christ, in whom the light of the knowledge of the glory of God is given, and the glory of all the perfections of the divine nature is displayed; who is that light that dwells with the Lord, was sent forth by him, and came into this world as the light of it, and is given for a light to the Gentiles, as well as the glory of the people of Israel; and who is the author of all light; of corporeal light, in the first creation; of the sun, moon, and stars; of the light of nature in every man; of the light of the Gospel of the grace of God; of the spiritual light of grace in the hearts of his people; and of the light of eternal glory: or else the Gospel is intended, called the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, **2Co 4:4** by which some are only notionally enlightened, and some spiritually and savingly, when it is attended with the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ: or rather, the light of the latter day glory, which includes the other two; when Christ and his Gospel will be more clearly revealed and seen, not only by the watchmen, who will see eye to eye, but by all the saints; when the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold as the light of seven days, and the whole earth shall be lightened with its glory, Isa 30:26 and to "walk" in this light, as it respects Christ, is to walk by faith in him, to go on in believing views of him, and to walk in imitation of him, and as he directs; and as it respects the Gospel, it is to embrace it, profess it, hold it fast, and hold it forth; and to walk as that prescribes and guides, and as becomes it; and to walk as children of the light, wisely and circumspectly; worthy of the calling of God, of the grace he calls by, and the kingdom he calls to: and to walk in the light of the latter day glory is to enjoy it, and share in all the blessings of it, with perseverance therein, through the grace of God; and such walking is pleasant and comfortable; such shall have the communion of God and Christ, and fellowship one with another, and at last enjoy the light of life. **Joh 8:12**

Isaiah 2:6

Ver. 6. Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people, the house of Jacob,.... These words contain a reason of the divine conduct, in calling the Gentiles, and rejecting the Jews, because of the sins of the latter hereafter mentioned; though some, as the Targum and R. Moses, refer this to the Israelites; and read, "because ye have forsaken", &c. and interpret it of their forsaking the Lord, his worship, and his law. What is hereafter said does not agree with the Jews, literally understood, neither in the times of Isaiah, nor when they returned from Babylon, nor in the times of Christ, nor since the destruction of Jerusalem, or in the latter day, a little before their conversion; for after the Babylonish captivity they were not given to idolatry, nor did they abound in riches, and much less since their dispersion among the nations; nor will this be their case in the latter day: wherefore Kimchi applies the whole to the times of Solomon, when the land abounded with gold and silver, with horses and chariots, and with idolatry also, in the latter part of his life: but it seems best to interpret this of antichrist and his followers, who call themselves the people of God, and the house of Jacob, say they are Jews, but are not, and are of the synagogue of Satan; and are therefore rejected of the Lord, and will be given up to utter ruin and destruction, for the evils found in them, hereafter charged with.

Because they be replenished from the east, or "more than the east" {s}; than the eastern people, the Syrians and Chaldeans; that is, were more filled with witchcrafts and sorceries than they, as Kimchi explains it; of the sorceries of the Romish antichrist, see **Re 9:21** the words may be rendered, "because they be full from of old time" {t}; or, as of old, or more than they were of old; namely, fuller of idols than formerly; so the Targum paraphrases it,

"because your land is full of idols, as of old;"

and so Rome Papal is as full of idols, or fuller, than Rome Pagan was. Some, as Aben Ezra, understand this of their being filled with the wisdom of the children of the east, **1Ki 4:30** and others of the riches of the east:

and [are] soothsayers like the Philistines: who were a people given to divination and soothsaying, **1Sa 6:2** and some of the popes of Rome have studied the black art, and by such wicked means have got into the Papal chair; for under this may be included all evil arts and fallacious methods, by which they have deceived themselves and others:

and they please themselves in the children of strangers; being brought into their convents, monasteries, and nunneries; the priests and nuns vowing celibacy and virginity, and contenting themselves with the children of others: or they love strange flesh, delight in sodomitical practices, and unnatural lusts with boys and men; wherefore Rome is called Sodom and Egypt, Re 11:8 or they content and delight themselves in the laws, customs, rites, ceremonies, and doctrines of other nations; many of the Gentile notions and practices being introduced into the faith and worship of the church of Rome; wherefore the Papists go by the name of Gentiles, Re 11:2. The Targum is,

"and they walk in the laws of the people,"

or study strange sciences, and not the statutes and laws of God; so some interpret it, as Ben Melech observes, and who also mentions another sense some give, that they please themselves in images they renew daily.

{s} Mdqm "prae oriente, vel filiis orientis", Vatablus. {t} ap' archv, Sept.; "ut olim", Vulg. Lat. Sic Syr. & Ar.

Isaiah 2:7

Ver. 7. Their land also is full of silver and gold,.... Procured by pardons, indulgences, masses, praying souls out of purgatory, tithes, annates, Peter's pence, &c.

neither [is there any] end of their treasures; laid up in the pope's coffers, in their churches, monasteries, and convents:

their land is also full of horses, neither [is there any] end of their chariots; for the cardinals, archbishops, bishops, &c. to ride on and in. Horses and chariots are mentioned among the wares and merchandise of Rome, in Re 18:13.

Isaiah 2:8

Ver. 8. Their land also is full of idols,.... Of the Virgin Mary, and of saints departed, whose images are set up to be worshipped in all their churches, and had in private houses:

and they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made; namely, idols of gold, silver, brass, wood, and stone, **Re 9:20**.

Isaiah 2:9

Ver. 9. And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself,.... Both high and low, rich and poor, bow down unto, humble themselves before, and worship idols made by the hands of men: the words for the "mean man" and "the great man" are Mda and vya, "Adam" and "Ish"; and which are also interpreted by Jarchi of little or mean men, and of princes and mighty ones:

therefore forgive them not; their sins of soothsaying, covetousness, and idolatry; and such that worship the beast and his image shall not be forgiven, but drink of the wine of divine wrath, and be tormented with fire for ever and ever, Re 14:9. These are either the words of the prophet to the Lord representing the church, and imprecating evils on antichristian worshippers; or of the angel to the Christian powers, exhorting them not to spare Babylon, Re 18:6 some refer these words to the mean and great men bowing down and humbling themselves, and read them in connection with them thus, "and lifts not up unto them"; that is, the head or soul; so Aben Ezra, who also observes, that the word "earth" may be wanting, and supplied thus, "and the earth shall not bear them"; they shall be destroyed from off it, both the idols and the worshippers of them. See Ps 10:16.

Isaiah 2:10

Ver. 10. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust,.... As it was when Rome Pagan was destroyed, the kings, princes, and freemen called to the rocks to fall on them and hide them, **Re 6:15** so it will be at the downfall of Rome Papal, when the kings and merchants of the earth, who have been concerned therewith, will stand afar off, as for fear of her torment, Re 18:10

so for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty; lest he should pour out his wrath and vengeance upon them, and be a consuming fire to them, before whose glory and majesty they will not be able to stand; for this is to be understood not of a filial reverence of God, but of a servile fear of punishment; and these words are sarcastically said, suggesting that rocks and mountains will be no protection or security for them.

Isaiah 2:11

Ver. 11. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled,.... Particularly of the man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, assuming that to himself which belongs to God; looking down with contempt upon, and behaving haughtily and insolently to all below him; blaspheming the name of God, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven; he shall be humbled, consumed, and destroyed with the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming, **2Th 2:4**

and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down; of the followers of antichrist, who have boasted of their wisdom and knowledge, of their number, power, greatness, and authority, of their wealth and riches, and of their merits and works of supererogation; their pride will now be stained, and all their glory laid in the dust:

and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day: in his divine Person, and in all his offices, and especially in his kingly office; he shall be King over all the earth, the kingdoms of this world will become his, he shall be the one Lord, and his name one, Zec 14:9 this will be in the spiritual reign of Christ, in the latter day, or last day of the Gospel dispensation, when the church will be exalted, as in **Isa 2:2** and in the personal reign of Christ it will still more appear, that he, and he alone, will be exalted by and among his people, among whom his tabernacle will be, for then he will have no rivals; not only all rule, power, and authority among men, will be put down, and the beast and false prophet will have been cast alive into the lake of fire; but Satan, the god of this world, will be taken and bound, and cast into the bottomless pit, and so remain during the time of Christ's thousand years' reign with his saints on earth: this passage is referred by the Jews {u} to the end of the six thousand years the world according to them shall stand.

{u} T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 31. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 2. & 97. 1.

Isaiah 2:12

Ver. 12. For the day of the Lord of hosts,.... Which is peculiarly his, which he has fixed and appointed, and in which there will be a great display of the glory of his power and grace: this

[shall be] upon every [one that is] proud and lofty, and upon every [one that is] lifted up, and he shall be brought low; either the day of his mighty power and efficacious grace shall be upon them to convert them; when they who thought themselves in a good estate, rich, and standing in need of nothing, shall now perceive themselves to be in a very poor, wretched, and miserable one; and when such who have trusted in and boasted of their own righteousness, and despised others, and would not submit to the righteousness of Christ; shall now renounce their own, and gladly embrace his; and when those who prided themselves with their free will, strength, and power, will now find that they can do nothing of themselves, and without Christ, his Spirit and grace; and such, who fancied that their own right hand could save them, will now see that there is salvation in no other but Christ, and will prostrate themselves before him, and seek unto him alone for peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life: or else this means the day of the Lord's vengeance on his proud and haughty enemies, who would not have him to reign over them; these shall be as stubble, when the day of the Lord, which will burn like an oven, will consume and destroy them, **Mal 4:1**.

Isaiah 2:13

Ver. 13. And upon all the cedars of Lebanon [that are] high and lifted up,.... That is, upon the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication with Babylon, and will join with the beast and false prophet in making war with the Lamb. So the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it of the kings of the nations, mighty and strong:

and upon all the oaks of Bashan; nobles, princes, governors of provinces, as the same writers explain the words, oaks being inferior to cedars: the day of the Lord will be upon these, and their destruction come on at the battle of Armageddon, Re 19:18.

Isaiah 2:14

Ver. 14. And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills [that are] lifted up. By which may be meant either kingdoms and cities belonging to the Roman jurisdiction, or churches and monasteries, and such like religious houses, and the dissolution of them. See Re 16:20.

Isaiah 2:15

Ver. 15. And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall. Which may signify everything that serves to support and defend the antichristian hierarchy, particularly the secular powers. The Targum paraphrases it,

"and upon all that dwell in a high tower, and upon all that reside by a fortified wall."

Isaiah 2:16

Ver. 16. And upon all the ships of Tarshish,.... Upon all the merchants and merchandises of Rome. The Targum is,

"and upon all that dwell in the islands of the sea."

See Re 16:20. Tarshish, as Vitringa observes, designs Tartessus or Gades in Spain, which must bring to mind the memorable destruction of the Spanish Armada in 1558, as he also notes.

And upon all pleasant pictures; of Christ and the Virgin Mary, of angels, and of saints departed, the Papists make use of to help their devotion. The Targum is,

"and upon all that dwell in beautiful palaces;"

such as those of the pope and his cardinals at Rome, and of archbishops and bishops at other places. The Septuagint version is, "and upon all the sight of the beauty of ships"; such were the ships of the Phoenicians, which were very much ornamented, and beautiful to behold.

Isaiah 2:17

Ver. 17. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down,.... This, with what follows in this verse, is repeated for the confirmation and certainty of it; and also for the further explanation of what is before figuratively and metaphorically expressed. See Gill on "Isa 2:11". Jarchi interprets "that day", here spoken of, of the day of judgment; and then indeed every tongue shall confess, whether they will or not, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, **Php 2:11**.

Isaiah 2:18

Ver. 18. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. The images of saints worshipped by the Papists: after the destruction of antichrist, and when the spiritual reign of Christ takes place, there will be no idolatry or worshipping of images any more, see Zec 13:2. The word
Mylyla, used for "idols", signifies things that are not, for an idol is nothing in the world, **1Co 8:4** these the Lord "will cause to pass away", even all of them, they shall disappear.

Isaiah 2:19

Ver. 19. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth,.... That is, the worshippers of idols, as they are bid to do, **Isa 2:10**

for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty,
See Gill on "Isa 2:10"

when be ariseth; out of his place; Jarchi says, at the day of judgment; but it respects the judgment of the great whore, and the time when Babylon the great shall come in remembrance before God:

to shake terribly the earth; at which earthquake, or shaking of the earth, that is, a revolution of the antichristian state, the tenth part of the city will fall, and seven thousand men of name be slain, **Re 9:13** and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"when he shall be revealed, to break in pieces the wicked of the earth;"

which will be done by him, as the vessels of a potter are broken to shivers, **Re 2:27**.

Isaiah 2:20

Ver. 20. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols o[gold,.... Being frightened at the terrible shaking of the earth, and at the glory and majesty of Christ, which will be seen in his witnesses and people, at the time of his spiritual coming, and the destruction of antichrist; insomuch that they shall cast away their idols, and relinquish their idolatrous practices, and give glory to the God of heaven, Re 11:11:

which they made [each one] for himself to worship; everyone having their peculiar idol, the work of their own hands; which shows their gross ignorance and wretched stupidity:

to the moles, and to the bats; that is, either they shall leave them to persons as blind and ignorant as moles and bats; or rather they shall cast them into the holes which moles make, and bats have recourse unto. The Targum makes these the objects of worship, rendering the words,

"that they may worship the idols and images;"

and the Jewish writers interpret them of images worshipped in the form of moles and bats; though we never read of those creatures being worshipped, Moles were sacrificed to Neptune {w}. Kimchi refers this text to the times of the Messiah; and some of their ancient writers {x} apply it to the Messiah, and to his arising and appearing in the land of Galilee.

{w} Phurnutus de Natura Deorum, p. 59. {x} Zohar in Exod. fol. 3. 3. &. in Numb. fol. 99. 3.

Isaiah 2:21

Ver. 21. To go into the clifts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks,.... That is, the idolaters shall either go there themselves; or they shall cause their idols to go there, thither they shall cast them; though the former sense seems the best, because of what follows,

for fear of the Lord, &c. See Gill on "Isa 2:10" see Gill on "Isa 2:19".

Isaiah 2:22

Ver. 22. Cease ye from man, whose breath [is] in his nostrils,.... "From that man" {y}, meaning antichrist, the man of sin; who is but a mere man, a poor, frail, mortal man; though he sits in the temple of God, as if he was God, showing himself to be God, by taking that to himself which belongs to the Deity. This is advice to the followers of antichrist, to cease from going after him, and worshipping him, seeing he is not the living God, but a dying man:

for wherein is he to be accounted of? The Targum is,

"for he is alive today, and tomorrow he is not, and he is to be accounted as nothing;"

and much less as Peter's successor, as head of the church, and vicar of Christ, and as having all power in heaven, earth, and hell. It may be applied to men in general, in whom no confidence is to be placed, even the greatest of men, Ps 118:8 and particularly the Egyptians, in whom the Jews were apt to trust, who were men, and not God; and whose horses were flesh, and not spirit, Isa 31:3 so Vitringa; but the first sense is best.

{y} Mdah Nm.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 3

In this chapter the Jews are threatened with various calamities, on account of their sins, which would issue in their entire ruin and destruction. They are threatened with a famine, **Isa 3:1** with a removal of useful men in church and state, and in common life, **Isa 3:2** with ignorant and effeminate governors; the consequences of which would be oppression and insolence, **Isa 3:4** yea, that such would be their state and condition, that men, though naturally ambitious of honour, would refuse to have the government of them, **Isa 3:6** the reasons of these calamities, and of this ruin and fall of them, are their evil words and actions against the Lord, which were highly provoking to him; and their impudence in sinning like Sodom, which was to their own harm, **Isa 3:8** yet, in the midst of all this, it is the will of God that the righteous should be told it shall be well with them, with the reason of it; when it shall be ill with the wicked, as a just recompence of reward, **Isa 3:10** the errors and mistakes of the people are attributed to their childish and effeminate governors, **Isa 3:12** wherefore the Lord determines to plead their cause, and contend with their elders and rulers, because they had spoiled and devoured the poor, **Isa 3:13** and particularly the women are threatened, for their pride and luxury, to have their ornaments taken from them, which are particularly mentioned, **Isa 3:16** and the chapter is concluded with a prophecy, that their mighty men should perish by the sword in war, and the city should be desolate, **Isa 3:25**.

Ver. 1. For, behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts,.... These titles of Jehovah, expressive of power and authority, are used to show that he is able to execute what he threatens to do; and the word "behold" is prefixed, to excite attention to what is about to be said:

doth take away from Jerusalem, and from Judea; the present tense is used for the future, because of the certainty of what would be done to the Jews, both in city and country; for as in the preceding chapter **Isa 2:1** it is foretold what shall befall the antichristian party among the nations of the world, this is a prophecy of the destruction of the Jews by the Romans; at which time there would be a dreadful famine, signified by the taking away

the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water; bread and water being the stay and staff of man's life, which support and maintain it; and, in case of disobedience, a famine was threatened this people very early, and in much such terms as here,
Le 26:26 and as there was a very sore famine at the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 52:6 so there was a very dreadful one when the city was besieged by the Romans, as related by Josephus, and predicted by Christ, Mt 24:7.

Isaiah 3:2

Ver. 2. The mighty man, and man of war,.... The meaning is either that these should die in war, as thousands of them did; or that men fit to be generals of armies should be removed by death before this time, so that they should have none to go out with their armies, and meet the enemy:

the judge and the prophet; there should be none to sit upon the bench, and administer justice to the people in civil affairs, and to determine causes relating to life and death; and none to instruct them in religious matters, and deliver the mind and will of God to them; and before this time the Jews were under the Roman jurisdiction, and had a Roman governor over them, and had not power to judge in capital cases, in matters of life and death, as they suggest, Joh 18:31 and they say {z}, that forty years before the destruction of the temple this power was taken from them; and at the time that Jerusalem was besieged, and taken by the Romans, and before that, they had no prophets among them; for though there were prophets in the Christian churches, yet none among them; this shows that this prophecy cannot be understood of the Babylonish captivity, because there were prophets then, as Jeremy, Ezekiel, and Daniel, but of Jerusalem's destruction by the Romans:

and the prudent and the ancient: with whom are wisdom, and who are fit to give advice and counsel in matters of difficulty; but these would be removed by famine or sword. The first of these words is used sometimes in an ill sense, for a diviner or soothsayer,
De 18:10. The Jewish writers {a} interpret it of a king, according to Pr 16:10 and it is certain they were without one at this time, and have been ever since, **Ho 3:4**.

{z} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 15. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 41. 1. and Beracot, fol. 58. 1. {a} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 1. Jarchi in loc.

Isaiah 3:3

Ver. 3. The captain of fifty,.... A semi-centurion, such an one as in **2Ki 1:9**. So far should there be from being captains of thousands, and of hundreds, that there should not be one of fifty:

and the honourable man; by birth, breeding, and behaviour, through riches and greatness; and one of power and authority among the people, and in their favour and esteem:

and the counsellor; one able to give advice in matters of moment and difficulty, and in controversy between man and man; it suggests that nothing should be done with advice and counsel, with wisdom and discretion, but all tumult and sedition, as the history of these times shows: the Jews {b} interpret this of one that knows how to intercalate years, and fix the months: and the

cunning artificer: in any kind of metal, old, silver, brass, and iron, and in any sort of wood, and in any kind of manual and mechanical business; which would now be laid aside, shops shuts up, and all trade and business neglected and discouraged, occasioned partly by the siege without, and chiefly by their internal divisions and robberies, and by their zealots and cutthroats, which swarmed among them. The Septuagint render it, "the wise architect", or "masterbuilder"; the same word is used by the apostle in **1Co 3:10**:

and the eloquent orator; who has the tongue of the learned, and can speak a word in season to the distressed; or who is able to plead at the bar the cause of the injured and oppressed, the widow and the fatherless. Aben Ezra interprets it of one that is skilful in enchanting serpents; that charms wisely, as in Ps 58:5 it may be rendered, "one that understands enchantment" {c}: with the Septuagint it is a "prudent hearer"; sad is the case of a nation when men of so much usefulness are taken away from them. See 2Ki 24:15.

{b} T. Bab. Chagiga & Jarchi, ut supra. (fol. 14. 1. Jarchi in loc.) {c} vxl Nwbn "intelligentem incantationis", Vatablus.

Isaiah 3:4

Ver. 4. And I will give children [to be] their princes,.... Either in age, or in understanding, who are really so, or act like such; and in either sense, when this is the case, it is an unhappiness to a nation, Ec 10:16:

and babes shall rule over them; which is the same as before. The Targum is,

"the weak shall rule over them;"

such who are weak in their intellectuals, or are of mean pusillanimous spirits, "effeminate", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; and so as "children" are opposed to the "ancient", that should be taken away, these are opposed to "men of might" and courage, who would now be wanting: or "men of illusions", as in the margin; such as were subtle as foxes, and should deceive them, and impose upon them, and were audacious and impudent, and would mock at them, and despise them. So Jarchi and Abarbinel; and according to this sense of the word the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "mockers shall rule over them".

Isaiah 3:5

Ver. 5. And the people shall be oppressed, everyone by another, and everyone by his neighbour,.... There being no governors, or such as were unfit for government, no decorum was kept and observed, but a mere anarchy; and so everyone did as he pleased, as when there was no king in Israel; and everyone rushed into the house of his neighbour, and plundered his goods; this was the case of Jerusalem, at the time of the siege, it abounding with robbers and spoilers:

the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient; show no respect to them, nor honour them, as the law requires in Le 19:32 but behave insolently towards them; and so the Jews say {d}, that when the son of David is come, as he now would be, young men shall make ashamed the faces of old men, and old men shall stand before young men:

and the base against the honourable; persons of a mean birth and extract would rise up against and insult such as were men of families and fortune, of noble birth and of high degree.

{d} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1.

Isaiah 3:6

Ver. 6. When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father,.... One of the same country, kindred, and family; for only one of their brethren, and not a stranger, might rule over them,
De 17:15 this taking hold of him may design not so much a literal taking hold of his person, his hand or garment, much less using any forcible measures with him; though indeed the Jews would have took Christ by force, who was one of their brethren, and would have made him a temporal king, which he refused, as this man did here spoken of, **Joh 6:15** but rather an importunate desire and entreaty, urging him, as follows,

[saying], thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler; that is, he had good and rich clothing, fit for a ruler or civil magistrate to appear in, which everyone had not, and some scarce any in those troublesome times:

and [let] this ruin be under thy hand; that is, let thy care, concern, and business, be to raise up the almost ruined state of the city and nation; and let thy hand be under it, to support and maintain it. The Targum is, "and this power shall be under thy hand;"

thou shalt have power and government over the nation, and the honour and greatness which belong unto it, and all shall be subject unto thee. The Septuagint renders it, "let my meat be under thee", or "from thee", as the Arabic version.

Isaiah 3:7

Ver. 7. In that day shall he swear,.... Or "lift up", that is, his hand {e}, which was a gesture used in swearing, and therefore is so rendered; the meaning is, that he shall at once immediately give an answer, and for the solemn confirmation of it shall say an oath with it, saying,

I will not be a healer, or "a binder"; that is, of wounds, of political wounds, made in the nation, and which were incurable. See **Isa 1:6** for the meaning is, that he neither was fit to be, nor could he be, a healer of the distempered state of the nation, it was so desperately bad. The Targum is,

"I am not fit to be a head or governor;"

and so Kimchi explains it of a governor, who, he says, is so called, because he binds and imprisons those that transgress his commands; and to this sense Jarchi and Abarbinel:

for in my house [is] neither bread nor clothing; not a sufficiency of either to support such grandeur and dignity; not enough to keep a proper table, and a suitable equipage:

make me not a ruler of the people; this shows that the state of the nation must be very bad indeed, that men, who are naturally ambitious of power and honour, should refuse government when offered to them.

{e} avy "attollet manum", Piscator.

Isaiah 3:8

Ver. 8. For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen, &e.] This is a reason given why the government of them is refused; they were fallen into such a ruinous condition, that there was no probability of recovering them. And the reason of this their fall and ruin is,

because their tongue and their doings [are] against the Lord; against the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they reproached and vilified as an impostor, a blasphemer, and a seditious person; and whom they spit upon, buffeted, scourged, and crucified:

to provoke the eyes of his glory; whose glory, as seen by some in the days of his humiliation, was as the glory of the only begotten of the Father; and, upon his ascension, he was crowned with glory and honour: and as his eyes saw, as well as his ears heard, all their blasphemy and wickedness; so they refusing to have him to reign over them, he was provoked to come in his kingdom with power, and cause his wrath to fall upon them to the uttermost, in the destruction of their country, city, and temple.

Isaiah 3:9

Ver. 9. The shew of their countenance doth witness against them,.... The word translated "shew" is only used in this place. Some derive it from rkn, "to know", in the conjugations Piel and Hiphil; and render it, "the knowledge of their countenance" {f}; that is, that which may be known by their countenances; the countenance oftentimes shows what is in the heart, the cruel disposition of the mind, the pride and vanity of it, the uncleanness and lasciviousness that is in it; to this our version agrees, and which is confirmed by the Chaldee paraphrase,

"the knowledge of their countenance in judgment doth testify against them;"

as they appear there, so it may be judged of them; their guilt flies in their face, and fills them with shame and confusion; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "the shame of their face"; but others derive it from rkh, which has the signification of hardness in the Arabic language, and as it is thought by some to have in Job 19:3 and render it, "the hardness of their countenance"; so R. Joseph Kimchi, and others {g}, meaning their impudence {h}; not only their words and actions, but their impudent looks, show what they are; which agrees with what follows:

and they declare their sin as Sodom, and hide [it] not; commit it openly, without fear or shame; glory in it, and boast of it, as the Jews did in their crucifixion of Christ, and their evil treatment of him:

woe to their soul, for they have rewarded evil unto themselves; they have brought upon themselves, soul and body, the just recompence of reward; they have been the cause of their own ruin, and have wronged their own souls.

{f} Myhynp trkh "cognitio vultus eorum", Munster, Vatablus, V. L. {g} "Obfermatio", Janius & Tremellius; "durities", Piscator. {h} So Schindler renders the Arabic word , "hacar", impudence. Vid. Castel. Lexic. col. 846.

Isaiah 3:10

Ver. 10. Say ye to the righteous, that [it shall be] well [with him],.... The Lord always has some righteous ones, in the worst of times, whom he can and does distinguish, single out, and take care of; and it is his will that they should be comforted by his prophets and ministers, who seem to be the persons to whom these words are directed, lest they should be distressed with what is said unto, and what they see is coming upon, the world, or upon a nation in general: and it will be, and is well with such, when calamities are on a nation, in a time of famine, war, or pestilence, under any affliction whatever at death, and at judgment, and to all eternity; the Lord has the highest regard for them; Christ's righteousness, by which they are denominated righteous, secures them from wrath, and entitles them to glory; they are blessed now, and will be happy hereafter. So the Targum,

"say ye to the righteous, ye are blessed,"

pronounce them such as they are: some render it, "say to the righteous, that he do good" {i}; exhort him, excite and encourage him, to it; such who have believed in Christ for righteousness ought to be careful to maintain good works: others, "say to the righteous", own him, speak well of him, "for it is good"; or say to him, "that he is good" {k}, a happy man. The Septuagint and Arabic versions, very foreign from the text, and sense of it, render the words, "saying, let us bind the just man, for he is unprofitable to us"; as if they were the words of the wicked Jews, respecting Christ, the just One, so called sarcastically by them: and the reason of the righteous man's happiness follows:

for they shall eat the fruit of their doings: both of what Christ has done for them, as their Head and representative, by whose righteousness they are justified; and of what they have done themselves, under the influence of his Spirit and grace; which being done from a principle of grace, are rewarded with a reward of grace, and not of debt; such enjoy a peace of conscience now, which is the work and effect of righteousness, and shall receive the reward of the inheritance, which is not of the law, but by promise, and of faith, and so by grace.

{i} bwj yk "quod bene agat", Vatablus. {k} "Dicite justum, quod bonus beatusque est", Cocceius.

Isaiah 3:11

Ver. 11. Woe unto the wicked! [it shall be] ill [with him],.... In time, and to eternity, in times of public calamity, and under all afflictions, and adverse dispensations of Providence; he has no God to go to; all that befalls him is in wrath; at death he is driven away in his wickedness; at judgment he will be bid to depart as cursed, and his portion will be in the lake of fire, with devils and damned spirits for ever. Some {l} render it, "woe to the wicked, evil"; or who is evil, who is exceedingly bad, a very great sinner, the chief of sinners, such as the Sodomites were, sinners before the Lord exceedingly, Ge 13:13 to whom these men are compared, **Isa 3:9**. So the Targum,

"woe to the ungodly, whose works are evil:"

the Jews, as they distinguish between a good man and a righteous man, so between a wicked man and an evil man; there are, say they {m}, a righteous good man, and a righteous man that is not good; but he that is good to God, and good to men, he is a righteous good man; he that is good to God, and not good to men, he is a righteous man, that is not good; and there are a wicked evil man, and a wicked man that is not evil; he that is evil to God, and evil to men, he is a wicked evil man; he that is evil to God, and not evil to men, he is a wicked man that is not evil. See **Ro 5:7**

for the reward of his hands shall be given him; in righteous judgment, in strict justice, as a just recompense of reward; nor shall he have reason to complain of unrighteousness in God.

{l} er evrl ywa "vae impio malo", Munster, Vatablus; so Ben Melech. {m} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 40. 1.

Isaiah 3:12

Ver. 12. [As for] my people, children [are] their oppressors,.... Or rulers; for vgwn, in the Ethiopic language, signifies a king: or "exactors", as in Isa 60:17 princes are so called, because they exact tribute of their subjects, and sometimes in a tyrannical and oppressive manner, and so get the name of oppressors. The sense is the same with **Isa 3:4**. The words may be rendered, "as for my people, everyone of their governors, is a child" {n}; not in age, but in understanding:

and women rule over them, or "over him" {o}; either over the people of Israel, as Alexandra before Hyrcanus, and Helena queen of the Adiabenes; or over the child their governor, as women had great influence over their husbands, the governors of Judea, in those times, as Herodias, Bernice, and Drusilla; or it may be understood of men, weak, effeminate, and given to pleasure:

O my people, they which lead thee: as the former may design their political governors, this their ecclesiastic rulers, who were to direct and lead them in the paths of religion and truth. Some render the words, "who praise thee", as the Targum; "or bless you", or "call you blessed", as the Septuagint and Arabic versions, though guilty of the most flagitious crimes:

cause [thee] to err, or wander from the way of God's commandments,

and destroy the way of the paths, by turning them out of the right way; by enjoining them the traditions of the elders; by taking away the key of knowledge from them, and not suffering them to go into the kingdom of heaven, or attend the ministry of the Gospel and ordinances; as did the Scribes and Pharisees, who were blind leaders of the blind.

{n} llwem wyvgn "exactorum ejus quisque parvulus est", Piscator. {o} wb "in eum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "in illum", Cocceius.

Isaiah 3:13

Ver. 13. The Lord standeth up to plead,.... His own cause, or the cause of his son against the Jews that rejected him, and the Scribes and Pharisees that led them to an ill opinion of him:

and standeth to judge the people. Both expressions show indignation and resentment; he rises up out of his place, and stands up in defence of his cause, and avenges himself on a wicked and ungrateful people: it seems to have reference to the judgments of God on the people of the Jews, the tribes of Israel.

Isaiah 3:14

Ver. 14. The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof,.... Both civil and ecclesiastical; the princes, chief priests, and elders of the people, who set themselves and took counsel together against the Lord and his Christ; would not suffer the people to be gathered to him; sought his life, and at last took it away.

For ye have eaten up the vineyard, or burnt it {p}; the house of Israel, and of Judah compared to a vineyard, in a following chapter; and so the Targum,

"ye have oppressed my people;"

these are the husbandmen our Lord speaks of, that beat the servants that were sent for the fruits of the vineyard, and at last killed the heir, Mt 21:34.

The spoil of the poor [is] in your houses; the Pharisees devoured widows' houses, and filled their own, with the spoil of them,
Mt 23:14.

{p} Mtreb "succendistis", Vatablus, Montanus.

Isaiah 3:15

Ver. 15. What mean ye, [that] ye beat my people to pieces,.... Reduce them to the utmost poverty; so the Targum,

"wherefore do ye impoverish my people?"

as they did by exacting tithes of all that they possessed; by requiring large sums for their long prayers; and by various traditions they enjoined them to observe:

and grind the faces of the poor? either by smiting them on the cheek, as Christ, who became poor for our sakes, was smitten by them; or by bringing them into such low circumstances, by their exorbitant demands, that they had not sufficiency of food to eat; by which means their faces became pale, thin, and meagre:

saith the Lord God of Hosts: who saw all their actions, and was able to plead his people's cause, and take vengeance on their oppressors.

Isaiah 3:16

Ver. 16. Moreover the Lord saith, because the daughters of Zion are haughty,.... The wives or daughters of the rulers, princes, or elders; these were "high", affected to look high and tall, and therefore stretched out their necks, and walked on tiptoes; or "were lifted up" with pride, which is the root and source of all the vanity expressed in their gesture and ornaments.

And walk with stretched forth necks or "throats"; looking high, and above others, and upon them with contempt and disdain; this is a sign of pride; see Ps 75:5:

and wanton eyes; either winking with their eyes to others to follow them to their houses, as Kimchi interprets it; so Jarchi thinks it is expressive of their looks, as we, of wanton looks; and the Septuagint render it, "with winking of eyes"; so the Syriac and Arabic versions, or painting their eyes; so the Targum,

"they walk with their eyes painted,"

as Jezebel painted her face, **2Ki 9:30** arqyo, in the Talmudic language, is used {q} for vermilion, or red lead, with which they painted their eyes, as they did also with adydu, {r} black lead.

Walking and mincing [as] they go: jumping and dancing as children in the streets; or using the like gesture as those who beat upon a drum; or walking in even paces, in a soft and delicate manner; all which senses Kimchi {s} observes in the word. The whole is rendered by the Septuagint, "and in the walk of their feet", or as they walk "together, drawing their coats" upon the ground after them, which makes a noise. The Targum is, "with hair rolled up", bound up and plaited.

And making a tinkling with their feet; having a sort of bells hanging on them, as Kimchi thinks, which made a noise as they went. Of the word here used, and the sense of it, See Gill on "Isa 3:18". The Targum renders it, "provoking with their feet"; either the lust of men; or the anger of the Lord, as the Syriac version; the Septuagint and Arabic versions, "playing with the feet".

{q} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 18. 1. Misn. Sabbat. c. 12. sect. 4. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {r} Targum on 2 Kings ix. 30. {s} Sepher Shorash. rad. Ppj.

Isaiah 3:17

Ver. 17. Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion,.... This is opposed to the lifting up of their heads in that haughty manner they did, and to the binding, and plaiting, and curling of their hair, which now will fall off, through the scab or leprosy upon them, or must be obliged to be shaven off.

And the Lord will discover their secret parts; the Vulgate Latin renders it, "their hair", which is their glory, 1Co 11:6. The Targum is, "and the Lord shall take away their glory". The Syriac and Arabic versions render it "their sex", that which distinguishes their sex; of which Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it; than which nothing could be more distressing and intolerable, being worse than baldness of the head, and yet common with captives; and the Septuagint render it "their habit": the meaning is, they shall be stripped of their fine apparel, and be clothed in rags, so that their nakedness shall be seen. An enumeration of the several particulars follows.

Isaiah 3:18

Ver. 18. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of [their] tinkling ornaments [about their feet],.... With which they made a tinkling as they went, **Isa 3:16** it being about the shoe, and made a noise; or seeing the word used signifies "stocks", and is so rendered **Pr 7:22**, it may design some sort of attire about the feet, as golden chains, as the Talmudists say {t}, which being fastened to both, directed their motion in walking, and prevented them taking too large steps: or rather these may intend some ornaments of the feet, used by the eastern nations; which, according to Golius, as related by De Dieu on the place, were plates of gold, one or two fingers broad, and sometimes four, which were put about the ankles of infants of rich families; not to make a tinkling, nor to direct their walk, but for ornament, and to distinguish them from the meaner sort. The Targum renders it, "the ornament of the shoes"; these were put about the place where the shoes were tied; and in the Talmud {u} the word is explained by hyyqydrwq, "shoes"; which the gloss interprets of wooden shoes: the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, are, "the ornament of their clothing"; as if this was the general name for the particulars that follow:

and [their] cauls: the attire of the head, of network: the word is used in the Misnah {v} for the ornament of cauls; which was, as one of their commentators {w} says, a picture made upon the caul for ornament; it was placed upon the forehead, and reached from ear to ear; and it was made by itself, so that it might be removed, and put upon another caul. Under these cauls they plaited their hair; hence the Septuagint render the word "the plaiting and the curls"; and to the same purpose the Syriac and Arabic versions.

And [their] round tires like the moon; these were not tires for the head, as our version suggests; much less were they clasps, buckles, or strings for the shoes, in the form of a half moon; such as were the "lunuloe" which the Roman senators had on their feet, to distinguish them from the common people; and were used by Evander and the Arcadians, to show that they sprung from the moon; which custom the noblemen of Rome followed; and some say {x} they put them under their feet, see Re 12:1 but these were ornaments wore about the necks, such as those which were found upon the necks of the kings of Midian, and even upon the necks of their camels, **Jud 8:21** where the same word is used as here; they were no other than bracelets, necklaces, or golden chains, in the form of the moon; and the word is in the Talmud {y} rendered hyyqnwe, "chains". See also footnote {z}.

{t} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 63. 2. Maimon. in Misn. Sabbat, c. 6. sect. 4. {u} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 8. 2. {v} Misn. Sabbat, c. 28. sect. 10. & Negaim, c. 11. sect. 11. {w} Bartenora in Misn. Sabbat, ib. {x} Vid. Scacch, Sacrer. Eleaochr. Myrothec. 1. c. 49. col. 248. {y} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 8. 2. {z} Vid. Bynaeus de Calceis Heb. l. 1. c. 9.

Isaiah 3:19

Ver. 19. The chains,.... According to Kimchi and R. Levi ben Gersom on **Jud 8:26** these were drop bottles, or vessels of gold, in which were put stacte or balsam; and the former says here, they were such in which balsam was put, and women hung about their necks; though, he observes, some interpret them of chains, which were made of small stones of bdellium; hence pure bdellium is called in the Arabic tongue
Pjnla; and so Jarchi renders the word "chains"; and they are called by this name, because they hang about the neck, and drop upon the breast, and are in the form of precious stones, bored and strung:

and the bracelets; hand bracelets, according to the Targum; such as Abraham's servant gave to Rebekah, Ge 24:22:

and the mufflers; these were veils which covered the whole face, excepting the eyes, the same that we call masks: it is said {a} of the Arabian women, that they went out twlwer; that is, as Bartenora explains it, they were veiled about the head, so that the whole face was covered, excepting their eyes; though Maimonides interprets them of little bells, which the Arabian women went out with; the Targum here explains the word by "women's veils"; though some think only the "spangles" which were on them are meant, so called from their trembling and shaking motion.

{a} Misn. Sabbat, c. 6. sect. 6.

Isaiah 3:20

Ver. 20. The bonnets,.... This word is used sometimes for the tire of the heads of men, Eze 24:17 and even for the bonnets of the priests, Ex 39:28. The Targum renders the word "crowns"; the Jewish women wore golden crowns on their heads, in the form of the city of Jerusalem, with which they might not go out on a sabbath day {b}:

and the ornaments of the legs; and so the Targum,

"the chains or bracelets of the feet;"

with which Jarchi and Kimchi agree; but the word is used for a bracelet on the arm in **2Sa 1:10** and Aben Ezra so interprets it here:

and the headbands: the, word is rendered "attire" in **Jer 2:32** according to

Jarchi, they were short binders with which the hair was bound up, and some of them were wrought with gold; but with Aben Ezra they were binders about the neck or throat:

and the tablets; in the Hebrew text, "the houses of the soul" {c}; and were, as Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi think, ornaments which women hung between their breasts on the heart, or over against it; they seem rather to be smelling bottles, as the Vulgate Latin version renders the words, which they carried in their bosoms to refresh the spirits, and fetch back the soul or breath when fainting and almost gone; the Targum renders it "earrings", by which we render the following:

and the earrings; so Jarchi and Kimchi, who suggest they are so called because the ear is the place where whispering and muttering is used, which this word has the signification of; but, according to Aben Ezra, they were writings written in gold, and silver, by way of enchantment or charm; and the Arabic version renders the word, "boxes of amulets" or "charms"; the word signifies enchantments, see Ps 58:5.

{b} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {c} vpnh ytb "domos animae", i.e. "olfactoriola", Cocceius; so V. L.

Isaiah 3:21

Ver. 21. The rings,.... On their finger, as Aben Ezra observes:

and nose jewels; the same with the jewels on the forehead or nose, Eze 16:12 not that they hung upon the nose, but were fastened upon the forehead, and hung down to the nose, see Ge 24:22; an allusion to this is in Pr 11:22 though Austin says it was a custom of the women of Mauritania to put jewels in their nose; and which is still kept in Persia, Arabia, and other countries, as travellers affirm.

Isaiah 3:22

Ver. 22. The changeable suits of apparel,.... To put on and off upon occasion; Kimchi says they were beautiful garments, and so they stand opposed to filthy ones, **Zec 3:3**

and the mantles: or "cloaks", as the Targum; Jarchi translates the word by "bedclothes", or coverings for the bed, such as tapestry, rugs, quilts, &c. which were worked with purple; hence the Septuagint makes use of words to express it by of such a signification:

and the wimples; according to Jarchi, these were "towels" or linen cloths, with which they wiped their hands; but, according to Kimchi, they were "veils" with which women covered themselves; and so the word is rendered in **Ru 3:15** and elsewhere {d} he observes, that some interpret it of "gloves"; some think "aprons" are meant: our English word "wimples" comes from the Dutch word "wimpel", a muffler, or plaited linen cloth, which nuns wear to cover their necks and breasts; the word is also used for a streamer or flag:

and the crisping pins: with which they used to part their hair, and curl their locks, and keep them so: according to Kimchi, they were "purses"; and such made of silk, and wrought with gold and silver, may very well be reckoned among the ornaments of women; and the word is rendered "bags" in **2Ki 5:23** some think needle cases are meant; the word by which the Targum explains it seems to design "hooks" or "clasps", with which women clasped their garments, that they might be kept close about them.

{d} In Sepher Shorash. rad. xpj.

Isaiah 3:23

Ver. 23. The glasses,.... Looking glasses, by which they dressed themselves, see Ex 38:8 and so Kimchi explains the word; but elsewhere {e} he says it signifies thin garments, so called because the flesh is seen through them, being so exceeding thin; which sense is favoured by the Septuagint version, which renders it by ta diafanh
lakwnika, garments which the Lacedemonians wore, which were so thin and transparent, that the naked body might be seen through them:

and the fine linen; of which several of their garments and ornaments were made, and particularly their veils, with which they veiled themselves, as Jarchi observes:

and the hoods; the word is used for a diadem and mitre, Isa 62:3 the Targum renders it "crowns"; and such the Jewish women wore, See Gill on "Isa 3:20" and particularly newly married women {f}:

and the veils; so the word is rendered in **So 5:7** with which women covered their heads, either through modesty, or as a token of subjection to their husbands, see Ge 24:65 but, according to the Targum and Kimchi, these were thin garments which women wore in summertime; Jarchi says they are the same which the French call "fermelan", and are of gold, which they put about the cloak the woman is covered with; perhaps they were a sort of umbrellas, to keep off the heat of the sun.

{e} Ib. (In Sepher Shorash.) rad. hlg. {f} Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 14.

Isaiah 3:24

Ver. 24. And it shall come to pass, [that] instead of sweet smell there shall be a stink,.... Instead of "spice", or in the place where they put spices, carried musk, or had their smelling bottles, of precious and aromatic ointment, balsam, and myrrh, and such like things {g}, namely, in their bosoms, there should be a "stink" or putrefaction, arising from ulcers and diseases of the body, Zec 14:12 the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it "dust"; or this may refer to the anointing of their hair with ointment of myrrh and other things, which gave an agreeable scent; but instead of this there would be a scab, giving an ill scent, **Isa 3:17**

and instead of a girdle a rent; such as is made in times of mourning and distress, or by the enemy. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, a "rope"; instead of fine curious girdles, wrought with gold and silver, they should have nothing but a rope about their loins. The Targum is,

"in the place where they bind the girdles, shall be marks of smiting;"

stripes, cuts, see Isa 10:34 as either by blows from the enemy, by whom they should be taken, or by the hand of God, being smitten with sores and ulcers, so that they should not be able to bear girdles upon them; or "holes", in their clothes or skin:

and instead of well set hair baldness; instead of plaited hair, and curled locks, kept in order, there would be scabs, ulcers, leprosy, or such diseases as would cause the hair to fall off, and leave a baldness. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "instead of the golden ornament of the head, thou shall have baldness for thy works"; and the Syriac version, "instead of gems, incisions":

and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; the word for a "stomacher" is only used in this place; according to Kimchi, it signifies a very broad girdle; but Aben Ezra says it was a thin garment embroidered, which was put over all the rest of the clothes; perhaps something like a "mantelet". The Septuagint version renders it, "instead of the garment worked with purple"; and so the Syriac version, "instead of their hyacinths, or purples"; and the Arabic version, "instead of thy silken garment thou shall be girt with sackcloth"; which was usually done in times of distress and mourning:

[and] burning instead of beauty; either through the scorching beams of the sun, being stripped of their hoods and veils; or rather this is to be understood of carbuncles, and such like hot burning ulcers in their faces, which once were beautiful, and they prided themselves in; though the Hebrew word yk seems rather to be a preposition than a noun; so Jarchi, whose note is,

"for this is fit to be unto them instead of beauty, with which they have prided themselves,"

or have lifted up themselves; and so in his gloss upon the Talmud {h}, where this clause, with the context, is cited and paraphrased,

"for all these things shall come unto thee instead of thy beauty;"

and this clause may be read in connection with the following, "because of beauty", or "instead of beauty, thy men shall fall", &c. and so the Targum,

"this vengeance shall be taken on them, because they have committed fornication in their beauty; thy beautiful men shall be killed by the sword."

The Syriac version is, "because their beauty shall be corrupted", and those versions which seem to have left out this clause, yet retain something of it in the beginning of the next verse **Isa 3:25**. The Vulgate Latin version is, "thy most beautiful men also shall fall by the sword". The Septuagint and Arabic versions begin it thus, "and thy beautiful son, whom thou lovest, shall fall by the sword".

{g} Misn. Sabbat, c. 6. sect. 3. {h} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 62. 2.

Isaiah 3:25

Ver. 25. Thy men shall fall by the sword,.... Of the Romans; which would be a punishment to the women for their pride and luxury, being deprived thereby of their husbands:

and thy mighty in the war; of Vespasian and Titus, and which the Jews {i} call ownyopoa lv owmlwp, "the war of Vespasian": in which great multitudes of men, even of mighty men, were slain.

{i} Misn. Sabbat, c. 6. sect. 3.

Isaiah 3:26

Ver. 26. And her gates shall lament and mourn,.... These being utterly destroyed; or there being none to pass through them, meaning the gates of the city of Jerusalem:

and she [being} desolate; clear of inhabitants, quite emptied, and exhausted of men; being laid even with the ground, and her children within her, Lu 19:44

shall sit upon the ground; being levelled with it, and not one stone cast upon another; alluding to the posture of mourners, **Job 2:13**. Our countryman, Mr. Gregory {k}, thinks that the device of the coin of the emperor Vespasian, in the reverse of it, upon taking Judea, which was a woman sitting on the ground, leaning back, to a palm tree, with this inscription, "Judea Capta", was contrived out of this prophecy; and that he was helped to it by Josephus, the Jew, then in his court. The whole prophecy had its accomplishment, not in the Babylonish captivity, as Jarchi suggests, much less in the times of Ahaz, as Kimchi and Abarbinal suppose, but in the times of Jerusalem's destruction by the Romans.

{k} Notes and Observations, &c, p. 26, 27.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 4

The "first" verse of this chapter **Isa 4:1** seems more properly to belong to the preceding chapter, which declares such a scarcity of men, through the destruction of them in war, there predicted, that there should be seven women to one man; who, contrary to their natural modesty, would make suit to him; and, contrary to custom, propose to provide their own food and raiment, only desiring to be called by his name. After which, **Isa 4:2**, follows a prophecy of Christ, who is described by his names, the branch of the Lord, and the fruit of the earth; and by proper epithets of him, as such, beautiful, glorious, excellent, and comely; and by the persons to whom he is so, the escaped of Israel, to whom various blessings are promised; as the sanctification of them, the source of which is their election, and the means of it the spirit of judgment and burning, **Isa 4:3** and the protection and preservation of them, by the Lord's creating, as for Israel of old, a cloud of smoke to rest upon them by day, and a shining of flaming fire by night, and by being himself a tabernacle to screen them from heat in the day, and a place of refuge to cover them from storm and rain, **Isa 4:5**.

Ver. 1. And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man,.... Not in the days of Ahaz, when Pekah, son of Remaliah, slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand men in one day, 2Ch 28:6 as Kimchi thinks; for though there was then such a destruction of men, yet at the same time two hundred thousand women, with sons and daughters, were carried captive by the Israelites, 2Ch 28:8 but in the days of Vespasian and Titus, and in the time of their wars with the Jews; in which were made such slaughters of men, that there were not enough left for every woman to have a husband; and therefore "seven", or a great many, sue to one man to marry them, contrary to their natural bashfulness. It is a tradition of the Jews, mentioned both by Jarchi and Kimchi, that Nebuchadnezzar ordered his army, that none of them should marry another man's wife; wherefore every woman sought to get a husband; but the time of this prophecy does not agree with it:

saying, we will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; which used to be provided for wives by their husbands, and that according to law, Ex 21:10 but rather than be without a husband, they promise, in order to engage him to marry them, to provide food and raiment for themselves, by their own labour. The Arabic version adds,

"neither in anything will we be troublesome:"

only let us be called by thy name; let us be married to thee, let us become thy wives; for upon marriage the woman was called by her husband's name:

to take away our reproach: of being unmarried, and having no offspring: or it may be rendered in the imperative, "take away our reproach" {l}; so the Targum, Septuagint, and Oriental versions. The words may be accommodated in a spiritual sense to some professors of religion, who lay hold on Christ in a professional way, but spend their money for that which is not bread, and live upon their own duties and services, and not on Christ, and wear their own rags of righteousness, and not his robe; only they desire to be called by the name of Christians, to take away the reproach of being reckoned Pagans or infidels.

{l} wntprx Poa "aufer probrum nostrum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "aufer ignominiam nostram", Cocceius.

Isaiah 4:2

Ver. 2. In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious,.... When the beauty of the Jewish women shall be taken away, and their men shall he slain; by whom is meant, not the righteous and wise men left among the Jews, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; nor Hezekiah; which is the sense of some, as the latter observes: but the Messiah, as Kimchi, and so the Targum, which paraphrases the words thus,

"at that time shall the Messiah of the Lord be for joy and glory;"

and the Septuagint understand it of a divine Person appearing on earth, rendering the words, "for in that day God shall shine in counsel with glory upon the earth"; and so the Arabic version. Christ is called "the branch", not as God, but as man, not as a son, but as a servant, as Mediator; and it chiefly regards his descent from David, and when his family was very mean and low; and a branch being but a tender thing, it denotes Christ's state of humiliation on earth, when he grew up as a tender plant before the Lord, and was contemptible in the eyes of men: and he is called the branch "of the Lord", because of his raising up, and bringing forth; see **Zec 3:8** and yet this branch became "beautiful", being laden with the fruits of divine grace, such as righteousness, reconciliation, peace, pardon, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life; as well as having all his people as branches growing on him, and receiving their life and fruitfulness from him: and "glorious", being the branch made strong to do the work of the Lord, by his obedience and death; and especially he became glorious when raised from the dead, when he ascended up to heaven, and was exalted there at the right hand of God; and when his Gospel was spread and his kingdom increased in the Gentile world, as it did, both before and after the destruction of Jerusalem, the time here referred to; and which will he in a more glorious condition in the last days; and now he is glorious in the eyes of all that believe in him, and is glorified by them; and when he comes a second time, he will appear in his own and his father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels.

And the fruit of the earth [shall] be excellent and comely; not the children of the righteous, as Jarchi; nor ydbe atyrwa, "the doers of the law", as the Targum; see **Ro 2:13** but the Messiah, as before, as Kimchi well observes; called "the fruit of the earth", to show that he is not a dry and withered, but a fruitful branch, and which should fill the earth with fruit; and because he sprung from the earth as man, and was the fruit of a woman, that was of the earth, earthly; and so this, as the former, denotes the meanness of Christ in human nature, while here on earth; and yet he became, as these words foretold be should, "excellent": he appeared to be excellent in his person as the Son of God, and to have a more excellent name and nature than the angels, and fairer than the sons of men; to be excellent as the cedars, and more excellent than the mountains of prey; to have obtained a more excellent ministry than Aaron and his sons; to be excellent in all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; and particularly in the fruits and blessings of grace, which grew upon him, and came from him; see De 33:13 "and comely", in his person, as God and man, in the perfections of his divine nature, and in the fulness of his grace; and so are his people, as considered in him, who are made perfectly comely, through the comeliness he puts upon them: and so he is

for them that are escaped of Israel; not beautiful and glorious; excellent and comely, in the view of all men, only them that believe, who have seen his glory, and have tasted that he is gracious; these are the remnant according to the election of grace, the preserved of Israel, the chosen of God, and precious, who were saved from that untoward generation, the Jews, and escaped the destruction of Jerusalem, and were saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.

Isaiah 4:3

Ver. 3. And it shall come to pass, [that he that is] left in Zion, and [he that] remaineth in Jerusalem,.... These are the persons to whom Christ appears beautiful and glorious, excellent and comely, who will be left, and remain in Zion and Jerusalem; by which is meant the Gospel church, or church as in the latter day; in which these shall continue, abide by the truths and doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances thereof, and persevere unto the end; even when Christ shall take his fan in his hand, and purge his floor of the chaff; when the filth of the daughter of Zion shall be washed away by the spirit of judgment and burning, as in the following verse **Isa 4:4**; when it shall be a shocking and shaking time in the churches, and the hour of temptation shall come, that shall try those that dwell upon earth; these shall be pillars in the temple of God, that shall never go out. The doctrine of the saints' final perseverance is held forth in these words, as their sanctification and election are in the following clauses, which secure it to them: they

shall be called holy: in the original text it is added, "unto him"; either the person left, it shall be said to him, that he is holy or rather the branch; and Kimchi interprets it, "because of him"; for these are accounted holy, through the imputation of the holiness of Christ unto them; and they are really and inherently holy, through the grace of Christ implanted in them; they are called to be holy, to be saints, and they are called with a holy calling, and unto holiness; and, in effectual calling, principles of grace and holiness are wrought in them, and which appear in their lives and conversations. The principal meaning seems to be, that those who shall hold fast their profession, and hold out, and persevere through the trying dispensation in the latter day, they shall be remarkably holy; they shall shine in the beauties of holiness; holiness shall be upon their horses' bells, and they themselves shall be holiness unto the Lord, Zec 14:20

[even] everyone that is written among the living in Jerusalem; or, "everyone that is written unto life" {m}, that is, unto eternal life, as the Targum paraphrases the words; and it is the same with being ordained unto eternal life, Ac 13:48 or predestination unto life, which is a writing of the names of God's elect in the book of life: this writing is God's writing, it is his act and deed, the act of God the Father, and an eternal one, flowing from his sovereign will and pleasure, and is sure, certain, and unfrustrable; what is written is written, and can never be altered; and election being signified by writing names in a book, shows it to be particular and personal, not of nations, churches, and bodies of men, but of particular persons; and that it is irrespective of faith, holiness, and good works, and entirely unconditional; it is of naked persons, and not as so and so qualified; and that it is distinguishing of some, and not others, whom

God has an exact knowledge of, and calls by name: and this writing is "unto life", or "lives", as in the original text; not to a temporal life, but to a spiritual and eternal one; in consequence of which, such become living, holy, and persevering Christians in Jerusalem, in the church of God, and shall be admitted into the New Jerusalem, and none else, Re 21:27 and so Jarchi interprets it, everyone that is written to the life of the world to come, or to eternal life, shall be in Jerusalem; and the Targum adds,

"and he shall see the consolation of Jerusalem;"

from hence it appears that election is the source and spring of holiness, and the security of the saints final perseverance, **Ro 8:30** and is not a licentious doctrine, but a doctrine according to godliness; holiness is a fruit and evidence of it; whoever are written or ordained to life become holy; and these being brought to Zion, remain there, and persevere unto the end.

{m} Myyxl bwtkh lk "quicunque fuerit scriptus ad vitam", Piscator; "omnis scriptus ad vitam", Cocceius.

Isaiah 4:4

Ver. 4. When {n} the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion,.... By Zion is meant the church of Christ in general, his mystical body, the general assembly and church of the firstborn, written in heaven, Heb 12:22 and by her "daughters" particular churches, that go by the name of Christian churches, who are called the reformed churches, being such as are separated from the church of Rome; among whom there is a great deal of "filth", and which will be removed in the latter times of the Gospel dispensation; by which are designed all false doctrines, such as are contrary to the deity and sonship of Christ, and the personality of the Holy Spirit; which derogate from the grace of God in election, justification, pardon, and salvation; which detract from the blood of Christ, and deny his imputed righteousness and satisfaction; and which exalt the power and free will of man, and tend to impurity and licentiousness; these will all be removed, and the true doctrine, which secures the glory of each divine Person, asserts the free grace of God, salvation by Christ, the operations of the Spirit, and influences and engages to holiness of life, will take place. This filth likewise includes all false worship; all ordinances and institutions of men; all corruptions in the ordinances of Christ, baptism, and the Lord's supper; all forms and modes of worship that are not of

God; all offices and officers, except bishops and deacons, which are of the man of sin; and all immorality and profaneness; and all wicked men, even all that offend and do iniquity, shall be taken out of Christ's kingdom and churches; there will be a thorough clearing of his floor of all filth, dirt, and chaff.

And shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof; that is, of the daughters of Jerusalem, particular churches, of which the Jerusalem above is the mother; for this is not to be understood literally of the city of Jerusalem, nor of the blood of Christ, and his servants, shed in it, purged away by the burning of it by the Romans; but of the bloodshed and persecution in Protestant churches; for a spirit of persecution has prevailed in some of them, but this shall be no more seen in the latter day; Christ's kingdom will be a peaceable kingdom, and of the peace of it there will be no end; as there will be no war in a civil sense, so neither in a religious sense; all animosities, disputes, and contentions, will cease; see **Isa 9:7** and much less will there be any effusion of blood on account of religion, nor any that shed it; as the Targum paraphrases the words,

"and they that shed innocent blood in Jerusalem shall be removed out of it:"

it is added,

by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning; the Targum is,

"by the word of judgment, and by the word of consummation or perfection;"

by the former is meant a judicious spirit, which the Lord will give to his churches and ministers; a set of ministers will be raised up, having the everlasting Gospel, which they shall freely, fully, and openly preach unto all men; by which means the churches will be cleared of all false doctrines; clear and distinct light will be given to all the preachers of the word; the watchmen shall see eye to eye; and all Zion's children be taught of God; and this shall be universal all the world over; there will be a discerning of spirits of men and doctrines, whether of God, or not; by which good doctrines will be distinguished from bad ones, and good men from the wicked; and this will be part of the judgment which will be given to the saints of the most High, and will proceed from the Spirit of God; who will be poured out in a plenteous manner to guide the churches into all truth, as it is in Jesus; and by the latter, "the spirit of burning", is meant a burning flaming zeal; a zeal according to knowledge, against all false doctrine and worship, and for the pure doctrine and worship of Christ; which will appear in Christian ministers and churches, and also in Christian magistrates, who will hate the whore, and burn her flesh with fire; and who will be stirred up by the preachers of the Gospel to pour out the plagues on the antichristian states, Re 15:6 and when the fire of God's word will burn up all the wood, hay, and stubble, which the day will declare; and then will be the trying winnowing time, and those that are left will be holy unto the Lord.

{n} Or, "for the Lord shall wash away"; so Noldius, in Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 88. No. 428. which gives a reason why he "that is left in Zion, &c shall be called holy"; because "the Lord", &c. so the Septuagint version, oti ekplunei; and Aben Ezra observes, that Ma, "if", is used for yk, "because."

Isaiah 4:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord will create on every dwelling place of Mount Zion,.... That is, on every particular church of Christ in Gospel times, and especially in the latter day; which are the dwelling places of Father, Son, and Spirit, and of believers in Christ. The word {o} used signifies a place well fitted up, and prepared, and established, and settled; and such will be the churches of Christ in the latter day glory; they will be fitly framed together and built up, a habitation for God, through the Spirit; they will be beautified, and made glorious, and will be established upon the top of the mountains, and be tabernacles that shall not be taken down, whose stakes and cords shall not be removed and broken, **Eph 2:21** and so will be sure dwellings, and quiet resting places; and happy will those be who will be the inhabitants of them, since they will have the best of company, the best of provisions, and all health and prosperity,
Isa 32:18:

and upon her assemblies; or "her convocations" {p}; in allusion to the holy convocations and solemn assemblies of the Israelites at their festivals, Le 23:2 which are the churches of Christ, as before, consisting of men called by the grace of God, with a holy calling; called to be saints, and so are an assembly of saints, Ps 89:7 called by means of the Gospel, as the Israelites were by the blowing of the trumpets, to assemble together, to hear the word, and attend every part of divine worship, Nu 10:2 and as the invisible church is called Zion, and the general assembly,
Heb 12:22 so particular visible churches are called assemblies,

Ec 12:11 and which will be very numerous in the latter day, and well attended.

A cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; alluding to the Lord's going before the children of Israel in the wilderness, in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; and to their being upon and covering the tabernacle, when it rested; and also to the cloud and smoke that were upon Mount Sinai, when the Lord was present there, Ex 13:20 and as a cloud was frequently a symbol of the divine Presence, both in the Old and in the New Testament, Ex 19:9 **1Ki 8:10** so it may here signify that the presence of God with his churches in the latter day will be very manifest and remarkable; he will be seen over them, and be the glory in the midst of them, **Zec 2:5** and it may also denote the gracious protection of the churches by Christ from all their enemies; as the cloud stood between the Israelites and the Egyptians, when they passed through the Red sea, and secured them from them, Ex 14:19 as well as a cloud, is refreshing and protecting from heat, as Christ then will be from heat of every kind. See Gill on "Isa 4:6". And as the pillar of fire was to give light to the children of Israel, and direct them in their passage through the wilderness in the night time; so Christ will be the light of his people, by the very great illuminations of his spirit, and the clear preaching of the Gospel, which will give both light and heat; and from both which will arise such a bright shining light, as shall drive away the night of affliction, darkness, desertion, and sleepiness, which shall precede this glorious day. See Isa 60:1 and this will be all the Lord's doing, a work of his almighty power, and therefore signified by a "creation"; it will be a new, strange, and marvellous work; wonderful in the eyes of the saints, and in the eyes of the world, that those who have been forsaken and hated should be made an eternal excellency, and the joy of many generations, Isa 60:15:

for upon all the glory [shall] he a defence; the glory of the churches in the latter day will greatly consist in the presence of God and Christ; in the pouring forth of the Spirit upon them; in the purity of Gospel doctrine, worship, and discipline among them; in the holiness of their lives and conversation; and in the peace, harmony, and unity, that shall subsist with them; and the defence of this glory will be partly the ministers of the Gospel, in the pure administration of the word and ordinances, as means, but principally the Lord himself, who will be a wall of fire about them, and will appoint salvation as walls and bulwarks to them, **Zec 2:5**.

{o} Nwkm a Nwk "paravit, disposuit". {p} hyarqm le "super convocationes ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius.

Isaiah 4:6

Ver. 6. And there shall be a tabernacle,.... Christ, who tabernacled in our nature, and is the minister of the true tabernacle, which God pitched, and not man; who will be spiritually present in the word and ordinances, where the shepherds pitch their tents; and who will be that to his people as shepherds' tents are to them, to which the allusion is:

for a shadow in the day time from the heat: from the heat of a fiery law, which works wrath; from the flaming sword of justice, which calls for vengeance; from the wrath of God, which is poured forth like fire; from Satan's temptations, compared to fiery darts; and from the violence of persecution; for there will be no more after the last struggle of the beast, and the slaying of the witnesses:

and for a place of refuge; until the indignation be over and past: as Christ is a refuge for sensible sinners to flee unto for safety, from avenging justice, and the wrath of God; so he is a place of security, and has his chambers of safety for saints, from all dangers, and from every enemy, Isa 26:20:

and for a covert from storm and from rain; from the blast of the terrible ones, the antichristian powers, which will be as a storm against a wall, Isa 25:4 this will be the hour of temptation, which will come upon and try them that dwell upon the earth, from which Christ will preserve his faithful ones, **Re 3:10**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 5

In this chapter, under the parable of a vineyard and its ruins, the Jews and their destruction are represented; the reasons of which are given, their manifold sins and transgressions, particularly enumerated, with the punishment threatened to them, and which is delivered in form of a song. The vineyard is described by the owner of it, a well beloved one; by the situation of it, in a fruitful hill; by the fence about it, and care and culture of it; and by its not answering the expectation of the owner, it bringing forth wild grapes instead of good ones, **Isa 5:1** wherefore the men of Judah and Jerusalem are made judges between the owner and his vineyard, what more could have been done to it, or rather what was now to be done to it, since this was the case; and the result is, that it should be utterly laid waste, and come to ruin; and the whole is applied to the house of Israel, and men of Judah, **Isa 5:3** whose sins, as the cause of their ruin, are mentioned in the following verses; their covetousness, with the punishment of it, **Isa 5:8** their intemperance, luxury, and love of pleasure, with the punishment threatened thereunto, **Isa 5:11** whereby haughty men should be humbled, the Lord be glorified, and at the same time his weak and innocent people would be taken care of, **Isa 5:15** next, other sins are taken notice of, and woes pronounced on account of them, as, an impudent course of sinning, insolent impiety against God, confusion of good and evil, conceit of their own wisdom, drunkenness, and perversion of justice, **Isa 5:18** wherefore for these things, and for their contempt and rejection of the law and word of the Lord, utter destruction is threatened them, **Isa 5:24** yea, the anger of God had been already kindled against them, and they had felt it in some instances, **Isa 5:25** but they are given to expect severer judgments, by means of foreign nations, that should be gathered against them; who are described by their swiftness, strength, and vigilance; by their armour, horses, and carriages; and by their terror and cruelty; the consequence of which would be utter darkness, distress, and calamities, in the land of Judea, **Isa 5:26**.

Ver. 1. Now will I sing to my well beloved,.... These are the words of the Prophet Isaiah, being about to represent the state and condition of the people of Israel by way of parable, which he calls a song, and which he determines to sing to his beloved, and calls upon himself to do it; by whom he means either God the Father, whom he loved with all his heart and soul; or Christ, who is often called the beloved of his people, especially in the book of Solomon's song; or else the people of Israel, whom the prophet had a great affection for, being his own people; but it seems best to understand it of God or Christ:

a song of my beloved; which was inspired by him, or related to him, and was made for his honour and glory; or "a song of my uncle" {q}, for another word is used here than what is in the preceding clause, and is rendered "uncle" elsewhere, see Le 25:49 and may design King Amaziah; for, according to tradition, Amoz, the father of Isaiah, was brother to Amaziah king of Judah, and so consequently Amaziah must be uncle to Isaiah; and this might be a song of his composing, or in which he was concerned, being king of Judah, the subject of this song, as follows:

touching his vineyard; not his uncle's, though it is true of him, but his well beloved's, God or Christ; the people of Israel, and house of Judah, are meant, comparable to a vineyard, as appears from **Isa 5:7** being separated and distinguished from the rest of the nations of the world, for the use, service, and glory of God.

My beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill; or, "in a horn, the son of oil" {r}; which designs the land of Israel, which was higher than other lands; and was, as some observe, in the form of a horn, longer than it was broad, and a very fruitful country, a land of olive oil, a land flowing with milk and honey, **De 8:7**. The Targum is,

"the prophet said, I will sing now to Israel, who is like unto a vineyard, the seed of Abraham, my beloved, a song of my beloved, concerning his vineyard. My people, my beloved Israel, I gave to them an inheritance in a high mountain, in a fat land."

{q} ydwd tryv "canticum patruelis mei", V. L. {r} Nmv Nb Nrqb "in cornu, filio olei", V. L.

Isaiah 5:2

Ver. 2. And he fenced it,.... With good and wholesome laws, which distinguished them, and kept them separate from other nations; also with his almighty power and providence; especially at the three yearly festivals, when all their males appeared before God at Jerusalem:

and gathered out the stones thereof; the Heathens, the seven nations that inhabited the land of Canaan, compared to stones for their hardness and stupidity, and for their worshipping of idols of stone; see Ps 80:8

and planted it with the choicest vine; the seed of Abraham, Joshua, and Caleb, who fully followed the Lord, and the people of Israel with them, who first entered into the land of Canaan, and inhabited it; such having fallen in the wilderness, who murmured and rebelled against God, **Jer 2:21**

and built a tower in the midst of it; in which watchmen stood to keep the vineyard, that nothing entered into it that might hurt it; this may be understood of the city of Jerusalem, or the fortress of Zion, or the temple; so Aben Ezra, the house of God on Mount Moriah; and the Targum,

"and I built my sanctuary in the midst of them:"

and also made a winepress therein; to tread the grapes in; this the Targum explains by the altar, paraphrasing the words,

"and also my altar I gave to make an atonement for their sins;"

so Aben Ezra; though Kimchi interprets it of the prophets, who taught the people the law, that their works might be good, and stirred them up and exhorted them to the performance of them.

And he looked that it should bring forth grapes; this "looking" and "expecting", here ascribed to God, is not to be taken properly, but figuratively, after the manner of men, for from such a well formed government, from such an excellent constitution, from a people enjoying such advantages, it might have been reasonably expected, according to a human and rational judgment of things, that the fruits of righteousness and holiness, at least of common justice and equity, would have been brought forth by them; which are meant by "grapes", the fruit of the vine, see **Isa 5:7**

and it brought forth wild grapes; bad grapes; corrupt, rotten, stinking ones, as the word {s} used signifies; these, by a transposition of letters, are in the Misnah {t} called Myvba, which word signifies a kind of bad grapes, and a small sort: evil works are meant by them, see **Isa 5:7** the Targum is,

"I commanded them to do good works before me, and they have done evil works."

{s} Myvab. The Septuagint render it "thorns". {t} Maaserot c. 1. sect. 2. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Isaiah 5:3

Ver. 3. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah,.... All and everyone of them, who were parties concerned in this matter, and are designed by the vineyard, for whom so much had been done, and so little fruit brought forth by them, or rather so much bad fruit:

judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard; between God and themselves; they are made judges in their own cause; the case was so clear and evident, that God is as it were willing the affair should be decided by their own judgment and verdict: so the Targum,

"judge now judgment between me and my people."

Isaiah 5:4

Ver. 4. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?.... Or "ought", as the Vulgate Latin: this is generally understood of good things done to it in time past; as what better culture could it have had? what greater privileges, blessings, and advantages, natural, civil, and religious, could have been bestowed on this people? what greater favour could have been shown them, or honour done them? or what of this kind remains to be done for them? they have had everything that could be desired, expected, or enjoyed: though it may be rendered, "what is further or hereafter to be done to my vineyard" {u}, and "I have not done in it?" that is, by way of punishment; I have reproved and chastised them, but all in vain; what remains further for me, and which I will do, because of their ingratitude and unfruitfulness? I will utterly destroy them as a nation and church; I will cause their civil and ecclesiastical state to cease. The sense may be gathered from the answer to the question in the following verse **Isa 5:5**,

wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? that is, why have these people acted so ill a part, when such and so many good things have been bestowed upon them; on account of which it might have been reasonably expected they would have behaved in another manner? or rather the words may be rendered, "why have I looked or expected {w} that it should bring forth grapes, seeing it brought forth wild grapes?" why have I been looking for good fruit, when nothing but bad fruit for so long a time has been produced? why have I endured with so much patience and longsuffering? I will bear with them no longer, as follows. The Targum is for the former sense,

"what good have I said to do more to my people, which I have not done to them? and what is this I have said, that they should do good works, and they have done evil works?"

{u} ymrkl dwe twvel hm "quid faciendum amplius fuit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "et quid ultra faciendum erat"; so some in Vatablus, Montanus. {w} ytywq ewdm "quare expectavi?" Cocceius.

Isaiah 5:5

Ver. 5. And now, go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard,.... Not by bestowing fresh favours upon them, but by inflicting punishment on them, for abusing what they had received; and this he told by John Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, what he determined to do; and what he was about to do to the Jewish nation, in the utter ruin of it, **Mt 3:12**.

I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; that is, the vineyard shall be eaten by the wild beasts that will enter into it, when the hedge is taken away; or "it shall be burnt"; that is, the hedge, being a hedge of thorns, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe; such there were about vineyards, besides the stone wall after mentioned:

[and] break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down; the vineyard, or the vines in it, see Ps 80:12 this is to be understood of the Lord's removing his presence, power, and protection from the Jewish nation, and leaving them naked, destitute, and helpless, and exposed to their enemies. The Targum is,

"and now I will declare to you what I will do to my people; I will cause my Shechinah, or Majesty, to remove from them, and they shall be for a spoil; and I will break down the house of their sanctuary, and they shall be for treading."

Isaiah 5:6

Ver. 6. And I will lay it waste,.... Or "desolate", as it was by the Romans: the whole land of Judea, as well as the city and temple
Mt 23:38,

it shall not be pruned nor digged; as vineyards are, to make them more fruitful; but no care shall be taken of it, no means made use of to cultivate it, all being ineffectual:

but there shall come up briers and thorns; sons of Belial, wicked and ungodly men; immoralities, errors, heresies, contentions, quarrels, &c. which abounded about the time of Jerusalem's destruction, and before:

I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon them; by "the clouds" are meant the apostles of Christ, who were full of the doctrines of grace, from whom they dropped as rain upon the mown grass; these, when the Jews contradicted and blasphemed the Gospel, and judged themselves unworthy of it, were commanded by Christ to turn from them, and go to the Gentiles, Ac 13:45 agreeably to this sense is the Targum,

"and I will command the prophets, that they do not prophesy upon them prophecy."

Isaiah 5:7

Ver. 7. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel,.... This is the explication of the parable, or the accommodation and application of it to the people of Israel, by whom are meant the ten tribes; they are signified by the vineyard, which belonged to the Lord of hosts, who had chosen them to be a peculiar people to him, and had separated them from all others:

and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; they were so when first planted by the Lord; they were plants of delight, in whom he took great delight and pleasure, De 10:15 these design the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, in distinction from Israel:

and he looked for judgment; that the poor, and the fatherless, and the widow, would have their causes judged in a righteous manner, and that justice and judgment would be executed in the land in all respects; for which such provision was made by the good and righteous laws that were given them:

but behold oppression; or a "scab", such as was in the plague of leprosy; corruption, perverting of justice, and oppressing of the poor: Jarchi interprets it a gathering of sin to sin, a heaping up iniquities:

for righteousness, but behold a cry; of the poor and oppressed, for want of justice done, and by reason of their oppressions. Here ends the song; what has been parabolically said is literally expressed in the following part of the chapter.

Isaiah 5:8

Ver. 8. Woe unto them that join house to house,.... Or "O ye that join", &c.;

for, as Aben Ezra observes, it signifies calling, as in
Isa 55:1 though Jarchi takes it to be expressive of crying and groaning, on account of future punishments; and he observes, that as there are twenty two blessings pronounced in the book of Psalms, on those that keep the law, so there are twenty two woes pronounced by Isaiah upon the wicked:

[that] lay field to field; the sin of covetousness is exposed and condemned in these words; not that it is unlawful in itself for a man that has a house or field of his own to purchase another that is next unto it; but when he is insatiable, and not content with his houses and lands, but is always coveting more, this is his sin, and especially if he seeks to get them by fraud or force:

till [there] be no place; for others to dwell in and possess; and so the Targum,

"and say, until we possess every place;"

or "unto the end of the place" {x}, city, or field; till they have got all the houses in the town or city, and all the pieces of ground in the field, in their own possession:

that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth, or land; that is, of Judea; wholly inhabit it themselves, and have the sole power and jurisdiction over it. It is in the Hebrew text {y} "that ye may be placed", &c.; the Targum is,

"and they think they shall dwell alone in the midst of the land."

{x} Mwqm opa de "usque ad terminum loci", V. L. {y} Mtbvwhw "constituamini", Vatablus, Forerius, Montanus; "colloeemini", Calvin.

Isaiah 5:9

Ver. 9. In mine ears, [said] the Lord of hosts,.... This may be understood either of the ears of the Lord of hosts, into which came the cry of the sins of covetousness and ambition before mentioned; these were taken notice of by the Lord, and he was determined to punish them; or of the ears of the prophet, in whose hearing the Lord said what follows: so the Targum,

"the prophet said, with mine ears I have heard, when this was decreed from before the Lord of hosts:"

of a truth many houses shall be desolate; or "great" ones {z}; such as the houses of the king, of the princes, and nobles, judges, counsellors, and great men of the earth; not only the house of God, the temple, but a multitude of houses in Jerusalem and elsewhere; which was true not only at the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, but at the destruction of it by the Romans, to which this prophecy belongs,
Mt 23:38 the words are a strong asseveration, and in the form of an oath, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe; al Ma, "if not"; if many houses are not left desolate, let it be so or so, I swear they shall:

[even] great and fair, without inhabitants: houses of large and beautiful building shall be laid in such a ruinous condition, that they will not be fit for any to dwell in, nor shall any dwell in them: and this is the judgment upon them for joining house to house; that for laying field to field follows.

{z} Mybr Mytb "domus magnificae, sive sumptuosae", Vatablus.

Isaiah 5:10

Ver. 10. Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath,.... They shall get nothing by laying field to field, for their fields shall be barren and unfruitful; though Jarchi and Kimchi take this to be a reason why their houses should be desolate, and without inhabitants, because there would be a famine, rendering the words, "for ten acres", &c. The Targum makes this barrenness to be the punishment of their sin, in not paying tithes; paraphrasing the words thus,

"for because of the sin of not giving tithes, the place of ten acres of vineyard shall produce one bath."

The word ydmu signifies "yokes", and is used of yokes of oxen; hence the Septuagint and Arabic versions render the words thus, "for where ten yoke of oxen work", or "plough, it shall make one flagon"; and so Kimchi explains them, the place in a vineyard, which ten yoke of oxen plough in one day, shall yield no more wine than one bath. A bath is a measure for liquids; according to Godwin {a}, it held four gallons and a half; a small quantity indeed, to be produced out of ten acres of ground; an acre, according to our English measure, being a quantity of land containing four square roods, or one hundred sixty square poles or perches:

and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah: that is, as much seed as an "homer" would hold, which was a dry measure, and which, according to the above writer, contained five bushels and five gallons, should yield only an ephah, which was the tenth part of an homer,
Eze 45:11 so that it would only produce a tenth part of the seed sown.

{a} Moses and Aaron, l. 6. c. 9.

Isaiah 5:11

Ver. 11. Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning,.... To rise up early in the morning is healthful, and to rise to do business is commendable; but to spend the day in drunkenness and intemperance is very criminal, which is here meant:

[that] they may follow, strong drink; not only drink it, but follow on to drink; diligently seek after it, where the best is to be had; go from house to house till they have found it; closely follow the drinking of it, till inebriated with it:

that continue until night; at their pots, with their drinking companions, even all the day till night comes, the twilight either of the evening or of the morning:

[till] wine inflame them; their bodies with heat, and their souls with lust.

Isaiah 5:12

Ver. 12. And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe,.... Instruments of music; some struck with a bow or quill, or touched with the fingers; and others blown with the mouth:

and wine are in their feasts; so that they lived jovially and merrily, like sons of Bacchus, more than like the people of God:

but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands; meaning not the law, as the Targum and Kimchi, which was the work of the Lord, and the writing of his hands; rather, as Aben Ezra, the punishment inflicted on the ten tribes being carried into captivity; or else the works of creation and providence, and the daily mercies of life; or, best of all, the great work of redemption by Christ, and the conversion of sinners, both among Jews and Gentiles, by the preaching of his Gospel; for this refers to the Jews in the times of Christ and his apostles, which immediately preceded their utter destruction; and those sins here mentioned were the cause of it. See Ps 28:5.

Isaiah 5:13

Ver. 13. Therefore my people are gone into captivity,.... Or rather, as Kimchi explains it, "shall go into captivity"; the past for the future; for this cannot be understood even of the captivity of the ten tribes, for they were not carried captive until the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign, 2Ki 17:6 whereas this prophecy was delivered out many years before, even in the time of Uzziah, as is manifest from the following chapter, **Isa 6:1** and much less it cannot design the captivity of Judah, but respects the captivity by the Romans, in future time.

Because [they have] no knowledge; of the work of the Lord, and the operations of his hands; the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "because they knew not the Lord", the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, the true Messiah; they knew not his person, office, grace, and Gospel; they did not own and acknowledge him, but despised and rejected him; their ignorance was affected and voluntary; they had the means of knowledge, but did not make use of them; they would not know him, they would not attend to the strong and clear evidence of his being the Messiah, which prophecies, miracles, and his doctrines, gave of him; the things belonging to their peace they knew not, these were righteously hid from them, and hence destruction came upon them, Lu 19:42 the words may be rendered in connection with the former, "therefore my people shall go into captivity without knowledge" {b}, unawares, unthought of, and unexpected; and the Jews, to the last; did not think their city would be taken, but that in some way of other salvation and deliverance would be wrought for them:

and their honourable men [are] famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst; or "shall be"; this is expressive of a famine of bread and water, which all, both high and low, prince and people, should be affected with; see **Isa 3:1** and was true not only when Jerusalem was besieged by the Chaldeans, Jer 52:6 **Jer 5:10** but when it was besieged by the Romans, in which the rich suffered as well as the poor; and was so great, that even women ate their own children, as Josephus {c} relates: this is threatened as a punishment of their rioting and drunkenness, **Isa 5:11**.

{b} ted ylbm yme hlg Nkl "idcirco exsulat populus meus absque scientia", Cocceius; so Montanus. {c} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 10. sect. 2. 3. & 12. 3. & 6. 3, sect. 3.

Isaiah 5:14

Ver. 14. Therefore hell hath enlarged herself,.... That is, the grave, to receive the dead which die with famine and thirst; signifying that the number of the dead would be so great, that the common burying places would not be sufficient to hold them; but additions must be made to them; or some vast prodigious pit must be dug, capable of receiving them; like Tophet, deep and large: or "hath enlarged her soul" {d}; her desire after the dead, see **Hab 2:5** being insatiable, and one of those things which are never satisfied, or have enough,
Pr 30:15 wherefore it follows:

and opened her mouth without measure; immensely wide; there being no boundary to its desires, nor any end of its cravings, or of filling it. And so the Targum renders it, "without end". Moreover, by "hell" may be meant the miserable estate and condition of the Jews upon the destruction of Jerusalem, when they were in the utmost distress and misery, See Gill on "Lu 16:23".

And their glory; their glorious ones, their nobles, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and the Targum, their princes, rulers, civil and ecclesiastical; which were the glory of the nation:

and their multitude; meaning the common people; or rather their great and honourable ones, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render the word; and in which sense it may be used in the preceding verse **Isa 5:13**; since not of the poor, but of the rich, the context speaks; even of such who indulged themselves in luxury and pleasure:

and their pomp; the Septuagint version, "their rich ones"; such who live in pomp and splendour: but the word {e} signifies noise and tumult; and so the Targum renders it; and it designs noisy and tumultuous ones, who sing and roar, halloo and make a noise at feasts; and who may be called Nwav ynb, "sons of tumult", or "tumultuous ones"; Jer 48:45 wherefore it follows:

and he that rejoiceth, that is, at their feasts, shall descend into it; into hell, or the grave: or, "he that rejoiceth in it", that is, in the land or city; so the Targum,

"he that is strong among them;"

so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it.

{d} hvpn hbyxrh "dilatavit suam animam", V. L. Munster, Montanus, Cocceius. {e} hnwavw "et strepitus ejus", Montanus, Forerius.

Isaiah 5:15

Ver. 15. And the mean man shall be brought down,.... To hell, or the grave, as well as the rich and noble:

and the mighty man shall be humbled; laid low in the dust, and be equal to the poor; for, in the grave, princes and peasants are alike; or they shall be all alike, in the same low and miserable condition:

and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled; when famine and distress, ruin and misery, come upon them, then shall the pride of those be abased, as it was; who boasted of their riches and honour, of their descent and parentage, as the children of Abraham, and as being free men, and never in bondage; of their righteousness and good works; not submitting to the righteousness of Christ; but despising it, and looking with disdain upon, and treating with contempt, such as they thought less holy than themselves. The Scribes and Pharisees, the members of the sanhedrim, and rulers of the people, together with the whole body of the nation, are meant; who were all of the same cast and complexion, being conceited of themselves, and proud boasters.

Isaiah 5:16

Ver. 16. But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment,.... By the "Lord of hosts" is meant Christ, the Lord of the armies, and of the inhabitants of the earth, of angels, and of men; who, though in our nature, in his state of humiliation, was brought very low, yet is now highly exalted; and which exaltation of his is seen and known, as it is here foretold it should be, by his judgments inflicted on the Jewish nation, for their contempt and rejection of him; see **Ps 9:16** so Kimchi interprets judgment of the judgment which the Lord would inflict on the ungodly of Israel: thus Christ's exaltation is seen in their humiliation, and his kingdom and power in their destruction:

and God that is holy; Christ is truly and properly God, God over all, blessed for ever; and he is holy, both as God and man; as God he is essentially and perfectly holy; and, as man, without sin original or actual; he is the Holy One of God, and the Holy One of Israel; and of him it is said, he

shall be sanctified in righteousness, or be declared to be holy; by the obedience and righteousness of his life, wrought out for his people, whereby he becomes their sanctification and righteousness; and by his justice, in punishing his and his people's enemies. Were all this to be understood of Jehovah the Father, it might very well be interpreted, as it is by Cocceius, of his being exalted and honoured by the condemnation of sin in the flesh of Christ; and of his being "glorified", as the Arabic version renders it, by the obedience and righteousness of his son, whereby his justice is satisfied, and his law magnified, and made honourable; and by the faith of his people, laying hold on that righteousness, and receiving it to the glory of God; in all which the purity, holiness, and justice of God appears.

Isaiah 5:17

Ver. 17. Then shall the lambs feed after their manner,.... That is, the people of God, the disciples of Christ, either apostles and ministers of the Gospel, whom he sent forth as lambs among wolves,
Lu 10:3 who fed the flock of Christ after their usual manner, and as directed by him; even with knowledge and understanding, by the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances; or the people of God fed by them, who are comparable to lambs for their harmlessness and innocence; and who feed in green pastures, "according as they are led"; as the word used may be rendered {f}; or "according to their word"; the doctrine of the ministers of the Gospel, by whom they are instructed and directed to feed on Christ, as he is held forth in the word and ordinances. The Targum is,

"and the righteous shall be fed as is said of them;"

and so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of the righteous:

and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat; that is, the Gentiles, who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise; the other sheep that were not of the Jewish fold, **Eph 2:12** these shall come in the room of the fat ones of the land of Judea, the rulers, elders, Scribes, and Pharisees; and feed on those pastures which were despised and left desolate by them; enjoy the Gospel they put away from them, and the ordinances of it, which they rejected. The Targum is,

"and they shall be multiplied, and the substance of the ungodly shall the righteous possess."

{f} Mrbdk "juxta ductum suum", Montanus, Vatablus; "juxta verbum ipsorum", Forerius.

Isaiah 5:18

Ver. 18. Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity,.... The prophet returns to the wicked again, and goes on with the account of their sin and punishment; and here describes such, not that are drawn into sin unawares, through the prevalence of their own hearts' lusts and corruptions, through the temptations of Satan, the snares of the world, or the persuasions of others; but such who draw it to themselves, seek after it, and willingly commit it; who rush and force themselves into it; who solicit it, and seek and take all occasions and opportunities of doing it; and take a great deal of pains about it; and make use of all arguments, reasonings, and pretences they can devise, to engage themselves and others in the practice of it; which are all cords of vanity, fallacious and deceitful.

And sin as it were with a cart rope; using all diligence, wisdom, policy, and strength; labouring with all might and main to effect it. Some by "iniquity" and "sin" understand punishment, as the words used sometimes signify; and that the sense is, that such persons described by their boldness and impudence in sinning, by their impenitence and hardness of heart, and by adding sin to sin, draw upon themselves swift destruction, and the greater damnation. The Targum interprets it of such that begin with lesser sins, and increase to more ungodliness; paraphrasing it thus,

"woe to them that begin to sin a little, and they go on and increase until that they are strong, and "their" sins "are" as a cart rope;"

to which agrees that saying in the Talmud {g},

"the evil imagination or corruption of nature at first is like a spider's thread, but at last it is like to cart ropes; as it is said, "woe to them that draw iniquity", &c."

{g} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 52. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 2. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 22. fol. 19. 2.

Isaiah 5:19

Ver. 19. That say, let him make speed, [and] hasten his work,.... Either the punishment of their sins, threatened by the prophets; which, because not speedily and immediately executed, therefore they did not believe it ever would; and in a daring and insolent manner call upon God to inflict it:

that we may see [it], or feel it; for, as for words or threatenings, they regarded them not; thus deriding God and his judgments, and disbelieving both, like the mockers in the last days, described in **2Pe 3:3** and, in contempt of him, do not so much as mention his name; though the Syriac version expresses the word "Lord", and the Arabic version "God": or rather the great work of redemption and salvation by the Messiah; for, as they did not believe Jesus to be the Messiah, so they ridiculed and despised salvation by him, mocking him as a Saviour, and calling upon him, in a sarcastic way, to hasten and do his work he pretended to come about; see Mt 27:42 for to the Jews in Christ's time this prophecy belongs. The Targum interprets it, "his miracle"; the Jews were always for signs and miracles; they sought them of Jesus of Nazareth; they urged the doing of them; they were very solicitous and importunate, and in haste to have them done, that they might see and believe, as they pretended; and expressed themselves in almost the same words as here; "what sign shewest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? what dost thou work?" **Joh 6:30** this is an instance of their drawing iniquity and sin in the manner before complained of:

and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know [it]! not that they believed him to be the Holy One of Israel, but because the prophet had made mention of this title, **Isa 1:4** as he often does in this prophecy afterwards, and applies it to the Redeemer; therefore they use it: so the Jews put an "if" upon Christ being the King of Israel, Mt 27:42 wherefore, in a daring, jeering, and ironic manner, urge that what is said to be in the purposes and decrees of God, or what was agreed upon between him and the Messiah, who said he was the son of God, in the council and covenant of grace and peace, as pretended, might speedily come to pass; all which expresses their blasphemy, impiety, and unbelief; and shows that they did not believe, but derided any counsel or decree of God, respecting spiritual and eternal salvation by the Messiah, especially by Jesus of Nazareth: or the conversion of the Gentiles, or the spread of the Gospel, and the enlargement of the kingdom and interest of Christ in the world, are meant, Kimchi, on the text, owns that these words belong to the Jews in the present day, and makes this confession,

"it appears that our prophets said the truth for now we believe not."

Isaiah 5:20

Ver. 20. Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil,.... That call evil actions good, and good actions evil; that excuse the one, and reproach the other; or that call evil men good, and good men evil; to which the Targum agrees. Some understand this of false prophets rejecting the true worship of God, and recommending false worship; others of wicked judges, pronouncing the causes of bad men good, and of good men evil; others of sensualists, that speak in praise of drunkenness, gluttony, and all carnal pleasures, and fleshly lusts, and treat with contempt fear, worship, and service of God. It may very well be applied to the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time, who preferred the evil traditions of their elders, both to the law of God, that is holy, just, and good, and to the Gospel, the good word of God, preached by John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles, and to the ordinances of the Gospel dispensation:

that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; for calling good evil, and evil good, is all one as putting these things one for another; there being as great a difference between good and evil, as between light and darkness, sweet and bitter; and it suggests, as if the perversion of these things was not merely through ignorance and mistake, but purposely and wilfully against light and knowledge; so the Jews acted when they preferred the darkness of their rites and ceremonies, and human traditions, before the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ; which showed they loved darkness rather than light, **Joh 3:19** and chose that which would be bitter to them in the end, than the sweet doctrines of the grace of God; the bitter root of error, rather than the words of Christ's mouth, which are sweeter than the honey, or the honeycomb. The Targum is,

"woe to them that say to the wicked who prosper in this world, ye are good; and say to the meek, ye are wicked: when light cometh to the righteous, shall it not be dark with the wicked? and sweet shall be the words of the law to them that do them; but bitterness (some read "rebellion") shall come to the wicked; and they shall know, that in the end sin is bitter to them that commit it."

Abarbinel interprets this of the ten tribes preferring the worship at Dan and Bethel, before that at Jerusalem.

Isaiah 5:21

Ver. 21. Woe unto [therm that are] wise in their own eyes,.... And yet betray such stupidity and sottishness, as to call things by their wrong names; and make such a perverse judgment of them, as before described. This is a true description of the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time; who said, "dost thou teach us? are we blind also?" **Joh 9:34**

and prudent in their own sight; being wise above what was written; leaving the word of God, and following the traditions of the elders.

Isaiah 5:22

Ver. 22. Woe unto [them that are] mighty to drink wine,.... That can bear a great deal, and not be overcome and intoxicated with it; that try their strength this way with others, and get the mastery and glory in it: not mighty to fight their enemies, as Kimchi observes, and defend their country, but to drink wine; by which their strength was weakened: wherefore some think soldiers are particularly designed, given to drinking, who are derided and mocked, as being valiant in the warfare of Bacchus, and not of Mars:

and men of strength, to mingle strong drink; in the cup, and then drink it: or "men of war"; the same with "mighty" before. The Targum interprets it, "men of riches": who can afford to drink wine and strong drink; which carries the sense not to the strength of their bodies, but of their purses: the former sense seems best. The Scribes and Pharisees loved the cup and the platter, and to be at feasts, and to have the uppermost seats there, Mt 23:6 and that those that sat in Moses's chair are intended appears from the following words.

Isaiah 5:23

Ver. 23. Which justify the wicked for reward,.... This is either spoken of judges, and civil magistrates, who gave the cause in favour of the wicked, that bribed them, contrary to law, De 16:19 or rather of the Scribes and Pharisees, who pronounced the wicked righteous men, provided they kept the traditions of the elders, and paid tithes of all they possessed, and gave them money for their long prayers, Mt 23:14:

and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him; by condemning them as unrighteous persons: so the Jews did Christ and his apostles; they pronounced them wicked, and condemned them to death; and as much as in them lay took away their righteousness from them, by taking away their character from them as righteous persons among men; though their righteousness itself could not be taken away, it being an everlasting one.

Isaiah 5:24

Ver. 24. Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble,.... Or "tongue of fire" {h}; meaning the flame, the same as in the next clause; because it is in the form of a tongue; see **Ac 2:3**:

and the flame consumeth the chaff; which is done easily, speedily, and entirely; the metaphors denote that their destruction would be easy, swift, sudden, irresistible, and irrecoverable. Reference may be had to the burning of Jerusalem, literally understood:

[so] their root shall be rottenness; and so utterly perish; meaning their fathers, as Aben Ezra and Abarbinel think; or their chief and principal men, before mentioned; or their riches and substance, and whatever they gloried of, or trusted in; see **Mt 3:10**:

and their blossom shall go up as dust; before the wind; either their children, or whatever was excellent or valuable with them; so Jarchi interprets it of their grandeur, pomp, and glory; it seems to express an utter destruction of them, root and branch, as in **Mal 4:1**:

because they have cast away the law of the Lord; or doctrine of the Lord; that is, the Gospel; which the Jews blasphemed, contradicted, and put away from them, and judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life: the preaching of a crucified Christ, and salvation by him, and justification by his righteousness, were a stumbling block to them: this is to be understood not of the law of works, but of the law or doctrine of faith:

and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel; meaning either the same as before; expressing their great contempt of the Gospel, and the reason why they rejected it, because they loathed, abhorred, and despised it: or else Christ, the essential Word of God; so the Targum,

"they rejected the Word, the Holy One of Israel;"

as the Messiah, and received him not; and this their rejection of him, and ill treatment of his Gospel and ministers, were the cause of the burning of Jerusalem, and of their utter ruin and destruction,
Mt 22:4.

{h} va Nwvl "lingua ignis", Vatablus.

Isaiah 5:25

Ver. 25. Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people,.... His professing people; which character, as it aggravated their sin in rejecting and despising the word of the Lord, so it increased his anger and indignation against them:

and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them; which some understand of past judgments and afflictions upon them, under Joash, Amaziah, and Ahaz; and others of future ones, under Shalmaneser and Nebuchadnezzar:

and the hills did tremble; which Jarchi interprets of their kings and princes; or it may be only a figurative expression, setting forth the awfulness of the dispensation:

and their carcasses [were] torn in the midst of the streets. The Targum renders it, "were as dung"; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; being slain there, and lying unburied, were trampled upon, and trodden down like "clay", as the Syriac version; or like the mire of the streets.

For all this his anger is not turned away; this being abundantly less than their sins deserved; which shows how great were their sins, and how much the Lord was provoked to anger by them:

but his hand [is] stretched out still; to inflict yet sorer judgments. The Targum is

"by all this they turn not from their sins, that his fury may turn from them; but their rebellion grows stronger, and his stroke is again to take vengeance on them;"

which expresses their impenitence and hardness of heart, under the judgments of God, which caused him to take more severe methods with them.

Isaiah 5:26

Ver. 26. And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far,.... Not to the Chaldeans or Babylonians, for they were not nations, but one nation, and were a people near; but to the Romans, who consisted of many nations, and were afar off, and extended their empire to the ends of the earth; these, by one providence or another, were stirred up to make an expedition into the land of Judea, and besiege Jerusalem: and this lifting up of an ensign is not, as sometimes, for the gathering and enlisting of soldiers, or to prepare them for the battle, or to give them the signal when to begin the fight; but as a direction to decamp and proceed on a journey, on some expedition:

and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth, or "to him" {i}; the king, or general of them, wherever he is, even though at the end of the earth: and the phrase denotes the secret and powerful influence of divine Providence, in moving upon the hearts of the Romans, and their general, to enter upon such a design against the Jews; and which was as easily done as for one man to hiss or call to another; or as for a shepherd to whistle for his sheep; to which the allusion seems to be; the Lord having the hearts of all in his hands, and can turn them as he pleases, to do his will:

and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly; or "he shall come"; the king with his army; and so the Targum paraphrases it;

"and behold, a king with his army shall come swiftly, as light clouds;"

this shows the swift and sudden destruction that should come upon the Jews; and is an answer to their scoffs, **Isa 5:19**.

{i} wl "ei", Vatablus; Montanus; "illi", Cocceius; "ad se", Junius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 5:27

Ver. 27. None shall be weary nor stumble among them,.... Though they should come from far, and make long marches, yet none should be weary by the way, but go on with great cheerfulness and strength; and though they should make such haste, they should not stumble at any thing by the way, nor rush one against another, but proceed with great order in their several ranks:

none shall slumber nor sleep; day nor night, in any fixed stated times, as men usually do:

neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed; with which they should be girded both for strength and greater expedition; this they should not unloose, in order to lie down and take sleep:

nor the latchet of their shoes be broken, which might hinder their journey; they never plucked off their shoes: all the expressions show their indefatigableness, diligence, intenseness, and resolution, and the good order observed by them; see **Joe 2:7**.

Isaiah 5:28

Ver. 28. Whose arrows [are] sharp, and all their bows bent,.... Ready to shoot their arrows upon any occasion; and which being sharp, penetrated deep, and were deadly. This includes all kind of warlike instruments, with which they should come furnished, and ready prepared to do execution:

their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint; by those who rode upon them; who knowing how strong and firm they were, and that they were not worn out, nor hurt by the length of the way they came, would not spare to make haste upon them:

and their wheels like a whirlwind; that is, the wheels of their chariots, they used in battle, as Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it: this metaphor denotes both the swiftness with which they should come, and the noise and rattling they should make, and the power and force in bearing down all before them. The Targum is,

"and his wheels swift as a tempest."

Isaiah 5:29

Ver. 29. Their roaring [shall be] like a lion,.... When engaged in war, just seizing on their prey. The phrase denotes their fierceness and cruelty, and the horror they should inject into the hearts of their enemies:

they shall roar like young lions; that are hungry, and almost famished, and in sight of their prey; see **Job 4:10**:

yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey; seize it with great noise and greediness:

and shall carry [it] away safe; into their own den, the country from whence they come:

and none shall deliver [it]; this shows that respect is had; not to the Babylonish captivity, from whence there was a deliverance in a few years; but the Roman captivity, from thence there is no deliverance as yet to this day.

Isaiah 5:30

Ver. 30. And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea,.... That is, the Romans against the Jews; whose attacks upon them should be with so much fierceness and power, that it should be like the roaring of the sea, which is very dreadful, and threatens with utter destruction; the roaring of the sea and its waves is mentioned among the signs preceding Jerusalem's destruction by the Romans, Lu 21:25:

and if [one] look unto the land: the land of Judea, when wasted by the Romans, or while those wars continued between them and the Jews; or "into it" {k}

behold darkness; great affliction and tribulation being signified by darkness and dimness; see **Isa 8:21**

[and] sorrow or "distress", great straits and calamities:

[and], or "even",

the light is darkened in the heavens thereof; in their civil and church state, the kingdom being removed from the one, and the priesthood from the other; and their principal men in both, signified by the darkness of the sun, moon, and stars. Mt 24:29.

{k} Ural "in terram", Montanus, Piscator; "in hanc terram", Junius & Tremellius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 6

This chapter contains a vision of the glory and majesty of Christ, the mission and commission of the prophet, and the destruction of the Jews. In the vision may be observed the time of it, and the object seen; who is described by the throne on which he sat, **Isa 6:1** and by his ministers about him; and these, by their name, by their situation, by their wings and the use of them, and by their employment, **Isa 6:2** and by the effects their crying to one another had upon the place where they were, **Isa 6:4** and next follows the effect the whole vision had on the prophet, which threw him into great distress of mind; and the relief he had by one of the seraphim, and the manner of it, **Isa 6:6** upon which a question being put, concerning sending some person, the prophet makes answer, expressing his readiness to go, **Isa 6:8** when a commission is given him, and the message he is sent with is declared, **Isa 6:9** whereupon he asks how long it would be the case of the Jews mentioned in the message he was sent with; and he is told it would continue until the utter destruction of them, **Isa 6:11** and yet, for the comfort of him and other saints, it is intimated that there would be a remnant among them, according to the election of grace, **Isa 6:13**.

Ver. 1. In the year that King Uzziah died,.... Which was the fifty second year of his reign, and in the year 3246 from the creation of the world; and, according to Jerom {l}, was the year in which Romulus, the founder of the Roman empire, was born: some understand this not of his proper death, but of his being stricken with leprosy, upon his attempt to burn incense in the temple; upon which he was shut up in a separate house, which was a kind of a civil death: so the Targum,

"in the year in which King Uzziah was smitten;"

that is, with leprosy; and so Jarchi and others interpret it, from the ancient writers; but the first sense is the best. Some, as Aben Ezra, would have this to be the beginning of the prophecy of Isaiah, because of the mission of the prophet in it; but others rightly observe, that this mission respects not the prophecy in general, but the particular reproof the prophet was sent to give to the Jews herein mentioned. The title of this chapter, in the Arabic version, is remarkable; according to which, this chapter contains the vision which Isaiah, the son of Amos, saw three years, or, as others affirm, thirty years, after prophecy was taken from him. He had prophesied about ten years before this, in the reign of Uzziah; and only this vision was in the reign of Jotham; the next prophecy was delivered out in the reign of Ahaz, **Isa 7:1** and others in the time of Hezekiah; and the date of this vision is only mentioned, to observe the order of the visions, agreeably to **Isa 1:1** and moreover it may be observed from hence, that kings must die as well as others; but the King of kings ever lives, he is the living God, and the everlasting King, as follows:

I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; not God essentially considered, whose essence is not to be seen; but personally, Father, Son, and Spirit, for all the three Persons appear in this vision, **Isa 6:3** particularly Christ, as, is clear from
Joh 12:41 who is the "Adonai", or Lord; he is Lord of all, of all men, even of the greatest among them, and of all the angels in heaven, and of the church of God, by his Father's gift, by his own purchase, in right of marriage, and through the conquest of his grace. This sight was not corporeal, but with the eyes of the understanding, in the vision of prophecy; and to have a sight of Christ as the Lord, and especially as our Lord, is very delightful and comfortable; for though he is a sovereign Lord, he is no tyrannical one, is very powerful to protect and defend, and has all fulness for supply; and particularly as "sitting upon a throne" as a king, for he having done his work as a priest, sits down on his throne as a king; and a lovely sight it is to see him enthroned at the right hand of the Majesty on high; and therefore is said to be "high and

lifted up"; for this is to be understood not of his throne, as if that was high and lifted up in the highest heavens, as the Targum paraphrases it; but of himself, who is high and exalted above all creatures, as Aben Ezra observes; and this sense the accents determine for: the vision refers to the exaltation of Christ, after his humiliation here on earth; and to behold him crowned with glory and honour is very delightful, since he is exalted as our head and representative in our nature, and acts for us in this his exalted state; and we may be assured of being exalted also. It follows,

and his train filled the temple; either the material temple visionally seen, where his feet were, and his throne in heaven, as Jarchi interprets it; or heaven, as Kimchi, which is the Lord's holy temple, where his throne is, Ps 11:4 or rather the human nature of Christ, the temple where the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and which the train of divine perfections fill; though it may be best of all to understand it of the church, the temple of the living God; and "his train" may denote the effects of Christ's kingly and priestly offices, with which the Church was filled upon his exaltation; as the gifts and graces of his Spirit in an extraordinary manner on the day of Pentecost, and since in a more ordinary way; whereby men have been made ministers of the New Testament, and churches filled with them, and these made useful in filling the churches with members. The Targum is,

"and the temple was filled with the splendour of his glory;"

the "train" is the skirts, borders, or lower parts of the garments, in allusion to those of a king, or rather of the high priest, a type of Christ.

{l} Epist. Damaso, tom. 3. fol. 37. K.

Isaiah 6:2

Ver. 2. Above it stood the seraphims,.... Not above the temple, nor above the throne, much less above him that sat upon it, but either "by him", on the right hand and on the left, as Aben Ezra; or "near him", as Kimchi and Ben Melech; or "before him", as the Targum; or "round about him", as the Septuagint; all which denote the ministering form in which they stood; by whom are meant, not the Son and Spirit, as some of the ancients thought, who imagined the Father to be the Person sitting on the throne; nor the two Testaments, as Jerom; nor angels, which is the common interpretation; but ministers of the Gospel, the same with the four beasts in **Re 4:6** and the four living creatures in **Eze 1:5** the Jewish commentators in general agree that these are the same with Ezekiel's living creatures; so Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi; and the first of these cites the Midrash Agada, as saying this is the Mercavah, which is the name they give to Ezekiel's vision of the living creatures and wheels; and this appears by their name "seraphim", which signifies "burning", and so Ezekiel's living creatures are said to be "like burning coals of fire", **Eze 1:13** and the ministers of the Gospel are so called, because of their ministerial gifts, compared to fire, as the gifts of the spirit of God are, especially those which the apostles had bestowed on them, who were baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire, **Mt 3:11** and even the ordinary gifts of the spirit are signified by the same figure, **1Ti 1:6** and because of their light, which they have in the truths of the Gospel; and because of their fervent and ardent love to Christ and immortal souls; and because of their flaming zeal for his cause and interest: and this also appears by their situation near the throne, see **Eze 1:26** and Christ on it; where they stand as servants waiting upon him, and in order to receive from him, and where they enjoy communion with him; or "above" it may mean the temple, the church, where they stand in the highest place in it, and are over others in the Lord; they stand as servants to Christ, but preside in the church as the rulers and governors of it; to which agrees the Targum,

"holy ministers on high before him:"

and this further appears by their wings,

each one had six wings; as Ezekiel's living creatures, **Eze 1:4** and John's four beasts, **Re 4:8**:

with twain he covered his face; that it might not be seen, as the Targum adds; expressive of their modesty and humility, looking, upon themselves as less than the least of all the saints, and the chief of sinners, and as ashamed of themselves before the Lord; or that they might not look upon the divine Majesty, as Jarchi; or rather as being unable to look upon the dazzling glory and infinite perfections of his being; so Elijah wrapped his face in a mantle, when he heard the still small voice of the Lord, 1Ki 19:12 and as Moses before him did, **Ex 3:6** being afraid to look upon God, conscious of creature distance, and of sinfulness and unworthiness; and therefore not so suitable to angels, who always behold the face of God, Mt 18:10:

with twain he covered his feet; or body, that it might not be seen, as the Targum; as conscious of the imperfection of their conduct, walk, and conversation, as ministers and Christians, in the sight of God, however beautiful their feet may appear to others, Isa 52:7:

and with twain he did fly: or minister, as the Targum; this denotes their readiness and swiftness in preaching the everlasting Gospel, running to and fro with it, having their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace: see Re 14:6.

Isaiah 6:3

Ver. 3. And one cried unto another,.... This denotes the publicness of their ministry, and their harmony and unity in it; they answered to one another, and agreed in what they said; their preaching was not yea and nay, **2Co 1:19**:

and said, holy, holy, holy [is] the Lord of hosts; this expresses the subject matter of the Gospel ministry, respecting the holiness of God; all the doctrines of the Gospel are pure and holy, and have a tendency to promote holiness of heart and life, and are agreeable to the holiness of God, and in them the holiness of God in each of the divine Persons is declared; particularly the Gospel ministry affirms that there is one God, who is the Lord of hosts, of armies above and below, of angels and men; that there are three Persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit; and that each of these three are glorious in holiness; there is the Holy Father, and the Holy Son, and the Holy Ghost, and the holiness of them is displayed in each of the doctrines of grace: the holiness of the Father appears in the choice of persons to eternal life, through sanctification of the Spirit; in the covenant of grace, which provides for the holiness of covenant ones; and in the justification of his people through Christ, and redemption by him, whereby the honour of his justice and holiness is secured: the holiness of the Son appears in his incarnation and life; in redemption from sin by him, and in satisfying for it, and justifying from it: and the holiness of the Spirit is seen in the doctrines of regeneration and sanctification, ascribed unto him.

The whole earth [is] full of his glory; as it was when Christ dwelt in it, wrought his miracles, and manifested forth his glory, and when his Gospel was preached everywhere by his apostles; and as it will be, more especially in the latter day, when it will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord; when the kingdoms of this world will become his, and his kingdom will be everywhere, even from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth; and this is what Gospel ministers declare will be: or "the fulness of the whole earth is his glory" {m}; the earth is his, and all that is in it, and all declare his glory; see **Re 4:8**.

{m} wdwbk Urah lk alm "plenitudo totius terrae gloria ejus", Montanus; "quicquid replet terram [est] gloria ejus", Piscator.

Isaiah 6:4

Ver. 4. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried,.... That is, the posts of the door of the temple, as the Targum adds, where this vision was seen, as represented to the prophet. Some think this respects the earthquake in Uzziah's time, mentioned in Zec 14:5 and which they suppose was at the time he attempted to offer incense, and was smitten with leprosy; but, as Kimchi observes, this moving of the door posts was only in the vision of prophecy, and not in reality; this shaking therefore may denote either the shaking and removing of the temple service and worship, at the death of Christ, and through the preaching of the Gospel; or rather the shaking of the consciences of men by the word, which made them cry out, what shall we do to be saved?

And the house was filled with smoke; this was a token either of the burning of the temple, or of the anger of God against the Jews, Ps 18:8 or of their superstition and will worship, the cause of it, **Re 9:1** or of the judicial blindness and darkness they were given up unto, **Isa 6:9** or rather of the presence of God in his church, and with his ministers, Ex 40:3 the allusion may be to the cloud of incense that covered the mercy seat, on the day of atonement, Le 16:13 the passage is cited on this account in the Talmud {n}.

{n} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 53. 1.

Isaiah 6:5

Ver. 5. Then said I, woe [is] me,.... There's no woe to a good man, all woes are to the wicked; but a good man may think himself wretched and miserable, partly on account of his own corruptions, the body of sin and death he carries about with him; and partly on account of wicked men, among whom he dwells, **Ro 7:24**:

for I am undone; a good man cannot be undone, or be lost and perish; he is lost in Adam with the rest; in effectual calling he is made sensible of his lost and undone state; and under the power of unbelief may write bitter things against himself; but be can never perish, or be lost and undone for ever. The Targum is,

"for I have sinned;"

and his particular sin is after mentioned: some {o} render it, "for I have been silent"; as if he had not performed the duty of his office, in reproving for sin, or declaring the will of God: others {p}, "for I am reduced to silence", I am forced to be silent; he could not join with the "seraphim", being conscious to himself of his vileness, and of his unworthiness to take the holy name of God into his polluted lips, as follows:

because I [am] a man of unclean lips; he says nothing of the uncleanness of his heart, nor of his actions; not that he was free from such impurity; but only of his lips, because it was the sin of his office that lay upon his mind, and gave him present uneasiness; there is no man but offends in words, and of all men persons in public office should be careful of what they say; godly ministers are conscious of many failings in their ministry. The Targum is,

"because I am a sinful man to reprove;"

and so unfit for it.

And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; such were the Jews, not only in Isaiah's time, but in the times of Christ and his apostles, who traduced him, as if he was a wicked person, calumniated his miracles, said he was a Samaritan, and had a devil; they taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and opposed and blasphemed the truths of the Gospel; and to live among men of a filthy speech and conversation is a concern to a good man; he is vexed and distressed hereby; he is in danger of learning their words, and of suffering with them in a common calamity.

For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts; the same divine and glorious Person described in **Isa 6:1** who is no other than the Lord Christ, King of kings, and Lord of lords, King of saints, and Lord of the armies, in heaven and in earth; and a lovely sight it is to see him by faith, in the glory and beauty of his person, and in the fulness of his grace; such a sight is spiritual, saving, assimilating, appropriating, very endearing, and very glorious and delightful: wherefore it may seem strange that a sight of Christ should fill the prophet with dread; one would think he should rather have said, happy man that I am, because I have seen this glorious Person, whom to see and know is life eternal; but the reason of it is, because in this view of Christ he saw the impurity of himself, and was out of conceit with himself, and therefore cries out in the manner he does; just as in a sunbeam a man beholds those innumerable motes and atoms, which before were invisible to him. It was not because of his sight of Christ he reckoned himself undone; but because of the impurity of himself, and those among whom he dwelt, which he had a view of through his sight of Christ: his sight of Christ is given as a reason of his view of his impurity, and his impurity as the reason of his being undone in his apprehension of things. The prophet, in these his circumstances, represents a sensible sinner, under a sight and sense of his sinfulness and vileness; as the seraph in the following verses represents a Gospel minister bringing the good news of pardon, by the blood and sacrifice of Christ.

{o} ytmdn yk "quia tacui", V. L.; so R. Joseph Kimchi. {p} "Ad silentium redactus sum", Tigurine version.

Isaiah 6:6

Ver. 6. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me,.... When the prophet had confessed his sin; for upon that follows the application of pardon; and when the seraph, or minister of the Gospel, had an order from the Lord to publish the doctrine of it: it is God's act alone to forgive sin; it is the work of his ministers to preach forgiveness of sin, and that to sensible sinners; who when they are made sensible of sin, and distressed with it, the Lord takes notice of them, and sends messengers to them, to comfort them, by acquainting them that their iniquity is forgiven; who go on such an errand cheerfully and swiftly; and though they do not know the particular person, yet the Lord directs their ministration to him, and makes it effectual.

Having a live coal in his hand: by which is meant the word of God, comparable to fire, and to a burning coal of fire, Jer 23:29 for the light and heat which it gives both to saints and sinners, and for its purity and purifying nature:

[which] he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; of burnt offering, where the fire was always burning; which was a type of Christ, and his sacrifice; and

this shows what particular doctrine of the word it was the seraph or Gospel minister took, and delivered in this visionary way; it was the doctrine of pardon, founded upon the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ. To this sense of the words the Targum agrees, which paraphrases them thus,

"and there flew to me one of the ministers, and in his mouth a word which he received from his Shechinah, upon the throne of glory, in the highest heavens, above the altar,"

See Re 14:6.

Isaiah 6:7

Ver. 7. And he laid [it] upon my mouth,.... Because he had complained of the impurity of his lips, and that his mouth might take in by faith this comfortable doctrine of pardon, and it might be filled with praise and thankfulness; it denotes the ministration of the Gospel, as a means of the application of pardoning grace:

and said, lo, this hath touched thy lips; this coal, as a symbol of the word; the particle "lo", or "behold", is prefixed to this declaration, as requiring attention to a matter of importance, and as expressing something wonderful, and declaring something sure and certain; all which the pardon of sin is, and which is spoken of without a figure in the next words:

and thine iniquity is taken away: which was abominable in his sight; a burden to him, and the cause of his distress; even all his iniquity, and particularly the iniquity of his lips he had been mourning over, and confessing; this was taken away, as by the sacrifice of Christ, from the sight of God, so from his own conscience, by the application of pardon:

and thy sin purged; or "atoned for", or "covered" {q}; which is done meritoriously, only by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and in a way of application by the Spirit of God, through a promise, and by the ministry of the word; which latter is here meant. The Targum is,

"and he disposed "it" in my mouth; and said, lo, I have put the words of my prophecy in thy mouth, and thine iniquities are removed, and thy sins are expiated, or forgiven."

{q} rpkt "expiatur", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius; "expiabitur", Montanus, Piscator; rpk "proprie tegere". Forerius.

Isaiah 6:8

Ver. 8. Also I heard the voice of the Lord,.... The Targum renders it, the voice of the Word of the Lord, as if it was the second Person, the Word, that was heard speaking; but it seems rather to be the voice of the first Person, the Father:

saying, Whom shall I send? to the people of Israel, to reprove them for their blindness and stupidity, and to threaten them, and foretell unto them their ruin and destruction; intimating that it was a difficult thing to pitch upon a proper person; and that there were but few that were fit to go on such an errand: this is spoken after the manner of men; otherwise the Lord knew whom to send, and whom he would send; and could easily qualify anyone he pleased, and send with such a message:

and who will go for us? not directing his discourse to the seraphim, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; as if he consulted with them: for who of all the creatures is the Lord's counsellor? but to the Son and Spirit, who it is certain were concerned in this mission; for the following words were said when Isaiah saw the glory of Christ, and spake of him, Joh 12:41 and they are expressly attributed to the Holy Ghost in Ac 28:25 the Septuagint and Arabic versions, instead of "for us", read "unto this people"; and the Targum is,

"whom shall I send to prophesy? and who will go to teach?"

then said I, here [am] I, send me: for he who before thought himself undone, and unworthy to be employed in the service of God, now having a discovery and application of pardoning grace, freely offers himself to God: this shows the true nature and effect of an application of pardon; it gives a man freedom and boldness in the presence of God, and stimulates to a ready and cheerful obedience to his will, and engages him with the utmost alacrity in his service; so far is the doctrine of free and full pardon by the blood of Christ from being a licentious doctrine.

Isaiah 6:9

Ver. 9. And he said, go, and tell this people,.... What is and will be their case and condition, as follows:

hear ye indeed; the words of the prophets sent unto them, yea, Christ himself incarnate preaching among them; the great Prophet Moses said should be raised up unto them:

but understand not; neither that he is the Messiah, nor the doctrines delivered by him; which were spoken to them in parables; see
Mt 13:13:

and see ye indeed: the miracles wrought by him, as raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, restoring sight to the blind, causing the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak:

but perceive not; that he is the Messiah, though all the characteristics pointed at in prophecy are upon him, and such miracles are done by him.

Isaiah 6:10

Ver. 10. Make the heart of this people fat,.... Gross and heavy, stupid and unteachable, hard and obdurate; which is sometimes done by the preaching of the Gospel, through the wickedness of man's heart, that being the savour of death unto death to some, just as the sun hardens the clay; or declare that their hearts are thus gross and stupid; or that I will give them up to a judicial hardness of heart:

and make their ears heavy: that they cannot hear the word, so as to understand it; they having stopped the ear, and plucked away the shoulder, it is in righteous judgment that they are given up to such an insensibility as not to be capable of hearing and understanding what is delivered in the ministry of the word:

and shut their eyes; they having wilfully shut their own eyes against all evidence of the Messiah, and the truth of his doctrines, they are given up to a judicial blindness; which still continues upon them, and will until the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in:

lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understated with their heart; though only in a notional way, the things relating to the Messiah, the truths of the Gospel, and the ordinances thereof, and what may belong to their outward peace:

and convert; or turn themselves by external repentance and reformation:

and be healed: or forgiven in such sense as to be preserved from national ruin; which God willed not; for seeing they went such great lengths in sin, in rejecting the Messiah, and his Gospel, they were given up to a reprobate mind, to do things that were not convenient, that they might be destroyed; which destruction is after prophesied of.

Isaiah 6:11

Ver. 11. Then said I, Lord, how long?.... That is, how long will this blindness, hardness, stupidity, and impenitence, remain with this people, or they be under such a sore judgment of God upon them:

and he answered, until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate; until there is not an inhabitant in the cities of Judea, nor in Jerusalem, the metropolis of the land, nor a single man in any house in them; which denotes the utter desolation of the land and city; and can refer to no other than to the desolation thereof by the Romans; and till that time the blindness which happened to them continued; the things which belonged to their peace were hid from their eyes till their city was destroyed, and not one stone left upon another, Lu 19:42 till that time, and even to this day, the veil of blindness, ignorance, and and penitence, is on their hearts, and will remain until they are converted to the Lord, in the latter day; see Ro 11:25 **2Co 3:14**.

Isaiah 6:12

Ver. 12. And the Lord have removed men far away,.... Not to Babylon, but to the ends of the earth, into the most distant countries, by means of the Romans; for they were but instruments of carrying the Jews captive out of their own land, and dispersing them among the several nations of the world; it was the Lord's doing, and a judgment which he inflicted upon them for their sins:

and [there be] a great forsaking in the midst of the land; not that there should be many left in the land, and multiply and increase in it; which is the sense of the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; but that the land should be greatly forsaken of men; there should be many places in the midst of the land destitute of them; and this should continue a long time, as Kimchi observes, which therefore cannot be understood of the Babylonish captivity, but of their present one.

Isaiah 6:13

Ver. 13. But yet in it [shall be] a tenth,.... Which some understand of ten kings that should reign over Judah from this time, the death of Uzziah, unto the captivity, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe; and which are, as Kimchi reckons them, as follows, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah; but the prophecy, as we have seen, respects not the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, but their present one; wherefore the words are to be understood of a few persons, a remnant, according to the election of grace, that should be called, and saved amidst all the blindness, darkness, and destruction that should come upon that people; and may be illustrated by the words of the apostle in
Ro 11:5 and these chosen, called, and saved ones, are the "tenth", that is, the Lord's tenth, as the words may be rendered {r}. To this sense the Targum agrees,

"and there shall be left in it righteous persons, one out of ten;"

though indeed the Christians were not left in Jerusalem when it was destroyed, but were called out of it just before, and were preserved from that ruin.

And [it] shall return, and shall be eaten; or "be for burning". I should choose to render it, "it shall return, and be burnt" {s}; that is, it shall be burnt again; it was burnt a first time by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and his army, Jer 52:13 and a second time by Titus Vespasian, to which this prophecy refers:

as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance [is] in them, when they cast [their leaves]; the word "Beshallecheth", which we render, "when they cast their leaves", is by some, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi observe, thought to be the name of a gate in Jerusalem, called "Shallecheth", from which a causeway went towards the king's palace, from whence it had its name, 1Ch 26:16 and along which causeway, as is supposed, were planted teil trees and oaks, which are here referred to. But the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret the word as we do, of casting their leaves: and the sense seems to be this; that as the teil tree and oak, when they cast their leaves in autumn, and look as if they were dry, withered, and dead, yet have a substance in them, and in spring appear alive and green, and flourishing again; so the Jews, notwithstanding their miserable destruction by the Romans, when they were stripped of all their riches and glory, yet were not utterly consumed as a people, but remained an entire distinct people, and do so to this day, among the nations of the world; though, like a dry withered trunk of a tree, without verdure or beauty; the reason of this follows:

so, or "because",

the holy seed [shall be] the substance thereof; that is, they shall subsist, or continue a distinct people, though in this miserable condition; because there is a "holy seed", or a certain number, whom God has chosen to be holy, that is to arise from them, and will be called and converted in the latter day; hence they have a substance, a subsistence, and shall remain till that comes, and that chosen remnant is called and saved, Ro 11:25. The Targum is,

"as the elm and oak, when their leaves fall, and are like to dry "trees", and yet are moist to raise up seed from them; so the captivities of Israel shall be gathered, and shall return to their land; for the seed which is holy is their plantation."

Some, interpreting the passage of the Babylonish captivity, by the "holy seed" understand the Messiah. See **Lu 1:35** {t}.

{r} hyryve "decima ejus", i.e. Dei. {s} rebl htyhw hbvw "et convertatur sitque in incendium", Syr.; "ad conflagrandum", Montanus; "ad urendum", De Dieu. {t} Ericus Phaletranus de ablat. Sceptr. Jud. in Graev. Syntag. p. 437.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 7

This chapter contains a prophecy of the preservation of the kingdom of Judah, from its enemies; a confirmation of it by a sign; and a prediction of various calamities that should come upon it, antecedent to the accomplishment of that sign. The enemies of Judea are named, and the besieging of Jerusalem by them, and the date of it, which was without effect, are mentioned, **Isa 7:1** the fear and dread which seized the house of David upon the news of this confederacy, **Isa 7:2** the orders given by the Lord to the Prophet Isaiah, to take with him his son, and meet Ahaz, at a certain place pointed at, **Isa 7:3** whose errand was to comfort him, and exhort him to be quiet and easy; since the conspiracy formed against him should be fruitless, and the kingdom of Israel should be broken to pieces, **Isa 7:4** after which the king is put upon asking a sign of the Lord, for the confirmation of it; which he refusing to do, under a pretence of tempting the Lord, is reproved; and a sign nevertheless is given; which is that of the birth of the Messiah of a virgin, who would be truly God, as his name Immanuel shows, and truly man, as his birth, his food, and gradual knowledge of good and evil, prove, **Isa 7:10** yea, it is suggested that the deliverance of Judea from the two kings of Syria and Israel should be very speedy; even before the young child Isaiah had with him was capable of knowing to refuse evil, and chose good, **Isa 7:16** but as a chastisement of the house of David for their incredulity in this matter, and slight of the divine goodness, various things are threatened to befall them, before the birth of the Messiah; even such as had not been since the revolt of the ten tribes; as that their enemies, the Assyrians and others, should come upon them in great numbers, and fill all places, so that they would be in the utmost distress, and not be able to escape, **Isa 7:17** there would be a great consumption of men of all sorts, high and low, signified by shaving off the hair of the head, beard, and feet; so that the few that remained would enjoy plenty, **Isa 7:20** and for want of men to till the land, it would be covered with thorns and briers; and because of wild beasts, the few men in it would be obliged to defend themselves with bows and arrows, **Isa 7:23** and yet, after this, the land should become fruitful again, before the Messiah's coming, **Isa 7:25**, as some interpret it.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah king of Judah,.... Here begins a new prophecy under the reign of another king; who, though a wicked king, had religious ancestors; and who are mentioned, not, as the Jewish writers {u} generally say, because it was owing to their worthiness that the enemies of Ahaz could not prevail against him; but because it was under these kings the prophet had prophesied: what is contained in the first five chapters were delivered in the times of Uzziah; and the vision in the sixth was in the times of Jotham, in the beginning of his reign; and what is said here, and in some following chapters, was in the time of Ahaz; so that this is mentioned to fix and carry on the date of the prophecy:

[that] Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah king of Israel, went up towards Jerusalem to war against it; at the latter end of Jotham's reign,

and the beginning of Ahaz's; these two separately came up against Judah, and greatly distressed and afflicted the kingdom, slew many, and carried others captive, 2Ki 15:37 but afterwards, in the third {w} or fourth {x} year of Ahaz, as it is said, they joined together to besiege Jerusalem, which this refers to, 2Ki 16:5:

but could not prevail against it; or "he could not"; that is, according to Aben Ezra, the king of Israel, Pekah, the son of Remaliah; but, according to Kimchi, it was Rezin king of Syria, who, he says, was the principal in the war, and brought Pekah along with him; but it may very well be understood of them both, since in 2Ki 16:5, the plural number is used; "and they could not"; and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Oriental versions here.

{u} Jarchi & Kimchi in loc. & Yalkut Simeoni, ex Bereshit Rabba, sect. 63. fol. 54. 4. {w} Yalkut Simeoni in loc. {x} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 23. p. 85. Jarchi in ver. 14.

Isaiah 7:2

Ver. 2. And it was told the house of David,.... Ahaz, and his family, the princes of the blood, his court and counsellors; who had intelligence of the designs and preparations of the Syrians and Israelites against them:

saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim; the ten tribes; or the kingdom and king of Israel. Some render it, "Syria led"; that is, its army "unto Ephraim" {y}; marched it into the land of Israel, and there joined the king of Israel's army; others, as the Vulgate Latin version, "Syria rests upon Ephraim" {z}; depends upon, trusts in, takes heart and encouragement from Ephraim, or the ten tribes, being his ally. The Septuagint version is, "Syria hath agreed with Ephraim"; entered into a confederacy and alliance with each other; which is the sense of our version; and is confirmed by the Targum, which is,

"the king of Syria is joined with the king of Israel:"

and his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind; the metaphor denotes the strength and force of the confederate armies, comparable to a strong, blustering, boisterous wind; see Isa 32:2 and the weakness of the king and people of Judah, who were like to trees shaken by the wind; and also the fear they were possessed with, partly through consciousness of guilt, and partly through distrust of divine power and Providence; and also on account of what they had suffered already from these powerful enemies, when they attacked them singly; and therefore might much more dread them, as they were combined together against them; see 2Ch 28:5.

{y} hxn "duxit exercitum", Tigurine version. {z} "Syria quievit super Ephraim", Forerius, Cocceius; "Syria acquiescit in Ephraimo", Piscator.

Isaiah 7:3

Ver. 3. Then said the Lord unto Isaiah,.... The prophet, the inspired penman of these prophecies, that go by his name; what follows, the Lord said unto him in vision, or by an articulate voice, or by an impulse on his mind:

go forth now to meet Ahaz; the prophet was in the city of Jerusalem, and Ahaz was without, as appears by the place after mentioned, where he was to meet him; perhaps Ahaz was at his country house, which, upon the news brought him of the designs of his enemies, he leaves, and betakes himself to Jerusalem, his metropolis, and fortified city, where he might be more safe; or he had been out to reconnoitre the passes about Jerusalem, and give orders and directions for the strengthening and keeping of them:

thou, and Shearjashub thy son: whose name signifies "the remnant shall return", and who was taken with the prophet, to suggest either that the remnant that were left of the former devastations by those two kings ought to return to the Lord by repentance; or that though the people of Judah should hereafter be carried captive by the Assyrians, yet a remnant should return again. The Targum interprets this not of Isaiah's natural son, but of his disciples; paraphrasing it thus,

"thou, and the rest of thy disciples, who have not sinned, and are turned from sin:"

at the end of the conduit of the upper pool; for there was an upper pool and a lower one; see Isa 22:9 this was outside the city, and is the same place where Rabshakeh afterwards stood, and delivered his blasphemous and terrifying speech, 2Ki 18:17:

in the highway of the fuller's field; where they washed and dried their garments, and whitened them; the pool, conduit, and field, being fit for their purpose.

Isaiah 7:4

Ver. 4. And say unto him, take heed, and be quiet,.... Or "keep" thyself, not within the city, and from fighting with his enemies, but from unbelief, fear, and dread; or, as the Septuagint version, "keep" thyself, "that thou mayest be quiet" {a}; be easy, still, and silent, and see the salvation of God: the Jewish writers interpret the first word of resting and settling, as wine upon the lees: see
Jer 48:11:

fear not; this explains the former:

neither be fainthearted; or "let thy heart soft" {b}, and melt like wax, through dread and diffidence:

for the two tails of these smoking firebrands: meaning the two kings of Syria and Israel: and so the Targum,

"for these two kings, who are as smoking firebrands;"

a metaphor used to express the weakness of these princes, their vain wrath and impotent fury, and the short continuance of it; they being like to firebrands wholly burnt and consumed to the end; a small part remaining, which could not be laid hold upon to light fires or burn with, and that only smoking, and the smoke just ready to vanish.

For the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah; this shows who are meant by the two firebrands, Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel; and what by the smoke of them, their fierce anger; which, though it seemed to threaten with utter destruction, in the opinion of Ahaz and his court, was only like the smoke of a firebrand burnt to the end, weak and vanishing.

{a} jqvhw rmvh fulaxai, Sept.; "observa ut sis quieto animo", Vatablus. {b} Kry la "ne mollescas", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 7:5

Ver. 5. Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah,.... Not that there were three parties in the counsel and confederacy against Judah, only two, the kingdoms of Syria and Ephraim, or Israel; the king of the former is not mentioned at all, and the latter only as if he was the son of a private person, which is purposely done by way of contempt:

have taken evil counsel against thee: which is expressed in the next verse;

saying; as follows.

Isaiah 7:6

Ver. 6. Let us go up against Judah, and vex it,.... By besieging or distressing it; or "stir it up" to war, as Jarchi interprets it:

and let us make a breach therein for us; in the walls of the city of Jerusalem, and enter in at it; the Targum is,

"let us join, and put it to us;"

and so Jarchi, let us level it with us, as this valley, which is even: the sense may be, let us make a breach and division among them, and then part the kingdom between us {c}; or if we cannot agree on that, let us set up a king of our own, as follows:

and set a king in the midst of it, [even] the son of Tabeal; which Jarchi, by a situation of the alphabet the Jews call "albam", makes it to be the same with Remala, that is, Remaliah; and so supposes, that the intention was to set Pekah, son of Remaliah, king of Israel, over Judah; but it is not reasonable to think that the king of Syria should join in such a design; and besides, the method of interpretation, Aben Ezra says, is mere vanity; and whose sense of the words is much preferable, taking Tabeal to be the name of some great prince, either of Israel or of Syria; and so Kimchi thinks that he was a man of the children of Ephraim, whom they thought to make king in Jerusalem. The Targum understands not any particular person, but anyone that should be thought proper; and paraphrases it thus, "let us appoint a king in the midst of it, who is right for us,"

or pleases us; the name seems to be Syriac, see **Ezr 4:7**. Dr. Lightfoot thinks it is the same with Tabrimmon, the name of some famous family in Syria. One signifies "good God": and the other "good Rimmon", which was the name of the idol of the Syrians, **2Ki 5:18**.

{c} So Noldius, Elr. Concord. Part. p. 62. renders its "let us divide it among us".

Isaiah 7:7

Ver. 7. Thus saith the Lord GOD, it shall not stand,.... That is, the counsel they had taken against Judah to vex it, make a breach in it, and set a king of their own liking over it; so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render the words, "that counsel shall not stand"; the counsel of God shall stand, but not the counsel of men, when it is against him, Pr 19:21:

neither shall it come to pass; or "shall not be"; so far from standing, succeeding, and going forward, till it is brought to a final accomplishment, it should not take footing, or have a being.

Isaiah 7:8

Ver. 8. For the head of Syria [is] Damascus,.... Damascus was the metropolis of Syria, the chief city in it, where the king had his palace, and kept his court; of which See Gill on "Ge 15:2" see Gill on "Ac 9:2":

and the head of Damascus [is] Rezin; he was king of it, as of all Syria; the meaning is, that Syria, of which Damascus was the principal city, was the only country that Rezin should govern, his dominion should not be enlarged; and Ahaz, king of Judah, might assure himself that Rezin should never possess his kingdom, or be able to depose him, and set up another; and as for Ephraim or Israel, the ten tribes, they should be so far from succeeding in such a design against him, that it should befall them as follows:

and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people; which is by some reckoned, not from the time of this prophecy, that being in the third or fourth year of Ahaz, who reigned in all but sixteen years; and in the ninth of Hosea king of Israel, and in the sixth of Hezekiah king of Judah, Samaria was taken, and Israel carried captive into Assyria, 2Ki 17:6 which was but about eighteen or nineteen years from this time: some think indeed the time was shortened, because of their sins; but this does not appear, nor is it probable: and others think that it designs any time within that term; but the true meaning undoubtedly is, as the Targum renders it,

"at the end of sixty and five years, the kingdom of the house of Israel shall cease."

This is commonly reckoned by the Jewish writers {d} from the prophecy of Amos, who prophesied two years before the earthquake in Uzziah's time, concerning the captivity both of Syria and Israel, **Am 1:1** **Am 7:11** which account may be carried either through the kings of Judah or of Israel; Jarchi goes the former way, reckoning thus,

"the prophecy of Amos was two years before Uzziah was smitten with the leprosy, according to **Am 1:1**. Uzziah was a leper twenty five years, lo, twenty seven. Jotham reigned sixteen years, Ahaz sixteen, and Hezekiah six; as it is said, "in the sixth year of Hezekiah (that is, the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel) Samaria was taken", 2Ki 18:10 lo, sixty five years."

So Abarbinel; but Kimchi goes another way, which comes to the same, reckoning thus,

"the prophecy of Amos, according to computation, was in the seventeenth year of Jeroboam, son of Joash, king of Israel, how is it? Jeroboam reigned forty one years, Menahem ten, so there are fifty one; Pekahiah the son of Menahem two, so fifty three; and Pekah twenty, so seventy three; and Hoshea the son of Elah nine, and then Israel were carried captive, so there are eighty two: take out of them seventeen (the years of Jeroboam before the prophecy), and there remain sixty five, the number intended; for we do not reckon the six months of Zechariah, and the month of Shallum."

Cocceius reckons from the death of Jeroboam, who died in the forty first year of his reign, and in the fifteenth of Uzziah, so that there remained thirty seven years of Uzziah; in the twentieth of Jotham, that is, in the fourth after his death, Hoshea son of Elah was made king, this was the twelfth of Ahaz, 2Ki 15:30 and in the ninth of Hoshea, Samaria was taken, and Israel carried captive. But Junius and Tremellius are of a different mind from either of these, and think the prophecy wholly respects time to come; they observe, that

"Isaiah in these words first shows, that the kingdom of Syria should be immediately cut off, and the king should die, which at furthest must needs happen four years after; so (say they) we may suppose that these things were said by the prophet in the first year of Ahaz; thence, from the destruction of the Syrians, to the full carrying captive of the Israelites, or from the time of this prophecy, sixty five years must have run out; for although the kingdom of Israel was abolished in the sixth year of Hezekiah, yet Israel did not immediately cease to be a people when only some part of it was carried away; but they entirely ceased to be a people when new colonies were introduced by Esarhaddon, the son of Sennacherib, and all the Israelites were forced into bondage, which the Samaritans explain, **Ezr 4:2** wherefore so we fix the series of the times, from the fourth year of Ahaz, in which the kingdom of Syria fell, unto the end, are eleven years, Hezekiah reigned twenty nine years, so the last translation of the Israelites was in the twenty fifth year of Manasseh's reign; but if you begin from the time of the prophecy; the thing will fall upon the twenty first or twenty second of Manasseh's reign; at which time perhaps, as some say, Manasseh was carried captive into Babylon."

And of this mind was the learned Dr. Prideaux {e}, who observes, that in the twenty second year of Manasseh, Esarhaddon prepared a great army, and marched into the parts of Syria and Palestine, and again added them to the Assyrian empire; and adds,

"and then was accomplished the prophecy which was spoken by Isaiah in the first year of Ahaz against Samaria, that within threescore and five years Ephraim should be absolutely broken, so as from thenceforth to be no more a people; for this year being exactly sixty five years from the first of Ahaz, Esarhaddon, after he had settled all affairs in Syria, marched into the land of Israel, and there taking captive all those who were the remains of the former captivity (excepting only some few, who escaped his hands, and continued still in the land), carried them away into Babylon and Assyria; and then, to prevent the land becoming desolate, he brought others from Babylon, and from Cutha, and from Havah, and Hamath, and Sephervaim, to dwell in the cities of Samaria in their stead; and so the ten tribes of Israel, which had separated from the house of David, were brought to a full and utter destruction, and never after recovered themselves again."

And this seems to be the true accomplishment of this prophecy; though the sense of the Jewish writers is followed by many, and preferred by Noldius; so that there is no need with Grotius and Vitringa to suppose a corruption of the text. Gussetius {f} fancies that Myvv signifies twice six, that is, twelve; as Myrve twice ten, or twenty; and so five, added to twelve, makes seventeen; and from the fourth of Ahaz, to the taking of Samaria, was about seventeen years.

{d} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 28. p. 85. Aben Ezra in loc. {e} Connection, &c. par, 1. B. 1. p. 30. Bishop Usher, Annal. Vet. Test. A. M. 3327. {f} Comment Ebr. p. 892.

Isaiah 7:9

Ver. 9. And the head of Ephraim [is] Samaria,..... Samaria was the metropolis or chief city of Ephraim, or the ten tribes of Israel:

and the head of Samaria [is] Remaliah's son; Pekah, son of Remaliah, was king of Samaria, as of all Israel. The sense is, that, until the sixty five years were ended, there should be no enlargement of the kingdom of Israel; Judah should not be added to it; Samaria should continue, and not Jerusalem be the metropolis of it; and Pekah, during his life, should be king of Israel, but not of Judah.

If ye will not believe; the Targum adds,

"the words of the prophet;"

surely ye shall not be established, or remain {g}; that is, in their own land, but should be carried captive, as they were after a time; or it is, "because ye are not true and firm"; in the faith of God, as Kimchi interprets it; or, "because ye are not confirmed" {h}; that is, by a sign; wherefore it follows:

{g} wnmat al yk "non permanebitis", V. L. Cocceius. {h} "Quod non confirmamini", Junius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 7:10

Ver. 10. Moreover the Lord spake again unto Ahaz,.... By the prophet Isaiah:

saying; as follows:

Isaiah 7:11

Ver. 11. Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God,.... For though Ahaz was a wicked man, yet the Lord was his God, as he was the God of the people of Israel in general, as a nation; and knowing his unbelief and diffidence of his word unto him, offers to confirm it by a sign or miracle:

ask it either in the depth, or in the height above, in earth, or in heaven: so the Targum,

"ask that a miracle may be done for thee upon earth, or that a sign may be shown thee in heaven;"

either that the earth might gape and open its mouth, as in the days of Moses; or that the sun might stand still, as in the times of Joshua; or that a dead man might be raised out of the depth of the earth; or that there might be some strange appearances in the heavens.

Isaiah 7:12

Ver. 12. But Ahaz said, I will not ask,.... That is, a sign or miracle to be wrought; being unwilling to take the advice to be still and quiet, and make no preparation for war, or seek out for help from the Assyrians, and to rely upon the promise and power of God, and therefore chose not to have it confirmed by a sign; adding as an excuse,

neither will I tempt the Lord, by asking a sign; suggesting that this was contrary to the command of God, **De 6:16** so pretending religion and reverence of God; whereas, to ask a sign of God, when it was offered, could not be reckoned a tempting him; but, on the contrary, to refuse one; when offered, argued great stubbornness and ingratitude, as Calvin well observes.

Isaiah 7:13

Ver. 13. And he said,.... That is, the Prophet Isaiah; which shows that it was by him the Lord spoke the foregoing words:

hear ye now, O house of David; for not only Ahaz, but his family, courtiers, and counsellors, were all of the same mind with him, not to ask a sign of God, nor to depend upon, his promise of safety, but to seek out for help, and provide against the worst themselves. Some think that Ahaz's name is not mentioned, and that this phrase is used by way of contempt, and as expressive of indignation and resentment:

[is it] a small thing for you to weary man; meaning such as himself, the prophets of the Lord; so the Targum,

"is it a small thing that ye are troublesome to the prophets;"

disturb, grieve, and vex them, by obstinacy and unbelief:

but will ye weary my God also? the Targum is,

"for ye are troublesome to the words of my God;"

or injurious to them, by not believing them; or to God himself, by rejecting such an offer of a sign as was made to them.

Isaiah 7:14

Ver. 14. Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign,.... Whether they would ask one or not; a sign both in heaven and earth, namely, the promised Messiah; who being the Lord from heaven, would take flesh of a virgin on earth; and who as man, being buried in the heart of the earth, would be raised from thence, and ascend up into heaven; and whose birth, though it was to be many years after, was a sign of present deliverance to Judah from the confederacy of the two kings of Syria and Israel; and of future safety, since it was not possible that this kingdom should cease to be one until the Messiah was come, who was to spring from Judah, and be of the house of David; wherefore by how much the longer off was his birth, by so much the longer was their safety.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son; this is not to be understood of Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, by his wife, as some Jewish writers interpret it;

which interpretation Jarchi refutes, by observing that Hezekiah was nine years old when his father began to reign, and this being, as he says, the fourth year of his reign, he must be at this time thirteen years of age; in like manner, Aben Ezra and Kimchi object to it; and besides, his mother could not be called a "virgin": and for the same reason it cannot be understood of any other son of his either by his wife, as Kimchi thinks, or by some young woman; moreover, no other son of his was ever lord of Judea, as this Immanuel is represented to be, in **Isa 8:8** nor can it be interpreted of Isaiah's wife and son, as Aben Ezra and Jarchi think; since the prophet could never call her a "virgin", who had bore him children, one of which was now with him; nor indeed a "young woman", but rather "the prophetess", as in **Isa 8:3** nor was any son of his king of Judah, as this appears to be, in the place before cited: but the Messiah is here meant, who was to be born of a pure virgin; as the word here used signifies in all places where it is mentioned, as Ge 24:43 and even in Pr 30:19 which is the instance the Jews give of the word being used of a woman corrupted; since it does not appear that the maid and the adulterous woman are one and the same person; and if they were, she might, though vitiated, be called a maid or virgin, from her own profession of herself, or as she appeared to others who knew her not, or as she was antecedent to her defilement; which is no unusual thing in Scripture, see De 22:28 to which may be added, that not only the Evangelist Matthew renders the word by paryenov, "a virgin"; but the Septuagint interpreters, who were Jews, so rendered the word hundreds of years before him; and best agrees with the Hebrew word, which comes from the root Mle, which signifies to "hide" or "cover"; virgins being covered and unknown to men; and in the eastern country were usually kept recluse, and were shut up from the public company and conversation of men: and now this was the sign that was to be given, and a miraculous one it was, that the Messiah should be born of a pure and incorrupt virgin; and therefore a "behold" is prefixed to it, as a note of admiration; and what else could be this sign or wonder? not surely that a young married woman, either Ahaz's or Isaiah's wife, should be with child, which is nothing surprising, and of which there are repeated instances every day; nor was it that the young woman was unfit for conception at the time of the prophecy, which was the fancy of some, as Jarchi reports, since no such intimation is given either in the text or context; nor did it lie in this, that it was a male child, and not a female, which was predicted, as R. Saadiah Gaon, in Aben Ezra, would have it; for the sign or wonder does not lie in the truth of the prophet's prediction, but in the greatness of the thing predicted; besides, the verification of this would not have given the prophet much credit, nor Ahaz and the house of David much comfort, since this might have been ascribed rather to a happy conjecture than to a spirit of prophecy; much less can the wonder be, that this child should eat butter and honey, as soon as it was born, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi suggest; since nothing is more natural to, and common with young children, than to take down any kind of liquids which are sweet and pleasant.

And shall call his name Immanuel; which is, by interpretation, "God with us", **Mt 1:23** whence it appears that the Messiah is truly God, as well as truly man: the name is expressive of the union of the two natures, human and divine, in him; of his office as Mediator, who, being both God and man, is a middle person between both; of his converse with men on earth, and of his spiritual presence with his people. See **Joh 1:14**.

Isaiah 7:15

Ver. 15. Butter and honey shall he eat..... As the Messiah Jesus no doubt did; since he was born in a land flowing with milk and honey, and in a time of plenty, being a time of general peace; so that this phrase points at the place where, and the time when, the Messiah should be born, as well as expresses the truth of his human nature, and the manner of his bringing up, which was in common with that of other children. hamx signifies the "cream of milk", as well as "butter", as Jarchi, in Ge 18:8, observes; and milk and honey were common food for infants:

that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good; meaning not knowledge of good and bad food, so as to choose the one, and refuse the other; but knowledge of moral good and evil; and this does not design the end of his eating butter and honey, as if that was in order to gain such knowledge, which have no such use and tendency; but the time until which he should live on such food; namely, until he was grown up, or come to years of discretion, when he could distinguish between good and evil; so that as the former phrase shows that he assumed a true body like ours, which was nourished with proper food; this that he assumed a reasonable soul, which, by degrees, grew and increased in wisdom and knowledge; see **Lu 2:52**. wtedl should be rendered, "until he knows"; as vrpl in Le 24:12 which the Chaldee paraphrase of Onkelos renders, "until it was declared to them"; and so the Targum here,

"butter and honey shall he eat, while or before the child knows not, or until he knows to refuse the evil, and choose the good."

Isaiah 7:16

Ver. 16. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good,.... This may be understood of Isaiah's child, Shearjashub, he had along with him, he was bid to take with him; and who therefore must be supposed to bear some part, or answer some end or other, in this prophecy; which it is very probable may be this, viz. to assure Ahaz and the house of David that the land which was abhorred by them should be forsaken of both its kings, before the child that was with him was grown to years of discretion; though it may be understood of any child, and so of the Messiah; and the sense be, that before any child, or new born babe, such an one as is promised, **Isa 7:14**, arrives to years of discretion, even in the space of a few years, this remarkable deliverance should be wrought, and the Jews freed from all fears of being destroyed by these princes:

the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings; meaning not the land of Judea, now distressed by them, which they should leave; for that could not be said to be abhorred by Ahaz, or the house of David; but the land of Israel and Syria, called one land, because of the confederacy between the kings of them, Rezin and Remaliah's son, which Ahaz and his nobles abhorred, because of their joining together against them; and so it was, that in a very little time both these kings were cut off; Pekah the son of Remaliah was slain by Hoshea the son of Elah, who reigned in his stead, 2Ki 15:30 and Rezin was slain by the king of Assyria, 2Ki 16:9.

Isaiah 7:17

Ver. 17. The Lord shall bring upon thee,.... These words are directed to Ahaz; and show, that though he and his kingdom would be safe from the two kings that conspired against him, yet evils should come upon him from another quarter, even from the Assyrians he sent to for help, and in whom he trusted; in which the Lord himself would have a hand, and permit them in his providence, in order to chastise him for his unbelief, stubbornness, and ingratitude in refusing the sign offered him, and for his other sins; and the calamities threatened began in his time; and therefore it is said, "upon thee"; for Tilgathpilneser, king of Assyria, to whom he sent for help, instead of helping and strengthening him, distressed him, 2Ch 28:20:

and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house; so in the reign of his son Hezekiah, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded the land of Judah, took all its fenced cities, excepting Jerusalem, and came up even to that, 2Ki 18:13 and in the times of Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up against Jerusalem, and destroyed it, and carried the people of Judah captive, 2Ki 25:1 and these are the evil days, the days of affliction and adversity, here threatened:

days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah: meaning the revolt of the ten tribes from the house of David, in the times of Rehoboam, 1Ki 12:16 which was a day of great adversity, a great affliction to the house of Judah; and there had been several evil days since, and that very lately; as when the king of Syria came into the land, and carried away great multitudes captives to Damascus; and when Pekah, king of Israel, slew in Judah, on one day, a hundred and twenty thousand valiant men, and carried captive two hundred thousand women, sons and daughters, with a great spoil, 2Ch 28:5 and yet these were not to be compared with the calamitous times yet to come:

[even] the king of Assyria; or "with the king of Assyria", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; rather the meaning is, that those days of trouble should come by the king of Assyria {i}, as they did. The Septuagint version renders it, "from the day that Ephraim took away from Judah the king of the Assyrians"; and the Syriac and Arabic versions, just the reverse, "from the day that the king of the Assyrians", or "Assyria, carried away Ephraim from Judea"; neither of them right.

{i} rwva Klm ta "per regem Assyriae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; and which is preferred by Noldius, Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 120, No. 616.

Isaiah 7:18

Ver. 18. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... the time when those evil days before spoken of should take place:

[that] the Lord shall hiss for the fly that [is] in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt; or flies, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it; the Egyptians, so called because their country abounded with flies; and because of the multitude of their armies, and the swiftness of their march; this seems to have had its accomplishment when Pharaohnechoh king of Egypt slew Josiah, put his son Jehoahaz, that reigned after him, in bands, placed Eliakim his brother in his stead, and made the land of Judah tributary to him,

2Ki 23:29 though some think either the Edomites or Philistines, that bordered on Egypt, are meant; who in Ahaz's time invaded Judah, and brought it low, 2Ch 28:17 or else the Ethiopians, that inhabited on the furthermost borders of Egypt, and the rivers of it; who either came up separately against Judah, or served under Nebuchadnezzar; see Isa 18:1:

and for the bee that [is] in the land of Assyria; the Assyrian army, so called because the country abounded with bees; and because of the number of their armies, their military order and discipline, and their hurtful and mischievous nature. The Targum paraphrases the whole thus,

"and it shall be at that time that the Lord shall call to a people, bands of armies, of mighty men, who are numerous as flies, and shall bring them from the ends of the land of Egypt; and to mighty armies, who are powerful as bees, and shall bring them from the uttermost parts of the land of Assyria:"

hissing or whistling for them denotes the ease with which this should be done, and with what swiftness and readiness those numerous and powerful armies should come; and the allusion is to the calling of bees out of their hives into the fields, and from thence into their hives again, by tinkling of brass, or by some musical sound, in one way or another.

Isaiah 7:19

Ver. 19. And they shall come,.... The Egyptian and Assyrian armies, when the Lord calls for them in his providence, and his time is come to make use of them as a scourge to his people:

and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys: made so by war; this is said in allusion to flies and bees resting on trees and flowers; and signifies that these armies, after long and tedious marches, should all of them, without being diminished by the way, enter the land of Judea, fill all places, and take up their abode there for a while:

and in the holes of the rocks. Kimchi thinks that the former phrase designs cities in valleys, and this fortified cities which are upon rocks:

and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes; in allusion to flies and bees. Kimchi interprets this of unwalled towns and villages. The Targum of the whole verse is, "and they shall all of them come and dwell in the streets of the cities, and in the clifts of the rocks, and in all deserts full of sedges, and in all houses of praise."

The sense is, that they should be in all cities, towns, and villages, whether fortified or not, and in all houses of high and low, rich and poor, in cottages and in palaces; there would be no place free from them, nor no escaping out of their hands.

Isaiah 7:20

Ver. 20. In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired,.... Meaning the Assyrian monarch, whom he would use as an instrument in his hand to spoil and cut off the people of the Jews; who is compared to a "razor" for sharpness; and for the thorough work, and utter ruin and destruction, he should be the means of; and called a "hired" one, either in reference to the present Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria, by which he prevailed upon him to come and help him against the kings of Syria and Israel, 2Ki 16:7 or to a reward given by the Lord to Nebuchadnezzar for the service in which he employed him, see Eze 29:18:

[namely], by them beyond the river; not Nile, but Euphrates; even the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Babylonians, who lived on the other side that river; which, with what follows, explains the simile of the razor:

by the king of Assyria; who ruled over those beyond the river:

the head, and the hair of the feet; and it shall also consume the beard; signifying that as a razor cuts off the hair entirely where it is applied, and leaves nothing behind, whether of the head, beard, or feet, or privy parts, which are meant by the latter; so the king of Assyria should carry all clean off captive out of the land of Judea; king, princes, nobles, and common people; those of the highest, and of the middling, and of the lowest class. The Targum is,

"in that time the Lord shall slay them as one is slain by a sharp sword, by clubs, and by saws, by those beyond the river, and by the king of Assyria; the king, and his army, and even his rulers, together shall he destroy."

So Jarchi explains it. Several of the Jewish writers, as Aben Ezra, Abarbinel, and Kimchi {k}, explain this of the Angel of the Lord destroying Sennacherib's army, when before Jerusalem, in Hezekiah's time; so the latter interprets it: "the head"; the heads of his armies: "the hair of the feet"; the multitude of the people: "the beard"; the king, who died, not in the camp, but was killed by his sons in his own land; but this is not a prophecy of the destruction of the Assyrian army, but of the Jewish people by it; and the whole denotes the mean and low condition, the state of slavery and bondage, the Jews should be brought into; of which the shaving of the hair is the symbol; it was usual to shave the head and hair of such as were taken captive, as a sign of reproach and servitude; see 2Sa 10:4 {l}.

{k} Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 95. 2. and 96. 1. {l} Vid. Lydium de re militari, l. 6. c. 6. p. 238, 239. & Noldium, No. 937.

Isaiah 7:21

Ver. 21. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... Not in the days of Hezekiah, after the destruction of Sennacherib's army, when there followed great fruitfulness and plenty, Isa 37:30 as Kimchi and Jarchi interpret it; but in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, after the destruction of Jerusalem, when some poor men were left in the land to till it, Jer 39:10 for of these, and not of rich men, are the following words to be understood:

[that] a man shall nourish a young cow and two sheep; this seems to denote both the scarcity of men and cattle, through the ravages of the army of the Chaldeans; that there should not be large herds and flocks, only a single cow, and two or three sheep; and yet men should be so few, and families so thin, that these would be sufficient to support them comfortably.

Isaiah 7:22

Ver. 22. And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk [that] they shall give,.... The cow and the two sheep, having large pastures, and few cattle to feed upon them, those few would give such abundance of milk, that the owner of them would make butter of it, and live upon it, having no occasion to eat milk; and there being few or none to sell it to:

he shall eat butter; the milk producing a sufficient quantity of it for himself and his family:

for butter and honey shall everyone eat that is left in the land: signifying that though they would be few, they would enjoy a plenty of such sort of food as their small flocks and herds would furnish them with, and the bees produce. The Targum and Jarchi interpret this of the righteous that shall be left in the land; but it is rather to be extended unto all, righteous and unrighteous.

Isaiah 7:23

Ver. 23. And it shall come to pass in that day; [that] every place shall be,.... Barren and unfruitful, for want of men to till the ground:

where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings; which were so good, as to be sold or let out for so many silver shekels {m}; or the fruit of them came to such a price; see **So 8:11**:

it shall [even] be for briers and thorns; for want of persons to stock the ground and cultivate it.

{m} Which was about two shillings and sixpence of our money.

Isaiah 7:24

Ver. 24. With arrows and with bows shall [men] come thither,.... For fear of wild beasts, serpents, and scorpions, as Jarchi; or in order to hunt them, as others; or because of thieves and robbers, as Aben Ezra:

because all the land shall become briers and thorns; among which such creatures, and such sort of men, would hide themselves.

Isaiah 7:25

Ver. 25. And [on] all hills that shall be digged with the mattock,.... Which could not be ploughed with a plough, but used to be dug with a mattock or spade, and then sowed with corn:

there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns; where thorns and briers used not to grow, and where there was no fear or danger of being overrun with them, as the vineyards in the valleys and champaign country; yet those places should become desolate in another way; or rather, there shall be now no fences made of briers and thorns, which deter cattle from entering into fields and vineyards thus fenced:

but it shall be for the setting forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle; there being no fence of briers and thorns to keep them out, cattle both of the greater and lesser sort should get into the corn, and feed upon it, and make such places desolate, where much pains were taken to cultivate them. The Targum is,

"it shall be for a place of lying down of oxen, and for a place of dwelling of flocks of sheep;"

not for pastures, but for folds for them; though the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, suggest these places should become pastures; and therefore some understand this as a prophecy of a change in the country for the better, and of the great fruitfulness of it after the Jews' return from the Babylonish captivity.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 8

This chapter contains a confirmation of the sudden destruction of the kingdoms of Syria and Israel, by another sign; a threatening to those that gloried in the kings of those nations, with an invasion of their land by the Assyrian monarch; a sarcastic address to those that joined in confederacy against Judah; some directions and instructions to the people of God; and some prophecies concerning the Messiah, and the miserable estate of the Jews, that should reject him and his Gospel. The sign given is a son of the Prophet Isaiah, whom his wife conceived and bore, and whose name was written with a man's pen, Mahershalalhashbaz, of which there were witnesses, whose names are mentioned; and it is predicted, that before this child should have knowledge to call his father and mother, Damascus and Samaria, the chief cities of Syria and Israel, would be taken and spoiled by the king of Assyria, **Isa 8:1** who would invade, the land of Israel, and even pass through the land of Judah, as a chastisement not only of the Israelites that rejoiced in Rezin and Remaliah's son, the kings of Syria and Israel; but also of those Jews who chose to be under them, or neglected the promise of God, and applied to Assyria for help, **Isa 8:5** and then both the people of Israel and of Syria are addressed, in a sarcastic way, to associate and take counsel together, when they should be broke to pieces, and their counsel come to nought, **Isa 8:9** and the prophet being instructed by the Lord how to behave among the people of the Jews, advises them not to join with them whose cry was a confederacy with Assyria, nor to be afraid of the two kings that were come up against them, but to sanctify the Lord of hosts, and trust in him, and make him the object of their fear and dread, **Isa 8:11** which is enforced from the consideration of what the Lord, who is no other than the Messiah, would be, both to his own people, and to his enemies; to the one a sanctuary, and to the other a stone of stumbling, a rock of offence, a trap, and a snare, **Isa 8:14** then follows an instruction to the prophet to take care of the Gospel of Christ, and communicate it to his disciples, **Isa 8:16** upon which the prophet determines to keep waiting and looking for his coming, who at present was hidden from the people of God, **Isa 8:17** wherefore the Messiah is introduced, as presenting himself and his children to the prophet's view, which would be for signs and wonders in Israel, gazed at and reproached, **Isa 8:18** and then the folly and vanity of seeking counsel of the Scribes and Pharisees, when Christ should be come in the flesh, is exposed; whose Gospel should be attended to, and not those dark and blind guides, **Isa 8:19** and the chapter is concluded with the wretched condition of the Jews that called Jesus accursed; they should pass through the land, and find no food; and look into it, and see nothing but darkness and misery, **Isa 8:21**.

Ver. 1. Moreover the Lord said unto me,.... This is another prophecy, confirming the same thing that was promised in the preceding chapter **Isa 7:1**; namely, safety to the Jews from the two kings of Syria and Israel, which combined against them:

take thee a great roll; or volume, a writing book, a roll of parchment, in which form the ancients used to write, Ps 40:7. The Targum renders it, a "table"; a writing table, such an one as Zacharias called for, **Lu 1:63** and this was to be a "great" or large one, because much was to be written in it; or what was to be written was to be written in large letters:

and write in it with a man's pen; such as men usually write with; and in such a style and language as may be easily understood by men, even though unlearned; and so clearly and plainly, that he that runs may read; and so the Targum, "write in it a clear writing;"

very plain, and explicit, and legible:

concerning Mahershalalhashbaz; a son of the prophet Isaiah, so called, **Isa 8:3** whose name was very significant, and was given him on purpose to express the sudden destruction of the enemies of Judah. The Targum renders it,

"hasten to seize the prey, and to take away the spoil."

Some translate it, "in hastening the prey, the spoiler hastens"; perhaps it may be better rendered, "hasten to the spoil, hasten to the prey"; as if the words were spoken to the Assyrian monarch, to hasten to the spoil of Damascus and Samaria; and the repetition of the same thing in different words may have respect to the spoils of both, see **Isa 8:4** and for the greater confirmation of the thing. Gussetius has a very peculiar fancy about the sense of this text; he observes that jrx, rendered a "pen", signifies some hollow vessel, in which things were put; and supposes that it here designs a man's chest, or some such thing, in which garments might be laid up and reserved: and Nwylg, is the singular of a word used in **Isa 3:23**, for some sort of luxurious garments wore by women; so that, upon the whole, the reading and sense of the words are, that the prophet is bid to take a large garment of the above sort, and write upon it, putting it into the chest. This for Mahershalalhashbaz; signifying it was to lie there till this child was born; and intimating hereby, that the women, far from battle, would be spoiled of their soft and precious garments, as well as the men be slain in war {m}, though this is more tolerable than the fancy of Huetius {n}, that the whole is an euphemism, in modest terms, expressing the prophet's coition with his wife.

{m} Vid. Comment. Ebr. p. 286. {n} Demonstr. Evangel. prop. 7. parag. 15. p. 352.

Isaiah 8:2

Ver. 2. And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record,.... Not his marriage, nor the birth of his son, nor the name he gave him, but the prophecy written in the roll, concerning the spoiling of Syria and Israel, in a very short time; that so, when it came to pass, it might be a clear and certain point that it had been foretold by him:

Uriah the priest; of whom mention is made in 2Ki 16:10 which some object to, because he proved a wicked man, and obeyed the king's command, contrary to the law of God, in building an altar according to the form of one at Damascus; but to this it is replied, that it was before this happened that Isaiah took him to be a witness; and besides, because of the authority of his office, and his familiarity with Ahaz, he must be allowed to be a proper and pertinent person to bear testimony in this case. Some indeed, and so the Jewish commentators, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, would have Uriah the prophet meant, who prophesied in the times of Jehoiakim, and was slain by him, Jer 26:20 to which it is objected, that he was no priest, as this was and, besides, was not born at this time; it was a hundred and forty years after that he lived:

and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah; this was Zechariah the prophet, as the Targum, and all the Jewish writers, say {o}; who lived in the times of Darius, which was two hundred and forty years after this; but most likely this Zechariah is he who was Ahaz's wife's father, 2Ki 18:2 or rather, as Vitringa thinks, Zechariah a Levite, a son of Asaph, 2Ch 29:13 though there are some learned men {p}, who think the two prophets Uriah and Zechariah are meant, though then unborn; who prophesied of the like or same things as Isaiah did; and so were faithful witnesses of his prophecy, as of the calamities that should come on the land, the restitution of it to its former fruitfulness, and the coming of the Messiah; nor is the observation of Abarbinel to be despised, taken from the ancient Jews, that these are the words, not of the prophet, but of God himself; as also that they are to be read in the future tense, "and I will take to me", &c.

{o} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 24. 2. {p} Cocceius, Witsius, Miscel. Sacr. tom. 1. l. 1. c. 20. sect. 8, 9, 10.

Isaiah 8:3

Ver. 3. And I went unto the prophetess,.... His wife, so called; not because she prophesied, but because she was the wife of a prophet; and besides, the birth of her son later mentioned, and his name, had in them the nature of a prophecy. The phrase of going unto her is an euphemism, a modest way of expressing the conjugal debt:

and she conceived and bare a son; which Jarchi would have the same with Immanuel in **Isa 7:14** but this is a later prophecy, and a distinct one from that; and not only the names of the children are different, but the mothers also; the one a virgin, the other the prophet's wife.

Then said the Lord to me, call his name Mahershalalhashbaz: of the signification of this name, See Gill on "Isa 8:1". Kimchi thinks that his name did not consist of these four words, only of two of them; and that he was sometimes called "Mahershalal", and sometimes "Hashbaz": both signifying the same thing. Some think that all this was done only in a vision, and not in reality, to declare and confirm what follows; though by that it seems rather to be a real fact.

Isaiah 8:4

Ver. 4. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, my father, and my mother,.... Which are commonly the first words children learn to say; and so it signifies that what follows should happen in a year or two; as it did:

the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria, shall be taken away before the king of Assyria; or, "he shall take away the riches" {q}, &c.; not the child, unless he is considered as the sign of taking them away; but the soldier, put for the whole Assyrian army, which carried off the riches and spoil of these places, in the presence, and by the order, of the king of Assyria; the first of these, namely, Damascus, the metropolis of Syria, with its riches, wealth, and army, were taken and carried away by Tilgathpilneser, king of Assyria, within the time here mentioned, 2Ki 16:9 but the latter, Samaria, the metropolis of the kingdom of Israel, was not taken and spoiled until the sixth year of Hezekiah, and ninth of Hoshea, 2Ki 17:6 but because the prophecy began to be fulfilled, and was fulfilled in part, within the time mentioned, the whole is attributed to it; though it should be observed, that before this, after Pekah the son of Remaliah was slain, and Hoshea reigned in his stead, the king of Assyria came up against him, and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents; which may be called the spoil of Samaria, 2Ki 17:3.

{q} lyx ta avy "asportabit, opulentiam----servus regis Assyriae", Junius & Tremellius "auferet opes----is [qui stet] coram facie regis Assyriae", Piscator.

Isaiah 8:5

Ver. 5. The Lord spake also unto me again,.... In the same prophecy, or in another; the Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord added to speak with me again;"

but rather Jehovah the Father, or the Spirit of the Lord, is meant, since the Person speaking is distinguished from Immanuel, **Isa 8:8**:

saying; as follows:

Isaiah 8:6

Ver. 6. Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah, that go softly,.... The same with Siloam, **Joh 9:7** and so it is called in the Septuagint version here; and the word here used signifies "sent", as it is there interpreted. Jarchi says it is a fountain, whose name was Gihon and Shiloah; see **1Ki 1:33** concerning which Jerom yet writes,

"Siloam is a fountain at the foot of Mount Sion, which does not send forth water continually, but on certain times and days; and comes through the hollow places of the earth, and caves of a hard rock, with a great noise; of which we especially cannot doubt, who dwell in this province."

This was a small current of water, which moved softly and slowly, and not with a rapid motion, as some rivers do; to which the kingdom of the house of David is compared, because of its easy and gentle government; as the Targum, which paraphrases the words thus,

"because this people loathed the kingdom of the house of David which ruled them quietly, as the waters of Shiloah which flow softly;"

or because of the weakness of it in the days of Ahaz, it had not strength to oppose their enemies, as Kimchi suggests; now the ten tribes despised the house of David, and departed from it, and continued in their revolt, and had that government in contempt, as well as the religion of it. Jerusalem, the temple, and the worship of God in it, may be meant by the waters of Shiloah; it being usual to name places by the rivers that are near them.

And rejoice in Rezin, and in Remaliah's son: in Rezin king of Syria; and in Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel. Perhaps respect may be had to later times, to the times of the Messiah, when the Jews would despise his government, and reject him as King; though he is the Prince of peace, and his government the most quiet and peaceable one, and he the Shiloah, the sent of God, and declare they had no other king but Caesar.

Isaiah 8:7

Ver. 7. Now therefore the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many,.... Alluding to the river Euphrates, which ran by Babylon, which was a large river, full of water, and had a rapid torrent, and so is opposed to Shiloah and its waters; and these waters are explained as follows:

[even] the king of Assyria, and all his glory; his army, which was his glory, in which he gloried, and by which he got himself honour and glory. It is usual for mighty kings, kingdoms, and armies, to be signified by such waters, for their multitude and strength; see
Re 17:1:

and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks; that is, either of the land of Ephraim or Israel, and overflow the borders thereof, run over all the whole land, and possess its fortified towns and cities. The Targum is,

"therefore behold the Lord shall bring, and cause to ascend upon them, the army of the people, who are many, as the waters of a river, strong and mighty, the king of Assyria, and his army; and he shall come up upon all his rivers, and shall go upon all his banks;"

or rather "its own" {r} channels and banks, as it may be rendered; and so denotes, that the king of Assyria, and his army, should pass the Euphrates, and come out of their own land, and subdue the adjacent kingdoms and territories, and particularly the land of Judah, as follows.

{r} wytwdg-wyqypa lk "omnes alvcos suos----ripas suas", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Isaiah 8:8

Ver. 8. And he shall pass through Judah,.... That is, the king of Assyria, compared to a river of mighty waters; who should not only run over and possess the land of Israel, or the ten tribes, but should enter into Judea, and pass through it, as a chastisement for not trusting in the Lord, but sending to Assyria for help; who instead of helping, distressed them in the times of Ahaz, even Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, 2Ch 28:20:

he shall overflow, and go over; the whole land of Judea, as Sennacherib king of Assyria did in Hezekiah's time:

he shall reach [even] to the neck; that is, to Jerusalem: the whole land is compared to a body, of which Jerusalem was the head; the Assyrian army, comparable to the waters of a great river, overflowed the whole land, took all the fenced cities of Judah, and came up even to Jerusalem, so that the whole was in great danger of being drowned and destroyed; as a man is, when the waters are come up to his neck; see 2Ki 18:13:

and the stretching out of his wings, the wings of the Assyrian army,

shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel; Judea, called Immanuel's land, because he was to be born there, and converse and die there; and this is particularly mentioned, to show that, though this land should be overrun by the Assyrians, yet not destroyed, until Immanuel, the son of the virgin, was born here. The Targum is,

"and he shall pass through the land of the house of Judah as an overflowing torrent, unto Jerusalem shall he come; and the people of his army shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel."

Isaiah 8:9

Ver. 9. Associate yourselves, O ye people,.... Both of Syria and Israel, whose two kings were confederate against Judah:

and ye shall be broken in pieces; as the kingdom of Syria was by Tilgathpilneser quickly after this, 2Ki 16:9 and the kingdom of Ephraim or

Israel by Shalmaneser, 2Ki 17:6:

and give ear, all ye of far countries; the Assyrians, and the nations that belonged to them, who were more remote from Judea:

gird yourselves; for a long and tedious march, and for war; it may signify the putting on of their whole armour; for, as Pausanius {s} says, the ancients used to call putting on of armour, girding:

and ye shall be broken in pieces: as the Assyrian army was, which came up against Jerusalem in Hezekiah's time, 2Ki 19:35:

gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; this is repeated for confirmation sake, to denote the certainty of it.

{s} Boeotica sive, l. 9. p. 567.

Isaiah 8:10

Ver. 10. Take counsel together,.... As Rezin king of Syria, and Remaliah's son, did against Judah, **Isa 7:5**:

it shall come to nought; for, though they came up against it, they could not overcome it, 2Ki 16:5:

speak the word; what they intended, resolved upon, and determined to do; this is the issue of their counsels:

and it shall not stand; See Gill on "Isa 7:7":

for God is with us; which is the interpretation of the name "Immanuel": and which shows that the reason why the consultations and resolutions of the enemies of Judah could not take place, so as to destroy it, was because Immanuel, the virgin's son, was to be born in it.

Isaiah 8:11

Ver. 11. For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand,.... In the strength of prophecy, as the Targum explains it; and so all the Jews' interpreters understand it of prophecy, as in **Eze 1:3**: or, "the Lord spake thus to me, when he took (me) by the hand" {t}; as parents or masters take hold of the hands of children, while they are advising and instructing them, as expressive of their great affection for them; and when they would retain them with them, or restrain them from doing amiss:

and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people: or join with them in desiring and seeking for the help of the king of Assyria, against Rezin and Remaliah's son; or in being willing to surrender up into their hands:

saying; as follows:

{t} dyh tqzxb "apprehensione manus", Piscator; "cum manu me apprehenderit", Tigurine version.

Isaiah 8:12

Ver. 12. Say ye not, a confederacy,.... With the king of Assyria, or any other; do not cry it up as a right thing, and express pleasure and satisfaction in it, and encourage others to come into it, and vote for it, and declare an approbation of it; or a "rebellion", as the Targum, that is, against Ahaz; and so deliver up the kingdom of the house of David into the hands of its enemies:

to all [them] to whom this people shall say, a confederacy: who either were for entering into an alliance with the Assyrian monarch, and sending for him to help; or were for joining with their enemies, to the subversion of the present government. Jarchi interprets this of Shebna the Scribe, and his company; who, as he suggests, conspired against Hezekiah, and secretly made an agreement with Sennacherib king of Assyria; but the former sense is best:

neither fear their fear, nor be afraid: let not the same fear possess you as does them, on account of Syria and Israel combining together against Judah; nor be afraid of their two kings, as they were; since there was nothing to fear from them; it being impossible that the kingdom of Judah should fail until Shiloh came, or Immanuel was born of a virgin in it; nor does it become the people of God, and especially his prophets and ministers, to be afraid of men; since the fear of men brings a snare. See **1Pe 3:14**.

Isaiah 8:13

Ver. 13. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself,.... Christ, Immanuel, God with us, the Lord of the armies above and below, of angels and of men, God over all, the true Jehovah, who is sanctified by his people, when they declare him to be so; as the Targum paraphrases it,

"the Lord of hosts, him shall ye say is holy;"

for they cannot make him so, nor can he receive any holiness from them, nor does he need any; but they celebrate the perfection of his holiness, and ascribe it to him; yea, they sanctify him, by ascribing their holiness to him; by looking to him as their sanctification, and by deriving and expecting every degree and measure of holiness from him, to complete theirs; by exercising faith upon him, and showing a regard to his commands and ordinances:

and [let] him [be] your fear, and [let] him [be] your dread; that is, the object of fear and dread; not of a servile fear and dread, but of a holy reverence and godly fear; such a fear as is the grace of the covenant, which flows from the goodness of God, and has that for its object, and is influenced by it; see **Ho 3:5** where the same Lord, Messiah, David the king, is meant, as here. See **1Pe 3:15**.

Isaiah 8:14

Ver. 14. And he shall be for a sanctuary,.... Not the king of Assyria, as Aben Ezra, but the Lord of hosts: the Targum rightly interprets it of the word of the Lord, the essential Word; of the Messiah, who is for a sanctuary, or asylum, a place of refuge for his people in all times of distress, and who is their dwelling place in all generations; he dwells in them, and they dwell in him; and where they dwell safely and securely, peaceably and quietly, comfortably and pleasantly, and that always; he is a sanctuary to worship in, in whom they draw nigh to the Father, and offer up the sacrifices of prayer and praise, and where the glory of God is seen by them, and they have communion with him; or "for sanctification", as the Septuagint version; this Christ is to his people, **1Co 1:30**:

but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel: which Jarchi interprets of Pekah, the son of Remaliah, and his company, and of Shebna and his company; but Aben Ezra much better of the kingdoms of Israel and of Judah, especially when the twelve tribes were under one form of government in Christ's time. In the Talmud {u} it is explained of the two houses of the fathers of Israel; and these are they, the head of the captivity in Babylon, and the prince in the land of Israel; and the Nazarenes, as Jerom {w} reports, apply the words to the two houses or families of Hillel and Shammai, who were two heads of schools in Jerusalem, a little before the times of Christ, and were of the sect of the Pharisees; and to whom indeed Christ was a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, as he was to the Jews in common; who were offended and stumbled at his birth and parentage, he descending from poor parents; at his education and place of bringing up; at the mean appearance of himself and his followers; at the obscurity of his kingdom, it not being of this world, nor coming with observation; at the company he kept, and the audience that attended on him; at his doctrines and miracles; and at his death, and the manner of it; see **Ro 9:32**.

For a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; even the principal inhabitants of it, such as the elders of the people, priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, who sought to entangle Christ in his talk, and to ensnare him by questions they put unto him; but were themselves snared and taken, convicted, confounded, and silenced. See
Mt 22:15.

{u} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 38. 1. {w} In loc.

Isaiah 8:15

Ver. 15. And many among them,.... Not all, though the greater part; for Christ was set for the falling and rising of many in Israel, **Lu 2:34**:

shall stumble, and fall, and be broken: stumble at Christ, the stumbling stone; fall by unbelief into other sins and punishment, and be broken in pieces by this stone, Mt 21:44:

and be snared, and be taken; and so die in their sins, and perish eternally. The allusion is to birds being taken in a snare or trap, or with bird lime, and therein or thereby held and detained.

Isaiah 8:16

Ver. 16. Bind up the testimony,.... These are not the words of the prophet, as Kimchi thinks, but of the Lord to the prophet, and are part of that instruction given him, **Isa 8:11**. By "the testimony" is meant the word of prophecy delivered to him; particularly that evangelical part of it respecting Immanuel, who was to be born of a virgin, and would be for a sanctuary to them that believe in him, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, to unbelievers; so the Gospel is called the testimony of Christ, it bearing witness of his person, office, and grace, **2Ti 1:8** and "binding" denotes care of it, as something valuable, that it be not lost, but committed to the trust faithful men, called disciples of Christ in the next clause, in allusion to the binding up of money, or anything of value, in bundles, to be laid up and preserved, Ge 42:35 so the Targum,

"O prophet, keep the testimony:"

seal the law among my disciples: the disciples of Christ, the faithful of that day, and of after times, to whom this prophecy, and the "doctrine" in it, which the word "law" signifies, even the doctrine of Christ, should be transmitted or communicated, which is meant by "sealing" of it; not hiding it from them, but signifying, that while it was a sealed book, a hidden doctrine, and delivered in parables to others, it should be made known to them, and sealed and laid up by them among their treasure, and be so esteemed of; as the Gospel, the doctrine of grace, is, by the true disciples and followers of Christ; who are such as are taught of God, have learned of the Father, who continue in the word and doctrine of Christ, love his people, take up the cross and follow him, and bring forth fruit to the glory of his heavenly Father, **Joh 6:45**.

Isaiah 8:17

Ver. 17. And I will wait upon the Lord,.... Or "for the Lord" {x}; for the coming of Christ, the Immanuel, who would be a sanctuary to some, and a stone of stumbling to others, and whose doctrine in the meanwhile would be bound up and sealed; faith in, and expectation of the Messiah's coming, are often signified by waiting for him,
Isa 25:9:

that hideth his face from the house of Jacob; to whom the promise of him was made, from whom he should descend, to whom he should be sent, and whom he would redeem. This is not to be understood of his deserting of his people, and withdrawing his gracious presence from them, to show his displeasure at them, and resentment of their conduct, which is sometimes the sense of this phrase; but as descriptive of Christ before his assumption of human nature, when he was "Deus absconditus", the hidden God, as some render the words in Isa 45:15 until he was manifest in the flesh; and which is therefore called his "appearing", **2Ti 1:10**:

and I will look for him; the prophet here speaks in his own person, and in the person of the church who in that, and in succeeding ages, as well as before, were looking by faith for the coming of Christ, and redemption by him, **Lu 2:38** though some understand this of Christ, expressing his satisfaction in the few disciples he had among the Jews, and determining to wait for the accomplishment of divine promises hereafter, when he should have a larger number; the Lord for the present hiding his face from the Jewish nation, and giving them to a spirit of judicial blindness; which sense well agrees with what goes before, and follows after.

{x} hwhyl ytykxw "praestolabor Dominum", Montanus; "expectabo Dominum", V. L.

Isaiah 8:18

Ver. 18. Behold, I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me,.... These are the words of Christ, as is clear from **Heb 2:13** who, upon the prophet's declaring his resolution to look and wait for him, presents himself and his children to him, as if he was actually come, or else continues his discourse from the preceding verse; for these are not the words of the prophet, speaking of himself and his natural children, Shearjashub and Mahershalalhashbaz; nor of his spiritual children, his disciples, called sometimes the sons of the prophets; but of Christ, who has a seed, a spiritual offspring, to whom he stands in the relation of a father, **Isa 9:6** and who are given him of God, in the covenant of grace; for whose sake he partook of flesh and blood, and died to gather them together, being scattered abroad; and redeemed them, that they might receive the adoption of children; and who, being regenerated, believe in him: these were from eternity given unto him, to be his seed and offspring, his spouse, his sheep, his portion, and inheritance; in virtue of which they are brought unto him, and received by him in time in effectual calling; which gift of them to Christ is an instance of the Father's love to him, and of distinguishing grace to them.

[Are] for signs and wonders in Israel; not the prophet and his natural children;

though it is true that he himself was for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and Ethiopia, Isa 20:3 and his children, Shearjashub and Mahershalalhashbaz, were signs in their very names, as well as actions, of the future deliverance of Judah from its enemies; but Christ and his spiritual children: Christ the Immanuel, the son of the virgin, is "for a sign", given by the Lord himself, even of the same deliverance, **Isa 7:14** and a sign of the love of God to his people, and of his care of them, and regard unto them; and a sign that should be spoken against, as he was in his person, office, doctrines, and miracles, by the unbelieving Jews, **Lu 2:34**

and for wonders: his name being wonderful; his person, as God man, wonderful; his love to his people wonderful; his works and actions, doctrines and miracles, life and death, being wonderful;
See Gill on "Isa 9:6" and so his children and people are "for signs and wonders"; they are like Joshua's fellows, men wondered at,
See Gill on "Zec 3:8"; they are a wonder to themselves, that such sinful and unworthy creatures should partake of so much grace; they are a wonder to angels, that they should be chosen, redeemed, and called; and they are a wonder to Christ, who admires his own grace in them; and they are a wonder to the men of the world, a spectacle, a gazingstock to them, and are reproached by them; and all this is

from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion; Christ, as man and Mediator, is from him, and all that befall him is according to his determination, will, and pleasure; his children, and their being children, and given to him; and whatsoever they have, and whatsoever they meet with, and befall them, is all from the Lord; and this may serve to comfort them, that "the Lord of hosts", of armies in heaven and in earth, is for them, and on their side, and therefore need not fear any that shall be against them; and that he "dwelleth in Mount Zion", the church, which he has chosen for his rest, and where he will dwell for ever, and so will never leave nor forsake his people.

Isaiah 8:19

Ver. 19. And when they shall say unto you,.... These are the words of Christ continued, as making his appearance in Israel; and are an address to his people among them, even to his children, disciples, and followers, advising them what they should do, when those among whom they dwelt should press them to seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards, that peep, and that mutter; meaning the Scribes and Pharisees, the doctors among the Jews, who sat in Moses's chair, and who were very much given to sorcery, and the magic art, and used enchantments, which were performed by "muttering"; hence we read of muttering over a wound for the healing of it; and muttering over serpents and scorpions at the driving of them away {y}; and of such a Rabbi muttering in the name of such an one {z}; and of such and such a doctor skilled in wonders or miraculous operations: See Gill on "Mt 24:24" yea, even such as were chosen into the sanhedrim, or great council, were to be skilled in the arts of soothsayers, diviners, and wizards, and the like, that they might know how to judge them {a}; now the Jews would have had the disciples of Christ to have applied to these men to direct their judgments in religious affairs, and be determined by them concerning the Messiah and other things:

should not a people seek unto their God? "to" Christ, who is the Lord God omniscient and omnipotent, who knows all things, and whose name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Angel of the great council; and who is able to give the best counsel and direction in matters of moment and consequence, and able to do everything for his people they stand in need of; and who being present with them, God manifest in the flesh, it would be egregious folly to apply to any other, and especially such as are here described; see **Joh 6:68**:

for the living to the dead? that is, should men seek to such who are no other than dead men, for the sake or on the account of such who are living? The disciples of Christ, the children that God had given him, were quickened and made alive by the grace of God, had principles of grace and spiritual life implanted in them, had passed from death to life, lived by faith on Christ, lived holy lives, and were heirs of eternal life; and therefore it does not become them, nor any of them, to consult persons dead in trespasses and sins, who knew no more, and were no more capable of judging of spiritual things, than dead men are. See **1Co 2:14**.

{y} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 101. 1. {z} T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 40. 4. {a} Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1.

Isaiah 8:20

Ver. 20. To the law, and to the testimony,.... Kimchi takes this to be an oath, "by the law, and by the testimony", it is so and so; but Aben Ezra observes there is no instance of this kind in Scripture; it is a direction of Christ's to his disciples, to attend to the writings of Moses and the prophets, to search the Scriptures, as in **Joh 5:39** and particularly what is before said in this prophecy concerning himself, the same is meant as on **Isa 8:16**.

if they speak not according to this word; this sure word of prophecy, to which men do well to take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place, it being the rule of faith and practice, a lamp to the feet, and a light to the path:

[it is] because [there is] no light in them; that is, in them that speak not according to it, meaning the Scribes and Pharisees; who, rejecting the written word, set up the traditions of the elders above it, and taught the people to walk according to them; and so were, as our Lord says, "blind leaders of the blind", Mt 15:14 or the words may be read, "if not"; if they will not regard the Scriptures, and the evangelical doctrine in them, and the testimony they give concerning Christ; "let them speak according to this word"; or instruction, and counsel, they have from the Scribes and Pharisees: "in which there is no light" {b}; but the darkness of ignorance, infidelity, superstition, and will worship; or "no morning"; but a night of Jewish darkness, even though the sun of righteousness was risen, and the dayspring from on high had visited the earth; yet they had received no light and knowledge from him, which was their condemnation, **Joh 1:4** **Joh 3:19** or thus, "to the law, and to the testimony, though they may say after this manner, there is no light in it" {c}; in the law and testimony, preferring the traditions, decisions, and determinations of their doctors above it. Noldhius {d} renders the words thus, "seeing they speak not according to this word, certainly they shall have no morning"; that is, seeing the seducers and false teachers, in the preceding verse **Isa 8:19**, speak not according to the word of God, and testimony of Jesus, they shall have no morning of light and joy, of grace and comfort, or any spiritual felicity; Christ will be no morning to them, but they will continue in their dark, benighted, and miserable condition, described in the following verse.

{b} wrmay al Ma "sin minus, dicant secundum verbum istud, cui mon est aurora", Piscator. So Sanctius. {c} "Licet ipsi dicent, in verbis legis, nihil lucis esse", Oleaster in Bootius. {d} Ebr. Part. Concord. p. 374. No. 1302.

Isaiah 8:21

Ver. 21. And they shall pass through it,.... The land, as the Targum and Kimchi supply it; that is, the land of Judea, as Aben Ezra interprets it. Here begins an account of the punishment that should be inflicted on the Jews, for their neglect of the prophecies of the Old Testament, and their rejection of the Messiah:

hardly bestead and hungry; put to the greatest difficulty to get food to eat, and famishing for want of it; which some understand of the time when Sennacherib's army was before Jerusalem, as Aben Ezra; but it seems better, with others, to refer it to the times of Zedekiah, when there was a sore famine, Jer 52:6 though best of all to the besieging of Jerusalem, by the Romans, and the times preceding it,
Mt 24:7 and it may also be applied to the famine of hearing the word before that, when the Gospel, the kingdom of heaven, was taken from them, for their contempt of it:

and it shall come to pass, when they shall be hungry: either in a temporal sense, having no food for their bodies; or in a mystical sense, being hungry often and earnestly desirous of the coming of their vainly expected Messiah, as a temporal Saviour of them:

they shall fret themselves; for want of food for their bodies, to satisfy their hunger; or because their Messiah does not come to help them:

and curse their King, and their God; the true Messiah, who is the King of Israel, and God manifest in the flesh; whom the unbelieving Jews called accursed, and blasphemed:

and look upwards; to heaven, for the coming of another Messiah, but in vain; or for food to eat.

Isaiah 8:22

Ver. 22. And they shall look unto the earth,.... As persons in distress, upwards and downwards, backwards and forwards, on the right hand and on the left, particularly into the land of Judea; a land that used to flow with milk and honey, a land of light, plenty, and prosperity:

and behold trouble and darkness; adversity, and miseries of all kinds, expressed by a variety of words; and even words fail to express the tribulation of these times, which were such as were not from the beginning of the world, Mt 24:22:

dimness of anguish; or "fleeing from affliction" {e}, multitudes everywhere fleeing from one place to another, to avoid the calamities coming upon them, Mt 24:16:

and [they shall be] driven to darkness; when they endeavour to escape one calamity, they shall be driven and fall into another; the whole land shall be full of nothing else.

{e} Pwem a Pwe "volare", Forerius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 9

This chapter contains a prophecy, partly of comfort to the church and people of God, against the calamities predicted in the preceding chapter **Isa 8:1**; and partly of punishment, to be inflicted upon the ungodly Israelites by their enemies. The comfort promised arises from the appearance of Christ, the great light, in some certain places of the land mentioned, said before to be afflicted, **Isa 9:1** which would occasion a joy among them; illustrated by some similes, by the joy in harvest, and at the dividing of spoils, **Isa 9:3** the cause of which is a deliverance from a burdensome yoke of tyranny and bondage, wrought in like manner as that by Gideon formerly; different from all other salvations, which are usually obtained with noise and blood, **Isa 9:4** the author of which is the Messiah; who is described by his birth as man, and by his divine sonship as God; or by his person, having two natures united in him; and by the government devolved on him; and by his several names, which express the greatness and glory of his person and office; and by the increase and administration of his government, **Isa 9:6** then follows a denunciation of judgment on Israel, **Isa 9:8** the instruments of which are pointed at, **Isa 9:11**, and the persons described that should suffer, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, **Isa 9:14** the reasons of it, their making light of former corrections, **Isa 9:9** their impenitence and hardness under chastenings, **Isa 9:13** their going astray by means of their leaders; and their hypocrisy and wickedness, **Isa 9:16** all which would occasion the wrath of God to burn against them, and consume them, **Isa 9:18** yea, through hunger and want of provisions, should destroy one another, **Isa 9:20**.

Ver. 1. Nevertheless, the dimness [shall] not [be] such as [was] in her vexation,.... The words may be rendered, "for there shall be no weariness to him that straitens" or "afflicts" them {f}; so Jarchi, who interprets it of the king of Assyria; but it is better to understand it of Titus Vespasian, who would not be weary of, but indefatigable in carrying on the siege of Jerusalem, and in distressing the Jews in all parts: or thus, "for there shall be no fleeing from him that is oppressed in it" {g}; either that is besieged in Jerusalem, or distressed in Judea; and so the words are a reason of the former distress, and a continuation and amplification of it; though many interpreters think they are to be understood by way of comfort, and as a mitigation of it, which is the sense of our version:

when at first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; either by Pul king of Assyria, in the reign of Menahem king of Israel, 2Ki 15:19 or rather by Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, in the reign of Pekah king of Israel, since by him Galilee, and all the land of Naphtali, were carried captive, 2Ki 15:29 which at the time of this prophecy was past, and was but a light affliction in comparison of what followed:

and afterwards did more grievously afflict [her]: by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, in the reign of Hoshea king of Israel, who took Samaria, and carried Israel or the ten tribes into captivity, from whence they returned not; and yet it is suggested, that the tribulation and distress that should come upon the Jews by the Romans should be greater than the heaviest of these; there should be no fleeing, no escape, no, not of any, as at those times mentioned, but wrath should come upon them to the uttermost, and particularly in the places following:

by the way of the sea; which some understand of the Mediterranean sea, and of that part of the land of Israel which lay next it; but it seems rather to design the sea of Tiberias or Galilee, as Jarchi rightly interprets it:

beyond Jordan; a part of the land of Israel so called, known by the name of Peraea; See Gill on "Mt 4:25":

in Galilee of the nations; which was inhabited not only by Jews, but by persons of other nations, and therefore so called; now these places suffered much in the wars between the Jews and the Romans, by skirmishes, sieges, robberies, plunders, &c. as appears from the history of Josephus. Some interpreters understand all this, as before observed, as an alleviation of those times of trouble, as if it would be less than in former times; but it is certain that it was to be, and was, greater than ever was known, Mt 24:21 it is true, indeed, it may be considered as an alleviation of it, and as affording some comfort in a view of it, that in those very parts where there should be so much distress and misery, the Messiah, previous to it, would appear, and honour it with his presence, who is afterwards spoken of, and so, in connection with the following words, these may be rendered thus; as by De Dieu, "but obscurity shall not be brought to it" (the land) "to which distress is brought; as at the first time he caused reproach towards the land of Zebulun, and towards the land of Naphtali, so in the last" (time) "he will give glory by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, on the border of the nations": and if it be asked what that glory should be, the answer is, "the people that walked in darkness", &c. and so the sense may be, that whereas the inhabitants of Zebulun and Naphtali, and all Galilee, were lightly esteemed of, being mean and illiterate, not famous for any arts or sciences, and having no prophet among them, should, in the days of the Messiah, be highly honoured, and made glorious by his presence, ministry, and miracles among them {h}. See Mt 14:13, where it is quoted, and applied to Christ's being in those parts.

{f} hl quwm rval Pewm al yk "quia non defatigatio ei angustanti eos." Quidam in Gataker; so Jarchi. {g} "Et non poterit avolare de angustia sua", Hieron. {h} See my book of the Prophecies of the Messiah, &c. p. 148.

Isaiah 9:2

Ver. 2. The people that walked in darkness,.... Meaning not the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, in the times of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib besieged them, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; and much less the people of Israel in Egypt, as the Targum paraphrases it; but the inhabitants of Galilee in the times of Christ; see **Mt 4:16** **Joh 1:48** and is a true character of all the people of God before conversion, who are in a state of darkness, under the power of sin, shut up in unbelief; are in gross ignorance of themselves, and their condition; of sin, and the danger they are exposed to by it; of divine and spiritual things; of the grace of God; of the way of peace, life, and salvation by Christ; and of the work of the blessed Spirit; and of the truths of the Gospel; they are in the dark, and can see no objects in a spiritual sense; not to read the word, so as to understand it; or to work that which is good; and they "walk" on in darkness, not knowing where they are, and whither they are going; and yet of these it is said, they

have seen a great light; Christ himself, who conversed among the Galilaeans, preached unto them, and caused the light of his glorious Gospel to shine into many of their hearts; by which their darkness was removed, so that they not only saw Christ, this great light, with their bodily eyes, but with the eyes of their understanding; who may be called the "light", because he is the author and giver of all light, even of nature, grace, and glory; and a "great" one, because he is the sun, the greatest light, the sun of righteousness, the light of the world, both of Jews and Gentiles; he is the true light, in distinction from all typical ones, and in opposition to all false ones, and who in his person is God over all.

They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death; as Galilee might be called, because it was a poor, miserable, and uncomfortable place, from whence no good came; and this character fitly describes God's people in a state of nature and unregeneracy, who are dead in Adam, dead in law, and dead in trespasses and sins, dead as to the spiritual use of the powers and faculties of their souls; they have no spiritual life in them, nor any spiritual sense, feeling, or motion; and they "dwell", continue, and abide in this state, till grace brings them out of it; see Joh 12:46:

upon them hath the light shined: Christ in human nature, through the ministration of his Gospel, by his spirit, so as to enlighten them who walk in darkness, and to quicken them who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, and to comfort them in their desolate estate; and this light not only shone upon them in the external ministration of the word, as it did "upon" the inhabitants in general, but it shone "into" the hearts of many of them in particular, so that in this light they saw light.

Isaiah 9:3

Ver. 3. Thou hast multiplied the nation,.... With light, knowledge, honour, and glory, even Galilee of the nations before mentioned, the land of darkness, and of the shadow of death, where the people dwelt; on whom Christ, the light, shone in the ministration of his Gospel to them; whereby the number of believers in Christ were multiplied; and indeed, as he conversed, preached, and wrought his miracles most here, he had here the greatest number of disciples and followers; here were the five hundred brethren by whom he was seen at once, after his resurrection, 1Co 15:6 for this is not to be understood of the Assyrian nation, whose army under Sennacherib was very large; nor of the Jewish nation enlarged by the destruction of that army, or of their increase after their return from the Babylonish captivity; nor of the church of God by the accession of Gentiles to it; but of the land or nation before spoken of:

[and] not increased the joy; or rather, as it should be rendered, "and hast increased joy unto it"; following the Keri; or marginal reading, which directs that it should be read, not as a negative,
al "not", but wl, "to it"; and which is followed by the Targum and Syriac version, and by Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, and others; and the sense of the words requires this reading, since it follows,

they joy before thee; or otherwise there would be a manifest contradiction in the text; though some, to avoid it, read the words interrogatively, "hast thou not increased the joy?" thou hast; and in this way both the Keri and the Cetib, the reading and the writing, may be taken in, "hast thou not increased joy unto it?" and so as Gussetius {i} renders it,

"thou hast multiplied the nation to whom thou hadst not given great joy:"

that is, temporal joy; though now much of that which is of a spiritual kind: Christ the light appearing, his Gospel being preached by him, and his apostles, and many believing in him, occasioned an increase of spiritual joy in those parts; and so it is, that wherever the Gospel comes, and Christ is preached, and souls are converted, there is great joy, **Ac 8:6** where there is any grace of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love, there is joy; and particularly when a soul is enlightened and quickened, as in the preceding verse **Isa 9:2**, it rejoices, reflecting on the state of darkness and death it is brought out of, and on the marvellous light, life, and liberty it is brought into; and at a sight of Christ, his person, offices, relations, and grace, as the sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings, and beaming light, salvation, and happiness; which joy is spiritual, internal, passes knowledge, is imperfect, but capable of being increased:

they joy before thee; the words, both in this and in the preceding clauses, are addressed to God, and show, that as the work of conversion, and an increase of spiritual joy, are from him; so that joy that is given by hint is expressed "before" him, in his house and ordinances, and it is in his sight, before whom all things are manifest; and so it denotes the truth and sincerity of it, which is illustrated by the following metaphors:

according to the joy in harvest; such as is expressed by men in harvest time, both by the rich owners and proprietors, when they have a good harvest, and well got in, and by the poor, who have a prospect of a comfortable supply in a cheap manner; and this simile is used with great propriety and pertinence. Christ and his ministers are sowers of seed, of the word; and hearers of the word are compared to seed sown in different places; and when any number of these are converted, it is a harvest which occasions joy. The Targum is,

"as the joy of conquerors in war;"

which agrees with what follows:

[and] as [men] rejoice when they divide the spoil; taken in war: in redemption, Christ has taken the prey from the mighty, and delivered the lawful captive, and has divided the spoil with the strong; and in effectual calling binds the strong man armed, and spoils his goods, and delivers souls out of his hands, and this is matter of great joy,
Isa 53:12 see Ps 119:162.

{i} Ebr. Comment. p. 423.

Isaiah 9:4

Ver. 4. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden,.... Of Galilee, of the nation multiplied, of the spiritual inhabitants of it, whose joy was increased; and this is one reason of it, because they were delivered by the Lord from the burdensome yoke of the ceremonial law, which was broken off and abolished by Christ; and from the tyranny of Satan, the god of this world, out of whose hands they were ransomed and delivered; and from the dominion of sin, under the power of which they had been in bondage.

And the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor; different phrases, expressive of the same thing; the bondage and slavery of the law, sin, and Satan:

as in the day of Midian; when Gideon got an entire victory over the Midianites, with a few unarmed men, by the sound of trumpets, and breaking of pitchers, **Jud 7:16** and may denote the easy manner in which Christ obtained a conquest over all his and our enemies; and the means by which it is made known unto us, and we are freed from bondage to spiritual enemies; namely, by the ministration of the Gospel, compared to the blowing of trumpets; and which is a treasure put into earthen vessels, frail and weak men.

Isaiah 9:5

Ver. 5. For every battle of the warrior [is] with confused noise,.... With the sound of the trumpet and as now with beating of drums, and the huzzas and shoutings of the soldiers, the stamping and neighing of horses, the rushing of chariots, and rumbling of wheels, and the clashing of swords, spears, and shields, and these sometimes striking one against another {k}:

and garments rolled in blood; of them that were slain in battle:

but [this] shall be with burning [and] fuel of fire; which refers either to the sudden destruction of the Midianites, or rather to the quick and easy conquest that Christ obtained over sin, Satan, the world, and death; which was as soon over as any combustible matter is burnt with fire. Some interpret this of the destruction of the devil, his angels, of antichrist, and all wicked men by fire, at the last day; and others think that this last clause is to be read in connection with the preceding: "and garments rolled in blood, which shall be for burning, the fuel of fire" {l}; that is, which garments rolled in blood shall be burnt with fire, and utterly consumed; and so there be no more war, but perpetual peace. It was usual after victory to burn the armour and spoils of the enemy {m}; or rather it may intend the burning love and flaming zeal and affection of Christ the Saviour, next described **Isa 9:5**.

{k} Vid. Lydium de re militari, l. 4. c. 3. p. 159. {l} So Cocceius, De Dieu. {m} Vid. Lydium de re militari, l. 6. e. 4. p. 229.

Isaiah 9:6

Ver. 6. For unto us a child is born,.... This is a reason of all that is said in the context; of the great light that shone upon and was seen by those that sat in darkness, and in the land of the shadow of death; of the great joy among the people; of the breaking off of the yoke, rod, and staff of the oppressor; and of the burning of garments rolled in blood, so putting an end to war, and establishing peace; all which is owing to the child here said to be born, by whom we are to understand the Messiah; as the Targum interprets it; and not Hezekiah, as many of the Jewish writers {n} apply it; who could never be represented as a child just born, when he was, at least, ten or eleven years of age when this prophecy was given out, and twenty nine when Sennacherib came up with his army against him, as Aben Ezra observes; to which time he and others refer the context; nor can any reason be assigned why he should be called a "son", in such a peculiar and unusual manner; nor can it be said of him, that he was the great light which shined upon the inhabitants of Galilee; nor was his birth the occasion of so great joy as the birth of this child is said to be; nor can it, with any justness, be said of him, that of the increase of his government and peace there was no end; seeing his government only extended to the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah, and his reign was but twenty nine years, and for the most part attended with affliction, oppression, and war; besides, the many august titles here used cannot be ascribed unto him, nor to any mere creature whatever {o}; but everything agrees with Christ; and to him it is applied, even by some ancient and modern writers among the Jews {p} themselves. This clause respects his humanity, his incarnation and birth, which is spoken of in the present tense, though future, because of the certainty of it; that he should really become man, assume a true body, and a reasonable soul, partake of the same flesh and blood with the children, be made flesh, and dwell among us: and this was to us, wnl, "for us": for our good, for our profit and advantage; not for angels, but for men; for the saints under the Old Testament, and under the New; for all his people, his brethren, and children; that they might have a sanctified nature; that law and justice might be satisfied in that nature which had sinned, and Satan be ruined by it, which he himself had ruined; and that Christ might be a fit Mediator and Redeemer of his people, and be capable of executing his several offices to our advantage; his priestly office, by satisfying and interceding for us; his prophetic office, by teaching us; and his kingly office, by ruling over us; and that he might answer the relations he stands in of a father, husband, brother, and friend:

unto us a son is given: even he who is the Son of God, his own Son, his only begotten Son, his beloved Son, the dear Son of his love; all which aggravate his love in the gift of him, to be the covenant and head unto us, to be the Saviour of us, and a sacrifice for us; and in delivering him up into the hands of men, justice, and death; this is a free gift of God's love, a very large and comprehensive one, is unparalleled and unspeakable, unchangeable and irreversible.

And the government shall be upon his shoulder: not only of the world in general, but of the church in particular; this child is born to royal dignity; he is King of saints; his government consists in ruling in the hearts of his people, in enacting laws for them, and causing them to submit unto them, in subduing their enemies, in protecting them, their persons and properties, rights and liberties, and in supplying them with everything necessary; and this government is delegated to him from his Father, is devolved upon him by him, is not of this world, but is spiritual; it is righteously administered, is peaceable, and will continue for ever: and its being said to be "upon his shoulder" is an allusion to magistrates having a key or rod laid on their shoulders, as ensigns of their office, or carried by their officers for them, see **Isa 9:4** and it shows that it was laid upon him, or enjoined him by his father, though not against his will; and it denotes a weight of honour and care bore by him, whose shoulders are fit for the same, and equal to it; and that he is the prop and support of his church and people, who are safe under his government and protection:

and his name shall be called Wonderful: not that he should be commonly called among men by this name, nor by any of the following; but that he should appear to be, or to have that in him, or to do what would sufficiently answer to this name, and to the rest: he is wonderful in his person, and in the glory and beauty of it; that he should be God and man in one person, and have two natures, so different from each other, united in him; that he, being truly God, should become man; and that he should be born of a virgin; wonderful in the disposition of his mind, and in the qualities he is possessed of; in his love to his people, and his sympathy with them; in his humility, meekness, and patience; in his wisdom, conduct, courage, and greatness of soul: wonderful in his life; in his private life many wonderful things are recorded of him; as the direction of the wise men to him by a star, and their worshipping of him; the preservation of him from Herod's cruelty; his disputation with the doctors in the temple at twelve years of age; and his living such a mean and obscure life for thirty years together: and his public life was nothing but a continued series of wonders; his baptism in Jordan; his temptations in the wilderness; his doctrines and miracles, and his transfiguration on the mount: wonderful in his death; that he should die at all, who is the Prince of life, the Lord of life and glory; that he should die with his own and his Father's consent, and that for sinners, even the chief of sinners; and by dying procure life for us; abolish death; destroy him that had the power of it, the devil; and obtain eternal salvation and redemption: the circumstances attending his death were marvellous: such as the darkness that was upon the earth; the rending of the vail, and cleaving of the rocks: wonderful in his resurrection from the dead, which was by his own power, before he saw corruption, at the time signified by types and prophecy, and with the same body exceedingly glorious; and which has an influence on our justification, regeneration, and resurrection: wonderful in his ascension to heaven, both in the manner of it, in a cloud, and in the effects of it, receiving gifts for men, and giving them to them; in his entrance into heaven; session at the right hand of God; and intercession for transgressors: wonderful he will be in his second coming to judgment; the

signs of it are many and marvellous; the manner of it wonderfully glorious; the different effects of it on men, filling some with joy, and others with terror; and the things that will then be done; as the raising of the dead; placing all nations before him; separating the righteous from the wicked; pronouncing their distinct sentences, and executing them; in a word, Christ is wonderful, in all he is, has, or belong unto him; in his person, offices, and relations; in his people, who are for signs and wonders; in his doctrines and ordinances; and in the manifestations of himself and of his grace to his people, now and hereafter; nay, the word signifies not only "wonderful", but a "miracle" itself, as Christ is in his person {q}, see
Jud 13:17:

Counsellor; this some read in conjunction with the former title, thus, "Wonderful Counsellor"; so the Arabic version; and the Septuagint, which calls him, "the Angel of the great council"; and the Targum is,

"who does wonderfully in council;"

and which agrees with Isa 28:29. This title belongs to Christ, as concerned with his Father, and the blessed Spirit, in the works of nature, providence, and grace. God stands in no need of counsel, nor does it properly fall on him, though it is sometimes ascribed to him, speaking after the manner of men. Creatures are not of his council, but Christ is; he was privy to all his thoughts, purposes, and decrees; he was consulted in creation, and in the works of providence, **Ge 1:26**
Ge 11:7 and in the great affair of redemption and salvation; the council held concerning that is the great council the Septuagint version here makes mention of; and may be called the council of peace, **Zec 6:13** in which the scheme of salvation was fixed; the author of it was found, and pitched upon; the way of it agreed on, to be through the assumption of human nature, and by obedience, sufferings, and death; and the time of Christ's incarnation and death settled, as well as all blessings of grace and glory, for the persons who were to share in this salvation. This title also agrees with Christ in respect to his people, to whom he is council, and for whom he is council; he is council to them; he gives them council; so he did in person, when on earth; he advised sinners to repentance; encouraged souls to believe in him; directed the weary to come to him for rest; the hungry and thirsty for food; such as were healed and pardoned, he counselled them to sin no more; and he advised his followers to do to all men as they would men should do to them; to behave in an humble and modest manner; to bear reproaches and persecutions cheerfully; to love one another; and to pray to his Father, in his name, for all things they wanted:

and now he gives his people counsel by the ministry of the word, which is the counsel of God, the produce of his wisdom, a transcript of his eternal council and covenant, a declaration of the will of God, and of Christ; and in which Christ counsels the poor in spirit to come to him for riches, the naked for clothing, the ignorant for spiritual light and knowledge, such as are ready to perish for salvation; and he counsels those that believe to abide in him, and by his truths and ordinances; which counsel is wholesome and suitable, hearty, sincere, and faithful; is wise and prudent, and freely given; and which being taken, infallibly succeeds: he is council for them in heaven; he appears there in the presence of God for them; represents their persons, and presents their petitions; answers to all charges exhibited against them; and, as their advocate, pleads their cause; and calls for blessings agreed to be bestowed upon them, which they want; for all which he is abundantly qualified, being the only wise God, the Ancient of days, the Father of his people; and, as Mediator, the Wisdom of God, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are, and on whom the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, and of counsel and might, rests:

the mighty God; or "God the mighty One" {r}; as some read the words with a comma; but if read together, the sense is the same; Christ is God, truly and properly so; as appears from his name Jehovah, which is peculiar to the most High; from his nature and perfections, being the same with his Father's: from the works performed by him, as those of creation, providence, miracles, redemption, resurrection from the dead, &c.; and from the worship given him, which only belongs to God; also he is called our God, your God, their God, my God, by which epithets those that are not truly God are never called; he is said to be God manifest in the flesh; God over all, blessed for ever; the great God, the living God, the true God, and eternal life; and he is "the mighty One" as appears by the works he did, previous to his incarnation; as the creation of all things out of nothing; the upholding of all things by the word or his power; the management of all the affairs of providence, there being nothing done but what he was concerned in; as the confusion of languages; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah; bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt; leading and going before them through the Red Sea and wilderness; and bearing and carrying them all the days of old: and also by the works he did when here on earth; as his miracles, called his mighty works; such as healing all manner of diseases by a word speaking, or by touching the person, or by the person touching him, even his garment, or without seeing the person at all, and always without the use of medicines; dispossessing devils out of the bodies of men; power over the elements, as to change water into wine, rebuke the wind and seas, &c.; raising the dead, and even his own body when dead; and, above all, the great work of redemption, by which he appears to be the mighty One indeed; his Father's call of him to it shows it; his undertaking it confirms it; and his actual performance of it puts it out of all doubt; as well as what was then done by him; such as bearing all the sins of his people; engaging with all their enemies; conquering them, and delivering them out of their hands: likewise by what he does now, partly in the conversion of his people; quickening men dead in trespasses and sins; causing dry bones to live; giving spiritual sight to such as were born blind; plucking out of the hands of Satan, and turning from his power to God; which shows him to be stronger than the strong man armed; beginning, carrying on, and finishing the work of faith with power on them; as well as at first making them willing to submit to his righteousness and to be saved by him; and partly in his care of them afterwards; he having the government of them on his shoulders; supplying all their wants; bearing all their burdens; and supporting them under all their afflictions, temptations, and desertions; protecting them from all their enemies; strengthening them to do his will and work; and keeping them from falling totally and finally, and preserving them safe to his everlasting kingdom and glory: moreover, by what he will do hereafter; binding Satan, and confining him for the space of a thousand years; clearing the world of all his and his people's enemies; raising the dead; and judging the world; and destroying wicked men and devils with an everlasting destruction.

The everlasting Father; which does not design any relation of Christ in the Godhead; and there is but one Father in the Godhead, and that is the first Person; indeed Christ and the Father are one, and the Father is in him, and he is in the Father, and he that has seen the one has seen the other, and yet they are distinct, Christ is not the Father; the Son and Spirit may be considered with the first Person as Father, in creation and regeneration, they being jointly concerned therein, but not in the Trinity: it is easy to make it appear Christ is not the Father, but is distinct from him, since he is said to be with the Father from eternity, to be the Son of the Father in truth and love, his own Son, his only begotten and beloved Son; Christ frequently calls the first Person his Father, prayed to him as such, and is our advocate with him, as well as the way unto him; he is said to be sent by the Father, to come from him, and to go to him; and many things are said of Christ that cannot be said of the Father, as his being made flesh, suffering and dying in the room of his people; and the Father is said to do many things unto him, as to anoint him, to seal him, to show him all he did, to commit all judgment to him, and give him to have life in himself as he had: but Christ is a Father with respect to chosen men, who were given him as his children and offspring in covenant; who are adopted into that family that is named of him, and who are regenerated by his Spirit and grace: and to these he is an "everlasting Father"; he was so from everlasting; for regeneration and faith do not make men children, but make them appear to be so; God's elect are children previous to the Spirit's work upon them, and even to the incarnation and death of Christ; adoption is an act of the will of God in covenant from eternity: and Christ is a Father to these unto everlasting; he will never die, and they shall never be left fatherless; he and they will ever continue in this relation; he as such supplies them with everlasting provisions, he clothes them with everlasting raiment, he gives them an everlasting portion, promotes them to everlasting honour, saves them with an everlasting salvation, bearing an everlasting love to them. Some render the words, "the Father of eternity" {s}; the author of eternal life, who has procured it for his people, and gives it to them; or to whom eternity belongs, who inhabits it, and is possessed of it, is the everlasting I AM, was before all persons and things, was set up in an office capacity from everlasting, and had a glory with the Father before the world was, in whom eternal election, and with whom the everlasting covenant, were made. The Septuagint version is, "the Father of the world to come" {t}; of the Gospel dispensation; so called, **Heb 2:5** the legal dispensation, when in being, was the then present world, at the end of which Christ came; this is now at an end, and a new state of things has taken place, which with respect to the Old Testament saints was the world to come, and of this Christ is the Father or author; as the law came by Moses, and he was the father of the legal dispensation, grace and truth are come by Christ, the Father and author of the Gospel dispensation; the doctrines of it are from him, and the ordinances of it by him; and he is the father of that state or world to come after the resurrection, the New Jerusalem church state, and also of the ultimate glory.

The Prince of peace; Christ is a Prince, often so called, Eze 34:24 he is so by birth, being the King's Son, the Son of God, and by office, power, and authority; he is so a Prince as that he is a King; he is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour; and he is a Prince superior to kings, being the Prince of the kings of the earth, **Ac 5:31** and he is called the "Prince of peace", because he is the author of peace; just as he is said to be the "Prince of life", **Ac 3:15** for the same reason: he is the author of peace between Jew and Gentile, by abrogating the ceremonial law, the enmity between them, and by sending the Gospel to both, and making it the power of God to salvation to some of each of them, and by bringing them into the same Gospel church state, and making them partakers of the same privileges and blessings, internal and external, **Eph 2:14** and he is the author of peace between God and sinners; he has made it by the blood of the cross, having the chastisement of their peace laid upon him, in consequence of a covenant of peace he made with his Father, who was in him reconciling the world to himself, and he is so called likewise, because he is the giver of peace; of all outward peace and prosperity to his churches, as rest from their enemies, concord among themselves, and additions to them of such as shall be saved; of internal peace through the discoveries of his love, and the application of his righteousness, blood, and sacrifice in a way of believing in him, and in a course of obedience to him; and likewise of eternal peace and rest in the world to come. Moreover, all that concern him as a King or Prince show him to be the Prince of peace: his kingdom lies, among other things, in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; the sceptre of his kingdom is the golden sceptre of grace and mercy; his royal proclamation is the Gospel of peace; the fruit of his Spirit is peace; and his subjects are peaceable ones, both in church and state. With this compare **Heb 7:2**. It is observable that at his birth there was a general peace, not only in the Roman empire, **Lu 2:1** but in all the world; and it is remarkable, that whereas at this time the Chinese empire enjoyed a profound peace, the emperor of it changed his name, and would not be called by his name Ngayus, but Pingus, which signifies "peaceable" {u}.

{n} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. & 99. 1. Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, & Abarbinel, in loc. Nizzachon Vet. p. 87. R. Isaac. Chizzuk Emuna, par. 1. c. 21. p. 195. Lipman. Carmen. p. 115. {o} See my book of the Prophecies of the Messiah, &c. p. 200, 201. {p} Debarim Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 234. 4. Perek Shalom, fol. 20. 2. Maimon. apud Maji Synops. Theolog. Jud. p. 121. Vid. Reuchlin de Arte Cabal. p. 745. {q} alp "non admirabilis tantum sed" kat' exochn, "miraculum ille est; per se Deus, per unionem hypostaticam", yeanyrwpov, Gusset. Ebr. Comment, p. 675. {r} rwbg la "Deus, fortis", V. L. Montanus. {s} de yba "Pater aeternitatis", Montanus, Cocceius, &c. {t} pathr tou aiwnov mellontov, so some copies; with which agrees the Vulgate Latin version, "Pater seculi futuri". {u} Martin, Hist. Sinic. p. 361.

Isaiah 9:7

Ver. 7. Of the increase of [his] government,.... That is, of the Prince of peace, on whose shoulders it is; which, from small beginnings, will rise to a very great pitch and height of glory; this is signified by the stone cut out of the mountain without hands; that smote the image, became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth, **Da 2:34** and by the parable of the mustard seed, the least of all seeds, and yet, when grown up, becomes a great tree, in which the birds of the air build their nests, Mt 13:31. Christ's kingdom and interest, his dominion and government, may be said to be increased, when his Gospel is spread far and near, which is called the Gospel of the kingdom, and the doctrines of it, the mysteries of the kingdom; by means of which men become subjects of it, and so his kingdom is enlarged. At first it was only preached in Judea; and then it was carried into the Gentile world, where it met with great success, and was spread to the overthrow of Paganism in the Roman empire; a stop was put to its progress by the appearance and power of antichrist, the man of sin; but at the Reformation it broke out again, and spread itself over many nations; and though of late years there has been a decline, in the latter day the knowledge of it will cover the earth, as the waters do the sea, and multitudes shall be converted by it; which is meant by the increase of Christ's government. In the days of his flesh on earth, few believed in him; after his ascension to heaven, there was a large increase of his followers in Jerusalem, and in the Gentile world; the Gospel being preached there, more were the children of the desolate than of the married wife; large numbers were converted, and churches raised and formed everywhere; and in the latter day the church shall fill the earth, and the kingdoms of this world will become the church of Christ; all nations will flow unto it; the people of the Jews, in a body, will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in; the interest of Christ, which made so contemptible a figure at first, consisting chiefly of the poor of this world, harassed with persecution, and disturbed by heretics, will now make a very great one; the kings of the earth coming into it, the wealth and riches of the world falling into the hands of the saints, the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven being given to them; Christianity will be the universal religion of men, and which will be attended with the greatest spirituality, holiness of life, purity of doctrine, worship, and discipline, and freedom from persecution, as follows. In the word hbrMl, rendered, "of the increase", the letter M, in the middle of it, is shut, which in other places is open. The Jews seek for mysteries in this. Aben Ezra says, it respects the miracle of the sun, whose shadow returned back in Hezekiah's time; this is said, to serve an hypothesis; Kimchi observes, on the contrary, that in, Ezra (it is in **Ne 2:13**) the same letter at the end of a word is open, which used to be shut, where mention is made of the walls of Jerusalem being broken down; and thinks is has this mystery in it, that at the time of the salvation, the walls of Jerusalem, that were broken down during the captivity, should be stopped up, and then the government should be opened, which was shut, until the King Messiah came. If there is any mystery in this, it may denote that the government of Christ, which would be for a time straitened, and kept in narrow bounds and limits, should hereafter be extended throughout the world, to the four corners of it, to be firm and stable, perfect and complete; which the figure of this letter, being, shut, and foursquare, may be an emblem of. See Re 21:16.

And peace [there shall be] no end; this respects both the increase and perpetuity of the peace of Christ's kingdom. The peace of believers, under the Gospel dispensation, is greater than that of the saints under the legal dispensation, whose sacrifices could not remove a consciousness of sin and its guilt; and who, through various laws threatening with death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage; but great is the peace of New Testament saints, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, and which may be increased more and more; and in the latter day there will be more peace among themselves; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim; the sticks of Joseph and Judah shall be one nor will there ever be any more discord between Jew and Gentile, the lion and the lamb shall lie down together; there will be no more war among the nations, after the battle of Armageddon; and no more persecution, after the slaughter of the witnesses; and this abundance of peace, spiritual and temporal, will be as long as the moon endures, Ps 72:7 and all this will issue in eternal peace in the world to come:

upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom; that is, on it the Prince of peace shall sit, who is David's son, according to the flesh, and so his heir; see **Lu 1:32** and which must be understood spiritually of the church and people of Christ, who are his throne and kingdom; in whose hearts he reigns by his grace and Spirit:

to order it; dispose, rectify, put into form and order, and adorn and beautify, by enacting laws for them, writing them on their hearts, and putting his Spirit within them, to enable them to keep them; and by setting persons over them, under him, as deputies and sub-governors, guides and rulers, to explain his laws, and enforce them; to teach them to observe all things commanded by him; to whom he gives gifts for usefulness and service; and whose ministry he blesses, for the conversion and gathering in of others, and so repairs and glorifies the house of his kingdom; and also by granting his presence in his word and ordinances:

and to establish it with justice and judgment; by convincing men by his Spirit of righteousness and judgment; by revealing in his Gospel his own righteousness to them; by forming in their hearts the new man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness; by teaching them to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and by protecting them from all their enemies: and so he establishes particular believers in the faith of himself, and with the doctrine of faith, that they persevere to the end; and his whole church upon himself, the Rock of ages, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and in the latter day he will establish it upon the top of the mountains, **Isa 2:2**:

from henceforth, even for ever; Christ's throne is for ever and ever, his kingdom is an everlasting one; he will have no successor in it, nor any rival that shall ever dispossess him of it; all other kingdoms will cease, but his will remain for ever: though this clause, according to the accents, is to be connected with what follows {w}, thus,

from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this; all that is said in this verse, and in the context, respecting the incarnation of Christ and his kingdom; the veracity, faithfulness, and power of God, are engaged to perform whatever he has purposed and promised; and his zeal, which is no other than his fervent flaming love, will move him to it, and is effectual to accomplish it; his fervent love for his own glory, which is his ultimate end in all his works of nature, providence, and grace, will engage him to fulfil whatever is foretold concerning the birth of Christ, and redemption by him, and his offices and kingdom; since this is greatly concerned in all these things, his zeal or fervent love to his Son, shown in giving all things into his hands, in committing all judgment to him, that men may honour him as they do the Father, will move him to increase his government and peace, and make him his firstborn higher than the kings of the earth; and his zeal or fervent love to his people will put him upon all this, since it is for their good, as well as for his own glory, and the honour of his Son; what the queen of Sheba said of Solomon may be said of Christ and his people, 1Ki 10:9.

{w} So Junius and Tremellius, whom Reinbeck commends, De Accent. p. 387.

Isaiah 9:8

Ver. 8. The Lord sent a word unto Jacob,.... The prophet, having comforted Judah with the promise of the Messiah, returns to denounce the judgments of God upon the ten tribes, under the names of Jacob and Israel, which signify the same; for the "word" here is not the word of promise, the comfortable word concerning the Messiah before mentioned; but a word of threatening, ruin, and destruction, to the kingdom of Israel, after enlarged upon, which the Lord sent unto them by his prophets before hand, to warn them of it, and bring them to repentance; by which they would know, when it came to pass, that their destruction was of the Lord, and not a matter of chance: the Septuagint version is, "the Lord sent death upon Jacob"; and so the Arabic version, following it; the same word, differently pointed, being used for the pestilence, but is not the sense here; the Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions, render it, "a word", as we do:

and it hath lighted upon Israel, or "hath fallen" {x}; as an arrow shot out of a bow, as some think; or as seed cast upon the earth; or rather like a thunderbolt: it denotes the sure and full accomplishment of the word of God upon the persons to whom it was sent; for as his word of promise, so of threatening, does not return to him void and empty, Isa 55:10. The Targum is,

"the Lord sent a word into the house of Jacob, and it was heard in Israel."

{x} lpn "cecidit", Grotius, Cocccius.

Isaiah 9:9

Ver. 9. And all the people shall know,.... The word of the Lord, and that it is his; and by sad experience shall feel the weight of it; or, "the people shall know the whole of it" {y}; shall find that the whole of it will be accomplished, every punctilio in it; whatever is said is done, everything predicted by it, the substance of it, and every circumstance relating to it: or they shall be punished, they shall bear, know, and feel the punishment of their sins; in which sense the word "know", in the Arabic language, is frequently used, of which Schultens {z} has given many instances:

[even] Ephraim, and the inhabitants of Samaria: the ten tribes are meant by Ephraim; and the inhabitants of Samaria are particularly mentioned, because Samaria was the metropolis of Ephraim, **Isa 7:9** and because it was to suffer, and did suffer much in the threatened calamity, being besieged three years, then taken, and its inhabitants carried captive; and so experimentally knew the word of the Lord, and the truth of it, 2Ki 17:5:

that say in the pride and stoutness of heart; being proud and haughty, stout hearted, and far from righteousness, and the fear of God; hardening themselves against him, despising his word, and defying, as it were, his power and providence; saying, as follows:

{y} wlk "totum ejus". {z} Animadv. Philol. in Job, p. 77, 78.

Isaiah 9:10

Ver. 10. The bricks are fallen down,.... Houses made of bricks, which were without the cities besieged and destroyed by the Assyrians; of which the haughty Israelites made no account, looking upon such a desolation as little, or no loss at all:

but we will build with hewn stone, so that the houses will be better and stronger, more beautiful, and more durable:

the sycamores are cut down; which grew in the fields, and outer parts of the cities, and were but a mean sort of wood, and which the Assyrians cut down to serve several purposes in their siege; of this sort of trees, See Gill on "Lu 19:4":

but we will change them into cedars; that is, will plant cedars in place of them; trees tall and large, very delightful to look at, of great worth and usefulness, and very durable; though this may regard not so much the planting of them as the use of them in building, and the sense be agreeable to the former clause; that as, instead of brick, they would build houses with hewn stone; so, instead of sycamore wood, which was not so substantial and durable, and fit for building, they would make use of cedar, which was both beautiful and lasting; so the Septuagint,

"the bricks are fallen, let us hew stones, and cut down sycamores and cedars, and build for ourselves a tower;"

and so the Arabic version; so that, upon the whole, they flattered themselves they should be gainers, and not losers, by the Assyrian invasion; thus deriding it, and despising the prophecy concerning it. Jarchi interprets the bricks and sycamores of the kings that went before, as Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, in whose days they were lessened, and were like a building of brick, broken and falling; but their present king, Pekah, the son of Remaliah, was strong, like a building of hewn stone, and so cedars were better for building than sycamores; and to this sense agrees the Targum,

"the heads (or princes) are carried captive, but we will appoint better in their room; goods are spoiled, but what are more beautiful than them we will purchase."

Isaiah 9:11

Ver. 11. Therefore the Lord shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him,.... Set them up on high, as the word {a} signifies; exalt them above him, and make them superior to him, and conquerors of him, meaning the Assyrians; who, being sent for by Ahab, went up against Damascus, took it, and carried the people captive, and slew Rezin the king of Syria, the head of which was Damascus,
2Ki 16:7 this is mentioned, because the Israelites put great trust and confidence in this prince, with whom they were in alliance; and this is said to abate their pride, arrogance, and haughtiness, before expressed:

and join his enemies together; or mix them; the Assyrian army, consisting of a mixture of various nations; or "stir" them "up", as the Targum; instigate them against him. Some understand the whole of Israel, against whom the adversaries of Rezin, namely, the Assyrians, would come, as they did, and invade their land, and carry them captive; with whom were various other people, as follows.

{a} bgvy "elevabit, sive extollet", Forerius.

Isaiah 9:12

Ver. 12. The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind,.... Rezin, king of Syria, the confederate of the Israelites, being slain, his people joined the Assyrians against Israel; and they, with others mentioned, beset them on all sides, before and behind, east and west; and so the Targum, Septuagint, and other versions, render it, the Syrians on the east, or from the rising of the sun; and the Philistines on the west, or from the setting of the sun; for, as Kimchi observes, Syria lay east of the land of Israel, and Palestine on the West {b}:

and they shall devour Israel with open mouth: greedily and presently; make, as it were, but one morsel of him:

for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still; that is, the anger of God, that was not turned away; he had not yet stirred up all his wrath, he had not done with them, he had still other judgments to bring upon them; and his hand continued to be stretched out to inflict them, seeing they were not brought to repentance by what was already done unto them; so the Targum, "for all this they do not return from their sins, that he may turn away his anger from them, but still retain their sins; and yet his stroke will be to take vengeance on them."

{b} So Noldius renders it, Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 10. No. 69.

Isaiah 9:13

Ver. 13. For the people turneth not to him that smiteth them,.... Who was the Lord of hosts, as it is explained in the next clause; it was he that had smote the people with the rod of correction and chastisement, by various afflictions and distresses which he had brought upon them; in order to bring them to a sense of their sin and duty, to reclaim and recover them from their backslidings; but they had not such an effect upon them; they returned not to him by repentance and reformation, from whom they had turned themselves by their evil ways; nor to his worship, as the Targum interprets it, to his word and ordinances; for afflictions; unless sanctified, are of no use to restore backsliders. This is to be understood of the people of Israel, the ten tribes, whom the prophet calls "the people", not my people, nor the people of the Lord, because unworthy of that character. The Septuagint render the words, "the people returned not until they were smitten", and so the Syriac version intimating, as if they did return when smitten; but the following words, and the whole context, show the contrary:

neither do they seek the Lord of hosts; by prayer and supplication, for pardoning grace and mercy through Christ the Mediator; nor in his word and ordinances, for his presence and communion with him, or instruction or doctrine from him, as the Targum; to be taught true doctrine, and their duty to God and man; this is one part of the character of an unregenerate man, **Ro 3:11**.

Isaiah 9:14

Ver. 14. Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail,.... The former of these is afterwards interpreted of "the ancient and honourable", men in high places, civil magistrates, judges, governors, and elders of the people, the king as supreme, and all subordinate officers; and so the Targum,

"the Lord will destroy from Israel the prince and the ruler;"

and the latter is interpreted of the false prophet. The people of Israel are compared to a beast with a tail, being so sadly degenerated and corrupted; as the Romish antichrist, in both his capacities, civil and ecclesiastical, is compared to a beast; the one being the head, and the other the tail, Re 13:1 and Rome Pagan to a dragon with a tail, Re 12:3 and the Saracens and Turks to locusts with tails like the tails of scorpions, **Re 9:10**:

branch and rush, in one day. The Septuagint render it, "great and small"; and so the Arabic version; the first word intending the great men of the nation, in flourishing circumstances, like branches of trees; the latter the common, people, like reeds and rushes, weak and feeble; so Kimchi explains them,

"the strong and the weak;"

though the Targum interprets both of the governor and lord; and so Jarchi says they signify kings and governors; but Aben Ezra renders the word root and branch; and so they may denote the utter destruction of the people of Israel, fathers and children, high and low, rich and poor. See **Mal 4:1**.

Isaiah 9:15

Ver. 15. The ancient and honourable, he [is] the head,.... The elder in office, not in age; and who, on account of his office, dignity, and riches, is honoured by men, is of a venerable countenance himself, and is reverenced when seen and looked upon by others, and received by persons with pleasure and cheerfulness; as the phrase used signifies. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "who admire", or "have" men's "persons in admiration"; which is the character Jude gives of false teachers, **Jude 1:16** who are next described:

and the prophet that teacheth lies, he [is] the tail; so called from their low extract, being often of a mean original and descent; or rather from the meanness of their spirits, their flattery of princes and great men, to whom they tell lies, and prophesy smooth and false things, for the sake of a little sordid gain, in allusion to dogs that wag their tails at their masters; or from the poison of their doctrines, some creatures having poison in their tails, and do much mischief with them. See **Re 9:19**.

Isaiah 9:16

Ver. 16. For the leaders of this people cause [them] to err,.... Or, "who bless this people", as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; and so the Targum,

"who praise this people;"

that call them blessed, pronounce them happy, see **Mal 3:15** and promise them happiness, both in this world and that to come, though guilty of notorious sins, and live a vicious course of life; and so harden them in their iniquities, and cause them to wander more and more from the way of truth and righteousness; and lead them unto, and leave them in, fatal mistakes about their state and condition. These seem to design the ecclesiastical leaders of the people, the blind leaders of the blind, see **Isa 3:12**:

and [they that are] led of them [are] destroyed; or, "they" that "are blessed of them are swallowed up" {c}; and so irrecoverably lost; the deceivers and the deceived perish together; as it is sinful in teachers and leaders of the people to teach them false things, and lead them out of the way, it is criminal in the people to be led and taught by them, who ought to take care what they hear and receive; and therefore both are righteously punished; for the words are a reason why the Lord would cut off both the one and the other.

{c} Myelbm wyrvamw "qui ex hoc populo beati dicuntur, absorbebuntur", Vatablus.

Isaiah 9:17

Ver. 17. Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men,.... Take no delight and pleasure in them; but, on the contrary, detest and abhor them, and so destroy them, being depraved and corrupted by the bad instructions and examples of their parents:

neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows; who are objects of pity and compassion; yet these being wicked, as well as the fathers of the one, and the husbands of the other, shall be no more spared than they have been; so that this expresses both the general corruption and destruction of this people:

for everyone [is] a hypocrite and an evildoer; a hypocrite, as Aben Ezra on the place observes, is one that is outwardly good, and inwardly wicked; which was the general character of the people of Israel in Isaiah's time, as it was of the Jews in the times of Christ, see Mt 23:25 they pretended to do good, but were doers of evil, workers of iniquity, continually committing sin; and yet would be thought to be very upright and sincere, both in their religion towards God, and in their dealings with men; but deceitful in both:

and every mouth speaketh folly; or falsehood; a lie, as the Targum, as all lies are foolish; as also all vain words, all impious ones; or the savour of irreligion or superstition, and indeed every idle word, and all unsavoury and corrupt speech, and there is particularly foolish talking, which is not convenient, **Eph 5:4**:

for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still; which is repeated from **Isa 9:12**.
See Gill on "Isa 9:12".

Isaiah 9:18

Ver. 18. For wickedness burneth as the fire,.... That is, the punishment of their sins, as the Targum interprets it; the wrath of God for sin, which is poured out like fire, and consumes as that does; unless wicked men are meant, who are consumed with the fire of divine vengeance; the sense is the same:

it shall devour the briers and thorns; sinners and ungodly, so the Targum paraphrases it; and Aben Ezra observes, they are the wicked; who are compared to briers and thorns, for their unfruitfulness in themselves, harmfulness to others, and for their weakness to stand against the fury of incensed Deity, see 2Sa 23:6:

and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest. Kimchi thinks there is a gradation in these words, that as fire first begins to burn the thorns, and smaller wood, and then the greater; so wickedness consumes first the little ones, who are the thorns, and after that it kindles in the thickets of the forest, who are the great ones; so the commonwealth of Israel is compared to a forest; and the thorns, briers, and thickets, may denote the common people and their governors, who all being guilty of wickedness, should not escape the vengeance of God:

and they shall mount up [like] the lifting up of smoke: or lift up themselves, or be lifted up; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret the word; but Jarchi thinks it has the signification of Kwb, "to be perplexed": and gives the sense of it thus; they are perplexed, and shut up with the strength of smoke that burns: others take it to be a word of the same meaning with qba; and render it, "they shall pulverize", or "go into dust in the lifting up of smoke" {d}; and denotes the dissolution of the commonwealth; but perhaps it may be better rendered, "though they shall walk proudly" (or behave haughtily), their "pride" shall be as "smoke", which soon vanishes away; since the word, which is only here used, in the Syriac language signifies to walk proudly, as a cock with two crests {e}.

{d} Nve twag wkbaty "et epulverabitur erectione fumi", Cocceius; "adeo ut in minutissimum pulverem abeant elato fumo, [vel] elatione fumi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {e} "Et superbient, (fastuose se gerent,) at superbia (vel quorum superbia) fumus, h. e. fumi instar, evanescit, interibit, quod etiam Armenis indigiat, isfud vacobulum `Abac' , Syr. galus, gallinaceus, superbo gradu incedens et bicristatus", Castel. Lexicon Polyglott. col. 12.

Isaiah 9:19

Ver. 19. Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened,.... Brought into great distress and affliction; sore judgments and calamities being upon it; for not darkness in a natural, but in a figurative sense, is intended, see **Isa 8:22** the allusion is to the ascending of the smoke before mentioned, through fire being kindled in the thickets of the forest, which filled the air with darkness; as smoke arising in great quantity does. This sense of the word, which is only to be met with in this place, is given by Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, from the use of it in the Arabic language, in which it signifies {f} darkness; but the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "the whole land is burned"; and which is confirmed by the Targum, which so interprets it; and this sense well agrees with the context:

and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire; this explains who are meant by the briers and thorns, and thickets of the forest, the inhabitants of the land of Israel; who, as they are the fuel of fire, were the objects of divine wrath and fury:

no man shall spare his brother; which may be ascribed either to the darkness and confusion in which they should be, and so not be able to discern a friend from a foe, as persons surrounded with smoke; or to their malignant spirit, cruelty and inhumanity, not only doing ill to their enemies, but to their own friends and relations, to their own flesh and blood.

{f} "obscura evasit", ---- "tertia pars noctis, a fine crepusculi, tempus quo posterior peragitur precatio vespertina", Golius, col. 1521, 1522. Castel col. 2944. So Schindler, col. 1410.
hmate "[ateme], caligo, tenebra, crepusculum".

Isaiah 9:20

Ver. 20. And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry,.... Either with his hand, and rob and plunder all within his reach; or, with his teeth, as cannibals, or beasts of prey, catch at, tear, and rend in pieces, whatever comes in their way; and yet hungry after more, and unsatisfied, as follows:

and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied; ravage and spoil on every side, and yet not content. The Targum is,

"he shall spoil on the south, and be hungry; and he shall destroy on the north, and not be satisfied:"

they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm; destroy their near relations, who are their own flesh and blood, or take away their substance from them; so the Targum,

"they shall spoil every man the substance of his neighbour:"

which will give some light to Re 17:16.

Isaiah 9:21

Ver. 21. Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh,.... That is, "Manasseh" shall eat or devour "Ephraim"; and "Ephraim" shall eat or devour "Manasseh"; as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it; which is to be understood of their quarrels, contentions, and wars among themselves, whereby they bit, devoured, and consumed each other, though they were brethren; which explains and confirms what is before said, of no man sparing his brother, and everyone eating the flesh of his own arm. The Targum paraphrases the words thus,

"they of the house of "Manasseh", with those of the house of "Ephraim", and they of the house of "Ephraim", with those of the house of "Manasseh", shall be joined together as one, to come against them of the house of Judah;"

and so Jarchi interprets them,

""Manasseh" shall be joined with "Ephraim", and "Ephraim" shall be joined with "Manasseh", and they together shall be joined against Judah;"

so it follows,

[and] they together [shall be] against Judah; as the ten tribes did sometimes make war against the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, see
2Ch 28:6:

for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still; more and sorer judgments were to come upon this people for their sins. See Gill on "Isa 9:12".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 10

This chapter contains denunciations of punishment, first on the governors of the Jewish nation, and then upon the Assyrians; a woe is denounced on the makers and imposers of bad laws, whereby the poor and the needy, the widows and the fatherless, were deprived of their right,
Isa 10:1 which woe or punishment is explained to be a desolation of their country by the Assyrians, that should come afar off, and which they could not escape; under whom they should bow and fall; and yet there should not be an end of their punishment, Isa 10:3 next follows a prophecy of the destruction of the Assyrians themselves, for the comfort of God's people; in which is observed, that the Assyrian monarch was an instrument in the hand of the Lord to chastise his people, and therefore is called the rod and staff of his wrath and indignation, Isa 10:5 the people are described against whom he was sent, and the end for which is mentioned, Isa 10:6 though this was not his intention, nor did he design to stop here, but to destroy and cut off many other nations, Isa

10:7 which he hoped to do from the magnificence of his princes, who were as kings, and from the conquests he had made of kingdoms, and their chief cities, Isa 10:8 wherefore, when the Lord had done what he designed to do by him among his people the Jews, he was determined to punish him, because of the pride of his heart, and the haughtiness of his looks, and his boasting of his strength and wisdom, and of his robberies and plunders, without opposition; which boasting was as foolish as if an axe, a saw, a rod, and a staff, should boast, magnify, move, and lift up themselves against the person that made use of them, Isa 10:12 which punishment is said to come from the Lord, and is expressed by leanness, and by a consuming and devouring fire; for which reason his army is compared to thorns and briers, to a forest, and a fruitful field, which should be destroyed at once; so that what of the trees remained should be so few as to be numbered by a child, Isa 10:16 and, for the further consolation of the people of God, it is observed, that in the times following the destruction of the Assyrian monarchy, a remnant of the people of Israel should be converted, and no more lean upon an arm of flesh, but upon the Lord Christ, the Holy One of Israel; even a remnant only; for though that people were very numerous, yet a remnant, according to the election of grace, should be saved, when it was the determinate counsel of God, and according to his righteous judgment, to destroy the far greater part of them, for their perverseness and obstinacy, Isa 10:20 wherefore the people of God are exhorted not to be afraid of the Assyrian, though chastised by him; since in a little time the anger of the Lord would cease in his destruction, which should be after the manner of the Egyptians at the Red sea, and as the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; whereby they would be free from his burden and yoke, because of the anointed King that should reign, or the King Messiah, Isa 10:24 and then follows a description of the expedition of the king of Assyria into Judea, by making mention of the several places through which he should pass with terror to the inhabitants, until he should come to Jerusalem, against which he should shake his hand, Isa 10:28 and then, under the similes of lopping a bough, and cutting down the thickets of a forest, and the trees of Lebanon, is predicted the destruction of his army and its generals by an angel, Isa 10:33.

Ver. 1. Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees,.... Or, "O ye that decree", &c. ywh being a sign of the vocative case, and an interjection of calling, as Aben Ezra observes; though the Targum and other versions understand it of a threatening denounced; and is to be understood as lying against lawgivers and judges, political rulers and governors of the people, that made unrighteous laws; laws which were not agreeable to the law of God, nor right reason; and were injurious to the persons and properties of men; and which were calculated for the oppression of good men, especially the poor, and for the protection of wicked men, who made no conscience of spoiling them:

and that write grievousness [which] they have prescribed; laws grievous and intolerable being made by them, they wrote them, or ordered them to be written, to be engrossed and promulgated, published them, and obliged the people to be subject to them. This some understand of the scribes of judges, who sat in court, and wrote out the decrees and sentences made by them; but it rather intends the same persons as before; and not ecclesiastical but political governors are meant, and such as lived before the Babylonish captivity; or otherwise the whole is applicable to the Scribes and Pharisees, to the Misnic doctors, the authors of the oral law, the fathers of tradition, whose decisions and decrees were unrighteous and injurious, and contrary to the commands of God; heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and very oppressive of the poor, the fatherless, and the widow; for which they are reproved by Christ, Mt 15:3 Jarchi says it is an Arabic {g} word, which signifies scribes.

{g} So and Scriba, Golius, col. 1999; so the word is used in the Chaldee and Syriac languages. See Castel. col. 1828, 1829.

Isaiah 10:2

Ver. 2. To turn aside the needy from judgment,.... Such laws being made as discouraged them from any application for justice; and, when they did, were harassed with such long, vexatious, and expensive suits, as obliged them to desist, and the cause being generally given against them, and for the rich:

and to take away the right from the poor of my people; for not to do justice to the poor is the same as to rob and plunder them, and take away by force what of right belongs to them; wherefore it follows:

that widows may be their prey, and [that] they may rob the fatherless; who have none to protect and defend them, and whose protectors judges ought to be, in imitation of God, whom civil magistrates represent, who is the Judge of the widows and the fatherless; and therefore this is observed as an aggravation of their sin, which was very great indeed: it is very wicked in a judge to pervert the judgment of the poor and needy, the widow and the fatherless, contrary to laws that are made by God and men; but to make and prescribe wicked and unrighteous laws, that wickedness may be framed, and mischief committed by a law, that the poor and the needy, the widows and fatherless, may be injured under colour and pretence of law and justice, is the height of injustice. See Ps 94:20.

Isaiah 10:3

Ver. 3. And what will ye do in the day of visitation,.... Not in a way of grace and mercy, but of wrath and anger, as the following clause explains it, when God should come and punish them for their sins; and so the Targum,

"what will ye do in the day that your sins shall be visited upon you?"

it designs the Babylonish captivity, as the next words show; the same phrase is used of the destruction of the Jews by the Romans,
Lu 19:44:

and in the desolation [which] shall come from far? from Assyria, which was distant from the land of Judea: the word {h} for "desolation" signifies a storm, tumult, noise, and confusion; referring to what would be made by the Assyrian army, when it came upon them:

to whom will ye flee for help? Rezin king of Syria, their confederate, being destroyed; and Syria, with whom they were in alliance, now become their enemy, see **Isa 9:11**:

and where will ye leave your glory? either their high titles, and ensigns of honour, as princes, judges, and civil magistrates, which they should be stripped of; or rather their mammon, as Aben Ezra interprets it, their unrighteous mammon, which they got by perverting the judgment of the poor and needy, the widow and the fatherless, of which they gloried; and which now would be taken away from them, when they should go into captivity.

{h} hawvl "sub procella, quae a longinquo veniet", Cocceius; so the Targum renders it, "in tumult of tribulation".

Isaiah 10:4

Ver. 4. Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain,.... That is, either, being forsaken by me, and destitute of my help, they shall bow down; or, "because they are without me", are not my

people, and do not hearken to me, therefore they shall bow down, so David Kimchi; or, were it not for me, they would, as others; or that they might not bow down and fall; and so the words may be connected with the preceding verse
Isa 10:3: others render the word, translated "without me, besides"; and the sense is either, as Moses Kimchi, besides their bowing in their own land, when subdued by the Gentiles, a greater affliction shall befall them, captivity; when they should be either carried captive or slain; or besides him that shall bow down under the prisoners, they shall fall under the slain; besides those that are taken, others shall be killed; or none shall escape, but, or "except", him that bows, and hides himself under the prisoners, or in the place of the slain, that he might not be thought to be alive: or the sense is, the desolation shall be so general, that none shall escape, either they shall be taken prisoners, or they shall be slain; agreeably to which Noldius {i} renders the words, "without me", everyone "shall bow down among the prisoners, or shall fall among the slain"; which gives the best sense of them; that, being left of God for their sins, they would either be bound and carried captive, or else slain with the sword, and one or the other would be the lot of everyone of them:

for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still; the final and utter destruction of the nation of the Jews being then not yet come, when carried captive to Babylon, there remained a greater calamity for them, to come by the hands of the Romans. These first four verses Isa 10:1 seem more properly to belong to the preceding chapter **Isa 9:1**, and this should begin with the next verse Isa 10:5.

{i} Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 201, 771.

Isaiah 10:5

Ver. 5. O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger,..... Either as calling him to come against the land of Israel to spoil it, so Kimchi; or as grieving that he was obliged to make use of him in such a manner against his people; or as threatening him with ruin. So the Targum, Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions render it, "woe to the Assyrian"; wherefore this, and what follows, serve to comfort the people of God; that though they should be carried captive by the Assyrians, yet they should be utterly destroyed, and a remnant of the Jews should be saved. The Assyrian monarch is called the "rod of God's anger", because he was made use of by him as an instrument to chastise and correct Israel for their sins:

and the staff in their hand is mine indignation; that is, the staff which was in the hand of the king of Assyria, and his army, with which they smote the people of Israel, was no other than the wrath and indignation of God against that people, and the execution of it, which he committed to them as instruments. Kimchi interprets "their hand" of the land of Israel, into which this staff was sent, the Assyrian, to smite and chastise them. The Targum is,

"woe to the Assyrian, the government of my fury; and an angel sent from before me against them for a curse."

Isaiah 10:6

Ver. 6. I will send him against a hypocritical nation,.... The people of Israel, who might well be called so, since everyone of them was a hypocrite, **Isa 9:17** pretending to love, fear, and serve the Lord, when it was only outwardly, and by profession, and not in deed, and in truth; their character contains the reason of the Lord's calling and sending the Assyrian to correct and chastise them:

and against the people of my wrath: who provoked him to wrath, were deserving of it, and upon whom he was about to bring it; it was their hypocrisy that stirred up his wrath against them; nothing is more hateful to God than that:

will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey: that is, the Assyrian monarch, to make a spoil and a prey of the people of the Jews, not by any legal commission, or express command, but by the secret power of his providence, guiding and directing him into the land of Judea, to ravage and spoil it:

and to tread them down like the mire of the streets: which denotes the great subjection of the inhabitants of it to him; the very low and mean estate into which they should be brought; the great contempt they should be had in; the little account that should be had of them; and their inability to help and recover themselves.

Isaiah 10:7

Ver. 7. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so,.... His purposes, intentions, and thoughts, were not as the Lord's; he did not imagine that he was only the rod of his anger, and the staff of his indignation, a minister of his wrath, and the executioner of his vengeance; he thought he was his own lord and master, and acted by his own power, and according to his own will, and was not under the direction and restraints of another; his intention was not to chastise and correct the people of the Jews, but utterly to destroy them, and not them only, but many other nations; as follows:

but [it is] in his heart to destroy and cut off nations, not a few; not the nation of the Jews only, but many others, and so establish an universal monarchy; and what flushed him with hope and expectation of success were the magnificence of his princes, and the conquests he had already made.

Isaiah 10:8

Ver. 8. For he saith, [are] not my princes altogether kings?] Meaning either the kings which he had conquered, which were become his princes and subjects; or rather, such were the greatness and glory of his nobles, that they were equal in their riches and dominions to kings, and so were able to furnish him with men and money for such an expedition he had in his heart to undertake, even to conquer and subdue all the nations of the earth: and this he said either to his people, boasting of his grandeur; or in his heart, as Kimchi observes, to encourage himself; or rather more openly before others, in order to discourage and inject terror into the nations he meant to destroy, and particularly the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 10:9

Ver. 9. [Is] not Calno as Carchemish?.... Jarchi's note is,

"as the children of Carchemish are princes and rulers, so are the children of Calno;"

as if this was giving an instance of the grandeur of his subjects; but much better is the Targum,

"as Carchemish is subdued before me, shall not Calno be so?"

as I or my ancestors have conquered the one, it is as easy for me to conquer the other; or as sure as the one is subject to me, so sure shall the other be; for

Carchemish was a city belonging to the Assyrians, situated upon the river Euphrates, 2Ch 35:20 called by Ammianus {k} Circusium; the Syriac version calls it Barchemosh; and Calno is the same with Calneh in the land of Shinar, a city built by Nimrod, Ge 10:10 in the Septuagint version it is called Chalane, and it is added,

"where the tower was built;"

from whence the country, called by Pliny {l} Chalonitis, had its name, the chief city of which was Ctesiphon, thought to be the same with Calneh.

[Is] not Hamath as Arphad? Hamath and Arphad were both cities conquered by the Assyrians; see 2Ki 18:34 and are both mentioned along with Damascus, Jer 49:23.

[Is] not Samaria as Damascus? Damascus was the metropolis of Syria, and was taken by the Assyrians; and Samaria was the metropolis of Ephraim, or the ten tribes; see **Isa 7:8** and was as easy to be taken as Damascus was. The Targum is,

"as Arphad is delivered into my hands, shall not Hamath be so? As I have done to Damascus, so will I do to Samaria."

{k} L. 23. c. 5. p. 360. {l} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 26. and 27.

Isaiah 10:10

Ver. 10. As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols,.... Which worship idols, as the Targum paraphrases it. He speaks of them as being very easily taken by him; he had no trouble in subduing them; no sooner did he come up to them, and looked on them, and saw where they were, but they fell into his hands; they gave up themselves to him at once, and he took possession of them.

And whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria; being made of better metal, or more richly ornamented, or worshipped in a more pompous manner; or were "more" than they of Jerusalem and Samaria, exceeded them in number; or were "stronger" and mightier than they, as Kimchi supplies it, and yet could not protect them; or were "from Jerusalem, and from Samaria"; the wicked men of Israel, Jarchi says, supplied all the nations with images, they all sprung from them; and if the idols which came from hence could not secure the nations of the earth from falling into the hands of the Assyrian monarch, neither could they preserve Jerusalem and Samaria from being taken by him.

Isaiah 10:11

Ver. 11. Shall I not, as I have done to Samaria, and her idols,.... Kimchi observes, that what is said in the preceding verses was said before Samaria was taken, but this after it was taken:

so do to Jerusalem, and her idols; he had taken Samaria, and carried the ten tribes captive, and now his eye was upon Judah and Jerusalem; and such was his insolence, impiety, and blasphemy, that he reckons the true God, whom the Jews worshipped, among the idols of the Gentiles, and upon a level with them, if not inferior to them, especially to his own idol, and thought himself superior to him.

Isaiah 10:12

Ver. 12. Wherefore it shall come to pass,.... It shall surely be; what God has purposed in his heart, and published in his word, shall certainly be fulfilled:

[that] when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem; in correcting, chastising, and humbling the inhabitants thereof, by suffering them to be besieged by the Assyrian army. God sometimes makes use of wicked men to chastise his people; this is his work, and not theirs; and when he begins, he goes on, and finishes it; and when he has done, punishes the instruments he uses; after he has scourged his children, he takes the rod, and breaks it to pieces.

I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks; that is, he would punish him for his wicked actions, which were the fruit of the haughtiness of his heart, and the pride of his eyes; or for that pride which filled his heart, and showed itself in his lofty looks. Kimchi joins this to the preceding clause, and makes the sense to be, that God would punish the Assyrian for his pride, in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem; for there his army died, or near it, being smitten by the angel. The Targum is, "and it shall be, when the Lord hath finished to do all that he hath said in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem."

Isaiah 10:13

Ver. 13. For he saith, by the strength of my hand I have done [it],.... Meaning either that by the power of his army, which was under his command, or by his own personal valour, he had subdued kings, taken their kingdoms and chief cities, and ascribes nothing to the power aud providence of God; and if such arrogance and haughtiness, in things of a civil nature, is an instance of vanity, and is resented by the Lord, then much more such conduct in things of a religious nature, when men ascribe regeneration, conversion, and salvation, to the power of their free will, and to the works of their hands, and not to the power and grace of God:

and by my wisdom, for I am prudent; attributing his conquests partly to his power, and partly to his skill and prudence in marshalling his army, making use of stratagems to decoy the enemy, and get an advantage of him; whereas strength and power, and so wisdom and prudence, are from the Lord; as he gives safety, victory, and salvation to kings, so he teaches their hands to war, and their fingers to fight; which they ought to acknowledge, and will, unless vain and proud:

and I have removed the bounds of the people; by subduing kingdoms, and adding them to his own, so that they were no more distinct governments; and by transplanting the inhabitants of them to other places, and making new colonies and settlements; and so the Targum,

"and I have removed the people from province to province:"

taking that to himself which belongs to God, who has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of men's habitations:

and have robbed their treasures: laid up in palaces, temples, sepulchres, and private houses, for time to come, which are usually plundered when cities and towns are taken; the Targum renders it,

"their laudable cities:"

and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant [man]; from their greatness, from their seats of honour and dignity; or I have put down many inhabitants, as Jarchi, and reduced great numbers to a low and mean estate. The Targum is,

"I have brought down with strength they that dwell in fortified places;"

and so Aben Ezra and Kimchi explain it, they that dwell in a strong place or palace.

Isaiah 10:14

Ver. 14. And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people,.... With that ease as a man finds a nest of birds, and takes them:

and as one gathereth eggs [that are] left; by the bird, who not sitting upon them, there is none to protect them; whereas, when they are sat upon by the bird, she will flutter with her wings, and strike with her bill, and preserve them as well as she can:

have I gathered all the earth; the kingdoms and inhabitants of it, there being none to resist, or that dared to do it, as follows:

and there was none that moved the wing; as a bird will do, when its young or eggs are taken away from it:

or opened the mouth, or peeped; chattered, clucked, or expressed any grief, uneasiness, or resentment; the Targum is,

"that opened his mouth, and spoke a word."

Isaiah 10:15

Ver. 15. Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?.... Hitherto are the words of the Assyrian monarch; and here begin the words of the prophet, rebuking him for his pride, and deriding his vain boasting, in attributing that to himself, to his wisdom and power, who was but an instrument, which belonged to God, the sole Governor and wise orderer of all things; which was all one as if an axe should ascribe the cutting down of trees to itself, and insist on it that the man that cut with it had no share in the action, nor was it to be ascribed to him; than which nothing is more absurd. The sense is, that the king of Assyria, in taking cities, and conquering kingdoms, and adding them to his own, was only an instrument in the hand of God, like an axe in the hand of one that hews down trees; and therefore it was vain and ridiculous to take that to himself which belonged to the Lord, on whom he depended as an instrument, as to motion, operation, and effect; from whom he had all power to act, all fitness for it, and efficacy in it, as the axe has from the person that makes and uses it, or any other instrument, as follows:

[or] shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? or draws it to and fro; which is the sense of the Targum, Septuagint, and Vulgate Latin versions, and others; and which further exposes the vanity and arrogance of the Assyrian monarch, who had no more concern in the spoiling of nations, and destruction of kingdoms, than the saw has in cutting of timber that is hewn; which has its form, its sharp teeth, not of itself, but from the maker; and when thus made, and fit for use, cannot draw itself to and fro, and cut trees in pieces, which are felled by the axe, but must be moved by another; and to insult the mover of it, as if it was not his act, but its own, is not more absurd than what this haughty prince was guilty of, in boasting of his power, wisdom, and prudence, in the above mentioned things:

as if the rod should shake [itself] against them that lift it up {m}; for such was the king of Assyria, he was no other than the rod of the Lord's anger, Isa 10:5 and which he lifted up, and with it chastised his people; wherefore for him to behave haughtily against the Lord, and arrogate that to himself which was the Lord's doing, was as if a rod should shake itself against him that lifts it up; or, "as if a rod should shake those that lift it up": as if there were more power in the rod than in them that take it up and strike with it; yea, that even the rod moves them, and not they the rod, which is wretchedly absurd:

[or], as if the staff should lift up [itself, as if it were] no wood {n}; but something more than wood, an animate creature, a rational agent, whereas it is nothing else but wood; or "as if a staff should lift up" itself against that which is "not wood", like itself, but is a man, that can move himself and that too; or "as if a staff should lift up" that which is "not wood"; attempt to bear, carry, move, and direct that which is not material like itself, but is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, even the almighty God. De Dieu thinks that Myrh is not a verb, but a noun of the plural number, of rh, "a mountain": and renders it, "as if a rod should shake those that lift it up: and as if a staff were mountains, and not wood". The Targum is,

"when a rod is lifted up to smite, it is not the rod that smites, but he that smites with it."

The sense is, that the Assyrian monarch was only a rod and staff in the hand of the Lord, and only moved and acted as used by him; whereas, according to his vain boast, he was the sole agent, and all was done by his own power and prudence; and was so far from being moved and directed by the power and providence of God, that he was the director of him; which is infinitely more absurd than the things instanced in.

{m} Ben Melech observes, that this is to be understood of the blessed God; and the word being in the plural number, it is the same way, of speaking as in Josh. xxiv. 19. "the Holy Gods is he".

{n} Gussetius thinks this clause contains an ironical answer to the above questions, "shall the axe boast itself?" &c.; "shall the saw magnify itself?" &c.; they should, "as the rod should shake itself" &c.; just in like manner as that does, and so by lifting up itself, ceases to be wood; and which being sarcastically spoken, carries in it a strong negative, that the axe and saw should not glory, or magnify themselves, and no more should the king of Assyria. Vid. Comment. Ebr. p. 360.

Isaiah 10:16

Ver. 16. Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts,.... Because of the pride, and arrogance, and vain boasting of the Assyrian monarch, which was resented by the Lord, he is threatened with what follows; and in order to humble him, and to show that God is above him, these titles are used; "the Lord", the Lord of the whole earth, and the King of kings, and Lord of lords; "the Lord of hosts", of armies above and below, of more and greater armies than what the king of Assyria was lord of; and therefore he might be assured that what is hereafter threatened would be fulfilled, namely,

send among his fat ones leanness; the Targum is, among his princes, who abounded in riches and honour; or his army, and the chiefs in it, the mighty and strong; and by "leanness" is meant destruction and death, which came upon his army, and the great men of it, immediately from the hand of God; see Ps 106:15 compared with Nu 11:33:

and under his glory he shall kindle a burning, like the burning of a fire; that is, under his army, which was great and glorious, very numerous, and well accoutred with clothes and arms, and made a very splendid and glittering show, and of which the Assyrian monarch gloried; this army the Jews say was destroyed by fire, and that the bodies of the men were burnt, and their clothes untouched; but Jarchi interprets this glory of their garments, which give a man glory, and says these were burnt; the Targum calls them their vessels of glory; perhaps meaning their glittering arms, which were burnt along with them.

Isaiah 10:17

Ver. 17. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire,.... That is, the Lord, who is the light of his people; who enlightens them by his word and Spirit, and by his grace effectually calls them out of darkness into marvellous light, to the light of grace here, and to the light of glory hereafter; and who comforts and refreshes them with his gracious presence, and with the light of his countenance when in affliction and distress, which is sometimes signified by darkness; and the same Lord, who is as light to his people, and gives light and comfort to them, is as a consuming fire to others:

and his Holy One for a flame; that is, the Holy One of Israel, the God of Israel, who is holy in himself, and the sanctifier of others; the Syriac version reads, "his Holy Ones": so Jarchi observes it as the sense of some, that the righteous of that generation are meant; the Targum is,

"and there shall be the Lord, the light of Israel, and his Holy One; and his word strong as fire, and his word as a flame;"

see Jer 23:29 so Jarchi interprets it of the law Hezekiah studied:

and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day; the Targum interprets it, his rulers and governors; and so Jarchi, his princes and mighty men; the chief in the Assyrian army, called briers and thorns, because mischievous and hurtful, and caused grief; but rather the multitude of the common soldiers is designed, who were all destroyed in one night, 2Ki 19:35 by an angel; who, according to Aben Ezra, is the light and Holy One of Israel here spoken of.

Isaiah 10:18

Ver. 18. And shall consume the glory of his forest,.... The Assyrian army is compared to a "forest", for the number of men in it; and for the mighty men in it, comparable to large and tall trees, such as oaks and cedars; and like a wood or forest a numerous army looks, when in rank and file, in proper order, and with banners, and having on their armour, their shields, spears, bows and arrows; and the "glory" of it intends either the princes and nobles that were in it, the principal officers, generals, and captains; or the riches of it, the plunder of the Egyptians and Ethiopians, as Kimchi observes, which were all destroyed at once:

both soul and body, or "from the soul even to the flesh" {o}; which denotes the total consumption of them, nothing of them remaining; the Targum is,

"the glory of the multitude of his army, and their souls with their bodies, it shall consume;"

and so some understand this of the eternal destruction of soul and body in hell: the Rabbins are divided about the manner of the consumption of the Assyrian army; some say their bodies and souls were both burnt, which these words seem to favour; and others, that their souls were burnt, and not their bodies, their lives were taken away, and their bodies unhurt; which they think is favoured by Isa 10:16 where it is said, "under his glory", and not "his glory" {p}:

and they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth; who when he fails, the whole company or army is thrown into confusion, and flees; and so the Targum,

"and he shall be broken, and flee."

Some render it, "as the dust of the worm that eats wood" {q}; so Jarchi; signifying that they should be utterly destroyed, and become as small as the dust that falls from a worm eaten tree; which simile is used, a forest being made mention of before.

{o} rvb dew vpnm "ab anima usque ad carnem", V. L. Montanus, Piscator. {p} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 113. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol 94. 1, 2. See Kimchi in loc. {q} oon owomk "at pulvis teredinis", Tigurine version.

Isaiah 10:19

Ver. 19. And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few,.... Which were left unconsumed, that escaped this destruction, those of the Assyrian army that fled with Sennacherib their king; which, the Rabbins say {r}, were no more than ten, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe; yea, some say there were but five left who escaped, and name them, Sennacherib and his two sons, Nebuchadnezzar and Nebuzaradan:

that a child may write them; count them, and take down their names; and it may be understood of a military muster, and the sense be, that the army should be reduced to so small a number by this stroke upon them, that there would be no need of an able muster master to take the account of them, a child would be equal to such a task. The Targum is,

"and the rest of his warriors shall fail, that the people shall be a small number, and shall be reckoned a weak kingdom."

{r} T. Bab. ib. fol. 95. 2. Praefat. Echa Rabbati, fol. 41. 1.

Isaiah 10:20

Ver. 20. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... Here begins a prophecy relating to the people of Israel, and concerns things that should befall them after the destruction of the Babylonish monarchy, which after Nebuchadnezzar did not last long; there were but two kings after him mentioned in Scripture, Evilmerodach, and Belshazzar; so that its tall trees, its kings, were very few, so few that a child might count them; and what is after said is for the comfort of that people, and seems to refer to the times of the Gospel, as appears by some words in the context cited by the Apostle Paul:

[that] the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob; who should return from the Babylonish captivity, and be settled in their own land:

shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; either on the kings of Egypt, who were originally their oppressors, and in whom they had been so foolish as to put their trust and confidence, they being but a broken staff and reed, Isa 30:2 or on the king of Assyria, in the time of Ahaz, who made him pay tribute, and afterwards fought against him:

but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth; that is, upon Christ, the Lord of all, and King of saints; the Lord their righteousness, and from whom they have their holiness: to stay or lean on him is expressive of faith in him, of reliance and dependence on him, and trust in him; which is done in sincerity and uprightness of soul, unfeigned and without dissimulation; not in profession only, but in reality, and as nakedly revealed in the Gospel, without type and figure; for this respects Gospel times, in which the shadows of the law are gone, and Christ, as the object of faith, appears unveiled, being come a High Priest of good things to come. The Targum is they

"shall no more lean on the people whom they served; but they shall lean upon the Word of the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth;"

that is, on the essential Word, the Messiah: this was the case of a few of them, a remnant according to the election of grace, as the following words show.

Isaiah 10:21

Ver. 21. The remnant shall return,.... This is said in allusion to Shearjashub, the name of Isaiah's son, **Isa 7:3** which signifies "the remnant shall return", and was imposed on him, to give assurance of it; meaning, either that they should return from the Babylonish captivity, as they did, or to God by repentance; or rather the sense is, they shall turn to the Lord, be converted to Christ, to the faith and obedience of him, as some of them were when he came, a few, not all, only a remnant, as it is explained in the next clause:

[even] the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God; the Messiah, so called, **Isa 9:6**. The Targum is,

"the remnant which have not sinned, and are turned from sin; the remnant of the house of Jacob shall return to worship before the mighty God."

Isaiah 10:22

Ver. 22. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea,.... These words are spoken either by the Lord to the prophet, calling Israel his people; or by the prophet to Hezekiah, as Jarchi and Kimchi think; or they may be rendered thus, "for though thy people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea" {s}; that is, innumerable, as was promised to Abraham, Ge 22:17:

[yet] a remnant of them shall return; or "be converted in it" {t}, to the Messiah; or "be saved", as the apostle interprets it,
See Gill on "Ro 9:27"; a remnant is a few, as Kimchi explains it, out of a great number: it signifies, that the majority of the Jewish nation should reject the Messiah, only a few of them should believe in him; and these should certainly believe in him, and be saved by him; and that for the following reason, because

the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness; that is, the precise and absolute decree, concerning the salvation of the remnant, God will cause to overflow, or abundantly execute, in a righteous manner, consistent with his divine perfections; and so it makes for the comfort of the remnant of the Lord's people, agreeably to the intent of the apostle's citation of it, See Gill on "Ro 9:28"; though some understand it of God's punitive justice, in consuming and destroying the greater part of the Jewish people, the ungodly among them, and saving a remnant, which return and repent; and to this sense are the Targum, and the Jewish commentators.

{s} "Nam etsi fuerit populus tuus, O Israel, sicut arena maris", Piscator. {t} wb bwvy "convertetur in eo", Montanus, Cocceius.

Isaiah 10:23

Ver. 23. For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption,.... Not of the land of Judea, as at the destruction of Jerusalem; but the meaning is, that he that is Lord of all, who does what he pleases in the armies above and below, will execute and accomplish a precise and absolute decree of his, concerning the salvation of the remnant of his people; which is his decree of election, and that standing sure, not upon the foot of works, but his own sovereign will: hence their salvation is sure and certain, and not precarious;

even determined, in the midst of all the land; that is, the determined decree should be executed in the several parts of the land of Judea, where this remnant was; for which reason the Gospel was preached in the several cities of Judah, in order to accomplish it, both by Christ and his apostles.

Isaiah 10:24

Ver. 24. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts,.... Since there is such a decree, and this will certainly be executed:

O my people, that dwellest in Zion; the inhabitants of Jerusalem; such of them especially as feared the Lord, and worshipped him, and served him in the temple:

be not afraid of the Assyrian: the king of Assyria; neither Sennacherib, that threatened them with ruin, having taken the cities of Judah, and laid siege to Jerusalem; nor Nebuchadnezzar, who carried them captive, since he would not be able utterly to destroy them, they would return and dwell in the land again; for there was a decree concerning the salvation of a remnant, which would certainly take place; and till that was executed, it was impossible the nation should be destroyed.

He shall smite thee with a rod; be an instrument of chastising and correcting, but not of destroying; Jarchi interprets it of smiting with the rod of his mouth, by means of Rabshakeh reproaching, and blaspheming:

and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt; which Kimchi explains of the tribute the Assyrians exacted of them, in like manner as the Egyptians set taskmasters over them, and afflicted them with hard bondage, in Egypt: the sense is, that though the Assyrians should annoy and distress them, yet should not utterly consume them; there would be an end of their oppression, and a deliverance out of it; even as when they were in Egypt, and oppressed there, the Lord appeared for them, and supported them, and at length saved them, and so he would now. Mention is made of a rod and a staff, in allusion to what the Assyrian is said to be in the hand of the Lord, Isa 10:5.

Isaiah 10:25

Ver. 25. For yet a very little while,.... Within a few days; for in a very short time after Sennacherib was come up against Jerusalem his army was destroyed by an angel:

and the indignation shall cease; the indignation of the Lord against his people Israel, shown by bringing the Assyrian monarch against them, of which he was the staff or instrument, Isa 10:5:

and mine anger in their destruction; not in the destruction of the Jews, but the Assyrians: the sense is, that the anger of God towards the people of the Jews for the present should be discontinued, when the Assyrian army was destroyed. The Targum is,

"for yet a very little while, and the curses shall cease from you of the house of Jacob; and mine anger shall be upon the people that work iniquity, to destroy them;"

that is, the Assyrians.

Isaiah 10:26

Ver. 26. And the Lord of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him,.... The Assyrian monarch; this scourge stirred up or awakened by the Lord, with which that monarch was severely scourged, is no other than the angel that was sent of God to destroy his army, 2Ki 19:35:

according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: this refers to the destruction of the Midianites in the time of Gideon; and suggests, that the slaughter of the Assyrians should be like that, as it was; for as that was in the night, and very general, and immediately from the hand of the Lord, and was unthought of, and unexpected, and such of their princes that fled were taken and slain, particularly Oreb, at the rock which took its name from him; for not mount Horeb, and the rock there smitten by Moses, are meant, which is written with different letters; see the history of this in **Jud 7:19** so it was in the night when the Assyrian army was destroyed, and that wholly; and not by the Israelites, but by the Angel of the Lord; and at once, at an unawares; and though Sennacherib fled and escaped, he was slain by his own sons, in his own city, in the temple of his god,
2Ki 19:35:

and [as] his rod [was] upon the sea; referring to Moses's rod, which was lifted up, by the order of the Lord, over the Red Sea, when the Egyptians were drowned:

so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt; and destroy the Assyrians, in like manner as he destroyed the Egyptians, all at once.

Isaiah 10:27

Ver. 27. And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder,.... The tax or tribute imposed upon Hezekiah by the king of Assyria, 2Ki 18:14:

and his yoke from off thy neck; the same with the burden; unless it means also the subjection of the cities of Judah, which were taken by the Assyrian; and indeed it may be extended further, and be considered as a prophecy not merely of deliverance from the present distress, but from the future captivity in Babylon; and which was a type of the deliverance and redemption by Christ, when the Lord's people were delivered from the burden of sin, the guilt and punishment of it; from the yoke of the law, the yoke of bondage; and from the tyranny of Satan, and out of the hand of every enemy; and this seems to be hinted at in the next clause:

and thy yoke shall be destroyed, because of the anointing; or, "be corrupted, because of fatness" {u}; through the multitude of riches and honours, with which the Assyrian monarchy abounded; which fill with pride, introduce luxury, and so bring ruin, on a state. Jarchi and Kimchi interpret the anointing of Hezekiah, the anointed king of Israel, for whose sake the Assyrian yoke was destroyed. The Rabbins say, that this deliverance was wrought on account of the large quantity of oil which Hezekiah consumed in the schools and synagogues, for the study of the law, and the explanation of it; but the Targum much better refers it to the Messiah,

"the people shall be broken from before the Messiah;"

who was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, and for whose sake, and by whom, the yoke of sin, Satan, and the law, has been destroyed. Vitringa interprets it of the Spirit of God, and his powerful operations, whose gifts and graces are often compared to oil and ointment; and makes the words parallel to **Zec 4:6**.

{u} Nmv ynpm le lbxw "et corrumpetur jugum propter oleum", Cocceius; "prae pinguedine", Quidam in Munster.

Isaiah 10:28

Ver. 28. He is come to Aiath,.... In this and the following verses is prophetically described the expedition of Sennacherib to Jerusalem, when he either went from Assyria, or returned from Egypt thither; and the several places are mentioned, through or by which he passed, or near to which he came, the tidings of which greatly distressed the inhabitants of them; and the first that is named is Ajath, thought to be the same with Ai, which was beside Bethaven, and on the east side of Bethel, **Jos 7:2** and though it was burnt, and made desolate by Joshua, **Jos 8:28** yet it was afterwards rebuilt, for it was in being in Nehemiah's time; or at least there was a place of this name, which was upon or near the spot where this stood, since it is mentioned with Geba, Michmash, and Bethel, Ne 11:31 according to the ancient Jewish writers {w}, it lay three miles from Jericho. Jerom {x} calls it Agai, and says that in his time there was scarce any remains of it, only the place was shown.

He is passed to Migron; this place, as the former, was in the tribe of Benjamin; mention is made of it, as in the uttermost part of Gibeah,
1Sa 14:2. Sennacherib seems not to have stayed either in this, or the former place:

at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages; here was a passage, called the passage of Michmash, where was the garrison of the Philistines; and on each side of it were two rocks, one called Bozez, and the other Seneh; one of which fronted Michmash to the north, and the other Gibeah to the south, 1Sa 13:23 by Josephus {y} it is called Mechmas, a city; and so it is in the Apocrypha:

"Thus the sword ceased from Israel: but Jonathan dwelt at Machmas, and began to govern the people; and he destroyed the ungodly men out of Israel." (1 Maccabees 9:73)

In Jerom's time it was a very large village, who says it was nine miles from Jerusalem {z}: mention is made of it in the Misna {a}, as famous for the best fine flour; and this the king of Assyria made his magazine, and in it laid up his provisions and warlike stores, from whence he might be supplied upon occasion. The words may be rendered, "he hath laid up his arms"; and Kimchi thinks he left the greatest part of his arms here, and went in haste to Jerusalem, imagining he should have no occasion for them, but should easily take it. The Targum is,

"at Micmas he shall appoint the princes of his army;"

the generals of it: perhaps the sense is, that here he made a muster of his army, examined the arms of his soldiers, appointed the proper officers, and gave them their instructions.

{w} Shemot Rabba, sect. 32. fol. 135. 2. {x} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 87. E. {y} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 1. & l. 13. c. 1. sect. 6. {z} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 93. F. {a} Menachot, c. 8. sect. 1.

Isaiah 10:29

Ver. 29. They are gone over the passage,.... Or "from the passage" {b}; not of Jordan, as the Targum; but rather of Michmash,
1Sa 13:23 this to be understood of the king of Assyria with his army:

they have taken up their lodging at Geba; or "Geba was their lodging"; that is, for a night only; not that they continued here for any time, as our version seems to suggest. This was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 21:17 called Geba of Benjamin, 1Ki 15:22.

Ramah is afraid; the inhabitants of it, as the Targum, at the report of the march of the king of Assyria and his army, and their being near to them. Ramah was in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:25 it is mentioned with Gibeah in **Ho 5:8** upon which place Jerom says it was seven miles from Jerusalem; but elsewhere {c} he says it was but six, and was to the north against Bethel. See Jud 19:13.

Gibeah of Saul is fled; that is, the inhabitants of it fled, upon hearing the king of Assyria with his army was coming that way. This was also a city of Benjamin, and is called Gibeah of Benjamin,
1Sa 13:2 and Gibeah of Saul, 1Sa 11:4 as here; either because he was born there, as Jerom {d} affirms; and certain it is, that he was of the tribe of Benjamin; or because he built it, or at least a palace in it to dwell in, as Kimchi thinks; and it is plain he dwelt here, for it is called his home, 1Sa 10:26 the name of the place with Josephus {e} is Gabathsaoula, which he makes to be thirty furlongs or four miles from Jerusalem, and says it signifies "Saul's hill", and that it was situated in a place called the Valley of Thorns.

{b} hrbem "a transitu". {c} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 94. B. {d} Comment. in Hos. v. 8. {e} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 2. sect. 1.

Isaiah 10:30

Ver. 30. Lift up that voice, O daughter of Gallim,.... In a mournful and lamentable manner, and yet with such a clear loud voice, as to be heard afar off: the word is sometimes used for making a joyful sound, and of the neighing of horses. The inhabitants of Gallim are meant by its daughter; of this place was Phalti, who married Michal, Saul's daughter; very probably it was in the tribe of Benjamin. Jerom {f} makes mention of Accaron, a village, which was called Gallim.

Cause it to be heard unto Laish; if this was the place the Danites took, and called it Dan, it was on the northern border of Judea, in the furthermost part of the land; hence the phrase, from Dan to Beersheba; it was near to Caesarea or Paneas, from whence the river Jordan took its rise; and was a great way off, either of Gallim or Anathoth, for the voice of them to be heard.

O poor Anathoth! this was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 21:18 it was the native place of the Prophet Jeremiah, **Jer 1:1** according to Josephus {g}, it was twenty furlongs from Jerusalem; and, according to Jerom {h}, three miles: it is called "poor", because it was but a poor mean village; or because it would now become so, through the ravages of the Assyrian army.

{f} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 92. D. {g} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 7. sect. 3. {h} Comment. in Hieremiam, l. 1. fol. 121. H. & l. 2. fol. 132. F. & l. 6. 161. C.

Isaiah 10:31

Ver. 31. Madmenah is removed,.... That is, the inhabitants of it, who removed from thence upon hearing that the Assyrian army had invaded the land, and was coming up to Jerusalem. There was a place called Madmannah, which lay in the southern part of the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:31 which, Jerom {i} says, was then called Memris, and was near the city of Gaza; but whether the same with this is not certain.

The inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee; of this place we have no account any where. Hillerus {k} thinks the whole name of the city was Joshebehaggebim, which we render "the inhabitants of Gebim"; and supposes it had its name from the ditches that were in it, or about it.

{i} De Iocis Hebraicis, fol. 93. E. {k} Onomast. Sacr. p. 310.

Isaiah 10:32

Ver. 32. As yet shall he remain at Nob that day,.... The same day he came from Gebim; and proceed no further as yet, but make a short stay, and prepare himself and army to march to Jerusalem the next day: the Jews say {l}, that he performed all his journeys in one day; the same day he came to Ajath he came to Nob, where he stayed the remaining part of the day. Nob was a city of the priests, 1Sa 22:19 and so it is called in the Targum here; it was so near Jerusalem, that, as Jarchi and Kimchi say, it might be seen from hence; wherefore here he stood, in sight of Jerusalem; against the wall of it, the Targum says; and did as follows:

he shall shake his hand [against] the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem; threatening what he would do to it, and despising it as unable to hold out against him; or the sense is this, yet a day, or in a day's time, from the last place where he was; he shall come to Nob, and there shall he stop, and go no further: or, "the mountain of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem, shall shake its hand"; bidding him defiance, insulting over him, or rejoicing at the fall of the Assyrian army. Wherefore it follows:

{l} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 95. 1.

Isaiah 10:33

Ver. 33. Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror,.... Cut off the king of Assyria and his army, in a most terrible manner; "the glory" of it, as in Isa 10:18 the word signifies that which is the ornament, the beauty and glory, of the tree. The Septuagint render it, "the glorious ones"; and the Arabic version, "the nobles", the generals, and principal officers of the army; the Targum is,

"behold, the Lord of the world, the Lord of hosts, shall cast forth the slain in his camp, as grapes that are trod in a winepress."

And the high ones of stature [shall] be hewn down; the princes of Assyria, so boasted of as kings, Isa 10:8 comparable to tall trees, to oaks and cedars:

and the haughty shall be humbled; who, like their monarch, boasted of their wisdom and strength, Isa 10:12 but now both he and they will be brought very low.

Isaiah 10:34

Ver. 34. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron,.... The multitude of the common soldiers, the whole body of the army, by means of one of his angels, that excel in strength, for which he is compared to "iron"; and which is explained in the next clause:

and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one; the Assyrian army is compared to the forest of Lebanon, for the multitude of trees in it, and the tallness of its cedars, it abounding not only with common soldiers, but with great men; so it is compared to a forest, and to Carmel, or a fruitful field, in Isa 10:18 and the Assyrian monarch is said to be a cedar in Lebanon, Eze 31:3 which fell by the hands of one of the mighty angels, 2Ki 19:35 some, because of this last clause, think that this and the preceding verse Isa 10:33 are to be understood of the calamities that should come upon the Jews, at the time of the Babylonish captivity; for though Sennacherib should stop at Nob; and proceed no further, however should not be able to take Jerusalem, yet hereafter a successor of his should; and, according to this sense, by the "bough" lopped may be meant Jeconiah, or Zedekiah king of Judah; by the "high ones of stature", and the "haughty" ones, his children, the princes of the blood, and the nobles of the land; and by the "thickets of the forest", the common people, who were either killed or carried captive; and by Lebanon, the temple, Zec 11:1 and by the "mighty one", Nebuchadnezzar that burnt it. And some of the ancient Jews interpret this last clause of the destruction of the temple by Vespasian; they observe upon this passage in one place {m}, there is no mighty one but a king, as in Jer 30:21 and there is no Lebanon but the house of the sanctuary, according to **De 3:25** wherefore when a certain Jew saluted Vespasian as a king, and he replied that he was no king, the Jew made answer, if thou art not a king, thou shall be one; for this house (meaning the temple) shall not be destroyed but by the hands of a king, as it is said, "and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one" {n}.

{m} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 56. 2. {n} Midrash Echa Rabbati, fol 46. 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 11

This chapter is a prophecy of the Messiah, and gives an account of his descent, as man; of his qualifications for his office, as a Judge and King; of his performance of it; of the peaceableness of his kingdom; of the spread of it among the Gentiles, by the preaching of the Gospel; and of the last and general conversion of the Jews. His original and descent from David the son of Jesse, under the titles of a rod and branch, is described as mean and obscure, expressed by stem and roots,
Isa 11:1 his gifts and qualifications for his work, in general and particular, Isa 11:2 the performance of it, both with respect to good men and bad men, in the fear of the Lord, with all equity, righteousness, and readiness, Isa 11:3 the peaceableness of his kingdom is figuratively expressed, by the agreement of savage and tame creatures, the former becoming the latter, and so losing their malignant and hurtful nature, through the efficacy of the Gospel, spreading the knowledge of Christ all over the world, Isa 11:6 particularly among the Gentiles, comparable to those savage creatures, who, upon the exhibition of Christ in the Gospel; should seek to him, and find rest in him, Isa 11:10 which will be followed or accompanied with a collection of the Jews out of all lands, and the conversion of them, which will be brought about by the power and grace of God, all impediments being by him removed out of the way; the consequences of which will be, peace among themselves, and obedience among the Gentiles, Isa 11:11.

Ver. 1. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse,.... By which is meant, not Hezekiah, as R. Moses {o} the priest, and others, since he was now born, and must be at least ten or twelve years of age; but the Messiah, as both the text and context show, and as is owned by many Jewish writers {p}, ancient and modern: and he is called a "rod", either because of his unpromising appearance, arising "out of the stem of Jesse"; from him, in the line of David, when that family was like a tree cut down, and its stump only left in the ground, which was the case when Jesus was born of it: Jesse's family was at first but a mean and obscure one; it became very illustrious in David's time, and in some following reigns; from the Babylonish captivity, till the time of Christ, it was very low; and at the birth of Christ was low indeed, his supposed father being a carpenter, and his real mother Mary a poor virgin, dwelling at Nazareth; and it seemed very unlikely, under these circumstances, that he should be the King Messiah, and be so great as was foretold he should; and have that power, authority, and wisdom he had; and do such mighty works as he did; and especially be the author of eternal salvation; and bring forth such fruits, and be the cause of such blessings of grace, as he was: or else because of his kingly power and majesty, the rod or branch being put for a sceptre, and so a symbol of that; to which the Targum agrees, paraphrasing the words thus,

"and a King shall come forth from the sons of Jesse:"

and the sense is, that though Jesse's or David's family should be brought so very low as to be as the stem or stump of a tree, without a body, branches, leaves, and fruit; yet from thence should arise a mighty King, even the King Messiah, who is spoken of by so many august names and titles, **Isa 9:6** and this is observed for the comfort of the people of Israel, when distressed by the Assyrians, as in the preceding chapter Isa 10:1; when those high ones, comparable to the loftiest cedars in Lebanon, and to the tallest trees in the forest, should be hewn down, a rod should come out of Jesse's stem, which should rise higher, and spread more than ever they did:

and a branch shall grow out of his roots; the roots of Jesse, out of his family, compared to the stump of a tree; meaning either his ancestors, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Boaz, and Obed; or his posterity, as David, Joseph, and Mary; and so the Targum,

"and the Messiah shall be anointed (or exalted) from his children's children."

The branch is a well known name of the Messiah; See Gill on "Isa 4:2" the word Netzer, here used, is the name of the city of Nazareth {q}; which perhaps was so called, from the trees, plants, and grass, which grew here; and so our Lord's dwelling here fulfilled a prophecy, that he should be called a Nazarene; or an inhabitant of Netzer, **Mt 2:23**. The Jews {r} speak of one Ben Netzer, who they say was a robber, took cities, and reigned over them, and became the head of robbers; and make {s} him to be the little horn in **Da 7:8** and wickedly and maliciously say {t} he was Jesus; and yet, under all this wickedness, they tacitly own that Jesus of Nazareth is the Netzer this prophecy speaks of; the design of which is to show the meanness of Christ's descent as man, and that he should be as a root out of a dry ground,
Isa 53:2 or rather as a rod and branch out of a dry root.

{o} Apud Aben Ezra in loc. {p} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 85. fol. 75. 1. Midrash Tillim in Psal. lxxii. 1. Apud Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 112. 2. Abarbinel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 8. 4. Aben Ezra, Jarchi, & Kimchi, in loc. Nachman. Disputat. cum Fratre Paulo, p. 53. {q} David de Pomis Lexic. p. 141. {r} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 51. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {s} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 76. fol. 67. 2. {t} Abarbinel in Dan. vii. 8. fol. 44. 1.

Isaiah 11:2

Ver. 2. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,.... The rod and branch, the King Messiah, so qualifying him for his office, and the discharge of it. This shows that Christ's kingdom is of a spiritual nature, and administered in a spiritual manner, for which he was abundantly furnished by the "Spirit of the Lord" resting on him; by whom is meant the third Person in the Trinity, so called, not because created by him, for not any created spirit is meant, but because he proceeded from him; he is the one Jehovah with him, a divine Person, truly God, yet distinct both from the Father and the Son; so that here is a clear proof of the trinity of Persons. Christ was filled with the Spirit from the womb, and he descended and rested upon him at his baptism; he was anointed with him to be Prophet, Priest, and King, and received his gifts and graces from him without measure, which abide with him, and are designed in the following words:

the spirit of wisdom and understanding; which appeared in his disputation with the doctors; in his answers to the ensnaring questions of the Scribes and Pharisees; in the whole of his ministry; and in his conduct at his apprehension, trial, condemnation, and death; as also in the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding he imparted to his disciples, and does more or less to all his people:

the spirit of counsel and might; of "counsel", which fitted him to be the wonderful Counsellor, and qualified him to give suitable and proper advice to the sons of men; and of "might" or "power", to preach the Gospel with authority; do miracles in the confirmation of it; bear the sins of his people, and the punishment due to them; obtain eternal redemption for them; and engage with all their enemies and conquer them:

the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord; and so as man had the "knowledge" of God the Father; of his mind and will; of the Scriptures, and things contained therein; of the law and Gospel; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were hid in him, which he communicates to his saints; and "of the fear of the Lord", and so had a reverence of him, a strict regard to his will, and always did the things which pleased him; see **Heb 5:7** this verse is also applied to the Messiah, both by ancient and modern Jews {u}.

{u} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 3. & in Numb. fol. 54. 4. & 92. 1. & in Deut. fol. 123. 3. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 2. 4. sect. 8. fol. 6. 3. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 13. fol. 209. 3. Midrash Ruth, fol. 34. 4. Pirke Eliezer, c. 3. fol. 3. 2. Raziel, fol. 11. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 156. 1. Baal Hatturim in Numb. vii. 12. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 1. fol. 3. 1.

Isaiah 11:3

Ver. 3. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord,.... Or "cause him to smell the fear of the Lord" {w}; that is, to discern in whom it was: this is one effect of the Spirit's resting upon him, and particularly as the spirit of understanding, and of the fear of the Lord, whereby he has a quick and sharp discerning of it; not merely of the grace of fear, so as to know what that is, and what the exercise of it; or so as to make it the rule of his actions, though all this is true; but so as to discern where and in whom it was, and was not; he could distinguish between him that feared God and him that feared him not; he knew Nathanael to be an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile, **Joh 1:47** and the Scribes and Pharisees to be hypocrites, Mt 22:18. As the Jews {x} understand this passage of the Messiah, and of his quick smell, as the word used signifies, or of his discerning of good and bad men, they make this to be a rule of judging the Messiah by; and accordingly made use of it with one that set up himself for the Messiah, and took the name of Barcochab, the son of a star, referring to Nu 24:17 and tried him whether he could discern a good man from a bad man; and because he could not, they rejected him as a false Messiah, and called him Barcoziba, the son of a lie {y}: compare with this **Lu 7:39** where it may be seen the same notion obtained among the Jews in Christ's time:

and, he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes; or according to the outward appearance, the external guise of sanctity and religion men might put on; as the Scribes and Pharisees were outwardly righteous before men, but not to Christ, who knew their hearts; they seemed to be somewhat to others, but nothing to him, because he judged not by appearances to the eyes:

neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; he needed no testimony of men, for he knew what was in men; nor did he regard the words of men, the boastings of a Pharisee, any more than his outward actions; nor would he reprove or condemn, nor will he, upon a human testimony.

{w} hwhy taryb wxyrhw "et faciet odorari eum timorem Jehovae", Munster, Vatablus; "et odorabitur timorem Jehovae", Cocceius. {x} Zohar in Exod. fol. 31. 3. & 86. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 62. 3. {y} T. Bab. Sanhedrin. fol. 93. 2.

Isaiah 11:4

Ver. 4. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor,.... The poor sinner, that is sensible of his spiritual poverty, and comes and acknowledges his sins and transgressions, and prays for pardoning grace and mercy, and hungers and thirsts after righteousness; such Christ justifies with his own righteousness, acquits and discharges them from all sin and condemnation, as also protects and defends them against all their enemies and oppressors:

and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; that is, shall take the part of the meek, the lowly, and the humble, who are under a sense of their sins and unworthiness, apply to him for grace, righteousness, pardon, and eternal life; and for their sakes reprove wicked men that would distress and crush them; and in a just and equitable manner, in a way of righteous retaliation, render tribulation to them that trouble them:

and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth: that is, either he shall smite the consciences of earthly and unregenerate men, by the ministration of his word, the rod of his strength, so that they shall be convinced of sin, and humbled for it, and be brought to repentance towards God, and faith in himself; or he shall smite the nations of the earth, the antichristian states, and destroy them,
Re 19:15

and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked; either by the words of his mouth, as before; see **Ho 6:5** so that they become dead men in their own apprehensions, have no hope of life and salvation by their own works, see themselves dead in law, and liable to eternal death and damnation; or this is to be understood of the destruction of the wicked at the last day, by a sentence of condemnation pronounced upon them by Christ; and particularly of antichrist, the wicked and lawless one, the man of sin and son of perdition, whom the

Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming, **2Th 2:4** in which place the apostle seems to have respect to this; nor is the Targum foreign from the sense given, which is

"he shall smite the sinners of the earth with the word of his mouth, and with the speech of his lips he shall slay the wicked Armillus."

Armillus seems to be a name hammered out of Romulus, and designs the Romish antichrist; for elsewhere the Jews expressly say, that Armillus is he whom the nations call antichrist {z}; by whom they suppose that Messiah, the son of Joseph shall be slain, and afterwards he himself shall be slain by Messiah the son of David; or it is the same with
erhmolaov, a destroyer of the people, a name that well agrees with antichrist; see Re 11:18. This whole, verse is applied to the Messiah, both by ancient and modern Jews {a}.

{z} Abkath Rocel, p. 52. Ed. Huls. Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud, p. 221, 222, 223, 224. {a} Shirhashirim. Rabba, fol. 22. 3. Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2. Pesikta apud Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 66. 4. Nachman. Disputat. cum Fratre Paulo, p, 41.

Isaiah 11:5

Ver. 5. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,.... He shall be adorned with it, strengthened by it, and ready at all times to perform it; he loved righteousness, and did acts of righteousness throughout the whole course of his life; and, by his active and passive obedience, wrought out an everlasting righteousness for his people; he is a King that reigns in righteousness, righteousness is the sceptre of his kingdom; all his administrations of government are righteous; just and true are all his ways:

and faithfulness the girdle of his reins; he was faithful to God, that appointed him as King and Head of the church; faithful as a Prophet, in declaring his mind and will; and is a faithful High Priest, as well as a merciful one. The Targum, interprets this of righteous and faithful men, thus,

"and the righteous shall be round about him, and they that work (the work) of faith shall draw nigh unto him;"

but it is said of a single person, of the Messiah only, to whom it properly belongs.

Isaiah 11:6

Ver. 6. And the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,.... This, and the three following verses Isa 11:7, describe the peaceableness of the Messiah's kingdom; and which the Targum introduces in this manner,

"in the days of the Messiah of Israel, peace shall be multiplied in the earth."

The wild and tame creatures shall agree together, and the former shall become the latter; which is not to be understood literally of the savage creatures, as if they should lose their nature, and be restored, as it is said, to their paradisiacal estate, which is supposed to be the time of the restitution of all things; but figuratively of men, comparable to wild creatures, who through the power of divine grace, accompanying the word preached, shall become tame, mild, meek, and humble; such who have been as ravenous wolves, have worried Christ's sheep, made havoc of them, breathing out slaughter and threatenings against them, as did Saul, through converting grace, become as gentle and harmless as lambs, and take up their residence in Christ's fold, and dwell with, yea, some of them even feed, Christ's lambs and sheep, as the above mentioned person:

and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; such who are like the leopard, for the fierceness of his nature, and the variety of his spots; who can no more change their hearts and their actions, than that creature can change its nature and its spots; are so wrought upon by the power of divine grace, as to drop their rage against the saints, alter their course of life, and attend on the word and ordinances, lie down beside the shepherds' tents, where the church feeds her kids, or young converts:

and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; either dwell and feed together, or lie down together, or walk together, since it follows:

and a little child shall lead them; become through the grace of God so tractable, that they shall be led, guided, and governed by the ministers of the Gospel, Christ's babes and sucklings, to whom he reveals the great things of his Gospel, and out of whose mouths he ordains praise. Bohlius {a} interprets this little child of Christ himself, by whom they should be led and directed, see **Isa 9:6** and the following passages are referred to the times of the Messiah by the Jewish writers {b}; and Maimonides {c} in particular observes, that they are not to be understood literally, as if the custom and order of things in the world would cease, or that things would be renewed as at the creation, but in a parabolical and enigmatical sense; and interprets them of the Israelites dwelling safely among the wicked of the nations of the world, comparable to the wild beasts of the field.

(This verse may apply to the future state when all things will be restored to their original state before man fell. By Adam's sin, death and bloodshed were introduced into the creation. **Ro 5:12**. In the final state these will be removed and the wild nature of animals become tame. Editor.)

{a} Comment. Bibl. Rab. in Thesaur. Dissert. Philolog. par. 1. p. 752. {b} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 25. 3. Baal Hatturim in Deut. 11. 25. {c} Hilchot Melachim, c. 12. sect. 1. & Moreh Nevochim, par 3. c. 11. p. 354.

Isaiah 11:7

Ver. 7. And the cow and the bear shall feed,.... That is, together, in one church state, at one table, or in one pasture, upon the wholesome food of the Gospel, the salutary doctrines of Christ; who though before of different dispositions, the one tame and gentle, useful and profitable, dispensing the milk of the divine word, and gracious experience; the other cruel and voracious, barbarous and inhuman, worrying the lambs and sheep of Christ; but now of the same nature, and having no ill will to one another, and being without fear of each other:

their young ones shall lie down together; those like the calf and the young bear, shall lie in the green pastures of Gospel ordinances, and do no injury, the latter to the former, being of one mind, and agreeing in doctrine and practice:

and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; kings shall be nursing fathers to the church, and feed on the same Gospel provisions; and there shall be a great agreement between them who were before comparable to lions for their strength, power, and cruelty, and ministers of the Gospel, who are compared to oxen, for their strength and laboriousness, **1Co 9:9** "straw" here denotes true doctrine, though elsewhere false, see **1Co 3:12**.

See Gill (Editor's note) on "Isa 11:6" .

Isaiah 11:8

Ver. 8. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,.... Without fear or danger:

and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den; and suffer no damage: the meaning is explained in the next words, and to be understood of regenerate persons, both of new born babes, or just born, and all such who are weaned from their own righteousness, and live by faith on Christ, who shall not be hurt by the poison of false teachers, nor by the force of violent persecutors, now no more,

See Gill (Editor's note) on "Isa 11:6".

Isaiah 11:9

Ver. 9. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,.... In the Church, so called, in allusion to the holy hill of Zion; in the latter day, after the destruction of antichrist, there will be no more persecution of the saints; they will be no more injured nor harassed by wicked men, comparable to the above mentioned creatures, either for their cruelty or cunning; the reason follows:

for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea: full of the Gospel, the means of conveying the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ, of his person and office, of his grace and righteousness, of peace, pardon, life, and salvation by him. The phrase denotes the abundance and depth of the knowledge of divine things, and the large spread of the Gospel, and the multitude of persons that shall be blessed with it, and a profound knowledge of it; so that there will be none to molest, disturb, and distress the people of God, see **Hab 2:14** this has had some appearance of accomplishment at several times; as at the first times of the Gospel, when the sound of it, by the apostles, went into all the earth, and diffused the savour of the knowledge of Christ in every place; and in the times of Constantine, when Paganism was abolished, and the whole empire became Christian, persecution ceased, and peace ensued, as before described; and at the Reformation, when whole nations embraced the Gospel of Christ; but the full accomplishment of it is yet to come, when the angel shall fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to all men, and the earth shall be lightened with his glory; when men shall run to and fro, and knowledge be increased, and all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. This passage is applied to the times of the Messiah by the Jews, ancient and modern {d}.

{d} Zohar in Exod. fol. 28. 3. Kimchi in Joel 2. 28. Maimon. Melachim. c. 12. sect. 1. Caphtor, fol. 57. 2. and 93. 1. and 108. 1.

Isaiah 11:10

Ver. 10. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse,.... The Messiah, so called, either with respect to his human nature, who was to spring from Jesse; so the Targum,

"and there shall be at that time a son of the sons of Jesse;"

who, when incarnate, was like a root under ground, hidden to men, as to the glory of his person, and the fulness of his grace, and was mean, abject, and contemptible in their view; or rather with respect to his divine nature, just as he is called "the root and offspring of David", **Re 5:5** the former as God, the latter as man; and so the phrase may denote his eternity, being before Jesse, or any other man or creature whatever; and his being the Creator and preserver of all, of Jesse, and of all others; and, as Mediator, he is the root from whom Jesse, and all the elect of God, are; they have their being in him; they are rooted and grounded in him; and are bore by him as the branches by the root; and they have their life and nourishment, their fruitfulness, holiness, and perseverance therein from him. This is understood of the Messiah, by ancient and modern Jews {e}:

which shall stand for an ensign of the people; in the ministration of the Gospel, for the gathering of the people of God to him, to enlist in his service, and fight under his banner, where they may be sure of victory; an ensign set up, a banner displayed, is for the gathering of soldiers together; it is a sign of preparation for war, and an encouragement to it; and is sometimes done when victory is obtained, see **Isa 5:26** and is a direction where soldiers should stand, when they should march, and who they should follow, as well as it serves to distinguish one company from another; and of all this use is the preaching of Christ and his Gospel:

to it shall the Gentiles seek; that is, to Christ, signified by the root of Jesse, and set up for an ensign of the people; being sought out by him in redemption and calling, and being sensible of their need of him, and that there is something valuable in him, having had a manifestation of him to them; and therefore seek to him, not out of curiosity, nor with worldly views, nor in the last, but in the first place, and chiefly; not hypocritically, but sincerely, and with their whole hearts; not carelessly, but diligently and constantly; not partially, but for everything they want; principally for the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, for eternal glory and happiness, and for a justifying righteousness, as the title to it: or to him shall they "betake themselves" {f}, see De 12:5 as to an ensign, standard bearer, captain-general, leader and commander of the people; or as to a stronghold, for protection from enemies; or as to a city of refuge, to secure from avenging justice and wrath to come; and, under a sense of danger and ruin, to one that is able to save; and for help to one that is mighty; or him "shall" they "consult" {g}; or seek to him for advice and counsel, see **Isa 8:19** who is a most proper person to be consulted on all occasions, he being the wonderful Counsellor, **Isa 9:6**. This is a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles, and which had its accomplishment, in part, in the first times of the Gospel, and will be completely fulfilled in the last days:

and his rest shall be glorious; either that which Christ gives to those that seek unto him, and which is both a spiritual rest here, from the burden and guilt of sin, and the tyrannical power of it; from the bondage, curse, and condemnation of the law; from a sense of divine wrath; and a rest in afflictions, though not from them; and an eternal rest hereafter, a "rest in glory" {h}; as the words may be rendered here; it will be a glorious one, the bodies of the saints at death rest in the grave, and their souls in the arms of Jesus; and after the resurrection, body and soul will rest together from sin and Satan, from unbelief, doubts, and fears, and from all enemies; or else this rest is what Christ himself enjoys. Some understand it of his death, which, though ignominious in itself, yet glorious in its consequences; a glorious display of the condescension and love of Christ was made in it; and glorious things have been effected by it: others, of his grave, which was an honourable man's; his grave was made with the rich; though perhaps better of his rest in glory; when he had done his work, and sat down at the right hand of God, he was crowned with glory and honour; or rather it may design his church, which is his rest, Ps 132:13 which is glorious, with his righteousness, grace, and presence, and being put in order by him, as an army with banners; and especially it will be, when all the glorious things spoken of it shall be fulfilled.

{e} Zohar in Exod. fol. 71. 1. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 85. 3. Midrash in Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 97. 2. Baal Hatturim in Numb. 26. 10. {f} vrd "non

significat [quaerre], sed [tendere], aut [se confere]", Bootius, Animadv. l. 1. c. 5. sect. 6. {g} "Ad eum consulent", Junius. {h} So Ben Melech observes that b is wanting, and the sense is
dwbkb, "in", or, "with glory".

Isaiah 11:11

Ver. 11. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... Before spoken of, and which includes the whole Gospel dispensation:

[that] the Lord shall set his hand again the second time; which refers to a first, in which the Lord exerted his power in the recovery of his people out of the hands of their enemies; and that was the deliverance of them out of Egypt, and which was typical of the deliverance of the Lord's people in the times of Christ; and it is usual with the Jews {i} to call Moses the first redeemer, and the Messiah the latter; wherefore this "second time" refers to the times of the Messiah, and not to the time of the deliverance from the Babylonish captivity; for that, as Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi observe, was not a perfect redemption; only Judah and Benjamin returned, not the ten tribes, and so did not answer to the first time, when all Israel came out of Egypt; and much less can it be understood of the return of those, in the times of Hezekiah, carried captive by Tilgathpilneser and Shalmaneser: or the first and second time may be distinguished thus; the first time may intend the calling of a large number, both of Jews and Gentiles, through the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles; and the second time the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Jews, in the latter day; or the first time may respect the calling of the Gentiles, and the second the gathering in of the Jews: or both may intend later times; the first time, the reformation from Popery; the second time, deliverance from Babylon, or the antichristian yoke, under which all nations will again be brought, before the destruction of the man of sin:

to recover the remnant of his people; or to "obtain", or to "possess" {k}; for this is not to be understood of the recovery or redemption of them by the price of Christ's blood, but of the calling and conversion of them, when the Lord claims them, possesses and enjoys them, as his own; and as they are but a remnant whom God has chosen for his people, and Christ has redeemed by his blood, so they are no other that are called; though here they may be called a remnant, or what remains, with respect to those who have been called already:

which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt; Egypt, and other places following, being joined with Assyria, show that this cannot be understood of the deliverance from the Babylonish captivity; but designs the several places where Christ would have a people in Gospel times, and who would be found out, and called by grace; some of which already have been, as in Babylon and Egypt, **1Pe 5:13** and others will be hereafter, according to the prophecies, Ps 68:31 and as Assyria and Egypt are now in the hands of the Turks, it may design the call and conversion of many in those parts, when the Turkish empire shall be destroyed; or else the deliverance of God's people from the tyranny of the Romish antichrist, called Egypt and Babylon, at the time of his ruin:

from Pathros; by which some understand Parthia, as Manasseh ben Israel {l}, and Calvin thinks it probable; many of this country were converted in the first times of the Gospel; the Apostle John's first epistle is called by the ancients the Epistle to the Parthians, see **Ac 2:9** and very likely there will be more of them in the latter day: others think Arabia Petraea is intended; it seems to be a part of Egypt last mentioned, as appears from Eze 29:14 and is mentioned with some cities in Egypt, Jer 44:1 and had its name very likely from Pathrusim, a son of Mizraim, Ge 10:14. Thebais is here meant, the extreme part of Egypt, next to Ethiopia, which is designed by what fellows, according to Sir John Marsham {m}, and Bochart {n}, and Vitringa after them:

and from Cush; or Ethiopia; from whence some have been called, see **Ac 8:27** and others will, according to prophecy, Ps 68:31 and in part of this country now live the Abyssines, who profess Christianity: or rather Arabia, see **Ga 1:17**. The Targum renders it,

"from India:"

and from Elam; a province in Persia, **Da 8:2** the inhabitants of this place are called Elamites, **Ac 2:9** some of these heard the apostles speak the wonderful things of God in their own language, and were converted:

and from Shinar; in Chaldea, in the plain of which the tower of Babel was built, Ge 10:10 wherefore the Targum renders it,

"from Babylon:"

and from Hamath; meaning either Antiochia, as some, or Cilicia, as others. Cocceius says it is a country which lies towards the Mediterranean sea, over against Cyprus, above Mount Libanus, where now is Tripoli:

and from the islands of the sea; or of the west; the European islands, particularly England, Ireland, and Scotland, and others. Aben Ezra refers this prophecy to the times of the Messiah, and so does Manasseh ben Israel.

{i} Midrash Koheleth, fol. 63. 2. {k} twnql "ad possidendum", Grotius; tou kthsasyai, Aquila. {l} Spes Israelis p. 72. {m} Canon. Chron. p. 25. {n} Geograph. l. 4. c. 27. col. 276.

Isaiah 11:12

Ver. 12. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations,.... For the gathering of them, for the calling of the Gentiles, that is, the Lord would do it; he who before is said to set his hand a second time to recover his people, whether among Jews or Gentiles; this he has done in the ministration of the Gospel, in which Christ is lifted up and held forth as the only Saviour of lost sinners, the sole author and glorious Captain of salvation, for them to flee to, and lay hold on; and this he still does, and will continue to do, until all his people are gathered in from the several parts of the world:

and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel; so those of his people among the ten tribes, that were scattered about in various countries, when the Gospel was preached throughout the world by the apostles, were called by it, and gathered into Gospel churches among the Gentiles, of whom the first churches of Christ consisted; and so it will be in the latter day, when all Israel shall be saved:

and gather together the dispersed of Judah; the Jews, scattered about like lost sheep, among each of the nations of the world; some of which were looked up, and found out, and brought into the sheepfold, in the first times of Christianity; and others will be in the latter day:

even from the four corners of the earth: which shows that this cannot intend the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, which was only from one corner of the earth; The Targum is,

"from the four winds of the earth;"

a phrase the same with that in **Re 7:1**.

Isaiah 11:13

Ver. 13. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart,.... With which it envied Judah, on account of the kingdom of the house of David, and the temple being in that tribe; not that this is the thing intended, only alluded to; the meaning is, that whatever envy or jealousy subsisted in the Gentile against the Jew, or in the Jew against the Gentile, should be no more, when gathered into one Gospel church state; or whatever of this kind has appeared in one Christian church, or denomination among Christians, against another, shall cease, when the Gospel in its power and purity shall more generally take place, and the earth shall be filled with it:

and the adversaries of Judah, or of God's professing people,

shall be cut off; and be no more, as the Turks and Papists:

Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim; this is repeated for the confirmation of it; and the sense is, that all animosities, contentions, and discords, shall cease among the people of God, and there shall be entire peace and harmony among them. Jarchi interprets this of the two Messiahs, Messiah ben Joseph, and Messiah ben Judah, the Jews dream of.

Isaiah 11:14

Ver. 14. But they shall flee upon the shoulders of the Philistines towards the west,.... That is, Ephraim and Judah, who shall not only agree among themselves, but cheerfully join together against the common enemy: "they shall flee with the shoulder", as some render the words; with joint consent, as the phrase is used in **Ho 6:9** **Zep 3:9** and so the Targum,

"and they shall be joined together in one shoulder, to smite the Philistines;"

the Septuagint version is, "they shall flee in the ships of strangers"; and so Abarbinel interprets it of the ships of the Philistines, Genoese, and Venetians, that shall bring the Israelites from the west to the east, and carry them in ships by sea. The Philistines were the sworn enemies of the Israelites, and lay to the west of the land of Israel, and when the Gospel was sent into all the world, it began to be preached in the parts of Palestine, whereby many were converted, and embraced it, as foretold they should, Ps 87:4 and flying upon their shoulders, as it denotes the conquest of them, and their subjection to the Gospel, so the swiftness of the apostles in carrying it to them, when they had a commission to do it, who were all of them Jews, of one tribe or another; and these may also design the enemies of the people of God now, the antichristian states, some of which will fall off from Popery, receive the Gospel, hate the whore, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; which will be brought about by the preaching of the Gospel by its ministers, who will fly in the midst of heaven, and upon the shoulders of the Romish antichrist, and proclaim the fall of Babylon, and call upon, the Lord's people to come out of it, Re 14:6:

they shall spoil them of the east together; the Syrians and Arabians, who lay east of Judea; perhaps the Turks are meant, and the destruction of the Ottoman empire, whereby way will be made for the kings and kingdoms of the east to know, receive, and profess the Gospel of Christ, Re 16:12

they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; or "there shall be a sending out of their hand"; that is, they shall stretch out their hand, and lay hold on these people, and bring them into subjection to them; which is to be understood of the sending out of the Gospel, by the hands of the ministers of it, into those countries where the Moabites and Edomites formerly dwelt; and thereby bringing them into subjection to Christ and his churches:

and the children of Ammon shall obey them; that have the rule in the house of God, submitting to the laws and ordinances of Christ.

Isaiah 11:15

Ver. 15. And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea,.... Which Kimchi and Abarbinel interpret of the Egyptian river Sichor, or the Nile; others of a bay of the Egyptian sea, so called because in the form of a tongue; the destroying of it designs the drying of it up, so that people might pass over it dry shod; the allusion is to the drying up of the Red Sea, when the Israelites came out of Egypt, and passed through it, as on dry land; and it intends the destruction of Egypt itself, not literally by the Romans, in the times of Augustus Caesar, as Jerom thinks, who interprets the "strong wind", in the following clause, of them; but figuratively, the destruction of Rome, which is spiritually called Egypt, Re 11:8 and the utter destruction of it, by an anathema, and with a curse, from the Lord himself; as the word Myrxh here used signifies; and which will take place upon the battle at Armageddon, Re 16:16 which has its name from the word in the text:

and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river; in allusion to Moses's stretching out his hand over the Red sea, and the Lord's causing it to go back with a strong east wind, Ex 14:21. Some understand this of the river Nile as before, and that because of what follows; but Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of the river Euphrates, which is commonly understood in Scripture when "the river", without any explication, is made mention of; and so the Targum,

"and the Lord shall dry up the tongue of the Egyptian sea, and shall lift up the stroke of his strength upon Euphrates, by the word of his prophets;"

and this designs the destruction of the Turks, or the Ottoman empire, which is signified by the drying up of the river Euphrates,
Re 16:12 where it is thought by some there is an allusion to the words here:

and shall smite it in the seven streams; which have made some think the river Nile is meant, because that had its seven streams, or gates, as Juvenal calls {o} them, or mouths, by which the sea issued into it; which are called {p} the Canopic or Heracleotic, the Bolbitine or Bolbitic, the Sebennitic, the Phatnitic, the Mendesian, the Tanitic or Saitic, and the Pelusian or Bubastic, from the cities Canopus and Heracleum, Bolbitine, Sebennytus, Phatnus, Mendes, Tanis or Sais, Pelusium, and Bubastus, built on the shore of these entrances; but it may be observed, that the river Euphrates was drained by seven ditches or rivulets by Cyrus, when Babylon was taken, by which means his soldiers entered the city dry shod, to which the allusion may be here; and it may denote the entire destruction of the Turkish empire, in all its branches; for "seven", as Kimchi observes, may signify a multitude, even the many kingdoms, people, and nations, under that jurisdiction:

and make [men] go over dryshod; or "with shoes", with them on, there being no need to pluck them off, the river and its streams being dried up; by the "men" are, meant the "kings of the east", of which
See Gill on "Re 16:12" all these phrases denote the removal of all impediments out of the way of God's people in those parts, in coming over to the Christian religion, and their embracing and professing that.

{o} Satyr. 13. {p} Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 10.

Isaiah 11:16

Ver. 16. And there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people,.... That is, through the river; that being dried up, and all hindrances and obstacles being removed, the way will be clear for multitudes to walk in without interruption, like a large common, highway, or causeway; so the Mahometan, Pagan, and Papal kingdoms being destroyed, and with them each of their religions, the way of truth, righteousness, and holiness, will be manifest to the remnant of the Lord's people; who will be at this time in those parts, in which they will be directed to walk, and will walk, and not err, see Isa 35:8:

which shall be left from Assyria; the Septuagint and Arabic versions read, "which is left in Egypt"; and designs the remnant, according to the election of grace, that shall be in any of the antichristian countries, either Mahometan or Papal; rather the former seems intended, who shall at this time be brought to the knowledge of Christ, and to walk in his ways:

like as it was to Israel in that day that he came up out of the land of Egypt; that is, as there was a highway made through the Red Sea, in which Israel passed, as on dry land, when they came out of Egypt, and went through the wilderness to Canaan's land.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 12

This chapter contains a song of praise and thanksgiving for redemption and salvation by Christ, of which the preceding chapter Isa 11:1 is a famous prophecy. It begins with an account of the church's former uncomfortable and now comfortable state and condition, Isa 12:1 the foundation of whose comfort was Christ her salvation and strength, and so her song, which engaged her trust, and dispelled her fears, Isa 12:2 hence encouragement to others to apply to the fulness of Christ for grace, and fresh supplies of it, to be had with joy, Isa 12:3 and then follow certain mutual exhortations to praise, exalt, and glorify Christ, with reasons enforcing them,

Isa 12:4.

Ver. 1. And in that day thou shalt say,.... The following song of praise; just as Israel did, when they were brought through the Red sea, and saved out of the hands of their enemies; to which there are several allusions and references in it; that deliverance being typical of salvation by Christ; the Gospel day, or the times of the Gospel, are here meant:

O Lord, I will praise thee; or "confess thee"; to be my Lord, Redeemer, and Saviour, my Husband, Head, and King; or "confess to thee" {q}, my sins and transgressions, and unworthiness to receive any favour from thee, and gratefully acknowledge all the favours bestowed upon me:

though thou wast angry with me; as it appeared to the church, and according to her apprehensions of things, though not in reality, or strictly or properly speaking; for anger is not to be ascribed to God; but it is a speaking after the manner of men; and the Lord seems to be angry when he hides his face from his people, when he refuses to hear their cries, when he afflicts them, and continues his hand upon them, and when he lets in a sense of wrath into their consciences:

thine anger is turned away; he granting his gracious presence; taking off his afflicting hand; manifesting his love, particularly his pardoning grace and mercy; peace and reconciliation being made by the blood of Christ, and justice satisfied, the effects of resentment and displeasure cease:

and thou comfortedst me; by shedding abroad his love in her heart; by discovering the free and full forgiveness of sin; by lifting up the light of his countenance; by an application of precious promises; and by means of the word and ordinances, through the influence of the blessed Spirit as a comforter; who leads in this way for comfort to the person, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and fulness of Christ, and comforts with these, by applying them, and showing interest in them. The Targum is,

"and thou shalt say at that time, I will confess before the Lord; for that I have sinned before thee, thine anger is upon me; but when I am turned to the law, thine anger will turn from me, and thou wilt have mercy on me;"

or rather turned to Christ, and embrace his Gospel, which is the only way to have comfort.

{q} Kdwa "confitebor tibi", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Isaiah 12:2

Ver. 2. Behold, God [is] my salvation,.... Or Saviour; that is, Christ, who is God, the great God, and so fit to be a Saviour, and is one, was appointed by the Father, provided in covenant, promised in the word, sent in the fulness of time, and is become the author of salvation, which a creature could not be; and this the church saw her interest in, and which was the ground of her comfort before declared; and to which she prefixed the word "behold", as a note of asseveration, affirming him to be her Saviour; and of admiration, wondering at it; and of exclusion of all others from being concerned therein; and of attention and direction to others, pointing him out as the only one to look unto.

I will trust, and not be afraid; "trust" in Christ for salvation, be confident of enjoying it, and look upon myself safe and secure from all wrath and condemnation, and from every enemy; and not be "afraid" of sin, Satan, the world, death, hell, and wrath to come. The Targum joins this and the preceding clause together,

"behold, in the word of God my salvation I trust, and shall not be moved:"

for the LORD JEHOVAH [is] my strength and [my] song; the author of her spiritual strength; the "strength" of her life, and of her heart, which maintained the one, and supported the other; the strength of her graces, and of her duties, by which she exercised the one, and performed the other: and the subject matter of her "song" were his person, and the fulness and fitness of it, his righteousness, and salvation by him; this clause, and the following one, are taken out of
Ex 15:2:

he also is become my salvation; salvation is wrought out by Christ, and believers have it in him, and they know it, and believe it, and so are already saved in him.

Isaiah 12:3

Ver. 3. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water,.... These words are either an exhortation to others, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "draw ye"; and so likewise an encouragement to them by her example, or a prophecy that they should do this; that is, apply to Christ for grace, and receive it from him: for by "water" is meant grace, which is compared to it, because it is softening, purifying, fructifying, cooling, and refreshing, and extinguishes thirst; and this is to be "drawn", it is to be come at, though the well in which it is be deep, and not in the reach of everyone; the bucket is faith that it is drawn with, and this is the gift of God; and it is in the exercise of this grace, which requires diligence, strength, and labour, that saints receive from Christ, and grace for grace; and this is exercised in the use of means, by prayer, reading of the Scriptures, and attendance on the word and ordinances, by which faith draws hard, and receives much, and, when it does, it is attended "with joy": salvation itself is received with joy, and so is the Saviour; as also a justifying righteousness, and pardoning grace, and likewise every supply of grace; which joy is of a spiritual kind, is in a way of believing, what a stranger intermeddles not with, and is unspeakable and full of glory:

out of the wells of salvation, or "fountains"; as all the three Persons are; Jehovah the Father, as he is called "the fountain of living water", **Jer 2:13** so he is the fountain of salvation; it springs from him, from his everlasting love, his eternal purposes, his infinite wisdom, his sure and unalterable covenant, his free grace in the mission of his Son; and he himself is the God of grace, from whence it all comes, and every supply of it. The Spirit and his grace are called a "well of living water", **Joh 4:14** and he also is a well of salvation; it is he that convinces men of their need of it, that brings near this salvation to them, and shows them their interest in it, and bears witness to it, and is the earnest and pledge of it; and he is the author of all that grace which makes them meet for it, and from whom are all the supplies of it by the way. But more especially Christ is meant, who is the "fountain of gardens, and well of living water", **So 4:15** in whom salvation is, and in no other: the words may be rendered, "the wells" or "fountains of the Saviour" {r}, yea, of Jesus; and which are no other than the fulness of grace in him: the phrase denotes the abundance of grace in Christ, much of which is given out in conversion; an abundance of it is received with the free gift of righteousness for justification; and a large measure of it in the pardon of sins, and in all the after supplies, through the wilderness of this world, till the saints come to glory; and which is vouchsafed to a great number, to all the elect angels and elect men, to all the churches, and the members thereof, in all ages; and this always has been and ever will be communicating to them. The Targum is,

"and ye shall receive a new doctrine from the chosen, the righteous;"

or of the righteous; which is true of the doctrine of the Gospel, received by the hands of chosen men, the apostles of Christ. The Jews {s} make use of this passage, in confirmation of the ceremony of drawing of water at the feast of tabernacles; and say {t} it signifies the drawing of the Holy Ghost; that is, his grace.

{r} hewvyh ynyemm "de fontibus Salvatoris", V. L.; Vatablus. {s} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 48. 2. & 50. 2. {t} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 70. fol. 62. 3. T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 55. 1.

Isaiah 12:4

Ver. 4. In that day shall ye say, praise the Lord,.... On account of his being and perfections, for blessings received from him, especially spiritual ones; and particularly such as are before mentioned, fulness of grace in him, strength and salvation by him, a view of interest in him as a Saviour, and divine comforts communicated from him; which is done by giving him the glory of them, and thanks for them. This is a work very proper for Gospel times; it always was a duty, and there was ever reason for it under the former dispensation, and much more under the present one; and there will be still more reason for it in the latter day here referred to, when antichrist will be destroyed, the kingdom of Christ will be enlarged, and his church will be in a very glorious state and condition, her walls will be salvation, and her gates praise; when the saints will be stirring up one another to this service, and engaging in it with all readiness and cheerfulness; see Re 11:15:

call upon his name: which takes in the whole of religions worship, of which Christ is the object, being the true Jehovah; and particularly prayer, in which his name is invoked together with faith in him, and expressions of affection to his name; which is precious to believers, and is as ointment poured out:

declare his doings among the people; not merely his works of creation, in which he was equally concerned with his divine Father; nor so much his miracles which he wrought when on earth, in proof of his deity and Messiahship, and in confirmation of his doctrine; but his acts of obedience and righteousness, which were perfect; and his bearing the sins of his people, and the punishment due to them; and so fulfilled the whole law, and hereby accomplished the great work of redemption and salvation; which, according to his orders, have been published among the Gentiles, for their good, and his glory:

make mention that his name is exalted; that is, he himself, who has a name given him above every name; for having obeyed, suffered, and died in the room of his people, he is by his Father, according to promise, exalted, by raising him from the dead, receiving him into heaven, placing him at his right hand, giving him all power in heaven and in earth, and causing angels, authorities, principalities, and powers, to be subject to him; all which is to be made mention of, to the honour of his name: or else the sense is, to speak of him, to make mention of his name, of his person, of his offices, of his grace and salvation, that he may be exalted in each of them by his people; for he is, and ought to be, exalted in their hearts, and with their lips, since he is above all in the excellency of his person, and is their only Saviour and Redeemer, Head and Husband; and so he will be exalted more abundantly in the latter day. See Gill on "Isa 2:11".

Isaiah 12:5

Ver. 5. Sing unto the Lord,.... Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, vocally and together, as Gospel churches, to the glory of God; or "sing the Lord" {u}, let him be the subject matter of the song, as in Isa 12:2 sing how great and good he is; sing what he is in himself, and what he is to others:

for he hath done excellent things; he hath wrought out an excellent salvation, which excels all others, being of a spiritual nature, complete and everlasting: it is emphatically a great one, in which God is glorified in all his perfections, and which issues in the eternal glory and happiness of his people. He has brought in an excellent righteousness, a righteousness that excels any righteousness of the creature, men or angels; it being the righteousness of God, a perfect, pure, and spotless one, which serves for many, even all his spiritual seed, and is everlasting: he has offered up an excellent sacrifice, a sacrifice that excels all that were offered up under the law; in the matter, which is himself; in the use and efficacy of it, to atone for sin, and take it away; in the continuance of that efficacy, and in its acceptableness unto God: and he has obtained an excellent victory over all his and his people's enemies, sin, Satan, the world, and death, and made them sharers in his conquests; reference seems to be had to Ex 15:1:

this [is] known in all the earth; that such a salvation is finished; such a righteousness is brought in; that peace, pardon, and atonement, are procured, and all enemies are conquered; for the Gospel publishing all this has been sent into all the world, and will be more fully preached throughout it in the latter day.

{u} hwhy wrmz "canite Jehovam", Cocceius; nmghsate to onoma knrw; Sept.

Isaiah 12:6

Ver. 6. Cry out, and shout,.... By singing aloud, with the high praises of God in the mouth:

thou inhabitant of Zion: born and brought up there, free of Zion, that is settled and dwells there, and so happy; since there plenty of provisions is had, health is enjoyed, and the inhabitants in the utmost safety and protection, having the greatest privileges and immunities; and therefore have reason to sing and shout for joy, and especially for what follows:

for great [is] the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee; by "the Holy One of Israel" is meant Christ, the Redeemer and Husband of this church; see Isa 48:17 because, as God, he is the God of Israel, the spiritual Israel, and as such is holy, even glorious in holiness; and, as man, sprung from Israel, literal Israel, and as such is holy in his nature, acts, and offices; and is the sanctifier of the whole Israel of God, from whom they receive all their holiness: he is "in the midst" of his church, in the midst of Zion, and the inhabitants of it, to whom he has promised his presence, and grants it, and which causes such joy and gladness, as nothing else can give; and here he is "great", and shows himself to be so, the great God, and our Saviour; a Saviour, and a great one; a great King over the holy hill of Zion; and a great High Priest over the house of God; wherefore greatness should be ascribed unto him, and praise be given him.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 13

This chapter contains a prophecy of the destruction of Babylon, literally understood as a type and exemplar of the destruction of the mystical Babylon, so often spoken of in the book of the Revelation: an account is given of the persons that should be the instruments of it, and of the desolation they should make; which would issue in the utter ruin of that once famous city. The title of the prophecy, and the person that had it, and brought it, are expressed, Isa 13:1 orders are given to the Medes and Persians to prepare for war, Isa 13:2 and are described as the Lord's sanctified ones, his mighty ones, and who rejoiced in his highness, Isa 13:3 by the multitude of them, by the length of the way they came, and the end of their coming, by divine direction, and as the instruments of God's wrath, to destroy the land of the Chaldeans, Isa 13:4 wherefore the inhabitants of it are called to howling, because that destruction from the Lord was at hand, Isa 13:6 the effects of which were fainting, fear, consternation, pain, and sorrow, without the least relief and comfort, Isa 13:7 the causes of which were their sin and iniquity, particularly their arrogance, pride, and haughtiness, Isa 13:11 which destruction is further described by the fewness of men that should be left in the land, Isa 13:12 by the strange revolution made in it, and the confusion it should be in, Isa 13:13 by the fear and flight of men, both of their own and other nations, that should be among them, Isa 13:14 by the slaughter of men and children, the plunder of their houses, and the ravishing of their wives, Isa 13:15 the persons that should be employed as instruments are mentioned by name, and represented as not to be bribed with gold and silver; and as merciless and uncompassionate, that should spare neither young men nor children, Isa 13:17 and the chapter is concluded with a particular account of the destruction of Babylon; which is aggravated, by observing its former glory; by comparing its ruin to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah; by its being no more to be inhabited by men within, nor to have Arabian shepherds pitching their tents without it; and by being the habitation of wild beasts, satyrs, dragons, and doleful creatures, Isa 13:19.

Ver. 1. The burden of Babylon,.... That is, a prophecy concerning Babylon, as the word is rendered, Pr 31:1. The Septuagint and Arabic versions translate it "the vision"; it signifies a taking up {w} a speech against it, and pronouncing a heavy sentence on it, such an one as should sink it into utter destruction; which will be the case of mystical Babylon, when it shall be as a millstone cast into the sea, never to be brought up again, Re 18:21. The Targum is,

"the burden of the cup of cursing to give Babylon to drink:"

after some prophecies concerning the Messiah and his kingdom, and the church's song of praise for salvation by him, others are delivered out concerning the enemies of the people of God, and their destruction, and begin with Babylon the chief of these enemies, and into whose hands the people of

Israel would be delivered for a while; wherefore this prophecy is given forth, in order to lay a foundation for comfort and relief, when that should be their case; by which it would appear that they should have deliverance from them by the same hand that should overthrow them:

which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see: by a spirit of prophecy; for this he saw not with his bodily eyes, though it was as clear and certain to him as if he had. The Targum is,

"which Isaiah the son of Amoz prophesied."

{w} avm a avn "tollere".

Isaiah 13:2

Ver. 2. Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain,.... Or "upon the mountain Nishphah"; some high mountain in Media or Persia, proper to set a standard on, or erect a banner for the gathering men together, to enlist themselves as soldiers, and so form an army to march into the land of Chaldea. Vitringa thinks there may be an allusion to the mountain Zagrius, which divides Media and Persia from Assyria, mentioned by Strabo {x}. Or "upon a high mountain"; any high mountain fit for such a purpose; or "against the high mountain", as some {y} read it; meaning Babylon, called a mountain, Jer 51:25 not because of its situation, for it was in a plain; but because of its eminence above other cities and states. The Targum is,

"against the city that dwells securely, lift up a sign;"

a token of war, proclaim war against it, that lives at ease, and is in peace; and so the word is used in the Talmudic language, as Kimchi observes; and to this agrees Jarchi's note,

"to gather against the mountain that is quiet, and trusts in its tranquillity, lift up a banner to the nations."

Exalt the voice unto them; the Medes, mentioned by name in Isa 13:17 such as were within call, or were gathered together by the lifting up of the banner; such were to be urged with great vehemency to enlist themselves, and engage in a war against Babylon:

shake the hand; beckon with it to them that are afar off, that cannot hear the voice:

that they may go into the gates of the nobles; that dwell in the city of Babylon, where they might expect to find rich plunder; though some understand this of the nobles or princes of the Medes and Persians, as Kimchi observes, that should enter through the gates of Babylon into the city; and by others it is interpreted of the soldiers coming to the doors of the leaders or generals of the army, to give in their names, and enlist themselves in their service; which well agrees with what goes before.

{x} Geograph. l. 11. p. 359. {y} hpvn rh le "contra montem excelsum", Forerius, Sanctius.

Isaiah 13:3

Ver. 3. I have commanded my sanctified ones,.... The Medes and Persians, so called, not because sanctified by the Spirit of God, or made holy persons, through the regenerating and renewing grace of God, or purified by the blood of Christ, and prepared for glory; but because they were set apart in the mind and counsel of God for a special work and service, and were qualified by him with courage and strength to perform it, and therefore said to be his; and this command that was given them was not by a voice from heaven, or in a message by one of his prophets; but by a secret instinct, and, by the power of his providence, stirring them up to engage in such an enterprise {z}.

I have also called my mighty ones; meaning Cyrus and Darius, and the officers of their armies, with the common soldiers, who were furnished with might and strength to do his will, to which they were called in his providence:

for mine anger; to execute his wrath upon the Babylonians; so the Targum,

"that they may avenge my wrath upon them:"

or, "in mine anger"; which being stirred up, put him upon calling those mighty ones to his service, and fitting them for it: literally it is, "to my nose" {a}; to be before him, to be at his beck and will, and to minister his wrath and vengeance:

[even] them that rejoice in my highness; in doing that which tended to the exaltation and glory of God; they went cheerfully about the work, and exulted and triumphed in their success: or, "that rejoice my highness" {b}; make me glad, because I am glorified by them. So seven angels, the Lord's holy and mighty ones, will be employed in pouring out the vials of his wrath on mystical Babylon, Re 15:1.

{z} Vid. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 8. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {a} ypal "in ira mea", Vatablus; "ad iram meam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "in naso meo", Montanus. {b} ytwag yzyle "exultantis celsitudinis meae", Montanus.

Isaiah 13:4

Ver. 4. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people,.... That is, like the noise of a very numerous people; this noise was heard either on the mountains of Media, where they flocked in vast numbers to the standard set; or on the mountains upon the borders of Chaldea, when the army under Cyrus was marching towards Babylon:

a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together; for Cyrus's army consisted of several kingdoms and nations; for besides the thirty thousand Persians he brought with him into Media, where he was made general of the Medes also, and was sent with the joint forces of both nations against Babylon, the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz, were prepared, gathered together, and called forth against it, Jer 51:27:

the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle; or the warlike army: it was the Lord, that has the armies of heaven and earth at his command, who in his providence caused such a numerous army to be formed, directed them where to march, and put them in battle array, and gave them the victory.

Isaiah 13:5

Ver. 5. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven,.... The east, as Kimchi observes; the Targum is, from the ends of the earth; the furthermost parts of it, as Persia and Media were: the former is bounded on the south side by the main ocean; and the latter, part of it by the Caspian sea; and between

Babylon and these kingdoms lay the large kingdom of Assyria; so that this army might be truly said to come from a far country:

[even] the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation; the Medes and Persians, who were the instruments of his wrath and vengeance against Babylon; just as Assyria is called the rod of his anger, Isa 10:5 with these he is said to come, because this army was of his gathering, mustering, ordering, and directing, in his providence; the end and design of which was,

to destroy the whole land; not the whole world, as the Septuagint render it; but the whole land of Chaldea, of which Babylon was the metropolis. The Targum is,

"to destroy all the wicked of the earth."

Isaiah 13:6

Ver. 6. Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand,.... These words are an address to the Babylonians, who instead of rejoicing and feasting, as Belshazzar and his nobles were the night that Babylon was taken, had reason to howl and lament; seeing the day that the Lord had fixed for their destruction was very near, and he was just about to come forth as a judge to take vengeance on them; for though it was about two hundred and fifty years from the time of this prophecy, to the taking of Babylon, yet it is represented as at hand, to show the certainty of it, both for the comfort of the Jewish captives, when they should be in it, and for the awakening of the sluggish inhabitants, who were secure, and thought themselves out of danger:

it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty: suddenly, swiftly, and irresistibly: there is a beautiful paronomasia in the Hebrew text, "ceshod mishaddai" {c}; as destruction from the destroyer; from God, who is able to save, and to destroy; he is almighty and all sufficient, so some render the word; the hand of God was visible in it.

{c} ydvm dwvk.

Isaiah 13:7

Ver. 7. Therefore shall all hands be faint,.... Or hang down; that is, the hands of all the Babylonians, the city being taken suddenly and at once, so that they should not be able to lift them up to lay hold on a weapon, and defend themselves:

and every man's heart shall melt; like wax before the fire; be dispirited, and lose all their valour and courage, have neither power nor heart to resist their enemies, and attempt to save themselves.

Isaiah 13:8

Ver. 8. And they shall be afraid,.... Troubled, dismayed, frightened, at the sudden taking of the city, and at the sight of Cyrus's troops marching up into the very heart of it, and to the king's palace:

pangs and sorrow shall take hold of them; as convulsions, pains in the bowels, &c. more fully explained in the next clause:

they shall be in pain, as a woman that travaileth; that is in labour, and ready to bring forth her child, whose pains are very sharp, and agonies great; the same is said of the king of Babylon,
Jer 50:43:

they shall be amazed one at another; that so great a city should be so surprised, and so suddenly taken; and that they shall not be able to help one another; and that such as were so famous for courage and valour should be at once so dispirited:

their faces [shall be as] flames; not red with blushing, through shame, as Kimchi; but pale with fear, as the colour of flame, or, as the faces of smiths, that work at a forge: the words may be rendered, "their faces are as the faces of Lehabim" {d}; the name of a people mentioned in Ge 10:13 the same with the Libians, which were of a blackish or tawny colour; so Jarchi interprets it, and says they were a people of a yellow complexion: and Aben Ezra observes, that some interpret it of a nation like the Ethiopians; and so it denotes, that the Babylonians, their faces should be black with distress and anguish; see **Joe 2:6**.

{d} Mhynp Mybhl ynp "ut facies Lehabim, [sive] Lybiorum facies eorum", Gataker.

Isaiah 13:9

Ver. 9. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh,.... Or "is come" {e}; said in Isa 13:6 to be at hand, but now it is represented in prophecy as already come:

cruel both with wrath and fierce anger; which, whether referred to "the Lord", or to "the day", the sense is the same; the day may be said to be cruel, and full of wrath and fury, because of the severity and fierceness of the Lord's anger, exercised upon the Babylonians in it; and he may be said to be so, not that he really is cruel, or exceeds the bounds of justice, but because he seemed to be so to the objects of his displeasure; as a judge may be thought to be cruel and severe by the malefactor, when he only pronounces and executes a righteous judgment on him; a heap of words are here made use of, to express the greatness and fierceness of divine wrath:

to lay the land desolate; the land of the Chaldeans:

and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it; this shows that what is before said most properly belongs to the Lord, to whom the destruction of Babylon, and the country belonging to it, must be ascribed; and indeed it was such as could not be brought about by human force; the moving cause of which was the sin of the inhabitants, some of whom were notorious sinners, for whose sakes it was destroyed by the Lord, and they in the midst of it, or out of it; see Ps 104:35.

{e} ab "venit", Piscator; "veniens", Montanus.

Isaiah 13:10

Ver. 10. For the stars of heaven,.... This and what follows are to be understood, not literally, but figuratively, as expressive of the dismalness and gloominess of the dispensation, of the horror and terror of it, in which there was no light, no comfort, no relief, nor any hope of any; the heavens and all the celestial bodies frowning upon them, declaring the displeasure of him that dwells there:

and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; which are assemblages of stars, or certain configurations of the heavenly bodies, devised by the ancients; to which each of the names are given for the help of the imagination and memory; the number of them are forty eight, twelve in the Zodiac, twenty one on the northern side of it, and fifteen on the southern. R. Jonah, mentioned both by Aben Ezra and Kimchi, says that "Cesil", the word here used, is a large star, called in the Arabic language "Suel", and the stars that are joined unto it are called by its name "Cesilim"; so that, according to this, only one constellation is meant; and Aben Ezra observes, that there are some that say that Cesil is a star near to the south pole, on which, if camels look, they die; but, says he, in my opinion it is "the scorpion's heart". Jerom's Hebrew master interpreted it to him Arcturus; and it is in **Job 9:9** rendered Orion, and by the Septuagint here; which is one of the constellations, and one of the brightest; and the word being here in the plural number, the sense may be, were there ever so many Orions in the heavens, they should none of them give light. The Targum and Jarchi interpret it of the planets:

the sun shall be darkened in his going forth; as soon as it rises, when it goes forth out of its chamber, as in Ps 19:5 either by an eclipse of it, or by dark clouds covering it:

and the moon shall not cause her light to shine: by night, which she borrows from the sun; so that it would be very uncomfortable, day and night, neither sun, moon, nor stars appearing, see Ac 27:20 by the sun, moon, and stars, may be meant king, queen, and nobles, whose destruction is here prophesied of; it being usual in prophetic language, as well as in other writers {f}, to express great personages hereby.

{f} "Solem Asiae Brutum appellat, stellasque salubres appellat comites", Hor. Serm. 1. Satyr. 7.

Isaiah 13:11

Ver. 11. And I will punish the world for [their] evil,.... Not the whole world, but the kingdom of Babylon, so called because of its large extent, and the number of its inhabitants, just as the Roman empire is called the whole world, **Lu 2:1** "evil" may be meant, either of the evil of sin, which was the cause of punishment, or else of the evil of punishment itself; and the sense be this, I will visit, or, in a way of visitation, I will bring evil, or evils, upon the world; so the Targum, and the wicked for their iniquity, or "on the wicked their iniquity"; that is, I will visit on them, or inflict upon them, the punishment of their iniquity; meaning the notorious and abandoned sinners among them, see Isa 13:9:

and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and I will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible: such as Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, famous for their pride, arrogance, and haughtiness, tyranny and oppression, whereby they became terrible to others.

Isaiah 13:12

Ver. 12. I will make a man more precious than fine gold,.... Which may denote either the scarcity of men in Babylon, through the slaughter made of them; so things that are scarce and rare are said to be precious, **1Sa 3:1** or the resolution of the Medes to spare none, though ever so much gold were offered to them, they being not to be bribed therewith, Isa 13:17 or that such should be the fear of men, that they would not be prevailed upon to take up arms to defend themselves or their king, whatever quantity of gold, even the best, was proposed unto them, a man was not to be got for money:

even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir; which designs the same thing in different words. The Targum gives another sense of the whole, paraphrasing it thus,

"I will love them that fear me more than gold, of which men glory; and those that keep the law more than the fine gold of Ophir;"

understanding it of the Israelites, that were in Babylon when it was taken, and who were precious and in high esteem with the Medes and Persians, more than gold, and whose lives they spared. Jarchi interprets it particularly of Daniel, and of the honour that was done him by Belshazzar, upon his reading and interpreting the writing on the wall, **Da 5:29**. This is interpreted by the Jews also of the King Messiah; for in an ancient writing {g} of theirs, where having mentioned this passage, it is added, this is the Messiah, that shall ascend and be more precious than all the children of the world, and all the children of the world shall worship and bow before him. Some take "Phaz", the word for fine gold, to be the name of a place from whence it came, and therefore was so called; and that the kingdom of Phez, in Africa, has its name from hence; and Ophir is taken to be Peru in America; though others place it in India; and the Arabic version renders it, "a man shall be more precious than a little stone that is" brought "from India"; and the Septuagint version is, "than a stone in", or "of sapphire".

{g} Zohar in Gen. fol. 71, 1.

Isaiah 13:13

Ver. 13. Therefore will I shake the heavens,.... Some think this was literally fulfilled at the taking of Babylon, when the heavens were shook with dreadful thunders and lightnings; as well as what is said above of the sun, moon, and stars, not giving their light; and so is likewise what follows,

and the earth shall remove out of her place; and that there was a violent shock by an earthquake at the same time; but rather all this is to be understood figuratively, as expressive of the great confusion men would then be in, it being as if all nature was convulsed, and heaven and earth were coming together, or rather dissolving:

in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger; when that should be; or through it, or because of it, as the Septuagint, see Isa 13:6 compare with this Re 16:18 which expresses the destruction of mystical Babylon in much such language.

Isaiah 13:14

Ver. 14. And it shall be as the chased roe,.... That is, Babylon, and the inhabitants thereof, shall be like a roe when hunted by the dogs; which is a very fearful creature, and at the sight and noise of the dogs flies here and there for safety; just so should be the most courageous of the Babylonians, when their city should be taken. The Syriac version renders it, "they shall be"; and the Septuagint and Arabic versions, "they that are left shall be as the fleeing roe", such who fall not by the sword. Kimchi interprets it of people of other nations that should be in Babylon when taken, which agrees with the latter part of the verse:

and as a sheep that no man taketh up; the Septuagint and Arabic versions read, "as a straying sheep", that flees from the wolf; and there being none to fetch it back, and bring it to the flock, it wanders about and perishes:

they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee everyone into his own land; this is to be understood of such foreigners, who were called in by the king of Babylon to his assistance, and the defence of the city; who perceiving it to be taken, or in danger, fled to their own countries, from whence they came, and so left the city naked and defenceless, see Jer 50:16.

Isaiah 13:15

Ver. 15. Every one that is found shall be thrust through,.... With a sword, spear, or lance, and be slain; that is, everyone that is found in the city of Babylon; and so the Targum adds,

"and everyone that is found in it shall be slain;"

so Kimchi, in the midst of it, or without; in the street, as Jarchi. The orders of Cyrus {h} were, that those that were found without (in the streets) should be slain; and to proclaim in the Syriac language, that those that were within doors should continue there, but, if they were found without, they should be put to death; which orders were executed, and well agrees with this prophecy:

and everyone that is joined [unto them] shall fall by the sword; or "added" unto them; any of other nations that joined them as auxiliaries, see Re 18:4 or "that is gathered"; so the Septuagint, "they that are gathered"; that are gathered together in a body to resist the enemy, and defend themselves. Some render the word, "every one that is consumed", with age; neither old nor young, as follows, should be spared. The Targum is,

"everyone that enters into the fortified cities,"

flees there for safety and protection.

{h} Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 7. sect. 23.

Isaiah 13:16

Ver. 16. Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes,.... Upon the ground, or against the wall, as was foretold should be, Ps 137:8 and in way of retaliation for what they did to the Jews, 2Ch 36:17 and this was to be done "before their eyes", in the sight of the inhabitants, which must make it the more distressing and afflicting; and, as Kimchi observes, this phrase is to be applied to the following clauses:

their houses shall be spoiled; plundered of the substance, wealth, and riches in them, by the Persian soldiers:

and their wives ravished; by the same, and both before their eyes, and after that slain, in like manner as they had ravished the women in Zion, **La 5:11**.

Isaiah 13:17

Ver. 17. Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them,.... The Babylonians; this explains who are meant by the sanctified and mighty ones, Isa 13:3 the Medes were a people that descended from Medai, one of the sons of Japheth, Ge 10:2 as Josephus observes {i}; under these the Persians are included, though they are only mentioned, because Cyrus was sent by Cyaxares king of Media on this expedition against Babylon, and was made by him general of the Medes, and acted as such under him; and when Babylon was taken, and Belshazzar slain, Darius the Median took the kingdom, **Da 5:31** now these are mentioned by name some hundreds of years before the thing came to pass, as Cyrus their general in Isa 45:1 which is a strong proof of the truth of prophecy, and of divine revelation; and, whatever might be the moving causes of this expedition, the affair was of God; it was he that put it into the hearts of the Medes, and stirred up their spirits to make war against Babylon; and though God is not the author of sin, yet he not only suffered the things to be done before and after mentioned, but in his providence ordered them as just punishments on a sinful people:

which shall not regard silver; and [as for] gold, they shall not delight in it; not but that they had a regard for, gold and silver, as appears by their spoiling of the houses of the Babylonians,
Isa 13:16 but that they had not so great a regard for these things as to spare the lives of any for the sake of them; they were so intent upon taking away their lives, that they disregarded their substance; their first work was to slay, and then to spoil; they first destroyed, and then plundered; no man with his gold and silver could obtain a ransom of his life from them. Cyrus {k} in his speech to his army said,

"O ye Medes, and all present, I truly know that not for want of money are ye come out with me," &c.

{i} Antiqu. Jud. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1. {k} Cyropaedia, l. 5. sect. 3.

Isaiah 13:18

Ver. 18. [Their] bows also shall dash their young men to pieces,.... That is, the bows of the Medes should dash in pieces the young men of the Babylonians. The meaning is, either that they should put them into their bows, instead of arrows, and shoot them upon the ground, or against a wall, and so dash them to pieces; or that they should first shoot them through with their arrows, and then dash them with their bows; according to Xenophon {l}, Cyrus came to Babylon with great numbers of archers and slingers:

and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; even of those that were in the womb, but should rip up women with child, and cut them in pieces:

their eyes shall not spare children; in the arms of their parents, or running to them, shrieking and crying, and in the utmost fright; and yet their tender and innocent age would meet with no mercy. The Medes were notorious for their cruelty {m}, and which issued at last in the ruin of their empire.

{l} Cyropaedia, l. 2. sect. 1. {m} Ammian. Marcellin. l. 23. c. 6. Diodor. Sicul. l. 13. p. 342.

Isaiah 13:19

Ver. 19. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,.... The first and most ancient kingdom, Ge 10:10 and now, at the time of its fall, the largest and most extensive; wherefore of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, which was a representation of several kingdoms, this was the head, the head of gold, **Da 2:31** so Babylon is called the "lady of kingdoms", Isa 47:5 the word here used for "glory" is the same with that which is rendered a "roe", Isa 13:14. Babylon was once as a pleasant roe, but now a chased one:

the beauty of the Chaldees excellency; the glory of that nation; what they gloried in, being so famous for pompous buildings, number of inhabitants, riches and wealth, see **Da 4:30**. Pliny {n} calls it the head of the Chaldean nations, and says it obtained great fame in the whole world:

shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah; which, though not at once, and by fire from heaven, as that was, yet was of God, and, when completed, was, like that, irrecoverable; which was begun by Cyrus and Darius, and in after times finished; and besides there was a circumstance which made it similar to that; for as the men of Sodom were eating and drinking, when their destruction came upon them, so Belshazzar, and his nobles, were feasting and revelling when the city was taken. The Jews {o} say, that, after Belshazzar was slain, Darius reigned one year, and in his second year the city was overthrown, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven; but without any foundation; for certain it is that Babylon was in being many years after this, and continued to the time of Alexander the great.

{n} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 26. {o} Jarchi & Kimchi ex Seder Olam Rabba, c. 28.

Isaiah 13:20

Ver. 20. It shall never be inhabited,.... As it has not been since its utter destruction. Pausanias {p}, who lived in the times of Adrian, says, Babylon, the greatest city that ever the sun saw, that then there was nothing left of it but a wall: what is now called Babylon is a new city, and built in another place:

neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; which is the same thing repeated in other and stronger terms, for the confirmation of it:

neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; that sort of the Arabians called Scenitae, because they dwelt in tents, and moved from place to place with their flocks, for the sake of pasture; but here there should be none for them, and therefore would not pitch their tents at it:

neither shall the shepherds make their folds there; as they had used to do in the pastures adjoining to it, which were formerly exceeding good, but now would be barren and unfruitful; and as there would be no shepherds in the city, so neither would any neighbouring ones come hither, or any from distant parts; partly because of the unfruitfulness of the place, and partly through fear of wild beasts, which had their habitation there, as follows. Pliny {q} says it was reduced to a mere desert.

{p} Arcadica sive, l. 8. p. 509. {q} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 26.)

Isaiah 13:21

Ver. 21. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there,.... What sort of creatures are meant is not certain. The Targum renders it by a word which signifies monstrous, astonishing creatures; the Latin interpreter of it calls them apes. Jarchi and Kimchi say such are intended as are called martens or sables, a creature of the weasel kind. The Hebrew word does not much differ from the Arabic one used for "wild cats":

and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; whose voices are very mournful and unpleasant. Aben Ezra says such creatures are meant, that those that see them are amazed at them. Jarchi declares they are a kind of creatures he was ignorant of; and Kimchi thinks they are the same with "furon", or "ferrets": and the Latin interpreter of the Targum renders the word that uses by "weasels":

and owls shall dwell there; or "the daughters of the owl", or "of the ostriches", as the Targum and Syriac version; with which agrees the Vulgate Latin, rendering the word "ostriches", as it is in **La 4:3**; the Septuagint version translates it "sirens", or "mermaids":

and satyrs shall dance there; a sort of monstrous creatures with the ancients, painted half men and half goats; the upper part of them like men, except the horns on their heads, and the lower parts like goats, and all over hairy; and the word here used signifies hairy; and is used for goats, and sometimes for devils, either because they have appeared in this form, as Kimchi says, to them that believe them; or because they, by their appearance, inject such horror in men, as cause their hair to stand upright: hence the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it of devils here; and so the Septuagint version, and those that follow it, the Syriac and Arabic, render it, "and demons shall dance there": with this agrees the account of mystical Babylon,
Re 18:2.

Isaiah 13:22

Ver. 22. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses,.... The Targum and Syriac version, "in their palaces", and so the Vulgate Latin; or "with their widows", such as have lost their mates: what creatures are here meant is very uncertain; we in general call them the wild beasts of the islands, because the word is sometimes used for islands; the Targum renders it "cats", wild ones; the Syriac version, "sirens"; and the Arabic, the "hyaenae"; the Septuagint version, "onocentaurs"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "owls", which live in desolate houses, and cry or answer to one another, which is the sense of the phrase here:

and dragons in [their] pleasant palaces; where they delight to be, though otherwise very dismal. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "hedgehogs": the Syriac version, "wild dogs"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "sirens"; the word is commonly used for "whales", and sometimes for serpents, which seems to be the sense here; and to this agrees the account that R. Benjamin Tudelensis {r} gives of Babylon, who, when he was there, about five or six hundred years ago, saw the palace of Nebuchadnezzar in ruins, but men were afraid to enter into it, because of serpents and scorpions, which were within it. Rauwolff, a German traveller, about the year 1574, reports of the tower of Babylon, that it was so ruinous, so low, and so full of venomous creatures, which lodge in holes made by them in the rubbish, that no one durst approach nearer to it than within half a league, excepting during two months in the winter, when these animals never stir out of their holes {s}:

and her time [is] near to come; that is, the time of the destruction of Babylon, as the Targum expresses it; which, though two hundred years or more from the time of this prophecy, yet but a short time with God; and when this was made known to the Jews in captivity, for whose comfort it is written, it was not afar off:

and her days shall not be prolonged; the days of her prosperity and happiness, but should be shortened.

{r} Itinerarium, p. 76. {s} Vid. Prideaux's Connection, par. 1. p. 569.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 14

This chapter contains prophecies of the restoration of the Jews, of the fall of the king of Babylon, and the destruction of the Assyrian empire, and of the ruin of Palestine. The moving cause of the restoration of the Jews, and their

settlement in their own land, is the distinguishing mercy of God towards them; the accomplishment of it, proselytes joined unto them; the means, people of other nations, who should bring them into it, and whom they should possess and rule over; and the consequence of it, rest from sorrow, fear, and hard bondage,
Isa 14:1 upon which they are introduced as taking up a proverb, or a triumphant song, concerning the king of Babylon, wondering at his fall, and ascribing it to the Lord, Isa 14:4 representing the inhabitants of the earth, and great men of it, as at peace, and rest, and rejoicing, who before were continually disturbed, and smitten by him, Isa 14:6 introducing the dead, and those in hell, meeting him, and welcoming him into their regions, with taunts and jeers; upbraiding him with his weakness, shame, and disgrace he was come into; putting him in mind of his former pomp and splendour, pride, arrogance, and haughtiness, Isa 14:9 spectators are brought in, as amazed at the low, mean, and despicable condition he was brought into, considering what he had done in the world, in kingdoms and cities, but was now denied a burial, when other kings lay in their pompous sepulchres, Isa 14:16 and then it is foretold that that whole royal family should be cut off, and Babylon, the metropolis of his kingdom, should be utterly destroyed, Isa 14:21 all which was settled and fixed by the purpose of God, which could not be made void, Isa 14:24 and next follows a prophecy of the destruction of Palestine; the date of the prophecy is given Isa 14:28 the inhabitants of Palestine are bid not to rejoice at the death of one of the kings of Judah, since another should arise, who would be fatal to them, Isa 14:29 and while the Jews would be in safety, they would be destroyed by famine and war, Isa 14:30 from all which it would appear, and it might be told the messengers of the nations, or any inquiring persons, that Zion is of the Lord's founding, and under his care and protection, and that his people have great reason and encouragement to trust in him, Isa 14:32.

Ver. 1. For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, will yet choose Israel,.... While the Jews were in captivity, the Lord seemed to have no pity for them, or compassion on them, and it looked as if he had rejected them, and wholly cast them off; but by delivering them from thence, he showed that he had a merciful regard unto them, and made it to appear that they were his chosen people, and beloved by him: and this is a reason why Babylon should be destroyed, and her destruction be no longer deferred, because the Lord's heart of compassion yearned towards his own people, so that his mercy to them brought ruin upon others: a choice of persons to everlasting salvation, though it is not made in time, but before the foundation of the world, yet is made to appear by the effectual calling, which therefore is sometimes expressed by choosing, **1Co 1:26** and is the fruit and effect of sovereign grace and mercy, and may be intended here; the words may be rendered, "and will yet choose in Israel" {t}, some from among them; that is, have mercy on them, and call them by his grace, and so show them to be a remnant, according to the election of grace; and such a chosen remnant there was among them in the times of Christ, and his apostles, by which it appeared that the Lord had not cast off the people whom he foreknew:

and set them in their own land: or "cause them to rest upon their own land" {u}; for the word not only denotes settlement and continuance, but rest, which they had not in Babylon; but now should have, when brought into their own land; and no doubt but reference is had to the original character of the land of Canaan, as a land of rest; and hither shall the Jews be brought again, and be settled when mystical Babylon is destroyed:

and the stranger shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob; by which is meant, that proselytes should be made to the Jewish religion, who should be admitted into their church state, as well as into their commonwealth, and should abide faithful to the profession they made; which doubtless was fulfilled in part at the time of the Jews' return from the Babylonish captivity, when many, who had embraced their religion, cleaved to them, and would not leave them, but went along with them into their land, that they might join with them in religious worship there; but had a greater accomplishment in Gospel times, when Gentiles were incorporated into the same Gospel church state with the believing Jews, and became fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the same promises and privileges; and so Kimchi and Ben Melech apply this to the times of the Messiah; and Jarchi to time to come, when Israel should be redeemed with a perfect redemption: because from the word translated "cleave" is derived another, which signifies a scab; hence the Jews {w} have a saying,

"proselytes are grievous to Israel as a scab."

{t} larvyb dwe rxbw "et eliget adhuc in Israele", Pagninus, Montanus. {u} Mxynhw "et requiescere eos faciet", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus. {w} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 47. 2. & Kiddushin, fol. 70. 2.

Isaiah 14:2

Ver. 2. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place,.... That is, the people among whom the Jews dwelt in Babylon, who had a kindness for them, and especially such of them as were proselyted to their religion should attend them in their journey home, and supply them with all necessaries for provision and carriage, as they were allowed to do by the edict of Cyrus, **Ezr 1:4** and this will have a further accomplishment in the latter day, when the Gentiles shall bring their sons and daughters in their arms, and on their shoulders, and on horses, and in chariots, to Jerusalem, Isa 49:21 which last passage Kimchi refers to, as explanative of this:

and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord, for servants and handmaids; by the "land of the Lord" is meant the land of Israel, which was peculiarly his; for though the whole earth is his, yet he chose this above all others for the place of his worship, under the former dispensation; and where his son, in the fulness of time, should appear in human nature, preach the Gospel, perform miracles, and work out the salvation of his people; and where his feet shall stand at the latter day, when he comes to judge the world; this is the same with Immanuel's land, **Isa 8:8** hither many of the Chaldeans coming along with the Jews, and having embraced their religion, chose rather to be servants and handmaids to them, than to return to their own land, and who were a kind of inheritance or possession to the Jews; though some think that these were such as they bought of the Babylonians, that came with them to be their servants, and not they themselves. It may be understood of Gentile converts in Gospel times, who would willingly and cheerfully engage in the service of the church of God, and by love serve his people, and one another. Kimchi explains this clause by Isa 61:5:

and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors: that is, the Babylonians, who had carried the Jews captive, should be taken captives by them, and made slaves of; which might be true of those they bought of them, when they returned to their own land; or, as some think, this had its accomplishment in the times of the Maccabees, when they conquered many people, who before had carried them captive, and oppressed them; and in a spiritual and mystical sense has been fulfilled in the times of the Gospel, through the spread of it in the Gentile world, by the ministry of the apostles, who were Jews; by which means many of the nations of the world were brought to the obedience of Christ and his church.

Isaiah 14:3

Ver. 3. And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow,.... In captivity, and on account of that, being out of their own land, deprived of the free exercise of their religion, and at a distance from the house of God, and continually hearing the reproaches and blaspheming of the enemy, and seeing their idolatrous practices, and their ungodly conversation; all which must create sorrow of heart to the sincere lovers and worshippers of God:

and from thy fear; of worse evils, most cruel usage, and death itself, under the terror of which they lived:

and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve; as before in Egypt, so now in Babylon; but what that was is not particularly expressed anywhere, as the former is, see **Ex 1:13** and when they had rest from all this in their own land, then they should do as follows:

Isaiah 14:4

Ver. 4. That thou shall take up this proverb against the king of Babylon,.... Or "concerning" him, his fall, and the fall of the Babylonish monarchy with him; if we understand this of any particular king of Babylon, it seems best not to interpret it of Nebuchadnezzar, whom Jerom mentions, in whom the empire was in its greatest glory: but of Belshazzar, in whom it ended; the king of Babylon may be here considered as a type of antichrist, and what is said of the one may be applied to the other: the "proverb" or "parable" taken up into the mouth, and expressed concerning him, signifies a sharp and acute speech, a taunting one, full of ironies and sarcasms, and biting expressions, as the following one is. The Septuagint render it, a "lamentation"; and the Arabic version, a "mournful song"; but as this was to be taken up by the church and people of God, concerning their great enemy, whose destruction is here described, it may rather be called a triumphant song, rejoicing at his ruin, and insulting over him:

and say, how hath the oppressor ceased! he who oppressed us, and other nations, exacted tribute of us, and of others, and made us to serve with hard bondage, how is he come to nothing? by what means is he brought to ruin; by whom is this accomplished? who has been the author of it, and by whom effected? this is said as wondering how it should be brought about, and rejoicing that so it was:

the golden city ceased! the city of Babylon, full of gold, drawn thither from the various parts of the world, called a golden cup,
Jer 51:7 and the Babylonish monarchy, in the times of Nebuchadnezzar, was signified by a golden head, **Da 2:32** so mystical Babylon, or the Romish antichrist, is represented as decked with gold, and having a golden cup in her hand; and as a city abounding with gold, Re 17:4. The word here used is a Chaldee or Syriac word {x}, and perhaps is what was used by themselves, and is the name by which they called this city, and is now tauntingly returned; the word city is not in the text, but supplied. Some render "tribute" {y}, a golden pension, a tribute of gold, which was exacted of the nations in subjection, but now ceased; and when that tyrant and oppressor, the Romish antichrist, shall cease that tribute which he exacts of the nations of the earth will cease also, as tithes, first fruits, annates, Peter's pence, &c.

{x} hbhdm. {y} "Tributum", V. L. Cocceius; "aurea pensio", Montanus; "aurum tributarium", Munster.

Isaiah 14:5

Ver. 5. The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked,.... This is an answer to the above question, how the exactor and his tribute came to cease; this was not by man, but by the Lord himself; for though he made use of Cyrus, the work was his own, he broke the power of the wicked kings of Babylon:

[and] the sceptre of the rulers; that were under the king of Babylon; or of the several kings themselves, Nebuchadnezzar, Evilmerodach, and Belshazzar; so Kimchi interprets it. This may be applied to the kingdom of antichrist, and the antichristian states, which shall be broken to shivers as a potter's vessel by Christ, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, **Re 2:27**. The "staff" and "sceptre" are emblems of power and government; and "breaking" them signifies the utter destruction and cessation of authority and dominion.

Isaiah 14:6

Ver. 6. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke,.... The king of Babylon, who made war with the people and nations of the earth, and conquered them, smote them with the edge of the sword to gratify his passions, and satiate his bloodthirsty mind; and those that were spared, he ruled with rigour, and oppressed them with tribute and hard bondage; and, when he had conquered one nation, attacked another, and so went on pursuing his victories without intermission, giving no respite neither to his army, nor to the people:

he that ruled the nations in anger; not with justice and clemency, but in a tyrannical and oppressive way, even his own nation, as well as the nations whom he subdued:

is persecuted; is, pursued by the justice of God, overtaken and seized, and brought to condign punishment;

[and] none hindereth; the execution of the righteous judgment upon him; none of the neighbouring kings and nations, either tributary to him, or in alliance with him, give him the least help or assistance, or attempt to ward off the blow upon him, given him, under the direction and appointment of God, by Cyrus the Persian. So the Romish antichrist, who has made war with the saints, and has smitten them with the sword, and gone on to do so without any intermission for ages together, and has tyrannised over them in a most cruel manner, he shall be persecuted, and taken, and brought to his end, and there shall be none to help him; see Re 13:7.

Isaiah 14:7

Ver. 7. The whole earth is at rest, [and] is quiet,.... The troubler of them being gone; and which will be the ease of the people of God, who in the latter day will fill the face of the earth, when the beast and false prophet will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire; and especially when Satan shall be bound, and put in prison for a thousand years, that he may deceive the nations no more, Re 19:20:

they break forth into singing; that is, the inhabitants of the earth, because of the fall of the king of Babylon, they being delivered from so great a tyrant or oppressor; or, "utter a song of praise", as the Targum, Aben Ezra says the word in the Arabic language is expressive of "clearness", and so it does signify to speak purely, dearly, and fluently, with open, mouth, and a clear voice {z}; it is rendered in Ps 98:4 "make a loud noise"; by singing a joyful song; and such a song will be sung by the church, when the mystical Babylon is fallen; see Re 15:2.

{z} "perspicuo, puriore sermone fuit, fluida oratione disertas fuit, ----diserte, eleganter locutus est", Castel. col. 3040.

Isaiah 14:8

Ver. 8. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, [and] the cedars of Lebanon,.... Which by, a prosopopoeia are represented as singing and rejoicing, as inanimate creatures often are in Scripture, these being now in no danger of being cut down, to make way for his armies; see Isa 37:34 or to furnish him with timber for shipping, or building of houses: or else these words are to be understood metaphorically of kings and princes of the earth, comparable to such trees, for their height, strength, and substance; see Zec 11:2 who would now be no longer in fear of him, or in subjection to him. So the Targum,

"the rulers also rejoiced over thee, the rich in substance said;"

not only the common people, the inhabitants of the earth, as before, but the princes of it rejoiced at his ruin; and so will the kings of the earth rejoice at the destruction of the whore of Rome, when they shall hate her, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; though others, that have committed fornication with her, will lament her case,
Re 17:16:

[saying], since thou art, laid down; or "art asleep" {a}; that is, dead; it being usual in the eastern nations to express death by sleep:

no feller is come up against us; or "cutter of wood", to whom the king of Babylon is compared, for cutting down nations, and bringing them into subjection to him, in whose heart it was to destroy and cut off nations, not a few; being as an axe in the hand of the Lord, whereby trees, large and high, were cut down; see Isa 10:5 but now, since this feller of wood was gone, the axe was laid aside, and broke to pieces, there was none to give the nations any disturbance; and so it will be when antichrist is destroyed, there will be no more persecution of the church and people of God.

{a} tbkv "dormisti", Pagninus.

Isaiah 14:9

Ver. 9. Hell from beneath is moved for thee,.... Or the "grave", or the place and state of the dead, and particularly of the damned, meaning those that are in such a place and state; and the sense is, that not only the inhabitants of the earth, and the trees upon it, express their joy at the fall of the king of Babylon, but those that are under the earth, in the grave, or in hell, are affected with it, and moved on account of it, not with fear and dread, as they were in his and their life time, as Kimchi suggests; but they are represented as in motion, and that as attended with a great noise, because of the multitude of them, upon hearing of his death, and his entrance into the regions of the dead:

to meet [thee] at thy coming: as kings used to be met when they, and as he used to be when he, entered into any city that was taken, to salute him, and congratulate him upon his entrance into the dark regions of death, the grave, and hell; a biting sarcasm:

it stirreth up the dead for thee; the dead that are in it, in hell or the grave; not to oppose him, but to welcome him into their parts, as being now one of them, and to be joined to their company; hell or the grave is said to rouse them, as if they were asleep, and took no notice of the death of so great a monarch, who was just making his public entry among them. The word "Rephaim", here used, is sometimes rendered "giants", as in **De 2:11** and Jarchi interprets it of the Anakim; and so the Targum,

"it raiseth up unto thee mighty men;"

for not the common people among the dead, but the princes and great ones of the earth, whom the Babylonian monarch had subdued and slain, and to whom he was well known, are intended, as appears by what follows:

[even] all the chief ones of the earth; or the "great goats"; the leaders and commanders of the people, who, as goats go before and lead the flock, so they the people. The Targum calls them

"all the rich in substance;"

who were persons of wealth, power, and authority, when on earth:

it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations; to offer in a jeering manner their thrones to him, who had been obliged, in their life time and his, to surrender to him their crowns, and thrones, and kingdoms; but by their thrones here are meant their sepulchres, built, as many of them were, in great pomp and splendour; for kings at death have no other thrones but their graves. Aben Ezra says, it was the custom of the Babylonians to set thrones in the sepulchres of their kings.

Isaiah 14:10

Ver. 10. All they shall speak, and say unto thee,.... So they would say, could they speak, and are here represented as if they did:

art thou become also weak as we? who had been more powerful than they, had been too many for them, and had subdued them, and ruled over them, and was not only looked upon as invincible but as immortal, yea, as a deity; and yet now was become "sick", as the word {b} signifies, or by sickness brought to death, and by death enfeebled and rendered weak and without strength, stripped of all natural strength, as well as of all civil power and authority:

art thou become like unto us? who thought himself, and was flattered by others, that there were none like unto him; but now as the rest of the dead, and upon a level with them. So will it be with the Romish antichrist, who now exalts himself above all that is called God, and reigns over the kings of the earth, and shows himself as if he was God, and of whom his parasites say, "who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" when he shall be consumed by Christ, and cast into the lake of fire with the devil and false prophet, he will be like the kings of the earth deceived by him, and the rest of the worshippers of him, and be as weak as they, **2Th 2:4**
Re 20:10.

{b} tylx a hlx "aegrotuss fuit".

Isaiah 14:11

Ver. 11. Thy pomp is brought down to the grave,.... Or "hell"; all the state and majesty in which he appeared, when sitting on the throne of his kingdom, with a glittering crown on his head, a sceptre in his hand, clad in the richest apparel, and attended by his princes and nobles with the utmost reverence and submission; all this, with much more, followed him to the regions of the dead, and there it left him; see Ps 49:17:

[and] the noise of thy viols; or musical instruments, even all of them, one being put for all; such as were used at festivals, and at times of joy and

rejoicing, of which the Babylonians had many, and very probably were used at the feast by Belshazzar, when the city was taken, and he was slain; to which reference may be had in this place, **Da 3:5** compare with this Re 18:16:

the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee; who used to have rich carpets spread for him to tread upon, and stately canopies under which he sat, beds of down to lie upon, and the richest covering over him, and now, nothing but worms over him, and worms under him; or instead of being wrapped in gold and silk, and embalmed with the most precious spices, as the eastern kings used to be, he had not so much as a grave, but was cast out of that, as is after said, and so was liable to putrefaction, and to be covered with worms at once; worms in his bed, and worms in his bed clothes! See Job 21:26.

Isaiah 14:12

Ver. 12. How art thou fallen from heaven,.... This is not to be understood of the fall of Satan, and the apostate angels, from their first estate, when they were cast down from heaven to hell, though there may be an allusion to it; see Lu 10:18 but the words are a continuation of the speech of the dead to the king of Babylon, wondering at it, as a thing almost incredible, that he who seemed to be so established on the throne of his kingdom, which was his heaven, that he should be deposed or fall from it. So the destruction of the Roman Pagan emperors is signified by the casting out of the dragon and his angels from heaven, Re 12:7 and in like manner Rome Papal, or the Romish antichrist, will fall from his heaven of outward splendour and happiness, of honour and authority, now, possessed by him:

O Lucifer, son of the morning! alluding to the star Venus, which is the phosphorus or morning star, which ushers in the light of the morning, and shows that day is at hand; by which is meant, not Satan, who is never in Scripture called Lucifer, though he was once an angel of light, and sometimes transforms himself into one, and the good angels are called morning stars, Job 38:7 and such he and his angels once were; but the king of Babylon is intended, whose royal glory and majesty, as outshining all the rest of the kings of the earth, is expressed by those names; and which perhaps were such as he took himself, or were given him by his courtiers. The Targum is,

"how art thou fallen from on high, who was shining among the sons of men, as the star Venus among the stars."

Jarchi, as the Talmud {c}, applies it to Nebuchadnezzar; though, if any particular person is pointed at, Belshazzar is rather designed, the last of the kings of Babylon. The church of Rome, in the times of the apostles, was famous for its light and knowledge; its faith was spoken of throughout all the earth; and its bishops or pastors were bright stars, in the morning of the Gospel dispensation:

how art thou cut down to the ground; like a tall tree that is cut down, and laid along the ground, and can never rise and flourish more, to which sometimes great monarchs and monarchies are compared; see Isa 10:18 and this denotes that the king of Babylon should die, not a natural, but a violent death, as Belshazzar did, with whom the Babylonish monarchy fell, and never rose more; and this is a representation of the sudden, violent, and irrecoverable ruin of the Romish antichrist, Re 18:21:

which didst weaken the nations! by subduing them, taking cities and towns, plundering the inhabitants of their substance, carrying them captive, or obliging them to a yearly tribute, by which means he weakened them, and kept them under. So the Romish antichrist has got the power over many nations of the earth, and has reigned over the kings of it, and by various methods has drained them of their wealth and riches, and so greatly enfeebled them; nay, they have of themselves given their power and strength unto the beast, Re 17:12. Several of the Jewish writers observe, that the word here used signifies to cast lots; and so it is used in the Misna {d}, and explained in the Talmud {e}; and is applied to the king of Babylon casting lots upon the nations and kingdoms whom he should go to war with, and subdue first; see Eze 21:19. The Targum is,

"thou art cast down to the earth, who killedst the people:"

a fit description of antichrist, Re 11:7.

{c} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 89. 1. Gloss. in Pesachim, fol. 94. 1. & Chagiga, fol. 13. 1. {d} Misn. Sabbat, c. 23. 2. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {e} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 149. 2.

Isaiah 14:13

Ver. 13. For thou hast said in thine heart,.... Which shows the pride and haughtiness that were in his heart; and were the cause and reason of his fall, for pride goes before a fall; it was the cause of the fall of angels, and of Adam, and of many kings and kingdoms; see
Pr 16:18 with this compare Re 18:7:

I will ascend into heaven; be above all men, rule over the whole world; and so the Targum.

"I will ascend on high;"

unless by it is meant the temple at Jerusalem, where Jehovah dwelt, an emblem of heaven, to which sense the following clauses incline; and so the Romish antichrist sits in the temple of God, and on his throne as if he was God, **2Th 2:4**.

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; which he has made and set in the heavens, and preserves; meaning either the angels,
Job 38:7 or rather the kings and princes of the earth, over whom he placed himself, having subdued them under him. It may be applied to ecclesiastical persons, pastors, and bishops of churches, compared to stars, **Re 1:20** the third part of which the dragon drew with his tail, Re 12:4 and over whom the bishop of Rome has usurped an universal dominion. The Targum is,

"over the people of God I will put the throne of my kingdom;"

notoriously true of the man of sin:

I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: that is, as some think, in the temple where the tribes of Israel gathered together for worship, which was built upon Mount Zion; which, as Kimchi says, lay north of Jerusalem; see Ps 48:2 so the tabernacle is often called the tabernacle of the congregation; but, as Cocceius and Vitringa observe, Mount Zion was not to the north, but to the south of Jerusalem; wherefore not that mount, but Mount Moriah, which was to the north of Mount Zion, is designed; however, not Babylon is here meant, as R. Joseph Kimchi thought; called, as he supposes, "the mount of the congregation", because all the world were gathered thither to the king of Babylon; and a "mount", because a strong city; and said to be "in the sides of the north", because it lay north east to the continent; but, as one observes, he had no need to boast of sitting there, where he was already. Jarchi thinks the last clause refers to the north side of the altar, in the court, where the sacrifice was killed, **Le 1:11** and may point at the seat of the Romish antichrist, and the sacerdotal power usurped by him, to offer sacrifice for the sins of men, particularly the bloodless sacrifice of the Mass.

Isaiah 14:14

Ver. 14. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,.... Which are the chariots of God, and in which he rides, and so this proud monarch affected to be as he; perhaps some reference is had to the cloud in which Jehovah dwelt in the temple. The Targum is,

"I will ascend above all people,"

compared to clouds for their multitude. In the mystical sense, the true ministers of the word may be meant, so called for their height, motion, swiftness, and fulness of Gospel doctrine, compared to rain; see **Isa 5:6**.

I will be like the most High; so Satan affected to be, and this was the bait he laid for our first parents, and with which they were taken; and nothing less than deity could satisfy some ambitious princes, as Caligula, and others; and this was what the Babylonish monarch aspired to, and ordered to be ascribed to him, and be regarded as such, either while living, or at least after death, which was what had been done to many Heathen princes. So antichrist is represented as showing himself to be God, **2Th 2:4** by calling and suffering himself to be called God; by assuming all power in heaven and in earth; taking upon him to depose kings and dispose of kingdoms at pleasure; dispensing with the laws of God, and making new ones; absolving men from their oaths, pardoning their sins, setting up himself as infallible, as the sole interpreter of Scripture, and judge of controversies. The Targum is,

"I will he higher than them all;"

than the kings of the earth, and all other bishops.

Isaiah 14:15

Ver. 15. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell,.... Into a very low and miserable condition; see Mt 11:23 instead of ascending to heaven: or "to the grave"; though, inasmuch as afterwards a burial is denied him, the word may be taken for the infernal pit, and so is, as much as can be, opposed to heaven; and this will be true of antichrist, when the beast and false prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire, Re 19:20:

to the sides of the pit; instead of being on the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north; another word for hell, the pit of corruption, and the bottomless pit. The Targum is,

"to the ends of the lake of the house of perdition;"

the place of everlasting destruction.

Isaiah 14:16

Ver. 16. They that see thee,.... These are the words of the dead, speaking of the living, who when they should see the carcass of the king of Babylon lying on the ground,

shall narrowly look upon thee, [and] consider thee; whether it is he or not, not knowing at first sight who he was, the alteration being so great; he that was but just now on his throne of glory, with all the ensigns of majesty about him, and on him, now cast to the earth, deprived of life, besmeared with blood, and so disfigured as scarcely to be known; these phrases are used to express the great change made in him, and in his state and condition:

[saying]; scarce believing what they saw, and as wondering at the sudden and strange alteration, and yet in an insulting manner:

[Is] this the man that made the earth to tremble: the inhabitants of it, when they heard of his coming against them, with his numerous and conquering army, dreading that he would do to them as he had done to others, destroy their cities, rob them of their substance, put them to the sword, or carry them captive, or make them tributary:

that did shake kingdoms; depose their kings, and set up others; alter their constitution, change their form of government, and added their kingdoms to his own.

Isaiah 14:17

Ver. 17. [That] made the world as a wilderness,.... Both by destroying the inhabitants of it, and by laying waste cities, towns, villages, fields, vineyards, gardens, and all places improved and cultivated, wherever he came, as it follows:

and destroyed the cities thereof; as the Assyrian kings had done, some of which are mentioned in Isa 10:9:

[that] opened not the house of his prisoners; the prison house, in, which they were held; or,

"the gate to his prisoners,"

as the Targum; or rather the words may be rendered, "that opened not to his prisoners", that they might go "home"; or as De Dieu, in short, yet fully, expresses it, "that did not dismiss his prisoners home"; he not only cruelly and inhumanly put many to the sword, but such as surrendered, and were taken captives, he detained them in prison, and would not loose their bonds, but let them die there; which was an instance of great cruelty and inhumanity.

Isaiah 14:18

Ver. 18. All the kings of the nations,.... Of other nations, besides those he governed, and even of those whom he had subdued, at least their ancestors, the greatest part of them however; for the word "all" does not always signify every individual, though by the repetition of it, it here bids fair for such a sense, there being but very few, or scarce any exceptions to this observation; for, on some account or another, both good and bad kings are interred in great state:

[even] all of them lie in glory; in rich tombs and stately monuments, erected for the honour of them; and where they "sleep", as the word signifies, with their fathers, their ancestors, and are at rest, in the state of the dead, where they will continue to the resurrection:

everyone in his own house; or grave, see Job 30:23 the same with his long home, Ec 12:5 or the house of his world: in reference to which, the Targum paraphrases it by the same phrase here; and though their graves were not in their dwelling houses or palaces, yet often near them, and in their own country, and were what had been erected, or caused to be erected by them, in their lifetime.

Isaiah 14:19

Ver. 19. But thou art cast out of thy grave,.... Or rather "from" it {d}; that is, he was not suffered to be put into it, or to have a burial, as the following words show, at least not to be laid in the grave designed for him; though the Jews {e}, who apply this to Nebuchadnezzar, have a fabulous story that he was taken out of his grave by his son, to confirm this prophecy; and which their commentators, Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abendana, tell in this manner: that when Nebuchadnezzar was driven from men, and was with the beasts of the field for seven years, the people made his son Evilmerodach king; but when Nebuchadnezzar came to his right mind, and returned to his palace at Babylon, and found his son upon the throne, he put him in prison, where he lay till Nebuchadnezzar died, when the people took him out to make him king; but he refused to be king, saying, he did not believe his father was dead; and that if he should come again, as before, and find him, he would kill him; upon which they took him out of his grave, to show him that he was dead: but the sense here is not that the king of Babylon should be taken out of his grave, after he was laid in it, but that he should be hindered from being put into it; which very likely was the case of Belshazzar.

Like an abominable branch; cut off from a tree as useless and hurtful, and cast upon the ground, where it lies and rots, and is good for nothing, neither for fuel, nor anything else, but is neglected and despised of all:

[and as] the raiment of those that are slain; in battle, which being rolled in blood, nobody cares to take up and wear, nor even touch; for such persons were accounted unclean by the ceremonial law, and by the touch of them uncleanness was contracted; and perhaps with a view to this the simile is used, to express the very mean and abject condition this monarch should be in:

thrust through with a sword; which was added for explanation sake, to show in which way the persons were slain whose raiment is referred to; the clothes of such being stained with blood, when those that died by other means might not have their raiment so defiled. The word {f} rendered "thrust through", is only used in this place, and in

Ge 45:17 where it is rendered "lade", or put on a burden; but, as the several Jewish commentators before mentioned observe {g}, in the Arabic language it signifies to pierce or thrust through with sword or spear, and so it is used in the Arabic version of Joh 19:34:

that go down to the stones of the pit; into which dead bodies after a battle are usually cast, and which have often stones at the bottom; and into which being cast, stones are also thrown over them:

as a carcass trodden underfoot; which is frequently the case of those that fall in battle; and very probably was the case of Belshazzar, when slain by the Chaldeans, whose body in a tumult might be neglected and trodden upon, and afterwards have no other burial than that of a common soldier in a pit; and instead of having a sepulchral monument erected over him, as kings used to have, had nothing but a heap of stones thrown upon him.

{d} Krbqm "a sepulchro tuo", Gataker. {e} Seder Olam Rabba c. 28. fol. 81. {f} Strong's Concondance assigns two numbers to this word, 02943 and 02944. The word is the same in the Hebrew, differing only in the tense. This case is a Pual and the one in Genesis is a Qal. Wigrim's Englishman's Hebrew Concondance also has them in separate categories. There appears to be no good reason for this. Editor. {g} "confodit cum instrumentis, hasta, gladiis", Castel. col. 1546. So it is used in the Arabic version of Lam. iv. 9. and in the Chaldee language it signifies to pierce through and wound; as in the Targum on Jer. li. 4.

Isaiah 14:20

Ver. 20. Thou shall not be joined with them in burial,.... The kings before mentioned; not that the sense is that he should not be interred in the same place they were, or lie in the same stately monuments they did, for that was never designed by him or others; but that he should not be buried in like manner, be embalmed as they, or have odours burned for him, or lie in such state and pomp, or have a "pyramid" or "mausoleum", or any rich monument, erected over him; unless this can be understood of his ancestors, the kings that were before him; and the sense be, that he should not have a burial with the kings of Babylon, or be inferred where they were, but, as before said, should be cast out, or be kept from the place of sepulture. The Targum is, "thou shall not be as one of them in the grave;"

shall not be like them, or equal to them, in the glory and pomp of a funeral, not having the same funeral rites; obsequies, and ornaments they have had. So the whore of Rome shall have no funeral, but the kings of the earth will eat her flesh, and burn her with fire
Re 17:16,

because thou hast destroyed thy land; not only other lands and nations, but also his own, and the inhabitants of it, by his tyrannical government, by levies and exactions, by mulcts and fines, on various pretences: or, "hast corrupted, thy land" {g}; which phrase is used of mystical Babylon, Re 19:2 see also Re 11:18 whose land or earth is the whole Romish jurisdiction, corrupted by her idolatries, and wasted and destroyed by the various methods used to drain away the substance thereof:

[and] slain thy people; put them to death at pleasure, without any just cause, for trifling matters; which is often done by arbitrary princes. Jarchi and Kimchi apply this to Nebuchadnezzar's slaying the wise men of Babylon, because they could not tell him his dream, and the interpretation of it. It is true of antichrist slaying such, that would not worship his image, and receive his mark, Re 13:10.

The seed of evildoers shall never be renowned; or, "not for ever"; though they may have a name, and be very famous for a while, yet not always; in process of time their honour is laid in the dust; or, "shall not be called for ever" {h}; their name and their memory shall not always last; their name shall be cut off, and their memory shall rot; they shall have none to keep up their name, and they shall not be spoken of with respect; such a seed of evildoers were Belshazzar and his family, who descended from Nebuchadnezzar and Evilmerodach, and were at once extinct, as follows:

{g} txv Kura "terram tuam corrupisti", Montanus, Cocceius, Junius, Tremellius, Piscator. {h} Mlwel arqy al "non nominabitur in seculum", Forerius; "vocabitur", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster.

Isaiah 14:21

Ver. 21. Prepare slaughter for his children,.... These words are directed to the Medes and Persians, to prepare instruments of slaughter, and make use of them; and prepare themselves for the slaughter of the whole royal family, Belshazzar and all his children. So it is threatened to Jezebel, or the Romish antichrist, that all her children should be killed with death, **Re 2:23**:

for the iniquity of their fathers; they imitating and following them in their sins, partaking of them, and filling up the measure of their iniquities:

that they do not rise, nor possess the land; stand up and succeed him in the government of the land, as their inheritance:

nor fill the face of the world with cities; as their ancestors had done, which were built by them to perpetuate their name and glory, and to keep the nations in awe subdued by them. The Targum renders it, "with enemies"; which is followed by Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi; and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, "with wars"; to the great disturbance of the peace of the world, and to the disquietude of the inhabitants of it; which is a great plague to the world, and a judgment in it.

Isaiah 14:22

Ver. 22. For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts,.... That is, against the children of the Babylonish monarch; and therefore they shall not rise and possess the earth, and disturb it, since he who is the Lord of armies in heaven and earth, and has all power in both worlds, and has everything at his beck and command, will rise up, who seemed, as it were, asleep, and unconcerned about the affairs of this world, and will set himself against them, and exert his power in their destruction:

and cut off from Babylon; the king of Babylon, and the inhabitants of it:

the name; not of the city, which is mentioned long after, and still is; but of the king and his family:

and remnant; his flesh, or those that were akin to him, as Kimchi interprets it:

and son, and nephew; his son, and son's son as the Targum, and after that other Jewish writers; the whole family was destroyed with Belshazzar, after whom none of that race was ever heard of any more.

Isaiah 14:23

Ver. 23. I will also make it a possession for the bittern,.... Instead of being possessed by any of the family of the king of Babylon. The "bittern" is a kind of water fowl, which, by putting its bill into mire, or a broken reed, is said to make a most horrible noise. Some think the "owl" is meant, which dwells in desolate and ruinous places; and others take it to be the "ospray", a sort of eagle that preys upon fish and ducks; according to Kimchi, the "tortoise" is meant; some will have it that the "beaver" or castor is intended; Jarchi understands it of the porcupine or "hedgehog"; and in the Arabic language this creature is called "kunphud", which is pretty near the Hebrew word "kippod", here used; to which Bochartus agrees; but, whatever creature is meant, the design is to show that Babylon should not be inhabited by men, but by birds or beasts of prey, or noxious animals; and so mystical Babylon is said to be a cage of every unclean and hateful bird, Re 18:2:

and pools of water; Babylon being situated in a marshy ground, and by the river Euphrates; and when that river was turned by Cyrus {i}, and afterwards its banks neglected, in course of time the water overflowed the place where the city was, and all about it, and so easily came to be what is here predicted it should; see Re 18:21:

and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts; and so clear it at once of all its inhabitants, wealth, and riches, and entirely remove its large walls and stately buildings, no more to be seen, just as a house is swept clean of all its dust; intimating, that this superb city, and all belonging to it, should be reduced to dust, and be as easily swept away as dust is with a besom. The word for "sweep", and a "besom", is only used in this place, and has this signification in the Arabic language; it is said in the Talmud {k}, that the Rabbins knew not the meaning of this word, till they heard an Arabian girl say to her fellow servant,

"take this besom, and sweep the house."

expressing the word here used.

{i} Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 23. {k} Roshhashana, fol. 26. 2. Megilla, fol. 18. 1.

Isaiah 14:24

Ver. 24. The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying,.... The Septuagint only read, "these things saith the Lord of hosts"; for, as Kimchi on the place observes, his word is his oath; but for the comfort of his people, and for the confirmation either of the prophecies concerning the fall of Babylon, or of the following concerning the destruction of the Assyrian monarchy, or both, he adds his oath to his word, to show that the sentence passed in his mind, and now expressed, was irrevocable:

surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; as he had shaped and schemed it, and drew the form and image in his own mind, or fixed and settled it there, so should it be done in due time, as every thing is that is determined by the Lord; and this shows that nothing is casual, or comes by chance, but everything as it is purposed of God; and that as everything comes to pass which he has resolved, so every such resolution proceeds from thought, and is the produce of the highest wisdom and prudence:

and as I have purposed, so it shall stand; or "counselled" {l}; within himself, for he does all things according to the counsel of his will; and which always stands firm, sure, and unalterable, let what devices soever be in the heart of man.

{l} ytuey "consului", Montanus, Cocceius; "consilium inivi", Junius & Tremellius; "consultavi", Piscator.

Isaiah 14:25

Ver. 25. That I will break the Assyrian in my land,.... This was his thought, counsel, purpose, and decree; which must be understood either of the king of Babylon, as before, called the Assyrian; as the king of Babylon seems to be called the king of Assyria in
2Ch 33:11, but then his destruction was not in the land of Israel, or on the mountains of Judea, as is here predicted; or rather, therefore, this is a new prophecy, or a return to what is foretold in the tenth chapter Isa 10:1 concerning Sennacherib and his army, and the destruction of it; which, coming to pass long before the destruction of Babylon, is mentioned for the comfort of God's people, as a pledge and assurance of the latter: though some think that it was now past, and is observed to strengthen the faith of the Jews, with respect

to the preceding prediction, and read the words thus, as "in breaking the Assyrian in my land"; and then the sense is, what I have thought, purposed, and sworn to, to come to pass, concerning the fall of Babylon, shall as surely be accomplished, and you may depend upon it, as I have broke the Assyrian army in my land before your eyes, of which ye yourselves are witnesses. Some think that Gog and Magog are intended by the Assyrian, of whom it is predicted that they should fall upon the mountains of Israel, as here, Eze 39:4 it may be, that as the king of Babylon was a type of the Romish antichrist in the preceding prophecy, the Assyrian here may represent the Turks, who now possess the land of Israel, and shall be destroyed:

and upon my mountains tread him under foot; the mountainous part of Judea, particularly the mountains which were round about Jerusalem, where the Assyrian army under Sennacherib was, when besieged by him, and where they fell and were trodden under foot; and now the Lord may be said to break the Assyrian troops, and trample upon them, because it was not only done according to his will, but without the use of men, by an angel that was sent immediately from heaven, and destroyed the whole host, 2Ki 19:35:

there shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders: meaning, that hereby the siege of Jerusalem would be broken up, and the city rid of such a troublesome enemy; and the parts adjacent eased of the burden of having such a numerous army quartered upon them; and the whole land freed from the subjection of this monarch, and from paying tribute to him. The same is said in Isa 10:27. This, in the Talmud {m}, is interpreted of Sennacherib.

{m} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 2.

Isaiah 14:26

Ver. 26. This [is] the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth, &c] Or, "counsel that is counselled". The Targum is,

"all the inhabitants of the earth;"

and the Septuagint version, "the whole world", meaning the Assyrian empire, and all states depending on it; as the Roman empire is called, **Lu 2:1** for this purpose respects not the end of the world, and the judgment of it at the last day, as some have thought; but the preceding prophecy, purpose, or counsel, concerning breaking and trampling under foot the Assyrians, and delivering the Jews from subjection to them:

and this [is] the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations; of which the Assyrian army consisted, or which made up the Assyrian monarchy, or depended on it, and fell with it. "Purpose" denotes the counsel, will, and decree of God, about this business; and "hand" the execution of it. The Targum renders it "power"; so "hand" and "counsel" go together in **Ac 4:28**. The Targum is

"on all kingdoms."

Isaiah 14:27

Ver. 27. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed,.... What is before declared, the fall of Babylon, and the destruction of the Assyrian, and everything else that comes to pass in this world; there is nothing comes to pass but he has purposed, and everything he has purposed does come to pass:

and who shall disannul [it]? not the most powerful monarch, or most powerful armies, or the most refined councils of men, or the greatest politicians on earth:

and his hand [is] stretched out, and who shall turn it back? or aside, from giving the blow it is designed to give; no power on earth is equal to it.

Isaiah 14:28

Ver. 28. In the year that King Ahaz died was this burden. The following heavy prophecy, concerning the destruction of the Philistines; whether it was delivered out before or after his death is not certain. Here some begin the "fifteenth" chapter Isa 15:1, and not improperly; henceforward prophecies are delivered out under another reign, as before under Uzziah, Jotham, and Ahaz, now under Hezekiah. This, according to Bishop Usher, was A. M. 3278 and before the Christian era 726.

Isaiah 14:29

Ver. 29. Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina,.... The land of the Philistines; the inhabitants of Palestine are meant, who rejoiced at the death of Uzziah, who was too powerful for them, and during the reign of Ahaz, of whom they had the better; and, now he was dead, they hoped things would still be more favourable to them, since a young prince, Hezekiah, succeeded him; but they would find, by sad experience, that they had no occasion to rejoice in these changes: "whole Palestine" is mentioned, because it was divided into five districts or lordships, over which there were five lords, Jos 13:3 **1Sa 6:4** and as they were all rejoicing in their late successes in Ahaz's time, and in hopes of still greater, so they would all suffer in the calamity hereafter threatened:

because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: meaning not Ahaz, for be did not smite the Philistines, but was smitten by them, for they invaded his country, and took many of his cities; see 2Ch 28:18 but rather Uzziah, who broke down the walls of their cities, and built others, 2Ch 26:6 wherefore they rejoiced at his death; and their joy continued during the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, and was increased at the death of Ahaz, a new and young king being placed on the throne. Some understand this of the breaking of the Assyrian, the rod of God's anger, Isa 14:25 by whom the Philistines had been smitten, and therefore rejoiced at his ruin; and to this the Targum seems to incline, paraphrasing it thus,

"because the government is broken, whom ye served."

Such that interpret in this way, by the "serpent" after mentioned understand Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, whose successors were more troublesome to the Philistines than he; and by the "cockatrice" Sennacherib; and by the "fiery flying serpent" Nebuchadnezzar. Cocceius thinks that the sense of the prophecy is, that the Philistines should not rejoice at the sceptre being taken away from the Jews, and they being carried captive into Babylon, since it would not be to their advantage; for after Nebuchadnezzar and his sons, meant by the "serpent", should come the Medes and Persians, signified by the "cockatrice": and after them the Macedonians or Greeks, designed by the "flying fiery serpent", under Alexander, who should "kill" their "root", take Tyre their metropolis, at the siege of which was a famine; and then "slay [their] remnant", the city of Gaza, the last of their cities, whose inhabitants he slew; but the first sense of the prophecy, as it is most common, so most easy and natural:

for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice: that is, from the posterity, of Uzziah king of Judah, who greatly annoyed the Philistines, for which reason he is compared to a "serpent", should arise Hezekiah compared to a "cockatrice", because he would be, and he was, more harmful and distressing to them; see 2Ki 18:8:

and his fruit [shall be] a fiery flying serpent; not the fruit of the cockatrice, but of the serpent; and intends the same as before, Hezekiah, likened to such a creature, because of the fury and swiftness with which he was to come, and did come, against the Philistines, and the hurt he did to them: the "serpent" to which he is compared is called "fiery", or "burning", because it inflames where it bites; of which see Nu 21:6 and "flying", not because it has wings, though some serpents are said to have them; but because, when it leaps or darts upon a man, it is with such swiftness, that it seems to fly; the serpent called "acontias", or "serpens jaculus", is here alluded to. The Targum applies the passage to the Messiah, thus,

"for out of the children's children of Jesse shall come forth the Messiah, and his works shall be among you as a flying serpent."

Isaiah 14:30

Ver. 30. And the firstborn of the poor shall feed,.... That is, the Jews, who were brought very low in the times of Ahaz, reduced to the greatest straits and difficulties; for so the word "firstborn" may signify the chief, or those who were of all the poorest, and in the greatest distress; these, in the times of Hezekiah, shall enjoy abundance of good things, and under his gentle government shall feed like a flock of sheep in good pastures; this signifying, that though he should be like a serpent, harmful to his enemies, yet should be kind and tender unto, and take great care of his own subjects, and under whom they should have great plenty and prosperity:

and the needy shall lie down in safety; like a flock of sheep, secure from beasts of prey, under the care of a faithful and vigilant shepherd; this shows that the Jews should not only have plenty of good things, but should live in the greatest security, without fear of any enemy, or danger from them:

and I will kill thy root with famine; this is said to Palestine, compared to a tree, whose root is dried up for want of moisture, and so dies; and the meaning is, that a sore famine should rage in their country, and utterly destroy them:

and he shall slay thy remnant: that is, Hezekiah should slay with the sword those that were left of the famine.

Isaiah 14:31

Ver. 31. Howl, O gate,.... Or gates of the cities of Palestine; the magistrates that sat there to execute judgment, or the people that passed through there; or because now obliged to open to their enemies; wherefore, instead of rejoicing, they are called to howling:

cry, O city; or cities, the several cities of the land, as well as their chief, because of the destruction coming upon them. The Targum is,

"howl over thy gates, and cry over thy cities;"

or concerning them:

thou, whole Palestina, [art] dissolved; or "melted"; through fear of enemies coming upon them; or it may design the entire overthrow and dissolution of their state;

for there shall come from the north a smoke; a numerous army, raising a dust like smoke as they move along, and coming with great "swiftness", and very annoying. Some understand this of the Chaldean army under Nebuchadnezzar coming from Babylon, which lay north of Judea; so Aben Ezra; to which agrees Jer 47:1 but most interpret it of Hezekiah's army, which came from Judea: which, Kimchi says, lay north to the land of the Philistines. Cocceius is of opinion that the Roman army is here meant, which came from the north against Judea, called whole Palestine; which country came into the hands of the Jews after the taking of Tyre and Gaza by the Greeks, and therefore the sanhedrim, which sat in the gate, and the city of Jerusalem, are called upon to howl and cry. But the first of these senses seems best, since the utter destruction of Palestine was by the Chaldean army under Nebuchadnezzar; and so the prophecy from the time of Hezekiah, with which it begins, is carried on unto the entire dissolution of this country by the Babylonians.

And none [shall be] alone in his appointed times; when the times appointed are come, for the gathering, mustering, and marching of the army, whether

Hezekiah's or the Chaldean, none shall stay at home; all will voluntarily and cheerfully flock unto it, and enlist themselves; nor will they separate or stray from it, but march on unanimously, and courageously engage the enemy, till the victory is obtained. Aben Ezra understands this of the Philistines, that they should not be able to abide alone in their palaces and houses, because of the smoke that should come in unto them.

Isaiah 14:32

Ver. 32. What shall [one] then answer the messengers of the nation?.... Or nations, of any of the nations. Not the messengers sent to Hezekiah, Isa 39:1 but rather such as were sent to him, to congratulate him upon his victory over the Philistines; or any others that were sent, and came from other nations, that inquired about these matters, and the answer returned is,

That the Lord hath founded Zion; and not Hezekiah; he had given his people victory over their enemies, and protected, defended, and established them, and therefore ought to have all the glory:

and the poor of his people shall trust in it; or, "betake themselves to it"; as to a place of safety, being founded by the Lord, and under his protection. So the church of God, which often goes by the name of Zion in Scripture, is of his founding; he has laid Christ as the foundation of it, and such as are sensible of their spiritual poverty, misery, and danger, trust in him; not in Zion, but in the foundation God has laid in Zion, or built his church upon.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 15

This chapter is a prophecy of the destruction of the Moabites; two of their principal cities are mentioned as made desolate, Isa 15:1 the inhabitants in divers places are represented as weeping and mourning, and showing various signs of it, Isa 15:2 yea, not only the common people, but the armed soldiers also, Isa 15:4 nay, even the prophet himself, Isa 15:5 the reasons of which were the great drought, so that there were no grass, nor green thing, Isa 15:6 the carrying away of their good things, either by themselves or others, Isa 15:7 the flight and cry of the people to the very borders of the land, Isa

15:8 and the great effusion of blood, Isa 15:9.

Ver. 1. The burden of Moab,.... A heavy, grievous prophecy, concerning the destruction of Moab. The Targum is,

"the burden of the cup of cursing, to give Moab to drink."

This seems to respect the destruction of it by Nebuchadnezzar, which is prophesied of in Jer 48:1 for that which was to be within three years, Isa 16:14 looks like another and distinct prophecy from this; though some think this was accomplished before the times of Nebuchadnezzar, either by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, some time before the captivity of the ten tribes, as Vitringa and others; or by Sennacherib, after the invasion of Judea, so Jarchi.

Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, [and] brought to silence; this was a chief city in Moab, perhaps the metropolis of it; see Nu 21:28. Kimchi conjectures it to be the same with Aroer, which was by the brink of the river Arnon, **De 2:36** **De 3:12** and is mentioned with Dibon, as this, in Nu 32:34 of which notice is taken, and not of Ar, in Jer 48:19. Some versions take Ar to signify a "city", and render it, "the city of Moab", without naming what city it was; and the Targum calls it by another name, Lahajath; but, be it what city it will, it was destroyed in the night; in such a night, as Kimchi interprets it; in the space of a night, very suddenly, when the inhabitants of it were asleep and secure, and had no notice of danger; and so the Targum adds,

"and they were asleep."

Some have thought this circumstance is mentioned with a view to the night work, that work of darkness of Lot and his daughter, which gave rise to Moab; however, in a night this city became desolate, being taken and plundered, and its inhabitants put to the sword, and so reduced to silence; though the last word may as well be rendered "cut off" {n}, utterly destroyed, being burnt or pulled down; two words are made use of, to denote the utter destruction of it:

because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, [and] brought to silence; either in the same night, or rather in another. Kir, another city of Moab, met with the same fate as Ar. This is called Kirhareseth, and Kirharesh, in Isa 16:7 and so Kirheres in
Jer 48:31 called Kir of Moab, to distinguish it from Kir in Assyria, **Am 1:5** and Kir in Media, Isa 22:6.

{n} hmdn "succisus", Pagninus, Montanus; "excisa", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. So Ben Melech interprets it by trkn.

Isaiah 15:2

Ver. 2. He is gone up to Bajith,.... That is, Moab; the king or people of Moab, particularly the inhabitants of the above cities. Bajith signifies house; and here a house of idolatry, as Kimchi interprets it; it was an idol's temple, very likely the temple of their god Chemosh, the same which is called Bethbaalmeon, Jos 13:17 "the house of Baal's habitation", and is mentioned with Dibon and Bamoth, as here; hither the Moabites went in their distress, to lament their case, ask advice, make supplication, and offer sacrifice:

and to Dibon, the high places, to weep; Dibon was another city of Moab, Nu 21:30 where probably were high places for idolatrous worship, and from whence it might have the name of Dibonhabbamoth, as it may be here called; or since there was such a place in Moab as Bamoth, here rendered "high places", it may be taken for a proper name of a place, Nu 21:20 and the rather, since mention is made of Bamothbaal along with Dibon, and as distinct from it, Jos 13:17 and Jarchi interprets the words thus,

"and the men of Dibon went up to Bamoth to weep."

Kimchi takes all three to be places of idolatrous worship, and which is not unlikely.

Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba; two cities in the land of Moab, now taken, plundered, and destroyed; the former of these, Nebo, had its name either from the Hebrew word abn, "naba", to prophesy, because of the prophecies or oracles which is thought were delivered here from the Heathen priests, as from their deities; and among the Chaldeans there was a god of this name, Isa 46:1 or from the Arabic word "naba" {o}, to be eminent, and so had its name from its height; near to it was a mountain of the same name, where Moses had a view of the land of Canaan, and died, De 32:49 of this city see Nu 32:3. Jerom says {p}, that in his time a desert place called Naba was showed, eight miles distant from the city Esbus (Heshbon, Isa 15:4) to the south. The latter of these, Medeba, is mentioned in Nu 21:30 this city is by Ptolemy {q} called Medava. Josephus {r} speaks of it as a city of Moab, in the times of Alexander and Hyrcanus; so that if it was now destroyed, it was built again: and Jerom {s} says of it, that in his days it was a city of Arabia, retaining its ancient name, near Esebon, or Heshbon.

On all their heads [shall be] baldness; that is, on the heads of the Moabites, especially the inhabitants of these cities that survived the destruction, who through sorrow and distress, and as a token of mourning, tore off the hair of their heads, which caused baldness, or else shaved it:

[and] every beard cut off; with a razor, which makes it probable that the hair of the head was tore off; both these used to be done as signs of mourning and lamentation, even shaving of the head and beard, **Job 1:20**.

{o} "editus, elatus fuit", Golius, col. 2287. Castel. col. 2182. {p} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 93. H. {q} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17. P. 137. {r} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 15. sect. 4. & l. 14. c. 1. sect. 4. {s} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 93. D.

Isaiah 15:3

Ver. 3. In their streets they shall girt themselves with sackcloth,.... Instead of their fine clothes, with which they had used to deck themselves, being a very proud people; see Isa 16:6 this was usual in times of distress on any account, as well as a token of mourning for the dead; see **Joe 1:8**. The word for "streets" might be rendered "villages", as distinct from cities, that were "without" the walls of the cities, though adjacent to them; and the rather, seeing mention is made of streets afterwards:

on the tops of their houses; which were made flat, as the houses of the Jews were, on which were battlements, De 22:8 hither they went for safety from their enemies, or to see if they could spy the enemy, or any that could assist them, and deliver them; or rather, hither they went for devotion, to pray to their gods for help; for here it was usual to have altars erected, to burn incense on to their deities; see
2Ki 23:12 and in such places the people of God were wont to pray, Ac 10:9:

and in their streets; publicly, as well as privately, where they ran up and down to get from the enemy, and save themselves:

everyone shall howl, weeping abundantly: or, "descending with weeping": the tears running down his cheeks in great abundance, so that his whole body was as it were watered with them; or the meaning may be, that everyone that went up to the temples of the idols, and to the high places, Isa 15:2 or to the roofs of the houses, as here, to pray the assistance of their gods, should come down weeping and howling, having no success.

Isaiah 15:4

Ver. 4. And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh,.... Two other cities in the land of Moab. The first of these was the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who took it from the Moabites, Nu 21:25 it came into the hands of the Reubenites, Nu 32:3 and afterwards was again possessed by the Moabites, Jer 48:2. Josephus {t} calls it Essebon, and mentions it among the cities of Moab; it goes by the name of Esbuta in Ptolemy {u}; and is called Esbus by Jerom {w}, who says it was a famous city of Arabia in his time, in the mountains over against Jericho, twenty miles distant from Jordan; hence we read of the Arabian Esbonites in Pliny {x}. Elealeh was another city of Moab, very near to Heshbon and frequently mentioned with it,
Isa 16:9. Jerom says {y} that in his time it was a large village, a mile from Esbus, or Heshbon. By these two places are meant the inhabitants of them, as the Targum paraphrases it, who cried for and lamented the desolation that was coming, or was come upon them:

their voice shall be heard [even] unto Jahaz; sometimes called Jahazah, Jos 13:18 it was a frontier town, at the utmost borders of the land, Nu 21:23 hence the cry of the inhabitants of the above cities is said to reach to it, which expresses the utter destruction that should be made; see Jer 48:34 this is thought to be the same place Ptolemy {z} calls Ziza. Jerom {a} calls it Jazza, as it is in the Septuagint here, and says that in his time it was shown between Medaba and Deblathai.

Therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; not as when they go to battle, with courage and cheerfulness, as some have thought; but through fear, and as in great terror and distress; and so it signifies, that not only the weak and unarmed inhabitants, men and women, should be in the utmost confusion and consternation, but the soldiers that should fight for them, and defend them; who were accoutred, or "harnessed", as the word signifies, and were "girt" and prepared for war, as the Targum renders it; even these would be dispirited, and have no heart to fight, but lament their sad case:

his life shall be grievous to everyone; the life of every Moabite would be a burden to him; he would choose death rather than life; so great the calamity: or the life of every soldier; or "his soul shall cry out", grieve or mourn for "himself" {b}; for his own unhappy case; he shall only be concerned for himself, how to save himself, or make his escape; having none for others, for whose defence he was set, and for whom he was to fight; but would have no concern for his king or country, only for himself.

{t} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 15. sect. 4. {u} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17. P. 137. {w} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 90. M. {x} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 11. {y} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 90. M. {z} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17. p. 137. {a} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 92. F. {b} wl hery wvpn "anima ejus vociferabit sibi", Pagninus & Montanus.

Isaiah 15:5

Ver. 5. My heart shall cry out for Moab,.... These seem to be the words of the prophet, pitying them as they were fellow creatures, though enemies; which shows humanity in him, and signifies that their calamities were very great, that a stranger should be concerned for them, and such to whom they had been troublesome; so Jarchi understands it, who observes the difference between the true and false prophet, particularly between Isaiah and Balaam; but others, as Kimchi, interpret it of the Moabites themselves, everyone expressing their concern for the desolation of their country; and so the Targum,

"the Moabites shall say in their hearts:"

his fugitives [shall flee] unto Zoar; a city where Lot fled to, when he came out of Sodom, to which it is thought the allusion is, see
Ge 19:20 the meaning seems to be, that those that escaped out of the above cities, when taken and destroyed, should flee hither for safety: the words may be supplied thus, "his fugitives" shall cry out "unto Zoar"; that is, those that flee from other places shall cry so loud as they go along, that their cry shall be heard unto Zoar,
Jer 48:34:

an heifer of three years old; which is not to be understood of Zoar in particular, or of the country of Moab in general, comparable to such an heifer for fatness, strength, beauty, and lasciviousness; but of the cry of the fugitives, that should be very loud and clamorous, like the lowing of an ox, or an heifer in its full strength, which is heard a great way; see **1Sa 6:9**. Dr. Lightfoot {c} conjectures that "Eglath Shelishiah", translated an heifer of three years old, is the proper name of a place; and observes, that there was another place in this country called Eneglaim, Eze 47:10 which being of the dual number, shows that there were two Egels, in reference to which this may be called the "third" Eglath; and so the words may be rendered, "his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, unto the third Eglath"; and he further conjectures, that this may be the Necla of Ptolemy {d}, mentioned by him in Arabia Petraea, along with Zoara; and also to be the Agella of Josephus {e}, reckoned with Zoara and Oronai, and other cities of Moab:

for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; which seems to have been a very high place, and the ascent to it very great; and as the Moabites went up it, whither they might go for safety, they should weep greatly, thinking of their houses and riches they had left to the plunder of the enemy, and the danger of their lives they were still in. This place is thought by some to be the same with the Lysa of Ptolemy {f}; Josephus {g} calls it Lyssa; Jerom {h} says in his time it was a village between Areopolis and Zoara, and went by the name of Luitha; it is mentioned in Jer 48:5:

for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction; of Moab, and the several cities of it; or "of breaking", of breaking down of walls and of houses. The Targum is,

"the cry of the broken (or conquered) in battle;"

whose bones are broken, or however their strength, so that they are obliged to surrender; or a "broken cry", such as is made when there is a multitude of people together, and in great distress. The word Horonaim is of the dual number, and signifies two Horons, the upper and the lower, as say Kimchi and Ben Melech; which is true of Bethhoron, if that was the same place with this, Jos 16:3. By Josephus {i} it is called Oronas and Oronae; it is taken by some to be the Avara of Ptolemy {k}; it seems, by the Targum, that as Luhith was a very high place, this lay low, since it renders it,

"in the descent of Horonaim;"

to which its name agrees, which signifies caverns; and mention is made of Bethhoron in the valley, along with Bethnimrah {l}.

{c} See his Works, vol. 2. p. 502. {d} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17. {e} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 1. sect. 4. {f} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17. p. 137. {g} Antiqu. l. 14. c. 1. sect. 4. {h}

De locis Hebraicis, fol. 93. A. {i} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 15. sect. 4. & l. 14. c. 1. sect. 4. {k} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17. p. 137. {l} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 38. 4.

Isaiah 15:6

Ver. 6. For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate,.... Or dried up, through a great drought that should come upon the land at this time; or being defiled with the blood of the slain, as Jarchi: it may denote the well watered pastures about Nimrim, that should become the forage of the enemy, and be trodden under foot by its army, or be forsaken by the proprietors of them. Josephus {m} speaks of fountains of hot water springing up in the country of Peraea, where Nimrim was, of a different taste, some bitter, and others sweet; which, Dr. Lightfoot {n} suggests, might be these waters of Nimrim; and, according to the Jerusalem Talmud {o}, Bethnimrah was in that part of the country which was called the valley, and so was very fruitful with springs of water. The word is in the plural number, and may design more places of the same name; and we read of Nimrah and Bethnimrah,
Nu 32:3. Jerom {p} calls it Nemra, and says it was a large village in his time; it seems to have its name from panthers or leopards, of which there might be many in these parts:

for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing; by which it seems that the desolation spoken of was not merely through the forage and trampling of the enemy's army, but by a drought.

{m} De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 6. sect. 3. Ed. Hudson. {n} Ut supra (See his Works, vol. 2.) p. 50. {o} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 38. 4. {p} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 93. I.

Isaiah 15:7

Ver. 7. Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up,.... The great substance which the Moabites had got, and hoarded up:

shall they carry away to the brook of the willows; either the Moabites should carry their substance to some brook, it may be near Nimrim, where many willows grew, and cast it into the brook, or lay it by the brook side, in some private place, or under and among the willows, to preserve it from the enemy; or else the meaning is, that their enemies should take what they had with a great deal of labour got, and with a great deal of care had laid up, and carry it to the brook of the willows, some place without the city, and there divide it; or to the valley of the Arabians {q}, as some render it, some part of Arabia lying between Moab and Babylon, whither they might carry it, in order to the conveyance of it into their own country at a proper time: it may be observed, that the country of Moab came after this into the hands of the Arabians; and, according to Jerom, the valley of Arabia lay in the way from Moab to Assyria; but it may be rendered "the valley of the willows", and design the land of Babylon, or Babylon itself, which was built in a plain, or on a flat by the river Euphrates, out of which many canals and rivulets were cut and derived, near to which willows in great abundance grew; as they usually do in marshy and watery places; hence the Jews in Babylon are said to hang their harps upon the willows which were by its rivers; so Jarchi thinks the land of Babylon is meant, and compares it with Ps 137:1 which sense is approved of by Bochart and Vitringa. The Septuagint version is,

"I will bring upon the valley the Arabians, and they shall take it;"

and the Targum is,

"their border, which is by the western sea, shall be taken from them."

{q} Mybreh lxn le "in vallem Arabum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Isaiah 15:8

Ver. 8. For the cry is gone found about the borders of Moab,.... The cry of destruction and howling because of it; the places mentioned, as is observed by some, being upon the borders of the land. Heshbon was on the north east, Elealeh on the north west, Jahaz on the south west, Horonaim further west, Zoar the utmost west, and the places following seem to be upon the borders likewise:

the howling thereof unto Eglaim; which word signifies a border, and so the Arabic word Agalon; some take it to be the same with the brooks of Arnon, Nu 21:13 said so be the border of Moab:

and the howling thereof unto Beerelim; the same with Beer, Nu 21:16 called Beerelim, or "the well of the mighty ones", being dug by the princes of Israel, Nu 21:18.

Isaiah 15:9

Ver. 9. For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood,.... Of the slain, as the Targum adds. This was a river in the land of Moab, as say Jarchi and Kimchi; it had its name from the blood of the slain, Some take it to be the name of a city, and the same with Dibon, Isa 15:2 but, because of the abundance of blood shed in it, got this new name; and the Vulgate Latin version here calls it Dibon; and the Syriac version Ribon; and the Arabic version Remmon:

for I will bring more upon Dimon; or "additions" {r}, not merely add blood to the waters of the river, as Jarchi and Kimchi; but bring additional evils and plagues, as Aben Ezra. The Targum interprets it,

"the congregation of an army;"

but what these additions were are explained in the next clause:

lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land; or a "lion" {s}; the meaning is, that such who escaped the sword should be destroyed by lions, or other beasts of prey, which was one of the Lord's four judgments, Eze 14:21. The Targum is,

"a king shall ascend with his army, and so spoil the remainder of their land;"

and Aben Ezra interprets it of the king of Assyria; and Jarchi of Nebuchadnezzar, who is called a lion, **Jer 4:7** and the sense is thought to be this, that whom Sennacherib king of Assyria should leave, Nebuchadnezzar should destroy. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render the last clause, "the remnant of Adama", a city of Moab; so Cocceius.

{r} twpown "addita", Pagninus, Montanus; "additiones", Vatablus; "additamenta", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {s} hyra "leonem", Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 16

This chapter is a continuation of the prophecy against Moab; in which the prophet gives good advice, but in case of a haughty neglect of it, which he foresaw, threatens with ruin, and fixes a time for it. He advises the Moabites to pay their tribute to the king of Judah, or otherwise they should be turned out of their land, as a bird out of its nest, Isa 16:1 to protect, and not betray the people of the Jews that should flee to them, because of the Assyrian army, Isa 16:3 and for this end gives a great character of the king of Judah, and assures them of the stability of his kingdom, Isa 16:5 but for their pride, wrath, and lying, they are threatened with destruction, and are represented as howling under it, Isa 16:6 because of the spoil of their cities, vineyards, and fields, so that they have no harvest, nor vintage, nor gathering of summer fruits, or joy on these accounts, Isa 16:8 for which even the prophet expresses a concern, Isa 16:11 and after having observed the application of the Moabites to their gods without success, Isa 16:12 the chapter is closed with an assurance of the certain ruin of Moab, and of the time when it should be, Isa 16:13.

Ver. 1. Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land,.... Or tribute, as the Targum rightly interprets it. The Moabites, being conquered by David, paid tribute to him, **2Sa 8:2** and when the kingdom was divided in Rehoboam's time, the tribute was paid to the kings of Israel, which continued till the times of Ahab, when the Moabites rebelled, and refused to pay it, **2Ki 3:4** and this tribute, as appears from the passage now referred to, was paid in lambs and rams; which now they are bid to pay to the king of Judah, David's lawful heir and successor in his kingdom; who is supposed to be meant by the ruler of the land, that is, of the land of Judah, whose reigning king at this time was Hezekiah; but rather by "the ruler of the land" is meant the king of Moab, for the words may be rendered, more agreeably to the language and the accents, "send ye the lamb" (or lambs, the singular for the plural), "O ruler of the land" {t}; though others, "send ye the lamb of the ruler of the land" {u}; that is either, O king of Moab send the tribute that is due; or ye people of the land send the tribute which your ruler owes to the king of Judah; so Jarchi understands it of the king of Moab: some indeed expound the ruler of the land of God himself, who is the Governor of the world; and take the sense to be, that the Moabites are bid to send a lamb, or lambs, for sacrifice, to the God of the whole earth, in order to appease him, and atone for their sins; which is said either seriously, as some think, this being to answer a good purpose, or ironically, as other's, it being now too late; but the sense given is the best: in the Talmud {w} it is applied to Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of the land, who came to the mount of the daughter of Zion, by the way of rocks and mountains. The Targum applies it to the Messiah, paraphrasing it thus,

"they shall be bringing tributes to the Christ of Israel, who is strong over them."

Jerom interprets it of Christ, the Lamb of God, the ruler of the world, or who was to be sacrificed to the ruler of the world; who descended from Ruth, the Moabitess, who he supposes is meant by the rock of the wilderness, as he renders the next clause:

from Sela to the wilderness, unto the mount the daughter of Zion: according to Kimchi, and others, Sela was the chief city of the kingdom of Moab. The word signifies a rock; it is the same with Petra {x}, the chief city of Arabia, and from whence Arabia Petraea had its name. Some take it to be Selah, the chief city of Edom, afterwards called Joktheel, 2Ki 14:7 it was a frontier city, and lay upon the borders of Moab and Edom to the south; as the wilderness of Jordan was on the border of Moab to the north, and is thought to be here meant; or, according to Vitringa, the plains of Jericho, the same with the wilderness of Judea, where John the Baptist came preaching; which lay in the way from Sela or Petra, the chief city in Moab, unto Jerusalem. Strabo {y} says of Petra, the metropolis of the Nabataeans, that it lies in a plain, surrounded with rocks and precipices, and within it fountains and gardens, and without it a large country, for the most part desert, especially towards Judea, and from hence it is a journey of three or four days to Jericho; and so the sense is, send the lambs, or the tribute, from Sela or Petra, the chief city of Moab; send them, I say, to the wilderness of Judea, or by the way of that, even to Mount Zion or Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea, and the seat of the king of it.

{t} Ura lvwm rk wxlv "mittite agnum, dominator terrae", Montanus; so Luther; which is approved by Reinbeck de Accent. Heb. p. 395. {u} "Mittite agnum dominatoris terrae", Pagninus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {w} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 96. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {x} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 4. c. 4. sect. 7. Ptolem. Geogr. l. 5. c. 17. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {y} Geograph. l. 16. p. 536. Ed. Casaub.

Isaiah 16:2

Ver. 2. For it shall be,.... Or, "otherwise it shall be" {z}; if ye do not pay this tribute:

[that] as a wandering bird cast out of the nest: or, "as a wandering bird, the nest sent out": that is, as a bird that has forsaken its nest, and wanders about, and its young ones are turned out of the nest, scarcely fledged, and unable to shift for themselves, but flutter about here and there, trembling and frightened, see Pr 26:2:

[so] the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon: turned out of their houses, wandering up and down, not knowing where to go; unable to help themselves, and in the utmost fright and consternation, fleeing to the very borders of their land, as the fords of Arnon were, see Nu 21:13.

{z} hyhw "alioqui", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 16:3

Ver. 3. Take counsel, execute judgment,.... This refers either to what goes before, that they would take the counsel given, and do that which was just and right, by paying tribute to the king of Judah; or to what follows, that they would enter into a consultation, the king of Moab with his nobles, and resolve upon what was right, and do it, by protecting and harbouring the distressed Jews, who would flee unto them from the enemy:

make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; a time of the greatest heat, to which the Assyrian army, for its force and fury, and the mischief done by it, is compared: and the Moabites they are advised to make a shadow, as large and as strong as the dark night, that is, to protect the Jews in their distress, and to refresh and comfort them under it; see **Isa 4:6**:

hide the outcasts; such as were driven out of their land through the fury and persecution of the enemy, receive and conceal, as Rahab did the spies:

bewray not him that wandereth; from his native place, as a bird from its nest, being forced to it; such an one, or as many as may be, in such a case, do not discover them where they are, or betray them, and deliver them up into the hands of their enemy.

Isaiah 16:4

Ver. 4. Let mine outcasts dwell with thee,.... Not whom God had cast out, but who were the Lord's people, and whom he owns as such, though cast out by the enemy, or obliged to flee, and quit their country; let these be sojourners in thy land; let them continue awhile there; let them dwell privately and peaceably:

Moab, be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: that is, O king of Moab, or kingdom of Moab, as the Targum, hide and protect the Jews that shall flee to thee for shelter, from the face of the spoiler of their land and substance, Sennacherib king of Assyria; and, to encourage them to do these things, it is suggested that they would not be long troublesome to them, and would quickly be in a capacity of requiting them, and of being serviceable to them in like distress:

for the extortioner is at an end; or "the squeezer", or "wringer out" {a}; that oppressed them, and wrung their property out of their hands; that milked them out of their substance, and even sucked their blood; meaning the Assyrian monarch, whose time was short, and an end was soon put to all his schemes and oppressions:

the spoiler ceaseth: out of the land, being obliged to depart out of it:

the oppressors are consumed out of the land: the Assyrian army, and its officers, who were all consumed in one night by an angel,
2Ki 19:35.

{a} Umh "expressor", Pagninus, Montanus; "emunctor, [vel] emulsor", Vatablus.

Isaiah 16:5

Ver. 5. And in mercy shall the throne be established,.... That is, the throne of Hezekiah, and his government over Judah, which was more firmly settled and established after the overthrow of the Assyrian army, through the mercy of God vouchsafed to him, and on account of the mercy he exercised among his subjects, see Pr 20:28. Hezekiah was a type of Christ, and his throne typical of his, and the ultimate view of the prophecy may be to the stability of the kingdom of Christ; so the Targum,

"then the Christ of Israel, his throne shall be established in goodness:"

and he shall sit upon it in truth; which does not so much intend the reality of his sitting there, as his continuance, signified by sitting, and the constancy and stability of his reign, or his governing with faith fulness and truth;

in the tabernacle of David; or "tent"; meaning his palace, or house in Jerusalem, alluding to his having been a shepherd before he was a king, or referring to the unsettled state of David's house; this was typical of the church of God, where Christ sits and reigns as King, see **Am 9:11**; the Targum is,

"in the city of David;"

Jerusalem, as Aben Ezra:

judging and seeking judgment; acting the part of a righteous, faithful, and diligent Judge; seeking to do justice to the poor and needy, and searching into the cause that comes before him, to find out, and take the right side of it:

and hasting righteousness; not delaying justice, protracting a cause, deferring the sentence, and the execution of it, but dispatching the whole as speedily as may be; all which characters, though they may be found in Hezekiah, yet are much more eminently in Christ.

Isaiah 16:6

Ver. 6. We have heard of the pride of Moab,.... These are the words of the prophet, either in the name of the Lord, or in the person of the Jews, or of other nations, who had heard very frequently, and from many persons, and from every quarter, of the excessive pride of this people, and had many instances of it related to them, which foretold their ruin; for pride comes before a fall:

([he] is very proud): though his original was so base and infamous; and therefore there is little reason to hope or expect that he would take the advice above given him, or do the good offices for the Jews he was exhorted to; his pride was such, that he would despise the counsel of God, and would never stoop to do any favour for his people:

[even] of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath; of his contempt of the people of God, and his wrath against them:

[but] his lies [shall] not be so; or, "his strength" shall "not be so" {b}; as his wrath: he shall not be able to do what in his pride and wrath he said he would do; all his wicked thoughts and devices, all his haughty and wrathful expressions, will signify nothing; they will all be of no effect, for God resisteth the proud, see Jer 48:30. It may be rendered, "not right", that of "his diviners" {c}; their words and works, what they say or do; so the word is used in Isa 44:25.

{b} wydb Nk al "non sicut, fortitudo ejus"; so some in Vatablus. {c} wydb Nk-al "non rectum divinorum ejus", Vitringa.

Isaiah 16:7

Ver. 7. Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab,.... One Moabite shall mourn for another; the living for the dead; or one part of the country for another; or to Moab, they shall howl in turns, answering to one another:

everyone shall howl: every Moabite, or the whole country of Moab shall howl, being everywhere desolate:

for the foundations of Kirhareseth shall ye mourn: surely [they are] stricken; this was a very principal city in the land of Moab, and a very strong one, see **2Ki 3:25**. It signifies, according to some, "the city of the sun", so called, it may be, because the sun was worshipped here; or, according to others, "the earthen city", or "city of brick", because its houses and walls were made of brick; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "the walls of burnt brick". Now this strong city was to be razed even to the foundations, so that these would be discovered, which would occasion mourning to its inhabitants, and those of other places. Kimchi interprets "the foundations", of the great men and princes of Moab, see Jer 48:31 so the Targum,

"and they shall howl over the men of the city of their strength;"

R. Jonah, of the men of the army, the foundation of the kingdom; so Ben Melech. The word translated "foundations" signifies also flagons or bottles, and so Aben Ezra and Abendana understand it here; and accordingly the words may be thus rendered, "for the bottles of Kirhareseth shall ye mourn, verily they are broken" {d}; this agrees with the signification of the word in **Ho 3:1** and with what follows, concerning the vine of Sibmah; the reason of the mourning seems to be, that there would be no wine, and the bottles would lie useless, and be broken.

{d} yvyval "de lagenis Kir-hareseth gemetis, ubique confractae sunt", De Dieu; "propter dolia Cir-hareseth gemetis"; so some in Vatablus.

Isaiah 16:8

Ver. 8. For the fields of Heshbon languish,.... Through drought; or because of the forage of the enemy, and their treading upon them; or because there were no men left to till and manure them. Of Heshbon
See Gill on "Isa 15:4". It seems to have been a place famous for fields and pastures, and to have been a very fruitful and well watered place; hence we read of the fish pools in Heshbon, **So 7:4** though Aben Ezra and Kimchi think the word signifies vines, as they suppose it does in De 32:32:

[and] the vine of Sibmah; called Shebam and Shibmah, in
Nu 32:3 thought to be the Seba of Ptolemy {e}; and seems to have been famous for vines and vineyards:

the lords of the Heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof; that is, the Chaldeans and their army, and commanders and principal officers of it, dealing with them as the Turks do with vines, wherever they meet with them, destroy them; though Jarchi and Kimchi interpret all this figuratively, both here and in the above clauses, of the inhabitants of these places, the multitude of the common people, and their princes, some being killed, and others carried captive; to which sense the Targum,

"because the armies of Heshbon are spoiled, the multitude of Sebama are killed, the kings of the people have killed their rulers:"

they are come [even] unto Jazer; meaning either the Chaldean army, or the Moabites, who had fled hither; or rather this is to be understood of the vines of Sibmah, expressing the excellency and large spread of them, which reached even to Jazer; which, as Jerom says {f}, was fifteen miles from Heshbon, called Jaazer, Nu 21:32:

they wandered [through] the wilderness; the wilderness of Moab, **De 2:8** not the lords of the Heathen, nor the Moabites, but the vines and their branches, which crept along, and winded to and fro, as men wander about:

her branches are stretched out; that is, the branches of the vine Sibmah:

they are gone over the sea; the Dead Sea, called the sea of Jazer, Jer 48:32 or rather a lake near that city.

{e} Geograph. l. 5. c. 19. {f} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 92. G.

Isaiah 16:9

Ver. 9. Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah,.... That is, bewail the one, as he had done the other, both places with the fruits about them being destroyed by the enemy; or "therefore with weeping I will bewail" (most vehemently lament, an usual Hebraism) "Jazer", and "the vine of Sibmah": the prophet here represents the Moabites weeping for their vines more especially, they being a people addicted to drunkenness, in which their father was begotten; hence Bacchus is said to be the founder of many of their cities, see Jer 48:32. The Targum is,

"as I have brought armies against Jazer, so will I bring slayers against Sibmah;"

I will water thee with my tears: shed abundance of them, see **Ps 6:6**:

O Heshbon, and Elealeh; perhaps alluding to the fishponds, in the former, **So 7:4** of these places,
See Gill on "Isa 15:4":

for the shouting for thy summer fruits, and for thy harvest, is fallen; is ceased, so as not to be heard; namely, the singing and shouting which used to be made by labourers, while they were gathering the summer fruits, or reaping the harvest, with which they amused and diverted themselves, and their fellow labourers, and so their time and their work went on more pleasantly; or else that great joy and shouting they expressed when all was ended, something of which nature is still among us at this day; but now in Moab it was at an end, because the enemy had destroyed both their summer fruits and harvest; though

Jarchi and Kimchi interpret this shouting of the enemy, of the spoilers and plunderers, upon their summer fruits and harvest, when they destroyed them; and so the Targum,

"upon thy harvest, and upon thy vintage, spoilers have fallen;"

so Noldius {g} renders the words, "for upon thy summer fruits, and upon thy harvest, the shouting shall fall"; that is, the shouting of the enemy, spoiling their fruits and their harvest; and this seems to be the true sense, since it agrees with Jer 48:32 and the ceasing of the other kind of shouting is observed in the next verse
Isa 16:10.

{g} Ebr Concord. Part p. 253.

Isaiah 16:10

Ver. 10. And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field,.... Or "is gathered" {h}, though their harvest was not; all cause of joy and gladness was removed; a plentiful field being foraged, trampled upon, and destroyed by the enemy, and left desolate without any to manure it:

and in the vineyards there shall be no singing; as there used to be by the men that gathered the grapes, and trod the wine presses; but now there would be no men in the vineyards, there being no grapes to gather or tread, as follows:

the treaders shall tread out no wine in [their] presses; the way in those times and countries being for men to tread the grapes, and the wine out of them, with their feet, in vats or vessels, and not in presses with screws and weights, as now:

I have made their [vintage shouting] to cease; by suffering the enemy to come in among them, which had destroyed their vintage, and so prevented their shouting, and spoiled their song.

{h} Poan "colligetur", Montanus; "ad verbum, collectum est", Vatablus.

Isaiah 16:11

Ver. 11. Wherefore my bowels shall sound like a harp for Moab,.... Making a noise as the harp does, and a mournful one as that, when used at funerals; which it makes when it is stricken or played on with the hand, as these were, through the afflictive and punitive hand of God; and which, when stricken, causes a quavering of the strings, to which the inward trembling of the bowels is compared, and is very expressive of the prophet's sympathy, or those he personates; for, when one string of the harp is touched, the rest sound. For these words, as Kimchi says, are spoken in the language of the Moabites; those that survived lamenting the desolate state of their country, which must be very great and affecting; and to show that it was so is the design of the prophet's expressing himself after this manner; for if it was painful to him, it must be much more so to them; so the Targum,

"wherefore the bowels of the Moabites shall sound as a harp;"

of the sounding of the bowels, see Isa 63:15:

and mine inward parts for Kirharesh: the same with Kirhareseth, Isa 16:7 which being a principal city, the destruction of it was greatly laid to heart. The Targum is,

"and their heart shall grieve for the men of the city of their strength;"

it being a strong city, in which they placed their confidence; but being destroyed, and the inhabitants of it, it was very affecting, to which agrees Jer 48:31.

Isaiah 16:12

Ver. 12. And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place,.... With weeping there, Isa 15:2 or with frequent sacrifices, and going from one high place to another, as Balak king of Moab did; and by comparing places together, it looks as if this was the way of the Moabites in their distress, to offer up a multitude of sacrifices in different places; now, when it should be seen by others, and appear to themselves, that they wearied themselves in vain, and all their cries and sacrifices were to no purpose, they should then be ashamed of them, leave off, and betake themselves to some other method; though Jarchi interprets it of their being weary of fighting on the high places of their towers, which when observed, they would take another course, and apply to devotion:

that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray; to the temple of Chemosh, and to pray to that idol to help him, 1Ki 11:7:

but he shall not prevail; his prayers shall be ineffectual; his suit will be fruitless, and without success; or "he cannot", that is, his idol cannot help him. So Kimchi interprets his sanctuary of the house of his God; and the Targum, of the house of his idolatry; yet since the house or temple of an idol is never called a sanctuary, it may be understood of God's sanctuary, the temple at Jerusalem; and the sense be, that when Moab shall see that his praying and sacrificing to idols are in vain, and he has tired himself with his superstition and idolatry, without having any redress, he shall think and express his desire of going up to the temple of Jerusalem, and of praying to the God of Israel; but he shall not be able to do it, because of the enemy; and could he get thither, he would not prevail with God, for the decree was gone forth, which could not be frustrated, as follows. Ben Melech interprets it of the palace of the king.

Isaiah 16:13

Ver. 13. This [is] the word that the Lord hath spoken concerning Moab,.... That is, this prophecy now delivered out is what comes from the Lord; it is the word of the Lord, and not of man, and so shall certainly come to pass; when this word was spoken follows:

since that time; from eternity, as some, and so refer it to the decree of God within himself; or from the time that Moab was in being, or a nation, as others; or from the time that Balak hired Balaam to curse Israel, so Jarchi; or rather from the time that the Lord made known his mind and will, concerning this matter, to the prophet Isaiah: for it should be rendered, "this is that word which the Lord spake concerning Moab then" {i}; that is, at the time or year in which Ahaz died, Isa 14:28 and is observed, to distinguish it from what the prophet spoke, or was about to speak, now or from this time, concerning him, as in the next verse Isa 16:14.

{i} So Noldius, Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 473. No. 1586.

Isaiah 16:14

Ver. 14. But now the Lord hath spoken,.... Something else. What follows is a distinct prophecy from the former, and has a date annexed to it, when it should be fulfilled: the former prophecy relates to the utter destruction of the Moabites by the Babylonians, in the times of Nebuchadnezzar; of which Jeremiah, Jer 48:1 prophesies, in much the same language as Isaiah; and so Jarchi observes, that the final destruction of Moab was by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar: but this was of a lesser nature, and to be accomplished in a short time, either by Shalmaneser, or by Sennacherib king of Assyria, or Esarhaddon his son:

saying, within three years, as the year of an hireling; that is, precisely and exactly three years, neither more nor fewer, neither sooner nor later; as whatever time is agreed upon by an hireling, as soon as ever it is out, which he often thinks of, and counts exactly, he demands his wages, and his freedom. Some think this prophecy bears date with the former, concerning the Philistines, which was the year King Ahaz died, Isa 14:28 and so had its accomplishment in the fourth year of Hezekiah, when Shalmaneser came up against Samaria {k}, and took Moab in his way, 2Ki 18:9 others, that it was given out in the fourth year of Hezekiah, when the Assyrian besieged Samaria, and after three years took it, and then returned and fell upon the Moabites; others place it in the eleventh year of Hezekiah, and suppose it to be fulfilled in his fourteenth by Sennacherib, about the same time he came up and took the fenced cities of Judah, and besieged Jerusalem, 2Ki 18:13 and with this agree the Jewish writers {l}, whose words are these,

"after those things, and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib king of Assyria came into Judah, 2Ch 32:1 and at the same time sent Tartan to Ashdod, Isa 20:1 who overran the Ammonites and Moabites, who helped him when he besieged Samaria three years, that it might be fulfilled what is said, Isa 16:14 at the same time the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem."

Upon which Kimchi observes, as an interpretation of the phrase, "as the years of an hireling",

"it is as if it was said, because they helped the king of Assyria three years against Samaria, it was as if they had been hired; therefore they fell by his hand, and the glory of Moab was light in the hand of the king of Assyria."

But others make it to be three years after this time; but very likely it might be later still, about the eighteenth or nineteenth year of Hezekiah, as Gataker thinks, who, in his notes on this place, has collected all these senses, and made his observations on them; and so had its accomplishment in some expedition of Esarhaddon, who greatly weakened and impoverished the country of Moab, though he did not destroy it, and which was an earnest and pledge of the utter destruction of it before prophesied of. Noldius renders it, "after three years"; and so Grotius: it was in the first year of Hezekiah, as Noldius observes, that this was said; and in the fourth year of his reign, Shalmaneser came against Samaria, and in his way was the beginning of this destruction, and but a beginning of it, as he observes, yet a pledge of the consummation by Nebuchadnezzar, which was long after these three years of Isaiah.

And the glory of Moab shall be contemned with all that great multitude; of cities and towns, of the inhabitants of them, and of wealth and riches, things in which Moab gloried, and were reckoned weighty and heavy things; these were accounted light by the king of Assyria, who spoiled them, or at least greatly diminished them:

and the remnant [shall be] very small [and] feeble; or, "not mighty" or "strong"; those that were not cut off by the Assyrian army would be but few, and these weak and without strength, being dispossessed of their cities, and of their wealth; though, in process of time, between this, and the fulfilment of the former prophecy, and that of Jeremiah, they recovered themselves, and became very numerous and flourishing.

{k} See Prideaux's Connect. par. 1. B. 1. p. 18. So Vitringa. {l} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 23. p. 64.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Isaiah 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 17

This chapter contains a prophecy of the ruin of Syria and Israel, the ten tribes; who were in alliance; and also of the overthrow of the Assyrian army, that should come against Judah. The destruction of Damascus, the metropolis of Syria, and of other cities, is threatened,
Isa 17:1 yea, of the whole kingdom of Syria, together with Ephraim or the ten tribes, and Samaria the head of them, Isa 17:3 whose destruction is expressed by various similes, as by thinness and leanness, and by the reaping and

gathering of corn, Isa 17:4 and yet a remnant should be preserved, compared to gleaning gapes, and a few berries on an olive tree, who should look to the Lord, and not to idols, Isa 17:6 and the reason of the desolation of their cities, and of their fields and vineyards, was their forgetfulness of the Lord, Isa 17:9 and the chapter is closed with a prophecy of the defeat of the Assyrian army, who are compared for their multitude and noise to the seas, and to mighty waters, and the noise and rushing of them, Isa 17:12 and yet should be, at the rebuke of God, as chaff, or any small light thing, before a blustering wind, Isa 17:13 and who, in the evening, would be a trouble to the Jews, and be dead before morning; which was to be the portion of the spoilers and plunderers of the Lord's people, Isa 17:14.

Ver. 1. The burden of Damascus,.... A heavy and grievous prophecy, concerning the destruction of it; the Arabic version is,

"the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Damascus;"

and the Targum is,

"the burden of the cup of cursing to give Damascus to drink."

Behold, Damascus is taken away from [being] a city; a kingdom, as the Targum; it was the head of one, but now its walls were demolished, its houses pulled down, and its inhabitants carried captive; this was done by Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, 2Ki 16:9 it had been a very ancient city, see Ge 15:2 and the head of the kingdom of Syria, **Isa 7:8**, and though it underwent this calamity, it was rebuilt again, and was a city of great fame, when destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 49:24 after which it was raised up again, and was in being in the apostle's time, and still is, **Ac 9:22**
2Co 11:32

and it shall be a ruinous heap; or a heap of stones, as the Targum and Kimchi interpret it. A "behold" is prefixed to the whole, as being very wonderful and remarkable, unthought of, and unexpected.

Isaiah 17:2

Ver. 2. The cities of Aroer are forsaken,.... The inhabitants of them being slain, or carried captive, or obliged to flee. Aroer was a city by the river Arnon, on the borders of Moab and Ammon, **De 2:36** **De 3:12**, it was originally in the hands of the Amorites, and sometimes in the hands of the Moabites and Ammonites: it was given by Moses to the Reubenites and, Gadites, from whom it was taken by the Syrians, and in whose possession it seems to have been at this time; see 2Ki 10:33 though Jarchi thinks it was now in the hands of Pekah king of Israel, and said to be forsaken, because the Reubenites and Gadites were now carried captive. Jerom {m} says it was seen in his time, upon the top of the mountain. Here it seems to designs a country of this name, in which were many cities. Grotius thinks it was a tract of land in Syria, the same with the Aveira of Ptolemy {n}. Vitringa is of opinion that Damascus itself is meant, which was a double city, like that divided by the river Chrysorrhoas, as this was by Arnon.

They shall be for flocks which shall lie down; instead of houses, there should be sheepcotes and shepherds' tents, and instead of men, sheep; and where streets were, grass would grow, and flocks feed and lie down; which is expressive of the utter desolation of these cities, or this tract of ground:

and none shall make [them] afraid; the flocks of sheep, timorous creatures, easily frightened; but so great should be the depopulation now, there would be no man upon the spot, or any pass by, to give them any disturbance.

{m} De locis. Heb. fol. 87. 1. {n} Geograph. l. 5. c. 15.

Isaiah 17:3

Ver. 3. The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim,.... The ten tribes, now in confederacy with the Syrians, whose metropolis or fortress was Samaria, which seems to be intended here; and should be destroyed, at least taken out of the hands of the Israelites, and they be carried captive by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, 2Ki 17:6 and this may be understood, not of that particular city and fortress only, but of all their strongholds, the singular being, put for the plural. The Targum is, "the government shall cease from Ephraim"; they shall have no more a king over them, nor have they to this day:

and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria; Damascus was the head city of Syria, where the kings of Syria had their palace; but now that and the rest of Syria should no more be a kingdom of itself, but should be subject unto others, as it has been ever since:

they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the Lord of hosts; that is, the Syrians, who were in alliance with Israel, should share the same fate; should be carried captive as they were; should have their metropolis and other cities, and their whole kingdom, taken from them, and be stripped of their grandeur and wealth, and have no more glory than they had; which was none at all; or at least very small, as the next verse shows Isa 17:4.

Isaiah 17:4

Ver. 4. And in that day it shall come to pass,.... It being much about the same time that both kingdoms were destroyed by the Assyrians:

[that] the glory of Jacob shall be made thin; the same with Ephraim and Israel, the ten tribes, whose glory lay in the superior number of their tribes to Judah; in the multitude of their cities, and the inhabitants of them; but now would be thinned, by the vast numbers that should be carried captive:

and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean: like a man in a consumption, that is become a mere skeleton, and reduced to skin and bones: the meaning is, that all their wealth and riches should be taken away; so the Targum,

"and the riches of his glory shall be carried away."

Isaiah 17:5

Ver. 5. And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn,.... The "standing" corn, as in the Hebrew text: "and reapeth the ears with his arm"; or "his arm reaps the ears" {o}; that is, with one hand he gathers the standing corn into his fist, and then reaps it with his other arm; and just so it should be with the people of Israel: they were like a field of standing corn, for number, beauty, and glory; the Assyrian was like a harvestman, who laid hold upon them, and cut them down, as thick and as numerous as they were, just as a harvestman cuts down the corn, and with as much ease and quick dispatch; they being no more able to stand before him than a field of corn before the reaper! this was done both by Tilgathpilneser, 2Ki 15:29 and by Shalmaneser, 2Ki 17:6 kings of Assyria:

and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim; the Targum renders it, "the valley of giants."

and so it is translated, Jos 15:8 mention is made of it in **2Sa 5:18** it was a valley not far from Jerusalem, as Josephus {p} says; who also calls it the valley of the giants: it is thought to have been a very fruitful place, where the ears of corn were very large and heavy, and so great care was taken in gathering and gleaning that none be lost: wherefore, as the former simile signifies the carrying off the people of Israel in great numbers by the above kings, this may signify, as some have thought, either the picking up of those that fled without, or the gleaning of them in after times by Esarhaddon, **Ezr 4:2**.

{o} rwuqy Mylbv werzw "et brachium ejus spicas demeteret", Junius & Tremellius; "demetit", Piscator, &c. {p} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 4. sect. 1.

Isaiah 17:6

Ver. 6. Yet gleaning grapes shall be left in it,.... In Ephraim or Jacob; that is, in the ten tribes, a few of them should escape, a remnant should be saved; comparable, for the smallness of their number, to grapes that are gleaned after the vintage is got in: though Kimchi interprets it of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who were but few, in comparison of the ten tribes, who were many; and Jarchi explains it of Hezekiah and his company, in the midst of Jerusalem, who were but few; and observes, that some of their Rabbins understood it of the few men that were left of the multitude of Sennacherib's army, when it was destroyed; but the first sense is best: and the same thing is signified by another simile,

as the shaking of an olive tree; with the hand, when the fruit is ripe; or, "as the striking" {q} of it with a staff; to beat off the berries, when there are left

two [or] three berries at the top of the uppermost bough: the word "amir" is only used here, and in Isa 17:9 and signifies, as Kimchi says, the upper bough or branch; and so Aben Ezra interprets it, the highest part of the olive; and observes, that it so signifies in the language of Kedar, or the Arabic language; in which it is used for a king, a prince, an emperor, one that has the command and government of others {r}; and hence the word "amiral" or "admiral" comes: now two or three olive berries, being in the uppermost bough, are left, because they cannot be reached by the hand of the gatherer, nor by the staff of the striker. Kimchi applies this to Jerusalem, which was the highest part of the land of Israel; and what was in it the hand of the king of Assyria could not reach:

four [or] five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof; which escape the gatherer, shaker, or striker, for the same reason. These similes are very aptly made use of, since the people of Israel are frequently compared to grapes, and vines, and olives, **Isa 5:1**
Jer 11:16:

saith the Lord God of Israel; this is added to confirm what is said, and to express the certainty of it; and shows that the Israelites are meant, to whom the Lord was a covenant God. The Targum applies the metaphors thus,

"so shall the righteous be left alone in the world among the kingdoms, saith the Lord God of Israel."

{q} tyw Pqnk "ut strictura oleae", Cocceius. {r} "imperator; princeps, dux qui allis quomodo cumque praest imperatque", Golius, col. 158. Castel. col. 150. though the verb in the Hebrew language is used in the sense of elevation or lifting up, and seems to be derived from hence. So Schindler, col. 96. ryma "ramus, summitas rami----inde verbum", rymah "eminere aut prominere fecit, rami aut frondis instar exaltavit, extulit, evexit", Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. Psal. xciv. 4.

Isaiah 17:7

Ver. 7. At that day shall a man look to his Maker,.... The one only living and true God, who has made him, and not he himself, nor any other creature; that is, such as are left, as before described, the remnant, according to the election of grace; these shall look to God for help and assistance, for supply, support, and protection; and to Christ particularly, who is the Maker of all things, without whom was not any thing made that is made, for all spiritual blessings; for righteousness and strength, for peace and pardon, for food, and all comfortable supplies of grace, for life and salvation; who is set up to be looked unto for these things; to whom men are directed and encouraged to look for them, both by himself, and by his ministers, and to whom saints in all ages have looked and have not been disappointed; and to this sense the following words incline:

and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel; who in this prophecy is said to be the Redeemer, Isa 43:14 he is the Holy One that sprung from literal Israel; and is the sanctifier of mystical Israel; to which agrees the Targum,

"and his eyes shall hope for the Word of the Holy One of Israel:"

the Word by whom all things were made in the beginning, and who was made flesh and dwelt among men.

Isaiah 17:8

Ver. 8. And he shall not took to the altars, the work of his hands,.... That is, to altars erected to the worship of idols, which are both the works of men's hands, so as to serve at them, and sacrifice upon them. Kimchi observes, that the latter clause is not to be understood as belonging to the former, but as distinct from it, and signifies idols which men have made; otherwise all altars, even the altars of God, were the works of men, which yet it was right to look unto, and offer sacrifice upon; but idol altars, and idols themselves, are here meant: and a good man will not look unto his good works as altars to atone for sin; he knows that nothing that a creature can do can expiate sin; that his best works are such as are due to God, and therefore can never atone for past crimes; that Jesus Christ is only the altar, sacrifice, and priest, to whom he looks for, and from whom he receives the atonement:

neither shall respect [that] which his fingers have made, either the groves or the images; both might be said to be made by the fingers of men, the former being planted, and, the latter carved and fashioned by them; whether by groves are meant clusters of trees, where idols and altars were placed, or medals struck with such a representation on them, and also whatever images are here designed: the word signifies sun images, images made to represent the sun, or for the honour and worship of it. Aben Ezra says they were images made according to the likeness of chariots for the sun. The Targum renders it "temples", such as were dedicated to the sun; though some understand by it sunny places, where their idols were set and sunburnt, as distinct from shady groves. Good men will not took to their own works, what their fingers have wrought, as groves to shelter them from divine wrath and vengeance, or as idols to bow down to, trust in, and depend upon for salvation; but reject them, and look to Christ only.

Isaiah 17:9

Ver. 9. In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch,.... Meaning the strong cities of Ephraim or Jacob, the ten tribes, which should be forsaken of their inhabitants; having fled from before the enemy, or being slain or carried captive; like a bough of a tree, that is forsaken stripped of its leaves, and an uppermost branch of a tree that is dead and dry, and has nothing on it:

which they left; or "as they left", or "were left":

because of the children of Israel; "from the face of" them; or for fear of them; that is, the same cities which the Canaanites left; and as they left them, or were left by them, for fear of the Israelites; the same, and in the same manner, shall they be left by the Israelites, for fear of the Assyrians; and so the Septuagint version reads the words,

"in that day thy cities shall be forsaken, in like manner as the Amorites and Hivites left them, from the face of the children of Israel;"

and this sense is given by Aben Ezra and Kimchi: though some interpret it of some places being spared and left for the remnant to dwell in; but what follows in this verse, and in the next Isa 17:10, shows the contrary sense:

and there shall be desolation; over all those cities, and in all the land; though Aben Ezra particularly applies it to Samaria, the royal city. Jerom interprets the whole of the cities of Judea being forsaken of their inhabitants, when the Romans besieged Jerusalem, and made the land desolate; which calamity came upon them, for their neglect and forgetfulness of Jesus the Saviour.

Isaiah 17:10

Ver. 10. Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation,.... Who had been the author of salvation to them many a time, in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in various instances since; and yet they had forgot his works of mercy and goodness, and had left his worship, and gone after idols; and this was the cause of their cities being forsaken, and becoming a desolation:

and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength; or strong Rock, who had supplied and supported them, protected and defended them:

therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants; or "plants of pleasant fruit" {s}, or "plants of Naamanim"; and so Aben Ezra takes it to be the proper name of a plant in the Arabic language, and which he says is a plant that grows very quick; perhaps he means "Anemone", which is so called in that language {t}, and is near to it in sound; though rather, not any particular plant is meant, but all sorts of pleasant plants, flowers, and fruit trees, with which the land of Israel abounded:

and shall set it with strange slips; with foreign ones, such as are brought from other countries, and are scarce and dear, and highly valued; and by "plants" and "slips" may be meant false and foreign doctrines, inculcating idolatry and superstition, which are pleasing to the flesh {u}.

{s} Mynmen yejn "plantas amaenorum [fructuum]", Piscator. {t} Alnaaman "Anemone", in Avicenna, l. 256. 1. "vel a colore sanguineo, vel quod ab illo adamaretur rege", Golius, col. 2409. Castel. col. 2346. {u} So Vitringa.

Isaiah 17:11

Ver. 11. In the day shall thou make thy plant to grow,.... Not that it is in the power of man to make it grow; but the sense is, that all means and methods should be used to make it grow, no cost nor pains should be spared:

and in the morning shall thou make thy seed to flourish; which may denote both diligence in the early care of it, and seeming promising success; and yet all should be in vain, and to no purpose:

[but] the harvest [shall be] a heap in the day of grief; or "of inheritance"; when it was about to be possessed and enjoyed, according to expectation, it shall be all thrown together in a heap, and be spoiled by the enemy: or, "the harvest" shall be "removed in the day of inheritance" {w}; just when the fruit is ripe, and going to be gathered in, the enemy shall come and take it all away; and so, instead of being a time of joy, as harvest usually is, it will be a time of grief

and trouble,

and of desperate sorrow too, or "deadly"; which will leave them in despair, without hope of subsistence for the present year, or of having another harvest hereafter, the land coming into the hands of their enemies.

{w} hlxn Mwyb ryuq dn "recedit messis in die hereditatis sive possessionis"; so some in Vatablus.

Isaiah 17:12

Ver. 12. Woe to the multitude of many people,..... Not as lamenting the people of the Jews with Hezekiah, as if they were the words of the prophet bemoaning their condition, saying, "O the multitude", &c. nor intending the Syrians and Israelites joined together against Judah; but the Assyrian army under Sennacherib, which consisted of people of many nations, and was very numerous, who are either threatened or called unto. A new subject is here begun, though a short one.

[which] make a noise like the noise of the seas; in a storm, when they foam and rage, and overflow the banks; this may refer both to the noise made by the march of such a vast army, the rattling of their armour and chariot wheels, and prancing of their horses; and to the hectoring, blustering, and blasphemous speeches of Sennacherib and Rabshakeh:

and to the rushing of nations, or "rushing nations",

[that] make a rushing like the rushing of mighty, waters; which denotes the fury and force with which they come, threatening to bear down all before them, as an inundation of water does.

Isaiah 17:13

Ver. 13. The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters,.... With great force and noise, and run over the whole land, as the Assyrian army did, until it came to Jerusalem, and there it stopped; see **Isa 8:7**:

but [God] shall rebuke them; as he did the waters of the Red Sea, Ps 106:9 and as Christ rebuked the winds and sea, and made a calm, **Mt 8:26**. The word "God" is not in the text, but rightly supplied; for as none but he can rebuke the mighty waters of the sea, so none but he could have destroyed such an army in the manner it was, and wrought such a salvation for his people. The phrase, is expressive both of his wrath and power.

And they shall flee afar off; from Jerusalem to Nineveh, reckoned to be six hundred and eighty four miles from thence: or, "he shall flee afar off" {x}; that is, Sennacherib, and the few that escaped with him, for, his army was destroyed; see 2Ki 19:36:

and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind; chaff upon the floor is easily chased away with the fan, and much more easily chaff upon the mountains with the wind; it was usual with the Jews to thresh their corn, and winnow it on hills and mountains, to which the allusion is; see **2Ch 3:1** or "the dust of the mountains", as some {y} render it, which is more exposed to the wind than that in the valleys. Kings and great men of the earth are but as dust with God; and the higher they are, or they exalt themselves, the more they are exposed to the power of his wrath, and as easily cast down as the dust is scattered by the wind:

and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind; or "like a wheel" {z}, as the word is sometimes rendered; or any round thing, as a round wisp of straw or stubble, which is easily and swiftly moved and rolled along, especially by a strong wind. Jarchi interprets it of the flower of thorns; that is, the down of the thistle, which, when blown off, rolls up, and, being exceeding light, is carried away at once; see
Ps 83:13 all which shows what poor light things the greatest of men are in the hands of God, and with what ease he can chase them from place to place, and out of the world, when it is his pleasure.

{x} qxrmm onw "fugiet de procul", Vatablus. {y} Myrh Uwmk "velut, pulvis montium", Tigurine version. {z} lglg "sicut rota". Junius & Tremellius; "tanquam glomus [stipularum]", Piscator.

Isaiah 17:14

Ver. 14. And behold at eveningtide trouble,.... Or terror {a} and consternation;

which some understand of that which was in the Assyrian army, when the Angel of the Lord destroyed it, taking "evening for night", for it was in the night that that was done; so Jarchi interprets it of Shedim, a sort of spirits or demons, that came against the enemy, and troubled and frightened them: but it is best to take it in the more common sense, of the trouble that Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem were in, on the evening or night before their deliverance; the whole land of Judea round about them being laid waste, their city besieged by a powerful army, and the enemy blaspheming, blustering, and triumphing:

[and] before the morning he [is] not; Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, he was not before Jerusalem, he was fled: or "it was not" {b}; the Assyrian army was not, it was destroyed by an angel in the night, and in the morning were all dead corpses, 2Ki 19:35 or trouble was not, that was all over, joy came in the morning; see Ps 30:5:

this [is] the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us; these are the words of the prophet, and of the people of God, he represents, making observation upon, and use of the above dispensation, though not confining it to that; and their meaning is, that this is not the case of these Assyrians only, but of all the enemies of God's people, who, sooner or later, come to destruction; and which is not by chance, but by the appointment and disposition of God, who allots and portions out ruin unto them, as the just reward of their works; see Job 20:29.

{a} hhlb "terror", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {b} wnnya "non ipsa", Montanus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 18

This chapter is a prophecy of the desolation of a land or country, described by the wings with which it was shaded, and by the rivers by which it was situated, Isa 18:1 by its messengers and message to another nation, which is also described, Isa 18:2 all the nations of the world are called upon to observe the judgment about to be inflicted on it, Isa 18:3 and a promise is made, that at the same time God will take up his rest and dwelling among his own people, and refresh and protect them, Isa 18:4 and the time, and manner, and nature of the destruction of the people before threatened, are metaphorically expressed, Isa 18:5 and the issue of all will be the glory of God, since these people will be brought, in after times, as a present to him in Mount Zion, Isa 18:7.

Ver. 1. Woe to the land shadowing with wings,.... Or, "O land", as calling to it; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi. It is very difficult to determine what land is here meant: some think the land of Assyria is here designed, as Aben Ezra and others, and so it is a continuation of the prophecy concerning the destruction of the Assyrians, in the three last verses of the preceding chapter Isa 17:12; the stretching out of whose wings is mentioned, **Isa 8:8** and thought to be referred to here; others are of opinion that the land of Judea is intended, which trusted under the shadow of the wings of Egypt and Ethiopia, to whom the characters in the next verse Isa 18:2 are supposed to belong: but the more generally received sense is, that either Egypt or Ethiopia themselves are pointed at, described as "shadowing with wings"; not with the wings of birds, as Jarchi interprets it, which flocked thither in great numbers, the country being hot, and so shaded it with their wings; but rather with mountains, with which Ethiopia, at least some part of it, was encompassed and shaded; or else with ships, whose sails are like wings, and which resorting hither, in numerous fleets of them, and hovering about their coasts and ports, seemed to shadow them; to which agrees the Septuagint version, "Woe to the land, the wings of ships!" and so the Targum,

"Woe to the land to which they come in ships from a far country, whose sails are stretched out, as an eagle that flies with its wings;"

so Manasseh Ben Israel {c} renders them,

"Woe to the land, which, under the shadow of veils, falls beyond the rivers of Ethiopia."

The word translated "shadowing" is used for a cymbal, **2Sa 6:5**
Ps 150:5 and so it is rendered here in the Vulgate Latin version, "Woe to the land, with the cymbal of wings": and some think the "sistrum", is meant, which was a musical instrument used by the Egyptians in their worship of Isis; and which had wings to it, or had transverse rods in the middle of it, which looked like wings, one of which may be seen in Pignorius {d}; and so it describes the land of Egypt, famous for its winged cymbals. Minucius Felix {e} makes mention of the swallow along with the sistrum, which was a bird of Isis; and which some say was placed over the statue of Isis, with its wings stretched out.

Which [is] beyond the rivers of Ethiopia; the principal of which were Astaboras and Astapus {f}, and also Nile itself, which came out of Ethiopia into Egypt: or, "which is on this side of the rivers of Ethiopia" {g}; and so may intend Egypt, which bordered on this side of it towards Judea; or, "which is beside the rivers of Ethiopia" {h}; and so may denote Ethiopia itself, situated by these rivers. The Targum renders it,

"the rivers of Judea."

Some would have it, that the rivers of Arabia Chusaea are meant, which, lay between Judea and Egypt, as Besor, Rhinocorura, Trajan, and Corys; and Arabia seems rather to be meant by "Cush", than Ethiopia in Africa, since that lay beyond the rivers of Egypt, rather than Egypt beyond the rivers of Ethiopia.

{c} Spes Israelis, sect. 17. p. 57. {d} Mensa Isiaca, p. 67. {e} Octav. p. 21. {f} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 9. Ptolem. Geograph. 1. 4. c. 8. {g} vwk yrhnl rbem rva "quae est citra flumina Cuscheae", Vitringa. So some in Gataker. {h} "Quae est secundum flumina Aethiopiae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 18:2

Ver. 2. That sendeth ambassadors by the sea,.... The Red Sea, which washed the coasts of Egypt and Ethiopia, and which were united into one kingdom under Sabacus, or So the Ethiopian, called king of Egypt, 2Ki 17:4 and this kingdom, or rather the king of it, is here described as sending ambassadors by sea to foreign courts, to make leagues and alliances, and thereby strengthen himself against attempts made on him; though some understand it of one part of Ethiopia, on one side of the Red Sea, sending to that on the other side; and some of Tirhakah the Ethiopian sending messengers to the king of Assyria to bid him defiance, and let him know he intended to fight him; and at the same time sent to the Jews, that they might depend upon his protection and help, Isa 37:9 some understand this of the Egyptians sending to the Ethiopians, to let them know of the Assyrian expedition; and others, of their sending to the Jews, with the promise of a supply; and the word for "ambassadors" signifying "images", Isa 45:16 some have thought it is to be understood of carrying the head of Osiris, and the image of Isis, from place to place, in proper vessels:

even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters; or, "upon the face of the waters" {i}; where these light vessels floated without sinking, not drawing the quantity of waters as vessels of wood did. Both the Egyptians and Ethiopians had ships made of the "papyrus" {k}, or "biblus" {l}, a sort of rush, that grew upon the banks of the Nile, and which were light, and moved swiftly, and were also safest; there was no danger of their being broken to pieces, as other vessels, on shelves, and rocks, and in waterfalls: yea, Pliny {m} says, that the Ethiopian ships were so made, as to fold up and be carried on their shoulders, when they came to the cataracts.

[Saying], go, ye swift messengers; the word "saying" is not in the text, nor is it to be supplied; for these are not the words of the nation before described, sending its messengers to another nation after described, either the Jews or the Assyrians; but they are the words of God to his messengers, angels or men, who were swift to do his will, whom he sends to denounce or inflict judgment upon the same nation that is before mentioned, with which agrees Eze 30:9:

to a nation scattered; that dwelt in towns, villages, and houses, scattered about here and there; or who would be scattered and dissipated by their enemies: or, "drawn out", and spread over a large tract of ground, as Ethiopia was:

and peeled; of their hair, as the word signifies; the Ethiopians, living in a hot country, had very little hair upon their bodies. Schultens {n}, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, renders it,

"a nation strong and inaccessible:"

to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; for their black colour and grim looks, especially in some parts; and for the vast armies they brought into the field, as never were by any other people; see
2Ch 12:3 and they might well be said to be so from the beginning, since Nimrod, the mighty hunter, was the son of Cush, from whence the Ethiopians have the name of Cushites, and is the name Ethiopia is called by in the preceding verse Isa 18:1:

a nation meted out, and trodden down: to whom punishment was measured by line, in proportion to their sins, and who in a little time would be trodden under foot by their enemies:

whose land the rivers have spoiled: which must not be understood literally of Niger and Nilus, of Astapus and Astaboras, which were so far from spoiling the land, that it was much more pleasant and fruitful for them; but figuratively, of powerful princes and armies, that should come into it, and spoil and plunder it; see **Isa 8:7**. Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of the kings of the nations of the world; and so the Targum,

"whose land the people spoil."

Some understand all this of the Assyrians, whose army was now scattered, and its soldiers exhausted, who had been from the beginning of their monarchy very terrible to their neighbours, but now marked for destruction; and whom the Ethiopians, who dwelt by the rivers, despised, as some render the words: and others interpret them of the Jews, as overrun by the Assyrian army like a mighty river, by whom they were scattered, and peeled, and spoiled, and plundered; who from their beginning had been very terrible, because of the wonderful things wrought for them at the Red Sea, in the wilderness, and in the times of Joshua and the judges; and because of the dreadful punishments inflicted on them; but the first sense is best. Vitringa interprets all this of the Egyptians, whose country was drawn out or long, their bodies peeled or shaved; a people terrible to their neighbours, and very superstitious; a nation of line and line, or of precept and precept.

{i} Mym ynp le "super facies aquarurum", Montanus. {k} Hence papurina skafh, paper skiffs, in Plutarch, de Is. et Osir. and ploia kalamina, ships of reeds which the Indians made and used, as Herodotus relates, l. 3. sive Thalia, c. 98. and so Diodorus Siculus speaks of ships made of a reed in India, of excellent use, because they are not liable to be eaten by worms, Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 104. to the Egyptian vessels of this kind Lucan has respect when he says, "-----Sic cum tenet omnia Nilus, Conficitur bibula Memphitis cymba papyro. Pharsal. l. 4.

{l} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 22. & l. 13. 11. Heliodor. l. 10. c. 4. p. 460. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 9. {n} Animadv, Philol. in Job, p, 108.

Isaiah 18:3

Ver. 3. All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth,.... All the men of the world are here called upon, either by the Lord, or rather by the prophet, to be eye and ear witnesses of the judgment that should be inflicted upon the above nation, and of the salvation of his own people; which should be so manifest, that all should see it as easily as an ensign set up on a mountain;

and the news of it should ring through the earth, and be as plainly heard as when a trumpet is blown: unless it should be thought that these are the words of the messengers sent to the above nation, addressing them in such terms, assuring them, that, however stupid and secure they were now, they should quickly see the sign and hear the alarm of war; it being usual to call any large kingdom the world, and the earth:

see ye, when be lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; or ye shall see this as clearly as when a flag is set up on a mountain; or ye shall be sensible of this judgment coming on, when a standard shall be set up on the mountains, to gather the people to war. Vitringa interprets this of the mountains of Judea, where the Assyrians would set up their banners, and blow their trumpets, as follows:

and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye; or, "ye shall hear"; the trumpet sounding as an alarm of war, by which the people will be summoned, and come to execute the judgment threatened. The Targum is,

"ye shall hear the redemption;"

that is, of Israel, in the times of the Messiah, and in the war of Gog and Magog; of which times Jarchi and Kimchi interpret this whole prophecy.

Isaiah 18:4

Ver. 4. For so the Lord said unto me,.... The prophet Isaiah, both what goes before, and follows after:

I will take my rest; these are not the words of the prophet, as some think, like those of Habakkuk, **Hab 2:1** but of the Lord himself, signifying that he would, as he always did, enjoy himself, amidst all the commotions that were in the world; or that he would take up his rest among his people in Zion, of which he had said, this is my rest for ever, Ps 132:14 or rather that he would be still and quiet, and as one asleep and at rest, that took no notice of what was doing, nor interpose between parties preparing for war, and laying schemes for the ruin of each other; not help the one nor hinder the other, but let them go on a while with their designs:

and I will consider in my dwelling place: in heaven, what is to be done; for though the Lord may seem sometimes to take no notice of what is done on earth, yet he sees and knows all things, and considers in his own mind what is fit and proper that he should do, who works all things after the counsel of his own will: or, "I will look upon my dwelling place" {o}; Jerusalem, Mount Zion, the temple, the sanctuary, where his Shechinah dwelt; here he promises to look in a way of grace and favour, with delight and pleasure, to comfort and refresh his own people; so the Targum paraphrases this and the preceding clause,

"I will make my people to rest, I will make them to rest, and I will delight in my holy habitation to do them good:"

like a clear heat upon herbs; or "after rain", as Aben Ezra and Kimchi, see 2Sa 23:4 when then the sun shines forth brightly after a shower of rain, which revives the plants and herbs, and makes them grow:

[and] like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest; which is very desirable and welcome, which cools the air, refreshes the earth, plumps the corn, and is very grateful to the harvestman; and both metaphors may signify how grateful is the appearance of God to and for his people, his presence with them, the light of his countenance on them, and his protection of them; see **Isa 4:5** and so the Targum,

"blessings and consolations will I bring to them quickly, as heat burning by means of the sun, and as a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest:"

though the whole may be understood in a very different sense, as it is by some, thus; that though the Lord for a while may seem to take no notice of what is doing below, yet he in heaven beholds what is done, and looks in a way of wrath and anger upon his enemies, as the sun looks with its scorching heat upon the herbs, and dries them up; and as a cloud which brings a large dew or rain with it, which is very hurtful in harvest time; and this sense seems most agreeable to the context.

{o} wnwkmb hjybaw "sed intusor in locum meum", Janius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 18:5

Ver. 5. For afore the harvest,.... Or vintage: the above metaphor is carried on; before the designs and schemes of the people above described are ripe for execution, who promised themselves a large harvest of their neighbours:

when the bud is perfect; when the bud of the vine is become a perfect grape, though unripe; when the scheme was fully laid, and with perfect and consummate wisdom as imagined, though not brought into execution:

and the sour grape is ripening in the flower; things go on and promise well, as if the issue would be according to expectation, and there would be a good vintage. The sour grape may denote the temper and disposition of the above people against their enemies, their ill nature, and enmity to them; or the sins and transgressions, for which the judgment denounced came upon them:

he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away [and] cut down the branches; as the vinedresser; or rather as one that has no good will to the vine, cuts it with pruning hooks, not to make it better, but worse, and cuts off, not the dead withered and useless parts of it, but the sprigs that have buds and flowers, or unripe grapes, upon them, and even whole branches that have clusters on them, and takes them and casts them away, to be trodden under foot, or cast into the fire; so the Lord, or the king of Assyria, the instrument in the hand of God, should cut off the Ethiopians, or the Egyptians, with the sword, both small and great, when their enterprise should fail, and their promised success: or this is to be understood of the destruction of Sennacherib's army by the angel, when he was full of expectation of taking Jerusalem, and plundering that rich city. Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of the destruction of the armies of Gog and Magog. The Targum is,

"and he shall kill the princes of the people with the sword, and their mighty ones he shall remove and cause to pass over."

Isaiah 18:6

Ver. 6. They shall be left, together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth,.... That is, both sprigs and branches; with the fruit of them, which being unripe, are disregarded by men, but fed upon by birds and beasts; the fruits by the former, and the tender sprigs and green branches by the latter; signifying the destruction of the Ethiopians or Egyptians, and that the princes and the people should fall together, and lie unburied, and become a prey to birds and beasts; or the destruction of the Assyrian army slain by the angel, as Aben Ezra and others; though some interpret it of the army of Gog and Magog, as before observed; see Eze 39:17:

and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them; not that the one should feed upon them in the summer time, and the other in the winter; the fowls in the summer time, when they fly in large flocks, and the beasts in the winter, when they go together in great numbers, as Kimchi; but the sense is, that the carnage should be so great, there would be sufficient for them both, all the year long.

Isaiah 18:7

Ver. 7. In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts,.... Not exactly at the time when this destruction should be, but some time after, even in Gospel times; for to them this part of the prophecy refers:

of a people scattered and peeled; this explains what the present is, that shall be brought to the Lord; it is a people, and therefore not the spoils of Sennacherib's army, as some interpret it; nor yet the people of the Jews, that shall be brought by the Gentiles out of all nations in the latter day, as an offering to the Lord, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; see Isa 11:11 {p}; but the Ethiopians or Egyptians, described Isa 18:2 as here, who, being converted, shall stretch out their hands to God, submit unto him, and present themselves soul and body as an acceptable sacrifice unto him; when these prophecies in Ps 68:31 shall be fulfilled, and which began to be in the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, **Ac 8:27** and of which there were other instances in the times of the apostles, and in following ages:

and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; that is, some of the people, not all of them; the same people are designed as before, only this Hebraism is used, to show a distinction among them:

a nation meted out, and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled; these descriptive characters, with those in the preceding clauses, are retained, to show that the same people are here meant as in Isa 18:2 and to magnify the riches of God's grace, in the conversion of a people to whom such characters belonged; which show that it was not owing to themselves, or any deserts of theirs, but to the free favour and good will of God:

to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion; hither the present was to be brought, and here the persons to present themselves to the Lord, even in the mount Zion, the church of God; where the name of the Lord is named and called upon, his word is preached, his ordinances are administered, and where he dwells, and grants his presence.

{p} So Manasseh ben Israel, Spes. Israelis, sect. 17. p. 57.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 19

This chapter contains prophecies of various calamities that should come upon Egypt in a short time, and of the conversion of many of them to Christ in Gospel times. The calamities are many; the Lord's coming unto them, which their gods cannot prevent, nor stand before, nor save them, and at which the hearts of the Egyptians are dispirited,
Isa 19:1 civil wars among themselves, Isa 19:2 want of counsel, which sends them to idols and wizards, but in vain,
Isa 19:3 subjection to a cruel lord, Isa 19:4 drying up of their rivers and waters, so that the paper reeds wither, and fishes die; and hence no business for fishermen, nor for workers in flax, or weavers of nets, Isa 19:5 the stupidity of their princes and wise counsellors, given up by the Lord to a perverse spirit, so that they concerted wrong measures, and deceived the people,
Isa 19:11 a general consternation among them, because of the hand and counsel of the Lord; and because of the Lord's people, the Jews, who were a terror to them, Isa 19:16 and then follows the prophecy of their conversion in later times, which is signified by their speaking the language of Canaan, and swearing to the Lord,
Isa 19:18 by their erecting an altar, and a pillar to the Lord, which should be a sign and witness to him; and by their crying to him, and his sending them a Saviour, and a great one, Isa 19:19 by his being known unto them, by their offering sacrifice to him, and by his smiting and healing them Isa 19:21 and the chapter is concluded with a prophecy of that harmony, and agreement, and fellowship, that shall be between Jew and Gentile, between Egypt, Assyria, and Israel; and that the blessing of God should be upon them all, Isa 19:23.

Ver. 1. The burden of Egypt;.... Or a prophecy concerning Egypt, as the Arabic version; a very grievous one, declaring many calamities that should come upon them. The Targum is,

"the burden of the cup of cursing, to make the Egyptians drink."

The people of the Jews reposed great confidence in the Egyptians their allies; wherefore, in order to break this confidence, it was necessary they should be acquainted with the destruction that was coming upon them, which is the design of this prophecy.

Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud: or a "light" one {q} denoting the speed with which he came, he would come quickly, light clouds move swiftly; the suddenness and unexpectedness of his coming, clouds being rarely seen in Egypt, where was no rain; and the irresistible power with which he would come, for who or what can stop the clouds of heaven? not anything on earth, not armies, nor castles, and fortified places. The Lord is represented as riding in great state and majesty, as a general at the head of his army against his enemies; or as a judge going to try and condemn criminals; he rides upon the heavens, walks on the wings of the wind, and the clouds are his chariot, Ps 68:4 so Christ is represented as coming in the clouds of heaven, and as sitting on a white cloud, when he shall come to judge the world, **Re 1:7** though these words are not to be understood of that coming of his; and much less of his first coming in the flesh, to which they are weakly applied by Jerom and others; who, by the light cloud, understand the Virgin Mary, as the Christians of Syria; or the human nature of Christ, as Salmero, who relates, that upon Christ's flight into Egypt, and entering into Heliopolis, and the temple there, in which were as many idols as days of the year, they all fell, and so this prophecy was fulfilled {r} but of the Lord's coming to inflict punishment on the Egyptians; so the Targum,

"and, behold, the Lord shall be revealed in the cloud of his glory, to take vengeance on the Egyptians:"

and shall come into Egypt; not by Sennacherib king of Assyria, and his army, whom he should send to invade it, and enter into it, as some think; but rather by Cambyses and Ochus, kings of Persia; though it seems that what is here foretold should be done, was done, not by means of any foreign power, but by the Lord himself, who did by his own power and providence, or suffer to be done, what was done:

and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence; or tremble before him; these were many, the chief of them were Osiris and Isis, Apis, Serapis, Vulcan, Bubastis, &c.; some were living creatures, as cats, dogs, oxen, sheep, &c. who might move and tremble, in a literal sense; and some were images, "made with hands", as the Septuagint here render the word; and which, as the Targum paraphrases it, should "be broken"; the sense is, that they could none of them save the Egyptians, or deliver them out of their distresses:

and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it; like wax before the fire; even the most courageous among them, their soldiers, their army, with their officers and generals; which were the heart of the people, and their defence, and who used to fight for them, and protect them, but now would be dispirited.

{q} lq be le "super nubem levem", V. L. Pagninus, &c. {r} Vid. Hackspan. Not. Philolog. in S. Scrip. par. 584.

Isaiah 19:2

Ver. 2. And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians,.... Or mingle and confound them together; in which confusion they should fall upon and destroy one another, as the Midianites did: the phrase is expressive of rebellions and civil wars, as the following words explain it; and which show, that the calamities of Egypt should be brought upon them, not by means of a foreign invasion, but by internal quarrels, and other means, which the Lord would in judgment send among them:

and they shall fight everyone against his brother, and everyone against his neighbour; and destroy one another:

city against city; of which there were great numbers in Egypt; in the times of Amasis, it is said {s}, there were twenty thousand:

[and] kingdom against kingdom; for though Egypt was but originally one kingdom, yet upon the death of Sethon, one of its kings, who had been a priest of Vulcan, there being no successor, twelve of the nobility started up, and set up themselves as kings, and divided the kingdom into twelve parts {t}, and reigned in confederacy, for the space of fifteen years; when, falling out among themselves, they excluded Psammiticus, one of the twelve, from any share of government; who gathering an army together, fought with and conquered the other eleven, and seized the whole kingdom to himself, and who seems afterwards regarded in this prophecy; all this happened in the times of

Manasseh king of Judah, and so in or quickly after Isaiah's time: though some understand this of the civil wars between Apries and Amasis, in the times of Nebuchadnezzar. The Septuagint version renders the phrase here, "nome against nome"; for the whole land of Egypt, by Sesostris, one of its kings, was divided into thirty six {u} nomes, districts, or provinces, whose names are given by Herodotus {w}, Pliny {x}, and others; for so the words of that version should be rendered, and not as they are by the Latin interpreter, and in the Arabic version, which follows it, "law upon law".

{s} Herodot. l. 2. c. 177. {t} Ib. c. 147. {u} There were ten of them in Thebais, the same number in Delta, and sixteen between them. {w} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 164, 165, 166. {x} Nat. Hist. I. 5. c. 9. Ptolem. Geograph. l. 4. c. 4. Strabo Geogr. l. 17. P. 541.

Isaiah 19:3

Ver. 3. And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof,.... Meaning not the spirit of valour and courage, that is expressed before, but of wisdom, prudence, and understanding; the wisdom of Egypt, in which Moses is said to be brought up, **Ac 7:22** was famous all the world over; hither men of learning, as the ancient philosophers, Pythagoras, Plato, and others, travelled, to improve in knowledge, and gain a larger acquaintance with things human and divine; it was the mother and mistress of the liberal arts and sciences; but now what was before like a river full of water, was about to be "emptied", and drained dry, as the word {y} used signifies:

and I will destroy the counsels thereof; or "swallow [them] up" {z}, so that they shall be no more seen, or take effect: this explains what is before meant by the spirit of Egypt, and which is further enlarged on, and illustrated in Isa 19:11,

and they shall seek to the idols; with which the land abounded, particularly to Osiris and Isis, to Apis, Latona, and others:

and to the charmers; that used incantations and spells; magicians and conjurers, that whispered and muttered; for the word used has the signification of speaking in a slow and drawling manner. The Targum renders it "witches"; but Jarchi takes it to be the name of an idol:

and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards;
See Gill on "Isa 8:19".

{y} hqbn "evacuabitur", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius. {z} elba "deglutiam", Montanus; "absorpsero", Junius & Tremellius; "absorbebo", Piscator.

Isaiah 19:4

Ver. 4. And the Egyptians will I give over into the hands of a cruel lord,.... Not of Sennacherib king of Assyria, which way go many interpreters, both Christian and Jewish, as Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi; nor of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, as in Jer 46:25 but either of the twelve tyrants that rose up after the death of Sethon above mentioned; for the word is in the plural number, "lords", though the adjective rendered "cruel" is singular; or else Psammiticus, the father of Pharaohnecho, that slew Josiah; and who conquered the other eleven tyrants, and ruled alone, for the space of fifty four years, with great rigour; and the same is designed in the next clause:

and a fierce king shall rule over them; it is reported of Psammiticus, that he gave such offence to his subjects, that two hundred thousand of his soldiers left him, and went into Ethiopia {a}. Vitringa interprets this of the Persian emperors, into whose hands Egypt fell, as Cambyses and Ochus; and who, according to historians, were very cruel princes. That there might be no doubt of the sure and certain accomplishment of this prophecy, it is added,

saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts; of the armies above and below; and who does what he pleases among the kings and kingdoms of the earth.

{a} See Raleigh's History of the World, B. 2. c. 27. sect. 3. p. 357.

Isaiah 19:5

Ver. 5. And the waters shall fail from the sea,.... Which Kimchi understands figuratively of the destruction of the Egyptians by the king of Assyria, compared to the drying up of the waters of the Nile; and others think that the failure of their trade by sea is meant, which brought great revenues into the kingdom: but, by what follows, it seems best to take the words in a literal sense, of the waters of the river Nile, which being dried up, as in the next clause, could not empty themselves into the sea, as they used, and therefore very properly may be said to fail from it; nay, the Nile itself may be called a sea, it being so large a confluence of water:

and the river shall be wasted and dried up; that is, the river Nile, which was not only very useful for their trade and navigation, but the fruitfulness of the country depended upon it; for the want of rain, in the land of Egypt, was supplied by the overflow of this river, at certain times, which brought and left such a slime upon the earth, as made it exceeding fertile; now the drying up of this river was either occasioned by some great drought, which God in judgment sent; or by the practices of some of their princes with this river, by which it was greatly impaired, and its usefulness diminished.

Isaiah 19:6

Ver. 6. And they shall turn the rivers far away,.... The river Nile, called "rivers", the plural for the singular, because of the abundance of water in it; or its seven streams, with other rivulets, derived from it. Some make the "they" here to refer to the kings of Egypt, and interpret the words of some projects of theirs, by which the course of the river was turned to great disadvantage; particularly they understand it of the twelve tyrants that reigned after Sethon, to whom they ascribe the digging of the vast lake of Moeris, the two pyramids built in the midst of it, and a labyrinth near it, though only the labyrinth was made by them {b}; and as for the lake, it was made by Moeris, a king of Egypt, from whom it had its name, some hundred years before; and, besides, was of service, and not disservice, to the Nile; for it received its waters when it overflowed too much, and it furnished it with water by an outlet when it failed: rather therefore this passage may be illustrated by the attempt which Necus, the son of Psammiticus, whom the Scripture calls Pharaohnecho, made, to join the Nile and the Red Sea together, by making a canal from the one to the other; in which work he lost a hundred and twenty thousand men, and desisted from it without finishing it {c}; but it is thought hereby the river was greatly weakened:

[and] the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up; as the river of Nile and its streams were the defence of the land of Egypt, as well as made for the fruitfulness of it, for these must make it less accessible to a foreign enemy; and besides, here lay their shipping, which were their protection; and moreover,

from hence brooks and courses of water might be derived and carried about their fortified cities, which added to the strength of them. The Targum renders it deep brooks or rivers; and Kimchi interprets it the brooks of Egypt, taking Matzor to signify Egypt, a word in sound near to Mitzraim, the common word used for Egypt. It looks, by this and other expressions in the context, as if more were designed than the above instance or instances will account for:

the reeds and flags shall wither; which grew in the brooks, and near them; and therefore much more the grass and corn, and other trees, which were at a distance; besides, these are mentioned, bemuse of the great usefulness they were of; for of these they made ships, barks, and boats, and mats for bedding, and nets fishing; as also paper to write on, as follows, and which was a staple commodity with them;
See Gill on "Isa 18:2".

{b} Herodot. l. 2. c. 148, 149. {c} Ib. c. 158.

Isaiah 19:7

Ver. 7. The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks,.... Not at the fountain or origin of the Nile and its streams, but by the sides thereof; on the banks of which grew a reed or rush, called by the Greeks "papyrus" and "biblus"; from whence come the words "paper" and "bible", or book, of which paper was anciently made; even as early as the times of Isaiah, and so, many hundreds of years before the times of Alexander the great, to which some fix the era of making it.

"According to Pliny {d}, its root is of the thickness of a man's arm, and ten cubits long; from this arise a great number of triangular stalks, six or seven cubits high, each thick enough to be easily spanned. Its leaves are long, like those of the bulrush; its flowers stamineous, ranged in clusters at the extremities of the stalks; its roots woody and knotty, like those of rushes; and its taste and smell near akin to those of the cyprus.----The manner of making the Egyptian paper was this: they began with lopping off the two extremes of the "papyrus", viz. the head and root, as of no use in this manufacture; the remaining stem they slit lengthwise, into equal parts; and from each of these they stripped the thin scaly coats, or pellicles, whereof it was composed, with a point of a penknife (or needle, as some); the innermost of these pellicles were looked on as the best, and those nearest the rind or bark the worst; they were kept apart accordingly, and constituted different sorts of paper. As the pellicles were taken off, they extended them on a table; then two or more of them were laid over each other transversely, so as that their fibres made right angles; in this state they were glued together by the muddy waters of the Nilus. These being next pressed to get out the water, then dried, and lastly flatted and smoothed, by beating them with a mallet, constituted paper; which they sometimes polished further, by rubbing it with a hemisphere of glass, or the like. There were paper manufactures in divers cities of Egypt; but the greatest and most celebrated was that at Alexandria, where, according to Varro's account, paper was first made. The trade and consumption of this commodity were in reality incredible. Vopiscus relates, that the tyrant Firmus, who rebelled in Egypt, publicly declared he would maintain an army only, "papyro et glutine", with paper and glue {e}."

So that the withering and drying up of these paper reeds, here threatened, must be a great calamity upon the nation. And, besides paper, of this rush or reed were made sails, ropes, and other naval rigging, as also mats, blankets, clothes, and even ships were made of the stalk of the papyrus; and the Egyptian priests wore shoes made of it {f}. It may be observed, that paper was made of the pellicles or little skins stripped off of the inside of the stem of the papyrus; which shows with what propriety the word {g} for paper reeds is here used, which comes from a root which signifies to strip or make bare, and from which also is derived a word which signifies a skin.

And everything sown by the brooks shall wither, be driven away, and be no [more]; all sorts of fruitful plants, and grain of every kind, hemp and flax, after mentioned, and which are opposed to reeds and rushes, which grew of themselves; and if these which were sown by the sides of brooks and rivers withered and came to nothing, then much more what was sown at a greater distance.

{d} Nat Hist. l. 13. c. 11. {e} Chambers's Cyclopaedia, in the word "Paper". {f} Herodot, Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 37. {g} twre "ad" hre "nudari, inde" rwe "pellis".

Isaiah 19:8

Ver. 8. The fishers also shall mourn,.... Because there will be no fish to catch, the waters of the river being dried up, and so will have none to sell, and nothing to support themselves and families with; and this must also affect the people in general, fish being the common food they lived upon, see Nu 11:5, not only because of the great plenty there usually was, but because they killed and ate but very few living creatures, through a superstitious regard unto them; though Herodotus says {h} the Egyptian priests might not taste of fishes, yet the common people might; for, according to that historian {i}, when the river Nile flowed out of the lake of Moeris, a talent of silver every day was brought into the king's treasury, arising from the profit of fish; and when it flowed in, twenty pounds; nay, he expressly says {k}, that some of them live upon fish only, gutted, and dried with the sun:

and all they that cast angle, or hook,

into the brooks shall lament; which describes one sort of fishermen, and way of catching fishes, with the angle and hook, as the following clause describes another sort:

and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish; be dispirited and enfeebled for want of trade and subsistence, and with grief and horror.

{h} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 37. {i} Ibid. c. 149. {k} Ibid. c. 92.

Isaiah 19:9

Ver. 9. Moreover they that work in fine flax,.... Of which they made fine linen cloth, and yarn, and was much wore by the Egyptians, and was the commodity of the country, and for which other nations traded with them, 1Ki 10:28 but now would have no flax to work, that being withered and gone which was sown by the sides of the brooks, Isa 19:7 and no linen cloth or yarn to sell, and consequently in great confusion and distress, as they are here represented {l}. The Targum renders the whole verse thus,

"they shall be confounded which work flax, which they comb, and of it weave nets;"

and so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it, not of persons that wrought in flax, to make yarn or linen of it; but who combed it, to make nets of it, as follows:

and they that weave networks shall be confounded: because they would have no sale for their nets, the fishermen having no use for them, the rivers being dried up. The word for "networks" signifies "holes", because nets are made with holes large enough to let the water through, and so small that the fishes may not get out. Some render the word "white works" {m}, white linen, white cloth, of which white garments are made, such as nobles and princes formerly wore; hence, in the Hebrew language, they are called by a name of the same root and signification; but the former sense seems best.

{l} twqyrv is by us rendered "fine"; and so, Ben Melech says, in the Arabic language the best and finest linen is called qrvla; and so says Kimchi in Sepher Shorash.; with which Schindler agrees, Arab. qrvla, sericum or "muslin"; but it is a question whether this is of so early a date, and especially not fit to make nets of. De Dieu and Bochart think it denotes the colour of the linen, which was yellow, that being the best; but others render it "combed". {m} yrwx Mygrwaw "et textores alborum operum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 19:10

Ver. 10. And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof,.... Meaning either the persons that work in flax, or in making nets; who shall be disappointed in their views, expectations, and designs, in bringing them to a good market, since there will be no buyers. The word for "purposes" signifies foundations, as in Ps 11:3 and may design dams and banks, that are made to keep in the water, which shall be broken down, and be of no service to answer the end; but Kimchi observes, that the word in the Talmudic language signifies "nets", as it does {n}; and this seems to be most agreeable to the context; and then the words may be rendered, "and its nets shall be broken" {o}; shall lie and rot for want of use:

all that make sluices [and] ponds for fish; or, "all that make an enclosure of ponds of soul" {p}; or for delight and pleasure; that is, not only such shall be broken in their purposes, ashamed and confounded, and be dispirited, mourn and lament, whose business and employment it is to catch fish, or make nets for that end, and get their livelihood thereby; but even such who enclose a confluence of water, and make fishponds in their fields and gardens for their pleasure, will be disappointed; for their waters there will be dried up, and the fish die, as well as in the common rivers. The Septuagint version renders it, "and all they that make zythum shall grieve"; "zythum" was a sort of malt liquor of the ancients; and the word for "sluices" is of affinity with a word that is often used for strong drink; and so the Syriac version here, "and all they shall be humbled that make strong drink, for the drink of the soul;"

or for men to drink for pleasure.

{n} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 124. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 117. 1. {o} "Et erunt retia ejus contrita", Pagninus, Montanus. {p} vpn ymga rkv yvwe lk "omnes facientes clausuram stagnorum animae", Montanus.

Isaiah 19:11

Ver. 11. Surely the princes of Zoan [are] fools,.... Zoan was a very ancient city of Egypt, it was built within seven years of Hebron in the land of Judah, Nu 13:22 here it was that the Lord did those miracles, by the hands of Moses and Aaron, before Pharaoh and his people, in order to oblige him to let Israel go, Ps 78:12 by which it appears that it was then the royal city, as it seems to have been now; since mention is made of the princes of it, who usually have their residence where the court is. The Targum, Septuagint, and Vulgate Latin versions, call it Tanis, which was the metropolis of one of the nomes or provinces of Egypt, called from it the Tanitic nome {q}; near it was one of the gates of the Nile, which had from it the name of the Tanitic gate {r}; the princes of this place, the lords of this nome, though they had princely education, acted a foolish part, in flattering their sovereign, as afterwards mentioned, and in putting him upon doing things destructive to his kingdom and subjects:

the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish; the men of whose privy council were esteemed very wise, and greatly boasted of, and much confided in; and yet the counsel they gave him were such as made them look more like brutes than men:

how say ye unto Pharaoh; the then reigning prince, for Pharaoh was a name common to all the kings of Egypt. Some think their king Cethon is meant, said to be a very foolish king: others Psammiticus; which seems more likely; though there is no need to apply it to any particular king, they being used to say what follows to all their kings:

I [am] the son of the wise; suggesting that wisdom was natural and hereditary to him; though this may not merely respect his immediate ancestors, but remote ones, as Menes or Mizraim, the first king of Egypt, to whom is attributed the invention of arts and sciences; and his son Thoth, the same with Hermes, the Mercury of the Egyptians. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, make these words to be spoken by the wise counsellors of themselves, "we are the sons of wise men", and so the next clause; likewise Aben Ezra and Jarchi, also the Targum:

the son of ancient kings? according to these, it is spoken to Pharaoh thus, "and thou the son of kings of old"; of Ham, Mizraim, Thoth, &c.; the Egyptians boasted much of the antiquity of their kingdom and kings; and they say, from their first king Menes, to Sethon the priest of Vulcan, who lived about the time of this prophecy, were three hundred and forty one generations or ages of men, in which were as many kings and priests; and three hundred generations are equal to ten thousand years {s}; and so many years, and more, their kings had reigned down to the prophet's time; which was all vain boasting, there being no manner of foundation for it. Vitringa renders it the son of ancient counsellors; this, as the former, being spoken by the counsellors, not of Pharaoh, but themselves.

{q} Herodot. l. 2. c. 166. Plin. l. 5. c. 9. Ptolem. Geogr. l. 4. c. 5. {r} Ptolem. ib. Plin. l. 5. c. 10. {s} Herodot. l. 2. c. 142.

Isaiah 19:12

Ver. 12. Where [are] they? where [are] thy wise [men]?.... The magicians and soothsayers, the diviners and astrologers, who pretended, by their magic art and skill in judicial astrology, to foretell things to come: this is an address to the king of Egypt, who had such persons about him, and encouraged them, by consulting them on occasion, and rewarding them:

and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the Lord of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt; or, "against it"; let them tell, if they can, and make known unto thee the purposes of God's heart, the things he has resolved upon, even the calamities and punishments he will shortly inflict upon the Egyptians, of which he has given notice by his prophets.

Isaiah 19:13

Ver. 13. The princes of Zoan are become fools,.... Or infatuated, in their counsels to Pharaoh, and by giving heed to the magicians and diviners; See Gill on "Isa 19:11":

the princes of Noph are deceived; called Moph, in **Ho 9:6** where our translation renders it Memphis; and so do the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions here; the Arabic version has it Menphis; the Syriac version Mophis; and the Targum Mephes; the city of Memphis is no doubt intended, which was the chief of the first of the nomes or provinces of Egypt, from whence it was called Memphites: it was the metropolis of upper Egypt, and the seat of their kings and princes; it was built by their first king Menes {t}, or Mizraim, and had in it the famous temple of Vulcan; it continues to this day, and goes by the name of Alkair, or Grand Cairo:

they have also seduced Egypt; the princes of the above places, being deceived themselves by the diviners and astrologers, deceived the common people that inhabited the nomes and provinces where they dwelt; it being usual with such to follow their superiors in principle and practice:

[even they that are] the stay of the tribes thereof; or, "who are the corner of its tribes" {u}; meaning the nomes or provinces of Egypt, especially the Tanitic and Memphitic nomes, whose provinces are mentioned; these are called tribes by the prophet, in the language of the Jews, which land were divided into tribes, as the land of Egypt was divided into nomes; and about this time it was divided into twelve kingdoms, as Israel was into twelve tribes: now, the princes of these tribes and kingdoms, who should have been as cornerstones, to which civil magistrates are compared, see Ps 118:22 the stay and support of the people, and should have kept them right, these led them wrong, into mistakes and errors.

{t} Ib. (Herodot. l. 2.) c. 99. {u} hyjbv tnp "angulus [vel] tribuum ejus"; so some in Vatablus.

Isaiah 19:14

Ver. 14. The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof,.... A spirit of error, as the Targum, Septuagint, and Arabic versions; or of giddiness, as the Vulgate Latin: this he mingled in a cup for them, and poured it out, and gave them it to drink; and an intoxicating cup it was, such as men are made drunk with; to which the allusion is, as the last clause of the verse shows; so that the infatuation and want of wisdom in their counsels were from the Lord; who, because of the vain boasts of their wisdom in righteous judgment, gave them up to judicial blindness, stupidity, and folly:

and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof; both in religious and civil affairs, leading them into superstition and idolatry, to which they were of old inclined and addicted, and forming such schemes and projects, and putting them upon such works, as were very detrimental to the nation. Some think this refers to the twelve tyrants, who disagreeing among themselves, being actuated by a perverse spirit, greatly distracted the people; though rather it may refer to the times of Necho, and to his project in cutting a canal for the bringing of the Nile to the Red sea before mentioned, in which he lost several thousands of men without accomplishing it; and of his predecessor, in besieging Ashdod twenty nine years ere he took it {w}:

as a drunken [man] staggereth in his vomit; who is so very drunk, that his head is quite giddy, and cannot walk upright, but staggers as he goes, and vomits as he staggers, and falls down, and is rolled in it, as the Targum; just like such a man were the princes and governors of the Egyptian provinces.

{w} Herodot. l. 2. c. 157, 158.

Isaiah 19:15

Ver. 15. Neither shall there be [any] work for Egypt,.... No trade or business to carry on; their rivers being dried up, there was no flax to work with, and fine linen was a principal commodity of Egypt; nor any fish to catch, or rushes to make paper of, as before observed: or it would not be in the power of their hands to deliver themselves from the Assyrians that should come against them; and that they should be deprived of wisdom and counsel, and be at their wits' end, not knowing what to do, or what step to take:

which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do: high or low, strong or weak, all ranks and orders of men shall have nothing to do; all shall be weak and dispirited, and void of counsel. By the "head" and "branch" may be meant the king and his nobles; and by the "tail" and "rush" the common people; see **Isa 9:14**. The Targum interprets the whole of their chief men thus,

"and the Egyptians shall have no king to reign, nor prince, noble, governor, or ruler."

Jarchi explains it of the magicians, astrologers, and stargazers of Egypt, who, with all their boasted knowledge and wisdom, should not be able either to foresee or prevent the evil coming upon them.

Isaiah 19:16

Ver. 16. In that day shall Egypt be like unto women,.... Weak and feeble, as the Targum; fearful and timorous, even their military force; and devoid of wisdom, even their princes and nobles:

and it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of hosts, which he shaketh over it: which the Lord may be said to do, when he lifts up his rod, and holds it over a people, and threatens them with ruin and destruction; perhaps this may refer to what was done in Judea by Sennacherib's army, which was an intimation to the Egyptians that their turn was next; and if the shaking of the Lord's hand over a people is so terrible, what must the weight of it be? Some think there is an allusion to Moses's shaking his rod over the Red sea when the Egyptians were drowned, in which the hand or power of the Lord was so visibly seen, and which now might be called to mind. Ben Melech observes, that when one man calls to another, he waves his hand to him to come to him; so here it is as if the Lord waved with his hand to the enemy to come and fight against Egypt, which caused fear and dread.

Isaiah 19:17

Ver. 17. And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt,.... Not by reason of war breaking out between them, they being in strict alliance with each other at this time; but on account of what they should hear had befallen the land of Judea, and the cities of it, by the invasion of Sennacherib's army, which had taken and laid them waste; the tidings of which being brought them a panic would seize them, fearing that they should next fall a sacrifice to them, because of their alliance with them, and nearness to them, there being only the land of the Philistines between them and Egypt; and Judea being invaded and overrun, the way was open for the Assyrian army into their country; and besides they might reflect, that if the judgments of God fell so heavy on his own people, what might they not expect? and the rather, as they had been the means of drawing them into idolatry, which had provoked the Lord to come out against them; as well as at the remembrance of the injuries they had formerly done them. Jarchi and Kimchi understand this of the fall and ruin of Sennacherib's army, at the siege of Jerusalem, the rumour of which reaching, Egypt would fill them with terror; or as fearing that the hand of the Lord, which was seen in that affair, would be next lifted up against them; which sense is not probable; the former is best. The word used for terror signifies "dancing", such as is not through joy, but fear, see Ps 107:27:

everyone that maketh mention thereof; or calls to mind, or thinks of it, or speaks of it to others, what was done in the land of Judea by the Assyrian army:

shall be afraid in himself; that this will be their case quickly in Egypt:

because of the counsel of the Lord of hosts, which he hath determined against it; or "upon it", or "concerning it" {x}; meaning either Judea, which was known by the prophets he sent unto it; or Egypt, who might conclude this from what happened to a neighbouring nation.

{x} wyle ep' authn, Sept.; "supra eum", V. L.; "super eum", Pagninus, Montanus.

Isaiah 19:18

Ver. 18. In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt,.... Here opens a scene of mercy, a prophecy of good things to the Egyptians in future times; for this is not to be understood of the selfsame time, that the former calamities would come upon them; but of some time after that; and not of Egypt, spiritual or mystical, that is, Rome, or the antichristian jurisdiction, so called, Re 11:8 and of the five kingdoms that should revolt from it at the Reformation, as Cocceius thinks; who interprets the above prophecy of the antichristian state, and names the five kingdoms that should break off from it, and did; as Great Britain, the United States of Holland, Denmark and Norway, Swedeland, the people of Germany, and those near them, as Bohemia, Hungary, Transylvania, and Helvetia; but Egypt literally is here designed; and its five cities either intend just so many principal ones, as some think, namely, Memphis, Tanis, Alexandria, Bubastis, and Heliopolis; or rather it is a certain number for an uncertain; and to be understood either of many, as five out of six, since afterwards one is mentioned, as to be destroyed; or rather of a few, as five out of twenty thousand, for so many cities are said to have been in Egypt {y}; and so this number is used in Scripture for a few; see 1Co 14:19 and the prophecy respects the conversion of them, which some think was fulfilled in some little time after; either by some Jews fleeing to Egypt when Judea was invaded, and Jerusalem besieged by Sennacherib, who making known and professing the true religion there, were the means of converting many of the Egyptians; or, as the Jews {z} think, it had its accomplishment when Sennacherib's army was destroyed, and what remained of them, consisting of Egyptians and other people, were dismissed by Hezekiah, and being used kindly by him, embraced the true religion, and carried it with them into Egypt, and there professed and propagated it; but it seems most likely to refer to later times, the times of the Gospel, when it was carried and preached in Egypt by the Evangelist Mark, and others, to the conversion of them, which is expressed in the following words:

speak the language of Canaan; the Hebrew language, which continued from the time of the confusion in the posterity of Shem, and in the family of Heber, from whom Abraham descended; which was not the language of the old Canaanites, though that was pretty near it, but what the Jews now at this time spake, who dwelt in the land of Canaan: but though this language is here referred to, and might be learned, as it is where the Gospel comes, for the sake of understanding the Scriptures in the original; yet that is not principally meant, but the religion of the Christian and converted Jews; and the sense is, that the Egyptians, hearing and embracing the Gospel, should speak the pure language of it, and make the same profession of it, and with one heart and mouth with them glorify God, and confess the Lord Jesus: and when a sinner is converted, he speaks a different language than he did before; the language of Canaan is the language of repentance towards God, faith in Christ, love to them, and all the saints; it is self-abasing, Christ exalting, and free grace magnifying language; it is the language of prayer to God for mercies wanted, and of praise and thanksgiving for mercies received, and especially for Christ, and the blessings of grace in him; it is the language of experience, and what agrees with the word of God: and in common conversation it is different from others; not swearing, or lying, or filthiness, or foolish jesting, or frothy, vain, and idle talk, are this language; but what is savoury, and for the use of edifying:

and swear to the Lord of hosts; not by him, but to him, which sometimes is put for the whole of religious worship, **De 6:13** and signifies a bowing, a submission, and subjection to him; compare
Isa 45:23 with Ro 14:11 it is swearing allegiance to him, owning him to be

their Lord, King, and Lawgiver, and a resolution to obey him in all his commands and ordinances, see Ps 119:106:

one shall be called the city of destruction; not one of the five cities before mentioned; because all such as believe with the heart unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession agreeably to it, shall be saved; but the sense is, that one and all, and everyone of these cities, and all such persons in them as speak not the language of Canaan, who neither embrace the Gospel, nor become subject to Christ, shall be devoted to destruction: though there is a Keri and Cetib of these words; it is written "heres", destruction, but it is read "cheres", the sun; and there was a city in Egypt called Bethshemesh, the house of the sun, Jer 43:13 and by the Greeks Heliopolis {a}; and by the Latins Solis Oppidum {b}; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "and one shall be called the city of the sun"; that is, Heliopolis, where the sun was worshipped, and from whence it had its name; and so the words are a display of the grace of God, that in that city, which was the seat of idolatrous worship, there the sun of righteousness should arise, and there should be a number of persons in it that should profess his name. The Targum takes in both the writing and reading of this passage, and renders it,

"the city of Bethshemesh, which is to be destroyed, shall be called one of them."

{y} Herodot. l. 2. c. 177. {z} T. Bab. Menachot fol. 109. 2. and 110. 1. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 23. p. 66. {a} Herodot. l. 1. c. 3. 7. 8. 9. 59. 63. {b} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 9. and 6. 29.

Isaiah 19:19

Ver. 19. In that day there shall be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt,.... Josephus {c}, and other Jewish writers {d}, suppose this to be fulfilled when Onias, the son of Simeon the just, fled into Egypt, and obtained leave of Ptolemy king of Egypt, and Queen Cleopatra, to build a temple and an altar there, like those at Jerusalem, in order to draw the Jews thither, which was about six hundred years after this prophecy; and who did build both a temple and an altar in the nome of Heliopolis, about twenty three miles from the city of Memphis, and which continued three hundred and forty three years; but not a material altar is here meant, but a figurative and spiritual one, and no other than Christ, who is the altar that sanctifies every gift, and upon which the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise being offered up are acceptable to God. The phrase denotes a public profession of Christ, and a setting up of his worship; it is used in allusion to the patriarchs, who, wherever they came, set up an altar to the Lord, and worshipped him:

and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord; in like manner as the patriarchs used to do, Ge 28:18 it signifies not only that in the middle of the land, but upon the borders of it, the Christian religion should be embraced and professed; so that no sooner did a man step into it, but he should find that this was the religion professed there: it signifies that here would be placed ministers of the Gospel, who are as pillars to hold forth and support the doctrines of it; and a church state, which is the pillar and ground of it; and persons converted, that should be pillars in the house of God, that should never go out; see **Pr 9:1**.

{c} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 3. sect. 1. 3. & de Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 10. sect. 2, 3, 4. {d} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 109. 2.

Isaiah 19:20

Ver. 20. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt,.... This refers either to what goes before, that the altar and pillar were signs and witnesses that the Lord was believed in, professed, and worshipped there; or to what follows after, that the Lord's hearing the cries of men, and answering them, by sending a great Saviour to them, is a token and testimony for him of his great love unto them:

for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors; as men awakened and convinced do, feeling the oppressions of a guilty conscience, and a tempting devil, and an ensnaring wicked world:

and he shall send them a Saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them; this is Christ, whom God sent in the fulness of time to be the Saviour of lost sinners; and he is a "great" one indeed, the great God, and our Saviour, **Tit 2:13** who is the Son of God, the true God, and eternal life, who has all the perfections of deity in him; the Creator and Upholder of all things; and must have therefore great and sufficient abilities to save sinners to the uttermost; and those that come to God by him he does save and deliver from all their sins, and out of the hands of all their enemies, and from wrath, ruin, and destruction. Abarbinel {e} owns that the Messiah is here meant, as undoubtedly he is; and not the angel that destroyed Sennacherib's army, as Kimchi; for the text speaks not of the Jews, but of the Egyptians. Vitringa thinks that either Alexander, called the Great, or else Ptolemy the son of Lagus, who had the same epithet, and who was also called "Soter", the saviour, is here meant.

{e} Mashmiah Jeshua, fol. 13. 1.

Isaiah 19:21

Ver. 21. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt,.... The means of knowing him would be granted them; which were partly through the Bible being translated into the Greek language, at the request of Ptolemy king of Egypt, which was then understood in that country, and this was a considerable time before the coming of Christ; and chiefly through the Gospel being brought hither by the Evangelist Mark, and others, whereby many of them were brought to a spiritual, experimental, and evangelical knowledge of Christ:

and the Egyptians shall know the Lord; own and acknowledge him, profess faith in him, hope of happiness by him, love of him, and subjection to him, his Gospel and ordinances:

and shall do sacrifice and oblation; not such sacrifice and oblation as were enjoined by the ceremonial law, since those would be now abrogated; but the spiritual sacrifices of prayer, praise, and good works, and of the presentation of themselves, as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice to God, their reasonable service: under these ceremonial rites is signified the whole spiritual worship of the New Testament:

yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform [it]; lay themselves under obligation to serve the Lord, and act according to it; see **Ec 5:4** and this is to be understood not of legal vows, as that of the Nazarite, or any other, but of the spiritual one of praise and thanksgiving; see Ps 50:14.

Isaiah 19:22

Ver. 22. And the Lord shall smite Egypt,.... By one afflictive providence or another, which shall awaken them to a sense of sin and duty; or smite their consciences with convictions of sin, through the ministry of the word by his spirits:

he shall smite and heal [it]; or "smiting and healing" {f}; as he smites he shall heal, by an application of pardoning grace and mercy, by sprinkling the blood of Christ on their wounded consciences, and by pouring in the oil and wine of divine love into the wounds made by sin:

and they shall return, [even] to the Lord: by faith and repentance; or to his worship, as the Targum; by an obedience to his will, and shall cleave unto him:

and he shall be entreated of them, and he shall heal them; when wounded with a sense of sin, and pricked to the heart, they shall cry unto him, and entreat his pardoning grace and mercy, which, being applied to them, heals; for healing diseases and forgiving iniquities are one and the same thing; see Ps 103:3.

{f} awprw Pwgn "percutiendo et sanando", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Tigurine version.

Isaiah 19:23

Ver. 23. In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria,.... It signifies that there should be peace between them, all hostilities should cease, free trade and commerce with each other should be opened, and nothing should hinder communion with one another; which some think had some show of accomplishment in the times of Psammiticus; but it chiefly refers to Gospel times, and to the Christian communion between one nation and another, that receive the Gospel, though before implacable enemies, as the Egyptians and Assyrians were:

and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria: which is expressive of entire concord and harmony between them, such as was among the first Christians:

and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians; that is, the Lord, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; they shall both serve the Lord with one shoulder and consent, unite in prayer to the Lord, in hearing the word, and attending on other ordinances. Some render it, "the Egyptians shall serve the Assyrians" {g}; not as being their lords and masters in a servile way, but by love, as saints do or should serve one another, doing all kind offices of love to each other; see

Ga 5:13.

{g} rwva ta Myrum wdbew "et serviet Aegyptius Assyrio", Cocceius; "et servient Aegyptii ipsi Assur", Montanus.

Isaiah 19:24

Ver. 24. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria,.... There shall be a triple alliance between them; Jew and Gentile shall be made one, the middle wall of partition being broken down; yea, Israel, or the Jews, shall be the third, or the Mediator between them both, or the means of uniting the Gentiles together, since the Gospel of peace was to go out from them, as it did. Perhaps there may be an allusion to the situation of the land of Israel between Egypt and Assyria:

[even] a blessing in the midst of the land; or of the earth, the whole world, being the means of conveying the blessings of grace to the several nations of the world; the Messiah, in whom all nations are blessed, descending from them, and the Gospel being sent out from them unto all nations, which publishes the blessings of grace by Christ, and is the means both of the knowledge, application, and possession of them.

Isaiah 19:25

Ver. 25. Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless,.... Not only Israel, but Egypt and Assyria, even all his chosen ones, whether among Jews or Gentiles:

saying, blessed [be] Egypt my people; as they must needs be blessed who are the Lord's covenant people; for he being their covenant God, his blessing is upon them, even life for evermore; they are blessed with all the blessings of the covenant, even all the spiritual blessings which are in Christ; they are secure of his love, and may depend upon his power and protection; they are happy here, and will be so hereafter:

and Assyria the work of my hands; not as creatures only, but new creatures, having the good work of grace wrought in their hearts, of which God is the author; and therefore are called his workmanship, Eph 2:10 and who must be blessed, because, by this work of grace upon them, they appear to be the chosen of God, and precious, to be his children, and dear unto him, whom he will not forsake, and who are formed for himself, and for heaven, and happiness:

and Israel mine inheritance; chosen by him to be so, and given to Christ as such; and who must be happy, because, as they are the Lord's inheritance, portion, and peculiar treasure, so he has provided an inheritance for them, incorruptible, undefiled, which fades not away, reserved in the heavens. The Targum interprets all this of Israel, thus,

"blessed be my people, whom I brought out of Egypt; and because they sinned before me, I carried them captive into Assyria; and when they are turned, they are called my people, and mine inheritance, Israel."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 20

This chapter contains a prophecy of the destruction of the Egyptians and Ethiopians by the Assyrians, which had been prophesied of separately in the two preceding chapters Isa 18:1, and now conjunctly in this: the time of it is given, Isa 20:1 the sign of it, the prophet's walking naked, and barefoot, Isa 20:2 the explanation and accommodation of the sign to the captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia, Isa 20:3 the use of this to the Jews, and the effect it had upon them; shame for their trust and dependence on the above nations, and despair of deliverance from the Assyrians by their means,
Isa 20:5.

Ver. 1. In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod,.... Or Azotus, as the Septuagint here call it; and which is its name in the New Testament, See Gill on "Ac 8:40". This Tartan, or whom the Septuagint names Tanathan, and the Arabic version Tathan, was one of Sennacherib's generals, 2Ki 18:17:

(when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him); to the above place to besiege it. This Sargon is generally thought to be the same with Sennacherib, since Tartan was one of his generals, who might have more names than one. Jerom says he had seven; the Jewish Rabbins {h} eight; though some think a predecessor of his is meant, Shalmaneser; and others his son Esarhaddon, who in the

Apocrypha:

"And there passed not five and fifty days, before two of his sons killed him, and they fled into the mountains of Ararath; and Sarchedonus his son reigned in his stead; who appointed over his father's accounts, and over all his affairs, Achiacharus my brother Anael's son." (Tobit 1:21)

is called Sarchedon, which might easily pass by pronunciation into Sargon:

and fought against Ashdod, and took it; which was held by the Assyrians till the time of Psammiticus, and was so strong a city, and so well fortified, that it held out a siege of twenty nine years before he could be master of it {i}; how long Tartan lay against it, before he took it, is not said; nor is it certain what year he came against it; those who take Sargon to be Shalmaneser place it in the fourth year of Hezekiah's reign, who sent Tartan to Ashdod at the same time that he went against Samaria, 2Ki 18:9 but others, who think Sennacherib is Sargon, fix it to the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign, as Kimchi; who, hearing of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia and Egypt coming against him, went forth to meet him, and subdued him; and at the same time sent Tartan against Ashdod; or rather this was done when he took the fenced cities of Judah, of which this was one, having been taken a little before by Hezekiah from the Philistines; see 2Ki 18:8 though, if Esarhaddon is Sargon, this must be in the times of Manasseh, perhaps about the twenty second year of his reign, by whom he was taken, and carried captive; but it is most likely to have been in Hezekiah's time.

{h} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1. {i} Herodot. l. 2. c. 157.

Isaiah 20:2

Ver. 2. At the same time spake the Lord by Isaiah the son of Amoz,.... Or, "by the hand of Isaiah", by his means; and it was to him likewise, as the following words show; and so the Septuagint version renders it; he spoke by him, by the sign he used, according to his order, and he spoke to him to use the sign:

saying; so the Arabic version, "with him"; and with these versions Noldius agrees:

go, and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins; a token of mourning, and which the prophet wore, as Kimchi thinks, because of the captivity of the ten tribes;

and it may be also on account of the miseries that were coming upon the people of the Jews; though some think this was his common garb, and the same with the royal garment the prophets used to wear, Zec 13:4 but that he had put off, and had put on sackcloth in its room, which he is now bid to take off:

and put off thy shoe from thy foot; as a sign of distress and mourning also, 2Sa 15:30:

and he did so, walking naked and barefoot; Kimchi thinks this was only visionally, or in the vision of prophecy, as he calls it, and not in reality; but the latter seems most probable, and best to agree with what follows; for he was obedient to the divine command, not regarding the disgrace which might attend it, nor the danger of catching cold, to which he was exposed; and hence he has the character of a servant of the Lord, in the next words, and a faithful obedient one he was.

Isaiah 20:3

Ver. 3. And the Lord said,.... Here follows the explanation of the sign, and the accommodation of it to the thing signified by it:

like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot; not wholly naked, for that would have been very indecent and dangerous indeed; but without his upper garment, as Saul, 1Sa 19:24 and David, **2Sa 6:14** or with rent and ragged clothes, and old shoes, as Jarchi {k} interprets it, and which might be only when he appeared abroad; and how long he thus walked is not certain, whether only one day, as some, or three days, as others, or three years, which is not said, though our version inclines to it; but the three years next mentioned are not to be joined to Isaiah's walking, but to the thing signified by it; for the accent "athnach" is at the word which is rendered "barefoot", and distinguishes this clause from the following. The Septuagint indeed puts the phrase "three years" into both clauses, but it only belongs to the latter:

three years [for] a sign and wonder upon Egypt, and upon Ethiopia; that is, the prophet's walking naked and barefoot was a sign that three years after this Egypt and Ethiopia should be subdued by the Assyrians; or, that so long he should be in subduing them, or their calamities should last such a term of time. This sign was only seen by the Jews, for whose sake chiefly this prophecy was, to take off their dependence on the above nations; though probably this might be made known to the Egyptians and Ethiopians.

{k} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 77. 1. & Sabbat, fol. 114. 1.

Isaiah 20:4

Ver. 4. So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives,.... As beasts are led or driven, being taken prisoners, and carried captive by the king of Assyria, namely Sargon, whoever is intended by him:

young and old; without any regard to age, sparing none for their tender years or gray hairs:

naked and barefoot; as prisoners of war commonly are, being stripped by their conquerors of their clothes, and having only a few rags given them to cover their nakedness with, and obliged to travel without shoes on their feet:

even with [their] buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt; having no clothes on them to cover those parts; or the skirts of their garments cut off, as David's servants were by the Ammonites,
2Sa 10:4 and this to humble and mortify the pride of the Egyptians.

Isaiah 20:5

Ver. 5. And they shall be afraid and ashamed,.... That is, those that trusted and depended upon the Egyptians and Ethiopians, particularly the Jews after mentioned, shall be "afraid" that it will be their turn next, that they also shall be taken and carried captive; and they shall be "ashamed" that they have put their trust and confidence in those nations, and not in the Lord:

of Ethiopia their expectation; from whom they expected assistance and protection, particularly when Tirhakah king of Ethiopia went out against the king of Assyria, that he would have been a match for him, and have overcome him, and so have freed them from such a powerful enemy:

and of Egypt their glory; who was their ally, and a very potent one, and in whom they gloried; but now should be ashamed, when both those people on whom they relied were carried captive.

Isaiah 20:6

Ver. 6. And the inhabitants of this isle shall say, in that day,.... Not of Ashdod, Isa 20:1 or the isle of Caphtor, Jer 47:4 but the land of Israel, as both Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; so called, because it bordered on the sea, as such countries are sometimes called isles; see Jer 25:22. Ben Melech interprets it of Jerusalem, and observes that the word signifies a place or country, whether it has a river or sea encompassing it, or not; besides, the land of Canaan had the Mediterranean sea on one side of it, and the sea of Galilee and Tiberias on the other, and was moreover separated from all other countries by the power, providence, and presence of God:

behold, such [is] our expectation, whither we flee for help, to be delivered from the king of Assyria; signifying that it was vain and foolish, and they had acted a very weak, as well as a wicked part, in having recourse to the Egyptians and Ethiopians to help them against the Assyrians, as it plainly appeared by both nations now being conquered by them:

and how shall we escape? seeing they had not, who were more powerful than they were; and how could they think that they could save them, who could not save themselves? and so the Targum,

"if they have not delivered their souls (themselves), how shall we be delivered?"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 21

This chapter contains prophecies against Babylon, Idumea, and Arabia. The prophecy against Babylon is called "the burden of the desert of the sea"; whose enemies are described by the fierce manner of their coming, and by the land from whence they came, Isa 21:1 which vision being declared to the prophet, is called a grievous one; what made it so was treachery among themselves; and the Medes and Persians are invited to besiege them, Isa 21:2 their terror and distress upon it are represented by the pains of a woman in travail, whom the

prophet personates, Isa 21:3 and by the methods they took to defend themselves, to which they were alarmed, when in the greatest security and jollity, Isa 21:5 all which is illustrated by the vision of the watchman, who saw the Medes and Persians on the march, signified by a chariot and a couple of horsemen, who declares the fall of Babylon, and the destruction of its gods, Isa 21:6 which would issue in the good and comfort of the church and people of God, Isa 21:10 then follows the prophecy against Idumea, which consists of a question put to the watchman, and his answer to it; to which an exhortation is added, Isa 21:11 and the chapter concludes with another prophecy against Arabia: the calamities threatened are lodging in a forest, thirst, famine, and fleeing from the sword Isa 21:13, and the time is fixed when all this should be, by which their glory would fail, and the number of their archers and mighty men be lessened; for the confirmation of which the divine testimony is annexed,
Isa 21:16.

Ver. 1. The burden of the desert of the sea,.... That this is a prophecy of the destruction of Babylon is clear from the express mention both of the Medes and Persians, by whom it should be, and of Babylon itself, and its fall, Isa 21:2 which, though prophesied of before, is here repeated, partly for the certainty of it, and partly for the comfort of the people of the Jews, who would be captives in it, and so break off and prevent their confidence in a nation that would be ruined; and perhaps this prophecy might be delivered out about the time or on account of Merodach king of Babylon sending letters and a present to Hezekiah, who showed to his messengers all his treasures. Babylon is here called "the desert of the sea", not because it was a desert land, for it was a very fruitful one; or because it would be laid desolate, and become as a wilderness; but either because there was one between that and the countries of Media and Persia, as Kimchi, from whence its destroyers would come; or rather, because it was, as the word may be rendered, a "plain", for so the land of Chaldea was, and the city of Babylon particularly was built in a plain, Ge 11:2 and because this country abounded with pools and lakes, which with the Hebrews are called seas; and especially since the city of Babylon was situated by the river Euphrates, which ran about it, and through it and which therefore is said to dwell upon many waters, Jer 51:13 hence it has this name of the desert of the sea; besides, Abydenus {l}, from Megasthenes, informs us, that all the places about Babylon were from the beginning water, and were called a sea; and it should be observed that mystical Babylon is represented by a woman in a desert, sitting on many waters, which are interpreted of a multitude of people and nations, Re 17:1 and some here by "sea" understand the multitude of its riches, power, and people. The Targum is, "the burden of the armies, which come from the wilderness, as the waters of the sea;"

understanding it not of Babylon, but of its enemies and invaders, as follows:

as whirlwinds in the south pass through; and nothing can hinder them, such is their force and power; they bear all before them, come suddenly, blow strongly, and there is no resisting them; see **Zec 9:14**:

[so] it cometh from the desert; or "he", that is, Cyrus; or "it", the army under him, would come with like irresistible force and power as the southern whirlwinds do, which come from a desert country; at least that part of it in which their soldiers were trained up, and which in their march to Babylon must come through the desert, that lay, as before observed, between that and their country, and through which Cyrus did pass {m}:

from a terrible land; a land of serpents and scorpions, as Jarchi; or a land afar off, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; whose power and usage, or customs, were not known, and so dreaded, as the Medes and Persians were by Nitocris queen of Babylon, who took care to preserve her people, and prevent their falling into their hands. The Targum is,

"from a land in which terrible things are done."

{l} Apud Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. {m} Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 5. c. 5, 6.

Isaiah 21:2

Ver. 2. A grievous vision is declared unto me,.... The prophet; meaning the vision of Babylon's destruction, which was "hard", as the word signifies, and might seem harsh and cruel; not to him, nor to the Jews, but to the Chaldeans:

the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth; that is, according to Jarchi, one treacherous dealer deals treacherously with another, and one spoiler spoils another; the Medes and Persians deal treacherously with and spoil the Babylonians, who had dealt treacherously with and spoiled other nations: and to this sense some read the words, "the treacherous dealer hath found a treacherous dealer, and the spoiler one that spoileth" {n}: some take it to be a compellation of the Medes and Persians, calling upon them, under these characters, to go up and besiege Babylon, as, "O treacherous dealer, O spoiler" {o}; though the words may be understood of the perfidy and treachery of the Babylonians, of which they had been frequently guilty, and which is given as a reason of their fall and ruin; or rather they suggest the treacherous means by which they should be ruined, even by some from among themselves; particularly, history {p} informs us, that Gobrias and Gadates, two noblemen of the king of Babylon, being used ill by him, revolted from him, and joined with Cyrus; and when the river Euphrates was drained, went at the head of his army in two parties, and guided them into the city, and took it; or rather Belshazzar king of Babylon himself is meant, who acted, and continued to act, most impiously and wickedly: and therefore,

go up, O Elam; or Elamites, as the Targum and Septuagint; see **Ac 2:9** these were Persians, so called from Elam, a province in Persia; who are here called upon by the Lord of armies, through the mouth of the prophet, to go up to war against Babylon; and these are mentioned first, because Cyrus, who commanded the whole army, was a Persian: or if Elam is taken for a province, which was indeed subject to Babylon, of which Shushan was the capital city, **Da 8:2** the governor of it, Abradates, revolted from the Babylonians, and joined Cyrus, and fought with him {q}:

besiege, O Media; or, O ye Medes, join with the Persians in the siege of Babylon; as they did:

all the sighing thereof have I made to cease; either of the army of the Medes and Persians, who, by reason of long and tedious marches, frequent battles, and hard sieges, groaned and sighed; but now it would be over with them, when Babylon was taken; or of the Babylonians themselves, who would have no mercy shown them, nor have any time for sighing, being cut off suddenly, and in a moment; or rather of other people oppressed by them, and particularly the Lord's people the Jews, who had been in captivity for the space of seventy years, during which they had sighed and groaned, because of the hardships they endured; but now sighing would be at an end, and they should have deliverance, as they had, by Cyrus the Persian. The sighing is not that with which they sighed, but which they caused in others.

{n} ddwv ddwvhw dgwb dgwbh "praevaricator prevaricatorem et vastator, vastatorem [sub.] inveniet"; so some in Vatablus; also Gataker. {o} "O perfide, perfidus; O vastator, vastator", De Dieu. {p} Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 4. c.

24. l. 5. c. 11. & l. 7. c. 23. {q} Ib. l. 6. sect. 7, 8, 9, 26. & l. 7. sect. 4, 8.

Isaiah 21:3

Ver. 3. Therefore are my loins filled with pain,.... As a woman at the time of childbirth, as the following words show: these words are spoken by the prophet, not with respect to himself, as if he was pained at heart at the prophecy and vision he had of the ruin of Babylon, since that was a mortal enemy of his people; and besides, their sighing being made to cease could never be a reason of distress in him, but of joy: these words are spoken by him in the person of the Babylonians, and particularly of Belshazzar their king:

pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth; which come suddenly and at once, are very sharp and strong, and inevitable, which cannot be escaped; so the sudden destruction of the wicked, and particularly of antichrist at the last day, and the terror that shall attend it, are expressed by the same metaphor, **1Th 5:2**:

I was bowed down at the hearing [of it]; distorted and convulsed; not the prophet at the hearing of the prophecy, but Belshazzar, whom he personated, at hearing that Cyrus had entered the city, and was at the gates of his palace:

I was dismayed at the seeing [of it]; the handwriting upon the wall, at which his countenance changed, his thoughts were troubled, his loins loosed, and his knees smote one against another, **Da 5:6**.

Isaiah 21:4

Ver. 4. My heart panted,.... Fluttered about, and could hardly keep its place: or, "my mind wandered" {r}; like a person in distraction and confusion, that knew not what to think say or do:

fearfulness affrighted me; the terror of Cyrus's army seized him, of its irruption into the city, and of his being destroyed by it; the writing on the wall threw him into a panic, and the news of the Medes and Persians being entered the city increased it:

the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me; in which he promised himself so much pleasure, at a feast he had made for his princes, wives, and concubines; either in honour of his god, as some think {s}, being an annual one; or, as Josephus ben Gorion {t} says, on account of the victory he had obtained over the Medes and Persians; and so was quite secure, and never in the least thought of destruction being at hand; but in the midst of all his revelling, mirth, and jollity, the city was surprised and taken, and he slain, **Da 5:1**. So mystical Babylon, in the midst of her prosperity, while she is saying that she sits a queen, and knows no sorrow, her judgment and plagues shall come upon her, Re 18:7.

{r} ybbl het "erravit cor meum", Montanus; "errat animus meus", Junius & Tremellius; "errat cor meum", Piscator. {s} Vid. Herodot. l. 1. c. 191. Xenophon. l. 7. c. 23. {t} L. 1. c. 5. p. 24. Ed. Braithaupt.

Isaiah 21:5

Ver. 5. Prepare the table,.... Set it, spread it, furnish it with all kind of provisions, as at a feast; and such an one Belshazzar made, the night the city was taken: these words are directed to him by his courtiers or queen, as represented by the prophet, in order to remove his fears; see **Da 5:10**:

watch in the watchtower; this is said to his servants, his soldiers, or sentinels, that were placed on watchtowers to observe the motions of the enemy, who were ordered on duty, and to be on guard, that he and his nobles might feast the more securely; and all this being done, a table furnished, and a guard set, he, his nobles, and all his guests, are encouraged to "eat" and "drink" liberally and cheerfully, without any fear of the Medes and Persians, who were now besieging the city; when, at the same time, by the Lord it would be said,

arise, ye princes; not, ye nobles of Babylon, from your table, quit it, and your feasting and mirth:

[and] anoint the shield; prepare your arms, see that they are in good order, get them in readiness, and defend your king, yourselves, and your city, as some; but the princes of the Medes and Persians, Cyrus and his generals, are bid to take their arms, and enter the city while indulging themselves at their feast: it was usual to anoint shields, and other pieces of armour, partly that they might be smooth and slippery, as Jarchi, that so the darts of the enemy might easily

slide off; and partly for the polishing and brightening of them, being of metal, especially of brass; so the Targum,

"polish and make the arms bright;"

see **2Sa 1:21**. Aben Ezra understands the words as an exhortation to the princes, to arise and anoint Darius king, in the room of Belshazzar slain; the word "shield" sometimes signifying a king, for which he mentions Ps 84:9 so Ben Melech; but they are a call of the prophet, or of the Lord, to the princes of the Medes and Persians, to take the opportunity, while the Babylonians were feasting, to fall upon them; and the words may be rendered thus {u},

"in or while preparing the table, watching in the watchtower, eating and drinking, arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield;"

which was done by their servants, though they are called upon.

{u} Nxlvh Kre "disponendo, mensam, speculando speculam, comedendo, bibendo, surgite principes, ungite clypeum", Montanus; and to the same sense Grotius.

Isaiah 21:6

Ver. 6. For thus hath the Lord said unto me,.... This is a confirmation of the above prophecy from the Lord himself, he showing to the prophet, in a visionary way, the ruin of Babylon, and the means and instruments of it:

go, set a watchman; not Habakkuk, as Jarchi; nor Urias, as the Septuagint; nor Jeremiah, as others; but himself, who, in a way of vision, represented a watchman on the walls of Babylon; and which was no way unsuitable to his character and office as a prophet:

let him declare what he seeth; what he sees coming at a distance, or at hand, let him faithfully and publicly make it known: these are not the words of the king of Babylon to one of his watchmen; but of the Lord of hosts to his prophet.

Isaiah 21:7

Ver. 7. And he saw a chariot [with] a couple of horsemen,.... The drivers of it, or the riders in it; perhaps meaning Cyrus and Darius:

a chariot of asses, [and] a chariot of camels; by the former may be meant the Persians, who very much used mules or asses; and the Medes by the latter, who abounded in camels: the words are in the singular number, and may be rendered, "a rider of an ass, and a rider of a camel" {w}; and so may describe the couple of riders along with the chariot, which may signify the whole army of the Medes and Persians, chariots being much used in war; and the rider of the ass or mule may design Cyrus, who was called a mule, because of his mixed descent, being a Persian by his father, and a Mede by his mother's side; so the oracle of Apollo told the Babylonians, that their city should stand, until a mule was king of the Medes; and the rider of the camel may point at Darius:

and he hearkened diligently with much heed; the watchman that was set to watch used the utmost attention to what he saw, and listened diligently to the noise of this chariot and horsemen, as they came nearer.

{w} lmg bkr rwmx bkr anabathn onou, kai anabathn kamhlou, Sept.; "ascensorem asini, et ascensorem cameli", V. L. "unum equitantium in asinis, alterum equitantium in camelis", Piscator.

Isaiah 21:8

Ver. 8. And he cried, a lion,.... That is, the watchman cried, a lion, or that he saw a lion; not Uriah the priest, as the Septuagint; nor Habakkuk, as some Jewish writers; but Cyrus, at the head of the Persian and Median armies, compared to a lion for his fierceness, courage, and strength; see **2Ti 4:17** a type of Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, by whom antichrist, or mystical Babylon, will be destroyed, **Re 5:5**. The Targum is,

"the prophet said, the voice of armies, coming with coats of mail, as a lion."

Aben Ezra interprets it, the watchman cried as a lion, with a great voice; upon sight of the chariots and horsemen, he lifted up his voice, and roared like a lion, to express the terror he was in, and the greatness of the calamity that was coming upon the city.

I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime: so that nothing could escape his notice:

and I am set in my ward whole nights: which expresses his diligence, vigilance, and constancy, in the discharge of his duty; and therefore what he said he saw might be depended on.

Isaiah 21:9

Ver. 9. And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men,.... Or "of a man" {x}; a chariot with a man in it, Cyrus or Darius:

[with] a couple of horsemen; the army of the Medes and Persians, with their two leaders or generals, as before; only now seen nearer the city, just entering into it; for so the word may be rendered, "goeth", or "is gone in a chariot", &c.:

and he answered, and said; either the watchman, upon seeing the chariot and horsemen go into the city; or one of the horsemen that went in; so the Syriac and Arabic versions; or rather the prophet, and the Lord by him:

Babylon is fallen, is fallen: which is repeated to show the certainty of it. The same words are used of the fall of mystical Babylon, Re 14:8. The Targum is,

"it is fallen, and also it shall be, that Babylon shall fall;"

that is, a second time, and hereafter: and so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of two falls, one by the Medes and Persians, and the other by the hand of heaven, or God himself: literal Babylon fell by the former; mystical Babylon will fall by the latter, even by the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming:

and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground; either Cyrus or Darius, who might do this, not from any detestation of them, but for the sake of the gold, and silver, and riches, that were about them; or rather the Lord by them, and so put an end to idolatry; as will be, when mystical Babylon is destroyed.

{x} vya bkr "currus viri", Pagninus, Montanus.

Isaiah 21:10

Ver. 10. O my threshing, and the corn of my floor,.... Which may be understood either of the Babylonians, now threshed or punished by the Lord, and whom he had made use of as instruments for the punishment of others; or rather of the people of the Jews, whom the prophet calls "his", as being his countrymen, to whom he was affected, and with whom he sympathized; and besides, he speaks in the name of the Lord; or it is the Lord that speaks by him, calling the church of the Jews his floor, and the people his corn, which were dear and valuable to him, as choice grain, wheat, and other things; and therefore, though he threshed or afflicted them, it was for their good, to purge and cleanse them, and separate the chaff from them; and indeed it was on their account, and for their good, that all this was to be done to Babylon, before predicted; where they were, as corn under the threshing instrument, greatly oppressed and afflicted, but now should be delivered; for the confirmation of which it is added:

that which I have heard of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you; the preceding prophecy was not a dream of his, but a vision from the Lord of hosts; it was not devised by him, but told him by the Lord, and that for the good and comfort of the people of Israel, whose covenant God he was; and the prophet acted a faithful part, in delivering it just as he received it, which might be depended on.

Isaiah 21:11

Ver. 11. The burden of Dumah,.... Whether this prophecy concerns the Edomites or Idumeans, or whether the Arabians, particularly the Dumean Arabians, is a question, since Dumah was a son of Ishmael, Ge 25:14 and there was a place in Arabia called Dumatha {y}; and Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it here of Dumah the son of Ishmael; but inasmuch as mention is made of Seir, a mountain, which belonged to the Edomites, Ge 36:8 and a distinct prophecy afterwards follows concerning Arabia, it is more generally thought that Dumah signifies Edom or Idumea; the Septuagint version renders it, the vision of Idumea; and the Arabic version calls it, a prophecy concerning Edom and Seir; and Jarchi, by Dumah, understands Edom; and Kimchi himself observes, that in a book of R. Meir's, it was found written, "the burden of Duma, the burden of Edom."

Jerom says, Duma is not the whole province of Idumea, but a certain country in it, that lay to the south, twenty miles distant from a city of Palestine, in his days called Eleutheropolis; and further observes, that some of the Hebrews read "Roma" for "Duma", and suppose that the Roman empire is designed; and certain it is, that nothing is more common with them than to call the Roman empire, and Rome itself, by the name of Edom, and the Romans, or Christians, Edomites {z}:

he calleth to me out of Seir; a mountain inhabited by the Edomites, the posterity of Esau, so called from Seir the Horite, Ge 36:8. The Targum understands this of God calling from heaven to the prophet to prophesy; and Jarchi of an angel, or a prophet out of Seir, calling to God, who he supposes is meant by the watchman; but it seems best to interpret it of an Edomite, or an inhabitant of Mount Seir, calling to the watchman, and saying, as follows:

watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night? what time of night is it? what o'clock is it? how much of the night is gone, and what remains to come? it is the business of watchmen to give or tell the time of night: or, "what from the night?" {a} what has happened since it was night? hast thou observed nothing? is not the enemy nigh, or danger at hand? or, "what" sayest thou "concerning the night?" the night of darkness, affliction, and distress, in which we are, when will it be over? the question is repeated, as is usual with persons in a panic, and fearing the watchman should not hear them the first time; or it may denote one coming after another in a fright, asking the same question. Some, by the watchman, understand God himself, as Jarchi and Abarbinel, who is Israel's keeper, Ps 121:4 where the same word is used as here; and well agrees with God, who is the keeper and preserver of all men in a way of providence; and of his own people in a way of grace; and who, as he watches over the evil of sin, to bring the evil of affliction or punishment for it; so he watches over his, to do good unto them; and, as the times and seasons are in his power only, and are known by him, it is most proper to apply unto him. Others think Christ is meant, as Cocceius; and so the Jews say {b}, this is Metatron the keeper of Israel, which with them is one of the names of the Messiah; and to whom this character of a watchman agrees, as he is the shepherd of his flock, and the keeper of his people; and who, as the omniscient God, knows all things that are, and shall be, and which will quickly come to pass: though it may be best of all to understand it of a prophet or prophets, who were called watchmen under the Old Testament, Isa 21:6 as ministers of the word are under the New, in allusion to shepherds and watchmen of cities;

and whose business it is, as to show sinners the danger of their ways, and to arouse sleepy saints, so to give the time of night, that the churches of Christ may know whereabout they are. Now let it be observed, that this prophecy may refer to the times when Dumah, Edom, or Idumea, was possessed by the Jews, according to the prophecy in Nu 24:18 as it was before the coming of Christ; Herod, an Idumean, was upon the throne of Judea when he came, at which time the Jews and Idumeans were mixed together; and the latter, at least many of them, embraced the Jewish religion {c}, and so had knowledge of the Messiah and his coming, after which they may be thought to be inquiring here. The Mosaic dispensation was a night season, there was much obscurity in it, the shadows of darkness were stretched out on it; and though there was the moon of the ceremonial law, and there were the stars the prophets, yet the sun of righteousness was not risen; and it was a time of gross darkness with the Gentile world: now one or more of these proselyted Idumeans, or of the Jews among them, may be supposed to be inquiring of the prophet or prophets of the Lord in their time, how much of this night was gone, when it would be over, or the Messiah would appear, and bring in the morning, and make the bright day of the Gospel dispensation. And again, as Edom and Seir were typical of Rome Papal, or the Romish antichrist, the person calling out to the watchman may design such of the people of God in the midst of them, for which see Re 18:4 who, sensible of the night of darkness they are in, are looking for and inquiring after latter day light and glory. The Targum of the whole verse is,

"the burden of the cup of curse, to give Dumah to drink: to me he calls out of heaven, prophet, declare unto them the prophecy; prophet, declare unto them what shall hereafter come to pass."

{y} Vid. Hiller. Onomasticon Sacr. p. 797. {z} Vid. Buxtorf. Lexic. Talmud. col. 30, 31, &c. {a} lylm hm "quid accidit ex quo nox est?" Vatablus. {b} Zohar in Exod. fol. 54. 2. {c} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 13. c. 9. sect. 1. Ed. Hudson.

Isaiah 21:12

Ver. 12. The watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night,.... Not only a morning, but a night; and as sure as the morning comes, so shall the night; there wilt be a constant succession of morning and night; as a morning of prosperity, so a night of adversity: the morning of the Gospel dispensation was coming on, or of Christ's coming in the flesh, which was attended with joy and cheerfulness; like the morning, it dispersed the shadows of the law, introduced light, which gradually and irresistibly spread itself over the Gentile world; but then followed a night of darkness to the Jews, blindness happened to them, which still continues; and to the Arabians, Saracens, and Turks, when the bottomless pit was opened by Mahomet, which let out smoke and locusts in the eastern part of the world; and to the western part, when the Romish antichrist established himself as universal bishop: a morning came on again at the Reformation, and a night will follow, which is now begun; it is already a time of darkness, coldness, sleepiness, and of error and heresy, which will issue in an eventide, in a dark night: if it be asked what time it is with us, or how far we are gone toward the night? the answer is, we are in and toward the close of the Sardian church state; we are in the twilight, or in that part of time which is neither day nor night, Zec 14:6 the slaying of the witnesses is yet to come, which, with the general spread of Popery all over Christendom, will make it entire night; after which will come on the morning of the spiritual reign of Christ, when the light of the Gospel will be spread everywhere, and joy and gladness will attend the saints in all places; and it will be a time of great prosperity, both spiritual and temporal; which will be succeeded by another night of coldness, deadness, and carnal security, and will last till the second and personal coming of Christ; which will bring on the morning of a glorious resurrection to the saints, after which there will be no more night to them, though there will be an eternal one to the wicked. The Targum is,

"the prophet said, there is a reward for the righteous, and punishment for the wicked;"

and so the Jews elsewhere {d} interpret it of the morning of redemption to the righteous, and of the night of darkness to the wicked; or, as they sometimes express it {e}, the morning is for the righteous, and the night for the wicked; the morning for Israel, and the night for the nations of the world. Dumah they sometimes {f} make to be the angel appointed over spirits, who they suppose gather together, and say to him, "watchman", &c.

if ye will inquire, inquire ye; seriously and in good earnest, diligently and constantly, with all humility and reverence, by prayer to God and by searching the Scriptures, and by application to the watchmen, the ministers of the word, who make it their business to study it, and have the mind of Christ:

return, come; return by repentance, and come to God, who receives backsliders, heals their backslidings, and loves them freely; or, "come again", to the watchman, and to the Lord, and renew your inquiries till you get satisfaction.

{d} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1. & in Bava Kama fol, 3. 2. {e} T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 64. 1. & Kimchi in loc. {f} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1.

Isaiah 21:13

Ver. 13. The burden upon Arabia,.... Which lay heavy upon it, as a burden upon a beast; or "concerning" it, or "against" it, as Kimchi notes; which Arabia, or what part thereof, is meant, may be gathered from the names after mentioned. The Targum is,

"the burden of the cup of cursing, to give the Arabians to drink."

Ben Melech says, these are the Arabians that dwell in the wilderness:

in the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge; not in their tents and huts, which they had used to carry with them, and set up where they pleased; since now in their fright and flight they would leave them behind them, and so be obliged to take up their lodging in woods and forests; perhaps the desert of Arabia Petraea is meant:

O ye travelling companies of Dedanim; or Dedanites; these were Arabians that descended from Jokshan, a son of Abraham by Keturah,
Ge 25:3 who were either shepherds, who went in companies together with their flocks, and moved from place to place for the sake of pasture; or rather were merchants, who went in caravans and troops with their merchandise from one country to another; see Eze 27:15 and who, because of the ravages of the enemy, would be glad of a lodging in the woods for security.

Isaiah 21:14

Ver. 14. The inhabitants of the land of Tema,.... This country had its name from Tema, one of the sons of Ishmael, Ge 25:15. The Targum calls it the land of the south, as if it was Teman. These people were Arabians, and are here said to assist their countrymen, the Dedanites, in distress:

brought water to him that was thirsty; as travellers are wont to be, especially in a desert land, and when fleeing from an enemy; in which circumstances the travelling companies of Dedanim now were:

they prevented with their bread him that fled; gave it to him, being hungry and necessitous, without asking for it. Now all this seems to show what calamities should come upon the inhabitants of some parts of Arabia; that they should lodge in a forest, be hungry and thirsty, and flee before their enemy, as follows.

Isaiah 21:15

Ver. 15. For they fled from the swords,.... Of their enemy, whom they could not withstand; perhaps the Assyrian army:

from the drawn sword; just ready to be sheathed in them:

and from the bent bow; just going to let the arrow fly at them:

and from the grievousness of war: too heavy for them to bear.

Isaiah 21:16

Ver. 16. For thus hath the Lord said unto me,.... The prophet; which confirms what is before said, as well as assures the accomplishment of what follows:

within a year, according to the years of an hireling; that is, exactly and precisely, as soon as ever the year is come to an end; for the hireling, when his year is up, instantly demands dismissal from his service, or his wages, or both. The time is to be reckoned from the delivery of this prophecy; and so the calamity predicted was brought upon them by the Assyrians, perhaps under Sennacherib, when he invaded the cities of Judah, and might take Arabia in his way; less time is allowed than was the Moabites, who suffered by the same hand; see
Isa 16:14:

and all the glory of Kedar shall fail; these were another sort of Arabians, as the Targum calls them: they descended from Kedar, a son of Ishmael, Ge 25:13 their "glory" were their multitude, their riches and substance, and which chiefly lay in their flocks; for the sake of which they moved from place to place for pasture, and dwelled in tents, which they carried with them, and pitched where it was most convenient for them; hence they were called Scenites; see Ps 120:5.

Isaiah 21:17

Ver. 17. And the residue of the number of archers,.... Or of "bow" {g}, for "bows": that is, of men that use the bow, or are expert at it, as the Kedarenes were, both for taking wild beasts, and fighting with men, in which they followed their original ancestor Ishmael,
Ge 21:20 the number of these archers it seems had been great, but would be lessened by the calamity threatened; and those that would escape that, and be preserved from it, should be lessened still, as follows:

the mighty men of the children of Kedar shall be diminished; their military men, the most expert at the use of the bow, and the most valiant and courageous; the few of those that were left, and did not fall by the sword of the Assyrians, should gradually diminish, and be fewer and fewer:

for the Lord God of Israel hath spoken [it]; who cannot lie, nor will repent, and whose word never fails, what he has said he will do, nor will he alter the thing that is gone out of his lips; and he is spoken of as the God of Israel, because it was to the Israelites that this was said, and for their sakes; either because these Arabians some way or other were injurious to them, or they had put some confidence in them. The Targum is,

"because by the word of the Lord God of Israel it is so decreed."

{g} tvq rpom "numeri arcus", Montanus, Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 22

This chapter contains two prophecies, one concerning the invasion of Judah and Jerusalem, not by the Medes and Persians, but by the Assyrian army, under which they served; and the other of the removal of Shebna, an officer in Hezekiah's court, and of the placing of Eliakim in his stead. After the title of

the former of these prophecies, the distress of the people, through the invasion, is described, by their getting up to the housetops, Isa 22:1 by the stillness of the city, having left both trade and mirth; by the slain in it, not by the sword, but through fear or famine, Isa 22:2 by the flight of the rulers, and by the lamentation of the prophet, Isa 22:3 the instruments of which distress were the Persians and Medes serving under Sennacherib, who are described by their quivers and shields, their chariots and horsemen, Isa 22:6 the methods the Jews took to defend themselves, and their vain confidence, are exposed; for which, with their disrespect to the Lord, and his admonitions, their carnal security and luxury, they are threatened with death, Isa 22:8 then follows the prophecy of the deposition of Shebna, who is described by his name and office, Isa 22:15 whose pride is exposed as the cause of his fall, Isa 22:16 and he is threatened not only to be driven from his station, but to be carried captive into another country, suddenly and violently, and with great shame and disgrace,
Isa 22:17 and another put in his place, who is mentioned by name, Isa 22:20 and who should be invested with his office and power, and have all the ensigns of it, Isa 22:21 and should continue long in it, to great honour and usefulness to his family,
Isa 22:23 yet not always, Isa 22:25.

Ver. 1. The burden of the valley of vision,.... A prophecy concerning Jerusalem, so called, because it lay in a valley, encompassed about with mountains, and which was the habitation of the prophets or seers, and the seat of vision and prophecy; and perhaps there is an allusion to its name, which signifies the vision of peace, or they shall see peace. The Septuagint version calls it, "the word of the valley of Sion"; and the Arabic version,

"a prophecy concerning the inhabitants of the valley of Sion, to wit, the fields which are about Jerusalem."

The Targum is,

"the burden of the prophecy concerning the city which dwells in the valley, of which the prophets prophesied;"

by all which it appears, that not the whole land of Judea is thought to be meant, only the city of Jerusalem, so called, not from its low estate into which it would fall, through the wickedness of the people, and so rather to be called a valley than a mountain, as Kimchi; but from its situation, it being, as Josephus {h} says, fortified with three walls, except on that side at which it was encircled with inaccessible valleys; and hence it may be, that one of its gates is called the valley gate, **Ne 2:13** and besides, there was a valley in it, between the mountains of Zion and Acra, which divided the upper and lower city, as he also elsewhere says {i}. The burden of it is a heavy prophecy of calamities that should come upon it, or at least of a fright it should be put into, not in the times of Nebuchadnezzar, when it was taken and destroyed, as Jarchi and Kimchi, and another Jew Jerom makes mention of; nor in the times of Titus Vespasian, according to Eusebius, as the said Jerom relates; but in the times of Hezekiah, when Judea was invaded, and Jerusalem besieged by Sennacherib:

what aileth thee now? or, "what to thee now?" {k} what is come to thee? what is the matter with thee now? how comes this strange and sudden change?

that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops? not to burn incense to the queen of heaven, which was sometimes done, and is the sense of some mentioned by Aben Ezra; but either for safety, to secure themselves from their enemies; or to take a view of them, and observe their motions, and cast from thence their arrows and darts at them; or to look out for help, or to mourn over their distresses, and implore help of the Lord; see Isa 15:2 and this was the case, not only of some, but of them all; so that there was scarce a man to be seen in the streets, or in the lower parts of their houses, but were all gone up to the tops of them, which were built with flat roofs and battlements about them, De 22:8.

{h} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 1. {i} Ib. l. 6. c. 6. {k} Kl hm "quid tibi accidit?" Vatablus; "quid tibi nunc est?" Piscator.

Isaiah 22:2

Ver. 2. Thou art full of stirs,.... Or, "wast full of stirs"; through the multitude of people walking about in it, and the vast hurry of business done in it; but now all hush and quiet, the streets clear of people, and the shops shut up, and all got up to the housetops for shelter; or, "full of noises" {l}, as a populous trading city is. The word signifies shoutings and acclamations, and is used for joyful ones, **Zec 4:7** and may be so taken here, and may design such as were expressed at their festivals, and on other occasions; unless it is to be understood of doleful ones, on account of the invasion and siege:

a tumultuous city; through the throng of people, and the noise of thorn:

a joyous city; some on business, others on pleasure; some hurrying from place to place about their trade and commerce, and others amusing themselves with pastime, mirth, and jollity; which is commonly the case of populous cities in prosperity. This had been Jerusalem's case, but now it was otherwise:

thy slain [men] are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle; for Sennacherib never entered into it, nor put any of its inhabitants to the sword; nor was there any battle fought between them, nor was he suffered so much as to shoot an arrow into it, Isa 37:33 wherefore those that died in it died either through the fright and consternation they were put into, or through the famine his army had caused, in laying the country round about them desolate.

{l} halm tavt "plena strepitibus", Munster; "tumultuationibus", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; "fragoribus", Piscator.

Isaiah 22:3

Ver. 3. All thy rulers are fled together,.... Either the rulers of Jerusalem, civil and ecclesiastical, that should have been at the head of the people, and have encouraged them, fled together to the housetops, or to the temple and strongholds; or the generals and officers of their militia, one and all of them fled, as if they had done it by joint consultation and consent; or the rulers of the several cities of Judea, which, when invaded by Sennacherib, stayed not to defend them, but left them and fled:

they are bound by the archers; or, "from the bow" {m}; from using it; were in such a consternation, and under such a panic, that they had no strength nor heart to draw the bow, but were as if they were bound, and held from it: or for fear of the bow, or the archers in the Assyrian army, and therefore fled from them, as the Tigurine version renders it, joining it to the preceding clause, "they fled from the bow, they are bound"; or, as Ben Melech, for fear of the bow, they delivered themselves up, and were bound; so Aben Ezra:

all that are found in thee are bound together; that is, from the bow, as before; not only the princes, but the common people. These clauses have led many interpreters to conclude that this must be understood of the taking of the city by Nebuchadnezzar, when Zedekiah was bound in chains, and carried to Babylon, Jer 52:11:

[which] have fled from far; from the furthest part of the land of Judea to

Jerusalem, for shelter and safety.

{m} tvqm "ab arcu", Vatablus.

Isaiah 22:4

Ver. 4. Therefore said I,.... Not God to the ministering angels, as Jarchi; but the prophet to those that were about him, his relations, friends, and acquaintance:

look away from me; turn away from me, look another way; cease from me, let me alone; leave me to myself, that I may weep in secret, take my fill of sorrow, and give full vent to it:

I will weep bitterly; or, "I will be bitter", or, "bitter myself in weeping" {n}; it denotes the vehemence of his grief, the greatness of his sorrow, and the strength of his passion:

labour not to comfort me; make use of no arguments to persuade me to lay aside my mourning; do not be urgent and importunate with me to receive consolation, for my soul refuses to be comforted:

because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people; his countrymen, which were as dear to him as a daughter to a tender parent, now spoiled, plundered, and made desolate by the ravages of the enemy, in many cities of Judea.

{n} ykbb rrma "amarificabo me in fletu", Montanus; "amaritudine afficiam me in isto fletu", Junius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 22:5

Ver. 5. For [it is] a day of trouble,.... To Hezekiah, and also Jerusalem, and all the inhabitants of the land:

and of treading down; the people of it by Sennacherib's army, like mire in the streets, when their cities were taken by him:

and of perplexity by the Lord of hosts in the valley of vision; in Jerusalem, besieged, and threatened with desolation; which threw the king and his nobles, and all the inhabitants, into the utmost perplexity, confusion, and distress; and all this was not merely from men, nor was it by chance, but by the permission and appointment of God, to humble his people for their sins, and bring them to a sense and acknowledgment of them:

breaking down the walls: of the fenced cities, with their battering rams, at the time they besieged and took them, 2Ki 18:13:

and of crying to the mountains: looking and running to them for help and succour, for shelter and protection; and crying so loud, by reason of their distress, as that it reached the distant mountains, and made them echo with it.

Isaiah 22:6

Ver. 6. And Elam bare the quiver with chariots of men [and] horsemen,.... Or the Elamites, as the Targum and Septuagint, that is, the Persians, who were at this time subject to the Assyrians, and served in Sennacherib's army, which consisted of many nations; see
Isa 29:7 these bore the quiver, a case for arrows, being expert in the use of the bow, which was the chief of their might, Jer 49:35 and so Strabo {o} reports, that the Elamites had many archers among them; and along with them went

chariots of men, full of men, of military men; these were chariots for war, and brought men to fight against Jerusalem;

[and] horsemen also, these were the cavalry, as those that carried bows and arrows seem to be the foot soldiers. The Targum is,

"and the Elamites bore arms in the chariot of a man, and with it a couple of horsemen;"

as in the vision or prophecy concerning Babylon, Isa 21:7:

and Kir uncovered the shield; this was a city in Media, and signifies the Medes, who were in subjection to the Assyrians, and fought under them; see 2Ki 16:9 though Ben Melech says it was a city belonging to the king of Assyria; these prepared for battle, uncased their shields, which before were covered to keep them clean, and preserve them from rust and dirt; or they polished them, made them bright, as the word in the Ethiopic language signifies, as De Dieu has observed; see Isa 21:5 these might be most expert in the use of the shield and sword, as the others were at the bow and arrow. Some render "Kir" a "wall": so the Targum,

"and to the wall the shields stuck;"

and the Vulgate Latin version, "the shield made bare the wall": but it is best to understand it as the proper name of a place.

{o} Geograph. l. 16. p. 512.

Isaiah 22:7

Ver. 7. And it shall come to pass, [that] thy choicest valleys,.... The valleys that were near Jerusalem, that used to be covered with the choicest corn or vines, or with grass and flocks of sheep, and used to be exceeding delightful and pleasant:

shall be full of chariots; where they can be more easily driven than on mountains; these were chariots not for pleasure, but for war; chariots full of soldiers, to fight against and besiege Jerusalem:

and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate: to take them that come out of the city, and to force their way into it; as well as to protect and defend the foot, while they made the assault, and scaled the walls, and to be ready when the gates were opened to them.

Isaiah 22:8

Ver. 8. And he discovered the covering of Judah,.... Either God himself, who uncloaked them of their hypocrisy, as Dr. Lightfoot; or took away his power and presence from them, and his protection of them, and discovered their weakness; or rather the enemy Sennacherib: and then by the covering is meant, not Jerusalem, nor the temple, as Jarchi and Kimchi, for neither of them came into his hands; but the fenced cities of Judah, which were the strength and protection of the country; these he took and dismantled, 2Ki 18:13 and when this was done, it was high time for the Jews at Jerusalem to look about them, and provide for their defence and safety:

and thou, didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest; to see what store of armour they had, in what condition it was, and to take from hence, and furnish themselves and soldiers with it, to annoy the enemy, and defend themselves. This house of the forest is the same with the house of the forest of Lebanon; so called, not because built in it, for it was in Jerusalem, but because it was built of the wood of Lebanon; or because it was surrounded with trees, and had walks and groves belonging to it, resembling that forest. This was an armoury; here Solomon put his two hundred targets, and three hundred shields of beaten gold, **1Ki 7:2** see also **So 4:4**.

Isaiah 22:9

Ver. 9. Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many,.... Not Jerusalem in general, but that part of it which was called the stronghold of Zion, and in particular had the name of the city of David, **2Sa 5:7** the fortifications of which, in times of peace, had gone to decay; and which they had seen before, but took no notice of, being in safety; but now besieged, and in great danger, they looked upon them in good earnest, in order to repair them, and secure themselves from the irruption of the enemy; for this is not to be understood of breaches now made by the Assyrian army, but of old ones, which had lain neglected; see 2Ch 32:5:

and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool: not to make mortar with, to be used in repairing the breaches, as Kimchi; but either that they might be as a wall round about the place, as Aben Ezra; or rather to deprive the enemy of them, and cut off all communications from him, and to supply the inhabitants of the city with them; see 2Ch 32:3. The Septuagint version is, "and he turned the water of the old pool into the city": but the old pool was another pool hereafter mentioned, and was without the city, the same with the upper pool; whereas this was the lower, and was in the city. The Targum is,

"and ye gathered the people to the waters of the lower pool."

Isaiah 22:10

Ver. 10. And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem,.... To know what number of men were in them, and how many could be spared to do duty, either as watchmen or soldiers; or to know how to levy the tax, and what money they would be able to raise, to defray the charge of the defence of the city; or to see what provisions they had, and so make a computation how long they could hold out the siege; or else to observe what houses might be annoyed by the enemy, and what stood in the way of the repair of the walls, or were proper to pull down, that with the stones and timber of them they might make up the breaches of the wall, and that the stronger, as follows:

and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall; either such as were without the wall, which, had they let them stand, would either have been destroyed by the enemy, or have been a harbour for them; or those upon it, and near it within, which stood in the way of the repair, and were easily beat down by the enemy; or might be a means of communication between them and such as were inclined to be treacherous; with the stones and timber of which houses, when broken down, they strengthened the wall, and so served a better purpose than if they had stood.

Isaiah 22:11

Ver. 11. Ye made also a ditch between the two walls,.... The outward and the inward; for Hezekiah not only repaired the broken wall, but he built another without, 2Ch 32:5 and between these two he made a ditch, or receptacle for water; for rain water, as Kimchi says; that the inhabitants might not want water during the siege; but the end for which it was made follows:

for the water of the old pool; which, being without the city, was by this means drained into this ditch or receptacle; and so the Assyrians were deprived of it, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem more abundantly supplied; this was wisely contrived to distress the enemy, and to enable themselves to hold out the siege the longer; and for this and other methods they took they are not blamed, but for what follows:

but ye have not looked unto the Maker thereof; either of the distress and calamity which came upon them for their sins, with the will and by the decree of God; or of the water of the pool, which is a creature of his; for who can give rain or water but himself? or rather of the city of Jerusalem, to build which he stirred up persons, and assisted them in it, and which he chose for the seat of his habitation and worship:

neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago; not in his own mind from eternity, which is the gloss of the Jewish Rabbins {p}; Jerusalem being one of the seven things, which, before the world was, came into the mind of God to create; but in time, many years ago, in the times of David, who built some part of it; and before, it being the ancient city of Salem. Now this was their fault, that they trusted in their warlike preparations, and prudential care and caution, for the defence of themselves, and looked not unto, nor trusted in, the Lord their God; for though Hezekiah did, yet many of his people did not; and very probably his principal courtiers and officers about him, concerned in the above methods, and particularly Shebna, hereafter mentioned.

{p} Vid. Kimchi in loc.

Isaiah 22:12

Ver. 12. And in that day did the Lord God of hosts,.... When it was a day of trouble, of treading down, and of perplexity; when Jerusalem was besieged by the Assyrian army; and when the people were so much concerned, and so careful for their defence and preservation; then did the Lord

call to weeping and to mourning; to confess and mourn over their sins, the cause of these calamities; to lament their unhappy case; to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and, by prayer and supplication, with tears to implore his help and assistance, and grant them deliverance; this the Lord called them unto by the voice of his Providence, by the afflictive dispensations of it, and also by his prophets, whom he sent unto them, particularly the Prophet Isaiah; so the Targum,

"and the prophet of the Lord God of hosts called in that day," &c.:

and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth; which were external signs and tokens of inward sorrow and repentance; the former of which was done by shaving the head, or plucking off the hair, and was forbidden on private occasions, yet might be allowed in a public case; see **Mic 1:16**.

Isaiah 22:13

Ver. 13. And behold joy and gladness,.... As if it was a time of rejoicing, rather than of weeping and mourning; and as if they were at a festival, and in the greatest prosperity and liberty, and not besieged by a powerful army:

slaying oxen, and killing sheep: not for sacrifice, to make atonement for sin, as typical of the great sacrifice; but to eat, and that not as at ordinary meals, or merely for the support of life, but as at feasts, where, as there was great plenty, so luxury and intemperance were indulged; just as Belshazzar did, at the same time that Babylon was beset by the army of the Medes and Persians, **Da 5:1** so the Jews here, having taken the armour out of the treasury, and furnished the soldiers with them, and took care of provisions of bread and water, and having repaired and fortified the walls of the city, thought themselves secure, and gave up themselves to feasting, mirth, and pleasure: saying,

let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die; which they said, not as believing their case to be desperate; that the next day, or in a few days, their city would be taken by the Assyrians, and they should be put to the sword, and therefore, since they had but a short life to live, they would live a merry one; but rather as not believing it, but scoffing at the prophet, and at the word of the Lord by him; as if they should say, the prophet says we shall die tomorrow, or we are in great danger of being suddenly destroyed; but let us not be dismayed at such words, and to show that we do not believe them, or if this is our case, let us take our fill of pleasure, while we may have it. This is the language of epicures, and of such that disbelieve the resurrection of the dead, and a future state, to whom the apostle applies the words in
1Co 15:32.

Isaiah 22:14

Ver. 14. And it was revealed in my ears by the Lord of hosts,.... Both what they said in the preceding verse Isa 22:13, their profane, impious, and scoffing language; which perhaps was not expressed by words, but said in their hearts, and which God the searcher of hearts knew, and revealed it to the prophet; and also what he determined to do upon this, which is afterwards said, which being a purpose within himself, could not be known without a divine revelation; so the Targum,

"the prophet said, with mine ears I was hearing, when this was decreed from before the Lord of hosts;"

namely, that their iniquity should not be forgiven; the Vulgate Latin version is, "the voice of the Lord of hosts is revealed in mine ears"; saying what is expressed in the next clause: but the Septuagint, and Arabic versions, understand it of the ears of Lord of hosts himself: and Aben Ezra thinks the word "ani" or "I" is wanting, and so Kimchi; and that the words should be rendered thus, "it was revealed in mine ears, [I am] the Lord of hosts": and so it is by some others, "it was revealed in the ears of me, the Lord of hosts" {q}, or, "of the Lord of hosts"; the wickedness, profaneness, and luxury of the people; the cry of their sins came up into the ears of the Lord of hosts, and therefore he determined to do what he next declares:

Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die; it being of heinous nature, so daring, insolent, and affronting, such a contempt of God and his word, and discovering such impenitence and hardness of heart, it should not be expiated by any sacrifice whatever; not by the day of atonement, nor death itself, as the Jews from hence fancy; in short, it should not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in that to come; for if not till they died, then not after, where there is no repentance, nor remission; see Mt 12:32 the words are in the form of an oath, "if this iniquity be purged, or expiated", &c. {r}; the Lord swears to it, that it never should be pardoned, but they should die in it; as a corporeal, so an eternal death. The Targum interprets it of the second death; that is, as Kimchi explains it, the death of the soul in the world to come; see Re 21:8:

saith the Lord God of hosts; and therefore this would certainly be the case; for his word and oath are his two immutable things, in which it is impossible for him to lie.

{q} ynzab hlgnw "et revelabitur in auribus meis Domini exercituum", Montanus; "et revelatum in auribus Domini", &c. Musculus. {r} rpky Ma "si exibitur", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator; "si expietur", Junius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 22:15

Ver. 15. Thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Go,.... These words are spoken to the prophet, bidding him go to Shebna's house; so the Arabic version, "go to the house"; or however, by some means or other, let him know that he should be displaced, and turned out of his office, and another put in his room:

get thee unto this treasurer; or governor, as the Targum; treasurer in the house of King Hezekiah, as Kimchi: the word has the signification of profit; and Jarchi, from the Talmud {s}, calls him master of the profits; that is, of the profits and revenues belonging to the king; though, perhaps, he sought more his own profit and advantage than the king's: it has also the signification of danger, and so may be rendered, "this dangerous" man to the king and state. The Jews say {t} he entered into conspiracy with some others in Jerusalem, to deliver up the city and king into the hands of Sennacherib. It is also used for a cherisher or nourisher, **1Ki 1:2** and may be understood of him, as a cherisher and encourager of the scoffers before mentioned, and a fomenter of secret conspiracies against the king and the city. Some render it, "this Sochenite", so called from the place of his birth, or from whence he came; and the Jews {u} say he came from Sochen, a place in Egypt; and he seems by what follows to have been a foreigner, and not an inhabitant of Jerusalem; nor is it likely that he should be twice described by his office:

[even] unto Shebna, which [is] over the house; that is, over the king's house, so Kimchi; the steward, that had the ordering of all the affairs civil and domestic in it, which was a very high post; he had the keys of the money, stores, and provisions in it; see
Isa 22:22. The Vulgate Latin version calls him the governor of the temple; so Jarchi understands it, that he was over the house of the sanctuary, the temple; some Jewish writers say he was a high priest; and others that he was an "amarcal" {w}, which was a name of office in the temple, a governor there, that had the keys of the stores in it:

[and say]; this is not in the text, but is supplied; the message to him follows.

{s} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 26. 2. {t} Jarchi & Kimchi in loc. & Sanhedrin, ib. col. 1. {u} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 5. fol. 150. 2. {w} Ibid.

Isaiah 22:16

Ver. 16. What hast thou here?.... In the king's house, or in Jerusalem; what business hast thou here? thou art unworthy of such an office, nor shalt thou long continue in it; what inheritance hast thou here? thou art an alien from the commonwealth of Israel and hast no estate or possession in the land:

and whom hast thou here? of thy family and kindred; what ancestors hast thou? where did they live or die, and were buried? what children hast thou to succeed thee in honour and estate? or what relations to be interred, when deceased, in thy grave, that thou hast made such a provision as follows? and it may be observed, that wherever he is spoken of, the name of his father is never mentioned. Aben Ezra's gloss is, who hast thou here of thy family that can help thee? his fall and ruin being at hand:

that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here; in the city of Jerusalem, or near it; the Jews say {x}, among the sepulchres of the kings of the house of David; as if he thought to live and die here, and so had provided a sepulchre for himself and family, to lie in great pomp and splendour, like the kings and princes of the earth:

[as] he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, [and] that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock; where sepulchres, as well as palaces, used to be built; see Mt 27:60 and great men, especially the Egyptians, used to build sepulchres like to palaces; though it may be observed, that the word "as" is not in the text; and the words may be understood of Shebna's hewing out a sepulchre in some high place near Jerusalem, and building a fine house upon a rock there; and which may design either one and the same thing, a grave or sepulchre being called a house, Job 30:23 or two different things, a sepulchre to be buried in when dead, and a palace to dwell in while living; and so the words may be rendered thus {y}, "O he that heweth himself", &c.; "O he that graveth an habitation", &c.; so the Syriac version, "O thou that hewest thy sepulchre on high", &c.

{x} T. Bab. Sanhedrin fol. 26. 2. {y} "O caedens, &c. O statuens", &c. Junius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 22:17

Ver. 17. Behold, the Lord will carry thee away with a mighty captivity,.... Or with the captivity of a man; so the Targum, of a mighty man, Sennacherib king of Assyria; who, as the Jews say {z}, when he went from Jerusalem, upon the rumour of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia coming against him, carried away Shebna and his company, as with an inundation: or as a man is carried captive, whose captivity is harder, and more severe and cruel, than a woman's, as the Rabbins {a} observe; a woman finding more mercy in captivity usually than a man does. Some of the Jewish writers render the word "geber" a cock, as they do elsewhere; and gloss it, as a cock is carried away, and goes from place to place {b}; and so the Vulgate Latin version,

"behold, the Lord shall cause thee to be carried away, as a cock is carried away;"

but it seems best, with Aben Ezra and Kimchi, to read the word "man" in the vocative case; the Lord will carry thee away, "O man", O mighty man {c}; as mighty a man as thou art in office, in power, in riches, God shall carry thee away with the greatest ease imaginable:

and will surely cover thee: or, "in covering cover thee"; with confusion, as the Targum. Jarchi says the word has the signification of flying; and so interprets it, he shall cause thee to fly like a bird into captivity; that is, very speedily and swiftly. The Rabbins gather from hence that Shebna was struck with leprosy, because the leper was obliged to put a covering upon his upper lip; and this sense is embraced by Grotius; but the allusion seems to be to persons in disgrace, or condemned to die, whose faces used to be covered, **Es 7:8**.

{z} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 23. p. 64. {a} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 26. 2. {b} Jarchi in loc. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 5. fol. 150. 2. {c} rbg "O vir poteus", Grotius; "O tu heros", Tigurine version.

Isaiah 22:18

Ver. 18. He will surely violently turn and toss thee,.... Or, "wrapping he will wrap thee with a wrapping"; as anything is wrapped up close and round, either to be more commodiously carried, or more easily tossed: or, "rolling he will roll thee with a rolling" {d}; that is, roll thee over and over again, till brought to a place appointed:

[like] a ball into a large country; where there is nothing to stop it; and being cast with a strong hand, runs a great way, and with prodigious swiftness; and signifies, that Shebna's captivity was inevitable, which he could not escape; that he was no more in the hands of the Lord than a ball in the hands of a strong man; and could as easily, and would be, hurled out of his place, into a distant country, as a ball, well wrapped, could be thrown at a great distance by a strong arm; and that this his captivity would be swift and sudden; and that he should be carried into a large country, and at a distance. Jarchi says Casiphia {e}, a place mentioned in **Ezr 8:17**. Aben Ezra interprets it of Babylon, which seems likely.

There shalt thou die: in that large and distant country; and not at Jerusalem, where he had built a magnificent sepulchre for himself and family:

and there the chariots of thy glory; shall cease and be no more; he should not have them along with him to ride in pomp and state, and to show his glory and grandeur, as he had done in Jerusalem. We connect this with the following clause, and supply it thus,

[shall be] the shame of thy lord's house; as if the chariots and coaches of state he had rode in were to the reproach of the king his master; who had made such an ill choice of a steward of his house, or prime minister of state, and had advanced such a worthless creature to such a dignity; but it may be better supplied thus, without being so strictly connected with the other clause, and which is more agreeable to the accents, "[O thou], the shame of thy lord's house" {f}; a disgrace and dishonour to Ahaz, who perhaps put him in his office; and to Hezekiah, that continued him in it. The Jews say he was brought to a very shameful end; they say {g}, that when he went out of the city of Jerusalem, in order to deliver Hezekiah's forces into the hands of the enemy, Gabriel shut the gate before his army; to whom the enemy said, where's thy army? he replied, they are turned back; say they, thou hast mocked us: upon which they bored his heels, and fastened him to the tails of horses, and drew him upon thorns and briers. So says Kimchi, instead of chariots of glory, he thought they would give him, they put him to shame, binding him to the tails of horses.

{d} hpnu Kpnuy Pwnu "cidarizando cidarizabit te cidari", Forerius; as the priest's linen mitre, Lev. xvi. 4. which was wrapped about his head, so Ben Melech; or any turban, such as were used in the eastern countries; signifying, that he should be rolled up like this, or any such like round thing, and carried away. {e} So in Vajikra, sect. 5. fol. 150. 3. {f} Kynda tyb Nwlq "tu, O dedecus domus domini tui", Tigurine version; "O ignominia", &c. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol 26. 1, 2.

Isaiah 22:19

Ver. 19. And I will drive thee from thy station,.... Or thou shalt be driven from it, according to my word; this is said by the prophet, and expresses his being degraded from his office by the king, according to the will of God:

and from thy state shall he pull thee down; either the king his master, or the Lord, who, by his providence, would so order it, that it should be: the phrases express indignation and force, and an entire removal of him from all offices in the king's house or government; for it does not at all seem likely, what is

commonly suggested, that he was removed from his office of treasurer, or steward of the king's house, and put into a lower office, and made a scribe, as he is called,
Isa 37:2 besides, the words preceding show that he should be carried captive into another land.

Isaiah 22:20

Ver. 20. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... At the same time that Shebna was deposed from his high station:

that I will call my servant Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah; whom Kimchi thinks was the same with Azariah the son of Hilkiah, who might have two names, and was a ruler over the house of God in the times of Hezekiah, **1Ch 6:13** this man, by the character given him, was a good man, a faithful, diligent, and constant servant of the Lord, and therefore he delighted to raise him to great honour and dignity: he did not seek great things for himself, nor did he thrust himself into the office, but the Lord called him to it in his providence, and put him into it; he did, as Kimchi observes, put it into the heart of Hezekiah to appoint him governor in the room of Shebna. This man was a type of Christ; his name agrees with him which signifies, "my God will raise up"; that is, the dead by him, **1Co 6:14** and so does the character of a servant, frequently given to Christ in this book; see
Isa 42:1 nor did Christ take any office to himself, but was called unto it by his Father, **Heb 5:4**.

Isaiah 22:21

Ver. 21. And I will clothe him with thy robe,.... The same he wore, or rather one like unto it, which was a badge and token of his office. If he was a priest, as the Jews say, this was his priestly robe, by which the high priest was distinguished from others; but he rather seems to be a civil officer, who wore a garment suitable to it, and distinctive of it; in which he was a type of Christ, invested with the priestly, or rather with the kingly office, crowned with glory and honour; and who is seen among his churches, clothed with a garment down to the feet, **Re 1:13**:

and strengthen him with thy girdle: which was a symbol both of power and of strength; both priests and princes had their girdles. Christ's girdle, in the administration of his office, is faithfulness and righteousness, Isa 11:5;

and I will commit thy government into his hand; the government of the king's house, typical of the government of the church, put into the hands of Christ by his Father, **Isa 9:6**:

and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah; have a fatherly care over them, and affection for them; and such an one is Christ, who stands in the relation of the everlasting Father to his church and people, and of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; he provides for them, takes care of them, is tenderly affected towards them, pities and sympathizes with them, and affords them all supply and support. Kimchi interprets it of a faithful counsellor, and a good leader. So Ben Melech.

Isaiah 22:22

Ver. 22. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder,.... In allusion either to magistrates carrying a key on their shoulder, hanging down from thence, having a hook at one end of it fit for that purpose; or having one embroidered on that part of their garment: or one carried before them by their servants. It regards either the keys of the temple; or rather the key of the king's house, which it was proper should be delivered to him as treasurer and steward of it; the Targum takes in both,

"and I will give the key of the house of the sanctuary, and the government of the house of David, into his hand."

In the mystical sense, Christ is said to have this key, **Re 3:7** where the following words are applied to him:

so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open; all which is expressive of the government of the church being on his shoulders, and of his absolute and uncontrollable power over it; who opens the treasures of his word, of his grace, and of wisdom and knowledge, and communicates them unto, and shuts or hides them from, whom he pleases; who opens and shuts the doors of his church, his house, and lets in, and keeps out, whom he thinks fit; and who also opens and shuts the door of the kingdom of heaven, and introduces into it his own people, and excludes others.

Isaiah 22:23

Ver. 23. And I will fasten him [as] a nail in a sure place,.... In a strong part of the wall or timber, where it shall not fail, or be removed, or cut down, and so let drop what is hung upon it: it denotes the stability and continuance of his government, and of the strength and support he should be of unto others; and well agrees with Christ his antitype; see Zec 10:4 and is expressive of the strength of Christ, as the mighty God; and as the man of God's right hand, made strong for himself; and as the able Saviour, and mighty Redeemer; and of the stability of his person, he is unchangeable, the same today, yesterday, and for ever; and of his office, as Mediator, Head, and Surety of the covenant; whose priesthood passes not from one to another, and whose kingdom is an everlasting one, and his truths and ordinances unshaken and immovable: the sure place in which he is fixed is both his church, where he is the everlasting Head, Husband, and Saviour of it; and heaven, where he is, and will be retained, until the time of the restitution of all things:

and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house; or make the throne of his father's house glorious, Eliakim being, as some have thought, of the blood royal; or he should be an honour and credit to his father's house, by his wise and faithful administration of the government committed to him. Christ is the brightness of his Father's glory; and, to them that believe, he is an honour; he is on a glorious throne himself, and he will bring all his Father's family to sit with him on the same throne, **1Sa 2:8**.

Isaiah 22:24

Ver. 24. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house,.... Which shows the reason of his being compared to a nail; not to one that fastens pieces of timber together, or to a nail or stake drove in the ground, to which the cords of tents are fastened, but to a nail in a wall, on which things are hung: and the meaning is, that all of his father's family would be dependent upon him, be supported by him, and receive honour and glory from him: and which also is true of Christ the antitype; the glory of building his Father's house, the church, and of saving it, and of making of it glorious, belongs to him, and is given to him; it is put upon him, and it is visible on him, and it is weighty, and will continue:

the offspring and the issue; all the descendants of his father's family, sons and daughters, children and grandchildren; so the Targum,

"and all the glorious or noble ones of his father's house shall lean upon him, children, and children's children:"

so all the children of God, and who are also Christ's spiritual seed and offspring, these depend upon him for grace, and all the supplies of it; they boast in him for righteousness and strength, and rely upon him for life and salvation:

all vessels of small quantity; from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons; meaning those of his family, that were some of lesser, others of greater capacities, for whom he provided places and posts under him, suitable thereunto; none were forgotten or neglected by him: this simile, of vessels of various sorts and sizes, is made use of, in perfect agreement with Eliakim's being compared to a nail, on which vessels in a house are hung by their handles. The Targum is,

"from young men to little ones; from the priests clothed with the ephod, to the Levites that held the psalteries."

In the typical sense, it is to be understood of the vessels of mercy; some of which are larger, and others lesser; some capable of receiving more grace and larger gifts, and others less; to whom Christ communicates, and whom he fills, according to their capacities; all whose wants he supplies, and whose persons he supports; he fills them with his grace, and he fits them for glory; see **Ro 9:23**.

Isaiah 22:25

Ver. 25. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts,.... That Shebna is deposed, and Eliakim put in his place:

shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; meaning, not Eliakim before spoken of, who really was a nail fastened in a sure place, and not to be removed; but Shebna, who thought himself to be as a nail in a sure place, being put into it by the king, and supported by his authority, and courted by his friends and flatterers; for to him the whole preceding prophecy is directed, which is carried down to this verse;

for all that is said of the glory and usefulness of his successor Eliakim was to be told to him, which would make it still the more grievous to him, to be degraded and disgraced as he would be, signified by his being removed, cast down, and falling:

and the burden that [was] upon it shall be cut off; those that were dependent upon him, his family, his flatterers, and friends, such whom he had raised by his influence and authority to considerable places, and whom he supported in them; these would fall with him, as is usual when a royal favourite, or prime minister of state, falls into disgrace, and is removed; an instance of this may be seen in Haman, whose family and friends were involved in the same ruin with him, **Es 9:12** and it may be observed, that many dependents, which a minister of state always has, are a burden to him. The Targum interprets this of the burden of prophecy; and Jarchi says, that some explain it thus,

"the prophecy, which thou prophesiest, concerning it, shall be confirmed;"

as follows:

for the Lord hath spoken [it]; and therefore it shall come to pass;

as the Targum,

"for, so it is decreed by the word of the Lord."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 23

This chapter gives an account both of the desolation and restoration of Tyre, an ancient city of Phoenicia. Its desolation is described as so complete, that a house was not left in it, Isa 23:1 and by the fewness and stillness of the inhabitants of it, with which it had been replenished, it having been a mart of nations, Isa 23:2 and by the shame and pain Zidon, a neighbouring city, was put into, on account of it,
Isa 23:4 and by the removal of its inhabitants to other places,
Isa 23:6 all which is attributed to the counsel, purpose, and commandment of God, to destroy it; whose view was to stain their pride, and bring them into

contempt, Isa 23:8 the means and instruments made use of to this purpose were the Assyrians or Chaldeans, Isa 23:13 and its desolation is further aggravated by the loss of its trade; hence the merchants of other countries are called to mourning, Isa 23:1 the date and duration of this desolation were seventy years, Isa 23:15 after which it should be restored, and its merchandise and commerce with all the nations of the earth be revived again, Isa 23:15.

Ver. 1. The burden of Tyre,.... Or a prophecy concerning the destruction of it. The Targum is,

"the burden of the cup of cursing, to give Tyre to drink."

This was a famous city in Phoenicia, which exceeded in renown and grandeur all the cities of Syria and Phoenicia {h}, and was much known for its trade and navigation, for which it was well situated by the sea; and indeed new Tyre stood in it, about half a mile from the shore, before it was joined to the continent by Alexander the great: but this seems to be old Tyre, and, was upon the continent, which was built by the Phoenicians before the Trojan war {i}, and two hundred and forty years before the temple of Solomon {k}. It had its name rwu, "Tzur", in the Hebrew language, from whence it is called Tyre, from the rock on which it was built, that word so signifying. It is written here without a vau; and it is a rule with the Jews {l}, that whenever this word is written full, with all its letters, it is to be understood of the city of Tyre; but if wanting, it designs Rome; and Cocceius interprets the whole prophecy of the antichristian city.

Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; not of Carthage, as the Septuagint version; but of Tartessus in Spain, which traded with Tyre, and from whence the Phoenicians are said to have large quantities of gold and silver. Some interpret it Tarsus, a seaport in Cilicia, which lay nearer to Tyre, the same place the Apostle Paul was of, Ac 22:3 though by Tarshish may be meant the sea, as it sometimes is, and as the Targum and Jarchi here interpret it, and so designs ships in general; or, as the Targum, those that go down in the ships of the sea; or all sorts of persons, from every quarter, that sailed in ships to Tyre, and traded with it; these are now called to mourning and lamentation, because their commerce with it was now over:

for it is laid waste; not Tarshish, but Tyre; and this was done, not by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, who indeed besieged it for the space of five years, but took it not; the Tyrians with twelve ships scattered his fleet, and took five hundred of his men, this was when Elulaeus was king of Tyre {m};

nor by Alexander the great; for though it was besieged and taken by him, yet before his time it had been besieged by Nebuchadnezzar thirteen years, and at last was taken by him, when Ithobalus was king of it {n}: and this seems rather intended here, since seventy years after this it was to be restored again, which best accords with those times, as will be seen hereafter:

so that there is no house, no entering in; no port or haven open to go in at, no shops to vend their goods in, no warehouses to lay them up in, nor inns to lodge at, as well as no private houses for the inhabitants to dwell in, all being destroyed by the enemy:

from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them; Chittim was one of the sons of Javan, as was also Tarshish, by whom the isles of the Gentiles were divided, Ge 10:4 from whom the Ionians or Grecians descended; so that Chittim seems to design some part of Greece, or isles belonging to it. The Macedonians are called by this name; and Alexander the Macedonian is said to come out of the land of Chittim, as in the Apocrypha:

"And it happened, after that Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came out of the land of Chettiim, had smitten Darius king of the Persians and Medes, that he reigned in his stead, the first over Greece," (1 Maccabees 1:1)

"Beside this, how they had discomfited in battle Philip, and Perseus, king of the Citims, with others that lifted up themselves against them, and had overcome them:" (1 Maccabees 8:5)

hence some think he is designed here, and the destruction of Tyre by him; and the words may be rendered, "from the land of Chittim he is revealed", or "appears unto them"; that is, as Jarchi glosses it, the destroyer to the men of Tyre, though he by Chittim understands the Cuthites. Josephus says {o} Chittim the son of Javan possessed the island Chethima, now called Cyprus, and from hence all islands, and most maritime places, are called Chittim by the Hebrews; and observes, that one of the cities of Cyprus is called Citium. And in the lamentation for Tyre, Eze 27:6, we read of the isles of Chittim; by which are meant perhaps the isles in the Aegean and Ionian seas, who traded with Tyre, and from these first came the tidings of Tyre's destruction to the ships or merchants of Tarshish; which agrees with a Hebrew exposition mentioned by Jarchi,

"from the land of Chittim is revealed to the men of Tarshish the destruction of Tyre; for the inhabitants of Tyre fled to Chittim, and from thence the rumour was heard."

The sense which R. Joseph Kimchi gives of the passage, as his son David relates, is this,

"Chittim were merchants that went to Babylon, and told them that they might go to Tyre, and would be able to take it, and they would help them, and carry them there by sea."

But it seems more likely that those trading people, by going from one country to another, got knowledge of the design of the Babylonians against Tyre, and acquainted that city with it. Some join the words, "from the land of Chittim", to the preceding, thus, "no entering in from the land of Chittim, it is revealed", or made known; that is, it is some way or other made known to the merchants of Chittim {p} that there is no entrance into Tyre, the city being laid waste and its port ruined, so that it is in vain for them to send their ships; to which the Septuagint in some measure agrees,

"because it perishes, and there are none come from the land of Chittim, it is carried captive."

The Targum is,

"they shall come from the land of Chittim against them;"

which seems to favour the first sense.

{h} Curt. l. 4. sect. 2. {i} Justin, l. 18. c. 3. {k} Joseph. Antiqu. I. 8. c. 3. sect. 1. {l} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 61. fol. 54. 2. {m} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 9. c. 14. sect. 2. {n} Ib. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 1. & contr. Apion, I. 1. sect. 21. {o} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1. {p} So some in Vatablus.

Isaiah 23:2

Ver. 2. Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle,.... Either the isles of Chittim, or other islands that traded with Tyre, the singular being put for the plural, called upon to grieve and mourn, because the city of their merchandise was destroyed, as Kimchi; or of Tyre itself, which being situated at some distance from the shore, was an island itself, until it was joined to the continent by Alexander {q}; and even old Tyre might be so called, it being usual in Scripture to call places by the seashore isles; and besides, old Tyre included in it new Tyre, the island, as Pliny {r} suggests; who are instructed to be silent as mourners, and to cease from the hurries of business, which they would be obliged to, and not boast of their power and wealth, as they had formerly done, or attempt to defend themselves, which would be in vain:

thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished; Zidon was a very ancient city of Phoenicia, more ancient than Tyre; for Tyre was a colony of the Zidonians, and built by them, and so might be said to be replenished by them with men from the first, as it also was with mariners, Eze 27:8 and likewise with merchants and wares, they being a trading and seafaring people; wherefore they are spoken of as merchants, and as passing over the sea: or this may be understood of the isles replenished with goods by the merchants of Tyre and Zidon, but now no more, and therefore called to mourning.

{q} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19. {r} Ibid.

Isaiah 23:3

Ver. 3. And by great waters the seed of Sihor,.... Sihor is the river Nile in Egypt; it had its name from the black colour of its waters, as in **Jer 2:18** hence called by the Greeks Melas, and by the Latins Melo: the "seed" of it intends what was sown and grew upon the banks of it, or was nourished by the overflow of this river throughout the land, and includes corn, flax, paper, &c. with which Egypt abounded; and when this is said to be "by great waters", the meaning either is, that it grew by great waters, the waters of the Nile, and through the influence of them; or that it came by great waters to Tyre; that is, by the waters of the sea, the Mediterranean Sea:

the harvest of the river [is] her revenue; this clause is the same with the former, and serves to explain it; the river is the river Nile, the harvest is the seed that was sown and grew by it, and which at the proper season, when ripe, was gathered from it, and carried in ships to Tyre, with which that city was supplied and enriched, as if it had been its own produce:

and she is a mart of nations; Tyre was a city to which all nations traded, it was a mart for them all, and where they brought their wares to sell, and always found a market for them, here they had vent. The twenty seventh chapter of

Ezekiel Eze 27:1 is a proper commentary on this clause.

Isaiah 23:4

Ver. 4. Be thou ashamed, O Zidon,.... A city near to Tyre, about twenty five miles from it; Jarchi says it was within a day's walk of it; these two cities, as they were near to each other, so they were closely allied together, and traded much with one another, so that the fall of Tyre must be distressing and confounding to Zidon; and besides, Tyre was a colony of the Zidonians, and therefore, Isa 23:12, is called the daughter of Zidon, and could not but be affected with its ruin, and the more, as it might fear the same would soon be its case:

for the sea hath spoken; which washed the city of Tyre; or those that sailed in it; or rather Tyre itself, so called because its situation was by the sea, the island was encompassed with it:

[even] the strength of the sea; which was enriched by what was brought by sea to it, and was strengthened by it, being surrounded with the waters of it as with a wall, and had the sovereignty over it:

saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, [nor] bring up virgins; either the sea itself, which now no more brought great numbers of young people to Tyre, children to be educated, young men to be instructed in trade and business, and virgins to be given in marriage, the city being destroyed; or Tyre, which before was very populous, full of children, young men, and maidens, but now desolate; and which formerly sent out colonies abroad, and was a mother city to many, as Pliny says {s}; it was famous for the birth of many cities, as Lepti, Utica, Carthage, and Gades or Cales; but now it was all over with her. Some render it as a wish, "O that I had never travailed", &c. and so the Targum.

{s} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.

Isaiah 23:5

Ver. 5. As at the report concerning Egypt,.... Its future destruction prophesied of, Isa 19:1 or what had in times past befallen it when the ten plagues were inflicted on it, and Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the Red Sea; the report of which filled the neighbouring nations with fear and trembling, and put them into a panic; so the Targum,

"as they heard the plague with which the Egyptians were smitten:"

[so] shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre; of the destruction of that; this should have the like effect upon the nations round about them, especially such as traded with them, as the judgments on Egypt had upon their neighbours; for, as for what was to come, the destruction of Tyre was before the destruction of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar: though some read the words, and they will bear to be read thus, "when the report" was made, or came "to the Egyptians, they will be in pain at", or "according to the report of Tyre" {t};

"when it was heard in Egypt, pain shall take them for Tyre;"

as soon as the Egyptians heard of the taking and ruin of Tyre, they were in pain, as a woman in travail, partly fearing their own turn would be next, Tyre lying in the way of the Chaldeans unto them; and partly because of the loss of trade they sustained through the destruction of that city. In like pain will be the kings or merchants of the earth, at the destruction of Rome, Re 18:9 and, according to an exposition mentioned by Jarchi, Tyre here is Edom; that is, Rome, for that with the Jews is commonly meant by Edom.

{t} So the Septuagint, Vatbalus, and others.

Isaiah 23:6

Ver. 6. Pass ye over to Tarshish,.... Either to Tartessus in Spain, or to Tarsus in Cilicia, which lay over against them, and to which they might transport themselves, families, and substance, with greater ease; or "to a province of the sea", as the Targum, any other seaport; the Septuagint says to Carthage, which was a colony of the Tyrians; and hither the Assyrian {u} historians say they did transport themselves; though Kimchi thinks this is spoken, not to the Tyrians, but to the merchants that traded with them, to go elsewhere with their merchandise, since their goods could no more be disposed of in that city as usual.

Howl, ye inhabitants of the isle: of Tyre, as in Isa 23:2 or of every isle, as

Aben Ezra, which traded here, because now their commerce was at an end; so Kimchi.

{u} Apud Hieron. in loc.

Isaiah 23:7

Ver. 7. [Is] this your joyous [city]?.... Which the other day looked so gay, brisk, and cheerful, through the number of its inhabitants, largeness of trade, fullness of provisions, and pleasures of every kind; and now distressed and desolate, and no voice of joy and gladness heard in it:

whose antiquity [is] of ancient days; the most ancient city in Phoenicia, excepting Zidon, as Strabo {w} says; and it was in being in the days of Joshua, Jos 19:29 if the words there are rightly rendered; and if so, Josephus must be mistaken, unless he speaks of insular Tyre, when he says {x}, that from the building of Tyre to the building of the temple (of Solomon) were two hundred and forty years, which must fall very short of the times of Joshua; such {y} seem to be nearer the truth, who make Agenor, the father of Cadmus, to be the builder of this city, who lived about the times of Joshua. The Tyrians indeed boasted of a still greater antiquity, and to which boasts perhaps reference is here had; for one of the priests of Tyre told Herodotus {z} that their city had been inhabited two thousand three hundred years; and Herodotus lived in the times of Artaxerxes and Xerxes, about the year of the world 3500. According to Sanchoniatho {a}, it was inhabited by Hypsuranius, who first built cottages of rushes, &c. in it; but these things are beyond all credit; however, certain it is that it was a very ancient city; it had the name of Palaetyrus, or old Tyre:

her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn; the sense is, that though the Tyrians had lived very delicately, and in great affluence, while their city was flourishing, yet now they should be very coarsely and roughly used; they should not ride on horses, or be drawn in carriages, but should be obliged to walk on foot, and be led or driven into a foreign country, Assyria or Chaldea, or to some province or provinces belonging to that empire; where they should be, not as inhabitants, but as sojourners and strangers; and should be used, not as freemen, but as captives and slaves. Grotius, by "her feet", understands the feet of her ships, sails and oars, and mariners themselves, by means of which she got into distant places, for safety; and so it is reported in history {b}, that the Tyrians being long besieged by Nebuchadnezzar, and having no hopes of being delivered, prepared a convenient number of ships, abandoned their city, transported themselves, wives, children, and riches, and sailed from thence to Cyprus, Carthage, and other maritime cities of their tributaries, or confederates; so that the Babylonians, when they took the city, found little or nothing in it; see Eze 29:18 though the words will bear another sense, being, according to the accents, to be read in connection with the preceding clauses, thus, "[Is] this the joyous city? from the first days of her antiquity her feet brought unto her [inhabitants] from afar to sojourn"; that is, by her labour and pains, by her journeys and voyages for the sake of merchandise, which may be meant by her feet, she brought a great number of persons to sojourn in her {c}.

{w} Geograph. l. 16. p. 520. {x} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 3. sect. 1. {y} Curtius, l. 4. c. 4. {z} Herodot. l. 2. c. 44. {a} Apud Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 35. {b} See Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World: l. 2. c. 7. sect. 3. p. 198. {c} Reinbeck. de Accent. Heb. p. 399.

Isaiah 23:8

Ver. 8. Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning [city],.... Which had a king over it, to whom it gave a crown; and which crowned its inhabitants with riches and plenty, and even enriched the kings of the earth, Eze 27:33 this is said as wondering who could lay a scheme to destroy such a city, or ever think of succeeding in it; who could take it into his head, or how could it enter into his heart, or who could have a heart to go about it, and still less power to effect the ruin of such a city, which was the queen of cities, and gave laws and crowns, riches and wealth, to others; surely no mere mortal could be concerned in this; see Re 13:3:

whose merchants [are] princes; either really such, for even princes and kings of the earth traded with her, Eze 27:21 or they were as rich as princes in other countries were:

whose traffickers [are] the honourable of the earth; made rich by trafficking with her, and so attained great honour and glory in the world; see Re 18:3.

Isaiah 23:9

Ver. 9. The Lord of hosts hath purposed it,.... To destroy Tyre; who is wonderful in counsel, capable of forming a wise scheme, and able to put it in execution; being the Lord of armies in heaven and in earth: and his end in it was,

to stain the pride of all glory; Tyre being proud of its riches, the extent of its commerce, and the multitude of its inhabitants, God was resolved, who sets himself against the proud, to abase them; to pollute the glorious things they were proud of; to deal with them as with polluted things; to trample upon them:

[and] to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth: or, "to make light all the heavy ones of the earth" {d}; all such, who are top heavy with riches and honour, God can, and sometimes does, make as light as feathers, which the wind carries away, and they fall into contempt and disgrace with their fellow creatures; and the Lord's thus dealing with Tyre was not merely on their account, to stain their pride and glory, and disgrace their honourable ones; but for the sake of others also, that the great ones of the earth might see and learn, by this instance of Tyre, how displeasing to the Lord is the sin of pride; what a poor, vain, and perishing thing, worldly honour and glory is; and what poor, weak, feeble creatures, the princes and potentates of the earth are, when the Lord takes them in hand.

{d} Ura ydbkn lk lqhl.

Isaiah 23:10

Ver. 10. Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish,.... Or, "of the sea", as the Vulgate Latin; meaning Tyre, which was situated in the sea, and did, as it were, spring from it, and was fortified by it, and supported by ships of merchandise on it, from various places; but now, being about to be destroyed, the inhabitants of it are called upon to pass through it, and get out of it as fast as they could, even as swiftly as a river runs, and in great abundance or multitudes. Kimchi thinks the Tyrians are bid to pass to the daughter of Tarshish, that is, to Tarshish itself, to make their escape out of their own land, and flee thither for safety; this the accents will not admit of, there being an "athnach" upon the word "river"; rather the merchants of Tarshish, that were in Tyre, are exhorted to depart to their own land with all possible haste, lest they should be involved in its ruin; though the Targum inclines to the other sense,

"pass out of thy land, as the waters of a river flee to a province of the sea:"

[there is] no more strength; in Tyre, to defend themselves against the enemy, to protect their trade, and the merchants that traded with them; or, "no more girdle" {e}; about it; no more girt about with walls, ramparts, and other fortifications, or with soldiers and shipping, or with the sea, with which it was encompassed, while an island, but now no more, being joined to the continent by the enemy. Some think, because girdles were a part of merchandise, Pr 31:24, that this is said to express the meanness and poverty of the place, that there was not so much as a girdle left in it; rather that it was stripped of its power and authority, of which the girdle was a sign; see Isa 22:21.

{e} dwe xzm Nya "nulla est zona amplius", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "non est cingulum amplius", Cocceius.

Isaiah 23:11

Ver. 11. He stretched out his hand over the sea,.... That is, the Lord of hosts, who had purposed to destroy Tyre, stretched out his hand of power over it, called the sea, as in Isa 23:4 because situated in it, supported by it, and had the sovereignty of it; in like manner as he stretched out his hand on the Red Sea, and destroyed Pharaoh and the Egyptians in it; to which the allusion may be:

he shook the kingdoms; of Tyre and Zidon, which were both kingdoms, and distinct ones; and also made other neighbouring kingdoms shake and tremble when these fell, fearing it would be their case next. Some understand this of the moving of Nebuchadnezzar, and of the kings of the provinces under him, to come against Tyre:

the Lord hath given a commandment against the merchant [city]; the city of Tyre, so famous for merchandise, that it was the mart of nations, as in Isa 23:3 or "against Canaan", in which country Tyre and Zidon were, being originally built and inhabited by the posterity of Canaan, Ge 10:15:

to destroy the strong holds thereof; either of the merchant city Tyre, whose fortifications were strong, both by nature and art; or "of Canaan", whose strong holds, or fortified cities, the principal of them were Tyre and Zidon; so Jarchi: and if the Lord of hosts gives a commandment to destroy it and its strong holds, as he did to Nebuchadnezzar and his army, and afterwards to Alexander and his, who could save them? that is, God said it, who gave commandment to destroy it.

Isaiah 23:12

Ver. 12. And he said, thou shalt no more rejoice,.... Not meaning that she should never more rejoice, but not for a long time, as Kimchi interprets it; when her calamity should come upon her, her jovial time, her time of mirth, jollity, and revelling, would be over for a time; for, at the end of seventy years, she should take her harp, and sing again, Isa 23:15 for the words seem to be spoken of Tyre, concerning whom the whole prophecy is; though some think Zidon is here meant, which, being near, suffered at the same time with Tyre, or quickly after:

O thou oppressed virgin! Tyre is called a "virgin", because of her beauty, pride, and lasciviousness, and because never before subdued and taken: and "oppressed", because now deflowered, ransacked, plundered, and ruined, by Nebuchadnezzar:

daughter of Zidon: some think Zidon itself is meant, just as daughter of Zion means Zion herself, &c.; but it may be also observed, that such cities that have sprung from others, or have their dependence on them, are called their daughters; so we read of Samaria and her daughters, and Sodom and her daughters, Eze 16:46 and so Tyre is called the daughter of Zidon, because it was a colony of the Zidonians {f}; and at first built and supported by them, though now grown greater than its mother:

arise, pass over to Chittim; to the isle of Cyprus, which was near them, and in which was a city called Citium; or to Macedonia, which was called the land of Chittim, as in the Apocrypha:

"And it happened, after that Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came out of the land of Chettiim, had smitten Darius king of the Persians and Medes, that he reigned in his stead, the first over Greece," (1 Maccabees 1:1)

or to the isles of the Aegean and Ionian seas; or to Greece and Italy; which latter sense is approved by Vitringa, who thinks the islands of Corsica, and Sardinia, and Sicily, are meant, which were colonies of the Tyrians; and so in Isa 23:1:

there also shalt thou have no rest; since those countries would also fall into the enemy's hands, either the Babylonians, or the Medes and Persians, or the

Romans; into whose hands Macedonia, Carthage, and other colonies of the Tyrians fell, so that they had no rest in any of them.

{f} Justin ex Trogo, l. 18. c. 3.

Isaiah 23:13

Ver. 13. Behold the land of the Chaldeans,.... Not Tyre, as some think, so called, because founded by the Chaldeans, who finding it a proper place for "ships", so they render the word "tziim", afterward used, and which is so interpreted by Jarchi, built the city of Tyre; but the country called Chaldea is here meant, and the Babylonish empire and monarchy, particularly Babylon, the head of it:

this people was not; a people, or of any great note and figure:

[till] the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness; Nimrod was the first builder of Babel, in the land of Shinar, and from that land went forth Ashur, and built Nineveh, the city Rehoboth, and Calah, which were built for people that lived scattered up and down in fields and desert places; so that the Assyrians were the first founders of Chaldea; and after it had been inhabited by the Chaldeans, it was seized upon by the Assyrians, and became a province of theirs:

they set up the towers thereof; the towers of Babylon, not of Tyre. Jarchi interprets it of building bulwarks against Tyre:

they raised up the palaces thereof; the stately buildings of Babylon; or razed them; so Jarchi; also the Targum,

"they destroyed the palaces thereof:"

[and] he brought it to ruin: or he will do it; the past tense for the future, i.e. God will bring Babylon to ruin; and therefore it need not seem strange that Tyre should be destroyed, since this would be the case of Babylon. Sir John Marsham {g} interprets the words thus,

"look upon Babylon, the famous metropolis of the Chaldeans; the people, that possess that city, not along ago dwelt in deserts, having no certain habitation; Nabonassar the Assyrian brought men thither, the Scenites (the inhabitants of

Arabia Deserta, so called from their dwelling in tents); he fortified the city, he raised up towers, and built palaces; such now was this city, founded by the Assyrian; yet God hath brought it to ruin; Babylon shall be destroyed as Tyre;"

and this instance is brought to show that a city and a people, more ancient and powerful than Tyre, either had been or would be destroyed; and therefore need not call in question the truth or credibility of the prophecy relating to Tyre; but the sense of the whole, according to Vitringa, seems rather to be this: "behold the land of the Chaldeans"; the country they now inhabit; take notice of what is now about to be said; it may seem strange and marvellous: "this people was not"; not that they were of a late original, for they were an ancient people, who descended from Chesed, the son of Nahor, but for a long time of no account, that lived scattered up and down in desert places: till "the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness"; he drove out the Arabians from Mesopotamia, and translated the Chaldeans thither, who before inhabited the wilderness: "they set up the towers thereof, they raised up the palaces"; that is, the Assyrians fortified and adorned the city of Babylon, the metropolis of the country; so Herodotus {h} says the Assyrian kings adorned the walls and temples of Babylon; now behold this land of the Chaldeans, or the people that inhabit it, as poor and as low as they have been, who owe their all to the Assyrians, even these "shall bring" Tyre "to ruin"; so that the instruments of the ruin of Tyre are here described; which, when this prophecy was delivered, might seem improbable, the Assyrians being possessors of monarchy.

{g} Canon. Chronic. Egypt, &c. p. 509. Ed. 4to. {h} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 184.

Isaiah 23:14

Ver. 14. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish,.... As in Isa 23:1.
See Gill on "Isa 23:1":

for your strength is laid waste; meaning Tyre, a strong seaport, where their ships were safe, and always found vent for their goods and merchandise; and so it was the strength and support of their country; but was now destroyed, and therefore was matter of lamentation and mourning.

Isaiah 23:15

Ver. 15. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... When Tyre is destroyed, from that time forward:

that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years; shall so long lie in its ruin, and not be rebuilt; it shall be without inhabitants, and unfrequented by men; there shall be no merchandise in it during that time; no merchants will come nigh it; she will be like a harlot cast off and forgotten by her lover: the term of time is the same with that of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and great part of it at least run out along with it; for Tyre was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, as Jerusalem was, though some time after it, and was restored when the Babylonish empire was destroyed, at the expiration of seventy years:

according to the days of one king; or kingdom, the Babylonish kingdom, which lasted so long in Nebuchadnezzar's family; whose family, he himself, his son, and son's son, are here meant, as Aben Ezra thinks; and seems to be the more commonly received sense; though Kimchi and others understand it of the days of a man, which are seventy years,
Ps 90:10 and so it is added in the Septuagint version, "as the time of a man"; which perhaps was a marginal note, way of explanation, and crept into the text. Jarchi is of opinion King David is meant, whose age was seventy years, though he is at a loss to give a reason for this his opinion; but Kimchi suggests one, and that is, the covenant which was between Hiram king of Tyre and David; and this is mentioned to put the Tyrians in mind of the breach of it, which had brought desolation upon them; some understand this of the King Messiah {i}:

after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot; being rebuilt and restored to its former state; as a harlot who has been cast off by her lovers, on account of some disease she has laboured under, and through a dislike of her; but, having recovered her health, makes use of her arts, and this among others, to sing a song, in order to draw, by her melodious voice, her lovers to her again; and so Tyre being built again, and out of the hands of its oppressors, and restored to its former liberty, should make use of all arts and methods to recover her trade, and draw merchants from all parts to her again.

{i} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1. Yalkut Simeoni in Psal. lxxii. fol. 112. 2.

Isaiah 23:16

Ver. 16. Take a harp, go about the city,.... As harlots used to do, that by their music, both vocal and instrumental, they might allure men into their company to commit fornication with them; so Tyre is directed to, or rather this is a prophecy that she should take very artful and ensnaring methods to restore her commerce and merchandise:

thou harlot that hast been forgotten; See Gill on "Isa 23:15":

make sweet melody; or, "do well by striking" {k}; that is, the harp in her hand; strike it well with art and skill, so as to make melody, and give pleasure:

sing many songs; or, "multiply a song" {l}; sing one after another, till the point is carried aimed at:

that thou mayest be remembered; men may took at thee again, and trade with thee as formerly, who had been so long forgotten and neglected.

{k} Ngn ybyjh "benefac pulsando", Junius; "belle pulsa", Piscator. {l} ryv ybrh "multiplica cantum", Piscator.

Isaiah 23:17

Ver. 17. And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years,.... When the seventy years before mentioned are ended:

that the Lord will visit Tyre; not in judgment, as before, but in mercy:

and she shall return to her hire; trade and merchandise; that shall revive, and be as in times past:

and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world, upon the face of the earth; be a mart of nations again, as in Isa 23:3 that is, trade and traffic with all nations of the earth, in the most ample and public manner; this is called committing fornication, in agreement with the simile of a harlot before used, whereunto Tyre is compared; as well as to observe the illicit ways and methods used in her commerce. The Targum is,

"and her merchandise shall be sufficient to all the kingdoms of the people, which are upon the face of the earth;"

and so the Septuagint,

"and shall be a mart to all the kingdoms of the world, upon the face of the earth."

The phrase is used of mystical Tyre or Babylon, and of her merchants, in Re 18:3.

Isaiah 23:18

Ver. 18. And her merchandise, and her hire,.... Or, "but her merchandise", &c. not the same as before; or, however, not as carried on at the same time, but many ages after, even in the times of the Gospel; for this part of the prophecy respects the conversion of the Tyrians, in the first ages of Christianity; this is prophesied of elsewhere, Ps 45:12 and was fulfilled in the times of the apostles, Ac 11:19 and so Kimchi and Jarchi say this is a prophecy to be fulfilled in the days of the Messiah {m}; and then the trade of this people, and what they got by it,

should be holiness to the Lord; that is, devoted, at least, great part of it, to holy uses and service; that is, in defraying of all expenses in carrying on the worship of God, for the maintenance of Gospel ministers, and for the supply and support of the poor saints:

it shall not be treasured, nor laid up: in order to be laid out in pride and luxury; or to be kept as useless, to gratify a covetous disposition; or for posterity to come:

for her merchandise shall be laid up for them, that dwell before the Lord; part of what should be gained by trading, at least, should be laid by for religious uses, as is directed, 1Co 16:1 even for the relief of poor saints in general, who assemble together before the Lord, for the sake of his worship; and particularly for the support of the ministers of the Gospel, who stand before the Lord, and minister in holy things, in his name, to the people:

to eat sufficiently; that they may have food convenient for them, and enough of it; or, in other words, have a sufficient maintenance, a comfortable supply of food for themselves and families, and raiment also; as follows:

and for durable clothing; that they may have a supply of clothing, and never want a coat to put upon their backs. This prophecy, as it belongs to Gospel times, is a proof of the maintenance of Gospel ministers, that they ought to be liberally provided for; and care should be taken that they want not food and raiment, but have a fulness and sufficiency of both, and that which is convenient for them.

{m} So in Midrash, Kohelet, fol. 62. 3.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 24

This chapter contains a prophecy of calamities that should come upon the whole world, and the inhabitants of it, for their sins; of the preservation of a remnant; of the visitation of the kings of the earth; and of the appearance of Christ in his glory and majesty. The miserable condition of the world, and its inhabitants, especially all within the Romish jurisdiction, is set forth by various phrases, Isa 24:1 the causes of which are the transgression and mutation of the laws and ordinances of Christ, Isa 24:5 the effects of which are the cursing and burning of the inhabitants, Isa 24:6 cessation of all joy among them, Isa 24:7 and the destruction of their chief city, Rome, Isa 24:10 then follows a prophecy of a remnant that shall escape, and be brought into a very comfortable condition, and sing for joy, and glorify God in the midst of the earth, and in the uttermost parts of it, Isa 24:13 but it is intimated it shall go ill with others for their perfidy and treachery; fear and danger shall attend them everywhere, Isa 24:16 yea, in the issue, the world shall be shaken, and moved and removed, and be utterly dissolved, fall and not rise more, Isa 24:19 when the kings and great ones of the earth shall be taken prisoners, and punished by the Lord,
Isa 24:21 and then Christ shall take to himself his great power, and reign with his people gloriously in the New Jerusalem state,
Isa 24:23.

Ver. 1. Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty,.... Some, by the "earth", only understand the land of Israel or Judea, and interpret the prophecy of the captivity of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser, as Kimchi, and other Jewish writers; and others, of the destruction of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar; but some take in along with them the neighbouring nations who suffered by the same princes at the same time. Vitringa interprets the whole of the times of the Maccabees, as also the three following chapters Isa 25:1; though it is best to understand it of the Papal world, and all the antichristian states; and there are some things in it, at the close of it, which respect the destruction of the whole world. The Septuagint version uses the word by which Luke intends the whole Roman empire, **Lu 2:1** and the Arabic version here renders it, "the whole world": the "emptying" of it is the removal of the inhabitants of it by wars and slaughters, which will be made when the seven vials of God's wrath will be poured upon all the antichristian states; see Re 16:1 and this being a most remarkable and wonderful event, is prefaced with the word "behold":

and maketh it waste; or desolate; the inhabitants and fruits of it being destroyed. R. Joseph Kimchi, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, renders it, "and opened it" {n}; and explains it of the opening of the gates of a city to the enemy, so as that men may go out of it; to which the Targum inclines paraphrasing it,

"and shall deliver it to the enemy:"

and turneth it upside down; or, "perverteth the face of it" {o}; so that it has not the form it had, and does not look like what it was, but is reduced to its original chaos, to be without form and void; cities being demolished, towns ruined, fields laid waste, and the inhabitants slain; particularly what a change of the face of things will there be in the destruction of the city of Rome! see Re 18:7. The Targum is,

"and shall cover with confusion the face of its princes, because they have transgressed the law:"

and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof; who will be obliged to fly from place to place from the sword of their victorious enemies. All is spoken in the present tense, though future, because of the certainty of it.

{n} So "aperuit totam portam", Golius, col. 321. {o} hynp hwew "et pervertet faciem ejus", Piscator.

Isaiah 24:2

Ver. 2. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest,.... Or, "prince" {p}; no order or rank of men will fare better than another; their dignity, in things civil or ecclesiastical, will not secure them from ruin; it will be no better with princes and priests than the common people; they shall all alike share in the common destruction. Not Jeroboam's priests, but rather the Romish priests, are here meant, who have led the people into superstition and idolatry; blind leaders of the blind, and so both fall into the ditch together:

as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; there shall be no distinction of superiors and inferiors; as not of prince and subjects, so not of master and servant, mistress and maid; no respect will be had to persons, but the one shall be treated even as the other:

as with the buyer, so with the seller; the one that bought an estate, and thought to enjoy it, will be no better off than he that sold it, and perhaps spent the money; the one will be possessed of no more than the other, seeing what the one had bought, and the other sold, will now be in the possession of a third:

as with the lender, so with the borrower; their condition will be equal; he that was so poor that he was obliged to borrow to carry on his business, or for the necessaries of life, and so he that was so rich that he was capable of lending, now the one will be no richer than the other, but both on a level; the substance of the lender being taken from him:

as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him; this was forbidden the Jews by a law, De 23:19 wherefore not the land of Judea is here meant, but the antichristian states, among whom this practice has greatly prevailed.

{p} Nhkk "ac praesidi", Junius & Tremellius; "sic gubernator", Piscator.

Isaiah 24:3

Ver. 3. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled,.... Entirely emptied of its inhabitants, and wholly spoiled of its riches and substance; this is repeated, and with greater strength, to confirm what is before said, and which receives a greater confirmation by what follows:

for the Lord hath spoken this word; who is able to perform it, and who is faithful to his threatenings, as to his promises; not a word of his shall ever fail; the judgments threatened to the antichristian world are his true and faithful sayings; and the ruin of Rome is certain, because strong is the Lord that judgeth her, Re 18:8.

Isaiah 24:4

Ver. 4. The earth mourneth, [and] fadeth away,.... It mourns, because of its inhabitants being destroyed; and it fades away, because stripped of its wealth and riches: so the kings of the earth, and merchants of it are represented as weeping and mourning at the destruction of Rome, because of its judgments, and the loss of its trade and riches, Re 18:9:

the world languisheth, [and] fadeth away: the inhabitants of it are like a sick man, that is so faint and feeble that he cannot stand, but totters and falls; and like the leaves of trees and flowers of the fields, whose strength and beauty are gone, and fade and fall:

the haughty people of the earth do languish: the kings and merchants of the earth before mentioned, who grow sick and faint through fear of what is coming upon them.

Isaiah 24:5

Ver. 5. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants of it,.... Or, "and the earth"; or, "for the earth is defiled" {q}; and so it is a reason why it is emptied and spoiled, because polluted and corrupted with the fornication of the whore of Rome, with her idolatries and superstitions, with which the inhabitants of the earth are defiled; or with her rapine and violence, cruelties, bloodshed, and murders; for blood defiles a land, Nu 35:33 all which are committed by the inhabitants of the earth, subject to the see of Rome, by reason of which it may be said to be corrupted or defiled; so the phrase may be interpreted "for", or "because of the inhabitants of it": thus Jarchi and Kimchi, because of their wickedness and impieties; see
Re 11:18 or, "the earth is deceitful" {r}, or plays the hypocrite; promising and showing as if it would bring forth fruit, and brings forth none, but is barren and unfruitful, because of the sins of the inhabitants of it; see Re 18:14:

because they have transgressed the laws; of God and man, as antichrist and his followers have done; who is that wicked anomov, that "lawless one", that sets up himself above laws, and takes upon him to dispense with the laws of God and man, **2Th 2:4** and in innumerable instances has transgressed both, casting all contempt upon them, and bidding all defiance to them, as being not at all bound and obliged by them:

changed the ordinance; or "ordinances"; the singular for the plural, a collective word; the ordinances of divine revelation, of the Gospel dispensation, those of baptism, and the Lord's supper; the former of these is changed, both as to subjects and mode, from adult baptism to infant baptism, from immersion to aspersion; and the latter, in it the bread and wine are pretended to be changed into the very body and blood of Christ, and is only given in one kind to the laity, and made a real sacrifice of, when its end and use are only to commemorate the one sacrifice already offered up; moreover, by the "ordinance" may be meant the Scriptures, which are the qx, "the rule of judgment"; which antichrist has most miserably perverted, and has changed and altered the sense of them; taking upon him to be the infallible interpreter of them, and judge of all controversies, forbidding the reading of them to the people, and setting up his own decrees, definitions, and determinations, above them; and is "that throne of iniquity, that frameth mischief, by a law", or ordinance, of his own making, and which he puts in the room of the divine law or ordinance,
Ps 94:20 where the same word is used as here; and he is that little horn, that thought to change times and laws, **Da 7:25**:

broken the everlasting covenant; not the eternal law of nature, nor the everlasting covenant of circumcision, or that made with Israel on mount Sinai; but the new covenant, or the administration of the covenant of grace under the Gospel dispensation, which is to last to the end of time, and lies in the ministration of the word, and administration of ordinances; which antichrist has done all that in his power lies to break, make null and void, by corrupting the word, and changing the ordinances, and setting up his own institutions above them, and against them.

{q} Urahw "et terra", V. L. "nam terra", Piscator. {r} hpnx "hypocrita est", Montanus, Tigurine version.

Isaiah 24:6

Ver. 6. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth,.... The inhabitants of it, and the fruits upon it, alluding to the earth being cursed for the sin of man, when it brought forth briers and thorns; this may denote the seven vials of God's wrath poured upon the earth, or the antichristian states. Some, by the curse, understand perjury or false swearing; so the Targum, "therefore, because of perjury (or a false oath) the earth is become a desert;"

of which popes, and Popish princes, cardinals, priests, Jesuits, &c. have been notoriously guilty:

and they that dwell therein are desolate: for want of houses, cities and towns being destroyed by war; or through famine, for want of provisions, the earth being cursed for their sins: or the words may be rendered, "for they that dwell therein are guilty" {s}; of idolatry, bloodshed, perjury, thefts, sorcery, and all other abominations, **Re 9:20**:

therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned; their cities burnt with fire, and particularly the city of Rome; or their persons, their bodies burnt with burning fevers, and pestilential diseases; and their minds with envy, fury, and madness: this may be the same with the fourth vial poured upon the sun, when men will be scorched with fire and great heat, and blaspheme, Re 16:8. The Vulgate Latin version here renders it, "shall be mad"; through the wrath of God poured out upon them:

and few men left; but what shall be consumed by fire or sword, by famine or pestilence, or by one or other of the vials; and those that remain shall be frightened, and give glory to the God of heavens
Re 11:13.

{s} wmvayw, hmartosan, Sept. "peccabunt", V. L. "quia deliquerunt", Tigurine version; "rei aguntur, sive luunt", Cocceius.

Isaiah 24:7

Ver. 7. The new wine mourneth,.... For want men to drink it, or because spilled by the enemy; or the inhabitants of the land mourn for want of it, not having their vintages as usual:

the vine languisheth; or is sickly, and so barren and unfruitful, does not bring forth its clusters of grapes as it used to do; there being none to prune it, and take care of it, and being trodden down by hostile forces. The Targum is,

"all that drink wine shall mourn, because the vines are broken down."

So the Romish harlot, and those that have drank of the wine of her fornication, and have lived deliciously, shall have, in one hour, death, and mourning, and famine, Re 18:7:

all the merryhearted do sigh; such, whose hearts wine has formerly made glad, shall now sigh for want of it; and such who have lived deliciously with the whore of Rome, and have had many a merry bout with her, shall now bewail her, and lament for her, when she shall be utterly burnt with fire, Re 18:9.

Isaiah 24:8

Ver. 8. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth,.... Or of drums, and such like musical instruments, used at junketings and jovial feasts. So when Babylon is fallen, the voice of harpers and musicians, and of pipers and trumpeters, shall be heard no more therein, Re 18:22:

the noise of them that rejoice endeth; the tumultuous noise of revelling persons at feasts and banquets, at marriages, and such like seasons; and so it is said, that when Babylon is destroyed, the voice of the bridegroom and the bride shall be heard no more at all therein, or the joy expressed on such occasions by their friends and companions,
Re 18:23:

the joy of the harp ceaseth; an instrument of music used on joyful occasions; the voice of harpers is particularly mentioned in
Re 18:22.

Isaiah 24:9

Ver. 9. They shall not drink wine with a song,.... They that have wine to drink shall not drink it with that pleasure they have heretofore done; nor shall their drinking be attended with merry songs, such as are sung by drunkards, who, while they are quaffing, are chanting to the sound of the viol, or other musical instruments; see **Am 6:5**:

strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it; they shall have no gust for it, or relish of it, as they formerly had; either through bodily diseases upon themselves, or because of the calamities upon the nations and states in which they dwell: this will be the case of her that says, "I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow", Re 18:7.

Isaiah 24:10

Ver. 10. The city of confusion is broken down,.... Or "of vanity", as the Vulgate Latin version; or of "emptiness" or "desolation"; the word is "tohu", used in **Ge 1:2** this is to be understood not of Bethel, where one of Jeroboam's calves was, called Bethaven, or "the house of vanity"; nor Samaria, the chief city of the ten tribes; nor Jerusalem; but mystical Babylon, whose name signifies "confusion"; even the city of Rome, in which there is nothing but disorder and irregularity, no truth, justice, or religion; a city of vanity, full of superstition and idolatry, and devoted to ruin and desolation; and will be broke to pieces by the judgments of God, which will come upon it in one hour, Re 18:8:

every house is shut up, that no man may come in: or, "from coming in"; not for fear of the enemy, and to keep him out; but because there are no inhabitants in them, being all destroyed by one means or another, by fire or sword, or famine or pestilence, so that there is none to go in or out.

Isaiah 24:11

Ver. 11. [There] is a crying for wine in the streets,.... Not to them that have it, to come and sell it, as Kimchi; but for want of it: there shall be a howling and lamentation in the streets of Rome, during the siege of it, when there will be a famine of bread and of wine, as in Re 18:8 by those who used to drink wine, and make glad their hearts; but now shall be without it. This is put for all desirable things, which their souls lusted after; but now will be departed from them, Re 18:14:

all joy is darkened: or come to an eventide; the light of joy is turned into the darkness of misery and distress; this will be, when the fifth vial is poured out on the seat of the beast, and his kingdom will be full of darkness; and men will gnaw their tongues for pain, and yet not repent of their sins, but blaspheme the God of heaven,
Re 16:10:

the mirth of the land is gone; not Jerusalem, the joy of the whole earth, as

Jarchi; but the mirth and joy of the city of Rome;
See Gill on "Isa 24:8".

Isaiah 24:12

Ver. 12. In the city is left desolation,.... And nothing else, palaces, houses, and temples burnt, and inhabitants destroyed; none but devils, foul spirits, and hateful and unclean birds, inhabiting it,
Re 18:2:

and the gate is smitten with destruction; or "gates", the singular for the plural; none passing and repassing through them, as formerly, and themselves utterly destroyed. This, according to Kimchi, shall be in the days of the Messiah, in the times of Gog and Magog.

Isaiah 24:13

Ver. 13. When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people,.... When the above judgments shall be executed, the city of Rome shall be destroyed, and the vials of God's wrath are poured but on all the antichristian states, on all the followers of the beast, throughout the whole Romish jurisdiction:

[there shall be] as the shaking of an olive tree, [and] as the gleaning of grapes, when the vintage is done; as when an olive tree is shaken, or beaten with a staff, which was the usual way of gathering olives, and which the word {t} here signifies, there are some few left upon the uppermost or outermost branches, which cannot be reached; and as, after the vintage is got in, there are some grapes to be gleaned and gathered from the vines; see Isa 17:6 so it is here insinuated that there should be some, though but a few, a remnant, according to the election of grace, that should escape the above calamities, and be preserved as a seed for the church of God; and so it will be, that just before the destruction of mystical Babylon, the Lord's people will be called out of her, that they partake not of her sins, and of her plagues, Re 18:4. The Targum is,

"for now shall be left alone the righteous in the midst of the earth, among the kingdoms, as the shaking of olives, as the gleaning of grapes after the vintage;"

and to olives and grapes are these gracious persons fitly compared, for the goodness, loveliness, and fruitfulness of them, through the grace of God.

{t} tyz Pqnk "similes olivis destrictae oleae", Junius & Tremellius; "tanquam strictura oleae", Cocceius.

Isaiah 24:14

Ver. 14. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing,.... That is, as the Septuagint version adds,

"they that are left upon the earth;"

these shall lift up their voice, in singing the praises of God, for his judgments on Babylon, and avenging the blood of his saints; and for their deliverance and salvation, and the inestimable blessings they are now put into the possession of; these are they, who, having gotten the victory over the beast and his image, sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, Re 15:2:

for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea: so the Hebrew accents distinguish these clauses; and the sense is, that from the west, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, from the western nations, where Protestantism chiefly prevails; or from the Mediterranean Sea, which lay west of Judea; from the maritime countries, the countries bordering upon it, where at this time will appear many that will embrace the Gospel of Christ; or from the isles of the sea, as the phrase is explained in the next verse Isa 24:15, such as our isles of Great Britain and Ireland; great acclamations will be made unto the Lord, on account of his glorious majesty, seen in the destruction of antichrist, and in setting up his own kingdom and glory: these are the four and twenty elders, who will fall down, and give thanks to Christ, for taking to himself his great power, and reigning; and these triumphant and victorious persons are represented as standing on a sea, while they make their shouts and hallelujahs; see Re 11:16 this, with what follows in the two next verses Isa 24:15, belong to the Philadelphian church state, or spiritual reign of Christ, and express the light and joy that will attend that.

Isaiah 24:15

Ver. 15. Wherefore glorify ye the Lord, in the fires,.... These are the words of the remnant, now triumphing and singing, calling upon others also to glorify the Lord in the fires of affliction and tribulation, in which they had lately been, and had themselves done: or, "in the valleys" {u}; in low estates and conditions: or, "in holes" {w}; dens and clefts of rocks, where they fled from their persecuting enemies; but neither of these versions suit the state of the true church, as it will be at this time. The word "Urim", here used, which is one of the names of what was put into the breastplate of the high priest, signifies "lights"; which sense of the word the Vulgate Latin version retains, rendering it, "in doctrines glorify the Lord", and so the Targum,

"therefore, when light cometh to the righteous, they shall glorify the Lord;"

and so the words may be rendered, "glorify the Lord for the Urim", or "the lights"; for Christ, who has the true "Urim" and "Thummim", lights and perfections; for the light of his Gospel, and the truths of it, which will now be spread in a most wonderful manner throughout the world; to which times may be applied those words, "arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee--and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising", Isa 60:1 and which will be a just and sufficient reason for giving glory to the Lord:

[even] the name of the Lord God of Israel, in the isles of the sea; whose name will now be known, not in Israel, or among the Jews only, but in all distant and foreign countries, which are sometimes meant by the isles of the sea; and in all islands, even the most remote, who will have reason to join with them on the continent to glorify God, whose name will now be great in all the earth.

{u} Myrab "in vallibus". So Kimchi, Ben Melech, Munster, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator. {w} "In cavernis vel speluncis", Forerius, Sanctius.

Isaiah 24:16

Ver. 16. From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs,.... Of praise and thanksgivings, on account of the judgments of God on antichrist; for the glorious appearance of Christ's kingdom; for the spread of his Gospel throughout the world; for the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles everywhere; wherefore these songs are heard from all parts of the world, and the uttermost parts of them; these are the voices said to be heard in heaven, or in the church, everywhere, Re 11:15 so some Jewish writers {x} interpret the words of the days of the Messiah, and of the songs then to be sung:

[even] glory to the righteous; to the righteous One; meaning either the righteous God, who is essentially righteous in himself, and declaratively in his works of providence and grace, and in the judgments he executes on his enemies; on account of which, particularly, glory is here ascribed unto him, even for his judgments on the great whore, they being just and true, Re 16:6 or to Christ the righteous One, who is so as God, and as Mediator, and is the author of righteousness to his people; who ascribe the glory of deity, of salvation, and of righteousness to him, who is crowned with glory and honour now, and will be glorified on earth at this time; for then he, and he alone, will be exalted, and will reign before his ancients gloriously: or to righteous men, such who are made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them: it is a glory to have on the righteousness of Christ; and such as have it are all glorious within, and will be remarkably glorious in the latter day, a crown of glory in the hands of the Lord; and especially in the New Jerusalem church state, when they will have the glory of God upon them, as well as in the ultimate state. Ben Melech observes, that ybu signifies desire and good will; and so may suggest, that the righteous at this time will have all that their hearts can wish for and desire, as well as visibly appear to be the objects of God's light and pleasure. Some think that the word "tzebi", translated "glory", signifies the land of Judea, called "the glory of all lands", Eze 20:6 which will at this time be restored to the Jews, who will now be converted, and be all righteous:

but I said, my leanness, my leanness, woe unto me: the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously: this the prophet said, which brought leanness upon him; he either pining and fretting at the present state of his people, so very unlike to that which he now had a view of; they being a set of treacherous men, there being no faith in them, with respect to God or one another; no religion or truth, no honour nor honesty among them: or having in view the future state of this people when the Messiah should come; whom they would reject, and treacherously betray into the hands of the Gentiles, and crucify: or else, rather foreseeing, by a spirit of prophecy, the sad times that would be previous to those glorious ones before mentioned; as great declensions among professors; great coldness and lukewarmness in religious affairs, the consequence of which is leanness of soul; the interest of Christ brought very low, his witnesses being slain, and prophesying at an end; and all this through the treachery of false teachers that lie in wait to deceive: unless, rather, it can be thought that this refers to the Laodicean state, when there will be great lukewarmness and indifference in the professors of religion; great carnality and security, and much spiritual leanness, though great boasts of riches and fulness; and which will issue in the dissolution of the world, and the personal appearance of Christ, to which the following part of the chapter seems to relate. The Targum interprets the word "razi", which is repeated, and rendered "leanness", by a "secret" or mystery, thus,

"the prophet said, a secret, a reward for the righteous is shown unto me; a secret punishment for the wicked is revealed unto me;"

and so Jarchi explains it of two secrets, the secret of punishment, and the secret of salvation; but of the latter especially the prophet would not say woe unto me, nor indeed of the former; for as the one is desirable, so the other is but just and righteous, and neither of them secrets, or mysteries: rather, if the idea of a mystery or secret is to be retained, the prophet may be thought to be thrown into distress, in the foreview of the blindness that should happen to Israel, and continue till the fulness of the Gentiles came in, which the apostle calls a mystery, Ro 11:25 and of their rejection, because of their disbelief of the Messiah, and their perfidious usage of him and his followers, dealing very treacherously with them, and betraying them into the hands of wicked men.

{x} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 62. 3.

Isaiah 24:17

Ver. 17. Fear, and the pit, and the snare, [are] upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. This is to be understood not of the land of Judea only, and the inhabitants of it, but of all the earth; Kimchi interprets it of the nations of the world, particularly the Greeks and Turks; but the whole world, and the inhabitants of it, are meant, as the following verses show. There is an elegant play on words in the Hebrew, which cannot well be expressed in English, in the words "pachad, pachath, pach", fear, pit, and a snare; which are expressive of a variety of dangers, difficulties, and distresses; there seems to be an allusion to creatures that are hunted, who flee through fear, and fleeing fall into pits, or are entangled in snares, and so taken. Before the last day, or second coming of Christ to judge the world, there will be great perplexity in men's minds, great dread and fear upon their hearts, and much distress of nations; and the coming of the Son of Man will be as a snare upon the earth; see Lu 21:25.

Isaiah 24:18

Ver. 18. And it shall come to pass, [that] he who fleeth from the noise of the fear,.... From the fearful noise that will be made, the voices and thunderings heard in the heavens above, the sea and waves roaring below; or from wars, and rumours of wars, and terrible armies approaching and pursuing, Lu 21:25 or rather at the report of an object to be feared and dreaded by wicked men, even the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, **Re 1:7**:

shall fall into the pit; of ruin and destruction, dug for the wicked, Ps 94:13 just as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fell into the slime pits, when they fled from their conquerors, Ge 14:10:

and he that comes up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare; the meaning is, that he that escapes one trouble should fall into another, so that there will be no safety anywhere. Jarchi's note is,

"he that escapes the sword of Messiah ben Joseph, shall fall upon the sword of Messiah ben David; and he that escapes from thence shall be taken in a snare in the war of Gog:"

for the windows from on high are open; not hereby signifying, as Jerom thinks, that the Lord would now see all the sins of men, which, because he did not punish before, he seemed by sinners to be ignorant of; but the allusion is to the opening of the windows of heaven at the time of the deluge, **Ge 7:11** and intimates, that the wrath of God should be revealed from heaven, and the severest judgments be denounced, made manifest, and come down from thence in a very visible, public, and terrible manner, like an overflowing tempest of rain:

and the foundations of the earth do shake: very probably the dissolution of the world may be attended with a general earthquake; or this may denote the dread and terror that will seize the inhabitants of it.

Isaiah 24:19

Ver. 19. The earth is utterly broken down,.... Still alluding to the deluge, when the earth broke in upon the waters under it, if Mr. Burnet's theory of the earth can be supported:

the earth is clean dissolved; it will be an entire dissolution, nothing shall remain; all these things, as Peter says, the heavens and the earth, and all in them, shall be dissolved, **2Pe 3:11**:

the earth is moved exceedingly; out of its place and form, and shall fall into its original chaos and confusion. The Targum is,

"moving, the earth shall be moved; agitating, the earth shall be agitated; breaking or dissolving, the earth shall be broken or dissolved;"

which seems to express the more gradual and natural dissolution of the world. These expressions are used, and repeated, to declare the certain and complete destruction of it.

Isaiah 24:20

Ver. 20. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard,.... When it shall be moved and agitated to and fro, and dissolved; or this may be meant of the inhabitants, who shall be at their wits' end, and in the utmost confusion, not knowing what to do, nor where to go, having no more thought, nor sense, nor command of themselves, than a drunken man; and this is in just retaliation, that as they have been drunk with sin, having drank up iniquity like water, they shall now be drunk with punishment, which being heavy upon them, will make them stagger like a drunken man:

and shall be removed like a cottage; or, "a tent" {x}; either of soldiers or shepherds, which are easily taken down and moved; or like "a lodge" {y}, as the word is rendered **Isa 1:8**. The Septuagint render it a "fruit watch"; and, according to the Jewish writers, it signifies a booth or tent, in which the keepers of gardens or vineyards watched in the night; which Jarchi says was built on the top of a tree, and Kimchi on a hill; and, being made of light wood, was easily moved to and fro with the wind. The Targum is,

"and it goes and comes as a bed;"

that is, rocks as a cradle:

and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; that is, the punishment of transgression, which, like a talent of lead, in **Zec 5:8** shall crush it, and the inhabitants of it, to pieces:

and it shall fall, and not rise again; in the form it now is; for there will be new heavens and a new earth, in which the righteous, who will share the first resurrection, will dwell; for as for the first earth, or present one, it shall pass away, and no place be found for it, Re 20:11.

{x} hnwlmk "quasi tabernaculum", V. L. {y} "Ut diversoriolum", Piscator.

Isaiah 24:21

Ver. 21. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... Not at the precise exact time the earth shall be dissolved, but previous to it, within that dispensation that is called the last day:

[that] the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones [that are] on high; which is not to be understood of the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars in the heavens, as some; nor of the visiting of angels, as Aben Ezra; nor of the punishment of Satan, and his principalities and powers, who are reserved to the judgment of the great day; much less of the people of the Jews, their kings and rulers; nor the great monarchs of the earth, the Assyrian, Chaldean, and others; but of antichrist and, his dignified clergy, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, &c. who are the "host or army of that high one" {z}, as it may be rendered; of him that exalts himself above all that is called God, sitting in the high place in the temple of God, as if he was God; him, with all his mighty ones, will Christ, who is the true Jehovah, destroy with the breath of his mouth and the brightness of his coming; see **2Th 2:4**:

and the kings of the earth upon the earth; the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication with the whore of Rome; and who will make war with the Lamb, and shall be overcome by him, Re 17:2 or, "the kings of he earth" with "their earth" {a}; both they and their land shall be visited.

{z} Mwrmh abu le "super exercitum excelsi", Pagninus, Montanus, So Cocceius. {a} hmdah le "cum terra ipsorum", Junius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 24:22

Ver. 22. And they shall be gathered together,.... First to the battle of the great day of God Almighty at Armageddon, Re 16:14 and there being overcome and taken, they shall be gathered together

[as] prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison; in the prison or the grave, and in hell; as captives are, till such time as something is determined and ordered what to be done with them:

and after many days shall they be visited; or punished, that is, after the thousand years are ended, when the wicked dead will be all raised; after the battle of Gog and Magog, when Satan, the beast, and false prophet, and all their adherents, shall be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, Re 19:20.

Isaiah 24:23

Ver. 23. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed,.... Either literally understood; and the meaning is, that they shall be darkened, their light being eclipsed by the superior light of Christ, the sun of righteousness; see Mt 24:29 the New Jerusalem church state, which is referred to, will have no need of the light of the sun, or of the moon, Christ being the light thereof, Re 21:23 figuratively it may be interpreted of the kings and great men of the earth, as Aben Ezra; whose glory will be outshone by the transcendent lustre and glory of Christ, the King of saints. The Targum paraphrases it of idolaters thus,

"and they shall be confounded that worship the moon, and they shall be ashamed that worship the sun;"

perhaps this may have reference to the fourth vial, which shall be poured out upon the pope and his clergy, Re 16:8:

when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem; who is no other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Jehovah, the Lord of hosts or armies, of the sun, moon, and stars, the host of heaven, and of the heavenly host of angels, and of men on earth; who was King from eternity, and reigned during the Old Testament dispensation; came a King into this world, though his kingdom was not of it, nor was with observation: upon his ascension to heaven was made and declared Lord and Christ; and now rules in the hearts of his people by his Spirit and grace, and whose spiritual reign will more manifestly appear in the latter day; but here it is to be understood of his reign on earth, which will be personal, visible, and glorious, and in a different manner from what it now is, when he will be King over all the earth. Zion and Jerusalem, where he will reign, may be literally understood as the chief place of his residence during this state, the spot of ground where he was most despised and ill treated; see Zec 14:4 or mystically, the church in the New Jerusalem state, Re 21:2 here he will reign,

and before his ancients gloriously: or, "in glory"; in his own glory, both as God and as man, and Mediator; and in his Father's glory, and in the glory of his holy angels, in which he will come and appear; and therefore his appearing is called a glorious one, **Lu 9:26** **Tit 2:13** and this "before his ancients", the ancient patriarchs both before the flood, as Adam, Abel, &c. and after the flood, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others; the old Jewish church, the prophets and saints of the Old Testament dispensation; the apostles and elders of the Gospel churches under the New; the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the Gospel churches, so often spoken of in the book of the Revelation; very probably with reference to this text; and all the saints, in all ages, who will now be raised from the dead, and live and reign with him; these are his ancients, who are loved with an everlasting love, chosen in him before the foundation of the world, with whom a covenant was made in him, and grace given to them in him, before the world began; in the midst and presence of these he will reign, and they shall behold his glory; yea, these shall appear in glory; for so the words may be construed, "before his ancients", who are "glory", or "in glory" {b}; for they shall appear with him in glory, both in soul and body, having the glory of God upon them, **Col 3:4**.

{b} dwbk wynqz dgnw "et coram senibus suis, gloria", Pagninus, Montanus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 25:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 25

This chapter contains a thanksgiving, or a triumphant song, upon the destruction of antichrist, and the antichristian states, for benefits and blessings bestowed upon the church, and for the setting up of the glorious kingdom of

Christ in the Jerusalem state. It begins with a form of praise, and the reason of it in general, Isa 25:1 the particular instances of wonderful things are, the ruin of a certain city described, Isa 25:2 which will issue in the fear and glory of God, Isa 25:3 the great appearance of the Lord for his poor people, in being strength, refuge, and a shadow to them,
Isa 25:4 a rich feast made for them, Isa 25:6 the removal of the veil from all people, Isa 25:7 the abolition of death, and every affliction, Isa 25:8 the personal appearance of Christ unto salvation, Isa 25:9 the protection of the church, and the certain and utter destruction of her enemies, under the name of Moab,
Isa 25:10

Ver. 1. O Lord, thou [art] my God,.... Not by creation and providence only, but by covenant and grace. This is the first and foundation blessing of grace, and secures all the rest; in this true happiness consists, and is preferable to every other enjoyment; the knowledge of it is come at in effectual calling, and by the witnessing of the Spirit; it is the highest attainment of grace to be assured of it; and though it is not always seen and known, it will always remain, and will be the glory of the New Jerusalem state,
Re 21:3. These are the words, Aben Ezra says, either of the prophet, or of the ancients, before whom the Lord will reign,
Isa 24:23. Kimchi says of the latter, which seems very probable, these are the elders and representatives of the church; see
Re 11:16:

I will exalt thee; the Lord God, Father, Son, and Spirit; the Father, by attributing the whole of salvation to his love and free favour; the Son, by ascribing deity to him, by making use of him in all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, and by giving him the glory of salvation wrought out by him; the Spirit, in his person, and the operations of his grace. Christ, in particular, will be exalted in this state as King of saints, and because of his having taken to himself his reigning power, Re 11:15:

I will praise thy name; celebrate his perfections, confess him before men, praise him for all his benefits; this is one way of exalting him, and is the great work of New Testament saints, and especially in the latter day; see Re 19:1:

for thou hast done wonderful [things]; this respects not so much the wonderful things in nature and grace, either in creation and providence, or in redemption and effectual calling; but what will be done in the latter day; as the conversion of the Jews and Gentiles, the destruction of antichrist, and the glorious appearing of the kingdom of Christ:

[thy] counsels of old [are] faithfulness [and] truth; the decrees and purposes of God, which are from eternity, are all truly and faithfully performed; this is an amplification of the wonderful things which are done according to the counsel of the divine will; not only the choice of men to salvation, the redemption of them by Christ, and their effectual calling; but the calling of the Jews and Gentiles, in particular, in the latter day, and all things relating to the church to the end of time; which, as they were fixed in the eternal purpose of God, they are punctually and exactly brought about in time; these are the true and faithful sayings of God, Re 19:9.

Isaiah 25:2

Ver. 2. For thou hast made of a city an heap,.... Which is to be understood, not of Samaria, nor of Jerusalem; rather of Babylon; though it is best to interpret it of the city of Rome, as Jerom says the Jews do; though they generally explain it of many cities, which shall be destroyed in the times of Gog and Magog, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; and so the Targum has it in the plural number; perhaps not only the city of Rome, but all the antichristian states, the cities of the nations, all within the Romish jurisdiction are meant; which shall all fall by the earthquake, sooner or later, and become a heap:

[of] a defenced city, a ruin; or, "for a fall" {c}; the same thing is meant as before: it designs the fall of mystical Babylon or Rome, called the great and mighty city, Re 18:2:

a palace of strangers; which Kimchi interprets of Babylon, which, he says, was a palace to the cities of the Gentiles, who are called strangers; and it is said, that that city was originally built for strangers, that dwelt in tents, in Arabia Deserts; but it is best to understand it of Rome, as before, which is the palace of such who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, who have introduced a strange religion, and are the worshippers of strange gods, Da 11:38. The Targum renders it,

"the house of the gods of the people in the city of Jerusalem;"

and this will be made

to be no city, it shall never be built; any more, when once it is destroyed, signified by the angels casting a millstone into the sea, which shall never be taken up again, or found more, Re 18:21.

{c} hlpml "in lapsum".

Isaiah 25:3

Ver. 3. Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee,.... To whom the Lord is strength, as in the following verse Isa 25:4; who are strong in the Lord, in the power of his might, and in the grace that is in him; or such of the antichristian party as shall be awakened and convinced by the judgments of God on antichrist, and shall be converted, these shall give glory to the God of heaven, Re 11:13:

the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee; or such who have belonged to the city or jurisdiction of Rome, and have been terrible to the people of God, yet now shall be frightened themselves, and shall fear the Lord, either with a servile fear, or some, at least, with a truly filial fear; see Re 11:13.

Isaiah 25:4

Ver. 4. For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress,.... The people of God, who are poor and needy, both in a literal and in a spiritual sense; and especially when under afflicted circumstances, in times of desertion, temptation, bodily affliction, and persecution from men, which may be here chiefly intended; to whom the Lord is a strength: he strengthens their hearts, and his own grace in them; he sheds abroad his love in their hearts, which makes their mountain to stand strong; he directs them to Christ, in whom is strength, as well as righteousness; he strengthens them by his Spirit, his promises, word, and ordinances. Christ may be more especially meant; and it may refer to the strength and power he will give to his people in the latter day; when a small one shall be a strong nation; when the feeble shall be as David, and the house of David as the angel of the Lord; when they shall have got the victory over the beast, his mark and image, Isa 60:21:

a refuge from the storm; or tempestuous rain, or overflowing flood; as Christ is a refuge from the tempest and storm of divine wrath and vengeance, by his satisfaction and righteousness, Isa 32:2 so from the flood of persecution, by his power and providence, Re 12:15:

a shadow from the heat; which gives refreshment and rest, and is a protection from the scorching beams of the sun. Christ, as he is the shadow from the heat of a fiery law, from the flaming sword of justice, from the wrath of God, and the fiery darts of Satan's temptations; so from the violence of persecution, which heat shall now be no more, antichrist being destroyed, **Re 7:15**:

when blast of the terrible ones [is] as a storm [against] the wall; these terrible ones are either Satan and his principalities, who are very terrible to the Lord's people; and whose temptations are like a strong wind, which beat against them as against a wall, but they stand, the Lord being their strength, refuge, and shadow; see Isa 49:24 or rather antichrist and his persecuting princes, the kings of the earth, that have joined him, and persecuted the saints, and have been terrible to them; and whose persecutions have been like a blustering strong wind, threatening to carry all before them; but the Lord has been their protection, and made them to stand as a wall, firm and immovable, against them. The Targum is,

"so the words of the wicked are to the righteous, as a storm that dasheth against a wall."

Isaiah 25:5

Ver. 5. Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers,.... Such as are strangers to God and godliness, to Christ, his Gospel, and truths, to the Spirit and his operations of grace; the clamour and noise of such against true religion, and the professors of it, their persecuting rage and fury, this the Lord in his own time will bring down, and cause to cease, and it shall be heard no more:

as the heat in a dry place: which parches the earth, and burns and dries up the grass and fruits of it; to which persecution is compared:

[even] the heat with the shadow of a cloud; as that is brought down, and caused to cease by the shadow of a cloud, sheltering from the scorching beams of the sun, and by letting down rain, which moistens the earth; so the Lord protects his people from the fury of persecution, and abates it by the interposition of his power and providence; and at last puts an end to it:

the branch of the terrible ones shall be made low; meaning the most eminent of them; a branch being put for a most eminent person, **Isa 4:2** perhaps the pope of Rome is meant, the head of the antichristian party, the principal of the terrible persecutors, who shall be brought low and destroyed by Christ, at his coming. Some render it, "the song of the terrible ones shall be brought low" {d}; it will be brought a note lower; their triumphing will be at an end; the voice of harpers and musicians, of pipers and trumpeters, will be heard no more among them; but instead thereof weeping and howling,
Re 18:9.

{d} hney Myuyre rymz "cantus fortium humiliabitur, vel humiliabit se", Vatablus; see Cant. ii. 12.

Isaiah 25:6

Ver. 6. And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things,.... Which is to be understood, not of the ultimate glory of the saints in heaven; which is sometimes represented by a feast; and the participation of it, by sitting down with the saints at a table in the kingdom of God, and by drinking wine there, to which state the best things are reserved, **Mt 8:11**, but rather of the Gospel dispensation, which lies in the ministration of the word and ordinances; and which are compared to a feast, which consists of the richest dainties, for the entertainment of the faith of God's people; and this is made by the Lord himself, who is sovereign Lord of all, the King of kings; who sits at table himself, and welcomes his guests, and is the sum and substance of the feast: and this is made in his "mountain"; the church, comparable to one for its visibility and immovableness; and for "all" his "people", Jews and Gentiles; for all that are made spiritually alive, and have a spiritual taste, and true faith in Christ, Mt 22:4 particularly the Lord's supper itself is a feast, and a feast of love, comparable to wine; and which is better than wine, and in which wine, in a literal sense, is made use of; and in which the choicest and richest food is presented to faith; the flesh and blood of Christ, which are meat and drink indeed; here the saints are fed as with marrow and fatness, **1Co 5:7** **So 1:2** but it seems rather to respect the marriage supper of the Lamb, in the latter day, when antichrist shall be destroyed, and Jews and Gentiles be converted, and shall join together in the participation of divine blessings, Re 19:1 or, best of all, the glories, joys, and pleasures of the New Jerusalem state; in which the saints shall drink of the water of life freely, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations, Re 21:6

a feast of wines on the lees; that has been long kept on the lees, but now drawn off, and both strong and fine; of a banquet of wine, see **Es 7:2** this refers to the wine of the kingdom, Mt 26:29:

of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined: this heap of words, and repetition of them, show the plenty of the provisions, and the richness and excellency of them; and "fat" being mentioned is a proof that the words must respect the times of the Messiah, since, under the law, fat was not to be eaten {e}.

{e} Fortunatus Scacchus, in Sacror. Elaeochr. Myrothec. l. 1. c. 40. col. 205. thinks, that as the prophet speaks of the deliverance of believers from present troubles, and of good things at the coming of the Messiah, the metaphors are taken from the customs of that age, in which feasts were not prepared without the best of ointments; nor in a royal feast were the flesh of any animals used but such as were well fed and kept, and which, according to the law were pure and clean; and agreeably he renders the whole verse thus:

"and the Lord of hosts will make to all people a feast of ointments; a feast of those (animals) that are kept; of ointments full of marrow (the richest and fattest) of those that are kept";

"pure" beasts, well kept and clean, according to the law of Moses. So Gussetius observes, that Nmv signifies not fat, but oil; and Myrmv not "lees" of wine, but bottles in which wine is "kept", Comment. Ebr. p. 868, 872. The Syriac version of the latter part of the text, though not according to the original, is remarkable;

"the feast, I say, of our heavenly and most mighty quickener, reserved and fat.".

The interpreter seems to have in his view the great master of the feast, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 25:7

Ver. 7. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over

all people,.... Or, "the covering of the face" {f}; that which has covered the face of all people; that darkness which has been spread over them, partly by Mahomet, and his Alcoran, and partly by the pope of Rome, and his party; the covering of human doctrines and traditions seems chiefly intended, which now will be removed, as well as all Pagan and Mahometan darkness, through the clear ministration of the everlasting Gospel, which will be spread with power, and in its purity, throughout the whole world; see
Isa 60:1 more especially this may respect the light and glory of the New Jerusalem state, in which Christ will be the light thereof, and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in it, and Satan will be bound a thousand years, that he may not deceive the nations any more,
Re 21:23

and the veil that is spread over all nations; meaning the same as before; the veil or covering of darkness and ignorance, with which the nations are covered, either Papal, Pagan, and Mahometan; particularly, respect may be had to the veil that is upon the Jewish nation, which remains to this day, and will be taken off when it shall turn to the Lord, **2Co 3:13** this may be said in allusion to the veil on Moses's face, when he spake to the people, Ex 34:33 as the former expression may be to the covering or wrapper about the face of dead men, Joh 11:44 for they that sit in spiritual darkness, are in the region of the shadow of death.

{f} jwlh ynp "velum faciei", Piscator.

Isaiah 25:8

Ver. 8. He will swallow up death in victory,.... Or, "for ever" {g}. This is to be understood, not of a spiritual death, which is swallowed up in conversion, and of which those that are quickened shall never die more; nor of the conversion of the Jews, which will be as life from the dead; nor of the civil death of the witnesses, and of their rising, who afterwards will never die more, in that sense; but of a corporeal death: this Christ has swallowed up in victory, by dying on the cross, both with respect to himself, who will never die more, and with respect to his people, from whom he has abolished it as a penal evil; but it chiefly respects the resurrection state, or the personal coming of Christ, when the dead in him shall rise first, and shall never die more, there will be no more death, neither corporeal, spiritual, nor eternal to them; on them death shall have no power, in any shape: and then will this saying be brought about or fulfilled, as the apostle has interpreted it, 1Co 15:54 so the Jews {h} interpret it of the future state, when those that live again shall die no more, and there will be no death; and of the days of the Messiah, when the dead will be raised {i}:

and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; there are many things now that cause tears to fall from the saints, as their own sins, indwelling sin, unbelief, carnality, leanness, backslidings, &c. and the sins of others, the temptations of Satan, the hiding of God's face, afflictions of various sorts, and the persecutions of men; but these will be no more in the New Jerusalem state; and therefore God is said to wipe them away, having removed the cause of them, **Re 7:17**
Re 21:4 the allusion is to a tender parent, that takes a handkerchief, and wipes the face of its child, when it has been crying, and quiets and comforts it:

and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; all the reproaches and calumnies which have been cast upon them, and all misrepresentations of them, shall be taken away from them everywhere, and they will no longer lie under them, but stand clear of all false charges and accusations: or all persecution shall now cease; there shall be none to hurt them in all the holy mountain, Isa 11:9:

for the Lord hath spoken [it]; and it shall be done. The Targum is,

"for by the word of the Lord it is so decreed."

{g} xunl "in sempiternum", Munster, Pagninus, Montanus; "in aeternum", Piscator. {h} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. Misna, Moed Katon, c. 3. sect. 9. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 61. 2. {i} Zohar in Gen. fol. 73. 1. Shemot Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 131. 4.

Isaiah 25:9

Ver. 9. And it shall be said in that day,.... When the feast will be made for all the Lord's people; when the veil and covering shall be removed; when death will be swallowed up in victory; when all tears shall be wiped away from the saints; when their rebuke shall be taken away from them; all which will be at the glorious appearing of Christ.

Lo, this [is] our God; and not the idols of the Gentiles, or the works of their hands; but Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever; Immanuel, God with us: the phrase is expressive of his true and proper deity, of faith of interest in him, and of the joy of it:

we have waited for him, and he will save us: as the Old Testament saints waited for his first coming, and for his salvation, believing that he would be the author of it: so New Testament saints are waiting for his second coming; and to them that look for him, and expect his glorious appearing, who have their loins girt, and their lights burning, and wait for their Lord's coming, will he appear a second time without sin unto salvation; to put them into the possession of salvation he has obtained for them, for which they are heirs, and is nearer than when they believed:

this [is] the Lord, we have waited for him; looking, longing, and hasting to the day of his coming; this they will say, when they shall see him coming in the clouds of heaven; whither the living saints being changed, will be caught up to meet him, and upon meeting him shall thus greet him, and one another:

we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation; so suitable to them, so full, complete, and perfect, and so much for the glory of God; which was wrought out by him before, and now possessed by them; and is what is called the "joy" of their "Lord", they now "enter" into, Mt 25:21.

Isaiah 25:10

Ver. 10. For in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest,.... Where he will make the feast of fat things, Isa 25:6 even in his church, which is his resting place, and where he delights to dwell; and over whom his hand is, and abides for their protection and safeguard; and where he gives rest, as the Septuagint {k} render it; even spiritual rest to the souls of his people; and where, as the Targum has it,

"the power of the Lord is revealed;"

namely, in the preservation of his church, and in the destruction of its enemies; as follows:

and Moab shall be trodden down under him: under the Lord, and his mighty hand of power; or "under it"; under the mountain, the church; under the feet of the saints; see **Mal 4:2** or, "in his place" {l}, as Jarchi and Kimchi explain it;

wherever he is, or shall be found, where he lies there shall he be trodden upon. By Moab the enemies of the church are meant, and is put for them all, even all the antichristian powers, both Turks and Papists; their ruin is expressed by treading down or threshing, in allusion to the threshing of corn, as the word used mostly signifies, when the straw is bruised by the cartwheel, or the feet of oxen; or to the treading of straw in the mire, as follows:

even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill; or in "it" {m}; or "in the waters of the dunghill" {n}, as the Cetib; where being cast and trodden, it rots, and becomes dung; and so the Targum,

"as straw is trodden in the clay;"

Jarchi interprets it to this sense. R. Joseph Kimchi takes it to be the name of a place, Madmenah, which was one of the cities of Moab,
Jer 48:2.

{k} anapausin dwsei o yeov. {l} wytxt "apud se", i.e. "in loco suo", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius. {m} wmb as the Keri or marginal reading directs it should be read. {n} hnmdm ymb in "aquis sterquilinii", De Dieu.

Isaiah 25:11

Ver. 11. And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them,.... In the midst of Moab, in the midst of the enemies of the church of God; and so it denotes the utter destruction of them; for the spreading forth of the hands is to be understood of the Lord, that should do so:

as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth [his hands] to swim; signifying, that as he should exert the power of his might, in the midst of them, he should strike on both sides, as a swimmer does; and as easily and utterly destroy them as the swimmer parts the waters, and has the command of them; though some interpret this of Moab stretching out his hands as the swimmer, either in a way of submission and supplication, or as catching, as men drowning do, at anything, to save them. But the former sense agrees best with what follows:

and he shall bring down their pride; that is, God shall bring down the pride of Moab, which was notorious in them, and hateful to God, and was the cause of their ruin, Isa 16:6 with this compare the pride of the Romish antichrist, which

God will humble, Re 17:7:

together with the spoils of their hands; which their hands are full of; and which they have spoiled or robbed others of; or, "with the wiles of their hands" {o}, as some, which they had by craft and insidious methods taken from others; these shall be taken from them, and they be stripped of them; or the words may, be rendered, "with the elbows", or "armholes of his hands" {p}; as the swimmer with his arms keeps the water under him, and himself above it, so the Lord with the strength of his arm would bring down and destroy those enemies of his.

{o} wydy twbra Me "insidiis, vel cum insidiis manuum suarum", Montanus, Piscator. {p} "Cum cubitis, vel axillis manuum suarum", Pagninus, Tigurine version; and Ben Melech, who mentions both senses.

Isaiah 25:12

Ver. 12. And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down,.... That is, their high and, fenced walls, which were about their cities, the fortifications of them; these should be destroyed by the Lord, be battered and brought down, not being able to stand against his mighty power. The Targum renders it,

"the mighty city, the cities of the nations;"

and may design the city of Rome, and the cities of the nations that shall fall at the pouring out of the seventh and last vial, Re 16:19 it follows,

lay low, [and] bring to the ground, [even] to the dust; which variety of words without any copulative are used to express the sudden, quick, certain, and irrecoverable destruction of such fortified city, or cities, and their fortifications.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 26:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 26

This chapter contains a song of praise for the safety and prosperity of the church, and the destruction of its enemies. The church is represented as a strong city, whose walls and bulwarks are salvation,
Isa 26:1 it is said to have gates which are to be opened to a righteous nation, Isa 26:2 its inhabitants, being such who trust in the Lord, are promised perfect peace, Isa 26:3 hence the saints are exhorted to trust in him, Isa 26:4 then follows an account of another city, described as lofty, and its inhabitants as dwelling on high, who are brought down, and trampled on, by the feet of the poor and needy, Isa 26:5 when the prophet returns to the righteous, and asserts their way to be uprightness, because their path is weighed or levelled by God the most upright, Isa 26:7 and in the name of the church declares that they had waited for the Lord in the way of his judgments; and that the desire of their souls was to his name, and the remembrance of it; and that they continued, and would continue, to desire him, and seek after him, seeing righteousness was to be learned by his judgments, Isa 26:8 and though the wicked would not be brought to repentance and reformation by the goodness of God, nor take notice of his hand, yet they should see and be ashamed, and destroyed at last, Isa 26:10 but notwithstanding these judgments of God in the earth, the church professes her faith in the Lord, that he would give her peace and prosperity, from the consideration of what he had wrought for her, and in her, Isa 26:12 and rejects all other lords but him, Isa 26:13 who were dead, and should not live again, but were visited and destroyed, and their memory made to perish, Isa 26:14 but the righteous nation should be increased, though they should meet with trouble, which would cause them to go to the throne of grace, and there pour out their complaints, express their pain and distresses, and the disappointments they had met with,
Isa 26:15 to which an answer is returned, promising a glorious resurrection, Isa 26:19 and calling upon the people of God to retire to their chambers for protection in the mean while, until the punishment to be inflicted on the inhabitants of the earth for their sins was over, Isa 26:20.

Ver. 1. In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah,.... When great things shall be done: for the church and people of God; and when antichrist and all their enemies are destroyed, as mentioned in the preceding chapter Isa 25:1; then this song shall be sung expressed in this throughout; which the Targum calls a "new" song, an excellent one, as the matter of it shows; and which will be sung in the land of Judah, the land of praise in the congregation of the saints, the professors and confessors of the name of Jesus: in Mount Zion, the church of God below, Ps 149:1:

we have a strong city; not an earthly one, as Jerusalem; so the Jewish writers, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, interpret it; nor the heavenly city, which God has prepared and built, and saints are looking for, and are citizens of: but rather the holy city, the New Jerusalem, described in Re 21:2 or however, the church of Christ, as in the latter day; which will be a "strong" one, being of the Lord's founding, establishing, keeping, and defending; and whose strength will greatly lie in the presence of God, and his protection of it; in the number of its citizens, which will be many, when Jews and Gentiles are converted; and in their union one with another, and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ; when a "small one", as the church is now, shall become a "strong nation", Isa 60:22:

salvation will [God] appoint [for] walls and bulwarks; instead of walls, ditches, parapets, counterscarps, and such like fortifications; what they are to cities, that is salvation to the church and people of God; it is their safety and security: as God the Father is concerned in it, it flows from his love, which is unchangeable; it is by an appointment of his, which is unalterable; is secured by election grace, which stands not upon the works of men, but the will of God; and by the covenant of grace, ordered in all things, and sure; and by his power the saints are kept unto it: as Christ is concerned in it, it is as walls and bulwarks; he is the author of it, has completely finished it, and has overcome and destroyed all enemies; his righteousness is a security from all charges and condemnation; his satisfaction a bulwark against the damning power of sin, the curses of the law, and the wrath of God; his mediation and intercession are a protection of saints; and his almighty power a guard about them. As the Spirit is concerned in it, who is the applier of it, and evidences interest in it; it is a bulwark against sin, against Satan's temptations, against a spirit of bondage to fear, against error, and a final and total falling away; particularly the church's "walls" will be "salvation", and her "gates" praise, of which in the next verse Isa 26:2, in the latter day glory; to which this song refers; see Isa 60:18.

Isaiah 26:2

Ver. 2. Open ye the gates,.... Not of Jerusalem, literally understood, nor of heaven; rather of the New Jerusalem, whose gates are described, Re 21:12 at least of the church in the latter day; the gates or door into which now should be, and then will be, open; Christ the door, and faith in him, and a profession of it, without which none ought to be admitted, and whoever climbs up another way is a thief and a robber, Joh 10:1 these words are the words of the prophet, or of God, or of Christ by him, directed not to the keepers of the gates of

Jerusalem, or of the doors of the temple, though, they may be alluded to; nor to any supposed doorkeeper of heaven, angels, or men, there being none such; rather to the twelve angels, at the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem, Re 21:12 or to the ministers of the Gospel, who have the key of knowledge to open the door of faith, and let persons into the knowledge of divine things; to admit them to ordinances, and receive them into the church by the joint suffrage of the members of it. The phrase denotes a large increase of members, and a free, open, and public reception of them, who are after described; see Isa 60:11:

that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in; not all the world, for there is none righteous, not one of them naturally, or of themselves; nor the Jewish nation, for though they sought after righteousness, did not attain it, unless when they will be converted in the latter day, and then they, and all the Lord's people, will be righteous, and appear to be a holy nation, and a peculiar people,
Isa 60:21 and being made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and sanctified by the Spirit, will be fit persons to be admitted through the gates into the city; see
Ps 118:19 and because there will be great numbers of such, especially when a nation shall be born at once, hence they are so called: and these will be a set of men that "will keep the truth"; not, as the Targum renders it,

"who keep the law with a perfect heart;"

for no man can do that; but rather the ordinances of the Gospel, as they were first delivered by Christ and his apostles, and especially the truths of it; and the word here used is in the plural number, and may be rendered "truths"; the several truths of the Gospel, which will be kept by the righteous, not in memory only, but in their hearts and affections, and in their purity, and with a pure conscience; and they will not part with them at any rate, but hold them fast, that no man take their crown, **Re 3:11**.

Isaiah 26:3

Ver. 3. Thou wilt keep [him] in perfect peace,.... Peace with God in Christ through his blood, in a way of believing, and as the fruit and effect of his righteousness being received by faith; this is not always felt, received, and enjoyed in the soul; yet the foundation of it always is, and is perfect; and besides, this peace is true, real, and solid; in which sense the word "perfect" is used, in opposition to a false and imaginary one; and it will end in perfect peace in heaven: moreover, the word "perfect" is not in the Hebrew text, it is there "peace, peace"; which is doubled to denote the certainty of it, the enjoyment of it, and the constancy and continuance of it; and as expressive of all sorts of peace, which God grants unto his people, and keeps for them, and them in; as peace with God and peace with men, peace outward and peace inward, peace here and peace hereafter; and particularly it denotes the abundance of peace that believers will have in the kingdom of Christ in the latter day; see Ps 72:7:

[whose] mind [is] stayed [on thee]; or "fixed" on the love of God, rooted and grounded in that, and firmly persuaded of interest in it, and that nothing can separate from it; on the covenant and promises of God, which are firm and sure; and on the faithfulness and power of God to make them good, and perform them; and on Christ the Son of God, and Saviour of men; upon him as a Saviour, laying the whole stress of their salvation on him; upon his righteousness, for their justification; upon his blood and sacrifice, for atonement, pardon, and cleansing; on his fulness, for the supply of their wants; on his person, for their acceptance with God; and on his power, for their protection and preservation; see Isa 10:20:

because he trusteth in thee; not in the creature, nor in any creature enjoyment, nor in their riches, nor in their righteousness, nor in their own hearts, nor in any carnal privileges: only in the Lord, as exhorted to in the next verse Isa 26:4; in the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, that is, in Christ.

Isaiah 26:4

Ver. 4. Trust ye in the Lord for ever,.... In the Word of the Lord for ever and ever, as the Targum again; that is, at all times, in every state and condition, in times of affliction, temptation, and darkness; for he will support under, and in his own time deliver out of every trouble, and cause all things to work to gether for good; and trust in him always, for everything, for all temporal blessings, and for all spiritual ones, and for eternal life and happiness; for he has them, has promised them, and will give them:

for in the Lord JEHOVAH [is] everlasting strength; Christ is the Lord JEHOVAH, which is, and was, and is to come, self-existent, eternal, and immutable; and in him is strength, as well as righteousness for his people; and that for everything it is wanted for, to bear up under temptations and afflictions, to withstand every spiritual enemy, to exercise every grace, and discharge every duty: and this strength is everlasting; it always continues in him, and is always to be had from him; he is the "eternal" God, who is the refuge of his people, and his "arms" of power and might "underneath" them are "everlasting": the words may be rendered, "for in Jah" is "Jehovah, the Rock of ages" {q}; Jehovah the Son is in Jehovah the Father, according to Joh 10:38 or "Jah Jehovah" is "the Rock of ages", so Vitringa; he is the "Rock" on which the church and every believer is built, against which "the gates of hell cannot prevail"; and he has been the Rock of his people in ages past, and will be in ages to come: or "of worlds"; this world, and that to come; and so it is explained in the Talmud {r}, he that trusts in the Lord has a refuge in this world, and in the world to come.

{q} Mymlwe rwu hwhy hyb "in Jah [est] Jehovah, rupes saeculorum". {r} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29. 2.

Isaiah 26:5

Ver. 5. For he bringeth down them that dwell on high, the lofty city,.... That dwell on high in the high city, so the accents require the words to be rendered; and accordingly the Targum is,

"for he will bring low the inhabitants of the high and strong city;"

such that dwell in a city built on high, and in the high towers and palaces of it; or that sit on high thrones, are spiritual wickednesses in high places, and are of proud and haughty dispositions and conduct; as the pope of Rome and his cardinals, &c.; for not the city of Jerusalem is here meant, as Jerom thinks, whose destruction he supposes is foretold, as both by the Babylonians and Romans; and therefore, he observes, the word is doubled in the next clause; nor the city of Nineveh; nor Babylon, literally taken; but mystical Babylon is here meant. Jarchi interprets them that dwell on high of Tyre and Greece; but Jerom says, the Jews understand by the lofty city the city of Rome; and this seems to be the true sense; a city built upon seven hills or mountains; a city that has ruled over the kings of the earth, and whose present inhabitants are proud and haughty:

he layeth it low: he layeth it low, [even] to the ground; he bringeth it [even] to the dust; all which expressions denote the utter destruction of it; see Isa 25:12.

Isaiah 26:6

Ver. 6. The foot shall tread it down,.... Trample upon it when brought down, laid low, and level with the ground, as mire is trodden in the streets, and straw for the dunghill; as grapes in the winepress, or grass by the feet of cattle: not the foot of a prince, as Aben Ezra observes, or of mighty men; but, as follows,

[even] the feet of the poor, [and] the steps of the needy; these are not the Israelites in a literal sense, as Kimchi explains it; but the spiritual Israel of God; the righteous, as the Targum paraphrases it; the saints of the most High, to whom the kingdom and dominion under the whole heaven will now be given, and who will be just come out of great tribulation; for the words suggest, that the people of God will be a poor and afflicted people, and very feeble, and sore distressed, a little before the destruction of antichrist; but as God has been always used to do his work by the poor and weak things of this world, by mean and feeble instruments, so he will now, and raise his poor and needy ones to a very high and exalted estate; all their enemies shall be subdued and crushed under their feet; see **Mal 4:3** Jarchi interprets the feet of the poor of the feet of the King Messiah, according to **Zec 9:9**.

Isaiah 26:7

Ver. 7. The way of the just [is] uprightness,.... Or, "the way for the just is uprightnesses" {s}, most upright; the way which is appointed for him, and which he is directed to walk in, is a way of righteousness and holiness, and in which he does walk; he walks uprightly, according to the rules of the word, becoming the Gospel of Christ, and worthy of his calling: or, it is "evennesses"; a most plain and even way, in which men, though fools, shall not err,
Isa 35:8 or, "the way" of the Lord "to the just is uprightnesses", or "evennesses"; most upright, or most even; there is no inequality in it, though sometimes so charged, Eze 18:25 it is entirely agreeable to justice, equity, and truth; regular and even, and suited to all his perfections of wisdom, goodness, &c. {t}:

thou most upright; these words are addressed to God, and contain an appellation and description of him, who is upright, just, and true, and loves upright and righteous persons; so Kimchi and Ben Melech take the word to be in the vocative case, and as an address to God; though some render them, "he is upright" {u}; that is, the just man is upright, whose way is uprightness; but the former sense best agrees with what follows:

dost weigh the path of the just; observe, consider, and approve of it, as being according to rule, and agreeable to his mind and will, **Ps 1:6** or, "thou dost level" or "make even the path of the just" {w}; remove all impediments and obstructions out of it, direct his goings, order his steps, and cause him to walk in a straight way, wherein he shall not stumble, Jer 31:9 and so this is a reason given why the way of the just is even, because it is made so by the Lord himself.

{s} Myrvym qydul xrwa "via justo rectitudines", Vatablus. {t} For this note, I am indebted to my learned, pious, and ingenious friend, the Rev. Mr. Hervey; see Theron and Aspasio, vol 2. Dialog. 13. p. 225. Ed 3. {u} rvy "rectus est", De Dieu. {w} olpt "aequabis", Vatablus. So Ben Melech explains it by rvwy, making a thing plain and even.

Isaiah 26:8

Ver. 8. Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee,.... Meaning by "judgments" either the ministration of the word and ordinances, called statutes and judgments,
Ps 147:19 an attendance on which is the right way of waiting upon God, and where it may be expected he will be found and manifest himself, and favour with his gracious presence; or else the corrections and chastisements, which are done in wisdom and with judgment, in measure and in mercy, and in a fatherly way, and for good; and so the sense is, that they had not only followed the Lord in a plain and even way, but even in the more rugged paths of afflictive dispensations; nor did these things at all move them from their duty to him, and worship of him:

the desire of [our] soul [is] to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee; to God himself, and to a remembrance of his nature, perfections, and works; to Christ, whose name is as ointment poured forth, and whose person is desirable, because of his glory, beauty, and fulness, because of his offices, and blessings of grace; and to his Gospel, which publishes and proclaims him, his grace, and salvation; and to his ordinances, which refresh the memory of his people concerning him, and his love to them shown in what he has done and suffered for them.

Isaiah 26:9

Ver. 9. With my soul have I desired thee in the night,.... Either literally, when others were asleep: or figuratively, in the captivity; which, as Jarchi says, was like unto the night; or in the time of Jewish and Gentile darkness, preceding the coming of Christ; or rather in the time of latter day darkness, when the church is represented as heartily desirous of, and importunately praying for, the latter day glory, the rising of the sun of righteousness, the spiritual reign of Christ, the spread of his Gospel, and the setting up of his kingdom and glory in the world; so the Targum,

"my soul desireth to pray before thee in the night;"

her desires were expressed by prayer:

yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early; she determines to continue seeking the Lord night and day, with the greatest intenseness of spirit, and eagerness of soul, until she obtained and enjoyed what she sought for; namely, the presence of Christ, communion with him, the discoveries of his love, and larger measures of his grace, light, and knowledge;

for when thy judgments [are] in the earth; such as pestilence, famine, sword, and the like; especially the judgments of God on antichrist, and the antichristian states, which will be just and righteous; see Re 19:2:

the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness; not the wicked inhabitants of the world, for the contrary is suggested in the following verses; but the saints that are in the world, the upright ones, the righteous before mentioned, the church and her members; these, by the judgments of God in the world, learn what a righteous Being he is, how unrighteous men are, on whose account these judgments come, and themselves too, as in his sight; and they learn the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them before him, and their need, the worth and value, of the righteousness of Christ: and also learn hereby to live soberly, righteously, and godly,
Ps 119:67 they learn to ascribe righteousness to God, and to fear and worship him, Re 15:3.

Isaiah 26:10

Ver. 10. Let favour be showed to the wicked,.... As it often is in a providential way; they have the good things of this life, and sometimes more than heart could wish for; nor are they in trouble as other men; they have many mercies, and many deliverances; they have their portion here, and are filled with hidden treasure, and are spared when others are cut off; and, besides sparing mercy and providential goodness, sometimes enjoy the means of grace, have the word and ordinances:

[yet] will ye not learn righteousness; neither repent of sin, nor reform from it; though "the goodness of God" should, yet it does not, "lead" him "to repentance"; he neither learns the righteousness of God, nor of Christ, nor the insufficiency of his own righteousness, nor to live a truly righteous and godly life; all means and mercies will not do, without the efficacious grace of God:

in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly; in the land of Judea, where were the laws and statutes of God, which were just and equitable, the word and worship of God, and many good men, who lived uprightly, and set good examples; and yet wicked men went on in their sinful courses. Jarchi interprets it of Jerusalem, and the temple, and of men's spoiling, plundering, and destroying there; and the Talmud {x} of wicked Esau, by whom the Romans are meant, that should destroy Jerusalem, and the land of Israel. It seems best to understand it of any land or country in later times, or present ones, where there is a good polity, good and wholesome laws are enacted, vice is corrected and punished, and virtue encouraged, and where also the Gospel is preached, and the ordinances of it administered; and yet, notwithstanding all laws, instructions, precepts, and precedents, such men will go on to live unrighteous and ungodly lives and conversations:

and will not behold the majesty of the Lord; visible in the government of the world; in the dispensations of his providence, in protecting and defending his own people, and in punishing of the wicked; in the Gospel, and in the success of it: in the effusion of the Spirit; and in the setting up of the kingdom of Christ in greater glory in the latter day.

{x} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 6. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

Isaiah 26:11

Ver. 11. Lord, [when] thy hand is lifted up, they will not see,.... Or, "thy high hand they will not see" {y}; when it is exalted, and become glorious in power, in punishing wicked men; though the punishment is visible, yet they will not consider that it comes from the hand of God, but attribute it to chance, misfortune, or second causes, Ps 28:5 or when the hand the Lord is manifest in doing good to his own people, in delivering them out of their oppressions, and the hands of their oppressors; in reviving his cause and interest, and enlarging the kingdom of his Son; they will not see, own, and acknowledge the power and glory of it. The Targum favours this latter sense,

"Lord, when thou shall be revealed in thy power to do good to them that fear thee, there will be no light to the enemies of thy people:"

[but] they shall see; whether they will or not; the judgments of God will be manifest, both in his vengeance on antichrist, and in glorifying his own people:

and be ashamed for [their] envy at the people; their envy at the happiness and prosperity of the Lord's people; their malice towards them, and persecution of them: or, "for the zeal of thy people" {z}; not for the zeal of the people to God, but for the zeal of the Lord to them; when they shall see him zealously affected to them, and concerned for them; as they shall see it, whether they will or not; they will then be confounded and ashamed, when he will vindicate his own people, and right their wrongs, and avenge their enemies; so the Targum,

"the revenge of thy people shall cover them:"

yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them: or, "fire shall devour them, thine enemies" {a}; the wrath of God, which is like unto fire; or, fire out of the mouth of the witnesses, Re 11:5.

{y} Nwyzxy lb Kdy hmr "elatam tuam manum non cernunt", Castalio; "celsitudinem manuum tuarum nequaquam vident", Syriac version. {z} Me tanq "zelum populi tui"; so some in Vatablus; "zelum erga populum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {a} Mlkat Kyru va "ignis hostes tuos consumet eos", Pagninus, Vatablus, "comedet eos", Montanus.

Isaiah 26:12

Ver. 12. Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us,.... Dispose, order, give it to us, outward and inward, spiritual and eternal: chiefly respect is had to that peace and prosperity the church will have in the latter day, which the zeal of the Lord of hosts, before mentioned, will perform for her, Ps 72:8 and which she expresses her faith in, when it goes ill with the wicked, and that for the following reason:

for thou also hast wrought all our works in us; or "to us", or "for us" {b}; all that had been done for them before were done by the Lord, came of his hands, were owing to his goodness, grace, and power and not to be ascribed unto themselves; all their mercies and deliverances, all that had been done for them in nature, providence, and grace; all that had been done for the church and people of God in all ages and periods of time, the glory of all was due to him; and since he had done so many and such great things for them, they had reason to believe he would grant them that peace and prosperity promised and expected in the latter day. The work of grace upon the heart is peculiarly the work which God works in his people, and is thought by some to be here meant; this is God's work, and not man's; and it is an internal one, something wrought in the heart, and which, being begun, will be performed; and may be expressed in the plural number, because of the excellency of it, it is the work of works; it includes others, and from whence all good works done by good men spring; and, besides, it consists of various parts, each of which is a work; as the work of faith, the labour of love, and perfect work of patience; and the fruit of this is peace here, and men on account of it may expect eternal peace hereafter; for this is the saints' meetness for glory, and which is inseparably connected with it. Abarbinel {c} interprets this "peace" of the times of the Messiah, and of the redemption wrought out by him; and "our works", of the troubles that came upon the Jews in captivity, which were all from the Lord, as well as their mercies and deliverance.

{b} wnl "in nobis", Munster; "nobis", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {c} Mashmia, Jeshua, fol. 16. 1.

Isaiah 26:13

Ver. 13. O Lord our God, [other] lords besides thee have had dominion over us,.... Sin and Satan have the dominion over the Lord's people, in a state of unregeneracy; before the good work of grace is wrought in them, every lust is a lord, and is served and obeyed: and Satan is the god of this world by usurpation, and leads men captive at his will. Some think that the idols the Jews had served and worshipped, called "Baalim" or lords, are meant, and that this is a confession of their sin; but that word is not here used. The Targum interprets it of the Jewish governors ruling over them, without the Lord; rather the Assyrians and Babylonians are designed; but it is best of all to understand it of persecuting tyrants, of antichristian kings and states that have exercised a tyrannical power over the people of God:

[but] by thee only will we make mention of thy name; that is, by thy strength, and through grace received from thee, we will be only subject to thee, our King and Lawgiver, and obey thy commands, serve and worship thee, knowing that it is right to obey God rather than man; or through the influence of thy grace, and by the assistance of thy Spirit, we will celebrate thy name, give thee thanks for our deliverance from the servitude, bondage, and oppression of other lords.

Isaiah 26:14

Ver. 14. [They are] dead, they shall not live; [they are] deceased, they shall not rise,.... The above tyrannical lords, the kings of the earth and their mighty men, associates of the Romish antichrist, who shall be gathered together, and slain at the battle at Armageddon; these shall not live again in this world, nor rise from their graves, and return to their former state, power, and authority; or tyrannise over, molest, disturb, oppress, and persecute the people of God any more; though they shall live again at the end of the thousand years, and shall awake to everlasting shame and contempt, and come forth to the resurrection of damnation. The Targum is,

"they worship the dead, who do not live; and their mighty men, who shall not rise;"

and are opposed to the worshippers of the only Lord God:

therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish; or, "because thou hast visited", &c. {d}; for these words are a reason why they are irrecoverably lost, and shall not live in eternal life, or rise in the resurrection of the just; because God has visited them in wrath, destroyed them in and for their sins, with such an utter destruction, that they shall be remembered no more. This visitation will be at Armageddon, when the kings, and captains and great men will be slain; the beast and false prophet taken, and cast alive into the furnace of fire; and the rest will be killed by the sword, proceeding out of the mouth of Christ, Re 19:18. The Targum interprets it of

God's casting the wicked into hell.

{d} Nkl "propterea", V. L. Junius & Tremellius; "propterea quod", Piscator, De Dieu.

Isaiah 26:15

Ver. 15. Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, thou hast increased the nation,.... The righteous nation, Isa 26:2 the church of God, by the numerous conversions of Jews and Gentiles; when the nation of the Jews shall be born at once, and the fulness and forces of the Gentiles are brought in; when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ: this increase is repeated, to denote the certainty of it, and because a matter of great moment and importance:

thou art glorified; as by the destruction of the antichristian powers, so by the enlargement of the church and kingdom of Christ; for now will the voices be heard in heaven, giving praise and glory to God: even those that are frightened with his judgments, as well as those that are affected with his goodness, will give glory to the God of heaven,
Re 11:13:

thou hadst removed [it] far [unto] all the ends of the earth: not the Jewish people now scattered throughout the world, but the righteous nation increased and enlarged, which now will be spread to the ends of the world; for Christ's kingdom will be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, Ps 72:8 it may be rendered, "thou hast removed afar off all the ends of the earth": so De Dieu, who interprets it of the great men of the earth, the excellent in it, the cornerstones of it; but perhaps it may be better to understand hereby every island and mountain fleeing away at the destruction of antichrist, and the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, Re 16:20.

Isaiah 26:16

Ver. 16. Lord, in trouble have they visited thee,.... This, and the two following verses Isa 26:17, represent the troubles and disappointments of the church and people of God, before the destruction of antichrist; in which time of trouble they will visit the Lord, frequent the throne of grace, as saints in afflictions are wont to do; and sometimes this is the end to be answered by afflictions, **Ho 5:15**:

they poured out a prayer; or "muttering" {e}; they will pray with a low voice, in an humble and submissive way, as persons in dejected circumstances; not a few words, but many, will they use; their petitions will be numerous; they will continue praying, and be constant at it, and out of the abundance of their hearts their mouth will speak; and they will pour out their souls and their complaints to the Lord, though privately, and with a low voice, and with groans unutterable:

[when] thy chastening [was] upon them; the afflicting hand of God, not as a punishment, but as a fatherly chastisement upon them; so all their persecutions from men are considered as permitted by the Lord for their instruction and correction; and these will not drive them from God, but bring them to him to seek him by prayer and supplication.

{e} vxl "mussitationem", Montanus; "submissam orationem", Junius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 26:17

Ver. 17. Like as a woman with child,.... By this simile are set forth the great distresses and afflictions the church of Christ will be in, before redemption and deliverance from the antichristian yoke comes:

[that] draweth near the time of her delivery; when her burden is great and very troublesome:

[is] in pain, [and] crieth out in her pangs; for her friends to come about her, and give her all the help and assistance they can:

so have we been in thy sight, O Lord; in great distress and trouble, and crying to him for salvation and deliverance, all which were well known unto him.

Isaiah 26:18

Ver. 18. We have been with child,.... Like women with child; we have been full of hopes and expectations of great things, of deliverance from our enemies, and of the kingdom of Christ being at hand:

we have been in pain; in great distress and anxiety, and in fervent and frequent prayer, travailing in birth, which we looked upon as forerunners of a happy issue of things:

we have as it were brought forth wind; all our hopes have proved abortive, and we have been disappointed in our expectations:

we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth: or, "salvations" have "not been wrought in the earth" {f}; this explains what is meant by bringing forth wind; salvation and deliverance out of the hand of the enemy not being wrought, as was expected:

neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen; worldly men, the great men, the kings of the earth; particularly such as commit fornication with the whore of Rome, Popish persecuting princes; these as yet are not fallen, though they shall in the battle of Armageddon.

{f} Ura hven lb twewvy "res salutum non est facta", Vatablus; "salates non fit terra", Montanus; "salutes non factae sunt terrae", Tigurine version; "non sunt factae in terra", Pagninus.

Isaiah 26:19

Ver. 19. Thy dead [men] shall live,.... These are the words of Christ to his church and people, promising great and good things to them after their troubles are over, thereby comforting them under all their trials and disappointments; as that such things should come to pass, which would be as life from the dead; as the conversion of the Jews, and of great numbers of the Gentiles, dead in trespasses and sins; and a great reviving of the interest of religion, and of professors of it, grown cold, and dead, and lifeless; and a living again of the witnesses, which had been slain. And, moreover, this may refer to the first resurrection, upon the second coming of Christ, when the church's dead, and Christ's dead, the dead in him, will live again, and rise first, and come forth to the resurrection of life, and live and reign with Christ a thousand years:

[together with] my dead body shall they arise; or, "arise my dead body"; the church, the mystical body of Christ, and every member of it, though they have been dead, shall arise, everyone of them, and make up that body, which is the fulness of him that filleth all in all, and that by virtue of their union to him: there was a pledge and presage of this, when Christ rose from the dead, upon which the graves were opened, and many of the saints arose, Mt 27:51 see **Ho 6:2**, or, "as my dead body shall they arise" {g}; so Kimchi and Ben Melech; as sure as Christ's dead body was raised, so sure shall everyone of his people be raised; Christ's resurrection is the pledge and earnest of theirs; because he lives, they shall live also; he is the first fruits of them that slept: or as in like manner he was raised, so shall they; as he was raised incorruptible, powerful, spiritual, and glorious, and in the same body, so shall they; their vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body. This is one of the places in Scripture from whence the Jews {h} prove the resurrection of the dead; and which they apply to the times of the Messiah, and to the resurrection in his days.

Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; this is a periphrasis of the dead, of such as are brought to the dust of death, and sleep there; as death is expressed by sleeping, so the resurrection by awaking out of sleep; which will be brought about by the voice of Christ, which will be so loud and powerful, that the dead will hear it, and come out of their graves; and then will they "sing", and have reason for it, since they will awake in the likeness of Christ, and bear the image of him the heavenly One:

for thy dew [is as] the dew of herbs; the power of Christ will have as great effect upon, and as easily raise the dead, as the dew has upon the herbs, to refresh, raise, and revive them; so that their "bones", as the prophet says, "shall flourish like an herb", Isa 66:14:

and the earth shall cast out the dead; deliver up the dead that are in it, at the all powerful voice of Christ; see Re 20:13. The Targum is,

"but the wicked to whom thou hast given power, and they have transgressed thy word, thou wilt deliver into hell;"

see Re 20:14.

{g} Nwmwqy ytlbn "quemadmodum corpus meum resurget", Vatablus. {h} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 90. 2, & Cetubot, fol. 111. 1. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 62. 3. Targum in loc. Elias Levita in his Tishbi, p. 109. says the word hlbn is never used in Scripture but of the carcass of a beast or fowl that is dead; and never of a man that is dead, but of him that dies not a natural death, excepting this place, which speaks of the resurrection of the dead; and, adds he,

"I greatly wonder at it, how he (the prophet) should call the bodies of the pure righteous ones a carcass; no doubt there is a reason for it, known to the wise men and cabalists, which I am ignorant of."

But the words are spoken of one who did not die a natural, but a violent death, even the Messiah Jesus; and so just according to the Rabbin's own observation.

Isaiah 26:20

Ver. 20. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers,.... These words are either to be connected with the preceding verse Isa 26:19, and considered as a part of the song; and then the design of them is, to let the people of God know that there would be times of great trouble and distress, previous to that glorious one before mentioned; whether it is to be understood of a spiritual resurrection, the conversion of Jews and Gentiles in the latter day, which the judgments on antichrist will antecede, Re 19:2 or of the first resurrection, upon the coming of Christ, Da 12:1 and therefore should expect such a time of trouble, and concern themselves for shelter and security: or else, the song being finished, as is generally thought; in the last verse Isa 26:19, these words begin a new subject, and should a new chapter, in which it is foretold what punishment would be inflicted on a wicked world; and therefore, to comfort the Lord's people that should dwell among them, and to let them know what provision was made for their retreat and safety, and where they might be secure during the storm, these words are delivered out; in which the Lord addresses his people in a very kind and tender manner, claiming an interest in them, and expressing great affection for them, and concern for their welfare: "my people", whom I have loved with an everlasting love, chosen to be a special people above all people, made a covenant with them in my Son, and redeemed them by his blood, and called them by my Spirit and grace; "come", away from the wicked, be separate from them, have no fellowship with them; much the same with that in Re 18:4 and referring to the same time, "come out of her, my people", &c. or "come" to me, who have been the dwelling place of my people in all generations, a strong habitation, to which they may continually resort, Ps 90:1 or "come" along with me, I will lead you to a place where you may be safe; as he did Noah and his family into the ark, to which there may be an allusion, **Ge 7:1**,

enter thou into thy chambers; alluding to persons abroad in the fields, who, when they perceive a storm coming, make haste home, and get into their houses, and into the more retired and safer parts of them, till it is over; or to the Israelites, who kept within the doors, while the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt; or to Rahab and her family being within her house, when Jericho was destroyed: these "chambers" may be taken literally for places of prayer and devotion; prayer being very proper to have recourse unto in times of trouble, and which as it should be performed by single persons privately, **Mt 6:6** which text is a comment on this; and perhaps respect may be had to the manner of the performance of it by societies, in times of great persecution; so it is the safety of God's people; and there is nothing better for them, in times of trouble, than to commit themselves to God in prayer, and to his divine protection: and it may be that God himself, and the perfections of his nature, are here meant by "chambers"; his name is a strong tower, whither the righteous run and are safe, Pr 18:10 and every perfection in him is as a chamber in this tower, where the saints betaking themselves may securely lodge, till the trouble is over; as the everlasting love of God, which changes not, and therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed; the faithfulness of God, in his covenant and promises, which never fails; and his power, in which they are kept, as in a garrison, **1Pe 1:5** and these chambers may not be unfitly applied to Christ and to his blood and righteousness, who is a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the storm, a strong hold for prisoners of hope; in whose person are rest, peace, and safety in the midst of trouble; whose righteousness secures from condemnation and wrath; and not good works, as the Targum, which it says will protect in a time of distress; but the righteousness of Christ will, as also his precious blood; which was typified by the blood of the passover lamb, sprinkled on the door posts of the Israelites, whereby they were preserved by the destroying angel; and was signified by the scarlet thread in Rahab's window, the token by which her house was known, and so all in it saved. The general design of the words is to exhort the people of God to a composed and tranquil state of mind; to calmness, quietness, and rest, while the judgments of God were upon the earth; to be still and easy, whatever hurly burleys there were in the world; to commit themselves to God, and look upon themselves safe and secure, under his providence and protection. Some of the ancients, by "chambers", understand the graves, and not amiss; especially if the words are to be considered in connection with the preceding, thus, since the dead saints will arise as sure as Christ is risen, and in like manner as he, and those that sleep in the dust of the earth will awake and sing, then do not be afraid of death and the grave; enter here, as into your bedchambers; where, being taken away from the evil to come, you will enter into peace, lie down and rest on your beds, in the utmost secrecy and safety, until the resurrection morn; while storms of divine wrath fall upon a wicked and ungodly world; see Isa 57:1:

and shut thy doors about thee; a phrase expressive of safety and secrecy, and may be applied to the several things above mentioned:

hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast; not the indignation of Satan, or of wicked persecutors against the saints, but the indignation of God; and that not upon his own people, or on the Jewish nation, but on a wicked world; not in hell, for that will be everlasting, and never over, and much less be only for a little moment; but as it will be in time, and fall upon all the nations of the world, and especially the Romish antichrist, and the antichristian states; and refers chiefly to the seven vials of God's wrath, which will be poured forth upon them; which, when they begin, will soon be over; see Isa 34:2 and so will be the burning of the world, the last instance of God's indignation on earth, it will soon be at an end; and, in the meanwhile, the saints will be with Christ in the air; and those troubles, in which the people will be involved before happy times come, will be very short; as indeed all their afflictions are but for a moment, a little moment; the temptation that will come upon all the earth, to try the inhabitants of it, will be but an hour; and the slaying of the witnesses, and their lying slain, will be but three days and a half; this time of trouble will be shortened for the elect's sake, Mt 24:21 compare with this Ps 57:1.

Isaiah 26:21

Ver. 21. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place,.... God, as omnipresent, is everywhere, and cannot be properly said to quit one place, and go to another; but as heaven is the seat of his majesty, and where he more manifestly displays his glory, when he is said to do anything remarkable on earth, he is said to come out of his place, and come down thither, **Mic 1:3** especially in the exertion of his power and justice, in a way of punishment of sin; which is his act, his strange act; and comes off from his throne of grace and mercy, in which he delights: the allusion is to a king leaving his throne and palace, to go forth against an enemy abroad, or to quell and punish rebellious subjects: some reference may be had to the Lord's dwelling in the temple secretly, in the inward part of it, and coming out from thence in the display of his perfections, as Calvin thinks; with which may be compared Re 14:15:

to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; not the same as in Isa

26:10 for those are distinguished from the Lord's people; but carnal, worldly, and earthly men, particularly the followers of antichrist, called the inhabiters of the earth, who have committed fornication with the whore of Rome, Re 17:2 these the Lord will punish for their iniquity; for he punishes none but for sin, even for their idolatries, adulteries, sorceries, thefts, and murders, particularly their shedding of innocent blood, as follows; and therefore their punishment will be just, God will remember their iniquities, and retaliate; see **Re 9:20**:

the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain; when God shall make inquisition for blood, the blood of all his saints and prophets will be found in mystical Babylon, and what was hid and covered, or thought to be so, will now be discerned, and brought to light, and just punishment inflicted for it,
Re 18:24 unless this should rather denote the great effusion of blood and carnage that will be made, so that the earth will not be able to drink it in, and the slain will lie unburied on it; see
Re 11:13. The Targum favours the former sense,

"and the earth shall reveal the innocent blood that is shed on it, and shall no more cover her slain."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 27:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 27

This chapter refers to the same times as the two foregoing ones
Isa 25:1; and is a continuation of the same song, or rather a new one on the same occasion; it is prophetical of the last times, and of what shall be done in them, as the destruction of the antichristian powers, and Satan at the head of them, Isa 27:1 the happy state of the church, and its fruitfulness under the care and protection of the Lord, and his affection for it, Isa 27:2 its peace, prosperity, and flourishing condition, Isa 27:5 the nature, use, and end of all its afflictions and chastisements,
Isa 27:7 the ruin and destruction of the city of Rome, and its inhabitants, and of its whole jurisdiction, Isa 27:10 a great gathering and conversion of the Lord's people, both Jews and Gentiles, by the ministry of the Gospel, Isa 27:12.

Ver. 1. In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword,....

Meaning either the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, quick and powerful, and sharper than a twoedged sword, **Eph 6:17** or else some sore judgment of God: some understand it of the Medes and Persians, by whom the Lord would destroy the Babylonish monarchy; or rather it is the great power of God, or his judiciary sentence, and the execution of it, the same with the twoedged sword, which proceeds out of the mouth of the Word of God, by which the antichristian kings and their armies will be slain,
Re 19:15:

shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent {i}, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that [is] in the sea; by which are meant, not literally creatures so called, though the Talmud {k} interprets them of the whales, the leviathan male and female; but mystically earthly princes and potentates, for their great power and authority, their cruelty and voraciousness, their craft and cunning; so the Targum and Aben Ezra interpret them of the kings of the earth; and are to be understood either of distinct persons, or countries they rule over: some think three are pointed at, as the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Edomites, or Romans, so Jarchi; or the Greeks, Turks, and Indians, as Kimchi. The Targum is,

"he shall punish the king who is magnified as Pharaoh the first, and the king that is exalted as Sennacherib the second, and shall slay the king that is strong as the dragon (or whale) that is in the sea."

Some are of opinion that only one person or kingdom is here meant, either the king of Egypt, compared to such a sea monster, because of the river Nile, that watered his country; see Eze 29:3 others, the king of Babylon, which city was situated by the river Euphrates, and is described as dwelling on many waters, Jer 51:13 and others the king of Tyre, which was situated in the sea; it seems most likely that all tyrannical oppressors and cruel persecutors of the church are intended, who shall be destroyed; and particularly Rome Pagan, signified by a red dragon, Re 12:3 and Rome Papal, by a beast the dragon gave his power to, which rose out of the sea, and by another out of the earth, which spoke like a dragon, Re 13:1 both the eastern and western antichrists may be included; the eastern antichrist, the Turk, whose dominions are large, like the waters of the sea; and the western antichrist, the whore of Rome, described as sitting on many waters, Re 17:1 both which are comparable to serpents and dragons for their cruelty and poison; moreover, Satan, at the head of all these, called the dragon, the old serpent, and devil, must be taken into the account, who is the last enemy that will be destroyed; he will be taken and bound a thousand years, and then, being loosed, will be retaken, and cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and false prophet be, Re 20:1. Kimchi thinks this prophecy belongs to the times of Gog and Magog.

{i} Or boom, or bar-serpent, "serpentem vectem", V. L. and Montanus; the same, as the Bishop of Bergen thinks, with the "soeormen", or sea snake, which often lies stretched out before a creek, like a boom, to block up the passage; and is soon bent, in a curve, in folds, and is soon again in a straight line, like a pole or beam; see his History of Norway, p. 206, 207. {k} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 74. 2.

Isaiah 27:2

Ver. 2. In that day sing ye unto her,.... The congregation of Israel, as the Targum; or rather the church of Christ; for after, and upon the destruction of his and her enemies, there will be great rejoicing and singing alternately, and by responses, as the word signifies; see Re 15:1. Gussetius {l} renders it, "afflict her"; as if spoken by the Lord to the enemies to do their worst to her, and he would take care of her, that it shall be in vain, and to no purpose, since he would keep her:

A vineyard of red wine; as the people of the Jews are compared to one, **Isa 5:1** so is the church of Christ under the Gospel dispensation; see **So 8:11** a vineyard is a spot of ground separated from others, and the church and people of God are separated from the rest of the world by electing, redeeming, and calling grace; a vineyard is a place set with various vines, so is the church; there is Christ the true vine, the principal one, which stands in the first place, Joh 15:1 and there are particular congregated churches, which belong to the vineyard, the general or catholic church, **So 2:13** and there are particular believers that may be so called, **So 6:11** moreover, sometimes in vineyards other trees are planted besides vines, as barren fig trees, Lu 13:6 and so there are in the visible church of God nominal believers, carnal professors, trees without fruit; there are no true vines but such as are ingrafted and planted in Christ, and who, through union to him, and abiding in him, bring forth fruit; a vineyard is the property of some one person, as this is of Christ, whose it is by his own choice, by his Father's gift, by inheritance, by purchase, as well as it is of his planting, and under his care; vineyards are valuable, pleasant, and profitable, but exposed to beasts of prey, and therefore to be fenced and guarded; all which may be applied to the church of Christ, which shall, in the latter day especially, be very fruitful, and answer to this character given her in this song, a vineyard "of red wine"; the allusion is to such a vineyard, in which vines grow, that bring forth grapes, productive of the best wine, as the red was reckoned in the eastern countries; see Ge 49:12 and so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; this is a vineyard very different from that in **Isa 5:5** and from the vine of Israel, Ho 10:1 the fruit of it, signified by "red wine", may intend the graces of the Spirit, which like grapes, the fruit of the vine, grow in clusters; where one is, all of them are, and come from Christ, the vine, from whom all the fruit of divine grace is found: and which receive their tincture from the blood of Christ, their vigour and their usefulness; and may be said, like wine, to cheer the heart of God and man, **Jud 9:13** grace when in exercise is delightful to God and Christ, **So 4:9** and gives pleasure to other saints, Ps 34:1 and as the fruit of the vine must be squeezed ere the liquor can be had, so the graces of the Spirit are tried by afflictive dispensations of Providence, by which the preciousness and usefulness of them are made known; moreover, the fruits of righteousness, or good works, may be also intended, by which the graces of faith and repentance are evidenced, and which, when performed aright, are acceptable to God through Christ, and profitable to men; and for these fruits of grace and good works the church will be famous in the latter day.

{l} Comment. Ebr. p. 622.

Isaiah 27:3

Ver. 3. I the Lord do keep it,.... The vineyard, the church, not only by his ministers, called the keepers of it, **So 8:12** but by himself, by his own power; for unless he keeps it, who is Israel's keeper, the watchmen wake in vain; he keeps his church and people from sin, that it does not reign over them; and from Satan's temptations, that they are not destroyed by them; and from the malice of the world, and the poison of false teachers, that they are not ruined thereby; and from a final and total falling away; the Lord's preservation of his church and people will be very manifest in the latter day:

I will water it every moment; both more immediately with the dews of his grace, and the discoveries of his love; that being like dew, it comes from above, is according to the sovereign will of God, without the desert of man falls in the night, silently, gently, and insensibly, and greatly refreshes and makes fruitful, Ho 14:5 and more immediately by the ministry of the word and ordinances, by his ministers, the preachers of the Gospel, who water as well as plant, **1Co 3:6** these are the clouds he sends about to let down the rain of the

Gospel upon his church and people, by which they are revived, refreshed, and made fruitful, **Isa 5:6** and this being done "every moment", shows, as the care of God, and his constant regard to his people, so that without the frequent communications of his grace, and the constant ministration of his word and ordinances, they would wither and become fruitless; but, by means of these, they are as a watered garden, whose springs fail not, Isa 58:11:

lest [any] hurt it; as would Satan, who goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; and the men of the world, who are the boar out of the wood, and the wild beast out of the field, that would waste and destroy the vineyard; and false teachers, who are the foxes that would spoil the vines, **1Pe 5:8** but, to prevent any such hurt and damage, the Lord undertakes to keep the church, his vineyard, himself, which he repeats with some addition, to declare the certainty of it; or, "lest he visit it" {m}; that is, an enemy, as some {n} supply it; lest he should break down the hedge, and push into it, and waste it; or Jehovah himself, that is, as Gussetius {o} interprets it, while Jehovah the Father, Isa 27:1, is striking leviathan, or inflicting his judgments upon his enemies, Jehovah the Son promises to take care of his vineyard, the church, that the visitation does not affect them, and they are not hurt by it, but are safe and secure from it; which is a much better sense than that of Kimchi mentioned by him, I will water it every moment, "that not one leaf of it should fail"; the same is observed by Ben Melech, as the sense given by Donesh Ben Labrat:

I will keep it night and day; that is, continually, for he never slumbers nor sleeps; he has kept, and will keep, his church and people, through all the vicissitudes of night and day, of adversity and prosperity, they come into: how great is the condescension of the Lord to take upon him the irrigation and preservation of his people! how dear and precious must they be to him! and what a privilege is it to be in such a plantation as this, watered and defended by the Lord himself!

{m} hyle dwqpy Np "ne forte visitet eum", Munster, Pagninus, Tigurine version. {n} So Munster, Pagninus, Vatablus, and Ben Melech. {o} Comment. Ebr. p. 668, 669.

Isaiah 27:4

Ver. 4. Fury [is] not in me,.... Against his vineyard he takes so much care of, his church and people, whom he has loved with an everlasting love; they are indeed deserving of his wrath, but he has not appointed them to it, but has appointed his Son to bear it for them, who has delivered them from wrath to come, and they being justified by his blood and righteousness, are saved from it; and though the Lord chastises them for their sins, yet not in wrath and sore displeasure; there is no wrath or fury in his heart towards them, nor any expressed in the dispensations of his providence:

who would set the briers [and] thorns against me in battle? either suggesting the weakness of his people, who, was he to deal with them as their sins and corruptions deserved, for which they may be compared to thorns and briers, they would be as unable to bear his wrath and fury as briers and thorns could to withstand a consuming fire; or rather intimating, that should such persons rise up in his vineyard, the church, as often do, comparable to briers and thorns for their unfruitfulness and unprofitableness, for the hurt and mischief they do, and the grief and trouble they give to the people of God, as hypocrites and false teachers, and all such as are of unsound principles, and bad lives and conversations, and which are very offensive to the Lord; and therefore, though there is no fury in him against his vineyard, the church, yet there is against those briers and thorns, wicked men, whom he accounts his enemies, and will fight against them in his wrath, and consume them in his fury; see 2Sa 23:6:

I would go through them: or, "step into it" {p}; the vineyard, where those briers or thorns are set and grow up; the meaning is, that he would step into the vineyard, and warily and cautiously tread there, lest he should hurt any of the vines, true believers, while he is plucking up and destroying the briers and thorns; or contending, in a warlike manner, with carnal and hypocritical professors:

I would burn them together; or, "I would burn" out of it {q}; that is, gather out of the vineyard the briers and thorns, and bind them up in bundles, as the tares in the parable, which signify the same as here, and burn them, or utterly destroy them; though the words may be rendered, "who will give, or set, me a brier and thorn in battle, that I should go against it, and burn it up together?", or wholly {r} and the meaning is, who shall irritate or provoke me to be as a brier and thorn, to hurt, grieve, and distress my people, to cause me to go into them, and against them, in a military way, in wrath and fury to consume them? no one shall. This rendering and sense well agree with the first clause of the verse. Jerom renders it thus, "who will make me an adamant stone?" as the word "shamir" is rendered in **Eze 3:9** **Zec 7:12** and gives the sense, who will make me hard and cruel, so as to overcome my nature, my clemency, to go forth in a fierce and warlike manner, and walk upon my vineyard, which before I kept, and burn it, which I had hedged about?

{p} hb hevpa "gradiar in eam"; so some in Vatablus; "caute ingrediar eam", Piscator. {q} hntyua "succendam ex ea", Junius & Tremellius; "comburam [illos] ex ipsa", Piscator. {r} So De Dieu; and some in Vatablus; and which is approved by Noldius, who renders it in like manner, to the same sense, Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 409. No. 1671.

Isaiah 27:5

Ver. 5. Or let him take hold of my strength,.... Not on the law, as the Targum and Kimchi; but on Christ, as Jerom rightly interprets it; who is the strength and power of God, the man of his right hand he has made strong for himself; a strong tower, as the word signifies, a rock of defence, to whom saints may betake themselves, and be safe; in him they have righteousness and strength; in him is everlasting strength. The sense is, let the people of God, any and everyone of them, when afflicted and chastised by him particularly, and are ready to conclude that he is wroth with them, and is dealing with them in hot displeasure; let such look to Christ, and lay hold, and a strong hold, on him by faith, which will be greatly to their advantage and support. The Targum and Jarchi render wa, translated "or", by "if"; and then the words are to be read thus, "if he will", or "should, take hold of my strength", or fortress {s}; or, as some render them, "O that he would {t}", &c.; it follows,

[that] he may make peace with me, [and] he shall make peace with me; or rather, "he shall make peace with me, peace shall he make with me". The phrase is doubled for the certainty of it; and the meaning is, not that the believer who lays hold by faith on Christ, Jehovah's strength, shall make peace with him; which is not in the power of any person to do, no, not the believer by his faith, repentance, or good works; but Christ the power of God, on whom he lays hold, he shall make peace, as he has, by the blood of his cross, and as the only peacemaker; and hereby the believer may see himself reconciled to God, and at peace with him; and therefore may comfortably conclude, under every providence, that there is no fury in God towards him.

{s} wzemb qzxy wa "si prehenderit munitionem meam", Noldius. {t} "Utiuam, O si apprehenderit munitionem meam", Forerius.

Isaiah 27:6

Ver. 6. He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root,.... That is, the posterity of Jacob, the seed of Israel, in a spiritual sense; such who are Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile; these shall be so far from being plucked up, or rooted out of the vineyard, the church, that they shall take deeper root, and their roots shall spread yet more and more; they shall be rooted and grounded in the love of God, and also in Christ, and be built up in him, as well as firmly settled and established in the church, **Eph 3:17** or, "them that come to Jacob {u}"; proselytes unto him, converted Gentiles, that come to the church of Christ, signified by "Jacob", and give up themselves unto it, and are added to it, these shall take root. The words may be rendered, in days "to come, he shall cause Jacob to take root": or, he "shall take root", as Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Ben Melech supply the words; and so they are a prophecy of the stability and prosperous estate of the church in the latter day:

Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit; which may be understood of the fruits of grace and righteousness, which shall appear upon the people of God, in all parts of the world; or of the great number of converts everywhere; so the Targum, by "fruit", understands children's children; the sense is, that when the church of God, in the latter day, is settled and established, grounded in Christ, and in the doctrines of grace, it shall be in very flourishing and fruitful circumstances, abounding in grace and good works, and with numbers of converts; it shall be like the mustard tree, when it becomes so great a tree as that the birds of the air make their nests in it; and as the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, when it becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth,
Mt 13:31 compare with this Isa 37:31.

{u} So some in Gataker.

Isaiah 27:7

Ver. 7. Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him?.... No; the Lord does smite his people by afflictive dispensations of his providence; he smites them in their persons, and families, and estates; see Isa 57:17 as he smote Israel, by suffering them to be carried captive, and as the Jews are now smitten by him in their present state; yet not as he smote Pharaoh, with his ten plagues, and him and his host at the Red Sea; or as he smote Sennacherib and his army, by an angel, in one night; or as Amalek was smitten, and its memory perished;

or as he will smite mystical Babylon, which will be utterly destroyed; all which have been smiters of God's Israel, who, though smitten of God, yet not utterly destroyed; the Jews returned from captivity, and, though now they are scattered abroad, yet continue a people, and will be saved. God deals differently with his own people, his mystical and spiritual Israel, than with their enemies that smite them: he afflicts them, but does not destroy them, as he does their enemies; he has no fury in him towards his people, but he stirs up all his wrath against his enemies:

[or], is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him? or, "of his slain" {w}; the Lord's slain, or Israel's slain, which are slain by the Lord for Israel's sake; though Israel is slain, yet not in such numbers, to such a degree, or with such an utter slaughter, as their enemies; though the people of God may come under slaying providences, yet not such as wicked men; they are "chastened, but not killed"; and, though killed with the sword, or other instruments of death, in great numbers, both by Rome Pagan and Papal, yet not according to the slaughter as will be made of antichrist and his followers, Re 19:15.

{w} wygrh "occisorum ejus", Montanus; "interfecti illius", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 27:8

Ver. 8. In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it,.... Or, "when he sendeth it forth" {x}; when God sends forth an affliction on his people, or gives it a commission to them, as all are sent by him, he does it with moderation; he proportions it to their strength, and will not suffer them to be afflicted above what they are able to bear; and as, in afflicting, he debates and contends with his people, having a controversy with them, so he contends with the affliction he sends, and debates the point with it, and checks and corrects it, and will not suffer it to go beyond due bounds; and in this the afflictions of God's people differ from the afflictions of others, about which he is careless and unconcerned:

he stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind: when afflictions, like a blustering and blasting east wind, threaten much mischief, and to carry all before them, Jehovah, from whom they have their commission, and who holds the winds in his fist, represses them, stops the violence of them, and gradually abates the force of them, and quite stills them, when they have answered the end for which they are sent: or "he meditateth" {y}; or speaketh, as Jarchi interprets it, "by his rough wind in the day of his east wind"; God sometimes meditates hard things against his people, and speaks unto them by the rough dispensations of his providence, admonishes them of their sins, and brings them to a sense and acknowledgment of them, which is his view in suffering them to befall them; or, "he removes by his rough wind" {z}; their fruit, so Kimchi interprets it; as a rough wind blows off the blossoms and fruits, so the Lord, by afflictions, removes the unkind blossoms and bad fruit from his people, their sins and transgressions, as it follows.

{x} hxlvb "in emittendo eam", Montanus. {y} hgh "meditatus est", V. L. so it is used in Psal. i. 2. It sometimes intends a great sound and noise, such as the roaring of a lion, Isa. xxxi. 4. and Gussetius here interprets it of thunder, Ebr. Comment. p. 202. so Castalio renders it, "sonans suo duro spiritu". {z} "Removit in vento suo duro", Pagninus, Montanus; "removebit", Vatablus; "abstulit", Tigurine version, Piscator; so Ben Melech observes that the word has the signification of removing in Prov. xxv. 4, 5.

Isaiah 27:9

Ver. 9. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged,.... Or "expiated", or "atoned" {a}; not that afflictions are atonements for sin, or give satisfaction to divine justice for it; but they are the means of bringing the Lord's people to a sense of their sins, and to repentance and humiliation for them, and confession of them, and of leading them to the blood and sacrifice of Christ, by which they are expiated and atoned, and which the Spirit of God brings near, and applies unto them; whereby their sins, they are convicted of by means of afflictions, and which lay heavy upon their consciences, are purged away, and removed from them:

and this [is] all the fruit, to take away sin; this is the design and use of afflictions, the profit and advantage of them to the saints, that, being humbled for their sins, they depart from them, leave and forsake them; as well as the guilt of them is taken away from their consciences, through the application of pardoning grace, upon their repentance; see Job 36:8 this shows another difference between the afflictions of God's people and of others: namely, in the use and end of them. The sin of idolatry seems to be particularly designed by what follows; unless the sin of the present Jews, in their disbelief and rejection of the Messiah, should be rather intended; which, through their long affliction, they will be convinced of in the latter day, and it will be taken away from them, and be purged and expiated through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, the Saviour and Deliverer, they will embrace, Ro 11:25:

when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder; that is, when Jacob, or the people of the Jews, being convinced of their idolatry by their afflictions, shall pull down all their idolatrous altars; perhaps particularly referring to that which Ahaz made, 2Ki 16:10 and remove the stones thereof, and break them to pieces, as chalkstones for lime, which is easily done:

the groves and the images shall not stand up; erect, to be worshipped; but shall be thrown down, demolished, and broke to pieces; and, by thus abandoning their idols and idolatrous practices, they will show the sense they have of their sins, and the sincerity of their repentance; and it is to be observed, that the Jews, after their return from the Babylonish captivity, never practised idolatry more, not in the literal sense; perhaps some respect may be had here to the time when they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn; and when they shall renounce all their legal sacrifices, traditions of the elders, and their own righteousness, their idols, and look alone to the sacrifice of Christ, and declare against all the idolatry of the church of Rome, and all antichristian worship.

{a} rpky "propitiabitur", Pagninus, Montanus; "expiabitur", Piscator.

Isaiah 27:10

Ver. 10. Yet the defenced city [shall be] desolate,.... Or "but", or "notwithstanding" {b}; though the Lord deals mercifully with his own people, and mixes mercy with their afflictions, and causes them to issue well, and for their good; yet he does not deal so with others, his and their enemies: for by the "defenced city" is not meant Jerusalem, as many interpret it, so Kimchi; nor Samaria, as Aben Ezra; nor literal Babylon, as others; but mystical Babylon, the city of Rome, and the whole Roman or antichristian jurisdiction, called the "great" and "mighty" city, Re 18:10 which will be destroyed, become desolate, or "alone" {c}, without inhabitants:

[and] the habitation forsaken and left like a wilderness; or "habitations"; the singular for the plural; even beautiful ones, as the word {d} signifies, the stately palaces of the pope and cardinals, and other princes and great men,

which, upon the destruction of Rome, will be deserted, and become as a wilderness, uninhabited by men:

there shall the calf feed: not Ephraim, as Jarchi, from Jer 31:18 nor the king of Egypt, as Kimchi, from Jer 46:20 nor the righteous that shall attack the city, and spoil its substance, as the Targum; see Ps 68:30 but literally, and which is put for all other cattle, or beasts of the field, that should feed here, without any molestation or disturbance:

there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof; which the Targum interprets of the army belonging to the city; it denotes the utter destruction of it, and its inhabitants; see Re 18:2. Some of the Jewish writers {e} interpret this passage of Edom or Rome, and of the Messiah being there to take vengeance on it.

{b} yk "sed", Junius & Tremellius, Forerius; "tamen, nihilominus", Calvin. {c} ddb "solitaria", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {d} hwn "amoenum habitaculum", Tigurine version; Piscator {e} Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 91. 3.

Isaiah 27:11

Ver. 11. When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off,.... This city is compared to a tree, whose branches are not only gnawed and consumed by cattle, as in the former verse Isa 27:10; but which, in a hot dry summer, are withered and dried up, and so are easily broken, and are fit for nothing but the fire; hence it follows:

the women come [and] set them on fire; or "gather" them {f} in order to burn them; as is commonly done with withered branches, Joh 15:6 it may design the burning of the whore of Rome by the kings of the earth; for as antichrist is signified by a woman, so the ten kings that shall hate her, and burn her flesh with fire, may be signified by women; see Re 17:16. The word here used signifies to illuminate, or give light, which is done when wood is set on fire; hence the Vulgate Latin renders it, "women coming, and teaching it"; and so the Targum,

"women shall come into the house of their gods, and teach them;"

as the woman Jezebel does, **Re 2:20** the former sense is best:

for it [is] a people of no understanding; or "understandings": that is, the people that inhabit the above city, they are sottish and stupid, have no understanding of God and divine things, of the Scriptures, and the doctrines of them; among whom this maxim obtains, that ignorance is the mother of devotion; they are under a judicial blindness, are given up to strong delusions to believe a lie, **2Th 2:10**:

therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them will show them no favour; but his wrath shall be poured out upon them to the uttermost, which will be fulfilled in the seven vials, and in the destruction of Rome, and the everlasting ruin of the worshippers of the man of sin; see Re 16:1 no argument can be taken from men's being God's creatures and offspring, and from his being the former and maker of them, to their salvation; or because they are so, therefore shall be saved when they are sinful and sottish; for, being like brutes without understanding, they shall perish as they, without mercy.

{f} So Abendana in Miclol Yophi observes, this is the sense some give of the word, taking it to be the same as is used in Cant. v. 1.

Isaiah 27:12

Ver. 12. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... When the song will be sung, Isa 27:2 when God will appear to have taken particular care of his church, and is about to bring it into a flourishing condition; when its troubles and afflictions will come to an end, with a sanctified use of them; and when the city of Rome will be destroyed, and all the antichristian powers, then will be the conversion of the Jews; for antichrist stands in the way of that work:

[that] the Lord shall beat off; or "beat out" {g}; alluding either to the beating off of fruit from a tree, or to the beating out of grain from the ear; and signifies the separating of the Lord's people in the effectual calling from the rest of the world; as the fruit beaten off is separated from the tree, and corn beaten out is separated from the ear and chaff; for this beating off does not intend judgment, but mercy; and is done not by the rod of affliction, but by the rod of the Lord's strength sent out of Zion, even the Gospel, the power of God to salvation; which, in the ministration of it, should reach

from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt; from the river

Euphrates, on the banks of which was the city of Babylon, to the river Nile in Egypt, which were the limits and boundaries of the land of Israel, De 11:24 and in which places many Jews {h} were, or would be, as in the following verse Isa 27:13. The Septuagint version is,

"from the ditch of the river to Rhinocorura;"

which, Jerom says, is a town on the borders of Egypt and Palestine. The meaning is, that the Lord would find out his people, wherever they were, in those parts, and separate and call them by his grace, and gather them to himself, and to his church and people, as follows:

and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel; as fruit is gathered up, when beaten off of the tree; and the phrase "one by one" denotes either the fewness of them, and the gradual manner in which they will be gathered; or rather, since this does not so well suit with the conversion of the Jews, which will be of a nation at once, it may signify the completeness of this work, that they shall be everyone gathered, not one shall be left or lost, but all Israel shall be saved; or it may be also expressive of the conjunction of them, and union of them one to another, in the Gospel church state, into which they shall be gathered, as fruit beaten off, and gathered up, is laid together in a storehouse. To this sense agrees the Targum,

"ye shall be brought near one to another, O ye children of Israel {i}."

{g} jbxy "excutiat", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius. {h} Ben Melech interprets the river of the river Sabation or the Sabbatical river, beyond which the Jews generally suppose the ten tribes are, and from whence they will come at the time of their restoration; and, as this writer says, will come to Egypt, and there be gathered together with their brethren, the children of this captivity, Judah and Benjamin, which are scattered in every corner, and join one another. {i} dxa dxal "ad unum unum", Montanus; "unus ad unum"; so some in Vatablus, Forerius.

Isaiah 27:13

Ver. 13. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... When the Lord is about to do the above things, and in order to it. The Talmudists {k} apply this text to the world to come, or times of the Messiah, when the ten tribes shall be returned:

[that] the great trumpet shall be blown; meaning not the edict or proclamation of Cyrus, but the ministration of the Gospel, called a "trumpet", in allusion to those that were ordered by Moses to be made for the congregation of Israel, Nu 10:1, or to the jubilee trumpet, Le 25:9 or with respect to any trumpet giving a musical sound; the Gospel being a joyful sound, a sound of love, grace, and mercy through Christ, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him; and which may be called a "great" one, the author of it, God, being great; and it is the effect of great love, and the produce of great wisdom; it proclaims and publishes great things, great promises, great truths, and a great salvation; it gives a great sound, which has and will again go into all the world, and reach to the ends of the earth; and has been, and will be, attended with great power; the "blowing" of it intends the ministry of the word, which to perform aright requires ability and skill; and here it respects the ministration of it in the latter day, when this Gospel trumpet will be blown more clearly, and without any jar, discord, and confusion; and more loudly, openly, and publicly; and more effectually, and to greater purpose:

and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt; all mankind are in a perishing condition, but all are not sensible of it; some are, and they become so through the preaching of the word, attended with the power and Spirit of God; whereby they are convinced of sin, and of their lost estate by nature; their consciences are loaded with guilt, their souls are filled with a sense of wrath; they have a sight of sin, but not of a Saviour from it, or of the pardon of it; they have a view of a broken law, which curses and condemns, and of injured justice brandishing its sword against them, but see they have no righteousness to satisfy one or the other; and find themselves in a starving condition, ready to perish with hunger; and are like the wretched infant "cast out" into the open field, to the "loathing" of its person: and these now, whether in Assyria or in Egypt, or wherever they are, the Gospel trumpet will reach them, and encourage them to come; and powerful and efficacious grace accompanying it will engage and cause them to "come" first to Christ as poor perishing sinners, and venture their souls on him for life and salvation; they shall come to him in a way of believing, for pardon, cleansing, rest, food, righteousness, and life; and then they shall come to his churches, and give up themselves unto them, to walk with them:

and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem; in the Gospel church, signified frequently by Mount Zion and Jerusalem; see Heb 12:22 where the Jews shall come, when converted, and join themselves, and worship God internally and externally, in spirit and in truth: and it may be true of Mount Zion, and of Jerusalem, in a literal sense, which will be rebuilt, and inhabited by the Jews, and become a place of divine worship.

{k} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 110. 2. Midrash Kohelet. fol. 68. 3.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 28:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 28

In this chapter the ten tribes of Israel and the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, are threatened with divine judgments, because of their sins and iniquities mentioned. The ten tribes, under the name of Ephraim, for their pride and drunkenness, Isa 28:1 the means of their destruction, the Assyrian monarch, compared to a hail storm, and a flood of mighty waters, Isa 28:2 which destruction, for their sins, is repeated, and represented as sudden and swift; when they would be like a fading flower and hasty fruit, Isa 28:3 and then, as for the two tribes, though they had a glorious prince at the head of them, who had a spirit of wisdom and judgment for government, and of valour and courage for war, Isa 28:5 yet the generality of the people, led on by the example of priest and prophet, went into the same sensual gratifications as they of the ten tribes did, Isa 28:7 and became sottish and unteachable, and were like children just taken from the breast, and to be used as such, Isa 28:9 and though the doctrine proposed to be taught them was such as, if received, would be of the greatest advantage to them, for their comfort and refreshment, yet it was refused by them with the utmost contempt; which was to be their ruin, Isa 28:12, wherefore the rulers of Jerusalem are threatened with the judgments of God, which should come upon them night and day, the report of which would be a vexation to them; and from which they should not be screened by their covenant with death and hell, or by their shelters and coverings with lies and falsehood, in which they placed their confidence, Isa 28:14 in the midst of which account, for the comfort of the Lord's people, stands a glorious prophecy, concerning the sure foundation laid in Zion, on which all that are built are safe and happy, Isa 28:16 and the certainty of these judgments is illustrated by the method which the ploughman takes in sowing his corn, and threshing it out; for which he has instruction and direction from the Lord of hosts, Isa 28:23.

Ver. 1. Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim,.... Or, "of the drunkards of Ephraim": or, "O crown of pride, O drunkards of Ephraim {l}"; who are both called upon, and a woe denounced against them. Ephraim is put for the ten tribes, who were drunk either in a literal sense, for to the sin of drunkenness were they addicted, **Ho 7:5** **Am 6:6**. The Jews say {m}, that wine of Prugiatha (which perhaps was a place noted for good wine), and the waters of Diomasit (baths), cut off the ten tribes from Israel; which both Jarchi and Kimchi, on the place, make mention of; that is, as Buxtorf {n} interprets it, pleasures and delights destroyed the ten tribes. The inhabitants of Samaria, and the places adjacent, especially were addicted to this vice; these places abounding with excellent wines. Sichem, which were in these parts, is thought to be called, from the drunkenness of its inhabitants, Sychar, **Joh 4:5** this is a sin very uncomely in any, but especially in professors of religion, as these were, and ought to be declaimed against: or they were drunkards in a metaphorical sense, either with idolatry, the two calves being set up in Dan and Bethel, which belonged to the ten tribes; just as the kings of the earth are said to be drunk with the wine of antichrist's fornication, or the idolatry of the church of Rome, Re 17:2 or with pride and haughtiness, being elated with the fruitfulness of their country, their great affluence and riches, and numbers of people; in all which they were superior to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and in which they piqued themselves, and are therefore called "the crown of pride"; and especially their king may be meant, who was lifted up with pride that he ruled over such a country and people; or rather the city of Samaria, the metropolis of the ten tribes, and the royal city. Perhaps there may be an allusion to the crowns wore by drunkards at their revels, and particularly by such who were mighty to drink wine or strong drink, and overcame others, and triumphed in it: pride and sensuality are the vices condemned, and they often go together:

whose glorious beauty; which lay in the numbers of their inhabitants, in their wealth and riches, and in their fruits of corn and wine:

[is] a fading flower; not to be depended on, soon destroyed, and quickly gone:

which [are] on the head of the fat valleys; meaning particularly the corn and wine, the harvest and vintage, with which the fruitful valleys being covered, looked very beautiful and glorious: very probably particular respect is had to Samaria, the head of the kingdom, and which was situated on a hill, and surrounded with fruitful valleys; for not Jerusalem is here meant, as Cocceius; nor Gethsemane, by the fat valleys, as Jerom:

of them that are overcome with wine; or smitten, beaten {o} knocked down with it, as with a hammer, and laid prostrate on the ground, where they lie fixed to it, not able to get up; a true picture of a drunkard, that is conquered by wine, and enslaved unto it; see Isa 28:3.

{l} Myrpa yrkv twag trje ywh "vae coronae erectionis ebriorum Ephraimi", Cocceius, Gataker. {m} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 147. 2. {n} Lex. Talmud. col. 529. {o} Nyy ymwlh "concussi vino", Pagninus, "percussi vino", so some in Vatablus; "conquassantur vel conculcantur a vino", Forerius; "contusorum a vino", Cocceius.

Isaiah 28:2

Ver. 2. Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one,.... That is, a powerful king, with a mighty army, meaning Shalmaneser king of Assyria; whom the Lord had at his beck and command, and could use at his pleasure, as his instrument, to bring down the towering pride of Ephraim, and chastise him for his sensuality:

[which] as a tempest of hail; that beats down herbs and plants, and branches of trees, and men and beasts:

[and] a destroying storm; which carries all before it, blows down houses and trees, and makes terrible devastation wherever it comes:

as a flood of mighty waters overflowing; whose torrent is so strong there is no stopping it: so this mighty and powerful prince

shall cast down to the earth with the hand; the crown of pride, the people of Israel, and the king of it; he shall take the crown from his head, and cast it to the ground with a strong hand, as the Jews interpret it, with great violence; or very easily, with one hand, as it were, without any trouble at all. The Targum is,

"so shall people come against them, and remove them out of their own land into another land, because of the sins which were in their hands;"

see **Isa 8:7**.

Isaiah 28:3

Ver. 3. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet. Not only cast down with the hand, but trampled upon with the feet; showing their utter destruction, and the contempt with which they should be used; which, with their character, is repeated, to point out their sins, the cause of it, to denote the certainty of it, and that it might be taken notice of.

Isaiah 28:4

Ver. 4. And the glorious beauty which is on the head of the fat valley,.... Meaning the riches and fruitfulness of the ten tribes, and especially of Samaria the head of them:

shall be a fading flower; as before declared, Isa 28:1 and here repeated to show the certainty of it, and to awaken their attention to it:

[and] as the hasty fruit before the summer; the first ripe fruit, that which is ripe before the summer fruits in common are. The Septuagint render it the first ripe fig; and so the Targum and Aben Ezra:

which [when] he that looketh upon it seeth it; that it is goodly and desirable, and so gathers it, **Mic 7:1**:

while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up; and as soon as he has got it into his hand, he cannot keep it there to look at, or forbear eating it, but greedily devours it, and swallows it down at once; denoting what a desirable prey the ten tribes would be to the Assyrian monarch, and how swift, sudden, and inevitable, would be their destruction.

Isaiah 28:5

Ver. 5. In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory,.... Or, "glorious crown" {p}; surrounding, adorning, and protecting his people; granting them his presence; giving them his grace, and large measures of it; causing them to live soberly, righteously, and godly: this stands opposed to "the crown of pride" before mentioned, and refers to the time when that should be trampled under foot, or when the ten tribes should be carried into captivity, which was in the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign, 2Ki 18:10 at which time, and in whose reign, as well as in the reign of Josiah, this prophecy had its accomplishment:

and for a diadem of beauty: or, "a beautiful diadem" {q}; the same as expressed by different words, for the confirmation and illustration of it:

unto the residue of his people; the Arabic version adds, "in Egypt"; the people that remained there, when the others were carried captive, but without any foundation. Jarchi interprets it of the righteous that were left in it, in Samaria, or in Ephraim, in the ten tribes before spoken of; but it is to be understood, as Kimchi observes, of the other two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, which remained in their own land, when others were carried captive, to whom God gave his favours, spiritual and temporal, in the times of Hezekiah and Josiah; and especially the former is meant, and who was a type of Christ, to whom this passage may be applied, who is the glory of his people Israel; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"in that day shall the Messiah of the Lord of hosts be for a crown of joy;"

and Kimchi says their Rabbins expound this of the King Messiah, in time to come, when both the kingly and priestly glory should be restored; the one being signified by the "crown of glory", the other by the "diadem of beauty".

{p} ybu trjel "pro corona decora", Piscator. {q} hrapt trypulw "et pro diadem ate ornante", Piscator.

Isaiah 28:6

Ver. 6. And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment,.... That is, as the Lord would give honour and glory to the people in general, so wisdom and prudence, a spirit of judgment and discerning, to the king in particular, who sat on the throne of judgment to do justice, and execute judgment among his subjects: though this need not be restrained to the king, but be applied to all the judges and magistrates in the land, who sat and heard causes and complaints brought before them, for which they should be qualified by the Lord; so Aben Ezra interprets it of the sanhedrim:

and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate; as wisdom is promised to the king and judges of the land, so strength of body and mind, valour and

courage, to the prince and his army; so that they should turn the battle, and cause their enemies to fly before them, and pursue them to the very gates of their cities, as Hezekiah did,
2Ki 18:8. The Syriac version is, "who turn the battle from the gate"; who, when besieged, sally out upon the besiegers, and drive them from their gates, oblige them to break up the siege, and fly before them. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "and strength to them that return from war to the gate": that come home victorious to their own houses; and so the Targum,

"that he may give victory to them that go out in war, to return them in peace to their own houses."

Wisdom in the cabinet and courts of judicature, and courage in the camp, are two great blessings to a nation, and serve much to explain the glory and beauty before promised.

Isaiah 28:7

Ver. 7. But they also have erred through wine,.... Either they that sat in judgment, and turned the battle to the gate, as Jarchi interprets it: or rather, since the Lord was a spirit of judgment and strength to those, the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin in later times are meant, in the latter end of Hezekiah's reign, or in the times of Manasseh, or nearer the Babylonish captivity; these tribes, which professed the true religion, and who had the word, and worship, and ordinances of God among them, even these were guilty of the same sin of drunkenness, as the ten tribes that had apostatized; there were the drunkards of Judah, as well Ephraim, who "erred through wine"; they erred and strayed from the rule of the divine word by excessive drinking, and this led them on to other sins, as drunkenness commonly does; and they were not only through it guilty of errors in practice, but in principle also; they made sad mistakes, as in life and conversation, so in doctrine, their memories, understandings, and judgments, being sadly affected and beclouded through this sin:

and through strong drink are out the of way; of God and his word; out of the way of truth and godliness: it signifies the same as before, only expressed in different words. The Targum renders the word for "strong drink", which designs any liquor that makes men drunk, by "old wine", which is accounted the best:

the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink; committed sin, by drinking to excess, and made themselves unfit for the duties of their office, and were guilty of sad mistakes in the performance of it; the priest sinned by so doing against an express command, and made himself incapable of distinguishing between the holy and unholy, the clean and the unclean, Le 10:9 though this need not be restrained to the priest only, for the word "cohen" signifies a prince as well as priest; and it is not fitting for kings to drink wine, nor princes strong drink, to excess, Pr 31:4 civil as well as ecclesiastical rulers may be here designed, though chiefly the latter, men that should set the best of examples to others; and the "prophet", as Kimchi observes, intends not the true, but false prophets. The Targum renders it a "scribe"; these and the priests are frequently mentioned together in the New Testament, and were both erroneous; and their errors here, both as to doctrine and practice, are imputed to their drunkenness; a very scandalous sin, especially in persons of such a character:

they are swallowed up of wine; they not only greedily swallowed it down, and were filled with it, but were swallowed up by it, drowned in it, and lost the exercise of their sense and reason, and were ruined and destroyed by it, and made wholly unfit for such sacred offices in which they were:

they are out of the way through strong drink; out of the of their duty, by sinning in this manner; and out the way of the performance of their office, being rendered incapable of it:

they err in vision: these were the prophets, the seers, who pretended to the visions of God, and related them to the people as such; but they mistook the imaginations of their crazy heads, intoxicated with liquor, for the visions of God; they erred in prophesying, which may be meant by "vision", they delivered out false prophecies, false doctrines, and grievous errors, of fatal consequence to the people; or, as Kimchi further interprets it, they erred "in seeing"; they mistook in those things which were plain and obvious to the eye of everyone, in things clear and manifest; drunkenness affects the eyes both of the body and of the mind, that a man can see clearly with neither. The Targum is,

"they turned after, or declined unto, sweet meat;"

as if they were guilty of gluttony as well as drunkenness; but it is not usual for drunkards to crave sweet meat, but rather what is relishing:

they stumble [in] judgment; or "reel" {r} and stagger, as drunken men do: this refers to the priest, who, through drunkenness, made sad hobbling work in expounding the law, and giving the sense of it, and in pronouncing sentence of judgment in matters of controversy brought before him, to whom those things appertained, **Mal 2:7**
De 17:8.

{r} hylylp wqp "titubant in judicatione", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gataker.

Isaiah 28:8

Ver. 8. For all tables are full of vomit [and] filthiness,.... The one signifies what is spued out of a man's mouth, his stomach being overcharged, and the other his excrements; and both give a just, though nauseous, idea of a drunken man. This vice was very common; men of all ranks and degrees were infected with it, rulers and people; and no wonder that the common people ran into it, when such examples were set them; the tables of the priests, who ate of the holy things in the holy place, and the tables of the prophets, who pretended to see visions, and to prophesy of things to come, were all defiled through this prevailing sin;

[so that there is] no place [clean] or free from vomit and filthiness, no table, or part of one, of prince, prophet, priest, and people; the Targum adds,

"pure from rapine or violence."

R. Simeon, as De Dieu observes, makes "beli Makom" to signify "without God", seeing God is sometimes with the Jews called Makom, "place", because he fills all places; and as if the sense was, their tables were without God, no mention being made of him at their table, or in their table talk, or while eating and drinking; but this does not seem to be the sense of the passage. Vitringa interprets this of schools and public auditoriums, where false doctrines were taught, comparable to vomit for filthiness; hence it follows:

Isaiah 28:9

Ver. 9. Whom shall he teach knowledge?.... Not the drunken priest or prophet, who were both unfit for teaching men knowledge; but either the true and godly priest or prophet of the Lord, or the Lord himself, before spoken of as a spirit of judgment, Isa 28:6 namely, by his prophets and ministers, the latter seem rather intended; whom may or can such an one teach the knowledge of God, and of themselves; the knowledge of the law, and of the Gospel; the knowledge of divine truths, of things necessary to salvation, and the conduct of human life; of Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation by him, and of him, as a foundation of the Lord's laying in Zion, hereafter mentioned in this chapter? who are capable of receiving such instructions? it intimates the stupidity and sottishness of the Jews, whose minds were so impaired by excessive drinking, that they were not able to take in the knowledge of these things:

and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? or "hearing"; the hearing of the word, or the word heard, the report of the Gospel; so the word is used in Isa 53:1 this will never be understood, believed, and received, unless the arm of the Lord is revealed, or his power be exerted; prophets and ministers may speak to the ears of men, but they cannot give them an understanding of divine things, God only can do that: here it designs, as before, the unteachableness of the people of the Jews, being in the circumstances they were, as appears by what follows:

[them that are] weaned from the milk, [and] drawn from the breasts; signifying, that one might as well take children from the breast, such as are just weaned, and instruct them, as to pretend to teach these people the knowledge of divine things, or cause them to understand sound doctrine, that which is agreeable to law and Gospel; so sottish were they become through excessive drinking. Some understand this as a serious answer to the questions, and of persons in a metaphorical sense, who desire and thirst after the sincere milk of the word, as children just taken from the breast, and deprived of it, do; and who are afflicted and distressed, and without the milk of divine comfort, and are like weaned children, humble, meek, and lowly; see
Mt 11:25. Jarchi makes mention of such an interpretation as this, "them that are weaned from the milk"; from the law, which is called milk: "and drawn from the breasts"; drawn from the disciples of the wise men. It may be understood of such who departed from the sincere milk of the word; and embraced the traditions of the elders.

Isaiah 28:10

Ver. 10. For precept [must be] upon precept, precept upon precept,....

Signifying, that they must be dealt with as children were, when first instructed in the rudiments of a language, first had one rule given them, and then another, and so one after another till they had gone through the whole:

line upon line, line upon line; who are taught first to write one line, and then another; or to draw one line, and write after that, and then another; or where to begin one line, and, when finished, where to begin another; for the allusion is to writing by line, and not to a line used in building, as Kimchi and Ben Melech think:

here a little, [and] there a little; a small lesson out of one book, and a small lesson out of another; a little one day, and a little on the next, and so on, that their memories may not be overburdened.

Isaiah 28:11

Ver. 11. For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. Or "hath spoken" {s}; as parents and nurses, in a lisping manner, and in a language and tone different from what they use in common, speak unto their children, accommodating themselves according to their capacities and weakness; and so it is a continuation of the method to be used in instructing the Jews, as being like children: or else these words are to be considered as a reason why, since they refused instruction in this plain, easy, and gentle manner, by the ministry of the prophets of the Lord, he would speak to them in a more severe and in a rougher manner in his providences, and bring a people against them of a strange language they understood not, and so should not be able to treat and make peace with them, and who would carry them captive into a strange land; which was fulfilled by bringing the Chaldean army upon them, **Jer 5:15** see 1Co 14:21 and afterwards the Romans.

{s} So Gataker.

Isaiah 28:12

Ver. 12. To whom he said,.... Either the Lord himself, or the prophet Isaiah; or rather the Lord by him, and other prophets; so the Targum,

"to whom the prophets said;"

that is, the true prophets of the Lord said to the people, or to the priests and other prophets; or Christ and his apostles, as follows:

This [is] the rest [wherewith] ye may cause the weary to rest: and this [is] the refreshing: that is, by teaching the word of God, the true knowledge of him, and the sound doctrines of the Gospel, and the duties of religion; this would be the best way of casing and refreshing the minds and consciences of the people, burdened with a sense of sin, or distressed and disconsolate through afflictions and calamities upon them, and be the most effectual method of continuing them in ease and peace in their own land, and of preserving them from captivity, and other judgments threatened with; see Mt 11:28:

yet they would not hear; having no regard to the Lord and his prophets; nor any compassion to their countrymen, afflicted and distressed in mind or body; nor to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles.

Isaiah 28:13

Ver. 13. But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept,.... Was despised and derided by them; they took the prophet's words out of his mouth, and in a scoffing manner repeated them; which, in the Hebrew text, is in a rhyming form, and were sung and drawled out by them, "Tsau lotsau, Tsau lotsau, Kau lakau, Kau lakau": this is all he can say to us, and we have from him:

precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little; or the words may be rendered, "and the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept", &c.; as it had been, so it still was; the same method was continued to be taken with them, and they still treated as children; and it is suggested that they should remain so, and not be men in understanding; and that they should be ever learning like children, and never come to the knowledge of the truth. Moreover, the words may be rendered, "though the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept", &c.; though it was delivered in so plain and easy a manner to them, and such methods of instruction were used gradually and gently, to instil knowledge into them, yet so stupid were they as not to receive it, and so perverse and stubborn as wilfully to reject it; hence they were given up to judicial blindness and hardness, Ro 11:8:

that they might go and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken: go on in their own sinful ways, backslide from God, and be broken by his judgments; and be ensnared and taken in the net of the Babylonians, and be carried by them into captivity; see Eze 12:13 compare with this Mt 21:44 or rather fall into the hands of the Romans, and be taken and dispersed by them among the nations.

Isaiah 28:14

Ver. 14. Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men,.... Men of scorn and mockery, that scoffed and mocked at the word of God, as in the preceding verse Isa 28:13; or at the threatenings of punishment; and even made a jest of death and hell, as in the following words: "the word of the Lord" they are called upon to hear, hearken, and attend to, is either the word of promise of the Messiah,
Isa 28:16 or rather the word threatening them with ruin,
Isa 28:18 or it may be both:

that rule this people which [is] in Jerusalem; which must not be understood of the chief ruler Hezekiah, but rather of some subordinate rulers, such as Shebna and others; these set a very bad example to the common people: no wonder that irreligion and profaneness prevail, when civil magistrates are scoffers at religion. It agrees best with the rulers of the Jewish people in the times of Christ, who mocked at him and his ministry, and that of his apostles.

Isaiah 28:15

Ver. 15. Because ye have said,.... Within themselves; they thought so, if they did not say it in express words; and their conduct and behaviour showed that these were the sentiments and presumptions of their minds:

We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement: as safe from death, and secure from hell, or the grave, as if a covenant and compact had been formally entered into between them. The phrases are expressive of their being fearless of them, and of their confidence and assurance that they should not be hurt by them. Some interpret this of their deadly enemies, as Sennacherib king of Assyria particularly, with whom they had made peace, and had entered into a covenant of friendship and alliance, and so had nothing to fear from the threatenings of the Lord by the prophet; but Vitringa, better, of the covenant and agreement with the Romans, which the Jewish rulers were careful to observe, and thought themselves safe on account of it; see **Re 6:8**:

when the overflowing scourge shall pass through; when the judgments of God shall come upon the earth, and pass through the whole world, as a chastisement and correction of men for their sins, and as a punishment for them, like a mighty torrent spreading itself, and carrying all before it; or particularly when the Assyrian monarch with his army shall pass through the land of Judea, signified, in
Isa 28:2, by a tempest of hail, a destroying storm, a flood of mighty waters overflowing; or rather the Roman army invading Judea:

it shall not come unto us; who were in the city of Jerusalem:

for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves; not what they themselves reckoned so, but what the prophet Isaiah, or the Lord by him, called so, whose words they used, and in whose language they spoke; meaning either their lying prophets, as Kimchi, and the false doctrines they delivered to them, promising them peace when destruction was at hand; or their idols, as Jarchi, which are falsehood, lying vanities, and work of errors; or their carnal policy, arts of dissimulation, sinful compliances, and crafty methods of acting with their enemies, by which they hoped to deceive them, and secure themselves from destruction, as others; or else their wealth and riches, got by lying and fraud, which is the sense of some interpreters; and perhaps all may be intended in which they might put their trust and confidence, and on account of them expect security from threatened evils, though no other than lies and falsehood; and the same may be observed of all outward acts of religion, rites and ceremonies, and works of righteousness done by men, in which they place their trust, and hope to be saved by them from wrath to come.

Isaiah 28:16

Ver. 16. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD,.... In order to show what is the true foundation of hope and trust for security from death and hell, and to convince men of their vain and false confidence, as well as to comfort the people of God, such as truly feared him in Jerusalem; who, bearing the judgment denounced, might conclude that they were going to be cut off from being a nation, and that the family and kingdom of David would be at an end, and then where was the promise of the Messiah? wherefore, to relieve the minds of such, a promise of him is delivered out in the midst of a denunciation of judgment upon the wicked:

Behold, (a note of attention and admiration, as well as asseveration,)

I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone; which the Targum interprets of a king; and Jarchi of the King Messiah, who undoubtedly is meant, as is clear from **Ro 9:33** and not Hezekiah, as Kimchi, and others, who was now king, when this prophecy was made, and therefore cannot respect him; but Christ, who is frequently spoken of, under the simile of a stone, Ge 49:24 and may be compared to one for his usefulness in the spiritual building, being both foundation and cornerstone, and for his great strength and durableness; and this is a stone of the Lord's laying, which he had been laying in his eternal purposes and decrees, as the Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer of his people; and whom he was about to lay, by sending him forth, in the fulness of time, to be incarnate, suffer, and die for them: and whom he lays as the foundation in the effectual calling of his people, to build their faith and hope upon; and this is done in Zion, in the church, which is built upon him, and where he is revealed and made known to be what he is, and as here described:

a tried stone; by the Old Testament saints, and by saints in all ages, who have ventured their souls on him, and laid the whole stress of their salvation upon him, and have been saved by him; and by Satan, and his principalities and powers, by his temptations of him in the wilderness, and by his attacks upon him in the garden, and on the cross, and found him to be an immovable stone, and were broken by him; and by his divine Father, who tried his faithfulness by trusting him with all his elect, and the salvation of them; and his great strength, by laying upon him all their sins, and the punishment due unto them. Some render it, "a stone of trial", or "a trying stone" {t}; by which men are tried, and discovered to be what they are, whether believers or unbelievers, sincere Christians or hypocrites; which may be known by their conduct and behaviour to Christ; if they come to him as a living stone, and he is precious to them, they are true believers; but if he is to them a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, they are unbelievers, and reprobate persons, **1Pe 2:4**:

a precious corner [stone]; which, as it is both for the beauty and strength of the building, so it knits, cements, and keeps the parts together; and of this use is Christ in the spiritual building; angels and men are knit together in him, Jews and Gentiles, Old and New Testament saints, saints above and saints below, saints in all ages, times, and places: and a "precious" stone he is, a pearl of great price; precious to his Father, who loves him, and delights in him, and has chosen and laid him as the foundation of his church, and of every true believer; to whom also he is precious, his person, names, offices, and relations, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, his word, ordinances, and people, and everything belonging to him:

a sure foundation; a well founded one {u}; which will never give way; a rock on which the church is built, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it; a sure foundation of faith and hope, of peace, joy, and comfort, and of eternal happiness, to all that build upon it; a foundation firm and strong, immovable and everlasting; and so is every thing that is laid or depends upon it, the covenant of grace, and the promises of it, the persons of the Lord's people, and their salvation:

he that believeth; either those things, as the Targum adds, this promise and prophecy, and the things contained therein; or in Christ, the foundation laid, the tried and precious cornerstone, so it is explained in **1Pe 2:6**:

shall not make haste; or be impatient for the fulfilment of this prophecy, but patiently wait for it, knowing that it is for an appointed time, and will not tarry; and that God will hasten it in his own time; or will not make haste to lay any other foundation, being satisfied with this that is laid; nor make haste to a strange god, to another Saviour, knowing there is salvation in him, and in no other. The Targum is,

"shall not be moved when trouble comes;"

being founded upon this Rock of ages, which is proof against all storms and tempests; see **Mt 7:24**. The Apostles Paul and Peter, agreeably to the Septuagint version, render it, "shall not be ashamed", or "confounded"; See Gill on "Ro 9:33" see Gill on "1Pe 2:6".

{t} Nxb Nba "lapidem probationis", Junius & Tremellius, Calvin, Vitringa.
{u} dowm dowm "fundamentum fundatum"; so some in Vatablus; "fundationem fundatissimam", Junius & Tremellius; "fundamentum solidum", Calvin; "solidissimum" Tigurine version; So Ben Melech interprets it a strong foundation.

Isaiah 28:17

Ver. 17. Judgment also will I lay to the line,.... A metaphor taken from builders, who in building use the line and plummet to carry on their work even and regular, retaining such stones as agree thereunto, and rejecting such as do not; signifying, that in the spiritual building, where Christ is the foundation and cornerstone, such as are built thereon shall continue and grow up regularly into a holy temple; but those that set at nought this precious stone, and build upon the sandy foundation of their own righteousness, betake themselves to a refuge of lies, and cover themselves in their own hiding places, as well as all such who go on in their sins, shall be rejected by the righteous judgment of God:

and righteousness to the plummet; meaning the same as before; or, "I will lay judgment by the line, and righteousness by the plummet" {w}; the rule of the divine law, by which it will appear whether their actions are agreeable to it, or the righteousness they trust in answerable to it; or the sense is, that at the same time that God would preserve and secure his own people upon the sure foundation Christ, he would punish others, according to the strict rules of justice, as his righteous law required, and according to the just demerit of sin. Kimchi interprets it, but very wrongly, of the justice and equity that should take place in the reign of Hezekiah, which were wanting at the time of this prophecy; but the preceding prophecy regards Christ, and not Hezekiah; and therefore is rather to be understood of the right and equal distribution of justice and judgment in the administration of government by him:

and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies; the lies they made their refuge, Isa 28:15 their lying prophets, their idols, their riches, their righteousness, and everything in which they placed their confidence; for all refuges, be they what they will, are lying ones, and will deceive, excepting Christ and his righteousness; all which are easily and at once swept away, with the besom of avenging justice, when God takes it in hand. The phrase denotes the facility and suddenness of the destruction, and the entirety of it, which should be brought about by means of a "hail" storm, the same with that in Isa 28:2 which designs the Assyrian, or rather the Roman army, since the prophecy preceding relates to the times of Christ; and it may be, by the refuge of lies may be meant the temple, in which the Jews greatly placed their confidence, as Cocceius thinks:

and the waters shall overflow the hiding place; the city of Jerusalem, where they hid, and thought themselves safe: a mighty army rushing into a city, and putting the inhabitants to the sword, or to flight, or obliging them to surrender, may be fitly signified by an inundation of water; see **Isa 8:7** very probably the army of the Romans under Vespasian.

{w} So Gataker.

Isaiah 28:18

Ver. 18. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled,.... Or, "be besmeared" {x}, or daubed over, as the ark was with pitch, **Ge 6:14** where the same word is used as here; so that it shall not be legible, as any writing that is blotted out by ink, or any other liquor, so that it cannot be read; in like manner this their covenant with death should be so obliterated, that the articles of it could not be made out, and so of no force; thus the Targum renders it,

"shall be made void;"

See Gill on "Isa 28:15":

and your agreement with hell shall not stand; or "vision", or "provision" {y}; which they had made by compact, with the greatest care, caution, and foresight, to secure themselves from destruction, would be found insufficient. The Targum is,

"and our peace, which was with the destroyer, shall not stand;"

See Gill on "Isa 28:15":

when the overflowing scourge shall pass through: the land of Judea and the city of Jerusalem; See Gill on "Isa 28:15":

then shall ye be trodden down by it: though they flattered themselves it should not come near them, yet it would; and they would not be able to stand before it, but would be thrown down, and trampled upon by it as the mire of the streets; see Lu 21:24.

{x} rpkw "Heb. oblinetur", Piscator; "quasi pica illita tabulae literaeque foederis incrustentur, inducantur ac dispereant", Gusset. Comment. Ebr. p. 397. {y} Mktwzxw "et visio vestra", Vatablus; "cautio vestra", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Heb. "visio", i.e. "provisio", Piscator.

Isaiah 28:19

Ver. 19. From the time that it goeth forth, it shall take you,.... Or, "as soon as it passeth through" {z}, "it shall take you away"; as soon as it begins to overflow, and as it goes along, it shall make clear work, and carry you away with it; you will not be able to resist it, to withstand its motion, and stop its progress; but will be borne down by it, and carried away with it, either destroyed by it at once, or carried into captivity; so the Targum,

"in the time of its passing over, it shall carry you captive:"

for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night; signifying that it should come very early, before they were aware of it and prepared for it, and should be constant and incessant, day after day, day and night, continually, until it had done its work thoroughly, in the utter destruction of them; which was true of the Assyrian, but especially of the Roman army:

and it shall be a vexation only [to] understand the report; the fame, the rumour of the enemy's coming, of his invasion of the land, of the devastation he makes everywhere, and of his progress and near approach to Jerusalem; the bare report of this only being made and confirmed, so that there was reason to believe it, would produce anguish and distress of mind, cause a commotion, a fear and trembling, and shaking of the joints, as the word {a} signifies; and therefore, how dreadful must the calamity itself be! or else this may be meant of the report of the prophecy of the Lord, which before they would not believe; but now the judgments threatened coming upon them, they would be made to understand it; so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "and only vexation alone shall give understanding to the report"; and to this sense the Targum,

"and it shall be, before the time of the curse comes, that ye shall understand the words of the prophets;"

and, when it was come, should know to their sorrow, and by sad experience, the truth of what they had said.

{z} wrbe ydm "mox ut pertransierit", Tigurine version. {a} hewz "commotio", Montanus, Piscator; "terror", Calvin; "pavor", Pagninus.

Isaiah 28:20

Ver. 20. For the bed is shorter than that [a man] can stretch himself [on it],.... When a bed is short, a man cannot lie at his full length, and at ease:

and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself [in it]; when the bedclothes are narrow a man cannot cover himself with them, so as to be warm and comfortable. These proverbial expressions are interpreted by Kimchi of Jerusalem, when besieged by the Assyrian army, when the inhabitants of it were much straitened, distressed, and made uncomfortable; perhaps it may be better understood of the same city when besieged by the Romans, to which the Jews flocked from all parts, in such numbers, for shelter, that there was not room enough for them, at least not provision, and which was the cause of that great distress and miserable condition they were reduced to: in general, the design of the words may be to show that all refuges and shelters, all means made use of for safety and protection, by which they endeavoured to cover and secure themselves, would be insufficient; and particularly such that laid themselves at ease on the bed of their own righteousness, not submitting to Christ and his righteousness, and covered themselves with the rags of their own doings, and not with the garments of his salvation, would find themselves in a very uncomfortable and unsafe state.

Isaiah 28:21

Ver. 21. For the Lord shall rise up as [in] Mount Perazim,.... Where the Lord broke forth on David's enemies the Philistines, as the breach of waters; see Isa 28:17 and destroyed them, from whence the place had the name of Baalperazim, **2Sa 5:20**. The Targum is,

"for as the mountain which moved when the glory of the Lord was revealed in the days of Uzziah the king;"

referring to the earthquake in his time, **Am 1:1**:

he shall be wroth as [in] the valley of Gibeon; Josephus Ben Gorion {b} makes mention of the valley of Gibeon, where a battle was fought between Cestius the Roman general and the Jews, in which the latter got the victory, and says it was about six miles from Jerusalem: here the Philistines were smitten, returning again after they had been vanquished before, 1Ch 14:16 though it is

more generally thought that this refers to the discomfiture of the Canaanites in the times of Joshua, when also hailstones fell upon them, and destroyed many; see
Isa 28:17 and when the sun and moon stood still till Israel were avenged on their enemies, and which showed the power and presence of God with them, Jos 10:10 and so the Targum, which adds,

"and in the miracles which he (the Lord) did for Joshua, in the valley of Gibeon;"

and these instances are mentioned as proofs of the divine power and vengeance, and to assure the Jews that the Lord would rise up in the same wrath and indignation against them, and consume them:

that he may do his work, his strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act; which may be called so, because in the above mentioned instances he fought for his people Israel, but in this he would fight against them; and because this was a work and act of strict justice and awful severity, and not so agreeable to him as acts of mercy, grace, and goodness, in which he delights; or rather, because it was an unusual one, marvellous and surprising, and would be so to the Jews themselves, and even to their enemies, and to all the world, as the destruction of Jerusalem was, especially as by the Romans; see **Hab 1:5**. Vitringa, besides this, adds the calling of the Gentiles, the seizing of the inheritance of the world, and the destruction of the kingdom of Satan in the Roman empire. The Targum interprets this in a very contrary sense, of such as do strange works, idolatry, for which they are consumed.

{b} L. 6. c. 5. p. 559. Vid. Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 19. sect. 1.

Isaiah 28:22

Ver. 22. Now therefore be ye not mockers,.... At the words of the prophets, and the judgments denounced by them, which is very common, when they are deferred, and not immediately executed: this was the case before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, and one cause of it, 2Ch 36:16 and also by the Romans; see Ac 13:41:

lest your bands be made strong; punishment become heavier, and more grievous; and so the Syriac version renders it; as prisoners that attempt to

make their escape have their bonds and fetters made faster, and so are put to more pain and distress; to which the allusion seems to be, signifying, that by scoffing and mocking at the word of God they would bring upon themselves greater and sorer punishments,
Heb 10:29:

for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts; in a vision from him, by a spirit of prophecy, as a secret communicated by him; for whatever the Lord did he usually made it known to his prophets; and it might be depended upon what they said, as being what the Lord had declared in their hearing; see **Am 3:7**:

a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth: or, "on the whole land", the land of Judea; for this destruction seems only to respect that; and is the same with "the consummation, and that determined", that should be "poured upon the desolate", **Da 9:27** which manifestly designs the destruction of the Jews by the Romans, which was an affair determined by the Lord, whose counsel shall stand, and therefore would surely come to pass.

Isaiah 28:23

Ver. 23. Give ye ear, and hear my voice,.... So said the prophet, as the Targum introduces the words; and because what he was about to say was of importance, and delivered in a parabolical manner, and required attention, he makes use of a variety of words to the same purpose, to engage their attention:

hearken, and hear my speech; now about to be made; listen to it, and get the understanding of it.

Isaiah 28:24

Ver. 24. Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow?.... Or, "every day"; he ploughs in order to sow; by ploughing he prepares the ground for sowing, that is his end in ploughing; and he may plough a whole day together when he is at it, but he does not plough every day in the year; he has other work to do besides ploughing, as is later mentioned; such as breaking of clods, sowing seed, and threshing the grain after it is ripe, and reaped, and gathered. The prophet signifies that the Lord, like a ploughman, had different sorts of work; he was not always doing one and the same thing; and particularly, that he would not be always admonishing and threatening men, and making preparation for his judgments, but in a little time he would execute them, signified by after metaphors:

doth he open and break the clods of his ground? he does, with a mallet or iron bar, or with the harrow; whereby the ground is made even, and so more fit for sowing. The Targum interprets the whole in a mystical sense, of the instructions of the prophets, thus,

"at all times the prophets prophesy to teach, if perhaps the ears of sinners may be opened to receive instruction;"

and it may be applied to the work of the Spirit of God upon men's hearts, by the ministry of the word: the heart of man is like the "fallow ground", hard and obdurate, barren and unfruitful; the ministry of the word is the "plough", and ministers are the "ploughmen"; but it is the Spirit of God that makes their ministrations useful, for the conviction of the mind, the pricking of the heart, and breaking it in pieces; see **Jer 4:3**.

Isaiah 28:25

Ver. 25. When he hath made plain the face thereof,.... By harrowing it, after it is ploughed:

doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin; in sowing them in the ground, prepared for them; the former of these does not seem to be the same we so call, but something else. The Septuagint version calls it the little "melanthion" {c}, the same with the "nigella" {d} of the Latins, and is sometimes called "gith" {e}, as in the Vulgate Latin version here. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it "anise", which is mentioned along with "cummin", as common with the Jews, and which, in Christ's time, were tithed, Mt 23:23 and both these in the text are by Kimchi said to be the food of man:

and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rye in their place? each in their proper place, or in soil suitable for them; some land being more suitable for the one than for the other, which the husbandman understands: "wheat" is the choicest and most excellent grain, and therefore called "principal"; or else because it is "first" sown, or sown in the best and "principal" ground: "barley" is said to be "appointed", or to be sowed in a place appointed for it; or "marked" {f}, referring either to places marked in the field, where it should be sown; which sense the Targum and the Jewish commentators favour; or to sacks of it marked, in which the best seed for sowing was put: "and the rye in its border" {g}; appointed for that Jarchi thinks this refers to the different places of sowing; the wheat was sown in the middle of the field; barley round about the mark or sign for that purpose; and rye upon the borders. The Targum is,

"as wheat is sown in an uncultivated field, and barley by the signs, and rye by the borders;"

but the whole is intended to express the wisdom of the husbandman, in sowing different seeds, not in the same field, which was forbidden by the law, Le 19:19 but in ground suitable to each of them; and in the mystical sense designs the execution of divine judgments on men, in proportion to their sins, after they have been admonished of them, and reproved for them; and may be applied also to the sowing of the seed of the word in the hearts of men, and illustrated by the parable of the sower in Mt 13:19.

{c} So Junius & Tremellius, and Piscator. {d} As here with Pagninus, Montanus. {e} So Vatablus and Castalio. {f} Nmon hrev "hordeum signatum", Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus; "signato loco", Tigurine version. {g} wtlbg tmok "speltam in termino ejus, vel suo", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 28:26

Ver. 26. For his God doth instruct him to discretion, [and] doth teach him. God gives the husbandman instruction and discretion how to sow his seed, at what time, and in a proper place; for this refers to what goes before; though some think a new act is here intended, namely, threshing or beating out of corn, rendering the words, "and he" (the husbandman) "beateth it out, according to the discretion", or "judgment, his God teaches him" {h}; which is expressed in general terms here, and is next particularly insisted on in the following verses Isa 28:27.

{h} "Excutit illud ad eam rationem, [quam] Deus, ipsius docet eum", Piscator, Gataker; "vel colligat", &c. Junius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 28:27

Ver. 27. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument,.... A wooden sledge, dray, or cart, drawn on wheels; the bottom of which was stuck with iron teeth, and the top filled with stones, to press it down with the weight thereof, and was drawn by horses, or oxen, to and fro, over the sheaves of corn, laid in proper order, whereby the grain was separated from the husk: See Gill on "1Co 9:9" but fitches, the grain of them being more easily separated, such an instrument was not used in threshing them:

neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; the cart wheel of the above instrument was not turned upon the cummin, that being also more easily threshed, or beaten out, and therefore another method was used with these, as follows:

but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod: in like manner as corn is with us threshed out with a flail; so the Lord proportions the chastisement, and corrections of his people to the grace and strength that he gives them; he afflicts them either more gently, or more severely, as they are able to bear it; with some he uses his staff and rod, and with others his threshing instrument and cart wheel; some being easier and others harder to be wrought upon by the afflictive dispensations of Providence; see 1Co 10:13 or this may point out the difference between the punishment of wicked men and the chastisement of the saints.

Isaiah 28:28

Ver. 28. Bread [corn] is bruised,.... The corn which bread is made of is bruised and ground in a mill:

because he will not always be threshing it; for there is another way of bringing it to flour, that so it may be made bread, namely, by grinding it in a mill; and therefore the husbandman uses his discretion in threshing it; he will not thresh it too much, nor too long, no more than what is necessary to get out the grain, but will take care that he does not bruise and break it; as follows:

nor break [it with] the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it [with] his horsemen; though he makes use of the above threshing instrument, drawn upon wheels by horses, or oxen, for the threshing out of wheat, barley, or rye, corn of which bread is made; yet he takes care that it is not crushed and spoiled by the wheels of the cart, or the feet of the horses, or oxen, going too often over it; by all which may be signified the tender regard of God in afflicting his own people; he will not always be chiding, striving, and contending with them, or be always angry, and ever afflicting, and, when he does afflict, it is in a tender and careful manner, Ps 103:9.

Isaiah 28:29

Ver. 29. This also cometh from the Lord of hosts,.... All this wisdom the husbandman has, in manuring his ground, in sowing it with proper seed, and in threshing it out in a manner suitable to it. Agriculture or husbandry, even among the Heathens, is always ascribed to God, as an invention of his, and it was the first work which God put man to, and instructed him in, **Ge 3:23** and as this, so all other arts, and sciences, and manufactures, come from God, even all things in nature, providence, and grace, and the knowledge of them; wherefore he himself must be infinitely wise and knowing; see Ps 94:9 and be as he is next described:

[which] is wonderful in counsel: in giving counsel to man, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual; and whose counsel is always wise and good, and for the best; and, when taken, infallibly succeeds. See an instance of his wonderful counsel, **Re 3:18** and also he is "wonderful" in forming wise plans and schemes of operation; the wise plan of his works of creation and providence was formed in his vast and infinite mind from eternity; the wise scheme of our redemption and salvation by Christ was concerted by him, wherein he has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence; and the manner, means, time, and place, of his gathering and the effectual calling of his people, are all wisely fixed by him; and he does all things after "the counsel of his will", **Eph 1:11** and therefore it follows:

[and] excellent in working; both as to the matter or things wrought by him, which are the most excellent things in nature, providence, and grace, wrought out either by the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit; and as to manner of working, all being done well and wisely; and likewise with respect to the end, his own glory, and the good of his people.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 29:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 29

This chapter contains a prophecy concerning the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem by the Romans; the character and condition of the people of the Jews, previous to it; the calling of the Gentiles, by the preaching of the Gospel; the ruin of antichrist, and the conversion of the Jews, in the latter day. The siege and destruction of Jerusalem are described in Isa 29:1 the disappointment of their enemies, notwithstanding their taking and destroying it, Isa 29:7 the stupidity, judicial blindness, and hardness of the Jews, which brought on their ruin, are predicted, Isa 29:9 the ignorance of their learned, as well as of their unlearned men, with respect to the Scripture, and the prophecies of it, Isa 29:11 their hypocrisy and formality in worship, Isa 29:13 a blast upon all their wisdom and prudence, who thought to be wiser than the Lord, and too many for him, whose folly and atheism are exposed, Isa 29:14, and a great change both in Judea and the Gentile world, by the removal of the Gospel from the one to the other, Isa 29:17 the effects of which are, deaf sinners hear the word, dark minds are enlightened, and joy increased among the meek and poor, Isa 29:18 the fall of the Jews, or else of antichrist, is foretold, Isa 29:20 and the chapter is closed with a promise and prophecy of the conversion of the seed of Abraham and Jacob,
Isa 29:22.

Ver. 1. Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city [where] David dwelt,.... Many Jewish writers by "Ariel" understand the altar of burnt offerings; and so the Targum,

"woe, altar, altar, which was built in the city where David dwelt;"

and so it is called in Eze 43:15 it signifies "the lion of God"; and the reason why it is so called, the Jews say {i}, is, because the fire lay upon it in the form of a lion; but rather the reason is, because it devoured the sacrifices that were laid upon it, as a lion does its prey; though others of them interpret it of the temple, which they say was built like a lion, narrow behind and broad before {k}; but it seems better to understand it of the city of Jerusalem, in which David encamped, as the word {l} signifies; or "encamped against", as some; which he besieged, and took from the Jebusites, and fortified, and dwelt in; and which may be so called from its strength and fortifications, natural and artificial, and from its being the chief city of Judah, called a lion, Ge 49:9 whose standard had a lion on it, and from whence came the Messiah, the Lion of the tribe of Judah; or rather from its cruelty in shedding the blood of the prophets, and was, as the Lord says, as a lion unto him that cried against him, Jer 12:8 and so the words may be considered as of one calling to Jerusalem, and lamenting over it, as Christ did, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets", &c. Mt 23:37 and the mention of David's name, and of his dwelling in it, is not only to point out what city is meant, and the greatness and glory of it; but to show that this would not secure it from ruin and destruction {m}:

add ye year to year; which some understand of two precise years, at the end of which Jerusalem should be besieged by the army of Sennacherib; but that is not here meant. Cocceius thinks that large measure of time is meant, that one year is the length of time from David's dwelling in Jerusalem to the Babylonish captivity; and the other year from the time of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah to the destruction by the Romans, which is more likely; but rather the sense is, go on from year to year in your security and vain confidence; or keep your yearly feasts, and offer your yearly sacrifices; as follows:

let them kill sacrifices; the daily and yearly sacrifices; let the people bring them, and the priests offer them, for the time is coming when an end will be put to them; "the feasts shall be cut off": so the words may be rendered; the festivals shall cease, and be no more observed; and so the Targum,

"the festivities shall cease;"

or, feasts being put for lambs, so in Ps 118:27 as Ben Melech observes, the sense is, their heads should be cut off {n}.

{i} Yoma apud Jarchi in loc. {k} T. Bab. Middot, fol. 37. 1. {l} hnx "castrametatus est", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius; "castra habuit", Piscator. {m} The words are rendered by Noldius, "woe to Ariel, to Ariel: to the city in which David encamped"; and he observes, that some supply the copulative "and; woe to Ariel, and to the city", &c.; So making them distinct, which seems best to agree with the accents, and may respect the destruction both of their ecclesiastic and civil state; the temple being designed by "Ariel", and "Jerusalem" by the city. See Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 183. No. 842. {n} wpqny Mygx "agni excervicabuntur", Montanus; "excidentur", Vatablus; "jugulentur", Munster.

Isaiah 29:2

Ver. 2. Yet I will distress Ariel,.... Or "straiten" it, by causing it to be besieged; and this he would do, notwithstanding their yearly sacrifices, and their observance of their solemn feasts, and other ceremonies of the law, in which they placed their confidence, and neglected weightier matters:

and there shall be heaviness and sorrow; on account of the siege; by reason of the devastations of the enemy without, made on all the cities and towns in Judea round about; and because of the famine and bloodshed in the city:

and it shall be unto me as Ariel; the whole city shall be as the altar; as that was covered with the blood and carcasses of slain beasts, so this with the blood and carcasses of men; and so the Targum,

"and I will distress the city where the altar is, and it shall be desolate and empty; and it shall be surrounded before me with the blood of the slain, as the altar is surrounded with the blood of the holy sacrifices on a solemn feast day all around;"

so Jarchi and Kimchi.

Isaiah 29:3

Ver. 3. And I will camp against thee round about,.... Or as a "ball" or "globe" {o}; a camp all around; the Lord is said to do that which the enemy should do, because it was by his will, and according to his order, and which he would succeed and prosper, and therefore the prophecy of it is the more terrible; and it might be concluded that it would certainly be fulfilled, as it was; see Lu 19:43:

and will lay siege against thee with a mount: raised up for soldiers to get up upon, and cast their arrows into the city from, and scale the walls; Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it a wooden tower. This cannot be understood of Sennacherib's siege, for he was not suffered to raise a bank against the city, nor shoot an arrow into it, Isa 37:33 but well agrees with the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, as related by Josephus {p}:

and I will raise forts against thee; from whence to batter the city; the Romans had their battering rams.

{o} rwdk "quasi pila", Piscator; "instar globi", Gataker. {p} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 1. & c. 12. sect. 1, 2.

Isaiah 29:4

Ver. 4. And thou shalt be brought down,.... To the ground, and laid level with it, even the city of Jerusalem, as it was by the Romans; and as it was predicted by Christ it would, Lu 19:44 though some understand this of the humbling of the inhabitants of it, by the appearance of Sennacherib's army before it, and of which they interpret the following clauses:

[and] shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust; which some explain of the submissive language of Hezekiah to Sennacherib, and of his messengers to Rabshakeh,
2Ki 18:14 as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; but it is expressive of the great famine in Jerusalem, at the time of its siege by the Romans, when the inhabitants were so reduced by it, as that they were scarce able to speak as to be heard, and could not stand upon their legs, but fell to the ground, and lay in the dust, uttering from thence their speech, with a faint and feeble voice:

and thy voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust: or peep and chirp, as little birds, as Jarchi and Kimchi, as those did that had familiar spirits; and as the Heathen oracles were delivered, as if they came out of the bellies of those that spoke, or out of caves and hollow places in the earth; and this was in just retaliation to these people, who imitated such practices, and made use of such spirits; see **Isa 8:19**.

Isaiah 29:5

Ver. 5. Moreover, the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust,.... Or "of those that fan thee" {q}, as the Vulgate Latin Version; and so the Targum,

"of those that scatter thee;"

or of thine enemies, as others; meaning the Romans, who were a strange people to them, who got the dominion over them, and scattered them abroad in the world: and the simile of "small dust", to which they are compared, is not used to express the weakness of them, but the greatness of their number, which was not to be counted, any more than the dust of the earth; see Nu 23:10:

and the multitude of the terrible ones [shall be] as chaff that passeth away; designing the same numerous army of the Romans as before, who were terrible to the Jews: nor does this metaphor signify any imbecility in them, and much less the ruin of them, but their swiftness in executing the judgments of God upon his people, who moved as quick as chaff, or any such light thing, before a mighty wind:

yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly; either the numerous army should be suddenly before Jerusalem, or the destruction of that city should be as it were in a moment; and though the siege of it lasted long, yet the last sack and ruin of it was suddenly, and in so short a time, that it might be said to be in an instant, in a moment, as it were. The Jewish writers interpret this of the sudden destruction of Sennacherib's army by the angel, 2Ki 19:35 but the next words show that the destruction of Jerusalem is meant.

{q} Kyrz "ventilantium te", V. L. "dispergentium te", Vatablus, so Targum; "hostium tuorum", Pagninus, Cocceius.

Isaiah 29:6

Ver. 6. Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise,.... That is, not the multitude of strangers and terrible ones, unless they could be understood of the wicked among the Jews; but thou Ariel, or Jerusalem, shalt be punished by the Lord of hosts; for this visitation or punishment was from him, for their sins and iniquities; the Romans were only the instruments he made use of, and the executioners of his vengeance; which was attended with thunder in the heavens, a shaking of the earth, and a great noise or voice heard in the temple, saying, let us depart hence; at which time comets were seen in the heavens, and chariots and armed men in the air, and one of the gates of the temple opened of itself {r}: it is added,

with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire; with which the temple was burnt by the Roman army, when it came in like a storm and tempest, and carried all before it.

{r} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 5.

Isaiah 29:7

Ver. 7. And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel,.... The Roman army, which consisted of men of all nations, that fought against Jerusalem; the city in which was the altar, as the Targum paraphrases it:

even all that fight against her, and her munition, and that distress her; that besieged it, and endeavoured to demolish its walls, towns, and fortifications, as they did:

shall be as a dream of a night vision: meaning either that the Roman empire should quickly fall, and pass away, and come to nothing, like a dream in the night, as it soon began to decay after the destruction of Jerusalem, and also the Pagan religion in it; or that the Roman army would be disappointed at the taking of the city, expecting to find much riches, and a great spoil, and should not; and so be like a man that dreams, and fancies he is in the possession of what he craves, but, when he awakes, finds he has got nothing. This is more largely exemplified in the following verse Isa 29:8.

Isaiah 29:8

Ver. 8. It shall be even as when a hungry [man] dreameth, and, behold, he eateth,.... That is, he dreams of food, and imagines it before him, and that he is really eating it:

but he awaketh, and his soul is empty; his stomach is empty when he awakes, and he finds he has not ate anything at all:

or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh: who fancies that he has got a cup of liquor in his hand, and at his mouth, and is drinking it with a great deal of eagerness and pleasure:

but he awaketh, and, behold, [he is] faint, and his soul hath appetite; when he awakes, he is not at all refreshed with his imaginary drinking, but still desires liquor to revive his fainting spirits, and extinguish his thirst:

so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against Mount Zion; either shall quickly perish; or, having raised their expectations, and pleased themselves with the booty they should obtain, of which they thought themselves sure, shall find themselves mistaken, and all like an illusive dream. Some interpret this of the disappointment of Sennacherib's army; and others of the insatiable cruelty of the Chaldeans; but rather, if the above sense pleases not, it would be better to understand it of the Jews, who, amidst their greatest danger, flattered themselves with the hope of deliverance, which was all a dream and an illusion; and to which sense the following words seem to incline.

Isaiah 29:9

Ver. 9. Stay yourselves, and wonder,.... Stop a while, pause a little, consider within yourselves the case and circumstances of these people, and wonder at their stupidity. Kimchi thinks these words were spoken in the times of Ahaz, with respect to the men of Judah; and so Aben Ezra says, they are directed to the men of Zion; and it is generally thought that they are spoken to the more religious and sober part of them; though, by the following verse Isa 29:10, it appears that the case was general, and that the people to whom this address is made were as stupid as others:

cry ye out, and cry; or, "delight yourselves" {s}, as in the margin; take your pleasure, indulge yourselves in carnal mirth, gratify your sensual appetite in rioting and wantonness, and then "cry" and lament, as you will have reason to do. Kimchi says, his father rendered the words, "awake yourselves, and awake others"; that is, from that deep sleep they were fallen into, afterwards mentioned:

they are drunken, but not with wine; not with that only, for otherwise many of them were given to drunkenness in a literal sense, Isa 28:7 but they were like drunken men, as stupid, senseless, and secure, though in the utmost danger:

they stagger, but not with strong drink; unsteady in their counsels and resolutions, in their principles and practices, and stumble in their goings.

{s} wevetvh "oblectate vos", Cocceius; "delicias agunt", Junius & Tremellius; "deliciantur", Piscator.

Isaiah 29:10

Ver. 10. For the Lord hath poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep,.... Gave them up to a stupid frame of spirit; to a reprobate mind, a mind void of judgment and sense; to judicial blindness and hardness of heart: this was remarkably fulfilled in the Jews, in the times of Christ and his apostles, who choosing darkness rather than the light of the Gospel, which shone around them, were righteously given up to such a temper of mind; and to nothing else can be imputed their obstinate rejection of the Messiah, against the most glaring light and evidence. The Apostle Paul produces this passage, in proof of that blindness that had happened unto them in his time, Ro 11:7:

and hath closed your eyes; that is, the eyes of their understandings, so that they could not see the characters of the Messiah, and the fulfilment of prophecies in Jesus of Nazareth; nor the danger they were in, nor the ruin that was coming upon their nation, nor even when it was come, still flattering themselves with safety and deliverance:

the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered; the eyes of them, as before; not only the common people were blinded, but even the Scribes and Pharisees, the elders of the people, their ecclesiastical rulers, who pretended to be seers, and to know more than others; even "for judgment", for the judicial blindness and hardness of these Christ "came, that they which see might be made blind", **Joh 9:39**. The words may be rendered, "your heads, the seers, hath he covered" {t}; and there may be an allusion to the covering of the head with a veil, an emblem of that veil of ignorance and infidelity which still remains upon the Jews. The Targum renders it,

"the prophets, and the Scribes, and the teachers that teach the law."

{t} Mkyvarw "et capita vestra, videntes, operuit", Montanus. So Cocceius.

Isaiah 29:11

Ver. 11. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed,.... The prophecies of all the prophets contained in the Scriptures; or all the prophecies in the book of Isaiah, concerning the Messiah, were no more seen, known, and understood, both by the priests and the people, than if they had been in a book, written, rolled up, and sealed. And this was owing, not to the obscurity of these writings, or because they were really sealed up, but to the blindness and stupidity of the people, whose eyes were closed, and their heads covered; and the prophecies of the Scriptures were only so to them, "unto you", not unto others; not to the apostles of Christ, whose understandings were opened by him, to understand the things written concerning him, in the law, in the prophets, and in the psalms; but the Jewish rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, as well as the common people, understood them not, though they were the means of fulfilling many of them; and they were as ignorant of the prophecies concerning their own ruin and destruction, for their rejection of Christ; see Lu 24:27:

which [men] deliver to one that is learned; or, "that knows the book" {u}; or "letters", as the Septuagint; see **Joh 7:15** such were the Scribes, called grammateiv, or "letter men", men that could read well, and understood language:

saying, Read this, I pray thee; or read this now, as the Targum, and interpret it, and tell the meaning of it:

and he saith, I cannot, for it [is] sealed; which Kimchi says was an excuse invented, because he had no mind to read it, or otherwise he could have said, open, and I will read it; or he might have broke off the seal; but knowing there were difficult things, and things hard to be understood, in it, did not care to look into it, and read it, and attempt to explain it to others.

{u} rpoh edwy "scienti librum", Montanus; epistamenw grammata, Sept.; "scienti literas", V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Isaiah 29:12

Ver. 12. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned,.... Or that knows not a book or letters, as before, and so consequently cannot read, having never been put to school, or learned to read:

saying, Read this, I pray thee; or "now" {w}, at once, immediately:

and he saith, I am not learned; he does not excuse himself on account of its being sealed, but on account of his want of learning; which shows the former was but an excuse. In short, the sum of it is this, that neither the learned nor unlearned, among the Jews, cared to read their Bibles, or to search the Scriptures, and the prophecies in them, concerning the Messiah, and that neither of them understood them; these things were hid from the wise and prudent, as well as from the ignorant and unlearned of the people, in common, and were only made known to a few babes and sucklings. There was great ignorance of the Scriptures in the times of Christ, to which these passages truly belong, Mt 11:25.

{w} an "nunc", Pagninus, Montanus.

Isaiah 29:13

Ver. 13. Wherefore the Lord said,.... Concerning the hypocritical people of the Jews in Christ's time, as the words are applied by our Lord himself, Mt 15:7:

Forasmuch as this people draw near to [me] with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me; Kimchi observes, there is a double reading of the word vgn, rendered "draw near": in one reading of it, it signifies to be "afflicted"; and then the sense is, "when this people are afflicted, with their mouth, and with their lips, they honour me"; that is, when they are in distress, they pray unto him, and profess a great regard for him, speak honourably of him, and reverently to him, hoping he will help and relieve them; see Isa 26:16 but the other reading of the word, in which it has the signification of "drawing near", is confirmed, not only by the Masora on the text, but by the citation of it in Mt 15:7 and designs the approach of these people to God, in acts of religion and devotion, in praying to him, and praising of him, and expressing great love and affection for him, and zeal for his cause and interest; but were all outwardly, with their lips and mouths only:

but have removed their heart far from me; these were not employed in his service, which is the main thing he requires and regards, but were engaged elsewhere; while their bodies were presented before him, and their mouths and lips were moving to him, their affections were not set upon him, nor the desires of their souls unto him, nor had they any real hearty concern for his glory:

and their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men; their worship of God was not according to the prescription of God, and his revealed will; but according to the traditions of the elders, which they preferred to the word of

God, and, by observing them, transgressed it, and made it of no effect; see Mt 15:3.

Isaiah 29:14

Ver. 14. Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people,.... Because of their hypocrisy and formality, their regard to men, their doctrines and commandments, and not to the will and word of God, therefore he determines "to deal marvellously with this people":

[even] a marvellous work, and a wonder; that is, something exceedingly marvellous, which would be matter of astonishment to everyone that observed it; and is as follows:

for the wisdom of their wise [men] shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent [men] shall be hid; and be no more: this was eminently fulfilled in the wise men, the doctors and learned Rabbins of the Jews; and they themselves own {x}, that, from the time the temple was destroyed, the wise men became like to Scribes, and the Scribes to those that looked after the synagogues, and these became like the common people, and they grew worse and worse: and Maimonides acknowledges {y}, that this respects their present case; he says, when the Heathen princes destroyed their best things, took away their wisdom, and their books, and killed their wise men, they became ignorant and unlearned; which evil God threatened them for their iniquities, as is said in this passage: and also this had its accomplishment in the wise philosophers of the Gentiles; see **1Co 1:18**.

{x} Misna Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. {y} More Nevochim, par. 2. c. 11. p. 212.

Isaiah 29:15

Ver. 15. Woe unto them,.... Or, "O ye",

that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord; which they consulted against Christ, to take away his life, to persecute his apostles, and hinder the spread of his Gospel; which though they consulted in private, and formed deep schemes, imagining they were not observed by the Lord, yet he that sits in the heaven saw them, and laughed at their vain imaginations, **Ps 2:1**:

and their works are in the dark; in the dark night, as if the darkness could conceal them from the all seeing eye of God; such works are truly works of darkness, but cannot be hid, though they flatter themselves they will:

and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? as no man, they imagined, did, so not God himself; into such atheism do wicked men sink, when desirous of bringing their schemes into execution, they have taken great pains to form; and which they please themselves are so deeply laid, as that they cannot fail of succeeding; but hear what follows Isa 29:16.

Isaiah 29:16

Ver. 16. Surely your turning of things upside down,.... Revolving things in their minds, throwing them into different shapes, forming various schemes, and inverting the order of things by their deep counsels, and seeking to hide things from the Lord: or, "O the perverseness of you" {z}; in imagining and saying that no eye saw, nor anyone knew, what they did, not the Lord himself. So the Vulgate Latin version, "this is your perverse thought"; namely, what is before related. The Targum is,

"do you seek to pervert your works?"

Our version joins it with what follows; though a stop should be made here, because of the accent:

shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: their perverse counsels and designs shall be made of no more account with God, and be as easily turned about and brought to nought, as the clay can be formed, and shaped, and marred by the potter, at his pleasure: "if" or "surely as the potter's clay shall it be esteemed", as the words may be rendered; or it may refer to their persons, as well as their counsels. So the Septuagint version, "shall ye not be reckoned as the potter's clay?" ye shall. To which agrees the Targum,

"behold, as the clay in the hand of the potter, so are ye accounted before me;"

who could do with them just as seemed good in his sight. De Dieu renders them, "shall the potter be reckoned as the clay?" Such was the stupidity and perverseness of the Jews, in endeavouring to hide their counsels from the Lord, and in fancying that he did not see and know them, that they thought God was like themselves; which is all one as if the potter was reckoned as the clay, for they were the clay, and God the potter. The Vulgate Latin version is, "as if the clay could think against the potter"; contrive schemes to counterwork him; which, to imagine, was not more stupid, than to think they could do anything against the Lord:

for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? to say that God does not know what is done by his creatures, is in effect to say that he did not make them; for he that made them must needs know their actions, and even the very thoughts of their hearts; as he that makes a watch knows all that is in it, and the motions of it:

or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding? or judgment, did not know how to make it as it should be. So the Septuagint version, "thou hast not made me wisely"; or he did not understand the work itself, the make and fashion of it. So the Targum,

"thou does not understand me."

This might as well be said, as for a creature to pretend that God does not know what and where he is, or what he is doing.

{z} So some in Gataker; Mkkph "subversio vestra", Pagninus, Montanus.

Isaiah 29:17

Ver. 17. [Is] it not yet a very little while,.... In a short space of time, in a few years, what follows would come to pass; when there would be a strange change and alteration made in the world, and by which it would appear, that the Lord not only knows, but foreknows, all things:

and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field; the forest of Lebanon should be as Carmel. The meaning is, that the Gentile world, which was like a forest uncultivated, and full of unfruitful trees, to which wicked men may be compared, should through the preaching of the Gospel be manured, become God's husbandry, and be like a fruitful field, abounding with people and churches, fruitful in grace and good works:

and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest? the people of the Jews, who once had the word and ordinances of God, and were a fruitful and flourishing people in religion; through their rejection of the Messiah, and contempt of his Gospel, should be deprived of all their privileges, and become like a forest or barren land: this was fulfilled, when the kingdom of God was taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits of it, Mt 21:43. See Isa 32:15.

Isaiah 29:18

Ver. 18. And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book,.... That is, in the Gospel day, or times of the Gospel dispensation, when that should be preached to the Gentiles; who before were deaf, but now should be made to hear, and be willing to hear, and hear so as to understand the doctrines contained in the Scriptures, the prophecies of them concerning the Messiah; even the words of that book that is sealed to the Jews, and could not be read, neither by the learned nor unlearned among them; but should be both read, heard, and understood, by the Gentiles, having ears given them to hear the Gospel, to receive its doctrines, and obey its ordinances:

and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness; such, who before were blind and ignorant as to spiritual things, being called, through the ministry of the word, out of darkness into marvellous light, and their eyes being opened by it, should now see their sin and misery, their lost and dangerous estate, the way of life and salvation by Christ, the great and glorious truths of the Gospel, and what eye has not seen, nor ear heard.

Isaiah 29:19

Ver. 19. The meek also shall increase [their] joy in the Lord,.... The "meek", lowly, and humble, are such who are made sensible of sin, and become humble under a sense of it; who see the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and submit to the righteousness of Christ; who attribute all they have, and are, to the free grace of God, and quietly submit to every dispensation of Providence; who are not easily provoked by men, but bear much and long without reviling; who envy not those that are above them in gifts and grace, nor despise those that are below them, and think the worst of themselves, and the best of others; now these have joy in the Lord, in the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, in the

Lord Jesus Christ; in the greatness and glory of his person as Jehovah, and so able to save to the uttermost; in him as the Lord their righteousness; in his blood and sacrifice, for the pardon and expiation of their sins; in his fulness as theirs, to supply their wants; in his salvation, being so great, so full, so free, and suitable to them: and whereas their joy may be interrupted through the corruptions of their hearts, the temptations of Satan, and divine desertions, they "shall add" {a} joy in the Lord, as in the original; they shall repeat it, it shall come again, it shall be restored unto them, and they shall afresh exercise it, and "increase" in it, as we render it; for spiritual joy may be increased by the discoveries of the love of God; by fresh views of Christ, through an increase of knowledge of him, and faith in him; by means of meditation and prayer, and by reading and hearing the word:

and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel; or, "the poorest of men" {b}, who were so in a literal sense; for such were the persons, both among Jews and Gentiles, who in the first times of the Gospel were brought to the knowledge of Christ, and faith in him,
Mt 11:4 or such who are "poor in spirit"; not only spiritually poor, but who are sensible of their spiritual poverty, and apply to Christ for the true riches of grace: the words may be rendered, "Adam's poor"; such who are impoverished by Adam's fall, and are sensible of it; these, perceiving durable riches and righteousness, even unsearchable riches, in Christ, rejoice in him, "the Holy One of Israel"; who is holy in himself, the sanctifier of others, and is made satisfaction to all his people. The Targum is,

"in the word of the Holy One of Israel."

This joy is not carnal, but spiritual; it is the fruit of the Spirit of God, and is called joy in the Holy Ghost; as it also is the joy of faith, which goes along with it, is through it, and increases as that does; it is peculiar to believers, unknown to the world, and is unspeakable, and full of glory: and such kind of rejoicing, and an increase of it, are what belong to Gospel times.

{a} wkoyw "et addent", V. L. Pagninus: Montanus, {b} Mda ynwyba "mendici hominum", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "egentissimi hominum", Junius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 29:20

Ver. 20. For the terrible one is brought to nought,.... Who before was so to the people of God; meaning not Sennacherib king of Assyria, but some formidable enemy or enemies under the Gospel dispensation; as the Scribes and Pharisees, and the Jewish sanhedrim; who were "violent" {c}, as it may be rendered, violent persecutors of the followers of Christ, the meek and poor before described; who were brought to nought, and their power ceased at the destruction of Jerusalem; and the Roman emperor, with all subordinate rulers and governors in the empire, who harassed the Christians in a terrible manner, but were at last brought to nought by Constantine, and their persecution ceased; and the Romish antichrist, who has been so terrible, that none could or dared oppose him; he in a little time will be brought to nought, and cease to be. The Septuagint version renders it, "the wicked one faileth"; and uses the same word {d}, by which antichrist is described, **2Th 2:8** also Satan, that terrible enemy of the saints, shall be brought to nought; first bound for a thousand years; and afterwards, being loosed, shall be taken again, and cast into the lake of fire; all which will be matter of joy to the meek and lowly:

and the scorner is consumed; the same as before, only represented under a different character; the Jew, that mocked at Christ, because of his meanness, and that of his followers, that scoffed at his doctrines and miracles; and the Gentile, that derided his cross, and the preaching of it; and antichrist, whose mouth is full of blasphemies against God, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in it:

and all that watch for iniquity are cut off; that cannot sleep unless they commit it, and seek for and take all opportunities of doing it; or watch for iniquity in others, in Christ, and the professors of his religion; or for anything they could call so, that they might have something to accuse them of, and charge them with, and a pretence to proceed against them in colour of law and justice: which has been the practice of Jews, Pagans, and Papists.

{c} Uyre "violentus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {d} anomov

Isaiah 29:21

Ver. 21. That make a man an offender for a word,.... Inadvertently spoken, unwarily dropped, without any bad design or ill meaning; or for a word misplaced or misconstrued; or for preaching and professing the word of God, the Gospel of salvation, and adhering to it; which is the true character of the persecutors of good men in all ages: some render the words, "who make a man sin by a word" {e}; by their words and doctrines; and so apply it to the false prophets, as Jarchi does; and very well agrees with the Pharisees in Christ's time, who made men to sin, to transgress the word of God, by their traditions. The Targum is,

"who condemn the sons of men by their words;"

or for them; particularly for their words of reproof, for which they make them offenders, or pronounce them guilty, as follows:

and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate; either for just judges, who sat in the gate of the city, and faithfully reproved and punished men for their sins; or for such that had boldness and courage enough to reprove wicked men openly, and before all, for their wickedness, the gate being a public place, where people pass and repass; and such that sin openly should be reproved openly; and particularly the true prophets of the Lord may be referred to, who sometimes were sent to publish their messages, which were frequently reproofs of the people, in the gates of the city; but, above all, Christ seems to be respected, who in the most public manner inveighed against the Scribes and Pharisees for their wickedness, on account of which they sought to entangle him in his talk, and to lay snares for his life; see Mt 22:15:

and turn aside the just for a thing of nought; the Targum is,

"that falsely pervert the judgment of the innocent;"

that turn away their judgment, decline doing them justice, but condemn them on frivolous pretences, for just nothing at all, what is mere emptiness and vanity: Christ is eminently the "just" One, righteous in himself, and the author of righteousness to others; yet, on account of things for which there were no foundation, and contrary to all justice, he was proceeded against as a criminal.

{e} rbdb Mda yayjxm "qui verbie faciunt ut peccent homines", Castalio; "peccare facientes hominem in verbo", Pagninus, Montanus. And to the same sense the Septuagint, V. L. Syr. and Arab.

Isaiah 29:22

Ver. 22. Therefore thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham,.... That brought him from Ur of the Chaldees; that freed him from idolatry, and from a vain conversation before conversion, and delivered him from many evils and dangers afterwards; and saved him with an everlasting salvation, through the Messiah, the great Redeemer, that sprung from him, and took on him the nature of the seed of Abraham:

concerning the house of Jacob; his family and posterity, the whole body of the Jewish people; or rather the church of God in Gospel times, consisting of the posterity of Jacob; that trod in his steps, plain hearted Christians, Israelites indeed, praying souls, wrestling Jacobs, and prevailing Israels; of whom the Lord speaks the following things:

Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale; as formerly, when those that descended from Jacob rejected the Messiah, traduced his character, as if he was the worst of men; blasphemed his person, doctrines, and miracles; spit upon him, buffeted, scourged, and crucified him; which filled those of the same descent and nation, that believed in him, with shame and confusion, so that their faces blushed, or turned pale or white; but now this should be no longer their case, because of the conversion and salvation of that people in the latter day, which is predicted in the next verse Isa 29:23, with which this is connected.

Isaiah 29:23

Ver. 23. But when he seeth his children, the work of my hands, in the midst of him,.... That is, it will be a pleasure to the church of God, signified by Jacob, when they shall observe a great number of Jacob's posterity, or of the Jews, born again, become the "children" of the church, born in her, and nursed up at her side, dandled on her knees, and sucking at the breasts of her consolation; and so in the midst of her, members of her, and in communion with her, having been begotten again, by means of her ministers, through the Gospel, by the Spirit and grace of God; and so "the work of his hands", his new creatures, formed for and by himself; his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ, curiously wrought by his hands, as well as engraven on them:

they shall sanctify my name; meaning either the spiritual seed of Jacob, those regenerated ones, the nation that shall be born at once; these shall sanctify the name of the Lord, not by making, but by declaring him to be holy; by believing in his name; by seeking to him for righteousness and holiness; by embracing his doctrines, and submitting to his ordinances; which will add to the pleasure of the church of Christ. So the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "but when he seeth his children---sanctifying my name"; or else Jacob, that is, the church of Christ, is here meant, who, upon seeing such a large number of Jewish converts, shall sanctify the name of the Lord, or give him praise and glory on account of it; which is repeated with some addition,

and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel; reverence his name and his sanctuary, his word and his ordinances, worship him inwardly and outwardly, fear the Lord and his goodness, both the church and these new converts, **Ho 3:5**.

Isaiah 29:24

Ver. 24. They also that erred in spirit,.... In judgment, and in spiritual things; as the Jews have done, ever since the Messiah's coming, being given up to a spirit of error, as the Targum, on Isa 29:10 calls it; they have erred concerning the Scriptures, and the prophecies of them; concerning the Messiah, his work and office; concerning his truths and his ordinances, and by preferring their traditions to the word of God: but these

shall come to understanding; to a spiritual understanding of Christ, and salvation by him; of his Gospel, and the doctrines of it; as well as of themselves, their state and condition:

and they that murmured; at Christ, and what was delivered by him; at the reception of sinners by him; at the calling of the Gentiles; and at the providence of God that have attended them, ever since their rejection of the true Messiah:

shall learn doctrine; the doctrine of the Messiah; not the law, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; but the Gospel, which Christ "received" from his Father, as the word {f} used signifies, and his disciples received from him, and the church has received from them, and has been transmitted to us Gentiles, and will be to the Jews in the latter day, who will learn the true knowledge of it.

{f} tql a xql "capere, accipere, est id quod aliquis sibi sumit dicendum", Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 443.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 30:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 30

This chapter contains a complaint of the Jews for their sins and transgressions; a prophecy of their destruction for them; a promise of grace and mercy, and of happy times, to the saints; and a threatening of utter and dreadful ruin to the wicked. The Jews are complained of for their rebellion against God, their slighting his counsel and protection, their trust in Egypt, and application there for help; whither they went with their riches for safety, but in vain, it being contrary to the will and counsel of God, Isa 30:1 next follows a denunciation of ruin and destruction for these things, rebellion, and lying, and vain confidence, as well as for contempt of the word of God, which, that it might appear sure and certain, is ordered to be written in a book, Isa 30:8 and this ruin is signified by the sudden falling of a wall, and by the breaking of a potter's vessel into pieces, which can never be used more, Isa 30:13 and seeing they rejected the way of salvation proposed by the Lord, and took their own way, first destruction is threatened them, which should be very easily brought about, and become so general, that few should escape it,
Isa 30:15 and then promises of grace and mercy are made to them that wait for the Lord, Isa 30:18 such as a dwelling place in Zion, hearing their prayers, granting them teachers to instruct them, and the riddance of idolatry from them, Isa 30:19 and also many outward blessings, as seasonable rain, good bread corn, fat pastures, good food for cattle, and fruitfulness of mountains and hills,
Isa 30:23 likewise an amazing degree of spiritual light and glory, and healing of the Lord's people, Isa 30:26 and the chapter is concluded with a threatening Of God's wrath upon the Assyrian, expressed by various similes, as of an angry man, an overflowing torrent, a tempest of thunder, lightning, and hail, and the fire of Tophet, Isa 30:27.

Ver. 1. Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord,.... The Jews, who were, by national adoption, and by outward profession of religion, the "children" of God, but were apostates from him, had turned their backs upon him, deviated from his law, and departed from his worship and ordinances; and therefore a woe is pronounced against them, or they are called upon to consider of their evil ways, and return, that iniquity might not be their ruin:

that take counsel, but not of me; they met and consulted together about their safety, when in danger, but did not ask counsel of the Lord; they did not consult his word, nor his prophets, nor by Urim and Thummim, as in case of war they should more especially:

and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit; they sought for a cover, a shelter, a protection from the enemy, but not from the Spirit of the Lord, in his word and prophets, who would have directed them to a more suitable and sufficient one. Kimchi understands this of their covert and secret counsels, which they laid deep, as they fancied, and sought to hide. The Targum of the former clause and this is,

"that take counsel, but not of my word; that consult a consultation, but do not ask of my prophets:"

that they may add sin to sin; the sins of consulting others, and of putting confidence in a creature, to their other sins of rebellion and apostasy: so wicked men, who are enemies in their minds, by wicked works, to God, and commit acts of hostility against him, and are in danger thereby of eternal ruin, do not consult the word and ministers of the Gospel, but flesh and blood, carnal sense and reason, and seek to cover themselves with the rags of their own righteousness, and not with the robe of Christ's righteousness, and garments of salvation, which the Spirit of God reveals and brings near; and so to their other sins they add that of trusting to their own righteousness, and not submitting to Christ's.

Isaiah 30:2

Ver. 2. That walk to go down into Egypt,.... That walk out of their own land to go thither; who sent messengers thither to form an alliance, and get help and assistance, or went in person, to secure themselves from present danger. Jarchi refers this to the times of Hoshea, the son of Elah, king of Israel, who sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, 2Ki 17:4. Jerom to the times of Jeremiah, to the history in his prophecy, Jer 41:17 and others to Zedekiah. Kimchi thinks it respects the time of Ahaz, though there is no account, either in the books of Kings or Chronicles, of sending then to Egypt for help; or else to the times of Hezekiah himself; which latter is right, as appears from the insults of Rabshakeh, when Sennacherib's army was before Jerusalem,
Isa 36:6:

and have not asked at my mouth: or as the Targum,

"the words of my prophets they have not asked;"

they did not inquire of the prophets of the Lord, whether they should go down or not:

to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh; by making an alliance with him, and receiving men and horses from him, to assist them against the Assyrians; this Pharaoh was he whom the Scriptures call So, 2Ki 17:4 and by other writers, Sevechus and Sethon:

and to trust in the shadow of Egypt; the protection that would afford them, in which they placed their confidence, and thought themselves safe from their other enemy, by having so powerful an ally; but this was but a shadow, as are whatsoever men trust in short of the Lord himself, be they riches or righteousness, or any creature or creature enjoyment.

Isaiah 30:3

Ver. 3. Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame,.... They should be disappointed of the help and assistance they expected from him, and so be ashamed of their ally, and of confidence in him:

and the trust in the shadow of Egypt [your] confusion; they should be confounded, when they should find themselves unsupported by the Egyptians, in whom they put their confidence; so all such that trust in the creature, or in an arm of flesh, sooner or later are ashamed and confounded; but those that trust in the Lord never are, neither in this world, nor in that to come.

Isaiah 30:4

Ver. 4. For his princes were at Zoan,.... That is, the princes of the king of Judah, or of the people of Judah; though it can hardly be thought that princes should be sent ambassadors into Egypt, to enter into an alliance, or request help, without the knowledge, leave, and consent, and indeed order, of the king, under which character they went, as appears from the following clause:

and his ambassadors came to Hanes; these are the same with the princes, for such were sent on this embassy, both for the honour of the kingdom, and for the more easy obtaining of their end; the two places mentioned, to which they went, were two principal cities in Egypt, where probably the king of Egypt was, and his court kept, sometimes at one place, and sometimes at another. Zoan is the same with Tanis, the metropolis of one of the nomes or provinces of Egypt, called from it the Tanitic nome; and so the Targum here renders it, "Tanes": and the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, "Tanis"; See Gill on "Isa 19:11". The Jews {g} say there is not a more excellent place in all Egypt than Zoan, because kings were brought up in it, as it is here said, "his princes were at Zoan"; the other, here called "Hanes", is the same with Tahapanes in **Jer 2:16** and Tahpanhes, Jer 43:7 and so the Targum here calls it; it is thought to be the same with Daphnae Pelusiae; here Pharaoh had a house or palace; see Jer 43:9 and this is the reason of the ambassadors going thither.

{g} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 112. 1. & Sota, fol. 34. 2.

Isaiah 30:5

Ver. 5. They were all ashamed of a people [that] could not profit them,.... The princes, the ambassadors that were sent unto them, and the king or people, or both, that sent them, who hoped for and expected great things from them, but, being disappointed, were filled with shame; because either the Egyptians, who are the people here meant, either could not help them, or would not, not daring to engage with so powerful an enemy as the Assyrian monarch, which is illustrated and confirmed by repeating the same, and using other words:

nor be an help, nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach: so far from being of any advantage to them, by helping and assisting them against their enemy, wanting either inclination or capacity, or both, that it not only turned to their shame, but even was matter of reproach to them, that ever they made any application to them, or placed any confidence in them for help.

Isaiah 30:6

Ver. 6. The burden of the beasts of the south,.... Some think this begins a new prophecy, and this the name and inscription of it. The Septuagint version is, "the vision of the four footed beasts in the wilderness;"

and Kimchi's note is,

"this prophecy, which he prophesied, that the beasts of the south should go out, meaning the beasts of the wilderness, and devour those that went to seek help from Egypt;"

but it respects the same thing as before, as appears by what follows; namely, the messengers going down to Egypt, which lay south of Judea, as Jarchi and Kimchi, Ben Melech and Abarbinel, observe, with beasts carrying riches thither, either for safety, or to obtain help from them:

into a land of trouble and anguish; as it had been to their fathers formerly, and would be no otherwise to them now, notwithstanding their high raised expectations of assistance from them; there may be an allusion to its name Mizraim:

from whence [come] the young and old lion, the viper, and fiery flying serpent; creatures with which Egypt abounded, as historians relate, and where some of them, at least, were worshipped, and where also men dwelt comparable to these creatures, as for craft and cruelty; though some understand this not of the country of Egypt, into which they went, but of the desert of Arabia, which lay between Judea and Egypt, through which they went; which was a land of trouble and anguish, for want of water, and because of these noxious creatures, of which it was full; see **De 8:15**:

they will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses; which were much used in Judea to carry burdens on, and which were laid chiefly on their shoulders; and this denotes the great quantity of riches that would be, and were carried into Egypt, either by the ambassadors, as presents to the Egyptians, to gain their friendship and assistance; or else by some of the principal inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, who, upon hearing of the invasion by Sennacherib, gathered up their riches, and fled to Egypt with them for safety, making use of young asses and camels, as follow:

and their treasures upon the bunches of camels; much used in travelling through the deserts of Arabia, and which have some one, some two humps on their backs, whereby they are better fitted to carry burdens. The word is of the singular number, and only used in this place; and has the signification of honey, as the camels hump is so called, as Jarchi from the Talmud {h} says, because, when hurt, it is healed by anointing it with honey; and upon these they carried their money and jewels they had treasured up:

to a people [that] shall not profit [them]; the Egyptians, who were of no service to the Jews, to free them from the invasion of the Assyrians.

{h} Bava Metzia, fol. 38. 1. Sabbat. fol. 154. 2.

Isaiah 30:7

Ver. 7. For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose,.... Not sending help in time, or such as did no service; though they made a show of help, and attempted to help them, or seemed to do so, yet failed to do it:

therefore have I cried; proclaimed or published, either the Lord by the prophet, or the prophet in the name of the Lord, which is much the same:

concerning this, Their strength [is] to sit still; either concerning this embassy, that it would have been better for the ambassadors to have spared all their toil, and labour, and strength, in going down to Egypt, and have remained quiet and easy in their own country: or, "I cried, or called, to this {i}", this city of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it, and declared to them, that it was best for them quietly to trust in the Lord, and depend upon his protection, and sit still in Jerusalem, and not attempt to flee from thence to Egypt for safety, and they should see the salvation of God, as in Ex 14:13 to which some think there is an allusion; not but that they might be busy, and employ themselves in preparing for their defence, by providing themselves with arms, and repairing their fortification; but it was not right to go out of the city, and seek a foreign aid or safety. The word for "strength" is "Rahab", one of the names of Egypt, Ps 87:4 and so the sense may be, their "Rahab", their "Egypt", or what they expect from thence, namely, protection and safety, is to sit still, and abide quietly at Jerusalem. Jarchi refers this to Egypt, "I have called to this", to Egypt, they are of a proud spirit, the people cease, and are proud without cause; or according to another exposition he gives, their pride ceaseth, or it is fit it should. De Dieu interprets it also of Egypt; and so does Gussetius {k}, but in a different manner, thus, the Egyptians are strength as to rest, they will strongly rest, while Israel strongly hopes they will help them.

{i} tazl ytarq "vocavi ad hanc", Montanus; "ad istam clamo", Castalio. {k}

Comment. Ebr. p. 829.

Isaiah 30:8

Ver. 8. Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book,.... Meaning their sins, their rebellion against God, their trust in an arm of flesh, and contempt of the divine word; or the prophecy of their destruction, for these things; and both may be meant; which the Lord orders to be written before their eyes, in some public place, as in the temple, upon a table, a table of wood covered with wax, on which they formerly wrote, and then hung it up against a wall, that it might be read by everyone; and he would have him also engross it in a book, that it might be kept for time to come: now what God would have thus written and engrossed, must be something considerable, and of consequence; and, as it may refer to the sins of this people, may denote the blackness and detestableness of them, as being what they had reason to be ashamed of, when thus set before them; and, as it may refer to their punishment, it may signify the certainty of it:

that it may be for the time to come, for ever and ever; and so continue to their eternal infamy, and for the justification of God in his proceedings against them, and be cautious unto others. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "for a testimony for ever", a witness for God, and against the Jews; and so the Targum,

"and it shall be in the day of judgment for a witness before me for ever."

Isaiah 30:9

Ver. 9. That this [is] a rebellious people,.... This, with what follows, is what the Lord would have written and engrossed, and remain for ever; or this is a reason why he would have it, for so the words be rendered, "for", or "because, this [is] a rebellious people {l}"; rebellious against God and his commands; they are called "rebellious children" before, Isa 30:1 and, as it follows,

lying children; false spurious ones, only called, not truly, the children of God, and lied when they called themselves so, and were guilty of lying also, not only to God, but to one another:

children [that] will not hear the law of the Lord; either read, or explained, at least, not so as to be obedient to it; and such must be rebellious ones, and deserve not to be called the children of God. The Targum is,

"children that like not to receive the doctrine of the law of the Lord."

{l} Me yk "nam populus", Forerius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "quia", Pagninus, Montanus.

Isaiah 30:10

Ver. 10. Which say to the seers, See not,.... The same with the prophets in the next clause, which explains this:

and to the Prophets, prophesy not unto us right things; things agreeable to the mind and will of God, and which ought to be done; not that they, in so many words, said this, but this was the language of their hearts and actions. The Targum is,

"who say to the prophets, prophesy not, and to the teachers, teach us not the doctrine of the law:"

speak unto us smooth things; that peace and prosperity should attend them, though they went on in their sinful courses:

prophesy deceits; for to prophesy peace to them, when destruction was at hand, was to deceive them; and yet they chose rather to be told the one than the other.

Isaiah 30:11

Ver. 11. Get ye out of the way: turn aside out of the path,.... These two expressions mean one and the same thing; either that the prophets would go out of their usual way of threatening ruin and destruction; or that they would go out of the way of the people, and not stand in it to hinder them pursuing their own lusts and pleasures; or that they would go out of the right way, as the Targum, which is God's way, and join with them; or, at least, connive at, and indulge them, in their ways:

cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us; do not so often make mention of his name, or come to us with a "thus saith the Lord"; let us hear no more of him, or messages from him; and especially under this character of "the Holy One of Israel", who is by nature holy, loves holiness, and requires it, and hates sin. The Targum is,

"remove far from us the word of the Holy One of Israel;"

let us hear no more of that.

Isaiah 30:12

Ver. 12. Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel,.... The prophet introduces his message with the phrase they objected to: ministers of the word must not seek to please men, nor should they be deterred from the use of phrases, because disliked by natural men: as, in our days, men do not love to hear the name of Christ so often mentioned, or his Gospel, or the glorious truths of it; but the use of them should not be left off on that account, but rather they should be the more inculcated, as we find this phrase was; see Isa 30:15:

Because ye despise this word; either this name of the Lord, "the Holy One of Israel"; or this prophecy that was delivered unto them, which reproved them for their confidence in Egypt, and exhorted them to sit still at home, and trust in the Lord; but instead of that they trusted in what was very bad, as follows:

but trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon; either in oppressors, and perverse persons, as the Egyptians were; or in their wealth, got by oppression, rapine, and fraud, which they carried to Egypt, and on which they depended for help and relief; and in that perverse disposition of mind, contradicting the Lord speaking by his prophets, resolving to take their own way, not doubting but that they should have success.

Isaiah 30:13

Ver. 13. Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall,.... Or, "as a falling breach" {m}; contempt of the word of God, and trusting in wickedness, rejecting the counsel of God, and placing confidence in the creature, these would be the cause of ruin; which ruin is signified by the breach of a falling wall, or by a breach in a wall, by reason of which it is in danger of falling, and is just ready to fall:

swelling out in a high wall; like a wall that bellies out and bulges, and which, when it once begins to do, suddenly falls; and the higher it is, it comes with more force, and the greater is the fall:

whose breaking cometh suddenly, at an instant; and so it is suggested, should be the ruin of this people; the high towering confidence they had in Egypt would fall with its own weight, and they with it, and be broken to pieces in a moment; and which is further illustrated by another simile.

{m} lpwn Urpk "sicut ruptura cadens", Montanus, Cocceius, De Dieu. Ben Melech observes, that a breach is after the building is fallen; for the breach does not fall, but it is said on account of the end of it, or what it is at last, as in Isa. xlvii. 2. "grind meal" or "flour".

Isaiah 30:14

Ver. 14. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potter's vessel,.... That is, their confidence in an arm of flesh, and they that place it there; and this either God shall do, or the enemy, and God by him; or rather it may he rendered impersonally, "it shall be broken"; and may refer to the wall to which the ruin of this people is compared, that that when it falls shall be broke to pieces, as a potter's vessel is when it falls upon a pavement, or is dashed against anything, or, struck with a rod of iron:

that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare; or that is broken in pieces without mercy, as the Targum; no pity shall be shown by the enemy, nor mercy from the Lord:

so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water [withal] out of the pit; as poor people are wont to do, to take fire from the hearth, and water out of a well, in a piece of a broken pitcher {n}; but this vessel should be broke into so many shivers, that there should not be such a piece left of it as could be made use of for such purposes. This denotes the utter and irreparable ruin and destruction of these people, which, though it was not at this time, yet afterwards by the Babylonians, and especially by the Romans.

{n} Vid. Misn. Sabbat, c. 8. sect. 7.

Isaiah 30:15

Ver. 15. For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel,.... This is still repeated, though displeasing to the carnal Jews, who, notwithstanding their ill behaviour to the Lord, condescends to give them the best advice, as follows:

in returning and rest shall ye be saved; or "may be saved" {o}; this is the right and the only way, namely, by "returning" from their evil ways, particularly their purpose of going to Egypt for help, and by returning to God by repentance and reformation, and to his worship and ordinances; and so the Targum,

"if ye return to my law;"

and by "resting" quietly at home, and reposing their trust in the Lord:

in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength; in a quiet submission to the will of God, and in quietly waiting upon him for the issue and event of things, abiding in their own houses, and not in a hurrying tumultuous manner, running here and there for help; and in a holy and humble confidence in the Lord, and in the power of his might, where they should find such strength and security, as Pharaoh king of Egypt could not give them:

and ye would not; would not be persuaded to keep at home, and from going down to Egypt; would not take the advice given, but pursue their own measures and methods of salvation. This is the literal sense of the words; and if they can be accommodated to spiritual and eternal salvation, it may be done in this way: repentance may be meant by "returning", and faith by "rest"; or by "returning and rest" may be designed returning to rest, that is, to Christ, who is the only rest to weary souls: "quietness" may intend peace of conscience, arising from the blood and righteousness of Christ; and "confidence" faith, and an assurance of it, which make men strong Christians; though their strength does not barely lie in these graces, but in the object of them: now faith and repentance are blessings of the covenant of grace, gifts of God, and graces of the Spirit, which go together in the doctrine of salvation, and have a concern in it; though they are not meritorious procuring causes, nor conditions of it; yet in this way God brings his people to salvation, and they enter into, and are descriptive of, the character of such that are saved; there is so close a connection between these and salvation, that none are saved without them; and it may be observed, that this way of saving men through faith and repentance, and by going to Christ alone for rest, and by placing confidence in, and deriving all peace and comfort from him, is disagreeable to unregenerate men; which is a proof of the wretched depravity, and corruption, and perverseness of the will of man.

{o} Nwevwt "servaremini", Piscator, Gataker.

Isaiah 30:16

Ver. 16. But ye said, No, for we will flee upon horses,.... Hither and thither to get help and assistance; go down to Egypt for it on them, or thither for them, as some render it; and then face the enemy, and, if we can not conquer him, will flee from him, and so provide for our safety; this is man's way of salvation, as opposed to God's way; see **Ho 1:7** or this may design their fleeing on horses and camels with their riches into Egypt, both for the security of them and their persons, Isa 30:6:

therefore shall ye flee; on horses from the enemy, and be pursued and taken by him; this was fulfilled long after, when the city was taken by the Chaldeans; see 2Ki 25:4:

and, We will ride upon the swift; horses or camels, to the swiftness of which they trusted, and doubted not to get off safe, but would find themselves mistaken:

therefore shall they that pursue you be swift; yea, swifter than the horses and camels they rode on, and overtake them, and either put them to death, or carry them captive. The Chaldeans are represented as very swift, **Jer 4:13**.

Isaiah 30:17

Ver. 17. One thousand [shall flee] at the rebuke of one,.... A troop of horse, consisting of a thousand men, shall flee upon the attack and onset of a single person, so dispirited should they be, and so possessed of the fear of the enemy;

what was promised to them with respect to their enemies is here turned against them, Le 26:7:

at the rebuke of five shall ye flee; being attacked by a very small number, the whole army should run away: this denotes with what ease they should be routed, and put to flight; and is to be understood, not of what would be at the present time, but of what should come to pass hereafter, when the Chaldean army should come against them;

till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain; or, "as the mast of a ship", so the Septuagint and other versions. Jarchi says it signifies a high tree, or tall piece of wood fixed in the earth, like a ship's mast {p}, set up to give warning of an enemy's approach, and when, and where, sometimes fires used to be kindled; hence the Targum is,

"till ye are left as a burning torch on the top of a mountain."

The Syriac version renders it, "as a wild ass", solitary and alone:

and as an ensign on a hill; erected as a trophy of victory. The design of the metaphors is to show that there should be few that should escape falling into the enemy's hand, here and there one, that should he scattered about, and be very thin, as beacons and signs are, and should be warnings to others of pursuing the same foolish and sinful methods and practices.

{p} So Ben Melech says, it is a high piece of wood in a ship, on which they hang an ensign or flag; and so he interprets the ensign in the next clause of a veil, so called, because they lift it up upon the mast.

Isaiah 30:18

Ver. 18. And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you,.... Or "yet" {q}, or "nevertheless" though such an utter destruction shall be made, there are a few that the Lord has a good will unto, and therefore waits till the set time comes to arise and have mercy on them; he has taken up thoughts and resolutions of grace and favour concerning them, and has fixed the time when he will show it; and he is, as it were, panting and longing after it, as the word {r} used signifies, as some have observed, until it is up; he waits for the fittest and most proper time to show mercy; when things are brought to the worst, to the greatest extremity, and when his people are brought to a sense of their danger, and of their sins, and to repentance for them, and to see their need of his help and salvation, and to implore it, and to depend upon him for it; then, in the mount of difficulty, and in the most seasonable time, does the Lord appear; and hereby the mercy is the sweeter to them, and his grace is the more magnified towards them: so he waits to be gracious to his people in conversion; he is gracious before; he is of a gracious disposition; he is inclined, nay, resolved, to show favour to them; yea, he has done various acts of grace before, such as their election in Christ, the provision of a Saviour for them in the covenant, putting all grace into his hands for them, the redemption of them by him, and the adoption of them into his family; but in conversion there is an open exhibition and display of the grace of God; much grace is then shown in applying pardoning grace, a justifying righteousness, and salvation by Christ unto them; by many love visits, and by opening the treasures of his grace unto them, as well as by implanting much grace in them, as faith, hope, love, and every other: now there is a fixed time for all this; and, until that time comes, the Lord waits to be gracious; this is his longsuffering towards his elect, which issues in their salvation; he does not cut them off in their sins; he bears much and long with them, and, as it were, longs till the time comes to unbosom himself to them, and bestow his favours on them; and so, after conversion, he waits and observes the fittest time to deliver them out of afflictions, temptations, &c.

and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; or, "will exalt himself" {s}; raise up himself, who seemed to be asleep, and careless of his people, and rise up against their enemies, and in defence of them, which is showing mercy to them; or be exalted on his throne of grace, that he may give, and they may find, grace and mercy to help them in time of need: or, "he will exalt", or "lift up"; that is, his Son; so he was lifted up on the cross, that his people might be drawn after him, and saved by him; and he has also exalted him at his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins; and he is now lifted up as the serpent on the pole in the ministry of the word, that whosoever believes in him should have everlasting life; so that these exaltations, or lifting up, are in order to have mercy; and his waiting to be gracious is by the Jews {t} interpreted of his desire after the Messiah's coming, and his waiting for that: or, "he will be exalted, in", or "by, having mercy on you" {u}; the glory of God is displayed in showing mercy to his people; they are engaged and influenced hereby to glorify God for his mercy, both in things temporal and spiritual. The word in the Arabic language, as Schultens observes {w}, signifies to "desire" {x}; and this will make the words run smoothly in agreement with the former; "and therefore", or "nevertheless, will he desire to have mercy on you"; which denotes the Lord's good will to his people, and how much his heart, and the desires of it, are towards them:

for the Lord [is] a God of judgment; or, "though he is a God of judgment" {y}, of strict justice, judges in the earth, and will judge the world in righteousness; see **Mal 2:17** his grace, mercy, and justice, agree together, in redemption justification, pardon of sin, and salvation: or of moderation, clemency, and grace to correct his people; he corrects them not in wrath and hot displeasure, but in judgment, in a tender and fatherly way and manner, Jer 10:24 and he is a God of "discretion", Ps 112:5 of wisdom and knowledge, and does all things after the counsel of his will; he has fixed upon the proper time, and he knows which is the best time, and he waits that time to show grace and mercy to his people:

blessed [are] all they that wait for him; that do not run here and there for help, and are tumultuous, restless, and impatient, but wait God's own time to do them good; that wait for his gracious presence, and the discoveries of his love, for the performance of his promises, for answers of prayer, for all blessings temporal and spiritual, and for eternal glory and happiness; these are happy persons, all and every one of them; they enjoy much now, and it can not be said, nor conceived, what God has prepared for them hereafter; see Isa 49:23.

{q} Nkl "nihilominus, tamen"; so Noldius, Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 507. in the same way Gataker. {r} hkx "significat anhelat, vel inhiat", Forerius. {s} Myry Nklw "et propterea exaltabit se", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "elaturus est se", Junius & Tremellius. {t} Gloss, in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 2. {u} Mkmxrl "dum miserabitur vestri"; so some in Vatablus. {w} Animadv. Philolog. in Job. p. 56. {x} "mavit rem", Golius, col. 922. "quaesivit, expetivit, voluit", Castel. col. 3551. {y} yk "quamvis", so this particle is often used; see Noldius, p. 399.

Isaiah 30:19

Ver. 19. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem,.... Or, "for the people of Zion {z} shall dwell in Jerusalem"; those that belonged to the fort of Zion should dwell in Jerusalem, or "abide" there, both they and the inhabitants of it, at least many of them should quietly continue there, waiting the Lord's time to appear for them, and not run here and there, and particularly to Egypt for help or shelter. Seeing there are many things in the following verses which have respect to Gospel times, and best suit with them, this may be understood of the safe and comfortable dwelling of the children of Zion, or regenerate persons, in a Gospel church state, which is often called Jerusalem, both in the Old and New Testament:

thou shalt weep no more; or, "in weeping thou shall not weep" {a}; though they had been weeping because of the enemy's invasion of their land, and besieging their city, yet now all tears should be wiped away from their eyes, being delivered from him; this may very well be accommodated to Gospel times:

he will be very gracious unto thee, at the voice of thy cry; these are the words of the prophet, declaring that the Lord would be gracious to his people at the voice of their prayer and supplication to him in their distress, as he was to the voice of Hezekiah's cry and supplication to him:

when he shall hear it, he will answer thee; he always hears the prayers of his people, and he always answers them, sooner or later, in his own time, and in his own way; see Isa 65:24.

{z} Nwyub Me "polpulus Sion", V. L. Gataker. {a} hkbt al wkb "plorando non plorabis", Pagninus, Montanus.

Isaiah 30:20

Ver. 20. And [though] the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction,.... Either at this present time, when the city was besieged by Sennacherib; or when it should be besieged by the Chaldeans, when adversity was their bread, and affliction their water; or when they had only bread and water in their adversity and affliction; or a famine of bread and water, as is common in times of a siege. It may refer to the poor, and mean, and afflicted state of the people of God, in the first times of the Gospel especially:

yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more; or, "thy rain" {b}, as some interpret it; one and the same word signifies both rain and a teacher, because doctrine from the mouth of a teacher drops like rain upon the tender herb, and as showers on the grass; and is to be understood, not merely in a literal sense, of rain, and fruitfulness by it, in opposition to penury and famine for want of it; but of rain of spiritual doctrine; and so the sense is much the same as if it was rendered teachers; that though the people of God should be attended with afflictions, yet they should have spiritual consolation; and though they might have a famine of bread and water, yet not of hearing the word of the Lord; their teachers should not be removed from them, as they had formerly been, perhaps in the time of Ahaz: or "take wing" {c}, and fly away from them, as the word signifies, being scared by persecutors; so the prophets in the time of Ahab were forced to fly, and were hid by fifty in a cave. The word here used has in the Arabic language the signification of hiding, as Maimonides {d} from Aben Ganach has observed; and so may be read, "thy teachers shall not be hidden any more"; things being hidden under wings; see Ps 17:8:

but thine eyes shall see thy teachers; in their proper place, doing the work of their office: it denotes not a bare seeing them with their bodily eyes, but a seeing them with pleasure and delight, a wistfully looking at them, and a diligent and attentive observance of what they said. Some understand these teachers of Hezekiah and his princes, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Abendana; others of the priests and prophets in his time, the principal of which was Isaiah; others of the prophets a little before, in, and after the Babylonish captivity; it may be applied to John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, and other Gospel ministers. Jarchi interprets it of God himself, who teaches to profit, and who would not hide his face from his people; the Targum, of the Shechinah not removing from the sanctuary, but being seen there; and being in the plural number, may denote all the three Persons.

{b} Kyrwm "pluvia tua", some in Munster, Calvin; so Ben Melech interprets it; and the same in the next clause. {c} Pnky al "non avolabit", Piscator; "ad verb. alabitur", Forerius. {d} More Nevochim, par. 1. cap. 43. p. 61. So "operuit, sub alis tutatus est", Castel. col. 1760.

Isaiah 30:21

Ver. 21. And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee,.... Which may be said in reference to the backsliding and declining state of the people, Isa 30:11 and is thought by some to be an allusion to schoolmasters, who stand behind their scholars, or at their backs, to guide, teach, and instruct them; and by others to shepherds following their flocks, who, when they observe any of the sheep going out of the way, call them back; or to travellers, who, coming to a place where are several ways, and being at a loss which way to take, and inclining to turn to the right or left, are called to by persons behind them, and directed in the right way. This "voice behind" is by the Jews {e} interpreted of Bath Kol;

and by others of the voice of conscience; but it rather intends the Spirit of God, and his grace; though it seems best to understand it of the Scriptures of truth, the word of God, the only rule of faith and practice; the language of which is,

saying, This [is] the way, walk ye in it; it directs to Christ the way, and who is the only way of life and salvation to be walked in by faith, and to all the lesser paths of duty and doctrine, which to walk in is both pleasant and profitable, and which is the right way; so the Targum paraphrases it,

"this is the right way;"

to which agree the comments of Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi; though the Arabic and Syriac versions, following the Septuagint, represent them as the words of seducers, directing to a wrong way: but the words are a promise of being led right, and not a threatening of being led wrong:

when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left; through ignorance or inadvertency, through the prevalence of corruption, or force of temptation; and as it is promised there should be such a voice, so they should have ears to hear, their ears erect to attend to what is said, to observe it, and act according to it.

{e} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 32. 1.

Isaiah 30:22

Ver. 22. Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver,.... Images made of solid silver, covered with rich and costly garments; or images covered and decorated with plates of silver; see Jer 10:4 these they not only pulled down and defaced, but defiled, to show their contempt and abhorrence of them:

and the ornament of thy molten images of gold; images made of solid gold, covered with an ephod, as the word here used signifies; such an one as the high priest wore, and Micah made for his house of idolatry, Ex 28:6:

thou shall cast them away as a menstruous cloth; which is not only filthy and loathsome, but defiling; whoever touched it were unclean by the law for a while; or as a woman in her monthly courses, who, during that time, was to be separate from her husband, Le 15:19, &c.; this is used to express the pollution and nauseousness of idols, and of the utter rejection of them:

thou shall say unto it, Get thee hence; Kimchi observes that some say the word signifies "dung; thou shall say to it, thou art dung", and only fit for the dunghill, and to it thou shall go; at the same time cast it out, declaring abhorrence of idols, repentance for worshipping them, and signifying that they would have nothing more to do with them. This shows the efficacy of the word of God when it comes not in word only, but with the power and Spirit of God; it was fulfilled in some measure in Hezekiah's time; see 2Ki 18:4, and after the Babylonish captivity, when the Jews left off idolatry, and never more returned to it; and when the Gospel prevailed in the Roman Pagan empire, and at the time of the Reformation, and will be more largely accomplished when Popery shall be utterly destroyed through the powerful ministration of the Gospel.

Isaiah 30:23

Ver. 23. Then shall he give thee rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal,.... Or, "rain to thy seed" {f}; that is, when the seed is sown in the earth, the Lord will give the former rain, and cause it to take root, and spring up:

and bread of the increase of the earth; the earth, being watered with rain, should give its increase of corn, of which bread should be made; so that there would be seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, as in Isa 55:10:

and it shall be fat and plenteous; or "fat and fat"; very fat and rich, exceeding good bread, and plenty of it; and after the siege of the city by Sennacherib's army was broke up, and that was destroyed, for years following there was great fruitfulness in the land, as was foretold, Isa 37:30 and this may denote the great fruitfulness of the Gospel, and the excellency of the spiritual food of it, and of the blessings of grace that come by it:

in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures; signifying that there should be pastures for cattle in the several parts of the country, and these large ones, where cattle should feed, and enjoy great plenty. This clause belongs to the next verse Isa 30:24, and should of right begin it. The Targum interprets it thus,

"and the righteous shall be nourished with their cattle at that time, with the fat of tender and fat things;"

as the earth would be fruitful, the cattle would be well fed; and so there would be plenty of provision for man and beast.

{f} Kerz rjm "sementi tuae", Piscator; "semini tuo", V. L. Tigurine version.

Isaiah 30:24

Ver. 24. The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground,.... Or till it; for though these might not be joined together in a yoke, yet they were made use of separately in ploughing land,
De 22:10:

shall eat clean provender; the word for "provender" signifies a mixture, such as cattle eat, especially horses, as beans, oats, barley, and fitches, and of which there should be such plenty, that the cattle should eat of it; not of the chaff and husks of these, nor these in their husk and straw, but as cleansed from them, as follows:

which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan: with the former of which the corn was raised up and shook, and with the latter fanned. Now this is expressive of great plenty, that cattle should feed on winnowed corn. The Septuagint indeed render it,

"they shall eat chaff mixed with winnowed barley;"

but if they were to eat chaff with it, there would be no need to winnow it. This may be mystically understood of apostles, and of apostolical men, as Jerom; and of all Gospel preachers, especially in the latter day, who labour in the word and doctrine, and feed upon the pure food of the Gospel themselves, and bring it to others; see **1Co 9:9** **1Ti 5:17**.

Isaiah 30:25

Ver. 25. And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill,.... Which were round about Jerusalem, and in other parts of Judea:

rivers [and] streams of water; such abundance of rain, that it should flow in streams like rivers, from the higher to the lower lands, and water them. This may in a spiritual sense be understood of the great plenty of the ministry of the Gospel, in all the kingdoms of the world, great and small, signified by mountains and hills; and which may also intimate the open and public ministrations of it in them,
Zec 14:8 or of the blessings of grace, and the graces of the Spirit, communicated everywhere; see Isa 41:18 **Joh 7:38**. This is applied to the times of the Messiah by the Jews {g} themselves, and respects the latter part of those times:

in the day of the great slaughter; not of Sennacherib's army by the angel, as many Jewish and Christian interpreters understand it; nor of the Babylonians, at the taking of Babylon by Cyrus; but of the antichristian kings, and their armies, Re 19:17. So the Targum paraphrases it,

"for the ruin of kings and their armies, in the day of the great slaughter;"

and a great slaughter it will be indeed:

when the towers fall; not the batteries and fortifications raised in the Assyrian camp, at the siege of Jerusalem, which fell when they were destroyed by the angel; or the great men and princes in that army, which then fell; though towers sometimes signify great persons, such as princes; see **Isa 2:15** and so the Targum interprets it here; and may be true of the antichristian princes; for of the fall of the great city of Rome, and of other cities of the nations, with the towers thereof, is this to be understood, even of mystical, and not of literal Babylon; see Re 11:13.

{g} Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 212. 3.

Isaiah 30:26

Ver. 26. Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun,.... An hyperbolical expression, used to set forth the exceeding great light of the Gospel under the dispensation of it, which would as far exceed the light of the former dispensation, comparable to the moon, as the light of the sun exceeds the light of the moon; as also that great degree of spiritual joy and comfort that should be in those times, especially in the latter day; and the Jews themselves apply this to the times of the Messiah, and to the times after the war of Gog and Magog, after which they say there will be no more sorrow and distress; so Kimchi; and to these times it is applied in the Talmud {h}; and Aben Ezra says, that all interpreters understand it of the time to come:

and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days; as if the light of seven days was collected together; or as if there were seven suns shining together. The Targum and Jarchi not only make it to be seven times seven, that is, forty nine; but multiply forty nine by seven, and make it three hundred and forty three, or as the light of so many days. Maimonides {i} thinks it has respect to the seven days of the dedication of the temple in Solomon's time, when the people never had such glory, felicity, and joy, as at that time: with this compare the light of the New Jerusalem state, Re 21:23:

in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound; not only peace being made, by the blood of Christ, between God and his people, and they healed by his stripes, and Jew and Gentile reconciled in one body on his cross, and through the preaching of the Gospel; but as will be in the latter day, the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in, and all Israel shall be saved; and all the Lord's people will be one in his hands, and be entirely freed from all grievances and afflictions by the man of sin, who will now be destroyed, and also will be in a sound and healthful state and condition. This will be at the time of the rising and ascending of the witnesses, Re 11:11.

{h} T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 68. 1. & Gloss. in ib. & Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2. {i} More Nevochim, par. 2. c. 29. p. 267.

Isaiah 30:27

Ver. 27. Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far,.... From hence to the end of the chapter Isa 30:28 is a very full account, by way of prophecy, of the destruction of the Assyrian army by the Lord; and which is to be considered as a type of the destruction of antichrist, by and at the coming of the Lord Jesus. It is introduced with a "behold", as declaring something of moment and importance worthy of attention, and even wonderful. "The name of the Lord" is the Lord himself; unless it is to be understood of the angel that came in the name of the Lord, and destroyed Sennacherib's army; who may be said to come "from far", because he came from heaven; and from whence Christ the Angel uncreated, in whom the name of the Lord is, will come to judge the world, and to take vengeance on all his and his people's enemies, antichrist and all his followers:

burning [with] his anger; against the Assyrian monarch and his army. So our Lord, when he shall come forth to make war with the antichristian kings of the earth, his "eyes" shall be "as a flame of fire": and when he comes to judge the world, he will descend in "flaming fire",
Re 19:12 the day of the Lord will burn as an oven, **Mal 4:1**:

and the burden [thereof is] heavy: the punishment inflicted, in his burning anger and hot displeasure, will be heavy, even intolerable, heavier than it can be borne, as the Targum paraphrases it; see **Ge 4:13**:

his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire; the words he will utter, the sentence he will pronounce, will be dreadful, executed by the angel; so the sharp sword that goes out of the mouth of Christ, with which he will smite the nations; and such the awful sentence pronounced by him on the wicked, "go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire", &c. see Re 19:15. So the Targum,

"from before him goes out the curse upon the ungodly, and his Word as a consuming fire."

Isaiah 30:28

Ver. 28. And his breath as an overflowing stream,.... Which comes with great swiftness and force, bearing all before it, breathing out nothing but the fire of divine wrath, before which there is no standing; nor could the Assyrian army stand before it, but suddenly, in a moment, was carried away with the force of it: thus our Lord will consume the man of sin with the spirit or breath of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming, **2Th 2:8**: and this stream

shall reach to the midst of the neck; which shows the extreme danger the army would be in, as a man that is up to the neck in water, and can find no way of escaping; and very aptly represents their state and condition, the whole body of the army being encompassed and destroyed by this overflowing stream of divine wrath, only their head, their king Sennacherib was saved; and he in a little time was cut off, when he had got into his country; as the Assyrian army served the Jews, they are served themselves; see **Isa 8:7**:

to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity; that is, the breath, wind, or Spirit of the Lord, compared to an overflowing stream, should be of this use, and have this effect, to sift the people of several nations, of which the Assyrian army consisted, so as to dash them one against another, and utterly destroy them; for they were to be sifted, not with a good and profitable sieve, which retains the corn, and shakes out the chaff, or so as to have some taken out and spared; but with a sieve that lets all through, and so be brought to nothing, as the Vulgate Latin version; and thus will all the antichristian nations be agitated, and shaken, and destroyed, ere long:

and [there shall be] a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing [them] to err; from the way they intended to go, namely, up to Jerusalem, and take and sack it, and obliging them to betake themselves another way for their retreat and safety; see Isa 37:29.

Isaiah 30:29

Ver. 29. Ye shall have a song,.... That is, the Jews should have a song, and sing it upon the ruin of the Assyrian army; as the Israelites had, when Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the Red Sea; and so will the Christian church have one, at the fall of Babylon,
Re 15:1:

as in the night, [when] a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, the Jewish feasts always began, the even preceding, and were ushered in with singing songs, and psalms; especially the feast of the passover, which it is thought is alluded to here. It is a common notion of the Jews {k}, that the slaughter of the Assyrian army was on the night of the passover; that it was in the night is certain,
2Ki 19:35 but that it was on the night of the passover is not certain; however, the songs sung on that night were not on this occasion, nor could this be sung so soon; and it will be at evening time that the latter day glory shall break out, and songs of joy be heard from the uttermost parts of the earth, Zec 14:7:

as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord; the temple; it being usual for persons, that came from distant parts of the land to the temple to worship, to bring pipes along with them in their hands, and play upon them as they were travelling, to divert them, and the company that were

with them; see
Ps 42:4. Jarchi thinks the allusion is to the bringing up of the first fruits to the temple at Jerusalem, which was preceded with a pipe, as appears from the Misnah {l}:

to the mighty One of Israel; or, "Rock of Israel" {m}; one of the names of the Messiah, 2Sa 23:3 to whom the song of praise and triumph shall be sung, in the latter day, by those that stand upon Mount Zion, with harps in their hands, having gotten the victory over the beast and his image, Re 14:1.

{k} Vid. Aben Ezra, Ben Melech, & Abendana. {l} Biccurim, c. 3. sect. 3, 4. {m} larvy rwu "rupem Israelis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "petram Israel", Montanus.

Isaiah 30:30

Ver. 30. And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard,.... Or, "the glory of his voice" {n}; his majestic voice, the voice of his word, as the Targum, giving orders for the destruction of the Assyrian army; this was heard by the angel who obeyed it: and such a voice will be heard, ordering the destruction of antichrist, and the antichristian powers, in the pouring out of the vials by the angels, fitly signified by the following emblems; see Re 16:1. This voice is commonly interpreted of thunder, which is the voice of the Lord, and a very majestic one, Ps 29:3 and the destruction of the Assyrian army might be by thunder and lightning, and hailstones, and attended with such a tempest as here described, though not mentioned in the history:

and shall show the lighting down of his arm; or the strength of the arm of his power, as the Targum; his mighty arm, and the descent of it; meaning what should descend from heaven at the time of this tempest, as thunderbolts, balls of fire, hailstones, &c.; and by all which may be meant the heavy judgments of God, which fell upon his enemies, and were intolerable unto them: the metaphor is taken from the motion of a man in smiting another, who lifts up his hand, when it falls with the greater might, and rests upon him:

with the indignation of [his] anger; as when a man strikes in great wrath and fury: the heaping up of words here, and as follows, shows the vehemence and excess of anger:

and [with] the flame of a devouring fire; or, "of a fire devouring"; the Assyrian army; which, the Jews say, burnt their souls, destroyed their lives, but not their bodies. The Targum is,

"with the flame of fire, which consumes the graven images."

The destruction of mystical Babylon will be by fire, Re 18:8:

[with] scattering, and tempest, and hailstones; with lightning, which rends things in pieces, and scatters them here and there, and with a violent storm of rain and hail; see Re 16:18.

{n} wlwq dwh "gloriam vocis suae", V. L. Vatablus; "magnificam vocem suam", Piscator.

Isaiah 30:31

Ver. 31. For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down,.... As anything is by a storm of thunder, lightning, hail, and rain: or "fear", or be "affrighted", as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it; Sennacherib, the Assyrian monarch, and that part of his army which escaped, though not destroyed by it, were put into the utmost consternation: this shows that the prophecy in the context refers to the overthrow of the Assyrian army by the angel, when besieging Jerusalem in Hezekiah's time; though the Assyrian is sometimes used for any enemy of God's people at other times, particularly antichrist, and especially the eastern antichrist, the Turk:

[which] smote with a rod; other nations, particularly the Jews, whom the Assyrian is expressly said to smite with a rod; and because he was an instrument in God's hand for the chastising of that people, he is called the rod of his anger, Isa 10:5 but now he that smote shall be smitten himself; him whom God used as a rod to correct others, he will smite with his rod, for his own correction: for this may be understood of God, and be rendered thus, "with a rod, he", that is, God, "shall smite" the Assyrian, as before; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi. The Targum interprets the "rod" of dominion.

Isaiah 30:32

Ver. 32. And [in] every place where the grounded staff shall pass,.... The storm before mentioned, the wrath and righteous judgment of God, founded upon his unalterable purposes and decrees; and, wherever it came, would fall with great weight, sink deep, stick fast, and remain fixed and sure, like a rod or staff fastened in the earth:

which the Lord shall lay upon him; or, "cause to rest upon him" {o}; the Lord would lay his rod upon him, the Assyrian, and let it remain there, so that it should be a destroying rod or staff, as before; it should continue until it had done full execution, and utterly destroyed him. The Targum is,

"and there shall be every passage of their princes, and of their mighty ones, on whom the Lord shall cause to rest the vengeance of his power;"

and so the "grounded staff" may be understood of the Assyrian himself, that wherever he should be, this storm of vengeance should follow him, and rest upon him:

[it] shall be with tabrets and harps; the allusion is to the use of these in war; but, instead of these, no other music would be used at this time than what thunder, and rain, and hailstones made; unless this refers to the joy of God's people, upon the destruction of their enemies; so the Targum,

"with tabrets, and harps shall the house of Israel praise, because of the mighty war which shall be made for them among the people:"

see Re 15:2:

and in battles of shaking will he fight with it; the Assyrian camp; or as the Keri, or marginal reading, "with them": with the Assyrians, with the men of the camp; the soldiers, as Kimchi explains it; that is, the Lord will fight with them in battles, by shaking his hand over them in a way of judgment, and thereby shaking them to pieces, and utterly destroying them; see Re 19:11.

{o} xyny "requiescere faciet", Pagninus, Montanus; "quiescere faciet", Cocceius.

Isaiah 30:33

Ver. 33. For Tophet is ordained of old,.... The place long ago appointed for the ruin of the Assyrian army, which pitched here: this was a valley near Jerusalem, the valley of the son of Hinnom; so called, from the drums and tabrets beat upon here, to prevent parents hearing the cries of their infants offered to Molech: into it was brought the filth and dung of the city; here malefactors were buried, it is said; and such as were condemned to burning were burned here; and such as had no burial were cast here; so that it was an image and picture of hell itself: and the word "Gehenna", used for hell, comes from "Gehinnom", or the valley of Hinnom, the name of this place; and some think that is here meant, which from all eternity was appointed as the place of torment for wicked men, So the Targum,

"for hell is ordained from the worlds (or before the worlds), because of their sins."

It is in the original, "from yesterday": hence Jarchi interprets it of the second day of the creation, which had a yesterday; on which day the Jews suppose hell was made: and so it is interpreted in the Talmud {p}, where it is said to be one of the seven things created before the world was, and is proved from this text; and said to be called Tophet, because whoever htptmh is deceived by his imagination (or evil concupiscence) falls into it; See Gill on "Mt 25:41" with this compare **Jude 1:4**:

yea, for the king it is prepared; for Sennacherib king of Assyria; that is, for his army, which perished here, though he did not; or for kings, the singular for the plural; for his princes, which, as he boastingly said, were "altogether kings", Isa 10:8 and particularly for Rabshakeh, the general of his army, who might be so called, and was eminently one of these kings. Understood of hell, it may not only be interpreted of Satan, the king and prince of devils, for whom and his angels the everlasting fire of hell is prepared,
Mt 25:41 but also of antichrist, the king of the bottomless pit, and of all antichristian kings; see Re 11:9. Some render it, "by the king it is prepared"; so the Vulgate Latin version; by whom may be meant either Hezekiah, who cleared it from idols and idolatrous worship, and so eventually prepared it to make room for the Assyrian army; or else the King of kings. So the Targum,

"the King of worlds (of all worlds) prepared it;"

and he seems manifestly designed in the next clause:

he hath made [it] deep [and] large; to hold the whole army alive, and to bury them when dead; and so hell is large and deep enough to hold Satan and all his angels, antichrist and all his followers; yea, all the wicked that have been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end of it:

the pile thereof [is] fire and much wood; alluding to the burning of bodies in this place, and particularly of infants sacrificed to Molech; and refers to the burning of the Assyrian army, either by lightning from heaven, or by the Jews when they found them dead the next morning. In hell, the "fire" is the wrath of God; the "wood" or fuel ungodly men:

the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it; the pile of fire and wood. The Targum is,

"the word of the Lord, like an overflowing torrent of brimstone, shall kindle it;"

it shall be done by his order, at his word of command. In hell, the wrath of God will be like a continual stream of brimstone, keeping up the fire of it, so that it shall ever burn, and never be quenched; hence it is called a lake burning with fire and brimstone; into which Satan, the beast, and false prophet, and the worshippers of antichrist, will be cast, Re 14:10. The allusion is to the fire and brimstone rained by Jehovah, from Jehovah, upon Sodom and Gomorrah, Ge 19:24.

{p} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 54. 1. Nedarim, fol. 39. 2. & Erubim, fol. 19. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 31:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 31

This chapter denounces woe to those that trusted in the Egyptians; assures the Jews of God's care and protection of them; calls them to repentance, and foretells the destruction of the Assyrian army. The sin of those that trusted in Egypt, with the reasons of their trust, and not looking to the Lord, and seeking him, is declared in Isa 31:1 and their folly exposed in so doing; since the Lord is wise, powerful, and unchangeable, and the Egyptians frail and weak; so that the helper and the helped must fall before him, Isa 31:2 whereas protection might be expected from the Lord, as is promised, whose power is like that of the lion, and whose tender care is like that of birds to defend their young, Isa

31:4 wherefore the Jews are called upon to return to the Lord by repentance, from whom they had revolted; which would be shown by their detestation of idolatry, the sin they had been guilty of, Isa 31:6 and the chapter is closed with a prophecy of the ruin of the Assyrian army, and the flight of their king, Isa 31:8.

Ver. 1. Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help,.... Or, "O ye that go down", &c.; what poor foolish creatures are you! And in the end what miserable and wretched ones will ye be! Such were the Jewish rulers and people, who either went themselves, or sent ambassadors to the king of Egypt, to supply them with men and horses against the king of Assyria, contrary to the express command of God, which forbid them returning to Egypt; and which showed their unmindfulness of deliverance from thence, and their not having a due sense of that mercy upon them; as well as their so doing exposed them to the danger of being drawn into the superstitions and idolatries of that people:

and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because [they] are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; having their dependence upon, and placing their confidence in, the strength and numbers of the cavalry of the Egyptians:

but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord; they did not look unto the Lord with an eye of faith, nor seek him by prayer and supplication; or ask any counsel or instruction of him, as the Targum paraphrases the last clause; so that their sin lay not only in their confidence in the creature, but in their neglect of the Lord himself; and so all such persons are foolish and miserable, that trust in an arm of flesh, that place their confidence in creature acts, in their own righteousness, duties, and services, and have no regard to the Holy One of Israel, to the holiness and righteousness of Christ, neglect that, and do not submit to it; thus the Targum interprets the former clause of the Word of the Holy One of Israel, the essential Word Christ.

Isaiah 31:2

Ver. 2. Yet he also [is] wise,.... That is, God, the Holy One of Israel, is, whom they disregarded; and wiser too than the Egyptians, to whom they sought for help, and who were thought to be a wise and political people; and wiser than themselves, who imagined they acted a prudent part, in applying to them; so wise as to know all their schemes, and able to confound them, as well as most certainly and fully to complete his own; and it would have been therefore the highest wisdom to have sought to him, and not to men:

and will bring evil; the evil of punishment or affliction on wicked men, which he has threatened, and which they could in no wise escape, by taking the methods they did:

and will not call back his words; his threatenings delivered by the prophets: these, as he does not repent of, he will not revoke or make void, but fulfil and accomplish; what he has said he will do, and what he has purposed he will bring to pass; and therefore it was a weak and an unwise part they acted, by applying to others, and slighting him:

but will arise against the house of evildoers; not the ten tribes of Israel, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; but rather the people of the Jews, or some particular family among them; it may be the royal family, chiefly concerned in sending the embassy to Egypt, or in advising to it; though it may be the singular is put for the plural, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it "the houses"; and so may design all those great families which joined in this affair, and are therefore called "evildoers"; as all such are that put their confidence in the creature, and not in the Lord; and against such he will "arise", in a hostile manner, sooner or later, against whom there is no standing; see **Job 9:4**:

and against the help of them that work iniquity; that is, against the Egyptians, the helpers of the Jews, who were workers of iniquity, and therefore their help and hope in it would be in vain; or else the latter part is descriptive of the Egyptians their helpers, who were a wicked and idolatrous nation, and so not to be sought unto for help, or trusted in, since, God being against them, it would be to no purpose, as he is against all workers of iniquity.

Isaiah 31:3

Ver. 3. Now the Egyptians [are] men, and not God,.... Be it that they are mighty, they are not mighty, as God is; and indeed they are but frail, feeble, mortal, and mutable men, and therefore not to be trusted in, and depended on; or to be put upon an equality with God, and even to be preferred to him, as they were by the Jews; and of what use and service could they be unto them, seeing God was against them?

and their horses flesh, and not spirit; only flesh, without an immortal soul or spirit, which man has; and therefore a foolish thing in man to trust in them, who must be entirely guided and directed by them; and much less angelic spirits, or like them, which are incorporeal, invisible, and exceedingly mighty and powerful, which excel all creatures in strength, and are called the mighty angels; these are God's cavalry, his horses and chariots; see Ps 68:17 **Hab 3:8** and what mighty things have been done by them, even by a single one? Witness the destruction of the Assyrian army, in one night, by one of them; wherefore the Egyptian cavalry was not to be named with them {q}:

When the Lord shall stretch out his hand; as soon as he does it, before he strikes, and when he does this in order to it:

both he that helpeth shall fall; or "stumble", take a false step; meaning the Egyptians, sent for and come forth to help the Jews; but, stumbling and falling themselves, would be but poor assistants to them. Aben Ezra interprets this of the king of Assyria destroying the Egyptians, when he came to Jerusalem:

and he that is holpen shall fall down; the Jews, helped by the Egyptians, who should fall, and be destroyed, though not now; yet hereafter by the Chaldeans, as they were:

and they all shall fail together; both the Egyptians and the Jews.

{q} So Ben Melech interprets "spirit" of an angel, as he does the word "God" in the preceding clause.

Isaiah 31:4

Ver. 4. For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me,.... The prophet Isaiah, who had heard and received what follows from the Lord, and therefore it might be depended upon; and they are words of grace and mercy, promising preservation and deliverance; and therefore it was a foolish thing to send to Egypt for help:

Like as the lion, and the young lion roaring on his prey; or "muttering", or "growling over his prey" {r}; for the lion roars when he is hungry, and wants a prey, and not when he has got one; but when he has one, and is tearing it in pieces, and feeding upon it, he makes a lower noise, a growling one, especially when he apprehends anyone near to disturb him:

when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him; or, "a fulness of shepherds" {s}; the whole posse of them, all that are in the towns and villages, or fields adjacent: who, when a lion has got a lamb or sheep out of the flock, are alarmed and called together, to deliver it, if possible, out of his hands; one not daring to venture, or being not sufficient to disturb him, or drive him away: or, "when a multitude of shepherds meet him" {t}; with the prey in his jaws; or rather "call to him", make a noise, in hopes to frighten him, and cause him to drop his prey, that being all they can do, not daring to go near him; which sense is confirmed by what follows:

[he] will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them; he will not leave and lose his prey, or flee from it or them, for the yell and confused noise they make; nor move at all the faster for them, not being in the least intimidated by them:

so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for Mount Zion, and for the hill thereof; that is, he shall come down from heaven by his angel, or in the display of his mighty power, and fight against the Assyrian army, in favour of his people, the inhabitants of Zion or Jerusalem, and deliver them; and there will be no more withstanding him, or putting him off from his purpose, or preventing his good designs and resolutions, than the shepherds are able to divert a lion from his prey. The simile is expressive of the power of God, and of his certain accomplishment of his purposes and promises.

{r} wprj le hghy "ab" hgh, "mussitare." {s} Myewr alm "plenitudo pastorum", Montanus, De Dieu, Cocceius. A collection of them, as Ben Melech. {t} wyle arqy rva "quando in occursum illius venit", Munster.

Isaiah 31:5

Ver. 5. As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem,.... As the preceding metaphor expresses the mighty power of God, this his tenderness and affection, as well as his speed and swiftness in the deliverance of his people. As birds in the air, at a distance, especially the eagle, have their eye upon their nests, and their young ones in them, and when in danger fly to their assistance, and hover over them, and about them, to keep off those that would hurt them, or carry them away; so the Lord, on high, sees his people when in distress, and hastens to help them, and does surround, protect, and defend them: thus the Lord did, when Sennacherib with his army besieged Jerusalem; who boasted, with respect to other nations, that he had "found as a nest the riches of the people", and that "there was none that moved the wing against him", Isa 10:14 to which it is thought the allusion is here:

defending also he will deliver [it]; from present distress, the siege of the Assyrian army:

[and] passing over he will preserve [it]; passing over the city of Jerusalem to the army of the king of Assyria, that lay encamped against it; and smiting that by an angel with a sudden destruction, preserved the city from the ruin it was threatened with. The allusion is rightly thought to be to the Lord's passing over the houses of the Israelites, when he destroyed the firstborn in Egypt, Ex 12:23 where the same word is used as here, and nowhere else.

Isaiah 31:6

Ver. 6. Turn ye unto [him],.... From the Egyptians, to whom they sought for help, unto the Lord, they had neglected; from evil ways and practices, idolatry and impiety, by repentance and reformation; to the true worship of God, to his word and ordinances, statutes and commands. The Targum is,

"turn to the law;"

which they had rejected and broken. These are the words of the prophet, a call of his to the people to repentance, to which they might be induced by the gracious declaration of the Lord unto them, in the preceding verses, promising them preservation and safety:

[from] whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted: or, "made deep a revolt" {u}; had gone very far back from God, and deep into sin and ruin, that their recovery was difficult; and yet their return was absolutely necessary, which ought to be done both speedily and heartily. Some think reference is had to the deep schemes they had laid, those political ones, at least, which they thought were such, in applying to Egypt for help, when they, as it is said, Isa 29:15 sought "deep to hide their counsel front the Lord"; in doing which they deeply departed from him, and are here called to return to him. This is said not

of the ten tribes, that were gone into captivity, but of the Jews, who were the posterity of Israel also; which is mentioned, to put them in mind of their descent, as an aggravation of their sin, and as an argument for their return.

{u} hro wqymeh Heb. "profundam fecerunt recessionem", Piscator; "profundaverunt defevtionem", Montanus

Isaiah 31:7

Ver. 7. For in that day,.... When deliverance shall be wrought; when men shall be convinced of the vanity and insufficiency of their idols to help them, and of their sin in worshipping them; when they shall be brought to repentance for it, and turn to the Lord as an evidence of it:

every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold; with contempt and abhorrence of them, as the word {w} signifies; every man "his" own idol, and even those that were of the greatest value, which were made of gold and silver:

which your own hands have made unto you [for] a sin; their idols were the work of their own hands, and were made by them in order to commit sin with, the sin of idolatry; or sin may be put for the punishment of sin, which is the issue and consequence of such practices: or it may be rendered, "which your hands of sin", or "sinful hands, have made" {x}; it was a sin to make such idols, especially with a view to worship them; it was a sin to worship them; and the fruit of it was deserved punishment.

{w} Nwoamy a oam "spernere, reprobare." {x} ajx Mkydy "manus vestrae flagitiosae", Bootius Animadv. Sacr. l. 4. c. 2. sect. 12.

Isaiah 31:8

Ver. 8. Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man,.... That is, the Assyrian army under Sennacherib their king, which besieged Jerusalem in Hezekiah's time; which, as soon as the people were brought to a sense of their sin, and repentance for it, and cast away their idols as a proof of it, were utterly destroyed; but not in battle, not by the sword of Hezekiah, or any of his valiant generals:

and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him; neither the sword of a general, nor of a private soldier, nor indeed of any man, but of an angel; see 2Ki 19:35:

but he shall flee from the sword; from the drawn sword of the angel, who very probably appeared in such a form as in 1Ch 21:16 which Sennacherib king of Assyria seeing, as well as the slaughter made in his army by him, fled from it; in the Hebrew text it is added, "for himself" {y}; he fled for his life, for his own personal security; see
2Ki 19:36:

and his young men shall be discomfited; his choice ones, the flower of his army: or "melt away" {z}, through fear; or die by the stroke of the angel upon them: the sense of becoming "tributary" seems to have no foundation.

{y} wl "fugiet sibi", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; "fuga consulet sibi", Junius & Tremellius. {z} wyhy oml "in liquefactionem, erunt", Vatablus; "colliquescent", Piscator.

Isaiah 31:9

Ver. 9. And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear,.... This is said of the king of Assyria, departing in haste from the siege of Jerusalem, to some strong hold in his own country, particularly his strong city Nineveh, for fear of the angel, and destruction following him; nor could he think himself safe, until he had got there. Some render it (and the original will bear it), "and his rock shall pass over for fear" {a}; his mighty men, his men of valour, in whom he trusted, and put his confidence, who were his strength, on which he depended; these, as many as were left of them, fled away. So the Targum,

"his princes shall flee for fear;"

though these are expressed in the next clause:

and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign; any ensign or standard they saw, supposing it to be a detachment of the Jews in pursuit of them; or not daring afterwards to face any enemy with their banners displayed: or rather were terrified at the sight of the standard erected by the angel in the air, and at the slaughter of their companies under them in the camp:

saith the Lord, whose fire [is] in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem; who keeps house there, and therefore will defend it. Some, as Aben Ezra and others, think reference is had to the altar of the Lord, where the fire was kept continually burning, and sacrifices were offered up to him, and therefore being the place of his worship, he would take care of it; but rather it seems to denote the fire of God's wrath, to defend his people, and destroy his enemies, **Zec 2:5**. The Targum is,

"whose lustre is in Zion to them that do the law, and a burning furnace of fire to them that transgress his word."

The Jews, in their Talmud {b}, interpret the "fire" of hell, and the "furnace" of the gate of hell.

{a} rwbey rwgmm welow "et rupes ejus prae pavoro transibit", Forerius. So Cocceius and Ben Melech; with which the version of Junius and Tremellius agrees. {b} T. Bab. Erubim, fol. 19. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 32:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 32

This chapter contains a prophecy of the Messiah; for, however applicable it may be to Hezekiah, as a type of Christ, it only has its full accomplishment in him, and in his times; who is described as a righteous King, and as having just princes ruling under him, Isa 32:1 and as a very great blessing, protection, and comfort to his subjects, Isa 32:2 when follows a prediction of great light and knowledge that should be in his days, Isa 32:3 and of the vileness, hypocrisy, and covetousness of the Jews in his times, Isa 32:5 and of the destruction of their country, because of their sins, of which they seemed greatly insensible, and were unconcerned about it, and are therefore called upon to lament it, Isa 32:9 which should continue until there would be a very great effusion of the Spirit, as should make the world, comparable to a wilderness, fruitful in grace and good works; the consequence of which is great prosperity, peace, and safety, to the saints, Isa 32:15 and destruction to their enemies, particularly the city of Rome, Isa 32:19 and the chapter is concluded with the happiness of the Gospel ministration, and the success of it, Isa 32:20.

Ver. 1. Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness,.... Not Hezekiah, as the

Jewish writers; at least only as a type, as some writers interpret it; rather Christ himself, who is "King" not only of the whole world, and of the kings of it in general, but in particular is King of saints; and who "reigns" now in and over his church and people, being set as King by his Father over his holy hill of Zion, and, being exalted at his right hand, is made and declared Lord and Christ; and where he does and will reign until all enemies are put under his feet, and ere long will reign gloriously before his ancients in Jerusalem, Isa 24:23 and his reign is "in righteousness"; in a righteous manner, according to the rules of justice and equity: all his laws are just; his ways and methods of administration are right; his sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness: righteousness is the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins:

and princes shall rule in judgment: the ministers of the Gospel, pastors of churches, who are set over them in the Lord, and have the rule over them; and who rule well, and in judgment, when they rule according to the word of God; when they preach the Gospel, and administer ordinances, and do all the business of Christ's house, according to the instructions, laws, and rules he has given.

Isaiah 32:2

Ver. 2. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest,.... Or, "that man"; the King Messiah before mentioned; who had agreed to become man, was promised and prophesied of as such, had often appeared in a human form, was to be incarnate, and now is; though he is not a mere man; were he, he could not be what is here said of him, "as a hiding place, and covert from the wind and tempest", of his Father's wrath, raised by sin; and which all men are deserving of, and on whom it must fall, unless secured from it by Christ; who has bore it in the room and stead of his people, has turned it away, and delivered them from it, and all the effects of it, so that nothing of it comes upon them; he has endured the whole force of the storm himself; and his righteousness, blood, sacrifice, and intercession, screen his people from it: he also hides and covers them from Satan's temptations, the blast of the terrible ones, which is as a storm against the wall, so as they shall not be destroyed by them; by praying for them, succouring of them, supplying them with his grace, and delivering from them in his own time: likewise he protects them from the rage and fury of their persecuting enemies, when they come like a "whirlwind" to "scatter" them; they have rest in him, when troubled by men; and security by him, when these winds and waves beat upon them; and when they are tossed with the tempests of afflictions of various kinds, he bears them up under them, and carries them through them, and delivers out of them, and brings them at last safe to glory:

as rivers of water in a dry place; which are very delightful, refreshing, and fructifying. This denotes the abundance of grace in Christ, and the freeness of it, which flows from the boundless ocean of divine love, and which greatly comforts and refreshes the souls of the Lord's people in this dry and barren land, and makes them cheerful and fruitful, revives their spirits, makes glad their hearts, and causes them to go on their way rejoicing:

as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land: to travellers in it, who passing through a desert in hot countries and sultry climates, are glad when they find a rock which casts a shade, under which their can sit a while, sheltered from the scorching sun. Such a weary land is this world to the saints, who are wearied with sins, their own and others, with Satan's temptations, with afflictions and troubles of various sorts; Christ is the "Rock" that is higher than they, to whom they are directed and led when their hearts are overwhelmed within them; on whom not only their souls are built, and their feet are set, and he is a shelter to them; but he casts a shadow, which is very reviving and refreshing, and that is the shadow of his word and ordinances, under which they sit with delight and pleasure, and which makes their travelling through this wilderness comfortable.

Isaiah 32:3

Ver. 3. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim,.... Not of the seers and prophets, or ministers of the word only, but of the righteous in general, as the Targum; even all such as are illuminated by the Spirit of God, who shall have a clear discerning of Gospel truths, behold with open face, with eyes unveiled, the glory of them, and of Christ in them, and not have their eyes covered, or such a dim obscure knowledge of them as under the law; and not only the watchmen shall see, eye to eye, all truths clearly and distinctly, but even all, from the least to the greatest, shall know the Lord, and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of him, as the waters cover the sea. It is a prophecy of the great increase of spiritual light in the times of the Messiah:

and the ears of them that hear shall hearken: very diligently and attentively to the word preached, and receive and embrace the doctrines of the Gospel, and submit to, and obey, the ordinances of it.

Isaiah 32:4

Ver. 4. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge,.... Such who have been hasty and precipitant, as the word {c} signifies; who have not given themselves time to consider what they have read or heard, or has been proposed unto them, and have hastily received every thing that has been suggested to them, especially by carnal sense and reason, shall now sit down, and coolly consider things, and so gain an understanding of divine and spiritual knowledge, of the knowledge of Christ, of his person, offices, grace, righteousness, and salvation; an experimental knowledge and understanding of these things, heart and not head knowledge:

and the tongue of the stammerer shall be ready to speak plainly; or, "shall make haste to speak neatly" {d}; elegantly and politely; such who hesitated in their speech, and spoke in a blundering manner, and scarcely intelligibly, especially when they spoke of divine and spiritual things, yet now, without the least hesitation, in the freest and most ready manner, with all plainness and propriety shall talk of these things, to the great delight, satisfaction, and use of those that hear them: this was true of the apostles of Christ, those babes and sucklings, out of whose mouth God ordained praise, and who were most of them Galilaeans, very illiterate and unpolished, and yet these, especially when they had the gift of tongues, spake the great things of God very readily, and in good language; and also is true of other ministers of the word, raised up among the barbarous nations of the world.

{c} Myrhmn "inconsideratorum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "praecipatorum", Montanus. {d} twxu rbdl rhmt "festinabit loqui nitida", Pagninus; "polite", Munster; "diserte", Calvin; "loqui venusta", Cocceius.

Isaiah 32:5

Ver. 5. The vile person shall be no more called liberal,.... Or "Nabal" (a fool) "shall no more be called Nadib" {e} (a prince); or have this name put upon him, or be advanced to honour and dignity, or be flattered with such a title, so unbecoming him. The sense seems to be, that, in Gospel times, such who are fools as to the knowledge of spiritual things, that have no spiritual and experimental knowledge of the truths of the Gospel, but are quite ignorant of them, shall not be made princes, or spiritual rulers, and governors in the house of God;

nor the churl said [to be] bountiful; or called a lord, as Jarchi interprets the word; which, he says, is used of such an one, because all men look to him, and respect him {f}; but now a covetous and tenacious man, that withholds more than is meet, that keeps, all he has to himself, without communicating to others, and scarcely allows himself the necessaries of life, being so sordidly avaricious, such an one shall not be a pastor, or ruler, in the church of God; such were the Scribes and Pharisees among the Jews in Christ's time, and therefore rejected, Mt 23:14 folly and covetousness are both bad things in a minister of the word, and greatly disqualify a man for that work and office: or else the sense of the whole is, that there should be such a discerning of men in Gospel times, and such faithfulness used towards them, that a wicked man should not be taken for a good man, nor in a flattering way be called one; but the precious and the vile should be distinguished, and called by their right names. The Targum is,

"the wicked man shall be no more called just, and they that transgress his word shall not be called mighty."

{e} bydn lbnl dwe arqy al "Nabal non vocabitur Nadib", Gataker. {f} Kimchi makes it to be the same with Nrtw, a "prodigal person"; and so Ben Melech; but Elias, in his Tishbi, p. 93, 95. says there is a difference between them; Nrtw, he says, is one that squanders his money in eating and drinking, and the like, which is a bad custom; but ewv is an honourable person, who gives his money to good purposes, and more than is meet, which is a good custom; and he is more praiseworthy than the liberal man.

Isaiah 32:6

Ver. 6. For the vile person will speak villainy,.... Or, "a fool will utter folly" {g}; a man that has no understanding of Gospel truths himself can not deliver them to others; he will only speak foolish things, concerning the purity of human nature, the power of man's free will, the sufficiency of his own righteousness to justify him, and the merits of good works, and the like; and therefore such a man is a very improper one to be a guide and governor in the church of God:

and his heart will work iniquity; forge and devise it within himself; will form schemes of false doctrine, discipline, and worship, disagreeable to the word of God:

to practise hypocrisy; to make men believe he is a very devout and religious man, when he has no good thing in him, and to put others upon a profession of religion that have none; which things are commonly done by foolish and ignorant preachers:

and to utter error against the Lord; such doctrines as are contrary to the free, rich, sovereign grace of God; to the deity, personality, sonship, offices, blood, sacrifice, and righteousness of Christ, and so to the person and operations of the blessed Spirit:

to make empty the soul of the hungry; and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail; the "hungry" and "thirsty" are such as hunger and thirst after, and earnestly desire, the sincere milk of the word for their spiritual nourishment and growth; whose "souls" become "empty", and their "drink" fails, when the doctrines of grace are not dispensed unto them, but false and unedifying doctrines are delivered, so that their souls sink and faint, and are ready to die away, for want of the bread of the Gospel; agreeably to this sense, the Targum paraphrases the words thus,

"to make the soul of the righteous weary, who desire doctrine, as a hungry man bread; and the words of the law, which are as water to him that is thirsty, they think to cause to cease."

{g} rbdy hlbn lbn yk "nam stultus stultitiam loquetur", Pagninus, Montanus.

Isaiah 32:7

Ver. 7. The instruments also of the churl [are] evil,.... Not his [vessels] or measures he sells by, which are small and deficient, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; nor his servants, his tools in doing his wickedness, which are fit for his purpose, wicked men; but rather these are much the same with "the instruments of the foolish shepherd", Zec 11:15 and may signify the evil ways and methods which covetous pastors or shepherds take to fleece the flock, and to increase their own gain:

he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right; he consults, contrives, and forms schemes with all craft and cunning, on purpose, to corrupt, as the word {h} signifies, the poor and meek, humble and afflicted souls, with false doctrines; even when these poor and needy ones, who want to have sound and comfortable doctrine delivered to them, speak and ask for that which is right and just, agreeably to the oracles of God, and the analogy of faith, but can not have it; wherefore such a man is unfit to be a ruler in the house of God.

{h} rqv yrmab Mywne lbxl "ad corrumpendum afflictos in eloquiis falsitaits", Montanus.

Isaiah 32:8

Ver. 8. But the liberal man deviseth liberal things,.... The man of a princely spirit consults and contrives, and delivers out things worthy of a prince and governor in the church of God; he that is one of a free spirit, that is made free by the Spirit of God, and is led into the doctrines of free grace, will study to deliver out the same to others, and, as he has freely received, he will freely give, and without any sinister, selfish, and mercenary ends and views:

and by liberal things shall he stand; or, "be established" {i}; both by the doctrines of free grace he dispenses to others, to be established by and with which is a good thing; and by the free communications of the gifts and grace of the Spirit to him, to supply and furnish him yet more and more for his work; by the discoveries of the free favour of God unto him; by the enjoyment of his gracious presence in private and in public; by the blessings of a free and well ordered covenant; and, at last, by being brought to eternal glory and happiness, in which he will be settled to all eternity; or, "on liberal things shall he stand"; grace here, and glory hereafter. The Targum is,

"the righteous consult truth, and they upon truth shall stand."

{i} Mwqy "stabilietur", Gataker.

Isaiah 32:9

Ver. 9. Rise up, ye women that are at ease,.... On beds of down, unconcerned about the present or future state of the nation; who had their share of guilt in the nation's sins, particularly pride, luxury, superstition, rejection of the

Messiah, and contempt of his Gospel, and so should have their part in its punishment. Some think that the men of the nation are so called, because of their effeminacy. The Jews interpret them of the other cities of Judea, besides Jerusalem; the Targum explains it by provinces:

hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear to my speech; the words of the prophet concerning the future desolation of their country; here it is thought the lesser towns and villages are intended by daughters, who dwelt in confidence and security, having no thought and notion of destruction coming upon them; so Ben Melech interprets the "women" of cities, and the "daughters" of villages.

Isaiah 32:10

Ver. 10. Many days and years shall ye be troubled,.... Or, "days above a year" {k}; a year, and somewhat more, yet not two years; which some understand of the time from this prophecy, until their troubles began, by the invasion of Sennacherib; and others of the continuance of it, it lasting more than a year; or, "days with a year"; so Kimchi, days upon a year, year upon year, one year after another; and so denotes a long duration of their troubles; and so the troubles of the Jews, before their utter destruction by the Romans, lasted a great while, and since to this day; for the prophecy respects those times. Kimchi says it may be interpreted of the destruction of the whole land of Israel, and of the destruction of the temple in the days of Zedekiah; or of the destruction of the second temple, that is, by the Romans:

for the vintage shall fail; being spoiled by the enemy, or taken for their own use; and so there would be no wine to cheer their hearts, and make them merry:

the gathering shall not come; of the other fruits of the earth; when the time of ingathering should come, at which there was a feast that bore that name, there should be none to be gathered in; the consequence of which must be a famine, and such there was before and at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

{k} hnv le Mymy "dies super annum", Vatablus; "dies ultra annum", Cocceius.

Isaiah 32:11

Ver. 11. Tremble, ye women that are at ease,.... Which may be considered either as an exhortation to repentance for their sins, of which, if a due sense was impressed on their hearts, would cause a trembling of body and mind, under a fearful expectation of divine wrath; or as a prediction, that though they were now quite tranquil and easy, and nothing disturbed them, yet such calamities would come upon them as would make them tremble:

be troubled, ye careless ones; or, "confident ones" {l}; that live securely, trusting in their present wealth and riches, and confident that things will always continue as they are; be it known to you that trouble will come, and better it would be for you if you were now troubled for your sins, and truly repented of them, that the judgments threatened, and coming, might be prevented:

strip ye, and make you bare; of your fine clothes, and beautiful ornaments, in which they prided themselves, which used to be done in time of mourning, **Eze 7:27** or it signifies that this should be their case, they would be stripped not only of their richest clothes and decorating jewels, but of their ordinary apparel, and left bare and naked by the enemy:

and gird [sackcloth] upon [your] loins; as a token of mourning; see Ge 37:34 the word "sackcloth" is supplied, as it is by Kimchi, and in the Syriac and Arabic versions; though some understand it as a direction to gird their loins for servile work, signifying what would be their condition and circumstances when taken and carried captive by the enemy; they would no longer live at ease, and in pleasure, as mistresses, but would serve as handmaids.

{l} twxjwb "confidentes", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 32:12

Ver. 12. They shall lament for the teats,.... Either of the beasts of the field, that should be dried up, and give no milk, through the great drought that should be upon the land; or through the waste of the herbage by the enemy; or else of the women, their breasts and paps, which should afford no milk for their infants, through the famine that should press them sore, which would occasion great lamentation, both in mothers and children; though some think are to be understood of the fields, and are explained by them in the next clause; the fruitful earth being compared to a woman, its fields are like breasts or paps, which yield food and nourishment, but now should not afford any, and therefore there would be cause of lamentation. Jarchi interprets it, "they shall beat upon their breasts" {m} a gesture used in lamentation to express exceeding great grief and sorrow, Lu 18:13 some, because the word rendered "lament" is of the masculine gender, and so not applicable to women, render the words in connection with the preceding verse Isa 32:11 thus,

"gird sackcloth on your loins, and on your mourning breasts" {n};

though they may be interpreted indefinitely, "there shall be lamentation for the teats", among all sorts of people, men, women, and children:

for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine; as the fields are when covered with corn and grass, and the vines with clusters of grapes, but now should not be, either through drought, or by being foraged and trampled on by the enemy.

{m} So it is explained in T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 27. 2. {n} So Castalio.

Isaiah 32:13

Ver. 13. Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns [and] briers,.... The curse of the earth, the spontaneous productions of it, being uncultivated, and this through want of men, they being destroyed or carried captive by the enemy; this is to be understood of the land of Judea, and not Samaria, as Aben Ezra; where the professing and covenant people of God dwelt; which is mentioned to show the apostasy of this people, for which ruin came upon their land, and the aggravation of it, as well as the goodness of God to them, which continued to the last, still considering them as his people. This respects not the desolation of the country by the Assyrian army, nor by the Chaldeans, but rather by the Romans, even their last destruction:

yea, upon all the houses of joy [in] the joyous city; not Samaria, the head of the ten tribes, as some; but Jerusalem, the joy of the whole earth, as Jarchi; and the "houses of joy" in it mean not public houses, as taverns, and the like, where persons meet to revel and carouse, but the houses of nobles, princes, and rich men, who lived voluptuously, in great sensuality and carnal mirth, drinking wine in bowls, and chanting to the sound of the viol, and using all instruments of music; but now their houses, in which they enjoyed so much pleasure, should be demolished, and briers and thorns should grow upon the spot where they stood. Some render the word yk, "burning", as in **Isa 3:24** "burning shall be on all the houses" {o}, &c.; and think it refers to the burning of the city of Jerusalem, and the palaces or houses of nobles and rich men in it, which was done both by the Chaldeans and by the Romans.

{o} Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius.

Isaiah 32:14

Ver. 14. Because the palaces shall be forsaken,.... The palaces of the princes and nobles shall be forsaken by them, they being obliged to flee from the enemy, or being taken, and either slain, or carried captive. The word in the Hebrew is in the singular number, "the palace", meaning the royal palace; and so Aben Ezra and Jarchi interpret it of the king's palace; though the Targum paraphrases it the house of the sanctuary, or the temple, so Kimchi; which was left desolate, as Christ foretold it should be, Mt 23:38:

the multitude of the city shall be left; to take care of themselves, and to the fury of their enemies, their princes and nobles being killed or fled; or, "the city shall be left of the multitude" {p}; the multitude of inhabitants that were in it shall forsake it, and flee, or be destroyed in it, so that few or none shall remain:

the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever; Ophel and Bachan, which some take to be the names of two towers of Jerusalem; of Ophel we read in 2Ch 27:3 but rather these intend in general the high towers and strong fortifications of Jerusalem, which being cut out of rocks, when demolished served for dens for thieves and robbers, and wild creatures; and this being "for ever", that is, for a very long time, shows that it cannot be applied to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, and the seventy years' captivity; but it is to be understood of the last destruction, which continues unto this day:

a joy of wild asses; which delight in wild and desert places; see
Job 39:5

a pasture of flocks; where flocks of sheep feed, instead of being inhabited by men. Jarchi's note is pretty remarkable,

"for the desire, or at the will, of the Ishmaelites, and for the feeding of the Grecians, and their army;"

and certain it is that Jerusalem now is in the hands of the Ishmaelites, or Turks. The Targum is,

"the place which was a house of joy and gladness for kings is now become a spoil for armies."

{p} So Gataker.

Isaiah 32:15

Ver. 15. Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high,.... That is, Jerusalem shall lie in ruins until this time comes; which therefore cannot be understood of the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, which, as it was before the destruction of the city by the Romans, so the desolation it was brought to by the Chaldeans did not last so long; but must be interpreted of a pouring forth of the Spirit in his gifts and graces yet to come, which will bring on the fulness of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Jews, and till that time comes Jerusalem will continue in a ruinous condition; the sense is the same with that of Lu 21:24 "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled". The Targum of the place is,

"until refreshing comes to us from the face of him, whose Shechinah, or Majesty, is in the highest heavens;"

with which may be compared **Ac 3:19**:

and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest; this will be the consequence, fruit, and effect of the effusion of the Spirit in the latter day; that such parts of the world as were like a wilderness, barren and unfruitful, producing nothing but the briers and thorns of impiety, infidelity, superstition, and idolatry, should now become like a fruitful field; the Gospel being now preached everywhere, multitudes of souls converted, churches raised and formed, and these filled with such as were laden with the fruits of righteousness; and such places where the Gospel had been preached and professed, and where churches had been planted, and there were some good degree of fruitfulness in word and works, now should be abundantly more fruitful, and the professors of religion more numerous, and look more like a forest, for number of trees, than a field. Kimchi says this whole paragraph shall be accomplished in the days of the Messiah.

Isaiah 32:16

Ver. 16. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness,.... In the desert part of the world, inhabited by Pagans, Papists, and Mahometans; where the Scriptures, the rule of judgment, and where the Gospel, sometimes called the judgment of the Lord, Isa 51:4 had no place, now they shall have one, and an abiding one; and men of judgment in spiritual and evangelical things, and such as do justice and judgment, shall dwell there:

and righteousness remain in the fruitful field; both the doctrine and practice of righteousness shall continue in the church of God, which will be the glory of it; the righteous men will be the settled constant inhabitants of it; these will be all righteous at this time,
Isa 60:21 not only by profession, but in truth and reality; at least the far greater part; so the Targum interprets it of those that do judgment and do righteousness.

Isaiah 32:17

Ver. 17. And the work of righteousness shall be peace,.... Not works of righteousness done by men, no, not by the best of men; for though peace may be had and enjoyed in doing them, yet it does not arise and flow from thence, because there is no justification by them, and salvation through them, without which there can be no true solid peace; nor the work of righteousness in men, which is their sanctification, and is indeed the work of God, and follows upon the pouring forth of his Spirit, and therefore bids fairer to be the sense than the former; yet peace is one part and branch of the work itself; see Ro 14:17 but the work of righteousness wrought out for man is rather meant, even the righteousness of Christ, a work proposed unto him, which he undertook, and has wrought out, and which was a work, and lay in working, and was a very toilsome and laborious one; the consequence of which is "peace", inward peace of soul now, and eternal peace hereafter; the righteousness of Christ applied removes the guilt of sin from the conscience, it being perfect justifies from all things, and yields a tranquillity and serenity of mind, which is had in a way of believing, in this righteousness now, and it will issue in everlasting peace and rest in the world to come; the end of the perfect and upright man, who is perfectly justified by Christ's righteousness, is peace, Ps 37:37:

and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever; or, {q} "the service of righteousness"; the same as before, with the "work of righteousness": a service which Christ performed, as a servant, in obedience to the law, in the room and stead of his people; a service perfectly and completely done, and what is well pleasing unto God; and which, when a sensible sinner sees its interest in, produces "quietness" of soul, under the mighty hand of God, amidst all the calamities in the world, and judgments upon men, under the load of calumny and reproach cast upon him, and notwithstanding all the charges and accusations of Satan: moreover, this also gives "assurance for ever", of interest in divine things, in the love of God, and relation to him as a Father, in Christ as a Saviour and Redeemer, and in the glorious inheritance which this gives a title to; or a holy confidence and boldness at the throne of grace now, having this righteousness to make mention of as a justifying one, and also hereafter, before the throne of judgment, this being what will answer for him in a time to come.

{q} hqduh tdbew "et cultus justitiae", V. L. Montanus; "labor, seu operatio", Piscator, Cocceius.

Isaiah 32:18

Ver. 18. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation,.... Jews and Gentiles, and all the saints, shall dwell in peace and love one with another, and shall be free from all the outrages and persecutions of the enemy; which, when these happy times of the pouring forth of the Spirit and of the spiritual reign of Christ come, will be no more:

and in sure dwellings; where they may dwell safely and confidently, secure from all enemies, in no fear of them, and free from all hurt and danger by them:

and in quiet resting places; where they may sleep and rest quietly, and none to disturb them, and make them afraid: and though all this may be understood of their private houses and habitations, yet may well enough be applied to the several Christian communities and churches to which they belong; where they shall enjoy much spiritual prosperity and safety, great peace and quietness, comfort and rest, under the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances.

Isaiah 32:19

Ver. 19. When it shall hail, coming down on the forest,.... The people of God will be peaceable and quiet, safe and secure, when the judgments of God, signified by a "hail" storm, shall come upon antichrist, and the antichristian states, intended by the "forest", both for their numbers, and for their barrenness and unfruitfulness; see Re 16:21 and as so it sometimes is, by the disposition of divine Providence, that a storm of hail falls not upon fields and gardens, and the fruits of the earth, but upon forests and desert lands; and as the plague of hail fell upon the Egyptians, and not upon the Israelites in Goshen, to which some think the allusion is here; so will it be when God comes to take vengeance on the enemies of his people:

and the city shall be low in a low place: meaning not the city of Jerusalem, surrounded with mountains, built under hills, and so under the wind, and not exposed to the fury of a storm; but rather Babylon, built in a plain, in a low plain, and yet should be brought lower still; mystical Babylon is here meant, the city of Rome, that should "in humiliation be humbled", as the words may be rendered, that is, brought very low, exceeding low; see Isa 26:5 and which, at the time of the great hail, will be divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations shall fall, and Babylon be had in remembrance by the Lord to destroy it, Re 16:19.

Isaiah 32:20

Ver. 20. Blessed [are] ye that sow beside all waters,.... In places well watered and moistened, and so fit to receive the seed sown, which grows up, and brings forth much fruit, and amply rewards the pains of the sower, who on that account is happy. These words are directed to the ministers of the Gospel in the latter day; the word is compared to seed, and the preachers of it to sowers of seed, who have a commission to preach the Gospel to every creature; and in the latter day, in the spiritual reign of Christ, to which the whole paragraph refers, they will sow the seed of the word "by many waters"; or among great multitudes of people, signified hereby, and with great success, great numbers both of Jews and Gentiles will be converted:

that send forth [thither] the feet of the ox and the ass; which were used in ploughing and tilling the earth, and in making it fit to sow the seed in it, and to eat off the heads of grain when it is grown thick and full, which some think is here meant; and the one might also be used to gather it in when ripe, and the other to tread and thresh it, as the Targum and Jarchi interpret it; there being a law given the Jews, that these two should not work together, De 22:10 and from hence it may be concluded, that these words refer to a time when this law should be abolished; and the Jews themselves apply it to the times of the Messiah {r}; and it undoubtedly points to Gospel times, and even to those times when the Jews shall be converted, and great numbers among the Gentiles also, who shall join together in spreading the Gospel, and in promoting the interest of Christ.

{r} Debarim Rabba, sect. 6. fol. 241. 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 33:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 33

This chapter contains an account of God's judgments upon the enemies of his people, and of the peaceable, comfortable, and happy state of the church in the latter day. The judgment denounced, Isa 33:1 a prayer of the church for safety and protection, which it promises itself from what God had heretofore done, Isa 33:2 an answer to it, declaring the spoil of the enemy, and the happy times the people of God should enjoy through his appearance for them, Isa 33:4 though previous thereunto there would be very distressing ones, Isa 33:7 when the Lord resolves to arise and exert his power in the destruction of the people, who should be burnt up like stubble, thorns, and lime, Isa 33:10 persons far and near are called upon to take notice of this, Isa 33:13 which would issue in a different manner, in the surprise and terror of hypocrites, and in the safety and plenty of provisions for good men, who are described, Isa 33:14 and then follow promises to them, of seeing the King in his beauty, and beholding a distant country of reflecting on past terror with pleasure, being freed from it, and in no danger of a foreign enemy, Isa 33:17 and the chapter is concluded with a famous prophecy of the peace, prosperity, and safety of the church, and of the healthfulness of its inhabitants, under the protection of Christ, its King and Lawgiver, its enemies being also an easy prey to it,
Isa 33:20.

Ver. 1. Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou [wast] not spoiled,.... Which some understand of Nebuchadnezzar; others of Sennacherib, which is more probable; it seems best to interpret it of the Romish antichrist. Kimchi thinks that, if it respects the times of Hezekiah, Sennacherib is meant; but if the times of the Messiah, then the king of nations that shall be in those days; and he adds, this is the kingdom of Persia, in the vision of Daniel. Vatringa applies this to Antiochus Epiphanes, and the whole prophecy to the times of the Maccabees; but it best agrees with the beast of Rome, to whom power has been given over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, the Apollyon, the spoiler and destroyer of the earth, especially of the saints, whom he has made war with and overcome; see **Re 9:11** now this spoiler of man, of their substance by confiscation, of their bodies by imprisonment and death, and of their societies and families by his violent persecutions, and of the souls of others by his false doctrine; though he may continue long in prosperity and glory, and not be spoiled, or destroyed, yet not always. The Vulgate Latin version renders the last clause interrogatively, and perhaps not amiss, "shall thou not be spoiled?" verily thou shalt; the same measure he has meted to others shall be measured to him again; the spoiler of others shall be stripped of all himself; he that destroyed the earth shall be destroyed from off the earth; he that leads into captivity shall go into it; and he that kills with the sword shall be slain by it,
Re 11:18:

and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee; or, "shall they not deal treacherously with thee?" so the above version renders it with an interrogation; and both this and the preceding clause are thus paraphrased by the Targum,

"woe to thee that comest to spoil, and shall they not spoil thee? and who comest to oppress, and shall they not oppress thee?"

truly they shall; the kings of the earth that were in confederacy with the beast, and gave their kingdoms to him, shall hate the whore, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, Re 17:16:

when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shall be spoiled; when the time is come that antichrist shall be suffered no longer to ravage in the earth, and spoil the bodies, souls, and substance of men, then shall he himself be spoiled of his power and authority, riches and grandeur; his plagues shall come upon him at once, fire, famine, and death; for his cessation from spoiling will not be his own option, nor the fruit and effect of repentance and reformation, but will be owing to the sovereign power of God in restraining him:

[and] when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee; for the coming of antichrist was with lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; he has the appearance of a lamb, but speaks like a dragon; has used many wiles, arts, and stratagems, and treacherous methods to deceive and impose on men, and to ensnare and entrap them; and when the time is come that he will not be permitted to proceed any further and longer in his deceitful practices, the kings of the earth, who have been deceived by him, and brought in subjection to him, will pay him in his own coin; see **2Th 2:9**.

Isaiah 33:2

Ver. 2. O Lord, be gracious unto us,.... This is a prayer of the church under the persecutions of antichrist, imploring the grace and favour of God in their miserable and distressed circumstances; desiring his gracious help, assistance, and deliverance; pleading not any merits of their own, but casting themselves upon the mercy and kindness of God:

we have waited for thee; time after time, year after year, in the use of means; hoping for the manifestations of thyself, and kind appearance for us; expecting help and salvation, and still continue to wait, believing the time will come when favour will be shown:

be thou their arm every morning; when they pray unto thee, the morning being the time of prayer; and also be their arm all the day long, to lean and depend upon, to support, protect, and defend them; there is a change of person from the first to the third, usual in prophetic and poetic writings: some take them to be the words of the Old Testament church, praying for the New Testament church; and others a prayer of the church for her children and members. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "our arm"; and the Syriac version, "our helper"; and the Targum,

"our strength:"

some read the words in connection with the following clause, thus, "be thou", who wast "their arm every morning", referring to their forefathers, whose strength and support the Lord was, our salvation also in the time of trouble {s}; the deliverer of us from the antichristian yoke of bondage, from all his persecutions and oppressions, from the last struggle of the beast, from that hour of trouble and temptation that shall come upon all the earth.

{s} So some in De Dieu.

Isaiah 33:3

Ver. 3. At the noise of the tumult the people fled,.... The Vulgate Latin Version renders it, "at the voice of the angel"; and Jerom reports it as the opinion of the Jews, that it was Gabriel; and many interpret the words either of the noise the angel made in the air, or was made in the Assyrian camp, when the angel descended, and smote such a vast number of them, at which the remnant, being frightened, fled, 2Ki 19:35 but either this is to be understood as expressing what had been done in time past, and therefore the church took encouragement that it might and would be so again; or as a continuance of her prayer, thus, "at the noise of the tumult", or multitude {t}, "let the people flee" {u}; or as a prediction, "they shall flee" {w}; that is, at the noise of the multitude of saints, the faithful, called, and chosen armies of heaven, that follow Christ on white horses, and clothed in white; when he shall go forth to battle with the kings of the earth, beast, and false prophet, let the people under them flee, or they shall flee, and not be able to stand before so puissant a General, and so powerful an army; see Re 17:14:

at the lifting up of thyself, the nations were scattered; so it has been in times past, when the Lord has lifted up himself, and appeared on behalf of his people, and has exerted himself, and displayed his power; and so it will be again; or so let it be: "let the nations be scattered"; the antichristian nations, as they will be, when the Lord shall lift up his hand, and pour out the vials of his wrath upon them.

{t} Nwmh lwqm "a voce multitudinis", Pagninus; "a voce turbae", Montanus, Cocceius. {u} Fugiant, so some in Gataker. {w} Profugient, Piscator.

Isaiah 33:4

Ver. 4. And your spoil shall be gathered [like] the gathering of the caterpillar,.... This is the answer of the Lord to the prayer of his church, signifying that their enemies should flee, be scattered, and perish, and that they should be victorious, and enjoy the spoils of them; which they should gather as easily as the caterpillar or locust, as some render it, gathers and consumes herbs, and every green thing; or as easily as they are gathered, and laid on heaps, being weak and unable to defend themselves: most understand it of the Jews going into the camp of the Assyrians, after the destruction of them by the angel, and gathering their spoil. The Targum is,

"and the house of Israel shall gather the substance of the people, their enemies, as they gather a locust:"

the antichristian locusts or caterpillars are here meant, whose substance shall fall into the hands of the followers of Christ, when they shall have got the victory of them; this is the flesh of the whore, her worldly substance, which the kings of the earth, the Christian kings, shall eat or enjoy, Re 17:16:

as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them: or "upon it"; the spoil; as these locusts, of which see **Re 9:3** run to and fro, and pillaged them in times past, as the creatures, to whom they are compared, run to and fro and destroy the fruits of the earth, so now everyone of the followers of Christ shall run and seize upon the spoil of the antichristian states.

Isaiah 33:5

Ver. 5. The Lord is exalted,.... These are the words of the church, or of true believers, setting the praise and glory of God, on account of the victory and spoil of their enemies; by which the Lord is exalted, magnified, and honoured, as he will be in the hearts and mouths of his people when these times shall come; see Re 11:15 this will be true of Christ, and indeed this will be the time when he, and he alone, shall be exalted, **Isa 2:17**:

for he dwelleth on high; in the highest heaven, and is above his greatest enemies, and can, and will, pour down his wrath and vengeance on them:

he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness; the church of God, where Christ her King will reign in righteousness, and when all the administrations of his kingly power and government will appear to be just and true; where his word shall be faithfully preached, and his ordinances duly administered; and when all his subjects and people shall be righteous, and live soberly and righteously. The Targum is,

"with those that do true judgment and righteousness."

Isaiah 33:6

Ver. 6. And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times,.... Some take these words to be directed to Hezekiah; but rather they are an apostrophe to the Messiah, and respect the later times of Christ, when many shall run to and fro, and the knowledge of him shall be increased, and the earth shall be covered with it, as the waters cover the sea; and which, as it will make these times comfortable and pleasant, so firm, durable, and lasting: or else they are the words of believers in those times, addressed to Zion the church, before spoken of, observing the great increase of spiritual wisdom and knowledge after the destruction of antichrist; by means of which there would be settled times of peace, joy, and comfort to the church:

[and] strength of salvation; or "salvations" {x}; or strong and lasting salvations; eternal salvation by Jesus Christ, and complete salvation from antichrist, and from every other enemy; which, together with spiritual wisdom, and experimental knowledge of Christ, and his Gospel, will be the stability of those happy times, which will make the spiritual reign of Christ. The whole may be rendered, according to the accents {y}, and "he" (that is, the Lord, before spoken of) "shall be the stability of thy times; the strength of salvations shall be wisdom and knowledge":

the fear of the Lord [is] his treasure; either Hezekiah's, as some, who esteemed the fear of the Lord above all his treasure; and was more zealous in settling and establishing the true worship of God than in amassing treasures to himself: or rather the Lord's treasure, from which he receives a tribute of honour, of more value than the greatest treasure: or, best of all, the church's treasure, and every true believer's; this being the beginning of wisdom, or true grace, the best of riches, and which secures the saints' final perseverance to glory, the better and more enduring substance.

{x} tewvy Nox "fortitudo salutum", Pagninus, Montanus; "rebur ominis, [vel] multiplicis salutis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {y} Vid. Reinbeck de Accent. Heb. p. 405.

Isaiah 33:7

Ver. 7. Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without,.... Or, "in the street": this, and the two following verses Isa 33:8, describe the sad and desolate condition of the people of God, before the above happy times take place; "their valiant ones", such who have been valiant for the truth on earth; or "their angels", as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech interpret the word; these are the angels and pastors of the churches, the two witnesses that prophesy in sackcloth openly and publicly, and who will be slain, and their bodies lie unburied in the street of the great city, Re 11:3:

the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly; most interpreters understand this of the ambassadors which Hezekiah sent to the king of Assyria to obtain peace, but could not succeed, on account of which they are said to weep bitterly; but the character of "ambassadors of peace" well agrees with the ministers of the Gospel, who are "ambassadors" in Christ's stead, and whose work it is to exhort men to "be reconciled to God", and to preach the Gospel of peace to sinful men; these now will "weep bitterly", when they are removed into corners, and are silenced, and not suffered to deliver their messages of peace, to the comfort of the Lord's people, and the glory of his name; which will be the case at the time of the slaying of the witnesses.

Isaiah 33:8

Ver. 8. The highways lie waste,.... No man walking in them, for fear of the enemy; "the ways of Zion", which are said to "mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts", **La 1:4** none daring to attend the ministry of the word and ordinances; see Isa 35:8:

the wayfaring man ceaseth; or, "the traveller rests" {z}; or stops; he does not proceed on his journey; a stop is put to a religious course and conversation; there is an entire cessation of religious worship; a sabbath is kept, but not a religious one; he that would walk in Zion's ways is forbid, and is obliged to sit still:

he hath broken the covenant; some, as Kimchi's father, interpret this of the Jews' complaining that God had broken his covenant with them, as in Ps 89:39 but most of Sennacherib's breaking his covenant with Hezekiah, 2Ki 18:14

rather this is to be understood of antichrist, whose doctrine is, that faith is not to be kept with heretics, and which will abundantly appear at this distressing time:

he hath despised the cities; as Sennacherib did the fenced cities of Judah; he despised their fortifications, and easily took them, and treated the inhabitants with disdain and contempt; and so will the reformed Protestant cities and countries be invaded, seized upon, and insulted, by the Romish antichrist:

he regardeth no man; so as to keep covenant with them, have compassion on them, and spare them, he fearing neither God nor man.

{z} xra rbe tbv "cessaverat viator", Junius & Tremellius; "desiit viator", Cocceius.

Isaiah 33:9

Ver. 9. The earth mourneth [and] languisheth,.... All Christendom, being now under the power, dominion, and tyranny of antichrist, and the church's faithful witnesses slain, and a stop put to all Gospel ministrations; and therefore the church must be in a very languishing condition, and great reason for mourning:

Lebanon is ashamed, [and] hewn down; being stripped of its stately cedars; as now the church of Christ, comparable to that goodly mountain Lebanon, will be deprived of its able ministers, which were like tall and spreading Cedars, for their gifts, grace, strength, and usefulness:

Sharon is like a wilderness; such parts, as Great Britain, which have been most fruitful (as Sharon was a very fruitful place) for the Gospel, and Gospel ordinances, in the purity of them, and for professors of religion, being fruitful in grace, and in good works, shall now be like a desert; there being no ministry, no ordinances, nor any, that dare to make an open profession of the true religion:

and Bashan and Carmel shake off [their fruits]; before they are ripe, or come to anything; places noted for being fruitful, and pastures for flocks; and denote, as before, such spots in Christendom where the Gospel has most flourished, but now should be like barren heaths, and desert places.

Isaiah 33:10

Ver. 10. Now will I rise, saith the Lord,.... At the last extremity, when things are come to a crisis; his interest at the lowest, and the kingdom of antichrist at its highest pitch; the whore of Rome triumphing over the slain witnesses, and boasting she was a queen, and knew no sorrow: this will be God's fit time to exert himself, and get him honour and glory: he before was as one lain down and asleep, as if quite negligent and careless about his honour and interest; but now he determines to arise, and show himself strong on the behalf of it; see Ps 12:5:

now will I be exalted; that is, in his power, by the destruction of the enemies of his church; and in the hearts and mouths of his people, on account of their deliverance and salvation:

now will I lift up myself; show himself above his enemies, higher and greater than they, and reduce them to a low estate and condition. The repetition of the word "now" has its emphasis; and is designed to observe the time of God's appearing in the cause of his people, and the fitness and propriety of it; and to quicken their attention to it, as well as to express the certainty of it, and the firmness of his resolution to do it without delay, and the vehemence and ardour with which he would set about it.

Isaiah 33:11

Ver. 11. Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble,.... Signifying that all the counsels, designs, and schemes, of the antichristian party, to continue themselves in their present state, and save themselves from ruin, as well as utterly to destroy the interest of Christ, would be weak, vain, and fruitless; their conceptions and actions, their purposes and attempts, would be alike; would be abortive, like chaff and stubble, and only serve as such for their own destruction:

your breath [as] fire shall devour you; or, "your spirit" {a}; your pride and haughtiness, in self praises, commendations, and glorying; your rage, wrath, and fury, against the saints; your blasphemy against God and Christ shall be the reason why the fire of God's wrath shall consume you. The Targum is,

"you have thought for yourselves, O ye people, thoughts of wickedness; ye have done for yourselves evil works; because of your evil works, my Word shall destroy you, as a whirlwind the stubble;"

Christ, the essential Word of God.

{a} Mkxwr "spiritus vester", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Isaiah 33:12

Ver. 12. And the people shall be [as] the burnings of lime,.... Like chalk stones that are burnt to make lime of; which may denote not only their hardness and impenitency, which brought upon them and issued in the wrath of God; but the miserable condition into which they are brought, and the torture they should be put to: perhaps this may refer to the casting of the beast and false prophet alive into the lake burning with fire and brimstone, Re 19:20:

[as] thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire; "thorns" are a fit simile to express the unfruitfulness, uselessness, and harmfulness of wicked men, particularly the sons of Belial, the followers of antichrist; and these "cut up", and so not green and moist, but dry, and fit fuel for the fire, which burn the more easily and quickly, makes the metaphor more agreeable. The burning of Rome seems here to be pointed at,
Re 17:16.

Isaiah 33:13

Ver. 13. Hear, ye [that are] far off, what I have done,.... Not meaning the destruction of the Assyrian, as it is commonly interpreted; but the ruin of antichrist, the beast, and false prophet, and the burning of the city and whore of Rome; for, whoever will be the instruments, the work is the Lord's, and therefore it will be done: "she shall be utterly burnt with fire, for strong is the Lord who judgeth her", Re 18:8 and this shall be heard of far and near, who shall applaud the mighty work, and give God the glory of it,
Re 19:1:

and, ye [that are] near, acknowledge my might; even his omnipotence, which will be seen, observed, and owned by multitudes, who will say, "Allelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth", Re 19:6 there will be some that will be nigh, that shall stand afar off, lamenting her case, and will not own the hand of God in it, Re 18:9 but others will.

Isaiah 33:14

Ver. 14. The sinners in Zion are afraid, and fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites,.... Meaning not persons of such a character that dwelt in Jerusalem, who had the guise and form of religion, and not the power of it, and were for fleeing to Egypt, and trusting in Pharaoh, and not in the Lord; who were seized with dread and terror, when the Assyrian army besieged them, or when it was so awfully destroyed by the angel in the night; when, observing the visible and immediate hand of God in it, they might fear the like judgment would fall upon them for their irreligion and hypocrisy; but rather formal professors, and hypocritical persons, in the reformed churches, or Protestants having only a form of godliness, without the power of it, are meant; who, observing God's judgments upon antichrist, shall be seized with a panic, lest the like should come down upon them for their hypocrisy and deceit; unless it should be rather thought that antichrist, and his followers themselves, are designed, who himself is said to sit in the temple of God, and who claim to themselves the name of the church of God, and pretend to be Christians, though they are not; when they shall see the city of Rome in flames, and the vials of God's wrath poured on the antichristian states, shall dread the vengeance of eternal fire, which they express in the following words:

Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? that is, the wrath of God in hell, which is the fire that feeds upon and devours Christless sinners; which shall never be quenched, and is called everlasting fire, in which the followers of antichrist will be tormented for ever; and the smoke of which will ascend for ever and ever, and will be intolerable; none will be able to abide and endure it; see Re 14:9. So the Targum interprets it of the place where the ungodly are to be judged and delivered into hell, an everlasting burning.

Isaiah 33:15

Ver. 15. He that walketh righteously,.... These are the words of the prophet, in answer to those of the hypocrites. So the Targum, "the prophet said, the righteous shall dwell in it;"

not in the devouring fire and everlasting burnings, but in Zion, in Jerusalem, on high, in the munition of rocks, safe from those burnings; for these words are to be connected not with the preceding, but with the following verse Isa 33:16, "thus, he that walketh righteously", &c. "he shall dwell on high", &c.; and such an one is he that walks by faith on Christ as his righteousness; that walks after the Spirit, and not after the flesh; that walks uprightly, according to the rule of the Gospel, and as becomes it; that walks in the ways of judgment and righteousness, in which Christ leads his people, and lives soberly, righteously, and godly:

and speaketh uprightly; or "uprightnesses" {b}; upright things, what is in his heart, what is agreeable to the word of God, the standard of truth; who makes mention continually of the righteousness of Christ, and that only as his justifying one: and whose tongue talks of judgment, just and righteous things, and not what is corrupt, profane, impure, and impious:

he that despiseth the gain of oppressions; that which is got by oppression and rapine; the mammon of iniquity, as the Targum calls it; but reckons the gain of wisdom, and of godliness, exceeding preferable to it:

that shaketh his hand from holding of bribes; that will not receive any, but when they are put into his hands shakes them out, and will not retain them; expressing his abhorrence of such practices, and declaring that he is not to be influenced by such methods from speaking truth, and doing justice:

that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood; or "bloods" {c}; from hearing those that shed innocent blood, as the Targum; who will not hearken to any solicitations to shed blood; will not converse with men about it, or enter into schemes in order to it, much less join them in shedding it:

and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; done by others; he abhors it in himself, and dislikes it in others; turns his eyes from beholding it, so far from taking pleasure in it, and in those that do it: all this is opposed to the hypocrisy, impiety, profaneness, rapine, bribery, murders, and wickedness of the church of Rome; see **Re 9:21**.

{b} Myrvym rbd "qui loquitur recta", Piscator; "loquens recta", Cocceius; "loquens aequitates", Montanus. {c} Mymd emvm "ab audiendo sanquines", Montanus; "ne audiat sanquines", Cocceius.

Isaiah 33:16

Ver. 16. He shall dwell on high,.... And so in safety: this is opposed to the fears of hypocrites, the grovelling life of a worldling, and the low life of many professors, and is expressive of the security of good men. It may respect the state of the saints on earth, who dwell by faith on God, as their covenant God, on his everlasting love and unchangeable grace; on Christ, as their Redeemer and Saviour; and in their thoughts and contemplations on heavenly things, where Christ is; and particularly in the spiritual reign of Christ, after the destruction of antichrist, when such shall dwell quietly and safely in God's holy hill, the church, which shall be established upon the top of the mountains: and it may also respect the state of the saints in heaven, which is a dwelling on high, and where they will be safe from everlasting burnings, and out of the reach of all enemies:

his place of defence [shall be] the munitions of rocks; Christ is "the place of defence" to his people, against avenging justice, the curse and condemnation of the law, the wrath of God, sin and all its dreadful consequences, Satan and all enemies: and he is "the munitions of rocks"; he is "a Rock" himself, for them to build upon, and shelter in; and like "fortresses" made out of "rocks", which can never be undermined, blown up, or broke through:

bread shall be given him: not only shall he be in safety, but shall enjoy the greatest plenty of blessings, particularly spiritual ones; above all, Christ, the bread of God from heaven, the true bread, the bread of life, which gives and supports life, and secures an eternal one; as also the word and ordinances, which are the provisions of Zion, and which all its inhabitants are favoured with; for these are all the "gifts" of divine goodness. The Targum is,

"in the house of the sanctuary his soul shall be satisfied, his food shall be sufficient:"

his waters [shall be] sure; Christ and his fulness, the Spirit and his grace, the Gospel doctrines, and ordinances of it; the believer may be assured of a supply from Christ's fulness; the grace of the Spirit is never failing, and is persevering; and Gospel doctrines and ordinances are not deceitful brooks, but yield comfort and refreshment: compare with this, **Re 7:15**.

Isaiah 33:17

Ver. 17. Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty,.... Not merely Hezekiah in his royal robes, and with a cheerful countenance, having put off his sackcloth and his sadness, upon the breaking up of the siege; but a greater than he, even the King Messiah, in the glory of his person and office, especially as a King reigning gloriously before his ancients in Jerusalem: the apostles saw him in his glory, in the days of his flesh, corporeally and spiritually; believers now see him by faith, crowded with glory and honour, as well as see his beauty, fulness, and suitableness, as a Saviour; and, before long, their eyes shall see him personally in his own and his Father's glory. This is to be understood of the eyes of good men, before described. The Targum is,

"thine eyes shall see the glory of the Majesty of the King of worlds in his praise;"

and Jarchi interprets it of the glory of the Majesty of God; so, according to both, a divine Person is meant, and indeed no other than Christ:

they shall behold the land that is very far off; not the land of hell, as the Targum, which paraphrases it thus;

"thou shalt behold and see those that go down into the land of hell;"

but rather the heavenly country, the better one, the land of uprightness, typified by the land of Canaan; and may be said to be "a land afar off", with respect to the earth on which the saints now are, and with regard to the present sight of it, which is a distant one, and will be always afar off to wicked men; this now the saints have at times a view of by faith, which is very delightful, and greatly supports them under their present trials: though it may be that an enlargement of Christ's kingdom all over the world, to the distant parts of it, may be here meant; which may be called, as the words may be rendered, "a land of distances", or "of far distances" {d}; that reaches far and near, from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; which will be the case when the kingdoms of this world shall become Christ's, and the kingdom, and the greatness of it under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the most High; a glorious sight this will be. And this sense agrees with the context, and declares what will be after the destruction of antichrist.

{d} Myqxrm Ura "terram distantiarum", Vatablus, Montanus, Gataker.

Isaiah 33:18

Ver. 18. Thine heart shall meditate terror,.... shall recollect, and think of with pleasure and thankfulness, the terror they were formerly seized with, when surrounded and oppressed by their enemies, particularly at the time of the slaying of the witnesses, which will be a terrible time to the church and people of God; but when that is over, they will call it to mind with gratitude, for deliverance from it {e}. This is commonly understood of the terror and consternation the Jews were in when besieged by the Assyrian army; and so the following words,

Where [is] the scribe? where [is] the receiver? where [is] he that counted the towers? are taken to be either the words of the Jews in their distress, calling for such and such officers to go to their respective posts, and do their duty; as the "scribe", or muster master, to see that he has his full quota of men; the "receiver" or treasurer, and paymaster of the soldiers, to give the men money and wages, that they may be encouraged to fight; and "the counter of towers", or engineer, to take care of the fortifications, and give directions about them: or else, as now insulting the Assyrians after the defeat of them, inquiring where were now such and such officers in their army, whom before they dreaded, signifying they were all perished and gone. The apostle cites these words, or at least alludes to them, **1Co 1:20** when he says, "where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?" triumphing over the wise doctors of the Jews, and the philosophers of the Gentiles, as not being able to face and withstand the power and wisdom of the Gospel; See Gill on "1Co 1:20". So here, when the people of God will be recovered from their fright, and be brought out of their low estate, and will have ascended into heaven, or be come into a glorious church state, they will then triumph over their enemies, who will be no more, and say, where are the pope and his clergy? his cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, monks, friars, &c.; what are become of them? they are all gone, and will be no more. The Targum is,

"thine heart shall think of great things; where are the scribes? where are the princes? where are the counters? let them come, if they can count the numbers of the slain, the heads of mighty armies;"

which may well enough be illustrated by Re 11:13.

{e} So Ben Melech interprets it,

"thine heart, which was meditating terror before this."

Isaiah 33:19

Ver. 19. Thou shalt not see a fierce people,.... A people of a fierce countenance, as in **Da 8:23** fierce in their looks, furious in their temper, cruel and bloodthirsty in their practices, confirmed and hardened in their sins, whose consciences are seared as with a red hot iron; a character given of the Papists, **1Ti 4:2** these shall be no more seen nor feared:

a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; than the people in common could, having their worship and devotion not in their mother tongue, but in the Latin tongue:

of a stammering tongue, [that thou canst] not understand: meaning the same as before, a barbarous language, as everyone is to those who understand it not; so the Syriac and Assyrian languages were to the Jews, 2Ki 18:26 and so the Roman language to other nations; but now no more to be used in religious worship; nor shall the church of God be any more visited by Turks or Papists, and be in any dread of them more.

Isaiah 33:20

Ver. 20. Look upon Zion,.... Instead of such terrible objects as before described, a very amiable and lovely one is presented to view; even Zion, the church of God, beloved by him, chosen for his habitation, a strong city, a perfection of beauty, and the joy of the whole earth. The Targum is,

"O Zion, thou shalt see their fall;"

the fall of her enemies before mentioned; as at this time the church will see the fall both of the eastern and western antichrist. But the words are an exhortation to the saints and people of God, to behold the safety, peace, and prosperity of the church, now freed from all its enemies:

the city of our solemnities; a "city", for its situation, foundation, walls, and building; for its number and sorts of inhabitants; for its wholesome laws and choice privileges: a city of "solemnities", where the saints solemnly assemble together for religious worship; where the word of God is, solemnly preached, and where the ordinances are solemnly administered, and the sacrifices of prayer and praise are solemnly offered up:

thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation; or the church of God in Gospel times, and particularly in the latter day: see
Heb 12:22 and by which name the church is called in its more glorious state, Re 21:2 which is the "habitation" of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and of saints, where they dwell, or however will in the latter day, safely, quietly, pleasantly, and comfortably; for then will it be, and be "seen" and enjoyed, as a "quiet" one; for now will the saints live in peace one with another; there will be no more envy, vexations, animosities, and divisions; this will be the Philadelphian church state, when brotherly love shall everywhere prevail, and when they shall also be entirely free from the persecutions of enemies; none shall hurt and destroy in all the holy mountain, Isa 11:9. Some render it a "sheepfold" {f}; Christ is the shepherd, the saints are his sheep, the church is the fold where they are gathered, fed, and preserved, and lie in safety, and peace: and

a tabernacle [that] shall not be taken down; as the tabernacle of Moses was; or the tents of shepherds, soldiers, and sojourners are, to which the allusion may be; and so is expressive of the continuance of the church, which shall not now be removed from place to place, as it has been, but shall be fixed and settled all over the world, and so remain to the end of time, an immovable tabernacle; and especially so it will be when the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, Re 21:3:

not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken; alluding to tents and tabernacles made of curtains, fastened by cords to stakes, by which they are supported. Not only ministers of the Gospel, but every true believer, is as a "stake" or pillar in the church of God, which shall never be removed, **Re 3:12** never removed from the heart and love of God; nor out of the hands of Christ, and an interest in him; nor out of the family of God, or from the privileges of it; nor from Christ's body, the church, which is his fulness. The "cords" with which these are all held together, which shall never be broken, are the everlasting love of God, electing grace, the covenant and its promises, the word and ordinances, which always remain firm and sure, and secure the stability and continuance of the church of God.

{f} xwn "caulam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 33:21

Ver. 21. But there the glorious Lord [will be] unto us a place of broad rivers [and] streams,.... Egypt had its Nile, and Babylon its Euphrates, but Jerusalem had no such river for its convenience, commerce, and defence; but God promises to be that to his Jerusalem, his church and people, as will answer to, and be "instead" {g} of, a river that has the broadest streams; which is expressive of the abundance of his grace, and the freeness of it, for the supply of his church, as well as of the pleasant situation and safety of it; see Ps 46:1 where the Lord appears "glorious"; where he displays the glorious perfections of his nature, his power, faithfulness, truth, holiness, love, grace, and mercy; where his glorious Gospel is preached; where he grants his gracious and glorious presence; and where saints come to see his glory, do see it, and speak of it; see **2Sa 6:20**:

wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ships pass thereby: this advantage literal Jerusalem had, that, though it had no river for its pleasure, profit, and protection, yet no enemy could come up to it in that way; and the Lord, though he is indeed instead of a broad river to his people for their supply and safety, yet such an one as will not admit any enemy, great or small, signified by the "galley with oars", and the "gallant ship", to come near them; and in the New Jerusalem church state, when there will be new heavens and a new earth, there will be no sea, Re 21:1 and so no place for ships and galleys. The design of these metaphors is to show that the church of Christ at this time will be safe from all enemies whatsoever, as they must needs be, when the Lord is not only a place of broad rivers, but a wall of fire round about them, and the glory in the midst of them, **Zec 2:5**.

{g} Myrxn Mwqm "loco fluviorum", Junius & Tremellius; Mwqm pro txt "non in talione, sed saltem ut significat loco ac vice, Deus ecclesiae est pro fluminibus", Gusset. Ebr. Comment, p. 740.

Isaiah 33:22

Ver. 22. For the Lord [is] our Judge,.... The Lord Christ, who has all judgment committed to him by the Father, who will judge his people, right their wrongs, and avenge their injuries:

the Lord [is] our Lawgiver; who has enacted wholesome laws for his church, writes them on their hearts, and puts his Spirit within them, to enable them to keep them:

the Lord [is] our King: King of saints, King of Zion, made so by his Father, owned by his church, under whose government it is in safety:

he will save us; from all sin, and from all enemies, with an everlasting salvation. The church here speaks with great pleasure of her interest in Christ under every character, and of her safety as depending upon him. The Targum is,

"the Lord is our Judge, who brought us by his power out of Egypt; the Lord is our teacher, who gave us the doctrine of the law from Sinai; the Lord is our King, he will redeem us, and take vengeance of judgment for us on the army of Gog;"

which shows that the ancient Jews understood this prophecy as referring to times yet to come.

Isaiah 33:23

Ver. 23. Thy tacklings are loosed,.... Or "are left" {h}; forsaken by the mariners, as being of no use and service:

they could not well strengthen their mast; with ropes to make it stand upright:

they could not spread the sail; upon the mast, without which they could not proceed. This is spoken to and of the enemies of the church; most interpreters understand it of the Assyrians, who are compared to a ship in great distress at sea, when its tacklings are shattered, the mast is split, and the sails cannot be spread. The metaphor is taken and carried on from Isa 33:21, where mention is made of a galley with oars, and a gallant ship. Tyrannical governments are thought by some to be compared to ships; a king to the mast; princes to ropes, cords, and tackling; and their army in battle array to sails spread; but here all is in confusion, distress, and unavoidable ruin: this may very well be applied to the antichristian states, when the vials of God's wrath shall be poured out upon them; especially when the second vial shall be poured out upon the sea, and all shipping will suffer, as under the second trumpet the third part of ships were destroyed, there being a correspondence between the trumpets and the seals, **Re 8:8**:

then is the prey of a great spoil divided: as the spoil of the Assyrian camp was by the Israelites, so will the spoil of the Papists by the Protestants; particularly when the kings of the earth shall be filled with an aversion to the whore of Rome, and shall destroy her, and make her bare and desolate of all her riches, and shall "eat her flesh", or seize upon her substance, which will become the prey of a great spoil unto them:

the lame take the prey; which denotes both how easily it shall be taken, and what a plenty there shall be, that even such, and who come late, shall have a share in it. The Targum of the whole is,

"at that time (when vengeance shall be taken on Gog) the people shall be broken with their own strength, and they shall be like to a ship whose ropes are broken; and there is no strength in their mast, which is cut down, that it is not possible to spread a sail on it; then shall the house of Israel divide the substance of the people, the multitude of a prey and spoil; and although the blind and the lame are left among them, they also shall divide the multitude of the prey and spoil."

{h} So the word is interpreted by Kimchi and Ben Melech.

Isaiah 33:24

Ver. 24. And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick,.... That is, the inhabitant of Zion, or Jerusalem, the church of Christ,
Isa 33:20 and such are they that are born again in Zion, and brought up there; who are made free thereof by Christ; are brought to dwell here by the Lord himself; and, under the influence of divine grace, ask their way hither, and come willingly and cheerfully, and settle here: these, at this time the prophecy refers to, even the latter day, shall not be heard to say, not one of them, "I am sick"; either with the sickness of sin, so as to say there is no cure for them, or that they shall die of it, or even to complain of it; for all their sicknesses and diseases of this kind will be healed by the rising of the sun of righteousness upon them, with healing in his wings; or with the sickness of affliction, especially outward affliction of persecuting enemies, which will be at an end;

and such joy will attend them, on account of their deliverance from them, that all their former sorrows and sufferings will be forgot; and in the New Jerusalem church state there will be neither one sickness nor another; no more sorrow, pain, or death; the leaves of the tree of life will be for the healing of the nations, Re 21:4:

the people that dwell therein [shall be] forgiven [their] iniquity; this shows that sin is the sickness meant; the manner in which such a disease is cured, by forgiveness; and the perfect health and soundness, as well as joy, and peace, and comfort, which follows upon an application of pardoning grace and mercy. The Targum refers this to the time when the Israelites shall return to their own land; and Kimchi owns that some of their interpreters apply it to the times of the Messiah.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 34:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 34

This chapter is a prophecy of the destruction of all the antichristian nations of the world, and particularly of Rome, signified by Idumea; which is introduced with a call to a general attention to it, it being a very awful and solemn affair, Isa 34:1 utter and universal destruction is declared, as the effect of God's wrath, Isa 34:2 which is expressed by a dreadful scene of blood, to the melting of the mountains with it, and by the dissolution of the heavens, and the hosts of them, Isa 34:3 particularly the destruction of Idumea is denounced by the sword of the Lord being on it, and bathed with the blood, both of the common people, and of their princes, signified by various sorts of creatures, Isa 34:5 the cause of which is the Lord's vengeance for the controversy of his church and people, injured by Edom or Rome, Isa 34:8 whose desolate and calamitous state is represented as being like that of Sodom, Isa 34:9 and should be no more inhabited by men, nor governed by princes, but be the dwelling of wild beasts and unclean birds, Isa 34:11 all which is confirmed by the word and Spirit of God, Isa 34:16.

Ver. 1. Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people,.... Not the people of the Jews, as some, whose utter destruction, after their rejection of the Messiah, is here thought to be prophesied of; and much less are these people called upon to hear the Gospel preached to them, as Cocceius thinks; for not good, but bad news they are called to hearken to, even the account of their utter ruin:

let the earth hear, and all that is therein: not the land of Judea, but all the earth, and the inhabitants of it:

the world, and all things that come forth of it; which may either be understood of those that dwell in it, as the Targum interprets it; of the people that are in it, as the Septuagint and the Oriental versions; and so the phrase may denote the original of them, being of the earth, earthly, and to which they must return again; and may be designed to humble men, and hide pride from them; or else the fruits of the earth, trees, and everything that spring out of it, which are called upon to hear the voice of the Lord, when men would not; and so is designed to rebuke the stupidity and sluggishness of men to hearken to what is said to them, even from the Lord, when upon the brink of destruction.

Isaiah 34:2

Ver. 2. For the indignation of the Lord [is] upon all nations,.... All the nations of the earth, which have committed fornication with the whore of Rome, or have given in to her false worship, superstition, and idolatry; which is the reason of God's wrath and indignation against them, and of such severe punishment being inflicted on them; see
Re 18:3:

and [his] fury upon all their armies; the armies of the kings of the earth, gathered together at Armageddon, to make war with Christ, and those that follow him; see Re 16:14:

he hath utterly destroyed them; not only devoted them to destruction, but actually destroyed them, with "Cherem", an utter destruction; one of the words of which Armageddon is compounded, and so points at the place, as well as the nature and manner, of the destruction:

he hath delivered them to slaughter; to be slain with the sword of him that sitteth on the white horse, which proceeds out of his mouth,
Re 19:21.

Isaiah 34:3

Ver. 3. Their slain also shall be cast out,.... Upon the open fields, and there lie unburied, and become meat for the fowls of heaven, who are invited to them as to a supper, even the supper of the great God, Re 19:17:

and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses; so that they shall become loathsome and abominable to the living, and none shall care to come near thereto bury them; an emblem of their loathsome and abominable sins, the cause of this destruction:

and the mountains shall be melted with their blood; an hyperbolical expression, denoting the great number of the slain upon the mountains, and the great quantity of blood shed there; which should run down in large streams, and carry part of them along with it, as large and hasty showers of rain wash away the earth, and carry it along with them; such an hyperbole see in Re 14:20.

Isaiah 34:4

Ver. 4. And all the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved,.... "Pine away" {i}, as with sickness, grow languid, become obscure, lose their light, and be turned into blood and darkness; this figure is used to express the horror of this calamity, as if the very heavens themselves, and the sun, and moon, and stars, were affected with it; see
Isa 13:10

and the heavens shall be rolled gether as a scroll; a book, or volume, which when rolled up, one letter of it could not be read; and it was the manner formerly of making and writing books in the form of a roll; hence the word volume; and here it signifies that there should be such a change in the heavens, as that not a star should be seen, much less the sun or moon; and may signify the utter removal and abolition of all dignities and offices, supreme and subordinate, civil and ecclesiastical, in the whole Roman jurisdiction; thus the destruction of Rome Pagan is described in **Re 6:14** as the destruction of Rome Papal is here; from whence the language seems to be borrowed:

and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling [fig] from the fig tree; that is, the stars should fall down: by whom may be meant persons in office, that made a considerable figure; who shall fall from their stations, in which they shone with much splendour and grandeur, as leaves fall from trees in autumn, particularly the vine; or as unripe and rotten figs fall from the fig tree when shaken by a violent wind; the same metaphor is used in **Re 6:13**.

{i} wqmn "tabescet", Vatablus; "centabescet", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "contabescent", Cocceius, Gataker.

Isaiah 34:5

Ver. 5. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven,.... That is, the sword of the Lord, as it is called in the next verse Isa 34:6, and it is he that is speaking; it designs the vengeance of the Lord, the punishment he will inflict on the wicked, said to be "bathed in heaven", because determined and prepared there; the allusion may be to the bathing of swords in some sort of liquor, to harden or brighten them, and so fit them for use. Kimchi renders it, "my sword" which is "in heaven shall be bathed", that is, in the blood of the slain; "heaven" may denote the whole Roman Papal jurisdiction, as it does the whole Roman Pagan empire in Re 12:7 and may design the principal men in it, those that are in the highest places and offices, in whom the sword of the Lord shall be first drenched, and be as it were satiated and inebriated with the blood of them:

behold, it shall come down upon Idumea; with great weight, force, and vengeance, having a commission from heaven to execute. Idumea is here particularly mentioned, because the Edomites were implacable enemies to the Jews, and so are here put for all the enemies of God's church and people, all the antichristian states, particularly Rome, which the Jews, as Jerom observes, understand by Edom or Idumea here:

upon the people of my curse to judgment; a very descriptive character of the Papists, the people of God's curse, and righteously so; those who have anathematized his people, and cursed them with bell, book, and candle, are anathematized by him, devoted to destruction, and doomed to be accursed, sentenced to ruin, and on whom judgment shall pass, and shall be executed; they shall hear, "go, ye cursed", both here and hereafter, at the fall of Babylon, and at the general judgment. The Targum is,

"because my sword is revealed in heaven; behold, upon Edom it is revealed, and upon the people whom I have condemned to judgment."

Isaiah 34:6

Ver. 6. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood,.... Multitudes being slain by it; the "Lord" here is that divine Person that is described as a warrior, as a General of an army, with a sharp sword, by whom many are slain, such a number as that it is filled with the blood of them, Re 19:11:

it is made fat with fatness: not only filled with the blood, but fattened by it; the allusion is to ravenous creatures gorged and sated with the blood of others, and thereby made fat; perhaps this may refer to Christian princes, the sword in the hand of the Lord, who shall be enriched with the plunder and spoil of the antichristian states:

[and] with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. The Targum is,

"with the blood of kings and governors, with the fat of the kidneys princes;"

and Jarchi interprets them, of princes and rulers; but rather the common people are designed, or the common soldiers in the army, or however the inferior officers of it; kings, princes, and generals, being intended in the following verse Isa 34:7. It denotes the great carnage of all sorts and ranks of men made at this time, and which is described in Re 19:18:

for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea: there seems to be two Bozrahs the Scripture speaks of, the one in Moab, Jer 48:24 and another in Edom,
Isa 63:1 which is here meant, and was a chief city of the Edomites, and signifies a fortress, being no doubt a place well fortified; this is the Bostra of Ptolemy {k}, and which he places in Arabia Petraea. Aben Ezra says that some interpret it of Constantinople, the metropolis of the Ottoman empire; but it is best to understand it of Rome, as Menasseh ben Israel {l} does, and Idumea of the whole Roman jurisdiction; Rome being the chief city of the antichristian states, that great city, which John in his Revelation describes as reigning over the kings of the earth; here and in all the antichristian kingdoms will be a great "slaughter" of men, called a "sacrifice" of the Lord, because by his order and direction, and for the honour of his justice, and being acceptable to him; and perhaps there may be an allusion to the blood sacrifices being the Lord's; this slaughter and sacrifice is called the supper of the great God,
Re 19:17.

{k} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17. {l} Spes Israelis, sect. 30. p. 91.

Isaiah 34:7

Ver. 7. And the unicorns shall come down with them,.... With the lambs, goats, and rams; that is, either the rhinoceros, as some, there being no such creature as the unicorn; or the buffaloes, as {m} others; these "shall fall", as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it, they shall be slain, as well as the rest; meaning, that along with the common soldiers, and inferior officers, the general officers should fall; and so the Targum,

"and the mighty shall be slain with them."

R. Abraham Seba says {n} he read in a certain book, that the word here should not be read Mymar, "unicorns", but Myymwr, "the Romans shall come down", &c.:

and the bullocks with the bulls: or, as the Targum,

"and the rulers with the princes;"

the same with the kings, captains, and mighty men in Re 19:18:

and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness; Or, "their land shall be inebriated" {o}, or made drunk, with blood; and the dust thereof thickened by it, and made clods of with it, as the parched earth is watered with a plentiful shower, and the dust laid with it: this is a just retaliation to the whore of Rome, who has been made drunk with the blood of the saints, and now blood shall be given her to drink, even her own, with which she shall be filled, and welter and wallow in the clods of it, Re 17:6.

{m} So Gussetius understands it of a larger sort of oxen, Comment. Ebr. p. 783. {n} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 47. 3. {o} htwrw "et inebriabitur", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.

Isaiah 34:8

Ver. 8. For [it is] the day of the Lord's vengeance,.... The time which he has appointed to take vengeance on antichrist, his 1260 days, or years; being up, in which he is to reign; these being expired, the time is come for the Lord to avenge the blood of his saints; see
Re 18:20:

[and] the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion; the church of God, which has been for many ages abused and injured by the antichristian powers, for which the Lord will have a controversy with them; he will appear in favour of his people, and plead the cause of Zion, and recompense their enemies for all the injuries they have done them; then they that have led into captivity shall go into captivity, and they that have killed with the sword shall be killed with it,
Re 13:10 this will be a time of double recompence; and therefore perhaps the word is used in the plural number; it will be the time of rewarding antichrist as he has rewarded others; and it will be the time of the dead, that they shall be judged, and rewards given to God's servants the prophets, Re 18:6. The Targum is,

"the year of recompence, to take vengeance of judgment for the injury of Zion."

Isaiah 34:9

Ver. 9. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch,.... The Septuagint render it, "the valleys"; the word signifying both rivers and valleys, most render it rivers or streams. The Targum is express,

"the rivers of Rome shall be turned into pitch;"

by which may be meant the maritime places belonging to the Romish jurisdiction, the same on which the third vial will be poured, by which the rivers and fountains of waters will become blood; and which refers to this very time, when blood shall be given to the whore of Rome to drink, Re 16:4. The allusion, in this and some following clauses, is to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; see
Jer 49:17:

and the dust thereof into brimstone; and so easily take fire:

and the land thereof shall become burning pitch: plainly pointing to the destruction of Rome by fire, Re 17:16.

Isaiah 34:10

Ver. 10. It shall not be quenched night nor day,.... It will be long burning, and shall not be extinguished until it is utterly consumed. The burning of Rome will continue long, especially the smoke of it; the kings of the earth, and others, are represented as standing and looking at it, and lamenting for it, Re 18:9:

the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; this very phrase is what will be used by the saints in their "allelujahs", at the burning of Rome, Re 19:3 with which compare Re 14:11:

from generation to generation it shall lie waste; the land shall be no more manured and cultivated, nor the city rebuilt; when Babylon is once fallen, it shall never be raised up again, but always remain desolate, Re 18:2:

none shall pass through it for ever and ever; no inhabitant in it, nor traveller through it; it will be so horrible and terrible, as none will care to dwell there, yea, not so much as to travel through it; see
Jer 49:18.

Isaiah 34:11

Ver. 11. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it,.... The word for "cormorant" is rendered a "pelican", in Ps 102:6 they were both unclean fowls according to the law, of which see Le 11:17 and See Gill on "Isa 14:23":

the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it; which were likewise unclean creatures; and these, with the former, and other creatures after mentioned, delight to dwell in desolate and ruinous places; and so Babylon or Rome being destroyed, will become a cage of every unclean and hateful bird, Re 18:2:

and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness; "he", that is, God, as Kimchi interprets it; the allusion is to builders, that make use of the line and plummet, as to build, so to pull down, that they may know what is to be pulled down, and how far they are to go; see 2Ki 21:13 and hereby it is signified, that as the destruction should be entire, nothing should be left but confusion and emptiness; and all should become "tohu" and "bohu", which are the words used here; and are the same that are used to express the confused chaos, the unformed and empty earth, **Ge 1:2** so likewise that it should be by line and level, by rule and measure; or according to the rules of justice and equity.

Isaiah 34:12

Ver. 12. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none [shall be] there,.... They shall call them to take upon them the kingdom and government, and there shall be none to do it, or that will care to do it; or rather there will be no kingdom to take unto them. The words may be rendered either, "as for the nobles thereof, not there a kingdom shall they be called" {p}; or, "the nobles shall call"; or, "they shall call the nobles", and "there shall be no kingdom" {q}; the kingdom of the beast, as it is called, Re 16:10 shall be no more; and though the cardinals, who are like to nobles, may call for it, and expect it, or be called to it, yet to no purpose; this kingdom will not only be full of darkness, but utterly destroyed:

and all her princes shall be nothing; shall come to nothing; the above mentioned cardinals, who are clothed and live like princes, these shall be no more; the same with the merchants of the earth, which like the merchants of Tyre are princes, Re 18:3.

{p} warqy hkwlm Mv Nyaw hyrx "nobiles ejus, et non ibi regnum vocabuntur", Forerius. {q} "Ingenuos ejus vocabunt, et non erit ibi regnum", Tigurine version.

Isaiah 34:13

Ver. 13. And thorns shall come up in her palaces,.... Where their kings and princes dwelt, and kept their courts, popes and cardinals; here will be the tokens of God's curse, as thorns are, these being the people of his curse, as in Isa 34:5:

nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; alluding to "Bozrah" which signifies a fortress; referring to the towers and fortifications of the city of

Rome, and all other fortified cities within its jurisdiction:

and it shall be a habitation of dragons; literally, as it figuratively had been the seat of the old dragon, the devil, and of the beast to whom the dragon gave his power, seat, and authority; and who, though he looked like a lamb, spoke like a dragon, Re 12:3:

[and] a court for owls; or, "daughters of the owl"; or "ostriches", as some render it.

Isaiah 34:14

Ver. 14. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the islands,.... In Rome, and take up their abode there; of these creatures, the first of which the Targum renders monstrous ones, and the latter wild cats, See Gill on "Isa 13:22":

and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; or the "hairy" one {r}; from which word the goat has its name; and these creatures are described by the ancients as half goats and half men; of which
See Gill on "Isa 13:21". The Targum renders it demons; and with this well agrees the account of Babylon or Rome as fallen, that it shall be the habitation of, devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, Re 18:2:

the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest; there being no inhabitants to disturb her. By the name "Lilith", it appears to be a night bird, which flies and is heard in the night. The Jews call a she demon by this name, which, they say {s}, has a human face, and has wings, and destroys children as soon as born; and therefore the Jews, especially in Germany, write upon the four corners of the bed of a new mother, Adam, Eve, out Lilith {t}; the same with the Lamia of the Romans; and so the Vulgate Latin here renders it.

{r} ryev "pilosus", a rev "capillus." {s} T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 24. 2. {t} Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Rab. col. 1140.

Isaiah 34:15

Ver. 15. There shall the great owl make her nest,.... Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, say that "kippoz" here is the same with "kippod", rendered "bittern" in Isa 34:11 but Aben Ezra takes them to be two different birds; it is hard to say what is designed by it. Bochart thinks that one kind of serpent is here meant, so called from its leaping up, and which may be said to make nests, lay eggs and hatch them, as follows:

and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow; lay its eggs, sit upon them, and hatch them; or "break" them {u}, that is, the eggs, by sitting on them, when the young ones spring out of them; and then being hatched, and running about, gather them under their wing, especially when in any danger:

there shall the vultures also be gathered, everyone with her mate; which creatures usually gather together where dead carcasses lie.

{u} heqby "et scindet", Pagninus, Montanus; "rumpet", Vatablus; "quumque eruperit", Junius & Tremellius, i.e. "pullities", so Ben Melech.

Isaiah 34:16

Ver. 16. Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read,.... Joseph Kimchi interprets this of the book of the law of Moses; which being consulted, it will appear that punishment was threatened to be inflicted on the enemies of God's people, particularly the Edomites. Jarchi thinks the book of Genesis is intended; in which we may read how every creature, with its mate, at the time of the flood, was gathered to Noah in the ark. Aben Ezra supposes the book of God's decrees is meant; in which, could it be seen, might be read all the particulars of this prophecy. But it seems best to understand it of this book of the prophecy of Isaiah; which being sought to, and read at the time when these predictions will be fulfilled, it will be easily seen, by comparing events with prophecies, how everything will be exactly accomplished; from whence may be concluded, this book being called the book of the Lord, that it was written by divine inspiration, as all other parts of the Bible are; which is a recommendation of them, and is a reason why they should be constantly applied unto, and diligently read. It may deserve some consideration, whether the book of the Revelation may not be designed; which, at the destruction of Babylon or Rome, will be proper to be looked into afresh, to see the agreement between the prophecies in it, and the then state of things respecting it, when it will be an habitation of devils and unclean birds:

not one of these shall fail: not one of these beasts or birds before mentioned shall be wanting here, or be "deprived" of its prey:

none shall want her mate; the satyr, or vulture, or any other, which will engage their continuance, and by which means there will be a fresh brood of them in succession for after ages:

for my mouth, it hath commanded them; these beasts and birds, to assemble in the above mentioned place:

and his spirit, it hath gathered them; the Spirit of the mouth of the Lord, his power, and his providence; as he gathered all creatures to Adam, to give them names; and to Noah, to be preserved with him in the ark; so, by a secret instinct; will he gather together these creatures, to inhabit the desolate places of Edom or Rome. The Targum is,

"for by his word they shall be gathered, and by his will they shall draw near."

So Ben Melech interprets it of his will and pleasure.

Isaiah 34:17

Ver. 17. And he hath cast the lot for them,.... The Targum adds,

"by his word:"

and his hand hath divided it unto them by line; the same adds,

"by his will."

The allusion is to the dividing of the land of Canaan by lot and line, to the children of Israel, for their inheritance and possession; and in like manner, it is suggested, shall Rome and its territories be distributed to those wild beasts and birds of prey, and everyone shall know and take its proper place and portion:

they shall possess it for ever; as their inheritance, allotted and appointed to them:

from generation to generation shall they dwell therein:
See Gill on "Isa 34:10" where Jarchi, out of the Derash, has this note,

"this is the curse of Moses; the war of the Lord against Amalek, from generation to generation; from the generation of Moses to the generation of Saul; from thence to the generation of Mordecai; and from thence to the generation of the King Messiah."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 35:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 35

This chapter is a prediction of the glory and flourishing estate of the Gospel church, and of the blessings received by it from Christ. Its flourishing state is expressed by the fruitfulness of the desert, being made like to Lebanon, Carmel, and Sharon; and by the inhabitants of it seeing the glory and excellency of Christ, Isa 35:1 the ministers of the word are directed and exhorted to strengthen the weak, and comfort the feeble minded, by assuring them of the coming of Christ to save them,
Isa 35:3 when miracles, both in nature and grace, should be wrought; and great alterations should be made in the wilderness, by the power of God, Isa 35:5 when a way should be cast up, described; and the persons that should walk in it are pointed at; and the end it should bring them to, everlasting joy and happiness, Isa 35:8.

Ver. 1. The wilderness, and the solitary place, shall be glad for them,.... Either for the wild beasts, satyrs, owls, and vultures, that shall inhabit Edom or Rome, and because it shall be an habitation for them: or they shall be glad for them, the Edomites, and for the destruction of them; that is, as the Targum paraphrases it,

"they that dwell in the wilderness, in the dry land, shall rejoice;"

the church, in the wilderness, being obliged to fly there from the persecution of antichrist, and thereby become desolate as a wilderness; and so called, in allusion to the Israelites in the wilderness, **Ac 7:38** shall now rejoice at the ruin of Rome, and the antichristian states; by which means it shall come into a more flourishing condition; see Re 12:14:

and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose; or "as the lily", as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; and so the Targum,

"as the lilies:"

not Judea or Jerusalem, as the Jewish writers, become like a desert, through the devastations made in it by the king of Assyria's army; and now made glad, and become flourishing, upon the departure of it from them: rather the Gentile world, which was like a wilderness, barren and unfruitful, before the Gospel came into it; but by means of that, which brought joy with it, and was attended with fragrancy, it diffusing the savour of the knowledge of Christ in every place, it became fruitful and flourishing, and of a sweet odour, and looked delightful, and pleasant: though it seems best to understand it of the Gentile church in the latter day, after the destruction of antichrist, when it shall be in a most desirable and comfortable situation. These words stand in connection with the preceding chapter Isa 34:1, and very aptly follow upon it.

Isaiah 35:2

Ver. 2. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing,.... A redundancy of words, to express the very flourishing estate of the church, and the great joy there shall be on that occasion, as well as because of the destruction of their enemies, and deliverance from them:

the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it; a mountain in Judea, famous for its choice and tall cedars, which were the glory of it; signifying hereby, that the church of God, which had been in a desolate condition, should abound with choice and excellent Christians, comparable to the cedars of Lebanon. Jarchi interprets it of the sanctuary or temple; which may be so called, because built of the wood of Lebanon. This was an emblem and type of the Gospel church; and the glory of it lay not only in its outward form and building, but in those things which were in the holy places of it, especially the most holy, which were all typical of spiritual things in Gospel times; so that all the glory of the Jewish church state and temple is brought into the Gentile church, into the Christian or Gospel church state; and which will still more appear in the latter day, when the temple of God will be opened in heaven, and the ark of the testament; see Re 11:19:

the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; two places in the land of Judea, famous for fruitfulness and pasturage; and so denote the very great fruitfulness of the

Gospel church; the word and ordinances of which are as green pastures for the sheep of Christ to feed upon, and by which they become fat and flourishing:

they shall see the glory of our Lord, [and] the excellency of our God; the Targum introduces this clause thus,

"the house of Israel, to whom these things are said, they shall see," &c.;

but not Israel in a literal sense is here meant, but the Gentile church, formerly in the wilderness; or, however, converted persons, be they Jews or Gentiles, in the latter day, who shall see the glory of divine power, in the destruction of their enemies; and the excellency and beauty of divine grace, in the blessings of it bestowed upon them; they shall see the glory of the Lord, which shall then be risen upon them, Isa 60:1 the Lord our God is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Lord and God; the glory and excellency of whose person and offices, and of his righteousness and salvation, is seen in the Gospel, by those whose eyes are enlightened by the Spirit of God; and will be more clearly discerned, when there will be a greater effusion of the Spirit, as a spirit, of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; and to this sight of the glory and excellency of Christ, the joy and fruitfulness of the church will be greatly owing. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "my people shall see", &c.

Isaiah 35:3

Ver. 3. Strengthen ye the weak hands,.... These are the words of the prophet, as the Targum,

"the prophet said, strengthen the weak hands;"

or rather of God, by the prophet, to the converted Gentiles, to those who saw the glory of the Lord; particularly to the ministers of the Gospel, who have to do with weak and feeble persons, who can scarcely lift up their hands, or stand upon their legs, under a sense of sin, in a view of wrath, and immediate ruin and destruction, ready to sink and faint, because of their enemies, or through want of food; and their business is to comfort and strengthen them, by preaching the Gospel, and pointing out the promises of it to them:

and confirm the feeble knees; that so they may keep their ground against their enemies; shake off their fears and trembling; go on their way courageously and rejoicing; run, and not be weary; walk, and not faint: "hands" and "knees" are mentioned particularly, because a man's strength lies greatly in them; and his weakness is seen by the languor and trembling of them.

Isaiah 35:4

Ver. 4. Say to them [that are] of a fearful heart,.... Or, "hasty of heart" {w}; are at once for flying from the enemy; "hasty" in drawing black conclusions upon themselves and their state; "inconsiderate" of the promises made unto them; ready to doubt of, and call in question, the performance of the above things, respecting the fruitful and flourishing estate of the church: wherefore it must be said to them,

Be strong, fear not; be strong in faith, fear not the enemy, nor doubt of the fulfilment of divine promises, relating to their ruin and your safety:

behold, your God will come [with] vengeance; Christ, who is God in our nature, God manifest in the flesh, and who came by the assumption of human nature; and when he first came, he came with vengeance, and took vengeance on Satan and his works; on him, and his principalities, and powers, whom he spoiled and destroyed, as well as made an end of sin and abolished death; see Isa 61:2 so likewise he came in his kingdom and power, and took vengeance on the Jewish nation, for their disbelief and rejection of him; and which time is expressly called the days of vengeance, Lu 21:22 and at the time of his spiritual coming he will destroy antichrist with the brightness of it, and avenge the blood of his servants, Re 18:20 and at his personal coming he will take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not his Gospel, **2Th 1:8** and the words are so expressed as to take in the several times of his coming: and since he has already come, and taken vengeance in some instances, this may serve to encourage, and perhaps the design of it is to encourage, the faith of God's people, with respect to his future coming, and the end and issue of it:

[even] God [with a] recompence: or, "the God of recompence" {x}; and so the Targum,

"the Lord of recompences;"

both to the wicked a just recompence of reward or punishment for their sins, it being just with him to recompense tribulation to them that trouble his people; and to the saints, the time of his spiritual reign being the time, as to destroy them that destroy the earth, so to give a reward to his servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear his name, Re 11:18:

he will come and save you; the end of his first coming was to save his people from sin, the curse and condemnation of the law, from hell, wrath, ruin, and destruction; and the end of his spiritual coming, at the latter day, will be to save his people from their antichristian enemies, from idolatry, superstition, and slavery.

{w} bl yrhmn "festinis corde", Vatablus; "praecipitantibus corde", Cocceius; "inconsideratis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {x} awh Myhwla lwmg "praemiator Deus ipse veniet", Castalio.

Isaiah 35:5

Ver. 5. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,.... Which was literally fulfilled in the first coming of Christ, **Mt 9:27** **Joh 9:1** and spiritually, both among Jews and Gentiles; especially the latter, under the ministry of the apostles, when those who were blind as to spiritual things had no knowledge of God in Christ; nor of the way of salvation by him; nor of the plague of their own hearts; nor of the work of the Spirit of God upon the soul; nor of the truths of the Gospel; through the power of divine grace had the eyes of their understanding opened, so as to see their sinfulness and vileness; their emptiness of all that is good, and their impotency to do anything that is spiritual; their want of righteousness; their need of Christ, and the fulness and suitableness of him as a Saviour; and to have some light into the truths of the Gospel, and a glimpse of heaven and eternal glory: and this will still have a greater accomplishment in the latter day, when the blind Jews are converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in:

and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; which was literally true of some when Christ came in the flesh, Mt 11:5 and spiritually of many who had not ears to hear in a spiritual sense; stopped what ears they had to the charming voice of the Gospel; and, though they might externally hear, did not understand it: yet these having ears given them to hear, and their ears and hearts opened by the Spirit of God, heard the Gospel spiritually, profitably, pleasantly, comfortably, and with wonder and astonishment; and a multitude of such instances there will be in the latter day glory. Jarchi interprets it of such who were blind as to the knowledge of the fear of God, and deaf to the voice of the prophets.

Isaiah 35:6

Ver. 6. Then shall the lame [man] leap as an hart..... As the lame man did healed by Peter, **Ac 3:1** there were many instances of such persons cured by Christ when here on earth, Mt 15:30 and in a spiritual sense this was verified in many who were impotent to that which is good; had neither will nor power to go to Christ for life and salvation, nor to walk by faith in him, nor to walk in his ways; who yet, by the mighty power of the Spirit and grace of God, became able and willing to go to him, and venture their souls on him; walked on in him as they had received him; and not only walked in his ways, but ran in the ways of his commandments, and leaped for joy for what they saw and heard of him, and received from him; and innumerable will be the instances of such mighty grace at the spiritual coming and reign of Christ:

and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; this had its accomplishment, in a literal sense, at the first coming of Christ, **Mt 9:32**
Mt 12:22 and, in a spiritual sense, in many who before had nothing to say to God in prayer, nor in praise; nothing to say of Christ, or for him; or of the blessed Spirit, and his divine operations; but now, by divine grace, are made to speak unto God, both in a petitionary way, and in a way of thankfulness; and of Christ, and of the blessed Spirit; and of the great things each have done for them; and even to sing for joy, because of the wondrous blessings of grace they were made partakers of; and many more such there will be in the latter day, when the Spirit is poured down from on high. Kimchi interprets all this of the Israelites, who were in captivity as blind, deaf, lame, and dumb. So the Targum of this and the preceding verse Isa 35:5,

"then shall the eyes of the house of Israel be opened, who were as blind men as to the law; and the ears of them that are as deaf men, to attend to the words of the prophets shall hear; then when they shall see the captives of Israel gathered to go up to their own land as the swift harts, and not tarry," &c.;

but it may be better applied to their present state, and to their case when they shall be turned to the Lord in the latter day:

for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert; not literally, but mystically; and may be understood both of the doctrines of the

Gospel breaking out in the ministry of them, in such places as were like unto the wilderness and desert, quite barren, and destitute of the knowledge, grace, and fear of God; see **Joe 3:18** and of the abundance of grace, and the efficacy of it, making the word effectual to the conversion and fruitfulness of multitudes of souls, bringing along with it a vast variety of spiritual blessings; see **Joh 7:37** to both which, the one as the means, and the other as the cause, all the above wonderful things are owing.

Isaiah 35:7

Ver. 7. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water,.... Such persons who have been like the parched earth, barren and unfruitful, or like the earth scorched with the sun, filled with a sense of divine wrath, and thirsting, like the dry earth, after the grace of God, Christ, and his righteousness, shall be comforted and refreshed, and filled with the grace of God: or such who have been scorched and parched with the heat of persecution, from the antichristian party, and have been thirsting after deliverance from it, shall now enjoy peace and prosperity:

in the habitation of dragons, where each lay; in kingdoms, cities, and towns, inhabited by men, comparable to dragons for their poison and cruelty; where the great red dragon Satan had his seat; and the Pagan emperors, and Papal powers, who have exercised the authority, power, and cruelty of the dragon, dwell; see Re 12:3:

[shall be] grass, with reeds and rushes; persons shall spring up, partakers of the grace of God, who, for their number and flourishing estate, shall be like the green grass; and others, still more eminent for their gifts and usefulness, like reeds, or canes and rushes; see
Isa 44:3.

Isaiah 35:8

Ver. 8. And an highway shall be there, and a way,.... Not two ways, but one; the way shall be a highway, a way cast up, raised, and "elevated" {y}; this is to be understood principally of Christ, the only way of life and salvation; and of the lesser paths of duty and ordinances: and the meaning is, that in those desert places, where Christ and his Gospel had not been preached, at least for many ages, here he should be made known, as the way, the truth, and the life; his Gospel preached, and his ordinances administered; and multitudes, both of Jews and Gentiles, should be directed and enabled to walk here. Christ is a highway to both; a way cast up by sovereign grace, which is raised above the mire and dirt of sin, and carries over it, and from it; a way visible and manifest, clearly pointed to and described in the everlasting Gospel; it is the King's highway, the highway of the King of kings, which he has ordered and appointed, and is common to all his subjects, high and low, rich and poor, stronger or weaker believers, all may walk in this way; it is an old beaten path, which saints in all ages, from the beginning of the world, have walked in; it is the good old way, the more excellent, the most excellent one; all obstructions and impediments are removed, cast in by sin, Satan, the law, and the world; nor is anyone to be stopped and molested in this way, and all in it shall come safe to their journey's end:

and it shall be called The way of holiness; or, "a holy way" {z}; Christ is perfectly holy in nature and life, and the holiness of both is imputed to those that are in this way; all in this way are sanctified by the Spirit and grace of God; this way leads to perfect holiness in heaven, and none but holy persons walk here: salvation by Christ no ways discourages the practice of holiness, but is the greatest motive and incentive to it. Christ leads his people in paths of righteousness; in the paths of truth, of ordinances, and of worship, public and private, all which are holy; and in the path of Gospel conversation and godliness: this way is so holy, that

the unclean shall not pass over it; all men are unclean by nature; some are cleansed by the grace of God and blood of Christ; and though, as sanctified, they are not free from sin and the pollution of it, yet, as justified, they are "the undefiled in the way"; and none but such can pass over, or pass through this way to heaven, Re 21:27:

but it [shall be] for those; for holy men, not for the unclean; for Israel only, as Kimchi, for such who are Israelites indeed; for those who are before mentioned, Isa 35:5 as Jarchi; it is for those to walk in who have been blind, but now see, and these are led in a way that they knew not before; for the deaf, who now hear the voice behind them, saying, this is the way; for the lame man, that leaps like a hart, to walk and run in; for the dumb, now made to sing, and go on in it rejoicing; it is for the redeemed to walk in, as in the following verse. This clause may be rendered, "and he shall be with them" {a}; that is, God shall be with them; they shall have his company and gracious presence in the way; he will be with them, to guide and direct them, to supply all their wants, and furnish them with everything convenient for them; to support and strengthen them, on whom they may lean and stay themselves; to guard and protect them from all their enemies; and being with them they shall not miss their way, or fail of coming to the end. Hence it follows,

the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein; or travellers; such the saints are, they are strangers, pilgrims, and sojourners here; they have no continuance here; they are like wayfaring men, that abide but for a night; they are bound for another country, a better, even a heavenly one, and at last shall arrive thither: now these, though they have been "fools" in their unregenerate state, with respect to spiritual things; or though they may not have that sharpness of wit, and quickness of natural parts, as some men have; and though they may not have that clear and distinct knowledge of Gospel truths as others, at least of some of them, yet shall not err as to the way of salvation; and though they may err or mistake in some things, yet not in the main, not fundamentally, nor finally; the way of salvation by Christ is so plain a way, that he that has any spiritual understanding of it shall not err in it.

{y} lwlom "semita strata", Montanus; "vel exaltata lapidibus", Vatablus. {z} vdwqh Krd "via sancta", V. L. Piscator. {a} wml awhw "sed ipse illis ambulator vise" De Dieu; "ipse cum eis", Tigurine version.

Isaiah 35:9

Ver. 9. No lion shall be there,.... That is, in the way before described; no wicked persons, comparable to lions for their savage and cruel dispositions towards the people of God; for those who have been as such, as Saul before conversion, yet when brought into this way become as tame as lambs. The Targum interprets it of tyrannical kings and princes,

"there shall not be there a king doing evil, nor an oppressive governor;"

and Jarchi applies it to Nebuchadnezzar, as in Jer 4:7 and the sense may be, that when this way shall be more known on earth, in the latter day, there will be no persecutor of the church and people of God: or else Satan, the roaring lion, is here meant, who has no part nor lot in this way of salvation; and all that are in it are out of his reach; and though he may disturb in the paths of duty and ordinances, yet he can never destroy those who are in Christ the way:

nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; upon the high way; the same may be intended as before:

it shall not be found there; walking, ravaging, and destroying:

but the redeemed shall walk there; without fear, as Kimchi adds, since no lion, or any beast of prey, shall be found upon it: the "redeemed" are the redeemed of the Lord, and by him, and are peculiarly his, being bought with his precious blood, redeemed from among men, and unto God, and from sin, the law, its curse, and condemnation; these "shall walk" in the way of life and salvation by Christ, in consequence of their being redeemed; which supposes life, strength, and wisdom, which are given them, and a proficiency or going forward: they "shall" walk here; though they have been blind, their eyes shall be opened to see this way; and, though weak, they shall have strength to walk in it; and, though foolish, they shall have wisdom to guide their feet with discretion; and, though they may stumble and fall, they shall rise again, and shall keep on walking to the end.

Isaiah 35:10

Ver. 10. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,.... The same with the "redeemed" in Isa 35:9 these shall return, or be converted, as the Vulgate Latin version; they are in the same state and condition with other men by nature, but, by virtue of their being ransomed by Christ, they are by the grace of God turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God; they are returned from the paths in which they had been straying to Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, in order to walk in his ways,

and come to Zion with songs; being called by grace, and converted, they turn their backs on the world, and the men of it, and ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherwards, even to the church of God; and they find their way, being directed and brought there by the Lord himself; where they come readily and willingly, not only to hear the Gospel, but to submit to all ordinances, and become members of a Gospel church; see Heb 12:20 and hither they "come with songs", for electing, redeeming, calling, justifying, and pardoning grace; everyone of which blessings requires a song, and with which they are now affected, seeing their interest in them, and cannot forbear speaking of them to the glory of divine grace:

and everlasting joy upon their heads; seen in their countenances, and by the lifting up of their heads; and which oil of gladness, is poured upon them, and diffused all over them, like the ointment on Aaron's head: and this is "everlasting": not as to the exercise of it, which is often interrupted by sin, temptation, and desertion; but as to the ground and foundation of it, the everlasting love of God, the everlasting covenant of his grace, and the everlasting righteousness and salvation by Christ; and, as to the principle and habit of it, which can never be lost, nor any man take it away:

they shall obtain joy and gladness; by having the presence of God, and communion with him; through his love being shed abroad in their hearts; by being favoured with views of Christ, and interest in him, and with the gracious influences of the blessed Spirit:

and sorrow and sighing shall flee away; which before attended them, through convictions of sin, but now removed by the discoveries and applications of pardoning grace and mercy; or what was occasioned by want of the divine Presence, now enjoyed; being come to Zion, they are made joyful in the house of prayer, and are satisfied with the marrow and fatness of Gospel ordinances, and continually hear the joyful sound of the Gospel itself: all this may be applied to the state of the saints in heaven; for the highway before described not only leads to Zion the church below, but to the Zion above, to the heavenly glory; and all the redeemed, all that walk in this way, shall come thither; at death their souls "return" to God that gave them, and are in immediate happiness with Christ; and in the resurrection shall return from their dusty beds, and shall appear before God in Zion above; and "with songs" to Father, Son, and Spirit, for what each have done for them, in election, redemption, and conversion; and for persevering grace, and for being safely brought over Jordan's river, and from the grave; see 1Co 15:54, they shall then enter into joy, which will never end; there will be nothing to interrupt it to all eternity; it will be "everlasting joy" indeed; and this will be "upon their heads", visible and manifest, and be upon them as a crown of life, righteousness, and glory, that shall never fade away; they shall then "obtain joy and gladness", in all the fulness thereof, their joy in the Lord will be complete; which these several words and phrases used are expressive of; and then there will be no more "sorrow and sighing"; for there will be no more sin and unbelief, or any other corruption of nature; no more darkness and desertion; no more of any of Satan's temptations; no more distresses, inward or outward; and so no more sighing within, nor sorrowing without; all tears will be wiped away. The Jews {b} apply this passage to the world to come.

{b} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 110. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 36:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 36

In this chapter we have an account of the king Assyria's invasion of Judea, and of the railing speech of Rabshakeh his general, to discourage the ministers and subjects of the king of Judah. The time and success of the invasion are observed in Isa 36:1 the messenger the former king sent to the latter, and from whence, and with whom, he conferred,
Isa 36:2, the speech of the messenger, which consists of two parts; the first part is directed to the ministers of Hezekiah, showing the vain confidence of their prince in his counsels and strength for war, in the king of Egypt, and in his chariots and horsemen, and even in the Lord himself, pretending that he came by his orders to destroy the land,
Isa 36:4. The other part is directed to the common people on the wall, he refusing to speak in the Syrian language, as desired,
Isa 36:11, dissuading them from hearkening to Hezekiah to their own deception; persuading them to come into an agreement with him for their own safety and good; observing to them that none of the gods of the nations could deliver them out of his master's hands, and therefore it was in vain for them to expect deliverance from the Lord their God,
Isa 36:13, to which neither ministers nor people returned any answer; but the former went with their clothes rent to Hezekiah, and reported what had been said, Isa 36:21.

Ver. 1. Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah,.... The following piece of history is inserted from the books of Kings and Chronicles, as an illustration of some preceding prophecies, and as a confirmation of them; see 2Ki 18:13

that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah; who in the Apocrypha:

"And if the king Sennacherib had slain any, when he was come, and fled from Judea, I buried them privily; for in his wrath he killed many; but the bodies were not found, when they were sought for of the king." (Tobit 1:18) is said to be the son of Shalmaneser, as he certainly was his successor, who in the sixth year of Hezekiah, eight years before this, took Samaria, and carried the ten tribes captive, 2Ki 18:10 he is called Sennacherib by Herodotus {c}, who says he was king of the Arabians, and the Assyrians; who yet is blamed by Josephus {d}, for not calling him the king of the Assyrians only of the Arabians, whereas he styles him both; and the same Josephus observes, that Berosus, a Chaldean writer, makes mention of this Sennacherib as king of Assyria; the same came up in a military way against the fortified cities of Judah, which were the frontier towns, and barriers of their country:

and took them; that is, some of them, not all of them; see Isa 37:8, he thought indeed to have took them to himself, this was his intent, 2Ch 32:1, but was prevailed upon to desist, by a payment of three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold to him, by the king of Judah, 2Ki 18:14.

{c} In Euterpe c. 141. {d} Antiqu. Jud. l. 10. c. 1. sect. 4.

Isaiah 36:2

Ver. 2. And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto King Hezekiah with a great army,.... Notwithstanding he had taken Hezekiah's money to withdraw his army out of his country, yet sends it out to his very capital; along with this Rabshakeh he sent two other generals, Tartan and Rabsaris, 2Ki 18:17 though they are not mentioned, only Rabshakeh, because he was the principal person, however the chief speaker. Lachish was a city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:39, which Sennacherib was now besieging, 2Ch 32:9. This message was sent, Bishop Usher says, three years after the former expedition:

and he stood by the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the fullers' field; where they spread their clothes, as the Targum, having washed them in the pool, of which see **Isa 7:3**. Ben Melech thus describes the pool, conduit, and highway: the pool is a ditch, built with stone and lime, where rainwater was collected, or where they drew water from the fountain, and the waters were gathered into this pool; and there was in this pool a hole, which they stopped, until the time they pleased to fetch water, out of the pool: and the conduit was a ditch near to the pool, and they brought water out of the pool into the conduit, when they chose to drink, or wash garments: the highway was a way paved with stones, so that they could walk upon it in rainy days; and here they stood and washed their garments in the waters of the conduit, and in the field they spread them to the sun. This pool lay outside the city, yet just by the walls of it, which showed the daring insolence of Rabshakeh to come so very nigh, for he was in the hearing of the men upon the walls, Isa 36:12, this Rabshakeh is by the Jewish writers thought to be an apostate Jew, because he spoke in the Jews' language; and some of them, as Jerome says, will have him to be a son of the Prophet Isaiah's, but without any foundation, Procopius, in 2Ki 18:18, thinks it probable that he was a Hebrew, who either had fled on his own accord to the Assyrians, or was taken captive by them.

Isaiah 36:3

Ver. 3. Then came forth unto him,.... Being sent by Hezekiah; for otherwise Rabshakeh had the impudence to call to him, in order to parley, and treat with him about the surrender of the city; but as this was not thought either safe or honourable for the king to go in person, his following ministers went; see 2Ki 18:18:

Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house; not over the house of the Lord, the temple, as some, but the king's house, being high steward of if, or "major domo". This is the same person as is mentioned in Isa 22:20:

and Shebna the scribe; not of the book of the law, a copier, or interpreter of that, but secretary of state; he had been treasurer, but now removed, Isa 22:15:

and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder; the master of requests, or the "remembrancer" {e}; who, as the Targum, was appointed over things memorable; whose business it was to take notice of things worthy of memory, write them down, and digest them in order; perhaps the king's historiographer.

{e} rykzmh "recordator, commonfactor", Vatablus; "commenefaciens", Montanus: "a nemoria", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 36:4

Ver. 4. And Rabshakeh said unto them,.... The three ministers above mentioned:

say ye now to Hezekiah; tell him what follows; he does not call him king, as he does his own master:

thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria; this he said boastingly of his master, and in order to terrify Hezekiah and his subjects; whom he would represent as little in comparison of him, who had subdued many kingdoms, and aimed at universal monarchy; so the eastern kings used to be called, as now the Grand Signior with the Turks, and the French call their king the great monarch; but the title of a great king suits best with God himself, Ps 95:3:

what confidence is this wherein thou trustest? meaning, what was the ground and foundation of his confidence? what was it that kept him in high spirits, that he did not at once submit to the king of Assyria, and surrender the city of Jerusalem to him?

Isaiah 36:5

Ver. 5. I say, (sayest thou,) but they are but vain words,.... Or, "word of lips" {f}; meaning the following, which he suggests were only the fruit of his lips, not of his heart; or were vain and foolish, and without effect, and stood for nothing; so the first part of the words are Hezekiah's, "I say (sayest thou)"; and the latter, Rabshakeh's note upon them; though they may be understood as Hezekiah's, or what he is made to speak by Rabshakeh, as the ground of his confidence, namely, "word of lips"; that is, prayer to God, as Kimchi explains it; or eloquence in addressing his soldiers, and encouraging them to fight, either of which Rabshakeh derides, as well as what follows:

I have counsel and strength for war; as he had; he had wise ministers to consult, and was capable of forming a good plan, and wise schemes, and of putting them in execution, and of heartening men; though he did not put his confidence in these things, as Rabshakeh suggested,
2Ch 32:3, the words may be rendered; "but counsel and strength are for war" {g}: what signifies words to God, or eloquence with men? this is all lip labour, and of little service; wisdom and counsel to form plans, and power to execute them, are the things which are necessary to carry on a war with success, and which, it is intimated, were wanting in Hezekiah; and therefore he had nothing to ground his confidence upon, within himself, or his people:

now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? which it does not appear he had, having paid the money agreed to for the withdrawment of his army; but this was a pretence for the siege of Jerusalem.

{f} Mytpv rbd "verbum labiorum", Montanus; "vel, sermo labiorum", Vatablus. {g} hmxlml hrwbgw hue "consilium et fortitudo ad praelium", Montanus; "sed consilio et fortitudine opus ad praelium", Pagninus, i.e. "requiruntur", ut Grotius.

Isaiah 36:6

Ver. 6. Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt,.... His ally and auxiliary; and which is rightly called "the staff of a broken reed", if trusted to, and leaned upon, being weak and frail, and an insufficient ground of confidence to depend upon; the allusion seems to be to the cane or reed which grew upon the banks of the river Nile, in Egypt:

whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it; the splinters of the broken reed being leaned on, will enter into a man's hand, and do him harm, instead of being a help to him to walk with:

so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him; pernicious and harmful, instead of being useful and helpful.

Isaiah 36:7

Ver. 7. But if thou say to me, we trust in the Lord our God,.... In his promises, providence, power, and protection, and not in human counsels and strength; not in allies and auxiliaries, as Pharaoh king of Egypt; should this be replied, Rabshakeh has something to say to that; having shown the vanity of trusting in the above things, he now proceeds to beat them off of all trust in the Lord their God:

is it not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away; the question might easily be answered in the negative; no, he has not; the high places and altars which Hezekiah took away were the high places and altars of Heathen gods, of false deities, and not of the true God of Israel, and which was to his honour and glory; but Rabshakeh would make a crime of it, and, ignorantly supposing that these were the altars and high places of the God of Israel, would insinuate that the taking of these away must be displeasing to him, and consequently Hezekiah and his people could not hope for any protection from him, whom he had so highly affronted; but all this talk was the fruit of ignorance, as well as of malice:

and said to Judah, and to Jerusalem, ye shall worship before this altar? the altar of the Lord, in the temple at Jerusalem, and before that only, confining their religious worship to one place, and their sacrifices to one altar; which was so far from being displeasing to God, as he would insinuate, that it was entirely agreeable to his will: and therefore there was no weight or strength in this kind of reasoning.

Isaiah 36:8

Ver. 8. Now therefore give pledges to my master the king of Assyria,.... Or; "hostages" {h}; that thou wilt not rebel against him, but be faithful to him, and he will withdraw his army; or give security for the horses after promised: "or mingle thyself with him"; agree the matter with him, give pledges for future fidelity; or join in battle with him, come out and fight him, if able:

and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders on them; thus scoffing at him, as if he had not so many soldiers to bring out against him; or so many men in his kingdom as had skill enough to ride a horse; in his bravado he signifies, that if he would come out and fight him, he would lend him so many horses, if he could put men upon them, to assist him; this he said as boasting of his master's strength and power, and in scorn and derision at Hezekiah's weakness.

{h} breth "da obsides", Vatablus; "paciscere cum domino meo, Gataker; "misceto, quaeso, [bellum] cum domino meo", Junius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 36:9

Ver. 9. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants,.... Be able to resist him; or be a match for him; or cause him to flee; the least captain or general in the army having, as Kimchi says, two thousand men under him; and therefore, if Hezekiah could not produce two thousand men, to sit upon so many horses offered, he could not be a match for, or hope to conquer, or cause to flee, the least officer in the army, who had the fewest men under him, and much less conquer, or cause to flee, the whole Assyrian army. Some think Rabshakeh means himself, but that does not seem likely, that Sennacherib should send an inferior officer, or a person of a low character, and in a low station, or that such an one should be the principal speaker; nor does it suit with the imperious and haughty disposition of Rabshakeh to speak in such a manner of himself:

and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots, and for horsemen? for to what purpose was it to seek and send to Egypt for chariots and horses, since he had not a sufficient number of men to put upon them, but must be obliged to have men, as well as horses and chariots; and which, as before observed, it was a vain thing to trust to, and was quite needless, when he might have enough from his master, the Assyrian king, would he agree with him.

Isaiah 36:10

Ver. 10. And am I now come up without the Lord against this land to destroy it?.... He would insinuate that he had a commission from the Lord God, and that it was by his will and order that he came up to destroy the land; which he said to intimidate Hezekiah and his subjects, as knowing that nothing was more likely to do it than that so far it was true, that he did not come up without the knowledge of the Lord, nor without his will to chastise, but not to destroy, as the event showed:

the Lord said unto me: by the impulse of his Spirit, or by one of his prophets, as he would suggest:

go up against this land, and destroy it; which was a lie of his own making; he knew that the Lord had said no such thing to him, nor had sent him on such an errand; unless he concluded it from his success in taking the fenced cities of Judah, and from Samaria, and the ten tribes, being delivered up in time past into the hands of the king of Assyria, and so was confident this would be the fate of Judah and Jerusalem.

Isaiah 36:11

Ver. 11. Then said Eliakim and Shebah and Joah unto Rabshakeh,.... That is, one of them addressed him in the name of the rest; for the verb is singular; and what follows confirms it; perhaps Eliakim was the speaker:

speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syriac language; which was somewhat different from the Hebrew, in which he spoke, and which was not understood by the common people, and for that reason desired:

for we understand it; or hear it; could hear it, so as to understand it; it being common in all courts, as the French tongue now; the Assyrian empire being very large, and so had been learned by these courtiers, for the sake of negotiation or commerce, when the common people had no concern with it:

and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall; the wall of the city, where the commissioners were, who would not venture themselves out of the city, in the hands of so perfidious an enemy: and the men on the wall were such, who either were placed there to defend the city, and so were soldiers, or people that were gathered together to see the ambassadors of the king of Assyria, and to hear, as much as they could, what passed between them and the ministers of Hezekiah; and as this speech of Eliakim's showed great submissiveness in praying and entreating Rabshakeh to speak to them in another language, and a mean abject spirit, in saying they were his servants, so a great degree of timorousness in them, and diffidence of the people, lest they should be terrified, and be for giving up the city at once into the hands of the enemy; this looks like a piece of bad policy, and some think that Shebna was the contriver of it, and the adviser to it, in order to give Rabshakeh a hint of their fears, and of the disposition of the people, and put him in higher spirits, and on railing the more, and thereby still work the more on the people's fears; however, it had this effect on him, as follows.

Isaiah 36:12

Ver. 12. But Rabshakeh said, hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words?.... That is, to them only, that he should use a language only understood by them:

hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall; and therefore it is proper to speak in a language which they understand, and to let them know that if they will not surrender up the city, but will attempt to hold out a siege, they must expect

that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you? suggesting that they must expect a close siege, which would not be broke up until the city was taken; the consequence of which would be such a famine, that they would be reduced to such extremities. The Jews have substituted other words in the margin, instead of those in the text, as more cleanly, and less offensive; for "dung" they put "excrement", and for "piss" they read "the waters of the feet"; and had we in our version put excrement and urine instead of these words, it would have been more decent.

Isaiah 36:13

Ver. 13. Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language,.... In which he spoke before; but now he raised up himself, and elevated his voice, and strained himself to the utmost, that all the people might hear, and that he might strike a terror into them, and stir them up to mutiny and rebellion, and oblige their governors to give up the city into the hands of the Assyrians; this use he made of the request of Hezekiah's ministers, perceiving hereby their fears, and the disposition of the people:

and said, hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria;
See Gill on "Isa 36:4".

Isaiah 36:14

Ver. 14. Thus saith the king,.... The king of Assyria, whom he personated, whose general and ambassador he was; so he spake to command the greater awe of the people, and the more to terrify them:

let not Hezekiah deceive you; with fair words, promising protection and safety, making preparations for the defence of the city, and to oblige the besiegers to break up the siege of it:

for he shall not be able to deliver you; but if he was not, his God, whom he served, and in whom he trusted, was able to deliver them, and did deliver them; though he endeavoured to dissuade them from trusting in him, or hearkening to Hezekiah's persuasions thereunto, as in the following verse.

Isaiah 36:15

Ver. 15. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord,.... Hezekiah trusted in the Lord himself, and he endeavoured, both by his own example, and by arguments, to persuade his people to do so likewise; of this Rabshakeh was sensible, and was more afraid of this than of any thing else, and, therefore laboured this point more than any other; see
2Ch 32:6;

saying, the Lord will surely deliver us, this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria: which he might say with the greatest confidence, since the Lord had promised to defend it,
Isa 31:5 and especially if his sickness, and recovery out of it, and promises then made to him, were before this, as some think; since it is expressly promised by the Lord, that he would deliver him and the city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, Isa 38:6.

Isaiah 36:16

Ver. 16. Hearken not to Hezekiah,.... To his exhortations and persuasions to trust in the Lord; nor would he have them obey him in things civil, any more than hearken to him in things sacred, though their liege lord and sovereign; for his view and endeavour were to stir them up to mutiny and rebellion; and so the Targum,

"do not obey Hezekiah:"

or receive any orders from him, or pay any regard to them:

for thus saith the king of Assyria, make an agreement with me by a present; or, "make a blessing with me" {i}; either send a large and liberal gift to secure his favour, and their happiness; a most insolent and unrighteous demand this, when he had already received three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold, to withdraw his army; or make a blessed peace with me; suggesting that it would turn more to their account to give up themselves to him, than to be in the condition they were; so the Targum,

"make peace with me:"

this sense Ben Melech gives; and the Septuagint version is, "if ye would be blessed" {k}, or happy,

come out to me; forsake your king, throw off your allegiance to him, surrender yourselves and city to me:

and eat ye everyone of his vine, and everyone of his fig tree: and drink ye everyone the waters of his own cistern; promising liberty and property, but does not tell them how long they should enjoy them; he signifies that they should enjoy everything that was necessary, convenient, and delightful; vines and fig trees are mentioned, because common in Judea, and all had cisterns near them for their use; unless this last clause is to be understood of everyone having their own wives; see **Pr 5:15** as the other clauses may design the enjoyment of their estates and possessions, without any molestation or infringement of them; see **Mic 4:4**.

{i} hkrb yta wve "facit mecum benedictionem", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.
{k} ei boulesye euloghyhnai, Sept.

Isaiah 36:17

Ver. 17. Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land,..... Some have thought, as Jerom observes, that the land of Media was meant, which bore some likeness to the land of Judea in situation and fruitfulness. Maimonides thinks that Africa is intended {l}. Rabshakeh names no land, nor could he name any like, or equal to, the land of Canaan; he could not conceal his intention to remove them from their own land to another; this having been always done by the king of Assyria to people conquered by him, and as was usual for conquerors to do, that so the conquered might have no expectation or opportunity of recovering their own land:

a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards; corn for bread, and vineyards for wine, and both for food and drink; such a land was the land of Judea. The description agrees with **De 8:8**. Rabshakeh was well acquainted with the land of Judea; and this seems to confirm the conjecture of the Jews, that he was one of their people, since he could speak their language, and describe their land so well; all this he said to sooth and persuade them to a voluntary surrender.

{l} See T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1.

Isaiah 36:18

Ver. 18. Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you,.... To trust in the Lord, stand up in your own defence and not listen to these proposals; or, lest he "deceive you" {m}; with vain words; whom he would represent not only as not being their lawful king, and therefore never gives him that title, but also as a deceiver and impostor, of whom they should be cautious, and guard against:

saying, the Lord will deliver us; and therefore need not fear the boasts and threats, the force and fury, of the enemy:

hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land; over whom he presided, and to whom the people of it were devotees:

out of the hand of the king of Assyria? this reasoning would have had some weight in it had the Lord God of Israel been like the gods of the nations, but he is not; he is the Former and Maker of all things, and sits in the heavens, and does whatsoever he pleases in heaven and in earth; and therefore, though they could not deliver their nations that worshipped them, it did not follow that the God of Israel could not deliver Hezekiah and his people.

{m} Mkta tyoy Np "ne forte decipiat vos", Calvin, Vatablus; "ne seducat vos", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 36:19

Ver. 19. Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad?.... What is become of them? where are they to be found? where's their power to protect and defend the people they presided over? thus they might be justly derided, but not so the God at Israel; these places are mentioned in
Isa 10:9. Hamath was a city in Syria, thought by some to be the same afterwards called Antiochia and Epiphania, from Antiochus Epiphanes: Arphad is joined with it in Jer 49:23 as a city of Syria; perhaps originally founded and inhabited by the Arvadite, mentioned with the Hamathite, in Ge 10:18:

where are the gods of Sepharvaim? another place in Syria, the city Sipphore; not the Sipphara of Ptolemy {n}, in Mesopotamia, or that, near Babylon, Abydenus {o} makes mention of, but a city in Syro-Phoenicia, 2Ki 17:24:

and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? the gods of the above places, which were worshipped in Samaria, or the gods peculiar to that place; though Samaria was not taken by the present king of Assyria, Sennacherib, but by a predecessor of his, Shalmaneser, 2Ki 17:3,6, which yet is here boasted of as a conquest of the present king.

{n} Geograph. l. 5. c. 18. {o} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 457.

Isaiah 36:20

Ver. 20. Who are they amongst all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand?.... Not one of them, it is suggested; wherefore then should it be thought practicable,

that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand? thus blasphemously setting the Lord God of Israel upon a level with the fictitious gods of the Gentiles; though these could not, the Lord could, being the Lord God Almighty. If Rabshakeh was an apostate Jew, he must have known better; but the malice of such is usually the greatest.

Isaiah 36:21

Ver. 21. But they held their peace, and answered him not a word,.... The three ministers of Hezekiah; not as confounded, and unable to return an answer: they were capable of saying many things in proof that the Lord God was greater than the gods of the nations, and in favour of their king, Hezekiah, whom he had treated in a scurrilous manner; and could have objected to him the king of Assyria's breach of faith and honour, but these things they waved, and said nothing of; no doubt they said something to him, had some conference with him, or otherwise what were they sent as commissioners about? but they made no answer to his blasphemies and menaces:

for the king's commandment was, saying, answer him not: with respect to the above things; when he sent them, he might be aware that he would behave in such a rude, insolent, and blaspheming manner, and therefore the king gave them instructions how to conduct themselves, should this be the case. Musculus thinks the king was on the wall, and heard all himself, and gave orders to his ministers to make no reply; but this does not seem likely; what is here said of the ministers is also said of the people, 2Ki 18:36.

Isaiah 36:22

Ver. 22. Then came Eliakim, that was over the household,.... The first of the commissioners sent to Rabshakeh:

and Shebna the Scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah: by which it seems that he could not be with them on the wall, but was all the while in his own palace, whither they came to him, to report the issue of their conference with Rabshakeh:

with their clothes rent; which was done perhaps not in the presence and within the sight of Rabshakeh, but as they came along; and that partly on account of the blasphemies they had heard, Mt 26:65, and partly through the grief of heart, for the distress and calamity they might fear were coming on themselves, their king, their city, and country, **Joe 2:13**:

and told him the words of Rabshakeh; what he had said against him, and against the God of Israel, his menaces and his blasphemies; they made a faithful report of the whole, as messengers ought to do. What effect this had upon the king, we have an account of in the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 37:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 37

In this chapter are contained Hezekiah's message to Isaiah, desiring his prayer for him and his people, in this time of sore distress, Isa 37:1, the comforting and encouraging answer returned by the prophet to him, Isa 37:6, the king of Assyria's letter to Hezekiah, to terrify him into a surrender of the city of Jerusalem to him, Isa 37:8 which Hezekiah spread before the Lord, and prayed unto him for deliverance, Isa 37:14, upon which he received a gracious answer by the hand of the prophet, promising safety and deliverance to him, and destruction to the king of Assyria, of which a sign was given, Isa 37:21 and the chapter is closed with the slaughter of the Assyrian army by an angel, the flight of the king, and his death by the hands of his sons, Isa 37:36.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when King Hezekiah heard it,.... The report that his ministers made to him of the blasphemies and threatenings of Rabshakeh, the general of the Assyrian army:

that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth; the one because of the blasphemies he heard; the other cause of the destruction he and his people were threatened with:

and went into the house of the Lord; the temple, to pray to him there: he could have prayed in his own house, but he chose rather to go to the house of God, not so much on account of the holiness of the place, but because there the Lord promised, and was used to hear the prayers of his people, 1Ki 8:29,30 as also because it was more public, and would be known to the people, and set them an example to follow him in. Trouble should not keep persons from, but bring them to, the house of God; here the Lord is to be inquired of, here he is to be found; and from hence he sends deliverance and salvation to his people. Nothing is more proper than prayer in times of affliction; it is no ways unbecoming nor lessening the greatest king on earth to lay aside his royal robes, to humble himself before God, in a time of distress, and pray unto him. Hezekiah does not sit down to consider Rabshakeh's speech, to take it in pieces, and give an answer to it, but he applies unto God.

Isaiah 37:2

Ver. 2. And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe,.... Two of the commissioners sent to Rabshakeh, and who heard his insolence and blasphemy, and were capable of giving a full account of it, to Isaiah the prophet:

and the elders of the priests; as the chief of those that were concerned in civil affairs, so the chief of those that were employed in sacred things, were sent: this was a very honourable embassy; and it was showing great respect to the prophet, to send such personages to him:

covered with sackcloth; as the king himself was, following his example; and this is to be understood not of the elders of the priests only, but of Eliakim and Shebna also. These, so clad, were sent by the king

unto Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz; to give him an account of the present situation of affairs, of the distress he was in, and to desire his prayers: a very proper person to apply to, a prophet, one highly dear to God, and honoured by him, had near access unto him, and knew much of his mind.

Isaiah 37:3

Ver. 3. And they said unto him,.... The messengers to the prophet:

thus saith Hezekiah; this is the message he has sent us with; this is what he would have us lay before thee, and has given us in charge to say unto thee:

this day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy; it was a "day of trouble" to Hezekiah and his people, because it was a "day of rebuke", in which God rebuked them for their sins; or of "reproach and reviling", as the Targum and Septuagint, in which the Assyrians reviled and reproached both God and them; and especially because it was a "day of blasphemy" against God:

for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth; which is to be understood not of the reformation within themselves, happily begun and carried on, but now hindered from being brought to perfection, by the Assyrian army being so near them; nor of their attempt to cast off the Assyrian yoke, which was thought to be just upon finishing, but now despaired of, unless divine assistance be given; nor of their inability to punish the blasphemy that so much affected them; but of the deplorable condition they were now in. Hezekiah compares himself and his people to a woman in travail, that has been some time in it, and the child is fallen down to the place of the breaking forth of children, as the word {p} used signifies, but unable to make its way, and she having neither strength to bear it, nor to bring it forth, nature being quite exhausted, and strength gone, through the many pains and throes endured: and just so it was even with him and his people, they were in the utmost pain and distress; they could not help themselves, nor could he help them; and therefore must perish, unless they had immediate assistance and relief. Jarchi interprets the children of the children of Israel, the children of God.

{p} rbvm a rbv "fregit, confregit----matrix, vel os matricis, quod partu frangi videtur vel a frangentibus partus doloribus sic dictum", Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 324. rbvm de "usque ad angustias uteri", Vatablus. So Ben Melech interprets it of Mxr, "the womb".

Isaiah 37:4

Ver. 4. It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh,.... He had heard them; but the sense is, that it might be that he would take notice of them, and resent them in a public manner, and punish for them; and this is said, not as doubting and questioning whether he would or not, but as hoping and encouraging himself that he would: and it may be observed, that Hezekiah does not call the Lord "my God", or "our God", because he and his people were under the chastening hand of God for their sins, and were undeserving of such a relation; but "thy God", whose prophet he was, whom he served, and to whom he was dear, and with whom he had an interest; and therefore it might be hoped his prayer to him would be heard and accepted, and that through his interposition God would be prevailed upon to take notice of the railing speech of Rabshakeh:

whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; who has life in and of himself, and is the fountain, author, and giver of life to all others; him he reproached by setting him on a level with the lifeless idols of the Gentiles:

and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard; reprove him for his words, take vengeance upon him, or punish him for the blasphemous words spoken by him against the Lord and in his hearing: to this sense is the Targum; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions:

wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left; lift up thy voice, thy hands, and thine heart, in prayer to God in heaven; pray earnestly and fervently for those that are left; the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, the other ten having been carried captive some time ago; or the inhabitants of Jerusalem particularly, the defenced cities of Judah having been already taken by the Assyrian king. The fewness of the number that remained seems to be made use of as an argument for prayer in their favour. In times of distress, men should not only pray for themselves, but get others to pray for them, and especially men of eminence in religion, who have nearness of access to God, and interest in him.

Isaiah 37:5

Ver. 5. So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And delivered the above message to him from the king: these servants are mentioned Isa 37:2. Musculus thinks that the third and fourth verses are the words of the king to the messengers, and not of the messengers to the prophet; and that the first clause of the "third" verse should be rendered, "that they might say unto him", &c.; and having received their instructions, here is an account of their going to the prophet with them, which they delivered to him, and which it was not necessary to repeat. The Arabic version reads this verse in connection with the following, thus, "when the servants of King Hezekiah, came to Isaiah, Isaiah said to them", &c.

Isaiah 37:6

Ver. 6. And Isaiah said unto them, thus shall you say unto your master,.... Or, "your lord" {q}; King Hezekiah, whose ministers and messengers they were:

thus saith the Lord, be not afraid of the words thou hast heard; be not not terrified by them, they are but words, and no more, and will never become facts:

wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me; by representing him as no better than the gods of the Gentiles, and as unable to deliver out of the hands of the king of Assyria the city of Jerusalem, when he had said he would. The word {r} for "servants" signifies boys, lads, young men; so Rabshakeh and his two companions, Rabsaris and Tartan, are called, by way of contempt, they acting a weak and childish part as well as a wicked one.

{q} Mkynda la "ad dominum vestrum", Montanus. {r} yren "pueri recens nati, infantes, pueri judicio", Gusset.

Isaiah 37:7

Ver. 7. Behold, I will send a blast upon him,.... The king of Assyria; a pestilential one, as he afterwards did, which destroyed his army: or,

I will put a spirit into him {s}; a spirit of fear and dread, which will oblige him to desist from his purposes, and flee; though some interpret it only of an inclination, a will {t} in him, to return: it may be understood of an angel, a ministering spirit, and be rendered "I will send a spirit against him"; an angelic spirit, as he did, which cut off his army in one night:

and he shall hear a rumour; of the sudden and total destruction of his army; though some refer this to the rumour of the king of Ethiopia coming out to make war against him, Isa 37:9, but upon this he did not return to his own land, nor was he slain with the sword, as follows:

and return to his own land; as he did, immediately upon the slaughter of his army by the angel:

and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land: as he did, being slain by his own sons, Isa 37:37.

{s} xwr wb Ntwn "indam ei Spiritum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {t} So Ben Melech explains it by Nwur, "will", "desire", "purpose".

Isaiah 37:8

Ver. 8. So Rabshakeh returned,.... To the king of Assyria his master, to give him an account how things went at Jerusalem, and that he could get no direct answer from the king of Judah, and to consult with him what was proper to be done in the present situation of things; leaving the army before Jerusalem, under the command of the other two generals. For that he should take the army with him does not seem reasonable, when Hezekiah and his people were in such a panic on account of it; besides, the king of Assyria's letters to Hezekiah clearly suppose the army to be still at Jerusalem, or his menacing letters would have signified nothing; and after this the destruction of the Assyrian army before Jerusalem is related:

and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah; a city in the tribe of

Judah, Jos 10:29, and lay nearer to Jerusalem than Lachish, where Rabshakeh left him; so that he seemed to be drawing his army towards that city, on which his heart was set. Josephus {u} makes him to be at this time besieging Pelusium, a city in Egypt, but wrongly; which has led some into a mistake that Libnah and Pelusium are the same:

for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish; where he was, when he sent him to Jerusalem, Isa 36:2, having very probably taken it.

{u} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 1. sect. 4.

Isaiah 37:9

Ver. 9. And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia,.... Not Rabshakeh, but the king of Assyria heard a rumour of this Ethiopian king coming out to war against him: his name, in Josephus {w}, is Tharsices; in the Septuagint version it is Tharaca; and by Africanus {x} he is called Taracus; and is the same, who, by Strabo {y}, out of Megasthenes, is named Tearcon the Ethiopian: the Ethiopia of which he was king was either the upper Ethiopia or that beyond Egypt; to which agrees the Arabic version, which calls him Tharatha king of the Abyssines; but others take it for Cush, or rather Ethiopia in the land of Midian, or Arabia, as Bochart; which lay nearer to Judea than the other Ethiopia. Now the report that was brought to the king of Assyria of him was,

he is come forth to make war with thee; not by assisting the Egyptians, as Josephus, but rather the Jews; or by making an irruption into the king of Assyria's country in his absence: this some think to be the rumour predicted, Isa 37:7

and when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah; with terrifying letters, to frighten him into an immediate surrender of the city, that he might withdraw his army, and meet the king of Ethiopia with the greater force; and the rather he dispatched these messengers in all haste to Hezekiah, that his letters might reach him before he had knowledge of the king of Ethiopia, asking a diversion in his favour, which would encourage him to hold out the siege the longer: saying; as follows:

{w} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 1. sect. 4. {x} Apud Euseb. Chron. {y} Geograph. l. 15.

p. 472.

Isaiah 37:10

Ver. 10. Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying,.... This was the direction, and these the instructions he gave to his messengers, in which he gives Hezekiah the title of king, and owns him to be king of Judah; which was more than Rabshakeh his servant would do:

let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee; than which, nothing could be more devilish and satanical, to represent the God of truth, that cannot lie, as a liar and deceiver: in this the king of Assyria outdid Rabshakeh himself; he had represented Hezekiah as an impostor and a deceiver of the people, and warns them against him as such; and here Sennacherib represents God himself as a deceiver, and cautions Hezekiah against trusting in him: nothing is more opposite to Satan and his instruments, than faith in God, and therefore they labour with all their might and main to weaken it; however, this testimony Hezekiah had from his enemy, that he was one that trusted in the Lord; and a greater character a man cannot well have:

saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria; and so the Lord had said it; see Isa 38:6 and by some means or another Sennacherib had heard of it; and there was nothing he dreaded more than that Hezekiah should believe it, which would encourage him, he feared, to hold out the siege.

Isaiah 37:11

Ver. 11. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly,.... He boasts of the achievements of himself and his ancestors, and of more than was true; and which, if it had been true, was more to their disgrace than honour, namely, utterly to destroy kingdoms, and their inhabitants, to gratify their lusts; but though many had been destroyed by them, yet not all; not Ethiopia, whose king was come out to make war with him, and of whom he seems to be afraid; nor Egypt, which was in confederacy with Ethiopia; nor Judea, he was now invading; but this he said in a taunting way, to terrify Hezekiah:

and shalt thou be delivered? canst thou expect it? surely thou canst not. Is it probable? yea, is it possible thou shouldest be delivered? it is not; as sure as other lands have been destroyed, so sure shall thine.

Isaiah 37:12

Ver. 12. Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed,.... They have not. But what then? is the God of Israel to be put upon a level with such dunghill gods? so Sennacherib reckoned him, as Rabshakeh before, in his name, Isa 36:18:

as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden, which were in Telassar. Gozan was the same, it may be, with the Gausanitis of Ptolemy {z} which he makes mention of in his description of Mesopotamia; and the rather, since Haran or Chapman was a city of Mesopotamia, Ge 11:31 called by Ptolemy by the name of Carrae {a}; and who also, in the same place, makes mention of Rezeph, under the name of Rhescipha; though he likewise speaks of another place in Palmyrene in Syria, called Rhaesapha {b}, which some think to be the place here intended. Eden was also in Mesopotamia, in the eastern part of which was the garden of Eden; and this Telassar, inhabited by the children of Eden, was a city in that country, which is by Ptolemy {c} called Thelda; though Hillerus {d} is of opinion that the city Thalatha is meant, which is placed {e} near the river Tigris, a river of paradise. A very learned {f} men is of opinion, that the Eden, Isaiah here speaks of, belongs either to Syria of Damascus, and to the Lebanon and Paneas from whence Jordan arose; or to Syro-Phoenicia, and the Mediterranean sea, which the name Thalassar shows, as if it was
yalassa, the Syrians being used to derive not a few of their words from the Greeks: and certain it is, that there is now a village called Eden on Mount Lebanon, which Thevenot {g} mentions; and another, near Damascus, Mr. Maundrell {h} speaks of; see **Am 1:5** and Tyre in Phoenicia is called Eden, Eze 28:13.

{z} Geograph, l. 5. c. 18. {a} Ibid. {b} Ibid. c. 15. {c} lbid. c. 18. {d} Onomast. Sacr. p. 945. {e} Geograph. l. 5. c. 20. {f} Nichol. Abrami Pharus Vet. Test. l. 2. c. 16. p. 57. {g} Travels, part 1. B. 2. ch. 60. p. 221. {h} Journey from Aleppo, p. 119, 120. Ed. 7th.

Isaiah 37:13

Ver. 13. Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim,.... The same, as some think, with the gods or idols of those places, See Gill on "Isa 36:19"; though it may be the princes that ruled over those cities are meant, who were either slain, or become tributary to the king of Assyria. It is added,

Henah and Ivah: which some take to be the names of the gods or kings of Sepharvaim; but rather, since Sepharvaim is of the dual number, it was a double city, the river Euphrates passing between them; and these, as Musculus conjectures, were the names of them; or it may be, these were distinct cities from that, but what or where they were is not certain. Ptolemy makes mention of a place called Ingine, near Gausanitis or Gozan, supposed to be Henah; though others rather think it to be Ange, which he places in Arabia {i}, which I think is not so probable. Ivah perhaps is the same with Avah, in 2Ki 17:24. The Targum does not take them for names or places, but translates them,

"hath he not removed them, and carried them captive?"

and so Jarchi's note is,

"the king of Assyria hath moved and overthrown them, and destroyed them, and removed them out of their place;"

referring to the other cities.

{i} Geograph. l. 6. c. 7.

Isaiah 37:14

Ver. 14. And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it,.... Or books {k}, in which the above things were written; and everyone of these he read, as Kimchi interprets it; though the Targum is,

"he took the letters from the hand of the messengers, and read one of them;"

that is, as Kimchi's father explains it, in which was the blasphemy against God;

this he read over carefully to himself, observed the contents of it, and then did with it as follows:

and Hezekiah went up unto the house of God; the temple, the outward court of it, further than that he could not go:

and spread it before the Lord; not to read it, as he had done, or to acquaint him with the contents of it, which he fully knew; but, as it chiefly regarded him, and affected his honour and glory, he laid it before him, that he might take notice of it, and vindicate himself, and avenge his own cause; he brought it as a proof of what he had to say to him in prayer, and to support him in his allegations, and as a means to quicken himself in the discharge of that duty.

{k} Myrpo ta "libros", V. L.

Isaiah 37:15

Ver. 15. And Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord, saying. He did not return railing for railing, but committed himself and his cause to him that judgeth righteously; he did not write an answer to the letter himself, but lays it before the Lord, and prays him to answer it, who was most principally reflected on in it.

Isaiah 37:16

Ver. 16. O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubim,.... Or, "the inhabitant of the cherubim" {l}; which were over the mercy seat, the residence of the Shechinah, or Majesty of God, the symbol of the divine Presence in the holy of holies; a title which the God of Israel, the Lord of armies in heaven, and earth bears, and distinguishes him from all other gods, and which several titles carry in them arguments to strengthen faith in prayer; being "the Lord of hosts", he was able to do whatsoever was desired, and more abundantly; being "the God of Israel", their covenant God, it might be hoped and expected he would protect and defend them; and sitting "between the cherubim", on the mercy seat, great encouragement might be had that he would be gracious and merciful, and hear and help:

thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; this is opposed to the conceit of Sennacherib, that he was only the God of the Jews, and had no concern with other kingdoms and nations; whereas all belong to him, and him only; they are all under his jurisdiction and dominion, and at his will and control:

thou hast made heaven and earth; and so has an indisputable right to the government of the whole world, and to the disposal of all things in it.

{l} Mybrkh bvy "cherubim inhabitator", Forerius.

Isaiah 37:17

Ver. 17. Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear,.... The prayer which Hezekiah was now presenting to him, as also the reproach of the enemy:

open thine eyes, O Lord, and see; the letter he spread before him, and take notice of the blasphemies in it; and punish for them. Both these clauses are to be understood after the manner of men, and in a way becoming the being and perfections of God, to whom ears and eyes are not properly to be ascribed, and so likewise the bowing of the one, and the opening of the other; but both denote the gracious condescension of God, to take notice of things on earth, and vindicate the cause of his people, which is his own:

and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he hath sent to reproach the living God; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, understand it of the words which Sennacherib sent in the letter to reproach the Lord; but in 2Ki 19:16, it is, "which hath sent him"; the messenger, Rabshakeh, or whoever was the person that brought the letter to Hezekiah. The Targum paraphrases the latter part thus,

"to reproach the people of the living God;"

both God and his people were reproached, and both carry in them arguments with the Lord to hear and avenge himself and them; and the king prays that he would "hear", take notice of and observe all the words and give a proper answer, by inflicting just punishment.

Isaiah 37:18

Ver. 18. Of a truth Lord,.... This is a truth and will be readily owned what the king of Assyria has said that his ancestors have destroyed all lands, or at least have endeavoured to do it, and have had it in their hearts to do it:

the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries: or "all the lands and their land" {m}; the Targum is,

"all provinces and their lands;"

the countries and town and villages in them, or the chief cities and villages round about them.

{m} Mura taw twurah lk "omnes terras, et terram eorum", Pagninus, Montanus; "vel terram inquam eorum", Vatablus.

Isaiah 37:19

Ver. 19. And, have cast their gods into the fire..... And burnt them; and it may well be asked, where are they? Isa 36:19:

for they were no gods, but the works of men's hands, wood and stone; they were made of wood or of stone, and therefore could not be called gods; nor could they save the nations that worshipped them, nor themselves, from the fire:

therefore they have destroyed them; the Assyrian kings were able to do it, and did do it, because they were idols of wood or stone; but it did not therefore follow, that they were a match for the God of Israel, the true, and living God.

Isaiah 37:20

Ver. 20. Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand,.... The hand of the king of Assyria. The Lord had promised that he would and Hezekiah believed he would; but he knew that for this he would be inquired of by him, and he pleads covenant interest, in him, and entreats for salvation upon that account, as well as for the reason following:

that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even thou only; by doing that which other gods could not do; they could not save the nations that worshipped them from the hand of the Assyrians; if therefore the God of Israel saved his people from them, this would be a proof to all the world that he is God and there is none besides him.

Isaiah 37:21

Ver. 21. Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying,.... Isaiah, by a spirit of prophecy, was made acquainted by the Lord both with the prayer of Hezekiah, and the Lord's answer to it; and therefore immediately sent to the king, who was either at the temple praying, or was returned to the palace, to let him know, the mind of the Lord in this matter. The Septuagint and Syriac versions render it, "and Isaiah the son of Amoz was sent to Hezekiah"; but this does not agree with the Hebrew text; Isaiah sent messengers to the king, and by them informed him what the Lord had said in answer to his prayer. Why he went not himself cannot be said:

thus saith the Lord God of Israel; Hezekiah had been praying to him under that title and character, Isa 37:16:

whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria: or, "what thou hast prayed", &c. {n}; the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, supply, "I have heard". It is bad for any to have the prayers of good men against them.

{n} tllpth rva "quae preeatus es", Vatablus; "quod attinet ad id quod oravisti", Piscator.

Isaiah 37:22

Ver. 22. This is the word which the Lord hath spoken concerning him,.... The sentence he has pronounced upon him, the punishment he has determined to inflict on him, in answer to Hezekiah's prayer against him:

the virgin, the daughter of Zion; hath despised thee; and laughed thee to scorn; that, is the inhabitants of Zion, particularly of the fort of Zion, called a "virgin", because it had never been forced, or taken and to show that it was a vain thing in Sennacherib to attempt it, as well as it would have been an injurious one, could he have accomplished it; since God, the Father of this virgin, would carefully keep her from such a rape; and he who was her husband to whom she was espoused as a chaste virgin, would defend and protect her; and the whole is designed to show the impotent malice of the king of Assyria; otherwise, at the time when these words were spoken, the daughter of Zion was in a fearful and trembling condition, and not in a laughing frame; but this declares what she might do now, and would do hereafter, for anything that he could do against her. The Targum paraphrases it,

"the kingdom of the congregation of Zion;"

the whole nation. Some restrain this to the inhabitants of the upper part of the city of Jerusalem, as what follows to those of the lower part:

the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee; or "after thee {o}"; by way of scorn and derision; that is when he fled; which shows, that though these things are spoken as if they were past, after the manner of the prophets, yet were to come, and would be when Sennacherib fled, upon the destruction of his army. Of this phrase, as expressive of scorn, see Ps 22:7. The Targum is, "the people that dwell in Jerusalem", &c.

{o} Kyrxa "post te", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 37:23

Ver. 23. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed?.... A creature like thyself? no, but a God, and not one like the gods of the nations, the idols of wood and stone, but the living God:

and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice? alluding to Rabshakeh's crying with a loud voice, Isa 36:13:

and lifted up thine eyes on high? as proud and haughty persons do, disdaining to look upon those they treat with contempt:

even against the Holy One of Israel; that is, Israel's God, and will protect him; "a Holy One", and of purer eyes than to behold with pleasure such a proud blaspheming creature, and cannot look upon him but with indignation; for against such he sets himself; these he resists, pulls down, and destroys.

Isaiah 37:24

Ver. 24. By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord,.... Particularly by Rabshakeh, and the other two that were with him, who, no doubt, assented to what he said; not content to reproach him himself, he set his servants to do it likewise; he made use of them as instruments, and even set them, as well as himself, above the Lord:

and hast said, by the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains; not only with his foot soldiers, but with his chariots, and a great number of them, he had travelled over hills and mountains, as Hannibal over the Alps, and was now upon the high mountains which were round about Jerusalem, and very near the mountain of the Lord's house; of which Jarchi interprets the words:

to the sides of Lebanon; meaning either the mountain of Lebanon, which was on the borders of the land of Israel, famous for cedars and fir trees, later mentioned; or, the temple made of the wood of Lebanon, near which his army now lay; so the Targum and Jarchi understand it:

and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof; to make way for his army, and to support himself with materials for the siege; to make tents with for his soldiers to lie in, or wooden fortresses from whence to annoy the city. The cedars of Lebanon were very large and tall. Mr. Maundrell {p} says he measured one of the largest, and

"found it six and thirty feet and six inches thick; its branches spread a hundred and eleven feet; its trunk from the ground was about fifteen or sixteen feet, and then divided into five branches, each of which would make a large tree."

Monsieur Thevenot {q} says, now there are no more nor less that, twenty three cedars on Mount Lebanon, great and small: or it may be, these metaphorically intend the princes, and nobles, and chief men of the Jewish nation, he threatens to destroy; so the Targum,

"and I will kill the most beautiful of their mighty ones, and the choicest of their princes:"

and I will enter into the height of his border; some think the tower of Lebanon, which stood on the east part of it towards Syria, is meant; but it seems rather to design Jerusalem, the metropolis of the nation, which he thought himself sure of entering into, and taking possession of; and this was what his heart was set upon; so the Targum,

and I will subdue the city of their strength; their strong city Jerusalem, in which they placed their strength:

and the forest of his Carmel: or "the forest and his fruitful field" {r}; the same city, which, for the number of its houses and inhabitants, was like a forest, and was Hezekiah's fruitful field, where all his riches and treasure were. The Targum interprets it of his army,

"and I will consume the multitude of their army."

{p} Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 179. {q} Travels, part 1. B. 2. ch. 60. p. 221. {r} wlmrk rey "sylvas, arva ejus", Junius & Tremellius; "sylvas et arva ejus", Piscator.

Isaiah 37:25

Ver. 25. I have digged, and drunk water,.... In places where he came, and found no water for his army, he set his soldiers to work, to dig cisterns, as the Targum, or wells, so that they had water sufficient to drink; in 2Ki 19:24, it is "strange waters", which were never known before:

and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places; or, as the Targum,

"with the soles of the feet of the people that are with me;"

the Syriac version, "with the hoofs of my horses": with which he trampled down banks of rivers, and pools, and cisterns of water; signifying the vast numbers of his soldiers, who could drink up a river, or carry it away with them, or could turn the streams of rivers that ran by the sides, or round about, cities besieged, and so hindered the carrying on of a siege, and the taking of the place; but he had ways and means very easily to drain them, and ford them; or to cut off all communication of the water from the besieged. Some render it, "I have dried up all the rivers of Egypt" {s}, as Kimchi, on 2Ki 19:24, observes, and to be understood hyperbolically; see Isa 19:6, so Ben Melech observes.

{s} rwum yrway lk "omnes rivos Aegypti", Vitringa.

Isaiah 37:26

Ver. 26. Hast thou not heard long ago?.... By report, by reading the history of ancient times, or by means of the prophets; these are the words of the Lord to Sennacherib. The Targum adds,

"what I did to Pharaoh king of Egypt;"

it follows:

how I have done it; and of ancient times that I have formed it? meaning either the decree in his own breast from all eternity, and which he had published by his prophets, of raising up him, this wicked prince, to be the scourge of nations; or by the "it" are meant the people of the Jews, God's Israel, whom he had made, formed into a body politic, and into a church state, and had done great things for, in bringing them out of Egypt, leading them through the Red sea, providing for them, and protecting them in the wilderness, subduing nations under them, and settling them in the land of Canaan;

now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities into ruinous heaps {t}; which some render interrogatively,

now should I bring, it to be laid waste, and fenced cities to be ruinous heaps? that is, the people of the Jews, the city of Jerusalem, and other fenced cities? no, I will not: or the meaning is, that that decree, which he had framed and formed in his own mind from all eternity, he was now bringing to pass; which was, that this king of Babylon should be a waster and destroyer of fortified cities, which he should reduce to heaps of ruin; wherefore he had no reason to vaunt as he had done, for he was only an instrument of executing the purposes and designs of God, though it was not in his heart, nor did he so mean.

{t} Myun Mylg "in acervos et flores", "into heaps and flowers", that is, into heaps of dust, which being moved, and raised by the wind, fly away like flowers and blossoms of trees; so Gussetius, "in acervos volantes, aut ad volandum excitatos, scil. dum redacti in pulveres, magna ex parte, volant, excitati a ventis", Comment. Ebr. p. 502.

Isaiah 37:27

Ver. 27. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power,.... Or, "short of hand" {u}; it was not in the power of their hands to help themselves, because the Lord took away their strength, having determined that they should be destroyed for their sins; otherwise it would not have been in the power of Sennacherib to have subdued them; this takes off greatly from the king of Assyria's triumph, that they were a weak people, whom he had conquered, and were given up into his hands by the Lord, according to his purposes, or he had never been lord over them:

they were dismayed and confounded; not so much at the sight of Sennacherib's army, but because the Lord had dispirited them, and took away their natural courage from them, so that they became an easy prey to him:

they were as the grass of the field: which has no strength to stand before the mower:

and as the green herb; which is easily cropped with the hand of man, or eaten by the beasts of the field:

as the grass on the housetops: which has no matter of root, and is dried up with the heat of the sun:

and as corn blasted before it be grown up; before it rises up into anything of a stalk, and much less into ears; so the Targum,

"which is blasted before it comes to be ears;"

all which represent the feeble condition of the people overcome by him; so that he had not so much to glory of, as having done mighty things.

{u} dy yruq breviati, "vel breves manu", Forerius; "abbreviati manu", Vatablus, Montanus.

Isaiah 37:28

Ver. 28. But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in,.... Where he dwelt, what he did at home, his secret councils, cabals, contrivances, schemes and plans for the compassing of his ends, the subduing of kingdoms, and setting up an universal monarchy; and his going out of Babylon, his marches, and counter marches, and his entrance into the land of Judea; there was not a motion made, or a step taken in the cabinet or camp, but what were known to the Lord; so the Targum,

"thy sitting in council, and thy going out abroad to make war, and thy coming into the land of Israel, are manifest before me:"

and thy rage against me; against his people, against the city that was called by his name, against the temple where he was worshipped, particularly against his servant Hezekiah, because he would not immediately deliver up the city to him. The Targum and Syriac versions render it, "before me"; and then the meaning is, "thy rage", wrath and fury, "is before me": or manifest to me; and which he could restrain at pleasure, as he promises to do in the next verse.

Isaiah 37:29

Ver. 29. Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult is come up into mine ears,..... The rage which Sennacherib expressed both by Rabshakeh, and in his letter against Hezekiah and his people, is taken by the Lord as against himself; so great was his care of them, and concern for them; and indeed there was a great deal of blasphemy belched out against himself; and so the Syriac version renders the next word, translated "tumult", "thy blasphemy"; though that may rather intend the blustering noise that Rabshakeh made, or the noise of the Assyrian army, the chariots and horsemen, and the multitude of the soldiers, which was not only heard by the Jews, and was terrible to them, but was taken notice of by the Lord, who had it in derision; hence he adds:

therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips; comparing Sennacherib to leviathan, or the great whale, or to some very large and unruly fish, not easily caught and managed; see Job 41:1, or to a bear, or buffalo, in whose noses men put iron rings, and lead them about at pleasure; and also to a horse or mule, which are managed by the bit and bridle; signifying hereby the strength, fierceness, and fury of the Assyrian monarch, and the power of God to restrain him, which he could easily do:

and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest; from Jerusalem, the same way he came to it, to his own land again, and so he did, Isa 37:37.

Isaiah 37:30

Ver. 30. And this shall be a sign unto thee,.... Not to Sennacherib, but to Hezekiah; for here the Lord turns himself from the former, and directs his speech to the latter, in order to comfort him under the dreadful apprehensions he had of the Assyrian monarch, and his army; assuring him of deliverance; giving him a sign or token of it, and which was a wonder, as the word sometimes signifies, and was no less marvellous than the deliverance itself:

ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself: and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof: all which was very wonderful; for whereas, either through the invasion of the land, and the siege of the city, they could not till their land as they had used to do, or what was upon it was destroyed or eaten up by the Assyrian army; and yet, through the wonderful providence of God, the earth of its own accord yielded that very year a sufficiency for them; and though the second year was, as it is thought, a sabbatical year, when the land had rest, and by the law was not to be tilled, yet it also produced of itself what was sufficient for their support; and then the third year being entirely free from the enemy, and all fears of his return, they go about their business as formerly, to sowing and reaping corn, and planting vineyards, and enjoying the fruit of their labours; all which falling out according to this prediction, must greatly confirm the mind of Hezekiah, and make him easy as to any future attempt upon him he might fear. The Vulgate Latin version renders the second clause, "ye shall eat apples the second year"; and so Symmachus, but without foundation.

Isaiah 37:31

Ver. 31. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah,.... The few that escaped out of the cities of Judah, upon Sennacherib's invasion of the land, and besieging and taking the fenced cities thereof, who fled to Jerusalem for safety; these were a type of the remnant, according to the election of grace, the few that are chosen of God, the special people redeemed by Christ, the little flock of his, the small number that enter in at the strait gate, and are saved; and who escape, not the fall of Adam, nor the imputation of his sin, nor the corruption of nature, nor the pollutions of the world in a state of nature; but who escape the vengeance of divine justice, the curse of a righteous law, wrath to come, and the damnation of hell; which is owing to the love of God, the covenant of his grace, the suretyship engagements of Christ, and his performance of them; these are the household of faith, God's confessing and professing people, who are Jews inwardly, of whom there are but a few; of these it is said, they

shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. The Targum is,

"as a tree which sends forth its roots below, and lifts up its branches above."

The sense is, that those people that fled from their own habitations to Jerusalem should return thither again upon the breaking up of the siege, and be firmly settled, and live peaceably and prosperously, abounding with all good things, which may be applied, mystically, to true believers taking root again in the love of God, which is a hidden root, and is the source of salvation, and all the blessings of it, and is in itself immovable; and though the saints are secured in it, and by it, and nothing can root them out of it, yet they are sometimes shaken with doubts and fears about their interest in it; when there is again a fresh taking root in it, and that is, when they have a strong and lively persuasion of it, which produces fruitfulness in the exercise of faith, hope, and love, and in Gospel obedience; and also to their taking root in Christ, who is as a root unto them, hidden, and out of sight to the world, mean and abject, yet the source of all happiness to the saints, who have a being in him, are born by him, and receive sap and nourishment from him; and though their faith of interest in him may be sometimes shaken, yet there is a fresh taking root by new acts of faith upon him, which produce fruitfulness; the fruits brought forth by such are good works, which spring from the seed of grace, are owing to divine goodness, to the dews of grace, are pleasant and acceptable to God through Christ, and profitable unto men; these are called the fruits of the Spirit, and of righteousness, and are meet for repentance, and are brought forth openly and publicly, which may be signified by being bore upwards.

Isaiah 37:32

Ver. 32. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant,.... The Targum is, "the rest of the righteous;"

the same as before; who, when the city should be free from the enemy, would go out of it, and return to their former settlements, in the several parts of Judea; a type of those who went out of Jerusalem with the Gospel of Christ, and spread it not only in Judea, but in the Gentile world:

and they that escape out of Mount Zion; the same persons, differently described; some of whom were in the city of Jerusalem, and others in the fort of Zion, but departed from hence when the siege was broke up. The Targum is,

"and the escaped of them that confirm the law out of Mount Zion;"

see **Isa 2:3**:

the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this: his concern for his own honour and glory, and his great love to his people, shall engage him to perform all that is here promised and foretold. The Targum is,

"by the word of the Lord of hosts this shall be done."

Isaiah 37:33

Ver. 33. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria,.... The issue of his expedition, and the fruitfulness of it; how vain his attempts would be, and how successless in this undertaking:

he shall not come into this city; shall not enter into it, and take possession of it, though so sure of it; or, "shall not come unto it {w}"; for some think he never was any nearer it than Libnah, from whence he sent his letters to Hezekiah, Isa 37:8,

nor shoot an arrow there; neither he nor his archers, so as to annoy or kill anyone person in it:

nor come before it with shields; or, "with a shield"; that is, he himself with one; otherwise his army under Rabshakeh was before it with men armed with shields; or the sense is, he shall not prevent it, or seize upon it, with his shielded men:

nor cast a bank against it; raise a mount, in order to fix his batteries upon, and play his artillery from, and shoot his arrows in to greater advantage.

{w} tazh ryeh la aby al "non veniet ad civitatem hanc", Oecolampadius, Musculus, Gataker; "ad urbem hanc": Vitringa.

Isaiah 37:34

Ver. 34. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return,.... Without executing his designs on Jerusalem, or other places; he shall lose his labour, and make the best of his way to his own country, without turning to the right or left, in order to disturb other nations, and enlarge his kingdom, being quite dispirited and confounded by what he shall meet with:

and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord; or, unto this city, as before; which is repeated to confirm it, and to show the certainty of it.

Isaiah 37:35

Ver. 35. For I will defend this city to save it,.... Or, "shield it"; and if God will be the shield and protection of any place or people, they must needs be safe; who can hurt them?

For my own sake, and for my servant David's sake; not for the merits of the inhabitants of it, but for the sake of his own name and glory, who had been blasphemed by the Assyrian monarch, and his general; and for the sake of his servant David, in whose seed he had promised the kingdom should be established; see **2Sa 7:12** and chiefly for the sake of the Messiah, David's son, and the Lord's servant, who was to spring from Hezekiah's race, and therefore must not be cut off.

Isaiah 37:36

Ver. 36. Then the angel of the Lord went forth,.... From heaven, at the command of the Lord, being one of his ministering spirits, sent forth by him,

as for the protection of his people, so for the destruction of their enemies; this was the same night, either in which the Assyrian army sat down before Jerusalem, as say the Jews {x}; or, however the same night in which the message was sent to Hezekiah; see
2Ki 19:35:

and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand men: a prodigious slaughter indeed! which shows the power and strength of an angel. Josephus {y} says they were smitten with a pestilential disease; but other Jewish writers say it was by fire from heaven, which took away their lives, but did not consume their bodies, nor burn their clothes; but, be that as it will, destroyed they were:

and when they arose early in the morning: those of the army that survived; Sennacherib, and his servants about him; or Hezekiah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that were besieged:

behold, they were all dead corpses; the whole army, excepting a few; this may well be expressed with a note of admiration, "behold!" for a very wonderful thing it was.

{x} T. Bab. Sanhedrin: fol. 95. 1. {y} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 1. sect. 5.

Isaiah 37:37

Ver. 37. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went, and returned,.... Being informed of the destruction of his army in this miraculous manner, he departed from the place where he was in all haste, fearing lest he himself should be destroyed in like manner; and having no forces to pursue his designs, or wherewith to make an attempt elsewhere, he made the best of his way at once into his own country, whither he returned with great shame and confusion:

and dwelt at Nineveh; the metropolis of his kingdom; see
Ge 10:11.

Isaiah 37:38

Ver. 38. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god,.... Josephus says {z}, in his temple, called Arasce; but Nisroch was the name of his deity he worshipped; though who he was is not certain. Jarchi says, in one of their expositions it is said to be ron, "neser", a plank of the ark of Noah; in Tobit 1:24 {a} it is called his idol Dagon; according to Hillerus, the word signifies a prince; and with Vitringa, a king lifted up, or glorious, and whom he takes to be the Assyrian Belus, worshipped in the form and habit of Mars:

that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; the former of these had his name from an idol so called, 2Ki 17:31, which signifies a glorious king; and the other may signify a prince of treasure. Josephus says they were his eldest sons; what should move them to be guilty of this parricide is not known. Jarchi says that he prayed to his god, and vowed, if he would deliver him, that he might not be slain, he would offer up his two sons to him, who standing by, and hearing him, therefore slew him; the reason given for it in the Apocrypha:

"And there passed not five and fifty days, before two of his sons killed him, and they fled into the mountains of Ararath; and Sarchedonus his son reigned in his stead; who appointed over his father's accounts, and over all his affairs, Achiacharus my brother Anael's son." (Tobit 1:21)

According to Munster's edition, is, that Sennacherib asked his counsellors and senators why the holy blessed God was so zealous for Israel and Jerusalem, that an angel destroyed the host of Pharaoh, and all the firstborn of Egypt, but the young men the Lord gave them, salvation was continually by their hands; and his wise men and counsellors answered him, that Abraham the father of Israel led forth his son to slay him, that the Lord his God might be propitious to him, and hence it is he is so zealous for his children, and has executed vengeance on thy servants; then, said the king, I will slay my sons; by this means, perhaps, he may be propitious to me, and help me; which word, when it came to Adrammelech and Sharezer, they laid in wait for him, and killed him with the sword at the time he went to pray before Dagon his god:

and they escaped into the land of Armenia; or "Ararat;" on the mountains of which the ark rested, **Ge 8:4**. Both the Septuagint version and Josephus say it was Armenia into which he escaped; and Jerom observes, that Ararat is a champaign country in Armenia, through which the river Araxes flows, at the foot of Mount Taurus, whither it is extended. The Targum calls it the land of Kardu; and the Syriac version the land of the Keredeans, which also belonged to Armenia; in these mountainous places they might think themselves most safe:

and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead; whom Josephus calls Assarachoddas; and in Ptolemy's Caron he is named Assaradinus; the same, as some think, whom the Greeks call Sardanapalus; in the Apocrypha:

"And Achiacharus intreating for me, I returned to Nineve. Now Achiacharus was cupbearer, and keeper of the signet, and steward, and overseer of the accounts: and Sarchedonus appointed him next unto him: and he was my brother's son." (Tobit 1:22)

he is called Sarchedon, which some take to be the same with Sargon, Isa 20:1.

{a} I could not verify this reference. Editor. {z} Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 10. c. 1. sect. 5.)

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 38:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 38

This chapter gives an account of Hezekiah's sickness, recovery, and thanksgiving on that account. His sickness, and the nature of it, and his preparation for it, as directed to by the prophet, Isa 38:1, his prayer to God upon it, Isa 38:2 the answer returned unto it, by which he is assured of living fifteen years more, and of the deliverance and protection of the city of Jerusalem from the Assyrians, Isa 38:4, the token of his recovery, the sun going back ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz, Isa 38:7, a writing of Hezekiah's upon his recovery, in commemoration of it, Isa 38:9, in which he represents the deplorable condition he had been in, the terrible apprehensions he had of things, especially of the wrath and fury of the Almighty, and his sorrowful and mournful complaints, Isa 38:10, he observes his deliverance according to the word of God; expresses his faith in it; promises to retain a cheerful sense of it; owning that it was by the promises of God that he had lived as other saints did; and ascribes his preservation from the grave to the love of God to him, of which the forgiveness of his sins was an evidence, Isa 38:15, the end of which salvation was, that he might praise the Lord, which he determined to do, on stringed instruments, Isa 38:18, and the chapter is closed with observing the means of curing him of his boil; and that it was at his request that the sign of his recovery was given him, Isa 38:21.

Ver. 1. In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death,.... This was about the time that Sennacherib invaded Judea, threatened Jerusalem with a siege, and his army was destroyed by an angel from heaven; but, whether it was before or after the destruction of his army, interpreters are not agreed. Some of the Jewish writers, as Jarchi upon the place, and others {a}, say, it was three days before the ruin of Sennacherib's army; and that it was on the third day that Hezekiah recovered, and went up to the temple, that the destruction was; and that it was the first day of the passover; and that this was before the city of Jerusalem was delivered from him; and the fears of him seem clear from Isa 38:6 and some are of opinion that his sickness was occasioned by the consternation and terror he was thrown into, by reason of the Assyrian army, which threatened ruin to him and his kingdom. Though Josephus {b} says, that it was after his deliverance from it, and when he had given thanks to God for it; however, it is certain it was in the same year, since it was in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign that Sennacherib invaded Judea, and from this his sickness and recovery fifteen years were added to his days, and he reigned no more than twenty nine years, **2Ki 8:2** what this sickness was cannot be said with certainty; some have conjectured it to be the plague, since he had a malignant ulcer, of which he was cured by a plaster of figs; but, be it what it will, it was a deadly one in its own nature, it was a sickness unto death, a mortal one; though it was not eventually so, through the interposition of divine power, which prevented it. The reason of this sickness, which Jarchi gives, that it was because he did not take to himself a wife, is without foundation; more likely the reason of it was, to keep him humble, and that he might not be lifted up with the deliverance, or be more thankful for it:

and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came unto him: not of his own accord to visit him, but was sent by the Lord with a message to him:

and said unto him, thus saith the Lord, set thine house in order; or, "give orders to thine house" {c}: to the men of thine house, as the Targum; his domestics, his counsellors and courtiers, what they should do after his death; how his personal estate should be disposed of; how the throne should be filled up; who should succeed him, since he had no son: the family and secular affairs of men should be put in order, and direction given for the management of them, and their substance and estates should be disposed of by will before their death; and much more a concern should be shown for the setting in order their spiritual affairs, or that they may be habitually ready for death and eternity;

for thou shall die, and not live: or not recover of thy sickness, as the Targum adds: "for thou art a dead man", as it may be rendered, in all human appearance; the disease being deadly, and of which he could not recover by the help of any medicine; nothing but almighty power could save him; and this is said, to observe to him his danger, to give him the sentence of death in himself, and to set him a praying, as it did.

{a} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 23. p. 65. {b} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 2. sect. 1. {c} Ktybl wu "praecipe domui tuae", Musculus, Vatablus, Pagniaus, Montanus.

Isaiah 38:2

Ver. 2. Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall,.... Not figuratively to the wall of his heart, as Jerom; but literally, either to the wall of his bedchamber where he lay sick, that his tears might not be seen, and his prayers interrupted, and that he might deliver them with more privacy, freedom, and fervency; or else to the wall of the temple, as the Targum, towards which good men used to look when they prayed, **1Ki 8:38**, which was a type of Christ, to whom we should have respect in all our petitions, as being the only Mediator between God and man: and prayed unto the Lord; as follows:

Isaiah 38:3

Ver. 3. And said, remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee,.... He puts the Lord in mind of his good walk and works, which are never forgotten by him, though they may seem to be: and this he the rather did, because it might be thought that he had been guilty of some very enormous crime, which he was not conscious to himself he had; it being unusual to cut men off in the prime of their days, but in such a case:

how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart; or rather, "that I have walked before thee", as Noldius, since the manner of walking is declared in express terms; so the Targum, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and others; that the course of his life in the sight of God, having the fear of him upon his heart, and before his eyes, was according to the truth of his word, institutions, and appointments; that he walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, and in the sincerity, integrity, and uprightness of his soul; and however imperfect his services were, as no man so walks as to be free from sin, yet he was sincere and without dissimulation in the performance of them; his intentions were upright, his views were purely to the glory of God:

and have done that which is good in thy sight; agreeably both to the moral and ceremonial law, in his own private and personal capacity as a man, in the administration of justice in his government as a king; and particularly in reforming the nation; in destroying idols, and idol worship; in breaking in pieces the brazen serpent, when used to idolatrous purposes; and in setting up the pure worship of God, and his ordinances; and which he does not plead as meritorious, but mentions as well pleasing to God, which he graciously accepts of, and encourages with promises of reward:

and Hezekiah wept sore; not only because of his death, the news of which might be shocking to nature; but because of the distressed condition the nation would be in, having now the Assyrian army in it, or at least not wholly free from fears, by reason of that monarch; and besides, had no son to succeed him in the throne, and so difficulties and troubles might arise within themselves about a successor; and it may be, what troubled him most of all was, that dying without issue, the Messiah could not spring from his seed.

Isaiah 38:4

Ver. 4. Then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah,.... Before he had got out into the middle court, 2Ki 20:4:

saying, as follows:

Isaiah 38:5

Ver. 5. Go and say to Hezekiah,.... Turn again, and tell him, 2Ki 20:5:

thus saith the Lord the God of David thy father; this is said, to show that he remembered the covenant he made with David his father, concerning the kingdom, and the succession of his children in it; and that he had a regard to him, as walking in his steps:

I have heard thy prayer; and therefore was not surely a foolish one, as Luther somewhere calls it, since it was heard and answered so quickly:

I have seen thy tears; which he shed in prayer, and so studiously concealed from others, when he turned his face to the wall:

behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years; that is, to the days he had lived already, and beyond which it was not probable, according to the nature of his disease, he could live; and besides, he had the sentence of death pronounced on him, and had it within himself, nor did he pray for his life; so that these fifteen years were over and above what he could or did expect to live; and because it was unusual in such a case, and after such a declaration made, that a man should live, and especially so long a time after, it is ushered in with a "behold", as a note of admiration; it being a thing unheard of, and unprecedented, and entirely the Lord's doing, and which, no doubt, was marvellous in the eyes of the king.

Isaiah 38:6

Ver. 6. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria,.... So that it seems that Hezekiah's sickness was while the king of Assyria was near the city of Jerusalem, and about to besiege it, and before the destruction of the Assyrian army; unless this is said to secure Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from all fears of a return of that king, to give them fresh trouble:

and I will defend this city; from the present siege laid to it, ruin threatened it, or from any attack upon it, by the Assyrian monarch.

Isaiah 38:7

Ver. 7. And this shall be a sign unto thee from the Lord,.... And which it seems Hezekiah asked, and it was put to him which he would choose, whether the shadow on the sundial should go forward or backward ten degrees, and he chose the latter, 2Ki 20:8, which was a token confirming and assuring

that the Lord will do this thing that he hath spoken; recover Hezekiah from his sickness, so that on the third day he should go up to the temple; have fifteen years added to his days; and the city of Jerusalem protected from the attempts of the Assyrian monarch.

Isaiah 38:8

Ver. 8. Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees,.... Or lines made on a dial plate, to show the progress of the sun, and what time of day it was. Some think only the shadow was brought back by the power of God, the sun keeping its course as usual; but in the next clause the sun is expressly said to return ten degrees: besides, it is not easy to conceive how the shadow of the sun should go back, unless the sun itself did; if it had been only the shadow of it on Ahaz's dial, it would not have fallen under the notice of other nations, or have been the subject of their inquiry, as it was of the Babylonians, 2Ch 32:31:

which is gone down on the sundial of Ahaz, the first sundial we read of; and though there might be others at this time, yet the lines or degrees might be more plain in this; and besides, this might be near the king's bedchamber, and to which he could look out at, and see the wonder himself, the shadow to return ten degrees backward; what those degrees, lines, or marks on the dial showed, is not certain. The Targum makes them to be hours, paraphrasing the words thus;

"behold, I will bring again the shadow of the stone of hours, by which the sun is gone down on the dial of Ahaz, backwards ten degrees; and the sun returned ten hours on the figure of the stone of hours, in which it went down;"

but others think they pointed out half hours; and others but quarters of hours; but, be it which it will, it matters not, the miracle was the same:

so the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down; and so this day was longer by these degrees than a common day, be they what they will, and according as we suppose the sun went back, suddenly, or as it usually moved, though in a retrograde way, and made the same progress again through these degrees. The Jews have a fable, that the day King Ahaz died was shortened ten hours, and now lengthened the same at this season, which brought time right again. According to Gussetius, these were not degrees or marks on a sundial, to know the time of day, for this was a later invention, ascribed to Anaximene's, a disciple of Anaximander {c}, two hundred years after this; but were steps or stairs built by Ahaz, to go up from the ground to the roof of the house, on the outside of it, and which might consist of twenty steps or more; and on which the sun cast a shadow all hours of the day, "and this declined ten of these steps", which might be at the window of Hezekiah's bedchamber. {d}

{d} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 76. {d} Vid. Comment. Ebr. p. 859.

Isaiah 38:9

Ver. 9. The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah,.... The Septuagint and Arabic versions call it a "prayer": but the Targum, much better,

"a writing of confession;"

in which the king owns his murmurings and complaints under his affliction, and acknowledges the goodness of God in delivering him out of it: this he put into writing, as a memorial of it, for his own benefit, and for the good of posterity; very probably he carried this with him to the temple, whither he went on the third day of his illness, and hung it up in some proper place, that it might be read by all, and be sung by the priests and the Levites; and the Prophet Isaiah has thought fit to give it a place among his prophecies, that it might be transmitted to future ages:

when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness; or, "on his being sick {e}"; on his sickness and recovery, which were the subject matter of his writing, as the following show; though it is true also of the time of writing it, which was after he had been ill, and was well again.

{e} wtwlxb "in aegrotando ipsum", Montanus.

Isaiah 38:10

Ver. 10. I said, in the cutting off of my days,.... When he was told that he should die, and he believed he should; this he calls a "cutting off" in allusion to the weaver's web, Isa 38:12 and a cutting off "his days", he being now in the prime of his age, about thirty nine or forty years of age, and not arrived to the common period of life, and to which, according to his constitution, and the course of nature, he might have attained. The Jews call such a death a cutting off, that is, by the hand of God, which is before a man is fifty years of age. The

Vulgate Latin version is, "in the midst of my days"; as it was, according to the common term of life, being threescore and ten, and at most eighty, Ps 90:10:

I shall go to the gates of the grave; and enter there into the house appointed for all living, which he saw were open for him, and ready to receive him:

I am deprived of the residue of my days; the other thirty or forty years which he might expect to have lived, according to the course of nature; of these he was bereaved, according to the sentence of death he now had in him; what if the words were rendered, "I am visited with more of my years {f}?" and so the sense be, when I was apprehensive that I was just going to be cut off, and to be deprived of the days and years I might have lived, and hoped I should, to the glory of God, and the good of my subjects; just when I saw it was all over with me, I had a gracious visit or message from the Lord, assuring me that fifteen years should be added to my life: and so this is mentioned as a singular instance of divine goodness, in the midst of his distress; and to this sense the Targum agrees,

"because he remembered me for good, an addition was made to my years."

{f} ytwnv rty ytdqp "visitatus sum, eum adhuc superessent anni", Tigurine version.

Isaiah 38:11

Ver. 11. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living,.... Not any more, in this world, though in the other, and that more clearly, even face to face: his meaning is, that he should no more see him in the glass of the word; no more praise him in his house; worship him in his temple; enjoy him in his ordinances; and see his beauty, power, and glory, in the sanctuary; and confess unto him, and praise his name {g}. The Targum is,

"I shall no more appear before the face of the Lord in the land of the house of his Shechinah, in which is length of life; and I shall no more serve him in the house of the sanctuary."

In the Hebrew text it is, "I shall not see Jah, Jah"; a word, the same with Jehovah; and is repeated, to show the vehemency of his affection for the Lord, and his ardent desire of communion with him: unless it should be rendered, "I shall not see the Lord's Lord in the land of the living {h}"; or the Lord's Christ in the flesh:

I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world; or "time" {i}; of this fading transitory world, which will quickly cease, as the word for it signifies: next to God, his concern was, that he should no more enjoy the company of men, of his subjects, of his courtiers, of his relations, companions, and acquaintance; particularly of the saints, the excellent in the earth.

{g} Ben Melech observes, that seeing or appearing before the Creator signifies confession and praise before him, and consideration of his ways; and this sense of the words, he says, R. Sandiah gives. {h} hy hy hara al ouketi ou mh idw to swthrion tou yeou, Sept. "non videbo Jah Jah", Montanus, Vatablus. {i} ldx ybvwy "cum habitoribus temporis", Montanus. So Ben Melech explains it; and which will quickly cease. ldx, "mundus, tempus cito desinens"----ldx, "prodit mundi cessabilitatem, quatenus est colectio rerum pereuntium", Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 242. "cum habitatoribus terrae cessationis", Vitringa.

Isaiah 38:12

Ver. 12. Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent,.... Or, my habitation {k}; meaning the earthly house of his tabernacle, his body; this was just going, in his apprehension, to be unpinned, and removed like a shepherd's tent, that is easily taken down, and removed from place to place. Some understand it of the men of his age or generation; so the Targum,

"from the children of my generation my days are taken away; they are cut off, and removed from me; they are rolled up as a shepherd's tent;"

which being made of skins, as tents frequently were, such as the Arabian shepherds used, were soon taken down, and easily rolled and folded up and carried elsewhere:

I have cut off like a weaver my life; who, when he has finished his web, or a part of it, as he pleases, cuts it off from the loom, and disposes of it: this Hezekiah ascribes to himself, either that by reason of his sins and transgressions he was the cause of his being taken away by death so soon; or this was the thought he had within himself, that his life would now be cut off, as the weaver's web from the loom; for otherwise he knew that it was the Lord that would do it, whenever it was, as in the next clause:

he will cut me off with pining sickness; which was now upon him, wasting and consuming him apace: or, "will cut me off from the thrum" {l}; keeping on the metaphor of the weaver cutting off his web from the thrum, fastened to the beam of his loom:

from day even tonight wilt thou make an end of me; he means the Lord by "he" in the preceding clause, and in this he addresses him; signifying that the affliction was so sharp and heavy upon him, which was the first day of it, that he did not expect to live till night, but that God would put a period to his days, fill them up, and finish his life, and dispatch him out of this world.

{k} yrwd "habitatio mea", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius. {l} yneuby hldm "a liciis resecturus est me", Piscator; "a primis filis resecat me", Vitringa.

Isaiah 38:13

Ver. 13. I reckoned till morning,.... Or, "I set my time till the morning {m}"; he fixed and settled it in his mind that he could live no longer than to the morning, if he lived so long; he thought he should have died before the night came on, and, now it was come, the utmost he could propose to himself was to live till morning; that was the longest time he could reckon of. According to the accents, it should be rendered, "I reckoned till morning as a lion"; or "I am like until the morning as a lion"; or, "I likened until the morning (God) as a lion"; I compared him to one; which agrees with what follows. The Targum is,

"I roared until morning, as a lion roars;"

through the force of the disease, and the pain he was in: or rather,

"I laid my bones together until the morning as a lion; "so indeed as a lion God" hath broken all my bones {n}:"

so will he break all my bones; or, "it will break"; that is, the sickness, as Kimchi and Jarchi; it lay in his bones, and so violent was the pain, that he thought all his bones were breaking in pieces; such is the case in burning fevers, as Jerom observes; so Kimchi interprets it of a burning fever, which is like a fire in the bones. Some understand this of God himself, to which our version directs, who may be said to do this by the disease: compare with this Job 16:14 and to this sense the following clause inclines:

from day even tonight wilt thou make an end of me; he lived till morning, which was more than he expected, and was the longest time he could set himself; and now be reckoned that before night it would be all over with him as to this world. This was the second day of his illness; and the third day he recovered, and went to the temple with his song of praise.

{m} rqb de ytywv "statui, [vel] posui usque ad mane", Pagninus, Montanus; "constitui [rursum terminum] usque mane", Vatablus. {n} Reinbeck de Accent Heb. p. 411.

Isaiah 38:14

Ver. 14. Like a crane, or a swallow, so did I chatter,.... Rather, "like a crane and a swallow", like both; sometimes loud and clamorous, like a crane {o}, when the pain was very acute and grievous; and sometimes very low, through weakness of body, like the twittering of a swallow; or the moan he made under his affliction was like the mournful voices of these birds at certain times. Some think he refers to his prayers, which were quick and short, and expressed not with articulate words, but in groans and cries; at least were not regular and orderly, but interrupted, and scarce intelligible, like the chattering of the birds mentioned:

I did mourn as a dove; silently and patiently, within himself, for his sins and transgressions; and because of his afflictions, the fruit of them:

mine eyes fail with looking upwards; or, "on high"; or, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions express it, "to the height of heaven"; to the Lord there, whose Shechinah, as the Targum, is in the highest heavens: in his distress he looked up to heaven for help, but none came; he looked and waited till his eyes were weak with looking, and he could look no longer; both his eyes and his heart failed him, and he despaired of relief; and the prayer he put up was as follows:

O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me; or, "it oppresseth me {p}"; that is, the disease; it lay so heavy upon him, it bore him down with the weight of it, he could not stand up under it; it had seized him, and crushed him; it held him fast, and he could not get clear of it; and therefore entreats the Lord to "undertake" for him, to be his surety for good, as in Ps 119:122, he represents his disease as a bailiff that had arrested him, and was carrying him to the prison of the grave; and therefore prays that the Lord would bail him, or rescue him out of his hands, that he might not go down to the gates of the grave. So souls oppressed with the guilt of sin, and having fearful apprehensions of divine justice, should apply to Christ their surety, and take refuge in his undertakings, where only peace and safety are to be enjoyed. So Gussetius renders the words, "I have unrighteousness, be surety for me" {q}; and takes them to be a confession of Hezekiah, acknowledging himself guilty of unrighteousness, praying and looking to Christ the Son of God, and to his suretyship engagements, who, though not yet come to fulfil them, certainly would.

{o} So it is said in the Talmud, "Resh-Lakish cried like a crane", T. Bab. Kiddushin, col. 42. 1. {p} "Opprimit me, [sub.]infirmitas, vel morbus", Munster. {q} yl hqve "[njustitia est mihi] hoc est, habeo injustitiam, reus suro injustitia, [sponde pro me]", Ebr. Comment, p. 654.

Isaiah 38:15

Ver. 15. What shall I say?.... In a way of praise and thankfulness, for the mercies promised and received; I know not what to say; I want words to express the gratitude of my heart for the kindness bestowed. What shall I render to God for all his benefits? So the Targum,

"what praise shall I utter, and I will say it before him?"

for here begins the account of his recovery, and his thanksgiving for it:

he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it; the Lord had sent him a message by the prophet, and assured him that he should recover, and on the third day go up to the temple; and now he had performed what he had promised, he was restored, and was come to the house of God with his thank offering; whatever the Lord says, he does; what he promises, he brings to pass:

I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul; before he did not reckon of a day to live, now he speaks of his years, having fifteen added to his days, during which time he should "go softly", in a thoughtful "meditating" frame of mind {r}; frequently calling to remembrance, and revolving in his mind, his bitter affliction, and recovery out of it, acknowledging the goodness and kindness of God unto him: or leisurely,

step by step, without fear of any enemies, dangers, or death, having a promise of such a length of time to live: or go pleasantly and

cheerfully, after the bitterness of my soul {s}, as it may be rendered; that is, after it is over, or because of deliverance from it. So the Targum,

"with what shall I serve him, and render to him for all the years he hath added to my life, and hath delivered me from the bitterness of my soul?"

{r} hdda "motitando meditabor", Tigurine version; "leniter, vel pedetentim incedam" Vatablus; "alacriter incedam", Piscator, Vitringa. {s} rm le "post amaritudinem", Piscator.

Isaiah 38:16

Ver. 16. O Lord, by these things men live,.... Not by bread only, but by the word of God: by the promise of God, and by his power performing it; and by his favour and goodness continually bestowed; it is in him, and by his power and providence, that they live and move, and have their being, and the continuance of it; and it is his lovingkindness manifested to them that makes them live comfortably and go on cheerfully:

and in all these things is the life of my spirit; what kept his soul in life were the same things, the promise, power, and providence of God; what revived his spirit, and made him comfortable and cheerful, was the wonderful love and great goodness of God unto him, in appearing to him, and for him, and delivering him out of his sore troubles. Ben Melech renders and gives the sense of the words thus; "to all will I declare and say, that in these", in the years of addition (the fifteen years added to his days) "are the life of my spirit"; so Kimchi. The Targum interprets it of the resurrection of the dead,

"O Lord, concerning all the dead, thou hast said, that thou wilt quicken them; and before them all thou hast quickened my spirit:"

so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live; or rather, "and" or "for thou hast recovered {t} me, and made me to live"; for the Lord had not only promised it, but he had done it, Isa 38:15, and so the Targum, "and hast quickened me, and sustained me."

{t} So Gataker.

Isaiah 38:17

Ver. 17. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness,.... Meaning not that instead of peace and prosperity, which he expected would ensue upon the destruction of Sennacherib's army, came a bitter affliction upon him; for he is not now dwelling on that melancholy subject; but rather the sense is, that he now enjoyed great peace and happiness, though he had been in great bitterness; for the words may be rendered, "behold, I am in peace, I had great bitterness"; or thus, "behold my great bitterness is unto peace": or, "he has turned it into peace" {u}; it has issued in it, and this is my present comfortable situation: "but", or rather,

and thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: the grave, where bodies rot and corrupt, and are quite abolished, as the word signifies; see Ps 30:3 or "thou hast embraced my soul from the pit of corruption {w}"; it seems to be an allusion to a tender parent, seeing his child sinking in a pit, runs with open arms to him, and embraces him, and takes him out. This may be applied to a state of nature, out of which the Lord in love delivers his people; which is signified by a pit, or dark dungeon, a lonely place, a filthy one, very uncomfortable, where they are starving and famishing; a pit, wherein is no water, **Zec 9:11** and may fitly be called a pit of corruption, because of their corrupt nature, estate, and actions; out of this the Lord brings his people at conversion, and that because of his great love to their souls, and his delight in them; or it may be applied to their deliverance from the bottomless pit of destruction, which is owing to the Lord's being gracious to them, and having found a ransom for them, his own Son, Job 33:24, and to this sense the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions seem to incline; "for thou hast delivered my soul that it might not perish": in love to their souls, and that they may not perish, he binds them up in the bundle of life, with the Lord their God; he redeems their souls from sin, Satan, and the law; he regenerates, renews, and converts them, and preserves them safe to his everlasting kingdom and glory; in order to which, and to prevent their going down to the pit, they are put into the hands of Christ, redeemed by his precious blood, and are turned out of the broad road that leads to destruction:

for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back; as loathsome and abominable, and so as not to be seen by him; for though God sees all the sins of his people with his eye of omniscience, and in his providence takes notice of them, and chastises for them, yet not with his eye of avenging justice; because Christ has took them on himself, and made satisfaction for them, and an end of them; they are removed from them as far as the east is from the west, and no more to be seen upon them; nor will they be any more set before his face, or in the light of his countenance; but as they are out of sight they will be out of mind, never more remembered, but forgotten; as what is cast behind the back is seen and remembered no more. The phrase is expressive of the full forgiveness of sins, even of all sins; see Ps 85:2, the object of God's love is the souls of his people; the instance of it is the delivery of them from the pit of corruption; the evidence of it is the pardon of their sins.

{u} ynmylxtw Abendana, after Joseph Kimchi, interprets it of changing bitterness into peace; he observes in the phrase
rm Mwlvl rm yl that the first rm signifies change or permutation as in Jer. xlvlii. 11. and the second bitterness: and that the sense is this, behold, unto peace he hath changed my bitterness, that is the bitterness and distress which I had, he hath changed into peace. {w} ylb txvm yvpn tqvx htaw "et tu amplexus es amore animam meam a fovea abolitionis"; Montanus; "tu vero propenso amore complexus es animam meam", Piscator; "tu tenero amore complexus animam meam", Vitringa.

Isaiah 38:18

Ver. 18. For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee,.... That is, they that are in the grave, and under the power of death, they cannot celebrate the praises of God with their bodily organs; their souls may praise him in heaven, but they in their bodies cannot till the resurrection morn, or as long as they are under the dominion of the grave; so the Targum,

"they that are in the grave cannot confess before thee, and the dead cannot praise thee;"

in like manner the Septuagint and Arabic versions: this shows the design of God in restoring him from his sickness, and the view he himself had in desiring life, which was to praise the Lord; and which end could not have been answered had he died, and been laid in the grave:

they that go down to the pit cannot hope for thy truth: for the performance of promises, in which the truth and faithfulness of God appear; or for the Messiah, the truth of all the types of the former dispensation; those that go down to the pit of the grave, or are carried and laid there, can have no exercise of faith and hope concerning these things.

Isaiah 38:19

Ver. 19. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day,.... Every one of the living, or such who are both corporeally and spiritually alive; and therefore the word is repeated; none but such who are alive in a corporeal sense can praise the Lord in this world; and none but such who are spiritually alive can praise him aright, and such do under a true sense of the greatness of his mercies, and of their own unworthiness; and such a one was Hezekiah; for the words may be rendered, "as I am this day {x}"; that is, alive in both the above senses; and so did he praise God, in such a spiritual manner, even on the day he committed this to writing, and was now in the temple offering up this thanksgiving:

the father to the children shall make known thy truth: not meaning himself, for at this time he had no children; though, no doubt, when he had any, as he afterwards had, particularly Manasseh, he took care to acquaint him with the truth and faithfulness of God in the fulfilling of his promises to him; and which every religious parent would do, and so transmit the memory thereof to future ages.

{x} Mwyh ynmk "quails ego sum hodie", Syr.

Isaiah 38:20

Ver. 20. The Lord was ready to save me,.... Or, "the Lord to save me {y}"; he was at hand to save him; he was both able and willing to save him; he was a present help in time of need; he arose for his help, and that right early; he very quickly delivered him out of his distress; he, who one day expected death every moment, was the next day in the temple praising God:

therefore will we sing my songs; which were made by him, or concerning him, or which he ordered to be sung, as he did the Psalms of David, 2Ch 29:30:

to the stringed instruments: which were touched with the fingers, or struck with a quill or bow; which distinguishes them from wind instruments, which were blown with the mouth; each of these were used in the temple service:

all the days of our life; he had before said "we will sing", meaning his family and his friends with him, his courtiers, princes, and nobles, or he and the singers of Israel; and this he determined to do as long as he and they lived; signifying, that the mercy granted would never be forgotten by him, as well as there would be new mercies every day, which would call for praise and thankfulness: and this he proposed to do

in the house of the Lord; in the temple; not only privately, but publicly; not in his closet and family only, but in the congregation of the people; that the goodness of God to him might be more known, and the praise and glory given him be the greater.

{y} yneyvwhl hwhy "Dominus ad servandum me", Montanus; "Jehova est ad salvandum me", Cocceius, Vitringa.

Isaiah 38:21

Ver. 21. For Isaiah had said,.... Before the above writing was made, which ends in the preceding verse; for this and the following are added by Isaiah, or some other person, taken out of 2Ki 20:7. The Septuagint version adds, "to Hezekiah"; but the speech seems rather directed to some of his servants, or those that were about him:

let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaster upon the boil, and he shall recover; which was done, and he did accordingly recover. Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and. Kimchi, all of them say, that this was a miracle within a miracle, since figs are hurtful to ulcers; and so say others; though it is observed by some, that they are useful for the ripening and breaking of ulcers; however, it was not from the natural force of these figs, but by the power of God, that this cure was effected; for, without that, it was impossible so malignant an ulcer and so deadly a sickness as Hezekiah's were could have been cured, and especially so suddenly; nor were these figs used as a medicine, but as a sign of recovery, according to the Lord's promise, and as a means of assisting Hezekiah's faith in

it.

Isaiah 38:22

Ver. 22. Hezekiah also had said,.... Unto Isaiah, as in 2Ki 20:8:

what is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord? both of his health, and of his going up to the temple with thanksgiving for it; though the former is not here mentioned, as it is elsewhere; partly because it is supposed in the latter, for without that he could not have gone up to the temple; and partly because he was more solicitous for the worship and honour of God in his house, the for his health. The Syriac version transposes these verses, "Hezekiah had said, what is the sign? &c. and Isaiah had answered, let them take a lump of figs", &c. as if this latter was the sign; whereas it was that of the sun's going down ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz, Isa 38:7,
See Gill on "Isa 38:7",
See Gill on "Isa 38:8".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 39:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 39

This chapter gives an account of Hezekiah's fall into sin after his recovery, and the correction he had for it. The king of Babylon sent messengers to him to congratulate him upon his recovery, Isa 39:1. Hezekiah received them with great joy, and in the pride of his heart showed them all his treasures, Isa 39:2. Isaiah the prophet examined him about it, which he readily owned, Isa 39:3 upon which the Babylonish captivity is foretold, when all his riches and his children too should be carried into that land, Isa 39:5, to which sentence he quietly and patiently submitted, Isa 39:8.

Ver. 1. At that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon,.... The same is called Berodach, 2Ki 20:12 which, according to Hillerus {z}, is the same with Barmerodach, the son of Merodach; though it is generally took to be a slip of the scribe's there, or a change of letter, as is common in names;

he was either afterwards made a god of, or he had his name from an idol of the Babylonians so called, Jer 50:1, which signifies "a pure lord." Jerom observes it, as the opinion of the Jews, that he was the father of Nebuchadnezzar, which is not probable. Kimchi takes him to be the same with Esarhaddon, the son of Sennacherib; but he was king of Assyria, not of Babylon; it is most likely that he is the Assyrian king, whom Ptolemy in his canon calls Mardocempad; his other name Baladan, which is compounded of two words, "bal" and "adan", and both of them signify lord, he took from his father, for he is called the son of Baladan; by Josephus {a} he is called Baladas, who says that Berosus the Chaldean makes mention of a king of Babylon by this name. Bishop Usher {b} thinks he is the same that is called by profane writers Belesis, and Belessus, and Nabonasarus; his name consists of the names of three idols, Merodach, an idol of the Babylonians, as before observed, and Bal, the contraction of Baal, and Adon, the same with Adonis:

he sent letters and a present to Hezekiah; by his ambassadors, which was always usual in embassies and visits, and still is in the eastern countries; the purport of which embassy was to congratulate him upon his recovery, and to inquire concerning the miracle that was wrought in his land; either the destruction of the Assyrian army in one night by an angel, or rather the sun's going back ten degrees, 2Ch 32:31 and, as Josephus {c} says, to enter into an alliance with him; and this seems to be the true reason of sending these ambassadors; or the king of Babylon had lately fallen off from the Assyrian monarch, and therefore was desirous of entering into a league with Hezekiah the king of Assyria's enemy, in order to strengthen himself against him, and secure his liberty he had just gained:

for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered; which both gives a reason of the embassy, and points at the time when it was; very probably the same year of his sickness and recovery.

{z} Onomast. Sacr. p, 603. {a} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 2. sect. 2. {b} Annales Vet. Test. p. 87, 88. {c} Ibid.

Isaiah 39:2

Ver. 2. And Hezekiah was glad of them,.... Not of the presents, for he was very rich, and stood in no need of them, nor does it appear that he was covetous; but of the ambassadors, and of the honour that was done him in having such sent to him from such a prince; his sin was vain glory; and because he might hope that such a powerful ally would be a security to him against any after attempt of the king of Assyria, in which he was guilty of another sin, vain confidence, or trusting in an arm of flesh; and being lifted up with pride that his name was become so famous abroad, and that he had got so good an ally: and in order to ingratiate himself the more into his esteem and favour, he "showed" these his ambassadors

the house of his precious things; where his jewels and precious stones lay, and where were

the silver and the gold; large quantities of not only which he and his predecessors had laid up, which had been very lately greatly exhausted by the demand of three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold, by the king of Assyria; to answer which Hezekiah had given all the silver in the temple, and in the treasures of the king's house, and was so drove by necessity, that he cut off the gold from the doors and pillars of the temple, 2Ki 18:14, so that it might be reasonable to ask, how came he so soon by all this treasure? it is possible that some part of the royal treasure might be unalienable, and he might have since received presents from his own nobles, and from foreign princes; but this was chiefly from the spoils found in the Assyrian camp, after the angel had made such a slaughter of them,
2Ki 19:35, as a learned {d} man observes:

and the spices, and precious ointment; which, as Jarchi notes, some say were oil of olives; others the balsam which grew in Jericho; great quantities of this, with other spices, were laid up in store for use, as occasion should require:

and all the house of his armour; where were all his military stores, shields, swords, spears, arrows, &c.:

and all that was found in his treasures; in other places:

there was nothing in his house; in his royal palace:

nor in all his dominion; that was rare, curious, and valuable:

that Hezekiah showed them not; even the book of the law, as Jarchi says.

{d} Nicolai Abrami Pharus Vet. Test. l. 6. c. 17. p. 164.

Isaiah 39:3

Ver. 3. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto King Hezekiah,.... Quickly after the ambassadors had been with the king, and he had shown them all his treasures; the prophet did not come of himself, but was sent by the Lord, though he was not sent for by the king; in the time of his distress and illness he could send for him, but now being well, and in prosperity, he forgot the prophet, to send for him, and have his advice, how he should behave towards these men, as not to offend the Lord:

and said unto him, what said these men? what was their errand to thee, and their business to thee? what did they communicate to thee, or request of thee?

and from whence came they unto thee? from what country? these questions the prophet put to the king, not as ignorant of the men, and their business, and country, but in order to have everything from the king himself, and to lead on to further conversation with him on these things:

and Hezekiah said, they are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon; he makes no answer to the first question, but at once replies to the second, as being what his heart was lifted up with; that ambassadors should come to him from a very distant country, and from so famous and renowned a place as Babylon; which showed that his name was great in foreign parts, and was in high esteem in distant countries, and even so great a prince as the king of Babylon courted his friendship.

Isaiah 39:4

Ver. 4. Then said he, what have they seen in thine house?.... Coming nearer to the point he had in view, and which was the thing that was displeasing to the Lord; not that he had received the ambassadors, and used them in such a manner as persons in such a quality ought to be used; but that he had shown them what he ought not to have done, and especially from such a principle of pride and vanity as he did:

and Hezekiah answered without any reserve, very openly, not suspecting that the prophet was come with a reproof to him, or to blame him, or would blame him for what he had done:

all that is in my house have they seen; the several royal apartments, and the furniture of them:

there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them: which were more secret, laid up in cabinets, under lock and key; his gold, silver, jewels, and precious stones, spices, and ointments. Jerom thinks he showed them the furniture and vessels of the temple, though he does not mention them.

Isaiah 39:5

Ver. 5. Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah,.... Now he begins to let him know that he came not of himself, and that he did not ask these questions to gratify his own curiosity, but that he came from the Lord, and with a word of rebuke from him:

hear the word of the Lord of hosts; a greater King than thou art, who art so elated with thy riches, and grandeur, and fame; or than the king of Babylon, whose ambassadors these are; even the King of kings, and Lord of armies above and below, and who is able to make good every word that is spoken by him, and therefore should be solemnly attended to.

Isaiah 39:6

Ver. 6. Behold, the days come,.... Or, "are coming {e}"; and which quickly came; after a few reigns more, even in Jehoiakim's time:

that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; as it was, when Jehoiakim king of Judah, his mother, servants, princes, and officers, were taken by the king of Babylon, and carried captive, and along with them the treasures of the king's house, and also all the treasures of the house of the Lord, 2Ki 24:12:

nothing shall be left, saith the Lord; this was, as Jarchi says, measure for measure; as there was nothing that was not shown to the ambassadors, so nothing should be left untaken away by the Babylonians.

{e} Myab "venientes", Montanus; "venturi sunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 39:7

Ver. 7. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away,.... Manasseh his immediate son was taken and carried to Babylon, though afterwards released; nor does it appear that he was made a eunuch or an officer there; this had its fulfilment in Jeconiah and his children, and in others that were of the seed royal, as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, to whom the Jewish commentators apply this; this is expressed in different words, signifying much the same, to affect the mind of Hezekiah the more:

and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon; or "chamberlains"; and who very often were castrated for that purpose, though it does not necessarily signify such, being used of officers in general. The Targum renders it "princes" {f}; and such an one was Daniel in the court of the king of Babylon; and his three companions were also promoted, **Da 2:48**.

{f} So Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it princes and governors.

Isaiah 39:8

Ver. 8. Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken,.... Hezekiah was at once convinced of his sin, acknowledged it and repented of it, and owned that the sentence pronounced was but just and right; and that there was a mixture of mercy and goodness in it, in that time was given, and it was not immediately executed:

he said moreover, for there shall be peace and truth in my days; or a confirmed peace, lasting prosperity, peace in the state, and truth in the church, plenty of temporal mercies, and the truth of doctrine and worship, which he understood by the prophet would continue in his days, and for which he was thankful; not that he was unconcerned about posterity, but inasmuch as it must be, what was foretold, and which he could not object to as unjust, he looked upon it as a mercy to him that there was a delay of it to future times; or it may be considered as a wish, "O that there were peace" {g}, &c.

{g} Mwlv hyhy yk genesyw de eirhnh, Sept.; so the V. L. Syriac and Arabic versions; "O si fieret pax", Forerius; "precor ut sit pax", Vatablus; which is preferred by Noldius Ebr. Cocord. Part. p. 407. No. 1153.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 40:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 40

This chapter treats of the comforts of God's people; of the forerunner and coming of the Messiah; of his work, and the dignity of his person; of the folly of making idols, and of the groundless complaints of the church of God. The consolations of God's people, by whom to be administered, and the matter, ground, and reason of them, Isa 40:1. John the Baptist, the harbinger of Christ, is described by his work and office, and the effects of it; it issuing in the humiliation of some, and the exaltation of others, and in the revelation of the glory of Christ, Isa 40:3, then follows an order to every minister of the Gospel what he should preach and publish; the weakness and insufficiency of men to anything that is spiritually good; their fading and withering goodliness, which is to be ascribed to the blowing of the Spirit of God upon it; and the firmness and constancy of the word of God is declared, Isa 40:6, next the apostles of Christ in Jerusalem are particularly exhorted to publish fervently and openly the good tidings of the Gospel; to proclaim the coming of Christ, the manner of it, and the work he came about; and to signify his faithful discharge of his office as a shepherd, Isa 40:9, the dignity of whose person is set forth by his almighty power, by his infinite wisdom, and by the greatness of his majesty, in comparison of which all nations and things are as nothing, Isa 40:12 and then the vanity of framing any likeness to God, and of forming idols for worship, is observed, Isa 40:18, and from the consideration of the divine power in creation and upholding all things, the church of God is encouraged to expect renewed strength and persevering grace, and is blamed for giving way to a distrustful and murmuring spirit, Isa 40:26.

Ver. 1. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. The Babylonish captivity being predicted in the preceding chapter, for the comfort of God's people a deliverance is promised, expressed in such terms, as in the clearest and strongest manner to set forth the redemption and salvation by Jesus Christ, of which it was typical. Here begins the more evangelical and spiritual part of this prophecy, which reaches to and includes the whole Gospel dispensation, from the coming of John the Baptist to the second coming of Christ. It begins with comforts, and holds on and ends with them; which consolations, Kimchi observes, are what should be in the times of the Messiah; and the word "comfort" is repeated, he says, to confirm the thing. It is God that here speaks, who is the God of all comfort; the persons whom he would have comforted are his "people", whom he has chosen, with whom be has made a covenant in Christ, whom he has given to him, and he has redeemed by his blood, and whom he effectually calls by his grace; these are sometimes disconsolate, by reason of the corruptions of their nature, the temptations of Satan, the hidings of God's face, and the various afflictions they meet with; and it is the will of God they should be comforted, as appears by sending his Son to be the comforter of them, by giving his Spirit as another comforter, by appointing ordinances as breasts of consolation to them, by the promises he has made to them, and the confirmation of them by an oath, for their strong consolation; and particularly by the word of the Gospel, and the ministers of it, who are Barnabases, sons of consolation, who are sent with a comfortable message, and are encouraged in their work from the consideration of God being their God, who will be with them, assist them, and make their ministrations successful; and to these are these words addressed; which are repeated, not to suggest any backwardness in Gospel ministers, who are ready to go on such an errand, however reluctant they may be to carry bad tidings; but rather to signify the people's refusal to be comforted, and therefore must be spoken to again and again; and also to show the vehement and hearty desire of the Lord to have them comforted. The Targum is,

"O ye prophets, prophesy comforts concerning my people."

And the Septuagint and Arabic versions insert, "O ye priests", as if the words were directed to them. The preachers of the Gospel are meant, and are called unto; what the Lord would have said for the comfort of his people by them is expressed in the following verse.

Isaiah 40:2

Ver. 2. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her,.... Or, "speak to or according to the heart of Jerusalem {h}"; to her very heart, what will be a cordial to her, very acceptable, grateful, and comfortable; and let it be proclaimed aloud, that she may hear and understand it. By "Jerusalem" is meant the Gospel church, and the true members of it. Aben Ezra interprets it of the congregation of Israel; see Heb 12:22:

that her warfare is accomplished; this life is a warfare; saints have many enemies to engage with, sin, Satan, and the world; many battles to fight, a great fight of afflictions, and the good fight of faith: this is "accomplished", or "filled up {i}"; not that it is at an end before this life is, while that lasts there will be a continual conflict; yet all enemies are now conquered by Christ, and in a short time will be under the feet of his people; the Captain of their salvation, who has got the victory, is gone before them; the crown is laid up for them, and is sure unto them. Some interpret it, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, "her set or appointed time {k}"; and compare it with **Job 7:1**, and may be understood either of the time of deliverance from captivity: so the Targum,

"that her captivity by the people is filled up:"

or of the time of the Messiah's coming, the fulness of time, when he should appear, afterwards prophesied of; or of the servitude and bondage of the law being at an end, and of all the fatigue, labour, and trouble of that dispensation; and of the Gospel dispensation taking place: it follows,

that her iniquity is pardoned; which is God's act, flows from his free grace, is obtained by the blood of Christ, is full and complete, and yields great relief and comfort to guilty minds: or "is accepted" {l}; that is, the punishment of it as bore by her surety; see Le 26:43. The allusion is to the sacrifices being accepted for the atonement of sin, **Le 1:4**, and may have respect here to the acceptation of Christ's sacrifice, for the expiation of the sins of his people. Jarchi interprets the word "appeased"; and so it may be applied to the reconciliation for sin made by the blood of Christ. The Targum understands it of forgiveness, as we do:

for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins; which may be understood either of a sufficiency of chastisements for sin; though they are not more, but less, than are deserved, yet are as much as their heavenly Father, in his great tenderness and compassion, thinks are enough; and though they are in measure, and do not exceed, yet are in large measure often, at least in their own apprehension: or else of the large and copious blessings of grace and goodness received, instead of punishment for sins, that might be expected: or rather at the complete satisfaction made by Christ for her sins, and of her receiving at the Lord's hands, in her surety, full punishment for them; not that more was required than was due, but that ample satisfaction was made, and, being infinite, fully answers the demerit of sin; and this being in the room and stead of God's people, clears them, and yields comfort to them.

{h} bl le wrbd, lalhsate eiv thn kardian Sept. "loquimini ad cor", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Vitringa; "secundum cor", Calvin. {i} habu halm "completa est militia ejus", Pagninus, Montanus. {k} "Tempus praefinitum", Junius & Tremellius. {l} hurn "acccpta est", Piscator, Forerius.

Isaiah 40:3

Ver. 3. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness,.... Not the voice of the Holy Ghost, as Jarchi; but of John the Baptist, as is attested by all the evangelists, **Mt 3:3** and by John himself, **Joh 1:23**, who was a "voice" not like the man's nightingale, "vox et praeterea nihil" a voice and nothing else; he had not only a sonorous, but an instructive teaching voice; he had the voice of a prophet, for he was a prophet: we read of the voices of the prophets, their doctrines and prophecies, Ac 13:27, his voice was the voice of one that crieth, that published and proclaimed aloud, openly and publicly, with great eagerness and fervency, with much freedom and liberty, what he had to say; and this was done "in the wilderness", in the wilderness of Judea, literally taken, **Mt 3:1**, and when Judea was become a Roman province, and the Jews were brought into the wilderness of the people, Eze 20:35 and when they were, as to their religious affairs, in a very forlorn and wilderness condition {m}: what John was to say, when he came as a harbinger of Christ, and did, follows:

prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God: by whom is meant the Messiah to whose proper deity a noble testimony is here bore, being called "Jehovah" and "our God": whose way John prepared himself, by preaching the doctrine of repentance, administering the ordinance of baptism, pointing at the Messiah, and exhorting the people to believe in him; and he called upon them likewise to prepare the way, and make a plain path to meet him in, by repenting of their sins, amending their ways, and cordially embracing him when come, laying aside all those sentiments which were contrary to him, his Gospel, and kingdom. The sense of this text is sadly perverted by the Targum, and seems to be, done on purpose, thus,

"prepare the way before the people of the Lord, cast up ways before the congregation of our God;"

whereas it is before the Lord himself. The allusion is to pioneers, sent before some great personage to remove all obstructions out of his way, to cut down trees, level the way, and clear all before him, as in the following verse.

{m} Though, according to the accents, the phrase, "in the wilderness", belongs to what follows, "in the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord"; where it is placed by Junius and Tremellius, commended for it by Reinbeck, de Accent, Heb. p. 416. though the accent seems neglected in Matt iii. 3. Mark 1. 3.

Isaiah 40:4

Ver. 4. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low,.... Which is not to be understood literally, but, as Kimchi says, parabolically and mystically: the meaning is, that in consequence of John's ministry, and our Lord's coming, such who were depressed and bowed down with the guilt of sin, and were low and humble in their own eyes, should be raised up and comforted; and that such who were elated with themselves, and their own righteousness, should be humbled; their pride and haughtiness should be brought down, and they treated with neglect and contempt, while great notice was taken of lowly minded ones; see Lu 14:11 and Lu 18:14:

and the crooked shall be straight and the rough places plain; what before was dark and intricate in prophecy should now become clear; and such doctrines as were not so well understood should now become plain and easy.

Isaiah 40:5

Ver. 5. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed..... Christ himself, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and his own glory, as the glory of the of the only begotten of the Father; the glorious perfections of his nature, seen in the miracles wrought, and in the doctrines taught by him; the glory of the divine Father, in the face or person of Christ; and the glory of his attributes, in the work of salvation by him; all which is most clearly discerned in the glass of the Gospel, or in the ministry of the word, by John, Christ himself, and his apostles:

and all flesh shall see it together; not the Jews only, but Gentiles also; not with their bodily eyes, but with the eyes of their understanding; even the salvation of the Lord, and his glory, as displayed in it, being set forth in the everlasting Gospel to the view of all; see **Lu 3:7**,

for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it: that his glory should be revealed, and be visible to all, and therefore sure and certain; for what he has said he does, and what he has spoken he makes good. The Targum is,

"for by the word of the Lord it is so decreed;"

and therefore shall be fulfilled.

Isaiah 40:6

Ver. 6. The voice said, cry,.... Not the same voice as in
Isa 40:3, nor the voice of an angel, as Aben Ezra; but a voice from the Lord, as Jarchi; the voice of prophecy, says Kimchi; it is the Lord's voice to the prophet, or rather to any and every Gospel minister, giving them an order to prophesy and preach, without which they cannot preach regularly and lawfully; it is the same as, "go, teach all nations", &c. preach the Gospel to every creature, &c.
Mt 28:19:

and he said, what shall I cry? publish, proclaim, or preach? for a minister of the Gospel is to preach not out of his own heart, or of his own head, or what is of his own devising and framing, but what is agreeable to the mind of Christ, as revealed in his word; he is to speak according to the oracles of God, the proportion and analogy of faith; he is to inquire there, and of Christ, what he shall say. The Targum is,

"the voice of him that saith, prophesy; and he answered and said, what shall I prophesy?"

The reply is,

all flesh is grass; declare the frailty and mortality of men; which some think is mentioned, to increase the wonder of Christ's incarnation, after prophesied of, as the forerunner of it is before; that Christ should condescend to take upon him such frail mortal flesh; that he should become flesh, and be manifested in it: or rather this is to be said, to put men in mind and to prepare them to think of another world, and how they shall appear before the judgment seat; seeing, if they have not a better righteousness than their own, and except they are born again, they shall neither see nor enter into the kingdom of heaven; which is one of the first things to be published in the Gospel ministry; as also how weak, impotent, and insufficient, men are, to that which is good, which may be meant by this phrase; being as weak as a spire of grass, not able to do any good actions, much less to fulfil the law, or to regenerate themselves, renew their hearts, or cleanse their natures: and this must be said, to abate the pride of men; to show the necessity of divine power in regeneration; to instruct men to seek for the grace of God, as to convert them, so to help and assist them in all they do; and to direct them to ascribe all they have, and are, to the grace of God; to this purpose the Apostle Peter quotes this passage, **1Pe 1:23**. It may be applied to the ordinances of the legal dispensation, and all the privileges of it, which are said to be carnal; and trusting in them was trusting in the flesh, **Php 3:4** **Heb 9:10**, these were weak and insufficient to justify, sanctify, and save, and were not to continue:

and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field; all the goodliness and glory of man; all that is excellent and valuable in him, or belonging to him, Or that is thought to be so, his riches, honours, strength, beauty, wisdom, and knowledge; yea, all his seeming holiness and righteousness; which are all fading and perishing, like a gay flower, which appears lovely for a while, and on a sudden falls off, or is cropped, or trampled upon; to which a flower of the field is more liable than that of the garden. This may be applied to the splendour of the legal dispensation, which is done away by a more excellent glory taking place, **2Co 3:10**.

Isaiah 40:7

Ver. 7. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,.... And so does man, and all his glory and goodliness:

because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: alluding to some impetuous and blasting wind blowing upon herbs and flowers, to the withering and fading of them; see Ps 103:15, legal ordinances ceased upon the pouring forth of the Spirit. The external excellencies of men, or their outward advantages, perish at the breath of God, at the blast of his nostrils, when taken away by death; and at conversion the Spirit of the Lord blows a blast upon all the goodliness of man;

the operations of the Spirit are compared to wind, **Joh 3:8**, which, like that, are free, and, as he pleases, are invisible and imperceptible, land powerful and efficacious, and these cause a withering in men's goodness; the Spirit of God shows that their holiness is not true holiness; that their righteousness has only the appearance of one before men; and their religion and godliness a mere form; and their good works, "splendida peccata", shining sins; that those are insufficient to justify and save, and bring to heaven; upon which they fade away and die in their esteem, who now reckon them but loss and dung, **Php 3:6**: "surely the people is grass"; the people of the Jews, with all their external advantages; yea, all people, with all the excellencies of human nature, or considered in their best estate, possessed of all that is reckoned good and great, being but mere natural men. The Targum restrains this to the ungodly, as it does the former verse, rendering it,

"as grass the wicked among the people are esteemed;"

as it does the former, thus,

"the wicked are as grass, and their strength as the stubble of the field."

So Kimchi interprets them of the nations that come with Gog and Magog; and Jarchi of the princes of the kingdoms; but very wrongly, since it is true of all flesh, or of all mankind.

Isaiah 40:8

Ver. 8. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,.... Which is repeated, to raise attention to it, as being a matter of importance, and for the confirmation of it:

but the word of our God shall stand for ever; the Apostle Peter adds, by way of explanation,

and this is the word, which by the Gospel is preached unto you; who seems to distinguish the word from the Gospel, by which it is preached, and to intend Christ the essential Word; who stands or abides for ever as a divine Person; in his office as Mediator, being Prophet, Priest, and King for ever; in the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and in the fulness of his grace: it is true of the written word or Gospel, which remains, is everlasting, and will stand and continue, notwithstanding the persecutions of tyrants, the craft of false teachers, the reproach of ungodly men, and the death of the best of men, even of ministers; though all flesh is grass, fading and withering, the word of God is fresh and lively, firm and durable; and so it is as transcribed into the hearts of men, where it becomes the ingrafted word, and issues in everlasting life. It may be applied to God's word of promise, which is for ever settled in heaven, and is always fulfilled.

Isaiah 40:9

Ver. 9. O Zion, that bringest good tidings,.... Or, "O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion {n}"; which rendering of the words is more agreeable to the latter part of the verse,

say unto the cities of Judah, &c. and to some parallel places, Isa 41:27 and to the type, the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon; the tidings of which came from Babylon to Zion, or Jerusalem; and to the Targum which paraphrases the words thus,

"O ye prophets, that bring good tidings to Zion;"

and so may be applied to Gospel ministers, who bring the good tidings of the good will, grace, and favour of God, to men, through Christ; of the grace of Christ, in his suretyship engagements and performances; in his incarnation, sufferings, and death, and in his advocacy and intercession; and of the good things that come by him, as peace, pardon, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life:

get thee up into the high mountain; to declare these good tidings, in the most open and public manner, that all might hear and receive them, and rejoice at them; it may also point at the place, the church of God, comparable to a high mountain for its visibility and immovableness, where the Gospel is to be published:

O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings: the church of God so called, to whom the faith of the Gospel is delivered, which is the pillar and ground of truth; which receives, retains, and maintains it, and sends forth ministers to proclaim it; particularly the first church at Jerusalem, where it was first preached, and from whence it went forth into other parts of Judea, and into all the world; here the apostles of Christ were, and from hence they set out, and published the

Gospel all the world over, and who seem to be chiefly meant; for the words may be rendered, as the other clause, "O thou that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem {o}"; so the Targum: "lift up thy voice with strength"; or preach the Gospel with a strong voice, speak it out; do not mutter it over, or whisper it in a corner; proclaim it on the housetops, cry aloud that all may hear; lift up thy voice like a trumpet; blow the trumpet of the Gospel with all the strength thou hast; cause the joyful sound to be heard far and near:

lift it up, and be not afraid; of the reproaches and revilings of men on account of it, or of their persecutions for it; or lest it should not be welcome, or be received as truth:

say unto the cities of Judah; the inhabitants of them literally understood, and to the several churches and congregations of the saints everywhere:

behold your God! that divine Person is come, that was promised, prophesied of, and expected; even Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, God manifest in the flesh, God your Saviour, and who being God, truly God, is able to save to the uttermost; look to him with an eye of faith, and be saved; behold the Son of God, the Lamb of God, that has bore your sins, and took them away; behold him now, as your King and your God, on the throne, made and declared, Lord and Christ, crowned with glory and honour, on the same throne with his divine Father, having all power in heaven and earth; and let the echo of your faith be,

my Lord and my God. The Targum is,

"the kingdom of your God is revealed; see **Mt 3:2**."

{n} Nwyu trvbm "O quae evangelizas Tsijoni", Juntas & Tremellius, Piscator.
{o} Mlvwry trvbm "O quae evangelizas Jeruschalaimo", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 40:10

Ver. 10. Behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand,.... Some understand this of the second coming of Christ, which coming is certain, such assurances being given of it by promise and prophecy; and will be attended with power, which will be requisite to raise the dead, summon all nations before him, and pass and execute the proper sentence on them; when his arm shall openly bear rule, he will take to himself his great power, and reign; when his reward will be with him, to give to every man according to their works; and his own work will be before him, to judge the world in righteousness: see Re 22:12, but it is more agreeable to the context, which foretells the coming of John the Baptist, points out the ministers of the Gospel, and describes Christ in his office, as a shepherd feeding his flock, to understand it of his first coming; for not God the Father, but the Son of God, is meant by the Lord God, who is truly God, and so able to save, and which was the end of his coming. He is said to come "with a strong hand", or with great power, which his work required; which was to fulfil the law, satisfy divine justice, atone for sin, grapple and conflict with innumerable enemies, undergo the death of the cross, bear the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, and all in order to obtain eternal redemption for his people; for this he came from heaven to earth, not by change of place, but by assumption of nature. Some render it, "against a strong one" {p}; the strong man armed, the devil, whose head he came to break, whose works he came to destroy, with whom he fought, and whom he conquered and destroyed. Jarchi's note is,

"against the wicked, to take vengeance on them;"

but Aben Ezra and Kimchi supply the word hand, as we do:

and his arm shall rule for him; or he shall have sufficient power of himself to do the work he comes about; his own arm or power wrought salvation for him and for his people; see Isa 63:5. Some render it, "over him {q}"; that is, over the strong and mighty one, against whom he came, whom he conquered, subdued, and ruled over:

behold, his reward is with him; to give to those that trust in him, as Kimchi; or to those that do his word, as the Targum; that believe in him, embrace his Gospel, and act according to it: or this may respect his own reward, which should follow his work; which he was as sure of as if it was in his hands; namely, his exaltation in his human nature, his glory with his Father, and the enjoyment of his spiritual seed to all eternity:

and his work before him; the work of redemption and salvation, which he was called unto, sent to do, and which, being given him, he agreed to do, was very toilsome and laborious, yet he took great delight in it, and has finished it; this is said to be "before him", being proposed in council, and cut out in covenant for him, was well known unto him, and in his power to effect, and what he could easily do, and did. The Targum understands this of the works of men being before him, for whom he has a reward.

{p} qzxb "contra robustum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vitringa. {q} wb "in illum", ibid.

Isaiah 40:11

Ver. 11. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,.... Christ has a flock, a flock of men, a distinct and peculiar people, and it is but one, and that a little one, and yet a beautiful one, though often a flock of slaughter; which is his by his Father's gift, and his own purchase, and appears manifest in the effectual calling, when he calls them by name; to these he stands in the relation of a shepherd, being so by his Father's designation and appointment, and his own consent; and a good shepherd he is, as is manifest by his laying down his life for the sheep; and a great one, being Jehovah's fellow, and the chief shepherd, under whom all others are; yea, he is the one, and only one; and a very careful, compassionate, and faithful one he is; who performs his whole office as a shepherd, not only by providing food for his flock, by leading them into green and good pastures, his church and ordinances; by appointing under shepherds to feed them with the doctrines of the Gospel, the wholesome words of the Lord Jesus; and by feeding them himself, with himself, the bread of life, and hidden manna, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed; but also by protecting them from all their enemies, the roaring and devouring lion, Satan, and wolves in sheep's clothing, false teachers; and by taking such notice and account of them, as that none of them shall be lost; and by doing all that is expressed Eze 34:16, seeking that which was lost; bringing back that which was driven away; binding up that which was broken; and strengthening and healing the sick, as well as watching over them night and day, lest any hurt them:

he shall gather the lambs with his arm; the weaklings of the flock; the same with babes and sucklings, newly born souls, weak believers, mean and low in their own eyes, the smoking flax, and bruised reed, the day of small things, the poor of the flock; these he gathers with his arm of power, and by the ministry of the Gospel, both to himself, his person, righteousness, grace and fulness, and to his church, to partake of the word and ordinances of it, and to nearer communion with him in them; he gathers them up into his arms in a way of protection, when liable to fall into the hands of powerful enemies, and to be hurt by them, and in order to carry them, they not being able to go of themselves, as it follows:

and carry them in his bosom; which is expressive of very great affection to them, such being greatly loved as are put into the bosom, as Obed by Naomi, the poor man's ewe lamb, and a wife of youth; as also of great nearness to him, being in his bosom must lie near his heart, and are indeed upon it; likewise it denotes the most intimate communion with him, and a being privy to his secrets, as Christ in the bosom of his Father is to his; as well as it implies an enjoyment of rest in him, and safety by him; for what can disturb or hurt such as are in the bosom of Christ?

and shall gently lead those that are with young; who have the seed of grace in them, have spiritual principles wrought in their souls, Christ formed in their hearts, are full of desires for him and spiritual things, and carry a burden, that of their sins, under which they groan; these he leads out, and off of themselves to himself, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, into green pastures, into his Father's presence, and at last to glory; and he leads them on "gently", gradually, step by step, to see their own vileness and sinfulness, to look, go to, lay hold on him, and retain him; he leads them into the truths of the Gospel, and the deep waters of the sanctuary, and proportionably to their strength as they are able to bear, either the doctrines of the Gospel, or the duties of religion, or afflictions and sufferings; see Ge 33:14.

Isaiah 40:12

Ver. 12. Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?.... The following account of the power, wisdom, and all sufficiency of God, and which is to be understood of Christ, is to show that he is equal to the work of redemption and salvation he has engaged in, and was about to come and perform, and that he is able to do it, as well as to execute his office as a shepherd; and also to observe, that though his rich grace and goodness he had condescended to take upon him the work of a saviour, and the office of a shepherd, yet this was not to be interpreted as if he had lost his dignity and glory as a divine Person, or as if that was in the least diminished; for he was no other than that infinite Being, "who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand"; the waters of the seas, for which he has provided a receptacle, where he has collected and put them together; the dimensions of which are exactly known to him, and the vast confluence of water is no more in his hands than so much water as a man can hold in the hollow of his hand, in his fist, or hand contracted:

and meted out heaven with the span; which he has stretched out as a curtain, Isa 40:22, and the measure of which is but one hand's breadth with him; and is no more to him than stretching out a carpet or canopy; and as easily measured by him as a piece of cloth is by a man with the span of his hand, or any measuring rule or yard:

and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure; the word {r} used signifies the third part of some larger measure, as of a sextarius, as some; or of an ephah, or bath as others; or of some other measure not known; See Gill on "Ps 80:5". The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "with three fingers"; and the sense may be, that the dust of the earth, or the earth itself, which is but dust, is no more with the Lord than so much earth or dust as a man can hold between his thumb and two fingers; and in like manner is the whole earth comprehended by the Lord:

and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance; as easily as a man can throw in his goods into a pair of scales, and take the true weight of them, with equal ease did the Lord raise the mountains and the hills in a proper proportion, and has so exactly poised them, as if he had weighed them in a pair of scales; this seems to hint at the use of mountains and hills to be a sort of ballast to the earth, and shows the original formation of them from the beginning. The answer to the above question is, that it was the same divine Person of whom it is said, "behold your God, [and who should] come with a strong hand, [and] feed his flock."

{r} vlvb "in mensura ternaria", Montanus; "trientali", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Vitringa.

Isaiah 40:13

Ver. 13. Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord,.... In the creation of all things, in garnishing the heavens, and moving upon the face of the waters? not anyone, angel or man; there were none with him, nor did he need any to guide and direct him what to do {s}:

or being his counsellor, hath taught him? or, "the man of his counsel {t}"; there was no other than the Wonderful Counsellor, the Angel of the great council, the essential Word of God, whose spirit is here spoken of.

{s} The Targum is, "who hath directed the Holy Spirit in the mouth of all the prophets? is it not the Lord?" which agrees with the accents; for so according to them the words should be rendered "who hath directed the Spirit? the Lord"; so Reinbeck, de Accent. Heb. p. 418. and who renders the next clause, and he hath made the man of his counsel (Moses) to know that.

{t} wtue vya "vir a consiliis", Junius & Tremellius Piscator.

Isaiah 40:14

Ver. 14. With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him,.... This is the same as before, only repeated in other words, the more strongly to deny that any mere creature counselled, taught, and instructed the Spirit of Christ, in the ordering and managing the works of creation:

and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding? or gave him that judgment, knowledge, and understanding in framing the world, and all things in it, in that beautiful and regular manner that it is; which shows it to be a work of wisdom, more than human or angelical, and to be purely divine; no one, angel or man, could have struck out such a path of judgment, such a way of understanding, or showed such exquisite skill and knowledge, as appear in the works of creation; see Ps 104:24.

Isaiah 40:15

Ver. 15. Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket,.... Not only the Chaldeans and Babylonians, and other nations most known, and most troublesome to the Jews, but all the nations of the world; these, in comparison of God, of his infinite and immense Being, are but as a drop of water that hangs upon the bucket, or falls from it, when water is drawn by it, or is left in it, when poured out of it; which is nothing in comparison of the well out of which the water is drawn, or even of the water in the bucket drawn out of it:

and are accounted as the small dust of the balance; that is, they are accounted nothing of with God, comparatively speaking, any more than the small dust which hangs upon the balance, and gives it no weight, nor turn one way or another, and so is of no consideration. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "as the turn of the scale"; and so the Targum; but the other version more strongly expresses the sense:

behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing; by which are meant not merely islands, properly so called, which are encompassed by the sea, but all such countries which the Jews used to go to by sea, for all such they called isles; these the Lord can take up, or cast away {u}, as some render the word; toss them about, overturn and destroy, as a man may take up the most minute thing and cast it from him. The Targum renders it,

"as chaff which flies away;"

or, as others translate it,

"as the ashes of a coal which fly away."

The word may signify any light thing, as chaff, straw, stubble, feathers, down of thistles, which are easily carried away with the least force; and so Vitringa renders the words, "behold, the isles are as some little thing which flies away".

{u} lwjy "projiciet", Pagninus, Tigurine version; so R. Jonah in Ben Melech.

Isaiah 40:16

Ver. 16. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn,.... The trees of it, as the Targum; these are not sufficient to burn a sacrifice with, suitable to the dignity and majesty of God, and as his justice can require for offences committed:

nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering, though it was a mountain and forest which abounded with trees, and especially cedars, and there was a great quantity of cattle in it, yet neither were sufficient to furnish out a proper burnt offering to the Lord; he only himself could provide a Lamb sufficient for a burnt offering, and he has done it, the only begotten Son of God; he has offered himself an offering and a sacrifice to God, of a sweet smelling savour, by which he has put away sin, and made full atonement for it, Jarchi thinks this is said to aggravate the sins of men, of the wicked, which were so great, that Lebanon with all its wood and cattle could not furnish out a sacrifice sufficient to expiate them.

Isaiah 40:17

Ver. 17. All nations before him are as nothing,.... As if they were nonentities, and were not real beings in comparison of him, who is the Being of beings, the author of all beings which exist in all nations; who are all in his sight, and are not only as grasshoppers, as is after mentioned, but even as nothing:

and they are counted to him as less than nothing, and vanity; if there is or could be such a thing less than nothing, that they are; and so they are accounted of by him; they are like the chaos out of which the earth was formed, when it was "tohu" and "bohu", the first of which words is used here; this serves to humble the pride of men, and to lessen the glory of the nations, and the inhabitants of them.

Isaiah 40:18

Ver. 18. To whom then will ye liken God?.... There is nothing in the whole creation that can bear any resemblance to him, or he to them; since all nations are as a drop of the bucket, as the small dust of the balance, as nothing, yea, less than nothing, and vanity: "or what likeness will ye compare unto him", {w} order, ordain, and appoint for him? in what rank can he be placed? to what class of beings can he be likened? what similitude can be given of him? what is there that is fit to be named with him, or compared to him? this, with what follows, is mentioned as an antidote to prevent the Jews falling into idolatry in Babylon, where they would be exposed unto it; or rather to prevent Christians in Gospel times from going into the idolatry of the Papists; see Ac 17:28.

{w} wl wkret twmd hmw "et quid similitudinis ponetis ei", Pagninus; "ordinabitis", Montanus; "disponetis", Vatablus.

Isaiah 40:19

Ver. 19. The workman melteth a graven image,.... Or, "the founder"; he melts some sort of metal, as iron, brass, copper, or lead, which he casts into a mould for an image, and afterwards graves, or gets it graved:

and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold; or, "the finer"; he stretches out plates of gold, and covers it with them, so that it looks as if it was made of solid gold, and deceives the eyes of men; such stupidity and vanity are there in mortals to believe that there can be deity in such a piece of workmanship!

and casteth silver chains to put about the graven image, either for ornament, or rather to fasten it to some wall or pillar, that it may stand upright, and may not be taken down and stole away, or blown down with the wind, or fall of itself and be broken; thus ridiculing the weakness of these idols, and the folly of the makers and worshippers of them. The Targum is,

"the silversmith joins silver chains to it."

Isaiah 40:20

Ver. 20. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation,.... Who is so poor that he cannot bring an offering to his God, yet he will have one; and though he cannot purchase a golden or silver one, or one that is gilt, and adorned with either; yet he will have a wooden one, as follows. Some render it, "he that is set over the oblation", which Aben Ezra mentions; that was over the treasury, where the oblations were; the Heathen priest, whose business it was from thence to procure idols to worship. Jerom takes the word Nkom to be the name of a tree that will not rot; and so the Targum renders it,

"he cuts down an ash:"

but the word is descriptive of an idol worshipper; and, according to Gussetius {x}, signifies one that by custom and repeated acts has got skill in such things; and so Jarchi: hence

he chooseth a tree that will not rot: he goes to the forest, and chooses the best tree for his purpose he can find, even one that will not rot, as the cypress; and though he cannot get an idol made of metal, but is forced to have one of wood, yet he will get the best he can, that will last longest, an incorruptible deity, as he fancies:

he seeketh unto him a cunning workman, to prepare a graven image that shall not be moved: having decided upon his tree, and what sort of wood to make his god of, he looks out for an ingenious carpenter and carver, a good workman, to make it in the form of an image, and grave, or rather carve it, in the best manner he can, and then fasten it in a proper place, that it may not fall; a poor helpless deity, that cannot secure itself, and much less be of any service to its worshippers.

{x} Ebr Comment. p. 558.

Isaiah 40:21

Ver. 21. Have ye not known?] This is the speech of the prophet, directed to the idolaters, appealing to their own natural knowledge, who, from the light of nature, might know that idols were nothing, had no divinity in them: that it is God that made the earth and governs the world, and who only ought to be worshipped:

have ye not heard? by tradition from the ancients, from your forefathers, who received it from theirs, and have delivered it to you:

hath it not been told you from the beginning? from the beginning of your states and kingdoms, and even from the beginning of the world, by the wisest and best of men that have been in it, that those things are true before related, and what follow:

have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? the being of God, the invisible things of him, his eternal power and Godhead, from the things that are made, even from his founding of the earth; as well as such knowledge and understanding has been as early as that, and might be continued from it: or,

have ye not understood the foundations of the earth {y}? what the earth is founded upon, and who laid the foundations of it; no other than that divine Being described in the next words.

{y} Urah twdowm Mtwnybh alh "nonne intelligetis fundamenta terrae?" Pagninus, Montanus; "annon intellexistis?" Vatablus.

Isaiah 40:22

Ver. 22. It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth,.... Or, "the globe {z}" of it; for the earth is spherical or globular: not a flat plain, but round, hung as a ball in the air; here Jehovah sits as the Lord and Sovereign; being the Maker of it, he is above it, orders and directs its motion, and governs all things in it: Kimchi rightly observes, that the heavens are the circle of the earth, which is the centre of them, and around which they are; and so it signifies, that the Lord sits or dwells in the heavens, from whence he beholds the children of men:

and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; or "locusts {a}"; as one upon a very great eminence looking down beholds creatures as exceeding small and little; and if the Israelites were to the "anakim" or giants as grasshoppers, Nu 13:33, much more must puny mortals be such in the sight of God, and in comparison of him; and this may denote, not only the minuteness of men, but what weak, impotent, useless, worthless, and short lived creatures men are:

that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain; alluding to the firmament or expanse made at the creation, and still continued; which is as a curtain to himself, which he draws around himself, he dwelling in the highest heavens, and in light inaccessible to mortals; and which he stretches out as a canopy around this earth, for the use of the inhabitants of it: or, "as a little thing"; or, as a little skin {b}; and which he stretches out as easily as a man can stretch out that:

and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in it; for himself to dwell in, and so stretches out the heavens like curtains about him; tents being made of such, and often of skins.

{z} gwx le "super sphaeram", Pagninus; "globum", Montanus Vatablus; "super orbem telluris", Vitringa. {a} Mybgxk "ut locustae", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Vitringa; "tanquam locustae", Munster; "velut locustae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {b} qdk "velut tenue", Montanus; "tenuissimum", Vatablus; "pellem." Munster; so some in Vatablus; "pellculam", Gataker.

Isaiah 40:23

Ver. 23. That bringeth princes to nothing,.... The great men of the earth, kings, rulers, and nobles, these he brings to the dust; and all their counsels, schemes, and purposes, come to nothing; and their monarchies and kingdoms too in time. Where are now the Babylonish, Persian, and Grecian monarchies, and those great princes that formerly reigned in them?

he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity; their decrees and decisions to stand for nothing, as "tohu" and "bohu", the first of which words is used here; so that they are no more regarded and attended to.

Isaiah 40:24

Ver. 24. Yea, they shall not be planted,.... As trees are, like the cedars in Lebanon, though they may seem to be such; but be like the grass of the field, and herbs of the earth: or, "even they shall be", as if they were "not planted {c}", they shall not grow and flourish; or they shall be plucked up, and be no more; this is said of the princes and judges of the earth; nay,

they shall not be sown; as seed is, which springing up, brings forth fruit, but so it shall not be with them; or they shall be as if they had not been sown, no fruit being brought forth by them:

yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth; so as to continue and abide, but they shall soon vanish and disappear, as the most powerful princes and wisest judges do. The Targum is,

"although they multiply, although they increase, although their children become great in the earth:"

"and" or "yea",

he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither; as grass withers, when a severe wind blows upon it:

and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble; which is not able to stand before the force of it; and as unable are the greatest potentates on earth to stand before the tempest of divine wrath and vengeance; if God blows but upon them in anger, all their glory and grandeur, pomp and power, wither away like the flower of the field; and especially if he comes forth in all the fury of his wrath in a tempestuous way against them, they are no more able to stand before him that stubble before a violent storm: see **Re 6:15**. The Targum is,

"yet, even he will send his fury upon them; and his word shall take them away, as a whirlwind stubble."

{c} wejn lb Pa "perinde ut non plantati", Calvin; and so the following clauses.

Isaiah 40:25

Ver. 25. To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One?] Or be upon a level with? since the greatest of men on earth are brought to nothing by him, and are no more: this is repeated from Isa 40:18 and supported with fresh strength of argument, to show that there is nothing whatever, that is a fit likeness and similitude, by which to represent the Lord.

Isaiah 40:26

Ver. 26. Lift up your eyes on high,.... From the earth, and the inhabitants of it, even those of the greatest power and influence in it, to the heavens above, those that are visible to the eye:

and behold who hath created these things; that are seen in the heavens, the sun, moon, and stars; consider the Creator of them, what a glorious Being he must be; what power he must be possessed of; what dazzling light he must dwell in; what glory and majesty he must be clothed with; and how infinitely transcending all mortal creatures he must be:

that bringeth out their host by number; not only into being, at the first creation of them, but at every proper season; causing the sun to rise every morning, the stars to appear at night, and the moon in its revolution; as a general brings forth his army, marshals it in order, musters it, and takes the number of his soldiers:

he calleth them all by names; suitable to their position and influence; he knows the proper names of them all, which no astrologer can pretend unto; and this is such knowledge as no general of an army has; for though the stars are innumerable to men, the names of most unknown, they are all known to him that made them, Ps 147:4:

by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power not one faileth; through the omnipotence of God, not only the sun and moon, the great luminaries, are continued in being, and constantly observe their order; but even every star keeps its place, or performs its course, and retains its influence, and in every instance obeys the commands of its Creator; never fails of appearing at his order, and of doing what he appoints it should. Kimchi gives the sense thus, that according to the virtue and efficacy that there is in every star, so is its name; and because of the strength and power that is in everyone of them, they remain unchangeably and unalterably the same as when they were first created; which not only holds true of the sun and moon, but of the stars lesser and greater. The Targum is,

"because of the multitude of strength, and the power of might, not one is hindered from its order;"

wherefore, as there is no likeness on earth, so none in heaven, with which the Lord is to be likened, or to which he can be equalled. This may respect not the might and power of the Lord, in supporting and maintaining these creatures in their being and usefulness; but the strength and power of the mightiest creatures, to hinder their influence and service: for the words may be rendered, "through the multitude of strength", or anyone being "strong in power, not one indeed fails {d}"; or is wanting, that is, through the strength or power of the mightiest creatures, angels or men, the hosts of heaven cannot be stopped in their course, or hindered in their work appointed to do, or be deprived of their being.

{d} rden al vya xwk Uymaw Mynwa bwrm "prae multitudine virium, et robore virtutis, ut ne unum quidem deesset", Tigurine version.

Isaiah 40:27

Ver. 27. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel,.... The Jews, supposed to be in captivity, are here meant, according to Jarchi and Kimchi; whom the prophet reproves, for murmuring at the calamities and afflictions there endured by them; but it may be the church and people of God, in Gospel times, are here intended, being under suffering circumstances, either under Rome Pagan, or Rome Papal; not only inwardly repining, but openly complaining and uttering, as follows:

my way is hid from the Lord; meaning not their course of life, or their religious actions, their profession of the Gospel, their attendance on public worship, their prayers and other duties of religion; but their sufferings for his name's sake, the tribulations they endured, the afflicted way they walked in, which they imagined God took no notice of, since no way was opened in Providence for their deliverance out of them:

and my judgment is passed over from my God; my cause and case are neglected by him; he does not undertake my cause, nor plead it against my enemies, or right my wrongs, and avenge the injuries done me, or deliver me out of the hands of those that contend with me. The answer to which complaint follows, and which clearly shows there was no just foundation for it.

Isaiah 40:28

Ver. 28. Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard?.... From the history of the church in all ages; from the experience of all good men; from their own knowledge and observation; from the Scriptures, and the prophets, the interpreters of them; both that what is before suggested is wrong, and that what follows is true,

that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? or, "the God of the world"; that has made it, and upholds it, and governs it, and judges righteously in it; who is from everlasting to everlasting, unchangeably the same; whose name alone is Jehovah, the self-existent and all comprehending Being, the Maker and Former of all things; who has not only created the earth, and the foundations of it, as the Targum, or the continent, and the habitable part of the world, that is most known and dwelt in, but even the extremities of the earth; and therefore knows and will take care of his own people, let them be where they will: and though the work of creation, and of upholding creatures in their beings, and of governing the world, and providing for all in it, and of taking care of his church and people in particular, requires so much power, as well as wisdom, yet he never sinks under it, nor is weary of it; wherefore they have no reason to give way to such unbelief and despondency, as above expressed:

there is no searching of his understanding; it is infinite, it reaches to all persons and things, and therefore he cannot be at a loss to provide for his people, or plead their cause; nor can their case be unknown to him, or he want either power or skill to help them.

Isaiah 40:29

Ver. 29. He giveth power to the faint,.... Who are ready to faint under afflictions, because they have not immediate deliverance, or their prayers are not answered at once, or promises not fulfilled as they expected; to such he gives fresh supplies of spiritual strength; he strengthens their faith, and enlarges their views, to behold the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, and confirms his blessings and promises of grace unto them, Ps 27:13. The Targum is,

"who giveth wisdom to the righteous that breathe after the words of the law:"

and to them that have no might he increaseth strength; not that they have no might at all, strictly speaking; for then it could not be properly said their strength was increased by him; but that their might and power were very small, and that in their own apprehensions they had none, and then it is that fresh strength is given them; as the apostle says, "when I am weak, then am I strong"; 2Co 12:10, though this may be understood, not of the strength of their graces, but of their sins and corruptions: a word from the same root as this here used signifies "iniquity"; and the sense may be, that the Lord increases the spiritual strength of such on whom the lust's, corruptions, and virtuosity of nature have not the power and dominion {e}.

{e} "Cur non sumatur", Mynwa "illis quibus non sunt vitiosae concupiscentiae robur auger", Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 21.

Isaiah 40:30

Ver. 30. Even the youths shall faint and be weary,.... Such as are in the prime of their strength, and glory in it, yet through the hand of God upon them, by one disease or another, their strength is weakened in the way; or they meet with that which they are not equal to, and sink under, and are discouraged, and obliged to desist. Some think the Babylonians and Chaldeans are here meant, the enemies of Israel, and by whom they were carried captive. The Targum interprets this clause, as well as the following, of wicked and ungodly men; and so do Jarchi and Kimchi: it may be applied to the Heathen emperors, who persecuted the church of God, and were smitten by him, and found it too hard a work to extirpate Christianity out of the world, which they thought to have done; and also to all the antichristian states, who have given their power and strength to the beast:

and the young men shall utterly fail; or, "falling shall fall" {f}; stumble and fall, die and perish; or, however, not be able to perform their enterprise.

{f} wlvky lwvk "corruendo corruent", Montanus; "labefacti cadent", Castalio.

Isaiah 40:31

Ver. 31. But they that wait upon the Lord,.... As children on their parents, to do them honour, to obey their commands, and receive food and blessings from them; as servants on their masters, to know their pleasure, do their work, and have their wages; as clients on their patrons, to have advice of them, put their cause into their hands, and know how it goes; and as beggars at the door, who knock and wait, tell their case and wait, meet with repulses, yet keep their place, and continue waiting: such an act supposes a knowledge and reverence of God, confidence in him, attendance on him, not with the body only, in public and private, but with the soul also, and with some degree of constancy, and with patience and quietness: the Lord is to be waited upon for the manifestations of himself, who sometimes hides himself, but is to be waited for, since he has his set time to show himself again, and his presence is worth waiting for; also for the performance of his promises, which may be expected from his perfections, the nature of the promises, and their being in Christ; likewise for answers of prayer, and for the fresh discoveries of pardoning grace and mercy; and as Old Testament saints waited for the first coming of Christ, so New Testament saints for his second coming, and for eternal glory and happiness: and such "shall renew their strength"; which is to be understood of spiritual! strength in the heart, and of the graces of the Spirit there: it supposes strength received already, which natural men have not, but converted men have; and yet they want more, and more they shall have; to assist them in the performance of duty, to enable them to resist Satan and his temptations, and the corruptions of nature, and to cause them to endure afflictions and persecutions patiently, and to persevere unto the end:

they shall mount up with wings as eagles; swiftly and strongly; it is expressive of the motion of the affections heavenwards towards God and Christ, and things above; of the entrance of faith and hope within the veil, and of the exercise of these graces on Christ, who is now at the right hand of God; of the expectation of glory and happiness in heaven hereafter, and of present support under afflictions, the Lord bearing them as on eagles' wings; see Ps 103:5 {g}:

they shall run, and not be weary; in the way of God's commandments; which shows great affection for them, haste to obey them, delight and pleasure, cheerfulness and alacrity, therein, so as to be without weariness:

and they shall, walk, and not faint: in the ways of God, in the name of the Lord, or in Christ, as they have received him; leaning on him, trusting in him, continuing to do so, till they receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls; and so shall not sink under their burdens, nor give out till they enjoy it; different persons, though all of them believers, may be here intended; particularly Christians under the Gospel dispensation, tried and exercised by many enemies; some shall soar aloft, and dwell on high; others, though they cannot rise and "fly" so swiftly and strongly, yet shall "run" without weariness; and others, though they can neither fly nor run, yet shall "walk" without fainting.

{g} The Jews have a notion, that for ten years the eagle ascends very high in the firmament of heaven, and approaching near to the heat of the sun, it falls into the sea, through the vehemence of the heat; and then it casts its feathers, and is renewed again, and its feathers grow, and it returns to the days of its youth; and so every ten years to a hundred; and in the hundredth year it ascends according to its custom, and falls into the sea, and dies. So Ben Melech from Saadiab Gaon.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 41:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 41

This chapter contains a summons to the enemies of Christ to come and try the cause between God and them before him; words of comfort to true believers, promising them help, protection, and provision; full conviction of idolaters, and their practices; and is closed with a promise of some great person, and what he will do unto them, and for the people of God. The summons is in Isa 41:1, expressed according to the forms used in courts of judicature. The issue of the controversy is put upon this foot, the raising up a certain person from the east, who it was that did it, which appearing to be the work of the Lord, proves the point contended about, Isa 41:2, the obstinate persistence of idolaters in their idolatry, notwithstanding this is observed, Isa 41:5, the people of God, under the names of Jacob and Israel, the objects of God's choice and affection, Isa 41:8 are encouraged against the fear of men, with promises of help and

strength from the Lord, Isa 41:10 of confusion to their enemies, and victory over them, Isa 41:11, and of spiritual provisions, and great prosperity in their wilderness state, in which they should manifestly see the hand of the Lord, Isa 41:17 when the idolatrous nations are challenged to produce their strong reasons for their idolatry, and are put upon proving that their idols can foretell things to come, or do good or evil to men, or own they are nothing but an abomination,
Isa 41:21 and then one is spoken of that should come as a mighty warrior, and tread down the Pagan princes, and a set of Gospel ministers should be sent, bringing good tidings to Zion, to the silencing of idolaters, and the cessation of idolatrous worship,
Isa 41:25.

Ver. 1. Keep silence before me, O islands,.... The great controversy in the world after the coming of Christ, which is expressly spoken of in the preceding chapter, was, as Cocceius observes, whether he was a divine Person; this was first objected to by the Jews, and afterwards by many that bore the Christian name; some, in the times of the apostles, especially the Apostle John; and others in later ages; some affirmed that he was a mere man, as Ebion and Cerinthus; others that he was a created God, as Arius; and others a God by office, as Socinus and his followers; now these are called upon, wherever they were, whether on the continent, or in the isles of the sea; and especially all such places which were separated from Judea by the sea, or which they went to by sea, were called islands, perhaps the European nations and isles are more particularly intended; and now, as when the judge is on the bench, and the court is set, and a cause just going to be tried, silence is proclaimed; so here, Jehovah himself being on the throne, and a cause depending between him and men being about to be tried, they are commanded silence; see **Zec 2:13**:

and let the people renew their strength; muster up all their force, collect the most powerful arguments they had, and produce their strong reasons in favour of their sentiments:

let them come near, then let them speak; let them come into open court, and at the bar plead their cause, and speak out freely and fully all they have to say; and let them not pretend that they were deterred from speaking, and not suffered to make their defence, or were condemned without hearing:

let us come near together in judgment: and fairly try the cause; the issue of which is put upon this single point that follows.

Isaiah 41:2

Ver. 2. Who raised up the righteous man from the east,.... The Targum interprets this of Abraham; and so the Talmud {h}; and this way go most Jewish and Christian commentators, and to him the characters agree; he was a righteous man, believed in Christ for righteousness, had the righteousness of faith when circumcised, did justice, and wrought righteousness himself, and required his children and servants to do the same, Ge 15:6, he was raised up out of an idolatrous family, from Ur of the Chaldees, on the other side the river Euphrates, which lay east of Judea; he was called by the Lord to his foot, as it follows, and was obedient to him; he went forth at his command, not knowing whither he went, Heb 11:8. God gave him by promise the land of Canaan, possessed by several "nations", and which his seed afterwards inherited; yea, he made him, in a spiritual sense, "the father of many nations", even of all believers, in all nations of the world, Ge 15:18, he made him a conqueror "over" the "kings" that had vanquished the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, and plundered their cities; who were no more able to stand before him, though he had no more than three hundred and eighteen servants of his household, than "dust and stubble" can resist the force of a mighty wind; he "pursued them" in an unknown tract, got an entire victory over them, without being hurt or losing a man; which was so extraordinary an affair, that Melchizedek, priest of the most high God, and a type of Christ, went forth to meet him, and blessed him, Ge 14:14, and who but the mighty God could or did raise up this man, and make him what he was, and do the things he did? some, as Aben Ezra, and several Christian writers also, think that Cyrus is meant, spoken of as raised up already, though to come, in the manner of prophetic language, called the ravenous bird from the east, Isa 46:11, who came from Persia, which lay east of Judea;

whom God called to his foot, and who performed his pleasure, and executed his counsel, and so said to be a "righteous man" in that respect; and is expressly said to be "raised up in righteousness"; before whom the Lord subdued "nations", and loosed the loins of "kings"; see Isa 44:28, some understand it of him as a type of Christ, who is the righteous One, or "righteousness" itself, as the word properly signifies, the Lord our righteousness; whose name is "Oriens", or the east, the rising sun in the east, **Zec 3:8**, the angel ascending from the east, **Re 7:2**, born in the eastern part of the world; called to be the servant of the Lord, and was; to whom he has given the Heathen for his inheritance, and made him his firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth, and whom he will overcome and slay with his twoedged sword: but since rather Christ is the person speaking, and concerning whom the controversy is, therefore some person distinct from him must be meant; and I am inclined to think, with Coeceius, that the Apostle Paul is intended, that wonderful man; though this sense is rejected by Vitringa: he was a "righteous" one, made so by the righteousness of Christ; he believed in it, and was a preacher of it, and lived a holy and righteous life and conversation; whom the Lord raised up for uncommon service and usefulness, and to whom he appeared personally to make him a minister, and send him out to do his work; he was raised up in the eastern part of the world, in Judea, being a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and from thence sent forth into various parts; see Ac 26:16:

called him to his foot; and though he was like a furious lion, raging against his saints, breathing out slaughter and threatenings against them, and in the height of his rage and fury; yet was at once, at the call of Christ, made as tame as a lamb, and said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" he was willing to do anything and everything he pleased, **Ac 9:1** and when he signified it as his will that he should preach his Gospel, he was not disobedient, he did not confer with flesh and blood, but at once set about it with the greatest zeal and readiness:

gave the nations before him; made him an apostle of the Gentiles, or of the nations, and made those Gentiles or nations obedient by word and deed; he triumphed in Christ everywhere, and diffused the savour of his knowledge in every place, Ro 11:13:

and made him rule over kings? governors, princes, potentates, and kings of the earth; he had power over their spirits, being an instrument either of converting them, as Sergius Paulus the Roman deputy, from whence some think he had his name; or to make them to tremble at his discourses, as Felix the Roman governor; and of bringing them at least to own there was something in the Christian religion, as Agrippa, a crowned head, who was obliged to confess he had almost persuaded him to be a Christian, Ac 13:7, and of bringing their kingdoms, and the inhabitants of them, into subjection to Christ:

he gave them as dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow; whose weapons were not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God; his sword was the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; his bow and arrows were the Gospel, and the truths of it, in whose ministry Christ went forth conquering, and to conquer: and this being attended with the power of God, men could no more stand against them than dust and stubble before the wind.

{h} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 156. 2. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 108. 2. and Taanith, fol. 21. 1.

Isaiah 41:3

Ver. 3. He pursued them, and passed safely..... Went on in his work, pursued his great design in subduing the souls of men, and bringing them to the obedience of Christ; and though he had so many enemies, he "passed on safely"; God did not suffer them to set upon him, to do him any harm, even though he was exposed to perils by sea and land, by thieves and robbers, by his own countrymen and Heathens, in city and country, and even by false brethren; see Ac 18:10, it is in the future tense, "he shall pursue them, he shall pass safely" {i}; or in peace:

even by the way that he had not gone with his feet; travelling in foreign parts, in distant countries, in tracks of land unknown unto him; where he had never been before, even from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum, fully preaching the Gospel of Christ, Ro 15:19.

{i} Mpdry "persequetur", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "transibit", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Isaiah 41:4

Ver. 4. Who hath wrought and done it,.... Contrived and effected it, formed the scheme, and brought it to pass; namely, raising up the righteous man from the east, and succeeding him in the manner described:

calling the generations from the beginning? or rather here begins the answer to the above question, which may be rendered,

he that calleth the generations from the beginning {k}; he has wrought and done this; and to this agree the Syriac and Arabic versions; even he that knew them from all eternity, before they were, and all the men that would be in them, and could call them by their names; and who calls things that are not, as though they were; and who calls them into being at the appointed time, and continues a succession of them, one after another; who calls by his grace all that are called in successive generations, and rules over them by his power, providence, and grace:

I the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am he; the immutable Jehovah, the everlasting I AM, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last; all which is said of Christ, and is the person here speaking, **Re 1:8**, phrases expressive of his eternity and deity; he is the first and the last in God's thoughts, purposes, and decrees; in the covenant of grace; in the creation of all things; in the salvation, justification, sanctification, adoption, and glorification of his people; and in the church, above and below:

and with the last, may be understood either of the last generations God is with, and calls as well as the first, as De Dieu; or of all believers, with whom he shall be and they with him to all eternity, so Gussetius {l}. Now the conversion of the Apostle Paul, his commission to preach the Gospel, the extraordinary qualifications he was endowed with, the wonderful things done by him, in the conversion of sinners, and planting of churches in the Gentile world, and towards the abolition of Paganism in it, are incontestable proofs of the deity of Christ; no mere creature could ever have raised up, such a man, and accomplished him in such a manner, or wrought such things by him.

{k} varm twrwdh arwq "ille qui vocat vel vocavit generationes ab inito", Munster, Tigurine version. So some in Vatablus. {l} Comment. Ebr. p. 29.

Isaiah 41:5

Ver. 5. The isles saw it, and feared,.... Not the victory which Abraham got over the kings; nor Cyrus's expedition against Babylon, and other nations, and his deliverance of the Jews; but the progress of the Gospel, through the ministry of the Apostle Paul: the idolatrous inhabitants of the Gentile nations saw great multitudes embracing and professing the Gospel; they saw their idols neglected, and their temples abandoned; they feared what would be the consequence of all this, that their old religion their fathers retained, and they were brought up in, would be abolished; and especially a panic seized the priests on this account, whose livelihood depended upon it:

the ends of the earth were afraid; for the sound of the Gospel by him, and other apostles, went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world, Ro

10:18 meaning the inhabitants that dwelt in the furthest parts of the earth, where ignorance and idolatry wholly reigned: they drew near, and came: not to God, nor to Abraham, or Cyrus; rather to their gods, to exert themselves in the defence of their religion; or, which is best, they got together to consult what was proper to be done on such an emergency.

Isaiah 41:6

Ver. 6. They helped everyone his neighbour,.... By advice and counsel, by the best arguments they could make use of, to withstand the new religion, and defend the old one; to prevent the embracing the one, and relinquishing the other:

and everyone said to his brother, be of good courage: or, "be strong" {m}; they strengthened one another's hands in their idolatrous worship, encouraged each other to oppose the prevailing doctrine; urging, that the craft of some was in danger, and the religion of them all at stake, and their gods like to fall into contempt. An instance of this may be seen in Demetrius the craftsman at Ephesus, when the Gospel mightily prevailed there, who stirred up the workmen of the same craft with himself and the like, suggesting the loss of their business, and the dishonour reflected on their goddess Diana, should the apostle go on as he did; by which we may judge how it was, more or less, in other parts of the world; see Ac 19:20.

{m} qzx "fortis esto, vel sis strenuus", Vatablus.

Isaiah 41:7

Ver. 7. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith,.... The carpenter, when he had made a wooden image, encouraged and hastened the goldsmith, or the "finer", as some render it, to do his part, in covering it with plates of gold or silver:

and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil; he that beat out thin plates of gold and silver with the hammer, in order to decorate the wooden god, encouraged the smith at the forge, that smote on the anvil, there making nails for the fastening it to a pillar or wall, to hasten his work:

saying, it is ready for the sodering; for the several joints to be put together, by sodering them:

and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved; either the goldsmith and finer fastened the plates of gold and silver with nails, that they might be kept fast and close to it; or the smith that smote on the anvil, and made the nails, he fastened the image with them at some proper place, that so it might not fall, or be taken away. All which, as it represents the hurry and solicitude idolaters were in to keep up their craft and religion, so it exposes them to ridicule and contempt.

Isaiah 41:8

Ver. 8. But thou, Israel, art my servant,.... As the great spread and success of the Gospel could not fail of drawing the resentment of the idolatrous Heathens on those who embraced and professed it, and by whom they were grievously persecuted under the Roman emperors; wherefore, to support them under these trials, the Lord speaks these and the following comfortable words unto them; for not carnal, but spiritual Israel are here meant; such who by the power of divine grace were turned from idols to serve the living God, who were made willing to become his servants, and whose honour it was to be so called and accounted; and being so, they might be assured their Lord and Master would protect and defend them, bless and reward them:

Jacob whom I have chosen; Israelites indeed, Jacob like, plain hearted men, wrestling and prevailing ones in prayer with God, whom he chose to be his people, and peculiar treasure; who, though disallowed of men, were like their Lord and Saviour, chosen of God, and precious:

the seed of Abraham my friend: the spiritual seed of Abraham, being believers in Christ, and friends of his, as Abraham was; and whom he uses and shows to be such, by disclosing his secrets to them,
Joh 15:15.

Isaiah 41:9

Ver. 9. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth,.... Meaning not Abraham, nor his natural seed; but such who believed in Christ, who dwelt in the furthest parts of the earth, to whom the Gospel came, and by which they were laid hold upon, and apprehended by Christ as his own:

and called thee from the chief men thereof; from among the great men of the earth, out of their families, courts, and palaces: or rather called them by grace, when such personages were passed by and left; not many noble, not many mighty, being called in those times, **1Co 1:26**:

and said unto thee, thou art my servant; and not only called them by the name, but made them such in reality: adding,

I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away; nor does the Lord cast away any whom he has chosen and foreknown; and therefore being thus dear to God, as all the above titles and acts of grace show, and being secured by him from perishing or being eternally lost, this should encourage them to suffer persecution patiently for his name's sake, and not be afraid of any of their enemies, as follows.

Isaiah 41:10

Ver. 10. Fear thou not, for I am with thee,.... Not merely by his essence or power, who is every where; or by his providence supporting, preserving, observing, ordering, and overruling all things; but in a way of special grace, to guard and protect his people, support and supply them, comfort and strengthen their hearts; wherefore they need not fear any of their enemies, nor whatsoever they may be called to suffer for his name's sake, even though they pass through fire and water, and the valley of the shadow of death:

be not dismayed, I am thy God; through Christ, in a covenant way, as appeared by the effectual calling of them; and therefore might depend on his love, be sure of his power, expect all needful supplies, and to be comfortably carried through every service and trial they were called unto; and need fear no enemies, or be dismayed at anything that should befall them; or become weak as water, and their hearts melt like wax within them, as the Jewish commentators generally interpret the word {n}. The Targum is,

"be not broken;"

in spirit. The word signifies to look about, as persons in distress, and amazed:

I will strengthen thee; with strength in their souls, to perform duties, exercise grace, withstand corruptions, resist temptations, bear afflictions, suffer persecutions, and do their generation work, according to the will of God; and if God is the strength of his people, they need not be afraid of any persons or things, Ps 27:1:

yea, I will help thee; help them out of all their afflictions and temptations, and out of the hands of all their enemies; help them in the discharge of duty, in the exercise of grace, in bearing the cross, in fighting the Lord's battles, and in their journey to another world; help them to every mercy, temporal and spiritual, to all needful supplies of grace, and at last to glory; whose help is suitable and seasonable, and may be expected, since he is able to help, either with or without means; has promised to help his people, as here, and he is faithful that has promised; he has laid help on one that is mighty, and set up a throne of grace to come to for help in time of need; and seeing he is their helper, they need not fear what men or devils can do unto them, Heb 13:5

I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness; either by his almighty power, or by his Son, the man of his right hand, made strong for himself, and the author of righteousness to his people: this is expressive of his sustentation of them, not merely in a providential way, but in a way of special grace; and of his powerful protection and preservation of them, so as that they shall stand in the grace of God, go on in his ways, and not fall finally and totally, but persevere to the end, though their trials and temptations may be great and many.

{n} etvt la "neque dissolvaris", Munster; "vel ne liquefias", Vatablus. "Verbum formatum a nomine" hwev, "quod [ceram] significat, quae calor exposita facile dissolvitur", Munster.

Isaiah 41:11

Ver. 11. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee,.... For rejecting their idols, and idol worship; for receiving the Gospel, and professing it:

shall be ashamed and confounded; their idols not being able to help them, nor they to defend the worship of them: the same is said with respect to Christ, Isa 45:24:

they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall perish; or, "the men of thy strife" {o}; all shall come to nothing, and utterly perish, as to their persons, substance, power, and dignity; as did the Roman emperors, the persecutors of God's people.

{o} Kbyr yvna "viri litis tuae", Montanus; "rixae tuae", Vatablus.

Isaiah 41:12

Ver. 12 Thou shall seek them, and shalt not find them,.... They not existing, or being fled into holes and corners, to rocks and mountains, to hide themselves from the wrath of the Lamb, **Re 6:15**:

even them that contended with thee; or, "the men of thy contention" {p}; who contended with them, not by words and arguments, but by severe persecutions, striving thereby to hinder the progress of the Gospel, and to root Christianity out of the world:

they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought: or, "the men of thy war" {q}; that proclaimed and carried on war against the Christians, in order to destroy them utterly; yet they, and all their efforts, came to nothing, the Gospel prevailed, and Paganism was utterly abolished; which came to pass in Constantine's time, at the opening of the sixth seal, **Re 6:12** which is a proper comment on this text.

{p} Kytum yvna "viros jurgii tui", Montanus. {q} Ktmxlm yvna "viri belli tui", Vatablus; "pugnae tuae", Montanus.

Isaiah 41:13

Ver. 13. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand,.... Take hold of it, join in league and alliance with his people as it were, go hand in hand with them; and having such an one with them, and on their side, they need fear no enemy: or it is expressive of great freedom, familiarity, and friendship, which may assure believers of the strong affection of God towards them; and they may conclude themselves safe, being held by him as a child in the hand of its parents, which is then not afraid of anything. The Lord holds the right hand of

his people, teaching them to walk by faith, leading them into his presence, and to communion with himself, and keeps them from falling: or, he "will strengthen their right hand" {r}; to do his work and service, and oppose their enemies; or he will relieve their wants, and fill their hands with his good things, which is sometimes the sense of the phrase,
Eze 16:45:

saying unto thee, fear not, I will help thee; as one friend takes another by the hand in distress, and bids him be of good cheer, promising him all needful assistance and supply.
See Gill on "Isa 41:10".

{r} Knymy qyzxm "qui confortat dexteram tuam", Gataker.

Isaiah 41:14

Ver. 14. Fear not, thou worm Jacob,.... Being like a worm, exposed to danger, and liable to be trampled upon and crushed, mean and despicable in their own eyes, and in the esteem of others; and it may be Jacob, or the true Israelites, are so called, because of their impurity in themselves, of which they are sensible; and chiefly because of their weakness and impotence to defend themselves, and resist their enemies. It is an observation of Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, that the strength of a worm lies in its mouth, which, though tender, can strike the strongest cedar, and penetrate into it; and the latter observes, that the strength of Israel lies in their prayers, as Jacob's did, when, wrestling with the angel, and making supplication, he had power with God, and prevailed. Now, though the saints are such poor, weak, and contemptible things, yet the Lord bids them not fear any of their enemies, he would take their part, and protect them:

and ye men of Israel; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "ye dead men of Israel" {s}; such as were accounted as dead men, and had no more respect shown them than the dead, that are remembered no more; or were exposed to death daily, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; or that reckoned themselves dead to sin, and did die daily to it, and lived unto righteousness: or, "ye few men of Israel", as others {t} render it; Christ's flock is a little flock, his church is a little city, and few men in it, in comparison of the men of the world:

I will help thee, saith, the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and is the more strongly assured by these characters of a Redeemer of his people out of the hands of all their enemies, and the holy and just God, and sanctifier of them, which he here takes to himself, and makes himself known by.

{s} larvy ytm "mortales Israeliae", Castalio. {t} oligostov israhl, Sept. "viri pauci Israel", Munster, Montanus; "Israel, qui pauco es numero", Tigurine version.

Isaiah 41:15

Ver. 15. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth,.... The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "as a new threshing cart, having teeth like saws"; and the Septuagint and Arabic versions, "as the new threshing wheels of a cart, in the manner of saws"; for corn with the Jews was threshed out by drawing a cart with wheels over it, which wheels were stuck with teeth or spikes of iron; see Isa 28:27, or by a cart or sledge filled with stones to press it down, and at the bottom with iron teeth, which being drawn to and fro by oxen over the sheaves, separated the grain from the husk. Beckius has given a figure of this instrument {t}, and some such like instrument is still made use of in the eastern countries, as Monsieur Thevenot {u} relates;

"at Damascus (he says), and almost all Turkey over, they thresh not the corn, but after it is cut down they put it up in heaps, and round the heaps they spread some of it four or five feet broad, and two feet thick; this being done, they have a kind of sled, made of four pieces of timber in square, two of which serve for an axle tree to two great rollers, whose ends enter into these two pieces of timber, so as that they easily turn in them: round each of these rollers, there are three iron pinions, about half a foot thick, and a foot in diameter, whose pinions are full of teeth, like so many saws: there is a seat placed upon the two chief pieces of the timber, where a man sits, and drives the horses, that draw the machine, round about the lay of corn that is two foot thick; and that cutting the straw very small, makes the corn come out of the ears without breaking it, for it slides betwixt the teeth of the iron: when the straw is well cut, they put in more, and then separate the corn from that bashed straw, by tossing all up together in the air with a wooden shovel; for the wind blows the straw a little aside, and the corn alone falls straight down--in some places that machine is different, as I have seen (adds he), in Mesopotamia; where, instead of those pinions round the rollers, they have many pegs of iron, about six inches long, and three broad, almost in the shape of wedges, but somewhat broader below than above, fastened without any order into the rollers, some straight, and others crossways; and this engine is covered with boards over the irons, whereon he that drives the horse sits--they take the same course in Persia."

Some apply this to the apostles of Christ, compared to oxen that tread out the corn; and who not only ploughed and sowed, but threshed in hope, and were instruments of bringing down every "high thing", comparable to mountains and hills, "that exalted itself against the knowledge of God", and of reducing it "to the obedience of Christ"; see **1Co 9:9**, but it seems rather to refer to Constantine, a Christian emperor, brought forth and brought up in the church; the same with the man child the woman brought forth, caught up into heaven, raised to the Roman empire, and who ruled the nations, the Pagan ones, with a rod of iron, Re 12:5 and then the church, who before was but as a worm, weak and contemptible, now became powerful and formidable; and therefore compared to a new threshing instrument, heavy, sharp, and cutting:

thou shall thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff; which metaphorically design kingdoms and states; so the Targum,

"thou shalt slay the people, and consume kingdoms"; so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of kings and princes; and Aben Ezra particularly of the Babylonians; but these were not destroyed by the people of God, but by the Persians: it is better therefore to understand it of the Roman emperors, and of the Roman empire conquered by Constantine, and destroyed as Pagan, and when every mountain and island were moved out of their places, Re 12:7, and the prophecy may have a further accomplishment in the destruction of Rome Papal, and all the antichristian states, when the kingdom and interest of Christ, signified by a stone cut out without hands, shall break in pieces, and consume all other kingdoms: which shall become like the chaff of summer threshing floors, and the wind shall carry them away, and no place be found for them, as follows; see **Da 2:34**, this threshing of the nations is ascribed to the church, though only as an instrument, the work is the Lord's, as in Isa 41:20.

{t} Beckius, notes on the Targum on 1 Chron. xx. 3. p. 210. {u} Travels, Part 2. B. 1. c. 5. p. 24.

Isaiah 41:16

Ver. 16. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them,.... In illusion to the custom of the Jews, who had their threshingfloors on the tops of hills and mountains, where they took the opportunity and advantage of the wind in winnowing their corn, which fanned it, and carried away the chaff, and scattered it abroad; in like manner, it is suggested, the enemies of the church and people of God should be dealt with, which are like the chaff the wind driveth away, and is found no more, **Ps 1:5**, and so Rome Pagan was no more as such when subdued by Constantine, nor will the Papal antichristian states, **Da 2:35**. Compare with this what is said of literal Babylon, which will have its accomplishment in mystical Babylon, Jer 51:33:

and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord: the Targum is,

"in the word of the Lord;"

and so it paraphrases the preceding clause,

"his word shall scatter them as the whirlwind chaff;"

and therefore in him the saints shall rejoice, because it is he that destroys their enemies; so when Rome Pagan was abolished, and the devil and his angels, or the Heathen emperors, were drove out of it and destroyed, there was great joy among the people of God, saying, "now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ", Re 12:10 there will be great rejoicing in the Lord likewise when Rome Papal falls, and the saints have got the victory over the beast, Re 15:2

and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel; whose arm alone has done the above things, and to whom the glory is to be given: it is the true character of believers to rejoice in Christ, in his person, offices, and grace, and to glory in his being made unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. **Php 3:3**.

Isaiah 41:17

Ver. 17. When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst,.... This is to be understood not literally, but spiritually; not of their outward circumstances, though the people of God are for the most part the poor of the world, and in need of the good things of it, hungry and

thirsty, and naked; but of their spiritual estate: as in Christ they need nothing; but in themselves, and at different times, and in different frames, want many things; as larger discoveries of the love of God, fresh supplies of grace from Christ, more spiritual light and liveliness, fresh strength and comfort, fresh views of pardon and righteousness, fresh food for faith, and more grace of every sort to help them in their time of need; and which they seek for at the throne of grace, and in public ordinances, and sometimes they can find none, or it is a long time ere they obtain any: they thirst after doctrine, as the Targum, after the word and ordinances, and sometimes their circumstances are such, they cannot come at them; after communion with God, and spiritual comfort, and cannot enjoy it, being in a place where is no water; and after the blessings of grace, and can have no application of them; see Ps 42:1, this may represent in a great measure the state of the church under the ten persecutions of the Heathen emperors, or when obliged to fly into the wilderness from the wrath of the dragon,
Re 12:6:

I the Lord will hear them; their cries and prayers, and answer them, and supply their wants, who is the Lord God Almighty, and can help them, the Lord that changes not, and therefore they shall not be consumed:

I the God of Israel will not forsake them; neither their persons, nor his work of grace upon them, but will support them, and provide for them, and carry on his work in them; of which they may be assured, because he is the God of Israel, their covenant God and Father.

Isaiah 41:18

Ver. 18. I will open rivers in high places,.... Which is not usual; but God will change the course of nature, and work miracles, rather than his people shall want what is necessary for them; thus he opens to them his everlasting and unchangeable love, and makes it manifest, and shows it to them, and their interest in it, which is a broad river, that cannot be passed over; this is in high places, it flows from the throne of God, and of the Lamb; and of this river of pleasure he makes his people to drink, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God; likewise the fulness of grace in his Son, whose grace is as rivers of water in a dry land, exceeding abundant, and very refreshing; also the graces of his Spirit, which he gives in great abundance, and are those rivers of water he causes to flow forth from them that believe in Christ, in the comfortable

exercise of them; see
Ps 36:8,

and fountains in the midst of the valleys; God himself is the fountain of life, and of living waters; Christ is the fountain of gardens, and in him are wells of salvation; the grace of the Spirit is a well of living water, springing up unto eternal life; and of these, humble souls, comparable to the lowly valleys, are partakers,
Ps 36:9:

I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water; respecting either the Gentile world, which was like a wilderness and dry land before the Gospel came into it, but by that was watered and made fruitful; or the state and case of the people of God being in a wilderness condition, when the Lord takes notice of them, and supplies them with everything necessary, so that they are like a watered garden, whose springs fail not, Re 12:14. This passage is applied by the Jews to the times of the Messiah {w}.

{w} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 1. 4. fol. 212. 3.

Isaiah 41:19

Ver. 19. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree,.... Where such trees had not used to grow, but in Lebanon, and such like places. The "shittah tree" is thought to be a kind of cedar; it is the same of which is the "shittim wood" mentioned in
Ex 25:5 and is so called by the Targum here:

and the myrtle, and the oil tree; about the former there is no difficulty, and one would think there should be none about the latter, and that the olive tree is meant; but Kimchi thinks that is not certain, and supposes the pine tree is meant; and observes that the olive tree is distinguished from this oil tree in **Ne 8:15**, as indeed it is; and is by our translators there rendered the pine tree, which they take to be meant by another word in the next clause:

I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together; what we here render the "pine" the Targum interprets it of the "elm", and so the Vulgate Latin version: now by all these are figuratively meant converted persons in the Gentile world, in whom as great a change was wrought, as if, instead of briers and thorns, came up such trees as these; and who, by the grace of God, were made as goodly and beautiful as some of these trees were; as odorous and of as sweet a scent in their graces and duties as others; and as profitable and fruitful in grace and good works like others of them; and comparable to them, as being some of them evergreen, durable, and incorruptible; because of their perseverance in grace and holiness.

Isaiah 41:20

Ver. 20. That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together,.... Not the nations of the world, as Kimchi; but rather, as Aben Ezra, the poor and needy; who in all this, by subduing kingdoms and states, their enemies, supplying their wants when in the greatest distress, and in a marvellous manner, and converting sinners, might easily perceive, and so frankly own and acknowledge, as well as lay it to heart, and lay it up in their minds, and get understanding from it:

that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it; for the things before said to be done carry in them plain marks of the hand of the Lord, and are as clear proofs of his almighty power, as what was done in the creation of all things; such as a worm to be made a threshing instrument, to beat down mountains and hills, kingdoms and states, and make them as chaff; rivers to be opened in high places, and all manner of excellent trees to be planted in a wilderness; and indeed the work of conversion is a creation work; men are by it made new creatures, and are manifestly the workmanship of the hand of God.

Isaiah 41:21

Ver. 21. Produce your cause, saith the Lord,.... The Lord having comforted his people under their afflictions and persecutions from their enemies in the first times of Christianity, returns to the controversy between him and the idolatrous Heathens, and challenges them to bring their cause into open court, and let it be publicly tried, that it may be seen on what side truth lies:

bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob; or King of saints, the true Israel of God, who acknowledge the Lord as their King and their God, and whom he rules over, protects and defends; and this title is assumed for the comfort of them, that though he is King over all the nations of the world, yet in an eminent and peculiar sense their King; and he does not style himself the God of Jacob, though he was, because this was the thing in controversy, and the cause to be decided, whether he was the true God, or the gods of the Gentiles; and therefore their votaries are challenged to bring forth the strongest reasons and arguments they could muster together, in proof of the divinity of their idols; their "bony" arguments, as the word {x} signifies; for what bones are to the body, that strong arguments are to a cause, the support and stability of it.

{x} Mkytwmue Mue os.

Isaiah 41:22

Ver. 22. Let them bring them forth,.... Not their reasons, as before, but their gods; let them cause them to come nigh, let them appear in court, and speak for themselves, when their worshippers have said all they can in defence of their deity:

and show us what shall happen: what shall come to pass hereafter; and by that prove their divinity; for none but God can foretell things to come with certainty; for everything else but what comes from God, by his prophets, is all conjecture, ambiguous, uncertain, mere juggle, trick, and deception, as were the oracles of the Heathens; but what is clearly and plainly foretold, and agreeably to the prediction comes to pass, is a proof of deity, and as such is here challenged. The "us" here, and the "we" in the following clauses, either design God, and the Christians, the true worshippers of him; or rather the three divine Persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit, the one true God, in opposition to the gods of the Heathens. The Targum renders it,

"what shall happen to us:"

let them show the former things what they be: either what were before the creation of the world, as Jarchi; what were purposed, decreed, and determined so early to be done; or let them write, or inspire their prophets to write, a history of the creation, and of the transactions of former times, as Moses did, under the inspiration of God; or let them show what things before predicted by them have come to pass, agreeably to their predictions; or rather "the first things, which may be, show" {y}; what will first or presently come to pass, that show unto us if you can:

that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or, "and we will set our hearts upon them" {z}; weigh them well in our minds, and diligently and attentively consider them, how and in what manner it is foretold they shall come to pass, and take notice and observe the issue of them, and whether the event answers to the prediction: or "declare us things for to come"; which are at a great distance; tell us not only what shall be done in the present age, but onward to the end of the world.

{y} ydynh hnh hm twnwvarh "priora quid ipsa, nuntiate", Montanus; "piora quaenam sint indicate", Piscator. {z} wnbl hmyvnw "et ponemus cor nostrum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Isaiah 41:23

Ver. 23. Show the things that are to come hereafter,.... From henceforward to the consummation of all things: so the Targum,

"show what shall come to the end;"

or at the end, the end of all things; or show wonderful things, which shall be hereafter; so Jarchi interprets the word; a word like this having the signification of signs and wonders:

that we may know that ye are gods; as ye are said to be; that we may own and acknowledge you to be such, there being this clear proof of it, if it can be made out, foretelling things to come, both near and far off. The Targum is,

"that we may know whether ye worship idols, in whom there is any profit;"

as if the words were spoken not to the idols, but to the worshippers of them: "yea, do good, or do evil"; not in a moral, but in a civil sense; do good to your friends, to your worshippers; bestow favours upon them, as I do on mine; or inflict punishment on your enemies, such as despise your deity, and will not worship you, as I do on those that despise me, and will not regard my service and worship:

that we may be dismayed, and behold it together: that when we see your deity, and are convinced of it by the above proofs, we may be amazed and astonished, as not expecting such proof, and be confounded, and have no more to object unto it. The Targum is,

"that we may consider and reason together;"

and bring the matter in controversy to an issue, as it is in the next verse.

Isaiah 41:24

Ver. 24. Behold, ye are of nothing,.... Not as to the matter of them, for they were made of gold, silver, brass, &c. but as to the divinity of them: there was none in them, they were of no worth and value; they could do nothing, either good or evil, either help their friends, or hurt their enemies; yea, they were less than nothing; for the words may be rendered by way of comparison, "behold, ye are less than nothing"; {a}. See Gill on "Isa 40:17";

and your work of nought; the workmanship bestowed on them, in casting or carving them, was all to no purpose, and answered no end; or the work they did, or pretended to do, their feigned oracles, and false predictions: or, "worse than nothing": some render it, "worse than a viper" {b}; a word like this is used for one, Isa 49:5 and so denotes the poisonous and pernicious effects of idolatry:

an abomination is he that chooseth you; as the object of his worship; he is not only abominable, but an abomination itself to God, and to all men of sense and religion; for the choice he makes of an idol to be his god shows him to be a man void of common sense and reason, and destitute of all true religion and godliness, and must be a stupid sottish creature. The Targum is,

"an abomination is that which ye have chosen for yourselves, or in which ye delight;"

meaning their idols. This is the final issue of the controversy, and the judgment passed both upon the idols and their worshippers.

{a} Nyam Mta "vos minus quam nihil [estis]", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
{b} epam "pejus [opere] viperae", Junius & Tremellius; "pejus [est opere] basilisci", Piscator.

Isaiah 41:25

Ver. 25. I have raised up one from the north,.... Either one people, or one person; a mighty king, as the Targum; meaning either Cyrus, who might be said to come from the north, and from the rising of the sun, or the east, as in the next clause; since he was by birth a Medo-Persian, hence called a mule; by his mother a Mede, and the country of Media lay rather to the north of Babylon; and by his father a Persian, and Persia lay to the east of it; and the forces he brought with him against it were partly Medes, and partly Persians; though some, as Jarchi observes, think two persons are meant in this and the next clause; in this Nebuchadnezzar, who came from Babylon, which lay north of Judea, to invade it; and in the other Cyrus, who came from the east, and proclaimed the name of the Lord, and liberty to the captive Jews. Kimchi and his father both interpret it of the King Messiah, as do also more ancient Jewish writers {c}, of whom Cyrus was a type; but to me it seems best of all, as most agreeable to the scope and tenure of the prophecy, to understand it of Constantine, who, as reported, was born in Britain, in the northern part of the world; but, when called to the empire, was in the eastern parts of it; and so with great propriety it is expressed here, and in the following clause:

and from the rising of the sun he shall call upon my name; which those that apply the prophecy to Cyrus explain by **Ezr 1:1**, but is much more applicable to Constantine, who was a worshipper of the true God, which invocation of his name is expressive of; and who openly professed the name of Christ, and encouraged those that did, and spread his name and fame, his Gospel and his glory, throughout the empire, east and west:

and he shall come upon princes as upon morter, and as the potter treadeth clay; that is, he shall come upon them with his army, and conquer them, and tread them down, and trample upon them, as morter is trodden upon, or mire in the streets; or as the clay is trodden by the potter, who does with it as he pleases; which those who interpret it of Cyrus understand of Astyages, Croesus, Belshazzar, and others; see
Isa 14:1, and is as true of Constantine, who subdued the emperors of Rome, trod them under his feet, as Maximius, Maxentius, Licinius, &c.; moreover, the word "saganin", here used, is a word used by Jewish writers for priests, for such who were the deputies of the high priest; and it may design here the Pagan priests, and the destruction of them, and of Paganism in the Roman empire by Constantine.

{c} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 153. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 13. fol. 208. 1. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 19. 2.

Isaiah 41:26

Ver. 26. Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know?.... Who of the idols, or of their priests, that have declared things future before they came to pass, or ever predicted such an event as this before mentioned; which, if understood of Cyrus, was an hundred and fifty years before it came to pass; and if of Constantine, near a thousand years:

and before time, that we may say, he is righteous? that is, who hath declared things before the time of the accomplishment of them, and they have come to pass, as they have been declared? by which it may be known that they are gods, or the priests of such that are so, by their having prescience of future events, or the spirit of prophecy; and so it may be said of them, that they are just in their pretensions, and have a rightful claim to deity, or are true prophets; so the Targum,

"that we may say it is true"

yea, there is none that showeth, yea, there is none that declareth; that shows and declares things to come, or such as the true God shows and declares:

yea, there is none that heareth your words; none of your worshippers that ever heard you speak a word, who, when they have prayed to you, could never have an answer; and therefore you have no just claim to deity; or ever heard any of your prophets say such a thing should come to pass, and it did.

Isaiah 41:27

Ver. 27. The first shall say to Zion, behold, behold them,.... Or, "I the first say to Zion"; I who am the first and the last, Isa 41:4 which some ancient Jewish writers {d} observe is the name of the Messiah, and apply the passage to him; or, I am the "first" that say these things to Zion {e},

behold, behold them; behold such and such things shall come to pass, and accordingly they have come to pass; or, "behold", the promised Messiah, whom I have long spoken of, behold, he is come; see Isa 42:1, and behold them, his apostles and ministers, publishing the good tidings of salvation, as follows. The Targum is,

"the words of consolation which the prophets prophesied from the beginning concerning Sion, behold they come;"

they come to pass; which is such a proof of deity the idols and their worshippers cannot give:

and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings; which some interpret of Isaiah; others of Cyrus; others of Christ; and others of John the Baptist. I suppose the singular put for the plural, "one that bringeth good tidings", or, "an evangelist for evangelists"; and may be understood of Gospel teachers, whom the Lord gave to his church and people, and by means of whom he spread his Gospel, not only in Judea, but in the Gentile world, to the overthrow of Paganism.

{d} T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 5. 1. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 63. fol. 55. 3. and Vajikra Rabba, sect. 30. fol. 171. 2. {e} Nwyul Nwvar "ego primus sum qui dico haec Sioni", Tigurine version.

Isaiah 41:28

Ver. 28. For I beheld, and there was no man,.... Among all the Pagan priests and prophets, that could foretell things to come; or could prove that their idols did or could say anything in favour of them:

even amongst them, and there was no counsellor: none that could be advocates for these idols, and plead their cause; or could give any good advice and counsel to persons that needed it, and who applied to them or their idols for it:

that, when I asked of them, could answer a word; when asked what they had to say on behalf of their gods they worshipped, were dumb and speechless; moreover, all this may be said of the idols themselves, that there was none among them that could foretell a future event, or give any wholesome counsel to their worshippers, or could say anything in their own defence; and therefore, to close the controversy, the following sentence is pronounced.

Isaiah 41:29

Ver. 29. Behold, they are all vanity,.... Both the idols and the worshippers of them; in vain they claim the title of deity, to which they have no right; and in vain do men worship them, since they receive no benefit by them:

their works are nothing; they can do nothing, neither good nor evil; nothing is to be hoped or feared from them, and the worship given them is of no avail; nothing is got by it; it is all useless and insignificant, yea, pernicious and harmful:

their molten images are wind and confusion: though they are made of cast metal, yet setting aside the costly matter of which they are made, they are of no more solidity, efficacy, and use, than the wind; and are like the chaos of the first earth, mere "tohu" and "bohu", one of which words is here used, without form and void, having no form of deity on them; and therefore men are directed to turn themselves from them, and behold a most glorious Person, worthy of worship and praise, described in the beginning of the next chapter, "behold my servant", &c.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 42:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 42

This chapter begins with a prophecy concerning the Messiah, under the character of the servant of the Lord, and his elect, whom he supported, and was well pleased with; whose work is pointed at, and for which he was well qualified with the Spirit without measure,
Isa 42:1 and is described by his humility and meekness,
Isa 42:2, by his tenderness to weak and ignorant persons,
Isa 42:3 and by his courage and resolution, Isa 42:4 then follow his call to his work, and the several parts of it, introduced with setting forth the greatness of God that called him, as the Creator of the heavens and of the earth, and of men upon it,
Isa 42:5, whose name is Jehovah, and whose glory is incommunicable to a creature, and whose knowledge reaches to future things, which are predicted by him, Isa 42:8, and then Gentiles are called upon to praise the Lord, and give glory to him, partly for the above promises concerning the Messiah, Isa 42:10,

and partly for the destruction of his enemies, Isa 42:13, and also for his gracious regard to such who had been blind and ignorant,
Isa 42:16, the confusion of idolaters is prophesied of, and an exhortation is given them to make use of the means of light and knowledge, Isa 42:17, and the blindness, ignorance, and stupidity of the Jews, are exposed, though there was a remnant among them with whom the Lord was well pleased, for the sake of the righteousness of his Son, Isa 42:19, but as for the body of the people, they were to be given up to the spoilers and robbers for their sins and disobedience, and be the butt of the divine wrath and vengeance, Isa 42:22.

Ver. 1. Behold my servant, whom I uphold,.... The Targum is,

"behold my servant the Messiah;"

and Kimchi on the place says, this is the King Messiah; and so Abarbinel {f} interprets it of him, and other Jewish writers, and which is right; for the prophet speaks not of himself, as Aben Ezra thinks; nor of Cyrus, as Saadiah Gaon; nor of the people of Israel, as Jarchi; but of Christ, as it is applied, Mt 12:17 who is spoken of under the character of a "servant", as he is; not as a divine Person, for as such he is the Son of God; but as man, and in his office as Mediator; a servant of the Lord, not of angels, or men, but of his divine Father; who chose him, called and sent him, and assigned him his work; which was principally the redemption of his people, and which he diligently, faithfully, and fully performed; in which he was "upheld" as man and Mediator by his Father, not only in his being as man, but was strengthened and helped in his mediatorial service so that he did not sink under the mighty weight of the sins of his people, or of the wrath of God: or, "whom I lean upon" {g}; as a master on his servant, so Kimchi; he relied on him to do the work he undertook; he trusted him with his own glory, and the salvation of his people. This prophecy is ushered in with a "behold"; exciting attention to what is said concerning Christ, as of the greatest importance; directing the eye of faith to him for righteousness and salvation; and as expressive of admiration at him, that he who was the Son of God should become a servant, and undertake the salvation of men:

mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: this character of "elect" may respect the choice of the human nature to the grace of union with the Son of God; which was chosen out from among the people, and separated from them for that purpose; and was preordained to be the Lamb slain for the redemption of man, and appointed to glory; and likewise the choice of Christ to office, to be the Mediator between God and man; to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the

Lord's people; to be the Head of the church, and to be the foundation and the corner stone of that spiritual building; and to be the Judge of quick and dead: and with him, as such, was the Lord "well pleased, or delighted"; with his person; as the Son of God; and with all his chosen, as considered in him; with what he did as his servant; with the righteousness he wrought out; with the sacrifice he offered up; and with his sufferings and death, through which peace and reconciliation were made with God for sinners:

I have put my Spirit upon him; my Holy Spirit, as the Targum; not on him as a divine Person, as such he needed him not; but as man, with which he was filled without measure at his incarnation, and which rested upon him, and qualified him for his work and office, as Prophet, Priest, and King:

he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles; the Gospel, the produce of divine wisdom; the Gospel of God, whose judgment is according to truth; the rule of human judgment in things spiritual and saving, and by which Christ judges and rules in the hearts of his people; this he brought forth out of his Father's bosom, out of his own heart, and published it in person to the Jews, and by his apostles to the converted by it, became subject to his rule and government. Gentiles, who being converted by it, became subject to his rule and government.

{f} Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 9. col. 1. 2. Chizzuk Emunah, p. 299. {g} wb Kmta "qui innitar", Munster, "innitar ei, vel illi", Pagninus, Calvin; "in eo", Montanus.

Isaiah 42:2

Ver. 2. He shall not cry,..... According to Aben Ezra and Kimchi, as a judge in court is obliged to extend his voice that he may be heard: the Evangelist Matthew renders it, "he shall not strive"; or contend in a disputatious way, about mere words and things to no profit, or litigate a point in law; he shall bring no complaints, or enter an action against any, but rather suffer wrong, as he advises his followers, **Mt 5:40**, for this does not respect the lowness of his voice in his ministry; in this sense he often cried, as Wisdom is said to do, **Pr 1:20**: "nor lift up"; that is, his voice, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech supply it; or, as others, he shall not lift up faces, or accept persons; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, neither shall he accept any person; or the person of any man, which is true of Christ; but the former sense seems best, which agrees with what goes before and follows after:

nor cause his voice to be heard in the street; his voice was heard in the street in a ministerial way; he sometimes preached in the street, as in many other public places, Lu 13:26, but not in a clamorous contentious way; not in an opprobrious and menacing manner; nor in a way of ostentation, boasting of himself, his doctrines, and miracles, but behaved with great humility and meekness; his kingdom was without pomp and noise, which worldly princes are attended with; but this was not to be, nor was it his case; See Gill on "Mt 12:19".

Isaiah 42:3

Ver. 3. A bruised reed shall not break,.... The tenderness of Christ to weak and ignorant persons is here and in the next clause expressed; by whom young converts or weak believers seem to be designed; who are compared to a "reed", because worthless with respect to God, whom they cannot profit; and in the view of men, who reckon them as nothing; and in themselves, and in their own view, who judge themselves unworthy of the least of mercies; and because they are weak, not only as all men are, of which weakness they are sensible; but they are weak in grace, especially in faith, and have but little hope, their love is the strongest; and because they are wavering like the reed, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, and shaken with the temptations of Satan, and disturbed with many doubts and fears; and are like a "bruised" reed that is squeezed, and almost broke to pieces, and so of no use; these are broken in heart, under a sense of sin and unworthiness; whose spirits are bruised and wounded with it, and whose hearts are contrite on account of it. On these Christ does not lay his iron rod, but holds out the golden sceptre of his grace to them; he does not call them to service and sufferings beyond their strength; but strengthens, supports, and upholds them with the right hand of his righteousness; he binds up their broken hearts, having poured in the balm of Gilead, his own blood, and the wine and oil of his love; he encourages them in their application to him for salvation, and manifests his pardoning grace, and restores comforts to them, and revives their souls:

and the smoking flax shall he not quench; or, "the wick of a candle; {h}" which just going out, has some heat, a little light, smokes, and is offensive; so the persons intended by it are fired or lighted by the divine word; have some heat of affection in them to spiritual things, but have but little light; into the corruption of nature into the glories of Christ's person; into the doctrines of the Gospel; into the everlasting love of God, and the covenant of grace; and but little light of joy and comfort, and this almost gone, and seemingly ready to go out; and yet Christ will not extinguish it, or suffer it to be extinct; he does not discourage small beginnings of grace, or despise the day of small things; he blows up their light into a flame; he increases their spiritual light and knowledge; supplies them with the oil of grace; trims, snuffs, and causes their lamps to burn brighter. The Targum is,

"the meek, who are like to a bruised reed, shall not be broken; and the poor, who are as obscure as flax (or a lamp ready to go out), shall not be extinct:"

he shall bring forth judgment unto truth; which some understand of Christ's severity to wicked men, in opposition to his tenderness to his own people; see Isa 11:4, others of the Gospel, as preached by him in truth, as in Isa 42:1, but rather it designs the power of his Spirit and grace accompanying the word, to the carrying on of his own work in the hearts of his people; which, though attended with many difficulties and discouragements, shall go on, and be performed; grace will break through all obstructions, and prove victorious at last; see Mt 12:20.

{h} hhk htvp "ellychnium fumigans", Junius & Tremellius; "fumans", Piscator.

Isaiah 42:4

Ver. 4. He shall not fail,.... For want of strength to go through the work of redemption: or, "grow dim" {i} and dark, as a lamp for want of oil, or as the wick of a candle ready to go out. Hence the Septuagint version, "he shall shine {k}"; in the glory of his person, as the Son of God; in the fulness of his grace, as Mediator, which shall never fail; and in the hearts of his people by his Spirit; and in his Gospel published to the world:

nor be discouraged; at the number, power, and menaces of his enemies, he had to grapple with, sin, Satan, the world, and death: or,

nor be broken {l}; with the weight of all the sins of his people upon him; and with a sense of divine wrath; and with the whole punishment due unto them, inflicted on him, enough to have broke the backs and spirits of men and angels; but he stood up under the mighty load, and did not sink beneath it, but endured all with an invincible courage and resolution of mind:

till he have set judgment in the earth; fully satisfied the justice of God for the sins of his people, and performed the work of their redemption in righteousness; and then he sent and settled his Gospel in the world, proclaiming the same; and fixed a set of Gospel ordinances to continue the remembrance of it, till his second coming. Maimonides {m} produces this passage to prove that the Messiah shall die, because it is said, "he shall not fail--till", &c.; but this does not signify that he should fail afterwards, but that he should continue always:

and the isles shall wait for his law; his doctrine or Gospel, the law or doctrine of faith, particularly that of justification by his righteousness, with every other; this the inhabitants of the islands, or distant countries, the Gentiles, should be desirous of hearing, readily embrace and receive, and trust in Christ, made known to them in it. The Septuagint version is, "and in his name shall the Gentiles trust"; and so in Mt 12:20.

{i} hhky al, "non caligabit", Pagninus, Montanus. {k} analamqei, Sept. {l} uwry, "nec fraugetur", Paguinus, Montanus. {m} Porta Mosis, p. 160.

Isaiah 42:5

Ver. 5. Thus saith God the Lord,.... The God of the world, as the Targum. This, with what follows, is a preface to the call of Christ, to the great work of redemption; setting forth the greatness of God as a Creator, that calls him to it, and thereby encouraging him as man and Mediator in it, as well as the faith of his people to regard him as their Saviour and Redeemer, and believe that this work he was called unto should be performed by him; for what is it that God, the Creator of all things, cannot do?

he that created the heavens, and stretched them out: he first made them out of nothing, and stretched out the firmament of them as a curtain and canopy over the earth, and them as a tent for himself to dwell in,
Isa 40:22:

he that spread forth the earth; into the length and breadth it has, for man and beast to dwell on it:

and that which cometh out of it; grass, herbs, and trees, which he has spread all over it:

he that giveth breath unto the people upon it; as he did to man at first, he breathed into him the breath of life, and as he gives to all since, **Ge 2:7**:

and spirit to them that walk therein; not only breath in common with the beasts of the field, and other creatures, but a rational spirit, or a reasonable soul, an intellective faculty, a capacity of understanding things, as brutes have not. Jarchi interprets this of the Holy Spirit, which God gives to them that walk before him.

Isaiah 42:6

Ver. 6. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness,.... Not the Prophet Isaiah, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it; nor the people of Israel, as Kimchi; but the Messiah, whom Jehovah called to the office of Mediator, in a righteous way and manner, consistent with his own perfections; and not against the will of Christ, but with his full consent: or, "unto righteousness", as some {n}; so the Arabic version; to fulfil his righteous purposes, concerning the welfare and salvation of his people; to perform his righteous promises of his coming, and of good things by him; to show his strict vindictive justice against sin, in the punishment of it; and to bring in an everlasting righteousness for his people: or it may be rendered, "I have called thee with righteousness {o}"; Christ came a righteous Person, holy in his nature, harmless in his life, and truly deserved the character of Jesus Christ the righteous:

and will hold thine hand: denoting his presence with him, and nearness unto him; his favour and affection for him; his counsel and direction of him; the support and assistance he gave him; and the strength he received from him as man, to go through his work:

and will keep thee; as the apple of his eye, being dear unto him; from being hurt by his enemies till the time came to be delivered into their hands; and from miscarrying in his work; and from the power of the grave, so as to be long detained in it:

and give thee for a covenant of the people; Christ is a covenantee, a party concerned in the covenant of grace; the representative of his people in it; the surety, Mediator, messenger, and ratifier of it; the great blessing in it; the sum and substance of it; all the blessings and promises of it are in him, and as such he is "given"; it is of God's free grace that he was appointed and intrusted with all this in eternity, and was sent in time to confirm and secure it for "the people"; given him of his Father, redeemed by him and to whom the Spirit applies the blessings and promises of the covenant; even the elect of God, both among Jews and Gentiles, especially the latter, as follows:

for a light of the Gentiles; who were in the dark as to the true knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, and the way of righteousness and salvation by him, and of all divine and spiritual things; now Christ, through the ministry of the word by his Spirit, was a light unto them; by which they were enlightened into their own state and condition by nature, and into the knowledge of himself, and the mysteries of grace.

{n} "Ad, [sive] in justitiam", Sanctius. {o} qdub "cum justitia", Piscator, Forerius, Cocceius.

Isaiah 42:7

Ver. 7. To open the blind eyes,.... Of the idolatrous Gentiles, who were spiritually blind, and knew not the wretchedness of their case; the exceeding sinfulness of sin; their need of a Saviour, and who he was; as they did, when their eyes were opened by means of the Gospel sent among them, through the energy of the divine Spirit; for this is a work of almighty power and efficacious grace:

to bring out the prisoners from the prison; who were concluded in sin, shut up in unbelief, and under the law, the captives of Satan, and held fast prisoners by him and their own lusts, under the dominion of which they were:

and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house: of sin, Satan, and the law; being under which, they were in a state of darkness and ignorance as to things divine and spiritual. The allusion is to prisons, which are commonly dark places. Vitringa, by the "prisoners", understands the Jews shut up under the law; and by those in "darkness" the Gentiles, destitute of all divine knowledge.

Isaiah 42:8

Ver. 8. I am the Lord, that is my name,.... Jehovah, a name expressive of his self-existence, eternity, and immutability; a name by which be made himself known to Israel of old, and which is peculiar to him, and does not belong to another, and so distinguishes him from all false gods; see **Ex 3:14** or, "Hu [is] my name" {p}; to which
autov, "he himself the same", answers; see Ps 102:27, compared with Heb 13:8 and this is one of the names of God with the Jews {q}; as Hou is with the Turks to this day; which, in Arabic, signifies "him": that is, God, as Monsieur Thevenot {r} observes; see Isa 48:12:

and my glory will I not give to another; that is, to another god, to a strange god, to an idol; as that has not the nature, it ought not to have the name of deity, nor divine worship given to it: this the Lord will not admit of, but will punish those, be they Heathens, or are called Christians, that give the glory to idols that is due unto his name. This is not to be understood to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, who are with the Father the one Jehovah, and share in the same glory; the Son is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the Spirit is the Spirit of glory, **Heb 1:3** nor will he suffer the glory of the justification, salvation, and conversion of men, to be given to their works, will, and power, which is entirely due to his own grace, to the blood and righteousness of his Son, and to the energy of the divine Spirit:

neither my praise to graven images; which serves to explain the former clause, what is meant by his "glory", and who by "another", to whom he will not give it. Papists should observe this, for it respects not merely or only the graven images of the Heathens, but chiefly those among them that bear the Christian name; for this relates to New Testament times. The Targum is,

"and my glory, in which I am revealed to you, I will not give to another people; nor my praise to worshippers of images."

{p} ymv awh {q} Seder Tephillot. fol. 1. 2. & 4, 1. Ed. Basil. {r} Travels. part 1. B. 1. c. 31. p. 41.

Isaiah 42:9

Ver. 9. Behold, the former things are come to pass,.... Which the Lord had foretold in former times, as to Abraham, concerning the affliction of his posterity in Egypt, the bringing them out from thence, and settling them in the land of Canaan; and other things by Moses and Joshua, and other prophets; and by Isaiah; and particularly the captivity of the ten tribes, which was now come to pass in the times of Hezekiah:

and new things do I declare; as the captivity of Judah and Benjamin, and their restoration by Cyrus; and more especially the mission and incarnation of Christ, his sufferings and death, and redemption and salvation by him; which were not only things to come, but new things, famous and excellent ones:

before they spring up I tell you of them or "before they bud forth" {r}; while the seeds of them were under ground, sown in the purposes and decrees of God, he spoke of them in prophecy; and now former prophecies being fulfilled, and new ones delivered out, concerning things of which there was no appearance, and yet there was the greatest reason to believe their accomplishment, from the fulfilment of the former; this must be a strong proof and confirmation of the Lord being the true God, and the only one.

{r} hnxmut Mrjb "antequam pullulent", Montanus, Cocceius; "germinent", Vatablus; "antequam propullulent vel efflorescant", Vitringa.

Isaiah 42:10

Ver. 10. Sing unto the Lord a new song,.... On account of the new things before prophesied of, and now done; on account of redemption and salvation by Christ, and the conversion of the Gentiles through the light of the Gospel brought among them; the song of redeeming love, and for the Gospel, and regenerating grace; and not the Jews only, but the Gentiles also, are called upon to sing this song, as having a special share in the blessings, the subject of it: hence it follows,

and his praise from the end of the earth; thither the Gospel being sent, and there made effectual to the conversion of many, these are exhorted to sing and show forth the praises of him who had called them out of Heathenish blindness and darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel and grace of God:

ye that go down into the sea; in ships, that trade by sea; such as the Phoenicians, Tyrians, and Sidonians, to whom the Gospel came, and where it was preached with success, to the conversion of many of them, and therefore had reason to join in this new song; see Ac 11:19 or such that went by sea to distant parts, on purpose to publish the Gospel, as Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy; and who, succeeding in their work, had reason to rejoice; see Ac 13:4:

and all that is therein: or "the fulness of it" {s}; meaning not the fishes in it, but the islands of it, as next explained:

the isles, and the inhabitants thereof; as Cyprus, Crete, and other isles, which heard the joyful sound of the Gospel, and embraced it,
Ac 13:4, and, as the sea often denotes the western part of the world from Judea, this may design the European parts of it, and the islands in it, particularly ours of Great Britain and Ireland, whither the Gospel came very early.

{s} walmw "et plenitudo ejus", Munster, Pagainus, Montanus.

Isaiah 42:11

Ver. 11. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice,.... The eastern part of the world, Arabia Deserta, and the inhabitants of the cities which were in it:

the villages that Kedar doth inhabit; or the "courts" {t}, or tents, the Kedarenes inhabited, who were Arabians, and dwelt in tents, which they pitched here and there, for the convenience of their flocks; and so the Targum,

"the Arabians that inhabit the wilderness shall praise:"

let the inhabitants of the rock sing: or of Petra, which Jerom says was a city of Palestine. It was the metropolis of Arabia Petraea, which whole country may be here meant, and the inhabitants of it, who had reason to sing for joy, when the Gospel was preached unto them; as it was by the Apostle Paul in Arabia, **Ga 1:17**:

let them shout from the top of the mountains; the wild, savage, and barbarous people that dwell there, but now become civilized, as well as evangelized, by the Gospel; or the messengers and ministers of the word, whose feet on those mountains were beautiful, bringing the good tidings of peace and salvation by Christ. The Targum interprets this of the resurrection of the dead, "the dead, when they shall go out of the house of their world, from the tops of the mountains shall lift up their voice {u}."

{t} Myrux "atria", Montanus; "tentoria", Grotius. {u} Ben Melech interprets the rocks and mountains of towers built on rocks and mountains, where men dwelt.

Isaiah 42:12

Ver. 12. Let them give glory unto the Lord,.... For all the great and good things he has done for them, in sending his Gospel to them, calling them by his grace, enlightening their minds, and revealing his Son in them, and making them partakers of the blessings of his grace, and entitling them to eternal glory and happiness:

and declare his praise in the islands; as on the western continent, and the isles of it; so on the eastern continent, and the islands of it, the islands of Greece, the islands in the Aegean sea.

Isaiah 42:13

Ver. 13. The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man,.... In the ministry of the word,

conquering and to conquer; girding his "sword" on his thigh; causing his "arrows" to be sharp in the hearts of his enemies; clothing the word with power;

making the weapons of warfare, put into the hands of his ministering servants,

mighty, to pull down the "strong holds" of sin and Satan, to cast: down the proud "imaginations" of men's hearts, and to

bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of himself; or in the army of Constantine, whom he used as his instrument for the destruction of the Pagan empire, and of Paganism in it, and for the establishment of Christianity:

he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war; or "a man of wars" {x}; that has been used to fight battles; Christ is represented as a warrior, Re 19:11, his church is in a warfare state; his subjects are soldiers; his ministers are his generals under him, and with them he goes forth, and stirs up his own jealousy, his wrath and fury against his enemies, and takes vengeance on them, and the jealousy of his ministers and people, for his own glory:

he shall cry, yea, roar; not only shout aloud, as soldiers do, when they make an onset, but make a hideous noise, as the old Romans did, to frighten and dispirit their enemies. Christ, in the ministry of the word, not only cries, and calls, and invites souls, sensible of themselves and their condition, to come unto him, and partake of his grace; but he roars as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and threatens impenitent and unbelieving sinners with his wrath and vengeance:

he shall prevail against his enemies: he shall conquer and subdue them by his Spirit and grace, and make them his willing people in the day of his power; and such who will not have him to reign over them, he will rule them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces as a potter's vessel.

{x} twmxlm vyak "sicut vir bellorum", Montanus; "vir bellicosissimus", Junius & Tremcellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 42:14

Ver. 14. I have long time holden my peace,.... For many hundred years the Lord suffered the Gentile world to walk in their own ways, to worship their idols, and took no notice of them; he winked at and overlooked their times of ignorance, and did not bring down his vengeance upon them, nor stir up all his wrath; nor indeed did he send any among them, to reprove and convince them of their errors, and threaten them with "ruin", in case of their continuance in them:

I have been still, and refrained myself; had been silent, and said nothing against them in a providential way, but curbed and kept in his wrath and displeasure at their idolatry, as a woman in travail "holds in" {y} her breath as long as she can; to which the allusion is, as appears by what follows:

now will I cry like a travailing woman; when sharp pains are upon her, and just going to be delivered; and that so loud as to be heard all over the house. This may be taken in a good sense; the ministers of the Gospel travail in birth, and Christ in them, until he is formed in the hearts of men by regenerating and converting grace, **Ga 4:19** and in an ill sense; for swift and sudden destruction, which should come on his enemies, as travail on a woman with child. So the Targum,

"as pains on a woman with child, my judgment shall be revealed (or exposed) upon them."

I will destroy and devour at once; all enemies that should oppose him in the spread of the Gospel, in the destruction of Paganism, and establishment of Christianity in the Roman empire, who are described in the next verse.

{y} qpata "continebam me", Pagninus, Montanus; "continui me", Junius & Tremellius, Vitringa; "diu [continui] iram meam sicut halitum foeminae parturientis", Grotius.

Isaiah 42:15

Ver. 15. I will make waste mountains and hills,.... Kingdoms, greater and lesser; kings and governors, as Jarchi interprets it; and so Kimchi understands it of the kings of the nations; by them are meant the emperors of Rome, and their governors under them, that set themselves against Christ and his Gospel, but were overcome by him; these mountains and hills became a plain before him: "every mountain and island were moved out of their places, and the kings of the earth, and the great men, &c. hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and called upon them to fall on them, and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb", **Re 6:14**:

and dry up all their herbs; the common people, and common soldiers that were with them, and on their side; comparable, for smallness, weakness, and number, to the grass of the mountains and hills:

and I will make the rivers islands, and dry up the pools; extirpate all the remains of idolatry, rivers and fountains being sacred with the Heathens, as mountains and hills were places where sacrifices were offered to idols. Unless by it rather should be meant, that the Lord would remove all impediments out of the way of his people, or which were obstacles of their conversion; just as he dried up the waters of the Red sea and Jordan, to make way for the people of Israel; to which the allusion may be, and which agrees with the following words.

Isaiah 42:16

Ver. 16. And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not,.... The Targum interprets this of the people of Israel, thus,

"I will lead the house of Israel, which are like to the blind, in a way which they knew not."

But it is better to understand it of the Gentiles, who, before the light of the Gospel came among them, were blind as to the true knowledge of God, and especially as in Christ; and of Christ, and the way of peace, life, and salvation by him; and of themselves, and their miserable estate and condition; and of the Spirit of God, and his operations; and of the Scriptures, the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; and which is the case of all men in a state of nature: but the Lord, by his Spirit, opens the eyes of their understandings, and shows them those things they were blind in, and ignorant of, and brings them by a way they knew not before; which way is Christ, the only way to the Father; the way of peace, righteousness, and life; the way to heaven, and eternal happiness: this they knew not before, but thought they must make their own way to God, and their peace with him; must be justified by their own works, and work out their own salvation; but, in conversion, this way to Christ is made known and plain unto them; and in this way the Lord brings all his people to eternal glory:

I will lead them in paths that they have not known; in the paths of duty and truth; in the paths of faith, righteousness, and holiness, and in the ordinances of the Gospel; which they were aliens and strangers to before:

I will make darkness light before them; by going before them himself, as before the children of Israel in a pillar of fire by night; by giving his word to enlighten them; by granting his good Spirit, as a spirit of illumination to them; and by lifting up the light of his countenance on them:

and crooked things straight; remove all obstructions, bear them up under all discouragements, and carry them through all difficulties:

these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them; which may be depended upon, being promised by him that is able to perform, is true, and faithful, and changes not; and, when done, shall not be the last done for them; he will never leave them, nor forsake them, till he has brought them safe to glory.

Isaiah 42:17

Ver. 17. They shall be turned back,.... Either from their former course, from their idolatry and their idols, and be converted, and turn to the living God; or it may be understood of such Gentiles as were not converted, when others were, who should be put to flight, and should fly to the rocks and mountains to hide and cover them from the wrath of God; for this phrase is used of the overthrow of enemies, of their being obliged to turn their backs and flee:

they shall be greatly ashamed that trust in graven images; as converted persons when they come to be convinced of the folly of their idolatrous practices are; and if not converted, yet are confounded when they find their idols cannot help and assist them, nor deliver them out of their trouble:

that say to the molten images, ye are our gods; as the Israelites did to the molten calf made by Aaron; and the stupidity of the one and the other is much alike; this of the Gentiles, and that of the Israelites.

Isaiah 42:18

Ver. 18. Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Jarchi and Kimchi think these words are spoken to Israel, who, as Aben Ezra says, were deaf and blind in heart; but they are rather an exhortation to the Gentiles that remained impenitent and unbelieving, and who were deaf to the voice of the Gospel, and blind as to the knowledge of it; and the purport of the exhortation is, that they would make use of their external hearing and sight, which they had, that they might attain to a spiritual hearing and understanding of divine things; "for faith comes by hearing, and hearing the word of God", Ro 10:17 to hear the Gospel preached, and to look into the Scriptures, and read the word of God, are the means of attaining light and knowledge in spiritual things; and these are within the compass of natural men, who are internally deaf and blind.

Isaiah 42:19

Ver. 19. Who is blind, but my servant?.... Kimchi, taking the former words to be spoken to the Jews, thinks this is their reply; who will say in answer to it,

why do ye call us blind and deaf? who so blind and deaf as Isaiah the prophet, the servant of the Lord, his messenger, and a perfect one as he is called? but as the preceding words are spoken to the Gentiles, here the Lord does as it were correct himself, as if he should say, why do I call the Gentiles blind and deaf, when the people of the Jews, who call themselves my servants, and pretend to serve and worship me, yet there are none so blind as they in spiritual things? though they have so many opportunities and advantages of light and knowledge, yet shut their eyes wilfully against the light; hence the people and their guides, the Scribes and Pharisees, are often called "blind" by our Lord, to whose times this passage refers,
Mt 15:14; "or deaf, as my messenger that I sent?" not the Prophet Isaiah, but some other, who did not attend to what he was charged with, and did not perform his office aright; it may design in general the priests and Levites, who were the messengers of the Lord of hosts to instruct the people; and yet these were deaf to the messages that God gave them, and they were to deliver to the people: or it may be rendered, "or deaf, but, or as, to whom I send my messenger" {z}; or messengers, as the Vulgate Latin version; and so the Targum,

"and sinners to whom I send my prophets;"

and so it may respect the body of the people as before, who were deaf to John the Baptist, the messenger sent before the Lord; to Christ himself, and his ministry, and to his apostles, who were first sent to them:

who is blind, as he that is perfect? who pretended to be so, as the young man who thought he had kept all the commandments, and as Saul before conversion, and all the Pharisees, those self-righteous persons who needed no repentance, and yet who so blind as they? and indeed, had they not been blind to themselves, they could never have thought themselves perfect; and yet when they were told they were so, could not bear it, Mt 19:20: and blind, as the Lord's servant? which is repeated for the further confirmation of it, and more clearly to show whose servant is meant.

{z} xlva ykalmk vrxw "et surdus, sicut (sub. [ad quem], vel [ad quos]) angelum sive nucium meum missurus sum", Forerius, ex V. L. and to this sense, Grotius.

Isaiah 42:20

Ver. 20. Seeing many things, but thou observest not,.... The Scribes and Pharisees, saw Christ in the flesh; they saw the miracles he did; they saw the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead raised; yet they did not give note to these things, and keep them in their minds, and regard them as clear proofs of his being the Messiah:

opening the ears, but he heareth not; they heard John Baptist preach, the forerunner of Christ, and the testimony he bore of him; they heard Christ himself and his apostles; they sometimes opened their ears, and seemed to listen and hear with attention, and wonder at what they heard; and some would own, that never man spake like Jesus; and yet understood not his speech, and hardened their hearts against him; they saw many things with their bodily eyes, but perceived them not with the eyes of their understandings; they heard with their ears, but understood not in their hearts; for their eyes were shut and their ears heavy, **Isa 6:9**.

Isaiah 42:21

Ver. 21. The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake,.... This may be either understood of what the Lord had done for these people in time past, and which is mentioned as an aggravation of their stupidity, disobedience, and ingratitude; he had delighted in them, and chose them above all people upon the earth, and distinguished them with his favours, which he did for the sake of his own righteousness or faithfulness to his promises made to their fathers:

he magnified them with the law, and made them honourable {a}; gave them a law which made them great and honourable in the esteem of others; see De 10:15 or it may be interpreted of what the Lord would do hereafter, either in a way of grace and favour; that though they were now so ignorant and disobedient, yet in the times of salvation, in the days of the Messiah, these blind shall see, and deaf shall hear, not for their sakes, but for his righteousness sake; when he will magnify his law and make it honourable, and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of him; this way go the Jewish commentators: or rather in a way of judgment, that the Lord would be well pleased in glorifying his justice or righteousness, in the rejection of such a blind and stupid people, who refused to receive the Messiah, against so much light and evidence; and would "magnify the law", and support the authority of it, and "make it honourable", by punishing the transgressors of it; but I am inclined to think that this has respect to a remnant among these people, according to the election of grace; or to the Lord's people in common, whether Jews or Gentiles, with whom he "is well pleased", or in whom he delights. The Lord is well pleased with his Son, and with him as his servant, as Mediator, for his righteousness sake, as in Isa 42:1 to which there may be some respect; and he is well pleased with all his people as considered in him; the love he bears to them, is a love of complacency and delight: the choice he has made of them; the things he has laid up for them; the care of their persons in Christ, and salvation by him; the marrying of them to him, and the taking them into his family, show how well pleased he is with them: he delights in them, as they are regenerated and sanctified by his Spirit; the exercise of their graces, and the performance of their duties and services, are acceptable to him through Christ; his presence with them, the fellowship with himself he grants unto them, the account he makes of them as his jewels, fully demonstrate his well pleasedness in them: but this is not on their own account; for they are polluted and loathsome creatures in themselves, guilty of sin, deserving of wrath; and not for any righteousness of their own, which is imperfect, filthy, and not answerable to the law; which, instead of being made honourable, is dishonoured by it; there is no justification by it, and no acceptance with God through it; but for the sake of the righteousness of Christ, which is perfect, pure, and spotless; which justifies from all sin, and makes comely and beautiful, and glorifies the justice of God, as well as his righteous law, as follows:

he will magnify the law, and make it honourable: that is he for whose righteousness sake God is well pleased: the law of God is great and honourable in itself, from the author, matter, and usefulness of it; and it becomes more so by Christ the Son of God being made under it; by his perfect obedience to it, and by his bearing the penalty of it, in the room and stead of his people; and by holding it forth in his hands, as a rule of walk and conversation to them; by all which it receives more honour and glory than by all the obedience of creatures to it, angels or men, though ever so perfect.

{a} rydayw hrwt lydgy "magnificabat (eum) doctrina et reddebat magnificum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "magnificum [illum] ficit lege et condecoravit", Vitringa.

Isaiah 42:22

Ver. 22. But this is a people robbed and spoiled,.... The Jewish people, who shut their eyes against the clear light of the Gospel, and turned a deaf ear to Christ, and to his ministers, rejected him, and persecuted them; these were robbed and plundered by the Roman soldiers of all their riches and treasures, when the city of Jerusalem was taken:

they are all of them snared in holes; such of them as escaped and hid themselves in holes, and caverns, and dens of the earth, were laid in wait for and taken, and dragged out, as beasts are taken in a pit, and with a snare. Josephus {b} says, some the Romans killed, some they carried captive, some they searched out lurking in holes underground, and, breaking up the ground, took them out and slew them:

and they are hid in prison houses; being taken by their enemies out of their holes, they were put in prisons, some of them, and there lay confined, out of which they could not deliver themselves:

and they are for a prey, and none delivereth; when they were taken by the Chaldeans, and became a prey to them, in a few years they had a deliverer, Cyrus, but now they have none:

for a spoil, and none saith, restore; there is none to be an advocate for them; no one that asks for their restoration; for almost seventeen hundred years {a} they have been in this condition, and yet none of the kings and princes of the earth have issued a proclamation for their return to their own land, as Cyrus did; and no one moves for it, either from among themselves or others.

{a} Written about 1730 A. D. The Jews in 1948 once again became a nation. Editor. {b} De Bello Jud. l. 7, c. 9. sect. 4.

Isaiah 42:23

Ver. 23. Who among you will give ear to this?.... To this prophecy of your destruction, and to what follows concerning it:

who will hearken and hear for the time to come? and receive instruction from hence, and repent and reform? none at all; so blind, and deaf, and stupid, were they both before, and at their destruction, and even ever since; they take no notice of the hand of God upon them, nor hearken to the rod, any more than to the word of God; which seems to be what is meant by "the time to come", or "hereafter"; and this will be their case till the veil is taken away, and then they shall see and hear, and turn to the Lord.

Isaiah 42:24

Ver. 24. Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers?.... To the Roman soldiers, to be spoiled and robbed by them? this was not owing to chance and fortune, or to the superior skill and power of the Roman army:

did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? he did, but not without cause; he was justly provoked to it by the sins of the Jews, which were the meritorious and procuring causes of it; yet the Roman army could not have taken their city and plundered it had it not been the will of God, who for their sins, delivered it up to them; even Titus, the Heathen emperor, himself saw the hand of God in it, and acknowledged it;

"God favouring us (says he {c}) we have made war; it is God that drew the Jews out of those fortresses; for what could human hands and machines do against such towers?"

for they would not walk in his ways; in Christ, the way, the truth, and the life; nor in the ways of his commandments; or in the ordinances of the Gospel; all which they rejected:

neither were they obedient unto his law; or "doctrine" {d}; the doctrine of the Gospel, particularly the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; they went about to establish their own righteousness, and did not submit to his; and also every other doctrine respecting the person, office, and grace of Christ, whom they disbelieved, and refused to receive.

{c} Ib. (De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 9.) sect. 1. {d} wtrwtb "non acquieverunt in doctrina ejus", Forerius.

Isaiah 42:25

Ver. 25. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger,.... The Lord was angry with these people for their rejection of the Messiah, and contempt of his Gospel; and therefore his wrath came upon them to the uttermost, not in some small drops, but in great abundance, to the utter ruin of their nation, city, and temple. Josephus says {e},

"the Romans came to subdue Palestine, but their coming was the pouring out of the heat of the wrath of the Lord:"

and the strength of battle; or "war"; all the miseries and calamities that are the effects of war. The Targum is,

"he hath brought upon them the strength of his warriors;"

the Roman soldiers:

and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart; the Roman army set fire first to the lower part of the city of Jerusalem, and then the higher {f}, and wholly consumed it; and yet this has not to this day brought this people to lay it to heart, to consider and observe the true reason of it, their rejection of the Messiah.

{e} Josephus apud Forerium in loc. {f} Josephus de Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 7. sect. 2. and c. 8. sect. 5.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 43:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 43

Is this chapter the Lord comforts his own people, under their afflictions, with many precious promises; asserts his deity against the idols of the nations; promises deliverance from Babylon, and a greater redemption than that; one branch of which is forgiveness of sin; and closes the chapter with a prediction of the destruction of the Jews by the Romans, for their iniquities. The Lord claims his interest in his people, not only on the foot of creation, but of redemption and calling, and promises them his presence in the midst of afflictions, Isa 43:1, puts them in mind of what he had done for them; and assures them of future layouts, as the effect of his unchangeable love to them, Isa 43:3 and promises the conversion of their seed and offspring in the several parts of the world, Isa 43:5 then challenges the Heathen nations to give such proofs of the deity of their idols as he was capable of giving of his, as his people were witnesses, taken from his eternity and immutability, as the alone

Jehovah, and from his omniscience and omnipotence, Isa 43:8, after which the destruction of Babylon is prophesied of, and the redemption of his people out of it; which they are encouraged to believe from his being Jehovah, their Sanctifier, Creator, and King; and from what he had done formerly for them, when he brought them out of Egypt,
Isa 43:14, and which yet was not to be mentioned or remembered, in comparison of what he would do in the world, a new thing, redemption by the Messiah, and the conversion of the Gentiles to the glory of his grace, Isa 43:18, the sins of omission and commission the people of God had been guilty of are mentioned, which are freely pardoned for Christ's sake, Isa 43:22 when the body and bulk of the Jewish nation were given up to destruction, because of their sins, Isa 43:26.

Ver. 1. But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob,.... This prophecy is not concerning Cyrus, and the redemption of the Jews by him, as some have thought; nor of Sennacherib and his army, and of their deliverance from him, as Kimchi and his father interpret it; but of the Christian church, and the state of it, when Jerusalem should be destroyed, as predicted in the preceding chapter; which goes by the name of Jacob and Israel, for the first churches chiefly consisted of Jews, and both Jews and Gentiles converted are the spiritual Israel of God:

and he that formed thee, O Israel; this creation and formation are not so much to be understood of their being the creatures of God, and the work of his hands, in a natural sense; but of their new creation and regeneration; of their being the spiritual workmanship of God, created in Christ, and formed for his glory:

fear not: for I have redeemed thee: though Jerusalem shall be destroyed, and Judea wasted, and though subject to the persecutions of wicked men in all places; yet since redeemed by Christ from sin, Satan, and the law, hell, and death, nothing is to be feared from either of them; redemption by Christ is an antidote against the fear of any enemy whatsoever:

I have called thee by thy name; with an effectual calling, which is of particular persons, and those by name, even the same that are redeemed by Christ; for whom he has redeemed by his precious blood, they are called by the grace of God to special blessings of grace, with a high, holy, and heavenly calling; and have no reason to fear anything, since they are the chosen of God; have a right to all spiritual blessings; all things work together for their good; they shall persevere to the end, and at last be brought to glory, to which they are called:

thou art mine; such as are redeemed by Christ, and called by his grace, they are his Father's gift, and his own purchase; they voluntarily give up themselves to him, under the influence of his Spirit and grace; they are his by profession and possession; they are his portion, people, sheep, and spouse; and his interest in them, and theirs in him, serve to prevent fear; such need not fear wanting anything, nor any enemy, nor perishing, or miscarrying of heaven and happiness, to which fears they are subject.

Isaiah 43:2

Ver. 2. When thou passest through the waters; I will be with thee,.... The Targum and Jarchi apply this to the Israelites' passage through the waters of the Red sea, as a thing past; and Kimchi to Sennacherib's army, compared to the waters of a river strong and many, **Isa 8:7**. Jerom says, that the Jewish writers by "waters" would have the Egyptians understood; by the "rivers", the Babylonians; by "fire", the Macedonians; and by the "flame", the Romans; which is not amiss; but rather the afflictions of God's people in general are meant by waters, as by rivers also, in the next clause:

and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; because of the variety and multitude of them, as persecutions from men, those proud waves that go over them; the temptations of Satan, that enemy who comes in like a flood, and various others; and because of the rapidity and force of them, and their overflowing and overwhelming nature: now there are paths through which the people of God pass: their way lies through them to eternal glory; and though they are of some continuance, yet have an end, as paths have; and having a good guide, and sufficient strength given them, they wade through them safely; for they do not and shall not "overflow" them, so as to cause their faith utterly to fail, or to separate them from the love of God, or so as to destroy them; for though they come nigh them, and upon them, and may greatly affect and distress them, yet shall not hurt them, but turn to their advantage; for their God is with them, to sympathize with them, to comfort and revive them, to teach and instruct them by their afflictions, and to sanctify them to them, as well as to support and bear them up under them, and to deliver out of them:

when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; afflictions are compared to fire and flames, because very grievous and troublesome to the flesh; and because of the apprehensions of God's wrath in them sometimes; and because of their trying nature; grace is tried by them as gold and silver in the fire; but yet the saints are not consumed by them, they lose nothing but their dross; their principles and profession are tried, and they are supported through all; which has been abundantly verified in the martyrs of Jesus; see Ps 66:12.

Isaiah 43:3

Ver. 3. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour,.... The Lord is the covenant God of his people, holy in himself, and the sanctifier of them, and their Saviour in time of trouble; and therefore need no doubt of his presence and support amidst all their afflictions; and besides they should call to mind past experiences of his goodness, to encourage their faith in him, as to present help and assistance:

I gave Egypt for thy ransom; he sacrificed the Egyptians instead of the Israelites; he destroyed the firstborn of Egypt, and saved Israel his firstborn; he drowned the Egyptians in the Red sea, when the Israelites passed safely through it; and the destruction of the former was to make way for the salvation of the latter, and so said to be a ransom for them; see Pr 11:8:

Ethiopia and Seba for thee; this refers either to the rumour brought to Sennacherib of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia coming against him to war, which diverted him from the siege of Jerusalem for a time, and caused him to turn his forces upon the Ethiopians and Sabeans, whereby the Jews had a respite, 2Ki 19:9 or rather to the overthrow of the Ethiopians in the time of Asa, 2Ch 14:9 or to the king of Assyria, perhaps Shalmaneser's being diverted from Palestine and Judea, and turning his forces upon Egypt and Ethiopia, as in Isa 20:1 and the Lord, by putting his people in mind of these instances, suggests hereby that he will sacrifice all their enemies, rather than they shall be destroyed, and therefore they need not fear.

Isaiah 43:4

Ver. 4. Since thou wast precious in my sight,.... As the saints are; not that they are valuable in themselves; they have no intrinsic worth in them; they are in no wise better than others; they are of the same mass and lump with others; they are of the fallen race of Adam, and are earthly and simple as he was; nor are they precious in their own sight, and much less in the eyes of the world; they are mean and despicable: but they are precious in the sight of God and Christ; in the sight of God the Father, who has chosen them, and taken them into his family, and blessed them with all spiritual blessings; and in the sight of Christ, who desired them, and betrothed them to himself, and undertook for them in eternity, and died for them in time; hence they are compared to things of value, to gold, to jewels, and precious stones, to a pearl of great price, to rich treasure; and are reckoned by Christ as his portion, and are as dear to him as the apple of his eye:

thou hast been honourable; ever since precious, and that was from all eternity; for though they became dishonourable in themselves, through the fall of Adam, and their own transgressions, and are dishonourable in the esteem of men, yet honourable in the esteem of God and Christ; they appear to be so, by their birth, by regeneration, being born of God; by their marriage to the Son of God, the Lord of the whole earth; by their characters of kings and priests unto God; and by their clothing, the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation clothing of wrought gold; and by their being favoured with the presence of God and Christ, and their nearness to them:

and I have loved thee; which is the source and spring of all; hence they became precious and honourable; this is a past act, an act in eternity; it is an act of complacency and delight; a continued one, God rests in his love; and it is an act of undeserved grace and layout, and unchangeably the same; it never alters:

therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life: as, of old, the Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Sabeans, were given for the people of Israel, as in the preceding verse; so, in New Testament times, the enemies of God's people should be given for them; that is, their enemies should be destroyed, and they should be spared and saved; so that all Jews that rejected Christ, and persecuted his people, were given up to destruction. The Pagan empire was demolished, and so will Rome Papal too be destroyed, and the church of God will be preserved, and his interest revive, and all the kingdoms of the world become his; of which the conversions among the Gentiles in the first ages of Christianity were a pledge, prophesied of in the next words. The Talmudists {g}, by "Adam", rendered "man", understand "Edom", by which Rome is often meant in Jewish writings.

{g} T. Bab. Beracot fol. 62. 2.

Isaiah 43:5

Ver. 5. Fear not, for I am with thee,.... With thy ministers that preach the everlasting Gospel, to make it effectual to the conversion of many everywhere, as well as to bear thee up under all trials, and to cause thee to stand against all opposition:

I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; which is to be understood not literally of the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity; for these several quarters, east, west, north, and south, will hardly agree with that, though it may be supposed they were scattered in several countries; but spiritually of the gathering in of God's elect, whether Jews or Gentiles, which were scattered abroad throughout the world, called the "seed" of the church, because born to her, and brought up in her, and of which she consists; and therefore she herself is said to be gathered, converts being brought in from all quarters; from the "east", even from India, where the Apostle Thomas is said to preach the Gospel, and from other "eastern" countries; and from the "west", from the European nations, good part of which lay west of Judea. Our Lord seems to have respect to this passage in **Mt 8:12**.

Isaiah 43:6

Ver. 6. I will say to the north, give up: and to the south, keep not back,.... That is, give up, and not retain, those that belong to the Lord; here the winds are spoken to by a personification; or the inhabitants of the northern and southern climates are called upon to deliver up the Lord's people to him, for whose sake the Gospel was sent into these parts, to find them out, and bring them home; by the "north" may be meant the Goths, Swedes, Muscovites, and those northern isles of ours, with others; and by the "south" the Egyptians, Africans, and Ethiopians. Manasseh ben Israel {h} thinks the passage is thus expressed, which he supposes refers to the universal gathering of the Jews in the latter day to the holy land; because Media, Persia, and China, lie to the east of it; Tartary and Scythia to the north; the kingdom of the Abyssines to the south; and Europe to the west:

bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; such whom the Lord had predestinated to the adoption of children, and had taken into his family, and whom he regenerated by his Spirit and grace, of either sex; to whom he beareth the strongest love and affection, as a parent to his children; and of whom he takes the utmost care, so that not one shall be lost;

let them be in ever so distant a part of the world, he will send his Gospel to them, his ministers after them, and his Spirit shall accompany them, to bring them to himself, his Son, and his churches. Manasseh, before mentioned, understands this of America, and of the Jews there; but may be much better applied to converted Gentiles there; for God has many sons and daughters in those parts.

{h} Spes Israelis, sect. 24. p. 76.

Isaiah 43:7

Ver. 7. Even everyone that is called by my name,.... That is called by the name of God, a son or daughter of his; or by the name of Christ, a Christian; whoever belongs to the Lord, whom he calls by his name; and who, being called by his grace, call upon his name, make a profession of his name, and serve and worship him:

for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him; all which is expressive of the power and grace of God, in the regeneration and conversion of his people; which is a creation, a formation, a making them for himself, for the glory of his grace, and to show forth his praise; and therefore he will gather them in, and bring them into a body together, into a church state, that this end may be answered.

Isaiah 43:8

Ver. 8. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears,.... The Targum applies this to the bringing of the people of Israel out of Egypt; and others understand it of their deliverance from the Babylonish captivity; and some of the exclusion of them from the kingdom of heaven, and casting them into outward darkness, according to **Mt 8:12**, but it is rather to be understood of the conviction of them; though better of the Gentiles, and of the enlightening of them, who before were blind; and causing them to hear, who before were deaf to spiritual things, agreeably to what goes before. It seems best to consider the words as a summons to the Heathens uncalled, to the Roman Pagan empire, to come forth and appear, who were as blind and deaf as the idols they worshipped, and plead their cause, agreeably to what follows.

Isaiah 43:9

Ver. 9. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled,.... In one place, if it could be, in an open court of judicature; that their whole strength might be united together, and the most cogent arguments any of them are able to produce might be brought out; and that all might have an opportunity of hearing the cause fairly argued, and the point decided, and judge for themselves on which side truth lies:

who among them can declare this, and show us former things? what god or prophet of theirs can declare any future event, such as this, the redemption of the Jews by Cyrus, foretold from the mouth of the Lord by Isaiah, so long before the accomplishment of it, or anything whatever before it comes to pass? for this does not regard things past, which might be shown and declared; but the things they are challenged with are things future, to declare them first, before they come into being, which would be a proof of deity; for none but God, who is omniscient, can foretell future events with certainty:

let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified; let them produce witnesses that their gods spoke of things before they came to pass, and that they came to pass just as they foretold they would; that their cause may appear a just one, and that they, their worshippers, are right in serving them:

let them hear, and say, it is truth; or let them hearken to the evidence against them, and acknowledge that what I say is true, and that I am the true God, and there is no other.

Isaiah 43:10

Ver. 10. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord,.... The people of Israel, who could testify that the Lord had foretold their affliction in Egypt, their coming from thence, and settling in the land of Canaan, many hundreds of years before they came to pass, and which were exactly fulfilled; and so the apostles of Christ, and ministers of the word, and all Christian people in all nations, are witnesses of the prophecies concerning Christ, his birth, miracles, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, all which are exactly accomplished, **Ac 1:8**:

and my servant whom I have chosen; meaning either the Prophet Isaiah, or the prophets in general; or rather the Messiah. So the Targum,

"and my servant the Messiah, in whom I am well pleased;"

and who is called the faithful witness, **Re 1:5**, and to whom the characters of a servant, and the Lord's chosen, well agree, Isa 42:1:

that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he; by which testimonies and evident proofs of deity, from the prediction of future events, and the accomplishment of them, you may have a competent knowledge, a firm persuasion, and a clear perception of this important truth, that the God of Israel, and of all true Christians, is the one only Lord God:

before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me; intimating that idols were formed by the hands of men, and yet none of these were formed before him, and therefore could make no pretensions to deity, or to an equality with him; nor should any be formed afterwards, that could be put in competition with him. In short, the sense is, there is no other god beside him; as the Targum, Septuagint, and Arabic versions render it.

Isaiah 43:11

Ver. 11. I, even I, am the Lord,.... Jehovah, the self-existing, eternal, and immutable Being; this is doubled for the confirmation of it, and to exclude all others:

and besides me there is no Saviour; either in a temporal or spiritual sense; the gods of the Heathens could not save them out of their present troubles, and much less save them with an everlasting salvation; none but God can do this, and this is a proof that Christ is God, since none but God can be a Saviour.

Isaiah 43:12

Ver. 12. I have declared, and I have saved, and I have showed,.... The Targum is,

"I have showed to Abraham your father what should come to pass; I redeemed you out of Egypt, as I swore to him between the pieces; and I caused you to hear the doctrine of the law at Sinai."

But the sense is, that God had declared by his prophets, long before the Messiah came, that he would send him; that he should come and save his people by his obedience, sufferings, and death; accordingly he was come, and was the author of salvation; the Lord had wrought out salvation by him, as he had declared he would; and this he had shown, published, and made known by the everlasting Gospel, preached among all nations:

when there was no strange god among you; that assisted in this salvation; the arm of Christ alone wrought it out: or, "and this is not strange among you" {i}; this work of salvation wrought out is not strange among you; it is well known unto you, being published in the Gospel.

{i} rz Mkb Nyaw "et non est in vobis alienum vel peregrinum", Musculus.

Isaiah 43:13

Ver. 13. Yea, before the day was I am he,.... Before there was a day, before the first day of the creation; that is, before time was, or from all eternity, I am he that resolved upon and contrived this method of saving men; "and ever since that day was" {k}, as it may be rendered, I am he that have spoken of it by all the prophets, from the beginning of the world, and now it is accomplished:

and there is none can deliver out of my hand: either such whom the Lord determines to punish, or such whom he resolves to save; none can snatch them out of his hands, there they are safe:

I will work, and who shall let it? as when he wrought the work of creation, there was no opposition to it, or hinderance of him; and in providence all things are done as be pleases; so all his purposes and decrees, which are his works within him, are exactly accomplished according to his pleasure, and none can resist his will. The work of redemption is finished just according to the draught of it in his eternal mind; and when he works upon the heart of a sinner at conversion, whatever obstructions and difficulties are in the way, these are removed, and the work is begun, and carried on, and performed, until the day of Christ. The work of the Lord in his churches, and the setting up of his kingdom in the world, in a more visible and glorious manner, shall be done, and none will be able to hinder it:

who can turn it back? either his work, or his hand in working; his purposes cannot be disannulled; his power cannot be controlled; his work cannot be made void, or of no effect; he always succeeds, for he has no superior that can obstruct him.

{k} awh yna Mwym "ex quo dies [fuit]", Gataker; "ex quo dies esse coepit", Vatablus; "inde a tempore diei", Piscator. awh "Hu", may be considered here as one of the names of God, who from eternity to eternity is, autov, "he", the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

Isaiah 43:14

Ver. 14. Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer,.... That redeemed Israel out of Egypt, and would redeem the Jews from Babylon in a short time, and be the author of a greater redemption to his people than either of these, even a spiritual and eternal one:

the Holy One of Israel; see Isa 43:3, holy in himself, holiness to Israel, and faithful to his promises:

for your sake I have sent to Babylon: Cyrus and his army to take it, in order to deliver the Jews from their captivity in it. The Targum wrongly paraphrases it to the sense quite contrary,

"for your sins have I carried you captive unto Babylon:"

and have brought down all their nobles; from their seats of honour and glory, stripped them of all their grandeur and dignity, and reduced them to a low and mean estate. This is to be understood of the princes and nobles of Babylon, who fell with the city, as their king did: or, "their bars" {l}; for what bars are to houses and cities, that princes should be to the people, the defence and protection of them. Though some think this refers to the gates of Babylon, and the strong bars of them now broken; see Isa 45:2. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it "fugitives"; and which some understand of the Jews, who were as such in Babylon, but now should be brought out of it; which sense is countenanced by the above versions, which render it, I will raise up, bring, or bring back, "all the fugitives" {m}; others of the Chaldeans, who should be forced to fly upon the taking of their city; but the first sense seems best, which distinguishes them from the common people in the next clause:

and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in their ships; who used to glory in their shipping they had in the river Euphrates, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; and so the Targum calls their ships, "ships of their praise"; where, and of which, they used to make their ovations and triumphs; and the word {n} used has the signification of shouting for joy: or rather, "whose cry is to the ships" {o}; as it might be, when they found Cyrus and his army had got into the city, then their cry was, to the ships, to the ships, that lay in the river hard by, in order to make their escape; or their cry was, when they were "in" the ships, even in a way of lamentation and distress, because they could not get them off, Cyrus having drained the river; or it refers to their cry, when put aboard the ships that belonged to the Medes and Persians, in order to the transporting them into other countries. Such a howling there will be when mystical Babylon is destroyed, Re 18:17.

{l} Mlk Myxyrb "vectes omnes", Julius & Tremellius; "vectes universos", Piscator. {m} "Fugitivos universos", Vatablus, Paginus, Montanus; "fugientes omnes", Vitringa {n} Mtnr twynab "in navibus ovatio eorum", Forerius; "cumu avibus ob quas jubilant", Piscator; "in naves ovationis ipsorum", Vitringa. {o} "Ad naves clamor eorum", Grotius, Gataker.

Isaiah 43:15

Ver. 15. I am the Lord, your Holy One,.... And therefore need not doubt of the performance of those promises:

the Creator of Israel, your King; and therefore both able and willing to protect them.

Isaiah 43:16

Ver. 16. Thus saith the Lord, which maketh a way in the sea,.... Who did make a way in the Red sea, when he led Israel through it as on dry land; this, with what follows, is observed to encourage the faith of the Lord's people in the performance of what he had promised, to bring them out of Babylon; for he that had done this, and the rest that are mentioned, could easily remove all difficulties that lay in the way of their deliverance:

and a path in the mighty waters; either of the Red sea, or it may be of Jordan; through which the Israelites passed into the land of Canaan.

Isaiah 43:17

Ver. 17. Which bringeth forth the chariot and the horse, the army and the power,.... Who brought forth the chariots and horses, and the mighty army of Pharaoh, out of Egypt, to pursue the Israelites into the Red sea, where they were drowned. The present tense is put for the future, as in the preceding verse; the future is put for the past tense in the next clause:

they shall lie down together, they shall not rise; they lay down in the Red sea, where they sunk to the bottom, and perished, and never rose more, at least to life, nor never will, till the general resurrection:

they are extinct, they are quenched as tow; or flax, or as the wick of a candle {p}, when put into water, is quenched at once; so the Egyptian, became extinct in the Red sea. Some observe an allusion to the commodity of flax, for which Egypt was famous. Kimchi interprets the whole of the army of Sennacherib, which was brought out of their own land to Jerusalem, and was destroyed in one night by an angel. Aben Ezra of the Chaldeans being brought out to fight with the Persians. But others rather of the army of the Medes and Persians being brought against them, by whom they became extinct as tow or flax.

{p} htvpk "ut ellychnium" Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gataker, Vitringa.

Isaiah 43:18

Ver. 18. Remember ye not the former things,.... Just now referred to, the bringing of Israel out of Egypt, and through the Red sea, and the drowning of Pharaoh and his army in it; for though these things were worthy to be remembered with thankfulness and praise, and to the glory of God, and for the encouragement of faith, yet not in comparison of what was hereafter to be done; meaning, not the redemption from Babylon, unless as a type of spiritual and eternal redemption by Christ; for otherwise there were greater and more wonderful things done, when Israel were brought out of Egypt, than when they were brought out of Babylon; but the great salvation by the Messiah, which exceeds both the deliverances out of Egypt and Babylon, is meant:

neither consider the things of old; unless as figures of the new, but not to be put upon a foot with them, much less to the undervaluing of them, and indeed to be forgotten in comparison of them; see
Jer 23:7. The Talmudists {q}, by the "former" things, understand subjection to kingdoms; and, by the "things of old", the going out of Egypt; as they do by the "new thing", in the following verse, the war of Gog and Magog.

{q} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 13. 1. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 4. 1.

Isaiah 43:19

Ver. 19. Behold, I will do a new thing,.... A wonderful and unheard of thing, and therefore introduced with a "behold", as a note of admiration; the same with the new thing created in the earth,
Jer 31:22, the incarnation of the Son of God; who took flesh of a virgin, appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was made sin and a curse for his people, in order to obtain eternal redemption for them; which blessing, though not newly thought of, resolved on, contrived, and agreed upon, that being from eternity; nor newly made known, or as to the virtue and efficacy of it, which had been from the beginning of the world, yet new as to the impetration of it by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and may be also called "new", because excellent, it being of a spiritual nature, complete and eternal, and having so many valuable blessings in it, as justification, pardon, and eternal life:

now it shall spring forth; or bud forth as a branch, in a very short time, suddenly, and at once; one of the Messiah's names is that of the Branch; see
Zec 3:8:

shall ye not know it? the Redeemer, and the redemption by him. It was known to them that looked for it, and to whom the Gospel is sent, and the Spirit reveals and applies it; these know the nature of it, own it to be of God, and know their interest in it, and know the author of it, in whom they have believed, by the characters given of him: and as this may have respect to the redemption of Christ, so to the conversion of the Gentiles, and to the grace of God dispensed through Christ to them; when old things passed away, and all things became new; a new covenant of grace was exhibited, a new church state set up, new ordinances appointed, and a new people called to partake of all this, on whom was a new face of things; and wonderful and excellent things were done for them, as follows:

I will even make a way in the wilderness; as there was a way made for the Israelites through the wilderness, which lay between Egypt and Canaan; and through another, which lay between Babylon and Judea; so the Lord would also make a way in the Gentile world, comparable to a wilderness for its barrenness and unfruitfulness, for the Gospel to enter into it, where it should run, and be glorified; where Christ, the way of salvation, should be made known; and where there should be a way for Christians to walk together, in the fellowship of the Gospel:

and rivers in the desert; the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, which should be preached and administered in the Gentile world, before like a desert; and the graces of the Spirit, which should be brought into the hearts of men by means of them; and the large communications of grace from Christ; and the discoveries of the love of God, with the blessings of it; compared to rivers for their abundance, and for the comforting, reviving, and fructifying nature of them.

Isaiah 43:20

Ver. 20. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons, and the owls,.... Which is not to be understood literally of these creatures, who as they had honoured the Lord, when Israel passed through the wilderness, so would again in their way praise the Lord, when they came through the deserts from Babylon, for giving them water to drink in such dry and thirsty places, to which there may be an allusion; but spiritually of the Gentiles, compared to those creatures for the savageness, fierceness, and stupidity of them, and who were reckoned by the Jews no other than as the beasts of the field; who should honour and glorify God for the Gospel brought unto them, and for his grace and mercy bestowed on them:

because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert; as before; See Gill on "Isa 43:19"; because of the plenty of divine grace, and the means of it:

to give drink to my people, my chosen; to refresh and comfort the hearts of his people, whom he had chosen out from among the Gentiles, and now would call them by his grace, and set them a thirsting after Christ, and salvation by him.

Isaiah 43:21

Ver. 21. This people have I formed for myself,.... The Gentiles, compared to a desert and wilderness, wild and uncultivated, distinguished from Jacob and Israel in the next verse, and the same with the chosen people before mentioned; who being chosen of God, and redeemed by Christ, are formed anew by the Spirit of Christ, made new creatures, regenerated, and transformed by the renewing of their minds, and conformed to the image of Christ, and having him formed in their souls, and principles of grace and holiness wrought in them; in consequence of which they reformed in their lives and conversation, and were also formed into a Gospel church state, and all this done by the Lord for himself, his service, and his glory. The Targum is,

"this people have I prepared for my worship:"

they shall show forth my praise; with their lips, by ascribing their formation to the power and grace of God, and even their whole salvation to it, and express their thankfulness for the same; and likewise by their actions, by a subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel, and by their lives and conversations being agreeably to it. Joseph Kimchi, as Abendana observes, interprets this people of the beasts of the field, spoken of in the preceding verse, that should honour the Lord, and here said to be formed for himself, and should show forth his praise; and which is taken notice of to aggravate the sins of the people of the Jews, who called not on the Lord, &c. as in the following verses; so the ants and conies are called a people not strong, and the locusts a people great and strong, Pr 30:25.

Isaiah 43:22

Ver. 22. But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob,.... The Jews, though they were the posterity of Jacob, a praying person, yet did not tread in his steps, but were more like the Heathens that called not on the name of the Lord; though there is no necessity of restraining this to prayer, it may regard the whole worship of God, which is sometimes included in the invocation of his name; and so the Targum,

"and ye come not to my worship, O ye of the house of Jacob."

The Jews, in Christ's time, did not call upon his name, nor believe in him, nor receive his Gospel, nor submit to him and his ordinances; they rejected him and his service, therefore the Lord rejected them, and called the Gentiles, as before prophesied of:

but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel: of the word, worship, and ordinances of God; see **Mal 1:13**.

Isaiah 43:23

Ver. 23. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings,.... The kids and the lambs, which, according to the law, should have been brought for burnt offerings daily, morning and evening; and much less did they bring the larger cattle of burnt offerings, as oxen and bullocks. The Targum and Vulgate Latin render it, "the rams of thy burnt offerings"; the Septuagint version, "the sheep"; and the Syriac and Arabic versions, "the lambs"; and these were not brought to him, but to their idols; or, however, were not brought in a right way and manner, and from right principles, and with right views. Kimchi thinks this refers to the times of Ahaz, when the service of God ceased in the temple, and idolatry was practised at Jerusalem but it seems to respect later times, nearer the times of Christ; see **Mal 1:13**:

neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices; what sacrifices they did offer were not offered to God, but to their idols; or they were such as were not according to the law of God; or they were not offered up in the faith of the Messiah, nor with a true spirit of devotion, and with a sincere view to the glory of God, and in the exercise of repentance for sins; but rather as an atonement for them, and that they might go on in them with ease of mind; see **Isa 1:11**:

I have not caused thee to serve with an offering; the "minchah", a meat offering or bread offering, which was a freewill offering, and they were not obliged to it; it was at their own option whether they would bring it or not, and which was not very chargeable to them:

nor wearied thee with incense; or frankincense, which was put upon the meat or bread offering; see **Le 2:1**. Some understand this of all offerings in general, that they were not so many that were commanded them, as to be a burden to them; nor so expensive but that they were able to bear the charge of them, considering the fruitfulness of the land of Canaan, and especially the numerous and costly sacrifices of Heathen idolaters: and others think it has reference to the time of Israel's coming out of Egypt, and the covenant of God with them, when no mention was made of sacrifices, nor were they enjoined them, **Jer 7:21**.

Isaiah 43:24

Ver. 24. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money,.... Or "calamus" {r}, which was used in the anointing oil, and for the perfume or incense, Ex 30:7, this they thought too expensive, and so left it out of the composition, or neglected the whole this being put a part for the whole. Jarchi gives it as the sense, that they had no need to buy it, since it grew in great plenty in the land of Israel, which he took to be cinnamon; though this is distinguished from calamus, or the sweet cane, **So 4:14**, wherefore Kimchi much better observes, that it was not to be had in the land of Israel, but came from a land afar off; and therefore must be bought; see **Jer 6:20**, hence grudging to give the price for it, and to be at the expense of it, bought it not, and disused it:

neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices; they did not multiply their sacrifices, offered only just what the law required, if so many, and those of the leaner sort; and whereas the fat of the sacrifices was the Lord's, there was little of it for him in these:

but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities; they were so many, and so aggravated, that he could not bear with them any longer, his patience was worn out; they were an uneasiness to him, as it were a burden upon him, and therefore would ease himself, as he sometimes does, by avenging himself, **Isa 1:24**, but here by pardoning them, as in the following verse. Some think that these are the words of Christ, the surety of his people, who took upon him the form of a servant for the sake of them, and had all their sins laid upon him, and which he bore, and made satisfaction for; and were to the human nature a burden, and a weariness to it; see Ps 40:12. This must be understood of the remnant according to the election of grace, among these people so sadly corrupted, for whose sins of omission and commission Christ made atonement; and upon the foot of his satisfaction, remission of sins proceeds, as in the next verse: this they thought too chargeable, and so left it out of the composition, or neglected the whole this being put a part for the whole. Jarchi gives it as the sense, that they had no need to buy it, since it grew in great plenty in the land of Israel, which he took to be cinnamon; though this is distinguished from calamus, or the sweet cane, **So 4:14**, wherefore Kimchi much better observes, that it was not to be had in the land of Israel, but came from a land afar off; and therefore must be bought; see **Jer 6:20**, hence grudging to give the price for it, and to be at the expense of it, bought it not, and disused it:

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{r} hnq "calamum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "calamum odoratum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Vitringa.

Isaiah 43:25

Ver. 25. I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake,.... The same with "sins" in the next clause; original sin, and actual sins; which are transgressions of the law of God, of which the law accuses, for which it pronounces guilty, curses, and condemns; which are contrary to the nature of God, strike at his deity, and must be abominable to him; they are many, yea infinite, and yet all pardoned for Christ's sake; which is here expressed by a "blotting" them out, in allusion to the blotting of a debt book: sins are debts, and these are many, and which cannot be paid by the sinner; Christ has made full payment; as the surety of his people: upon this the debt book is crossed; these debts are remitted for his sake: or as a cloud is blotted out, dispelled by the wind, or scattered by the sun; see Isa 44:22, so as to be seen no more with the eye of avenging justice, or to be charged against the sinner to his condemnation. The author of this blessing of grace is the Lord, "I, even I am he"; who had been so ill used, and maltreated, as before declared; whose law had been broken in such a manner; and who is the Lawgiver that is able to save and to destroy; and who hates and abhors sin, and is strictly just; and yet, notwithstanding all this, forgives it; and which he repeats for the confirmation of it, and seems to express it with the utmost pleasure, and as glorying in it, and as if it was an honour to him, and a jewel in his crown; and indeed it is his sole prerogative; none can forgive sins but him: and this he does for his own sake; it is not procured by anything of the creature; not by riches, nor by righteousness, nor by repentance, nor by faith, nor by obedience to any ordinance; it is not for the sake of these that the Lord forgives sin, but for his own sake, and his Son's sake, which is the same; it is an instance of unmerited and distinguishing grace; it flows from the free grace of God; it is a branch of the covenant of grace; it is through the blood of Christ, and yet according to the riches of grace; and it is for the glory of all the divine perfections, justice, truth, and faithfulness, as well as grace and mercy; and after such a list of sins of omission and commission, to hear such language as this is surprising grace indeed!

and will not remember thy sins; God forgives and forgets; God will not remember the sins of his people against them; having forgiven them, he will never punish them for them, which is meant by remembering them; see Jer 14:10.

Isaiah 43:26

Ver. 26. Put me in remembrance,.... Of this gracious promise of free remission of sins, and of all others of the same kind; not that God ever forgets any of his promises, but he may sometimes seem to do so; wherefore he would have his people put him in mind of them, that he may by his good Spirit make a comfortable application of them to him: "let us plead together"; or come together in judgment, as God and the sinner may upon the foot of remission of sin, through the blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction of Christ; which may be pleaded, and will be allowed, in the court of justice: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified; declare the promise before made; declare the grace that is expressed in it; plead the blood and righteousness of my Son, that thou mayest be justified by it, on which account remission of sin is: or it may be rather, these words are directed to another set of men among the Jews, who rejected the doctrine of forgiveness of sin by the grace of God, through the blood of Christ; such as were the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time, those self-justiciaries, who sought to be justified by the works of the law; setting at nought the grace of God and righteousness of Christ: now these the Lord calls upon in a way of derision, to put him in mind of any of their good actions they had done, and he had forgotten, for the sake of which they expected pardon, and not for his name's sake; and to come into open court and plead their own righteousness, and see whether they could carry their cause upon the foot of their own merits; and declare publicly what these merits and good works were, that they might be justified by them, if they were sufficient for such a purpose; but alas! these would not bear examination at the bar of strict justice, and would be far from justifying them in, the sight of God; and as their own works would be insufficient, it would be a vain thing to have recourse to the works and merits of their forefathers; for it follows,

Isaiah 43:27

Ver. 27. Thy first father hath sinned,.... Either Adam, as Kimchi, in whom all have sinned, and from whom all derive a sinful and corrupt nature; or Abraham, as Jarchi, the father of the Jewish nation, of whom they boasted, and in whom they trusted, as being of his seed, and through whose merits and worthiness they expected great things; yet he was but a sinful man, though a good man, and a great believer; of whose infirmity and frailty many instances are on record. Some have thought Terah the father of Abraham is designed, who was an idolater; others think some particular king is meant, the father of his people; Aben Ezra supposes Jeroboam to be intended, the first king of the ten tribes who made Israel to sin; but Kimchi observes, it is better to understand it of Saul, who was the first king over all Israel; others interpret it of Ahaz; and others of Manasseh; Vitringa of Uriah the priest, in the times of Ahaz; but it seems best to take the singular for the plural, as the Arabic version does, which renders it, "your first fathers have sinned"; all their forefathers had sinned, from their coming out of Egypt to that day; and, therefore it was in vain to have respect to them, or plead any worthiness of theirs in their favour; besides, they imitated them in their sins, and were filling up the measure of their iniquities:

and thy teachers have transgressed against me; or "interpreters" {s}; of the law to the people, the Priests and Levites, Scribes and Pharisees; such who should have taught the people, and instructed them in the knowledge of divine things, and interceded with God for them; these were transgressors of the law themselves, as well as despisers of the Gospel; these rejected the counsel of God against themselves, disbelieved the Messiah, and dissuaded the people from receiving him; they were "orators" {t}, as the word is by some rendered; and they used all the oratory they were masters of against Christ, and to persuade the people into an ill opinion of him, and at last to insist upon his crucifixion.

{s} Kyuylm "interpretes tui", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus. {t} "Oratores", Cocceius; "interpretes, [seu] oratores tui", Piscator; "oratores, intercessores tui", Vitringa.

Isaiah 43:28

Ver. 28. Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary,.... Or will do it; the past tense for the future, common in prophetic writings; these are not Moses and Aaron, or the kings, but the priests of the temple, who had the care and government of things there, and therefore called "princes"; these, when this prophecy was fulfilled, were treated as common persons, and divested of their office, and laid aside; their priesthood and the honour of it were taken from them; sacrifices were abolished, and the law concerning them; this was more especially true when Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple burnt, and the daily sacrifice made to cease, by the Romans:

and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches; to be cursed and reproached, as the Jews are in all places to this day, wherever they be, and that very righteously, and in just retaliation for their behaviour to Christ, and their usage of his followers; for they both hung him upon the accursed tree, and imprecated his blood on them and their children, and anathematized, or delivered to an anathema {u}, as the word here used signifies, and cast those who professed his name out of their synagogues, as well as reproached and blasphemed him, his person, offices, miracles, and doctrines; and therefore have been justly given up to the curse of God and man, and to be a taunt, proverb, and byword throughout the world, Jer 24:9.

{u} Mrxl "in anathema", Montanus; "anathemati", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vitringa.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 44:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 44

In this chapter the Lord comforts his people with the promise of the effusion of his Spirit, and the blessings of his grace upon them; the consequence of which would be fruitfulness in them, and the conversion of others, who should profess themselves the Lord's people, Isa 44:1, he proves his deity in opposition to all false gods from his eternity, omniscience, and foretelling future events, Isa 44:6, exposes the stupidity of idol makers and the worshippers of them, Isa 44:9, makes gracious promises of the remembrance of his people, the remission of their sins, and their redemption by Christ, Isa 44:21, of which redemption from Babylon was a type; and of that assurance is given, from the Lord's creating all things by his power; from his frustrating and infatuating diviners and wise men; from his fulfilling his predictions delivered by his prophets; and from his mentioning by name the instrument of their redemption, Cyrus, Isa 44:24, which makes way for a particular prophecy concerning him in the next chapter.

Ver. 1. Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant,.... These words are directed to a remnant according to the election of grace among the Jews, about the time when their princes should be profaned, and the body of the people should be given to curse and reproaches; and who are distinguished from them by the title of the Lord's "servants": who, being called by grace, were made willing to serve him in righteousness and holiness, either by preaching his Gospel, and so had the title of the servants of the most high God, which show unto men the way of salvation; or by observing his commands and ordinances, and walking agreeably to his will, serving him acceptably with reverence and godly fear; as they are also, in the next clause, distinguished from the rest by their being "chosen" of God: and these, having ears to hear, are called upon to hearken to what the Lord had to say unto them; for, notwithstanding the sorrowful things delivered out in the latter part of the preceding chapter, threatening destruction to the nation of the Jews; yet he had some comfortable things to say to this remnant, and therefore would now have them hear them, and attend unto them for their use and comfort:

and Israel whom I have chosen; an Israel out of Israel; a seed the Lord had reserved for himself, whom he had chosen in Christ before the world was; to be holy and happy, to grace here and glory hereafter, to believe in him, and profess his name, and to serve him in their day and generation, either in a more public, or in a more private way; chosen vessels they were to bear his name, and show forth his praise. What they were to hear and hearken to is as follows,

Isaiah 44:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb,.... Which is not to be understood of the forming of the people of Israel into a commonwealth or church state, for this is not said of the body of them; nor of the natural creation and formation of these individuals, but of their new creation, regeneration, and spiritual formation; which, as it was owing to the grace and power of God, by which the Lord describes himself, who is speaking to them, the consideration of it might serve to encourage their faith and confidence in the performance of the promises about to be made to them; see Ps 100:3: which "will help thee"; in the exercise of grace, in the performance of duty, in suffering for his name's sake in every time of trouble, and out of all trouble, and that right early, and when none else can:

fear not, O Jacob, my servant, and thou Jesurun, whom I have chosen; the titles are as before, only instead of "Israel" is "Jesurun", which is a name of the people of Israel, De 32:15 and here the Targum instead of it puts Israel; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions. The Septuagint version renders it, "beloved Israel"; the word signifies upright; and so the Vulgate Latin version translates it, "O thou most upright one" {w}; and well agrees with this little remnant of Israelites indeed, in whom there was no guile. Some derive the word from one that signifies to "see", "behold", "contemplate" {x}; and so it may be rendered, "the seeing ones whom I have chosen", such whose eyes the Lord opened to see their own vileness and sinfulness, and the glory of Christ and salvation by him: these are bid not to fear: not any of their enemies, though they themselves were but worms; and though their number was small, and they weak and feeble, and their enemies numerous, strong, and mighty; and though their countrymen would reproach, revile, and persecute them for Christ's sake, and they should be obliged to turn to the Gentiles, and carry the Gospel among them, when those of their nation would reject it, which would issue in the ruin of it, as before predicted; see Isa 41:10.

{w} Nwrvyw "et rectissime", V. L. a rvy "rectum fuit, Forerius"; so Ben Melech says, that Israel is called Jeshurun, because he is upright among the people. {x} A rwv "contemplari, respicere".

Isaiah 44:3

Ver. 3. For I will pour water oh him that is thirsty,.... Or rather upon the thirsty land, as the Targum; and so the Syriac version, "in a thirsty place"; as a dry land is a thirsty land; it thirsts for water, gapes and opens for it: see Ps 63:1 "and floods upon the dry ground"; large quantities of rain to moisten it, and make it fruitful; these figurative expressions are explained in the next clauses:

I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; by which "seed" and "offspring" are meant the spiritual seed of this remnant or little church of Christ among the Jews, in the first times of the Gospel: such as should be regenerated and converted in it, and who are signified by the "dry" and "thirsty" ground; for being made sensible of their desolate condition, their barrenness and unfruitfulness, they hungered and thirsted after righteousness; were desirous of Christ and his grace, and more knowledge of him, and eagerly sought after them; and to these are promised the Spirit, and his gifts and graces, compared to water, for its purifying, softening, fructifying, and refreshing nature, and for extinguishing thirst, and giving a real pleasure and delight; see Eze 36:25 and the abundance thereof is signified by "floods" of water; for in first conversion especially, there is an abounding, yea a superabounding of the grace of God; it is a well of living water; yea, out of the believer flow rivers of living water, **Joh 4:14** and this grace of the Spirit is always a blessing: and indeed all the blessings of grace go along with it, as to the manifestation and application of them as justification, pardon of sin, adoption, &c.; here perhaps a more special regard is had to the extraordinary effusion of the Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, when the apostles of Christ being furnished with his gifts and graces, were fitted to go forth with the "fullness of the blessing" of the Gospel of Christ. The Targum of the whole is,

"for as waters are given upon the thirsty land, and they flow upon the dry land, so will I give my Holy Spirit on thy children, and my blessing upon thy children's children;"

a succession of converts in the Christian church.

Isaiah 44:4

Ver. 4. And they shall spring up as among the grass,.... That is, such on whom the Spirit of the Lord shall be poured with his gifts and grace, and with the blessings of it: by the "grass" may be meant common believers, comparable to green grass, for their numbers, being many; for their weakness in themselves; for their flourishing condition; like grass for its greenness, and verdure, and its springing up by clear shining after rain; see Ps 72:6 and by those that "spring up among them" are intended the apostles and ministers of the word, who exceed common Christians in their gifts, and grace, and usefulness; grow up higher and taller than they, like palm trees and cedars in Lebanon; and as such exceed private saints as tall trees exceed the grass they grow among:

as willows by the water courses; a sort of trees well known, and which delight in watery places, and grow best on banks of rivers, and shoot up apace in a very short time, and spread their branches; so the apostles, after the effusion of the Spirit on them, grew quickly in gifts, and grace, and evangelic knowledge; and their usefulness spread far and near. The Targum is,

"the righteous shall grow tender and delicate as the flowers of the grass, as a tree that sends forth its roots by flows of water."

Isaiah 44:5

Ver. 5. One shall say, I am the Lord's,.... This expresses the success of the apostles' ministry, not only among the Jews, but more especially among the Gentiles, who were not called by the name of Jacob and Israel; but now should call themselves by those names, as the following clauses show, being called by grace and converted; when they should openly profess their faith in Christ, claim their interest in him, and acknowledge his property in them, and not be ashamed of the name of Christians; and this one, and another, even many should do. The Lord has a people who are his special and peculiar people, his beloved ones, the objects of his delight and pleasure, his chosen and covenant ones, his adopted ones, his treasure and his jewels; and hence he has taken such care of them; he has put them into the hands of Christ for their security; given him to be a Head, Redeemer, and Saviour of them; bestows every blessing of grace on them; will not suffer any to hurt them; and keeps them by his power: and having given them to Christ, they are his people, his portion, his spouse and bride, his children, and the sheep of his hand; hence he became incarnate on their account; laid down his life to save them; sends his Gospel, and along with it his Spirit effectually to call them; and hence all that he has is theirs, and he will keep them, and not lose any of them: and being called by grace, they are the workmanship of the Spirit; his temples in which he dwells, and in whom he is as the earnest and pledge of their eternal glory: and this

interest the Lord has in his people may be known by them, so as that they may be able to say, one and another, "I am the Lord's", as many of them have done; see
Ps 119:94, they may know they are the Lord's beloved ones, by his drawing them with his love, by the communications of his grace to them, by the communion with himself he indulges them with, and by what he shows unto them, and by the shedding abroad of his love in them; and that they are his chosen ones, by the Gospel coming in power to them, by their effectual calling, by the sanctification of the Spirit, and their faith in Christ Jesus; and that they are his covenant ones, by the application of covenant grace and blessings to them; and that they are his adopted ones, by the Spirit of adoption sent down into their hearts, witnessing it unto them; they may know that they are the redeemed of the Lamb, by their having his Spirit, and by his being formed in their hearts: and they may know that they are the temples of the Holy Ghost, by his own work upon them, and his dwelling in them: and knowing this, they should and will declare, and say they are the Lord's and none other's; that they are not their own, nor Satan's, nor the servants of men, but the Lord's to whom they devote themselves, and whom they desire to serve; and therefore join themselves to his churches, and walk in his ordinances, publicly confessing their faith in him, which is telling all the world whose they are; and this they say with the utmost joy and pleasure, in an exulting, yea, even boasting way and manner. The Targum is,

"this shall say, I am of them that fear the Lord:"

and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; reckon himself of the posterity of Jacob, in a spiritual sense; count it an honour to be called a wrestling Jacob, and a prevailing Israelite; so the Targum,

"this shall pray in the name of Jacob;"

either in the name of the God of Jacob, the Messiah, or as Jacob did: "and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord": shall give his hand and seal to serve the Lord; shall esteem it his high and great privilege to be written among the living in Jerusalem and to have his name registered among the saints, and in their church book. The Targum is,

"and this shall offer his oblation before the Lord;"

himself and his sacrifices of prayer and praise: "and surname himself by the name of Israel": shall value himself upon this, that he is an Israelite indeed, and shall choose no other name to be called by than that of a Christian. The Targum is,

"in the name of Israel; he shall draw near;"

and worship with them; all these phrases are expressive of a sincere and hearty profession of faith in Christ, and of the Christian religion, in terms borrowed from the people of Israel; see **Ac 2:41**.

Isaiah 44:6

Ver. 6. Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel,.... The King of the whole world, and Governor among the nations; and in a peculiar manner King of Israel, that nation being a theocracy; and especially King of spiritual Israel, or King of saints, be they of what nation they will:

and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts; who redeemed Israel out of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and would again redeem them from the Babylonish captivity, and the whole Israel of God from sin, Satan, and the law; which he was able to do, being "the Lord of hosts", of the armies above and below:

I am the first, and I am the last; the first cause and last end, of all things in nature, and providence, and grace; all things are of him, through him, and from him; all things were made by him in creation, and for his pleasure they are and were created; and all things are disposed of in his providence for his own glory; and he is the first in reconciliation, justification, and salvation, and all are to the glory of his grace: or this is a periphrasis of his eternity, who is from everlasting to everlasting, without beginning or end, the Alpha and Omega; the same is said of Christ, **Re 1:8**, and all the other characters before mentioned agree with him:

and besides me there is no God: all others are only gods by name, not by nature, mere nominal fictitious deities, not real ones; and it is to the exclusion of these from the rank of deity, these words are said; but not to the exclusion of the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit, who, with the Father, are the one true God.

Isaiah 44:7

Ver. 7. And who as I shall call,.... Which of the idols of the Gentiles can do as the king of Israel, the Lord of hosts has done? call things that are not, as though they were? call all creatures into being? call men by their names before they were born, as Isaac; Josiah, and Cyrus, of whom mention is made in the latter end of this chapter, and call them to service and usefulness in their day and generation? and call whom he pleases by his grace to eternal glory?

and shall declare it; the end from the beginning, things future that are yet to come to pass; or the purposes and decrees of God, his counsel and covenant, his mind and will?

and set it in order for me; give an exact and orderly account of things that shall be throughout the successive ages of time; as Jehovah did with respect to the people of Israel, whose God and king he was; he foretold to Abraham their going into Egypt, and bondage there, their deliverance from thence, and settlement in the land of Canaan, and now their deliverance from Babylon, and by name who should be the instrument of it; none of the gods of the Gentiles could do this, or anything like it, or order and dispose all occurrences in providence for his own glory, and the good of men:

since I appointed the ancient people? meaning either the ancient patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their posterity, the children of Israel, who were early formed into a body politic, and into a church state; see De 32:6, or rather the first man, and the first race of men that inhabited the world before the flood, called the old world; and so the sense is, who ever did the things I have done, from the time I made man, and other creatures, and placed them on the earth, or from the creation of the world? so Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi interpret it; though it is best of all to understand this of the people of God, the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, in the Lamb's book of life, from the foundation of the world; who are, as the words may be rendered, "the people of eternity" {y}; and may be so called, because they were in some sense a people that were "from eternity", as the Targum paraphrases it; not that they had an actual personal being so early, for they are but creatures of time, raised up in successive generations, and but of yesterday, and of a short continuance; yet they had from all eternity a representative being in Christ, as their federal head; they were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and had grace given them in him before the world began, **Eph 1:3** they were the people of God taken into covenant by him from everlasting, for so early was the covenant of grace made with Christ, and them in him; they stood so early related to God as his children, and to Christ as his spouse and bride; so early were they on the thoughts of God, and on his heart,

and in his affections, as they were also upon Christ's, and in his hands, and their names so early registered in his book of life; so that they may be said to be indeed an "ancient people", or "a people of eternity"; and they may be called so, because they will continue for ever, as the days of heaven, and as the sun and moon, before the Lord, Ps 89:29, everlasting habitations are provided for them, and they shall be for ever with the Lord; so the Syriac version renders it, "a people for eternity": now these are appointed by the Lord to come into actual being at the time, and in the place he has fixed; they are appointed to many things in life; not unto wrath, either here or hereafter, but to afflictions, and to death itself: and they are appointed to many good things, to be called by grace, to be saved with an everlasting salvation, and to reign with Christ in the New Jerusalem state; see
Isa 24:23 where they are called "ancients", as here; and to be glorified with Christ for ever; it follows:

and the things that are coming, and shall come? let them show unto them: let the idols show to their worshippers if they can, "the things that are coming"; just coming, that are near at hand, that will be tomorrow; and that "shall come", are at a greater distance, which will be in ages to come; or wonderful things, and things future, so Jarchi interprets it; a word {z} like the first being used for signs and wonders. God foretells wonderful things that shall come to pass, and which accordingly do; but the idols of the Gentiles can do nothing of this kind.

{y} Mlwe Me "populum seculi", Munster, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, i.e. "qui a seculo est", Targ. "populum aeternitatis", Gataker.
{z} twtwa "sigma", with the Rabbins twytwa as here.

Isaiah 44:8

Ver. 8. Fear ye not, neither be afraid,.... Of the accomplishment of prophecies and promises, and of professing the true God, and of adhering to Jesus Christ, the only Redeemer and Saviour; or of the gods of the Heathens, and of persecuting tyrants, and what they can do against you, and in favour of their idolatrous religion:

have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? what should come to pass, before it did, even everything that has since the appointment of the ancient people; and particularly what troubles and persecutions the apostles, ministers of the word, the first Christians should meet with among the

Heathens, for professing and propagating the Gospel, and what success they should meet with, which came to pass accordingly:

ye are even my witnesses; as especially the apostles were, who had it from Christ's own mouth, that they should be hated and persecuted for the sake of the Gospel, and should be successful wherever they came; as they also were his witnesses in Jerusalem, and Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth, of his person, doctrine, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, **Ac 1:8**:

is there a God besides me? that is a true God; for there were many fictitious and false deities, but none omniscient and omnipotent, that could foretell future events, and accomplish them as he did; there is no god but the one God, Father, Son, and Spirit; for this an appeal is made to the witnesses:

yea, there is no God, I know not any; or, there is "no rock" {a}; or, is there any? a word used for God, De 32:4, there is no rock to build upon for salvation, no rock for shelter and safety, but Christ the rock of ages, on which the church is built, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, Mt 16:18, and if God, who is omniscient, knows none else, there can be no other.

{a} rwu Nya "nulls rupes", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "non est petra", Montanus, Cocceius; "estne rupes?" Vitringa.

Isaiah 44:9

Ver. 9. They that make a graven image are all of them vanity,.... They show themselves to be vain men, by making such vain things as graven images are; both images, makers, and worshippers of them are all vain, yea vanity itself:

and their delectable things shall not profit; their idols made of gold and silver, or covered with them, and adorned with precious stones, and so delightful and desirable, are of no manner of profit and advantage, unless the matter they are made of, and the ornaments about them, were converted to other uses; yet not as gods, and worshipped as such, who can be of no service to their worshippers to help them in distress, or save them from ruin:

and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know that they may be ashamed; they that made them must be witnesses against themselves, and the idols they have made; they must be convicted in their own consciences that they cannot be gods; they must be sensible that they have no sight nor knowledge of persons and things; that they cannot see, nor know their worshippers, nor their wants, and cannot give them relief; and this they ought to acknowledge to their own shame that made them, and that their worshippers of them might be ashamed also.

Isaiah 44:10

Ver. 10. Who hath formed a god,.... Who ever made one? was such a thing ever known? or can that be a god which is made or formed? who so mad, foolish and sottish, as to imagine he has made a god? or is it possible for a creature to be the maker of a god? or any so stupid as to fancy he had made one? yet such there were, so void of understanding and reason, and even common sense: "or molten a graven image": first melted it, and cast it into a mould, and then graved and polished it, and called it a god?

that is profitable for nothing? or seeing it "is profitable for nothing", as a god; cannot see the persons, nor hear the prayers, nor relieve the distresses of those that worship it; and therefore it must be great folly indeed to make an image for such a purpose, which answers no end.

Isaiah 44:11

Ver. 11. Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed,.... Either such who join with them in the worship of the molten graven image, or god formed, when they find it is profitable for nothing; so the Targum,

"behold all their worshippers shall be confounded;"

or their fellow workmen, who took their several parts in making the image, and so must be conscious of the vanity and unprofitableness of it, and ashamed when upbraided with it:

and the workmen they are of men; or, "of Adam" {b}; they are the sons of Adam, fallen men, sinful, frail, mortal creatures; they are not so much as of the angels in heaven, but of men on earth, and so very unfit to be makers of a god:

let them be gathered together; workmen and worshippers, as Demetrius, and the craftsmen or shrine makers, with others at Ephesus:

let them stand up; and plead for their gods, and say all they can in the behalf of them:

yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together; the light of the Gospel breaking forth in the ministry of the apostles and others, the minds of many were enlightened to see the folly of worshipping idols, which brought them, and the makers of them, into contempt; who not being able to withstand the evidence and force of arguments brought against them, were covered with shame, and filled with fear, lest, should the Gospel still get further ground, their trade of idol making would come to nothing; or lest the vengeance of heaven should fall upon them for their idolatrous practices.

{b} Mdam hmh "ipsi ex Adamo, sive ex hominibus", Munster, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.

Isaiah 44:12

Ver. 12. The smith with the tongs,.... Or, "the worker of iron" {c}; the blacksmith, who had a concern in making of idols, for some were made of iron, **Da 5:4**, or in making plates to cover them, or nails to fasten them with, or instruments which the carpenter made use of in cutting down trees, and fitting the wood for an image; such as the axe or hatchet, or plane, and which some think is here meant, by the word translated "tongs", but is rendered an "axe", Jer 10:3 and is used for that, or an hatchet, or a plane, by the Misnic {d} writers; so the Targum renders it,

"the smith out of iron makes an axe or hatchet:"

"both worketh in the coals"; he puts his iron in the coals, and blows upon them, and so makes it soft and malleable, and then takes it out:

and fashioneth it with hammers: beats it with hammers upon the anvil, and puts it into what form he pleases:

and worketh it with the strength of his arms; uses his utmost strength to bring it into a form he is desirous of:

yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth; he drinketh no water, and is faint; he works at it with all his might and main, is earnest at it, and is eagerly desirous of finishing his work; he works till he is hungry and thirsty, and for want of food is ready to faint and sink; and yet will not give himself time to eat and drink, being so intent upon his work: or the sense is, though he is hungry and thirsty, and faints for want of provisions, yet the god he is making, or has made, cannot supply him with any: this is said to expose the folly of idol making, and of idol worship.

{c} lzrb vrx "faber ferri", Pagninus, Montanus; "faber ferrarius", V. L. Vitringa. {d} Misn. Sabbat, c. 12. sect. 1. Celim, c. 29. 6.

Isaiah 44:13

Ver. 13. The carpenter stretcheth out his rule,.... Or, the worker of trees {e}; that works in wood, or makes images of wood; having cut down a tree, he stretches out his rule or line upon it, and takes the dimensions of it, and measures the length and the breadth of it, as much as is for his purpose to make a god of: and then

he maketh it out with a line; coloured with ochre, or chalk, which leaves a mark, by which he knows where to cut it, and fashion it to his mind:

and he fitteth it with planes; first with the rougher planes, which take off the knotty and more rugged parts; and then with a smoother plane, makes it even, and polishes it:

and he marketh it out with a compass; where its head and body, and legs and arms, and other parts must be:

and maketh it after the figure of a man; with all the parts and proportion of a man:

according to the beauty of a man; with the face and countenance of a man; with all the lineaments and just symmetry of a man; in the most comely and beautiful manner he is capable of, that it may be the more striking and pleasing to the worshippers of it. Jarchi's note is,

"this is a woman, who is the glory of her husband;"

and so the Targum,

"according to the praise of a woman;"

there being female deities, as Juno, Venus, Diana, and others:

that it may remain in the house {f}; either in the temple built for it, whither its rotaries repair to the worship of it; or in the dwelling house, being one of the Lares or Penates, household gods: it may be, this is said by way of scorn and contempt; this god being made, is set up in the house, from whence it cannot stir nor move, to the help of any of its worshippers.

{e} Myue vrx "faber lignorum", Montanus; "artifex lignarius", V. L. Pagninus; "faber lignarius", Vitringa. {f} The note of Ben Melech is, "as it is the glory of a woman to abide in the house, and not go out of doors, so a graven image abides in the house."

Isaiah 44:14

Ver. 14. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak,.... To make gods of, trees both pleasant and durable, but all unfruitful:

which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest; taking a great deal of pains in seeking out such trees as were most fit for his use, and a great deal of care in the growth of them, that they might answer his end, as well as exerting his strength in cutting of them down:

he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it; a tree that soon grows up, and which he plants for the purpose to make a god of; and this being watered and nourished with rain, which God vouchsafes, though designed for an idolatrous use, grows, and is fit for what it was intended; and being so, he cuts it down, and, makes an image of it; which shows his folly and madness, that a tree of his own planting, which he has seen the growth of, and yet be so sottish as to imagine that a god may be may be made of it. The word for "rain" signifies a body in the Syriac {g} language, as Kimchi observes, and for which he produces Da 4:33, and so Aben Ezra says it signifies in the Arabic language {h}; and the sense is, "the body" of the tree "grew up", and being grown up, was cut down, and used as follows.

{g} "corpus", Luke iii. 22. 2Cor. x. 10. Castel. Lex. Polyglott. col. 627. So in the Chaldee language. {h} So, according to Schindler, signifies a body, Lex. Pentaglott. col. 347, 348.

Isaiah 44:15

Ver. 15. Then shall it be for a man to burn,.... And which indeed is the proper use of it, but not all that this man puts it to; only the boughs, and what he cuts off as useless to his purpose, and the chips he makes, which he commits to the fire:

for he will take thereof, and warm himself; with some part of it he makes a fire in his parlour, and warms himself when it is cold weather:

yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; he heats his oven with another part of it, and bakes the bread he has made for himself and family to live on, and which is putting it to a good use:

yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh a graven image, and falleth down thereto; the other part of the tree, and which is the better part, he makes an image of, and carves it, and calls it a god; and not only so, but when he has done, falls down and worships it; than which there cannot be a greater instance of stupidity and folly.

Isaiah 44:16

Ver. 16. He burneth part thereof in the fire,.... To warm himself with, as before:

with part thereof he eateth flesh; that is, with part of it he dresses flesh, and makes it fit to eat; unless the meaning is, with part of it he makes tables and trenchers to eat meat off of; but the former sense seems most likely, and agrees with what follows:

he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; he roasts his meat with it, and eats it when roasted, and is highly pleased and delighted with it, and he eats of it to his satisfaction:

yea, he warmeth him, and saith, Aha; an expression of joy and delight, being before a good fire in winter time:

I am warm, I have seen the fire; have felt it, and enjoyed the comfort of it, which has given a sensible pleasure.

Isaiah 44:17

Ver. 17. And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image,.... What remains of the tree, that is not consumed by making a fire to warm with, by heating the oven to bake bread with, and by using it in the kitchen to roast meat with, this is made an image of, and being graved and carved, is called a god, and worshipped; though it is of the same matter, and of the same nature, with that which was used for warming, baking, and roasting:

he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, deliver me, for thou art my god; he bows unto it, falls down on his knees, and spreads out his hands, and lifts them up, and uses all the gestures of adoration; yea, makes a formal address in prayer and supplication, and particularly requests that he would deliver him from present danger and distresses, of whatsoever kind he was attended with; declaring at the same time he was his god, in whom he trusted, and from whom he expected relief and help. Monstrous stupidity!

Isaiah 44:18

Ver. 18. They have not known nor understood,.... Who the true God is, nor the worship that is due to him alone; they do not know nor understand divine and spiritual things; nay, they have not the knowledge and understanding of men; they want common sense that can do and say such things as before mentioned, both idol makers and idol worshippers:

for he hath shut their eyes that they cannot see, and their heart that they cannot understand; either the devil, as some think, the god of this world, that blinds their eyes from seeing the folly of such gross idolatry, which he, deceiving them, leads them into; or rather God himself, who, because they like not to retain him in their knowledge, gives them up to a reprobate and injudicious mind, to believe a lie, and worship a false god; this he permits, orders, and overrules to some good ends and purposes: this is to be understood of the eyes of the understanding, which, as the word {i} signifies, are "daubed" and plastered over, that there is no opening of them, and seeing with them; which is the judicial blindness and hardness of heart, which God sometimes in righteous judgment gives up men unto; see **Ro 1:28**.

{i} Mhynye xt "oblevit oculos eorum", Montanus; "obleverit", Cocceius; "quod [sculptile] oblinat", Piscator.

Isaiah 44:19

Ver. 19. And none considereth in his heart,.... Or, "and he does not return it to his heart" {k}; he does not come to himself again, or return to his right mind, but lives and dies under the infatuation; never once revolving it in his mind, pondering within himself what he has done, or is doing, whether right or wrong:

neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say; within himself, and reason the matter in his own mind, and thus express himself:

I have burnt part of it in the fire; to warm myself with:

yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; both heated the oven, and baked bread with it; and also upon the live coals have laid kneaded dough, and baked a cake on them:

and I have roasted flesh, and eaten it; made a fire with another part of it, and roasted meat at it, and ate it with great pleasure and satisfaction:

and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? an idol, which is an abominable thing to God, and to all men of sense and goodness:

shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? or "the bud of a tree?" {l} or that which is made out of a tree of my own planting, cutting down, and hewing, part of which has been used to the above purposes; and the remaining lifeless log, shall I worship it as a god? and yet, though such reasoning might be justly expected from a man that is a reasonable creature, sottish are idolaters, that they seem to be quite deprived of their rational powers, or at least these are disused by them.

{k} wbl la byvy alw "et non reducet ad cor suum", Pagninus, Montanus; "reducit", Piscator. {l} Ue lwbl "ante id quod provenit ex abore", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "germen ligni", Forerius.

Isaiah 44:20

Ver. 20. He feedeth of ashes,.... That is, the idolater delights in his idol, pleases himself with seeks comfort and satisfaction from it, fills and feeds himself with hopes and expectations of being helped and delivered by it; but this is all vain hope, a mere delusion; it is as if a man fed on ashes instead of food; it is feeding on that which has no savour nor substance, can yield no nourishment, but, on the contrary, is pernicious and hurtful; and it is like Ephraim's feeding on wind, Ho 12:1 or on chaff instead of wheat, Jer 23:28 and so such who feed upon and delight themselves in sinful lusts, or false doctrines, may be said to feed on the same sort of food: and here it may be true of the idol in a literal sense; part of the wood of which it was made being reduced to ashes, to which some respect may be had, Isa 44:15, and that itself was capable of the same fate. The Targum is,

"behold his god, part of it is ashes;"

so the Vulgate Latin version: "a deceived heart hath turned him aside" from the true God, and the right worship of him, unto idolatry; the heart of man is deceitful, and desperately wicked; a man needs no other to entice him, and draw him away into any sin, and from the living God, than his own evil heart; which, being deceived itself, deceives him, and leads him to the commission of such things as are contrary to reason and common sense: and he is so infatuated with them, and possessed with a strong belief of them,

that he cannot deliver his soul: divest himself of his erroneous and wicked principles, and leave his idolatrous practices, or be persuaded that he is in the wrong:

nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand? that the idol, which his right hand has made, is a lie, a mere vanity, not to be depended upon and trusted in: or which is in, or "at his right hand" {m}; and worshipped by him, and is highly esteemed and loved as his right hand; this he cannot be persuaded to believe, and say that it is a falsehood and a work of errors; such is the force and fascination of idolatry, when once persons are ensnared and entangled with it.

{m} ynymyb "[quod est] in dextera mea", Piscator; "ad dexteram meam", Junius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 44:21

Ver. 21. Remember these, O Jacob, O Israel,.... Remember these persons, these idolaters before spoken of; or these things, the gross idolatries they were guilty of, and loath and abhor them, shun and avoid them, and not imitate them, and do the same things: or remember that this was formerly your case, and admire the distinguishing grace of God, in turning you from idols to serve him: for by Jacob and Israel may be meant the spiritual Israel of God, or those from among the Gentiles called by the grace of God, and incorporated into Christian churches; see Isa 44:5:

for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: and therefore should serve the Lord, and him only, and not idols, for no man can serve two masters; moreover, these were formed by the Spirit and grace of God in regeneration for his service, and therefore ought cheerfully to engage therein, and abide in it, and never serve any other:

O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me; such as remember the Lord, and remember to serve him, he will remember, and not forget them, his love to them, his covenant with them, and the promises he has made them; he will not forget their persons, nor their service, their work and labour of love, which they have showed to his name. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "do not forget me"; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"do not forget my fears;"

to fear, serve, and worship the Lord, and him only; but Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe, it should be rendered as it is by our translators.

Isaiah 44:22

Ver. 22. I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins,.... Sins and transgressions are compared to clouds, for the number of them, they being many as the fleeting clouds of the air; and for the nature and quality of them: as clouds are vapours rising out of the earth and sea, so these arise out of the earthly and corrupt heart of man, which is as a troubled sea; and, like the clouds, they reach up to the heavens, and the cry of them calls aloud for vengeance from thence; they cause darkness, even all that darkness, both in unregeneracy, and after conversion; they intercept the light of God's countenance, and interpose between God and the souls of men, and cause him to hide his face from them; they come between them and the sun of righteousness, and cover him out of their sight; and by means of them the light and comfort of the Holy Spirit are withdrawn; and they hinder the free passage of prayer to God, at least as to the apprehension of God's people; see Isa 59:2, and they portend a storm, and threaten with a tempest of divine wrath and vengeance; but God graciously forgives them; which is meant by "blotting" them out. Clouds are blotted out either by the wind dissipating and scattering them; or by the sun breaking through them, conquering and dispersing them, which perhaps is alluded to here; and designs not the satisfaction of Christ for sin; by which he has finished and made an end of it; but rather God's act of pardon upon it, and the application of it to his people; or the discoveries of it by Christ himself, the sun of righteousness, arising upon them with healing in his wings, that is, with pardon to their souls; saying to them, thy sins, though many, are forgiven thee; and they are so blotted out and removed as to be seen no more, and as if they had never been, as a cloud is; not only no more seen by the avenging eye of divine justice, but so removed from them as not to be seen by them, as to have no more conscience of them, or feel the load and burden of them; and though other clouds or sins may arise, yet these also are blotted out in the same way, and shall never appear against the saints to their condemnation. And as, when clouds are blotted out, there is a clear sky, a serene heaven, the sun shines in its brightness, and everything is pleasant and delightful; so when sin is pardoned, or it appears to be so, then God is beheld as the God of all grace, as all grace and love; the sinner can go with a holy boldness to him, through the blood of Christ, as being pardoned, and has fellowship with him; the evidences of interest in Christ become clear, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost are enjoyed. And let it be observed, that as no man can reach the clouds, and blot any of them out; so none can forgive sins but God, this is his sole prerogative,
Isa 43:25. Here is mention made of a cloud, and a thick cloud; no clouds are so thick but God can blot them out, and these are no sins so great but he can forgive them; clouds, and thick clouds, are blotted out, lesser and greater sins are forgiven by him. Some read the words thus, "I have blotted out", wiped or

washed away, "as with a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as with a cloud thy sins" {n}; and give the sense thus, as clouds pouring down with rain wash the streets from the filth of them, so the Lord, as with a deluge of pardoning grace and mercy, washes away the sins of his people; grace superabounds abounding sin, and carries it all before it, and removes it clear away; now this blessing of grace is mentioned, to attach the people of God to his service, as it follows:

return unto me, for I have redeemed thee; this supposes them to have backslidden from the Lord in heart or in practice, in life and conversation, or in both, and yet the Lord had forgiven them; and which was a reason why they should return to him by repentance; as nothing is a greater motive to it, or more strongly influences it, than a discovery of pardoning grace; and then the people of God do return to God as their Father, who graciously receives them, and to Christ as their husband, to whom they are married, though backslidden, and to their duty to both. So the Targum,

"return to my worship or service;"

the reason or argument enforcing it is very strong, "for I have redeemed thee"; from sin, and all its sad effects; from the law, and the curses of it; and from death and hell, and wrath to come; and therefore need not fear any of these things, or fear coming to the Lord on account of them. Such, who are redeemed, need not doubt but they shall be kindly received, though they have backslidden, and that no good thing will be withheld from them; for if God has given his Son to redeem them, he will give all things freely with him; besides, being redeemed, they are the Lord's, and therefore ought to return to him, and glorify him with their bodies and spirits, which are his; and as they are redeemed from our vain conversation, they should return from it, and not indulge one, or otherwise the end of redemption is not answered: and this being joined with the forgiveness of sin in the preceding clause, shows that that proceeds upon the foot of redemption, or upon the foot of satisfaction made by Christ; and both furnish out arguments engaging to the service of God.

{n} So some in Gataker.

Isaiah 44:23

Ver. 23. Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it,.... Done what he promised, the forgiveness of the sins of his people, and the redemption of them. So the Targum,

"because the Lord hath wrought redemption for his people."

The Vulgate Latin version adds, "mercy" {o}; and so the Septuagint version, "because God hath had mercy on Israel" {p}; and therefore the heavens are called upon to sing on this occasion, as the angels of heaven did when the Redeemer was born, and who rejoice at the salvation of God's elect, **Lu 2:13**:

shout, ye lower parts of the earth; the earth, which is low in comparison of the heavens; the inhabitants of it, especially the Gentiles, which dwelt in the lower parts of the world, in comparison of Judea, which lay high:

break forth into singing, ye mountains; kings and great men of the earth, like the strong and lofty mountains:

O forest, and every tree therein; the multitude of the common people; see Isa 10:18 these are called upon to express their joy, for the following reason:

for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel; which is to be understood not merely of their redemption from the Babylonish captivity, but of the redemption by Christ, which the former was a type of, and in which all God's people in all nations are concerned, and therefore have reason to rejoice; and in which all the divine perfections are glorified, not only the wisdom, power, goodness, grace, and mercy of God, but his holiness and justice; and saints not only have reason to rejoice, because they are redeemed from sin and Satan, and the law, and death and hell, and all spiritual enemies, but because the glory of God is great in their salvation.

{o} "Quia fecit misericordiam", V. L. {p} oti hlehsen o yeov ton israhl, Sept.

Isaiah 44:24

Ver. 24. Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer,.... These are the words of the Son of God, of Christ, the Redeemer of his people; and the following show him to be the mighty God, and so able to redeem them, and therefore was appointed to this work, and undertook it:

and he that formed thee from the womb; that formed thee in it, and brought thee out of it, separated thee from it, and called thee by his grace:

I am the Lord that maketh all things; that made all things out of nothing at first; for without Christ was not anything made that was made; all things in heaven, and earth, and sea, were made by him; and he continues all creatures in their being, and provides for them, and governs all by his power; he works hitherto, and continues working with his divine Father, **Joh 1:1**:

that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; not to the exclusion of the Father and the Holy Spirit, but of all creatures, angels and men; of himself, and by his own strength and power, and, without the help of these, he stretched out the vast space of the heavens as a curtain, and spread out the earth in its length and breadth, and the large surface of it, to that great circumference which it has; a full proof of his proper deity! A man cannot stretch out a curtain, or piece of tapestry, of any size, without the help of another; and much less can a creature stretch out the heavens and the earth.

Isaiah 44:25

Ver. 25. That frustrateth the tokens of the liars,.... Struck dumb the oracles of the Heathens, disappointed their lying priests, and made void all the signs and tokens they gave the people, that such and such things would come to pass, which did not, and which proved them to be liars:

and maketh diviners mad; soothsayers, astrologers, and such sort of persons, who pretended to foretell future events; but these not answering to their predictions, they became mad, because their credit was ruined, and they lost their reward:

that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolishness; the wise philosophers among the Gentiles, and their schemes of philosophy, which were confounded and destroyed, and proved foolish, through the ministration of the Gospel, **1Co 1:20**.

Isaiah 44:26

Ver. 26. That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers,.... Who, as he confirmed the word of Isaiah and other prophets, and fulfilled their predictions concerning the captivity of the Jews, and their deliverance from it; so he has confirmed and established the word preached by his servants, the Gospel, which is the counsel of God, delivered out by his messengers, the apostles, and first preachers of it; it being attended with the demonstration of the spirit, and of power, to the conversion of sinners, and to the destruction of idolatry and Pagan worship. By the Lord's "servant" some understand Moses, as Jarchi; others Isaiah, as Kimchi and most interpreters; and why not Paul, as Cocceius? though the singular seems rather to be put for the plural, as the next clause explains it; and so the Arabic version renders it, "his servants"; to which the Targum agrees, paraphrasing it,

"confirming the words of his servants the righteous:"

that saith to Jerusalem, thou shalt be inhabited, and to the cities of Judah, ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof; all which suppose that Jerusalem, which, in the prophet's time, was full of inhabitants, should be emptied of them, by the sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity; yet, nevertheless, there should be a return of the Jews from captivity, and this city should be peopled and inhabited again; and also, that the cities of Judah, which were now in good circumstances, should be laid waste, and all the adjacent country be in a ruinous condition, all which should be rebuilt and restored to a flourishing state again. The Lord had said it, and it should be done; as accordingly it was. This may be understood, in a spiritual sense, of the building up of the church of God, and the setting up and establishing the interest of Christ, by the preaching of the Gospel.

Isaiah 44:27

Ver. 27. That saith to the deep, be dry,.... The Targum is,

"that saith to Babylon, be desolate;"

and most interpreters, Jewish and Christian, understand it of Babylon, which was situated in a watery place, by rivers of water, particularly the river Euphrates, and in a low valley:

and I will dry up thy rivers; some think the allusion is to the stratagem of Cyrus, made use of, under a divine direction, to drain the river Euphrates, and make it passable for his army; by which means he surprised the city of

Babylon, and took it: though others think it refers to the drying up of the Red sea and the river Jordan, which are proofs of what God can do, and a periphrasis of his power.

Isaiah 44:28

Ver. 28. That saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd,.... Or Coresh, as his name in the Hebrew language is; and in the Persian tongue signifies the "sun"; from whence he had his name, as Ctesias {q} and Plutarch {r} say; to which the Hebrew word "cheres", which signifies the "sun", has some affinity; though Joseph Scaliger {s} would have the name of Cyrus to signify "food" in the Persian language, and which answers to his character as a shepherd. The father of this illustrious person was Cambyses, king of Persia; his mother's name was Mandane, daughter of Astyages, king of Media {t}. This prophecy, concerning him, was nearly two hundred years before he was born. Josephus says {u}, that Cyrus read this prophecy himself, which Isaiah had delivered out two hundred and ten years before; and which is a proof both of God's prescience of future contingencies, and of the truth of divine revelation. The Lord honours him with the title and character of his "shepherd", who was to lead his flock, the people of Israel, out of the Babylonish captivity, and guide them into their own land. It is very usual, both in sacred and profane writings, for kings to be called shepherds; and if Cyrus signifies "food", as before observed, his name and office agree. Justin {w} says, he had this name given him, while he was among the shepherds, by whom he was brought up, having been exposed in his infancy. Cyrus himself compares a king to a shepherd, and observes a likeness between them {x}:

and shall perform all my pleasure; concerning the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon, and the encouragement of them to go up to their own land, and rebuild their city and temple; and many other things which he did, agreeably to the secret will of God, though he knew it not; and what he did he did not do in obedience to his will, but as overruled by the power and providence of God:

even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built; these are not the words of the Lord, as before, but of Cyrus, giving orders that Jerusalem should be built:

and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid; with great propriety this is said, since only the foundation was laid in his time; the Jews being discouraged and hindered by their enemies from going on with the building in his reign, until the times of Darius, king of Persia. See **Ezr 1:1**.

{q} Excerpta, p. 648. Ed. Gronov. {r} In Vita Artaxerxis, {s} Emendat. Temp. I. 6. {t} Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 1. sect. 1. {u} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 1. sect. 2. {w} Hist. ex Trogo l. 1. c. 5. {x} Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 8. sect. 18.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 45:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 45

This chapter contains prophecies concerning Cyrus, the deliverer of the Jews from captivity; and concerning the grace, righteousness, and salvation of Christ; and the conversion of the Gentiles. An account is given of Cyrus, and of the great things God would do for him, and by him,
Isa 45:1 and the ends for which he would do these things, for the sake of his people Israel; and that he might be known to be the only true God, who is the Maker of all things, Isa 45:4 an intimation is given of the Messiah, as the author of righteousness and salvation; and of the contention and murmuring of the Jews about him, Isa 45:8, encouragement is given to pray for and expect good things by him for the children of God, in consideration of the greatness of God as the Creator, who would raise him up in righteousness, the antitype of Cyrus,
Isa 45:11, the conversion of the Gentiles, the confusion of idolaters, and the salvation of the Israel of God, are prophesied of,
Isa 45:14, which are confirmed by his works and his word, what he had done and said, Isa 45:18, the vanity of idols is exposed, and Christ the only Saviour asserted, to whom persons in all nations are directed to look for salvation, Isa 45:20 when it is affirmed with an oath that all shall be subject to him; that his people shall come to him for righteousness and strength; that his enemies shall be ashamed, and the spiritual Israel of God shall be justified, and glory in him, Isa 45:23.

Ver. 1. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus,.... Cyrus is called the Lord's anointed, not because he was anointed with material oil, as the kings of Israel and Judah were; but because he was appointed by the Lord to be a king, and was qualified by him for that office; and was raised up by him to be an instrument of doing great things in the world, and particularly of delivering the Jews from their captivity, and restoring them to their own land:

whose right hand I have holden; whom he raised up, supported, strengthened, guided, and directed to do what he did:

to subdue nations before him; which was accordingly done. Xenophon {y} relates, that he subdued the Syrians, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappadocians, both the countries of Phrygia, the Lydians, Carians, Phoenicians, and Babylonians; also the Bactrians, Indians, Cilicians, the Sacae, Paphlagonians, and Megadinians; likewise the Greeks that inhabit Asia, Cyprians and Egyptians. Herodotus {z} says, that he ruled over all Asia: all which the Lord subdued under him; for it was he that did it rather than Cyrus; it was he that clothed him with strength and courage, gave him skill in military affairs, and success and victory:

I will loose the loins of kings; as Croesus king of Lydia, and Belshazzar king of Babylon, by divesting them of their dignity, power, and government; and particularly this was true of the latter, when, by the handwriting on the wall, he was thrown into a panic; "and the joints of his loins were loosed", **Da 5:6**, "to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut"; the gates of cities and palaces wherever he came, which were opened to receive him as their conqueror and sovereign; this was very remarkably true of the gates of the palace of the king of Babylon, when the army of Cyrus by a stratagem had got into the city, and were come up to the king's palace, they found the gates shut; but a clamour and noise being made, the king ordered to see what was the matter; the gates being opened for that purpose, the soldiers of Cyrus rushed in to the king, and slew him {a}; but, what is more remarkable, the gates of brass, which shut up the descents from the keys to the river, were left open that night Babylon was taken, while the inhabitants were feasting and revelling; which, had they been shut {b}, would have defeated the enterprise of Cyrus; but God in his providence ordered it to be so.

{y} Cyropaedia, l. 1. p. 2. {z} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 130. {a} Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 22, 23. {b} Herodot. l. 1. c. 191.

Isaiah 45:2

Ver. 2. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight,.... Or, "level the hilly places" {c}; as pioneers do. The sense is, that he would remove all impediments and obstructions out of his way, and cause him to surmount all difficulties:

I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron; with which the brasen gates were barred: in the wall that surrounded Babylon there were a hundred gates, all made of solid brass, twenty five on each side of the square; which, no doubt, are here referred to; which could not hinder the entrance of Cyrus into the city, and the taking of it; though they were not then destroyed by him, but by Darius afterwards {d} these gates of brass are mentioned by Abydenus {e}, as made by Nebuchadnezzar, and as continuing till the empire of the Macedonians.

{c} The Septuagint render the word by orh, mountains; Gussetius by eminences, high places, such as stood in the way of passage into countries. The Vulgate Latin interprets it of glorious persons; and Abendana says it is right to understand it in this way; and applies it to Zerubbabel, and those that went up with him to Jerusalem, with the leave of Cyrus, who were good men, and honourable in their works, whom the Lord directed in their way right, and prospered them in the building of the temple, {d} Herodot. l. 1. c. 179. l. 3. c. 159. {e} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 457.

Isaiah 45:3

Ver. 3. And I will give thee treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places,.... What had been laid up in private places, and had not seen the light for many years. The Jewish Rabbins say {f}, that Nebuchadnezzar having amassed together all the riches of the world, when he drew near his end, considered with himself to whom he should leave it; and being unwilling to leave it to Evilmerodach, he ordered ships of brass to be built, and filled them with it, and dug a place in Euphrates, and hid them in it, and turned the river upon them; and that day that Cyrus ordered the temple to be built, the Lord revealed them to him: the riches of Croesus king of Lydia, taken by Cyrus, are meant; especially what he found in Babylon, which abounded in riches, Jer 51:13. Pliny {g} says, when he conquered Asia, he brought away thirty four thousand pounds of gold, besides golden vessels, and five hundred thousand talents of silver, and the cup of Semiramis, which weighed fifteen talents. Xenophon {h} makes mention of great riches and treasures which Cyrus received from Armenius, Gobryas, and Croesus:

that thou mayest know that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel; to call him by name two hundred years, or near it, before he was born, was a proof that he was God omniscient, and knew things before they were, and could call things that were not, as though they were; and this Cyrus was made acquainted with; for, as Josephus {i} says, he read this prophecy in Isaiah concerning him; and all this being exactly fulfilled in him, obliged him to acknowledge him the Lord, to be the Lord God of heaven, and the Lord God of Israel, **Ezr 1:2**.

{f} Vide Abendana in Miclol Yophi in Ioc. {g} Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 3. {h} Cyropaedia, l. 3. c. 3. l. 5. c. 4. l. 7. c. 14. {i} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 1. sect. 2.

Isaiah 45:4

Ver. 4. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name,.... Not so much for the sake of Cyrus, and to do honour to him, was it that he so long before he was born called him by his name; but to assure the people of the Jews, the Lord's chosen people, and who were his servants, of the certainty of their deliverance, their deliverer being mentioned by name; and it was for their sakes, and not his, that he called him, and raised him up to do such great things as he did, that he might deliver them from their captivity: and it is for the sake of God's elect, whom he has chosen to holiness and happiness, to serve him, and be with him for ever, that he has called Christ, of whom Cyrus was a type, and sent him into the world, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of them:

I have surnamed thee; not only called him by his name, Cyrus, but surnamed him his "shepherd", and "his anointed", Isa 44:28:

though thou hast not known me; as yet not being born; and when he was, and was grown up, he was ignorant of the true God; and though, upon sight of the above prophecy, and under an immediate influence and impression, he acknowledged the God of Israel to be the God of heaven yet it does not appear that he left the Pagan idolatry; for Xenophon {k} relates, that when he found his end was near, he took sacrifices, and offered them to Jupiter, and the sun, and the rest of the gods; and gave them thanks for the care they had taken of him; and prayed them to grant happiness to his wife, children, friends, and country.

{k} Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 45.

Isaiah 45:5

Ver. 5. I am the Lord, and there is none else,.... Whom thou, O Cyrus, for the words are directed to him, ought to own, serve, and worship:

there is no God besides me; in heaven or earth, in any of the countries conquered by thee, and thou rulest over; for though there were gods and lords many, so called, these were only nominal fictitious deities; not gods by nature, as he was; of which the following, as well as what is before said, is a proof:

I girded thee, though thou hast not known me; the Lord girded him with a royal girdle, a symbol of kingly power; he made him king over many nations; he girded him with strength, courage, and valour for war; and made him so expeditious, successful, and victorious, as he was, though a Heathen prince, and ignorant of him, in order to answer some valuable ends of his own glory, and the good of his people, and particularly for what follows.

Isaiah 45:6

Ver. 6. That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west,.... That all the inhabitants of the world, from east to west, which takes in the habitable part of the world, that from north to south not being entirely so; that all within this compass, by hearing what great things God did by Cyrus, and for his people, might know, own, and acknowledge,

that there is none besides me: I am the Lord, and there is none else; or, "besides me there is nothing" {l}; all creatures are nonentities in comparison of God; and he fills up all places, and everything lives, and moves, and has its being in him; and there is no God, the Lord, the eternal Jehovah, but the one true God, Father, Son, and Spirit.

{l} dwe Nyaw "quod nihilum absque me", Forerius.

Isaiah 45:7

Ver. 7. I form the light, and create darkness,.... Natural light, or that light which was produced at the first creation, and of which the sun is the fountain and source; or day which is light, and night which is darkness, the constant revolutions of which were formed, appointed, and are continued by the Lord, **Ge 1:3**, moral light, or the light of nature, the rational understanding in man; spiritual light, or the light of grace, by which things spiritual and supernatural are known; the light of joy and comfort from Christ, the sun of righteousness; and the light of eternal glory and happiness: this is all from God, of his producing and giving; and so darkness is his creature; that natural darkness which was upon the face of the earth at the beginning; what arises from the absence of the sun, or is occasioned by the eclipses of it, or very black clouds; or any extraordinary darkness, such as was in Egypt; or deprivation of sight, blindness in men; and, in a figurative sense, ignorance and darkness that follow upon sin; judicial blindness, God gives men up and leaves them to; temporal afflictions and distresses, and everlasting punishment, which is blackness of darkness:

I make peace, and create evil; peace between God and men is made by Christ, who is God over all; spiritual peace of conscience comes from God, through Christ, by the Spirit; eternal glory and happiness is of God, which saints enter into at death; peace among the saints themselves here, and with the men of the world; peace in churches, and in the world, God is the author of, even of all prosperity of every kind, which this word includes: "evil" is also from him; not the evil of sin; this is not to be found among the creatures God made; this is of men, though suffered by the Lord, and overruled by him for good: but the evil of punishment for sin, God's sore judgments, famine, pestilence, evil beasts, and the sword, or war, which latter may more especially be intended, as it is opposed to peace; this usually is the effect of sin; may be sometimes lawfully engaged in; whether on a good or bad foundation is permitted by God; moreover, all afflictions, adversities, and calamities, come under this name, and are of God; see **Job 2:10**:

I the Lord do all these things; and therefore must be the true God, and the one and only one. Kimchi, from Saadiah Gaon, observes, that this is said against those that assert two gods, the one good, and the other evil; whereas the Lord is the Maker of good and evil, and therefore must be above all; and it is worthy of observation, that the Persian Magi, before Zoroastres {m}, held two first causes, the one light, or the good god, the author of all good; and the other darkness, or the evil god, the author of all evil; the one they called Oromazes, the other Arimanius; and, as Dr. Prideaux {n} observes,

"these words are directed to Cyrus king of Persia, and must be understood as spoken in reference to the Persian sect of the Magians; who then held light and darkness, or good and evil, to be the supreme Beings, without acknowledging the great God as superior to both;"

and which these words show; for Zoroastres, who reformed them in this first principle of their religion, was after Isaiah's time.

{m} Vid. Pocock. Specimen Arab. Hist. p. 147, 148. {n} Connexion, part 1. p. 215.

Isaiah 45:8

Ver. 8. Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness,.... Or, "the righteous One", as the Vulgate Latin version; the Lord our righteousness, Christ the author of righteousness, who was to bring in an everlasting one; and whose coming was to be, and was, as the rain, as the former and latter rain to the earth, **Ho 6:3**, and who came from heaven to earth to fulfil all righteousness; and with him came an abundance of blessings of rich grace, even all spiritual blessings, peace, pardon, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life, which were poured down from above upon the sons of men; thus the Holy Ghost, the spirit of prophecy, proceeds at once from Cyrus to Christ, from the type to the antitype, from the temporal redemption of the Jews to the spiritual redemption of the Lord's people; and these words are to be considered, not as a petition of the prophet, or of the church, for the coming of Christ, and salvation by him; but a promise and prophecy of it. Aben Ezra and Kimchi take them to be an address to the angels of heaven to assist in the affair of the salvation of Israel; these did drop down or descend, even a great multitude of them, at the incarnation of Christ, and published the good tidings of good things that came by him:

let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation; or the "Saviour", as the Vulgate Latin version; Christ the author of salvation, who was appointed to be the salvation or Saviour of his people, who came to effect it, and has obtained it; heaven and earth were both concerned in bringing forth this "fruit" of righteousness and salvation, as the word {o} rendered "bring forth" signifies; see **Isa 4:2**. Christ was the Lord from heaven, and yet made of a woman in the lowest parts of the earth: Christ, who is the "truth", sprung "out of the earth"; and he, who is the author of "righteousness", looked down from heaven, Ps 85:11 and it follows: "let righteousness spring up together"; or "bud forth" {p} as a branch; one of the names of the Messiah, frequent in prophecy:

I the Lord have created it; or that, both righteousness and salvation; or Christ as man, the author of both, whom God appointed, and raised up, and sent to be the Redeemer and Saviour of his people. The Targum interprets this of the resurrection of the dead, paraphrasing the whole thus;

"let the heavens from above minister, and the clouds flow with good; let the earth open, and the dead revive; and let righteousness be revealed together; I the Lord have created them."

{o} evy wrpy "fructificent", Vatablus; "edant fractum salutis"; Junius & Tremellius. {p} xymut "germinare faciet", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, "progerminet germen", Vitringa

Isaiah 45:9

Ver. 9. Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker,.... That contends with him, enters into a controversy, and disputes with him, or litigates a point with him; quarrels with his purposes and decrees; murmurs and repines at his providences, and finds fault with his dispensations: this seems to have respect to the murmurs, quarrels, and contests of the Jews about Christ, the author of righteousness and salvation, when he should appear:

let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth; let men strive with men, who are as earthen vessels made of the same mass and lump, and so are upon an equal foot, and a match for each other; but let them not have the insolence and vanity to strive with their Maker, who, as he has made them, can dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel:

shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest thou? yet this might be said with as much propriety and justice as that the Jews should quarrel with God for not sending the Messiah as a temporal prince to rescue them from the Roman yoke; but in a mean and humble manner, in the form of a servant, as a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; and, at last, became obedient to the death of the cross, the way in which he was to be the Saviour of men: or

thy work, he hath no hands? or thus, or "thy work say unto thee, he, the potter, hath no hands"; no power nor skill to make me; I can make myself: as weakly, as wickedly, and as foolishly did the Jews, seeing no need of the Saviour sent them, nor of his righteousness and salvation, argue for justification by their own works, and in favour of their self-sufficiency to work out their own salvation. The Targum takes the words to be spoken to idolaters, and paraphrases the former part thus;

"woe to him who thinks to contend in judgment against the words of his Creator, and trusts that earthen images shall profit him, which are made out of the dust of the earth, &c."

and there are many interpreters who think they are spoken against the idolatrous Babylonians, particularly against Belshazzar, as Kimchi; and others, against Astyages, a king of Persia, who was angry with the father and mother of Cyrus, and sought to have slain him as soon as born {q}.

{q} Vid. Abendana in Miclol Yophi in loc.

Isaiah 45:10

Ver. 10. Woe unto him that saith unto his father, what begettest thou?.... That quarrels with him, and complains of him, because he was not of the other sex, or not so wise, or so rich, or so handsome, as others:

or to the woman; disdaining to call her mother:

what hast thou brought forth? equally as absurd and impious it was in the Jews to quarrel with Christ for his conversation with sinners, and the reception of them; or for the regeneration of such persons; or to find fault with God for the conversion of the Gentiles, and resent it, and be angry at it, as they were; see Ro 10:19.

Isaiah 45:11

Ver. 11. Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker,.... He whose name alone is Jehovah, who is glorious in holiness, the Sanctifier of his people, and the Maker of them, both as creatures, and new creatures:

ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me; these words are not spoken to idolaters, or the idolatrous Jews, or those of them that were inclined to idolatry; directing them to ask of the Lord, and not of their idols, things to come, which they were not

able to show, and to seek to him for, and insist upon the performance of his promises to them, his children, and creatures; but to the spiritual Israel of God, as the preface shows, directing them to inquire after things future, concerning his children and people, especially among the Gentiles, whom the carnal Jews despised; and to expect, and believe, and even as it were demand the performance of them, being promised and prophesied of: there are some who are the "sons" of God, not by creation only, or by natural birth, or by desert, or merely by profession, but by adopting grace; which is a very great and excellent privilege, preferable to civil or national adoption, or to the highest rank of sonship among men; a blessing which continues forever, and entitles to eternal life: and these become the work of the Lord's hands in regeneration; they are made new creatures; they are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus; whatever is wrought in them is of his operation, faith, hope, love, and every grace, which make up that good work which shall be performed until the day of Christ: first, men are the sons of God by adoption, and then they are his workmanship in regeneration; and the latter because of the former, and of which the latter is an evidence: now there were and are "things to come", concerning these persons; there were some things to come, and which were to come to pass, and did, in the first times of the Gospel, as the incarnation of Christ, and redemption by him; his sufferings and death, and the glory that should follow; the effusion of Spirit, and the conversion of the Gentiles; all which were for the sake of these "sons" of God, and respected them: and there are other things yet to come concerning them, and will be accomplished in the latter day; some things sad and sorrowful, as the giving the outward court to the Gentiles, the Protestant churches to the Papists, and the slaying of the witnesses; and others desirable and joyful, as the numerous conversions of the Jews and Gentiles; their extensive knowledge of spiritual things, and their abundant peace and prosperity; the increase of brotherly love, their purity, spirituality, holiness, and righteousness; their power, authority, and dominion, both in the spiritual and personal reign of Christ, and their ultimate glory. And now the Lord allows his people, and encourages them to "ask" of him these things; to inquire of him by prayer, and by searching the Scriptures, what these things are that are to come; what of them have been accomplished, and what of them remain to be accomplished, "and how long it will be to the end of these wonders",
Da 12:6, and so Jarchi interprets the word, rendered "things to come in the text", signs and wonders: and they may and should pray for the accomplishment of them; yea, insist upon and demand them. The Lord not only allows his people to put him in remembrance of his promises and prophecies, but to plead for, and, as it were, require the performance of them; and so the words are an encouragement to the importunate prayer of faith.

Faith in prayer has great power with God, a kind of command over him; it holds him to his word; it will not let him go without the blessing; nor let him alone till he has made good his promise; nor give him any rest, day nor night, till he has fulfilled the things to come concerning his sons. Some {r} read the words by way of interrogation, "do ye ask or question me concerning things to come?" what I intend to do hereafter? am I obliged to give you an account of my secret purposes and designs? or make you acquainted with future events? "do ye, or should ye, command me concerning, my sons and the works of my hands?" will you prescribe to me what I shall do in my family? am I a father, and must I be directed what to do with my sons? am I the Maker of all men, and must I be told what to do with the work of my hands? what arrogance and insolence is this! but the former reading and sense are best.

{r} So Gataker, and some in the Dutch annotations, and Vitringa.

Isaiah 45:12

Ver. 12. I have made the earth,.... The Targum adds, "by my Word"; the essential Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; see Heb 11:3, this, with what follows, is said to show that the Lord was able to bring to pass things to come, concerning his children, and the works of his hands, which he allowed his people to inquire of him concerning, and to insist upon the performance of them; since he was the Creator of all things, and had made the earth out of nothing, in the beginning of time, by the word of his power:

and created man upon it; the last and chief of the creation, for the sake of whom the earth was made; and man was made to dwell upon it, manure, and cultivate it:

I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens; as a canopy over the earth, as a curtain and tent to dwell in; a phrase often used to express the greatness and majesty of God; see Isa 40:22:

and all their host have I commanded; into being, and to perform their offices regularly and constantly, the sun, moon, and stars, as well as the heavenly host of angels; see Ps 33:9, what is it that such a God cannot do? he is able to do more than his people can ask of him, or think to receive from him, **Eph 3:20**.

Isaiah 45:13

Ver. 13. I have raised him up in righteousness,.... Though this may be said with some respect to Cyrus, yet chiefly to Christ, of whom Cyrus was a type; him the Lord appointed and determined to be the Saviour and Redeemer of his people; him he sent forth in time for that purpose, in righteousness or faithfulness to concerning him: or, "unto righteousness" {s}, as the Vulgate Latin version; to bring in an everlasting righteousness for the justification of his people: or, "with righteousness", as the Septuagint version is {t}:

I have raised him up a King with righteousness; a righteous King, a King that reigns in righteousness, as Christ does, and better agrees with him than Cyrus; see Jer 23:5:

and I will direct all his ways; or "make them plain" {u}; remove all difficulties and obstructions out of his way; he shall succeed and prosper, as the "pleasure of the Lord did prosper" in the hands of Christ; God being at his right hand as man and Mediator, to direct, counsel, and assist him, and to make him successful:

he shall build my city; not Cyrus, for he did not build the city of Jerusalem, whatever orders he might give for it, Isa 44:28 though his proclamation only mentions the temple, **Ezr 1:2**, but Christ, the builder of the church, often compared to a city, and called the city of God, of which the saints are fellow citizens; and which is built by Christ, upon himself the Rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, Mt 16:18:

and he shall let go my captives, not for price, nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts; the Lord's people are captives to sin, Satan, and the law; Christ has not only redeemed these captives, but has proclaimed liberty to them, and delivered them from their bondage by his Spirit and grace; and all this freely, not through any merits of theirs, but of his own rich grace and mercy; and though they are redeemed with a price; yet not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ; and whatever their redemption and freedom cost him, it costs them nothing, it is to them without money and without price,
Isa 52:3.

{s} qdub "adjustitiam", V. L. {t} meta dikaiosunhv, Sept. "cum justitia", Forerius. {u} rvya "aequabo", Piscator; "aequaturus", Junius & Tremellius; "rectificabo", Vatablus; "rectificabam", Cocceius; "aequas faciam", Vitringa.

Isaiah 45:14

Ver. 14. Thus saith the Lord,.... The following words are said not to Cyrus, nor to Christ, but to the church, as the feminine pronouns show; and Kimchi observes, they are directed to Jerusalem:

the labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee; a prophecy of the conversion of many in these nations, who should join themselves to the churches of Christ, formed among them, and make use of their riches, got by merchandise, labour, and industry, for the support of the interest of religion; and had its accomplishment in part, in the first times of the Gospel, which was brought into Egypt, as it is said, by the Evangelist Mark; and by which, no doubt, many were converted and formed into a church state, and others joined them. The Ethiopian eunuch, baptized by Philip, carried it into his country, where it also met with success, was embraced and professed; as it will be more so in the latter day, when the kings of Seba and Sheba shall offer gifts to Christ, and bring their riches into the church, the same with the Sabeans here; see Ps 72:10, who are said to be "men of stature"; that is, of a large and tall stature, as the men of Seba are said to be by other {w} authors; or, "men of measure" {x}. The Targum renders it, "men of merchandise"; who used measures in trade and business: "and they shall be thine": give up themselves to the church, become members of it, and submit to its rule and discipline:

they shall come after thee; follow the church and its pastors, as they have them, for examples. The Targum is,

"they shall walk after thy word;"

be directed, guided, and governed by the church:

in chains they shall come over; being subdued and conquered by the grace of God, shall come in the chains of efficacious grace, drawn with the cords of love, and bands of a man; and yet shall come willingly, being made willing in the day of the power of divine grace upon their souls:

and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee; this is not to be understood of religious worship and invocation, such as is made to

God, who only is the object of adoration and prayer in that sense; but is only expressive of their profound veneration and respect for the church of God, beseeching that it would receive them into, though unworthy of, its communion; see Isa 49:23:

saying, surely God is in thee, and there is none else, there is no god; induced thus to come to the church, and show all this respect unto her, from this consideration, that God is in the midst of her, of a truth, her name being "Jehovah Shammah", the Lord is there; here he grants his presence, here his word is preached, and ordinances administered; and hither converts flock, in hope of enjoying the same blessing also, being fully satisfied there is no other God but in Zion, **Zec 8:23**
Eze 48:35. This passage of Scripture is thus explained in the Jewish Chronicles {y}: "the labour of Egypt", that is, Pharaoh king of Egypt: "and the merchandise of Ethiopia", that is, Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia: "and the Sabeans, men of stature", these are their armies:

they shall come over to thee, this is Jerusalem:

they shall be thine, peace being now made with thee:

they shall come after thee, that is, Hezekiah:

in chains they shall come over, in chains and bracelets:

they shall bow down to thee, and make supplication to thee, they shall give praise to God in the midst of thee, and say,

surely God is in thee.

{w} As by Agatharcides, l. 5. c. 50. in Gataker. {x} hdm yvna "viri mensurae", Vatablus, Cocceius, Pagninus, Montanus; i.e. of a large measure, as Ben Melech interprets it
andrev uqhloi, Sept. "viri sublimes", V. L. {y} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 23. p. 64, 65.

Isaiah 45:15

Ver. 15. Verily thou art a God that hideth thyself,.... Who hid himself from the Gentile world for some hundreds of years, who had no knowledge of the true

God, lived without him in the world, and whose times of ignorance God overlooked, and suffered them to walk in their own ways; though now he would make himself known by his Gospel sent among them, and blessed for the conversion of them. He is also a God that hides himself from his own people at times, withdraws his gracious presence, and withholds the communication of his love and grace. These seem to be the words of the prophet, speaking his own experience, and that of other saints: or rather of the church, upon the access of the Gentiles to her, declaring what the Lord had been to them in former times; but now had showed himself to them in a way of grace and mercy. Some render it "thou art the hidden God" {z}; invisible in his nature; incomprehensible in his essence; not to be found out to perfection, nor to be traced in his providential dispensations; his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out. It may be applied to Christ in his state of humiliation; for though he was God manifest in the flesh, yet the glory of his deity was seen but by a few, being hid in the coarse veil of humanity; he appearing in the form of a servant, who was in the form of God, and equal to him; and to him the following words agree:

O God of Israel, the Saviour; for he is God over all, and the God of his spiritual Israel in an especial manner; and the Saviour of them from sin, wrath, condemnation, and death, by his obedience, sufferings, and death; or if it is to be understood of God the Father, who is the God of Israel, he is the Saviour of them by his Son.

{z} rttom la hta "tu es Deus absconditus", V. L. Tigurine version; "tu es abditus Deus Israelis", Syr.

Isaiah 45:16

Ver. 16. They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them,.... This refers not to any persons spoken of before; not to Israel or the church, or converts among the Gentiles that came to her; but to those that follow, of whom the same is said in other words:

they shall go to confusion together, that are makers of idols; the Targum is,

"worshippers of images;"

both may be designed: this refers to the first times of the Gospel, and its coming into the Gentile world, and its success there; when the oracles of the

Heathens were struck dumb; idols and idol temples were forsaken; and Paganism was abolished in the Roman empire; and when the gods they served could not help them, but they fled to the rocks to hide them from the wrath of God and the Lamb, **Re 6:15**.

Isaiah 45:17

Ver. 17. But Israel shall be saved in the Lord,.... Not the carnal seed of Israel, or the natural posterity of Jacob, for only a remnant of them were saved; indeed, in the latter day, when there will be a general conversion of them, there will be a general salvation of them,

all Israel shall be saved; but here the spiritual Israel of God are meant, such as God has appointed unto salvation; who are taken into the covenant of his grace, in which their salvation is secured; who are his spiritual people, whom Christ saves from their sins; who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and are called by his grace; who believe in him, and hope in the Lord: these "shall be saved": there is a certainty of their salvation, and not a mere probability and possibility of it only. It is not they "may be", but they "shall be" saved; it is the will of God they should, whose will cannot be resisted; they are the purchase of Christ, which he will never lose, and the Spirit is the earnest and pledge of salvation to them: and it is "in" and "by the Lord" they are saved, not in of themselves; their destruction is of themselves, but their salvation is of the Lord; and they are saved as they are in him, and owing to their being in him; they are chosen in him, and hence spring all the blessings of grace and salvation to them; they are representatively in him, as their federal Head; they are openly in him, in effectual calling; and they are justified in him, and by his righteousness, and so saved; and being in him, there is no condemnation to them, nor can they ever come into it. They are saved "by" the Lord; by the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; by Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word; by his obedience, sufferings, and death; by his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and by his interceding life, and that "with an everlasting salvation"; which is distinguished, by this epithet, from a temporal one, and is opposed to eternal damnation, the desert of sin; it is the salvation of the immortal soul, and includes in it grace and glory, which are perpetual and everlasting; and the duration of it is owing to the perpetuity of Christ's person, office, and grace: or, "with a salvation of ages", or "worlds" {a}:

ye shall not be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end; or, "unto the ages of eternity" {b}; that is, such who believe in Christ, and are saved by him, they shall not be ashamed, though the makers and worshippers of idols will; they shall not be confounded, neither in this world, nor in the other; they shall not be ashamed of Christ, his word, and ordinances, nor of their faith and hope in him, or of their sufferings for him; they shall not be ashamed in the resurrection morn, their vile bodies being fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ, when others shall rise to shame and everlasting contempt; nor shall they be ashamed at the coming of Christ, and when they stand before him, being clothed with white robes, and having on the wedding garment; when they shall be introduced into his own and his Father's kingdom and glory, into the world of happiness, which will know no end.

{a} Mymlwe tewvt "salute Seculorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatublus; "salvatione seculorum", Cocceius. So Ben Melcch interprets it, this world and the world to come; everlasting salvation takes in both. {b} de ymlwe de "in secula perpetuitatis", Montanus, Vatablus.

Isaiah 45:18

Ver. 18. For thus saith the Lord, that created the heavens,.... These words, and what follow, are the words of the Son of God, of the Lord the Saviour, in whom Israel is saved with an everlasting salvation; and this is said to assure them of it, as well as to distinguish himself from the gods of the Gentiles, who made not the heavens and the earth, as he had done; for by the Word of the Lord, the essential Word of God, were the heavens made in the beginning; see Ps 33:6:

God himself, that formed the earth, and made it, he hath established it; the Saviour is God himself, truly and properly God, who has all the perfections of deity in him; and this appears as from his creation of the heavens, so from his forming, making and establishing the earth; he made the chaos of the earth out of nothing; he formed that chaos he made into a beautiful order, and prepared, as the last word {c} signifies, fitted, and furnished it with everything convenient for man and beast:

he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited; the earth indeed was "tohu" when it was first created, **Ge 1:2**, which word is used of the chaos of the earth first made, here rendered "in vain"; but then it was not created to continue so, nor did it continue so; for though it was first without form, it was soon formed in a beautiful manner, and fitted for the habitation of men and beasts, and especially the former; and more especially for the habitation of the saints, those sons of men, with whom the delights of Christ were from eternity, and whom he foresaw would dwell in the habitable parts of the earth, which was a pleasure to him; and for the sake of them was it made to be inhabited, and not by them with the wicked promiscuously only as now, but when purified, and refined by fire, to be the habitation of the righteous, with Christ at the head of them; as will be the case in the thousand years' reign:

I am the Lord, there is none else; the one Jehovah with the Father and the Spirit, and there is no other that is the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

{c} hnnwk "parsvit eam", Musculus; "aptavit, instruit", Gataker; "exaptavit", Cocceius, Vitringa,

Isaiah 45:19

Ver. 19. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth,.... In a private whisper, in a muttering manner, and out of the belly, as the Heathen priests did; and from out of cells, dens, and caverns of the earth, from whence the oracles of Heathen deities were delivered; but in a free, open, clear, and public manner, before multitudes, in the face of all men, or where there was a great concourse of people: so Christ delivered the law on Mount Sinai, in an audible manner, attended with a multitude of angels, and before all the people; and when here on earth he said nothing in secret, but openly to the world, in the synagogues and temple of the Jews, where they resorted in great numbers, Joh 18:20 and ordered his disciples also to publish on the housetops what they heard with their ears, Mt 10:27:

I said not unto the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain; that is, he never suffered the seed of Jacob, Israelites indeed, praying Jacobs and prevailing Israels, the true worshippers of him, to seek him in vain; to pray unto and worship him to no purpose, or without fruit to themselves; for all such who seek him early and earnestly, heartily and diligently, and where he may be found, always find him; he receives them, and not rejects them; and they receive that from him which is worth seeking after, and amply rewards all their trouble. The Targum is,

"nor have I said to the seed of the house of Jacob in vain, seek my fear:"

I the Lord speak righteousness; the word of righteousness, the doctrine of justification by his own righteousness; that which he wrought out by his obedience, sufferings, and death, he declared and brought near in the ministry of the word; see Isa 46:13. The Targum renders it, "truth"; grace and truth came by Christ, **Joh 1:17**:

I declare things that are right; according to right reason, agreeably to the word of God, both law and Gospel, fit for men to receive, and what made for his own and his Father's glory; see **Pr 8:6**.

Isaiah 45:20

Ver. 20. Assemble yourselves, and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations,.... Not that escaped the sword of Cyrus's army, the Chaldeans; nor the Jews that escaped out of Babylon and other countries, by his means; but the remnant, according to the election of grace among the Gentiles; such who were called out of Heathenish darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel, and escaped the idolatries that others continued in; these are called and summoned together, as to observe the grace of God to themselves, so to labour to convince others of their gross ignorance and stupidity in worshipping idols, and to judge and pass sentence on the obstinate among them:

they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image; or that "lift up" or "carry the wood of their graven image" {d}; the inside of whose graven image is wood, though covered with some metal which is graved; and for a man to carry such an image on his shoulders, either in procession or in order to fix it in some proper place for adoration, argues great ignorance and stupidity; such persons can have no knowledge of deity, that can believe that a log of wood, covered with gold or silver, graved by art and man's device, and which they are obliged to carry upon their shoulders, can be a god, or a fit object of worship:

and pray to a god that cannot save; itself, nor them; cannot hear their prayers, nor return an answer to them; cannot help and assist them in distress, nor deliver them out of their troubles; and therefore it must be the height of madness and folly to pray unto it.

{d} Mlop Ue ta Myavwnh oi airontev to xulon glumma autwn, Sept. "qui efferunt", Pagninus; "extollentes", Montanus; "qui gestant", Piscator; "gestantes lignum sculptilis sui", Junius & Tremellius; "qui portant", Cocceius, Vitringa.

Isaiah 45:21

Ver. 21. Tell ye, and bring them near, and let them take counsel together,.... Tell them what I say of their ignorance and stupidity; and gather them all together, their gods, their makers, and their worshippers, and let them lay their heads together, and consult what proof they are able to give of their divinities, particularly by foretelling things to come:

who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? that is, who of all their gods or priests have ever declared this or anyone thing at any distance of time before it came to pass? either this everlasting salvation of my people, or the redemption by Cyrus, which was a type of it, and was spoken of beforehand? have ever any of them foretold anything like this, and it came to pass as predicted? not one of them.

Have not I the Lord? he had. Christ, by his Spirit in the prophets, signified before hand his sufferings and his death, and the glory that should follow, **1Pe 1:11** and when he was here on earth, he foretold his being betrayed to the chief priests; his being delivered to the Gentiles; his scourging and crucifixion, and resurrection from the dead; all which came to pass exactly as he had predicted, Mt 20:18:

and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour: there is "none beside me", Christ is the one God with the Father and Spirit, and there is no other; nor any Saviour of lost sinners, but him; there is salvation in him, and in no other; and he is "just" in things pertaining to God, in satisfying his justice, and fulfilling his law; he was set forth as Mediator to declare his righteousness, and which is displayed in the work of redemption by him; so that God is just, while he is the justifier of him that believes in him, **Ro 3:25**.

Isaiah 45:22

Ver. 22. Look unto me,.... And not to idols, nor to any creature, nor to the works of your hands; to your own righteousness and doings; to your wounds; to your tears and humiliations; to your own hearts and frames; to your graces and the exercise of them; all must be looked off of, and Christ only looked unto by a direct act of faith, for righteousness, for pardon, for all supplies of grace, and for glory and eternal happiness. He is to be looked unto as the Son of God, whose glory is the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world; as the only Mediator between God and man; as the Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners; and considered in all his offices and relations: under all circumstances he is to be looked to; when in the dark, look to him for light; when dead and lifeless, look to him for life; when weak, look to him for strength; when sick, look to him for healing; when hungry, look to him for food; and when disconsolate, look to him for comfort; for none ever look to him and are ashamed or disappointed, they have what they look for; and as it is profitable, so pleasant to look to Jesus, and he himself is well pleased with it; and therefore here encourages to it, adding,

and be ye saved; or, "ye shall be saved" {e}: Christ is set up in the Gospel, and the ministration of it to be looked at, that men may be saved by him; and it is the will of God, not only that men should look to him, but that whosoever sees him, and believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life: the ministers of the Gospel are appointed to show men the way of salvation by Christ, and to assure them that he that believes in him shall be saved; and saints in all ages have looked unto him, and have been saved by him; and therefore this may be taken for a sure and certain thing, that such that look to Christ, as the Israelites did to the brasen serpent, the type of him, shall be saved, **Joh 3:14**:

all the ends of the earth; all that live at the furthest part of the earth; Christ has a people there, the Father has given him for his possession, and which are the purchase of his blood, and for whose sins he became the propitiation; and to these he sends his Gospel and his ministers, to find them out, and publish salvation to them, and to assure them, that however distant they are, both as to place and state, yet through looking to him by faith they shall be saved, even though they are the worst and vilest of sinners:

for I am God, and there is none else; and so mighty to save, able to save to the uttermost, all that come to him, and to God by him, be they where they will; since he is truly God, there is virtue enough in his blood to pardon sin, and cleanse from it; and in his righteousness to justify from all sin; and in his sacrifice to expiate it; and therefore sensible sinners may safely look to him, and venture their souls on him. The Targum is,

"look unto my Word, and be ye saved, &c."

{e} wevwhw "salvi eritis", V. L. Pagninus, Tigurine version.

Isaiah 45:23

Ver. 23. I have sworn by myself,.... Christ being the true God, he could swear by no greater, **Heb 6:13**, this shows that what follows, and is here sworn unto, is of great importance, and strictly true, and would certainly be accomplished:

the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness; both what goes before, that such that look unto him shall be saved; and also what follows, concerning the subjection of every creature to him; this was what he had resolved in his mind, and declared in his word, by promise and prophecy, should be; and as it was agreeably to truth and justice, it should certainly, and in faithfulness, be performed, and shall not return void and without effect, but be exactly and punctually accomplished:

that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear; that is, everyone, or at least the generality of mankind, shall be subject to Christ, embrace his Gospel, submit to his ordinances, profess his name, and serve and worship him; this will be when the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in, and the Jews are converted: the apostle quotes this passage, and applies it to the judgment day, when all, whether they will or not, shall confess that Christ is God, which he so often asserts in this context; see Ro 14:10.

Isaiah 45:24

Ver. 24. Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength,.... That is, one and everyone of these that shall be brought to submit to Christ, and to confess him, shall declare it as their faith, that in Christ alone is their "righteousness or righteousnesses" {f}; that they have a full and complete righteousness in him, and which serves for many; consisting of the holiness of his nature, the obedience of his life, and his sufferings of death; by which the law is honoured, justice satisfied, God is well pleased, and they are acquainted and discharged; and which is pure, perfect, and everlasting, is given them of grace, and entitles them to eternal life; and this they have in Christ as their covenant head and representative, and which they come to have by being in him: it is not inherent in them, but is in Christ, by whom it is wrought out, and becomes theirs by the imputation of it to them, and which they receive by faith; and this is an act of faith concerning it here expressed, and which declares the certainty of it, and of interest in it, and excludes all other: for it may be rendered, "only in the Lord", &c. {g}; and seems to be spoken with great joy, in an exulting way, and what may be said at all times; for this righteousness is always in Christ, and "strength" likewise to enable them to exercise every grace; to do the will and work of God; to bear afflictions; to withstand Satan's temptations, and oppose their own corruptions; and to which they have not sufficient strength in themselves, but there is enough in Christ. Some take these to be the words of the prophet, and differently interpret them. Some thus, as Abendana observes,

"saith the prophet, these future things I know not in a way of wisdom, but by the Lord, who saith unto me, my God of righteousness and strength."

Aben Ezra thus,

"surely in the Lord that speaketh with me alone are righteousness and strength."

Joseph Kimchi takes it to be in the form of an oath,

"the prophet said, I swear by the name of the Lord, that unto me he saith, righteousness and strength unto him shall come; as if he had said, the author or doer of righteousness and strength shall draw near to him, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed."

Even to him shall men come: or everyone of the above persons; they shall come to Christ, not merely to his word and ordinances, but to himself by faith; for righteousness and strength; for peace and pardon; for spiritual rest, joy, and comfort; for food and clothing; for all supplies of grace, and for eternal life; or if not in a way of grace now, they shall come to him, and appear before him at the last judgment, whether they will or not.

And all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed; that are incensed against his person, his deity, personality, and divine sonship; against his blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction; against his offices, kingdom, and glory; these shall be ashamed, either when they are convinced of the truth of these things now, or however when they shall appear in his glory at the last day. Kimchi connects this verse with the preceding, thus, "he saith, every tongue shall swear verily by the Lord alone, and not by another god; and so saith God, I have righteousness and strength to give to them that serve me; and all the people who are incensed against me, and reject my service unto that day, then shall they come unto him, and confess before him, and shall be ashamed for what they have done."

The Targum is,

"in his word they shall confess, and all the people shall be confounded with their idols, who rush upon his people."

{f} twqdu "justitiae", Montanus; "omnis justitia", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {g} hwhyb da "tantummodo in Jehova", Junius & Tremellius; "duntaxat in Domino", Tigurine version; "tantam", Cocceius. So some in Vatablus.

Isaiah 45:25

Ver. 25. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified,.... All the spiritual Israel of God, whether Jews or Gentiles; all the spiritual seed and offspring of Christ, to whom he stands in the relation of the, everlasting Father and federal Head; these being given to him, and being in him, are justified in him from all things; and these, all and everyone, shall be brought to see their need of his righteousness, and look to him for it, and receive it from him by faith; and be manifestatively justified in their own consciences, as they will be openly at the bar of God, before angels and men, hereafter. The Targum is,

""in" or by the Word of the Lord all the seed of Israel shall be justified:"

and shall glory; in Christ, as the Lord their righteousness; not in themselves, in their own righteousness, holiness, wisdom, and strength, but in this, that Christ is made to them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, **1Co 1:30**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 46:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 46

This chapter contains a prophecy of the taking of Babylon by Cyrus, and of the deliverance of the Jews; who are encouraged to expect the divine protection, and a continuance of it; are dehorted from idolatry, and directed to look to the Lord alone for righteousness and salvation. The taking of Babylon is signified by the demolition of its idols, which become the plunder of the enemy, and by the carrying of the inhabitants of it captive, Isa 46:1. Then follows a promise of grace and mercy to the remnant of Israel that should now be delivered; that the Lord, who had cared for them from the infancy of their state, would not leave them in their declining times, Isa 46:3, when they are dehorted from the worship of idols, from the consideration of the matter of which they were made, as silver and gold; from their being the works of men's hands; and from their inability to move themselves, or help others; and from the Lord being the true God, as appears by his omnipotence and omniscience, Isa 46:5. A description is given of Cyrus, who should be the instrument of the Jews' deliverance from Babylon, Isa 46:11. And the chapter is concluded with an address to the stout hearted and unrighteous Jews, to observe the righteousness and salvation which were brought near and set before them, Isa 46:12.

Ver. 1 Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth,.... These are names of the idols of Babylon. Bel is by some thought to be the contraction of Baal, the god of the Phoenicians, called by them Beel; so "Beelsamin" {h}, in the Phoenician language, is Lord of heaven: but rather this is the Belus of the Babylonians, who was a renowned king of them, and after his death deified; whom Nebuchadnezzar, according to Megasthenes {i}, calls Belus his progenitor, and by whom Babylon was walled about. This idol is, no doubt, the same with Jupiter Belus, who had a temple in Babylon with gates of brass, and which was in being in the times of Herodotus {k}, as he reports. This name is sometimes taken into the names of their kings, as Belshazzar or Beltesbazaar. Nebo was another of their idols, an oracular one, from whom, by its priests, prophesies of things future were pretended to be given out; for it may have its name from abn, "to prophesy", and answers to the Apollo or Mercury of other nations. The Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint has very wrongly, instead of it, Dagon the god of the Philistines; and so the Arabic version "Dsagon". This name Nebo was also taken into the names of the kings of Babylon, as Nabonassar, Nabopalassar, Nebuchadnezzar, and others. As Bel is the same with Belus, so Nebo is the same with Beltis, the queen Megasthenes or Abydenus speaks of in the same place; and Bel may design the sun, and Nebo the moon, which may have its name from
bwn, "to bud forth", or "make fruitful", as the moon does; see
De 33:14. It is said of both these deities, that they "stooped" or "bowed down";

being taken down from the high places where they were set upright, and looked grand and majestic, and where they might be seen and worshipped by the people. Jarchi gives the words another sense, that it represents in a sarcastic way these idols, as through fear, in a like condition that men are in, in a fit of the colic, who not being able to get to the solid stool, are obliged to bend their knees, and ease themselves as they can {l}. Aben Ezra seems to refer to the same signification of the word, when he says the sense was well known, but it was not fit to write it. The prophet goes on in the derision of these idols:

their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle; that is, being taken down, and broke to pieces for the sake of the silver, and gold, and brass that were about them, or they were made of, they were put into sacks by the Persians, and laid upon camels, and mules, and horses, and transported into Media and Persia. Jarchi interprets it, their idols are like to beasts, which defile themselves with their dung as they do; and so the Targum renders it,

"their images are "in" the likeness of serpents and beasts."

These were the forms of them:

your carriages were heavy loaden, they are a burden to the weary beast; this seems to be spoken to the Persians, who loaded their carriages, and their beasts, with this lumber, that their wagons were ready to break down, and their cattle groaned under the weight of it; a sarcastic jeer at the idols which were become the plunder and prey of the soldiers. It was usual at the taking of cities to demolish the idols of them; and this was typical of the demolition of Heathen idols, and the cessation of Heathen oracles in the Gentile world, through the spread of the Gospel in it, in the first times of Christianity.

{h} Sanchoniatho apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. c. 10. p. 34. {i} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 4. l. p. 456. {k} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 181. Vid. Pausan. Messen. p. 261. {l} Vid. gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 63. 2.

Isaiah 46:2

Ver. 2. They stoop, they bow together,.... Either the beasts under their burdens, or other idols besides those mentioned; or rather the Babylonians themselves, who were obliged to submit to the conquerors:

they could not deliver the burdens; the idols could not save themselves from being laid as burdens upon the beasts, any more than they could save their worshippers: so the Targum understands this and the preceding clause of them;

"they are cut off, and cut to pieces together, they could not deliver those that carried them;"

or else the Babylonians are designed, who could not save their gods from being used in this shameful manner:

but themselves are gone into captivity, or "their souls" {m}; what were as dear to them as their own souls, their idols; to whom also souls may be ascribed by way of derision, being inanimate as well as irrational; and it is not unusual for idols to be said to be carried captive; hence those words of Tertullian, "manent et simulachra caplira": or rather the Babylonians, who went into captivity themselves, and so could not save their idols: thus they who had led captive the Jews are led captive themselves; and thus it will be with mystical Babylon, Re 13:10.

{m} Mvpnw "et animae eorum", V. L. Munster, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius.

Isaiah 46:3

Ver. 3. Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob,.... The Jews, the descendants of Jacob:

and all the remnant of the house of Israel; those that remained of the ten tribes that had been carried captive long ago. These may, in a spiritual sense, design those who are Israelites indeed; the household of the God of Jacob; the chosen of God, and called; the remnant according to the election of grace:

which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: here the Lord distinguishes himself from the idols of the Babylonians; they were laid as burdens upon beasts, and bore and carried by them; but the Lord is born and carried by none, but bears and carries his people. The allusion is to tender parents that have compassion on their children as soon as born, and take care of them, and bear them in their bosoms, and carry them in their arms; and may have respect, in the literal sense, to the infant state of the Jews, both as a church and commonwealth, when the Lord took pity on them, and care of them, and bore them as a father bears his son; and bore with their manners too, and carried them all the days of old through the wilderness to Canaan's land; see Nu 11:12. It may be applied to the care of God in the preservation of men by his providence, especially his own people, whose God he is from their mother's belly; who takes them under his protection as soon as born, and carries them through every state of infancy, youth, manhood, and old age, and never leaves nor forsakes them; see Ps 22:10, and with great propriety may be applied to regenerate persons, who, as soon as born again, are regarded by the Lord in a very visible, tender, and compassionate manner; he "bears" them in his bosom, and on his heart; he bears them in his arms; he puts his everlasting arms underneath them; he bears with them, with all their weakness and infirmities, their peevishness and frowardness; he bears them up under all their afflictions, and sustains all their burdens; he bears them through and out of all their troubles and difficulties: he "carries" them, in like manner, in his bosom, and in his arms; he "carries" them into his house, the church, which is the nursery for them, where they are nursed and fed, and have the breasts of consolation drawn out to them; he carries on the good work of grace in them; he carries them through all their trials and exercises safe to heaven and eternal happiness; for they are poor, weak, helpless creatures, like newly born babes, cannot go alone, but must be bore up and carried.

Isaiah 46:4

Ver. 4. And even to your old age I am he,.... The same he ever was, the eternal and unchangeable Jehovah; the same in his love and affections; in his sympathy and care; in his power and protection; in his promises, truth, and faithfulness to his people, in their last days, as at the first moment of their conversion; and therefore they are safe; see Ps 102:27:

and even to hoar hairs will I carry you {n}; which is doing more than the most tender parent does, or can, or need to do! God will not leave his people in the decline of life, when pressing infirmities are upon them, and they stand in as much need as ever of being bore up, supported, and carried: wherefore it follows,

I have made; these persons, not merely as creatures, but as new creatures; they are formed for myself; they are my sons and daughters, the works of my hands: I have an interest in them, therefore I will bear, even I will carry: from the first of their regeneration, to their entrance into glory; See Gill on "Isa 46:3";

And will deliver you; out of all affliction; out of all temptations; out of the hand of every enemy; from a final and total falling away; from a body of sin and death; from death eternal, and wrath to come; and even at last from the grave and all corruption.

{n} This seems to express more than old age, as Ben Melech observes hence the Jews say, a man sixty years old is come to old age, and one of seventy to hoary hairs.

Isaiah 46:5

Ver. 5. To whom will ye liken me?.... Was it lawful that any likeness might be made, which yet is forbidden, Ex 20:4 what likeness could be thought of? is there any creature in heaven or earth, among all the angels or sons of men, to whom God can be likened, who has done such works of power, and acts of grace, as to care and provide not only for the house of Israel, from the beginning of their state to the close of it, but for all his creatures from the beginning of life to the end thereof, yea, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, and has shown such special grace and goodness to his chosen people, in such a kind and tender manner?

And make me equal; or any equal to him in power and goodness, since all are but worms, dust, and ashes, as the small dust of the balance, yea, as nothing in comparison of him.

And compare me, that we may be like? which is impossible to be done; for what comparison or likeness can there be between the Creator and a creature, between an infinite, immense, and eternal Being, possessed of all perfections, and a finite, frail, imperfect one? see Isa 40:18. To pretend to frame a likeness of such a Being, is to act the absurd and stupid part the Heathens do, described in the following verses.

Isaiah 46:6

Ver. 6. They lavish gold out of the bag,.... As if it was of no value and account;

that is, the Heathen idolaters, some of them, who are excessively devoted to idolatry; these, being rich, take out their bags of gold, and give it in a very profuse manner to a workman to make a golden image for them, not caring what it cost them; such an one was that which Nebuchadnezzar made, sixty cubits high, and six broad, **Da 3:1** see an instance of profuseness this way in the Israelites themselves, Ex 32:2.

And weigh silver in the balance; or "with a reed" {o}. Others, though idolaters, yet less devoted to idolatry, and more tenacious of their money, make silver do for a god, and weigh it out to the workman, that it be made of such a weight, and no more, and that they might not be cheated of their silver; or they weighed it to pay the workman for his workmanship. Money formerly was not coined and stamped, so not numbered by pieces, but weighed.

And hire a goldsmith, and he maketh it a god; a "finer" or "founder", with whom they agree for such a sum of money, and he, of the gold or silver that is put into his hands, makes a god: he casts and moulds it into such a form or shape that is agreed upon, and this is called a god; though nothing but a piece of gold or silver fashioned by art and man's device, and the work of his hands:

they fall down, yea, they worship; the god they made; both the artificer, and he that employed him, fall down upon their knees, or their faces, and pay divine worship add adoration to the idol; though the one knew it was made of his own gold or silver, and the other knew it to be the workmanship of his hands. Worshipping is more than falling down, as Ben Melech observes, and therefore it is said, yea, they worship.

{o} hnqb "in calamo", Pagninus, Montanus. The bar of the balance on which they hang the scales with threads, Ben Meleck says is called hnq, the "reed". So Vatablus.

Isaiah 46:7

Ver. 7. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him,.... That is, the idol; men carry him upon their shoulders in procession, and expose him to the view and veneration of the people, just as the host is carried in procession by the Papists; or the idol being made, the workman or his men lift it up, for it cannot lift up itself, and take it upon their shoulders, and carry it home to the proprietor:

and set him in his place; in his house, if an household god: or in the temple, church, or place of public worship, if designed for that:

or cause him to rest under him {p}, or "in his place"; under the roof of his house or temple; a jeer upon him, as if he was weary of his long journey, though carried. Here again the idols are distinguished from the true God, and he from them; they are on men's shoulders, and set in a certain place, but he carries all his people, and is not limited to, or included in any place:

and he standeth, and from his place he shall not remove; the idol being set in his place stands fast, being nailed; he stands upright as a palm tree, and can never stir from the place where he is, to help any of his worshippers, in whatsoever distress they may be; nor can he get out of the way of any danger to which he may be exposed; if the temple or house, in which he is, is on fire, or overflowed with water, or broke into by thieves, he cannot move out of his place, and escape the danger; a fine deity to be worshipped indeed! see Isa 44:13.

Yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer; as Baal's priests and worshippers cried to him, but no voice was heard, nor answer returned, 1Ki 18:26 for though they have ears, they hear not, and mouths, yet they speak not, Ps 115:5

nor save him out of his trouble; that is, the idol cannot save the idolatrous worshipper out of his distress, which has caused him to cry unto him; see Isa 45:20.

{p} wytxt whxyny "et quiescere eum faciunt suo loco", Musculus.

Isaiah 46:8

Ver. 8. Remember this,.... Or "these things", as the Syriac version, concerning the matter of which, and the manner in which idols are made; their impotency to move themselves, and their inability to help their votaries, and the difference between them and the true God:

and show yourselves men; and not brutes, as the makers and worshippers of images are, or show themselves as if they were; who unmanly themselves, and act contrary to the natural reason of mankind: or "be ye strong" {q}; so the Targum and Jarchi; fortify yourselves against all temptations to idolatry, and against all the arguments and persuasions of idolaters; or "burn ye" {r} or "be ye inflamed", so Rabenu Hal and Joseph Kimchi; that is, blush and be ashamed at such sottishness and stupidity, as men when they are ashamed look as if their faces were inflamed; so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "be ye confounded" {s}; or the sense is, be fervent in spirit, be fired {t} with zeal for God and his glory, and with indignation against such gross idolatry:

bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors; of the law of God, in this instance of idolatry; meaning either the Babylonians, or rather the Jews, who had been drawn in by them to idolatrous practices; calling upon them to return to their senses; to use and exercise their reason; to recollect and reconsider things, and observe and repent of the folly and wickedness they had been guilty of.

{q} wvvath "roborat vos", Pagninus, Tigurine version; so Ben Melech interprets the word. {r} Ardete, "comburite vos", some in Vatablus. {s} "Confundamini", V. L. "et erubescite", Calvin. {t} "Incendimini sive corripimini zelo", Vitringa.

Isaiah 46:9

Ver. 9. Remember the former things of old,.... The things that were from the beginning, or the ancient things done by the Lord, whether as the effects of power, wisdom, and goodness, or in wrath, or in mercy; such as the creation of the heavens, and the earth, and all things in them; the destruction of the old world, and of Sodom and Gomorrah; the bringing of Israel out of Egypt through the Red sea and wilderness, to Canaan's land, and all the wondrous things then done for them; which are so many proofs of the true deity of the God of Israel, in opposition to the idols of the Gentiles:

for I am God, and there is none else; as he must needs be what did the above things:

I am God, and there is none like me; for greatness or goodness, or that has done the like things; not one of the gods of the Gentiles.

Isaiah 46:10

Ver. 10. Declaring the end from the beginning,.... The end of the Jewish state, both as a church, and a commonwealth, from the first settlement of it in the times of Moses, and by him, De 32:29. The end of the world, and all things in it, as early as the times of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, **Jude 1:14**. The end and issue of every event, at least of many very remarkable and momentous ones, before they came to pass; and particularly things relating to Christ, the beginning and end; the fulfilling end of the moral law for righteousness; the scope and design of the ceremonial law, to which that tended, and in which it issued; as well as the end of the whole Scripture, of the prophecies and promises of it: and this end was declared very early, and spoken of by all the prophets that were from the beginning of the world; and which is a full proof of the omniscience of God, and so of his true deity, **Lu 1:70**.

And from the ancient times the things that are not yet done; that were not at this time done, though they are since: such as the captivity of the Jews, and their return from it; also the incarnation of Christ, his obedience and sufferings, and the glory that should follow; his resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God; the work of redemption by him; the effusion of the Spirit; the spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles, and their conversion; and others which are now not yet done; as the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, and the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles; the glory of the church in those times as to knowledge, peace, purity, power, and authority; the destruction of antichrist; and the second coming of the Messiah; all which have been declared from ancient times; and as the former have been accomplished, there is reason to believe the latter will:

saying, my counsel shall stand; the purposes and decrees of God, which are within himself, wisely formed by him, eternal and not frustrable; and which shall stand, or be accomplished, being the counsels of him who is all wise, all knowing, all powerful, unchangeable, true, and faithful; whether they respect the providence of God in relation to the world in general, and the government of it, or to particular persons, and their affairs, from the time of their birth to their death; or whether they respect his grace and goodness in the salvation of men; such as his purpose according to election, the covenant of his grace, redemption by Christ, the effectual calling, and eternal glorification; all which, as they are according to the will and counsel of God; stand firm and sure, and shall have their full accomplishment; see Ps 33:11.

And I will do all my pleasure; as he has done in creation, and does in providence, so he has done, can do, and does in grace, in predestination and redemption, and in the effectual calling. And particularly this may refer to the deliverance of the Jews by Cyrus, a type of Christ, and deliverance by him, as follows:

Isaiah 46:11

Ver. 11. Calling a ravenous bird from the east,.... Or "a flying fowl", or "swift winged bird" {u}; for the word used does not so much denote rapaciousness as swiftness; which well agrees with Cyrus, who is here meant, and not Abraham, as Jarchi, nor Nebuchadnezzar, as others; and who was always swift in all his expeditions, and always recommended celerity and dispatch of business to his soldiers and others, as Xenophon {w} often observes; and very remarkable is that speech of Tigranes to him, in which he tells him {x}, that he so far exceeded the king of Armenia in swiftness, that he came upon him with a great army, from a far country, before he could get his army together, which was just by him. And very observable are the words of Cyrus himself, who was desirous of being a thorough horseman, that he might seem to be anyrwpov pthnov, "a winged" or "flying man" {y} So the Targum here renders it, a swift bird. Aben Ezra, who interprets it of Cyrus, says he is so called, as if he flew to do the will of God; and Kimchi observes of Cyrus, that he has this name because he came swiftly, and in haste, as a bird that flies: and it is no unusual thing for a mighty monarch, or a general, marching with his army, to be compared to a flying bird, particularly an eagle, Jer 48:40 and may be the bird intended here, which well suits with Cyrus, who had, as Plutarch {z} reports, an aquiline nose; hence men that have such noses, among the Persians, are highly esteemed: and Xenophon {a} says, that the standard of Cyrus was a golden eagle upon the top of a high spear, and which is retained by the kings of Persia. Cyrus is said to be called from the east, because, as Kimchi observes, his country lay to the east of Babylon:

the man that executeth my counsel from afar country; as Persia was from Babylon, Assyria and other provinces lying between; but though he lived in a far country, and knew nothing of the affairs of the people of God in Babylon, or what work he was to do, yet God called him, and brought him to do his will, which he was ignorant of: so God sometimes puts into the hearts of men to fulfil his will, which they are strangers to, Re 17:17. It is in the Hebrew text, "the man of my counsel" {b}; not with whom the Lord consulted, for none are of his counsel in this sense; but whom in his counsels, decrees, and purposes, he appointed to such service, and whom he made use of as an instrument to do his pleasure; see Isa 44:8

yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass: I have purposed, I will also do it; the counsel of the Lord, concerning the deliverance of his people from Babylon, by the hand of Cyrus; this he had purposed in his own breast, had spoken of in prophecy, and would certainly perform. R. Joseph Kimchi interprets this verse of the Messiah, and so does Jerom, of whom, no doubt, Cyrus was a type; and what is here said agrees with him: he may be compared to a flying bird for his swiftness in coming at the appointed time; he came from the east, as the rising sun of righteousness; he was the man of God's counsel in the highest sense, and came, being called, to execute it; the work of redemption was according to the eternal purpose of God, and spoke of by all the holy prophets, and now accomplished; and his righteousness and salvation are made mention of in the following verses.

{u} jye "avem, a velocitate", Munster; so Vatablus; ab jwe "in volando celeriter et cum impetu", Forerius; so Ben Melech says, Cyrus is surnamed a fowl, because of his great swiftness and haste to come to Babylon; though he observes that some say, that a ravenous fowl is called jye; the singular may be put for the plural; so Cocceius renders it, "volucres", birds, and may design the whole army of Cyrus. {w} Cyropaedia, l. 1. c. 17. and l. 3. c. 6. and l. 6. c. 17. {x} Cyropaedia, l. 3. c. 2. {y} Ib. l. 4. c. 17. {z} In Apothegm. {a} Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 1. {b} ytue vya "virum mei consilii", Munster, Pagninus, Montanus; so according to the Keri: but the Cetib is wtue vya, "the man of his counsel".

Isaiah 46:12

Ver. 12. Hearken unto me, ye stout hearted,.... This is not an address to the Chaldeans, as Kimchi and others think, who were merciless and cruel to the Jews, and far from doing that which was right unto them, but oppressed them, and would not let them go; but to the Jews themselves, at least to the wicked and profligate among them, who were always a stouthearted, stiffnecked, and a rebellious people; and even those who made more presences to religion were only self-righteous, and were far from true righteousness. The whole may be applied to all persons destitute of the grace of God, professors or profane, who are stout or stubborn hearted; have hard and impenitent hearts; proud and haughty in their hearts; proud of their wisdom, power, and strength; stout in their hearts against God, as appears by their words and actions; oppose themselves to the people of God, his word and ordinances; and some so daring as to make a mock at sin, at religion, and a future state, and outbrave death itself; though when God calls them to an account, as he sometimes does by his judgments here, and will at the last judgment hereafter; or by the workings of his Spirit upon them, convincing them of sin, righteousness, and judgment; their hearts fail, and they cannot be strong and endure; when his word comes with power, and they hear it, and feel the energy of it, they are cut to the heart, and their stout and proud spirits are brought down, and made to submit: even such

that are far from righteousness; as all men are in a state of nature, none are righteous, no, not one, but are full of all unrighteousness; even those that are the most righteous and religious, externally, are without a righteousness; they do not attain to one by the law of works; they go about to establish their own, and do not submit to the righteousness of God, and so are far from it: and indeed all God's elect, in a state of unregeneracy, are far from any knowledge of the righteousness of Christ, they not being yet convinced of the need of it, and it having not yet been revealed and applied unto them, and received by faith; now these are called upon to hear the word externally, which coming with power, causes them to hear spiritually what follows:

Isaiah 46:13

Ver. 13. I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off,.... Meaning either the faithfulness of God, in fulfilling his promises; or the justice of God displayed, in redemption by Christ; or Christ himself, God's righteous One, and the Lord our righteousness; or rather the righteousness of Christ itself, which Jehovah the Father may call his, because he sent his Son to work it out, approved of it, accepted it, and imputes it to his people, and justifies them by it; and which was near to be wrought out by Christ, and revealed in the Gospel; and which is brought near and applied by the Spirit of God to a sensible sinner, to a sinner convinced of the insufficiency of his own righteousness, and of the suitableness and excellency of Christ's, and of his need of it; and which is near in Christ, and in the Gospel, for faith to come at, at any time; nor is it ever far off from the believer, to whom it is imputed, and on whom it is put:

and my salvation shall not tarry; either Christ, who is God's salvation, provided and appointed by him, who was to come as a Saviour, and should not tarry; nor did he tarry beyond the appointed time, **Hab 2:3** or the salvation itself wrought out by him; this work is done by Christ, and is published in the Gospel, and is brought nigh and applied by the Spirit of God in conversion, in due and proper time, and shortly will be fully enjoyed in heaven:

and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory: the Saviour himself was to come to Zion; near to Zion was salvation wrought out; here the Gospel of salvation was first published, and out of it the word of it was sent into all the world; and in Zion, the church of God, Christ the Saviour is to be met with; and his salvation is the safety of it, it is placed about it instead of walls and bulwarks; and all this is for the Israel of God, the spiritual Israel, chosen, redeemed, and called, and who shall be saved with an everlasting salvation; and who are the glory of God, have the glory of God, the grace of God in them, and the righteousness of God upon them, by which they are glorious; who enjoy the presence of the glorious God, and who is glorified in them, and by them; whose glory, even the glory of all his perfections, wisdom, grace, mercy, justice, holiness, truth, and faithfulness, is great in their salvation. So Kimchi gives the sense of the words,

"the salvation I will give to them shall be glory to me,"

Or Israel may be called his glory, because he gives glory to them; not only grace here, but glory hereafter, when their salvation wilt be complete, that is, completely enjoyed.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 47:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 47

This chapter is a prophecy of the destruction of Babylon, and of the Chaldeans, and declares the causes of it. The mean, low, ignominious, and miserable condition Babylon and the Chaldeans should be brought into by the Lord, the Redeemer of his people, is described, Isa 47:1, the causes of it are their cruelty to the Jews, Isa 47:6, their pride, voluptuousness, and carnal security, Isa 47:7 their sorceries and enchantments, and trust in their own wisdom, Isa 47:9, wherefore their destruction should come suddenly upon them, and they should not be able to put it off, Isa 47:11, their magic art, and judiciary astrology, which they boasted of, by them they could neither foresee nor withstand their ruin, which would be of no avail unto them,
Isa 47:12, nor their merchants either, Isa 47:15.

Ver. 1. Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon,.... The kingdom of Babylon is meant, as the Targum paraphrases it; or the Babylonish monarchy, called a virgin, because it had never been subdued and conquered from the first setting of it up, until it was by Cyrus; so Herodotus {c} says, this was the first time that Babylon was taken; and also because of the beauty and glory of it: but now it is called to come down from its height and excellency, and its dominion over other kingdoms, and sit in a mournful posture, and as in subjection to other princes and states, Jerom observes, that some interpret this of the city of Rome, which is mystical Babylon, and whose ruin may be hinted at under the type of literal Babylon. And though the church of Rome boasts of her purity and chastity, of her being espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin, she is no other than the great whore, the mother of harlots; and though she has reigned over the kings of the earth, the time is coming when she must come down from her throne and dignity, and sit and be rolled in the dust:

there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: that is, for her; there was a throne, but it was for Cyrus and Darius, kings of Persia, who should now possess it, when the king of Babylon should be obliged to come down from it. So the seat and throne which the dragon gave to the beast shall be taken from it, and be no more, Re 13:2:

for thou shall no more be called tender and delicate; or be treated in a tender and delicate manner; or live deliciously, and upon dainties, as royal personages do, Re 18:7.

{c} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 191.

Isaiah 47:2

Ver. 2. Take the millstones, and grind meal,.... Foretelling that the Chaldeans should be taken captives, and used as such, and sent to prison houses, where they should turn the mill, and grind corn into meal; a very servile work, and which used to be done by captives and slaves, even by female ones, Ex 11:5. The Targum is,

"go into servitude;"

of which this was a sign:

uncover thy locks: the attire and dress of the head, by which the locks were bound up and kept together; but being taken off, would hang loose, and be dishevelled, as in captives and mourners. The Targum is,

"uncover the glory of thy kingdom:"

make bare the leg; or the shoulder, as the Vulgate Latin version, to be scourged by the Persians:

uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers: they are bid to tuck up their clothes so high, that they might pass over the rivers which lay between them and Persia, whither they were carried captives. The Targum is,

"thy princes are broken, the people of their army are scattered, they pass away as the waters of the river."

Isaiah 47:3

Ver. 3. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen,.... Not only stripped of their garments, and have nothing to cover their naked bodies, being spoiled of all by the soldiers; but should have nothing to cover those parts which women are most ashamed should be exposed to view, and which is often the case of such who fall into the hands of the conquerors. It is said of the whore of Rome, of mystical Babylon, that the kings of the earth should hate her, and make her desolate and naked, Re 17:16:

I will take vengeance; for though the Medes and Persians were the instruments, the destruction was of the Lord, who took vengeance of the Chaldeans, for their ill usage of his people; as he will on mystical Babylon, Re 18:20:

and I will not meet thee as a man; in a humane way, with lenity, tenderness, and compassion, but with inflexible wrath and fury; not with human strength, which is but weakness, but with the strength of the mighty God; as is said of mystical Babylon,

strong is the Lord God that judgeth her, Re 18:8 or it may be rendered, "I will not meet a man" {d}; or a man shall not meet me, to stop or hinder me, by strength or might, or by prayers and entreaties. So some give the sense, "I will not receive the "intercession of any man for thee"; which is observed by

Kimchi. The Targum is, "I will change "thy judgment from the children of men"; which agrees with the first sense.

{d} Mda egpa alw "et non occurram homini", Cocceius; so some in Vatablus; "neque feram obstare quenquam mihi", Junius & Tremellius. So Ben Melech, "I will not receive the request of a man, his supplication for them."

Isaiah 47:4

Ver. 4. As for our Redeemer,.... Or, "saith our Redeemer", as it may be supplied {e}: or, "our Redeemer" will do this; inflict this punishment on Babylon, even he who has undertook our cause, and will deliver us from the Babylonish yoke, and return us to our land: these are the words of the Lord's people, expressing their faith in the things foretold of Babylon, and in their own deliverance:

the Lord of hosts is his name; and therefore able to redeem his people, and destroy his enemies, being the Lord of armies above and below, and having all at his command:

the Holy One of Israel; the sanctifier of them, their covenant God, and therefore will save them, and destroy their enemies, being hateful to him, because unholy and impure.

{e} "[Inquit] viudex noster", Junius & Tremellius; "hoc dicit", Piscator.

Isaiah 47:5

Ver. 5. Sit thou silent,.... Here the speech is directed again to Babylon, which used to be a place of noise and hurry, as well as famous and much talked of all the world over; but now there should be a deep silence in it, no voice to be heard, the inhabitants being gone, and no discourse concerning it; no more talked of and celebrated for its magnificence and authority, trade and riches, but buried in oblivion. It is represented as sitting in silence, either as a mourner, or as one that is free among the dead, remembered no more:

and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; meaning either captivity or imprisonment, prison houses being dark; or into the state of the dead, which is a state of darkness:

for thou shall no more be called the lady of kingdoms; the mistress or governess of them, as she had been, having subdued many kingdoms and nations, and added them to her monarchy, which now would be at an end. Thus mystical Babylon, or Rome, has reigned over the kings of the earth, and has been mistress over many nations; but the time is coming when she will sit in silence, and no voice will be heard in her; and when the kingdom of the beast will be full of darkness,
Re 17:15.

Isaiah 47:6

Ver. 6. I was wroth with my people,.... The people of Israel, for their sins and transgressions, particularly their idolatries. Here begin the reasons and causes of the destruction of Babylon, and the first mentioned is their cruelty to the people of God; for though he was angry with them himself, yet he resented their being ill used by them:

I have polluted mine inheritance; the Jews, who, as they were his people, were his portion and inheritance, as he was theirs: these he is said to pollute, by suffering the Heathen to enter into the land, and defile their city and sanctuary, and carry them captive into an unclean and idolatrous country:

and given them into thine hand; to correct and chastise, but in measure, not to kill and destroy:

whereas thou didst show them no mercy; used them very cruelly, and exceeded the commission given:

upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke; whose age should have commanded reverence and respect, and whose weakness and infirmities called for compassion; but nothing of this kind was shown; they were not spared because of age, but had insupportable burdens laid upon them; and if not they, then much less young men; see **La 5:12**.

Isaiah 47:7

Ver. 7. And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever,.... That her monarchy would continue in a succession of kings, that should rule over all nations to the end of the world. So mystical Babylon, when near her ruin, will say, "I sit a queen----and shall see no sorrow", Re 18:7:

so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart; neither the sins she had been guilty of, particularly in acting the cruel part towards the people of God; nor the evils foretold should come upon her; these she did not consider of and think upon, so as to repent of the one, and prevent the other:

neither didst remember the latter end of it; or, "thy latter end" {f}; either her own latter end, the end of her wickedness which she had committed, as Jarchi; the end of her pride, that she should be humbled, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; or her ruin and destruction, the end she should come to at last; this she never thought of, but put this evil day far from her: or she remembered not the latter end of Jerusalem, who, though a lady too, fell by her own hand; which sense Kimchi takes notice of: or she did not consider what would befall the Jews in the latter day; that God would put an end to their calamities, and deliver them out of Babylon, as he had foretold.

{f} htyrxa "novissimi tui", Vatablus; who observes a various reading. In some copies it is Ktyrxa, "thy latter end"; which is followed by the Vulgate Latin.

Isaiah 47:8

Ver. 8. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures,.... To carnal lusts and pleasures; gratifying her sensual appetite; indulging herself in everything that was agreeable to the senses; abounding in delicacies, and living deliciously; as is said of mystical Babylon, Re 18:4, particularly given to venereal pleasures. Curtius says {g},

"no city was more corrupt in its manners, or furnished to irritate or allure to immoderate pleasures. Parents and husbands suffered their children and wives to prostitute themselves to strangers, so that they had but a price."

Yea, every woman was obliged by a law to do this once in life, and that in a public manner, in the temple of Venus; the impurities of which are at large described by Herodotus {h} and Strabo {i}:

that dwelleth carelessly; in great confidence and security, being fearless of danger, and insensible of any:

that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else besides me: sole monarch of the world, empress of the whole universe; no competitor with me, none that can rival me. These words are sometimes used by the eternal and unchangeable Jehovah of himself, and indeed they suit with none but him; and it is the height of insolence and blasphemy in a creature to use them of itself; they fitly express that sovereignty, supremacy, infallibility, and even deity, which mystical Babylon assumes and ascribes to her head:

I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children; not be without a head, king, or monarch, which is as a husband to the state; nor without numerous subjects, which are as children. The like mystical Babylon says, "I sit a queen, and am no widow", Re 18:7.

{g} Hist. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 1. {h} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 199. {i} Geograph. l. 16. p. 513.

Isaiah 47:9

Ver. 9. But these two things shall come to thee in a moment on one day,.... Suddenly, at once, at one and the same time. The destruction of Babylon was very sudden; the city was taken by surprise, before the inhabitants were aware of it, while the king and his nobles were regaling themselves at a feast; that very night Belshazzar was slain, and Darius the Mede took the kingdom, **Da 5:30** and so those two things she boasted of would never be her lot came upon her together and at once: "the loss of children, and widowhood"; bereaved of her king, and the whole royal family, and of her people in great numbers, who were either slain, or carried captive; or, however, the kingdom was transferred from them to another people. When Babylon was taken by Cyrus, according to Xenophon {k}, not only the king was slain, but those that were about him; and orders were presently given to the inhabitants to keep within doors, and to slay all that were found without. Though Dr. Prideaux {l} thinks this prophecy had its accomplishment when Babylon was besieged by Darius, who, to save provisions, slew all their own women, wives, sisters, daughters, and all their children, reserving only one wife and maidservant to a man; and when it was taken, Darius ordered three thousand of the principal inhabitants to be crucified. And in much such language is the destruction of mystical Babylon expressed, when God shall "kill her children with death; her plagues shall come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine", **Re 2:23**:

they shall come upon thee in their perfection; those evils and calamities shall be fully accomplished, not in part only, but in whole; she should have no king to govern, nor anything like one; should have no share of government; and her children or subjects should be entirely destroyed:

for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments; which the Chaldeans were very famous for; this is another reason given for their destruction; see **Da 2:2**, or, "in the multitude of thy sorceries" {m}, &c.; notwithstanding these, her destruction should come upon her, which her sorcerers and enchanters could neither foresee nor prevent. Sorceries are ascribed to mystical Babylon, and as the cause of her ruin, **Re 9:21**.

{k} Cyropaedia, 1. 7. sect. 23. {l} Connexion, &c. part 1. B. 3. p. 188, 189.
{m} Kypvk bwrb "in multitudine maleficiorum tuorum", Munster, Montanus; "in multitudine praestigiarum", Cocceius.

Isaiah 47:10

Ver. 10. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness,.... In wealth and power wickedly obtained; in political schemes wickedly contrived; in her ambition and pride, tyranny and cruelty; and especially in her wicked arts of astrology, divination, and magic:

thou hast said, none seeth me; lay her schemes of policy, which she thought so deeply laid, as not to be discovered; perform her magic arts, which were secretly done, and other her wicked actions done in the dark; but nothing can be hid from the omniscient God:

thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee: her high opinion of her own wisdom and knowledge in political affairs, or in magic arts, deceived her, and turned her from right to wrong ways, which issued in her ruin. This rightly describes the Jesuits, and other emissaries of the church of Rome, who trust in their wickedness, their craft and cunning, which none can penetrate into; but there is an all seeing eye upon them, which discovers their intrigues, blasts their designs, and brings them into confusion:

and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else besides me; none so wise and knowing as myself. This is what the oracle said of the Chaldeans {n},

"the Chaldeans and the Hebrews are the only wise."

This is repeated, to observe the haughty and insolent boasts of themselves.

{n} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evang. l. 9. c. 10. p. 413.

Isaiah 47:11

Ver. 11. Therefore shall evil come upon thee,.... The evil of punishment, a great calamity; so Nebuchadnezzar foretold, as Abydenus relates {o}, that sumforh, a calamity, should come upon the Babylonians; a day of evil, because of the above sins Babylon was guilty of:

thou shall not know from whence it riseth; from what quarter it will come, little dreaming of Cyrus, with whom the Chaldeans had had no quarrel. So mystical Babylon will not know from whence her ruin will come; little thinking that the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication with her, and have given their kingdoms to her, will hate her, and burn her flesh with fire: or, "thou shall not know the morning of it" {p}: that is, on what day, or at what time, it will be. Babylon was taken when it was not thought of, as appears from the book of Daniel, and profane history. Aristotle {q} reports, that it was said, that the third day after Babylon was taken, one part of the city did not know that it was taken. Or the sense is, this day of evil and calamity should be such a dark and gloomy day, there should be no light in it, it should be as the night, and therefore its morning or light should not be known, so Aben Ezra: "and mischief shall fall upon thee"; contrived for others; the pit dug for others she should fall into herself: though the phrase seems to denote the mischief coming from above, by the hand of heaven, and suddenly and irresistibly; which should fall with weight and vengeance upon her, to the crushing and utter destruction of her:

thou shalt not be able to put it off; or, "to expiate it" {r}; and atone for it, either by prayers and entreaties, which God will not regard, Isa 47:3 or by gifts, or by ransom price, by gold and silver, which the Medes and Persians were no lovers of, Isa 13:17:

and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know; that is, before hand; neither the persons from whom nor the time when it shall come; notwithstanding their astrologers, diviners, and monthly prognosticators, pretended to tell what would come to pass every day; but not being able by their art to give the least hint of Babylon's destruction, as to either time or means, the Chaldeans were in great security, quite ignorant of their ruin at hand, and which therefore came suddenly and unawares upon them; as will the destruction of mystical Babylon.

{o} Ib. c. 41. p. 456. {p} hrxv yert al "non scis auroram ejus", Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius; "cujus non cognoscis auroram", Vitringa. That is, as Ben Melech explains it, thou shalt not know the time of its coming; for it shall come suddenly, as a thing comes in a morning, which a man is not aware of till he sees it. {q} Politic. l. 3. c. 3. {r} hrpk ylkwt al "non potens placare eam", Montanus; "expiare", Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Vitringa.

Isaiah 47:12

Ver. 12. Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries,.... An ironic expression, deriding those evil arts, bidding defiance to them, calling upon the masters of them to do their utmost by them:

wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; from the infancy of their state; as soon as their monarchy was founded, or they became a people, they were given to these practices, and were famous for them; and in which, no doubt, many among them were brought up from their youth; and to gain the knowledge of which they were at great labour and expense; and yet it was all in vain, and to no purpose:

if so be thou shall be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail; if skill in these things can be of any advantage to keep off the impending calamity, and fortify against the powerful enemy that will quickly surprise thee; try if by thine art thou canst foresee the danger, and prevent it.

Isaiah 47:13

Ver. 13. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels,.... Taken of astrologers, diviners, and soothsayers; who were never able to give any satisfactory answers to questions put to them, or to give good advice in cases of emergency; as appears from Nebuchadnezzar's consultation with them about his dream; and Belshazzar's about the handwriting upon the wall, which was the very night that the city was taken, **Da 2:2**:

let now the astrologers; or, "viewers of the heavens" {s}; not that look upon them, and consider them as the work of God's hands, in order to glorify him; but that examine the face of the skies, and the position of the heavenly bodies, their conjunctions with, and aspects on each other, in order to foretell what shall be below: or, "the dividers of the heavens" {t}, as it may be rendered, from the use of the word in the Arabic language; who divide the heavens into so many parts, or houses; who, as Kimchi {u}, from the same use of the word, fix and determine things according to the stars; and who next are called "the stargazers"; that look at them, and, according to their position, conjunction, aspect, and influence, judge what will come to pass among men. So Cicero observes {w}, that the Chaldeans, by long observation of the stars, were thought to have formed a science, whereby they could foretell what should happen to everyone, and what fate he was born to:

the monthly prognosticators; or "that make known months", or "for the months" {x}; what shall be in every month; what weather it will be, and what things shall happen; such as our almanac makers. Let these now all meet together,

and stand up and save thee from those things that shall come upon thee; which they were never able to do; for if they could not foretell these things by their art, it could not be thought they could give any directions how to escape them, or put upon any methods that would secure from them.

{s} Mymv yrbwh "speculantes coelos", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version; "contemplatores coelorum", Vitringa. {t} "resecuit, amputavit", Golius, Castel. {u} Sepher Shorash. rad. rbh {w} De Divinatione, l. 1. c. 1. {x} Myvdxl Myeydwm "cognoscere faciunt menses", Pagninus; "facientes", Montanus; "qui notas faciunt in menses", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; i.e. "praedictiones suas notificantes in menses", Cocceius; "indicantes novilunia", Vitringa.

Isaiah 47:14

Ver. 14. Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them,.... That is, these astrologers and diviners shall be like stubble; weak as that, as the Targum; they shall be no more able to stand before the fire of divine wrath, or before the judgments of God, by the hands of the Medes and Persians, than stubble can stand before a consuming fire:

they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame; from those dreadful calamities that shall come upon them like flames of fire; and if they cannot deliver themselves by their art and skill, how should they deliver others?

there shall not be a coal to warm, nor fire to sit before it; stubble, when burnt, leaves no coals to warm a man with; and though it gives a blaze for a short time, while burning, it is quickly out, and gives no light nor heat for a man to sit by, so that there is little or no profit by it; which signifies that there were no hope, or help, or comfort, to be expected from those sorts of persons.

Isaiah 47:15

Ver. 15. Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured,.... In training them up in those arts, and in consulting with them in cases of difficulty; in which they were of no service, and now in time of danger as useless as stubble, or a blaze of straw:

even thy merchants from thy youth; either the above astrologers and diviners, who had been with them from the beginning of their state; and who had made merchandise of them, and were become rich as merchants by telling fortunes, and predicting things to come by the stars; which sense our version leads to by supplying the word "even"; or rather merchants in a literal sense, which Babylon abounded with from the first building of it; it being the metropolis of the empire, and the mart of nations: these, upon the destruction of the city,

shall wander everyone to his quarter, or "passage" {y}; to the country from whence they came, and to the passage in that part of the city which led unto it; or to the passage over the river Euphrates, which ran through the city; or to the next port, from whence they might have a passage by shipping to their own land: it denotes the fright and fugitive state in which merchants, from other countries, should be in, when this calamity should come upon Babylon; that they should leave their effects, flee for their lives, and wander about till they got a passage over to their native place, and be of no service to the Chaldeans, as follows:

none shall save thee: neither astrologers nor merchants; so the merchants of mystical Babylon will get without the city, and stand afar off, and lament her sad case, but will not be able to help her,
Re 18:15.

{y} wrbel "ad vel in transitum suum", Tigurine version.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 48:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 48

The prophecy of this chapter is concerning the deliverance and salvation of the Jews, and is addressed unto them; who are described by their natural descent and lineage, and by their hypocrisy in religious things,
Isa 48:1. By their obstinacy and impudence, and by their proneness to idolatry, and to ascribe that to idols which belonged to God; which were the reasons why the Lord foretold all former things to them, before they came to pass, Isa 48:3. And for the same reasons also he declared unto them what should be hereafter, particularly the destruction of Babylon, and their deliverance by Cyrus, Isa 48:6. From which account of them it would clearly appear, that it was not for any merits of theirs, but for his own name's sake, for his own glory, that he chose them, purified, and saved them as gold tried in the fire, Isa 48:9. He observes his own perfections, his eternity and immutability, and power displayed in creation, to engage their faith in the promise of deliverance, Isa 48:12 and points out the deliverer Cyrus, a type of Christ, whom he loved, called, sent, and made him prosperous,
Isa 48:14. Then he directs them to walk in his ways, with promises of peace and prosperity, Isa 48:17. And the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to go out of Babylon with joy, publishing wherever they came their redemption, and who would be supplied with all necessaries in their return to their own land; only it should be observed, that there was no peace or happiness for the wicked,
Isa 48:20.

Ver. 1. Hear ye this, O house of Jacob,.... Who were of the house and family of Jacob, his descendants and posterity; and who were of the house of the God of Jacob, had a name and a place there, at least in profession:

which are called by the name of Israel; a name given to Jacob, because of his prevalence with God in prayer; but these had only the name, not the thing, however not as yet; they were neither praying Jacobs, nor prevailing Israels; they were not Israelites indeed:

and are come forth out of the waters of Judah; that is, were of the seed of Judah, as the Targum, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi interpret it; these were waters out of his buckets, as Jarchi observes from Nu 24:7, so we read of the fountain of Jacob, De 33:28. These were streams from thence; they were of the tribe of Judah, to whom the kingdom belonged; from whence was the chief ruler, the Shiloh, the King Messiah; they were of these waters, though not born again of water and of the Spirit:

which swear by the name of the Lord God; own him for their God, acknowledge him their Lord and King, and solemnly promise to serve him, and yield obedience to him:

and make mention of the God of Israel; or "remember" him {z} in their religious exercises; invoke his name, sing his praises, ask of him the ordinances of righteousness, honour him with their lips, speak honourably of him, and profess to remember his works of old at their solemn feasts:

but not in truth, nor in righteousness; not according to the will of God, nor truth of things; nor in the integrity of their hearts, but in an hypocritical way, and not in sincerity and uprightness; in word and tongue only, not in deed and in truth; worshippers of God they were externally, but not in spirit and truth.

{z} wrykzy "recordantur", Munster, Vatablus.

Isaiah 48:2

Ver. 2. For they call themselves of the holy city,.... The city Jerusalem, so called because the temple, the place of divine worship, was in it, the residence of the Holy One of Israel: they valued themselves, not only upon their being of the family of Jacob, and of the tribe of Judah, but that they were inhabitants of Jerusalem, the holy city; as many now call themselves fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, when they are strangers both to God and his people in the experimental knowledge of things:

and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; professed to trust in the Lord, and lean upon him, and rely upon his power and providence, his mercy and goodness, and expect all needful things from him, renouncing all confidence in the creature; and yet at the same time acted an hypocritical part, their faith was feigned: see **Mic 3:11**.

The Lord of hosts is his name; whom they professed to be their God and Father, their Lord and Husband, their Saviour and Redeemer; who has all power in heaven and in earth, and does according to his will in both worlds, having the hosts of angels and armies of men at his command, and therefore so called.

Isaiah 48:3

Ver. 3. I have declared the former things from the beginning,.... From the time of their first ancestors, from the time of Abraham their father, to whom was declared what should befall his posterity; that they should sojourn in Egypt, be afflicted there, and come out from thence with great substance; that they be brought into the land of Canaan, and the inhabitants of it being driven out before them,
Ge 15:13.

And they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them; they were told to Abraham by word of mouth; they were shown to him in prophecy:

I did them suddenly, and they came to pass; for very quickly these things began to take place, even in Abraham's time; for his seed being a stranger in a land not theirs, and afflicted near four hundred years, must be reckoned from the birth of Isaac; and all which exactly came to pass as was foretold; not one thing which the Lord had spoken of failed; all was punctually fulfilled, Jos 21:45.

Isaiah 48:4

Ver. 4. Because I knew that thou art obstinate,.... Or "hard" {a}, hard hearted, an obdurate and rebellious people, contradicting and gainsaying:

and thy neck is as an iron sinew; stiffnecked, inflexible, not compliant with the will of God, and his commands; unwilling to admit his yoke, and bear it:

and thy brow brass; impudent, not ashamed of sin, nor blushing at it, refusing to receive correction for it, having a whore's forehead. This the Lord knew and foreknew, and therefore declared before hand what would come to pass unto them; who otherwise would have had the assurance to have ascribed them to themselves, or their idols, and not to him.

{a} hta hvq yk "quod durus tu es", Pagninus, Montanus; "te durum esse", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vitringa.

Isaiah 48:5

Ver. 5. I have even from the beginning declared it to thee,.... From the beginning of their being a people, even before they were formed into a body politic; yea, from the original of them, from the time of Abraham their ancestor, as before observed:

before it came to pass I showed it thee; some hundreds of years before; first to Abraham, then to Isaac, then to Jacob, then to Joseph, and then to Moses, and by him to the children of Israel:

lest thou shouldest say, mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them; or my libation or fusion of wine, oil, or blood, by which, as by other things, they made conjectures of what was to come to pass; so Gussetius {b} interprets the last word; lest they should ascribe their deliverance out of Egypt to the idols they made and worshipped, being a people prone to idolatry; as they did when they made a golden calf, and danced about it, Ex 32:4. This the Lord knew before hand, and therefore to prevent this stupidity, or convince them of it, he foretold what should come to pass, which their idols were never able to do.

{b} Ebr. Comment. p. 517.

Isaiah 48:6

Ver. 6. Thou hast heard, see all this: and will ye not declare it?.... You have heard of all these things, how they were foretold before they were; how they came to pass exactly as they were predicted; now look over these prophecies, and compare them with the events; see the exact completion of them; and when you have so done, can you be so stouthearted and impudent as to deny them, or not own and confess them?

I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them; meaning the destruction of the Babylonish empire, and the deliverance of the Jews by Cyrus, prophesied just now in the preceding chapters; things not yet come to pass, newly revealed, which were hidden in the breast of God, and unknown to them until prophesied of; and which were typical of redemption by the incarnate Son of God, whose incarnation, and salvation by him, were new, unheard of, and wonderful things; and of the new state of things under the Gospel dispensation, when all things shall become new; the doctrines and ordinances of which are new; the whole Gospel is a hidden mystery, and unknown to men till revealed and made known by the Spirit of God.

Isaiah 48:7

Ver. 7. They are created now, and not from the beginning,.... Not that they were now done or brought into being, for as yet Cyrus was not born; though the raising of him up, and holding his right hand, and his executing the counsel of God, are spoken of as if they were already done, because of the certainty of them, Isa 45:1. Aben Ezra interprets "created" by "decreed"; though these were not now decreed by God; for no new decrees are made by him; but those which were made by him of old were now revealed and made manifest by prophecy, which is the sense of the phrase; so Kimchi observes,

"the time when they went out of the mouth of God is the time of their creation."

Thus in like manner the incarnation of Christ, his sufferings and death, and salvation by him, things decreed from eternity, are spoken of in this prophecy as if actually done, because of the clear manifestation and certainty of them:

even before the day when thou heardest them not; they were in the breast of

God, kept and reserved in his mind, and therefore are before called hidden things, before the Israelites heard anything of them; as were the things respecting Christ, and salvation by him; which were not only in God, who created all things by Christ, but were revealed before the Israelites had any knowledge of them, even to Adam and Eve, immediately after their fall; and were spoken of by all the holy prophets from the beginning of the world:

lest thou shouldest say, behold, I knew them; lest they should ascribe their present knowledge of them to their own sagacity and penetration; as if they were not obliged to a divine revelation, but of themselves had got the secret, and became acquainted with these things.

Isaiah 48:8

Ver. 8. Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened,.... This, as Kimchi rightly observes, is said by way of reproof; showing that they were so far from knowing these things before the prophecy of them was given out, that when it was, they did not hearken or listen to them; they did not understand them, nor receive and embrace them, but turned a deaf ear to them; their hearts being hardened, and they given up blindness of mind; which was the case of the Jews, even when the Messiah, the antitype of Cyrus, came, and there was a more clear revelation of Gospel truths, as was foretold, **Isa 6:9**. To this sense is the Targum,

"yea, thou has not heard the words of the prophets; yea, thou hast not received the doctrine of the law; yea, thou hast not inclined thine ear to the words of the blessings and curses of the covenant I made with thee at Horeb:"

for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously: with God, and with one another, as they did; and were, as Jeremiah calls them, an assembly of treacherous men; and especially so they were in Christ's time, and to him; one of his own disciples treacherously betrayed him into the hands of the Jews, and they delivered him into the hands of the Gentiles to be crucified and slain; all which he knew before hand, **Joh 6:64**. And so the Lord knows all the wickedness and unfaithfulness of men, and of his own people, who are by nature children of wrath, as, others; yet this hindered not the designs of his grace, and the discoveries of his love to them, after expressed:

and wast called a transgressor from the womb; from the time of their civil birth, as a people and state, God was their Father that settled and established them; in this sense they were his children, whom he begot, brought up, and nourished; though they rebelled against him, and as soon almost as born, soon after they came out of Egypt, which were the days of their youth, of their infancy as a church and people; witness their murmurings and unbelief, their idolatry in making a golden calf, and worshipping it: and this is applicable to every particular person, and his natural birth, even to everyone of God's elect; who are all conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; go astray from God from the womb; and the imagination of whose heart is evil from their youth, and are continually transgressing the righteous law of God, and therefore justly deserve this name.

Isaiah 48:9

Ver. 9. For my name's sake will I defer mine anger,.... From age to age, for those sins which had been committed, and continued in ever since they were a people. The above account of them shows that it was not for any merits of theirs, or any works of righteousness done by them, that he showed favour to them, as afterwards expressed; but for his own name's sake, and because of his glory; because these people were called by his name, and said to be his people, lest therefore his name should be reproached among the Heathen, or he should suffer any diminution of his glory, therefore he did not at once stir up all his wrath, as their sins deserved, but prolonged it from time to time:

and for my praise will I refrain from thee, that I cut thee not off: that is, refrain mine anger from thee; or "seal" or "stop my nostrils" {c}, that the smoke of his wrath and anger might not go out from thence to destroy them. The Targum is,

"I will confirm (or establish) thee, that I may not consume thee;"

and this he would do, because of his praise, of the praise of his mercy, grace, and goodness; and that he might have a people to praise him, which he would not, should they be cut off.

{c} Kl M xa "obstruam sive". "obturabo nares tibi", Malvenda, Gataker; so Jarchi.

Isaiah 48:10

Ver. 10. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver,.... But it is not usual to refine with silver; not silver with silver, nor any other metal with it; that itself is what is refined; this therefore cannot be the sense of the words; wherefore they are, by others, differently rendered; by some, "not in silver" {d}; not in a furnace of silver, as Aben Ezra; "but in a furnace of poverty", as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions render the next clause; and to the same sense the Targum; that is, I have tried, and purified, and refined thee, not by prosperity, but adversity; not with riches, which has its snares, temptations, trials, and exercises, but with poverty, which also has the same, or greater; and therefore Agur desired neither, Pr 30:8. By others, "but not into silver" {e}, so as to make silver of them, whereby all the labour was lost; but this is contrary to the following clause: by others, "not for the sake of silver" {f}; so the Septuagint version; or for the gain of it, as the Arabic; which sense suggests that God was no gainer by their afflictions; what he did was freely, without money or price, and all the use and profit were to themselves; see Ps 44:12. Others think, that instead of "beth", "in", it should be "caph", "as", a note of similitude, and be rendered, "but not as silver" {g}: but that the text is corrupted, and ought to be thus altered, there is no authority for it, and besides is contrary to several express passages of Scripture, Ps 66:10. Rather therefore it should be rendered, "but not among silver" {h}; along with that, which requires a fierce fire, is kept in the furnace or melting pot until all the dross is consumed: but if God was to afflict his people to such a degree, they would not be able to bear it; and if they were to continue under his afflicting hand till all their dross, sin, and corruption were removed, they would be utterly consumed; was he to contend, or be wroth for ever, the spirit would fail before him, and the souls that he has made; wherefore he does not afflict in this fierce and furious manner, but gently and gradually, in measure, in mercy, and not in strict justice, 1Co 10:13 and by such gentle means he refines and brightens the graces of his people, tries and proves their principles and profession, and reforms their manners: I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction; such was the affliction of Israel in Egypt, called the iron furnace, **De 4:20** and as God has his furnace to punish and consume his enemies, so he has his furnace to try, purge, and purify his people, Isa 31:9, and which is a fiery one, and very grievous and distressing, especially when the wrath of God is apprehended in it, though fury is not in him: when he afflicts, it is all in love, and therefore is said to choose his people at such a time; which is to be understood not of their election to grace and glory; for that is not done in time, but in eternity, and is of them, not as transgressor, or as in the corrupt mass, but as in the pure mass of creatureship: rather of calling, which is the fruit, and effect, and evidence of election, and is expressed by choosing, Joh 15:19, and sometimes afflictions have been the means of it; or God has in them, or by them, brought them to himself, as he did Manasseh: but it seems best of all to understand it of the manifestation of election; God sometimes under afflictive providences appears to his people, and tells them that he has loved them with an everlasting love, and assures them that they are his chosen ones; he knows their souls, and owns them as his own in their adversities; besides, in afflicting them, he deals with them as his children and chosen ones; and because they are so, he takes the pains he does with them, which he does not with others, to purge and purify them, Ps 31:7. Moreover, he makes them choice and excellent persons by afflictions; they come forth out of them as choice silver and pure gold; they gain thereby many choice experiences of the love and grace of God, and of the truths of the Gospel, and of the promises of it: afflicted saints are commonly the choicest believers; they become thriving and flourishing Christians, humble and Holy Ones; more fit for their master's use, more weaned from the world, and wrought up for heaven and happiness. Some, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, render the words, "I have chosen for thee the furnace of affliction" {i}, or "thee for the furnace of affliction"; afflictions are chosen and appointed for the people of God, and they are chosen for and appointed unto affliction, Job 23:14. Some, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe, by the change of a letter, read "bachantica", "have proved thee", or "tried thee", instead of "bachartica", "I have chosen thee"; but without any reason.

{d} Pokb "in argento", Montanus; "in fornace argenti", Vatablus. {e} "Non in argentum", Grotius. {f} ouk eneken arguriou, Sept. "non pro pecunia", Tigurine version. {g} "Quasi argentum", V. L. "tanquam argentum", Munster, Pagninus, Calvin. {h} "Inter argentum", Syr. {i} yne rwkk Kytrxb "elegi tibi, [sive] pro te fornacem affictionis", Gataker,

Isaiah 48:11

Ver. 11. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it,.... Defer his anger, not cut off his people and destroy them, but redeem and save them: this, in the literal sense, respects the redemption and deliverance of the Jews by Cyrus from the Babylonish captivity; which the Lord did, not for any deserts of theirs, but for the sake of his own honour and glory; or, as the Targum,

"for my name, and for my word;"

which is repeated here again and again for the confirmation of it, and that it might be more observed. In the mystical sense, it respects redemption and salvation by Christ, of which the former was typical:

for how should my name be polluted? blasphemed and evil spoken of among the nations of the world; who would be ready to say, that either the Lord did not love his people, and was not mercifully disposed towards them; or that he could not save them, and that their hands, or their gods, were mightier than he; see De 32:26

and I will not give my glory to another; to another people, as the Targum, or to another god; See Gill on "Isa 42:8".

Isaiah 48:12

Ver. 12. Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called,.... Called before out of Egypt, and now out of Babylon, and who had the name of God called upon them, and who called upon the name of the Lord; so such who are called with a holy calling, according to the purpose and grace of God, by the Spirit and grace of Christ, unto fellowship with him, to partake of his grace here, and glory hereafter, are styled "the called of Jesus Christ", **Ro 1:6** and who seems to be the person here speaking, as appears from the following clause: and it may be observed, that Jacob and Israel are described here in a different manner from what they are in the beginning of the chapter, since the Lord had declared his designs of grace towards them, and that he had chosen them, and would save them for his name's sake: which they had reason to believe he could and would do, from the account which he gives of himself: and they are called upon to hearken to him, as follows,

I am he, I am the first, and I also am the last; the everlasting I AM, the immutable Jehovah, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first cause and last end of all things; phrases expressive of the self-existence, supremacy, eternity, and immutability of Christ, **Re 1:8**, and what is it that such a sovereign, eternal and unchangeable Being cannot do?

Isaiah 48:13

Ver. 13. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth,.... Which is ascribed to the Wisdom, Word, and Son of God, **Pr 3:19**. This Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret of the left hand {k}, seeing the work of the heavens is ascribed to the right hand in the following clause; the earth being less honourable than the heavens:

and my right hand hath spanned the heavens; stretched them out as a curtain or canopy over the earth, and measured them out with a span, as easily as a man measures anything with his hand; see Isa 40:12,

when I call unto them, they stand up together; or, "I called them, and they stood up together", as the Targum; and so may refer to the first creation of them, when at the word of God, and by his almighty fiat, they rose into being at once, Ps 33:9. Kimchi observes, that the houses of Hillell and Shaminai were divided about this matter, which were created first, the heavens or the earth; at which R. Simeon ben Jochai wondered, since, according to the text, they were both created together {l}; though this may be understood of the consistence and permanency of the heavens and the earth, being upheld by the Lord, and by the word of his power, and of the ready obedience of the heavenly bodies to do his will, who, like servants, rise up at once at the word of his command; see
Isa 40:26.

{k} Vid. T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 36. 2. {l} Vid. T. Bab. Chagigah, fol. 12. 1.

Isaiah 48:14

Ver. 14. All ye assemble yourselves, and hear,.... That is, the people of the Jews, Jacob and Israel his called, before addressed; who are bid to gather together, and draw nigh, that they might hear what the Lord had to say to them:

which among them hath declared these things? that are future, that concern the redemption and salvation of Israel? which of all the idols among the nations, or of the priests and soothsayers among them, whom the Jews were prone to listen to, that could foretell things to come, such as these the Lord had said should be?

the Lord hath loved him; not Israel, as the Targum; but Cyrus, whom the Lord loved as a man, as he does all his creatures; and whom he distinguished from others, by bestowing excellent qualifications on him; and whom he raised to great dignity, and gave him great honour, by using him as an instrument in his hand for the deliverance of his people; and who was a type of Christ, the dear

Son of God's love, in whom he is always well pleased.

He will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans; either he shall do as he pleases with Babylon, and with his army destroy the Chaldeans; or he shall do the pleasure of God on Babylon, and destroy the inhabitants of it, and deliver his people from it. This is also true of Christ, who will do his pleasure on mystical Babylon, destroy antichrist, and all the antichristian states, with his mighty arm and power, with the breath of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming.

Isaiah 48:15

Ver. 15. I, even I, have spoken,.... What I will do, and what shall certainly come to pass; for not one word of the Lord ever fails; what he has spoken he will make good; what he has said to his Son in his council, and in covenant, or has delivered out by promise or prophecy, Nu 23:19:

yea, I have called him; not Abraham, as the Targum; but Cyrus, whom he called by name, as well as called him to his work and office as a deliverer of his people, Isa 45:4 and so he called Christ also to his work and office, which he did not take to himself, but was called of God, **Heb 5:4**: I have brought him; from a far country, from Persia to Babylon; and who has also brought forth his servant, the branch, the Messiah, **Zec 3:8**:

and he shall make his way prosperous; or "his way shall be prosperous" {m}; being made so by the Lord, who directed his way, and removed all difficulties and obstructions in it, Isa 45:1 and so the pleasure of the Lord has prospered in the hands of Christ, who has succeeded in the work of redemption and salvation he was called to,
Isa 53:11, these are the words of God the Father, confirming what the Messiah said in the preceding, and who is introduced speaking in the next verse.

{m} wkrd xyluhw "et prosperabitur via ejus", Pagninus, Montanus; "critique prospera via ejus", Vitringa.

Isaiah 48:16

Ver. 16. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this,.... An address to the Jews, to attend the ministry of Christ, and hear the doctrine he had delivered to them:

I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the beginning of his ministry; which be exercised not in private houses, but in the synagogues of the Jews, and in the temple, whither a large concourse of people resorted, Joh 18:20:

from the time that it was, there am I; from the time that his ministry began there, he was in the same places, in Judea and Galilee, always publicly preaching the Gospel, and doing good: or rather, "before the time that it was, there was I" {n}; Christ existed before his incarnation, before he appeared as the great Prophet in Israel; he existed as the Word and Son of God from all eternity, and was with God his Father from everlasting; he was by him, and brought up with him, and lay in his bosom so early:

and now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me; in the fulness of time, in the likeness of sinful flesh, to preach the Gospel, fulfil the law, and to redeem and save the Lord's people. Here is a glorious testimony of a trinity of Persons in the Godhead; Christ the Son of God is sent in human nature, and as Mediator Jehovah the Father and the Spirit are the senders of him; and so is a proof of the mission, commission, and authority of Christ, who came not of himself, but was sent of God, **Joh 8:42**, it may be rendered, "and now the Lord God hath sent me and his Spirit" {o}; both were sent of God, and in this order; first, Christ, to be the Redeemer and Saviour; and then the Spirit, to be the Convincer and Comforter; see Joh 14:26

{n} htwyh tem "ex tempore antequam fieret", V. L. "nondum existente tempore horum eventuum", Forerius. {o} wxwrw ynxlv "misit me et spiritum ejus", Lutherus, Castalio; "et spiritum suum", Cocceius, Vitringa.

Isaiah 48:17

Ver. 17. Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer,.... A character peculiar to Christ, who engaged in covenant to be the Redeemer of his people; was promised and prophesied of as such; and who came into this world for this purpose, and has obtained eternal redemption:

the Holy One of Israel; who came of Israel as man, and as such was holy, and without any spot or stain of sin and who, as God, is the most holy, in his nature and works; and, as Mediator, the Sanctifier of Israel, and is in the midst of them as such:

I am the Lord thy God; and so fit to be the Redeemer and Sanctifier of them; and happy are those who can say with Thomas, "my Lord and my God"; and who further describes himself, and declares his work and office:

which teacheth thee to profit; or "teacheth thee profitable things" {p}; as the whole of the Gospel ministry is, whether it respects doctrines relating to the knowledge of the Persons in the Godhead; the knowledge of God in Christ; the person and offices of Christ; and the person and operations of the Spirit: or to the knowledge of man; his lost and depraved state; having sinned in Adam, the guilt of his sin is imputed to him, and a corrupt nature propagated; the bias of the mind being to evil, and man impotent to all that is good: or to the way of salvation by the grace of God, as the fruit and effect of the love of God; the doctrines of his eternal love, and of redemption by Christ; of justification by his righteousness; pardon by his blood; atonement by his sacrifice; regeneration by his Spirit and grace; and of the perseverance of the saints in faith and holiness. These are profitable doctrines, which serve to display the riches of divine grace, make for the glory of the Redeemer, and the good of souls, their peace, joy, comfort, and salvation. These are the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus. Or whether these teachings respect ordinances which Christ has appointed, and in his word and by his Spirit teaches men to observe; and which are profitable to lead to him, are breasts of consolation from him, and the means of spiritual strength: or whether they regard the duties of religion, the performance of good works; which, though not profitable to God, and not meritorious of anything from him, yet are profitable to men; to others by way of example, and otherwise, and to the doers of them, who find pleasure, peace, and advantage, by them. Christ was a teacher of these things when on earth, and he still teaches them by his ministers, whom he commissions and qualifies, and by his Spirit accompanying their ministrations:

which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go; Christ leads his people out of the wrong way, in which they naturally are, into the right way; to himself, as the way to the Father, and as the way of salvation, and unto eternal life; he takes them by the hand, and teaches them to go in the path of faith, and to walk in him by it; he leads them in the ways of truth and righteousness, in the highway of holiness, in the path of duty; and, though in a rough way of afflictions, yet in a right way to heaven and happiness.

{p} lyewhl "utilia", V. L. "quae prosunt sunt", Tigurine version; "ea quae prosunt", Piscator; so the Targum; "condueibilia", Vitringa.

Isaiah 48:18

Ver. 18. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments,.... Which the Jews did not, but slighted and despised them, and were not obedient to them. So, in the times of Christ, they disregarded his doctrines, though so profitable; and despised his ordinances and commands, which were not grievous; they neither hearkened to them themselves, nor would suffer others; wherefore our Lord expresses his great concern at it, and his desire, as man, after their welfare; see Mt 23:13:

then had thy peace been as a river: their prosperity, temporal and spiritual, had been abundant, and would have always continued, have been increasing and ever flowing, yea, overflowing, like the waters of a river. The Targum is, the river Euphrates, a river which ran through Babylon: but they had no regard to the things which related to their temporal, spiritual, and eternal peace, these were hid from their eyes,
Lu 19:42:

and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea: large, abundant, numerous as the waves of the sea; which may regard acts of justice and righteousness, which are the support of a people and state, and blessings the fruit thereof; and which God of his goodness bestows on such a people, as all kind of prosperity, protection, safety, and continuance.

Isaiah 48:19

Ver. 19. Thy seed had also been as the sand,.... Upon the sea shore, as numerous as that, as was promised to Abraham, Ge 22:17:

and the offspring of thy bowels as the gravel thereof; that is, of the sand; the little stones that are in it, which lie in great numbers on the sea shore; the same thing expressed in different words, denoting the number of their posterity, as it would have been, had they received the Messiah, his doctrines and ordinances: it may be rendered, "and the offspring", or "those that go out of thy bowels", that spring from thee, are born of thee, "as the bowels thereof" {q}, that is, of the sea; as what is within it, particularly the fishes of it, which are innumerable; and so Aben Ezra and Jarchi interpret it; and which sense is mentioned by Kimchi and Ben Melech:

his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me: the name of Israel, as the Targum has it; the name of the people of the Jews is no more in the land where they dwelt; they are cut off as a nation; their city and temple are destroyed, where they appear no more before the Lord; which would not have been, had they hearkened to the Messiah, embraced his truths, and been obedient to his commands.

{q} wytemk "sicut viscera ejus", Montanus; "interiora maris"; Munster.

Isaiah 48:20

Ver. 20. Go ye forth of Babylon,.... Which the Jews had leave to do by the proclamation of Cyrus; and so the people of God will be called to come forth out of mystical Babylon before its destruction, to which these words are applied, Re 18:4 perhaps this, in the figurative sense, may be a call to the Christians in Jerusalem, now become another Babylon for wickedness, to come out of it a little before its ruin; and may be applied to the call of persons, by the Gospel, from a state of confusion, sin, and darkness, in which they are:

flee ye from the Chaldeans with the voice of singing; not by stealth, or through fear, but openly and publicly, and with all the tokens and demonstrations of joy and gladness. So the Christians separated, from the unbelieving Jews; as will the followers of the Lamb from the antichristian states, Re 19:1 and so all that are called by grace should flee from the company of wicked men:

declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; this shows that something more than deliverance from the Babylonish captivity is here intended; for what had all the ends of the earth to do with that? even redemption and salvation by Christ, typified by it; which the apostles and ministers of the word are here exhorted to declare, publish, and proclaim, to the ends of the earth; Christ having a people there to be called and saved by him; and accordingly such a declaration has been made, Ro 10:18:

say ye, the Lord hath deemed his servant Jacob; as the people of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, so the people of God, his spiritual Jacob and Israel, his sons and servants, from sin, Satan, and the world, the law, its curses, and condemnation, by the precious blood of Christ, which is the sum and substance of the Gospel declaration.

Isaiah 48:21

Ver. 21. And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts,.... As when he led the people of Israel through the wilderness to Canaan's land, though they sometimes thirsted for want of water, yet they were supplied with it, by which their thirst was extinguished, to which the reference here is. So when they came out of Babylon, and passed through the waste and desert places which lay between that and Judea, they were supplied with all necessaries. Thus the apostles of Christ, when they travelled through the Gentile world, comparable to a desert, publishing redemption and salvation by Christ, had every needful supply, both of temporal and spiritual things; they lacked not any thing. In like manner the people of God, while they pass through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly glory, are furnished and refreshed with living water out of the fountain and fulness of grace in Christ, of which if a man drink, he shall thirst no more, **Joh 4:14**
Isa 49:10: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for thee; that is, for the Israelites in the wilderness, when they were come out of Egypt, and wanted water, Ex 17:6:

he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out; Ps 78:15, the rock was a type of Christ, from whom the living waters of grace flow, to the support, supply, comfort, and refreshment of the saints in this world, 1Co 10:4. Grace is often signified by waters, because purifying and cleansing, reviving and refreshing, softening and fructifying, and an extinguisher of thirst: their gushing out denotes the abundance of it, which is received from Christ, not only at first conversion, in the regeneration and quickening of men; in the pardon of their sins, and the justification of their persons; but in the large communications of grace, after made, for the supply of their wants: and all which come from Christ the Rock, that is higher than they, from whence their bread is given them, and their waters are sure unto them; and who is the Rock of their refuge and salvation: and the cleaving of this Rock may signify his sufferings and death; his being smitten, bruised, and broken for his people, that they may partake of his grace, and the blessings of it.

Isaiah 48:22

Ver. 22. There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked,.... To

Nebuchadnezzar and his seed, says Jarchi; to the Babylonians, say Aben Ezra and Kimchi; who enjoyed no more peace and prosperity, being conquered by Cyrus, and their monarchy dissolved, and put an end to: but rather this is to be understood of the wicked among the Jews; which sense Aben Ezra mentions, though he prefers the former; and either those are meant, who refused to go out of Babylon, and the land of Chaldea, when they might, but continued among an idolatrous people, and therefore are threatened with want of peace and prosperity; or rather the Jews in the times of Christ and his apostles, who disbelieved the Messiah, despised his Gospel, and rejected his ordinances; the consequence of which was, they had no peace, no outward prosperity, but all the reverse; their nation, city, and temple, were destroyed, and they carried captive, and scattered up and down in the world; nor any inward spiritual peace, nor eternal happiness; for blaspheming and contradicting the word of the Gospel, and putting it away from them, they judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life; and the apostles were bid to turn from them to the Gentiles, and preach the Gospel to them; hence the next chapter begins,

listen, O isles, unto me, &c.; see Lu 19:4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 49:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 49

This is a prophecy concerning Christ, and redemption by him; and of the enlargement of the church in the latter day, by the conversion of Jews and Gentiles; which the isles, and people afar off, are exhorted to listen and hearken to, delivered out by the prophet, in the person of Christ; who gives an account of his call to his office, and the time of it; of what the Lord did for him, and said unto him, Isa 49:1, then follows a complaint of his labouring in vain, and a correction of it,
Isa 49:4 and a further declaration of his call and appointment to office, and of each of the parts of the work assigned him, with encouragement to it, Isa 49:5. Christ is again represented under discouraging circumstances, as despised of men, abhorred by the nation, and a servant of rulers; who is encouraged by divine promises that kings should rise up before him, and worship him; that God would be faithful to his promise to him, and yet choose him, hear and help him, at a proper time; preserve him, and give him for a covenant to the people, to the establishment of the earth, and making it habitable, Isa 49:7 for the release of prisoners, and feeding, leading, and guiding them, and removing

all difficulties out of the way, Isa 49:9 when the calling of the Gentiles is foretold, which would occasion great joy in the world,
Isa 49:12 yet the church is introduced as complaining that she was forsaken of God, Isa 49:14 which is denied, and the contrary affirmed; being dear to the Lord as a sucking child to its mother, and more so; never forgotten by him, and always under his care, Isa 49:16, and, for her comfort, she is assured that those who had destroyed and made her waste should be removed; and that she should have converts that would be an ornament to her, and these numerous, insomuch that the place of their habitation would be too strait and narrow, and which would be matter of astonishment to her, Isa 49:17 and, besides those that would be converted in the land of Judea, there would be great numbers in the Gentile world converted by the power of God accompanying his Gospel, set up as a standard there, kings and queens countenancing and encouraging the interest of Christ, Isa 49:22 and yet still it is questioned whether the church should be delivered from her oppressors, Isa 49:24 to which it is answered, that she should be delivered, and her persecutors destroyed; by which it would be known that the Lord is the Redeemer and Saviour of his people, Isa 49:25.

Ver. 1. Listen, O isles, unto me,.... These are not the words of Cyrus, as Lyra mentions; nor of the Prophet Isaiah, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and other Jewish writers think; but of Christ, calling upon the inhabitants of the isles to hearken to him; by whom are meant the inhabitants of islands properly so called, as ours of Great Britain, and may be chiefly designed, being a place where the Gospel of Christ came early, and has been long; or all such that dwell in countries beyond the sea, it being usual with the Jews to call all such countries isles that were beyond sea to them; Christ is the great Prophet of his church, and is alone to be hearkened unto, and in all things, Mt 17:5:

and hearken, ye people, from far; that were afar off from the land of Judea, as well as afar off from God and Christ, and the knowledge of him, and of righteousness and salvation by him; the Gentile nations are meant; see **Eph 2:12**, for this is to be understood of kingdoms afar off, as the Targum paraphrases it; and not of distant and future things, to be accomplished hereafter, as Aben Ezra; taking this to be the subject they are required to hearken to, and not as descriptive of persons that are to hearken:

the Lord hath called me from the womb; to the office of a Mediator; to be Prophet, Priest, and King; to be the Saviour and Redeemer of men; he did not assume this to himself, but was called of God his Father, **Heb 5:4**, and that not only from the womb of his mother Mary, or as soon as he was conceived and born of her; but from the womb of eternity, from the womb of eternal purposes and decrees; for he was set forth, or foreordained in the purposes of God, to be the propitiation for sin; and was predestinated to be the Redeemer before the foundation of the world, even before he had a being in this world as man. So the Targum,

"the Lord, before I was, appointed me;"

he prepared a body for him, and appointed him to be his salvation. The Syriac version join, the words "from far" to this clause, as do the Septuagint and Arabic versions, contrary to the accents, and renders them, "of a long time the Lord hath called me, from the womb"; even from eternity:

from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name; Jarchi interprets this of Isaiah, whose name was fixed and given him by the Lord, while he was in his mother's bowels, signifying that he should prophesy of salvation and comfort; but it is much better to understand it of Christ, whose name Jesus, a Saviour, was made mention of by the Lord, while he was in his mother's womb, and before he was born, **Mt 1:20**, for the words may be rendered, "before the womb, and before the bowels of my mother" {r}; that is, before he was in them.

{r} yma yemm-Njbm "ante uterum----ante viscera matris meae", h. e. "antequam essem in utero, et in visceribus matris meae", Vitringa.

Isaiah 49:2

Ver. 2. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword,.... Or,

"he hath put his words in my mouth as a sharp sword,"

as the Targum; namely, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and is sharper than a twoedged sword, and is said to come out of the mouth of Christ, **Eph 6:17**, with which he pierces into and cuts the hearts of men, and lays open all their sin and unrighteousness, and cuts down the worst and best in men, and slays all his enemies; so his mouth was as a sharp sword in the days of his flesh, to inveigh against the sins and to refute the errors of the Scribes and Pharisees; as it will be, in the latter day, to smite the nations of the earth, Re 19:15: "in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me"; in his counsels and purposes of old, and in his providence;

"in the shadow of his power hath he protected me,"

as the Targum; thus he hid, and protected him from Herod's cruelty in his infancy; and from the rage and malice of the Scribes and Pharisees, who sought often to lay hands on him, and take away his life before his time. The Jews talk very much of the Messiah's being hid under the throne of glory. Aben Ezra's remark, that the phrase, "he hath hid me", answers to the scabbard of a sword, before mentioned, is not amiss:

and made me a polished shaft; or, "choice arrow" {s}; which being polished at the point, or well oiled, and shining, pierces the deeper, So the doctrines of Christ, the words of his mouth, are compared to bright and sharp arrows, which make cutting work, and give great pain where they come; as they sometimes do like arrows, swiftly, suddenly, and with great force and power, Ps 45:5. Kimchi observes, that he speaks of a sharp sword with respect to the Jews that were near, where a sword could reach them; and of a polished shaft or arrow with respect to the Gentiles afar off, which must be cast after them:

in his quiver hath he hid me, meaning his secret purposes, and his powerful protection, as before; which he compares to a quiver, a case in which arrows are put, because mention had been made of a polished shaft or arrow before.

{s} rwrb Ux belov eklekton Sept. "sagittam electam", V. L. "telum electum", Cocceius; "sagittam nitidam vel electam", Vitringa.

Isaiah 49:3

Ver. 3. And said unto me,.... Both in the everlasting council, and when he made a covenant with him in eternity; when he found him and anointed him, and laid help on him; and also when he brought him, his first begotten, into the world, at his incarnation:

thou art my servant; of his choosing, appointing, calling, sending, bringing forth, and supporting; so he was as Mediator, especially in his estate of humiliation, when he appeared in the form of a servant, and came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many; thereby to obtain redemption, which was the great work and service he was appointed to; which he readily undertook, and willingly and cheerfully engaged in, and diligently and faithfully performed; to whom justly belong the characters of an obedient, diligent, prudent, and faithful servant; in answering which he showed his regard to his Father's will, his love to his people, and his great humility and condescension:

O Israel; a name of Christ, and which properly belongs to him, being the antitype of Jacob or Israel; the Head and representative of the whole Israel of God; who was of Israel according to the flesh, and an Israelite indeed in a spiritual sense, and was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Israel is a name of the church, often given to it in this prophecy; Christ and his church, by virtue of the union between them, have the same names; as she is sometimes called by his names, Christ, and the Lord our righteousness, so he is here called by her name Israel, 1Co 12:12:

in whom I will be glorified; this is Jehovah's end in all he does in nature or grace; and is what Christ had in view in working out our salvation; and all the divine perfections are glorified in it by him, the wisdom, power, faithfulness, holiness, justice, love, grace, and mercy of God. Some render the words actively, "in thee" or "in whom I will glory" {t}; as his own Son, in whom he is well pleased, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; and in whom also all the seed of Israel glory, as well as are justified. Or, as others, Israel is he, of "whom by thee I will glory", or "glorify" {u}; meaning, that it was the spiritual and mystical Israel, the church, whom he would save by his Son and servant, the Messiah, and bring to glory.

{t} rapta Kb rva "in quo gloriabor", Munster, Tigurine version, De Dieu; "quia in te gloriabor", V. L. {u} "Israel est is de quo, per te gloriaturus sum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "vel glorificaturus", Gal.

Isaiah 49:4

Ver. 4. Then I said,.... The Messiah said, by way of objection, in a view of what treatment he should meet with, or when entered on his work, and which he found by experience, what follows:

I have laboured in vain; this is not to be understood of the travail of his soul, or of his sufferings and death, which were not in vain, but issued in the redemption and salvation of his people; but of his ministry and miracles, and fatiguing journeys among the Jews; which, with respect to them, were in vain, as to their conversion and reformation; they rejecting the Messiah, slighting his doctrines and miracles, refusing to be gathered by him, being a faithless and perverse generation:

I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain; by frequent preaching and working of miracles, and travelling from place to place: the same thing is designed as before, repeated in other words, to express the certainty of it, to chew the ingratitude and wickedness of the people, and to utter the complaints of his mind:

yet surely my judgment is with the Lord; or is manifest before the Lord, as the Targum; the Lord knew that he had called him to his office; how prudently, diligently, and faithfully he had executed it; and what was his right and due, and which would be given him; and with this he corrects his former complaint, and makes himself easy, and quiets and satisfies his mind:

and my work with my God; or the reward of my works is before my God, as the Targum; and before himself also, Isa 40:10 as his work was assigned him by the Lord, so his reward was promised him, and which he knew he should have; and having done his work, be asked for his reward, and had it, Joh 17:4.

Isaiah 49:5

Ver. 5. And now, saith the Lord,.... Jehovah the Father, in confirmation of the call, office, and work of Christ, which he hath declared, Isa 49:1:

that formed me from the womb to be his servant; who preordained him to this service before the world began, and prepared him for it from the womb of his mother Mary, by filling him with grace and wisdom and with the Spirit without measure; anointing him with the oil of gladness above his fellows, and so fitting him as man and Mediator for the preaching of the Gospel, and every other service he called him:

to bring Jacob again, to him; the lost sheep of the house of Israel, God's elect among the Jews, which were as straying sheep; or all his chosen people, whether Jews or Gentiles, which were scattered abroad, and were afar off from God, whom Christ was to bring back again, and bring nigh unto God, and did:

though Israel be not gathered: in general, only a remnant, according to the election of grace, the greater part refusing to be gathered ministerially by him;

and the rulers not suffering the common people to attend on his ministry. Mt 23:37. It may be observed that there is a marginal reading of the Hebrew, different from the written text; instead of al, "not" it is wl, "to him"; and may be rendered thus, "and Israel shall be gathered unto him"; and then the sense entirely agrees with the preceding clause, with which the words are connected, and not with the following, as the accent "athnach" shows, thus; the Lord appointed and formed me to be his servant to bring back Jacob, and that Israel might be gathered to him; as all the Israel of God, all the elect of God were by the sufferings and death of Christ; see **Eph 1:10**. The marginal reading, and the writing, may be both retained, as in some other places, thus, "and shall not Israel be gathered to him?" since he has formed me to bring back Jacob to him? verily he shall. The marginal reading is followed by the Targum, and the passage paraphrased thus,

"to return the house of Jacob to his service, and Israel shall be brought nigh, to his fear."

And so it is by Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, and by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and by Aquila: "yet shall I be glorious" in the eyes of the Lord; or "I shall be glorious", &c.; as he was at his baptism and transfiguration on the mount; by the wonderful things done in heaven and on earth at the time of his death, at his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to heaven, and exaltation at the right hand of God, far above all principalities and powers, angels, authorities, and powers, being subject to him; and by the ministration of the Gospel in the Gentile world, and particularly when he shall reign gloriously in the latter day, and in the New Jerusalem church state:

and my God shall be my strength; to keep up his spirits under all discouragements; to protect him from his enemies; to support him in his work as man; to carry him through it, and enable him completely to perform it, as he promised he would, and as he did, Isa 49:8.

Isaiah 49:6

Ver. 6. And he said,.... Or "even he said"; namely, the Lord his God, that called, appointed, and strengthened him for his service:

it is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; the tribes of Jacob and the preserved of Israel are the elect of God among the Jews; though the characters agree with all the chosen of God of other nations, who, are distinguished from the rest of the world, and are "preserved in Christ", **Jude 1:1**, where they are preserved before they are redeemed and called; not from falling in Adam with the rest of mankind, nor from the general corruption of nature, nor from actual sins and transgressions; yet from the condemnation of the law, the damning power of sin, and the second death; the ground of which is, their being in the love of God, in the covenant of grace, and in the hands of Christ: and yet, notwithstanding this, they are in a most miserable condition as the descendants of Adam, and, in a state of nature; they are "fallen" creatures, which is supposed by the "raising them up" by Christ, whose work it is; they fell in Adam, and are fallen from a state of honour, friendship, and communion with God; from the glorious image stamped on man in his creation; from righteousness and holiness into sin and misery, poverty and beggary; into a very low estate indeed, and are not able to raise up themselves, being feeble and without strength, yea, dead in trespasses and sins; they are gone back from God, and out of the good way, and are gone astray like lost sheep, which is supposed by the "restoring" of them: now it is Christ's work to "raise up", "restore", or "return" these; he raises them to a state of justification and acceptance with God, to a better righteousness than they fell from, and to greater riches, honour, and glory; in consequence of redemption by Christ they are raised to a state of grace here, and to glory hereafter; they are brought nigh to God, from whom they were departed, sons to have access unto him and fellowship with him now, and to be with him for evermore. Now to do all this is said to be a "light thing"; it was not so in itself, it was a "great thing", famous and excellent, to be a servant of the Lord, and to be employed in such work as this; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it; but this is to be understood either by way of interrogation, as by the Targum, Kimchi, Ben Melech, and so the Syriac version, "is it a matter of small moment that thou shouldest be my servant?" &c.; surely it is not; or, if it is, I will find thee other work to do: or else it is to be understood comparatively, the elect of God among the Jews being few, in comparison of those among the Gentiles; wherefore it was not work enough, nor honour enough, only to be employed in the redemption of them: and therefore it follows,

I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles; which supposes the Gentiles to be in a state of darkness, as they were before the coming of Christ, and the ministration of the Gospel to them; they were in the dark about the divine Being, the unity of God, and the persons in the Godhead; about the worship of God; about a future state, and about their own state and condition; and about revelation, the truths, doctrines, and ordinances of it: and this expresses, that

Christ should be a "light" to them, as he has been, not only in a way of nature, as he is to every man, but in a way of special grace through the ministry of the word; not in his own person, for he only preached in Judea, but by his apostles, by whom he went and preached peace to them afar off; and particularly he was so to them by his Spirit, as a spirit of illumination; and so they came to have light in divine things, and which is a "gift" of the free grace of God. Simeon has respect to this passage, **Lu 2:32** and the Apostle Paul cites it, and applies it to Gospel times, Ac 13:47, it follows,

that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth; Christ was given, that he might be the author of that salvation, which God had chosen and appointed his people to, and provided for them in covenant; and that being the salvation of his own people, he calls it his own salvation; and which should reach to them all everywhere, in the several parts of the world, and the corners and ends of it, east, west, north, and south, wherever they were. Kimchi refers this to the saving of the Gentiles, after the war of Gog and Magog, yet to come; and with it compares Isa 60:3.

Isaiah 49:7

Ver. 7. Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One,.... These are all the titles of the Father of Christ, who is the Jehovah, the self-existent Being, and from whom all have their Being; "the redeemer of Israel", being concerned with his Son in the redemption, of his people, in the contriving and settling the method of it, and bringing it about; "and his Holy One", or the Holy One of Israel, the sanctifier of them, together with the blessed Spirit; who speaks the following words, not to the Prophet Isaiah, as Aben Ezra, nor to the people of the Jews, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, but to Christ:

to him whom man despiseth; whom the Jews despised, because of the meanness of his descent, parentage, and education; because of his doctrines, disciples, and followers; and because his kingdom was not of this world, and came not with observation: or "whom a soul despiseth", or "despised in soul" {w}; heartily despised, as Christ was; or "who despiseth his soul" {x}, or life, as Christ did his, for the sake of his people, for whom he freely laid his life down, and made his soul an offering for sin:

to him whom the nation abhorreth; the nation of the Jews abhorred Christ, his person, doctrine, and miracles; they hated him, and would not have him to rule over them: they persecuted him, and sought to slay him, and at last delivered him up to the Romans to be crucified:

to a servant of rulers; of Jewish rulers in subjection to them, being made under the law; and of Gentile rulers, paying tribute to Caesar, and when scourged by Pilate, and crucified by his order, which was the usual death of servants or slaves. But though he was so ill used, despised, and abhorred, he is encouraged by his divine Father, and great glory and honour are promised him:

kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship; they shall see the glory and majesty of Christ, and rise up in reverence of him, and fall down before him and worship him; which has had its accomplishment in part in Constantine, Theodosius, Valentinian, and other Christian princes, and will have a further fulfilment in the latter day; see
Isa 49:23. This passage is interpreted by the Jews of the Messiah {y}:

because of the Lord that is faithful; to his promises to him in raising him from the dead, and giving him glory; in exalting him at his own right hand; in giving him gifts for men, which he bestowed on them; in spreading and succeeding his Gospel in the Gentile world; and in the enlargement of his kingdom and interest in it; all which obliged, and will oblige, the kings and princes of the earth to own him, and pay homage to him:

and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee; or make it appear that he has chosen thee to be the Saviour and Redeemer of his people, the Head of the church, and the Judge of the whole world.

{w} vpn hwzbl "ad eum quem contemnens est anima cujusque", Glassius; "ad contemptum anima", Montanus; "contemptui animae", Cocceius. {x} faulizonta thn quchn autou, Sept. "ad contemporem animea suae", Grotius; so the Arabic version. {y} Zohar in Gen. fol. 127. 2.

Isaiah 49:8

Ver. 8. Thus saith the Lord,.... These are the words of God the Father to his Son continued; the Jews themselves interpret them of the Messiah {z}:

in an acceptable time have I heard thee: this was the time when Christ was here on earth, when he became incarnate, and suffered and died for his people: this was an acceptable time to God the Father; his very sufferings were acceptable; his sacrifice was of a sweet smelling savour; his righteousness was well pleasing to him; for by all this his perfections were glorified, his purposes were answered, his covenant and promises fulfilled, and his people saved: it was acceptable to men, the things that were now done and procured; as pardon of sin, peace and reconciliation, a justifying righteousness, and complete salvation; which is worthy the acceptation of all that are lost and undone, and see themselves so, and that nothing they can do will save them: or "in a time of good will" {a}; such was the time of Christ's first coming; it was good will to men, **Lu 2:14**. God showed his good will to men by the Person whom he sent to save them, his own, only, and beloved Son; and by sending him to save sinners, the chief of sinners, even enemies; and this time was fixed and settled by the good will and pleasure of God; and during this time the Lord heard Christ; he always heard him interceding for himself, and for his people; he heard him in the garden, and on the cross, and at all other times; see **Heb 5:7**

and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; at the time when he wrought out the salvation of his people, then he helped him in it, and through it, as he promised him, and as Christ believed he would,
Isa 42:1. This is to be understood of him as man and Mediator, and to show the greatness of the work of salvation, and the concern of God in it; otherwise, as Christ is the mighty God, he needed no help, and his own arm brought salvation to him:

and I will preserve thee; as he did from his enemies in life, in his infancy, and when grown up, that his life might not be taken away before his time; from being overcome by his enemies in the garden, and on the cross; from the power of death and the grave, by raising him up from thence; he preserved him to his kingdom and glory, and now retains him in heaven until the time of the restitution of all things; and will preserve his seed, and his throne, his cause, and interest, to the end of time:

and give thee for a covenant of the people; Jews and Gentiles, all that are given to him, and whom he redeems by his blood, whom the Spirit sanctifies, and applies the blessings and promises of the covenant to; which is to be understood of the covenant of grace: Christ is said to be given for it unto them, he being a covenantee in it; the representative of these people in it; the surety of it for them; the Mediator and messenger of it to them; and the ratifier and confirmer of it; and as he is the great blessing of it, the sum and substance of it; and as all the blessings and promises of it are in him; and this may respect the constitution of the covenant from everlasting, and the manifestation of it in time; and this is a gift of God honourable to Christ, of free grace to his people, very comprehensive and unspeakable. Kimchi says this refers to the times of the Messiah: and the end of all this is

to establish the earth; not the land of Judea, but the whole earth; which, were it not for Christ, and his covenant and suretyship engagements for his people, and for the sake of them, and their salvation, would long ago have been dissolved and broke to pieces; but he bears up the pillars of it; and, when he has gathered in all his people, will destroy it: or the end in his being given for a covenant was to "raise up" the fallen inhabitants of the earth, for so the word {b} may be rendered; or to raise up the elect of God unto life, who were obnoxious to death; or to establish, settle, and confirm the church of God on earth; see Ps 89:36. The Targum is, "to raise up the righteous that lie in the dust", referring it to the resurrection of the dead:

to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; the desolate cities of Judah, or the Gentile world, which was like a desolate wilderness: it seems to denote the desolate condition of the church, which should become comfortable and flourishing through the numerous conversions of Jews and Gentiles, as the fruit and effect of the covenant of grace made with Christ; in which the Heathen were given for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, **Ps 2:8**.

{z} In Pesikta Rabbati in Yalkut in loc. {a} Nwur teb "in tempore gratuitae voluntatis", Munster; "in tempore placito", V. L. Pagninus; "beneplaciti", Piscator. {b} Ura Myqhl "ad suscitandam terram", Pagninus, Montanus; "ut erigas terram", Piscator; "ad erigendam terram", Vitringa.

Isaiah 49:9

Ver. 9. That thou mayest say to the prisoners, go forth,.... God's covenant people, while unconverted, are prisoners; they are in the prison of sin, under the power and dominion of it, and under the guilt of it, and obligation to punishment for it; and they are in the prison of the law, they are transgressors of it, and are accused and convicted by it, and are condemned, and put in prison, and held there; and they are also Satan's prisoners, and are held and led captive by him at his will; and by virtue of the covenant, and the blood of it, these prisoners are set free; and Christ in the. Gospel speaks unto them, and proclaims liberty to them; and by the knowledge of the truth they are made free, and are brought into the liberty of the children of God; and are bid to go forth, and they are brought forth from their prison houses; and bid to go to the house of God, and walk at liberty, enjoying all the privileges and ordinances of the Gospel:

to them that are in darkness; in a state of nature and unregeneracy, which is a state of infidelity and ignorance; when men are in the dark, and know not themselves, nor their lost state and condition; nor the exceeding sinfulness of sin; nor Christ, and the way of salvation by him; nor the Spirit, and the operations of his grace; nor the Scriptures, and the doctrines of them:

show yourselves; among the people of God, in his house and ordinances, when called, converted, and enlightened by Christ; or "be revealed" {c} or manifested, when they are known to be, what they were not knows before, the people and children of God. The Targum is,

"be revealed to the light;"

such are called to partake of the light of grace, and to enjoy the light of comfort and communion:

they shall feed in the ways; not in the broad road and highways of sin, but in the ways of God, in the word and ordinances: this denotes the publicness and pleasantness of them, and the plenty of provisions in them; and yet where it might not be expected, and where exposed to enemies: the allusion is to cattle, that are drove from place to place, and as they pass along feed in the ways upon such pasture as they there find; and suggests, that the saints are travellers, and as such have food provided them by the way:

and their pastures shall be in all high places; on hills and mountains, which are often barren and unfruitful. The Targum is,

"in or by rivers of water shall be the place of their habitation."

{c} wlgh "revelamini", V. L. Munster, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 49:10

Ver. 10. They shall not hunger nor thirst,.... Being fed in the ways and high places of Gospel ordinances with the love of God, with covenant mercies and precious promises, with Christ, the bread of life, and his grace the water of life, and with the doctrines of the Gospel; they do not desire carnal things, as formerly, but spiritual ones, which they have and are satisfied with, and desire no other food: it signifies that there shall be no famine of the word, nor want of spiritual provisions; it is applied to the New Jerusalem state, **Re 7:16** and so the following clause,

neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; not the sun of persecution, nor the heat of fiery trials and afflictions, particularly in the latter day; nor the heat of a fiery law and divine wrath, or of Satan's fiery darts; not however in the above mentioned state, or in the ultimate glory:

for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them; Christ, the great and good Shepherd of the sheep, who had mercy on them in eternity, and therefore undertook to feed them; and in time, and therefore laid down his life for them; and now in heaven, and sympathizes with him; and at the last day they shall find mercy with him: these he leads out of a state of nature, from the wilderness, where he finds them; out of their sinful ways, and from the pastures of their own righteousness; and he leads them in paths they had not known, in which they should go, in the way of truth, faith, and holiness; in right, though sometimes rough ways; he leads them to himself, his blood, righteousness, and fulness; into his Father's presence, and to his house and ordinances; into Gospel truths, and from one degree of grace to another, and at last to eternal glory; all which he does gradually, softly, gently, in proportion to their strength, and as they are able to bear:

even by the springs of water shall he guide them; or "fountains of water" {d}; even of living water; which are no other than God himself, and the plenty of his grace and mercy; Christ, and the fulness of grace that is in him; the covenant of grace, and the blessings of it; the Gospel, and its ordinances; see **Re 7:17**.

{d} Mym yewbm phgwn udatwn, Sept. "fontes aquarum", V. L. rather flows of water which come from fountains, so Ben Melech; "scaturigines aquarum", Montanus; "scatebras aquarum", Vitringa.

Isaiah 49:11

Ver. 11. And I will make all my mountains a way,.... Or "for", or "into a way" {e}; signifying that they should be dug through or levelled, and a way made through them, over them, or upon them, for his people to pass: very probably the allusion is to the mountains that lay between Babylon and Judea; and which the Lord calls his, because of his making and settling, and was therefore able to make them a way, or passable: though the words are not to be literally understood, but denote the removing of all impediments, obstructions, and difficulties, in the people's return from captivity; which was typical of redemption by Christ, which had its difficulties, which he only could get over; he came leaping over these hills and mountains, and they became a plain before him, the great Zerubbabel; such as the assumption of a sinless nature, to make atonement in for sin, which only could be produced in an uncommon and extraordinary way; the fulfilling of a broken law, satisfying divine justice, engaging with many enemies who were to be conquered, sin, Satan, the world, and death; bearing the wrath of God, and submitting to an accursed death: and so in the conversion of the Gentiles, which may here be referred to, and of any sinner, there are many mountains of difficulties in the way of it, which the Lord only can remove; great opposition is made by the men of the world to the preaching of the Gospel, the means of it to the work itself, by Satan, who is loathe to lose a subject of his kingdom; and by men themselves, whose carnal minds are enmity to God, and all that is good difficulties arise from the state of deadness, darkness, and hardness of heart men are in before conversion from the corruptions of their nature, and strong habits of sin; from the general depravity of all the powers and faculties of the soul; from the bad company they have got into; or from their own self-righteousness, they are loathe to part with: and when men are called, and a work of God is begun, there are many mountains appear in their way of coming to Christ; as their numerous and aggravated sins, and doubts about the willingness Christ to receive such sinners; but, when God works, nothing can let. Many are the obstructions the saints meet with in their passage, through this world, by reason of a body of sin, Satan's temptations, the world's persecutions, afflictions of various kinds, strait circumstances of life, losses, crosses, and disappointments; unbelief of itself is a mountain, and raises many others; but the Lord makes a way for his people through all; it may be some respect may be had to the spread of the Gospel in the world, and the introduction of latter day glory, and the difficulties in the way thereof, which the Lord has been removing, and will remove. Rome Pagan is one mountain which God has removed; and Rome Papal is another he will, move, with all the antichristian powers; and the Turkish empire is another:

and my highways shall be exalted; Christ is the great highway of all, and next his word and ordinances, which are ways of holiness and righteousness; these may be said to be "exalted", being conspicuous and visible; and, like causeways, or, highways cast up, that are above, and carry over the mire and dirt; so these carry over the mire and dirt of sin and corruption; and may be said to be so when made use of, approved, and valued: or the words may be rendered, "they shall be", or "let them be exalted on my highways" {f}; that is, his people, being in the exercise of faith, and in the discharge of their duty; see Ps 18:33 with these words compare Isa 40:3 perhaps this passage may be best explained by Re 16:12, where mention is made of the drying up of the river Euphrates, or of the destruction of the Ottoman empire, to make way for the conversion of the eastern nations, prophesied of, among others, in the following verse.

{e} Krdl "in viam", V. L. Piscator, Montanus, Cocceius; "ut siut pervii", Junius & Tremellius; "in viam planam", Vitringa. {f} Nwmry ytwlomw "et in aggeribus meis emineant", Junius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 49:12

Ver. 12. Behold, these shall come from far,.... This is a prophecy of the conversion of the Jews, or of the Gentiles, or of both, in the latter day, in the several parts of the world; who shall come to Christ, and to his churches, and join in fellowship with them: the allusion is to the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, and from all other parts at that time; some are said to come "from far", from the east, as it is generally interpreted, from the several eastern nations, as Persia, Judea lying west from them, on the western or Mediterranean sea:

and, lo, these from the north; from Media, as some; or rather from Babylon, which lay north of Judea:

and from the west; or "from the sea"; the Mediterranean sea, and the countries beyond it, which lie west of Judea:

and these from the land of Sinim. The Targum and Vulgate Latin version render it, from the land of the south, with which Jarchi and Kimchi agree, where dwelt the Sinites, which were of the children of Canaan, Ge 10:17, as the latter observes; and where were the wilderness of Sin, and mountain of Sinai, according to the observation of Jerom. Aben Ezra thinks

Egypt is meant, which lay south of Judea, and conjectures that Sinai, a place in it, is designed; perhaps Sin, as others are of opinion, called "the strength of Egypt", Eze 30:15, the same city the Greeks called Pelusium; and R. Saadiah, in Kimchi, supposes it is here intended, which is most likely; the Pelusiotae are meant. Manasseh ben Israel {g} will have it that the Chinese are intended: China is indeed called, by Ptolemy {h}, the country of the Sinites; and if this is designed, which is not probable, it cannot be so called from the family of Cina, as Martinius {i} thinks, since that family was not in being till two or three hundred years after this prophecy; and, if it concerns them, it will have its accomplishment, when the kingdoms of this world shall become Christ's, Re 11:15 compare with this **Mt 8:12** yea, they are said to have received the Gospel, in the first times of it, by the means of the apostles, Thomas, or Bartholomew {k}. The Septuagint version renders it, "from the land of the Persians"; and the Arabic version, "from the land of Persia"; and the Syriac version, "from the sea of Senjam".

{g} Spes Israelis, p. 48. {h} Geograph. l. 7. c. 3. {i} Hist. Sinic. p. 195. {k} Vid Fabricii Lux Evangelii, p. 652, 653.

Isaiah 49:13

Ver. 13. Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth,.... Which may be understood of the heavens, and the earth by a personification, a figure usual in Scripture, to express the greatness of the benefit received, and to raise thankfulness and admiration in the hearts of God's people; see Ps 90:11 or by the heavens may be meant the angels in heaven, who, as they rejoice at the conversion of a single sinner, will much more rejoice at such numerous conversions among Jews and Gentiles, here prophesied of, Lu 15:10 and, by the "earth", the saints on earth, the excellent in it, who have a more immediate concern in, and must be affected with, the case here represented:

and break forth into singing, O mountains; such as are in high office either in the state, as Christian kings and princes, Isa 49:23 or in the church, as prophets and apostles, Re 18:20. The reason of all this is,

for the Lord hath comforted his people; with the discoveries of his love and grace; by his gracious presence among them; by the coming of Christ unto them in a spiritual way; by sending his Spirit, and renewing the face of things, and reviving his work in the midst of them; by the pure and powerful preaching of the Gospel, and comfortable administration of Gospel ordinances;

and by large additions of converts made unto them:

and will have mercy upon his afflicted, or "poor", or "meek" and "humble" ones, as the words {l} may be rendered: the Lord's people is a poor and afflicted people, poor in a temporal and spiritual sense; the church and interest of Christ is in a poor and low condition: the Lord's people are afflicted outwardly and inwardly, and so become meek, and are kept humble; these the Lord, in the latter day, will raise from a low and distressed condition to a more exalted and comfortable one; which will be an instance of his mercy and compassion, and be matter of joy unto them.

{l} wyyne "pauperum suorum", V. L. "pauperes suos", Forerius; "inopes suos", Vitringa; tapeinouv "humiles", Sept. "mansuetorum", Targum.

Isaiah 49:14

Ver. 14. But Zion said,.... By way of objection, as some think, to the above prophecies of glorious and comfortable times; she being now in a very disconsolate condition, and could not tell how to take it in, how it should thus be, when the case was with her as it was; though I rather think the words should be rendered, "for Zion had said"; and which is mentioned to show the uncomfortable condition she had been in, and to observe the method the Lord took to comfort her, as he before promises. Reference may be had to the Jews in the times of the Babylonish captivity, mentioned under the name of Zion; because, as Kimchi says, that was the chief city of the kingdom of Israel; who, because of the length of their captivity, might think themselves forsaken and forgotten by the Lord: yet, by Zion is meant the church under the Gospel dispensation, the saints that meet at Mount Zion, the hundred and forty and four thousand, with the Lamb there, Heb 12:22:

the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me: so the church might be tempted to conclude, during the persecutions under Rome Pagan, and the long reign of antichrist not yet at an end, and because of his oppressions and cruelties; and because of the low and declining state of the interest of Christ, as it now is; few being converted by the ministry of the word; great opposition made to the truths of the Gospel with success; the ordinances of it perverted or neglected; the presence of God in them very little enjoyed; great indifference and lukewarmness among professors of religion, and discord and dissensions in churches. And so it is with particular believers, when they do not enjoy the presence of God as formerly, either in private or in public ordinances; have not had a promise for a long time; nor are favoured with the discoveries of the love of God, or with any visit from him; then they are apt to say they are forsaken by the Lord, though they cannot give up their interest in him, and therefore call him "my Lord".

Isaiah 49:15

Ver. 15. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?.... This is the Lord's answer to the church's complaint, instancing in the care and affection of a mother to her child, thereby illustrating his love to his people; he instances in a "woman", the tender sex; in a "child" of her's, an infant, not one grown up, from which her affections might be alienated by disobedience; her suckling child, she had in her arms, and on her knees, and whom her breasts would put her in mind of; and since one that is not an own child may be suckled, it is called "the son of her womb"; and is it possible for such an one to be forgotten?

yea, they may forget; through inadvertency, want of affection, a cruel disposition, hurry of business, sickness, public calamities, &c. La 4:3, such monsters in nature there may be, though rare:

yet will I not forget thee; he cannot forget, because of is nature, on which forgetfulness cannot properly fall; he will not, because of his promise, which never fails; he may seem to his people to have forgotten them, and he may be thought to have done so by others; he forgets their sins, but not their persons; he cannot forget his love, nor his covenant with them, nor his promises made to them; nor does he forget their love to him, nor their works, words, and thoughts; the righteous are had by him in everlasting remembrance. All this suggests that the Lord stands in the relation of a parent to his people, and they stand in the relation of children to him; they are born of him, and are as it were pieces of himself, and little images of him, and dear to him as the apple of his eye; they are like sucking children, that suck in the milk of his word, and suck at the breasts of his ordinances; and they are used by him in the most tender manner, as infants are; they are kissed by him, and dandled on the knee; they are led by him, and taught to go; he delights in them when they begin to speak in prayer or praise, though in a lisping and stammering manner; all their little actions are engaging, their works done by them, though imperfect, and a great deal of childishness in them; when anything ails them, he sympathizes with them, he takes care of them, and provides for them; and it is a concern to him whenever he is obliged to chastise them, and can he therefore forget them?

Isaiah 49:16

Ver. 16. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands,.... Not upon his thick clouds, the clouds of heaven under him, always in view, as R. Saadiah Gaon, mentioned by Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi: much better the Targum,

"lo, as upon the hands thou art engraven before me;"

signifying that his people were always in his sight, his eyes were ever upon them, and never withdrawn from them; as anything held in the hand, or tied to or wore upon it, as a signet or ring that has the name of a person on it, to which the allusion may be; which shows how near and dear they are to him, what affection he has for them, and care of them; see **So 8:6**. Some think respect is had to the wounds in the hands of Christ, which, being on their account, are looked upon and remembered by him; or, however, to their being in his hands, out of which none can pluck them, Joh 10:28:

thy walls are continually before me; not the walls of Jerusalem to rebuild, though there may be an allusion to them; but either the walls of their houses where they dwell; his delights being in the habitable parts of his earth, where his saints are; or rather the walls of the church of God, for the erecting and establishing of which he is concerned. The metaphor seems to be taken from an architect that has the plan of a building, a house, or a city and its walls, in his hand, or lying before him. The phrase denotes the constant care and concern of Jehovah for the protection and safety of his church and people; who places angels about them, salvation for walls and bulwarks to them, yea, he himself is a wall of fire about them, Isa 26:1.

Isaiah 49:17

Ver. 17. Thy children shall make haste,.... Regenerate persons, young converts, such as are born again of incorruptible seed by the word; these shall flock to the church, as doves to the windows; join themselves to her, and submit to Gospel ordinances, and

make haste, and delay not, to keep the Lord's commandments; which is no small pleasure, joy, and comfort to the church of God. Some render it, "thy builders" {m} "shall make haste"; Gospel ministers, who are wise masterbuilders under Christ; these shall come with all readiness and cheerfulness, and build in the temple, the church of God, and rebuild her walls, and repair her breaches:

thy destroyers and they that made thee waste, shall go forth of thee; tyrants and persecutors of the church shall cease, and be no more; and false teachers, that corrupt the minds of men, subvert their faith, and destroy their souls, as antichrist and his ministers, shall be drove out of the church, and destroyed by Christ, the Head of it; see
Re 11:18.

{m} Kynb "structores vel aedificatores tui", Munster, Montanus, Calvin, Tigurine version.

Isaiah 49:18

Ver. 18. Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold,.... Look east, west, north, and south, and behold the flocking converts from all parts; see on Isa 49:12. The words are spoken to the church, and for her comfort; and so the Targum,

"lift up thine eyes round about, O Jerusalem, and see all the children of the people of thy captivity:"

all these gather themselves together, and come to thee; though of different nations, and come from different quarters, yet coalesce together, make one body, and join themselves with the church, in which they centre, and are incorporated:

as I live, saith the Lord; this is the form of an oath, sometimes used by the Lord, to denote the importance and certainty of a thing, and to assure his people of it:

thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all as with an ornament; as children's children are the crown of old men, Pr 17:6, so young converts are the crown, glory, and ornament of the church; even such who are beautified with the graces of the Spirit, and whose conversations are as become the Gospel of Christ:

and bind them on thee as a bride doeth; her clothes, the attire of her head, and her jewels. So in the latter day, when the Jews are converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in, the marriage of the Lamb will be come, and the church made ready, as a bride, for her husband, and be very beautiful and comely in his sight, as well as very comfortable and glorious in herself; and which will be matter of joy to all the saints, Re 19:7. The Targum is,

"all these shall be unto thee as a garment of glory, and their works in the midst of thee as the ornament of a bride."

Isaiah 49:19

Ver. 19. For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction,.... Or "thy land of destruction, or thy destroyed land" {n}; laid waste and desolate by the enemy, without inhabitants; such countries in which there were few professors of the true religion:

shall even now be too narrow, by reason of the inhabitants; because of the multitude of them; a hyperbolical expression, setting forth the great numbers of Christian converts everywhere: this straitness will not be on account of strangers or enemies having taken possession; but on account of those who are true and proper possessors: for it follows,

and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away; from the church; the Heathen, the Gentiles, or Papists,

shall now perish out of his, Jehovah's, "land"; "sinners shall be consumed out of the earth, and the wicked be no more",
Ps 10:16. Antichrist and his abettors, which "swallowed" up the people, their riches, and substance, like beasts of prey, to which he is compared, shall go into perdition, and never disturb the church any more, Re 13:1.

{n} Ktoyrh Ura "terra tua destructa", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, De Dieu; "et terram destructionis tuam", Cocceius; "et terram tuam quae destructa est", Vitringa.

Isaiah 49:20

Ver. 20. The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other,.... Which "other lost" are not the Jews, the broken branches, rejected and cut off for unbelief; and the "children after" them not the Gentiles converted, which took their place; but "the other" are such who have been destroyed by the Heathen persecutions, and especially by the antichristian cruelties; and the "children after", the great numbers of converts upon the fall of antichrist. The words may be rendered, "the children of thine orbity" {o}, or "childless state"; such as were born unto her in an uncommon, extraordinary, and unexpected way, when the church seemed to be in a widowhood estate, or like a woman that is past bearing children:

shall say again in thine ears; or, "shall yet say" {p}; that is, hereafter, in time to come: for this is a prophecy of what should be said in the church's hearing, and such as had never been said before; and therefore improperly rendered "again"; for there never has been as yet such a time as this, or such a large number of converts, as to say,

the place is too strait for me to dwell in; there is not room enough for us, as in **2Ki 6:1**:

give place to me that I may dwell; one and another of the children or converts should say, make room for me, that I may have a name and a place among you, and dwell with you, and abide in the house of the Lord, and partake of the privileges and ordinances of it: but the word used signifies drawing nigh, and not giving way or removing; and should rather be rendered, "draw nigh to me that I may dwell"; or "and I shall dwell" {q}, or "sit"; come close to one another, and we shall all sit and dwell comfortably together; just as when a house is well filled with agreeable company, and there is an unwillingness to part with or lose any, they are desired to sit close together, that there may be room for all: and this is, and will be, the case with the church and her members; they will be desirous to sit regularly, and close together, in Gospel order, that everyone may be comfortable, and partake of the benefit of communion, and none be obliged to depart: and to this sense Gussetius {r} interprets the phrase.

{o} Kylwkv ynb "filii orbitatis tuae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vitringa;

"orbitatum tuarum", Pagninus, Montanus; "tui orbati", Munster. (The word "orbity" means "childless" or "without parents", Webster's 1828 Dictionary, Editor) {p} wrmay dwe "adhuc dicent", Gataker, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vitringa. q} hbvaw yl hvg "accede mihi & habitabo", Montanus; "contrahe te mea causa ut sedeam", Cocceius. {r} Ebr. Comment. p. 496.

Isaiah 49:21

Ver. 21. Then shalt thou say in thine heart,.... In, a way of admiration, secretly within herself, astonished at the numerous crowds flocking in;

who hath begotten me these? not their natural parents, nor they themselves;

for they are not born of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh; nor ministers of the Gospel, though they are instruments, yet not the cause; but God only, Father, Son, and Spirit, to whom regeneration is only ascribed: regeneration is a wonderful work of God; it is unaccountable to the natural man; it is amazing to the saints themselves; and it is matter of astonishment to the church of God; especially when on a sudden, and without means, and in great numbers, men are born again; and particularly when these come from among the Gentiles, which seems to be the case here:

seeing I have lost my children; by captivity and the sword, by the tyranny and cruelty of the man of sin:

and am desolate; or alone, as if without a husband, or any to take care of her: this represents the church in the wilderness, during the reign of antichrist, Re 12:14, while she seems to be forsaken of the Lord her husband, though she is not:

and a captive; to the Romish antichrist; see Re 13:10:

and removing to and fro; being forced to flee from place to place, by reason of persecution: there is, no doubt, an allusion in all this to the case of the Jews in the Babylonish captivity:

and who hath brought up these? the same that begot them, even the Lord himself; who nourishes and brings up his children with the milk of the Gospel, and the breasts of Gospel ordinances; so that they are brought up from children

to young men, from young men to fathers, till they become perfect men; even the church in the wilderness, with her children, are nourished by him, for a time, and times, and half a time,
Re 12:14 which is wonderful:

behold, I was left alone; seemingly without husband or children, in a desolate and wilderness state:

these, where had they been? in the ruins of Adam's fall; in a state of darkness; in the graves of sin; in a pit wherein is no water; in the hands of Satan, and among wicked men; even in Babylon itself, but now called out; see Re 18:4.

Isaiah 49:22

Ver. 22. Thus saith the Lord God,.... In answer to the questions, where had these children been? and from whence did they come? who begot them, and brought them up? and by what means was all this done, or would be done?

I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles; beckoning them to come unto him, directing and ordering them what to do; or rather exerting the power of his grace in the conversion of them. The Targum is,

"I will reveal my power among the Gentiles;"

his efficacious grace attending the ministry of the word, whereby it becomes "the power of God unto salvation"; for when that hand is lifted up or exerted, the "word" comes "not in word only", "but in power, and in the Holy Ghost", and is effectual to saving purposes:

and set up my standard to the people; meaning Christ, "the ensign of the people"; who, in the ministration of the Gospel, is set up as a standard, to gather persons to him, as an ensign or standard is set up by a general of an army to collect soldiers to him, to come and enlist, and fight under his banners; see Isa 11:10:

and they shall bring thy sons in their arms; or, "bosom" {s}; such as are regenerated by the Spirit and grace of God, under the word, are to be tenderly dealt with by the ministers of the Gospel, as they are by Christ, Isa 40:11 and to be encouraged to come and join themselves to the church, and be directed and assisted by them in that service:

and thy daughters shall be carried on their shoulders; meaning the same as before, only perhaps weaker converts, dealing with them according to their infirmities; carrying them with as much ease, care, and tenderness, as young children are carried on the shoulders of their parents or others. It may be these expressions are designed to show how assisting and encouraging the Christian Gentiles will be to the Jews, when converted in their several countries, both to admit them into Gospel churches, and bring them into their own land; see Isa 66:19.

{s} Nuwxb en kolpw, Sept. "in gremio", Tigurine version; "in sinu", Munster, Montanus. But Ben Melech interprets it "the arm".

Isaiah 49:23

Ver. 23. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers,.... Who shall show favour and respect to the church and people of God, grant them liberty, and protect and defend them in their religious privileges: for this is to be understood not figuratively of apostles and apostolical men, as Jerom, who are kings and priests unto God, and who feed the church with the milk of the word, and the breasts of ordinances; but literally of the kings and queens of the earth; and is thought to have had its fulfilment, at least in part, in Cyrus, Ahasuerus, Esther, and others; but more so in Christian kings and queens, as Constantine and Helena, Theodosius and Placilla, and others; and will have a far greater accomplishment in the latter day glory; see Isa 60:3:

they shall bow down toward thee with their faces toward the earth; which expresses the great veneration and respect these great personages shall have for the church of God, and their entire submission and subjection to the Gospel of Christ, and the ordinances of it, and to the laws and discipline of his house; for they shall now become members of the Christian church, and be entirely under the government of it, as to religious things; see **Re 3:9**

and lick up the dust of thy feet; the allusion is to the eastern nations, especially the Persians, who, in the adoration of their kings, used to kiss the ground they stood on, and seemed to lick, if they did not, the dust that was about them; and it expresses the very low submission of kings and princes to the church, and their high veneration of it; their willingness to do the meanest office for the good of it, and their great regard and affection for the meanest of its members, the dust of Zion; see Ps 72:9:

and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who has the hearts of all men, even of kings, in his hands, and can turn them, and bring them to a thorough submission to his will; and who is able to accomplish all his promises, and is true and faithful to them; this will be known and owned by the church, when the above things have their accomplishment:

for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me; or for my salvation, as the Targum; for favours from him; for the light of his countenance; for the discoveries and application of pardoning grace; for the performance of promises; for answers of prayer; for his spiritual coming, and for eternal glory and happiness; these shall not be ashamed of him for whom they wait, nor of their hope and expectation of him, nor at his coming.

Isaiah 49:24

Ver. 24. Shall the prey be taken from the mighty,.... This is an objection to the accomplishment of what is predicted and promised above, taken from the power of the enemy, and his right to detain the people; and are either the words of the nations among whom the Jews were, according to Kimchi, boasting of, and presuming upon, and opposing to what is said, both their might and right, to keep the people in their own hands, bidding as it were defiance to any to attempt to take them from them; or the words of the prophet, in the name of the people, as Aben Ezra, objecting to their deliverance, doubting the effecting of it, or admiring at it: it may be applied to the taking of the Lord's people out of the hands of Satan, who may be said to be "mighty" or "strong", as he appears to be from his nature, a spirit; from his names, the strong man armed, a roaring lion, the great red dragon, leviathan, the piercing serpent, &c.; and from his power and dominion over the evil angels, and over men, both their bodies and souls; and to whom the Lord's own people are a "prey", while they are in a state of nature, as all mankind, and every unconverted man, be; a difficult thing it is to take any out of his hands, and a wonder of grace it is when it is done:

or the lawful captive delivered? justly and lawfully taken captive in war, as the Jews were by the Babylonians: or, "the captivity of the righteous be delivered" {t}; that is, either the righteous who were taken captives; or those that took them, who were so in their opinion, at least with respect to the taking of them, doing, as they judged, what was lawful and just. The people of God are in their state of nature led by Satan at his will, and are lawful captives in the judgment of him, and his principalities; and are in reality taken in war by him, and not only led captive by him at his will, but with their own will, and are justly given up unto him. Perhaps all this may be better referred to the people of God being a prey to the Romish antichrist, and detained as a lawful captive by him, and to the difficult and wonderful deliverance of them from him in the latter day; see Re 13:4. The Targum interprets this and the following verse of the captives of Esau and Ishmael, by whom seem to be meant the Pope and Turk.

{t} jlmy qydu ybv Maw "et an captivitas justi evadet", Montanus; "vel liberabitur", Munster; "captiva turba justi", Vitringa. And by the righteous Gussetius (Ebr. Comment. p. 709.) understands God the Father, who is righteous as a judge, exercising vindictive justice; and from him another person delivers us, namely, God the Son, the Messiah. A sense truly evangelical.

Isaiah 49:25

Ver. 25. But thus saith the Lord,.... In answer to the above objection, being mightier than the mighty, and stronger than he by whom his people are detained, being the Almighty:

even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; or, "the prey of the violent ones" {u}; which is an answer both as to might and right; as to might, though they are the captives of the mighty, yet they shall be taken away from them by him that is mightier than they, even the mighty God; and as to right, they are the prey of persons that have by force and violence usurped a power over them, and therefore shall be delivered; as the Lord's people are out of the hands of Satan; both in redemption by Christ out of the hands of him that is stronger than they; and in conversion by him who is stronger than the strong man armed; and enters into their hearts, the palace of the devil, spoils his goods, takes his armour from him, overcomes and binds him, and delivers them from his power; so that he shall not have dominion over them, and much less destroy them, though he may sometimes be terrible to them by his temptations, Jer 31:11. This will have a further accomplishment, in the deliverance of the Lord's people from the mighty and terrible beast of Rome:

for I will contend with them that contend with thee; the Babylonians literally; Satan and his principalities figuratively; and also antichrist, and the antichristian kings and states, that quarrel with, fight against, and oppress the Lord's people:

and I will save thy children; regenerate persons, the members of the church, be they where they will; these the Lord will save with a temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation, Deliverance from the Romish yoke and oppression seems to be here chiefly designed, when Jezebel's children will be killed with death, as follows; see **Re 2:23**.

{u} Uyre xwqlm "captura violenti", Moutanus Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "turba captiva violenti", Vitringa.

Isaiah 49:26

Ver. 26. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh,.... Not that they should feed upon their own flesh, because of famine, for this was not the case of Babylon when taken; but that they should destroy one another, as the Midianites did; and which was true of some of the Babylonians, who assisted Cyrus in taking the city, and destroying the inhabitants of it; and will be verified in the Popish party killing one another:

and they shall be drunken with their own blood as with sweet wine; which denotes the abundance of blood that shall be shed, and the pleasure in shedding of it. It will be a righteous thing with God to give the whore of Rome her own blood to drink, even so as to be made drunk with it as with wine, who has been drunk already with the blood of the saints, Re 16:6. The Targum is,

"I will give the flesh of them that oppress thee for food to every fowl of the heavens; and as they are drunken with wine, so the beasts of the field shall be drunken with their blood;"

see Re 19:17:

and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob; it shall be notorious to all the world, that Jehovah, the "Lord" of lords, the Lord of the whole earth, is the "Saviour and Redeemer" of his church and people out of all their afflictions, oppressions, and persecutions, by the Romish antichrist; this will be apparently seen, and publicly owned and acknowledged, when antichrist shall be destroyed, and the church saved; by which it will be manifest, it being the Lord's work, and wondrous in the eyes of men, that he is "the mighty One of Jacob", able to help and save them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 50:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 50

This chapter is a prophecy of the rejection of the Jews, for their neglect and contempt of the Messiah; and of his discharge of his office as Mediator, and fitness for it. The rejection of the Jews is signified by the divorce of a woman from her husband, and by persons selling their children to their creditors; which is not to be charged upon the Lord, but was owing to their own iniquities, Isa 50:1, particularly their disregard of the Messiah, and inattention to him, as if he was an insufficient Saviour; whereas his power to redeem is evident, from his drying up the sea and rivers below, and clothing the heavens above with black clouds, and eclipsing the luminaries thereof, Isa 50:2, his fitness for his prophetic office is expressed in Isa 50:4. His obedience to his Father, and his patience in sufferings, while performing his priestly office, Isa 50:5, and his faith and confidence in the Lord, as man and Mediator, that he should be helped, carried through his work, and acquitted; and not be confounded, overcome, and condemned, Isa 50:7, and the chapter is closed with an exhortation to the saints to trust in the Lord in the darkest times; and a threatening to such who trust in themselves, and in their own doings, Isa 50:10.

Ver. 1. Thus saith the Lord,.... Here begins a new discourse or prophecy, and therefore thus prefaced, and is continued in the following chapter:

where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? these words are directed to the Jews, who stood in the same relation to the Jewish church, or synagogue, as children to a mother; and so the Targum interprets "your mother" by "your congregation", or synagogue; who were rejected from being a church and people; had a "loammi" written upon them, which became very manifest when their city and temple were destroyed by the Romans; and this is signified by a divorce, alluding to the law of divorce among the Jews, De 24:1, when a man put away his wife, he gave her a bill of divorce, assigning the causes of his putting her away. Now, the Lord, either as denying that he had put away their mother, the Jewish church, she having departed from him herself, and therefore challenges them to produce any such bill; a bill of divorce being always put into the woman's hands, and so capable of being produced by her; or if there was such an one, see **Jer 3:8**, he requires it might be looked into, and seen whether the fault was his, or the cause in themselves, which latter would appear:

or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? referring to a practice used, that when men were in debt, and could not pay their debts, they sold their children for the payment of them; see
Ex 21:7, but this could not be the case here; the Lord has no creditors, not any to whom he is indebted, nor could any advantage possibly accrue to him by the sale of them; it is true they were sold to the Romans, or delivered into their hands, which, though a loss to them, was no gain to him; nor was it he that sold them, but they themselves; he was not the cause of it, but their own sins, as follows:

behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves; or, "are sold" {w}; they were sold for them, or delivered up into the hands of their enemies on account of them; they had sold themselves to work wickedness, and therefore it was but just that they should be sold, and become slaves:

and for your transgressions is your mother put away; and they her children along with her, out of their own land, and from being the church and people of God.

{w} Mtrkmn eprayhte, Sept. "venditi estis", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceias, Vitringa.

Isaiah 50:2

Ver. 2. Wherefore, when I came, was there no man?.... The Targum is,

"why have I sent my prophets, and they are not converted?"

And so Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret it of the prophets that prophesied unto them, to bring them to repentance: the Lord might be said to come by his prophets, his messengers; but they did not receive them, nor their messages, but despised and rejected them, and therefore were carried captive, 2Ch 36:15, but it is best to understand it of the coming of Christ in the flesh; when there were none that would receive, nor even come to him, but hid their faces from him, nor suffer others to be gathered unto him, or attend his ministry; they would neither go in themselves into the kingdom of the Messiah, nor let others go in that were entering, **Joh 1:11**,

when I called, was there none to answer? he called them to the marriage feast, to his word and ordinances, but they made light of it, and went about their worldly business; many were called externally in his ministry, but few were chosen, and effectually wrought upon; he called, but there was no answer given; for there was no internal principle in them, no grace to answer to the call; he stretched out his hands to a rebellious and gainsaying people, Mt 22:2,

is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? they did not know him to be the mighty God; they took him to be a mere man; and being descended from such mean parents, and making such a mean appearance, they could not think he was able to be their Redeemer and Saviour; but that he had sufficient ability appears by what follows:

behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea; he was able to do it, and did do it for the children of Israel, and made a passage through the Red sea for them, as on dry land; which was done by a strong east wind he caused to blow, here called his "rebuke", Ex 14:20, of Christ's rebuking the sea, see **Mt 8:26**.

I make the rivers a wilderness; as dry as the wilderness, and parched ground; in which persons may pass as on dry ground, and as travellers pass through a wilderness; so Jordan was made for the Israelites, **Jos 3:17**, and may be here particularly meant; called "rivers" because of the excellency of it, and the abundance of water in it, which sometimes overflowed its banks; and because other rivers fall into it, as Kimchi observes:

their flesh stinketh because there is no water, and dieth for thirst; as they did when the rivers of Egypt were turned into blood, **Ex 7:21**.

Isaiah 50:3

Ver. 3. I clothe the heavens with blackness,.... With gross and thick darkness; perhaps referring to the three days' darkness the Egyptians were in, Ex 10:12, or with thick and black clouds, as in tempestuous weather frequently; or by eclipses of the sun; there was an extraordinary instance of great darkness at the time of Christ's crucifixion, Mt 27:45

and I make sackcloth their covering; that being black, and used in times of mourning; the allusion may be to the tents of Kedar, which were covered with sackcloth, or such like black stuff. The fall of the Pagan empire, through the power of Christ and his Gospel, is signified by the sun becoming black as sackcloth of hair, **Re 6:12**. Jarchi interprets this parabolically of the princes of the nations, when the Lord shall come to take vengeance upon them; as Kimchi does the sea, and the rivers, in the preceding verse, of the good things of the nations of the world, which they had in great abundance, and should be destroyed.

Isaiah 50:4

Ver. 4. The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned,.... These are not the words of the prophet, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and others think; though what is here said is applicable to ministers of the word, who have to do with weary souls, and it is their work to comfort and refresh them; and which work requires knowledge and experience of their case, a good degree of elocution to speak aptly and with propriety, even to have the tongue of the learned, especially in a spiritual sense; as such have who have learned of the Father, and have been taught by the Spirit of God, and are well versed in the Scriptures, and can speak in the taught words of the Holy Ghost, comparing spiritual things with spiritual; and they have need of great prudence to time things right, to speak fitly and opportunely, and give to each their portion in due season, to whom they minister; and also great diligence and assiduity in prayer, reading, and meditation; and such as are teachers of others must be the Lord's hearers, and should be very diligent and attentive ones; all which are gifts from the Lord, and to be ascribed to him. But the words are to be understood of Christ, the same person that is speaking in the preceding verses; who being anointed by the Spirit of the Lord God, as man, whose gifts and graces he received without measure, he was abundantly qualified for the discharge of his prophetic office; and was capable of speaking as never man did, and with such power and authority as the Scribes and Pharisees did not, and with so much wisdom and eloquence as were surprising to all that heard him; he had the Spirit of wisdom on him, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in him:

that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary; not only saints, weary with sin, their own and others, and with troubles from the world, from Satan, and by afflictive providences; but sinners under first awakenings, distressed and uneasy in their minds at a sight of sin, in its exceeding sinfulness; pressed with the guilt of it, filled with a sense of divine wrath on account of it, and terrified with the thoughts of death, and a future judgment; and are weary with labouring for bread which satisfies not, for righteousness and life, and in seeking for resting places, being in want of spiritual rest, peace, and comfort; and who are hungry and thirsting after righteousness, after pardoning grace and mercy, after Christ and salvation by him, after his word and ordinances, after communion with him, and conformity to him; who are weak and without strength, and ready to faint for want of refreshment. The word for "weary" signifies "thirsty", according to Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech; who explain it of persons that thirst after hearing the word of the Lord: the Targum is,

"to know how to teach the righteous that weary themselves at the words of the law;"

or, as some render it, that pant after the words of the law: but not the law, but the Gospel, is "the word in season", to be spoken to weary souls; which proclaims pardon, preaches peace, is the word of righteousness and salvation; which directs hungry and thirsty souls to Christ, as the bread and water of life, and invites weary ones to him for rest. That word of his, Mt 11:28 is a word in season to such persons: such a word Christ spoke when he was here on earth in his own person, and now speaks by his ministers in the preaching of the Gospel, and by his Spirit applying it to his people.

He wakeneth morning by morning; one after another continually, meaning himself; the allusion is to masters calling their scholars early to their studies; the morning being the fittest season for instruction and learning.

He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned; who hear attentively, and with great pleasure and profit. This and the preceding clause seem to denote both the earliness in which Christ entered on his prophetic office, and his attentiveness in hearkening to all that was said in the eternal council and covenant by his divine Father; which he, as the Prophet of his church, makes known unto his people, Joh 15:15.

Isaiah 50:5

Ver. 5. The Lord God hath opened mine ear,.... To hear most freely, and receive most fully, what is said by him, and to observe and do it: the allusion seems to be to the servant that had his ears bored, being willing to serve his master for ever, Ex 21:5 which phrase of boring or opening the ear is used of Christ, Ps 40:6. It is expressive of his voluntary obedience, as Mediator, to his divine Father, engaging in, and performing with the greatest readiness and cheerfulness, the great work of man's redemption and salvation.

And I was not rebellious; not to his earthly parents, to whom he was subject; nor to civil magistrates, to whom he paid tribute; nor to God, he always did the things that pleased him: he was obedient to the precepts of the moral law, and to the penalty of it, death itself, and readily submitted to the will of God in suffering for his people; which obedience of his was entirely free and voluntary, full, complete, and perfect, done in the room and stead of his people; is the measure of their righteousness, and by which they become righteous; is well pleasing to God, and infinitely preferable to the obedience of men and angels:

neither turned away back; he did not decline the work proposed to him, but readily engaged in it; he never stopped in it, or desisted from it, until he had finished it; he did not hesitate about it, as Moses and Jeremy; or flee from it, as Jonah.

Isaiah 50:6

Ver. 6. I gave my back to the smiters,.... To Pontius Pilate, and those he ordered to scourge him, Mt 27:26

and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; of the beard; which, is painful, so a great indignity and affront. The Septuagint renders it, "and my cheeks to blows"; eiv rapismata, a word used by the evangelists when they speak of Christ being smitten and stricken with the palms of men's hands, and seem to refer to this passage,
Mr 14:65:

I hid not my face from shame and spitting; or from shameful spitting; they spit in his face, and exposed him to shame, and which was a shameful usage of him, and yet he took it patiently, Mt 26:67, these are all instances of great shame and reproach; as what is more reproachful among us, or more exposes a man, than to be stripped of his clothes, receive lashes on his bare back, and that in public? in which ignominious manner Christ was used: or what reckoned more scandalous, than for a man to have his beard plucked by a mob? which used to be done by rude and wanton boys, to such as were accounted idiots, and little better than brutes {x}; and nothing is more affronting than to spit in a man's face. So Job was used, which he mentions as a great indignity done to him, Job 30:10. With some people, and in some countries, particular places, that were mean and despicable, were appointed for that use particularly to spit in. Hence Aristippus the philosopher, being shown a fine room in a house, beautifully and richly paved, spat in the face of the owner of it; at which he being angry, and resenting it, the philosopher replied, that he had not a fitter place to spit in {y}.

{x} "------------barbam tibi vellunt Lascivi pueri", Horace. "Idcirco stolidam praebet tibi vellere barbara Jupiter?" Persius, Satyr. 2. {y} Laertius in Vita Aristippi.

Isaiah 50:7

Ver. 7. For the Lord God will help me,.... As he promised he would, and did, Ps 89:21, which is no contradiction to the deity of Christ, nor any suggestion of weakness in him; for he is the true God, and has all divine perfections in him; is equal to his Father in power, as well as in glory, and therefore equal to the work of redemption, as his other works show him to be; but this is to be understood of him as man, and expresses his strong faith and confidence in God, and in his promises as such; and in his human nature he was weak, and was crucified through weakness, and in it he was made strong by the Lord, and was held and upheld by him: and this shows the greatness of the work of man's redemption, that it was such that no mere creature could effect; even Christ as man needed help and assistance in it; and also the concern that all the divine Persons had in it:

therefore shall I not be confounded; or "made ashamed" {z}; though shamefully used, yet not confounded; so as to have nothing to say for himself, or so as to be ashamed of his work; which is perfect in itself, and well pleasing to God:

therefore have I set my face like a flint: or like "steel" {a}; or as an adamant stone, as some {b} render it; hardened against all opposition; resolute and undaunted; constant and unmoved by the words and blows of men; not to be browbeaten, or put out of countenance, by anything they can say or do. He was not dismayed at his enemies who came to apprehend him, though they came to him as a thief, with swords and staves; nor in the high priest's palace, nor in Pilate's hall, in both which places he was roughly used; nor at Satan, and his principalities and powers; nor at death itself, with all its terrors.

And I know that I shall not be ashamed, neither of his ministry, which was with power and authority; nor of his miracles, which were proofs of his deity and Messiahship; nor of his obedience, which was pure, and perfect, and pleasing to God; nor of his sufferings, which were for the sake of his people; nor of the work of redemption and salvation, in which he was not frustrated nor disappointed of his end.

{z} ytmlkn al "non erubui", Pagniuus, Montanus; "non afficior ignominia", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "non pudefactus", Syr. {a} vymlxk "at chalybem". Forerius. {b} "Tanquam saxum adamantinum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 50:8

Ver. 8. He is near that justifieth me,.... His Father was "near" him in his whole state of humiliation; he left him not alone; he was at his right hand, and therefore he was not moved; and "justified" him from all the calumnies of his enemies, or the false charges they brought against him, and from all the sins of his people that were upon him; these he took upon him, and bore them, and made satisfaction for them, upon which he was acquitted; and which is evident by his resurrection from the dead, by his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God; and by the gifts of the Spirit, extraordinary and ordinary, he received for men, and gave unto them; see **1Ti 3:16**.

Who will contend with me? being thus acquitted; will the law and justice of God litigate the point with him? they are both satisfied; will Satan dispute the matter with him? he is foiled, conquered, and destroyed; or will the wicked Jews enter the argument with him? wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

Let us stand together; face to face, if they dare; let them face me, if they can:

who is mine adversary? let him appear, that he may be known:

let him come near to me: and engage with me, if he has courage or skill. This is bidding defiance to all his enemies, and triumphing over them.

Isaiah 50:9

Ver. 9. Behold, the Lord God will help me,.... This is repeated from Isa 50:7, See Gill on "Isa 50:7"; to show the certainty of it, the strength of his faith in it, and to discourage his enemies:

who is he that shall condemn me? make me out a wicked person {c}, prove me guilty, and pass sentence upon me, when thus acquitted and justified by the Lord God? The Apostle Paul seems to have some reference to this passage in **Ro 8:33**,

lo, they all shall waste old as doth a garment; his enemies, those that accused him, the Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests; and those that condemned him, the Jewish sanhedrim, and the Roman governor:

the moth shall eat them up; they shall be like a worn out or motheaten garment, that can never be used more. The phrases denote how secret, insensible, and irrecoverable, their ruin should be, both in their civil and church state, all being abolished and done away.

{c} yneyvry awh ym "quis ipse impium faciet me", Pagninus, Montanus; "impium vel praevaricatorem et iniquum faciet me", Vatablus.

Isaiah 50:10

Ver. 10. Who is among you that feareth the Lord?.... Not with a slavish fear of the awful majesty of God, or of his tremendous judgments, or of wrath to come, but with a filial fear, a fear of the Lord, and his goodness, which is an internal principle in the heart, a reverential affection for God, a godly fear of him; is attended with faith in him, and joy of him; which makes holy, and keeps humble, and takes in the whole worship of God: of men of this character there are but few, and especially there were but few among the Jews at this time which the prophecy refers to; the greatest part were rejecters of Christ, before spoken of, and to; and from whom the Lord turns himself, and addresses these few. There are none that naturally fear the Lord, only such who have the grace bestowed on them; their number is but small, but there are always some in the worst of times, and these are taken notice of by the Lord, **Mal 3:16**,

that obeyeth the voice of his servant: not the prophet, as the Targum adds, and as it is commonly interpreted by the Jewish writers, and others; though some of them say {d} this is "Metatron", a name of the Messiah with them; and indeed he is meant, before spoken of as the Lord's servant, and represented as an obedient one, and afterwards as righteous; see Isa 49:3 and by his "voice" is meant either his Gospel, which is a soul quickening and comforting voice, a charming and alluring one; and which is obeyed, heard, and hearkened to, by his people, externally and internally, when they receive it by faith, and in the love of it; or else his commands, precepts, and ordinances, which love constrains his people to an obedience unto; and where there is the fear of God, there will be hearing of his word, and submission to his ordinances:

that walketh in darkness: not the Lord's servant, but the man that fears the Lord, and obeys his servant's voice, such an one may be in darkness, and walk in it; or "in darknesses" {e}, as in the original; not only in affliction and misery, often expressed by darkness in Scripture, but in desertion, under the hidings of God's face; and which may continue for a while:

and hath no light? or "shining" {f}: not without the light of nature, nor without the light of grace, but without the light of God's countenance shining upon him; without the light of spiritual joy and comfort shining in his heart; and this must be a very distressing case indeed.

Let him trust in the name of the Lord; not in himself, nor in any creature, but in the Lord himself; in the perfections of his nature, his mercy, grace, and goodness; in the name of the Lord, which is a strong tower, and in whom is salvation; in Christ, in whom the name of the Lord is, and whose name is the Lord our Righteousness; and to trust in him, when in the dark, is a glorious act of faith; this is believing in hope against hope.

And stay upon his God; covenant interest continues in the darkest dispensation; God is the believer's God still; and faith is a staying or leaning upon him, as such; a dependence upon his power to protect, on his wisdom to guide, and on his grace, goodness, and all sufficiency, to supply.

{d} Zohar in Exod. fol. 54. 3. {e} Mykvx {f} hgwn "splendor", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vitringa.

Isaiah 50:11

Ver. 11. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire,.... To enlighten and warm yourselves; who, rejecting Christ the Light of the world, and despising the glorious light of his Gospel, and loving darkness rather than light, set up the light of nature and reason as the rule of faith and practice; or the traditions and doctrines of men to be guided by; or their own righteousness for their justification before God, and acceptance with him:

that compass yourselves about with sparks, that fly out of the fire kindled, or are struck out of a flint, which have little light and no heat, and are soon out; which may denote the short lived pleasures and comforts which are had from the creature, or from anything of a man's own:

walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled; an ironical expression, bidding them take all the comfort and satisfaction they could in their own works and doings, and get all the light and heat they could from thence:

this shall ye have of mine hand; which you may depend upon receiving from me, for rejecting me and my righteousness, and trusting in your own:

ye shall lie down in sorrow; instead of being justified hereby, and having peace with God, and entering into heaven, ye shall be pressed down with sore distress, die in your sins, and enter into an everlasting state of condemnation and death; see Mr 16:16. This was the case and state of the Jews, **Ro 9:31**. This is one of the passages the Jews {g} say is repeated by the company of angels, which meet a wicked man at death.

{g} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 104. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 51:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 51

This chapter gives the church and people of God reason to expect comfortable times and certain salvation, though they had many enemies. They are directed to look to Abraham and Sarah, signified by the rock and hole of the pit, and observe how he was called alone, blessed and increased; which should be improved as an argument to strengthen their faith, that God could and would bless and increase his church, though in a low estate, and bring it into a flourishing one, Isa 51:1. They are assured of the publication of the Gospel, expressed by the law, doctrine, and judgment of the Lord; by which means the righteousness and salvation of Christ should be brought nigh to them, as the object of their trust and confidence, Isa 51:4, and also of the perpetuity of his righteousness and salvation, when the heavens, and the earth, and the inhabitants of it, should decay, even their revilers and persecutors, and therefore they need not fear their reproaches and revilings, Isa 51:6, upon which follows a prayer of faith, that the Lord would exert his power as in former times, when he destroyed the Egyptians, and dried up the Red sea for Israel to pass through, the ransomed of the Lord; from whence it might be concluded, that the redeemed of the Lord would be brought into a very comfortable condition again, Isa 51:9 wherefore they had no reason to be afraid of men, since the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth, would deliver, comfort, and establish them, of which he assured them by his prophet, Isa 51:12, and though Jerusalem and her sons were, or would be, in a very distressed condition, through the sword and famine, which is described, Isa 51:17, yet they should be delivered out of it, and their persecutors should be brought into the same, Isa 51:21.

Ver. 1. Hearken unto me, ye that follow after righteousness,.... After having declared the doom of the wicked, and those that trust to their own righteousness, the Lord returns to them that fear him, whom he describes as such that "follow after righteousness"; not the righteousness of the law, it is the character of carnal Israel to follow after that; nor is that attainable in the way it is pursued by such; nor is there any justification by it; nor is following that consistent with seeking the Lord, in the next clause: but the righteousness of Christ is meant; not his essential righteousness as God; nor the righteousness of his office as Mediator; but that which consists of his active and passive obedience; of which he is the author and giver, and is in him as its subject: this is what is commonly called imputed righteousness, an evangelical one, the righteousness of faith, and is justifying: "following after" this supposes a want of one; a sense of that want; a view of this as out of themselves, and in another; a love and liking of it, and a vehement desire for it; and what determines to an eager pursuit of it are its perfection, suitableness, and use: now such persons are called to hearken to the Lord; to the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; to Christ, to his Gospel, and to his ordinances, particularly to what is after said:

ye that seek the Lord: the Lord Christ, for life and salvation; for righteousness and strength; for more grace from him; a greater knowledge of him, and of doctrine from him, as the Targum; and more communion with him; that seek his honour and glory in the world, and to be for ever with him; who seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; that seek him where he may be found, affectionately and sincerely, carefully, diligently, constantly, and for everything they want:

look unto the rock whence ye are hewn; which is in the next verse interpreted of Abraham; so called, not so much for the strength of his faith, as for his old age; when he looked like a hard dry rock, from whom no issue could be expected; and yet from hence a large number of stones were hewn, or a race of men sprung:

and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged; that is, to Sarah, who was for a long time barren, whose womb was shut up, but afterwards opened; and from whom, as from a cistern, (to which a wife is sometimes compared, **Pr 5:15**) flowed the waters of Judah, Isa 48:1 or the Jewish nation. Jerom thinks Christ is meant by both, the Rock of ages, in whom is everlasting strength; to whom men are to look for salvation, righteousness, and strength; and out of whose pierced side flowed blood and water: and in this sense he is followed by Cocceius, who interprets the rock of Christ, the Rock of salvation; out of whose side flowed the church, as out of the hole of a pit or cistern.

Isaiah 51:2

Ver. 2. Look unto Abraham your father,.... Not only the father of the Jewish nation, but of all them that believe: this explains what is meant by the rock, in the former verse, who is to be looked unto for imitation in the exercise of faith, and performance of duty, and for encouragement in distressed times and circumstances:

and unto Sarah that bare you; signified by the pit or cistern; who was not only the mother of the Jewish nation; but such also are her daughters who do well, and tread in her steps: now the very unpromising circumstances these two persons were in, are proposed to be considered by the church in her present ones, for the encouragement of her faith; that as a numerous issue proceeded from them, so also should she become fruitful and multiply:

for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him; he was without issue when he was "called" out of Chaldea into another country, and also the only one of the family; and the Lord "blessed" him not only with flocks and herds, and gold and silver, but with a son in his old age; and so "increased" him, that there sprung from him as many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand by the sea shore innumerable, Heb 11:12. The Septuagint and Arabic versions, between "blessed" and "increased", insert these words, "and I loved him", which are not in the Hebrew text. The Targum is,

"and one was Abraham, alone in the world, and I brought him to my service, and I blessed him, and multiplied him."

Isaiah 51:3

Ver. 3. For the Lord shall comfort Zion,.... The church, by his Spirit, in the ministration of the word, and administration of ordinances; by the donation of the blessings of grace, and by the application of Gospel promises; by the discoveries of his love; by granting his gracious presence; by blessing his word; and by calling many souls, and adding them to his people: and in order to engage the church and people of God to believe God will do this, and that he can and will bless and increase them when in a low estate, the above instances of calling Abraham alone, and the blessing and increasing him, are produced:

he will comfort all her waste places; by rebuilding them, and restoring them to their former lustre and glory: the church may be said to be "waste" and desolate, and like "a wilderness" and "desert", as in the next clauses, when the doctrines of the Gospel are departed from, the ordinances of public worship are not attended to, and the discipline of it is not kept up; when there are great declensions among the Lord's people, in their faith, love, patience, forbearance, self-denial, spirituality, and heavenly mindedness; when divisions and animosities prevail among them; when there is a negligence in their lives and conversations; and there are but few instances of conversion, and a general unconcernedness about those things; but so it will not always be:

and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; the church is a "garden", a small spot, in comparison of the world, distinguished and separated by the grace of God from others; in which are many precious souls, comparable to trees, herbs, and plants; and these do not grow up of themselves, but are planted there by the Lord; and much pains are taken by him, the husbandman, to cultivate this garden: for it is his, the garden of the Lord; it is of his planting; it is his property, and enclosed for his rise; it is an Eden, pleasantly situated on a fruitful hill, Christ Jesus, by the river of divine love; is full of pleasant plants, pleasant to the owner of the garden, and to the saints themselves; it becomes fruitful through the dews of divine grace, the rising of Christ, the sun of righteousness, and the blowing of the south wind, the blessed Spirit; and may be said to be in a very comfortable condition, when the word and ordinances are duly ministered; when the graces of the Spirit are in exercise, and many souls are converted: the consequence of which is,

joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody; for the pure preaching of the Gospel; the feast of fat things made in the holy mountain; the presence of God enjoyed; a lively exercise of grace in the saints; and many souls born again. The Targum is,

"joy and rejoicing shall be found in her; they that offer thanksgiving, and the voice of them that praise;"

all hearts filled with joy and gladness.

Isaiah 51:4

Ver. 4. Hearken unto me, my people,.... His special people, whether Jews or Gentiles, chosen by him, taken into covenant with him; given to Christ, redeemed by him as a peculiar people, and called by his grace; these are exhorted to hearken to him; to his word, as the Targum; see
Isa 51:1:

and give ear unto me, O my nation; not the nation of the Jews only, but the Gentiles; a nation taken out of a nation, even out of all nations; a chosen and a holy nation. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it "kings"; such are made kings and priests unto God: see **1Pe 2:9**,

for a law shall proceed from me; not the Sinai law, but the Gospel; that doctrine that is said to go out of Zion, **Isa 2:3**, as Kimchi rightly observes, who adds, "for the King Messiah shall teach the people to walk in the ways of the Lord; and this shall be after the war of Gog and Magog:"

and this law or doctrine of God comes from Christ, and is dictated, directed, and made effectual by his Spirit:

and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people; this is the same with the law, or doctrine of the Gospel, called "judgment", because it comes from the God of judgment, flows from his wisdom and counsel, and is a declaration of his will; it expands his method of justifying sinners, and is the means of awakening, convincing, and judging the consciences of men, and of informing and establishing the judgments of the saints, and by which the world will be judged at the last day. Now this is

for a light of the people; to enlighten unconverted ones, such who sit in darkness, to turn them from it, and call them out of it into marvellous light; and to illuminate the saints yet more and more, both with respect to doctrine and duty. And this is said to be made to "rest"; which denotes both the continuance of it in the world, until all the ends of it are answered; and the spiritual rest it gives to weary souls now, as well as points out to them that which remains for them hereafter. Though the words may be rendered, "I will cause my judgment to break forth" {h}; like the morning, suddenly, and in a "moment" {i}; to which agrees what follows.

{h} eygra "erumpere faciam", De Dieu. {i} So R. Jonah, in Ben Melech, takes it to have the signification of
egr, "a moment"; as if the sense is, "my judgment I will show every moment from this time, to enlighten the people with it."

Isaiah 51:5

Ver. 5. My righteousness is near,.... These are either the words of God the Father, and to be understood not of his essential righteousness, nor of his vindictive justice; but of the righteousness of his Son, which he calls his own, because he approves and accepts of it, imputes and reckons it to his people, and with it justifies them. The words may be rendered, "my righteous One", as in the Vulgate Latin version; not Cyrus, as Grotius; but Christ, God's righteous servant, who was near to come in the flesh, in order to work righteousness. Or these are the words of Christ, speaking of his own righteousness, which was near being wrought out by him, as it was when he became the end of the law for it, by obeying its precept, and bearing its penalty; and near being revealed in the Gospel, where it is revealed from faith to faith; and near being applied by the blessed Spirit, as it is to all that believe; and is near to be come at, and laid hold on, by faith:

my salvation is gone forth: the "salvation" appointed by the Lord; provided in covenant; wrought out by Christ; applied by the Spirit; and fully enjoyed in heaven: this is "gone forth" in the purpose and decree of God, in prophecy and promise, and in the declaration of the Gospel: or, "my Saviour", as the Vulgate Latin version; the Saviour of God's appointing, providing, and sending. Or these are the words of the Saviour himself, who has wrought it out, in whom it is, and of whom it is to be had; it is done, and ready for sinners to look unto and embrace; it is ready to be revealed, and to be fully enjoyed:

and mine arms shall judge the people; to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed, and the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation; both the arms of Christ are ready to receive them, and these protect and defend them, and judge, condemn, and destroy those that despise it:

the isles shall wait upon me; upon Christ, for his coming; for his salvation and righteousness; for his Gospel, the truths, promises, and blessings of it; and in his house and ordinances, for his presence. This is a prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles, even in the isles of the sea, those afar off, as ours of Great Britain and Ireland, in which there have been and are many waiting upon him:

and on mine arm shall they trust; as on Christ, the arm of the Lord, for salvation; so on the power of Christ for protection and preservation; and on his promises in the Gospel, for their support; which is the arm of the Lord revealed unto them, and yields much support and comfort, and makes known that which is a proper object of trust.

Isaiah 51:6

Ver. 6. Lift up your eyes to the heavens,.... And observe their beauty and order, the constant and regular motion of the heavenly bodies, the firmness and solidity of them:

and look upon the earth beneath; how stable and well founded it is:

for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke; though they are so firm, and have lasted so long, and have kept their constant situation and course, yet they shall melt away like salt, as the word {k} signifies, and disappear in an instant like smoke. Reference seems to be had to the general conflagration, when the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, **2Pe 3:12**:

and the earth shall wax old like a garment; and be folded up, and laid aside, as useless; see Ps 102:26. This seems to design not a substantial destruction of the earth, but of its qualities, when waxing old it shall be renewed and changed. Jarchi interprets these clauses of the princes of the hosts of people in heaven, and the governors of the earth; but the inhabitants thereof are mentioned next:

and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; as the heavens and the earth; be dissolved as they, and in like manner; vanish as smoke, and be seen no more; wax old as a garment, and become useless and unprofitable. De Dieu renders it, "as a louse" {l}, and so this word sometimes signifies; and this sense is approved of by many learned men {m}, and seems best to agree with the text; since neither the heavens and the earth are said to die, nor smoke, or a garment: and it may denote how loathsome and nauseous wicked men are in life, like vermin; and how mean and contemptible in death, their bodies are vile and despicable, and how easily they are destroyed:

but my salvation shall be for ever; that salvation which Christ has wrought out for his people is an everlasting salvation, Isa 14:17 **Heb 5:9** and they that are interested in it will be always safe and happy; and though they shall die as other men, they shall rise again, and enjoy glory, immortality, and eternal life:

and my righteousness shall not be abolished: the righteousness which Christ has brought in for his people, and by which they are justified, is also everlasting, **Da 9:24** or, "shall not be broken" {n}; it answers all the demands of law and justice, and stands firm against all the accusations and charges of men and devils: or, "shall not fail" {o}, as the Septuagint; its virtue to justify will always continue; it will answer for the saints in a time to come, even at the last judgment. The Targum is, it

"shall not tarry;"

being near to be wrought out and revealed, Isa 51:5.

{k} wxlmn aliwsontai, "Symmachus". It is expressive of corruption and consumption, as Ben Melech observes; which is the sense of salt land, not inhabited Jer xvii 6. It denotes, as Gussetius (Ebr. Comment. p. 469.) thinks, the fluctuating and confused agitation of the heavens, like those of the salt sea, and as smoke over the head. {l} Nk-wmk "tanquam pediculus", De Dieu; so the word is used in Exod. viii. 16, 17, 18. "instar vermiculi", Vitringa. {m} Calvinus, Gataker, Gussetius. {n} txt "conteretur", Pagninus, Montanus; "atteretur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. So Ben Melech interprets it, "shall not be broken". {o} ou mh ekleiph, Sept. "non deficiet", V. L.

Isaiah 51:7

Ver. 7. Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness,.... The righteousness of God, and of his law; the purity of his nature, what righteousness is agreeable to him, and required by him; the imperfection and insufficiency of a man's own righteousness, and the glory and fulness of Christ's righteousness, revealed in the Gospel; and so know that, as to approve of it, follow after it, lay hold upon it, believe in it, and rejoice in it, as their justifying righteousness:

the people in whose heart is my law; not in their heads only, but in their hearts; having an understanding of it, an affection for it, and the bias of their minds toward it; being written there by the finger of the divine Spirit, according to the covenant of grace, Jer 31:33, and not in tables of stone, as the law of Moses, and of which this is not to be understood; but of the law or doctrine of Christ, even the everlasting Gospel; which coming with power, and the Holy Ghost, into the hearts of the Lord's people, is received by them with great approbation and affection, in faith and love; they obey it from their hearts, and are cast into the mould of it:

fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings; either of the Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees, for renouncing a pharisaical righteousness, and embracing the righteousness of Christ; for rejecting the traditions of the elders, the rituals of the ceremonial law, and the doctrine of justification by the works of the moral law; and for cordially receiving the pure Gospel of Christ: or of idolatrous Heathens, from whom they were called, and that for leaving the religion of their country, and the gods of their fathers, and professing the one only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent: or of the antichristian worshippers, and of the man of sin at the head of them, who belches out his blasphemies against God and Christ, his tabernacle and saints; but neither their shocking blasphemies, nor spiteful taunts and jeers, nor menacing words, nor even cruel persecutions, should deter the saints from the profession of Christ and his Gospel.

Isaiah 51:8

Ver. 8. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment,.... Either these reproaches, or the persons that reproach; as a garment is eaten by the moth, secretly, slowly, surely, and at last completely, so that it becomes utterly good for nothing; so secret, gradual, sure and certain, complete and perfect, will be the ruin and destruction of the enemies of Christ and his people:

and the worm shall eat them like wool; or as a woollen garment, which is most liable to be motheaten; for the moth and worm are much the same, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; who say, that in the Arabic tongue the moth is called by a name much of the same sound with this word in the text; and the sense is, that as a woollen garment is eaten and consumed by vermin, so wicked men will be destroyed by the vengeance of the Lord upon them; for the moth and worm design both the judgments of God upon them in this world, and his wrath in the other, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched:

but my righteousness shall be for ever; to justify his people and secure them from wrath and ruin:

and my salvation from generation to generation; it will abide through the endless ages of eternity, and be the portion of the saints for ever, of which they are now heirs; is nearer than when they first believed, and is ready to be revealed, and will be everlastingly enjoyed by them, firm against all the accusations and charges of men and devils: or, "shall not fail" {o}, as the Septuagint; its virtue to justify will always continue; it will answer for the saints in a time to come, even at the last judgment. The Targum is, it

"shall not tarry;"

being near to be wrought out and revealed, Isa 51:5.

{o} ou mh ekleiph, Sept. "non deficiet", V. L.

Isaiah 51:9

Ver. 9. Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord,.... The Septuagint and Arabic versions take the words to be an address to Jerusalem; and the Syriac version to Zion, as in Isa 51:17, but wrongly: they are, as Jarchi says, a prayer of the prophet, or it may be rather of the church represented by him; and are addressed either to God the Father, who, when he does not immediately appear on the behalf of his people, is thought by them to be asleep, though he never slumbers nor sleeps, but always keeps a watchful eye over them; but this they not apprehending, call upon him to "awake"; which is repeated, to show their sense of danger, and of their need of him, and their vehement importunity; and that he would clothe himself with strength, and make it visible, exert his power, and make bare his arm on their behalf: or they are an address to Christ, who is the power of God, that he would appear in the greatness of strength, show himself strong in favour of his people, and take to himself his great power and reign:

awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old; which is mentioned not only as an argument to prevail with the Lord that he would do as he had formerly done; but as an argument to encourage the faith of the church, that as he had done, he could and would still do great things for them:

art thou not it that hath cut Rahab; that is, Egypt, so called either from the pride and haughtiness of its inhabitants; or from the large extent of the country; or from the form of it, being in the likeness of a pear, as some have thought; see Ps 87:4 and the sense is, art thou not that very arm, and still possessed of the same power, that cut or "hewed" to pieces, as the word {p} signifies, the Egyptians, by the ten plagues sent among them?

and wounded the dragon? that is, Pharaoh king of Egypt, so called from the river Nile in Egypt, where he reigned, and because of his fierceness and cruelty, see Eze 29:3. So the Targum interprets it of Pharaoh and his army, who were strong as a dragon. And that same mighty arm that destroyed Egypt, and its tyrannical king, can and will destroy that great city, spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, and the beast that has two horns like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon, and to whom the dragon has given his seat, power, and authority; and the rather this may be believed, since the great red dragon has been cast out, or Rome Pagan has been destroyed by him, Re 11:8.

{p} tbuxhm "quod excidit", Piscator; "excidens", Montanas.

Isaiah 51:10

Ver. 10. Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep,.... That is, the Red sea, and the deep waters of it; as it did, by causing a strong east wind to blow, which drove the sea back, and made it a dry land, in the midst of which the children of Israel walked as on dry land, Ex 14:21 and the same arm and mighty power can and will dry up the waters of the river Euphrates, to prepare the way of the kings of the east, Re 16:12:

that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over? divided the waters of the sea, made a path through them for the Israelites that were redeemed out of Egyptian bondage and slavery, to pass over, and so to go to Canaan's land.

Isaiah 51:11

Ver. 11. Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return,.... Or "and", or "so" {q}. In like manner, and as sure as the Israelites had a way made for them through the sea to pass over, so sure shall all those that are redeemed by the blood of Christ from sin, Satan, the law, death, and hell, be gathered out of the nations of the world, and from the antichristian states, and shall be converted and turn to the Lord. Or these words are a continuation of the above prayer, as Jarchi, "let them return"; or rather are an answer to it, and a promise that they should:

and come with singing unto Zion; to the Gospel church, and join themselves to it, praising God for his grace in calling and converting them, adoring the riches of his distinguishing love, and singing the new song of redeeming grace; and hereafter they shall return from the grave, and come to Zion above, singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb:

and everlasting joy shall be upon their head; visible in the present state, more so hereafter, when there will be upon them an eternal weight of glory, a crown of life and righteousness:

they shall obtain joy and gladness; by having the presence of God, communion with him, views of interest in Christ, and the gracious influences of the blessed Spirit; all these they enjoy in the church now, but in full perfection hereafter:

and sorrow and mourning shall flee away: either for sin, having the discoveries

and application of forgiving love; or on account of desertion, now enjoying the light of God's countenance; or by reason of persecution, which in the latter day glory will entirely cease. But all this will be most fully accomplished in the New Jerusalem church state, and ultimate glory, Re 21:4.
See Gill on "Isa 35:10".

{q} yywdpw "et nunc", V. L. "ita", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. And Ben Melech observes, that w "and", is in the room of zk, "thus".

Isaiah 51:12

Ver. 12. I, even I, am he that comforteth you,.... This is an answer to the prayer of the prophet, or the church by him, in which the Lord promises not only assistance and help, but comfort; not only to exert his power and show his great strength by making bare his arm; but to open his heart, unbosom himself, and show his great love and strong affection for them; and so administer divine comforts unto them, giving more than was asked for: and he promises to do it himself, not by his prophets and ministers, word and ordinances, though these are the usual means; but he himself would do it by his Spirit and grace, and the immediate discoveries of his love; and which he repeats, to show the certainty of it, as well as to point out to their view the great Comforter himself; which is an instance of amazing condescension, and could not fail of exciting admiration and thankfulness in them; see **2Co 1:3**,

who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die; a poor faint hearted creature indeed, to be afraid of a frail mortal dying man; which is the case of every man, even of the greatest of men, of the kings and princes of the earth, who all die like other men; the most proud and haughty tyrants, the fierce and furious persecutors of the people of God. Perhaps the Roman Pagan persecutors may be had in view, whose edicts were very terrible to the first Christians, whose persecutions were very violent and furious, and the tortures and deaths they put them to were very dreadful; and which put them in great fear though they had no reason to fear them that could destroy the body, and do no more; and the rather, since these were mortal men, and did die, and their persecutions came to an end. Or it may be, the man of sin, the son of perdition, antichrist, is here referred to, who in his time has made all to tremble at him, Re 13:3 but must die, and his power too, and will be destroyed with the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming; and therefore his church and people have no reason to be afraid of him:

and of the son of man, which shall be made as grass; as weak as that, which cannot stand before the scythe, is cut down, and tossed about, and trampled upon, and made hay of, and becomes the food of beasts, Ps 90:5. Or the words may be rendered, "and of the son of man, to whom grass shall be given"; {r} which if understood of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, of whom the people of the Jews were afraid, and who was a type of antichrist, it was literally true of him, **Da 4:32**.

{r} Nyny ryux "herba dabitur", Pagninus, Montanus.

Isaiah 51:13

Ver. 13. And forgettest the Lord thy Maker,.... That he is thy Maker, and therefore is able to protect and preserve thee; when the fear of man prevails God is forgotten, his power, his providence, his promises, and past instances of divine favour and goodness; were these more frequently recollected, considered, and thought of, they would prove an antidote against the fear of men; and especially when it is observed, that he that is our Maker is he

that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; these are amazing works of his hands; and what is it that he cannot do that has made these? these he upholds and maintains in being, and does all things in them as he pleases, and overrules all for his own glory and his people's good, and therefore they have nothing to fear from men; and yet they are afraid of them, such is their distrust and unbelief:

and hast feared continually every day; not only at some certain times, when the enemy has appeared very formidable, and threatened with destruction, or some terrible rumour has been spread, but every day, every hour, and every moment; and to be always in a panic must be very uncomfortable living, as well as very dishonourable:

because of the fury of the oppressor; either the king of Babylon, or antichrist:

as if he were ready to destroy: had drawn his sword, and just going to give the fatal blow:

and where, or "but where", is the fury of the oppressor? where's the fury of

Pharaoh, that great oppressor of God's Israel formerly? it is gone and vanished like smoke: where's the fury of Sennacherib king of Assyria, and his army, that threatened Jerusalem with ruin? it was over in a short time, in one night the whole host, or the greater part of it, were destroyed by an angel: and where is, or will be, the fury of the king of Babylon? it will not last always; nor the fury of the antichristian oppressor.

Isaiah 51:14

Ver. 14. The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed,.... The time hastens on, or God will hasten the time, for the release either of the captive Jews in literal Babylon, or of his people in mystical Babylon; or they that are in exile and captivity, as soon as ever opportunity offers for their release, will take it, and make no delay: though some understand the words by way of complaint, as if the persons spoken of were impatient, and could not wait the proper time of their deliverance:

and that he should not die in the pit; in captivity, which was like a pit or grave:

nor that his bread should fail: while in the pit or prison, or on his way home. Musculus interprets all this of Pharaoh, whom he supposes to be the oppressor in the preceding verse, and renders the words,

who hastened going to open, lest he should die in the destruction; who, when he saw the firstborn slain, hastened to open and let Israel go, and was urgent upon them to be gone immediately, lest he and all his people should perish in that calamity:

nor did his bread fail; the bread of the people delivered out of Egypt, so he understands it, but were provided with bread from heaven, all the while they were in the wilderness; and yet this instance of divine power and goodness was greatly forgotten in later times. Jerome applies the whole to Christ, who should quickly come; going and treading down his enemies; opening the way of victory; saving those that are converted, and giving the bread of doctrine to them: but the words are a promise to exiles and prisoners for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, that they should be quickly loosed and set free, and not die in prison, nor want bread, neither corporeal nor spiritual.

Isaiah 51:15

Ver. 15. But I am the Lord thy God that divided the sea, whose waves roared,.... Referring to the dividing of the Red sea by a violent wind, at which time the waves of it doubtless roared till they were made to stand quietly, as a wall on the right and left, for the Israelites to pass through, as in Isa 51:10. Or this is to be understood of the power of God at any time in stilling and quieting the sea when it rages; which signification the word {s} here used has, as Aben Ezra observes; which power is expressed by a rebuke or reproof of it. And so the Targum,

"I am the Lord thy God, that rebuketh the sea:"

and in like manner the Syriac version; see Ps 106:9 with which compare **Mt 8:26**. Now he that can do, and oftentimes has done this, can rebuke, restrain, and still the fury of the oppressors, the rage of the persecutors, Rome Pagan or Papal, and deliver out of their hands, Ps 65:7:

the Lord of hosts is his name: the Lord of armies in heaven and earth, and therefore is able to do these things in a natural, civil, and religious sense.

{s} egr "qui tranquillat" Gakater; "faciens quiescere", so some in Vitringa; and the word has the signification of rest and quietness in ver 4.

Isaiah 51:16

Ver. 16. And I have put my words in thy mouth,.... His promises and his truths, either in the mouth of his church, and people for them, both to preserve and transmit to future generations, and to publish and declare to the comfort of each other, Isa 59:21 or to the Prophet Isaiah, to make known to the people of Israel; or to Christ himself, the great Prophet in Israel, by whom grace and truth are come, and by whom God has spoken all his mind and will, and in whom all the promises are yea and amen. The doctrines of God, and not men, as appears by their truth, purity, harmony and efficacy; they are the words of faith and sound doctrine, of peace and reconciliation, of pardon and righteousness, of salvation and eternal life; and these were put into the mouth of Christ, to be published and declared by him as the great Prophet of the church; for which he was abundantly qualified as man and Mediator, by being anointed with the Holy Ghost, without measure, and by having the tongue of the learned given him: hence he declares, that the doctrine he preached was not his own as man, but his Father's, and that he spoke nothing of himself, but what he heard of him, and was taught by him, and had a commandment from him to say; and which words or doctrines he delivered to his apostles, and put into their mouths to make known unto men; see **Joh 7:16**.

And have covered thee in the shadow of my hand; protected and defended both the church and its members, Christ and his ministers, his interest and kingdom, his Gospel, and the truths of it, with its ordinances; and continued them from age to age, notwithstanding the virulence and violence of false teachers and persecutors, see Isa 49:2,

that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth; form and establish Gospel churches in the world, in the Roman empire, and elsewhere, both by the words and doctrines of the Gospel; by the ministry of the apostles, and other preachers of the word; and by the hand of almighty power, the efficacious grace of God attending the same: so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions connect this clause with the former,

by which I have settled the heavens, &c; these are called "heavens", for their purity, brightness, and glory they have from the Lord; for the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, which are from heaven, and not of men; and for the true members of them, which are men born from above, and partakers of the heavenly calling; and for the ministers of the Gospel, those stars of light, which here hold forth the light of the divine word to men; and where the sun of righteousness arises with healing in his wings, and where the clouds drop down the rain of heavenly doctrine: these are said to be "planted", as if they were gardens, as the churches of Christ are, planted with all kind of pleasant plants, with trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified; and these, being watered with the dew of heaven, flourish and bring forth fruit: but planting rather denotes the stability and duration of the churches of Christ, which will continue as long as the days of heaven: or "that thou mayest plant" {t}; referring either to the ministers of the word, who are instruments in planting churches, **1Co 3:7**, or to Christ, the chief master builder and founder of them; though this may principally respect the making of the new heaven, and the new earth, which will be of Christ's forming and making, Re 21:1 for it is not to be understood of the first making of the heavens and earth in a natural sense, or in a political sense of the settling and establishing of the Jewish nation:

and say unto Zion, thou art my people; the church of God, consisting whether of Jews or Gentiles, especially the latter, who once were not, but now, being

called through the ministry of the word, are the people of God: and more particularly this will be declared and made manifest in the New Jerusalem state, when all the elect of God will be gathered in,
Re 21:3.

{t} ejnl "ut plantes", V. L.

Isaiah 51:17

Ver. 17. Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem,.... As persons out of a sleep, or out of a stupor, or even out of the sleep of death; for this respects a more glorious state of the church, the Jerusalem, the mother of us all, after great afflictions; and especially if it respects the more glorious state of all on earth, signified by the New Jerusalem, that will be preceded by the resurrection of the dead, called the first resurrection, when the saints will awake out of the dust of the earth, and stand upon their feet; see Da 12:2, though the last glorious state of the church, in the spiritual reign of Christ, is also expressed by the rising of the witnesses slain, by their standing on their feet, and by their ascension to heaven, Re 11:11, before which will be a time of great affliction to the church, as here:

which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury; it is no unusual thing in Scripture for the judgments of God, upon a nation and people, or on particular persons, to be signified by a cup, and especially on wicked men, as the effect of divine wrath,
Ps 11:6. Here it signifies that judgment that begins at the house and church of God, **1Pe 4:17**, which looks as if it arose from the wrath and fury of an incensed God: and though it may greatly intend the wrathful persecutions of men, yet since they are by the permission and will of God, and are bounded and limited by him, they are called "his cup", and said to come from his hand; and the people of God take them, or consider them as coming by his appointment:

thou hast drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out; alluding to excessive drinking, which brings a trembling of limbs, and sometimes paralytic disorders on men, and to the thick sediments in the bottom of the cup, which are fixed there, as the word {u} signifies, and are not easily got out, and yet every drop and every dreg are drunk up; signifying, that the whole portion of sufferings, allotted to the Lord's people, shall come upon them, even what are most disagreeable to them, and shall fill them with trembling and astonishment.

{u} yebq ta "crassamentum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vitringa.

Isaiah 51:18

Ver. 18. There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth,.... Still alluding to drunken persons staggering in the streets, that can scarcely stand on their feet, and do not know their way, and yet have none to hold them up and guide them, not even of their friends and relations:

neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up; to hold her up from falling, of which there is danger by reeling to and fro, through the intoxicating liquor; and this, either for want of sons, these being dead, or through want of filial affection in them. This was true of Jerusalem, literally understood, at the time of her last destruction by the Romans, when she had no king, priest, nor prophet, to counsel and direct, defend and protect her; and will be the case of the church of God at the slaying of the witnesses, when their own friends will be shy of them, and refuse or neglect to do any kind offices, or show any respect unto them, signified by not suffering their dead bodies to be put into graves, Re 11:9.

Isaiah 51:19

Ver. 19. These two things are come unto thee,.... Affliction from the hand of God, though by means of enemies, and no friends to help, support, and comfort, as before hinted: or else this respects what follows, after it is said,

who shall be sorry for thee? lament or bemoan thee? they of the earth will rejoice and be glad, and others will not dare to show any concern outwardly, whatever inward grief may be in their breasts, Re 11:10,

desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword; which may be the two things before mentioned, for though there are four words, they are reducible to two things, desolation, which is the sword, and by it, and destruction, which is the famine, and comes by that, as Kimchi observes: or the words may be rendered thus, "desolation, and destruction, even the famine and the sword"; so that there is no need of making these things four, and of considering them as distinct from the other two, as the Targum makes them, which paraphrases the whole thus,

"two tribulations come upon thee, O Jerusalem, thou canst not arise; when four shall come upon thee, spoiling and breach, and the famine and the sword, there shall be none to comfort thee but I."

All this was literally true of Jerusalem, both at the destruction of it by the Chaldeans and by the Romans, and will be mystically true of the church at the slaying of the witnesses by the sword of antichrist; when there will be a famine, not of bread, nor of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord; and which will bring great devastation and desolation on the interest of Christ:

by whom shall I comfort thee? there being no ministry of the word, nor administration of the ordinances, the usual means of comfort, the witnesses being slain; see **La 1:9**.

Isaiah 51:20

Ver. 20. Thy sons have fainted,.... Through want of food, or at the desolation made, and have no spirit in them to appear in the interest of true religion:

they lie at the head of all the streets; emaciated by famine, and not able to walk, but drop down in the streets, and there lie panting and pining away; or slain by the enemy; or with the famine, and the sword, as Aben Ezra, and none to bury them; so the dead bodies of the witnesses shall lie in the street of the great city unburied, Re 11:8

as a wild bull in a net; that is slain, being taken; or, if alive, however it flings about and struggles, cannot extricate itself: so it may denote such that survive the calamity, yet held under the power of the enemy; and though inwardly fretting, and very impatient, cannot help themselves, no more than such a creature taken in a toil or net; which Aben Ezra takes to be a fowl, to which a net best agrees; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "as the oryx snared"; which Drusius says is the name of a bird; though it is used for a wild goat. So Aristotle {w} makes mention of it as of the goat kind, and says it has two hoofs, or is cloven footed, and has one horn; and Bochart {x} takes it to be the same with the unicorn of the Scriptures, or the "monoceros"; and, according to some writers {y}, it is a very fierce and bold creature, and not easily taken; and therefore it is no wonder, when it is in the net, that it strives, though in vain, and till it is weary, to get out of it, and yet is obliged to lie there. But Kimchi says the word here used signifies a wild ox or bull {z}, as we render it: in Hebrew it is called "tho" or "thoa", and very probably is the same with the "thoos" mentioned by Aristotle {a} and Pliny {b}, and is rendered a wild ox in De 14:5, where it is reckoned among sheep, goats, and deer. It is strange that the Septuagint should render it, "as beet half boiled"; or flaccid and withering, as the Syriac and Arabic versions, taking it for an herb: and as much out of the way is the Targum, which renders it,

"as broken bottles:"

they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of thy God; that is, Jerusalem's sons, the members of the church of God, professors of religion, now full of calamities, which may seem to flow from the wrath of God, and be rebukes in fury, when they are only in love, **Re 3:19** and from whence they shall be delivered, and their enemies punished, as follows.

{w} Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 1. {x} Hierozoic. l. 3. c. 27, 28. {y} Oppian. de Cyneget. l. 2. apud Gataker. & Sanctium in loc. "saevus oryx", Martial. l. 13. Epigr. 95. {z} And so it is explained in Gloss. in T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 117. 1. {a} Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 17. {b} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 34.

Isaiah 51:21

Ver. 21. Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted,.... By Babylon, by antichrist and his followers; hear, for thy comfort, the following prophecy:

and drunken, but not with wine; not with wine in a literal sense; nor with the wine of the fornication of the whore of Rome; nor with idolatry, as the kings of the earth are said to be, Re 17:2 but, as the Targum expresses it, with tribulation; with afflictions at the hand of God, and persecutions from men.

Isaiah 51:22

Ver. 22. Thus saith the Lord, the Lord and thy God,.... He who is Lord of all, the eternal Jehovah, who can do all things, and who is the covenant God of his people, and will do all things he has purposed and promised, and which are for their good and his glory; of which they may be assured from the consideration of these names and titles of his, for which reason they seem to be used and mentioned:

that pleadeth the cause of his people, which is a righteous one, as he will make it appear to be, by delivering them out of their troubles, and by avenging their bodies.

Behold, I have taken out of thy hand the cup of trembling; which he himself had put there, Isa 51:17, and which none but himself could take out; not she herself, nor any of her sons, nor indeed could they give her any relief; but when the Lord's time is come to favour his people, he himself will remove it:

even the dregs of the cup of my fury; it shall all be clean taken away, nothing of it shall remain:

thou shalt no more drink it again; or "any longer" {c}; after the slaying of the witnesses, and their rising again, there will be no more persecution of the church of God; see **Isa 2:9**.

{c} dwe al "non ultra", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Isaiah 51:23

Ver. 23. And I will put it into the hand of them that afflict me,.... As the Lord did to literal Babylon, Jer 25:15, so will he do to mystical Babylon; he will retaliate upon her all the evils she has done to others, and destroy them that destroyed the earth; see
Re 11:18,

which have said to thy soul, bow down, that we may go over; who not only afflicted the bodies, but tyrannized over the souls and consciences of men; obliging them to a compliance with their idolatrous practices, to bow down and worship the beast, and his image; and thereby acknowledge subjection to the see of Rome, and its authority over them: the allusion seems to be the custom of the eastern kings trampling upon the necks of their conquered enemies, Jos 10:24, and the pope of Rome has, in a literal sense, trampled upon the necks even of kings and emperors.

And thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over; which expresses the low estate of the church of Christ, or holy city, while trodden under foot by the Gentiles during the reign of antichrist, Re 11:2, and may also denote the sneaking outward compliance of some through the force of persecution, when they did not cordially embrace, nor with conscience, and from their heart, submit to the authority of the church of Rome; but though the people of God are represented in such a low and grovelling condition, yet they shall arise out of it, and come into a very flourishing one, as the next chapter shows.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 52:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 52

This chapter is a prophecy of the glorious state of the church in the latter day, typified by the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon. The church, under the names of Zion and Jerusalem, is exhorted to awake and clothe herself with strength, and with beautiful garments, to shake off her dust, and loose her bands, since she should become a pure and separate people, Isa 52:1 and whereas the Lord's people had been afflicted formerly by the Egyptians, and more lately by the Assyrians, a free redemption is promised them; and the rather they might expect it, since the Lord was no gainer by their affliction, but a loser in his name and honour, as well as they distressed, Isa 52:3. And it is suggested, that the knowledge of the Lord should be spread, the good tidings of peace and salvation be delightfully published, and that the ministers of the Gospel should have clear light, and be harmonious and unanimous in the publishing of it, Isa 52:6. Upon which the waste places of Jerusalem are called upon to rejoice, both because of the restoration of the Jews, and the conversion of the Gentiles, **Isa 2:9**. And the people of God are called to go out of Babylon, the manner of their departure is directed, and something said for their encouragement, Isa 52:11. And the chapter is concluded with some account of the Messiah, of his humiliation and exaltation, and of his work and office, Isa 52:13, and which are enlarged upon in the next chapter, which ought properly to begin with these last verses.

Ver. 1. Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion,.... Aben Ezra says, all interpreters agree that this prophecy is yet to be fulfilled, and so it is: by Zion is meant the church in Gospel times, in the latter day glory, which is called upon to awake out of sleep; and this repeated to show what a deep sleep had fallen on her, the danger she was in through it, and the vehemency of the speaker, or the great concern the Lord had for her; and this is the very state and case of the church of Christ now, and the prophecy respects our times, and what follow. There is a general carnal security, and spiritual drowsiness, which has seized the people of God; a non-exercise of grace among them, at least it is not a lively one; a sluggishness to and in duty; a contentment in the external performance of it; an indifference about the cause of Christ, and power of religion; and an unconcernedness about the truths and ordinances of the Gospel, the discipline of Christ's house, and the honour of it; which the enemy takes the advantage of, and sows his tares of false doctrine and worship; wherefore it is high time to "awake" out of sleep, and to "put on strength", or "clothe" {e} with it, and do the Lord's will, and work and oppose the enemy. Saints are weak in themselves, but they have strength in Christ, and on him should they wait, to him should they look, and on him should they exercise faith for it; they should put on the whole armour of God, clothe themselves with it, resume courage, pluck up a good heart and spirit, and not fear any difficulties, dangers, and enemies.

Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; another name for the Gospel church, see Heb 12:22, and which is called "the holy city"; referring to the times in the latter day, when holiness shall more appear and prevail in the churches; when saints shall be built up in their holy faith, and more closely attend to holy ordinances, and walk in an holy conversation and godliness; and especially the New Jerusalem church state will answer to this name, and so it is called,
Re 21:2, and when the saints will "put on" their "beautiful garments", as on holy days, and times of rejoicing; their mourning will be over, and all signs of it shall be laid aside; the witnesses will no more prophesy in sackcloth; the marriage of the Lamb will be come; the bride made ready, being clothed with fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints, the garments of Christ's salvation, and the robe of his righteousness; which are the beautiful garments here meant, which serve for many, and answer all the purposes of a garment; as to cover nakedness, preserve from the inclemency of the weather, keep warm and comfortable, beautify and adorn; and beautiful they are, being all of a piece, large and long, pure and spotless, rich and glorious, and which make those beautiful that wear them; and though, being once on, they are never off again; yet saints sometimes are remiss in their acts of faith in putting them on, to which they are here exhorted; see Re 19:7,

for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean; this shows that the prophecy cannot be understood of Jerusalem literally, nor of the times of the Babylonish captivity, and deliverance from it, since after this the uncircumcised and the unclean did enter into it, Antiochus Epiphanes, Pompey, and the Romans; but of the mystical Jerusalem, the church of Christ, in the latter day, the spiritual reign of Christ; when the Gentiles, the Papists, meant by the uncircumcised and the unclean, shall no more "come against" them, as the words {f} may be rendered, and persecute them; and when there will be no more a mixture of Papists and Protestants, of heretics and orthodox, of hypocrites and saints; and when there will be few or none under a profession but will have the truth of grace in them; when every pot and vessel in Jerusalem will be holiness to the Lord, and the Heathen will be perished out of the land, Zec 14:21, and especially this will be true in the personal reign of Christ, in the New Jerusalem church state, into which nothing shall enter that defiles, or makes an abomination, and a lie, Re 21:27.

{e} Kze yvbl endusai thn iscun bou, Sept.; "induere fortitudine tua", V. L. "induere robur tunm", Vitringa. {f} Kb aby "non veniet contra te", Gataker; "non perget invadere te", Junius & Tremellius; "non pergent", Piscator.

Isaiah 52:2

Ver. 2. Shake thyself from the dust,.... Or "the dust from thee" {g}, in which she had sat, or rolled herself as a mourner; or where she had been trampled upon by her persecutors and oppressors; but now being delivered from them, as well as from all carnal professors and false teachers, she is called upon to shake herself from the dust of debasement and distress, of false doctrine, superstition, and will worship, in every form and shape, a great deal of which adheres to those churches called reformed.

Arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem; or "sit up", as it may be rendered; arise from thy low estate, from the ground and dust where thou art cast;

"and sit upon the throne of thy glory,"

so the Targum: it denotes the exaltation of the church from a low to a high estate, signified by the ascension of the witnesses to heaven, Re 11:12. Some render it, "arise, O captivity"; or "captive" {h}; so the word is used in Isa 49:24 and agrees with what follows:

loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion; or loose thou "the bands off thy neck from thee"; which seems to denote the people of

God in mystical Babylon, a little before its destruction, who will be called out of it, as they afterwards are in this chapter; and to throw off the Romish yoke, and release themselves from that captivity and bondage they have been brought into by the man of sin, who now himself shall be led captive, Re 13:10.

{g} rpem yrenth "exute pulverem a te", Sanctius, Gataker. {h} ybv ymwq "surge captivas", Forerius; so Ben Melech interprets it.

Isaiah 52:3

Ver. 3. For thus saith the Lord, ye have sold yourselves for nought,.... As Ahab did to work wickedness; as men do freely, and get nothing by it; for there is nothing got in the service of sin, Satan, and antichrist, or by being slaves and vassals to them; not profit, but loss; not pleasure, but pain; not honour, but shame; not liberty, but bondage; not riches and wealth, but poverty and want, which Popery always brings into those countries and people where it obtains.

And ye shall be redeemed without money; in like manner as our spiritual and eternal redemption from sin, Satan, and the law, the world, death, and hell, is obtained; not without the price of the precious blood of the Lamb, but without such corruptible things as silver and gold, **1Pe 1:18** and without any price paid to those by whom we are held captive, but to God, against whom we have sinned, whose law we have broken, and whose justice must be satisfied; and the blood of Christ is a sufficient price to answer all: hence redemption, though it cost Christ much, is entirely free to us; so will the redemption of the church, from the bondage and slavery of antichrist, be brought about by the power of God undeserved by them; not through their merits, and without any ransom price paid to those who held them captives.

Isaiah 52:4

Ver. 4. For thus saith the Lord God,.... The Lord confirms what he had before said of redeeming his people without money, who had been sold for nothing, by past instances of his deliverance of them:

my people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; Jacob and his family went down there of their own accord, where they were supplied with food in a time of famine, and settled in a very fruitful part of it; but when they were oppressed, and cried to the Lord, he appeared for them, and delivered them:

and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause; which some understand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who they say was an Assyrian, or so called, because of his power and cruelty; or it being usual to call any enemy of the Jews an Assyrian: or rather the words may be rendered, "but the Assyrian", &c. Pharaoh had some pretence for what he did; the Israelites came into his country, he did not carry them captive; they received many benefits and favours there, and were settled in a part of his dominions, so that he might claim them as his subjects, and refuse to dismiss them; but the Assyrians had nothing to do with them; could not make any pretence why they should invade them, and oppress them; and therefore if the Lord had delivered them from the one, he would also deliver them from the other. This may be understood of the several invasions and captivities by Pul, Tiglathpileser, Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, and even Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; Babylon having been the metropolis of Assyria, and a branch of the Assyrian empire, though now translated to the Chaldeans: or the sense is, and the Assyrians also oppressed Israel, as well as the Egyptians, without any just reason, and I delivered them out of their hands; and so I will redeem my church and people out of antichristian bondage and slavery.

Isaiah 52:5

Ver. 5. Now therefore what have I here, saith the Lord, that my people is taken away for nought?.... Or what do I get by it, that my people should be taken and held in captivity without cause? I am no gainer, but a loser by it, as it afterwards appears; and therefore why should I sit still, and delay the deliverance of my people any longer? but as I have delivered Israel out of Egypt, and the Jews from Babylon, so will I deliver my people out of mystical Babylon, spiritually called Sodom and Egypt.

They that rule over them cause them to howl, saith the Lord; they that hath carried them captive, and exercised a tyrannical power over them, cause them to howl under their bondage and slavery, as the Israelites formerly in Egypt; wherefore the Lord is moved with compassion to them, and since neither he nor they were gainers, but losers by their captivity, he determines to deliver them: or it may be rendered, "they cause its rulers to howl" {i}, or his rulers howl; not the common people only, but their governors, civil and ecclesiastical; so Aben Ezra interprets it not of Heathen rulers, but of the great men of Israel:

and my name continually every day is blasphemed; by ascribing their extent of power and authority, their dominions and conquests, not to the Lord, but to their idols, whom they worship, to such or such a saint; opening their mouths in blasphemy against God, his name and tabernacle, and his people, Re 13:5. The Targum is,

"and always, all the day, because of the worship of my name, they provoke."

The Septuagint is, "for you always my name is blasphemed among the Gentiles"; see **Ro 2:24**.

{i} wlylyhy wlvm "dominatores ejus ululare facient", Montanus; "dominus ipsius ejulant", Junius & Tremellius, Vitringa; "ululant", Piscator; "qui habent potestatem in eum ejulant", Cocceius.

Isaiah 52:6

Ver. 6. Therefore my people shall know my name,.... His nature and perfections; his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises to them; his power in delivering them out of their bondage; and his justice in punishing their enemies.

Therefore they shall know on that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I; they shall then see, when the people of God are delivered from the antichristian slavery and bondage, and when Babylon is fallen, that all the promises God has spoken are yea and amen; that Jesus Christ is the true and faithful witness; and that these are his true and faithful sayings, which he has spoken.

Isaiah 52:7

Ver. 7. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,.... Not of the messenger that brought the news of Cyrus's proclamation of liberty to the Jews; rather of John the Baptist, the forerunner of our Lord; best of Christ himself, the messenger of the covenant, who was anointed to preach glad tidings to the meek, and by whom grace, peace, life, and salvation came; and also of the apostles of Christ, for to Gospel times are these words applied, and to more persons than one, Ro 10:15, who were not only seen "upon the mountains" of the land of Israel, as the Targum paraphrases it, where both Christ and his apostles preached, but upon the mountains of the Gentile world; and may denote the pains they took, the circuit they made, and the difficulties they had to encounter with; and the publicness of their ministrations, which lay in bringing "good tidings" of the incarnate Saviour, of God manifest in the flesh, for the word {k} here used has the signification of flesh in it; of good things in the heart of God for his people, in the covenant of grace, in the hands of Christ, and as come by him, and to be had from him; as pardon by his blood; justification by his righteousness; eternal life and happiness through him; and of all good things to be enjoyed now and hereafter. It may be applied to all other ministers of the Gospel in later ages, who are bringers of the same good tidings to the children of men, to whom their very feet are beautiful, and even at a distance, upon the high mountains; not to carnal men, but sensible sinners, to whom the good news of salvation by Christ is welcome. Feet are mentioned instead of their whole persons, because the instruments of motion, and so of bringing the tidings, and of running to and fro with them from place to place, and even though they are dirty and defiled with sin; for Gospel ministers are not free from it, and are men of like passions with others; yet are beautiful when their walk and ministry, conversation and doctrine, agree together; and their feet are particularly so, being shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. The words may with the greatest propriety, and in agreement with the context, be understood of that angel, or set of Gospel ministers in the latter day, represented as flying in the midst of the heavens, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to all nations, which will precede the fall of Babylon, Re 14:6:

that publisheth peace; peace by the blood of Jesus Christ, a principal article of the Gospel, and of its good news; hence it is called the Gospel of peace, and the word of reconciliation; peace of conscience, which flows from the same blood applied, and of which the Gospel is the means; and peace among the saints one with another, and among men, which shall at this time be enjoyed; there, will be no discord nor animosities among themselves, nor persecution from their enemies: happy times! halcyon days! welcome the publishers of such tidings!

that bringeth good tidings of good; or, "that bringeth good tidings" {l}; for the original does not require such a tautology; it means the same good tidings as before, and which follow after:

that publisheth salvation; by Jesus Christ, as wrought out by him for sinners, which is full, complete, and suitable for them, and to be had of him freely; and what better tidings than this? see Re 19:1:

that sitteth unto Zion, thy God reigneth; that saith to Zion, the church of Christ, that Christ, who is truly God, and their God, has taken to himself, in a more open and visible manner, his great power and reigns as the Lord God omnipotent; and this is good news and glad tidings; see Ps 97:1. The Targum is,

"the kingdom of thy God is revealed;"

see **Mt 3:2**. This passage is interpreted of the Messiah and his times, by many Jewish {m} writers, ancient and modern; See Gill on "Ro 10:15".

{k} rvbm a rvb "caro". {l} bwj rvbm "evangelizantis bonum", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; "qui nuntiat bonum", Cocceius. {m} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 153. 2. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4. Yalkut Simeoni in Psal. xxix. 11. Menasseh Ben Israel, Nishmat Chayim, fol. 41. 2.

Isaiah 52:8

Ver. 8. The watchmen shall lift up the voice,.... Not the Levites in the temple, nor the prophets of the Old Testament; rather the evangelists and apostles of Christ; best of all Gospel ministers in the latter day, so called in allusion to watch men on the walls of cities looking out, and giving notice of approaching danger; see
Isa 62:6. The words may be rendered, "the voice of the watchmen; they shall lift up the voice; together shall they sing"; that is, this is the voice of the watchmen, namely, the voice of peace and salvation, which the bringer of good tidings, the same with these watchmen, publish. "Lifting up" their "voice" denotes the publicness of their ministrations, the vehemency of them, and their importance; "singing together", their joy and cheerfulness, their harmony and unity.

For they shall see eye to eye; most clearly, Zion's King reigning before his ancients gloriously; the great doctrines of peace and salvation published by them; and the great and wonderful things God will do for his church, in fulfilling prophecies relating thereunto. So the Targum,

"for with their eyes they shall see the great things which the Lord will do;"

and as their light and discerning will be most clear, like the light of seven days, so it will be alike in them; their sentiments and doctrines will exactly agree; there will be no difference nor dissension among them:

when the Lord shall bring again Zion: return his church and people to their former state, from whence they were declined; restore them as at the beginning; revive his work among them; cause his Gospel and ordinances to be professed and observed in their purity; call in his ancient people the Jews, and bring in the fulness of the Gentiles; pour out his spirit in a plentiful manner on them, and grant his gracious presence to them; so the Targum,

"when he shall return his Shechinah or divine Majesty to Zion."

This text is by the Jews {n} applied to the times of the Messiah, and to the resurrection of the dead {o}.

{n} Pesikta in Kettoreth Hassammim in Targ. in Numb. fol. 25. 4. {o} T. Bab. Sanhedrhin. fol. 91. 2.

Isaiah 52:9

Ver. 9. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem,.... This is what the watchmen shall say when they lift up their voice; this will be one part of their song, and the intent of it; to observe to the members of the churches, which shall be constituted in those parts which were formerly barren and desolate, what wonderful things the Lord has done in bringing again Zion; in building up the ruins of it; in the clear light of the Gospel he has caused to break forth, and in the good tidings of peace and salvation published; on account of all which they are called upon to express the greatest joy in a social manner, with the utmost unanimity, as having everyone a concern therein:

for the Lord hath comforted his people; with his divine presence, and the light of his countenance; with the discoveries of his love; with the joys of his salvation by Christ; with the comforts of his Spirit; with the doctrines of the Gospel, and the exceeding great and precious promises of it; with the ordinances of his house, those breasts of consolation; and by enlarging his kingdom and interest with the conversion of Jews and Gentiles; and particularly by the donation and application of the various blessings of grace through Christ, and especially that which follows:

he hath redeemed Jerusalem; the same with his people, particularly the Jews, now converted; who will have the blessing of redemption, obtained by the Messiah, made known and applied unto them; which will be matter of comfort to them: as it is to all sensible sinners, who see themselves lost and undone; liable to the wrath of God, and curses of the law; under a sentence of condemnation; the captives of sin and Satan, and prisoners of law and justice; unable to redeem themselves, or any creature capable of giving a ransom for them.

Isaiah 52:10

Ver. 10. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations,.... Revealed his Gospel, which is a system of holy doctrines, and is the power of God unto salvation, openly, in the sight of all men, and given it a general spread all the world over; and with it has exerted his almighty power, in the marvellous conversion of multitudes of souls everywhere, in which his holiness, as well as his power, is displayed: or else Christ is here meant, who is the power of God; by whom he has made the world, and upholds it; by whom he has redeemed his people, and saved them; and by whom he keeps and preserves them; and by whom he will raise them from the dead at the last day; and who is holy in his nature, and in his works: this arm of his was made bare or revealed at his incarnation; is evidently seen in his word and ordinances; and will be more clearly revealed therein in the latter day, as he will be most fully manifested in person at the last day, even in the eyes of the whole world. The allusion is to military persons preparing for battle, especially in the eastern countries, where they wore loose and long garments, which they tucked up on their arms, that they might be more expeditious in it, and so in any other service. Scanderbeg used to fight the Turks with his arm bare, as the writer of his life observes.

And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God; the salvation which Christ, God manifest in the flesh, has wrought out: the people of God, in the several parts of the world, shall see their need of this salvation; the suitableness of it to them; the necessity of going to Christ for it; their interest in it; and shall partake of the blessings of it: or Christ himself is meant, the Saviour of God's providing, sending, and giving; of whom multitudes, in the several parts of the world, shall have a spiritual sight, by faith, in the latter day; and all shall have a corporeal sight of him, when he comes in person, or appears a second time, without sin unto salvation.

Isaiah 52:11

Ver. 11. Depart ye, depart ye,.... Not from Jerusalem, as some, for that is now said to be redeemed, and its waste places made joyful; but Babylon, even mystical Babylon. The Targum is, "be ye separated, be ye separated": and so the apostle, **2Co 6:17**. It denotes a separation from the idolatrous church of Rome; and the exhortation is repeated, to hasten the thing, to urge the necessity of it, and point at the danger of delaying it; and it may be it may respect a two fold separation, one that has been already at the time of the Reformation, and another that will be just before the destruction of Babylon, Re 18:4:

go ye out from thence: not only protest against the false doctrines, idolatries, and superstitions of that apostate church, but entirely relinquish her communion:

touch no unclean thing; have no fellowship with her in any of her unclean and idolatrous actions, and bring none of her abominations along with you. It was the fault of the first reformers from Popery, that they brought so many of the impurities of the church of Rome along with them, which are retained to this day; in this last separation, care is to be taken, and will be taken, that those that come out keep clear of all her defilements; see Re 14:4:

go ye out of the midst of her; which signifies much the same as before, and is repeated again and again, to show the importance of it:

be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord; not the vessels of the Lord's sanctuary, as the Targum, restored by Cyrus to the Jews, at their return from the Babylonish captivity, **Ezr 1:7**, and so Jarchi interprets it of the priests and Levites that bore the vessels of the Lord in the wilderness; but Kimchi of the mercies and kindnesses of the Lord; Aben Ezra of the law: but it may much better be understood of the ministers of the Gospel, and of the treasure of the Gospel which they have in their earthen vessels; or the name of the Lord, which they are chosen vessels to bear and carry in the world; who ought to be pure from false doctrine, superstitious worship, and an evil conversation: though it may be applied to every Christian, since all true believers are priests under the Gospel dispensation; and as they bear the whole armour of God, and it is their duty to attend all the ordinances of the Gospel, they ought to have their conversation as becomes it. In Zohar {p}, these vessels are interpreted of the righteous, brought as a gift to the King Messiah.

{p} In Exod. fol. 87. 4.

Isaiah 52:12

Ver. 12. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight,.... As persons afraid of their enemies, of being pursued, overtaken, and detained by them; privily or by stealth, like fugitives, as the Oriental versions render it; in like manner as the Israelites went out of Egypt: but it signifies, that they should go out openly, boldly, quietly, and safely, and without fear of their enemies; yea, their enemies rather being afraid of them. So the witnesses, when they shall rise, will ascend to heaven in the sight of their enemies; which will be followed with a great slaughter of some, and the terror of others, Re 11:12:

for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rearward; the Lord will be their Captain, and will lead the van, so that they shall follow in order, and without any tumult or fear; and though they shall make all necessary dispatch, yet no more haste than good speed; the Lord, going before, will check all tumultuous and disorderly motions; and he also will bring up the rear, so that they shall be in no fear of the enemy attacking them behind, and where generally the weaker and more feeble part are; but the Lord will be gathering them up, or closing them, as the word {q} signifies; so that they shall be in the utmost safety, and march out of Babylon with the greatest ease and freedom, without any molestation or disturbance. The allusion may be to the Lord's going before, and sometimes behind Israel, in a pillar of fire and cloud by night and day, as they passed through the wilderness.

{q} Mkpoam, o episunagwn umav, Sept.; "colligens vos", Montanus; "congregabit vos", V. L. Syr. Ar.

Isaiah 52:13

Ver. 13. Behold, my servant shall deal prudently,.... Here properly a new chapter should begin, these three last verses treating of the same person and subject as the following chapter; even of Christ, his person, offices, humiliation, and exaltation, and the effects and fruits thereof; for of him undoubtedly the whole is to be understood. The Jews say it is a difficult prophecy; and so it is to them, being contrary to their notions and schemes, or otherwise it is plain and easy, respecting the Messiah; but rather than he should be thought to be meant, the modern ones have invented a variety of interpretations. Some apply this prophecy to Abraham; others to Moses; others to Ezra; others to Zerubbabel; and others to any righteous person: the more principal and prevailing opinions among them are, that it is to be understood either of the whole body of the people of Israel in captivity, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi; or of King Josiah, slain by Pharaohnecho, as Abarbinel; or of Jeremiah, as Saadiah Gaon; all which are weak and impertinent, and, as they disagree with each other, show the perplexity they are under {r}. The Targum interprets it of the Messiah; and so did the ancient Rabbins, as Aben Ezra and Alshech confess; and several parts of the prophecy are applied to him, both by ancient and modern ones, as will be seen in the exposition of it. Christ, as man and Mediator, is the servant of God, of his choosing and calling, sending, bringing forth, and supporting; see Isa 42:1, from whom he had both his work and his wages: the principal part of his service lay in working out the redemption and salvation of his people, in which he willingly and cheerfully engaged, and which he diligently and faithfully performed; in which he showed a regard to his Father's will, love to his people, and great condescension, as well as wisdom; for, as it is here promised he would, so he did deal "prudently": as in his infancy, when he disputed with the doctors in the temple, so throughout the whole of his public life, in preaching the Gospel, in answering the questions of his enemies, and in his behaviour at his apprehension, arraignment, condemnation, and crucifixion: or "he shall cause to understand {s}"; make others wise and prudent; he caused them to understand his Father's mind and will, the Scriptures, and the Gospel in them; he made men wise unto salvation, and instructed in those things which belong to their peace; and he still does by his spirit, through the ministry of the word: or "he shall prosper" {t}; the pleasure of the Lord prospered in his hands; he rode forth prosperously, destroying his and our enemies was very successful in working out salvation, as he is in his advocacy and intercession for his people, and in the ministration of his Gospel; and is the author of all prosperity in his churches, and to particular believers. The Targum is,

"behold, my servant the Messiah shall prosper;"

and so another Jewish writer says {u}, that the section which begins with these words is concerning the Messiah:

he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high; as he has been exalted by his Father, by raising him from the dead, and giving him glory; by placing him at his own right hand, and giving him all power in heaven and in earth; by committing all judgment into his hands, that all men may honour him as they do the Father: and he is "extolled" by his people, in his person and offices, by giving him the glory of their salvation, in their hearts, thoughts, and affections, with their mouths and lips; and so he is in his house and ordinances, by his ministers and churches: and is made "very high"; higher than the kings of the earth; higher than the angels of heaven; higher than the heavens themselves. The Jews {w} say of the Messiah, in reference to these words, that he is exalted above Abraham, extolled above Moses, and made higher than the ministering angels; and in another ancient book {x} of theirs it is said, the kingdom of Israel shall be exalted in the days of the Messiah, as it is written,

he shall be exalted and extolled, &c.

{r} See my book of the Prophecies of the Old Testament, &c. fulfilled in Jesus, p. 160, &c. {s} lyqvy "erudict, sive intelligere faciet", Morus. {t} "Prosperabitur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Calvin. So Ben Melech interprets it by xyluy, "he shall prosper." "Feliciter agit", Cocceius; "prospere aget", Vitringa. {u} Baal Hatturim in Lev. xvi. 14. {w} Tanchuma apud Yalkut in loc. {x} Pesikta apud Kettoreth Hassammim in Targum in Numb. fol. 27. 2.

Isaiah 52:14

Ver. 14. As many were astonished at thee,.... Not so much at the miracles he wrought, the doctrines he taught, and the work he did; or at his greatness and glory, at his exaltation and dignity, though very wonderful; as at his humiliation, the mean appearance he made, the low estate he was brought into; the sufferings and death which he underwent. These words are placed between the account of his exaltation and humiliation, and may be thought to have respect to both; and indeed it is astonishing that one so great as he was, and is, should become so low as he did; and also that one that was brought so low should be raised so high:

his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men; though fairer than the children of men, as he was the immediate workmanship of the divine Spirit, and without sin; yet, what with his griefs and sorrows he bore, and troubles he met with; what with watchings and fastings, with laborious preaching, and constant travelling about to do good; what with sweat and blood, with buffetings and scourgings, never was any man's face more marred, or his form more altered, than his was.

Isaiah 52:15

Ver. 15. So shall he sprinkle many nations,.... This is not to be understood of water baptism, for though this has been administered in many nations, yet not by Christ, nor done by sprinkling; rather of the grace of the Spirit, which is expressed by water, and its application by sprinkling, and is of a cleansing and sanctifying nature, and which Gentiles are made partakers of; but better of the blood of Christ, called the blood of sprinkling, by which the conscience is purged from dead works, and the heart from an evil conscience, and by which multitudes of many nations are justified and sanctified; though it seems best of all to interpret it of the doctrine of Christ, which is compared to rain and dew, and is dropped, distilled, and sprinkled, and falls gently upon the souls of men, and has been published in many nations, with good effect and success. So Kimchi and Ben Melech say the phrase is expressive of speaking. This passage is applied to the Messiah by a Jewish writer {y}. The Targum is,

"he will scatter many people;"

and Aben Ezra interprets it of pouring out their blood and taking vengeance on them.

The kings shall shut their mouths at him; astonished at the glories and excellencies of his person and office, as outshining theirs; at his wonderful works of grace and salvation, and as having nothing to object to his doctrines; and if they do not profess them, yet dare not blaspheme them. It seems to denote a reverent attention to them, and a subjection to Christ and his ordinances; and must be understood of their subjects as well as of themselves.

For that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider; or "understand" {z}; this is applied to Christ and his Gospel, in the times of the apostles,
Ro 15:20. The Gentiles had not the oracles of God committed to them; could not be told the things of the Gospel, and what relate to Christ, by their oracles,

or by their philosophers; nor could they be come at by the light of nature, or by carnal reason; such as the doctrines of a trinity of Persons in the Godhead; of the deity, sonship, and incarnation of Christ; of salvation by him; of justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice; of the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life: but now Christ and his Gospel are seen and understood by spiritual men; who, besides having a revelation given them, and the Gospel preached unto them, have their eyes opened, and indeed new eyes and understandings given them; so that they have a sight of Christ, of the glory, beauty, and fulness of his person by faith, through the glass of the word, so as to approve of him, appropriate him, and become like unto him; and of his Gospel, and the doctrines of it, so as to like and esteem them, believe them, distinguish them, and look upon them with wonder and pleasure.

{y} Baal Hatturim in Lev. xvi. 14. {z} wnnwbth, bunhsousi, Sept.; intelligent, Calvin; "intellexerunt", Vitringa.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 53:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 53

This chapter treats of the mean appearance of Christ in human nature, his sufferings in it, and the glory that should follow. It begins with a complaint of the small number of those that believed the report concerning him, the power of God not being exerted, Isa 53:1, the reason of this general disbelief was the meanness of his outward circumstances, and the want of comeliness in him; hence he was treated with general neglect and contempt, Isa 52:2 was the more unkind and ungenerous, since it was the griefs and sorrows of others he bore, and their sins also, for which he was wounded and bruised, that they might have healing, Isa 53:4, yet he took and bore all patiently, like a lamb at the slaughter, and the sheep under the shearer, Isa 53:7, which was the more extraordinary, since he was used, both in life and at death, in so rigorous and barbarous a manner, and all for the sins of others, having been guilty of none himself, Isa 53:8, and, what is most amazing, the Lord himself had a hand in grieving and bruising him,
Isa 53:10, though for his encouragement, and a reward to him, as man and Mediator, for all his sufferings, it is intimated that he should succeed and prosper, have a numerous issue, should justify many, and have a portion and

spoil divided with the great and mighty,
Isa 53:10.

Ver. 1. Who hath believed our report?.... Or "hearing" {a}. Not what we hear, but others hear from us; the doctrine of the Gospel, which is a report of the love, grace, and mercy of God in Christ; of Christ himself, his person, offices, obedience, sufferings, and death, and of free and full salvation by him: it is a good report, a true and faithful one, and to be believed, and yet there are always but few that give credit to it; there were but few in the times of the Prophet Isaiah that believed what he had before reported, or was about to report, concerning the Messiah; and but few in the times of Christ and his apostles, whom the prophet here represented; for to those times are the words applied,
Joh 12:38, the Jews had the report first made unto them, and saw the facts that were done, and yet believed not; when Gentile kings, and their subjects, listened with the most profound silence, and heard with the greatest attention and reverence, as in the latter part of the preceding chapter, to which some think this is opposed; wherefore some begin the text with the adversative particle "but". According to the Septuagint and Arabic versions, the words are directed to God the Father, for they render them, "Lord, who hath believed", &c.; and so they are quoted in the above places in the New Testament:

and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? meaning either the Gospel itself, the power of God unto salvation, hidden from the generality of men; for though externally, yet not internally revealed and made known; which to do is the Lord's work, and is owing to his special grace: or Christ, who is the power of God, by whom all the works of creation, providence, grace, and salvation, are wrought; and by whom the blessings of grace are dispensed; and by whom the Lord upholds all things, and supports his people; and who was not revealed but to a very few, as the true Messiah, as God's salvation, and in them the hope of glory: or else the powerful and efficacious grace of the Spirit, and the exertion and display of it, which is necessary to a true and spiritual believing the Gospel, and the report of it; which, unless it comes with the power and Spirit of God, is ineffectual.

{a} wntemvl, th akoh hmwn, Sept.; "auditui nostro", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius.

Isaiah 53:2

Ver. 2. For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant,.... Which springs out of the earth without notice; low in its beginning, slow in its growth, liable to be crushed with the foot, or destroyed with the frost, and no great probability of its coming to any perfection; or rather as a little "sucker", as the word {b} signifies, which grows out of the root of a tree, at some little distance from it, of which no notice or care is taken, nor anything hoped for from it; and the figure denotes the mean and unpromising appearance of Christ at his incarnation; which is the reason given why the Jews in general disbelieved, rejected, and despised him; for this phrase of "growing up" does not design his exaltation, or rising up from a low to a high estate; but his mean entrance into the world, like that of the springing up of a low and insignificant plant or shrub out of the earth: and the phrase "before him" is to be understood either of God the Father, by whom he was taken notice of, though not by men; and in whose sight he was precious, though despised by men; or his growing up, and the manner of it, or his mean appearance, were all before the Lord, and according to his will: or else it may be understood of Christ himself, and be rendered "before himself", who was meek and lowly, and was mean and low in his own eyes; or rather it may be interpreted of the unbelieving Jew, of any or everyone of them that did not believe the report concerning him: because before him, in the sight of everyone of them, he sprung up in the manner described; unless it can be thought that it would be better rendered "to his face" {c}; or "to his appearance"; that is, as to his outward appearance, in the external view of him, so he grew up:

and as a root out of a dry ground; or rather, "as a branch from a root out of a dry ground"; agreeably to Isa 11:1, meaning not so much the land of Judea, where he was born; or the country of Galilee, where he was brought up; as the family of David, from whence he sprung, which was reduced to a very low condition when he was born of it; his supposed father being a carpenter, and his real mother a poor virgin in Nazareth, though both of the lineage and house of David; from this passage the ancient Jews {d} are said to conclude that the Messiah would be born without a father, or the seed of man:

he hath no form nor comeliness; like a poor plant or shrub just crept out of the ground, in a dry and barren soil, ready to wither away as soon as up; has no strength nor straightness, of body; without verdure, leaves, blossom, and fruit things which make plants comely and beautiful. This regards not the countenance of Christ, which probably was comely, as were his types Moses and David; since he is said to be "fairer than the children of men"; and since his human nature was the immediate produce of the Holy Ghost, and without sin: but his outward circumstances; there was no majesty in him, or signs of it; it did not look probable that he would be a tall cedar, or a prince in Israel, much less the Prince Messiah; he was born of mean parents; brought up in a contemptible part of the country; lived in a town out of which no good is said to come; dwelt in a mean cottage, and worked at a trade:

and when we shall see him: as he grows up, and comes into public life and service, declaring himself, or declared by others, to be the Messiah: here the prophet represents the Jews that would live in Christ's time, who would see his person, hear his doctrines, and be witnesses of his miracles, and yet say,

there is no beauty, that we should desire him; or "sightliness" {e} in him; nothing that looks grand and majestic, or like a king; they not beholding with an eye of faith his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father; only viewing him in his outward circumstances, and so made their estimate of him; they expected the Messiah as a temporal prince, appearing in great pomp and state, to deliver them from the Roman yoke, and restore their nation to its former splendour and glory; and being disappointed herein was the true reason of their unbelief, before complained of, and why they did not desire him, who is the desire of all nations.

{b} qnwyk wv paidion, Sept.; wv yhlazon, Theodotion, vox a qny, "lac sugere, proprie lactantem significat", Rivet. Sanctius, "surculus tener, veluti laetens", Forerius. {c} whynpl "ad faciem suam, vel in facie, sua", Rivet.; "quoad conspectum, vel quoad faciem suam, seu faciem ejus", Sanctius. {d} R. Hadarson apud Galatia, de Arcan. Cathol. Ver. l. 8. c. 2. p. 549. {e} harm al "non aspectus", Munster: Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus; "nulla spectabilis forma", Vitringa.

Isaiah 53:3

Ver. 3. He is despised, and rejected of men,.... Or, "ceaseth from men" {f}; was not admitted into the company and conversation of men, especially of figure; or ceased from the class of men, in the opinion of others; he was not reckoned among men, was accounted a worm, and no man; or, if a man, yet not in his senses, a madman, nay, one that had a devil: or "deficient of men"; he had none about him of any rank or figure in life, only some few fishermen, and some women, and publicans, and harlots. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "the last of men", the most abject and contemptible of mankind;

despised, because of the meanness of his birth, and parentage, and education, and of his outward appearance in public life; because of his apostles and audience; because of his doctrines, not agreeably to carnal reason, and his works, some of them being done on the sabbath day, and, as they maliciously suggested, by the help of Satan; and especially because of his ignominious sufferings and death:

a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: or "known by grief" {g}; he was known by his troubles, notorious for them; these were his constant companions, his familiar acquaintance, with whom he was always conversant; his life was one continued series of sorrow, from the cradle to the cross; in his infancy his life was sought for by Herod, and he was obliged to be taken by his parents, and flee into Egypt; he ate his bread in sorrow, and with the sweat of his brow; he met with much sorrow from the hardness and unbelief of men's hearts, and from the contradiction of sinners against himself, and even much from the frowardness of his own disciples; much from the temptations of Satan, and more from the wrath and justice of God, as the surety of his people; he was exceeding sorrowful in the garden, when his sweat was as it were great drops of blood; and when on the cross, under the hidings of his Father's face, under a sense of divine displeasure for the sins of his people, and enduring the pains and agonies of a shameful and an accursed death; he was made up of sorrows, and grief was familiar to him. Some render it, "broken with infirmity", or "grief" {h}:

and we hid as it were our faces from him; as one loathsome and abominable as having an aversion to him, and abhorrence of him, as scorning to look at him, being unworthy of any notice. Some render it, "he hid as it were his face from us" {i}; as conscious of his deformity and loathsomeness, and of his being a disagreeable object, as they said; but the former is best:

he was despised, and we esteemed him not; which is repeated to show the great contempt cast upon him, and the disesteem he was had in by all sorts of persons; professors and profane, high and low, rich poor, rulers and common people, priests, Scribes, and Pharisees; no set or order of men had any value for him; and all this disgrace and dishonour he was to undergo, to repair the loss of honour the Lord sustained by the sin of man, whose surety Christ became.

{f} Myvya ldx "desiit viris", Montanus, Heb.; "desitus virorum", Piscator; "deficiens virorum", Cocceius; "destitutus viris", Vitringa. {g} ylwx ewdyw "notus aegritudine", Montanus; "notus infirmitate," Cocceius. {h} "Attritus

infirmitate"; so some in Vatablus, and R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel. Moed. fol. 96. 1.
{i} wnmm Mynp rtomk "velut homo abscondens faciem a nobis", Junius & Tremellius; "et tanquam aliquis qui obtegit faciem a nobis", Piscator; "ut res tecta facie averanda prae nobis", Cocceius.

Isaiah 53:4

Ver. 4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows,.... Or "nevertheless", as Gussetius {k}; notwithstanding the above usage of him; though it is a certain and undoubted truth, that Christ not only assumed a true human nature, capable of sorrow and grief, but he took all the natural sinless infirmities of it; or his human nature was subject to such, as hunger, thirst, weariness, &c.; and to all the sorrow and pain arising from them; the same sorrows and griefs he was liable to as we are, and therefore called ours and hence he had a sympathy with men under affliction and trouble; and, to show his sympathizing spirit, he healed all sorts of bodily diseases; and also, to show his power, he healed the diseases of the soul, by bearing the sins of his people, and making satisfaction for them; since he that could do the one could do the other; wherefore the evangelist applies this passage to the healing of bodily diseases, **Mt 8:17**, though the principal meaning of the words may be, that all the sorrows and griefs which Christ bore were not for any sins of his own, but for the sins of his people; wherefore these griefs and sorrows signify the punishment of sin, and are put for sins, the cause of them and so the apostle interprets them of Christ's bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, **1Pe 2:24**, and the Septuagint and Arabic versions render the words here, "he bears our sins"; and the Targum is,

"wherefore he will entreat for our sins;"

these being laid upon him, as is afterwards said, were bore by him as the surety of his people; and satisfaction being made for them by his sufferings and death, they are carried and taken away, never to be seen any more:

yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; so indeed he was by the sword of divine justice, which was awaked against him, and with which he was stricken and smitten, as standing in the room of his people; but then it was not for any sin of his own, as the Jews imagined, but for the sins of those for whom he was a substitute; they looked upon all his sorrows and troubles in life, and at death, as the just judgment of God upon him for some gross enormities he had been guilty of; but in this they were mistaken. The Vulgate Latin version is, "we esteemed him as a leprous person"; and so Aquila and Symmachus render the word; and from hence the Jews call the Messiah a leper {l}; they say,

"a leper of the house of Rabbi is his name"

as it is said, "surely he hath borne our griefs", &c.; which shows that the ancient Jews understood this prophecy of the Messiah, though produced to prove a wrong character of him; and so it is applied unto him in other ancient writings of theirs; See Gill on "Mt 8:17". The words are by some rendered, "and we reckoned him the stricken, smitten of God" {m}, and "humbled"; which version of the words proved the conversion of several Jews in Africa, as Andradius and others relate {n}; by which they perceived the passage is to be understood not of a mere man, but of God made man, and of his humiliation and sufferings in human nature.

{k} Ebr. Comment. p. 41. Nka "verumtamen", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "et tamen", so some is Vatablus. {l} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. {m} Myhla hkm "percussum Deum", Sanctius. {n} Vid. Sanctium in loc.

Isaiah 53:5

Ver. 5. But he was wounded for our transgressions,.... Not for any sins of his own, but for ours, for our rebellions against God, and transgressions of his law, in order to make atonement and satisfaction for them; these were the procuring and meritorious causes of his sufferings and death, as they were taken upon him by him to answer for them to divine justice, which are meant by his being wounded; for not merely the wounds he received in his hands, feet, and side, made by the nails and spear, are meant, but the whole of his sufferings, and especially his being wounded to death, and which was occasionally by bearing the sins of his people; and hereby he removed the guilt from them, and freed them from the punishment due unto them:

he was bruised for our iniquities; as bread corn is bruised by threshing it, or by its being ground in the mill, as the manna was; or as spice is bruised in a mortar, he being broken and crushed to pieces under the weight of sin, and the punishment of it. The ancient Jews understood this of the Messiah; in one place they say {o}, "chastisements are divided into three parts, one to David and the fathers, one to our generation, and one to the King Messiah; as it is written, "he was wounded for our transgressions; and bruised for our iniquities":"

and in another place {p},

"at that time they shall declare to the Messiah the troubles of Israel in captivity, and the wicked which are among them, that do not mind to know the Lord; he shall lift up his voice, and weep over the wicked among them; as it is said, "he was wounded for our transgressions", &c."

the chastisement of our peace was upon him; that is, the punishment of our sins was inflicted on him, whereby our peace and reconciliation with God was made by him; for chastisement here does not design the chastisement of a father, and in love, such as the Lord chastises his people with; but an act of vindictive justice, and in wrath, taking vengeance on our sins, of our surety, whereby divine wrath is appeased, justice is satisfied, and peace is made:

and with his stripes we are healed; or "by his stripe" {q}, or "bruise": properly the black and blue mark of it, so called from the gathering and settling of the blood where the blow is given. Sin is a disease belonging to all men, a natural, hereditary, nauseous, and incurable one, but by the blood of Christ; forgiving sin is a healing of this disease; and this is to be had, and in no other way, than through the stripes and wounds, the blood and sacrifice, of the Son of God. Christ is a wonderful physician; he heals by taking the sicknesses of his people upon himself, by bearing their sins, and being wounded and bruised for them, and by his enduring blows, and suffering death itself for them. The Targum is,

"when we obey his words, our sins will be forgiven us;"

but forgiveness is not through our obedience, but the blood of Christ.

{o} Mechilta apud Yalkut, par. 2. fol 90. 1. {p} Zohar in Exod. fol. 85. 2. See also Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2. and Zohar in Deut. fol. 117. 3. and R. Moses Hadarsan apud Galatia de Arcan. Cath. Ver. I. 8. c. 15 p. 586. and in I. 6. c. 2. p. 436. {q} wtrbxb "per livorem ejus", Munster; "livore ejus", V. L. Montanus, Vatablus; "tumice ejus", Junius & Tremellius; "vibico ejus", Cocceius; "vibicibus ejus" Vitringa.

Isaiah 53:6

Ver. 6. All we like sheep have gone astray,.... Here the prophet represents all the elect of God, whether Jews or Gentiles; whom he compares to "sheep", not for their good qualities, but for their foolishness and stupidity; and particularly for their being subject to go astray from the shepherd, and the fold, and from their good pastures, and who never return of themselves, until they are looked up, and brought back by the shepherd, or owner of them; so the people of God, in a state of nature, are like the silly sheep, they go astray from God, are alienated from the life of him, deviate from the rule of his word, err from the right way, and go into crooked paths, which lead to destruction; and never return of themselves, of their own will, and by their own power, until they are returned, by powerful and efficacious grace, unto the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls; see **1Pe 2:25** where the apostle has a manifest respect to this passage:

we have turned everyone to his own way; and that is an evil one, a dark and slippery one, a crooked one, the end of it is ruin; yet this is a way of a man's own choosing and approving, and in which he delights; and it may not only intend the way of wickedness in general, common to all men in a state of nature, but a particular way of sinning, peculiar to each; some are addicted to one sin, and some to another, and have their own way of committing the same sin; men turn their faces from God, and their backs upon him, and look to their own way, and set their faces towards it, and their hearts on it; and which seems right and pleasing to them, yet the end of it are the ways of death; and so bent are men on these ways, though so destructive, that nothing but omnipotent grace can turn them out of them, and to the Lord; and which is done in consequence of what follows:

and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all; that is, God the Father, against whom we have sinned, from whom we have turned, and whose justice must be satisfied; he has laid on Christ, his own Son, the sins of all his elect ones; which are as it were collected together, and made one bundle and burden of, and therefore expressed in the singular number, "iniquity", and laid on Christ, and were bore by him, even all the sins of all God's elect; a heavy burden this! which none but the mighty God could bear; this was typified by laying of hands, and laying of sins upon the sacrifice, and putting the iniquities of Israel upon the head of the scapegoat, by whom they were bore, and carried away. The words may be rendered, "he made to meet upon him the iniquity of us all" {r}; the elect of God, as they live in every part of the world, their sins are represented as coming from all quarters, east, west, north, and south; and as meeting in Christ, as they did, when he suffered as their representative on the cross: or "he made to rush, or fall upon him the iniquity of us all" {s}; our sins, like a large and mighty army, beset him around, and fell upon him in a hostile manner, and were the cause of his death; by which means the law and justice of God had full satisfaction, and our recovery from ruin and destruction is procured, which otherwise must have been the consequence of turning to our own ways; so the ancient Jews understood this of the Messiah. R. Cahana {t} on these words, "binding his ass's colt to the choice vine", Ge 49:11 says,

"as the ass bears burdens, and the garments of travellers, so the King Messiah will bear upon him the sins of the whole world; as it is said, "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"," Isa 53:6.

{r} wnlk Nwe ta wb eygph "fecit occarrere in eum iniquitatem omnium hostrum", Montanus; "occurrere fecit ei, vel irruere fecit in ilium", Vatablus. {s} "Incurrere fecit in eum", Cocceius, Vitringa, Forerius; "irruere fecit in ilium", Vatablus; sic Syr. "fecit ut incurreret iniquitas", Piscator. {t} Apud Galatin. de Cathol. Ver. I. 10. c. 6. p. 663, and Siphre in ib. l. 8. c. 20. p. 599.

Isaiah 53:7

Ver. 7. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,.... He was injuriously treated by the Jews; they used him very ill, and handled him very roughly; he was oppressed and afflicted, both in body and mind, with their blows, and with their reproaches; he was afflicted, indeed, both by God and men: or rather it may be rendered, "it was exacted", required, and demanded, "and he answered" {u}, or "was afflicted"; justice finding the sins of men on him, laid on him by imputation, and voluntarily received by him, as in the preceding verse, demanded satisfaction of him; and he being the surety of his people, was responsible for them, and did answer, and gave the satisfaction demanded: the debt they owed was required, the payment of it was called for, and he accordingly answered, and paid the whole, every farthing, and cancelled the bond; the punishment of the sins of his people was exacted of him, and he submitted to bear it, and did bear it in his own body on the tree; this clearly expresses the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction:

yet he opened not his mouth; against the oppressor that did him the injury, nor murmured at the affliction that was heavy upon him: or, "and he opened not his mouth"; against the justice of God, and the demand that was made upon him, as the surety of his people; he owned the obligation he had laid himself under; he paid the debt, and bore the punishment without any dispute or hesitation: "he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb"; or, "as a sheep to the slaughter, and as an ewe before her shearer" {w}; these figurative phrases are expressive, not only of the harmlessness and innocence of Christ, as considered in himself, but of his meekness and patience in suffering, and of his readiness and willingness to be sacrificed in the room and stead of his people; he went to the cross without any reluctance, which; when there was any in the sacrifice, it was reckoned a bad omen among the Heathens, yea, such were not admitted to be offered {x}; but Christ went as willingly to be sacrificed as a lamb goes to the slaughter house, and was as silent under his sufferings as a sheep while under the hands of its shearers; he was willing to be stripped of all he had, as a shorn sheep, and to be slaughtered and sacrificed as a lamb, for the sins of his people:

so he opened not his mouth: not against his enemies, by way of threatening or complaint; nor even in his own defence; nor against the justice of God, as bearing hard upon him, not sparing him, but demanding and having full satisfaction; nor against his people and their sins, for whom he suffered; see **1Pe 2:23**.

{u} hnen awhw vgn "exigebatur, et ipse respondit", Gataker; "exigitur poena, et ipse affligitur", Junius & Tremellius; "quum illa exigebatur, ipse affligebatur", Piscator; "exigebatur, et ipse submittebatur", Cocceius. {w} hxrk-hvk "sicut ovis----sicut ovis foemina", Gataker; "ut agnus----et ut agna", Cocceius; "instar ovis----et ut agna", Vitringa. {x} Macrob. Satnrnal. I. 3. c. 5. Plin. Nat. Hist. I. 8. c. 45.

Isaiah 53:8

Ver. 8. He was taken from prison, and from judgment,.... After he had suffered and died, and made satisfaction to divine justice; or after he had been arrested by the justice of God, and was laid in prison, and under a sentence of condemnation, had judgment passed upon him, and that executed too; he was taken in a very little time from the prison of the grave where he lay, and from the state of condemnation into which he was brought, and was acquitted, justified, and declared righteous, and his people in him; a messenger was sent from heaven to roll away the stone, and set him free: though some render it, he was taken by distress and judgment; that is, his life was taken away in a violent manner, under a pretence of justice; whereas the utmost injustice was done him; a wrong charge was brought against him, false witnesses were suborned, and his life was taken away with wicked hands; which sense seems to be favoured by the quotation in **Ac 8:32** "in his humiliation his judgment was taken away": he had not common justice done him:

and who shall declare his generation? which is not to be understood of his divine generation, as the Son of God, which is in a way ineffable and inconceivable; nor of his human generation, as the Son of Man, which is unaccountable, being born of a virgin; nor of the duration of his life after his resurrection, he dying no more, but living for ever, which is more probable; nor of the vast number of his spiritual offspring, the fruit of his sufferings, death, and resurrection; but of the age, and men of it, in which he lived, whose barbarity to him, and wickedness they were guilty of, were such as could not be declared by the mouth, or described by the pen of man. The Targum is,

"and the wonderful things which shall be done for us in his days, who can declare?"

for he was cut off out of the land of the living; was not suffered to live, was taken off by a violent death; he was cut off in a judiciary way, as if he had been a malefactor; though lest it should be thought it was for his own sins he was cut off, which is denied, **Da 9:26** it is added,

for the transgression of my people was he stricken; that is, either through the malice and wickedness of the people of the Jews, whom the prophet calls his people, he was stricken, not only with the scourges of the whip, but with death itself, as the efficient cause thereof; or rather because of the transgressions of God's elect, in order to make satisfaction for them, he was stricken by divine justice, and put to death, as the meritorious cause thereof; and so they are the words of God the Father; and this, with the preceding clause, give a reason, showing both why he was taken from the prison of the grave, acquitted, and exalted, and why the wickedness of his age could not be declared; he being stricken and cut off in such a manner, when he was an innocent person; and since it was only for the transgressions of others, even of God's covenant people, the people he chose, and gave to Christ, **Mt 1:21**.

Isaiah 53:9

Ver. 9. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death,.... These words are generally supposed to refer to a fact that was afterwards done; that Christ, who died with wicked men, as if he himself had been one, was buried in a rich man's grave. Could the words admit of the following transposition, they would exactly agree with it, "and he made his grave with the rich; and with the wicked in his death"; for he died between two thieves, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathaea, a rich man. Or the meaning perhaps in general is, that, after his death, both rich men and wicked men were concerned in his sepulchre, and about his grave; two rich men, Nicodemus and Joseph, in taking down his body from the cross, in embalming it, and in laying it in the tomb of the latter; and wicked men, Roman soldiers, were employed in guarding the sepulchre, that his disciples might not take away the body. Or the sense is, "he" the people, the nation of the Jews, through whose enmity against him he suffered death, "gave", intended, and designed, that "his grave" should be with "the wicked"; and therefore accused him to the Roman governor, and got him condemned capitally, and condemned to a Roman death, crucifixion, that he might be buried where such sort of persons usually were; and then it may be supplied, "but he made it"; that is, God ordered and appointed, in his overruling providence, that it should be "with the rich in his death", as it was. Aben Ezra observes, that the word wytmb, which we translate "in his death", signifies a structure over a grave, "a sepulchral monument"; and then it may be rendered impersonally thus, "his grave was put or placed with the wicked, but his tomb", or sepulchral monument, was "with the rich"; his grave was indeed put under the care and custody of the wicked soldiers; yet a famous tomb being erected over it, at the expense of a rich man, Joseph of Arimathaea, which was designed for himself, made the burial of Christ honourable: which honour was done him,

because he had done no violence: or injury to any man's person or property; had not been guilty of rapine and oppression, theft and robbery; murder and cruelty; he had not been a stirrer up of sedition, an encourager of mobs, riots, and tumults, to the harm of the civil government:

neither was any deceit in his mouth: no false doctrine was delivered by him; he was no deceiver of the people, as he was charged; he did not attempt to seduce them from the true worship of God, or persuade them to believe anything contrary to the law of Moses, and the prophets; he was no enemy to church or state, nor indeed guilty of any manner of sin, nor given to any arts of trick and dissimulation; see **1Pe 2:22**. Some render the words, "though" {y} "he had done no violence", &c. and connect them with the following.

{y} le "quamvis", Vatablus, Calvin, Noldius; "licet", Syr. Interpr.

Isaiah 53:10

Ver. 10. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him,.... The sufferings of Christ are signified by his being "bruised"; See Gill on "Isa 53:5", and as it was foretold he should have his heel bruised by the serpent, **Ge 3:15**, but here it is ascribed to the Lord: he was bruised in body, when buffeted and scourged, and nailed to the cross; and was bruised and broken in spirit, when the sins of his people were laid on him, and the wrath of God came upon him for them: the Lord had a hand in his sufferings; he not only permitted them, but they were according to the counsel of his will; they were predetermined by him, **Ac 2:23**, yea, they were pleasing to him, he took a kind of delight and pleasure in them; not in them simply considered as sufferings, but as they were an accomplishment of his purposes, a fulfilment of his covenant and promises, and of the prophecies in his word; and, particularly, as hereby the salvation of his people was brought about; see Joh 10:17:

he hath put [him] to grief; when he awoke the sword of justice against him; when he spared him not, but delivered him up into the hands of wicked men, and unto death: he was put to grief in the garden, when his soul was exceeding sorrowful; and on the cross, when he was nailed to it, had the weight of his people's sins, and his Father's wrath, on him; and when he hid his face from him, which made him cry out, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" or, "hath put [him] to pain": suffered him to be put to pain, both in body and mind:

when thou shall make his soul an offering for sin: not his soul only, but his body also, even his whole human nature, as in union with his divine Person; for it was he himself that was offered up in the room and stead of his people, to make atonement and satisfaction for their sins, **Heb 9:14**, or, "when thou shalt make his soul sin" {z}; so Christ was made by imputation, **2Co 5:21**, and when he was so made, or had the sins of his people imputed to him, then was he bruised, and put to pain and grief, in order to finish them, and make an end of them, and make reconciliation for them: or, "when his soul shall make an offering" {a} "for sin", or "sin" itself; make itself an offering; for Christ offered up himself freely and voluntarily; he gave himself an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweetsmelling savour, **Eph 5:2**, he was altar, sacrifice, and priest.

He shall see his seed; or, "a seed"; a spiritual seed and offspring; a large number of souls, that shall be born again, of incorruptible seed, as the fruit of his sufferings and death; see Joh 12:24, this he presently began to see after his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven; when great numbers were converted among the Jews, and after that multitudes in the Gentile world, and more or less in all ages; ever since has he had a seed to serve him; and so he will in the latter day, and to the end of time:

he shall prolong his days: live long, throughout all ages, to all eternity; though he was dead, he is alive, and lives for evermore; lives to see all the children that the Father gave him, and he has gathered together by his death, when scattered abroad, and see them all born again, and brought to glory. Some connect this with the preceding clause, "he shall see a seed that shall prolong its days" {b}; for Christ will never want issue, his church will never fail, his seed will endure for ever, Ps 89:29. So the Targum, paraphrasing the words of Christ and his seed,

"they shall see the kingdom of their Messiah; they shall multiply sons and daughters; they shall prolong their days:"

and so Aben Ezra says these words are spoken of the generation that shall return to God, and to the true religion, at the coming of the Messiah.

And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; the work of man's redemption, put into the hands of Christ, which he undertook to accomplish; which was with him and before him, when he came into this world, and was his meat and drink to do; this he never left till he had finished it; so that it succeeded and prospered with him: and this may well be called "the pleasure of the Lord"; it was the good pleasure of his will; it was what he purposed and resolved; what his heart was set upon, and was well pleasing to him, as effected by his Son. Likewise the setting up of the kingdom and interest of Christ in the world, and the continuance and increase of it; the ministry of the word, and the success of that as the means thereof, may be also meant; for the Gospel will be preached, and a Gospel church still continued, until all the elect of God are gathered in.

{z} wvpn Mva Myvt Ma "quum posueris delictum animam ejus", De Dieu. {a} "Ubi posuit satisfactionis pretium anima ejus", Cocceius; "si posuerit delictum sua anima", Montanus. {b} Mymy Kyray erz hary "videbit semen quod prolongabit dies", Cocceius; "videbit semen longaevum", V. L.

Isaiah 53:11

Ver. 11. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied,.... "The travail of his soul" is the toil and labour he endured, in working out the salvation of his people; his obedience and death, his sorrows and sufferings; particularly those birth throes of his soul, under a sense of divine wrath, for the allusion is to women in travail; and all the agonies and pains of death which he went through. Now the fruit of all this he sees with inexpressible pleasure, and which gives him an infinite satisfaction; namely, the complete redemption of all the chosen ones, and the glory of the divine perfections displayed therein, as well as his own glory, which follows upon it; particularly this will be true of him as man and Mediator, when he shall have all his children with him in glory; see Heb 12:2. The words are by some rendered, "seeing himself or his soul freed from trouble, he shall be satisfied" {c}; so he saw it, and found it, when he rose from the dead, and was justified in the Spirit; ascended to his God and Father, was set down at his right hand, and was made glad with his countenance, enjoying to the full eternal glory and happiness with him: and by others this, "after the travail {d} of his soul, he shall see [a seed], and shall be satisfied"; as a woman, after her travail and sharp pains are over, having brought forth a son, looks upon it with joy and pleasure, and is satisfied, and forgets her former pain and anguish; so Christ, after all his sorrows and sufferings, sees a large number of souls regenerated, sanctified, justified, and brought to heaven, in consequence of them, which is a most pleasing and satisfactory sight unto him,

By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; Christ is the servant of the Lord; See Gill on "Isa 53:1",
See Gill on "Isa 49:3",
See Gill on "Isa 52:13". He is said to be "righteous", because of the holiness of his nature, and the righteousness of his life as a man; and because of his faithful discharge of his work and office as Mediator; and because he is the author and bringer in of an everlasting righteousness, by which he justifies his people; that is, acquits and absolves them, pronounces them righteous, and frees them from condemnation and death; he is the procuring and meritorious cause of their justification; his righteousness is the matter of it; in him, as their Head, are they justified, and by him the sentence is pronounced: for this is to be understood not of making men holy and righteous inherently, that is

sanctification; nor of a teaching men doctrinally the way and method of justifying men, which is no other than ministers do; but it is a forensic act, a pronouncing and declaring men righteous, as opposed to condemnation: and they are many who are so justified; the many who were ordained to eternal life; the many whose sins Christ bore, and gave his life a ransom for; the many sons that are brought by him to glory. This shows that they are not a few, which serves to magnify the grace of God, exalt the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ, and encourage distressed sinners to look to him for justification of life; and yet they are not all men, for all men have not faith, nor are they saved; though all Christ's spiritual seed and offspring shall be justified, and shall glory: and this is "by" or "through his knowledge"; the knowledge of him, of Christ, which is no other than faith in him, by which a man sees and knows him, and believes in him, as the Lord his righteousness; and this agrees with the New Testament doctrine of justification by faith; which is no other than the manifestation, knowledge, sense, and perception of it by faith.

For he shall bear their iniquities; this is the reason of Christ's justifying many, the ground and foundation of it; he undertook to satisfy for their sins; these, as before observed, were laid on him; being laid on him, he bore them, the whole of them, and all the punishment due to them; whereby he made satisfaction for them, and bore them away, so as they are to be seen no more; and upon this justification proceeds.

{c} ebvy hary wvpn lmem "exemptum a molestia se ipsum (vel animam suam, Jun.); videns, satiabitur", Junius & Tremellius. {d} "Post laborem", Forerius.

Isaiah 53:12

Ver. 12. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great,.... The great ones of the earth, the kings and princes of the earth: these are the words of God the Father, promising Christ that he shall have as great a part or portion assigned him as any of the mighty monarchs of the world, nay, one much more large and ample; that he would make him higher than the kings of the earth, and give him a name above every name in this world, or that to come; and all this in consequence of his sufferings, and as a reward of them; see **Php 2:8** and whereas the Lord's people are his portion, and with which Christ is well pleased, and greatly delighted, De 32:9, they may be intended here, at least as a part of the portion which Christ has assigned him. For the words may be rendered {e}, "therefore will I divide, assign, or give many to him": so the Vulgate Latin version; and which is favoured by the Targum,

"therefore will I divide to him the prey of many people;"

and by the Septuagint version, therefore he shall inherit many, or possess many as his inheritance; so the Arabic version. The elect of God were given to Christ, previous to his sufferings and death, in the everlasting council of peace and covenant of grace, to be redeemed and saved by him; and they are given to him, in consequence of them, to believe in him, to be subject to him, and serve him; and so it denotes a great multitude of persons, both among Jews and Gentiles, that should be converted to Christ, embrace him, profess his Gospel, and submit to his ordinances; and which has been true in fact, and took place quickly after his resurrection and ascension.

And he shall divide the spoil with the strong; or "the strong as a spoil"; that is, he shall spoil principalities and powers, destroy Satan and his angels, and make an entire conquest of all his mighty and powerful enemies. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render the words, "he shall divide the spoil of the strong"; of Satan and his principalities; those they make a spoil of he shall take out of their hands, and possess them as his own. The best comment on this version is Lu 11:22. Or rather the words may be rendered, "he shall have or possess for a spoil or prey very many" {f}; for the word for "strong" has the signification of a multitude; and so the sense is the same as before, that a great multitude of souls should be taken by Christ, as a prey out of the hands of the mighty, and become his subjects; and so his kingdom would be very large, and he have great honour and glory, which is the thing promised as a reward of his sufferings. Some understand, by the "great" and "strong", the apostles of Christ, to whom he divided the gifts he received when he led captivity captive; to some apostles, some prophets, &c. **Eph 4:10**, and others the soldiers, among whom his garments were parted; but they are senses foreign from the text.

Because he hath poured out his soul unto death; as water is poured out, Ps 22:14 or rather as the wine was poured out in the libations or drink offerings; for Christ's soul was made an offering for sin, as before; and it may be said with respect to his blood, in which is the life, that was shed or poured out for the remission of sin; of which he was emptied,

and made bare, as the word {g} signifies, when his hands, feet, and side, were pierced. The phrase denotes the voluntariness of Christ's death, that he freely and willingly laid down his life for his people.

And he was numbered with the transgressors; he never was guilty of any one transgression of the law; he indeed appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was calumniated and traduced as a sinner, and a friend of the worst of them; he was ranked among them, and charged as one of them, yet falsely; though, having all the sins of his people upon him, he was treated, even by the justice and law of God, as if he had been the transgressor, and suffered as if he had been one; of which his being crucified between two thieves was a symbolical representation, and whereby this Scripture was fulfilled, Mr 15:28.

and he bore the sin on many; everyone of their sins, even the sins of all those whose iniquity was laid on him, of the many chosen in him, and justified by him; See Gill on "Isa 53:11" where this is given as the reason for their justification; and here repeated as if done, to show the certainty of it; to raise the attention of it, as being a matter of great importance; see **1Pe 2:24**.

And made intercession for the transgressors; as he did upon the cross, even for those that were the instruments of his death, Lu 23:34 and as he now does, in heaven, for all those sinners for whom he died; not merely in a petitionary way, but by presenting himself, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; pleading the merits of these, and calling for, in a way of justice and legal demand, all those blessings which were stipulated in an everlasting covenant between him and his Father, to be given to his people, in consequence of his sufferings and death; see **Ro 8:33**.

{e} Mybrb wl qlxa Nkl "ideo dispertiam ei plurimos", V. L. "propterea ipsi attribuam (vel addicam) permultos", Bootius, Animadv. I. 4. c. 12. sect. 20. p. 251. "idcirco dispertiam ei sortem, multitudinem Gentium", Vitringa. {f} llv qlxy Mymwue ta "et plurimos (seu innumeros) habebit loco praedae, vel plurimi obtingent ipsi pro praeda", Bootius, ibid. {g} wvpn twml hreh "denudavit morti animam suam", Forerius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 54:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 54

As the former chapter is a prophecy of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, of his sufferings and death, and the glory that should follow; this is a prophecy of that part of his glory which relates to the flourishing estate of his church, as the fruit of his death, and explains and enlarges upon the promise of his having a numerous seed. The prophecy reaches from the death and resurrection of Christ to his second coming; and describes the state of the church during that time, which had been like a barren woman, but now fruitful, which was matter of joy; and would increase, and have yet a more numerous issue, through the conversion and accession of the Gentiles; and therefore is bid not to fear, since she should not bear the shame and reproach of widowhood, Isa 54:1, the reason confirming which is, because Christ was her husband, who was her Maker and Redeemer, the God of Israel, and of the whole earth, Isa 54:5, and though she might for some time be under some dark providences, and seem to be forsaken of God, and lie under his displeasure; yet she is assured of the love of God towards her, that it is constant and perpetual; which is illustrated by the oath and covenant of God with Noah, and by its being more immovable than mountains and hills, Isa 54:6, and though she would sometimes be in a very afflicted and uncomfortable condition, yet should be raised again to a state of great honour and splendour, of spiritual knowledge, peace, and safety, Isa 54:11 and that all her enemies, that gathered together against her, should perish, and all their attempts be unsuccessful, since the Lord was on her side, and would defend her cause, and protect her, Isa 54:15.

Ver. 1. Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear,.... The Targum interprets this of Jerusalem, paraphrasing the words thus,

"sing praise, O Jerusalem, which was as a barren woman that bears not;"

and so the apostle applies the words of the text to the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all, the then present Gospel church, **Ga 4:26**, which, at the first setting of it up, in the times of Christ, during his life and at the time of his death, and before the day of Pentecost, was like a barren woman; the number of converts were very small; few believed the report of the Gospel, professed Christ, and submitted to his ordinances; the names of the disciples were but a hundred and twenty. Though some understand this of the Jewish church, under the Old Testament dispensation, whose members were not many, and whose proselytes from the Gentiles were but few; and others of the Gentile world, before the coming of Christ, and the preaching of the Gospel in it; but the former sense is to be preferred, having the suffrage of the apostle:

break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; among whom there were few instances of conversion, scarce any begotten and born again of incorruptible seed by the word of God, and no signs thereof; but now it being otherwise, and multitudes being converted both in Judea and in the Gentile world, the church and its members are called upon to express their joy aloud in songs of praise, setting forth the glory of efficacious grace, in the regeneration of men; for as this is matter of joy to the angels of heaven, so to the saints on earth:

for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord; more souls were born again, and added to the church after the death of Christ, when she was in a desolate condition, like a woman deprived of her husband, and in a widowhood state, then there were while Christ was here on earth, personally present with his people, and preaching the Gospel himself unto men; three thousand were converted under one sermon, and great numbers afterwards were added, so that the church at Jerusalem was in a much more flourishing condition after the death of Christ than before; more fruitful when it was become like a widow than when the bridegroom was with her; and the church of Christ still increased yet more and more afterwards, as the following verses predict. The Targum is,

"more shall be the children of Jerusalem than the children of the habitable city."

The edition of it, in the king of Spain's Bible, has it,

"than the children of Rome;"

and so it is quoted by R. Elias {h}, and by Buxtorf {i}. The Jews understand this prophecy of their deliverance from their present condition by the Messiah; and of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the prosperity of it.

{h} In Tishbi, p. 227. {i} Lexic. Talmud. col. 996, 2229.

Isaiah 54:2

Ver. 2. Enlarge the place of thy tent,.... To which the church is compared, because of its uncertain and movable condition, being sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; and because of its outward meanness and weakness, as well as its small extent; but now it is signified that it should be enlarged, and room be made for an accession of in habitants to it; or, in other words, that the Gospel church state should not be confined to Jerusalem, but should take place in other parts of Judea, and in Galilee, and in Samaria; hence we read of churches in those places, **Ac 9:31**:

and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitation; alluding to the curtains of which tents or tabernacles were made, which used to be stretched out on poles or stakes, in order to make more room, and hold more people. This may respect the spreading of the Gospel by the apostles, who may be here meant, and the success of it, especially among the Gentiles; who may be said to stretch out the curtains of the tent, the church, when, according to their commission, they went and preached the Gospel to every creature. First they travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching to the Jews only; but when they wholly rejected the Gospel, they turned to the Gentiles, and went everywhere preaching the word, Ac 11:19, and their ministry was blessed to the conversion of multitudes, and Gospel churches were set up in all parts of the world. The Apostle Paul was an eminent instrument of stretching these curtains, who went from Jerusalem, round about to Illyricum, fully preaching the Gospel of Christ, Ro 15:19:

spare not: any cost or pains, to spread the Gospel, enlarge the interest of Christ, and increase his church and people; as did not the apostles of Christ, who may be supposed to be the persons here addressed:

lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; the curtains being stretched out, it was necessary the cords, to which they were fastened, should be lengthened, that they might reach further, and take in a greater compass; and the wider the tent is made by such means, the stronger should be the staves, and the more surely should they be drove and fixed in the earth, to hold the cords with the curtains bound unto them; all which express the enlargement of the church in the Gentile world, by means of the Gospel ministry and discipline. The Targum is,

"multiply the people of thy camp, and strengthen the governors."

Isaiah 54:3

Ver. 3. For thou shall break forth on the right hand and on the left,.... To the south, and to the north, as the Targum, like an inundation of water, that breaks through and overflows the banks of the river, and spreads itself in the adjacent countries; or like a warehouse overstocked with goods, bursts the walls in which they are pent up; or rather as infants break forth from the womb at the time of birth, as Pharez did, from whence he had his name, Ge 38:29 see Ho 13:13, or as, when a country is become exceeding numerous, the inhabitants break out, and go forth beyond their borders, and seek new settlements, the place of their abode being too small for them; so it shall be in the latter day, through the vast number of converts that will be made; see Isa 49:19:

and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles; where formerly only Heathens lived, there the Gospel of Christ shall be carried by his apostles and other ministers; and being succeeded to the conversion of many souls, through the power of divine grace accompanying it, a spiritual seed, the seed of the church, shall take place, and dwell there; this was true in the first ages of Christianity, more especially in Constantine's time; and will be more fully accomplished in the latter day, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in:

and make the desolate cities to be inhabited: such cities as were destitute of the knowledge of Christ and his salvation, and of all divine and spiritual things, shall now be inhabited by spiritual men, such as believe in Christ, and profess his name; such cities as Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Colosse, Philippi, Thessalonica, and many others.

Isaiah 54:4

Ver. 4. Fear not,.... The fulfilment of these things; however unlikely and unpromising they might seem, yet God was able to perform them; and therefore way should not be given to a fearful, distrustful, and unbelieving heart:

for thou shall not be ashamed; as men are, when disappointed of what they have been hoping for and expecting; but so it should not be with the church, she should not be ashamed of her hope, faith, and confidence; for there would be a performance of all that the Lord had spoken: nor should she be ashamed of her barrenness, which should cease; and of the fewness of her children or converts, which would be many; and of the straitness of the place of her tent or habitation, which would now be enlarged:

neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame; other words made use of to express the same thing, and for the further confirmation of it, that she needed not, and that she should not be put to the blush, or to shame and confusion, on the above accounts:

for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth; by which may be meant either the small number of converts at the first preaching of the Gospel; or more especially that there were so few of the wise and learned, the rich and noble, that embraced it, with which the first Christians were greatly upbraided; or those persecutions which attended them the three first centuries, which, being now at an end, shall be forgotten:

and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more; which signifies much the same as before, the seeming desolate estate of the church upon the death of Christ; when she seemed to be deprived of her husband, and forsaken by him, and left as a widow, and without children, barren and unfruitful; which was reckoned reproachful with the Jews, **Lu 1:25**.

Isaiah 54:5

Ver. 5. For thy Maker [is] thine Husband,.... That is, Christ, the Husband of the church, and of every true believer; who secretly betrothed them to himself in eternity, having asked him of his father; and, being given to him, openly espouses them in conversion, one by one, as a chaste virgin; which he will do more publicly in a body at the last day, when the marriage of the Lamb will be come, when he will appear as the bridegroom of his people; and to which character he acts up, by loving them with a love of complacency and delight, most affectionately and constantly; by sympathizing with them in all their troubles; by nourishing and cherishing them as his own flesh, and interesting them in all he is and has. It is, in the Hebrew text {k} "thy Makers, thy Husbands", Father, Son, and Spirit; though the relation of a husband is more peculiar to Christ; and the words are a reason of the church's fruitfulness, and why she need not fear the performance of what was promised her; and which is wonderful and amazing; he who stands in such a near and endearing relation to his church and people, is the "Maker" of all things, yea, their Maker, both as creatures, and as new creatures:

the Lord of hosts is his name; of armies above and below, in heaven, and in earth; how great therefore must this their Husband be! to what honour and dignity are they advanced! how safe must they be under his protection! nor need they fear any enemy:

thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; he who is the church's Husband is her Redeemer; and who so fit as he to redeem her from sin, Satan, and the law, and every enemy; who is of the same nature with her, so dearly loves her, and so able to save her? for which he is also abundantly qualified, being holy in both his natures, in his person and offices, in his birth, life, and death; for this seems greatly to respect him as man, as he was a descendant of the Israelitish nation, and of the seed of Abraham:

the God of the whole earth shall he be called: not of Israel only, but of all the nations of the world, of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews; the earth was made by him; the world and all that are in it are his: he is the Governor among the nations; and in the latter day will appear to be the King over all the earth, and will be owned as such; so great and illustrious a Person is the church's Husband. These words are applied by the Jews to the times of the Messiah {l}.

{k} Kyvwe Kyleb Heb. "mariti tui, factores tui", Piscator; "qui crearunt te, habent te in matrimonio", Cocceius. {l} Shemot Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 102. 4.

Isaiah 54:6

Ver. 6. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit,.... That has lost her husband by death, is solitary upon it, is like one forsaken, and mourns for the loss of him; or is forsaken by a living husband, rejected by him, having a bill of divorce from him, and so she grieves at his unkindness to her, and the reproach cast upon her; as such an one was the church when it was first constituted, when the members of which it consisted were called out of the world by the grace of God, and formed into a church state; almost as soon as ever they were thus embodied together, Christ was taken from them by death, and they were left alone, and filled with grief and trouble: the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel were persecuted from place to place, and all of them lost their lives for the cause in which they were engaged; and the church endured grievous persecutions during the three first centuries, when she seemed to be forsaken of God, and was greatly oppressed and grieved in spirit. Some understand this of the Gentiles, and of their state and condition when called, as described in **Eph 2:10**, but rather it may be interpreted of the Jews, now cut off and forsaken; and who, when they come to be sensible of their case, will be grieved and mourn, even when they shall be called and converted in the latter day; but I think the first sense is best:

and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God; or, "and as a wife of youth {m}"; whom a man marries in his youth, and she a young woman herself, which makes it the more grievous to be despised, refused, and forsaken, or to seem to be so. The words may be rendered thus, "and", or "but, a wife of youth thou art, though thou wast despised" {n}, or "refused, saith thy God"; that is, though thou hast been seemingly despised and cast off, my providential dispensations towards thee may be so interpreted by thyself and others; yet I am thy God, thy Maker, Redeemer, and Husband, and thou art as dear to me as the wife of a man's youth, for whom he has the most passionate love; and which agrees with what follows.

{m} tvaw, wv gunaika, Sept.; sic Arab. & Targum; "et velut foeminam", Tigurine version, Castalio; "et ut uxorem", Vitringa. {n} oamt yk "quamvis spreta sis", Junius & Tremellius; "fueris", Piscator.

Isaiah 54:7

Ver. 7. For a small moment have I forsaken thee,.... The people of God seem to be forsaken by him when he hides his face from them, as it is afterwards explained; when they are in distress, and he does not immediately appear for them; when they are afflicted in body and mind, though these afflictions are but for a moment; nor are they really forsaken, not as to things temporal or spiritual; God never forsakes the work of his own hands, nor his people, at least for ever, or so as that they shall perish. Some interpret this of the seventy years' captivity of the Jews in Babylon, which was but a very short time; others of the times of ignorance in the Gentile world before the coming of Christ, which God winked at, when he overlooked them, and took no notice of them; but I choose to understand it of the time and state of the Christian church, during the ten persecutions of Rome Pagan, when it seemed to be forsaken of God, and to be triumphed over by her enemies:

but with great mercies will I gather thee; they had been scattered about by persecution, but now should be gathered together in bodies, and have their public assemblies, and worship God openly, none making them afraid; which was fulfilled in Constantine's time, when Paganism was abolished, and Christianity established throughout the Roman empire; when public places for Christian worship were opened everywhere, the Gospel was freely preached, and multitudes were gathered by effectual calling, and brought into the Gospel church, which was now in a very flourishing condition; for this is not to be understood of the gathering of the captive Jews from Babylon, nor of the calling of the Gentiles by the ministry of the apostles, nor of the restoration and conversion of the Jews in the latter day, though this is more eligible than the former, and much less of the gathering of the saints at the last day.

Isaiah 54:8

Ver. 8. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment,.... This signifies much the same as before, when God hides his face from his people, withdraws his gracious presence, and does not grant the discoveries of his love; or they are under the frowns of his providence, and have not the smiles of his face and the light of his countenance as formerly, then they think they are forsaken by him; though all this is but for a moment, a small period of time; and though it seems to be in "wrath", it is but "little wrath"; and this wrath is no other than the displeasure of a loving and tender hearted father. The Syriac version renders it, "great wrath"; and so Schultens {o} thinks the word signifies "overflowing wrath" {p}, and the vehemency of it; to which agrees R. Menachem {q}, who interprets it, "the heat of wrath"; so the Lord's suffering such a scene of bloody persecutions to attend his church in the first ages of Christianity might seem to be:

but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer; all the dealings of God with his people, however dark and dismal they be, whatever appearances there are in them of wrath and displeasure, they are all agreeable to, and do not contradict, his everlasting love; and sooner or later he will make it manifest, he has mercy in store for his people, which he does and will exercise towards them; this mercy flows from his love and kindness to them, which kindness is everlasting, and continues in and through all states and conditions into which they come; the consideration of which is very comfortable and encouraging, and of which they may be assured from the relation the Lord stands in to them as their Redeemer; for, having redeemed them at the expense of his blood, he will effectually gather them by grace in calling, and will never lose them, or suffer them to perish here or hereafter.

{o} Animadv. in Job, p. 145, 146. {p} Puq Puvb "pauxillo irae exundantis, [vel] exiguo irae ebullientis", Vitringa. {q} Apud Jarchi, Kimchi, & Ben Melech, in loc.

Isaiah 54:9

Ver. 9. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me,.... Some copies, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, read these two words, ym yk, as one, thus, ymyk, "as the days of Noah"; and this is followed by the Targum, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; both readings may be kept, and joined in one, and the sense be, "for this is as the waters that were in the days of Noah unto me"; so Kimchi and Menachem join them. The meaning is, that God's dispensation towards his people, at the time the prophecy refers to, is like that of his to Noah and his family; and the love he bears to them is like that which he bore to him; and the covenant he has made with them is as that he made with him:

for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; he gave his word for it, which is as firm as his oath; he made a covenant with Noah, and confirmed it by a rainbow, that the waters should no more go over the earth as they had, and that the world should be no more destroyed by a flood, **Ge 9:9**:

so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee; for though the Lord's people are by nature children of wrath, as others, he has not appointed them to it, nor will he suffer it to fall upon them, but saves them from it through the righteousness of Christ, who has borne it for them; and though he rebukes by his Spirit, by his word and ministers, and by his providences, yet not in wrath, but in love; and of this he has given the strongest assurances; he has not only said it, but swore to it in covenant, Ps 89:3. The Jews {r} refer this prophecy to the times of the Messiah.

{r} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1.

Isaiah 54:10

Ver. 10. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed,.... As sometimes by earthquakes, and as they will at the last day, when the earth shall be dissolved, and all in it, things the most solid, firm, and durable: it may be understood comparatively; sooner shall these depart and be removed than the kindness and covenant of God: it may be interpreted figuratively of revolutions in kingdoms and states, and particularly of the abolition of Paganism in the times of Constantine; and which is expressed in much such language; "the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places", **Re 6:14**. Kimchi observes, that mountains and hills may be interpreted of the kings of the nations; with this compare **Re 6:15**:

but my kindness shall not depart from thee; the love of God to his people is an everlasting love; it always continues; it never did, nor never will depart, notwithstanding their fall in Adam, their depraved state by nature, their actual sins and transgressions, their many revoltings and backslidings; though the Lord may hide his face from them, and afflict them, still he loves them; whatever departs from them, his kindness shall not; though riches may flee away from them, friends stand aloof off from them, health may be taken away, and life itself, yet the love of God is always the same; and so, whatever providences may attend his church and interest in any period of time, he has the same paternal care for it, and kindness for his people, as ever:

neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed; the covenant of grace made with Christ and his people in him from everlasting, so called, because peace is a considerable article of it; even that peace which was upon the heart and thought of God from everlasting; the scheme of which was drawn by him; all things relating to it were settled in this covenant, as that Christ should be the Maker of it, and that it should be made by his blood; besides, peace includes all the blessings of grace which that covenant is stored with; and the covenant is the spring and source of all peace, spiritual and eternal: moreover, as this refers to Gospel times, the new covenant is here meant, and the publication of it, in which the Gospel of peace, or peace by Jesus Christ, is preached unto men; to which may be added, that one part, at least, of the sense of the passage, may be, that notwithstanding all the troubles and exercises the church of Christ should meet with from Rome Pagan or Papal, yet the promise and covenant of God, that it should enjoy peace and prosperity in the latter day, should never be made void, but should have its sure and certain accomplishment:

saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee; for all springs from the mercy of God, and not the merits of men; and therefore the fulfilment of the covenant and promises may be depended upon.

Isaiah 54:11

Ver. 11. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted,.... Or, "O thou poor" {s} church; for the first Christian churches chiefly consisted of poor persons, not many mighty and noble being called; and which were greatly "afflicted" with false teachers, who broached errors and heresies, and made schisms among them; and "tossed with tempests" like a ship at sea; or "stormed" {t} with the rage and fury of violent persecutors, such as the Roman emperors were; and not "comforted", having none to administer any external comfort or relief to them; none of the kings or princes of the earth, or any civil magistrate to protect and defend them; what comfort they had was internal and spiritual; what they had from Christ and his Spirit, and by the word and ordinances; or rather this may describe the state of the church under Papal tyranny and persecution, which brings it nearer to the times of peace and prosperity after promised:

behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours; or, "with paint" {u}; such as women used to paint their faces or eyes with, **2Ki 9:30**. The Targum is,

"behold, I will lay with paint the stones of thy pavement;"

and the words seem plainly to design the stones of a pavement, and perhaps by an hypallage or transposition may be rendered,

I will lay thy pavement with glistering stones; so the word is translated 1Ch 29:2 or, "with stones of paint" {w}; which are of the colour of the "stibium", or paint before mentioned, and which was of a black colour; and Aben Ezra says the word here signifies a precious stone of a black colour; perhaps black marble is meant, a stone fit for pavements; but, be these stones what they will, they design in the spiritual sense the materials of a Gospel church, those "lively stones" which

are built up a spiritual house, and which are beautified with the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God; and may also denote that the lowest and meanest of the Lord's people, pointed out by stones of the pavement, should be thus adorned:

and lay thy foundations with sapphires; a precious stone of a white colour, according to R. Saadiah Gaon; but, according to Aben Ezra, of a red colour; though the sapphire is usually said to be of a sky colour, shining with specks of gold. The Targum renders it, "with precious stones"; and so the foundation of the wall of the New Jerusalem is said to be garnished with all manner of precious stones, Re 21:19, this may respect Christ, the sure foundation God has laid in Zion, the foundation of the apostles and prophets; the one and only foundation of the church of Christ, and all true believers, who is more precious than sapphires, or all the most precious stones; he always has been the foundation of his church in all ages; but the meaning is, that he shall now appear most clearly and manifestly to be the foundation, and to be a firm, rich, and glorious one; see Ex 24:10.

{s} hyne V. L. Munster, Pagninus; "O paupercula", Tigurine version; "inops", Cocceius. {t} hrewo "tempestate obruta"; Munster, Vatablus, Forerius. {u} Kwpb "in fuco", Tigurine version; "in stibio", Sanctius. {w} "Stibinis lapidibus", Forerius.

Isaiah 54:12

Ver. 12. And I will make thy windows of agates,.... Some sort of which stones, Pliny {x} says, were valued for their clearness like glass; but the stone which bears this name with us is not clear and lucid enough to make windows of. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "of jasper", a stone more fit for that purpose; and it is interpreted of the jasper in the Talmud {y}; so "the light" of the New Jerusalem is said to be like unto the "jasper stone",
Re 21:11. Some take the crystal to be meant, which suits well with windows; the word {z} for which has its name from the sun, because by means of them the rays and light of the sun are let into a house, and illuminate it; these in a figurative sense may design the ministers of the Gospel, who are the lights of the world, especially of the church; and the word and ordinances administered by them, by means of which the light of spiritual knowledge, joy, and comfort, is let into the churches, and into the souls of men, from Christ, the sun of righteousness. The phrase signifies, that in the latter day their ministrations should be very clear and bright, and be greatly owned, and be very successful: "and thy gates of carbuncles"; precious stones so called from their fiery flaming colour. The gates of the New Jerusalem are said to be so many pearls, Re 21:21 which there, as here, signify the entrance into the church of God, which is through Christ, who is the door into it, and through faith in him, which works by love; these gates will be open in the latter day to receive many, who will come in great numbers, and are called "praise",
Isa 60:11, which will be expressed in very warm and lively strains of love and affection, of which the carbuncle may be a symbol:

and all thy borders of pleasant stones; true believers, called "lively stones", and who are pleasant in the sight of God and Christ, and are taken pleasure in by one another; see Ps 102:14. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "thy wall", which agree with Re 21:18, where the wall of the New Jerusalem is said to be of jasper.

{x} Nat. Hist l. 37. c. 10. {y} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 1. {z} Kytwvmv "a radice, quae solem significat", Sanctius,

Isaiah 54:13

Ver. 13. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord,.... The children of the church, who are born in her, and nursed up at her side, and who are the children of God by adoption, which is made manifest by regeneration; these the Lord will take care of that they be "taught", even "all" of them, from the least to the greatest, Jer 31:34, they shall be taught of the Lord himself, by his ministers, word, and ordinances, as means, and by his Spirit, as the efficient; by whom they are taught to know themselves, their vileness and sinfulness, their folly and weakness, their want of right counsels, and the insufficiency of their own to know Christ, and the way of salvation by him; him as the only Saviour, able and willing so to know him as to believe in him, receive him, and walk on in him; this had an accomplishment in the first times of the Gospel; see **Joh 6:45** and will have a further one in the latter day, when there will be a greater effusion of the Spirit, when the doctrines of the Gospel will be taught and understood more clearly, fully, and largely:

and great shall be the peace of thy children; the inward peace of their minds in and from Christ, arising from a view of their justification by his righteousness, from the sprinklings of his blood upon their consciences, and from the discoveries of his love to their souls, enjoyed in a way of believing, and by means of the word and ordinances; also peace among themselves, harmony and concord, and no more strifes, contentions, and animosities; likewise outward peace from enemies, no more persecution or war. This word includes all kind of prosperity, external and internal, temporal and spiritual. This, with the following verses, explain the figurative phrases used in the foregoing. These words are applied by the Jews {a} to the times of the Messiah, when all Israel shall learn the law from the Lord; so the Targum,

"all thy children shall know the law of the Lord;"

but it is much better understood of all the children of the church, the true Israel of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, learning the Gospel of Christ.

{a} Midrash Tillim, apud Yalkut in Psal. xxi. 1.

Isaiah 54:14

Ver. 14. In righteousness shalt thou be established,.... In the righteousness of Christ, from whence flows the peace before spoken of, and which is the stability of the church of Christ, and the security of it and its members from condemnation. The doctrine of justification by Christ's righteousness is, as Luther calls it, "articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae", the article of the church, by which, as it is held fast or neglected, it stands or falls: or be established in exercising righteousness, doing justice and judgment, which, as it is the support and establishment of a kingdom and state, so of the church; for if purity of manners, holiness and righteousness, are neglected, a church soon comes to decay and ruin; but such will be the holiness of the professors of religion in the latter day, that every pot and vessel in it shall be holiness to the Lord, Zec 14:20:

thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shall not fear; so far from it, that thou shalt not be in the least afraid of it, neither from within nor from without; not from false teachers that oppress the mind with legal doctrine; nor from persecutors that oppress and injure in person and property: the church will be now free from the oppression and tyranny of Rome, or mystical Babylon, which will now fall, and from the persecution of the antichristian states, on whom the vials of God's wrath will be poured, and so the church will be no more in fear of them; the words may be rendered, "therefore thou shalt not fear" {b}; there will be no cause for it, no occasion of it:

and from terror; it shall not come near thee; the terror of the antichristian beast and powers, which shall be no more, after their last effort next mentioned.

{b} yaryt al "quare non timebis, [vel] ideo non metues", Vitringa; "quare ne timeas", Forerius.

Isaiah 54:15

Ver. 15. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me,.... Not by the

Lord, by his command or order to do his will, and execute his pleasure, which sometimes was the case, as in Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and others; but so it shall not be, when the enemies of Christ and his people gather together against them in the latter day; this will be by the means of three unclean spirits like frogs that will come out of the mouth of the dragon, beast, and false prophet; even spirits of devils, Popish priests, and Jesuits, who will instigate, stir up, and get together the antichristian kings of the earth to the battle of almighty God, Re 16:14. Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret them of Gog and Magog:

whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake; because of the love that I bear to thee, they shall not succeed, or do thee any hurt, but shall perish; or, "shall fall to thee" {c}; so far from doing thee any hurt, they shall come over to thee, and be on thy side; be joined to thee, as the Vulgate Latin version; that is, the remnant that shall escape, and be converted, and give glory to God,
Re 11:13 or rather, "shall fall before thee" {d}, in thy sight; or, as the Targum, in the midst of thee; which remarkably paraphrases the words thus,

"at the end the kings of the nations, which are gathered together to afflict thee, O Jerusalem, shall fall in the midst of thee;"

for the kings of the earth that shall be gathered together against Christ and his church shall fall in battle before them, and their flesh shall become meat for the fowls of the heaven; the beast and false prophet, in company with them, will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire, and the remnant be slain with the sword of Christ,
Re 19:17.

{c} lwpy Kyle "ad te cadet", Cocceius. {d} "Cotam te cadet", Grotius, Gataker.

Isaiah 54:16

Ver. 16. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire,.... Into which he puts his iron to soften it, that he may beat it, and form it into what shape he pleases; which descriptive clause is added to show that it is a blacksmith that is intended, and to distinguish him from the carpenter and mason, of whom this word is also used, who deal, the one in wood, and the other in stone, and neither of which requires fire: now the Lord observes, to the comfort of his people, surrounded by enemies with instruments of war in their hands, that he made the smith that made these, not only as a man, but as an artificer gave him all the skill he has in making military weapons; and therefore could take away his skill, or hinder him from making any, or destroy and defeat, and render useless those that are made; and therefore they had nothing to fear from warlike preparations. Some understand this of the devil, that great incendiary of mankind; and others of a council of war, that forms the design, blows up the coals of contention, and brings forth the plan of operation in war, it follows, as a further description of the smith,

and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work: who takes the iron out of the fire which he blows, as an instrument to work upon, and which he forms into a military weapon, as an arrow, a sword, a spear, or shield; or, "for their work" {e}; for the use of the enemies of Christ and his church:

and I have created the waster to destroy; military men, soldiers that use the above weapons of destruction for that purpose; these are God's creatures, and he can destroy or disappoint them, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. Some understand this also of the devil, who is by way of eminence the waster of mankind; others of tyrannical princes; I should choose to interpret it of the Romish antichrist, that waster and destroyer of the souls of men, and of the antichristian states that destroy the earth, and shall be destroyed themselves; or of the Turk, the locust, whose king is called Apollyon and Abaddon, which signifies a waster and a destroyer, Re 11:18. These are said to be "created" by the Lord, not only because they are his creatures, the work of his hands, but because they are raised up by his providence, according to his secret purpose, as Pharaoh was, to show his power in them; and are permitted by him to continue for awhile to fulfil his will, being entirely dependent upon him, and subject to his influence, direction, and overruling providence; and therefore his people had no reason to be afraid of them.

{e} whveml "ad opus ipsorum", Gataker.

Isaiah 54:17

Ver. 17. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper,.... All weapons of war, as the Targum, which are made with a design to hurt and destroy the people of God, shall be rendered useless; not one of them shall prosper to the advantage of their enemies, or so as to answer their design; nor to the hurt and prejudice, ruin and destruction, of the saints:

and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment; that shall raise any calumny upon thee, or bring any charge against thee, or enter into a lawsuit with thee, litigate a point with thee in any court of judicature, or claim, in right and law, a power, authority, and dominion over thee, as the pope of Rome does over the consciences of men:

thou shalt condemn; disprove and roll off the calumny, refute the charge and accusation, put to silence the clamours and pretences of wicked men, carry the cause against them, and shake off the yoke of bondage they would bring them under; and, instead of being condemned by them, condemn them. By "weapon" may be meant all the attempts made by force to ruin the interest and church of Christ in the world, such as the bloody persecutions of the Roman emperors, who, though they made sad havoc of the professors of Christianity, and designed hereby to have rooted it out of the world, and thought they should have accomplished it, yet could not do it; so far from it, that the Christians yet more and more increased, insomuch that it became a common saying, that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church; also the wars of the Papists with the Albigenses and Waldenses, and all the cruel methods they have taken by fire and faggot, and the bloody inquisition, to hinder the growth of what they call heresy; yet all have been in vain, a reformation has taken place, and many nations have embraced the truth, and shook off the yoke of Popery; together with all their efforts since to crush the Protestant interest; and though the kings of the earth will be stirred up, and gather together to the battle of the Lord God Almighty, they will not succeed, but be overcome and slain, and the beast and false prophet at the head of them will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire: and by the "tongue" may be designed the edicts of the Pagan emperors, forbidding the exercise of the Christian religion, and threatening the preachers and professors of it with imprisonment, confiscation of goods, and death itself; and the anathemas, bulls, and interdicts of the popes of Rome, as well as the reproaches, scandals, and calumnies uttered by the emissaries of that church against all that depart from it; together with the errors and heresies of false teachers of all sorts in all ages of the world, which, though levelled against the faith and doctrine of the church of Christ, have not been able to subvert it, nor ever will:

this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; this, with all that is said in this chapter, is the part, portion, and privilege, that such shall enjoy who serve the Lord Christ, and not antichrist; they shall be treated rather as sons than as servants, and have an inheritance assigned them; not only protection from all enemies, and absolution from all charges, but they shall receive the reward of the inheritance in heaven, that which is incorruptible and undefiled, and reserved there, since they serve the Lord Christ:

and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord; the vindication of their righteousness, of their cause, and of their character; or the reward of their righteous works in a way of grace; even all that righteousness and true holiness that is in them, and that righteousness which is imputed to them, and by which they are justified, are from the Lord; by which they are secured from all the charges of law and justice, and, from all the accusations of men and devils, and which will answer for them in a time to come, and acquit them at the bar of God before men and angels; see **Ro 8:33**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 55:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 55

As the two preceding chapters are prophecies of Christ and his church, this treats of his word and ordinances, and of the nature, use, and efficacy of them. It begins with an invitation of thirsty souls to them, Isa 55:1, an expostulation with them for taking wrong methods, and a dissuasive from them, Isa 55:2, which is followed with an exhortation to hear the word of Christ, attend on his ordinances; to which they are encouraged with promises of life and covenant blessings, Isa 55:2. Christ is prophesied of in his offices; and the conversion of the Gentiles to him is foretold, Isa 55:4, men are called upon to seek the Lord, where and while he might be found; and both wicked and unrighteous persons, forsaking their ways and thoughts, are encouraged to turn to the Lord, in hopes of pardon, and in consideration of his ways and thoughts not being like theirs, Isa 55:6, the nature and efficacy of the word of God are expressed and illustrated by the similes of rain and snow, Isa 55:10, and the conversion of the Lord's people, in consequence of the word being made effectual, is predicted, the issue of which is the glory of God, Isa 55:12.

Ver. 1. Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,.... These are the words not of the prophet, but of the Lord, as what follows throughout the chapter shows; and are directed to the Gentiles, as Aben Ezra thinks: and indeed their conversion is manifestly spoken of in it; and who, Kimchi says, after the war of Gog and Magog, shall know that the Lord reigns, and shall come and be desirous of learning his judgments and laws. The word "ho" is expressive of calling, as the Jewish commentators rightly observe; and carries in it an invitation, in which there seems to be a commiseration of the case of the persons called and it is delivered in indefinite terms, and very openly and publicly; and has in it the nature of a Gospel call or invitation, to persons described as "thirsty"; not in natural, much less in a sinful sense, but in a spiritual one; thirsting after forgiveness of sin by the blood of Christ; after justification by his righteousness; after salvation by him; after more knowledge of him, more communion with him, and more conformity to him; and after the milk of the word, and breasts of ordinances; being sensible of sin and danger, and having a spiritual appetite, and a desire after spiritual things. Such as these are persons made alive; are in distress, and sensible of it; and have desires formed in them after divine things: and these are invited and encouraged to "come to the waters"; by which are meant not Christ, though he is as "rivers of water"; and sensible sinners are directed to come to him, and that as in a starving and famishing condition, and having nothing to help themselves with; and such things are to be had of him, which like water are refreshing and reviving, as his grace, and the blessings of it; and which serve to extinguish thirst, and free from it; yet not he, nor the grace of the spirit, are intended, which is often signified by water in Scripture; but rather the ordinances of the Gospel, which are the means of conveying grace, and of refreshing and comforting distressed minds; in order to which, such may come and hear the word, come and partake of all ordinances. The allusion seems to be to such places by the waterside, where ships, laden with provisions, come and unlade; and where persons, by a public crier, are informed of it, and are called to come and buy. So water means the water side, **Jud 7:4**. Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret them of the law, and the doctrines of it; and so the Targum,

"ho, everyone that would learn, let him come and learn;"

but the Gospel, and the doctrines and ordinances of that, seem rather designed:

and he that hath no money; not in a natural, but in a spiritual sense: unconverted persons have nothing to support themselves or pay off their debts with, though they fancy they have, and that they are rich, and stand in need of nothing; but sensible souls know they have none, and that they are poor and needy; yet these are invited to come where provisions are to be had, since they are to be had at free cost:

come ye, buy and eat; come to the ordinances, partake of them freely, and feed upon the provisions therein made:

come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price; by wine and milk are meant the Gospel and its doctrines, compared to good old generous wine, for the antiquity of them, and for their being of a reviving and refreshing nature; and to "milk", for its purity and sweetness, and for its cooling and nourishing nature, and because easy of digestion; these are to be bought, and not to be sold. Pr 23:23, but not in a proper sense; no valuable consideration can be given for them, for they are of more worth than thousands of gold and silver; nor have we anything to give to God for them, and the blessings of grace conveyed by them, which is not his own, or can be profitable to him; but in an improper sense, when something thought valuable is parted with for them, as sinful and righteous self, and even everything in life, when called for, and that itself; these are bought without any money or price on our part; they are freely given and received; and on this basis may men expect them, and have them. The Targum is,

"he that hath no silver, come, hear and learn; come, hear and learn, without price and money, doctrine better than wine and milk."

Isaiah 55:2

Ver. 2. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?.... Lavish away time, opportunities, and strength, in reading and hearing false doctrine, which is not bread, but chaff; is not wholesome, does not nourish, but is harmful and destructive; eats as does a canker, instead of feeding and refreshing; such as the vain philosophy of the Gentiles, the traditions of the Jews, and the errors and heresies of false teachers:

and your labour for that which satisfieth not? labouring to seek for happiness in worldly things, which is not to be had; or to obtain righteousness by the works of the law, which is not to be attained to in that way; all such labour is in vain, no satisfaction is enjoyed, nor peace and comfort had, nor any solid food; these are husks which swine eat:

hearken diligently unto me; not the prophet, but the Lord himself. The Targum renders it,

"my Word;"

the essential Word, Christ Jesus, hearken to his doctrine, which is bread, and of a satisfying nature:

and eat ye that which is good; not the law, as the Jewish commentators; but the good word of God, the Gospel, which being found and eaten by faith, or mixed with faith by them that hear it, and so digested, is the joy and rejoicing of the heart:

and let your soul delight itself in fatness; in the goodness and fatness of the Lord's house, attending on the word and ordinances with spiritual pleasure and delight; and which is the way to become fat and flourishing in spiritual things; see Ps 36:8.

Isaiah 55:3

Ver. 3. Incline your ear, and come unto me,.... The exhortations are repeated, to show the importance of them, how welcome these persons were to the Lord, and to his house, and his earnest and tender care and concern for them:

hear, and your soul shall live; or, "that your soul may live {f}"; spiritually and eternally. There must be life before hearing; men must be made alive before they can come to Christ spiritually, or hear his word so as to have a spiritual understanding of it, or savingly believe it; but the meaning is, that by coming and hearing the word of the Lord, they should have something to live upon, good, solid, substantial food; and that they should live comfortably and plentifully, and that for ever. It was reckoned a great absurdity in Sunlungus, a Chinese philosopher, who asserted {g} that a man had three ears, one different from the two that are seen; it is true in a spiritual sense.

And I will make an everlasting covenant with you; which is to be understood not of the covenant of works, nor of the covenant of circumcision, nor of the Sinai covenant; but of the covenant of grace, which is an "everlasting one"; it is from everlasting, being founded in the everlasting love of God, is according to his eternal purposes; Christ is the Mediator of it, who as such was set up from everlasting, and the promises and blessings of it were so early put into his hands; and it will continue to everlasting, sure, firm, unalterable, and immovable. This, properly speaking, was made with Christ from all eternity, and his people in him; it is made manifest to them at conversion, when they are shown it, and their interest in it; when God makes himself known to them as

their covenant God, and Christ as the Mediator of it is revealed to them; when the Lord puts his Spirit into them, and makes them partakers of the grace of it; shows them their interest in the blessings of it, and opens and applies the promises of it unto them; and these are made manifest in the ministration of the Gospel, and in the administration of ordinances: even "the sure mercies of David"; that is, the Messiah, the son of David, and his antitype, whence he is often called by his name,
Eze 34:23, and so Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and others {h}, interpret it. The blessings of the covenant are called "mercies", because they spring from the mercy of God, as redemption, pardon of sin, regeneration, salvation, and eternal life; and they are the mercies of David, or of Christ, for the promises of them were made to him, and the things themselves put into his hands, and are ratified and confirmed by his blood, and through him come to his people: and these are "sure", firm, and steadfast, through the faithfulness and holiness of God, who has given them to Christ; through being in a covenant ordered in all things and sure; and also being in the hands of Christ, in whom the promises are yea and amen, and the blessings sure to all the seed; see Ac 13:34,
See Gill on "Ac 13:34".

{f} yxtw "ut vivat", Junius & Tremellius, Vitringa. {g} Martin. Hist. Sinic. l. 4. p. 170. {h} Abarbinel, Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 26, 1.

Isaiah 55:4

Ver. 4. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people,.... That is, the Messiah, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech rightly interpret it. This respects an act past in eternity, in God's eternal purposes and decrees, when he appointed Christ to the office of a Mediator; and this was an act of his grace, a free gift of his, flowing from his love to his people, both Jews and Gentiles, even all his elect, to whom Christ is a "witness", both of his father and of himself: of his father, of his good will to men, in forming the scheme of their salvation; of his love to sinners, in the mission of him; of his justice and holiness, which appear in his being the propitiation for sin; of his truth in his promises; of his whole mind and will, with respect to doctrine and worship: he is a witness of himself; of his deity and perfections; of his divine and eternal sonship; of his existence before his incarnation; of his Messiahship; of the end of his coming into the world; of his sufferings, death, and resurrection; of his second coming; and of the several characters he bears: he is a witness of the covenant itself, as well as the surety, Mediator, and messenger of it, and of truth in general; to which he has bore witness by his word and doctrines; by his works and miracles; by his sufferings and death; by the Scriptures of truth; by his Gospel, and the ministers of it; and by his spirit, and a faithful witness he is:

a leader and commander to the people; he is a "leader", as he is a teacher of his people, who teaches them to profit, and leads them in the way they should go; as a king that guides his subjects with the skilfulness of his hands, as David the type of him did; as a general leads out and on his armies to battle; as a shepherd leads his flock to good pastures; as a guide to those that know not the way; and as one that goes before others by way of example: Christ leads his people out of their own ways into his ways; and he leads them in a right way to the city of their habitation, to heaven at last; and he leads them on gradually and gently, as they are able to bear. He is a "commander" in a military way, a wise, powerful, valiant, and courageous one, and always victorious; and in a political sense, as a King commands his subjects, whose commands are to be obeyed; and indeed they are written on the hearts of his people; they are not grievous, though they cannot be performed in their own strength; nor is it designed that life and salvation should be obtained by the observance of them, but are done to testify subjection to Christ, and gratitude to him. The Targum is,

"behold, I have appointed him a Prince to the people, a King, and a ruler over all kingdoms."

Isaiah 55:5

Ver. 5. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not,.... And even nations, as in the next clause; not all the individuals of them, though the Gospel is sent to all nations; and in the latter day the kingdoms of this world shall be the Lord's, and all nations shall serve him. It denotes a great concourse of people to Christ, even such as were not known by him: he knows all mankind as he is the omniscient God, and especially them that are his, these he has a special and peculiar knowledge of; he knows them as his beloved, chosen, and redeemed ones, even before conversion; and yet, in a sense, they are unknown to him before calling; they are not taken notice of by him in an open way; they are not owned and acknowledged to be his; there is no intimacy between them; they are not admitted to fellowship and communion with him. The phrase denotes them to be a foreign people, and so properly describes the Gentiles, who were without Christ, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. These, Jehovah the Father says, for these are his words to his Son, he shall "call"; not merely with an external call, by the ministry of the word, though this is Christ's call, and is the means of bringing souls to him; but sometimes this is a call of persons who are not chosen and saved, and is of no effect; but with the internal call, by his Spirit and grace, which is according to the purpose of God, and is peculiar to his elect; is the fruit of love, and by special grace, and to special blessings; is by the power of God, and is irresistible, unfrustrable, and irreversible: hence the following effect,

and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee; knew not even God himself, as the Gentiles did not, much less the Messiah; they knew neither his person nor his offices, nor the way of peace, life, and salvation by him; were in a state of gross darkness; and to whom the Gospel was not known, which is a revelation of Christ, and of good things by him. Now the promise is, that, upon the above call, such persons should "run" unto Christ; light goes along with that call, directing to the object, where all grace and salvation be; life is infused, by which they are quickened, and move; and strength is given, by which they stand upon their feet, walk and run; efficacious grace, then exerted, draws them; and under a sense of danger, and in a view of safety in Christ, they run with all readiness and cheerfulness to him, and lay hold on him the hope set before them. The Targum adds,

"to bring tribute unto thee."

Because of the Lord thy God; because of the love of God, with which they are drawn; and because of his power, which is put forth upon them; because of his grace, and the proclamations of it in Christ, and the declaration of his will, that whoever believes in him shall have everlasting life; and because he has appointed Christ, and him only, to be their Saviour and Redeemer; and because there is no coming to God but by him:

for the Holy One of Israel; or, "and" or "even to the Holy One of Israel" {i}; that is, Christ, who is holy in his natures and offices, and the sanctifier of his people; to him shall they run, for the cleansing of their filthy souls in the fountain of his blood; and for the expiation of their sin and guilt, by his atoning sacrifice; and for righteousness and strength; for grace, and all the supplies of it; for peace, pardon, and eternal life:

for he hath glorified thee; that is, God the Father has glorified his Son, through the miracles wrought by him in his state of humiliation; by supporting him, as man, in his work, and under all his sufferings; and by raising him from the dead, and at his ascension to heaven; and by bestowing on him the gifts of the Spirit without measure, to give to others; which, with the reasons before suggested, induce, engage, and encourage sons to run to Christ, when called by his grace. Some understand all this of the first Christian church, consisting of believing Jews, who should call the Gentiles by her ministers unto Christ, by the conversion and accession of which she would be glorified. These nations are those the apostles were sent and preached unto, after the resurrection of Christ, all the nations of the world, even most distant and remote; and particularly those the Apostle Paul preached unto from Jerusalem, round about to Illyricum; and which the ministers of the word preached unto, in the first ages of the Gospel; such as those mentioned by Tertullian {k} in his time, as the Parthians, Medea, Elamites; the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, and Pamphylia; the Egyptians, Africans, Romans, Getulians, Moors, Spaniards, Gauls, Britons, Sarmatians, Dacians, Germans, and Sythians; besides many other nations, provinces, and isles unknown, too many to enumerate, who professed the name of Christ; and yet more, when the whole Roman empire became Christian, in the times of Constantine; to which may be added the various kingdoms in Europe, which cast off the Romish yoke at the Reformation; together with many of the American nations, or new found world, who now embrace and profess the Christian religion.

{i} larvy vwdqlw "et ad Sanctum Israel", Montanus, Cocceius. {k} Adversus Judaeos, c. 7.

Isaiah 55:6

Ver. 6. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found,.... The Lord is to be sought unto at all times, whenever the people of God meet together, especially on sabbath days, and while the external ministry of the word lasts, and life itself; so the Targum,

"seek the fear of the Lord, while ye are alive."

Kimchi compares it with Ec 9:10. The Jewish writers, as Aben Ezra and others, generally interpret it before the sealing of the decree, or before the decree is gone forth. It may be understood of place, as well as time, and be rendered, "seek the Lord in the place where he may be found" {l}; God is to be found, as Aben Ezra observes, in all places, and at all times; under the Old Testament there was a particular place appointed for the worship of God, the tabernacle and temple, where he was to be sought unto, and might be found; under the New Testament, all places are alike, and wherever the church and people of God meet together, there he is to be sought, and there he may be found, even in his house and ordinances:

call ye upon him while he is near; the same thing designed by different words: seeking and calling design not only prayer, but the whole of public worship, and the time and place when and where the Lord is to be found, and is near. Aben Ezra thinks it refers to the Shechinah in the sanctuary. Perhaps it may have some respect to the time of Christ's incarnation, and his being in the land of Judea; and to the destruction of the temple by the Romans, when the Lord could be no more sought unto, and found in that place; or when the Christians were obliged to move from Jerusalem, because of the siege of it; and when the Jews had no more an opportunity of hearing the Gospel there.

{l} So in the Jerusalem Talmud, as quoted by Abendana on the place,

"seek the Lord, where he is found, in the synagogues, and in the schools; call upon him, where he is near, in the synagogues, and in the schools."

And so another Jewish writer, mentioned by him, interprets the words,

"whilst the Shechinah is found in the sanctuary; before he hides his face, and causes his Shechinah to remove from you."

Isaiah 55:7

Ver. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way,.... His evil way, as the Targum paraphrases it, his wicked course of life; and which is his own way, of his own choosing, and in which he delights, and a very dangerous one it is; and yet he is bent upon it, and nothing can turn him from it but efficacious grace; nor will he ever forsake it till he sees the evil, danger, and loathsomeness of it; and when he does forsake it, it is so as not to make sin the course of his life, though he does not and cannot live without sin. The word for "wicked" signifies restless, troublesome, and ungodly, and is expressive of the pollution and guilt of sin all are under. Some are notoriously wicked, and all men are wicked in the account of God, though they may think otherwise themselves; and they become so their own apprehensions, when they are thoroughly awakened and convinced of sin, and of the evil of their ways, and are enabled to forsake them: though this may also be understood of "his own way" of saving himself, which is by works of righteousness he has done, in opposition to God's way of saving men by Jesus Christ; which way of his own must be relinquished, and Christ alone must be applied unto, and laid hold on, for salvation:

and the unrighteous man his thoughts: not his natural thoughts, but his sinful ones, his wrong thoughts of religion, righteousness, and salvation; particularly his thoughts of being justified by his own righteousness; which thoughts are to be forsaken, as being contrary to God's way of justifying sinners; and as all men are unrighteous, are destitute of righteousness, and full of unrighteousness, so is the self-righteous person; and he must be divested of all thoughts of his own righteousness, and acknowledge himself an unrighteous man, ere he receives mercy, forgiveness, righteousness and salvation, at the hands of the Lord:

and let him return unto the Lord; from whom he has departed, against whom he has sinned, and who only can save him; and this he does when he comes and acknowledges his sin before the Lord, implores his grace and mercy, and attends his word and worship; all which is the fruit and effect of powerful and efficacious grace, in turning and drawing. The Targum is,

"and let him turn to the worship of the Lord:"

and he will have mercy upon him; which shows that the returning of the sinner to God is not meritorious, it is mercy still to receive him; and which is here mentioned as the motive to return; there is an abundance of it with the Lord, and he has resolved and promised to show it, and he takes delight in it, and many are the instances of it:

and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon; God is to be applied unto, not as an absolute God, or out of Christ; but as our God in Christ, in whom he has proclaimed his name, a God gracious and merciful, and so he does abundantly pardon. The promise of pardon is absolute and unconditional, and is here observed as the motive to forsake sin, and not that as the condition of pardon; the design is to comfort those that are distressed with sin; God does and will pardon, and none but he can, and he has declared that he will; forgiveness is with him, and it is published in the Gospel, and there have been many instances of it.

The Lord does abundantly pardon, or "multiply to pardon" {m}; he pardons all sorts of sinners, and all sorts of sins; original sin, actual sins and transgressions; all backslidings and revoltings; all but the sin against the Holy Ghost.

{m} xwlol hbry "multiplicabit ad parcendum vel ut parcat", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "multiplicabit condonare", Cocceius; "multus erit ut proritietur": Munster.

Isaiah 55:8

Ver. 8. For my thoughts are not your thoughts,.... In some things there may be a likeness between the thoughts of God and the thoughts of men, as to the nature of them: thoughts are natural and essential to them both; they are within them, are internal acts, and unknown to others, till made known; but then the thoughts of men are finite and limited, whereas the thoughts of the Lord are infinite and boundless; men's thoughts have a beginning, but the Lord's have none; though not so much the nature as the quality of them is here intended: the thoughts of men are evil, even the imagination of their thoughts, yea, every imagination is, and that always and only so; but the thoughts of God are holy, as appears from his purposes and covenant, and all his acts of grace, in redemption, calling, and preparing his people for glory: the thoughts of men, as to the object of them, are vain, and nothing worth; their thoughts and sentiments of things are very different from the Lord's, as about sin, concerning Christ, the truths of the Gospel, the people of God, religion, holiness, and a future state, and in reference to the business of salvation; they think they can save themselves; that their own works of righteousness are sufficient to justify them; their privileges and profession such, that they shall be saved; their wisdom, riches, and honour, a security to them from damnation: however, that their sincere obedience, with repentance for what is amiss, will entitle them to happiness: but the thoughts of God are the reverse of all this; particularly with respect to pardoning mercy their thoughts are different; carnal men think of mercy, but not of justice, and of having pardoning mercy in an absolute way, and not through Christ, and without conversion and repentance; and so this is a reason why men's thoughts are to be forsaken, because so very unlike to the Lord's. Or else these words are to be considered as an argument, proving that God does abundantly pardon all returning sinners; since he is not like men, backward to forgive, especially great and aggravated crimes, but is ready, free, and willing to forgive, even those of the most aggravated circumstances.

Neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; the ways which God prescribes and directs men to walk in are different from theirs; his are holy, theirs unholy; his are plain, theirs crooked; his are ways of light, theirs ways of darkness; his are pleasant, theirs not so, at least in the issue; his lead to life, theirs to death; and therefore there is good reason why they should leave their evil ways, and walk in his. Moreover, the ways which he takes in the salvation of men are different from those which they, naturally pursue, and especially in the pardon of sin; he pardons freely, fully, without any reserve, or private grudge, forgetting as well as forgiving.

Isaiah 55:9

Ver. 9. For as the heavens, are higher than the earth,.... Than which there cannot be conceived a greater distance:

so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts; which may denote the heavenliness of the ways and thoughts of God, the eternity and unsearchableness of them, and their excellency and preciousness; as well as the very great distance between his ways and thoughts and men's which this is designed to illustrate.

Isaiah 55:10

Ver. 10. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither,.... Rain and snow come down from the clouds in the heavens, and do not return again until they have done what they are sent to do, or have produced the following effects; otherwise they may be exhaled into vapours, as they often are, and drawn up again by the sun:

but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud; or, "inebriateth the earth" {n}; soaks into it, and reaches the seed that is sown in it, and causes that to spring up, and rise into stalk and ear:

that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; produce a sufficiency for food both for man and beast, and enough for seed to sow the ground with the following year.

{n} Ura ta hwrh Ma yk ewv an meyush thn ghn, Sept.; "sed inebriats"

Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius; "quin imo inebriavit terram", Montanus.

Isaiah 55:11

Ver. 11. So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth,.... My good word, as the Targum; this may either be understood of Christ, the eternal Word, who is called the Word of God, and may be said to go forth out of his mouth, being spoken of by all his holy prophets, since the world began, whose coming was like the rain or snow, **Ho 6:3**, he came from heaven, from his Father there, and as a free gift of his, and in consequence of a decree, as the rain does; the manner of his coming, like that, was suddenly, gratefully, and with great efficacy, watering his people with his grace, through the ministry of the word, and making them fruitful; and though he returned to heaven again, yet not empty, without fruit and effect; he produced a large harvest of souls, and procured all blessings of grace for them, and accomplished the whole will and pleasure of God, in effecting the salvation of his people; and the pleasure of the Lord prospered in his hand: or else it may be interpreted of God's word of promise; the promises are made in heaven, and come from thence as the rain and snow do; are the gifts of God's grace; are very refreshing and reviving, as rain to the earth; and are always effectual, being yea and amen in Christ Jesus; and being made good, fulfil purposes, or the good will and pleasure of God; particularly promises concerning Christ, pardon and peace through him; such as are given forth in this chapter: or rather it may be meant of the word of the Gospel, which is of God; comes from heaven; is a blessing grace; falls according to divine direction here and there; tarries not for the expectations, desires, or deserts of men; falls in great plenty; and is a blessing wherever it comes: it is the means of softening the hard hearts of men; of cooling the conscience set on fire by the law, and allaying the heat of divine wrath there; and of refreshing and reviving drooping, disconsolate, and weary souls: it is the means of the first buddings of grace in the Lord's people, and of the larger exercises and flourishings of it, and of all fruitfulness in good works: it is productive of seed to Christ the sower, and fruit to his ministers who labour under him, and of bread to the eater, the believer, whom it furnishes with the bread of life to feed upon by faith:

it shall not return to me void; it is accompanied with a divine energy; it is the power of God to salvation:

but it shall accomplish that which I please; in the conversion of sinners, and comfort of saints:

and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it: whether it be the savour of life unto life, or the savour of death unto death; whether for the quickening of sinners, and reviving of saints; or whether for the hardening of men, and leaving them without excuse to perish in their sins, both in the Jewish and Gentile world.

Isaiah 55:12

Ver. 12. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace,.... Though these words may literally respect the Jews' return from captivity to their own land, attended with joy and peace; as the preceding verse may respect the word of promise concerning it; as it is interpreted by the Targum,

"for with joy shall ye go out from among the people, and with peace shall ye be brought to your own land;"

yet they may be spiritually applied to the conversion of men, in consequence of the word being made effectual, of which the deliverance from the Babylonish thraldom was a type; when men "go out" of a state of bondage to sin, Satan, and the law; out of a state of darkness and ignorance; out of the pit of nature's misery and distress; out of themselves and their own righteousness; out of their own sinful ways, and from among the men of the world: and though here is a divine power exerted in all this, yet they go out freely, being led by the Spirit of God; who takes them by the hand as it were, and leads them in ways before unknown to them; he leads them to Christ, his person, fulness, blood, and righteousness; to the house of God, and to the ordinances of it; and from one degree of grace to another, till he brings them to glory: all which is attended with "joy and peace" to themselves; finding themselves released from bondage, in a state of light and comfort, out of the horrible pit, and on a rock; brought to Christ, and clothed with his righteousness; to the angels in heaven, who rejoice over every sinner that repenteth; to the ministers of the Gospel, who are the instruments of their conversion; and to all the saints into whose fellowship they are brought; which joy is further illustrated by the following strong figures:

the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing; or the people that dwell upon them: and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands; or clap with their branches; as the Targum, the tops of them, being moved with gentle breezes of wind, bow themselves, and the branches intertwining and clasping each other like hands and arms. Kimchi observes, that "mountains and hills" may signify the kings of the nations; and "the trees of the field" the people rejoicing at the deliverance of the Jews, as they pass along: it may be as well applied to the ministers of the word, and common believers rejoicing at the conversion of sinners, in whom as wonderful a change is wrought, as in the following cases. Vitringa interprets this of the apostles and ministers of the word going forth into the Gentile world, attended with joy in themselves, and among the converts there.

Isaiah 55:13

Ver. 13. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree,.... The meaning of which either is, that instead of wicked men, comparable to briers and thorns for their being fruitless and useless, harmful and pernicious, under a curse, and their end to be burned, there good men, comparable to fruitful and beautiful trees, shall be; which was eminently true when the Gospel was preached in the Gentile world; see Isa 35:1 so the Targum,

"instead of the ungodly shall rise up righteous persons, and instead of sinners shall rise up such as are afraid to sin;"

or else the sense is, that such who are like briers and thorns in their nature state, being no better than others, but children of wrath, even as others, shall by the grace of God be made like fir and myrtle trees; as great a change shall be wrought in them as if briers and thorns were changed into fir and myrtle trees; to which the saints are sometimes compared, particularly to myrtle trees, **Zec 1:10**, because goodly to look at, of a sweet smell, ever green, flourish in watery places, and bring forth fruit:

and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off; that is, these persons, who are become and made like to fir and myrtle trees, shall be called by the name of the Lord, shall bear his name, support his Gospel and interest, and be for his praise, and to the glory of his grace, who has done such great and wonderful things for them;

and shall be for an everlasting sign and monument of the love, grace, power, and faithfulness of God, and for a sure token that the church and people of God shall not be cut off, but that God will have a people to serve him as long as the sun and moon endure.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 56:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 56

This chapter contains a prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles, and their accession to the church, and of the corrupt state of the church afterwards, especially of its rulers, which brought in men comparable to wild beasts to devour. It begins with an exhortation to the duties of judgment and justice, enforced by the nearness of Christ's salvation, and the clear relation of his righteousness in the Gospel, and by the blessedness of the man that does those duties, and lays hold on those blessings, and observes the whole of religion, instituted and moral,
Isa 56:1, when encouragement is given to eunuchs, and strangers or Gentiles, sensible and religious persons, to hope for acceptance with God, and that they shall be welcome to his house, with an answer to their objections, and promises of special favours, Isa 56:3 to which is subjoined a promise or prophecy of future additions, both of Jews and Gentiles, to the church of God in the latter day, Isa 56:8 and then follows a call upon some savage people, comparable to wild beasts, to come and devour, which will be previous to the above prophecy,
Isa 56:9, the reason of which is the sad corruption of the rulers of the church, their ignorance, negligence, avarice, and drunkenness,
Isa 56:10.

Ver. 1. Thus saith the Lord, keep ye judgment, and do justice,.... Observe the word of the Lord, which comes from the God of judgment, is the best informer of the judgment, and the only rule of faith and practice; and which should be kept in the heart, mind, and memory, be held fast, and abode by; and so likewise all the ordinances of the Lord, which are his statutes and judgments; these should be all of them kept as they were delivered, in faith, from love, and with a view to the glory of God and Christ; all matters of judgment and justice between man and man, whether public or private, should be observed and done; all that you would have men to do to you, do to them; all works of righteousness required by the Lord, though not to be depended upon for justification in his sight, but regarded as fruits and evidences of faith and repentance; for works of righteousness cannot be done but by regenerated persons. The reasons enforcing a regard to these things follow:

for my salvation is near to come; which are either the words of God the Father concerning Christ and his salvation, whom he appointed, called, and sent to effect it; who, when this prophecy was given out, was to come, and was to come as a Saviour, and was near at hand; and whose salvation, as to the efficacy of it, was come, all the Old Testament saints being saved by it; and, as to the impetration of it, was near at hand, he being ready to come, and in a short time, comparatively speaking, did come, and work out this salvation God had resolved upon, chosen his people to, and in which his glory was greatly concerned; and therefore calls it his own: or they are the words of Christ, who is the sole author of spiritual and eternal salvation, and in whom alone it is, and from him alone to be had; and which was near, being performed by himself, published in his Gospel, applied by his Spirit, and enjoyed by his people here and to all eternity:

and my righteousness to be revealed; and which also are either the words of God the Father concerning his faithfulness in the performance of his promise of Christ, and good things by him; concerning his justice, which was glorified in the work of redemption by Christ; or concerning the righteousness of Christ, called his, because he sent him to bring it in, he approves of it, imputes it to his people, and justifies them by it; or they are the words of Christ concerning his own righteousness, which he has wrought out, and brought in, in the room and stead of his people, and for their sakes; and which is revealed, not by the light of nature, nor by the law of Moses, but by the Gospel of Christ, and that from faith to faith, or only to believers. Now these being used as arguments to engage to the keeping and doing judgment and justice, show that the doctrines of salvation by Christ, and justification by his righteousness, are no licentious doctrines.

Isaiah 56:2

Ver. 2. Blessed is the man that doth this,.... That does justice, and keeps judgment; he hereby exercises a good conscience both towards God and men; he enjoys communion with God in his ways, worship, and ordinances, he attends unto, and has an evidence of his right to eternal happiness:

and the son of man that layeth hold on it; on the salvation of Christ, and his righteousness; which supposes a sense of the insufficiency of a man's own righteousness, a view of the excellency and suitableness of Christ's righteousness; and is expressive of a strong act of faith upon it, embracing and retaining it as a man's own:

that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it; by doing any servile work on it, and attending to all religious duties, private or public. This is put for the whole of instituted worship under the Gospel dispensation, and for any day or time in which the church of Christ meet together for religious worship:

and keepeth his hand from doing any evil; committing any sin against God, or doing injury to the persons or properties of men, including the whole of moral duty.

Isaiah 56:3

Ver. 3. Neither let the son of the stranger,.... A Gentile, that is so by birth, the son of one that is an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger from the covenants of promise, and so had no right to come into the congregation of the Lord under the former dispensation; but now the middle wall of partition being broken down, in the times to which this prophecy belongs, such are encouraged to expect admission:

that hath joined himself to the Lord; who, having a spiritual knowledge of him in Christ, loves him, believes in him, gives up himself to him, to walk in his ways and ordinances, and cleaves unto him with full purpose of heart; see Isa 44:5 such an one should not speak,

saying, the Lord hath utterly separated me from his people; by a law of his, De 23:3, for now the wall of separation, the ceremonial law, is destroyed, and God declares himself to be the God of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews; and of all that fear God, and believe in Christ, of every nation, who are accepted with him; and that they are all one in Christ, and all partakers of the same promises and blessings; so strangers, and the sons of strangers, were to have an inheritance among the children of Israel in Gospel times; see Eze 47:22 and therefore should have no reason to speak after this manner:

neither let the eunuch say, behold, I am a dry tree; having no children, nor could have any; and to be written childless was reckoned a reproach and a curse; nor might an eunuch enter the congregation of the Lord, De 23:1, and yet such a man, having the grace of God, and acting agreeably to it, as in the following verse, should not distress himself on the above accounts.

Isaiah 56:4

Ver. 4. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths,.... That fear and serve the Lord; religiously observe all times of divine worship, and walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; show regard to all the institutions of the Gospel, and perform all religious exercises, private and public, on Lord's days, and at other times:

and choose the things that please me; who do that which is wellpleasing unto God, which he has declared in his word to be acceptable to him; and do that from right principles, with right views, and of choice; not forced to it by those who have authority over them, or led to it merely by example and custom:

and take hold of my covenant; not the covenant of circumcision, as Kimchi; for what had eunuchs to do with that? but the covenant of grace, the everlasting covenant, the covenant of peace before spoken of Isa 14:10, made between the Father and the Son, on account of the elect; which may be said to be taken hold of when a person by faith claims his interest in God as his covenant God; comes to Christ as the Mediator of the covenant; and deals with his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, for pardon, justification, and atonement; regards all the promises and blessings of the covenant as belonging to him and lives by faith on them, as such; so David by faith laid hold on this covenant, 2Sa 23:5.

Isaiah 56:5

Ver. 5. Even to them will I give in mine house and within my walls,.... The Targum is,

"in the house of my sanctuary, and in the land of the house of my Shechinah;"

meaning the temple at Jerusalem, in the land of Judea; but a Gospel church state is here meant, which is the house of God; the materials of which are true believers; the foundation Christ; the pillars and beams of it are the ministers of the word; the windows the ordinances, the door into it faith in Christ, and a profession of it; the provisions of it the word and ordinances; the stewards of it the preachers of the Gospel; where are saints of various sorts, fathers, young men, and children; where Christ is as a son over his own house, and acts as Prophet, Priest, and King, there. This is the Lord's house, it is of his building, where he dwells, which he keeps, repairs, beautifies, and adorns; here he promises to give the persons before described

a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters; a "place" of entrance and admission into his house, for continuance to dwell in; a place of honour, profit, and pleasure; a place of comfort, rest, ease, and quietness; a place of fulness at the table of the Lord; a fixed, abiding, settled place; or "a hand" {o}, which may signify a part, portion, lot, or inheritance, 2Sa 19:43 or a statue or pillar,
2Sa 18:18, and a "name", not of office, for all in it are not officers; nor a mere name in a church book, which to have only is of no avail; nor the mere name of a professor, which men may have, and be dead; but a good name, as a church member: and such an one is he who keeps his place in the church; seeks to maintain peace and brotherly love in it; lays himself out for the welfare of it; is ready to contribute according to his ability for the support of it; and whose life and conversation is becoming the Gospel of Christ; moreover, by this name may be meant the name of the people of God, he being their covenant God; or of the priests of God, as all the saints are under the Gospel dispensation; or of Christians, as they are now called; or rather of the sons of God, which is the new name that is given them, and is a more excellent name

than of sons and daughters; that is, than to have sons and daughters, the want of which the eunuch complained of; or than to be the sons and daughters of the greatest potentate on earth:

I will give them an everlasting name, that shall never be cut off; such is their good name in the church, and is spoken well of in later ages, is had in everlasting remembrance, and will be confessed by Christ at the last day; and such is their name as the children of God, for, once sons, no more servants, the name and relation will always continue; and both this name and place are the gift of God; it is he that brings them to his house, and gives them a place there, and enables them to behave well in it, so as to have a good name; and it is he that gives them the name, privilege, power, and relation of children, which shall never be cut off by any act of their own, or his, or by men, or devils; such a name had the eunuch, converted and baptized by Philip, **Ac 8:27**.

{o} dy "manum", Montanus, Cocceius. Ben Melech interprets it by

Mwqm, "place"; and observes, that not at coporeal place is intended, but a place, of honour, excellency, dignity, and praise.

Isaiah 56:6

Ver. 6. Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord,.... Having answered the objection and removed the discouragement of the eunuch, he now returns to the sons of the stranger, who also join themselves to the Lord, as the eunuch had done; see Isa 56:4 and who do this,

to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants; who give up themselves to him, not only to be saved by him, but to serve him in righteousness and holiness, with reverence and godly fear, and from a principle of love to him; being heartily desirous, and accounting it an honour, to be his servants:

everyone that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; See Gill on "Isa 56:4".

Isaiah 56:7

Ver. 7. Even them will I bring to my holy mountain,.... The church, called a "mountain" for its height, visibility, and immovableness; see **Isa 2:2**, especially for the latter; the true members of it being such who are interested in the unchangeable love of God, in the immovable grace of election, in the unalterable covenant of grace, are on the Rock Christ Jesus, and are secured by the favour and power of God; and it is called a "Holy One", because in it holy men are, holy doctrines are preached, holy services performed, and the holy God, Father, Son, and Spirit, grant their presence: and hither the Lord "brings" his people; he shows them the way thither; he inclines their minds, and moves their wills, to come hither; he removes the objections that are in their way; he constrains them by his love; and he does it in a very distinguishing way, takes one of a city, and two of a family, and brings them hither; and he who says this is able to do it; and, when he has brought them there, will do for them as follows:

and make them joyful in my house of prayer; or "in the house of my prayer" {p}; not made by him, as say the Jews {q}; but where prayer is made unto him, and is acceptable with him; every man's closet should be a place of private prayer; and every good man's house a place of family prayer; but a church of God is a house where saints meet together, and jointly pray to the Lord: and here he makes them joyful; by hearing and answering their prayers; by granting his gracious presence; by discovering his love, and shedding it abroad in their hearts; by feeding them with his word and ordinances; by giving them views of Christ, his love and loveliness, fulness, grace, and righteousness: by favouring them with the consolations of his Spirit, and his gracious influences; and by showing them their interest in the blessings of grace and glory:

their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar: which is Christ, who is not only the priest that offers up all the sacrifices of his people, but is also the altar on which they are offered up, Heb 13:10, and is the only One, and the most Holy One, which is greater than the gift, and sanctifies every gift that is upon it, and makes both the persons and the offerings of the Lord's people acceptable unto God; for by these offerings and sacrifices are not meant legal but spiritual ones; good deeds, acts of beneficence, rightly performed, with which sacrifices God is well pleased; sacrifices of prayer and praise; and even the persons of saints themselves, their bodies and their souls, when presented, a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice unto God, Heb 13:15, the prophet here speaks in figures, agreeably to his own time, as Calvin observes, when speaking of Gospel times; so he makes mention of the sabbath before, instead of the Lord's day, or any time of worship under the Gospel dispensation:

for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people; Gentiles as well as Jews; the sons of the strangers, as others, are all welcome to the church of God, to come and worship, and pray to the Lord there, and that is in any place where the saints meet together; for holy hands may be lifted up everywhere, without wrath or doubting, **1Ti 2:8**. The Jews apply this verse to the time when the son of David, the Messiah, shall come {r}.

{p} ytlpt tybb "in domo orationis meae", V. L. Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus, Vitringa. {q} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 7. 1. {r} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 18. 1.

Isaiah 56:8

Ver. 8. The Lord God, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith,.... Not the

outcasts of literal Israel, the captives in Babylon, and elsewhere; but of spiritual Israel, and who are cast out, not by the Lord, but by the men of the world; who cast out their names as evil, who call them outcasts, and account them the offscouring of all things,
Jer 30:17 or rather this character of them may represent what they appear to be in a state of nature, when they seem to be neglected, and not taken notice of by the Lord, as if they were not his people, or beloved by him; and are like the infant cast out into the open field to the loathing of its person; and yet such as these the Lord looks upon, takes notice of, and gathers in by an effectual calling. The Targum renders it, "the scattered of Israel"; and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; who, while unregenerate, are in a state of distance and alienation from God; are without God and Christ, and destitute of the Spirit; aliens from the people of God; wandering out of the way of God; are like lost sheep, scattered abroad by the fall of Adam, and their own actual transgressions: now the Lord God is the gatherer of these; which agrees with Christ, as the surety that engaged to look them up, and bring them in; and as he is a shepherd that gathers the lambs in his arms; and as he is the Saviour that came to seek and save that which was lost; and who, in consequence of having redeemed his people, gathers them by his Spirit and grace, through the ministry of the word; see Joh 10:16, it may be here meant of God the Father, whose purpose, plan, and contrivance, it was to gather together all his elect in one, even in Christ; and whose promise it is, that to him should the gathering of the people be; and who set him up as an ensign for that purpose, **Eph 1:10** he now says:

yet will I gather others to him besides those that are gathered unto him; that is, to Israel; either to Christ, to whom these outcasts and scattered ones belong, who is sometimes called Israel, Isa 49:3, or to the church of God, whither they are brought when gathered, as in
Isa 56:5, this is done in the effectual calling, when God's elect are called and gathered out of the world, among whom they have been, and are brought to Christ as their Saviour; as the Lord their righteousness; as the Mediator of the new covenant; and to his blood for pardon, justification, and salvation; and as the ark where they only can find rest for their souls; and as their King, to whom they become subject; and so they are gathered into the church as to a fold and good pasture. Now great numbers of these, both among the Jews and Gentiles, were gathered in at the first preaching of the Gospel, in the first times of the Gospel dispensation; and it is here promised that others besides them should be gathered in, even all that remain of the election of grace uncalled; the rest of those that the Father has given to Christ; the residue of those he has redeemed by his blood; such of the children of God as are yet scattered abroad,

even all the remainder of the Lord's people, whether Jews or Gentiles; which will be fulfilled in the latter day, when the forces and fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, and the nation of the Jews converted at once. The words may be rendered, "yet will I gather unto him his that are to be gathered" {s}; the other sheep uncalled; as many as are ordained unto eternal life; not one shall be lost or left behind. Kimchi mentions it as an exposition of his father's,

"after I have gathered the outcasts of Israel; yet will I gather, against them that are gathered, others against his gathered ones, and they are Gog and Magog;"

to which sense, he says, the following verse inclines: but much better is the sense of Aben Ezra,

"yet, will I gather proselytes to the gathered of Israel;"

for his "gathered ones", he says, refers to Israel. But it is best of all to interpret it of the nations gathered and added to the Christian churches in the times of Constantine, who before had been treated as outcasts, and persecuted for their profession of Christ; and of the conversion of various other people, as the Goths, Vandals, &c. in later ages. So Vitringa.

{s} wyubqnl wyle Ubqa dwe "adhuc congregabo, super eum congregatos ejus", Pagninus, Montanus; "congregandos ejus", Forerius, Grotius.

Isaiah 56:9

Ver. 9. All ye beasts of the field, come to devour,.... Which may be understood either literally of savage beasts being called to devour the slain, signifying a great slaughter that should be made, like that in Re 19:17 to which the fowls of the heaven are invited, as to a supper; and so Kimchi interprets it of such creatures being called to feed upon the carcasses in the camp of Gog and Magog, agreeably to Eze 39:17, but it seems better to understand it figuratively of people and nations, comparable to the beasts of the field for their strength, cruelty, and voraciousness. The Targum of the whole is,

"all the kings of the people that shall be gathered to oppress thee, O Jerusalem, shall be cast in the midst of thee; they shall be for food to the beast of the field, the beast of the forest shall be satisfied with them."

Though it seems most correct to interpret these beasts of the kings of the people themselves; by whom some understand the Chaldeans, Babylonians, and other nations along with them, and under them, who spoiled the people of the Jews, and carried them captive; but rather the Romans are intended. And so the prophet, after he had foretold the gathering in of the remnant, according to the election of grace, among the Jews, and the addition to them from among the Gentiles, proceeds to give an account what should become of the rest of the Jewish nation that rejected the Messiah and his Gospel; that the Romans should be brought in upon them, who should devour them; which destruction would be owing to the following sins abounding among their principal men. But I am inclined to the opinion of Cocceius and Vitringa, that the barbarous nations of the Goths and Vandals, and others, coming into the Roman empire, become Christian, though greatly corrupted, are here meant {t}; since this seems to be a prophecy of what should happen between the first gathering of the Jews and Gentiles to Christ in the first times of the Gospel, and the later gathering of them in the latter day; and the following words aptly describe the ignorance, stupidity, avarice, and intemperance of the priests of the apostate church of Rome; and the following chapter, which is a continuance of this prophecy, better agrees with the idolatry of the church of Rome than with the Jews, who, especially at the time of their destruction by the Romans, were not given to idolatry. Yea,

all the beasts in the forest: a herd of them, which, like an inundation, ran over the Roman empire, and tore it to pieces, and spread ignorance and corruption every where, next described; for now the beast of Rome arose with his ten heads. Some think that a new chapter should begin here.

{t} Agreeably to which, the words, according to the accents, are thus rendered by Reinbeck, De Accent. Heb. p. 427. "all ye beasts of the field; come ye, to devour all the beasts in the forest"; so Munster; one sort of beasts are called upon to devour another sort.

Isaiah 56:10

Ver. 10. His watchmen are blind,.... A sad character of watchmen; who, of all men, ought to have good sight, to see who is coming, to discover an enemy, to discern approaching danger, and so be capable of giving notice thereof. This some apply to the Scribes and Pharisees, who are often called blind guides,

and blind leaders of the blind,
Mt 15:14 and well suits the character of the Popish clergy, bishops, and priests, those ecclesiastical watchmen, whose business should be to look after the souls of men, and feed them with knowledge and understanding; but very ill qualified for it, being blind and ignorant as to the knowledge of things divine and spiritual. The first letter in this clause is larger than usual, perhaps designed to strike the eye, and raise the attention to what follows, as being something remarkable and extraordinary, as indeed the character given of these men is, and directing to beware of them. The first word, which is the word for "watchmen", has the letter "jod" wanting; which, being a note of multitude, shows, it is observed {u}, that all the watchmen were universally deficient in the light of their minds, and not one of them did their duty, as it follows:

they are all ignorant; or "know not" {w}, or "nothing", not the Scriptures, and the meaning of them; the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; Christ, and the way of salvation by him; the Spirit of God, and his operations on the souls of men; and so very unfit to be spiritual watchmen, or to have the care of immortal souls. A Popish bishop in Scotland declared he did not know neither the Old nor the New Testament; and Bishop Albert, reading the Bible, could not tell what book it was, only he found it was contrary to their religion.

They are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; and so useless; as a house dog, or one that is set to keep the sheep, if it barks not at the noise of a thief, or the approach of a wolf, to give notice to the family, or the shepherd, it is of no service. It may design such who call themselves ministers of the word, and yet either cannot or will not preach, such as are non-preaching bishops; or in their ministry do not reprove the errors and vices of men, and warn them of their danger:

sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber; as dogs do; slothful, indolent, do not care to be concerned in business, but take their ease and pleasure, and are very improper persons for watchmen. The first word {x} used is observed to signify speaking vain things in dreams, things delirious; and agrees well with the dreaming doctrines and delirious notions of the Romish clergy.

{u} Buxtorf. Tiberias, c. 14. p. 39. Vid. Hiller. De Arcano Cethib & Keri, I. 1. c 7. p. 55. {w} wedy al "nesciverunt", Pagninus, Montanus; "nil sciunt", Piscator. {x} Myzh "deliria loquentes", Montanus; "videntes vans", V. L. So Ben Melech interprets it of such that speak vain things in their sleep.

Isaiah 56:11

Ver. 11. Yea, they [are] greedy dogs,.... Or "strong of soul" {y}; of great appetites, and are never satisfied: or "strong of body"; the soul is sometimes put for the body; large bodied, fat bellied men, such as the priests, monks, and friars, that live upon the fat of the land; gluttons, epicures, men of a canine appetite, like dogs,

which can never have enough; know not fulness {z}, or what it is to be filled to satisfaction, always craving more. Though some think this denotes their insatiable avarice, their greedy desire of money, not being satisfied with what they have, in order to support their voluptuous way of living.

And they are shepherds that cannot understand; or, "and they are", or "are they shepherds?" these blind and ignorant watchmen; these dumb and greedy dogs; these pretend to be the shepherds of the flock, and to feed them?

yet they know not to understand {a}, or "know not understanding"; have no knowledge and understanding of divine things, and therefore unfit and incapable of feeding the people therewith:

they all look to their own way: to do that which is most pleasing to them, agreeable to their carnal lusts; they seek that which is most for their worldly profit and advantage, having no regard to the glory of God, the interest of Christ, and the welfare of the flock:

everyone for his gain from his quarter; from the province, city, or town he is in; from his archbishopric, bishopric, or parish; making the most of his benefice, of his tithes and revenues; increasing his salary as much as he can; getting as much as possible from all sorts of persons, rich and poor, high and low, that are under his jurisdiction; and this is the case of everyone, from the greatest to the least. The Targum is,

"everyone to spoil the substance of Israel;"

as the Pharisees devoured widows' houses, Mt 23:14.

{y} vpn yze "fortes animo", Montanus; "fortes anima, [sub.] appetente", Vatablus; "sunt valido appetitu", Vitringa. {z} hebv wedy al "nesciunt, vel non noverunt saturitatem", Paguinus, Montanus, &c, {a} Nybh wedy al Myer hmhw "et iili pastores? non sciunt docere", Cocceius; "et illi cum pastores sunt, mulla pollent discernendi peritia", Vitringa.

Isaiah 56:12

Ver. 12. Come ye, say they,.... Either to their fellow bishops and priests, when got together, jovially carousing; or to the common people, encouraging them in luxury and intemperance:

I will fetch wine; out of his cellar, having good store of it, and that of the best, hence called "priests' wine"; and so, at Paris and Louvain, the Popish priests called their wine "vinum theologicum":

and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; fill their bellies and skins full of it till drunken with it; the drunkenness of priests in Popish counties is notorious, which seems here to be taxed and prophesied of:

for tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant; the morrow shall be as good, and merry, and jovial a day as this, and better; and we shall have as much wine and strong drink to drink, or more; this they say to encourage their companions to drink, and not spare, and to put away the evil day far from them. The Targum is,

"saying, come, let us take wine, and be inebriated with old wine; and our dinner tomorrow shall be better than today, large, very large."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 57:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 57

This chapter contains complaints of the stupidity and idolatry of the people, described in the latter part of the preceding chapter; and some promises of grace to the people of God. The stupidity of the former is observed, Isa 57:1 they not taking notice of the death of good men, nor of impending calamities they were taken from, whose happiness is described, Isa 57:2, then these idolatrous people are summoned before the Lord, Isa 57:3 and are charged

with deriding the saints with idolatry and murder, Isa 57:4 and their idolatry is represented under the notion of adultery, attended with very aggravating circumstances,
Isa 57:7 and yet these people still entertained presumptuous hopes of happiness, and boasted of, and trusted in, their righteousness and good works, which would be exposed, and be of no advantage to them,
Isa 57:10, next follow promises of grace to the saints, that such that trusted in Christ should inherit the holy mountain, Isa 57:13 that the stumblingblock of his people should be removed, Isa 57:14, that he should dwell with the humble and contrite, Isa 57:15, and not be always wroth and contend with them, for a reason given, Isa 57:16 and that though he had smote them, and hid his face from them because of their sins, yet would heal them, lead them, and comfort them, and speak peace unto them, Isa 57:17 and the chapter is concluded with the character of the wicked, and an assurance that there is no peace for them, Isa 57:20.

Ver. 1. The righteous perisheth,.... Not eternally; he may fear he shall, by reason of sin and temptation; he may say his strength and hope are perished; and his peace and comfort may perish for a time; but he cannot perish everlastingly, because he is one that believes in Christ, and is justified by his righteousness, from whence he is denominated righteous; and such shall never perish, but have everlasting life: but the meaning is, that he perisheth as to his outward man, or dies corporeally, which is called perishing, **Ec 7:15** and so the Targum renders it,

"the righteous die."

Or it may be rendered, "the righteous man is lost" {b}; not to himself, his death is a gain to him; but to the church, and to the world, which yet is not considered:

and no man layeth it to heart; takes any notice of it, thinks at all about it, far from being concerned or grieved; instead of that, rather rejoice, and are pleased that they are rid of such persons; which will be the case when the witnesses are slain, Re 11:10. The Targum is,

"and no man lays my fear to heart;"

or on his heart; whereas such providences should lead men to fear the Lord, and seek to him, and serve him, as it did David, Ps 12:1:

and merciful men are taken away; or "gathered" {c}; out of the world, to their own people, to heaven; these are such who obtain mercy of the Lord, and show mercy to others, holy good men: the former character may respect the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, this his grace implanted in them, discovered by acts of mercy and goodness; for one and the same persons are intended:

none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come; that there are evil times coming, great calamities, and sore judgments upon men; and therefore these righteous ones are gathered out of the world, and are gathered home, and safely housed in heaven, that they may escape the evil coming upon a wicked generation; and who yet have no thought about it, nor are they led to observe it as they might, from the removal of good men out of the world; see 2Ki 22:20. All this may be applied to the martyrs of Jesus in times of Popish persecution; or to the removal of good men by an ordinary death before those times came.

{b} dba qyduh, apwleto, Sept. {c} Mypoan "colliguntur", V. L. Munster, Piscator, Cocceius; "congregantur", Pagninus.

Isaiah 57:2

Ver. 2. He shall enter into peace,.... Or "shall go in peace" {d}; the righteous man goes in peace now; he has peace from his justifying righteousness; he has peace through believing in Christ; he has peace in, though not from, his obedience and holiness of life; and he has peace in the midst of the many trials he is exercised with; and he goes out of the world in peace, with great serenity and tranquillity of mind, as Simeon desired he might, having views of an interest in Christ, and in the glories of another world; and as soon as he is departed from hence he enters into peace, into a state where there is everything that makes for peace; there is the God of peace; there is Christ, the Prince of peace; there is the Spirit, whose fruit is peace; and there are the angels of peace, and good men, the sons of peace: and there is nothing there to disturb their peace, no sin within, nor Satan's temptations without, nor any wicked men to annoy and molest them; and there is everything that can come under the notion of peace and prosperity; for the happiness of this state is signified by riches, by glory and honour, by a kingdom, and by a paradise; and into this state the righteous may be said to enter immediately upon death, which is no other than stepping out of one world into another; and this they enter into as into a house, as it really is, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; and, entering into it, they take possession of it, and for ever enjoy it:

they shall rest in their beds, their souls in the bosom of Abraham, in the arms of Jesus; their bodies in the grave, which is a bed unto them, where they lie down and sleep, till they are awaked at the resurrection; and where they rest from all toil and labour, from all diseases and distempers, pains and tortures, and from all persecuting enemies; see Re 14:13:

each one walking in his uprightness; in the righteousness of Christ, and in the shining robes of immortality and glory, and in perfect purity and holiness: or, "before him" {e}; before God, in the sight or presence of him, and by sight, and not by faith, as now. Though this is by some considered as the character of the righteous man in life, so Aben Ezra; and then the sense is, that he that walks in his uprightness, in the uprightness or righteousness of Christ, and by faith on him; that walks uprightly in his life and conversation before God, and "before himself"; following the rule before him, and walking according to the rule of the Gospel, and in the ordinances of it blameless, when he comes to die, he enters into peace and rest. And to this sense is the Targum, which paraphrases it,

"that are doers of his law;"

see **Ro 2:13**. In the Talmud {f} it is interpreted of that peace and happiness righteous men enter into when they die.

{d} Mwlv awby "ibit in pace", Gataker. {e} wxwkn "coram eo", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Calvin; "ante se", Cocceius, Vitringa. {f} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 104. 1.

Isaiah 57:3

Ver. 3. But draw near hither,.... The death of the righteous, and their happiness after it, being observed: the wicked, who thought themselves safe from danger, and the happier that they were rid of the righteous, those witnesses and prophets which had tormented them, and therefore rejoiced on that account, are here summoned to the divine tribunal, to hear their character, and receive their doom, as follows:

ye sons of the sorceress; the children of Jezebel, the witch, and the prophetess that taught the servants of the Lord to commit fornication, and bewitched with her witchcrafts the sons of the apostate church of Rome; by whose sorceries all nations have been deceived, and of which she repents not, **Re 2:20**:

the seed of the adulterer and of the whore; of the great whore of Babylon, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication; and whose subjects and children are the seed of this whore, and the sons of this idolatrous church: or, "that committeth whoredom" {g}; which aggravates the character, that they were not only the children of adulterous persons, but committed whoredom themselves.

{g} hnztw "qua scortata est", Piscator; "quod scortaris", Junius & Tremellius; "qui scortaris", Cocceius.

Isaiah 57:4

Ver. 4. Against whom do ye sport yourselves?.... Is it against the ministers of the Gospel, the prophets of the Lord, the true and faithful witnesses, over whose dead bodies you triumph? know that it is not so much against them, as against the Lord himself, whose ministers, prophets, and witnesses they are; see **1Th 4:8**: "against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue?" gestures used by way of scorn and derision; see Ps 22:7. So the Papists open their mouths, and draw out their tongues, in gibes and jeers, reproaches and calumnies, against the true Christians, calling and despising them as heretics and schismatics; which abuse and ill usage of them will be resented another day. The Targum is,

"before whom do ye open your mouth, and multiply to speak things?"

as antichrist is said to have a mouth open, speaking great things and blasphemy against God, his name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven, Re 13:5:

are ye not children of transgression; given up to all manner of sin and wickedness; or children of the wicked one, as the Targum, either of Satan, or of the man of sin; or, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "children of perdition"; of the same character, complexion, and religion, as the son of perdition is: "a seed of falsehood"; or a lie, given to lying; to believe a lie, and to speak lies in hypocrisy; professing a false religion; embracing false doctrines; a spurious breed, and not the sons of the true church of Christ.

Isaiah 57:5

Ver. 5. Inflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree,.... Or, "inflamed with or among oaks" {h}; with images made of oaken wood, such as the Papists worship, Re 9:20 expressing a burning zeal for their idols, and being as hot upon them, as impure persons burn in lust one towards another: or "with mighty ones" {i}; the kings and potentates of the earth, with whom the whore of Rome commits her fornication, even in every flourishing kingdom and state in Europe, compared to a green tree; alluding to the custom of the Heathens, who used to set up their idols under green trees and groves, and there worship them, which were pleasing to the flesh; and I wish, says Musculus on the text, there were no instances of this kind in the Papacy.

Slaying the children in the valleys, under the clifts of the rocks? this may refer to the cruelty of these idolatrous worshippers; for, as they burn with zeal to their idols, so with rage against those that oppose their idolatrous practices, not sparing men, women, and children; and such butcheries have been committed in many places, and especially in the "valleys" of Piedmont; nor could the cragged rocks secure them from their falling a sacrifice unto them. Or it may intend the ruining and destroying the souls of such, who, before they fell into their hands, were innocent as children, by their superstitious worship and idolatry, committed in low and dark places, under cragged rocks, and in caves and dens; such as the above mentioned commentator speaks of, a very dark one, under a prominent rock, in which the ignorant and unhappy people, some time ago, worshipped and invoked a certain blessed saint, he knew not who, which could scarce be looked into without horror; and such was the cave in which they worshipped the angel Michael.

{h} Mylab Mymxnh "inflammati inter quercus", Gataker; "incalescentes, [vel] incalescitis inter quercus, [vel] ulmos", Vatablus. {i} "In potentibus", Cocceius.

Isaiah 57:6

Ver. 6. Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion,.... Or thy god; but the portion of Jacob is not like them, stocks and stones, Jer 10:16. Whenever they could pick up smooth stones, and such as were fit for their purpose, whether in the stream of a brook, or in a valley, as the word also signifies, they polished and formed them into an image, and made gods of them; and these were their portion and inheritance, and which they left to their children. There is an elegant play on words {k} in the Hebrew tongue, between the word for "smooth stones", and that for a "portion {l}", which cannot be expressed in our language: or, "in the smooth or slippery places of the valley shall be thy portions"; see Ps 35:6.

They, they are thy lot; even those stones. Jarchi's note is, to stone thee with, the punishment of idolaters with the Jews; suggesting that those idols would be their ruin; as they will be the ruin of the idolatrous members of the church of Rome, who repent not of worshipping their idols of stone among others, **Re 9:20**:

even to them hast thou poured a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering; or a "bread offering", as well as a libation of wine, respecting the sacrifice of the mass, which consists of bread and wine, which is offered up in honour of their idols, angels and saints; hence "Michael mass" and "Martin mass", &c.

Should I receive comfort in these? be pleased with such idolatrous sacrifices? no. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions render it, "should I not be angry for these?" I will; I have just reason for it. Or it may be rendered, "shall I repent of these {m}?" of the evil I have threatened to bring, and am about to bring upon these idolaters? I will not.

{k} Kqlx lhn yqlxb. {l} "In laevitatibus vallis erit portio tua", Gataker, Vitringa. {m} Mxna hla leh "a me super his poenitebit?" Musculus; "poenitebit me", some in Vatablus.

Isaiah 57:7

Ver. 7. Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed,.... Temples and altars, which are usually built on high places, where they commit spiritual adultery; that is, idolatry, in imitation of the Heathens, who had their temples and altars on high places; and the idolatry of the church of Rome, in this context, is all along expressed in language agreeable to the Heathen idolatry, and in allusion to it. Some think this phrase denotes impudence in their idolatrous worship; for not content to worship under trees, in valleys, and under clifts of rocks, and such dark places; now, as not blushing at, or being ashamed of their actions, erect their altars in the most public places. Perhaps some reference may be had to the city of Rome itself, built on seven mountains, the seat of antichrist, and where the principal bed for idolatry is set up. The Targum is,

"on a high and lofty mountain thou hast the place of the house of thy dwelling;"

which agrees very well with the great city, the seat of the beast.

Even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice; the sacrifice of the mass, to do which the idolaters go to their high places, their temples, and to their high altars, and especially in the great city.

Isaiah 57:8

Ver. 8. Behind the doors also and the posts hast thou set up thy remembrance,.... The memorial of thine idols, as the Targum. As the Heathens had their "lares" and "penates", their household gods, so the Papists have their tutelar images, which they place in their houses, and in their bedchambers; their images of saints, their crucifixes and superstitious pictures, which they call "memories", and "laymen's books":

for thou hast discovered thyself to another than me; or, "from me" {n}; departing from me, and leaving my bed; rejecting Christ as King of saints, deserting his worship and ordinances; thou hast uncovered thyself to another, prostituted thyself to another, been guilty of spiritual adultery or idolatry; receiving and acknowledging another for head of the church, according to whose will all things in worship are directed:

and art gone up; to the bed set up in the high place; to idolatrous temples and altars, there to offer sacrifice:

thou hast enlarged thy bed; to take in many adulterers, and idolatrous worshippers; and so, as Musculus observes, many small chapels, at first erected for this and the other saint, through the vast concourse of people to them, and the gifts they have brought, have, in process of time, become large and magnificent temples:

and made a covenant with them; with idols, and idol worshippers; agreeing to receive the mark and name of the beast, and to worship his image, Re 13:15, or, "thou hast cut for thyself more than they" {o}; more trees to make idols of, or to make more room for the placing of idols in groves than the Heathens: or, "thou hast hewed it for thyself",

a bed larger {p} than theirs; that is, thy bed thou hast made larger than theirs: or, "thou hast cut for thyself from them" {q}; taken away from emperors and kings part of, their dominions, and joined them to thy patrimony, and appropriated them to thine own use:

thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest it; took delight and pleasure in places of idolatrous worship, and in their idolatry, wherever they were: or, "thou lovedst their bed, a hand thou hast seen" {r}; stretched out to help thee, or give thee power, or to invite, encourage, and receive thee into the idolatrous bed; or rather any pillar, monument {s}, or statue, erected for idolatry, which seen, they fell down to and worshipped.

{n} ytam "a me", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vitringa. {o} Mhm Kl trktw "et caedis tibi arbores plusquam illi", Piscator. {p} "Caedens tibi amplius Cubile quam illorum sit", Junius & Tremellius. {q} "Et excidisti tibi ex eis", Montanus. {r} tyzx dy "manum vidisti", Montanus, Cocceius. {s} "Ubi monumentum vidisti", Vitringa.

Isaiah 57:9

Ver. 9. And thou wentest to the king with ointment,.... To the kings of the earth, the singular for the plural, with whom the whore of Rome has committed fornication or idolatry, in allusion to harlots, who, in order to render themselves the more agreeable to their lovers, anointed themselves with ointment: this may respect the grace of the Spirit of God, which the church of Rome pretends to give by administration of the sacraments, which it is said confer grace "ex opere operato"; and the extreme unction given as a meetness for heaven, in the last moments of life:

and didst increase thy perfumes; after the manner of harlots, who, to ingratiate themselves with men, use much perfumes: this may signify the many ways the whore of Rome takes to make herself regarded by the kings and nations of the earth; pretending to antiquity, infallibility, power of working miracles, works of supererogation, primacy and superiority over all other churches; using great pomp and splendour in places of worship, and in all religious services:

and didst send thy messengers far off; not only into neighbouring kingdoms and states, into all the nations of Europe; but even into the most distant parts of the world, into both the Indies, in order to make proselytes, spread the religion of the see of Rome, and increase its power. The pope's "nuncios" and "legates a latere", may be here pointed at, as well as the Jesuits his emissaries, sent into all parts to promote his interest. Jarchi's note is,

"to exact tribute of the kings of the nations;"

which has been the business of the pope's legates:

and didst debase thyself even unto hell; or lay thyself low; prostitute thyself as harlots do to every lover; or didst feign thyself very lowly and humble, as the pope does when he calls himself "servus servorum"; or rather, "thou didst depress", or "bring low, even unto hell" {t}; that is, multitudes of men and women, who are brought down to hell by the false doctrine and worship of the church of Rome; and the followers of the man of sin say, that if he brings down thousands into hell, none ought to say, what dost thou? Cocceius thinks it may have respect to his pretended power over hell, to send as many there as do not please him; arrogating to himself the keys of heaven and hell; or over purgatory, a figment of his brain, where he pretends the souls of men are for a time, and from whence, for a sum of money, he delivers them. The Targum is,

"thou hast depressed the strength of the people; or, as some copies, the strong of the people unto hell."

{t} lwav de ylypvtz "et demisti usque ad infernum", Cocceius.

Isaiah 57:10

Ver. 10. Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way,.... Or, "in the multiplicity of thy ways" {u}: which were so many, as were enough to make her weary; the steps which were taken to obtain so much power over kings and kingdoms, which was gradually got with great pains and artifice, and to amass such vast treasures, and to enlarge her interest, and spread her religion in the world; the multitude of stratagems devised, and vast number of men employed, and embassies made to carry her point everywhere. Jarchi's note is,

"to fulfil thy desires, and to enlarge thy substance:"

yet saidst thou not, there is no hope; as men in a good cause are apt to do, upon every difficulty that arises; but here, in this case, though the cause was very bad, yet when schemes did not take, or not so soon as wished for and expected, new difficulties arose, and opposition made; yet no cost nor pains were spared to gain the point in view, and establish a kingdom and hierarchy; which at last succeeded: this expresses the resolution, constancy, and pertinency of the bishops of Rome in their ambitious views and claims of power, who would not give out, nor despair of arriving at what they aimed at; and which, through great fatigue and labour, they attained unto:

thou hast found the life of thine hand; that which was sought for and laboured after; sovereignty over all bishops and churches; power over kings and kingdoms; and an universal empire over consciences, as well as over churches and nations; and also immense treasure and riches to support the pope, cardinals, priests, &c.; and perhaps giving life to the image of the beast that it should speak, and cause those that would not worship it to be killed, may be included, Re 13:15. The Targum is,

"thou hast multiplied (or as other copies) thou hast found great riches."

Jarchi's note is,

"the necessity of thine hands, thou hast found prosperity in thy works:"

therefore thou wast not grieved; at the toil and labour used, pains taken, and weariness contracted; the issue was an over recompence for all the trouble and difficulty that attended it: or, "therefore thou wast not sick" {w}; of the undertaking; did not despond in mind, or languish without hope of succeeding, finding ground was gained; and at last things went according to wishes; and then it caused no grief to reflect upon the fatigue and trouble that had been endured; and also grieved not at the idolatry introduced, nor repented of it; see **Re 9:20**, So the Targum interprets it of impenitence.

{u} Kkrd brb "in multitudine viae tuae", Pagninus, Montanus. {w} tylx al "non aegrotasti", Pagninus, Montanus, "non aegrotas", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 57:11

Ver. 11. And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lied,.... By assuming the name of Christian, when it did not belong to her; as it does not to the church of Rome which is antichristian: this lie is told, not out of any fear of God, or reverence of Christ; for she has no fear or reverence of either; but to serve a purpose, to blind the eyes of men under the Christian name, and, with a pretence to serve the cause of Christianity, to get all Christendom under her power:

and hast not remembered me; or, "for thou hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart?" or, "put me upon thy heart" {x}; had no regard to Christ, nor had true faith in him, nor love to him; but all the reverse; degraded him in his offices, corrupted his doctrines, ordinances, and worship. The Targum is,

"and hast not remembered my worship, nor put my fear upon thy heart:"

and have not held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not or, "therefore thou fearest me not" {y}; because as yet the vials of God's wrath are not poured out, or his judgment inflicted on antichrist; but, ever since he began to reign, he has enjoyed great prosperity; therefore he fears not God, nor regards man; but says, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow", Re 18:7.

{x} Kbl le tmv al trkz al "nam mei non es recordata, neque posuisti me super cor tuum", Grotius. {y} waryt al ytwaw "idcirco me non times", Calvin, Piscator, Gataker.

Isaiah 57:12

Ver. 12. I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works,.... For, notwithstanding all the idolatry, superstition, irreligion, and cruelty of the church of Rome, she makes large pretences to righteousness, by which she expects to be justified, and to merit eternal life, and even pretends to works of supererogation; but God will in due time make it clearly appear, both by the ministry of his faithful servants, which he has done in part already; and by his judgments that he will execute, that she has no righteousness; that what she calls so is no righteousness, but wickedness; and that her works she calls good works are bad ones, superstitious, idolatrous, and tyrannical:

for they shall not profit thee; secure from judgment here, or from wrath to come; nor justify before God, nor procure salvation and eternal life; but, on the contrary, shall bring deserved ruin and destruction, here and hereafter.

Isaiah 57:13

Ver. 13. When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee,.... From distress and impending ruin, if they can; meaning not the allies and auxiliaries of the Jews, the Egyptians and Assyrians, they sent to for help, as Kimchi, and others; rather, as Jarchi, their idols and graven images they worshipped, angels and saints departed, the Papists pray unto; let them now, in the time of Rome's ruin, renew their addresses to them for help and deliverance, if they can give it: or, "thy gathered ones" {z}; the kings of the earth the whore of Rome has gathered unto her to commit fornication with her: and who, by her emissaries, will be gathered together to the battle of the Lord God Almighty, and to make war with the Lamb, but will be overcome; as also her many religious societies and convents of Jesuits, friars, priests, &c.; these will stand afar off, and lament her in her distress; even the kings and merchants of the earth, ship masters, and all company in ships, but will not be able to relieve her, Re 18:9:

but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them; so far will they be from helping her in the time of her calamity, that the wind of God's power and wrath shall carry them away as chaff; a puff of his "breath", or the least breath of air {a}, shall dissipate them, and bring them to nothing; they will be no more able to stand before him than the lightest thing that can be thought of can stand before a blustering wind or tempest. The phrase denotes an utter and easy destruction of the whole jurisdiction and hierarchy of the church of Rome:

but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain; such of God's people as will be in Babylon a little before its fall, and will be called out of it, who shall betake themselves to the Lord as their only refuge, and put their trust and confidence in him, rejecting all idolatry and superstitious worship, shall enjoy the communion of the true church of Christ, and partake of all the ordinances of it: it may be this may have also a particular respect unto the Jews, who will be called about this time;

who, upon their believing in Christ, will return to their own land, and dwell in Jerusalem, God's holy mountain, as it used to be called. Hence it follows:

{z} Kyuwbq "collectitii tui", Tigurine version; "congregati a te", Vatablus; "copiae tuae collectae", Vitringa. {a} lbh "halitus" Cocceius; "aura" V. L. "aura levisima" Vitringa.

Isaiah 57:14

Ver. 14. And shall say, cast ye up, cast ye up,.... A causeway, a highway, for the people of the Jews to return to their own land: this is either said by the Lord, as some supply it; or by the prophet, as Jarchi; or by him that putteth his trust in the Lord, as Kimchi; or rather by one, that is, the first of the living creatures, a set of Gospel ministers, that shall give to the angels, the Protestant princes and potentates, the seven last vials to pour out on the antichristian states, both Papal and Mahometan, and shall stir them up to do it; or the voice out of the temple, that shall order them to do their work; by which means way will be made for the return of the said people,
Re 15:7:

prepare the way; of the true doctrine and worship of God: the way of truth and holiness, of faith and practice:

take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people; the superstition, idolatry, and impiety of the church of Rome, are the great stumblingblock in the way of the conversion of the Jews, and the means of hardening that people in their disbelief of Christ and the Christian religion; wherefore the fall of antichrist, and a reformation everywhere from all corruption in doctrine and worship, in principle and practice, which also may be intended by these expressions, will prepare the way for their embracing the Christian religion, and so for their return to their own land. The Targum is,

"and he shall say, teach and admonish, prepare (or direct) the heart of the people to the right way, remove the stumblingblock of the wicked out of the way of my people."

Isaiah 57:15

Ver. 15. For thus saith the high and lofty One,.... Who is high above the earth, and the nations of it; higher than the kings in it; the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and so able to save his people, and destroy his and their enemies; who is higher than the heavens, and the angels there; who is exalted above the praises of his people; the knowledge of whose being and perfections is too wonderful for them; whose thoughts are higher than theirs; and whose love has a height in it not to be reached by them; all which may serve to command a proper awe and reverence of him, and close attention to what he says; and perhaps these characters and titles are assumed in opposition to antichrist, who exalts himself above all that is called God, as well as what follows; who boasts of antiquity, and insolently takes to himself the title of Holiness: wherefore the Lord goes on to describe himself as

he that inhabiteth eternity: is from everlasting to everlasting, without beginning or end, the first and the last, who only hath immortality in and of himself; angels and the souls of men, though they die not, yet have a beginning; God only is from eternity to eternity; or rather inhabits one undivided, uninterrupted, eternity, to which time is but a mere point or moment:

whose name is Holy: his nature being so; he is originally and essentially holy, and the source of holiness to his creatures, angels and men; though none are holy in comparison of him; his holiness is displayed in all his works; he is glorious in it; and therefore with great propriety holy and reverend is his name:

I dwell in the high and holy place; he dwelt in the most holy place in the tabernacle and temple, which were figures of the true sanctuary, heaven, where Jehovah dwells, and seems to be here meant; though the word "place" is not in the text; and it may be rendered, "I dwell with the high and holy" {b}; and Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it of the holy angels; and if we apply it to the holy and divine Persons in the Trinity, the Son and Spirit, it may not be amiss, and will stand well connected with what follows

with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit; not only with the other divine Persons, and with those high ones, but with such who are broken under a sense of sin; not merely in a legal, but in an evangelical way; not only with the weight of divine wrath, but with a view of pardoning grace and mercy; and such souls are humble as well as contrite; have the worst thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; they are humble under a sense of sin and unworthiness, and submit to the righteousness of Christ for their acceptance and justification before God; and ascribe the whole of their salvation to his free grace alone; and become cheerful followers of the meek and lowly Jesus; with such the Lord dwells, not merely by his omnipresence and omnipotence, but by his spirit and grace; or in a gracious way and manner, by shedding abroad his love in their hearts, and communicating his grace to them; and which he usually does under the ministry of the word and ordinances, and which may be expected: and his end in so doing is,

to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones; who are sometimes in a very lifeless and uncomfortable condition; grace is weak; sin is prevalent; they are under a sense of divine displeasure; under the hidings of God's face, and attended with various afflictions and adverse dispensations of Providence: now the Lord dwells with them, to revive and quicken them; which he does by his gracious presence; by the discoveries of his pardoning love and grace; by the application of precious promises; and by granting large measures of his grace, so that they become comfortable in their souls, and are quickened to the fresh exercise of grace, and discharge of duty. All this seems to be spoken for the consolation of the Lord's people in their low estate, during the reign of antichrist, and towards the close of it, when greatly oppressed by him. Vitringa interprets this of the Waldenses and Bohemian brethren; but it seems to respect later times.

{b} Nwkva vwdqw Mwrm "excelso et sancto habitabo", Pagninus, Montanus.

Isaiah 57:16

Ver. 16. For I will not contend for ever,.... By afflictive providences; with the humble and contrite, the end being in a great measure answered by their humiliation and contrition; when God afflicts his people, it shows that he has a controversy with them, for their good, and his own glory; and when these ends are obtained, he will carry it on no longer:

neither will I be always wroth; as he seems to be in the apprehensions of his people, when he either hides his face from them, or chastises them with a rod of affliction:

for the spirit should fail before me; the spirit of the afflicted, which not being able to bear up any longer under the affliction, would sink and faint, or be "overwhelmed", as the word {c} signifies:

and the souls which I have made; which are of God's immediate creation, and which are also renewed by his grace, and made new creatures. The proselytes Abraham made are called the souls he made in Haran, Ge 12:5, much more may this be said of the Father of spirits, the author both of the old and new creation. The Lord knowing the weakness of the human frame, therefore restrains his hand, or moderates or removes the affliction; see a like reason in Ps 78:38, the last days of trouble to God's people, which will be the time of the slaying of the witnesses, will be such that if they are not shortened, no flesh can be saved, but for the elect's sake they will be shortened, Mt 24:22.

{c} Pwjey "obrueretur", Junius & Tremellius, Vitriuga; "in deliquium incideret", Piscator, Gataker.

Isaiah 57:17

Ver. 17. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him, ... Not the greedy watchmen of the church of Rome, Isa 56:10, but teachers and preachers in the reformed churches, who mind their own things, and not the things of Christ; seek after good benefices and livings, temporalities and pluralities, and to be lord bishops; taking the oversight of the flock for filthy lucre sake; which may easily be observed to be the predominant sin of the preachers and professors of the reformed churches; for which God has a controversy with them, and, resenting it, has smote and rebuked them in a providential way; and has threatened them, as he did the church at Sardis, the emblem of the reformed churches, that he will come upon them as a thief, **Re 3:4**.

I hid me, and was wroth: showed his displeasure by departing from them; and how much God has withdrawn his presence, and caused his spirit to depart from the churches of the Reformation, is too notorious:

and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart; took no notice of the reproofs and corrections of God; was unconcerned at his absence; not at all affected with his departure, and the withdrawings of his Spirit; these had no effect to cause a reformation, as is now too visibly the case; the same evil is pursued with equal eagerness; this is a way the heart of man is set upon, and they do not care to be turned out of it; and are like froward peevish children under the rod, receive no correction by it.

Isaiah 57:18

Ver. 18. I have seen his ways, and will heal him,.... Either the ways of such who trust in the Lord, the ways of the humble and contrite, who are brought by repentance and reformation, by the dealings of God with them; these he sees, knows, and approves of, and heals their former backslidings; for though not all, yet some may be reformed hereby; or rather the ways of the froward, their evil ways, which are their own ways in opposition to God's ways, peculiar to themselves, of their own devising and choosing; these the Lord sees, resents, and corrects for, and yet graciously pardons them, which is meant by healing:

I will lead him also; out of those evil ways of his into the good and right way in which he should go; into the way of truth and paths of righteousness; for it is for want of evangelical light and knowledge that so many err from the truths of the Gospel, and from the simplicity of Gospel worship; but in the latter day the Spirit of truth shall be poured down from on high, and shall lead professors of real religion into all truth, and they shall speak a pure language, and worship the Lord with one consent:

and restore comforts to him, and to his mourners; that mourn over their own sins, and the sins of others; that mourn in Zion, and for Zion; for the corruptions in doctrine and worship crept into the reformed churches; for the want of church discipline and Gospel conversation; for the declensions of professors of religion, and the divisions among them; and for that worldly, earthly, and carnal spirit that prevails; for these, as bad as our times are, there are some that mourn publicly and privately; and to these, and to the church for their sakes, comfort shall be restored, by sending forth Gospel light, truth, and knowledge, which shall cover the earth as the waters the sea; by reviving primitive doctrines and ordinances; by blessing the word to the conversion of a multitude of sinners, and to the edification of saints; by causing brotherly love, peace, and spirituality, to abound among professors, and by blessing all the means of grace to the consolation of their souls; and by making particular applications of the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, for pardon, justification, and atonement, the solid foundation of all true comfort.

Isaiah 57:19

Ver. 19. I create the fruit of the lips,.... Which is praise and thanksgiving, Heb 13:16 that is, give occasion of it, afford matter for it, by restoring comforts to the church and its mourners, as in the preceding verse; and by giving peace, as in all the following words. The Targum renders it,

"the speech of the lips in the mouth of all men;"

as if it respected that blessing of nature, speech, common to all mankind: whereas this is a blessing of grace, peculiar to some that share in the above blessings; and it may be restrained to Gospel ministers, the fruit of whose lips is the Gospel of peace; or the word preaching peace by Christ; the word of reconciliation committed to them; the subject of their ministry, as follows:

peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; peace with God, made by Christ, is the fruit of Jehovah the Father's lips, who promised it in covenant, on condition of Christ's shedding his blood to make it; whence the covenant is called the covenant of peace; and spoke of it in prophecy, as what should be obtained by Christ the peacemaker; and peace of conscience flowing from it is the fruit of Christ's lips, who promised to give it to, and leave it with, his disciples; and that they should have it in him, when they had tribulation in the world; and who also by his apostles went and

preached peace to them that were afar off, and to them that were nigh; having first made it by the blood of his cross, **Eph 2:17** in which place there seems a manifest reference to this passage, when the Gospel was preached to the Jews that were near; to them in Judea first, from whence it first came; and then to the Gentiles that were afar off, as well as the dispersed Jews in distant countries; and in the latter day, to which this prophecy refers, it will be preached far and near, even all the world over; when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Gospel of peace, through the ministry of a set of men raised up by the Lord, created for that purpose, and eminently furnished for such service; the effect of which will be great spiritual peace in the hearts of God's people, and much concord, unity, and love among them, as well as there will be an abundance of external peace and prosperity; and when nations shall learn war no more. This Kimchi and Ben Melech take to be yet future, and what will be after the war of Gog and Magog: "and I will heal them"; of all their soul sicknesses and maladies; of all their divisions and declensions; of their carnality and earthly mindedness, before complained of; and even of all their sins and backslidings; and restore them to perfect health in their souls, and in their church state.

Isaiah 57:20

Ver. 20. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest,.... Disturbed by winds, storms, and hurricanes, when its waves rise, rage, and tumble about, and beat against the shore and sand, threatening to pass the bounds fixed for it. In such like agitations will the minds of wicked men be, through the terrors of conscience for their sins; or through the malice and envy in them at the happiness and prosperity of the righteous, now enjoyed, upon the downfall of antichrist; and through the judgments of God upon them, gnawing their tongues for pain, and blaspheming the God of heaven, because of their plagues and pains, Re 16:9:

whose waters cast up mire and dirt; from the bottom of the sea upon the shore; so the hearts of wicked men, having nothing but the mire and dirt of sin in them, cast out nothing else but the froth and foam of their own shame, blasphemy against God, and malice against his people.

Isaiah 57:21

Ver. 21. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. They have no share in the peace made by the blood of Christ; they have no true, solid, inward peace of conscience; nor will they have any part in the happiness and prosperity of the church and people of God in the latter day, which will but add to their uneasiness; and will have no lot and portion in the eternal peace which saints enjoy in the world to come; and of this there is the strongest assurance, since God, the covenant God of his people, has said it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 58:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 58

From the wicked and antichristian party the prophet is bid to turn to the professors of the true religion, and openly, boldly, and sharply, reprove them for their sins, particularly their hypocrisy and formality in worship, Isa 58:1, who yet were angry, and complained that the Lord took no notice of their

religious services, particularly their fasting, which is put for the whole; the reason of which was, because they did not fast aright; it was attended with much cruelty, strife, and wickedness, and only lay in external appearances, Isa 58:3, when they are directed how to keep a fast, and are shown what a true fast is, and what works and services are acceptable to God, Isa 58:6 on doing of which, light, health, prosperity, and hearing of their prayers, are promised, provided the yoke of oppression is taken away, and compassion shown to the poor, Isa 58:8, yea, a very fruitful and flourishing estate of the soul is promised, and a rebuilding of waste places, delight in the Lord, and great honour and dignity; so be it that the sabbath of the Lord, or public worship, is attended to in a proper manner,
Isa 58:11.

Ver. 1. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,.... These words are directed to the prophet; and so the Targum expresses it,

"O prophet, cry with thy throat;"

and so it is in the original, "cry with the throat" {d}, which is an instrument of speech; and it denotes a loud, strong, vehement cry, when a man exerts his voice, and as it were rends his throat, that he may be heard; as well as it shows the intenseness of his spirit, and the vehemence of his affections, and the importance of what he delivers; and this the prophet is encouraged to do, and "spare not", the voice, throat, or his lungs, nor the people neither he was sent unto; or, "cease not", as the Targum, refrain not from speaking, "cease not crying"; so Ben Melech: "lift up thy voice like a trumpet"; like the voice or sound of a trumpet, which is heard afar, and gives an alarm; and to which the Gospel ministry is sometimes compared, Isa 27:13 all which shows the manner in which the ministers of the word should deliver it, publicly, boldly, with ardour and affection; and also the deafness and stupidity of the people which require it:

and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins; by whom are meant the professing people of God, the present reformed churches, as distinguished from the antichristian ones, spoken of in the preceding chapter; who yet are guilty of many sins and transgressions, which must be showed them, and they must be sharply reproved for; and particularly their coldness and deadness, formality and hypocrisy in religious worship; their "works not being perfect" before God, or sincere and upright, as is said of the Sardian church, which designs the same persons, **Re 3:1**. In the Talmud {e} the words are thus paraphrased, "shew my people their transgression"; these are the disciples of the wise men, whose sins of error or ignorance become to them presumptuous ones; "and the house of Jacob their sins"; these are the people of the earth, or the common people, whose presumptuous sins become to them as sins of ignorance.

{d} Nwrgb arq "clama in gutture", Pagninus, Montanus; "exclama gutture", Junius & Tremellius; "exclama pleno gutture", Piscator; "clama pleno gut ture", Cocceius. {e} T. Bab. Metzia, fol. 33. 2.

Isaiah 58:2

Ver. 2. Yet they seek me daily,.... Which may be considered as an acknowledgment of their external piety; or as a caution to the prophet not to be imposed upon by outward appearances; or as a reason why they should be rebuked sharply: they sought the Lord, either by prayer, or in the ministry of the word; they sought doctrine, as the Targum; they sought him, and that every day, or, however, every Lord's day; and yet they did not seek him with that diligence and intenseness of spirit, with their whole hearts, cordially and sincerely, as they ought to have done; they sought themselves, and the honour of men, rather than the Lord and his glory:

and delight to know my ways; not only his ways of creation and providence, but of grace; and also the ways which he prescribes and directs his people to walk in; not that they had a real delight in them, or in the knowledge of them, or such a delight as truly gracious souls have when they have the presence of God in them; are assisted by his Spirit; have their hearts enlarged with his love; find food for their souls, and have fellowship with the saints; but this delight was only seeming, and at most only in the knowledge and theory of these ways, but not in the practice of them; see
Eze 33:31:

as a nation that did righteousness: in general appeared to be outwardly righteous; had a form of godliness, and name to live, and yet dead, and so destitute of any works of true righteousness, at best only going about to establish a righteousness of their own:

and forsook not the ordinance of their God; the ordinance of assembling together in general; any of the ordinances of God in particular; hearing, reading, singing, praying, especially the ordinance of the supper, constantly attended to by them; see Lu 13:26:

they ask of me the ordinances of justice; not of justice between man and man, but of righteousness and religion with respect to God; they ask what are the ordinances of the Gospel, and the rules of worship and discipline, and whether there are any they are ignorant of; suggesting they were desirous of being instructed in them, and of complying with them:

they take delight in approaching to God; there is no right approaching God but through Christ, and gracious souls take a real delight in this way; but the approaching here is only in an external manner, by the performance of outward duties; and the delight is not in God, and communion with him; but in the service, performed as a work of their own, in which they trust, and in what they expect as the reward of it.

Isaiah 58:3

Ver. 3. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?.... Our fasting; takest no notice of it; expresses no approbation of it, and pleasure in it: this is put for all religious services, being what was frequently performed under the Old Testament, not only at certain times appointed by the Lord, but on other occasions, and of their own fixing; in which they put their confidence, and often boasted of,
Lu 18:12: "wherefore have we afflicted our soul", by fasting, "and thou takest no knowledge?" of that, nor of us, and dost not save us from our enemies, and deliver us from our troubles, and bestow favours on us: they had a high opinion of their own performances, and thought that God must have likewise; and were displeased that he showed no more regard unto them:

behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure; this, and what follows in the two next verses, are an answer to their questions, and give reasons why the Lord took no more notice of their fasting, or of their services; because they were not done aright, they found their own pleasure in them; not that they indulged to bodily recreations and carnal delights, but they gratified the inward desires of the flesh, malice, envy, and the like; and they pleased themselves with their own duties, and fancied they procured the favour of God by them:

and exact all your labours; of their servants, or their money of their debtors; they grieved and afflicted their debtors, by demanding their debts of them, as

Jarchi interprets it; and that in a very rigorous manner, requiring whole and immediate payment; or, as it is usual with establishments, they require an exact conformity to their manner of service, worship, and discipline.

Isaiah 58:4

Ver. 4. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate,.... Brawling with their servants for not doing work enough; or quarrelling with their debtors for not paying their debts; or the main of their religion lay in contentions and strifes about words, vain hot disputations about rites and ceremonies in worship, as is well known to have been the case of the reformed churches:

and to smite with the fist of wickedness; their servants or their debtors; or rather it may design the persecution of such whose consciences would not suffer them to receive the doctrines professed; or submit to ordinances as administered; or comply with rites and ceremonies enjoined by the said churches; for which they have smitten their brethren that dissented from them with the fist, or have persecuted them in a violent manner by imprisonment, confiscation of goods, &c.; all which is no other than a fist of wickedness, and highly displeasing to God, and renders all their services unacceptable in his sight; see Mt 24:49:

ye shall not fast as ye do this day; or, "as this day"; after this manner; this is not right:

to make your voice to be heard on high; referring either to their noisy threatening of their servants for not doing their work; or their clamorous demands upon their debtors; or to their loud prayers, joined with their fasting, which they expected to be heard in the highest heaven, but would be mistaken; for such services, attended with the above evils, are not wellpleasing to God.

Isaiah 58:5

Ver. 5. Is it such a fast that I have chosen?.... That is, can this be thought to be a fast approved of by me, and acceptable to me, before described, and is as follows:

a day for a man to afflict his soul? only to appoint a certain day, and keep that, by abstaining from bodily food, and so for a short time afflict himself; or only after this manner to afflict himself, and not humble himself for his sins, and abstain from them, and do the duties of justice and charity incumbent on him:

is it to bow down his head as a bulrush; when it is moved with the wind, or bruised, or withered; as if he was greatly depressed and humbled, and very penitent and sorrowful. The Syriac version renders it, "as a hook"; like a fish hook, which is very much bent; so Jarchi interprets the word:

and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? which were ceremonies used in times of mourning and fasting; sometimes sackcloth was put on their loins, and ashes on their heads; and sometimes these were strewed under them, and they laid down upon their sackcloth, which, being coarse, was uneasy to them, and rolled themselves in ashes, as expressive of their meanness and vileness:

wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? does this deserve the name of a fast? or can it be imagined that such a day so spent, can be agreeable to God? that such persons and services will be accepted of by him? or that hereby sin is atoned for, and God is well pleased, and will show his favour and good will, and have respect to such worshippers of him? no, surely.

Isaiah 58:6

Ver. 6. Is not this the fast that I have chosen?.... Which God has appointed, he approves of, and is well pleasing in his sight; these are works and services more agreeable to him, which follow, without which the rest will be rejected:

to loose the bands of wickedness; which some understand of combinations in courts of judicature to oppress and distress the poor; others of bonds and contracts unjustly made, or rigorously demanded and insisted on, when they cannot be answered; rather of those things with which the consciences of men are bound in religious matters; impositions upon conscience; binding to the use of stinted forms, and to habits in divine worship, which the word of God has not made necessary:

to undo the heavy burdens. The Septuagint render it, "dissolve the obligations of violent contracts"; such as are obtained by violence; so the Arabic version; or by fraud, as the Syriac version, which translates it, bonds of fraud. The Targum is,

"loose the bonds of writings of a depraved judgment;"

all referring it to unjust bonds and contracts in a civil sense: but rather it regards the loosing or freeing men from all obligation to all human prescriptions and precepts; whatever is after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ; so the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees are called "heavy burdens, grievous to be borne", Mt 23:4 these should not be laid and bound on men's shoulders, but should be done and taken off of them, as well as all penal laws with which they have been enforced:

and to let the oppressed go free; such as have been broken by oppression, not only in their spirits, but in their purses, by mulcts and fines, and confiscation of goods; and who have been cast into prisons, and detained a long time in filthy dungeons; and where many have perished for the sake of religion, even in Protestant countries:

and that ye break every yoke; of church power and tyranny; everything that is not enjoined and authorized by the word of God; every yoke but the yoke of Christ; all human precepts, and obedience to them; all but the commands of Christ, and obedience to them; no other yoke should be put upon the neck of his disciples but his own.

Isaiah 58:7

Ver. 7. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry?.... Or "to break" {f} it, divide it, and communicate it to them; that which is "bread", food fit to eat, wholesome and nourishing; which is thine, and not another's; which thou hast saved by fasting, and therefore should not be laid up, but given away; and that not to the rich, who need it not, but to the hungry and necessitous: and this may be understood of spiritual bread, of imparting the Gospel to such who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, which to do is an acceptable service to God; and not to bind and oppress men's consciences with burdensome rites and ceremonies of men's own devising. These are husks, and not bread.

And that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house; poor ministers, cast out of the church, cast out of their livings, cast out of their houses, cast out of the land; and other Christian exiles for conscience sake; poor travellers and wanderers, as the Targum, obliged to flee from persecution into foreign countries, and wander about from place to place, having no certain dwelling place; these take into your house, and give them lodging: so some have entertained angels unawares, as Abraham and Lot, as indeed the faithful ministers of Christ are: or,

the poor rebels {g}; for the word has this signification; such who have been accused and attainted as rebels; who have been charged with being rebels to church and state, though the quiet in the land, and so have been forced to flee and hide themselves; do not be afraid to receive them into your houses, though under such an imputation:

when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; the naked Christian especially; not entirely so, but one that is thinly clothed, whose clothes are scarce anything but rags, not sufficient to keep him warm, or preserve him from the inclemencies of the weather; put a better garment upon him, to cover him with:

and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh; meaning not only those "near akin" {h}, though more especially them; but such as are in the same neighbourhood, of the same country; and indeed all men are of one blood, and so are the same flesh; and from persons in distress, and especially such as are of the household of faith, of the same religion, that support the same Protestant cause, though differing in some lesser matters, a man should not hide himself, or turn his eyes from, or refuse to relieve them, or treat them with disdain and contempt; see **Ga 6:10**.

{f} orp alh "nonne ut frangas?" Pagninus; "nonne frangere?" Montanus. {g} Mydwrm Myyne Heb. "rebellatos, expulsos tanquam rebelles", Piscator; "qui persecutionem patiuntur", Vitringa. {h} Krvbm "a cognatis tuis", Vatablus. So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 85. 1.

Isaiah 58:8

Ver. 8. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,.... Through thick clouds, or the darkness of the night, suddenly, swiftly, irresistibly, and increase more and more, till it is perfect day. This is to be understood best of temporal and spiritual prosperity, especially the latter, which will attend the churches of the Reformation, when a spirit of persecution is laid aside, and a spirit of love commences, which will be in the Philadelphian church state; and it particularly respects the glorious light of the Gospel, which will break forth very clearly, and shine out in all the world; and the light of joy, peace, and comfort, which will attend it, in the hearts of the Lord's people; see Isa 60:1:

and thine health shall spring forth speedily; as the herbs and grass out of the earth, by clear shining after rain; by which is meant the healthful and sound state of the church in the latter day, when all divisions shall be healed; contentions and animosities cease; sound doctrine preached; the ordinances administered according to their original institution; true discipline restored; and all the parts of worship performed, according to the rule of the divine word; and so the souls of men, under all these means, be in thriving and flourishing circumstances:

and thy righteousness shall go before thee; not the external righteousness of the saints, or works of righteousness done by them; these do not go before them, at least to prepare the way for them into a future state of happiness, but follow after, Re 14:13, rather the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and so theirs; or Christ their righteousness, the sun of righteousness, that arises upon them with healing in his wings, and from whom they have the health before mentioned; he goes before his people by way of example, as a guide to direct them, and as the forerunner of them, and whose righteousness will introduce them into the heavenly glory. Though perhaps the meaning here is, that their righteousness, in the latter day glory, shall be very manifest, both their righteousness before God, and before men; which will, as it were, visibly walk before them, make way for them, and protect them; see Isa 60:21,

and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward, the glorious power and providence of God, preserving his people; or the glorious Lord himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, the brightness of his Father's glory, he, as the word may be rendered, "shall gather thee" {i}; he gathers his people to himself; he protects and defends them; he takes care of the weak and feeble, and that are straggling behind; and he brings them up, being the reward, and saves them. The phrase denotes a glorious state of the church in the latter day, when the glory of the Lord will be risen on his church, and abide upon it, and upon all that glory there shall be a defence; see Isa 60:1.

{i} Kpoay "colliget te", V. L. Munster, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.

Isaiah 58:9

Ver. 9. Then shall thou call, and the Lord shall answer,.... A spirit of grace and supplication will be poured out upon the people of God; they will then pray without a form, and call upon the Lord in sincerity and truth, with faith and fervency; and the Lord will hear and answer them, and plentifully bestow his favours on them, so that they will have no reason to complain, as in Isa 58:3:

thou shalt cry, and he shall say, here I am; he will immediately appear to the help and relief of his people; they shall have his presence with them, to comfort and refresh them, to support and supply them, to protect and defend them:

if thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke; of human inventions, doctrines, rites and ceremonies, as in Isa 58:6: "the putting forth of the finger"; pointing at those that could not comply with them, by way of scorn and derision, as puritans, schismatics, &c. and persecuting them for it; and so is the same with smiting with the fist of wickedness, Isa 58:4; when this deriding and persecuting spirit is done away, then, and not till then, will the prayers of a people be heard, though under a profession of religion, and under the Protestant name: and speaking vanity; which also must be taken away, or desisted from; even speaking false doctrines, as the Syriac version; or which profits not, as the Vulgate Latin version; profane and vain babblings, **2Ti 2:14**, and threatening words, to such who will not receive them.

Isaiah 58:10

Ver. 10. And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry,.... Not only deal out thy bread, but thy soul also, to him; that is, give him food cheerfully, with a good will, expressing a hearty love and affection for him; do it heartily, as to the Lord; let thy soul go along with it; and this is true of affectionate ministers of the Gospel, who not only impart that, but their own souls also, **1Th 2:8**:

and satisfy the afflicted soul; distressed for want of food; not only give it food, but to the full; not only just enough to support life, but to satisfaction; or so as to be filled with good things, or however a sufficiency of them:

then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday; in the midst of darkness of affliction, or desertion, the light of prosperity and joy shall spring up, and a dark night of sorrow and distress become a clear day of peace and comfort; see Ps 112:4, at evening time it shall be light, Zec 14:7.

Isaiah 58:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord shall guide thee continually,.... With his counsel, by his word, and by his Spirit, and that night and day; as he guided the Israelites through the wilderness with the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night: or, "cause thee to rest" {k}; from adversity, from persecution; to have spiritual rest in Christ now, and eternal rest hereafter:

and satisfy thy soul in drought; or, "in drynesses" {l}; in an exceeding dry time; when in a dry and thirsty land; when thirsting after Christ and his grace, Christ and his righteousness; after more knowledge of him, communion with him, and conformity unto him; after the word and ordinances; after the presence of God in them; and after more spiritual light, knowledge, and experience:

and make fat thy bones; with the good report of the Gospel, Pr 15:30 that is, quicken, comfort, refresh, and strengthen the soul, and make it fat and flourishing in spiritual things, by means of Gospel ordinances. The Targum is,

"and shall quicken thy body with life everlasting;"

or give rest to thy bones, as others {m}:

and thou shalt be like a watered garden; like a "garden", the church of Christ is separated from others, by electing, redeeming, and efficacious grace; and like a "watered" one, watered by the Lord himself, and the dews of his grace, and by the ministry of the word; whereby the plants that are planted in it thrive and flourish, lift up their heads, shoot up and grow, and bring forth fruit:

and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not; as there is in every believer a well of living water springing up unto everlasting life, not of themselves, but from Christ, and which is very abundant, and never fails; so there is in the church a spring of the living waters of Gospel doctrines, and of Gospel ordinances; here runs the river of divine love, which makes glad the city of God; here Christ is the fountain of gardens; and here the Spirit and his graces are communicated; all which remain, and never fail; see Ps 87:7.

{k} Kxn "requiem tibi dabit", V. L. {l} twxuxub "in siccitatibus", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Vitringa; "in summa ariditate", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. Abendana observes, that some interpret the word in the sense of purity, and understand it of the delight of the soul, in the world of souls, where the Lord leads them continually, and satisfies them with pure light, which is the brightness of the Shechinah, or divine Majesty. {m} R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 55. 2.

Isaiah 58:12

Ver. 12. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places,.... As the cities in Israel and Judea, which had been long laid waste by the Assyrians and Chaldeans, were rebuilt by those of the Jewish nation, who returned from the captivity of Babylon, to which there is at least an allusion; and as the church of God, the tabernacle of David, which was fallen down, and had lain long in ruins, through corruptions in doctrine and worship, to the times of Christ, when the apostles, who were of the Jews, those wise masterbuilders, were instruments of raising it up again, and repairing its ruins: so, in the latter day, "the waste places of the world" {n}, as the words may be rendered, shall be built by a set of men, that shall be of the church of God, who shall be instruments in his hand of converting many souls, and so of peopling it with Christians; such places as before were desolate, where before there was no preaching of the word, no administration of ordinances, nor any Gospel churches:

thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; either such foundations as have been razed up, and lay so for ages past; or raise up such as shall continue for generations to come. It may allude to the raising the foundations of the city and temple of Jerusalem; but rather refers to the founding of churches in Gospel times, which, as it was done in the first times of it by the apostles in the Gentile world, so shall be again in the latter day, which will continue for many ages:

and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, and the restorer of paths to dwell in; that is, the church and her builders, that shall be of her, shall be so called; the Jews and Gentiles will be converted in great numbers, and coalesce in the same Gospel church state, and so the breach between them will be repaired. Christians of various denominations, who now break off and separate one from another, will be of the same sentiment and judgment in doctrine and discipline; they shall see eye to eye, and cement together, and all breaches will be made up, and there will be no schism in the body; and they shall dwell together in unity, and walk in the same paths of faith and duty, of truth and holiness; and such who will be the happy instruments of all this will have much honour, and be called by these names.

The Targum is,

"they shall call thee one that confirms the right way, and converts, the ungodly to the law."

{n} Mlwe twbrx "desolata seculi", Munster, Vatablus, Vitringa; "deserta seculi", Pagninus, Montanus.

Isaiah 58:13

Ver. 13. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath,.... From walking and working on that day; or withdrawest thy mind and affections from all worldly things; the affections being that to the mind as the feet are to the body, which carry it here and there. The time of worship, under the Gospel dispensation, is here expressed in Old Testament language, as the service of it usually is in prophetic writings; though its proper name is the Lord's day, **Re 1:10**, and is here instanced in, and put for all religious institutions and services to be attended unto, and which will be with greater strictness in the times referred to:

from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; that is, if thou turnest away, or dost abstain from doing thine own servile work, the business of thy calling; which may be agreeable for the sake of the profit of it; or from recreations and amusements, which may be lawfully indulged on another day:

and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of God, and honourable; take delight and pleasure in the service of it; in all the duties of religion, private and public, to be observed on that day; in reading and hearing the word, and meditation on it; in prayer, and in attendance on all ordinances; and reckon it as separated for holy use and employment, and on that account honourable; and so have it in high esteem, and desire the return of it, and not think the service of it long and tedious, when enjoyed, and wish it was over: or, "for the Holy One of God, and honourable"; that is, for the sake of Christ, the Holy One of God, in both his natures, and honourable in his person and office; accounting the sabbath a delight, in remembrance of the great work of redemption and salvation wrought out by him:

and shall honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; honour the Lord on that day, by not attending to any secular business, or walking abroad in the fields, to the neglect of private duties or public worship; by not seeking the gratification of the fleshly and sensual part, or indulging to those things which are agreeable to it; and by not speaking such words, or talking of such things, as relate to worldly affairs, or the things of civil life, but walking in the ways of the Lord, doing those things which are well pleasing in his sight, and conversing about spiritual and heavenly things; by such means God is honoured on his own day; and the reverse of this is a dishonouring him. The Jews {o} make this honour to lie chiefly in wearing other clothes on this day than on a weekday, and not walking as on other days, or talking as on them; yet they allow of thoughts, though not of words, about worldly things.

{o} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 113. 1, 2. & 119. 1. & 150. 1.

Isaiah 58:14

Ver. 14. Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord,.... In his perfections; in his omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, eternity, immutability, holiness, justice, truth, and faithfulness; in his wisdom, love, grace, and mercy, especially as displayed in Christ, and salvation by him; in the relations he stands in to his people, as their covenant God and Father, and in what he is to them, their shield and exceeding great reward, their portion and inheritance; in his works of creation, providence, and grace; in his word, the Gospel, the truths, doctrines, and promises of it; in his ways and worship: in his ordinances and commandments; in communion with him, and with his people; in all which, abundance of delight, pleasure, and satisfaction, is found by those who know him in Christ, have tasted that he is gracious; who have some likeness to him, love him, and are the objects of his love and delight:

and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth; to live above the world, and to have their conversation in heaven; to be in the utmost safety, and enjoy the greatest plenty, especially of spiritual things: or to be superior to the men of the world, even the highest of them; to have power and authority in the earth, as the saints will have in the latter day; particularly this will be true when the mountain of the Lord's house is established upon the top of the mountains, **Isa 2:2**:

and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: the Jewish writers inquire why Jacob is mentioned, and not Abraham nor Isaac; and answer, as in the Talmud {p}, not Abraham, of whom it is written, "arise, walk through the land in the length of it", &c. Ge 13:17, nor Isaac, of whom it is written, "for unto thee, and to thy seed, will I give all these countries", &c. Ge 26:3, but Jacob, of whom it is written, "and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south", &c. Ge 28:14 expressing the larger extent of the inheritance; so Jarchi and Samson account for it; but Kimchi gives a better reason, because the sons of Jacob, and not Ishmael the son of Abraham, nor Esau the son of Isaac, inherited the land of Canaan: but rather the reason is, because he is the father of all true Israelites, who are, as he was, wrestling and prevailing; these the Lord feeds with spiritual provisions here, and glory hereafter; which the good things of the land of Canaan, the inheritance of Jacob and his sons, were a type of: and perhaps this may have respect to the conversion of the Jews, when they shall return to their own land, and enjoy the good things of it, as well as all spiritual blessings:

for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it; who is faithful to his covenant, true to his word; cannot lie, will never deceive; performs whatsoever he has promised, being able to do it; and therefore it may be depended upon that all this shall be as he has said.

{p} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol 118. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 59:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 59

As the former chapter declares the hypocrisy and formality of professors of religion; this expresses the errors and heresies, immorality and profaneness, which shall prevail before the spiritual reign of Christ, or the latter day glory begins; which is so fully described in the next chapter. Reasons are given of God's withdrawing his presence from a professing people, which were not want of power and readiness in him, but their own sins and transgressions, Isa 59:1 which are enumerated, such as murder, rapine, lies, &c. Isa 59:3 for which the judgments of God were upon them, darkness, distress, and misery, of which they were sensible, Isa 59:9 and confess their sins and transgressions, Isa 59:12 and lament their wretched state and condition, which was displeasing to God, Isa 59:14 who is represented as appearing for their salvation; moved to it by their want of help, and the oppression of their enemies, in which he shows his power, justice, zeal, grace, and goodness, Isa 59:16 the consequence of which shall be the conversion and salvation of many, owing to the efficacy of the divine Spirit, and to the spiritual coming of the Redeemer, Isa 59:19, and the chapter is closed with a promise of the continuance of the Spirit of God, and the Gospel of Christ in his church, unto the end of the world, Isa 59:21.

Ver. 1. Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save,.... It is not for want of power in the Lord, that he has not as yet destroyed the enemies of his people, antichrist, and the antichristian states, and saved them out of their hands, and made them to triumph over them; or brought on the glorious state of the church, and fulfilled the promises of good things, suggested in the latter part of the preceding chapter. His hand is as long as ever, and as able to reach his and their enemies in the greatest height of power, or at the greatest distance, and to do every good thing for them; his power is as great as ever, and not in the least abridged or curtailed.

Neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: the prayers of his people, their cries unto him on their fast days, of which he seemed to take no notice, complained of Isa 58:3, this is not owing to any want of attention in him, or of readiness to hear prayer made unto him; for he is a God hearing and answering prayer, and is ready to help his people in every time of need, who apply to him in a proper and suitable manner; his eyes are upon them, and his ears are open to their cries. And this is introduced with a "behold", as requiring attention, and deserving the notice and consideration of his people. The Targum is,

"behold, not through defect of hand (or power) from the Lord ye are not saved; nor because it is heavy to him to hear, that your prayer is not received."

Isaiah 59:2

Ver. 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God,.... Like a partition wall dividing between them, so that they enjoy no communion with him in his worship and ordinances; which is greatly the case of the reformed churches: they profess the true God, and the worship of him, and do attend the outward ordinances of it; but this is done in such a cold formal way, and such sins and wickedness are perpetrated and connived at, that the Lord does not grant his gracious presence to them, but stands at a distance from them:

and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear; or have caused him to hide himself; withdraw his gracious presence; neglect the prayers put up to him; deny an answer to them; or, however, not appear as yet for the deliverance and salvation of them, and bringing them into a more comfortable, prosperous, and happy condition.

Isaiah 59:3

Ver. 3. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity,.... From a general charge, the prophet proceeds to a particular enumeration of sins they were guilty of; and idolatry not being mentioned, as Jerom observes, shows that the prophecy belongs to other times than Isaiah's, when that sin greatly prevailed. He begins the account with the sin of shedding blood; the blood of innocents, as the Targum; designing either the sin of murder, now frequently committed in Christian nations; or wars between Christian princes, by means of which much blood is shed; or persecutions of Christian brethren, by casting them into prisons, which have issued in their death; and at least want of brotherly love, or, the hatred of brethren, which is called murder, **1Jo 3:15** a prevailing sin in the present Sardian state; and which will not be removed till the spiritual reign or Philadelphian state takes place: and this sin is of a defiling nature; it "defiles" the "hands" or actions; and without love all works signify nothing,
1Co 13:1: yea, even their "fingers" are said to be defiled "with iniquity"; meaning either their lesser actions; or rather those more curiously and nicely performed, and seemingly more agreeable to the divine will; and yet defiled with some sin or other, as hypocrisy, vain glory, or the like: or it may be this may design the same as putting forth the fingers, and smiting with the fist, Isa 58:4, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; and so may have respect to some sort of persecution of their brethren for conscience sake, as there.

Your lips have spoken lies: or "falsehood" {q}; that is, false doctrines, so called because contrary to the word of truth, and which deceive men:

your tongue hath muttered perverseness: that which is a perversion of the Gospel of Christ, and of the souls of men; what is contrary to the sacred Scriptures, the standard of faith and practice, and that premeditated, as the word {r} signifies; done with design, and on purpose: the abounding of errors and heresies in the present day, openly taught and divulged, to the ruin of souls, seems here to be pointed at. In the Talmud {s} these are explained of the several sorts of men in a court of judicature; the "hands" of the judges; the "fingers" of, the Scribes; the "lips" of advocates and solicitors; and the "tongue" of adversaries, or the contending parties.

{q} rqv "falsitatem", Montanus, Cocceius; "falsum", Junius & Tremeliius, Piscator. {r} hght, meleta, Sept.; "meditabitur", Montanus; "meditatur", Piscator; "meditatam effert", Junius & Tremellius. {s} T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 139. 1.

Isaiah 59:4

Ver. 4. None calleth for justice,.... Or, "righteousness"; not for civil justice in courts of judicature, as if there were no advocates for it there; or that put those in mind of it, to whom the administration of it belongs; or that see to put the laws against sin in execution, and to relieve those that are oppressed; though of this there may be just cause of complaint in some places: but there are none or few that call for evangelical righteousness, either that preach it, proclaim and publish it to others; even the righteousness of Christ, the grand doctrine of the Gospel, which is therein revealed from faith to faith; so the Syriac version, "there is none that preacheth righteously"; or "in", or "of righteousness" {t}; and the Septuagint version, "no one speaks righteous things"; the words and doctrines of righteousness and truth: or, "no one calls for righteousness"; desires to hear this doctrine, and have it preached to him; hungers and thirsts after it; but chooses the doctrine of justification by works. The Targum refers it to prayer, paraphrasing it thus,

"there is none that prays in truth;"

in sincerity and uprightness, in faith and with fervour; but in a cold, formal, and hypocritical way:

nor any pleadeth for truth: for the truth of the Gospel, particularly for the principal one, the justification of a sinner by the righteousness of Christ alone; few or none contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; they are not valiant for the truth, nor stand fast in it, but drop or conceal it, or deny it: or, "none is judged by", or "according to truth" {u}; by the Scriptures of truth, but by carnal reason; or by forms and rules of man's devising, and so are condemned; as Gospel ministers and professors of it are:

they trust in vanity; in nothing, as the Vulgate Latin; that is worth nothing; in their own strength, wisdom, riches, righteousness, especially the latter:

and speak lies; or "vanity"; vain things, false doctrines, as before:

they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity; they "conceive" and contrive "mischief" in their minds against those that differ in doctrine and practice from them: "and bring forth iniquity": do that which is criminal and sinful, by words and actions, by calumnies and reproaches, by violence and persecution. The Targum is,

"they hasten and bring out of their hearts words of violence."

{t} qdub "in justitia", Montanus, Tigurine version; "sive de justitia". {u} hnwmab jpvn Nya "nemo judicatur scundum veritatem", Munster; "non judicatur in veritate", Montanus.

Isaiah 59:5

Ver. 5. They hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spider's web,.... Invent false doctrines according to their own fancies, which may seem fair and plausible, but are poisonous and pernicious; as the "eggs [of the] cockatrice", which may look like, and may be taken for, the eggs of creatures fit to eat; and spin out of their brains a fine scheme of things, but which are as thin, and as useless, and unprofitable, as "the spider's web"; and serve only to ensnare and entangle the minds of men, and will not stand before the word of God which sweeps them away at once; particularly of this kind is the doctrine of justification by the works of men, which are like the spider's web, spun out of its own bowels; so these are from themselves, as the doctrine of them is a device of man, and is not of God:

he that eateth of their eggs dieth: as a man that eats of cockatrice eggs dies immediately, being rank poison; so he that approves of false doctrines, receives them, and feeds upon them, dies spiritually and eternally; these are damnable doctrines, which bring upon men swift destruction; they are poisonous, and eat as do a canker, and destroy the souls of men:

and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper; or "cockatrice"; so Kimchi and Ben Melech take it to be the same creature as before, which goes by different names; and the words seem to require this sense; however, it cannot be the creature we call the viper, since that is not oviparous, but viviparous, lays not eggs, but brings forth its young; though both Aristotle {w} and Pliny {x}, at the same time they say it is viviparous, yet observe that it breeds eggs within itself, which are of one colour, and soft like fishes. The Targum renders it "flying serpents": the sense is, that if a man is cautious, and does not eat of the cockatrice eggs, but sets his foot on them, and crushes them, out comes the venomous creature, and he is in danger of being hurt by it; so a man that does not embrace false doctrines, and escapes eternal death by them, but tramples upon them, opposes them, and endeavours to crush and destroy them, yet he is exposed to and brings upon himself calumnies, reproach, and persecution.

{w} Hist. Animal. l. 5. c. 34. {x} Nat. Hist. I. 10. c. 62.

Isaiah 59:6

Ver. 6. Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works,.... As spiders' webs are not fit to make garments of, are too thin to cover naked bodies, or shelter from bad weather, or injuries from different causes; so neither the false doctrines of men will be of any use to themselves, or to others that receive them; particularly the doctrine of justification by works: these are not proper garments to cover the nakedness of a sinner from the sight of God, or screen him from avenging justice; but his hope which is placed on them will be cut off, and his trust in them will be a spider's web, of no avail to him, **Job 8:14**:

their works are works of iniquity: both of preacher and hearer; even their best works are sinful; not only as being imperfect, and having a mixture of sin in them, and so filthy rags, and insufficient to justify them before God; but because done from wrong principles, and with wrong views, and tending to set aside the justifying righteousness of Christ, and God's way of justifying sinners by it, which is abominable to him:

and the act of violence is in their hands; they persecuting such that preach and profess the contrary doctrine.

Isaiah 59:7

Ver. 7. Their feet run to evil,.... Make haste to commit all manner of sin, and particularly that which follows, with great eagerness and swiftness, taking delight and pleasure therein, and continuing in it; it is their course of life. The words seem to be taken out of **Pr 1:16** and are quoted with the following by the Apostle Paul, **Ro 3:15** to prove the general corruption of mankind:

and they make haste to shed innocent blood: in wars abroad or at home, in quarrels and riots, or through the heat of persecution; which if it does not directly touch men's lives, yet issues in the death of many that fall under the power of it; and which persecutors are very eager and hasty in the prosecution of. The phrase fitly describes their temper and conduct:

their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity: their thoughts are continually devising things vain and sinful in themselves, unprofitable to them, and pernicious to others: their thoughts, words, and actions being evil; their tongue, lips, hands, and feet being employed in sin, show their general depravity:

wasting and destruction are in their paths: they waste and destroy all they meet with in their ways, their fellow creatures and their substance; and the ways they walk in lead to ruin and destruction, which will be their portion for evermore.

Isaiah 59:8

Ver. 8. The way of peace they know not,.... Neither the way of peace with God, supposing it is to be made by man, and not by Christ; and are ignorant of the steps and methods taken to procure it; nor do they know the way of peace of conscience, or how to attain to that which is true and solid; nor the way to eternal peace and happiness, which is alone by Christ, and the Gospel of peace reveals, to which they are strangers; nor the way of peace among men, which they are unconcerned about, and do not seek after, make use of no methods to promote, secure, and establish it; but all the reverse:

and there is no judgment in their goings; no justice in their actions, in their dealings with men; no judgment in their religious duties, which are done without any regard to the divine rule, or without being able to give a reason for them; they have no judgment in matters of doctrine or worship; they have no discerning of true and false doctrines, and between that which is spiritual and superstitious in worship; they have no knowledge of the word of God, which should be their guide both in faith and practice; but this they do not attend unto:

they have made them crooked paths: they have devised paths and modes of worship of their own, in which they walk, and which they observe, that are not according to the rule of the word; but deviate from it; and so may be said to be crooked, as not agreeable to that:

whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace; the way of peace with God, as before; or he shall not have any experience of true, solid, and substantial peace in his own conscience now, and shall not attain to eternal peace hereafter.

Isaiah 59:9

Ver. 9. Therefore is judgment far from us,.... These are the words of the few godly persons in those times, taking notice of prevailing sins, confessing and lamenting them, and observing that these were the source of their calamities under which they groaned; "therefore", because of the above mentioned sins, and in just retaliation, no justice or judgment being among men; therefore, in great righteousness "judgment is far from us"; or God does not appear to right our wrongs, and avenge us of our enemies, but suffers them to afflict and distress us:

neither doth justice overtake us; the righteousness of God inflicting vengeance on our enemies, and saving and protecting us; this does not come up with us, nor do we enjoy the benefit of it, but walk on without it unprotected, and exposed to the insults of men:

we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness; or "for brightnesses" {y}; for much clear light; but

we walk in mists {z}; in thick fogs, and have scarce any light at all. The meaning is, they waited for deliverance and salvation; but instead of that had the darkness of affliction and distress; or they were expecting latter day light and glory, the clear and bright shining of Gospel truths; but, instead of that, were surrounded with the darkness of ignorance and infidelity, superstition and will worship, and walked in the mists and fogs of error and heresy of all sorts: this seems to respect the same time as in Zec 14:6.

{y} twhgnl "in splendores", Pagninus, Montanus; "magnum splendorem", Vitringa. {z} twlpab "in ealiginibus", Montanus, Cocceius; "in summa caligine", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "in densa caligine", Vitringa.

Isaiah 59:10

Ver. 10. We grope for the wall like the blind,.... Who either with their hands, or with a staff in them, feel for the wall to lean against, or to guide them in the way, or into the house, that they may know whereabout they are, and how they should steer their course:

and we grope as if we had no eyes: which yet they had, the eyes of their reason and understanding; but which either were not opened, or they made no use of them in searching the Scriptures, to come at the light and knowledge of divine things; and therefore only at most groped after them by the dim light of nature, if thereby they might find them. This is to be understood not of them all, but of many, and of the greatest part:

we stumble at noonday as in the night; as many persons do now: for though it is noonday in some respects, and in some places, where the Gospel and the truths of it are clearly preached; yet men stumble and fall into the greatest errors, as in the night of the greatest darkness; as if it was either the night of Paganism or Popery with them:

we are in desolate places as dead men; or "in fatnesses" {a}; in fat places where the word and ordinances are administered, where is plenty of the means of grace, yet not quickened thereby; are as dead men, dead in trespasses and sin, and at most have only a name to live, but are dead. Some render it, "in the graves" {b}; and the Targum thus,

"it is shut before us, as the graves are shut before the dead;"

we have no more light, joy, and comfort, than those in the graves have.

{a} Mynmvab "in rebus pinguissimis", Junius & Tremellius; "in pinguetudinibus", Piscator; "in opimis rebus", Vitringa. {b} "In sepulchris", Pagninus; and so Ben Melech interprets it.

Isaiah 59:11

Ver. 11. We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves,.... Some in a more noisy and clamorous, others in a stiller way, yet all in private: for the bear, when robbed of its whelps, goes to its den and roars; and the dove, when it has lost its mate, mourns in solitude: this expresses the secret groanings of the saints under a sense of sin, and the forlorn state of religion. The Targum paraphrases it thus,

"we roar because of our enemies, who are gathered against us as bears; all of us indeed mourn sore as doves:"

we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us; we expect that God will take vengeance on our enemies, and save us; look for judgment on antichrist, and the antichristian states, and for the salvation of the church of God; for the vials of divine wrath on the one, and for happy times to the other; but neither of them as yet come; the reason of which is as follows.

Isaiah 59:12

Ver. 12. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee,.... Not only an increase of immorality among the people in common, but among professors of religion; and as their transgressions are committed against the Lord, so they are in his sight taken notice of and observed by him, are loathsome and abominable to him, and call aloud for his judgments on them:

and our sins testify against us; God is a witness against us, in whose sight our sins are done; and our consciences are witnesses against us, which are as a thousand witnesses; and there is no denying facts; our sins stare us in the face, and we must confess our guilt: or, "our sins answer against us" {c}; as witnesses called and examined answer to the questions put, so our sins, being brought as it were into open court, answer and bear testimony against us; or it must be owned, our punishment for our sins answers to them; it is the echo of our sins, what they call for, and righteously comes upon us:

for our transgressions are with us; or, "on us" {d}; in our minds, on our consciences, loading us with guilt; continually accusing and condemning us; are manifest to us, as the Targum; too manifest to be denied:

and as for our iniquities, we know them; the nature and number of them, and the aggravating circumstances that attend them; and cannot but own and acknowledge them, confess, lament, and bewail them; an enumeration of which follows.

{c} wnb htne wnytajx "peccata nostra respondit contra nos", Montanus; "id ipsum respondit contra nos", Cocceius; "even everyone of them", so Junius & Tremellius; "peccatorum nostrorum quodque", sic {d} wnta "super nos", Munster.

Isaiah 59:13

Ver. 13. In transgressing and lying against the Lord,.... The word of the Lord, as the Targum; they transgress the doctrine of Christ, as well as the law of God, and deny him the only Lord God, even our Lord Jesus Christ, his proper deity, his righteousness, and satisfaction, which is notorious in our days; so the Syriac version renders it,

we have denied the Lord; the Lord that bought them: this is the case of many under a profession of Christ:

and departing away from our God: from following him, from walking in his ways, from attending his worship, word, and ordinances; so the Targum,

"from the worship of our God;"

from Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature; from him the living God, as every degree of unbelief is a departing from him; and especially he is departed from when his divine Person is denied; when neglected as the Saviour; his Gospel corrupted; his ordinances perverted, and his worship, or the assembly of the saints, forsaken:

speaking oppression and revolt: such who are in public office, speakers in the church of God; these speak what is oppressive and burdensome to the minds and consciences of those who are truly gracious; make their hearts sad, whom God would not have made sad, by their false doctrines; and which have a tendency to cause men to revolt from the Lord, and turn their backs on him: or "speak calumny and defection" {e}, as some render it; calumniate, reproach, and revile the few faithful ones, and draw off many from the truths of the Gospel, and a profession of them. The Targum renders it, "falsehood and apostasy"; false doctrine, which leads to apostasy from Christ; with which the next clause agrees:

conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood; false doctrines;

such as agree not with, but are contrary to, the word of God; these are of their own conceiving and contriving; the produce of their own brains; the fruit of their own fancy and imaginations; and which, out of the abundance of their hearts, they utter, even premeditated falsehoods, studied lies, as in Isa 59:3, See Gill on "Isa 59:3".

{e} hrow qvwe "calumniam et perversitatem", Pagninus; "calumniam et defectionem", Montanus; "calumniam et transgressionem", V. L.

Isaiah 59:14

Ver. 14. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off,.... Jarchi interprets this of the vengeance of God, and his righteousness in his judgments, not immediately executed; but it is to be understood of the want of judgment and justice being done among men; and therefore are represented as persons turned back, and standing afar off, rejected, neglected, and discouraged. The Targum renders it,

"they that do judgment are turned back, and they that do justice stand afar off;"

having none to take their parts, but everyone opposing them: this may respect both the want of judgment and justice in courts of judicature; no regard being had to right and wrong; no true judgment being given, or justice done, in any cause; but both banished from the bench: and also in the churches of Christ, or, however, under a profession of his name, where there is no judgment in doctrines, or discerning between truth and error; and no justice inflicted on delinquents according to the rules of Christ; no order nor discipline observed in his house; these are dismissed and discarded:

for truth is fallen in the street; where it used to be preached, exalted, established, and confirmed; but now thrown down and trampled upon, and few or none to help it up, and stand by it; and though it may have some secret well wishers, yet very few, if any, public advocates for it:

and equity cannot enter; either into civil courts, or Christian congregations; the doing of that which is just and right between man and man in things civil; and between Christian and Christian in things religious; or that which is right according to the word of God; can find no place, or cannot be admitted into assemblies that are called by his name. The Targum is, "they that do truth stumble in the street; and they that exercise faith cannot be made manifest;"

such as are on the side of truth, in the service of it, cannot stand their ground through the violence of their opposers; and those that are faithful, and abide by the doctrine of faith, are forced to hide themselves, and cannot appear in the vindication of it.

Isaiah 59:15

Ver. 15. Yea, truth faileth,.... Or, "is deprived" {f}; of its life and being; it not only falls in the street, and there lies, without any to show regard unto it; but it fails; it seems as if it had given up the ghost and expired; so very prevalent will error be, before light and truth spring up again and be victorious, as they will:

and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey; he that does not give in to the prevailing vices of the age in which he lives, now become fashionable, but abstains from them, and departs from doctrinal as well as practical evils; from all false doctrines, and from all superstitious modes of worship; becomes a prey to others; a reproach and a laughing stock to them; they scoff at him, and deride him for his preciseness in religion; for his enthusiastic and irrational notions in doctrine; and for his stiffness in matters of worship: or, "he makes himself reckoned a madman" {g}; as some render it; and this is a common notion with profane men, and loose professors, to reckon such as madmen that are upright in doctrine, worship, and conversation; see Ac 26:24:

and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment; he took notice of all this, and resented it, though in a professing people, that there was no judgment or discretion in matters of doctrine and worship; no order or discipline observed; no justice done in civil courts, or in the church of God; no reformation in church or state.

{f} trden "privata"; so rdeh "privatio", often with the Rubbins. {g} llwtvm "facit ut insanus habeatur", Junius & Tremellius; "habitus est pro insano", Vitringa; so Abendana, "he that fears God, and departs from evil", hjwvl whwbvxy, "they reckon him a fool or a madman."

Isaiah 59:16

Ver. 16. And he saw that there was no man,.... Whose works are good, as the Targum adds; no good man, or faithful and righteous one, that had any regard to truth and justice; that was an advocate for truth, and opposed error, and set on foot a reformation; or was concerned for any of these things, and mourned over the general corruption; not that it must be thought there was not one individual person, but very few, comparatively none; since mention is made before of some that departed from evil, and made themselves a prey:

and wondered that there was no intercessor; to stand up, and pray for them, as the Targum; so it seems a spirit of prayer and supplication will be greatly wanting in the times of latter day darkness, and before latter day glory breaks out: or, "that there was no interposer" {h}; none to appear on the side of truth and justice, and on the behalf of those that become a prey to others. "Wonder" is here ascribed to God by an anthropopathy, after the manner of men, as being a marvellous and surprising thing, and almost incredible, that none could be found in so good a cause, and taking the part of injured truth and righteousness; and it expresses the general corruption and defect of religion in those times; and shows that it is not for the goodness of men, or their merits, that the Lord will do what is next said he did:

therefore his arm brought salvation to him; either to himself, and which redounded to his own honour and glory; or to his people, those that became a prey to their enemies; these he rescued out of their hands, and by his own arm of power saved them; or he himself alone wrought out salvation for them, and delivered them from the insults, reproach, and persecution of men, under whatsoever name; so when antichrist, and antichristianism in every form, shall be destroyed, salvation will be ascribed to God alone, Re 19:1:

and his righteousness, it sustained him; his righteousness, in taking vengeance on his and his people's enemies; and his faithfulness, in the performance of his promises, will support him in, and carry him through, his work, though attended with difficulties that may seem insuperable to men: this may be understood of Christ, as well as what follows. The Jews {i} interpret this of the Messiah, who should come in an age in which are none but wicked men, as is here said.

{h} eygpm Nya "nullum interventorem", Junius & Tremellius. {i} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1.

Isaiah 59:17

Ver. 17. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate,.... Here the Lord is represented as a warrior clothed with armour, and as Christ is, and as he will appear in the latter day on the behalf of his people, and against their enemies, who is called faithful and true, and in righteousness will make war, Re 19:11, he will proceed according to justice and equity in righting the wrongs and avenging the injuries of his people; and both in saving them, and destroying their enemies, he will secure the honour of his faithfulness and justice, and the credit of his name and character; which will be preserved by his conduct, as the breast and inward parts are by the breastplate:

and an helmet of salvation upon his head; the salvation he will work out for his people will be very conspicuous; it will be seen by all, as the helmet on the head; and he will have the glory of it, on whose head are many crowns, Re 19:12. The apostle has borrowed these phrases from hence, and applied them to the Christian armour, **Eph 6:14**:

and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing; or, "he clothed himself with vengeance as a garment" {k}; he wrapped himself in it, and resolved to execute it on his and his people's enemies; the time being come to avenge the blood of his servants, by shedding the blood of their adversaries, with which his garments will be stained; and therefore is represented as having on a vesture dipped in blood,
Re 19:13:

and was clad with zeal as a cloak; with zeal for his own glory, and the interest of his people, and against antichrist, and all antichristian worship and doctrine; and therefore his eyes are said to be as a flame of fire, Re 19:12.

{k} Mqn ydgb vblyw "et ultionem induit tanquam vestem", Tigurine version.

Isaiah 59:18

Ver. 18. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay,.... As the enemies of his people have treated them, so will the Lord deal with them; as they have shed their blood, he will, according to the laws of retribution and retaliation, give them blood to drink, as they deserve. The whore of Rome shall be rewarded as the followers of Christ have been rewarded by her, and double shall be rendered to her double, according to her works, Re 16:6:

fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies: the church's adversaries and enemies are Christ's, and so he esteems them; and therefore his wrath and fury is poured out by way of recompence to them, for all the ill they have done them, even the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath, Re 16:19:

to the islands he will repay recompence; even to those who dwell in the more distant and remote parts of the antichristian jurisdiction; for when the cup of wrath shall be given to Babylon every island will flee away, Re 16:20.

Isaiah 59:19

Ver. 19. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun,.... The eastern and western antichrist being destroyed, way shall be made for the spread of the Gospel east and west; which shall be everywhere embraced, and the true worship of God set up; and the glorious name of the Lord, or the Lord who is glorious in his name, nature, perfections, and works, shall be feared and served from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, or by all nations under the heavens; see **Mal 1:11** and even those that are left in the antichristian states, and escape the general ruin, shall be frightened at his judgments, fear his great and awful name, and give glory to the God of heaven, Re 11:13

when the enemy shall come in like a flood; when Satan, the common "enemy" of mankind, the avowed and implacable enemy of Christ and his people, "shall come" into the world, and into the church, as he will in the latter day; and has already entered "like" an impetuous flood, threatening to carry all before him, introducing a flood of immorality and profaneness, as in the days of Noah and Lot, to which the times of the Son of Man's coming are likened, Lu 17:26 or else a flood of error and heresy of all sorts; see Re 12:15 and likewise a flood of persecution, as will be at the slaying of the witnesses, that hour of temptation that will come upon all the earth, to try the inhabitants of it, **Re 3:10**. Aben Ezra compares this passage with, and illustrates it by, that time of trouble which will be, such as never was since there was a nation, Da 12:1 when this will be the case, which seems to be near at hand:

the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him; Christ and his

Gospel, or Christ the standard lifted up in the ministry of the Gospel, Isa 11:10 a set of ministers shall be raised up, having the everlasting Gospel, which they shall publish to all nations, and which shall have an universal spread; and by means of which the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; and which will be a sufficient check to the enemy's flood of immorality, error, and persecution; and which, after this, shall be no more; see Re 14:6. Some render the words, "when he", the glorious name of the Lord, or he who is the glory of the Lord, the brightness of his glory;

shall come like a narrow flood, that flows with great swiftness and force, and carries all before it;

the Spirit of the Lord lifting him up for a standard {l}, that is, in the ministry of the word; "so shall they fear", &c.; then multitudes shall serve the Lord, and worship him. The Targum is,

"they that afflict shall be as the overflowing of the river Euphrates; by the word of the Lord shall they be broken;"

and Vitringa thinks there is an allusion to the river Euphrates; interpreting the enemy of the Ottoman Turks, Tartars, and Scythians, stirred up by Satan to distress the church: all this may be applied to the case of particular believers under the assaults of Satan their grand enemy; who seeks all occasions to disturb their peace and destroy their comfort, though he cannot ruin their souls; he comes in, not only into their houses where they dwell, and gives them disturbance there; and into the house of God where they worship, and does all he can to hinder them in attending on the word and ordinances, and to prevent all usefulness, edification, and comfort thereby; but he enters into their hearts, and stirs up the corruptions of their nature, and causes these to rise like a flood, which threaten with bringing them into captivity to the law of sin and death; and attacks them with violent temptations, suggesting that they are not the people of God, the redeemed of the Lamb, or regenerated by the Spirit, but are hypocrites, and never had the work of grace on their hearts; aggravating their sins, and telling them they have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, and there is no pardon for them; and at other times filling their minds with blasphemous and atheistical thoughts; all which come upon them sometimes with so much force, that it is like an overflowing flood that threatens with utter destruction; when the Spirit of the Lord within them, who is greater than he that is in the world, lifts up Christ as an ensign or standard to them; and directs them to his blood for peace and pardon, for the cleansing of their souls and the atonement of their sins; where they may see and read, in legible characters, the free and full remission of their sins, and an entire satisfaction to the justice of God for them; and he holds up and holds out the righteousness of Christ unto them, with which God is well pleased, his justice satisfied, and his law made honourable; and by which they are justified from all things, and secured from all charges and condemnation; and who also leads them to the person, power, and grace of Christ, to preserve them in grace to glory, to keep them from falling, and present them faultless before the throne of God; the consequence of which is a check to Satan's temptations; an antidote to the doubts and fears he injects; and an abundance of spiritual peace and comfort; as well as it engages to fear the Lord and his goodness.

{l} wb hoon hwhy xwr ru rhnk aby yk "etenim veniet (sub. [Dominus] vel [nomen Domini]) instar fluminis angusti, spiritu Domini levante ipsum pro vexillo", Bootius, Animadv. I. 1. c. 1. p. 68.

Isaiah 59:20

Ver. 20. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion,.... Not Cyrus, as some; but the Messiah, as it is applied in the Talmud {m} and in other Jewish writers {n}, and as Aben Ezra rightly interprets it; and so Kimchi, who also understands by the enemy, in the preceding verse, Gog and Magog; and this must be understood not of the first coming of Christ to redeem his people by his blood from sin, Satan, and the law; but of his spiritual coming to Zion to the church of God in the latter day, at the time of the conversion of the Jews, as appears from the quotation, and application of it by the apostle, Ro 11:25 and with it compare Re 14:1:

and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord; that is, to such among the Jews, the posterity of Jacob, who repent of their sins, and turn from them; and particularly their sin of the rejection of the Messiah, and the disbelief of him, and turn to him, and believe in him as their Saviour and King. The Targum is,

"and the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to turn the transgressors of the house of Jacob to the law;"

but rather the turn will be to the Gospel of Christ.

{m} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. l. & Yoma, fol. 86. 2. {n} Echa Rabbati, fol.

47. 2.

Isaiah 59:21

Ver. 21. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord,.... Which shall be manifested and made good to them that repent of their sins, and, believe in Christ; and to whom the particular blessing of it shall be applied, the forgiveness of their sins; see Ro 11:27:

my Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth; the Spirit of God, with his gifts and graces, which were upon Christ the Redeemer without measure; and the doctrines he received from his divine Father to teach others, and which he gave to his apostles; the same Spirit which in measure was put upon them, and the same truths which were delivered to them:

shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever; that is, shall always continue with the church and her spiritual seed, such as are born in her, and brought up by her, throughout all successive ages, and to the end of time; and it may be observed, that after the conversion of the Jews, to which this prophecy has a special regard, they shall no more apostatize; the Spirit of the Lord shall not depart from them; and the Gospel shall always be professed by them: and it may be further observed, that the Spirit and the word go together; and that the latter is only effectual as accompanied will, the former, and is a proof of the perseverance of the church of God, and of all such who have the Spirit and grace of God, Christ will always have a church, and that church a seed, in which the Spirit and word will always remain. The grace of the Spirit, in the hearts of God's people, never removes from them; nor his Gospel from such, in whose hearts it works effectually. The Targum interprets this of the words of prophecy; and the Talmud {o} of the law not departing from the disciples of wise men; but it is best to understand it of the Gospel not departing from the disciples of Christ, and the seed of the church.

{o} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 85. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 60:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 60.

As, in the two preceding chapters, the hypocrisy and formality, the profaneness and immorality, that should abound in the latter day, and even among professors of religion, are prophesied of; so, in this, a very ample account is given of latter daylight and glory; of both the spiritual and personal reign of Christ, with the latter of which it concludes. The light and glory of the church, in the spiritual reign, are described, Isa 60:1 the numerous conversions of persons to it from all quarters, east and west particularly, are prophesied of, Isa 60:4, the great usefulness those should be of unto it, in enriching it, and building it up, and in glorifying it, is declared,
Isa 60:9, as also the subjection of enemies to it; the favours it should receive from kings, and the fame and renown of it through all nations and ages, Isa 60:14, its riches, prosperity, peace, and safety, Isa 60:17 and the chapter is concluded with an account of the more perfect state of the church in the personal reign of Christ, when there will be a perfection of light and righteousness; and the number of God's elect will be complete, and they will be all together, Isa 60:19.

Ver. 1. Arise, shine,.... The Targum adds, "O Jerusalem"; and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; and no doubt but the church of God is here addressed: and by what follows it seems to be the Jewish church, as distinct from the Gentiles, since they are said to come to it, the Jews, now converted, and brought into a church state; and who are called upon to arise out of their low dejected state and condition, in which they have long lain, and "shine": or to "awake", as some {p} render it, out of that sleep and lethargy they have been so long in, and to shine forth in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty: or to be "enlightened" {q}; with the light of Christ and of the Gospel, now come unto them; and to diffuse this light to others, to hold it forth in profession and conversation; see **Mt 5:16**

for thy light is come: the Targum,

"for the time of thy redemption is come;"

meaning from the Babylonish captivity, which that paraphrase refers to: but this is not intended here, but the spiritual prosperity and happiness of the Jews in the latter day, at the time of their conversion; and the sense is, either that Christ, the Light of the world, was come unto them in a spiritual way; or that the glorious light of the Gospel of Christ was come unto them, and shone upon them; or the time was come that the blindness that had been so long upon them should be taken oft, and the veil be taken away they had been so long covered with, and they be turned to the Lord, the fulness of the Gentiles now being about to be brought in; see Ro 11:25:

and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee; or the glorious Lord; he, whose glory is to be seen, as the glory of the only begotten, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, the sun of righteousness; who shall now, rise upon these, and, leave a glory upon them that shall be visible.

{p} yrwa "expergiscere", Grotius. {q} yrwa "illuminare", Pagninus, Montanus Piscator.

Isaiah 60:2

Ver. 2. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people,.... Like that which covered the land of Egypt, when there was light in Goshen: and this may be meant either of the darkness of ignorance, idolatry, superstition, false doctrine, and false worship, that should cover the far greater part of the nations of the world, before this light and glory should break out, as it does at this day; some parts of it being covered with Pagan darkness, others with Mahometan darkness, and others with Papal darkness; and a very small spot it is where the light of the Gospel is, and that clear, but among a very few; for the most part it is not clear nor dark, it is not day nor night; and this is the evening time, in which, ere long, it shall be light; see Zec 14:6 or else this may design the distress that the antichristian states will be in, when this light shall break forth; the kingdom of the beast will be full of darkness, distress, and confusion, Re 16:10:

but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee: as on the tabernacle of old, **Le 9:23** to which the allusion is, **Isa 4:5** this shows that the light and glory of the Lord, in the preceding verse, design the Lord himself, and his gracious purpose, and the display of his glory in the Gospel now preached; and that it will be visible in the church, and taken notice of by others, and induce them, and even great personages, to come unto it, as follows: or "he shall be seen", or "appear", in "his glory upon thee"; so Ben Melech renders it, supposing that b "in", is wanting; and so the sense is, that Christ shall appear in the glory of his person and of his offices, and especially his kingly office; and in the glory of his grace and righteousness, in the ministration of his word among his people. The Jews {r} apply this to the first coming of Christ, which belongs to his spiritual reign.

{r} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1.

Isaiah 60:3

Ver. 3. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light,.... To the Gospel, preached in the midst of her; and to Christ, who is her light and into her church state, and partake of the prosperity and happiness of it. The Targum is,

"and nations shall walk in thy light;"

and so in Re 21:24, where it is interpreted of the nations of them that are saved, truly regenerated and converted persons:

and kings to the brightness of thy rising; Christ, the sun of righteousness, will rise upon her; and this being the morning of the latter day glory, the church will rise as a bright morning star; and such be the evidence and lustre of Gospel truths and ordinances, that kings shall he enlightened by them, and come and join themselves unto her, and walk with her in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. Some of this high rank and dignity have been called, and but a few; but in those times the instances will be many, even all kings shall serve and worship the Lord, Ps 72:11.

Isaiah 60:4

Ver. 4. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see,.... The Gentiles and kings coming to Christ and his church; the vast number of converts flocking from all parts of the world to join themselves to the church of Christ, and to behold the wonderful work of God among the Jews now converted. The Targum is,

"lift up thine eyes O Jerusalem, round about, and see all the children of the people of thy captivity:"

all they gather themselves, and come to thee: this seems to have respect not to the Gentiles, as before; but to the Jews themselves, who are scattered up and

down in the world; but now, being in a wonderful manner converted, shall gather together in a body, and go up to Jerusalem, where a Christian church of them will be formed, and to which they will join themselves; or this may respect the kings,
Isa 60:2:

thy sons shall come from far; such as are of the seed of Abraham, children of the Jews, and now born again, and so Zion's sons; these shall come from the furthest parts of the earth, where they are, and incorporate themselves with their brethren:

and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side; by the ministers of the word, and with the sincere milk of it, and the breasts of Gospel ordinances; see **1Th 2:7**. The Targum is, "shall be carried at their sides" {s}: and the Septuagint and Arabic versions, on their shoulders; and so refers to the manner of their being brought, and not to their bringing up; see Isa 49:22, but the former sense is best. Ben Melech interprets it of their being nursed up at the side of great personages, kings and queens, according to Isa 49:23. The word "thy" is not in the original; and it may be as well: rendered "at their side", as is supplied by some {t}.

{s} "Ad latus portabuntur", Vitringa. {t} du le "ad latus illorum", Gataker.

Isaiah 60:5

Ver. 5. Then thou shalt see, and flow together,.... That is, when thou seest thy sons and daughters flocking to thee from all parts, there will be a flow of joy in thee, like the stream of a river; or thine heart will beat and flutter within thee, through surprise and joy, when thou seest such a numerous company gathered unto thee. Some render it, "then thou shall fear", as Aben Ezra {u}, or be surprised at the sight; and others the next clause, "thou shall be enlightened" {w}; that is, shall see, being enlightened, and shall increase in light and knowledge more and more; or "shine" {x}, in great splendour and glory:

and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; shall fear the Lord and his goodness, and be enlarged with love to him, his truths and ordinances, and his people; and particularly shall be enlarged to receive in the most cordial manner those that flock unto her:

because the abundance of the Sea shall be converted unto thee: by which some understand the riches of the sea, that which is got out of it, or got upon it, in trading by it, this shall be converted to the use of the church and people of God; but rather an abundance of seafaring men is here meant, who shall be converted at this time, in which the grace of God will the more appear, as they are generally a very wicked and profligate set of men; or the inhabitants of the islands of the sea, such as Great Britain and others; or the sea may intend the several nations of the world, as waters do many people, nations, and kindreds, Re 17:15 and so it may denote a large abundance of converted persons everywhere, and more especially in the western parts of the world, in the European parts; since it is very common in Scripture to describe the western part of the world by the sea, the Mediterranean sea lying west of Judea.

The forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee; or their armies, every army of them; the soldiery will be converted, as well as the seafaring men, who are for the most part also exceeding wicked; not only kings will become real Christians, but their armies will be so too, their generals, officers, and common soldiers; and when this is once the case, woe to the whore of Rome! these will hate her, and burn her flesh with fire; these are the seven angels that shall come out of the temple, the church of God, to whom they have joined themselves, with the vials of God's wrath, and shall pour them upon the antichristian states; see Re 15:7.

{u} "Tum timebis", Vitringa. {w} trhn "iiluminaberis", Vatablus. {x} "Splendebis", Munster, Montanus, Calvin; "et lucebis", Cocceius, So Ben Melech interprets the word.

Isaiah 60:6

Ver. 6. The multitudes of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah,.... That is, multitudes of people riding on these creatures from the parts mentioned, which, abounded with them, should come and cover or fill Jerusalem, and the places about it. Midian was a son of Abraham by Keturah, and a son of Midian, Ge 25:4 these and their posterity inhabit Arabia; and so this is a prophecy of the conversion of the Arabians that dwell in Arabia Felix, Petraea, and Deserts; and so the Targum,

"a multitude of Arabians shall cover thee round about."

A dromedary is a lesser camel, and swifter than the others; and both are very frequent in these countries, and used in travelling. Strabo {y} calls the Arabian

Scenites feeders of camels.

All they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; Sheba was another of the posterity of Abraham by Keturah, Ge 25:3 and lived near the others; the queen of this country came to hear the wisdom of Solomon; but the people of it in the latter, day will come to a greater than he; even to Christ and to his church, and bring their gold and incense, as the wise men did to Christ, and shall honour the Lord with their substance; see Ps 72:10:

and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord; who has called them by his grace out of Mahometan darkness, into the marvellous light of the Gospel. These were the things the Sabaeans abounded with. Strabo {z} says, that frankincense, myrrh, and cinnamon, grew with them; and that they have such an abundance of spices, that they use the branches of cinnamon, cassia, and other things, for fuel; and that some of them are so rich through merchandise, that they have very sumptuous houses, and much furniture of gold and silver, as vessels, beds, tripods, cups with covers; and even that their gates, and walls, and roofs, are adorned with ivory, gold and silver, and precious stones. And so Pliny {a} observes: that the Sabaeans are very rich in fruitful and odoriferous woods, and in mines of gold, and other things; see Eze 27:22. Vitringa understands both these clauses of the camels bringing gold and incense, and praising the Lord in their way, or being the occasion of it.

{y} Geograph. l. 16. p. 528. Ed. Casaub. {z} Geograph. I. 16. p. 535. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28.

Isaiah 60:7

Ver. 7. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee,.... Nebaioth and Kedar were the sons of Ishmael, Ge 25:13, Ishmael's twelve sons, of which Nebaioth was the eldest, inhabited all the country from Euphrates to the Red sea, calling it the Nabatene country, as Josephus {b} says; these design the Turks and Saracens, who shall now be converted. The Targum is,

"all the sheep of the Arabians shall be gathered unto thee;"

that is, these shall come with their sheep and rams, not to be offered up in sacrifice, for such sacrifices will not be used; but these, being the produce of the countries of these people, are mentioned to show, that being affected with the grace of God towards them, and influenced by it, will bring the best and chief of their substance to serve the interest of Christ, and glorify him with it:

they shall come up with acceptance on my altar; both they and their sacrifices and offerings will become acceptable to God through Christ, who is that altar that sanctifies every gift:

and I will glorify the house of my glory: with this large number of converts, and with the gifts and offerings they bring with them; the church is meant, which is the house of God, where he dwells and manifests his glory, the glory of himself, of his grace, and of his Gospel; see Jer 30:19.

{b} Antiqu. I. 1. c. 12. sect 4.

Isaiah 60:8

Ver. 8. Who are these that fly as a cloud,.... Referring to the vast number of converts before mentioned, who are compared to a "cloud" for the number of them, covering Judea as the clouds do the heavens; and for their elevation and situation, being raised from an earthly to a heavenly state; called with a high calling, and made partakers of an heavenly one; and for their being filled with the grace of God, as clouds with water; and for their unanimity, their coming together in a body, making as it were one cloud, and that openly and publicly, professing Christ, and joining themselves to his church, in the face of the world; and so the Targum,

"who are these that come publicly as the swift clouds?"

and chiefly are they compared to a cloud for their swiftness in motion to Christ and his church; sinners; sensible of danger from the avenging justice of God, from his law, and from his wrath and displeasure, and eternal death, and being apprized of salvation and safety in Christ, make haste and flee to him as swiftly as a cloud driven by the winds;

and as the doves to their windows; or "dove houses", or "lockers and holes" {c}; through which they enter, and to which they bend their course with great swiftness, when pursued by birds of prey, or through an eager desire after their young: converted persons may be compared to doves for their being a clean and cleanly creature; for their being amiable and lovely, chaste and loving;

harmless and inoffensive, meek and humble, weak and timorous; mournful and disconsolate when they have lost their mate; and what dove houses are to these, Christ and his church are to converted persons, whither they flee for rest and shelter, and where they have both: the ordinances of Christ may be particularly meant by these holes or windows that doves make unto; by which, especially baptism, they enter into the church, and by means of which light is let into them, and through which Christ shows himself to them, **So 2:9**, what engages them to flee hither is their love to Christ, in order to have communion with him, and food for their faith; and when he causes them to come, or draws them by his grace, nothing can hinder; not the reproaches of the world, nor the temptations of Satan; nor objections from their own unworthiness. These words are said by the church, by way of admiration wondering at their numbers and swiftness in coming to her; see Isa 49:21. The Targum is

"the, captivity of Israel, who are gathered together, and come to their own land, as doves that return to their dove houses."

{c} Mhytwbra la "ad columbaria sua", Montanus, Vitringa; "in suis forulis", Castalio Gataker.

Isaiah 60:9

Ver. 9. Surely the isles shall wait for me;.... The Targum is,

"for my Word."

The Messiah, and his coming. The isles of Great Britain may more especially be intended, who, as they waited for his Gospel, and readily received it, and embraced it, as soon as it was brought to them, which was very early; so there are many here now waiting for the spiritual coming of Christ, and the glory of his churches in the latter day, and perhaps more than in any other part of the world besides:

and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them; this is to be understood of the Jews converted in distant parts of the world, who shall be brought in transport ships to the churches of Christ, particularly in Judea; and the ships of Tarshish shall be used in that service principally, they shall be the chief that shall be employed. Most of the Jewish commentators, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, think there is a want of the particle of similitude "as", and that it should be rendered, "and the

ships of Tarshish, as at first"; and then the sense is, they shall be made use of now to bring, the converted Jews with their substance from foreign parts, as they had been in Solomon's time, for bringing gold and silver, and other things to him, from distant places, **2Ch 9:21** but by Tarshish here is not meant Tartessus in Spain, as Vitringa; nor Tarsus in Cilicia; but the sea itself; which is so called; and so the Targum renders it, "the ships of the sea"; and Jarchi observes that this is the name of the sea; and what ships can be better understood than ours of Great Britain, so famous for shipping, and which claims the sovereignty of the seas? these may be principally employed in bringing great numbers of converts from different places to the church of God; and as Israel, when they came out of Egypt, came forth with silver and gold; and when they came out of Babylon, they were furnished with gold and silver, and everything convenient for their journey, and for the rebuilding of their city and temple,
Ps 105:37 so when they are gathered from their present dispersion, and are called and converted, they shall come with their tribes to the church of Christ, and honour the Lord with their substance, and promote the interest of religion by it, as it follows:

unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel; that is, their persons shall be brought unto him, and their riches also; they shall give up themselves, and all they have, to the Lord, and devote themselves and their substance to his glory, and the good of his interest; even to him whose name was detestable to them, but now precious; and whom they will own with the church to be the Lord their God, their Redeemer and Sanctifier:

because he hath glorified thee; the church; caused such a glory to arise upon her, and upon that a defence; so that it will continue, and be so visible and manifest as to draw persons from all parts, though the most distant, to come unto her, and join themselves with her.

Isaiah 60:10

Ver. 10. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls,.... The sons of the people; or Gentiles, as the Targum; who were strangers from the covenants of promise, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; strangers to God and Christ, and the Spirit of Christ, and to the Gospel, and all that is good; yet the sons of these, being in great numbers converted everywhere, will be useful in building up the church of God, in strengthening, protecting, and defending it;

these are the same with those afar off, that shall come and build in the temple of the Lord, **Zec 6:15**, such there have been among the Gentiles in all ages, more or less, since the times of the apostles, who have been instruments of the edification of the church, and of the defence of its doctrines and ordinances; and more there will be in the latter day:

and their kings shall minister unto thee; that is, the kings of the Gentiles, as Constantine, and some other truly Christian kings and emperors, have done, though their numbers have been very small as yet; but, when this prophecy is fulfilled, it will be a general case; kings everywhere will be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church, will serve the interest of it, and promote it to the uttermost of their power; see Isa 49:23:

for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee; for the Jews' rejection of the Messiah, for their contempt of his Gospel, and persecution of his apostles and ministers, wrath came upon them to the uttermost, upon their city, temple, and nation, to the destruction of them, and which is still upon them; and though blindness is happened unto them, and they are shut up in unbelief, yet there is a time when the Lord will have mercy on them, call and convert them, and return their captivity; see Ro 11:25.

Isaiah 60:11

Ver. 11. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually,.... This is expressive both of the peaceable state of the church, that she shall be in no danger, nor fear of enemies; there being none to hurt and destroy in all the holy mountain; and therefore under no concern to keep her gates shut; see Eze 38:11 and of the vast concourse of people to it continually; converts from all parts shall be always coming in, and the gates of the church will stand open always to receive them; they will be welcome, come as many as will; there will be no objection to them, no hinderance of them; ministers and people will gladly embrace them; see Isa 26:2 and likewise of the capacity of the church to receive them; for though they will be continually coming in great numbers, yet still there will be room; the gates will not be shut upon them, as unable to receive more; place will be given for them to dwell in; her tents will be enlarged; the curtains of her habitation stretched out; her cords lengthened, and stakes strengthened; so that though she breaks forth on the right hand, and on the left, there will be room for them all, Isa 54:2,

they shall not be shut day nor night; this clause is referred to in

Re 21:25 but there differently expressed,

and the gates of it shall not be shut at all day, for there shall be no night there; the reason of which difference is, because the New Jerusalem state, or personal reign of Christ, will be a perfect state, and no night at all in it; but the spiritual reign of Christ, to which this prophecy relates, will be an imperfect one, though glorious; and therefore mention is made both of day and night:

that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles; the whole strength of them, their armies; See Gill on "Isa 60:5". The Targum paraphrases it, the substance of the people, their wealth and riches:

and that their kings may be brought; or "led" {d}, either in state, as kings on horseback sometimes are, or rather as captives in chains; see Isa 20:4, so the Targum renders it, "bound"; being conquered by mighty grace, and led in chains of love to Christ, and to his church, and become obedient. Kimchi has this note,

"they shall come before the King Messiah, as servants before their masters."

{d} Mygwhn "ducti", Vatablus, Calvin; "ducantur", Tigurine version; "ductos", Cocceius.

Isaiah 60:12

Ver. 12. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish,.... That will not serve the Lord Christ, and worship him with his church and people; that will not be obedient to the laws and ordinances of his house; but appoint another head over them, the pope of Rome; and make other laws, and set up other ordinances, rejecting the authority of Christ, the rule of his word, and the order of his churches:

yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted; even all the antichristian states, when the vials of God's wrath will be poured out upon them; see Zec 14:17.

Isaiah 60:13

Ver. 13. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee,.... Which are the trees that grew upon it, especially the cedars, for which it was famous, as well as the other trees after mentioned. Now, as these were brought into Solomon's temple, and used in the building of that, **1Ki 6:9**, so such shall come of themselves, willingly and cheerfully, being drawn with the cords of love, into the church of Christ, comparable to the tall and strong cedars of Lebanon, and other trees, being eminent for their gifts and graces, and strong in the exercise of them; the more feeble among them being as the house of David, and that as the Angel of the Lord; and being durable, constant, and immovable in the work of the Lord; pillars in his house that shall never go out; ever green and flourishing; never wither in their profession, and always fruitful in every good word and work; of a good smell in the exercise of grace; of savoury conversations, and of a good report in the world; see Ps 107:12:

the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together; which may denote persons of different ranks and sizes, both as to worldly and spiritual affairs; and yet will all agree to come together to the church, and will unite in the service and worship of God in it, and be a real glory to it; see Isa 41:19:

to beautify the place of my sanctuary; the church, so called in allusion to the tabernacle and temple; and thus the Targum here,

"the place of the house of my sanctuary;"

where the holy God dwells; and which is sanctified by him, and where he is sanctified, and worshipped in a holy and spiritual manner; and which will be beautified in the latter day, when the saints that will come into the church will put on by faith more manifestly the beautiful garments of Christ's righteousness; and be more visibly adorned with the graces of his Spirit, which will shine like so many brilliant diamonds and sparkling gems; and will appear in the beauties of a holy conversation; walk in brotherly love with each other, and unite in sentiments of doctrine, and in acts of Gospel worship; and when the Gospel shall be purely and powerfully preached; the ordinances administered as they were in the times of Christ and his apostles; and Gospel discipline in all its branches restored:

and I will make the place of my feet glorious; alluding to the ark under the mercy seat, over which were the cherubim, and between which Jehovah dwelt, hence called his footstool, 1Ch 28:2, denoting that the church is the place where the Lord grants his presence through Christ, the antitype of the mercy seat and ark; and which is the seat of his rest and residence; where he takes his walks, and where his footsteps of rich grace are seen; where his lower parts, his feet, his works, and acts of grace, are beheld; where he favours with communion with himself; where his power and glory are observed, and his beauty is upon his people; where they see the King in his beauty, and all which will be more manifestly enjoyed in the latter day, and make his church very glorious indeed.

Isaiah 60:14

Ver. 14. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee,.... The posterity of the Jews, who persecuted the first Christian churches, even those who say they are Jews and are not; these shall be convinced of the truth of the Christian religion, and be converted to it, and shall come and worship before the church, and in fellowship with it, and own it to be the true church of God; which is what is foretold shall be in the Philadelphian state, which is the same with the spiritual reign here described; see **Re 3:9** or the children of the Roman Heathens, their remote descendants, who formerly greatly distressed the Christians; or rather the posterity of Rome Papal, many of whom shall be called out of her at the time of her destruction, and be humble suppliants to the church of Christ, and be subject to the doctrines, rules, and laws of it, whose ancestors cruelly persecuted it:

and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; a phrase expressive of great respect, veneration, and submission; see Isa 49:23:

and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel; instead of calling them heretics, schismatics, and fanatics, as their fathers did, they shall own them to be the true church of Christ; a city of his building, and where he dwells; the object of his choice, delight, and love, as Zion was; a holy people made meet to be the habitation of the God of Israel; which are so many names for the church under the Gospel dispensation; see Heb 12:22.

Isaiah 60:15

Ver. 15. Whereas thou hast been forsaken,.... Seemingly forsaken of God; thought to be so by herself, which was matter of complaint; and by her enemies, which to them was matter of joy; the Lord not appearing for her immediate relief, and for her deliverance out of the hands of her persecutors:

and hated: of all men, of wicked and profane sinners, and of carnal professors, and especially of the antichristian party:

so that no man went through thee; very few passengers in Zion's ways; few asked the way to her, or joined themselves in fellowship and worship with her. Jacob was small; the number of converts exceeding few:

I will make thee an eternal excellency; the saints are the excellent in the earth, in the esteem of God and Christ; they, are their jewels and peculiar treasure, having the excellent graces of the Spirit of God in them; and the excellent robe of Christ's righteousness on them; an excellent knowledge of divine and spiritual things; an excellent spirit of love and unity; and an excellent order and discipline maintained among them; as well as excellent truths preached, and ordinances administered to them; all which shall continue, being made clearly to appear to be their case:

the joy of many generations; of age and age {e}; or, as the Targum,

"the house of joy of generation and generation;"

that is, the church will be the joy of God and Christ, of the saints, and of the whole world, age after age, for a long period of time: see Isa 65:18 there seems to be some respect to Ps 48:2.

{e} rwdw rwd "generationis et generationis", Vatablus, Pagninas, Montanus; "cujusque generationis", Vitringa.

Isaiah 60:16

Ver. 16. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles,.... Partake of their riches and wealth; so the Targum,

"and ye shall be satisfied with the substance of the people:"

or drink of the sincere milk of the word of the Gospel, which Gentiles have been favoured with for many ages; for this seems to have regard to Jewish converts, though not to them only, but as they, with the converted Gentiles, will make up one church state, and partake of the same privileges:

and shall suck the breast of kings; who shall now be converted in various places, come into the church, and be nursing fathers to it; help and assist the people of God with their riches to carry on divine worship in an honourable manner; and to protect and defend them with their power; see Ps 72:9. The Targum is,

"in the spoil of kings ye shall delight yourselves;"

and it may also design the breasts of consolation, the ordinances of the Gospel, such as Christian kings will suck, and Jews and Gentiles shall do the same, Isa 66:11,

and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob; the Jews, being called, shall seek the Lord their God, the true Messiah, and shall look unto him by faith, whom they have pierced; shall know, own, and acknowledge him to be their Redeemer and Saviour; who must be fit and qualified for such an office and work, and equal to it, being the mighty One of Jacob, whom before they and their ancestors rejected and despised.

Isaiah 60:17

Ver. 17. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron,.... By "wood and stones" may be meant the Old Testament dispensation; by the "brass and iron" the present Gospel dispensation; and by "silver and gold" the latter day glory; by "silver" the spiritual reign of Christ in his church; and by "gold" his personal reign in the New Jerusalem; which is said to be all of pure gold, and even the very street of it, Re 21:18, now, as far as brass and iron exceed wood and stones, so far the Gospel dispensation exceeds the legal one; the one being the shadow, the other the substance; the one having carnal ordinances, which are done away; the other spiritual ones, which remain; and as far as silver and gold exceed brass and iron, so far the glory of the latter day will exceed the present state of things, in clear light, in spiritual grace and strength, in purity of doctrine and worship, in holiness of life, and in love, peace, and unity; and as far as gold exceeds silver, so far, and much more, will the personal reign of Christ, which will be perfectly glorious, exceed the spiritual one. There may be an allusion to the times of Solomon, a type of Christ, 1Ki 10:27. This, by some Jewish writers {f}, is applied to the times of the Messiah they yet expect. The Targum is,

"for the brass which they spoiled thee of, O Jerusalem, I will bring gold, &c."

I will also make thine officers peace; civil magistrates shall be men of peaceable dispositions, who shall promote peace and unity in kingdoms, states, cities, towns, and neighbourhoods; they shall be properly justices of peace; they will answer to their office, and the title of it. Church officers or ministers of the word shall publish the Gospel of peace in the clearest manner; and the peace of God shall rule in the hearts of all the saints; there will be abundance of temporal and of spiritual peace, promoted by each of the officers of church and state; see Ps 72:7:

and thine exactors righteousness; even tax gatherers, who used to be the worst of people for injustice and oppression, these shall do nothing but what is right and just; nor will there be any reason to complain of them. The Septuagint render it "bishops" or "overseers" {g}, pastors of churches, who shall be truly ministers of righteousness; preach up the doctrine of justification by Christ's righteousness; and instruct persons to live soberly, righteously, and godly.

{f} Caphtor Uperah, fol. 57. 2. {g} episkopouv.

Isaiah 60:18

Ver. 18. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land,.... It shall be no more committed; no instances of it will be heard of, or any complaints concerning it; neither public nor private oppression: antichristian persecution will now be at an end; those that destroyed the earth with violence and oppression shall be no more; "there will be none to hurt in all the holy mountain", Isa 11:9:

wasting nor destruction within thy borders; no more wars, nor rumours of wars; no more blood shed; no more depopulation of cities, nor destruction of the lives of men; the whore of Rome will have drank up her full cup; and the vials of wrath being poured out upon the antichristian states, there will be a profound peace, and the greatest prosperity everywhere; especially in all those places where the churches of Christ will be, who will no more be exposed to the cruelty of their enemies:

but thou shall call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise; or, "call Salvation thy walls, and Praise thy gates" {h}; having no need of any other walls but the salvation of God, temporal and spiritual; nor of any other gates but the praise that will be in the hearts and mouths of the saints, on account of it; though temporal salvation may be included, which will be for walls and bulwarks to the church: yet spiritual and eternal salvation is chiefly meant, which flows from the invariable love of God; is founded upon his unalterable purpose; secured in the act of electing grace; established in the covenant; and completely wrought out by Christ, who has vanquished every enemy, procured every blessing; and whose almighty power, as well as his divine Father's, is and will be concerned for the safety of his people; who will now be in great numbers in the gates of Zion; praising the Lord for electing, redeeming, calling, pardoning, and justifying grace; and for the privileges of the house of the Lord they are admitted to; and for the communion they have with him there; see Isa 26:1. The Targum is,

"and they shall proclaim salvation on thy walls, and on thy gates there shall be they that praise."

{h} hlht Kyrevw Kytmx hewvy tarqw "vocabis salutem muros tuos, et portas tuas laudem", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.

Isaiah 60:19

Ver. 19. The sun shall be no more thy light by day,.... Here begins the account of the sinless, pure, and perfect state of the church in the personal reign of Christ, even the New Jerusalem church state, as appears from the use of these very words, in the description of that state, Re 21:23 where it is read, "and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof"; and in like manner the Targum renders these words,

"and ye shall have no need any more of the light of the sun by day, nor even of the light of the moon by night;"

and so both Aben Ezra and Jarchi interpret it,

"ye shall have no need of the light of the sun;"

and the former adds, because of the light of the Shechinah; and which seems to be the meaning of the next clause:

neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; that is, because of the exceeding brightness, splendour, and lustre of the divine majesty of Christ, who will appear personally among his people, neither sun nor moon will be able to give any light: as the light of a candle is made useless and unnecessary by the light of the sun, so the light of the sun and moon will be made useless and unnecessary by the vastly superior light and glory of Christ; see Isa 24:23, though the sun and moon may be understood here mystically, not of civil magistrates, who are sometimes signified by these luminaries; and who also will be no more used when this dispensation or personal reign of Christ shall take place; see Isa 13:10, but rather of the Gospel and Gospel ordinances, which the church will no more stand in need of to enlighten, teach, and instruct them, refresh and comfort them, having the immediate presence of Christ with them, as follows:

but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light; that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, as it is interpreted in the above cited place in the Revelation; who, as he is the author of the light of nature, and of the light of grace, so of the light of glory in this state, and to all eternity; then will the saints in this light behold the face of God, which is not to be seen now; they shall see Christ in all his glory, in the glory of his Father, and of his holy angels; all the glorious forms, the angels of heaven, and all the saints, those spirits of just then made perfect, that shall come with Christ, and be clothed with glorious bodies; even the New Jerusalem descending from heaven, having the glory of God upon her; likewise all the doctrines of grace, now not so clearly understood; and all the mysteries of Providence, which will be laid open, and made manifest; and this clear light will continue for ever; there will be no more night, but one everlasting day:

and thy God thy glory; it is the saints' glory that God is their God; and it will be their glory in this state to have the God-man Jesus Christ personally with them; the tabernacle of God will be among them; God himself shall be with them, and be their God; and his glory shall lighten them, Re 21:3.

Isaiah 60:20

Ver. 20. Thy sun shall no more go down,.... This is a different sun from the former; this is the church's sun, and no other than the sun of righteousness, Christ Jesus; who has his risings and settings now, at least, in the apprehensions of his people; he sometimes withdraws himself, and is gone; and then returns again: but so it will not be in this state: the saints shall be for ever with him, and he shall be for ever with them; who will always behold his glory, and be enlightened by him; see **1Th 4:16**:

neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; or, "shall not be gathered" {i}, under a cloud; or "fail" {k}, as the Septuagint version; or, "suffer a defect", as the Arabic version; as the moon does when in the wane, or is eclipsed. This may refer to this then present state of the church, which shall not fail; and to the blessings and comforts of it from Christ the sun, which will not cease, the enjoyment of them be ever interrupted. The Targum is,

"thy kingdom shall cease no more, and thy glory shall not be removed;"

and so Maimonides {l} interprets it of the kingdom of the Messiah, that shall endure for ever:

for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light; this is repeated for the confirmation of it:

and the days of thy mourning shall be ended {m}; or, "completed"; shall be fully up, and so at an end: or, "shall be recompensed" {n}; with an everlasting day of joy and pleasure; there will now be no more sin to distress the saints; no more temptations of Satan to annoy them; no more afflictions either of body or mind to trouble them; no more pain, or crying, or death; and so no more mourning; sorrow and sighing will flee away; all tears will be wiped from their eyes; and everlasting joy be upon their heads; see Re 21:4.

{i} Poay "non colligetur", Montanus, Vitringa; "vel recolligetur", Vatablus; "occultabitur", Munster, Tigurine version. {k} ouk ekleiqein, Sept. "deficiet", Pagninus. {l} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 29. p. 263. {m} wmlv "completi erunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "completisunt", Vitringa. {n} "Compensabuntur", Tigurine version.

Isaiah 60:21

Ver. 21. Thy people also shall be all righteous,.... That is, the church's people, or the members of the church; otherwise the Lord's people, who are truly so, always were, and ever will be, all righteous; but so have not always been the members of the churches; when Israel was the church of God, they were not all righteous; there was only a remnant among them, according to the election of grace, that were so; nor in the first Christian churches were they all such, there was a Judas among Christ's disciples; Ananias and Sapphira in the church at Jerusalem; and many in the church of Corinth, very disorderly and irregular; and so in all others; and in all ages since there are foolish virgins among the wise, tares among the wheat, and chaff among the corn on the floor; yea, even in the spiritual reign of Christ they will not be all truly gracious; some that will have only a form of godliness, and who, at the close of it, will be the greater number, and will form the lukewarm Laodicean state; but in the personal reign of Christ all the members of the church will be righteous, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them: it will be a congregation of righteous persons, and not one sinner shall stand in it; yea, they shall be inherently righteous, perfectly holy, and free from sin; none shall enter into this state that defiles; every pot and vessel in Jerusalem shall be holiness to the Lord, **Ps 1:5**. The Jews {o} have a saying, that the son of David comes not but in an age in which men will be all righteous, or all wicked; in an age in which they will be all righteous, according to Isa 60:21, but this designs not his first, but his second coming:

they shall inherit the land for ever; not the land of Canaan only; though perhaps that may be the spot on which Christ will descend, and where he will reside; where he was treated with contempt and crucified, here he will reign, and reign gloriously; and the rather, since, when he comes with all his saints, his feet will stand upon the mount of Olives, Zec 14:4 but the new earth is meant, which John saw, and Peter says the saints expect, according to promise, in which righteousness men perfectly righteous shall dwell, and none but they, Re 21:1 as also it may include a better country, the land afar off, the heavenly glory, which will be the inheritance of the saints to all eternity:

the branch of my planting; in Christ by election grace; in the likeness of his death and resurrection by redemption grace; and as branches in him, the Vine, by effectual calling grace; and in his church, through the ministry of the word; all which will appear true and real; and that they are plants of the Lord's planting, by their being in this church state, even in the paradise of God, near to the tree of life, the fruit of which they will always partake of:

the work of my hands; the workmanship of God, curiously wrought by him; the effect of his mighty power; wholly his own work and not another's; and entirely owing to his great love, abundant mercy, and rich grace; as will be evident in this state; this being the day of the Lord unto which it is performed, and become perfect; and there will be no more doubts of that matter:

that I may be glorified; as he will be then in all them that believe; and by these characters which they bear, and are to be ascribed to his power, grace, and righteousness; Christ, and he alone, will be exalted; he will reign before his ancients gloriously, until he delivers up the kingdom; and then God, Father, Son, and Spirit, will be all in all.

{o} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1.

Isaiah 60:22

Ver. 22. A little one shall become a thousand,.... A small family, a little handful of people in all ages, scattered up and down in the world, of no esteem and account in it, being all gathered together, that ever were in the world, will appear to be thousands and millions, and such a number as no man can number, **Re 7:9**

and a small one a strong nation; a company of weak persons, persecuted by their enemies, and unable to resist them, as in the present state: now there will be a nation of them strong and mighty; the feeble among them shall be as David, and the house of David as God, as the Angel of the Lord, Zec 12:8:

I the Lord will hasten it in his time: as there was a fixed appointed time for Christ's first coming, so there is for his second coming, when this state and dispensation of things will commence; and when that time comes, it will be deferred no longer; as soon as ever it is up, the Lord will hasten the accomplishment of what he has promised, and who is able also to perform; see **1Ti 6:15**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 61:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 61

In this chapter both Christ and the church are introduced speaking, in their turns. It begins with the words of Christ, describing his work and office; his qualifications for it; the several parts and branches of it; and the ends to be answered by it; Isa 61:1, the reparation of the church; the feeding it by strangers; its being a holy priesthood; its enjoying the riches of the Gentiles; its having honour and joy, instead of shame and confusion; its prosperity in the work of the Lord, and the continuance of its spiritual offspring among the Gentiles, are prophesied of in Isa 61:4, and then the church is represented as rejoicing in the Lord, on account of her being clothed with his righteousness, so ornamental to her, Isa 61:10 and the chapter is concluded with a promise of her righteousness and glory appearing before all the nations of the world; of which the following chapter is an illustrious prophecy, Isa 61:11.

Ver. 1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,.... According to the Targum, these are the words of the prophet concerning himself; and so say Aben Ezra and Kimchi; but the latter elsewhere says {p} they are the words of the Messiah, who should say, "because the Lord hath anointed me", &c.; and another of their writers {q} is in a doubt about them; either, says he, they are the words of the prophet with respect to the Messiah, or the words of the prophet concerning himself; but there is no doubt but the Messiah himself is the person speaking, as appears from **Lu 4:17**, on whom the Spirit of God was; not his grace and gifts only, but the person of the Spirit, the third Person in the Trinity, equal with the Father and the Son; to whom several divine actions are ascribed, and to whom many things relating to Christ are attributed, and who is described as residing on him, and who, by the baptist, was seen upon him, Isa 11:2 the phrase denotes his continuance with him, whereby he was qualified, as man and Mediator, for his office:

because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek: not the Lord, the Spirit that was upon him, for Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost; but Jehovah the, Father, he was the anointer of Christ, by whom he was anointed in some sense from everlasting, being invested by him with the office of Mediator, **Pr 8:21** and in the fulness of time, in the human nature, at his birth and baptism, with the Holy Spirit, his gifts and grace, without measure, Ps 45:7, hence he has the name of Messiah or Anointed, and from him his people have the anointing which teacheth all things: and hereby he was qualified, as a prophet, to preach good tidings to the meek; such as are sensible of sin, and humbled for it; submit to the righteousness of Christ; ascribe all they have to the grace of God and have a mean opinion of themselves, and patiently bear every affliction: or "poor", as in **Lu 4:18**, the poor of this world, and as to their intellectuals, and spirit, who are sensible of their spiritual poverty, and seek the true riches, to these the Gospel is "good tidings"; and to such Christ preached good tidings concerning, the love, grace, and mercy of

God; concerning peace, pardon, righteousness, life and salvation, by himself; concerning the kingdom of God, and the things appertaining to it:

he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted; whose hearts are smitten and made contrite by the Spirit and Word of God, and are truly humbled under a sense of sin; who are cut to the heart, have wounded spirits, and in great pain; these Christ binds up, by speaking comfortably to them; by applying his blood; by discovering the free and full pardon of their sins; and for this, as Mediator, he had a mission and commission from his Father; he came not of himself, but he sent him:

to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening, of the prison to them that are bound; to such who were captives to sin, Satan, and the law, and as it were prisoners to them, shut up by them, and in them, and held fast there; but Christ, as he is the author of liberty; obtains it for his people, and makes them free with it, so he proclaims it in the Gospel; a liberty from sin, from the damning and governing power of it; a freedom from the curse and condemnation of the law; a deliverance from Satan, as of a prey from the mighty, or as of prisoners from the prison house. The allusion is to the proclamation of liberty, in the year of jubilee, Le 25:10. The Targum is,

"to the prisoners appear in light."

It may be rendered, "open clear and full light to the prisoners" {r}, so Aben Ezra interprets it; See Gill on "Lu 4:18".

{p} Sepher Shorash. rad. xvm {q} Ben Melech in loc. {r} xwq-xqp Myrwoalw "et vinctis visum acutissimum", Vitringa.

Isaiah 61:2

Ver. 2. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,.... Not an exact year, but time in general; for such are wrong, who from hence conclude that Christ's public ministry lasted but a year, since it is certain, by the passovers he kept, that it must be at least three or four years; the whole time of Christ on earth was an acceptable and desirable time, what many great personages desired to see, and did not: this time may take in the whole Gospel dispensation, which was ushered in by Christ: the allusion, as before observed, is to the year of jubilee, when there was a proclamation of liberty; of release of debts; of restoration of inheritances, and of cessation from work; all which must make it an acceptable year: and this proclamation was made on the day of atonement; and Jarchi interprets the phrase here of a "year of reconciliation"; or "the year of atonement to the Lord", as it maybe rendered {s}; this was made by the sacrifice of Christ, and is proclaimed in the Gospel, and makes a most considerable part of it. It may be rendered, "the year of the good will of the Lord" {t}; and such was the time of Christ's coming on earth, to save men, and make peace and reconciliation for them, **Lu 2:14** and was an "acceptable time" indeed; acceptable to the Lord himself; as were the incarnation of Christ, his obedience and righteousness, his sufferings and death, his sacrifice and satisfaction; since hereby the perfections of God were glorified, his purposes fulfilled, his covenant confirmed, and his people saved: acceptable to men; as were the birth of Christ; the things done by him; peace made, pardon procured, righteousness brought in, and salvation wrought out; all which must be acceptable to such who are lost, and know it, and are sensible that nothing of their own can save them; see **1Ti 1:15**

the day of vengeance of our God; when vengeance was taken on sin, in the person of Christ; when he destroyed the works of the devil, the devil himself, and spoiled principalities and powers; when he abolished death, and was the plague and destruction of that and the grave; when he brought wrath to the uttermost on the Jews for the rejection of him, who would not have him to reign over them; and who will take vengeance on antichrist at his spiritual coming, and upon all the wicked at the day of judgment. Kimchi understands this of the day when God shall take vengeance on Gog and Magog.

To comfort all that mourn: that are under afflictions, and mourn for them; and under a sense of sin, and mourn for that; who mourn for their own sins, indwelling sin, and their many actual transgressions; and for the sins of others, of profane persons, and especially professors of religion; these Christ comforts by his Spirit, by his word and ministers, by his promises, by his ordinances, and by the discoveries, of pardoning grace and mercy,

{s} hwhyl Nwur tnv "annum placabilem Jehovae", Vatablus; "annum placabilem Domino", V. L. {t} Heb. "annum benevolentiae, seu bneplaciti Jehovae", Piscator, Tigurine version; "annum complacentiae", Vitinga.

Isaiah 61:3

Ver. 3. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion,.... Or, "to the mourners of

Zion" {u}; such who are of Zion, belong to the church of God, and mourn for the corruptions in Zion's doctrines; for the perversion, abuse, and neglect of Zion's ordinances; for the disorders and divisions in Zion; for the declensions there, as to the exercise of grace, and the power of godliness; for the few instances of conversions there, or few additions to it; for the carelessness, ease, and lukewarmness of many professors in Zion; and for their unbecoming lives and conversations. Now one part of Christ's work is to "appoint" comfort to such; he has appointed it in counsel and covenant from eternity; made provision for it in the blessings and promises of his grace; he has "set" {w} or put it in the ministry of the word; be has ordered his ministering servants to speak comfortably to his people; yea, by his Spirit he "puts" comfort into the hearts of them, who through their unbelief refuse to be comforted; and he has fixed a time when he will arise and have mercy on Zion, and bring her into a better state than she is now in, when there will be none of these causes of complaint and mourning:

to give unto them beauty for ashes; in the Hebrew text there is a beautiful play on words, which cannot be so well expressed in our language, "to give peer for epher" {x}; in times of mourning, it was usual to put on sackcloth and ashes, **Es 4:1**, instead of this, Christ gives his mourners the beautiful garments of salvation, and the robe of his righteousness, and the graces of his Spirit, and his gracious presence, together with his word and ordinances, and sometimes a large number of converts; all which, as they are ornamental to his people, they yield them joy, peace, and comfort: and this is a beauty that is not natural to them, but is of grace; not acquired, but given; not fictitious, but real; is perfect and complete, lasting and durable, and desired by Christ himself, who gives it:

the oil of joy for mourning; oil used to be poured on the heads of persons at entertainments and festivals, and at times of rejoicing; and so is opposed to the state of mourners, who might not be anointed, as the Jewish commentators observe; see Ps 23:5 the grace of the Spirit without measure, with which Christ was anointed, is called "the oil of gladness", Ps 45:7 and of the same nature, though not of the same measure, is the grace which saints have from Christ; the effect of which is joy and gladness, even joy unspeakable, and full of glory; which is had in believing in Christ, and through a hope of eternal life by him; hence we read of the joy of faith, and of the rejoicing of hope: this oil is Christ's gift, and not to be bought with money; this holy unction comes from him; this golden oil is conveyed from him, through the golden pipes of the word and ordinances; is very valuable, of great price, and to be desired; and, being had, cannot be lost; it is the anointing that abides:

the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; such as is in persons under afflictions, or under a sense of sin, a load of guilt, and expectation of wrath; such as have heavy hearts, contrite and contracted {y} ones, as the word is observed to signify; for as joy enlarges the heart, sorrow contracts it; instead of which, a garment of praise, or an honourable one, is given; alluding to persons putting on of raiment suitable to their characters and circumstances, at seasons of rejoicing, such as weddings, and the like, **Ec 9:7** by which may be meant here the robe of Christ's righteousness later mentioned, Isa 61:10 so called because worthy of praise, for the preferableness of it to all others, being the best robe; for its perfection and purity; for the fragrancy and acceptableness of it to God, and for its eternal duration; also, because it occasions and excites praise in such on whom it is put; and such likewise shall have praise of God hereafter, when on account of it they shall be received into his kingdom and glory:

that they might be called trees of righteousness; that is, that the mourners in Zion, having all these things done for them, and bestowed on them, might be called, or be, or appear to be, like "trees" that are well planted; whose root is in Christ, whose sap is the Spirit and his grace, and whose fruit are good works; and that they might appear to be good trees, and of a good growth and stature, and be laden with the fruits of righteousness, and be truly righteous persons, made so by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them: "the planting of the Lord"; planted by him in Christ, and in his church, and so never to be rooted out:

that he might be glorified; by their fruitfulness and good works, Joh 15:8 or that he might glorify himself, or get himself glory by them; See Gill on "Isa 60:21".

{u} Nwyu ylbal "lugentibus Sionis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator Vitrtnga. So Syr. {w} Mwvl "ad ponendum" Montanus; "ut ponerem" Munster Pagninus. {x} rpa txt rap the Targum and Vulgate Latin version render it a "crown for ashes" and the word is used for the tire of the head in Eze 24:17. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "for ashes sweet ointment", or "oil of gladness", joining it to the next clause; and mention being made of oil or ointment there, Fortunatus Scacchus thinks the allusion is to crowns of roses and, lilies moistened with, ointment of myrrh, and like ointment, which used to be wore at nuptial solemnities; and so opposed to ashes put on the head in times of mourning, which falling from thence, and moistened with tears on the cheeks, were clotted there, and so expressed the miserable condition they were in; but these things the reverse. See his Sacror. Eleaoehr. Myrothec. I. 1. c. 28.

col. 139. {y} hhk xwr txt "pro spiritu stricto", Montanus, Paganinus; "loco spiritus contracti", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "constricto", Vatablus.

Isaiah 61:4

Ver. 4. And they shall build the old wastes,.... The captives set at liberty, and who are called trees of righteousness, and the planting of the Lord; righteous and good men, who shall be employed in the spiritual building of the church in Gospel times, and especially in the latter day; for here begins an account of the benefits and blessings the church of Christ should partake of, particularly at the time of the calling and conversion of the Jews: after having described the work and office of the Messiah, and his fitness for it, the Holy Ghost returns to the same subject with the preceding chapter, and which is carried on in the next. What is here said was literally true, when the Jews returned from Babylon, and built their ruined houses and cities; or, at least, there is an allusion to it: but it respects either the setting up of the interest of Christ, and forming churches in the Gentile world, where nothing but blindness and ignorance reigned; where there were no preaching nor ordinances, but all things were in ruin and confusion; as they were before the ministry of the Gospel by the apostles, who were wise master builders, and instruments of converting multitudes, and of raising churches to the honour of the great Redeemer there: or rather it respects the building up of the tabernacle of David, that is fallen down, or the church of God among the Jews, which will be in the latter day, when they are turned to the Lord, **Am 9:11** and the same sense have all the following expressions,

they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations; setting forth the desolate state and condition of the Jews; their long continuance in it, age after age; and their recovery and restoration, when they shall become a flourishing people again, both in civil and spiritual things.

Isaiah 61:5

Ver. 5. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,.... The several congregated churches of Christ, which shall be set among them, compared to flocks of sheep, as they often are; and which shall be fed with knowledge and understanding, with the words of faith and sound doctrine, by pastors of the

Gentile race; who shall be raised up by Christ, and shall freely, and faithfully, and constantly perform the office they are called unto; see Ac 20:28:

and the sons of the alien shall be your ploughmen, and your vinedressers: the sons of Gentiles, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, **Eph 2:12**, but now being converted and brought to the knowledge of Christ, and gifted by him, will be of eminent service in his church; which, as it is "God's husbandry", **1Co 3:9** shall be filled and cultivated by them; the fallow ground of men's hearts shall be ploughed up by them, with the plough of the Gospel the Lord succeeding their labours; and the seed of the word sown in them, which, by the blessing of God, shall take root, spring up, and bring forth fruit. And whereas the church of God is compared to a vineyard, and particular churches of Christ to vines; such men as are called by grace from among the Gentiles, and have received gifts from Christ, shall be the keepers and dressers of these vines, plant, and prune, and water them, and do everything requisite unto them; see **So 2:15**.

Isaiah 61:6

Ver. 6. But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord,.... Or, "and ye shall be named", &c. which Jerom understands of the builders of cities, pastors of flocks, the ploughmen and vinedressers, the strangers and the sons of the alien, that these also should be called priests: but rather it designs the Jews, when they shall be called and converted, and when there will be no more the distinction of priests and common people, but they shall all be kings and priests unto God, a royal priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices to him, all ceremonial ones being at an end:

men shall call you the ministers of our God; Christian men shall call, own, and acknowledge you to be the servants of Christ, of Immanuel, God with us, having professed faith in him, and submitted to his ordinances:

ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles; converted Gentiles, who shall join themselves with Jewish converts in the same church state; who shall bring their wealth with them, and with it support the interest of Christ; see Isa 60:5, or this may be understood of their spiritual riches, the unsearchable riches of Christ revealed in the Gospel, which the Gentiles have long possessed, but now the Jews shall have a share with them:

and in their glory shall you boast yourselves; not in being the seed of Abraham, as formerly; in birth privileges, in carnal rites and ceremonies, such as circumcision and others; but in what is the glory of the Gentiles, Christ himself, who is their glory, and of whom they glory; as also his Gospel, and the ordinances of it, which are the glory of every nation possessed of them: or, "ye shall delight yourselves" {z}; in the Lord; in communion and conversation with his people, and in the enjoyment of the privileges of his house with them: or, "ye shall lift up or exalt yourselves", or "be exalted" {a}; to the same degree of honour and glory, being all kings and priests unto God.

{z} wrmytt "oblectabitis", Tigurine, version. So the Targum. {a} "Summe efferetis vos", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vitringa; "exaltabimini", Munster, Pagninus. So Ben Melech, and R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 89. 2.

Isaiah 61:7

Ver. 7. For your shame you shall have double,.... Or, "for your double shame" {b}; instead of being a reproach, a proverb, a taunt, and a curse, as the Jews now are everywhere; being converted, they will have double honour, both in things civil and religious, be in great esteem with Christ, and all his people:

and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion; instead of the confusion and reproach they have long lain under; or of that they shall be thrown into, when first awakened and convinced of their sin, of unbelief and rejection of the Messiah; they shall rejoice in Christ their portion, and in all those spiritual blessings they will see themselves blessed with in him; they will now have the double portion of the firstborn, they once were, and to which there may be an allusion, as some think; or, as others, to the double portion of the spirit of Elijah on Elisha; they shall now have the spirit of grace and supplication poured upon them, and all the gifts and graces of the Spirit bestowed on them, all which will be cause of joy and rejoicing to them:

therefore in their land they shall possess the double; not only in the land of the Gentiles, where they have suffered reproach, shall they have double honour; but in their own land, the land of Israel, to which they shall be restored; they shall enjoy great plenty of all kind of blessings, temporal and spiritual:

everlasting joy shall be unto them; for after this they shall no more be carried captive, or be dispossessed either of their civil or religious privileges; see Isa 35:10.

{b} hnvm Mktmb txt "pro pudore vestro duplici", Gataker, Vitringa; "loco pudoris vestri duplicis", Piscator.

Isaiah 61:8

Ver. 8. For I the Lord love judgment,.... To do that which is right and just himself, and to see it done by others, and therefore he will right the wrongs of his people; and whereas the Jews, though they have justly suffered his vengeance for their sins, yet being reproached and abused beyond measure by the Gentiles, among whom they are dispersed; the Lord will look in mercy upon them, and will deliver and save them, and bestow favours plentifully on them, as in the preceding verse: or the Lord loves strict justice and real righteousness, and will not be put off with an imperfect righteousness in the room of a perfect one, and much less an insincere and hypocritical one, such as that of the unbelieving Jews, the pharisaical sect of them; nothing less is acceptable to God than a perfect righteousness, which is adequate to the demands of law and justice; and such a righteousness is not to be found among men, only in his Son Jesus Christ, and with which he is well pleased, Isa 42:21:

I hate robbery for burnt offering; that which is stolen, though it be converted into a burnt offering: or, "with a burnt offering" {c}; all immorality, this being put for the whole, along with ceremonial sacrifices; as if it could be atoned for by them, or would be connived at on account of them: or,

by burnt offering; expiation of theft, or any other sin, by the sacrifices of the law, being offered up without faith in Christ; and especially since the great sacrifice, the antitype of them, is offered up; and therefore God will have no more offered up, they are displeasing and hateful to him, **Isa 1:12**:

and I will direct their work in truth; appoint them work and service of a spiritual nature, and direct them, and enable them to perform it in spirit and in truth, in opposition to the carnal and shadowy ordinances of the ceremonial law; see **Joh 4:23**:

and I will make an everlasting covenant with them; that is, renew the everlasting covenant of grace with them, make it manifest unto them; apply the grace and bestow the blessings of it to and on them,
Ro 11:25.

{c} hlweb lzg "rapinam conjunctam holocausto", Junius & Tremellius.

Isaiah 61:9

Ver. 9. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people,.... Not only the Jews will be converted as a body in the latter day, but there will be a succession of converts among them in later ages, and will be known among Christian Gentiles by their faith and love, and good works and holy conversation; and will be taken notice of and acknowledged by them as brethren, and will be famous among them for religion and godliness:

all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed; that they are the spiritual seed of Abraham, as well as his carnal seed, and are blessed with him; blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, with faith in him, and with every other grace.

Isaiah 61:10

Ver. 10. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,.... These are not the words of the prophet spoken in his own person, rejoicing in the goodness of the Lord to his people and countrymen; nor of Christ; but of the church, especially the Jewish church, expressing her joy for benefits received, as declared in the preceding verses. The Targum is,

"Jerusalem said, rejoicing I will rejoice in the Word of the Lord;"

not in his word of promise, but in his essential Word, his Son the Messiah; in his person, offices, fulness, righteousness, and salvation:

my soul shall be joyful in my God; in Christ, in that he is God, and so able to save to the uttermost, and keep from a final and total falling, and to preserve safe to his kingdom and glory: hence his person is excellent; his blood precious; his righteousness valuable; and his sacrifice efficacious; and all matter of joy to the believer: and who also rejoices in that he is his God, "my God"; God in our nature; Immanuel, God with us; the God-man and Mediator, through whom there is access to God and acceptance with him; and who stands in near relation to his people, and has all fullness to supply their wants, and makes all he has theirs; so that, they have great reason to rejoice in him indeed.

The Targum is,

"my soul shall rejoice in the salvation of my God;"

the nature of this joy may be collected from the text itself: it is not a carnal one, or the joy of a carnal man in carnal things, it is spiritual; nor a pharisaical joy, a rejoicing in a man's self, in his own works of righteousness, for this "is in the Lord"; nor is it a hypocritical one, or only externally, for it is the soul that rejoices; and it is the joy of faith, or in the Lord, as "my God"; and a very great one it is, joy unspeakable, and full of glory; and is what continues, as the matter and ground of it always does, as follows: "for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation"; with salvation as garments; the salvation of Christ, which, like garments, is without men, being wrought out by Christ; and is brought near, and applied by the spirit of Christ; and is all around, and encompasses the saints as such, and like them beautifies and adorns them, and keeps them warm and comfortable, when they have the joys of it; and which secures them from the storms of divine wrath and vengeance; and the plural number being used may denote the fulness and completeness of this salvation, from all sin, from wrath, hell, and damnation, and from every enemy: and this is matter of joy to the believer interested in it, and clothed with it; since it is a salvation so great; a garment so fitting and suitable, and had at free cost; and in which the glory of all the divine perfections is so conspicuous, as well as it being so full, complete, and perfect, and an everlasting one:

he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness: not with her own, that is a rag, and not a robe, and a filthy one too, Isa 64:6 and no covering, and is indeed no righteousness, properly speaking; but the righteousness of Christ, the best robe, the wedding garment, and change of raiment, which, like a robe, is upon believers, but not in them; it in Christ, and imputed to them; it covers their persons and their nakedness, and all their sins, so as not to be seen with the eye of avenging justice: to clothe and cover with it is God's act of imputation, and Christ's application of it by his Spirit, **Zec 3:4**, which, perceived by the believer, causes great joy; it being all of a piece, like Christ's seamless robe, and so pure and spotless, so perfect and complete, and so rich and glorious:

as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments; or, "adorns" himself

in a princely or priestly manner {d}; for the word used signifies both. The sense is, as a bridegroom puts on the best clothes he has on his wedding day, and makes the appearance of a prince in his richest robes, or as the high priest when he had on all his sacerdotal garments; so the Targum,

"as a bridegroom that flourishes in his bridechamber, and as the high priest who is adorned with his garments:"

and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels; or "implements" {e}; and makes herself as fine as she can, to recommend herself to her spouse and her friends: thus richly and magnificently arrayed is the church of Christ, and every believer, being clothed with his righteousness; he and they are in the same relation; he is the bridegroom, they the bride; and they are clothed alike with the garment down to the foot; and are righteous as he is righteous; and are herewith as a bride adorned and made ready for her husband; and the joy at such a solemnity fitly expresses the mutual joy of Christ and his church; see Re 19:7 so Christ's righteousness is compared to a wedding garment, Mt 22:12.

{d} Nhky "sacerdotali more ornabit", Tigurine version; "qui sacerdotem refert ornatu", Piscator. {e} hylk "vasis suis", Vatablus, Montanus; "instrumentis"; Junius & Tremellius, De Dieu.

Isaiah 61:11

Ver. 11. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud,.... Of tender grass in the spring of the year, after a long and cold winter, being well manured:

and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth being enclosed, and better taken care of, and well watered, and dunged, and cultivated; seeds sown in such a rich soil spring up freely, strongly, and constantly:

so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations; that is, the righteousness and salvation of his people through Christ, by which they shall be justified and saved; and on account of which they shall praise the Lord, and shall be to honour and praise themselves, being interested in those blessings in the sight of all the Christian nations around them. It respects the conversion of the Jews, and their justification and salvation, and the suddenness of it, and the large numbers of them converted, who should rise up at once like the buds of grass out of the earth; and denotes the flourishing condition in which they shall be, like a garden abounding with all manner of flowers and fruit; and suggests how full of joy, thankfulness, and praise to God they should be, and how honourable in the sight of men; and all this will be the Lord's doing, and owing to his efficacious grace. The Targum is,

"so the Lord God will reveal the righteousness and praise of Jerusalem before all the people."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 62:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 62

This chapter is a continuation of the prophecy of the glory of the church in the latter day. The prophet expresses his earnest desire for it, and his full assurance of it, Isa 62:1 which should lie in a new name, by which she should be called, and in her being a glorious crown and diadem in the hand of the Lord, Isa 62:3, in having her sons with her, and the Lord rejoicing over her, Isa 62:5, in having watchmen on her walls, and such as are the Lord's remembrancers in the midst of her, Isa 62:6, in plenty of food, Isa 62:8, in the coming of the Saviour, and in the gathering of elect Gentiles both to him and her, Isa 62:10.

Ver. 1. For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,.... By Zion and Jerusalem, the church in Gospel times is meant, as it often is in this book, and elsewhere; see Heb 12:22, for whose glory, prosperity, and safety, a concern is here expressed. Some take them to be the words of God himself, as the Targum and Kimchi; who seems to be silent and at rest, and even as it were asleep, when he does not arise and exert himself on the behalf of his people; but here he declares he would not be as one silent and at rest, nor let the kingdoms and nations of the world be at rest until the deliverer of his people was come, either Cyrus the type, or Christ the antitype: others take them to be the words of Israel in captivity, as Aben Ezra; though he afterwards observes they are the words of God, or of the church of God, soliciting her own restoration, prosperity, and glory: but they are the words of the prophet, expressing his great love and affection for the church, and his importunate desire of her happiness, intimating that he would never leave off praying for it till it was completed; not that he expected to live till the Messiah came, or to see the glory of the latter day, and of the church in it; but the sense is, that he would continue praying for it without ceasing as long as he lived, and he knew his prayers and his prophecies would live after he was dead; and that there would be persons raised up in the church that would succeed him in this work, till all the glorious things promised and prophesied of should be accomplished:

until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness; meaning either till the church's innocence is made as clear as the brightness of the sun at noonday, and she is vindicated from the calumnies and reproaches cast upon her, and open vengeance is taken on her enemies by the Lord, from whom her righteousness is, and by whom her wrongs will be righted; or until the righteousness of Christ, which is by imputation her righteousness, is wrought out by him and revealed in the Gospel, and she appears to all to be clothed with it, as with the sun, Re 12:1, which will be the case when to her shall be given to be arrayed openly with that fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints, and will be the time of her open marriage to the Lamb,
Re 19:7,

and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth; which gives light, and is seen afar off; her open deliverance from all her enemies, Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan; and her salvation by Jesus Christ, which will be more clearly published in the Gospel ministry in the latter day, and more openly seen and enjoyed in the effects of it. The Vulgate Latin version of this and the preceding clause is,

"until her righteous one goes forth as brightness, and her Saviour as a lamp that burneth;"

meaning Christ the righteous, and the Saviour of his body the church, who in his first coming was as a burning and shining light, even like the sun, the light of the world; and whose spiritual coming will be in such a glorious manner, that he will destroy antichrist with the brightness of it, and is therefore very desirable, **2Th 2:8**. The Targum of the whole is,

"till I work salvation for Zion, I will give no rest to the people; and till consolation comes to Jerusalem, I will not let the kingdoms rest, till her light is revealed as the morning, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth."

Isaiah 62:2

Ver. 2. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness,.... The innocence of her case, and the justness of her cause, and the vengeance took on her enemies, all being so clear as before declared; as well as her justifying righteousness, which being published in the Gospel to the Gentiles, they shall see it, embrace it, and shall be justified by it, **Ro 1:17** or "thy righteous One", as the Vulgate Latin version, Christ:

and all kings thy glory; or, "thy glorious One", as the same version; her Lord in whom she glories, and who is a glory to her, whom kings shall fall down before and worship, Ps 72:10 or the glorious state of the church, which shall draw the eyes of kings unto it, and who shall promote it by bringing their glory into it, Isa 60:1. Vitringa thinks all this refers to the times of Constantine, before which kings had not seen the glory of the church, nor had she seen kings subject to her; but now they began to see the glory of the kingdom of Christ: but it is better to interpret it of the latter day, when not only kings begin to see, not a few of them, but all in general shall see it:

and thou shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name; either "Jehovah Shammah", "The Lord is there"; his presence being among his church and people at this time in a remarkable manner, Eze 48:35 or Jehovah our righteousness; this being most clearly revealed, as before observed, Jer 33:16 or Christ, to whom she is so closely united, and so nearly allied, as to have his name on her, 1Co 12:12 or the church, and church of God, and of Christ, names only to be met with in the New Testament, and under the Gospel dispensation; or the name of Christians from Christ, Ac 11:26, or, as is more commonly received, the name of the sons of God, which the church of converted Jews shall have in the latter day, when the name of "Loammi" is taken off from them, **Ho 1:10**, and to this passage there may be an allusion in **Re 2:17**. This name is a new name; a renewed one, at the time of regeneration and faith, which was anciently provided in predestination, and bestowed in the covenant of grace; a renowned one, better than that of sons and daughters of the greatest potentates, and attended with various privileges; a wonderful name, an instance of marvellous grace in God, who stood in no need of adopted ones, and to them so unworthy of it; and which is ever new, and will always continue; this blessing of grace is of God, and not of men, and is to be ascribed to the grace of God, Father, Son and Spirit. Kimchi makes this new name to be "Hephzibah", Isa 62:4, not amiss.

Isaiah 62:3

Ver. 3. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord,.... The church and her members are glorious in themselves, through the righteousness of Christ put upon them; through the grace of Christ wrought in them; and through the honour they are raised unto, being made kings and priests unto God, all which will be more manifest in the latter day: and they are a glory to the Lord; there is a glory arises to him from their election, redemption, sanctification, and glorification, and from the ascriptions of glory made unto him; and they are regarded by him as a crown is by a prince; as a crown of massy gold, stuck with jewels, is rich and valuable, so are they in the eyes of Christ; they are dear and precious to him; high in his esteem; which he will not suffer to be trampled upon, or to be taken away from him, no more than a prince will suffer his crown to be so used or lost: and these are "in" his "hand" as such, which he holds in his hand, and looks at with pleasure and delight, and which he preserves and keeps safe and secure: or, "by the hand of the Lord" {f}; and then the sense is, that the church and its members should become so glorious, through his hand communicating grace and glory to them, through the operations of his hand, and the wonderful effects of his power on them:

and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God; the same thing expressed in different words, for the further confirmation and illustration of it.

{f} hwhy dyb "per manum Jovae", Gataker.

Isaiah 62:4

Ver. 4. Thou shall no more be termed Forsaken,.... That is, of the Lord her God, as she had seemed to be to others, and thought to be so by herself, Isa 49:14, not having so much of his gracious presence as is desirable; sensible communion with him being withheld; the word and ordinances not owned and blessed, or very little; and few souls converted; and the interest of Christ, labouring under many difficulties and discouragements, under the reproaches and persecutions of men, and so looked as if forsaken of God; but in the latter day all these complaints shall be removed; and the presence of God will be very manifest in his churches, and among his people; and they will appear to be his care and charge; see Isa 60:15:

neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; as the Gentile world was before the preaching of the Gospel in it; and as the land of Israel now is, and the Jewish people are, having rejected the Messiah, and continuing in impenitence and unbelief; and as the church of Christ is, when the word and ordinances are neglected, or little success attends them; but now more shall be the children of the desolate than of the married wife; many souls shall be born again in Zion, and many sons and daughters brought there, and brought up there, and therefore shall not be called desolate, Isa 49:19:

but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; the former of these was the name of Hezekiah's mother, 2Ki 21:1 and a fit name for the church of Christ, who is pleasant to him for delights, **So 7:6** and the latter well agrees with her being married to Christ. The meaning of these names is explained in the next clause; or the reason of their being given:

for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land is married; the former explains "Hephzibah", which signifies "my delight is in her"; Christ delighted in his church from everlasting, as they were the objects of his own and his Father's love; as chosen in him, and given to him as his spouse and bride, **Pr 8:31** and he delights in them in time, as clothed with his righteousness, washed in his blood, and adorned with the graces of his Spirit; he delights in their company, to hear their voice, and see their countenance; they are the excellent in the earth, in whom is all his delight, Ps 16:2, and he will delight in them hereafter, in the spiritual reign, when he will glorify and beautify them, and make them an eternal excellency, Isa 60:7, and in the personal reign, when they shall be as a bride adorned for her husband, and his tabernacle shall be among them, and he will reign with them, and they with him; during which time he will be presenting them to himself, and delighting in them, as a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, Re 21:2 and in heaven to all eternity. The latter clause explains "Beulah", which signifies "married", as the church secretly was to Christ from all eternity; in the latter day the espousals of her to him will be more open and manifest; then the marriage of the Lamb will be come, and it will more clearly appear that she is in such a state, by the numerous converts in her, or sons and daughters that will be born in her to Christ, both of Jews and Gentiles, Re 19:7.

Isaiah 62:5

Ver. 5. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee,....

As a young man, having married a virgin, possesses and enjoys her, and lives and dwells with her in great harmony and love, having a delight and complacency in her, there being a suitableness in her person and age; so those that are born in Zion, and brought up there, have communion with the church, and enjoy the ordinances of it; dwell and continue with her, and delight in her fellowship, ways, and worship; and have their hearts knit in love to her, professing the same faith, joining in the same worship, and walking with her in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. So the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it {g}, "as a young man dwells with a virgin, so thy sons shall dwell in thee"; as does the Targum in like manner; and so Jarchi interprets it; for it seems exceeding disagreeable for sons to marry their mother; nor can there be an allusion to such an incestuous practice; rather it should be rendered, "as a young man hath a virgin, thy sons shall have thee" {h}; have union to and communion with the church, and share in all the pleasures, privileges, and immunities of it:

and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee; Christ is the Lord God of his church and people; Immanuel, God with us; and he stands in the relation of a bridegroom to them, and they in the relation of a bride to him; and as such he rejoices over them with exceeding great joy, and that to do them good; so he rejoiced over them from all eternity, when first betrothed to him; and so he does in time, in redemption: this was the joy set before him, which animated him to bear the cross, and despise the shame of it; namely, that those would be redeemed, and saved by him, and brought to glory; he rejoices at the conversion of them, and will present them to himself with joy in the spiritual and personal reign, and to his Father at the last day; and particularly, what is meant here, there will be such a profusion of blessings on the church in the latter day, as will abundantly show the joy of Christ in his people.

{g} kai wv bunoikwn neaniskov paryenw, outw katoikhsousin oi uioi bou, Sept.; "habitabit enim juvenis cum virgine, et habitabunt in te filii tui", V. L.
{h} "Nam ut habet juvenis virginem, habebunt te filii tui", Cocceius.

Isaiah 62:6

Ver. 6. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem,.... Not angels, as Jarchi; nor kings, as Kimchi; nor princes and civil magistrates, as others; nor the mourners in Zion, as Aben Ezra; but ministers of the Gospel; as the

prophets of the Old Testament are called watch men, Isa 21:11, so ministers of the New,
Isa 52:8 who are to watch in all things over themselves, and for the souls of men; for their good, and to guard them against that which is evil, pernicious, and dangerous, both in principle and practice, **2Ti 4:5**. The allusion is to watchmen on the walls of cities, whose business is to keep their place and stand, and not move from it; to look out diligently, and descry an enemy, or any approaching danger, and give notice of it; and to defend the outworks of the city, and repel the enemy; all which requires courage, constancy, vigilance, and sobriety. The church is a city, and a walled one; God himself is a wall about her; salvation by Christ is as walls and bulwarks to her; and ministers of the Gospel are set for the defence of her: this is an ordinance and appointment of God; these watchmen are not of men's setting, nor do they take this office to themselves; but are placed in it by the Lord, who makes them able ministers, qualifies them for watchmen, and enables them to perform their work; and which is an instance of the love of God to his church, and of his care of it:

which shall never hold their peace day nor night; as the living creatures in **Re 4:8**, which are an emblem of Gospel ministers; who are always to be employed, and to be continually praying or preaching; the two principal branches of their ministry, **Ac 6:4**, they are not to be silent, but either praying in private or in public for direction and assistance in their meditations; for supply of the gifts and graces of the Spirit in their ministration, and for success in their work; and that all blessings of grace might descend on those to whom they minister: or else preaching the Gospel; being constant in season, and out of season; frequently inculcating the doctrines of Christ; constantly affirming these things; ever informing, instructing, and exhorting the people. It was Austin's wish that death might find him either praying or preaching:

ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; some take this to be an address to the same persons; and they may be described as such that make mention of the Lord in their ministrations; of the grace and love of God the Father; of the person, office, and grace of Christ; and of the operations of the Spirit: or, "as the remembrancers of the Lord" {i}, as it may be rendered; that put men in mind of the Lord; of what he has done for them, and is unto them; of the doctrines of the Gospel respecting him, and of their duty to him, and to one another, and to all men; and who put the Lord in mind of his promises to his people, and prophecies concerning them, to fulfil them: but I rather think another set of men are meant, even members of churches, as distinct from ministers; who make mention of the Lord to one another, in private conference with each other; of his gracious dealings with them, and favours bestowed upon them; and who make mention of him in their prayers to him, and praises of him; and who should not keep silence, but pray without ceasing, even always, and not faint, Lu 18:1.

{i} hwhy ta Myrykzmh "qui Deo estis a memoriis", Gataker; "qui facitis ut alii reminiscantur Domini", Forerius.

Isaiah 62:7

Ver. 7. And give him no rest,.... Not let him alone, as he desired that Moses would, but wrestle with him as Jacob did, and not let him go without the blessing; be importunate with him, as the widow with the unjust judge; and be incessant in prayer:

until he establish; his church; which, though founded by him, and built upon the sure foundation of his laying, upon a rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; yet, as to its outward state, is sometimes fluctuating and unstable; it is not always in the same place, nor in the same circumstances; but in the latter day it will be established on the top of the mountains, and will be a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; which is the Lord's work to do, and which he has promised; and therefore may be prayed for in faith, nor should saints cease praying till it is done, **Isa 2:2**:

and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth; matter of praise; till the church and its members become famous in the world, and shall be praised by men, and God shall be praised for their sakes; for the purity of Gospel doctrines and ordinances; for unity in worship; for cordial love and affection to each other; for holiness of life and conversation; for number, and for figure, converts numerous, and many of these great personages; when what is now to its discredit and dispraise will be removed; all false doctrine, or mixtures of it the many sects and parties which go by the Christian name; the sad divisions and animosities among them; the impure lives of many professors; the small number of real Christians; their meanness and poverty.

Isaiah 62:8

Ver. 8. The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength,.... By Christ, say some, who is the arm of the Lord, the power of God, by whom he made the world, and upholds all things; but though he sometimes is said to swear unto him, and concerning him, yet is never said to swear by him; rather the attribute of omnipotence is here designed; as God is sometimes said to swear by his holiness, so here by his almighty power; the consideration of which itself is a great encouragement to faith, to believe the fulfilment of promises, because God is able; but his swearing by it is a further confirmation of it; it is as if he had said, let me not be thought to be the omnipotent God I am, if I do not do so and so; or as sure as I have such a right hand, and arm of strength, what follows shall certainly be accomplished:

surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the strangers shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: this was threatened to the people of Israel, in case of sinning against God, and revolting from him; and was accomplished in the times of their captivity in Babylon, De 28:33 but here it is promised, and the strongest assurance given, it should be so no more; which cannot respect the deliverance of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity; for it is certain that after that their enemies did eat their corn, and drink their wine; the Romans came and took away their city and nation, as they feared, and all their good things; wherefore this must refer to future times, to times yet to come, when this people, being converted, shall be restored to their own land, and enjoy great plenty of good things, and never more be disturbed by their enemies: though all this may be understood in a spiritual sense of the "corn" and "wine" of the Gospel, and the ministration of it; which was first provided for them, and they were invited to partake of it; and in preparing which the apostles and first ministers of the word, being Jews, "laboured"; but they rejecting it, it was carried to the Gentiles, who had been their "enemies", and were "aliens" from the commonwealth of Israel, which they gladly received and fed upon; but now it is promised, that the Gospel, being again brought unto them, should no more be taken from them, but ever continue with them; even all the means of grace, and ordinances of the Gospel, for the comfort and refreshment of their souls.

Isaiah 62:9

Ver. 9. But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord,.... That is, the corn; they who have manured the land, sowed seed in it, reaped it when ripe, gathered it in its season; these shall eat the fruit of their labours, and praise the Lord for it, acknowledge his bounty and goodness to them; for notwithstanding all the diligence, industry, and labour of men, it is through the blessing of the Lord, and owing to his favour, that they have bread, and a sufficiency of it, to eat; which when they have, they should be thankful for it, **De 8:10**

and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness: that is, the wine they shall drink; having planted vineyards, and gathered the grapes when ripe, and brought them to the winepress, and there made wine of them; they shall drink it at a proper time and place: the allusion is to the priests and Levites eating and drinking holy things, within the compass and bounds of the temple; and may signify the converted Jews, partaking of the Gospel and Gospel ordinances in the house of God, as well as the Gentiles, being all now made priests unto God. The Arabic version interprets it of persons "gathered", that should eat and drink. The Targum is express, they that gather the corn in, and they that press the wine.

Isaiah 62:10

Ver. 10. Go through, go through the gates,.... Open them, and keep them open for persons to enter in; meaning not the gates of Jerusalem, which those in it should open for the reception of the Jews returning from Babylon, though there may be an allusion to it; but the gates of the church in the latter day, which shall stand open night and day, that converts, who shall flock unto it, may enter in thereat, whether Jews or Gentiles; see Isa 26:1:

prepare you the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; for the people of the Jews, or the Gentiles, by the destruction of the eastern and western antichrist, and by the preaching of the Gospel; by which means way will be made for the kings of the east, and for the eastern kingdoms being converted, and becoming the kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ; see Re 16:12:

gather out the stones; all things that offend, that are a stumblingblock to Jews, Pagans, and Mahometans, and hinder them embracing the Christian religion; as errors, heresies, schisms, false doctrines, false worship, idolatry, and superstition. Jarchi thinks there is a respect to the corruption of nature; and so the Targum interprets it, the thought of the evil imagination, which is as a stone: or, "pitch" or "strow it with stones" {k}; that is, the highway; pave it with them, because of the clay, that so it may be a good way for passengers:

lift up a standard for the people; that they may know where to come or go; this is to be understood of the preaching of the Gospel, and of lifting up Christ as a standard or ensign in it, to whom the people might be directed, invited, and encouraged to come; see Isa 11:10. The Targum is,

"the prophet said, pass by, and return through the gates; turn the heart of the people to the right way; publish good things and comforts to the righteous, who remove the thought of the evil imagination, which was as a stone of stumbling; lift up a sign to the people."

{k} Nbam wlqo "sternite [eam] lapidibus", Vatablus, Forerius, Gataker. So many Jewish writers, R. Jonah, R. Joseph Kimchi, and Ben Melech; but is disliked by Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 569.

Isaiah 62:11

Ver. 11. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world,.... This is not to be interpreted of the proclamation by Cyrus, giving liberty to the people of the Jews to return to their own land, for that did not reach to the end of the world; but of the proclamation of the Gospel, which, as when first published, the sound of it went into all the earth, and the words of it to the ends of the world, Ro 10:18. So it will be in the latter day, when it shall be preached to all nations, from one end of the world to the other, Re 14:6:

Say ye to the daughter of Zion, behold, thy salvation cometh; or "thy Saviour" {l}, or "thy Redeemer", as the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and which is to be understood not of his first coming, or of his incarnation, though that is sometimes foretold in much such language, **Zec 9:9** and the same things are said of him with respect to that, as follows: "behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him"; See Gill on "Isa 40:10", but of his spiritual coming, of which notice is given to the church, the congregation of Zion, as the Targum renders it: who will come in a spiritual manner, and do a great work in the world; destroy antichrist; convert Jews and Gentiles; take to himself his great power and reign; and give a reward to his servants the prophets, his saints, and them that fear his name, **2Th 2:8**. The Targum is,

"behold, a reward to them that do his word is with him, and all their works are manifest before him."

The word behold is three times used in this verse, to raise attention to what is said, and as pointing out something wonderful, and to express the certainty of

it.

{l} Kevy "tuus Salvator", V. L. Munster, Tigurine version.

Isaiah 62:12

Ver. 12. And they shall call them the holy people,.... For whom the way is prepared, to whom the standard is lifted up, and the proclamation made, and who upon it are gathered in to Christ the Saviour, and to the church: these shall be called, by men that know them, have a spirit of discerning, and are capable of judging, "the holy people"; a people separated and set apart for God, for his service and glory; chosen to be a special people, above all the people of the earth; chosen through sanctification of the Spirit, and to holiness here and hereafter, and so sanctified by God the Father, as in **Jude 1:1**, and in consequence of it are made holy by the Spirit of God, in the effectual calling; they are not holy by nature, nor by their own power, but by the grace of God, who calls them with a holy calling, and to holiness, and implants principles of grace and holiness in them, so that they are truly and really so. This character respects the church and its members in the latter day, when everyone that remains in Jerusalem, and every pot and vessel there, shall be holiness to the Lord; yea, that shall be upon the bells of the horses, **Isa 4:3**:

the redeemed of the Lord; which character includes the blessing of redemption, from whence the denomination is, which is a blessing of a spiritual nature; the redemption of the soul from sin, Satan, the law, its curse, and condemnation, and from all enemies; a blessing early in the heart of God; contrived by his infinite wisdom; secured in the covenant of grace; wrought out by Christ; is a plenteous one, containing various blessings of grace in it, and, in its effects and consequences, of an eternal duration: this character is also expressive of Christ, as the author of the above blessing: these are not redeemed by themselves, nor by their friends, nor by men, nor by angels, but by the Lord; who, as man, is the near kinsman of his people, and has the right to redeem; as God, he is mighty and able to redeem them; and who by his precious blood has obtained redemption for them; so that he has a property in them, which is asserted in this character; they are not their own, nor any other's but his, a peculiar people, redeemed from among men, the special favourites of heaven; and who, in consequence of it, are called, and kept, and saved with an everlasting salvation:

and thou shalt be called, Sought out; thou, daughter of Zion; or the church of God, consisting of elect, redeemed, and called ones; such as are sought out of the ruins of the fall, among the men of the world, and dust of the earth; found in a very miserable condition, usually by means of the Gospel, and by Christ, who knows them well, where are, and what the time of finding them, and can by name, and does; all which is the fruit and effect of his love unto them; though this character may chiefly respect the notice that will be taken of the church in the latter day; whereas she has been Zion, whom no man seeks after, Jer 30:17, now she shall be sought and flocked unto by all nations, and by great personages, even by the kings and princes of the earth, **Isa 2:2**.

A city not forsaken; the city of the living God, of which saints are fellow citizens, consisting of many persons, in good and flourishing circumstances, and which shall not be forsaken of men, as it has been, Isa 60:15, but shall be filled with converts, both Jews and Gentiles; nor forsaken of God, but shall enjoy his gracious presence, and sensible communion with him in his ordinances; nor shall any of its true members be forsaken, or the work of grace in them; they shall none of them perish, but have everlasting life; so that here is a cluster of glorious doctrines, in their order and connection one with another: election in the first character; redemption in the second; effectual calling in the third; and final perseverance in the last.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 63:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 63

This chapter contains a prophecy of the vengeance of Christ upon the enemies of his church in the latter day, whereby complete salvation would be obtained for them; and this illustrated by the mercies of God to the people of Israel of old; and is concluded with the church s prayer to him. The account of the vengeance taken by Christ on his enemies is introduced by a colloquy between him and his church; who puts a question, in which he is described by the places from whence he came, by his apparel, and by his manner of walking; to which he returns an answer, Isa 63:1, then a second question is put, about the colour of his garments; for which he gives a reason, Isa 63:2 it being the time of his vengeance on his enemies, and of the redemption of his people, Isa 63:4 the manner in which he performed both is observed, Isa 63:5 and the thorough work he would make; and the entire riddance of all his enemies is determined upon, Isa 63:6, which puts the prophet, or the church, in mind of former mercies bestowed upon Israel of old, the peculiar people and children of God, the Lord had a great opinion of, and favour for, whom he dealt very tenderly with, and redeemed, and saved, and preserved, Isa 63:7 though they acted an ungrateful part to him, which is aggravated by the various kind steps of Providence, in leading them through the Red sea, guiding them in the wilderness, and bringing them to rest safely in Canaan's land, for his own glory, Isa 63:10 and all is closed with the church's prayer to God, imploring his grace and mercy; pleading relation to him; expostulating with him about their present case, and observing the difference between them and their enemies, Isa 63:15 and which prayer is continued in the next chapter.

Ver. 1. Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?.... These are not the words of the angels at the time of Christ's ascension to heaven; or of the people of Israel; but rather of the prophet, or of the church he represents; by whom this question is put, not concerning Michael the archangel returning from fighting the king of Persia, for what has Edom and Bozrah to do with Persia? nor concerning Judas Maccabaeus, in whose times it seems a victory was obtained over the Edomites: the description is too grand and august to agree with any mere man; rather therefore it is to be understood of God himself taking vengeance on the wicked, many of the characters agreeing with the description of him in Isa 59:16 though it seems best of all to interpret it of the Messiah. Aben Ezra observes, that there are some that say this is the Messiah; others that it is Michael; but, says he, it is right that it respects the glorious name, that is, Jehovah himself; the first sense he gives is most correct. Several Jewish writers, ancient as well as modern, interpret this of the Messiah, whom they yet expect to come from Rome to the land of Israel, which they suppose is meant by Edom. So says one {n} of their writers,

"when the King Messiah shall come, he will be clothed in purple, beautiful to look at, which in colour shall be like to wine for the clothing of the King Messiah shall be silk, red as blood; and it shall be worked with the needle in various colours, and he shall be the Head of Israel; and this is what is said in Isa 63:1 "wherefore art thou red in thy apparel?""

And, say others of their ancient writers {o}, the Ishmaelites or Turks shall fight three battles in the latter day; one in the forest of Arabia; another in the sea; and a third in the great city Rome, which shall be greater than the other two; and from thence shall spring the Messiah, and he shall look upon the destruction of the one and of the other, and from thence shall he come into the land of Israel, as it is said, "who is this that comes from Edom?" &c. So Abarbinel {p} asserts, that the Ishmaelites or Turks shall come against Rome, and destroy it; and then shall be revealed the Messiah, the son of David, and shall complete the redemption of the Lord, according to Da 12:1 and then quotes the above passage of their wise men; and upon it observes, that from thence it appears that Messiah, the son of David, shall be of the Jews that are in the captivity of Edom (or Rome), for so they explain Isa 63:1 "who is this that comes from Edom?" &c.; and so Kimchi interprets the prophecy of time to come: but though the Messiah is intended, this is to be understood not of his first coming, which was out of Zion, out of the tribe of Judah, and out of Bethlehem Ephratah; nor of his ascension to heaven, after his bloody sufferings and death, and the victory he had obtained over all our spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell; for that was from the land of Judea, from Mount Olivet, near to Jerusalem, the place of his sufferings and death; but of his spiritual coming, which is yet future, to take vengeance on antichrist, and all the antichristian powers. It is usual in Scripture for the enemies of the church and people of God in Gospel times to be expressed by such who were the known and implacable enemies of the people of Israel; and such were the Edomites, the inhabitants of Idumea, of which Bozrah was a principal city; see Ps 137:7 and were a lively emblem of antichrist and his followers, for their relation to the people of Christ, their cruelty to them, and contempt of them; from the conquest and slaughter of which Christ is here represented returning as a victorious and triumphant conqueror; see Isa 34:5 hence he is said to come from thence "with dyed garments", or "stained" {q}; that is, with the blood of his enemies; so Jarchi interprets it dyed in blood, or dipped in it; to which agrees the apparel of Christ in Re 19:18, where he is said to be clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; which chapter is the best commentary upon this passage, referring to the same time and case: it follows,

this that is glorious in his apparel; for though it was thus stained and discoloured with the blood of his enemies, yet was glorious to himself, having gotten such a complete victory over all his and his church's enemies, and so was glorious to them to behold; and especially, since on this vesture, and on his thigh, is a name written, "King of kings, and Lord of lords", Re 19:16:

travelling in the greatness of his strength? marching in great stateliness and majesty at the head of his victorious troops, he nor they having nothing to fear from their enemies, being all vanquished and destroyed. Strength, and the greatness of it, may well be ascribed to Christ, who is the mighty God, yea, the

Almighty; the mighty man, made strong by the Lord for himself; and the mighty Mediator, having all power in heaven and earth: he travelled in the greatness of his strength from heaven to earth, by the assumption of our nature; while here he went about continually doing good; with the utmost intrepidity he went forth to meet his foes, and death itself, at the proper time, and without fear passed through the valley of the shadow of death; when raised again, in his ascension to heaven, he marched through the territories of Satan, the air, in great triumph, dragging him and his principalities and powers at his chariot wheels; and when he had poured down his Spirit plentifully, he went forth into the Gentile world in the ministration of the Gospel, conquering and to conquer; and in the latter day he will come and take vengeance on all the antichristian states, and return in triumph, to which this passage refers; see Re 17:14 the answer to the question follows,

I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save; these are the words of Christ describing himself, by his speech and by his power, by his word and by his works: he "spoke in righteousness", at the making of the covenant of grace in eternity, some things by way of request for his elect, others by way of promise for them; all which he has faithfully and righteously performed: under the Old Testament dispensation, he spake many things in righteousness by his prophets, and by his Spirit in them; yea, he often appeared in a human form, and spoke to the patriarchs and others: when here on earth, he spoke "in" or "of righteousness" {r}; of the righteousness of God he came to declare; of his own righteousness he came to bring in; and of the happiness of those who sought it, and were justified by it; and of the insufficiency of man's righteousness to bring him to heaven: here it seems to have a more especial respect to the promises made to the church, of her salvation from her enemies, and of the destruction of them; which will now be accomplished, and appear to be the true and faithful sayings of Christ, Re 19:9 and that he is "mighty to save" appears from the spiritual salvation of his people he has already wrought out: God laid help on one that is mighty, and he being mighty undertook it, and has accomplished it; and which work required strength, even almighty power, since sin was to be atoned for by bearing it, the law to be fulfilled, justice to be satisfied, the wrath and curse of God to be endured, and innumerable enemies to be engaged with; and of such a nature was that salvation, that neither angels nor men could ever have effected it: and this his power to save will be further manifest, when the beast and false prophet, antichrist, and all the antichristian powers, shall be destroyed by him, and his people entirely delivered out of their hands, Re 11:18. The Targum of the whole is,

"who hath said these things that shall bring the blow upon Edom, the strong vengeance on Bozrah, to execute the vengeance of the judgment of his people, as he hath sworn unto them by his word? he saith, behold I appear as I spake in righteousness, much power is before or with me to save"

see Re 18:8.

{n} R. Moses Haddarsan in Bereshit Rabba in Gen. xlix. 11. apud Galatia. de Arcan. Cath. Ver. I. 8. c. 13. p. 579. {o} Pirke Eliezer, c. 30. fol. 32. 1. {p} Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 44. 1, 2. {q} Uwmx "contaminatus, maculatus vestibua", Gataker. {r} hqdub "de justitia", Piscator, Vitringa; "Ioquor justitiam", V. L. Sept.

Isaiah 63:2

Ver. 2. Wherefore art thou red in thy apparel,.... Christ having satisfied the church as to her first question, concerning his person, who he was; she puts a second to him, about the colour of his garments, which was red, and the reason of it. His garments at his transfiguration were white as snow, whiter than any fuller on earth could whiten them; his robe of righteousness is fine linen, clean and white; the garment of his human nature, or his form as man, was white and ruddy; but this, through his bloody sufferings, became red, being all over bloody through the scourges he received, the crown of thorns he wore, the piercing of his hands, feet, and sides, with the nails and spear; but here it appears of this colour not with his own blood, but with the blood of his enemies, as is hereafter explained:

and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? or winepress, into which clusters of grapes are cast, and these are trodden by men, the juice of which sparkles on their garments, and stains them, so that they become of a red colour.

Isaiah 63:3

Ver. 3. I have trodden the winepress alone,.... This is an answer to the question before put, and confirms what was observed, that his garments were like one that treadeth in the winepress; this was very true, he had trodden it, and trodden it alone, and that was the reason his garments were of such a hue; what others did by their servants, he did by himself, alone and without them. The winepress is a symbol of the wrath of God; not of what Christ bore himself as the sinner's surety, for then he was trodden as a vine, or the clusters of it, himself; but of what he executed on others. Wicked men are compared to clusters of the vine; the winepress into which they are cast is the wrath of God, and Christ is the treader of it; particularly he will be in the latter day, when antichrist and his followers will be destroyed by him; see Re 14:18.

And of the people there was none with me; either fighting with him, that could oppose him, any more than the clusters of grapes can resist the treaders of them; or to assist him in taking vengeance on his enemies: for though the armies of heaven follow him in white, these are little more than attendants and spectators, at most but instruments; all the power to conquer and destroy is from himself, and owing to the twoedged sword proceeding out of his mouth, Re 19:14 even as when he stood in the legal place and stead of his people there were none of them with him; he alone was the author of salvation, none could bear the wrath of God but himself, or engage with spiritual enemies, or work out salvation for them. But of this the texts speaks not, only of the destruction of the enemies of Christ and his church:

for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; with great eagerness, with all his might and strength; and this is the reason why his garments were so stained, even with the blood of his enemies, trodden and trampled under foot by him in this furious manner; as a person in a winepress alone, and treading it with all his might, has his garments more sparkled and stained with the juice of the grape, than when there are many, and these tread lightly. The words being in the future tense show that they respect time to come; and the manner of speaking ascertains the accomplishment of them, and which is further confirmed by what follows:

and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment; just as the garments of those that tread in the winepress are sprinkled and stained with the juice of the grape; this will have its accomplishment when he shall appear in a vesture dipped in blood, or shall be as bloody, with the blood of his enemies, as if it was dipped in it, Re 19:13.

Isaiah 63:4

Ver. 4. For the day of vengeance is in my heart,.... Resolved on with him, fixed by him, and which is desirable to him; he has it at heart, and longs as it were till the time is come to avenge the blood of his saints on the Romish antichrist, whom he will destroy with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming; see **2Th 2:8** and when he shall pour out all his vials on the antichristian states, and revenge the cause and quarrel of his people, Re 16:1:

and the year of my redeemed is come; the time when those who are already redeemed by the blood of Christ, and so are his property, whom he claims as his own, being the purchase of his blood, shall be redeemed again from antichristian bondage and slavery, shall be called and brought out of Babylon; and when those, who have led them captive, shall go into captivity themselves: this will be a jubilee year to the saints; a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; when, being rid of all their persecuting enemies, they will enjoy the utmost peace, prosperity, and safety; see Re 13:10.

Isaiah 63:5

Ver. 5. And I looked, and there was none to help,.... As, in the first redemption and salvation by Christ here on earth, there were none among the angels, nor any of the sons of men, to help him and assist him therein, none but Jehovah the Father; so, in this latter salvation, the church and people of God will be reduced to such a low, helpless, and forlorn condition, that there will be none to lend an assisting hand; their deliverance will appear most manifestly to be the sole work of almighty power:

and I wondered that there was none to uphold; not the Saviour and Redeemer, he needed none; but his people under their sufferings, trials, and exercises, and his sinking, dying, cause and interest: this is spoken after the manner of men, and to make the salvation appear the more remarkable, distinguishing, and great, and solely his own work; for otherwise expectation and disappointment, consternation and amazement, as the word {r} signifies, cannot be properly ascribed to this great Redeemer:

therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; to himself, his mystical self, his church and people, and for his own glory; a salvation which his own omnipotent arm could only effect;
See Gill on "Isa 59:16",

and my fury it upheld me; his zeal for his church and people, and his indignation against their enemies, excited his almighty power on their behalf, and carried him through the work of their deliverance and salvation he engaged in; see **Isa 9:7**.

{r} Mmwtvaw "et obstupui, Musculus; stupefactus sum", Vatablus; "et obstupesceban", Cocceius; "stupebam", Vitringa.

Isaiah 63:6

Ver. 6. And I will tread down the people in mine anger,....
See Gill on "Isa 63:3",

and make them drunk in my fury; or with it {s} the wrath of God is signified by a cup, which he gives wicked men to drink, and which is an inebriating one to them, Ps 75:8, and here it signifies the cup of the wine of the fierceness of God's wrath, which shall be given to mystical Babylon, to antichrist and his followers,
Re 14:10:

and I will bring down their strength to the earth; their strong kingdoms, fortified cities, and mighty men, their wealth and riches, of which they boasted, and in which they trusted; see Isa 26:5. The eighteenth chapter of the Revelation is a commentary on these words.

{s} ytmxb "excandescentia mea", Junius & Tremellius; "aestu meo", Cocceius; so Gataker.

Isaiah 63:7

Ver. 7. I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord,.... These are the words of the prophet, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe; who, having heard what the Lord would do for his church and people in later times, by avenging them on their enemies, calls to mind the favours bestowed on Israel of old; and determines to make mention of them, and put the saints in mind of them, as types, earnests, and pledges of what would be done for them; and to encourage their faith and hope in the performance of what was promised them: these he calls "the lovingkindnesses of the Lord"; meaning not only the instances of his providential goodness in bringing them out of Egypt, leading them through the

Red sea and wilderness, and settling them in Canaan's land, after particularly mentioned; but also those of his special grace and goodness to the chosen of God among them; called in the plural number "lovingkindnesses", being the acts of all the three Persons displayed in election, redemption, and sanctification; and because these are many and various, and an abundance of grace and love is manifested in them:

and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us; which are due to him from all creatures, angels and men, and especially the saints; and which belong to each divine Person, according to the various gifts of grace freely bestowed by them; such as the gift of God himself to his people; the gifts of his Son, and of the blessed Spirit, with all his graces, faith, hope, love, repentance, &c.; and all the blessings of grace; as pardon, justification, adoption, and eternal life; a right unto it, and meetness for it all which call for praise and thankfulness: and the

great goodness towards the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses; the gifts of grace are bestowed, not according to the merits of men, for then they would not be free grace gifts; and, besides, there is no merit in a creature; the best works of the best of men are not meritorious, of anything at the hand of God; but all they have flow from mere sovereign mercy, pure grace, and free unmerited love, which is abundant, yea, boundless, and even infinite. A heap of words is here made use of, and all little enough to express the wonderful kindness of God in the acts of his grace and goodness to his church and people; which ought always to be had in sight and mind, and to be remembered and spoken of in private and in public.

Isaiah 63:8

Ver. 8. For he said, surely they are my people,.... Not in common with the rest of mankind, being his creatures, and the care of his providence; but his special people, whom he had chosen to be such, and had made a covenant with; he had avouched them for his people, and they had avouched him to be the Lord their God; and this covenant interest was the ground and foundation of the actual donation and application of all the blessings of grace and goodness to them before mentioned. These are the words of Jehovah himself, related by the prophet; and are applicable to all the elect of God, whom he has chosen in Christ; taken into the covenant of grace made with him; and who appear manifestly to be his peculiar people by their effectual calling; when it is a sure and certain thing, that they, who were not known by themselves or others to be the people of God, are evidently so; and the Lord himself makes no scruple of acknowledging them as such, even though their conduct and behaviour towards him is not altogether as it should be, and which was the case of the people of Israel; however, he is willing to hope well of them, as parents do of their children, speaking after the manner of men, and that they will behave better for the future, being by fresh mercies laid under obligation to him, as he did of Israel of old:

children that will not lie; not the children of Satan, as liars are, who was a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies; as wicked men are, who go astray from the womb, speaking lies; but children of God by adopting grace, and through faith in Christ; and therefore should not lie to God, nor to men, nor to one another, as being unbecoming their relation as children: this opinion the Lord entertains of his children, speaking after the manner of men, that they will not deal deceitfully and hypocritically with him, but serve him in sincerity, and worship him in spirit and in truth; that their hearts will be right with him, and they steadfast in his covenant: thus he hoped well of Israel of old, and so he does of all his spiritual Israel, his special people, and dear children:

so he was their Saviour; in this view and expectation of things, as he is of all men in a providential way, and especially of them that believe; he was the Saviour of literal Israel in a temporal manner, in Egypt, the Red sea, and wilderness; and of his chosen people among them, in a spiritual manner, as he is of all his elect in Christ Jesus; and even though they do not entirely answer the just expectations expressed concerning them.

Isaiah 63:9

Ver. 9. In all their affliction he was afflicted,.... That is, God, who said the above words; not properly speaking; for to be afflicted is not consistent with his nature and perfections, being a spirit, and impassible; nor with his infinite and complete happiness; but this is said after the manner of men, and is expressive of the sympathy of God with his afflicted people, and his tender care of them, and concern for them under affliction, as one friend may have for another: afflictions belong to the people of God; they come to them, not by chance, but according to the will of God; and are not in wrath, but in love; they are many and various; there is an "all" of them, yet not one too many, and in everyone of them God is afflicted, or sympathizes with them: as he looked upon the affliction of the people of Israel, in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, and had compassion upon them, and saved them, so he visits all his people when afflicted, and pities them, and speaks comfortably to them; knows and owns their souls in adversity; makes known himself to them; grants them his gracious presence; puts underneath them his everlasting arms; makes their bed in their affliction, and supplies their wants; and this sympathy arises from their union to him, from his relation to them as a Father, and from his great love to them. There is a double reading of these words; the marginal reading is, "in all their affliction there is affliction to him" {t}; or, "he was afflicted"; which our version follows: the textual reading is, "there is no affliction"; or, "he was not afflicted" {u}; he seemed to take no notice of their affliction, or be concerned at it, that he might the sooner bring them to a sense of themselves and their sins, **Ho 5:15**. The Targum follows this reading, and renders it actively, "and he afflicted them not" {w}: they were indeed in affliction, but they, and not he, brought it upon them, and by their sins. Some render it, "he was no enemy" {x}; though he afflicted them, yet not in wrath, but love; or, "in all their straits there was no strait" {y}; the Israelites were in straits when Pharaoh's army pursued them behind, the rocks were on both sides them, and the sea before them, and yet there was no strait as it were, they were so soon delivered out of it; and so it may be read, "in all their afflictions there was no affliction"; there is so much love in the afflictions of God's people, and they work so much for their good, and they are so soon delivered out of them, that they scarce deserve the name of afflictions; and so both readings may be taken in, "in all their afflictions there was no affliction to him"; or to them, to Israel, to the people of God:

and the Angel of his presence saved them; not Michael, as Jarchi; but the Messiah is here meant; the Angel of the covenant, the Angel which went before the Israelites in the wilderness, Ex 23:20 not a created angel, or an angel by nature, but by office; being sent of God, as the word signifies, on the errand and business of salvation; called "the Angel of God's presence", or "face", because his face was seen in him; his name, and nature, and perfections were in him; he is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person besides, the presence of God was always with him; he is the "Ithiel", the Word that was with God, and with whom God always was; who lay in the bosom of his Father, and was ever with him; and who also, as Mediator, introduces his people into the presence of God, and always appears in it for them as their advocate and intercessor: now to him salvation is ascribed; he saved Israel out of Egypt, and out of the hands of all their enemies in the wilderness; and which salvation was typical of the spiritual, eternal, and complete salvation, which is only by Christ, and issues in eternal glory:

in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; Israel out of Egyptian bondage, and from all their enemies, which was owing to his great love to them, which operated in a way of mercy, pity, and compassion,
Ho 11:1, and it is he who has redeemed the spiritual Israel of God, not by power only, but by price, from sin, Satan, and the law, death, and hell, with a spiritual and eternal redemption, and which flows from his love to those persons; hence he undertook to be their Redeemer; came in their nature to redeem them; and gave himself for them for that purpose; which love is wonderful and matchless, and showed itself in pity and compassion; he became a merciful as well as a faithful high priest; he saw them in their low estate, pitied them, and delivered them out of it:

and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old; he bore them in his bosom, and in his arms, as a nursing father his child; he carried them, as on eagles' wings, from the time of their coming out of Egypt, to their settlement in Canaan's land, Nu 11:12 he bore with their manners for forty years, and carried them through all their trials and difficulties, and supported them under them, and brought them out of them all, Ac 13:18 and so he bears all his people on his heart, and in his hands, and bears them up under all their temptations and afflictions; and, from the time of their conversion, carries on his work in them, and carries them safe to heaven, as the great Captain of their salvation, and never leaves them, nor forsakes them; see
Isa 46:3.

{t} ru wl "angustia ipsi fuit", Calvin, Grotius; "ipse fuit contribulatus", Munster; "ipsi fuit angustum", Vitringa. {u} ru al "non angustia, Montanus; non afflictus est", Tigurine version. {w} "Non affecit [eos] angustia", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "non coarctavit eos, sub. Deus, vel angustia", Forerius, {x} "Non fuit hostis", Gataker; so Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 423. {y} "In omni angustia eorum non augustia", Montanus.

Isaiah 63:10

Ver. 10. But they rebelled,.... Against the Lord, not withstanding he thought so well of them; did so many good things for them; sympathized with them, and showed them so many favours; wretched ingratitude! they rebelled against the Lord in the times of Moses, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, by their murmurings, unbelief, and idolatry; wherefore he calls them a rebellious people, and says they were such from the day he had been with them; and so in later times, in the times of the judges, and of the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel, they rebelled against God their Parent, Protector, and King; see **De 9:7** and so they did in the times of Christ, whom they rejected as the Messiah, and disowned as their King, and still continue in their rebellion, Lu 19:14:

and vexed his Holy Spirit; the Spirit of God the Father, who pitied them in all their afflictions; or the Spirit of the Angel of his presence, that redeemed and saved them; for the Spirit is both the Spirit of the Father and of the Son; and he is holy in his nature and operations, and the author of sanctification in the hearts of his people; him they vexed and provoked to anger against them, speaking after the manner of men, by their sins and transgressions; rejecting his counsels and instructions by Moses, and by the prophets in later times, in and by whom he spake unto them, and by the apostles in Gospel times; for the Jews, as their fathers before them ever did, resisted the Holy Spirit of God in the evidence he gave of the Messiah, which must be very provoking, **Ac 7:51**. The Targum paraphrases it, the word of his holy prophets; and so Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; and according to some, in Aben Ezra, the Angel of glory is meant, who went before the people of Israel, whom they were charged not to provoke, Ex 23:20:

therefore he was turned to be their enemy; not that there is any change in God, or any turn in him from love to hatred; but he may, and sometimes does, so appear in his providential dispensations towards his people, as to seem to be their enemy, and to be thought to be so by them, Job 13:24. The Targum is, and his Word became their enemy; compare with this Lu 19:27:

and he fought against them; as he threatened he would when they behaved ill towards him; and as he actually did when he brought the sword upon them, gave them up into the hands of their enemies, as often in the times of the judges, and particularly when the king of Babylon came against them; see Le 26:25 and as the Messiah did when he brought the Roman armies against them, and destroyed their city, to which times this prophecy is thought by some to have respect, and not without reason.

Isaiah 63:11

Ver. 11. Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people,.... Which may be understood either of the Lord, who remembered his lovingkindnesses towards these people, and his tender mercies which had been ever of old; the covenant he made with their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the wonders he did for them in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, by the hand of Moses; his intercession to him on their behalf, and the many great and good things he did for them; and therefore determined not now to cast them off altogether, but to do as he had done before; and, to stir up himself thereunto, puts the following questions:

where is he? &c.; so the Targum paraphrases it,

"he had mercy for the glory of his name, and because of the remembrance of his goodness of old, the mighty things he did by the hands of Moses to his people;"

and adds,

"lest they should say;"

that is, the Gentiles, as Aben Ezra also explains it, lest they should by way of taunt and reproach say, as follows: "where is he?" &c.; compare with this De 32:26. Gussetius {z} thinks the last words should be rendered, "the extractor of his people"; or, he that drew out his people; that is, out of many waters, delivered them from various afflictions, as in Ps 18:16 and to be understood not of Moses, only in allusion to him, who had his name from being drawn out of the waters; but of a divine Person, who is said to do all the following things; so Ben Melech says the word here has the signification of drawing, or bringing out, as in the above psalm: or else these are the words of the people themselves; at least of some of the truly good and gracious, wise and faithful, among them, in this time of their distress; calling to mind former times, and former appearances of God for them, using them as pleas and arguments with him, and as an encouragement to their faith and hope; and right it is to

remember the years of the right hand of the most High, Ps 77:10 so Jarchi takes them to be the words of the prophet in his distress, bemoaning and saying, in a supplicating way, what is after expressed; and Kimchi interprets them of Israel in captivity; it seems to be the language of the believing Jews a little before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, or about the time of their conversion in the latter day: saying, where is he that brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? or "shepherds" {a}, according to another reading; that is, Moses and Aaron, by the hands of whom the Lord led his people Israel as a flock of sheep, and which were his, and not the property of those shepherds; they were only instruments by, and with whom, he brought them through the sea, and out of it, which was a wonderful work of God, and often mentioned as a proof of his power, as it is here; for what is it he cannot do who did this? see Ps 77:20

where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him? either within Moses, the shepherd of the flock, as Aben Ezra; or within Israel, the flock itself, as Jarchi; for the Spirit of God was not only upon Moses, but upon the seventy elders, and upon all the people at Sinai, as Kimchi observes; and indeed the Holy Spirit was given to the body of the people to instruct and teach them, according to **Ne 9:20** now these questions are put, not by way of jeer, but by way of complaint, for want of the divine presence as formerly; and by way of inquiry where the Lord was; and by way of expostulation with him, that he would show himself again, as in the days of old.

{z} Ebr. Comment. p. 482, {a} yewr ta "cum pastoribus", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Vitringa.

Isaiah 63:12

Ver. 12. That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm,.... That is, through the Red sea, as the next clause shows: this was done by the right hand of Moses, and the rod in it, to which Kimchi thinks respect is had; who, by divine order, lifted up his rod, and stretched out his hand over the sea, and divided it, and so led the people through it: but, lest this should be attributed to Moses and his rod, the glorious arm of the Lord is made mention of, which held and guided the right hand of Moses, and from whence came all that power that was exerted on this occasion. Aben Ezra interprets this of the Angel of the Lord, that went before them: it seems to design the arm of omnipotence, which was gloriously displayed, Ex 15:6:

dividing the water before them; the waters of the sea, so that they rose up as a wall on each side them, through which they passed as on dry land: to make himself an everlasting name? or to get himself everlasting honour and glory, as he did on Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen, Ex 14:17 and which wonderful action of his has been and ever will be spoken of to the glory of his name, which was the end he had in view.

Isaiah 63:13

Ver. 13. That led them through the deep,.... The depths, the bottom of the sea; not through the shallow, but where the waters had been deepest, the descent greatest; and at the bottom of which might have been expected much filth and dirt to hinder them in their passage, yet through this he led them:

as an horse in the wilderness; or rather, "in a plain", as the word {b} sometimes signifies; and so Kimchi renders it a plain land, and Jarchi smooth land. The sense is, that the Israelites passed through the sea with as much ease, and as little difficulty, as a good horse will run over a plain, where there is nothing to stop his course:

that they should not stumble? there being no clay to stick in, no stone to stumble at, but all like an even plain.

{b} rbdmb "in planitie", Calvin, Gataker, Vitringa; "in campis", Grotius.

Isaiah 63:14

Ver. 14. As a beast goeth down into the valley,.... Softly and gently, especially when laden; which may have some respect to the descent of the Israelites into the sea, into which they entered without any fear and dread, and without any hurry and precipitation, though Pharaoh's host was behind them; or rather, "as a beast goes along a valley", or "plain" {c}; with ease, and without any interruption, so passed the Israelites through the sea. Thus the Targum renders it,

"as a beast goes, or is led, in a plain;"

so the word is used in Isa 38:8, and elsewhere:

the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest; or gently led him, that is, Israel; he walked on through the sea, with as much facility, and as little danger, as a beast walks on in a valley, or a horse in a plain. Some understand this of leading Israel through the wilderness, where often resting places were found for them, and at last they were brought to the land of rest, Canaan, and settled there:

so didst thou lead thy people; both through the sea, and through the wilderness, in a like easy, safe, and gentle manner:

to make thyself a glorious name; among the nations of the world, as he did by this amazing appearance of his for Israel; and it is hoped by those, whose words these are, he would do the like again, and get himself immortal glory.

{c} drt heqbb hmhbk "sicut jumentum quod in campo, [vel] valle, [vel] planitie, graditur", Gataker.

Isaiah 63:15

Ver. 15. Look down from heaven,.... Here begins the prayer of the church and people of God, which continues to the end of the chapter, goes through the next, and the answer to which begins at Isa 65:1. Aben Ezra calls it the prayer of the wise in captivity: it seems to be the petition of some converts among the Jews, either in the first times of the Gospel, or in the latter day; who entreat that the Lord would "look down from heaven", the third heaven, the seat of his majesty, where is his throne of glory, and his presence is most visible to angels and glorified saints; this is on high, as the phrase imports; and the persons below, on earth, at his footstool, whom he is desired to look down upon, and which to do is a great condescension in him, Ps 113:6, and this is to be understood, not of that general view of persons and things, which he is always taking, Ps 33:13, but of a special look of love, grace, and mercy; such an one with which he looks upon his people in Christ, with complacency and delight: indeed his eyes are always on them, and never withdrawn from them; he ever looks upon them, to preserve and protect them, to communicate unto them, to support them under their afflictions, and to deliver out of them; but because of this they are not always sensible, but are ready to conclude that he looks off from them, and turns his back upon them, therefore they desire him to return, look down, and behold; see Ps 80:14:

and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory; this is a description of heaven, as the dwelling place of God, who is most holy, holiness itself, in whom that perfection is most glorious, and which is displayed in all his works; and hence heaven is a holy as well as a high place, and where none but holy persons dwell; and which is a glorious place, where the glory of God is displayed, the glory of Christ is seen, and which is glory itself; and from hence the holy God is desired to behold; what creatures, dust, and ashes, sinful ones, polluted worms, at his footstool, a poor and an afflicted people:

where is thy zeal, and thy strength? his "jealousy" of his great name, and of his own glory; his jealousy of his dear people, that they are not wronged and injured; his "fervent love", and warm affections for them, of which he has given pregnant proofs; which, shed abroad in the heart, warms that, and is what many waters cannot quench: this indeed is not always alike manifest, and therefore unbelief asks where it is, as if it was quite gone; or, however, faith prays for a fresh manifestation of it. The "strength" or power of God has appeared in creation, and in the sustentation of all things; in Christ, the man of his right hand; in strengthening his people, destroying their enemies, and delivering them; and yet this not appearing sometimes at once, immediately for their help and protection, they ask where it is: it follows:

the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me? the noise and rumbling of the bowels, to which the allusion is, are sometimes occasioned by the working of strong passions, as fear and love, and which produce what is called the yearning of the bowels; of which there are instances in Joseph, and in the harlot in Solomon's time, Ge 43:30, the tender mercies of God, his pity and compassion, are expressed hereby, to which are owing the mission of his Son, the forgiveness of sins, and help and relief under afflictions; see **Lu 1:77**, now it is asked, where are those?

are they restrained? it was thought they were shut up in anger, and would not be let out again; see Ps 77:7. The phrase "towards me", in the former clause, seems, according to the accents, to belong to this; and should be read, "are they restrained towards me" {d}? or "shut up from me?" the Lord seemed to harden his heart against his church and people, and to have no heart of compassion towards them, as they imagined.

{d} wqpath yla "erga me continerent se", Montanus; "continerent?" Junius & Tremellius; "erga me sese continent?" Piscator; "cohibeant se erga me?" Gataker; so Ben Melech; "quae se erga me continent?" Vitringa.

Isaiah 63:16

Ver. 16. Doubtless thou art our father,.... Therefore why shouldst thou restrain thy mercies and bowels of compassion from us? or therefore look down upon us, and behold us; the church pleads her relation to God, and in a strong manner; faith of interest continued with her, though he hid his face from her. This relation of father and children, which subsists between God and his people, is not upon the foot of creation, so he is a father to all men; nor on account of national adoption, so he was to the whole body of the Jewish people; but through special adopting grace, which is a sovereign act of his will, founded in divine predestination; is a blessing of the covenant of grace; comes to men through Christ, through relation to him, and redemption by him, and is made manifest in regeneration; and a loving tender hearted father he is to his children, who sympathizes with them, provides all things for them, food and raiment, and bestows them on them, and lays up for them, for time to come, even an inheritance rescued in heaven; and though there are sometimes doubts in the minds of the children of God about this relation, through the temptations of Satan, by reason of their sins and corruptions, and because of their afflictions; yet those doubts are wholly removed through the testimony of the spirit of adoption, witnessing to their spirits that they are the children of God, when they can in the strength of faith claim their interest, and call him their Father:

though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; those, who were their ancestors, were both dead; and the dead know not any thing of their posterity, and of their case and circumstances in this world, temporal or spiritual; nor are capable of giving them any help or aid in time of distress; and perhaps the prophet, in the name of the church, purposely expresses himself in this language, knowing what confidence the Jews were apt to place in Abraham and Israel, to draw off their minds from them, and to lead them to look to God as their only Father; who only could help them in their time of affliction, and was infinitely more to them than any earthly father could possibly be. Some think the sense is, that they confess they were become so degenerate, that if Abraham and Jacob were to return from the dead, they would not know them to be their seed and offspring; and yet, notwithstanding this, God was their Father. This may be the language of some persons, who have comfortable views of their relation to God, when earthly parents, and even professors of religion, disown and slight them:

thou, O Lord; art our father; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and to express their full assurance of faith in it the more strongly:

our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting; or, "our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name" {e}; more agreeably to the accents: Christ was appointed from everlasting to be the Redeemer of his people; God was so early in him, drawing the scheme of redemption and salvation, and made so early a covenant with him concerning it; which may be properly enough called the covenant of redemption, though not as distinct from the covenant of grace; and Christ was the Redeemer of his people in all ages, and lived as such, as well as God the Father was, of old, in all ages, the protector of his people, and the avenger of their wrongs, to whom they might at all times apply for help.

{e} Kmv Mlwem wnlag "redemptor noster a seculo nomen tuum", V. L. "[vel] est", Vitringa; "assertor noster a seculo est nomen tuum", Cocceius.

Isaiah 63:17

Ver. 17. O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?.... These are the words, not of wicked men among the Jews, charging all their errors, hardness of heart, and wickedness they were guilty of, upon the Lord, as if he was the author and occasion of them, and led them into them; but of the truly godly, lamenting and confessing their wandering from the ways, commands, and ordinances of God, the hardness of their hearts; their want of devotion and affection for God; and their neglect of his worship; not blaming him for these things, or complaining of him as having done anything amiss or wrong; but expostulating with him, and wondering at it, that he, who was their loving and tender Father, that he should suffer them to err from his ways, and to wander from his worship, by withholding his grace and withdrawing his presence from them; by leaving them to the corruptions and hardness of their hearts; by chastising them sorely, and suffering the enemy to afflict them in such a severe manner as laid them under temptation to desert the worship of God, and cast off the fear of him. The Jews {f} interpret this of their being hardened from the fear of God, and made to err from his ways by seeing the prosperity of the wicked, and their own long captivity, troubles, and distresses:

return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance; or turn {g}; turn from thine anger and displeasure to thy people; or, as the Targum,

"return thy Shechinah to thy people;"

thy gracious and glorious presence, which has been so long withdrawn; or "return" thy people from their captivity, the twelve tribes, thy portion and "inheritance"; and do this "for thy servants' sake"; for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: or because of the covenant made with them; or for the sake of all thy people, who are thy servants, and which also are the tribes of thine inheritance, return unto them.

{f} So Kimchi, Ben Melech, and R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 85. 2. {g} bwv "convertere", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Forerius.

Isaiah 63:18

Ver. 18. The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while,.... Either the land of Canaan, which the Jews, the Lord's holy people, whom he had separated from others, possessed about fourteen hundred years, which was but a little while in comparison of "for ever", as was promised; or they enjoyed it but a little while in peace and quiet, being often disturbed by their neighbours; or else the sanctuary, the temple, as it is to be supplied from the next clause, which stood but little more than four hundred years:

our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary; the temple; the first temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar; and the second temple by the Romans; and Antiochus, and Pompey, and others, profaned it, by treading in it.

Isaiah 63:19

Ver. 19. We are thine,.... Thy children, thy people, thy subjects. Some read it, taking a word from the next clause, "we are thine of old", or "from everlasting" {h}; as the Lord's special people are, being chosen by him in Christ before the foundation of the world, and taken into an everlasting covenant by him, when he became their God, and they his people; agreeably to which is the Targum,

"we are thy people that were of old;"

so Kimchi reads the words: "thou never barest rule over them"; the Heathens that oppressed them; they never acknowledged God as their King as they did, or were subject to him as they were; and therefore had no claim to protection from him as they had:

they were not called by thy name; they were not called the people of God, nor the children of God, nor the servants or subjects of God; or, "thy name is not called upon them" {i}; or they called after it; nor did they call upon it, but served other gods. The Targum is,

"thou hast not given unto the people the doctrine of thy law, neither is thy name called upon by them."

{h} Mlwem wnyyh "non fuimus [tui] ab omni aevo", Grotius; "a seculo", Pagninus, Montanus. {i} Mhyle Kmv arqn al "nec invocatum est nomen tuum super eos", Pagninus, Montanus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 65:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 65

This chapter contains an answer to the prayer begun Isa 63:15, and continued in the preceding chapter; in which reasons are given by the Lord for suffering such calamities as are before mentioned to come upon the Jewish nation; particularly their rejection of the Gospel as preached by Christ and his apostles, and cleaving to the traditions of the fathers, and to their own righteousness; which disobedience and rebellion are aggravated by the Gentiles quick reception of the Gospel, as soon as preached to them, Isa 65:1 as also the idolatry of their fathers, their impurity and breach of the divine laws, Isa 65:3, as well as their own pride, hypocrisy, and self-confidence, Isa 65:5 all which being observed by the Lord was highly provoking to him; and he was determined to recompense into their bosoms their own sins, and the sins of their fathers, whose measure they filled up, Isa 65:6, nevertheless he would have a regard to a remnant among them, in whom the true grace of God would be found, and who should have a name and a place in the Gospel church state, and be preserved from the general destruction,
Isa 65:8, but as for the unbelieving Jews, they should be punished with the sword, with famine, with disgrace, with distress, vexation, and a curse; when the servants of the Lord should have food, and joy, and honour, and bless themselves in the Lord, and serve him, Isa 65:11 and the chapter is concluded with promises of a new and happy state to the Jews upon their conversion in the latter day; which will be attended with much spiritual joy, with abundance of outward felicity, with great safety and security, and with the presence of God, Isa 65:17.

Ver. 1. I am sought of them that asked not for me,.... That this is a prophecy of the calling and conversion of the Gentiles is not to be doubted, since the Apostle Paul has quoted it, and applied it to that case, Ro 10:20 and is here mentioned as an aggravation of the sin of the Jews, in rejecting Christ, when the Gentiles received him; and was the reason of their being rejected of God, and the Gospel being taken away from them, and given to another people, and of the Lord's removing his presence from the one to the other. The Gentiles are described as those that "asked not for" Christ, or after him, as the apostle supplies it; they had not asked for him, nor after him, nor anything about him; nor of him "before" this time, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; they were without Christ, the promises and prophecies concerning him; and so had no knowledge of him, nor made any inquiry about him, who or what he was; they did not ask after his coming, or for it; did not desire it, or him, and were in no expectation of it; they asked no favour of him, nor saw any need of him, or worth in him; and yet now he was "sought of them"; or, as the apostle has it, "was made manifest unto them"; and so the Septuagint version; that is, he was manifested to them in the Gospel, and by the ministry of it; which is a revelation of him, of salvation by him, of justification by his righteousness, of peace and pardon by his blood, of atonement by his sacrifice, and of eternal life through him; and the words will bear to be rendered, "I was preached unto them": for from this word are derived others {g}, which signify an expounder, and an interpretation, or exposition; and this was matter of fact, that Christ was preached to the Gentiles upon the Jews' rejection of him, which is one branch of the mystery of godliness, **1Ti 3:16** and upon this he was sought of them: they sought him early and earnestly, and desired to have him and his Gospel preached to them again and again,
Ac 13:42 they sought after the knowledge of him, and for an interest in him, and for all grace from him, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life; and for all the supplies of grace, as all sensible sinners do; this they did as soon as he was made manifest to them by the word, and especially as soon as he was revealed in them, or made manifest in their hearts by his Spirit:

I am found of them that sought me not; that had not sought him before the Gospel came to them; they sought the world, and the thing, of it, "for after all these things do the Gentiles seek"; they sought after the wisdom of the world, the vain philosophy of it; "the Greeks seek after wisdom"; and at most and best they only sought after morality and outward righteousness, but not after Christ, till he was set up in the Gospel as an ensign to them, Isa 11:10, but being preached in it, they were set a seeking after him, and "found" him in it, of whom it is full; in the doctrines, promises, and ordinances of it; in whom they found righteousness, life, and salvation, food, and plenty of it, rest, spiritual and eternal, and everlasting glory and happiness:

I said, behold me, behold unto a nation that was not called by my name; which still describes the Gentiles, who formerly were not called the people of God, even those who now are, **Ho 2:23**, this Christ says to them in the Gospel, whose eyes he opens by his Spirit, to behold the glory of his person, the riches of his grace, his wondrous love and condescension, the abundance of blessings in him, and the complete salvation he has wrought out for sinners; and the words are repeated to show that Christ is only to be beheld, and is always to be looked unto; as well as it declares the heartiness of Christ, and his willingness that sinners should look unto him, and be saved; and all this is a proof of the preventing grace of God in the conversion of men, he is first in it; before they ask anything of him, or about him, or his Son, he manifests himself; he reveals Christ, bestows his grace, and presents them with the blessings of his goodness. R. Moses the priest, as Aben Ezra observes, interprets this of the nations of the world; and that the sense is,

"even to the Gentiles that are not called by my name I am preached;"

which agrees with the apostle's sense of them; See Gill on "Ro 10:20".

{g} So, with the Rabbins, vrd is "to preach"; Nvrd is "a preacher";
hvrd is "a sermon"; vrd "the name of a book of sermons"; and
vrdm "an exposition"; see Buxtorf. Lex. Rab. col. 583, 584.

Isaiah 65:2

Ver. 2. I have spread out mine hands all the day unto a rebellious people,.... Meaning Israel, as the apostle explains it, Ro 10:21, whom he calls a "disobedient and gainsaying people"; who believed not in Christ, obeyed not his Gospel, but contradicted and blasphemed it; and were rebellious against him, would not have him to reign over them, nor submit to his ordinances; though he most affectionately invited them, earnestly pressed and urged them, and that daily and frequently, to attend his ministry; and used all human methods to gain audience of them, and acceptance with them, but all to no purpose; see Mt 23:37, they remained obstinate and inflexible, and so they did under the ministry of his apostles; for, notwithstanding their ill usage of him, he ordered the Gospel to be first preached to them, as it was, till they treated it with such indignity and contempt, that the apostles turned away from them to the Gentiles, as they were bid; see Ac 13:46. The Targum is,

"I sent my prophets every day, &c."

which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; in their own way, of their own devising, choosing, and approving, and which was a wicked one; and after their own imaginations and inventions; after the traditions of the elders the doctrines and commandments of men; and after a righteousness of their own, which they sought by the works of the law, and so submitted not to, but rejected the righteousness of Christ.

Isaiah 65:3

Ver. 3. A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face,.... They committed their sins openly, without any fear of the divine Being, and in defiance of him, not at all awed by his omniscience and omnipresence; they committed them in the open streets, and even in the temple, the place of the divine residence; and these they did constantly, which provoked him to anger and wrath against them; particularly the following sins:

that sacrificeth in gardens; to idols, as the Targum, placed there, as they were under every green tree; or in groves, where idols were worshipped. Fortunatus Scacchus {h} thinks this refers to their having their sepulchres in their gardens, where they consulted the dead; which is favoured by a clause in the next verse:

and burneth incense on altars of brick: or, "upon bricks" {i}. Kimchi says, when they made bricks, they put upon them incense for idols; or, "upon tiles"; upon the roofs of their houses, which were covered with tiles; see Jer 19:13 when incense should only have been burnt upon the golden altar erected for that purpose, Ex 30:1, not that these idolatrous actions were committed by the Jews in the times of Christ and his apostles, the times preceding their last destruction; for, after their return front the Babylonish captivity, they were not guilty of idolatry; but these were the sins of their fathers, which God would recompense into their bosoms, according to Isa 65:7 they now filling up the measure of their iniquities, Mt 23:32.

{h} Sacr. Eleaochr. Myrothec. I. 2. c. 55. col. 580. {i} Mynblh le "super lateres", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vitringa.

Isaiah 65:4

Ver. 4. Which remain among the graves,.... In order to practise necromancy, to consult the dead, where they imagined demons and departed spirits haunted, and of whom they fancied they might get knowledge of future things:

and lodge in the monuments: whole nights for the same purposes. The Vulgate Latin version is, "that sleep in the temples of idols"; after the manner of the Heathens, who used to sleep there in order to obtain dreams, whereby they might be able to foretell things to come, as they did in the temple of Aesculapius; or, "in desolate places" {k}, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; where they expected to meet with demons and noxious spirits, to give them knowledge of things to come. The Targum paraphrases both clauses thus,

"who dwell in houses built of the dust of graves, and lodge with the corpse of the children of men;"

so corpse, according to Jarchi, are expressed by this word, which signifies "kept", or "preserved" {l}, as in Isa 49:6, because they are put in a strait place, from whence they cannot get out; though some think idols are meant, called so by way of derision, because kept for fear of being stolen, or because they cannot keep themselves, nor their votaries:

which eat swine's flesh; forbidden by the law, Le 11:7:

and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; or "pots": broth made of swine's flesh, and of other sorts of flesh which were unclean by the law. Our version follows the marginal {m} reading; as do the Targum, Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi; but the written text is, "a fragment" {n}, or piece, or pieces, of abominable things; both may be retained in the sense of the passage; slices of flesh unclean, and so abominable by the law, were put into their pots and stewed, and made broth of, which they drank. Spencer {o} thinks the milk in which kids were boiled is meant, which the Zabians kept in vessels, and sprinkled on the trees in their gardens, to make them more fruitful; hence mention is made of idolatrous practices in gardens, in the preceding verse.

{k} "In desertis locis", Munster, Pagninus. {l} Myrwunb "apud custodita", Junius & Tremellius; "custoditos", Piscator. {m} qrm "jusculum". {n} qrp "fragmentum". {o} De Legibus Hebr. I. 2. c. 8. sect. 2. p. 275.

Isaiah 65:5

Ver. 5. Which say, stand by thyself, &c], According to Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi, these are the unclean persons that did the above things; who say to the righteous, "draw near to thyself" {p}; so the words are, go to thine own place, or to thine own company:

and come not near to me; keep off at a distance, as unworthy of such company:

for I am holier than thou; but this is the language of a self-righteous man, of a Pharisee that strictly observed the rituals of the law; and fitly describes such who lived in the times of Christ; and exactly agrees with the characters of such, who not only would have no dealings with the Samaritans, but washed themselves when they came from market, or any public place, lest they should be defiled with the common people of their own nation; and, even with religious persons, would not stand near them while praying; but despised them, if they had not arrived to that pitch of outward sanctity they had; see **Joh 4:9** Lu 18:9. The phrase may be rendered, "do not touch me" {q}; and the Pharisees would not suffer themselves to be touched by the common people, nor would they touch them. Maimonides {r} says,

"if the Pharisees touched but the garments of the common people, they were defiled all one as if they had touched a profluvious person, and were obliged to dip themselves all over;"

so that, when they walked in the streets, they used to walk on the sides of the way, that they might not be defiled by touching them {s}. So Epiphanius {t} relates of the Samaritan Jews, that when they touch one of another nation, they dip themselves with their clothes in water; for they reckon it a defilement to touch anyone, or to touch any man of another religion; and of the Dositheans, who were another sect of the Samaritans the same writer observes {u}, that they studiously avoid touching any, for they abhor every man. A certain Arabic geographer of note {w} makes mention of an island, called the island of the Samaritans, inhabited by some Samaritan Jews, as appears by their saying to any that apply to them, do not touch; and by this it is known that they are of the Jews who are called Samaritans; and this same arrogant superstition, as Scaliger observes {x}, continues in that people to this day, as those relate who have conversed with them:

these are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day: very offensive to the divine Being, as smoke is to the eyes and nostrils; very abominable to him; and whose proud and vain conduct raised indignation in him, and kindled the fire of his anger, which was continually exercised on them; see Lu 16:15. The Targum is,

"their vengeance is in hell, where the fire burns all the day."

{p} Kyla brq "accede ad te", Vatablus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius; "appropinqua ad te", Piscator. {q} yb vgt la "ne contigas me"; so some in Vatablus; "ne attingite me", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ne tangae rue": Cocceius. {r} In Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 7. {s} lb. Hilcot Abot Tumaot, c. 13. sect. 8. {t} Contra Haeres. haeres. 9. {u} Contra Haeres, haeres 13. {w} Apud Scaliger de Emendat, Temp. l. 7. {x} Ibid.

Isaiah 65:6

Ver. 6. Behold, it is written before me,.... This account of their sins; it was in his sight and constant remembrance, and punishment for them was determined by him, written in the book of his decrees:

I will not keep silence; but threaten with destruction, and not only threaten, but execute; plead against them really, as well as verbally, with sore judgments:

but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom; full and just recompence of punishment for all their transgressions, as it follows. The Targum is,

"I will recompense to them the vengeance of their sins, and deliver their bodies to the second death."

Isaiah 65:7

Ver. 7. Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together (saith the Lord),.... That is, the punishment both of the one and of the other; these being alike, and continued from father to son, and approved of, and committed by one generation after another, till the measure was filled up; and then the recompence of reward is given for all of them together at once: which have burnt incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills; where they offered incense and other sacrifices to idols, which was interpreted by the Lord as a blaspheming and reproaching of him; see Isa 57:7:

therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom; punish them for their former sins as well as their latter ones, and both together.

Isaiah 65:8

Ver. 8. Thus saith the Lord, as the new wine is found in the cluster,.... Now, lest the truly godly and gracious among these people should be distressed at such denunciations of wrath and destruction, it is suggested that these few, this remnant according to the election of grace, should be saved from the general ruin; as when men are about to cut down a vine, or pluck it up, or prune the unfruitful branches of it, a single cluster of grapes is observed upon it, in which new wine is supposed to be:

and one saith, destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; one that stands by, perhaps the owner of the vine, seeing it, says to his servant, spare the vine, do not cut it down; or do not cut off the branch on which the cluster is, for there is life and sap in it, and it may grow, and bring forth much fruit:

so will I do for my servants' sake, that I may not destroy them all; as formerly he spared Noah at the deluge; of whom the Targum paraphrases the former clause; and Lot at the burning of Sodom; and Joshua and Caleb, when all the rest that came out of Egypt perished in the wilderness; so there would be, and were, a few whom God called by his grace, among the Jews, brought to the knowledge of Christ, and into a Gospel church state in Jerusalem; and these he preserved from the destruction of it, of which they had previous warning, and were directed to Pella, where they were safe: and so, wherever the truth of grace is, such shall not be destroyed; and which is a blessing, and a blessed work in the heart of man, and is a new thing there; and, like new wine, delightful to God and man; and like wine in the cluster, all grace, and all spiritual blessings are with it; and which must be tried by afflictions, to be brought into exercise, as the cluster is pressed; and which is found but in a few, like wine in a single cluster, concerning whom the Father says, destroy them not, being loved and chosen by him; and so says the Son, being redeemed by his blood; and the same says the Spirit, being regenerated and sanctified by his grace; and such being the servants of the Lord, and partakers of his grace, he will not suffer any of them to be destroyed; but encompasses them with his favour; holds them with his right hand; suffers no enemy to do them wrong, and guards them with his power.

Isaiah 65:9

Ver. 9. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob,.... Jerom says most understand this of Christ; and who indeed is called the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, and sprang from Jacob or Israel, and came out of the tribe of Judah; and may be fitly signified by the cluster, in which new wine and a blessing were, which "seed" here is explanative of; since the clusters of all divine perfections, of all the blessings of grace, and of all the promises of it, are in him: and since he is that seed in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed, and with whom the covenant of grace was made, **Ga 3:16**, but others, the above ancient writer observes, understood it of the apostles; and it seems to design the first that believed in Christ, who were of the Jewish nation, the apostles and others; for though the generality of that people rejected the Messiah, there were a few that believed on him, a remnant according to the election of grace, whom the apostle calls a seed, the Lord left among them, and reserved for himself, **Ro 9:29**
Ro 11:4 such who received the seed of the word into their hearts, and were born again of incorruptible seed, and which remained in them; these were distinguished by the grace of God from the rest of the people, and were called and brought forth from among them:

and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains; this also is true of Christ, who not only came out of the tribe of Judah, as was foretold he should, and as it is manifest he did; hence he is called the Lion of that tribe; but he is also an heir or inheritor of the mountains of God; he is indeed heir of all things, **Heb 1:2**, as he is the Son of God, he is heir by nature of all the Father has; and, as Mediator, he is heir by appointment of all persons and things; he has all persons for his inheritance, and in his possession, and at his dispose, angels and men; and he is possessed of all things, of all blessings of goodness, natural and temporal, spiritual and eternal; and his chosen people are joint heirs with him, and who may be here meant; such as are the seed of the Lord are sons and heirs; they are heirs of God, being the sons of God; heirs of his covenant, the blessings and promises of it, which is as a mountain, firm and immovable; they are heirs of the grace of life, and of the kingdom; heirs of righteousness, life, and salvation; of eternal glory, the heavenly Canaan, signified by the mountains of the Lord; alluding to the mountains on which the temple and Jerusalem stood, or to those about Jerusalem, or in the land of Judea in general:

and mine elect shall inherit it; Christ is God's first and chief elect, and his people are chosen in him through grace to glory; and these are the seed and heirs that do inherit grace, and shall inherit glory; for this is to be understood not literally of the land of Judea, which was not long inherited by any after the times of Christ and his apostles, to which this prophecy respects; unless it can be thought to belong to the latter day, when the Jews will be converted, and return to it; but figuratively of Mount Zion, or of the heavenly country:

and my servants shall dwell there; my righteous servants, as the Targum; these are the same with the seed, the inheritor, and the elect, who become the servants of God, through the power of his grace, and serve him cheerfully, willingly, and without selfish ends and views; to this they are chosen, and for this purpose become a spiritual seed; nor is this inconsistent with their being heirs; and who shall receive the inheritance in a way of grace, and possess it for ever; they shall dwell in the church below, and enjoy all the privileges of it, and shall dwell upon their estate for ever; for their inheritance is an eternal one, reserved in the heavens.

Isaiah 65:10

Ver. 10. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks,.... This was a champaign country about Joppa and Lydda, in which were rich pastures for herds and flocks, 1Ch 27:29, it seems to be a prophecy of the conversion of some in those parts, which had its accomplishment in the times of the apostles, **Ac 9:35**, here Christ had his sheep, and here was a fold for them; or, however, this may be expressive of the word and ordinances, which are like Sharon, green and fat pastures, for the flocks of Christ to be folded and fed in:

and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in; which, Aben Ezra says, was round about Jerusalem; but it was the valley in which Achan was stoned, and because of the trouble he gave to Israel, and had himself, it was called the valley of Achor, **Jos 7:26**, this the Lord promises shall be given for a door of hope, **Ho 2:15** and such the word and ordinances are, where Christ causes his church and people to lie down and rest, **So 1:7** and which are an earnest and pledge of future glory and happiness, and give hope thereof; are the firstfruits of it, as the valley of Achor is said to be the first place the children of Israel set footing on, when they had passed over Jordan; it lay to the north of Jericho, over against Ai:

for my people that have sought me; with their whole hearts, being first sought and found by him; See Gill on "Isa 65:1".

Isaiah 65:11

Ver. 11. But ye are they that forsake the Lord,.... Here the Lord returns to the body of the people again, the unbelievers and rejecters of the Messiah, who turned away from him, would not hear his doctrine, nor submit to his ordinances; they forsook the worship of the Lord, as the Targum; yea, some that professed to be his disciples, and followed him for a while, left him, and walked no more with him, **Joh 6:60**:

that forget my holy mountain; Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the Gospel church, to which the seed or heirs, the chosen of God, and the servants of the Lord among the Jews, came, and enjoyed the immunities of it, and worshipped the Lord there; but these men forgot it, and either never came, or, if any of them did, they soon forsook the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some was, Heb 12:22:

that prepare a table for that troop; or, "for a troop"; a troop of idols worshipped; or, "for Gad", which some take to be the name of a star; and R. Moses the priest says it is the name of the star Jupiter, in the Arabic language, a lucky star. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "for fortune": and the word is used by the Jewish writers {y} for the goddess Fortune, or good luck, and who make mention of "the bed of fortune" {z}; a bed, which, they say, is prepared for a star, and no man may sleep on it; and a table also, which they might not use but for that star, the same with the table here; for they used beds or couches at their tables, or at eating. And Jerom on the place says, it was an old custom in Egypt, particularly in Alexandria and other cities, on the last day of the year, to prepares table, with all kind of provisions for eating and drinking, by way of thankfulness for the fertility of the last year, and in order to obtain it in the year following; and this the Israelites did. "Table" seems to be put for an altar, on which sacrifice was offered to idols. Mention is made by Herodotus {a} of the table of the sun among the Ethiopians.

And that furnish the drink offering unto that number: or, "to a number"; to a number of deities, which were as numerous as their cities, **Jer 2:28** and according to the number of them they provided drink offerings, or a mixture of wine and water; and also according to the number of the priests that sacrificed they filled cups of wine, as Jarchi observes; or according to the number of letters in a person's name they wished well to, as many cups they drank, to which Sanctius thinks the allusion is; or to "Meni", which R. Moses takes to be the name of a star; some interpret it of a number of stars or planets, the seven planets particularly; and others of the planet Mercury. Some think it is the name of an idol, either, of an idol of the Arabians, as Pocock {b}; or of the Armenians, as others, Armenia being called Minni, Jer 51:27. The Targum interprets both clauses of idol deities; and so, in the gloss on the Talmud {c}, they are both said to be the names of idols. Bynaeus {d} seems to me to have advanced the best notion of Gad and Meni, translated "that troop", and "that number", which is, that the one signifies the sun, and the other the moon, which he supports with many reasons; so Vitringa; and yet there is a difficulty in the words, how they are to be applied to the Jews in the times of Christ and the apostles, when they were not guilty of such idolatrous practices; unless this is to be understood of the sins of their forefathers visited on them, as in Isa 65:3, though this is said of the same persons that forsook the Lord, and forgot his mountain; wherefore I am inclined to think that some thing like this is the sense of the words; that the evil charged upon this people, and of which they were guilty, was, that they regarded the stars, and attributed their case and circumstances to the influences of them, or to fate and fortune, rather than to the providence of God; or trusted in their troops and numbers, and so defied and despised the Roman army that besieged them, which was their ruin.

{y} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 65. fol. 58. 2. T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 40. 1. {z} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 56. 1. & Gloss. in ib, & Sanhedrin, fol. 20, 1. Gloss. in ib. {a} Thalia, sive I. 3. c. 18. {b} Specimen Hist. Arab, p. 92, 93. {c} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 1. & Gloss. in ib. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 67. 2. {d} De Caleeis Hebraeor. I. 1. c. 9. sect. 7, &c.

Isaiah 65:12

Ver. 12. Therefore will I number you to the sword,.... There is an elegancy in the expression, alluding to Meni, that number, they furnished a drink offering for, or trusted in; and since they did, God would number them, or appoint a number of them to the sword; or suffer them to be slain in great numbers, even from one end of their land to another, Jer 12:12, they should be numbered and told out, or care taken that none of them should escape the sword of the Romans, or not be taken by them:

and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter; be obliged to submit to the conqueror, and lay down their necks to be sacrificed by him:

because, when I called, ye did not answer; when I spoke, ye did not hear; when Christ called unto them personally, to come and hear him, they turned a deaf ear to this charmer, charming so wisely, and would not attend upon his ministry, **Pr 1:24**, and when he called to them in the ministry of his apostles, they rejected him and his word with contempt; they put it away from them, contradicting and blaspheming it, Ac 13:45. The Targum is,

"because I sent my prophets, and ye turned not; they prophesied, and ye did not receive them:"

but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not; adhered to the traditions of the elders, and taught for doctrines the commandments of men; and which they chose and preferred to the word of God, and the Gospel of Christ; and these were things the Lord delighted not in, yea, abhorred; and their embracing and cleaving to them were evil in his sight; see Mt 15:3.

Isaiah 65:13

Ver. 13. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... This being the case, the following contrast is formed between those that believed in Christ, and those that rejected him:

behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: which has been verified in a literal sense; for the Christians, the Lord's righteous servants, as the Targum in the several clauses calls them, were, as Eusebius {e} relates, by a divine warning, directed to leave Jerusalem, before the destruction of it; when they removed to a place called Pella, beyond Jordan, where they had proper accommodations; while the unbelieving Jews were penned up in the city, and were starved, and multitudes of them died by famine: and in a figurative sense they had a famine, not of bread, or of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord; the Gospel being taken from them, and sent to another people, who received it, and ate it, and were nourished by it; which is bread that strengthens, meat that is savoury, milk that nourishes, honey that is sweet to the taste, delicious fruit, and all that is wholesome and healthful; Christ in the word particularly, who is the Lamb of God, the fatted calf, the hidden manna, the bread of life and spiritual meat, as his flesh is, is the food which believers eat by faith, and feed upon, and are nourished with; while others starve, feeding upon ashes and husks, on that which is not bread. Kimchi interprets this and the following clauses, figuratively, of the reward of the world to come, and of the delights and pleasures of the soul, signified by eating and drinking; and so, he says, their Rabbins interpret it; see Lu 14:15.

Behold, my servants shall drink, and ye shall be thirsty; which has the same sense as before, the same thing in different words. Particularly true believers in Christ drink of his blood by faith, which is drink indeed; and of the grace of Christ, which is the water of life, of which they may drink freely; and of the Gospel of Christ, which is as wine and milk, and as cold water to a thirsty soul; and of the love of Christ, which is better than wine; and they shall drink of new wine with him in the kingdom of his Father; while the wicked shall thirst after their sins and lusts now, and have no satisfaction in them, and hereafter will want a drop of water to cool their tongues.

Behold, my servants shall rejoice; in Christ, in his person, grace, and fulness; in his righteousness and salvation; and in hope of the glory of God by him:

but ye shall be ashamed; of their vain confidence; of their trust in their own righteousness, in their temple, and the service of it; in their troops and numbers, particularly when taken and carried captive; and more especially this will be their case at the great day of judgment, when they shall see him whom they have pierced.

{e} Hist. Eccl. I. 3. c. 5. p. 75.

Isaiah 65:14

Ver. 14. Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart,.... The songs of electing, redeeming, and calling grace, with which they come to Zion now, and will hereafter; having their hearts filled with joy unutterable, and full of glory, under a sense of the great things which God has done for them:

but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit; under the sore judgments of God upon them, the sword and famine; more especially during the siege of Jerusalem, and when wrath came upon them to the uttermost, in the destruction of their city, temple, and nation, and they fell into the hands of the Romans, who carried them captive, and dispersed them in various places; and as the wicked will in hell to all eternity, where is nothing but weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Isaiah 65:15

Ver. 15. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen,.... Execrable and abominable to them, as the name of a Jew is to this day, and in all places; for their unbelief and impenitence, for their perfidy and insincerity, for their tricking and covetousness, and other crimes they are addicted to; see Jer 24:9:

for the Lord God shall slay them; by the sword of the Romans, and by his judgments, which continue upon them; the Targum says, with the second death; and so Jarchi interprets it of eternal death, which is the just wages of sin:

and call his servants by another name; a new name, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; the name of the people of God, the Gentiles formerly were not called by; but now all that believe in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, are his people; the name of the sons of God, a name better than that of sons and daughters of the greatest potentate; the name which the mouth of the Lord calls, "Hephzibah" and "Beulah", being delighted in by the Lord, and married to him; or rather the name of Christians, first given to the disciples of Christ at Antioch, and ever since continued, Ac 11:26.

Isaiah 65:16

Ver. 16. That he who blesseth himself in the earth,.... That is sensible he stands in need of blessings, and wishes for them, and prays he might have them; or that takes notice that he is blessed with them, and acknowledges them, and is thankful for them:

shall bless himself in the God of truth; shall pray to him for blessings he wants, and ascribe what he has unto him, and give him the praise and glory of them;

by whom is meant, either God the Father, in opposition to idols, the fictitious deities of the Gentiles, those lying vanities, which were not gods by nature, and to whom the God of truth, or the true God, is often opposed, and whom the Targum here calls the living God; or rather the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ: for the words may be rendered, "shall bless himself in God Amen" {f}; that is, in God, who is the "Amen", which is one of the names of Christ, **Re 3:14** in whom believers are blessed with all spiritual blessings, and reckon themselves blessed in him, and ascribe blessing to him for them; in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen, and who is the true God, and eternal life, **2Co 1:20**:

and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; when an oath is necessary on any account, and it is proper to appeal to the supreme Being for the truth of anything, this, in Gospel times, should be done in the name of Christ; he, who is the Amen and faithful witness, is to be appealed unto, who is God omniscient, the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Of forms of swearing by Christ, see **Ro 9:1**. Besides, swearing, as it is a part of religious worship, may here be put for the whole; so it signifies, that as all blessings come from Christ, so all worship and duty should be performed unto him, and in his name.

Because the former troubles are forgotten, they are hid from mine eyes; which is to be understood not of afflictions and persecutions for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, for these, especially in the first times of it, were very great; though in the latter day they will cease, to which indeed this prophecy extends: but rather either of the idolatry and superstition of the Gentile world, which were troublesome and offensive to God, but now removed by the clear light of the Gospel, and so forgotten by him, and hid from his eyes; or the carnal ordinances of the legal dispensation, which gave great trouble to the worshippers then, and could not cleanse their consciences, and through the fear of death, on the breach of them, were all their lifetime subject to bondage; but now these are all done away by Christ, and in Gospel times forgotten by men, and hid from the sight of God, who regards them no more; see **Jer 3:16**, which sense suits with what follows.

{f} Nma yhwlab Krbty "benedicet sibi in Deo Amen", Pagninus, Montanus, Vitringa; "benedicturus sit in Deo Amen", Cocceius.

Isaiah 65:17

Ver. 17. For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth,.... This prophecy began to have its accomplishment in the first times of the Gospel, when through the preaching of it there was a new face of things appeared in Judea, and in the Gentile world, so that the whole looked like a new world; and this was all the effect of creating power, of the mighty, powerful, and efficacious grace of God attending the word, to the conversion of many souls; a new church state was formed, consisting of persons gathered out of the world, the old national church of the Jews being dissolved, and Gospel churches everywhere set up; new ordinances appointed, to continue till Christ's second coming and the old ones abolished; a new way of worship observed, at least in a more spiritual and evangelic manner; a new covenant exhibited, or the covenant of grace held forth in a new form of administration, the former waxen old and vanished away; and the new and living way to the Father, through Christ, made more manifest: this will have a further accomplishment at the conversion of the Jews, which will be as life from the dead, and things will look like a new world with them; their blindness will be removed, the veil will be taken away from them; they will part with all their legal rites and ceremonies, and the traditions of the elders, and embrace the Messiah, and all his truths and ordinances; old things shall pass away, and all things become new: and it shall have its complete accomplishments in the New Jerusalem state, when not only Christ will appear, and make all things new in a spiritual sense, and that completely; but even in a literal sense there will be new heavens, and a new earth, which John in vision saw; and which Peter says he and other believers expected, according to the promise of God, when these heavens and earth shall be dissolved and pass away; and unless this passage is referred to by him, it will be difficult to find where this promise is; see Re 21:1:

and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind; either the old heavens and earth, which shall pass away, and be no more seen; or the former state both of the Jewish, and Gentile world; or the former troubles, as in the preceding verse, taken in the sense of affliction and persecution; all antichristian troubles shall cease in the latter day, after the conversion of the Jews, and especially in the New Jerusalem state; see **Isa 2:4**.

Isaiah 65:18

Ver. 18. But be you glad, and rejoice for ever in that which I create,.... This may refer either to persons converted, both at the beginning of the Gospel, and in the latter day, whether Jews or Gentiles; who are the Lord's creation, or new creatures, being made new men; having new hearts and spirits given them, or created within them; new principles of life, light, grace, and holiness, wrought in them, which are the produce of almighty and creating power; and all such instances are matter of joy, as to the angels in heaven, so to the saints on earth, and especially to the ministers of the Gospel; because of the grace bestowed on men, the glory brought to God, and their own ministry blessed and succeeded, and so their hands and hearts strengthened: or else this refers to the state of things under the Gospel dispensation, in every age of it, and especially in some periods of it, particularly the first and last; and the whole indeed is a new world or state of God's creating, and is matter of joy to all the people of God. The Targum renders it,

"rejoice in the world of worlds, which I create:"

agreeably to which is the version of Bishop Chandler {g},

"rejoice for the age to come, that I create;"

the world to come, **Heb 2:5**, which Christ is said to be the father of, in the Septuagint version of **Isa 9:6**, the Gospel dispensation, the Messiah's future world, as opposed to the legal dispensation.

For, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; that is, do that for them, through the mighty power of his grace, as will justly occasion joy to them, and to all others well affected to them; the conversion of the Jews will be matter of joy to the Gentiles; and that, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles, as well as the destruction of antichrist, which will occasion a new face of things in the world, will be matter of joy to the whole church; see Re 18:20.

{g} Defence of Christianity, c. 2. sect. 2.

Isaiah 65:19

Ver. 19. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people,.... God himself rejoices in his people, as they are considered in Christ; so he did from all eternity, and so he does at the conversion of them; which is the day of their espousals, and when he manifests his love to them, and rejoices over them to do them good, and continues to do so; and he rejoices in the exercise of his own grace in them, and will do so throughout the New Jerusalem state, and to all eternity. This seems chiefly to respect the time of the Jews' conversion, and the latter day glory; and will have its most complete accomplishment when the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he shall dwell among them. Re 20:3, and then what follows will be perfectly fulfilled,

and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying; either on account of outward afflictions and persecutions; or on account of inward darkness, desertion, and temptation, or the prevalence of corruptions, Re 21:4.

Isaiah 65:20

Ver. 20. There shall be no more thence an infant of days,.... That is, there shall no more be carried out from thence, from Jerusalem, or any other place where the church of God is, to the grave, in order to be interred, an infant that has lived but a few days, a very common thing now; but, in the latter day, such instances will be rare, or rather there will be none at all; every child born will live to the age of man, and not be cut off by any premature death, either by any natural disease, or by famine, or sword, or any other calamity, which will now have no place:

nor an old man that hath not filled his days; who, though he may in some sense, or in comparison of others, be said to be old, yet has not arrived to the full term of man's life, threescore years and ten, or more; for it seems, by what follows, as if the term of human life will be lengthened in the latter day, and reach in common to a hundred years; so that as long life is always reckoned a temporal happiness, among the rest that shall be enjoyed, this will be one in the latter day; and which is to be understood not of the Millennium state, in which there will be no death, Re 21:4, which yet will be in this, as the following words show; but of the state preceding that, even the spiritual reign of Christ:

for the child shall die an hundred years old; not that that shall be reckoned a child that shall die at a hundred years of age {h}, the life of man being now, in these days of the Messiah, as long as they were before the flood, as the Jewish interpreters imagine; but the child that is now born, or he that is now a child, shall live to the age of a hundred years, and not die before: but lest this outward happiness should be trusted to, and a man should imagine that therefore he is in a happy state for eternity, being blessed with such a long life, it follows, "but" or

though the sinner, being an hundred years old; shall be accursed; for though this shall be common in this state to good men and bad men, to live a hundred years, yet their death will not be alike; the good man will be blessed, and enter into a happy state of joy and peace; but the wicked man, though he lives as long as the other in this world, shall be accursed at death, and to all eternity; see **Ec 8:12**.

{h} Vid. Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2.

Isaiah 65:21

Ver. 21. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them,.... In Jerusalem, and other parts of Judea: though this need not be limited to the Jews, but be considered as reaching to all the Lord's people, the Gentiles also; who will be in no fear of enemies, or ever be disturbed by them, but shall dwell in their own houses peaceably and quietly; this is the reverse of what is threatened to the wicked, De 28:30:

and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them; they shall both live to dwell in their houses when built, and till their vineyards bring forth fruit, and then eat of them; and they shall be preserved from enemies breaking in upon them, and wasting their plantations.

Isaiah 65:22

Ver. 22. They shall not build, and another inhabit,.... As the Canaanites did, whose houses the Israelites inhabited; but they shall inhabit the houses they have built, and shall not be dispossessed by an enemy:

they shall not plant, and another eat; the fruit of the vines, olives, fig trees, or others, planted by them:

for as the days of a tree are the days of my people; not as of a leaf which falls every year, but as of a tree, and as of such that last long, as oaks, cedars, and the like; though perhaps a tree bearing fruit fit to eat is meant; and the sense be, that the Lord's people should live as long as the trees planted by them, and so should eat the fruit thereof, and not leave them to others to partake of. The Targum, Septuagint, and Arabic versions, render it,

"as the days of the tree of life;"

which, some of the Rabbins say, were five hundred years. The allusion may be to the tree of life in paradise, and may be expressive of the long life of good men in this state; and as the tree of life was typical of Christ, who is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon him, it may denote that eternal life his people have by him.

And mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands; what they have built and planted; they shall live long in their houses, and for many years partake of the fruit of their vineyards. The blessing of long life is carried on with the promises of all other instances of outward happiness.

Isaiah 65:23

Ver. 23. They shall not labour in vain,.... As they do, who build houses, and enemies come and turn them out of them, and dwell in them themselves; or who plant vineyards, and sow their fields, and strangers come and devour them; or they are smitten with blasting and mildew:

nor bring forth for trouble; for death, as the Targum; or for a curse, as the Septuagint: the tense is, they shall not beget and bring forth children, that shall immediately die by some distemper or another, or be taken off by famine, sword, or pestilence, to the great grief and trouble of their parents; but these shall live, and outlive their parents, so that their death will never be a trouble to them:

for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them; or, "they are a seed, the blessed of the Lord" {i}; or, "they are the seed blessed of God", or "the Lord", as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; or, as the Targum,

"a seed whom the Lord hath blessed;"

a spiritual seed of the church, a seed raised up to serve the Lord, whom he blesses with temporal and spiritual blessings; and their offspring also, being made a spiritual seed by the grace of God, and succeeding them in the church, and treading in their steps.

{i} hmh hwhy ykwrb erz yk "quia [sunt] semens, benedicti Domini ipsi"; which tension is most agreeable to the accents.

Isaiah 65:24

Ver. 24. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer,.... The sense is, should they be attacked by any enemy, or fear that they shall be disturbed by them, and so bethink themselves of making application to the Lord for help; while they are preparing for prayer, stirring up one another to it, and appointing a season for it, to meet together on that account; before they are able to put up one petition in a regular way, the Lord will appear for them, and give an answer of peace:

and while they are yet speaking, I will hear; while they are praying to him, he hears and answers, and grants their requests, and more, as he did Daniel. This shows the readiness of the Lord to help and assist his people in any time of trouble, or when they may fear an enemy; and is a great encouragement to attend the throne of grace constantly.

Isaiah 65:25

Ver. 25. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,.... Or, "as one" {k}: as if they were one, of the same kind and nature, and lived upon the same food. The people of God are comparable to lambs, for their harmlessness and innocence; and wicked men to wolves, for their fierceness and cruelty; but, by the grace of God, the latter become as mild and as gentle as the former, and live upon the same spiritual food, and join with them in attendance on the word and ordinances, where they find spiritual refreshment and comfort together; such who have been persecutors of the church shall now become members of it; and many instances of this kind, as there were in the first times of the Gospel, so there shall be in the latter day:

and the lions shall eat straw like the bullock, or "ox"; to which creature the ministers of the Gospel are compared for their laboriousness, as wicked persecutors are to lions; and sometimes the latter have been so changed by the grace of God, as to become preachers of it, as Saul was, and very probably many will hereafter; however, there will be no persecution of the church after those days; wolves and lions will have their nature changed, and be in fellowship with the saints, and be better employed than before in persecuting them:

and dust shall be the serpent's meat; the meat of the old serpent, the devil, as was threatened, **Ge 3:14** to which he shall now be confined; he shall not be able to bite the saints, being bruised under their feet; he shall only have power over carnal, worldly, earthly minded men; and shall not be able to give the church any trouble, by instigating men to persecute it:

they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord; that is, Satan and his emissaries; wicked men, comparable to lions and wolves, shall no more drink the blood of the saints, or persecute the church of God; after the calling of the Jews, and the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, and the destruction of antichrist, there will be no more persecution of the church of Christ, the mountain of God's holiness; he has said it, and we may be assured of the truth of it; See Gill on "Isa 11:9".

(This verse may also apply to the Millenial state, in which the effects of the curse on the animals is to be removed. However, from this verse it seems that the curse on snakes is permanent. Editor.)

{k} dxak "sicut unus", Montanus, Musculus, Gataker.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Isaiah 66:1

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 66

This chapter treats of the same things as the former, the rejection of the unbelieving Jews, and the regard had to them that did believe; the conversion of that people in the latter day; the calling of the Gentiles, and the happy state of the church in the last times. The causes of the rejection of the Jews were their unworthy notions of God, as if he was confined to the temple of Jerusalem, and to be pleased with external sacrifices, now both at an end under the Gospel dispensation; a better sacrifice being offered, and a more spiritual worship set up everywhere; which notions are considered,
Isa 66:1, and because they were set upon their ways and works, and rejected

the Gospel of Christ, they are threatened with ruin,
Isa 66:3 and the disciples of Christ, whom they excommunicated and persecuted, have a promise of divine appearance for them, while vengeance shall be taken on their enemies, their city and temple,
Isa 66:5, nevertheless, in the latter day, there will be a large and sudden conversion of this nation of the Jews, which is signified by the birth of them, which will be matter of great joy to all the true lovers of the interest of Christ,
Isa 66:7 and what will add to the prosperity, joy, and comfort of the church of Christ at this time, will be the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles, Isa 66:12 at which time the vials of God's wrath will be poured out upon antichrist and his followers, Isa 66:15 and the chapter is concluded with a fresh account of large conversions of men of all nations, and of the union of Jews and Gentiles in one church state, which shall long remain, and be undisturbed by enemies, who will be all slain, and their carcasses looked upon with contempt,
Isa 66:18.

Ver. 1. Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne,.... The third heaven, the heaven of heavens, where angels and glorified saints are, and some in bodies, as Enoch and Elijah, and where now Christ is in human nature; this is the seat of the divine Majesty, where he in a most illustrious manner displays his glory; and therefore we are to look upwards to God in heaven, and direct all our devotion to him there, and not imagine that he dwells in temples made with hands; or is confined to any place, and much less to any on earth, as the temple at Jerusalem, the Jews boasted of, and trusted in; and which were the unworthy notions they had of God in the times of Christ and his disciples; to confute which these words are here said, and for this purpose are quoted and applied by Stephen, **Ac 7:48**.
See Gill on "Ac 7:48",
See Gill on "Ac 7:49",
See Gill on "Ac 7:50":

and the earth is my footstool: on which he treads, is below him, subject to him, and at his dispose; and therefore is not limited to any part of it, or included in any place in it; though he for a while condescended to make the cherubim his throne, and the ark his footstool, in the most holy place in the temple; which were all figurative of other and better things, and so no more used:

where is the house that ye build unto me? what house can be built for such an immense Being? and how needless as well as fruitless is it to attempt it? where can a place be found to build one in, since the heaven is his throne, and the earth his footstool? and therefore, if any place, it must be some that is without them both, and that can hold both; but what space can be conceived of that can contain such a throne and footstool, and much less him that sits thereon? see **1Ki 8:27**:

and where is the place of my rest? for God to take up his rest and residence in, as a man does in his house? no such place can be found for him, nor does he need any; indeed the temple was built for an house of rest for the ark of the Lord, which before was moved from place to place; but then this was merely typical of the church, which God has chosen for his rest, and where he will dwell, as well as of heaven, the resting place of his people with him to all eternity; no place on earth is either his rest or theirs.

Isaiah 66:2

Ver. 2. For all those things hath mine hand made,.... The heavens and the earth, which are his throne and footstool; and therefore, since he is the Creator of all things, he must be immense, omnipresent, and cannot be included in any space or place:

and all those things have been, saith the Lord; or "are" {l}; they are in being, and continue, and will, being supported by the hand that made them; and what then can be made by a creature? or what house be built for God? or what need of any?

but to this man will I look. The Septuagint and Arabic versions read, by way of interrogation, "and to whom shall I look?" and so the Syriac version, which adds, "in whom shall I dwell?" not in temples made with hands; not in the temple of Jerusalem; but in the true tabernacle which God pitched, and not man; in Christ the antitypical temple, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and in whom Jehovah the Father dwells personally; see **Heb 8:2** as also in every true believer, who is the temple of the living God, later described, for these words may both respect Christ and his members; the characters well agree with him:

even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word; Christ was poor literally, and his estate and condition in this world was very low and mean, **2Co 8:9**, or "afflicted" {m}, as some render it, as he was by God, and by men, and by devils; or "humble" {n}, meek and lowly, as the Septuagint and Targum; it was foretold of him that he should be lowly; and this character abundantly appeared in him, **Zec 9:9** and he was of a "contrite" or broken spirit, not only was his body broken, but his spirit also; not through a sense of sin, and consciousness of it, but through his sorrows and sufferings:

he also trembled at the word of God; that is, had a suitable and becoming reverence of it; it was at the word of the Lord he assumed human nature; and according as his Father taught, and gave him commandment, so he spake; and, agreeably to it, laid down his life, and became obedient to death: and now the Lord looks, to him; he looks to him as his own Son, with a look of love, and even as in human nature, and is well pleased with all he did and suffered in it; he looked to him as the surety of his people, for the payment of their debts, and the security and salvation of their persons; and he now looks to his obedience and righteousness, with which he is well pleased, and imputes it to his people, and to his blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction, on account of which he forgives their sins, and to his person for the acceptance of theirs; and he looks to them in him, and has a gracious regard for them: they also may be described as "poor"; poor in spirit, spiritually poor, as they see and own themselves to be, and seek to Christ for the riches of grace and glory, which they behold in him, and expect from him; and are both "afflicted and humble", and become the one by being the other;

and of a contrite spirit, their hard hearts being broken by the Spirit and word of God, and melted by the love and grace of God; and so contrite, not in a mere legal, but evangelical manner:

and such tremble at the Word of God; not at the threatenings of wrath in it, or in a servile slavish manner; but have a holy reverence for it {o}, and receive it, not as the word of man, but as the word of God: and to such the Lord looks; he looks on these poor ones, and feeds them; on these afflicted ones, and sympathizes with them; on these contrite ones, and delights in their sacrifices, and dwells with them, and among them; see Ps 51:17.

{l} wyhyw sunt, Forerius, Gataker. {m} yne la "ad afflictum", Pagninus, Montanus. {n} "Ad humilem", Calvin, Tigurine version, Vitringa; "qui est pauper vel humilis", Munster. {o} Gussetius observes, that the word does not design a mere trembling, but care, pains, and labour to serve, as one friend has for another; and, when applied to the service of God, is no other than a generous fear, flowing from love. Vid. Ebr. Comment. p. 285.

Isaiah 66:3

Ver. 3. He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man,.... Not that killed the ox of his neighbour, which, according to law, he was to pay for; or that killed one for food, which was lawful to be done; but that slew one, and offered it as a sacrifice; not blamed because blind or lame, or had any blemish in it, and so unfit for sacrifice; or because not rightly offered, under a due sense of sin, and with repentance for it, and faith in Christ; but because all sacrifices of this kind are now abolished in Gospel times, to which this prophecy belongs; Christ the great sacrifice being offered up; and therefore to offer sacrifice, which, notwithstanding the unbelieving Jews continued daily, till it was made to cease by the destruction of their temple, was a great offence to God; it was as grievous to him as offering their children to Moloch; or as the murder of a man; and was indeed a trampling under foot the Son of God, and accounting his blood and sacrifice as nothing, which was highly displeasing to God:

he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; the lamb for the daily sacrifice, morning and evening, or the passover lamb, or any other: this now is no more acceptable to God, than if a dog, a very impure creature, was slain, his head cut off, and offered on the altar; which was so abominable to the Lord, that the price of one might not be brought into his house, De 23:18:

he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; the meat offering, made of fine flour, on which oil was poured, and frankincense put, **Le 2:1**, however rightly composed it might be, and offered according to law, yet now of no more esteem with God than blood, which was forbidden by the same law; nay, than the blood of swine, which creature itself, according to the ceremonial law, was unclean, and might not be eaten, and much less be offered up, and still less its blood, Le 11:7:

and he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol; or that "remembers incense" {p}; that offers it as a memorial of mercies, and by way of thankfulness for them, as if he gave thanks to an idol, which is nothing, and vanity and vexation in the world; sacrifices of such kind, be they what they will, are reckoned no other than as idolatry and will worship:

yea, they have chosen their own ways: which were evil, and opposite to the ways of God, especially to the way of salvation by Christ; they gave heed to the traditions of the elders; continued the service of the ceremonial law; and set up their own righteousness, in opposition to the doctrines, ordinances, sacrifice, and righteousness of Christ:

and their soul delighteth in their abominations: things which were abominable unto God; as were their traditions, which were preferred to the word of God, and by which they made it void; and their sacrifices being offered up contrary to his will, and with a wicked mind; and their righteousness being imperfect, and trusted in, to the neglect and contempt of the righteousness of his Son.

{p} hnwbl rykzm, o didouv libanon eiv mnhmosunon, Sept.; "qui recordatur thuris", V. L. Calvin, Vatablus; "memorans thus", Montanus.

Isaiah 66:4

Ver. 4. I also will choose their delusions,.... Suffer them to approve and make choice of such persons that should delude and deceive them; as the Scribes and Pharisees, who were wolves in sheep's clothing, and through their appearance of sanctity deceived many, and by their long prayers devoured widows' houses; and as these false prophets, so likewise false Christs, many of which arose after the true Messiah was come, and was rejected by them, whom they embraced, and, by whom they were deluded and ruined, **Mt 7:15**

and will bring their fears upon them; the things they feared; such as the sword, famine, and pestilence; and especially the Romans, who, they feared, would come and take away their place and nation, Joh 11:48:

because, when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear; that is, when Christ called unto the Jews, in the external ministry of the word, to come and hear him, they refused to come, nor would they suffer others to answer to this call, and hear him, and attend on his ministry; which rejection of him and his Gospel was the cause of their ruin:

but they did evil before mine eyes; openly and publicly to his face; blasphemed and contradicted his word, and despised his ordinances: and chose that in which I delighted not; their oral law, their legal sacrifices, and their own self-righteousness, as well as their immoralities.

Isaiah 66:5

Ver. 5. Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word,.... This is said to the comfort of the believing Jews, who are thus described; See Gill on "Isa 66:2":

your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake; as the unbelieving Jews, the Pharisees; and so Jarchi interprets it of the children of the Pharisee, that say, Depart, ye defiled; who were brethren to them that believed in Christ, by blood, by birth, by country, yet hated them, though without cause; as they did Christ, in whom they believed; and cast them out of their affections, and company, and conversation; out of their own houses, and out of the synagogues; excommunicated them from fellowship with them, and that for the sake of their believing in Christ, and professing his name; having made a law, that whoever confessed him should be put out of the synagogue, or excommunicated; and the word here used signifies that excommunication among the Jews called "niddui"; see Joh 15:19 these said,

let the Lord be glorified; that is, they pretended, by all this hatred of and aversion to those of their brethren that believed in Christ, and by their persecution of them, that all their desire and design were the glory of God, imagining that, in so doing, they did God good service; see Joh 16:2. R. Moses the priest (not the Egyptian, or Maimonides, as some commentators suggest) thinks the sense is, that these unbelievers complained, as if the Lord was "heavy" unto them, and imposed burdensome precepts and commands upon them they were not able to perform; and which, he says, is always the sense of the word when in this form; but Aben Ezra observes, that he forgot the passage in
Job 14:21, where it is used in the sense of honour and glory. This sense Kimchi also takes notice of; but seems not to be the sense of the passage; and, were it so, it was a false suggestion of those unbelievers; for Christ's "yoke is easy, and his burden light",
Mt 11:30, see **Joh 6:60**:

but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed: that is, the Lord shall appear, either in a providential way, as he did for the Christians at Jerusalem, before the destruction of it; directing them to go out from thence, as they did, to a place called Pella, where they were safe, and had a sufficiency of good things; while the unbelieving Jews were closely besieged, and reduced to the greatest straits and miseries, and so to shame and confusion: or else this may respect the second coming, the glorious appearance of Christ, which will be to the joy of those believing Jews, and of all his people; since he will appear to their salvation, and they shall appear with him in glory, and see him as he is, **Heb 9:28**, and to the shame, confusion, and destruction of those that have pierced him, despised and rejected him, and persecuted his people, **Re 1:7**.

Isaiah 66:6

Ver. 6. A voice of noise from the city,.... From the city of Jerusalem, as the Targum; so Kimchi, who says, that in the days of the Messiah shall go out of Jerusalem the voice of noise concerning Gog and Magog: this indeed respects the days of the Messiah, but such as are now past, and a voice of crying in the city of Jerusalem, at, the taking and destruction of it by the Romans; when were heard from it the noisy voices of the Roman soldiers, triumphing and rejoicing at it, and the shrieks of the inhabitants, running about from place to place for shelter; so when destruction and desolation are come upon any place, a voice or a cry is said to come from it; see Jer 48:3:

a voice from the temple; either from heaven, as Aben Ezra; or rather from the temple at Jerusalem, of the priests there hindered from doing their service, and starving for want of sustenance; or of the people that fled thither for security, but forced from thence by the soldiers; and especially a voice of crying and lamentation was heard, when set on fire. Some illustrate this by what the priests heard in the temple a little before the destruction of it, a rustling and a noise like persons shifting and moving, and a voice in the holy of holies, saying, "let us go hence"; as also the words of Jesus the son of Ananus, a countryman, who went about uttering these words,

"a voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and against the temple, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, a voice against all the people:"

this he did before the war began, nor could he be persuaded to desist from it, but continued it afterwards; going on the walls of the city, saying,

"woe, woe to the city, and to the temple, and to the people, woe to myself also;"

and while he was speaking the last words, a stone, cast from a Roman engine, killed him, as Josephus {q} relates:

a voice of the Lord, that rendereth recompence to his enemies; for the Lord's voice was in all this, and his hand in the destruction of those people; it was according to his appointment, direction, and order, in righteous judgment for their sins, they being his implacable enemies, that would not have him to rule over them, Lu 19:14.

{q} De Bello Jud. I. 6. c. 5. sect. 3.

Isaiah 66:7

Ver. 7. Before she travailed, she brought forth,.... That is, Zion, as appears from the following verse: lest it should be thought that the interest of Christ would be swallowed up and lost in the destruction of the Jews, this, and what follows, are said concerning the conversion of many of that people, both in the first times of the Gospel, and in the latter day, as well as concerning the calling of the Gentiles, and the uniting of both in one church state. Zion, or the church of God, is here compared to a pregnant woman, that brings forth suddenly and easily, without feeling any pain, or going through any travail, or having any birth throes; at least, feeling very little pain and travail, and having very few pangs, and those, as soon as they come, are gone, and an immediate delivery ensues:

before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child; like a woman before she is scarcely sensible of any pain; as soon as ever she perceives the least uneasiness of this kind, is delivered of a son, to her great joy, and the joy of all about her. This is to be understood, not of the sudden and easy deliverance of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, by the proclamation of Cyrus, which occasioned great joy; much less of the birth of Christ, of the Virgin Mary at the inn, and in the stable, which is the sense of some Popish interpreters; much better do some Jewish writers interpret it of the birth and appearance of Christ, before the troubles of their nation came on; so the Targum,

"before distress comes to her, she shall be redeemed; and before trembling comes upon her, her King shall be revealed;"

that is, the King Messiah; and so some copies have it, according to Galatinus {r}; who also makes mention of another exposition of this passage, by R. Moses Haddarsan, if it may be depended on,

"before he should be born that should bring Israel into the last captivity, the Redeemer should be born;"

that is, as he explains it, before the birth of Titus, who destroyed the temple and city of Jerusalem, the Messiah should be born; but the passage refers not to his natural but mystical birth, or the regeneration of a spiritual seed in his church; or of the conversion of the first Christians both in Judea and in the Gentile world; who were like a man child, strong and robust, able to bear and did endure great hardships for the sake of Christ, and do him much work and service, in which they persevered to the end; see **Ga 4:26**, as the first Christians did through various persecutions, until the times of Constantine, by whom they were delivered from them, and who is prophesied of as the church's man child, as in Re 12:2.

{r} De Arcan. Cathol. Ver. I. 4. c. 11. p. 219.

Isaiah 66:8

Ver. 8. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things?.... Such numerous conversions, as after related; suggesting that they were wonderful and surprising, unheard of, what had never been seen in the world before, and which were amazing and astonishing to the church herself; see Isa 49:21,

shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? as if it was said the thing about to be related was as wonderful as if all the women in the world should bring forth their children in one day, or bring forth as many at once as would fill the whole earth; or as surprising as if the earth should all at once send out its herbs, plants, and trees, as it did on the third day of the creation, **Ge 1:11** which now gradually spring up, some in one month, and some in another, and some are months in their production:

or shall a nation be born at once? was ever such a thing heard of? yet this will be the case of the Jews in the latter day, when they shall be all converted and saved; and which shall be done suddenly and at once; see **Ho 1:10**, of which the conversion of them, in the first times of the Gospel, was an earnest and pledge, when three thousand were convinced, converted, and regenerated, in one day, under one sermon; and at another time, under the word, two thousand, if not five thousand: thus Christ had,

from the womb of the morning, or at the first break of the Gospel day, "the dew of his youth", or numbers of souls born again to him, like the drops of the morning dew; see **Ac 2:41**:

for as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children; this shows that the preceding verse must be understood of some travail and pain, though comparatively little, and so soon over, that it was as if none; and this is to be understood of the pains which Gospel ministers take in preaching the word, which is the means of regeneration, and they the instruments of it; and so are called fathers, who through the Gospel beget souls to Christ; and of their anxious concern for the conversion of sinners, and the formation of Christ in them, which is called a travailing in birth; see **1Pe 1:23** **Ro 8:22** and it may also design the earnest prayers of the church and its members, striving and wrestling with God, being importunate with him, that the word preached might be useful for the good of souls; and particularly their earnest and fervent prayers for the conversion of the Jews, which will soon be brought about, when a spirit of grace and supplication is not only poured on them, but upon the saints in general, to pray fervently and earnestly for it.

Isaiah 66:9

Ver. 9. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth, saith the Lord?.... Or, "to the place of breaking" forth of children, as in Ho 13:13, the womb, and the mouth of it: or, "shall I break or open" that, so some {s} render it; lest too much should or seem to be attributed to the Church, she being said to travail in birth, and bring forth children, this is said by the Lord. The church may pray, and her ministers preach, and both be said to travail in birth, but it is the Lord that brings to it; regeneration is not the work of man, but of God; it is he that beget, again, quickens, renews, and sanctifies; it is he that begins the work of grace in regeneration, in real and thorough convictions of sin; which are right when men are convinced of the impurity of their nature, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, have a godly sorrow for it, and forsake it: the work is begun when souls feel the burden of sin; the inward struggling, of grace and corruption; a want of spiritual food, and hunger after it; desires after spiritual things, and a glowing love and affection for them; and when light is infused, faith, fear, and love produced, and every other grace implanted; and he that has begun the good work will perform it; as Jarchi rightly gives the sense of the clause,

"shall I begin a thing, and not be able to finish it?"

no, he is a rock, and his work is perfect, as in creation and redemption, so in regeneration and conversion; as may be concluded, from his power to effect it, and his promise to do it; the grace of Christ, and the indwelling of the Spirit; the impotency of everything to hinder it, and the glory of the three divine Persons concerned in it. As in the natural birth it is he that gives strength to conceive, forms the embryo in the womb, ripens it for the birth, and takes the child out of its mother's womb; so he does all that answers hereunto in the spiritual birth.

Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb, saith thy God? no, I will not. As God has regenerated many souls in the first times of the Gospel, and many more since, in various nations, in each of the ages and periods of time; so he has not ceased, nor will he cease from this work, until all his elect are born again; for everyone that is chosen of the Father, given to the Son, taken into covenant, and redeemed by his blood, shall be begotten again to a lively hope of a glorious inheritance; God will not shut the womb of conversion until they are all brought to faith in Christ, and repentance towards God. He will beget many more sons and daughters; and he will cause the fulness of the Gentiles to be brought forth and brought in, and convert his ancient people the Jews; all his promises shall be performed, and all prophecies relating to these things shall be accomplished.

{s} rybva ynah "matricem frangam?" Montanus; "an ego aperirem os matricis?" Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Isaiah 66:10

Ver. 10. Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her,.... The church; she bringing forth so many spiritual children to Christ; just as, when a woman is delivered of a child, her friends and neighbours congratulate her upon it, and rejoice with her on that account; as Elisabeth's neighbours and relations did, at the birth of John the Baptist, **Lu 1:57**, so the church's friends here are called together to rejoice with her, at the numerous birth and conversion of souls in her, than which nothing is more joyful to the saints; see
Lu 15:6:

all ye that love her; wish her well, and pray for her peace and prosperity; all that love God love his church, the habitation of his house, the place where his honour dwells; all that love Christ love her who is his spouse and bride, and purchased by his blood; all that love the word and ordinances love the church where they are administered:

rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that had mourned for her, when things went ill with her; these are they that mourn in Zion, and for Zion, because of the sins of her professors; corruptions in doctrine, discipline, and worship; declensions in grace; want of love to one another, and few instances of conversion: but now things being the reverse, and it going well with her, they are called upon to rejoice exceedingly with her; for such is the sympathizing spirit of the saints, that they rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep, Ro 12:15.

Isaiah 66:11

Ver. 11. That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breast of her consolations,.... This, according to our version, expresses the end of the church's friends being called together to rejoice with her, that they might partake of her joys and comforts, delights and pleasures: but the words may be better rendered, either, according to Kimchi's sense, "therefore shall ye suck" {t}, &c.; because ye have mourned for her, and because ye have rejoiced with her; or rather, as Noldius {u}, "because ye suck", &c.; partake of her privileges and ordinances, so give a reason why they should rejoice with her. "Breast" is put for "breasts", as Jarchi observes; for as the church is represented as a woman, and as a teeming woman, she has two breasts as such, grown and fashioned, and full of milk of consolation; for "breast of her consolations" is the same as "her breasts of consolation"; see **So 4:5**, these are either Christ and his Spirit. Christ is a full breast of comfort to his people, in the greatness of his person, and the riches of his grace; in his precious blood, perfect righteousness, atoning sacrifice, and great salvation; if there be any comfort it is in him, and abounds by him. The Holy Spirit is another breast of consolation, another Comforter, by giving knowledge of the free grace gifts of God; by showing the things of Christ; by opening and applying the precious promises of the Gospel; by shedding the love of God in the heart; by witnessing to the saints their adoption, and by sealing them up unto the day of redemption. Or the covenant, and its blessings and promises: the covenant is a full breast of comfort, yields much both in life and at death; its blessings are sure mercies, blessings indeed, spiritual ones, and he that has an interest in them has enough, has all things; the promises of it are great, precious, sure, and unconditional, and afford strong consolation to the heirs of them. Or the Holy Scripture, and its two Testaments, the Old and New, which are exactly alike as two breasts; agree in the person and offices of Christ, and in all the doctrines of grace, and are full of the sincere milk of the word, and of spiritual consolation. Or the two ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper; which agree with each other; come from the same author; relate to the same things, the sufferings and death of Christ; and to be partook of by the same persons: baptism leads to the blood of Christ for cleansing and pardon; to the burial of Christ it represents, there to behold all sins buried with him; and to the resurrection of Christ for justification, and so is a means of much spiritual comfort; as it was to the eunuch, who from thence went on his way rejoicing: the Lord's supper is another breast of consolation, it is a feast of fat things; it represents the broken body and bloodshed of Christ, whose flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed, and so is a means of spiritual nourishment and comfort. These breasts are to be "sucked"; the mouth of faith is to be laid unto them; Christ is to be applied unto for fresh supplies of grace and comfort; the covenant and its promises are to be laid hold upon, and all the goodness in them to be pressed and got out; the Scriptures are to be diligently read and searched, and the ordinances to be frequently attended on, and fervent prayer to be incessantly used, and not restrained till the blessing is given; and such who do so are sooner or later "satisfied", filled to the full. How satisfying are Christ and his grace! the covenant of grace, its blessing and promises! the doctrine of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it! these are the goodness of God's house, with which his people are satisfied, even as with marrow and fatness, Ps 36:8,

that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory; or, "for" or "because ye milk out", "may" or "shall milk out" {w}; that is, press with the hand of faith the above breasts of consolation, and get out from them all the comfort that is laid up in them: and so

be delighted with the abundance of her glory; or, "the brightness of it" {x}; Christ is the glory of his church; it is his presence with her, his grace and righteousness bestowed on her, which give her abundance of glory; and he it is in whom she glories: the Spirit of God, as a spirit of glory, rests upon her, and his grace makes her all glorious within; it is her glory to be interested in the covenant of grace, its promises and blessings, and to have the word and ordinances; her breasts are her glory, and she will have abundance of it in the latter day; see Isa 66:12, all which greatly "delight" the lovers and friends of Zion; a sight of Christ and his fulness, and a view of God as their Covenant God, are exceeding delightful; the doctrines of the Gospel are pleasant words, and the ways or ordinances of Christ are ways of pleasantness; and particularly the church in the latter day, enjoying all these to the full, and having the glory of God upon her, will be very delightful to behold.

{t} wqnyt Neml "pro eo quod, [vel] quia sugetis", Gataker. {u} "Quia sugitis", Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 521. {w} wumt Neml. {x} hdwbk wyzm "propter splendorem gloriae ejus", Pagninus; "a splendore", Munster, Montanus. So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 36. 2.

Isaiah 66:12

Ver. 12. For thus saith the Lord, behold, I will extend peace to her like a river,.... As the river Euphrates, so the Targum; or as the Nile, which overflowed Egypt, and made it fruitful; or as any flowing river, large and spreading, continuing to flow, and brings blessings with it where it comes; and so denotes the abundance of this peace, the perpetuity of it, and its blessed effects. This respects not the first times of the Gospel; for though Christ the peacemaker came and made peace by his blood, and went and preached peace to Jews and Gentiles, and many enjoyed spiritual peace in believing, flowing from his blood and righteousness, yet there was very little outward peace to the churches of Christ; and when at any time had, did not last long: but, in the latter day, not only spiritual peace, which passeth all understanding, and joy unspeakable and full of glory, will be extended unto and possessed by the saints; but outward peace in great abundance, and of lasting continuance, with all kind of prosperity, temporal and spiritual, Ps 72:7: and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream; like the Nile, that overflows; meaning either the vast number of converts, from among the Gentiles, that shall flow into the church, and especially many of their great men, princes, nobles, even kings and queens, who shall be nursing fathers and nursing mothers to her; see Isa 60:3, or their riches, which are the honour and glory they shall bring with them to the church in great abundance, and shall cheerfully and freely expend them in the service and worship of God, Isa 60:6 so Kimchi interprets it of their wealth and substance:

then shall ye suck; the milk of the Gentiles, and the breasts of kings; that is, partake of their good things, Isa 60:16 or the church's breasts of consolation, the sincere milk of the word and ordinances,
Isa 60:11, this is spoken to the friends of Zion, and lovers of Jerusalem, newly converted persons, Isa 66:10:

ye shall be borne upon her sides, or "side" {y}; children being carried by parents or nurses on one side of them in their arms; it denotes the affectionate care and regard the church has to young converts, who are said to be nursed at her side, Isa 60:4 she supporting and supplying them with everything in her power, by means of the word and ordinances:

and be dandled upon her knees: as darling children are, who are taken into the lap, and played with, and are the delight, the exceeding great delight, of their parents; and where they delight to be, as the word {z} used signifies. All shows that young converts are and should be made much of, and tenderly used; the day of small things should not be despised, or the bruised reed broken, or the smoking flax quenched; but these lambs should be gathered into the arms, and carried in the bosom, like sucking children.

{y} du le "ad latus", Vitringa; "super latus", Calvin, Pagninus, Montanus. {z} wevevt Mykrb le "super genua oblectabimini", Montanus; "delectabiliter fovebimini", Munster, Vitringa.

Isaiah 66:13

Ver. 13. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you,.... Though ordinances are means, and ministers are instruments of comfort, God is the sole efficient cause of it; and very wonderful it is that he should condescend to administer it, since he is an immense and infinite Being, the high and lofty One, possessed of all perfections, and yet deigns to revive the spirit of the humble and contrite; since he is the Maker of heaven and earth, and all things, and those he comforts are dust and ashes; and especially since they have sinned against him, and rendered themselves abominable to him; and moreover, seeing he is so strictly just and righteous, and they also continually guilty of backslidings and revoltings from him: and yet there are many things which confirm that he will comfort them, as he here declares; since he has loved them with an everlasting love, insomuch as to give his Son for them, and to quicken them when dead in sin; and seeing he has taken them into covenant with himself, and is their covenant God and Father; and, besides, has promised to do it, who never fails, and who is able, being God all sufficient. The Targum is,

"my Word shall comfort you;"

his essential Word Christ, the consolation of Israel, from whom all true and solid comforts flow; or the written word, read or heard, and especially as applied by the Spirit of God, who is another Comforter, and whose consolations the people of God walk in, nor are they small. Now the manner in which the Lord comforts the saints, especially young converts, is the most kind, tender, and affectionate; as a tender hearted mother comforts her child; when it has fallen and hurt itself, and cries, she takes it up in her arms, hugs it in her bosom, and speaks comfortably to it, to still and quiet it. The children of God often fall into sin, and hurt themselves, their peace and joy, break their bones, and lose the enjoyment of God; when, being sensible of their evils, they roar as David did, and weep bitterly as Peter; then the Lord speaks comfortably unto them, and bids them be of good cheer, for their sins are forgiven them. Or as, when a mother has an afflicted child more so than the rest, her heart yearns most after it, and she does all she can to comfort it. The people of God are an afflicted people, and their afflictions are grievous and painful; and they cry to God in their distress, who pities them, visits them, looks upon their afflictions, grants them his presence, supplies them with his grace, supports with his everlasting arms, makes their bed for them, and comforts them in all their tribulations. Or as, when a child behaves ill, the mother looks shy at it, and carries herself at a distance; which being observed, the child takes it to heart, and then that affects her, and she returns to it, and comforts it: thus, for faults committed, the Lord hides himself from his people, which grieves and troubles them; and then he gathers them to himself with great mercies, and with lovingkindness has mercy on them; and having also chastised them for their sins; and hearing them bemoaning themselves, his heart is moved towards them, and he restores comforts to them, to their mourning souls; see Isa 49:14, it is in the original, "as a man whom his mother comforteth" {a}; for mothers have a tender regard to their sons when grown up to men's estate; and all the things above mentioned may befall the people of God, when they are become young men, yea, fathers: and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem; nothing shall hinder comfort when God speaks it, or resolves to give it; not Satan, and all his temptations; the world, and all its afflictions; nor all their sins and transgressions, and the sense they have of them; nor all their unbelief, by reason of which sometimes they refuse to be comforted; but when it is the will of God they should, a tide of comfort flows in, that overpowers all: and this is often done in Jerusalem, in the church, where the Lord grants his presence, and commands his blessings; where his word is preached unto consolation, and the ordinances, those breasts of consolation, are ministered and held forth; though this is said not to the exclusion of other places, where the Lord may meet his people and comfort them, in their own houses, in their closets, in their shops, in rising up and lying down, in going out and coming in.

{a} wnmxnt wma rva vyak "sicut vir quem mater sua consolatur", Pagninus; "consolabitur eum", Montanus.

Isaiah 66:14

Ver. 14. And when ye see this,.... All the above things prophesied of come to pass; the conversion of the Jews; the peaceable and prosperous condition of the church of Christ; and perceive, feel, and enjoy the comforts of God in an experimental manner:

your heart shall rejoice; for nothing can be matter of greater joy than these; these cause an inward, hearty, and sincere joy, and not mere outward expressions of it:

and your bones shall flourish like an herb; in a well watered garden, or on which the dew lies; which revives, lifts up its head, and is green and flourishing: so the hearts of God's people are comforted and filled with joy, it renews their spiritual strength; the bones that were dried up with sorrow become fat and flourishing and like a garden of herbs, whose springs fail not; see Pr 17:22. The people of the Jews, in their present state, are like dry hones; but these dry bones shall live at the word of God, and through the power of his grace, and stand upon their feet, and which will cause great joy to others, and be is life from the dead. This passage Abarbinel and other Jewish writers interpret of the resurrection of the dead; for they believe the same body will rise, and the same bones revive. They have indeed a fabulous notion of the bone "luz", which they say is never consumed, and from which the rest will be restored; but, letting this pass, it may be observed that they use these words with others at the funeral of their dead, and when they return from the grave, thereby expressing their faith in this article. The ceremony used by them is this,

"as they return from the grave, everyone of them plucks up grass from off the ground twice or thrice, and casts it over his head behind him, saying those words of the psalmist, "and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth",
Ps 72:16 and this they do, to signify their hopes of the resurrection of the dead, who shall flourish as the grass, as the prophet says, "your bones shall flourish as the herb" {b},"

or tender grass; as that springs up after it is cut down, so will the bones of the dead revive again, after they have been reduced to dust in the grave; and if that experiment is fact, said to be made by chemists, that herbs may be caused to grow up out of their ashes, it will serve very much to illustrate the words taken in this sense; which is done in the following manner,

"they take a rose, gillyflower, or any other plant, in the spring, in its full consistence, and beat the whole of it in a mortar to a paste, and extract a kind of ashes or salt out of it, which they put up in glasses, stopped and sealed; and, by applying a candle or a soft fire to them, the herbs or plants are perceived, by little and little, to rise up again out of their salt or ashes, in their several proper forms, as they did in the field {c}."

And the hand of the Lord shall be known towards his servants: in making them thus joyful, prosperous, and fruitful; in protecting and preserving them, and, in supplying all their wants; his hand of power, which is not shortened that he cannot save; and his hand of grace, which is opened to distribute to the necessities of his people:

and his indignation towards his enemies; the worshipper, of the beast, the followers of antichrist, who will drink deep of the wine of the wrath of God, poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, he will put into their hands; whose indignation is such as is intolerable, there is no standing before it, or sustaining it, or abiding under it; see Re 14:9. Kimchi says this will be fulfilled in the war of Gog and Magog.

{b} Vid. Buxtorf. Jud. Synagog. c. 49. p. 702, 703. Leo Modena, History of the Rites, &c. of the present Jews, part 5. c. 8. sect. 6. p. 237, 238. {c} See Gregory's Notes and Observations, &c. c. 26. p. 122, 123. and his Posthumua, p. 70. (This sounds like a wild fable to me. Editor.)

Isaiah 66:15

Ver. 15. For, behold, the Lord will come with fire,.... Either with material fire, with which mystical Babylon or Rome shall be burnt,
Re 18:8, or with indignation and wrath, which shall be poured out like fire, and be as intolerable and consuming as that:

and with his chariots like a whirlwind; making a great noise, and striking great terror; alluding to chariots in which men used formerly to fight:

to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire; a heap of words, to show the fierceness of his wrath, and how severe his rebuke of enemies will be; which will be not a rebuke in love, as of his own people, but in a way of vindictive wrath.

Isaiah 66:16

Ver. 16. For by fire, and by his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh,.... With the Mahometans, the Turks, the Ottoman empire, against whom he will call for a sword, and will rain upon them fire and brimstone, signified by Gog and Magog, Eze 38:22 and with the other antichristian powers at the battle of Armageddon; and when the fourth vial will be poured upon the sun, and men will be scorched with fire; see Re 16:8:

and the slain of the Lord shall be many; that is, those that will be slain by the Lord, both in the attempt of the Turks to recover the land of Canaan out of the hands of the Jews, possessed of it; whose numbers of slain will be so many, that the burying of them will last seven months, Eze 39:12 and in the battle between the Christian princes, Christ at the head of them, and the antichristian armies, led on by the beast and the kings of the earth; when the fowls of the air will be invited to the great supper of the Lord, to eat the flesh of kings, captains, and mighty men, so great will the slaughter be, Re 19:17, see also Isa 11:13.

Isaiah 66:17

Ver. 17. They that sanctify themselves,.... This is a description of the enemies of the Lord, and of his people, who shall be slain at this time; not who are sanctified by the Spirit and grace of God, but who sanctify themselves, pretend to make themselves holy, and give out that they are holier than others; professing great outward sanctity, as the Papists do, but destitute of real inward holiness: or, "that prepare themselves", as the Targum; to go and worship such an idol, on such a day, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it, and as the above followers of the man of sin do, **Re 9:20**

that purify themselves in the gardens; in pools or ponds of water in gardens. This Kimchi understands of the Persians, by whom he means the Mahometans, who bathe and purify themselves daily, but yet are unclean in their lives and actions; and it is true also of the Papists, who pretend to purify themselves with their holy water in their churches. "Behind one tree in the midst": so Aben Ezra supplies it. Some take Achad, rendered "one", to be the name of an idol.

Macrobius {d} says, the Assyrians worshipped the sun under the name of Adad, which signifies "one"; him they adore as a most powerful deity; the same perhaps, with the Adodus of Sanchoniatho {e}, whom he calls the king of the gods; and the Adadus of Pliny {f}, the god of the Syrians, from whom the gem "adadunephros" has its name. The Targum paraphrases it, "company after company"; to which agrees the Syriac version, "that purify themselves--one after another"; as the Papists go to Mass company after company, when they make use of their holy water purification. The phrase, "after one in the midst" {g}, as it may be rendered, may signify, after some middle person or mediator; and the note of Cocceius is not amiss, after the false vicar and head, that is, the pope, the pretended vicar of Christ, and head of the church the above things the Papists do after his orders and injunctions. So R. Bechai {h} interprets all of this of the Mahometans and Papists; his words are, as Buxtorf {i} has cited them,

"that sanctify themselves; these are the sons of Edom (that is, the Christians), whose custom it is to move their fingers here and there (that is, to sanctify themselves with the sign of the cross): that purify, themselves; these are the sons of Ishmael (that is, the Turks), whose custom is to wash their hands and their feet; which custom of washing they had from Esau and the Jews: "after one in the midst"; this signifies the cross of the Edomites (that is, the Christians), by which they sanctify, themselves;"

the Papists he means. Ben Melech understands it of one pool in the midst of the garden; and observes, that others interpret it of one of the groves in the midst of it.

Eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse; the eating of swine's flesh, and the mouse, were forbidden by the law of Moses,
Le 11:7 and some think by the "abomination" is meant the "weasel", since that is mentioned in the above law with the "mouse"; though it may be rather things offered to idols, or blood, are designed. Mice have been eaten, at least some sort of them, as the dormouse, by some people, particularly the Romans, and counted delicious food, as Sanctius upon the place, from various authors, has showed; and Bochart {k} also observes, that there is a kind of field mice, called by the Arabians "jarbuo", which are eaten by them, and had in great esteem, and is the very word the Arabic interpreter renders this by in the text. Now, though the ceremonial law is abolished, and all distinction of meats ceased, and will continue so in the times referred to; yet the description of these unclean people, pretending to so much sanctity and purity, is taken from such persons who were reckoned impure in the times the prophet wrote; and

may particularly point at such who abstain from meats at certain times, to be eaten lawfully; and yet are as unclean as those under the law were, who ate things forbidden; they being such who are abominable, and make an abomination, and a lie,
Re 21:8: "these shall be consumed together, saith the Lord"; in the above mentioned battles, or in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

{d} Saturnal. I. 1. c. 23. {e} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. I. 1. c. 10. p. 38. {f} Nat. Hist. 1. 37. c. 11. {g} Ktb dxa rxa "post unam in medio", Montanus Munster, Vatablus; "post unum in medio", Cocceius, Vitringa. {h} Comment. in Deut. xxx. fol. 220. col, 4. {i} De Abbreviat. Heb. p. 199, 200. {k} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 33. col. 1014.

Isaiah 66:18

Ver. 18. For I know their works, and their thoughts,.... That is, of the persons before described; their evil works and thoughts, which are known to Christ the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, whose eyes are as a flame of fire to pierce and penetrate into them, **Re 2:18** or, "as for me {l}, their works and their thoughts"; as I know them, and abhor them, I will take vengeance on them for them, for what they have devised and done against me and mine: "and it shall come"; that is, it shall come to pass, or the time shall come:

that I will gather all nations and tongues; not against Jerusalem in the war of Gog and Magog, as the Jewish commentators, Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it, illustrating it by Zec 14:2 but to Christ and his church, by the preaching of the Gospel; which in the latter day will be published to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, and that immediately upon the destruction of both the western and eastern antichrists; and particularly, by the means of the latter, way will be made for it into the kingdoms of the east, which thereby will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ,
Re 14:6,

and they shall come and see my glory; the glory of Christ's person, offices, and grace; the glory of his Gospel, worship, and ordinances; the glory that will be upon Zion the church, and on all which there will be a defence, and a glorious sight it will be; see **Isa 4:5**.

{l} ykwnaw "ad me vero quod attinet", Piscator, De Dieu, Cocceius, Vitringa.

Isaiah 66:19

Ver. 19. And I will set a sign among them,.... Either a miraculous sign, something wonderful, as the word is often used, **Ex 4:8**, not the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, in the presence of men of all nations; or the miracles wrought in the Gentile world by the apostles, in confirmation of the Gospel; but rather the wonderful conversion of the Jews, Isa 66:8, or those wonders, the time of the end of which is inquired,
Da 12:6 or else some distinguishing sign or mark is meant; such an one as was set on Cain, and on those that sighed and mourned for the sins of Jerusalem, **Eze 9:4**, and may intend the seal or mark of Christ's Father's name, in the foreheads of his people, to distinguish and preserve them from being hurt with others, **Re 7:3**, or, best of all, a sign or ensign to gather persons together; which, though not the usual word for an ensign, is sometimes so used, as in Ps 74:4, and so may intend Christ, who is a sign that has been spoken against, **Lu 2:34** and is set up in the ministration of the Gospel, to gather souls unto him, Isa 10:10, and which, as it was attended with great success in the first times of the Gospel, will also in the latter day, **Isa 2:2**:

and I will send those that escape of them; meaning, not the apostles and first preachers of the word, that escaped the perverseness and frowardness of the Jewish nation, their rage and persecution, and the wrath that came upon them to the uttermost; but those that shall escape at the defeat of the Turks, and at the ruin of mystical Babylon, and at the fall of the tenth part of the city,
Re 11:13 and who also, in a spiritual sense, will escape the pollutions of the world, through the grace of God, and knowledge of Christ; the vengeance of divine justice; the curses of the law, and wrath to come; hell and eternal damnation, by fleeing to Christ; these, some of them, will be made preachers of the Gospel; as who so fit as those to warn sinners of their danger, to show men the way of salvation, and publish the good tidings of the Gospel, and will be sent of God with a commission from him "unto the nations"; in order to gather them to Christ and his church, and behold his glory: particularly to "Tarshish", a word sometimes used for the sea; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it "the nations in the sea"; or, as the Targum, the province of the sea, the maritime provinces, those that lie nearest the sea; the Persian and Arabian seas; or Tartessus in Spain; and may be put for the whole country:

Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow; which some take to be the same with Put and Lud, or Lybia and Lydia, which go together, Jer 46:9 both countries in Africa, famous for archery; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it Africa and Lydia; though Bochart, and after him Vitringa, take Pul to be the same with Philas, an island upon the Nile, above Syene, between Ethiopia and Egypt, of which Diodorus Siculus {m} and Strabo {n} make mention; or Elephantine, the same with Phil, near the other. Kimchi interprets those that draw the bow of the Turks:

to Tubal and Javan; which the same version renders Italy and Greece:

and the isles afar off; even as far as the West Indies: what places and countries are exactly and precisely meant cannot be determined; only, in general, that into various parts of the world, east, west, north, and south, even the most distant, the Gospel and Gospel ministers shall be sent:

even to those that have not heard my fame; or, "my report" {o}; the Gospel, which is a good and true report of Christ; this the nations, covered with gross darkness, the Pagan ones, have not so much as heard of, but now shall, through these men being sent unto them:

neither have seen my glory; in the glass of the Gospel, that having never been set before them; and so have never seen the glory of Christ, as the only begotten of the Father; his comeliness and beauty, the fulness of grace in him, nor any of the excellencies of him, either of his person or offices:

and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles; this, those that are escaped, or the preachers sent to the nations, shall do; they shall declare publicly, plainly, and clearly, that Christ is the brightness of the divine Glory; shall declare the glory of his deity; of his rich grace and love to sinners, in suffering and dying for them; of his salvation, how great, complete, suitable, and glorious it is; with all the glorious truths of the Gospel, peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, by Christ.

{m} Bibliothec I. 1. p. 23. {n} Geograph, l. 17. p. 552, 562. {o} yemv ta "meum auditum", Pagninus, Montanus; "the report of me", Gataker.

Isaiah 66:20

Ver. 20. And they shall bring all your brethren, for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations,.... This is not said of the Jews, either with respect to the first times of the Gospel; not of the devout men of all nations that heard the apostles on the day of Pentecost; nor of those the Gospel met with in the Gentile world, by the ministry of the apostles, to whom Peter and James write their epistles; or, in the latter day, such who remain in the several nations after the general conversion of that people; but this is to be understood of the Gentiles, and of the bringing in the fulness of them, by means of those who shall escape the calamities of those times, the destruction of the eastern and western antichrist; some of which will become preachers of the word, and be the instruments of doing this work: here the Gentiles are called the brethren of the converted Jews, as all the Lord's people are brethren one of another, be they of what nation they will; they are all in a spiritual sense the seed and children of Abraham, who is the father of all that believe; and so all believers are brethren, Jews and Gentiles; yea, they are all the children of God, who is the one God and Father of all, in the covenant of grace, which is common to them all; and by adoption, and through regeneration, the evidence of it. Christ stands in the relation of an elder brother to them all; and the church universal, the Jerusalem above, is the mother of them all; they are mother's children, and so brethren; they are partakers of the same blessings and privileges, and heirs of the same promises, grace, and glory: now all those that are predestinated to the adoption of sons, that are the children of God scattered abroad, and whom God has promised to call by his grace, shall be brought in; not one shall be left behind; such is the will of God, which cannot be resisted; such their election of grace, which stands firm on the sovereign will of God, and, always obtains; such the suretyship of Christ, and the purchase of his blood, which make the bringing of them absolutely necessary; and the Lord knows where they are, and will send his Gospel and ministers to them, to fetch them in, let them be in ever such distant and obscure places: and these shall be brought,

for an offering to the Lord; which shall be offered to him, either by the persons that bring them, the ministers of the Gospel, who are the priests of the Lord, Isa 66:21 and who offer, not slain beasts, as under the law, but living persons, men and women, converted under their ministry; whom they bring to the Lord, and to his house, as trophies of his victorious grace, to serve and glorify him. The Apostle Paul seems to allude to this passage, and to give the sense of it, Ro 15:16 or else by themselves that are brought; who shall present their souls and bodies a living, holy, and acceptable sacrifice unto God, as their reasonable service; not to atone for their sins, but in gratitude to the Lord, as being his, and not their own, Ro 12:1 the means by which they shall be brought follows:

upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts; which Kimchi and Aben Ezra interpret of camels, the better sort of them; but the Targum renders it, with praises; and so Jarchi understands it of the songs of those that skip and dance for joy; see **1Sa 6:16**, which carriages are not to be understood literally, but figuratively, expressive of the Gospel ministry, which is the vehicle of salvation, and in which souls are brought to Christ, and to his church; and various sorts being mentioned, may signify the multitudes that shall be gathered in, and the different accommodations made, according to different circumstances; some that are strong and eager, and impatient of church communion, are brought on more speedily, on horses, and swift beasts; and others more weakly, and can move but slowly, in chariots and litters; and all denote the safe and honourable way and manner in which they are conducted, as well as the welcome they may expect to have in the churches of Christ; since all manner of help is afforded to them. The horse is an emblem of the Gospel ministry, and so is the chariot, **Re 6:2** the place they will be brought unto is,

to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord; not Jerusalem literally taken, though it is highly probable it will be at this time a place of great resort of all Christians; but the church, often called by this name in this prophecy, and in this chapter; a "mountain", for height, visibility, and especially for firmness and immovableness; a "holy" one, where holy things, words, and ordinances are ministered, holy persons meet, and none else should be members of it; hither converted persons are brought, to partake of those holy things, and have communion with holy persons, by means of the ministers of the Gospel, who invite, exhort, encourage, and persuade, and use the most forcible arguments they can, but after all are but instruments, God is the cause; it is he that brings souls to Zion, **Jer 3:14** the manner follows:

as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord; just as the "minchah", or meat offering, was brought in a pure and clean vessel into the sanctuary of the Lord, and there presented before him; as all the vessels there were Holy Ones, **Ezr 8:28** denoting who those should be that should be brought and offered; persons whose hearts were purified by faith in the blood of Christ; called with a holy calling; sanctified by the Holy Ghost; and appearing in the beauties of holiness of heart and life. The Septuagint version renders it, "with psalms"; and the Arabic version, "with a jubilee"; suggesting they should be brought with joy and gladness; see
Ps 45:15. The ancient Jews {p} interpret all this of the gifts brought to the King Messiah in his days.

{p} Midrash Tillim apud Yalkut in Psal. lxxxvii. 4.

Isaiah 66:21

Ver. 21. And I will also take of them for priests,.... That is, of the Gentiles, the brethren brought as an offering to the Lord; and therefore must respect Gospel times, when the Aaronic priesthood would be changed and cease, which admitted not of Gentiles, nor any of any other tribe in Israel, but the tribe of Levi; nor is this to be understood of the spiritual priesthood common to all believers, **1Pe 2:5** since of those converted Gentiles brought, not all, but only some of them, would be taken for priests; and therefore can only be interpreted of the ministers of the word, who, in Old Testament language, are called priests, though never in the New Testament; but elders, bishops, overseers, pastors, and teachers. The first preachers of the Gospel were Jews, as the twelve apostles, the seventy disciples, Paul and Barnabas, and others; but when the Gospel was preached, and churches planted in the Gentile world, then priests, or pastors, or elders, were taken out from among them, and ordained over the churches everywhere; and which have continued, more or less, ever since; and will be more abundant in the latter day; whose work and office is not to offer up slain beasts, as the priests of old; but to point to the sacrifice of Christ, to the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of men; and to teach the knowledge of crucified Christ, and the several doctrines and duties of the Christian religion, as the priests formerly taught the knowledge of the law, **Mal 2:7**:

and for Levites, saith the Lord; this still more clearly shows that the prophecy belongs to the Gospel dispensation, and is to be understood figuratively and spiritually; for none but those of the tribe of Levi could be taken for Levites in a literal sense; but here Gentiles are said to be taken for such, and design men in Gospel churches. The Levites, as their name signifies, were such as were "joined" to others; they ministered to the priests, and assisted them, and had the charge of the temple, and the vessels of it, to whom deacons now answer; who are helps and assistants to the ministers of the word: their business is to serve tables, and to take care of the secular affairs of the church; so that this is a prophecy of the churches in the latter day being truly organized, and filled with proper officers, as well as with numerous members.

Isaiah 66:22

Ver. 22. For as the new heavens, and the new earth, which I will make,.... Not "have made"; for this is not to be understood of the heavens and the earth made new in the beginning, and which continue so without any change or alteration; though sometimes the perpetuity of the church, which is here predicted, is set forth by the duration of those,
Ps 89:36 but either of the new state of things under the Gospel dispensation, which still continues, promised Isa 65:15, or rather, since that would be an illustration of it by the same thing in different words, it may be interpreted literally of the new heavens and the new earth, which will be made when the present ones shall wax old and perish, and be no more, as in the New Jerusalem state, **2Pe 3:10**:

shall remain before me, saith the Lord; these shall continue, not only throughout the Millennium, or thousand years' reign, but for ever:

so shall your seed and your name remain; not the natural seed of believers; all have not such seed, and they that have, they are not all converted persons; but the spiritual "seed" of the church, born in her, and brought up by her; which shall continue in successive generations to the end of time, notwithstanding the persecutions of men, and the craft of false teachers, and the reproaches and banters of a vain world, Ps 22:30, and their "name" also; the name of Christ they name and confess, and that is called upon them, and from whence they are called Christians; this shall endure as long as the sun,
Ps 72:17 or the new name of sons and daughters of the Almighty; or their fame and glory, the memory of them; they shall be had in everlasting remembrance, Ps 112:6.

Isaiah 66:23

Ver. 23. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another,.... Or, "from month in its months" {q},

The Targum is,

"in the time of the beginning of the "month in its month";"

that is, in every day of the month; or rather every month:

and from one sabbath to another; the form of expressions the same as before;

and in like manner paraphrased in the Targum; and signifies either every day in the week; or rather every sabbath, or first day in the week; for we are not to imagine that new moons and Jewish sabbaths, that is, seventh day sabbaths, shall now be observed, which have been long abolished, **Col 2:16** but, as New Testament officers of churches are, in the preceding verses, called by Old Testament names; so here the times and seasons of Gospel worship are expressed in Old Testament language; and the sense is, that the people of Christ and members of churches, in the latter day, shall constantly attend church meetings; shall assemble together every month to celebrate the Lord's supper; and every Lord's day, to hear the word, pray and sing praises together; hereby enjoying much spiritual peace and rest, and increasing in evangelical light, signified by the new moons and sabbaths; and especially this will have a fuller accomplishment in the New Jerusalem state, when there will be a perfect sabbatism, which now remains for the people of God, and when their light will be exceeding great and glorious; and so the Jews {r} interpret this of the world to come, which is all sabbath or rest; that is, from all toil and labour, from sin and sorrow, from Satan's temptations, and the world's persecutions; but not from the worship and service of God; though that will be in a different and more perfect manner than now it is; as follows:

all flesh shall come to worship before me, saith the Lord; that is, men of all nations, and persons of each sex; not Jews only, and their males, as formerly, but men and women; not every individual, but all that will be converted, which will be many, shall come to the places of public worship, where the saints meet together for that purpose, and join together in it; and this they shall do continually and without intermission, as the first Christians did, **Ac 2:42**. The Talmud {s} interprets this of such whose heart is become as flesh; see Eze 36:26 these shall not only worship in the presence of God, and in the view of him the omniscient God, and by his assistance, and to his glory; but him himself, Father, Son, and Spirit, with reverence and devotion, in spirit and in truth, and that constantly, in the New Jerusalem, and ultimate glory, in the utmost perfection and purity.

{q} wvdxb vdwx ydm "a tempore mensis in mense ejus"; Montanus; "de mense in mensem suum", Forerius. {r} Midrash Tillim in Psal. xc. 15. apud Galatia de Arcan, Cathol. Ver. l. 11. c. 8. p. 691. {s} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 5. 1.

Isaiah 66:24

Ver. 24. And they shall go forth,.... That is, those constant and spiritual worshippers shall go forth from the holy mountain Jerusalem, the church of God, whither they are brought as an offering to the Lord, and where they worship him; for this is not to be understood of going out of Jerusalem literally, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; or of their going out of their graves after the resurrection, as others; but either out of the Christian assemblies, or out of the houses of the saints, and the beloved city, when fire shall come down from heaven, and destroy the wicked, Re 20:9:

and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me. The Targum is,

"against my Word;"

against Christ, whose person they blasphemed, denying him to be God; whose office, as a Mediator and Saviour, they rejected; whose doctrines they contradicted; and whose ordinances they despised: these are not the carcasses of the camp of Gog and Magog, the Jews so call, as Kimchi interprets it; though it may have reference to the carcasses of Gog's army, the Turks, that will be slain in their attempt to recover Judea,
Eze 38:1 or else the carcasses of those that will be slain at the battle at Armageddon, Re 16:16 or the army of Gog and Magog, at the end of the thousand years, Re 20:8. The Talmudists {t} observe from hence, that the wicked, even at the gate of hell, return not by repentance; for it is not said, that "have transgressed", but "that transgress"; for they transgress, and go on for ever; and so indeed the word may be rendered, "that transgress", or "are transgressing" {u}; for they interpret it of the damned in hell, as many do; and of whom the following clauses may be understood:

for their worm shall not die; with which their carcasses shall be covered, they lying rotting above ground; or figuratively their consciences, and the horrors and terrors that shall seize them, which they will never get rid of. The Targum is,

"their souls shall not die;"

as they will not, though their bodies may; but will remain to suffer the wrath of God to all eternity: neither shall their fire be quenched; in hell, as Jarchi interprets it; those wicked men, the followers and worshippers of antichrist, will be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; they will for ever suffer the vengeance of eternal fire; and the smoke of their torment shall ascend for ever and ever,

Re 14:10:

and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh; the true worshippers of God, Isa 66:23 to whom their carcasses will be loathsome, when they look upon them; and their souls abominable, because of their wicked actions; and who cannot but applaud the justice of God in their condemnation; and admire distinguishing grace and mercy, that has preserved them from the like ruin and destruction. The Targum is,

"and the ungodly shall be judged in hell, till the righteous shall say concerning them, we have seen enough;"

see **Mr 9:44**, where our Lord mentions and repeats some of the clauses of this, text, and applies them to the torments of hell.

{t} T. Bab. Erubim, fol. 19. 1. R. Hona in Midrash Tillim in Psal. i. 6. {u} yb Myevph "praevaricantium in me", Pagninus, Montanus; "qui transgressi sunt contra me", Piscator; "deficientium a me", Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH

The title of the book in the Vulgate Latin version is, "the Prophecy of Jeremiah"; in the Syriac and Arabic versions, "the Prophecy of the Prophet Jeremiah". According to a tradition of the Jews {a}, this book stands the first of the Prophets, the order of which is, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the twelve. Kimchi makes mention of it in a preface to his comment on this book; and Dr. Lightfoot from hence concludes, that this is the reason why a passage in Zechariah is cited under the name of Jeremy, Mt 27:9, because he standing first in the volume of the Prophets gave name to the whole; just as the book of Psalms, being the first of the Hagiographa, they are called the Psalms from it, Lu 24:44. The name of the writer of this book, Jeremiah, signifies, "the Lord shall exalt", or "be exalted"; or, "exalting the Lord"; being composed of Mry, "he shall exalt", and hy, "Jehovah", according to Hillerus {b}. Though others {c} take it to be a composition of hy, and hmry, "the Lord shall cast down"; as he did his enemies, and also himself, he being greatly afflicted; and which suits with the argument of his book, foretelling the casting away of the people of the Jews. His style of writing, according to the opinion of Jerom {d}, is more rustic than that of Isaiah and some other prophets, and which he attributes to his being born and brought up in a country village; and Abarbinel to his age, being a child when he began to prophesy. The duration of his prophesying was forty years and upwards. He began to prophesy in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign; in 3375 A.M. or before the era of Christ 629, according both to Bishop Usher {e} and Mr. Whiston {f}, and the Universal History {g}; and according to Mr. Bedford {h} 627. If any credit can be given to Epiphanius {i}, or to the writer that bears his name, he was stoned to death by the people at Taphnas in Egypt, and was buried where Pharaoh dwelt. Abulpharagius, an Arabic writer {k}, says, that he went to Egypt, where some of the Jews took him and put him into a well, and afterwards took him out and stoned him, so that he died, and he was buried in Egypt; and was from thence removed by Alexander, in his time, to Alexandria, and buried there. And both Tertullian {l} and Jerom {m} affirm that he was stoned by the people. This prophecy contains several discourses delivered to the people of the Jews; charging them with many sins they were guilty of; exhorting them to repentance; threatening them with the destruction of their city and temple, and with captivity in Babylon; and comforting the saints, not only with a promise of deliverance from thence, but of spiritual redemption by the Messiah. And it also has in it several predictions of judgments upon other nations; and gives a particular account of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the carrying of the Jews captive into Babylon; which he lived to see, as the fulfilment of his prophecies.

{a} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. {b} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 326, 508. {c} Schmidt in loc. {d} Praefat. in Hieremiam, tom. 3. fol. 9. B, {e} Annales Vet. Test, A. M. 3375. {f} Chronological Tables, cent. 9. {g} Vol. 21. p. 56. {h} Scripture Chronology, p. 673. {i} De Vit. Prophet. c. 8. Vid. Isidor. Hispalens. de Vit. & Mort. Sanct. c. 38. {k} Hist. Dynast. p. 46. Vid. Elmacin. Hist. Eccl. p. 128, Apud Hottinger. Thesaur. Phil. p. 478. {l} Scorpiace, c. 8. {m} Adv. Jovinian. l. 2, tom. 2. fol. 32. I.

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 1

This chapter contains the title or inscription of the book; the call of the prophet to his office, and the encouragement he had to enter upon it. In the inscription the prophet is described by his name, by his descent, by the place of his birth, and the time of his prophesying, **Jer 1:1**, the appointment and ordination of him to his office, which was very early, and the signification of it to him, are in **Jer 1:4**, his excuse, on account of his childhood and weakness, **Jer 1:6**, the encouragement given him, notwithstanding this, from the mission and command he had from the Lord, and the promise of his presence with him, **Jer 1:7**, and not only is he encouraged by words, but also by signs; by the Lord's touching his mouth with his hand, as a symbol of putting his words into his mouth, and setting him over nations and kingdoms, to publish in a prophetic way their destruction, **Jer 1:9**, and by a vision of an almond tree, signifying the quick and hasty performance of the word of the Lord by him, **Jer 1:11**, and by another vision of a seething pot northwards, intimating the coming of the Chaldeans from the north against Jerusalem, and their taking it, and carrying the Jews captive because of their wickedness, which was a principal part of the message he was sent with, **Jer 1:13** and the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to him to take heart, and be of good courage, and not be dismayed; since he was made a defenced city, an iron pillar, and brasen wall, against the whole land of Judea, its kings, princes, priests, and people; who, though they should fight against him, should not prevail, because God was with him, **Jer 1:17**.

Ver. 1. The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah,.... This is the general title of the whole book, and includes all his discourses, sermons, and prophecies; and designs not his own words, but the words of the Lord, which were put into his mouth, and he delivered under divine inspiration. The Septuagint version renders it, "the word of God": and the Arabic version, "the word of the Lord": the Targum,

"the words of the prophecy of Jeremiah;"

who is described by his descent and parentage, "the son of Hilkiah". The Arabic version calls him Selkiah. This was not Hilkiah the high priest, who in the days of Josiah found the book of the law,
2Ki 22:8 as Kimchi's father and Abarbinel think, and so Clemens of Alexandria {n}; since he is not said to be a high priest, or of the high priests, but

of the priests that were in Anathoth, in the land of Benjamin; though the Targum paraphrases the words to the other sense,

"of the heads of the ward of priests, of the amarcalin, or governors which were in Jerusalem, a man that took his inheritance in Anathoth, in the land of the tribe of Benjamin;"

nor is Jeremiah mentioned among the posterity of Hilkiah the high priest in **1Ch 6:13**, besides, Hilkiah, a priest of Anathoth, must be of the family of Ithamar; the last of which family that was high priest was Abiathar, who had fields in Anathoth, **1Ki 2:26**, and so could be no other than a common priest; for Hilkiah the high priest was of the family of Phinehas; for, from the times of that Abiathar to the Babylonish captivity, there was no high priest but of that family. The Jews say that Jeremiah descended by his mother's side from Rahab the harlot {o}. Anathoth was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, as is here said, and belonged to the priests, Jos 21:18, it lay north of Jerusalem about three miles from it, according to Jerom {p} and others; but, according to Josephus {q}, it was but twenty furlongs from it, that is, two and a half miles.

{n} Stromat. l. 1. p. 328. {o} T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 14. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 59. 3. Jarchi in loc. {p} Comment. in Hieremiam, I. 1. fol. 121. H. tom. 5. & I. 2. fol. 135. F. & I. 6. fol. 161. C. Isidor. Hispalens. de Vit. & Mort. Sanct. c. 38. {q} Antiqu. I. 10. c. 7. sect. 3. Ed. Hudson.

Jeremiah 1:2

Ver. 2. To whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah,.... This was the beginning of the prophecy of Jeremiah, so that he prophesied long after Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah; for this king was

the son of Amon king of Judah, which Amon was the son of Manasseh; the Septuagint and Arabic versions wrongly call him Amos; and Jeremiah began to prophesy

in the thirteenth year of his reign: in the twenty first of Josiah's age, for he began to reign when he was eight years old, and he reigned eighteen years after, for he reigned in all thirty one years; and it was five years after this that the book of the law was found by Hilkiah the high priest, 2Ki 22:3.

Jeremiah 1:3

Ver. 3. And it came also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah king of Judah,.... In the beginning of his reign, and in the fourth year of his reign; see Jer 25:1, no mention is made of Jehoahaz, who reigned between Josiah and

Jehoiakim, because his reign was short, but three months, 2Ki 23:31, and perhaps no word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in his time, though it did before and after:

unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah; so that Jeremiah must prophesy in the land of Judea upwards of forty years; eighteen under Josiah, 2Ki 22:11, three months under Jehoahaz, 2Ki 23:31 eleven years under Jehoiakim, 2Ki 23:36, three months under Jeconiah, 2Ki 24:8, and eleven years under Zedekiah, when the city was besieged and taken, 2Ki 25:2. Josiah had three sons as kings of Judah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, under all whom Jeremiah prophesied:

even unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month: the month Ab, which answers to part of July and part of August; and it was on the ninth or tenth day of this month that the city of Jerusalem was burnt, and the people carried captive, 2Ki 25:8 the ninth of the said month is now kept by the Jews as a fast on that account.

Jeremiah 1:4

Ver. 4. Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. Not in the days of Jehoiakim, but in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, **Jer 1:2**. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions read, "unto him".

Jeremiah 1:5

Ver. 5. Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee,.... Not merely by his omniscience, so he knows all men before their conception and birth; but with such a knowledge as had special love and affection joined with it; in which sense the Lord knows them that are his, as he does not others, and predestinates them unto eternal life; and which is not only before their formation in the womb, but before the foundation of the world, even from all eternity. The forming of the human foetus is God's act, and a curious piece of workmanship it is; see
Ps 139:15.

And before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; not by infusing holiness into him, but by separating him in his eternal purposes and decrees to the office of a prophet before he was born, and even before the world began; just as the Apostle Paul was separated to the Gospel of God, **Ro 1:1**, for it follows,

and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations; not to the Israelites only, who Jarchi thinks are so called, because they now followed the usages and customs of the nations; but to the Gentiles, against whom be was sent to prophesy, Jer 46:1 as Egyptians, Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, and Chaldeans. This ordination of him to be a prophet was not done in time, but in eternity, in the mind and thought of God; he was foreordained to this office before the foundation of the world, of which a declaration was made unto him when he was now called unto it; to which he makes answer.

Jeremiah 1:6

Ver. 6. Then said I, Ah, Lord God!.... The word hha, "Ah", or "Ahah", is used in distress and grief, as Kimchi observes; and is expressive of mourning and complaint, as Jarchi notes; and shows that the prophet was troubled and uneasy at his call, and would gladly have been excused on the following account:

behold, I cannot speak; or, "I know not how to speak" {r}; properly and pertinently, politely and eloquently, especially before great personages, kings and princes, and the citizens of Jerusalem, being brought up in a rustic manner in the country. A like excuse Moses made, **Ex 4:10**. The Targum is, "I know not to prophesy: for I am a child"; meaning either in knowledge and understanding, or in years; not a mere child, but a "junior", as the Septuagint version renders the word; or a "young man", as the Arabic version; so Samuel and Zechariah were young men, when they first ministered in their office, **1Sa 3:1**. Abarbinel supposes that Jeremiah was now twelve or fifteen years of age; but it should seem rather that he was more, perhaps twenty years of age; since he seems to have prophesied to the men of Anathoth before he was sent to Jerusalem, Jer 11:21.

{r} rbd ytedy al "uescio loqui", V. L. Munster, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius; "non novi loqui", Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 1:7

Ver. 7. But the Lord said unto me, say not, I am a child,.... This excuse will not be admitted:

for thou shall go to all that I shall send thee; either to "every place", as the Targum paraphrases; or "to all persons to whom" he should be sent, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions render the words; or "to all things for which" he should send him, as the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions. The sense is, that he should go everywhere, and to every person, and on every errand and message he should be sent unto and with:

and whatsoever I command thee, thou shall speak; out and openly, and keep back nothing through the fear of men; as follows:

Jeremiah 1:8

Ver. 8. Be not afraid of their faces,.... Their stern looks, their frowning brows, and angry countenances, which would threaten him with destruction and death:

for I am with thee, to deliver thee, saith the Lord; out of their hands, when in the most imminent danger. The Targum paraphrases the words thus,

"my Word shall be thine help to deliver thee:"

which is true of Christ, the essential Word of God.

Jeremiah 1:9

Ver. 9. Then the Lord put forth his hand,.... Who, according to Kimchi, was the Angel that appeared to the prophet, and spoke in the name of the Lord to him, and is called by his name; but rather it was the Son of God, the true Jehovah, who appeared in a human form he assumed for the present, and put forth his hand:

and touched my mouth; just as one of the seraphim touched the mouth and lips of the Prophet Isaiah with a live coal from the altar, **Isa 6:6**, by this symbol the prophet was inducted into his office; and it was suggested to him that his mouth was now sanctified to the Lord's use and service; and that what he should speak should not be his own words, but the words of the Lord; and so the Targum paraphrases it, "and the Lord sent the words of his prophecy, and ordered them in my mouth;"

to which agrees what follows:

and the Lord said unto me, behold, I have put my words in thy mouth; which was signified by the preceding symbol; wherefore he might with great freedom and boldness deliver them out to others.

Jeremiah 1:10

Ver. 10. See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms,.... Not as a prince, but as a prophet over them, to prophesy things concerning them, whether good or evil, which should certainly come to pass as he predicted:

to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down; that is, to foretell that such a kingdom and nation should be rooted out, as a tree or plant that is plucked up by the roots; and that such an one should be pulled, and thrown down, and destroyed, as a building is. The whole may be understood of the destruction of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar, of their temple, city, and nation; though the Targum and Jarchi interpret all this of the Gentiles only, and the following,

to build, and to plant, of the house of Israel; which may be applied to the building of the temple, and the planting of the Jews in their own land, after their return from captivity, which Jeremiah prophesied of. These last words are not in the Arabic version.

Jeremiah 1:11

Ver. 11. Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me,.... At the same time as before:

saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? The Septuagint version leaves out the word "Jeremiah":

and I said, I see a rod of an almond tree; a dry stick, without leaves or fruit upon it, and yet he knew it to be an almond tree stick; though some think it had leaves and fruit on it, by which it was known. The Targum is,

"and I said, a king hastening to do evil I see;"

meaning Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, hastening to bring destruction upon the Jews.

Jeremiah 1:12

Ver. 12. Then said the Lord unto me, thou hast well seen,.... The thing seen is a very proper emblem of what I am about to do, and the quick dispatch that will be made therein:

for l will hasten my word to perform it; the words yna dqv, "shoked ani", "I will hasten", or "I am hastening", are in allusion to dqv, "shoked", the name of the almond tree in Hebrew; which is so called because it is quick and early, and, as it were, hastens to bring forth its flowers, leaves, and fruit; in like manner the Lord says he would hasten to perform what he had said or should say by him concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and the captivity of the people, and every thing else he should give him in commission to say. Jarchi and Abendana make mention of an ancient Midrash, or exposition, to this sense; that from the time of the almond tree's putting forth, until its fruit is ripe, are one and twenty days, according to the number of days which were between the seventeenth of Tammuz, in which the city was broken up, and the ninth of Ab, in which the temple was burnt; but though the almond tree is the first of trees, and is very early in putting forth, yet there is a greater time than this between its putting forth and its fruit being ripe; for Pliny {s} says, that the almond tree first of all flowers in January, and its fruit is ripe in March.

{s} Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 25.

Jeremiah 1:13

Ver. 13. And the word of the Lord came unto me the second time,.... In the same vision:

saying, what seest thou? besides the almond tree rod; which perhaps was now removed out of sight, and another object appears:

and I said, I see a seething pot; a pot with fire under it, boiling and bubbling up:

and the face thereof was towards the north; either the mouth of the pot where it boiled up, which might be turned to the north in the vision; or that side of the pot, as Kimchi thinks, on which the liquor was poured out; it may be that side of it on which the fire was put to cause it to boil; and so denotes from what quarter the fire came, and was put under it, and the wind that blew it up. The Targum paraphrases the words thus,

"and I said, I see a king boiling as a pot, and the banner of his army, which was brought and came from the north."

The explanation follows:

Jeremiah 1:14

Ver. 14. Then the Lord said unto me,.... Explaining the above vision:

out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land; that is, out of Babylon, which lay north, as Jarchi says, and so the Talmud {t}; or north east, as Kimchi and Ben Melech, to the land of Israel; from hence came Nebuchadnezzar and his army, which are meant by "the evil" that should break forth, or "be opened" {u} and loosed, which before were bound and hindered by the providence of God; see **Re 9:14** and come upon all the inhabitants of the land of Israel; and who are signified by the boiling pot to the north; or, however, by the fire under it, which came from thence; for rather by the pot is meant Jerusalem; and, by the boiling of it, its destruction by the Chaldeans; see Eze 11:3.

{t} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 6. 1. and Bava Bathra, fol. 25. 2. {u} xtpt "aperietur", Munster, Tigurine version, Cocceius; "pandetur", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 1:15

Ver. 15. For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the Lord,.... Which belonged unto and were under the jurisdiction of

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and the "call" of them, as Kimchi well observes, is no other than putting it into their hearts to come:

and they shall come; being influenced and directed by the providence of God, who had a principal concern in this matter:

and they shall set everyone his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem; meaning, not only that they should pitch their military tents, and encamp about Jerusalem, and place themselves at the entering of the gates, in order to get in; but that they should sit down there in great safety and security, and be very successful, victorious, and triumphant:

and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah; not only besiege Jerusalem, and take that, but also all the rest of the cities of the land.

Jeremiah 1:16

Ver. 16. And I will utter my judgments against them,.... Not against the kingdoms of the north, but against the people of the Jews. The sense is, that God would enter into judgment with this people, and pass sentence upon them, and execute it:

touching all their wickedness; or on account of all their sins and transgressions hereafter mentioned:

who have forsaken me. The Targum is, "who have forsaken my worship"; for to forsake the public worship of God, attendance on his word and ordinances, or to forsake the assembling of themselves together for such a purpose, is to forsake the Lord himself, the fountain of living waters; and this is to forsake their own mercies:

and have burnt incense to other gods; to the idols of the Gentile, as the Targum explains it; to Baal, to the queen of heaven, and to others:

and worshipped the works of their own hands: idols of gold, silver, brass, and wood, which their own hands formed and carved, and which argued great stupidity and ignorance.

Jeremiah 1:17

Ver. 17. Thou therefore gird up thy loins,.... The loins both of his mind and body. The allusion is to the custom of the eastern countries in wearing long garments, who, when they went about business, girt them about them for quicker dispatch; and here it designs haste and expedition in doing the Lord's work, as well as courage and resolution of mind:

and arise; and go from Anathoth to Jerusalem:

and speak unto them all that I command thee; See Gill on "Jer 1:7",

be not dismayed at their faces; See Gill on "Jer 1:8",

lest I confound thee before them; show resentment at him in some way or another, which would make him ashamed before them. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add, "for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord", as in **Jer 1:8**.

Jeremiah 1:18

Ver. 18. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city,.... Or, "as" one; so read the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; which is inexpungible, and cannot be taken:

and an iron pillar; which cannot be removed out of its place:

and brasen walls; which cannot be broken down. All these metaphors show the safety and security of the prophet, being surrounded by the power of God; his constancy, immovableness, and invincibleness in the work of the Lord, having such a spirit of power, fortitude, and of a sound mind, that nothing was able to move and shake him, or to deter him from the execution of his office; and that he should stand inflexible

against the whole land; of Judea, and all the inhabitants of it:

against the kings of Judah; in successive reigns, as Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, or Jechonias, and Zedekiah:

against the princes thereof; who desired he might be put to death,

Jer 38:4:

against the priests thereof; who all of them dealt falsely, and were given to covetousness, **Jer 8:10**:

and against the people of the land; who were grievously addicted to idolatry, and all manner of wickedness.

Jeremiah 1:19

Ver. 19. And they shall fight against thee,.... The Targum adds,

"that they may hide the words of thy prophecy;"

hinder him from prophesying, stop his mouth, and even take away his life:

but they shall not prevail against thee; as to do either:

for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee; as he did; he hid him when they sought for him, and delivered him out of the dungeon and bonds into which he was cast by them; See Gill on "Jer 1:8".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 2

This chapter contains the prophet's message from the Lord to the people of the Jews; in which they are reminded of their former favours, in order to aggravate their sins and transgressions they were chargeable with; to show their ingratitude and unkindness, and to bring them to a conviction and acknowledgment of their iniquities, without which punishment would be inflicted on them. The preface to this message is in **Jer 2:1**, and the discourse begins with an account of their former state and condition when they came out of Egypt; what kindness was shown them by the Lord, and what was returned to him by them; what they were to him, and how much regarded by him, **Jer 2:2** and so far were they from being injured by him, that might cause them to depart from him, which they are desired to give attention to, that they were followed with various instances of goodness, which are particularly enumerated; and yet no notice was taken of them, neither by people, priests, pastors, and prophets, who were guilty of the grossest ignorance and wickedness, **Jer 2:4**, wherefore the Lord determines to plead with them and theirs; and charges them with such idolatry as was not to be found among the Gentiles, **Jer 1:9** the heavens are called upon to be astonished at it; and the reason given for it, the ingratitude and folly of this people, **Jer 2:12** in order to reclaim them, the Lord by the prophet proceeds to observe to them the corrections and chastisement they had already endured, being brought into bondage, their land wasted, cities burnt, and their glory taken from them; all which were owing to their revoltings and backslidings, and by which they might see what an evil and bitter thing sin is in its effects, **Jer 2:14** and again reminds them of former favours; how that he loosed them from their yoke and bonds, when they promised to transgress no more, and yet did more and more; how he had raised them from a right seed, and planted them a noble vine, and yet they were sadly degenerated, and were guilty of such crimes as were not to be removed by anything done by them, **Jer 2:20**, and notwithstanding all this, they had the impudence to deny that they were tainted with idolatry, when they had been so guilty of it in the valley of Hinnom, and elsewhere; and were comparable to the lustful dromedary and wild ass, and so fond of strange gods, that they thirsted after them, and were resolved to follow them, **Jer 2:23** and yet the time would come when all ranks of men among them would be ashamed of their worship of stocks and stones, and in the time of their trouble call upon the Lord to save them, when they would be sent to their gods, who were as numerous as their cities, **Jer 2:26** wherefore it was in vain to plead their innocence, when they were all so guilty, and had received correction without amendment, and had even slain the prophets of the Lord, **Jer 2:29** and then the Lord again upbraids them with their ingratitude to him, who had been so good and kind to them; with their forgetfulness of him, illustrated by a maid's not forgetting her ornaments, and a bride her attire; with their artful methods to entice others to idolatry, and with their shedding of innocent blood; and yet, after all this, they asserted their innocence, and affirmed they had never sinned, **Jer 2:31**, for all which sentence is pronounced against them, and punishment is threatened them, **Jer 2:36**.

Ver. 1. Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me, saying. Here begins the book, and Jeremiah's first sermon; and the following contains the message he was sent with, to which the preceding chapter is only a preface or introduction. The Targum calls it,

"the word of the prophecy from before the Lord."

Jeremiah 2:2

Ver. 2. Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem,.... Of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea. The prophet seems now to have been at Anathoth, and therefore is bid to go from thence to Jerusalem, and there prophesy before the people in it, as the Targum paraphrases it:

saying, thus saith the Lord, I remember thee; the Lord never forgets his people, though they sometimes think he does; it cannot be for they are engraven on the palms of his hands, yea, are set as a seal on his heart; nor does he forget his covenant with them, nor favours and blessings promised them: or, "I remember for thee"; or, "to thee" {w}: things in thy favour, and which will be to thy advantage:

the kindness of thy youth; either the lovingkindness of the Lord, which he had shown unto them; and the benefits, as the fruits thereof, which he had bestowed upon them in former times, when they were brought out of Egypt, and into the wilderness, which was the infancy both of their civil and church state; see Ho 11:1 and when they received many favours from the Lord, Jer 31:2 or the kindness of the people of Israel to the Lord, which was influenced and drawn forth by his love to them; though this can only be understood of some few of them, since the greater part tempted him, grieved, and provoked him:

the love of thine espousals; for the covenant God made with that people, when he brought them out of Egypt, was in the form of a marriage contract; he became their husband, and they became his spouse and bride; and which is an aggravation of their violation of it,
Jer 31:32 and this love, as before, may be understood either of the love of God to them, or of their love to him. The Targum interprets the former clause of the divine goodness to them, and this of their love to him, paraphrasing the whole thus,

"I remember unto you the blessings of ancient days, and the love of your fathers, who believed in my word:"

when thou wentest after me; the Lord going before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; even the angel of God's presence, who was their leader, guide, and preserver:

in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown; where they passed through many difficulties, and lived upon the providence of God, which, in a wonderful manner, supported them with the necessaries of life, which otherwise they could not have had. The Targum is,

"and they walked after my two messengers, after Moses and Aaron, in the wilderness forty years without food, in a land that was not sown."

The whole of this may be applied to the case of God's people at first conversion, when they are as newly born babes, and become young men in Christ; at which time they are openly espoused to him, having been secretly betrothed in covenant before; but now, through the efficacy of the Spirit attending the word, they are made willing to give up themselves to the Lord, and are espoused to one husband, Christ,
2Co 11:2 at which time also great kindness and love is expressed both by the Lord to them, by quickening them who before were dead; by bringing them out of a most miserable condition; by speaking comfortably to them; by manifesting and applying his pardoning grace; and by openly taking them into his family: and also by them to him again; for the grace of love is then implanted, which, as it is hearty and sincere, is very

ardent and fervent; which shows itself by parting with and bearing all for Christ; and by a concern for his company and presence; and by a regard to his people, Gospel, ways, and worship; particularly by following him in his ordinances with great zeal, fervency, and constancy, even though attended with many difficulties and discouragements; and though the way may seem to flesh and blood very unpleasant and unpromising; all which is remembered by the Lord when forgotten by them; and when their love is become cold to him, he not only remembers them, and his love to them, which is always the same, but also their love to him.

{w} Kl ytrkz "recordor tibi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Schmidt, and some in Vatablus; which is preferred by Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 228.

Jeremiah 2:3

Ver. 3. Israel was holiness unto the Lord,.... When first brought out of Egypt into the wilderness, by the Lord's choice and separation of them to be a holy people to him above all others; by covenant with him, and profession of him; and by his giving them holy laws, and placing a sanctuary among them; and by their high priest, who represented them in the most holy place; and had on the front of his mitre written,

holiness unto the Lord; so the spiritual Israel are chosen in Christ to be holy, and he is made sanctification to them; they are sanctified in him, and by his Spirit; they are called with a holy calling, and unto holiness; and, under the influence of grace, live holy lives and conversations, which the grace of God teaches, and young converts are remarkable for; their consciences being just awakened, and their hearts tender:

and the firstfruits of his increase; Israel was the first nation that God separated for himself; and this being the firstfruits, shows that he would separate others also, and take out of the Gentiles a people for his name, which he has since done; and the elect of God among the Israelites were the firstfruits of his chosen ones elsewhere; it were some of them that first believed in Christ, and received the firstfruits of the Spirit; and all converted ones are a kind of firstfruits of his creatures; the grace they receive at conversion is the firstfruits of a later increase of it, and even of eternal glory:

all that devour him shall offend; or, "all that eat him shall be guilty" {x}; and be condemned and punished, who eat up the Lord's people, as they eat bread; see Ps 53:4, these shall not go unpunished; for his people are as the apple of his eye, and whoever touches and hurts them fall under the divine displeasure, and will be looked upon as criminals and offenders, and will be judged and condemned as such. The allusion is to the eating of the firstfruits, which only belonged to the priests; nor might any of the increase be eaten until the firstfruits were brought to them, Le 23:10. This is expressed in the Chaldee paraphrase of the text,

"whosoever eats of them (the firstfruits) is guilty of death; for as the beginning of the harvest, the sheaf of oblation, whoever eats of it before the priests, the sons of Aaron, have offered of it upon the altar, shall be guilty or condemned; so all that spoil the house of Israel shall be guilty or condemned;"

so Jarchi and Kimchi:

evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord; that is, the evil of punishment, either in this world, or in that which is to come, or in both.

{x} wmvay "rcos fuisse", Junius & Tremellius; "rei peragebantur", Piscator; "rei fiunt", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 2:4

Ver. 4. Hear ye the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. The Lord, by the prophet, having observed his great kindness to this people, what they were unto him, and what a regard he had for them, proceeds to upbraid them with their ingratitude, and requires an attention to what he was about to say; all are called upon, because, all were guilty. This respects the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the several families in them. The ten tribes had been long carried captive.

Jeremiah 2:5

Ver. 5. Thus saith the Lord, what iniquity have your fathers found in me,.... What injustice or injury has been done them? there is no unrighteousness in God, nor can any be done by him; or what unfaithfulness, or want of truth and integrity in performing promises, had they found in him? he never suffers his faithfulness to fail, or any of the good things he has promised. So the Targum,

"what falsehood have your fathers found in my word?"

none at all; God is a covenant keeping God:

that they are gone far from me; from my fear, as the Chaldee paraphrase; from the word and worship, and ways of God:

and have walked after vanity; after idols, the vanities of the Gentiles, Jer 14:22:

and are become vain? in their imaginations and in their actions, in their knowledge and in their practice, worshipping idols, as well as guilty of many other sins.

Jeremiah 2:6

Ver. 6. Neither said they, where is the Lord?.... They did not ask after him, nor seek his face and favour, nor worship him, nor took any notice of the blessings he bestowed upon them:

that brought us up out of the land of Egypt? by means of Moses the deliverer, with a mighty hand, and outstretched arm; for, though Moses was the instrument, God was the efficient cause of the deliverance; the favour was his, and the glory of it ought to have been given to him:

that led us through the wilderness; of "Shur", or of "Sin", the desert of Arabia, Ex 15:22 and a dreadful and terrible one it was:

through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death; where were scorpions, fiery serpents, drought, and no water, and so very dangerous as well as uncomfortable travelling; and yet through all this they were led, and wonderfully supplied and preserved;

through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt; there was no passenger in it, nor inhabitants on it, so that there were none to relieve them; whence it appears, that all their supply, support, and preservation, were from the Lord. The Jews {y} interpret this of the first man Adam, after this manner,

"all land, concerning which the first man decreed that it should be inhabited, it is inhabited; and all land, concerning which he did not decree it should be inhabited, it is not inhabited; and such they suggest was this wilderness;"

see **De 8:15**.

{y} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 31. 1. & Sota, fol. 46. 2.

Jeremiah 2:7

Ver. 7. And I brought you into a plentiful country,.... "Into the land of Carmel", as in the Hebrew text; that is,

"into the land of Israel, which was planted as Carmel,"

as the Targum paraphrases it; with wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, and olives; a land flowing with milk and honey, **De 8:8**, so Ben Melech:

to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; of vineyards and oliveyards, which they had not planted, and for which they had never laboured, Jos 24:13:

but when ye entered ye defiled my land; which the Lord had chosen above all lands, where he would have a temple built for his worship, and where he would cause his Shechinah or glorious Majesty to dwell; but this they defiled by their sins and transgressions, and particularly by their idolatry, as follows:

that made mine heritage an abomination; by devoting it to the worship of idols, as the Targum paraphrases it.

Jeremiah 2:8

Ver. 8. The priests said not, where is the Lord?.... Whose business it was to draw nigh to God, and offer the sacrifices of the people, and inquire of God for them; whose lips should keep knowledge, and at whose mouth the law should be sought, they being the messengers of the Lord of hosts, **Mal 2:7**:

and they that handle the law knew me not; the sanhedrim, according to Jarchi; or the lawyers and scribes, the Rabbins and doctors of the law, whose business it was to read and explain it; these did not understand it, nor the mind of God in it; and much less did they know him in a spiritual and evangelical manner; or as he is in Christ, and revealed in the Gospel:

the pastors also transgressed against me; kings, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi interpret it, who were pastors or shepherds in a civil sense; whose business it was to feed the people as the shepherd does his flock; that is, to guide and govern them by wholesome laws, by the laws of God; but, instead of this, they rebelled against the Lord, and transgressed his commands:

and the prophets prophesied by Baal; in his name; pretending to be inspired by that idol, and to receive the spirit of prophecy from him:

and walked after things that do not profit; the gods of the Gentiles, which could not supply them with the least temporal blessing, and much less give them spiritual and eternal ones; see Jer 14:22. This is to be understood of false prophets, as Ben Melech.

Jeremiah 2:9

Ver. 9. Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord,.... Either verbally, by reasoning with them, and reproving them for their ignorance, stupidity, and idolatry; or by deeds, inflicting punishment upon them; so the Targum,

"therefore I will take vengeance on you, or punish you, saith the Lord:"

and with your children's children will I plead; who imitate their parents, and do the same evil things as they, which the Lord knew they would; and was particularly true of the Jews in the times of Christ, for which reason wrath came upon them to the uttermost.

Jeremiah 2:10

Ver. 10. For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see,.... Or, "to the isles of Chittim" {z}; so called from Kittim the son of Javan, Ge 10:4 who, as Josephus says {a}, possessed the island of Chethima, now called Cyprus; and, from that, all islands, and most maritime places, are, by the Hebrews, called Chittim, he observes: it may regard all the islands in the Aegean and Mediterranean seas:

and send unto Kedar; which was in Arabia, and lay to the east, as Chittim to the west; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"send to the provinces of the Arabians:"

and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing; as what is inquired about in the following verse, a change of deities. All this is to be understood of the contemplation of the mind, and not of any corporeal journey to be taken, to inquire into this matter.

{z} Myytk yya wrbe eiv nhsouv Sept. "transite ad insulas Cethim", V. L. "ad insulas Cypriorum"; so some in Vatablus; "in insulas", Schmidt. {a} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1.

Jeremiah 2:11

Ver. 11. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods?.... Though they are not by nature gods which they worship, only nominal and fictitious deities, yet they did not change them for others; but when they once embraced the worship of them, continued therein; so did the Chittim, the inhabitants of the isles, who though they traded to distant countries, from place to place; and so the Kedarenes, who dwelt in tents, and fed cattle, and moved from one desert to another, and from one pasture to another, as Jarchi observes; yet they carried their gods with them, and did not exchange them for new ones where they came. The Jewish writers say {b}, that the Kedarenes worshipped water, and the Chittim fire; and though they knew that water would quench fire, yet the latter would not change their gods. Kimchi and Abendana relate it just the reverse, and say the Kedarenes worshipped fire, and the Chittim water, which is most likely; and so it is said elsewhere {c}.

But my people have changed their glory; the true God, who is glorious in himself, and whom they should have glorified, and have counted it their highest honour and glory that they knew him, and were the worshippers of him; yet they changed him, their glory, into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass, Ps 106:20, wherefore it is justly added,

for that which doth not profit; meaning Baal, and such like idols; see the note on **Jer 2:8**.

{b} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 5. 2. {c} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 60. 3.

Jeremiah 2:12

Ver. 12. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this,.... Meaning either the angels in heaven, or the heavens themselves, by a personification:

and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord; all which may be signified by storms and tempests, by thunder and lightning, and by the sun's withdrawing its light. This is said to aggravate the wickedness committed, as if the heavens blushed and were ashamed, and were confounded and amazed at it; and as if, on account of it, the Jews deserved not the benefit of the heavens, and the orbs in them.

Jeremiah 2:13

Ver. 13. For my people have committed two evils,.... Not but that they had committed more, but there were two principal ones they were guilty of, hereafter mentioned; and it was an aggravation of these crimes, that they were the professing people of God who had committed them: and it may be observed, that such sin; they are not without it, nor the commission of it; and may be left to fall into great sins, and yet remain his people; covenant interest cannot be dissolved; this should be considered not as an encouragement to sin, but as a relief under a sense of sin:

they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters; this is said of Christ, **So 4:15**, grace in him is compared to "water", it being cooling and refreshing, cleansing and fructifying; and to living water, because it quickens dead sinners, revives drooping saints, supports and maintains spiritual life, and issues in eternal life; and because it is perpetual and ever flowing; and to a "fountain", denoting that the original of it is in Christ, and the great abundance of it which is in him; it is as water in a fountain, in us as in streams: now to forsake this fountain is the first of these evils; which is done when the people of God are remiss in the exercise of faith on Christ; grow cold in their affections to him, and neglect his word and ordinances.

And hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water; this is the other evil; and such are the world, and the things in it, when cleaved unto, and rest and satisfaction are taken in them; the inventions and ordinances of men, when followed and attended to; moral duties, and evangelical services, when depended on; and even spiritual frames, when these are lived upon, and put in the room of Christ; yea, acts of faith, when they are rested in, and the object not so much regarded as should be: moreover, what may principally be intended are, in the first place, forsaking the worship of God, as the Targum interprets it, the assembling of themselves together to attend his service and ordinances, which is to forsake their own mercies; and, in the next place, following after idols, as the same paraphrase explains it, which have no divinity in them, and can yield no help and relief, or give any comfort, or afford any supply in time of distress and need. It is egregious folly to leave a fountain for a cistern, and especially a broken one: in a fountain the water is living, and always running, and ever springing up; not so in a cistern, and in a broken cistern there is none at all.

Jeremiah 2:14

Ver. 14. Is Israel a servant?.... That he does not abide in the house, in his own land, but is carried captive, becomes subject to others, and is used as a slave; so the Targum,

"as a servant;"

is he not the Lord's first born? are not the people of Israel called the children of the living God? how come they then to be treated not as children, as free men, but as servants? this cannot be owing to any breach of covenant or promise on God's part, or to the failure of the blessing of national adoption bestowed on them; but to some sin or sins of theirs, which have brought them into this miserable condition:

is he a home born slave? or born in the house, of the handmaid, and so in the power of the master of the family in whose house he was born,
Ex 21:4 or the sense is, either Israel is a servant,

or a son of the family {d}, as some render the words; not the former, being not only the son of a free woman, but Jehovah's firstborn; if the latter,

why is he spoiled? why is he delivered up to the spoilers? as the Targum; why should he be given up into the hands of the Babylonians, and become their prey? is it usual for fathers to suffer their children, or those born in their house, to be so used? some reason must be given for it.

{d} tyb dyly "filius familias", Munster.

Jeremiah 2:15

Ver. 15. The young lions roared upon him, and yelled,.... Or, "gave out their voice" {e}; meaning the kings of the nations, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi explain it; and are to be understood of the kings of Assyria and Babylon, and particularly of Nebuchadnezzar; see Jer 50:17 compared to lions for their strength and cruelty; their "roaring" and "yelling design" the bringing forth of their armies against Israel, the noise of the battle, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war, and the voice of the warrior:

and they made his land waste; all this is said as past, when it was yet to come, because of the certainty of it, and the sure accomplishment of these prophecies; for this respects the future desolation of the land of Israel at the Babylonish captivity:

his cities are burnt without inhabitant; not only Jerusalem was burnt with fire, Jer 52:13, but other cities in the land of Israel, so that they were not inhabited: or, "they were desolate or destroyed" {f} as the Septuagint version, so that none could dwell in them; and so the Targum,

"her cities are desolate, without inhabitant."

Kimchi's father explains the word by wxmu, "budded", or brought forth herbs or plants; for desolate places bring up plants; where there is no inhabitant, grass grows.

{e} Mlwq wntn "dederunt vocem suam", Montanus, Pagninus; "edunt rocem suam", Schmidt. {f} htun, kateskafhsan, "desolatae sunt, [sive] destructae", Vatablus.

Jeremiah 2:16

Ver. 16. Also the children of Noph and Tahapanes,.... These were cities in Egypt. Noph is the same with Moph in **Ho 9:6** and which we there rightly render Memphis; as Noph is here by the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and was formerly, as Pliny {g} says, the palace of the kings of Egypt. It is the same that is now called Alcairo, or Grand Cairo. According to Herodotus {h}, it was built by Menes, the first king of Egypt; and who also makes mention of a city of Egypt, called Momemphis {i}. Tahapanes is the same with Hanes in Isa 30:4, and here, in the Arabic version, is called Daphnes; and is thought by some to be the same with Daphnae Pelusiae, a city in Egypt. This Tahapanes was the metropolis of Egypt, and the seat of their kings; mention is made of Pharaoh's house in it, in Jer 43:9, now the inhabitants of these, called the children of them, and who are put for the people of Egypt in general, were the allies of the Jews, and in whom they trusted for help, when attacked by their enemies, Isa 30:2 and yet

even these have broken the crown of thy head; which is interpreted, by the Targum, of slaying their mighty men, and spoiling their goods; perhaps it had its accomplishment when Pharaohnecho king of Egypt came out against the king of Assyria, and Josiah king of Judah went out to meet him, and was slain by him at Megiddo; and his son Jehoahaz he put in bonds, and carried him to Egypt, and put his brother upon the throne, and took tribute of gold and silver of him, 2Ki 23:29.

{g} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 9. {h} L. 2. vel Euterpe, c. 99. {i} lb. c. 163, 169.

Jeremiah 2:17

Ver. 17. Hast thou not procured this unto thyself,.... All this desolation and destruction, both from the Egyptians and the Babylonians; their sin was the cause of it, their idolatry and forsaking the Lord their God, as follows: and so the Targum,

"is not this vengeance taken upon thee?"

that is, by the Lord, for their sins and transgressions; he suffered these nations to make them desolate on that account: to which agrees the Septuagint version, "hath not he done these things unto thee?" for what the Egyptians and Babylonians did were done by the will of the Lord, who suffered them for their correction: and the Arabic version renders it, "have not I done these things unto thee?" and the Syriac as a prophecy, as indeed so is the whole, "lo, so it shall be done to thee"; as is predicted in the foregoing verses, and that for the following reason:

in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God; as in **Jer 2:13**,
See Gill on "Jer 2:13", that is, as the Targum interprets it, the worship of the Lord thy God, his service, his statutes, and his ordinances; and followed after idols, and the worship of them; which is aggravated by the circumstance of time in which this was done:

when he led thee by the way? who showed thee the right way, and thou walkedst not in it, as the Targum; the way in which they should have gone, the way of their duty, and his commandments; and which would have been pleasant and profitable to them, and secured them from ruin and destruction.

Jeremiah 2:18

Ver. 18. And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt,.... By worshipping of idols, in imitation of them; or by sending ambassadors thither for help, when they had their Lord, their God, so nigh, had they not forsaken him; nor had Josiah any business to go out against Pharaohnecho, 2Ch 35:21 and, contrary to the express word of God by the Prophet Jeremy, did the Jews which remained in Judea go into Egypt, Jer 42:19.

To drink the waters of Sihor? which is the river Nile, as Jarchi interprets it. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it "the waters of Geon", or "Gihon": and this also is the same with the Nile, as Josephus {k} affirms, who says,

"Geon, which runs through Egypt, is the same which the Greeks call Nile."

So Jerom {l} from Eusebius,

"Geon is a river, which with the Egyptians is called Nile."

The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "troubled water"; and such were the waters of the

Nile, which had its name of Sihor from the blackness of it; and hence, by the Greeks {m}, was called Melas; and by the Latines {n}, Melo. Hence, as Braunius {o} observes, it was represented by a black stone, as other rivers by a white one; for which reason the black colour was very grateful to the Egyptians; and for the same reason Osiris, which is the very Nile itself, was reckoned black; and the ox Apis they worshipped was a black one, at least part of it, and was covered with black linen cloth; and its priests were also clothed in black, hence called Chemarim, Ho 10:5.

Or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria; to go after their idolatrous practices, or to send to them for help; for this was the usual method of the Jews; when the Assyrians oppressed them, then they sent to Egypt for help; and when the Egyptians were upon them, then they applied to the Assyrians; and in both cases acted wrong, for they ought to have sought the Lord their God only:

to drink the waters of the river? of the river Euphrates. The sense is, that they preferred the waters of the Nile and of Euphrates, or the gods of the Egyptians and Assyrians, or the help of these people, before the Lord, the fountain of living waters, and his worship and powerful help. The Targum paraphrases this last clause thus,

"why do ye make covenant with the Assyrian, to carry you captive beyond the river Euphrates?"

{k} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 1. sect. 3. {l} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 91. H. {m} Eustathius in Dionys. perihg {n} Servius in Virgil. Georg. l. 4. p. 343. & in Aeneid. l. 1. p. 541. {o} Selecta Sacr. l. 4. c. 9. p. 492, & l. 5. Exercit. 4. sect. 8. p. 700, 701.

Jeremiah 2:19

Ver. 19. Thine own wickedness shall correct thee,.... That is, either their wickedness in going to Egypt and Assyria, and the ill success they had in so doing might be an instruction to them to act otherwise, and a correction of their sin and folly; or that their wickedness was a reason, and a very just one, why they were chastened and corrected of the Lord:

and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; or be the cause why they were reproved of God; or their ill success in turning their backs on him, and going to the creature for help, was a severe rebuke of their sin and madness. The Targum is,

"I have brought afflictions upon thee, and thou hast not refrained from thy wickedness; and, because thou art not turned to the law, vengeance is taken on thee."

Know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter; or observe and take notice what evil and bitter things sin, particularly the forsaking of the Lord and his worship, brings upon persons; for not sin itself is meant, though that is exceeding sinful, and is a root of bitterness, however sweet it may be to the taste of a sinner, and produces bitter effects;

but the punishment of sin is meant, or corrections and reproofs for it; which are evil things, as calamities, and captivity, and the like; and which are very ungrateful and disagreeable to flesh and blood; and yet men, going on in a course of sin, and forsaking the Lord, as it follows, are the cause of these things:

that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God; See Gill on "Jer 2:13", this is the source of all the evil and bitterness experienced by them:

and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts; this was the reason of their forsaking the Lord, his ways and worship, because they had no reverence of him; his fear was not before their eyes, nor on their hearts; and both were the cause of evil coming upon them; so the Targum paraphrases the words,

"and know and see, for I have brought evil and bitterness upon thee, O Jerusalem, because thou hast forsaken the worship of the Lord thy God, and hast not put my fear before thine eyes, saith the Lord, the God of hosts."

Jeremiah 2:20

Ver. 20. For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands,.... The yoke of the people, as the Targum expresses it, that was upon their necks, and the bands in which they were bound by them; referring to the deliverance of them of old from Egyptian bondage by the hands of Moses, and out of their several captivities among their neighbours by the means of the judges, and in their time; though the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "of old thou hast broken my yoke, and burst my bands"; or "thy yoke", and "thy bands", as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; the yoke of the law that the Lord put upon them, and the bands of statutes and ordinances which he enjoined them; but the former sense is best:

and thou saidst, I will not transgress; here is a double reading; the Cetib or writing is dwbea, "I will not serve"; which is followed by the Vulgate Latin, which so renders it; and by the Septuagint version, "I will not serve thee"; and which is the sense of the Arabic version, "I will not subject myself", that is, to the law and will of God; and so the Syriac version, though to a quite different sense, "I will serve no other god any more": which agrees with the Keri or reading, which is
rwbea, "I will not transgress"; and this is confirmed by the Targum, which paraphrases the words thus,

"and ye said, we will not add any more to transgress thy word;"

and by Jarchi and Kimchi, who interpret it of transgressing the words and commands of God; both have one and the same sense. For whether it be read, "I will not serve"; the meaning is, as Kimchi observes, "I will not serve idols"; or no other god, as the Syriac version: or whether, "I will not transgress"; that is, the command of the Lord, by serving

other gods. Hillerus {p} reconciles the writing and reading after this manner, rendering dwbea al, "I will not serve", and
rwbea al, "I will not pass", to servitude; though, in another place {q} "I will not pass over", that is, the rivers of Tigris and Euphrates with the captives; and refers to **Mic 1:11**, but doubtless reference is had to the promise of obedience and service, which the Israelites made at Mount Sinai quickly after their deliverance out of Egypt, Ex 19:8, but this promise they did not keep: "when", or "for", or "but", or "although" {r},

upon every high hill, and under every green tree, thou wanderest, playing the harlot; that is, committing spiritual whoredom or idolatry with idols, set on high hills and mountains, and under green trees, groves, and shady places; going from one idol to another, as harlots go from one stew to another; or as whoremongers go from harlot to harlot.

{p} De Arcano Kethib & Keri, p. 27, 28. {q} Ib. p. 89, 90. {r} yk "nam", Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; "atqui", Calvin, Gataker; "quamvis", Piscator.

Jeremiah 2:21

Ver. 21. Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed,.... It is usual to compare the people of the Jews to a vineyard, and to vines; and their settlement in the land of Canaan to the planting of vines in a vineyard; see **Isa 5:1**. Kimchi says this is spoken concerning Abraham; no doubt respect is had to the Jewish fathers, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the twelve patriarchs, Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, and the like; who, having the true and right seed of grace in them, became like choice and noble vines, and brought forth much fruit, and were deserving of imitation by their posterity:

how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? like a vine that grows in the woods, and brings forth wild grapes; so these, their sons, degenerating in practice from their fathers, became corrupt in themselves, and unprofitable to God. The Targum of the whole is,

"I set you before me as the plant of a choice vine, all of you doing truth; but how are you changed before me in your corrupt works? ye have declined from my worship, ye are become as a vine in which there is no profit."

Jeremiah 2:22

Ver. 22. For though thou wash thee with nitre,.... The word rtn, "nitre", is only used in this place and in Pr 25:20 and it is hard to say what it is. Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, that some say it is what is called "alum"; and others that it is a dust with which they wash the head, and cleanse everything; and so Jarchi says it is a kind of earth used in cleaning garments; and "nitre" is mentioned by the Misnic doctors {s} among those things which are used for the washing of garments, and taking spots out of them; though about what it is they are not agreed; and it seems the nitre of the ancients is unknown to us {t}; and saltpetre is put in the room of it; and some render the word here "saltpetre"; and Pliny {u} observes, that nitre does not much differ from salt, and ascribes to it a virtue of eating out filth, and removing it; so Aristotle {w} reports of the lake Ascania; that its water is of such a nitrous quality, that garments, being put into it, need no other washing. Nitre has its name from rtn, "to loose", because it looses the filth, and cleanses from it:

and take thee much soap. The Septuagint render it, "herb"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "the herb borith"; which is the Hebrew word here used; and about the sense of which there is some difficulty. Kimchi and Ben Melech say some take it to be the same with what is called "soap"; so Jarchi; and others, that it is an herb with which they wash, the same that is called fullers' herb; but whether it is soap, or fullers' herb, or fullers' earth, as others, it is certain it is something fullers used in cleaning garments, as appear from **Mal 3:2**, where the same word is used, and fullers made mention of as using what is signified by it. It has its name from hrb, which signifies to "cleanse" and "purify". The sense is, let this backsliding and degenerate people take what methods they will to cleanse themselves from their sins, as by their ceremonial ablutions and sacrifices, which was the usual method they had recourse to, to purify themselves, and in which they rested:

yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God; or, "will retain its spots" {x} these remain; the filth is not washed away; the iniquity is not hid and covered; it appears very plain and manifest;

yea, shines like gold; or, "is gilded" {y}; as the word used signifies. It is of too deep a die to be removed by such external things; nothing but the blood of Christ can cleanse from sin, take away its filth, removes its guilt, and cover it out of the sight of God, so that it can be seen no more. The Targum is,

"for if you think to be cleansed from your sins, as they cleanse with nitre, or make white with "borith", or soap; lo, as the mark of a spot which is not clean, so are your sins multiplied before me, saith the Lord God."

{s} Misn. Sabbat, c. 9. sect. 5. & Nidda, c. 9. sect. 6. & Maimon & Bartenora in ib. & in Misn. Celim, c. 10. sect. 1. {t} Schroder. Pharmacopoeia, l. 3. c. 23. p. 140. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 31. c. 10. {w} Opera, vol. 1, de Mirabil. p. 705. {x} "Maculas tamen retinebit iniquitas tua", Schmidt. {y} Mtkn "nitet, [vel splendet], instar anri", Piscator; "obducat se auro insigni", Junius & Tremellius; so Gussetius renders the word, "inaurari, auro ebduci"; and who rightly observes, that whatever is glided, or covered with gold, the more it is washed with nitre, or soap, the brighter it will appear; and so, whatever other methods are taken to wash away sin, but seeking for justification by the grace of God in Christ, it will be but the more manifest, Ebr. Comment. p. 410.

Jeremiah 2:23

Ver. 23. How canst thou say, I am not polluted,.... No man can say this; for all are defiled with sin; but this was the cast and complexion of these people in all ages; they were a generation of men that were pure in their own eyes, but were not cleansed from their filthiness; they fancied that their ceremonial washings and sacrifices cleansed them from moral impurities, when those only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; still their iniquity remained marked before the Lord; they acted the part of the adulterous woman in Pr 30:20 to whom they are compared in the context; and, therefore, as wondering at their impudence, they having a whore's forehead, this question is put, how and with what face they could affirm this, and what follows:

I have not gone after Baalim? or, "the Baalim"; the idols of the people, as the Targum interprets it; for there were many Baals, as Baalzephon, Baalpeor, Baalzebub, and others:

see thy way in the valley; where idols were set up and worshipped; or through which the way lay, as Kimchi observes, to the hills and mountains where idolatry was frequently committed; perhaps no particular valley is meant, but any in which idols were worshipped, or which they passed through to the worshipping of them; though the Targum interprets it of the valley in which they dwelt, over against Baalpeor, so Jarchi and Abarbinel, when they worshipped that idol; and seems to design the valley of Shittim, Nu 25:1, but rather, if any particular valley is intended, the valley of Hinnom seems to bid fair for it; and to this it may be the Septuagint version has respect, rendering it en tw poluandriw, "in the sepulchre of the multitude"; multitudes being burnt and buried here:

know what thou hast done; in the valley, especially in the valley of Hinnom, where they caused their children to pass through the fire to Molech:

thou art a swift dromedary. The Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it a young camel; and so the word in the Arabic language signifies; and the epithet "swift" better agrees with that than with the dromedary. Curtius {z} makes mention of dromedary camels of great swiftness; but it may be this is to be understood, not of its swiftness in running, but of its impetuous lust, as Calvin observes; and, indeed, each of these creatures are very libidinous; and therefore these people are compared to them; See Gill on "Mic 1:13", it follows:

traversing her ways; running about here and there after the male, burning with lust, sometimes one way, and sometimes another; and so these people sometimes run after one idol, and sometimes another, and followed a multitude of them. The Targum renders it, "which corrupts or depraves her ways". De Dieu observes, that the word Krv, in the Ethiopic language, signifies "the evening"; and so may intend walking in the evening, in the dark, rather than in the light; which, as it is the way of dromedaries, and almost of all beasts, so of harlots, to whom these people are likened; and he further observes, that, in the Arabic language, it signifies to make common, which agrees with adulterous persons, as these were in a spiritual sense. The word is only used in this place, and is deduced from, or has some relation to, the word Kwrv, which signifies a "shoelatchet", Ge 14:23 as Jarchi and Kimchi observe; and may denote, as the shoe is bound and fastened with the latchet, the binding of her ways to her heart, as the former suggests, the strengthening and confirming of her in her evil ways, and her constant persisting therein; but the first sense of running here and there through lust is best; and is approved by Bynaeus {a} and by Buxtorf {b}.

{z} (Curtius) L. 5. c. 2. {a} De Calceis Heb. l. 1. c. 7. sect. 4. {b} Lex. Heb. rad. Krv.

Jeremiah 2:24

Ver. 24. A wild ass used to the wilderness,.... That is, one that has been brought up in the wilderness, and has been accustomed to live, and run, and range about there; as men in general are compared to this creature for its ignorance, stupidity, folly, stubbornness, and unteachableness, Job 11:12, so the Jewish people are represented as like unto it, for its wantonness and lust:

that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; draws it in at her nostrils, and snuffs it up; or opens her mouth, and takes it in with her breath; drinks it in, and swallows it up at her pleasure: or, "with the desire of her soul" {c}; it being grateful and delightful to her. Some read this clause in connection with htnat, rendered "in her occasion"; and differently translate it. The Targum takes it to have the signification of Mynt, "dragons"; or whales; and renders it,

"drinking the wind as a dragon;"

and so Jarchi, who compares it with Jer 14:6 "they snuffed up the wind like dragons"; and so the Syriac version, "thou hast drawn up the wind like a wild dog"; others render it, "gathering the wind of her occasion"; or, "of her meeting" {d}; taking it in, and snuffing it up, as she occasionally met with it in running. The Vulgate Latin version is, "she drew the wind of her love"; it is reported of the wild ass, that it can smell its mate afar off, and, by the wind it snuffs, knows where it is; for which purpose it runs up the hills and mountains to get the scent, which, when it has, its lust is so violent that there is no stopping of it till it comes to the place where its mate is: wherefore it follows,

in her occasion who can turn her away? when this violent fit is upon her, there is no turning her away from pursuing the enjoyment of it; which is expressive of the eager desire of the Jews after the worshipping of idols, how bent upon it, and not to be reclaimed from it:

all they that seek her will not weary themselves; knowing that they can not overtake her, or stop her in her career, or hinder her gratification of her lust. This may be understood either of those who sought to commit spiritual adultery or idolatry with the Jews, they need not weary themselves, being easy to be found by them; or of the prophets that sought to reclaim them, who, perceiving how stubborn, and untractable, and irreclaimable they were, would not weary themselves with their admonitions and reproofs, seeing they were in vain:

in her month they shall find her; not that this creature sleeps one whole month in a year, as Jarchi dreams, when it may be easily taken; but the sense is, that when it is with young, and in the last month, and so is heavy with its burden, it may easily be found and taken; so when the people of Israel should have filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the judgment of God was fallen and lay heavy upon them; then those that sought to return them from their evil ways might find them, and hope to succeed in reclaiming them, and bringing them to repentance; agreeably the Septuagint render it, "in her humiliation"; when chastised and humbled by the Lord for her sins. This is not to be understood of the month of Ab, in which Jerusalem was destroyed, both by Nebuchadnezzar and Titus; in which month the Jews are sure to be found confessing their sins, and humbling themselves, as Kimchi, Abarbinel, and Ben Melech interpret it; nor of the new moon, as others; at everyone of which, those who sought to join with them in idolatrous practices might be sure to find them at them.

{c} wvpn twab "in, [vel] pro desiderio animae suae", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Vatablus, Schmidt. {d} htnat xwr "ventum occasionis suae", Pagninus Montanus; "veatum occursus sui", Calvin.

Jeremiah 2:25

Ver. 25. Withhold thy foot from being unshod,.... That it may not be unshod, be naked and bare. The sense is, either, as some, do not take long journeys into foreign countries for help, as into Assyria and Egypt, whither they used to go barefoot; or wore out their shoes by their long journeys, and so returned without; or refrain from idolatry, as Jarchi interprets it, that thou mayest not go naked into captivity; or this is an euphemism, as others think, forbidding adulterous actions, showing the naked foot, the putting off of the shoes, in order to lie upon the bed, and prostitute herself to her lovers; and is to be understood of idolatry:

and thy throat from thirst; after wine, which excites lust; abstain from eager and burning lust after adulterous, that is, idolatrous practices; so the Targum,

"refrain thy feet from being joined with the people, and thy mouth from worshipping the idols of the people."

The words are paraphrased in the Talmud {e} thus, "withhold thyself from sinning, that thy foot may not become naked; (the gloss is, "when thou goest into captivity") refrain thy tongue from idle words, that thy throat may not thirst:"

this was said by the Lord, or by the prophets of the Lord sent unto them, to which the following is an answer:

but thou saidst, there is no hope; of ever being prevailed upon to relinquish those idolatrous practices, or of being received into the favour of God after such provocations: no; I will never refrain from them; I will not be persuaded to leave them:

for I have loved strangers; the strange gods of the nations:

and after them will I go; and worship them; so the Targum,

"I love to he joined to the people, and after the Worship of their idols will I go."

{e} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 77. 1.

Jeremiah 2:26

Ver. 26. As the thief is ashamed when be is found,.... Taken in the fact, or convicted of it; that is, as the Targum explains it, one that has been accounted faithful, and is found a thief; for, otherwise, those who have lost their character, and are notorious for their thefts and robberies, are not ashamed when they are found out, taken, and convicted:

so is the house of Israel ashamed: of their idolatry, or ought to be; or "shall be", as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it; though not now, yet hereafter, sooner or later:

they, their kings, their princes, and their priests and their prophets; all being guilty; kings setting ill examples, and the people following them; the priests being priests of Baal, and the prophets false ones.

Jeremiah 2:27

Ver. 27. Saying to a stock,.... "To a tree" {f}; to a piece of wood; that is, to an image made of it; so the Targum,

"they say to an image of wood;"

what follows:

thou art my father; ascribing that to the idol which belongs to God, who was their Father that made them, and upheld them, was the author of their beings, and the God of their mercies:

and to a stone; an image of stone:

thou hast brought me forth: into being; affirming it to be his former and maker; so the Targum,

"to that which is made of stone, thou hast created me:"

for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face; they turned their faces to images of wood and stone, and worshipped them; and they turned their backs upon the Lord, his worship and ordinances, and apostatized from him; which the Targum thus expresses,

"for they turned their backs on my worship, and did not put my fear before their faces:"

but in the time of their trouble; when any calamity befalls them, as famine, pestilence, sword, captivity, and the like:

they will say, arise, and save us; not that they will say so to their idols, but they will say so to the true God; for notwithstanding they worshipped idols in time of prosperity, forgetting God their Saviour; yet in adversity they are brought to their senses, and find that none but God can save them, and therefore apply to him; to which agrees the Targum,

"and in the time that evil comes upon them, they deny their idols, and confess before me, and say, have mercy on us, and save us."

{f} Uel "ligno", V. L. Pagnanius, Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 2:28

Ver. 28. But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee?.... This is, or would be, the Lord's answer to them, what is become of your gods? why do not you apply to them for help in time of trouble? the gods that you have chosen for yourselves and worshipped; the gods, not that made you, but whom you yourselves have made:

let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble; call upon them to arise, those statues of wood and stone, those lifeless and senseless images; let them rise off their seats, and move out of their places, if they can, and see whether they can save in a time of trouble and distress; for there is enough of them, if numbers will do:

for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah; in imitation of the Heathens, who had not only in every country, but in every city and town, a different god, the patron and tutelar deity of the place; see 2Ki 17:29. The Septuagint and Arabic versions "add, according to the number of the ways, or streets, of Jerusalem", they sacrificed to Baal; see Jer 11:13.

Jeremiah 2:29

Ver. 29. Wherefore will ye plead with me?.... Strive and contend, chide, murmur, and complain, when evil came upon them, as if the Lord dealt hardly with them, and as if they had never sinned against him; when their case would not bear to be brought into judgment and examined openly; what would they get by that but shame and disgrace?

ye all have transgressed against me, saith the Lord; high and low, rich and poor, great and small; men of all ranks, degrees, and character; kings, priests and prophets; and therefore ought not to contend with God, and charge him with injustice or unkindness, but themselves with folly and wickedness.

Jeremiah 2:30

Ver. 30. In vain have I smitten your children,.... Or, "for vanity" {g}; for vain speaking, for making vain oaths and vows; so it is explained in the Talmud {h}; but the sense is, that the rod of chastisement was used in vain; the afflictions that came upon them had no effect on them to amend and reform them; they were never the better for them:

they received no correction; or instruction by them; see **Jer 5:3**,

your own sword hath devoured your prophets; as Isaiah, Zechariah, and Uriah, who were sent to them to reprove and correct them, but they were so far from receiving their correction, that they put them to death; though Kimchi mentions it as the sense of his father, and which he approves of, that this is to be understood, not of the true prophets of the Lord, but of false prophets; wherefore it is said, "your prophets"; and they had no prophets but false prophets, whose prophecy was the cause of the destruction of souls, and this brought ruin upon the prophets themselves; and this sense of the words Jerom gives into; it follows:

like a destroying lion; that is, the sword of the Lord, according to the latter sense; the judgments of God, by which the people fall, and their false prophets with them, were like a lion that destroys and devours all that come near it. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add,

and ye were not afraid; which confirms what was before said, that chastisement and correction were in vain.

{g} awvl "propter vanitatem, [sive] vaniloquentiam", Vatablus. {h} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 32. 2. & Cetubot, fol. 72. 1.

Jeremiah 2:31

Ver. 31. O generation, see ye the word of the Lord,.... Take notice of it, consider it; or, hear it, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. Jarchi and Kimchi think {i} the pot of manna was brought out, and shown them, to be looked at by them, for the conviction of them, and confirmation of what follows:

have I been a wilderness unto Israel? no: the Israelites were plentifully supplied by him when in the wilderness, and since they were brought into a land flowing with milk and honey; so that they stood in need of nothing; they had a constant supply of all good things:

or a land of darkness? of misery, distress, and poverty; where no light of joy, comfort, and prosperity, is; a land that never sees the light, or enjoys the benefit of the sun, and so is barren and unfruitful; "a land of thorns", as the Septuagint version; or, "a desert and uncultivated land", as the Targum, and Syriac and Arabic versions. It may be rendered, "a land of the darkness of God" {k}; that is, of the greatest darkness, of thick and gross darkness, alluding to that in Egypt; as the flame of God, and mountains of God, **So 8:6**, as Ben Melech and Kimchi observe:

wherefore say my people, we are lords; and can reign without thee; or we have kings and princes, and have no need of thee, so Kimchi; but the word used seems to have another meaning, and to require another sense. The Targum is, "we are removed"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "we have gone back"; to which agrees the Jewish Midrash {l}, mentioned by Jarchi, and confirmed with a passage out of the Misna {m}, "we are separated from thee"; we have departed from thee, turned our backs on thee, have forsaken thee, and left thy ways and worship; and to do so was very ungrateful, when the Lord had so richly supplied them, that they had not lacked any good thing; and this sense agrees with what follows:

we will come no more unto thee? some render it, "we have determined" {n}; as having the same sense with the Arabic word, which signifies to "will" or determine anything; and then the meaning is, we are determined, we are resolved to come no more to thee, to attend thy worship and service any more; and so the Targum,

"we will not return any more to thy worship."

{i} So Mechilta apud Yalkut in loc. {k} hylpam Ura "terra caliginis Dei", Gataker, Gussetius; "caliginis Jah", Montanus. {l} Midrash R. Tanchuma, apud Jarchi in loc. Vid. Yalkut Simeoni, in Ioc. {m} Misn. Trumot, c. 10. sect. 3. & Machshirin, c. 3. sect. 3. {n} wndr "voluimus non veniemus", &c, De Dieu; "decrevimus non veniemus", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 2:32

Ver. 32. Can a maid forget her ornaments,.... Which she has provided for her wedding day, and is then to wear, and which may be the next; such as ear rings, bracelets, and jewels, which are never out of her mind, and can scarce sleep for thinking of them, how richly she shall be adorned with them; wherefore it follows:

or a bride her attire? or, "her bindings" {o}; her knots about her head or breast. The word is rendered "head bands" in **Isa 3:20** and here, by the Septuagint version, "her stomacher"; set with sparkling precious stones; see Isa 61:10, these things her heart being set upon, and priding herself with, cannot be forgotten by her, at least not long:

yet, my people have forgotten me days without number; which shows great stupidity and ingratitude; the Lord not being so much to them, from whom they had received so many favours, as the ornaments of a maid, and the attire of a bride, are to them.

{o} hyrwvq "fasciae suae", Tigurine version; "ligaminum suorum", Munster, Calvin; "ligamentorum suorum", Piscator.

Jeremiah 2:33

Ver. 33. Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love?.... To seek the love, and gain the affections and esteem, of the idolatrous nations; as a lascivious woman dresses herself out in the best manner to excite the lust and move the affections of her lovers; and as Jezebel, who painted her face, and tired her head, **2Ki 9:30** or dressed it in the best manner, where the same word is used as here; so the Targum,

"why dost thou make thy way beautiful, to procure loves (or lovers) to be joined to the people?"

or the sense is, why art thou so diligent and industrious to make thy way, which is exceeding bad, look a good one, by sacrifices and ceremonies, oblations and ablutions, in order to seek and obtain my love and favour, which is all in vain? it is not to be gained by such methods:

therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways; the wicked idolatrous nations, to whom they joined themselves; these they taught their ways of sacrificing, their rites, ceremonies, and superstitions; or, as Jarchi interprets it, thou hast taught thyself the worst way among them all; that is, thou hast used thyself to it: there is a double reading in this clause. The Cetib, or writing, is ytdml, "I have taught"; as if they were the words of God, saying, "wherefore I have taught"; or, "will teach"; that is, by punishing thee;

that thy ways are evil; or, as Kimchi explains it,

"I have taught thee by thy ways that they are evil, and evil shall come unto thee because of them."

The Keri, or reading, is tdml, "thou hast taught"; which is confirmed by the Targum; and is followed by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and other versions. It is by some rendered, "seeing thou hast taught others thy evil ways" {p}; not content to sin themselves, but taught others to do so, and yet would be thought good.

{p} "Quandoquidem etiam (alios) malas docuisti vias tuas", Noldius, p. 507. vid. No. 1998.

Jeremiah 2:34

Ver. 34. Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents,.... Either of the innocent infants of poor persons, who were sacrificed to Moloch; or of the poor prophets of the Lord, whom they slew, because they faithfully reproved them for their sins; and the blood of those being found in their skirts is expressive of the publicness and notoriety of their sin, and also of the large quantity of blood shed, inasmuch as the skirts of their garments were filled with it, as if they had trod and walked in blood; see Isa 63:3.

I have not found it by secret search; or, "by digging" {q}; there was no need to dig for it; it lay above ground; it was upon their skirts, public enough: or, "in ditches", as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin {r} versions; as when murders are privately and secretly committed; but these were done openly. Some read the words, "thou didst not find them with a digging instrument" {s}; so Jarchi interprets the words,

"you did not find them with a digging instrument, or in digging, when you slew them;"

you did not find them prepared as thieves to break up your houses, or digging down your walls, and breaking through into your houses, then you would have been justified by the law in slaying them, Ex 22:2, but this was not the case:

but upon all these; upon all their skirts, and not in ditches, or under ground; or, "for all these"; thou hast so done; not for their sins, for theft, or any other; but for their faithful reproofs and rebukes; so Jarchi, for all these words with which they reproved thee; or for all these, the idols on whose account, in the worship of them, the blood of the innocents was shed.

{q} trtxmb "in suffossione", Vatablus, Calvin, De Dieu; "effossione", Junius & Tremellius; "perfossione", Schmidt. {r} en diorugmasin, Sept. "in fossis", V. L. {s} "Cum perfossorio", Pagninus, Montanus; "sub. instrumento", Grotius; "terebro", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 2:35

Ver. 35. Yet thou sayest, because I am innocent,.... Or, "that I am innocent"; though guilty of such flagrant and notorious crimes, acting like the adulterous woman, Pr 30:20 to whom the Jews are all along compared in this chapter; which shows the hardness of their hearts, and their impudence in sinning:

surely his anger shall turn from me; the anger of God, since innocent; or, "let his anger be turned from me", as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; pleading for the removing of judgments upon the foot of innocency, which is pretended:

behold, I will plead with thee; enter into judgment with thee, and examine the case closely and thoroughly:

because thou sayest, I have not sinned; it would have been much better to have acknowledged sin, and pleaded for mercy, than to insist upon innocence, when the proof was so evident; nothing can be got by entering into judgment with God, upon such a foundation; and to sin, and deny it, is an aggravation of it: the denial of sin is a double sin, as the wise man says, whom Kimchi cites.

Jeremiah 2:36

Ver. 36. Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?.... Or, "by changing thy way" {t}; sometimes going one way, and sometimes another; sometimes to Egypt, and then to Assyria; seeking sometimes to the one for help, and sometimes to the other; at one time serving the gods of the one, in order to curry favour with them, and then the gods of the other, like a lascivious woman that gads about from place to place to increase her lovers, and satisfy her lust. The Vulgate Latin version is, "how exceeding vile art thou become, changing thy ways"; and so Jarchi says, the word ylzt signifies "contempt", or "vileness": deriving it from lwz, or llz, to be "vile" or "contemptible"; and to this sense are the Septuagint and Arabic versions; but Kimchi derives it from lza, to go; to which our version and others agree:

thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt; as they were in the times of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim, when Pharaohnecho king of Egypt took the former, and put him in bands, and carried him into Egypt; and set the latter upon the throne, and took tribute of him, for which the land was taxed, 2Ki 23:33

as thou wast ashamed of Assyria; in the times of Ahaz, who sent to the king of Assyria for help, when Judah was smitten by the Edomites, and invaded by the Philistines; but when he came to him, he distressed him, and strengthened and helped him not, 2Ch 28:16.

{t} Kykrd twnvl "mutando viam tuam", Vatablus, Piscator, Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 2:37

Ver. 37. Yea, thou shalt go forth from him,.... From the Egyptian, without any help, and with shame; or, "from this" {u}; that is, from this place, from Jerusalem, and from the land of Judea, into captivity; notwithstanding all the promised and expected help from Egypt,
2Ki 24:7:

and thine hands upon thine head; plucking and dishevelling the hair, as women in distress; so Tamar, when abused by her brother, laid her hand on her head, and went out crying, 2Sa 13:19:

for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences; those in whom they trusted, as the Egyptians; so that they should be of no service to them; or them, because of their trust and confidence in men, when it ought to have been placed above in himself:

and thou shalt not prosper in them; or because of them, as Kimchi; but shalt go into captivity.

{u} hz tam "ab hoc, sub. loco", Gataker; "ab ista", Munster, Grotius; "sub. terra, etiam hinc exibis", Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Jeremiah 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 3

In this chapter the sins of the people of Israel and Judah are exposed; particularly their idolatry, signified by playing the harlot; which is aggravated by the number of lovers or idols they had worshipped; by the many places where they had committed it; by their impudence in doing it; and by the bad consequence of it, showers of rain being withheld from them on that account, **Jer 3:1** and the grace of God towards them is abundantly declared by frequent calls unto them to repent and turn to him, and this after putting them away, which is not usual, **Jer 3:1**, the Lord expostulates with them, and puts words into their mouths, what they should say to him, even after they had spoken and done as evil things as they could, **Jer 3:4** the sin of Judah is particularly aggravated, by having seen what Israel, or the ten tribes, had done; their impenitence, notwithstanding the divine call; their going into captivity for their sin; and yet all this had no effect on Judah, to restrain them from the like sins, and to engage them to repentance; so that, of the two, the men of Judah were most to blame, **Jer 3:6**, wherefore the prophet is bid to go towards the north, where Babylon lay, and Israel were carried captive, and call upon them to return to the Lord, and proclaim his grace and mercy to them, only insisting upon an acknowledgment of their sins, their idolatry and disobedience, **Jer 3:12** and next the call to them to return is repeated; to which they are encouraged by observing the relations, they stood in to him, which continued, by promising to bring a remnant of them to Zion, and give them pastors approved of by him, and profitable to them, **Jer 3:14** which respect Gospel times, and the latter day, when the ceremonial law would be abrogated, **Jer 3:16**, the Gentiles called, **Jer 3:17** and an entire agreement between Judah and Israel, **Jer 3:18** and yet the Lord expresses a concern how he should reckon them as his children, and treat them as such, who had behaved so ill towards him; but his grace gets over the difficulties; finds out a way, by putting it into their mouths to call him their Father, and not turn away from him, **Jer 3:19** and this, notwithstanding their great treachery to him, perversion of their ways, and forgetfulness of the Lord, **Jer 3:20**, and they are again exhorted to repent and turn, with a promise of healing their backslidings, which has such an effect upon them, as to engage them to come to him, **Jer 3:22** acknowledging their salvation is only in him, and not in their idols; and that sin was the cause of all their calamities; and that shame and confusion of face belonged unto them on that account, **Jer 3:23**.

Ver. 1. They say, if a man put away his wife,.... Or, "saying" {w}; wherefore some connect those words with the last verse of the preceding chapter, as if they were a continuation of what the Lord had been there saying, that he would reject their confidences; so Kimchi; but they seem rather to begin a new section, or a paragraph, with what were commonly said among men, or in the law, and as the sense of that; that if a man divorced his wife upon any occasion,

and she go from him; departs from his house, and is separated from bed and board with him:

and become another man's, be married to another, as she might according to the law:

shall he return unto her again? take her to be his wife again; her latter husband not liking her, or being dead? no, he will not; he might not according to the law in De 24:4 and if there was no law respecting this, it can hardly be thought that he would, it being so contrary to nature, and to the order of civil society:

shall not that land be greatly polluted? either Judea, or any other, where such usages should obtain; for this, according to the law, was causing the land to sin, filling it with it, and making it liable to punishment for it; this being an abomination before the Lord. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it, "shall not that woman be defiled?" she is so by the latter husband; and that is a reason why she is not to be received by the former again, De 24:4:

but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; or served many idols; the number of their gods having been according to the number of their cities, **Jer 2:28**:

yet return again to me, saith the Lord; by repentance, and doing their first works, worshipping and serving him as formerly; so the Targum,

"return now from this time to my worship, saith the Lord."

The Vulgate Latin version adds, "and I will receive thee"; this is an instance of great grace in the Lord, and which is not to be found among men.

{w} rwmal "dicendo", Montanus, Vatablus, Janius & Tremellius

Jeremiah 3:2

Ver. 2. Lift up thine eyes unto the high places,.... Where idols were set and worshipped; either places naturally high, as hills and mountains, which were chosen for this service; or high places, artificially made and thrown up for this purpose; see 2Ki 17:9, Jarchi interprets the word Mypv of "rivulets of water"; and so the Targum, where also idolatry was committed:

and see where thou hast not been lien with; see if there is a hill or mountain, or any high place, where thou hast not committed idolatry; the thing was so notorious, and the facts and instances so many, there was no denying it; every hill and mountain witnessed to their idolatry; to which agrees the Targum,

"see where thou hast not joined thyself to worship idols:"

in the ways hast thou sat for them; for the idolaters, waiting for them, to join with them in their idolatries; as harlots used to sit by the wayside to meet with their lovers, to be picked up by them, or to offer themselves to them as prostitutes, Ge 38:14 which shows that these people were not drawn into idolatry by the temptations and solicitations of others: but they put themselves in the way of it, and solicited it, and others to join with them in it:

as the Arabian in the wilderness; who dwelt in tents in the wilderness, and sat by the wayside to trade with those that passed by; or else lay in wait in desert and by places to rob all that passed by them; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it,

in the ways thou didst sit, expecting them as a thief in the wilderness; the Arabians being noted for thieves and robbers. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it,

as a crow, or raven, of the desert; the same word signifying a "raven" and an "Arabian": see 1Ki 17:4:

and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness; the land of Judea, where idolatry was so openly and frequently committed, which brought a load of guilt upon it, and exposed it to the wrath and judgments of God; so the Targum, "thou hast made the land guilty with thine idols and with thy wickedness."

Jeremiah 3:3

Ver. 3. Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain,.... There were two seasons of the year when rain in common fell upon the land of Israel, called the former and the latter rain, and both are designed here. The former by Mybybr, "showers", so called from the multitude of drops in them: these showers, or the former rain, used to fall in the month Marchesvan, which answers to part of our October; it was in autumn, at the fall of the year, at seedtime, when great quantity of rain usually fell, to prepare the earth for sowing, and watering the seed sown; whence that month was sometimes called Bul, as Kimchi observes, from "mabbul", a flood. The latter rain fell in Nisan, which answers to our March; it was in the spring, a little before harvest, which swelled the grain, made the skin the thinner, and the flower the finer. This is called vwqlm: now, because of the idolatry of these people, those rains were withheld from them, as they were in the times of Ahab, 1Ki 17:1, which brought a famine upon them; and was a manifest token of the divine displeasure, and what was threatened them in case they sinned against the Lord, De 28:23:

and thou hadst a whore's forehead; was impudent and unconcerned, repented not of sin, or blushed for it, though such judgments were upon them; hence the Rabbins {x} say rains are not withheld but for impudence, according, to this Scripture:

thou refusedst to be ashamed; to be made ashamed by the admonitions of the prophets, or by the judgments of God; see **Jer 5:3**.

{x} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 7. 2.

Jeremiah 3:4

Ver. 4. Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me,.... These words are either a confirmation and proof of that impudence with which these people are charged; for had they not been impudent, or had not a forehead like a whorish woman; or were they truly ashamed, they would have cried to the Lord henceforward; called upon him; claimed their relation to him; and owned his favours in time past: or, if they had not been impudent, they would not have dared from this time to have called God their Father and their guide, when they had so wickedly sinned against him; so that this is a charge of hypocrisy and deceit, calling God their Father and guide, when they were at the same time worshipping idols: or rather they are expressive of the wondrous grace and goodness of God towards this people, that had so highly offended him, yet he expostulates with them, puts words into their mouths to return unto him with, saying:

my father; I have sinned against thee, and am not worthy of the relation, yet receive me as a returning prodigal:

thou art the guide of my youth; or, "hast been": I acknowledge the favours I have received in time past, which is an aggravation of my sin; reject me not, but receive me graciously into thy favour; see Ho 14:2, so the Targum interprets the words as a prayer,

"wilt thou not from this time pray before me, saying, thou art my Lord, my Redeemer, which art of old?"

or else they point to them their duty, what they ought to do from henceforward; that seeing the Lord had withheld from them the former and latter rain for their idolatry, it became them to return to him by repentance; and to call upon him, who had been their Father and their guide in time past, to have mercy on them, and avert his judgments from them.

Jeremiah 3:5

Ver. 5. Will he reserve his anger for ever?.... These words may be considered as a continuation of the speech put into their mouths to make to the Lord and plead with him, as well as what follows:

will he keep it to the end? that is, his anger: no; he will not: this is not according to the nature of God; he retains not his anger for ever, **Mic 7:18**, though, according to some versions, this is to be understood of the sins of these people being reserved and kept forever, as their impudence and obstinacy; so the Syriac and Arabic versions; and to which agrees the

Targum,

"is it possible that thy sins should be kept for thee for ever, or the stroke (of punishment) be strengthened upon thee to the end?"

so Kimchi,

"says the prophet, if thou dost this (call him my father, &c.) will God reserve thine iniquity for thee for ever, or keep thy sin unto the end? he will not do so; but when thou returnest unto him, he will return unto thee, and do thee good; but thou hast not done so."

The sense is much the same:

behold, thou hast spoken, and done evil things as thou couldest; which were enough to cause the Lord to reserve and keep his anger for ever. There is a double reading here; the Cetib, or writing, is ytrbd, "I have spoken"; the prophet had spoken to them to return; or the Lord by the prophet had spoken to them, and put the above words into their mouths, and told them what they should say when they returned to the Lord; "but thou hast done evil things" {y}; notwithstanding such declarations of grace, and dost continue to do them:

and thou hast prevailed {z}; as the last clause may be rendered; that I cannot turn away mine anger from thee, but must reserve it, and keep it for ever. The Keri, or reading, is trbd, "thou hast spoken"; thou hast said thou wilt do evil things, and thou hast done them as thou hast said, and hast prevailed; thou hast sinned with all thy might and main, and hast spoken and done as evil things as possibly could be done. Some choose to render the words thus, "if thou hadst spoken"; the words that were put into their mouths before mentioned; "though thou hast done evil things, yet thou wouldest have prevailed" {a}; that is, with God, to have turned away his anger from thee.

{y} twerh yvexw "sed fecisit mala", Schmidt. {z} lkwxw "et praevaluisti", Vatablus, Schmidt; "et preavales", Piscator, Gataker; "et evaluisti", Cocceius. {a} "Si ita loquereris, quanquam mala [plurirma] fecisti, praevaleres", Grotius.

Jeremiah 3:6

Ver. 6. The Lord said also unto me, in the days of Josiah the king,.... For in his time Jeremiah began to prophesy, even in the thirteenth year of his reign, **Jer 1:2**:

hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? the ten tribes; that is, hast thou not heard? or dost thou not know the idolatry of the ten tribes, which was the cause of their captivity? as Kimchi explains it; for the facts, or the idolatrous actions of the ten tribes, were not done in Josiah's and Jeremiah's time; for they were carried captive in the sixth year of Hezekiah, ninety years or more before Jeremiah began to prophesy, and their idolatry was before their captivity, and therefore could not be properly seen by him; only it had been heard of by him, it was known by him, it was notorious enough, being well attested:

she is gone upon every high mountain, and under every green tree; that is, she did so, when in her own land, before she was carried captive, as Jarchi observes; for this respects not what she did in Josiah's and Jeremiah's time, or when in captivity, but before, which was the reason of it:

and there hath played the harlot: or committed idolatry, which was usually done in such places; so the Targum,

"and worshipped idols of wood."

Jeremiah 3:7

Ver. 7. And I said, after she had done these things,.... All these idolatries, in the several places mentioned, after she had repeated them over and over; the Lord sent to them by the Prophets Hosea, Amos, Micah, and others, who prophesied before the captivity of the ten tribes, and entreated them, saying,

turn unto me: to my worship, as the Targum; from their idols, to him the living God; they were not without admonitions, exhortations, and declarations of grace, and so were without excuse:

but she returned not; to fear and serve the Lord, but remained in idolatry, obstinate and inflexible:

and her treacherous sister Judah saw it; her treachery and breach of covenant, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions add, for explanation sake; Judah, or the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and who were allied to the ten tribes by birth and by religion, and equally treacherous to God, the husband of them both, saw all the idolatry of Israel, and the aggravations of it, and what followed upon it, namely, their captivity in Babylon, yet did not learn and take warning hereby.

Jeremiah 3:8

Ver. 8. And I saw, when for all the causes, whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery,.... Not only Judah saw, but God, who sees all things, saw the idolatry of the ten tribes which apostatized from him, and all the springs, causes, reasons, and occasions of it, and its consequences; and also the treachery, hardness, and idolatry of Judah:

I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; as men did, when they put away their wives, as they might lawfully do in case of adultery; and here being that which answered to it, spiritual adultery or idolatry, the Lord, who was married to this people, put them away from him, and caused them to be carried captive out of their own land into another, 2Ki 17:6 which is meant by the bill of divorce; so the Targum,

"I caused them to go into captivity, as those that give a bill of divorce (to their wives) and dismiss them:"

yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not; to commit idolatry and offend the Lord, nor stood in awe of his righteous judgments; had no reverence of God, nor fear of punishment; so hardened and daring was she: but went and played the harlot; committed idolatry, as the ten tribes did, taking no warning by what befell them.

Jeremiah 3:9

Ver. 9. And it came to pass, through the lightness of her whoredom,.... Or the "swiftness" {b} of it; when it was once set on foot, it ran through the land presently one taking it from and following the example of another; or it became a light thing with her to commit idolatry; it was looked upon as a small thing, a trivial offence at most: so the Targum,

"it came to pass that her idols were light in her eyes;"

not lightly esteemed of, but it was a light thing to commit idolatry with them; interpreting the word as the Masora, which it follows: and to the same sense the Septuagint version, "her fornication was for nothing"; it stood for nothing, it was not reckoned as a sin: the Arabic version is, "her fornication was with nothing"; with an idol, which is nothing in the world, **1Co 8:4**, some choose to render it, "because of the voice or fame of her whoredom" {c}, or idolatry; it sounded forth, and the fame, or rather infamy of it, went out through the whole land: wherefore it follows,

that she defiled the land; polluted it with sin, involved it in guilt, and exposed it to punishment:

and committed adultery with stones and with stocks; that is, with images made of stone and wood, which they served and worshipped as gods; and is the adultery or idolatry they are charged with, and by which the land was defiled. The Targum is,

"she erred or committed idolatry with the worshippers of stone and wood."

This, by what follows, seems to be understood not of Judah, but of Israel.

{b} lqm "a levitate", a llq, "velocem esse", Calvin. {c} Heb. "propter vocem scortationis ejus, [vel] famosam scortationem", Piscator; "a voce scortationis ejus", Schmidt; "propter famam scortationis ejus", Cocceius; "prae famosa scortatione", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 3:10

Ver. 10. And yet for all this,.... Though the two tribes saw the lightness and filthiness of the sin Israel was guilty of, and how the land was defiled with it, the stupidity of it, and the punishment inflicted on account of it:

her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord; there was a show of reformation in Josiah's time, but it was but a show; there was no true, hearty cordial repentance for the sin of idolatry, only a feigned one; there was an outward removal of it, and reformation from it, but inwardly the desires of the heart were to it; the good king, with some few others, were hearty in it, but the greater part played the hypocrite; the following reigns proved the truth of this.

Jeremiah 3:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord said unto me,.... To the Prophet Jeremiah, as in **Jer 3:6** and at or about the same time:

the backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah; that is, was comparatively more righteous; of the two she appeared the most righteous; though neither of them could vindicate their conduct, or justify themselves before God; see Lu 18:14. Judah was most to blame, because that after Israel committed idolatry, and was carried captive, she took no warning by it, but fell into the same sin; and in Manasseh's time committed greater idolatries, and more wickedness, than ever Israel did; and more than even the Amorites themselves, and other Heathen nations, had done, 2Ki 21:6 and though a reformation was made in Josiah's time, it was only feignedly, it was not cordial and hearty; and therefore she is all along here charged with perfidy and treachery.

Jeremiah 3:12

Ver. 12. Go and proclaim these words towards the north,.... With his face thitherwards, towards Babylon, which lay north of Judea, and was the metropolis of Assyria, where the ten tribes were carried captive; and though they were dispersed in the cities of Media and Persia, which lay eastward, yet Babylon being the head of the empire, respect is had to that; not that the prophet was to go thither to them, or to prophesy in the land of the north, as the Targum paraphrases the words: for the word "go", as Jarchi observes, is only expressive of a command on the part of God; and of readiness, as Kimchi says, on the part of the prophet to obey, but not of local motion; he was to read these words, as the latter of these suggests, in Jerusalem, before the elders of Judah, with a respect to Israel, as if they were before him; and the design of this was to show that the Lord was gracious and merciful, and ready to receive backsliders; and to stimulate Judah to repentance, and to turn unto the Lord:

and say, return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord not return from the land of their captivity, though that they shall return in the last day Kimchi thinks is here intimated; and Jarchi says some of them did return, in the eighteenth year of Josiah; but return from their idols to the living God: and for their encouragement it is added,

and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; or, "my face" {d}; by frowning upon them, expressing displicency with them, and anger towards them; the meaning is, that he would not continue his resentments, or cause his anger to fall upon them any more, or at least not for ever, as Kimchi interprets it; he had caused his anger to fall upon them like a mighty storm of rain, by carrying them captive; but now he intimates, should they repent and return, he would remove his anger from them, and not cause it to return any more:

for I am merciful, saith the Lord; so he proclaimed himself before Moses, Ex 34:6 and of this they had had often instances and proofs:

and I will not keep anger for ever; or, "thy sins", as the Targum; I will not mark and observe them, or reserve them for punishment, but will mercifully forgive them; See Gill on "Jer 3:5".

{d} ynp lypa al "non faciam cadere facies meas super vos", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 3:13

Ver. 13. Only acknowledge thine iniquity,.... Or, "know" {e} it; unless a man knows his sin, and is convicted of it, he will never repent of it, or turn from it; and when he is made sensible of it, and sorry for it, he ought to acknowledge and confess it before God, against whom he has sinned; this is what is insisted upon, and all that is insisted upon; and it is the least that can be done, and is what every sensible sinner will do, who upon it may expect the discovery of pardoning grace and mercy, Ps 32:5:

that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God; against his law, his declared mind and will, and notwithstanding he is the Lord thy God; against a God of love, grace, and mercy, who had loaded them with his benefits, and followed them with his goodness; all which aggravates the sin they had been guilty of:

and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree; a phrase expressive of whoredom; it is an euphemism, the same with Mylgr qwvyp, as Jarchi observes, "the opening of the feet", to everyone that passes by, to be lain with, Eze 16:25 and is to be understood of the multiplied idolatries of Israel; and that as harlots run about here and there, and prostitute themselves to whomsoever they meet with, so they worshipped the strange gods of the Heathens everywhere, in all their cities, upon every mountain and hill, and under every green tree; see **Jer 2:20** so the Targum,

"and thou hast corrupted thy way, thou hast joined thyself to the people that worship idols under every green tree:"

and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the Lord: the voice of his command in the law, which forbids idolatry; and his voice by his prophets, which reproved them for it, and exhorted them to repentance; but they regarded neither.

{e} yed "scito", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 3:14

Ver. 14. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord,.... All of them were children by national adoption, and some by special grace, and yet "backsliders", O monstrous ingratitude! "backsliders", and yet "children", still the relation continues, O marvellous grace! God's own children may backslide, and often do; either in heart, when love waxes cold, faith declines, zeal wanting; when they get into a carnal sleepy frame of spirit, and have not that quick sense of sin, and of duty, as heretofore: or in practice, when private prayer is restrained; public worship is neglected; get into bad company, and fall into gross sins; all which is owing to the prevalence of indwelling sin, the force of Satan's temptations, and the enticing snares of the world; but God will not leave them, he calls unto them again and again to turn unto him by repentance, and to doing their first works; which calls, at length, through powerful grace, become effectual; see **Jer 3:22** and the arguments used to engage to it follow,

for I am married unto you; in a civil sense as a nation, Jer 31:32, and in a spiritual sense to a remnant of them; Christ is the bridegroom, the church is the bride, which he has secretly betrothed to himself in eternity; openly in time, at the conversion of everyone of them; and will more publicly at the last day, when all are gathered in and prepared for him. This relation, as it is a very near one, so it is very astonishing, considering the disparity between the two parties, and it always continues; love, the bond of it, never alters; the covenant, in which this transaction is carried on, is ever sure; and Christ always behaves agreeably to it; wherefore it is base ingratitude to backslide; and reason there is sufficient why his backsliding spouse should return to him. The Septuagint version is, "because I will rule over you." agreeable to which is Jarchi's note,

"because I am your Lord, and it is not for my glory, (or honour) to leave you in the hand of enemies."

Kimchi's father interprets the word used by ytuq, "I loath you", or I am weary of you; the reverse of which is the Targum,

"for I am well pleased with you;"

and so the Syriac version, "I delight in you"; which carries in it a much more engaging argument to return, and agrees with what follows:

and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family: or tribe, or country; for sometimes a whole country is called a family, as in **Jer 1:15** and here it must design more than a city; for otherwise there are many families in a city; the meaning is, according to Kimchi, that though there may be but one Jew in a city of the Gentiles, or two only in a nation, the Lord would take them from thence; and, according to others, that though one or two, or a few, here and there one of the backsliders, should return to him by true repentance, he would receive them graciously; the smallness of their number would be no objection to him; which is a sense not to be despised: but the phrase seems to denote the distinguishing grace of God to his people; which appears in the choice of them in his Son; the redemption of them by him; and the sanctification of them by his Spirit; and very few are the objects of his grace, as it were one of a city, and two of a tribe; however, they shall none of them be lost, notwithstanding their backslidings, to which they are bent: for it is added,

and I will bring you to Zion; to the church of God here, a Gospel church state, whither to come is the great privilege of the saints, Heb 12:22 and to the Zion above, the heavenly state, where all the chosen and ransomed, and sanctified ones, shall come, with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads, Isa 35:10 and all as the fruit of distinguishing and efficacious grace.

Jeremiah 3:15

Ver. 15. And I will give you pastors according to mine heart,.... Which is to be understood not of political rulers and governors, but ministers of the word; who are "pastors" or "shepherds" under Christ the great Shepherd, and are "gifts" of his to the churches, and "according to his heart"; or "conformable to his mind", as the Arabic version; whom he calls, qualifies, puts into the ministry, and sends forth; whom he holds in his right hand, and keeps as the apple of his eye; who do his will, as the Targum, and feed men according to his heart: and as this prophecy belongs to Gospel times, as appears both by what goes before and by what follows, the apostles of Christ and first ministers of the Gospel are chiefly designed; though it might have some accomplishment in Nehemiah and Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, at and after the Jews return from Babylon; but a more complete one in the times mentioned: so Kimchi says, these are they that shall be with the King Messiah, according to **Mic 5:5**:

which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding; with things worthy to be known and understood; with the solid and substantial truths of the Gospel, and by faithfully administering the ordinances of it; and in all directing to Christ the bread of life: or, "shall rule you" {f} not in an arbitrary way, according to their own ills, but according to the laws of Christ: these words, with knowledge and understanding, may either intend the matter with which these pastors should feed the church; which is what tends to spiritual knowledge and understanding, and an increase thereof; and which is blessed of God to such a purpose, though they themselves cannot give it: or else the manner in which they should feed or rule; that is, wisely and "prudently", as the Arabic version renders it: they feed wisely and prudently when they rightly divide the word of truth, and give to every one their portion of meat in due season; and feed them in proportion to their age and capacity, give milk to babes, and meat to strong men: and they rule with wisdom and prudence when they govern according to the laws of Christ, and take care that they are put in execution; and do all things decently and in order; and, as David, feed the flock according to the integrity of their hearts, and guide them by the skilfulness of their hands, Ps 78:72.

{f} werw "regent", Gataker.

Jeremiah 3:16

Ver. 16. And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land,.... That is, when the number of the disciples and followers of Christ, and true believers in him, shall be multiplied and increased in the land of Judea, and in the Gentile world also, under the ministry of the above said pastors, apostles, and ministers of the Gospel, who should be succeeded everywhere, as they were; see **Ac 6:1**:

in those days, saith the Lord of hosts, they shall say no more, the ark of the covenant of the Lord; because the antitype of it would be come, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word that is made flesh and dwelt among men; and in whom the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, dwells in a more glorious manner than it did over the ark, for in him dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and the ark may be put for the whole ceremonial law, which was abolished at the death of Christ, and to be used and spoken of no more; and whereas it was, for a good while after the abrogation of it, a matter of debate and contention, and was not wholly under the church's feet until about the times of Constantine, when there was a great multiplication and increase of Christians throughout the Roman empire, the prophecy may be thought to belong to those times, at least there was then a greater accomplishment of it; see Re 12:1:

neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it; as it should not be spoken of, so it should not be thought of any more than if it had never been:

neither shall they visit it; to inquire of the Lord, before it, about what they wanted to be informed of, as they used to do, Jud 20:23:

neither shall that be done any more; or, "made any more" {g} the Jews {h} say, the ark was wanting in the second temple, and was never afterwards remade: all the expressions denote the utter abolition of legal rites and ceremonies, never to be revived more. The Targum paraphrases the last clause,

"neither shall they make war with it any more;"

and so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it as if it was a prophecy of such a time of profound peace, that there would be no need of bringing out the ark as formerly; this use of it would be quite forgotten; but this was not the principal use of the ark, and very rarely was it ever used in this way.

{g} dwe hvey alw "neque reparabitur amplius, [vel] et non constuetur amplius", Schmidt. {h} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21. 2.

Jeremiah 3:17

Ver. 17. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord,.... That is, the Gospel church, the heavenly Jerusalem, the Jerusalem above, that is free, and the mother of us all; which is Christ's kingdom, where he has his throne and subjects, and where he sits and reigns as King of saints; and where they yield a cheerful and ready subjection to him, signified by calling the church his throne:

and all the nations shall be gathered unto it: which shows that Jerusalem, literally understood, cannot be meant, but the church of Christ; to which the Gentiles, being converted, should join themselves in great numbers in all nations, as they have done; and which will be more largely accomplished and verified in the latter day, **Isa 2:2**

to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; to name his name, to trust in his name, to call upon it, and to worship him in Jerusalem, in his church, and among his people; and so the Targum, "and all nations shall give themselves to worship in it the name of the Lord, in Jerusalem:"

neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart; for the Gospel being preached to all nations, according to Christ's commission, by the pastors he promises, and that being blessed to the turning of the Gentiles from their idols to serve the living God, they shall no more worship the gods they chose for themselves, and their evil hearts devised.

Jeremiah 3:18

Ver. 18. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel,.... Which had its accomplishment when some of the ten tribes, scattered among the nations whither the Gospel came, as well as in the land of Judea, being converted under it, joined together in a Gospel church state, and walked together in all the commandments and ordinances of Christ: and it may also denote the agreement of all Christian confessors, as Judah signifies, and of all Israelites indeed, in worship, whether Jews or Gentiles; becoming through Christ members of one body, fellow heirs and partakers of the same grace, promises, and privileges; and which harmony will still be more manifest in the latter day, Isa 11:7:

and they shall come together out of the land of the north; out of these northern kingdoms of ours, and other parts of Europe, where they chiefly are; this will be when the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in, and the Jews are converted and joined to Christian churches: the allusion is to the return of the Jews from Babylon, which lay north of Judea:

to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers; for when the Jews are converted they shall return to their own land, which God gave for an inheritance to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to their seed after them.

Jeremiah 3:19

Ver. 19. But I said,.... Within himself, in the thoughts of his heart, when he took up a resolution concerning their conversion, open adoption, and return to their own land, as a symbol of the eternal inheritance:

how shall I put thee among the children? among the children of God, who are so by special adopting grace, which is a high and honourable privilege, greater than to be the sons and daughters of the greatest potentate on earth; who as they are high birth, being born of God, so they are brought up, and fed, and clothed as the children of the King of kings; they have great nearness to and freedom with God their Father; they are heirs with God and joint heirs with Christ, and shall ever remain in this relation. There is a secret and an open putting of the sons of men among the children of God. The secret putting of them among the children is by God the Father, when he predestinated them unto the adoption of children by Christ; when he promised in covenant he would be their Father, and they should be his sons and daughters; and as an act of his own will, secretly, in his own breast, adopted them into his family, his will to adopt being the adoption of them; hence they are called the children of God, previous to their redemption and sanctification, **Heb 2:13**. Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ was concerned in this affair by espousing these persons to himself in covenant, whereby his Father became their Father, and his God their God; and by assuming their nature, whereby they became his brethren, and so the children of God; and by redeeming them, whereby way is made for their actual reception of the adoption of children; when they are openly put among them in the effectual calling, in which the Holy Spirit is concerned, who regenerates them, works faith in them, and witnesses their adoption to them, from whence he is called the Spirit of adoption; regeneration and faith are the evidences of adoption, **Joh 1:12** and the Spirit the witness, **Ro 8:15**. Now, as all things were seen in one view by the Lord from eternity, as well when he secretly as openly puts them among the children, it may well be thought there were difficulties, at least seeming ones, in the way of it; or, however, such as make it wonderful and marvellous that any of the sons of Adam should be put among the children of God; seeing they that are, sinned in Adam as the rest, fell with him in his transgression into a state of condemnation and death; are corrupt in their first birth, defiled in soul and body, and cast out like the wretched infant, to the loathing of their persons; are as the children of the Ethiopians, black with original and actual sins; are children of disobedience, traitors and rebels against God, and children of wrath, even as others. And though these words may have a principal respect to the Jews, who dealt treacherously with God, in departing from his pure worship, rejecting the Messiah, and continuing in their obstinacy and infidelity, having a "loammi" upon them, and notwithstanding shall be called the children of the living God, **Ho 1:9**, yet may be applied to any of the sons and daughters of men, whether Jews or Gentiles, that are put among the children of God.

And give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of the nations? the allusion, doubtless, is to the land of Israel, which was a goodly and desirable land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and was the heritage or inheritance of the children of Israel, but not of the hosts of nations; wherefore heaven and eternal happiness is ultimately meant, the better country Christian pilgrims are seeking after, and the desired haven Christian sailors make unto: this is a "pleasant land"; pleasantly situated on high, where are great plenty of provisions, solid substance, enduring riches, the greatest liberty and choices, privileges, and the best of inhabitants and company, Father, Son, and Spirit, angels and glorified saints: this is

a goodly heritage or "inheritance"; not only a house not made with hands, a city that has foundations, but a kingdom and glory, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, which fades not away, reserved in the heavens: and it may be said to be

of the hosts of nations; for, though it is but one inheritance, vast numbers will share in it, and possess it; even an innumerable company of all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues, which are chosen, redeemed, and called out of them: and this is in, the "gift" of God; he regenerates to a lively hope of it, makes meet for it, and of his own good pleasure bestows it; and marvellous it is that he should give it to the persons before described; the putting of them among the children of God, and giving them such an inheritance, are entirely owing to his sovereign grace and goodness, which only can answer the question put, concerning these things.

And I said, thou shalt call me my father; not merely saying these words, but expressing them with affection and faith, under the witnessings of the Spirit of God; and declaring the relation by deeds, by honouring and obeying him, and being a follower of him in his ways and worship: and shalt not turn away from me; either from calling him Father, through the prevalence of unbelief; or from his service and worship, through the power of corruptions, backsliding and revolting from him, with which they are often charged in this chapter; so the Targum, "shalt not turn from my worship."

Jeremiah 3:20

Ver. 20. Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband,.... Or, "her friend" {i}; who loves her, takes care of her, and provides for her, and goes after another man, and cohabits with him; which is a violation of the marriage covenant, and acting a base and treacherous part unto him to whom she is married

so have you dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord; who was their Father, friend, and husband; who loved them and distinguished them from all other people, by a variety of blessings and privileges; and yet they departed from his commandments and ordinances, and held the traditions of the elders, and taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and rejected the Messiah, and still continue in their disbelief of him, and hatred to him; and therefore it need not be wondered at that he should make any difficulty about their adoption and inheritance; and a marvellous thing it must be to take such persons, and put them openly among his children, and give them a right and meetness for the goodly inheritance.

{i} herm "ab amico suo", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "a socio suo", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 3:21

Ver. 21. A voice was heard upon the high places,.... And so might be heard afar off; it shows that the repentance and confession of the Jews, when convinced and converted, will be very public, and made upon those places where they have committed their sins; see **Jer 2:20**, for this and the following verses declare the humiliation, repentance, and conversion of the Jews, and the manner in which they shall be brought to it, and be openly put among the children:

weeping and supplications of the children of Israel; not so much lamenting their calamities, as mourning over their sins, supplicating the pardon of them, and freely and ingenuously confessing them:

for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the Lord their God; or, "because they have" {k}, &c. this they shall be sensible of, that they have perverted the right ways of the Lord by their traditions, and have forgotten the worship of the Lord, as the Targum paraphrases it; yea, the Lord himself, their covenant God and kind benefactor, and lightly esteemed of the true Messiah, the Rock of their salvation. The consideration of which will cause them to weep and mourn; which they will do when the Spirit of grace and supplication is poured out upon them; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, Zec 12:10. Some interpret this as the cause of their calamities, and not as the subject matter of their mourning; but the latter seems best to agree with what follows, which shows by what means they were brought to repentance, and were converted.

{k} Mkrd ta wweh yk "quia perverterunt viam suam", Munster, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; "eo quod", Piscator; "quod pravam viam inierunt", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 3:22

Ver. 22. Return, ye backsliding children,.... This is the call of the Jews to repentance in the latter day; See Gill on "Jer 3:14".

and I will heal your backslidings; that is, I will forgive your sins. Sins are the diseases of the soul, and the wounds made in it; and pardoning them is healing them. So the Targum,

"I will forgive you when ye return;"

see Ps 103:3, this is done by the application of the blood of Christ, the only physician, and whose blood is the balm that heals every wound; and this springs from the love of God, and his free favour to his people, even the riches of his grace and abounding mercy through Christ; and is the great motive and inducement, and what gives the greatest encouragement to return unto the Lord, Ho 14:1.

Behold, we come unto thee; the Targum represents this as what the Jews pretended always to say, and did say, in a hypocritical manner, with which they are upbraided,

"lo, at all times ye say, we return to thy worship, save us;"

and Jarchi is of opinion that these are words the prophet put into their mouths, and taught them to say, and to confess in this manner: but they are rather their own words, arising from a true sense of sin, under the influence of divine grace, and encouraged with the hope and assurance of pardon; declaring that as they were called upon to return, so they did return, and now were come to God by repentance, with confession and acknowledgment of sin, and by prayer and supplication for pardon and by the exercise of faith upon him for it; and also were come into his house to wait upon him, and worship him in his ordinances:

for thou art the Lord our God; not merely as the God of nature and providence, or in a natural way, but in a way of special grace, of which they now will have an application by the Spirit of God.

Jeremiah 3:23

Ver. 23. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains,.... From any natural defence, by hills and mountains encompassing; or from idols worshipped on hills and mountains. So the Targum,

"truly in vain we worship upon the hills, and for no profit are we gathered upon the mountains;"

and to this purpose Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; or from the multitude of the people, the kingdoms of the world, and the nations of the earth, from whom the Jews have in vain expected salvation and deliverance:

truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel; or, "in the Word of the Lord our God", as the Targum; in Christ, the essential Word of God, is the salvation of all the chosen people, both Jews and Gentiles; it was put into his hands by his Father, and it is wrought out by him; and it resides in him, and it is to be had in him, and in him only, **Ac 4:12**, who is God the Lord, and therefore was able to effect it, and to give it; and hence these repenting ones, discarding all other saviours, apply to him for it.

Jeremiah 3:24

Ver. 24. For shame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth,.... That is, sin, which is the cause of shame, and of which sinners ought to be ashamed, and will be sooner or later; so the Targum renders it, "the confusion of sins"; and the Jewish writers generally interpret it of idolatry, and of the idol Baal, as Kimchi and others, called "shame", or that "shameful thing", Jer 11:13, this idol, because of the multitude of the sacrifices offered to it, consumed what their fathers laboured for, ever since they had known them; or, for their worshipping of this idol, such judgments came upon them as consumed all they got by hard labour; or rather it may regard their shameful sin of rejecting the Messiah, and crucifying him; which they will be ashamed of at the time of their conversion, when they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and on account of which they suffer the many calamities they now do:

their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters; whatever evils have befallen them in their persons, families, and estates, they will confess are owing to sin they have committed, of which they will now be ashamed; hence it follows:

Jeremiah 3:25

Ver. 25. We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us,.... As persons overwhelmed with a sense of sin, and so pressed with the guilt of it on their consciences, that they can neither stand up, nor look up, but throw themselves on the ground, and cover their faces, being ashamed of what they have done:

for we have sinned against the Lord our God; as by breaking the law of God, so by despising the Gospel; rejecting the ordinances of it; disbelieving the Messiah, and speaking reproachfully of him and his people:

we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day; in a long series of years, from the time that Christ was upon earth, to the day of their conversion, in the latter times of the Gospel dispensation:

and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God; the voice of his forerunner, John the Baptist, of the Messiah himself, and of his apostles, and of his ministers, since; so the Targum,

"and have not obeyed the Word of the Lord our God."

Christ the essential Word.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Jeremiah 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 4

This chapter begins with several exhortations to repentance; first to Israel, or the ten tribes, to return to the Lord with their whole hearts, and put away their abominations, and serve him in sincerity and uprightness of soul; with promises of rest and safety to themselves; and that it would have a happy influence on the Gentiles, and issue in their conversion; who would hereupon bless themselves in the Lord, and glory in him, **Jer 4:1**, and next to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, to show a concern for renewing and sanctifying grace, signified by various metaphors, lest they should be consumed with the fire of divine wrath, **Jer 4:3** and then the destruction of that land and city is foretold and described, partly by what was introductory to it, and the proclamation of it, signified by blowing the trumpet, and setting up the standard, **Jer 4:5**, by an account of the destroyers, their cruelty, swiftness, and diligence, **Jer 4:7**, and of the destruction itself, compared to a violent wind, **Jer 4:11**, by the effect it should have upon the inhabitants of all sorts, high and low, **Jer 4:8**, and had upon the prophet himself, **Jer 4:10**, and by the cause and ground of it, the sins of the people, which they are called upon to repent of, **Jer 4:14** and by a vision the prophet had of the dreadful desolation of the land, **Jer 4:23** and by the vain and false hopes the people would have of their recovery, and the great anxiety and distress they would be in, **Jer 4:30**.

Ver. 1. If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord,.... To which they had been encouraged, and as they had promised they would, and said they did, **Jer 3:14**:

return unto me; with thy whole heart, and not feignedly and hypocritically, as Judah did, **Jer 3:10**. Some render the words (and the accents require they should be rendered so) "if thou wilt return to me, O Israel, saith the Lord, thou shalt return" {l}; that is, to thine own land, being now in captivity; or, "thou shalt rest" {m}; or "have rest"; so Kimchi interprets the last word; see Jer 30:10, and these words may very well be considered as the words of Christ, and as spoken by him, when he entered upon his ministry, who began it with calling the people of the Jews to repentance, and promising to give them rest; and all such who return to God by repentance, and come to Christ by faith, find spiritual rest for their souls now, and shall have an eternal rest hereafter, **Mt 4:17**:

and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight; not only their sins, but their self-righteousness, and dependence upon it; the rites and ceremonies of the old law abolished by Christ, together with the traditions of the elders, by which they made void the commandments of God; all which were abominations in the sight of the Lord, **Isa 1:13**,

then shalt thou not remove; from thine own land again when restored, or further off, into more distant countries, for they were now in captivity; or rather the words may be rendered, not as a promise, but as a continuation of what is before said,

and not move to and fro {n}; or be unstable and wavering, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, and precept of men; but be established in the faith of the Gospel, and steadfast and immovable in every good work. The Targum is:

"if thou wilt return, O Israel, to my worship, saith the Lord, thy return shall be received before thy decree is sealed; and if thou wilt take away thine abominations from before me, thou shalt not be moved;"

or wander about.

{l} bwvt yla hwhy Man larvy bwvt Ma "si reverteris ad me, O Israel, dicit Jehovah, reverteris", Gataker, {m} bwvt "quiescas", Vatablus; "quiesce apud me", Calvin. {n} dwnt alw "et non vagaberis", Gatatker; "et non instabilis fueris", Cocceius,

Jeremiah 4:2

Ver. 2. And thou shalt swear, the Lord liveth,.... Or by the living Lord, by him and him only; not by the creatures, but by the God of truth. This is sometimes put for the whole worship and service of God, **De 6:13** and for a confession of Christ, and profession of faith in him, Isa 45:23, compared with Ro 14:11 and which ought to be done,

in truth, in righteousness, and in judgment; in sincerity, integrity, and uprightness of soul; in spirit and in, truth; in righteousness and true holiness:

and the nations shall bless themselves in him, not in Israel, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it; but in the Lord, even in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed with all spiritual blessings; with which being blessed, they call and count themselves happy, being pardoned through the blood of Christ, justified by his righteousness, and having peace, life, and salvation by him, Ge 22:18:

and in him shall they glory; not in themselves, nor in any creature, or creature enjoyment; but in the Lord, and in what he is to them, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; in whom all the seed of Israel, being justified, glory; see **1Co 1:30**. The sense of the words seems to be, that upon the Gospel being preached by Christ and his apostles to the Israelites, and some of them being converted, and their abominations put away, and they cleaving to the Lord, and to his worship; the Gentiles should have the Gospel sent to them, and receive it, and place all their blessedness in Christ, and glory in him.

Jeremiah 4:3

Ver. 3. For thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem,.... The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who were at the time of this prophecy in their own land; and so are distinguished from Israel the ten tribes, who were in captivity; unless the same persons should be meant, who were called by these several names, the people of the Jews; and it was in Judea that our Lord appeared in the flesh, and to the inhabitants thereof he ministered, he was the minister of the circumcision; and so to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, whom he called to repentance, and would have gathered, Mt 23:37:

break up your fallow ground; this is ground that lies untilled, not ploughed, nor sown, on which nothing grows but the produce of nature, as weeds, thorns, briers, &c. is common to men and beasts, and is trodden upon, and, so is hard and unsusceptible of seed; which, if it accidentally falls upon it, makes no impression on it, and is not received by it; and the breaking of it up is by the plough. The "fallow ground" fitly represents the hearts of unregenerate men, which are unopened to the word, and unbroken by it; nor have they the seed of divine grace sown in them; but are destitute of faith, hope, love, fear, and the like; there is nothing grows there but the weeds of sin and corruption; and are like a common beaten road; are the common track of sin, where lusts pass to and fro, and dwell; and so are hardened and obdurate, as hard as a stone, yea, harder than the nether millstone; and who, though they may occasionally be under the word, it makes no impression on them; it has no place in them, but is like the seed that falls by the wayside, Mt 13:4, unless divine power attends it; for the Gospel is the plough, and ministers are the ploughmen; but it is the Lord alone that makes it effectual to the breaking up the fallow ground of men's hearts, **Lu 9:62**, but when the Lord puts his hand to the plough it enters within, and opens the heart; it is quick, powerful, and sharp; it cuts deep, and makes long and large furrows, even strong convictions of sin; it throws a man's inside outward, as the plough does the earth; and lays all the wicked of his heart open to him; and roots up the pride, the vanity, and boasting of the creature, and other lusts; and so makes way for the seed of divine grace to be sown there:

and sow not among thorns; or, "that ye may not sow among thorns" {o}; for, unless the fallow ground is broken up, it will be no other than sowing among thorns; and unless the hearts of men are opened by the power and grace of God, they will not attend to the things that are spoken; preaching and eating the word will be like sowing among thorns; cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, the pleasures of life, and the lusts thereof, which are comparable to thorns, because pricking, perplexing, and distressing, and because vain and unprofitable, choke the word, and make it unfruitful; see Mt 13:7, now this exhortation in the text does not suppose power in man to break up and open his heart; but to show his want of renewing grace; the necessity of it; and the danger he is in without it; and to awaken in him a concern for it; see Eze 18:31. The words may be applied to backsliding professors, since backsliding Israel and Judah are the persons addressed; and this may be done with great propriety and pertinence to the simile; for fallow ground is that which has been broke up and sown, and laid fallow. It is usual to till and sow two years, and lay fallow a third: and backsliding Christians look very much like fallow ground; so faithless, so lukewarm, and indifferent; so inattentive to the word, and unconcerned under it; so barren and unfruitful, as if they had never had any faith, or love, or good work in them; so that they need to be renewed in the spirit of their minds; to have a new face of things put upon them: and to have a clean heart, and a right spirit, created in them. The Targum is,

"make to yourselves good works, and seek not salvation in sins."

{o} werzt law "ut non seratis".

Jeremiah 4:4

Ver. 4. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord,.... Or, "be ye circumcised", as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it. This is to be understood of the circumcision of the heart, as Kimchi observes; and as appears from the following words:

and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; this is the true spiritual circumcision; and they that are possessed of it are the circumcision, the only truly circumcised persons; and they are such who have been pricked to the heart, and thoroughly convinced of sin; who have had the hardness of their hearts removed, and the impurity of it laid open to them; which they have beheld with shame and loathing, and have felt an inward pain on account of it; and who have been enabled to deny themselves, to renounce their own righteousness, and put off the body of the sins of the flesh: and though men are exhorted to do this themselves, yet elsewhere the Lord promises to do it for them, De 30:6, and indeed it is purely his own work; or otherwise it could not he called, as it is, "circumcision without hands", and "whose praise is not of man, but of God", **Col 2:11**, and the reason of this exhortation, as before, is to convince those Jews, who were circumcised in the flesh, and rested and gloried in that, that their hearts were not circumcised, and that there was a necessity of it, and they in danger for want of it; as follows:

lest my fury come forth like fire; to which the wrath of God is sometimes compared, **Na 1:6** and is sometimes signified by a furnace and lake of fire, even his eternal wrath and vengeance:

and burn that none can quench it; such is the fire of divine wrath; it is unquenchable; it is everlasting, **Mr 9:43**:

because of the evil of your doings; which are so provoking to the eyes of his glory; the sins of men are the fuel to the fire of his wrath, and cause it to burn to the lowest hell, without the least degree of mercy. The Targum is,

"turn to the worship of the Lord, and take away the wickedness of your hearts, lest my fury burn as fire, and consume without mercy, because of the evil of your doings."

Jeremiah 4:5

Ver. 5. Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem, and say,.... Exhortations to repentance being without effect in general, though they might have an influence on some few particular persons, the Lord directs the prophet to lay before the people a view of their destruction as near at hand; who calls upon some persons as a sort of heralds, to publish and declare in the land of Judea, and in Jerusalem the metropolis of it, what follows:

blow ye the trumpet in the land; as an alarm of an approaching enemy, and of an invasion by him, and of danger from him; and this was to be done, not in order to gather together, and put themselves in a posture of defence, to meet the enemy, and give him battle; but to get together, that were in the fields, and in country villages, and hide themselves from him:

cry, gather together, and say; or cry with a full mouth, with a loud voice, that all might hear; which shows imminent danger:

assemble yourselves and let us go into the defenced cities; such as Jerusalem, and others, where they might think themselves safe and secure; see Mt 24:16.

Jeremiah 4:6

Ver. 6. Set up the standard toward Zion,.... Not on the tower of Zion, as Kimchi interprets it; but on some high place, pointing to Zion, and directing the country people to flee thither for safety; for the setting up of the standard here is not for enlisting of soldiers in order to fight, but as a sign of danger, and a direction where to flee from it:

retire; gather yourselves together in order to flee, as the word {p} is rendered in Isa 10:31, though some render it, "be ye strengthened" {q}; take heart, and play the man; but this does not seem so agreeable to the context:

stay not; or, "stand not"; stand not in the place ye are in, but move from it in all haste, because of present danger:

for I will bring evil from the north; from Babylon, as Kimchi interprets it; which lay north to the land of Israel; and so designs the captivity Judah should be brought into there:

and a great destruction or, "breach" {r}; which the Babylonians should make on the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem.

{p} wzyeh "congregate vos, [sub.] ad fugiendum", Vatablus; "confirmate vos [ad fugiendum]", Piscator. {q} "Confortamini", V. L. "corroboramiui", Castalio; "agite viriliter", Munster. {r} rbv "contritionem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "confractionem", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 4:7

Ver. 7. The lion is come up from his thicket,.... Meaning Nebuchadnezzar {s}, from Babylon, who is compared to a lion for his strength, fierceness, and cruelty; see Jer 50:17 so the Roman emperor is called a lion, **2Ti 4:17**, agreeably to this the Targum paraphrases it,

"a king is gone from his fortress;"

or tower; and the Syriac version,

"a certain most powerful king is about to go up as a lion out of his wood:"

and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he who had conquered and destroyed other nations not a few, and these mighty and strong; and therefore the Jews could not expect but to be destroyed by him. This tyrant was a type of antichrist, whose name is Apollyon, a destroyer of the nations of the earth, **Re 9:11**

he is gone forth from his place, to make thy land desolate; from Babylon, where his royal palace was, in order to lay waste the land of Judea; and he is represented as being come out, and on the road with this view, to strike the inhabitants of Judea with the greater terror, and to hasten their flight, their destruction being determined and certain:

and thy cities shall be laid waste without an inhabitant; they shall become so utterly desolate, that there should be none dwelling in them, partly by reason of the multitudes of the slain, and partly by reason of multitudes that should flee; and should be laid waste to such a degree, that they should be covered with grass growing upon them; which is the signification of the word {t} here used, according to R. Joseph Kimchi.

{s} So T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 11. 1. & Sanhedrin. fol 94. 2. {t} hnyut "gramine succrescente obducantur quidam" in Gataker.

Jeremiah 4:8

Ver. 8. For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl,.... That is, because of this destruction threatened, which was so near at hand, and so sure and certain:

for the fierce anger of the Lord is not turned back from us. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it "from you" and some render it "from it" {u}; from his purpose and design to destroy the Jews. Jarchi interprets this of Josiah, and his times, who, though he turned to the Lord with all his heart, yet the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his wrath and anger against Judah, 2Ki 23:25.

{u} wnmm "ab illo", i.e. "ab illo proposito", Cocceius; "ab eo", Montanus.

Jeremiah 4:9

Ver. 9. And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the Lord,.... When Nebuchadnezzar should be come up from Babylon into the land of Judea, and lay waste the cities thereof, and besiege Jerusalem:

that the heart of the king shall perish; meaning Zedekiah king of Judah, who should be in the utmost fright and consternation, not knowing what to do, being devoid both of wisdom and courage; see Jer 39:4:

and the heart of the princes; who being seized with the same panic, and at their wits' end, would not be able to give any advice and counsel to the king; so that the people would have no help from the king and his nobles, in whom they put their confidence:

and the priests shall be astonished; which Kimchi interprets of the priests of the high places, the idolatrous priests, whose service would now cease, and whose idols would not save them:

and the prophets shall wonder; which he also interprets of the false prophets; as does the Targum; who prophesied peace, and now they shall see it was a lie they prophesied, since sudden destruction now comes upon them.

Jeremiah 4:10

Ver. 10. Then said I, ah, Lord God!.... Expressing great sorrow and concern: this "ah" is by way of lamentation. The Targum interprets it as a petition,

"and I said, receive my prayer, O Lord God:"

surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem: what the false prophets did, that God is said to do, because he suffered them to deceive the people; see 1Ki 22:20. The Targum ascribes the deception to the false prophets, and not to God, "surely behold the false prophets deceive this people, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem;"

or this may be ironically said, because the false prophets pretended to speak in the name of the Lord; wherefore Jeremiah says, "surely thou hast greatly deceived", &c. "saying, ye shall have peace"; as the false prophets did, **Jer 6:14**:

whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul; takes away the life, many are slain by it; so the Targum,

"and now behold the sword killeth among the people;"

great slaughter is made by it. L'Empereur {w} observes that the word here used signifies, in the Arabic language, to educate or bring up; and then the sense is,

"ah, Lord, thou hast brought up this people with great tenderness, and promised them all manner of happiness; but now thou thunderest out threatenings of calamities of all sorts, and death itself; and assigned a place for the sword to enter into their very souls;"

so the Arabic word used in the version of Ac 22:2.

{w} Not. ad Mosis Kimchi, odoiporia, p. 186.

Jeremiah 4:11

Ver. 11. At that time shall it be said to this people, and to Jerusalem,.... The inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem, the people of the Jews; or "concerning" {x} them, as Jarchi interprets it:

a dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of my people. The Targum is,

"as the south wind upon the heads of floods of water in the wilderness, so is the way of the congregation of my people;"

but rather the north wind is designed, since that is a dry one, and the south wind a moist one; and the rather, since this wind intends Nebuchadnezzar and his army, which should come from Babylon, from the north. Some render it, "a neat clean wind" {y}; which strips the trees, lays bare rocks and mountains, carries away the earth and dust before it, and makes the stones look white and clean: it denotes a very strong, rushing, stormy, and boisterous wind. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "a burning one"; and it represents the force and power with which the enemy should come, without any opposition or resistance to him; for a wind on high places, hills, and mountains, and which comes through deserts and wildernesses, has nothing to hinder it, as Kimchi observes; whereas, when it blows in habitable places, there are houses, walls, hedges, and fences, which resist it; and it is observed, that in the way from Babylon to Judea, which the prophet calls "the daughter of my people", were many desert places. The Septuagint version is, "the spirit of error in the desert, the way of the daughter of my people"; which the Syriac and Arabic versions seem to follow; the former rendering it, "as the wind that wanders through the paths of the desert, so is the way of the daughter of my people"; and the latter thus, "there is a spirit of error in the desert, in the way of the daughter of my people";

not to purity, nor to holiness, as it with the Septuagint renders the next clause: "not to fan, nor to cleanse"; of which use a more moderate wind is in winnowing and cleansing the corn from chaff, and light and useless grain.

{x} hzh Mel "de hoc populo", Calvin, Vatablus. {y} xu xwr "ventus nitidus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 4:12

Ver. 12. Even a full wind from those places shall come unto me,.... That is, a strong one, very vehement; or, "a wind which is fuller than these", as the Syriac version renders it; which is stronger than those winds which are fit for fanning and winnowing the chaff from the wheat. Jarchi interprets it, a wind full of those punishments which God had threatened, and determined to bring upon this people, and would not turn from, nor repent of: and the phrase "shall come unto me" regards not the prophet, nor the people of the Jews, whom he represented, but the Lord himself; and shows that the wind is at his command, and when he calls, it comes unto him, and obeys his will, Ps 148:8 and that all afflictions, judgments, and punishments for sin, are from him:

now also will l give sentence against them; not the prophet, but the Lord, who would now call them to his bar, try their cause, reprove them for their sins, pronounce sentence against them, and execute it. The Targum is,

"because they have wandered after the false prophets, who prophesied to them in a spirit of falsehood; therefore the armies of the people, higher than those, as the wind shall come against them; even now by my word I will bring them, and pronounce the vengeance of my judgments on them."

Jeremiah 4:13

Ver. 13. Behold, he shall come up as clouds,.... Meaning the lion, Nebuchadnezzar, **Jer 4:7**,

"the king with his army (as the Targum paraphrases it); he shall come up against them as a cloud that ascendeth and covers the earth."

"come up against them as a cloud that ascendeth and covers the earth."

The metaphor denotes the swiftness of his coming, and the multitudes he should come with, and that darkness and distress he should bring with him upon the people of the Jews:

and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind; for swiftness, power, and violence: chariots for war are intended; see **Isa 5:28**:

his horses are swifter than eagles: the swiftest of birds. The same thing is designed as by the other metaphors; the swiftness and suddenness of the Jews' destruction:

woe unto us, for we are spoiled; their destruction was inevitable, there was no escaping it; and therefore their case was woeful and miserable.

Jeremiah 4:14

Ver. 14. O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness,.... These are the words of the prophet, or of God by the prophet, showing the cause of all their ruin and destruction, the wickedness of their hearts; and they are expressed in such form and language, as to be accommodated to the case of any unregenerate sinner: every man's heart is wicked, desperately wicked, even wickedness itself; everything in it is wicked; the thoughts, and the imagination of the thoughts of the heart, the mind, the understanding, the will, the conscience, and the affections; and everything that is wicked is in that: it is the womb in which all sin is conceived; the shop and forge in which it is wrought; it is the habitation of every unclean lust; the seeds and principles of all sin are in it; it is the fountain spring and source of all evil; of all evil thoughts, words, and actions; all come out of it, and have their rise in it: and this wickedness is of a defiling nature, and has left a pollution on it; and what comes out of it defiles the man, that he stands in need of washing; which cannot be done to purpose by ceremonial ablutions and sacrifices, by moral acts of righteousness, by humiliation and tears, nor by submission to Gospel ordinances; nor indeed is this to be done by man at all, any other way than by faith dealing with the blood of Christ, by which only the heart is purified: for this is God's work, as appears from his promises to cleanse his people from all sins; from their prayers to him, to create in them clean hearts, to wash them thoroughly from their iniquity, and cleanse them from their sin; from the sanctifying grace of the Spirit, and the washing of regeneration ascribed to him; and from the end and efficacy of the bloodshed of Christ, to cleanse from sin, and purge the conscience from dead works; and the design of such exhortations as these is to convince men of the wickedness and pollution of their hearts, of the necessity of being washed from it, and of their own inability to do it of themselves; and to lead them to the fountain of Christ's blood, to wash in for sin and for uncleanness:

that thou mayest be saved; not only with a temporal salvation, which may be here primarily meant; but with a spiritual and eternal one; for without purification of the heart there is no salvation: this is the meetness for the undefiled inheritance; without the washing of regeneration, there is no seeing nor entering into the kingdom of God; and unless we are washed by Christ, and in his blood, we can have no part nor portion with him in the heavenly glory; none shall ascend the holy hill, or dwell in the holy place, but such who have clean hands, and a pure heart; without this there is no seeing of God, nor having communion with him; this is the way in which he saves men, **Tit 3:5**:

how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? or, "wilt thou suffer them to lodge within thee?" {z} if the question is of right, the answer is, they ought not to lodge one night, one hour, one moment; but if it is of fact, the answer is, they will have a place in the heart as long as we are in this tabernacle; but the words are spoken by way of complaint and reproof: the thoughts of men's hearts are vain, are taken up about vain and foolish things; and these not only pass to and fro, but have a lodging in the heart; and particularly vain are the thoughts of those who think themselves pure, and that their hearts are good, and trust in them; or that they can wash themselves from their wickedness; and that an outward reformation of life and manners is sufficient; and who think they can be saved without the washing of regeneration, and the blood of Christ. The Targum is,

"cleanse thine heart from doing evil, O Jerusalem, that ye may be saved; how long shall they endure and be stable who do violence, which is in the midst of thee?"

{z} Nylt ytm de "quousque morari sines", Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 4:15

Ver. 15. For a voice declareth from Dan,.... The coming of the enemy, as Kimchi explains it, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Chaldeans; a messenger was come from Dan, which was on the border of the land of Israel to the north, on which side Babylon lay, and from whence the evil was to come predicted; who declared the enemy was approaching, just entering the land; not that this was now the case in fact, but this is represented in a prophetic manner, as what would be, in order to arouse and awaken the Jews to a sense of their sin and danger; see Jer 8:10

and publisheth affliction from Mount Ephraim: which lay on the border of the tribe of Benjamin, and nearer to Jerusalem; and this publication represents the enemy as advancing nearer, and being just at hand. The word for "affliction" signifies "iniquity" {a}; and it denotes, that the affliction spoken of, which is the destruction of the Jews, and their captivity in Babylon, were occasioned by their sins. Some think that Dan and Ephraim are mentioned, because of the calves that were worshipped in Dan, and in Bethel, which was in the tribe of Ephraim. The Targum favours this, which paraphrases the words thus,

"for the voice of the prophets that prophesied against them that go into captivity, because they worshipped the calf, which is at Dan; and they that bring evil tidings, shall come upon them, because they served the image which Micah set up in the mount of the house of Ephraim;"

and the Vulgate Latin version is,

"the voice of him that declares from Dan, and that makes known the idol from Mount Ephraim."

{a} Nwa "iniquitatem", Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus, Schimdt; "vanitatem", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius.

Jeremiah 4:16

Ver. 16. Make ye mention to the nations,.... This, according to Kimchi, is the sum and substance of the voice from Dan. It seems to be a summons to the nations to gather together to join the king of Babylon in his enterprise against Jerusalem; see 2Ki 24:2:

publish against Jerusalem; what follows:

that watchers come from afar country; from Babylon, which is said to be a far country, Isa 39:3, these are the soldiers of the king of Babylon; they are called Notzerim; which word agrees with the latter part of Nebuchadnezzar's name; to which some {b} think there is some reference, showing that his army is meant. It should be rendered "besiegers", as it is by some {c}; for these were not Nebuchadnezzar's bodyguard, but his whole army, who were come up to besiege Jerusalem; and they are compared to watchers and keepers of a field in the next verse, where another word is used. The Targum is,

"the army of a rapacious people, like the grape gatherers, come from a far country:"

and give out their voice against the cities of Judah; threaten the ruin of them; blow the trumpet, the alarm of war; give the orders to besiege; and, being sure of victory, triumph before the attack is made.

{b} R. Joseph Kimchi, R. Jonah, and Ben Melech, but disapproved of by Abarbinel. {c} Myrun "obsessores", Calvin, Buxtorf; a rwu, vel rru, "obsedit"; so Jarchi.

Jeremiah 4:17

Ver. 17. As keepers of a field, are they against her round about,.... As those that are set to watch a field, in which are fruit and corn of any sort, that thieves and robbers, and wild beasts, may not enter to waste and destroy, and are placed on all sides for that purpose; so the Chaldeans were round about Jerusalem, that none could make their escape out of it; see 2Ki 25:4:

because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the Lord; it was not without reason that the Lord suffered the Chaldeans to come against Jerusalem, besiege, and take it; the inhabitants of it had rebelled against him, their King and their God; and therefore he delivers them up into the hands of another lord, and a cruel one; they had provoked him to anger with their sins, and caused him to stir up his wrath against them in this way: rebellion against a prince, or against a parent, is a provoking sin; see 1Sa 15:23.

Jeremiah 4:18

Ver. 18. Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee,.... The way in which they walked, which was an evil one; and the actions which they committed; their idolatries, backslidings, and rebellions, before spoken of in this and the preceding chapter, were the cause of this siege, and those calamities coming upon them; they had none to blame but themselves; it was their own sinful ways and works which brought this ruin and destruction on them:

this is thy wickedness; the fruit of thy wickedness; or, "this thy calamity"; that is, is owing to these things; so the word is rendered in Ps 141:5:

because it is bitter; not sin, as in **Jer 2:19**, but the punishment of it; the calamity before mentioned; which was hard and heavy, and grievous to be borne, and yet very just; it was by way of retaliation; "they had bitterly provoked the Lord", as the word may be rendered in the preceding verse; and now he sends them a bitter calamity, and a heavy judgment:

because it reacheth unto thine heart; into the midst of them, and utterly destroyed them. The two last clauses may be rendered, "though it is bitter, though it reacheth unto thine heart" {d}; though it is such a sore distress, and such an utter destruction, yet it was to be ascribed to nothing else but their own sins and transgressions.

{d} egn yk rm yk "quamvis amarum sit, quamvis pertigerit", Calvin.

Jeremiah 4:19

Ver. 19. My bowels, my bowels,.... These are either the words of the people, unto whose heart the calamity reached, as in the preceding verse; or rather of the prophet, who either, from a sympathizing heart, expresses himself in this manner; or puts on an appearance of mourning and distress, in order to awaken his people to a sense of their condition. The repetition of the word is after the manner of persons in pain and uneasiness, as, "my head, my head", **2Ki 4:19**:

I am pained at my very heart; as a woman in labour. In the Hebrew text it is, "as the walls of my heart" {e}; meaning either his bowels, as before; or the "praecordia", the parts about the heart, which are as walls unto it; his grief had reached these walls, and was penetrating through them to his heart, and there was danger of breaking that:

my heart makes a noise in me; palpitates, beats and throbs, being filled with fears and dread, with sorrow and concern, at what was coming on; it represents an aching heart, all in disorder and confusion:

I cannot hold my peace; or be silent; must speak, and vent grief:

because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war; Kimchi observes, he does not say "my ears", but "my soul"; for as yet he had not heard with his ears the sound of the trumpet; for the enemy was not yet come, but his soul heard by prophecy: here is a Keri and a Cetib, a reading and a writing; it is written ytemv, "I have heard"; it is read temv, "thou hast heard", which is followed by the Targum: the sense is the same, it is the hearing of the soul. The prophet, by these expressions, represents the destruction as very near, very certain, and very distressing. The trumpet was sounded on different accounts, as Isidore {f} observes; sometimes to begin a battle; sometimes to pursue those that fled; and sometimes for a retreat.

{e} ybl twryq "parietes cordis mei", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius. {f} Orignum l. 18. c. 4.

Jeremiah 4:20

Ver. 20. Destruction upon destruction is cried;.... Or, "breach upon breach" {g}; as soon as one affliction is over, another comes on; and upon the news of one calamity, tidings are brought of another, as in Job's case: it signifies, that distress and troubles would come thick and fast, and that there would be no end of them, until there was an utter destruction, as this phrase signifies, and the following words show. Kimchi interprets it of the destruction of the ten tribes which came first, and of the destruction of Judah that came now.

For the whole land is spoiled, or "wasted" {h}; that is, the land of Judea:

suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment: meaning either the armies of his people, which dwelt in tents, and were destroyed at once; or the cities, towns, and habitations of his countrymen, which he compares to tents, as being easily beat down or overthrown; and so the Targum interprets it of cities; and the prophet seems to intimate that this destruction would reach to Anathoth, where his tent; cottage, and curtains were. So sudden destruction some times comes, when men are crying Peace, peace, 1Th 5:3.

{g} rbv le rbv "contritio super contritionem", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius. {h} hddv "vastata", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 4:21

Ver. 21. How long shall I see the standard,.... "Ensign" or "banner" displayed; either by the watchmen placed on high hills or towers, who, when they see the enemy approaching, lift up their ensign or banner, and blow with their trumpets, to give the people warning and notice of it, and to call them to battle, and that they might prepare for the same, as Kimchi observes; or else by the Chaldean army, which came with colours flying, trumpets blowing, and set in array for battle, which was very terrible, as an army with banners is, **So 6:4**:

and hear the sound of the trumpet? either of the watchmen giving notice of danger, and summoning to battle, or of the enemy preparing to attack; see 1Co 14:8.

Jeremiah 4:22

Ver. 22. For my people is foolish,.... This, as Kimchi says, is the answer of the Lord to the prophet; for not the prophet says this, but the Lord to the prophet, giving a reason why this sore destruction came upon the people of the Jews, and so reconciling his mind to the providence; seeing those whom he had chosen to be his people, above all people upon the face of the earth, and who professed themselves to be his people, had acted such a foolish part as they had done, in backsliding from him, revolting from his ways and worship, rebelling against him, and in committing such gross idolatries as they had been guilty of. So a people may be a professing people, and yet a foolish one; there are foolish professors of religion; such who take up a profession foolishly, without an experience of the grace of God; without any true faith in Christ; without having on the wedding garment of his righteousness; without laying it upon a good foundation; and without considering the cost and charge of a profession, and the difficulties and troubles attending it; and such are they who foolishly trust in it, when they have taken it up; and hold it foolishly, very remissly, and in a wavering manner; and who walk not agreeably to it, and at last foolishly drop it:

they have not known me; men may be the people of God by profession, and yet not know him; not know him so as to glorify him; not know him as their God, truly and experimentally; not know him in Christ, and have communion with him through him; not know the Lord Christ himself, the worth, glory, and excellency of him; their need of him; of his blood to cleanse them from sin; of his righteousness to justify them; of his sacrifice to atone for them; and of his fulness to supply their need; nor know the way of life, peace, and salvation by him, or at most only notionally, not experimentally; whereas the only true wisdom is to know Christ, and God in him; this is real and solid knowledge; it is science truly so called; it is delightful and satisfactory; it is useful and profitable, and is what issues in eternal life; and let men know what they will else, if they know not the Lord, they are "sottish children"; they are children indeed in understanding; and though they may be the children of God by profession, they are not the true and genuine children of God, since they know neither the Father nor the Son:

and they have no understanding; though they are not without a natural understanding, or an understanding of things natural and civil, yet they have no spiritual understanding, or an understanding of spiritual things; and at best only in a speculative, and not in an experimental way and manner:

they are wise to do evil; cunning inventors of evil things, crafty schemers that way, may be full of all wicked subtlety, and expert at over reaching and defrauding their brethren; when professors of religion especially ought to be wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil, Ro 16:19:

but to do good they have no knowledge; to do good, or to do a good thing well, is to do it according to the revealed will of God, from a principle of love to him, in the exercise of faith upon him, in the name and strength of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God; to do good in this sense, and in such a way and manner, carnal men and carnal professors have no knowledge, no practical knowledge; they have no inclination to it, but the reverse; nor do they, nor can they, perform it: if they had a knowledge how to do it, or a power to perform it, there would have been, in one age or another, some, more or fewer, that would have done it; but there is none of all Adam's descendants that does good, no, not one, **Ro 3:9**, the grace of God is absolutely necessary to the right doing of a good work, and the knowledge of it.

Jeremiah 4:23

Ver. 23. I beheld the earth,.... The land of Judea, not the whole world; and this the prophet says, either in spirit, as Jerom; or in prophecy, as Kimchi;

or in a visionary way; for these are not the words of God continued, as Cocceius, but of the prophet; who, by a prophetic spirit, describes the dreadful destruction of the Jewish nation, as follows:

and, lo, it was without form, and void; as the first earth or chaos was, before it was brought into form and order; the same words, "tohu" and "bohu", are used here, as in **Ge 1:2**, the land of Judea now was, in the prophet's view of it, like the first earth, when darkness covered it; no grass sprung out of it, not a tree to be seen in it, and neither man nor beast as yet upon it, but all an undigested mass, and in the utmost wild disorder and confusion; and this may denote not only the natural, but the political, and ecclesiastical, disorder of the Jewish nation and state:

and the heavens, and they had no light; that were over the land of Judea;

"their lights did not shine,"

as the Targum paraphrases it; that is, the sun, moon, and stars, which were darkened by the smoke of the burning of Jerusalem; or which withdrew their light, as blushing at, and being ashamed of, the iniquities of his people, and who were unworthy of enjoying the light of them; and which this phrase may denote.

Jeremiah 4:24

Ver. 24. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled,.... At the presence of God, at the tokens of his displeasure, and at his awful vengeance in the destruction of the Jews, as they are sometimes said to do, Ps 68:8:

and all the hills moved lightly; so Kimchi's father says the word used has the signification of lightness; though Jarchi, from Menachem, explains it, they were plucked up, and thrown out of their place; and some render it, were pulled down and destroyed, so the Targum. Mountains and hills are most stable, and not easily moved, wherefore this is said, to aggravate the desolation and destruction.

Jeremiah 4:25

Ver. 25. And I beheld, and, lo, there was no man,.... No people dwelling in it, as the Targum; the land was without inhabitants, they were either killed with the sword, or taken and carried captive into Babylon, or fled into Egypt and other countries:

and all the birds of the heavens were fled; at the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war; at the blackness of the heavens, filled with smoke; at the barrenness of the earth, there being no seed sown; and the earth, as at the first creation, having no herb, nor trees bearing fruit, and so no food for birds; and therefore they went elsewhere, both wild and tame.

Jeremiah 4:26

Ver. 26. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness,.... Or, "I beheld, and, lo, Carmel was a wilderness"; which was a particular part of the land of Israel, and was very fertile, and abounded in pastures and fruit trees, and yet this, as the rest, became desolate as a wilderness; see Isa 32:15 though it may be put for the whole land, which was very fruitful; and so the Targum,

"I saw, and, lo, the land of Israel, which was planted as Carmel, was turned to be as a wilderness:"

and all the cities thereof; not of Carmel only, but of the whole land:

were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger; for though this was done by the Chaldeans, yet it was by the will and appointment of God, and as a token of his fierce anger against the people of the Jews, for their sins and transgressions. Jarchi cites a Midrash Agadah, or an allegorical exposition of this place, which interprets the "mountains", the Jewish fathers; the "hills", the mothers, and their merits; "no man", the worthiness of Moses, who was meeker than any man; and "Carmel", Elijah; without any manner of foundation.

Jeremiah 4:27

Ver. 27. For thus hath the Lord said,.... What follows is an explanation and confirmation of the above vision the prophet had:

the whole land shall be desolate; as he had seen; it should not be manured, ploughed, and sown, or bring forth fruit; and should be without inhabitants, at least have very few:

yet I will not make a full end; there should be some inhabitants, who, with those that should hereafter return from captivity, would repeople it, rebuild the temple, and restore it to its pristine form and order, both as to things natural, civil, and ecclesiastical; but though a full end of them, as a church and people, was not to be made now by the Chaldeans, yet it would be; as it has been done by the Romans, in the times of Vespasian and Hadrian.

Jeremiah 4:28

Ver. 28. For this shall the earth mourn,.... That is, for the full end that will be made hereafter, though not now; the earth may be said to mourn when the inhabitants of it do; or when it is destroyed, and is become desolate, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, explain it; when it is uncultivated and uninhabited:

and the heavens above be black; with thick clouds, and storms, and tempests; in allusion to mourners, that are clothed with black: these figures, of the earth's mourning, and the heavens being clothed in black, denote the horribleness of that dispensation, when there would be an utter destruction of the Jewish nation, church, and polity, of which Daniel prophesies, **Da 9:27**:

because I have spoken it; in my word, as the Targum; in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, by Moses and the prophets:

I have purposed it; or I have thought of it, in my counsel, as the Targum; it was a thing deliberately devised and determined, and therefore can never be frustrated, or made void:

and will not repent; of what was purposed and predicted:

neither will I turn back from it; revoke, or retract it; it shall surely come to pass: the Jews, upon their return from the Babylonish captivity, and afterwards, might flatter themselves that a full end would not be made of them, because it was not then done; and therefore these several strong expressions are used, to confirm and assure them of it; for the word of God cannot fail, his counsel shall stand; he is not a man, that he should lie or repent; he will do all his pleasure.

Jeremiah 4:29

Ver. 29. The whole city shall flee,.... Or, "every city"; for not Jerusalem only is meant, but every city, or the inhabitants of every city; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"all the inhabitants of the land,"

who would be put into a panic, and flee: "for" or

at the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; of which the army of the enemy would greatly consist: it intimates that the inhabitants of Judea would not stand a battle; but at hearing the sound of the trampling of the horses, and the clattering of the bows and arrows, that the men upon them had, they would flee at once:

they shall go into the thickets, and climb upon the rocks; that is, either the horsemen and bowmen, who would pursue the inhabitants into those places: or rather the inhabitants themselves, who would flee thither to hide themselves from their enemies; namely, get into woods and forests, and among the thick trees, and cover themselves; and upon the highest mountains and rocks, and into the holes and caverns of them, and secure themselves from the enemy; see Mt 24:16, the word for "thickets" signifies "clouds" {i}; and Kimchi interprets it of places as high as the clouds, as the tops of some mountains are, so that going up to them is like entering into the clouds; and which are sometimes covered with thick trees, and look like clouds; but the Targum explains it of woods or forests:

every city shall be forsaken; of its inhabitants:

and not a man dwell therein; as the prophet had seen in his vision, **Jer 4:25**, this was to be when a full end was made, not by the Babylonians, but by the Romans.

{i} Mybeb "in nubes", Munster, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 4:30

Ver. 30. And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do?.... Or, "O thou spoiled" {k}, wasted, and undone creature, how wilt thou help thyself? by what means dost thou think thou canst be delivered? it suggests that her ruin was inevitable; that she could not be recovered from it by herself, or any other:

though thou clothest thyself with crimson; and so look like some rich and noble person; hoping thereby to find mercy, and to have quarter given and kindness shown:

though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold; as a person of high and princely dignity: or rather all this is to be understood of the manner of harlots, who dress rich and grand, in order to allure men; since it follows,

though thou rendest thy face with painting; or, eyes {l}; which painting dilates as Jezebel did, 2Ki 9:30,

in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; so as to be loved and admired: far from it:

thy lovers will despise thee; as an old harlot is despised by her former gallants, notwithstanding all her dressing and painting; yea, their love is often turned into hatred and abhorrence, as would be the case here,

they will seek thy life; to take it away; so far would there be from being any ground of expectations of help and deliverance from them.

{k} dwdv ytaw "et tu vastata", Pagninus, Montanus "et tu, res vastata", Cocceius. {l} Kynye Kwpb yerqx "scindes in fuco oculos tuos", Montanus; "rumpes stibio oculos tuos", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 4:31

Ver. 31. For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail,.... So the distress of the Jews, at the time of their destruction, is compared to the sorrows of a woman in travail; and a word, that signifies that is used to express it, Mt 24:8:

and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child; whose time is more difficult, her pains sharper, her anguish greater, and, having less experience, the more impatient:

the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself; her unhappy condition, and miserable circumstances:

that spreadeth her hands; as persons in distress do, and particularly women in travail: saying,

woe is me now, for my soul is wearied because of murderers: these abounded: under the second temple, and was the reason, the Jews say: {m}, of the sanhedrim removing from their usual place in the temple; and why they ceased from the beheading of the red heifer {n}.

{m} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 8. 2. {n} Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 9.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 5

This chapter contains a further account of the destruction of the Jews by the Chaldeans, and the causes of it, the sins of the people, as want of justice and truth; being so corrupt, that a just and faithful man was not to be found among them; could there, the city would have been pardoned for his sake, **Jer 5:1**, their swearing falsely by the name of the Lord, **Jer 5:2**, their incorrigibleness by chastisements, which was the case not only of the lower, but higher rank of people, **Jer 5:3**, wherefore the enemy, who for his cruelty is compared to a lion, a wolf, and a leopard, is threatened to be let in among them, **Jer 5:6**, then other sins are mentioned as the cause of it, as idolatry and adultery, **Jer 5:7** hence the enemy has a commission to scale their walls, take away their battlements, though not to make a full end, the Lord disowning them for his, **Jer 5:10**, because of their perfidy against him, their belying of him, contradicting what he had said, and despising the word sent by his prophets, **Jer 5:11**, wherefore it is threatened, that his word like fire should devour them; and that a distant, mighty, and ancient nation, of a foreign speech, should invade them; who, like an open sepulchre, would devour them, and eat up the increase of their fields, vineyards, flocks, and herds, and impoverish their cities, yet not make a full end of them, **Jer 5:14**, and in just retaliation should they serve strangers in a foreign country, who had served strange gods in their own, **Jer 5:19** then a declaration is published, and an expostulation is made with them, who are represented as foolish, ignorant, and blind, that they would fear the Lord; which is pressed by arguments taken from the power of God, in restraining the sea, which had no effect upon them; and from the goodness of God, in giving the former and latter rain, and the appointed weeks of the harvest, which their sins turned away and withheld from them, **Jer 5:20**, and then other sins are mentioned as the cause of God's visiting them in a way of vengeance, as the defrauding of men in trade, and the oppression of the fatherless and the poor in judgment; and false prophesying, to the advantage of the priests, and the king of the people, **Jer 5:26**.

Ver. 1. Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem,.... These are the words of the Lord, not to the prophet only, but to any other, who thought fit to look into the reasons of the Lord's dealing in a way of judgment with the people of the Jews; these he would have go through the whole city of Jerusalem, every street of it, and that backwards and forwards, not once only, but over and over again:

and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof; where there is commonly the greatest concourse of people; here he would have them look out diligently, observe and take cognizance of the persons they should meet with in such places:

if ye can find a man; that is, as the Targum adds, whose works are good, and as it is afterwards explained; for as yet the city was not desolate, so as that there was no man dwelling in it, as it was foretold it should be, **Jer 4:25**. It is reported {o} of Diogenes, the Cynic philosopher, that he lighted up a candle in the daytime, and went through the streets with it; and, being asked the reason of it, said, I seek a man; that is, a man of virtue, honour, and honesty; by which he would be understood, that such were very rare: and so it follows,

if there be any that executeth judgment; in the public courts of judicature; or in private, between man and man:

that seeketh the truth; of doctrine and worship, that seeks to speak it, and maintain it; who is true to his word, and faithful to his promises; but was not one such to be found? were there not the Prophet Jeremiah, and Baruch, and some others? the answer of Kimchi's father is, that such were not to be found in the streets and broad places, where the direction is to seek, because such were hidden in their own houses for fear of wicked men; others think that the meaning is, that there were none to be found to make up the hedge, or stand in the gap for the land, and to intercede for them, as in Eze 22:30, and others are of opinion that the Lord speaks of men in public offices, as judges, priests, and prophets, who were grown so corrupt, as that a good man was not to be found among them: but it seems rather to design the body of the people, and the sense to be, that an upright faithful man was rare to be found; and that, could there be found but a few of that sort, the Lord would spare the city for their sake, as in the case of Sodom, Ge 18:32 and so it follows,

and I will pardon it; the city of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it; so the Targum, Septuagint, and Arabic versions render it, "them".

{o} Laert. Vit. Philosoph. l. 6. p. 350.

Jeremiah 5:2

Ver. 2. And though they say, the Lord liveth,.... It might be said, that there were multitudes that made mention of the name of the Lord, that professed it, and swore by it; which sometimes is put for the worship and service of God, De 10:20 and therefore it could not be so difficult a matter to find a man of integrity and uprightness among them; this is answered by allowing there were persons that did do so: but then it must be observed,

that surely they swear falsely; they abused the name of God, and were guilty of perjury: or the sense is, they were only nominal professors, hypocritical worshippers; in words professed to know God, but in works denied him; had a form of religion and godliness, but without the power of it.

Jeremiah 5:3

Ver. 3. O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth?.... That is, thou hast no regard to such deceitful men, such hypocritical worshippers and formal professors, but to true and upright men: God looks not at outward appearances, but to the heart; he can see through all masks and vizards, there is no deceiving of him; he desires truth in the inward parts, and his eyes are on that; he has respect to men that have the truth of grace, the root of the matter in them, oil in their vessels, together with the lamps of an outward profession: his eyes are on such as have a true inward sense of sin, a genuine repentance for it, and that make a sincere, hearty, and ingenuous confession of it; to this man he looks, that is poor, and of a contrite spirit; he is nigh to such, and dwells with them; when he has no regard to the sad countenances and disfigured faces of Pharisees; to the tears of a profane Esau, or to the external humiliations and concessions of a wicked Pharaoh: his eyes are upon the internal graces of his own Spirit; to love, that is in deed and in truth; to hope, that is without dissimulation, and to faith unfeigned: and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it, "thine eyes are unto faith"; or, respect faith {p}; the faith of Christians, as Jerom interprets it. Faith is a grace well pleasing to God, and everything that is done in faith is so, and nothing else; it is a grace that gives glory to God, and on which he has put much honour, in making it the receiver of all the blessings of grace, and connecting salvation with it; he has so great a regard for it, that whatever it asks it has of him. In short, the sense is, that the eyes of the Lord, of his love, favour, good will, and delight, are upon such whose hearts are upright towards him; who draw nigh to him in truth, worship him in spirit and in truth, and are hearty to his cause and interest, and faithful to his word and ordinances; who are lovers of truth; of Christ, who is the truth itself; and of his Gospel, the word of truth, and the doctrines of it; see 1Sa 16:7.

Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; that is, the Lord had courted and chastised them with afflictive providences; he had brought his judgments upon them, and had smitten them with the sword, or famine, or pestilence, or some such sore calamity, and yet it had not brought them to a sense of their sin, and to a godly sorrow for it:

thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; God had by his judgments consumed or swept away many of them, yet the rest did not take warning thereby, but went on in their sins; or they were brought near to consumption, as Kimchi interprets it; nevertheless remained obstinate and incorrigible, refused to receive any correction or instruction by such providences:

they have made their faces harder than a rock; becoming more impudent in sinning, not blushing at, or being ashamed for it, and unmoved by judgments and chastising providence:

they have refused to return; to the Lord, and to his worship, from which they revolted; or by repentance, and unto faith and truth, from which they had swerved.

{p} hnwmal awlh Kynye "oculi tui respiciunt fidem", V. L. "ad fidem" Justius & Tremellius, Cocceius, and some in Vatablus.

Jeremiah 5:4

Ver. 4. Then I said, surely these are poor, they are foolish,.... The prophet, observing that reproofs and corrections in providence had no effect upon the people, he thought within himself that surely the reason must be, because these people are poor, and in low circumstances in the world, and are so busy in their worldly employments to get bread for their families, that they were not at leisure to attend unto divine things; nor of capacity to receive instruction and correction by providences; therefore it is they were so foolish, stupid, and infatuated:

for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God; either the way which God takes in the salvation of the sons of men, and in justifying of them, which is revealed in his word; or that which he prescribes them to walk in, in his law, even the way of truth and righteousness, and for failure of which he judges and condemns them; but of these things they were ignorant; see **Joh 7:48**, not that this is observed in excuse for them, but in order to introduce what follows; and to show that this depravity, stupidity, and ignorance, obtained among all sort of people, high and low, rich and poor.

Jeremiah 5:5

Ver. 5. I will get me unto the great men, and speak unto them,.... The princes, nobles, and judges, the elders of the people, the scribes and doctors of the law:

for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God; it might be reasonably expected that they had, having had a good education, and being at leisure from worldly business to attend to the law, and the knowledge of it, and whatsoever God had revealed in his word, both in a way of doctrine and duty:

but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds; the yoke of the law, and the bonds of his precepts, with which they were bound; these they broke off from them, and would not be obliged and restrained by them, but transgressed and rejected them.

Jeremiah 5:6

Ver. 6. Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them,.... Meaning King Nebuchadnezzar out of Babylon, a place full of people, and so comparable to a forest, as the king is to a lion, for his strength, fierceness, and cruelty; and who came from thence, besieged and took Jerusalem; and who not only slew their young men with the sword, but also the king's sons, and the princes and nobles of Judah, 2Ch 36:17

and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them; which, having sought for its prey all the day, or not daring to go out for any, is hungry, raging and furious, and tears and destroys whatever it meets with; see **Zep 3:3**, so the Targum and Kimchi understand it of such a wolf; but Jarchi and Ben Melech interpret it, "a wolf of the desert", or deserts; as the word {q} will bear to be rendered; one that frequents desert places, and rages about in the wilderness; as the king of Babylon with his army did among the wilderness of the people of the nations about him, and at length spoiled Judea, and laid it desolate:

a leopard shall watch over their cities; the same enemies, who are compared to watchers, and to keepers of a field, **Jer 4:16**. Kimchi interprets the lion of a king, that being the king among beasts; the wolf, of his army; and the leopard, of the princes of the army; and so the Targum,

"wherefore a king with his army shall come up against them, as a lion out of the forest; and the people, who are strong as the wolves of the evening, shall slay them; and the rulers, who are mighty as the leopard, shall make a prey of them, watching over their cities;"

but Jarchi applies them to the several monarchies; by the lion, he understands the kingdom of Babylon; by the wolf, the kingdom of the Medes; and by the leopard, the kingdom of Greece; and so Jerom:

everyone that goes out thence; from any of the cities of Judea, watched by the enemy:

shall be torn in pieces; by those beasts of prey. Jarchi adds, by the Persians; the reason of all which follows, and shows it to be a righteous judgment of God upon them:

because their transgressions are many: their rebellions against God, their violations of his righteous law, were not a few, but many; God had bore long with them, and they had abused his patience and longsuffering; and therefore now he determines to punish them by such instruments:

and their backslidings are increased; though he had so often, and so kindly and tenderly, invited them to return unto him, **Jer 3:12**.

{q} twbre baz "lupus desertorum", Montanus; "lupus solitudinum", Calvin; "deserta incolaus", Pagninuns, Vatablus; "lupus camporum", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 5:7

Ver. 7. How shall I pardon thee for this?.... Because of their manifold transgressions, and multiplied backslidings; or "wherefore, or for what, shall I pardon thee?" {r} as the Targum; can any reason be given why I should? what goodness is there in thee, or done by thee, that I should do this unto thee? The particle ya, according to Kimchi, is a word of exclamation; and, according to Jarchi, of admiration; and may be rendered, "oh! for this shall I pardon?" how can it be? R. Menachem; in Jarchi, takes it to be the same with Nya, "not"; and to be rendered, not for this will I pardon; and so is an affirmation, and fixed resolution not to pardon, and that for the following reasons:

thy children have forsaken me; my worship, as the Targum interprets it; that is, the children of Jerusalem, the inhabitants of it, the common people, as distinguished from their fathers, the civil and ecclesiastical rulers; see Mt 23:37, though not to the exclusion of them; for they were guilty of the same sin in forsaking the word, worship, and ordinances of God:

and sworn by them that are no gods; by the name of idols, as the Targum; or, "by those things which are not god", as Noldius {s} renders the words; who rightly observes, that there were other things besides idols that they swore by, as the heaven and earth, temple, altar, &c. with which the Arabic version agrees; when an oath ought only to be taken in the name of the living God; or, "swore without God"; without making mention of the name of the true God:

when I had fed them to the full; with the good things of life; gave them all things richly to enjoy; the best provisions, and fulness of them; so that they had all that heart could wish for. There is in the Hebrew text a beautiful play on words {t}, between the word used for swearing in the former clause, and this for feeding here:

they then committed adultery; either idolatry, which is spiritual adultery; or adultery literally taken; as it seems from the following verse. This is the consequence of their being fullly fed; and that is an aggravation of this their sin against God and their neighbour; see De 32:13:

and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses; either in the temples of idols, or in the stews or brothel houses, where harlots prostituted themselves; their going thither in troops, or in great numbers, shows both how universal and how public this sin was, and how impudent and barefaced they were in the commission of it.

{r} Kl xloa tazl ya "ad quid, [vel] ob quid, [vel] quare parcam tibi?" De Dieu. {s} Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 199. No. 911. {t} webvyw "et juraverunt", ebvaw "cum saturarem".

Jeremiah 5:8

Ver. 8. They were as fed horses in the morning,.... Adulterers are compared to horses, because they are very salacious and lustful creatures; wherefore the Septuagint renders the word: "horses are become mad after the females"; or, "as horses mad after the females are they become"; and especially to such as are well kept and are fat, and who, having much food given them in the night, and being full in the morning, go forth neighing, as Kimchi observes; and are the more salacious in the morning, by being so well fed all night, as those persons were, as is expressed in the preceding verse; though some render the word Mykvm, translated "in the morning", (for which sense of it see **Ho 6:4**) "drawing out" {u}; that is, the genital member, as lascivious horses do. The word is difficult of interpretation. The Targum calls them field or wood horses; horses that run in fields and woods, and are very vicious and wanton:,

everyone neighed after his neighbour's wife; coveted and lusted after her, signified his lustful desires, and sought an opportunity to defile her. Neighing is a sign of lust, and keeps up the metaphor of the horse.

{u} elkontev, "trahentes", Aquila, Symmachus & Theodotion in Bootius, l. 3. c. 5. sect. 3. Aben Ezra and Abendana interpret it of horses that come from Meshec; see Psal. cxx. 5. which were the strongest and most lascivious.

Jeremiah 5:9

Ver. 9. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord,.... For such adulteries and lasciviousness, and that in a way of punishment. The Targum adds,

"to bring evil upon them;"

the evil of punishment for the evil of sin:

and shall not my soul be avenged upon such a nation as this? which cannot delight in sin, but hates it; and therefore must punish for it; vindictive and punitive justice is essential to God; as sin is contrary to his nature, it is agreeable to it to punish for it; he cannot but do it; and he does avenge all sin, either on the sinner himself, or on his surety.

Jeremiah 5:10

Ver. 10. Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy,.... These are the words of the prophet, or of the Lord by the prophet, to the Chaldeans, ordering them to ascend the walls of Jerusalem, and break them down, as they did, even all the walls of it round about, Jer 52:7, there can be nothing done without the Lord's will; and there is no evil in a city but what is done, or ordered, or suffered to be done by him, **Am 3:6**:

but make not a full end; meaning not of the walls, for a full end was made of them, they were broken down all around; but of the people; there were a remnant to be preserved from the sword, and to be carried captive, and to be returned into their own land again, after a term of years:

take away her battlements; which must mean not the battlements of their houses, or of the temple; but of their walls, the fortifications that run out like branches without the wall {w}. Kimchi interprets them the teeth of the wall; the Septuagint version renders the word, "the under props"; and the Syriac and Arabic versions, "the foundations of it". The word properly signifies the branches of a vine; wherefore Jarchi takes the word for walls, in the preceding clause, to signify the rows of a vineyard; and the Jews are sometimes compared to a vineyard; and here the Chaldeans are called upon to enter into it, to come upon the rows of the vines in it, and take away its branches:

for they are not the Lord's; either the walls and the battlements are not the Lord's, he disowns them, and will not guard them, and protect them, any more; or rather the people are not the Lord's, he has written a "loammi" upon them; they are not the people of God, nor the branches of Christ the true Vine. The Septuagint, Syriac and Arabic versions, read the words without the negative, "leave her under props", or "her foundations, because they are the Lord's". The Targum is,

"go upon her cities, and destroy, and make not a full end; destroy her palaces, for the Lord has no pleasure in them."

{w} twvyjn "propaginos; rami libere luxuriantes----item pinnae, vel potius munimenta et propugnacula extra muri ambitum libere excurrentia", Stockius, p. 675.

Jeremiah 5:11

Ver. 11. For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me,.... This is a reason why such orders are given to the army of the Chaldeans to ascend the walls of Jerusalem and destroy them; namely, the perfidy both of the ten tribes, signified by the house of Israel; so Abarbinel; and of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, signified by the house of Judah; which was very great, and attended with aggravated circumstances; instances of it follow. The Targum is,

"they have dealt very falsely with my word:"

saith the Lord; for this was not the charge of the prophet against them, but of the Lord himself. This can only be understood of such of the ten tribes as remained in Judea, for the body of that people had been carried captive mary years ago; whose sins Judah imitated, and, being also the posterity of Israel, may be so called.

Jeremiah 5:12

Ver. 12. They have belied the Lord, and said, it is not he,.... Or, "denied the Lord" {x}, as some render the words, saying that there was no God; which, though they might not deliver in express words, yet inasmuch as they denied his providence, and disbelieved his word by his prophets, it was tacitly denying that there was a God, or that the Lord was God. The meaning of the phrase "not he" may be, he takes no notice of what is done by us; he does not concern himself with our affairs; nor has he given any such orders to our enemies, as above; nor said these things by the prophets which are pretended:

neither shall evil come upon us; they speak of:

neither shall we see sword nor famine; war and sieges, and famine, the consequence of them.

{x} hwhyb wvxkw "egaverunt Dominum", V. L. Pagninus; "abnegant", Piscator; "abnegarunt Jehovam", Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 5:13

Ver. 13. And the prophets shall become wind,.... Their prophecies shall vanish into air; they shall become of no effect; they shall never be accomplished:

and the word is not in them; not the word of the Lord; he never spoke by them; they speak of themselves; they never were inspired or commissioned by him to say what they do: thus shall it be done unto them; the same evils they say shall befall us shall come upon them; they shall perish by the sword or famine; we have reason to believe that our predictions are as good as theirs, and will be fulfilled: or, "thus let it be done to them" {y}; as they have prophesied shall be done to us; and so are an imprecation. The Targum interprets the whole of the false prophets, as if they were the words of the Lord concerning them, which is,

"but the false prophets shall be for nothing, and their false prophecy shall not be confirmed; this revenge shall be taken of them;"

and so Kimchi interprets it of the prophets that prophesied peace to them, and said that the above mentioned should not come upon them; and Jarchi takes the last clause to be the words of the prophet to them that say the above words; namely, that thus it shall be done to them, what the Lord has said.

{y} Mhl hvey hk "sic fiat illis"; so some in Vatablus; "sic eveniat ipsis", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 5:14

Ver. 14. Wherefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, because ye speak this word,.... That it is not the Lord; it is not he that speaks; it is no prophecy of him, and therefore shall become wind, and come to nothing:

behold, I will make my word in thy mouth fire: it shall have its effect, and a dreadful one; it shall not become wind, but be as fire, not to enlighten the understanding, to purify the conscience, and warm the heart; but to torture, distress, and destroy, as the fire of the word out of the mouths of the two witnesses, Re 11:5:

and this people wood, and it shall devour them; as wood is devoured by fire, so shall this people be destroyed by sword and famine, as the word of the prophecy has declared they should; and which was done by the following means.

Jeremiah 5:15

Ver. 15. Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far,.... From Babylon, as in **Jer 4:16**:

O house of Israel, saith the Lord; though the house of Israel is generally taken for the ten tribes, especially when distinguished from the house of Judah; yet here it seems to design the Jews, the posterity of Jacob, or Israel in the land of Judea; for Israel, or the ten tribes, were carried captive into Assyria before this time:

it is a mighty nation; strong and powerful; so mighty that they would not be able to oppose them, and stand before them: "it is an ancient nation"; the Babylonish monarchy was the most ancient; it began in the times of Nimrod, Ge 10:10 and therefore must be a nation of great power and experience that had so long subsisted, and consequently must be formidable to others:

a nation whose language thou knowest not; which was the Syriac language: this, it is plain, was not known by the common people among the Jews in

Hezekiah's time, though some of the chief men understood it; wherefore Rabshakeh, the king of Assyria's general, would not deliver his railing speech in the Syriac language, which only the princes understood; but in the Hebrew language, the language of the common people, 2Ki 18:26, though, after the captivity, this language was understood by the Jews, and was commonly spoken by them, as it was in our Lord's time:

neither understandest what they say; so would be barbarians to each other; nor could they expect any mercy from them, or that quarters would be given them, when their petitions for favour and life could not be understood.

Jeremiah 5:16

Ver. 16. Their quiver is an open sepulchre,.... The Chaldeans used bows and arrows in fighting; and the quiver is a case for arrows; and the phrase denotes, that their arrows would do great execution, and be very mortal; so that a quiver of them would be as devouring as an open grave, into which many dead are cast. The Septuagint and Arabic versions have not this clause; and the Syriac version renders it, "whose throats are as open sepulchres"; see **Ro 3:13**:

they are all mighty men; strong in body, of bold and courageous spirits, expert in war, and ever victorious; so that there was no hope of being delivered out of their hands.

Jeremiah 5:17

Ver. 17. And they shall eat up thine harvest,.... The standing corn in the fields, cut it down, and give it as fodder to their horses, which is usually done by armies; or the increase of the earth, when gathered into the barn, which so great an army would consume:

and thy bread; which includes all kind of provisions:

which thy sons and thy daughters should eat; which is an aggravation of the calamity and misery, that that should become the prey of their enemies, which they with so much labour and pains had provided for their children, who would now be deprived of it, and suffer want, The Targum renders it, "shall kill thy sons and thy daughters;"

that is, with the sword; and so Kimchi interprets it; and so other versions read, "they shall eat up, or devour, thy sons and thy daughters" {z}; the sword ate them up, or devoured them; and they who besieged them were the cause or occasion of their being eaten literally, even by their own parents; see **La 2:20**:

they shall eat up thy flocks and thy herds; their sheep and oxen, as the Targum interprets it:

they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: that is, the fruit of them, as the same paraphrase explains it:

they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword; that is, such strong and fortified cities as Jerusalem, and others, in which the Jews trusted they should be safe from their enemies; these the Chaldeans would enter into, kill with the sword those they found in garrisons, demolish the fortifications, take away what wealth and riches were laid up there, and so impoverish them, and render them weak and defenceless. The Targum of this clause is,

"shall destroy the fortified cities of thy land, in which thou trustedst thou shouldest be safe from those that kill with the sword."

{z} Kytwnbw Kynb wlkay "vorabunt filios tuos et filias tuas", Calvin; "devorabunt", Vatablus; "comedent filios tuos et filias tuas", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius.

Jeremiah 5:18

Ver. 18. Nevertheless, in those days,.... When these things should be done by the king of Babylon and his army:

saith the Lord, I will not make a full end with you: this was to be done at another time, not now; See Gill on "Jer 4:27", See Gill on "Jer 5:10", though some think that this is a threatening of more and greater calamities; that this would not be all he would do to them; he had not yet done; he had other evils and calamities, to bring upon them, particularly a long captivity.

Jeremiah 5:19

Ver. 19. And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say,.... That is, the people of the Jews, to whom the prophet belonged, after they had been spoiled by the enemy, and carried captive:

wherefore doth the Lord our God all these things unto us? as if they were innocent and guiltless, and had done nothing to provoke the Lord to anger; and it may be observed, that they professed to know the Lord in words, and call him their God, though in works they had denied him; and they own the hand of the Lord in all those evils that would now be come upon them; though before they had said they were not spoken by the Lord, nor would they befall them, **Jer 5:12**:

thou shalt then answer them; that is, the Prophet Jeremiah, in the name of the Lord:

like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land; when they were in their own land they forsook the worship and ordinances of God, and served the idols of the Gentiles, as the Targum rightly explains it:

so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours: which some understand of strange gods; but rather it designs strange lords, as the Chaldeans in the land of Babylon, a land not theirs; and so it is measure for measure, a just retaliation in righteous judgment upon them.

Jeremiah 5:20

Ver. 20. Declare this in the house of Jacob,.... That a mighty nation should come and destroy them, and they should be servants in a strange land; or rather the words seem to be an order to declare war against the Jews, and even in their own land; and do not seem to be addressed to the prophet, but to others, seeing the words are in the plural number; see **Jer 4:5**:

and publish it in Judah: the house of Jacob and Judah are the same, namely, the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah; for, as for the ten tribes, as observed on **Jer 5:15**, they had been carried captive before this time:

saying: as follows:

Jeremiah 5:21

Ver. 21. Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding,.... or, "heart" {a}; See Gill on "Jer 4:22":

which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not; like the idols they served, Ps 115:4. this is an upbraiding of them with their folly and stupidity, their want of common sense, their blindness and ignorance; notwithstanding they had the means of light and knowledge, the law, and the prophets.

{a} bl Nyaw "et non cor", Pagninus, Montanus; "qui non habes cor", V. L. "excors", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "cui cor non est", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 5:22

Ver. 22. Fear ye not me? saith the Lord,.... They did not fear the Lord, and this is a reproof to them for the want of it, which is a reproof of their ignorance and folly; for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, **Pr 9:10**, and where that is there is true wisdom; but, where it is not, there is nothing but ignorance and stupidity:

will ye not tremble at my presence? or "face"; his wrath and anger, justly resenting their carriage to him. The Targum is,

"from before my Word;"

the essential Word, his Son: or, "will ye not be in pain?" as a woman in travail; as Kimchi observes the word {b} signifies:

which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it. This is a very wonderful thing in nature, that the earth and sea, being spherical, and making one terraqueous globe, and the waters of the sea being higher than the earth, should be so bounded and restrained, by the power and providence of God, as not to overflow the earth, and that by means of the sand, which is penetrable, flexible, and movable; and yet this is set as a bound, and by the decree of God remains firm and stable, and that for ever, so that the sea cannot bear it down, go through it, or over it:

and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it; even when the sea is the most tumultuous and raging. This is an instance of the mighty power of God, and carries in it an argument and reason why he should be feared; and yet such was the stupidity of this people, that though they saw this with their eyes, the sea and the tossings of it, and the sand set as a bound to it, and an effectual one, and heard the roarings and ragings of the waves of it in vain; yet they feared not the Lord that did all this; and so showed themselves more stupid and disobedient than the sea and its waves, which obeyed their Maker, though destitute of sense and reason; see Job 26:10.

{b} "Significantissima impimis vox est" wlyxt, "quae significat ita angi ut parturiens", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 5:23

Ver. 23 But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart,.... They are not so obedient as the sea and its waves; nor so firm and stable as the sand that is set for the bound of it. This is a reproof and an aggravation of the revoltings and rebellions of this people:

they are revolted and gone; they had departed from the ways of the Lord, and were gone back from his worship, as the Targum; and were gone into evil ways, and to a false worship; they not only had revolted, but they went on, they continued therein, and went further and further, off from God and his worship.

Jeremiah 5:24

Ver. 24. Neither say in their heart,.... It came not into their mind, they never once thought of it, namely, of what follows,

let us now fear the Lord our God; they were not influenced and engaged to the fear of God, neither by his power in the preceding instance, nor by his goodness in the following one:

that giveth rain; in common, all the year round, at proper times, for the use of men and beasts. This is a pure gift of God, and an instance of his goodness, and is peculiar to him, what none of the gods of the Gentiles could give, Jer 14:22:

both the former and the later, in his season; there were two particular seasons in the year in which the land of Israel had rain; the one was in the month Marchesvan, answering to part of October and part of November, and this was the former rain, after the seed was sown in the earth; and the other was in the month of Nisan, answering to part of March and part of April, just before the time of harvest, and this was the latter rain:

he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest; which was reckoned by weeks, because of the seven weeks between the passover and pentecost: the barley harvest began at the former, and the wheat harvest at the latter, called the feast of weeks, Ex 34:22 and these were appointed of God, the harvest itself, **Ge 8:22** and the weeks in which it was gathered in, Le 23:15, and these appointments and promises the Lord carefully observed, and faithfully kept.

Jeremiah 5:25

Ver. 25. Your iniquities have turned away these things,.... Whereas of late years rain was withheld from them in common, and they had not the former and latter rain in its season, nor the appointed weeks of the harvest, and so their land was barren, and famine ensued. This was to be ascribed, not to the want of goodness and faithfulness in God, but to their own iniquities; these mercies were kept back from them in order to humble them, and bring them to a sense of their sins, and an acknowledgment of them:

and your sins have withholden good things from you; as rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, and had also brought many evil things upon them; for more is understood than is expressed.

Jeremiah 5:26

Ver. 26. For among my people are found wicked men,.... Not a few only, but in general they appeared to be so, upon an inquiry into their character and conduct; for otherwise it would not have been so difficult to find a good man among them, as is suggested **Jer 5:1**,

they lay wait as he that setteth snares; or, "they look about" {c}; that is, as Kimchi interprets it, every man looks in the ways, to see if a man passed by, that he might rob him of what he had; as a man that lays snares, or sets a trap to catch birds in: or, "everyone looks out, when they that lay snares rest" {d}; and so they are more diligent and constant in catching men than such persons are in catching birds:

they set a trap; or "dig a pit, or ditch" {e}; for men to fall in; see **Ps 7:15**:

they catch men; and rob them of their substance; or by their ill examples and counsels draw them into sin, and so into ruin; or circumvent them in trade and business.

{c} rwvy "aspicit", Vatablus, i. e. "quisque eorum", Piscator; "aspicient", Pagninus. {d} Myvwqy Kvk rwvy "contemplatur quisque, cum quiescunt aucupes", De Dieu; so Ben Melech; "et cum resident aucupes", Piscator, Gataker; "sit quiet and unmoved, that they may not frighten the birds by any noise, watching and expecting when they would get into the net"; so Gussetius. {e} tyxvm wbyuh "fodiunt foveas", Tigurine version.

Jeremiah 5:27

Ver. 27. As a cage is full of birds,.... Jarchi and Kimchi understand it of a place in which fowls, are brought up and fattened, what we call a "pen"; and, so the Targum renders it, a house or place of fattening. The word is rendered a "basket" in **Am 8:1** and may here design one in which birds taken in snares, or by hawking, were put. The Septuagint version, and those that follow it, render it, "a snare": which agrees with what goes before. It seems to intend a decoy, in which many birds are put to allure others; and, what with them, and those that are drawn in by them, it becomes very full; and this sense of the comparison is favoured by the rendition or application, which follows:

so are their houses full of deceit; of mammon, gathered by deceit, as Kimchi interprets it; ungodly mammon; riches got in a fraudulent way, by cozening and cheating, tricking and overreaching:

therefore they are become great; in worldly things, and in the esteem of men, and in their own opinion, though of no account with God:

and waxen rich; not with the true riches, the riches of grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ, his durable riches and righteousness; nor indeed with the riches of the world, honestly and lawfully gotten; but with unrighteous mammon.

Jeremiah 5:28

Ver. 28. They are waxen fat, they shine,.... Becoming rich they grew fat, and their faces shone through fatness; so oil, delicious food, and good living, as it fattens men, it makes their faces to shine; see Ps 104:15,

yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked; though they pretended to religion, the fear and worship of God, yet they committed crimes more heinous than the most abandoned and profligate sinners: or, "they exceed the words of the wicked" {f}; either they speak words more wicked than they; or do such actions as are not to be expressed by words, and which even a wicked man would hardly choose to name. The Targum is,

"they transgress the words of the law;"

and the Vulgate Latin version comes pretty near it, "they have passed over my words very badly"; as if they referred to the words of the law and the prophets:

they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless; this shows that it was not the common people only that were become so wicked, but the judges and civil magistrates; and who were so far from doing justice between man and man, in all civil cases that came before them, that they would not even exercise right judgment in the case of the fatherless; who not only require justice to be done them, but mercy and pity to be shown them:

yet they prosper; in the world, and increase in riches; have health of body and prosperity in their families; nor are they in trouble, as other men: this sometimes has been trying to good men to observe; see Ps 73:3 and particularly to the Prophet Jeremiah, Jer 12:1: or, "that they may prosper" {g}; as Jarchi interprets it; and to the same sense is the Targum,

"if they had judged the judgment of the fatherless they would have prospered;"

but the former sense is best; and which Kimchi gives into, and agrees with what goes before, concerning the riches and prosperous estate of those men:

and the right of the needy do they not judge: because they are poor, and can not fee them, they will not undertake their cause; or, if it comes before them, they will not do them justice, being bribed by the rich that oppose them.

{f} er yrbd wrbe "transcendunt verba mali", Schmidt; "transierunt verba mali", Cocceius. {g} wxyluyw "ut prosperentur", Gataker.

Jeremiah 5:29

Ver. 29. Shall I not visit for these things?.... See Gill on "Jer 5:9".

Jeremiah 5:30

Ver. 30. A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land. What may justly raise admiration in some, and horror in others, or both in all: it is so amazing that it can hardly be conceived of, and so shameful and filthy as not to be expressed; what it is follows:

Ver. 31. The prophets prophesied falsely,.... That the people would have peace and prosperity, and not be carried captive into Babylon, as Jeremiah and other true prophets of the Lord had predicted:

and the priests bear rule by their means; or rather "the princes"; for the word signifies princes as well as priests, and to the former government more properly belongs; and so Jarchi interprets it of the judges of the people, and their exactors; these governed the people according to the words of the false prophets, as the same writer explains it; they were "under" their influence and direction, they went after them, as the phrase ry le is sometimes used; see
1Ch 25:2 or, as Kimchi understands it, the priests received gifts by their hands to pervert judgment, and they declined doing justice, according to their will. The Targum is,

"the priests helped upon their hands;"

took the false prophets, as it were, and carried them in their hands. Some render it, "the priests remove, or depart by their means" {h}; through their false prophesies they departed from the law, and the worship of God and his ordinances, from attending to them, and performing them in the manner appointed; in the whole it denotes great friendship, unity, and agreement between the priests, or princes, and the false prophets; they agreed together to keep the people in awe and in bondage; and what was of all the most surprising is what follows:

and my people love to have it so; both that the prophets prophesy smooth things to them, though false; and that the princes should govern as they directed:

and what will ye do in the end thereof? that these evils will bring unto; namely, the destruction of the city and nation. The meaning is, what will become of them at last? or what would they do, when this wicked government would come to an end, and they should be taken and carried captive by the Chaldeans? which would be their case; and how would they like that, who love to have things as they were, which would bring on their ruin?

{h} So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, for. 62. I.

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 6

This chapter is of the same argument with the former; and contains two things in it, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, and the causes of it, which are intermixedly handled in it; a lively description is made of the notice of the approach of the enemy by blowing of trumpets and firing of beacons, **Jer 6:1**, and of the siege of the city, by pitching tents around it, casting up a mount against it, and scaling its walls at noon and by night, **Jer 6:2**, and this destruction is illustrated by the simile of gleaning of grapes, **Jer 6:9**, and amplified by the universality of it, with respect to persons and things; it reaching to persons of every age, and in every state, as old men, young men, and children, husbands and wives, and to all sorts of possessions, houses and fields, **Jer 6:11**, a description is given of the instruments of it, the Chaldeans, **Jer 6:22** and it is aggravated by the anxiety, distress, and sorrow, the Jews would be in on account of it, **Jer 6:24**, the causes of it are in general the great aboundings of sin and wickedness in the midst of them, illustrated by a fountain casting out its waters, **Jer 6:6**, in particular, their neglect and contempt of the word of the Lord, **Jer 6:10**, the sin of covetousness, which prevailed among all sorts of people, high and low, in civil or religious life, **Jer 6:13**, the unfaithfulness of the prophets to the people, declaring peace, when there was none, **Jer 6:14**, their impenitence and hardness, **Jer 6:15**, their disregard to all instructions and warnings, **Jer 6:16**, their rejection of the law, and the precepts of it, **Jer 6:18**, their hypocritical sacrifices, **Jer 6:20**, and the chapter is concluded with an address to the prophet, setting forth his character and office, and the end of it, **Jer 6:27** and his testimony concerning the people, showing their obstinacy and stubbornness, illustrated by a simile of refining metal in a furnace without success, **Jer 6:28**.

Ver. 1. O ye children of Benjamin,.... The tribe of Benjamin was with the tribe of Judah, and continued with that in the pure worship of God when the ten tribes revolted; and in the land of Israel, when they were carried captive;

and besides, Jerusalem, at least part of it, was in the tribe of Benjamin, and particularly Anathoth, which was Jeremiah's native place, was in that tribe; and this altogether is a reason why the children of Benjamin are so distinctly addressed:

gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem; where some of this tribe lived, or had betaken themselves for safety: or the Jews in general may be meant; for, as Ephraim is often put for the ten tribes, so Benjamin may be put for the two tribes, as Judah frequently is: or the words may be rendered, "be ye strong" {i} "out of the midst of Jerusalem"; as by the Septuagint, and others; and the sense may be, gather together in bodies out of Jerusalem, and form yourselves into companies, and into an army, and be prepared to meet the enemy, and fight him, who is near at hand; quit yourselves like men, and be strong; show courage and valour; perhaps this is spoken ironically, as Kimchi thinks it is; though he interprets the word, "flee ye"; that is, if ye can find a place to flee to; and the Targum is,

"remove out of the midst of Jerusalem;"

but it seems rather to be a direction to go forth and meet the enemy, by what follows:

and blow the trumpet in Tekoa; as an alarm of war, to give the people notice of an invasion; that the enemy was at hand, and therefore should provide themselves with armour, and gather together to meet and oppose him. Tekoa was a city in Judah, 2Ch 11:5, famous, for a wise woman in it, in the times of David, 2Sa 14:2. Jerom says it was twelve miles from Jerusalem, and might be seen with the eye; so that probably it was built on a very high hill, and for that reason chosen to blow the trumpet on, that it might be heard far and near; and which may be confirmed from its being said {k} to be the chief place in the land of Israel for the best oil, since olives grow on hills and mountains. There is in the clause a beautiful play on words {l}, which those, who understand the Hebrew language, will easily observe:

and set up a fire in Bethhaccerem. This place, as Jerom says, lay between Jerusalem and Tekoa; one of this name is mentioned in **Ne 3:14**. The Targum renders it,

"the house of the valley of the vineyards;"

and in the Misnah {m} mention is made of the valley of Bethhaccerem, the dust of which was red, and, when water was poured upon it, became hard; and this valley perhaps took its name from the town, which might be built upon a hill, and was famous for vines, from whence it was so called; and here might be a very high tower; for, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, it signifies a high tower, for the keepers of the vines to sit and watch the vines all about; and this was a very proper place to set up the sign of fire in, to give notice to the country all around; for it was usual with all nations, Persians, Grecians, and Romans, to signify in the night, by signs of fire, by burning torches, and the like, either the approach of an enemy, or help from friends; the former was done by shaking and moving their torches, the latter by holding them still {n}; see Jud 20:38:

for evil appeareth out of the north; Nebuchadnezzar and his army out of Babylon, which lay north of Jerusalem: and great destruction; see **Jer 1:14**.

{i} wzyeh eniscusate, Sept. "confortamini", V. L. "fortes estote", Tigurine version. {k} Misn. Menachot c. 8. sect. 3. {l} weqt ewqtb. {m} Misna Nidda, c. 2. c. 5. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {n} Vid. Lydium de re Militari, l. 5. c. 3. p. 185, 186. & Van Tillin ib. p. 52.

Jeremiah 6:2

Ver. 2. I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman. That dwells at home and lives in pleasure, and deliciously, in great peace and quietness, in entire ease and security, in no fear of enemies, or apprehension of danger; and so it describes the secure state of the Jews. Kimchi and Ben Melech supply the word "woman" as we do; but others supply "land" or "pasture"; and think that the Jewish nation is compared to pleasant and delightful lands and pastures, which are inviting to shepherds to come and pitch their tents about them; as follows. The words are by some rendered, "O beautiful and delicate one, I have cut off, or destroyed the daughter of Zion" {o}; in which sense the word is used in **Isa 6:5** and to this purpose is the Targum,

"O beautiful and delicate one, how hast thou corrupted thy ways? therefore the congregation of Zion is confounded;"

but the former senses seem to be best; in which the word used is understood as having the signification of likening or comparing; for which see **So 1:9**.

{o} So Jarchi and Joseph Kimchi. Vid. Gataker in loc.

Jeremiah 6:3

Ver. 3. The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her,.... Kings and their armies, as the Targum paraphrases it; kings and generals are compared to shepherds, and their armies to flocks, who are under their command and direction; here they design Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, with his generals and armies, who should come up against Jerusalem, as to a good pasture:

they shall pitch their tents against her round about; their military tents, in allusion to pastoral ones. The phrase is expressive of the Chaldean army surrounding and besieging Jerusalem:

they shall feed everyone in his place; where he is ordered and fixed by his head general: or, "everyone shall feed his hand" {p}: the sheep of his hand; see Ps 95:7, "them that are under his hand", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; who are committed to his care and charge. The meaning is, he shall direct the company or companies of soldiers under him, where to be, and what part to take in the siege; or "with his hand", as the Septuagint, with the skilfulness of his hands, Ps 78:72, or with might and power; or "at his hand", as the Arabic version; what is at hand, what is nearest to him; or according to his will and pleasure. The Targum is,

"everyone shall help his neighbour."

The sense, according to Kimchi, is, one king or general shall lay siege against a city, or against cities, and so another, until they have consumed and subdued the whole land.

{p} wdy ta vya wer "paverunt unusquisque manum suam", Montanus; "eos qui sub manu sua sunt", V. L.

Jeremiah 6:4

Ver. 4. Prepare ye war against her,.... Not only proclaim it, but prepare themselves for it; get everything ready for the siege, and begin it. These are either the words of the Lord, calling upon the Chaldeans in his providence to act such a part against Jerusalem; or of the Chaldeans themselves, stirring up one another to it; which latter seems to be the sense; since it follows:

arise, and let us go up at noon; scale the walls, and take the city; which, though in the heat of the day, and not so proper a time, yet such was the eagerness of the army, and their confidence of carrying the place at once; and concluding there was no need of waiting till the evening, or of taking any secret measures for the siege; they propose to go up at noon, in the heat of the day, and in the sight of their enemies, and storm the city:

woe unto us, for the day goes away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out; which some take to be the words of the besiegers, lamenting they had lost time, had not proceeded according to their first purpose, had neglected going up at noontime, and now the evening was coming upon them; or as being angry, and out of humour, that the city was not taken by them so soon as they expected: though, according to Kimchi, they are the words of the prophet; and he may represent the besieged, mourning over their unhappy case and circumstances; the day of prosperity declining, and nothing but darkness and distress coming upon them.

Jeremiah 6:5

Ver. 5. Arise, and let us go up by night,.... Since they could not take the city at noon, and by day, as they expected, they propose to attempt it by night; they would lose no time, but proceed on, day and night, until they had accomplished their end; this shows how much they were resolved upon it, and that nothing could discourage from it; and that they were sure of carrying their point: and therefore it follows,

and let us destroy her palaces; the tower and strong hold of Zion, the temple of Jerusalem, the king's palace, the houses of the high priest, judges, counsellors, and other civil magistrates, as well as the cottages of the meaner sort of people; for the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "her houses"; which, notwithstanding her strong walls, were not secure from the enemy.

Jeremiah 6:6

Ver. 6. For thus hath the Lord of hosts said,.... To the Chaldeans; for as it was the Lord that brought them out of their own country, and directed them to Jerusalem, and ordered them to prepare war against it; so they were as an army under his command, and he it was that ordered them to do this, and that, and the other thing: the whole affair was of the Lord, and the Jews had more to fear from him, who is the Lord of armies, than from the army of the Chaldeans; for, as they could do nothing without his divine permission, so, having that, there was a certainty of succeeding:

hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem: in the Hebrew text it is, "pour out a mount" {q}; the reason of which is, because there were a ditch or ditches about the city; and into these they poured in stones, and dirt, and trees, and pieces of wood, and so filled them up, and cast up a mount, on which they could raise their batteries, and demolish the walls and houses; hence mention is made of hewing down of trees, in order to cast the mount; for these were to be cut down, not so much to make battering rams, and other instruments of war, as to fill up the ditch, and raise the mount, so that the walls might be more easily battered and scaled: though some {r} interpret it of taking precise, fixed, determined counsel, about the war, and the manner of carrying it:

this is the city to be visited; or punished; not only that deserves to be so visited, but which would certainly be visited, and that immediately; its punishment was not far off; vengeance would soon be taken on it, and that for its sins: and so the Targum,

"this is the city whose sins are visited;"

as it follows:

she is wholly oppression in the midst of her; there were nothing but oppression and oppressors in her; not only full of oppressors, but oppression itself. This is instanced in for all kind of wickedness; the meaning is, that she was a sink of sin, and very wickedness itself.

{q} hllo wkpv "fundite aggerem", V. L. Munster, Tigurine version; "fundite vallum", Schmidt. {r} hue wtrk "decidite, [vel] decernite consilium". So Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 628.

Jeremiah 6:7

Ver. 7. As a fountain casteth out her waters,.... In great abundance, and continually:

so she casteth out her wickedness; this metaphor expresses the multitude of her sins, the frequent and constant commission of them, and the source and spring of them, the corrupt fountain of the heart; see Mt 12:34:

violence and spoil is heard in her; that is, the cry of those that are oppressed and spoiled is heard, and that by the Lord himself, whose ears are open to the cries of the oppressed, and will avenge them:

before me continually is grief and wounds; the poor, who were grieved and wounded by their oppressors; the Lord was an eye and ear witness of their grievances, and would redress them; nor could their enemies expect to escape his wrath, since they were all known to him; or else the sense is, that because of their violence and spoil of the poor, it was continually before the Lord, in his mind and purpose, and he was just ready to bring upon them, by way of punishment for these things, what would grieve and wound them; so Jarchi interprets it, which Kimchi mentions; and to it the Targum agrees,

"the voice of robbers and plunderers is heard in her before me continually, therefore will I bring upon her evil and smiting."

Jeremiah 6:8

Ver. 8. And be thou instructed, O Jerusalem,.... Or "corrected" {s}; receive discipline or instructions by chastisements and corrections, return by repentance, that the evils threatened may not come: this shows the affection of the Lord to his people, notwithstanding all their sins; that their amendment, and not their destruction, were pleasing to him; that it was with reluctance he was about to visit them in the manner threatened; and that even now it was not too late, provided they were instructed and reformed; but, if not, they must expect what follows:

lest my soul depart from thee; his Shechinah, or divine Presence, and all the tokens of his love, favour, and good will. The Targum interprets it of the Word of the Lord,

"lest my Word cast thee off;"

see Ro 11:1, or, "lest my soul pluck itself from thee"; or "be plucked" {t}, and separated from thee: the phrase denotes an utter separation, a forcible one, joined with the utmost abhorrence and detestation. In Eze 23:18, it is rendered, "my mind was alienated"; it denotes disunion and disaffection.

Lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited; the Targum adds, by way of illustration,

"as the land of Sodom;"

so that not a man should dwell in it; see **Jer 4:25**.

{s} yrowh "cape disciplinam", Vatablus; "admitte disciplinam", Cocceius; "castigationem", Schmidt. {t} Kmm yvpn eqt Np "ut non luxetur, [vel] avellatur anima mea a te", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 6:9

Ver. 9. Thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... Finding that all his threatenings, admonitions, and expostulations, were in vain, he says of the Chaldeans, with respect to the Israelites,

they shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine; by "the remnant of Israel" are meant the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who were left in the land when the ten tribes were carried captive; and these the Chaldeans should come and carry away also, just as the poor come into a vineyard, after the vintage has been gathered in, and pick off and glean what is left upon the branches:

turn back thine hand as a grapegatherer into the baskets; these words, according to Kimchi, are the words of the Chaldeans to one another, to turn their hands to the spoil, and to the prey, again and again, just as the grape gatherer does; he gathers a bunch of grapes, and puts it into his basket, and then turns his hand, time after time, till he has gleaned the whole vine: and, according to Jarchi, it seems to be his sense, that they are the words of God unto them; and so Abarbinel; and it is as if he should say, O thou enemy, turn thine hand to the spoil a second time, as a grape gatherer turns his hand to the baskets; and who observes that so it was, that when Jehoiakim was carried captive, and slain, Jeconiah was made king: then, at the end of three months, the enemy returned, and carried him captive; and, at the end of twelve years, returned again, and carried Zedekiah captive; nay, even of the poor of the people, and it may be observed, that they were carried away at different times; see Jer 52:15.

Jeremiah 6:10

Ver. 10. To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear?.... These are the words of the prophet, despairing of any success by his ministry; suggesting that the people were so universally depraved, that there were none that would hear him; that speaking to them was only beating the air, and that all expostulations, warnings, remonstrances, and testimonies, would signify nothing:

behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken; their ears were stopped with the filth of sin naturally, and they wilfully stopped their ears like the adder; and so being unsanctified, they neither could hear nor desired to hear the word of the Lord, as to understand it; see **Ac 7:51**:

behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they reproached it, and blasphemed it, as a novel and false doctrine, and thought it a dishonour to them to receive and profess it; and just so the Jews vilified the Gospel, in the times of Christ and his apostles; and as many do now, who treat it with contempt, as unworthy of God, as contrary to reason, as opening a door to licentiousness, and think it a scandal to preach or profess it:

they have no delight in it; they see no beauty nor glory in it; they taste nothing of the sweetness of it; its doctrines are insipid things to them, they having never felt the power of it in their hearts; whereas such who are the true circumcision, who are circumcised in heart and ears, who are born again, these desire the sincere milk of the word; it is to them more than their necessary food; and, with this Prophet Jeremiah, they find it, and eat it, and it is the joy and rejoicing of their hearts, Jer 15:16.

Jeremiah 6:11

Ver. 11. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord,.... Either of zeal for the Lord, for the glory of his name, and the honour of his word; or rather of the prophecy of the Lord, as the Targum interprets it, concerning the wrath of God, that should come upon this people for their sins:

I am weary with holding it; the prophecy, the message he was sent with to them, to pronounce the judgments of God upon them; which being a disagreeable task to him, he refrained from doing it as long as he could; but being highly provoked with the sins of the people, and particularly with their contempt of the word of God, and especially he being obedient to the divine will, he could forbear no longer making a full declaration of it; see Jer 20:9.

I will pour it upon the children abroad; or, "in the street" {u}; that are playing there:

and upon the assembly of young men together; that are met together for their pleasure and diversion; and the sense is, that the prophet would declare in a prophetic manner, and denounce, according to his office and commission, the wrath of God, which should come upon persons of every age, and of every relation in life, as follows: though the words may be rendered, "pour it upon the children", &c. {w}; and so it is a prayer of the prophet's to the Lord, that he would execute the vengeance on them which he had threatened them with by him:

for even the husband with the wife shall be taken; and carried captive:

the aged with him that is full of days; the old and the decrepit, such as are advanced in years, and also those that are just upon the brink of the grave, ready to die: the meaning is, that children should not be spared for their tender age, nor young men for their strength, nor husbands and wives on account of their relation, nor any because of their hoary hairs; seeing the corruption was so general, and prevailed in persons of every age, and of every station.

{u} Uwxb "in platea", Montanus, Schmidt. {w} llwe le Kpv "effunde in puerum", Cocceius; "super infantem", Schmidt; so V. L. "effundere", Montanus.

Jeremiah 6:12

Ver. 12. And their houses shall be turned unto others,.... To strangers, to the Chaldeans; they shall be transferred unto them, come into their hands, and become their property:

with their fields and wives together: not only their houses and lands shall be taken away from them, and put to the use of others, but even their wives; than which nothing could be more distressing:

for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord; the inhabitants of the land of Judea; and so the Septuagint render it, "upon them that inhabit this land"; and so the Arabic version: wherefore, since the Lord would exert himself in this affair, and stretch out his hand of almighty power, as the Targum paraphrases it,

"I will lift up the stroke of my power;"

it might be depended upon that all this destruction threatened would come on them.

Jeremiah 6:13

Ver. 13. For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them,.... From the least in age to the oldest among them; or rather, from persons of the lowest class of life, and in the meanest circumstances, to those that are in the highest places of trust and honour, and are in the greatest affluence of riches and wealth; so that as men of every age and station had sinned, old and young, high and low, rich and poor, it was but just and right that they should all share in the common calamity:

everyone is given to covetousness; which is mentioned particularly, and instead of other sins, it being the root of evil, and was the prevailing sin among them:

from the prophet even unto the priest everyone dealeth falsely; the false prophet, as Kimchi interprets it, and so the Septuagint and other versions; and the priest of Baal, as the same interpreter; both acted deceitfully; the one in prophesying lies to the people, the other in drawing them off from the pure worship of God. The Targum is,

"from the scribe to the priest;"

from the lowest order of teachers to the highest in ecclesiastical office. The whole shows a most general and dreadful corruption.

Jeremiah 6:14

Ver. 14. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly,.... That is, the false prophets and lying priests, who pretended to be physicians, and to heal the sickly and distempered state of the people; and they did do it, in their way, but not thoroughly; they did not search the wound to the bottom; they drew a skin over it, and made a scar of it, and called it a cure; they made light of the hurt or wound; they healed it,

making nothing of it; or "despising it", as the Septuagint: or they healed it "with reproach", as the Vulgate Latin version; in such a manner, as that it was both a reproach to them, and to the people: or, as the Targum,

"they healed the breach of the congregation of my people with their lying words;"

which are as follow:

saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace; promising them all prosperity, plenty of good things, and a continuance in their own land; when in a short time there would be none of these things, but sudden destruction would come upon them; see **1Th 5:3**.

Jeremiah 6:15

Ver. 15. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination?.... This seems chiefly, and in the first place, to respect the false prophets and wicked priests; who when they committed idolatry, or any other sin, and led the people into the same by their doctrine and example, yet, when reproved for it, were not ashamed, being given up to a judicial hardness of heart:

nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush; they were men of impudent faces, they had a whore's forehead; there was not the least sign or appearance of shame in them; when charged with the foulest crimes, and threatened with the severest punishment, they were not moved by either; they had neither shame nor fear:

therefore they shall fall among them that fall; meaning that the prophets and priests should perish among the common people, and with them, who should be slain, and fall by the sword of the Chaldeans; the sacredness of their office would not exempt them; they should fare no better than the rest of the people:

at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the Lord; that is, when the city and temple should be destroyed by the Chaldeans, these would be cast down from their excellency, the high office in which they were, and fall into ruin, and perish with the rest.

Jeremiah 6:16

Ver. 16. Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see,.... These are the words of the Lord to the people, whom he would have judge for themselves, and not be blindly led by the false prophets and priests; directing them to do what men should, when they are in a place where two or more ways meet, and know not which way to take; they should make a short stop, and look to the way mark or way post, which points whither each path leads, and so accordingly proceed. Now, in religious things, the Scriptures are the way mark to direct us which way we should take: if the inquiry is about the way of salvation, look up to these, which are able to make a man wise unto salvation; these show unto men that the way of salvation is not works of righteousness done by them, but Christ only: if the question is about any doctrine whatever, search the Scriptures, examine them, they are profitable for doctrine; they tell us what is truth, and what is error: if the doubt is about the matter or form of worship, and the ordinances of it, look into the Scriptures, they are the best directory to us what we should observe and do:

and ask for the old paths; of righteousness and holiness, which Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others, walked in, and follow them; and the way of salvation by Christ, which, though called a new way, Heb 10:20, yet is not newly found out, for it was contrived in eternity; nor newly revealed, for it was made known to Adam and Eve immediately after the fall; nor newly made use of, for all the Old Testament saints were saved by the same grace of Christ, and justified by his righteousness, and their sins pardoned through his blood, and expiated by his sacrifice, as New Testament saints; only of late, or in these last days, it has been more clearly made known; otherwise there is but one way of salvation; there never was any other, nor never will be; inquire therefore for this old path, which all true believers have trodden in:

where is the good way, and walk therein; or, "the better or best way" {x}, and more excellent way, which is Christ, Joh 14:6, he is the way of access to God, and acceptance with him, and the way of conveyance of all the blessings of grace; he is the way to the Father, and to eternal happiness; he is the living way which always continues, and is ever the same; and is a plain, pleasant, and safe way, and therefore a good one; there is no one better, nor any so good; and therefore this must be the right way to walk in, and to which there is great encouragement, as follows:

and ye shall find rest for your souls; there is rest and peace enjoyed in the ways of God, and in the ordinances of the Gospel; wisdom's ways are ways of peace, which are the lesser paths; and in the doctrines of the Gospel, when the heart is established with them, the mind is tranquil and serene, and at rest, which before was fluctuating and wavering, and tossed to and fro with every wind; but the principal rest is in Christ himself, in whom the true believer, that walks by faith in him, has rest from the guilt and dominion of sin, from the curse and bondage of the law, and from the wrath of God in his conscience; and enjoys a spiritual peace, arising from the blood, sacrifice, and righteousness of Christ, Mt 11:28:

but they said, we will not walk therein; in the old paths, and in the good way but in their own evil ways, which they chose and delighted in; and therefore, as their destruction was inevitable, it was just and righteous.

{x} bwjh Krd hz ya "quae sit via melior", Vatablus; "via optima", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 6:17

Ver. 17. Also I set watchmen over you,.... That is, prophets, as Jarchi; true prophets, as Kimchi; such an one was Ezekiel, **Jer 3:17**. The Targum interprets it teachers; such were the apostles and first ministers of the Gospel; and all faithful preachers of it, who teach men good doctrine and watch for their souls, give them warning of their danger, and exhort them to flee to Christ for rest and safety; and these are of the Lord's appointing, constituting, and setting in his churches; see 1Co 12:28.

Saying, hearken to the sound of the trumpet; to their voice, lifted up like a trumpet, Isa 58:1, to the word preached by them; to the law, which lays before them their sin and danger; and to the Gospel, which is a joyful sound, and gives a certain one, and proclaims peace, pardon, and salvation, by Christ:

but they said, we will not hearken; so the Jews, in the times of Christ and his apostles, turned a deaf ear to their ministry, contradicted and blasphemed the Gospel, and judged themselves unworthy of it, and of eternal life, brought to light by it. Perhaps here it may regard the punishments threatened the Jews by the prophets, which they would not believe were coming upon them, but put away the evil day far from them.

Jeremiah 6:18

Ver. 18. Therefore hear, ye nations,.... Since the Jews refused to hearken to the word of the Lord, the Gentiles are called upon to hear it, as in Ac 13:45, this is a rebuke to the Jews, that the Gentiles would hear, when they would not:

and know, O congregation; either of Israel, as the Targum and Kimchi explain it; or of the nations of the world, the multitude of them; or the church of God in the midst of them:

what is among them; among the Jews: either what evil is among them; what sins and transgressions are committed by them; which were the cause of the Lord's threatening them with sore judgments, and bringing them upon them; so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret the words; to which agrees the Targum,

"and let the congregation of Israel know their sins;"

or the punishments the Lord inflicted on them: so the Vulgate Latin version, "and know, O congregation, what I will do unto them"; which sense is confirmed by what follows:

Jeremiah 6:19

Ver. 19. Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people,.... The people of the Jews; the evil of punishment, for the evil of sin committed by them; wherefore the earth, and the inhabitants of it, are called upon to bear witness to, the righteousness of such a procedure:

even the fruit of their thoughts; which they thought of, contrived, and devised; which shows that they did not do what they did inadvertently, but with thought and design. Kimchi interprets it of sinful deeds and actions, the fruit of thoughts; but his father, of thoughts themselves. The Talmudists, {y} comment upon it thus,

"a thought which brings forth fruit, the holy blessed God joins it to an action; but a thought in which there is no fruit, the holy blessed God does not join to action;"

that is, in punishment; very wrongly. For the sense is, that God would bring upon them the calamities and distresses their thoughts and the evil counsels of their minds deserved. The Targum renders it,

"the retribution or reward of their works."

Because they have not hearkened unto my words; spoken to them by the prophets:

nor to my law, but rejected it; neither hearkened to the law, nor to the prophets, but despised both. The Targum is,

"because they obeyed not the words of my servants, the prophets, and abhorred my law."

{y} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 40. 1.

Jeremiah 6:20

Ver. 20. To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba,.... In Persia or Arabia, from whence incense was brought, and perhaps the best; see Isa 60:6, and yet the offering of this was of no esteem with God, when the words of the prophet, and the law of his mouth, were despised; see **Isa 1:13**:

and the sweet cane from a far country? either from the same place, Sheba, which was a country afar off, **Joe 3:8**, or from India, as Jerom interprets it; this was one of the spices in the anointing oil, Ex 30:23 and though this was of divine appointment, and an omission of it is complained of, Isa 43:24 yet when this was brought with a hypocritical heart, and to atone for neglects of the moral law, and sins committed against that, it was rejected by the Lord:

your burnt, offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me: being offered up with a wicked mind, and without faith in Christ, and in order to expiate the guilt of black crimes unrepented of, and continued in; they were not grateful to God, nor could he smell a sweet savour in them, but loathed and abhorred them; see **Isa 1:11**.

Jeremiah 6:21

Ver. 21. Therefore thus saith the Lord,.... Because of their immorality and hypocrisy, their contempt of his word, and confidence in legal rites and ceremonies:

behold, I will lay stumblingblocks before this people; by which may be meant the judgments of God upon them, raising up enemies against them, and suffering them to invade their land; particularly the Assyrians, as the following words show. Moreover, the prophecies of the false prophets, and the doctrines which they were permitted to spread among the people, were snares and stumblingblocks unto them, they being given up to believe their lies, and to be hardened by them; nay, even true doctrines, the doctrines of justification and salvation by Christ, yea, Christ himself, were a rock of offence, and a stumbling stone to these people, **Isa 8:14**

and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; or, "by them" {z}; the latter following the examples of the forager; and so it denotes, that as the corruption was general, the punishment would be:

and the neighbour and his friend shall perish; in the same calamity, being involved in the guilt of the same iniquity, in which they encouraged and hardened one another. The Septuagint and Arabic versions by "stumblingblocks" understand an "infirmity" or "disease", which should come upon the people, and make a general desolation among them. Kimchi interprets the whole of the wickedness of fathers and children, neighbours and friends, and such as were in trade and partnership, and of their delight in mischief; that though they were aware of the stumblingblocks, yet would not give each other warning of them. The whole, according to the accents, should be rendered thus, "and they shall fall upon them, the fathers and the sons together, the neighbour and his friend, and they shall perish"; falling and perishing are said of them all.

{z} Mb "in iis", Schmidt; "in eis", Cocceius, Pegnanius.

Jeremiah 6:22

Ver. 22. Thus saith the Lord, behold, a people cometh from the north country,.... The Assyrians from Babylon, which lay north of Judea, as in **Jer 1:14**:

and a great nation shall be raised; that is, by the Lord, who would stir them up to this undertaking. The Targum is,

"many people shall come openly:"

from the sides of the earth; afar off, as Babylon was, **Jer 5:15**.

Jeremiah 6:23

Ver. 23. They shall lay hold on bow and spear,.... That is, everyone of them should be furnished with both these pieces of armour, that they might be able to fight near and afar off; they had bows to shoot arrows at a distance, and spears to strike with when near. The Targum renders it bows and shields. "They are cruel, and have no mercy"; this is said, to strike terror into the hearts of the hardened Jews:

their voice roareth like the sea; the waves of it, which is terrible, Lu 21:25:

and they ride upon horses; which still made them more formidable, as well as suggests that their march would be quick and speedy, and they would soon be with them:

set in array as men for war; prepared with all sorts of armour for battle: or, "as a man" {a}; as one man, denoting their conjunction, ardour, and unanimity; being not only well armed without, but inwardly, resolutely bent, as one man, to engage in battle, and conquer or die; see Jud 20:8,

against thee, O daughter of Zion; the design being against her, and all the preparation made on her account; which had a very dreadful appearance, and threatened with ruin, and therefore filled her with terror and distress, as follows.

{a} vyak "tanquam vir", Pagninus; "ut vir", Schmidt; "quam unus vir", Grotius.

Jeremiah 6:24

Ver. 24. We have heard the fame thereof,.... Meaning not the prophet's report then, but the rumour of the enemy's coming from another quarter, at the time he was actually coming. These are the words of the people, upon such a rumour spread; or the words of the prophet, joining himself with them, describing their case, when it would be strongly reported, and they had reason to believe it, that the enemy was just coming, and very near:

our hands wax feeble; have no strength in them, shake and tremble like men that have a palsy, through fear and dread:

anguish hath taken hold of us; tribulation or affliction; or rather anguish of spirit, on hearing the news of the near approach of the enemy:

and pain, as of a woman in travail; which comes suddenly, and is very sharp; and this denotes that their destruction would come suddenly upon them, before they were aware, and be very severe.

Jeremiah 6:25

Ver. 25. Go not forth into the field,.... Either for pleasure, or for business; to take a walk in it for the air, or to till it, plough, sow, or reap; but keep within the city and its walls, there being danger:

nor walk by the way; in the high road from Jerusalem, to any town or village near it:

for the sword of the enemy: or, "because there is a sword for the enemy" {b}; or, "the enemy has a sword"; and that drawn; the enemy is in the field, and in the ways, and there is no escaping him:

and fear is on every side; all round the city, being encompassed by the Assyrian army: or, the enemy's sword "is fear on every side" {c}; causes fear in all parts round the city. The Targum is,

"because the sword of the enemy kills those who are gathered round about;"

or on every side.

{b} bwyal brx yk "quoniam gladius est inimico", Munster, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius; "quia (ibi) gladius (qui) hosti", Schmidt. {c} Gataker.

Jeremiah 6:26

Ver. 26. O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth,.... Either as a token of repentance for sin; so the king of Nineveh and his subjects did, to show their repentance, **Jon 3:6** or as a sign of mourning, for the calamities coming on them, Ge 37:34

and wallow thyself in ashes; or roll thyself in them, as a token of the same. The Targum is,

"cover your heads with ashes."

Make thee mourning as for an only son; which of all is the most bitter: and therefore it is added,

most bitter lamentation; see Zec 12:10.

For the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us; namely, Nebuchadnezzar, that would spoil their cities, towns, villages, and houses, and them of all their wealth and substance, and carry it away.

Jeremiah 6:27

Ver. 27. I have set thee for a tower,.... Or "in" one {d}; in a watch tower, to look about and observe the actions of the people, their sins and transgressions, and reprove them for them; as well as to descry the enemy, and give notice of danger; see **Hab 2:1** or, "for a trier"; since the word used comes from one which signifies to "try" metals, as gold and silver; and the rather this may be thought to be the meaning here, since the verb is made use of in this sense in the text; and the metaphor is carried on in the following words; though the word is used for towers in Isa 23:13 and may well enough be understood of a watchtower, agreeably with the office of the prophet; who is here addressed as a watchman, and was one to the house of Israel: and as the faithful discharge of his work required courage, as well as diligence and faithfulness, it follows, and

for a fortress among my people; not to defend them, but himself against them; or he was to consider himself as so under the divine protection, that he was as a fortress or strong tower, impregnable, and not to be dismayed and terrified with their calumnies and threatenings; see **Jer 1:18**:

that thou mayest know and try their way; their course and manner of life, whether good or bad; which he would be able to do, being in his watch tower, and in the discharge of his duty; for the ministry of a good man is as a touchstone, by which the principles and practices of men are tried and known; for if it is heard and attended to with pleasure, it shows that the principles and practices of men are good; but if despised and rejected, the contrary is evident, see **1Jo 4:5**.

{d} Nwxb "in exploratoria specula", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 6:28

Ver. 28. They are all grievous revolters,.... From the right way of God and his worship: or,

they are all revolters of revolters {e}; of all, the greatest revolters, the greatest sinners and transgressors, the most stubborn and disobedient; or sons of revolters; fathers and children are alike. The Targum, is,

"all their princes rebel;"

and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions: "walking with slanders": of one another; or with deceit, as the Targum; in a hypocritical and fraudulent manner; playing the hypocrite with God, or tricking and deceiving their neighbours. They are "brass and iron"; as vile and mean as those metals, and not as gold and silver; or as hard and inflexible as they are; or they deal as insincerely

"as he that mixes brass with iron;"

so the Targum:

they are all corrupters; as such that mix metals are; they are corrupters of themselves and of others, of the doctrines and manners of men, and of the ways and worship of God.

{e} Myrrwo yro "refractarii refractariorum", Schmidt; "contumacium contumacissimi", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 6:29

Ver. 29. The bellows are burnt,.... Which Kimchi interprets of the mouth and throat of the prophet, which, through reproving the people, were dried up, and become raucous and hoarse, and without any profit to them; and so the Targum,

"lo, as the refiner's blower, that is burnt in the midst of the fire, so the voice of the prophets is silent, who prophesied to them, turn to the law, and they turned not;"

or the judgments and chastisements of God upon the Jews may be meant, which were inflicted upon them to no purpose:

the lead is consumed of the fire; lead being used formerly, as is said {f}, instead of quicksilver, in purifying of silver; which being consumed, the refining is in vain: or it may be rendered,

out of the fire it is perfect lead {g}; or wholly lead, a base metal, no gold and silver in it, to which the Jews are compared:

the founder melteth in vain; to whom either the prophet is likened, whose reproofs, threatenings, and exhortations, answered no end; or the Lord himself, whose corrections and punishments were of no use to reform this people:

for the wicked are not plucked away; from their evil way, as Jarchi; or from good men, they are not separated the one from the other; or, "evils (sins) are not plucked away" {h}; from sinners: their dross is not purged away from them; neither the words of the prophet, nor the judgments of God, had any effect upon them. The Targum of the latter part of the verse is,

"and as lead which is melted in the midst of the furnace, so the words of the prophets which prophesied to them were nothing in their eyes; and without profit their teachers taught them and they did not leave their evil works."

{f} By Mathiolus, Agricola and others, in Poli Synops. {g} trpwe Mtvam "ab igne, et integrum est plumbum", Munster, Calvin, Tigurine version. {h} wqtn al Myerw "et mala non sunt evulsa", Piscator, so some in Vatablus; "mala avelli non pussunt", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 6:30

Ver. 30. Reprobate silver shall men call them,.... Or, "call ye them" {i}, as the Targum; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; by whom are meant the Jews, who thought themselves of some account, as silver; being the seed of Abraham, and having the law, the covenant and promises, and service of God; when those that tried them, as the prophets, found them to be nothing but dross; and therefore, if they must be called silver, they could call them no other than reprobate silver; or what is of no account and value; and which is confirmed by the following reason, which contains the judgment and conduct of him that cannot err:

for the Lord hath rejected them; from being his people; and therefore cast them out of their own land, and caused them to go into captivity.

{i} Mhl warq kalesete autouv, "vocate eos": V. L. Pagninus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 7

In this chapter the Lord, by the prophet, calls the people of the Jews to repentance and reformation; reproves them for their vain confidence; and threatens them with destruction for their many sins, and particularly idolatry. The preface to all this is in **Jer 7:1**, the exhortation to amendment, encouraged to by a promise that they should dwell in the land, is in **Jer 7:3**, but this was not to be expected on account of the temple, and temple service; but through a thorough reformation of manners; an exercise of justice, and avoiding all oppression and idolatry, **Jer 7:4**, their vain confidence in the temple is exposed; they fancying that their standing there, and doing the service of it, would atone for their theft, murder, adultery, perjury, and idolatry; and that they might commit these with impunity; wherefore they are let to know, that so doing these they made the temple a house of thieves; and that for such wickedness, what the Lord had done to his place in Shiloh, which they are reminded of, he would to the temple, and to them, reject and cast them off, **Jer 6:8**, and seeing they also had a dependence on the prophet's prayer, he is bid not to pray for them, for his prayers would not he heard; and he is directed to observe their wretched idolatry, of which an instance is given, whereby they provoked the Lord to anger; and therefore he was determined to pour out his fury on man and beast, and on the trees and fruit of the field, **Jer 7:16** and whereas they trusted in their burnt offerings and sacrifices, these are rejected, as being what were not originally commanded; but obedience to the moral law, and the precepts of it, which they refused to hearken to, though they were oft called upon to it by his servants the prophets, **Jer 7:21**, and it is foretold that the Prophet Jeremy would meet with the same treatment; that they would not hearken to his words, nor answer to his call; and therefore he should declare them a disobedient, incorrigible, and an unfaithful people, **Jer 7:27** hence, either he, or Jerusalem, is called upon to cut off the hair, as a sign of mourning; for their rejection of the Lord, occasioned by their sins, and especially their idolatry, of which instances are given, **Jer 7:29** and it is threatened that the place of their idolatry should be a place of slaughter and of burial, till there should be no room for more; and the carcasses of the rest should be the food of fowls and beasts; and all joy should cease from Judah and Jerusalem, **Jer 7:32**.

Ver. 1. The word that came to Jeremiah,.... The Word of prophecy, as the Targum:

from the Lord, saying; this begins a new prophecy. This verse, and the beginning of the next, are wanting in the Septuagint version.

Jeremiah 7:2

Ver. 2. Stand in the gate of the Lord's house,.... That is, of the temple, and the court of it. This gate, as Kimchi says, was the eastern gate, which was the principal gate of all; see Jer 26:2:

and proclaim there this word, and say; with a loud voice, as follows:

hear ye the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah; the inhabitants of the several parts of Judea, which came to the temple to worship; very probably it was a feast day, as Calvin conjectures; either the passover, or pentecost, or feast of tabernacles, when all the males in Israel appeared in court:

that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord; there were seven gates belonging to the court, three on the north, three on the south, and one in the east, the chief of all, as Kimchi, Abarbinel, and Ben Melech observe; and this agrees with the account in the Misna {k}. The names of them were these; on the south side were these three, the watergate, the gate of the firstlings; or the gate of offering, and the gate of kindling; on the north were these three, the gate Nitzotz, called also the gate of the song, the gate Korban, sometimes called the gate of women, and Beth Moked; and the gate in the east was the gate Nicanor, and this gate was the most frequented; and therefore Jeremiah was ordered to stand here, and deliver his message.

{k} Middot, c. 1. sect. 4, 5.

Jeremiah 7:3

Ver. 3. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... The Lord of armies above and below in general, and the God of Israel in particular; wherefore they ought to hearken to what he was about to say, and to be obedient to him:

amend your ways and your doings; or, "make them good" {l}; which shows that they were bad, and were not agreeable to the law and will of God, to which they ought to have been conformed; and the way to amend them was to act according to the rule of the divine word they were favoured with:

and I will cause you to dwell in this place; to continue to dwell in Jerusalem, and in Judea, the land of their nativity, and in the temple, the house of God, and place of religious worship; but, if not, it is suggested that they should not continue here, but be carried captive into a strange land.

{l} Mkykrd wbyjyh "bonas facite vias vestras", V. L. Munster, Pagninus, Montanus; "efficite", &c. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 7:4

Ver. 4. Trust ye not in lying words,.... In the words of the lying prophets, as the Targum; and to the same purpose is the Arabic version,

"do not trust in lying words, for the false prophets do not profit you in anything;"

the things in which they trusted, and in which the false prophets taught them to place their confidence, were their coming up to the temple at certain times for religious exercises, and their attendance on temple service and worship, offering of sacrifices, and the like. The Septuagint version is, "trust not in yourselves, in lying words"; see Lu 18:9, in their external actions of devotion, in their ritual performances, taking them for righteousness; and adds, what is not in the Hebrew text, "for they altogether profit you not"; in the business of justification before God, and acceptance with him:

saying, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these; that is, the people that hypocritically worshipped there, as the false prophets told them; and so the Syriac version, "ye are the temple of the Lord"; though that begins the next verse, with the last clause of this,

if ye amend your ways, &c. see **1Co 3:16** or rather the temple of the Lord are those gates through which they entered, **Jer 7:2** or those buildings which were pointed at with the finger; or hmh, "these", is a clause by itself; and the sense is, these are the lying words that should not be trusted in, namely, the temple and temple services; when all manner of sin and wickedness were committed by them, which they thought to atone for by coming to the temple and worshipping there. The mention of these words three times is, as Jarchi thinks, in reference to the Jews appearing in the temple three times a year, at the feast of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; and so the Targum,

"who say (i.e. the false prophets), before the temple of the Lord ye worship; before the temple of the Lord ye sacrifice; before the temple of the Lord ye bow; three times in a year ye appear before him."

Kimchi's father, R. Joseph, is of opinion, that it refers to the three parts of the temple, the porch, the holy place, and the holy of holies; but Kimchi himself takes it that these words are trebled for the greater confirmation of them; and they may denote the vehemence and ardour of affection for the temple.

Jeremiah 7:5

Ver. 5. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings,.... Or, "if ye make your ways good, and do your works well", which is what is exhorted to **Jer 7:3**, and respects the duties of the moral law; which are more acceptable to God than legal sacrifices, when done from right principles, and with right views, from love, in faith, and to the glory of God; which is doing good works well; the particulars of which follow:

if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; without respect to persons, without favour and affection, without bribery and corruption; passing a righteous sentence, and making an equitable decision of the case between them, according to the law of God, and the rules of justice and equity: this respects judges and civil magistrates.

Jeremiah 7:6

Ver. 6. If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,.... Who have none to help them, and who ought to have mercy and compassion shown them, as well as justice done them; and should not be injured by private men in their persons and properties, and much less oppressed in courts of judicature by those who should be the patrons and defenders of them:

and shed not innocent blood in this place: in the temple, where the sanhedrim, or great court of judicature, sat; for this does not so much respect the commission of murder by private persons, as the condemnation of innocent men to death by the judges, which is all one as shedding their blood; and by which actions they defiled that temple they cried up, and put their trust in; to shed innocent blood in any place, Kimchi observes, is an evil; but to shed it in this place, in the temple, was a greater evil, because this was the place of the Shechinah, or where the divine Majesty dwelt:

neither walk after other gods to your hurt; the gods of e people, as the Targum; "for this", as the Arabic version renders it, "is pernicious to you"; idolatry was more hurtful to themselves than to God; and therefore it is dissuaded from by an argument taken from their own interest.

Jeremiah 7:7

Ver. 7. Then will I cause you to dwell in this place,.... In the land of Judea, and not suffer them to be carried captive, which they had been threatened with, and had reason to expect, should they continue in their sins, in their impenitence and vain confidence:

in the land that I gave to your fathers; to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by promise; and to the Jewish fathers in the times of Joshua, by putting them in actual possession of it:

for ever and ever: for a great while; a long time, as Kimchi explains it; from the days of Abraham for ever, even all the days of the world, provided they and their children walked in the ways of the Lord. This clause may either be connected with the word "dwell", or with the word give; and the sense is, either that they should dwell in it for ever and ever; or it was given to their fathers for ever and ever.

Jeremiah 7:8

Ver. 8. Behold, ye trust in lying words,.... What they are dissuaded from, **Jer 7:4**, is here affirmed they did, and which is introduced with a note of asseveration, attention, and admiration; it being a certain thing that they did so; and was what was worthy of their consideration and serious reflection upon; and it was astonishing that they should, since so to do was of no advantage to them, but the contrary:

that cannot profit; temple worship and service, legal sacrifices and ceremonies, could not take away sin, and expiate the guilt of it; or justify men, and render them acceptable to God; these, without faith in the blood and sacrifice of Christ, were of no avail; and especially could never be thought to be of any use and profit, when such gross abominations were indulged by them as are next mentioned.

Jeremiah 7:9

Ver. 9. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely,.... At the same time they offered sacrifices, and trusted in them, they did those things, which would not be grateful to the Lord, nor profitable to them; or, "ye do steal", &c.; so the Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions; and likewise the Targum; as charging them with them; these are sins against the second table of the law, as what follow are against the first:

and burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; for they not only burnt incense to Baal, which was an act of idolatrous worship; but served other strange gods they had not known before; whose names they had never heard of, and of whose help and assistance they now had no experience, nor received any benefit from, as they had on the one and only true God; and therefore it was great folly and ingratitude in them to forsake the Lord, and walk after these.

Jeremiah 7:10

Ver. 10. And come and stand before me in this house,.... In the temple; this they did after they had been guilty of such immoralities and idolatry; thinking by their appearance there, and their performance of a few ceremonies, and offering of some sacrifices, that all were atoned for: or this denotes their impudence, that, after the commission of such notorious crimes, they should have the front to come into the house of God, and stand before him, as if they had never departed from him, and were his people, and the true worshippers of him:

which is called by my name; the temple of God, the house of God, the sanctuary of the Lord; and where his name was also called upon, being a house of prayer; or where prayer was made to the Lord:

and say, we are delivered; from the punishment of the above sins, by coming into the temple, and standing before the Lord in it; by calling on his name, and offering sacrifices, though with impure hearts and hands, and in a hypocritical way

to do all these abominations; before mentioned; theft, murder, adultery, perjury, and idolatry. The sense is, either we are delivered and freed from punishment, that we may do these things with impunity; this is the use we make of, and the inference we draw from, our deliverance from evil: or we are delivered, though we commit these abominations, and therefore in them: or, seeing we are delivered, therefore do we these things; not that they really said these words, but this was the language of their actions. The Syriac version is, "deliver us, while we commit all these sins".

Jeremiah 7:11

Ver. 11. Is this house, which is called by my name,.... Meaning the temple:

become a den of robbers in your eyes? or do you look upon it, and make use of it, as thieves do of dens; who, when they have robbed and murdered men, betake themselves to them, not only to share their spoil, but to hide themselves? just so those thieves, murderers adulterers, perjurers, and idolaters, after they had committed such gross enormities, came into the temple and offered sacrifices; thinking hereby to cover their sins, and expiate the guilt of them, and to be looked upon as good men, and true worshippers of God, when they were no better than thieves and robbers; and such were the Pharisees in Christ's time, and such was the temple as made by them; see Mt 21:13:

behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord; not only all the abominations committed by them, but the use they made of the temple and the worship of it; all the hypocrisy of their hearts, and the inward thoughts of them, and their views and intentions in their offerings and sacrifices; as well as what ruin and destruction the Lord designed to bring shortly upon them, and upon that house which they had made a den of robbers; as follows:

Jeremiah 7:12

Ver. 12. But go ye now unto my place, which was in Shiloh,.... A city in the tribe of Ephraim, on the north of Bethel, and the south of Lebonah, and not far from Shechem, Jud 21:19 here were the tabernacle, the ark and altar of the Lord, and the sacrifices; and therefore the tabernacle is called the tabernacle of Shiloh, Ps 78:60, and here the Lord calls it his place; the place of the house of his Shechinah, as the Targum paraphrases it; and where he would have those people go; which is not to be understood locally, but of their taking this place into the consideration of their minds, and observe what was done to it, and became of it; though it was once the place where the Lord dwelt, and where his name was called formerly; as follows:

where I set my name at the first; when the children of Israel first entered into Canaan's land, the tabernacle was set up and established in Shiloh, in Joshua's time, Jos 18:1 and there it continued to the times of Eli:

and see what I did to it, for the wickedness of my people Israel; he refused and forsook his tabernacle there; he suffered the ark, which was fetched from thence in the times of Eli, to be taken and carried captive, and that because of the sins of his people,
Ps 78:60. Jerom {m} says, in his time, the altar that was pulled down was shown, though scarce the foundations of it were to be seen. Now the Lord would have these people consider what was done to Shiloh; that though this was the first place where the tabernacle was set in the land of Canaan, and so the inhabitants of it had antiquity on their side; yet this did not secure them, nor the tribe it was in, from being rejected by the Lord, when they sinned against him; nor should the tribes of Judah and Benjamin think themselves secure because of the temple of the Lord, since they might expect he would do to them for their sins what he had done to others before.

{m} Comment. in Zeph. ch. 1. fol. 94. L. Epitaph. Paulae, fol. 59. L.

Jeremiah 7:13

Ver. 13. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord,.... Meaning evil works, such as theft, murder, adultery, perjury, and idolatry, mentioned **Jer 7:8** or the same which were done by the people of Israel, on account of which the tabernacle at Shiloh was left:

and I spake unto you, rising up early; that is, by his servants the prophets, whom he sent unto them, and by whom he spoke, as the Targum paraphrases it, and as it is in **Jer 7:25**, which shows the Lord's great concern for this people, his early care of them, in sending his servants betimes to warn, rebuke, and reclaim them:

and speaking, but ye heard not; would not listen to the words of the prophets, and of the Lord by them; but turned a deaf ear to them, which aggravates their stubbornness, obstinacy, and wickedness, that so much respect should be shown them, so much pains should be taken with them, and that so early, and yet to no purpose:

and I called you, but ye answered not; this call was by the external ministry of the prophets, and was with great vehemence in them, but not with divine energy; however, it was sufficient to leave the Jews without excuse; and their inattention to it exposes their hardness and wilful obstinacy; see **Pr 1:24**.

Jeremiah 7:14

Ver. 14. Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name,.... The temple, as in **Jer 7:11**, for though it was called by his name, and his name was called upon in it, yet this could not secure it from desolation; for so the name of the Lord was set in the tabernacle at Shiloh, and yet he forsook it through the wickedness of the people:

wherein ye trust; they trusted in the sacrifices there offered up, and the service there performed; in the holiness of the place, and because it was the residence of the divine Majesty; wherefore they thought this would be a protection and defence of them; and this was trusting in lying words, as in **Jer 7:4**:

and unto the place which I gave unto you and your fathers; meaning either Jerusalem; and so the Syriac version renders it, "and to the city"; or the whole land of Judea, as in **Jer 7:7**:

as I have done to Shiloh; See Gill on "Jer 7:12".

Jeremiah 7:15

Ver. 15. And I will cast you out of my sight,.... Or, "from before my face", or "faces" {n}; out of the land of Judea, and cause them to go into captivity; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"I will cause you to remove out of the land of the house of my majesty:"

as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim; or Israel, as the Targum; that is, the ten tribes so called, because Ephraim, a principal tribe, and the metropolis of the kingdom, was in it, and Jeroboam, the first king of the ten tribes, was of it: now, as they were carried captive into Babylon, so should the Jews; or they of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; who could not expect to fare better than their brethren, who were more in number than they; and especially since they were guilty of the same sins.

{n} ynp lem "desuper faciebus meis", Montanus; "a faciebus meis" Schmidt.

Jeremiah 7:16

Ver. 16. Therefore pray not thou for this people,.... These are the words of the Lord to the Prophet Jeremiah, forbidding him to pray for the people of the Jews; which he either was doing, or about to do, and which, from the great affection he had for them, he was inclined unto; wherefore, to show how much the Lord was displeased with them, and how determined he was to punish them with captivity, he orders the prophet not to make any supplication for them:

neither lift up cry nor prayer for them; referring to the gestures of lifting up the eyes and hands in prayer, and also to the frame of the heart, in the exercise of faith and holy confidence: "cry" and "prayer" are put together, because prayer is sometimes made, especially when persons are in great distress, with strong cryings and tears; see **Heb 5:7**:

neither make intercession to me; or, "meet me" {o}; or come between him and this people, and so act the part of a mediator, of which office intercession is a branch; it properly belongs to Christ. The Jews say {p} there is no heygp, "meeting", but prayer, or that is always intended by it; for proof of which they cite this passage:

for I will not hear thee; on the behalf of them, being so highly provoked by them, and determined they should go into captivity; see
Jer 15:1.

{o} yb egpt law "et ne oecurras mihi", Calvin; "et ne obsistas mihi", V. L. "et ne intervenias apud me", Tigurine version. {p} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 26. 2. Taanith, fol. 7. 2. & 8. 1. Sota, fol. 14. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 95. 2.

Jeremiah 7:17

Ver. 17. Seest thou not what they do in the cities Judah,.... Not in one city only, but in all of and particularly the chief of them; as follows:

and in the streets of Jerusalem? these words, with what is said next, show the reason why the prophet was forbid to pray for this people, and the Lord was so provoked with them as to cast them out of his sight; and he appeals to the prophet, and to what he saw, or which he might see; for what was done was done not in secret, but openly, in the very streets of the city; by which he might be sufficiently convinced it was but just with God to do what he determined to do with them.

Jeremiah 7:18

Ver. 18. The children gather wood,.... In the fields, or out of the neighbouring forest; not little children, but young men, who were able to cut down trees, and bear and carry burdens of wood:

and the fathers kindle the fire; take the wood of their children, lay it in order, and put fire to it; which shows that they approved of what their children did, and that what they did was by their direction and order:

and the women knead their dough; so that every age and sex were employed in idolatrous service, which is here intended; the corruption was universal; and therefore the whole body was ripe for ruin; nor would the Lord be entreated for them: and all this preparation was,

to make cakes for the queen of heaven; the moon, as Abarbinel; which rules by night, as the sun is the king that rules by day; and which was much worshipped by the Heathens, whom the Jews imitated. Some render it,

to the work, or workmanship, of heavens; {q} that is, to the whole host of heaven, sun, moon, and stars, which were worshipped in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem, 2Ki 23:5. The Targum renders it,

"to the star of heaven;"

and Jarchi interprets it of some great star in the heaven, called the queen of heaven; and thinks that these cakes had the impress of a star upon them; see **Am 5:26** where mention is made of "Chiun, your image, the star of your god". The word "chiun" is akin to the word here translated cakes, and thought to be explained by a star; see also **Ac 7:43** but it seems rather to be the moon, which is expressly called by Apuleius {r} the queen of heaven; and often by others Coelestis; and Urania by the Africans, as Tertullian {s} and Herodian {t} affirm; as also Beltis, by Abydenus {u}; and Baaltis, by Philo-Byblius, or Sanchoniatho {w}; which have the signification of "queen"; and these cakes might have the form of the moon upon them, and be made and offered in imitation of the shewbread:

and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods; not different from the queen of heaven, and the hosts thereof; for to her and them drink offerings were poured out, Jer 44:18 but other gods besides the one, only, living, and true God:

that they may provoke me to anger; not that this was their intention, but so it was eventually.

{q} Mymvh tklml "operi coelorum", Piscator, Gataker, Cocceius "machinae coelorum", Munster, Tigurine version; so Kimchi and Ben Melech. {r} Metamorph. l. 11. principio. {s} Apologet. c. 24. {t} Hist. l. 5. 1. 15. {u} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 456. {w} Apud ib. l. 2. c. 10. p. 38.

Jeremiah 7:19

Ver. 19. Do they provoke me to anger? saith the Lord,.... No: he cannot be provoked to anger as men are; anger does not fall upon him as it does on men; there is no such affection in God as there is in men; his Spirit cannot be irritated and provoked in the manner that the spirits of men may be; and though sin, and particularly idolatry, is disagreeable to him, contrary to his nature, and repugnant to his will; yet the damage arising from it is more to men themselves than to him; and though he sometimes does things which are like to what are done by men when they are angry, yet in reality there is no such perturbation in God as there is in men:

do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? the greatest hurt that is done is done to themselves; they are the sufferers in the end; they bring ruin and destruction upon themselves; and therefore have great reason to be angry with themselves, since what they do issues in their own shame and confusion. The Targum is,

"do they think that they provoke me? saith the Lord; is it not for evil to themselves, that they may be confounded in their works?"

Jeremiah 7:20

Ver. 20. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Since these are their thoughts, and this the fruit of their doings:

behold, my anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place; like fire, to consume and destroy it; meaning Jerusalem, which was burned with fire; as an emblem of God's wrath, and an instance of his vengeance upon it, for sins; which came down in great abundance, like a storm or tempest:

upon man and upon beast; upon beasts for the sake of man, they being his property, and for his use; otherwise they are innocent, and do not deserve the wrath of God, nor are they sensible of it:

and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of your ground; which should be blighted by nipping winds, or cut down and trampled upon by the Chaldean army:

and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched; that is, the wrath of God shall burn like fire, and shall not cease until it has executed the whole will of God in the punishment of his people.

Jeremiah 7:21

Ver. 21. Thus saith the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel,.... The Lord of armies above and below, and the covenant God of the people of Israel; who were bound to serve him, not only by the laws of creation, and the bounties of Providence, but were under obligation so to do by the distinguishing blessings of his goodness bestowed upon them; wherefore their idolatry, and other sins committed against him, were the more heinous and aggravated:

put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh; that is, add one offering to another; offer every kind of sacrifice, and, when you have done, eat the flesh of them yourselves; for that is all the advantage that comes by them; they are not acceptable to me, as Jarchi observes, therefore why should you lose them? burnt offerings were wholly consumed, and nothing was left of them to eat; but of other sacrifices there were, particularly the peace offerings; which the Jewish commentators think are here meant by sacrifices; and therefore the people are bid to join them together, that they might have flesh to eat; which was all the profit arising to them by legal sacrifices. The words seem to be sarcastically spoken; showing the unacceptableness of legal sacrifices to God, when sin was indulged, and the unprofitableness of them to men.

Jeremiah 7:22

Ver. 22. For I spake not unto your fathers,.... Meaning not Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but Moses, Aaron, and others, who were living at the time of the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt, as appears by what follows:

nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings, or sacrifices; these are not in the decalogue or ten commands; these are no part of that law or covenant, but are an appendage or addition to it; and though they are of early institution and use, yet they never were appointed for the sake of themselves, but for another end; they were types of Christ, and were designed to lead the faith of the people of God to him; they never were intended as proper expiations of sin, and much less to cover and encourage immorality; whenever therefore they were offered up in a hypocritical manner, and without faith in Christ, and in order to atone for sinful actions, without any regard to the sacrifice of Christ, they were an abomination to the Lord. These were not the only things the Lord commanded the children of Israel; nor the chief and principal ones; and in comparison of others, of more consequence and moment, were as none at all; and which are next mentioned.

Jeremiah 7:23

Ver. 23. But this thing commanded I them, saying,.... This was the sum and substance of what was then commanded, even obedience to the moral law; this was the main and principal thing enjoined, and to which the promise was annexed:

obey my voice: the word of the Lord, his commands, the precepts of the decalogue; obedience to which was preferable to the sacrifices of the ceremonial law; see 1Sa 15:22, wherefore it follows:

and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; the meaning is, that while they were obedient to him, he would protect them from their enemies, and continue them in their privileges and blessings, which he had bestowed upon them as his peculiar people:

and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you; not only in some of them, but in all of them; not merely in the observance of legal sacrifices, but chiefly in the performance of moral actions; even in all the duties of religion, in whatsoever is required in the law, respecting God or man:

that it may be well unto you; that they might continue in the land which was given them for an inheritance, and enjoy all the blessings promised to their obedience.

Jeremiah 7:24

Ver. 24. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear,.... Neither to the law that was given them, nor to the promises that were made unto them, this was the case of the Jewish fathers, and also of their posterity, to whom belonged the law, and the promises, and the service of God:

but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart; what their evil heart imagined, advised and directed to, that they attended to, walked in, and pursued after. The heart of man is evil; it is desperately wicked, even wickedness itself; and so is every thought and every imagination of the thoughts of it and all its counsels, machinations and contrivances; and therefore the consequence of walking in these, or steering the course of life according to them, must be bad:

and went backward, and not forward; they went backwards from the ways of God, and walked not in them. The Targum is,

"they turned the back in my worship, and did not put my fear before their face;"

or else this may design, not their sin, but their punishment, as Kimchi interprets it; they did not prosper, but suffered adversity; a curse, and not a blessing, attended the works of their hands.

Jeremiah 7:25

Ver. 25. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day,.... That is, in all generations; ever since their first coming out of

Egypt, they had been disobedient to the commands of God, and had walked after their own hearts' lusts, and had gone backward, and not forward; for this is not to be connected with what follows:

I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them; which should be rendered, "although I have sent" {x}; which is an aggravation of their sin, that they should continue in their disobedience, though the Lord sent to them to exhort and warn them, not one, or two, of his servants the prophets, but all of them, and that daily; who rose early in the morning, which denotes their care and diligence to do their message; and which, because they were sent of the Lord, and did his work as he directed them, it is attributed to himself; and of these there was a constant succession, from the time of their coming out of Egypt unto that day; which shows the goodness of God to that people, and their slothfulness, hardness, and obstinacy.

{x} xlvaw "et quamvis miserim", Ar. lnterpr. "cum tamen mitterem", Syr.

Jeremiah 7:26

Ver. 26. Yet they hearkened not unto me,.... Speaking by the prophets:

nor inclined their ear; to what was said to them; would not listen to it, and much less obey what was commanded them:

but hardened their neck; and so became stiffnecked, and would not submit to bear the yoke of the law:

they did worse than their fathers; every generation grew more and more wicked, and went on to be so until the measure of their iniquity was filled up; hence it follows:

Jeremiah 7:27

Ver. 27. Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them,.... Before mentioned in the chapter; exhortations to duty, dehortations from sin, promises and threatenings:

but they will not hearken to thee: so as to reform from their evil ways, and do the will of God; they will neither be allured by promises, nor awed by menaces:

thou shalt also call unto them; with a loud voice, showing great vehemency and earnestness, being concerned for their good, and knowing the danger they were in:

but they will not answer thee; this the Lord knew, being God omniscient; and therefore, when it came to pass, it would be a confirmation to the prophet of his mission; and being told of it beforehand, was prepared to meet with and expect such a reception from them; so that he would not be discouraged at it; and at the same time it would confirm the character given of this people before.

Jeremiah 7:28

Ver. 28. But thou shalt say unto them,.... Having found by experience, after long speaking and calling to them, that they are a disobedient and incorrigible people:

this is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God; who, though the Lord is their God, and has chosen and avouched them to be his special people, whom he has distinguished by special favours; yet what he says by his prophets they pay no regard unto, and are no better than the Gentiles, which know not God:

nor receiveth correction; or "instruction" {y}; so as to be reclaimed, and made the better; neither by the word, nor by the rod; neither had any effect upon them:

truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth; neither faith nor faithfulness is in them; nothing but lying, hypocrisy, and insincerity.

{y} rowm wxql alw "neque acceperunt disciplinam", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 7:29

Ver. 29. Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away,.... This supplement is made, because the word is feminine; and therefore cannot be directed to the prophet, but to Jerusalem, and its inhabitants; shaving the head is a sign of mourning, **Job 1:20** and this is enjoined, to show that there would soon be a reason for it; wherefore it follows:

and take up a lamentation on high places: that it might be heard afar off; or because of the idolatry frequently committed in high places. The Targum is,

"pluck off the hair for thy great ones that are carried captive, and take up a lamentation for the princes:"

for the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath; a generation of men, deserving of the wrath of God, and appointed to it, on whom he determined to pour it out; of which his rejection and forsaking of them was a token: this was remarkably true of that generation in which Christ and his apostles lived, who disbelieved the Messiah, and had no faith in him, and spoke lying and blasphemous words concerning him; and therefore were rejected and forsaken by the Lord; and wrath came upon them to the uttermost.

Jeremiah 7:30

Ver. 30. For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the Lord,.... Meaning not a single action only, but a series, a course of evil actions; and those openly, in a daring manner, not only before men, but in the sight of God, and in contempt of him, like the men of Sodom, Ge 13:13:

they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to defile it; that is, set their idols in the temple; here Manasseh set up a graven image of the grove, 2Ki 21:7 which was done, as if it was done on purpose to defile it.

Jeremiah 7:31

Ver. 31. And they have built the high places of Tophet,.... Where was the idol Moloch; and which place had its name, as Jarchi thinks, from the beating of drums, that the parents of the children that were burnt might not hear the cry of them: which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom; a valley near Jerusalem, and

lay to the south of it,
Jos 15:8:

to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire: which was done, as Jarchi says, by putting them into the arms of the brasen image Moloch, heated hot. The account he gives of Tophet is this,

"Tophet is Moloch, which was made of brass; and they heated him from his lower parts; and his hands being stretched out, and made hot, they put the child between his hands, and it was burnt; when it vehemently cried out; but the priests beat a drum, that the father might not hear the voice of his son, and his heart might not be moved:"

but in this he is mistaken; for "Tophet" was not the name of an idol, but of a place, as is clear from this and the following verse. There is some agreement between this account of Jarchi, and that which Diodorus Siculus {z} gives of Saturn, to whom children were sacrificed by the Carthaginians; who had, he says, a brasen image of Saturn, which stretched out his hands, inclining to the earth; so that a child put upon them rolled down, and fell into a chasm full of fire:

which I commanded them not: not in my law, as the Targum; nor by any of the prophets, as Jarchi paraphrases it; he commanded them, as Kimchi observes, to burn their beasts, but not their sons and daughters. The instance of Abraham offering up Isaac will not justify it. The case of Jephthah's daughter, if sacrificed, was not by divine command. The giving of seed to Moloch, and letting any pass through the fire to him, is expressly forbidden, Le 18:21:

neither came it into my heart; it was not so much as thought of by him, still less desired, and much less commanded by him. Jarchi's note is,

"though I spoke to Abraham to slay his son, it did not enter into my heart that he should slay him, but to make known his righteousness."

{z} Bibliothec. Par. 2. l. 20. p. 756.

Jeremiah 7:32

Ver. 32. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord,.... And they were coming on apace; a little longer, and they would be come; for it was but a few years after this ere Jerusalem was besieged and taken by the army of the Chaldeans, and the slaughter made after mentioned:

that it shall no more be called Tophet: no more be used for such barbarous and idolatrous worship; and no more have its name from such a shocking circumstance:

nor the valley of the son of Hinnom; as it had been from the times of Joshua:

but the valley of slaughter: or, "of the slain"; as the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; because of the multitude of men that should be killed there, or brought there to be buried; as follows:

for they shall bury in Tophet till there be no place: till there be no more room to bury there; or, "because there was no place" {a} elsewhere; the number of the slain being so many: this was in righteous judgment, that where they had sacrificed their children, there they should be slain, at least buried.

{a} Mwqm Nyam "quod, [vel] eo quod nullus (alius. sit) locus", Munster; "ideo quod non (erie) locus", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 7:33

Ver. 33. And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth,.... That is, those which remain unburied, for which there will be found no place to bury them in; all places, particularly Tophet, being so full of dead bodies; not to have a burial, which is here threatened, was accounted a great judgment:

and none shall fray them away; or frighten them away; that is, drive away the fowls and the beasts from the carcasses. The sense is, either that there should be such a vast consumption of men, that there would be none left to do this, and so the fowls and beasts might prey upon the carcasses without any disturbance; or else that those that were left would be so devoid of humanity, as not to do this office for the dead.

Jeremiah 7:34

Ver. 34. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem,.... Signifying that the devastation should not only be in and about Jerusalem, but should reach all over the land of Judea; since in all cities, towns, and villages, would cease

the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness; upon any account whatever; and, instead of that, mourning, weeping, and lamentation:

the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride; no marrying, and giving in marriage, and so no expressions of joy on such occasions; and consequently no likelihood, at present, of repeopling the city of Jerusalem, and the other cities of Judah:

for the land shall be desolate; without people to dwell in it, and till it. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, "the whole land".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 8

In this chapter the prophet goes on to denounce grievous calamities upon the people of the Jews; such as would make death more eligible than life; and that because of their idolatry, **Jer 8:1** and also because of their heinous backslidings in other respects, and continuance in them, **Jer 8:4** likewise their impenitence and stupidity, **Jer 8:6** their vain conceit of themselves and their own wisdom; their false interpretation of Scripture, and their rejection of the word of God, **Jer 8:8** their covetousness, for which it is said their wives and fields should be given to others, **Jer 8:10**, their flattery of the people, and their impudence, on account of which, ruin and consumption, and a blast on their vines and fig trees, are threatened, **Jer 8:11**, their consternation is described, by their fleeing to their defenced cities; by their sad disappointment in the expectation of peace and prosperity; and the near approach of their enemies; devouring their land, and all in it; who are compared to serpents and cockatrices that cannot be charmed, **Jer 8:14** and the chapter is closed with the prophet's expressions of sorrow and concern for his people, because of their distress their idolatry had brought upon them; and because of their hopeless, and seemingly irrecoverable, state and condition, **Jer 8:18**.

Ver. 1. At that time, saith the Lord, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah,.... That is, either the Chaldeans or the Romans would do this; for this refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, either by the former or the latter; and it is certain that Jerusalem was ploughed up by the Romans, whereby the prophecy in **Mic 3:12** was accomplished; when it is highly probable the graves were dug up, and the bones of the dead brought out, and scattered abroad by way of revenge; or it may be that graves were opened, especially the graves of kings and great men, for the sake of finding treasure in them: it follows,

and the bones of his princes; of the princes of Judah:

and the bones of the priests; that sacrificed to idols:

and the bones of the prophets: the false prophets; though this might be the case of the priests and prophets of the Lord; whose bones, in this general devastation, might be exposed as well as others; which of all might be thought to be the most sacred: and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem out of their graves; high and low, rich and poor, male and female; their graves, in common, were without the city.

Jeremiah 8:2

Ver. 2. And they shall spread them before the sun and the moon, and all the host of heaven,.... The stars. This shows, not only that they should be publicly exposed; but, as it refers to their idolatrous worship of the sun, moon, and stars, that these deities will not be able to help them; as they could not prevent their dead bodies being dug up, so neither could they order or cause them to be gathered together, and buried again:

whom they have loved; whereas they ought to have loved the Lord their God, and him only: it means an idolatrous love of and affection for them; and not the love of them, as creatures for use and delight; otherwise the light of the sun, moon, and stars, is sweet, and their influence great; and a pleasant thing it is to behold them, and especially the former of them, the fountain of light and heat: and whom they have served; more and besides the Creator of them, whom they should have served, the Lord of hosts, and him only:

and after whom they have walked; not in a natural and literal sense, but in a religious one, as is after explained:

and whom they have sought; for advice and counsel, and by making their prayers and supplications to them:

and whom they have worshipped; by bowing the knee, or kissing the hand; by offering sacrifices, and burning incense, and putting up petitions to them; by trusting in them, and expecting good things from them; see
2Ki 21:3:

they shall not be gathered, nor be buried: meaning not the men that should die in those times, but the bones that should be brought out of the graves; these, having been scattered about, should not be collected together again, and replaced in their sepulchres:

they shall be for dung upon the face of the earth; that is, they should lie and rot upon the face of the earth, and crumble into dust, and become dung for it; see
Ps 83:10.

Jeremiah 8:3

Ver. 3. And death shall be chosen rather than life,.... By them that should be alive in those times, who would be carried captive into other lands, and be used very hardly, and suffer greatly, by the nations among whom they should dwell; see **Re 9:6**. The Septuagint version, and those that follow it, make this to be a reason of the former, reading the words thus, "because they have chosen death rather than life"; see
De 30:19, but the other sense is best, which is confirmed by what follows:

by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family; the nation of the Jews, become very corrupt and degenerate; so the people of Israel are called the whole family of Israel, **Am 3:1**, now it is foretold, that those which remained of that people, who died not by famine, or were not slain by the sword, yet should be in such a miserable condition, as that death would be more eligible to them than life:

even which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the Lord of hosts: for, though they were carried captive by men, yet the thing was of the Lord, and a just punishment upon them for their sins.

Jeremiah 8:4

Ver. 4. Moreover, thou shalt say unto them,.... The Jews, in Jeremiah's time, in order to leave them inexcusable, though the Lord had before assured that they would not hearken to him, **Jer 7:27**:

thus saith the Lord, shall they fall, and not rise? men, when they fall, endeavour to get up again, and generally they do:

shall he turn away, and not return? when a man turns out of the right way into a wrong one, as soon as he is sensible of his mistake, he returns back; this is usually done among men. This is generally the case in a natural sense, and might be expected in a moral sense; that whereas these people had fallen into sin, they would rise again by repentance; and, having turned from the good ways of God, would soon return again to them.

Jeremiah 8:5

Ver. 5. Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding?.... These people fill into sin, and rise not again by repentance; they turn out of the good ways of God and religion, and return not again; they backslide and revolt from the Lord, and they continue in their revolt and rebellion; their backsliding is an everlasting one; there is no hope of their repentance and recovery: it is a vehement and passionate expostulation about the people of the Jews, founded upon the former general observation, showing them to be the worst of all people: it is a common saying, "it is a long lane that has no turning"; but these people, having departed from the Lord, return no more. A very learned man renders the words, "why does Jerusalem turn away this people with an obstinate aversion?" {b} that is, the rulers and governors of Jerusalem, as in Mt 23:37 or rather thus, "why does a stubborn aversion turn away this people, O Jerusalem?" and so they are an address to the magistrates and inhabitants of Jerusalem.

They hold fast deceit; practise it, and continue in the practice of it, both with God and man:

they refuse to return: to the Lord, to his worship, and to the right ways of holiness and truth, from whence they had erred; see **Jer 5:3**.

{b} txun hbvm Mlvwry hzh Meh hbbwv ewdm "quare avertit hunc populum Hierosolyma aversione pertinaci? [vel] quare avertit populum hunc", O Jerusalem, "aversio pertinax?" De Dieu.

Jeremiah 8:6

Ver. 6. I hearkened and heard,.... These are either, the words of the prophet, as Kimchi and Abarbinel think; who listened and attended to, and made his observations upon, the words and actions, conduct and behaviour, of this people, of which he gives an account: or of the Lord himself, as the Targum; who hearkened to the language of their hearts and actions, and heard the words of their mouth; all that they spoke against him, against his prophets, and those that feared his name; all their lying words, their false swearing; all their oaths and curses, and every idle expression that dropped from them; all which he takes notice of, and men are accountable to him for them:

but they spake not aright: what is so in the sight of God and good men; what is agreeable to right reason, and the word of God; they spoke what was contrary to all this. Wicked men neither think aright, nor act aright, nor speak aright.

No man repented him of his wickedness: of his heart, of his lips, and of his life; no man can repent of himself; no man truly does, without the grace of God:

saying, what have I done? which question an impenitent man does not put; but when it is made, the true answer to be returned to it is, that which is contrary to the nature of God; which is a breach of his law; which a man has reason to be ashamed of; at which he may be astonished, it being so exceeding sinful; that which cast the angels out of heaven, Adam out of paradise, and wicked men down to hell; which is deserving of the wrath of God, and eternal death; for which a man can never make atonement himself; and by which he is undone, to all intents and purposes, without an interest in Christ, and salvation by him.

Every one turneth to his course: which is not a good, but a bad one; sin is a way, a road, a path, in which men walk; a course, a series of sinning, a progress and persisting in it; such as the course of this world, and this course is evil, Eph 2:2:

as the horse rusheth into the battle, which denotes their swiftness to commit sin, the pleasure they take in it, and their inattention to danger, and death by it; see Job 39:21, or overflows {c}; the impetuosity of the horse is expressed by the overflowing of a river.

{c} Pjwv owok "quasi equus ferox", Heb. "inundans", Piscator; "sisut equus effundens se", Schmidt. So Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it.

Jeremiah 8:7

Ver. 7. Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times,.... Of going and returning; for this is a bird of passage, as Pliny {d} and other naturalists observe; which goes away as winter approaches, and returns when that is over. The temperature of the air, as to heat and cold, and the natural propensity of such birds of passage to breed their young, are thought to be the incentives to change their habitation; and wonderful thing it is in nature, that they should know the proper time of their passage, what places to go to, and how to steer their course thither; and, as the above naturalist observes, they go and come in the night:

and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming: for these also are birds of passage; the turtle is absent in the winter, and its coming is a sign of spring, **So 2:11**, the crane, according to Aelianus {e}, goes away with the stork, and returns when winter is over; and the same is observable of the swallow; hence the common saying, one swallow does not make spring; so Horace {f} uses "hirundine prima" for the beginning of spring. Where these birds retire to is not known; some think the swallows fly into Egypt and Ethiopia; but Olaus Magnus {g} says they lurk in holes, and even under water, where they hang together, and are sometimes drawn out in clusters, and being brought to the fire, and thawed, will revive and fly about.

But my people know not the judgment of the Lord; meaning not the unsearchable judgments of God, or those providential dispensations of God which are a great deep, and are not clearly discerned and known by the best of men; but either his own judgments, which are inflicted upon wicked men as punishments for sin, which yet are not taken notice of, and duly attended to, as they should be; or rather the law of God, and his revealed word, which is the rule of judgment and justice, and a declaration of righteousness, showing what is just and good, and ought to be done, which they were willingly ignorant of; or else the final and future judgment of God after death, to which all men must come, and into which every thought, word, and work, will be brought, and which day wicked men put far from them; see **Isa 1:3**.

{d} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 23. {e} De Animal. l. 3. c. 23. {f} Ep. l. 1. Ep. 7. {g} De Ritu Gent. Septent. l. 19. c. 11.

Jeremiah 8:8

Ver. 8. How do ye say, we are wise,.... Which they were continually boasting of, though they were ignorant of the judgment of the Lord, and were more stupid than the stork, turtle, crane, and swallow:

and the law of the Lord is with us? this was the foundation of their boast, because the law was given to them, and not to the nations of the world, which knew not God, and therefore they must be a wise and understanding people; and this law continued with them, they had it in their synagogues, and in their houses, and read it, and heard, or at least they might and ought to have heard and read it, and in this they trusted; of this character and cast were the Jews in the times of Christ and his apostles, **Ro 2:17** to which agrees the Targum,

"how say ye, we are wise, and in the law of the Lord we trust?"

Lo, certainly in vain made he it; either the law, which was made or given in vain by the Lord to this people, since they made no better use of it, and valued themselves upon having it, without acting according to it; or the pen of the scribe, which was made by him in vain to write it, as follows:

the pen of the scribes is in vain; in vain, and to no purpose, were the scribes employed in writing out copies of the law, when either it was not heard or read, or however the things it enjoined were not put in practice; or the pen of the scribes was in vain, when employed in writing out false copies of the law, or false glosses and interpretations of it, such as were made by the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time, and the fathers before them, by whose traditions the word of God was made of none effect: and so the Targum,

"therefore, lo, in vain the scribe hath made the lying pen to falsify;"

that is, the Scriptures. The words may be rendered,

"verily, behold, with a lie he wrought; the pen: is the lie of the scribes {h}."

{h} Myrpo rqv je hve rqvl hnh Nka "utique ecce, mendacio operatus est; stylus mendacium scribarum est", Schmidt. Approved by Reinbeck. De Accent. Heb. p. 435.

Jeremiah 8:9

Ver. 9. The wise men are ashamed,.... Of the wisdom of which they boasted, when it would appear to be folly, and unprofitable to them:

they are dismayed and taken; frightened at the calamities coming upon them, and taken as in a snare, as the wise sometimes are in their own craftiness, **Job 5:13**.

Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; sent by the prophets, which urged obedience to the law, and is the best explanation of it; but this they despised, and refused it:

and what wisdom is in them? to contemn that, which, if attended to, would have been profitable to them, and the means of making them wise unto salvation; let them therefore boast of their wisdom ever so much, it is certain there can be none in persons of such a spirit and conduct.

Jeremiah 8:10

Ver. 10. Therefore will I give their wives unto others,.... To strangers, to the Gentiles; than which nothing could be more disagreeable to them, or a sorer punishment, of a temporal one:

and their fields to them that shall inherit them; or,

to the heirs {i}; other and new ones; and who should possess them as if they were the true and rightful heirs of them.

For everyone from the least even to the greatest is given to covetousness; from the prophet even to the priest everyone dealeth falsely; covetousness and false dealing, which prevailed in all ranks and orders of men among them, were the cause of their ruin: covetousness is the root of all evil; and to deal falsely, or make a lie, as the words may be rendered, is diabolical and abominable in the sight of God, and especially in men of such characters, who were to preach truth to others; See Gill on "Jer 6:13".

{i} Myvrwyl "haeredibus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 8:11

Ver. 11. For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people,.... See Gill on "Jer 6:14",
See Gill on "Jer 6:15".

Jeremiah 8:12

Ver. 12. See Gill on "Jer 6:14".
See Gill on "Jer 6:15".

Jeremiah 8:13

Ver. 13. I will surely consume them, saith the Lord,.... Or, "gathering I will gather them" {k}; into some one place, the city of Jerusalem, and there destroy them. The word is, hyylk Nwvl, expressive of consumption and destruction, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech observe; and so the Targum,

"destroying I will destroy them, saith the Lord."

There shall be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade; some understand this by way of complaint, that there were no fruit on the vine and fig tree, nor even leaves; which they allegorically interpret of the fruit of good works being wanting in them, which was the cause of their ruin. Others think there are metaphors which describe the manner of their destruction; and so the Targum,

"and they shall fall, as the grapes fall from the vine, and as the falling fruit from the fig tree, and as the leaf from the tree."

Though it rather intends the sterility of the land, and in general the famine that should attend the siege of Jerusalem. Grapes and figs are mentioned only, as Kimchi observes, because they were the chief fruits, and they are put for the whole.

And the things that I have given them shall pass away from them; whatever they had in their barns and cellars, or were just becoming ripe in their fields, vineyards, and gardens, should either be blasted, or rather be taken away and devoured by their enemies, so that they themselves should not enjoy them. The Targum interprets it of the law transgressed by them, as the cause of their ruin, and paraphrases it thus,

"because I have given them my law from Sinai, and they have transgressed it;"

and so Jarchi,

"this shall be unto them, because I have given them statutes, and they have transgressed them."

{k} Mpyoa Poa "eolligendo colligam eos", Montanus, Tigurine version. So Piscator.

Jeremiah 8:14

Ver. 14. Why do we sit still?.... In the country, where were barrenness and want of provisions; in the villages and unwalled towns, where they were exposed to the spoils and ravages of the enemy. These words, with what follow, are the words of the prophet, in the language of the Israelites, as Kimchi observes.

Assemble yourselves; this is the gathering together, in order to be consumed, before threatened, which they themselves were made to do:

and let us enter into the defenced cities; such as Jerusalem, where they thought they should be safe from their enemies:

and let us be silent there; either promising themselves rest, quietness, and security; or suggesting that it would be right in them to say nothing by way of complaint; having no reason to murmur at their afflictions, since they were no other than what their own sins had brought upon them:

for the Lord our God hath put us to silence; stopped their mouths that they could not complain, being convicted in their consciences of their sins; and brought them into a state of destruction and death, which makes silent:

and given us water of gall to drink; afflictions bitter and deadly. The Targum is,

"and hath made us drink the cup of an evil curse, as the heads of serpents;"

a poisonous and deadly potion:

because we have sinned against the Lord; which they were obliged to own; though it does not appear that they had true repentance for their sins, or amended their ways; sometimes confession of sin is made without either of these.

Jeremiah 8:15

Ver. 15. We looked for peace,.... Outward prosperity, affluence of temporal blessings, peace with enemies, and safety from them, which the false prophets had given them reason to expect; or which last they concluded and hoped for, from their being in the defenced cities:

but no good came; they were disappointed in their expectation; the good that was promised them, and they looked for, never came, but all the reverse:

and for a time of health; or, of healing {l}; the political wounds of the commonwealth of Israel:

and behold trouble! or "terror" {m}; at the approach of the enemy, described in the following verses. The Targum is,

"a time of pardon of offences, and, lo, a punishment of sins."

Healing, in Scripture, signifies pardon of sin; see Ps 41:4.

{l} hprm "medelae, [vel] sanationis", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Schmidt.
{m} hteb "terror", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Schmdit.

Jeremiah 8:16

Ver. 16. The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan,.... That is, was heard at Jerusalem. It seems to be a hyperbolical expression, showing the certainty of the coming of the Assyrian monarch and his army, to invade Judea, and besiege Jerusalem; the news of which was brought from Dan, which lay in the further part of the land; see **Jer 4:15**, and pointing at the way in which they should come northwards, through Phoenicia and the tribe of Dan, with a numerous cavalry of horses and horsemen: for, by "his" horses are meant Nebuchadnezzar's; unless, with Calvin, it can be thought that they are called the Lord's, because ordered and sent by him, whose war it was against the people. The Targum paraphrases the words thus,

"because they worshipped the calf that is in Dan, a king with his army shall come up against them, and carry them captive;"

and so Jarchi interprets it.

The whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; his horses, strong and mighty; see **Jud 5:22** where we read of the prancings of the mighty ones; and here the Targum,

"at the voice of the treading of his strong ones, all the inhabitants of the earth shall be moved;"

and by the land trembling undoubtedly are meant the inhabitants of the land, filled with dread and consternation at the noise and near approach of the Chaldean army.

For they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; or, "the fulness of it"; which because of the certainty of it, is represented as then done: the city, and those that dwell therein; meaning not only the city of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it, but other cities also, the singular being put for the plural; and so the Targum,

"the cities, and they that dwell in them."

Jeremiah 8:17

Ver. 17. For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you,.... The Chaldeans, comparable to these noxious and hurtful creatures, because of the mischief they should do unto them. The Targum is,

"for, lo, I will raise up against you people that kill as the destroying serpents."

These were raised up by the Lord, and sent by him, just as he sent fiery serpents among the Israelites in the wilderness, when they sinned against him; there literally, here metaphorically.

Which will not be charmed: Jarchi says, at the end of seventy years a serpent becomes a cockatrice, and stops its ear, that it will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, according to Ps 58:4, the meaning is, that these Chaldeans would not be diverted from their purposes in destroying of the Jews by any arts or methods whatever; as not by force of arms, so not by good words and entreaties, or any way that could be devised.

And they shall bite you, saith the Lord; that is, kill them, as the Targum interprets it; for the bite of a serpent is deadly.

Jeremiah 8:18

Ver. 18. When I would comfort myself against terror,.... Either naturally, by eating and drinking, the necessary and lawful means of refreshment; or spiritually, by reading the word of God, and looking over the promises in it:

my heart is faint in me; at the consideration of the calamities which were coming upon his people, and which were made known to him by a spirit of prophecy, of which he had no room to doubt. So the Targum takes them to be the words of the prophet, paraphrasing them,

"for them, saith the prophet, my heart grieves."

Jeremiah 8:19

Ver. 19. Behold, the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people,.... This was what made his heart faint, such was his sympathy with his countrymen, his people in distress, whom he affectionately calls the daughter of his people, whose cry was loud, and whose voice he heard lamenting their case:

because of them that dwell in a far country; because of the Chaldeans, who came from a far country; see **Jer 5:15** who were come into their land, and devoured it; through fear of them, and because of the devastation they made; hence the voice of their cry: or this is to be understood of the Jews in a far country, carried captive into Babylon, and the voice of their cry there, because of their captivity and oppression. So Abarbinel and the Targum,

"lo, the voice of the cry of the congregation of my people from a far country;"

and so read the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her King in her? these are the words of the people, complaining of the Lord, calling in question whether he was in Zion, and whether he was King there; and if he was, how came it to pass that he did not protect it; that he suffered the city to be taken, and the inhabitants to be carried captive?

Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with their strange vanities? that is, with their idols, and their idolatrous worship; this is the Lord's answer to them, giving a reason why he suffered the enemy to come in among them, and prevail over them, namely, their idolatry. It may be rendered, "with the vanities of a stranger" {n}; of a strange people, or of a strange god.

{n} rkn ylbhb "in vanitatibus alienigenae", Montanus; "[sub.] populi", Vatablus; "dei alieni", Pagninus So Ben Melech.

Jeremiah 8:20

Ver. 20. The harvest is past,.... Which was in the month of Ijar, as Jarchi observes, and answers to part of April and May:

the summer is ended; which was in the month Tammuz, and answers to part of June and July:

and we are not saved; delivered from the siege of the Chaldeans; and harvest and summer being over, there were no hopes of the Egyptians coming to their relief; seeing winter was approaching; and it may be observed, that it was in the month of Ab, which answers to part of July and August, that the city and temple were burnt. These are the words of the people of the Jews, despairing of help and salvation. So the Targum,

"the congregation of Israel said, the time is passed, the end is up, and we are not redeemed."

Jeremiah 8:21

Ver. 21. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt,.... These are the words, not of God, as Jerom; nor of Jerusalem, as the Targum; but of the prophet, as Kimchi observes, expressing his sympathy with the people in their affliction: and they may be rendered, "for the breach of the daughter of my people" {o}, which was made when the city was broken up and destroyed, Jer 52:7.

I am broken; in heart and spirit:

I am black; with grief and sorrow. The Targum is,

"my face is covered with blackness, black as a pot."

Astonishment hath taken hold on me; at the miseries that were come upon his people; and there was no remedy for them, which occasion the following words.

{o} rbv le "super contritione", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "super confractione", Schmidt; "ob fractionem", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 8:22

Ver. 22. Is there no balm in Gilead?.... Which was famous for it; see Ge 37:25, or rather turpentine or rosin, a gum which drops from pine trees and the like; since balm or balsam grew on this side Jordan, near Jericho and Engedi, and not beyond Jordan, in the land of Gilead; and rosin is good for healing. Some render it "treacle", but very wrongly, since, as Calvin observes, that is a composition of many things,

Is there no physician there? or surgeon, anyone that heals wounds and bruises; very probably there were many such lived in Gilead, since it was a place where proper medicines were to be got and applied: this may be understood of prophets and teachers, who, in a moral and spiritual sense, are instruments of healing of men, by showing them their evil, calling them to repentance, and directing where to go for healing or pardon of sin; namely, to Christ, the alone physician, and to his precious blood, shed for the remission of sins. Some reference may be had to Elijah, who was of Gilead, and to the school of the prophets there, 1Ki 17:1. The Targum is,

"Jeremiah the prophet said, perhaps there are no good works in me, that I should supplicate for the house of Israel; should I not desire the doctrine of Elijah the prophet, who was of Gilead, whose words were healing?"

Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? that is, seeing there is balm in Gilead, and a physician there, how comes it to pass that such medicine is not made use of, and such a physician not applied to, that health might be restored? This shows the stupidity, sluggishness, and indolence of the people, and how inexcusable they were, as well as the prophet's great concern for their welfare; the want of means of deliverance, or non-attendance to them, or the failure of them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 9

This chapter is a continuation of the judgments of God upon the Jews for their sins and transgressions herein mentioned; illustrated by the lamentation of the prophet; by calling for the mourning women, and upon other women that had lost their husbands or children, with an intimation that none of any rank and class should escape. The prophet is introduced mourning over the destruction of his people, **Jer 9:1**, and as uneasy at his stay with them, because of their uncleanness, treachery, lying, unfaithfulness, and deceit, **Jer 9:2**, wherefore the Lord threatens to melt and try them; and for their deceitfulness particularly to visit them, and avenge himself on them, **Jer 9:7**, the destruction is described by the desolation of the mountains and habitations of the wilderness; they being so burnt up, that there were neither grass upon them, nor beasts nor birds to be seen or heard about them; and of Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, so that there was no inhabitant in them, **Jer 9:10**, upon which a wise man is inquired after, to give the true reason of all this, **Jer 9:12** but none appearing, the Lord gives it himself; which were their disobedience to his law, and their worship of idols, following the imagination of their own hearts, **Jer 9:13** wherefore they are threatened to be fed with wormwood and gall; to be scattered among the nations, and a sword sent after them to their utter consumption, **Jer 9:15**, hence, for the certainty of it, mourning women are ordered to be called for in haste, to assist them in their mourning, on account of their distress, **Jer 9:17**, and such as were mothers of children are bid to teach their daughters and neighbours lamentation, because of the children and young men cut off by death, and for the carcasses of men that should fall as dung in the field, and as the handful after the harvestman, **Jer 9:20**, and it is suggested that none should escape; not the wise man by any art or cunning he was master of; nor the strong man by his strength; nor the rich man by his riches; and therefore ought not either of them to glory in these things, but in the Lord, as exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, **Jer 9:23**, and the chapter is concluded with a strong asseveration, that the wicked, both circumcised and uncircumcised, should be punished, **Jer 9:25**.

Ver. 1. Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears,.... Or, "who will give to my head water, and to mine eyes a fountain of tears?" as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions. The prophet wishes that his head was turned and dissolved into water, and that tears might flow from his eyes as water issues out from a fountain; and he suggests, that could this be, it would not be sufficient to deplore the miserable estate of his people, and to express the inward grief and sorrow of his mind on account of it.

That I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people; the design of all this is to set forth the greatness and horribleness of the destruction, signifying that words were wanting to express it, and tears to lament it; and to awaken the attention of the people to it, who were quite hardened, insensible, and stupid. The Jewish writers close the eighth chapter with this verse, and begin the ninth with the following.

Jeremiah 9:2

Ver. 2. Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men,....

Such as travellers take up with in a desert, when they are benighted, and cannot reach a town or village. This the prophet chose, partly that he might have an opportunity to give vent to his grief, being alone; for which reason he did not desire to be in cities and populous places, where he might be amused and diverted while his people were in distress: and partly to show his sympathy, not being able to bear the sight of their misery; and also some degree of indignation at their impieties, which had brought ruin upon them; on account of which it was more eligible to dwell with the wild beasts of the desert than with them in his native country: wherefore it follows,

that I might leave my people, and go from them; which of itself was not desirable; no man chooses to leave his country, his own people, and his father's house, and go into distant lands and strange countries; and especially into a wilderness, where there is neither suitable food nor agreeable company: wherefore this shows, that there must be something very bad, and very provoking, to lead him to take such a step as this: the reason follows,

for they be all adulterers; either in a literal or figurative sense; the latter seems rather intended; for though corporeal fornication and adultery might greatly prevail among them, yet not to such a height as that "all" of them were guilty; whereas idolatry did generally obtain among them: an assembly of treacherous men; not a few only, but in general they were apostates from God and from true religion, and treacherous to one another. The Septuagint calls them "a synod"; and Joseph Kimchi interprets it "a kingdom"; deriving the word from rue, as it signifies to have rule and dominion; denoting, that the kingdom in general was false and perfidious.

Jeremiah 9:3

Ver. 3. And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies,.... Their tongues were like bows, and their lying words like arrows, which they directed against persons to their injury; see Ps 11:2, or, "like their deceitful bow" {p}; to which the Targum agrees,

"they teach their tongues words of falsehood, they are like to a deceitful bow."

Most agreeably to the accents the words may be rendered, "they bend their tongues, their bow is a lie" {q}; either deceitful, or carries a lie in it, and shoots one out of it:

but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; which a man should do everything for, and nothing against; and which he should earnestly contend for, and not part with or give up at any rate; not only for the truth of doctrine, for faith, as the Targum; for the doctrine of faith, the truth of the Gospel, and as it is in Christ; but for truth between man and man, for veracity, rightness, and integrity: for they proceed from evil to evil; from one sin to another, growing worse and worse, as wicked men and deceivers usually do. Kimchi observes, it may be interpreted, as of evil works, so of the evil of punishment, from one evil of the enemy to another; or this year they are smitten with blasting, another with mildew, or with the locust, and yet they turn not from their evil ways:

and they know not me, saith the Lord; the God of truth, and without iniquity, and who will severely punish for it; they did not serve and worship him as the only Lord God. The Targum is,

"the knowledge of my fear they learned not."

{p} rqv Mtvq "veluti acum falsum", Munster; "quasi arcum mendacii", V. L.
{q} "Et tetenderunt linguam suam, arcus ipsorum mendacium est", De Dieu; "qui tendunt linguam suam, arcus eorum est mendacium", Schmidt. Approved by Reinbeck. De Accent. Heb. p. 437.

Jeremiah 9:4

Ver. 4. Take ye heed everyone of his neighbour,.... Take care of being imposed upon by them, since they are so given to lying and deceit; be not too credulous, or too easily believe what is said; or keep yourselves from them; have no company or conversation with them, since evil communications corrupt good manners:

and trust ye not in any brother; whether by blood or by marriage, or by religion, believe not his words; trust him not, neither with your money, nor with your mind; commit not your secrets to him, place no confidence in him; a people must be very corrupt indeed when this is the case: or, "trust ye not in every brother" {r}; some may be trusted, but not all though the following clause seems to contradict this,

for every brother will utterly supplant; or, in supplanting supplant {s}; play the

Jacob, do as he did by his brother, who supplanted him twice; first got the birthright from him, and then the blessing; which was presignified by taking his brother by the heel in the womb, from whence he had his name; and the same word is here used, which signifies a secret, clandestine, and insidious way of circumventing another;

and every neighbour will walk with slanders; go about spreading lies and calumnies, as worshippers, backbiters, and tale bearers do. The word lykd is used for a "merchant"; and because such persons went from place to place with their goods, and made use often times of fraudulent practices to deceive people, it is applied to one that is guilty of slander and calumny; **So 3:8**.

{r} wxjbt la xa lk lew "et omni fratri ne fidatis", Paganinus. {s} bqey bwqe "supplantanto supplantat", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 9:5

Ver. 5. And they will deceive everyone his neighbour,.... In conversation, with lying words; and in trade and commerce, by art and tricking:

and will not speak the truth; with respect to facts they report, or goods they sell:

they have taught their tongue to speak lies; and become so accustomed to lying that they cannot do otherwise; it is as it were natural to them:

and weary themselves to commit iniquity; spared no pains to come at it, nor any in it, and go on even to weariness; are more laborious and indefatigable in committing sin than good men are in doing good; which shows great folly and stupidity. The Targum is,

"they are become foolish, they have erred."

Jeremiah 9:6

Ver. 6. Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit,.... In the midst of a people of deceit, as Kimchi and Ben Molech. These are the words of the Lord to the prophet, showing what a people he dwelt among, and had to do with; how cautiously and prudently he should act; how little they were to be trusted to and depended upon; and what little hope there was of bringing them to true repentance, since there was so much deceit and hypocrisy among them. The Targum interprets the words not of the habitation of the prophet, but of the people, thus,

"they sit in the house of their own congregation, and talk of their iniquities deceitfully;"

and so Jarchi,

"while they are sitting they devise deceitful devices."

Through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the Lord: or, "because of deceit" {t}; hypocrisy being a reigning and governing sin in them; they liked not the true knowledge of God, and refused to worship him according to the revelation of his will.

{t} hmrmb "ob dolum", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 9:7

Ver. 7. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... Because of this deceit and hypocrisy, and lying:

behold, I will melt them, and try them: as the refiner does his gold and silver, by putting them into the fire of afflictions, and thereby remove their dross and corruption from them. So the Targum,

"behold, I will bring distress upon them, and melt them, and try them."

For how shall I do for the daughter of my people? the sense is, what could be done otherwise or better? what was more fit or proper to be done, than to melt and try them, and purge away their sin, "from the face of the daughter of my people", as the words may be rendered? The Septuagint version is, "what shall I do from the face of the wickedness of my people?" and so the Targum,

"what shall I do from before the sins of the congregation of my people?"

that is, by way of resentment of them, and in order to remove them.

Jeremiah 9:8

Ver. 8. Their tongue is as an arrow shot out,.... As an arrow out of a bow, which moves swiftly, and comes with great force; or, "drawn out" {u}; as out of a quiver. The word is used of gold, and rendered "beaten gold", 1Ki 10:16, gold drawn out into plates; and here of an arrow drawn out of a quiver; and so it is interpreted in the Talmud {w}; or is "wounding", as the Septuagint, or "slaying" {x}; denoting the mischief and injury done to the characters of men, by a deceitful, detracting, and calumniating tongue. The Targum is, "as a sharp arrow their tongue"; which pierces deep, and is deadly; See Gill on "Jer 9:3",

it speaketh deceit; deceitful words, by which men are imposed upon, and are led into wrong ways of thinking and acting:

one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth; salutes him in a friendly manner; wishes him all health, peace, and prosperity; professes a sincere and cordial friendship for him, and pretends a strong affection to him:

but in his heart he layeth wait; to draw him into snares, and circumvent, trick, and defraud him.

{u} jxwv "extensa, [vel] tracta", Vatablus {w} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 30. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {x} Jugulans, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 9:9

Ver. 9. Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the Lord,.... The Targum adds,

"to bring evil upon them."

Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? the Targum is,

"or of a people whose works are such, shall I not take vengeance according to my pleasure?"

See Gill on "Jer 5:9".

Jeremiah 9:10

Ver. 10. For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing,.... Because of the desolation of them; because no pasture upon them, nor flocks feeding there; or "concerning" them, as the Arabic version; or "upon" them {y}, in order to cause the lamentation to be heard the further; but the former sense seems best, as appears by what follows. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read it as an exhortation to others, "take up a weeping": but they are the words of the prophet, declaring what he would do.

And for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation; for the cottages of the shepherds, erected for their convenience, to look after their flocks, feeding on the mountains, and in the valleys; for the wilderness does not denote barren places, but pastures:

because they are burnt up; by the fire of the Chaldeans, who burnt the cottages, and drove off the cattle:

so that none can pass through them; or there is none that passes through; as no inhabitant there, so no passenger that way; which shows how very desolate these places were:

neither can men hear the voice of the cattle; the lowing of the oxen, or the bleating of the sheep, there being none to be heard, being all carried off; and indeed no men to hear them, had there been any:

both the fowl of the heavens and the beasts are fled, they are gone; or, "from the fowl of the heavens to the beasts", &c. {z}, the places lying waste and uncultivated; there were no seed for the fowls to pick up, which generally frequent places where there is sowing, and where fruit is brought to perfection; and no pasture for the beasts to feed upon. Kimchi says these words are an hyperbole. The word hmhb, "beast", being by geometry, or numerically, fifty two, the Jews {a} gather from hence, that for the space of fifty two years no man passed through the land of Judah; which they reckon from the time that Zedekiah was carried captive, to the commandment of Cyrus.

{y} Myrhh le "super montibus", Cocceius; "super montes", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus. {z} hmhb red Mymvh Pwem "ab ave coelorum usque ad bestiam", Schmidt. {a} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 145. 2. & Gloss. in ib. Vid. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 11. 1, 2.

Jeremiah 9:11

Ver. 11. And I will make Jerusalem heaps,.... That is, the walls and houses of it shall be thrown down, and become heaps of stones and rubbish:

and a den of dragons; only inhabited by wild beasts:

and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without inhabitant; so that the calamity would be universal; not only Jerusalem, but all the cities of the land, would be destroyed, forsaken, and uninhabited.

Jeremiah 9:12

Ver. 12. Who is the wise man that may understand this?.... Not the calamity, but the cause of it; a man of wisdom would inquire into it, find it out, and understand it; but the intimation is, that there was not a wise man among them, at least very few; there were scarce any that took any notice of these things, or were concerned about them:

and who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken; and foretold this desolation and destruction; meaning a prophet:

that he may declare it; as from the Lord, namely, what follows:

for what the land perisheth, and is burnt like a wilderness, that none passeth through? that is, what were the sins of the inhabitants of the land, which brought such distress upon it, and for which it became such a ruinous heap, and like the heath in the wilderness, so that it had no inhabitant, nor even a passenger: they must be some very great and abominable iniquities that were the cause of all this.

Jeremiah 9:13

Ver. 13. And the Lord saith,.... The Septuagint version adds, "to me"; there being no wise and understanding man, nor prophet {b}, to take up this affair, and open the cause of it, therefore the Lord undertakes it himself: the question was put to them, but they not answering it, the Lord does it,

because they have forsaken my law, which I set before them; in a plain and easy manner, so as to be readily understood; yet this they attended not unto, but forsook it, neglected it, and cast it behind their backs. Kimchi's note on the phrase, "before them", is,

"not in heaven is it, nor beyond the sea is it;"

see De 30:11:

and have not obeyed my voice; in the law, and by the prophets:

neither walked therein: according to it, as the Lord directed; they neither hearkened to the voice of the Lord, nor did as they were instructed by it.

{b} Vid. T. Nedarim, fol. 81. 1. & Bava Metzia fol. 85. 1, 2.

Jeremiah 9:14

Ver. 14. But have walked after the imagination of their own heart,.... What their own hearts devised, chose, and were best pleased with;
See Gill on "Jer 7:24",

and after Baalim; the idols of the Gentiles; these they served and worshipped, and not the true God:

which their fathers taught them; which was so far from excusing them, that it was an aggravation of their sin, that they had continued in their wicked ways and idolatrous practices, from age to age, from one generation to another. This then was the cause of their calamity and destruction; they had forsaken the law of the Lord, and had broken that; they had chose their own ways, and had been guilty of idolatrous practices time out of mind; wherefore the Lord had shown much longsuffering and patience with them, and would now no longer forbear he was just and righteous in his doings.

Jeremiah 9:15

Ver. 15. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel,.... He calls himself "the Lord God of hosts", of armies above and below, in heaven and in earth, in opposition to Baalim, the idols of the Gentiles; which word signifies "lords"; which, though there be many who are called so, there is but one God, and one Lord, who is God over all, and "the God of Israel"; who had chosen them, and distinguished them by the blessings of his goodness; and yet they had forsaken him, and followed after other gods; by which the eyes of his glory were provoked, and he was determined to chastise them for it:

behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood; that is, with straits or difficulties, as the Septuagint version; with bitter afflictions; such are not joyous, but grievous; which are irksome and disagreeable, as bitter things, and particularly wormwood, are to the taste. The Targum is,

"I will bring tribulation upon them, bitter as wormwood:"

and give them water of gall to drink; meaning either of the entrails of a beast so called, or of the juice of the herb hemlock, as the word is rendered in Ho 10:4, as Kimchi; or of the poison of a serpent, as Jarchi; and so the Targum,

"and I will give them the cup of cursing to drink as the heads of serpents:"

signifying that their punishment would be very severe, though just.

Jeremiah 9:16

Ver. 16. I will scatter them also among the Heathen,.... Besides the bitter judgments of famine and pestilence during the siege, what remained of them should be carried captive out of their own land into foreign countries, than which nothing could be more distressing:

whom neither they or their fathers have known; a circumstance greatly aggravating their captivity:

and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them; or men that kill with the sword, as the Targum: it chiefly regards such of them as were scattered among the Moabites and Ammonites, and especially that went into Egypt; see Jer 44:27.

Jeremiah 9:17

Ver. 17. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider ye,.... The punishment that was just coming upon them, as Kimchi; or the words that the Lord was about to say unto them; as follows:

and call for the mourning women, that they may come; the same with the "praeficae" among the Romans; persons that were sent for, and hired by, the relations of the dead, to raise up their mourning; and who, by their dishevelled hair, naked breasts, and beatings thereon, and mournful voice, and what they said in their doleful ditties in praise of the dead, greatly moved upon the affections of the surviving relatives, and produced tears from them. This was a custom that early prevailed among the Jews, and long continued with them; and was so common, that, according to the Misnic doctors {c}, the poorest man in Israel, when his wife died, never had less than two pipes, and one mourning woman; See Gill on "Mt 9:23". Now, in order to show what a calamity was coming on them, and what mourning there would be, and what occasion for it; the Lord by the prophet, not as approving, but deriding the practice, bids them call for the mourning women to assist them in their lamentations:

and send for cunning women, that they may come; such as were expert in this business, and could mimic mourning well, and had the art of moving the affections with their voice and gestures.

{c} Miss. Cetubot, c. 4. sect. 4.

Jeremiah 9:18

Ver. 18. And let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us,.... Deliver out a mournful song, as the Arabic version; setting forth their miseries and distresses, and affecting their minds with them. The prophet puts himself among the people, as being a party concealed in their sufferings, and sympathizing with them, as well as to show the certainty of then and how soon they would be involved in them:

that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters; or balls of the eye, as the Targum and Kimchi; these hyperbolical expressions are used to express the greatness of the calamity, and that no mourning was equal to it; see **Jer 9:1**.

Jeremiah 9:19

Ver. 19. For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion,.... Out of the fortress of Zion, out of the city of Jerusalem, which was thought to be inexpugnable, and could never be taken; but now a voice is heard out of that, deploring the desolation of it:

how are we spoiled? our houses destroyed, and we plundered of our substance:

we are greatly confounded: filled with shame, on account of their vain confidence; thinking their city would never be taken, and they were safe in it:

because we have forsaken the land; the land of Judea, being obliged to it, the enemy carrying them captive into other countries:

because our dwellings have cast us out; not suffering us to continue there any longer, as being unworthy of them; or enemies have cast down our habitations to the earth, as Jarchi; and so the Targum, "for our palaces are desolate"; the principal buildings in Jerusalem, as well as the houses of the common people, were thrown down to the ground, or burnt with fire, and particularly the temple; so that the whole was in a most ruinous condition, and a fit subject of a mournful song.

Jeremiah 9:20

Ver. 20. Yet hear the word of the Lord, O ye women,.... Not the mourning women, but others who had lost their husbands and their children, and had just reason for real mourning; and therefore they are called upon to it, not only because they were more tenderhearted than men, as Kimchi observes; or because they were more attentive to the hearing of the word of God than men; but because of the paucity of men, such numbers being slain in the siege, and by the sword; and of the loss the women had sustained, see **Jer 9:22**:

and let your ear receive the word of his mouth; by his prophets; so the Targum,

"let your ear hearken to the words of his prophets:"

and teach your daughters wailing. The Arabic version, "a mournful song"; but not the daughters of the mourning women are meant; but the real daughters of those who had lost their husbands or children; since it follows:

and everyone her neighbour lamentation; signifying that the mortality among them would be very universal, not a family escaping; which is described in the next verses. This wailing and lamentation was made by responses, according to the Jews; for they say {d},

"what is lamentation? when one speaks, and all the rest answer after her, as it is written in **Jer 9:20**."

{d} Misn. Moed Katon, c. 3. sect. 9.

Jeremiah 9:21

Ver. 21. For death is come up into our windows,.... Their doors being shut, bolted, and barred, they thought themselves safe, but were not; the Chaldeans scaled their walls, broke in at the tops of their houses, or at their windows, and destroyed them: for the invasion of the enemy, and the manner of their entrance into them, seem to be described. Death is here represented as a person, as it sometimes is in Scripture; see **Re 6:8** and as coming suddenly and unawares upon men, and from whom there is no escape, or any way and method of keeping him out; bolts and bars will not do; he can climb up, and go in at the window:

and is entered into our palaces; the houses of their principal men, which were well built, and most strongly fortified, these could not keep out the enemy: and death spares none, high nor low, rich nor poor; it enters the palaces of great men, as well as the cottages of the poor. The Septuagint version is, "it is entered into our land"; and so the Arabic version; only it places the phrase, "into our land", in the preceding clause; and that of "into", or "through our windows", in this:

to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets; these words are not strictly to be connected with the preceding, as though they pressed the end of death, ascending up to the windows, and entering palaces, to cut off such as were in the streets; but the words are a proposition of themselves, as the distinctive accent "athnach" shows; and must be supplied after this manner, and passing through them it goes on, "to cut off", &c. and so aptly describes the invading enemy climbing the walls of the city, entering at windows, or tops of houses, upon or near the walls; and, having destroyed all within, goes forth into the streets, where children were at play, and slays them and into courts or markets, where young men were employed in business, and destroys them. The Jews {e} interpret it of famine.

{e} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 60. 2.

Jeremiah 9:22

Ver. 22. Speak, thus saith the Lord,.... These are the words of the Lord to Jeremiah, to go on with his prophecy in his name; so the Targum,

"prophesy, thus saith the Lord:"

even the carcasses of men shall fall as dung upon the open field; or, "upon the face of the field" {f}; this shows the reason why the women are called to mourning, because the men would fall by the sword in the open field, and there lie and rot, and become dung upon it. The Targum is,

"as dung spread upon the face of the field;"

which denotes the great number that should fall, which would cover the face of the field; the condition they should be in; and the contempt and neglect they should be had in:

and as the handful after the harvestman, and none shall gather them; as a handful of corn that is forgot, and left by the harvestman; or as ears of corn which are dropped by the reaper, or binder, and are usually gleaned or gathered up by the poor that follow; but in the case referred to, or supposed, are not gathered; so it would be with these people; they should be left upon the ground, like a handful forgot, or like ears of corn dropped, and not gathered up, and there they should lie, and none should bury them.

{f} hdvh ynp le "super faciebus agri", Montanus, Schmidt; "in facie agri", Cocceius; "in superficie agri", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 9:23

Ver. 23. Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,.... Not in his natural wisdom, or knowledge of natural things: this is often but an appearance of wisdom, and is science falsely so called; and whatever is real of this kind is of God; and the best falls short of leading men to a true and saving knowledge of God; the foolishness of God is wiser than it; and it is made foolish, destroyed, and brought to nought by him: nor in evangelical wisdom and knowledge; not in that which is less common, or what fits men for public usefulness, as ministerial gifts; for such are received from above; are more for the use of others than a man's self; there is something better than these, which a man may not have, and yet have these, which is grace; those may fade, or be taken away; and a man have them, and be lost eternally: nor in that which is more general, speculative knowledge of Gospel truths; for if it is attended with conceit, it is little or nothing that a man knows; if he is proud of it, his knowledge is not sanctified; and it is no other than what the devils themselves have: nor in that which is more special; wisdom in the inward part, or a spiritual and saving knowledge of God in Christ; this a man has wholly of free grace, and should give the praise and glory of it to God, and not attribute it to himself:

neither let the mighty man glory in his might; not in his natural might or strength; this is of God, and is greater in some of the brutes than in men; and is what God can take away, and does often weaken it in the way by diseases, and at last destroys it by death; nor in moral strength, or in the power of free will; which is very weak and insufficient to do anything that is spiritually good: nor even in spiritual strength; this is from Christ; it is only through him strengthening his people that they do what they do; and all supplies and increase of it are from him; and therefore no room for glorying:

let not the rich man glory in his riches; these come of the hand of God, and are what he can take away at pleasure; they are very uncertain and precarious things; there is a better and more enduring substance; these cannot profit in a day of wrath, nor deliver from death, corporeal, spiritual, or eternal. And the intention of the words here is to show, that neither the wise man with all his art and cunning, nor the mighty man by his strength, nor the rich man through his riches, could save themselves from the destruction before prophesied of. The Targum paraphrases them thus,

"thus saith the Lord, let not Solomon the son of David the wise man praise (or please himself) in his wisdom; nor let Samson the son of Manoah the mighty man please himself in his might; nor let Ahab the son of Omri the rich man please himself in his riches."

Jeremiah 9:24

Ver. 24. But let him that glorieth glory in this,.... In the Lord alone, as it is interpreted by the apostle, 1Co 1:31:

that he understandeth and knoweth me; or, "in understanding and knowing me" {g}; or, "he understanding and knowing me"; for this clause is descriptive of the person that is to glory in the Lord, and not of the thing in which he is to glory; for it is not even in the knowledge of God that men are to glory, but in the Lord himself; and he that understands himself as a creature dependent on God, and especially as a fallen sinful creature; and still more as one regenerated by the grace of God; he will never glory in himself, but in the Lord; and so, if he understands divine things, and the scheme of salvation by the grace of God, and not by the works of men; and if he knows the Lord, he will never glory in his own wisdom, nor in his own strength, nor in his riches, nor in his righteousness, nor in any man or creature, but in the Lord only; and particularly in what follows:

that I am the Lord, which exercise lovingkindness; in such various instances; in election, redemption, effectual calling, the pardon of sin, justification, adoption, and eternal life; and towards persons so very undeserving of any favour; and to have an interest in this exceeds all things else; it is better than life, and all the enjoyments of it:

judgment; exercising it on Christ, sin being laid, found, and condemned on him; and through Christ protecting and defending his people; and by Christ at the last day:

and righteousness in the earth; wrought by Christ here on earth in our nature, and imputed to his people in their present state, whereby they have a right to eternal glory:

for in these things I delight, saith the Lord; in showing mercy, grace, and favour, to miserable and undeserving men; in making his Son an offering for sin, and bruising him; and in his righteousness, whereby the law is magnified and made honourable.

{g} ytwa edyw lkvh "intelligendo et sciendo me", Montanus.

Jeremiah 9:25

Ver. 25. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,.... Or, "are coming" {h}; it seems to respect the time after the Babylonish captivity, when the punishment after threatened took place, and not before:

that I will punish all them that are circumcised with the uncircumcised; Jews and Gentiles together. The circumcised. Jews trusting in their circumcision, and being, as is said in the next verse, uncircumcised in heart, were no better than the uncircumcised Gentiles; wherefore both being transgressors of the law, and despisers of the Gospel of Christ, are threatened with destruction; see **Ro 2:12**.

{h} Myab Mymy "dies [sunt] venientes", Schmidt, Montanus; "venturi sunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 9:26

Ver. 26. Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab,.... Places and people among which the Jews were dispersed, and whose punishment is predicted in Jeremiah chapters forty six through forty nine, and whose countries are now under the dominion of the Turks: {h}

and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness; who dwelt in the desert of Arabia; these, according to Kimchi, were the Kedarenes, and the kingdoms of Hazor, a people that dwelt in the utmost corners, whom Nebuchadnezzar smote, as Jeremiah foretold,
Jer 49:28. Jarchi's note is,

"them that are cut off in a corner of the wilderness;"

that live by themselves, and have no communication with other people; were at the greatest distance, and secure; dwelt alone, and had neither gates nor bars, as is said of the same people, Jer 49:31. The Septuagint version is, "upon everyone that shaves what is about his face, that dwells in the wilderness"; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions; to which agrees the Targum,

"upon all that round the corners of the head, that dwell in habitations in the wilderness,"

The Arabians used to shave the extreme hairs of the head round about, as the forehead, temples, and behind the ears, which are the corners of the head; so Herodotus {i} reports of them, who seem to be meant here; though some think the Jews are intended, to whom this was forbidden,
Le 19:27:

for all these nations are uncircumcised; in the flesh; though they were not punished on this account, because it was not commanded them, as Kimchi observes; but is mentioned to show that the Jews were no better than they, though circumcised, and that they should be punished together:

and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart; had not the circumcision made without hands; or were not circumcised in heart, to love the Lord, fear and serve him; the foreskin of their flesh taken off availed not so long as that on their heart remained, and they were stupid, impenitent, and disobedient.

{h} Written about 1750. Editor. {i} In Thalia, vel l. 3. c. 8.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 10

This chapter shows that there is no comparison to be made between God and the idols of the Gentiles; represents the destruction of the Jews as near at hand; and is closed with some petitions of the prophet. It begins by way of preface with an exhortation to hear the word of the Lord, and a dehortation not to learn the way of the Heathens, or be dismayed at their signs, since their customs were in vain, Jer 10:1 which lead on to expose their idols, and set forth the greatness and glory of God. Their idols are described by the matter and makers of them, Jer 10:3 and from their impotence to speak, to stand, to move, or do either good or evil, Jer 10:4, but, on the other hand, God is described by the greatness of his name and power, and by the reverence that belongs unto him;

in comparison of whom all the wise men of the nations are brutish, foolish, and vain, Jer 10:6, by the epithets of true, living, and everlasting, and by the terribleness of his wrath, Jer 10:10, by his power and wisdom, in making the heavens and the earth, in causing thunder and lightning, wind and rain, when the gods that have no share in these shall utterly perish,
Jer 10:11 their makers being brutish, and brought to shame; and they falsehood and breathless vanity, the work of errors, and so shall come to ruin, Jer 10:14, but he, who is Jacob's portion, and whose inheritance Israel is, is not like them; being the former of all things, and his name the Lord of hosts, Jer 10:16 and next follows a prophecy of the destruction of the Jews; wherefore they are bid to gather up their wares, since in a very little time, and at once, the Lord would fling them out of the land, and bring them into distress,
Jer 10:17, upon which the prophet expresses his sympathy with his people in trouble, and the part of grief he took and bore with them, Jer 10:19, the particulars of his distress, through the desolation of the land, and the captivity of the people, with the cause and authors of it, by whose means these things were brought upon them, are mentioned, Jer 10:20, and the Chaldean army, the instruments of their ruin, are represented as just at hand, Jer 10:22, when the prophet, directing himself to God, acknowledges the impotence of man in general to help and guide himself, deprecates correction in anger to himself in particular, and prays that the wrath of God might be poured down upon the Heathens, by whom his people were devoured, consumed, and made desolate, Jer 10:23.

Ver. 1. Hear ye the word which the Lord speaketh unto you, O house of Israel. Or, "upon you"; or, "concerning you" {k}; it may design the judgment of God decreed and pronounced upon them; or the prophecy of it to them, in which they were nearly concerned; or the word of God in general, sent unto them by his prophets, which they were backward of hearing; and seems to refer particularly to what follows.

{k} Mkyle "super vos", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "de vobis", Vatablus; "super vobis", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 10:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith the Lord, learn not the way of the Heathen,.... Of the nations round about them, particularly the Chaldeans; meaning their religious ways, their ways of worship, their superstition and idolatry, which they were very prone unto, and many of which they had learned already; and were in danger of learning more, as they were about to be dispersed in divers countries, and especially in Chaldea, which was a very superstitious and idolatrous nation:

and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; by which are meant, not any extraordinary signs, such as are predicted in **Joe 2:30**, and by our Lord, as signs of the last destruction of Jerusalem, and of his coming, and of the end of the world, Mt 24:3, but ordinary signs, which are no other than the sun, and moon, and stars, which are set up for signs and seasons, and days and years, **Ge 1:14**, and as long as they are observed as signs of places and of times, it is well enough; but if more is attributed unto them, as portending things future, and as having an influence on the birth and death, dispositions and actions of men, when in such a conjunction, situation, and position, it is wrong; which is what is called judicial astrology, and to which the Chaldeans were much addicted, and is here condemned; nor should men possess themselves with fears with what shall befall them on such accounts, since all things are under the determination, direction, and influence of the God of heaven, and not the signs of them; especially they should not be so observed as to be worshipped, and to be so awed by them as to fear that evil things will befall, if they are not; and to this sense is the Syriac version, "the signs of the heavens do not worship, or fear". Jarchi interprets them of the eclipses of the luminaries, which may be thought to forbode some dreadful things {l}:

for the Heathen are dismayed at them; which is a reason why the people of God should not, because it is a Heathenish fear; or, "though the Heathen" {m}, &c.; though they are frightened at such and such conjunctions and positions of the stars, and fear that such and such dreadful things will follow; and never regard the supreme Being and first cause of all things; yet such who have the knowledge of the true God, and a revelation of his will, ought not to be terrified hereby; see Isa 47:13. This text is brought to prove that the Israelites are not under any planet {n}; since the Heathens are dismayed at them, but not they.

{l} Vid. T. Bab. Succa, fol. 29. 1. {m} wtxy yk "quamvis consterni soleant", Vatablus. {n} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 156. 1.

Jeremiah 10:3

Ver. 3. For the customs of the people are vain,.... Or, "their decrees", or "statutes" {o}, their determinations and conclusions, founded upon the observation of the stars; or, their "rites and ceremonies" {p} in religion, in the worship of the sun and moon, and the hosts of heaven. The Syriac version is, "the idols of the people are nothing"; and which appears by what follows:

for one cutteth a tree out of the forest (the work of the hands of the workman) with the axe; not for building, or for burning, but to make a god of; the vanity, stupidity, and folly of which are manifest, when it is considered that the original of it is a tree that grew in the forest; the matter and substance of it the body and trunk of a tree cut down with an axe, and then hewed with the same, and planed with a plane, and formed into the image of a man, or of some creature; and now, to fall down and worship this must be vanity and madness to the last degree; see
Isa 44:13.

{o} twqx "decreta", Targ.; "statua", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt. {p} Ritus, Vatablus; "ceremoniae", Tigurine version.

Jeremiah 10:4

Ver. 4. They deck it with silver and with gold,.... Cover it with plates of silver and gold, for the sake of ornament, that it may look grand, majestic, and venerable; and by this means draw the eye and attention, and so the devotion of people to it:

they fasten it with nails and hammers, that it move not. The sense is, either that the idol was fastened to some post or pillar, or in some certain place on a pedestal, that it might not fall, it not being able otherwise to support itself; or the plates of silver and gold, as Kimchi thinks, were fastened to the idol with nails and hammers, that so they might not be taken away from it; for, were it not for the nails, the god would not be able to keep his silver and golden deckings.

Jeremiah 10:5

Ver. 5. They are upright as the palm tree,.... Being nailed to a post, or fastened to a pillar, or set upon a pedestal, and so stand erect without bending any way; and are like a palm tree, which is noted for its uprightness; hence the church's stature is compared to it, **So 7:7**, here it is a sarcasm, and a bitter one:

but speak not; man, that is of an erect stature, in which he differs from other creatures, has the faculty of speech, which they that go upon four feet have not; but the idols of the Gentiles, though erect, have not the power of speaking a word; and therefore can give no answer to their worshippers; see Ps 115:5,

they must needs be borne: or, "in carrying be carried" {q}; when being made they are fixed in the designed place, or are moved from place to place; they are then carried in men's arms, or on their shoulders:

because they cannot go; they have no life, and so are incapable of motion of themselves; they have feet, but walk not; and cannot arise and bestir themselves for the help of those that pray unto them, Ps 115:7,

be not afraid of them, for they cannot do evil; that is, inflict judgment, cause drought, famine, or pestilence, or any other evil or calamity:

neither is it also in them to do good; to give rains and fruitful seasons, or bestow any favour, temporal or spiritual; see Jer 14:21.

{q} awvny awvn "portando portantur", Schmidt; "portabitur" Pagninus; "portabuntur", Montanus; "omnino portanda sunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 10:6

Ver. 6. Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord,.... None like him, for the perfections of his nature, for the works of his hands, and for the instances of his kindness and beneficence, both in a way of grace and providence; there is none like him for doing good, or doing evil; that is, for bestowing favours, or inflicting punishments; there is none like him for goodness or greatness, as follows:

thou art great; in his nature; of great power, wisdom, faithfulness, truth, and goodness; and in his works of creation and providence, and in everything in which he is concerned; and greatness is to be ascribed to him, and greatly is he to be praised; and all the glory due unto his name is to be given him:

and thy name is great in might; his name is himself, and his greatness much appears in the exertion of the attribute of his power and might; in making all things out of nothing, in upholding the whole creation, and in the government of the universe; or the fame of him is great through the effects of his power, which are to be seen throughout the earth.

Jeremiah 10:7

Ver. 7. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations?.... Not that the fear of him among the nations was general, or that he was owned by them as their King; but inasmuch as of right he was their King, so he ought to have been feared and reverenced by them; and it was an instance of great stupidity and ingratitude not to do it. The Targum renders it,

"King of all people;"

and the Syriac version, "King of all worlds"; some reference seems to be had to this passage in Re 15:3, where, instead of "King of nations", the Lord is called "King of saints"; and there refers to a time when he will be feared, that is, worshipped and served by all nations, as he ought to be:

for to thee doth it appertain; that is, fear belongs to him, it is his due; and this, with keeping the commandments of God, is the whole duty of man. The Vulgate Latin version is, "thine is the glory"; honour or praise, as the Syriac version; and so Jarchi interprets it of beauty or glory; but the Targum,

"thine is the kingdom;"

and so Kimchi; and to which agrees the Arabic version.

Forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee; that is, among all the wise kings of the nations, and all their wise counsellors, there is none like unto God for wisdom, or for glory and majesty; there is none of them that has such a kingdom as he has, or that governs it as he does; and as all their power and government, so all that wisdom by which they manage their political affairs, are from him.

Jeremiah 10:8

Ver. 8. But they are altogether brutish and foolish,.... In comparison of the Lord, there is no knowledge and wisdom in them, this is a certain fact; they are verily brutish and foolish; or they are one and all so, there is not a wise man among them: or, "in one thing they are brutish" {r}, &c.; namely, in their idolatry; however wise they may be in other respects, in this they are foolish: or, to give no more instances of their brutishness {s} and folly, this one is sufficient, even what follows,

the stock is a doctrine of vanities; or what they teach persons, as to worship the trunk of a tree, or any idol of metal, or of wood, is a most vain and foolish thing, and argues gross stupidity and folly, and proves them to be brutish, and without understanding.

{r} wreby txabw "in hoc uno Munster", Tigurine version; "et certe in una quadem re obbrutescunt", Piscator. So Jarchi and Abarbinel. {s} The Talmudists seem to take the word reb to have the signification of burning; for the sense of these words being asked, it is replied, there is one thing that burns the wicked in hell; what is it? idolatry; as it is here written, "a doctrine of vanities is the stock."

Jeremiah 10:9

Ver. 9. Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish,.... In Cilicia, where the Apostle Paul was born; according to Josephus, as Jerom says, it was a country in India. The Targum renders it, from Africa, and calls it silver "rolled up", or "covered"; so the Vulgate Latin; such was beaten with a hammer into plates, and might be rolled up for better convenience of shipment; and with which they covered and decked their idols, to make them look glittering and pompous, and command some awe and reverence from the common people. The Arabic version renders it, "solid silver"; it being the same word from whence the firmament of heaven has its name, or the wide expanse; hence we render it "spread", stretched, and drawn out into plates. The Syriac version is, "the best silver"; as very likely that from Tarshish was reckoned.

And gold from Uphaz; called sometimes "the gold of Uphaz"; Da 10:5 or "Fess"; perhaps the same with the gold of Ophir, Job 28:16 and so the Targum here calls it, "gold from Ophir"; to which agrees the Syriac version; and was esteemed the best gold.

The work of workmen, and of the hands of the founder; melter or refiner, being first purified by him from dross, and then wrought into plates, and polished, and fitted for the idol; and all this being owing to the art and workmanship of men, shows the brutishness and ignorance of the people, in worshipping it as a god. Blue and purple is their clothing; not the clothing of the workmen, but of the idols; these colours seem to be chosen to dazzle the eyes of the populace, and cause them to entertain a high opinion of them; the "blue" being the colour of the heavens, and the "purple" what is wore by kings; and so both may denote their deity and dominion. But, alas!

they are all the work of cunning men: both the idols, and their clothing; especially the latter is meant, which were curiously wrought and embroidered by men skilful in that art.

Jeremiah 10:10

Ver. 10. But the Lord is the true God,.... In opposition to all nominal and fictitious deities, which are not by nature God, only by name, and in the foolish imagination of the people: or, "the Lord God is truth" {t}; that cannot lie, is true to his covenant and promises, and will never deceive those that worship and serve him, and rely upon him:

he is the living God; that has life in himself, and is the author and giver of life to others; to all men natural life, to some men spiritual and eternal life; whereas the gods of the Gentiles have no life in themselves; are either dead men, or lifeless and inanimate things, stocks and stones, and can give no life to others. The words are in the plural number, "he is the living Gods"; not for the sake of honour and glory, as Kimchi observes; but as denoting a trinity of Persons in the unity of the divine essence: for though the words Myyx Myhla, "living Gods", that is, living divine Ones, or Persons, are in the plural number, yet awh, "he", is in the singular; which is worthy of observation. The Syriac version renders it, "the God of the living"; and so an Oxford Arabic MS, see Mt 22:32.

And an everlasting King; from everlasting to everlasting; he is King of old, even from eternity, and will ever be so; his kingdom is an everlasting one, and his throne for ever and ever, and he will always have subjects to reign over; nor will he have any successor, as mortal kings have, even such who have been deified by their idolatrous subjects.

At his wrath the earth shall tremble; that is, the inhabitants of it, when it is poured forth in judgments in the present life, and in the everlasting destruction of soul and body hereafter; and then shall they fear him, though now they do not.

And the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation; especially at the day of judgment; see **Re 6:16**.

{t} tma Myhla "Deus veritas", Pagninus, Montanus, Coceeius.

Jeremiah 10:11

Ver. 11. Thus shall ye say unto them,.... The godly Jews to the idolatrous Chaldeans; and therefore this verse alone is written in the Chaldee language. The Targum prefaces it thus,

"this is the copy of the letter, which Jeremiah the prophet sent to the rest of the elders of the captivity in Babylon; and if the people among whom you are should say unto you, serve idols, O house of Israel; then shall ye answer, and so shall ye say unto them, the idols whom ye serve are errors, in whom there is no profit; from heaven they cannot bring down rain, and out of the earth they cannot produce fruit:"

so Jarchi observes: it follows in the text,

the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens; which the Targum paraphrases thus,

"they and their worshippers shall perish from the earth, and shall be consumed from under these heavens."

The words may be considered as a prediction that so it would be; or as an imprecation that so it might be, and be read, "let the gods", &c.; and considered either way, being put into the mouth of the godly Jews in Babylon, to be openly pronounced by them in the midst of idolaters, and in answer to them, when they should be enticed to idolatry, show how open and ingenuous men should be in the profession of the true God, and his religion and worship: and it may be observed, against the deniers of the true deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, that if he is not that God that made the heavens and the earth, he lies under this imprecation or prediction.

Jeremiah 10:12

Ver. 12. He hath made the earth by his power,.... The Targum considers these words as a continuation of the answer of the Jews to the Chaldeans, paraphrasing them thus,

"and so shall ye say unto them, `we worship him who hath made the earth by his power':"

who stands opposed to the gods that made not the heavens and the earth, that had no title to deity, nor right to worship; but the true God has both; and his making the earth out of nothing, and hanging it upon nothing, and preserving it firm and stable, are proofs of his almighty power, and so of his deity; and consequently that he ought to be worshipped, and he only.

He hath established the world by his wisdom; upon the rivers and floods; or he hath poised it in the air; or he hath disposed it in an orderly, regular, and beautiful manner, as the word {u} used signifies; by making it terraqueous, partly land, and partly water; by opening in it fountains and rivers; by diversifying it with hills and vales, with wood and arable land, &c.; all which show the wisdom as well as the power of God.

And hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion; as a canopy over the earth, as a tent to dwell in; and which is beautifully bespangled with the luminaries in it; hence it has the name of expanse, or the firmament of heaven.

{u} Nykm "aptavit", Cocceius; "preparans", Schmidt; a Nwk "aptavit, disposuit", Gussetius.

Jeremiah 10:13

Ver. 13. When he uttereth his voice,.... Declares his will and pleasure, issues out his commands; or when he thunders, for thunder is his voice, Job 37:2:

there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; they are covered with clouds, and these clouds full of water; which is brought about by the following means:

and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; from the north and south, as Kimchi observes from the philosophers; or from all parts of the earth, the most distant, and particularly from the sea, the border of the earth, from whence clouds arise, being exhaled by the sun; see 1Ki 18:43.

He maketh lightnings with rain; which very often go together, and the one makes way for the other, Job 28:26, though they are so opposite one to another:

and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures; the caverns of the earth, or his fists, in which he holds it, Pr 30:4 and lets its loose at his pleasure; he has plenty of it in reserve; he is Lord over it; he sends it forth when he pleases, and it fulfils his will and his word.

Jeremiah 10:14

Ver. 14. Every man is brutish in his knowledge,.... Or science of making an idol, whether it be of wood, or of gold, or silver, or brass; he is no better than a brute, if he thinks, when he has made it, he has made a god: or, "because of knowledge" {w}; for want of it; being without the knowledge of God and divine things, he is like the beasts that perish, Ps 49:20:

every founder is confounded by the graven image; or put to shame on account of it; since, after all his art, and care, and trouble, in melting and refining, and casting it into a form, it is no more than a piece of gold, or silver, or brass, and has no deity, nor anything like it, in it:

for his molten image is falsehood; it is a lie, when it is said to be a god; and it deceives those who worship it, and place any confidence in it. Kimchi renders it, "his covering" {x}. The covering of the idol with gold and silver, with blue and purple, as in Jer 10:4, is all a piece of deceit, to impose upon the people, and lead them into idolatry:

and there is no breath in them; they are mere stocks and stones, lifeless and inanimate creatures; they have neither life themselves, nor can they give it to others.

{w} tedm "propter scientiam", Pagninus, Montanus; "a scientia", Calvin, Grotius, Schmidt. {x} wkon "tectio, [sive] obductio ejus", Vatablus.

Jeremiah 10:15

Ver. 15. They are vanity,.... They are the fruit of the vain imagination of men; to worship them shows the vanity of the human mind; and they are vain things to trust to:

and the work of errors; of erroneous men, and which lead men into errors; and are worthy to be laughed at, as the Targum paraphrases it.

In the time of their visitation they shall perish; or in the time that I shall visit upon them their sins, as the Targum; that is, when Babylon should be destroyed by the Medes and Persians, as Kimchi interprets it; when their idols were destroyed also; see Isa 46:1.

Jeremiah 10:16

Ver. 16. The portion of Jacob is not like them,.... Like those idols, vain, and the work of errors, or shall perish; even the true God, who is the portion of his people, of Jacob, whom he has chosen and redeemed; who call themselves by the name of Jacob, and are Israelites indeed, and plain hearted ones; and who have seen the insufficiency of all other portions, and the excellency of this; for there is none like it, none so large, so rich, so satisfying, and so durable; for God is the portion of his, in all the perfections of his nature, which all, some way or other, are for their good and advantage; and in all his persons, and under every character; even all he has is theirs, now and hereafter:

for he is the former of all things: which idols are not, being the maker of creatures themselves; wherefore the Creator must be a better portion than they; and as he has all things at his dispose, he bestows them on his people, and they cannot want:

and Israel is the rod of his inheritance; chosen and possessed by him, and dear unto him; and wonderful this is, that on the one side he should be the portion of his people; and, on the other, that they should be his portion and his inheritance, when so few in number, and despised by and among men, and but sinful dust and ashes; and especially when what follows is considered:

the Lord of hosts is his name: his title is the Lord of armies, above and below; he rules both in heaven and in earth, and has the inhabitants of both worlds, angels and men, at his command; and yet he chooses a handful of people to be his possession and inheritance.

Jeremiah 10:17

Ver. 17. Gather up thy wares out of the land,.... Or thy merchandise, as the Targum; or thy substance, as the Septuagint; all valuable effects and goods that are movable, which might be carried from place to place. The meaning is, that the Jews would gather up their riches from the several parts of the land of Judea, and bring them to Jerusalem, a fortified place; or they would be in danger of falling into the hands of the enemy. Kimchi interprets the words as if spoken of Babylon, and directed to the Chaldeans, not to be elated with the captivity of Israel; and because the word enk signifies "to humble and subdue" he takes the sense to be,

"gather in or contract thine humiliation or subjection;"

that is, of other nations; refrain thyself, or cease from subduing kingdoms; that is now at an end, it shall be no more so; but the words manifestly respect the people of the Jews, as is clear from the next verse.

O inhabitant of the fortress; of the fortress of Zion, or the fortified city, Jerusalem. The Targum is,

"O thou that dwellest in the strong place, in the fortified cities."

It may be rendered, "that dwellest in the siege" {y}; in the besieged city, Jerusalem.

{y} rwumb ytbvwy "quae habitas in obsidione", V. L. Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 10:18

Ver. 18. For thus saith the Lord,.... This is a reason enforcing the exhortation in the preceding verse, and shows that the same people that are spoken of here are addressed there.

Behold, I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this once; meaning the inhabitants of the land of Judea; or otherwise the prophet would never have expressed such a concern for them as he does in the following verse. Their captivity is signified by the slinging of a stone out of a sling, and shows how sudden, swift, and certain, it would be: and that it would as easily and swiftly be done, and with equal force and rapidity, as a stone is slung out of a sling; and that it would be done by the Lord himself, whoever were the instruments:

and will distress them; or "straiten" {z} them, on every side; it seems to intend the siege; or bring them into great straits and difficulties, through the pestilence, famine, sword, and captivity:

that they may find it; so as he had spoken by his prophets, it coming to pass exactly as they had foretold. The Targum is,

"that they may receive the punishment of their sins;"

and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions, "that thy stroke may be found"; but the Syriac version is very different from either, "that they may seek me and find"; which is an end that is sometimes answered by afflictive dispensations.

{z} Mhl ytruhw "oblidere faciana eos", some in Vatablus; "et angustabo, [vel] obsidebo eos", Schmidt; "faciam ut obsideant eos", Calvin; "arctum ipsis facium", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 10:19

Ver. 19. Woe is me for my hurt!.... Or "breach" {a}; which was made upon the people of the Jews, when besieged, taken, and carried captive; with whom the prophet heartily sympathized, and considered their calamities and distresses as his own; for these are the words of the prophet, lamenting the sad estate of his people.

My wound is grievous; causes grief, is very painful, and hard to be endured:

but I said; within himself, after he had thoroughly considered the matter:

this is a grief; an affliction, a trial, and exercise:

and I must bear it; patiently and quietly, since it is of God, and is justly brought upon the people for their sins.

{a} yrbv le "propter confractionem meam", Cocceius Schmidt,

Jeremiah 10:20

Ver. 20. My tabernacle is spoiled,.... Not the temple at Jerusalem only, rather Jerusalem itself, as Kimchi; or the whole land, as the Targum,

"my land is wasted:"

the allusion is to the tents of shepherds, and denotes the unstable condition of the Jewish nation:

and all my cords are broken: all the rest of the cities of the land are destroyed, as Kimchi; and so the Targum,

"my cities are spoiled:"

as the cords are what the parts of the tabernacle or tent are fastened and kept together with, they may intend the strength of the nation, which lay in its wealth, its fortresses, and the numbers of its people, now weakened, loosed, and broke.

My children are gone forth of me; into captivity, as the Targum interprets it; the prophet, representing Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah. The Septuagint adds, "and my sheep"; keeping on the metaphor of a shepherd, his tent, and flock.

And they are not; either not in the world, being destroyed by one judgment or another; or rather not in their own land, being carried captive.

There is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains; which shows the great destruction and desolation of the land, and its inhabitants, that there would be none to set up a shepherd's tent; perhaps the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the rest of the cities, may be meant.

Jeremiah 10:21

Ver. 21. For the pastors are become brutish,.... The "kings" of Judah, so the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, as Jehoiakim and Zedekiah; though it need not be restrained to these only, but may include all inferior civil magistrates, and even all ecclesiastical rulers, who were the shepherds of the people; but these being like the brute beasts, and without understanding of civil and religious things, and not knowing how to govern the people either in a political or ecclesiastical way, were the cause of their ruin.

And have not sought the Lord; this is an instance of their brutishness and stupidity, and opens the source of all their mistakes and misfortunes; they did not seek the Lord for counsel, by whom kings reign well, and princes decree justice; nor doctrine from the Lord, as the Targum, as the priests and prophets should have done, in order to instruct the people, and feed them with knowledge and understanding; nor did either of them seek the glory of God in what they did, but their own interest, worldly advantage, or applause:

therefore they shall not prosper; in their kingdom, and in the several offices and stations in which they were. Some render the words, "therefore they do not act prudently" {b}; not consulting the Lord, nor warning the people, nor giving them notice of approaching danger:

and all their flocks shall be scattered; the people of the Jews that were under their government, civil or ecclesiastical, should be dispersed in several nations, and especially in Chaldee; wherefore it follows:

{b} wlykvh al "non egerunt prudenter", Vatablus, Tigurine version; "non intellexerunt", Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 10:22

Ver. 22. Behold the noise of the bruit is come,.... Or, "the voice of hearing" {c}; that is, the voice heard; the report that was made that the king of Babylon had invaded the land, and was coming up to besiege Jerusalem: "and a great commotion out of the north country"; a large army from Babylon, which lay north of Judea, which came with great noise, and caused a great trembling and shaking among the inhabitants of the land whither they were coming:

to make the cities of Judah desolate, and a den of dragons; this shows that the whole paragraph is to be understood of the Jewish nation, and of their destruction. See Gill on "Jer 9:11".

{c} hewmv lwq "vox auditionis", Pagninus, Montanus; "vox auditus", Vatablus, Calvin; "vox famae", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 10:23

Ver. 23. O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself,.... Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it of that well known man Nebuchadnezzar, whose way was not in himself, and was not master of his own resolutions, but was under the influence and direction of divine Providence: when he set out of Babylon, he thought to have gone against the Ammonites; but when he came to a place where two ways met; the one leading to the children of Ammon, the other to Jerusalem; God changed his mind, and he steered his course to Jerusalem, to chastise Zedekiah for the breach of his oath: but the words seem to have a more general meaning; and the sense to be, that the prophet knew that it was not with him, nor with any of the godly, to escape the judgments that were coming upon them; that they were entirely in the hands of the Lord, to be guided, directed, and disposed of at his pleasure. The words may be accommodated to spiritual things and the affair of salvation; and be rendered thus, "I know, O Lord, that not for man is his way" {d}; his own way is not good for him; not his sinful way, for this is opposite to God's way, and a going out of it; it is not according to his word; it is after the course of the world; and it is a dark and crooked way, and leads to, and ends in, destruction and death, if grace prevent not: nor the way of his own righteousness; this is no way of access to God, no way of acceptance with him, no way of justification before him, no way of salvation, no way to heaven, and eternal happiness; that which is the good and right way, the only way of salvation, is not of man, in him, or with him naturally; it is not of his devising and contriving, and much less of his effecting; it is not even within his knowledge; and so far as he knows anything of it, he does not approve of it: but it is of God; the scheme of it is of his forming; it is a work wrought out by Christ; it is a way of salvation revealed in the Gospel; and the thing itself is savingly made known, and applied by the Spirit of God; all which is known and owned when men are spiritually enlightened:

it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps; as not in natural and civil things, much less in religious ones; a good man is one that "walks", which supposes life and strength, without which there can be no walking; and a progression, a going on in a way; which ways are Christ, and his ordinances the path of doctrine and of duty; yet it is not even in this good man "to direct" and order "his steps" of himself; it is the Lord that must do it, and does; he can take no step aright without him; he is guided by him and his Spirit, both in the path of truth and of obedience; and hence it is that the saints persevere unto the end; see Ps 37:23.

{d} wkrd Mdal al yk hwhy ytedy "novi, Jehovah, quod non sit homini via ejus", Schmidt; so Vatablus, Cocceius.

Jeremiah 10:24

Ver. 24. O Lord, correct me, but with judgment,.... The prophet here represents the body of the Jewish nation, especially the godly among them; he considers the troubles coming upon the nation as a correction and chastisement of the Lord; he does not refuse it, or desire it might not come upon them; he knew the chastisements of a father are for good; he only entreats it might be "with judgment"; not in strict justice, as his and the sins of his people deserved, then they would not be able to bear it; but in measure and moderation, with a mixture of mercy and tenderness in it; and in a distinguishing manner, so as to make a difference between his own people and others, in the correction of them; see Eze 34:16:

not in thine anger; in vindictive wrath, and hot displeasure, which is elsewhere deprecated by the saints, **Ps 6:1**:

lest thou bring me to nothing; or "lessen me" {e}, or "make me little"; or make us few, as the Arabic version; or bring to a small number, as the Syriac; and so to utter ruin.

{e} ynjemt Np "ne imminuas me", Munster, Calvin, Cocceius; "ne diminuere facias me", Pagninus, Montanus; "ne paucum reddas me", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 10:25

Ver. 25. Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen that know thee not,.... Make a difference between thy people that know thee, and make a profession of thy name, and worship thee, and the Heathen, the nations of the world who are ignorant of God, and worship stocks and stones; while thou correctest thine own people in measure, in love, and not in wrath, pour out without measure all thy fury upon the Gentiles that know not God, and are guilty of the grossest idolatry:

and upon the families that call not on thy name; this does not signify single families, commonly so called; but kingdoms, as the Targum interprets it; Heathen kingdoms and nations, that call not upon or worship the God of Israel, but their own idols; such as the family of Egypt, Zec 14:17 and so it is expressed in a parallel place,
Ps 79:6, which is either taken from hence, or this from thence:

for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate; a heap of words to express the great destruction and desolation of the land of Israel, of Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah; and of their houses and dwelling places, private and public; and of their spoiling them of all their goods, substance, wealth, and riches; which is given as a reason of the above imprecation.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 11

This chapter gives an account of the covenant God had made with the people of the Jews; their breach of it; and the evils threatened them on that account; and particularly against the men of Anathoth, for their ill treatment of the prophet. It begins with the order to Jeremiah to rehearse the words of the covenant in the ears of the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Jer 11:1, which covenant is described by the sanction of it; a curse in case of disobedience; and a promise of being their God, and bringing them into the good land, in case of obedience; and by the time when it was made, when the Israelites were brought out of Egypt,
Jer 10:3, which order, the prophet agreeing to, is repeated,
Jer 10:5 declaring the earnest protestation and exhortation of God to obey it, which they not observing, were threatened with the curses of it,
Jer 11:7, the present Jews doing as their forefathers had done, breaking the covenant, particularly by their idolatry, are threatened also with punishment

they should not escape, Jer 11:9 which is aggravated by a resolution to show no regard to their cries, Jer 11:11, by the impotence of their idols to save them, though so numerous,
Jer 11:12, by forbidding the prophet to pray for them,
Jer 11:14, by their having no longer a place and protection in the house of God, because of their wickedness, Jer 11:15, by comparing their former and present state together, having been as a beautiful and fruitful olive tree, but now burnt, and its branches broken,
Jer 11:16, next follows an account of a design of the men of Anathoth against the prophet, to take away his life, which he was ignorant of, till the Lord gave him knowledge of it, Jer 11:17, when he imprecates vengeance on them, Jer 11:20, and, under a spirit of prophecy from the Lord, foretells their utter ruin and destruction, Jer 11:21.

Ver. 1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying. Here seems to begin a new prophecy; but when it was, and under what reign, and what time between this and the former, is not known; however, it was from the Lord, and so to be regarded.

Jeremiah 11:2

Ver. 2. Hear ye the words of this covenant,.... Which. Dr. Lightfoot understands of the covenant lately made in the times of Josiah, upon finding and reading the law of Moses, 2Ki 23:3, but it seems rather to design the law of Moses itself; or the covenant made with the people of Israel on Mount Horeb, Ex 24:7, or rather which was made with them in the land of Moab, De 29:1. The words of it are the things contained in it, the blessings and curses; the order to hear them is in the plural number, and is directed, not to Jeremiah only, but to others with him, the rest of the prophets that were in his days; as Zephaniah, who prophesied, as Kimchi observes, in the reign of Josiah; and there was Baruch his companion; or the priests at Anathoth are here addressed with him; though it is usual, in the Hebrew language, to put one number for another; and Jeremiah, in the next verse, is singly addressed; and the Syriac version renders it in the singular number; perhaps the book of the law might lie before him, and be pointed at; and so he is bid to take it, or "receive" it, as the Targum is, and read and publish it to the Jews, as follows:

and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: the words of the covenant, and what follows.

Jeremiah 11:3

Ver. 3. And say thou unto them,.... This shows that the command of publishing the law or covenant was, however, principally given to Jeremiah:

thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; that made them, and brought them out of Egypt, and made a covenant with them, and had taken care of them, and had bestowed many favours upon them:

cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant; which the prophet, it may be, had in his hands, even the book of the law, and held it forth unto them, while he was speaking; the language of which is, cursed is everyone that does not constantly and perfectly perform what is contained in it, De 27:26.

Jeremiah 11:4

Ver. 4. Which I commanded your fathers,.... To observe and keep:

in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt: that is, quickly after, when they were in the wilderness, and before they came into the land of Canaan. The "day" seems to include the whole time from their coming out of Egypt, to their entrance into Canaan's land; it was in the first year of their coming out from thence that the law was given them on Mount Sinai, Ex 19:1, and it was in the fortieth year, and when they were upon the borders of Canaan, that the covenant was made with them in the land of Moab, **De 1:3**: "from the iron furnace"; meaning Egypt, and their bondage and affliction in it, compared to an iron furnace for the grievousness of it, its long continuance, and the use of it to try and prove them; see **De 4:20**:

saying, obey my voice; in the law:

and do them; the commands of it, the words of the covenant:

according to all which I command you; everything was to be done that was commanded, and as it was commanded; a perfect and uniform obedience is to be yielded to the law, in order to enjoy the blessing, or a penalty is incurred:

so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God; this is the tenor of the covenant of works; covenant interest in God, according to the law, depends upon obedience; that is the condition of it; but the covenant of grace is not clogged with such a condition; but runs absolutely,

they shall be my people, and I will be their God, Jer 32:39.

Jeremiah 11:5

Ver. 5. That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers,.... Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:

to give them a land flowing with milk and honey: that is, abounding with plenty of all kind of provisions; see **Ex 3:8**:

as it is this day; the land of Canaan continued to those times a very fruitful country; it was as it was promised it should be, and which was a clear thing; their eyes saw it, and the day bore witness to it:

then answered I, and said; that is, the Prophet Jeremiah, to whom the above order was given:

so be it, O Lord; or, "Amen, Lord" {f}; either agreeing to publish what the Lord commanded him; or as wishing that the land of Canaan might continue the same fruitful land it was, and the people of the Jews in it, they keeping the words of this covenant; or else as assenting that the curse might fall upon the men that did not observe them, alluding to De 27:15. This is the sense of Abarbinel; Jarchi and Kimchi observe, that the word "Lord" is vocative, and in the language of prayer.

{f} hwhy Nma "Amen, Domine", Pagninus: Montanus; "Amen, O Jehovah", Schmidt, Cocceius.

Jeremiah 11:6

Ver. 6. Then the Lord said unto me,.... Again; for this is a repetition of the above order:

proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: with a loud voice, and openly, that all may hear:

saying, hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them; which their forefathers promised, when the covenant was made with them, Ex 24:7, but did not perform; hearing without doing is of little avail; not the hearers, but the doers of the law are justified; wherefore men should not be content with hearing only, **Ro 2:13**.

Jeremiah 11:7

Ver. 7. For I earnestly protested unto your fathers,.... Or "witnessing, witnessed" {g}; testified his great affection for them; importunately solicited their observation of his precepts for their good; and strictly cautioned them against neglect and disobedience:

the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt;
See Gill on "Jer 11:4":

even unto this day, rising early, and protesting, saying, obey my voice; that is, from the time of the giving of the law, in all successive ages, to the present time, he had sent his prophets to them, time after time, morning by morning, early and late, to press, exhort, and stir them up to an obedience to his will, and to warn them of the evils that would come by disobedience to it.

{g} ytdeh deh "testificando tesficatus sum", Schmidt; "contestando contestatus sum", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius.

Jeremiah 11:8

Ver. 8. Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear,.... Though they had such strong solicitations and fair warnings, and these repeated again and again; all which was an aggravation of their disobedience and stubbornness:

but walked everyone in the imagination of their evil heart; which is desperately wicked, and is evil, and that continually, even every imagination of it; wherefore walking herein must be very wide and different from walking in the law of the Lord, and obeying that; see **Jer 3:17**:

therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant; that is, all the curses and threatenings denounced in it against the disobedient; and so the Targum,

"and I brought upon them vengeance (or punishment) because they received not the words of this covenant:"

which I commanded them to do, but they did them not; because they did not do the commands of the law, therefore the curses of it lighted on them; for the words of the preceding clause may be rendered, "and I brought upon them" {h}, &c.; and it is suggested that the like punishment would be inflicted on the present generation, they imitating and pursuing the iniquities of their fathers; as follows:

{h} Mhyle aybaw "et induxi", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "ideo adduxi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "et feci ut venirent", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 11:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord said unto me,.... After he had given him the order to publish and proclaim the words of the covenant, and exhort to obedience to them; he showed the prophet the reason of it, and opened to him a secret he was not acquainted with:

a conspiracy is found among the men of Judah, and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem; not against the king, and against the civil government, but against the King of kings, against God and his covenant, his word and his worship; some designs were forming to cashier these, and introduce a new religion, the idolatry of the Gentiles; and it was not a few only that were in the scheme, the combination was general, city and country were in it; the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the more polite part of the nation, and the country people, that dwelt in the several cities of Judah, were all united in this affair; and this was found out by him who sees and knows all things. It is common for innovators in religion to lay schemes privately, and secretly inculcate them, before things are ripe for the open introduction of them. The Syriac version renders it, "a rebellion"; and conspiracies often issue in open rebellion; and so the Targum,

"and it is found that the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, have rebelled against my word."

Jeremiah 11:10

Ver. 10. They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers,.... According to Kimchi, this prophecy was delivered out in the times of Jehoiakim. There had been a reformation in the reign of Josiah, but now they had rebelled against the Lord, and had returned to their former idolatries that had been practised in the times of Amon, Manasseh, and Ahaz:

which refused to hear my words; sent unto them by the prophets, Isaiah, and others:

and they went after other gods to serve them; not their forefathers, though it was true of them; but the then present generation, that were in the conspiracy and rebellion against God; they put their schemes into execution, and worshipped and served the gods of the nations:

the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers; by their many transgressions, and especially by their idolatry; the house of Israel, or the ten tribes, had done so, many years ago, and were carried captive; and the house of Judah, or the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah, committing the same iniquities, might justly expect the like treatment.

Jeremiah 11:11

Ver. 11. Therefore thus saith the Lord, behold, I will bring evil upon them,.... The evil of punishment for the evil of their sins, such as famine, the sword, captivity, which latter is the evil more especially designed; and there is no evil of this nature but what is of God; it is of his sending and bringing; see **Am 3:6**:

which they shall not be able to escape; they should not have wisdom enough to form a scheme, nor power enough to put one in execution when formed, whereby they could extricate themselves out of the difficulties they would be in; doubtless reference is had to their being besieged by the Chaldean army, the evil that should come out of the north, **Jer 1:14**, which should so closely surround them, that none should escape:

and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them: because their prayers were hypocritical, and not attended with faith and true repentance; otherwise, when men cry to God, under a sense of sin, being truly sorry for it, and put their trust in him, he hears them, and delivers them; but these would be concerned only for the evil that was come upon them, and not the evil they had been guilty of; and such sinners, when they pray to him, the Lord hears not. The Targum is,

"and they shall pray before me, and I will not receive their prayers."

Jeremiah 11:12

Ver. 12. Then shall the cities of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem,.... That is, the inhabitants of the cities of Judah, as well as the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem; the former being in distress through the enemy being in their land, as well as the latter besieged by him:

go and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense; Baal, the queen of heaven, sun, moon, planets, and all the hosts of heaven, as in Jer 44:15, these they should cry unto for help and deliverance in vain:

but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble; not yield them the least relief and comfort in their trouble, so far from saving them entirely from it.

Jeremiah 11:13

Ver. 13. For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah,.... See Gill on "Jer 2:28",

and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem; of which there were many, and some of note {i}:

have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal; one of whose names is Bosheth, "shame"; see **Ho 9:10**, hence Jerubbaal is called, in 2Sa 11:21, Jerubbesheth; very properly is this name given to Baal, not only because the worship of him was to the reproach of the true God, but brought shame and confusion in the issue to its worshipper; as well as because shameful things were done in the worship of it, especially of Baalpeor; who seems to be the same with the Priapus of other nations.

{i} Vid. Lightfoot, Chorograph. Cent. ad Matt. p. 34.

Jeremiah 11:14

Ver. 14. Therefore pray not thou for this people,.... If for a remnant among them, yet not for the body of the people; and if for their spiritual and eternal good, yet not for their temporal salvation; their temporal ruin was certain; the decree was gone forth, and there was no revoking it; and this is said, not so much by way of prohibition of the prophet, as by way of threatening to the people, to show that as their own prayers should not profit them, so they should not have the benefit of the prayers of good men, their sin was a sin unto death, at least temporal death, and must not be prayed for, **1Jo 5:16**:

neither lift up a cry or prayer for them; more words are used, to show the divine resolution, how inexorable he was, and how desperate was their condition, and their ruin sure; these words are repeated from **Jer 7:16**:

for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble; for, as he would not hear their prayers when they should cry to him to be delivered from their trouble, it cannot be thought that he should hear the prayers of others for them, The Targum understands this of the prayers of the prophet for them, paraphrasing the words thus,

"for there is no acceptance before me (or it is not pleasing to me) when thou shall pray for them before me, in the time of their evil;"

neither their prayers, nor the prophet's for them, would be acceptable to God, or of any avail, he being determined to bring evil upon them.

Jeremiah 11:15

Ver. 15. What hath my beloved to do in mine house,.... These are either the words of the prophet, as Kimchi and Ben Melech think, speaking after this manner; what has God, who is my beloved, he whom my soul loves, and who loves me, to do in the sanctuary, which is my house, and not this people's, that have defiled it, to cause his Shechinah to dwell there, after so much wickedness has been committed in it? and so Cocceius interprets it of Christ the beloved Son of God, and the beloved of his church and people, withdrawing from the temple, because of the wickedness of the Jews; or they are the words of God concerning the people of the Jews, who were beloved for the Father's sake; signifying that now, because of their abominations, it was not fitting they should continue in the house of God, or have any shelter and protection there. The Jews interpret {k} this of Abraham:

seeing she hath wrought lewdness with many; that is, the congregation of Israel, or the church of the Jews, had committed idolatry with many idols; or it was not only a few of them that were guilty of this sin, but a multitude, even their great men, the princes and nobles:

and the holy flesh is passed from thee? which Kimchi and Ben Melech understand of holy and good men, who ceased from among them, were perished and gone; and Jarchi, of the circumcision of the flesh, which was neglected: but it seems best to interpret it of the flesh of sacrifices; which were either laid aside by them, or, if offered and eaten of, were of no service to them, being offered up with a wicked mind; or rather the meaning is, the time was come that these were at an end, the temple being destroyed:

when thou doest evil; the evil of sin; or "when thine evil is" {l}; the evil of punishment is coming upon thee:

then thou rejoicest; instead of repenting of sin, and mourning for it, or being humbled at approaching judgments, gave themselves up to sensual lusts and pleasures; neither concerned at the one nor at the other; neither grieved for sin, nor trembled at punishment; but amidst all were brisk and jovial; though some say {m} the word has the signification of trembling; and render it, "then thou shalt tremble". The Targum of the whole is,

"What (have I to do) with this people, that was beloved before me? they have left the worship of the house of my sanctuary; they have took counsel to sin much; they mingle the flesh of abominations with the holy flesh; they shall go into captivity from thee; because of thy wickedness thou art strong."

{k} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 53. 2. {l} Kter yk "quum adest malum tuum", Junius & Tremellius; "praesto est", Piscator; extabit, Cocceius. {m} R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 32. 1.

Jeremiah 11:16

Ver. 16. The Lord called thy name a green olive tree,.... That is, compared the Jewish church and people to one, and made them as one, very prosperous and flourishing in the enjoyment of privileges, civil and religious, being highly favoured with the word and ordinances: fair, and of goodly fruit; which, for a while, brought forth the fruit of good works; and, while such, was amiable and goodly to look upon; was, as the Syriac version is, "fair with fruit, and beautiful in sight"; and whereas it might have been expected she would have so continued, and been still as a green olive tree in the house of God, as David says, Ps 52:8, now it was otherwise, she was become barren, dry, and fruitless: and therefore it follows:

with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it: that is, by means of the Chaldean army, which came with a mighty rushing noise, as a numerous army does; the Lord hath destroyed it, and burnt it with fire; what the Chaldeans did is ascribed to God, because it was done according to his will, and by his direction and overruling providence:

and the branches of it are broken; the high and principal ones, the king, princes, and nobles, their palaces, and the house of God. The apostle seems to have respect to this passage in Ro 11:17. The Targum is,

"as an olive tree that is beautiful in form and comely of sight, whose branches overshadow the trees, so the Lord hath magnified thy name among the people; but now that thou hast transgressed the law, the armies of the people, who are strong as fire, shall come against thee, and helps shall be joined to them."

Jeremiah 11:17

Ver. 17. For the Lord of hosts that planted thee,.... As a green olive tree, and gave thee all thy verdure, fruitfulness, happiness, and prosperity; when he first put thee into the possession of the good land, and distinguished thee by so many favours and blessings; as he is able to take them away, so he will:

for he hath pronounced evil against thee; he hath determined it in his mind, and he hath declared it by his prophets:

for the evil of the house of Israel; the ten tribes, who had committed sin, and for which the evil pronounced had been executed on them already, being some time ago carried captive:

and of the house of Judah; who had taken no warning by them, but had followed them in their iniquities, and even exceeded them; and therefore must expect the like punishment for their sins:

which they have done against themselves; for sin is not only against God, his nature, will, and law; but it is against the sinner himself, and is to his hurt and ruin, both temporal and eternal:

to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal; this particularly was the evil which was so provoking to God; and therefore he determined to bring the evil of punishment upon them; and shows the cause and reason of it; and which is a sufficient vindication of his justice.

Jeremiah 11:18

Ver. 18. And the Lord hath given me knowledge of it,.... Either of what he had been declaring as the sins of these people; and of what he had been prophesying concerning punishment for their sins; what he had said was not of himself, did not arise from any pique or resentment in him against them; but it was of God, that knows all things, and had made known these things to him; and he had only faithfully related them as he had received them; or else of the malicious designs of the men of Anathoth to take away his life, after mentioned:

and I know it; and am sure of it; having it by divine revelation, and from that God that cannot lie, and will not deceive:

then thou shewedst me their doings. Some versions, as the Septuagint, Syriac; and Arabic, take the former words to be a prayer of the prophet's, "O Lord, make me know, or show me, or teach me, that I may know"; and these signify that his prayer was answered. The Lord showed him the sins of these people, and what punishments they deserved, and would be inflicted on them; or rather what they were doing in the dark, and what schemes they were contriving and attempting to put in execution against his life; but God was careful of it, and would not suffer them to do him any harm; and therefore made all known unto him; see Ps 105:15.

Jeremiah 11:19

Ver. 19. But I was like a lamb, or an ox,.... The word "alluph", rendered an ox, is by many considered as an adjective to the word lamb {n}; since the disjunctive particle or is not in the next; and is differently translated; by the Vulgate Latin version, "as a meek or tame lamb"; by the Septuagint and Arabic versions, "as an harmless lamb": and by the Syriac version, "as a pure" or "clean lamb"; and by the Targum,

"as a choice lamb;"

and so R. Menachem in Jarchi, a large or principal one; but the words respect not the excellency, the meekness, patience, innocence, and harmlessness of the prophet; but his security and insensibility of danger, like one or both of these creatures:

that is brought to the slaughter; to be sacrificed by the priest, or killed by the butcher; not knowing but it is going to the pasture to feed in, or to the fold or stall to lie down in; so ignorant was the prophet of the designs of his townsmen against him, and not at all jealous that they wished him ill; since he meant none to them, but sought their good:

and I knew not that they had devised devices against me; that they had met and consulted together, and devised mischief against him:

saying, let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof; meaning either the prophet and his family, root and branch; or him and his prophecies; for taking away his life would put an end to his prophesying. Some think this respects the manner in which they proposed to take away his life, as by poison; so the Targum,

"let us cast (put) poison (or the savour of death) into his food;"

for the word rendered fruit signifies bread; and so the Septuagint, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin versions render it, "let us cast, or put wood into his bread" {o}; either some poisonous plant or tree, or rotten wood; or give him wood instead of bread, and so starve him. De Dieu observes, that Mxl, translated "fruit", signifies, both in the Hebrew and Arabic languages, "flesh"; and renders it, "let us break wood upon his flesh", {p} or body; that is, beat him with staves till they are broken upon him, and so kill him. The ancient fathers understand this of Christ, who is the bread of life, and of his crucifixion upon the wood of the cross. Jerom says it is the consent of all the churches that these things are said of Christ in the person of Jeremiah, even in this and the preceding verse, and the following one:

let us cut him off from the land of the living. The Targum explains it of the land of Israel; but it designs the world in general, and the taking away of his life out of it, and from among men:

that his name may be remembered no more; that he and his prophecies may be buried in everlasting oblivion; he no more spoken of, and his predictions no more regarded: but, as they failed in the former in taking away his life, he outliving many of them, so in the latter; for as what he foretold exactly came to pass, his name and his prophesying are in remembrance to this day; and, as the wise man says, "the memory of the just is blessed", Pr 10:7.

{n} Pla vbkk "quasi agnus mansuetus", V. L. "agnus assuefactus"; so some in De Dieu; "tanquam agnus amicabilis", De Dieu; "un agneau aimable", Gallic version. {o} wmxlb Ue htyxvn "mittamus lignum in panem ejus", V. L. "corrumpamus veneno cibum", Pagninus; "corrumpamus lignum in pane ejus", Montanus, Vatablus, Calvin. {p} "Rumpamus lignum in earnem ejus", De Dieu.

Jeremiah 11:20

Ver. 20. But, O Lord of hosts, that judgest righteously,.... This is the prophet's appeal to God, as the Judge of the whole earth, who will do right; he found there was no justice to be done him among men; he therefore has recourse to a righteous God, who he knew judged righteous judgment:

that triest the reins and the heart; of all men; as of his own, so of his enemies; and which he mentions, not so much on his own account as theirs:

let me see thy vengeance on them; which imprecation arose from a pure zeal for God, for his glory, and the honour of his justice; and not from private revenge; and so no ways inconsistent with the character of a good man; though some consider the words as a prediction of what would befall them, and he should live to see accomplished; and render them, "I shall see &c." {q}; and so the Targum,

"I shall see the vengeance of thy judgment on them:"

for unto thee have I revealed my cause; as a client to his patron; told his whole case, and left it with him, believing he would manage it for him, and do him justice. The Apostle Peter seems to have this passage in view, when speaking of Christ, **1Pe 2:23**.

{q} hara "videbo", Munster, Schmidt; "visurus sum", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 11:21

Ver. 21. Therefore thus saith the Lord of the men of Anathoth,.... That is, "unto", or "concerning the men of Anathoth", the townsmen of Jeremiah, and who were the persons that combined together to destroy him; of this place, See Gill on "Jer 1:1"

that seek thy life; or "soul"; that is, to take it away:

saying, prophesy not in the name of the Lord; without their leave, and such hard things as he did, unless he would prophesy smooth things, and then he might go on, otherwise he must expect to die:

that thou die not by our hand; or means; they intimate, that, should he persist in this way of prophesying, they should not stay to carry on a judicial process against him, to bring him and accuse him before a judge, or the sanhedrim, or any court of judicature; but should do as those called zealots in later times did; lay violent hands upon him, and dispatch him themselves at once; perhaps this they said after they found that the prophet had knowledge of their designs against him.

Jeremiah 11:22

Ver. 22. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, behold, I will punish them,..... Or, visit "them" {r}; look into this matter, try this cause, bring it to an issue, and pass sentence on them; which is as follows:

the young men shall die by the sword; by the sword of the Chaldeans, in the field, going out in battle against them; or rather when their town was taken and plundered, since they were the sons of priests:

their sons and their daughters shall die by famine; that is, their little ones, male and female; so that the famine, it seems, was not only in Jerusalem at the time of its siege, but in other parts also: no mention is made of the parents themselves.

{r} Mhyle dqp "visitans super eos", Montanus, Schmidt; "visito", Pagninus, Vatablus, Cocceius.

Jeremiah 11:23

Ver. 23. And there shall be no remnant of them,.... And thus the measure they meted out to the prophet was measured to them; they devised to destroy him root and branch, the tree with its fruit; and now none shall be left of them; such who escaped the sword and the famine should be carried captive, as they were; for though there were none left in Anathoth, there were some preserved alive, and were removed into Babylon; since, at the return from thence, the men of Anathoth were a hundred twenty and eight, **Ne 7:27**:

for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, even the year of their visitation; or, "in the year of their visitation" {s}; that is, of the visitation of their sins, as the Targum; which was the year of the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, and was in the nineteenth of Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 52:12 and this was not a chance matter, but what was fixed and determined by the Lord.

{s} Mtdqp tnv en eniautw episkeqewv autwn, Sept. "anno visitationis eorum", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 12

This chapter contains the prophets complaint of the prosperity of the wicked, and the Lord's answer to it; an account of the deplorable and miserable estate of the Jewish nation; and a threatening to the neighbouring nations that had used them ill; with a promise of deliverance of the Jews from them, and settlement among God's people in case of obedience. The prophet's complaint

is in Jer 12:1 in which he asserts the justice of God, yet seems at a loss to reconcile it with the prosperity of the wicked; and the rather, because of their hypocrisy; and appeals to the Lord for his own sincerity and uprightness, Jer 12:3 and prays for the destruction of the wicked, and that the time might hasten, for whose wickedness the land was desolate, and herbs, beasts, and birds, consumed, Jer 12:3, the Lord's answer, in which he reproves him for his pusillanimity, seeing he had greater trials than those to encounter with, and instructs him how to behave towards his treacherous friends, is in Jer 12:5 the account of the miserable condition of the Jewish nation is from Jer 12:7, under the simile of a house and heritage left by the Lord, given up to enemies, and compared to a lion and a speckled bird, hateful to God, and hated by those about it, Jer 12:7 and of a vineyard destroyed and trodden down by shepherds, and made desolate, Jer 12:10 even as a wilderness through the ravage of the sword; so that what is sown upon it comes to nothing,
Jer 12:12 then follows a threatening to those who had carried the people of Israel captive, with a promise to deliver the Jews out of their hands, and bring them into their own land, and settle them among the Lord's people, in case they use diligence to learn their ways,
Jer 12:14, but in case of disobedience are threatened to be plucked up and utterly destroyed, Jer 12:17.

Ver. 1. Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee,.... The six first verses of this chapter properly belong to the preceding, being of the same argument, and in strict connection with the latter part of it. Jeremiah appears to be under the same temptation, on account of the prosperity of the wicked, as Asaph was, Ps 73:1 only he seems to have been more upon his guard, and less liable to fall by it; he sets out: with this as a first principle, an undoubted truth, that God was righteous, and could do nothing wrong and amiss, however unaccountable his providences might be to men: he did not mean, by entering the list with him, or by litigating this point, to charge him with any unrighteousness this he took for granted, and was well satisfied of, that the Lord was righteous, "though", says he, "I plead with thee" {t}; so some read the words. De Dieu renders them interrogatively, "shall I plead with thee?" shall I dare to do it? shall I take that boldness and use that freedom with thee? I will. The Targum is the reverse,

"thou art more just, O Lord, than that I should contend before thy word:"

yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments; not of his laws, statutes, word, and ordinances, sometimes so called; but rather of his providences, which are always dispensed with equity and justice, though not always manifest; they are sometimes unsearchable and past finding out, and will bear a sober and modest inquiry into them, and debate concerning them; the people of God may take the liberty of asking questions concerning them, when they are at a loss to account for them. So the Targum,

"but I will ask a question of judgments before thee."

The words may be rendered, "but I will speak judgments with thee" {u}; things that are right; that are agreeable to the word of God and sound reason; things that are consistent with the perfections of God, particularly his justice and holiness; which are founded upon equity and truth; I will produce such reasons and arguments as seem to be reasonable and just.

Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? or they prosper in all their ways? whatever they take in hand succeeds; they enjoy a large share of health of body; their families increase, their trade flourishes, their flocks and herds grow large and numerous, and they have great plenty of all outward blessings; and yet they are wicked men, without the fear of God, regard not him, nor his worship and ways; but walk in their own ways which they have chosen, and delight in their abominations. Some understand this, as Jarchi, of Nebuchadnezzar, to whom God had given greatness and prosperity, to destroy the house of God; but by what follows, in the latter part of the next verse, it appears that God's professing people, the Jews, are meant, and most likely the priests at Anathoth.

Wherefore are all they happy; easy, quiet, secure, live in peace and plenty:

that deal very treacherously? with God and men, in religions and civil affairs.

{t} Kyla byra yk "etiamsi contendam tecum", Cocceius, Gataker. {u} Ktwa rbda Myjpvm Ka "verum tamen judicia loquar tecum", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 12:2

Ver. 2. Thou hast planted them,.... In the land of Canaan, fixed the bounds of their habitation, given them a firm and comfortable settlement; for all the good things, even of the wicked, come from God:

yea, they have taken root; as everything that is planted does not; but these did, though it was downwards in the earth, on which their hearts were set, and so were strengthened and established in their worldly circumstances:

they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit; but to themselves, not to God; not fruits of righteousness or good works; they grow, not in grace and holiness, but in their worldly substance; and they brought forth fruit, not such as were meet for repentance, but they had great riches, and numerous families; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions, "they produce children, and bring forth fruit." The Targum is,

"they become rich, yea, they possess substance."

Thou art near in their mouth; they often made use of the name of God, either in swearing by it, or praying to him in an external manner; they called themselves the Lord's people, and boasted of being his priests, and employed in his service; they took his covenant, and the words of his law, into their mouths, and taught them the people, and yet had no sincere regard for these things:

and far from their reins; from the affections of their hearts, and the desires of their souls; they had no true love for God, nor fear of him, nor faith in him. The Targum is,

"near are the words of thy law in their mouth, and far is thy fear from their reins."

Jeremiah 12:3

Ver. 3. But thou, O Lord, knowest me,.... The Lord knew him before he was born, **Jer 1:5**, he knew what he designed him for, and what use he would make of him; and he knew him now, and loved him, and cared for him, as his prophet; he knew his sincerity and faithfulness, and took notice of it, with what integrity he performed his office, and discharged his duty; and he knew that all his enemies said of him were scandal and reproach, lies and calumnies.

Thou hast seen me; his inside, his heart, and all in it; for all things are naked and open to the eyes of an omniscient God:

and tried mine heart towards thee; he had tried him by various afflictive providences, and his heart was found towards God; the affections and desires of his soul were towards him, and he remained faithful and upright before him, and not like the wicked before mentioned.

Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter; either out of the fold, or from a fat pasture; so fat sheep are plucked from the rest, in order to be killed: this shows that their riches, affluence, and plenty, served but to ripen them for ruin and destruction, and were like the fattening of sheep for slaughter; which the prophet, by this imprecation, suggests and foretells would be their case, as a righteous judgment upon them; see **Jas 5:5**.

Prepare them for the day of slaughter; or, "sanctify them" {w}; set them apart for it: this, doubtless, refers to the time of Jerusalem's destruction by the Chaldeans.

{w} Mvdqhw "et sanctifica eos", V. L. Montanus; "segrega", Piscator; "destina", Schmidt; "consecra", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 12:4

Ver. 4. How long shall the land mourn,.... The land of Judea, being desolate, and bringing forth no fruit, through the long drought that had been upon it:

and the herbs of every field wither; for want of rain to come upon it:

for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? this opens the cause, the reason of this dearth; it was the wickedness of the inhabitants of it: as the whole earth was originally cursed for the sins of men, so particular countries have had the marks of God's displeasure upon them, because of the sins of those that dwell in them. This clause, according to the accents, belongs to what follows, and may be read in connection with the next clause; either thus, "the herbs" of every field wither, I say, "because of the wickedness of the inhabitants of it, which consumes the beasts and the birds" {x}; that is, which wickedness is the cause not only of the withering of the grass and herbs, but of the consumption of birds and beasts: or else, by repeating the interrogation in the preceding clause,

how long shall the earth mourn, &c.;

how long, for the malice of them that dwell in it, are the beasts and the birds consumed {y}? the one having no grass to eat; and the other no fruit to pick, or seeds to live upon; the barrenness being so very great and general.

Because they said; the Jews, the inhabitants of the land, the wicked part of them, and which was the greater:

he shall not see our last end; either the Prophet Jeremiah, who had foretold it; but they did not believe him, that such would be their end, and that he should live to see it; or such was their atheism and infidelity, that they said God himself should not see it; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions read, "God shall not see".

{x} So Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 564. {y} Thus Schmidt, after Luther.

Jeremiah 12:5

Ver. 5. If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee,.... The Targum introduces the words thus,

"this is the answer which was made to Jeremiah the prophet, concerning his question; a prophet thou art, like to a man that runs with footmen, and is weary."

Then how canst thou contend with horses? or with men on horses: the sense is, either as Kimchi gives it, thou art among men like thyself, and thou art not able to find out their secrets and their designs against thee (see Jer 11:18); how shouldest thou know my secrets in the government of the world, as to the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous? be silent, and do not trouble thyself about these things: or rather, as thou hast had a conflict with the men of Anathoth, and they have been too many for thee; they have grieved and distressed thee, and have made thee weary of my work and service; and thou hast been ready to give out, and declare that thou wilt be no longer concerned therein; what wilt thou do, when thou comest to be exercised with greater and sorer trials, and shalt have to do with the king of Judah and his court, with his princes and nobles, the sanhedrim at Jerusalem, and the priests and inhabitants thereof? The Targum interprets the footmen of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and of the good things done to him; and the horses of the righteous fathers of the Jews, who run like horses to do good works, and of the much greater good reserved for them; but very improperly:

much better might it be applied, as it is by some, to the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, who gave the Jews much trouble; and therefore what would they do with the Chaldean army, consisting of a large cavalry, and which would come upon them like an impetuous stream, and overflow, as the swelling of Jordan, as follows?

and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee; if in his own native country, where he promised himself much peace, safety, and security, he met with that which ruffled and disturbed him:

then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan? when it overflowed its bank, **Jos 3:15** and may denote the pride and haughtiness of the king and princes of Judea, and of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and the difficulties that would attend the prophet's discharge of his duty among them; and the same thing is signified by this proverbial expression as the former.

Jeremiah 12:6

Ver. 6. For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father,.... The men of Anathoth;

even they have dealt treacherously with thee; by laying schemes, and consulting methods, to take away his life privately; his enemies were those of his own house; which is oftentimes the case of good men, and especially of such that are in public office:

yea, they have called a multitude after thee; a multitude of men, which they gathered together, and instigated to call after him in a clamorous and reproachful way: or,

they called after thee with a full voice, as the Vulgate Latin {z} version renders it; and which De Dieu approves of; they not only gathered a mob about him, and drew men after him, but they hooted him as he went along, and called aloud after him, giving him the most reproachful names they could think of:

believe them not, though they speak fair words to thee; this must be understood of some of them, who did not appear so openly against him, as to call after him, or gather a mob about him; but of such who pretended to be his friends, and to have respect for him, and yet had evil designs against him, and therefore were not to be trusted; their words were not to be believed; their company to be shunned; nor was he safe in their houses; nor was it safe for him to be with them, to eat with them, or converse with them.

{z} alm Kyrxa warq hmh "illi clamarunt post te plena voce", V. L. Tigurine version, Calvin; "pleno gutture", Piscator, Cosceius.

Jeremiah 12:7

Ver. 7. I have forsaken my house,.... The temple, where the Lord took up his residence, and vouchsafed his presence to his people; this was fulfilled in the first temple, when it was destroyed by the Chaldeans; and more fully in the second, when Christ took his leave of it, Mt 23:38 and when that voice was heard in it, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, as Josephus {a} relates,

"let us go hence."

So the Targum,

"I have forsaken the house of my sanctuary."

I have left mine heritage: the people whom he had chosen for his inheritance, whom he prized and valued, took care of, and protected as such; see De 32:9.

I have given the dearly beloved of my soul; whom he heartily loved and delighted in, and who were as dear to him as the apple of his eye:

into the hands of her enemies; the Chaldeans. This prophecy represents the thing as if it was already done, because of the certainty of it, and to awaken the Jews out of their lethargy and stupidity; and by the characters which the Lord gives of them it appears what ingratitude they had been guilty of, and that their ruin was owing to themselves and their sins.

{a} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 3.

Jeremiah 12:8

Ver. 8. Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest,.... Which roars, and terrifies passengers from going that way; and which rends and tears in pieces all it meets with. This expresses the clamours of these people against God and his providences, and their rage, fierceness, and cruelty, against his prophets, sent in his name.

It crieth out against me; this is to be understood not of the cry of the oppressed through violence, for this is a cry to God, and not against him; or of idolaters to idols, as Baal's prophets to him, in the time of their service; which senses are mentioned by Kimchi: but either of their charging God with inequality and injustice, in the ways of his providence; or their blaspheming his name, and speaking ill of his ministry

Therefore have I hated it; which he showed by leaving his house, forsaking his heritage, and delivering his people into the hands of their enemies; the reason of which was not in himself, but them; the fault was not his, but theirs; this is all to be understood of the change in the dispensation of the divine Providence towards them; otherwise the love of God to his chosen in Christ is unchangeable; it is never turned into hatred, but remains invariably the same, as it did to those, among these people; who belonged to the election of grace; for, as the love before expressed to this people in general only respects external favours and privileges, which they were indulged with above all people; so this hatred of them signifies the taking away of such favours, and leaving them to become a prey to their enemies.

Jeremiah 12:9

Ver. 9. Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird,.... Or, "is not mine heritage unto me as a speckled bird?" {b} as a bird of various colours, delightful to look at, as the peacock, so Jerom interprets it here; it was so formerly, but not so now; or as a bird of various colours, and unusual, which other birds get about, look on, hate, and peck at. Some think this refers to the motley party coloured religion the Jews had embraced, consisting of various rites and ceremonies of the Heathens; on which account they thought they looked beautiful and comely, when they were hated and rejected of God for them; but the word signifies rather to be dipped or stained, as with blood, and so denotes a bird of prey that is stained with the blood of others; a fit emblem of the cruelty of the Jews, in shedding the blood of the prophets. Some, because a word near akin to this signifies a finger, render it a "fingered bird" {c}; that is, a bird with talons or claws; like fingers, a ravenous bird, and it comes to the same sense as before. But the Septuagint take it, to be not a bird,

but a beast, and render it by the hyena; and which Bochart {d} approves of, since the word in the Arabic language signifies such a creature; and Schindler observes, that ebu, with the Arabians, is the name of a creature between a wolf and a middling dog, which agrees with the hyena. The word here used, in the Talmudic {e} language signifies a she leopard or panther, so called from its variety of spots; and is the same, as Maimonides says {f}, which, in the Arabic language, is called ebula; with the Targumists it is used for a kind of serpents or vipers. So the valley of Tzeboim is rendered, in the Targum, the valley of vipers, 1Sa 13:18. And it is said {g},
ewbu, the word in the text,

"this is from a white drop (or seed), and yet it has three hundred and sixty five kinds of colours, according to the number of the days of a solar year."

The birds round about are against her; or, "are not the birds round about against her?" the birds of prey? they are; meaning the neighbouring nations, that under Nebuchadnezzar came up against Jerusalem to take and destroy it.

Come ye, assemble all ye beasts of the field, come to devour; this is an invitation to the enemies of the people of the Jews, comparable for their fierceness and savageness to the beasts of the field, to come and destroy them; and shows that their destruction was by divine permission, and according to the will of God. Compare with this
Re 19:18. The Targum interprets it of those that kill with the sword; kings of the earth, and their armies.

{b} So V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Jarchi, and Kimchi. {c} ewbu jyeh "avis digtata", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gusetius; "ales unguibus praedita", Cocceius. {d} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 11. col. 830, 838, 839. {e} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 16. 1. {f} In Misn. Bava Kama, c. 1. sect. 4. {g} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 6. 2.

Jeremiah 12:10

Ver. 10. Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard,.... This is a metaphor which is often used of the people of Israel and Judah; see
Ps 80:8, the pastors that destroyed them are not their own governors, civil or religious, but Heathen princes, Nebuchadnezzar and his generals. So the Targum paraphrases it,

"many kings slay my people;"

so Kimchi and Ben Melech.

They have trodden my portion under foot; the people of the Jews, that were his portion, and before called his heritage; whom the Chaldeans subdued, and reduced to extreme servitude and bondage; and were as the dirt under their feet, greatly oppressed and despised.

They have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness; by pulling down stately edifices, unwalling of towers, and destroying men; so that there were none to manure the fields, to dress the vineyards, and keep gardens and orchards in good case; but all were come to ruin and what before was a delightful paradise was now like an heath or desert.

Jeremiah 12:11

Ver. 11. They have made it desolate,.... Which is repeated to denote the certainty of it; astonishment at it, and that it might be observed:

and being desolate it mourneth unto me; not the inhabitants of it for their sins, the cause of this desolation; but the land itself, because of the calamities upon it; it crying to God, in its way, for a restoration to its former beauty and glory.

The whole land is made desolate; it was not only the case of Jerusalem, and the parts adjacent, but even of the whole land of Judea:

because no man layeth it to heart, took any notice of the judgment threatened, foretold by the prophets; nor repented of their sins, for which they were threatened with such a desolation; nor even were properly affected with the destruction itself; the earth seemed more sensible of it than they were; this expresses the great stupidity of this people.

Jeremiah 12:12

Ver. 12. The spoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderness,.... Of Judea; or which lay between Chaldea and Judea, through which the Chaldean army came; called here the "spoilers", because they spoiled and plundered all places where they came; nor could the high, strong, and fortified places withstand them, or escape their ravage and fury. De Dieu renders it, "upon all the plains in the wilderness"; where was pasture, land for cattle, as Kimchi serves; which were trodden down and spoiled by the soldiers, and made forage of.

For the sword of the Lord shall devour from the one end; of the land even the other end of the land; the sword of the Chaldeans is called the sword of the Lord, because it was drawn by his order and appointment, and was succeeded by him to do execution; and the calamity which it brought upon the land reached from one end of it to the other, so general and; extensive it was.

No flesh shall have peace; no inhabitant of Judea shall be in safety, but be exposed to the sword, or to captivity.

Jeremiah 12:13

Ver. 13. They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns,.... Which may be understood literally, the land of Judea being cursed for their sins, and become barren and unfruitful, as the earth originally was for the sin of the first man, **Ge 3:19**, or rather figuratively, which some interpret of the prophets as Kimchi, sowing the good seed of the word among the Jews; but it did not take place in them, and bring forth fruit; instead thereof thorns sprung up, or evil works were done by them, comparable thereunto; but it seems better to understand it of the people; not, as Jarchi, of their prayers, which were not accepted, because unattended with repentance and good works; but of their schemes, which they thought were prudently laid, in forming an alliance with Egypt, and sending thither for help against the Chaldeans, but all in vain; these proved in the issue like thorns, grievous and vexatious to them. The Septuagint version reads imperatively, "sow ye": and Jarchi makes mention of a copy, in which the word was pointed as to be so read, as in Ho 10:12, and may be understood ironically. The Targum is,

"be ye not like those who sow wheat in untilled land, and can gather nothing but thorns."

They have put themselves to pain, but shall not profit; were at a great deal of pains and trouble to make Egypt their ally, and send thither for assistance, and all to no purpose. Kimchi's father interprets this of their uneasiness and grief, at parting with so much money to the king of Egypt, without having any advantage by it; which is to be preferred to the sense Jarchi gives, of the people crying to God, and grieving because not regarded by him. Some render the words, "they have got an inheritance", as the Vulgate Latin; the land of Canaan, but they will not be able to keep it; it shall no longer be theirs, or any advantage to them.

And they shall be ashamed of your revenues; not the prophets of the evil works of the people, but rather the people of their own evil works; and, particularly, of their schemes, counsels, and preparations, to secure themselves against the enemy; of their alliances with other nations, and of vain confidences; the success not answering to the pains and expense they had been at; but these failing and disappointing them, would fill them with shame and confusion.

Because of the fierce anger of the Lord; against which there was no standing; this being infinitely more powerful than the Chaldean army, by the means of which it came upon them, and from which no schemes and alliances could protect them.

Jeremiah 12:14

Ver. 14. Thus saith the Lord against all mine evil neighbours,.... Or, "concerning" {h} them; the Egyptians, Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Tyre, and Sidon; whom the Lord calls his "neighbours", because they were near the land of Canaan, where his people dwelt, to whom he vouchsafed his presence, and where the temple was in which he took up his residence; and his "evil" neighbours, because they often distressed and afflicted his people.

That touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit; meaning not only that they bordered on the land of Canaan, and so might be said to touch it, but that they did hurt unto it; in which sense the word touch is used, Ps 105:15, the land of Canaan was an inheritance which was distributed by lot to the children of Israel, who were a people dear unto the Lord, as this shows; and therefore they that touched them, or their inheritance, as to do them any harm, touched the apple of his eye, and which he resented greatly, **Zec 2:8**.

Behold, I will pluck them out of their land; cause them to be carried captive into other lands, or be destroyed in their own; see Jeremiah chapters forty six through forty nine: and pluck out the house of Judah from among them; such of the Jews they had formerly carried captive, or who had fled to them upon the Chaldean invasion; these the Lord would cause to come forth from among them, and return them to their own land.

{h} lk le "de omnibus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Jeremiah 12:15

Ver. 15. And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out,.... Not the Jews only, but more especially their neighbouring nations; after they have been plucked up and carried captive, and been in captivity some time:

I will return, and have compassion on them; or, "have compassion on them again" {i}; by returning their captivity, as is promised,
Jer 48:47:

and I will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land; this seems to respect the conversion of the Gentiles in the latter day, when the fulness of them shall be brought in; as the latter part of the preceding verse may more especially regard the conversion of the Jews at the same time, when they shall be gathered out of all nations where they are, and return to their own land.

{i} Mytmhrw bwva "rursus misereat me illorum", Junius & Tremellius; "rursus miserabor ipsorum", Piscator; "denuo miserabor ipsorum", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 12:16

Ver. 16. And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people,.... Not their evil ways of sin or superstition, they sometimes stray into; but the ways which God has prescribed to them, and has directed them to walk in, and in which they do walk; and which are to be learned of the Lord, by a diligent attendance with his people on his word and ordinances; see **Isa 2:3**:

to swear by my name, the Lord liveth; that is, to worship and serve the living God, a self-existent Being, who has life in himself, and of himself, and not another; and is the fountain, author, and giver of natural life to all creatures, and spiritual and eternal life to his true worshippers: swearing is here put for the whole of religious worship, as in **De 6:13**:

(as they taught my people to swear by Baal;) to worship him, and other idols:

then shall they be built in the midst of my people; become part of the spiritual building the church; being laid upon the same foundation of the apostles and prophets, and built up a holy temple; a spiritual house for the Lord to dwell in; partaking of the same privileges and ordinances as the people of God; being fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel, **Eph 2:20**, it denotes the settlement and establishment of the Gentiles with the Jews in a Gospel church state. So the Targum,

"and they shall be established in the midst of my people."

Jeremiah 12:17

Ver. 17. But if they will not obey,.... Or "hear" {k}; the word of the Lord, and hearken to the ministers of the Gospel, and be subject to the ordinances of it; or as the Targum,

"will not receive instruction:"

I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the Lord: root it up from being a nation, strip it of all its privileges and enjoyments, and destroy it with an everlasting destruction; see
Zec 14:16.

{k} wemvy "audierint", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "audient", Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 13

In this chapter, under the similes of a girdle and bottles of wine, the destruction of the Jews is set forth. Some exhortations are given them to repent and humble themselves, even men of all ranks and degrees among them; and their

sins, the source of their calamities, are pointed out to them. An order is given to the prophet to get him a linen girdle, with instructions what to do with it, and which he observed,
Jer 13:1, a fresh order to take it and hide it in the hole of a rock by the river Euphrates, which he accordingly did, Jer 13:3 and he is bid a third time to go and take it from thence, which he did; when he found it spoiled, and good for nothing, Jer 13:6, then follows the application of this simile, or the signification of this sign; that in like manner the pride of Judah and Jerusalem should be marred, and for their wickedness and idolatry should become good for nothing, like that girdle; whereas they ought to have cleaved to the Lord, as a girdle does to a man's loins, and to have been an honourable people to him, Jer 13:8. By the simile of bottles filled with wine is signified that all the inhabitants of the land, king, priests, prophets, and common people, should be like drunken men, that should dash one against another, and destroy each other, which the mercy of God would not prevent, Jer 13:12, some exhortations are made to the people in general, to be humble, and confess their sins, and give glory to God, before it was too late; which are enforced by the prophet's affectionate concern for them,
Jer 13:15 and to the king and queen in particular, since their crown and kingdom were about to be taken from them; the cities, in the southern parts, going to be shut up, and not opened; and even the whole land of Judea, and all its inhabitants, in a little time would be carried captive, Jer 13:18, and, to certify them of the truth of these things, they are bid to look to the north, from whence the enemy was coming to carry them captive, even the beautiful flock committed to their care, Jer 13:20, and to consider what they could say for themselves, when their punishment should come upon them suddenly, as the sorrows of a woman in travail, Jer 13:21 and should they ask the reason of this, it was owing to the multitude of their iniquities, and to their habit and custom of sinning, which made their case desperate, Jer 13:22, wherefore a resolution is taken to disperse them among the nations, and that this should be their lot and portion, because of their many abominations, and yet not without some concern that they might be purged from their iniquities,
Jer 13:24.

Ver. 1. Thus saith the Lord unto me,.... In a vision, and by the spirit of prophecy: when this was said is not certain, very likely in the reign of Jehoiakim; the prophet gives an account of what had been done, the present tense is put for the past.

Go and get thee a linen girdle; or, "a girdle of linens" {l}; a girdle made of flax or fine linen, which the prophet had not used to wear; and having none, is bid to go, perhaps from Anathoth to Jerusalem, to "get" one, or "buy" one: this girdle represents the people of the Jews in their more pure and less corrupted state, when they were a people near unto the Lord, and greatly regarded by him, and had a share in his affections; when they cleaved unto him, and served him, and were to his praise and glory: "and put it upon thy loins"; near the reins, the seat of affection and desire, and that it might be visible and ornamental; denoting what has been before observed: "and" or

but put it not in water or, "bring it not through it" {m}; meaning either before he put it on his loins; and the sense is, that he was not to wash it, and whiten it, but to wear it just as it was wrought, signifying that those people were originally taken by the Lord of his own mercy, and without any merits of theirs, rough, unwashed, and unpolished as they were: or else, after he had wore it, as Jarchi, when it was soiled with sweat; yet not to be washed, that it might rot the sooner: and so may design the corrupt and filthy state of this people, and the ruin brought thereby upon them, which was not to be prevented.

{l} Mytvp rwza "cingulum linorum", Montanus. {m} whabx al Mymbw "sed per aquam non duces eam", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 13:2

Ver. 2. So I got a girdle,.... Or, bought {n} a linen one, as directed:

according to the word of the Lord; his express order and command; the prophet was not disobedient to the heavenly vision:

and I put it on my loins; without washing it before or after, and wore it publicly for some time.

{n} hnqaw Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 13:3

Ver. 3. And the word of the Lord,.... The Targum is, "the word of prophecy from before the Lord:"

came unto me the second time, saying; what distance of time there was between this order and the former is not known.

Jeremiah 13:4

Ver. 4. Take the girdle which thou hast got, which is upon thy loins,.... Either he is bid to take it off his loins, on which it was; or to go with it on them; seeing the taking it off does not seem absolutely necessary; and go with it to the place directed to in the following words:

and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock; by the river side, where the waters, coming and going, would reach and wet it, and it drying again, would rot the sooner. This signifies the carrying of the Jews captive to Babylon, by which city the river Euphrates ran, and the obscure state and condition they would be in there; and where all their pride and glory would be marred, as afterwards declared.

Jeremiah 13:5

Ver. 5. So I went and hid it by Euphrates,.... Or, "in" {o} it; in a hole of the rock, upon the banks of it:

as the Lord commanded me: all this seems to be done not really, but visionally; it can hardly be thought that Jeremy should be sent on two such long journeys, on such an account, which would take up a considerable time to perform it in; but rather that he went and came in like manner as Ezekiel did, in the visions of God, from Chaldea to Jerusalem, and from thence to Chaldea again, **Eze 8:3**, and so Maimonaides {p} was of opinion, as Kimchi on the place observes, that all this was done in a vision of prophecy.

{o} trpb "in Euphrate", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin. {p} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 46. p. 323.

Jeremiah 13:6

Ver. 6. And it came to pass after many days,.... When the girdle had lain long in the hole, by the side of Euphrates; this denotes the length of the Babylonish captivity, which was seventy years:

that the Lord said unto me, arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there; which may denote the return of these people from captivity, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah; see Jer 25:11, though this seems to be visionally done, in order to express the wretched state and condition these people were in; either before the captivity, which was the cause of it; or at their return from it, when they were no better for it.

Jeremiah 13:7

Ver. 7. Then I went to Euphrates,.... In a vision; this is the second journey, of which See Gill on "Jer 13:5",

and digged; the hole, in process of time, being stopped up with soil or sand, that were thrown up over it; this digging was in a visionary way; see **Eze 8:8**:

and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it; which he knew again by some token or another:

and, behold, the girdle was marred; or "corrupted" {q}; it was become rotten by the washing of the water over it, and its long continuance in such a place:

it was profitable for nothing; it could not be put upon a man's loins, or be wore any more; nor was it fit for any other use, it was so sadly spoiled and so thoroughly rotten. It is in the Hebrew text, "it shall not prosper to all" {r} things; that is, not "to anything" {s}, as many render it.

{q} txvn "corruptum erat", Munster, Montanus, Schmidt; "computruerat", Pagninus. {r} lkl xluy al "non proficiet omnibus", Vatablus. {s} "Non prosperabitur cuiquam", Montanus; "ad ullam rem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 13:8

Ver. 8. Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. Or the word of prophecy from before the Lord, as the Targum; and now follows the application of this sign to the thing signified, and the whole intention of it is opened.

Jeremiah 13:9

Ver. 9. Thus saith the Lord, after this manner,.... As this girdle has been hid in Euphrates, and has been marred and rendered useless; so in like manner, and by such like means,

will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem; or their glory, or excellency {t}; that which they gloried in, and were proud of; their city which was burnt, and their temple which was destroyed by the Chaldeans; their king, princes, and nobles, who were carried captive into Babylon, by the river Euphrates, and stripped of all their grandeur, honour, and glory; and so the Targum,

"so will I corrupt the strength of the men of Judah, and the strength of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, which is much;"

and to which agrees the Syriac version, which renders it,

"the proud or haughty men of Judah, and the many haughty men of Jerusalem."

{t} Nwag "excellentiam", Calvin, Piscator.

Jeremiah 13:10

Ver. 10. This evil people, which refuse to hear my words,.... Sent by the prophets, to whom they turned a deaf ear; and though they pressed them, and importunately desired them to give them a hearing, they refused it; and this showed them to be a bad people, very degenerate and wicked; and which further appears by what follows:

which walk in the imagination of their heart; which was evil, stubborn, and rebellious, see **Jer 7:24**:

and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them; went to Egypt and Assyria to pay their adoration to those who were not by nature gods; and this was the cause of their ruin and destruction:

shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing: as they were corrupt in their practices, and were become useless and unserviceable to God; so they would be carried captive into a foreign country, where they would be inglorious, and unprofitable, uncomfortable in themselves, and of no use to one another.

Jeremiah 13:11

Ver. 11. For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man,.... Being girt tight unto him:

so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah; whom he chose above all people, and caused to approach unto him, and dwell in his courts; whom he favoured with his presence, and encouraged them to follow after him, and cleave to him in faith and affection, and with full purpose of heart; so that they were a people near unto him as a man's girdle is to his loins: and the end of this was, and would have been, had they continued so,

that they might be unto me for a people; his own people, a special and peculiar people above all others, peculiarly favoured and blessed by him, and continue so, and in the enjoyment of all good things:

and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory; for a famous and renowned people, that should be to the praise and glory of God, and an honour to him, and an ornament to the profession of him; whereas they were the reverse:

but they would not hear; the words of the Lord, nor obey his voice; but served other gods, departed from the Lord, to whom they should have cleaved, and so became like this rotten girdle.

Jeremiah 13:12

Ver. 12. Therefore thou shalt speak unto them this word,.... The following parable:

thus saith the Lord God of Israel; what was to be said is prefaced with these words, to show that it was not a trifling matter, but of moment and importance, and not to be slighted and despised as it was:

every bottle shall be filled with wine; meaning every inhabitant of Judea and Jerusalem, comparable to bottles or earthen vessels, as the Jewish writers interpret it, for their being empty of all that is good, and for their frailty and brittleness being liable to be broke to pieces, and to utter ruin and destruction; these are threatened to be "filled with wine"; not literally taken, such as they loved; though there may be an allusion to their intemperance, and so this is a just retaliation for their sins; but figuratively, with the wine of divine wrath; and their being filled with it denotes the greatness of the calamities which should come upon them, and be around them on all sides:

and they shall say unto thee; upon hearing the above, and by way of reply to it:

do we not certainly know; or, "knowing do we not know" {u}; can we be thought to be ignorant of this,

that every bottle shall be filled with wine? every child knows this; what else are bottles made for? is this the errand thou art sent on by the Lord? and is this all the knowledge and information that we are to have by thy prophesying? or what dost thou mean by telling us that which we and everybody know? what is designed by this? surely thou must have another meaning in it than what the words express.

{u} edn al ewdyh "an sciendo non scimus", Pagninus, Vatablus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 13:13

Ver. 13. Then shall thou say unto them,.... Explaining the above words:

thus saith the Lord, behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land; this is the application of the parable, and shows that by every bottle is meant every inhabitant of Judea:

even the kings that sit upon David's throne; or, "that sit for David on his throne" {w}; that succeed him one after another; more kings may be meant than one, as Jehoiakim and Zedekiah; or the present reigning king, and the princes of the brood, are designed; who, though of David's family, and on his throne, yet this could not secure them from the calamity threatened:

and the priests; who ministered in holy things; their sacred office and function would not preserve them from ruin:

and the prophets; the false prophets, as the Targum, that prophesied smooth things, and prophesied them peace and safety, these should be involved in the common destruction:

and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with drunkenness; with tribulation, as the Targum interprets it; and adds,

"and shall be like a drunken man;"

giddy, stupid, unable to help themselves, or to advise one another.

{w} dwdl Mybvyh "sedentes Davidi", Montanus, Schmidt, Cocceius; "pro David", Pagninus, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 13:14

Ver. 14. And I will dash them one against another,.... As drunken men fall foul on one another, and quarrel and fight; or in allusion to bottles and earthen vessels they are before compared to; and may denote the internal broils and contentions among themselves, that instead of assisting each other in their distress, they would be destroying one another; which was notorious in the last siege of Jerusalem:

even the fathers and the sons together, saith the Lord; no relation, nor even age nor sex, being regarded:

I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them: the Lord's hand was in all this; everything was by his permission, and according to his will; he would not prevent the enemy's invading, besieging, and taking them, nor hinder themselves from destroying one another; but suffer a general calamity to come upon them, without showing the least mercy to them, so great were their sins, and such the provocation.

Jeremiah 13:15

Ver. 15. Hear ye, and give ear,.... Both to what goes before, and what follows after. The words doubled denote the closest and strictest attention:

be not proud; haughty, scornful, as above all instruction, and needing no advice and counsel, self-conceited, despising the word of God, and his messages by his prophets; or, "do not lift up yourselves" {x}; above others, and against God:

for the Lord hath spoken; it is not I, but the Lord; and what he has said shall certainly come to pass; so the Targum,

"for in the word of the Lord it is so decreed;"

it is in vain to oppose him; his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure; none ever hardened themselves against him, and prospered.

{x} whbgt la "ne elevetis vos", Montanus, Pagninus; "exaltetis", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 13:16

Ver. 16. Give glory to the Lord your God,.... By confessing sin unto him; by humiliation for it before him; by believing what he says, hearkening to his word, and obeying his commands, and living to his honour and glory; see **Jos 7:19**, especially by believing in Christ, the true God, and true Messiah, embracing his Gospel, and his ordinances:

before he cause darkness; before the Lord brings on the dark dispensation threatened, the calamity before spoken of; repent while space is given, before it is too late; so the Targum,

"before tribulation comes upon you, and ye be like to those that walk in darkness."

The Babylonish captivity may be meant, which was a dark day with the Jews, as is their present case, and which may be included; and it is applicable to any dark state of the church of God, such as may be now apprehended as near, through the spread of Popery, the growth of errors and heresies, the persecution of the saints, the slaying of the witnesses, the cessation of the Gospel ministry and ordinances for a while; which is that day of darkness and gloominess, that hour of temptation that shall come upon all the earth, to try its inhabitants; happy those that give glory to God by their faith in him, and by keeping the word of his patience:

and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains; or, "of twilight"; or, "of the evening"; or rather, "upon the mountains in the evening" {y}; at eventide; at which time it is troublesome and dangerous travelling on mountains. These may design either the mountains to which they would flee for shelter, Mt 24:16, or those which lay in the way to Babylon, over which they should travel when carried captive; or rather the kingdoms of Babylon and Media, whither they should be carried, and where they should endure much affliction and hardship; it being usual to signify kingdoms by mountains; so Babylon itself is, Jer 51:25, perhaps there may be some allusion, as Sanctus thinks, to Babylon itself, which being situated in a marshy place, might be generally covered with a cloud or mist, and, together with the smoke of the city, might look like a dark mountain; and especially the hanging gardens in it looked at a distance like {z} mountains with forests on them. It may be applied to the eventide of the latter day, when many shall stumble and fall through mountains of difficulties and discouragements in the way of religion; of professing the pure Gospel and ordinances of it, through the prevailing darkness of the age, and the persecution of men; and to the evening of life, and the dark mountains of death and eternity, on which men may be said to stumble and fall when they die; and when their everlasting state will appear to be fixed as immovable as mountains; and there will be no more means of grace, of faith, repentance, and conversion, but blackness of darkness for evermore, outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth; wherefore, before this time comes, it behooves persons to be concerned for the glory of God, and the everlasting welfare of their souls:

and while ye look for light; prosperity and happiness, as the false prophets gave out they should have; or for help and assistance from the Egyptians, to whom they sent:

he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness; that is, the Lord, who would disappoint them, and, instead of having that relief and comfort they were promised, would bring upon them such shocking calamities, which would be as terrible as death itself, or at least as the shadow of death, and be like gross darkness, even such as was in Egypt, which might be felt; see

Isa 49:9.

{y} Pvn yrh le "in montibus crepusculi", Montanus, Piscator; "montibus caecioribus intempesta nocte", Junius & Tremellius. {z} See Berosus apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 1. &; Contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 19. & Curtius, Hist. l. 5. c. 1.

Jeremiah 13:17

Ver. 17. But if ye will not hear it,.... The advice and exhortation now given, to repent of sin, be humble before God, and glorify him:

my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; he would no more act in a public character; but, laying aside his office as a prophet and public instructor, would retire to some corner, where he might not be seen or heard, and there lament the sins of the people, particularly their "pride", which had been the cause of their ruin; or mourn on account of their glory and excellency, as the word may be rendered, which would depart from them; their city and temple would be burnt; and their king, princes, and nobles, and the flower of the nation, carried into Babylon; so the Jews {a} interpret it of the glory of Israel, which should cease from them, and be given to the nations of the world;
See Gill on "Jer 13:9";

mine eyes shall weep sore; or, "shedding tears it shall shed tears" {b}; in great abundance, being, as he wished his eyes might be, a fountain of tears to weep night and day, **Jer 9:1**:

and run down with tears; or, "mine eye let down tears" {c}; upon the cheek in great plenty. The phrases are expressive of the sorrow of his heart for the distresses of his people, and of the certainty of them; the reason of which follows:

because the Lord's flock is carried away captive: that is, the Lord's people, as the Targum; to whom he stood in the relation of a shepherd, and they to him under the character of a flock; and this was what so sensibly touched the heart of the prophet, that they were a people that the Lord had an interest in, a regard unto, and among whom he had been formerly glorified; wherefore it was to the loss of his honour and interest that these should be given into the hands of their enemies, and be carried captive; and this troubled him, for nothing lies nearer the heart of a good man than the glory of God.

{a} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 5. 2. {b} emdt emdw "et lachrymando lachrymabitur", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt. {c} hemd ynye drtw "et descendet oculus meus lachrymam", Montanus, "lachrymis", Cocceius; "descendere faciet", Pagninus; "demittet", Targ.

Jeremiah 13:18

Ver. 18. Say unto the king, and to the queen,.... Jehoiachin, and his mother Nehushta, as it is generally interpreted by the Jewish commentators, and others; who, with many princes and officers, were carried captive into Babylon, 2Ki 24:12 or rather Zedekiah and his wife; since the captivity after threatened is a perfect and complete one, which Jehoiachin's was not:

humble yourselves, sit down; or, "sit down humbled" {d}; come down from your thrones, and sit in the dust; humble yourselves before the Lord for your own sins, and the sins of the people; in times of general corruption, and which threatens a nation with ruin, it becomes kings and princes to set an example of repentance, humiliation, and reformation; though it may be this is rather a prediction of what would be, that they should descend from their throne, and lose their grandeur, and be in a low and abject condition, than an exhortation to what was their duty; since it follows:

for your principalities shall come down; their royal state and greatness, and all the ensigns of it; and especially such as they had upon their heads, as the word used denotes, and as the following explanation shows:

even the crown of your glory; or glorious crown, which should fall from their heads, or be taken from them, when they should be no more served in state, or treated as crowned heads.

{d} wbv wlypvh "degite humiliter", Castalio; "abjectissime considite", Junius & Tremellius; "loco humili considite", Piscator

Jeremiah 13:19

Ver. 19. The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open them,....

Meaning the cities of Judah, which lay in the southern part of the land of Israel, and to the south of Babylon; which might be said to be shut up, and not in the power of any to open, when besieged by the Chaldean army; or rather when destroyed, that there were none to go in and out; though some think the cities of Egypt are intended, which lay south of Judea, from whence the Jews should not have the relief they expected, and where they should find no refuge; but the former sense seems best:

Judah shall be carried away captive all of it; it was in part carried away in Jehoiachin's time, and wholly in Zedekiah's; which seems to be here respected:

it shall be wholly carried away captive; or, in perfections {e}; most perfectly and completely; the same thing is meant as before, only in different words repeated, to express the certainty of it.

{e} Mymwlv "perfectionibus", Vatablus, Montanus. It is by Schmidt left untranslated, "Schelomim", which he takes to be the city of Jerusalem, sometimes called "Solyma"; the inhabitants of which were carried captive when Judah was; and so Junius and Tremellius translate it; "civita, pacatorum", and understand it of Jerusalem; which has the signification of peace in its name.

Jeremiah 13:20

Ver. 20. Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north,.... There are a Keri and a Cetib of the words "lift up" and "behold"; they are written in the singular number, and may be considered as directed to the king, as the words following are; and they are read in the plural number, the state and whole body of the people being called upon to observe the Chaldean army, which came from the north; and is represented as on the march, just at hand to invade, besiege, take, and carry them captive. The Septuagint version renders it, "lift up thine eyes, O Jerusalem"; and the Arabic version, "O Israel: where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?" that is, the people, as the Targum interprets it, which were committed to the care and charge of the king, as sheep into the hands of a shepherd; and were a fine body of people, chosen of God and precious, distinguished above all others by wholesome and righteous laws and statutes, and special privileges; a people who were a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, and a peculiar people, the glory of the whole earth; but now carried, or about to be carried, captive. It is no unusual thing to represent a king as a shepherd, and his people as a flock, guided, governed, and protected by him, and who is accountable for his trust to the King of kings; see Ps 78:71.

Jeremiah 13:21

Ver. 21. What will thou say when he shall punish thee?.... Or, "visit upon thee" {f}; that is, either when God shall punish thee for thy sins, thou canst bring no charge of injustice against him, or murmur and repine at the punishment inflicted on thee; so Jarchi; to which agrees the Targum,

"when he shall visit on thee thy sin;"

or else, to which the following words seem to incline, when the enemy shall visit upon thee; so Kimchi and Abarbinel, when the Chaldeans shall come upon thee, and pay thee a visit, an unwelcome one; yet who wilt thou have to blame but thyself? so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "when they shall visit thee"; these words are directed, not to the king, nor to the queen neither; but to the body of the people, the Jewish state, represented as a woman; who, upon consideration of things past, would have a great deal of reason to reflect upon themselves for what they had done in former times, which had led on to their ruin and destruction:

(for thou hast taught them to be captains, and as chief over thee;) the Jews showed the Assyrians the way into their country, used them to come thither, and taught them how to conquer them, and be masters over them; or, "hast taught them against thee" {g}; to thy hurt and detriment, to be captains or governors;

for an head, to have the rule over them: this was done by Ahaz, when he sent to Tiglathpileser king of Assyria to come and save him out of the hands of the kings of Syria and Israel, 2Ki 16:7 and by Hezekiah, when he showed the messengers of the king of Babylon all his treasures; these were invitations and temptations to come and plunder them:

shall not sorrows take thee as a woman in travail? denoting the suddenness of their calamities; the sharpness and severity of them; and that they would be inevitable, and could not be prevented.

{f} Kyle dqpy yk "quando visitabit super te"; Cocceius; "quum visitaverit super te", Schmidt. {g} Kyle Mta tdml taw "docuisti istos contra te", Piscator.

Jeremiah 13:22

Ver. 22. And if thou say in thine heart,.... Not daring to express it with the mouth; and which, notwithstanding, God, that knows the heart, was privy to, and could discern all the secret workings of it; putting such a question as this:

wherefore come these things upon me? all these calamities, the invasion and siege of the enemy, famine, sword, captivity, &c.: the answer returned is,

for the greatness of thine iniquity; the enormous crimes the Jews were guilty of, such as idolatry, blasphemy, &c. which were attended with aggravated circumstances: or, "for the multitude of thine iniquity" {h}; their sins being so many, as well as great:

are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare; being obliged to walk naked and barefoot, their buttocks uncovered, and their legs and feet naked, without stockings or shoes, as captives used to be led, to their great shame and disgrace; see Isa 20:2. The phrases are expressive of captivity, and the manner of it; the cause of which was the greatness and multitude of their sins. The Targum is,

"because thy sins are multiplied, thy confusion is revealed, thy shame is seen."

{h} Knwe brb "propter multitudinem iniquitatis tuae", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 13:23

Ver. 23. Can the Ethiopian change his skin?.... Or, "the Cushite"; either, as the Arabic version, the "Abyssine", the inhabitant of the eastern Ethiopia; properly an Ethiopian, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it; or, the "Chusean Arabian"; the inhabitant of Arabia Chusea, which was nearer Judea than the other Ethiopia, and better known, and which were of a dark complexion. The Targum renders it, the Indian; and so does the Syriac version. In the Misna {i} mention is made of Indian garments, with which the high priest was clothed on the day of atonement; upon which the gloss {k} is, that they were of linen of the country of India; and which is the land of Cush (or

Ethiopia), as Jonathan Ben Uzziel interprets Jer 13:23

"can the Cushite, the Indian, change his skin?"

and it is highly probable, that, in the time of Jeremiah, no other India was known by the Jews but Ethiopia, or Arabia Chusea, and no other black people but the inhabitants thereof, or any other than the Arabians; and, as Braunius {l} observes, it need not be wondered at, that with the Jews, in those times, Ethiopia and India should be reckoned the same country; when with the ancients, whatever was beyond the Mediterranean sea, as Arabia, Ethiopia, and even Judea itself, was called India; so Joppa, a city of Phoenicia, from whence Andromeda was fetched by Perseus, is by Ovid {m} said to be in India; so Bochart {n} interprets the words of the Saracens or Arabians, who are of a swarthy colour, and some black; and indeed have their name from the same word the raven has, which is black; and particularly the inhabitants of Kedar were black, one part of Arabia, to which the allusion is in **So 1:5**. Jarchi interprets the word here by "the moor", the blackamoor, whose skin is naturally black, and cannot be changed by himself or others; hence to wash the blackamoor white is a proverbial expression for labour in vain, or attempting to do that which is not to be done:

or the leopard his spots? a creature full of spots, and whose spots are natural to it; and therefore cannot be removed by any means. Some think a creature called "the ounce", or "cat-a-mountain" is meant, whose spots are many, and of a blackish colour; but the description well agrees with the leopard, which is a creature full of spots, and has its name in the eastern languages, particularly the Chaldee and Arabic, from a word {o} which signifies "spotted", "variegated", as this creature is; so the female is called "varia" by Pliny {p}, because, of its various spots; and these spots are black, as the Arabic writers in Bochart {q}. The word here used signifies such marks as are made in a body beat and bruised, which we call black and blue; hence some render it "livid", or black and blue spots {r}; and these marks are in the skin and hair of this creature, and are natural to it, and cannot be changed; and it is usual with other writers {s} to call them spots, as well as the Scripture:

then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil; signifying that they were naturally sinners, as blackness is natural to the Ethiopian, and spots to the leopard; and were from their birth and infancy such, and had been so long habituated to sin, by custom founded upon nature, that there was no hope of them; they were obstinate in sin, bent upon it, and incorrigible in it; and this is another reason given why the above calamities came upon them. The metaphors used in this text fitly express the state and condition of men by nature; they are like the Ethiopian or blackamoor; very black, both with original and actual sin; very guilty, and very uncomely; and their blackness is natural to them; they have it from their parents, and by birth; it is with them from their infancy, and youth upwards; and very hard and difficult to be removed; it cannot be washed off by ceremonial ablutions, moral duties, evangelical ordinances, or outward humiliations; yea, it is impossible to be removed but by the grace of God and blood of Christ. Their sins are aptly compared to the leopard's spots, which are many and natural, and difficult to get clear off. What is figuratively expressed in the above metaphors is more plainly signified by being "accustomed" or "taught to do evil" {t}; which denotes a series and course of sinning; a settled habit and custom in it, founded on nature, and arising from it; which a man learns and acquires naturally, and of himself, whereby he becomes void of fear and shame; and there is a good deal of difficulty, and indeed a moral impossibility, that such persons should "do good": nothing short of the powerful and efficacious grace of God can put a man into a state and capacity of doing good aright, from right principles to right ends, and of continuing in it; for there is no good in such men; nor have they any true notion of doing good, nor inclination to it, nor any ability to perform it: in order to it, it is absolutely necessary that they should first be made good men by the grace of God; that they should be regenerated and quickened by the Spirit of God; that they should be created in Christ Jesus unto good works, and have faith in him; all which is by the grace of God, and not of themselves.

{i} Yoma, c. 3. sect 7. {k} In T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 34. 2. {l} De Vestitu Sacerdot. Heb. l. 1. c. 7. sect. 9. p. 150, 151. {m} "Andromedam Perseus nigris portarat ab Indis". De Arte Atnandi, l. 1. {n} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 2. col. 215, 216. {o} Vid. Golium, col. 2459, 2460. Castel. col. 2321, 2322. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 17. {q} Hierozoic. par 1. l. 3. c. 7. col. 786, 787. {r} wytwrbrbx "liventee maculas suas", Junius & Tremellius. {s} Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 19. Juvenal. Satyr. 15. {t} erh ydml "docti malefacere", Montanus; "edocti malefacere", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "qui edocti estis malum", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 13:24

Ver. 24. Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away,.... Because of their many sins, and continuance in them, their habits and custom of sinning, they are threatened with being carried captive into other nations, where they should be dispersed and separated one from another, which would make their state and condition very uncomfortable; and this would be as easily and as swiftly done as the light stubble which is blown away by every puff of wind; nor would they be able any more to resist the enemy, and help themselves, than the stubble is to stand before the wind; as follows:

by the wind of the wilderness; which blows freely and strongly; so the Chaldean army is compared to a dry wind of the high places in the wilderness, even a full wind that should scatter and destroy, **Jer 4:11**; or, "to the wind of the wilderness" {u}; and so may denote the wilderness of the people, or the land of Babylon, whither they should be carried captive, and from whence the wind should come that should bring them thither. Kimchi and Ben Melech make mention sea wilderness between Jerusalem and Babylon, as what may be intended.

{u} rbdm xwrl "ad ventum deserti", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Jeremiah 13:25

Ver. 25. This is thy lot,.... Meaning not the king's, or the queen's only, but the lot of the whole Jewish state:

the portion of thy measures from me, saith the Lord; which were divided and distributed, and measured out to them by the Lord, who appointed these calamities to befall them, and brought them upon them, and that in righteous judgment. The Targum is,

"and the portion of thine inheritance;"

who, instead of having the land of Canaan for their inheritance, to which the allusion is, and of which they boasted, the land of Babylon was assigned them, not to be possessors of it, but captives in it; and instead of having God to be their portion and inheritance, they were banished from him, and this was but righteous measure; they had measure for measure:

because thou hast forgotten me; their Maker and Benefactor; the goodness he had shown them, the mercies and benefits he had bestowed upon them; or, "my law", as the Arabic version; or, "my worship", as the Targum; therefore he forgot them, took no notice of them, hid his face from them, and gave them up into the hands of their enemies:

and trusted in falsehood; either in the Egyptians and Assyrians, who deceived them; or in their idols, which were falsehood and lying vanities, and could not help them.

Jeremiah 13:26

Ver. 26. Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face,.... Turn them up, or throw them over the head or face; that is, expose to public shame and disgrace; which was done when their city and temple were burnt, and they were carried captive; hence it follows:

that thy shame may appear; that their sins might appear to themselves and others, of which they had reason to be ashamed. The allusion is to the treatment which captive women sometimes meet with, or adulterous women, to which the Jews are here compared. The Targum is,

"and I also will reveal the confusion of thy sin upon thy face, and thy shame shall be seen."

Jeremiah 13:27

Ver. 27. I have seen thine adulteries,.... Not literally such, though they were greatly guilty of that sin; but figuratively, their idolatries:

thy neighings; expressive of their strong desires after other gods, like that of adulterers and adulteresses after one another; and both which are like the neighing of horses. Kimchi thinks this designs their rejoicing in their evil works:

the lewdness of thy whoredom; their sinful thoughts, and wicked desires, which were continually after their idols and idolatrous practices:

and thine abominations on the hills in the fields; their idols, which were abominable to God, and ought to have been so to them; and which they placed on high hills, and there worshipped them; all which were seen and known by the Lord, nor could it be denied by them; and this was the reason of their being carried captive, and therefore could not complain they had been hardly dealt with; yea, notwithstanding all this, the Lord expresses a tender and compassionate concern for them:

woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! sad will be thy case, dreadful are the calamities coming upon thee, unless thou repentest:

wilt thou not be made clean? wilt thou show no concern, land make use of no means to be cleansed, nor seek for it, where it is to be had? neither repent of sin, nor reform from it, nor seek to God for his grace, signified by clean water; or to the blood of Christ, the fountain opened, which cleanses from it:

when shall it once be? some instances there were of it in the times of Christ and his apostles; but it will not be completely done until they seek the Lord, and his Christ, and fear him, and his goodness, in the latter day; when they shall turn unto him, and all Israel shall be saved; or, "thou wilt not be cleansed after a long time" {w}; this the Lord foresaw, and therefore pronounces her case sad and miserable.

{w} dwe ytm yrxa yrhjt al "non mundaberis quousque adhuc, [vel] post quantum adhuc tempus", Schmidt; "non mundaberis posthac aliquamdiu"; so some in Vatablus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 14

This chapter contains prophecy of a drought, which produced a famine, Jer 14:1, and is described by the dismal effects of it; and general distress in the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, Jer 14:2, even the nobles were affected with it, whose servants returned without water ashamed, when sent for it, Jer 14:3, the ploughmen could not use their plough, their ground was so hard, Jer 14:4 and the very beasts of the field suffered much, because there was no grass, Jer 14:5, upon this follows a prayer of the prophet to the Lord, that he would give rain for his name's sake; he confesses the sins of the people, that they were many, and against the Lord; and testified against them, that they deserved to be used as they were; and he addresses the Lord as the hope and Saviour of his people in time past, when it was a time of trouble with them; and expostulates with him, why he should be as a stranger and traveller, and

like a mighty man astonished, that either had no regard to their land any more than a foreigner and a traveller; or no heart to help them, or exert his power, than a man at his wits' end, though he was among them, and they were called by his name; and therefore he begs he would not leave them, Jer 14:7, but he is told that it was for the sins of the people that all this was, which the Lord was determined to remember and visit; and therefore he is bid not to pray for them; if he did, it would not be regarded, nor the people's fasting and prayers also; for they should be consumed by the sword, famine, and pestilence,
Jer 14:10, and though the prophet pleads, in excuse of the people, that the false prophets had deceived them; yet not only the vanity and falsehood of their prophecies are exposed, and they are threatened with destruction, but the people also, for hearkening unto them,
Jer 14:13, wherefore the prophet, instead of putting up a prayer for them, has a lamentation dictated to him by the Lord, which he is ordered to express, Jer 14:17, and yet, notwithstanding this, he goes on to pray for them in a very pathetic manner; he expostulates with God, and pleads for help and healing; confesses the iniquities of the people; entreats the Lord, for the sake of his name, glory, and covenant, that he would not reject them and his petition; and observes, that the thing asked for (rain) was what none of the gods of the Heathens could give, or even the heavens themselves, only the Lord; and therefore determines to wait upon him for it, who made the heavens, the earth, and rain,
Jer 14:19.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the dearth. Or, "concerning the words of straints" {x}; that is, concerning the businesses of a drought, as the Targum; concerning the Lord's restraining rain from the earth, and forbidding the heavens dropping it down; the consequence of which is a drought, or dryness of the earth; and the effect of that a famine; when this was it is not anywhere said; it could not be the famine at the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, because that only affected the city; this all Judea. Some think it was in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, long before the siege; and others, that it was in the reign of Jehoiakim, since we read of a fast in his time, Jer 36:9, which might be on this occasion; and it appears that there was one at this time, though not acceptable to God; see
Jer 14:12.

{x} twrubh yrbd le "super verbis, cohibitionum", Junius & Tremellius; "retentionum"; Tigurine version; "prohibitionum", Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 14:2

Ver. 2. Judah mourneth,.... That is, the inhabitants of Judah; those of the house of Judah, as the Targum; these mourned because of the drought and famine that were upon the land:

and the gates thereof languish; the cities of Judah, as the Targum; the inhabitants of them, which used to be supplied from the field, and out of the country; gates may be mentioned, because through the gates the provisions were brought into the city; but now none; and therefore are said to languish; or else those that sat in the gates are meant, the elders of the people, the senators, the judges, and civil magistrates; these shared in the common calamity:

they are black unto the ground; that is, the inhabitants of the cities, and those that sit in the gates, their faces are black through famine; see **La 4:8**, so the Targum,

"their faces are covered with blackness, they are black as a pot;"

and which they turned to the ground, and looked downwards, not being able to lift them up through the sorrow and distress they were in, and through faintness of spirit for want of food:

and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up: meaning the cry and lamentation of the inhabitants of Jerusalem because of the famine, for that city was not exempted from it, it having its supply from the country; or the prayer of them, and of the people from all parts got together there, which went up to heaven for rain: it being usual, in times of common distress, for the people in the country to come up to Jerusalem to the temple to pray to God, and particularly for rain, when there was a want of it.

Jeremiah 14:3

Ver. 3. And their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters,.... To places where water used to be; to the pools, the upper and the lower, particularly to the fountain of Shiloah, which, Jerom says, was the only one the city of Jerusalem used. The meaning either is, that the nobles in Jerusalem sent their own children to get water for them, they having no servants to attend them, these being put away because they could not support them, the famine being so sore; or rather that they sent their menial servants, their subjects, as the Targum renders it, to fetch them a little water to refresh themselves with:

they came to the pits and found no water; their servants came according to order to the pools and cisterns, or to the deep wells, and to such places where there used to be a great confluence of water, and plenty of it, but now they could find none:

they returned with their vessels empty; just as they came:

they were ashamed and confounded; either the servants that were sent, or rather their masters that sent them, when they saw them come with their empty vessels; having been looking out and longing for their return, expecting they would have brought water with them for their refreshment; but to their great disappointment and confusion brought none:

and covered their heads; as persons ashamed, or as mourners used to do, being full of anguish and distress because of the drought.

Jeremiah 14:4

Ver. 4. Because the ground is chapt,.... Through the violent heat of the sun, and want of rain; or, is broken {y}; and crumbles into dust. The Targum is,

"because of sins, the inhabitants of the earth are broken:"

for there was no rain in the earth; this was the reason of the dearth, and of the famine, and why there was no water in the pits, and the ground was parched. It is to be understood of the land of Judea only, not of the whole earth:

the ploughmen were ashamed; because they could not work the earth with their plough; were obliged to sit still, could do no work, or go on with their husbandry; nothing could be done for want of rain: they covered their heads; as before; See Gill on "Jer 14:3".

{y} htx "confracta", Schmidt; "attritam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 14:5

Ver. 5. Yea, the hind also calved in the field,.... Or brought forth her young in the field; of which see Job 39:1, and which they sometimes did through fear, particularly when frightened with thunder and lightning; and which are common in a time of heat and drought, which is the case here; see Ps 29:9 of these sort of creatures there were great plenty in Judea and the parts adjacent. Aelianus {z} says, the harts in Syria are bred on the highest mountains, Amanus, Lebanon, and Carmel; which were mountains on the borders of the land of Canaan; and the flesh of these was much used for food by the Jews; see De 12:15:

and forsook it; which, as it is a loving creature to its mate, so very careful of its young, and provident for it, and nourishes it, as Pliny {a} observes. The reason of such uncommon usage follows:

because there was no grass; for the hind to feed upon, and so had no milk to suckle its young with; and therefore left it to seek for grass elsewhere, that it might have food for itself, and milk for its young.

{z} De Anima. l. 5. c. 56. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 32.

Jeremiah 14:6

Ver. 6. And the wild asses did stand in the high places,.... To see where any grass was to be had, or where the wind blows more freely and cooly, to draw it in; as follows. The Targum renders it, "by the brooks"; and so Jarchi interprets it brooks of water; whither they came as usual to drink, and found them now dried up; and where they stood distressed and languishing, not knowing where to go for any:

they snuffed up the wind like dragons: which, being of a hot nature, open their mouths, and draw in the wind and air to cool them. Aelianus {b} reports of the dragons in Phrygia, that they open their mouths, and not only draw in the air, but even birds flying. The word used for dragons signifies large fishes, great whales; and some understand it of crocodiles, who will lift up their heads above water to refresh themselves with the air:

their eyes did fail; in looking about for grass; or for want of food, being quite starved and famished:

because there was no grass; for their food and nourishment. With great propriety is the herb or grass mentioned, this being the proper food of asses, as Aristotle {c} observes; and with which agrees the Scripture; which represents them as content when they have it; and as ranging about the mountains for it when they have none; being creatures very impatient of hunger and thirst; see **Job 6:5** wherefore the Greek writers surname this animal dry and thirsty; and hence the lying story of Tacitus {d}, concerning Moses and the children of Israel; who, he says, being ready to perish for want of water, Moses observed a flock of wild asses going from their pasture to a rock covered with trees, and followed them, taking it for herbage, and found large fountains of water. And very pertinently are their eyes said to fail for want of food, and the sight of them grow dim, which is more or less the case of all creatures in such circumstances; but the rather is this observed of the wild ass, because, as an Arabic writer {e} suggests, it is naturally very sharp and clear sighted.

{b} De Animal. l. 2. c. 21. {c} Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 8. {d} Histor. l. 5. c. 3. {e} Damir apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 16. col. 878.

Jeremiah 14:7

Ver. 7. O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us,.... That we deserve such judgments to be inflicted on us; and that God is righteous in bringing them; and we are altogether undeserving of the favour now about to be asked. These are the words of the prophet interceding for his people, and confessing their sins and his own:

do thou it for thy name's sake; that is, give rain; which was the thing wanted, and which none but God could give, Jer 14:22 though we are not worthy to have it done for our sakes, do it for thine own sake; for the honour and glory of thy name, of thy goodness, power, and faithfulness:

for our backslidings are many; and so had many witnesses against them; and which shows how unworthy they were, and that they had no reason to expect the mercy on their own account; and especially as it follows:

we have sinned against thee; as all sin is against God, contrary to his nature and will, and a transgression of his law; and what aggravates it is, that it is against him as a God of goodness, grace, and mercy.

Jeremiah 14:8

Ver. 8. O the hope of Israel,.... The author, object, ground, and foundation of hope of all good things, both here and hereafter; in whom Israel had been used to hope in times past, and had great encouragement so to do, Ps 130:7 or, "the expectation of Israel" {f}; whom they looked for to come:

the Saviour thereof in time of trouble; the Saviour of all men in a way of providence, but especially of the true Israel of God, of them that believe; who, though they have their times of trouble and affliction, by reason of sin, Satan, and wicked men, and other things, yet the Lord saves and delivers them out of them all in due time:

why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land; or, a "sojourner" {g}; who abides but for a while; and it not being his native place, is not so solicitous for the welfare of it. Jerome interprets this of Christ when here on earth, who was as a stranger, and unknown by men; see
Ps 69:9 and the other characters;

of the hope of Israel, and the Saviour, well agree with him, **1Ti 1:1**

and as a wayfaring man; or "traveller" {h}:

that turnest aside to tarry for a night? that turns into an inn to lodge there for a night, and that only; and so is unconcerned what becomes of it, or the people in it; he is only there for a night, and is gone in the morning. Thus the prophet represents the Lord by these metaphors, as if he was, or at least seemed, careless of his people; and therefore expostulates with him upon it, as the disciples with our Lord, **Mr 4:38**.

{f} larvy hwqm "expectatio Israel", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius. {g} rgk "quasi colonus", Grotius; "advena", Gataker. {h} xrak "tanquam viator", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 14:9

Ver. 9. Why shouldest thou be as a man astonied,.... Astonished, and so surprised as not to know what to say or do; or "asleep", as the Septuagint;

taking no notice of us, and being altogether unconcerned what becomes of us; or, as one "dumb" {i}; that will give no answer to our prayers:

as a mighty man that cannot save? who, though he is able to save, yet, through want of a heart or will, does not exert his power:

yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us; having his residence and dwelling in the temple at Jerusalem; and therefore was not a stranger and foreigner among them; and this carries in it an entreaty and an argument that he would not in his providence conduct towards them in such manner as though he was:

and we are called by thy name; the people of God, the Israel of God, and the like:

leave us not; in our distress and trouble, but deliver us out of it.

{i} Mhdn "obmutefactus", Fosterus, Mercerus,

Jeremiah 14:10

Ver. 10. Thus saith the Lord unto this people,.... Instead of answering the prophet directly and immediately, he first speaks to the people, and observes their sin is the cause of his conduct; and whom he does not vouchsafe to call his people; they having broken covenant with him, and so notoriously backslidden from him; but this people, this wicked and worthless people:

thus have they loved to wander; from the Lord, and out of the way of their duty, to Egypt and Assyria for help, and after strange gods, and the worship of them; and this they chose and delighted in; it arose from corrupt affections and a depraved heart:

they have not refrained their feet; from going into other lands, or into the temples of idols; wherefore, it ought not to be wondered at that the Lord was as a stranger in their land, and as a wayfaring man that tarried for a night; and hence it was that they should have enough of wandering to and fro, since they loved it; in seeking for water in their own land, and by their being carried captive into others; so the Targum,

"as they loved, so will I take vengeance on them, to cause them to be carried captive from the land of the house of my majesty; and as they have delighted themselves in the worship of idols, and from the house of my sanctuary have not refrained their feet, therefore before the Lord there is no delight in them:"

therefore the Lord doth not accept them; has no favour for them, no pleasure in them; does not accept either their persons or their services:

he will now remember their iniquity; their idolatry; their trust in others, and distrust of him; which might seem to be forgotten because he had taken no notice of them, in a providential way, to correct for them; but now he would let them know that they were had in remembrance, by causing his judgments to come upon them for them: this stands opposed to the forgiveness of sin; when God forgives sin he remembers it no more; but when he does not, but punishes for it, then he is said to remember it: and visit their; sins; or them for their sins; that is, punish them.

Jeremiah 14:11

Ver. 11. Then said the Lord unto me,.... To the prophet; now the Lord gives a more direct answer to him, and to his prayers and intercession for the people; which he forbids, saying,

pray not for this people for their good; or "for good things", as the Septuagint; for rain, that the famine might cease; and for deliverance from their enemies, that they might not go into captivity; for these things were determined upon by the Lord: he does not forbid him praying at all for them, or for their repentance and reformation; or for spiritual good things for them, for eternal life and salvation for the remnant of his own people among them; but not for external good things for the bulk of them.

Jeremiah 14:12

Ver. 12. When they fast, I will not hear their cry,.... Or, "though they fast" {k}; very probably on account of the want of rain, and the dearth or famine, a fast was proclaimed; see Jer 36:9, when they prayed and cried aloud, and made a great noise; but their prayers being hypocritical, and not arising from a pure heart, or offered up in faith and love, were not heard and accepted by the Lord:

and when they offer burnt offerings and an oblation; or a meat or bread offering, which went along with the burnt offering; thinking by those outward things to atone for their sins, without true repentance for them, or faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ:

I will not accept them; neither their offerings, nor their persons:

but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; the Lord not only determines the continuance of the famine, notwithstanding the prayers of the prophet; but adds two other judgments, the sword and pestilence, by which he was resolved to consume them; and therefore it was to no purpose to pray to him on their behalf, he was inexorable.

{k} wmuy yk "quamvis jejunant", Gataker.

Jeremiah 14:13

Ver. 13. Then said I, Ah, Lord God!.... Being grieved at heart for the people, because he was forbid to pray for them, and because the Lord had resolved on the ruin of them; and the rather he pitied them, because they were deceived by the false prophets, and therefore he tries to excuse them, and lay the blame upon them, as follows:

behold, the prophets say unto them; that is, the false prophets, as the Targum; Jeremiah does not call them so, being willing to make the best of it:

ye shall not see the sword; the sword of the enemy drawn in your country, or fall by it:

neither shall ye have famine; by which it appears, that it was not yet come, only foretold; the contrary to which is here affirmed:

but I will give you assured peace in this place; so they spoke as from the Lord, and in his name, with all the confidence imaginable; assuring the people that they should have peace and prosperity, and be in the utmost safety in Jerusalem; and that neither famine nor sword would come to them, nor in the least hurt them. In the Hebrew text it is, "peace of truth" {l}; that is, true peace, firm and lasting. The Septuagint render it "peace and truth"; see Isa 39:8.

{l} tma Mwlv "pacem veritatis", Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 14:14

Ver. 14. Then said the Lord unto me,.... In reply to the above excuse, in favour of the people:

the prophets prophesy lies in my name; it is a wicked thing to tell lies; it is more so to foretell them, and that in the name of the Lord; pretending they have his authority, and are under the influence and guidance of his Spirit; and it was sinful in the people to give credit to them, and the more so in that they were forewarned of these prophets and their lies, and had the reverse told them by a true prophet of the Lord, and therefore were inexcusable.

I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spoke unto them; all which are requisite to a prophet, or to a man's prophesying in the name of the Lord; he ought to have his mission from him, and his commission from him; his orders and credentials from him, and the things themselves which he delivers; neither of which those prophets had; nor were they able to make out those things to the people, of which they should have had satisfaction before they believed them, and therefore were highly to blame in giving heed unto them.

They prophecy unto you a false vision; or, "a vision of falsehood" {m}; pretending they had a vision from the Lord, when they had none:

and divination; soothsaying or astrology, as some interpret it, as Kimchi observes; foretelling things by the stars:

and a thing of nought; which is good for nothing, and comes to nothing:

and the deceit of their hearts; which flows from their deceitful hearts and vain imaginations, and by no means to be depended upon.

{m} rqv Nwzx "visionem mendacii", Schmidt; "visionem falsitatis", Montanus.

Jeremiah 14:15

Ver. 15. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets,.... The false prophets, as the following description shows:

that prophecy in my name, and I sent them not; made use of his name, pretending his authority, though they were not sent by him:

yet they say, sword and famine shall not be in the land; though the Lord by his true prophet had said there should be both; which proves that they were not sent by the Lord, since what they said was in direct opposition to the word of the Lord; wherefore their doom in righteous judgment follows:

by sword and famine shall these prophets be consumed; they should be some of the first, if not the first that should perish by these calamities; which would abundantly prove the falsehood of their predictions, and show that their lies could neither secure themselves nor others from the judgments which the Lord had said should come upon them.

Jeremiah 14:16

Ver. 16. And the people to whom they prophesy,.... That is, such of them as gave credit to their prophecies:

shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem, because of the famine and the sword; they dying of the famine and of the sword, their carcasses should be cast out of their houses into the open streets, and there lie unburied, as a punishment for disbelieving the words of the Lord, and giving heed to the lies of the false prophets:

and they shall have none to bury them; either through want of ability of body or substance, or through want of affection; or rather through want of persons to do it for them, all their relations being cut off with them, as follows:

them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters; or rather, "they" {n}, "their wives, and their sons, and their daughters"; these shall die by the famine and the sword, and shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem; so that they and their relatives all dying, there would be none to bury one another; and that all should suffer by these calamities were but just and righteous, since all were guilty both of idolatry, and of despising the prophets, and listening to the false ones; see **Jer 7:18**:

for I will pour their wickedness upon them; or, "their evil upon them" {o}; not the evil of sin, but the evil of punishment; the meaning is, that he would abundantly punish them for their sins, and as they deserved, though not exceeding the bounds of justice: the phrase denotes that their wickedness was great; and that in proportion to it the vials of his wrath would be poured out upon them.

{n} hmh "ipsi inquam", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt. {o} Mter ta "suum malum", Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 14:17

Ver. 17. Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them,.... Instead of praying for the people, the prophet has a doleful lamentation put into his mouth, to pronounce in their hearing, in order to assure them of the calamities that were coming upon them, and to affect them with them.

Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: or "be silent" {p}; signifying that there would be quickly just reason and occasion for incessant grief and sorrow in them; and if they were so hardened as not to be affected with their case, he could not refrain shedding tears night and day in great abundance; which would have a voice in them, to call upon them to weeping and lamentation also. Some take these words to be a direction and instruction to the people; so the Septuagint,

"bring down upon your eyes tears night and day, and let them not cease;"

and the Arabic version,

"pour out of your eyes tears night and day continually;"

and the Syriac version is,

"let our eyes drop tears night and day incessantly."

For the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow; cities are sometimes called virgins, which were never taken; and so Jerusalem here, it having never been taken since it was in the hands of the people of Judah; nor were its inhabitants as yet carried captive, but now would be; which, together with the famine and the sword, by which many should perish, is the great breach and grievous blow spoken of; and which is given as a reason, and was a sufficient one, for sorrow and mourning.

{p} hnymdt "sileant", Schmidt; "taceant", Pegninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 14:18

Ver. 18. If I go forth into the field,.... Without the city, where was the camp of the enemy besieging it

then behold the slain with the sword! the sword of the enemy; who by sallying out of the city upon them, or by endeavouring to make their escape into the country, fell into their hands, and were slain by them.

And if I enter into the city; the city of Jerusalem:

then behold them that are sick with the famine! just ready to die, being starved for want of provisions; and multitudes dead, and their carcasses lying in the streets unburied; the prophet does not make mention of the dead indeed, only of the sick with famine; the reason of which, Kimchi says, is because the sick were more than the dead.

Yea, both the prophet and the priest go about into a land that they knew not; into the land of Chaldea, a strange and foreign country, whither they were carried captive, both in the times of Jehoiakim and of Zedekiah, and whither they might go in ways far about: and this seems to be understood of false prophets and wicked priests, that had led the people about, and had caused them to wander from the ways of God and his worship; and therefore, in righteous retaliation, they are led in round about ways to a land unknown to them: though some think that the true prophets and priests of the Lord may be meant, as Ezekiel and Daniel, who were carried captive into Babylon: others interpret them of such going about in the land of Judea seeking for bread and water, or food in the time of the famine;

but they know not {q}, as the last clause may be literally rendered, that is, men know them not, take no notice of them, show no regard to them, and give them no relief; the famine being so sore, that everyone was for himself, and could afford no help to others, even to the prophets and priests. Some render the words, "yea, the priest and the prophet make merchandise against the land"; or, "through the lands" {r}; by deceiving the people with their false prophecies: or rather, go about the land making merchandise {s}; of the souls of men; see **2Pe 2:3**, making a gain of their visions and prophecies:

and they know not; the people are not aware of their deception and falsehood. The Targum is,

"for even the scribe and the priest are turned to their own negotiations or merchandises, to that which is in the land, neither do they inquire;"

they minded their own affairs, and inquired not for, nor sought after, the people's good.

{q} wedy alw "et non agnoverunt, Supple, ulli eos", De Dieu. {r} Ura la zrxo "nundinantur contra terram", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "mercaturam exercuerunt per terram", Cocceius. {s} Ura la rho "est circuire terram negotiandi causa", Grotius.

Jeremiah 14:19

Ver. 19. Hast thou utterly rejected Judah?.... The prophet, though forbid, proceeds to prayers and expostulations on account of this people, the people of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin: or, "in rejecting hast thou rejected Judah?" {t} from being a nation, from being under thy care and protection? hast thou cast them away, and wilt thou suffer them to go into captivity as the ten tribes? what! Judah, whom the Lord hath chosen, and where was his dwelling place? what! Judah, from whom the chief ruler, the Messiah, was to come? what! Judah, from whom the sceptre was not to depart, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh came? and, what! wilt thou reject, and utterly reject, this tribe, upon which so many favours have been bestowed, and from which so much is expected?

Hath thy soul loathed Zion? whom thou hast formerly so much loved and delighted in, and chosen for thine habitation; Zion, the joy of the whole earth, and a perfection of beauty.

Why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? brought upon them his judgments; or, however, was about to bring them upon them, famine, sword, and captivity; and there was no deliverance from them, no way to

escape them, no relief, no remedy, or no healing, as in
2Ch 36:16.

We looked for peace: as the false prophets foretold; or through alliance with neighbouring nations, even all safety and prosperity; and had no notion of desolation and war:

and there is no good; as was promised and expected, but all the reverse:

and for the time of healing; national and civil disorders, from which might have been hoped for a train of blessings:

and behold trouble! fears, frights, perplexities, and distresses; trouble from without, and from within. The Targum is,

"a time of pardon of sins, and behold punishment of sins."

{t} toam oamh "reprobando reprobasti", Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 14:20

Ver. 20. We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers,.... This is said by the prophet, in the name of the few faithful that were among this people, who were sensible of their own sins, the sins of their ancestors, and which they ingenuously confess; their fathers had sinned, and they had imitated them, and continued in the same, and therefore might justly expect the displeasure of the Lord, and his controversy with them:

for we have sinned against thee; Jer 14:7.

Jeremiah 14:21

Ver. 21. Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake,.... Which was called upon them, and which they called upon; they deserved to be abhorred, they had done those things which might justly render them abominable, being what was abhorrent to him; and they deprecate this, not, for their own sake, who were unworthy of any favour, but for his own sake, for the sake of his honour and glory, which, as it is dear to the Lord, so to his people.

Do not disgrace the throne of thy glory; either Jerusalem, as Kimchi, which was the city of the great King, where he had his throne and palace, and which is called the throne of the Lord, **Jer 3:17** or the house of the sanctuary, the temple, as Jarchi; see
Jer 17:12, respect seems to be had to the mercy seat upon the ark, over which were the cherubim of glory, between which the Lord dwelt; and they pray, that though they were worthy of disgrace themselves, and to be taken and carried captive into a strange land, yet they entreat that the Lord would not disgrace his own glorious habitation, by suffering the city and the temple, and the ark in it, to be destroyed:

remember; thy people, Zion, as before; or the promises made to them, the covenant, as follows:

break not thy covenant with us: God never breaks his covenant, though man does; it may sometimes seem to be broken, when his church and people are in distress and affliction; but he will never break the covenant he has made, or suffer his faithfulness to fail; yet, though he does not, it is proper and necessary oftentimes to pray in this manner to God, for the encouragement of faith in him, and expectation of good things from him.

Jeremiah 14:22

Ver. 22. Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain?.... The blessing wanted; none of the idols of the Gentiles, called vanities, because it was a vain thing to apply to them, or hope for anything from them, none of these could give a shower of rain; though the name of one of their idols was Jupiter Imbrius {u}, or Pluvius, the god of rain, yet he could not make nor give a single drop; as Baal, in the times of Ahab, when there was a drought, could not.

Or can the heavens give showers? from whence they descend, and which are the second causes of rain; even these could not of themselves, and much less Heathen deities.

Art not thou he, O Lord our God? the everlasting and unchangeable He, or I AM, our covenant God and Father, thou, and thou only, canst give rain; this is the peculiar of the great God himself; see Ac 14:17.

Therefore we will wait upon thee; for rain, by prayer and supplication, and hope for it, and wait the Lord's own time to give it:

for thou hast made all these things; the rain and its showers, who have no other father than the Lord, Job 38:28, also the heavens from whence it descends, and the earth on which it falls, are made by him, who restrains and gives it at pleasure.

{u} Pausanias makes mention of an image of Jupiter Pluvius, and of altars erected to him in various places; Attica, sive l. 1. p. 60. Corinthiaca, sive l. 2. p. 119. Boeotica, sive l. 9. p. 602. and in India, as Apollonius Tyanaeus relates, in Vit. Philostrat. l. 3. c. 2. in fine, was a tub, which in time of drought they opened; from whence, as they pretended, clouds came forth and watered all the country. Near Rome was a stone called Lapis Manalis, which being brought into the city, was said to cause rain. A like fable is told of water being in the forehead of Jupiter Lycaeus, which being shook by an oaken branch in the hand of a priest, gathered clouds, and produced plentiful showers of rain when wanted; but these, with others, are all fables and lies. See Alex. ab Alex Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 16.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 15

This chapter contains the Lord's answer to the prophet's prayers, in which he declares himself inexorable, and had resolved on the ruin of the Jewish nation for their sins; the prophet's complaint of the hardships he endured, notwithstanding his sincerity and integrity; and the Lord's promise of protection and deliverance, in case of his continuance in the faithful discharge of his office. The Lord denies the request of the prophet, by observing, that if even Moses and Samuel had been the intercessors for the people, he would not have regarded them, being determined upon casting them out, and sending them away captive, Jer 15:1, their punishment is declared, which was resolved on; some for death, or the pestilence; others for the sword; others for famine; and others for captivity; and others to be devoured by dogs, and fowls, and wild beasts, Jer 15:2, the cause of which were their sins, particularly their idolatry in the times of Manasseh, Jer 15:4, wherefore they should have no pity from men, nor would the Lord any more repent of the evil threatened, of which he was weary, because of their many backslidings, Jer 15:5, which destruction, being determined, is illustrated by a description of the instrument of it; by the multitude of widows, and the distress of mothers bereaved of their children, Jer 15:7 on which the prophet takes up a complaint of his being born for strife and contention, and of his being cursed by the people, though no usurer, Jer 15:10, when he is comforted with a promise of being used well by the enemy, both he and his remnant, Jer 15:11, but as for the people of the Jews in general, they would never be able to withstand the northern forces, the army of the Chaldeans; their riches and substance would be delivered into their hands, and their persons also be carried captive into a strange land, and the prophet along with them, because of their sins, and the wrath of God for them, Jer 15:12, upon which the prophet prays to the Lord, who knew him, that he would remember and visit him, and avenge him of his persecutors, and not take him away in his longsuffering; he urges, that he had suffered rebuke and reproach for his sake; that he was called by him to his office, which he had cheerfully entered on; he had his mission, commission, and message, from him, which he received with the greatest pleasure, signified by eating his words with joy; and that he had not associated himself with mockers and scoffers at religion and the word of God; and therefore expostulates why he should be put to so much pain, and be used as he was, Jer 15:15, wherefore the Lord promises that, upon condition of doing his work faithfully, he should be preserved, protected, and delivered, Jer 15:19.

Ver. 1. Then said the Lord unto me,.... In answer to his expostulations and entreaties, Jer 14:19,

though Moses and Samuel stood before me; to pray before me, as the Targum; to make intercession for the people. Standing is a prayer gesture. The Jews say there is no standing but prayer, or that is meant when it is mentioned; See Gill on "Mt 6:5". Moses and Samuel were named, because they were eminent for prayer, and had success in it, for the people of Israel. Of Moses, see Ex 32:11 and of Samuel, see **1Sa 7:9** and of both, Ps 99:6. The Arabic version reads "Moses and Aaron", but wrongly. The Palmists make use of this text to prove the intercession of saints in heaven for those on earth; but the words are only a supposition, and not a fact. The meaning is, that supposing that Moses and Samuel were alive, and made intercession for the people, their prayers would not be regarded; and such a supposition, as it suggests that they were not alive, so that they did not stand before him, and make intercession for Judah; wherefore this is against, and not for, the intercession of saints in heaven:

yet my mind could not be towards this people; God could have no good will to them, no delight in them; could not be reconciled to them, or agree to it, that the favours asked for should be granted them, or that they should be continued in their own land; and therefore it was in vain for the prophet to solicit on their account; but, on the other hand, it is ordered as follows:

cast them out of my sight; or presence; as persons loathsome and abominable, not to be borne; I cannot look upon them, or have anything to say to them, in a favourable way:

and let them go forth; from my presence, from the temple, the city, and out of their own land; that is, declare that so it shall be.

Jeremiah 15:2

Ver. 2. And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee,.... As doubtless they will, when this message is brought to them:

whither shall we go forth? in a jeering scornful manner, not believing that this would be their case:

then thou shall tell them, thus saith the Lord, such as are for death, to death; such as were appointed to death, or to die by the pestilence, which is often signified by death; they shall go forth unto it; or it shall meet them, and seize upon them, and take them away:

and such as are for the sword, to the sword; who are appointed to die by the sword of the enemy, into whose hands they should fall by attempting to escape out of the city, shall perish by it:

and such as are for the famine, to the famine; such as are appointed to die by that, shall die of it in the city, where they shall be besieged, and not be able to get out to fetch in any provisions, and where none can be brought, because of the enemy:

and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity; such as are spared from the pestilence, sword, and famine, and are designed to be carried captive into a strange land, shall be taken and carried thither; nor will it be in their power, or in any other's, to hinder any of the above things, to which they are appointed of

God. According to the Jews, the latter of these is more grievous than the former; as the sword than death, and famine than the sword, so captivity than them all {w}.

{w} T. Bab Bava Bathra, fol. 8. 2.

Jeremiah 15:3

Ver. 3. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord,.... Or four families {x}, and these very devouring ones; that is, four sorts of punishment; and so the Targum,

"four evil punishments;"

which are after mentioned. These are represented as under God, and at his beck and command; servants of his, that go and come at his pleasure, and do his will; and as being over men, and having power and authority to kill and to destroy by a divine commission:

the sword to slay: the first and chief of the four families or punishments, which had a commission from the Lord to sheath itself in his people, the Jews; even the sword of the enemy, the Chaldeans, drawn against them by a divine order and appointment:

and the dogs to tear; the carcasses of those that are slain with the sword: or "to draw" {y}; as the word signifies; it being the usual way of dogs to draw and drag the flesh about they are feeding on; this is another of the four families, and a very voracious one it is:

and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy; or "to eat, and to corrupt", the bodies of those that are slain by the sword. The meaning is, that such should not have a burial, but should be the food of fowls and wild beasts: these are the other two destroying families, which have their commission from the Lord for such service.

{x} twxpvm ebra "quatuor familias, [sive] cognationes", Vatablus, Tigurine version, Calvin. {y} bwxol "ad trahendum", Calvin, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt; so Ben Melech,

Jeremiah 15:4

Ver. 4. And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth,.... Not only into Babylon, but into other countries; which has had its full accomplishment in this their last captivity by the Romans: or "I will give them for a commotion" {z}; shaking and trembling; they shall be like Cain, fugitives and vagabonds, and be in fear and trembling everywhere, for what is, or is about to come upon them: or "for horror unto all kingdoms" {a}; all that see the calamities and judgments that come upon them will be struck with dread and horror, plainly seeing the hand of the Lord in them:

because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah; because of the idolatry and murder committed by him; and which were the more aggravated, by having so good a parent, and so religious an education, and by his high office and dignity as king of Judah; and though these sins were personally forgiven him, yet, being imitated and continued in by the Jews, captivity is threatened them. The Targum is,

"because they turned not (or were not converted) as Manasseh;"

and so in the Talmud {b}, because Manasseh repented, and they did not; but this sense the words will not bear, because of what goes before, of which these are a reason; and because of what follows after, which are connected with them:

for that which he did in Jerusalem; the innocent blood he shed there, and the idolatrous worship he there set up; even where the temple was, the place of God's worship, and which was the metropolis of the nation, and so set an example, which must influence the whole country.

{z} hewzl "in commotionem", Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {a} "In horrorem", Cocceius. {b} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 102. 2.

Jeremiah 15:5

Ver. 5. For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem?.... The inhabitants of it; their sins being so many, and so heinous, and so aggravated, and so deserving of punishment, that none could pity their case, or have a heart of compassion towards them, or even spare reproaching them: or "who shall bemoan thee?" sympathize and condole with thee, or speak a comfortable word to thee, or seek to alleviate thy grief and sorrow: or "who shall go aside to ask how thou doest?" or "of thy peace?" {c} shall not think it worth their while to go a step out of their way, or turn into a house, and inquire of thy welfare, or salute thee.

{c} Kl Mwlvl lwavl "ad petendum [de] pace tua", Pagninus; "ad interrogandum te de paca tua", Piscator; "[sive] prosperitate tua", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 15:6

Ver. 6. Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord,.... His worship, as the Targum; and had set up idols, and idol worship; and this was the cause of the sword, pestilence, famine, and captivity, and of all the evils that befell them:

thou art gone backward; from the law of the Lord, and from his pure worship and service, from his ways and from his ordinances; and therefore it was but just they should go into captivity; hence it follows:

therefore will I stretch out mine hand against thee, and destroy thee; his hand of power and vengeance, which when stretched out, and falls with weight, whether on particular persons, or on a nation, brings inevitable ruin and destruction with it:

I am weary with repenting; not that the Lord ever changes his mind, or the counsel of his will; in this sense he is without repentance; but the conduct of his providence, and the dispensations of it; not executing the threatenings denounced, but sparing them a little longer, showing mercy, and exercising patience and longsuffering; but now he was as one weary and tired out, and was determined to bear no longer with them, but stir up all his wrath against them, and destroy them.

Jeremiah 15:7

Ver. 7. I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land,.... Either of their own land, the land of Judea; and so the Septuagint version, "in the gates of my people"; alluding to the custom of winnowing corn in open places; and by fanning is meant the dispersion of the Jews, and their being carried captive out of their own land into other countries: or of the land of the enemy, into their cities, as the Targum paraphrases it; gates being put for them frequently; whither they should be scattered by the fan of the Lord; for what was done by the enemy, as an instrument, is ascribed to him:

I will bereave them of children; which shall die of famine, or pestilence, or by the sword, or in captivity: I will destroy my people; which must be when children are cut off, by which families, towns, cities, and kingdoms, are continued and kept up; and this he was resolved to do, though they were his people:

since they return not from their ways; their evil ways, which they had gone into, forsaking the ways of God, and his worship: or,

yet they return not from their ways {d}; though fanned with the fan of affliction, bereaved of their children, and threatened with destruction: it expresses their obstinate continuance in their evil ways, and the reason of God's dealing with them as above.

{d} wbv al Mhykrdm "et tamen a viis suis non sunt reversi", V. L. Diodatus, Genevenses.

Jeremiah 15:8

Ver. 8. Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas,.... Their husbands being slain; not in the times of Ahaz, when a hundred and twenty thousand men were slain in one day in Judah, by Pekah the son of Remaliah, 2Ch 28:6, as Kimchi thinks; but in the times of Zedekiah, at the siege of Jerusalem, and the taking of it, and in the Babylonish captivity before predicted. The children of Israel were to be as the sand of the sea, and were very numerous; and here the widows are said to be so too, their husbands, who were numerous, being dead; and this, as it was of the Lord, so it was in his sight, and according to his counsel and will. Mention is made of "seas", in the plural, number, there being many in or near Judea, as the Red sea, the sea of Galilee, and the Mediterranean sea:

I have brought upon them against the mother of the young men a spoiler, at noonday; that is he would bring upon the Jews, against the mother of the young men, or mothers of them; for the young men being destroyed by the spoiler, it was against them; a calamity upon them, and a distress unto them, who have generally a tender concern for them. The Targum is,

"against the company of their young men;"

the Jews; or against Jerusalem, the mother city, the metropolis of the nation, full of young men fit for war: or, "against the mother", that is, Jerusalem, a "young man" {e}; meaning Nebuchadnezzar, who came against Jerusalem in the first year of his reign; and, as some say, in the eighteenth year of his age; and who came not as a thief in the night, but as a spoiler at noonday; not in a secret insidious manner, but openly and with force of arms making his way through the land to Jerusalem, in defiance of the Jews, and in the face of them:

and I have caused him to fall upon it suddenly; that is, upon the city of Jerusalem: for though he came openly, his march was quick, and he was presently at Jerusalem, and laid siege to it at once:

and terrors upon the city; or, "city and terrors" {f}; the city was immediately filled with terrors at the appearance of Nebuchadnezzar and his army. R. Joseph Kimchi interprets it, "an army and terrors", from 1Sa 28:16, the Babylonian monarch, at the head of his army, which spread terrors where he came. Some render the word, from **Da 4:13**, "a watcher and terrors" {g}: meaning the Chaldean army, called watchers, **Jer 4:16**. The Targum is,

"I will bring an army upon them suddenly, and destroy their cities;"

it should be rendered "alienation of mind and terrors": from the use of the word, rye, in the Arabic language {h}.

{e} rwxb Ma le "contra metropolin, juvenem", Junius & Tremellius, De Dieu; "contra matrem", Piscator; "super matrem, juvenem", Cocceius. {f} twlhbw rye "civitatem et terrores", Montanus; so Schmidt. {g} "Vigilem, [vel] vigiles et terrores", Gataker; "vigilias et terrores", Coeceius. {h} Ab "alteravit, mutavit et turbavit", Golius, Castel. Schindler.

Jeremiah 15:9

Ver. 9. She that hath borne seven languisheth,.... Either the mother that has borne many children, seven being put for a large number, now being able to bear no more, and being bereaved of what she had, and who were her staff and support, and from whom she had her expectation, faints away, and dies through grief and trouble; or Jerusalem, which formerly abounded with young men, is now in a forlorn and destitute state; her children, the inhabitants of it, being slain with the sword, or dying of famine and the pestilence. In the Talmud {i}, this is interpreted of seven wicked kings of Israel, as Jeroboam, Baasha, Ahab, Jehu, Pekah, Menahem, and Hoshea; and elsewhere of seven kings of Judah, thus reckoned, Jehoram, Joash, Ahaz, Manasseh, Amon, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah {k}:

she hath given up the ghost; or, "blew out her soul {l}"; her breath departs; no life can be kept in her; she faints away at the calamities coming on her:

her sun is gone down while it was yet day; the darkness of affliction, and the evening of distress and calamity came upon her sooner than was expected, while in the midst of peace and prosperity that was promised, and hoped to be enjoyed for a long time to come; see **Am 8:9**:

she hath been ashamed and confounded; of her vain hope, trust, and confidence:

and the residue of them will I deliver to the sword before their enemies, saith the Lord; that is; such who died not of the famine and pestilence, but at the breaking up of the city endeavoured to make their escape, these fell into the hands of the enemy, and perished by the sword, as the Lord here predicts; for whatsoever he says certainly comes to pass.

{i} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 88. 1. {k} Vid. Jarchi & Abendana in loc. {l} hvpn hxpn "efflabit animam suam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "exspiravit animam suam", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 15:10

Ver. 10. Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast born me a man of strife,.... Not that the prophet was a quarrelsome and contentious man, but others quarrelled and contended with him, and that for no other reason than for his faithful discharge of his office, under which he ought to have been easy; but being a man of like passions with others, wishes he had never been born, than to meet with so much trouble; and seems to blame his mother for bearing him; or however looked upon himself to be a miserable man through his birth, and that he was destined from thence to this sorrow:

and a man of contention to the whole earth; or "land"; the land of Judea, the inhabitants of it, as the Targum; for with no other had Jeremiah to do; and it were these only that contended with him, because he brought a disagreeable message to them, concerning their captivity:

I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury; which was not lawful with the Jews to do; and therefore such were cursed that did it: but this is not to be restrained to this particular branch of business, which was not usual; but has respect to all trade and commerce; and the meaning is, that the prophet did not concern himself with secular affairs, but attended to the duties of his office; he carried on no negotiations with men; he was neither a creditor nor a debtor; had nothing to do with pecuniary affairs; which often occasions strifes and contentions, quarrels and lawsuits; and yet, notwithstanding, could not be free from strife and debate:

yet everyone of them do curse me; that is, everyone of the inhabitants of the land of Judea, so much known were Jeremiah and his prophecies; these slighted and set light by both him and his predictions; and wished the vilest imprecations upon him for his messages to them. The word here used is compounded of two words, or derived from two roots, as Kimchi observes; the one signifies to make light or vilify, in opposition to honour and glory; and the other to curse, in opposition to blessing; and this is often the case of the ministers of the word, not only to be slighted and despised, but to be defamed and cursed; see **1Co 4:12**.

Jeremiah 15:11

Ver. 11. The Lord said,.... In answer to the prophet's complaint:

verily it shall be well with thy remnant: not with the remnant of his people, or those that should escape the threatened calamities; but the sense is, that it should be well with him in his latter end; the remainder of his days should be comfortable or be spent in peace and prosperity; and so the Targum,

"if thine end shall not be for good."

The words are in the form of an oath, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; and the meaning is, that if it is not well with thee in thy last days, then say I am unfaithful, and not true to my word. According to Donesh, cited by Jarchi, the word translated "remnant" has the signification of loosing; and he renders it, "if I loose thee not for good" {m}; which accordingly was done, Jer 40:4, and this sense is confirmed by the note of the Masorites: "verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well"; or, "if I do not", &c. for it is also in the form of an oath, as before, as Jarchi notes; and so it was, Nebuchadnezzar gave charge to Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, to look well to him, and do him no harm; who, when he loosed him, gave him his choice to go with him to Babylon, or continue in the land, Jer 39:11, or, "verily I will", or, "shall I not entreat the enemy for thee?" {n} and make him gentle and humane, so that he shall use thee kindly. Jarchi interprets this of Zedekiah and his courtiers seeking to Jeremiah, in the time of their distress, to pray for them, Jer 37:2, and to which sense the Targum inclines,

"if they shall not come and help thee, &c."

in the time of evil, and in the time of affliction; when the city is taken, and the people carrying captive.

{m} bwjl Ktwrv al Ma "si non absolvero te in bonum", Schmidt. Vid. De Dieu in loc. {n} Kb ytegph awl Ma "sed faciam hostem occurrere tibi", Calvin: "annon intervenirem pro te apud inimicum?" Junius & Tremellius; "nisi interveniam pro te apud inimicum", Piscator.

Jeremiah 15:12

Ver. 12. Shall iron break the northern iron and the steel?] Can iron break iron, especially that which comes from the north, which was harder than the common iron; or steel, the hardest of all? though the Jews were hard as iron, they could not prevail against and overcome Jeremiah, who was made an iron pillar and brasen walls against them, **Jer 1:18**, and so these words are spoken for his comfort and encouragement: or they may respect the Jews and the Chaldeans; and the sense be, that the Jews, as mighty and as strong as they fancied themselves to be, and boasted that they were, they could not find themselves a match for the Chaldean army, which came out of the north; and may be said to be as hard as the northern iron, which came from the Chalybes, a people in the north, near Pontus, from whom steel has its name in the Latin tongue; and this sense agrees with what follows.

Jeremiah 15:13

Ver. 13. Thy substance and thy treasures will I give to the spoil without price,.... Not the prophet's substance and treasure; for it does not appear that he had any, at least to require so much notice; but the substance and treasure of the people of the Jews, to whom these words are directed; these the Lord threatened should be delivered into the hands of their enemies, and become a spoil and free booty to them, for which they should give nothing, and which should never be redeemed again:

and that for all thy sins, even in all thy borders; this spoiling of their substance should befall them because of their sins, which they had committed in all the borders of their land, where they had built their high places, and had set up idolatrous worship; or else the meaning is, that their substance and treasure in all their borders, in every part of the land, should be the plunder of their enemies, because of their sins.

Jeremiah 15:14

Ver. 14. And I will make thee to pass with thine enemies,.... Not Jeremiah, but the Jews, to whom these words are continued. The meaning is, that they should go along with the Chaldeans out of their own land into theirs:

into a land which thou knowest not; the land of Babylon; and there is another reading of the words in the margin, "I will cause thee to serve thine enemies {o}, in a land that thou knowest not"; which is followed by the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. Some render the words, "I will bring thine enemies from, or through, a land that thou knowest not" {p}; the place from whence they came, and those through which they came, being at a great distance:

for a fire is kindled in mine anger, which shall burn upon you; meaning the wrath of God, compared to fire, which was kindled and excited by their sins, and which would continue upon them until it had destroyed them.

{o} ytdehw "et servire faciam". {p} "Et adducam inimicos tuos de terra quam nescis", V. L. "et transire faciam hostes tuos per terram quam nescis", De

Dieu; so Cocceius.

Jeremiah 15:15

Ver. 15. O Lord, thou knowest,.... All persons and things; he knew the prophet and his heart, and all that was in it; his innocence and integrity; all his afflictions, and what he met with from his enemies; and he knew them, and all their malicious designs against him:

remember me; with the favour which he bore to his own people, his covenant with him, his promises to him, and the word on which he had caused him to hope; because of his trials and troubles, he might seem to be forgotten by him:

and visit me; in mercy for good; and so the Targum adds,

"that thou mayest do well unto me:"

and revenge me of my persecutors; not so much for his own sake; unless this is to be attributed to his frailty and infirmity, to the warmth of his spirit, being a man of like passions with others; for private revenge ought not to be sought by good men, but for the sake of God and his glory, in whose cause he was engaged, and on whose account he was persecuted:

take me not away in thy longsuffering; while thou art bearing with others, do not take me away by death; or suffer them, whom thou dost forbear, to take me away, or give them an opportunity thereby so to do; or when thy longsuffering is at an end, do not involve me in the same calamity with them. The Targum is,

"do not give delay to my injury;"

or,

"length to my affliction;"

that is, do not delay to take vengeance on my persecutors; and to this sense Jarchi interprets it,

"do not take my cause, and leave it to thy longsuffering, but hasten and avenge me;"

and De Dieu proposes such a rendering of the words, "to thy longsuffering do not bring me" {q}; and which sense is favoured by the Septuagint version:

know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke; let it appear, and that even to mine enemies, that it is for thy sake that all this reproach is cast upon me; and all these afflictions are endured by me, by thy resentment of their carriage to me.

{q} ynxpt Kpa Kral la "ne ad longanimitatem tuam adduc me", De Dieu; "nec me capias ad dilationem irae tua", Gussetius.

Jeremiah 15:16

Ver. 16. Thy words were found, and I did eat them, &e.] The messages he was called to deliver unto others appeared to him to be of God, and they were as welcome to him as food is to a hungry man; he cheerfully received them, treasured them up in his memory, digested them in his mind, and carefully retained them. So the doctrines of the Gospel, which are the words of God, and not of men, when by searching and close application they are found in the Scriptures, and under the ministry of the word, they are food to souls, sweet, savoury, wholesome, nourishing, and strengthening; not as merely heard externally, or only assented unto, or superficially tasted of; but when eaten, as Ezekiel's roll was by him; and which is done by faith, which receives, feeds upon, and digests the word; for, unless it is mixed with faith, it is not profitable:

and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart; the messages which the prophet was sent with, even those which denounced grievous things against his people in case of impenitence, were gladly received by him, and he readily delivered them, hoping that they would be a means of bringing them to a sense of their sins, and to repentance for them, and so of preserving them from ruin; and especially those words or doctrines he had in commission to deliver, which respected the Messiah, his person, offices, kingdom, righteousness, and grace; the calling of the Gentiles, and the enlargement of the interest of Christ; the glory of his name, and the prosperity of his people in the latter day. The word of the Gospel, when received and eaten by faith, whether by ministers or people, is productive of spiritual joy and pleasure; the promises of it being exceeding precious; and the doctrines of it doctrines of grace, salvation, peace, pardon, and righteousness, by Christ, who is the sum and substance of them:

for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts; what added to his joy was, that the name of the Lord was called upon him, or that he was called a prophet of the Lord: this he looked upon as a high honour done him; and what still more increased his joy was, that he was a prophet, not of Baal, that could not hear nor help his prophets and worshippers; but of the Lord God of hosts and armies, who was able to uphold him, protect and defend him, against his enemies.

Jeremiah 15:17

Ver. 17. I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced,.... With them, the mockers; or, "those that make merry" {r}; as the word is rendered in Jer 30:19, and so the Targum,

"those that sing;"

and dance and live jovially; with these the prophet did not associate himself; such levity being unsuitable to his character as a prophet, and to those grievous messages he was charged with; and though he had joy, it was of another kind; it was not carnal, but spiritual; not outward, but inward; and what arose from the word of the Lord, being found and eaten by him. Moreover, there were some things which he was obliged by his office to deliver, that were very distressing to him, and made him very melancholy; so that he shunned all company and diversion, which might have been lawfully enjoyed: for this is not to be understood of the assembly or council of the wicked governors of the nation, and much less of the refuse of the people, that mocked at the word of God, and scoffed at the prophets and people of God; but of Jeremiah's friends and acquaintance, that met and made merry together; with whom he could not join, because of the sorrowful case in which he was, on account of the people he was sent unto:

I sat alone, because of thine hand; not because he was obliged to it, being deserted by men, but of choice; he withdrew from company, kept himself retired at home in his own house, there meditating upon the word of God, and mourning over the case of his people; and this he did, because the afflicting hand of God was upon him, or because the hand and spirit of prophecy was upon him, and he was charged to denounce very grievous things against the people; and because the hand of divine power and authority was over him, to which he ought to be subject, and was ready to obey:

for thou hast filled me with indignation; either with the indignation of the people against him, because of his prophecies; or with indignation against them, because of their sins; or with denunciations of wrath he was to deliver to them; and so the Targum,

"for thou hast filled me with a prophecy of cursing."

{r} Myqxvm "ludentium", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; "jocantium", Vatablus; "hilaria agentium", Gataker.

Jeremiah 15:18

Ver. 18. Why is my pain perpetual,.... The pain of his mind; his uneasiness for the good of his people, which was likely to last, having no hope of a change for the better: or it may design the pain which they gave him by their reproaches and persecutions of him, which seemed as if they would have no end:

and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? the same thing is meant as before. The allusion is to an old ulcer, or obstinate wound, which no medicine can affect, is desperate and deadly; and such the prophet reckoned his case to be, or however deprecates it, and expostulates with God why it should be so:

wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail? such God cannot be, nor did the prophet think he was; he knew that he was God that could not lie, and that he was faithful to his promises, and would not disappoint the faith, hope, and expectations of his people; but he feared he would be thought to be so by others, by his enemies, who would triumph over him, and say, where is thy God? did he not promise to make thee a defenced city, an iron pillar, and brasen walls? is he as good as his word? is he not like a dry brook, whose waters fail? are not thy hope and expectation in vain, who hast been trusting to him, and depending on him? and it is as if the prophet should say, Lord, let them have no occasion to speak after this manner; nor suffer my faith in thy promises to fail; show thyself to be as thou art, a covenant keeping God, and whose faithfulness never fails: to which an answer is returned in the following verses.

Jeremiah 15:19

Ver. 19. Therefore thus saith the Lord, if thou return,.... From thine unbelief, diffidence, and impenitence, and repent of them; expressed in the preceding verses:

then will I bring thee again; or, "restore thee {s}"; pardon his sin, and return him to his post and place, to his office and ministry in it, and confirm and establish him therein:

and thou shalt stand before me; not only as a petitioner for the people; see Jer 15:1, but as a servant of the Lord, attending to his word, and waiting his orders, and ready to execute them. It denotes his stability in his office:

and if thou wilt take forth the precious from the vile; take precious truths, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; truths more valuable and desirable than thousands of gold and silver, from those doctrines which are worthless and contemptible, comparable to wood, hay, and stubble, and everything that is mean and vile; these faithful ministers should separate one from the other, and not mix and blend them together: or precious souls, truly gracious ones, who are precious in the sight of God, are redeemed by Christ, by his precious blood, and are adorned with the graces of the Spirit; these are to be distinguished from the vile, from sinners impenitent and unbelieving, that live in sin, in defiance of the law, and in contempt of the Gospel; a difference is to be made between them; delivering out comfortable words to the one, and denouncing severe threatenings to the other; doing the reverse of the false prophets, Eze 13:22:

thou shalt be as my mouth; to the people; speak what I command thee, and whatsoever thou sayest shall be as if I had spoken it myself:

let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them; this is said of the people of the Jews, to whom the prophet was sent; and the sense is, that he should not at all comply with them, or conform to their humours, or flatter and sooth them in their sins, as the false prophets did; but if they returned to him, attended on his ministry, received his words and messages, and agreed and conformed to him, and followed his directions and example, it would be very well; but otherwise he was not in the least to give way to them, or go into any sinful compliance with them, either with respect to doctrine or practice, {s} Kbyva "restituam te", Tigurine version.

Jeremiah 15:20

Ver. 20. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall,.... As he had promised him, when he first called him to his office, **Jer 1:18**, and so would not be as a liar to him:

and they shall fight against thee; by words and blows, by menaces and imprisonment:

but they shall not prevail against thee; so as to cause him to call in his words, and contradict his prophecies; or so as to take away his life:

for I am with thee, to save thee, and deliver thee, saith the Lord; the presence of God with his ministers is sufficient to save and deliver them out of all their troubles, and to protect and defend them against all their enemies; see Mt 28:20.

Jeremiah 15:21

Ver. 21. And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked,.... The wicked Jews, Zedekiah and his courtiers, who imprisoned him:

and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible; as kings and great men of the earth seem to be; or, "the violent", or "strong" {t}, and mighty; that were stronger than he, that would use him with violence, and inject terror into him.

{t} Myuyre "violentorum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt; "fortium", V. L.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 16

In this chapter the ruin and destruction of the Jews is set forth, and confirmed by the prophet's being forbid to be merry, or to go into the house of feasting or mourning, with the reasons thereof; also the sins of the people, the cause of it, are pointed at; and afterwards a promise of their restoration is made; and the chapter is concluded with a prayer of the prophet, pressing his faith in the divine protection, and in the calling of the Gentiles. After the preface or introduction, Jer 16:1, the prophet is forbid to take a wife, or have any children, with the reason of it; because that parents and children would die of grievous deaths unlamented, and not be buried, Jer 16:2 and he is also forbid to go into the house of mourning, because peace, lovingkindness, and mercy, were taken from the people, and both great and small would die, and no lamentation be made for them, nor have any burial also, Jer 16:5, nor might he go into the house of feasting, because the voice of joy and gladness would cease out of the land, Jer 16:8, and upon the people's inquiring the reason of all this, the prophet is bid to tell them, that it was for their forsaking the Lord and his worship, and for their idolatrous practices; of which they were more guilty than their forefathers, and therefore would be cast out of the land, and carried captive into a strange country, Jer 16:10 but, after all this, they should be restored again to their own land, and have a greater deliverance than that out of Egypt, as they themselves would own, Jer 16:14 but before this would be, fishers and hunters should be sent to distress them, and all because of their iniquities, which God's eye was upon, and would recompense, Jer 16:16, and the chapter is closed with the prophet's prayer, in which he expresses his faith in the Lord, and in the conversion of the Gentiles, who would be convinced of their idolatry, and made to know the power and name of the Lord, Jer 16:19.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord came unto me, saying. The Targum is, the word of prophecy from the Lord: whether this is a new prophecy, or the former continued, is not certain; the latter seems probable. This introduction is omitted in the Septuagint and Arabic versions.

Jeremiah 16:2

Ver. 2. Thou shall not take thee a wife,.... Not because it was unlawful; for it was lawful for prophets to marry, and they did; but because it was not advisable, on account of the calamities and distresses which were coming upon the nation; which would be more bearable by him alone, than if he had a wife, which would increase his care, concern, and sorrow.

Neither shall thou have sons nor daughters in this place; in Anathoth, says Kimchi; but it is most likely that Jerusalem in particular is meant, though the whole land of Judea in general may be designed; and though nothing is more desirable than to have children to build up the family, and bear and continue a man's name for futurity, yet in times of public calamity these do but add to the affliction.

Jeremiah 16:3

Ver. 3. For thus saith the Lord concerning the sons and concerning the daughters that are born in this place,..... This is a reason given why the prophet should not have, and why he should not be desirous to have, sons and daughters in such a place and country, devoted to destruction:

and concerning their mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in this land: the land of Judea; which shows what is meant by the place before mentioned; both the one and the other, parents and children, should die there; this is what was determined by the Lord concerning them; and therefore it could not be a desirable thing for a man to have wife and children, whom he must part with in such an uncomfortable manner, as is after described; and to show the certainty of which the prophet is forbid to do as above.

Jeremiah 16:4

Ver. 4. They shall die of grievous deaths,.... Such as the sword, famine, and pestilence. The Targum particularly adds famine. It may be rendered, "deaths of diseases, or sicknesses" {u}; such as are brought on by long sickness and lingering distempers; by which a man consumes gradually, as by famine, and is not snatched away at once; and which are very grievous to bear.

They shall not be lamented, neither shall they be buried; which two offices are usually done to the dead by their surviving relations; who mourn for them, and express their grief by various gestures, and which especially were used by the eastern nations; and take care that they have a decent burial: but neither of these would now be, which is mentioned as an aggravation of the calamity; that not only the deaths they should die of would be grievous ones, but after death no regard would be shown them; and that either because there would be none to do these things for them; or they would be so much taken up in providing for their own safety, and so much in concern for their own preservation, that they would not be at leisure to attend to the above things:

but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth; lie and rot there, and be dung to the earth; which would be a just retaliation, for their filthy and abominable actions committed in the land:

and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; the grievous deaths before mentioned; the sword without, and the famine within; the one more sudden, and at once, the other more lingering; and therefore may be more especially designed by the death of lingering sicknesses referred to:

and their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; lying unburied; see **Jer 7:33**.

{u} Myalxt ytwmm "mortibus aegrotationum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, "aegritudium", Munster, Vatablus; "mortibus morborum", Schmidt. So Stockius, p. 340, 597, who restrains it to the death of individuals by the pestilence.

Jeremiah 16:5

Ver. 5. For thus saith the Lord, enter not into the house of mourning,.... On account of his dead relations or neighbours; since they were taken away from the evil to come, and therefore no occasion to mourn for them: moreover, this was to show the certainty of what is before and after said; that, at the time of the general calamity predicted, there would be no lamentation made for the dead. R. Joseph Kimchi says the word here used signifies, in the Arabic {w} language, a lifting of the voice, either for weeping, or for joy {x}; and Jarchi, out of the ancient book Siphri, interprets it a "feast"; and it is rendered a "banquet" in **Am 6:7**, and so may here design a mourning feast, such as were used at funerals, called by the Greeks perideipnea, and by the Latins "parentalia", as Jerom observes. Neither go to lament nor bemoan them; neither go to the house of mourning, or the mourning feast; to the houses of the deceased, to condole the surviving relations, and to express sorrow for the dead, by shedding tears, and shaking the head, or by any other gesture or ceremony after mentioned,

For I have taken away my peace from this people, saith the Lord; all peace or prosperity is of God, and therefore called his, and which he can take away from a people when he pleases; and having determined to take it away from this people because of their sins, he is said to have done it, it being as certain as if it was done:

even lovingkindness and mercies; all benefits, which flowed from his favour, love, and mercy, as the whole of their prosperity did.

{w} "magna et vehementi voce praeditus", Golius ex Giggeio, col. 979. {x} So the word is used in the Chaldee language: as Schindler observes in Lex. col. 1722.

Jeremiah 16:6

Ver. 6. Both the great and the small shall die in this land,.... The nobles as well as the common people, high and low, rich and poor; none shall be exempted from the grievous deaths by the sword, famine, and pestilence.

They shall not be buried, neither shall men lament for them; as before, Jer 16:4, this shall be the common case of them all; the great and the rich shall have no more care and notice taken of them than the poor:

nor cut themselves; their flesh, with their nails, or with knives, to show their grief for the dead, and to alleviate the sorrow of surviving friends, by bearing a part with them:

nor make themselves bald for them; by plucking off the hair of their heads, or by shaving them, and between their eyes; which though forbidden the Jews by the law of God, as being Heathenish customs, yet obtained in the times of Jeremiah, and were usually done; see De 14:1.

Jeremiah 16:7

Ver. 7. Neither shall men tear themselves,.... Either their flesh, or their clothes: or, "stretch out" {y}; that is, their hands, and clap them together, and wring them, as persons in great distress do: or "divide", or "break", or "deal unto them" {z}; that is, bread, as at their funeral feasts. Thus the Septuagint version, neither shall bread be broken in their mourning; and to the same sense the

Targum; so the word is used in Isa 63:7, a practice that obtained among the Heathens; see De 26:14 and now with the Jews, as it seems: which they did

for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead; they used to carry or send food to the surviving relations, and went and ate with them, in order to comfort them for the loss of their friends; but this now would not be done, not because an Heathenish custom, but because they would have no heart nor leisure for it: see Eze 24:17.

Neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother: not give them a cup of good liquor to comfort and cheer their spirits, overwhelmed with sorrow, on account of the death of a father or mother; which was wont to be done, but now should be omitted; the calamity would be so great, and so universal, that there would be none to do such offices as these; see Pr 31:6.

{y} worpy alw "et non expandent, [sub.] manus suas", Vatablus, Montanus; "extendent", Pagninus, Calvin. So Kimchi and Ben Melech. {z} "Non divident", Tigurine version; "neque impertientur, [sub.] cibum", Junius & Tremellius; "partientur panem", Piscator; "neque cibum dabunt", Schmidt. So Jarchi, Joseph Kimchi, and Abarbinel.

Jeremiah 16:8

Ver. 8. Thou shall not also go into the house of feasting,.... Which it was lawful to do, and which the prophet doubtless had done at other times; but now a time of calamity coming on, it was not proper he should; and the rather he was to abstain from such places, and from pleasant conversation with his friends, to assure them that such a time was coming, and this his conduct was a sign of it; for which reason he is forbid to attend any entertainment of his friends, on account of marriage, or any other circumstance of life, for which feasts were used:

to sit with them to eat and to drink: which not only expresses the position at table, but continuance there; for at feasts men not only eat and drink for necessity, or just to satisfy nature, but for pleasure, and unto and with cheerfulness; which may lawfully be done, provided that temperance and sobriety be preserved; but the prophet is not allowed to do that now, which at other times he might do, and did; and that on purpose that his friends might take notice of it, and inquire the reason of it, the distress that was coming upon them, as the words following show.

Jeremiah 16:9

Ver. 9. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... Who is able to do what he here threatens he will, and which he will do, notwithstanding his being the God of Israel; their hearts not being right with him, nor they steadfast in his covenant.

Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place, in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness: upon any account whatsoever, civil or religious; and that out of Jerusalem, where their religious feasts were kept, as well as where were often expressions of joy made on civil accounts; and this should be in their sight, it should be notorious and remarkable, that they could not but observe it; and it should be in a short time, in their days, though they were very desirous of putting these evil days far from them, and were not willing to believe they should be at all, or, however, not in their days:

the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride; the epithalamiums, or marriage songs, sung at the celebration of nuptials; these should cease, marrying and giving in marriage being over; the consequence of which must be ruin to the nation, a lawful succession of mankind being not otherwise to be kept up.

Jeremiah 16:10

Ver. 10. And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt show this people all these words,.... Or, "all these things" {a}; which he was forbid to do; as marrying and having children, going into the house of mourning or feasting, with the reasons of all, because of the calamities coming upon them:

and they shall say unto thee, wherefore hath the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us? as if they were quite innocent, and were not conscious of anything they had done deserving such punishment, especially so great as this was threatened to be inflicted on them; as their dying grievous deaths, parents and children, great and small, and be unlamented, and unburied: or "what is our iniquity?" or "what is our sin that we have committed against the Lord our

God?" supposing we have been guilty of some weaknesses and frailties; or of some few faults; which though they cannot be justified, yet surely are not to be reckoned of such a nature as to deserve and require so great a punishment: thus would they either deny or lessen the sins they had been guilty of, and suggest that the Lord was very hard and severe upon them.

{a} hlah Myrbdh lk "omnes res hasce", Gataker, Piscator.

Jeremiah 16:11

Ver. 11. Then shalt thou say unto them,.... In answer to their questions; not in a general way, but by observing to them particular sins, and those gross ones, they had been guilty of:

because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the Lord; that is, his worship, as the Targum; they had quitted his service, and left attending on his word and ordinances; and therefore it was but just with him to forsake them, and give them up into the hands of their enemies:

and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them; were guilty of gross idolatry, serving and worshipping the creature more than and besides the Creator; even idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and wood, and stone, which were no gods; for there is no other true God besides the Lord; and which they were well informed of, and therefore their sin was the greater to leave him and worship them; and which sin, because of the heinousness of it, is repeated:

and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law; they forsook his worship, as the Targum, and did not observe the law of the decalogue or ten commandments; especially the two first of them, which required the worship of the one true God, and forbid the worshipping of others; and which threatened the visiting such iniquities of fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation, of such that hated the Lord; and such were these persons, as follows.

Jeremiah 16:12

Ver. 12. And ye have done worse than your fathers,.... Not only committed the same sins, but greater, or, however, attended with more aggravating circumstances; they were wilfully and impudently done, and obstinately persisted in; and therefore deserving of the great evil of punishment pronounced against them.

For, behold, ye walk everyone after the imagination of his evil heart; they walked not as the word of God directs, but as their own evil heart dictated; the imagination of which was evil, and that continually, **Ge 6:5**.

That they may not hearken unto me; to the word of the Lord, and obey that; their minds being blinded, and their hearts hardened, and they obstinately bent on their own evil ways.

Jeremiah 16:13

Ver. 13. Therefore will I call you out of this land,.... By force, and against their wills, whether they would or not, and with abhorrence and contempt: it is to be understood of their captivity, which was but a just punishment for the above sins; for since they had cast off the Lord and his worship, it was but just that they should be cast off by him, and cast out of their land, which they held by their obedience to him:

into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; a foreign country, at a great distance from them; with which they had no alliance, correspondence, or commerce; and where they had no friends to converse with, or show them any respect; and whose language they understood not; all which was an aggravation of their captivity in it:

and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; should have their fill of idolatry, even to loathsomeness; and what they had done willingly in their own land, following the imagination of their own evil hearts, now they should be forced to; and what they did for their own pleasure, and at certain times, when they thought fit, now they should be obliged to attend tonight and day. The Targum is, "and there shall ye serve people that worship idols day and night"; that as they had served idols, now they should serve the people, the worshippers of those idols; the former was their sin, the latter their punishment:

where I will not show you favour; or, "not give you grace" {b}; the favour and mercy of God serve to support persons in distress; but to be denied these is an aggravation of it, and must needs make the captivity of those people the more afflicting. Some understand this of the Lord's not suffering their enemies to show them any favour or mercy; so Kimchi,

"the enemy shall have no mercy on you, but make you serve with rigour;"

and to the same purpose the Targum, connecting them with the people, the idol worshippers, and paraphrasing them thus,

"who shall not be merciful to you;"

and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions, "who shall not give you mercy"; or "rest", as the Vulgate Latin. The Jews {c} interpret this of the Messiah, whose name, they say, is Chaninah, the word here used, whom the Lord would not give them where they were.

{b} hnynx Mkl Nta al "non dabo vobis gratiam", Cocceius, Schmidt; "non dedero vobis gratiam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {c} T. Bab Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2.

Jeremiah 16:14

Ver. 14. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord,.... Or nevertheless, "notwithstanding" {d} their sins and iniquities, and the punishment brought upon them for them: or "surely", verily; for Jarchi says it is an oath, with which the Lord swore he would redeem them, though they had behaved so ill unto him:

that it shall no more be said, the Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; this was the form of an oath with the Jews, when a man, as Kimchi observes, used to swear by the living God that brought Israel out of Egypt; or this was a fact which they used frequently to make mention of, and relate to their children; and observe to them the power and goodness of God in it; and so the Targum,

"there shall be no more any declaring the power of the Lord who brought up, &c."

{d} So Noldius, Concord. Ebr. p. 507.

Jeremiah 16:15

Ver. 15. But the Lord liveth,.... Or they shall swear by the living Lord; or declare his power, as the Targum: "that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north"; that is, from Babylon, which lay north of Judea. The Jews {d} gather from hence, that the land of Israel was higher than all other lands, because it is said, that "brought up", or "caused to ascend"; as out of the land of Egypt as before, so out of all other lands. The meaning is, that the deliverance from the Babylonish captivity was a greater blessing and mercy than the deliverance out of Egypt; the hardships they endured in Babylon being in some respects greater than those they endured in Egypt; and especially the favour being recent, and fresh upon their mind, it would swallow up the remembrance of the former mercy; that would be comparatively forgotten, and not be so frequent and common in the mouths of men; so great would be the sense of this deliverance; wherefore this prophecy both expresses the grievousness of their captivity in Babylon, as exceeding their bondage in Egypt, and the greatness of their salvation from it; when they should be not only brought out of Babylon, but also

from all the lands whither he had driven them; from Egypt, Media, and Persia, and other places: or, "whither they were driven": by the kings of the earth, as Kimchi interprets it; though it is certain the Lord's hand was in it; it was according to his will, and by his providence, that they were scattered about among the nations:

and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers; which had its accomplishment at their return from the Babylonish captivity; and will be more fully accomplished in the latter day, when the Jews shalt be converted, and return to their own land. Kimchi says this refers to the days of the Messiah, and the gathering of the captives; and some following passages manifestly belong to Gospel times. So Jarchi and Abarbinel understand this and the following of the days of the Messiah.

{d} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 87. 1.

Jeremiah 16:16

Ver. 16. Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them,.... Which some understand of the Egyptians, who lived much on fish, and were much employed in catching them, to which the allusion is thought to be; but rather the Chaldeans are intended, whom God, by the secret instinct of his providence, brought up against the Jews; who besieged Jerusalem, and enclosed them in it, and took them as fishes in a net; see **Hab 1:14**, though some interpret this, and what follows, of the deliverance of the Jews by the Medes and Persians under Cyrus, who searched for them in all places, and sent them into their own land; or of Zerubbabel, and others with him, who used all means to persuade the Jews in the captivity to go with them, and build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem; and there are not wanting others, who by the "fishers" think the apostles are meant; who were fishers by occupation, and whom Christ made fishers of men, and sent forth to cast and spread the net of the Gospel in the several parts of Judea, for the conversion of some of that people; see **Mt 4:18**:

and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks; either the same persons, the Chaldeans, are meant here, as before; who, as they should slay those they took in Jerusalem with the edge of the sword, as fishes taken in a net are killed, or presently die, which is the sense of the Targum, and other Jewish commentators; so those that escaped and fled to mountains, hills, and holes of the rocks, to hide themselves, should be pursued by them, and be found out, taken, and carried captive: or, the Romans {e}. So Nimrod, the beginning of whose kingdom was Babel, being a tyrant and an oppressor, is called a mighty hunter, Ge 10:8.

{e} Vid. Joseph de Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 4.

Jeremiah 16:17

Ver. 17. For mine eyes are upon all their ways,.... Not only which they may take to hide themselves from their enemies, and where they should be directed to find them; but their evil ways in which they walked, and which were the cause of their calamities; these, how secret soever they were, were under the eye of God, whose eyes are in every place, and upon all the ways of men, good and bad; though they might flatter themselves, as wicked men sometimes do, that the Lord sees them not, and does not take notice of their iniquities: but, that they might be assured of the contrary, it is added,

they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes;

neither their ways nor their works, their persons nor their actions, could be concealed from the Lord; none can hide himself in secret places, that they should not be seen by him; the darkness and the light are both alike to an omniscient God. The Targum is,

"their iniquities are not hid from before (or from, or the sight of) my Word;"

the essential Word of God; see **Heb 4:12**.

Jeremiah 16:18

Ver. 18. And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double,.... Or, "but first I will recompense", &c. {f}; meaning, before he showed favour to them, and returned their captivity,
Jer 16:15, he would punish them according to their sins; not double to what they deserved, but to what: they were used to have, or he was used to inflict upon them, punishing them less than their sins deserved; but now he would reward them to the full, though not beyond the measure of justice, yet largely and abundantly, and with rigour and severity. Some understand this of God's gathering together all their sins and iniquities "from the beginning" {g}, as they render the word; the sins of their fathers and their own, and punishing them for them all at once; or first their fathers' sins, and then their own, in which they imitated their fathers, and filled up the measure of their iniquity. So the Targum,

"and I will render to the second as to the first, for everyone of both, their iniquities and their sins."

Because they have defiled my land; out of which he cast the Canaanites for the same reason; and which he chose for the place of his residence and worship, and settled the people of Israel for that purpose in it: that they might serve him in it, and not do as the Heathens before them had done, and which yet they did; and this was what was provoking to him.

They have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things; with their idols, which were not only lifeless, but stinking, loathsome, and abominable; or unclean creatures, which were sacrificed unto them; and some think human sacrifices, the bodies of men, are meant: places of idolatrous worship were set up everywhere in the land, and therefore it is said to be filled therewith; and it was an aggravation of their wickedness, that this was done in a land which the Lord had chosen for his own possession, and had given to Israel as an inheritance.

{f} hnwvar ytmlvw "sed reddum primum". {g} hnwvar "ab initio" Calvin; "initio", Montanus.

Jeremiah 16:19

Ver. 19. O Lord, my strength and my fortress,.... These are the words of the prophet, rising out of the temptation which beset him; casting off his impatience, diffidence, and unbelief; calling upon God, and exercising faith in him; having received the promise of the restoration of his people to their land, and a view of the future conversion of the Gentiles; which were a means of recovering his spiritual strength, of invigorating grace in him, and of encouraging him to exercise it in a lively manner; to go on in his duty constantly, and to bear affliction cheerfully and patiently; "strength" to do which he had from the Lord; and to whom he ascribes it; and whom he calls his "fortress", or strong hold; and such the Lord is to his people, a strong hold to prisoners of hope, and a strong tower or place of defence to all his saints:

and my refuge in the day of affliction; in which he now was, or saw was coming upon him, when he should be carried captive into Babylon; but God was his refuge, shelter, and protection, and to him he betook himself, where he was safe; and which was infinitely better to him than the mountains, hills, and holes of rocks, others would fly unto,
Jer 16:16.

The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth; not the Jews, who were like to the Gentiles for their idolatries, and other wicked practices, and therefore so called, who should return from the several distant countries where they had been scattered, to their own land, and to the worship of God in it; but such who were really Gentiles, that should be converted, either at the time of the Babylonish captivity, and should come along with the Jews when they returned, and worship the Lord with them; or rather in Gospel times. And so Kimchi says this belongs to the times of the Messiah; when the Gospel was to be, and was preached among them, even to the ends of the earth; and many savingly came to Christ for righteousness and strength, for peace, pardon, salvation, and eternal life; and turned to him as to a strong hold, and fled to him for refuge, and laid hold on him, the hope set before them.

And shall say, surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanities, and [things] wherein [there is] no profit; meaning their idols, which did not give what their priests, and the abettors of them, promised; and so deceived their votaries, and disappointed them of their expectations, which became vain, and so were of no profit and advantage to them; a poor inheritance this, which they had possessed and enjoyed for many generations, which their children, now being convinced of, relinquish; for a false religion is not to be retained on this score, because the religion of ancestors, and of long possession with them.

Jeremiah 16:20

Ver. 20. Shall a man make gods unto himself,.... Can a man make his own gods? a poor, weak, mortal man? can he make gods of gold, silver, brass, wood, or stone? can he put deity into them? and when he has made images of these, can he be so stupid as to account them gods, and worship them? can he be so sottish, and void of understanding, as to imagine that anything that is made by himself or any other, can be God?

and they are no gods; that are made by men; he only is the true God, that is the Maker and Creator of all things; or they are no gods themselves that pretend to make them, and therefore how should they make gods? can they give that which they have not? or impart deity to others which they have not themselves? These words are a continuation of the speech of the Gentiles, and contain their reasonings, exposing the folly of their idolatrous ancestors: though some take them to be the words of God, or of the prophet, inveighing against the Jews for their stupidity in worshipping idols; when the Gentiles were convinced of the folly and vanity of such practices, and acknowledged it.

Jeremiah 16:21

Ver. 21. Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know,.... Or, "at this time", as the Targum; when the Gentiles shall be convinced of the idolatry they have been brought up in, and of the vanity and falsehood of their idols; they shall be made to know the true God, God in Christ, Christ himself, whom to know is life eternal, and to know the way of life and salvation by him; and all this through the ministry of the Gospel that should be brought among them, the Spirit of God accompanying it; by means of which they should come to Christ from the ends of the earth, before predicted.

I will cause them to know my hand and my might; to experience the power and efficacy of his grace in conversion; quickening their dead souls, softening their hard hearts, taking away the stony heart, and giving a heart of flesh; and making them willing in the day of his power to be saved by Christ, and to serve him; to relinquish their idols, and turn to and worship the living God in spirit and in truth: though most understand this not as a promise of grace to the Gentiles, but as a threatening of punishment to the idolatrous Jews; that because of their idolatry they should once for all, or by this one and grievous calamity, captivity in Babylon, be made to know what they could not be brought to know by all the instructions and warnings of the prophets; they should now feel the weight of the Lord's hand, the lighting down of his arm with the indignation of his wrath; and so the Targum,

"I will show them my vengeance and the stroke of my power."

And they shall know that my name is the Lord; the Jehovah, the self-existent Being, the Being of beings, the everlasting and unchangeable I AM; who is able to make good his promises, or perform his threatenings; a name incommunicable to creatures, which do not belong to the idols of the Gentiles, is peculiar to the true God, who is the most High in all the earth; see Ps 83:18.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 17

This chapter is a further prophecy of the destruction of the Jews, with the causes of it, their sins, as their idolatry, which was notorious; of which their own consciences, their altars, and their children, were witnesses, Jer 17:1 for which they are threatened with the spoil of their substance and treasure, and discontinuance in their land, Jer 17:3 as also their confidence in an arm of flesh, which brought the curse of God upon them, when such are blessed that trust in him; and the difference between those that trust in men and those that trust in the Lord is illustrated by very apt similes, Jer 17:5, the source of which vain confidence is the wicked heart of man, known to none but God, Jer 17:9 and the vanity of it is exposed by a partridge sitting on eggs without hatching them, Jer 17:11, and their departure from God, by trusting in the creature, and in outward things, is aggravated by their temple being the throne and seat of the divine Majesty; by what God is to his people that trust in him; and by the shame and ruin that follow an apostasy from him, Jer 17:12, wherefore the prophet, sensible of his own backslidings, prays to be healed and saved by the Lord, who should have all the praise and glory, Jer 17:14 and then relates the scoffs of the people at the word of God by him, another cause of their ruin; declares his own innocence and integrity; prays for protection and security from fear in a time of trouble; and for confusion, terror, and destruction to his persecutors, Jer 17:15, then follows an order to him from the Lord, to go and stand in the gate of the city, and exhort all ranks of men to the observation of the sabbath, with directions how to keep it, which had not been observed by their fathers, and which was another cause of their ruin, Jer 17:19, and the chapter is closed with promises of blessings in city, court, and country, in church and state, should they religiously observe the sabbath day; but if they profaned it, the city of Jerusalem, and its palaces, should be burnt with fire, Jer 17:24.

Ver. 1. The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron,.... Or an iron tool, such as engravers use in working on hard matter:

[and] with the point of a diamond; such as glaziers use in cutting their glass; though this is not the word used for a diamond in Ex 28:18, this word is elsewhere translated an adamant, **Eze 3:9**. Bothart {h} takes it to be the smiris, which jewellers use in polishing their gems. Jarchi makes mention of a Midrash, or exposition, which explains the iron pen of Jeremiah, and the point of the adamant, or diamond, of Ezekiel, because of what is said of them, **Jer 1:18**. Kimchi thinks the word "shamir", rendered "diamond", is expressive of the subject matter on which their sin is said to be written, and not of the instrument with which; and then it is to be read thus,

"the sin of Judah is written with an iron pen (with an iron claw, or nail, of which mention is made in some Jewish writings) upon "shamir", or an adamant stone;"

which is no other than their stony heart, as it follows:

it is graven upon the table of their heart; where it is so fixed that it cannot be rooted out, and will never be forgotten by them, but always remembered and desired; for which they have the strongest affections, having a place, and having made deep impressions there: or this may denote the evidence of it in their own consciences, which bore witness to it, and which they could not deny:

and upon the horns of your altars; on which the names of their idols were engraven or inscribed, Ac 17:23, so that their idolatry was notorious; their consciences within, and their altars without, were testimonies of it and besides, the blood of the sacrifices was poured upon the horns of the altar, **Le 4:7** and which, as it was done at the offering of sacrifices appointed of God, so very probably at the offering of sacrifices to idols, and which made their sin notorious; yea, even all the sacrifices of the ceremonial law were a standing testimony of their being sinners, and carried in them a confession of sin, and that they were deserving of death, and so were a handwriting against them; for there is no need to limit the sin of Judah here to idolatry, but it may include all their sins; and so the Targum expresses it in the plural number,

"the sins of Judah;"

though, if any particular sin is intended, it seems to be idolatry, by what follows.

{h} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 6. c. 11, col. 842. of which stone, see Dioseorides, Hesychius, & Stephanus in ib.

Jeremiah 17:2

Ver. 2. Whilst their children remember their altars,.... Which is a further proof of their long continuance in idolatrous practices, and a fresh witness against them; they trained up their children in them; who, when grown up, could not forget them, but imitated them, and went on in the same evil ways. Some render the words, "as they remember their children, so they remember their altars {i}, and their groves, by the green trees upon the high hills"; they had the same love to their idols, and the worship of them, as they had to their children. This sense is received by Kimchi {k}; yea, they had a greater affection for their idols than for their children; since they made their children pass through the fire to Moloch, and burnt their sons and their daughters to Baal. The Targum renders it, "their groves under every green tree": see **Jer 2:20**. Kimchi and Ben Melech connect green trees not with groves but with altars; and take the sense to be, that their altars were by green trees; since groves and green trees were the same, and which altars also were upon high hills.

{i} Mtwxbzm Mhynb rkzk "sicut recordantur filiorum suorum, ita recordantur ararum suarum"; so some in Vatablus. {k} So in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 63. 2. & Gloss in ib.

Jeremiah 17:3

Ver. 3. O my mountain in the midst of the field,.... Meaning either the temple, called the mountain of the house, and of the Lord's house, **Mic 3:12**, or else Jerusalem, which stood on a hill in the midst of a plain, surrounded with fruitful fields and gardens; or in the midst of a land like a field. The Targum is,

"because thou worshippest idols upon the mountains in the field:"

I will give thy substance and all thy treasures to the spoil; all the riches of the city and temple to be the spoil and plunder of the enemy;
See Gill on "Jer 15:13".

and thy high places for sin, throughout all thy borders. The sense is, that all their substance and treasure throughout their borders, the riches of the whole land, as well as of the city and temple, Jer 15:13 and all their high places throughout the land, which were used for sin, for idolatrous practices, on account thereof, should become the spoil of the enemy.

Jeremiah 17:4

Ver. 4. And thou, even thyself,.... Or, "thou, and in thee" {l}; that is, thou and those that are in thee, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea; or, "thou even through thyself" {m}; through thine own fault, by reason of thy sins and iniquities:

shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; be removed from it, and no longer enjoy it: or, "shalt intermit from thine heritage" {n}; shall not till the land, plough and sow, and reap, and gather the fruits of it: this was enjoined on every seventh year, when the land was to have its rest, or sabbath, Ex 23:10, but this law they did not observe; and now, therefore, whether they would or not, the land should be intermitted, and not tilled and enjoyed by them. The Targum takes in the whole of the sense,

"and I will bring an enemy upon your land; and it shall be desolate as in the year of intermission: and I will take vengeance of judgment upon you, until I remove you from your inheritance which I have given unto you;"

the land of Canaan, which was given them for an inheritance:

I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not; the Babylonians in Chaldea; or, as Jerom thinks; the Romans. Of the different reading of these words, See Gill on "Jer 15:13":

for ye have I kindled a fire in mine anger; or by their sins had caused the anger of the Lord to burn like fire:

which shall burn for ever; as it will in hell, and therefore called everlasting fire: here it only means until these people and their country were consumed by the enemy; perhaps some reference is had to the burning of the city and temple by the Babylonians, or Romans, or both. These first four verses are left out by the Septuagint interpreters, Jerom thinks, to spare their own people.

{l} Kbw "qui [sunt] apud te", Junius & Tremellius. {m} "Per te", Piscator. {n} Kytlxnm htjmvw "ita intermissionen facies", Junius & Tremellius; so Schmidt.

Jeremiah 17:5

Ver. 5. Thus saith the Lord,.... Here begins a new discourse, or part of one; or, however, another cause or reason of the ruin and destruction of the Jews is suggested; namely, their trust in man, or confidence in the creature, which is resented and condemned:

cursed be the man that trusteth in man; as the Jews did in the Egyptians and Assyrians; see **Jer 2:36**, and in Abraham their father, and in being his seed, as they did in Christ's time; and which was trusting in the flesh; and as all such may be said to do who trust in their natural descent from good men, **Mt 3:9**, they also trusted in Moses, in the law of Moses, and in their having, hearing, and obeying it; which pronounces every man cursed that does not perfectly perform it: they trusted in themselves, and in their own righteousness; despised others, and rejected Christ and his righteousness; and brought an anathema upon them, **Joh 5:45** and all such that trust in their own hearts, and in their own works, trust in man, in the creature, in creature acts, and involve themselves in the curse here denounced. The Jews also, to this day, expect the

Messiah to come as a mere man, and so trust in him as such; and all those that call themselves Christians, and take Christ to be a mere creature, as the Arians, and a mere man, as the Socinians, may be said to trust in man, and entail a curse upon themselves; though we trust in Christ, yet not as a man, but as he is the true and living God:

and maketh flesh his arm; or his confidence, as the Targum, to lean upon, and be protected by; man is but flesh, feeble, weak and inactive; frail and mortal; sinful and corrupt; and so very unfit to make an arm of, or to depend upon: God, and an arm of flesh, are opposed to each other; as are also rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having confidence in the flesh, 2Ch 32:8:

and whose heart departeth from the Lord: as men's hearts may, under the greatest show of outward religion and righteousness; and as they always do, when they put their trust in such things; every act of unbelief and distrust of the Lord, and every act of trust and confidence in the creature, carry the heart off from God; every such act is a departing from the living God; see Isa 29:13.

Jeremiah 17:6

Ver. 6. For he shall be like the heath in the desert,.... The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "myrice": and so the Latin interpreter of the Targum; but the word that paraphrase makes use of according to R. Hai, mentioned by Kimchi, signifies something that is thorny without, and eatable within; but this is not likely to be intended here. The Septuagint version renders it, "wild myrice"; it seems to be the same that is called "erice", or "ling", and "heath"; which delights to grow in wild and waste places; hence such with us are called "heaths", whether this grows upon them or not. It is a low shrub, fruitless and useless; and, because neither bears fruit nor seed, is reckoned by Pliny {o} among unhappy plants, and such as are condemned or forbid religious uses; and very fit to represent such persons as truest in men and in themselves, and not in the Lord:

and shall not see when good cometh; perceive or receive any advantage by rain coming upon it; as such persons do not receive any good by the pure ministration of the word, compared to rain; and so the self-righteous Jews did not see when the Messiah came, who is goodness itself; nor see him, and embrace him, nor his righteousness; but rejected him and that; went about to establish their own, and did not submit to his; nor did they attain to righteousness, or enjoy eternal life; as is the case of all self-justiciaries:

but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited: which became literally true of the land of Judea, for the rejection of the Messiah, and trust in themselves; see
De 29:23 and may fitly represent the barren pastures of a man's own works of righteousness, which such as trust in themselves feed upon. All the characters are expressive of barrenness, as a wilderness, places parched with heat, and where salt is; for, as Pliny {p} says, where salt is found, it is barren, and produces nothing.

{o} Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 21. & l. 16. c. 26. & l. 24. c. 9. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 31. c. 7.

Jeremiah 17:7

Ver. 7. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord,.... In the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, in Christ the essential Word of God; see **Ps 2:12** who have a spiritual knowledge of him, and so trust in him, **Ps 9:10** who have seen the vanity and emptiness of all other objects of trust, there being no salvation in them, only in him; who betake themselves to him as their only refuge; lay hold, rest, and rely upon him, as their Saviour; commit their all unto him; trust him with all their concerns, respecting life and salvation, and with their immortal souls; and expect all from him, grace here, and glory hereafter: who trust in his person for their acceptance with God; in his righteousness for their justification; in his blood for the pardon of their sins; in his fulness for the supply of their wants; in his power for protection and preservation; and in all for eternal life and happiness: and such are blessed persons; for they are in the utmost safety; they are as Mount Zion, which can never be removed; they shall want no good thing, temporal or spiritual, proper for them; they enjoy great peace now, and in the world to come everlasting glory:

and whose hope the Lord is; the Word of the Lord, according to the Targum, as before: Christ, who is the Hope of Israel, our hope, and Christ in us the hope of glory, Jer 14:8, whose hope is from the Lord, of which he is the author and giver; and is a good hope, through his grace; and which has the Lord Jesus Christ for its object; who turn in to him as prisoners of hope; and lay hold on him, the hope set before them; and do hope in him for pardoning mercy, salvation, and eternal life. Blessed men! their hope shall not make them ashamed; they shall not be disappointed, Ps 146:5.

Jeremiah 17:8

Ver. 8. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters,.... Not as a "heath or shrub", but as a "tree", a green olive tree, a palm tree, a cedar in Lebanon, a fruitful flourishing tree; and he is one that really is a tree of righteousness, that is filled with the fruits of righteousness; and not like one of the trees of the wood, that grows wild, or as a wild olive tree, but as one "planted" in a garden, vineyard, or field; and is one that is planted in Christ, in the likeness of his death and resurrection, and in the house of the Lord; and that not only by means of the ingrafted word, and of Gospel ministers, who plant and water instrumentally; but by the Lord himself, as the efficient cause; and therefore called "the planting of the Lord"; and such plants as shall never be plucked up, Isa 60:21 and not like the earth in the wilderness, or trees in dry and barren soils; but like such that are planted "by the waters", which run about their roots, and make them fruitful; by which may be meant the love of God, and the streams of it; the fulness of grace in Christ, and the word and ordinances, the still waters of the sanctuary,
Ps 23:2:

and that spreadeth out her roots by the river; and which is the cause of the spreading of them: such an one is rooted in Christ, and in the love of God, which is as a river; with which being watered, he casts out his roots as Lebanon, as the cedars there; and is both firm and fruitful; see Ho 14:5:

and shall not see when heat cometh; shall perceive it, nor be affected with it, being planted so near a river: or "shall not fear"; which is the Cetib, or writing of the Hebrew text; and is followed by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; though the Keri, or marginal reading, is, "shall not see"; which is followed by the Targum, and by us, and others. The man that trusts in the Lord, he is not afraid of the heat of persecution when it comes, nor is he hurt by it; he does not perceive it, but grows the more under it; when a hypocrite and formal professor is withered by it; see Mt 13:6:

but her leaf shall be green; neither fail, nor lose its colour: a profession of faith is held without wavering; there being a radical moisture, the truth of grace, a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life, to supply and support it:

and shall not be careful in the year of drought; for lack of moisture, having a sufficiency. The man that trusts in the Lord is, or ought to be, and may he, careful for nothing, but cast all his care on the Lord, that careth for him:

whether this year of drought is to be understood of famine, in a literal sense; of carelessness in which, or strength of faith, Habakkuk is a famous instance, **Hab 3:17** or of a famine of the word, in a spiritual sense, through the persecutions of men; yet even the believer is not solicitous, or in anxious distress; God provides food for him, and nourishes him, as he does his church, though forced to fly into the wilderness:

neither shall cease from yielding fruit; the fruits of grace and righteousness, the fruits of good works, and which are brought forth by the good man, the believer in Christ, even unto old age, Ps 92:14 with the whole compare **Ps 1:3**, to which there seems to be an allusion.

Jeremiah 17:9

Ver. 9. The heart is deceitful above all things,.... This is the source of the idolatry and creature confidence of the Jews, sins which were the cause of their ruin; and though what is here said is particularly applicable to their hearts, yet is in general true of the heart of every man; which is "deceitful", and deceiving; and puts a cheat upon the man himself whose it is: it deceives him with respect to sin; it proposes it to him under the notion of pleasure; it promises him a great deal in it, but does not yield a real pleasure to him; it is all fancy and imagination; a mere illusion and a dream; and what it gives is very short lived; it is but for a season, and ends in bitterness and death: or it proposes it under the notion of profit; it promises him riches, by such and such sinful ways it suggests; but, when he has got them, he is the loser by them; these deceitful riches choke the word, cause him to err from the faith, pierce him through with many sorrows, and endanger the loss of his soul: it promises honour and preferment in the world, but promotes him to shame; it promises him liberty, but brings him into bondage; it promises him impunity, peace, and security, when sudden destruction comes: it deceives him in point of knowledge; it persuades him that he is a very knowing person, when he is blind and ignorant, and knows nothing as he ought to know; and only deceives himself; for there is no true knowledge but of God in Christ, and of a crucified Christ, and salvation by him; see **1Co 3:18** it deceives in the business of religion; it makes a man believe that he is a very holy and righteous man, and in a fair way for heaven, when he is far from that, and the character it gives him; in order to this, it suggests to him that concupiscence or lust, or the inward workings of the mind, are not sin; and it is only on this principle that it can be accounted for, that Saul, before conversion, or any other man, should be led into such a mistake, as to conclude that, touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless: it represents other sins as mere peccadillos, as little sins, and not to be regarded; and even puts the name of virtue on vices; profuseness and prodigality it calls liberality, and doing public good; and covetousness has the name of frugality and good economy: it directs men to compare themselves and their outward conduct with others, that are very profane and dissolute; and from thence to form a good character of themselves, as better than others; and as it buoys up with the purity of human nature, so with the power of man's freewill to do that which is good, and particularly to repent at pleasure; and it puts the profane sinner upon trusting to the absolute mercy of God, and hides from him his justice and holiness; and it puts others upon depending upon the outward acts of religion, or upon speculative notions, to the neglect of real godliness; see **Jas 1:22**. The man of a deceitful heart, the hypocrite, tries to deceive God himself, but he cannot; he oftentimes deceives men, and always himself; so do the profane sinner, the self-righteous man, and the false teacher; who attempts to deceive the very elect, but cannot; yea, a good man may be deceived by his own heart, of which Peter is a sad instance, Mt 26:33. The heart is deceitful to a very great degree, it is superlatively so; "above all", above all creatures; the serpent and the fox are noted for their subtlety, and wicked men are compared to them for it; but these comparisons fall short of expressing the wicked subtlety and deceit in men's hearts; yea, it is more deceitful to a man than the devil, the great deceiver himself; because it is nearer to a man, and can come at him, and work upon him, when Satan cannot: or "about", or "concerning all things" {q}; it is so in everything in which it is concerned, natural, civil, or religious, and especially the latter. The Septuagint version renders it "deep"; it is an abyss, a bottomless one; there is no fathoming of it; the depths of sin are in it; see Ps 64:6 and, seeing it is so deceitful, it should not be trusted in; a man should neither trust in his own heart, nor in another's, Pr 28:26, "and desperately wicked": everything in it is wicked; the thoughts of it are evil; the imaginations of the thoughts are so; even every imagination, and that only, and always, **Ge 6:5** the affections are inordinate; the mind and conscience are defiled; the understanding darkened, so dark as to call evil good, and good evil; and the will obstinate and perverse: all manner of sin and wickedness is in it; it is the cage of every unclean bird, and the hold of every foul spirit; all sin is forged and framed in it; and all manner of evil comes out of it, Re 18:1 yea, it is wickedness itself, **Ps 5:9**, it is so even to desperation; it is "incurably wicked" {r}, as it may be rendered; it is so without the grace of God, and blood of Christ:

who can know it? angels do not, Satan cannot; only the spirit of a man can know the things of a man within him; though the natural man does not know the plague of his own heart; the Pharisee and perfectionist do not, or they would not say they were without sin; such rant arises from the ignorance of their own hearts; only a spiritual man knows his own heart, the plague of it, the deceitfulness and wickedness in it; and he does not know it all; God only knows it fully, as is expressed in the next words, which are an answer to the question; see **1Co 2:11**.

{q} lkm "de omnibus", vid. Noldium, p. 548. {r} awh vnaw "et immedicabili malo affectum", Gussetius; "incurabiliter aegrum", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 17:10

Ver. 10. I the Lord search the heart,.... The inward parts of it, every room and corner in it; and know the thoughts of it; all its intents, purposes, designs, contrivances, and imaginations; all the secret motions of it, and the wickedness that is in it; so that this is an answer to the question in the preceding verse; and therefore, though the heart is deceitful, it cannot deceive him, because he judges not according to outward appearance; he sees and knows the heart; and none but the Lord, or he who is Jehovah, can so search the heart as thus to know it; wherefore, since Christ is said to search the reins and the heart, and to know the thoughts of men, and to be a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, he must be Jehovah, and the true God, **Re 2:23**:

I try the reins; the most inward and remote parts, covered with fat, and out of sight: these are the seat of the affections; and the Lord tries these, whether they are towards him or not; and whether sincere or hypocritical; Christ the omniscient God knew Peter's love to him, and the sincerity of it; for which he appeals to him as such,
Joh 21:17:

even to give every man accordions to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings; to do which it is necessary to search the heart, and try the reins, the fountain of all actions; and in which the principles of them are, and according to which they are denominated and judged of: in the future judgment every secret thing will be brought into account; the counsels of the heart will be made manifest; the book of conscience will be opened; and out of it, as well as other books, men will be judged according to their ways and works; and therefore it is requisite that the Judge should be the Lord God omniscient, the searcher and trier of the hearts and reins, as Christ is.

Jeremiah 17:11

Ver. 11. As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not,.... Here seems to be another sin pointed at, as the cause of the ruin of the Jews; as idolatry and trust in the creature before mentioned; so riches unjustly got, and these boasted of and trusted in; the folly of which is illustrated by the simile of a bird sitting on eggs, and not hatching them; being either addled, or broke by the male through lust, or by the foot of man or beast, being laid on the ground; Or by a bird which "gathers" {s}, as some; or "hatches", as others, eggs it has not laid; which being hatched, run away from it, and so not enjoyed by it. The Targum is,

"as the partridge, or "koraah", which gathers eggs that are not its own, and nourishes young ones which will not follow it, so, &c."

whether the partridge is meant by "kore", the word here used, is uncertain. Bochart {t} thinks the "woodcock", or "snite" or "snipe", is intended. Jarchi interprets it, by the "cuckoo", which is not likely; since that does not take away another's eggs, and sit on them; but lays its own eggs in another's nest, and leaves them to be hatched by it; but it must be understood rather of such an one that gets the eggs of another, and hatches them, but cannot keep the young when hatched; and this is said of the partridge, that when its own eggs are broke, it will get others, and sit upon them, and hatch them; but being hatched, knowing her not to be their dam, and hearing the voice of that which is, run from her to it {u}:

so he that getteth riches, and not by right; but by fraud, rapine, and oppression; such are they that will be rich, that are resolved upon it at any rate, right or wrong; and such persons may succeed, and become rich by illicit methods; but then, as such riches may be truly called "mammon of unrighteousness"; so they will not profit in a time to come, in a day of wrath; neither are they of long continuance now: for such a man

shall leave them in the midst of his days; which, according to the common term of life, and course of nature, he might hope to arrive to; he shall die, and not enjoy what he has got together; while he is promising himself much and long happiness, his soul is required of him; and whose his substance shall be, he knows not; the riches he has heaped up together, he knows not who shall gather; nor to whom he leaves them, whether a wise man or a fool: however, this is certain as to himself, and at his end shall be a fool; he shall appear to be one for getting riches in an unlawful way; for trusting in uncertain riches; for promising himself a great deal of pleasure and felicity in them for a long time, which he could not secure; and for neglecting the true riches of grace and glory; see Lu 12:19. The Targum is,

"at his end he is called a wicked man;"

because of the unjust manner in which he has got his riches, and which appears by his end; every wicked man is a fool. The word here used is "Nabal"; and as is his name, so is he.

{s} rgd "collegit", Vatablus, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "collegit", Montanus, Schmidt; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 82. 1. {t} Hierozoicon, par. 2. l. 1. c. 12. col. 81. {u} Vid. Frantz. Hist. Animal. Sacr. par. 2. c. 11. p. 414.

Jeremiah 17:12

Ver. 12. A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary. The temple, which was a sanctified place, where the holy God dwelt, his holy worship was observed, and his holy people met together. Here, from the beginning of its erection, from the time of its dedication, the Lord took up his residence; the glory of the Lord filled the house; he set up his throne in it, a high and glorious one; he dwelt between the cherubim, over the mercy seat, typical of the throne of grace. Kimchi and Ben Melech observe that R. Samuel Ben Tibbon is of opinion that the "caph" of similitude is here wanting; and that it should be interpreted thus, "as a glorious high throne", &c.: heaven is the high and glorious throne, where the Lord sits and reigns; and the temple or sanctuary bore some likeness and resemblance to it; it was a figure of it; and every place where God is worshipped, and grants his presence, is no other but "the house of God, and the gate of heaven"; and therefore it was great wickedness and ingratitude in the Jews, who were so highly favoured of God, to forsake him, his house, his worship, his word and ordinances, as the following verses show; and which suggest another reason of their destruction. The words in connection with the following verse may be read thus,

"and thou, whose glorious high throne the place of our sanctuary [is], O Lord, the Hope of Israel, &c."

Jeremiah 17:13

Ver. 13. O Lord, the Hope of Israel,.... Of all true Israelites; such as are regenerate persons, and true believers in him; Christ is the author and giver of that hope that is in them; the door of it unto them; the object on which it is exercised; the ground and foundation of it, or what gives encouragement to it; and the person they are hoping for; Old Testament saints hoped, waited for, and expected his first coming; and New Testament saints are hoping for his second coming, and to be for ever with him {w}:

all that forsake thee shall be ashamed; who forsake him as the Hope of Israel, and place their hope elsewhere; in the creature, in themselves, in their riches, in their righteousness, and profession of religion; such shall be ashamed of their vain hope; whereas a true hope, a hope upon the right object, on Christ the Hope of Israel, makes not ashamed; nor shall the man that has it be ashamed of that. The Targum paraphrases it,

"all who forsake thy worship shall be ashamed;"

for they forsake their own mercies, who forsake the house and ordinances of God, and the assembling of themselves together:

and they that depart from me; the prophet; refusing to hear the word of the Lord by him, which was all one as departing from the Lord. Some render it, "from thee", as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions; and so the Targum,

"and the ungodly that transgress thy word;"

whose heart departed from the Lord, as in Jer 17:1 notwithstanding their show of devotion and religion. Some render the words, "that are chastised by me"; but repent not, and are not reformed thereby; reading not yrwow, as the Masorites direct, and we, and many others, follow; but according to the letters, and retaining them, yrwoy {x}:

shall be written in the earth; have a name among earthly and carnal men, and be called so, being sensual and carnal, and minding nothing but earth and earthly things; and shall not be written among the living in Jerusalem, or have a name and a place among spiritual men: or they shall be of a short continuance; their memory shall rot; their names be put out for ever; and their memorial perish with them; for things written in the dust do not continue, but are presently destroyed by a puff of wind, or by the treading of the foot upon them; or they shall die, and return to the earth, and be laid in the grave, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; or shall perish eternally, die the second death, being not written in the Lamb's book of life. The Targum is,

"into hell shall they fall."

The phrase is opposed to a being written, or having names written in heaven, Lu 10:20; which is the same as to be written in the book of life, or to be ordained unto eternal life, **Php 4:3**; and what is the case of such who are not written in heaven, but in earth, may be seen in Re 20:15;

because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters;
See Gill on "Jer 2:13".

{w} hwqm, the word here used, sometimes signifies a confluence or collection of waters, as in **Ge 1:10** and elsewhere, a place to bathe in; hence Fortunatus Scacchus, in Sacror. Eleaochr. Myrothec. l. 1. c. 23. col. 159. renders it here, "the bath of Israel", the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood is a fountain opened, in which sinners wash, and are cleansed from their sins, Zech. xiii. 1. and this agrees with the latter part of the verse, where the Lord is called "the fountain of living water"; so De Dieu, on ch. xiv. 8, observes, the word is so used in Exod. vii. 21. and so R. Akiba interprets the words, saying,

"what is "the meaning of hwqm? it is that which cleanses the unclean; even so God cleanses Israel;"

and it is, adds De Dieu, as if you were to call God the pool of Israel, or a confluence of waters where Israel may be washed from his filth. {x} "Castigati a me", Schmidt; so Stockius, p. 455, 725, Junius & Tremellius follow the same reading, only they render the words, not so properly, "castigationes meae".

Jeremiah 17:14

Ver. 14. Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed,.... These are the words of the prophet, sensible of his own sins and backslidings, and of the part which he himself had in these corrupt and declining times; and being conscious of his own impotency to cure himself; and being fully satisfied of the power of the Lord to heal him; and being well assured, if he was healed by him, he should be thoroughly and effectually healed; therefore he applies unto him. Sins are diseases; healing them is the forgiveness of them; God only can grant this: or this may have respect to the consolation of him, whose soul was distressed, grieved, and wounded, with the consideration of the sins of his people, and the calamities coming upon them on that account:

save me, and I shall be saved; with a temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation; save me from the corruptions of the times, from the designs of my enemies; preserve me to thy kingdom and glory; there are none saved but whom the Lord saves, and those that are saved by him are saved to a purpose; they can never perish:

for thou [art] my praise; the cause of it, by reason of mercies bestowed; the object of it, whom he did and would praise evermore, because of his favours, particularly the blessings of healing and salvation by him; see Ps 103:1.

Jeremiah 17:15

Ver. 15. Behold, they say unto me,.... Or, "they are saying unto me" {y}, continually; these were their daily flouts and jeers:

Where [is] the word of the Lord? that thou hast so often talked of? thou hast for a long time threatened us with a siege, and famine, pestilence, and the sword, and captivity, but none of these come to pass; where is the accomplishment of them? thou hast pretended to have the word of the Lord for all this; but where is it, or the fulfilment of it? so the Targum,

"where is that which thou hast prophesied in the name of the Lord?"

the judgments, as punishments for sin, he prophesied of. This has been always usual in all ages, that when God's judgments threatened have not been immediately executed, scoffers and mockers have rose up, suggesting they would never come; see **Mal 2:17**;

let it come now; immediately, or we shall not believe it ever will; a very impudent, daring, and wicked expression: this is like that in **Isa 5:19**. The Targum is, "let it now be confirmed;"

or fulfilled; declaring as their impiety, so their infidelity; not believing it ever would be fulfilled.

{y} yla Myrma hmh hnh "ecce illi sunt dicentes ad me", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 17:16

Ver. 16. As for me, I have not hastened from [being] a pastor to follow thee,.... Though he had met with so much ill usage, and was hated by the people for bringing such messages to them, and was jeered and scoffed at because his prophecies were not accomplished; yet he had not been hasty, and solicitous, and importunate with the Lord to dismiss him from his service; but was willing to continue in his office as a pastor or prophet, and to follow the Lord fully, and faithfully perform the work he had called him to, whatever difficulties and discouragements attended him, or reproaches were cast upon him. Some render the words, "I hastened not", or "I have not urged", or "pressed to be a pastor after thee" {z}; to which the sense of Kimchi agrees,

"I did not press myself, or was anxious about the matter, that I should be a shepherd after thee, or a prophet;"

he did not run before he was sent; he did not thrust himself into this office; he was not forward, but backward to it, as appears from **Jer 1:6**; a pastor of the Lord is an under shepherd; one that has his mission and commission from the Lord; who obeys him in all things; follows his directions; goes where and with what he sends him; and such an one was Jeremiah; though it was not what he sought after, and was pressing for; and this he says to take off the edge of the people's resentment against him; to which agree the following words:

neither have I desired the woeful day, thou knowest; he foresaw that reproaches and calumnies would be cast upon him, and that bonds and afflictions would abide him wherever he went with his messages and prophecies; he knew it would be a woeful and miserable day to him, whenever he was sent as a prophet to this people; and that he should meet with nothing but sorrow, and trouble, and vexation of spirit; and therefore it could not be desirable to him, as a man, to be in such an office, or to be sent on such an errand; to be a messenger of such terrible things, and to denounce such woeful judgments; and much less did he desire the execution of them, even though he had prophesied of them; having not so much regard to his own honour and credit, as an affection to the people, and a compassionate concern for their welfare; and for all this he could appeal to the heart searching and rein trying God. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Arabic versions, render it, "man's day"; see **1Co 4:3**; but the Targum paraphrases it agreeably to the sense given,

"and the evil day which thou shall bring upon them, I have not desired:"

that which came out of my lips was [right] before thee; as he could appeal to the omniscient God for the truth of the above, so for this, that he delivered nothing by way of prophecy but what he had from the Lord; and that he delivered out truly and faithfully whatever he had from him; and it was all done openly and publicly, and in his sight, with all sincerity and truth; see **2Co 2:17**.

{z} Kyrxa herm ytua al ynaw "ego autem non festinavi ut essem pastor post te", Calvin; "et me (quod attinet) non ursi [esse] pastor post te", Noldius, p. 567.

Jeremiah 17:17

Ver. 17. Be not a terror unto me,.... By deserting him, and leaving him in the hands of his enemies; or by denying him supports under their reproaches and persecution; or by withdrawing his gracious presence from him, than which nothing is more terrible to a good man; or by withholding the comfortable influences of his Spirit; or by suffering terrors to be injected into him from any quarter; and more is meant than is expressed; namely, that God would be a comforter of him, and bear him up under all his troubles:

thou [art] my hope in the day of evil: the author and object of his hope; the ground and foundation of it, from whom he hoped for deliverance, when it was a time of distress with him, from outward as well as from inward enemies; he was his hope in a time of outward calamity, and in the hour of death and day of judgment.

Jeremiah 17:18

Ver. 18. Let them be confounded that persecute me,.... With words with reproaches, with scoffs and jeers, saying, "where is the word of the Lord?" Jer 17:14; let such be ashamed that scoffingly put such a question, by seeing the accomplishment of it:

but let not me be confounded; who have delivered it out as the word of the Lord, that should be surely fulfilled; let not me be brought to shame by the failure of it and be reckoned as a false prophet:

let them be dismayed; terrified and affrighted when they shall see the judgments of God coming upon them, which they have jeeringly called for:

but let not me be dismayed; by their not coming, or when they shall come; but preserve and protect me:

bring upon them the day of evil; of punishment; which they put far away, and scoff at; though the prophet did not desire the woeful day to come upon the people in general, yet upon his persecutors in particular. Jarchi interprets it of the men of Anathoth alone; and which desire of his did not arise from malice towards them, but from indignation at their sin and for the glory of the divine Being, whose name was blasphemed by them:

and destroy them with double destruction; not with two sorts of judgments, sword and famine, as Jerom; but with an utter destruction, with breach after breach, destruction after destruction, until they were entirely destroyed; unless it should have regard to the two times of destruction, first by the Chaldeans, and then by the Romans.

Jeremiah 17:19

Ver. 19. Thus said the Lord unto me,.... Here begins a new sermon or discourse, concerning the sanctification of the sabbath, and a very proper place to begin a new chapter:

Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people; where there were great numbers of people passing and repassing; and whither the people resorted upon one account or another; or where they dwelt. Some particular gate of the city of Jerusalem seems to be meant; and not the gate of the temple, as Abarbinel. Some think the sheep gate, and others the water gate, **Ne 3:1**; perhaps rather the latter, since the Nethinims dwelt near it, who were the

Gibeonites, so called, because given to the congregation of Israel, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to it; and these were "the children of the people", of the nations of the world, the old Canaanites, as well as they were the servants of the people of Israel: but what particular gate is intended is not certain; it is very likely it was one that was near the court, by what follows:

whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by which they go out; when they went out to war and returned; or went to their country houses and came back; or on any business and occasion whatever. This shows a reason why the prophet was to go and stand in this gate first; because his message was to be first delivered to these great personages, who had a personal concern herein, and who could influence others by their authority and example:

and in all the gates of Jerusalem; after he had been in the former, and delivered his message; for it concerned all the inhabitants of the city, high and low, rich and poor, male and female, young and old; and therefore he was to go to every gate, and stand and proclaim there, as being the most public places of resort and concourse, and where people were continually going and coming.

Jeremiah 17:20

Ver. 20. And say unto them, hear ye the word of the Lord,.... Concerning the sanctification of the sabbath; for this was not of human, but of divine institution:

ye kings of Judah; which must be understood either, as Kimchi thinks, of the then present king and his sons, so called because they would reign after him; for, there was but one king at a time; and who, perhaps, at this time, was Josiah: or else the king and his nobles, the princes of the land, are meant:

and all Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates; the people in the several parts of the land of Judea, that came to Jerusalem either for trade and merchandise, or for worship, and all that dwelt in the metropolis; for the business the prophet had to charge them with concerned them all.

Jeremiah 17:21

Ver. 21. Thus saith the Lord, take heed to yourselves,.... That ye sin not against the Lord, by breaking the sabbath, and so bring wrath and ruin upon yourselves: or "to your souls" {a}; to the inward frame of them, that they be in disposition for the work of that day; and that they be wholly engaged therein, even all the powers and faculties of them; and that they be not taken up in thoughts and cares about other things:

and bear no burden on the sabbath day; as no worldly thoughts and cares should, cumber the mind, and lie heavy thereon, to the interruption of spiritual exercises of religion; so neither should any weight or burden be borne by the body, or carried from place to place; as not by themselves, so neither by their servants, nor by their cattle, nor in carts and wagons, nor by any instrument whatever; in short, all servile work was forbidden:

nor bring [it] in by the gates of Jerusalem; to be unloaded and sold there, as wine, grapes, figs, and fish, were, in the times of Nehemiah,
Ne 13:15.

{a} Mkytwvpnb "in animabus vestris", Calvin, Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 17:22

Ver. 22. Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day,.... Not of dirt and soil only, as some restrain the sense; but of any ware or merchandise, in order to be sold in the city or elsewhere:

neither do ye any work; any servile work, any kind of manufacture, either within doors or without; or exercise any kind of trade, or barter and merchandise, or do any sort of worldly business; nothing but what was of mere necessity, for the preservation of life; see
Ex 20:10;

but hallow ye the sabbath day; or, "sanctify it" {b}; by separating it from all worldly business, and devoting it to the worship of God in public and private, spending it wholly in acts of religion and piety:

as I commanded your fathers; not Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but those that came out of Egypt, to whom, and to their posterity after them, this commandment was enjoined, Ex 20:8; so that this was not a novel injunction, but what was commanded from the beginning of their civil and church state; from the time of their coming out of Egypt, and becoming a separate people and nation, under a theocracy, or the government of God himself; being chosen and set apart to be a special, peculiar, and holy people to himself, of which the sanctification of the sabbath was a sign; and was to be observed unto the Messiah's coming, the sum and substance of it, **Col 2:16**.

{b} Mtvdq "sanctificate", Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 17:23

Ver. 23. But they obeyed not,.... Or, "heard not" {c}; so as to observe and do; that is, their fathers did not; this command was very early disobeyed, and more or less in all intervening times:

neither inclined their ear; or listened attentively to what was said to them; but if they heard at all, it was in a very indifferent and careless manner, as if they cared not whether they heard or not; whereas persons intent on hearing bow the head, and turn the ear; and if they have one better than another, will turn that, in order to take in what they are attentive to; but so did not the Jewish fathers:

but made their neck stiff; or "hard" {d}; and would not bend it, to take upon them the yoke of the commandments: a metaphor taken from untamed oxen, that will not submit the neck to the yoke, but draw back from it. The Septuagint and Arabic versions understand all this, not of the Jewish fathers of old, but of their children, even of the then present generation, rendering the words, "but hardened their neck more than their fathers"; they were more stiffnecked, refractory, and disobedient than they were; this was always the character of this people; as were the fathers, so were the children, if not worse; see **Ac 7:51**;

that they might not hear nor receive instruction; about the command of the sabbath, or any other: or "correction", or "discipline" {e}; the yoke of which they were as unwilling to bear as the yoke of the commandments, Jer 31:18.

{c} wemv al "non audiverunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt. {d} Mpre ta wvqyw "sed obturarunt cervicem suam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "indurarunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt. {e} rowm "discliplinam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 17:24

Ver. 24. And it shall come to pass,.... Or, "yet it shall come to pass" {f}; so it shall be, notwithstanding all former disobedience and rebellion:

if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord; or, "in hearing hear" {g}; hearken attentively, and readily obey the command given, before mentioned, so as

to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day; to be bought or sold, or to be wrought on or with; and so likewise to carry nothing out of their houses or city, which, though not expressed, is understood as before; and this respects not only the city of Jerusalem, but all other cities and towns in Judea; for the word of the Lord, concerning this matter, was sent to all Judah, the whole land of Judea, Jer 17:20;

but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; one part of the sanctification of the sabbath lay in a cessation from all servile work, though not wholly, but also in the observance of religious worship, and the one was in order to the other; for, unless they abstained from worldly business, they could not be at leisure to attend divine service.

{f} hyhw "tamen erit", Gataker; "erit autem", Cocceius. {g} Nwemvt emv "audiendo audiveritis", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 17:25

Ver. 25. Then shall there enter into the gates of this city,.... In a very public and splendid manner:

kings and princes, sitting upon the throne of David; that is, kings, with the princes of the blood, or with their nobles, who shall be of the house and line of David; and in a continual succession shall sit upon his throne, and possess the kingdom of the house of Judah, and rule over them in great glory, peace, and prosperity:

riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; some riding in chariots, and some on horses; the king, with some of the princes of the blood, in one chariot; his nobles in others, or on horseback; with great numbers of the citizens of Jerusalem, and people from all parts, flocking to see them, and join in the procession, and so make it more grand and august:

and this city shall remain for ever; or, "be inhabited for ever" {h}; a long time, and not be destroyed, as has been threatened, or its inhabitants carried captive.

{h} Mlwel hbvyw "et inhabitabitur in seculum", Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 17:26

Ver. 26. And they shall come from the cities of Judah,.... That is, men shall come from all parts of the land of Judea to the city of Jerusalem, and to the temple; especially at the times of their solemn feasts, three times a year, as the law directed:

and from the places about Jerusalem; and from all the towns and villages adjacent to it, such as Bethany and Bethphage, and many others:

and from the land of Benjamin; which tribe continued with the tribe of Judah when the rest revolted, and was now with it, and still would continue with it, and join with it in religious worship, were they careful to observe what the Lord commanded them:

and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south; these respect the several parts of the land of Judah, which, the Jews {i} say, was divided into three parts, the mountain, plain or champaign country, and the valley: the "plain" was that part where Lydda and other cities were; the "mountain" is the same with the hill country of Judea, **Lu 1:39**; and the "south" the southern part of the land, that which is called the wilderness of Judea, of which see Jos 15:20. The above Jewish writers say {k}, that from Bethhoron to Emmaus was the mountain or hill country; from Emmaus to Lydda the plain; and from Lydda to the sea the valley; now, from all these places should persons come to the temple:

bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, and meat offerings and incense; sacrifices and offerings of all sorts, according to the law; hereby signifying, that if the sabbath was observed, as it would go well with the kings and princes of Judah, they would keep a splendid court, and have a numerous retinue, so it would be well with the priests that served at the altar; sacrifices would be brought to them; of which they would have their part, as well as God have glory by an obedience to his laws; and, besides these, other sacrifices would also be brought, as follows:

and bringing sacrifices of praise unto the house of the Lord; thank offerings for mercies received and deliverances wrought, as well as sacrifices for sins committed; and this was one sort of the peace offerings, **Le 7:11**.

{i} Misna Sheviith, c 9. sect. 2. {k} Hieros. Sheviith, foI. 38. 4.

Jeremiah 17:27

Ver. 27. But if ye will not hearken unto me,.... With respect to this particular point, more especially:

to hallow the sabbath day; to keep it holy to the Lord in a religious way, in the exercise of the duties of religion, both public and private:

and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; or, "and go through"; or, so as "to go through" {l} &c; and may intend either one and the same thing, namely entering in at the gates with a burden upon the shoulders; or two things, bearing a burden, and carrying it any where in or out of the city; and an unnecessary passing and repassing through the gates of the city, whether a man has or has not a burden upon him, since the sabbath might be violated either way:

then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof; where the prophet was to publish all this, and where the people sinned by passing and repassing, and carrying burdens in and out on the sabbath day:

and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem; the king's palace, and the palaces of the princes and nobles, as well as the cottages of the poorer sort:

and it shall not be quenched; until it has utterly destroyed the city: this was fulfilled by the Chaldeans, Jer 52:13. The Jews say there is no fire kindled but where the sabbath is profaned; and that Jerusalem was destroyed because they profaned the sabbath {m}.

{l} vb abw "et intretis per portas", Cocceius, Schmidt. {m} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol.

119. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 18

This chapter expresses the sovereign power of God ever his creatures, and his usual methods of dealing with them; it threatens destruction to the Jews for their idolatry; and is closed with the prophet's complaint of his persecutors, and with imprecations upon them. The sovereign power of God is expressed under the simile of a potter working in his shop, and making and marring vessels at pleasure, Jer 18:1; the application of which to God, and the house of Israel, is in Jer 18:5; and is illustrated by his usual dealings with kingdoms and nations; for though he is a sovereign Being, yet he acts both in a kind and equitable way; and as the potter changes his work, so he changes the dispensations of his providence, of which two instances are given; the one is, that having threatened ruin to a nation, upon their repentance and good behaviour he revokes the threatening, Jer 18:7; and the other is, that having made a declaration of good to a people, upon their sin and disobedience he recalls it, and punishes them for their wickedness, Jer 18:9; then follows a prophecy of the destruction of the Jews in particular, in which they are exhorted to repentance to prevent it; their obstinacy is observed; their folly in departing from God, and worshipping idols, is exposed; and they are threatened with utter ruin, Jer 18:11; the conspiracy and evil designs of the Jews against the prophet, their malice and ingratitude, are complained of by him, Jer 18:18; his imprecations upon them, and prayers for their destruction, are delivered out in Jer 18:21.

Ver. 1. The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying. The word of prophecy, as the Targum: this is a distinct prophecy from the former, though it may be connected with it; it referring to the destruction threatened in the latter part of the preceding chapter.

Jeremiah 18:2

Ver. 2. Arise, and go down to the potter's house,.... Which, no doubt, was well known to the prophet; but where it was is not certain. Some think Jeremiah was in the temple, and this house was beneath it, and therefore he is bid to go down to it; but of this there is no certainty, nor even probability: it is most likely that this house was without the city, perhaps near the potter's field, Mt 27:10; and which lying low, he is ordered to go down to it:

and there I will cause thee to hear my words; there the Lord would tell him what he had further to say to him, and what he should say to the people; and where by lively representations, by sensible objects before him, he would cause him to understand more clearly what he said and designed to do: as God sometimes represented things to the minds of the prophets in dreams and visions, setting before them mental objects, and raising in their minds ideas of things; so sometimes he represented things to them by real visible objects, and, by similes taken from thence, conveyed unto them a clear and distinct knowledge of his mind and will, and they to the people; which was the case here.

Jeremiah 18:3

Ver. 3. Then I went down to the potter's house,.... He did as the Lord commanded him; he was obedient to the divine will; he went to hear what the Lord had to say to him there, and to observe such things, from whence he might learn instruction for himself and others:

and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels; the Targum renders it "upon a seat"; or "his seats", as Junius and Tremellius; but it signifies not the instrument on which the potter sat while he worked, but that on which he did his work. The Septuagint version renders it, "on stones" {n}; and R. Jonah {o} says, that in some countries the potter's instrument is in the likeness of two millstones, the lowermost is the greatest, and the uppermost is the least. Or rather the word may signify "frames", or "moulds" {p}, made of stone, in which the potter put his clay, and fashioned it: though I see no reason to depart from the signification of "wheels", which are used in the potter's work, even two of them; and so the word here is of the dual number; though one is more properly called the "wheel", and the other the "lathe", and are described as follows:

"The "potter's wheel" consists principally in its nut, which is a beam or axis, whose foot or pivot plays perpendicularly on a free stone sole, or bottom; from the four corners atop of this beam, which does not exceed two feet in height, arise four iron bars, called the spokes of the wheel; which forming diagonal lines with the beam, descend, and are fastened at bottom to the edges of a strong wooden circle, four feet in diameter, perfectly like the felloes of a coach wheel; except that it hath neither axis nor radii; and is only joined to the beam, which serves it as an axis, by the iron bars. The top of the nut is flat, of a circular figure, and a foot in diameter. On this is laid a piece of the clay, or earth, to be turned and fashioned. The wheel thus disposed is encompassed with four sides of four different pieces of wood, sustained in a wooden frame: the hind piece, which is that whereon the workman sits, is made a little inclining towards the wheel: on the fore piece are placed the pieces of prepared earth: lastly, the side pieces serve the workman to rest his feet against; and are made inclining, to give him more or less room, according to the size of the vessels to be turned; by his side is a trough of water, wherewith from time to time he wets his hands, to prevent the earth sticking to them.----The potter having prepared his clay or earth, and laid a piece of it suitable to the work he intends on the top of the beam, sits down; his thighs and legs much expanded, and his feet rested on the side pieces, as is most convenient. In this situation he turns the wheel round, till it has got the proper velocity; when, wetting his hands in the water, he bores the cavity of the vessel, continuing to widen it from the middle; and thus turns it into form, turning the wheel afresh, and wetting his hands from time to time.----The potter's "lathe" is also a kind of "wheel", but simpler and slighter than the former; its three chief members are an iron beam or axis, three feet and a half high, and two inches in diameter; a little wooden wheel, all of a piece, an inch thick, and seven or eight in diameter, placed horizontally atop of the beam, and serving to form the vessel on; and another larger wooden wheel, all of a piece, three inches thick, and two or three feet broad, fastened to the same beam at the bottom, parallel to the horizon. The beam, or axis, turns by a pivot at bottom, in an iron stand. The workman gives the motion to the lathe with his feet, by pushing the great wheel alternately with each foot; still giving it a lesser or greater degree of motion, as his work requires {q}."

Thus Jeremiah saw the potter work, or somewhat like this; for, no doubt, pottery, as other things, has been improved since his time.

{n} Mynbah le epi twn liywn, Sept. "super lapide, [vel] typo", Calvin. {o} Apud Kimchi & Ben Melech in loc. {p} "Lapideos typos", Calvin; "super formas", Montanus. {q} Chambers's Cyclopaedia, in the word "Pottery".

Jeremiah 18:4

Ver. 4. And the vessel that he made of clay,.... Which is the matter the vessel is made of:

was marred in the hand of the potter; while he was working it; either it fell, as the Septuagint version renders it, out of his hands, or from the beam on which it was laid; or was spoiled by some means or other, so that it was not fit for the purpose he first intended it: or the words should be read, according to some copies, "and the vessel was marred which he made, as clay in the hand of the potter" {r}; while it was clay; or moist, as Jarchi interprets it; and while it was in his hands, forming and fashioning it:

so he made it again another vessel; put it into another form and shape it would better serve:

as seemed good to the potter to make [it]; just as he pleased, and as his judgment in his art directed him; he having power over the clay to mould it as he would, and as it best answered so to do.

{r} ruwyh dyb rmxk hve awh rva ylkh txvnw "sed corruptum est vas quod ille ficiens (erat) sicud lutum (solet) in manu figuli", Schmidt, Montanus. So Abarbinel; and thus it is read in the margin of our Bibles.

Jeremiah 18:5

Ver. 5. Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. While he was in the potter's house, and after he had observed his manner of working, and the change he had made in his work, the Lord spoke to him, and applied it in the following manner.

Jeremiah 18:6

Ver. 6. O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord,.... Make, and mar, and remake at pleasure? certainly he could. God is a sovereign Being, and has a sovereign and uncontrollable power over his creatures; he has an indisputable right unto them, and can dispose of them as he pleases; he has as good a right to them, and as great power over them, as the potter has to and over his clay, and a better and greater; since they are made by him, and have their all from him, their being, life, and motion; whereas the clay is not made by the potter; it is only the vessel that is made of the clay by him, which has its form from him; if therefore the potter has such power over the clay, which he did not make, as to cast it into another forth as it pleases him, and especially when marred; the Lord has an undoubted power over men, and a just right to change their, state and circumstances as he pleases; nor have they any reason to complain of him, especially when they have marred themselves by their own sins and transgressions; which was the present case of the house of Israel, or the Jews; see Isa 29:16;

behold, as the clay [is] in the potter's hand; and he can form and fashion it as he pleases, and it is not in the power of the clay to resist and hinder him:

so [are] ye in mine hand, O house of Israel; and I can dispose of you as I please, and put you in what circumstances it seems good unto me, drive you from your land, and scatter you among the nations; nor can you hinder me from doing this, or whatever else is my pleasure. And this his sovereign power and pleasure, and as exercised in a way of mercy and equity, are exemplified in the following cases.

Jeremiah 18:7

Ver. 7. [At what] instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom,.... By way of threatening: or, "the moment I shall speak" {s}, &c; as soon as ever I have declared concerning any people whatever, Jews or Gentiles; that if they go on in their sins, and remain impenitent, and do not turn from them, that they must expect I will quickly come out against such a nation and kingdom in a providential way, as threatened:

to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy [it]; as the proprietor of a garden, when it do not turn to his account, plucks up the plants, and pulls down the fences, and lets it go to ruin.

{s} rbda egr "momento loquor", Schmidt; "momento eloquor", Junius & Tremellius; "momento ut loquutus fuero", Tigurine version.

Jeremiah 18:8

Ver. 8. If that nation against whom I have pronounced,.... Such a sentence as this, should immediately, upon the above declaration, do as Nineveh did:

turn from their evil; their evil of sin, their evil ways and works, as an evidence of the truth of their repentance for former sins:

I will repent of the evil that one thought to do unto them; as they change their course of life, God will change the dispensations of his providence towards them, and not bring upon them the evil of punishment he threatened them with; in which sense repentance can only be understood of God, he doing that which is similar to what men do when they repent of anything; they stop their proceedings, and change their outward conduct; so God proceeds not to do what he threatened to do, and changes his outward behaviour to men; he wills a change, and makes one in his methods of acting, but never changes his will.

Jeremiah 18:9

Ver. 9. And [at what] instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom,.... By way of promise on the other hand: or, "and the moment I shall speak", &c. as in Jer 18:7; in favour to a people; signifying, that if they do that which is right and good, and continue therein, it may be expected that I will appear for and among such a nation and kingdom:

to build and to plant [it]; to build up its fences that have been broken down, and to plant it with pleasant plants, and make it prosperous and flourishing, and protect and defend it, and keep it safe, and in a secure condition; so that it shall be in very thriving circumstances, and be out of the power of its enemies to hurt it.

Jeremiah 18:10

Ver. 10. If it do evil in my sight,.... What is sinful, contrary to the law and will of God, openly and publicly, in a bold and daring manner:

that it obey not my voice: in my word, and by my prophets, but turn a deaf ear to them, and slight and despise all instructions, admonitions, and reproofs:

then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them; or, "do them good" {t}; that is, withhold it from them, and not bestow it on them; but, on the contrary, correct or punish them according to their deserts. Thus, though God is a sovereign God, yet, in the dispensations of his providence towards kingdoms and nations, he deals with them in such a merciful and equitable manner, that there is no just reason to complain of him; and yet he maintains and keeps up his power and authority, such as the potter exercises over the clay.

{t} wtwa byjyhl "ad benefaciendum ei", Montanus; "ut benefacerem ei", Valablus, Pagninus; "benefacturum ei", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 18:11

Ver. 11. Now therefore go to,.... This is the application of the above general rules of procedure to the people of the Jews, and particularly that which relates to the destruction of a nation or kingdom, and the declaration of it in order to reclaim them:

speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
saying, thus saith the Lord; or, "to the man of Judah" {u}; the body of the Jewish nation, and especially the inhabitants of the metropolis of it; which was the source of sin to the whole kingdom, and on which the calamity threatened would chiefly come, if not prevented by a reformation:

behold, I frame evil against you; as the potter frames his clay upon the wheel, to which the allusion is; which is to be understood of the evil of punishment, but not of any secret purpose, and settled determination, in the mind of God to bring it upon them; for that is never disannulled by himself or others, or ever changed; but some operation in Providence, which began to work towards their destruction; some providential step which God had taken, and which threatened their ruin:

and devise a device against you; the same as before; by which it looked as if he had thought of the matter, and had contrived a scheme, which if he went on with, would issue in the subversion of their whole state:

return you everyone from his evil way; that so the reformation may be as general as the corruption was: it supposes a sense of the evil of their former conduct, and repentance for their sins, of which their forsaking and abstaining from them would be an evidence:

and make your ways and your doings good; for it is not sufficient barely to abstain from sin, which is only a negative holiness; but there must be a performance of good works, a walking in them, a constant series and course of obedience to God, according to the rule of his word.

{u} hdwhy vya la "ad virum Jehudah", Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 18:12

Ver. 12. And they said, there is no hope,.... Or, "but they said" {w}; not that there was no hope of the grace and mercy of God, upon their repentance and reformation, for that is before declared; but that they were so hardened in their sins, so fixed in their wicked courses, and so determined to go on in them, that there was no room for the prophet to hope of ever reclaiming them; signifying, that it was to little purpose to talk to them, or exhort them; his labour would be in vain; for they were at a point, and resolved to continue in their evil practices, let the consequences be what they would. Jarchi's note is,

"but I know that they will say to thee concerning thy words, that we do not care for them;"

no, not a rush; you may as well hold your peace and say nothing; we are in no pain about future judgments, these give us no uneasiness. The Targum is,

"we are turned from thy worship;"

and we are resolved to continue as we are, and not to return to say what you will:

but we will walk after our own devices; God may take his way, and we will take ours; he has devised evil against us, you say, and he may bring it if he pleases; we have devised sin, and we shall go on in it:

and we will do everyone the imagination of his evil heart; whatsoever our hearts suggest to us as pleasant and agreeable, that we shall do, let the issue be what it will: it is not to be thought that these people expressed themselves in so many words; but this was the language of their hearts, and of their actions, known unto the Lord, and are put into this form by him, or by the prophet, expressing the real sentiments of their minds.

{w} wrmaw "sed dixerunt", Schmidt; "sed dicunt", Piscator.

Jeremiah 18:13

Ver. 13. Therefore thus saith the Lord,.... This being the case of the people of the Jews, and they so resolutely bent on their own ways:

ask ye among the Heathen; inquire among the nations of the world, the Gentiles that know not the true God, and have not the external revelation of his will, only the dim light of nature to guide them; and see if anything like this is to be found among them, as with this people, favoured with the law of God, his word and ordinances to direct them, and his prophets to teach and instruct them; suggesting that they were worse than the Heathens, and that it would be more tolerable for them, one day, than for these people:

who hath heard such things? as expressed in the preceding verses; such desperate words, such bold and daring expressions, such impious resolutions; for generally, when persons are reproved and threatened for sin, they promise amendment; or what is after related concerning their idolatries; intimating that nothing like it was ever heard of among the Gentiles; see **Jer 2:10**;

the virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing; the congregation of Israel, as the Targum; the people of the Jews, ironically so called; because they had been espoused to the Lord as a chaste virgin, and ought to have remained so, pure and incorrupt in the worship of him; but had committed spiritual adultery, that is, idolatry; even very gross acts of it; horrible to hear and think of; enough to make a man's hair stand an end to be told of; or what was very filthy and abominable, and to be loathed and detested, which is explained, Jer 18:15; unless it can be thought to refer to what goes before, concerning their dreadful resolution to continue in their evil ways.

Jeremiah 18:14

Ver. 14. Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon, [which cometh] from the rock of the field?.... Lebanon was a mountain on the borders of Judea, the top of which was covered in the summertime with snow, from the whiteness of which it had its name, Lebanon; as the Alps, for the same reason, which lie between

France and Italy: now, the snow being dissolved by the heat, ran in flowing streams down the rocks into the field and plain, where they might be easily come at, and drank of; and would a thirsty traveller, on a summer's day, pass by such streams as these, and not drink of them? certainly he would not leave them, but stop and drink; he must be an unwise man that should do otherwise; and yet this was what the people of the Jews did; they forsook the Lord, "the fountain of living waters"; and who, because of the plenty of good things in him, and flowing from him to them, were as streams from Lebanon; and yet they left these crystal streams for the black and muddy waters of Sihor, or idols of Egypt, **So 4:15**; or the words may be rendered, "will a man leave [what comes] from the rock of the field [for] the snow of Lebanon" {x}? that is, will a man neglect to drink of the water that comes out of a rock in his field, pure and clear, and is near at hand, and choose to go to Mount Lebanon to drink of the snow water, which runs down the mountain, and can never be thought so clear as what comes out of the rock? surely he will not; he must act an unwise part if he does; and such a part, and worse, did the people of the Jews act, in forsaking God:

[or] shall the cold flowing waters which come from another place be forsaken? or, "strange waters" {y}; which come from far, from some distant rock, being conveyed in pipes, in; which they come cool, and in flowing streams, for the service of a city and its inhabitants; and who, having such a privilege, would neglect them, and drink of standing water in a pond or puddle? or, the words, as the former, may be rendered, "shall for strange frozen waters, be left flowing ones?" see Grotius.

{x} Nwnbl glv ydv rwum bwzeyh "nunquid deserit aliquis [aquam manatem] de petra agri, [ut biblat] nivem Libani"; so some in Vatablus. {y} Myrz Mym "aquae alienae", Schmidt, Montanus; "peregrinae", De Dieu.

Jeremiah 18:15

Ver. 15. Because my people hath forgotten me,.... Or, "that they have forgotten me" {z}; this is the horrible thing they have done, which was unheard of among the Gentiles, who were always tenacious of their gods, and the worship of them; and that foolish and unwise thing, which was like leaving pure flowing streams of water for dirty puddles. This is to be understood of their forsaking the worship of God, as the Targum interprets it, and following after idols:

they have burnt incense to vanity; to idols, which are vain empty things, and which cannot give their worshippers what they expect from them: or, "in vain they burn incense" {a}; even to the true God, while they also sacrificed unto idols; which to do was an abomination to the Lord, **Isa 1:13**; and especially burning incense to idols must be a vain thing; and so the Targum,

"to no profit a they burn incense or spices:"

and they have caused them to stumble in their ways; that is, either the idols they worshipped, or the false prophets caused the professing people of the Jews to stumble and fall in the ways into which they led them: and

[from] the ancient paths; or, "the paths of eternity" {b}; which lead to eternal life; or which were of old marked out by the revealed will of God for the saints to walk in; and in which the patriarchs and people of God, in all former ages, did walk; and which were appointed from everlasting, and will remain for ever; and these are the good old paths in **Jer 6:16**;

to walk in paths, [in] a way not cast up; a new way, unknown in former times; an unbeaten track, which the saints had never walked in; a rough path, unsafe and dangerous; and hence they stumbled, and fell, and came to ruin; as follows:

{z} ynxkv yk "quod obliti sunt", Schmidt. {a} wrjqy awvl "frustra adolebunt, [vel] adolent", Pagninus, Calvin. {b} Mlwe ylybv "semitae [quae a] seculo, [seu] antiquo", vid. Schmidt; so Targum; "semitis jam olim praescriptis", Piscator.

Jeremiah 18:16

Ver. 16. To make their land desolate,.... Not that this was the intention either of those that led them out of the right way into those wrong paths, or of them that went into them; but so it was eventually; this was the issue of things; their idolatry and other sins were the cause of their land being desolate; through the ravage of the enemy, let in upon them by way of judgment; and through the destruction of men by them; so that there were few or none to cultivate and manure it:

[and] a perpetual hissing; to be hissed at perpetually by the enemy, whenever they passed by it, and observed its desolation; thereby expressing their hatred at its inhabitants; their joy at its desolation; and their satisfaction in it, which would be for ever; or, as Kimchi interprets, a long time. This is the present case of the Jews; and has been ever since their destruction by the Romans; and will be until the fulness of the Gentiles is gathered in:

everyone that passeth thereby shall be astonished: to see the desolations made, and the strange alterations in a place once so famous for fruitfulness and number of inhabitants:

and wag his head; either out of pity, or rather in a way of derision and exultation; see **La 2:15**.

Jeremiah 18:17

Ver. 17. I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy,.... As the east wind, which is generally strong and boisterous, drives the chaff and stubble, and anything that is light, before it, and scatters it here and there; so the Lord threatens to scatter the people of the Jews over the face of the earth, before their enemies, whom they should not be able to withstand. It denotes the power of the enemy God would make use of; the ease with which this should be done; and the utter dispersion of them; and is their present case:

I will show them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity; that is, will not look upon them in a favourable way, nor with any pity and compassion for them, nor hear their cries; but turn his back upon them, and a deaf ear unto them, and give them no help and relief, or deliver them out of their calamities; but suffer them to continue upon them, and them to sink under them; see **Pr 1:26**; which refers to the same time of calamity as here.

Jeremiah 18:18

Ver. 18. Then said they, come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah,.... Being enraged at the judgments threatened them, they propose to enter into a confederacy and consultation together, to think of ways and means to stop the mouth of the prophet, and even to take away his life; since he had told them that God had devised a device against them, they were for devising devices against him; that so they might walk after their own devices, without being teased and tormented with this prophet:

for the law shall not perish from the priest; whose business it is to teach it; we have other priests besides Jeremiah, and we shall seek the law at their mouths, and not at his; and perhaps these are the words of the priests themselves, the men of Anathoth; so Jarchi thinks; pleasing themselves with their character and office, and the perpetuity of it; that, notwithstanding what Jeremiah had said, there would be a constant succession of this order of then; nor should the law ever cease from being aught by them, to whose instruction men ought to listen, and not to such a prophet:

nor counsel from the wise; we have wise rulers and governors, counsellors of state, and members of the sanhedrim, and judges of all controversies, and who are capable of giving advice upon any occasion; nor shall we ever want such, to whose prudent counsel we do well to attend, and not to what this babbling man says; does he think to know better than our statesmen and sages, our counsellors in church and state?

nor the word from the prophet; we have prophets among us, that prophesy as well as he, and better things; and whose words of prophecy shall be fulfilled, when his will not; who assure us that we shall have peace and prosperity; and therefore let us not regard what this man says, or be intimidated by his threatenings:

come, and let us smite him with the tongue; by saying all the evil we can of him: by threatening him with pains and penalties; by loading him with reproaches and calumnies; by taking away his good name, and lessening his character and reputation among the people; and so the Targum,

"let us bear false witness against him;"

or, "let us smite him in the tongue" {c}; cut it out, as Abarbinel; or stop his mouth, and hinder him from speaking any more in this manner to the people; or, "let us smite him for the tongue" {d}; because of the words he says, or the prophecies he delivers out:

and let us not give heed to any of his words; or, "to all his words" {e}; all which they reckoned his own, and not the words of the Lord. The Septuagint version is, "and we shall hear all his words"; we shall provoke him to say all he has to say, and shall hear and have enough out of his mouth to condemn him;

and in all this, and in many other things that follow, Jeremiah was a type of Christ, to whom Jerom applies the whole passage.

{c} Nwvlb "in lingua", Montanus, Castalio. {d} Propter "linguam istam", Junius & Tremellius. {e} wyrbd lk la "ad omnia verba ejus", Gataker; "ad universa verba ejus", Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 18:19

Ver. 19. Give heed to me, O Lord,.... To his prayer, since his enemies would not give heed to his prophecies; and God does give heed to the cries and complaints of his ministers, when men will not give heed to their words and doctrines; they have a God to go to, who will hear them, when men despise them:

and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me; hear their reproaches and rantings, their blasphemies and evil speakings, their lies and falsehoods, and judge between me and them; let it appear who is in the right; vindicate my cause, and plead with them that plead against me.

Jeremiah 18:20

Ver. 20. Shall evil be recompensed for good?.... For all the good that I have done them, shall this be all the recompence I shall have, to be evilly treated by them, to have my good name, and even life, taken away by them? shall this be suffered to be done? and, if it is, shall it go unpunished? the prophet taxes the people with ingratitude, which he afterwards instances in, and proves:

for they have digged a pit for my soul; or "life"; they lay in wait to take it away; or they had formed a design against it, and brought a charge and accusation against him, in order to take it away, under colour of law and justice. Kimchi interprets it of poison, which they would have had him drank of:

remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, [and] to turn away thy wrath from them; he was an intercessor for them with God; pleaded with him on their behalf, that good things might be bestowed upon them, and that wrath might be averted from them; so Christ did for the Jews that crucified him, Lu 23:34; this is an instance of their ingratitude; that though he had been an advocate for them, stood in the gap between God and them, and was importunate for their good, yet this was all the recompense he had from them; they sought his life to take it away. This kindness of his for them was forgotten by them; but he trusts the Lord will remember it, and not suffer them to act the base part they intended; and now he determines no more to plead their cause, but to imprecate evils upon them, as follows:

Jeremiah 18:21

Ver. 21. Therefore deliver up their children to the famine,.... To be starved, and perish by it, as they were in the siege of Jerusalem, both by the Chaldeans, and the Romans:

and pour out their [blood] by the force of the sword: or, "upon the hands of the sword" {f}; by means of it; that is, the blood of the parents of the children; let the one perish by famine, and the other by the sword; which, when thrust into a man, blood gushes out, and runs upon the sword to the handle of it:

and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and [be] widows; let them have neither husbands nor children; which latter might be a comfort to them, when they had lost their husbands; but being stripped of these also, the affliction and distress must be the greater:

and let their men be put to death; or "slain with death" {g}; with the pestilence, as Kimchi rightly interprets it; see **Re 6:8**; Jarchi understands it of the angel of death; see **Heb 2:14**;

[let] their young men [be] slain by the sword in battle; such being commonly employed in military service, as being the most proper persons for it.

{f} brx ydy le "super manus gladii", Montanus, Schmidt. {g} twm ygrh wyhy "occisi morte", Pagninus, Montanus, "i.e. peste" Schmidt; "occisi mortis", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 18:22

Ver. 22. Let a cry be heard from their houses,.... A shrieking of women and children, not only for the loss of husbands and parents, but because of the entrance of the enemy into the city, and into their houses, to take away their lives and their substance; as follows:

when thou shalt bring a troop suddenly upon them; or an army, as the Targum; either the Chaldean army, or rather the Roman army:

for they have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet: and therefore it was a just retaliation, that a troop or army should suddenly come upon them, and seize their persons and substance; though Kimchi understands it, as before, of poison, which they would have given him; but Jarchi, of a suspicion and vile calumny they raised of him, that he was guilty of adultery with another man's wife; a "whore" being called a "deep ditch" by the wise man, Pr 23:27; and so it is in the Talmud {h}.

{h} T. Bab. Kama, fol. 16. 2.

Jeremiah 18:23

Ver. 23. Yet, Lord, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay [me],.... However deep they had laid them; and however unknown they were to him; or however private and secret they might be thought to be by them; God is an omniscient God, and knows and sees all things; the thoughts of men's hearts, and all their secret designs in the dark against his ministers, people, and interest:

forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight; they had sinned the unpardonable sin; or, however, a sin unto death; for which prayer for the forgiveness of it was not to be made, **1Jo 5:16**; this the prophet knew: what he here imprecates, and both before and after, must be considered, not as flowing from a private spirit, or from a spirit of malice and revenge; but what he delivered out under a spirit of prophecy, as foretelling what would be the sad estate and condition of these persons; for, otherwise, the temper and disposition of the prophet were the reverse; and he was inclined to sue for mercy for these people, as he often did; wherefore this is not to be drawn into a precedent and example for any to follow:

but let them be overthrown before thee; by the sword, famine, and pestilence: or, "let them be made to stumble before thee" {i}; and fall into perdition; they having made others to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths of truth and goodness; so that it was but a righteous thing that they should be punished after this manner; see Jer 18:15;

deal [thus] with them in the time of thine anger; the set time for his wrath to come upon them to the uttermost; then do unto them according to all the imprecations now made; which the prophet foresaw, and believed he would do; and therefore thus spake.

{i} Kynpl Mylvkm wyhw "propellantur in offendiculum coram te", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "offensi ruant coram te", Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 19

In this chapter is foreshadowed, represented, and confirmed, the destruction of Jerusalem, by the breaking of a potter's vessel the prophet had in his hand; and by the place where he was bid to do this, and did it. The order for it, and the witnesses of it, and the place where it was done, are declared in Jer 19:1; the proclamation there of Jerusalem's ruin is made, Jer 19:3; the cause of it, their apostasy, idolatry, and shedding of innocent blood, Jer 19:4; the great slaughter of them by the sword and famine, Jer 19:6; and how easy, and irresistible, and irrecoverable, their destruction would be, are signified by the breaking of the bottle, Jer 19:10, when Jerusalem for its idolatry would become as defiled a place as Tophet, where the prophet was, Jer 19:12; from whence he came to the temple, and there repeated the proclamation of the evil that should come upon that city, and all the towns around it, Jer 19:14.

Ver. 1. Thus saith the Lord, go and get a potter's earthen bottle,.... From the potter's house, where he had lately been; and where he had been shown, in an emblematic way, what God would do in a short time with the Jews; and which is here further illustrated by this emblem: or, "go and get", or "buy, a bottle of the potter, an earthen one" {k}; so Kimchi; called in Hebrew "bakbuk", from the gurgling of the liquor poured into it, or out of it, or drank out of it, which makes a sound like this word {l}:

and [take] of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests; the word "take" is rightly supplied by our translators, as it is by the Targum, the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; for these words are not to be connected with the former, as in the Vulgate Latin version; as if the prophet was to get or buy the earthen bottle of the elders of the people, and of the priests; but those who were the greatest and principal men of the city, and of which the Jewish sanhedrim consisted, were to be taken by the prophet to be witnesses of what were said and done, to see the bottle broke, and hear what Jeremiah from the Lord had to say; who, from their years, it might be reasonably thought, would seriously attend to those things, and would report them to the people to great advantage; and the Lord, who sent the prophet to them, no doubt inclined their hearts to go along with him; who, otherwise, in all probability, would have refused; and perhaps would have charged him with impertinence and boldness, and would have rejected his motion with contempt, as foolish or mad.

{k} vrx ruwy qbqb tynqw "emas, [vel] emito oenophorum a figulo testaceum", Munster, Tigurine version. So Kimchi and Ben Melech. {l} Vid. Stockium, p. 150.

Jeremiah 19:2

Ver. 2. And go forth into the valley of the son of Hinnom,.... To whom it formerly belonged, and so it was called as early as Joshua's time, Jos 15:8; from the faith and abomination of the place, and the shocking torments here exercised, "hell", from hence, in the New Testament, is called "Gehenna": here the prophet with the elders were to go, for reasons after mentioned; because here their cruel idolatries were committed, and Jerusalem was to be made like unto it for pollution and bloodshed:

which [is] by the entry of the east gate; the way to it out of Jerusalem lay through the east gate of the city. The Targum calls it "the dung gate"; through which the filth of the city was carried out, and laid near it, and where lay the potter's sherds; hence some render it the "potsherd" gate {m}; or rather it should be the potter's gate; for that reason, because the potter's field and house lay near it, from whence the prophet had his earthen bottle; others call it the "sun gate" {n}, because it lay to the sun rising; but seeing the valley of Hinnom was to the south of Jerusalem, this seems rather to be the south gate; and a proper situation this was for the potters to dry and harden their pots. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, leave it untranslated, and call it the gate Harsith or Hadsith:

and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee; for as yet it was not made known to him what he should do with his bottle, or say to the elders, until he came to the place he was ordered to.

{m} tyorxh rev "portae fictilis", Munster, Pagninus. {n} "Portae solaris", Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius; so Ben Melech, and Stockius, p. 389.

Jeremiah 19:3

Ver. 3. And say, hear ye the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah,.... The king and his queen; or the king and his sons; or the king and his princes, and nobles; for there was but one king reigning at a time in Judah, and the present king was Zedekiah; see Jer 21:1;

and inhabitants of Jerusalem; the elders of which, and of the priests, were now before him; to whom he said the following things, that they might tell them to the persons mentioned:

thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; who is able to do whatsoever he pleases in the armies of the heavens, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and will do so among his own people, notwithstanding his being the God of Israel:

behold, I will bring evil upon this place; the evil of punishment for the evil of sin; such as the sword, famine, and captivity; meaning not on that spot of ground where the prophet with the elders were, but upon the city of Jerusalem, and on all the land of Judea:

the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle; it shall be astonishing and surprising to him; it shall even stun him; he shall stand as one thunderstruck or be so affected with it as a man is at a violent clap of thunder, or at some exceeding vehement sound, which leaves such an impression upon him, and continues with him, that he cannot get rid of it; but seems to be continually sounding in his ears, and they even echo and ring with it; see **1Sa 3:11**. The phrase denotes the greatness of the calamity, and the surprise which the bare report of it would bring with it.

Jeremiah 19:4

Ver. 4. Because they have forsaken me,.... My worship, as the Targum; they had apostatized from God, relinquished his service, neglected and despised his word and ordinances, and left the religion they had been brought up in, and was agreeable to the will of God. This, with what follows, contain reasons of the Lord's threatening them to bring evil upon them, as before:

and have estranged this place; or made a strange place of it, so that it could scarcely be known to be the same, nor would the Lord own it as his; meaning either the city of Jerusalem, to which the prophet was near, and could point to it; or the temple, which was in sight, and which they had strangely abused, by offering strange sacrifices to strange gods; or the valley of Hinnom, the spot he was upon, and which they had alienated from its original use:

and have burnt incense in it unto other gods; to strange gods, the gods of the Gentiles; and this they did both in the city of Jerusalem and in the temple, and very probably in the valley of Hinnom, where they sacrificed their children: gods

whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah; of whose wisdom, power, and goodness, neither they nor their fathers before them, nor any of their kings, had had any instance; and whose help and assistance, in times of danger and difficulty, they had had no experience of; and, till now, neither they nor their ancestors had ever owned them, or acknowledged them; nor scarce had heard of their names; nor any of their pious kings, as David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah:

and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; young children that were sacrificed here to idols, as they were in the valley of Hinnom, which seems to be the place principally intended; so that they were not only guilty of idolatry, but of murder; and of the murder of innocent creatures, and even, of their own babes; which was shocking and unheard of cruelty!

Jeremiah 19:5

Ver. 5. They have also built the high places of Baal,.... Or, they have even built, &c. and so the words explain what is before suggested of their idolatry; these were the temples in which they placed his image, and the altars on which they sacrificed to him; as follows:

to burn their sons with fire, [for] burnt offerings unto Baal; the same idol that is sometimes called Moloch, the names being much of the same signification; the one signifying a "lord" or "master"; the other a king; and to the idol under each name they burned their children with fire, and offered them as burnt offerings unto it; which was a most cruel and barbarous way of sacrificing. Some think they only caused them to pass through two fires; but the text is express for it, that they burnt them with fire, and made burnt offerings of them, as they did with slain beasts. It seems very likely that they did both:

which I commanded not; in my law, as the Targum adds; and which was intimation enough to avoid it; though this was not all, he expressly forbad it, Le 20:2;

nor spake [it], neither came [it] into my mind; and it is marvellous it should ever enter into the heart of man; none but Satan himself could ever have devised such a way of worship.

Jeremiah 19:6

Ver. 6. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord,.... Or, "are coming" {o}; a little while and it will come to pass, what follows; to which a "behold" is prefixed, as calling for attention and admiration, as well as to assure of the certain performance of it:

that this place shall no more be called Tophet: as it had been, from the beating of drums in it, that the cries and shrieks of infants burnt in the fire might not be heard by their parents:

nor the valley of the son of Hinnom; which was its name in the times of Joshua, and long before it was called Tophet; but now it should have neither names:

but the valley of slaughter; or, "of the slain", as the Targum; from the multitude of those that should be killed here, at the siege and taking of Jerusalem; or that should be brought hither to be buried; see
Jer 19:11 and
See Gill on "Jer 7:32".

{o} Myab Mymy "dies (sunt) venientes", Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 19:7

Ver. 7. And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place,.... The counsel which they took in this place and agreed to, in offering their sons and daughters to idols; and which they took with these idols and their priests, from whom they expected assistance and relief; and all their schemes and projects for their deliverance; these were all made to spear to be mere empty things, as empty as the earthen bottle he had in his hand, to which there is an allusion; there being an elegant paronomasia between the word {p} here used and that:

and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies: such as sallied out from the city, or attempted to make their escape:

and by the hands of them that seek their lives; and so would not spare them, when they fell into them:

and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth: signifying that they should have no burial, but their slain bodies should lie upon the earth, and be fed upon by fowls and beasts.

{p} qbqb & ytqbw.

Jeremiah 19:8

Ver. 8. And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing,.... An hissing to its enemies; an hissing because desolate; when its walls should be broken down, its houses burnt with fire, and its inhabitants put to the sword, or carried captive:

everyone that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and hiss; surprised to see the desolations of it; that a city once so famous and flourishing should be reduced to such a miserable condition; and yet hiss by way of detestation and abhorrence of it, and for joy at its ruin:

because of all the plagues thereof: by which it was brought to desolation, as the sword, famine, burning, and captivity.

Jeremiah 19:9

Ver. 9. And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons, and the flesh of their daughters,.... For want of food; the famine should be so great and pressing. Jeremiah, that foretells this, was a witness of it, and has left it on record, La 4:10;

and they shall eat everyone the flesh of his friend. The Targum interprets it, the goods or substance of his neighbour; which is sometimes the sense of eating the flesh of another; but as it is to be taken in a literal sense, in the preceding clause, so in this: so it should be,

in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them; the siege of Jerusalem should be so close, that no provision could be got in to the relief of the inhabitants; which obliged them to take the shocking methods before mentioned. Jerom observes, that though this was fulfilled at the Babylonish captivity, yet more fully when Jerusalem was besieged by Vespasian and Titus, and in the times of Hadrian. Josephus {q} gives us a most shocking relation of a woman eating her own son.

{q} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 4.

Jeremiah 19:10

Ver. 10. Then shall thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee. The earthen bottle he was bid to get of the potter, Jer 19:1; this he is ordered to break in pieces before the eyes of the ancients of and of the priests that went with him out Jerusalem to Tophet, as an emblem of the easy, sure, and utter destruction of Jerusalem; for nothing is more easily broken than an earthen vessel; and so easily was Jerusalem destroyed by the Chaldean army; nor can an earthen pot resist any force that is used against it; nor could the inhabitants of Jerusalem withstand the force of Nebuchadnezzar's army; and an earthen vessel once broken cannot be put together again; a new one must be made; which was the case both of the city and temple; and which, upon the return from the captivity, were not repaired, but rebuilt.

Jeremiah 19:11

Ver. 11. And shalt say unto them, thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... Of armies above and below; and so able to execute what he here threatens:

even so will I break this people and this city: the people, the inhabitants of this city, and that itself, by the sword, famine, burning, and captivity:

as [one] breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again; or "healed" {r}; a potter's vessel, upon the wheel, such an one as the prophet had seen, and to which the Jews are compared, Jer 18:3; being marred, may be restored and put into another form and shape; but one that is dried and hardened, when broke, can never be put together again; so a vessel, of gold, silver, and brass, when broke, may be made whole again; but an earthen vessel never can; a fit emblem therefore this to represent utter and irrecoverable ruin; see Isa 30:14. Jerom here again observes, that this is clearly spoken, not of the Babylonish, but of the Roman captivity; after the former the city was rebuilt, and the people returned to Judea, and restored to former plenty; but since the latter, under Vespasian, Titus, and Hadrian, the ruins of Jerusalem remain, and will till the conversion of the Jews:

and they shall bury [them] in Tophet, till [there be] no place to bury: where there should be such great numbers slain; or whither such multitudes of the slain should be brought out of the city to be buried there, that at length there would not be room enough to receive the dead into it; or, as the Syriac version renders it, "and in Tophet they shall bury, for want of a place to bury" in; in such a filthy, abominable, and accursed place shall their carcasses lie, where they were guilty of idolatry, and sacrificed their innocent babes, there being no other place to inter them in: an emblem this of their souls suffering in hell the vengeance of eternal fire.

{r} hprxl "sanari", Montanus; "curari", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 19:12

Ver. 12. Thus will I do unto this place, saith the Lord, and to the inhabitants thereof,.... To the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, as was done to the earthen bottle, and as before threatened:

and [even], or also,

make this city as Tophet; as full of slaughtered men and women as that had been of the blood of innocent children; and as filthy, abominable, and execrable a place as that; and to lose its name, as that is foretold it should, Jer 19:6; and as Jerusalem did, after the desolation of it by Hadrian, as Jerom observes; for what was built upon the spot afterwards was by the emperor called Aelia, after his own name.

Jeremiah 19:13

Ver. 13. And the houses of Jerusalem,.... Where the common people dwelt:

and the houses of the kings of Judah; the palaces of the king, princes, and nobles of Judah, one as well as another:

shall be defiled os Tophet; as that was defiled with the bodies and bones of the slain, and with the faith of the city brought unto it; so the houses of great and small, high and low, should be defiled with the carcasses of the slain that should lie unburied there; their houses should be their graves, and they buried in the ruins of them: or, "the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses of the kings of Judah, which are defiled" {s}, with the idolatries after mentioned, shall be as Tophet, places of slaughter:

because of all the houses upon whose roofs they have burnt incense to all the host of heaven; the roofs of houses with the Jews were built flat; and, as they sometimes used them for prayer to the God of heaven, as Peter did, Ac 10:9; idolaters used them to burn incense on to the sun, moon, and stars; to which they were nearer, and of which they could have a clearer view upon the house tops, and therefore chose them for this purpose; and so common was this sort of idolatry, that it was practised upon most, if not all, the houses in Jerusalem; see **Zep 1:5**;

and have poured out drink offerings unto other gods; besides the God of Israel; to Baal, and other Heathen deities.

{s} Myamjh "quae pollutae sunt", Gataker.

Jeremiah 19:14

Ver. 14. Then came Jeremiah from Tophet,.... When he had broke his earthen bottle, and delivered his prophecy before the elders of the people and priests: or, "from that Tophet" {t},

whither the Lord had sent him to prophesy; and whither he went and prophesied, according to his command; but now returned from thence, it being no doubt signified to him, in some manner or other, that it was the will of God he should;

and he stood in the court of the Lord's house, and said to all the people; this was the court of the temple, called the outward court, or the court of the Israelites, where all the people met; for into other courts they might not enter; here the prophet placed himself, on purpose to deliver his prophecy to all the people; even the same as he had delivered at Tophet to the ancients of the people and the priests; but lest they should not faithfully represent it to the people, and that they might not be without it, he delivers it openly and publicly to them all, in the following words; which both declare their punishment, and the cause of it.

{t} tpthm.

Jeremiah 19:15

Ver. 15. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,....
See Gill on "Jer 19:3";

behold, I will bring upon this city, and upon all her towns: the city of Jerusalem, and all the cities and towns near it, even all the cities and towns in Judea; of which Jerusalem was the metropolis, and therefore called hers:

all the evil that I have pronounced against it; or decreed against it, as the Targum; all that he had purposed, and all that he had threatened, or spoke of by the Prophet Jeremiah, or any other of his prophets; for whatever he has said he will do, and whatsoever he has solved upon, and declared he will do, he assuredly brings to pass:

because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words; they turned their backs upon him, pulled away the shoulder, stopped their ears that they might not hear what was said by the prophets from the Lord; they neither inclined their ears to hearken to, nor bowed their necks to receive the yoke of his precepts; but, on the contrary, were, as was their general character, a stiffnecked people, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, obstinate and disobedient; and this was the cause of their ruin, by which it appeared to be just and righteous.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 20

This chapter gives an account of the usage that Jeremiah met with from many for his prophecies, and the effect it had upon him. He was smitten and put in the stocks by Pashur the priest, who released him the next day, Jer 20:1; upon which he prophesies again of the delivery of the city of Jerusalem, with all its riches, and of the whole land, to the Chaldeans; and particularly that Pashur should be a terror to himself and all his friends; and that both he and they should be carried captive into Babylon, and die, and be buried there, Jer 20:4; and then he complains of his being mocked at by the people for the word of the Lord; which he therefore determined to make no more mention of, but was obliged to it; and of the defamations of him, and snares that were laid for him, Jer 20:7; under which he is supported with the consideration of the Lord's being with him, and that his enemies should not prevail, but be confounded; and appeals to him, and calls for vengeance from him on them; and, in the view of deliverance, not only praises the Lord himself, but calls upon others to join with him in it,
Jer 20:11; and yet, after all, the chapter is concluded with his cursing the day of his birth, and the man that brought his father the news of it, Jer 20:14.

Ver. 1. Now Pashur the son of Immer the priest,.... Not the immediate son of Immer, but one that descended from him after many generations; for Immer was a priest in David's time, to whom the sixteenth course of the priests fell by lot, 1Ch 24:14;

who [was] also chief governor in the house of the Lord; the temple; not the high priest, since he was of the course of Immer; perhaps he was the head of the course to which he belonged, the chief of the priests of that course. The Targum calls him the "sagan" of the priests. There was such an officer, who was called the "sagan" or deputy to the high priest, who upon certain occasions acted for him; and some think that this man was in the same office; though others take him to be the same with the captain of the temple, **Ac 4:1**. Who heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things; some that heard him in the court of the temple prophesying of the evil that should come upon the city, and places adjacent to it, went and told the chief governor of it. Though the words may be rendered, "now Pashur heard {u}----Jeremiah prophesying these things"; he heard him himself; either he was one of the ancients of the priests that went with him to Tophet, and heard him there; or, however, when he came from thence, and stood and prophesied in the court of the temple, he heard him.

{u} rwxvp emvyw "audivit autem", Paschchurus, Schmidt; "audiens autem", Paschhur, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 20:2

Ver. 2. Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet,.... Either with his fist, or with a rod, while he was prophesying, to stop his mouth, and hinder him from going on, and to show his resentment, and influence, the people not to believe him; or he ordered him to be smitten and scourged by some inferior officer. This was very ill treatment of a prophet, a prophet of the Lord, and one that was a priest too, of the same order with himself;

and put him in the stocks; or ordered him to be put there; but whether it was such an engine or instrument as we call "stocks", in which the feet of prisoners are put, is not certain. Kimchi's father says, it was an instrument made of two pieces of wood, in which the necks of prisoners were put; and some say it had besides two holes for the two hands to be put in; and so the same with our "pillory". The Septuagint render it "a cataract", a ditch or dungeon. Jarchi interprets it a prison; and so our translators render the word in Jer 29:26; however, it was a place of confinement, if not of torture and pain;

that [were] in the high gate of Benjamin; here were these stocks, pillory, or prison; which was either a gate of the city of Jerusalem, so called, because it looked towards and led out to the tribe of Benjamin, Jer 37:13; or a gate of the temple, which stood on that side of it that belonged to the tribe of Benjamin; both the city and temple being partly in the tribe of Judah, and partly in the tribe of Benjamin; and it seems by this that there was an upper and lower gate of this name; and the following clause seems to incline to this sense:

which [was] by the house of the Lord; or, "in the house of the Lord" {w}; the temple.

{w} hwhy tybb "in domo Jehovae", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 20:3

Ver. 3. And it came to pass on the morrow,.... After the prophet was put into the stocks; so that he was there all night:

that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks; either to bring him before the priests, or the sanhedrim, to be examined; or in order to dismiss him, being either admonished by his friends, or convicted in his own conscience that he had done a wrong thing;

then said Jeremiah unto him; when he had brought him out, not being at all intimidated by him, and having a word from the Lord for him:

the Lord hath not called thy name Pashur; which, according to Jerom, signifies "blackness of mouth"; and, according to others, "diffusing paleness"; one that terrified others, and made their faces look pale; but now it should be otherwise, and he himself should be filled with terror, and have paleness of thee: but, according to a late etymologist, it signifies one abounding or "increased in liberty" {x}, who in a little time would become a captive; for it is not suggested hereby that he should no more be called by this name, but that he should be in a condition which would not answer to it, but to another, as follows:

but Magormissabib; or, "fear round about"; signifying that terrors should be all around him, and he in the utmost fright and consternation. The Septuagint version renders it "one removing"; changing from place to place; that is, going into captivity; a stranger and wanderer, as the Syriac version. The Targum is,

"but there shall be gathered together against thee those that kill with the sword round about;"

meaning the Chaldeans, which would make him a "Magormissabib".

{x} vp "abundantiam" , & rwx liberum sonat", Hiller. Onomast. Sacr. p. 302.

Paschchur, "auctus libertate", ib. p. 904.

Jeremiah 20:4

Ver. 4. For thus saith the, Lord, behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends,.... This is an interpretation of the name given, "Magormissabib": and shows that it was not a mere name he had, but that he should be in fact what that signifies; his conscience should be filled with terror at the judgments of God coming upon him for his sins; and which could not be concealed in his own breast from others, but he should be seized with such tremblings and shakings, and be such a spectacle of horror, that his own familiar friends, instead of delighting in his company, would shun it, and run away from him: unless this terror is to be understood of the Chaldean army, which should not only terrify him, but his friends, in whom he placed his confidence; these would be thrown into such a consternation, as not to be able to help him or themselves; to which the following words agree:

and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold [it]; which would be an aggravation of the calamity, that not only he should be deprived of their assistance, but that they should fall into and by the hands of the Babylonians, and in his sight also:

and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon; the whole land, and the inhabitants of it:

and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword; being in his hands, he shall do as he pleases with them, either carry them captive, or slay them; and some he will dispose of one way, and some another.

Jeremiah 20:5

Ver. 5. Moreover, I will deliver all the strength of this city,.... The fortifications of it; its towers, as the Syriac version; the riches of it, as the Targum; all its magazines and stores, in which its strength lay:

and all the labours thereof; all the fruit of their labours; all their wealth and riches got by labour; all their goods in trade; all their manufactures and merchandise:

and all the precious things thereof; all their plate and jewels, the rich furniture of their houses, and whatsoever was laid up in their treasures as rare and valuable:

and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies; which they in successive reigns had been laying up in store for years together; see Isa 39:6;

which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon; make a prey of them, seize them as their property, and carry them away with them.

Jeremiah 20:6

Ver. 6. And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house, shall go into captivity,.... Particularly he and his family should not escape; whoever did:

and thou shalt come to Babylon; being brought there, though sore against his will:

and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there; even in a defiled land, as all other countries were reckoned by the Jews; and to be buried in such a land, Kimchi observes, was a curse; and so it is here threatened as such:

thou, and all thy friends; that is, such as should escape the sword, Jer 20:4;

to whom thou hast prophesied lies; this shows the cause of; all this threatened destruction to him and his friends; not only because he had so ill used Jeremiah, a true prophet of the Lord; but because he was a false prophet, and his friends had hearkened to his lies, and disbelieved those prophecies that came from the Lord himself.

Jeremiah 20:7

Ver. 7. O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived,.... What follows from hence to the end of the chapter is thought to have been said by the prophet, when in the stocks, or in prison, and shows mixture of grace and corruption in him; a struggle between flesh and spirit, and the force of a temptation under which he laboured, arising from difficulties and discouragements in his work; and he not only complains to God, but of him; that he had deceived him, when he first called him to be a prophet, by telling him that he should be set over nations and kingdoms, to pull them down, **Jer 1:10**; which he understood of foreign nations, but now found his own people were meant, so Jerom; or in not immediately executing the threatenings he sent him with; as was the case of Jonah; or by giving him reason to expect honour and ease, whereas he met with nothing but disrespect and trouble; and that he should have divine protection and success against his opposers, **Jer 1:18**; whereas he was now delivered into their hands, and used in the most reproachful manner; but be it so, this was all a mistake of the prophet, and no deception of God. Calvin takes it to be ironically spoken, expressing the sense of his enemies, who charging him with a deception, tacitly charged God with being the author of it. Others, to soften the expression, render the words, "if thou hast deceived me, I am deceived"; or, "thou hast deceived me if I am deceived" {y}. But it seems best of all to translate them, as they will hear it, "O Lord, thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded" {z}; so the word is used of God in **Ge 9:27**; "God shall enlarge" or "persuade Japheth"; see also **Ho 2:14**, where it is rendered allure; and then the sense is, thou hast persuaded me to take upon me the prophetical office against my will, and against remonstrances made by me; and I was persuaded by thy words and promises, and by thy spirit and grace, to enter upon it; to which sense the following words incline:

thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed; so strong were the arguments, motives, and inducements the Lord made use of; so pressing his injunctions and commands; so forcible the constraints of his spirit; that the prophet was obliged to yield unto them, and was made willing in the day of his power to comply, though first it was sore against his will; but he could not withstand the divine call, and therefore might have hoped, since it was so manifest that he was sent of God, and did not run of himself, that he should have met with a better reception, and more success; but so it was not:

I am in derision daily, everyone mocketh me; he was the laughing stock of everyone of the people of Israel, from the highest to the lowest; princes, priests, and people, all derided him and his prophecies, and that continually, every day, and all the day long, and especially when he was in the stocks; though it was not only his person they mocked, but the word of the Lord by him, as appears from Jer 20:8.

{y} tpaw hwhy yntytp "Domine si ego sim seductus, tu es qui me seduxit", Genevenses; "pellexisti me, quando pellectus sum", Junius & Tremellius; sic Syr. "tu decepisti me, si deceptus sim; quidam" in Gataker. {z} "Persuasisti mihi, O Jehovah, et persuasus sum", Luther, Piscator, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 20:8

Ver. 8. For since I spake, I cried out,.... Or, "when I speak, I cry" {a}; whensoever I speak in the name of the Lord, and deliver message from him to the people, I lift up my voice and cry aloud, that all may hear and understand; and as showing zeal, fervour, and diligence: or, "I cry" with grief and trouble at the usage I meet with, and the contempt that is cast upon the word; or because of what I am obliged to declare to them, as follows. The Targum takes in both sense, of the word thus,

"for at the time that I prophesy, I lift up my voice, weeping, and crying."

I cried violence and spoil: or, "proclaimed" it {b}, for a different word is here used; that is, he publicly declared the rapine and oppression they were guilty of, inveighed against it, and reproved them for it; and foretold the violence of the enemy, and the spoil that he should make of them, when he should come upon them, even the king of Babylon; as well as cried out and complained of the injurious treatment he himself met with from them;

because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily; which is a reason either why he cried with grief and sorrow; or why he cried violence and spoil, ruin and destruction: or, "though the word of the Lord was" {c}, &c; yet he went on publishing and proclaiming it: or, "surely the word of the Lord was made a reproach" {d}, &c; either because of the matter of it, it not being believed, or the manner in which it was delivered; or because it was not immediately fulfilled.

{a} qeza rbda ydm "quum loquor exclamavi, i.e. loquor exclamans", Gataker. {b} arqa "clamo", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius; "proclamo", Piscator. {c} rbd hyh yk "quamvis". {d} "Verum, verbum Domini", so some in Vatablus; "utique", De Dieu, Gataker.

Jeremiah 20:9

Ver. 9. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name,.... Not that he publicly said this before his enemies, or privately to his friends, but he said it in his heart; he thought, nay, resolved, within himself, to prophesy no more; since no credit was given to him, but contempt cast on him; he was disgraced, and God was dishonoured, and no good done; wherefore he concluded it was better to be silent, and not mention the name of God, and say nothing of any message he had from him, since it was to no purpose. A temptation that oftentimes besets a minister of the word, because of the ill usage he meets with, the ill success of his ministry; and is but a temptation, as such see it to be sooner or later, as Jeremiah did;

but [his word] was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones; which wanted vent, and must have it, and which only could be quenched by being divulged; and which, until it was done, he was in the utmost pain, as if he had been all on fire; his conscience accused him; his heart smote and condemned him; a woe was to him; see **1Co 9:16**; or "there was in mine heart as a burning fire" {e}, &c. a principle of love to God, and to the souls of men; a zeal for his glory, and the good of his countrymen; which made him uneasy, and constrained him to break his former resolution: for the phrase, "his word", is not in the original text; though it is in like manner supplied by the Targum,

"and his words became in mine heart as fire burning and overflowing my bones;"

and so Kimchi,

"and the word of the Lord was in my heart as fire burning;"

and also Jarchi; the prophecy was as fire, to which it is compared, Jer 23:29;

and I was weary with forbearing; to speak; weary to hold it in:

and I could not [stay]; or I could not hold it in any longer; I was obliged to speak in the name of the Lord again, and deliver whatever message he was pleased to send me

{e} yblb hyhw "atqui est", Junius & Tremellius; "et exstitit", Piscator; "sed factum est in corde meo", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 20:10

Ver. 10. For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side,.... It was brought to the prophet's ears by some of his friends, how he was defamed by many, and these great and mighty ones, as the word also signifies; how his character was aspersed; his good name taken away; and false and scandalous reports were raised of him from all quarters; which filled him with fear all around, so that he might quickly expect fresh trouble from one side or another; see Ps 31:13; and this was a reason of his entering into the above resolution to leave off prophesying: though some understand it as an additional reason to the former for going on with it; being not only inwardly pressed to it in spirit, but outwardly provoked by the usage of his enemies. Some retain the words "Magormissabib", untranslated, and render the whole thus, "for I heard the defaming of many magormissabibs"; of many such as Pashur, so called, Jer 20:3; but neither the accents nor the syntax will admit of it; since there is an accent on many, which makes a stop, and "magormissabib" is in the singular number: rather it may be rendered, "I have heard the defaming of many; [even of] magormissabib", that is, of Pashur and his associates;

report, [say they], and we will report it; these are the words of the defamers, whether Pashur and his accomplices, or the great ones, the princes and nobles, the priests and false prophets, that more especially bore a grudge to Jeremiah; addressing themselves to the common people, and such who were most acquainted with the prophet, and his manner of life; saying, tell us what you can of him, right or wrong, true or false, that may be any ways improved against him, and we shall tell it to the king, or to the sanhedrim, the court of judicature, and get him punished for it; or we shall take care to have it spread about city and country, and so blast his character and credit with the people, that none will after regard his prophecies;

all my familiars watched for my halting; or, "every man of my peace" {f}; who pretended to be at peace, and to be friendly with him, and wished well unto him, spoke fair to his face, as if they were cordial friends, and fond of the most intimate acquaintance with him; perhaps the men of Anathoth, the birth place of Jeremiah, are here meant; whom the priests at Jerusalem, or others, had engaged on their side, narrowly to observe what was said and done by him, of which any handle could be made against him to the government; and accordingly they did; they watched his words, and observed his actions, if they could catch at anything that was imprudently or inadvertently said or done, or what could be misconstrued to his disadvantage;

[saying], peradventure he will be enticed; to say or do something that may be laid hold on, and be produced against him, to the ruin of him; he not being on his guard, and knowing of no design against him:

and we shall prevail against him; gain our point, get him accused, condemned, and punished:

and we shall take our revenge on him; for inveighing so severely against their sins, which they could not bear; and for threatening them with punishments that should be inflicted on them, which they liked not to hear.

{f} ymlv vwna lk "omnis homo pacis meae", Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt; "omnes viri pacis meae", Munster, Vatablus.

Jeremiah 20:11

Ver. 11. But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one,.... The Targum is,

"the Word of the Lord is for my help."

"Mighty" to support, uphold, defend, and deliver him; and "terrible" to his enemies. The prophet looks back to the promise the Lord had made him, of his gracious and powerful presence, **Jer 1:18**; which he now takes comfort from; and it would have been well if he had kept this always in view, and had continued in the same actings of faith and temper of mind: but this lasted not long, as some following verses show;

therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and shall not prevail; though they should very hotly and furiously pursue him, yet they should stumble and fall by the way, and not be able to overtake him, and execute their designs upon him; the Lord, who was with him, and on his side, would throw some things in their way, at which they should stumble, and which should hinder them from proceeding;

they shall be greatly ashamed, for they shall not prosper; when they see their schemes are disappointed, and they do not succeed, they shall be filled with shame and confusion: or, "because they do not deal prudently" {g}, as the word is rendered, Isa 52:13; they do not act a wise, but a foolish part, and therefore shame will be the consequence of it;

[their] everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten; neither by themselves nor others; the memory of it will always continue, to their everlasting grief and reproach. A very learned man connects these words with the former, thus, "they shall be greatly ashamed, for they shall not prosper, with an everlasting shame never to be forgotten" {h}, very rightly; so another learned interpreter {i}.

{g} wlykvh al yk "quia non prudenter egerunt", Montanus, Piscator; "prudenter agunt", Calvin. {h} "Erubescent valde, quia non prosperabuntur, ignominia aeterna non obliviscenda", De Dieu. {i} "Pudefient, quod non profecerint, ignominia perpetuitatis (quae) non tradetur oblivioni", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 20:12

Ver. 12. But, O Lord, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart,.... That tries the cause of the righteous, and vindicates them, rights their wrongs, and does them justice; being the omniscient God, the seer and searcher of the hearts and reins; who knows the uprightness of their hearts, as well as their ways, and the sincerity of their affections: or that tries the faith and patience of the righteous, their constancy and integrity; and upon trial finds that their affections are real, and their souls sincere;

let me see thy vengeance on them; his enemies and persecutors; he does not seek vengeance himself, but desires it of the Lord; he does not ask to see his vengeance, but the Lord's vengeance on them, what he thought was just and proper to inflict on them; he knew that vengeance belonged to the Lord, and therefore left it with him, and prayed for it from him. The Targum is,

"let me see the vengeance of thy judgments on them;"

for unto thee have I opened my cause; or "revealed", or "made it manifest" {k}; this he did in prayer, at this time, when he laid before the Lord his whole case, and appealed and applied to him for justice, who judgeth righteous persons, and judgeth righteously.

{k} ybyr ta ytylg "revelavi causam meam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. So Schmidt.

Jeremiah 20:13

Ver. 13. Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord,.... The prophet, from prayer, proceeds to praise; and from expressions of faith and confidence in the Lord, having committed his cause to him, being assured of success, rises up to a holy triumph and joy; and calls upon his soul, and upon others, to join with him in praising, and singing praises to the Lord: this is said, as Kimchi observes, with respect to the saints in Jerusalem; for there were some good people doubtless there at this time, a remnant according to the election of grace; who had a regard for the prophet, and wished well to him, and were ready to join with him in acts of devotion, prayer, or praise;

for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evil doers; or, "the life of the poor"; meaning himself, a poor destitute person, few or none to stand by him but the Lord, who had delivered him out of the hand of Pashur and his accomplices; and out of the hand of those that watched for his halting; and out of the hands of all his persecutors: or this may respect not past deliverances, but what was to come; which the prophet had such a believing view of, that he calls upon himself and others to praise God for beforehand.

Jeremiah 20:14

Ver. 14. Cursed [be] the day wherein I was born,.... If this was said immediately upon the foregoing, it was a most strange and sudden change of frame indeed that the prophet came into, from praising God, to cursing the day of his birth; wherefore some have thought it was delivered at another time, when in great anguish of spirit; very likely when so ill used by Pashur, as before related; but here repeated, to show in what distress he had been, and what reason there was for praise and thanksgiving; for the words may be connected with the preceding, thus, "for he hath delivered from the hand of evil doers the soul of the poor, who said" {l}, in the time of his distress, "cursed be the day", &c; but, whenever it was spoke, it showed the impatience of the prophet, the weakness of his faith, and the greatness of his folly, to curse a day, and his birth day too, as Job did, when under affliction, **Job 3:1**;

let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed; to myself or others; let it be reckoned among the unhappy and unfortunate days; let it not be blessed with the light of the sun, or with the light of joy and prosperity; see **Job 3:4**; let it not be said on this occasion, as commonly is, we wish you joy on your birth day, and may you see many happy days of this kind. Abendana observes, that some of their Rabbins say, that Jeremiah cursed the day of his birth, because it was the ninth of Ab, the day on which the temple was burnt.

{l} So it is supplied by Grotius and Schmidt.

Jeremiah 20:15

Ver. 15. Cursed [be] the man who brought tidings to my father,.... The word signifies commonly good tidings, as the news of a child born, and especially a man child, is to its parent. The Septuagint use the same word the angel did, when he brought the tidings of the birth of Christ, **Lu 2:10**. This was still more foolish and sinful, to curse the man that carried the tidings of his birth to his father; who did a right thing, and what was acceptable, and perhaps might be a good man. Kimchi observes, that there are some that say, it was known to Jeremiah that this man was Pashur, the son of Immer, and therefore he cursed him; but this is without any foundation;

saying, a man child is born unto thee, making him very glad; as the birth of a man child usually makes glad its parent, whether father or mother; see Joh 16:21.

Jeremiah 20:16

Ver. 16. And let that man be as the cities which the Lord overthrew,.... In his fury, as the Targum and Septuagint add. Meaning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, who were utterly destroyed, and were never recovered:

and repented not; whose sentence God never repented of, nor revoked: this was very severe and uncharitable, to wish for so sore a destruction upon an innocent person;

and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide; as soon as he is up in the morning, the first thing that salutes his ears, let it be the noise of an enemy invading the city he dwells in; and by noon let him hear the shouting of him, having broke in, and gotten the victory, seizing the plunder.

Jeremiah 20:17

Ver. 17. Because he slew me not from the womb,.... As soon as he came out of it; that is, as soon as he was born; either because God slew him not so soon, as Kimchi; or the angel of death, as Jarchi: or rather the man that carried the tidings of his birth to his father, who is all along spoken of in the two former verses; he curses him for not doing that, which, had he done, would have been exceeding criminal in him indeed; for not committing murder, even for not murdering an innocent babe;

or that my mother might have been my grave; he wishes he had died in her womb, and had never been brought forth; and so that had been his grave, where he should have been at ease and safety:

and her womb [to be] always great [with me]; or, "her womb an everlasting conception" {m}; his wish was, that she had been always conceiving, or ever big with child of him, but never bring forth; which was a more cruel and unnatural wish than the former concerning the man, the carrier of the tidings of his birth; since this was wishing a perpetual, painful, and intolerable evil to his own mother.

{m} Mlwe trh hmxrw "et ejus uterus, conceptus perpetuus", Munster; "et vulva ejus, conceptio perpetua", Pagninus, "et vulva ejus praegnans perpetuo", Vatablus.

Jeremiah 20:18

Ver. 18. Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow,.... "Labour" in performing his work and office as a prophet; and "sorrow" in suffering reproach, contempt, and persecution for it; which to avoid, he wishes he had never been born: a sign of a very fretful and impatient spirit, and of a carnal frame. Jarchi thinks this refers to the destruction of the temple;

that my days should be consumed with shame? through the bad usage of him, the reproach that was cast upon him, and the contempt he was had in for prophesying in the name of the Lord. All this shows that there is sin in the best of men, and what they are when left to themselves; how weak, foolish, and sinful they appear. And Jeremiah recording these his sins and failings, is an argument of the uprightness and sincerity of the man, and of the truth of Scripture.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 21

This chapter contains Jeremiah's answer to King Zedekiah's message to him; in which he assures him of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and gives advice both to the people and the king. The names of the persons sent to him are mentioned, Jer 21:1; and the errand they were sent upon, to desire the prophet to pray to the Lord, that the king of Babylon might be obliged to depart from Jerusalem, Jer 21:2; the answer from the Lord by him is, that their opposition to the king of Babylon should be fruitless; that he should be so far from quitting the siege, that he should enter the city, Jer 21:3; yea, that the Lord himself would fight against them, and destroy men and beast with the pestilence; and that such who escaped the sword, famine, and pestilence, should fall into the hands of the king of Babylon, Jer 21:5; and then some advice is given to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to go out and give up themselves to the Chaldeans; which was the best way to save their lives, since the city would certainly fall into their hands, and be burnt by them, Jer 21:8; and as for the royal family, they are advised to do justice and deliver the oppressed; the not doing of which, it is suggested, was the cause of their ruin, Jer 21:11; and the chapter is closed with a denunciation of destruction upon the city, notwithstanding the vain trust and confidence of the inhabitants of it, Jer 21:13.

Ver. 1. The word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord,.... This prophecy stands out of its proper place, being made in the times of Zedekiah, and when Jerusalem was besieged by the king of Babylon; whereas, after this, there are prophecies which were delivered in the times of Jehoiakim and Jeconiah, who both reigned before Zedekiah; see Jer 22:11, &c.

when King Zedekiah sent unto him Pashur the son of Melchiah; this was another Pashur from him that is spoken of in the preceding chapter, and is called "Magormissabib"; he was the son of Immer; this of Melchiah; he was of the sixteenth course of the priesthood; this of the "fifth":

and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest; who was of the "twenty fourth" course; see 1Ch 24:9; in Jer 52:24, he is called the "second priest"; he was "sagan", or deputy to the high priest: they were both priests; wherefore the

Syriac version renders it in the plural number, "priests". It may be observed, that the foregoing chapter is concluded with the prophet's cursing the day of his birth; and the last clause of it expresses the "shame" he imagined his days would be consumed in; and the next account we have is of an honour done him by the king, in sending two priests to him, with a message from him; whereby he tacitly owned him to be a true prophet of the Lord; as indeed he must now be convinced by facts that he was. Princes and people, who slight the ministers of God in time of prosperity, send to them, and are desirous of their assistance in times of distress:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 21:2

Ver. 2. Inquire, I pray thee, of the Lord for us,.... Or, "seek the Lord now for us" {n}; seek the Lord by prayer and supplication for me and my people, for this city and the inhabitants of it; entreat him that he would appear for us, and deliver us out of the hands of the enemy; for this they said in the name of the king that sent them, who knew that the prophet had an interest at the throne of grace, and was a favourite of heaven; and therefore desired him to be an intercessor for them:

for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us; the same that is elsewhere called Nebuchadnezzar, commonly called by the Greeks Nebuchodonosor; he was now come up to Jerusalem, and was besieging it, as had been predicted:

if so be the Lord will deal with us according to all his wondrous works; which he had done in times past for that nation; as by bringing them out of Egypt; driving out the Canaanites before them; delivering them out of the hands of their neighbours, time after time, when oppressed by them; and particularly by destroying the Assyrian army in Hezekiah's time, which was besieging the city of Jerusalem, and causing their king to depart and flee in haste; and their present case being similar to that, it is very likely that that was more especially in view:

that he may go up from us; namely, the king of Babylon; that he may rise up, and raise the siege, and depart into his own country, as Sennacherib did.

{n} wndeb an vrd "interroga nunc pro nobis", Vatablus: Pagninus; "inquire nunc", Montanus.

Jeremiah 21:3

Ver. 3. Then said Jeremiah unto them,.... The two priests, Pashur and Zephaniah, after he had sought the Lord, and knew his mind and will:

thus shall ye say to Zedekiah; by whom they were sent.

Jeremiah 21:4

Ver. 4. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel,.... Who had been, still was, and would be, Israel's God, even the God of such who are Israelites indeed; though he should, as he would, give up the present generation to ruin and destruction; they having by their sins forfeited his care and protection of them; and therefore it was in vain to hope for it from this character which they bore:

behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that [are] in your hands; so that they should do no hurt to the enemy, but recoil upon themselves. The meaning is, that they should be useless and unserviceable; that they should neither be defensive to them, nor offensive to their enemies; but rather hurtful to themselves. It seems to suggest, as if they should fall out with one another; and, like the Midianites, turn their swords upon one another, and destroy each other:

wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and [against] the Chaldeans which besiege you without the walls; by shooting arrows at them from within the city; or by sallying out unto them with sword in hand: this, shows that the Chaldean army, under the command of the king of Babylon, was now without the walls of Jerusalem besieging it:

and I will assemble them into the midst of this city; either the weapons of war, as Jarchi and others; which the Chaldeans, breaking into the city, should cause to be brought in to them in the middle of the city, and there slay them with them: or rather the Chaldeans, as Kimchi; who, though now without the walls, and which the Jews thought a sufficient security for them; yet should not be long there, but the walls would be broken down, and they should enter the city, and rendezvous their whole army in the midst of it.

Jeremiah 21:5

Ver. 5. And myself will fight against you,.... So far from being entreated to do for them according to his wondrous works in times past, as their friend; that he will set himself against them as their enemy; and sad it is to have God for an enemy: if God be for a people, none can be against them to do them any hurt; but if he is against them, it signifies nothing who is for them: this must be much more terrible to them than the whole Chaldean army, and the king of Babylon at the head of them:

with an outstretched hand, and with a strong arm; such as he had used formerly in delivering Israel out of Egypt, but now in delivering them into the hands of their enemies; and out of the reach of such a hand there is no getting; and under the weight of such an arm there is no supporting; see **Ex 6:6**;

even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath; because of their sins and iniquities. This heap of words is used to show the greatness of his indignation: this was not the chastisement of a father, but the rebuke of an enemy; not a correction in love, but in hot displeasure; a punishment inflicted in vindictive wrath by a righteous Judge, appearing in a warlike manner.

Jeremiah 21:6

Ver. 6. And I will smite the inhabitants of this city,.... With one or other of his arrows after mentioned: or, "them that abide in this city" {o}; that do not go out of it, and surrender themselves to the king of Babylon; see Jer 21:9;

both man and beast; the latter for the sin of the former; particularly such beasts as were fit for food are meant, whereby the famine would be increased, and so the greater destruction of men:

they shall die of a great pestilence; both man and beast; a disease which comes immediately from the hand of God; hence Hippocrates used to call it to yeion, "the divine disease": here it denotes a very uncommon one, which should sweep away large numbers; called great, both for quality, or the nature of it, and for the quantity of persons that died of it.

{o} ryeh ybvwy ta "manentes in hac urbe", Gataker.

Jeremiah 21:7

Ver. 7. And afterwards, saith the Lord God,.... After there should be so great a mortality among men and beasts:

I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants; the king himself shall not escape; though he shall not die by the pestilence, or famine, or sword, yet he shall fall into the hands of the Chaldeans, and also "his servants", his courtiers, and counsellors:

and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine; such of the inhabitants of the city, as well as those at court, that died not by the sword, famine, and pestilence: these should be delivered

into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; who was now with his army without the walls of the city besieging it:

and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life; the Chaldeans, who were their implacable enemies, and cruel, and whom nothing would satisfy but their lives:

he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; that is, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, or, however, the army under his command; for what was done by the one is ascribed to the other: this is to be understood of such that fell into their hands upon taking the city, and who endeavoured to make their escape; see Jer 39:4;

he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy; they had no regard to rank or figure, to age or sex; the sons of the king were slain before his eyes, and then his eyes were put out; princes were hanged up by the hand; and no compassion shown to old or young, man or maiden; see Jer 52:10. This verse is remarkably long.

Jeremiah 21:8

Ver. 8. And unto the people thou shalt say, thus saith the Lord,.... These are the words, not of the prophet to the messengers of the king, ordering or advising them what they each of them should say to the people; for the message by them is finished; but they are the words of the Lord to the prophet, directing him what he should say to the people at this critical juncture:

behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death; the way how to preserve their lives; and which, if they did not choose to take, would be inevitable death. The allusion seems to be to a phrase used by Moses, when he gave the law; obedience to which would issue in life, and disobedience in death, De 30:15.

Jeremiah 21:9

Ver. 9. He that abideth in this city,.... Imagining himself safe there; not fearing its being taken by the king of Babylon; though it was so often foretold by the prophet of the Lord that it should:

shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: by the first of these, in sallying out against the enemy; and by the other two, which raged within the city:

but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you,
he shall live; not fall upon them, as the words may be literally rendered; so it would describe such that went out of the city and sallied upon them; whereas it designs such who should go out of the city, and surrender themselves unto the Chaldeans; submit to them, so as to obey them, as the Targum adds; such shall have their lives spared:

and his life shall be unto him for a prey; it shall be like a spoil or booty taken out of an enemy's hands; it shall be with difficulty obtained, and with joy possessed, as a prey or spoil is.

Jeremiah 21:10

Ver. 10. For I have set my face against this city,.... Or "my fury", as the Targum; their sins had provoked the eyes of his glory; he was wroth with them, and determined to cut them off; his mind was set against them, and upon their ruin; and there was no turning him from it:

for evil, and not for good, saith the Lord; to bring the evil of punishment upon them for the evil of their sins, and not do any good unto them, they were so ill deserving of:

it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon; come under his power and dominion, by the will of the Lord; for it was he that gave it into his hands, because of the sins of the inhabitants of it:

and he shall burn it with fire; as he did, both the house of the Lord in it, the temple, the king's house or palace, the stately houses of the princes and nobles, and even the houses of all the people; see
Jer 52:13.

Jeremiah 21:11

Ver. 11. And touching the house of the king of Judah, [say],.... Or "to the house of the king of Judah" {p}; that is, his palace, as Calvin understands it; go to it, and there say as follows, as in Jer 22:1; and some think that this part of the chapter belongs to that, and was not delivered at the time the former part of it was; but before the peremptory decree was gone forth, to deliver the city into the hand of the king of Babylon to be burned with fire; since, upon a reformation, some hope of pardon and salvation is yet given. The Syriac version joins this clause to Jer 21:10; "and he shall burn it with fire, and the house of the king of Judah"; burn the city of Jerusalem, and particularly the king's palace; but by "the house of the king" is not meant his dwelling house, but his family, himself, his sons, his servants, his courtiers and nobles, to whom the following speech is directed:

hear ye the word of the Lord; and obey it; for not bare hearing is meant, but a reverent attention to, and a cheerful and ready performance of, what is heard.

{p} Klm tybl "domui regis", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 21:12

Ver. 12. O house of David, thus saith the Lord,.... This appellation is made use of to put them in mind of their descent, and to observe to them how much it became them to follow the example of so illustrious an ancestor, from whom they had the honour to descend; by doing judgment and justice as he did, **2Sa 8:15**; or, otherwise, their being his seed would not secure them from ruin and destruction:

execute judgment in the morning; be at it early, and dispatch it speedily; show a hearty regard for it; prefer it to eating and drinking; and do not delay it to the prejudice of persons concerned. The power of judgment with the Jews belonged to the king; he was supreme judge in their courts; they judged, and were judged, the Jews say {q}; by whom judgment was executed in a morning, and not in any other part of the day; and the case judged ought, as they say, to be as clear as the morning {r}:

and deliver [him that is] spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor; that had anything taken from him by force or fraud; that was either robbed or cheated of his substance; or was refused what he had lent to or entrusted another with; or was by any ways and means wronged and injured by another in his person or property. This suggests that things of this kind were not done, and were the reason why the Lord would deliver them up into the hands of their enemies, or cause his judgments to fall upon them:

lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench [it]; or put a stop to it, by all their prayers and entreaties, or by all that they can say or do:

because of the evil of your doings; it is a sad thing when princes set bad examples; it is highly provoking to God, whose deputies they are; and it becomes them to begin a reformation, and lead it on, or they cannot expect safety for themselves and their people.

{q} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 1. {r} Ib. fol. 7. 2.

Jeremiah 21:13

Ver. 13. Behold, I [am] against thee,.... Or, "behold, I unto thee" {s}; to be supplied either thus, "behold, I say unto thee" {t}; what follows; and therefore take notice of it, attend unto it: or, "behold, I come unto thee" {u}; who bid defiance to all their enemies to come near them, as in the latter part of the verse. The Targum is, "lo, I send my fury against thee;"

and the phrase denotes the Lord's opposition to them; his setting himself against them, and coming out unto them in his great wrath:

O inhabitant of the valley, [and] rock of the plain, saith the Lord; a description of Jerusalem; between the lower and higher part of which lay a valley, called Tyropaeon, which divided the two hills, on which the city was built {w}; yea, the whole city was on high, on a rock, and around it a valley or plain; and because it was built upon a rock, and fortified with hills and mountains, the inhabitants of it thought themselves safe and secure, and even impregnable; hence it follows:

which say, who shall come down against us? who shall enter into our habitations? who of our neighbours dare to make a descent upon us? or are so weak and foolish as to attempt to break through our fortifications, natural and artificial, and enter into our houses, and take away our persons, and spoil us of our goods? we defy them.

{s} Kyla ynnh "ecce ego ad te", Munster, Montanus. {t} "Ecce tibi dico", Strigelius; so Luther. {u} "Ecce ad te venio", Pagninus; so Kimchi. {w} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 1.

Jeremiah 21:14

Ver. 14. But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the Lord,.... The situation of their city, and the strength of its fortifications, however sufficient they might be thought to keep out an enemy from annoying them; yet it was impossible to hinder the Lord's coming among them, as he here threatens to do; and "visit" them, as the word signifies, in a way of wrath and justice, according to the demerit of their sins, expressed by "the fruit of their doings"; their punishment was the reward of their unrighteousness, the effect of their sinful practices; and, though this was dreadful and terrible, they could not but own it was just and equitable:

and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof; not in the forest of Lebanon, but in the city of Jerusalem; whose houses stood as thick as trees in a forest, and which many of them, at least the most stately, might be built or ceiled with cedars from Mount Lebanon and its forest; though some understand this of the cities and towns about Jerusalem; and so the Targum renders it, "in its cities"; and the Syriac version, "its towns"; but these seem rather meant in the following clause:

and it shall devour all things round about it; the mountains and trees upon them, the cities and towns adjacent.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 22

This chapter is a prophecy of what should befall the sons of Josiah, Jehoahaz or Shallum; Jehoiakim and Jeconiah. It begins with an exhortation to the then reigning prince, Jehoiakim, his family and court, to do justice, relieve the oppressed, and refrain from doing injury to any; with a promise of prosperity upon so doing, Jer 22:1; but, on the contrary behaviour, the king's family, however precious they had been in the sight of the Lord, should be destroyed, by persons described as fit for such work, which would occasion others to inquire the cause of such destruction; when it would be told them, it was for their apostasy from the Lord, their breaking covenant with him, and their idolatry, Jer 22:5; then of Shallum, who was then carried captive, it is predicted that he should never return more, which was matter of greater lamentation than the death of his father Josiah, Jer 22:10; next Jehoiakim, the present king on the throne, is reproved, and a woe denounced upon him for his injustice, luxury, covetousness, rapine, and murders, Jer 22:13; and it is particularly threatened that he should die unlamented, and have no burial, Jer 22:18; and then the people of the land are called upon to mourning and lamentation, their kings one after another being carried captive, Jer 22:20; also Jeconiah the king's son, and who succeeded him, is threatened with rejection from the Lord, and a delivery of him up into the hand of the king of Babylon, with exile in a strange country, and death there, and that without children; so that Solomon's line should cease in him, Jer 22:24.

Ver. 1. Thus saith the Lord, go down to the house of the king of Judah,.... To the palace of Jehoiakim, who was now the reigning king; the prophet is bid to go down to it, because, as Kimchi thinks, he was now upon the mountain of the house, or in the temple, from whence to the king's house there was a descent:

and speak there this word; of prophecy, relating to the several kings hereafter mentioned. This prophecy was delivered some years before that in the preceding chapter, though it stands here. It is indeed by some thought to be repeated here on occasion of what is before said, and for the confirmation of it, putting in mind of what he had prophesied in former times: and they render the words, with which it begins, "thus hath the Lord said" {x}; so he said to me years ago; which agrees with what is now delivered.

{x} rma hk "haec dixit", Grotius; "sic dixit", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 22:2

Ver. 2. And say, hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah,.... O Jehoiakim king of Judah, hear the word of the King of kings; listen to it, and obey it, as kings ought to do; and it is for their good, as well as it is their duty, so to do:

that sittest upon the throne of David; whom he mentions, to put him in mind of his illustrious ancestor, whose successor he was, that he might be prompted to follow his example:

thou, and thy servants, and that people that enter in by these gates; the king and his courtiers, his nobles and privy counsellors, that were continually waiting upon him, and were frequently passing and repassing the gates of the palace; for not the gates of the court in the temple are meant, as Kimchi suggests; and all other people, that either waited on or came to the king, upon business, with their suits, and to have their causes heard and tried.

Jeremiah 22:3

Ver. 3. Thus saith the Lord, execute ye judgment and righteousness,.... Judge righteous Judgment; give the cause to whom it belongs, without respect of persons, and without a bribe or corruption; do no unrighteousness to any, by withholding from them what is due unto them, which was what this prince was chargeable with, Jer 22:13;

and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor; that was robbed or wronged of his property by one superior to him in power or cunning; See Gill on "Jer 21:12";

and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow: who are not in a situation, and in such a condition and circumstances, as to defend themselves; and whom God has a peculiar regard unto; and therefore they who are his deputies and vicegerents, as kings and civil magistrates are, ought to protect such persons, and neither grieve and injure them themselves, nor suffer others to do it:

neither shed innocent blood in this place; to grieve and wrong the above persons is a very great evil, but to shed the blood of innocent per tons is a greater still; and this is aggravated by being committed by such who are set over men to secure and preserve their properties and their lives; and such heinous sins as these the present reigning king of Judah was guilty of; which is the reason of their being mentioned; see Jer 22:17.

Jeremiah 22:4

Ver. 4. For if ye do this thing indeed,.... Or, "in doing do this word" {y}; diligently and carefully attend to this word of exhortation, and constantly perform the duties required:

then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David; or, upon the throne for David: in his room and stead, as successors of his; or of his lineage and descent, as the Vulgate Latin version. The meaning is, that should the kings of Judah do the duty of their office, before pointed at, there should never be any want of successors of the seed of David; but there should be a race of kings descending from him, and sitting on his throne in all after ages, who should dwell in the royal palace, and go in and out at the gates of it; and they should also live in great pomp and splendour, in royal dignity, answerable to their characters:

riding in chariots, and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people; the king, his nobles, and other his attendants; some on one, and some on another, when they went out or came in; see Jer 17:25.

{y} rbdh ta wvet wve Ma yk "si namque faciendo feceritis verbum hoc", Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 22:5

Ver. 5. But if ye will not hear these words,.... Will give no attention, and yield no obedience to them:

I swear by myself, saith the Lord; and by a greater he cannot swear; and that is the reason why he swears by himself, **Heb 6:13**; and as, when he swears to a promise, it shows the immutability of it, the certainty of its performance, and that it is irreversible, and never repented of, nor revoked; so it is when he swears to a threatening. The Targum is,

"by my word I swear:"

that this house shall become a desolation; meaning not the temple, nor the city, but the king's palace.

Jeremiah 22:6

Ver. 6. For thus saith the Lord unto the king's house of Judah,.... That is, to the family of the king of Judah; though it may be rendered, "concerning the house of the king of Judah" {z}; and so refer to his palace as before:

thou [art] Gilead unto me, [and] the head of Lebanon; or, though like to Gilead (which was a very fruitful country) for wealth, riches, and all kind of valuable things; and like to the top of Mount Lebanon {a}, being set with tall cedars, for stateliness. So the Targum is,

"although thou art beloved before me more than the sanctuary, which is high upon the top of the mountains:"

or thou shall be as Gilead, and Mount Lebanon, which belonged to the ten tribes of Israel, and are put for the whole kingdom of Israel, which was wasted by the king of Assyria; and in like condition should the royal palace at Jerusalem be, notwithstanding all its riches and grandeur, and so the city and temple likewise; as follows:

[yet] surely I will make thee a wilderness, [and] cities [which] are not inhabited; though as fruitful as Gilead, yet shall become like a barren desert; and though full of children, courtiers, princes, and nobles, yet shall be like cities quite depopulated: or, "if I do not make thee" {b}, &c. it is in the form of

an oath, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; and to be supplied thus, if I do not do as I have said, let me never be believed; let me be reckoned a liar, or not thought to be God, and the like. It shows the certain accomplishment of these things.

{z} Klm tyb le "de domo regis", Cocceius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {a} Nwnblh var yl hta delg "velut Gilead, ut caput Libani", Junius & Tremellius. {b} Ktyva al Ma "si non posuero te", Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 22:7

Ver. 7. And I will prepare destroyers against thee,.... The Chaldeans, men of savage dispositions, bent upon the destruction of their neighbours; and who had already destroyed many nations, and so fit instruments for such service, as after mentioned; and who yet did not come merely of themselves, but were moved and directed to it by the powerful and all wise providence of God, in consequence of a previous preparation and appointment of them by the Lord in his counsels and purposes. It is, in the original text, "I will sanctify destroyers" {c}; and not only intends a purpose and design; but suggests, that what they should do by his will and order would be consistent with his holiness and justice; and also that being prepared and ready, they might quickly expect a visit from them:

everyone with his weapons; of war, or slaughter weapons, as in **Eze 9:2**; or, "a man and his weapons" {d}; not a single man only, as Nebuchadnezzar, but him and his army; everyone of the destroyers prepared with proper instruments to do execution: and

they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast [them] into the fire; the sons of the king, the princes of the blood, the nobles of the land, and other persons of rank and distinction, comparable to the tall cedars of Lebanon; so the Targum,

"and they shall slay the beauty of thy mighty ones, as the trees of a forest are cut down, and cast into the fire;"

or else the stately palaces of the king and his nobles, and other beautiful buildings, which were lined and ceiled with cedar, are here meant; and which the Chaldeans burnt with fire, Jer 52:13.

{c} ytvdqw "sanctificabo", V. L. Montanus, Cocceius. {d} wylkw vya "virum et arma ejus", Vulg. Lat. Vatablus; "virum et instrumenta ejus", Montanus, Cocceius.

Jeremiah 22:8

Ver. 8. And many nations shall pass by this city,.... After it is burned down and destroyed; that is, people out of many nations travelling that way:

and they shall say every man to his neighbour; as in company together, passing along the ruined walls of the city:

wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this great city? so fortified and so full of people; the metropolis of the whole nation; the greatest city in the east; yea, the joy of the whole earth; a city peculiarly dear to the Lord; greatly honoured by him with his presence, worship, and ordinances, and yet now in ruins; how comes this to pass? they see and acknowledge the hand of the Lord in it, having a better notion of things than the Jews themselves had.

Jeremiah 22:9

Ver. 9. Then they shall answer,.... Or, "it shall be answered" {e}; by some in company, acquainted with the history of this people:

because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God; the Lord was the God of these people; he chose them for his peculiar people, and distinguished them by his favours from others; a covenant was made with them, in which many good things were promised them upon their obedience; this was kept by him, but forsaken and broken by them; they forsook their covenant God, his law and his worship; and that was the cause of their ruin:

and worshipped other gods, and served them; the idols of the people, as the Targum; they left the true God, who had done great and good things for them, and worshipped those who were only gods by name, and not by nature; and served stocks and stones, the vanities of the Gentiles, who could not bestow one good thing on them; such were their stupidity and ingratitude, and therefore very justly given up to destruction. This seems to refer, as Cocceius thinks, not to the first destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar, when it had not so clear and full an accomplishment; but to the second destruction of it by the Romans, and the times following that; when the Gospel being preached among the Gentiles, they had a better understanding of the true God, and of his covenant, and of the vanity of idolatry, and of the state of the Jewish nation, and the religion of it, and of the true causes of their ruin.

{e} wrmaw "respondebitur", Gataker; "dicetur", Piscator.

Jeremiah 22:10

Ver. 10. Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him,.... Not Jehoiakim, as Jarchi and Kimchi; but King Josiah, slain by Pharaohnecho; who, being a pious prince, a good king, and very useful, and much beloved by his people, great lamentation was made for him by them, and by the prophet also; but now he exhorts them to cease weeping, or at least not to weep so much for him, it being well with him, and he taken away from evil to come; and especially since they had other and worse things to lament; see 2Ch 35:24;

[but] weep sore for him that goeth away: or, "in weeping weep" {f}: weep bitterly, and in good earnest; there is reason for it; for him that was about to go, or was gone out of his own land, even Jehoahaz or Shallum, after mentioned, who reigned but three months, and was put into bonds by Pharaohnecho king of Egypt, and carried by him thither,
2Ch 36:4;

for he shall return no more, nor see his native country; for he died in Egypt, 2Ki 23:34; Jarchi interprets the dead, in the first clause, of Jehoiakim, who died before the gate, when they had bound him to carry him captive, 2Ch 36:6; "and him that goeth away", of Jeconiah and Zedekiah, who were both carried captive; and so Kimchi; but the former interpretation is best. Some understand this not of particular persons, but of the people in general; signifying that they were more happy that were dead, and less to be lamented, than those that were alive, and would be carried captive, and never see their own country any more; see **Ec 4:2**; but particular persons seem manifestly designed.

{f} wkb wkb "deplorate deplorando", Schmidt; "flete flendo", Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 22:11

Ver. 11. For thus saith the Lord touching Shallum,.... Not Shallum the fourth son of Josiah, **1Ch 3:15**; for it is not likely that he should immediately succeed his father; nor Zedekiah, as Jarchi; nor Jeconiah, as Kimchi; but Jehoahaz, as Aben Ezra; who seems to have had several names, as Johanan, **1Ch 3:15**; and Shallum here:

the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father; the same is said of Jehoahaz, 2Ch 36:1;

which went forth out of this place; out of Jerusalem, being put down there from his throne by Pharaohnecho, and carried by him into Egypt, 2Ch 36:3;

he shall not return thither any more; he died in Egypt, or however out of his own land; but was alive when this prophecy was delivered out, which was in the reign of his brother Jehoiakim, as some following verses show.

Jeremiah 22:12

Ver. 12. But he shall die in the place whither they have led him captive,.... Even in Egypt, where Pharaohnecho and his army carried him captive, as before observed:

and he shall see his land no more; the land of Judah, where he was born, and over which he had been king: this is repeated to show the certainty of it, and what reason there was for the above lamentation; since the people might have been in hopes of the return of him, but now they are assured they had no ground for it; who, though he was not a good prince, yet perhaps not so bad as his brother Jehoiakim, who succeeded him; who appears, by what follows, to have been a very unjust, tyrannical, and oppressive prince; and therefore there was great occasion for mourning on the account of Shallum, who very likely was more promising.

Jeremiah 22:13

Ver. 13. Woe unto him that buildeth his house by righteousness, and his

chambers by wrong,.... This respects Jehoiakim, the then reigning king; who, not content with the palace the kings of Judah before him had lived in, built another; or however enlarged that, and made great alterations in it; but this he did either with money ill gotten, or perverted to a wrong use, which ought to have been otherwise laid out; or by not paying for the materials of whom they were bought, or the workmen for their workmanship; and perhaps this may be the reason why so much notice is taken of the king's house or palace in the former part of the chapter, and why it is threatened with desolation,
Jer 22:1;

[that] useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; or, "that serveth [himself] of his neighbour freely"; or, "makes him serve freely" {g}; "and giveth him not his work" {h}; makes him, work for nothing; gives him no wages for it, but keeps back the hire of the labourers; which is a crying sin in any person, and much more in a king; see **Jas 5:4**.

{g} Mnx dbey wherb "qui socium suum servire facit gratis", Schmidt; "amici sui servitutem exigenti gratis", Junius & Tremellius. {h} wl Nty al wlepw "et opus ejus non dabit ei", Montanus; "mercedem operis", Pagninus.

Jeremiah 22:14

Ver. 14. That saith, I will build me a wide house,.... Or, "a house of measures", or, "dimensions" {i}; a very large house, whose length and breadth measure much consisting of many spacious rooms, upper as well as lower; as follows:

and large chambers; or, "widened ones"; very spacious and roomy; or "aired", or "airy {k} ones"; through which the wind blows, or into which much air comes; so that they were good summer chambers, for which they might be built:

and cutteth him out windows; to let in light and air, as well as for ornament. Some render it, "and teareth my windows" {l}; as if he had taken some of the windows of the temple, and placed them in his palace, and so was guilty of sacrilege; but this is not very likely:

and [it is] ceiled with cedar; wainscotted with it; or the roof of it was covered with cedar, as Jarchi; or its beams and rafters were made of cedar, as Kimchi; it might be lined throughout with cedar:

and painted with vermilion. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "sinopis"; so called from Sinope, a city in Pontus, where it is found; of which Pliny says {m} there are three sorts, one red, another reddish, and a third between them both: this is the same with "minium" or vermilion. Strabo {n} says, in Cappadocia the best Sinopic minium or vermilion is produced, and which vies with that of Spain; and he says it is called sinopic, because the merchants used to bring it to that place (Sinope) before the commerce of the Ephesians reached the men of this country, Cappadocia; other versions {o}, besides the Vulgate Latin, so render it here. Schindler {p} renders the Hebrew word by this; and also by "cinnabar", which is a red mineral stone, and chiefly found in quicksilver mines; and may be thought to be quicksilver petrified, and fixed by means of sulphur, and a subterraneous heat; for artificial cinnabar is made of a mixture of mercury and sulphur sublimed, and reduced into a kind of fine red glebe; and this is called by the painters vermilion; and is made more beautiful by grinding it with gum water, and a little saffron; which two drugs prevent its growing black: and there are two kinds of vermilion; the one natural, which is found in some silver mines, in form of a ruddy sand, of a bright beautiful red colour; the other is made of artificial cinnabar, ground up with white wine, and afterwards with the whites of eggs. There are two sorts of it that we have; the one of a deep red; the other pale; but are the same; the difference of colour only proceeding from the cinnabar's being more or less ground; when fine ground, the vermilion is pale, and is preferred to the coarser and redder. It is of considerable use among painters in oil and miniature {q}; and here it may be rendered, "anointed with minium" or "vermilion" {r}; but it is questionable whether this vermilion was known so early. Kimchi here says, it is the same which the Arabians call "zingapher", or cinnabar. The Hebrew word is "shashar", which Junius and Tremellius translate "indico" {s}; and observe from Pliny {t}, that there is a people in India called Sasuri, from whence it is brought; but this is of a different colour from minium or vermilion; the one is blue, the other red; but, be it which it will, the painting was for ornament; and either colours look beautiful.

{i} twdm tyb "domum mensurarum", Vatablus, Montanus, Calvin, Schmidt. {k} Myxwrm "perflabilia", Piscator; "vento exposita", Vatablus, Montanus. {l} ynwlx wl erqw "et lacerat sibi fenestras meas", Junius & Tremellius. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 35. c. 6. {n} Geograph. l. 12. p. 373. {o} Pagninus, Tigurine version, Castalio. {p} Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 1179. So Castel Lex. Polyglott. col. 3664. {q} Chambers's Cyclopaedia, in the words "Cinnabar" and "Vermilion". {r} rvvb xwvm "ungendo in minio", Montanus; "uncta est minio", Vatablus, Calvin; "ungit minio", Cocceius. {s} So Buxtorf, Gussetius, Stockius. {t} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 9.

Jeremiah 22:15

Ver. 15. Shalt thou reign because thou closest [thyself] in cedar?.... Dost thou think that thou shalt reign long, and thy throne be established firm and secure, because of thy cedar wainscot? as if that was a protection to thee, and were like the fortifications of a city or tower; when it may easily be broke to pieces, or burnt with fire; and must be a poor defence against a powerful enemy. The Targum is,

"dost thou think to be as the first king?"

as David; to be as great a prince, to keep as grand a court, and live in as splendid a manner, as he? The Septuagint version, instead of "ares", a cedar, reads "Ahaz", and takes it for the proper name of a king of Judah; and the Arabic version reads "Ahab"; and so the Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint; and both confound it with the next clause; the former rendering the words thus, "shalt thou reign, that thou provokest in", or "after the manner of Ahaz thy father?" and the latter thus,

"thou shalt not reign, because thou imitatest the original of Ahab thy father;"

but both wrong; though Grotius seems to approve of this reading:

did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice? that is, Josiah his father, who ate and drank in moderation, and lived cheerfully and comfortably; and kept a good table like a prince, without such a magnificent palace as he, his son, had built; and without oppressing his subjects, and detaining the hire of the labourer: living in a grand manner, becoming a king, may be done consistent with doing justice and judgment; let but that be done, and a prince will not be blamed for living like himself, and for supporting the dignity of his character and office, as Josiah did:

[and] then [it was] well with him; or, "therefore [it was] well with him" {u} he was blessed of God, and was prosperous and successful; he was happy himself as a prince, and his people under him, both enjoying peace and prosperity; there are never better times than when justice is done; by it the throne is established.

{u} wl bwj za "ideo bene fuit ei"; so Noldius renders the particle, Concord.

Par. Ebr. p. 7.

Jeremiah 22:16

Ver. 16. He judged the cause of the poor and needy,.... Who could not defend themselves against the rich and the mighty; he took their cause in hand, and, having heard it, determined it in their favour, and did them justice, as princes and civil magistrates ought to do:

then [it was] well [with him]; this is repeated, not only to show the certainty of it, but that it might be observed, and his example followed:

[was] not this to know me? saith the Lord; it is not by words only, but by deeds, that men show that they know the Lord; for some in words profess to know him, who in works deny him; when princes do the duty of their office, they thereby declare that they know and own the Lord, by, and under whom, they reign; that they have the fear of him before their eyes; this is a practical knowledge of him, and is well pleasing to him. The Targum is,

"is not this the knowledge with which I am well pleased? saith the Lord."

Jeremiah 22:17

Ver. 17. But thine eyes and thine heart [are] not but for thy covetousness,.... He was wholly intent upon gratifying that lust; his heart was meditating, contriving, and forming schemes for that purpose; and his eyes were looking out here and there for proper objects and opportunities to exercise it:

and for to shed innocent blood; in order to get their money, goods, and possessions into his hands; avarice often leads to murder:

and for oppression, and for violence, to do [it]; by making incursions, and seizing upon the properties of men, and converting them to his own use; so true it is, that covetousness, or the love of money, is the root of all evil, **1Ti 6:10**.

Jeremiah 22:18

Ver. 18. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim,.... This shows who is before spoken of and described; Jehoiakim, the then reigning king in Judah, whose name was Eliakim, but was changed by Pharaoh king of Egypt, when he deposed his brother Jehoahaz or Shallum, and set him on the throne, 2Ki 23:34;

the son of Josiah king of Judah; and who seems to have been his eldest son, though his brother Jehoahaz reigned before him; for he was but twenty three years of age when he began his reign, and he reigned but three months; and Jehoiakim was twenty five years old when he succeeded him, 2Ki 23:31; his relation to Josiah is mentioned, not so much for his honour, but rather to his disgrace, and as an aggravation of his wickedness, that having so religious a parent, and such a religious education, and the advantage of such an example, and yet did so sadly degenerate: and it also suggests that this would be no security to him from the divine vengeance; but rather provoke it, to deal more severely with him;

they shall not lament for him; that is, his people, his subjects, shall not lament for him when dead, as they did for his father Josiah; so far from having any real grief or inward sorrow on account of his death, that they should not so much as outwardly express any, or use the common form at meeting together:

[saying], ah my brother! or, ah sister! a woman meeting her brother would not say to him, O my brother, what bad news is this! we have lost our king! nor he reply to her, O sister, it is so, the loss is great indeed! for this is not to be understood of the funeral "lessus" at the interment of a king or queen; lamenting them under these appellations of brother or sister, which is denied of this prince. Kimchi thinks it has reference to his relations, as that they should not mourn for him, and say, "ah my brother!" nor for his wife, who died at the same time, though not mentioned, ah sister! both should die unlamented, as by their subjects, so by their nearest friends and relations;

they shall not lament for him, [saying], ah lord! or, ah his glory! O our liege lord and sovereign, he is gone! where are his glory and majesty now? where are his crown, his sceptre, his robes, and other ensigns of royalty? So the Targum,

"woe, or alas, for the king; alas, for his kingdom;"

a heavy stroke, a sorrowful melancholy providence this! but nothing of this kind should be said; as he lived not beloved, because of his oppression and violence, so he died without any lamentation for him.

Jeremiah 22:19

Ver. 19. He shall be buried with the burial of an ass,.... Have no burial at all, or no other than what any brute creature has; which, when it dies, is cast into a ditch, and becomes the food of dogs, and the fowls of the air. The "ass" is mentioned, as being a sordid stupid creature; and such an one was this king;

drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem; as the carcass of a beast is dragged about by dogs; or as a malefactor, when executed, is dragged and cast into a ditch: this perhaps was done by the Chaldeans, who, when he was slain, dragged him along, and cast him beyond the gates of Jerusalem. So Josephus {w} says, that when Nebuchadnezzar entered Jerusalem, he slew the most robust and beautiful with Jehoiakim their king, and ordered him to be cast without the walls unburied; and so, though he is said to "sleep with his fathers", yet not to be buried with them, 2Ki 24:6. Kimchi says that he died without Jerusalem, as they were carrying him into captivity a second time; and the Chaldeans would not suffer him to be buried. Jerom reports, from the Hebrew history, that he was killed by the robbers and thieves of the Chaldeans, Syrians, Ammonites, and Moabites. Some think, that as he was bound in chains, in order to be carried to Babylon, that he was had there, and there died, and after his death used in this ignominious manner: and the words will bear to be rendered, "cast forth far beyond the gates of Jerusalem" {x}; even as far as Babylon; see 2Ch 36:6.

{w} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 6. sect. 3. {x} Mlvwry yrevl halhm Klvhw "et projiciendo procul ultra portas Hierosolymae", Schmidt. So Grotius and Gataker.

Jeremiah 22:20

Ver. 20. Go up to Lebanon, and cry,.... These words are directed to Jerusalem and its inhabitants, and to the people of the Jews; not to go up to the temple, as the Targum interprets it, so called, because made of the wood of Lebanon, as in Zec 11:1; or, as the Rabbins say, because it made white the sins of Israel; but the mountain of Lebanon, and from thence call to their neighbours for help in their present distress, as the Assyrians and Egyptians;

and lift up thy voice in Bashan; another high hill in the land of Israel. The Targum interprets this also of the gates of the mountain of the house; so called, as Jarchi thinks, because made of the oaks of Bashan; or, as Kimchi, because there were beasts continually there for sacrifice, as in Bashan, a pasture for cattle; but the mountain itself is intended;

and cry from the passages; or "from Abarim"; a mountain of this name on the borders of Moab, Nu 27:12. Now these several high mountains are named, because from hence they might look around them, and call to their neighbours, if any of them could help them: it is ironically spoken, for it is suggested that none of them could:

for all thy lovers are destroyed; their friends and allies, with whom they had not only entered into leagues, but had committed spiritual fornication with them; that is, idolatry, as the Egyptians and Assyrians; but these were now subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, and were at least so weakened and destroyed by him, that they could give no assistance to the Jews; see 2Ki 24:7.

Jeremiah 22:21

Ver. 21. I spake unto thee in thy prosperity,.... Or "prosperities", or "tranquillities" {y}; when in their greatest affluence, in the height of it; this he did, when he sent to them his servants the prophets, as the Targum, and by them exhorted, reproved, and advised them:

[but] thou saidst, I will not hear; this was the language of their hearts and actions, though not of their mouths:

this [hath been] thy manner from thy youth; from the time they came out of Egypt, and first became a church and body politic; while they were in the wilderness; or when first settled in the land of Canaan: this was the infancy of their state; and from that time it was their manner and custom to reject the word of the Lord, and turn a deaf ear to it:

that thou obeyest not my voice; in his law, and by his prophets.

{y} Kytwlvb "in tranquillitatibus fuis", Vatablus, Cocceius, Schmidt;

"felicitatibus tuis", Pagninus; "securitatibus tuis", Montanus.

Jeremiah 22:22

Ver. 22. The wind shall eat up all thy pastors,.... King, nobles, counsellors, priests, prophets, and elders of the people; they shall be carried away as chaff before the wind, or perish as trees and fruits are blasted with an east wind; to which Nebuchadnezzar and his army are sometimes compared; see Jer 18:17. The Targum is,

"all thy governors shall be scattered to every wind;"

and thy lovers shall go into captivity: the Assyrians and Egyptians, as before; see Jer 52:31;

surely then thou shalt be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness; being disappointed of all protection from their governors at home, and of all help from their allies abroad; and will then, when too late, be convinced of all their wickedness, and ashamed of it.

Jeremiah 22:23

Ver. 23. O inhabitant of Lebanon,.... Jerusalem is meant, and the inhabitants of it, so called, because they lived near Lebanon, or in that land in which Lebanon was; or rather because they dwelt in houses made of the wood of Lebanon; and which stood as thick as the trees in the forest of Lebanon; and where they thought themselves safe and secure, according to the next clause; not but that there were inhabitants of the mountain of Lebanon, called Druses; and there were towns and villages on it, inhabited by people, as there are to this day. After four hours and a half travelling up the ascent, from the foot of the mountain, there is, as travellers {z} inform us, a small pretty village, called Eden; and besides that, at some distance from it, another called Canobine, where there is a convent of the Maronites, and is the seat of their patriarch; and near it a valley of that name, full of hermitages, cells and monasteries; but the former are here meant;

that makest thy nests in the cedars; in towns, palaces, and houses, covered, ceiled, raftered, and wainscotted with cedars; here they lived at ease and security, as birds in a nest. The Targum is, "who dwellest in the house of the sanctuary, and among kings? nourishing thy children;"

how gracious shalt thou be when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail? that is, either thou wilt seek grace and favour at the hand of God, and make supplication to him; thou wilt then be an humble supplicant, when in distress, though now proud and haughty {a}: or what favour wilt thou then find among those that come to waste and destroy thee? This refers to the calamity coming upon them by the Chaldeans, as the following words show:

{z} Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 142, 143. Thevenot's Travels, part 1. B. 2. c. 60. p. 221. {a} ytnxn hm "quam gratiam habuisti, [vel] quomodo precata es", Vatablus; "quam afficieris gratia", Piscator; "quantum gratiae invenies", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 22:24

Ver. 24. [As] I live, saith the Lord,.... The form of an oath, used to express the greater certainty of what is after delivered: swearing by his life is swearing by himself; see **Heb 6:13**;

though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah; the same with Jeconiah, so nicknamed by way of contempt; and it may be to denote the diminution of his glory and kingdom, and the shortness of his reign:

were the signet upon my right hand; ever so near to him, or ever so much valued by him, as he had been before, and so constantly cared for and regarded by him; as a ring, with anything respectable engraved on it, is constantly wore by persons, and greatly valued; especially such as had on them the image or picture of a person loved, as was usual in some countries, to which the allusion is by some thought to be: so the friends of Epicurus used to have his image engraved upon their rings, which they wore on their fingers in respect to him, and as an omen of good to themselves {b}; see **So 8:6**;

yet would I pluck thee thence: with great displeasure and indignation: it designs being removed from his throne and kingdom, and out of his native land, and carried into a far country, as follows.

{b} Vid. Alexand. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 19.

Jeremiah 22:25

Ver. 25. And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life,.... Cruel and bloodthirsty enemies, whom nothing would satisfy but his life; such were the persons following:

and into the hand [of them] whose face thou fearest: being a terrible savage people, to be dreaded both for their number and their cruelty; a strange change this, to be removed out of the hand of God into the hand of such an enemy;

even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon;
See Gill on "Jer 21:2";

and into the hand of the Chaldeans: who were the merciless and formidable people before mentioned: and this was fulfilled within three months after Jeconiah or Jehoiachin began to reign, and when he was but eighteen years of age, 2Ki 24:8.

Jeremiah 22:26

Ver. 26. And I will cast thee out,.... Out of his palace, out of the city of Jerusalem, and out of the land of Judea:

and thy mother that bare thee; who very probably was a bad woman, and had brought up her son in an evil way, and had led him on and encouraged him in it, by her own example, and had been a partner with him in his sins: her name was Nehushta, a daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem; and as it was here predicted of her, so it was accomplished,
2Ki 24:8; it is very likely Jeconiah had no children before the captivity, since no mention is made of them, only of his mother that was cast out with him:

into another country, where ye were not born; the land of Chaldea, which was not the native place neither of him nor his mother; being both, as it seems probable, horn in Jerusalem, or however in Judea:

and there shall ye die; both he and his mother; and so the Arabic version

expresses it, "and there shall ye both die"; as no doubt they did, though we have no particular account of their death; as for Jeconiah, he lived a long time in captivity; it was in the "thirty seventh" year of his captivity that Evilmerodach king of Babylon showed favour to him above all the captive kings that were with him, and continued it to his death; but how long after that was is not known; see
Jer 52:31.

Jeremiah 22:27

Ver. 27. But to the land whereunto they desire to return,.... Or, "lift up their soul to return" {c}: either by making supplication to God, for it, Ps 25:1; or buoying up themselves with vain hopes, founded upon the declarations of the false prophets, that they should return; and to which no doubt they had a natural desire, and comforted themselves with the hopes of it; but all in vain:

thither shall they not return; for they were to die, as before predicted, in another country, as they did, and never saw their own any more.

{c} Mv bwvl Mvpn ta Myavnm "elevant animam suam", Vatablus, Pagninus; "tollunt animam suam ut revertantlur eo", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 22:28

Ver. 28. [Is] this man Coniah a despised broken idol?.... Or like an idol that is nothing in the world, and like a broken one, that, whatever worship before was paid to it, has now none at all, but is despised by its votaries? he is such an one; though he was idolized by his people when be first came to the throne; but now his power and government being broken, and he carried captive, was despised by all; as his being called Coniah, and "this man" or fellow, show; which are used of him in a way of reproach and contempt;

[is he] a vessel wherein [is] no pleasure? he is. He is like a vessel made for dishonour, or is used for the most contemptible service; or like one that is cracked, or broken, or defiled, that no use can be made of it, or any delight taken in it; it is not fit to set up, to be looked at, or to be made use of;

wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed; which were in his loins, and were begotten by him in captivity; see **1Ch 3:17**; and so said to be cast out with him, when he was cast out of the land of Judea; just as Levi paid tithes in Abraham before he was born, **Heb 7:9**;

and are cast into a land which they know not? where they had no friends and acquaintance; doubtless it was for his sins and transgressions, and those of his people.

Jeremiah 22:29

Ver. 29. O earth, earth, earth,.... Not Coniah himself, an earthly man; but either the inhabitants of the whole earth, or of the land of Israel; or rather the earth, on which men dwell, is here called upon as a witness to what is after said; to rebuke the stupidity of the people, and to quicken their attention to somewhat very remarkable and worthy of notice, and therefore the word is repeated three times. Some think reference is had to the land from which, and that to which, the Jews removed, and the land of Israel, through which they passed. So the Targum,

"out of his own land they carried him captive into another land; O land of Israel, receive the words of the Lord."

Jarchi mentions another reason of this threefold appellation, because the land of Israel was divided into three parts, Judea, beyond Jordan, and Galilee;

hear the word of the Lord; which follows.

Jeremiah 22:30

Ver. 30. Thus saith the Lord, write ye this man childless,.... That is, Coniah, or Jeconiah; who though he had children in the captivity, yet they died in it, or however never succeeded him in the throne. This, to show the certainty of the thing, the Lord would have written. The speech is directed, as some think, to the angels, or to the prophets; though the words may be rendered impersonally, "let this man be written childless", it may be set down, and taken for a sure and certain thing, as though it was written with a pen of iron, that he shall be alone, and die without children, and have none to reign after him;

a man [that] shall not prosper in his days; he sat but three months and ten days upon the throne, and all the rest of his days he lived in captivity, 2Ch 36:9; so that he was a very unfortunate prince;

for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David,
and ruling any more in Judah; none of them were so prosperous and happy as to arrive to the royal dignity, or to sit on the throne of David, and be kings of Judah. Here ended the race of kings of the house of David, until the King Messiah came; for though there were of his line that were governors of Judah, as Zerubbabel, yet not kings. Moreover, Jeconiah was the last of the house of David in the line of Solomon. Salathiel, of whom was Zerubbabel governor of Judah, was the son of Neri, who descended from Nathan the son of David; see **Lu 3:29**, compared with **Mt 1:12**; and
See Gill on "Lu 3:29" and
See Gill on "Lu 3:31" and
See Gill on "Mt 1:12".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 23

This chapter contains threatenings to the Jewish governors, and to their priests and prophets, on account of their manifold sins; intermixed with gracious promises to the Lord's people, and particularly with a famous promise of the Messiah. The pastors or governors of Israel are charged with scattering and driving away the Lord's flock, for which they are threatened, Jer 23:1; and a promise is made of the gathering of the remnant of them, and of setting up other shepherds over them, under whom they should increase, and be comfortable, Jer 23:3; particularly the Messiah is promised; as David's righteous Branch; as a prosperous and righteous King; as the author of righteousness to his people, under whom they should have salvation and safety, Jer 23:5; so that in comparison of this salvation, the deliverance out of Egypt should not be spoken of,
Jer 23:7; and then follows a sad complaint of the priests and prophets; of their profaneness, their adultery, swearing, lying, hypocrisy, and deception of the people; for all which they are severely threatened, Jer 23:9; wherefore the people are exhorted not to hearken to them, promising them peace and safety;

whereas, by attending to the word of God, it might easily be seen that a storm of wrath was gone forth, and was ready to break, and would fall upon the head of the wicked, to the executing of the thoughts and purposes of God's heart, Jer 23:16; and the Lord declares he had not sent these prophets, as might be known from their not turning the people from their evil ways, Jer 23:21; whose conduct and behaviour could not be hid from the sight of the Lord, nor their prophecies from his ears, which were no other than dreams, and the deceits of their own hearts; and there was as great a difference between them and the word of the Lord, as between chaff and wheat; seeing his word in his hand is of great virtue and efficacy, whereas there was none in theirs, Jer 23:23; wherefore the Lord declares himself to be against these prophets, for stealing his word from their neighbour; for making use of his name, when they were not sent by him; and for causing the people to err by their lies, Jer 23:30; and both people, priest, and prophet, are severely threatened for jeering and scoffing at the word of the Lord, calling it the burden of the Lord; which phrase they are forbid to use in a sneering way; and should they persist in it, they are told that God would forsake and forget them, and cast them out, and everlastingly punish them, Jer 23:39.

Ver. 1. Woe be unto the pastors,.... Or, "O ye shepherds" or "governors", as the Targum; the civil rulers and magistrates, kings and princes of the land of Israel; since ecclesiastical rulers, the priests and prophets, are mentioned as distinct from them in Jer 23:9; whose business it was to rule and guide, protect and defend, the people: but, instead of that, they were such

that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture, saith the Lord God; set them bad examples, led them into idolatry and other sins, which were the cause of their ruin, and of their being carried captive, and scattered in other countries; and their sin was the more aggravated, inasmuch as these people were the Lord's pasture sheep, whom he had an interest in, and a regard unto, and had committed them to the care and charge of these pastors or governors, to be particularly taken care of.

Jeremiah 23:2

Ver. 2. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel,.... The covenant God of that people, who are Called his sheep, and the sheep of his pasture; having made a covenant with their fathers, and provided a good pasture for them, the land of Israel, where they enjoyed all blessings, civil and religious, and appointed persons over them to feed them; but these did not do their duty, and therefore the Lord was against them, as follows:

against the pastors that feed my people; whose office it was to feed, rule, and defend them; and who pretended to do it, but did it not;

ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them; they had been the means of their being driven out of their dwellings, and out of their own land, and of their being among the nations of the world, and took no care for the return of them, any more than they concerned themselves for their welfare when over them; or they suffered the enemy, like beasts of prey, to come in among them, which scattered them, and drove them from their pasture, as sheep are by bears, dogs, and wolves; and took no care to preserve them from them, or to gather them together again to their pasture. The people of the Jews, at the time when Christ came, hereafter prophesied of, were scattered as sheep without a shepherd, and are called the lost sheep of the house of Israel, **Mt 9:36**;

behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord; that is, punish them for their iniquities; since they visited not the flock in a way of mercy and kindness, as the duty of their office required, the Lord would visit them in a way of justice, and punish them according to their deserts.

Jeremiah 23:3

Ver. 3. And I will gather the remnant of my flock, out of all countries,.... Such of them as did not perish by the sword, famine, and pestilence, or died not in captivity, and chose not to remain in the kingdom where they were; for all did not return upon the edict of Cyrus: though some think this is to be understood of the gathering of God's elect, the remnant according to the election of grace, the children of God that were scattered abroad, by the sufferings and death of Christ, the Shiloh, to whom the gathering of the people should be, hereafter prophesied of:

whither I have driven them; this, which is before charged upon the pastors, is taken by the Lord to himself; because this was not only permitted by him, namely, the dispersion and captivity of the Jews, but was inflicted by him as a punishment upon them for their sins, and the sins of their governors; but yet such was the mercy and goodness of God, as to return a remnant of them:

and will bring them again to their folds; to the city of Jerusalem, and their dwelling houses there, and in other places; an emblem of the Lord's bringing his chosen remnant, whether Jews or Gentiles, into a good fold and good pastures, to a Gospel church state, and the ordinances of it, Joh 10:16;

and they shall be fruitful and increase; the remnant of the flock returned to their own land and dwellings, and there grow numerous, and increase in wealth and riches; as Christ's spiritual sheep, gathered into his fold, become fruitful in grace and good works, and increase with the increase of God.

Jeremiah 23:4

Ver. 4. And I will set shepherds over them, which shall feed them,.... Good shepherds, rulers and governors, that shall rule them with wholesome laws, and protect and defend them; such as Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, and others, after the captivity: or Christian kings and princes, when the Gospel came to be published and established in many kingdoms and provinces, and the sheep of Christ were gathered out of them. Jerom interprets these shepherds of the apostles of Christ; and it may include other ministers of the Gospel, who feed Christ's sheep with knowledge and understanding; see **Jer 3:15**;

and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed; not the shepherds, as Jerom understands it, but the sheep. This looks as if this prophecy had respect to more future times than those immediately following the return from the Babylonish captivity; since the Jews were made to fear, and were dismayed by Sanballat and Tobiah, and, in later times, by the Greeks and Romans; even to the times of Christ, and the Gospel dispensation; in which the saints receive not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, of Christ, have much spiritual peace and boldness of faith, and fear no enemy;

neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord; not one of the sheep brought back, or of the remnant gathered, shall be missing or lost; this is exactly true of Christ's sheep, Joh 10:28.

Jeremiah 23:5

Ver. 5. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,.... Or, "are coming" {d}; and will soon be here, a few days, months, and years more; so it was usual with the prophets to represent the coming of Christ as near at hand, to comfort the saints, and keep up their faith and expectation of him, and especially the latter prophets; see **Hag 2:6** **Mal 3:1**; as also to usher in their prophecies of this sort with a behold, as a note of admiration, attention, and asseveration; see **Isa 7:14**;

that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch; the Messiah; so it is explained by the Targum, which calls him the Messiah of the righteous; and by Kimchi and Ben Melech; and by the ancient Jews {e} also; who is frequently by the prophets spoken of as a branch, **Isa 4:2** **Zec 3:8**; which respects his incarnation, his springing up and appearance in the earth, and the meanness and weakness of it; and here, his descent from the family of David, when that was in a low and mean condition, to be his successor in his throne and kingdom, not in a temporal, but in a spiritual sense; and is a branch and plant not of man's raising, but of the Lord's, his human nature being formed without the help of man; and is that tabernacle which God pitched, and not man; and is therefore elsewhere called the Branch of the Lord, and said to be brought forth by him, **Isa 4:2**; the epithet of "righteous" is given him, because righteous in himself, and the author of righteousness to others; a branch that brings forth and bears the fruits of righteousness, from whence all those that are ingrafted in him come to have righteousness;

and a King shall reign and prosper; the King Messiah, the same with David's righteous Branch, his son and offspring; who was appointed by God the Father "King" over Zion, the church, from all eternity; was always promised and spoken of as a King, and came as such, though his kingdom was not with observation, it being not of this world; and when he ascended to heaven, he was declared Lord and Christ; and now "reigns" on the same throne with his Father, and will till all enemies are put under his footstool: and as he prospered in his priestly office, by obtaining the redemption and salvation of his people, which is the "pleasure of the Lord" that was to "prosper in his hand", Isa 53:10; so likewise in his kingly and prophetic offices, by going forth in his Gospel conquering and to conquer; riding forth therein prosperously, and subduing his enemies, and causing his ministers to triumph in him: or, "shall deal prudently" {f}, as the word is rendered in Isa 52:13;
See Gill on "Isa 52:13";

and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth: in his church, and among his people, by governing them with righteous laws, and by protecting and defending them from their enemies; for "all judgment [is] committed to the Son"; who will judge one day the whole world in righteousness; see **Joh 5:22**.

{d} Myab Mymy "dies sunt venientes", Montanus, Schmidt. {e} Bemidbar Rabba, parash. 18. fol. 223. 2. {f} lykvhw "et prudenter aget", Calvin, Tigurine version; "aget intelligenter", Montanus.

Jeremiah 23:6

Ver. 6. In his days Judah shall be saved,.... In the days of the Messiah, the righteous Branch, and reigning prosperous King, not only the people of the Jews, God's elect among them, but all that truly embrace him, and confess him, as Judah's name signifies, shall be saved from all their sins; from the law, its curse and condemnation; and from wrath to come; and from all their spiritual enemies. In the latter part of his days all Israel shall be saved, Ro 11:26;

and Israel shall dwell safely; without any fear of enemies, being saved from them; being in that city, the church, which has salvation for walls and bulwarks; angels encamping about them; the Lord as a wall of fire around them; the Spirit lifting up a standard against their enemies, when they come in like a flood; and the Messiah their rock and refuge, and strong tower, their strength and righteousness; as follows: for all the salvation and safety of the Lord's people are owing to the righteousness of Christ; the effect of which is peace, quietness, and assurance for ever:

and this [is] his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; because he is the author of righteousness to his people, and is only so; no creature could be the author of it; unrighteous man cannot be the author of righteousness; and the righteousness of an angel is of no advantage to man; and indeed neither of the other divine Persons is the Lord our righteousness; for though they are both Jehovah, the Father and the Spirit, yet not our righteousness: the Father appointed and sent Christ to work it out; he approved and accepted of it, when wrought out; and imputes it to his people; but is not the author of it: so the Spirit convinces of the need of it; reveals it, and brings it near; works faith to receive it; and applies it, and pronounces a person justified by it; but is not the author of it; that the Son of God only is; who is become so by his obedience to the law, and by bearing the penalty of it; and who, having been delivered for our offences, rose again for our justification: and this righteousness, which he has wrought out to the satisfaction of law and justice, becomes "ours"; it being signed for us, and wrought out for us, by a free gift of it is given to us; ours through the imputation of it to us by the Father, and in virtue of our union to Christ, and interest in him; and through the application of it to us by the Spirit of God; who puts it upon us, and clothes us with it, and enables us to lay hold upon it, and claim interest in it; and which may be meant by Christ being "called our righteousness"; for the meaning is, not that he should commonly go by this name; but only that he should be that unto us which it signifies; and that we should by faith, even every true Israelite, every believer, call him our righteousness; say that we have righteousness in him make mention of that continually, and express our desires to be found atone in it; for so the words may be rendered, "and this is the name whereby he shall call him {g}, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS"; and a sweet name to a sensible sinner it is; to one that has felt the guilt of sin in his conscience; seen his need of a righteousness, and the worth of it. That the Messiah is here meant is acknowledged by the Jews, ancient and modern {h}.

{g} warqy rva wmv hzw "hoc nomen ejus est quo vocabit eum Israel", Junius & Tremellius; "quo vocabit eum unusquique", Piscator. {h} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 2. Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 1. R. Saadiah Gaon in Dan vii. 13. R. Albo, Sepher Ikkarim, l. 2. c. 28. Abarbinel, Mashmiah Jeshuah. fol. 35. 2. Caphtor fol. 87. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 75. 2. Kimchi in loc. & in Ezek. xlviii. 35. & Ben Melech in loc.

Jeremiah 23:7

Ver. 7. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord,.... Or, "are coming" {i}; and will begin to take place in a little time, even upon the Jews' return from Babylon; and reached to the times of Christ, to which they have a special regard; and include the whole Gospel dispensation, even the latter day glory, when the Jews shall return to, and dwell in, their own land; as Jer 23:8; shows:

that they shall no more say, the Lord liveth: the people of Israel in particular, or the Lord's people in general, shall no more swear by the living God, described as follows; or, as the Targum, declare no more the power of God, in the instance next mentioned, they had been used to do:

which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt: which, though a wonderful deliverance, and never to be forgotten; yet not to be named with the redemption and salvation wrought out by Christ the Lord our righteousness; that being a deliverance from far greater and more powerful enemies, and from the far greater bondage of sin, Satan, and the law; nor with the restoration of the Jews in the latter day, which will be a most wonderful and amazing event, Ro 11:15.

{i} Myab Mymy "dies venientes", Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 23:8

Ver. 8. But, the Lord liveth,.... Or they shall swear by the living God; or declare the power of the Lord, as the Targum, in their redemption by the Messiah:

which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them: which respects not only the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon, which lay north of Judea; but the conversion of many of the ten tribes, through the preaching of the Gospel in the several countries where they were, to which the apostles of Christ were sent with it; and also the gathering of them together at the latter day, when they shall turn to the Lord, and return to their own land; as follows:

and they shall dwell in their own land: which has never been fulfilled as yet of the seed of the house of Israel, or of the ten tribes; but will be when all Israel shall be saved. {i} This passage is applied in the Talmud {k} to the days of the Messiah; See Gill on "Jer 16:14" and
See Gill on "Jer 16:15".

{i} This was written about 1730. Although the Jews are now in their land, they remain in unbelief to this present time and this prophecy will yet have a more complete future fulfullment. Editor. {k} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 12. 2.

Jeremiah 23:9

Ver. 9. Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets,.... The false prophets, as the Targum rightly interprets it. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "to the prophets"; and makes a stop there; which agrees with the original {l}; so that it may be considered as the title of what follows; it being directed to them by the prophet, to let them know his concern for them; to expose their sin, and reclaim them; who was so affected with their case, that his "heart" within him was "broken" with grief and sorrow, because of their false doctrines and wicked lives; and because of the mischief they did the people, and the ruin they brought upon them, and themselves also:

all my bones shake; with dread and horror at the iniquities committed and the judgments approaching. The word, as Jarchi says, signifies such a fluttering motion as is made by the wings of a bird hovering over its nest. The same word is used in **Ge 1:2**; which Ben Melech refers to here. The prophet shuddered at their dreadful impiety, and at the thoughts of what was coming upon them on that account:

I am like a drunken man; that can neither speak nor stand; that knows not what to say, or which way to go; so confused and astonished was the prophet at what he saw was doing by them, and was likely to befall them:

and like a man whom wine hath overcome; or, "has passed over" {m}; like waves and billows, so that he is drowned in it, and mastered by it:

because of the Lord, and because of the words of his holiness: because of the dishonour done to his holy name, and holy truths; because of the profanation of both in the mouths of these false prophets; they pretending to come in the name of the Lord, and to speak his words; and because of the dreadful judgments which he, the prophet, was sent to denounce against them from the Lord.

{l} Myabnl "ad prophetas", V. L. "quod ad prophetat ipsos", Junius & Tremellius; "ad prophetas quod attinet", Piscator. {m} So Kimchi and Ben Melech. wrbe "pertransivit", Vatablus, Montanus; "super quem transiit vinum", Pagninus, Calvin; "penetravit", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 23:10

Ver. 10. For the land is full of adulterers,.... Of such as were guilty of corporeal adultery, and of spiritual adultery, which is idolatry. Now, though in this, and in the following verses, the prophet describes the men of his generation, both ecclesiastics and laics; yet also so as to have regard to the Jews in the times of Christ, to which this prophecy has respect; between whom there was a great resemblance; adulteries were so frequent in Christ's time, that the Jews left off the use of the bitter waters {n}; and our Lord sometimes calls the generation in which he lived an adulterous one, Mt 12:39;

for because of swearing the land mourneth; because of false swearing and cursing; because of the oaths and imprecations of men; or because of the curse of God, for the sins of men, the land was desert or desolate, as the Targum; it became barren and unfruitful, the land of Judea; just as the earth was cursed for the sin of man originally; though it seems rather to signify perjury or false swearing, which, and adultery, were the reigning vices of the age; see **Mt 5:33**;

the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up; or the pastures of the wilderness, where cattle used to feed, were dried up for want of rain, and so were unfruitful, and produced no grass for the beasts of the field:

and yet their course is evil; the course of their ministry or prophesying was bad; and the course of their lives and conversations was one continued series of iniquity; the race they ran, both prophet and people, was a wicked one; they ran and made haste to commit sin; though a professing people, their conversation was according to "the course of this world", **Eph 2:2**; and not according to the rule of God's word:

and their force [is] not right; or, "is not so" {o}; as it ought to be, or employed in the manner it should: the power and authority of the prophets over the people was not used, as it might have been, for the preserving of the people from sin; nor their courage and valour shown for truth, as it ought to have been; and they used their power to hurt and oppress, and not to relieve and help: so the Pharisees in Christ's time laid heavy burdens on others, but would not move them themselves; and, through a pretence of devotion, devoured widows' houses,
Mt 23:4. So some render the words here, "and their violence is not right" {p}; their rapine and oppression were very unjust; so that, besides adultery and swearing, they are charged with violence in particular, and with a wicked course of life in general.

{n} Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 9. {o} Nk al "non sic", Montanus; "dissimilis", V. L.
{p} Mtrwbg "violentia eorum". So the margin of our Bible.

Jeremiah 23:11

Ver. 11. For both prophet and priest are profane,.... Being guilty of the afore mentioned sins. The Targum is, "the scribe and the priest;"

and such were the scribes and priests in the time of our Lord; they played "the hypocrite" {q}, as some render the word here; and are often charged with the sin of hypocrisy, and called hypocrites,
Mt 22:18;

yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord; where they officiated in holy things, or should have done so; where the one should have instructed the people, and the other offered sacrifices for them, according to the will of God; there they committed wickedness, which was an aggravation of their sin, as was the case of Eli's sons, **1Sa 2:22**; perhaps the same sin was committed by these men; or idolatry may be meant; setting up images, and building altars for them in the house of God; see **Jer 7:30**; or carrying on traffic and merchandise, whereby the temple was made a house of merchandise, as it was in the times of Christ, **Joh 2:14**.

{q} wpnx "hypocritae fuerunt", Vatablus, Montanus; "hypocritas agunt", Piscator; "hypocrisin exercent", Schmidt, Cocceius.

Jeremiah 23:12

Ver. 12. Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery [ways] in the darkness,.... Their course of life may fitly be compared, and in the issue will prove to be like to a man's walking in a dark night without any lamp or lantern to light him, and in a slippery way, scarce able to stand upon his legs, and cannot see to pick his way, nor where to step next, which is very uncomfortable and dangerous; such are blind leaders of the blind, and both in danger of slipping and falling into a ditch, Mt 15:14;

they shall be driven on, and fall therein; hurried on by Satan, and their own lusts, in their sinful ways to their ruin; or forced on into captivity and destruction; their enemies and the just judgments of God pursuing them, like a man pursued by others in a dark and slippery way; who cannot stand to feel his way, but is obliged to go on, though he can scarce keep upon his legs, and knows not where to set his foot next; see Ps 35:6;

for I will bring evil upon them: the evil of punishment, which is from the Lord; as sword, famine, pestilence, or captivity:

[even] the year of their visitation, saith the Lord: the precise and exact time appointed by the Lord to visit them in a way of judgment for their iniquities; which was a set time that would certainly come, and they could not escape; and which may not only respect the time of the Babylonish captivity, but the destruction of the Jews by the Romans, which was the time of their visitation, Lu 19:44.

Jeremiah 23:13

Ver. 13. And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria,.... The ten tribes of Israel, among whom, in Ahab's time there were many false prophets, Baal's prophets, even four hundred and fifty; whose "folly" the Lord had formerly taken notice of; even their idolatry and impiety for giving into which the ten tribes had been carried captive years ago. The word {r} here used signifies that which is "unsavoury": something very unsavoury in their doctrines, and in their lives; they were as salt which has lost its savour and is good for nothing; to which bad ministers are compared, **Mt 5:13**. These words are to be read in connection with the following, and may be rendered, "indeed I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria"; of Israel in times past; "but I have seen in the prophets of Jerusalem" {s} that which is far worse; and therefore they must not expect to escape; or, as the Syriac version, "as I have seen in the prophets of Samaria--so have I seen in the prophets of Jerusalem", &c. so that here is a comparison run between them; and the latter are represented as worse than the former, though they were bad enough; as follows: for

they prophesied in Baal; in the name of Baal, whose prophets they were; so the Targum,

"they prophesied in the name of idols:"

or, "they prophesied by Baal", as the Septuagint version {t}; they pretended to be inspired by him, and to receive their prophecies from him: or, "they prophesied concerning Baal"; what he would do for them, for those that worshipped him. The Arabic version is, "they prophesied in my name to Baal"; which seems to be foreign from the sense of the place:

and caused my people Israel to err; by following their directions and instructions, and worshipping Baal.

{r} hlpt "insulsitatem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt; "intulsa", Pagninus; "insulsam rem", Munster, Vatablus; "insulsum", Montanus, Cocceius. {s} So Schmidt. {t} lebb, dia ton baal, Sept. "per Baalem", Schmidt. So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 23:14

Ver. 14. I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing,.... Or "but", or "so have I seen", &c. as before observed; even in the prophets of Jerusalem, where the temple was, and where the pure worship of God was professed to be observed, and that now, at the present time; as he had formerly seen and observed what was foolish, ridiculous, and impious, in the prophets of the ten tribes, and had punished them for it; so now at this instant he sees that in the prophets of Judea which was enough to make a man's hair stand an end, as the word {u} signifies; or, as it may be derived from another root, what was "filthy" {w} and obscene; as follows:

they commit adultery; or, "in committing adultery" {x}; with their neighbours' wives; for this rather than idolatry or spiritual adultery seems to be meant:

and walk in lies; or, "walking in lies" {y}; constantly speaking lies in their common talk and conversation; so that they were not to be believed in anything they said; which was monstrous; and delivering out false doctrines in the name of the Lord, pretending they received them from him; which was worse than prophesying in the name of Baal:

they strengthen also the hands of evil doers, that none doth return from his wickedness; they hardened them in sin; partly by their false doctrines, extenuating their sins, putting a false gloss upon them, and promising them peace, though they lived in sin; and partly by their own wicked examples; the people concluding that what the prophets did they might do also; so that they never thought of repentance for their sins, or amendment of their lives; but went on in sin without remorse or reformation; not thinking anything about it, and not seeing any need of it; see Eze 13:22;

they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah; the prophets were all of them in God's account as the men of Sodom; who were exceeding great sinners before the Lord, daring and impudent in sinning; and the people, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that were led by them into the same wicked sentiments and practices, were like unto Gomorrah; and as they were like to them in sinning, So they would be in punishment; or a like punishment would be inflicted upon the prophets and people of Jerusalem as were upon Sodom and Gomorrah; see **Isa 1:9**.

{u} hrwrev a rev, "pilus". {w} "Turpitudinem", Munster, Montanus. {x} Pwan "adulterando", Junius & Tremellius, Schmidt. {y} rqvb Klhw "et eundo in mendacio", Schmidt; "et ambulando in falsitate", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 23:15

Ver. 15. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets,.... Concerning the false prophets, as the Targum; their sin is before declared, and now their punishment:

behold, I will feed them with wormwood; with some bitter affliction and calamity; so the Targum,

"behold, I will bring upon them distress bitter as wormwood;"

they that have been fed with dainties, and lived upon the fat of the land; their views in pleasing the people with their lies being to serve their own bellies; now they shall fare after another manner:

and make them drink the water of gall: or, "the juice of hemlock", as some; or "poison", as others; "the savour of death", so Kimchi; as they poisoned the people with their false doctrines, they shall drink poison themselves; they shall not only have that which is bitter and unpleasant, but that which is noxious and hurtful; not only a bitter potion, but a destructive one. The Targum is,

"I will cause them to drink a cup of the curse, bad as the heads of serpents;"

as pernicious as poison; see **Jer 8:14**;

for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land; by their false doctrines, and bad examples, debauchery, irreligion, and wickedness of all kinds, were encouraged, and spread all over the land; Jerusalem, the metropolis of the nation, being infected by them, the contagion spread from thence throughout the country. Evil teachers have a bad influence all around them; from whom, and from whence, true doctrine and real religion should have been propagated; from them, and thence, was the source of all impiety and pollution. Some render it, "hypocrisy" {z}, or "flattery"; as if by means of the hypocrisy and flattery of these false prophets, all manner of sin was countenanced; and the like hypocritical spirit and behaviour everywhere prevailed.

{z} hpnx "hypocrisis", Vatablus, Piscastor, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 23:16

Ver. 16. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you,.... Do not hear them; stop your ears at what they say; give no credit to them. The Targum is,

"do not receive the words of the false prophets that prophesy unto you:"

they make you vain; they filled their heads with vain and empty things, and their hearts with vain hopes, which deceived them; so the Targum,

"they deceive you;"

they taught them vain things, and made them vain and sinful in their lives and conversations; and therefore were not to be hearkened to:

they speak a vision of their own heart, [and] not out of the mouth of the Lord; what they imagined they saw was a device of their own hearts, and what was agreeable to them, which must be bad enough; a produce of their own brains; an invention of their own; mere doctrines of men, and not such as come from the mouth of God, are his revealed will, and according to his word; and therefore not to be hearkened to; for nothing is to be heard and received, in matters of religion, but what is according to the revelation of God's will in his word; see **Isa 8:20**. The Targum is,

"they speak to you the wickedness of their hearts, and not by the word of the Lord."

Jeremiah 23:17

Ver. 17. They say still unto them that despise me,.... That despised the word, worship, and ordinances of the Lord; with such mockers and scoffers at religion, such abandoned creatures, they associated themselves; finding that their prophecies and doctrines met with approbation and success among them. The Septuagint version is, "they say to them that put away the word of the Lord"; reject it, and cast it behind their backs; see Ac 13:46;

the Lord hath said, ye shall have peace; all manner of prosperity; that they should dwell in their own land, and not go into captivity, and enjoy the good things of it in peace and prosperity; this they pretended they had from the Lord; which was an aggravation of their sins; not only to tell a lie, but to tell it in the name of the Lord, and in direct opposition to what the true prophets said from the mouth of the Lord, particularly Jeremiah:

and they say unto everyone that walketh after the imagination of his own heart; which is evil, and that continually, **Ge 6:5**; whose course of life is after the lusts of his own wicked heart; and a worse guide than these a man cannot well have: and this is a true character and description of an unregenerate man, who walks after the flesh, and not after the Spirit; after his own carnal heart, and the dictates of it; and not according to the will and word of God: and yet to such, to whom the Lord says, "there is no peace", the false prophets said,

no evil shall come upon you; no evil of punishment for the evil of sin, as the prophets of the Lord had threatened; such as the sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity.

Jeremiah 23:18

Ver. 18. For who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord,.... These are either the words of the Prophet Jeremiah; signifying that none of the false prophets were of God's privy council, or were acquainted with his secrets, that they could tell the people they should have peace, and no evil come upon them; this they said, not from divine revelation, but from the imagination of their own hearts; for though the Lord does nothing but he reveals it to his servants, the prophets; yet not to men of such bad principles and wicked lives as they were: or rather these are the words of the false prophets; either taking this to themselves, that they were of God's privy council, and knew his secrets, and ask who were besides themselves; or else insulting the prophets of the Lord, as though they took too much upon them to threaten the people with captivity and destruction, as if they were in the secret of the most High, and his privy counsellors; but that they thought themselves in such a situation seems to be the sense, from Jer 23:22;

and hath perceived and heard his word? or, "hath seen and heard his word?" {a} seen a vision from him, and "heard" the word from his mouth, declaring the above things? or "seen" what was in his heart, what he purposed and designed to do; and "heard" what he said he would do?

who hath marked his word, and heard [it]? listened and attended to it, and obeyed it? not the false prophets, but the true ones; as the Targum of the whole is,

"for they stood not (or rose not up) that the secret from before the Lord might be revealed to them; and they saw not, nor heard his words; nor did they hearken to his word, nor receive;"

or obey; understanding this of the false prophets.

{a} aryw "et vidit", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "qui videat", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 23:19

Ver. 19. Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury,.... Or, "behold, a whirlwind of the Lord, of the fury is gone forth" {b}; which latter clause explains the former; and, hews, that by "the whirlwind of the Lord" is meant his "fury" or "wrath"; which, like a whirlwind, would come suddenly, and at an unawares, and be very boisterous and powerful, and carry all before it; and which was gone forth from the Lord in the decree and commission; and would quickly break out and appear in the Chaldean army that would invade Judea and besiege Jerusalem, compared to a full and fanning wind, and its chariots to a whirlwind, **Jer 4:11**; from whence it would appear, that these men, the false prophets, were not in the counsel of God; had seen no vision from him, nor had marked his word: since they prophesied of peace and prosperity, when a blustering storm was coming:

even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked; or "rest" {c} thereon; even on the head of the wicked prophets, and all such wicked persons as give heed unto them; on them it would fall with its full weight, and give excessive pain, and there continue to their utter ruin. Kimchi says this refers to the days of the Messiah, when all the wicked shall be consumed. It may refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, at least include it; which was a grievous whirlwind indeed.

{b} hauy hmh hwhy treo hnh "ecce turbo Domini exandescentia", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; "en procella Jehovae! ira exivit", Schmidt. {c} lwxy "manebit", Montanus, Cocceius; "permanebit", Junius & Tremellius; "residebit", Targ. "requiescet", Syr.

Jeremiah 23:20

Ver. 20. The anger of the Lord shall not return,.... Having a commission from him, and being sent forth on an errand to do business for him, it shall not return to him, without having done it; as a servant sent by his master does not return till he has finished what he was sent about:

until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart; all his counsels, purposes, and designs, respecting those his anger kindled against, the false prophets and wicked Jews:

in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly; when too late to avert it by repentance and reformation when all this shall be fulfilled, and the seventy years captivity take place; or, "in the end of days" {d}; in the latter part off time, when the Jews shall be converted, and seek the Lord their God, **Ho 3:5**; then "shall [they] understand it with an understanding" {e}, as it may be rendered; when they shall have the veil removed from them, and turn to the Lord; then they shall have a true and thorough understanding of these things; of the cause and reason of them; and of the mind of God in them, and the ends to be answered by them. Kimchi says this will be in the times of the Messiah.

{d} Mymyh tyrxab "in extremo dierum", Cocceius; "in extremitate dierum", Calvin, Piscator, Schmidt. {e} hnyb hb wngwbtt "intelligetis hoc inteliigentia", Calvin, Gataker.

Jeremiah 23:21

Ver. 21. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran,.... They might be sent of men, and be encouraged by them; but they were not sent of God: it is not only necessary that men employed in religious affairs should have an external call, in an orderly way, from the church of God; but also an internal call from the Lord himself; he qualifying them with gifts, putting his word into their mouths, and inclining their hearts to publish it; see **Heb 5:4**; but these false prophets had no mission nor commission from the Lord, nor were they sent on any errand, or with any message from him; and

yet they ran; showed great diligence and zeal, and made haste to tell the people what the Lord had never said to them, but what were the warm imaginations of their own heads and hearts; they ran a race or course of ministry, but it was not good, as in Jer 23:10. The Targum adds,

"to do evil:"

I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied; wherefore what they prophesied was not the word of the Lord, but what they themselves devised; and so was what was false, as the Targum adds: it is a sad character of men when they speak in public neither by the will of God, nor according to the word of God.

Jeremiah 23:22

Ver. 22. But if they had stood in my counsel,.... As they boasted they did; or, as they reproached the true prophets, and charged them with vanity and arrogance, in talking as if they had; had this been truly their case, as it was that of the prophets of the Lord:

and had caused my people to hear my words; or, "then they would have caused my people to hear my words"; had it been so, they would have heard first the words of the Lord themselves in secret and privately, and then they would have caused the people to have heard them; they would not have gone to them with their own lies; they would not have dared to have done that; they would have delivered nothing but what they had heard from the Lord:

then they should, or, "and they would",

have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings; and not have strengthened their hands, and hardened them in their wickedness, and so kept them from repentance and reformation,
Jer 23:14. The Lord argues from the efficacy and success of the ministry of the word to the truth of it, and their miss:, on from him; for though a good ministry is not always successful, at least so successful as could be wished for, and as it might reasonably be expected it would; yet it is more or less so; and at least it has a tendency to bring men off from their evil practices; and it attempts to do it, though it may fail in the execution; whereas a wicked ministry, such as this of the false prophets, had no tendency hereunto; nor was it the design of it; nor did they attempt it; but, on the contrary, encouraged and hardened men in sin.

Jeremiah 23:23

Ver. 23. [Am] I a God at hand, saith the Lord,.... Or "near" {f}; that is, in heaven; and only sees, and hears, and observes persons and things there, being near unto him:

and not a God afar off? that sees, and hears, and takes notice of persons and things at a distance, even on earth. The meaning is, that he certainly was; and that persons and things on earth were as much under his cognizance and notice, as persons and things in heaven; which was quite contrary to the notions of these atheistical prophets and people; who, like Heathens, thought that God did not concern himself about persons and things on earth. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, without the interrogative, "I am a God near, saith the Lord, and not afar off". The meaning is, that God is alike near in one place as in another; which is a very great truth; and a very comfortable one it is to the people of God, to whom he is near in all places, and at all times; he is a present help in time of trouble; he is near them, to hear their cries, and grant their requests; he is near to give them assistance in a time of need, and to deliver them out of all their troubles; to afford them his gracious presence, and to indulge them with communion with himself; to communicate all good things to them; to speak comfortably to them; to take them by the hand, and lead them in the way everlasting: he is at their right hand to uphold them with his, and to strengthen them with strength in their souls; to advise and counsel, and direct them; to rebuke their enemies, and save them from them that condemn them; and indeed there are no people like them, who have God so nigh unto them, in all things they call upon him for, **De 4:7**; and though he may seem at times to be afar off, and stand at a distance from them; when he hides his face; withdraws his gracious influences; does not appear at once for their relief in distress; but suffers them to he afflicted in one way or another; yet in reality he is not; but is nigh unto them when they call upon him: and this truth is as uncomfortable and dreadful to wicked men, who cannot go from his spirit, or flee from his presence; which is everywhere, in heaven and hell, in the earth and seas, even in the uttermost parts of them; there his eye is upon them, and his right hand can reach them: he is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. The Targum is,

"I God have created the world from the beginning, saith the Lord; and I God will renew the world for the righteous;"

see **2Pe 3:13**; and some interpret the words of time, as well as of place; as if the sense was this, am I a God of late date, as the gods of the Heathens are? no, I am not: am I not a God from eternity who was before the world was, and the Creator of it, which they are not? verily I am: but the former sense is best, and most agreeable with the context, and what follows.

{f} brqm "e propinquo", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "vel propinquus", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 23:24

Ver. 24. Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord,.... If a man should hide himself in the most secret and hidden places of the earth, and do his works in the most private manner, so that no human eye can see him, he cannot hide himself or his actions from the Lord, who can see from heaven to earth, and through the darkest and thickest clouds, and into the very bowels of the earth, and the most hidden and secret recesses and caverns of it. The darkness and the light are both alike to him; and also near and distant, open and secret places:

do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord; not only with inhabitants, and with other effects of his power and providence; but with his essence, which is everywhere, and is infinite and immense, and cannot be contained in either, or be limited and circumscribed by space and place; see **1Ki 8:27**. The Targum is,

"does not my glory fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord;"

both of them are full of his glory; and every person and thing in either must be seen and known by him; and so the false prophets and their lies; in order to convince of the truth of which, all this is said, as appears by the following words.

Jeremiah 23:25

Ver. 25. I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name,.... Or, "I hear what the prophets say" {g}, &c. though they thought God was at a distance from them, in the highest heavens, and neither saw, nor heard, nor took any notice of what was done on earth, they were greatly mistaken; he heard and observed with indignation the false doctrines and lying prophecies which they delivered out in his name to the people, whether in public or in private; for he is the Lord God omniscient and omnipresent; and therefore, though they deceived the people, they could not deceive him; who knew all their schemes and all their designs, from what principles they acted, and with what views;

saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed; not a common dream, but a divine dream; this was one way in which the Lord formerly made known his mind and will to his servants, Nu 12:6; wherefore these false prophets, in imitation of the true ones, and in order to gain credit from the people, pretended they had a dream from the Lord, in which such and such things were revealed to them; and this is repeated by them for the greater certainty of it, and to raise the people's attention as to something very uncommon and extraordinary. So the Targum,

"saying, a word of prophecy has been shown to me in a dream."

Now, though the people could not contradict them, or know any otherwise than as they might observe that they agreed not with the word of God, or with his will, as made known by the true prophets of the Lord; for if a man says he has dreamed so and so, another cannot say he has not; because no man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him; yet God, that knows all things, knew that these were all lies and impostures, and that they had never had a dream from him, or any revelation of his will in that way.

{g} wrma "dicunt", Calvin, Cocceius.

Jeremiah 23:26

Ver. 26. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies?.... To invent such lies, and deceive the people, and turn them away from God; agreeably to the preceding and following verses: this shows that this was not through ignorance and inadvertence; it was a meditated and studied thing by them; they contrived it in their hearts, and they were resolute and bent upon it, and took much delight and pleasure in it; their hearts were in it, and it was in them to do as they did; and in this way they had been long, but should continue no longer. Or the words may be rendered, "how long?" {h} and a stop be put there, being a short abrupt expression, like that in **Ps 6:3**; and the sense be, how long shall they go on thus, pretending to dreams, and visions, and revelations from the Lord, and so impose upon the people? shall they always go on after this manner? no, they shall not: and then the next words may be read, "is there any thing in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies?" {i} nothing that is good; truth is not there; nothing but lies and deceit; the word of God is not there, as it is with the true prophet of the Lord, "he that hath my word", as in Jer 23:28; there is no fear of God, nor knowledge of him and his will, nor faith in him, nor love to him, or any regard to his honour and glory;

yea, [they are] prophets of the deceit of their own hearts; they prophesy nothing but what their own deceitful hearts suggest to them, whereby they are deceived themselves, and deceive others, **2Ti 3:13**.

{h} ytm de "quousque?" Cocceius, Schmidt; "quousque tandem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "usque quando?" De Dieu. {i} Myabnh blb vyh "an est in corde prophetarum?", De Dieu, Gataker, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 23:27

Ver. 27. Which think to cause my people to forget my name,.... The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "my law". The word and worship of God; from which men are drawn off by false teachers, and are in a fair way to be brought to atheism, and to forget that there is a God; for when once men are turned from the word of God to believe lies, and from the pure worship of God to a false religion, there is no knowing where things will end; and, indeed, it was the design of these false prophets, a scheme and device of theirs, in which they hoped to succeed

by their dreams; which, says the Lord,

they tell every man to his neighbour; privately from house to house, as well as publicly, to take off the people from all thoughts of God and his worship:

as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal: or, by Baal {k}; by means of Baal's prophets in Samaria before mentioned; who seduced Israel from the pure worship of God, and made them forget him; having the name of Baal more in their minds and mouths than the name of God. The Syriac version is, "as their fathers forgot my name, and worshipped Baal"; and so the Targum,

"as their fathers forsook the worship of my name, and swore by the name of idols."

{k} lebb "per Baalem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 23:28

Ver. 28. The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream,.... These words are directed not to a true prophet of the Lord, that has a dream from him, or something communicated to him in a dream by the Lord, which he is to deliver as such; but to a false prophet, that says he has dreamed; and if he has dreamed a dream, let him tell it as a "dream" {l}; so some supply it, as the fruit of his own roving fancy and imagination in sleep; and not call it a revelation from the Lord, and impose it upon the people as such. The Septuagint version is, "let him tell his dream"; let him tell it as his own, and not as a dream from the Lord;

and he that hath my word; the word of prophecy by revelation, and under the influence of the Spirit of God, as the true prophets: "my word"; not the word of men, or the word spoken by angels, or the Scriptures in general; but the word of the Gospel, the word of peace and reconciliation, of righteousness, life, and salvation; the evangelical part of the word, though not to the exclusion of all the rest, but this chiefly: "he that hath it"; or "with whom", or "in whom it is" {m}; who has it not only in his hands to read, nor merely in his head, so as to have speculative notions of it; but has it in his heart, where it is come with power, and is become the ingrafted word; and who has a large share of spiritual and experimental knowledge of it, and an ability and capacity to express it to the edification of others;

let him speak my word faithfully; or "truly" {n}; as it is. Ministers of the word are stewards, and it is required of such that they be faithful, and a more honourable character they cannot well have; and then may the word of the Lord be said to be spoken faithfully, when nothing else is spoken but that; when there is no mixture of man's with it; and when the whole of it is spoken, and nothing kept back or concealed; when a man's views in it are sincere and upright, and he aims only at the glory of God; and the good of immortal souls; when it is spoken out, openly and boldly, not as pleasing men, but God, and as in his sight, to whom the account must be given: or, "let him speak my word, truth" {o}; which is truth; or, for it is truth, as Kimchi; so this is a reason why it should be spoken freely, fully, publicly, and boldly, because it is truth, and nothing but truth: or, "let him speak my word as truth"; or as it is {p}; it comes from the God of truth; if lies in the Scriptures of truth; the subject matter of it is truth, Christ, who is truth itself, and those doctrines, relative to his person, office, and grace, and salvation by him; and it is the Spirit of truth that directs into it, owns it, and makes it useful;

what [is] the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord; there is no comparison between the one and the other; the one is greatly preferable to the other; there is as much difference between the dreams and lies of the false prophets and the word of God, as there is between chaff and wheat. False doctrine is as "chaff", light; when put into the balance of the sanctuary it is found wanting; it is of no value; it is as wood, hay, and stubble, in comparison of gold, silver, and precious stones; it is not fit for food, and has no nourishment in it, but the contrary, and its end is to be burned. Some doctrine is as "wheat", choice and excellent, pure, solid, substantial, and of a nourishing and strengthening nature. And what is the one to the other? or what have they to do with one another? they should not be mixed together, but separated. So the Syriac version, "why do ye mix the chaff with the wheat?" see **2Co 2:17**. The Targum interprets this of persons, paraphrasing the words thus,

"behold, as one separates between the chaff and the wheat, so I separate between the righteous and the wicked, saith the Lord."

Wicked men are as "chaff"; such were the false prophets, and all ungodly men, for their emptiness, lightness, unprofitableness, and for their being fit fuel for everlasting burnings; see **Ps 1:5**; and good men, and true prophets of the Lord, and all the righteous, are as "wheat" for choiceness and excellency, purity and solidity; and these are not to be mixed together, should not now, nor will they be hereafter, **Mt 3:12**.

{l} Mwlx rpoy "narret [ut] somnium", Grotius, Gataker, Schmidt. {m} wta yrbd rvaw "et penes quem est verbum meum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "at cum quo est verbum meum", Schmidt;
kai en w o logov mou prov auton, Sept. {n} tma "vere", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius; "veritate", Montanus, Schmidt. {o} tma yrbd rbdy "narret meum verbum veritatem, quod est veritas", Kimchi, Ben Melech, Abarbinel. {p} "Loquatur verbum meum sicuti est", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 23:29

Ver. 29. [Is] not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord,.... The legal part of it is as fire; it is called a "fiery law", De 33:2; like fire, it is quick and piercing, and penetrating into the hearts and consciences of men; and works wrath there, and raises a fearful expectation of fiery indignation; it threatens with everlasting fire; it sentences men to the fire of hell; and the righteous Judge, in the execution of it, will be a consuming fire to wicked men. The Gospel part of the word is like fire, on account of the light the entrance of it gives to sinners; by which they see their own impurity, impotence, and the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and the way of life and salvation by Christ; and by the light of this fire saints are directed in their walk and conversation; and by it immoralities, errors, and superstition, are detected: also on account of the heat of it; it is the means of a vital heat to sinners, the savour of life to them; and is warming and comforting to saints, and causes their hearts to burn within them; it inflames them with love to God, Christ, and one another, and with zeal for truth and the interest of a Redeemer; though it has a scorching and tormenting heat to wicked men, and fills them with burning malice and envy, Re 11:5; and, through the corruption of human nature, is the occasion of contention and discord, for which reason Christ calls it fire, Lu 12:49; and indeed it has different effects on different objects, as fire, which hardens some things and softens others; see **2Co 2:16**; moreover, it may be compared to fire for its purifying, separating, and trying nature: as fire purifies gold and silver, and separates the dross, and tries the metal, and shows it what it is; so the Gospel tries men's principles, and discovers what they are, and separates one from another: and also for its consuming nature; it opposes, weakens, and burns up the worst in man, his lusts and corruptions, which it teaches him to deny; and the best in man, all his holiness and righteousness he depended upon; and it burns up the chaff of false doctrine and human inventions before mentioned.

and like a hammer [that] breaketh the rock in pieces? to which the heart of man may be compared, being hardened by sin, confirmed in it; destitute of spiritual life; stupid and senseless; stubborn and inflexible; on which no impressions are made, and is impenitent and inflexible; see **Zec 7:12**; now the word of the Lord, in the hand of the Spirit, is a means of breaking such hard hearts, and taking away the Obduracy and hardness of them; there is a legal contrition of it, through the law part of the word, by which there is a knowledge of sin, and the soul is wounded with a sense of it, and sore broken, but without any view of pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; and there is an evangelical contrition or brokenness of heart, through the Gospel part of the word, by means of which the stony heart is not only broken, but melted and dissolved into true evangelical repentance for sin, through the discoveries of a Saviour bruised and broken for its sin, and through a view of free and full pardon by his blood, and justification by his righteousness. Now the word is only an instrument; it is not the efficient cause of all this; as a hammer is but an instrument, and a passive one, can do nothing of itself; it must be taken up and used by a powerful hand, or it can do no execution; what is a hammer without a hand? so the Gospel is only an instrument in the hand of, he Lord; but when he takes it into his own hand, and strikes with it, it will break the hardest heart in pieces, and make a stony heart a heart of flesh, Eze 36:26.

Jeremiah 23:30

Ver. 30. Therefore, behold, I [am] against the prophets, saith the Lord,.... The false prophets, with whom the Lord was displeased; he set himself against them, and was determined to bring wrath and ruin on them. So the Targum,

"therefore, behold, I send my fury against the false prophets;"

that steal my word, or "words" {q},

everyone from his neighbour; either from the true prophets; beginning their prophecies as they did, with a "thus saith the Lord"; and mingling some words and phrases used by them, the better to ingratiate themselves among the people, and that they might be taken for the prophets of the Lord; as Pelagius, Austin says, used the word "grace", the better to hide his sentiments, and cause them the more easily to be received by the people: or from the false prophets; they privately meeting, and consulting, and agreeing together what they should say to the people, as if they were the words of the Lord: or else from the people themselves; lessening their esteem for the words of the Lord; making them negligent of them and indifferent to them; and causing them to forget what they had heard and received.

{q} yrbd "verba mea", Munster, Pagniuus, Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 23:31

Ver. 31. Behold, I [am] against the prophets, saith the Lord,.... Not another sort of prophets distinct from the former, or those that follow; but the same under another character, and against whom he was, and set his face on another occasion;

that use their tongues; at their pleasure, their lips being their own. So the Targum,

"who prophesy according to the will of their own hearts;"

talk in a haughty and insolent manner, speaking bold and daring things of the divine Being; or in a boasting bragging manner, extolling themselves, and speaking highly in their own commendations; or rather in a flattering way to the people: so some read it, by a transposition of a radical letter {r}, "that smooth their tongues", as Kimchi; or speak smooth things with their tongues, to please the people:

and say, he saith; that is, "the Lord", as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions express it; that so they, night be the more easily believed by the people; but this was highly provoking to God, to father their lies and falsehoods upon him.

{r} Myxqwlh "hic pro" Myqylxmh "qui lenificant linguam suam", Pagninus, Gataker; "sumentes blandam linguan suam", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 23:32

Ver. 32. Behold, I [am] against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord,.... And not true ones, such as the Lord spoke in to his prophets, and which they communicated from him to his people; see
Nu 12:6;

and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; by the false doctrines and prophecies which they delivered, and by their loose and disorderly lives which they led; so that they debauched the principles of the people by the former, and their practices by the latter. Kimchi interprets the word translated "lightness" of lightness of their knowledge; as if it was through the shallowness of their judgments, and want of capacity in teaching, that the people were made to err by their false doctrines. The Targum interprets it of their temerity or rashness; and Schultens {s}, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, explains it of their pride and false glorying;

yet I sent them not, nor commanded them; wherefore they lied, and acted a vainglorious part, when they pretended they were sent by him, and had their orders from him what they should say; see Jer 23:21;

therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord; so far from it, that they did them a great deal of hurt by their lies and flatteries; seducing them from the ways and worship of God, and leading them on in such as would issue in their destruction, and did.

{s} Animadv. in Job. p. 144.

Jeremiah 23:33

Ver. 33. And when this people, or a prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee,.... Any of the people, who were grown very profane; or any of the false prophets, who encouraged them in their irreligion and impiety; or any of the priests, who were in combination with them against the true prophets of the Lord; when any of these, in a scoffing jeering manner, should ask the Prophet Jeremiah,

saying, what [is] the burden of the Lord? or prophesy in the name of the Lord, as the Targum; and because some of the prophecies are called "burdens", see Isa 13:1; hence, by way of derision, they called every one so; and because many of these, though not all, were predictions of judgments and calamities that were to come on men; therefore they accounted all that the true prophets brought from the Lord as such, and sneering asked, what bad news do you bring now? what calamities are now to befall us? as if he was always a bringer of evil tidings;

thou shalt then say unto [them], what burden? making as if he was ignorant of what they meant; or rather as expressing indignation and resentment at the question; do you ask me such a question? I will tell you what it is, as follows: though the words may be rendered without an interrogation, "thou shalt then say unto [them], that which is a burden" {t}; which will fall heavy upon them, and be a burden unto them, and sink them down into ruin and destruction;

I will even forsake you, saith the Lord; so that they should have no more of his presence among them, or of prophecy with them, or of his protection of them.

{t} avm hm ta Mhyla trmaw "dicito ad eos quodnam onus sit", Schmidt. So the Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 23:34

Ver. 34. And [as for] the prophet, and the priest, and the people,.... Be they one or the other, or all of them; no regard will be had to their character and office, rank and dignity:

that shall say, the burden of the Lord; using that phrase in a bantering and ludicrous manner:

I will even punish that man and his house; not only he, but his family, shall suffer for it. This shows how much it is resented by the Lord, and what a dangerous thing it is to lampoon the word of God, to make a jest of Scripture phrases, or to joke with them; this is foolish jesting, which is not convenient, yea, impious and abominable. It is also hard jesting with edge tools.

Jeremiah 23:35

Ver. 35. Thus shall ye say everyone to his neighbour, and everyone to his brother,.... When conferring about religious things, and the word of God in particular; when any inquiry is made of another, whether any message from the Lord by his prophets? or what is it? that it should not be put in such deriding and calumniating words, "what is the burden of the Lord?" but in more decent and becoming language, thus,

what hath the Lord answered? and what hath the Lord spoken? they might lawfully and laudably inquire of the prophet what answer he had received from the Lord, and what it was that he had said to him, provided they were serious in it, and asked with meekness and fear: the word of God should be reverently spoken of, and attended to.

Jeremiah 23:36

Ver. 36. And the burden of the Lord shall be mentioned no more,.... Or the word of the Lord under that name, speaking of it in a ludicrous and scoffing manner:

for every man's word shall be his burden; every flout, scoff, and jeer of his, at the word of God, shall fall heavily upon him, with weight upon his conscience, and press him with guilt to the lowest hell; or, however, a heavy punishment for his sin shall light upon him: or, as the words may be rendered, "for his word is a burden to everyone" {u}; that is, the word of the Lord is reckoned by everyone a burden; and with them a burden and the word of the Lord are synonymous terms; which ought not to be, and was offensive to the Lord; and therefore he forbids the use of such a phrase, and threatens to punish for it;

for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the Lord of hosts, our God; derided them, and put a wrong sense upon them; and which is aggravated by their being the words of "the living God", who is the true God and his words true; and he lives and is able to resent and punish any ill usage of him, and ill treatment of his words; and not the oracles of lifeless idols: and they are the words of "the Lord of hosts", of all armies above and below, and so was able to make them good: and besides, they were the words of "our God", the God of Israel; who had in all ages kept his covenant with them, performed his promises to them, and had done great and good things for them.

{u} wrbd vyal hyhy avmh yk "quia onus erit unicuique verbum suum", Schmidt; "[vel] verbum ejus, nempe, Dei", Dieu.

Jeremiah 23:37

Ver. 37. Thus shall thou say to the prophet,.... To Jeremiah, or any true prophet of the Lord; after the following manner should everyone address him, that made any inquiry of the will of the Lord by him:

what hath the Lord answered thee? and what hath the Lord spoken? this is repeated from Jer 23:35; for the confirmation of it, and for the direction of the people, and to show how much the Lord approved of such a way of behaving towards his prophet, and himself by him.

Jeremiah 23:38

Ver. 38. But since ye say, the burden of the Lord,.... Seeing, notwithstanding all prohibitions of it, and directions to the contrary, they still persisted to call prophecy by this name, and that in a jocose and bantering way, and asked for it, and what it was, in a scoffing manner:

therefore thus saith the Lord, because you say this word, the burden of the Lord; will continue to use it, though so displeasing to me:

and I have sent unto you, saying, ye shall not say, the burden of the Lord; and therefore could not plead ignorance of his will, or excuse themselves, by saying they would have avoided it, had they known it was disagreeable to him: this was an aggravation of their impiety, that they should obstinately persist in it, after he had remonstrated against it by his messages to them.

Jeremiah 23:39

Ver. 39. Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you,.... That is, so behave towards them, as though they were entirely out of his sight and mind; show no affection to them; take no care of them; bestow no favours upon them; and no more have them under his protection. In the word here used, and rendered "forget", and the word before used for a "burden", there is an elegant play on words {w}, which another language will not easily express; no doubt there is an allusion to that word in this;

and I will forsake you; neither vouchsafe them his gracious presence, nor his powerful protecting presence, but give them up to the enemy:

and the city that I gave you and your fathers; the city of Jerusalem, which he had given to them to dwell in, and their fathers before them; but now they having sinned against him, and provoked him; therefore, notwithstanding this grant of the place to them, and which is mentioned that they might not depend upon it, and buoy up themselves with hopes that they should be in safety on that account; as he had forsaken them, he would forsake that, and the temple in it, and give it up into the hand of the Chaldeans:

[and cast you] out of my presence; as useless and loathsome. The Targum is,

"I will remove you far away, and the city which I save you and your fathers from my word."

it signifies their going into captivity.

{w} avn ytyvn "forgetting I will forget", and avm "a burden".

Jeremiah 23:40

Ver. 40. And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you,.... Which was a just retaliation for reproaching, vilifying, and bantering his word: they who had been honoured so much and so long as the people of God, and their city counted the glory of the earth; yet now both they and that should be the byword of the people, and had in the utmost contempt, and that for ever, or at least a long time, even for a series of ages; which has been their case ever since their destruction by the Romans, and still is; for this cannot be restrained to the short captivity of seventy years in Babylon; though this reproach began then, and they never recovered their former honour and glory;

and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten; the same thing in different words, to heighten their disgrace, and confirm the perpetuity of it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 24

This chapter contains a vision of two baskets of figs, representing the Jews both in captivity, and at Jerusalem. The vision is declared, Jer 24:1; where both time and place are pointed at, in which the vision was seen, and the nature of the figs described, and what passed between the Lord and the prophet concerning them. The explication of the vision begins, Jer 24:4; and continues to the end of the chapter. The good figs were an emblem of the good people that were carried captive with Jeconiah into Babylon, which the Lord says was for their good; and he promises to own them, and set

his eyes upon them for good, and that they should return to their own land, and have a heart to know him as their God, and return unto him, Jer 24:5; the bad figs signify the people that were with Zedekiah at Jerusalem, and those that were in Egypt, who are threatened to be carried captive into all lands, and there live under the greatest reproach and disgrace; or be destroyed in their own land by the sword, famine, or pestilence,
Jer 24:8.

Ver. 1. The Lord showed me,.... A vision, or in a vision, what follows; for by this it appears that what was seen was not real, but what was exhibited in a visionary way by the Lord, and represented to the mind of the prophet:

and, behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the Lord; or "pots", as Jarchi; these do not signify the law and Gospel, or the synagogue and church, or the Jews and Christians, or hell and heaven, as some have interpreted it, observed by Jerom; but the Jews that were in captivity with Jeconiah, and those that remained in Jerusalem with Zedekiah, as it is explained in some following verses. These baskets are said to be "set before the temple of the Lord", not to be sold there, but to be presented to the Lord; in allusion to the baskets of firstfruits, which, according to the law, were thither brought for that purpose, De 26:2; and signify, that the two people represented by them were before the Lord, in his sight, were known to him, and judged by him;

after that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah,
with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon: this was done when Jeconiah had reigned but little more than three months, and in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign,
2Ki 24:8. This is mentioned, not only to show the time of this vision, which was a little after this captivity, in the beginning of Zedekiah's reign; but to let us know who the captives were, signified by the good figs. The "carpenters" and "smiths" were carried away with the king and the princes, partly that they might be serviceable to the king of Babylon in his country; and partly that they might not be assisting to their own country in repairing their fortifications, and making instruments of war for them. There were a "thousand" of this sort carried captive, 2Ki 24:16; where the former of these are called "craftsmen". Jarchi interprets both of the scholars of the wise men; and Kimchi, of counsellors and wise men. The word for "carpenters" is used both of carpenters and blacksmiths; and that for "smiths" may be rendered "enclosers", or "shutters up"; which the Targum understands of porters or shutters of gates;

and some think goldsmiths are meant, that set or enclose precious stones in gold; and others are of opinion that masons are intended, so called from the building of walls for the enclosing of places. The Syriac version renders it "soldiers"; but those are distinguished from them, 2Ki 24:14. The Septuagint version translates it "prisoners"; but so all the captives might be called; and it adds, what is not in the text, "and the rich"; and the Arabic version following that; though it is true they were carried captive; for it is said, "none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land", 2Ki 24:14. This, according to Bishop Usher {x}, was in the year of the world 3405, and before Christ 599; and so the authors of the Universal History {y} place it; and Mr. Whiston {z} also; and Mr. Bedford {a} a year later; and in the same year that this captivity began was Cyrus the Persian born, who was the deliverer of the Jews from it.

{x} Annales Vet. Test. p. 123. {y} Vol. 21. p. 60, {z} Chronological Tables, cent. 10. {a} Scripture Chronology, p. 678.

Jeremiah 24:2

Ver. 2. One basket [had] very good figs, [even] like the figs [that are] first ripe,.... As there are some figs that are ripe sooner than others, and which are always the most desirable and acceptable; and such were they that were presented to the Lord, **Mic 7:1**; these signified those that were carried captive into Babylon with Jeconiah, among whom were some very good men, as Ezekiel, and others; and all might be said to be so, in comparison of those that were at Jerusalem, who were very wicked, and grew worse and worse:

and the other basket [had] very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad; as nothing is more sweet and luscious, and agreeable to the taste than a sound ripe fig, and especially a first ripe one; so nothing is more nauseous than a naughty rotten one: these signified the wicked Jews at Jerusalem indulging themselves in all manner of sin; so those who seemed to be the worst, through their being carried captive, were the best; and those who, seemed to be the best, by their prosperity, were the worst. This is to be understood in a comparative sense, as Calvin observes; though this does not so much design the quality of persons, as the issue of things, with respect unto them. The captivity of the one would issue in their good, and so are compared to good figs; when the sins of the other would bring upon them utter ruin and destruction without recovery, and therefore compared to bad figs that cannot be eaten.

Jeremiah 24:3

Ver. 3. Then said the Lord unto me, what seest thou, Jeremiah?.... This question is put, in order that, upon his answer to it, he might have an explication of the vision:

and I said, figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil; or "so bad", or "because of badness" {b}; which may be applied to mankind in general; who may be distinguished into good and bad: those that are good, who are made so by the grace of God; for none are so by nature, or of themselves; they are very good: they have many good things in them; they have a good heart, a new and a clean heart, and a right spirit created in them; they have a good understanding of spiritual things; they have a good will to that which is good, and good affections for God and Christ, and divine things; they have the good Spirit of God and his graces in them, and Christ and his word dwelling in them: and they do good things, and are prepared for every good work; they are good to others; pleasantly and acceptably good to God through Christ; and profitably good to their fellow saints and fellow creatures. On the other hand, those that are bad are exceeding bad; as they are by nature children of wrath, unclean, corrupt, loathsome, and abominable in the sight of God; so they are from their youth upward, and continue so, and are never otherwise; all in them, and that comes from them, are evil; their hearts are desperately wicked, the thoughts and imaginations of their hearts are evil continually; their words are idle, corrupt, and filthy, and all their actions sinful; there is no good in them, nor any done by them; they are good for nothing; they are of no use to God, to themselves, or others; sin has made them like itself, exceeding sinful: and now between these two sorts there is no medium; though all sins are not alike; and some in a comparative sense may be called greater or lesser sinners; yet all are exceeding bad, even the least: they are all of the same nature, and have the same wicked hearts; though some may be outwardly righteous before men; and hypocrites and formal professors are worst of all. There never were but two sorts of persons in the world; the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent; the children of God, and the children of the devil; and so things will appear hereafter at the great day; the one will be placed at Christ's right hand as good and righteous men, the other at his left hand as wicked, and will have separate states to all eternity: and so those figs are explained in the Talmud {c}; the good figs, they are the perfect righteous; the bad figs, they are the perfect wicked.

{b} erm "prae pravitate", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "prae malitia", Schmidt. {c} T. Bab. Erubim, fol. 21. 2.

Jeremiah 24:4

Ver. 4. Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. As follows; where an explanation is given of the above vision, to which this is a transition.

Jeremiah 24:5

Ver. 5. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel,.... Of all the tribes of Israel; of the ten tribes that had been carried captive long ago by the king of Assyria; and of the other two tribes, part of whom were in Babylon, and the other in Judea, who were not wholly cut off by the Lord; but he still had a regard for them; and therefore introduces what he was about to say in this manner:

like those good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah; that they are good men, and like those good rigs, even those that were; and though they are carried captive: or, "I will know them" {d}; take notice of them; show an affectionate love to them, and care of them; make himself known unto them, and own them for his, in the furnace of affliction:

whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for [their] good; or "for good things", as the Septuagint and other versions; for their temporal good; some were raised to great honours, as Daniel, and his associates; others got and possessed estates in Babylon, and some returned with favours and riches: and this was also for their spiritual good; to bring them to a sense of their sins, to repentance for them, and acknowledgment of them; and particularly to cure them of idolatry, which it effectually did; so the Lord makes all "things to work together for good", to them that love him, **Ro 8:28**; and it may be observed, that though the Chaldeans carried the Jews captive out of their own land, and the city of Jerusalem, meant by "this place", into the land of Babylon, yet they were only instruments; it was the Lord's doing; he sent them thither. Jarchi connects the phrase "for good" with the word "acknowledge", supposing a transposition of the words, thus, "I will acknowledge them for good".

{d} ryka "cognoscam", V. L. Gataker.

Jeremiah 24:6

Ver. 6. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good,.... His eyes of omniscience, providence, and grace; to communicate good things to them; to take care of them in the furnace of affliction, that they were not lost, but made the better; to watch over them, protect and defend them; to deliver them out of their troubles, and to bring them into their own land; as follows:

and I will bring them again into this land: the land of Judea, and city of Jerusalem, where Jeremiah now was, and saw this vision: this was accomplished when the seventy years' captivity was ended:

and I will build them, and not pull [them] down; and I will plant them, and not pluck [them] up; alluding to the building of houses, and planting of vineyards; signifying that they and their families should be built up and continue; yea, that they should be a habitation for God, and the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, of his planting, and which should remain: this will be more fully accomplished in the latter day; though it had in part a fulfilment upon the Jews' return from captivity.

Jeremiah 24:7

Ver. 7. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I [am] the Lord,.... God, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; the unchangeable Jehovah; the everlasting I AM; a covenant keeping God; faithful and true to his promises; able and willing to perform them; and does all things well and wisely; and was their Lord and God. This knowledge designs not the first knowledge of the Lord, but an increase of it; and not head knowledge, but heart knowledge; a knowledge of God, joined with love and affection to him, high esteem, and approbation of him; and including communion with him, and an open profession and acknowledgment of him: and it is an appropriating knowledge also; a knowing him for themselves, and as their own; and such a knowledge or heart to know the Lord is a pure gift of his, and without which none can have it: and it may be observed, that in captivity it was given them; afflictions

were the means of it; and happy it is when hereby men come to have a knowledge of God, and to be better acquainted with him,
Ps 92:12;

and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; that is, it shall appear that they are so, by the above blessings of grace and goodness bestowed upon them; the Lord hereby owning them for his people, and they hereby coming to know that he is their God:

for, or "when" {e}

they shall return unto me with their whole heart; affectionately, sincerely, and unfeignedly. It supposes that they had backslidden from God, his ways and worship; but now should return by sincere repentance to him, and to his worship, and obedience to his commands; so the Targum,

"for they shall return to my worship with their whole heart;"

all this will have an entire accomplishment in the latter day, when the Jews will be converted and turn to the Lord, and fear him and his goodness.

{e} yla wbvy yk "quum reversi fuerint ad me", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 24:8

Ver. 8. And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil,.... Here follows an explication of the evil figs, and an application of them to the wicked Jews:

surely thus saith the Lord, so will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah; who was then the reigning king of Judah, Jeconiah's father's brother; whom the king of Babylon had made king in his stead, and changed his name from Mattaniah to Zedekiah, 2Ki 24:17; him the Lord threatens to give up to ruin and destruction, or to deliver into the hands of the enemy:

and his princes, and the residue of them, that remain in this land; the rest of the inhabitants of Jerusalem that continued in the land of Judea, and were not carried captive:

and them that dwell in the land of Egypt; who had fled thither for safety upon the invasion of their land, and besieging their city; all these being like to the bad figs, exceeding evil and wicked, are threatened to be delivered into the hands of their enemies, though they might think themselves safe and secure where they were.

Jeremiah 24:9

Ver. 9. And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for [their] hurt,.... Jeconiah and the captives with him were only carried into Babylon; but these should be scattered one from another into the several parts of the world. The former were carried captive for their good, and it issued in that; but these were carried away for their hurt, to the injury of their persons and properties, and without having any effect upon them to the good of their souls: though this might begin to be fulfilled by the seventy years' captivity in Babylon, yet it had a more complete fulfilment in the destruction of this people by the Romans; to which these and the following words seem more particularly to refer:

[to be] a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them; their names to be used as a proverb for their riches ill gotten, their falsehood and tricking; and under the curse of God, and the reproach of man, as they are this day; see
De 28:37.

Jeremiah 24:10

Ver. 10. And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them,.... Meaning not in other lands, where they should be driven, but while in their own land, by which many should perish; and the rest that escaped these dreadful judgments should be carried captive. The Targum is,

"I will send those that kill with the sword, &c."

till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers; so that none of them should be left there to inhabit it, which is now their case; and it is an aggravation of their calamity and punishment, that they are no more the inhabitants of that good land, which was God's gift to them, and to their fathers before them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 25:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 25

This chapter contains a prophecy of the destruction of Judea by the king of Babylon; and also of Babylon itself, after the Jews' captivity of seventy years; and likewise of all the nations round about. The date of this prophecy is in Jer 25:1; when the prophet puts the Jews in mind of the prophecies that had been delivered unto them by himself and others, for some years past, without effect, Jer 25:2; wherefore they are threatened with the king of Babylon, that he should come against them, and strip them of all their desirable things; make their land desolate, and them captives for seventy years, Jer 25:8; at the expiration of which he in his turn shall be punished, and the land of Chaldea laid waste, and become subject to other nations and kings, Jer 25:12; and by a cup of wine given to all the nations round about, is signified the utter ruin of them, and who are particularly mentioned by name, Jer 25:15; which is confirmed by beginning with the city of Jerusalem, and the destruction of that, Jer 25:27; wherefore the prophet is bid to prophesy against them, and to declare the Lord's controversy with them, and that there should be a slaughter of them from one end of the earth to the other, Jer 25:30; upon which the shepherds, kings, and rulers of them, are called to lamentation and howling, Jer 25:34.

Ver. 1. The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah,.... Not only in the city of Jerusalem, but in the whole land of Judea. This prophecy concerns them all; their repentance and reformation, to which they are exhorted; or their invasion, desolation, and captivity, with which they are threatened. Before the prophet was sent to the king of Judah only, Jer 22:1; now to all the people:

in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; in the latter part of the third, and beginning of the fourth year of his reign; see **Da 1:1**;

this [was] the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon: in which he began to reign with his father, for he reigned two years with him; who is the Nabopolassar of Ptolemy. This was in the year of the world 3397, and before Christ 607, according to Bishop Usher {f}.

{f} Annales Vet. Test. p. 119.

Jeremiah 25:2

Ver. 2. The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah,.... Perhaps at one of the three feasts, at which all the males appeared in Jerusalem; for it cannot be thought that he went up and down throughout all parts of the land to deliver this prophecy, but to as many of them as he found in Jerusalem in any place, at any time; and none so likely as what is mentioned:

and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: to whom he had an opportunity of speaking frequently:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 25:3

Ver. 3. From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day,.... The year in which Jeremiah began to prophesy, **Jer 1:2**;

(that [is], the three and twentieth year); for Josiah reigned one and thirty years; so that Jeremiah prophesied nineteen years in his reign; and now it was the fourth of Jehoiakim's, which make twenty three years; so long the prophet had been prophesying to this people:

the word of the Lord hath come unto me; from time to time, during that space of twenty three years; and which he diligently, constantly, and faithfully delivered unto them; as follows:

and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking: as soon as ever he had a word from the Lord, he brought it to them, and took the most proper and seasonable time to inculcate it to them; in the morning, and after, he had had a vision or dream in the night from the Lord;

but ye have not hearkened; they took no notice of it; turned a deaf ear to it; however, did not obey or act as they were directed and exhorted to.

Jeremiah 25:4

Ver. 4. And the Lord hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets,.... Not only him, but many others, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and others:

rising early and sending [them]; not only the prophet, but the Lord himself is said to rise early, and send his prophets to them; which denotes his great care and concern for this people for their good; see **Jer 7:25**;

but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear; which is an aggravation of their sin; that whereas they had one prophet after another sent to them, and sent by the Lord himself; he rising early, and sending them; and they rising early, being sent to do their message; and yet were not hearkened and attended to.

Jeremiah 25:5

Ver. 5. They said,.... The prophets: this was the substance of their discourses and prophecies, what follows:

turn ye again now everyone from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings; repent of sins, and reform from them; particularly their idolatries, to which they were prone, and are after mentioned:

and dwell in the land that the Lord hath given unto you to your fathers for ever and ever; that is, the land of Canaan, which was given to them, and their fathers before them, by the Lord, for an everlasting inheritance, provided they behaved towards him aright; for they held the possession of it by their obedience to his law; and now, notwithstanding all that they had done, or had been threatened with; yet, if they repented and reformed, they should still dwell in the land, and enjoy it, and all the blessings and privileges of it.

Jeremiah 25:6

Ver. 6. And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them,.... So long as they served the Lord God, they continued in their own land, in the comfortable enjoyment of all the blessings of it; for their government was a theocracy; God was their King; and as long as they served and worshipped him only, he protected and defended them; but when they forsook him, and went after other gods, and served and worshipped them, then they were threatened to be turned out of their land, and carried captive into other lands; and yet, after all, if they returned from their idolatries, and left off worshipping idols, the Lord was ready to receive them kindly, and continue his favours to them:

and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; their idols, which their own hands made, and then fell down to worship them; than which nothing can be more provoking to God:

and I will do you no hurt; by sword, or famine, or pestilence, or captivity; signifying the hurt he had threatened them with should not be done, provided they forsook their idolatrous worship; God does no hurt to his true worshippers; yea, he makes all things work together for their good.

Jeremiah 25:7

Ver. 7. Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the Lord,.... Though it was he that spake unto them by his prophets; and though it was so much to their own good and advantage; and the neglect of him and his word were so much to their disadvantage, and even ruin:

that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands, to your own hurt: which, though not signed to do either, yet eventually did both; both provoked the Lord, and brought destruction upon themselves; for whatever is against the glory of God is to the hurt of man; and whatever provokes him is pernicious to them in its consequences.

Jeremiah 25:8

Ver. 8. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... Of armies above and below; and so can do what he pleases in heaven and in earth:

because ye have not heard my words; by the prophets, so as to obey them; they had heard them externally, but did not observe to do them.

Jeremiah 25:9

Ver. 9. Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord,.... The Targum is, the kingdoms of the north, the same with those in **Jer 1:15**; even all those kingdoms which were subject to the king of Babylon, and lay north of Judea:

and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon my servant: though a great king, he was a servant of the Lord of hosts; his servant, both as a creature of his make, and as a king that ruled under him; and as he was an instrument in his hand to chastise his people the Jews; though it was not knowingly and with intention that he served the Lord:

and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof; the land of Judea, and its inhabitants; this was the Lord's doing; it was he that stirred, up the king of Babylon, and by his secret instinct and powerful providence brought him and his armies into Judea to spoil it, and the inhabitants of it Jehovah as it were marched at the head of them, and led them on, and brought them against the Jews, and delivered them into their hands:

and against all these nations round about; Egypt and others; so that the Jews could have no help from them; nor would application to them, and alliance with them, signify anything:

and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations; both the Jews and their neighbours; who should be an astonishment to some, and a hissing to others, and remain desolate for a long time; even till the seventy years were ended after mentioned.

Jeremiah 25:10

Ver. 10. Moreover, I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness,.... At their festivals, and nuptial solemnities:

the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride; expressing their mutual love unto, and delight in, each other; so agreeable to one another and their friends: or it may mean those epithalamies, or nuptial songs, sung unto them by their friends:

the sound of the millstones; either the voice of those that sing at the mill while grinding; or rather the sound of the stones themselves used in grinding; either in grinding spices for the bride cakes; or rather in grinding corn for common use; and so denotes the taking away of bread corn from them, and the want of that. The sense is, there should be corn to grind, and so no use of the mill:

and the light of the candle; at their feasts and weddings, or rather, for common use; signifying that houses should be desolate, without inhabitants, no light in them, nor work to be done. The whole shows that they should be deprived of everything both for necessity and pleasure. John seems to have borrowed some phrases from hence,
Re 18:22; in which he appears to have followed the Hebrew text, and not the Greek version. The Targum of the last clause is,

"the voice of the company of those that sing at the light of candles."

Jeremiah 25:11

Ver. 11. And this whole land shall be a desolation,.... Not only the city of Jerusalem, but all Judea, without inhabitants, or very few, and shall be uncultivated, and become barren and unfruitful:

[and] an astonishment; to all other nations, and to all persons that pass through, beholding the desolations of it:

and other nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years; both the Jews, and other nations of Egypt, reckoning from the date of this prophecy, the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, when Daniel and others were carried captive, **Da 1:1**; to the first year of Cyrus.

Jeremiah 25:12

Ver. 12. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished,.... Which were accomplished in the first year of Cyrus: they began with the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, who reigned two years and two months with his father Nabopolassar; after that forty three years by himself; Evilmerodach two years: Neriglissar four years; Belshazzar or Nabonadius seventeen years; and Darius the Median two years; which all make sixty nine years and two months; and if ten months more be added to complete the said seventy years, it will carry the end of them to the first year of Cyrus {g}. These years are differently reckoned by others; by Spanhemius, from the first of Nebuchadnezzar, or fourth of Jehoiakim, to the destruction of the city under Zedekiah, nineteen years; thence to the death of Nebuchadnezzar, twenty four; then Evilmerodach, two; then the reign of Neriglissar, including some months of Laborosoarchod, five; then the years of Nabonadius, or Belshazzar, seventeen; and from his death, or the taking of Babylon, to the death of Darius the Mede, two years; which make sixty nine, exclusive of the first of Cyrus; and comes to much the same as the former. By James Alting thus; from the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, complete, to his death, twenty six years; Evilmerodach, twenty three; Belshazzar, three; Darius the Mede, eighteen, after the destruction of the Babylonish empire; which seems very wrong; better, by Dr. Lightfoot, thus; Nebuchadnezzar, forty five current; Evilmerodach, twenty three; and Belshazzar, three {h}. So the Jewish chronicle {i}:

[that] I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity; the king for his tyranny, and the nation for their idolatry; and both for these and other sins they were guilty of; for, though they did the will of God in carrying the Jews captive, they no doubt in their usage of them exceeded their commission, and were justly punishable for their iniquities. This is not to be understood of the present king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar; but of Nabonadius, or Belshazzar, whom the Lord punished by Cyrus; who appears to have been a very wicked man, and in the excess of not, profaning the vessels of the temple the night he was slain, **Da 5:1**;

and the land of the Chaldeans; and will make it perpetual desolations; even as other nations had been made by them, Jer 25:9.

{g} See Prideaux's Connexion, par. 1. B. 2. p. 130. {h} Vid. Witsii Exercitat. 11. in Miscel. Sacr. tom. 2. p. 282, 283. {i} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 28. p. 81.

Jeremiah 25:13

Ver. 13. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it,.... By his prophets, and particularly by Jeremiah, as follows; for not one word that is spoken by the Lord, either in a way of promise or threatening, shall fail; his truth, power, and faithfulness, are engaged to accomplish all:

[even] all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations; the Egyptians, Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, Arabians,

Persians, and also the Babylonians, in
Jer 46:1, which prophecies, in the Greek version, immediately follow here, though in a confused manner; where some have thought they might be more regularly placed than as they are in the Hebrew copies, at the end of the book; but of this there seems to be no absolute necessity.

Jeremiah 25:14

Ver. 14. For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also,.... Take their cities, seize upon the kingdoms, spoil them of their wealth and riches, and bring them into servitude to them: these "many nations", which should and did do all this, were the Medes and Persians, and those that were subject to them, or were their allies and auxiliaries in this expedition; and the "great kings" were Cyrus and Darius, and those that were confederate with them:

and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands; as they have done to others, it shall be done to them; as they have served themselves of other nations, other nations shall serve themselves of them; as they have cruelly used others, they shall be used with cruelty themselves; and as they have made other countries desolate, their land shall become desolate also; not only their tyranny and cruelty, but all their other sins, shall receive a just recompence of reward.

Jeremiah 25:15

Ver. 15. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me,.... The prophet:

take the wine cup of this fury at my hand; in a vision the Lord appeared to Jeremiah with a cup of wine in his hand, which he bid him take of him. It is usual in Scripture for the judgments of God on men to be signified by a cup of hot and intoxicating liquor, Isa 51:17; particularly in Ps 75:8; to which reference may be had; as John seems to refer to the passage here in Re 14:10; called a cup, because they are in measure, and but small in comparison of what will be inflicted in the world to come; and a cup of "fury", because they proceed from the wrath of God, stirred up by the sins of men. Jarchi interprets this cup of the prophecy of vengeance, which the Lord delivered to Jeremiah;

and not amiss:

and cause all the nations to whom I send thee to drink it; prophesy unto them what wrath and ruin shall come upon them.

Jeremiah 25:16

Ver. 16. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad,.... The judgments foretold shall come upon them, whether they will or not; which will have such effects upon them, as intoxicating liquor has on drunken persons; make them shake and tremble, and reel to and fro, and toss and tumble about, and behave like madmen:

because of the sword that I will send among them; this explains what is meant by the wine cup of fury, the sword of a foreign enemy that shall enter among them and destroy; and which would make them tremble, and be at their wits' end, like drunken and mad men.

Jeremiah 25:17

Ver. 17. Then took I the cup at the Lord's hand,.... In a visionary way, and did as he commanded, and prophesied as he directed him. The prophet was obedient to the heavenly vision, as became him:

and made all the nations to drink, unto whom, the Lord had sent me; not that he travelled through each of the nations with a cup in his hand, as an emblem of what wrath would come upon them, and they should drink deep of; but this was done in vision, and also in prophecy; the prophet publishing the will of God, denouncing his judgments upon the nations, and declaring to them what would befall them.

Jeremiah 25:18

Ver. 18. [To wit], Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah,.... Which are mentioned first, because God's judgments began with them, as they usually do with the house of God, **1Pe 4:17**; and even now began; for this very year, in which this prophecy was delivered, Nebuchadnezzar came up and besieged Jerusalem, and carried away some captives, **Da 1:1**; this was the beginning of what afterwards were more fully executed:

and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof: the Kings Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah, with those of their families, the princes of the blood, and their nobles:

to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; to strip them of their crowns and kingdom, of their wealth, and riches, and honour, and bring them into slavery and bondage; so that they became an astonishment to some, to see the change that was made in them; and were hissed stand cursed by others:

(as [it is] this day); which is added, either because of the certainty of it, or because it began to take, place this very year; though more fully in Jeconiah's time, and still more in Zedekiah's; or rather this clause might be added by Jeremiah after the captivity; or by Baruch, or by Ezra, or whoever collected his prophecies, and put them into one volume, as Jer 52:1 seems to be added by another hand.

Jeremiah 25:19

Ver. 19. Pharaoh king of Egypt,.... Who is mentioned first after the kings of Judah; not only because the Jews were in alliance with Egypt, and trusted to them; and therefore this is observed, to show the vanity of their confidence and dependence; but because the judgments of God first took place on the king of Egypt; for in this very year, in which this prophecy was delivered, Pharaohnecho king of Egypt was smitten by Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 46:2; though the prophecy had a further accomplishment in Pharaohhophra, who was given into the hands of his enemies, as foretold, Jer 44:30;

and his servants, and his princes, and all his people; his menial servants, his domestics, and his nobles and peers of the realm, and all his subjects. It expresses an utter destruction of the kingdom of Egypt; and the particulars of it may be the rather given, to show the vain trust of the Jews in that people.

Jeremiah 25:20

Ver. 20. And all the mingled people,.... Not the Arabians, who are mentioned afterwards, Jer 25:24; but rather a mixed people in the land of Egypt, such as came out of it along with the Israelites; or were near it, and bordered upon it, as the Targum; which renders it, all the bordering kings; or rather a mixture of people of different nations that dwelt by the sea coasts, either the Mediterranean, or the Red sea, as others think:

and all the kings of the land of Uz; not the country of Job, called by the Greeks Ausitis, as the Vulgate Latin version; but rather a country of Idumea, so called from Uz the son of Dishan, the son of Seir, **La 4:21**;

and all the kings of the land of the Philistines; the petty kings of it, called the lords of the Philistines elsewhere, who were great enemies to the people of the Jews: the prophecy of their destruction is in forty seventh chapter, and whose principal cities are next mentioned:

and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod; of Ashkelon, and the sword in it, and ruin, see Jer 47:5. "Azzah" is the same with Gaza, whose destruction is also foretold in Jer 47:1; see **Ac 8:26**; "Ekron" was another of the cities of the Philistines; see **1Sa 5:10**; and "Ashdod" is the same with Azotus, another of their cities, **Ac 8:40**; called "the remnant of Ashdod", because the remains only of a once very strong and fortified place; but was so weakened and wasted by Psammiticus, king of Egypt, in a blockade of it, for the space of nine and twenty years {k}, before he took it, that when he had got in it, it was but as the carcass of a city, to what it was before {l}.

{k} Herodot. l. 2. c. 157. {l} Vid. Prideaux, Connexion, part 1. B. 1. p. 34.

Jeremiah 25:21

Ver. 21. Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon. All well known and implacable enemies of Israel. The Edomites descended from Esau; and the Moabites and Ammonites from Moab and Ammon, the two sons of Lot by his daughters. Their destruction is prophesied of in the forty eighth and forty ninth chapters.

Jeremiah 25:22

Ver. 22. And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon,.... Two very ancient cities in Phoenicia, frequently mentioned together in Scripture, being near each other. Their ruin is foretold in Jer 47:4;

and the kings of the isles which [are] beyond the sea; which some understand of Greece and Italy; others of Rhodes, Cyprus, and Crete, and other islands in the Mediterranean sea; the Cyclades, as Jerom: but the words may be rendered, "and the kings of the country by the seaside"; and may design those that dwell upon the coast of the Mediterranean sea.

Jeremiah 25:23

Ver. 23. Dedan, and Tema, and Buz,.... These seem to be places in Edom or Idumea, of whose destruction Jeremiah prophesies in Jer 49:7; or rather in Arabia and Mesopotamia. Jerom reckons them among the Ishmaelites and Saracens, The persons from whom they descended are mentioned in Ge 22:21;

and all [that are] in the utmost corners; that is, either of the above countries, or of the whole earth: or "all that had their hair shorn" {m}; or the corners of their beards; which Jerom says is applicable to the Saracens.

{m} hap yuwuq lk "universis qui attonsi sunt in comam", V. L. "barbitonsis", Syr.

Jeremiah 25:24

Ver. 24. And all the kings of Arabia,.... Of Arabia Petraea;

and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert; the other Arabians or mixed people, that dwell in Arabia Deserta, as the Scenites, Nomades, Kedarenes, and others; and so the Targum,

"and all the kings of the Arabians, that dwell in tents in the desert."

Of these, see the prophecy in Jer 49:28.

Jeremiah 25:25

Ver. 25. And all the kings of Zimri,.... Of Arabia Felix, so called from Zimran, a son of Abraham by Keturah, Ge 25:2; the same whom Pliny {n} calls Zamerenes;

and all the kings of Elam; or Persia; who are prophesied against in Jer 49:34;

and all the kings of the Medes; who commonly go together with the Persians.

{n} Nat. Hist. I. 6. c. 28.

Jeremiah 25:26

Ver. 26. And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another,.... That were on the north of Judea, the kings of Syria, and those that were near to the kingdom of Babylon, whether more remote from Judea, or nearer it and which joined one another in that part of the world;

and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth; the whole Babylonian monarchy, called the whole world; as the Roman empire afterwards was, **Lu 2:1**;

and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them; or the king of Babylon, as the Targum; and that Babylon is meant by "Sheshach" is certain from Jer 51:41; but why it is so called is not so easy to say. The Jewish writers make it to be the same with Babylon, by a change of the letters in the alphabet, put in such a situation, which they call "Athbash", in which "shin" is put for "beth", and "caph" for "lamed"; and so, instead of Babel or Babylon, you have "Sheshach", which is thought to be used rather than Babylon, that Nebuchadnezzar, now besieging Jerusalem, might not be irritated: but others take it to be the name of an idol of the Babylonians, from whence the city was called, which is not improbable; for, as Hillerus {o} has observed, their god Bel and Sheshach signify the same thing. Bel is the same as Behal, "swift"; and "Sheshach" may be derived from the Arabic word which signifies "to move swiftly" {p}; and may both be names of the sun, worshipped by the Chaldeans, so called from the swiftness of its motion. Now in Babylon stood the temple of Bel or Sheshach, and so might have its name from thence: and it may be further observed, what has been by others, that the Babylonians had a public festival, like the Saturnalia of the Romans, which held five days, and was called Sacchoea or Shace, as is supposed from their god Shach, to whom it was kept:

to which may be added, that Mishael had the name of Meshach given him in Babylon; "Shach", in the one, answering to "El" in the other; which signifies God, **Da 1:7**. Shach is used for a king or prince in the Persic language to this day. And now the king of Sheshach or Babylon must drink of the cup, or be punished last of all; who was the instrument of destroying most of the rest, yet should not go unpunished.

{o} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 596, 597, 598, 611. {p} , "celer fuit, celeriter processit", Golius, col. 2676.

Jeremiah 25:27

Ver. 27. Therefore thou shalt say unto them,.... To the several nations before mentioned, prophesied against:

thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; the Lord of armies, above and below, the Sovereign of the whole universe; but in a special and peculiar manner the God of Israel:

drink ye, and be drunken, and spew, and fall, and rise no more; as is sometimes the case of drunken men; they drink till they are quite intoxicated; and become drunk, and then they spew up what they have drunk; and, attempting to walk, fall, and sometimes so as never to rise more; not only break their bones, but their necks, or fall into places where they are suffocated, or in one or other, where they lose their lives. So it is signified, that these nations should drink of the cup of God's wrath and fury; or his judgments should come upon them in such a manner as that they should be obliged to part with all their riches, power, and authority; and should fall and sink into such a ruinous condition, as that they should never be able to the more to a prosperous one:

because of the sword that I will send among you; by which they should be destroyed. The Targum joins this with the preceding clause, thus,

"and ye shall not rise from before those that kill with the sword, whom I send among you."

Jeremiah 25:28

Ver. 28. And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink,.... To give credit to the prophecies of ruin and destruction delivered by the prophet, but say, these things shall not be:

then shalt thou say unto them, thus saith the Lord of hosts, ye shall certainly drink; or those judgments shall certainly be inflicted; there will be no possibility of escaping, whether they were believed or not; or how unwilling soever they were to believe the denunciations of them, or to have them come upon them; yet assuredly so it would be; for thus saith the Lord of hosts, who is omnipotent, and does what he pleases in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, over whom he has a despotic power and government,

Jeremiah 25:29

Ver. 29. For, lo, I begin to bring evil upon the city which is called by my name,.... Jerusalem, the city of God, the holy city, where his name was called upon, and he was worshipped; on this he would first bring down his judgments; and indeed he had already begun to bring evil on it; for this very year Nebuchadnezzar came up to besiege it, and carried some away captives:

and should ye be utterly unpunished? or could they expect to go free from punishment, who had so grossly sinned, and were guilty of such abominable idolatries, and had been the means of drawing in the people of God into the same; and therefore, since the professing people of God, who had been drawn in by their examples, were punished, they could not, they ought not, to think of escaping. See the like argument in
Lu 23:31;

ye shall not be unpunished; or cleared, or acquitted, or go free; but made instances and examples of vindictive justice:

for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth,
saith the Lord of hosts; or I will call them that kill with the sword, as the Targum; who will obey the call, answer to it, and come forth and slay the inhabitants of the earth, and none shall escape.

Jeremiah 25:30

Ver. 30. Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them,.... What follows, as well as declare all that is before spoken concerning the cup of fury all nations must drink of:

the Lord shall roar from on high: from, heaven, like a lion, in violent claps of thunder; or in such dreadful dispensations of his providence, as will be very amazing and terrifying:

and utter his voice from his holy habitation; from heaven, as before; and though it will be terrible, yet quite consistent with his holiness and justice:

he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; the temple at Jerusalem, where he had his residence; but now should be deserted by him, and feel the effects of his wrath in the destruction and desolation of it: or rather, since the address is made to the nations of the world, and not to the Jews, it may be rendered, "in" or "out of his habitation" {q}; and so designs heaven, as before; and all these expressions are intended to show both the certainty and terribleness of the dispensation;

he shall give a shout, as they that tread [the grapes], against all the inhabitants of the earth; or, "answer a shout" {r}; give the onset for battle against the inhabitants of the earth, as the general of an army; which is accompanied with a shout, like that which is made by workmen treading in the wine press, to encourage one another to go on the more cheerfully in their work.

{q} whwn le "in habitaculo suo", Junius & Tremellius; "vel [ex habitaculo]", Gataker, Schmidt. {r} hney ddyh "heded respondebit", Schmidt; "celeusma respondebit", Gataker.

Jeremiah 25:31

Ver. 31. A noise shall come up [even] to the ends of the earth,.... Wars, and rumours of wars, everywhere, till the cup has gone round, and all nations have drank of it, and have felt the power of divine wrath for their sins:

for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations; will enter into a judicial process with them; will litigate the point with them, and try it openly; that it may be seen who is in the right, and who in the wrong:

he will plead with all flesh; or enter into judgment with them, as Kimchi; or reprove them in judgment, as Jarchi; he will be too many for them; he will carry his case, overcome them in judgment, and reprove and condemn them. Or the words may be rendered, "he will be judged by all flesh" {s}; he will submit it to the judgment of the whole world, if it is not a righteous thing in him to do what he is about to do, and will do; he will make it clear and manifest that he does nothing unjustly, but all according to the strict rules of justice and equity:

he will give them [that are] wicked to the sword, saith the Lord; to be destroyed by it, and none but them; and seeing they are such that deserve it, he is not to be charged with unrighteousness in so doing.

{s} rvb lkl awh jpvn "judicium subibit ipse cum omni carne", Tigurine version.

Jeremiah 25:32

Ver. 32. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation,.... Begin in one nation, and then go on to another; first in Judea, and then in Egypt; and so on, like a catching distemper, or like fire that first consumes one house, and then another; and thus shall the cup go round from nation to nation, before prophesied of: thus, beginning at Judea, one nation after another was destroyed by the king of Babylon; then he and his monarchy were destroyed by the Medes and Persians; and then they by the Macedonians; and then the Greeks by the Romans;

and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth; or "from the sides of [it]" {t}; that is, "from the ends of [it]"; as the Targum, which paraphrases it,

"and many people shall come openly from the ends of the earth;"

this was first verified in the Chaldean army under Nebuchadnezzar, compared to a whirlwind, **Jer 4:13**; and then in the Medes and Persians under Cyrus; and after that in the Greeks under Alexander; the great and last of all in the Romans under Titus Vespasian.

{t} Ura ytkrym "a lateribus terrae", Schmidt; "a finibus terrae", Vatablus.

Jeremiah 25:33

Ver. 33. And the slain of the Lord,.... Slain by his permission, yea, by his orders, according to his will, in his wrath and sore displeasure, and to glorify his vindictive justice:

shall be at that day from [one] end of the earth even unto the [other] end of the earth; not that this should be at one and the same time; for there never was such a time, that there was such a general slaughter in the world, that the slain should reach from one end to the other; but that within the dispensation, in which the cup should go round to all nations, meant by "that day", the slain of the Lord would be in all parts of the world; or that, according to his will, there would be a great slaughter everywhere, as the cup went round, or the sword was sent, first ravaging one country, and then another;

they shall not be lamented; having no pity from their enemies; and as for their friends, they will share the same rite with them; so that there will be none to mourn over them:

neither gathered; taken up from the field of battle where they fall; but, where they should fall, there they should lie; none gathering up their bodies or bones, in order for interment:

nor buried; in the sepulchres of their fathers, nor indeed in any place, or in any manner; as not in any grand and magnificent manner, so not so much as in a common way;

they shall be dung upon the ground; spread upon it, and lie above it, as dung, to manure the earth.

Jeremiah 25:34

Ver. 34. Howl, ye shepherds, and cry,.... The Targum is,

"howl, ye kings, and cry;"

and the rulers and governors of the nations before threatened with destruction are meant; who are here called upon to lamentation and mourning for the ruin and loss of their kingdoms; though Calvin thinks that this is an apostrophe to the Jewish nation, and the rulers of it. It is no uncommon thing in Scripture to call kings and civil magistrates shepherds; see Jer 23:1;

and wallow yourselves [in the ashes], ye principal of the flock; or "roll yourselves [in dust]", as a token of mourning; as being in the utmost distress, and incapable of helping themselves, and redressing the grievances of their people; and therefore lie down and tumble about as in the greatest anxiety and trouble, the Targum is,

"cover your heads with ashes, ye mighty of the people;"

meaning those who were in the highest posts of honour and profit; the chief as to authority and power, riches and wealth;

for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; the time is come when they who were the fat of the flock, and were nourished up for slaughter, should be slain. The allusion to shepherds and sheep is still kept up; and such who should escape that, should be scattered up and down the world, as a flock of sheep is by the wolf, or any other beast of prey, when some are seized and devoured, and others dispersed; and this was not the case of the Jews only, but of other nations in their turn;

and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel; a vessel of worth and value, and so desirable; as vessels of glass, of gems, or of earth, as of Venice glass, of alabaster, of China; which when they fall and are broken, become useless, and are irreparable; signifying hereby, that their desirableness and excellency would not secure them from destruction, and that their ruin would be irretrievable.

Jeremiah 25:35

Ver. 35. And the shepherds shall have no way to flee,.... Or, "and flight shall perish from the shepherds" {u}; though they may attempt it, they shall not be able to accomplish it; neither the dignity of their persons, the greatness of their power, or the abundance of their riches, would make a way for them; their enemies being so numerous, powerful, and watchful:

nor the principal of the flock to escape; this was particularly verified in Zedekiah and his princes, Jer 39:4. The Targum is, "and the house of fugitives shall perish from the kings, and deliverance from the mighty of the people."

{u} Myerh Nm ownm dbaw "et peribit fuga a pastoribus", V. L. "effugiumperibit", Schmidt; "perfugium", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 25:36

Ver. 36. And a voice of the cry of the shepherds,.... Or of the kings, as the Targum:

and an howling of the principal of the flock, [shall be heard]; of the mighty of the people, as the same; what is before called for is here represented as in fact, because of the certainty of it:

for the Lord hath spoiled their pastures: their kingdoms, provinces, cities, and towns; or their people, as the Targum, among whom they lived, and by whom they were supported; still keeping up the metaphor of the shepherd and flock. This the Lord is said to do because he suffered it to be done, yea, ordered it to be done, as a punishment for their sins.

Jeremiah 25:37

Ver. 37. And the peaceable habitations are cut down,.... Or, "their peaceable ones", as the Targum; the palaces and stately dwellings, in which they lived in great pomp and prosperity, in great peace, plenty, and safety, are destroyed by the enemy, and laid waste, and become desolate; yea, even those that lived peaceably and quietly, and neither were disturbed themselves, nor disturbed others, yet, as is usual in times of war, share the same fate with their neighbours, who have been more troublesome and molesting:

because of the fierce anger of the Lord; or "from before [it], from the face [of it]"; shall be destroyed by it, that being displayed; and using enemies as instruments in the destruction of them. Sin is the cause of God's wrath and fierce anger, and his wrath and anger the cause of the destruction of men and their habitations, Whoever are the instruments.

Jeremiah 25:38

Ver. 38. He hath forsaken his covert as a lion,.... Which some understand of God leaving Jerusalem, or the temple, where he dwelt; who, while he made it his residence, protected it; but when he forsook it, it became exposed to the enemy. Kimchi says it may be understood of the destruction of the first temple by Nebuchadnezzar; but he thinks it is most correct to interpret it of the destruction of the second temple; that is, by the Romans, when it was left desolate by Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. But it may be understood of Nebuchadnezzar leaving Babylon, his den, and ranging about like a]ion for his prey; see **Jer 4:7**. So the Targum,

"and a king has removed from his tower or fortress;"

and the land is desolate; the land of Judea, or whatsoever country he comes into with his army; that, or Egypt, or any other:

because of the fierceness of the oppressor; the tyrant Nebuchadnezzar; or "oppressing sword" {w}, as some supply it, it being feminine; and so the Targum,

"from before the sword of the enemy."

Some render it, "because of the fierceness of the dove"; so the Vulgate Latin; and understand it of the Babylonians or Chaldeans; who, as the Romans had an eagle, they had the dove on their standards or ensigns; which they received from the Assyrians, when they succeeded them in their monarchy; and those from Semiramis their first queen, who had it, it is said, on her standard {x}; and was retained in honour of her, and in memory of her being nourished by a dove, and turned into one after her death, as commonly believed {y}; and who had her name, as is affirmed {z}, from the word arymu, "semira", signifying, in the Chaldee language, the song or cooing of the dove; but fierceness ill agrees with the dove, which is a meek and harmless creature;

and because of his fierce anger; either of God, or of the king of Babylon his instrument, in destroying nations; not Judea only, but many others.

{w} hnwyh "gladii opprimentis", Junius & Tremellius; "gladii abripientis", Piscator. So Gataker and Ben Melech. {x} R. David Gantz, Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 4. 1. Vid. Lydium, de Re Militare, l. 3. c. 7. p. 83, 84. {y} Vid. Diodor. Sicul l. 2. p. 92, 107. Ed. Rhodoman. {z} R. Azarias, Meor, Enayim,

c. 21. fol. 89. 2. Vid Selden, De Dieu, Syris, l. 2. c. 3. p. 275.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 26:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 26

This chapter gives an account of Jeremiah's preaching; of his being apprehended by the people; of his defence of himself, and acquittance upon it. The time when, place where, and persons to whom the prophet delivered his discourse, are pointed at in Jer 26:1; the substance of it was, that if the people of the Jews would repent of their sins and turn from them, the Lord would avert the evil he had threatened them with; but if not, he would make their temple like Shiloh, and their city a curse to all the earth, Jer 26:3; upon hearing which the people seized him, and vowed he should die, because he had prophesied of the destruction of their city and temple, Jer 26:7; which the princes hearing of, came from the king's house to one of the gates of the temple, and sat as a court of judicature; to whom the priests and prophets accused Jeremiah of the above things as worthy of death, Jer 26:10; and before whom the prophet made his defence, alleging his mission and orders from the Lord; and therefore, instead of recanting, repeats his exhortation; and as for himself, he was not careful what they did to him; but advises them not to shed innocent blood, since it would bring evil upon them, Jer 26:12; upon which the princes acquit him, and declare him innocent, Jer 26:16; and this is confirmed by a like instance of Micah the prophet, in the times of Hezekiah, who prophesied of the destruction of Jerusalem, and yet was not put to death, Jer 26:17; and by a contrary instance of Uriah, in the then present reign of Jehoiakim, who had been put to death for the like, but wrongly, Jer 26:20; and, in the issue, Jeremiah, through the good office of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, particularly, was saved from being put to death, Jer 26:24.

Ver. 1. In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah,.... So that the prophecy of this chapter, and the facts and events connected with it, were before the prophecy of the preceding chapter, though here related; that being in the fourth year, this in the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign. Josiah was lately dead; Jehoahaz his son reigned but three months, and then was deposed by Pharaohnecho king of Egypt; and this Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah, who before was called Eliakim, was set on the throne; and quickly after his coming to it came this word from the Lord, saying; as follows, to the prophet. This was in the year of the world 3394, and before Christ 610, according to Bishop Usher {a}; with whom agree Mr, Whiston {b}, and the authors of the Universal History {c}.

{a} Annales Vet. Test. p. 118. {b} Chronological Tables, cent. 9. {c} Vol. 21. p. 58.

Jeremiah 26:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith the Lord, stand in the court of the Lord's house,.... It, the great court of Israel, where the people used to meet together for worship:

and speak unto all the cities of Judah; the inhabitants of them; not only to those that dwelt at Jerusalem but in the rest of the cities of Judah; for what he was to say concerned them all, they having all sinned, and needed repentance and reformation; without which they would be involved in the general calamity of the nation:

which come to worship in the Lord's house; as they did three times in the year, at the feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; and it was now the last of these, as Bishop Usher thinks, when this prophecy was to be delivered to them:

all the words that I command thee to speak to them: nothing must be kept back, the whole counsel of God must be declared; not a word suppressed through affection to them, or fear of them; God commanded, and must be obeyed, let the consequence be what it will:

diminish not a word; soften not any expression or alter any word, by putting one more smooth for one rough; or change the accent, or abate of the vehemency of delivering it; but both for matter manner, and form let it be as directed, without any subtraction and diminution, change or alteration: a rule which every minister of the word ought to attend to; seeking not to please men, but God that sends him and Christ whose minister he is.

Jeremiah 26:3

Ver. 3. If so be they will hearken,.... And obey; which is expressive not of ignorance and conjecture in God, but of his patience and long suffering, granting space and time for repentance, and the means of it; which disregarded, leave without excuse:

and turn every man from his evil way; his series and course of life, which was evil, and was the case of everyone; so that as their sin was general, the reformation ought to be so too:

that I may repent me of the evil which I purpose to do unto them; or "am thinking", or "devising {d} to do unto them"; which repentance must be understood not of a change of mind, but of the course of his providence towards them, which, by his threatenings, and some steps taken, portended ruin and destruction; yet, in case of repentance and reformation, he would change his method of action agreeably to his will:

because of the evil of their doings; this was the reason why he had threatened them with the evil of punishment, because of the evil of their actions; which were breaches of his law, and such as provoked the eyes of his glory.

{d} bvx ykna rva "quod ego (sum) cogitans", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 26:4

Ver. 4. And thou shalt say unto them,.... What follows is the substance of the prophecy, and the sum of the sermon or discourse he was sent to deliver, without diminishing a word of it:

thus saith the Lord, if ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law which I have set before you; first by Moses, by whose hands it was given to their fathers; and by the prophets, the interpreters of it to them; before whom it was set as a way for them to walk in, and a rule to walk by; a directory for them in their lives and conversations; and which continues to be so, as it is set before us Christians by our King and Lawgiver Jesus Christ; though not to obtain righteousness and life by the works of it; which should not be sought for, nor are attainable thereby.

Jeremiah 26:5

Ver. 5. To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets,.... The interpretations they give of the law; the doctrines they deliver; the exhortations, cautions, and reproofs given by them in the name of the Lord, whose servants they were; and therefore should be hearkened to; since hearkening to them is hearkening to the Lord himself, in whose name they speak, and whose message they deliver:

whom I sent unto you, both rising up early and sending [them]; they had their mission and commission from the Lord; and who was careful to send them early, if they might be instruments to do them good and prevent their ruin; they had the best of means, and these seasonable, and so were left without excuse:

(but ye have not hearkened); neither to the Lord, nor to his prophets; but went on in their own ways, neglecting the law of the Lord and the instructions of his servants.

Jeremiah 26:6

Ver. 6. Then will I make this house like Shiloh,.... Where the ark was until it was taken by the Philistines; and then the Lord forsook his tabernacle there, Ps 78:60; and so he threatens to do the like to the temple at Jerusalem, should they continue in their disobedience to him;
See Gill on "Jer 7:12" and
See Gill on "Jer 7:14";

and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth; that is, the city of Jerusalem, which should be taken up, and used proverbially in all countries; who, when they would curse anyone, should say, the Lord make thee as Jerusalem, or do unto thee as he has done to Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 26:7

Ver. 7. So the priests, and the prophets, and all the people,.... As it was in the temple, in one of the courts of it, that Jeremiah was, and said the above things, it is no wonder to hear of the "priests", since they were there about their work and service; the "prophets" were the false prophets, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions expressly call them; and "all the people" were all the males out of the several cities of Judah, who were come up to the temple on the account of the feast; see Jer 26:2; now these

heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord; in the temple; in the court of Israel; they heard him out, and did not interrupt him while he was speaking; and having heard him, they were angry with him, and were witnesses against him; they did not hear him so as to obey his words, receive his instructions, and follow, his directions; but they heard him with indignation, and were determined to prosecute him unto death.

Jeremiah 26:8

Ver. 8. Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking,.... For they let him alone till he had done, either out of reverence of him as a priest and prophet; or they were awed by a secret influence on their minds that they might not disturb him:

all that the Lord had commanded [him] to speak unto all the people; he did as he was ordered, kept back nothing, not fearing the resentment of the people, but fearing God:

that the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, took him; the priests and the prophets were the leading men in this action; they stirred up the people against him, and through their instigation he was seized and laid hold on:

saying, thou shall surely die; signifying that they would bring a charge against him, which they were able to support, and which by the law would be death; unless they meant in the manner of zealots to put him to death themselves, without judge or jury; and which they would have put in execution, had not the princes of the land, or the great sanhedrim, heard of it; and therefore to prevent it came to the temple, as is afterwards related.

Jeremiah 26:9

Ver. 9. Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord,.... Made use of his name in declaring a falsehood, as they would have it; this was the crime: had he said what he thought fit to say in his own name, they suggest it would not have been so bad; but to vent his own imaginations in the name of the Lord, this they judged wicked and blasphemous, and deserving of death; especially since what he said was against their city and temple:

saying, this house shall be like Shiloh; forsaken and destroyed; that is, the temple:

and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? so they wrested his words; for this he did not say, only that it should be a curse to all the nations of the earth:

and all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the Lord; besides those that were in the temple that heard him, others, upon a rumour that he was apprehended by the priests, and prophets, and people in the temple, got together in a mob about him: or, they were "gathered to" {e} him; to hear what he had to say in his own defence; and it appears afterwards that they were on his side, Jer 26:16.

{e} la "ad Jeremiam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 26:10

Ver. 10. When the princes of Judah heard these things,.... The tumult there was in the temple; these were the princes of the blood, or the nobles of the realm, particularly the courtiers, and who were of the king's privy council; or else the great sanhedrim, consisting of seventy persons, and were the chief court of judicature:

then they came up from the king's house to the house of the Lord; from the royal palace where they resided; by which it should seem that they were the king's courtiers, and counsellors, and officers of state; unless in those times the sanhedrim sat there; from hence they came up to the temple, where Jeremiah and the priests, &c. were, which, being built on a hill, was higher than the king's palace; and therefore are said to "come up" to it:

and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the Lord's [house]; as a court of judicature, to hear and try the cause between the prophet and his accusers. This gate of the temple is thought to be the higher gate, which Jotham built, 2Ki 15:35. The Targum calls it the eastern gate; and so Kimchi says it was; and that it was called the new gate, according to the Rabbins, because there they renewed the constitutions and traditions; though he thinks the better reason is, because newly repaired, or some new building was added to it. Jarchi also says it was the eastern gate; and gives this reason for its being called new; that when Jehoiakim was carried captive, and some of the vessels of the temple, Nebuchadnezzar's army broke the eastern gate, which Zedekiah afterwards repaired, and made new; but if so, it is here called new by a prolepsis; or this account was written after that time.

Jeremiah 26:11

Ver. 11. Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes, and to all the people,.... The priests and the prophets they were the accusers; the princes were the court before whom the cause was brought; and the people were the hearers of it; though it does not seem as if they were a sort of jury, or had any vote in determining; though they sometimes had in instigating a court, and the judges of it, to take on the side of the question they were for:

saying, this man [is] worthy to die; or, "the judgment of death [is] to this man" {f}; he is guilty of a capital crime, and judgment ought to be given against him, and he condemned to die:

for he hath prophesied against this city; the city of Jerusalem; saying that it should be a curse to other nations; or, as they interpreted it, that it should be utterly destroyed, and become desolate, and none should inhabit it:

as ye have heard with your ears; this must be directed to the people only; for the princes did not hear Jeremiah's prophecy.

{f} hzh vyal twm jpvm "judieium mortis est viro huic", V. L. Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus; "reatus mortis", &c. Schmidt.

Jeremiah 26:12

Ver. 12. Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes, and to all the people, saying,.... In his own defence; which, as Jerom observes, was with prudence, humility, and constancy:

the Lord sent me to prophesy against this house, and against this city, all the words that ye have heard; he does not deny but that he had prophesied against the city of Jerusalem and against the temple, and that they should both come to ruin, unless the people repented and reformed; but then he urges, that he was sent by the Lord on this errand, and that every word that he had said, and they had heard, he was ordered to say by the Lord; and therefore what was he, that he should withstand God? he surely was not to be blamed for doing what the Lord commanded him to do; besides, all this was threatened only in case they continued obstinate and impenitent; wherefore he renews his exhortations to them in Jer 26:13.

Jeremiah 26:13

Ver. 13. Therefore now amend your ways and your doings,.... Make them good; leave your evil ways, and walk in good ways; forsake your evil works, and do good works:

and obey the voice of the Lord your God; and that because he is your God, as well as what his word directs to is good, and for your good:

and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you; will do as men do when they repent, change their method of acting, and manner of behaviour; so the Lord is said to repent or turn, when he changes the method and conduct of his providence towards men, though he never changes his mind or counsel.

Jeremiah 26:14

Ver. 14. As for me, behold, I [am] in your hand,.... In their power, as they were the chief court of judicature; and to whom it belonged to judge of prophets, and to acquit or condemn them, as they saw fit; wherefore he submits to their authority:

do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you; he was not careful about it; he readily submitted to their pleasure, and should patiently endure what they thought fit to inflict upon him; it gave him no great concern whether his life was taken from him or not; he was satisfied he had done what he ought to do, and should do the same, was it to do again; and therefore they might proceed just as they pleased against him.

Jeremiah 26:15

Ver. 15. But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death,.... Take this along with you, and then do as you will; that if ye take away my life on this account, you may depend upon it; nothing is more certain than this:

ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof; that is, the guilt of innocent blood, which would cry for vengeance upon them that brought the accusation, and insisted upon his being brought in guilty; and upon those that sat in judgment, and condemned him; and upon all the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem, who should agree to the putting him to death:

for of a truth the Lord hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears; and therefore I am no false prophet, and am clear of the charge brought against me; and have said nothing but what I had a mission and an order from the Lord for, of which you may assure yourselves; and therefore he will avenge my blood, should it be shed on that account; so that you will only increase your guilt, and add to that great load that lies upon you, and will be your ruin, unless you repent and reform.

Jeremiah 26:16

Ver. 16. Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets,.... Hearing Jeremiah's apology for himself, by which it appeared that he was to be justified in what he had done, took his part, and acquitted him; and the people, who before were on the side of the priests and false prophets; yet hearing what Jeremiah had to say for himself, and also the judgment of the princes, took his part also, and joined with the court in an address to the priests and prophets, who were the chief accusers, and who would fain have had him brought in guilty of death:

this man [is] not worthy to die; or, "the judgment of death is not for this man"; we cannot give judgment against him; he is not guilty of any crime deserving death; See Gill on "Jer 26:11";

for he hath spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God; not in his own name, and of his own head; but in the name of the Lord, and by his order; and therefore was not a false, but a true prophet: what methods they took to know this, and to make it appear to the people, is not said; very probably the settled character of the prophet; their long acquaintance with him, and knowledge of him; his integrity and firmness of mind; the plain marks of seriousness and humility, and a disinterested view, made them conclude in his favour.

Jeremiah 26:17

Ver. 17. Then rose up certain of the elders of the land,.... The same with the princes; some of the court, who rose up as advocates for the prophet:

and spake to all the assembly of the people: to justify the vote of the court, and to confirm the people in a good opinion of it, by giving them examples and instances of the like kind:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 26:18

Ver. 18. Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah,.... Or, Micah of Maresha, as the Targum. Mareshah was a city of the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:44; the native place, of this prophet; who appears, by the following quotation, to be the same Micah that stands among the minor prophets; and who is also so called, and lived in the times of Hezekiah, **Mic 1:1**;

and spake to all the people of Judah; very openly and publicly, and just as Jeremiah had done, Jer 26:2;

saying, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Zion shall be ploughed [like] a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps; Mount Zion, on part of which the temple was built, and on the other the city of David, together with the city of Jerusalem, should be so demolished, as that they might be ploughed, and become a tillage; as the Jews say they were by Terentius, or Turnus Rufus, as they call him, after their last destruction by the Romans:

and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest; covered with grass and shrubs, and thorns and briers; even Mount Moriah, on which the temple stood, which is designed by the house; and so the Targum calls it the house of the sanctuary. Now this was saying as much against the city and temple as Jeremiah did; and was said in the days of a good king too, who encouraged a reformation, and carried it to a great pitch. See **Mic 3:12**.

Jeremiah 26:19

Ver. 19. Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death?.... No, they did not: neither the king, by his own authority; nor the sanhedrim, the great court of judicature, for the nation; they never sought to take away his life, nor sat in council about it; they never arraigned him, and much less condemned him:

did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord; that is, Hezekiah; he did, as knowing that Micah was a prophet of the Lord, and sent by him; wherefore he received his prophecy with great awe and reverence, as coming from the Lord, and made his supplications to him that he would avert the judgments threatened:

and the Lord repented of the evil which he had pronounced against them? the king and his people, the city and the temple; and so the threatened evil came not upon them in their days:

thus might we procure great evil against our souls; should we put Jeremiah to death: it is therefore much more advisable to do as Hezekiah did, pray unto the Lord to avert the threatened evil, or otherwise it will be worse with us. This precedent is urged to strengthen the decree of the council in favour of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 26:20

Ver. 20. And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the Lord,.... These are not the words of the same persons continued; because the following instance is against them; but of some other persons in the sanhedrim, who were on the side of the priests and prophets; who in effect said, why tell you us of an instance in Hezekiah's time, when there is so recent an one in the present reign, of a man that prophesied just as Jeremiah has done, and was put to death, and so ought he? after this manner Kimchi interprets it; and so Jarchi, who adds, that it is so explained in an ancient book of theirs, called Siphri; though some think they are the words of the same persons that espoused the prophet's cause; and observe the following instance with this view; that whereas there had been one prophet of the Lord lately put to death for the same thing, should they take away the life of another, it would be adding sin to sin, and bring great evil upon their souls; and it might be observed, that Hezekiah prevented much evil by the steps he took; whereas, should they proceed as they had begun in the present reign, they might expect nothing but ruin, which they might easily see with their own eyes was coming upon them: others are of opinion that this instance is added by the penman of this book, either the prophet himself or Baruch, to show the wonderful preservation of him; that though there had been very lately a person put to death for the very same thing, yet he was preserved through the good offices of a person mentioned at the close of the chapter; and which seems to make this account probable. The name of the prophet was

Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjathjearim; which was a city of Judah, Jos 18:14; but who he was is not known, there being no account of him elsewhere:

who prophesied against this city, and against this land, according to all the words of Jeremiah; just as he had done, in much the same words, if not altogether; so that their case was similar.

Jeremiah 26:21

Ver. 21. And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men,.... Either his courtiers, or his soldiers, or both:

and all the princes, heard his words; the words of the Prophet Urijah; not with their own ears very probably, but from the report of others:

the king sought to put him to death; as being a messenger of bad tidings, tending to dispirit his subjects, and allay the joy of his own mind upon his advancement to the throne:

but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt; which some understand as a piece of prudence in him; but rather it was the effect of pusillanimity and cowardice: it seems to show want of faith and confidence in the Lord; and the fear of man, which brings a snare; and besides, it was no piece of prudence to go to Egypt, whatever it was to flee; since there was such an alliance between the kings of Egypt and Judah; and the latter, though dependent on the former, yet the king of Egypt would easily gratify him in delivering up a subject of his, and a person of such a character.

Jeremiah 26:22

Ver. 22. And Jehoiakim sent men into Egypt,.... To seek for him; and to require the delivery of him upon being found:

[namely], Elnathan the son of Achbor; the father of this man very probably is the same we read of in Josiah's time, 2Ki 22:12; who is called Abdon in 2Ch 34:20;

and [certain] men with him, into Egypt; to assist him in taking him, whose names are not mentioned; Elnathan's is, as being the principal, and to fix an eternal infamy upon him.

Jeremiah 26:23

Ver. 23. And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt,.... Having found him, they seized him, and brought him away, with the leave of the king of Egypt: which, no doubt, was easily obtained:

and brought him to Jehoiakim the king, who slew him with the sword; very probably with his own hand; or however it was done by his order, and in his presence, most likely:

and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people; either where they were buried in heaps promiscuously, as some think; or in the common burying ground; and not where persons of distinction were laid, as prophets, and others {g}; this he did to reflect dishonour upon the prophet.

{g} Vid. Nicolai de Sepulchris Heb. c. 3. p. 126.

Jeremiah 26:24

Ver. 24. Nevertheless, the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah,.... Though this instance was urged as a precedent to go by, being lately done; or though the king's cruelty had been so lately exercised in such a manner; yet this man, who had been one of Josiah's courtiers and counsellors, 2Ki 22:12; stood by Jeremiah, and used all his power, authority, and influence, in his favour:

that they should not give him into the hand of the people, to put him to death; that the sanhedrim should not; who, by the last precedent mentioned, might seem inclined to it; but this great man, having several brothers, as well as other friends, that paid a regard to his arguments and solicitations; he prevailed upon them not to give leave to the people to put him to death, who appear to have been very fickle and mutable; at first they joined with the priests and false prophets against Jeremiah, to accuse him; but upon the judgment and vote of the princes, on hearing the cause, they changed their sentiments, and were for the prophet against the priests; and now, very probably, upon the instance of Urijah being given as a precedent, they altered their minds again, and were for putting him to death, could they have obtained leave of the court; and which only Ahikam's interest prevented.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 27:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 27

This chapter contains a prophecy of the subjection of the king of Judah, with five neighbouring kings, to the king of Babylon; signified by bonds and yokes on the prophet's neck, which they are exhorted patiently to bear, as being most for their good; and not to give heed to false prophets, who would persuade them to the contrary. The date of the prophecy is in Jer 27:1; the order to make the yokes, and send them to the several neighbouring princes by their messengers at Jerusalem, Jer 27:2; what they should say to their masters from the God of Israel, who is described from his power in the creation of the earth, and the disposal of it, Jer 27:4; as that he had given all their lands into the hand of the king of Babylon, whom they should serve, or it would be worse for them, Jer 27:6; and therefore should not hearken to their prophets, who prophesied lies; if they did, it would be to their hurt; whereas, if they quietly submitted, they would dwell in their own land, Jer 27:9; particularly Zedekiah king of Judah is exhorted to submit; and both he, and the priests and the people, are advised not to hearken to the false prophets, Jer 27:12; particularly as to what they said concerning the speedy return of the vessels of the temple, which were carried away to Babylon; but might assure themselves they should remain there; and the rest also should be taken, and not returned until the end of the seventy years, Jer 27:16.

Ver. 1. In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah,.... This is the same date with the prophecy of the preceding chapter and some think that this verse should conclude that, as belonging to it; and by which they would reconcile a difficulty that arises here; the orders for making the yokes being given in the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, which yet were to be sent to the messengers of the neighbouring kings that were come to Zedekiah at Jerusalem, who did not begin to reign until eleven years after this time; but the word "saying", at the end of the verse, shows it not to belong to the preceding, but to what follows: others think it is a mistake of the copy, and that Jehoiakim is put for Zedekiah; and the Syriac and Arabic versions read Zedekiah; but he was not the son of Josiah, as this king is said to be, but his brother: others therefore think, that though the prophecy was delivered to Jeremiah, and the orders were given him to make the bonds and yokes after mentioned, at this time; yet this prophecy was concealed with him, and the orders were not executed till Zedekiah's time; or that the prophet, in the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, made the yokes as he was ordered, and put one on his neck, to signify the subjection of Judah to the king of Babylon, which quickly took place, about the third or fourth year of this reign; and that the rest were sent to the ambassadors of the neighbouring nations in Zedekiah's time; which latter seems most probable:

came this word unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying; as follows. This verse is not in the common editions of the Septuagint; but it is in the king of Spain's Bible.

Jeremiah 27:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith the Lord to me, make thee bonds and yokes,.... The yokes were made of wood, as appears from Jer 28:13; and the bonds were strings or thongs, which bound the yoke together, that it might not slip off the neck, on which it was put:

and put them upon thy neck; not all of them together, but one after another, at different times; and this was very significant; for the prophet being seen abroad with a yoke upon his neck, it would be natural to inquire the meaning of it; when they would be told it was to signify the subjection of Judah, and so of other nations, to the king of Babylon; and that he did wear at times such a yoke, even fifteen years after, in the fourth of Zedekiah's reign, appears from

Jer 28:1.

Jeremiah 27:3

Ver. 3. And send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon,.... All neighbouring kings and states, to whom the wine cup of God's wrath was to be sent, and they made to drink of it, Jer 25:21; and against whom Jeremiah afterwards prophesies:

by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah; who were sent by their masters, either to congratulate Zedekiah upon his accession to the throne; or to enter into a league with him against the king of Babylon, and shake off his yoke; or to reside at his court, as ambassadors of nations at peace and in alliance usually do; and it may be for all those purposes. The yokes therefore are ordered to be sent to them, as being the most proper and easy way and method of conveying them, with the meaning of them, to their respective masters.

Jeremiah 27:4

Ver. 4. And command them to say unto their masters,.... The prophet is sent with authority, and ordered to speak in a very high strain, having his orders from the King of kings and Lord of lords; a greater master than those messengers had; and to enjoin them to tell their several masters in his master's name; as follows:

thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; who, though in a peculiar manner the God of Israel, yet was Lord of the whole world, and had all the armies of heaven and earth at his command, to enforce his power and authority; wherefore what he says ought to be attended to:

thus shall ye say to your masters; deliver to them the following words of the great Jehovah.

Jeremiah 27:5

Ver. 5. I have made the earth, the man and the beast that [are] upon the ground,.... The earth was made by him on the first day, and man and beast on the sixth day, of the creation; the earth is still supported in its being, and man and beast are continued on it in succession: this is mentioned to show his right and authority to dispose of the earth, and all in it, at his pleasure; which is founded on his creation and sustaining of it, and all creatures in it: which was, and is, as he says,

by my great power, and by my outstretched arm; for nothing less could have created the original chaos out of nothing, and brought that into form and order, and produced out of it such creatures as man and beast; and nothing less than that could continue it in being, and a succession of creatures on it:

and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me; some part of it to one, and some to another; and more to one than to another; but to none according to their merit, but according to his own sovereign will and pleasure; see Ps 115:16.

Jeremiah 27:6

Ver. 6. And now I have given all these lands,.... Before mentioned; of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Zidon, and Judea:

into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; whom God used as an instrument in correcting and chastising the nations; and who obeyed his will, though he knew it not; nor did what he did in obedience to it; and yet had the honour of being called his servant, and of being rewarded with a very large empire; which was owing, not so much to his prowess and valour, wisdom and management, as to the providence of God; who delivered the above kingdoms, with others, into his hands, as being the sole proprietor and sovereign disposer of them:

and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him; either to bring him, and his armies, and his carriages of provisions for them, and warlike stores, for the invasion and taking the above countries; or the cattle found there, which belonged to these countries, and the inhabitants thereof, which would fall into his hands with them.

Jeremiah 27:7

Ver. 7. And all nations shall serve him,.... That is, all those, all above mentioned; though there were others also that were tributary to him, but not every nation under heaven:

and his son, and his son's son; their Scripture names were Evilmerodach and Belshazzar, Jer 52:31; and by Ptolemy, in his canon, are called Iloarudamus and Nabonadius; between whom he places Niricassolassarus, or Neriglissarus; who was not a son of Evilmerodach, but his sister's husband. A son of his succeeded him, called Laborosoarchod; who, reigning but nine months, is not placed in the canon; agreeably to which is the account of Berosus {h}; by whom the immediate son of Nebuchadnezzar is named Evilmaradouchus; or Evilmalaurouchus, as in Eusebius {i}; who, after he had reigned two years, was slain by Neriglissoor, or Neriglissar, as in the above writer, his sister's husband; who, after he had enjoyed the kingdom four years, died, and left it to his son, whom he calls Chabaessoarachus, or Laborosoarchados, as before, who reigned but nine months; and then Nabonnidus succeeded, the name he gives him who was conquered by Cyrus in the seventeenth year of his reign; and not very different is the account of Nebuchadnezzar's successors, and the names of them, as given by Abydenus, out of Megasthenes {k}; according to whom, Evilmalaurouchus, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, was his successor; then Neriglissar, his sister's husband, who left a son called Labassoarascus; and after him Nabannidochus, in whose times Cyrus took Babylon; and who appears to be the same with Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar; so that the Scripture is very just and accurate in mentioning these two only as the son, and son's son of Nebuchadnezzar, whom the nations should serve; for in the last of these ended the Babylonish monarchy:

until the very time of his land come; or that "itself; also he himself" {l} or, "also of himself", as the Vulgate Latin version. The Targum is,

"until the time of the destruction of his land come, also of himself;"

there was a time fixed for his life, and so long the nations were to serve, and did serve, him personally; and there was a time fixed for the continuance of his monarchy, in his son, and son's son; when it was to end, as it did, in Belshazzar's reign; and when the seventy years' captivity of the Jews was up:

and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him; and his kingdom; subdue it, and make it tributary to them. This was accomplished by the Medes and Persians, with Darius and Cyrus at the head of them, and other nations and kings, allies and auxiliaries to them, and associates with them; see Jer 25:14. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "and many nations and great kings shall serve him"; so the Targum; which falls in with the former part of the verse; wherefore the other sense is best.

{h} Apud Joseph. contra Apion. I. 1. sect. 20. p. 1344. {i} Praepar. Evangel. I. 9. c. 40. p. 455. {k} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 457. {l} awh Mg "etiam illud, [vel] ipsum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 27:8

Ver. 8. And it shall come to pass, [that] the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon,.... Will not, upon his approaching to them, invading and besieging them, submit and become tributary to him, as is more fully expressed in the next clause:

and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon; or voluntarily become subject to him, and pay a tax he shall impose upon them. This refers to, and explains the symbol of, Jeremiah's making and wearing yokes, Jer 27:2;

that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence; with one judgment after another; some will perish by the sword of the enemy, sallying out upon them, or endeavouring to make their escape; others by famine their provisions being spent through the length of the siege; and others by pestilence, or the plague, by the immediate hand of God:

until I have consumed them by his hand; Nebuchadnezzar's; by means of him; by his sword, and strait besieging them; or, "into his hand"; and so the Targum,

"until I have delivered them into his hand;"

having consumed multitudes by the sword, famine, and pestilence, will deliver the rest into his hands to be carried captive by him.

Jeremiah 27:9

Ver. 9. Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets,.... False prophets, as the

Targum. These words are not directed to the Jews, but are a continuation of what the messengers of the nations should say to their masters from the God of Israel, by the mouth of his prophet; for they had their prophets as well as the Jews; as the prophets of Baal, and others:

nor to your diviners; or soothsayers; such an one as was Balaam:

nor to your dreamers; or "dreams"; such as they had themselves, and laid great stress upon; or to those who pretended to interpret them to them:

nor to your enchanters; or stargazers; astrologers, who pretended by the position of the stars to foretell what would come to pass:

nor to your sorcerers; or wizards, or necromancers; who, by unlawful methods, pretended to acquire knowledge of future things:

which speak unto you, saying, ye shall not serve the king of Babylon; meaning, either that they ought not to become tributary to him; or they should not be brought into subjection by him: and so were stirred up to oppose him, and not submit to him.

Jeremiah 27:10

Ver. 10. For they prophesy a lie unto you,.... That which was vain and false, and proved so; though they might not know it was when delivered:

to remove you far from your land; not that they designed it by their prophecies, but so it was eventually; for, standing it out against Nebuchadnezzar, encouraged by the lies and dreams of their prophets, he, in process of time, took them, and carried them captive into Babylon; whereas, had they surrendered at once, they might have continued in their own land, paying a tax or tribute to the king of Babylon:

and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish; drive them out of their own land, and so perish in a foreign land: God is said to do that which his servant or instrument did, being provoked by the sin and disobedience of the people, hearkening to their lying prophets, and not to him.

Jeremiah 27:11

Ver. 11. But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him,.... That at once, and readily, submit unto him, and pay him tribute:

those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the Lord; undisturbed by any other enemy; peaceably dwelling in their own habitations; following their occupations and business of life; and enjoying their substance and estates, only paying the tax imposed on them:

and they shall till it, and dwell therein; manure and cultivate it, and gather and eat the fruit of it, and continue to do so, they and their posterity after them.

Jeremiah 27:12

Ver. 12. I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah,.... At the same time that he delivered the above message from the Lord to the ambassadors of several nations, who were then residents in Zedekiah's court, or however in Jerusalem:

according to all these words; the same things, and much in the same language, he said to the king of Judah, as to the messengers of the nations:

saying; as follows:

bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon; you, O king, your nobles, and your people. Zedekiah was set upon the throne by the king of Babylon, was a tributary to him, and had took an oath to be faithful to him; and yet was now meditating rebellion against him; and was consulting and entering into a confederacy with the neighbouring nations to throw off the yoke, and be independent on him: wherefore the sense of this advice must be to bring themselves, he and his people, to a cheerful submission to it, and a patient bearing it, and not attempt to shake it off:

and serve him and his people, and live: the king of Babylon, and the Chaldeans, by faithfully paying the tribute, and acknowledging subjection to him; and so "live" in their own land, enjoying all other civil and religious privileges.

Jeremiah 27:13

Ver. 13. Why will ye die, thou and thy people, the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence,.... Through a blockade of the Chaldean army, which would invade their land, and besiege their city, upon a refusal to be subject to their yoke:

as the Lord hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? as the Lord has threatened shall be the case of any and everyone of the above nations that should refuse to be tributary to him; of which, no doubt, Zedekiah and his court had been apprized; see Jer 27:8.

Jeremiah 27:14

Ver. 14. Therefore hearken not unto the words of the prophets,.... The false prophets, as the Targum; such bad kings always had about them, to whom they listened, and which often proved of bad consequence to them:

that speak unto you, saying; as follows:

ye shall not serve the king of Babylon; ye ought not to do it, but cast off his yoke; to which if ye do not willingly submit, he will never be able to force you to it:

for they prophesy a lie unto you; and therefore should not be hearkened to, particularly when they promise safety from the king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 27:15

Ver. 15. For I have not sent them, saith the Lord,.... See Jer 23:21; yet they prophesy a lie in my name; to deliver out a lie was a very wicked thing, sinful in them, and fatal to others; but to make use of the name of the Lord, and cover it with that, and back it with his authority, was much more wicked and abominable:

that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish; being driven out of their own land, perish in another; which, though the false prophets did not intend by their prophesying, yet such would be, and was, the issue of it:

ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you; for it would end in the ruin and destruction of them both; both of the false prophets, as the Targum here again calls them, and those that listened to their prophecies; both would fall into the same ditch.

Jeremiah 27:16

Ver. 16. Also I spake to the priests, and to all this people, saying,.... From the court he went to the temple, and spoke to the priests that were ministering there, and to all the people that were assembled for divine worship; either at the ordinary time of it, or at some one of the solemn feasts: this was a proper time and place to meet with the people and the priests; which latter especially had a concern in what he had to say concerning the vessels of the temple:

thus saith the Lord, hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you: your false prophets, as the Targum:

saying; as follows:

behold, the vessels of the Lord's house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon; which were carried thither, both in the times of Jehoiakim, and of Jeconiah, 2Ch 36:7; these the false prophets gave out would in a short time be returned; that the king of Babylon, either willingly and of his own accord, or being pressed or forced to it, would send them back; so little reason had they to fear an invasion from him, or captivity by him:

for they prophesy a lie unto you; that which is false, and will never be accomplished, at least in any short time.

Jeremiah 27:17

Ver. 17. Hearken not unto them,.... The false prophets:

serve the king of Babylon, and live; pay homage and tribute to him; which is the way to live in your own land, and enjoy the benefits of that, and of the temple worship; which, if not, you will be utterly deprived of:

wherefore should this city be laid waste? as it certainly will, should you rebel against the king of Babylon; and as it was in a few years after, when they did.

Jeremiah 27:18

Ver. 18. But if they be prophets, and if the word of the Lord be with them,.... The true prophets of the Lord are sent by him, and have his word put into them:

let them now make intercession to the Lord of hosts: use their interest with him, as they must have one, if they are true prophets; let them pray unto him, who doubtless will hear them; and this will be acting in character, for prophets ought to be praying persons; and this will turn to some good account:

that the vessels which are left in the house of the Lord, and [in] the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon; instead of prophesying about the return of what are gone, let them pray for the preservation and continuance of what are left, that they do not go also; of which there was great danger, yea, certainty, in case of non-submission to, and rebellion against, the king of Babylon; there were some vessels of the sanctuary which yet remained, as well as others in the king's palace, and in the houses of the noble and rich men in Jerusalem; for the keeping of which they would do well to show a proper concern, and make use of proper means; and nothing more effectual than prayer to God; and, next to that, submission to the Chaldean yoke.

Jeremiah 27:19

Ver. 19. For thus saith the Lord of hosts concerning the pillars,.... The pillars of brass that stood in the temple; the one called Boaz, and the other Jachin, **1Ki 7:15**;

and concerning the sea; the sea of molten brass, which stood upon twelve oxen, **1Ki 7:23**;

and concerning the bases: the ten bases, which also were made of brass, **1Ki 7:27**;

and concerning the residue of the vessels that remain in this city; in the king's palace, and in the houses of the noblemen, and of the rich and wealthy inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 27:20

Ver. 20. Which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not,.... For he seems only to have taken the vessels of gold, and left the vessels of brass, as the above were; see 2Ki 24:13;

when he carried away captive Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem; of which see 2Ki 24:12.

Jeremiah 27:21

Ver. 21. Yea, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain [in] the house of the Lord,.... Which are mentioned in Jer 27:19; together with others:

and [in] the house of the king of Judah, and of Jerusalem; see Jer 27:18.

Jeremiah 27:22

Ver. 22. They shall be carried to Babylon,.... As they were; and of which, with others, there is a particular account in 2Ki 25:13;

and there shall they be until the day that I visit them, saith to the Lord; the Chaldeans in a way of wrath, and the Jews in a way of grace and favour; which was at the end of the seventy years' captivity; and so long the vessels of the sanctuary continued there; here we read of them as in use the very night that Belshazzar was slain, and Babylon taken, **Da 5:2**;

then will I bring them up, and restore them to this place; which was fulfilled when the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia to give leave to the Jews to return to their own land, and rebuild their temple; and at the same time delivered into the hands of Sheshbazzar, prince of Judah, the vessels of the temple, **Ezr 1:1**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 28:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 28

Thus chapter relates a false prophecy of Hananiah, who broke off the yoke from Jeremiah; but in return the people are threatened with an iron yoke, and he with death; which came to pass. The time, place, and substance of his prophecy, are in Jer 28:1; Jeremiah's answer to it,
Jer 28:5; Hananiah breaks Jeremiah's yoke, and explains the meaning of it to the people, Jer 28:10; Jeremiah prophesies that iron yokes should be given instead of wooden ones, Jer 28:12; and foretells the death of the false prophet, Jer 28:15.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass the same year,.... That the prophet was bid to make yokes and bonds, and send them to the neighbouring kings, whose ambassadors were in Zedekiah's court; and when he spoke the things related in the preceding chapter to Zedekiah, the priests, and people:

in the beginning the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah; perhaps in the first year of his reign:

in the fourth year, [and] in the fifth month; not in the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign, though the Septuagint and A table versions so render it; since his reign was but eleven years in all, and therefore the fourth could not be called with so much propriety the beginning of his reign: though, according to Jarchi, it was the fourth of Zedekiah's reign, the same year in which he paid a visit to the king of Babylon,
Jer 51:59; and was not only confirmed in his kingdom by him, but, according to the same writer, had it enlarged, and was made king over five neighbouring kings; and so this, though the fourth of his reign over Judah, was the first of his enlarged dominions: but rather this was the fourth year of the sabbatical year, or the fourth after the seventh year's rest of the land, as Kimchi observes; which was the first of Zedekiah's reign, who reigned eleven years, and the temple was destroyed at the end of a sabbatical year; in which he is followed by many, though there is nothing in the text or context that directs to it. Some divide Zedekiah's reign into three parts, the beginning, and middle, and end; and so what was done within the first four years of his reign might be said to be in the beginning of it. Others think that here are two distinct dates; that the former respects the things in the preceding chapter, which were in the beginning of his reign; and the latter that affair of Hananiah, which was in the fourth year of it. But Noldius {m}, after Glassius {n}, gets clear of the

difficulties of this text, by rendering the words, "and it was from that year, the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, unto the fourth year of his reign"; that is, the prophet went on for the space of four years, signifying the will of the Lord by words and types; when in the fifth month of the fourth year, which was the month of Ab, answering to part of our July and of August,

Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet; the false prophet, as the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions call him,

which [was] of Gibeon; a city of the priests; so might be a priest, though not the high priest, as some have thought:

spake unto me in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the priests, and of all the people; he came to the temple, where Jeremiah was, to confront him; and he addressed himself to him, the priests and all the people being present, who were come thither to minister and worship:

saying; as follows:

{m} Concord. Ebr. Partic. p. 143. No. 677. {n} Philolog. Sacr. l. 4. p. 625.

Jeremiah 28:2

Ver. 2. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... Using the language of the true prophets, and describing the Lord just in the same manner they do, when coming from him, and speaking in his name: a bold and daring action, when he knew the Lord had not sent him, nor had said any such thing to him: he next relates with all assurance,

saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon; which he had put upon the neck of the king of Judah; signifying that he should be no more subject to him; that is, he had determined to do it, and would do it, in a very short time.

Jeremiah 28:3

Ver. 3. Within two full years,.... Or, "within two years of days" {o}; when they are up to a day. The Targum is, "at the end of two years;"

what the false prophets before had said would be done in a very little time; this fixes the precise time of doing it; a very short time, in comparison of the seventy years that Jeremiah had spoken of,
Jer 25:11;

will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the Lord's house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place; the temple, where he now was; namely, all such vessels as before this time had been taken by him, both in Jehoiakim's reign, and at the captivity of Jeconiah:

and carried them to Babylon; where they still remained, and according to Jeremiah still would; and were so far from being brought back in a short time, that what were left would be carried thither also,
Jer 27:19.

{o} Mymy Mytnv dweb "in adhuc duobis anois dierum", Montanus; "intra adhuc biennium dierum", Schmidt; "intra biennum dierum", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 28:4

Ver. 4. And I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah,.... This he knew would please the people, who looked upon Zedekiah only as a deputy of the king of Babylon, and not properly their king; but Jeconiah, as he is here called; and he knew that Zedekiah dared not resent this, but was obliged to feigned a desire of Jeconiah's return, though otherwise not agreeable to him:

with all the captives of Judah that went into Babylon, saith the Lord; the princes, officers, and others, that should be living at the time fixed:

for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon; weaken his power over other nations, and particularly deliver the king of Judah from his bondage, and from subjection to him.

Jeremiah 28:5

Ver. 5. Then the prophet Jeremiah said unto the prophet Hananiah,.... The false prophet, as he is called by the Targum, Syriac, and Arabic versions:

in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people that stood in the house of the Lord; waiting and worshipping in the temple; and said boldly and before them all, in answer to Hananiah's prophecy, what follows.

Jeremiah 28:6

Ver. 6. Even the prophet Jeremiah said, Amen,.... Or, "so be it"; he wished it might be so as Hananiah had said, if it was the will of God; as a prophet he knew it could not be; as an Israelite, out of respect to his country, he wished it might be; or, however, he wished that they would repent of their sins, that the evil he had threatened them with might not come upon them, and the good that Hananiah had prophesied might be fulfilled:

the Lord do so: the Lord perform the words which thou hast prophesied; such a hearty regard had he for his country, that, were it the Lord's pleasure to do this, he could be content to be accounted a false prophet, and Hananiah the true one; it was very desirable to him to have this prophecy confirmed and fulfilled by the Lord. The Jews {p} have a saying, that whoever deals hypocritically with his friend, at last falls into his hand, or the hands of his son, or son's son; and so they suppose Jeremiah acted hypocritically with Hananiah, and therefore fell into the hands of the son of his son's son, Jer 37:13; but he rather spoke ironically, as some think:

to bring again the vessels of the Lord's house, and all that is carried away captive, to Babylon into this place; as a priest, this must be very desirable to Jeremiah, the Jews observe, since he would be a gainer by it; being a priest, he should eat of the holy things; when Hananiah, being a Gibeonite, would be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water to him.

{p} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 41. 2. &, 42. 1.

Jeremiah 28:7

Ver. 7. Nevertheless, hear thou now this word that I speak in thine ears,.... Though this would be very acceptable to me, and I should be glad to have it fulfilled; yet carefully attend to what I am about to say, it being what greatly concerns thee to observe, as well as all present to listen to: and therefore it is added,

and in the ears of all the people; that stood round to hear the conversation that passed between the two prophets.

Jeremiah 28:8

Ver. 8. The prophets that have been before me, and before thee of old,.... Such as Isaiah, Hoses, Joel, Amos, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and others: these

prophesied both against many countries and against great kingdoms; as Egypt, Babylon, Syria, Ethiopia, Moab, &c. as Isaiah particularly did:

of war, and of evil, and of pestilence; by evil some think is meant famine, because that usually goes along with the other mentioned, and there being but one letter in which the words for evil and famine differ; and now the prophets that prophesied of these were sent of God, were the true prophets of the Lord; and therefore this ought not to be objected to the prejudice of Jeremiah, that his prophecies were of this sort: yea, if they should not come to pass, yet a man is not to be counted a false prophet, because such things are threatened in case nations do not repent of their sins and reform, which they may do; and then the evils threatened are prevented, as in the case of the Ninevites.

Jeremiah 28:9

Ver. 9. The prophet which prophesieth of peace,.... Of prosperity, of good things, as Hananiah did, and which are always acceptable to men; and such a prophet is agreeable to them:

when the word of the Lord shall come to pass; when the prophecy of good things, which he delivers in the name of the Lord, shall be filled:

[then] shall the prophet be known that the Lord hath truly sent him; and not till then; it is the event that must make it manifest: in the other case it may be in a

good measure known before it comes to pass, and, whether it comes to pass or not, that a prophet is a true prophet; because his prophecies are agreeable to the word and the declared will of God; contain evils threatened on account of sin, and in order to bring men to repentance, which must needs be right; and besides, they have no interest of their own to serve, but run contrary to the stream of the people, and are exposed to their rage and censure: whereas, a man that prophesies of peace, he is more to be suspected of flattering the people, and of prophesying out of his own heart; and nothing but the event can show him a true prophet; which if he delivers with a proviso, that the people do not do that which is evil in the sight of God, to provoke him to deny them the promised good, is always certainly fulfilled; and if it is not, then he appears manifestly a false prophet.

Jeremiah 28:10

Ver. 10. Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck,.... Which he wore as a symbol of the subjection of Judea, and other nations, to the king of Babylon: an impudent and insolent action this was, to take the prophet's yoke from his neck; and the more so, as it was by the command of God that he made it, and wore it:

and brake it; being made of wood, as it afterwards appears, and so might easily be broken.

Jeremiah 28:11

Ver. 11. And Hananiah spoke in the presence of all the people,.... Explaining to them his meaning, in taking the yoke, and breaking it:

saying, thus saith the Lord; wickedly making use of the Lord's name, to give countenance to his words and actions:

even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations, within the space of two full years; the time he had fixed for the bringing back of the vessels of the sanctuary,
Jer 28:3;

and the prophet Jeremiah went his way; showing thereby his dissent from him, and his dislike and detestation of his lies and blasphemies; patiently bearing his affronts and insolence; and prudently withdrawing to prevent riots and tumults; returning no answer till he had received one from the Lord himself, which he quickly had.

Jeremiah 28:12

Ver. 12. Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah [the prophet],.... When in his own house or apartment, to which he retired; and this came to him either in a vision or dream, or by some articulate voice, or by an impulse upon his spirit, directing him what to say to the false prophet:

after that Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the Prophet Jeremiah: how long afterwards is not known, perhaps the same day; or, however, it is certain it was in the same year, and less than two months after, Jer 28:17; and very probably in a few hours after:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 28:13

Ver. 13. Go and tell Hananiah, saying, thus saith the Lord,.... Whose name he had abused; whose prophet he had ill treated; and whose prophecies he had contradicted, and the symbols of them had contumeliously used:

thou hast broken the yokes of wood: or, "bonds", or "the thongs" {q}; with which the yokes of wood were bound and fastened, as Kimchi interprets it:

but thou shall make for them yokes of iron; not Hananiah, but Jeremiah; who should prophesy of a more severe bondage the nations should be brought into by Nebuchadnezzar, in direct contradiction to Hananiah's prophecy; instead of wooden yokes, they should have iron ones; which should lie heavier, and bear harder upon them, and which could not be broken nor taken off.

{q} Ue tjwm "lora lignea", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 28:14

Ver. 14. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... Under which titles he is often spoken of; and which he uses, when he delivered anything to his prophets to declare in his name to others:

I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations: mentioned in Jer 27:3;

that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they shall serve him; directly contrary to what Hananiah had prophesied, Jer 28:11; that his yoke should be broke off from them; but instead of that, it should become heavier unto them, and they should be obliged to serve him, whether they would or not; and refusing to pay tribute to him, should be carried captive by him, as had been foretold:

and I have given him the beasts of the field also; as he had said he would, Jer 27:6; and which is repeated, to show that the whole would be punctually fulfilled; that not only those nations, the men, the inhabitants of them, would be delivered to him; but even the very cattle, and all that belonged to them.

Jeremiah 28:15

Ver. 15. Then said Jeremiah the prophet unto Hananiah the prophet,.... The false prophet, as he is again called by the Targum, and in the Syriac version; where he went to him, and met with him, whether in the temple or elsewhere, is not mentioned; very probably in some public place, that there might be witnesses of what was said; for it was for the conviction of others, as well as for his own confusion, the following things are observed:

hear now, Hananiah, the Lord hath not sent thee; though he spoke in his name, and pretended a mission from him, when he had none, which was abominable wickedness:

but thou makest this people to trust in a lie: that the Lord would break off the yoke of the king of Babylon, and free the nations from servitude to him, particularly Judea; and that the king, and his princes, and people, and the vessels of the temple, carried away with him, would be returned within two years; this the people depended on as coming from the Lord, when he was not sent by him.

Jeremiah 28:16

Ver. 16. Therefore thus saith the Lord,.... Because of this heinous offence, in lying in the name of the Lord, and deceiving the people:

behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth; with the utmost indignation and abhorrence, as not worthy to live upon it: it signifies that he should die, and that not a natural, but violent death, by the immediate hand of God, by some judgment upon him; and so be by force taken off the earth, and buried in it, and be no more seen on it:

this year thou shalt die; within the present year, reckoning from this time; so that, had he died any time within twelve months from hence, it would have been sufficient to have verified the prophecy:

because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord; to despise his word by his prophet; to contradict his will; to refuse subjection to the king of Babylon; to neglect his instructions, directions, and exhortations; and to believe a lie.

Jeremiah 28:17

Ver. 17. So Hananiah the prophet died the same year,.... That he had delivered out his prophecy; in the same year in which Jeremiah said he should die; which proved him to be a false prophet, and Jeremiah to be a true one:

in the seventh month: it was two months after he had prophesied; for it was in the fifth month that he prophesied, and in the seventh he died; not after seven months, as Theodoret remarks, but in two months; so he that prophesied, that within two years what he foretold would come to pass, in two months time dies himself, according to the word of the Lord, and his prophecies die with him. The Jewish writers move a difficulty here, how he should be said to die the same year, when the seventh month was the beginning of another year; for the civil year of the Jews began from the seventh month, or the month Tisri; as their ecclesiastical year from the month Nisan or Abib. To solve this they observe a tradition, that he died the last day of the sixth month, or the eve of the new year; and ordered his sons and his servants, before his death, to hide it, and not bring him out to be buried till after the year was begun, to make Jeremiah a liar: to which agrees the Targum, both of the clause in Jer 28:16; and this; the former of which it paraphrases thus, "this year shall thou die; and in the other year (or the year following) thou shalt be buried;"

and this verse thus,

"and Hananiah the false prophet died this year, and was buried in the seventh month:"

but there was no occasion to raise such a difficulty, since it would have been enough to have verified the prediction, that he died any time within the twelve months from the date of it; and, besides, the solution makes the difficulty greater, and contradicts the very text, which says, he died in the seventh month.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 29:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 29

Thus chapter contains a letter of Jeremiah to the captives in Babylon; and gives an account of another sent from thence by Shemaiah to the people at Jerusalem; and is closed with threatening him with punishment for so doing. Jeremiah's letter concerns both the captives at Babylon, and the people left at Jerusalem, The persons to whom and by whom it was sent, and the time of writing and sending it, are mentioned in Jer 29:1; and though the prophet was the amanuensis, God was the author of it, as well as of their captivity, Jer 29:4; the contents of, it, respecting the captives, are advices to them to provide for their comfortable settlement in Babylon, and not think of returning quickly, by building houses, planting gardens, marrying, and giving in marriage, Jer 29:5; and to seek and pray for the prosperity of the place where they were; in which their own was concerned, Jer 29:7; to give no heed to their false prophets and diviners, Jer 29:8; and to expect a return to Jerusalem at the end of seventy years; which they might be assured of, since God had resolved upon it in his own mind, Jer 29:10; and especially if they called upon him, prayed to him, and sought him heartily, Jer 29:12; the other part of the letter respects the Jews in Jerusalem; concerning whom the captives are directed to observe, that both the king and people should suffer much by sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity, with the reason of it, Jer 29:15; particularly it is foretold, that Ahab and Zedekiah, two lying prophets, should be made an example of vengeance; and a proverbial curse should be taken of them, because of their villany, lewdness, and lies, Jer 29:20; next follows some account of Shemaiah's letter from Babylon, to the people and priests at Jerusalem, stirring them up against Jeremiah the prophet; which came to be known, by the priests reading it to him, Jer 29:24; upon which Shemaiah is threatened with punishment, and his seed after him, Jer 29:30.

Ver. 1. Now these [are] the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem,.... The argument and tenor, the sum and substance, of an epistle, which the prophet Jeremiah, being at Jerusalem, wrote, under the inspiration of God, to his countrymen abroad, afterwards described; so the prophets under the Old Testament instructed the people, sometimes by their sermons and discourses delivered by word of mouth to them, and sometimes by letters and epistles; as did the apostles of the New Testament; and they were both ways useful and profitable to men:

unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captive; some perhaps dying by the way, and others quickly after they came to Babylon; some were left, who had been rulers or civil magistrates in Judea, and perhaps of the great sanhedrim:

and to the priests, and to the prophets: false prophets, as the Syriac version; for we read only of one true prophet that was carried captive, and that was Ezekiel; but of false prophets several:

and to all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon; which was eleven or twelve years before their last captivity thither. This was a catholic epistle, common to all the captives of every rank and class, age or sex.

Jeremiah 29:2

Ver. 2. After that Jeconiah the king,.... Of Judah; the same with Jehoiachin, who was carried captive into Babylon when he had reigned but three months:

and the queen; not Jeconiah's wife, for he had none; but his mother, whose name was Nehushta, and who was carried captive with him,
2Ki 24:8;

and the eunuchs; or "chamberlains" to the queen; the Targum calls them princes; these were of the king's household, his courtiers; and such persons have been everywhere, and in all ages, court favourites:

and the princes of Judah and Jerusalem; the noblemen and grandees of the nation:

and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem; whom Nebuchadnezzar took with him, partly for his own use in his own country; and partly that the Jews might be deprived of such artificers, that could assist in fortifying their city, and providing them with military weapons; See Gill on "Jer 24:1".

Jeremiah 29:3

Ver. 3. By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan,.... Perhaps the brother of Ahikam, and of Jaazaniah, Jer 26:24;

and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah; to distinguish him from Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, Jer 36:10;

whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; as his ambassadors, on what account it is not certain; perhaps to pay the tribute money to him; or to treat with him about the restoration of some of the captives; or to cultivate friendship, and promise submission, and that he would faithfully keep the covenant he had made with him: and perhaps he might be jealous of Jeconiah using his interest with the king of Babylon for his restoration, which could not be acceptable to Zedekiah; and this might be one reason why he admitted his messengers to carry Jeremiah's letter to the captives, if he knew of it, or saw it; since it exhorted them not to think of a returns, but provide for a long continuance where they were; however, by the hand of these messengers Jeremiah sent his letter to them:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 29:4

Ver. 4. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... For the letter was written by the order of the Lord, was endited by him, and was sent in his name, the prophet was only his amanuensis; and the titles which the Lord here takes are worthy of notice: "the Lord of hosts": of the armies above and below, that does according to his pleasure in heaven and in earth, with whom nothing is impossible; who could easily destroy the enemies of his people, and deliver them, either immediately by his power, or mediately by means of armies on earth, whom he could assemble, and send at pleasure; or by legions of angels at his command: "the God of Israel"; their covenant God; who still continued to be so, notwithstanding their sins and transgressions, and though in captivity in a foreign land; and a good him this, to preserve them from the idolatry of the country they were in, and to observe unto them that he only was to be worshipped by them:

unto all that are carried away captives: or, "to all of the captivity"; or, "to the whole captivity" {r}; high and low, rich and poor; this letter was an interesting one to them all:

whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon; for though their sins and iniquities were the moving, meritorious, and procuring causes of their captivity; and Nebuchadnezzar and his army the instruments; yet God was the efficient cause: the Chaldeans could never have carried them captive, if the Lord had not willed it, or had not done it by them; for there is no "evil [of this kind] in a city, and the Lord hath not done it", **Am 3:6**.

{r} hlwgh lkl "universae migrationi", Schmidt; "omni transmigrationi", Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 29:5

Ver. 5. Build ye houses, and dwell [in them],.... Intimating hereby that they must not expect a return into their own land in any short time, but that they should continue many years where they were; suggesting also, that as they had ability, so they should have liberty, of building themselves houses; nor should they be interrupted by their enemies; nor would their houses be taken from them, when built; but they should dwell peaceably and quietly in them, as their own; which they might assure themselves of from the Lord, who gives these, and the following directions:

and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; and live as comfortably as you can in a foreign country; plant your gardens with vines and pomegranates, and all sorts of fruitful trees the country produces; and fear not the fruit being taken away from you; depend upon it, you shall eat the fruit of your own labour, and not be deprived of it.

Jeremiah 29:6

Ver. 6. Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters,.... That is, such as had no wives, who were either bachelors or widowers; not that they were to take wives of the Chaldeans, but of those of their own nation; for intermarriages with Heathens were forbidden them; and this they were to do, in order to propagate their posterity, and keep up a succession:

and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands; or "men" {s}; preserving and establishing the right of parents to give their children in marriage, and pointing to them their duty to provide suitable yoke fellows for them; and hereby is signified, that not only they, but their children after them, should continue in this state of captivity:

that they may bear sons and daughters, that ye may be increased there;
and not diminished; like their ancestors in Egypt, who grew very numerous amidst all their afflictions and bondage.

{s} Myvnal "viris", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 29:7

Ver. 7. And seek the peace of the city,.... The prosperity and happiness of Babylon, or any other city in Chaldea, were they were placed: this they were to do by prayer and supplication to God, and by all other means that might be any ways conducive to the good of the state where they were:

whither I have caused you to be carried away captives; and as long as they continued so; for being under the protection of the magistrates of it, though Heathens, they owed them submission, and were under obligation to contribute to their peace and welfare:

and pray unto the Lord for it; the city, where they dwelt; for the continuance, safety, peace, and prosperity of it; and therefore much more ought the natives of a place to seek and pray for its good, and do all that in them lies to promote it; and still more should the saints and people of God pray for the peace of Jerusalem, or the church of God, where they are born, and brought up in a spiritual sense; see **1Ti 2:1**;

for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace; which is an argument taken from self-interest; intimating, that while the city in which they were was in safety and prosperity, was in a flourishing condition, as to its health and trade, they would partake more or less with them of the same advantages; and on the other hand, should they be distressed with the sword, famine, or pestilence, or any grievous calamity, they would be involved in the same.

Jeremiah 29:8

Ver. 8. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,....
See Gill on "Jer 29:4";

let not your prophets and your diviners, that [be] in the midst of you, deceive you; their false prophets, as the Targum; and there were many such in the captivity; see Eze 13:2; and such who pretended to divine and foretell future things, and so impose upon the people, who were too apt to believe them; these insinuated, that in a little time they should have their liberty, and return to their own land again, contrary to the prophecies that came from the Lord himself:

neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed; for that of a speedy return to their own land was no other than a dream, which they both dreamed themselves; their thoughts running on it in the daytime, they dreamed of it at night; and fancied it was from the Lord; a divine dream; and so built much upon it; and also which they encouraged the false prophets and diviners to dream, and tell their dreams, by their listening to them, and being pleased with them, giving credit to them as if they came from God.

Jeremiah 29:9

Ver. 9. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name,.... They pretended to have the authority of God for what they said; that their prophecies and dreams were from him, and as such they delivered them in his name; though they were false ones; that they might be the better received by the people:

I have not sent them, saith the Lord; they had no mission or commission from the Lord, no warrant or authority from him; they set up themselves; and ran without being sent; and prophesied out of their own hearts what came into their heads, the fancies of their own brain, or the delusions of Satan, under whose power and influence they were; therefore sad must be the case of a people giving heed to such seducing spirits.

Jeremiah 29:10

Ver. 10. For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon,.... These seventy years are not to be reckoned from the last captivity under Zedekiah; nor from the precise present time; nor from the first of Jeconiah's captivity; but the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and the first of Nebuchadnezzar, when he first came up against Jerusalem; see Jer 25:1;

I will visit you; in a way of mercy, by stirring up Cyrus king of Persia to grant them their liberty:

and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place; meaning the promise of return from their captivity to their own land; which was a good word of promise, a promise of good things; which was good news to them, and of which there was no doubt of its performance, since God is faithful who has promised, and is able also to perform. It was from hence, and Jer 25:11; that Daniel learned the time of the captivity, and the return from it, **Da 9:2**.

Jeremiah 29:11

Ver. 11. For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord,.... The purposes and resolutions of his heart concerning their welfare, particularly the restoration of them to their own land; these were within him, and known to him, and him only; they were remembered by him, and continued with him, as the "thoughts of his heart are to all generations"; and so would not fail of being performed; men think and forget what they have thought of, and so it comes to nothing; but thus it is not with God; he has taken up many thoughts in a way of love, grace, and mercy, concerning sinful men; about their election in Christ; a provision of all spiritual blessings for them; redemption and salvation by Christ; their effectual calling, adoption, and eternal life:

thoughts of peace, and not of evil: or "for evil" {t}; these thoughts were concerning the temporal peace and prosperity of the Jews in Babylon, and not of anything to their hurt; yea, even their captivity was for their good, Jer 24:5; and thoughts concerning his spiritual Israel, their peace and reconciliation with God, and the manner of bringing it about, by the blood, sufferings, and death of his Son in human nature, with whom he consulted and agreed about this matter; and concerning their inward spiritual peace of mind and conscience now, and their eternal peace hereafter: nor does he ever think of evil for them; whatever evil he thinks towards others, angels or men, he thinks none towards them; and whatever evil befalls them, he means it for good, and it does work for good unto them; he cannot think otherwise concerning them, consistent with his everlasting and unchangeable love to them; since he has designed so much good for them, does so much to them, and has so much to bestow upon them. The issue of all which is,

to give you an expected end; a very desirable one; such as they wished and hoped to have, and expected; such as would put an end to all their troubles, and put them into the enjoyment of all good things promised and waited for. This, in the mystical sense, may have reference to the Messiah, in whom all God's thoughts of peace, concerning his special people, issue; he is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, of all things, **Re 1:8**; of all things in creation; of the Scriptures, promises and prophecies of it: "the end of the law for righteousness",
Ro 10:4: the fulfilling end of it, by his obedience, and sufferings, and death; and who was to come, and did come, at the end of the Jewish world, at the end of their civil and ecclesiastical state: he was long promised and prophesied of and was much waited for and expected, by the saints before the flood; from thence to Moses; from Moses to David; from David to the Babylonian captivity; from thence to the times of his coming, when there was a general expectation of him; and expected end was then given, as an instance of grace and good will to men. It may also be applied to salvation by Christ; the end of all God's gracious purposes and designs; the end of the covenant of grace, the provisions, blessings, and promises of it; the end of Christ's coming into the world, and of his obedience and death; the end of his prayers and preparations now in heaven; and the end of the faith of the saints on earth: this is an end hoped, waited for, and expected by faith; and for which there is good reason; since it is wrought out, prepared, and promised; saints are heirs of it; and now it is nearer than when they believed; and will be bestowed as a free grace gift, through Jesus Christ our Lord; and will be enjoyed as the issue and result of God's eternal thoughts of peace concerning them. Some render it, "an expected reward" {u}; which is given at the end of the work: others, "posterity and

hope" {w}; a numerous posterity, and hope and expectation of good things from the Lord, promised in the days of the Messiah.

{t} herl alw "et non in malum", Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt. {u} hwqtw tyrxa "mercedem et quidem expectatam", Piscator; so Ben Melech. {w} "Posteritatem et spem", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 29:12

Ver. 12. Then shall ye call upon me,.... When the expected end is about to be given; when God intends and is about to bestow a mercy, he gives his people a spirit of prayer to ask for it; and even the promise of it is a considerable argument to encourage and engage more to pray for it:

and ye shall go and pray unto me: walk in my ways; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech; or rather ye shall go into your private closets, or into those public places where prayer was wont to be made, and there put up your petitions; or it may be the meaning is, that they should continue praying unto him; should pray without ceasing, until they enjoyed the blessing, and had the expected end given them:

and I will hearken unto you: God is a God hearing prayer; he listens to the requests of his people, and answers them in his own time and way; which is no small encouragement to pray unto him.

Jeremiah 29:13

Ver. 13. And ye shall seek me, and find [me],.... When persons seek the Lord aright, they always find him; a God hearing prayer; a God in Christ; bestowing favours upon them; granting them his presence; indulging them in communion with him; and favouring them with fresh supplies of his grace, and everything needful for them; every mercy, temporal and spiritual; that is, when they seek him in Christ, who is the only way to the Father, under the guidance and influence of the blessed Spirit; in the exercise of faith upon him and his promises; with fervency of spirit and ardour of mind; with diligence and importunity; with earnest desires and strong affections; and, as follows, with all sincerity of soul:

when ye shall search for me with all your heart; which, as Calvin rightly observes, does not design perfection, but integrity and sincerity; when they draw nigh with a true heart, and call upon him in truth, and search for him with eagerness, with a hearty desire to find him, as men search for gold, and silver, and hid treasure.

Jeremiah 29:14

Ver. 14. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord,.... As he is; when his favour is shown, his presence is enjoyed, and the blessing sought for is obtained:

and I will turn away your captivity; this designs the captivity of Jeconiah, or of the Jews that were carried captive with him; and which had its accomplishment when the Jews returned to their own land, upon the edict of Cyrus:

and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; for though the greatest part might be carried to Babylon, and continue there; yet others might be removed or moved into other countries; and besides, this may respect their brethren who should come into captivity, and return with them at the end of the seventy years; for the expressions are very large and general:

and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive; that is, Jerusalem, and the land of Judea; though the Vulgate Latin version renders it,

"and I will make you to return from the place to which I have caused you to go captive;"

meaning Babylon. The sense comes to the same; but the common rendering is most agreeable to the Hebrew text.

Jeremiah 29:15

Ver. 15. Because ye have said,.... That is, some of them; for here the Lord, by the prophet, turns from the godly among the captives, whom he had been advising, encouraging, and comforting before, to those who gave heed to the false prophets, who promised them a speedy return to their own land, and which they believed; and therefore rejected and despised the prophecies of Jeremiah, and others:

the Lord hath raised us up prophets in Babylon; and therefore stood in no need of other prophets that were in Judea, or in Jerusalem, nor should hearken to them; but believe those that were raised up among themselves, rather than others at a distance; and though these were false prophets, yet, being such that prophesied to them things that were agreeable, they were willing to believe them, and to consider them, and receive them, as prophets sent of God, when they were not.

Jeremiah 29:16

Ver. 16. [Know] that thus saith the Lord,.... Or "for", or "wherefore thus saith the Lord" {x}; for the word "know" is not in the text, and seems needless; though it is also supplied by other interpreters {y}. The words are illative, and follow upon the former; and the sense is, that since they gave heed to their false prophets in Babylon, who told them that they should quickly return; therefore the Lord sent the following message to them, informing them that it was so far from being true that they should in a short time return to Jerusalem, that, on the other hand, they that were there should soon be with them in captivity, or be destroyed:

of, or "concerning"

the king that sitteth on the throne of David; that is, King Zedekiah, who was then the reigning king at Jerusalem:

and of all the people that dwelleth in this city; the city Jerusalem, where Jeremiah was, and from whence this letter was written, in the name of the Lord, to the captives at Babylon:

and of your brethren that are not gone forth with you into captivity; that lived in the several parts of the land of Judea, who were left behind, and not carried captive, when those were to whom these words are directed.

{x} rma hk yk "nam sic ait", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "ideo", Calvin; "ita namque", Schmidt. {y} "Scitote quod", Vatablus.

Jeremiah 29:17

Ver. 17. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, behold, I will send upon them the sword,.... The sword of the Chaldeans, by which many of them should fall, as they did. The Targum is,

"I will send upon them those that kill with the sword:"

who, though they were prompted to come against the Jews, through a natural and ambitious desire of conquering and plundering, yet were sent of God; nor would they have come, had he not willed and suffered it:

the famine and the pestilence; to destroy others that escaped the sword; both these raged while Jerusalem was besieged by the Chaldeans:

and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil; to which they are compared, Jer 24:8. The sense is, that as they had made themselves wicked and corrupt, like naughty and rotten figs, so the Lord would deal with them as men do with such, cast them away, as good for nothing. The word {z} for "vile" signifies something horrible; and designs such figs so bad, that they even strike the eater of them with horror.

{z} Myrevh Mynatk "tanquam ficus horrendas", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Stockius, p. 1129.

Jeremiah 29:18

Ver. 18. And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence,.... Or, "follow after {a} them"; such as should make their escape out of the city, and go into Egypt, or other countries, for shelter and safety, should be pursued by the vengeance of God, and should fall by sword, famine, or pestilence, in other places:

and will deliver them; such as should not perish by the above mentioned calamities:

to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth; where they should be scattered, and live in exile: or "for a shaking to all the kingdoms of the earth" {b}; who should shake and tremble at such a dreadful spectacle of vengeance; or rather they should shake and tremble at the wrath of God upon them; or else their enemies, among whom they should be, should shake their heads at them, by way of insult and triumph over them:

to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them; where men shall look at them with amazement, and curse theft, and hiss at them, and reproach them, as the offscouring of the world.

{a} Mhyrxa ytpdrw "et persequar post eos", Calvin, Piscator. {b} hewzl "in commotionem", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 29:19

Ver. 19. Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the Lord,.... Which were spoken to them by the prophets; not hearkening to them, but despising them, were the same as not hearkening to him, and despising him; contempt of God, and his word, was the cause of their ruin; see 2Ch 36:15;

which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets; such as Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, and others:

rising up early, and sending [them]; which denotes the frequency of their mission; the diligent care of God towards them; and his earnest solicitude for their welfare; and the plenty of means they were favoured with; all which were aggravations of their sin:

but ye would not hear, saith the Lord; the words of the Lord by his prophets; the counsel and admonitions he gave them; but pursued their own ways and counsels, and listened to the false prophets.

Jeremiah 29:20

Ver. 20. Hear ye therefore the word of the Lord,.... What he was now about to say concerning their false prophets:

all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon; all that were carried captive along with Jeconiah. Some parts of this letter are directed to one sort of the captives, and others to another sort of them; some being good men, some bad; but what follows all are called upon to observe, good and bad; it being a prediction of a certain event, which they would see fulfilled in a short time; and therefore might be of service of them; to the godly, for the confirmation of them in the belief of what the Lord had promised; and to the rest, to make them stop giving heed to false prophets, that should here after arise.

Jeremiah 29:21

Ver. 21. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,....
See Gill on "Jer 29:4";

of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you: two false prophets, of whom we have no account any where else but here; and are, no doubt, the prophets, or however two of them, that they of the captivity boasted of that God had raised unto them in Babylon, Jer 29:15. The Jews {c} say, and so Jerom relates, that these are the two elders that attempted the chastity of Susannah:

behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon: they should be suffered to commit some crime against the state, of which notice should be given, and they should be seized as seditious persons; which was so permitted in providence, that they might be brought to punishment for other sins they were guilty of:

and he shall slay them before your eyes; by roasting them with fire: as follows:

{c} R. Gedaliah Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 80. 1.

Jeremiah 29:22

Ver. 22. And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which [are] in Babylon,.... A form of cursing; when they cursed anyone, or wished him ill, it should be in such like manner as follows; so odious and detestable would these men be afterwards to them, whom they, at least some of them, took to be the prophets of the Lord:

saying, the Lord make thee like Zedekiah, and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire; or "burnt them" {d}; not at once, but with a slow fire; so the Maccabees were roasted,

"Then the king, being in a rage, commanded pans and caldrons to be made hot: " (2 Maccabees. 7:3)

Burning persons with fire, and casting them into a fiery furnace, were ways used by the Chaldeans in putting persons to death, **Da 3:6**; and roasting men at a fire was used by the Chinese {e}.

{d} Mlq "combussit", Pagninus; "ustulavit", Munster; so Ben Melech says the word signifies "burning". {e} Martin Hist. Sinic. p. 257.

Jeremiah 29:23

Ver. 23. Because they have committed villany in Israel,.... Or "folly" {f}; as the sins of adultery, and prophesying falsely, are afterwards mentioned. This was not the reason why the king of Babylon put them to death; though the Jews {g} have a tradition that they attempted the chastity of Nebuchadnezzar's daughter, for which reason he case them into a furnace; but rather it was on account of their prophesying immediate destruction to Babylon; and telling the captives that they should be delivered in a short time; and stirring them up to prepare to go to their own land; but the reasons here given are those which moved the Lord to deliver them into the hands of the king of Babylon for their destruction:

and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives; which was a piece of villany, as well as folly; and which abundantly showed that these men were not the prophets of the Lord, or were sent by him, being such impure wretches:

and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them; as that the people should return to their own land in a short time; this was another part of their villany and folly, and for which they were given up into the hands of the king of Babylon, to be punished:

even I know, and [am] a witness, saith the Lord; for though their adulteries might be very secretly committed, and their lying prophecies were not seen to be such by the people in common; yet God, who is omniscient, saw all their impurity, and knew all their lies and falsehood, and was, and would be, a swift witness against them, here and hereafter. The Targum is,

"and before me it is manifest, and my word is a witness, saith the Lord."

{f} hlbn "stultitiam", V. L. Schmidt. {g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin. fol. 93. 1.

Jeremiah 29:24

Ver. 24. [Thus] shalt thou speak to Shemaiah the Nehelamite,.... Or, "the dreamer" {h}; because he pretended to have dreams from the Lord; or because what he delivered as prophecies were mere dreams; as that the captives should quickly return to their own land; so Kimchi: but Jarchi takes it to be the name of a place, from whence he was so called; perhaps the place of his birth, or habitation formerly; so the Targum, paraphrasing

"who was of Halem;"

he was, another of the false prophets in Babylon. This latter part of the chapter is of a later date than the former; and refers to what was done after the above letter of Jeremiah came to the captives in Babylon; and after, the return of the messengers from thence, who brought, account how it was received, and what umbrage it gave to the false prophets:

saying; as follows:

{h} ymlxnh "quasi" Mlwx "somniator somniorum", Kimchi and Ben Melech.

Jeremiah 29:25

Ver. 25. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying,.... See Gill on "Jer 29:4";

because thou hast sent letters in thy name unto all the people that [are] at Jerusalem; not in the name of the captives, whom he consulted not; nor with Ezekiel the prophet of the Lord, who was of the captivity; but in his own

name, taking upon him to direct and order what should be done in Jerusalem. These letters were sent, very probably, by the hands of the king's messengers, when they returned, whose names are mentioned,
Jer 29:3; some of them were sent to the people, to set them against the prophet of the Lord, Jeremiah, that they might not give any heed and credit to him; and others to the priests, as follows:

and to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest; not the high, priest, but his sagan or deputy; the second priest, as he is called, Jer 52:24; for Seraiah was high priest, unless he was now become high priest in his room. This Maaseiah was either his immediate parent, or else the head of that course to which Zephaniah belonged, as a common priest, which was the twenty fourth in order, 1Ch 24:18;

saying: as follows:

Jeremiah 29:26

Ver. 26. The Lord hath made thee priest in the stead of Jehoiada the priest,.... The same with Seraiah, who might have more names than one, and Jehoiada be one of them, who either was removed, or carried captive; and this Zephaniah, his sagan of deputy, succeeded him. Some think he refers to the famous Jehoiada in the times of Joash, a great reformer; and that this man was another such an one for his zeal, or at least ought to be, which he would have him exert against Jeremiah; but the former seems most probable:

that ye should be officers in the house of the Lord; or "visitors", or "overseers" {i} there; that is, Zephaniah, and the rest of the priests; or that he should see to it, that there were proper officers set there, to take care of it, and suffer none to come in and prophesy there, to the hurt of the people, as he would insinuate:

for every man [that is] mad, and maketh himself a prophet; or, "against every man" {k}; to prevent all enthusiastic persons, and such as are troubled with a frenzy in their brain, and set up themselves for prophets, from speaking in the name of the Lord; so the true prophets of old, and the apostles of Christ, and faithful ministers of the word, have always been represented as beside themselves, and as taking upon them an office that did not belong to them; and therefore should be restrained and persecuted by the higher powers:

that thou shouldest put him in prison, and in the stocks; the former of these words, according to the Hebrew, signifies an engine or instrument, in which the neck was put, like our pillory; and the latter an iron instrument for the hands, a manacle, or handcuff, as Kimchi; see Jer 20:2; though this rather better agrees with the pillory, being a strait narrow place, in which the hands, feet, and neck, were put {l}.

{i} Mydyqp "inspectores", Cocceius, Gataker. {k} vya lkl "adversus omnem virum", Calvin; "contra omnem virum", Schmidt. {l} Vid. Hottinger. Smegma Orientale, l. 1. c. 7. p. 190.

Jeremiah 29:27

Ver. 27. Now therefore why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth,.... Not by words only, but by actions; by beating and scourging, by pillory or imprisonment, and so restraining him from prophesying to the people:

which maketh himself a prophet unto you? takes upon him such an office, though not sent of the Lord, as he would insinuate: this shows the haughtiness and insolence of the false prophets in Babylon, to assume such authority to themselves, to dictate to the high priest, as Kimchi takes him to be, or however the second priest, what he should do, and to rebuke him for not doing his office.

Jeremiah 29:28

Ver. 28. For therefore he sent unto us [in] Babylon, saying,.... That is, Jeremiah the prophet; and this was the reason, because his mouth was not stopped, and he restrained from prophesying; so that Shemaiah lays all the blame on Zephaniah, and his brethren the priests; who, had they done their duty, would have prevented Jeremiah's letter to the captives, as he suggests; the purport of which was,

this [captivity] is long; so Kimchi, Abarbinel, and Ben Melech, supply it; or, "it [is] long" {m}; it will be a long time before the captives shall return to their own land; and therefore they should not think of it, or provide for it; but, on the contrary, for their continuance in Babylon; giving the following advice:

build ye houses, and dwell [in them]; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; referring to Jeremiah's letter;
See Gill on "Jer 29:5".

{m} ayh hkra "longum est", Pagninus, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 29:29

Ver. 29. And Zephaniah the priest read this letter,.... Of Shemaiah's to him, and the other priests:

in the ears of Jeremiah the prophet: whether out of good will, to let him know who were his enemies abroad; or out of ill will, to stir up the people against him; or in pretence of proceeding equitably with him; not taking him up, and punishing him before he brought the accusation and charge against him; and acquainted him who were his accusers, and what evidence there was, and heard what he had to say in his own defence whether one or the other is uncertain; however, by this means Jeremiah came to the knowledge of Shemaiah's letter.

Jeremiah 29:30

Ver. 30. When came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah,.... After he had heard the letter read:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 29:31

Ver. 31. Send to all them of the captivity,.... Another letter; not to Shemaiah, but to the people, that they might all know that he was a false prophet; and how his lies were resented by the Lord; and what punishment should be inflicted on him and his, on account of them:

saying, thus saith the Lord concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite; the letter, though written by the prophet, must be sent in the name of the Lord, declaring what he would do with the person mentioned, and the reason of it; which follows:

because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not,
and he caused you to trust in a lie; that they should in a very little time return from their captivity to Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 29:32

Ver. 32. Therefore thus saith the Lord,.... Because he prophesied without being sent of God, and prophesied lies, by which the people were deceived:

behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed; not him only, but his posterity also: thus God sometimes visits the sins of parents on their children, they being, as it were, a part of themselves, and oftentimes partners with them in their iniquities:

he shall not have a man to dwell among this people; either at Babylon, or at Jerusalem, whither he had promised a speedy return:

neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the Lord; by returning them, after seventy years captivity, to their own land, and to the enjoyment of all their privileges, civil and religious:

because he hath taught rebellion against the Lord; or, "a departure {n} from [him]"; taught men to revolt from him, and not give heed to his prophets; to disbelieve what he said by them, concerning their continuance in Babylon; which is called a rebellion against him; and being so heinous a crime, deserved the punishment denounced on him and his; rebels and their offspring are punished among men.

{n} hro "apostasiam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "recessionem", Schmidt.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 30:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 30

This chapter contains a prophecy of the call and conversion of the Jews in the latter day; which being a matter of moment and importance, and that it might

continue, and be read hereafter, it is ordered to be written in a book, Jer 30:1; the thing itself is expressed by a return from captivity to their own land, Jer 30:3; but previous to this there would be most dreadful times, as never were the like,
Jer 30:4; yet there would be a deliverance from them, and from the yoke of the oppressor; when the Jews should serve the Lord God, and the true Messiah, Jer 30:8; of which deliverance and salvation they are assured in the strongest terms, though all other nations should be made an end of, among whom they were, Jer 30:10; and though their ease might seem to be desperate, Jer 30:12; nevertheless they should be brought into a very comfortable and happy estate; their city rebuilt; their offspring increased; and religious worship established; and, above all, the Messiah should be made known to them as their King and Priest, and they appear to be the Lord's covenant people, Jer 30:18; and the chapter is concluded with threatening utter destruction to the wicked, Jer 30:23.

Ver. 1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord,.... The word of prophecy, us the Targum. Some make this to be the "thirteenth" sermon of the prophet's; it is a consolatory one, as Kimchi observes:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 30:2

Ver. 2. Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel,.... Who is their covenant God; has not forgotten them; still has a regard for them; and speaks after the following comfortable manner concerning them:

saying, write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book; being things of consequence, that they might remain to after ages; and be read to the use, comfort, and edification of the Lord's people, in times to come; and be a support to their faith and hope, as well as be a testimony of the truth and faithfulness of God. Some think this charge refers to all the prophecies that go before, as well as follow after, to put them all together in a book or roll, that they might be preserved; though others think it refers only to the present prophecy; and so Kimchi interprets it, write all the words "that I am now speaking unto thee" {o} in a book; which should come to pass in the latter day. So John is bid to write in a book what he saw; the things that are, and shall be hereafter, **Re 1:11**.

{o} Kyla ytrbd rva "quibus alloquor te", Junius & Tremellius; "quae locutus fuero ad te", Piscator.

Jeremiah 30:3

Ver. 3. For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord,.... And they are yet to come; the prophecy is not yet fulfilled. Kimchi says this belongs to the days of the Messiah; but not to his first coming, or to his coming in the flesh, which the Jews vainly expect; but to his spiritual coming in the latter day:

that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord; which cannot be understood of their return from the Babylonish captivity; for, as Kimchi rightly observes, only Judah and Benjamin returned from thence; and though there were some few of the other tribes that came with them, especially of the tribe of Levi, yet not sufficient to answer to so great a prophecy as this, which refers to the same time as that in **Ho 3:5**; as appears by comparing that with Jer 30:9; and when, as the Apostle Paul says, "all Israel shall be saved", Ro 11:25;

and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it; the land of Canaan, given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and which shall be again by the Jews their posterity; for, without that the Jews upon their call and conversion shall return to their own land, in a literal sense, I see not how we can understand this, and many other prophecies.

Jeremiah 30:4

Ver. 4. And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel, and concerning Judah. Which follow in this chapter and the next; first concerning Israel, the ten tribes; and then concerning the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, even concerning all Israel; whereas, if this prophecy only respects the return from the captivity in Babylon, there is very little in it which concerns the ten tribes, or but a very few of them. The words may be rendered, "unto Israel, and unto Judah"; as being the persons to whom they were directed, as well as were the subjects of them.

Jeremiah 30:5

Ver. 5. For thus saith the Lord,.... Yet what follows are the words of others; wherefore some supply it, "for thus saith the Lord, the nations shall say" {p}; so Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it as what the Gentiles will say in the times of the Messiah; but it might be better supplied, "ye shall say"; that is, Israel and Judah; to whom the words of the Lord are spoken in Jer 30:3; or else the Lord here represents his people, saying:

we have heard a voice of trembling, ear, and not of peace; which is to be understood, of the fear and dread injected into them by the Babylonians when they besieged their city, and burned that, and their temple; nor of the fear and dread which came upon the Babylonians at the taking of their city by Cyrus, upon which followed the deliverance of the Jews. Kimchi interprets this of something yet future, the war of Gog and Magog, which he supposes wilt be when their Messiah comes; and Jarchi sans it is so understood in their Midrash Agadah. This distress, I think, refers to the slaying of the witnesses, and to that hour of temptation which shall come upon all the earth to try the inhabitants of it; and which will be followed with the destruction of antichrist; and that will make way for the call and conversion of the Jews.

{p} "Gentes dicturae sunt", Vatablus.

Jeremiah 30:6

Ver. 6. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child?.... Look into the histories of former times, inquire of those most versed in them, whether ever there was such a thing in the world as that a man should travail with child; ask one and, another you see in distress, whether that is their case or not, which looks so much like it; and since there never was such an instance, nor is it possible that there should:

wherefore do I see every man with his hands his loins, as a woman in travail; the usual posture of women in such a condition, trying hereby to abate their pain, and ease themselves. This metaphor is made use of, both to express the sharpness and shortness of this distress; as the pains of a woman in travail are very sharp, yet short, and, when over, quickly forgotten; and so it wilt be at this time; it will be a sharp trial of the church and people of God; but it will last but for a short time; and the joy and happy times that will follow will soon cause it to be forgotten:

and all faces are turned into paleness? at the departure of the blood, through fear and trembling. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it "the yellow jaundice"; their faces were of the colour of such persons that have that disease upon them; or, as others, the green sickness. Some render it, "the king's evil" {q}.

{q} Nwqryl "in speciem morbi regii", Junius & Tremellius; "in morbum regium", Piscator.

Jeremiah 30:7

Ver. 7. Alas! for that day [is] great,.... For sorrow and distress:

so that none [is] like it; such were the times of Jerusalem's siege and destruction by the Romans; and which was an emblem of those times of trouble from antichrist in the latter day; see Mt 24:21;

it [is] even the time of Jacob's trouble: of the church and people of God, the true Israel of God; when Popery will be the prevailing religion in Christendom; when the outward court shall be given to the Gentiles; the witnesses shall be slain; antichrist will be "in statu quo"; and the whore of Rome in all her glory; though it shall not last long:

but he shall be saved out of it; shall come out of those great tribulations into a very happy and comfortable estate; the spirit of life shall enter into the witnesses, and they shall live and ascend to heaven; the vials of God's wrath will be poured upon the antichristian states; the kings of the earth will hate the whore, and burn her with fire; the Gospel will be preached everywhere; the Jews will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in; and an end be put to all trouble; of which there will be no more, nor any occasion of it: or, "therefore he shall be saved out of it" {r}; as the effect of the divine compassion to him in such great trouble.

{r} evwy hnmmw "ideo ex eo servabitur", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 30:8

Ver. 8. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts,.... When the time is come for Jacob to be saved out of his trouble:

[that] I will break his yoke from off thy neck; not the yoke of the king of Babylon, but of antichrist, and of all the antichristian states, by whom the people of God have been oppressed; so the Targum,

"I will break the yoke of the peoples (the antichristian nations) from off your necks."

Jarchi interprets it of the yoke of the nations of the world from off Israel; and Kimchi of the yoke of Gog and Magog, or of every nation:

and will burst thy bonds; by which they were kept in bondage, both with respect to civil and religious things; but now he that led into captivity shall go into captivity himself, Re 13:10;

and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him; this shows that this prophecy cannot be understood of deliverance from the Babylonish captivity; because, after this, strangers did serve themselves of the Jews, and they were servants unto them; as to the Persians, and Grecians, and especially the Romans, by whom they were entirely subdued and ruined; and to this day all nations almost serve themselves of them; but when they shall be called and converted, as they shall be free from the yoke of sin and Satan, and from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and the traditions of their elders, in a religious sense; so from the yoke of the nations of the world, in a civil sense.

Jeremiah 30:9

Ver. 9. But they shall serve the Lord their God,.... And him only, in a spiritual manner, in righteousness and true holiness, with reverence and godly fear; having respect to all his precepts and ordinances, and every branch of religious worship; joining themselves to Gospel churches, and worshipping along with them, before them, and in the midst of them; see **Re 3:9**;

and David their king; not literally, who shall be raised up from the dead, and reign over them, which Kimchi supposes possible, though he does not assert it; nor his successors called by his name, as the kings of Egypt were called

Pharaohs and Ptolemies, and the Roman emperors Caesars, of which we have no instance; nor were there any kings of David's line upon the throne of Israel after the Babylonish captivity, until the Messiah came, and who is the Person here meant; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"and they shall hearken to, or obey, Messiah the son of David their king;"

and Kimchi owns that it may be interpreted of Messiah the son of David, whose name is called David, as it is in many prophecies, Eze 34:23; and this prophecy is understood of the Messiah by several Jewish writers {s}; and in the Talmud {t} it is said,

"the holy blessed God will raise up unto thee another David; as it is said, "and they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them"; it is not said, "he hath raised up", but "I will raise up";"

and Christ is called David, not only because he is his son, but because he is his antitype. David was a type of Christ in his birth and parentage; the son of Jesse, born of mean parents, and at Bethlehem; in his outward form, ruddy and beautiful; in his inward character, a man of holiness, wisdom, and courage; in his offices of shepherd, prophet, and king; in his afflictions and sorrows, and in his wars and victories. The same Person is here meant as in the former clause, "the Lord their God"; since it is Jehovah that is here speaking; and he does not say "they shall serve me", but "the Lord their God"; and since the same service is to be yielded to David as to the Lord their God; and who is, in his divine nature, the Lord God, and so the object of all religious worship and service; and, in his human nature, of the seed of David; and by office a King, appointed by his Father, and owned by his people, as King of saints; so the words may be rendered, "they shall serve the Lord their God, even David their King"; see **Tit 2:13**;

whom I will raise up unto them; which is said of him in all his offices, Jer 23:5; and is expressive of his constitution as Mediator; and includes the Father's pitching upon him, appointing him, calling him, fitting and qualifying him, and sending him in the fulness of time, under this character, as a Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour; all which was for the good of his people; as a favour to them, for their profit and advantage: his incarnation is for them; his obedience, sufferings, and death; his righteousness, and the salvation he wrought out; he is raised up, and sent to them to bless them, with all spiritual blessings that are in him, **Ac 3:26**.

{s} R. Albo in Sepher lkkarim, l. 2. c. 28. Abarbinel in loc. & in Mashmiah Jeshuab, fol. 35. 4. {t} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.

Jeremiah 30:10

Ver. 10. Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord,.... Since the Messiah, who is the Lord God, should be raised up to thorn, whom they should serve, and he should save them; and so had nothing to fear from their enemies; and had no reason to doubt of salvation and deliverance, seeing so great a person was engaged for them. The language is very much like the Prophet Isaiah's:

neither be dismayed, O Israel: the same thing in other words; for Jacob and Israel are the same; and to fear and be dismayed are much alike:

for, lo, I will save thee from afar; from a far country; not from Babylon only, but from all distant countries where they are dispersed, east, west, north, or south; distance of place should be no hinderance to their salvation, and so need be no objection in their minds to it:

and thy seed from the land of their captivity; their children should come forth with them: it seems to respect future times; that though this should not be accomplished in the persons of the Israelites then living, yet should be in their posterity:

and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make [him] afraid; which was not fulfilled upon the Jews' return from the Babylonish captivity; for they quickly met with much opposition and disturbance in the rebuilding of their city and temple; and afterwards from Antiochus, in the times of the Maccabees, by whom they were greatly disquieted; and at last by the Romans, by whom their nation was subdued and ruined; wherefore this respects the quiet and peaceable times they shall have when they are converted, and have embraced the Christian religion.

Jeremiah 30:11

Ver. 11. For I [am] with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee,.... Not only from temporal enemies, but from spiritual ones, sin, Satan, and the world; and to save them with a spiritual and everlasting salvation, which the presence and power of God, through his rich grace, will bring all his people to:

though I will make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; a full end has been made of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Egyptians; these people and their names are no more; and of Rome Pagan, which, upon the opening of the sixth seal, departed as a scroll that is rolled together; and so will all the antichristian states be made a full end of, when the vials of God's wrath are poured out upon them; and yet the people of the Jews, a poor, mean, and despicable people, have been continued a distinct people, notwithstanding their dispersion so many hundreds of years; and will continue so until they are called and converted:

but I will correct thee in measure; or "in", or "according to judgment" {u}; as in Jer 10:24; wisely, moderately, and with clemency; which the Targum paraphrases "judgment remitted"; which is not strict and rigorous, but is abated of its rigour, and is mixed with mercy:

and will not leave thee altogether unpunished; or, "let thee go free"; from correction and chastisement in a merciful way. The Targum is,

"in destroying I will not destroy thee;"

or utterly destroy thee. And Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it of cutting off, from the use of the word in **Zec 5:3**.

{u} jpvml "in judicio", Pagninus, Montanus; "secundum, [vel] juxta judicium", Piscator, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 30:12

Ver. 12. For thus saith the Lord, thy bruise [is] incurable,.... By themselves or others, in all human appearance; there was no help for them from men; their case seemed desperate; there was no likelihood of their recovery to their former state and glory, as at this day the case of the Jews appears to be; there seems to be no probability of their conversion and restoration; and whenever it is, it will be as life from the dead, Ro 11:15; like quickening Ezekiel's dry bones, or raising persons from the dead, which none but the hand of omnipotence can effect:

[and] thy wound [is] grievous; an expression signifying the same as before: the metaphor is taken from a body wounded and bruised in such a manner, as to be past the skill of the most able surgeon to cure it.

Jeremiah 30:13

Ver. 13. [There is] none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up,.... None that will give themselves the trouble to look into their wound to judge of it; to consult, and reason, and debate about the nature of it; and what methods are most advisable to take for the healing and binding of it up: or, as others, "for the compression" {w} of it; the squeezing out the corrupt matter, in order to bring it to a cure:

thou hast no healing medicines; either of thine own, or of others, preparing for thee: the design of all these expressions is to show the helpless and hopeless state of the people of Israel, before their call, conversion, and restoration; by which it will appear to be the Lord's work, and his only; and since he was able to do it, and would do it, therefore Jacob and Israel had no reason to be afraid and dismayed, though their case might seem desperate.

{w} rwzml "compressioni", Junius & Tremellius; "ad compressionem", Gataker.

Jeremiah 30:14

Ver. 14. All thy lovers have forgotten thee,.... The Egyptians and Assyrians, whom they sought unto for help, and entered into an alliance with, and who promised them great things; but forgot their promises and forsook them:

they seek thee not; to ask of thy welfare, as the Targum adds; they do not, visit thee, nor inquire after thine health, or how it is with thee, having no manner of care and concern for thee; this has been the case of the Jews for many ages:

for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one; so it might seem to be; and thus it might be interpreted by them, as if the Lord acted the part of an enemy, and a very cruel one, that had no mercy; though he corrected them, as in
Jer 30:11, in measure, moderation, and mercy: or else the meaning is, that he

wounded them, when their nation, city, and temple, were destroyed, by the hand and means of an enemy, even a very cruel and merciless one, the Romans:

for the multitude of thine iniquity; [because] thy sins were increased; a very wicked people the Jews were, not only before they went into the Babylonish captivity, but after their return; and in the times of Christ and his apostles; who complain of their covetousness, hypocrisy, adultery, thefts, murders, and sacrilege; and particularly they were in the above manner chastised by means of the Romans, for their unbelief and rejection of the true Messiah, and the persecution of his followers.

Jeremiah 30:15

Ver. 15. Why criest thou for thine affliction?.... Or complainest of the hardness, and heaviness, and continuance of it, when there was such a just cause for it? when men have sinned at a high rate, they have no reason to complain of the punishment of their sins, **La 3:39**;

thy sorrow [is] incurable, for the multitude of thine iniquity; such were the number of their iniquities, that they brought them into such a sorrowful and wretched estate and condition that there was no recovery of them, nor hope of recovery of them, by their own power, or by the help and assistance of others:

[because] thy sins were increased I have done these things unto thee; which shows the justice of God, and is a vindication of it under all the seeming severity of it. The Jews {x} acknowledge, that under the second temple there was a great increase of capital crimes, such as murders, adulteries, &c. for which, and other sins, wrath came upon them to the uttermost by the Romans; and they still continue under the visible marks of the divine displeasure.

{x} Misna Sota, c. 9. sect. 9.

Jeremiah 30:16

Ver. 16. Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured,.... Thus rendering the words, they are to be connected with Jer 30:10; and all between to be put into a parenthesis: but rather, in connection with the preceding words, they should be rendered "nevertheless", or "notwithstanding" {y}; though they had sinned at so great a rate, and were so much afflicted and chastened by the Lord, yet their enemies should not go unpunished, and mercy in the issue would be showed to them. Jarchi calls it an oath, that so it should be; the Romans that devoured them, and ate up their substance, were devoured by the Goths and Vandals; for this may be carried further than to the destruction of the Babylonish empire by the Persians;

and all thine adversaries, everyone of them shall, fro into captivity; or be conquered and subdued, as were the Assyrians, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Grecians, Romans; and not only Rome Pagan has been destroyed, but Rome Papal also will go into captivity; see Re 13:10;

and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey: they shall be used according to the law of retaliation; the same measure they have measured shall be measured to them again.

{y} Nkl "verumtamen, [vel] nihilominus", Gataker. So Kimchi and Abarbinel.

Jeremiah 30:17

Ver. 17. For I will restore health to thee,.... That is, bring thee into a comfortable and prosperous condition, both in church and state, with respect to things religions and civil: as the afflictions and distresses of the Jewish nation are expressed by sickness, wounds, and bruises; so their prosperity, both spiritual and temporal, is signified by health. The words may be rendered, "I will cause length to ascend unto thee"; or a long plaster {z}; or rather, that which has been long looked for, and long in coming, prosperity; or else, that whereas they were before bowed down with afflictions and sorrows, now they should be as a man in an erect posture, that rises up in his full height and length, being in a robust and healthful state;

and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord; pardon their sins, remove their afflictions, and bring them into a comfortable situation, into a Gospel church state, and into their own land:

because they called thee an outcast; as the Jews now are, cast out of their own land, rejected from being the people of God; so they are reckoned by the nations among whom they are:

[saying], this [is] Zion, whom no man seeketh after: after their good, either temporal or spiritual; despised by most, pitied and prayed for by few; and fewer still they are that seek after, and are solicitous about, or take any methods, or make use of any means, for their conversion; but though man does not, God will, and his work will appear the more manifest.

{z} Kl hkra hlea "adducam tibi emplastrum longum", so some in Gataker; "faciam ut ad justam constitutionem assurgas", Junius & Tremellius; "ut assurgat sanitas tibi", Piscator; "nam faciam ut ascendat tibi proceritas", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 30:18

Ver. 18. Thus saith the Lord, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents,.... That is, the captives of Israel, the inhabitants of them; alluding to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, dwelling in tents, and to the Israelites in the wilderness; and fitly expresses the present unsettled state of the Jews:

and have mercy on his dwelling places; by restoring Israel, or Jacob's posterity, to their dwelling places in Jerusalem, and other places rebuilt by them and for them. The Targum is,

"I will have mercy on his cities;"

and the city shall be builded upon her own heap; the city of Jerusalem, as the Targum expresses it, as it was in the times of Zerubbabel; it was built in its place, as the same Targum; upon the very spot of ground where it before stood, which was become by its desolation a heap of rubbish: or, "upon its hill" {a}; Mount Moriah, on which some part of the city was built; so likewise in the latter day: though Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, and is now in a desolate condition, yet it shall be rebuilt, as it seems by this prophecy, upon the very spot where it formerly stood;

and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof; which the Targum interprets of the house of the sanctuary, the temple; so Jarchi; and it was true of it in Zerubbabel's time: but as this prophecy has a further view to future times, something else seems intended. Kimchi says it is either the king's palace or the temple. The singular may be put for the plural, and design "palaces", noble and stately buildings; signifying that the city shall be rebuilt in a very grand manner: and so "shall remain after the manner of it"; or, "according to its right" or "judgment" {b}; it shall be continued and established by or upon that justice and judgment that shall be done in it; for it shall be called a city of righteousness, and a faithful city, **Isa 1:26**.

{a} hlt le "colle suo", Vatablus. {b} wjpvm le "secundum jus suum", Vatablus; "ut oportet habitabitur", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 30:19

Ver. 19. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry,.... That is, out of Jacob's tents and dwelling places, the city and palaces of Jerusalem; for those who will inhabit them, when thus rebuilt, sensible of the divine favours, and thankful for them, will offer not any ceremonial sacrifices, as when before in their own land, which they will now see are abolished; but the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving only, which will be attended with great spiritual mirth and melody: perhaps this is said in allusion to the mirth and music used formerly in the solemn and religious festivals; see Re 19:1;

and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; the Jews, at the time of their conversion, will be very numerous, **Ho 1:10**; especially the number of God's spiritual Israel will then be very great; though Jacob is now small, he shall then arise and become a great multitude; the church's converts will be surprisingly many,
Isa 49:18;

and I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small; numbers of converts add to the glory of the church; it will be a glorious time; and this is what will make a considerable part of the latter day glory; namely, the conversion of the nation of the Jews at once, and the bringing in the fulness and forces of the Gentiles. The Targum is,

"I will strengthen them, and they shall not be weak."

It may be rendered, "I will honour them, and they shall not be little" {c}; or "mean" and contemptible; they shall be honoured with temporal and spiritual blessings, and be in great esteem, especially among the Christian nations.

{c} wreuy alw Mytdbkhw "et honorabo eos, et non evilescent", Montanus;

"neque parvi habebuntar aut vilescent", De Dieu.

Jeremiah 30:20

Ver. 20. Their children also shall be as aforetime,.... In the streets of Jerusalem, numerous and free; no more in a strange land, or subject to others, Zec 8:5; and educated in a religious manner. Some think it refers to the times of the patriarchs before the law was given; and that the meaning is, that the law being abrogated, and they now sensible of it, shall live without it, as their forefathers did. It may be understood of the church's children in a spiritual sense; that great numbers should be born again in her as formerly, who shall profess the Christian religion, and behave according to it:

and their congregation shall be established before me; the church, consisting of them; or their church state shall be settled and confirmed, and no more be destroyed, as it formerly was:

and I will punish all that oppress them; or rather, have oppressed them; all the antichristian nations, who will now suffer the wrath of God; and after this there will be no more oppressors and persecutors of the church of God.

Jeremiah 30:21

Ver. 21. And their nobles shall be of themselves,.... Or, "his noble One" {d}; Jacob's noble One, the Messiah, in whom all the promises centre; and whose incarnation and priesthood are the foundation of all the things above predicted. The Targum interprets these words of him;

"their King shall be anointed from them, and their Messiah shall be revealed from the midst of them."

And so it is applied to him in the Talmud {e}, and in other writings of the Jews {f}. Kimchi on the place says,

"it is known that the King Messiah shall be of Israel."

He may be called a "noble One", as he is a Nobleman in Lu 19:12; because he descended from illustrious persons; from David king of Israel, and from a race of kings in his line, as the genealogy of Matthew shows. Or, "his glorious One" {g}, as it may be rendered; he is glorious in his nature, being the brightness of his Father's glory; glorious in his perfections, which are the same with his divine Father's; glorious in his names and titles, the King and Lord of glory; glorious in his works and worship, which are the same that are ascribed to God the Father; glorious in his office as Mediator, which he has so well performed; glorious when he was raised from the dead, and had a glory given him; and when he ascended on high, and sat down at his Father's right hand, crowned with glory and honour; glorious in the eyes of God, and of all his people; and, when his kingdom shall be in a more glorious condition, he will reign before his ancients gloriously; and when he comes a second time, he will come in exceeding great glory. Or, his "mighty One" {h}; Christ is the mighty God, the mighty Mediator, the mighty Saviour; he is the most Mighty, he is the Almighty. Now, as man, his descent was from them, the Israelites; from Abraham, from Jacob, from Judah, from Jesse and David, and from the people of the Jews; see **Ro 9:4**;

and their Governor shall proceed from the midst of them; meaning the King Messiah, as before; who has the government of the church upon his shoulders; is worthy of all power and authority and has received it; has a power of making laws, and of obliging men to keep them; has a power of pardoning, justifying, and saving men; is the lawgiver that is able to save, and to destroy; and can subject all to his feet, as he will in a short time. This seems to refer to a law in Israel, that not a stranger, but one of their brethren, should be set as king over them,
De 17:15; which is true of the Messiah;

and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me; expressive of his priestly office; it being the business of a priest to draw nigh to God with the sacrifices of the people, and to intercede for them, Le 10:3. Christ in eternity drew nigh to his Father, and offered himself as a surety for his people, and became one; and the Greek word for surety, egguov, has the signification of being "near": he drew nigh and interposed between them and his father, and became a Mediator for them; he proposed to do everything for them law and justice required, and whatsoever was his Father's will should be done: he drew nigh and struck hands, stipulated and agreed with him, about the salvation of his people; he asked them of him, and all blessings of grace and glory for them: he drew nigh in time, having assumed their nature, and offered himself a sacrifice unto God, made satisfaction to his justice for them, and redeemed them unto God by his blood; by which means they are made nigh to God, and draw near to him with humble boldness; and now he is gone to heaven, and has taken his place at the right hand of God, where he appears in the presence of God, and makes intercession for them, presenting himself, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice. Now this is ascribed unto God, as causing him to draw nigh; because he chose, appointed, and called him to be a priest, Mediator, and surety, to which he was entirely free of himself; and therefore it follows,

for who [is] this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord; his drawing to God in the council and covenant of grace, to be the surety of his people, and his undertaking for them, were quite free and voluntary; he came of himself, and surrendered himself into the hands of justice at the time of his sufferings and death; and his intercession in heaven flows from his hearty love to his people; his heart has been, and is, engaged in every branch of his mediatorial work, which is a very singular and wonderful thing. No mere man could have engaged his heart to draw nigh to God, who is a consuming fire; no angel in heaven could have presumed to have done it on the behalf of sinful men; none but Christ himself could, and which is owing to the dignity of his person, and to his wondrous love; for this is a marvellous event. Now, though this is a prophecy of Christ's incarnation and priesthood, yet it is suitably introduced here; because, at the time of the Jews' conversion, he will be made known unto them, as being come of them, and as their Prophet, Priest, and King.

{d} wryda "praestans ejus", Montanus. {e} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. {f} Midrash Tillim apud Galatin. de Cathot. Ver. l. 10. c. 1. p. 648. {g} "Magnificus ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "dux ejus", V. L. "magnificus dux ejus", Munster, Tigurine version; "Rex eorum", Syr. {h} "Fortis ejus", Pagninus; "potens ejus", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 30:22

Ver. 22. And ye shall be my people,.... For many hundred years the people of the Jews have been called "Loammi" or, "ye are not my people", **Ho 1:9**; but now being converted, the covenant of God's grace shall be renewed, and a fresh manifestation and application of it made unto them; and they partaking of the grace of it, shall appear to be, and shall be, called the people of God, and shall behave as such, and fear and worship the Lord:

and I will be your God; will manifest his love to them, bestow his favours upon them, and take them under his care and protection. This is a summary of the covenant of grace, which will visibly take place when those people shall turn to the Lord, Ro 11:26.

Jeremiah 30:23

Ver. 23. Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury,.... That is, the wrath of God, which like a whirlwind comes suddenly, with great force and strength, and carries all before it; there is no withstanding it; such is the wrath of God against the enemies of his church and people:

a continuing whirlwind; whirlwinds, as they come suddenly, are generally soon over; but this will continue very boisterous and terrible, until it has done all the execution designed by it:

it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked; according to some, the wicked Jews, that do not repent and turn to the Lord; but rather the wicked of the nations, as Jarchi; not the Gentiles in general, as distinguished from the Jews, which is his sense, but the antichristian states; for the ruin of antichrist, and the conversion of the Jews, will be much about the same time; and the vials of God's wrath, which will be poured upon them, and fall upon their heads, will give them much pain, both in body and mind; see Re 16:10; and which wrath and ruin are expressed by a tempest of thunder, lightning, and hail, and by an earthquake, Jer 30:18.

Jeremiah 30:24

Ver. 24. The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return,.... This explains what is meant by the continuing whirlwind in Jer 30:23;

until he hath done [it]; his whole will and pleasure; brought Babylon to ruin, and destroyed all the antichristian powers:

and until he hath performed the intents of his heart; in a way of grace and mercy to his people, and in a way of wrath and vengeance on their enemies:

in the latter day ye shall consider it; this prophecy, and understand it; and see it wholly and fully accomplished.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 31:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 31

This chapter is connected with the former, respects the same times, and is full of prophecies and promises of spiritual blessings; of the coming of Christ; of the multiplication of his people, and the increase of their joy; of the conversion of the Gentiles; of the covenant of grace; and of the stability of the saints. It begins with the principal promise of the covenant, confirmed by past experience, of divine goodness, and with a fresh declaration of God's everlasting love, Jer 31:1; an instance of which would appear, in planting vines or churches in Samaria, the metropolis of Ephraim or the ten tribes, under the ministry of the apostles, the watchmen, on Mount Ephraim; whereby the Israel of God would be built, beautified, and made to rejoice, Jer 31:4; yea, it would be matter of joy to all that heard of it; since, notwithstanding distance and other difficulties, a great number should come to Christ, and to his church, drawn by the Father's love to them, and as owing to the relation he stands in to them, Jer 31:7; redemption out of the hands of Satan, and every spiritual enemy, must be published among the Gentiles; which would cause great joy, and give great satisfaction to the priests and people of the Lord, expressed by various metaphors, Jer 31:10; and though, upon the birth of the Redeemer, there would be an event, which might tend to damp the joy of saints on account of it, the murder of the infants at Bethlehem; yet some things are said to encourage faith, hope, and joy, and to abate sorrow and weeping, Jer 31:15; Ephraim's affliction, and behaviour under it, his repentance and reception, are recorded, Jer 31:18; backsliding Israel are called upon to return, in consideration of the birth of the Messiah, Jer 31:21; the happy and flourishing estate of the people of God is promised; all which were made known to the prophet by a dream in the night, Jer 31:23; and fresh promises are made, that the Lord would do them good, and not punish the children for their fathers' sins, but everyone for their own, Jer 31:28; and then an account is given of the new covenant of grace, as distinct from the old, and of the articles of it; the inscription of the law in the heart, spiritual knowledge of the Lord, and remission of sin, Jer 31:31; then follow assurances of the everlasting continuance of the true Israel and church of God, Jer 31:35; and the chapter is concluded with a promise of rebuilding the city of Jerusalem, and of the holiness of it, and of its abiding for ever, Jer 31:38.

Ver. 1. At the same time, saith the Lord,.... The time of the Messiah, the Gospel dispensation, the latter days; when the Jews shall consider the prophecies of the Old Testament, and observe how they have been fulfilled in Jesus; and shall reflect upon their disbelief and rejection of him; and shall turn unto him, and serve the Lord their God, and David their king; see Jer 30:9;

will I be the God of all the families of Israel; not of some few persons only, or of one of a city, and two of a family, but of every family; and this will be when "all Israel" shall be converted and saved, and a nation shall be born at once; then will God show himself to them as their covenant God, manifest his love to them, and bestow the blessings of his grace upon them:

and they shall be my people; behave as such to him; own him to be their God, and serve and worship him.

Jeremiah 31:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith the Lord, the people [which were] left of the sword,.... Which were not consumed by the sword of Pharaoh, who perished not through his cruel edicts, and by his sword, when drawn at the Red sea; nor by the sword of the Amalekites and Amorites; or of their own brethren, who sometimes, for their sins, were ordered to slay many, as on account of the molten calf, and joining to Baalpeor: but there was a remnant that escaped, who

found grace in the wilderness; in the sight of God, who went before them, protected and defended them from their enemies; gave them his holy law, his statutes, and his judgments; fed them with manna and quails; clave the rocks, and gave them water to drink; and supplied them with everything necessary for them, Ps 78:5;

[even] Israel, when I went to cause him to rest; went before him in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; and in the ark, the symbol of his presence; and not only to search out a resting place for them for a few days, but to bring them to Canaan, the land of rest, which he had promised them, Ex 13:21; now this past instance of divine goodness is mentioned, to encourage faith in the fulfilment of the above promise. The whole is paraphrased by the Targum thus,

"these things saith the Lord, who gave mercies to the people that came out of Egypt; he supplied their necessities in the wilderness, when they fled from before those who slay with the sword; he led them by his word, to cause Israel to dwell in a place of rest."

Some render the words in the future, "shall find grace", &c. "shall go to his rest", &c. and so apply it to the Jews that escaped the sword of the Chaldeans, and found favour in the wilderness of the people into which they were brought, and as they returned into their own land from the captivity. And it, nay be also applied to the Jews that were left of the sword of the Romans in their last destruction, who have found much favour among the nations; as they do in ours, and others, now; and who in time will return to their own land, and be in rest, Jer 30:10. Yea, it is applicable enough to the church and people of God in their present state; who are left of the sword of the Papists, and are now in the wilderness, where they are nourished for a time, and times, and half a time; and before long will be brought into a state of settled rest and tranquillity.

Jeremiah 31:3

Ver. 3. The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, [saying],.... Either to the prophet, bidding him say to the church what follows, so Jarchi: or to Christ, who was from eternity with the Father; lay in his bosom; between whom the council of peace was; with whom the covenant was made; and whom God loved before the foundation of the world; and which is observed by him, for the comfort of his people, Joh 17:24; so Cocceius; but rather they are the words of Israel, or the church, owning the above instances of God's grace and goodness; and that he had greatly appeared to them, and for them, in former times; but then this was a great while ago; and besides, now he hid his face from them, and they were under the tokens of his displeasure, and not of his love; to which the Lord replies, for the word "saying" is not in the text, which makes the following a continuation of the church's speech, though wrongly; since they are the words of the Lord, taking up the church for speaking too slightly and improperly of his love, and in a complaining way:

yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love; not only of old, or a good while ago, but from all eternity, and with a love which will always last, and does, notwithstanding dark and afflictive providences; for this love is like himself, sovereign, unchangeable, and everlasting: "I have loved thee": I, who am the great God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; a God of infinite purity and holiness; do whatever I please in heaven and in earth; and am the Lord that changes not: "have loved"; not love only now, and shall hereafter; but have loved, not for some time past only, but from all eternity, with the same love I now do: "thee" personally, "Jacob, have I loved", **Ro 9:13**; thee nakedly, and not thine, or for anything done by thee; thee separately and distinctly, and not others; thee a creature, vile and sinful, a transgressor from the womb, and known to be so beforehand; "thee" now openly, and in an applicatory way, through the evidence of the spirit: "with an everlasting love": a love from everlasting, which does not commence in time with faith, repentance, and new obedience; these being the fruits and effects of it; but was from all eternity, as appears from the eternal choice of the persons loved in Christ; from the everlasting covenant made with them in him; from the constitution and setting up of Christ as their Mediator from everlasting; and from the security of their persons and grace in him, before the world began: and this love will endure to everlasting, without any variation or change; nothing can separate from it. The evidence of it follows:

therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee; out of a state of nature; out of Satan's hands; out of the pit wherein is no water, the horrible pit, the mire and clay; unto Christ, his person, blood, righteousness, and fulness, by faith to lay hold upon them; unto his church, and to a participation of the ordinances and privileges of it; to nearer communion with God, and at last will draw to eternal glory. This is the Father's act, and to him it is usually ascribed: it chiefly regards the work of conversion, and the influence of divine grace on that; though it also includes after acts of drawing: it supposes weakness in men; is the effect of powerful and efficacious grace; and is done without offering any violence or force to the will of man, who is drawn with, and not against, his will. This is an instance of the love of God; a fruit and effect of it: it is love that draws a soul to Christ, and is the cause of its coming to him; it is love that reveals him to it, and causes it to come to him; love is then manifested and shed abroad in the heart; a cord of it is let down into it, and with it the Lord draws; it is not by the threats of the law, but by the declarations of grace in the Gospel; the cause of drawing is love, and the manner of it is with it. The Targum of the whole verse is,

"Jerusalem said, of old the Lord appeared to our fathers; prophet, say unto them, lo, I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore have led you with goodness."

It may be rendered, "I have drawn out", or "extended, lovingkindness to thee" {i}; see Ps 36:10.

{i} dox Kytkvm Nk le "protraxi tibi misericordiam", Vatablus; "protraxi, [vel] extendi ad te clementiam", Calvin; "extendo erga te benignitatem", Junius & Tremellius; "meam", Piscator.

Jeremiah 31:4

Ver. 4. Again, I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel,.... The same with "all the families of Israel", Jer 31:1; who, when converted, will be espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin; have a sincere affection for him; unfeigned faith in him, and purely worship him; receiving the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and submitting to the ordinances of it; and then will the church, comparable to a building, consisting of lively stones, laid upon the foundation Christ, which is fallen down, and lies in ruins, be rebuilt, and none shall hinder it; and a glorious building it will be, and will continue so, when its stones are laid with fair colours; its foundations with sapphires; its windows made of agates; its gates of carbuncles; and all its borders of pleasant stones, Isa 54:11;

thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets; or timbrels, instruments of music, such as women used at times of public joy and mirth, Ex 15:20; which became them, and were very ornamental to them; and their playing on these was usually attended with dancing; hence it follows:

and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry; phrases expressive of spiritual joy, which will be in the hearts of the saints, and expressed by the behaviour of them at the time of the conversion of the, Jews, which will be the marriage of the Lamb; and when the bride will be ready, being adorned with the robe of Christ's righteousness, and with the graces of his Spirit, and be brought into his presence, accompanied with a chorus of virgins her companions, undefiled ones, having harps in their hands, singing the Lamb's new song; see Re 14:2.

Jeremiah 31:5

Ver. 5. Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria,.... Mountains are proper places for vines, and which generally produce the best wine; but vines are not to be understood merely literally, or as only expressive of the outward peace, plenty, and prosperity of Samaria, with other places given to the Jews, as Josephus {k} observes they were by the Demetrii; which they might improve by planting vines, &c. but figuratively of the planting of Gospel churches there, comparable to vines, **So 2:13**; which was done in the first times of the Gospel; see **Joh 4:29**; and which was a pledge of what will be done in those parts hereafter in the latter day:

the planters shall plant, and shall eat [them] as common things; the fruit of the vines planted by them. The allusion is to the law of eating the fruit of trees planted on the fifth year of their plantation, when, and not till then, it was lawful to eat of it; but here the planters might eat of it as soon as it was produced, even as the fruit of the fifth year, which was common and lawful, Le 19:23. The "planters" are the ministers of the Gospel; such an one the Apostle Paul was; who are instruments in founding and raising churches, and of planting members in them, as well as of watering, and making them fruitful; and who receive themselves benefit from hence; not only in things temporal, but spiritual; it giving them a real pleasure and satisfaction to see the plants grow and thrive, which they have planted, **1Co 3:6**
Ps 92:14.

{k} Antiqu. Jud. l. 13. c. 2. sect. 3.

Jeremiah 31:6

Ver. 6. For there shall be a day,.... The whole Gospel dispensation is "a day", made so by the bright rising of the sun of righteousness; here it seems to design some certain fixed period of time in that dispensation, when the light of the Gospel will break out most gloriously, and it will be a clear day; as it will be when the Jews will be converted:

[that] the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim; the same with the mountains of Samaria; for Samaria was the head or metropolis of Ephraim, **Isa 7:9**; and these are the watchmen that kept the vines there, Jer 31:5; for the allusion is not to watchmen of states and cities, but to watchers of vineyards, and to such the ministers of the Gospel are compared, **So 1:6**. Grotius thinks there is an allusion in the word "Notzerim" to the title of Nazarenes, given to Christ and his followers; and Abarbinel the Jew on the place observes, that the prophet, by the Holy Ghost, foresaw that the Romans would believe in Jesus of Nazareth, and therefore would be called Nazarenes from him; see Ac 24:5; so

that Christian ministers may be well thought to be here intended: who

shall cry, arise ye; lift up their voice like a trumpet, and cry aloud to persons as asleep, or in dead and lifeless frames, to awake, arouse, and rise up, and shake off their sloth and indolence, saying:

and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God; to the church of God, to attend the word of God, his worship and ordinances; to which sometimes there is a backwardness, arising from sloth, from a lukewarm frame of spirit, from a love of the world, and a vain conceit of their own sufficiency and knowledge; and it is the business of Gospel ministers to stir up persons to frequent the house of God, and attend public worship in it; since it is not only their duty, but their interest and privilege; here they have true pleasure, and real profit; and it is to their honour to continue here, and not forsake the assembling of themselves together: but they should not rest here, trusting to, and depending on, these things; but should go "to the Lord [their] God"; not only seek and pray unto him, but should be desirous of hearing of him, and from him; of seeing him, his power and his glory, and him in his beauty; and of having communion with him; and should exercise faith upon him as their own God. Christ seems to be intended; going to him is exercising faith upon him, for righteousness and strength, peace, pardon, life, and salvation; and saying, as Thomas did, "my Lord, and my God", Joh 20:28.

Jeremiah 31:7

Ver. 7. For thus saith the Lord, sing with gladness for Jacob,.... For the restoration of Jacob, or the conversion of the Jews; which will be matter of joy to the Christians among the Gentiles; who seem to be here called upon to express their joy on that occasion, as they will; for it will be to them as life from the dead, Ro 11:15. Kimchi thinks there is a trajection in the words; and that they may be rendered, "thus saith the Lord to Jacob, sing with gladness"; as if the exhortation was to him to rejoice, and not to others on his account; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it; and to the same sense the Syriac version, "thus saith the Lord, sing, O ye of the house of Jacob, with gladness"; and so the Targum; it will no doubt be a joyful time with them:

and shout among the chief of the nations; where they shall be when converted, as in Great Britain, and other places: or, "on the top of the nations" {l}; on some high place among them. It seems to denote the publicness of the shout; it will be open and manifest to all; so the Targum,

"and exult with head uncovered, in the sight of all people;"

Turks, Papists, and Pagans:

publish ye; or "cause to hear", or "to be heard" {m}; cause their voice to be heard, both in prayer and praise to God; or cause men to hear their faith in Christ, and profession of it; and publish that Gospel, and spread it among others, which before they rejected and despised:

praise ye; the Lord for his wonderful grace in the conversion of them:

and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel; his covenant people; the remnant according to the election of grace. This is a direction to the Jews that are converted, to pray for the rest that are not; or to the Gentiles to pray for them; who are before called upon to rejoice at the first appearance of this wonderful work, and to spread it abroad, and to go on publishing the Gospel for the more forwarding of it; and to praise the Lord for what he had done; and to pray unto him to go on with the work of saving his people, the residue of them.

{l} Mywgh varb "in cacumine gentium", Castalio; "in capite gentium", Pagninus, Montanus. {m} weymvh "auditum facite", Pagninus, Montanus; "audiri facite", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 31:8

Ver. 8. Behold, I will bring them from the north country,.... As from Babylon, at the end of the seventy years' captivity, which lay north of Judea; so, in the latter day, from those northern countries, as ours, where they now are in great numbers:

and gather them from the coasts of the earth; or "sides" of it; from all the parts of the world where they are:

[and] with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together; signifying that no difficulties whatsoever should hinder them in their return to their own land; provision should be made for persons under these circumstances, so unfit to travel. All this may be

understood, in a figurative sense, of those who are spiritually "blind"; who are made to see their lost estate, and need of Christ; and are brought to him, and to his church, in a way they had not known, and in paths they knew not before: and of the lame and impotent, unable to do any good thing in a spiritual sense, and will not come to Christ, unless drawn; these are made to leap as a hart, and to flee to Christ for refuge, and run the ways of his commandments: and of such who are laden and burdened, as "women with child"; and who are encouraged and enabled as such to come to Christ, and cast their burdens on him, and find rest for their souls: and of such who are in pain and distress, as one "that travaileth with child": in the pangs of the new birth, under a sense of wrath, and as ready to perish; who also are enabled to come and venture their souls on Christ, receive his Gospel, and submit to his ordinances, where they find peace and comfort:

a great company shall return thither; three thousand were converted under one sermon, in the first times of the Gospel; and, in the latter day, the nation of the Jews shall be born again at once; the number of the children of Israel shall then be as the sand of the sea, and great shall be the day of Jezreel, Isa 66:8.

Jeremiah 31:9

Ver. 9. They shall come with weeping,.... For joy, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; of which there are instances, Ge 29:11; so the Jews will come to Christ, and to the Gospel church, as well as into their own land, with joy that they have found the Messiah, and are brought under his government, and into the enjoyment of the privileges of the Gospel, and the possession of their own land; or with tears of repentance for all their sins, original and actual, especially for their sin of unbelief, and rejection of the Messiah; they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn, when a spirit of grace and supplication is poured out upon them, Zec 12:10; with which agrees what follows:

and with supplications will I lead them; to Christ, and his church; and being drawn by the Father, and led by the Spirit, they will come to him with supplications and entreaties for mercy to be showed unto them; particularly for pardoning grace and mercy, and for salvation by him, which they will now see they stand in need of. Some render it, "with favours" {n}, or mercies; blessings of grace bestowed on them; as a justifying righteousness; remission of sins; adoption; sanctifying grace; a right and title and meetness for eternal life; which are all owing to the free favour and grace of God:

I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters; or, "to rivers of waters" {o}; to God himself, the fountain of living waters; and his everlasting love, that river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God; and to Christ, the fountain of gardens, and well of living waters; and to those wells of salvation, and fulness of grace, that are in him; and to the Gospel, its doctrines and ordinances, which are the still waters to it, by which the great Shepherd leads his flock. These rivers of waters may denote the blessings of grace which spring from the love of God, and flow through Christ in his word and ordinances, in great abundance; and it is very pleasant and profitable walking by these:

in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; in a direct way to Christ, without going round about, by works of righteousness done by them, to render them acceptable to him; but they shall go directly to him as they are; or in a plain way, as it is to them that understand it, and in which men, though fools, shall not err: or in a righteous way, a way of righteousness; in a way that leads to Christ for righteousness; and in which men are taught to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and in which, though they may stumble and fall into sin, for "in many things we all offend", **Jas 3:2**; yet not stumble at the word, as some do; or at the stumbling stone, Christ, as the Jews' forefathers did; or so as to fall, be broken, and perish, **Isa 8:14**;

for am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn; and so very dear to him, as in Jer 31:20. So the Targum,

"and Ephraim is beloved before me;"

all the blessings of grace which God bestows upon men, whether Jews or Gentiles, all flow from a prior relation he stands in to them; he first takes them into the relation of children, is a father to them in covenant; and then bestows children's blessings and covenant mercies on them. The allusion, perhaps, is to Joseph's having the birthright, and whose younger son, Ephraim, was preferred to Manasseh the elder, **1Ch 5:2**. Ephraim intends the same as Israel, the ten tribes, and includes the whole body of the Jewish nation.

{n} Mynwnxtb "cum beneficientiis", Tigurine version, Gataker; so Kimchi and Ben Melech. {o} Mym ylxn la "ad torrentes, vel fluvios aquarum", Munster, Tigurine version, Calvin, Cocceius; "ad fontes aquarum", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 31:10

Ver. 10. Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations,.... The Gentiles: who are called upon to hear the word of the Gospel; the word of peace, reconciliation, and salvation by Christ, sent among them by him, for the calling and conversion of them, that they might believe in him, and profess his name:

and declare [it] in the isles afar off; having heard, received, and embraced the Gospel themselves, it became them to make it known to others; not only to those upon the continent and the isles adjacent, but to those afar off from it; such as these isles of ours, of Great Britain and Ireland; where, blessed be the Lord, this Gospel has been declared to the conversion and comfort of many, and to the glory of Christ:

and say, he that scattered Israel will gather him: that is, the Lord that hath scattered the Jews throughout the nations of the world, and even in the isles afar off, will before long gather them together, and bring them into their own land. This may be understood of the spiritual Israel, be they Jews or Gentiles, the children of God scattered up and down in the world; and who, by reason of sin, and while in an unregenerate estate, are alienated from God, and at a distance from him; but are gathered together in one head, Christ, when he died for them, and redeemed them; and in the effectual calling, when they are gathered to God and Christ, one by one; and afterwards to more near communion with them; and, at last, to glory, and which is the sum and substance of the Gospel to be heard and declared:

and keep him as a shepherd [doth] his flock; so that they shall be scattered no more, as the Jews have been; nor any of them lost, as God's elect were in their first head Adam: they are Christ's flock, given him by the Father, and purchased with his blood; and having gathered them as above, he will keep them in his hands, from whence none can pluck them, and preserve them by his almighty power unto salvation; which doctrine of the saints' perseverance is a most comfortable doctrine of the Gospel to be published and declared.

Jeremiah 31:11

Ver. 11. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob,.... Not the patriarch Jacob singly and personally, though he no doubt was a redeemed one; nor his carnal posterity, at least not all of them, only a remnant among them, and especially not them only; but the Gentiles also, even all the elect of God, his church and people, of whatsoever nation, which frequently go by this name in the prophetic writings: and this redemption of them by Christ, which, though future, is spoken of as past, because of the certainty of it; and is the ground and foundation of their being gathered in effectual calling, and of their final perseverance; for redemption has its certain effect, and Christ will never lose the purchase of his blood; see Zec 10:8;

and ransomed him from the hand of [him that was] stronger than he; meaning Satan, the strong man armed; who is stronger than man, as appears by his possession of the bodies of men, inflicting diseases on them, and death itself, of which he had the power when permitted; and by his influence over the minds of men; by his temptations to sin, in which he so much succeeds; and even by the prevalence of his temptations over the saints themselves; and by the power which he had over our first parents in innocence, whom he prevailed upon to eat the forbidden fruit, which brought ruin on themselves, and on their posterity; by which means he got them into his hands, and God's elect among the rest, whom he leads captive at his will; and being enfeebled by sin, are so weak as not to be able to rescue themselves out of his hands; for he is stronger than they; but Christ is stronger than the strong man armed; he is the Redeemer that is mighty, and has taken the prey out of his hands, and has led captivity captive: and this he has done, not only by power and conquest, spoiling Satan and his principalities and powers; but by paying a "ransom" price for these captives into the hands of God; and which is no other than his precious blood, his life, himself; and so must be a sufficient ransom for them. This redemption was typified by the deliverance of the Jews out of the hands of the Chaldeans, a mighty nation, and stronger than they; and is the ground, reason, and foundation, of the restoration of that people in the latter day.

Jeremiah 31:12

Ver. 12. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion,.... The Targum is,

"in the mountain of the house of the sanctuary, which is built on Zion;"

but though there be an allusion to the temple built on it, and which may be called the height of it; yet the church of Christ in Gospel times is meant; the city built on a hill, where the saints, enjoying Gospel ordinances, dwell on high, and have all suitable provisions made for them; and here being come freely and willingly, though brought by the Lord, and drawn by his grace, they "sing" the songs of electing, redeeming, calling, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace; and which they will still do in a better manner, when they get to the height of Zion above:

and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord; to the perfection of his goodness, which is essential to him, infinite and eternal; and is diffusive and communicative, not only in a providential way, but in a way of grace and mercy; and especially in pardoning grace and mercy, which sensible sinners take notice of, and flee unto, and not their own merits; and who would faint under a sense of sin, without a sight of it; but this, viewed in such a light, makes all the perfections of God look amiable and lovely, which otherwise would be terrible; and encourages faith, hope, fear, and thankfulness: likewise to Christ, who is the goodness of the Lord; in whom his goodness is laid up; in whom it is proclaimed; through whom it is displayed; by whom it is communicated; who himself is the great gift of it, as well as he himself is good; and his goodness extends to his people, and to him sensible sinners apply for it: also to the goodness and fatness of the house and church of God; those rich provisions which are made in it for the comfort and refreshment of his people; hence it follows:

for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd; not for temporal blessings, which are for the good of the body only; but for spiritual blessings, signified by these, which are for the good of the soul, as the next clause shows: "for wheat"; for the Gospel and the doctrines of it, which are the finest of the wheat; and are as preferable to false doctrines as chaff is to wheat, and are soul nourishing and strengthening; see Jer 23:28. Moreover, Christ himself is compared to wheat, and was typified by the manna, the corn of heaven, and angels' food; and is the bread of God, and the bread of life; and to be had in the church and ordinances of it; see Joh 12:24; "and for wine"; the precious truths of the word, which, like the best wine, go down sweetly; the discoveries of the love of God and Christ, which are better than spiced wine; and the blood of Christ, signified by the wine in the Lord's supper, which is drink indeed, **So 7:9**; "and for oil"; the grace of the Spirit, and larger measures of it; which is the golden oil, that through the golden pipes of ordinances is emptied out of the fulness of grace in Christ into the hearts of his people, **Zec 4:12**; "and for the young of the flock, and of the herd"; the best of them, which being slain in sacrifice, typified Christ the passover lamb, and fatted calf, and which makes the principal part of the Gospel feast, Mt 22:4; now, for all these the redeemed of the Lord "flow" to

Zion, and to the goodness of the Lord there; which denotes their coming in great numbers, in shoals, as the streams of a flowing river; in conjunction and harmony "together": in the lively and flowing exercise of grace, and all moving one way, and to one centre, and with the greatest pleasure, delight, and cheerfulness; thus the Targum,

"and they shall delight in the good which the Lord giveth unto them;"

and so the Syriac version:

and their soul shall be as a watered garden; in a thriving and prosperous condition: the soul of a believer is as a "garden", in which are planted the graces of the Spirit; and which does not lie open to everyone, but to Christ, who is the object of every grace; has the sole property of this garden, where he walks and dwells: and this is "watered" by the Lord himself, with the dews of his grace, and by the ministry of his word; which drops and distils as the rain upon the mown grass; when every plant lifts up its head, and looks pleasant, shoots up and grows, and brings forth fruit:

and they shall not sorrow any more at all: have no occasion for it, being loved with an everlasting love, Jer 31:3; redeemed by Christ out of the hand of their mighty enemies, Jer 31:11; and enjoying all the goodness of the Lord, and of his house, as in this verse; and being partakers of Christ, and the blessings of grace in him, in whom there is always cause of rejoicing; though this will not have its full accomplishment as long as the saints are in the present state; having a body of sin and death, being liable to the temptations of Satan, and divine desertions; and until they come into the Jerusalem state, when there will be no more sinning, and so no more sorrowing, Re 21:4.

Jeremiah 31:13

Ver. 13. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together,.... Not any particular virgin, but all virgins, as Kimchi interprets it. The Targum is,

"then shall the congregation of Israel rejoice as in dances;"

it may very well be understood of the church of Christ, espoused to him as a chaste virgin, and of her spiritual joy in him, in allusion to the joy expressed by such persons in dancing, both upon civil and religious accounts; and it denotes that the joy should be very general and extensive, that persons of every age and sex should partake of it; see **Zec 9:17**;

for I will turn their mourning into joy: their mourning for sin, and for want of the divine presence, into joy, on account of the goodness of the Lord to them, and the large provisions made for them; though they come weeping to Zion, yet, when come thither, sing in the height of it, Jer 31:9; their fasts, as elsewhere, are turned into festivals; sometimes the joy of the saints is suddenly turned into grief, and again their sorrow turned into joy; see Ps 30:5;

and will comfort them; with the discoveries of love, with the divine Presence, and views of pardoning grace:

and make them rejoice from their sorrow; cause their sorrow to break off through joy: or, "after their sorrow" {p}; that being ended, joy shall succeed.

{p} Mnwgym "post moerorem suum", Cataker.

Jeremiah 31:14

Ver. 14. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness,.... Meaning either the ministers of the Gospel, who should not only be liberally provided for as to their maintenance, which is too low a sense; but filled with spiritual good things, with the doctrines of the Gospel, and a comfortable experience of them, that they may be able to feed others with knowledge and understanding; or since, under the Gospel dispensation, there is no such distinct order of men under the name of priests, but all the saints are made kings and priests to God, they may be here meant, as follows:

and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord; to which they are said to flow, See Gill on "Jer 31:12". But, lest it should be thought that there would be no manner of trouble and affliction in those times, two instances, as follow, are given; the one at the beginning, and the other towards the close of them, expressive of distress; one on temporal, the other on spiritual accounts.

Jeremiah 31:15

Ver. 15. Thus saith the Lord, a voice was heard in Ramah,.... Which signifies a high place; hence the Targum paraphrases it,

"in the high place of the world;"

and so the Vulgate Latin version,

"in a high place;"

but it is here the proper name of a place, of a city in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:25; and this voice heard was not a voice of joy and gladness as before, but of

lamentation [and] bitter weeping; signifying great sorrow and distress upon some very extraordinary occasion; and is as follows:

Rachel weeping for her children; not really and in person, but by a figurative way of speaking. Rachel is introduced as representing the Jewish women in those parts mourning for their slaughtered infants, even those that were slaughtered some time after the birth of Christ; for to this barbarous fact are the words applied by the Evangelist Matthew, as a fulfilment of them, **Mt 2:16**; and with great propriety and pertinence is Rachel brought in as the chief, yea, sole mourner, representing all the sorrowful mothers; since Ramah was in the tribe of Benjamin, a child of hers, as far as which, it seems, the bloody massacre referred to reached, from Bethlehem, where it began; and since Rachel's grave was between these two places, Ge 35:18; she is represented as rising out of her grave to act this part; or it signifies, that could she have been sensible of this inhuman affair, and could have come out of her grave, she would have done what she is here represented to do; and the rather is she mentioned, since she was so affectionately fond and desirous of children, Ge 30:1;

refused to be comforted for her children; by any of her friends, the loss was so great, the affliction so heavy:

because they [were] not; or, "because he was not" {q}; the Messiah was not, but was slain among the rest of the children, as the Jewish mothers, whom Rachel represented, imagined; and this heightened their distress, and filled them with more grief and trouble than the loss of their own children: but as Matthew has the plural number, the Targum, and all the Oriental versions, it is best to understand it of the children who "were not"; that is, they were dead;

they were not in the land of the living, as this phrase is used in Ge 37:30; which shows that this is not to be understood of the Babylonish captivity, and of the mourning of the Jewish women on that account; since the cause of this was death, and not captivity; besides, mourning for so general a calamity as captivity would not have been confined to mothers, and to some only, and to one particular place; though so the Jewish writers interpret it; and the Targum, which is,

"a voice was heard in the high place of the world, the house of Israel weeping and mourning after Jeremiah the prophet, whom Nabuzaradan the chief of those that slew, sent from Ramah; lamentation and weeping with bitterness, Jerusalem weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were gone into captivity."

{q} wnnya yk "quia non ipse", Vatablus; "vel non ille" i.e. "non sit ullus", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 31:16

Ver. 16. Thus saith the Lord, refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears,.... Though sorrow on such an occasion may be lawfully indulged, yet it ought to be moderated; and attention should be given to those things which may serve to relieve under it, and especially when they come from the Lord himself; then a stop is to be put to the mournful voice, and wet eyes are to be dried up:

for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; in bearing these children, and bringing them into the world, and expressing such an affectionate and tender concern for them; signifying, that the trouble of bearing and bringing them into the world, and nursing them the time they did live, should not, as it might seem, be fruitless, and to answer no end; but it should be seen hereafter, that all this was not in vain; nor should they think it so; but that they have an ample recompense of all their sorrow and trouble:

and they shall come again from the land of the enemy; meaning either Joseph, and Mary, and Jesus; who, by the warning of an angel, went into Egypt, the land of the enemy, where the Jewish fathers were once evilly entreated, just before this barbarity was committed; where they stayed till all danger was over, and then returned; see **Mt 2:13**; compared with Ho 11:1; or rather the murdered children, who, in the resurrection morn, shall return from the grave, the land of that "last enemy", death, which shall be destroyed, 1Co 15:26; and so Rachel, and the Jewish mothers she represents, are comforted with the hopes of a better resurrection; see Heb 11:35.

Jeremiah 31:17

Ver. 17. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord,.... Or, "hope for thy posterity" {r}; for their children that had been massacred, that these should rise again, and enjoy a blessed immortality, as the next clause seems to explain and confirm it:

that thy children shall come again to their own border: either to the border of the land of Israel, as Joseph, Mary, and Jesus did, **Mt 2:21**; or rather to the borders of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, where this cruel murder was committed; and so the intimation is, that they shall rise again, and stand upon that very spot of ground where their blood was split; and not only so, but enter into and dwell upon the new earth in the Jerusalem state; and also enter into the heavenly Canaan, and dwell with Christ for evermore, on whose account their lives were taken away.

{r} Ktyrxal "posteris tuis", Gataker; "posteritati tuae", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 31:18

Ver. 18. I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself [thus],.... Not Ephraim in person; though, as he was a very affectionate and tenderhearted man, as appears from **1Ch 7:22**; he is with like propriety introduced, as Rachel before; but Ephraim intends Israel, or the ten tribes, and even all the people of the Jews; and the prophecy seems to respect the conversion of them in the latter day, when they shall be in soul trouble, and bemoan their sins, and their sinful and wretched estate, and especially their rejection of the Messiah; when they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn, and be in bitterness, as one that mourns for his firstborn, and which the Lord will take notice of and observe, Zec 12:10; and it may be applied to the case of every sensible sinner bemoaning their sinful nature; want of righteousness; impotence to all that is spiritually good; their violations of the righteous law of God; and the curse they are liable to on account of it; their many sins against a God of love, grace, and mercy; and their ruined and undone state and condition by sin; all which the Lord takes notice of: "hearing I have heard" {s}; which denotes the certainty of it, and with what attention he hears, yea, with what pleasure; it is the moan of his doves, of those who are like doves of the valley, everyone mourning for his iniquity; he hears, so as he answers; and sympathizing with them, he sends comfort to them, and delivers them out of their troubles:

thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised; this is the case bemoaned; not so much the chastising hand of God, as unaffectedness with it, and not being the better for it; the Lord has indeed, as if Ephraim should say, chastised me, and I have been chastised by him, and that is all; it has made no manner of impression upon me; I have not received correction, nor has it been of any use to me; and this he bemoaned: and this will be the case of the Jews when they are converted; they will then reflect upon all the corrections and chastisements of God under which they have been ever since the rejection of the Messiah, and still are; and yet are now stupid under them, and take no notice of them, and are never the better for them; and this they will lament when their eyes are opened: and so it is with particular persons at conversion; in their state of unregeneracy they have been chastened and corrected by the Lord, by one providence or another, by one disease and disorder or another, and they have not observed it; it has not wrought upon them, nor awakened them to a sense of danger; God has spoken once, and twice, in this rough way, and they have not perceived; he has stricken them, and they have not grieved; beaten them, and they felt it not; but now being made sensible, they bemoan their former stupidity and inattention, and wonder at the forbearance and goodness of God:

as a bullock unaccustomed [to the yoke]; or to draw the plough; as senseless and as stupid, yea, as thoughtless of danger, as that creature is when led to the slaughter; as "untaught", as the word {t} signifies; as ignorant of divine and spiritual things; knowing nothing of Christ, or God in Christ, or of the way of salvation by him, and of the operations of his Spirit and grace; as unruly as that to bear the yoke of the law, or the yoke of Christ; and as impatient under the yoke of affliction, kicking, tossing, and flinging, like a wild bull in a net; all which give concern to an awakened mind, that now sees its need of conversion, and prays for it, as follows:

turn thou me, and I shall be turned; which designs not a mere reformation of manners, or conversion to a doctrine or doctrines; nor a restoration after backslidings; nor a carrying on of the work of grace on the soul, and a daily renewing it; but the first work of conversion; which lies in a man's being turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God; is a turn of the heart, and not of the head and action only; of the will, affections, and bias of the mind; it is a turning of persons to the Lord Jesus Christ, to look to him for righteousness, life, and salvation; and in such sense will the Jews be turned in the latter day, **2Co 3:16**; and this being prayed for, not only shows a sense of need of it, but of inability to work it; that it is not in the power of man to do it; that he is not active, but passive in it; that it is the Lord's work, and his only; and that when he does it, it is done effectually:

for thou [art] the Lord my God: the "Lord", the mighty Jehovah, and therefore able to do it; "my God", covenant God, who has promised to do it; and by virtue of covenant grace will be the conversion of the Jews; and to which the conversion of everyone is owing, Ro 11:25; or, "for thou [shalt be] the Lord my God"; I will own, acknowledge, fear, serve, and glorify thee as such, being converted to thee; see
Ge 28:20.

{s} ytemv ewmv "audiendo audivi", Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt.
{t} dml al "non instructus", Munster; "non doctus", Montanus.

Jeremiah 31:19

Ver. 19. Surely after that I was turned I repented,.... Ephraim's prayer was answered; as he prayed he might be turned, he was; and when he was turned, then he repented, not only of sin in general, but of such sins as he had been particularly guilty of; not only of the grosser actions of life, but of inward sins, secret lusts and corruptions; even of sins of holy things, having now different sentiments, affections, and conduct: and this is what is called evangelical repentance, and is from the grace of God; springs from love; flows from a sight of God and a view of Christ; is increased by the discoveries of God's love, and is unto life and salvation; and this sort of repentance follows upon conversion; there must be first a true and real conversion before this evangelical repentance can take place:

and after that I was instructed I smote upon [my] thigh: as expressive of sorrow for sin after a godly sort; of indignation at it; and shame and confusion for it; and also of astonishment, at the mercy, forbearance, and long suffering of God, Eze 21:12; and this humiliation follows upon spiritual instruction, which is previously necessary to it; "after it was made known to me" {u}; as the words may be rendered; what a sinful, guilty, impure, and impotent, and unrighteous creature he was; after that he became acquainted with himself, and his wretched state and condition; when instructed either by the rod, or by the word, and by the Spirit of God, in the use of both, or either; when led into the knowledge of divine things; of the love and grace of God through Christ; of the person, offices, and glory of Christ; of the way of life and salvation by him; and of the doctrines of pardon, and righteousness, and acceptance through him:

I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth; in his conscience; the sins and follies of his youth being presented and set before him, and he convinced of them, was filled with shame and confusion at the remembrance of them; which is a common thing when a man is thoroughly awakened and converted, and is brought to true repentance and humiliation. So the Targum,

"because we have received the reproach of our sins, which were of old?"

{u} yedwh ydxaw "et postquam ostensum est mihi", Pagninus, Vatablus; "ostensum fuerit", Junius & Tremellius; "et post notum est mihi", Montanus.

Jeremiah 31:20

Ver. 20. [Is] Ephraim my dear son?.... Questions put in this form, in the Hebrew language, usually more vehemently deny; and then the sense must be, Ephraim is not my dear son: and agreeably to this all the following clauses must be interpreted; which seems quite contrary to the scope and design of the context: wherefore it seems better to render the words thus, "[Is not] Ephraim my dear son?" {w} yes, he is; and so is everyone that stands in the relation of children to the Lord, they are all of them his dear children, **Eph 5:1**; his beloved ones, loved by him with an everlasting love; they are "precious" to him, as the word used signifies; they are dear to him as the apple of his eye; they are highly esteemed of by him; they are his jewels and peculiar treasure: how precious they are to him appears by his parting with his own most precious Son for their sakes; by sympathizing with them under all their afflictions; by providing so largely and liberally for them; by feeding them with the most delicious food; by clothing them with the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation; by protecting them with a guard of angels, and preparing an incorruptible inheritance for them;

[is he] a pleasant child? or, "is he [not] a child of delights" {x}? verily he is: and so are all the children of God by adopting grace; they are pleasant to him for delights; they are little images of himself, in whom he is well pleased; they are lovely and comely in his sight, through the perfect comeliness of Christ, that is put upon them; their speech is comely and pleasant to him; their prayer is his delight; and especially he loves to hear them cry "Abba", Father, though they do but lisp it out; just as parents take pleasure in their children, which are images of themselves, and comely in their view; particularly when they begin to talk, and can just lisp out their names. Moreover, as the little actions of children, though there may be a great deal of childishness in them, are pleasing to their parents, so are the acts of grace and duty well pleasing to God; those of faith, hope, fear, and love, and the several duties of religion, though but imperfectly performed: and their nearness to him, and communion with him, which he indulges them with, show his delight in them; he kisses them with the kisses of his mouth; he dandles them on his knee, and comforts them, as one whom his mother comforts; he carries them in his bosom; he takes them by the hand, and teaches them to go, and lays meat before them;

for since I spake against him; in his word, and by his providences; by way of complaint, as a peevish, perverse, backsliding, and rebellious child; by way of threatening with the rod, in case of impenitence and obstinacy; by way of rebuke, though in love, for many misdemeanors and offences; and in a providential, though not in a judicial way: God has nothing against his children in a judicial way, all their sins being stoned for by Christ; but in a providential way he has many things against them for their correction and chastisement; at least which seem to be against them, though they all work together for their good. However, as he here says,

I do earnestly remember him still; or, "in remembering I will" or "do remember him still" {y}; constantly as well as earnestly; God never forgets his children, though they and others may think he does; see Isa 49:14; he forgets their sins, but not their persons; he is ever mindful of his covenant with them, and remembers his promises to them; he remembers both his love to them, and their love to him; yea, he remembers their thoughts of him, their words concerning him, and their works done in his name, and to his glory; his dear children are had in everlasting remembrance, and are never forgotten by him;

therefore my bowels are troubled for him; sound for him, or yearn toward him; so that he did not do what he threatened, or was seemingly about to do. The phrase is expressive of great relentings, strong and melting pity in his heart, towards his his dear and delightful children; see Ho 11:8;

I will surely have mercy on him, saith the Lord; or show mercy to him; as the Lord does to his children, by receiving them graciously upon, their return; by manifesting and applying pardoning grace; by bestowing fresh mercies and favours on them; and by bringing them safe to eternal glory and happiness.

{w} yl ryqy Nbh "nonne filius pretiosus mihi?" Pagninus, Montanus. {x} Myewvev dly Ma "nonne natus delicarum?" Montanus; "unum natus delicarum?" Schmidt. {y} dwe wnrkza rkz "recordando recordabor ejus iterum", Schmidt; so Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin; "recordor", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 31:21

Ver. 21. Set thee up way marks, make thee high heaps,.... Of stones, raised up as pillars, or like pyramids; or upright, as palm trees, which signification the word {z} has; to be marks and signs, to know the way again upon a return. The Targum is,

"O congregation of Israel, remember the right works of thy fathers; pour out supplications; in bitterness set thy heart."

And so the Vulgate Latin version interprets the last clause, "put on bitternesses", without any sense; so Cocceius. The design of the words is to put the Jews upon thoughts of returning to their own land, and to prepare for it;

set thine heart towards the highway, [even] the way [which] thou wentest; from Judea to Babylon, or into other countries; think of going the same way back again; for, as there was a highway from Judea, there is one to it; let thine heart be upon returning that way. Jarchi reads, "the way which I went"; that is, the way in which the Lord went with the people; the right way in which he guided and directed them; and in which following him, they could not err; see Isa 35:8. The Targum is,

"consider the works which thou hast done, whether they are fight, when thou goest in a way afar off;"

turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities; an invitation and encouragement to the Jews to turn again to their own land; as from the Babylonish captivity, so from all lands in the latter day; which is yet to be fulfilled, and to which the prophecy more properly belongs.

{z} Myrwrmt "columnulas", Schmidt; "pyramidas", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "palmulas", Tigurine version, "a rmt palma".

Jeremiah 31:22

Ver. 22. How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter?.... From place to, place, from country to country, from one kingdom to another, as the Jews do to this day; and not return unto the Lord, and David their king, and to their own country? Or, "how long wilt thou be foolish" {a}? in backsliding from the Lord; in slighting the written word; neglecting the promises and prophecies, the exhortations, cautions, and instructions therein given; in adhering to and extolling the traditions of the elders, even above the Scriptures; in pertinaciously rejecting the Messiah, next prophesied of; all which folly the Jews are still guilty of, and continue in. So the word signifies in the Arabic language {b};

for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man; a mighty one, a mighty man, the man Jehovah's fellow; conceived, contained, and encompassed, in the womb of the virgin, the woman, whose seed he was to be of, and of whom he was: this was a "new", unheard of, extraordinary thing, a "creation", a work of almighty power! the human nature of Christ was formed and prepared by the power of the Holy Ghost, without the help of man; and this now is mentioned as an argument and an encouragement to the Jews to return to their own land, since the Messiah is born there of a virgin, as it was foretold he should. This seems to be the true and genuine sense of the words, and other senses weak and impertinent; as when they are made to refer to the heroic spirit in some women superior to men; to the unusual practice of women suing to men for marriage; and to the people of Israel returning to the Lord from their apostasy. So the Targum,

"for, behold, the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth and the people of the house of Israel have given themselves up to the law."

And very foreign are the senses which some Christian interpreters give of this passage; as when they interpret it of the Jews conquering and oppressing their enemies; or of the Jewish church seeking after God, her husband, when separated from him; or of the Christian church, though weak, resisting her mighty persecutors by her confession of faith, and overcoming them; or of the church under the New Testament embracing Christ; which indeed is preferable to the other, and especially to that Popish one of the eucharist containing the body of Christ {c}; but the true sense is what is before given: and even some of the Jewish doctors themselves have acknowledged, that the Messiah is here intended. In an ancient {d} book of theirs, on mention of these words, it is added,

"this shall be in the time of the Messiah, which will be on the sixth day;"

that is, the sixth millennium And elsewhere {e} "a woman shall compass a man"; says R. Hona, in the name of R. Ame, this is the King Messiah. So says R. Joshua ben Levi {f},

"he, that is, God, heals with the same he wounds; so will you find in Israel, they sinned by a virgin, and were punished in virgins, Eze 23:1; so he comforts them by a virgin, according to Jer 31:21; "turn again, O virgin of Israel", &c. "a woman shall compass a man". R Huna, in the name of R. Idi and R. Joshua, said, that this man is the King Messiah, of whom it is said, **Ps 2:7**, "this day have I begotten thee" {g}."

{a} Nyqmxtt ytm de "quamdiu fatua eris?" Majus apud Stockium, p. 358. {b} "mente laboravit, stultus fuit", Golius, col. 653. "et dementer, more fatui egit", Camus & Giggeius apud Castel. col. 1289. Arab. qmx "fatuatus, nugatus fuit, ineptiit", Schindler, col. 603. {c} Vid. Erlmanni, "novum omnium novorum", &c. ad Jer. xxxi. 22. in Thesaur. Dissert. Theolog. Philolog. tom 1. p. 851. {d} Zohar in Gen. tom. 13. 4. {e} In Abarbinel. Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 37. 4. {f} Apud Moses Hadarsan in Gen. c. 41. Vid. Galatin. de Arcanis Cath. Ver. l. 7. c. 14. p. 52, 526. {g} See my book of the "Prophecies of the Messiah", &c. p. 100, 101.

Jeremiah 31:23

Ver. 23. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... The Governor of the whole world, the Lord of armies above and below; and yet has a peculiar regard to Israel, his spiritual Israel, whose covenant God and Father he is; and is to be believed in what he after says, the fulfilment of which may be depended on:

as yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah, and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; not the Babylonish captivity, but their present one; for, upon their return from Babylon, though there was a reformation among them, by means of Ezra, and Nehemiah, and others, yet not so great an one as is here suggested; when, by way of salutation and prayer, the following words will be said by all that know them, and wish well to them, as had been heretofore:

the Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, [and] mountain of holiness; for now Jerusalem will be the habitation of righteous men, and every pot or person in it, and in "Judah, shall be holiness to the Lord", Zec 14:21; and so shall be blessed of God, and pronounced blessed by men, by all good men, among the Gentiles, who will rejoice at their conversion, restoration, and reformation.

Jeremiah 31:24

Ver. 24. And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together,.... In peace and unity, in great concord and harmony:

husbandmen, and those [that] go forth with flocks; husbandmen and shepherds; meaning such not merely in a temporal sense, but in a spiritual one; ministers of the Gospel, labourers with God, and under him, in the husbandry of his church; pastors after his own heart, to feed his people, his flocks, his sheep and lambs, with knowledge and understanding; who shall agree in their ministry, teaching the same doctrines, and administering the same ordinances, according to the rule of the word.

Jeremiah 31:25

Ver. 25. For I have satiated the weary soul,.... As sinners are at first awakenings and convictions; when sin is made exceeding sinful and loathsome to them, and becomes an uneasiness, and they a burden to themselves on account of it; when they labour, till they are weary, to get food for their famishing souls; weary in seeking for righteousness to cover them, in working for life to save them, and inquiring after rest; but cannot find neither food, nor righteousness, nor life, nor rest, till they come to Christ; and as all the saints are weary of a body of sin and death, with mourning over it, and groaning under it; weary of Satan's temptations and buffetings; weary of the world, and the men of it, and with afflictive dispensations of Providence in it; and are as weary travellers passing through a waste howling wilderness; these the Lord "satiates", refreshes, and even "inebriates" {h}, as the word used signifies, with his love; which is very reviving and refreshing, and is a feast of itself; and is very satisfying when it is shed abroad in the heart; when souls have a delightful sense of it, and see their interest in it; particularly satiates with his pardoning grace and mercy, and with food, and fulness of it, in Christ; with righteousness, life, and salvation by him; and with rest, peace, joy, and comfort in him: and this, though a promise and prophecy of what would be, yet, because of the certainty of it, is represented as if it had been done already; as also what follows:

and I have replenished every sorrowful soul; that is sorry for sin after a godly sort, and mourns for it after an evangelical manner; is troubled for want of the divine presence, and is pressed with afflictions inward and outward: these the Lord "replenishes" or "fills" {i}; that is, with all good, as the Targum adds, and fills them to satisfaction; with Christ, and all good things by him; with peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation; with the Spirit, his gifts and graces; with Gospel provisions, the goodness and fatness of his house; with all spiritual blessings now, and with glory and happiness hereafter. The Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions, instead of "weary" and "sorrowful", render the words "thirsty and hungry"; and such as hunger and thirst after righteousness; after the discoveries of pardoning grace; after Christ, and salvation by him; after more knowledge of him, and communion with him; are, sooner or later, filled with those things they are hungering and thirsting after; see **Mt 5:6**.

{h} ytywrh "inebriavi", V. L. Vatablus; "inebriabo", Piscator. {i} ytalm "implebo", Schmidt; "explebo", Piscator; "explevero", Junius & Tremellius; "implevero", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 31:26

Ver. 26. Upon this I awakened, and beheld,.... When or after he beheld or had seen the vision and prophecy concerning the incarnation of Christ, and the glory and happiness of his church and people in the latter day, he awoke; for it seems the prophecy contained in this and the preceding chapter was delivered to Jeremiah in a dream; who, when he had seen the vision, and upon the last words being spoken to him, awoke out of it:

and my sleep was sweet unto me; as it must needs be, to have so many gracious promises, and glorious prophecies, delivered to him in it. Some understand the words, that when he awoke out of sleep, he saw and considered with pleasure what had been made known to him; and then fell into a sweet sleep again, which was not usual with him. To which the Targum inclines,

"the prophet said, because of this good news of the days of consolation (that is, the days of the Messiah) that should come, I was raised up, and saw; again I slept, and my sleep was profitable to me."

So Kimchi. Some interpret the words of Christ, and of his sleep in the grave.

Jeremiah 31:27

Ver. 27. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,.... Or, "are coming" {k}; and will be here shortly:

that I will sow the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast; that is, will multiply both man and beast, so that there shall be a great increase; whereas, through war, famine, pestilence, and captivity, their number was greatly reduced. The allusion is to the sowing of a field with seed, which in due time springs up, and produces a large increase. Some understand this of the spiritual blessing of regeneration; but that is not of corruptible seed, such as is here mentioned, but of incorruptible seed, by the word of God: though this may be a type of the fruitfulness of the church in Gospel times; since afterwards an account is given of the new covenant, which should take place in those times.

{k} Myab "venientes", Montanus, Schmidt; "venturi sunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 31:28

Ver. 28. And it shall come to pass, [that] like as I have watched over them,.... In providence; looked upon them with an eye of vindictive justice; observed all their actions and motions; diligently attended to everything that passed, and took the first and most fitting opportunity:

to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; which words, as they have an elegance and an agreeableness in their sound, in the original; so they are expressive of the utter overthrow of the city, temple, and nation of the Jews, and of the several troubles and calamities they should be afflicted with:

so will I watch over them; be as careful and diligent, as intent, earnest, and early:

to build, and to plant, saith the Lord; to build their city and temple, and to plant them in their own land. So the church of God is his building, whose foundation he lays, the superstructure of which he rears up, and will complete it in his own time; and it is his plantation, into which he puts his pleasant plants, his plants of renown; which he waters with his Spirit and grace, by the ministry of the word, that they may grow, and become fruitful.

Jeremiah 31:29

Ver. 29. In those days they shall say no more,.... The following proverb or byword; they should have no occasion to use it, nor should they choose to use it; since they would understand themselves, and the dispensations of Providence towards them, better than to use it:

the fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge; that is, the fathers have sinned, and the children are punished for their sins. So the Targum,

"the fathers have sinned, and the children are smitten."

This was in some sense true; they were punished for their fathers' sins in the captivity, particularly for Manasseh's; nor was it unusual with God to visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children; nor at all unjust, since they were a part of their parents, and especially since they were guilty of the same sins; nor is it thought unjust among men to punish children for the treason of their parents, as every sin is treason against God. But this was not all that was meant by this proverb; the sense of those that used it was, that they themselves were quite clear and innocent, and that they only suffered for their fathers' faults; which was false, of which they should be convinced, and use the proverb no more, as charging God with injustice.

Jeremiah 31:30

Ver. 30. But everyone shall die for his own iniquity,.... His own personal iniquity; and not a corporeal death only, but an eternal one, which is the just wages of sin. It seems to intimate, that, after the Babylonish captivity, no public calamity should come upon them for the sins of their fathers and their own jointly, but for their own iniquities singly; so their last destruction by the Romans was for their personal disbelief and rejection of the Messiah; see **Joh 8:24**; and the calamities upon them ever since have been for the same reason. Indeed, they imprecated his blood upon them, and upon their children, and so it is; but then, their children are under the power of the same sin of unbelief, and will remain so, until the veil is taken away, and they turn to the Lord; after which it will still be a more clear case that everyone shall die for his own iniquity;

every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge; sin, though it may be esteemed a sweet morsel, is a sour grape, and will prove so in the issue; and will give a man as much trouble and disquietude, when he is convinced of the evil of it, or suffers the punishment of it, as when a man's "teeth are set on edge"; and indeed the consequence of it will be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Jeremiah 31:31

Ver. 31. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,.... This refers to Gospel times, as is clear from the quotation and application by the apostle, **Heb 8:8**; and it is owned by a modern Jew {l} to belong to the times of the Messiah. It is introduced with a "behold", as a note of attention, pointing to something of moment, and very agreeable and desirable, as the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises, are; and as a note of admiration, it being justly to be wondered at that God should make a covenant with such sinful and unworthy creatures as he has;

that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house Judah; by this "covenant" is meant the covenant of called new, not because newly made, for it was with the elect in Christ from everlasting; so early was Christ set up as the Mediator of it; and so early were promises made, and blessings given, to them in him: nor because newly revealed; for it was made known to all the saints, more or less, under the former dispensation, particularly to David, to Abraham, yea, to our first parents immediately after the fall, though more clearly manifested under the Gospel dispensation; but because of its new mode of exhibition; not by types, and shadows, and sacrifices, as formerly; but by the ministry of the word, and the administration of Gospel ordinances; and in distinction from the former covenant, which is done away, as to the mode of it; and because it is a famous covenant, an excellent one, a better covenant, best of all; better than the covenant of works, and even better than the covenant of grace, under the former administration; in the clear manifestation and extensive application of it; and in the ratification of it by the blood of Christ; besides, it provides and promises new things, as a new heart, and a new spirit; to which may be added, that it may be called new, because it is always new; it continues, it stands firm, as Kimchi observes, and shall not be made void; it will never be succeeded nor antiquated by any other covenant, or any other mode of administration of it. The persons with whom this covenant is said to be made are "the house of Israel and of Judah"; which was literally true of them in the first times of the Gospel, to whom the Gospel was first preached, and many of them were called by grace, and had an application of covenant blessings made to them; and is mystically to be understood of God's elect, whether Jews or Gentiles; the Israel after the spirit; Israelites indeed, Jews inwardly, even all that are fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God, the middle wall of partition being broken down: and this "making" of a covenant with them intends no other than a making it known unto them; showing it to them, and their interest in it; in God, as their covenant God; and in Christ, as the Mediator of it; and an application of the blessings and promises of it to them.

{l} Abendana, not. in Miclol Yophi in loc.

Jeremiah 31:32

Ver. 32. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers,.... Meaning not Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but the ancestors of the Jews that came out of Egypt, as appears by what follows. This was the covenant made at Sinai, which is here referred to; but the above covenant was not according to that; for, though it was not properly a covenant of works, but a typical one; yet it was in some sense faulty and deficient; or, however, the persons under it were faulty, and did not keep it; and besides, it was made with the Israelites; whereas this new covenant belongs both to Jews and Gentiles. That the Sinai covenant is intended is clear by the following circumstances:

in the day [that] I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; that is, immediately after their being brought out of Egypt, the covenant was made with them; see Ex 19:1; at which time of their bringing out, the Lord took them by the hand, as being unable to deliver themselves, and to go out of themselves; which is expressive, as of their weakness, so of his power and goodness, kindness and tenderness to them; and is an aggravation of their ingratitude to him in breaking the covenant, made with them at such a time by the Lord, who was so kind and indulgent to them; and which is still more fully expressed in the following clause:

which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord; they promised fair, but did not perform; their hearts were not right with God, nor were they steadfast in his covenant; though it was such a solemn transaction, and had the nature of a matrimonial contract; it was the day of their espousal; they were betrothed to the Lord, and he acted the part of a husband to them in nourishing and cherishing them in providing food and raiment for them; manna that continued with them, and clothes that waxed not old; and in protecting them from their enemies, and bringing them to a good settlement in the land of Canaan. The Septuagint version renders it, "and I regarded them not"; and so the apostle, **Heb 8:9**; for the reconciliation of which to the Hebrew text See Gill on "Heb 8:9".

Jeremiah 31:33

Ver. 33. But this [shall be] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord,.... The several articles or branches of the covenant next follow, which show it to be different from the former:

I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; not the ceremonial law, which was abolished when this covenant was made; but rather the moral law still in force, which is a transcript of the nature and will of God; was inscribed on Adam's heart in innocence; is greatly obliterated by sin; a contrary disposition to it is in man; this is reinscribed in regeneration; and hence a regard is had to it by regenerate persons, in which lies part of their conformity to Christ: or else, since the word here used signifies doctrine or instruction, the Gospel and the truths of it may be meant; see **Isa 2:2** **Ro 3:27**; which have a place and dwell in the hearts of renewed ones. The Septuagint version reads it in the plural number, "laws"; and so does the apostle, **Heb**

8:10; and may design the ordinances of the Gospel, and the commandments of Christ; which such, who are called by grace, have at heart to keep, and are made willing to be subject to; besides, the principle of grace in the soul is called "the law of the mind"; **Ro 7:23**; it has the force of a law; is a reigning, governing, principle; and which is implanted in the genre by the spirit and power of God; the tables on which this law or laws are written are not tables of stone, but the fleshly tables of the heart; the heart is the proper seat, both of the law of God and Gospel of Christ, as well as of the grace of God in all regenerate persons: and the "putting" of those things there denotes knowledge of them, as of the spirituality of the law, and its perfection; that there is no righteousness by it, and is only fulfilled by Christ; and that it is a rule of walk and conversation; and also of the doctrines of the Gospel, in the power and savour of them, and of the ordinances of it, so as to practise them, and walk in them; and an experience of the truth and reality of internal grace: and "writing" them here may denote affection for, and subjection to, the above things; and a clear work of grace upon the soul, so as to be legible, and appear to be the epistle of Christ, written not with the ink of nature's power, but by the Spirit of the living God; see **2Co 3:3**. This passage is applied to future times, the times of the Messiah, by the Jews {m}:

and will be their God, and they shall be my people; God is the God of his covenant ones; not as the God of nature and providence only, but as the God of grace, and as their God and Father in Christ; which is preferable to everything else; all things are theirs; nor can they want any good thing; they need fear no enemy; they may depend upon the love of God, and be secure of his power; they may expect all blessings here and hereafter; for this covenant interest will always continue: and they are his people in such sense as others are not; a distinct, special, and peculiar people; a people near unto the Lord; high in his favour, and greatly blessed by him; all which is made to appear in their effectual calling; see **1Pe 2:9**.

{m} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 3. 2.

Jeremiah 31:34

Ver. 34. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother,.... Which is not to be understood of the outward ministry of the word; in heaven indeed there will be no need of it, nor in the New Jerusalem state; but in every period of time before it. In the first times of the

Gospel, persons were appointed and qualified by Christ to be pastors and teachers; and in the latter day men shall run to and fro, and increase knowledge; besides, the saints in the present state stand in need of teaching; since they know but in part, and there is room for a growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ: nor does this contradict brotherly teaching, or the private instructions of saints in religious conversation and Christian conference, which are very useful; but is rather opposed to pretended revelations of private men; or to the magisterial dictates of persons in public office; the word of God being the only rule of instruction in righteousness: or this may be not absolutely, but comparatively said; setting forth the abundance of knowledge under the Gospel dispensation, that, in comparison of former times, there would be no need of the means of further knowledge:

saying, know the Lord: not naturally, or as by the light of nature; but spiritually; nor in a general way, as the God of nature and providence, as a Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor; but in a special manner, as the God of grace, as the God and Father of Christ, and his people in him; not legally, but evangelically; not speculatively, but practically, and in a saving way and manner: this kind of knowledge now under the Gospel dispensation is greater than under the former; as the knowledge of God in his persons, in his perfections, in his titles and characters, and in his Son; and as to the manner of it, clearly, with open face as in a glass; and as to the persons to whom it is communicated, not to Judah only, but to men of all nations; all which is owing to a greater effusion of the spirit, as it follows:

for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: not all mankind; but all the house of Israel, all the family of God, all the children of God being taught by him; not all alike, but all with the same kind of knowledge. This is frequently applied to the times of the Messiah by the Jews {n}:

for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more; there was forgiveness of sin under the former covenant, but the blood of Christ was not then actually shed for it; it was held forth under types; and there was a remembrance of sin made every year; and saints had not such a clear and comfortable sight of pardon in common as now; and it was known and applied but to a few. This is the staple blessing of the covenant, and the evidence of all the rest.

{n} Zohar in Lev. fol. 10. 1. & 24. 3. and on Numb. fol. 54. 4. Vid. Chizuk Emunah, p. 51.

Jeremiah 31:35

Ver. 35. Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day,.... As he did at first, and still continues it; and which is a wonderful gift of nature he bestows on men, unworthy of such a favour, **Mt 5:45**;

[and] the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night; which have a settled regular order and course, in which they move; and whereby they impart the light they borrow from the sun, to enlighten the world by night; which is another favour to the inhabitants of it; see **Ge 1:16**;

which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; some refer this, as Kimchi, to the dividing of the Red sea for the Israelites to pass over; but it rather respects an action more frequently done; and should be rendered, which "stilleth", or "maketh the sea quiet" {o}; which best agrees with what follows; when it is tumultuous, and threatens the loss of ships and men's lives, and attempts to pass its bounds, he "rebukes it"; so the Targum; and makes it a calm; he stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, Ps 65:7;

the Lord of hosts [is] his name; that has all the armies of heaven and earth at his command, and can do whatever he pleases; he, and he only, can do the above things, and does them; and he that can do them, is able to make good the covenant he has made with the house of Israel, and fulfil the promises of it, of which there is an assurance; as well as he is able to secure an interest and a church for himself unto the end of the world, as the following words show.

{o} Myh egr "quiescere cogit mare, etsi fluctus ejus fremuerunt", Gussetius, p. 778. So some in Gataker; "quo mari interminante sedantur fluctus ejus", Syr. Interpr.

Jeremiah 31:36

Ver. 36. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord,.... Of the sun, moon, and stars; should these leave their proper course, and not perform their several functions, or do the service appointed for them; should they desert their master, or disobey his orders, turn away from him, and pay no regard to the laws and rules he has set them:

[then] the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before me for ever; but, as the former is impossible, so is the latter, The Jews ceased not from being a nation through their captivity in Babylon, nor through their destruction by the Romans; they continue a distinct nation and people to this day, though scattered throughout the nations of the world: though this rather refers to the spiritual Israel, the holy nation and peculiar people; Christ will have a seed to serve him as long as the sun and moon endure; his church shall continue to the end of the world; it is built on a rock; and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

Jeremiah 31:37

Ver. 37. Thus saith the Lord, if heaven above can be measured,.... Either the space between the highest heavens and the earth; or the extent of the heavens, from one end of them to the other, which cannot be done by man; so the Targum,

"as it is impossible that man should know the measure of the heavens above;"

otherwise it is measured by the Lord, for he hath "meted out heaven with a span", Isa 40:12;

and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath: so as to be known what they are, or on what they are fastened, since the earth is hung upon nothing, Job 38:6;

I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord; as the former cannot be, so neither the latter; when there was a very great rejection of the Jews for their disbelief of the Messiah, they were not all cast off; the Apostle Paul was an instance to the contrary, and so were others: "the remnant according to the election of grace"; and there is a time coming when all Israel shall be saved, Ro 11:5; nor shall any of the spiritual Israel be cast off by him, or cast away from him, so as to perish; the Israel, whom God foreknew, is chosen, redeemed, and whom he calls by his grace; no, not for all the sins and transgressions they have been guilty of, however they may deserve it. The reasons are, because of his unchangeable love to them; his unalterable covenant with them; the satisfaction his son has made for them; and the free and full pardon of their sins, which he has granted to them.

Jeremiah 31:38

Ver. 38. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,.... The word come is not in the text; it is read, but not written. The vowel points are in the text, but not the letters; which those, who are against the antiquity of the points, would do well to consider; since the Jews never suffered any additions to the Bible. Jarchi says this prophecy refers to future times in the latter redemption, and never was fulfilled in the second temple; and indeed, under the figure of rebuilding Jerusalem, seems to be intended the building of the Gospel church, which was to continue to the end of time; for both holiness and perpetuity are ascribed to it:

that the city shall be built to the Lord; the city of Jerusalem; which was to be rebuilt upon the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, as by the order, and under the direction and protection of the Lord, so for his service and worship; the temple in it should be built up again, and divine worship restored; and both that and the city, with the inhabitants of it, be devoted to his service; a type of the Gospel church, built up an habitation for God, where he is worshipped, feared, and glorified:

from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner; of the tower of Hananeel mention is made in **Ne 3:1**. The Targum calls it the tower of Pikkus. Lightfoot places it on the south side of the city, bending to the east; but most place it on the east side of it: here probably the building of the city began in Nehemiah's time, and proceeded to the gate of the corner, which lay northeast; of which see
2Ki 14:13; Jerom interprets the tower of Hananeel the tower of obedience, or of the grace and gifts of God, which latter is not much amiss; since the word "Hansheel" may be interpreted "God gives grace"; and the spiritual building of the church proceeds from the grace of God, upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ being the chief corner stone, **Eph 2:20**.

Jeremiah 31:39

Ver. 39. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it,.... Or, "before it" {p}; the gate proceeding right on from it; of the length of the measuring line, or reed; see Eze 40:5; though some render it, "before him" {q}; before the Lord, under whose direction and powerful providence the work went on; so the city gates and walls of the New Jerusalem are said to be measured with a reed, Re 21:15;

upon the hill Gareb; which signifies a "scab", so called, as is supposed, from scabby and leprous persons sent here to dwell, which was a "lazaretto" for them. Lightfoot, following Lyra, takes it to be the same with Mount Calvary: it was on the north side of the city, bending to the west; and, if the same with Calvary, it was on the west side. The Targum renders it,

"the hill which was near to Gareb:"

and shall compass about to Goath; so called perhaps from the difficulty of its ascent, it being a laborious work to go up to it, enough to make a man breathe. Lyra takes it to be Golgotha, which is not very likely; it seems to be at some distance from the former; since from that there was a round about, a compass fetched to this: it is supposed to lie on the west side of the city, towards the south. The Targum renders it the calves' pool, or the round pool; it is thought by some more likely to be the hill Josephus {r} speaks of, that hung over the valley of Siloam.

{p} wdgn "ante ipsam", Tigurine version, Gataker {q} "Coram eo", Pagninus, Montanus; "coram ipso", Calvin. {r} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 12. sect. 2.

Jeremiah 31:40

Ver. 40. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes,.... The Targum paraphrases it,

"where the carcasses of the Assyrian army fell;"

Sennacherib's army, destroyed by an angel; and so Jarchi and Kimchi; which latter observes, that the word for "ashes" signifies "fat"; and so may describe the persons then destroyed, who were fat and lusty men: others think, more probably, that the valley of Tophet or Hinnom is here meant; so called, either from the persons that were burnt and sacrificed to Moloch; or from the carcasses of malefactors interred here; and from the ashes of the sacrifices which were brought from the temple, and laid here. This valley lay southwest of the city; it was a ditch at the foot of the mount of Calvary; where, as Monsieur Thevenot {s} says, now stands the chapel of the invention of the cross:

and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron; such as the potters and fullers' fields, which lay to the south of the city, or more to the east, where Kidron was situated:

unto the corner of the horse gate towards the east; and so the compass is fetched round the city to the eastern part of it, from whence it began, even to the tower of Hananeel, which was on the east of this horse gate; see 2Ki 11:16. The Targum renders it,

"to the corner of the gate of the house of the king's course;"

supposed to be the gate at which the king's horses went in and out, when led to be watered or exercised:

[shall be] holy unto the Lord; that is, the whole city in its utmost compass thus rebuilt, yea, even the out parts of it, and those that were defiled with the carcasses of men, and ashes of the burnt offerings. It seems to respect the extensive holiness of the church of God in the latter day; compare with it Zec 14:10;

it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever; which, if understood literally of the city of Jerusalem, can only signify, that it should not be destroyed soon, but should continue a long time; for certain it is, that after it was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, it was plucked up, and thrown down by the Romans, and particularly by Hadrian, who ploughed it up, and built another city, and called it by his own name; but this figuratively rather intends the church of Christ, which is built on him the Rock, and so is immovable; and, like Mount Zion, shall abide for ever.

{s} Travels, par. 1. ch. 39. p. 189.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 32:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 32

This chapter contains an account of Jeremiah's imprisonment, and the cause of it; of his buying a field of his uncle's son, and the design of it; of his prayer to God, and of the answer returned to him. The time of his imprisonment, the place where, and the reasons of it, are observed in Jer 32:1; that his uncle's son

would come and offer the sale of a field to him was told him by the Lord, which he did accordingly, Jer 32:6; of whom he bought the field, paid the money, had the purchase confirmed in a legal way, before witnesses, Jer 32:8; and the writings of it he committed to Baruch, to put in an earthen vessel, where they were to continue some time as a pledge of houses, fields, and vineyards, being possessed again after the captivity, Jer 32:13; then follows a prayer of his to the Lord, in which he addresses him as the Maker of all things; as the Lord God omnipotent; as a God of great grace and mercy, as well as strict justice; as a God of wisdom, counsel, and might, and an omniscient and righteous Being, Jer 32:16; and recounts the wonderful things he had done for the people of Israel, Jer 32:20; and observes the ingratitude and disobedience of that people, which were the cause of the present siege of the city, which should surely be delivered into the hands of the Chaldeans, Jer 32:23; to which prayer an answer is returned, Jer 32:26; in which the Lord describes himself as the God of all flesh, and as able to do what he pleases, Jer 32:27; and confirms the delivery of the city of Jerusalem unto the Chaldeans, Jer 32:28; and assigns the causes of it, the backslidings, disobedience, and dreadful idolatry of the people, Jer 32:30; and, notwithstanding, promises a restoration of them to their own land again, Jer 32:36; when an opportunity is taken to insert the covenant of grace, and the special articles and peculiar promises of it, for the comfort of the spiritual Israel of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, Jer 32:38; and the chapter is concluded with a fresh assurance of the return of the captivity, and of the punctual performance of the promise of it; when fields should be bought in every part of the land, in like manner as Jeremiah had bought his,
Jer 32:41.

Ver. 1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord,.... The word of prophecy, as the Targum, concerning Jeremiah's buying the field of his uncle's son, Jer 32:6; and concerning the delivery of the city of Jerusalem into the hands of the Chaldeans, Jer 32:26; and the return of the captivity, Jer 32:36;

in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which [was] the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar; the same with Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a year before the taking of the city by him; for that was in the eleventh of Zedekiah, and the nineteenth of Nebuchadnezzar; see
Jer 52:1.

Jeremiah 32:2

Ver. 2. For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem,.... And had done so for some time; for the siege began in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Jer 52:4;

and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which [was] in the king of Judah's house; which showed great stupidity and hardness of heart in the king, and his courtiers, and in the people, to imprison a prophet of the Lord, when surrounded by an enemy's army, and that according to the prediction of the prophet; by which it appeared that he was a true prophet; and they might reasonably expect that the rest of his predictions, which related to the taking of their city, and carrying them captive, would be fulfilled. It is true, indeed, he was in a better prison than before, more honourable, being within the limits of the king's house; and, besides, was not closely confined, but allowed to walk in the court of the prison; and so had a free air to breathe in, and more company to converse with, and could exercise himself by walking about; perhaps he was placed here to keep him from prophesying to the people to their discouragement, and the more to awe him, as he was under the eye of the king and his ministry. Of this prison and its court mention is made in **Ne 3:25**; it seems to have been for state prisoners.

Jeremiah 32:3

Ver. 3. For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up,.... In prison, at least in the court of the prison; he had given orders for his imprisonment, which were executed, and it was the same as if he had done it himself; the reason of which was, as follows:

saying, wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, thus saith the Lord, behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it? meaning the city of Jerusalem, now besieged by the king of Babylon. This prophecy stands in Jer 34:1; the prophecies of this book not being put together in proper order of time.

Jeremiah 32:4

Ver. 4. And Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans,.... This is a continuation of the prophecy of Jeremiah, repeated by the king to him, and which concerns himself more especially; who, upon the taking of the city, would endeavour to make his escape, as he did; but should not be able, Jer 52:8;

but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon; not only into the hands of his army, and of his generals, but into his own hand personally; since it follows:

and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes; converse together face to face, eye to eye; but no doubt with different tones and looks; the king of Babylon upbraiding the king of Judah with perjury and ingratitude, and looking upon him with indignation and contempt; the other speaking faintly, and looking down with grief, shame, and confusion; moreover, the eyes of the king of Babylon beheld the eyes of Zedekiah, and ordered them to be put out, as they were, 2Ki 25:7.

Jeremiah 32:5

Ver. 5. And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon,.... As he did in chains, from Riblah, where he was brought unto him after he was taken, endeavouring to make his escape, Jer 52:8;

and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the Lord; in taking him away by death; for he continued in Babylon to the time of his death, which was not violent, but natural; and, considering his circumstances, his captivity, imprisonment, and loss of sight, might be reckoned a visitation in mercy: though some understand this of God's visiting the people at the return of them from their seventy years' captivity; if Zedekiah lived till then, he must be a very old man; but of this we have no account, nor is it probable:

though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper; though they should sally out upon them, in order to beat them out of their trenches, and drive them from the walls of the city, yet without success.

Jeremiah 32:6

Ver. 6. And Jeremiah said, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. Not that he said this to Zedekiah; but the prophet, after the above preface, returns to declare what the word of the Lord was, which came to him at the time before mentioned.

Jeremiah 32:7

Ver. 7. Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee,.... Hilkiah, the father of Jeremiah, and this Shallum, were own brothers; so that Jeremiah and Hanameel were brothers' sons, or own cousins: this coming of Hanameel to Jeremiah being a contingent event, with respect to second causes, and yet foretold as what would certainly be, shows that such events are foreknown by the Lord, and are sure to him:

saying, buy thee my field that [is] in Anathoth; the place from whence Jeremiah came, and was but about two or three miles from Jerusalem, and therefore must be now in the possession of the Chaldean army; wherefore it may seem very strange in Hanameel to propose it to sale, and stranger still in Jeremiah to buy it: though something of this kind was done at Rome, while Hannibal was besieging it; the field where Hannibal pitched his camp was offered to sale at Rome, and found a buyer {t}; but then he that bought it was in high spirits, and in a strong belief that the city would not be taken, and that the enemy would be obliged to quit the siege; but Jeremiah knew, and firmly believed, on the other hand, that the city of Jerusalem, and all the country round it, would fall into the hands of the king of Babylon. Moreover, Anathoth was a city of the priests, and the fields adjoining to it belonged to them; as some of them did to Abiathar the priest in his time, **1Ki 2:26**; and such fields as belonged to the priests and Levites were not to be sold, according to the law in Le 25:34; to which it is answered, that this was not arable land, which the Levites might not possess; but some meadow, orchard, or garden, in the suburbs of the city, which though it might not be sold to strangers, yet might be sold among themselves; though it is more probable that this was a field that came fro, in some of his ancestors by his mother's or grandmother's side, and so might be disposed of; as it seems certain to be lawfully done, not only as it was the will of God, who could indeed dispense with his own law, was that in the way, but since it was a matter of right, and incumbent on him, as follows:

for the right of redemption [is] thine to buy [it]; that is, had it been sold to another, it would have lain upon him to have redeemed it, as being next of kin, that so it might not pass to another tribe and family.

{t} Florus, l. 2. c. 6.

Jeremiah 32:8

Ver. 8. So Hanameel mine uncle's son came unto me,.... Freely and voluntarily, of his own accord; though it was determined he should, as it was predicted he would; for God's decrees do not infringe the liberty of the will: this man came from Anathoth, very probably, to Jerusalem, to the place where the prophet was:

in the court of the prison, according to the word of the Lord; which had been made known before to Jeremiah:

and said unto me, buy my field, I pray thee, that [is] in Anathoth, which [is] in the country of Benjamin; it belonged to that tribe:

for the right of inheritance [is] thine; the reversion of this field; it would come to him after the death of his cousin, as being next heir:

and the redemption [is] thine; buy [it] for thyself; since, if it was sold to another, he, according to law, was obliged to redeem it; and therefore it was much better to buy it at once for himself:

then I knew that this [was] the word of the Lord; that it was the word of the Lord which came to him before, and that it was the will of the Lord that he should make this purchase; since there was such an exact agreement between the prophecy and the event.

Jeremiah 32:9

Ver. 9. And I bought the field of Hanameel mine uncle's son; that [was] in Anathoth,.... The prophet agreed with his cousin to take his field of him, at a certain price hereafter mentioned; which may seem strange in one that was a poor prophet, now a prisoner, and the land just going to be subject to the Chaldeans: but the design of this was to show that there would be a return from captivity, when houses and fields should be bought and sold again, of which this was a pledge:

and weighed him the money; agreed upon, which was reckoned not by tale, but by weight:

[even] seventeen shekels of silver; which, reckoning a shekel at half a crown, were no more than two pounds, two shillings, and sixpence; a small sum of money to make a purchase of a field with; though this may be accounted for by the scarcity of money, the field in the hand of the enemy, there being only his kinsman's life in it, the prophet bought the reversion, being his of right; and, besides, it might be only an orchard or garden that is so called. In the Hebrew text it is, "seven shekels and ten [pieces of] silver": and Kimchi and Ben Melech say, that by "shekels" are meant minas or pounds; and by "pieces of silver", selahs or shekels: and so the Targum renders it,

"seven minas, and ten shekels of silver."

Now a minah or maneh, according to Eze 45:12; was equal to sixty shekels, and so of the value of seven pounds, ten shillings; seven of these made fifty two pounds, ten shillings; and the other ten shekels being one pound, five shillings, the whole amounted to fifty three pounds, fifteen shillings, which would purchase a considerable field.

Jeremiah 32:10

Ver. 10. And I subscribed the evidence,.... Or, "wrote in a book" {u}; the instrument or bill of sale, the deed of purchase; which described the field sold, and expressed the condition on which the purchase was made; and by subscribing it he agreed to it, and laid himself under obligation to perform it:

and sealed [it]; for the further confirmation of it:

and took witnesses; to be present at the payment of the money, and to sign the deed likewise:

and weighed [him] the money in the balances; this he did a second time; he weighed it first before Hanameel himself, and then before the witnesses; everything was done fairly, and with great exactness.

{u} rpob btkaw "et scripsi in libro", V. L. Munster, Pagninus, Montanus; "in libello", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 32:11

Ver. 11. So I took the evidence of the purchase,.... The deed of purchase, the book or bill of sale, the instrument of the bargain, as before mentioned:

[both] that which is sealed, [according] to the law and custom; which was both sealed by the buyer and seller, and was sealed up, and not to be looked into by everyone, only when there might be a necessity; this was the original copy:

and that which was open; the counter part or copy of the former, which though signed and sealed as the other, yet not sealed up, but was open and exposed to view; either for the relations to see what was done, as some; or for the judges, as others, to ratify and make authentic: or, as is most probable, this copy was laid up in some public register, to have recourse unto upon any occasion; however it was, it was according to the laws and customs of those times, which Jeremiah carefully attended to: or, as others, it lay open for the witnesses to sign; so there are three distinct things; first the written contract; then that as signed and sealed by buyer and seller, according to law; and then as signed, but not sealed, by the witnesses.

Jeremiah 32:12

Ver. 12. And I gave the evidence of the purchase,.... Both that which was sealed and that which was open; both the original and the copy; or the whole, as signed, sealed, and witnessed:

unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah; this Baruch, as appears from other places in this book, was one that attended on Jeremiah, was his scribe or amanuensis, and did business for him of one kind or another, and is described here by his pedigree; and it was the more necessary now to make use of him in this affair, because the prophet was confined, and could not go out of the court of the prison; to him he gave the above deed:

in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's [son]; of whom the purchase was made: the word "son" is not in the text, which has led some to think that both were present at this bargain, both the uncle and the uncle's son; or that Hanameel was both uncle and uncle's son to Jeremiah, as Jarchi; but there is no need to suppose that; the word "son" may easily be supplied from what is before said:

and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase; the same that the prophet subscribed; so that the book the witnesses subscribed was not a separate book, as some have thought; for there was but one book or deed in all, besides the copy that was taken of it:

before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison; where Jeremiah was; and who probably came to visit him, and to hear the word of the Lord from his mouth; unless we can suppose that these were fellow prisoners, or were set as spies upon him, to watch him what he said and did.

Jeremiah 32:13

Ver. 13. And I charged Baruch before them,.... Before his kinsman, the witnesses of the deed, and the Jews that were in the court:

saying, as follows:

Jeremiah 32:14

Ver. 14. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel,.... The order to do the following is ushered in in this solemn manner, partly that Baruch might more strictly observe it, and act according to it; and partly that the persons before whom it was given might take the greater notice of it, and believe that there was something intended by it of moment and importance:

take these evidences; or "books" {x}; the deeds of purchase:

this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; both the original and the copy:

and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days; it seems, though it is not said, that this earthen vessel, with these deeds in it, were to be put under ground, and very probably in some part of the field that was bought: had these writings been laid up in a chest or box, they might have been stolen and destroyed; and had they been laid in the earth by themselves, they would have rotted and consumed; but being put into a dry earthen vessel, they might be preserved from the injury of the air and the moistness of the earth; and so might continue many days, even many years, to the end of the captivity, as it was designed they should; when Jeremiah's heirs, having some him of them where they were deposited, might take them up and claim the estate; though something more useful and instructive than this was designed by it, as appears by the following words:

{x} Myrpoh ta "libellos hos", Cocceius, Schmidt; "literas has", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 32:15

Ver. 15. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... Who is the Lord God Almighty, and can do what he pleases; and is the covenant God of his people, and therefore will do them good by all his providences in the issue of things:

houses, and fields, and vineyards, shall be possessed in this land; or "bought" {y} in it; of which the prophet's buying this field was a pledge and earnest; signifying, that though the city now besieged should be taken, and the people carried captive, yet they should return to their own land, and purchase and enjoy houses, fields, and vineyards again, as at the present time.

{y} wnqy "ementur", Cocceius, Piscator; "vedentur", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 32:16

Ver. 16. Now when I had delivered the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah,.... When he had finished his worldly business, and which yet was by a divine order, and to answer a divine purpose, then he betook himself to prayer; and it is proper we should be quite free from worldly cares and concerns when we enter upon religious duties, particularly prayer to God; when the soul ought to be separated from the world and the things of it, and wholly devoted to God:

I prayed unto the Lord; either for further information in this matter, of the use and design of buying the field; and how this part of the prophecy, signified by it, concerning the Jews buying and possessing houses and fields, can be made to agree with the other prophecy, that the city should be delivered into the hands of the Chaldeans; or, at least, that he might be able to answer the cavils and objections made by the Jews to it: that he was in some puzzle, perplexity, and distress, appears by his prayer, which begins, saying, as follows:

Jeremiah 32:17

Ver. 17. Ah Lord God!.... Which the Vulgate Latin version repeats three times, "Ah, ah, ah", as being greatly distressed with the trouble that was coming upon his people; and, it may be, not without some doubts and temptations about their deliverance; or, at least, was pressed in his mind with the difficulties and objections started by the Jews that were with him in the court:

behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm; with great propriety is the making of the heaven and the earth ascribed to the mighty power of God; for nothing short of almighty power could have produced such a stupendous work as the heavens, with all the host of them, sun, moon, and stars, the terraqueous globe, the earth and sea, with all that in them are; and all this produced out of nothing, by the sole command and word of God: and with great pertinency does the prophet begin his prayer with such a description of God; both to encourage and strengthen his faith in him touching the fulfilment of the above prophecy, and to stop the mouths of the Jews, who objected the impossibility of it: wherefore it follows,

[and] there is nothing too hard for thee; or "hidden from thee" {z}; so the Targum; which his wisdom and knowledge did not reach, or his power could not effect: or which is "too wonderful for thee" {a}; there is nothing that has so much of the wonderful in it, as to be above the compass of his understanding, and out of the reach of his power, as such things be, which are beyond the power and skill of men; but there is no such thing with God, whose understanding is unsearchable, and his power irresistible; with him nothing is impossible; and who can think there is that observes that the heaven and earth are made by him?

{z} Kmm alpy "non est absconditum a te quicquam", Pagninus; "non potest occultari tibi ulla res", Junius & Tremellius. {a} "Non mirabile est prae te ullun verbum", Schmidt; "non est ulla res abscondita a te, sive mirabile", Calvin; "non mirificabitur a te ullum verbum", Montanus.

Jeremiah 32:18

Ver. 18. Thou showest lovingkindness unto thousands,.... Not to thousands of persons only, but to a thousand generations, even such that love, fear, and serve him; see Ex 20:6; this is very properly added, for the further strengthening of faith; for though the omnipotence of God assures us that there is nothing but what he can do, yet it gives us no certain encouragement he will do this, or that, or the other, in a favourable and gracious manner; but this his loving kindness, experienced by a multitude of persons in all ages, gives reason to hope for:

and recompensest the iniquities of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them; it is added in the decalogue, from whence these words are taken, "of them that hate me", Ex 20:5; and here the Targum adds,

"when they go on to sin after them;"

when they imitate their fathers in their wickedness, and commit the same sins they have done, and continue in them; wherefore, having tilled up the measure of their fathers' sins, they receive a just and full recompence of them into their bosom; which denotes both the certainty of it and the fulness of it: the prophet formed in his mind just notions and ideas of the divine Being, as being not only gracious and merciful, but holy, just, and righteous; and it may be he strikes at the Jews, who might complain of God, as they sometimes did, for being punished for their fathers' sins, as if they themselves were innocent and guiltless:

the Great, the Mighty God, the Lord of hosts [is] his name: "great" in all the perfections of his nature, and greatly to be praised, loved, and feared; "mighty" to do whatsoever he pleases; and who, agreeably to his name, has all the hosts and armies of heaven and earth at his command; and what is it that he cannot do?

Jeremiah 32:19

Ver. 19. Great in counsel, and mighty in word,.... Counsel belongs to him, and he does all things after the counsel of his will, all things in nature, providence, and grace; and such a display of his wisdom is there in all, that show him to be excellent in counsel; to excel all others; not only to be great, but to be the greatest in counsel; and who regularly and perfectly performs all that he has wisely contrived; his wisdom and his power are equal to each other; he forms the scheme of all that he does with the greatest wisdom, and accomplishes by his power all that he has purposed in his eternal mind; see Isa 28:29;

for thine eyes [are] open upon all the ways of the sons of men; all their thoughts, schemes, devices, and purposes; all their words and actions, every step they take, whether good or bad, they are all before ham, and manifest to him; he is God omniscient as well as God omnipotent; and he does not look upon men, and their ways and works, as an idle spectator or indifferent person, as unconcerned at what they do, letting them pass without calling them to an account for them, or without passing any judgment on them, or sentence concerning them; no, he is the Judge of all the earth, and he sits in the heavens and observes what is done on earth:

to give everyone according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings: good things to good men for Christ's sake; and evil things to evil men, according to the just demerit of their sins and transgressions.

Jeremiah 32:20

Ver. 20. Which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, [even] unto this day,.... The prophet here descends to particular instances of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God; and begins with the miracles wrought in Egypt, the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians for refusing to let Israel go; these were set among them, they were true and real things, and obvious to everyone's view; there was no deception in them, they were plain to the senses of men; and the remembrance of them continued among the Egyptians to the times of the prophet; the tradition of what was done was handed down among them to that age: for that any marks of these things remained is not to be supposed; the tracks of Pharaoh's chariot wheels to be still seen in the Red sea must be rejected as fabulous, though Orosius relates it:

and in Israel, and amongst [other] men: that is, signs and wonders were set among the Israelites, or wrought for them; such as bringing them out of Egypt; leading them through the Red sea as on dry land; feeding them in the wilderness with manna and quails; subduing their enemies, and settling them in the land of Canaan; and in other nations very wonderful things have been done in one age or another: or else the meaning is, that the miracles done in Egypt were not only remembered there to this time, but also by the Israelites, and by other men, to whom the knowledge of these things came; on account of which God was more or less everywhere glorified, as follows:

and hast made thee a name as at this day; that is, got praise, honour, and glory, in Egypt, in Israel, and in other nations.

Jeremiah 32:21

Ver. 21. And hast brought forth thy people Israel of the land of Egypt,.... As he promised Abraham, some hundreds of years before, that they should come out from thence; and where they had been as bondsmen, though they were the Lord's peculiar people, whom he had chose for himself above all people, and therefore he brought them out of their state of bondage; and this was his own doing, they could not deliver themselves; the enemy would not let them go till he was obliged to it by the superior power of God:

with signs and with wonders; which he wrought for them at the time of their deliverance, slaying the firstborn; and at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, after he brought them out of Egypt, and before their settlement in the laud of Canaan; and so these may be considered as distinct from the signs and wonders in the land of Egypt before mentioned:

and with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm; with great power, and so delivered the Israelites from them that were stronger than they; with a mighty hand, that protected his people; and with a long arm, that reached their enemies, and destroyed them:

and with great terror; with great reverence in the Israelites, who saw the power and majesty of God; and with great terror to Pharaoh and his host, when they saw the waters return and overwhelm them; and to all the nations round about, when they heard of it; see **De 4:34**. The Targum is,

"with great vision;"

so a spectacle, as the Syriac version; openly, before the eyes of all.

Jeremiah 32:22

Ver. 22. And hast given them this land, which thou didst swear to their fathers to give them,.... Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; so that God was faithful to his word, kept his covenant and oath; and the faithfulness of God is observed and acknowledged by the prophet, along with other perfections of God before taken notice of. The land of Canaan was a land of promise, confirmed by an oath, and was the pure gift of God to the Israelites, and not any merit of theirs; it was given them by him who had a right to dispose of it, and could make them a good title to it, and which they had; though before in the possession of others, who for their wickedness were driven out:

a land flowing with milk and honey: abounding with plenty of all good things, for the sustenance and comfort of human life; a very frequent description of the land of Canaan, and is expressive of the great kindness and goodness of God to this people.

Jeremiah 32:23

Ver. 23. And they came in and possessed it,.... After forty years travel in the wilderness; they entered into it with Joshua at the head of them, and the Lord with them; giving victory over the Canaanites, who were soon subdued; and the Israelites with little trouble settled in their land, which was divided to them by lot, and possessed as their inheritance:

but they obeyed not thy voice; though they promised at Sinai they would, and though they were so much obliged by the goodness of God to them; this shows great ingratitude in them:

neither walked in thy law; moral, ceremonial, and judicial, given at Harsh as the rule of their obedience; but they walked not according to it:

they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do; they were not only deficient in some things, but in everything; they not only broke some of the laws of God, but all of them; there was not one law, one command, observed by them as it ought to have been; and yet these people were always prone to establish their own righteousness, and seek for justification by it:

therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them; the Chaldean army, now besieging them; and the famine and pestilence among them; which, the prophet serves, were but the righteous judgments of God upon them for their sins.

Jeremiah 32:24

Ver. 24. Behold, the mounts, they are come unto the city, to take it,.... These were ramparts or batteries, that were erected against the city, the more easily to annoy it: some take them to be engines from which they cast out stones; and others suppose them to be battering rams, used to break down the walls of the city; be they what they will, they were now brought near the city to make way for the Chaldeans to enter into it, and take it:

and the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans that fight against it; not only it the purpose of God that if should be, but it was plain case that he had withdrawn his protection from it, and that the city was indefensible; and that, humanly speaking, it was impossible it should hold out long, for the reasons following:

because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence: the sword of the Chaldeans, without, destroyed those that sallied out upon them, or endeavoured to make their escape; and the famine and pestilence, within, made such ravages, and so much weakened them, that they would never be able to stand it out against the enemy long, but must surrender:

and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; what was foretold by the prophets, and by himself, was now fulfilling:

and, behold, thou seest [it]; and therefore he had no need to observe it to him, or dwell any longer on this subject; only he hints what follows, as having some difficulty in it on his own account.

Jeremiah 32:25

Ver. 25. And thou hast said to me, O Lord God,.... Or, "O Lord God, yet thou hast said to me" {b}; notwithstanding this is the case, the country all around is in the hand of the enemy, and the city is as good as delivered up to them, yet thou hast given me such orders, as follows:

buy thee a field for money, and take witnesses; for though these words were not expressly said to him by the Lord; yet inasmuch as he told him that his uncle's son would come to him, and propose the selling of his field to him; and accordingly did come, agreeably to the word of the Lord; Jeremiah understood it as the will of the Lord, that he should buy it before witnesses; which he did, as before related:

for the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans; or rather, "though the city is given" {c}, &c. yet thou hast said so: now by this the prophet suggests, that though he had obeyed the divine order, as he ought to have done, yet there was some difficulty upon his mind; or there were some objections Started, by the Jews that were with him, how these things could be reconciled; that he should be ordered to buy a field at such a time as this, and thereby signify that fields and vineyards should be bought and possessed in the land, and yet the city just going to be surrendered into the hands of the Chaldeans.

{b} trma htaw "tu vero nihilominus dicis mihi", Piscator; "tu tamen dixisti ad me, Domime Jehovah", Schmidt. {c} hntn ryehw "cum tamen urbs tradenda sit", Schmidt; "quum tamen futurum sit", Piscator; "quum civitas ipsa traditur", Junius & Tremellius; "cum tamen urbs tradita sit", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 32:26

Ver. 26. Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah,.... This is an answer to the prophet's prayer, and particularly to the latter part of it; showing the consistency of the destruction of the city with his purchase of a field, and with God's promise of fields and vineyards being purchased and possessed again; and how each of these would be brought about:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 32:27

Ver. 27. Behold, I [am] the Lord, the God of all flesh,.... Jehovah, the self-existent Being, that gives being to all creatures; and is particularly the God of all men, the Maker and Preserver of them, and that provides for them; who are called "flesh", to denote their weakness and corruption, how unworthy of the divine favour, and how unable to resist his will, or hinder the execution of his purposes: and which is introduced with a "behold", to excite attention, to take notice of what was said; to encourage faith, and remove doubts and difficulties; for if God is Jehovah, the Being of beings; if he is the God and Governor of the world, and all men in it, what is it he cannot do? as follows:

is there anything too hard for me? suggesting, that though the city of Jerusalem should be destroyed, and the inhabitants carried captive, yet he could return them again to their own laud; where they should purchase fields and vineyards, and possess them as heretofore: or, "is there anything hidden from me?" {d} so the Targum and Syriac version; can anything unforeseen arise to hinder the fulfilment of promises and prophecies? nothing can; since all things are in one view before the Lord continually; or, "is there anything too wonderful for me?" {e} that which is too wonderful for men, beyond their comprehension, and so their faith; yet it is not so with God.

{d} rbd lk alpy ynmmh "celabitur, [vel] occultabitur", Vatablus; "an mihi occultari possit ultra res", Junius & Tremellius. {e} "Num prae me mirabile erit ullum verbum", Schmidt; "nunquid a me mirificabitur omne verbum", Montanus.

Jeremiah 32:28

Ver. 28. Therefore thus saith the Lord, behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans,.... As he had foretold by the prophet, and was just now going to be fulfilled. Here the Lord repeats and confirms the first of the two things which seemed contradictory; the destruction of the city by the Chaldeans, who were now besieging it, and into whose hands it would certainly come:

and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; who was now before it with his army:

and he shall take it; and become master of it: or, "I will give [it to him], that he may take it" {f}; which he could not do, notwithstanding his powerful army, had not the Lord delivered it into his hands.

{f} hdklw "ut capiat eam", Junius & Tremellius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 32:29

Ver. 29. And the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come,.... Or rather "shall enter", as Aquila renders it; for they were come to it already, and were fighting against it, battering the walls, and throwing in their arrows, and putting to the sword such as came out, or were within their reach:

and set fire on this city; as they did, Jer 39:8;

and burn it, with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal; or "especially the houses" {g}, or "even the houses"; the houses particularly mentioned in the history of the destruction as burnt; and which, very probably, are here intended; besides the Lord's house, and all the houses in Jerusalem, were the king's house, and the houses of the great men or princes; and which, Kimchi thinks, were higher than others; on which therefore they burnt incense to Baal; wherefore it was a just retaliation, upon them that they should be burnt with fire:

and poured out drink offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger; to other gods besides the true God; to strange gods, and to other gods besides Baal; which was done as if they really designed to provoke the Lord; as if they had it in view to affront him; and, if they had, they could not have taken a more effectual method; though this is to be understood, not intentionally, but eventually; not what was their design, though it looked like it, but what was the effect of their idolatry.

{g} Mytbh taw "imprimis domos", Schmidt; "nempe domos", Piscator.

Jeremiah 32:30

Ver. 30. For the children of Israel and the children of Judah,.... The former are mentioned, as well as the latter, though they had been carried captive some years ago, to justify the dealings of God with them; and besides, there were some of the ten tribes that remained, and were mingled with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin: of all which it is said, that they

have only done evil before me from their youth; from their infancy, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; and so being destitute of the grace of God, did nothing else but sin all their days, as is said of the men of the old world, **Ge 6:5**. Some understand this, from the time of their becoming a people, a body politic; or from the time of their coming out of Egypt, and being in the wilderness, when their idolatry began, they brought out of Egypt; or from the time of the judges:

for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the Lord; with their idols, made by their own hands; these they worshipped instead of their Creator and Benefactor; which must be very provoking indeed!

Jeremiah 32:31

Ver. 31. For this city hath been tame [as] a provocation of mine anger and of my fury,.... Or, "upon mine anger, and upon my fury this city was to me" {h}; that is, it was upon his heart, and in his mind and purpose, being provoked to anger and wrath by their sins, to have destroyed it long ago, though he had deferred it to this time; the inhabitants of this city had been always a provoking people to him; and he had thought to have poured out his wrath and fury upon them:

from the day they built it, even unto this day: when built and inhabited by the idolatrous Canaanites; possessed by the Jebusites; rebuilt by David; beautified with the temple and other stately buildings by Solomon, who was drawn it, to idolatry by his wives. It is a tradition of the Jews, mentioned both by Jarchi and Kimchi, that the same day that the foundation of the temple was laid, Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter; and which was the foundation of his idolatry; and which was more or less practised in every reign afterwards, to this time; and which so provoked the Lord, that he took up this resolution early, though he did not put it in execution; expressed as follows:

that I should remove it from before my face; as a man does that which is nauseous and abominable to him; meaning the removing the inhabitants of it into other lands, or causing them to go into captivity; so the Targum.

{h} ytmx lew ypa le "super naso meo, et super ira mea fuit mihi civitas haec", Montanus; "in furore meo, et in ira mea", Pagninus, Vatablus.

Jeremiah 32:32

Ver. 32. Because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah,.... His anger and fury were because of their sins, and so his carrying them captive:

which they have done to provoke me to anger; which was done, as if they had done it on purpose to provoke him; and which was done, not by a few, but by them all; not by the lower people only, but by men of every rank and order; as follows:

they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets; that is, their false prophets, as the Targum; yea, all the inhabitants of the land, both in city and country:

and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: the "metropolis" of the nation; the seat of the kings of Judah; and where the temple was, the priests ministered, and the prophets taught, and the people came up to worship.

Jeremiah 32:33

Ver. 33. And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face,.... When he reproved them for their sins; called them to repentance; instructed them in their duty; and warned them of the dangers they exposed themselves to; instead of turning the face to him, as scholars to their masters, and as subjects to their prince, to listen to what was said to them; they turned their backs or necks, the hinder part of them; expressive of contempt, and showing great rudeness and irreverence:

though I taught them, rising up early, and teaching [them]; by his prophets, as the Targum; whom he sent to them early in the morning; or in the early time of their life; or when they first began to practise idolatry; so careful was the Lord of them; so diligent to instruct them, and prevent their ruin:

yet have not hearkened, to receive instruction; or "correction" {i}; so as to repent of their sins, reform and amend; see **Jer 7:13**.

{i} rowm "disciplinam", Cocceius; i.e. "correctionem", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 32:34

Ver. 34. But they set their abominations,.... Their idols, which were abominable to the Lord, and ought to have been so to them: these they placed in the house (which is called by my name), to defile it; in the temple; as by Ahaz, Manasseh, and others: see **Jer 7:30**.

Jeremiah 32:35

Ver. 35. And they built the high places of Baal, which [are] in the valley of the son of Hinnom,.... Or "the high places of that Baal {k}, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom"; to distinguish him from other Baalim; and who seems to be the same with Molech after mentioned; and the signification of their names agree; the one is lord or master; the other king:

to cause their sons and their daughters to pass [through the fire] unto Molech: the phrase, "through the fire", is not in the text; but is well enough supplied from other places, where it is. Some think that their infants were not burnt to death with fire, but only were held over the flame by way of lustration; or were made to pass between two fires, and so were purified and dedicated to the idol:

which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind that they should do this abomination; See Gill on "Jer 7:31";

to cause Judah to sin; which Abarbinel understands of the children of Israel, who first began this practice, and seduced and drew the children of Judah into it; but rather it seems to intend the kings, princes, priests, prophets, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, who, by their example, led the people of the Lord into the same practice.

{k} aygb rva lebh twmb "quae in valle", Montanus; "excelsa Baal qui erat in valle", Calvin.

Jeremiah 32:36

Ver. 36. And now therefore thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city,.... Here begins the confirmation of the other part of the prophecy concerning the return of the Jews to their city and country, when they should again buy and possess fields and vineyards; which was thought impossible, supposing the destruction of the city; or however not easily reconcilable with it; but this is as strongly affirmed as the former; for though they had sinned so heinously, and had provoked the wrath of God to such a degree, that the destruction of their city was inevitable, of which they were now sensible themselves; "yet now, notwithstanding" {l}, for so it is ushered in; and thus the words may be rendered, "thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel"; who is Jehovah, with whom nothing is impossible; and continues the covenant God of his own people, his spiritual Israel; for whose sake he does great and wonderful things; he says, "concerning this city", the city of Jerusalem, now besieged by the Chaldeans:

whereof ye say, it shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; for, by these things, by the consumption that was made by them, they saw their case was desperate; and that there was no avoiding falling into the hands of the Chaldeans; wherefore, for the comfort of the Lord's own people among them, the following things are said; most of which respect the Gospel dispensation, either the beginning or latter end of it.

{l} Nkl htew "attamen num ideo", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 32:37

Ver. 37. Behold, I will gather them out of all countries,.... At the end of the seventy years' captivity; and which will have a greater accomplishment in the latter day, when the Jews shall be converted, and gathered from their present dispersion all over the earth:

whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath: or "whither I shall drive them", or "shall have driven them" {m}; for as yet they were not thus driven and dispersed. A heap of words is made use of to express the greatness of the Lord's indignation at them for their sins, the cause of their expulsion out of the land:

and I will bring them again unto this place; the city of Jerusalem; as they were at the end of the seventy years' captivity; and when the promise was fulfilled, that they should purchase and possess fields and vineyards; and as they will likewise at the time of their conversion in the latter day:

and I will cause them to dwell safely; which yet they did not for any continuance after their return from Babylon; being, as Jerom observes, often molested by the Persians, Macedonians, and Egyptians; and at last destroyed by the Romans: their troubles in the times of the Maccabees are very notorious; so that this refers either to the first times of the Gospel, and to the Jews that then believed in Christ; or rather to times yet to come, and which are prophesied of at Jer 32:37.

{m} Mv Mytxdh rva "quo dispulero eos", Schmidt; "quo depulero ipsos", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 32:38

Ver. 38. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. A comprehensive summary of the covenant of grace, which shall be made known to the Jews at the time of their conversion, and the blessings of it applied to them, and bestowed on them; though now a "loammi", **Ho 1:9**, is written upon them; see Jer 30:21.

Jeremiah 32:39

Ver. 39. And I will give them one heart and one way,.... "One" and the same heart; the same heart to one as to another; gracious souls, truly converted persons, be they Jews or Gentiles, have the same experience; they have all, more or less, a sight and sense of sin, and the evil of it; are brought off of their own righteousness; are led to Christ alone for life and salvation; are made partakers of precious promises; and all have their temptations, afflictions, and trials, and can sympathize with one another: and they have the same things put into their hearts; the laws of God are written there; the doctrines of the Gospel have a place there; Christ is formed in them; the graces of the Spirit are implanted, faith, hope, love, fear, humility, and other graces. Their heart, given them at conversion, is a sincere and upright heart, not a double one; they become Israelites indeed; their faith is unfeigned; their hope is devoid of hypocrisy; their love is without dissimulation; their repentance is genuine; and they serve God uprightly with true hearts. It is also single and alone for God; he has the whole of it; their understandings are enlightened with the knowledge of him; their affections and desires are towards him: their wills are subject to him; their eye is single to his glory; their hearts are not divided between him and another object of worship; and they are also one towards another, as the first Christians were of one heart and of one soul, **Ac 4:32**; and such a heart is a new heart, and the gift of God: "one way" is also promised:

one way of salvation, which is Christ; the one and only way of access to God; of acceptance with him; of justification before him; and of forgiveness of sin; the only true way into a Gospel church state, and to eternal glory and happiness; and which is the more excellent way; the good old way; the new and living one: one way of worship may also be intended; one Lord is to be obeyed and worshipped; one doctrine and scheme of faith to be received; one baptism to be administered, in one and the same way, to one and the same subjects, and in one and the same name; one true spiritual manner of worship, all shall come into in the latter day; and there will be no more parties among those that are called Christians; the Jews, when converted, will have no divisions nor different denominations among them; see **Eph 4:4** Zec 14:9;

that they may fear me for ever; both internally and externally; the one heart will be given them to fear and reverence him inwardly; and the one way of worship to fear or serve him outwardly, and in which they shall always continue; there will be no apostasy from the true grace of God, and no defection from his worship to superstition and idolatry:

for the good of them, and of their children after them; unity of heart; sincerity and uprightness of soul; a walking in the way of the Lord; having his fear before their eyes, and on their hearts, will issue in their spiritual good here, and in their eternal happiness hereafter; and even their posterity will reap some advantage by their good instructions and example.

Jeremiah 32:40

Ver. 40. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them,.... Which is made known and manifest at conversion; when the grace of it is applied; the blessings of it bestowed; and the promises of it made good; and therefore said to be made; for otherwise the covenant of grace here spoken of was made from all eternity with Christ, and his people in him; as appears from his being set up as the Mediator so early, and from the blessings and promises of it being of such a date. It is founded on the everlasting love of God, and is according to his eternal purpose; and is no other than an eternal transaction between the Father and the Son concerning the salvation of his elect; and which will last for ever, and never be antiquated, as the covenant under the former dispensation was; and which shows that this respects Gospel times:

that I will not turn away from them to do them good; he may withdraw his gracious presence for a while; but he never turns from his love and affections to his people; nor from his gracious purposes concerning them; nor from his promises to them; nor from his gifts bestowed on them; or so as to utterly leave them and forsake them, or cease to do them good: he has laid up goodness for them; he has bestowed much on them whom he has called by his grace; he has given himself to them as their God and portion; his Son as their Saviour and Redeemer, and all good things with him; his Spirit as their Sanctifier, with his gifts and graces; and he has wrought a good work in them; and he will continue to do them good, by fresh discoveries of his love; by granting his gracious presence; by carrying on his work of grace; by supplying their wants, and making all things work together for their good. The Targum is,

"my Word shall not turn away, &c."

but I will put my fear in their hearts; which is not naturally in the hearts of then; and, where it is, it is put there by the grace of God, and as a blessing of the covenant; it appears in those who are brought to a true sight of sin, in their humble sense of themselves, and dependence on the Lord; and in a reverent affection for him: and in a true and spiritual worship of him; and which is a security from a final and total apostasy from him, as follows:

that they shall not depart from me; not but that they may and do sin against God; and there may be a partial departure from him in those that truly fear him; but not a wicked, final, and total one: the fear of God influences them to cleave close unto him; and the power of God keeps them from departing from him, from his doctrines, worship, and ordinances, from his people, and a profession of his name.

Jeremiah 32:41

Ver. 41. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good,.... His covenant people, to whom he gives one heart and one way, and who have his fear implanted in them, and shall never depart from him, but persevere to the end: these he loves with a love of complacency and delight; he rejoices over them, not as considered in themselves, but as in Christ; he rejoices over them, as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride; and which does not merely lie in expression, but appears in fact; he does them good, and with the utmost joy and pleasure; he delights in showing mercy to them, beautifies them with salvation, and takes pleasure in their prosperity; he has taken up good thoughts and resolutions concerning them in his heart; has promised good things to them in his covenant; has provided good things for them in his Son, and bestows them on them in regeneration; and constantly supplies them with his grace, and will withhold no good thing from them, till he has brought them to glory; all which he does cheerfully and with the utmost delight The Targum is,

"my Word shall rejoice over them;"

the essential Word, Christ; he was rejoicing in them, and his delights were with them from eternity; he rejoices over them, as his lost sheep found at conversion; and they shall be his joy and crown of rejoicing to all eternity; and it was for the joy of having them with him that he endured so much for them in the redemption of them:

and I will plant them in this land assuredly; or "in truth", or "in stability and firmness" {n}; for it does not seem so much to relate to the truth of the promise, and the assurance that may be had of the fulfilment of that, as to the reality and constancy of the blessing itself. A Gospel church state was first planted in Judea, and from thence has been spread into other parts, and has never been rooted out of the world since; and when the Jews, upon their conversion, are settled in their own land again, they will never more be removed:

with my whole heart and with my whole soul. Grotius thinks these clauses are to be connected with the former part of the verse, that God will rejoice over them to do them good with all his heart and soul; but this the accents will not admit of; but the meaning is, that he will do this particular good for them, as well as all others, in the most cordial and respectable manner, even planting and establishing them in their own land. The Targum is,

"by my Word, and by my will."

{n} tmab "in veritate", Calvin, Cocceius, Schmidt; "in terra hac firma", Junius & Tremellius; "in terra hac firma", Grotius.

Jeremiah 32:42

Ver. 42. For thus saith the Lord, like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people,.... The Chaldean army now besieging them, the famine and pestilence among them, as well as their captivity, which was just at hand and certain:

so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them; in the preceding verses; as being their God, and they his people; giving them one heart, and one way; putting his fear into them; causing them to persevere to the end: rejoicing over them to do them good; and planting them in the land. God is as faithful to his promises as to his threatenings; and those who have seen the fulfilment of the one need not doubt of the accomplishment of the other; for if he has done all the evil things he threatened to do, which are his acts of justice, his strange acts, much more will he do the good things he has promised, which are his acts of grace and mercy, in which he delights.

Jeremiah 32:43

Ver. 43. And fields shall be bought in this land,.... After the return from the Babylonish captivity, which this respects; and of which the prophet's purchasing a field of his uncle's son was a pledge and token; in doing which, as a right thing, he is confirmed; as well as the cavils and objections of the Jews removed, who thought the destruction of the city, and such a practice, irreconcilable; and, moreover, this is mentioned as a pledge, earnest, and confirmation of the fulfilment of the above spiritual promises in Gospel times; for the people being returned at the end of the seventy years' captivity, and purchasing fields and vineyards, as was predicted, it might be strongly concluded, that since those temporal blessings promised were made good, spiritual ones would certainly be fulfilled; though some understand these words, in a spiritual sense, of the field of the church; for it is in the singular number, "a field shall be bought" {o}; yea, "that field", emphatically, which was bought by the blood of Christ, and first planted in the land of Judea, as in Jer 32:41;

whereof ye say, [it is] desolate without man or beast; so wasted and destroyed by the enemy, that neither man nor beast are left, but both carried off by him; and therefore no hope of what is above promised:

it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans; they are become the possessors of it, and therefore it is all over with us as to buying and possessing fields and vineyards; but notwithstanding this diffidence and despair in the present view of things, it follows:

{o} hdvh hnqnw "et [vel] tum emetur ager", Cocceius, Schmidt; "tum comparabitur ager", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 32:44

Ver. 44. Men shall buy fields for money,.... They shall have plenty of money, and they shall lay it out in land, and carry on husbandry, cultivate the ground, which had lain long untilled, but now should be manured for public as well as private good. This some understand of particular churches planted in Judea, and out of it, throughout the whole world; and of men's gathering and joining themselves to them by a profession of that faith which is more precious than gold or silver:

and subscribe evidences, and seal [them], and take witnesses; as Jeremiah had done before, when he bought the field of his uncle's son, Jer 32:10. This is spiritually understood by some of the word of God laid hold on by faith; of the sealing of the Spirit, and of the ordinances of the Gospel:

in the land of Benjamin; where Anathoth was, and Jeremiah's field lay; and where the same should be done by others as was done by him:

and in the places about Jerusalem; in the suburbs of it, and in the villages round about it:

and in the cities of Judah; throughout the whole country, divided into the three following parts:

and in the cities of the mountains; in the hilly country of Judea, where was Hebron, and other cities, **Lu 1:39**;

and in the cities of the valley. The Septuagint retains the Hebrew word "sephela", or the plain, in which were Emmaus, Lydda, Sharon, places mentioned in the New Testament:

and in the cities of the south; or Nagab, the south part of Judea, which led to Gaza, **Ac 8:26**. This division of Judea into the mountains, valley, and south, exactly agrees with the account of it in Jos 15:21. Some understand this of the Gospel going out of Jerusalem after the day of Pentecost, not only to the places near that city, but to Samaria, and the cities of the south towards Egypt, and so into all the world:

for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord; their temporal captivity from Babylon, and their spiritual captivity from sin, Satan, and the law.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 33:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 33

This chapter is a continuation of prophecies of spiritual blessings on the church of Christ in Gospel times, of which the return of the Jews from captivity, and the benefits following on that, were types. The place where Jeremiah had this prophecy communicated to him, the prison, Jer 33:1; the author of it, Jehovah, who describes himself, Jer 33:2; encourages the prophet to pray unto him, promising an answer, and a discovery of great and hidden things, Jer 33:3; not so much concerning the destruction of the city, and the rebuilding it, Jer 33:4; as spiritual blessings to the church, signified by it; such as a healthful state and condition through Christ, the sun of righteousness, arising with healing in his wings, and a revelation of abundance of peace and truth by him, Jer 33:6; a release of captives, and a rebuilding of the church, Jer 33:7; free and full forgiveness of all sins, Jer 33:8; the church a praise in the whole earth; much joy in it, and glory to God by it, Jer 33:9; spiritual pastors or shepherds feeding their flocks, and taking very diligent care of them, Jer 33:12; a promise of the Messiah as a righteous Branch; as the Saviour and safeguard of his people; and as the Lord their righteousness, Jer 33:14; an assurance of the continuance of the kingly and priestly offices in him, whereby the covenant of God with David and the Levites would be for ever secured, Jer 33:17; and the chapter is concluded with a promise of the perseverance of the saints and people of God; which is represented as certain as the covenant with day and night, and as the ordinances of heaven and earth, in opposition to a suggestion to the contrary, Jer 33:23.

Ver. 1. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah the second time,.... Not that this was precisely the second time that the word of the Lord came to the prophet, for it had come to him many more times than those; but this was the second time on the same occasion and subject; for the subject of this chapter is the same with that of the former, concerning the Messiah, and the happiness of the church in his times:

(while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison): though the prophet could not go out from hence, and publish his prophecies, yet the Lord visits him again and again; and his presence made the prison a palace to him; and though his afflictions, abounded for the sake of him, his comforts abounded through him; and though he was bound, the word of the Lord was not; it had a free course, and ran, and was glorified; it found its way into the prison, and also out of it:

saying: as follows:

Jeremiah 33:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith the Lord, the Maker thereof,.... The Syriac version is, "that made thee"; the prophet. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are, "the Maker of the earth"; see Jer 32:17. Kimchi interprets it of Jerusalem; rather it is to be understood of the New Jerusalem, or church of God in Gospel times. Jarchi seems to understand it of this prophecy or promise, and so others; the promise of restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem; which, if taken of the church of God, may be admitted;

the Lord that formed it, to establish it; who drew the scheme and model of this spiritual building, his church, in his eternal mind, and resolved upon its stability and glory; who forms it, and everyone in it, for himself, and for his praise, in order to establish it in the world; as it will be more especially in the latter day: we often read of the Lord's establishing his church and people in the world,
Ps 48:8;

the Lord [is] his name; Jehovah, the self-existing Being, the Being of beings; who is able to perform whatever he undertakes, and so is equal to this work, of settling and establishing his interest.

Jeremiah 33:3

Ver. 3. Call unto me, and I will answer thee,.... This is spoken not to Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it; but to the prophet, encouraging him to seek the Lord by prayer, promising an answer to him. So the Targum,

"pray before me, and I will receive thy prayer:"

and show thee great and mighty things; or, "fortified ones" {p}; which are like fortified cities, that cannot easily be come at, unless the gates are opened to enter into; and designs such as are difficult of understanding, which exceed human belief, and which reason cannot comprehend and take in; and such are the great things of the Gospel. Some copies read it, "things reserved" {q}; as the Targum; and so Jarchi, who interprets it of things future, of things reserved in the heart of God, and which he purposed to do; and very rightly:

which thou knowest not; until revealed; and from hence it appears, that by these great and hidden things are not meant the destruction of Jerusalem, and the seventy years' captivity, and return from that, things which Jeremiah had been made acquainted with time after time, and had prophesied of them; but spiritual blessings hereafter mentioned, some of which the deliverance from Babylon were typical of Ben Melech interprets these of comforts great and strong.

{p} twrub "munita", Vatablus, Paganinus, Montanus; "fortia", Tigurine version. {q} twrun "abstrusa", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "recondita", so some in Vatablus.

Jeremiah 33:4

Ver. 4. For thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel,.... The destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, which was now fulfilling, is here mentioned as a pledge of the accomplishment of spiritual blessings after spoken of; and to assure the prophet, that as he would with his own eyes see the fulfilment of the prophecies he had delivered out in the name of the Lord concerning that, so likewise as certainly would the other be brought to pass:

concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, which were thrown down by the mounts, and by the sword; by "the mounts", which the Chaldeans raised without the city; or by the engines they placed there, by which they cast out stones into the city, to the demolishing of the houses in it; not in common only, but particularly the houses of the king and nobles, which they especially directed their shot at; and by "the sword", hammers, axes, and mattocks, for which sometimes this word is used, when they entered into the city. Though some render the words, "which are thrown down for mounts, and for the sword" {r}; that mounts might be made of them within, on which the Jews might fight and defend themselves against the Chaldeans. So the Targum,

"which they pulled down, and threw up mounts to strengthen the wall, against those that kill with the sword;"

and so Jarchi interprets it.

{r} brxh law twlloh la "ad aggeres et vastitatem", Tigurine version; "in missilia catapultaria, et in gladium", Junius & Tremellius; "ad catapultas, et ad gladium", so some in Calvin.

Jeremiah 33:5

Ver. 5. They come to fight with the Chaldeans,.... Either the Jews out of the country, or their auxiliaries, their neighbours, to oblige them to break up the siege; but all to no purpose: or rather the Jews within; who, from the mounts erected, fight with the Chaldeans; or by sallying out upon them:

but [it is] to fill them with the dead bodies of men; the mounts, made of their houses, or their houses themselves; it is only to make them graves, and fill them with these carcasses:

whom I have slain in mine anger, and in my fury; that is, suffered to be slain, being wroth and angry with them, for their sins, as follows:

and for all whose wickedness I have hid my face from the city; had no pity for it, showed no mercy to it, gave it no help and assistance, or protection, having withdrawn his presence from it. So the Targum,

"I have caused my Shechinah to depart from this city, because of their wickedness."

Jeremiah 33:6

Ver. 6. Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them,.... That is, the church of God, the members of it, typified by Jerusalem; and it is to be understood of the healing of their spiritual maladies, the diseases of sin, through the blood of the Messiah, who should arise with healing in his wings; that is, with remission of sin, which is often meant by healing in Scripture: Christ is the physician; his blood the balm in Gilead, which being applied to those that are diseased with sin, to sin sick souls, it makes an effectual cure of them; so that they shall not say they are sick, because their iniquities are forgiven them; see Ps 103:3;

and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth; the same with "grace and truth", which are come by Christ, **Joh 1:17**; under the Old Testament, these were figured out by types and shadows; but not revealed clearly, as under the New Testament, to which this prophecy belongs. "Peace" may intend peace made with God by the blood of Christ; peace of conscience, which he gives, and arises from a sense of pardon and atonement by his blood, and justification by his righteousness; and all kind of spiritual welfare, prosperity, and happiness; of which there will be an abundance, especially in the latter days of the Messiah, Ps 72:8. "Truth" may design the faithfulness of God, in fulfilling all his promises and prophecies concerning the Messiah, and salvation by him, and may stand opposed to the types and shadows of the old law; and include the Gospel, the word of truth, and all the doctrines of it; which are clearly and fully revealed by the spirit of truth, wisdom, and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ. Here begins the account of the great, mighty, and hidden things the Lord promised to show the prophet, Jer 33:3. The Targum of this last clause is,

"and I will reveal the gate of repentance unto them, and I will show them, how they shall walk in the way of peace and truth;"

and the Syriac version is,

"I will reveal unto them the paths of peace and faith;"

but the word here used signifies abundance, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe.

Jeremiah 33:7

Ver. 7. And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return,.... Mention being made of the return of the captivity of Israel, or the ten tribes, as well as that of Judah, shows that this prophecy does not relate to the return of the Jews from their seventy years' captivity in Babylon; but is to be understood spiritually, of a release of the mystical and spiritual Israel of God from the captivity of sin, Satan, and the law, by the Messiah:

and will build them as at the first; in the latter day, as at the beginning or first times of the Gospel; when the temple of the Lord was built by Christ, as the chief master builder, and by his apostles under him, upon himself, the foundation of the apostles and prophets; he being the corner stone of it, whereby it became a habitation for God through the Spirit. Since that time, by means of heretics and false teachers, and especially by the man of sin, the tabernacle of David, or church of Christ, is greatly fallen into ruin, and needs rebuilding and repairing; and this will be done; and then it will be a beautiful structure, as at the first, or as it was in the times of the apostles; see Ac 15:16.

Jeremiah 33:8

Ver. 8. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me,.... Even by the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, of heart, lip, and life, in allusion to the purifications under the law, **1Jo 1:7**; see Eze 36:25;

and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me; for Christ's sake, and through his stoning sacrifice, and upon the foot of full satisfaction made by him. A heap of words is here used, to express the fulness of pardoning grace through the blood of Christ, which reaches to all manner of sin; and this is the great and peculiar blessing of the new covenant; see Jer 31:34.

Jeremiah 33:9

Ver. 9. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise, and an honour,.... That is, the church and people of God, being redeemed and rebuilt by Christ, and being cleansed from their sins in his blood, and all their iniquities forgiven for his sake, would be a cause of joy to themselves and others, and bring joy, praise, and honour unto God: so the church, in the latter day, will be an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations, and a praise in the earth, Isa 60:15; and here they are said to be so,

before all the nations, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them; in redeeming them by the Messiah; calling them by his Spirit and grace; justifying them by the righteousness of Christ; pardoning their sins through his blood; making them meet for, and giving them a title to, eternal glory and happiness; all which would be made known, as it has been to the Gentiles, through the preaching of the Gospel; and which has occasioned joy and gladness among them, and praise and thanksgiving unto God, and which has redounded to his honour and glory:

and they shall fear and tremble, for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it; that is, they shall fear the Lord, and tremble at his word; not with a slavish, but filial fear, which is consistent with joy and gladness; and which fear will be influenced not by the terrors of the law, but by the goodness of God; being of the same nature with the fear of the converted Jews at the latter day, who will fear the Lord, and his goodness, **Ho 3:5**; so the Gentiles, seeing and hearing of the goodness of God bestowed upon the believing Jews, will be solicitous for the same, and be encouraged to seek after it; and finding it, shall be engaged to fear the Lord, and worship him.

Jeremiah 33:10

Ver. 10. Thus saith the Lord, again there shall be heard in this place,.... This is to be connected with the beginning of Jer 33:11; and what follows to be put in a parenthesis:

which ye say [shall be] desolate without man and without beast: as in Jer 32:43; the destruction of it being now certain and inevitable; and by which such desolation would be made throughout the country, that very few men or cattle would be left:

[even] in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate; as they were already, the country being in the hands of the enemy, and the city almost depopulated by the sword, famine, and pestilence, and just about to be delivered up: and so

without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast; neither inhabited by man or beast; which is an hyperbolical exaggeration of the miserable condition of the city, and country; expressing the unbelief and despair of the Jews, at least of some of them, ever seeing better times: whereas, be it so, that this was or would be the case; yet here should be heard again, in the times of the Messiah, when he should appear in Judea, and his Gospel be preached there, from whence it should go into all the world, what follows:

Jeremiah 33:11

Ver. 11. The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness,.... Such is the voice of the Gospel to all sensible sinners; whose eyes are opened to see their lost estate; whose ears are opened to hear the joyful sound: whose hearts are opened to attend to the things spoken in it; who are humble and contrite, wounded and broken in spirit, and have a spiritual understanding of things given them: to these the Gospel preached is glad tidings of great joy; since it contains in it the doctrines of peace and pardon through the blood of Christ; of justification through his righteousness; of rest in him, and salvation by him. It is a voice of joy and gladness to all believers in Christ; since hereby they hear of Christ whom they love; they hear of the love of God in him, and of the love of him to them; it is food to their souls; and when found, under the hearing of it, it is the joy and rejoicing of their hearts; and whereas they are continually sinning in thought, word, or deed, the doctrine of pardon must be joyful to them. Moreover, this may be meant of the voice of those that come to the church of God, with songs of joy and gladness, for electing, redeeming, calling, pardoning, and justifying grace; the voice of young converts, and of all them that rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh; see Isa 35:10; and why may not the ordinance of singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, be included? since those are enjoined to be sung, and are sung in Gospel churches, **Eph 5:19**;

the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride; which, literally understood, is expressive of great joy and happiness; as the contrary signifies great calamity and distress; see **Jer 7:34**. It may be understood of such who are in such a natural relation to one another; and yet their voice may intend their joining together in spiritual praise to God. Moreover, by the "bridegroom" may be meant Christ, who has espoused his people to himself, and is their husband, and behaves as such towards them, in all tenderness, care, love, and affection; and his voice was heard in Judea's land as the bridegroom; John heard it, and rejoiced at it, and so did many others; see **Mt 9:15** **Joh 3:29**; and the Gospel indeed is no other than his voice; and a soul quickening, soul comforting, and soul alluring, and charming voice it is. And by the "bride" may be meant the church, who is the bride, the Lamb's wife, being married to him; whose voice of prayer and praise to Christ, and of encouragement to sensible sinners, is heard in Zion, and is very desirable, **So 2:14**;

the voice of them that shall say, praise the Lord of hosts; the husband of his church, and Redeemer of his people, and who is the sovereign Lord of all; the voice of such is heard, who stir up others to this work and service, and enforce it by the reasons following:

for the Lord [is] good; originally and essentially in himself, and the fountain of goodness to others; the good Head and Husband of his church; the good Samaritan: the good Shepherd of his sheep, and Saviour of his people:

for his mercy [endureth] for ever; it is from everlasting to everlasting; in his love and pity he has redeemed his church; and this is seen in his tender care of her, and will endure to eternal life: these words seem to be taken out of Ps 106:1; and were used by the Jews at the laying of the foundation of the second temple, **Ezr 3:11**;

[and] of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord; the church of the living God, the materials of which are lively stones, or true believers in Christ; into which none should enter without an offering; and this should be a spiritual one, the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; which God has enjoined as well pleasing to him, because it glorifies him. This shows that this prophecy belongs to Gospel times; since no other sacrifice is mentioned as brought into the house of God but the sacrifice of praise. And remarkable is the note of Kimchi on this passage;

"he does not say a sin offering, or a trespass offering, because at this time there will be no ungodly persons and sinners among them, for they shall all know the Lord. And so our Rabbins of blessed memory say, all offerings shall cease in time to come (the times of the Messiah) but the sacrifice of praise;"

for I will cause to return the captivity of the land as at the first,
saith the Lord: a release from spiritual captivity, or redemption by Christ; being the foundation of all solid joy, praise, and thanksgiving.

Jeremiah 33:12

Ver. 12. Thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... Which phrase, or what is answerable to it, is often repeated, to give authority to what is said, and to command a belief of it:

again, in this place which is desolate; which was said to be so, Jer 33:10; and indeed was so; and was near utter destruction, as to be

without man and without beast; both falling into the hands of the enemy; and that not in the city of Jerusalem only, but

in all the cities thereof; of the land of Judea; and from thence in other countries, even in Gentile ones:

shall be an habitation of shepherds, causing [their] flocks to lie down; which is expressive of great peace, no foreign enemy to make afraid or disturb the shepherds and their flocks; and of diligence and industry, plenty and prosperity; though this is to be understood not in a literal, but mystical sense. For by "shepherds" are meant the apostles of Christ, the first ministers of the Gospel, and pastors of churches, that should be first raised up in the land of Judea, and then sent into and spread in all the world; shepherds under Christ, of his raising, qualifying, and calling; to whom he gives a commission to feed his sheep and lambs; assigns them their distinct flocks, and gives them food to feed them with, and to whom they are accountable for those under their care, and the gifts bestowed upon them; and whose business lies in feeding the flock with the solid doctrines of the Gospel, by faithfully administering the ordinances, and in all directing to Christ, where they may find pasture; as also in ruling and governing according to the laws of Christ; in watching over the sheep that they go not astray, and in protecting and defending them from beasts of prey. By the "habitation" of these shepherds is meant the house of God, where the word is preached, and ordinances are administered; here are the shepherds' tents, which, like the tents of Kedar, which were shepherds' tents also, are mean and coarse without, but rich and beautiful within; and are like tents, movable from place to place; and it is the glory and happiness of a country where they are. And by "flocks", or "flock", for it is in the singular number, are meant the church of Christ, which is but one, the general assembly and church of the firstborn written in heaven, and the several particular congregated churches; consisting of such persons as may be compared to sheep, being weak and timorous, meek and humble, harmless and inoffensive; of persons gathered out of the world, distinguished by the grace of God, and folded together in a Gospel church state; though but few, and despised of men, and persecuted, a little flock, and a flock of slaughter: these, by their shepherds, are made "to lie down" in a good fold at night, where they are safe and secure; these shepherds watch over them; angels encamp about them; salvation is walls and bulwarks to them; and God himself a wall of fire around them; and in the day they are made to lie down in the green pastures of the word and ordinances, where they have an abundance, a sufficiency of provisions; and at noon under the shadow of Christ, where they have rest, and where they are screened and sheltered from the heat of a fiery law, of Satan's fiery darts, and of the world's persecution.

Jeremiah 33:13

Ver. 13. In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south,.... Into which three parts the land of Judea was divided; See Gill on "Jer 32:44";

and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah; in the cities of the two tribes, of which Jerusalem was the metropolis; and which returned from the captivity, and settled here, and were in being when the Messiah came, here prophesied of, the great Shepherd of the sheep:

shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telleth [them], saith the Lord; alluding to the custom of shepherds telling their flocks, when they led them out of the fold in the morning, and when they put them in at evening {s}; or to the tithing of them, Le 27:32; this is not to be understood literally, but mystically. So Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel interpret it of the Israelites going in and out under the hands of their king, that goes at the head of them; and the Targum, of the King Messiah, and who is no doubt meant. The elect of God, who are intended by the "flocks", were in eternal election considered as sheep, and by that act of grace were distinguished from others; and so when an exact account was taken of them, their names were written in heaven, and in the Lamb's book of life; and had this seal and mark put upon them, "the Lord knows them that are his", **2Ti 2:19**; also in the gift of them to Christ; in the covenant of grace, when they were brought into the bond of that covenant, they were likewise considered as sheep, distinct from others; and were told into the hands of Christ, where they are kept, and who has a most perfect knowledge of them; and in the effectual calling they will again pass under his hands; they are then as sheep that had gone astray, returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls; and when they are separated from others, and special knowledge is taken of them, and Christ's mark, the sanctification of the Spirit, is put upon them; and at the last day, when Christ shall deliver them up to the Father, he will say, lo, I and the children, or sheep, whom thou hast given me; and they will all be numbered, and not one will be wanting.

{s} "Bisque die numerant, alter pecus, alter et haedos". Virgil.

Jeremiah 33:14

Ver. 14. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,.... Or, "are coming" {t}; future times are respected; yet such as would quickly come; five or six hundred years more, and then would be fulfilled what is after promised. This is ushered in with a "behold", as being a matter of importance, and deserving attention, and even as calling for admiration. This is the principal of the great and mighty things the Lord promised to show to the prophet, Jer 33:3; even the coming of the Messiah, and what concerns his person and office:

that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah; or, "that good word" {u}; that gracious word concerning Christ and salvation by him; that mercy promised to the fathers; that good thing that came out of Nazareth: the good Shepherd that laid down his life for the sheep, preferable to the shepherds before spoken of: or rather, "that best word" {w}; the positive used for the superlative, as frequent in the Hebrew language. Many good words or promises are made before, concerning the spiritual welfare and prosperity of the church; but this is the best of all; this is the better thing provided for saints under the Gospel dispensation, and promised to them, who are meant by the houses of Judah and Israel; for these phrases, as the Jews themselves allow, show that the words belong to the times of the Messiah; and which God, that is true and cannot lie, and who is faithful, that has promised, and is able to perform, will do.

{t} Myab "venientes", Montanus, Schmidt. {u} bwjh rbdh "verbum bonum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius. {w} "Verbum optimum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 33:15

Ver. 15. In those days, and at that time,.... In those very selfsame days before spoken of; in those days to come, and which were hastening on; in the fulness of time, agreed on between Jehovah and his Son; the appointed, fixed, determined time:

will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; not Zerubbabel, but the Messiah; who is not only a branch of David's family, and therefore said to grow up unto him, being of his seed, his son, and offspring; but a Branch of righteousness, or a righteous Branch; perfectly righteous in himself, and the author of righteousness unto others; which cannot be said of Zerubbabel, or of any other branch springing from David but the Messiah; and of him the Targum interprets it, paraphrasing it thus,

"the Messiah of righteousness;"

and Kimchi's note is,

"this is the King Messiah;"

and so it is by other Jewish writers {x} interpreted of him:

and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land; judgment upon the blind Pharisees given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart; and upon the world, and the prince of it, who was cast out by him; and though he came not at first to judge the world and all the individuals of it, as he will do at his second coming; yet all judgment, rule, and government of his church, is committed to him by his Father; and he is on the throne to order and establish it with judgment, and to overrule all things for the good of it, and his own and his Father's glory: and he has "wrought" out an everlasting "righteousness", agreeably to law and justice, for the justification of his people; for which reason he and they have the name in Jer 33:16.

{x} Abarbinel, Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 40. 2.

Jeremiah 33:16

Ver. 16. In those days shall Judah be saved,.... The elect of God among the Jews; and all such who are Jews inwardly, who truly believe in Christ, and confess his name, and praise him, and give him the glory or salvation. Judah signifies one that confesses or praises the Lord; such shall be saved from sin, Satan, the law, wrath, hell, and damnation, by the Branch of righteousness, the Messiah; who was raised up and sent to be a Saviour; came into the world for this purpose; has obtained salvation for his people; is the Captain and author of it; nor is it in any other; hence his name is called Jesus; and this salvation is to be had from him at all times; as in those days in which it was first wrought out, so throughout the whole Gospel dispensation: for "now is the day of salvation", **2Co 6:2**; and indeed this is to be understood, not as exclusive of the Old Testament dispensation, when believers were saved by the same Lord Jesus as we are; only this is expressive of the impetration of this salvation by the incarnate Saviour; and of the more clear discovery and revelation of it; and of the application of it to a greater number of persons; and which is sure to all the spiritual seed of Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, who "shall be saved" with an everlasting salvation: it is not said they "may" be saved, but they "shall" be saved; not may be saved if they will; or, however, this is not left on such a precarious footing; but they are made willing to be saved by Christ in the day of his power, yea, they are already saved:

and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; the inhabitants of it; such who are come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; these being saved by Christ, are in the utmost safety; they have nothing to fear from the justice of God, that is satisfied; nor from the law, that is fulfilled; nor from their enemies, they are conquered and destroyed; God is pacified towards them; is the God of peace with them; and they have peace with him, and enjoy great serenity and tranquillity of mind; and must needs dwell safely, since Jehovah is around them as the mountains around Jerusalem; Christ is their strong hold, into which they run and are safe; the Holy Spirit within them is greater and mightier than their enemies in the world; angels encamp about them, and salvation is walls and bulwarks to them:

and this [is the name] wherewith she shall be called, the Lord our righteousness; the same with the Messiah's name, Jer 23:6; he is Jehovah; and he is our righteousness; the author of it, by his obedience, sufferings, and death; and which becomes ours by being wrought out for us, bestowed on us, imputed and applied to us. The Targum renders it here, as in the other place,

"this is the name wherewith they shall call him;"

and so the Vulgate Latin version; but this is contrary to the Hebrew text, which has "her", and not "him". R. Joseph Kimchi reads it, "and this who calls her

[is] the Lord our righteousness"; which is followed by some Christian writers {y}. Some interpret it, who calls her by his Gospel to the salvation promised and performed; others, who calls her to dwell safely; others render it, "this [is the name] with which he [the Lord] shall call him, for her", for the sake of the church, the Lord our righteousness {z}; but David Kimchi and Ben Melech take the sense to be this,

"the holy blessed God shall call Jerusalem the Lord our righteousness;"

and certain it is that this is the name imposed on the church here meant, as Hephzibah and Beulah, in Isa 62:4; and why may she not be as well called "Jehovah Tzidhenu", the Lord our righteousness, as "Jehovah Shammah", the Lord is there? Eze 48:35. She is called "Jehovah", not as deified by him, but as united to him; and our "righteousness", as justified by him. Christ and his church are one, as head and members are; and therefore are called by the same name: hence the church is called Christ, 1Co 12:12; they are in a marriage relation; Christ is the husband, and the church is his spouse; and as husband and wife bear the same name, so do Christ and his church; moreover, not only Christ is made righteousness to his people, but they are made the righteousness of God in him; his righteousness is put upon them, and imputed to them, so that they are righteous as he is righteous, **1Co 1:30**.

{y} wnqdu hwhy wl arqy rva hzw "et iste qui vocabit eam [est] Dominus nostra justitia", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "hic est ille qui vocabit eam, [ad se], Jehova justitia nostra", Gussetius. {z} "Et hoc est [nomen] quo vocabit [eum] ille, Jehovah nostra justitia". So some in Vatablus.

Jeremiah 33:17

Ver. 17. For thus saith the Lord,.... Confirming the above promise concerning the Messiah; giving a reason why his coming may be expected; and why the salvation, justification, and final perseverance of his church and people, are certain things, and to be depended upon:

David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; or, "there shall not be cut off unto David a man" {a}; and this is not to be understood of the temporal kingdom of David, which has been at an end long ago: Jeconiah, that was carried captive into Babylon, was written childless, and left no issue; and Zerubbabel, the only one of David's seed that made any figure after the captivity, was not a king; this is only true of the man Christ Jesus, of the seed of David, and is his son, to whom has been given the throne of his father David; and who reigns over the house of Jacob for ever; and of whose kingdom there is no end, **Lu 1:32**; and as long as he is King of saints, which will be for ever, David will not want a man to sit upon his throne. David's earthly kingdom was but a typical and shadowy one; a type of Christ's spiritual kingdom, which has succeeded it, and in which Christ is David's son and successor, and whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

{a} vya dwdl trky al "non exscindetur Davidi vir", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 33:18

Ver. 18. Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me,.... The Levitical priesthood has been abolished long ago; that was typical of Christ's priesthood, and is succeeded by it; who is a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek; and who, having offered up himself a sacrifice here on earth for his people, ever appears in heaven, in the presence of God, on their behalf, making intercession for them; and as long as he continues to do so, which will be always, a man shall not be wanting before the Lord:

to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually; that is, to present that sacrifice before him, and plead the efficacy and virtue of it with him, which was typified by all those sacrifices, and has superseded them, being much better than they. Some understand this of a continuance of Gospel ministers unto the end of the world, who succeeded the priests and Levites; but as they are never called priests and Levites in the New Testament; nor were they properly the successors of the priests and Levites; rather it may be applied unto all believers now, who are priests unto God, and offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ; but the first sense is best.

Jeremiah 33:19

Ver. 19. And the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah,.... For the further explanation and confirmation of what is before said; and which came at the same time as the other; this being not a new prophecy, but an illustration of the former:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 33:20

Ver. 20. Thus saith the Lord, if you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night,.... The same with the ordinances of the sun, moon, and stars, Jer 31:35; the original constitution and law of nature, settled from the beginning of the world, and observed ever since, in the constant revolution of day and night; and which was formed into a covenant and promise to Noah, after the deluge, that day and night should not cease, as long as the earth remained, **Ge 8:22**; and which has never been, nor can be, broken and made void: so

that there should not be day and night in their season; or turn; continually succeeding each other: this, as it would not be attempted, so could never be effected by any mortals, if it were.

Jeremiah 33:21

Ver. 21. [Then] may also my covenant be broken with David my servant,.... A type of the Messiah, with whom the covenant of grace is made, stands fast, and will never be broken; see Ps 89:3; for, as the other is impossible, the breaking of the covenant with day and night, or hindering the certain rotation of them; so likewise as impossible is the breaking of the covenant with David concerning the perpetuity of his kingdom in the Messiah:

that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; which he has in Christ, and ever will have; for he shall reign for ever and ever:

and with the Levites my priests, my ministers; of the line of Phinehas, to whom an everlasting priesthood was promised, and which has been fulfilled in Christ, who has an unchangeable priesthood; a priesthood that will never pass from him, and go to another; see Nu 25:13 **Heb 7:24**.

Jeremiah 33:22

Ver. 22. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured,.... As the stars of heaven are innumerable, and the sand of the sea immeasurable:

so will I multiply the seed of David my servant; the Messiah; the son and antitype of David; and who is often called by his name; and as the son of David is the servant of the Lord, his spiritual seed are meant, which shall endure for ever; and in Gospel times, especially in the latter part of them, shall be very numerous; see Ps 89:29;

and the Levites that minister unto me; meaning the same as before; not ministers of the Gospel, for they never were, or will be, so numerous as here expressed; but true believers in Christ, who are all priests unto God, and minister in holy things, offering up the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise through Christ: these Levites are the same with the seed of David, or Christ, in whom the kingdom and the priesthood are united.

Jeremiah 33:23

Ver. 23. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah,.... Upon the same subject, concerning the continuance of David's seed; with a refutation of a calumny uttered against the Lord about the rejection of them:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 33:24

Ver. 24. Considerest thou not what this people have spoken,.... The words are directed to the prophet by an interrogation, if he had not considered in his mind what he heard the people say; not the Chaldeans, with whom the prophet was not; but the unbelieving Jews, either the profane part of them, who had a wicked view in it, to accuse God, and discourage the godly; or the weaker sort of the good people, indulging unbelief and despondency:

saying, the two families which the Lord had chosen, he hath even cast them off? the kingdom and the priesthood, as Jarchi; the family of David and the family of Aaron, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; the, one with respect to the kingdom, and the other with respect to the priesthood; so Abarbinel, which seems right: though some interpret it of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah; and others of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; but since the covenant with David, and with the priests, are before spoken of, and the seed of David afterwards, it seems rather to regard the two houses of David and Aaron, which the Lord chose for the kingdom and priesthood to continue in; but by the captivity of the royal family, and of the priests in Babylon, just now about to take place, it was suggested that both were cast off by the Lord, and that there would be no more kings out of the one, nor priests out of the other:

thus they have despised my people: as being rejected of God, whom he would never more regard or restore to their former condition in church and state; so giving them up for lost, that they would be no more a nation and church, having kings to reign over them, or priests to minister for them:

that they should be no more a nation before them; either before their kings and priests, or in the sight of those persons who spoke the words before related.

Jeremiah 33:25

Ver. 25. Thus saith the Lord,.... In answer to the above calumny:

if my covenant [be] not with day and night; that is, if it should not stand; if it should be broken; or there should be no longer a succession of day and night:

[and if] I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; concerning the course of the sun, moon, and stars, and the influence of the heavenly bodies; and concerning the fruits of the earth, the seasons of the year, seedtime and harvest, summer and winter; if these are not settled and fixed, and do not appear according to appointment and promise.

Jeremiah 33:26

Ver. 26. Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant,.... R. Jonah thinks that Jacob is put instead of Aaron, because of the two families of David and Aaron before mentioned; but in this latter part of the chapter no mention is made of priests at all; and by the "seed" is meant one and the same, the spiritual seed of Christ, the antitypical David, and servant of the Lord; and which are no other than the seed of Jacob, over whom the Messiah reigns; or the spiritual Israel of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, and whom the Lord never casts away, so as to perish; but they shall all be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: See Gill on "Jer 31:37"; and even the seed of Jacob, and of David, who was of Jacob, in the line of Judah, shall not be in such sense rejected:

[so] that I will not take [any] of his seed [to be] rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that is, any of the seed of David taken literally; from whom the Lord has taken one, or raised up one of his seed, even the Messiah, to be a ruler over all the spiritual seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; or of all that tread in their steps: but inasmuch as by the seed of Jacob and David may be meant the spiritual seed of Christ, by rulers taken from them may be intended spiritual rulers and governors of the church, or ministers of the Gospel:

for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them; not only their captivity from Babylon, and so the family of David restored and continued till the Messiah should spring out of it; but the spiritual captivity of the Israel of God, of which the other was a type, and would be brought about by the Messiah; who in his love and pity should redeem them, as he has, from sin, Satan, law, hell, and death.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 34:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 34

In this chapter is a prophecy of the taking and burning of Jerusalem; of the captivity of Zedekiah king of Judah; and of the destruction of the whole land, because of their breach of covenant to let servants go free. The time of this prophecy is observed, Jer 34:1; the taking and burning of the city, Jer 34:2; the carrying captive the king, who yet should not die a violent death, but in peace, and should have an honourable funeral, Jer 34:3; the covenant the king, princes, and people entered into, to let their servants go free, according to the law of God, which was at first observed, and afterwards retracted, Jer 34:8; which conduct is taken notice of and resented, Jer 34:13; and they are threatened with the sore judgments of God, sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity, the king, princes, priests, and people; and with the destruction, not on of Jerusalem, but of the rest of the cities of Judah, Jer 34:17.

Ver. 1. The word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord,.... This prophecy came to Jeremiah, and was delivered by him, when he was at liberty, and before his imprisonment, and was the occasion of it, as appears from Jer 32:2; compared with Jer 34:2; the prophecies not standing in the proper order in which they were given out; for the prophecy, in this first part of the chapter at least, was delivered out before that in the thirty second chapter:

when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem; when this mighty monarch appeared before Jerusalem with a numerous army, consisting of Chaldeans, the natives of his own kingdom, and with the auxiliary troops of each the kingdoms he had subdued and made tributary to him, even people of almost every nation under the heavens; and invested it, and laid siege to it, and lay against it:

and against all the cities thereof; the rest of the cities of Judah, which were as daughters of Jerusalem, the metropolis or mother city:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 34:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel,.... Who, though the covenant God of Israel, yet provoked by their sins, sends the following message to their king:

go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him: alone; and tell it to no other but him, at least at present; the message being more peculiar to him, and must, had it been told to the people, been very disheartening to them:

behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon,
and he shall burn it with fire; see Jer 32:3; which was exactly accomplished, Jer 52:13.

Jeremiah 34:3

Ver. 3. And thou shalt not escape out of his hand,.... Though he would, and did attempt to do it, Jer 52:8;

but shall surely be taken, and delivered into his hand; he was taken on the plains of Jericho, and delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon at Riblah; as may be seen in the place just referred to:

and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon; and that was all; for they were quickly put out by him:

and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon; see Jer 32:3.

Jeremiah 34:4

Ver. 4. Yet hear the word of the Lord, O Zedekiah king of Judah,.... Which, though a king, he ought to hearken to; and, besides, what follows was for comfort, being a mitigation of his sentence, and containing in it mercy, as well as judgment:

thus saith the Lord of thee, thou shalt not die by the sword: of the king of Babylon; or a violent death; and therefore fear not to deliver up thyself and city into his hands; which he might be twelfth to do, fearing he would put him to death immediately.

Jeremiah 34:5

Ver. 5. [But] thou shall die in peace,.... Upon his bed, a natural death, and in good friendship with the king of Babylon; and, it may be, in peace with God; for before his death, some time in his captivity, he might be brought to true repentance for his sins:

and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings which were before thee: so shall they burn [odours] for thee. The sense is, that he should have an honourable burial; and that sweet odours and spices should be burned for him, as were for the kings of Judah his predecessors, particularly Asa, 2Ch 16:14. Josephus says {b}, that Nebuchadnezzar buried him in a royal manner; though this seems to refer to what the people of the Jews in Babylon would do in honour of him, by burning for him. The Rabbins say, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech observe, that they burned their beds and ministering vessels, or household goods {c}, as was usual on such occasions. The Talmudist {d} a say, all this honour was done him for that single act of ordering Jeremiah to be taken out of the dungeon; for this was done honour to persons: so, when

Gamaliel the elder died, Onkelos the proselyte burned for him seventy Tyrian pounds {e}; not such a quantity of money, but goods that were worth so much; and this was a custom with the Heathens, who used to burn the bodies of the dead, to burn their garments with them, and their armour, and whatever were valuable and esteemed of by them life; and particularly odoriferous things, as frankincense, saffron, myrrh, spikenard, cassia, and cinnamon {f}; and which seem to be meant here, by comparing the passage with the case of Asa before mentioned; for though the word "odours" is not in the text, it seems rightly enough supplied by us, as it is by other interpreters {g}. The Vulgate Latin version very wrongly translates it, "and shall burn thee"; for it was not the manner of the Jews to burn the bodies of the dead, but to inter them in the earth; and so Tacitus {h} observes, it was the custom of the Jews not to burn, but after the manner of the Egyptians to bury in the earth nor does it appear to have been the custom of the Babylonians or Chaldeans, as should seem from the account that is given of the death and burial of the Babylonian monarch in Isa 14:4;

and they will lament, [saying], Ah lord! alas! our lord the king is dead. The form of lamentation said over him, as the Jews record {i}, was,

"alas! King Zedekiah, who is dead, drank the dregs of all ages;"

was punished for the sins of men in all generations past:

for I have pronounced the word, saith the Lord; both that which respects his captivity, and that which refers to his death; the manner of it, and his honourable interment, which shall be accomplished.

{b} Antiqu. Jud. l. 10. c. 8. sect. 7. {c} Vid. T. Avoda Zara, fol. 11. 1. {d} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 28. 2. {e} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 11. 1. {f} Vid. Kirehman. de Fuuer. Roman. l. 3. c. 5. {g} "Sub. myropolae", Munster; "aromata odorata, sive res odoriferas", Vatablus; "ustiones odorum", Junius & Tremellius. {h} Histor. l. 5. c. 5. {i} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 28. p. 81.

Jeremiah 34:6

Ver. 6. Then Jeremiah the prophet spake all these words,.... The threatening, as well as the consolatory ones; he kept back no part of the message he was sent with, but faithfully delivered the whole:

unto Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem; though he knew it would displease him, and bring himself into trouble, as it did; for upon this he was put into prison.

Jeremiah 34:7

Ver. 7. When the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem,.... Had laid close siege to it, and still continued it:

and against all the cities of Judah that were left; unconquered by him; when he invaded the land, he fought against, and took, and ravished all the cities that lay in his way; and it seems there were none that stood out against him but Jerusalem, now besieged by him, and two others, next mentioned:

against Lachish, and against Azekah; for these defenced cities remained of the cities of Judah; two cities that had been fortified by Rehoboam, 2Ch 11:9; and were the only ones besides Jerusalem, which as yet had not fallen into the hands of the king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 34:8

Ver. 8. [This is] the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord,.... Here begins a new prophecy, which was delivered some time after the former; that was given out while the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem; this after he had quitted the siege for a while, and was gone to meet the king of Egypt, who was coming to the relief of the city, as appears from Jer 34:21; though the Jews {k} say this was delivered in the seventh year of Zedekiah, in the first month, and tenth day of the month; at the same time that the elders of Israel came to Ezekiel, to inquire of the Lord by him, Eze 20:1; which was two years before the king of Babylon came against Jerusalem; but this seems not likely. It is said to be

after that the King Zedekiah made a covenant with all the people that [were] at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them; not unto the people, or to themselves, the king and the people; unless the sense is, that the king and the people entered into an agreement among themselves to make proclamation, that liberty would be granted by them to their servants; for the liberty proclaimed was to the servants, and not to them. This seems to confirm it, that it was while the city was besieged that this covenant was made; since it was made only with the people at Jerusalem, which were pent up in it; for otherwise it would in all probability have been made with all the people of the land; and seems to have been done with this view, to obtain this favour of the Lord, that they might gain their freedom from the enemy, and come not under the yoke and into the servitude of the king of Babylon: and very probable it is that they did not do this of their own accord, but were exhorted to it by Jeremiah; who perhaps, among other sins, had reproved them for the breach of the law respecting the liberty of servants.

{k} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 26. p. 74.

Jeremiah 34:9

Ver. 9. That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, [being] an Hebrew, or an Hebrewess, go free,.... This is the proclamation that was agreed to be made, that every manservant and maidservant, that serve six years an apprenticeship, should be freed from their servitude, according to the law in Ex 21:1; a law founded upon justice and equity, mercy and compassion; done for the honour of the Jewish nation, that they might be a free people, and in commemoration of their deliverance from their servitude in Egypt. This law, as it seems, had been long neglected, and servants had been retained in bondage beyond their due time, through the oppression and covetousness of their masters, and the neglect of the civil magistrates; who should have took care that such a law was put in execution, and that servants were not oppressed. Some have thought that it was at the beginning of the sabbatical year that this proclamation was made, when, according to the law, there should be a release of servants, De 15:1; but that was not a release of servants, but of debts; for if a servant had not served out his time, the sabbatical year, or year of release, did not discharge him; though the year of jubilee did, according to Maimonides {l}, who says,

"if the year of release happens in any of the six years, he (the servant) serves in it; but if the year of jubilee happens within the time, even though he has been sold but one year before it, he is free;"

that none should serve himself of them, [to wit], of a Jew his brother; or cause them to serve him, oblige them against their will to continue in his service; or by any means avail himself of them, and receive to himself any profit or advantage by their service, they being Jews and brethren; which seems to be added, both as the reason of the law, because they were brethren of the same nation and religion with them, and to distinguish them from other servants, who notwithstanding this law might be retained as such.

{l} Hilchot Abadim, c. 2. sect. 2.

Jeremiah 34:10

Ver. 10. Now when all the princes, and all the people, which had entered into the covenant,.... The king had made with the people. Here the princes are mentioned, who were not before, but included in the people; they and the rest of the people are here meant, who having agreed to the covenant,

heard that everyone should let his manservant, and everyone his maidservant, go free, that none should serve themselves of them any more; or any longer, which they had done, contrary to law: when they understood that this was the sum of the covenant they had entered into, and this the intent of the proclamation they agreed unto; or when they heard the law read and explained by the prophet, concerning the manumission of the Hebrew servants, when the time of their servitude was expired,

then they obeyed, and let [them] go; dismissed them from their service, in obedience to the law of God, agreeably to their own covenant, and the proclamation of liberty they assented to. The whole might be rendered thus, "and all the princes and all the people obeyed, which had entered into the covenant, to let everyone his manservant, and everyone his maidservant, go free, not to serve themselves of them any more, and they obeyed, [I say], to let [them] go"; so far they did well, and were praiseworthy, that they kept the law of God, and their own covenant.

Jeremiah 34:11

Ver. 11. But afterwards they turned,.... From the law of God, and their own agreement, and returned to their former usage of their servants; they changed their minds and measures. This seems to be done, when the king of Babylon, hearing the king of Egypt was coming to break up the siege of Jerusalem, quitted it, and went forth to meet him, as appears from Jer 34:21; the Jews now finding themselves at liberty, and out of danger as they imagined, wickedly rebelled against the law of God; perfidiously broke their own covenant, repenting of what they had done, and returned to their former ways of oppression and cruelty; which shows they were not hearty and sincere in their covenant:

and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids; which was done by force, contrary to the will of their servants and handmaids, and in violation of the law of God, and their own solemn oath and covenant.

Jeremiah 34:12

Ver. 12. Therefore the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah from the Lord,.... The word of Jehovah the Son, from Jehovah the Father, because of this transgression of the princes and people, and as soon as it was committed by them; for it is plain, from Jer 34:21, that it was before the Chaldean army returned to Jerusalem, after its departure from it:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 34:13

Ver. 13. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel,.... The covenant God of Israel, their Creator, Redeemer, and Benefactor:

I made a covenant with your fathers; gave them a system of laws, among which was that of release of servants:

in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt; that is, at that time, quickly after, when they were come to Mount Sinai; this shows what fathers are meant, the Jewish ancestors that came out of Egypt, brought from thence by the mighty hand of God, and indulged with many favours by him, both in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan, where he brought and settled them:

out of the house of bondmen; where they were bondmen, servants, and slaves: this is mentioned, to put them in mind of their former state and condition; to observe unto them the foundation and ground of the law concerning servants, how equitable and merciful it was, and to aggravate their sin; who though their fathers had been bondmen, and they must have been so too, had they not been released, yet acted such a cruel part to their servants, who were their brethren, in not discharging them in due time:

saying; giving out the following law, as a part of the covenant made with their fathers.

Jeremiah 34:14

Ver. 14. At the end of seven years,.... Not when seven years were elapsed and fully completed; but within the compass of seven years, or as soon as the seventh year was began; for this term of seven years is the term of the seventh year coming in, and not going out, as appears from the law itself, Ex 21:9; and from an after clause in this verse, "when he hath served thee six years"; at the end of which, and the beginning of the seventh: and so Maimonides {m} interprets this law,

"he whom the sanhedrim sold served six years from the day of his sale, and at the beginning of the seventh year he was free:"

though the Vulgate Latin version very wrongly renders it, "when seven years are completed"; which version Sanctius takes a good deal of pains to reconcile to the original law. A Hebrew might sell himself for more years than six; he might sell himself for ten or twelve, as the above Jewish writer says, and nothing could release him but the year of jubilee; and that would do it, if he had served but one year {n};

let ye go every man his brother, an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; or, "hath sold himself unto thee" {o}; to be a servant; for money was not given with apprentices to their masters, as is usual with us; but masters gave money for their servants, and bought them either of themselves, or of the magistrates; hence it is said, "if thou buy an Hebrew servant", &c. Ex 21:2. A Hebrew servant was sold either against his will, or with it; if a man committed a theft, and he had not wherewith to make restoration, the sanhedrim or magistrates said him: if he was exceeding poor, the law gave him liberty to sell himself; but he might not sell himself as long as he had anything left, even a covering; and after that was gone, he might sell himself; and he was bought with silver or the value of silver or by contract or bond {p};

and when he hath served thee six years, thou shall let him go free from thee; or "from with thee" {q}; from being with thee, from being in thy house, as well as from being in thy service; he was to be dismissed, so as to go where he pleased, and work for himself, or another, as he thought fit;

but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear; to obey the laws of God, and particularly this concerning servants. This is not to be understood of the fathers with whom the covenant was first made, and to whom this law was first given; but their posterity in later times, who yet lived long before the present generation, and so might with great propriety be called their fathers; and by which it appears that this law had been long neglected.

{m} Hilchot Abadim, c. 2. sect. 2. {n} Ibid. {o} Kl rkmy "se ventdiderit tibi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {p} Hilchot Abadim, c. 1. sect. 1, 2. & c. 2. sect. 1. {q} Kmem "acuta te", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 34:15

Ver. 15. And ye were now turned,.... Or, "today indeed ye were turned" {r} some little time ago, indeed, it must be owned, that ye turned from the evil ways of your fathers, for which you were to be commended, as having acted a better part than they:

and had done right in my sight; what was acceptable to the Lord, approved of by him, being agreeably to his law; and it would have been well if they had continued so doing:

in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; for a manservant, or maidservant, was his neighbour, and to be treated as such, and loved as himself, especially a Hebrew one, of the same nation and religion; and not to be used as a slave, or retained for ever in bondage:

and ye made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name; this circumstance is mentioned as an aggravation of the breach of the covenant they had made, to dismiss their servants according to law; it was made in a very solemn manner, in the presence of God, appealing to him as a witness; it was done in the temple, a sacred place, devoted to him and his worship; which was called by his name, the temple of the Lord, and where his name was called upon, and where were the symbols of his presence.

{r} Mwyh Mta wbvtw "jam, [vel] et quidem conversi fuistis hodie", Schmidt;

"reversi quidem vos hodie", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 34:16

Ver. 16. But ye turned and polluted my name,.... Changed their minds, and turned from their resolutions they had entered into, and the good ways they were walking in, and returned to their former evil practices; and so polluted the name of God by taking it in vain, and breaking the covenant they had agreed to:

and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom he had set at liberty at pleasure: or, "according to their soul" {s}; according to their souls' desire, what was very agreeable and acceptable to them, and gave them a real pleasure; which did not last long, since they caused them

to return to their former service and bondage under them:

and brought them into subjection: forced them to come back to their houses, and into their service, and be subject to them, and obey their commands as formerly:

to be unto you for servants and for handmaids; to do the business of such, as they had done before.

{s} Mvpnl "in animam suam", Pagninus, Montanus; "secundum animam eorum", Piscator; "ad desideriurn suum", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 34:17

Ver. 17. Therefore thus saith the Lord,.... This being the case, and this their crime, which was provoking to the Lord;

ye have not hearkened unto me in proclaiming liberty everyone to his brother, and everyone to his neighbour; for though they did proclaim liberty, they did not act according to it; they did not give the liberty they proclaimed, at least they did not continue so to do; as soon almost as they had granted the favour, they took it away again; and because they did not persevere in well doing, it is reckoned by the Lord as not done at all:

behold, I proclaim liberty for you, saith the Lord; or rather against them; he dismissed them from his service, care, and protection, and consigned them to other lords and masters: he gave them up

to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; to rule over them; and gave them liberty to make havoc of them, and destroy them, that what was left by the one might be seized on by the other:

and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth: or, "for a commotion" {t}; to be moved, and wander from place to place in great fear and terror, not knowing where to settle or live comfortably. This was a liberty to go about in foreign countries where they could, for relief and shelter, being banished from their own land; but this was a liberty very miserable and uncomfortable; and indeed no other than captivity and bondage; and so it is threatened that what remained of them, who were not destroyed with the sword of the Chaldeans, or perished not by pestilence and famine, should be carried captive, and be miserable vagabonds in each of the kingdoms and nations of the world.

{t} hewzl "in commotionem", Vatablus, Cocceius, Schmidt, "commotioni", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 34:18

Ver. 18. And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant,.... The covenant the king, princes, and all the people made, to let their servants go free, is called the Lord's covenant, because made in his name, in his presence, and before him as a witness; and very probably the calf that was cut in pieces on this occasion, after mentioned, was sacrificed to him, which made him a party concerned; unless this is to be understood of the covenant of God in general made with Israel on Mount Sinai; and so is distinct from the other covenant, which may be more especially designed in the next clause:

which have not performed the words of the covenant made before me; did not perform what they promised to do in the presence of the Lord, as in
Jer 34:15;

when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof; which was a rite or custom used in making and confirming covenants; a calf, or some other creature, were cut in pieces, and the parts laid in order, and the covenantees passed between these parts; signifying thereby, that if they did not fulfil the engagements they entered into, they imprecated to be cut to pieces as that creature was. Some footsteps of this practice are to be seen as early as the times of Abraham, Ge 15:9; upon which place Jarchi observes, that it was the way of making a covenant to divide a beast, and pass between the parts of it; and this custom obtained among the Chaldeans, Greeks, and Romans; or what was very similar to it. Cyril {u} says this custom was by the Chaldeans, who might take it from Abraham. A people called Molotti had something of this kind among them: for they confirmed the covenants they swore to by cutting oxen into little pieces {w}; and Homer seems to have a respect to such a practice when he says that the priest, after he had prayed to Apollo, slew the sacrifice, and flayed it, and cut it in pieces, making duplicates {x}, alike to one another. Cicero {y} is thought to have the same custom in view; and likewise Virgil {z}, when he speaks of the covenant made between Romulus and Tatius king of the Sabines, whom he represents as standing armed before the altar of Jupiter, holding caps, and joining in covenant by killing a swine, and cutting it in pieces; in like manner Livy {a} describes the covenant made between the Romans and Albanians, when the herald at arms, reciting the conditions, called aloud

""hear, O Jupiter", &c."

if the Roman people first fail in observing these,

"strike them as I now strike this hog; and so much the more, as thou art more able and mighty;"

which being said, he struck it with a flint stone; hence the phrase, "ferire foedus", to strike or make a covenant; and, in allusion to the above custom, making a covenant is commonly called, in the Old Testament, "cutting a covenant". Some versions, as the Syriac interpreter, render it, "I will make the men as the calf they cut in twain", &c. they shall be cut in pieces as that is; see Mt 24:51.

{u} Contra Julian, l. 10. apud Grotium in Gen. xv. 17. {w} Zenobius apud 10.
{x} mhrouv t'exetamon ------
diptuca poihsantev, ep' autwn d' wmoyethsan. Iliad 1. v. 461, 462. {y} De Inventione, l. 2. sect. 20. {z} "Armati Jovis ante aram, paterasque tenentes

Stabant, et caesa jungebant foedera porea". Aeneid. l. 8. {a} Hist. l. 1. p. 14.

Jeremiah 34:19

Ver. 19. The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem,.... Here is a particular enumeration of the persons that had made the covenant, and transgressed it, and that should suffer for so doing; the princes of Judah, distinguished from the princes of Jerusalem, design such princes as lived without Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, and presided over them, though now at Jerusalem, having fled thither, upon the invasion of the king of Babylon, for their safety; as the princes of Jerusalem, or the magistrates of that city, are distinguished from the princes of the blood, and from the courtiers, both in this and
Jer 34:21;

the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land; that is, as many as had got into Jerusalem to secure themselves from the common enemy: the "priests" also were concerned herein, who had menservants, and maidservants, as well as others; and, besides, were persons doubtless concerned in drawing up the covenant and the form of an oath, as well as in slaying the sacrifice, and cutting it into pieces, and laying the parts in order: it is more surprising that there should be "eunuchs" here; that such should be in the court of the king of Judah, and have offices in it, and preside in them, as among the Gentiles. The Targum renders the word "princes":

which passed between the parts of the calf; signifying their assent to the covenant, and wishing they might be so used if they broke it.

Jeremiah 34:20

Ver. 20. I will even give them into the hand of their enemies,.... The Chaldeans, who were the enemies of the Jews, that were come from a far country to invade, dispossess, ravage, and plunder them; and what can be a greater punishment than to be given up into an enemy's hand, to be in his power, and at his mercy?

and into the hand of them that seek their life; not their wealth and substance only, but their lives also; nothing less will content them:

and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth; not only such should be the cruelty of their enemies that sought their lives, that they should slay them with the sword, and give them no quarter; but such their inhumanity, that they should not suffer their carcasses to be buried, but leave them exposed to birds and beasts of prey; of the princes of Judah, see Jer 52:10.

Jeremiah 34:21

Ver. 21. And Zedekiah king of Judah, and his princes,.... These were either the princes of the blood, the sons of Zedekiah, and his nobles and courtiers, as distinct from the princes in Jer 34:19; these shall not be spared, neither the king, nor his sons, nor those of the privy council: but those

will I give I to the hands of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life; as in Jer 34:20;

and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army; or, "even into the hand" {b} &c. and so this is an explanation of the former, and shows who their enemies were, and those that sought their life. The accomplishment of this may be seen in Jer 52:9;

which are gone up from you; departed from Jerusalem, as the Chaldean army did upon hearing that Pharaoh king of Egypt was marching with his army to raise the siege of Jerusalem; upon which they left it, and went forth to meet him; and this encouraged the wicked Jews to break their covenant, and reduce their servants to bondage again, they had let go free; see Jer 37:5.

{b} dybw "in manum, inquam, exercitus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 34:22

Ver. 22. Behold, I will command, saith the Lord, and cause them to return to this city,.... The Lord of hosts, or armies, was "Generalissimo" of Nebuchadnezzar's army, had it at his command, and could direct if as he pleased, and order it to march and countermarch as he thought fit: it was under the direction of his providence that it departed from Jerusalem, to try the inhabitants of it; and now, by a secret instinct, he would so powerfully work upon it, and by the ordering of external causes so manage it, that it should return to Jerusalem again, and carry on the siege with redoubled rigour:

and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire; they fought against it by shooting arrows from their bows, casting stones from their engines, and by beating down the walls with their battering rams; with which making breaches, they entered in and took the city; and burnt the temple, palaces, and other houses, with fire; of all which see the accomplishment in Jer 52:4;

and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant: many of them were already; the king of Babylon having taken, ravaged, and plundered them before he came to Jerusalem; and whither the inhabitants of them, that escaped the sword, fled for security; and others of them, that were not, now should be made desolate upon the taking of Jerusalem, as Lachish and Azekah, Jer 34:7; which should fall into the hands of the enemy, and the inhabitants thereof be forced to flee into other countries, or would be carried captive; so that they would be without any, or have but few to dwell in them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 35:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 35

In this chapter the disobedience of the people of the Jews unto God is aggravated by the obedience of the Rechabites to their father; and the one are threatened with the judgments of God upon them, and the other have a promise of the divine blessing. The time of this prophecy is observed; Jer 35:1; an order to bring the Rechabites into one of the chambers of the temple, which was done accordingly, Jer 35:2; wine is set before them to drink; which they refuse; alleging the command of their father to the contrary, Jer 35:5; which they had carefully and constantly obeyed in every part of it, excepting that which respects their dwelling in tents; for which they give a reason, Jer 35:8; by this instance of filial obedience to parents, the disobedience of the Jews towards their Father, which is in heaven, is aggravated; who, though he gave them laws and commandments, and sent his prophets to put them in mind of them, and exhort them to obedience, yet hearkened not to them, Jer 35:12; wherefore the Lord threatens to bring all the evil on them he had pronounced, Jer 35:16; and promises the sons of Rechab that there should be always some of them that should minister unto him, Jer 35:18.

Ver. 1. The word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord,.... Not as following the former prophecies; for they must be delivered seventeen years after this. The prophecies of Jeremiah are not put together in their proper time in which they were delivered. The preceding prophecies were delivered in the "tenth" and "eleventh" years of Zedekiah's reign: but this

in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; in what part of his reign is not certain; but it must be after Nebuchadnezzar had invaded the land, Jer 35:11; very probably in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, after he had been the king of Babylon's servant three years, and rebelled against him, 2Ki 24:1;

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 35:2

Ver. 2. Go unto the house of the Rechabites,.... Or "family" {c}; these are the same with the Kenites, who descended from Hobab or Jethro, Moses's father in law, **Jud 1:16**; these, as their ancestors, became proselytes to Israel, and always continued with them, though a distinct people from them; these here had their name from Rechab, a famous man in his time among those people:

and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the Lord; into the temple; for they were worshippers of the true God, though foreigners and uncircumcised persons; and so might be admitted into places belonging to the temple:

into one of the chambers; of the temple, where there were many; some for the sanhedrim to sit in; others for the priests to lay up their garments and the vessels of the sanctuary in; and others for the prophets and their disciples to converse in together about religious matters:

and give them wine to drink; set it before them, and invite them to drink of it, and thereby try their steady obedience to their father's commands. Now this family was brought to the temple either in vision, as it seemed to the prophet; or really, which latter is most probable; and that for this reason, that this affair might be transacted publicly, and many might he witnesses of it, and take the rebuke given by it; and, as some think, to reproach the priests for their intemperance.

{c} tyb la "ad familiam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 35:3

Ver. 3. Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziniah,.... Who was, no doubt, the most famous and leading man in this family:

and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites; the several branches of the family, especially the males; the women perhaps only excepted; whom it might not be so decent to gather together on such an occasion, to drink wine; or at least offer it to them.

Jeremiah 35:4

Ver. 4. And I brought them into the house of the Lord,.... Into the temple, as he was ordered; that is, he invited them thither, and they came along with him, having, no doubt, a respect for him as a prophet; and the rather, as it is highly probable he came in the name of the Lord to them:

into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God; a prophet, as the Targum and Syriac version; and so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it. This must be understood of Hanan, and not Igdaliah, as the accents show: he is thought by some to be the same with Hanani the seer, in the times of Asa, 2Ch 16:7;

which [was] by the chamber of the princes; these were not the princes of the blood, the sons of Jehoiachim; their chambers or apartments were not in the temple, but in the royal palace; but these were the princes or rulers of the people, as they are called, **Ac 4:8**; the sanhedrim, whose this chamber was, as Dr. Lightfoot {d} has observed:

which [was] above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door: a porter, whose chamber or lodge was under that in which the sanhedrim sat. The Targum calls him a treasurer; one of the seven "amarcalim", who had the keys of several chambers, where the vessels of the sanctuary and other things were put; and Kimchi observes, the word we render door comprehends the vessels of the sanctuary, and the vessels of wine, and other things.

{d} Temple-Service, c. 9. p. 1063.

Jeremiah 35:5

Ver. 5. And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups,.... Which the prophet might have out of the chambers where these vessels were, and particularly from Maaseiah, if he was a keeper of them, as before observed. The number of men gathered together was probably very large; and therefore pots, or large vessels of wine, were prepared, and set before them, and cups, lesser vessels, to drink out of:

and I said unto them, drink ye wine; he invited them to it, and bid them welcome; nay, more, he might not only encourage, but enjoin them to drink it; though, as Gataker observes, he does not say unto them, "thus saith the Lord, drink wine"; for then they must have done it, and doubtless would; since it is right to obey God rather than man, even parents.

Jeremiah 35:6

Ver. 6. But they said, we will drink no wine,.... Or "we do not drink wine" {e}; we are not used to it; we never do drink any; it is not lawful for us to do it; nor will we, let who will solicit us:

for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father; not their immediate father, but their progenitor; perhaps the same Jonadab is meant who lived in the times of Jehu, and rode with him in his chariot; by which it appears he was a man of note and figure, and who lived near three hundred years before this time, 2Ki 10:15; which is more likely than that he should be a descendant of his, and the proper father of the present Rechabites, which is the opinion of Scaliger {f}:

commanded us, saying, ye shall drink no wine, [neither ye], nor your sons, for ever; as long as any of them were in the world. What was the reason of this command, and of what follows, is not easy to say; whether it was to prevent quarrels and contentions, luxury and sensuality; or to inure them to hardships; or to put them in remembrance that they were but strangers in the land in which they lived; or to retain them in the original course of life their ancestors had lived in, feeding cattle; be it what it will, these his sons thought themselves under obligations to observe it; and perhaps finding, by experience, it was for their good so to do.

{e} Nyy htvn al "non hibimus vinum", Vatablus, Schmidt. {f} Elench. Trihaeres. Serrar. c. 24.

Jeremiah 35:7

Ver. 7. Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have [any],.... That is, they were not to build houses, sow seed, or plant vineyards, for themselves, for their own profit and advantage; nor possess either of these through purchase or gift: all this was enjoined them, partly because they were strangers in the land of Israel, as is suggested in the latter part of the verse, and so were to have no inheritance in it; and partly because the pastoral life was what their ancestors had lived; and therefore Jonadab was desirous it should be continued in his posterity; as well as because by this means they would live not envied by the Israelites, among whom they were; since they did not covet to get any part of their possessions into their hands; as also these being their circumstances, upon any public calamity, as sword, famine, or pestilence, they could more easily remove to other places; and likewise, by observing these rules, would not be liable to some sins, as drunkenness, worldly mindedness, &c. which are often the cause of great calamities. The Essenes, a sect among the Jews afterwards, seem in some things to have copied after these Rechabites:

but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; which they could move from place to place, for the convenience of pasture for the cattle, the business they were brought up in, and were always to exercise:

that ye may live many days in the land where ye [be] strangers; for they were not Israelites, as before observed, but Kenites, the descendants of Jethro; they were proselytes of the gate only; and now, partly on account of their obedience to parents, which had annexed to it the promise of long life in the land in which they lived; and partly because they would, by such a course of life, give no umbrage to, nor raise any jealousy in, the minds of the inhabitants of it, they might expect a continuance in it.

Jeremiah 35:8

Ver. 8. Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father,.... The above was the charge he gave them; and this, in every article of it, they had carefully and constantly kept, though it had been for the space of three hundred years, or thereabout; as follows:

in all he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters; which was the first of the precepts he gave them: and which they were now tempted to disregard, but were resolved to observe it, as they had hitherto done. The rest of the articles follow.

Jeremiah 35:9

Ver. 9. Nor build houses for us to dwell in,.... This explains that part of the charge more fully, which respects building of houses; which did not restrain them from building houses for others, if any of them were masters of that art; which is not very likely, since they were wholly brought up in the field as shepherds; but it forbad them building any for themselves, and making use of them by dwelling in them:

neither have we vineyard, nor field, or seed; any piece of ground planted with vines, or field sown with corn, or any seed to sow with; so exactly conformable were they to the prescriptions of their ancestor. Diodorus Siculus {g} reports of the Nabatheans, a people of Arabia, descended from Nebaioth, see Isa 60:7; that they have several laws which are much the same with those enjoined the Rechabites; for he says,

"it is a law with them not to sow corn, nor to plant any plant that bears fruit, nor to make use of wine, nor to build houses; and whosoever is found doing any of these things is, reckoned worthy of death; and the reason of their having such a law is, because they think that those who possess such things are easily compelled by men in power to do whatever is commanded them, for the sake of the enjoyment of them."

{g} Bibliothec. l. 19. p. 730. Ed. Rhod.

Jeremiah 35:10

Ver. 10. But we have dwelt in tents,.... Ever since, until very lately, when they had taken up their dwelling in Jerusalem; the reason of which is presently given:

and have obeyed, and done according to all Jonadab our father commanded us; and should it be objected, that in one point they had not obeyed, in that they had left their tents, and now dwelt in Jerusalem; they had this to say in answer to it, and as the reason of their so doing, as follows:

Jeremiah 35:11

Ver. 11. But it came to pass, when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up into the land,.... Into the land of Judea to invade it, which was in the reign of Jehoiakim, in the fourth year of it, after he had served him three years, and rebelled against him;
See Gill on "Jer 35:1";

that we said, come, and let us go to Jerusalem; they said one to another, let us not stay here to be destroyed by a foreign enemy; but let us go to Jerusalem, a fortified city, where we may be safe:

for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians; for Nebuchadnezzar's army in this expedition consisted of Chaldeans and Syrians, and of other nations, 2Ki 24:2;

so we dwell at Jerusalem; for the present. It seems as though this was quickly after Nebuchadnezzar's incursion, and when he was but just departed; so that their fears had not wholly subsided; and they, as yet, had not returned to their tents, and former manner of living: hence it appears that the Rechabites did not look upon this command of their father as equal to a divine precept, which must be always obeyed; but that in case of necessity it might be dispensed with, and especially when in danger of life, and when human prudence required it; and in which case the lawgiver himself would have dispensed with it, had he been on the spot.

Jeremiah 35:12

Ver. 12. Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah,.... After the

Rechabites had been tried whether they would break the command of their father, respecting drinking of wine; and steadfastly persisted in their resolution not to drink, urging the reason of it, and vindicating their conduct in another respect:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 35:13

Ver. 13. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... The Lord of armies in heaven and earth; the Creator of Israel; their benefactor, covenant God and Father and whom they professed to worship; God and not man; infinitely greater than Jonadab, whose precepts had been observed by his posterity:

go and tell the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; this is an order to the prophet to remove from the chamber where he was with the Rechabites, and go to the court of the people, where they were assembled for worship; or into the city of Jerusalem, and gather the heads of them together, and declare the following things to them:

will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the Lord; from this instance and case of the Rechabites, who had so constantly obeyed their father, and hearkened to his words, though but a man; a father of their flesh; an earthly father; and who had been dead long ago; and therefore much more ought they to hearken to the Father of their spirits; their Father which is in heaven, and who lives for ever.

Jeremiah 35:14

Ver. 14. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons, not to drink wine, are performed,.... That article particularly, respecting drinking wine, has been carefully observed; which, though so agreeable to the nature of man, what cheers the heart of God and man, and was not prohibited them by any law of God; yet, being forbidden by their father, they abstained from it:

for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment; though prescribed them three hundred years ago; during all which time they had punctually observed it, even to that very day; which might with great truth and strictness be said; since they had that very day refused to drink any:

notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early, and speaking; who am the eternal God; the King of kings; the great Lawgiver, able to save and to destroy; who had spoken to them, and given them laws as soon as they were a people, very early, in the times of Moses, on Mount Sinai and Horeb; and of which they had been reminded time after time, and enforced by proper arguments and motives; whereas the command of Jonadab was that of a mere man, not above three hundred years ago, and of which his posterity had never been put in mind, but as it was handed down from father to son; and this they constantly observed:

but ye hearkened not unto me; so that their disobedience was greatly aggravated.

Jeremiah 35:15

Ver. 15. I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets,.... One after another, ever since the times of Moses, to explain and enforce the laws given; a circumstance not to be observed in the case of the Rechabites; who yet, without such intimations, kept the charge their father gave them:

rising up early, and sending [them]; see **Jer 7:13**;

saying, return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them; all which were of a moral nature, and what were in themselves just and fit to be done; that they should repent of their sins, refrain from them, and reform their lives, and abstain from idolatry, and worship the one only living and true God, which was but their reasonable service; whereas abstinence from wine, enjoined the Rechabites, was an indifferent thing, neither morally good nor evil; and yet they obeyed their father in it, and when they had not that advantage by it, as is next promised these people:

and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: a land flowing with milk and honey; and in which they might build houses, plant vineyards, sow fields, and possess them; which the Rechabites might not do:

but ye have not inclined your ear, and hearkened unto me; they did not listen to his precepts, nor obey them; they would not so much as give them the hearing, and much less the doing.

Jeremiah 35:16

Ver. 16. Because the son of Jonadab the son of Rechab,.... Here we have the contrast between the Rechabites and the Israelites; the obedience of the one, and the disobedience of the other; the design of which is to aggravate and expose the sin of the Jews, since the former

have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; that particular commandment of not drinking wine, which they had never once violated in such a course of time; nor could they now be prevailed upon, even by the prophet himself, to do it:

but this people hath not hearkened unto me; the Lord their God, their father that bought them, made them, and established them. Gross ingratitude! De 32:6.

Jeremiah 35:17

Ver. 17. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel,.... Provoked by such ill usage:

behold, I will bring upon Judah, and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, all the evil that I have pronounced against them: which Abarbinel interprets of all the threatenings and curses in the law and the prophets respecting the Jews, until the times of Jeremiah; though it may more especially intend the evil, God by him had pronounced upon them; namely, that the Chaldean army should come into their land, besiege Jerusalem, and take it, and carry captive its inhabitants:

because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered; he spoke to them by his prophets, he called to them in his providences, and took every method to warn them of their sin and danger, and bring them to repentance and reformation; but all to no purpose. The Targum is,

"because I sent unto them all my servants the prophets, but they obeyed not; and they prophesied to them, but they returned not."

Jeremiah 35:18

Ver. 18. And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites,.... To the family of them, to those that were with him in the temple, and while they were there; and what he said to them, which is as follows, was by the order and direction of the Lord:

thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; he uses the same titles, when speaking to them, as to the Jews, expressive of his sovereignty, power, and grace:

because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father; that particular command concerning not drinking wine:

and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he hath commanded you; all the rest, as well as that; though they were many, they took notice of them, and observed them; they kept them in their minds and memory, and made them the rule of their actions, and conformed to them in all respects.

Jeremiah 35:19

Ver. 19. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... Who has enjoined children obedience to their parents, and has promised to reward it, and does:

Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever; which may be understood of a long time, of ages to come; or as long as the people of the Jews were a people, or the world should stand, the posterity of this man should continue: or, "a man shall not be cut off from Jonadab &c." {h}; his offspring shall never fail. It is certain that some of this family returned from the captivity, **1Ch 2:55**; and, according to Scaliger {i}, the Hasidaeans sprung from them. And, if any credit could be given to Benjamin Tudelensis, there were Rechabites in the twelfth century, since the times of Christ; for he tells {k} us, that in his travels he found a place where Jews dwelt, who were called Rechabites. The phrase, "to stand before me", is by the Targum paraphrased,

"ministering before me;"

serving and worshipping God, for they were religious people; that is, in their own families, carrying on religious worship among themselves, and not in the temple, where they had no office, and did no service; though some think they had, because called scribes, **1Ch 2:55**. Kimchi says that some of their Rabbins asserted that the daughters of these people married priests, and so some of their children's children offered sacrifice on the altar. And if what Eusebius reports from Hegesippus is true, there were priests of this family after the times of Christ; for he says {l}, that when the Jews were stoning James the just, a priest of the sons of Rechab cried out, saying, stop, what are ye doing? but these testimonies are not to be depended on; however, we may be sure of this, that the promise of God shall not fail, but be certainly accomplished. Very appropriate are the words of the learned Alting {m} upon this subject:

"not only the Lord promises length of life to the obedient, which proselytes, equally with Israelites, have the promise of; but, particularly, that the posterity of Jonadab should not perish, should have a place in the church of God, and an admission to the gracious enjoyment of God; not as priests and Levites, but as other Israelites and strangers,
Isa 56:4; so that the posterity of Jonadab must still continue, and hope of restoration of them with the Israelites remains; as in Jer 31:36; but in the same way and manner; so that being equally sharers in exile, they are to be restored after a long interruption. Indeed, the family is not at this day known; but from the ignorance of men, to the denial of a thing, there is no available argument. Families cannot be confounded, since they descend by the fathers; mothers do not belong to them; and as is the father as to tribe, so also is the son and grandson, and so on. A genealogical series may perish from the knowledge of men, but not from the nature of things, and the knowledge of God. Though the seeds of wheat, barley, and other things, may be mixed together, that men cannot distinguish them, yet their distinction does not perish; and God not only knows it, but also discovers it, when he makes every seed to rise in its own body, 1Co 15:37; so must we judge concerning families."

Perhaps, since these Rechabites were proselytes, and not Israelites, the conversion of the Gentiles may be respected; who are priests in a spiritual sense, and minister before the Lord, offering up, through Christ, the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise; and such a generation to serve the Lord will never be wanting.

{h} bdnwyl vya trky al "non exidetur vir Jonadabo", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt, &c. {i} Elench. Trihaeres. c. 24, {k} Itinerarium, p. 82. {l}

Eccles. Hist. l. 2. c. 23. {m} Apud Witsii Exercitat. 9. de Rechabitis in Miscell. Sacr. tom. 2. p. 235, 236.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 36:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 36

This chapter gives an account of an impious action of King Jehoiakim's burning the roll of Jeremiah's prophecies read unto him, and the consequence of it. The order to write this roll, the time when, the contents and use of it, are in Jer 36:1; the writing of it by Baruch, the order of the prophet to read it to the people on such a day, with the view he had in so doing, Jer 36:4; the reading of it by Baruch to the people first, Jer 36:8; then to the princes, being sent for by them, upon a report made to them, Jer 36:11; the king being acquainted with it, Jehudi was sent to fetch the roll, who read it to the king, Jer 36:16; who having heard part of it, burnt it, notwithstanding the intercession of some of his princes to the contrary, Jer 36:22; and who also ordered the apprehension of Jeremiah and Baruch, who could not be found, Jer 36:26; upon this a new roll is ordered to be written, Jer 36:27; which was done with some additions to it, respecting the destruction of the land, and the people in it, by the Chaldeans; and particularly the death of the king, and his want of burial, Jer 36:29.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah,.... Eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem:

[that] this word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord; the following order to write in a roll all his prophecies he had hitherto delivered:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 36:2

Ver. 2. Take thee a roll of a book,.... A roll of parchment, which being wrote on, and rolled up, was called a book; but books, in those times, did not consist of leaves cut and stitched together, and bound up, as our books are, but sheets of parchments being written upon, were glued together, and then rolled up;

hence such writings were called volumes; which name we still retain, and give to books, though the same practice is not used:

and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah; for though Israel was carried captive before the times of Jeremiah, and his prophecies were chiefly directed against Judah; yet as there were some of the ten tribes mixed with them, they were included in these prophecies, and therefore mentioned:

and against all the nations; such as Egypt, Edom, Ammon, and Moab, **Jer 9:26**;

from the day that I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day; that is, from the time the Lord called him to prophesy in his name, which was in, the thirteenth year of Josiah, who reigned one and thirty years; and this being the fourth year of Jehoiakim, it must be the three and twentieth year of his prophesying, and the a course of full two and twenty years; see **Jer 1:2**; now all the sermons, discourses, and prophecies, he had delivered out against one and another, during this time, must all be written in one roll or book, that that they might be read. Kimchi says their Rabbins {n} would have it that this roll was the book of the Lamentations, called by them "Megallah", or roll.

{n} T. Bab. Moed Katon fol. 26. 1.

Jeremiah 36:3

Ver. 3. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them,.... Not that there was any uncertainty in God as to the knowledge of future events, any more than a change in his purposes: he had purposed to bring evil upon them, which purpose would not be disannulled; and he knew that the Jews would not hearken to the prediction of it, or be concerned about it, and repent of their sins, and reform; but this method he was pleased to take, as being, humanly speaking, a probable one to awaken their attention, and which would leave them inexcusable:

that they may return every man from his evil way; repent of it, and reform:

that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin; by not inflicting on them the punishment and ruin threatened: where repentance is, remission of sin is likewise, and both are the gifts of divine grace, when spiritual and evangelical.

Jeremiah 36:4

Ver. 4. Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah,.... One of his disciples, and whom he had before made use of in the purchase of a field of his uncle's son, and to whom he gave the evidence of the purchase, Jer 32:12; he was probably a better penman than the prophet, or a quicker writer; however, he thought proper, for quicker dispatch, to make use of him as his amanuensis:

and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book; it seems that Jeremiah had not committed any of his prophecies to writing; and yet it cannot be thought that by the mere strength of memory he could repeat every discourse and prophecy he had delivered in the space of two and twenty years; wherefore it must be concluded, that that same Spirit, which first dictated the prophecies to him, brought them fresh to his memory; so that he could readily repeat them to Baruch, who took them down in writing on a roll of parchment.

Jeremiah 36:5

Ver. 5. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I [am] shut up,.... In prison, according to Jarchi; but this is not likely, for then there would have been no occasion for an order to take him, Jer 36:26. Grotius thinks he was obliged by the king's order to stay at home; possibly he might be restrained by the Spirit of God, or had not freedom in his own mind to go abroad; there might be a restraint, an impulse upon his spirit, by the Spirit of God. Some think he was under some legal pollution, which made him unfit to go into the temple: for it follows:

I cannot go into the house of the Lord: labouring either under some bodily infirmity, or ceremonial defilement, or was forbidden by the king. What was the true cause is not certain; but so it was, that either he was discharged, or disabled, or disqualified, from going into the house of God.

Jeremiah 36:6

Ver. 6. Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth,.... The roll being finished, Baruch is ordered to read it, which was the end of writing it: and since the prophet could not go himself, he sends another in his room, to read

the words of the Lord in the ears of the people, in the Lord's house, upon the fasting day; the day of atonement; the great fast, which was on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim; and so a different time of reading from that in Jer 36:9. This was a very proper time to read it in, when the people were fasting and humbling themselves before the Lord; though some think this was a fast proclaimed by Jehoiakim, to avert the vengeance threatened by the Chaldean army:

and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities; to keep the feast of tabernacles; as they did five days after the fast, or day of atonement; and this seems to be the second reading of the roll enjoined.

Jeremiah 36:7

Ver. 7. It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord,.... Or, "perhaps their supplication will fall" {o}; they will present it in an humble manner before him; alluding to the prostration of their bodies, and dejection of their countenances, in prayer:

and will return every man from his evil way; not only pray for mercy, but repent of sin, and reform; without which mercy is not to be expected:

for great [is] the anger and fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people; a very sore judgment, no less than the utter destruction of their city, temple, and nation.

{o} Mtnxt lpt ylwa "forte, [vel] fortasse cadet deprecatio eorum", Piscator, Schmidt. So Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Jeremiah 36:8

Ver. 8. And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him,.... Here follows Baruch's obedience to the prophet's commands; which he considered no doubt as the will of the Lord, who directed the prophet to give the orders he did; and which he punctually observed, in all respects, as to things, time, and place:

reading in the book the words of the Lord in the Lord's house; the prophecies of Jeremiah, which came from the Lord, and which he had transcribed into a book from the mouth of the prophet; these he read before the people in the temple, a first, if not a second time, before the reading of it recorded in the following verses.

Jeremiah 36:9

Ver. 9. And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month,.... This was a different time of reading the book from the former, enjoined by the prophet, and performed by Baruch, Jer 36:6; that was on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim; this was in the fifth year of his reign, and in the ninth month of the year, a year and two months after the former, as it should seem; but Jehoiakim's fifth year beginning in the seventh month after the day of atonement, this ninth month is to be reckoned not from the beginning of his fifth year, but from the beginning of the ecclesiastical year in the spring; so that this was but two months after the former reading:

[that] they proclaimed a fast before the Lord: this was not an ordinary fast, or a common annual one of divine appointment, which came in course, but an extraordinary one, upon some particular occasion. Some think it was on account of the dearth, drought, and famine in the land, Jer 14:1; and others, which seems most likely, take it to be on account of the calamity threatened the nation by the Chaldean army. This fast was not in course, but was proclaimed by the order of the king and his council; and it may be at the request of the people, at least they, greed and consented to it, and indeed are represented in the text as the proclaimers; for so the word "they" is explained in the following clause, which should be rendered, not

to all the people, but even "all the people in Jerusalem" {p},

and all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem: these proclaimed the fast; they applied to the government for one, or however obeyed the king's orders, and published and proclaimed a fast; not only the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but those who came from other cities on business, or for safety, or for worship.

{p} Mlvwryb Meh lk "omnis populus Hierosolyma", Cocceius; "omnis populus in Hierosolyma", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 36:10

Ver. 10. Then read Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the Lord,.... The prophecies of Jeremiah he had taken from him in writing on a roll of parchment; these he read in the temple, in a part of it, after described:

in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe; not a scribe of the law, or an officer of the temple, but the king's chancellor or secretary of state; for this is the title, not of Gemariah, who had a chamber in the temple here mentioned, in which Baruch read his roll, and was an officer there, but of Shaphan, as the accents show, and as his title runs elsewhere, 2Ki 22:9; which chamber was

in the higher court; it looked into it, which some say was the court of the priests; but into that Baruch, not being a priest, could not enter: rather, according to Dr. Lightfoot, it was the court of Israel, on the same ground with it, though parted from it, and divided from the court of the women by a wall, to which they went by an ascent of fifteen steps; so that it might with great propriety be called the higher court:

at the entry of the new gate of the Lord's house; the eastern gate, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it: here Baruch read his roll,

in the ears of all the people; that were in the court; so that being in a chamber, he must read out of the chamber window, or in a balcony before it.

Jeremiah 36:11

Ver. 11. When Micaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan,.... Who was present when Baruch read in the roll to the people in his father's chamber; but his father was absent, and was with the princes in the secretary's office at the same time, as Jer 36:12 shows: the son seems to be a more religious man than the father, unless he was placed as a spy, to hear and see what he could:

however, when he

had heard out of the book all the words of the Lord: which were spoken by the Lord to Jeremiah, and which Baruch read out of the book he had written in his hearing; for it is a vain conceit of Abarbinel, that Micaiah did not hear these words from the mouth of Baruch reading, but out of the book which he looked into; for then it would have been said, which he had "seen" or "read" out of the book, and not "heard".

Jeremiah 36:12

Ver. 12. Then he went down into the king's house,.... The royal palace, which was not upon the mountain on which the temple stood, but lay lower, and therefore Micaiah is said to go down to it; with what design he went thither is not certain, whether out of ill will to Jeremiah and Baruch, or out of good will, being affected with what he had heard, and desirous that some steps might be taken by the government to prevent the calamities coming upon them, according to these prophecies; which latter seems most probable, since no charge or accusation is brought by him; and since his father, with others, to whom he gave the account afterwards, interceded with the king that the roll might not be burnt, Jer 36:25; however, immediately after he had heard the roll read, he went to the king's house:

into the scribe's chamber; the secretary's office; formerly his grandfather Shaphan's, now Elishama's:

and, lo, all the princes sat there; some of them are mentioned by name:

[even] Elishama the scribe; or secretary; the prime minister, the principal secretary of state, and therefore named first, in whose chamber or office they were:

and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah; who this person was, or his office, is not known; he is nowhere else made mention of; and who his father was is not certain:

and Elnathan the son of Achbor; the same that Jehoiakim sent to Egypt to fetch Uriah from thence, Jer 26:22;

and Gemariah the son of Shaphan: who was Micaiah's father, and in whose chamber Baruch read the roll:

and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah; of this prince also no account is given elsewhere:

and all the princes; the rest of them, who were either members of the great sanhedrim, or courtiers; it appears from hence that this court was very profane and irreligious; for though they had proclaimed a fast, to make a show of religion, or at the importunity of the people; yet they did not attend temple worship and service themselves, but were all together in the secretary's office, very probably about political affairs.

Jeremiah 36:13

Ver. 13. Then Micaiah declared all the words that he had heard,.... The sum and substance of them; for it cannot be thought that he should retain in his memory every word that he had heard; though, as it is very probable he was much struck and affected with what he had heard, he might remember and declare a great deal of it:

when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people; and this he also declared, no doubt, that what he had heard, and then related, were read by Baruch out of a book; as is clear from the princes sending for Baruch, and ordering him to bring the roll along with him, as in
Jer 36:14.

Jeremiah 36:14

Ver. 14. Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi,.... Who, according to Junius, was the king's apparitor: he is described by his descent,

the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi; him the princes sent, being not one of their body, but a servant at court:

to Baruch; who was very probably still in the temple, where Micaiah left him:

saying, take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come; that is, to the king's palace, to the secretary's office, where they were, and bring the roll along with him he had been reading to the people, and of which Micaiah had given them some account; and which had such an effect upon them, as to make them desirous of hearing it themselves;

so Baruch the son of Neriah took the roll in his hand, and came unto them; which showed great boldness and intrepidity in him, to go at once, without any hesitation, to court, and appear before the princes with his roll, which contained things so very disagreeable to the king and his ministry; but as he had not been afraid to read it publicly before the people in the temple, so neither was he afraid to read it before the princes at court.

Jeremiah 36:15

Ver. 15. And they said unto him, sit down now,.... Or, "pray sit down" {q}; they received him very courteously, and treated him with great humanity, and showed much respect to him, in beseeching him to sit down by them:

and read it in our ears; as he had done in the ears of the people, with an audible voice, clearly and distinctly, that they might be able to hear it, so as to understand it:

so Baruch read [it] in their ears; without any fear or dread, though in the king's palace, and before an assembly of princes; nor did he excuse himself on account of weariness, having just read it to the people; or upbraid the princes with not being in the temple, where they might have heard it.

{q} an bv "sede quaeso", Vatablus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 36:16

Ver. 16. Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words,.... In the roll or book read by Baruch; they heard them read patiently, which was what the king afterwards would not do:

they were afraid both one and another; both good and bad; for there were some of both sorts among them: or, "a man to his friend" {r}; they looked at one another, and knew not what to say to each other, as men amazed and astonished; they trembled at what they heard, the threatenings were so terrible, and the calamity threatened so great; and they consulted together what they should do with this roll, or what course they should take to avert the threatened vengeance, and particularly whether they should acquaint the king with it or not; and which they thought the safest and most prudent part to do:

and said unto Baruch, we will surely tell the king of all these words; this they said, not to terrify Baruch, or out of any ill will to him; but partly for their own security, lest they should incur the king's displeasure, should he come to the knowledge of it any other way; and chiefly hoping it might have some effect upon him, to cause a reformation; though of this they were dubious, and rather feared it would exasperate him; and therefore desired that Baruch and Jeremiah would hide themselves, Jer 36:19; this was the sense of some of them, of those that were good men among them, and wished things were otherwise than they were.

{r} wher la vya "vir ad socium suum", Montanus; "ad proximum suum", Vatablus; "ad amicum suum", Pagninus; "erga socium suum", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 36:17

Ver. 17. And they asked Baruch,.... The following question, which may seem at first sight an odd, needless, and trifling one, as some have called it:

saying, tell us now, how didst thou write all these words at his mouth? this question does not regard the manner of writing them, whether with ink or not, for that they could see with their eyes, and yet Baruch's answer seems to have respect to this, as if he so understood them; nor barely the matter of them, as whether it was the substance of what was contained in the roll that Jeremiah dictated, and that only, leaving it to Baruch to use what words he would, or whether the express words were dictated by him; but rather it seems to have regard to the possibility of doing it: by the question it appears, that Baruch had told the princes that the prophet had dictated all these things to him, and he had taken them down in writing from his mouth; now they wanted more satisfaction about the truth of this matter. It was a difficulty with them how it was possible for Jeremiah to recollect so many different discourses and prophecies, delivered at different times, and some many years ago, and so readily dictate them to Baruch, as fast as he could write them; wherefore they desire he would tell them plainly and faithfully the truth of the matter, how it was, that so they might, if they could, affirm it with certainty to the king; since, if this was really fact which he had related, these prophecies originally, and the fresh dictating of them, must be from the Spirit of God, and would certainly have their accomplishment.

Jeremiah 36:18

Ver. 18. Then Baruch answered them,.... At once, without any hesitation, plainly and fully:

he pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth; that is, the Prophet Jeremiah delivered by word of mouth, not the substance only of this roll, but the express words of it, and everyone of them, and that clearly and distinctly, without any hesitation, or premeditation; by which it is plain it was by the Spirit of the Lord he did it; neither matter nor words were Baruch's, but were exactly as they were delivered:

and I wrote [them] with ink in the book; as they saw with their eyes, and which was the manner of writing with the Jews so early; Baruch had no further concern in this matter than to provide pen, ink, and parchment, and to make use of them as he did, just as the prophet dictated and directed him.

Jeremiah 36:19

Ver. 19. Then said the princes unto Baruch,.... Being satisfied with his answer:

go hide thee, thou and Jeremiah, and let no man know where ye be. Some of these princes at least seem to be good men, and believed what was read to them, and had a value for the prophet and his scribe, and were concerned for their welfare; and knowing the furious temper of the king, and his little regard to the prophets; and fearing he would resent what had been so publicly read to the people, provided against the worst; and in point of prudence advised Baruch and his master to abscond, and not let anyone know, no, not their nearest friends, where they were, lest they should be betrayed; nor did they, the princes, desire to know themselves. Jeremiah might be in prison, as some have thought, at the first reading of the roll, which was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and be at liberty now, which was in the fifth year; see Jer 36:1.

Jeremiah 36:20

Ver. 20. And they went in to the king into the court,.... The inner court, the king's court, where he usually resided; though very probably they did not rush in at once; but first sent to know whether the king could be spoke with, or would admit them, they having something to communicate to him; which they might do by the person in waiting, by whom they were introduced:

but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe; they did not take it with them, but left it in the secretary's office; and, no doubt, put it up safe in some chest or scrutoire, as something valuable, and not to be exposed to everyone; or to be thrown about, torn, or trampled on, as a book of no use and value: very probably it was with the consent of Baruch that it was left with them: and this was a point of prudence in them not to take it with them when they went to the king:

and told all the words in the ears of the king; that is, the sum and substance of them; for it cannot be thought they should remember every word in the roll; but the main of it they did, and rehearsed it in a very audible manner.

Jeremiah 36:21

Ver. 21. So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll,.... The same person the princes sent to Baruch to come to them, and bring the roll with him, Jer 36:14. This the king did, out of curiosity, and to satisfy himself of the truth of what the princes said; and by this it appears they had told him of the roll, which contained what they had given him a summary of, and where it was:

and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber; or, "out of the chamber of Elishama the scribe"; who knew where it was, being present at the reading of it in the secretary's office, and saw where it was laid; or, however, was directed by the secretary where it was, and might have the key of the chest or scrutoire given him in which it was laid:

and Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes that stood by the king: as he doubtless was ordered; and which he did so loudly, clearly, and distinctly, that the king and all the princes could hear; which princes were those who had heard it before, and were come to the king to acquaint him with the substance of it; and who stood by the side of the king, or about him, in honour to him; though there might be also others besides them,

who were before with the king, and waiting on him; and Abarbinel thinks that other princes distinct from those that went to the king are meant. When it is said that Jehudi read the roll in the hearing of the king and princes, it mast be understood of a part of it only, and not the whole; as
Jer 36:23 shows.

Jeremiah 36:22

Ver. 22. Now the king sat in the winter house, in the ninth month,.... The month Cisleu, which answers to part of November, and part of December; and so was the midst of winter, and a proper time for the king to be in his winter house; though, as this was a fast day, it would have been more proper for him to have been at the worship of God in the temple, Jer 36:9. This winter house probably was a winter parlour, as distinguished from a summer parlour, **Jud 3:20**; and both might be under the same roof, or parts of the same house; only the one might be more airy and cool, and the other more close and warm. Kings had their summer and winter houses; see **Am 3:15**; this circumstance is mentioned for the sake of what follows, the burning of the roll; and accounts for there being a fire at hand to do it:

and [there was a fire] on the hearth burning before him; there was a stove, or some such vessel or instrument, in which a large fire of wood was made, at which the king sat to keep himself warm while the roll was reading, and about which the princes stood.

Jeremiah 36:23

Ver. 23. And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves,.... Either three or four of the breadths of parchment, which were glued together, and rolled up; or three or four of the columns in those breadths. The meaning is, he had read a few of them. The Rabbins {s} would have it, that three or four verses in the book of the Lamentations are meant:

he cut it with the penknife; that is, he cut the roll to pieces with a penknife he had in his hand, or lay near him. It is difficult to say who it was that did this; whether Jehudi that read the roll, or Jehoiakim the king that heard it; most interpreters understand it of the latter; but the connection of the words carries it to the former; for the nearest antecedent to the relative he is Jehudi; though it is highly probable he did it at the king's command; or, however, saw by his countenance and behaviour that such an action would be grateful to him; and that he was highly displeased with what had been read, and could not hear any longer with patience:

and cast it into the fire that [was] on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that [was] on the hearth; that is, he cast it into the fire, and there let it lie, until it was wholly consumed; a very impious action, to burn the word of God; a full evidence of an ungodly mind; a clear proof of the enmity of the heart against God, and of its indignation against his word and servants; and yet a vain attempt to frustrate the divine predictions in it, or avert the judgments threatened; but the ready way to bring them on.

{s} T. Hieros. Moed Katon, fol. 83. 2.

Jeremiah 36:24

Ver. 24. Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments,.... They were not struck with horror at such an impious action as the burning of the roll; nor afraid of the judgments and wrath of God threatened in it; nor did they rend their garments in token of sorrow and mourning on account of either, as used to be when anything blasphemous was said or done, or any bad news were brought. The Jews from hence conclude, that whenever a man sees the book of the law torn of cut to pieces, he should rend his garments {t}. The persons here meant are not the princes that first heard the roll read in the secretary's office, for they were afraid, Jer 36:16; unless they now dissembled in the king's presence, or had shook off their fears; however, if they are included, three must be excepted, whose names are mentioned in Jer 36:25; and those who are more especially designed are expressed in the next clause:

[neither] the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words; not all that were in the roll, for they only heard a part; but all that were in that part, which was enough to make them fear and tremble; but they were hardened in their sins; and by the hardness and impenitence of their hearts treasured up wrath against the day of wrath. These servants of the king seem to be those in waiting, and not the princes that came to him; however, they were not all of this complexion and character, since it follows:

{t} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 26. 1.

Jeremiah 36:25

Ver. 25. Nevertheless, Elnathan, and Delaiah, and Gemariah,.... Three of the five princes mentioned in Jer 36:12;

had made intercession to the king, that he would not burn the roll; or suffer it to be burnt; this they did either at first, as soon as the roll was brought, that if the king should not like it, yet they besought him that he would not destroy it; or rather when they saw what Jehudi was going to do with it, either by the express order, or at the connivance of the king; then they humbly entreated that such an action might not be done, which gave them a secret horror, though they might endeavour to hide it as much as possible:

but he would not hear them; or he would not receive it of them, as the Targum; that is, their supplication and intercession; but either east the roll into the fire himself, or permitted Jehudi to do it; nor would he suffer it to be taken out till it was all consumed.

Jeremiah 36:26

Ver. 26. But the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech,.... Or, "the king's son", as the Targum; though it rather seems to be the proper name of a person, one of the king's servants; since it is not probable he would send his own son on such an errand; and had he, he would rather have been called his own son than the king's son; besides, Jeconiah, who succeeded him, seems to be his eldest son, and yet he now could not be more than twelve years of age; whereas this Jerahmeel must be a man grown; and had he been an elder son, as he must, he would have succeeded him, unless it can be thought that he died before his father:

and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet; in order to bring them before the king, or to imprison them, or put them to death, for which they might have the king's warrant; the one for prophesying, and the other for writing out and reading his prophecies; though Baruch may be called a scribe, not for being the amanuensis of Jeremiah; but because he was one of the scribes of the law, or doctors of the people:

but the Lord hid them; the princes advised them to hide themselves, and they did, very probably in a house of some of their friends; but this would not have been sufficient, had not the Lord took them under his protection; there was no doubt a special providence concerned for them; but by what means this preservation was is not known. Kimchi suggests that these messengers sought for them in the very place where they were, and could not find them; and conjectures that the Lord set darkness about them, or weakened the visive faculty of those that searched for them, that they could not see them.

Jeremiah 36:27

Ver. 27. Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah,.... In the place where he was hid; the Lord knew where he was, for he hid him, and therefore could send his word to him:

after the king had burnt the roll; either with his own hands, or had ordered it to be burnt, or connived at the burning of it:

and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah; hence the Jews {u} gather, that when a man sees the book of the law burnt, that he is bound to rend his garments twice; once for the burning of the paper or parchment, and again for the burning of the writing; but no other is meant than the roll, in which the prophecies were written, Baruch took from the mouth of Jeremiah:

saying; as follows:

{u} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 26. 1.

Jeremiah 36:28

Ver. 28. Take thee again another roll,.... Or a piece of parchment; or rather several pieces of parchment glued or rolled up together:

and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burnt; just as when the two tables of the law were broken, two others were made, and the same laws written on them; and so here the same Spirit of God, which brought to the mind of the prophet all his former discourses and prophecies, so that he could readily dictate them to Baruch, could and did renew them again; wherefore Jehoiakim's burning of the roll signified nothing: all attempts to destroy the word of God are in vain; they always have been, and will be; for the word of the Lord endures for ever.

Jeremiah 36:29

Ver. 29. And thou shall say to Jehoiakim king of Judah,.... Or, "concerning" {w} him; since the prophet was hid, and he was in quest of him; nor was it safe for him to appear in person before him; though this may be understood as what should be put into the second roll, and in that he addressed to him:

thus saith the Lord, thou hast burnt this roll; or "that roll"; or had suffered or ordered it to be burnt, giving this as a reason for it:

saying, why hast thou therein written; what the king would have to be a great falsehood, and which he thought never came from the Lord; but was a device of Jeremiah, to whom he ascribed the writing of them, though it was Baruch's, because dictated by him:

saying, the king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? by killing some, and carrying off others, so that the destruction should be complete. He takes no notice of himself and his family, as if his concern was only for the nation; and that he took it ill that anything should be said which expressed the ruin of that, and might dishearten the inhabitants of it.

{w} le "de", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 36:30

Ver. 30. Therefore thus saith the Lord, of Jehoiakim king of Judah,.... Or, "concerning" {x} him; for Jehovah is not here said to be "the Lord of Jehoiakim", though he was, being King of kings, and Lord of lords; bat as speaking concerning him, and threatening him, as follows:

he shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; that is, none of his issue that should reign after him, or succeed him in the throne of David and kingdom of Judah; for his son Jeconiah reigned but three months, which is reckoned as nothing, and could not be called sitting upon the throne; and, besides, was never confirmed by the king of Babylon, in whose power he was, and by whom he was carried captive; and Zedekiah, who followed, was not his lawful successor, was brother to Jehoiakim, and uncle to Jeconiah, and was set up by the king of Babylon in contempt of the latter; and as for Zerubbabel, he was no king, nor was there any of this family till the Messiah came:

and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. The sense is, he should have no burial but that of an ass, Jer 22:18; should be cast into a ditch, and be exposed to the heat of the sun in the daytime, and to nipping frosts at night, and so putrefy and become nauseous; and though the body would be insensible of it, yet would it be very reproachful to the character of a prince, and shocking to any to behold; and very disagreeable and dreadful for himself to hear and think of.

{x} le "de", Schmidt, &c.

Jeremiah 36:31

Ver. 31. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity,.... In cutting the roll pieces, and burning it, as Abarbinel interprets it; which either was done by himself, or by his order, and with his connivance; and at which perhaps his sons were present, and expressed a pleasure in it; an& his servants that stood by assented to it, excepting three; nor were they afraid of the judgments of God for it, nor in the least shocked at it, Jer 36:24; though this may be understood of all their iniquities they had been guilty of, the singular being put for the plural:

and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; the sword, famine, and pestilence; the destruction of their land, city, and temple; and their captivity in Babylon:

but they hearkened not; to what was said to them, neither in the first nor in the second roll.

Jeremiah 36:32

Ver. 32. Then took Jeremiah another roll,.... Of parchment; several sheets joined together, which made up a roll or volume:

and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who was by office a public notary or scribe of the law, as well as the amanuensis of the prophet:

who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burnt in the fire; not one was lost; all were recovered again, through the fresh inspiration of the Holy Spirit, under which Jeremiah dictated the selfsame things in the same words to Baruch again; so that the king got nothing by burning it, but an addition of guilt, and a heavier denunciation of wrath and vengeance, as follows:

and there were added besides unto them many like words; of the same nature and argument, of the threatening kind more especially. The Rabbins {y}, who take the roll to be the book of Lamentations, very triflingly observe, that the first roll had only the three alphabets, in the first, second, and fourth chapters that the addition is the treble alphabet, in the third chapter the whole of the fifth chapter. Here it may not be amiss to insert the testimony of Eupolemus {z}, an Heathen historian, concerning Jeremiah and his prophecies in the times of Jehoiakim.

"Joachim, (for so he calls him,) in his times Jeremiah the prophet prophesied, being sent of God, to take the Jews sacrificing to a golden idol, called by them Baal, and to declare unto them the calamity that was coming upon them; but Joachim would have laid hold on him, and burnt him alive; then he (the prophet) said that with those sticks they should prepare food for the Babylonians, and that they should dig canals from the Tigris and Euphrates when carried captive; wherefore, when Nebuchadnezzar king of the Babylonians heard what was prophesied by Jeremiah, he besought Astibares, king of the Medes, to join his forces with him; and having gathered and joined together the Babylonians and Medes, a hundred and eighty thousand foot, and a hundred and twenty thousand horse, with ten thousand chariots, first destroyed Samaria, Galilee, Scythopolis, and the Jews that inhabited Gilead; and then marched to Jerusalem, and took alive Joachim king of the Jews; and having taken out the gold, silver, and brass in the temple, sent it to Babylon, excepting the ark and the tables in it, for this remained with Jeremiah;"

compare with this Jer 22:18.

{y} Vid. Yalkut & Kimchi in loc. {z} Apud Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 39. p. 454.

Jeremiah 37:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 37

This chapter makes mention of the reign of Zedekiah, and what happened in it; of his message to Jeremiah, to pray for the kingdom; of the king of Babylonian's raising the siege of Jerusalem, on hearing the king of Egypt was coming to its relief; of the assurance the prophet gave that the Chaldean army would return again, and destroy the city; of the prophet's attempt to depart the city, his imprisonment, conversation with Zedekiah, and his clemency to him. A short account is given of Zedekiah, and of the disobedience of him and his people to the word of the Lord, Jer 37:1; of the message sent by him to the prophet to pray for them, Jer 37:3; the time, when Jeremiah was at liberty, and the siege of Jerusalem was raised, Jer 37:4; the prophet's answer to them from the Lord, assuring them the Chaldeans would return and burn the city, Jer 37:6; the prophet attempting to go out of the city is stopped, and charged as a deserter to the Chaldeans; is had before the princes, and beat and imprisoned, Jer 37:11; but the king sending for him out of prison, and having some private discourse with him, upon the prophet's expostulation and intercession, his confinement was mitigated, and bread allowed him, Jer 37:16.

Ver. 1. And King Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned,.... The brother of Jehoiakim, whose untimely death, and want of burial, are prophesied of in the preceding chapter. The name of Zedekiah was Mattaniah before he was king; his name was changed by the king of Babylon, who made him king, 2Ki 24:17;

instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim: the same with Jehoiakim, or jeconiah, called Coniah by way of contempt; he reigned but three months, and so was not reckoned as a king, not being confirmed by the king of Babylon, but was carried captive by him, and his uncle placed in his stead:

whom Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah; to whom he became tributary, and swore homage and fealty, 2Ch 36:13.

Jeremiah 37:2

Ver. 2. But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land,.... The king, his courtiers and subjects the royal family, nobility, and common people; they were all degenerate and corrupt. Jarchi observes, that Jehoiakim was wicked, and his people righteous; and that Zedekiah was righteous, and his people wicked but he seems to found his character on that single action of taking Jeremiah out of prison; whereas, according to this account, king and people were all wicked: for neither one or other

did hearken unto the words of the Lord, which he spake by Jeremiah the prophet; neither those which were spoken in the former nor in the latter part of his reign, concerning the destruction of the city by the Chaldeans. This short count is given to show how just it was to give up such a prince and people to ruin.

Jeremiah 37:3

Ver. 3. And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest,.... That is, Zephaniah the priest, as the accents shaw; though his father Maaseiah was doubtless a priest too; according to the Syriac version, both Jehucal, called Jucal, Jer 38:1; and Zephaniah, were priests; since it reads in the plural number, "priests": these the king sent as messengers

to the Prophet Jeremiah, saying, pray now unto the Lord our God for us. This message was sent either upon the rumour of the Chaldeans coming against Jerusalem, as some think; or rather when it had departed from the city, and was gone to meet the army of the king of Egypt; so that this petition to the prophet was to pray that the king of Egypt alight get the victory over the Chaldean army, and that that might not return unto them. Thus wicked men will desire the prayers of good men in times of distress, when their words, their cautions, admonitions, exhortations, and prayers too, are despised by them at another time.

Jeremiah 37:4

Ver. 4. Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people,.... Was at full liberty, and could go out of the city, and come in, when he pleased; or go into any part of it, and converse with the people, and prophesy to them; which he could not do in the latter part of Jehoiakim's reign, who sent persons after him and Baruch to take them, and they were obliged to hide themselves, yea, the

Lord hid them,
Jer 36:19; but now he was under no restraint, as least as yet:

for they had not put him into prison; not yet; they afterwards did,
Jer 37:15.

Jeremiah 37:5

Ver. 5. Then Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt,.... At the time the above message was sent to Jeremiah. Zedekiah, though he had took an oath of homage to the king of Babylon, rebelled against him, and entered into a league with the king of Egypt, to whom he sent for succours in his distress; and who, according to agreement, sent his army out of Egypt to break up the siege of Jerusalem; for though the king of Egypt came no more in person out of his land, after his defeat at Carchemish by Nebuchadnezzar, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim,
Jer 46:2; yet he sent his army to the relief of Jerusalem:

and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem; which was in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign that they first besieged it, and is the time here referred to,
Jer 39:1;

heard tidings of them; the Egyptian army, and of its coming out against them; the rumour of which might be spread by the Jews themselves, to intimidate them; or which might come to them by spies they had in all parts to give them intelligence of what was doing; and what they had was good and certain, and on which they acted:

they departed from Jerusalem: not through fear, but to meet the Egyptian army, and give them battle, before they could be joined by any considerable force of the Jews. It was at this time the covenant was broken about the manumission of servants, Jer 34:10; which conduct ill agrees with their desire of the prophet's prayer.

Jeremiah 37:6

Ver. 6. Then came the word of the Lord unto the Prophet Jeremiah,.... At the time when the messengers came to him from the king to pray for them; for Jer

37:4 are to be included in a parenthesis:

saying; as follows: which is an answer to the messengers.

Jeremiah 37:7

Ver. 7. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel,.... Which are the usual titles and characters the Lord takes to himself, when he spake by the prophet; see Jer 34:2;

thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me, to inquire of me; in an oracular way; for by this it seems that they were not only sent to desire the prophet to pray for them, but to obtain an oracle from the Lord, confirming it to them, that the Chaldean army which was gone would not return any more; this they were willing to believe, but wanted to have a confirmation of it from the Lord; and so the Targum,

"to seek an oracle from me;"

or to ask instruction or doctrine from me: now these messengers are bid to go back and tell the king, his nobles, and all the people of the land, what follows:

behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt, into their own land; being afraid to face the Chaldean army; or being defeated and driven back by it. Josephus {a} says there was a battle fought between the Egyptians and Chaldeans, in which the latter were conquerors, and put the former to flight, and drove them out of all Syria. Jarchi relates a fable, how that the Egyptian army came by ships, and that at sea they saw strange appearances, upon which they said one to another, what means this? they replied, these are our fathers, whom the fathers of those we are going to help drowned in the sea; and immediately returned to their own land.

{a} Anitqu. l. 10. c. 7. sect. 3.

Jeremiah 37:8

Ver. 8. And the Chaldeans shall come again,.... To Jerusalem, after they have defeated or drove back the Egyptian army:

and fight against this city; with fresh rigour and resolution; being exasperated by the methods taken to oblige them to raise the siege:

and take it, and burn it with fire; as they did, Jer 39:8.

Jeremiah 37:9

Ver. 9. Thus saith the Lord, deceive not yourselves,.... Or, "your souls"; with a false opinion, a vain persuasion and belief of the departure of the Chaldeans never to return; which they would have confirmed by the Lord; or, "lift not up your souls" {b}; with vain hopes of the above things: self or soul deception is a dreadful thing; and sad is the disappointment when men are elated with a false and vain hope:

saying, the Chaldeans shall surely depart from us; they had departed from Jerusalem; but they were persuaded they would depart out of the land of Judea, and go into their own land, the land of Babylon, from whence they came, and never return more:

for they shall not depart; out of the land of Judea, into their own land; at least not till they had done the work they were sent about.

{b} Mkytvpn wavt la "ne efferatis animas vestras", Tigurine version, Calvin; "ne tollatis (in spem) animas vestras", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 37:10

Ver. 10. For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you,.... Supposing the whole army of the Chaldeans had been vanquished and slain by the Egyptians, the confederates of the Jews; or should they be slain by them in a second siege of them, excepting a few next mentioned:

and there remained [but] wounded men among them; and supposing that those of them that were left, that were not slain, were everyone of them wounded men, and so disabled for fighting, as might be thought:

[yet] should they rise up every man in his tent; where he was smitten, and lay wounded; or where he was carried to be cured of his wounds; such should rise

up like persons from the dead almost, and fight with such strength and spirit, that they should soon take the city, though in such a condition:

and burn this city with fire; this being a thing determined by the Lord, and nothing should hinder it; for it matters not what the instruments are; though ever so impotent and disabled, they shall do the work allotted to them. Wherefore all the hopes of the Jews, founded upon the departure of the Chaldean army, were vain ones.

Jeremiah 37:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans were broken up from Jerusalem,.... When the siege of the city was broken up and raised: or, when they "went up from Jerusalem" {c}; were gone from it;

for fear of Pharaoh's army; or rather "because of Pharaoh's army" {d}. The word "fear" is not in the text; nor did they leave Jerusalem for fear of his army, but to meet it, and give it battle, as they did; however, by this means there was a freer egress and regress from and to the city.

{c} twlexb "cum recessisset", Cocceius; "ascendisset", Schmidt. {d} lyx ynpm "propter exercitum", Cocceius, Schmidt; "propter copias", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 37:12

Ver. 12. Then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem,.... At least he attempted to do so, taking the opportunity of the siege of the city being broke up: what were his reasons for it are not certain; whether that he might not be put into prison, which he might fear for what he had just prophesied of concerning the return of the Chaldean army, that should take the city, and burn it; or to save himself from the destruction which he was sure would come upon it; or because he found he could do no good by his preaching and prophesying in it: however his view was

to go into the land of Benjamin; his native country, the tribe he belonged to; and very likely to Anathoth in that tribe, where he was born, and had lived. Josephus {e} is express for it, which he says was twenty furlongs from

Jerusalem:

to separate himself thence in the midst of the people: or, "to slip away thence in the midst of the people" {f}; the siege being raised, the people that had fled to Jerusalem for safety crowded out again to go into their own countries, which the prophet thought to take the advantage of, and slip away in a crowd unobserved; though the words may be rendered, "to take part from thence in the midst of the people" {g}; either to take part of the spoil left there by the Chaldean army; or with the priests there, of what belonged to them, of whose number he was, **Jer 1:1**. The Targum is,

"to divide an inheritance which he had there in the midst of the people;"

and to the same sense are the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions {h}.

{e} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 7. sect. 3. {f} Meh Kwtb Mvm qlxl "ad lubrificandum seipsum", Montanus; "ad delabendum", Junius & Tremellius; "elabendo", Piscator; "ut subduecret se", Grotius. {g} "Ut partem acciperet ibi in medio populi", Schmidt. {h} Vid. Gloss. in T. Bab. Sota, fol. 42. 1. & Pesikta apud Yalkut in loc.

Jeremiah 37:13

Ver. 13. And when he was in the gate of Benjamin,.... One of the gates of the city so called, either because it stood in the tribe of Benjamin, as part of Jerusalem did; or because it led to the land of Benjamin, whither the prophet was going: and just as he had got to that gate, and was going through it, he was stopped by

a captain of the ward there; who was placed at this gate, that none should go out to the Chaldeans, according to Kimchi; but rather he was the keeper of the gate, not at this time only, but always; Josephus {i} calls him one of the rulers:

whose name [was] Irijah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah: the grandson as some think, of that Hananiah the false prophet, of whose death Jeremiah the prophet prophesied, Jer 28:16; and the Jews have a tradition that Hananiah ordered his son Shelemiah, that if he ever had an opportunity to bring Jeremiah to ruin, to do it; and the same charge Shelemiah gave to his son Irijah, who, having this opportunity, laid hold on him; Jarchi, Kimchi, and

Abarbinel, make mention of it:

and he took Jeremiah the prophet, saying, thou fallest away to the Chaldeans; it looks as if, though he might not have a family grudge against him, as the Jews suggest, yet had a hatred of him for his prophecies, and therefore fixes this calumny on him; for otherwise, why did he suffer the people to pass in great numbers without any such charge?

{i} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 7. sect. 3.

Jeremiah 37:14

Ver. 14. Then said Jeremiah, [it is] false,.... Or a "falsehood" {k}; as undoubtedly it was;

I fall not away to the Chaldeans; for the Chaldean army was gone from the city; nor did Jeremiah like so well to be with an idolatrous people; for after the city was taken, when Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard gave him his choice, either to go with him to Babylon, where he promised to take care of him; or to go to Gedaliah, who was made governor of Judah; he chose rather to be with him, and his poor company:

but he hearkened not to him; would not hear his defence, or however would not give any credit to it, being unwilling to let slip this opportunity of doing him ill will:

so Irijah took Jeremiah, and brought him to the princes; the princes of Zedekiah's court, or the princes of the people, the civil magistrates; or it may be the great sanhedrim, who he knew had no good disposition towards the prophet.

{k} rqv "mendacium est", Vatablus; "falsitas, calumnia", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 37:15

Ver. 15. Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah,.... For attempting to depart the city, and go off to the Chaldeans, as Irijah had suggested to them, and to whom they hearkened; and perhaps would not hear what the prophet had to say for himself; and if they did, it had no weight with them:

and smote him; either with their fists, or with rods, or a scourge; perhaps he underwent the punishment of forty stripes save one, according to the law; and they may be said to smite or beat him, because they ordered it to be done:

and put him in prison, in the house of Jonathan the scribe; or secretary of state; such an one as Elishama was in Jehoiakim's time, who had a house or apartment at court as he had, who was now dead or removed, Jer 36:12;

for they had made that the prison; which had not used to be; but by the courtiers, and with the consent of this scribe, secretary, or chancellor, it was made a prison; not for common malefactors, but for state prisoners; and a bad prison it seems it was. Very probably this scribe was a very cruel wicked man, who used those very ill that were his prisoners; and indeed, if he had not been of such a character, he would scarcely have suffered his house to have been made a prison.

Jeremiah 37:16

Ver. 16. When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon,.... Or, "into the house of the pit" {l}; a dungeon, like a pit or ditch, dark, dirty, or dismal:

and into the cabins; or "cells" {m}; into a place more inward than the cells, as the Targum; into the innermost and worst part in all the prison, where a man could not well lie, sit, nor stand:

and Jeremiah had remained there many days; in this very uncomfortable condition; very probably till the Chaldean army returned to Jerusalem, as he foretold it should.

{l} rwbh tyb la "in, [vel] ad domum laci", Pagninus, Montanus; "in domum foveae", Schmidt. {m} twynxh law "et in cellulas illius", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "et ad cellas", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 37:17

Ver. 17. Then Zedekiah the king sent and took him out,.... After Jeremiah had been in prison for some time; and the Chaldean army being returned, and having renewed their siege, the king is frightened; and knowing the prophet was in prison, sends a messenger to take him out from thence, and bring him to him; which was accordingly done:

and the king asked him secretly in his house; he took him into some private apartment, and there alone conferred with him, for fear of his princes and courtiers; who he knew bore no good will to the prophet, and would be ready to charge him with timidity;

and said unto him,

is there [any] word from the Lord? he means any particular word of prophecy, any late one, and what concerned their present circumstances, showing what would be the issue of the return of the Chaldean army; for prophecy did not come at all times, nor even according to the will of man, but always according to the will of God, and when he thought fit; this the king knew very well, and he wanted a comfortable word, some good news of the failure of the present attempt:

and Jeremiah said, there is; but not such an one as he wanted; it was of the same strain with the former, and confirmed all that the prophet had from time to time told him and his predecessor what would certainly be the case:

for, said he, thou shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon; which was boldly and faithfully said, to be said to the face of the king himself, risking his life in so doing; or, at least, exposing himself to severer treatment, if severer could be used.

Jeremiah 37:18

Ver. 18. Moreover, Jeremiah said unto King Zedekiah,.... Having this opportunity with him alone, and perhaps observing the king was melted and softened with what he had said; however, finding liberty in his own mind, he enlarges his discourse, and freely expostulates with him in the following manner:

what have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison? or, "what have I sinned?" have I been guilty of treason against thee, O king? or of scandal and defamation of any of thy nobles and courtiers? have I done any injury to any of the king's subjects? has there been any falsehood in my prophecies? has not everything appeared to be true that I have spoken, concerning the coming of the Chaldeans to invade the land, and besiege the city? and concerning the return of the Chaldean army when broken up? why then should I be cast into prison, and detained there? is it not a clear case that what I have said comes from the Lord? and therefore ought not to be used in this manner.

Jeremiah 37:19

Ver. 19. Where [are] now your prophets that prophesied unto you,.... Your false prophets, as the Targum; what is become of their prophecies? where is the truth of them, to which general credit has been given? where are they? let them appear and defend themselves, if they can, from the charge of lying, and of being false prophets? or where are they? tacitly suggesting the different circumstances of him and them; he, who was a true prophet, was laid in a prison; they, who were false prophets, were caressed in the palaces of the king and his nobles, and in favour with the people in general:

saying, the king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land? gave out that the king of Babylon would never invade the land of Judea, or besiege the city of Jerusalem, which proved false; and still they had the front to say, that when the siege was raised, he would never come again; whereas he was then returned to it, and was now besieging it; so that here were notorious falsehoods delivered out by them.

Jeremiah 37:20

Ver. 20. Therefore hear now, one pray thee, O my lord the king,.... When the prophet spoke in the name of the Lord, and the words of the Lord, it was with great boldness and majesty; but when he spoke for himself, and on his own behalf, it was with great submission, as it became a subject to his king; and whom he owns as his sovereign lord, though a wicked prince, and whose destruction he knew was at hand:

let my supplication be accepted before thee; or, "fall before thee": see Jer 36:7; which was as follows:

that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe; but that he might be discharged from his confinement; or however be removed into another prison, not so uncomfortable and disagreeable as this man's house or prison was; and which perhaps was still the worse through his cruel and ill natured carriage to him; and which all together endangered his life: wherefore he adds,

lest I die there; for though he had continued there many days, yet the place was so exceedingly noisome, that he thought he could not long continue there, was he remanded back to it.

Jeremiah 37:21

Ver. 21. Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court of the prison,.... He did not think fit to discharge him entirely, lest it should give offence to the princes, who had committed him; but he ordered him to be put in a court belonging to the prison, where he might breathe in a freer air, and have liberty of walking to and fro, where his friends might be admitted to come and see him:

and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the bakers' street; it seems there was a street in Jerusalem so called, where the bakers lived; and perhaps the king's bakers; who had orders to deliver to the prophet every day a piece or loaf of bread, as much as was sufficient for a man; or, however, as much as the scarcity of provisions in a siege would allow. Kimchi makes mention of a Midrash, which interprets this of bread made of bran, which was sold without the palace; as if it was coarser bread than what was eaten at court:

until all the bread in the city was spent; that is, as long as there was any. These were the king's orders:

thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison: until the city was taken; unless a small time that he was in the dungeon of Malchiah, out of which he was taken again, and restored to the court of the prison, and there continued; see Jer 38:6.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 38:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 38

This chapter is taken up in giving an account of Jeremiah's being cast into a dungeon; his deliverance from it; and private conversation with King Zedekiah. The occasion of the prophet's being cast into a dungeon was his discourse to the people, which four of the princes represented to the king as seditious, and moved to have him put to death; and, being delivered into their hands, was put into a miry dungeon,
Jer 38:1. Ebedmelech, the Ethiopian, hearing of his miserable case, represented it to the king, and interceded for his release; which being granted, with the help of thirty men, and by means of old clouts and rotten rags, let down by cords, drew him up, and placed him in the court of the prison, Jer 38:7. King Zedekiah sends for Jeremiah, and has a private conference with him about the state of affairs; when the prophet faithfully told him how things would issue, and gave him his best advice, Jer 38:14; upon parting, the king desires the conference might be kept a secret from the princes, which was accordingly done, Jer 38:24; and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison till the taking of Jerusalem, Jer 38:28.

Ver. 1. Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur,.... Of these two persons we nowhere else read. Some think that Pashur, whose son Gedaliah was, is the same as is mentioned
Jer 20:1; which is not likely, since he was a priest, and this son a prince:

and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah; these had been sent by the king to Jeremiah, to inquire of the Lord, and to pray for him and his people, Jer 21:1; all four were princes, prime ministers of state, of great power and authority, and to whom the king could deny nothing, or withstand, Jer 38:4; these

heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken to all the people; that is, to as many of them as came to the court of the prison to visit him; some out of good will, and some out of ill will; and others out of curiosity; being desirous to know by the prophet how things would go with them; and by which means what he said was spread all over the city, and came to the ears of the above princes; and no doubt there were persons enough officious enough to carry these things to them:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 38:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith the Lord, he that remaineth in this city,.... Of Jerusalem; that does not go out of it, and surrender himself to the Chaldeans; but continues in it fighting against them:

shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; that is, by one or other of these:

but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live: that goes out of the city, throws down his arms, delivers up himself to the Chaldean army, and submits to their mercy, shall have quarters given him, and his life shall be spared:

for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live; or, "his soul, and it shall live" {n}; comfortably and in safety; he shall escape with his life, and that shall be preserved from the sword, famine, and pestilence; and whereas it was, as it were, lost, it shall be recovered out of the jaws of death, out of the above calamities it was exposed to; and so be like a prey taken out of the hands of the mighty, and be quite safe.

{n} yxw llvl wvpn wl htyhw "et erit illi anima ejus in praedam et vivet", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 38:3

Ver. 3. Thus saith the Lord, this city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army,.... When those found in it should be put to the sword, or carried captive: this the prophet declares with the greatest certainty; and what he had often affirmed for twenty years past, and now stands to it, having had fresh assurances from the Lord that so it would be; and which he faithfully published; though he had received some favours from the court, had his liberty enlarged, and was now eating the king's bread, he was not to be bribed by these things to hold his peace; but the nearer the ruin of the city was, the more confident was he of its destruction:

which shall take it; or, "that it may take it" {o}; being delivered into its hands by the Lord, without whose permission the Chaldean army could never have taken it: or "and he shall take it" {p}; that is, the king of Babylon.

{o} hdklw "ut capiat eam", Schmidt. {p} "Et capiet illam", Cocceius; "et capiet eam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 38:4

Ver. 4. Therefore the princes said unto the king,.... The four princes mentioned in Jer 38:1, having heard what Jeremiah said to the people, laid the case before the king, and addressed him upon it in the following manner:

we beseech thee, let this man be put to death; or,

"let this man now be put to death,"

as the Targum. They speak very disrespectfully of the prophet, him "this man"; and with great authority to the and not in a submissive supplicating way, as we render it; the king, being in distress, was in their hands; he stood in fear of them, and could do nothing against their will and pleasure; and they urge that he might die instantly; they were for taking away his life at once. The reason they give follows:

for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words to them; dispirited the soldiers who were set for the defence of the city, such of them as were left, who were not taken off by the sword, famine, or pestilence; since, if what Jeremiah said was true, all attempts to defend it must be in vain; and the people be without any hope of being delivered out of the hands of the enemy:

for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt; than which nothing was more false; for the prophet foreseeing that their lives were in danger, through the sword, famine, or pestilence, by continuing in the city, advised them to go out of it, and surrender to the Chaldeans, whereby they would be preserved.

Jeremiah 38:5

Ver. 5. Then Zedekiah the king said, behold, he [is] in your hand,.... In your power, to do with him as you please. This is either a grant of the king, allowing them to do as they thought fit; or a declaration of their power, supposing them to be the princes of the sanhedrim, as Grotius thinks, to judge of a false prophet, and condemn him; but that they were such does not appear; nor does their charge of the prophet, or their procedure against him, confirm it. The former sense seems best:

for the king [is] not [he that] can do [any] thing against you; which is said either in a flattering way, that such was their interest in him, and so great his regard for them, that he could not deny them any thing. So it is in the old translations, "for the king may deny you nothing"; and, "the king can deny you nothing": or else in a complaining way, suggesting that, he was a king, and no king; that he had no power to oppose them; they would do as they pleased; and therefore it signified nothing applying to him; he should not say any thing against it; he would have no concern in it; they might do as they pleased, since he knew they would.

Jeremiah 38:6

Ver. 6. Then took they Jeremiah,.... Having the king's leave, or at least no prohibition from him; they went with proper attendants to the court of the prison, and took the prophet from thence:

and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that [was] in the court of the prison; this was a dungeon that belonged to the prison which Malchiah had the care of, or which belonged to his house, which was contiguous to the court of the prison. The Targum renders it, Malchiah the son of the king; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions; but it is not likely that Zedekiah should have a son that was set over his dungeon, or to whom one belonged, or should be called by his name: here the princes cast the prophet, in order that he should perish, either with famine or suffocation, or the noisomeness of the place; not caring with their own hands to take away the life of a prophet, and for fear of the people; and this being a more slow and private way of dispatching him, they chose it; for they designed no doubt nothing less than death:

and they let down Jeremiah with cords; there being no steps or stairs to go down into it; so that nobody could come to him when in it, or relieve him:

and in the dungeon [there was] no water, but mire; so Jeremiah sunk in the mire; up to the neck, as Josephus {q} says. Some think that it was at this time, and in this place, that Jeremiah put up the petitions to the Lord, and which he heard, recorded in **La 3:55**; and that that whole chapter was composed by him in this time of his distress.

{q} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 7. sect. 5.

Jeremiah 38:7

Ver. 7. Now when Ebedmelech the Ethiopian,.... The Targum renders it,

"a servant of King Zedekiah;"

which Jarchi, and other writers, following, make Zedekiah to be the Ethiopian; so called, because as an Ethiopian differs in his skin, so Zedekiah differed in his righteousness, from the rest of his generation; and this his servant, he, with others {r}, takes to be Baruch the son of Neriah, but without any foundation; but, as Kimchi observes, with whom Abarbinel and Ben Melech agree, had this word "Ebedmelech" been an appellation, the usual article would have been prefixed before the word "king", as in the next clause; and somewhere or other his name would have been given; but it is a proper name, as Ahimelech, and Abimelech. A servant of the king he might be, and doubtless he was; and perhaps had this name given him when he became a proselyte; for such he seems to be, and a good man; who had a great regard to the prophet, because he was one; and had more piety and humanity in him, though an Ethiopian, than those who were Israelites by birth:

one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house; an officer at court; one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber. Josephus {s} says he was in great honour; so the Targum renders it,

"a great man;"

a man in high office, of great authority; taking it to be a name of office, as it sometimes is; though it may be understood, in a proper sense, of a castrated person; for such there were very commonly in kings' palaces, employed in one office or another, and especially in the bedchamber: now this man

heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; for though the princes did it with all possible secrecy, it was known at court, and came to the ears of this good man; and indeed the dungeon was not far from the court; and some have thought he might have heard the groans of Jeremiah in it; however, he came to the hearing of it, and was affected with the relation of his case, and determined to save him, if possible:

the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin; the same in which the prophet was taken, Jer 37:13; here he sat to hear and try causes, courts of judicature being held in gates of cities; or to receive petitions; or rather it may be to consult about the present state of affairs, what was best to be done in defence of the city, and to annoy the besiegers; and it may be to have a view of the enemy's camp, and to sally out upon them; for that he was here in order to make his escape is not likely.

{r} Pirke Eliezer, c. 53. Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 13. 1. {s} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 7. sect. 5.

Jeremiah 38:8

Ver. 8. And Ebedmelech went forth out of the king's house,.... As soon as he heard of the prophet's distress, he immediately went out from his apartments in the king's palace, where he performed his office, and his business chiefly lay, or where he dwelt, to the gate of Benjamin, where the king was; and if he was here for the administration of justice, it was a proper time and place for Ebedmelech to lay the case of Jeremiah before him:

and spake to the king; freely, boldly, and intrepidly, in the presence of his nobles:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 38:9

Ver. 9. My lord the king,.... He addresses him as a courtier, with great reverence and submission, and yet with great boldness:

these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet; meaning the princes, who might be present, and whom he pointed at, and mentioned by name; which showed great courage and faithfulness, as well as great zeal for, and attachment to, the prophet; to charge after this manner persons of such great authority so publicly, and to the king, whom the king himself stood in fear of: he first brings a general charge against them, that they had done wrong in everything they had done to the prophet; in their angry words to him; in smiting him, and putting him in prison in Jonathan's house; and particularly in their last instance of ill will to him:

whom they have cast into the dungeon; he does not say where, or describe the dungeon, because well known to the king, and what a miserable place it was; and tacitly suggests the cruelty and inhumanity of the princes:

and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is, for [there is] no more bread in the city; or very little; there was none to be had but with great difficulty, as Kimchi observes; and therefore though the king had ordered a piece of bread to be given him daily, as long as there was any in the city; yet it being almost all consumed, and the prophet being out or sight, and so out of mind, and altogether disregarded, must be in perishing circumstances, and near death; and must inevitably perish, unless some immediate care be taken of him. It may be rendered, "he will die" {t}, &c. or the sense is, bread being exceeding scarce in the city, notwithstanding the king's order, very little was given to Jeremiah, while he was in the court of the prison; so that he was half starved, and was a mere skeleton then, and would have died for hunger there; wherefore it was barbarous in the princes to cast such a man into a dungeon. It may be rendered, "he would have died for hunger in the place where he was, seeing there was no more bread in the city" {u}; wherefore, if the princes had let him alone where he was, he would have died through famine; and therefore acted a very wicked part in hastening his death, by throwing him into a dungeon; this is Jarchi's sense, with which Abarbinel agrees.

{t} tmyw "morietur enim", Schmidt. {u} "Qui moriturus fuerat in loco suo propter famem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 38:10

Ver. 10. Then the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian,.... Being affected with the case of the prophet; and repenting of the leave he had given the princes to do with him as they pleased, gave orders as follows:

saying, take from hence thirty men with thee; from the place where the king was, the gate of Benjamin; where very probably at this time was a garrison of soldiers, thirty of which were ordered to be taken; or these were to be taken out of the king's bodyguard, he had here with him. Josephus {w} calls them thirty of the king's servants, such as were about the king's person, or belonged to his household; and so the Syriac version of Jer 38:11 says that Ebedmelech took with him men of the king's household; but why thirty of them, when three or four might be thought sufficient to take up a single man out of a dungeon? Abarbinel thinks the dungeon was very deep, and Jeremiah, ah old man, could not be got out but with great labour and difficulty. Jarchi and Kimchi say, the men were so weakened with the famine, that so many were necessary to draw out one man; but the true reason seems rather to be, that should the princes, whom the king might suspect, or any other, attempt to hinder this order being put in execution, there might be a sufficient force to assist in it, and repel those that might oppose it:

and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he die; the king speaks honourably of Jeremiah, giving him his title as a prophet, and expresses great concern for him; and orders them to hasten the taking him up, lest he should die before, which he suggests would give him great concern.

{w} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 7. sect. 5.

Jeremiah 38:11

Ver. 11. So Ebedmelech took the men with him,.... The thirty men, as the king ordered: as soon as ever he had got the grant, he immediately set about the work, and lost no time to save the prophet's life:

and went unto the house of the king under the treasury; from the gate of Benjamin he went to the king's palace, and to a particular place under the treasury; by which "treasury" may be meant the treasury of garments, or the royal wardrobe, under which was a place, where clothes worn out, or cast off, were put: the Septuagint represent it as underground, a cellar under the wardrobe:

and took thence old cast clouts, and old rotten rags: the Syriac version has it, such as cattle were wiped and cleaned with:

and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah; for it was so deep, that men could not reach to put them into the hands of the prophet; and, had they been thrown in, they might have been scattered about and be out of his reach, who stuck in the mire; or they would have been in all likelihood greatly bedaubed with the mire.

Jeremiah 38:12

Ver. 12. And Ebedmelech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah,.... Being come to the dungeon, and at the mouth of it, he addressed him in a very humane and friendly manner, and directed him how to make use of the rags he let down for his ease and benefit:

put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine arm holes under the cords; the cords were first put under his arm holes to draw him up with, and then these clouts and rags were put under the cords; lest they should cut into his flesh, at least hurt him, and give him pain, the whole weight of his body resting on them; and perhaps these parts had received some hurt when he was let down into the dungeon with cords, when they were not so careful of him; and therefore needed some soft rags the more to be put under them at this time; all which shows what an affection this man had for the prophet and holy tender he was of him:

and Jeremiah did so; he put the rags between the cords and his arm holes.

Jeremiah 38:13

Ver. 13. So they drew up Jeremiah with cords,.... The men that were with Ebedmelech, as many as were necessary; he overlooking, directing, and encouraging:

and he took him out of the dungeon; alive, according to the king's orders and design, and in spite of the prophet's enemies: the thing succeeded according to wish; the Lord ordering and prospering every step:

and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison; from whence he had been taken, and where he was replaced; Ebedmelech having no warrant to set him at entire liberty; nor would it have been prudent to have solicited that, which might too much have exasperated the princes; and besides, here, according to the king's order, bread was to be given him, as long as there was any in the city; so that it was the most fit and proper place for him to remain in; wherefore what Josephus {x} says, that he dismissed him, and set him free, is not true.

{x} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 10. c. 7. sect. 5.)

Jeremiah 38:14

Ver. 14. Then Zedekiah the king sent and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him,.... When the prophet was taken out of the dungeon, and brought to the court of the prison, of which the king had knowledge, he sent some person or persons to bring him to him, to have some private conversation with him:

into the third entry that [is] in the house of the Lord; what place is meant Jarchi confesses his ignorance of, but conjectures it was the court of the Israelites; the outward court, and the court of the women, being before it. Kimchi rightly takes it to be a place through which they went from the king's house to the house of the Lord; no doubt the same that is called the king's ascent, by which he went up thither, shown to, and admired by, the queen of Sheba, 1Ki 10:5; in which there were three gates or entrances, as Dr. Lightfoot observes {y}; the first, the gate of the foundation; the second, the gate behind the guard; and the third, the gate Coponius; and here the king and the prophet had their interview:

and the king said to Jeremiah, I will ask thee a thing, or "a word"; a word of prophecy; or whether there was a word of prophecy from the Lord, concerning him, his people, and city, and what it was; and what would be the event of the present siege, whether it would issue well or ill:

hide nothing from me; be it what it will, whether grateful or not; he had been told again and again how things would be; but still he was in hopes that something more favourable and consolatory would come from the Lord to him.

{y} Temple-Service, c. 33. p. 2028.

Jeremiah 38:15

Ver. 15. Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah,.... Here follows the prophets answer, in which he tacitly desires to be excused saying any thing upon this head, since it might be attended with danger to himself, and be of no service to the king; and therefore prudently thought fit to come into some agreement with the king, to secure himself, if he insisted upon it:

if I declare [it] unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death? this he might fear, from past experience of the king's conduct; for, though he might not slay him with his own hands, or give orders to others to do it; yet he might deliver him up to the will and mercy of his princes, as he had done before; not that the prophet was afraid to die, or was deterred through fear of death from delivering the word of the Lord, and doing his work; but he thought it proper to make use of prudent means to preserve his life; besides, he had no express order from the Lord to say anything concerning this matter at this time:

and if give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken to me? or, "thou wilt not hearken to me" {z}; so the Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions; and therefore it was to no purpose to give him any advice; from all this the king might easily understand the prophet had nothing to say that would be agreeable to him; however, he was very desirous to know what it was, and therefore promises indemnity and security, as follows:

{z} yla emvt al "non audies me", V. L. Schmidt; "non audies ad me", Montanus; "non auscultabis mihi", Piscator.

Jeremiah 38:16

Ver. 16. So Zedekiah the king swore secretly unto Jeremiah,.... The king not only gave the prophet his word, but also annexed to it his oath, that his life should be in no danger, either from him or his princes; this oath was made secretly, both for the honour of the king, he swearing to a subject, and that it might not be known by the princes, and for fear of them:

saying, [as] the Lord liveth, that made us this soul; or "these souls", as the Targum: here a superfluous word, ta, is used; which, as the Jews observe, is one of the eight words which are written, but not read: he swears by the living God, by whom only men should swear, whenever it is necessary; this is the proper form of an oath; the appeal is to be made to the eternal God, that knows all things, the Father of spirits, the Maker of souls, and giver of the lives of all men, and who can take them away when he pleases. The sense is, may the living God, who has made my soul and yours, and given life to us both, may he take away my soul, my life, from me, if ever I make any attempt upon yours;

I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of those that seek thy life; he not only promises and swears to it, that he would not take awake his life with his own hands, or give orders to take it away; but he would not deliver him into the hands of his princes, who he knew were implacable enemies, and sought all opportunities and advantages against him; but then he makes no promise that he will take any counsel or advice that should be given him; as to this, he would lay himself under no obligation to observe, resolving to take his own way; if he liked it, to follow it; if not, to reject it; he would not be bound by it.

Jeremiah 38:17

Ver. 17. Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah,.... Being thus indemnified and secured by the king's word and oath, he proceeds freely to lay before the king the whole matter as from the Lord:

thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; the prophet does not give the following advice in his own name, but in the name of the eternal Jehovah, the Lord of armies above and below, and who had a special regard to the people of Israel, and their welfare; and therefore it became the king to show the more regard unto it:

if thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes; the generals of his army, whose names are mentioned, Jer 39:3; the king not being with his army at this time, but at Riblah, Jer 39:5; the meaning is, if he would open the gates of Jerusalem, and go forth from thence to the Chaldean army, and surrender himself and the city into the hands of the princes in it, and general officers of it:

then thy soul shall live; in thy body, and not be separated from it; or live comfortably, in peace and safety, though not in so much splendour and glory as he had done:

and this city shall not be burned with fire; as had been threatened; and as the Chaldeans would be provoked to do, should it hold out to the last extremity; but should preserve it upon a surrender:

and thou shall live, and thine house; not only himself, but his wives and children, and servants.

Jeremiah 38:18

Ver. 18. But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes,.... And surrender to them:

then shall this city be given into the hands of the Chaldeans; if not willingly delivered up by the king of Judah, it shall be forcibly taken by the king of Babylon's army, through the permission of God; with respect to whom it is said to be given unto them, even by him who has the disposing of cities and kingdoms:

and they shall burn it with fire; as it had been often foretold it should, and as it accordingly was, Jer 39:8;

and thou shalt not escape out of their hand; though he might hope he should, and would attempt to do it, yet should be taken; and though he should not be slain, yet should never regain his liberty, or get out of their hands, when once in them; see Jer 52:7.

Jeremiah 38:19

Ver. 19. And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah,.... In answer to this advice he gave him, persuading him to give up himself and the city into the hands of the Chaldeans:

I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans; who did go out of the city, and surrendered to the Chaldeans, whom Zedekiah had cruelly used, or severely threatened:

lest they deliver me into their hands, and they mock me; that is, lest the Chaldeans should deliver him into the hands of the Jews, and they should jeer and scoff at him, for doing the same thing he had forbidden them on the severest penalty; or lest they should put him to death in the most revengeful and contemptuous manner, as Kimchi's note is: but all this was either a mere excuse, or showed great weakness and pusillanimity, and was fearing where no fear was; for, on the one hand, it was not reasonable to think that the Chaldeans, when they had got such a prize as the king of the Jews, that they should easily part with him, and especially deliver him up into the hands of his own people; and, on the other hand, it is not likely, that, should he be delivered into their hands, they would ever have treated him in so scornful and cruel a manner, who was their prince, and a partner with them in their captivity.

Jeremiah 38:20

Ver. 20. But Jeremiah said, they shall not deliver [thee],.... To take off the above excuse, or remove that objection, the prophet assures the king that the Chaldeans would never deliver him into the hands of the Jews; he might depend upon it, it would never be done:

obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the Lord, which I speak unto thee; the counsel he had given him, to surrender to the Chaldeans, was not from himself, but from the Lord: and though he had no express order to give it at that time, yet it was what was agreeable to the will of God, and what he had exhorted the people to in the beginning of this chapter; and therefore, since it came from the Lord, as it ought to be attended to, so he might be assured of the divine protection, should he act according to it:

so it shall be well with thee, and thy soul shall live; that is, it would not only be much better with him than he feared, but than it would be with him should he obstinately stand out to the last; he should have more respect and honour from the king of Babylon; and not only have his life spared, but enjoy more of the comforts of life; particularly the sight of his eyes, which he lost when taken.

Jeremiah 38:21

Ver. 21. But if thou refuse to go forth,.... Out of Jerusalem, to the Chaldean army, and submit to them:

this [is] the word that the Lord hath showed me, or the thing which should certainly come to pass; the word of prophecy the Lord had showed to the prophet, and which he now declares to the king; who asked of him a word, was desirous to know whether there was a word from the Lord, and what it was; and this it is which follows, in case he continued impenitent, obstinate, and disobedient.

Jeremiah 38:22

Ver. 22. And, behold, all the women that are left in the king of Judah's house,.... That were left in the royal palace when Jehoiakim and Jeconiah were carried captives; or which were left of the famine and pestilence in, Zedekiah's house; or would be left there when he should flee and make his escape; meaning his concubines, or maids of honour, and court ladies;

[shall be] brought forth to the king of Babylon's princes: who shall use them as they think fit, and dispose of them at pleasure:

and those [women] shall say, thy friends have set thee on, and have prevailed against thee: or, "the men of thy peace" {a}; the false prophets, and the princes that hearkened to them, and promised and flattered him with peace and prosperity, these deceived him; they set him on to hold out against the Chaldeans, and not believe the Prophet Jeremiah; and they prevailed with him to do so, though it was against himself, and his own interest:

thy feet are sunk in the mire; not literally, as some Jewish writers suppose, that he got into a quagmire when he fled; though there may be a hint in the expression to the miry dungeon in which he suffered the prophet to be cast; and was now got into one himself, in a figurative sense, being involved in difficulties, out of which he could not extricate himself:

[and] they are turned away back; meaning either his feet, which were distorted, and had turned aside from the right way; or now could go on no further against the enemy, but were obliged to turn back and flee; or else the men of his peace, the false prophets and princes, who had fed him with vain hopes of safety, now left him, and every man shifted for himself. This would be said by the women, either in a mournful manner, by way of complaint; or as scoffing at the king, as a silly foolish man, to hearken to such persons; and so he that was afraid of being mocked by the Jews is jeered at by the women of his house.

{a} Kmlv yvna "viri pacis tuae", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 38:23

Ver. 23. So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans,.... Not the citizens of Jerusalem; but, as Kimchi observes, the Chaldeans that should enter the city shall bring them out to the Chaldeans without: or it may be rendered impersonally, "they shall be brought out": not only the ladies at court, that waited on him and his queen, as before; but all his wives and concubines, and his children, or his sons rather; for at the taking of the city no mention is made of daughters, only of sons, who were slain before his eyes, Jer 39:6;

and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon; not by him personally, for he was not present at the taking of him, but by his army, who having taken him, brought him to him, and delivered him into his hand, Jer 39:5;

and thou shalt cause this city to be burnt with fire; or, "thou shall burn this city with fire" {b}; be the moral cause of it; through his sin and obstinacy, impenitence and unbelief, the burning of the city might be laid to his charge; his sin was the cause of it; and it was all one as if he had burnt it with his own hands. All this is said to work upon him to hearken to the advice given; but all was in vain.

{b} vab Pdvt "combures igne", Vatablus, Schmidt; "cremabis in igne", Montanus.

Jeremiah 38:24

Ver. 24. Then said Zedekiah to Jeremiah,.... Not a word signifying his approbation of the counsel given him, or that he intended to take it; his silence showed the reverse:

let no man know of these words: that had passed between them; of the conference and conversation they had had together, at least not the particulars of it; the thing itself was known, as appears by what follows, that the king and prophet had been discoursing together; but what they talked of, he desires might be concealed, pretending the prophet's good, though it was his own honour and safety he sought:

and thou shall not die; as he had promised he should not, and had sworn to it; but suggests by this, that if he disclosed the conversation, he should took upon himself free from his word and oath; so that this carried something menacing in it: or it may be rendered "that thou die not" {c}; intimating, that if the princes should come to the knowledge of what he had said, of the advice he had given, they would surely put him to death; and therefore, for his own safety, he desires the whole may be kept a secret.

{c} twmt alw "ne moriaris", Gataker, Schmidt; "ut non moriaris", Piscator.

Jeremiah 38:25

Ver. 25. But if the princes hear that I have talked to thee,.... Which the king suspected they would; and could hardly think but somebody or other would see him and the prophet talking together; who would be officious enough to go and acquaint the princes with it, though he had endeavoured to be as private as possible; however, to provide against the worst, he instructs Jeremiah what to say to them, should they hear of their being together:

and they come unto thee: as he did not doubt but they would, as soon as ever they had notice of it:

and say unto thee, declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king; hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death; also what the king said unto thee: the king knew how inquisitive they would be, and sift the prophet to the bottom, to know both what the prophet said to the king, about the state of affairs respecting the Chaldeans, and the surrender of the city to them, which they supposed to be the subject of the discourse; and what were the king's thoughts about it, and his determinations concerning it; and in order to make the prophet easy, and more free and open to tell the whole matter, he suggests they would promise him his life should not be taken away.

Jeremiah 38:26

Ver. 26. Then thou shalt say unto them,.... Here the king puts words into the prophet's mouth, what he should say to the princes, to put them off from inquiring further, and so keep the matter a secret:

I presented my supplication before the king; or "caused [it] to fall" {d}; delivered it in an humble and submissive manner:

that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house, to die there; this he had entreated of the king before, Jer 37:20; and now, no doubt, renewed his request, having this fair opportunity with the king alone to do it; or, however, it is highly probable he did it upon this hint of the king. This shows how much the king stood in fear of his princes in this time of his distress; and that he had only the name of a king, and had not courage and resolution enough to act of himself, according to the dictates of his mind; yea, that he feared men more than he feared the Lord.

{d} ytnxt yna lypm "cadere feci deprecationem meam", Pagninus; "cadere faciens fui", &c. Schmidt.

Jeremiah 38:27

Ver. 27. Then came all the princes to Jeremiah, and asked him,.... After he had parted with the king, and was come back to the court of the prison; as soon as the princes had been informed of the interview between the king and the prophet, which soon came to their ears, they came in a body to him, to the court of the prison, where he was, and asked him of what passed between him and the king:

and he told them according to all those words that the king had commanded; what he told them, no doubt, was truth; though he did not tell them all the truth; which he was not obliged to do, having no command from God, and being forbid by the king:

so they left off speaking with him; or, "were silent from him" {e}; went away silent, not being able to disprove what he had said, or object unto it, and finding they could get nothing more out of him:

for the matter was not perceived; or, "was not heard" {f}; though there were persons that saw the king and the prophet together, yet nobody heard anything that passed between them; and therefore Jeremiah could not be confronted in what he had said, or be charged with concealing anything.

{e} wnmm wvrxyw "et tacuerunt ab eo", Pagninus, Montanus; "siluerunt", Calvin. {f} rbdh emvn al "quia non auditum est verbum", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 38:28

Ver. 28. So Jeremiah abode in the court of the prison,.... Where he was ordered to be by the king, before he was cast into the dungeon, and where he was replaced by Ebedmelech; and which was now confirmed by the king, and here he continued:

until the day that Jerusalem was taken; but how long it was from his conversation with the king, to the taking of the city, is not certain:

and he was [there] when Jerusalem was taken; as appears from Jer 39:14. Kimchi connects this with the beginning of the next chapter; and so the Targum, rendering it,

"and it came to pass when Jerusalem was taken;"

namely, what is related in the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 39:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 39

This chapter gives an account of the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, according to the several prophecies of Jeremiah concerning it. The time of taking it, and by whom, after a siege of eighteen months, Jer 39:1; several things relating to King Zedekiah; his flight; the taking of him; the bringing him to the king of Babylon, and his sentence on him; the execution of that sentence, slaying his sons and nobles, putting out his eyes, and carrying him in chains to Babylon, Jer 39:4; the destruction of the city is described, by burning the houses in it, breaking down its walls, carrying the people captive, all, except a few poor persons left in the land, Jer 39:8; the preservation of Jeremiah, according to the king of Babylon's orders by his princes; and the committing him to the care of Gedaliah, the governor of the poor Jews, Jer 39:11; and the chapter is concluded with a promise of the protection of Ebedmelech, made by the Lord before the taking of the city, while the prophet was in prison; and which, no doubt, had its accomplishment, Jer 39:15.

Ver. 1. In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month,.... The month Tebet, which answers to part of our December, and part of January; so that it was in the winter season the siege of Jerusalem began:

came Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it; provoked by Zedekiah's breaking covenant with him, and rebelling against him, who had set him upon his throne, in the room of his nephew; so that here was a mixture of perfidy and ingratitude, which he was determined to revenge; and being impatient of it, came at such an unseasonable time of the year for a long march and a siege. The king of Babylon came in person at first; but having begun the siege, and given proper orders to his generals for the carrying of it on, and supposing it would be a long one, retired to Riblah in Syria, either for pleasure or for business. The time of beginning the siege exactly agrees with the account in 2Ki 25:1; only there it is more particular, expressing the day of the month, which was the tenth of it; and so in
Jer 52:4. The reason of inserting the account of the siege and taking of the city, in this place, is both to show the exact accomplishment of Jeremiah's prophecies about it, and to lead on to some facts and predictions that followed it.

Jeremiah 39:2

Ver. 2. [And] in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month,.... The month Tammuz, which answers to part of June, and part of July:

the ninth [day] of the month, the city was broken up; or taken by storm; the walls of it were broken by engines and battering rams, so that the Chaldeans could enter it, and take it. This was just a year and a half after it had been besieged, not being able to hold out any longer, because of the famine; see Jer 52:6.

Jeremiah 39:3

Ver. 3. And all the princes of the king of Babylon came in,.... Into the city: a breach being made in the walls to take possession of it:

and sat in the middle gate; according to Jarchi, this was a gate of the temple; the gate Nicanor, the eastern gate, which was between the gate of the court of the women and the gate of the temple; who observes, that their Rabbins say, the middle gate was the gate in which the wise men made their decrees and constitutions: so that, in "the place of judgment, wickedness was there"; as in

Ec 3:16; and Josephus {g} says, that the city was taken in the middle of the night, when the enemies' generals went into the temple; but rather, according to Kimchi, it was one of the gates of the city of Jerusalem; according to Abarbinel, Jerusalem had three walls, and this was the gate of the middle wall; but others take it to be the gate in the middle wall, between the upper and lower city; perhaps it is the same called the second gate, **Zep 1:10**; and might be the chief and principal gate where these princes placed their seats in triumph as victors, and so fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah, **Jer 1:15**; though they might have another reason for it, their own safety; here they sat till the city was well searched and cleared, lest there should be any ambush laid for them, and cut them off as they entered. The names of some of them were as follow:

[even] Nergalsharezer: according to Kimchi, these are two names of two distinct persons; but generally thought to be one name of the same person; so Josephus, who calls him Nergelearus. The first part of the name "Nergal" was the name of an idol with the Cushites, 2Ki 17:30; and it was usual with the Heathens to give the names of their idols to their kings, princes, and great men. The other part, "Sharezer", is a name of one of Sennacherib's sons; and seems to be an Assyrian name,
Isa 37:38. The next is called

Samgarnebo; though, according to Hillerus {h}, this is a surname of the former, to distinguish him from another Nergalsharezer after mentioned, taken from his office: this name signifying the "strict keeper of Nebo", the temple of the idol Nebo; see Isa 46:1. The next is

Sarsechim Rabsaris; for these are not two names of different persons, but of the same person. The first is his proper name, which signifies the "prince of the Scythians"; the other his name of office, and signifies the "chief eunuch", or the "chief of the eunuchs". The last name is

Nergalsharezer Rabmag; these names belong to the same person, who is called from his office "Rabmag", the "chief magician", or the "chief of the magicians", to distinguish him from the other Nergalsharezer before mentioned: these,

with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon, entered the city and took it.

{g} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 8. sect. 2. {h} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 608.

Jeremiah 39:4

Ver. 4. And it came to pass, [that] when Zedekiah the king of Judah saw them, and all the men of war,.... That is, when Zedekiah and his soldiers saw the princes and generals of the Chaldean army enter the city through a breach made in the wall, and take possession of the middle gate; which they might see from some high tower where they were for safety, and to make their observation of the enemy:

then they fled; finding they were not able to keep their posts and resist the enemy:

and went forth out of the city by night; it being the middle of the night, as before observed out of Josephus, that the city was taken; and they took the advantage of the darkness of the night to make their escape: this they chose rather to do than to surrender to the Chaldeans, and lie at their mercy: and they went

by the way of the king's garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls; which lay either between the wall of the city and the outworks, as some; or between the old wall and the new one Hezekiah built,
2Ch 32:5; as others; or rather between the wall of the city and the wall of the king's garden; this being a private way, they took it. The Jews have a fable, and which is related both by Jarchi and Kimchi, that there was a cave or vault underground, from the king's house to the plains of Jericho; and by this way the king went that he might not be seen; but God prepared a hind, which the Chaldean army saw, and pursued, and which went into the cave, add they after it; and when they were at the mouth of the cave they saw Zedekiah coming out of it, and took him:

and he went out the way of the plain; on the south side of the which led to Jericho; and on which side the kings garden was; not that he went alone, but his wives, and children, and princes, and men of war with him; see Jer 52:7.

Jeremiah 39:5

Ver. 5. But the Chaldean army pursued after them,.... Being informed of the flight of them, by those who surrendered to them, as Josephus says; or not finding the king, his family, nobles, and guards, at the palace, where they expected them; and, knowing which way they must take, pursued after them; not the whole army, only a part of it; for some must remain at Jerusalem to demolish the city, and take the spoil of it:

and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; not far from it, as Josephus says; and who also observes, that when his friends and generals saw the enemy near, they left him, and shifted for themselves, and only a few were with him when overtook:

and when they had taken him they brought him to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath: which is generally thought to be Antioch in Syria; whither he had retired from the siege of Jerusalem, having left it to his generals to refresh himself in this pleasant place, as it seems it was; or that he might be nearer his own kingdom, if any troubles should arise in it during his absence; however, here he was, and here the army brought Zedekiah to him, and those they took with him; which must be very agreeable to the king of Babylon to have this perfidious and ungrateful prince in his power:

where he gave judgment upon him: or passed sentence on him, which was to have his eyes put out: or, "spake judgments with him" {i}; he severely chide him, and upbraided him for the injury he had done him; the perfidy he had been guilty of in breaking his oath and covenant. So Josephus says,

"after he came to him, Nebuchadnezzar began to call him a wicked man and a covenant breaker, unmindful of promises he had made to preserve the country for him; he reproached him with ingratitude, in receiving the kingdom from him he had taken from Jehoiakim, and given to him, who had used his power against the giver; but, says he, the great God that hates thy manners has put thee into our hands."

{i} Myjpvm wta rbdyw "et locutus est cum eo, [vel] ipso judicia", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 39:6

Ver. 6. Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes,.... Not with his own hands, but gave orders to do it: these must be very young, at least some of them; since Zedekiah at this time was but thirty two years of age. This must be a dreadful spectacle for him to behold; and the consideration must be cutting, that it was owing to his own obstinacy in not taking the advice of the Prophet Jeremiah to surrender to the Chaldeans, whereby he and his family would have been saved, Jer 38:17;

also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah; who did not come over to the Chaldean army and surrender themselves; such who advised the king to stand out to the last, and who fled, and were taken with him; as many of them as fell into the hands of the king of Babylon. Jarchi says those were the sanhedrim, who loosed Zedekiah from his oath to Nebuchadnezzar.

Jeremiah 39:7

Ver. 7. Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes,.... By what means is not certain; however, hereby the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled, that his eyes should see the king of Babylon, as they did, before they were put out, and that he should not die by the sword, Jer 34:3; and also the prophecy of Ezekiel, Eze 12:13; that he should be brought to Babylon, and yet should not see it; for his eyes were put out before he was carried there: a full proof this of the prescience of God; of his foreknowledge of future and contingent events; of the truth and certainty of prophecy, and of the authority of divine revelation:

and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon; with two brass or iron chains, or fetters, for both his legs; and thus bound he was carried to Babylon, where he remained to the day of his death.

Jeremiah 39:8

Ver. 8. And the Chaldeans burnt the king's house,.... His palace: this was a month after the city was taken, as appears from Jer 52:12;

and the houses of the people, with fire; the houses of the common people, as distinct from the king's house, and the houses of the great men, Jer 52:13; though Jarchi interprets of the synagogues. It is in the original text in the singular number, "the house of the people"; which Abarbinel understands of the temple, called, not the house of God, he having departed from it; but the house of the people, a den of thieves; according to Adrichomius {k}, there was a house in Jerusalem called "the house of the vulgar", or common people, where public feasts and sports were kept; but the former sense seems best:

and broke down the walls of Jerusalem; demolished all the fortifications of it, and entirely dismantled it, that it might be no more a city of force and strength, as it had been.

{k} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 154.

Jeremiah 39:9

Ver. 9. Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard,.... The Targum is,

"the captain of those that kill;"

of the soldiers, of the militia. Some render it, the captain of the "cooks"; others, of the "butchers" {l}; but no doubt it was a military office he bore; he was captain of the forces that were left in Jerusalem, after the other part went in pursuit of the king and those with him; or the captain of a company, being sent by the king of Babylon to execute a commission of his: the same

carried away into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city; that were left of the pestilence, famine, and sword; and who were found in it when it was taken:

and those that fell away, that fell to him; that fell to the Chaldean army during the siege of the city; and those that betook themselves to Nebuzaradan, and voluntarily surrendered themselves to him afterwards:

with the rest of the people that remained; in other cities in the land of Judah.

{l} Myxbj br "praefectus coquorum"; so some in Vatablus; "magister laniorum", Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 39:10

Ver. 10. But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah,.... Because they would have been of no service to the Chaldeans, but a burden to them; and because they had nothing to fear from them; they had no arms to rebel against them, nor money to purchase any; and because it would be to their interest to have the land manured, and not lie waste, that they might have some tribute from it:

and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time; as their own property to dress and cultivate, and receive the advantage of them; though very probably a tax was laid upon them; or they were to pay tribute to the king of Babylon; or, however, contribute out of them to the support of the government that was placed over them; and this was a happy incident in their favour; here was a strange change of circumstances with them; though the nation in general was in distress, they, who before had nothing, are now proprietors of vineyards and fields, when the former owners were carried captive: there might be much of the justice of God conspicuous in this affair; such who had been oppressed and ill used by the rich are now retaliated with their possessions. The Targum is,

"and he appointed them to work in the fields and in the vineyards in that day."

Jeremiah 39:11

Ver. 11. Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard,.... Of whom he had heard, by one or another of his generals or officers; who had been informed, by those Jews that deserted to them, that Jeremiah had prophesied of the taking of the city by the Chaldeans; had advised the people to fall off to them; and had even exhorted the king and princes to surrender up the city, and themselves, unto them; and that he had suffered much on this account; wherefore the Lord put it into the heart of this monarch, otherwise not at all disposed to the prophets of the Lord, to show regard to him; and therefore, when he sent Nebuzaradan upon an expedition to Jerusalem, he gave him a particular charge concerning Jeremiah:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 39:12

Ver. 12. Take him, and look well to him,.... Take him out of prison; take him under your immediate care; receive him kindly, and use him humanely; provide everything necessary for him, and let him not want for anything: or, "set thine eyes upon him" {m} look pleasantly at him, and let him be always under your view and inspection; treat him not with neglect and contempt, but see to it that nothing is wanting to him:

and do him no harm; no injury to his person by beating, imprisoning, or starving him; nor suffer any to be done to him by the common soldiers, or by his own people:

but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee: let him have whatever he asks for: this was great favour from a Heathen prince indeed, and more than he met with from his own countrymen.

{m} wyle Myv Kynyew "et oculos tuos pone super eum", V. L. Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 39:13

Ver. 13. So Nebuzaradan captain of the guard sent,.... When he was come to Jerusalem, one of the first things he did was, he sent a messenger or messengers to the court of the prison where Jeremiah was, to bring him from thence; and this he did not alone, but with the rest of the princes, who had the same charge, and were joined in the commission with him: two of them are mentioned by name,

Nebushasban Rabsaris and Nergalsharezer Rabmag; the latter of these is manifestly one of the princes that first entered Jerusalem, at the taking of it, See Gill on "Jer 39:3"; and perhaps the former is the same with Sarsechim Rabsaris, as Hillerus {n} thinks, mentioned at the same time, who might have two names; unless we suppose there were two persons in the same office:

and all the king of Babylon's princes: so that great honour was done to the prophet, to have them all charged with his commission from the king; and to be sent unto, and for, by them all.

{n} Onomastie. Sacr. p. 604.

Jeremiah 39:14

Ver. 14. Even they sent and took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison,.... Where he was, when Jerusalem was taken, Jer 38:28; and where he remained until this order came:

and committed him unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan; the father of this person seems to be the same who saved Jeremiah from being delivered into the hand of the people, to be put to death by them, in Jehoiakim's reign, Jer 26:24; and he himself was doubtless a prince of Judah, that deserted to the Chaldeans during the siege, and was in esteem with them, and appointed a governor over those that were left in the land: now what is here recorded was not done immediately after Jeremiah was taken out of the court of the prison; for however it was, whether through the multiplicity of business, or the neglect of inferior officers, who did not attend to the charge the captain of the guard gave them concerning Jeremiah; though he was taken out of prison, he was bound in chains, and carried among the captives to Ramah; where, very probably, Nebuzaradan, looking over his prisoners, to his great surprise finds the prophet among them; when he released him, and, after some discourse with him, sent him to Gedaliah; see Jer 40:1;

that he should carry him home; or, "to the house" {o}; either to the house of Gedaliah, as Kimchi; or rather to the house of Jeremiah in Anathoth:

so he dwelt among the people; that were left in the land, being at full liberty.

{o} tybh la "in domum", Schmidt; "ad domum", Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 39:15

Ver. 15. Now the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the prison,.... This prophecy was before the taking of the city, and after the prophet had been took out of the dungeon by Ebedmelech; though here inserted after the city was taken; and that to show the great regard the Lord has to such who show favour to his prophets; for though we have no account of the accomplishment of this prophecy, there is no doubt to be made of it; and that Ebedmelech was saved from the general destruction, as is here predicted:

saying: as follows:

Jeremiah 39:16

Ver. 16. Go and speak to Ebedmelech the Ethiopians,.... Not that the prophet was to go, or could go, out of prison, to deliver this message to Ebedmelech; but that he should, as he had opportunity, acquaint him with it; either by writing to him, or by word of mouth, when he should visit him; for no doubt he sometimes did, having so great a respect for the prophet:

saying, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; whom Ebedmelech, though an Ethiopian, served; being a proselyte, and a good man; and therefore would listen unto and believe what came from him:

behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; meaning the prophecies delivered out by Jeremiah, which Ebedmelech was no stranger to, these should be accomplished; not what promised good, on condition of repentance and amendment; but what threatened evil to the city, and the inhabitants of it, even the destruction of them:

and they shall be [accomplished] in that day before thee; signifying that he should live till then, and his enemies would not be able to take away his life; and that he should see with his eyes all that was predicted accomplished, and he himself safe amidst all this.

Jeremiah 39:17

Ver. 17. But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the Lord,.... As from the famine and pestilence, so from the sword of the Chaldeans, and from all the evil that shall come upon the city in the day of its destruction:

and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the man of whom thou [art] afraid; for though he was a bold and intrepid man, as appears by his charging the princes and prime ministers of state with having done evil to the prophet, and that in the presence of the king; yet at times he was not without his fears, which is the case of the best of men; and whereas he knew the courtiers owed him a grudge, for the freedom he took with their characters before the king, and for his friendship to Jeremiah, he might fear they would seek to do him a mischief, and contrive his ruin, in some way or another; but here he is assured he should not be given into their hands; or rather, as Jarchi, into the hands of the Chaldeans; for, as he believed in the Lord and his prophet, so he knew that all that was predicted would certainly come to pass; and that the city, with the king, his nobles, and the inhabitants of it, would fall into the hands of the Chaldeans; he might tremble at the righteous judgments of God, and fear that he himself would become a prey unto them; but here he is assured of the contrary.

Jeremiah 39:18

Ver. 18. For I will surely deliver thee,.... Or, in "delivering will deliver thee" {p}; this is a repetition and confirmation of what is promised in Jer 39:17, and more fully explains it:

and thou shall not fall by the sword: by the sword of the Chaldeans, when the city should be taken, as he feared he should:

but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: shall be safe; be like a prey taken out of the hand of the mighty, and be enjoyed beyond expectation, having been given up for lost; and therefore matter of the greater joy, such as is expressed at the taking of spoils:

because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the Lord. The Targum is, "in my word"; what he had done in serving the prophet, and other good actions, sprung from a principle of faith and confidence in the Lord; and this the Lord had a respect unto; without which works are not right; and without which it is impossible to please God with them; and which faith may be, and be true, where fears are.

{p} Kjlma jlm "eripiendo eripiam te", Schmidt; "eruendo eruam te", Pagninus, Montanus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 40:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 40

This chapter treats of the release of Jeremiah, and the care taken of him; of the gathering of the princes and people of the Jews to Gedaliah, appointed their governor, dispersed about Judea, and other countries; and of a conspiracy against him, of which information was given him. The release of Jeremiah, where, and by whom, Jer 40:1; the liberty granted him to go to Babylon, or stay in Judea, as he thought fit; and, if he chose the latter, is advised to go to Gedaliah, appointed governor, or where he would; and is dismissed with food, and a reward, Jer 40:4; upon which he went and dwelt with Gedaliah, Jer 40:7; to whom also the captains of the dispersed forces joined themselves, to whom he swore, and bid them be of good cheer; and exhorted them to serve the Chaldeans, which he urged from the profit of it to them, and by his own example, Jer 40:8; and to whom also gathered the Jews in other countries, Jer 40:11; by the captains he is informed of a conspiracy against his life, and one of them offers to destroy the conspirator, which Gedaliah would not agree to, disbelieving the information, Jer 40:13.

Ver. 1. The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord,.... The word of prophecy, as the Targum; but there being no prophecy in this and the following chapter, only a narration of facts, this is generally referred to what came ten days after, and which begins Jer 42:7; so Jarchi and Kimchi; all between being included in a parenthesis, or a relation of facts preparatory, to lead on to it; though Abarbinel takes it to be a general title to all histories and prophecies in this book, from henceforward to the end of it. Jarchi and Kimchi make mention of a Midrash, which refers it to the special word of the Lord to Jeremiah to go to Gedaliah, Jer 40:5; interpreting that passage as the words of the Lord, and not of Nebuzaradan; but Abarbinel's sense seems best. The time of this prophecy was

after that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah; which was a city in the land of Benjamin near Gibeon, seven miles from Jerusalem, as Jerom {q} says; here Nebuzaradan had his rendezvous, whither he brought his captives as they fell into his hands, among whom were Jeremiah:

when he had taken him; out of the court of the prison, and out of Jerusalem, and brought him to Ramah:

being bound in chains among all them that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah, that were carried away captive unto Babylon; how it came to pass is not certain, but so it was; that, though by the orders of Nebuzaradan and the princes, agreeably to the command of the king of Babylon, Jeremiah was taken out of the court of the prison, yet was not set free; but without the knowledge of Nebuzaradan, and through the inadvertency of inferior officers, he was taken and bound, and with other prisoners brought to Ramah, in order to be transported to Babylon, which lay in the way to it; for Ramah was to the north of Jerusalem, as Babylon was: these chains were for the hands, or what we call handcuffs, as Kimchi, Abarbinel, and Ben Melech observe, and as appears from Jer 40:4.

{q} Comment in Hos. v. 8,

Jeremiah 40:2

Ver. 2. And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah,.... When he mustered his prisoners, to his great surprise he found the prophet among them, whom he took out from them, and set him free; though, before he dismissed him, he had the following conversation with him:

and said unto him, the Lord thy God hath pronounced this evil on this place; the city of Jerusalem; from whence the prophet and the rest of the captives were just brought, and which now lay in ruins; the houses burnt; the walls broken down; and the inhabitants spoiled and carried captive. This was the evil which the Lord, he says, had "decreed", as the Targum renders it; had purposed to bring upon it; and which he had declared and pronounced by the mouth of Jeremiah, whose Lord God he was, being his prophet, and a worshipper of him: this Nebuzaradan was apprized of by the Jews that deserted to the Chaldeans; and particularly, as is probable, by Gedaliah.

Jeremiah 40:3

Ver. 3. Now the Lord hath brought [it], and done according as he hath said,.... As he purposed, so it came to pass; as he foretold by his prophet, so it was brought about by his providence. This Heathen captain acknowledges the hand of the Lord in all this; and suggests, that his master, the king of Babylon, himself, and the rest of the generals, were only instruments the Lord made use of; which is very piously as well as wisely said; and more is here acknowledged by him than by the Jews themselves; who were not willing to believe that God had determined evil against them, or would bring it on them; at least, this they did not care to believe and own before, whatever they did now; he goes on to observe the cause of all this:

because ye have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you; meaning not Jeremiah particularly, but his countrymen; and perhaps he might turn himself to, and address, the captives that were before him. Here he vindicates the justice of God; and ascribes the ruin of this people, not to the valour of Nebuchadnezzar and his captains; nor to the strength, and courage, and skilfulness of his army; or to any righteousness and merits of the king of Babylon; or to the justness of his cause; but to the sins of the people.

Jeremiah 40:4

Ver. 4. And now, behold, I loose thee this day from the chains which [were] upon thine hands,.... Or rather are; for, when he said these words, it is highly probable they were on him, though now ordered to be taken off; these were not what were put upon him by the Jews, when in the court of the prison; for rather his legs, than his hands, would have had fetters on them there; but what were put upon him by the Chaldeans, when he fell into their hands; though inadvertently done by the inferior officers, and without the knowledge of the princes, or of this captain, who loosed them; with these he came manacled to Ramah, with the rest of the captives, but now were loosed in the sight of them:

if it seem good unto thee to come with me unto Babylon, come, and one will look well unto thee; or, "I will set mine eyes upon thee" {r}; as the king of Babylon had ordered him to do, Jer 39:12; would favour him, protect him, provide for him, and use him in the most kind and generous manner:

but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me to Babylon, forbear; if it was not agreeable to him to leave his native country, and to go into Babylon, he would not urge it, but leave him to his liberty; yea, would advise him to continue where he was, and not take one step out of it:

behold, all the land [is] before thee; the land of Judea, which was at the disposal of the king of Babylon; and Jeremiah has a grant from him, by his officer, to settle where he pleased:

whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go; he left him to take his own way, and do as he thought fit; and this agrees with his master's orders to him, Jer 39:12.

{r} Kyle ynye ta Myvaw "ponam oculos meos super te", Schmidt; "et ponam oculum meum super te", Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 40:5

Ver. 5. Now while he was not yet gone back, [he said], go back also to Gedaliah,.... These words, by different versions, are made difficult to be understood, both, whose words they are, and of whom they are spoken. Jarchi makes them to be words of God, and the sense this,

"and by all this he (Jeremiah) had no mind to return; and God said to him, go back to Gedaliah."

According to the Targum, they are the words of Nebuzaradan, which paraphrases them thus;

"if thou wilt not return (that is, with him to Babylon, or rather to Jerusalem, or best to his own native place), or if thou wilt not dwell (that is, in this place), go back to Gedaliah."

But of whom they are spoken interpreters differ. Some say of Zedekiah, as Cocceius; while he (Zedekiah) does not return, that is, to Jerusalem; which possibly he might, though as yet not determined by the king of Babylon; in the mean while is bid to go to Gedaliah, appointed governor. Others of Gedaliah, thus, while he (Gedaliah) does not return, but stays at Mizpah, go to him thither. Though it seems best to understand it of Jeremiah, who, having had leave from the captain, did not immediately set out anywhere; but, seething to be at a loss which way to go, Nebuzaradan gives him his advice; that seeing he did not care to go to Babylon, that he would go to Gedaliah

the son of, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over all the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people; this was one of the princes of Judah, who, during the siege, went over to the Chaldeans, and who was in great esteem with them; and being, no doubt, recommended to the king of Babylon by his generals, he made him governor of the land under him:

or go wherever it seemeth convenient unto thee to go; though he gave him his advice, he did not press it, but left him at full liberty to take his own way, and go into what part of the land he pleased, and settle in it:

so the captain of the guard gave him victuals, and a reward, and let him go; the prophet was just come out of prison, and destitute of the necessaries of life, and the land was laid waste by the enemy; and therefore he could not have subsisted without a supply, which was liberally given by the captain; not only food for present refreshment, and sufficient for his journey, which way soever he took, but a present of money or clothes, or both; which was very kind usage of a prophet by a Heathen officer.

Jeremiah 40:6

Ver. 6. Then went Jeremiah to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah,.... A city in the tribe of Benjamin, not far from Ramathon; which, as Josephus says, was about five miles from Jerusalem. Jeremiah took the captain's advice, though it might have been better with him had he gone along with him to Babylon; but he chose rather to dwell in his own land, and suffer affliction with the people of God, than to dwell at ease in a foreign and idolatrous land:

and dwelt with him among the people that were left in the land; among the poor people that Nebuzaradan left, who dwelt either at Mizpah or at Anathoth, and lived as they did.

Jeremiah 40:7

Ver. 7. Now when all the captains of the forces which [were] in the fields,.... Not the captains of the king of Babylon's forces, but the captains of the king of Judah's forces; who either during the siege had lurked in the fields and villages, not daring to fall upon the Chaldean army, or attempt to raise the siege; or rather who fled with Zedekiah from Jerusalem, when the city was taken, and who deserted him, when he was apprehended, and shifted for themselves, and were dispersed about in the country, where they continued for some little time: but when

they and their men; their servants, or rather the common soldiers that were under them:

heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land; his viceroy or deputy governor in the land of Judea; being a prince of considerable note among the Jews, and in high favour with the king of Babylon:

and had committed unto him men, and women, and children, and of the poor of the land, of them that were not carried away captive unto Babylon; even as many men, women, children, and poor, as were left in the land, and not carried captive; these were all committed to the care of this prince, to rule over and govern them; to keep them in subjection to the king of Babylon; to employ them in cultivating the land, from whence some profit might arise to the conqueror and new proprietor of it.

Jeremiah 40:8

Ver. 8. Then they came to Gedaliah to Mizpah,.... Having heard that the Chaldean army was gone, and so were in no fear of that; and also that Gedaliah was made deputy governor, one of their own nation, a pious, prudent, good man, a man of ingenuity, mildness, and integrity; under whose government they might expect to live comfortably; and which was much preferable to captivity in a foreign country, though tributary to Babylon:

even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah; who was of the seed royal,
Jer 41:1;

and Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah; two brothers, but who they were, or their father, is not known, no mention being made of them but in this story:

and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth; who he was is also uncertain:

and the sons of Ephai the Netophathite; so called from Netophah, a city of the tribe of Judah near Bethlehem, and are mentioned together, **Ezr 2:22**; the Netophathites inhabited several villages, **1Ch 9:16**; mention is made in the Misnic {t} writings of artichokes and olives this place was famous for:

and Jezaniah the son of a Maachathite; a family so called from Maacah, Caleb's concubine, **1Ch 2:48**;

they and their men; these generals, and the forces under their command.

{t} Shebiit, c. 9. sect. 5. & Pea, c. 7. sect. 1.

Jeremiah 40:9

Ver. 9. And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan aware unto them and to their men,.... They might express their fears, that should they continue with Gedaliah, as they were inclined to do, could they be safe; that seeing they had encouraged Zedekiah to hold out the siege to the last against the Chaldeans, and they should hear where they were, would demand them, and they, should be taken and delivered up into their hands; upon which Gedaliah not only promises them safety, but swears to them that they should live safely with him, and never be delivered up to the Chaldeans, and that he would undertake to indemnify them, and preserve them:

saying, fear not to serve the Chaldeans; as if it was an evil to do it; or as if their yoke was hard and intolerable; or as if it would be unprofitable, and turn to no account; or they should be always in danger of their lives:

dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall he well with you; settle in the land, and do not rove about from place to place like fugitives; nor go out of the land through fear of the king of Babylon, but continue in it, and live in subjection to him, and depend upon it you will live comfortably and safely.

Jeremiah 40:10

Ver. 10. As for me, behold, I will dwell at Mizpah, to serve the Chaldeans that come unto us,.... Here he urges his own example, as before their welfare, to engage them to dwell in the land, and serve the Chaldeans; this was what he had determined to do, and had fixed upon Mizpah, a frontier town, and in the way to Babylon, as a proper seat of residence for him, as a governor under the king of Babylon: "to serve the Chaldeans"; or "to stand before them" {u}; that should come to him as messengers from the king of Babylon, to receive tribute or bring orders to him; all which he would take care of, as well as be an advocate for the Jews, and plead on their behalf, for favours to be bestowed on them; and particularly for these generals and their forces, that they might be pardoned, and dwell safely in the land: he suggests, that they need not trouble themselves about these things; all affairs of this kind he would take upon himself to transact; so that they would have nothing to fear, nor anything to do, but as follows:

but ye, gather ye wine, and summer fruits, and oil; that is, grapes to make wine of, and olives to make oil of, and summer fruits, such as figs and apples. The Targum interprets it lumps of figs; and so Jarchi; for fruits of trees are meant, and not fruits of the earth, as corn and wheat; for both barley and wheat harvests were over before this time; the city being taken in July, and, a month after that, Nebuzaradan came and carried off the captives, and left the poor with Gedaliah, appointed governor. It may be rendered, "autumnal fruits" {w}; for the word signifies autumn as well as summer;

and put [them] in your vessels; casks, bottles, and such like vessels, suitable to the things mentioned, and which were in common use, in order to be laid up for winter; and as they used to do in times of peace, not fearing any enemy to come and take them from them:

and dwell in your cities which ye have taken; not by force of arms, or as they pleased; but which they had held in possession formerly as the inheritances of their families, and which they had lately reassumed, or might however enter upon the quiet possession of.

{u} ynpl dmel "ut stem coram", Vatablus, Pagninus; "ad standum coram", Schmidt. {w} Uyqw "et autumni fructus", Schmidt; "fructus autumnales", Vatablus.

Jeremiah 40:11

Ver. 11. Likewise, when all the Jews that [were] in Moab,.... Who had fled thither, and to the places after mentioned, when the king of Babylon first invaded the land, and where they had continued unto this time:

and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that [were] in all the countries; in all other neighbouring countries, besides Moab, Ammon, and Edom; some fleeing one way, and some another, which lay nearest to their borders, or where they thought themselves safest: when they

heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah; a few of their brethren, to cultivate the land, and repopulated it:

and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan; whom they knew to be a wise and good man; these were engaging motives to them to return to their own land, being more desirable to live in than any other, could they enjoy peace and safety; and to dwell with their brethren, their own countrymen, and of the same religion with them, was more eligible than to dwell in foreign idolatrous countries; and especially since there was a government established to protect and defend them, and that in the hands of so worthy a prince as Gedaliah.

Jeremiah 40:12

Ver. 12. Even all the Jews returned from all places whither they were driven,.... Through fear of the Chaldean army; they came all of them from the several countries before mentioned; so that here was like to be a happy settlement and a flourishing commonwealth again; here being princes and generals, soldiers and common people, in large numbers, that were returned and coalesced under the government of Gedaliah:

and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah; they came out of the several countries where they had been for some time, and entered the land of Judah; but did not take up their abode anywhere, till they had presented themselves to the governor, and put themselves under his protection; promising, no doubt, to regard him as such, and to be tributary to the Chaldeans; being assured by him, as the generals and their forces before, that all would be well with them, giving them free liberty to settle in the cities and villages to which they belonged; and accordingly they set out from Mizpah, and went to their respective habitations they had abandoned:

and gathered wine and summer fruits very much;
See Gill on "Jer 40:10"; the people of the land being carried captive; and the Chaldean army not having ravaged these parts, or however had left an abundance of fruits, which these people, at their return, found and gathered.

Jeremiah 40:13

Ver. 13. Moreover, Johanan the son of Kareah,.... Who seems to be the principal captain next to Ishmael, against whom an information is brought, and so not present; this captain is here only mentioned by name, and before next to Ishmael:

and all the captains of the forces that [were] in the fields; or that had been in the fields, and probably might be there again; see
Jer 40:7; that is, the rest of them, besides Johanan mentioned, and Ishmael the

conspirator: these

came to Gedaliah to Mizpah; they had been with him before, and being satisfied by him of the safety they would be in, in the service of the Chaldeans, under him, either returned to the fields from whence they came, or went to those cities and villages he directed them to; but, like honest and faithful men, knowing there was a conspiracy against his life, came in a body to inform him of it, for the greater certainty of it; as judging he would be more ready to give heed unto it, than if only a single person had informed him of it, as well as to show their affection and loyalty to him.

Jeremiah 40:14

Ver. 14. And said unto him, dost thou certainly know,.... Not that they thought he did know, or that the thing was so flagrant that he must know it; but that he might be assured of the truth of it, from the information they were now about to give him: or, "dost thou [not] in knowing know?" {x} it is most certainly true; and thou mayest depend upon it that it is real matter of fact:

that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee? very probably Ishmael, with the forces under him, fled to the king of the Ammonites upon the taking of Jerusalem; who, out of ill will to the Jews, always bore them by the Ammonites, envying their reestablishment under Gedaliah, and hoping to make a prey of them if their governor was removed, moved it to this young prince to dispatch him; and who might be forward enough to undertake it, being displeased that Gedaliah should be governor, which he might think was an office he had a better right to, being of the seed royal; and therefore readily agreed to be sent on this bloody errand, to take away the governor's life: or, "to smite [him] in the soul"; or "to smite his soul" {y}; that is, to give him a mortal blow, his death's wound, to separate soul and body:

but Gedaliah the son of Ahikam believed them not; being a good man, and knowing he had done nothing to disoblige him, could not believe a person of such birth and dignity would ever be guilty of such an action: very likely Ishmael had behaved in a very princely complaisant manner, and had expressed a great affection for the governor, and had been very familiar with him; and being of the seed royal, it is highly probable Gedaliah had shown a distinguished regard to him, which he might think was the reason of this charge being brought against him, out of envy to him; however, since it came from such a body of men, though he was not over credulous, yet he ought to have inquired into it, and provided for his own safety, and the public good, against the worst that might happen.

{x} edt edyh "nonne cognoscendo cognosces", Pagninus, Montanus. {y} vpn Ktkhl "ut percutiat animam tuam", Munster; "te in anima", Pagninus; "secundum animam", Piscator; "ad percutiendum te (quoad) animam", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 40:15

Ver. 15. Then Johanan the son of Kareah spake to Gedaliah in Mizpah secretly,.... Partly that he might, as he thought, more easily prevail upon him, and persuade him to believe the information given; and partly for the sake of the proposal he had to make to him, which it was not proper should be publicly made:

saying, let me go, I pray thee, and I will slay Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no man shall know [it]; that he had slain him, or that Gedaliah had given him leave to do it:

wherefore should he slay thee, that all the Jews that are gathered unto thee should be scattered, and the remnant in Judah perish? suggesting, that it was not barely his losing his own life, which is, and ought to be, precious to every man, and should be carefully preserved, but it would be a public loss; the people, being without a governor, would disperse here and there, fearing their own lives and property would not be safe under a murderer; and that the Chaldeans would be so incensed by such an action, as to come and revenge his death on them; and thus being scattered about, some one way, and some another, would be no more under any form of government as a body politic, and so perish as such, at least; and thus all their hopes, which began to revive, of their beings commonwealth again, would be lost: with this argument Johanan hoped to prevail on Gedaliah to give him leave to slay the conspirator.

Jeremiah 40:16

Ver. 16. But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said unto Johanan the son of Kareah,.... In answer to his request, and the motion made by him:

thou shalt not do this thing; or, "do not do this thing" {z}; dissuading him from it, as being unlawful to take away a man's life in such a secret manner, without any legal process against him; though it seems to carry more in it, that he laid his commands upon him not to do it, and threatened him if he did:

for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael; or "a lie" {a}; a falsehood, a mere calumny; which was not using Johanan well, neither kindly nor genteelly, who had expressed such a concern for him, and for the public good. The event related in the following chapter shows that the information was good, and that it was no lie or calumny that was told; and it would have been well for Gedaliah, and the people of the Jews, had he given credit to it; but the time was not come for the Jewish commonwealth to be restored; and things were thus suffered to be, for the further punishment of the sins of that people.

{z} rbdh ta vet la "noli facere hoc verbum", V. L. "ne facias verbum hoc", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt. {a} rqv "mendacium", Schmidt; "falsum", Pagninus, Montanus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 41:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 41

This chapter relates the event of the conspiracy against Gedaliah Johanan and the princes had informed him of, to which he gave no credit; but it proved true. An account is given of the murder of Gedaliah, and of the Jews and Chaldeans with him; and of the perpetrators of it, Jer 41:1; and of the chief of them, Ishmael's treacherous dealing with fourscore men that came from several parts to the house of God to offer sacrifice, who all perished by his hands, excepting ten, Jer 41:4; and of the rest of the people at Mizpah being carried away, in order to be captives among the Ammonites, Jer 41:10; and of Johanan, and the rest of the captives, hearing of all this, and coming out to fight with Ishmael; upon which the people deserted him, and he fled to the Ammonites, Jer 41:11; and of Johanan and the people settling in the way to Egypt, to flee there on occasion, should the Chaldeans fall on them for what was done to the governor, which they feared, Jer 41:16.

Ver. 1. Now it came to pass in the seventh month,.... The month Tisri, which answers to part of our September, and part of October; according to the Jewish {b} chronicle, it was on the third day of this month, fifty two days after the destruction of the temple, that Gedaliah was slain; on which day a fast was kept by the Jews, after their return from captivity, on this occasion, called the fast of the seventh month, **Zec 7:5**; though, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, this event happened on the first day of the month, the beginning of the new year; but the fast was kept the day following, because the first day was a festival. Josephus {c} says it was thirty days after Johanan had departed from Gedaliah, having given him information of the conspiracy against him:

[that] Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the seed royal: not the son of King Zedekiah, but one of the remoter branches of the family; whether Elishama his father was the same with Elishama the scribe is not certain, Jer 36:12; the Jews have a tradition that he descended from Jerahmeel, whose wife, Atarah, was the daughter of a Heathen king, and was a proselyte, which Kimchi on the place relates; see **1Ch 2:26**; this circumstance, of his being akin to the royal family, is mentioned, to show that he envied the governor, and bore him a grudge for the honour he had, thinking that he had a better title to it, as being of the seed royal:

and the princes of the king, even ten men with him; some of the nobles of Zedekiah, who fled with him from Jerusalem, and deserted him when he was pursued and taken, and ever since had remained in the land; even ten of these joined with Ishmael in the conspiracy against Gedaliah, whom they bore an ill will to, for going over to the Chaldeans, and envying the power he was now possessed of. Some think these were ten ruffians, besides the princes of the king, since it may be rendered, "and the princes of the king, and ten men with him"; whom Ishmael and the princes took with them, as fit persons to assassinate the governor; and, besides, it is thought that eleven men were not sufficient to slay the Jews and the Chaldeans, as afterwards related; though it may be observed, that Ishmael, and these ten princes, did not come alone, as it can hardly be imagined they should, but with a number of servants and soldiers with them: these

came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah: they had been with him before, to whom he had swore, and given them assurance of security; and they departed from him to their respective cities, seemingly satisfied; and now return, to pay him a friendly visit, as they pretended:

and there they did eat bread together at Mizpah; had a feast, and kept holiday together, it being a new moon, the first day of the month, and the beginning of the new year too; so that it was a high festival: and perhaps this season was fixed upon the rather, to cover their design, and to perpetrate it; pretending they came to keep the festival with him, and who, no doubt, liberally provided for them; for bread here is put for all provisions and accommodations.

{b} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 26. p. 76. {c} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 4.

Jeremiah 41:2

Ver. 2. Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him,.... After they had eat and drank well, they rose up from their seats at table:

and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword, and slew him; they all drew their swords and thrust at him, and were assisting in the murder of him; though it is probable that it was Ishmael that gave him the mortal wound, since the phrase, "and slew him", is singular. Josephus {d} says that Gedaliah prepared a splendid table, and made a sumptuous entertainment for them, and being drunk himself, which they observed, took the opportunity and slew him, and all at table with him:

whom the king Babylon had made governor over the land; which mentioned; both to aggravate the crime they were guilty of, and to observe the reason of it, and what it was that prompted them to it; for so the words may be rendered, "because the king of Babylon had made him governor over the land" {e}.

{d} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 4. {e} dyqph rva "quia illum praefecerat", Vatablus. So Ben Melech.

Jeremiah 41:3

Ver. 3. Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, [even] with Gedaliah, at Mizpah,.... Not only those that were at table, but that were in the city also. Josephus {f} says, that having slain those that were at the feast with him, he went out in the night, and slew all the Jews in the city, and the soldiers that were left by the Babylonians in it; but this cannot be understood of all the individuals there, or of the main body of the people, for they were carried captive by him, Jer 41:9; but of those that opposed him, or were able to avenge the death of their governor, and he might suspect would do it:

and the Chaldeans that were found there, [and] the men of war; or, "even the men of war" {g}; this describes more particularly who they were that were slain, those of the Jews, and especially the Chaldeans, who were in military service; either the bodyguards of the governor, or the city guards, or both, whom Ishmael thought it advisable to cut off, lest they should fall upon him, and revenge the death of Gedaliah, and prevent his further designs.

{f} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 4. {g} hmxlmh yvna ta "[inquam] viros belli", Schmidt; "bellatores scilicet", Piscator.

Jeremiah 41:4

Ver. 4. And it came to pass, the second day after he had slain Gedaliah,.... That is, the day following, for it was in the night, as Josephus relates, as before observed, the murder was committed:

and no man knew [it]; not any out of the city, or in remote parts; for those that were in the city must be sensible of it; but as yet the report of it had not reached the neighbourhood, and much less distant parts; this is observed on account of the following story, and to show how easily the persons after mentioned were drawn in by Ishmael.

Jeremiah 41:5

Ver. 5. That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria,.... Places in the ten tribes, and which belonged to the kingdom of Israel; so that it seems even at this distance of time, though the body of the ten tribes had been many years ago carried captive, yet there were still some religious persons sons remaining, and who had a great regard to the temple worship at Jerusalem:

[even] fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves; as mourners for the destruction of Jerusalem, and the captivity of the people. The two first of these rites, shaving the beard, and rending of clothes, were agreeably to the law; but that of cutting themselves,

their flesh with their nails, or knives, was forbidden by it, Le 19:28; so that these people seemed to have retained some of the Heathenish customs of the places where they lived; for the king of Assyria had placed colonies of Heathens in Samaria, and the cities of it, 2Ki 17:24; these came

with offerings and incense in their hands: a meat offering made of fine flour, as the word signifies; and incense, or frankincense, which used to be put upon such an offering, **Le 2:1**;

to bring [them] to the house of the Lord; but the temple was now destroyed; wherefore either they thought there was a tabernacle or sanctuary erected at Mizpah for divine service and sacrifice; or they intended to offer these offerings on the spot where the temple of Jerusalem stood; and where they hoped to find an altar, if only of earth, and priests to sacrifice; though the Jewish commentators, Jarchi and Kimchi, observe, that when they first set out, they had not heard of the destruction of the temple, but heard of it in the way; and therefore came in a mourning habit; but before knew nothing of it; and therefore brought offerings with them, according to the former; but, according to the latter, they had heard before they set out of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the captivity of the people; but not of the burning of the temple, until they were on their journey.

Jeremiah 41:6

Ver. 6. And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth to Mizpah to meet them,.... Hearing there was such a number of men upon the road to Jerusalem, in such a habit, and upon such a design, he thought it advisable to go out and meet them, and stop them, and decoy them into the city, and there destroy them; lest, if they should have got any hint of what had been done by him, they should spread it, and raise the country upon him, before he had executed his whole design:

weeping all along as he went; pretending equal concern for the destruction of the land, city, and temple, as they had:

and it came to pass, as he met them; when he came up to them, and some discourse had passed between them:

he said unto them, come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam; as if he was alive, and for whom he had a great respect, and whose character was well known to these men; and thought that this would be an inducement to come along with him: this he said either to try them, whether they had heard anything upon the road of the death of him; or as an argument to come into the city, suggesting the governor would gladly receive, and liberally entertain them. This looks as if their design was not to come to Mizpah, but to go on their way to Jerusalem, had they not been met with by him, and had he not thus solicited them.

Jeremiah 41:7

Ver. 7. And it was [so], when they came into the midst of the city,.... Where Gedaliah's house was, to which he invited them; and as they went in, he shut up the court, as Josephus {h} says, and slew them, as it here follows:

that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, [and cast them] into the midst of the pit; when he had slain them, the fourscore men he had enticed into the city, except ten of them, he cast their dead bodies into a pit near at hand:

he, and the men that [were] with him; Ishmael and the ten princes, with what servants they brought with them; these were all concerned in the death of these men.

{h} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 4.

Jeremiah 41:8

Ver. 8. But ten men were found among them, that said unto Ishmael, slay us not,.... They begged for their lives, using what follows as an argument to prevail upon him:

for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey; not that they had then a stock upon the ground at this time; for this being the seventh month, not only the barley and wheat harvests had been over long ago, but the rest of the fruits of the earth were gathered in: but this either means storehouses of such things in the field; or else that these things were hid in cells under ground, the land having been invaded, to secure them from the enemy, as is common to do in time of war; and so Josephus says {i}, they promised to deliver to him things hid in the fields, household goods, clothes, and corn:

so he forbore, and slew them not among their brethren; but saved them, and kept and carried them with him, in order to take these hidden treasures, which lay in his way to Ammon; for between Gibeon, where he was found, Jer 41:12; and Ammon, lay Samaria, Sichem, and Shiloh; at least it was not far out of his way to take that course; and thus he appears to be a covetous man, as well as a cruel one.

{i} Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 4.)

Jeremiah 41:9

Ver. 9. Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies,.... Not only of those seventy men of Samaria, &c. but

of the men whom he had slain because of Gedaliah; because of their attachment to him: or, "by the hand of Gedaliah" {k}; not by him, as an instrument; unless, as Jarchi observes, because he rejected the advice of Johanan, and provided not for his safety, and his people, it was as if they were slain by him {l}; rather the sense is, that they were slain by the side of him, or in the, place where he was, or along with him {m}; see a like phrase in Jer 38:10; now both the one and the other were cast into one pit: and this

[was] that which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel; which was either a ditch that was cast up against the wall that went round the city; or a large pit or well in the midst of it, to hold water in it; and this was made by King Asa, either when he built and fortified Mizpah, 1Ki 15:22; or, as the Targum here, when Baasha king of Israel besieged it; which he made that he might be provided for with water during the siege; or to hide himself in it; or stop the enemy from proceeding any further, should he enter:

[and] Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with [them that were] slain; which shows it rather to be a pit or well within the city than a ditch about it; since it was filled with the slain, with those that were slain with Gedaliah, and those seventy other persons; and by which he made the well useless to the inhabitants hereafter.

{k} whyldg dyb "in manu Gedaliae", Montanus, Vatablus. {l} So T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 61. 1. {m} "Ad latus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "in loco", some in Munster; "cum Gedalia", De Dieu, Gataker.

Jeremiah 41:10

Ver. 10. Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that [were] in Mizpah,.... All that were not slain by him, that remained after the slaughter he had made, chiefly the unarmed people; they being men of war who fell by his sword:

[even] the king's daughters; whether they were the daughters of Zedekiah, Jehoiakim, or Jehoiakim, says Kimchi, we know not; but it is most likely that they were the daughters of Zedekiah the last king, and who was just taken and carried captive; and so Josephus {n} expressly calls them; these the king of Babylon regarded not, because they could neither fight, nor claim the kingdom; only the sons of the king, whom he slew before his eyes; though it may be these were not his daughters by his lawful wife, but by his concubines, and so were not properly of the royal family, and less regarded:

and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam; that were not slain, or carried captive by the Chaldeans; but were left at Mizpah, under the care and government of Gedaliah:

and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive: so that those who escaped one captivity fell into another, and even by the hand of one of their own countrymen:

and departed to go over to the Ammonites; he went from Mizpah with these captives, in order to carry them to the king of Ammon, and make them his slaves; who had put him upon this enterprise out of hatred to the Jews, and to enrich himself with their spoils. Some render it, "to go over with the Ammonites" {o}; which they suppose the ten men to be that came along with him and the princes, to commit the barbarities they did.

{n} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 4.) {o} Nwma ynb la "cum filiis Ammon", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 41:11

Ver. 11. But when Johanan the son of Kareah,.... The same that is mentioned Jer 40:8; and who had informed Gedaliah of Ishmael's designs against him, but he would not believe him:

and all the captains of the forces that [were] with him; his brother Jonathan, Seraiah, the sons of Ephai, and Jezaniah, Jer 40:8;

heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done; in murdering Gedaliah, and those that were with him, destroying seventy other persons he had decoyed, and carrying captive the rest of the people at Mizpah; for though Ishmael kept all this a secret as much as he could, for fear of these forces, and that he might get off clear to Ammon; yet, by some means or another, these captains came to hear of it, who, probably, were not at a great distance from Mizpah.

Jeremiah 41:12

Ver. 12. Then they took all the men,.... All the soldiers that were under their command; this they did at once, believing the report to be true, as they had reason to do; since they knew of Ishmael's designs, and had given notice and warning of them to Gedaliah, though he would not listen to them:

and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah: resolving to give him battle, and to revenge the innocent blood he had shed, and rescue the captives out of his hands he was carrying to the Ammonites:

and found him by the great waters that [are] in Gibeon; taking this road to the country of Ammon, though it was not quite the direct road; either to avoid the forces of Johanan; or rather for the sake of the hid treasure at Shechem, or Shiloh, or Samaria, the ten men had promised him for their lives. These great waters were the same with the pool at Gibeon, where the servants of Ishbosheth and the servants of David met, and sat one on one side, and the other on the other; and where twelve young men on each side slew one another, and from thence called Helkathhazzurim, **2Sa 2:12**; and the Targum calls it

"the pool of many waters, which were in Gibeon."

Josephus {p} calls it a fountain in Hebron; which perhaps should be read Gibeon.

{p} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 5.

Jeremiah 41:13

Ver. 13. Now it came to pass, [that], when all the people which [were] with Ishmael,.... That is, those which he had brought captives from Mizpah; not those that came with him thither:

saw Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that [were] with him, they were glad; looking upon them as their deliverers; hoping by their means to be preserved from being carried captives to the king of Ammon.

Jeremiah 41:14

Ver. 14. So all the people that Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah cast about,.... Or turned about, and wheeled off from Ishmael, and deserted him at once; not at all regarding his authority, nor fearing his menaces or his power; being in sight of the captains and their forces, they were determined to join, and put themselves under their protection, knowing them to be their friends, and that they, came to deliver them:

and returned, and went unto Johanan the son of Kareah; turned their backs on Ishmael, and marched directly to Johanan, and the captains of the forces under them.

Jeremiah 41:15

Ver. 15. But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men,.... Of the ten he brought with hin}, Jer 41:1; two of them being slain in this skirmish, or taken by Johanan, or they fled another way:

and went to the Ammonites; who had put him upon, or however encouraged and assisted him in, his wicked attempts; though he returned to them not according to their wishes, nor with that honour and glory he thought to have done.

Jeremiah 41:16

Ver. 16. Then took Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that [were] with him,.... After Ishmael had made his escape, whom they did not think fit to pursue, and the people had committed themselves to their care and protection; and having brought them to Mizpah again, they took them from thence, as follows:

all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah from Mizpah, after [that] he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam: those whom he had rescued from Ishmael, and had returned to Mizpah, be persuaded to go with him from thence; who are more particularly described, as follows:

[even] mighty men of war, and the women, and the children, and the eunuchs, whom he had brought again from Gibeon; or "men, [even] men of war" {q}; warlike men, soldiers; by which it appears that Ishmael must have more than ten men with him when he came to Mizpah, as well to do what he did there, as likewise to carry away such a number of captives, among which were mighty men, men of war, some of whom he had slain, besides women and children, to which are added eunuchs, not mentioned before, such as the king of Judah had in his court; see Jer 38:7; but these were of no account with the Chaldeans; and therefore they left them behind with the poor of the land; perhaps Ebedmelech might be among them, whose safety and protection is promised, because of his kindness to Jeremiah, Jer 39:15. The Targum calls them princes: these were brought back by Johanan from Gibeon, where he met with Ishmael, to Mizpah; from whence they had been carried, and whom he took from thence again.

{q} hmxlmh yvna Myrbg "mares, viros belli", Schmidt; "nempe vires bellatores", Piscator.

Jeremiah 41:17

Ver. 17. And they departed,.... From Mizpah, Johanan, and the captains of the forces, and all the people rescued from Ishmael:

and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem: so called perhaps from Chimham, the son of Barzillai the Gileadite, to whom David or Solomon might give this place to dwell in, 2Sa 19:37 **1Ki 2:7**. The Targum is express for the former, calling it

"the habitation which David gave to Chimham, the son of Barzillai the Gileadite;"

and as it was near Bethlehem, it might be a part of the patrimony which belonged to David, as a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite; which he might give to Chimham, out of respect to his father Barzillai, who showed kindness to him when he was obliged to flee from Absalom; which, though it returned to David's family in the year of jubilee, as all inheritances did, yet might continue to be called after the name of Chimham, in commemoration of the royal grant of it to him. Josephus {r} calls the name of the place Mandra. The reason why Johanan and those with him pitched on this place was, because it lay in the way

to go to enter into Egypt; where they had an inclination to go; having still a friendly regard to that people, and a confidence in them, as appears by some following chapters; and that they might be ready and at hand to flee thither, should the Chaldeans come against them, which they feared.

{r} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 5.

Jeremiah 41:18

Ver. 18. Because of the Chaldeans,.... Which clause some think should have been joined to Jer 41:17. This is a reason given why they departed from Mizpah, and dwelt at the habitation of Chimham in the way to Egypt; and which is explained in the next words:

for they were afraid of them; at least this they pretended, that the Chaldeans would come upon them, and cut them off, and revenge themselves on them:

because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon made governor in the land; no doubt it was provoking to them to hear that the viceroy or deputy governor of the king of Babylon was slain in this manner; and still more so, as there were many Chaldeans slain with him; but there was no reason to believe that the king of Babylon would carry his resentment against the Jews with Johanan, or take vengeance on them, who had so bravely appeared against the murderers, and had rescued the captives out of their hands: this seems only a pretence for their going into Egypt; for though they were promised safety in Judah by the Prophet Jeremiah, yet they were still for going into Egypt, as the following chapters show.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 42:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH CAHPTER 42

This chapter contains a request of the Jews to Jeremiah, to pray to the Lord for them to direct them, and the Lord's answer to it. The request is made by the captains and all the people, Jer 42:1; which Jeremiah undertook to present to the Lord, Jer 42:4; they promising to go according to the direction that should be given, Jer 42:5. After ten days an answer is returned, and the prophet calls the captains and people together to hear it, Jer 42:7; the purport of which was, that if they continued in the land of Judah, it would be well with them, and they would be safe, Jer 42:9; but if they went into Egypt, they should die by the sword, famine, and pestilence, and be a curse and reproach, and never see their own land more, Jer 42:13; they are charged with dissimulation and disobedience, Jer 42:19; and the chapter is concluded with an assurance of their perishing by the above judgments in the place they were desirous of dwelling in,
Jer 42:22.

Ver. 1. Then all the captains of the forces,.... Having taken up their residence at the habitation of Chimham, in their way to Egypt, where they were desirous of going, and being afraid of the Chaldeans, as they pretended:

and Johanan the son of Kareah; or, "even Johanan" {s}; especially and particularly he, the principal captain and chief spokesman in this affair:

and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah; said to be the son of a Maachathite,
Jer 40:8;

and all the people from the least even unto the greatest: a phrase expressive of the universality of them in the strongest terms:

came near; that is, to Jeremiah; who either was at Mizpah when Gedaliah was slain, but preserved by the Lord; and though carried captive by Ishmael with the rest, was rescued by Johanan; and now along with him: or rather after he had been with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and made a short stay there, he went to Anathoth, and there abode till now; and when Johanan took those that were left at Mizpah, he gathered together all the rest of the Jews in different places to him, in order to go to Egypt, and among the rest the Prophet Jeremiah; for it can hardly be thought, had he been at Mizpah when Ishmael was there, he would have escaped without a miracle.

{s} Nnxwyw "imprimis Johanan", Schmidt; "nempe Johanan", Piscator, Grotius.

Jeremiah 42:2

Ver. 2. And said unto Jeremiah the prophet,.... That is, some one of them, as the mouth of the whole body, very probably Johanan:

let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee; they treat the prophet with great respect, and are very humble and submissive, as if they were very hearty and sincere in their request:

and pray for us unto the Lord thy God; as if they were conscious of their own inability to pray for themselves, and of their unworthiness to call God their God; and as if they had a high opinion of, he prophet, as having an interest in God, and great power with him in prayer, whom he could not well deny anything:

[even] for all this remnant; this poor remnant, this handful of people, left of the sword, famine, and pestilence, left in the land by the Chaldeans, and who had escaped the cruelty of Ishmael; and for whom it might be hoped the Lord would still have a regard, since he had so mercifully and wonderfully preserved them:

for we are left [but] a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us; the number of the people had been very large, but by the judgments of the sword, famine, and pestilence, and captivity, they were greatly reduced; here was their whole number before the prophet; his eyes beheld them, and the condition they were in: this they said to move his compassion, and very likely to suggest to him how improbable it was that they should ever be able to continue in their own land; but that it would be better to put themselves under the protection of a neighbouring nation, Egypt, whither they were inclined to go; and hoped to have a word from the Lord by the prophet, to direct them thither.

Jeremiah 42:3

Ver. 3. That the Lord thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk,.... Not the way of their duty as to religious worship, or their moral conversation, which was the way of God's commandments, and had been shown them, and they knew it; but which way they should steer their course for their safety; they had departed from Mizpah of themselves, and had taken up their dwelling at Geruthchimham, in the way to Egypt; whither they had set their faces, and where their hearts were, only they wanted the Lord's sanction for it, pretending they would be directed by him:

and the thing that we should do; the steps they should take in order to proceed; and what they should do before they left their own country, and went into another.

Jeremiah 42:4

Ver. 4. Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard [you],.... He took notice of what they said to him, and found himself disposed to comply with their request, and readily granted it:

behold, I will pray unto the Lord your God, according to your words; be an intercessor for them; use his interest with his God, and their God; and, on account of relation, might expect to be heard; whom he would humbly entreat to direct what they should do, as they desired:

and it shall come to pass, [that] whatsoever thing the Lord shall answer you, I will declare [it] unto you; I will keep nothing back from you; but faithfully make known the whole mind and will of God, just as it is delivered, be it in what way soever: and though it is not expressed, he might suggest that he had some doubt on his mind whether they would obey it or not; and that he expected they would be open and free in declaring themselves on that point; since he had so readily complied with their request, and was determined to act the faithful part to them; hence the following reply:

Jeremiah 42:5

Ver. 5. Then they said to Jeremiah, the Lord be a true and faithful witness between us,.... Which is the form of an oath; a solemn appeal to God, as a witness to what they were about to say, and to the sincerity of their hearts in it; who is true to his word, and faithful to his promises and threatenings; and who bears a true and faithful testimony, and will do what is just and right; and yet these people never intended to perform what they promised; which is a most shocking piece of atheism in a professing people; and who, at this very time, could not but observe the judgments of God upon their nation, city, and temple:

if we do not even according to all things for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us; they promise to do everything the Lord should signify by the prophet as his will; and, if they did not, wish the severest judgments of God might fall upon them.

Jeremiah 42:6

Ver. 6. Whether [it be] good, or whether [it be] evil,.... Not morally good, or evil; for nothing but what is good, and not evil, in this sense, can come from God; but whether pleasantly or profitably good or evil; whether agreeable or disagreeable, pleasing or displeasing, advantageous or not; whether it seemed to them good or evil, be it what it would in their opinion and esteem:

we will obey the voice of the Lord our God, to whom we send thee; this was well spoken, had they been sincere in it; and had they implored and depended on the grace of God to have enabled them to obey; but they spoke not in the uprightness of their hearts; and, did they, it was with too much confidence of their own strength, and the power of their free will:

that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the Lord our God; they spoke as if they knew their own interest; for so it was, that it was well or ill with those people, as they obeyed or disobeyed the voice of the Lord; and yet they acted not according to it; and, what was worse still, did not intend it. What a wretched scene of hypocrisy is here!

Jeremiah 42:7

Ver. 7. And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah. Abarbinel thinks it was on the tenth day of the seventh month, the day of atonement, that the answer was returned; but it is clear, from the context, that it was ten days from the time the Jews applied to the prophet to inquire of the Lord for them, and he promised to do it, that this word came from the Lord to him; not that he was praying all this while, as some think; but, having spread the case before the Lord, he waited for an answer; which was deferred, that it might have the greater weight with it when it came; and that it might appear that it was not of the prophet himself, a device of his own; and chiefly this was to mortify these people, who were impatient of an answer; and whose hypocrisy the Lord knew; and whose disobedience he foresaw; and therefore did not think fit to give the answer directly, but keep them in suspense awhile.

Jeremiah 42:8

Ver. 8. Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah,.... That is, Jeremiah, as soon as he had received the answer from the Lord, called to Johanan; who, after the death of Gedaliah, was a person of the greatest authority, and had the command of the people, to come unto him, and hear what it was: he either called to him vocally and by name; or he sent a proper messenger to him, to meet him at some convenient place, to receive it; and not him only, but

all the captains of the forces which [were] with him, and all the people, from the least even unto the greatest; they were all convened together, as it was proper they should, to hear the word of the Lord; and the rather, since they all joined in a request to the prophet,
Jer 42:1.

Jeremiah 42:9

Ver. 9. And said unto them, thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel,.... That had chosen Israel; had a favour for that people, and bestowed many blessings on them, and continued in a covenant relation to them; and therefore what he said should be regarded by them. This preface is made by the prophet, to show that what he was about to say was not of himself, and in his own name; but was from the Lord, and who bore a good will to them; and therefore whatever he said should be taken in good part, and as what was best for them:

unto whom ye sent me, to present your supplication before him; or, "to cause your supplication to fall before him" {t}; to make it in the most humble and submissive manner; and which carries in it other arguments to engage them to obey the word of the Lord he brought to them; both because they had sent him to the Lord on this errand, to get a word from him; and by him had entreated him for it, in the most suppliant manner. The word from the Lord follows:

{t} wynpl Mktnxt lyphl "ut cadere facerem preces vestras coram ipso", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 42:10

Ver. 10. If ye will still abide in this land,.... In the land of Judea, their native country, where they had always lived, and where they continued when their brethren were carried captive; and yet they thought of going out of it, which the Lord knew; and therefore to encourage them to abide in it, and not think of departing into Egypt; that if they would take up their residence in it, and determine to continue there, he thus promises them:

then will I build you, and not pull [you] down: and I will plant you, and not pluck [you] up; that is, they should be firm and stable, happy and prosperous; and abound with all kind of blessings, and increase in numbers, wealth, and riches. The metaphors are taken from building houses, and planting fields and vineyards:

for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you; not that he had done any unjust thing to them; or that he changed his mind concerning them; but that he had compassion on them, and would change his way and course of providence towards them, according to his unchangeable will.

Jeremiah 42:11

Ver. 11. Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid,.... Lest he should revenge the death of Gedaliah upon them, which was a groundless fear; see Jer 41:18; or that they should be dealt hardly with by him, and be cruelly oppressed, and not able to live in subjection to him; see Jer 40:9;

be not afraid of him, saith the Lord: who, being omniscient, knew they were; and, being omnipotent, a greater King than the king of Babylon, the King of king?, they had no reason to fear anything from him, since they were under his protection:

for I [am] with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand; from his avenging and oppressing hand; though they were not to be delivered as yet from subjection to him, or being tributaries to him; which they might be, and yet dwell in peace and safety.

Jeremiah 42:12

Ver. 12. And I will show mercies unto you,.... Bestow blessings of goodness upon them, out of pure mercy and compassion to them, and not according to their merits; or I will cause others to show mercy to them, even the king of Babylon, as follows: God shows mercy to men when he stirs up the compassion of others towards them:

that he may have mercy upon you; and not avenge the death of Gedaliah, or any way cruelly oppress them, but show them all the favour they could wish for or expect under such a government, and in such circumstances; giving them vineyards and fields, and allowing them to gather the fruits of them, and enjoy them:

and cause you to return to your own land: this is said, not of the captives in Babylon, as Kimchi and Abarbinel, since these were not to return till seventy years were ended; and when they did, it was not by the order and direction of the king of Babylon, but of the king of Persia: this is said of those who, from the time that Jerusalem had been besieged, had deserted their houses and fields, but should have liberty to return to them; or of those who more lately had been carried captive by Ishmael, from the places where they had settled, but should be returned to them again, and live peaceably and comfortably there under the government and protection of the king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 42:13

Ver. 13. But if ye say, we will not dwell in this land,.... Or continue any longer in it, but go into Egypt:, neither obey the voice of the Lord your God; or, "so as not to hearken to" or "obey", &c. {u}; for they did not say in so many words that they would not obey the voice of the Lord; they had promised they would; but resolving, against his declared will, that they would not abide in the land, but go into Egypt, was interpretatively saying they would not obey his voice.

{u} emv ytlbl "ita ut non auscultetis", Piscator, Cocceius; "ut non obediatis", Pagninus, Schmidt; "ut non audiatis", so some in Vatablus.

Jeremiah 42:14

Ver. 14. Saying, no, but we will go into the land of Egypt,.... It was all one as if they had said, no, we will not obey the voice of the Lord to continue in our own land; we are determined to go into Egypt, induced by the following reasons:

where we shall see no war; either internal, or with a foreign enemy; as both of late in their own land, and which they feared would be again; but promised themselves exemption from both in the land of Egypt, and therefore coveted to dwell there:

nor hear the sound of the trumpet; neither hear of wars nor rumours of wars; not the sound of the trumpet in the armies of the enemy, or among themselves, to gather together and prepare for battle; or, as Jarchi thinks, the sound of the trumpet blown by the watchman, giving notice to the people of the approach of an enemy:

nor have hunger of bread; as they had had while Judea was invaded and Jerusalem besieged, and a foreign army in the land; and though they had no reason to fear this now, yet they thought they should be more out of the danger of it in Egypt, a fruitful country, overflowed by the Nile:

and there will we dwell; in peace, prosperity, and safety: this was their resolution, to go and abide there; and this their confidence, that such would be their happy state.

Jeremiah 42:15

Ver. 15. And now therefore hear the word of the Lord, ye remnant of Judah,.... A small remnant indeed, a few that were left in the land; who ought therefore to have admired the distinguishing goodness of Providence in preserving them in it; where they should have continued and made use of their privilege, to the glory of God and their mutual good:

thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; the Lord of armies above and below, the Lord God omnipotent, and so able to protect them in their land; and who had a peculiar favour to Israel, and stood in a particular relation to them, and therefore would do it, of which they had no reason to doubt; but, disobliging him, what judgments might they not expect?

if you wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt: are resolved upon it, and are actually engaged in it; turning their faces from Judea towards Egypt, and obstinately pursuing it, nor can be reclaimed from it: the phrase expresses their resolution, impudence, and obstinacy:

and go to sojourn there: to be sojourners and strangers there, as their fathers had been before; the remembrance of which was enough to set them against going into Egypt any more.

Jeremiah 42:16

Ver. 16. Then it shall come to pass,.... That the various judgments following should come upon them:

[that] the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt; that is, the sword; of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, which they feared they should fall by in Judea; this should come after them in Egypt, and there overtake them, as it did; Egypt being destroyed by the king of Babylon, as it was foretold it should, Jer 46:25;

and the famine, whereof you were afraid, shalt follow close after you there in Egypt; the famine they were afraid would come upon them in Judea, should pursue them, overtake them, seize on them, and cleave unto them, in Egypt; thus the evils they thought to escape, by moving from one place, should befall them in another; there is no fleeing from the presence, power, and hand of God:

and there ye shall die; either by the sword, or by famine, or by pestilence, as in the Jer 42:17.

Jeremiah 42:17

Ver. 17. So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there,.... Not all that went into Egypt, but all that were resolutely set upon it; that were obstinately bent to go there, and did go, contrary to the express command of God; for otherwise there were some that were forced to go against their wills, as Jeremiah, Baruch, and no doubt others:

they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; three of the Lord's sore judgments; some should die by one, and some by another, and some by a third; all should die by one or the other:

and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them; that is, none of those who wilfully, and of their own accord, went down to Egypt; they all perished there, none could escape the hand of God, or the evil he determined to bring upon them; which is to be understood of the above judgments.

Jeremiah 42:18

Ver. 18. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,....
See Gill on "Jer 42:15";

as mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; like a large hasty shower of rain; or rather like melted metal, which suddenly and swiftly runs, and spreads itself, and burns and consumes with a violent heat; such was the wrath of God on Jerusalem, in the destruction of it by the Chaldeans:

so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt; as soon as they had well got there, quickly after they were settled there; for it was in the time of the then present king of Egypt, Pharaohhophra, and by the then present king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, that the destruction of Egypt was, in which these Jews suffered:

and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; men should be astonished at the hand of God upon them, reproach them for their sins; and when they made any imprecation on themselves, it would be in this form, if it be so, let the same calamities come upon me as upon the Jews in Egypt:

and ye shall see this place no more; and so their case would be worse than their brethren in Babylon; who, after a term of years were expired, would return to their own land, which these would never see any more.

Jeremiah 42:19

Ver. 19. The Lord hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah,.... Or, "unto you" {w}; by the mouth of the prophet; or, "against you" {x}; that which was contrary to their inclination and will, as follows:

go ye not into Egypt: this was the express command of God:

know certainly that I have admonished you this day; not to go into Egypt: or, "have testified unto you" {y}; the will of God concerning this matter; and therefore they could not plead ignorance.

{w} Mkyle "alloquitur vos", Junius & Tremellius; "ad vos", so some in Vatablus. {x} "Contra vos", Calvin. {y} Mkb ytdyeh "contestatus sum vos", Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius.

Jeremiah 42:20

Ver. 20. For ye dissembled in your hearts,.... Did not honestly and faithfully declare their intentions; they said one thing with their mouths, and meant another in their minds; they pretended they would act according to the will of God, as it should be made known to them by him, when they were determined to take their own way. Some render it, "ye have deceived [me] in your hearts" {z}; the prophet, so Kimchi; by that which was in their hearts, not declaring what was their real intention and design: or, "ye have deceived your souls" {a}; you have deceived yourselves and one another; I have not deceived you, nor the Lord, but you have put a cheat upon your own souls: or, "you have used deceit against your souls" {b}; to the hurt of them, to your present ruin and everlasting destruction:

when ye sent me unto the Lord your God; the prophet did not go of himself, they desired him to go:

saying, pray for us unto the Lord our God; to be directed in the way they should go; so that the prophet did nothing but what they desired him to do:

and according to all that the Lord our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do [it]; they pressed him to a faithful declaration of the will of God to them, and promised they would act according to it. Now he had done all this; he had been wire God, prayed unto him as they requested, and had brought them his mind and will, and made a faithful relation of it, and yet they did not attend to it; so that the deceit was not in him, but in them, as follows:

{z} Mkytwvpnb Mtyeth "seduxistis [me] animis vestris", so some in Vatablus; "fefellistis me", Munster. So Ben Melech. {a} "Fecistis errare animas vestras", Pagninus; "fefellistis", Calvin. {b} "Seduxeritis vos contra animas vestras", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 42:21

Ver. 21. And [now] I have this day declared [it] unto you,.... The whole will of God, and had not kept back anything from them:

but ye have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God; or, "ye will not obey" {c}; the prophet knew they would not obey the command of the Lord not to go into Egypt, either by his conversation with them during the ten days the answer of the Lord was deferred, by which he plainly saw they were determined to go into Egypt; or by their countenances and behaviour, while he was delivering the Lord's message to them; by what he observed in them, he knew what was said was not agreeable to them, and that their mind was to go into Egypt: or he had this, as others think, by divine revelation; though without that he knew the cast of this people, and what a rebellious and disobedient people they were, and had been, never obeying the voice of the Lord:

nor any [thing] for which he hath sent me unto you: not anyone particular thing respecting this present affair; nor indeed any of his prophecies had they regarded, with which he had been sent to them before.

{c} Mtemv alw "et tamen non vultis parere", Vatablus.

Jeremiah 42:22

Ver. 22. Now therefore know certainly,.... Or, "in knowing know" {d}; they might assure themselves of this, that it would certainly come to pass, and most justly and deservedly; since it was at their own request the prophet sought the mind of the Lord for them, and had faithfully related it to them, and they had promised to observe it; wherefore, should they go into Egypt, as their inclination scented to be entirely that way, they must expect what follows:

that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; by one or other of these, or all of them; some by one, and some by another, as before threatened; evils they thought to escape by going thither, but which should surely follow them, and overtake them:

in the place whither ye desire to go [and] to sojourn; that is, in Egypt, to which they had a strong inclination, where they greatly desired to be, pleased themselves with the thoughts of, and which they chose of their own will and pleasure for their habitation.

{d} wedt edy "sciendo scietis", Schmidt; "sciendo sciatis", Pagninus, Montanus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 43:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 43

This chapter contains the answer of the princes and people to the prophet's message; a relation of their going into Egypt; and a prophecy of the destruction of that land. The persons that gave the answer are described, some by name, and all by their character; and the time of their giving it is mentioned, in which they charge the prophet with a falsehood; impute the whole to an instigation of Baruch, and an ill design of his, and so were disobedient to the command of God,
Jer 43:1; and went into Egypt, and carried all with them, of every rank, age, and sex, and even Baruch, and the prophet too, and came to Tahpanhes, the

seat of the kings of Egypt, Jer 43:5; upon this a prophecy is delivered out, concerning the destruction of that country, which is signified by a symbol explained; the person, the instrument of it, is mentioned by name, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; the devastation he should make is expressed by slaying with the sword, and carrying into captivity; by burning the temples of their gods, and breaking their images in pieces, Jer 43:8.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, [that] when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people,.... The princes and the people, the whole body of them, who had desired the prophet to seek the Lord for them, and whom he called together to relate his answer, and declare his will; see Jer 42:1; they heard him out, and that was as much as they did; for as soon as he had done, they rose up and contradicted him: however, he faithfully declared

all the words of the Lord their God, for which the Lord their God sent him to them, [even] all the words; which are related in the preceding chapter, which were the words of the Lord, and so ought to have been regarded; and the rather, as they were the words of their God, whom they professed, and which he had sent his prophet to declare unto them; and who had kept back nothing, but had made known the whole; he had told the truth, and nothing but the truth, and all the truth.

Jeremiah 43:2

Ver. 2. Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiah,.... Perhaps the same with Jezaniah, or a brother of his, Jer 42:1; he is mentioned first, it may be, because he was the contriver of this scheme to go into Egypt, advised unto it, and was most for it it. The Septuagint and Arabic versions call him the son of Maaseiah;

and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men; the great men among them, who are commonly proud of their greatness; of their descent, family and blood; of their wealth and riches, and posts of honour; perhaps the captains of the forces are meant, who elsewhere are mentioned along with Johanan, Jer 40:13; these were men full of themselves, had a high opinion of their own wisdom, and were prudent in their own eyes; and could not bear to be contradicted or advised by the prophet, nor even by the Lord himself; and are justly, by the Targum, called wicked men; and so the Syriac version renders it; their pride was the cause of their rebellion against God, and disobedience to him, and of their ungenteel and insolent behaviour to the prophet

saying unto Jeremiah, thou speakest falsely: or, "a lie" {e}; it being contrary to their minds: so the prophets of the Lord, the ministers of the word, and even the word of God itself, are charged with falsehoods, when contrary to men's sentiments and lusts;

the Lord our God hath not sent thee to say, go not into Egypt to sojourn there; they did not care to own it was the word of the Lord, Whatever convictions of it they had in their minds; because they would not openly appear to be fighters against God, whom they professed to be their God; but deny that the prophet was sent by him with any such message to them; when they had all the reason to believe by former prophecies, which had had their fulfilment, that Jeremiah was a true prophet of the Lord, and that he had acted a very faithful part in the present affair: they themselves had sent him to the Lord to pray for them; he had done so, and the Lord had returned an answer by him; of which they had no reason to doubt, but their pride would not allow them to receive it.

{e} rqv "mendacium", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 43:3

Ver. 3. But Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us,.... First they charge the prophet with a lie, and deny his mission from the Lord; and now to lessen the prophet's crime they charged him with, they lay the blame on Baruch, as if he, out of ill will to them, had instigated the prophet to deliver such a message; which is not at all likely, that he should be prevailed upon by a younger person, and his secretary, to take such a step: nor can it be thought that Baruch should have any interest to serve by it; and, besides, both he and the prophet were too good men, the one to instigate, and the other to be instigated, to declare a falsehood in the name of the Lord. The end proposed, they suggest, was

for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon; either that he or the prophet might deliver them into the hands of the Chaldeans, to be put to death by them, or be carried captive; which is not at all probable, it being inconsistent with that piety and humanity which were conspicuous in them both, and with their conduct, who chose rather to abide in their own land, with this small and despicable handful of people, than to go and live in the court of Babylon, where good care would have been taken of them.

Jeremiah 43:4

Ver. 4. So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, and all the people,.... The generality of them, at least, all agreed together, were of the same mind, and in the same sentiment and practice: and so

obeyed not the voice of the Lord, to dwell in the land of Judah; it was the command of the Lord they should dwell there, and not go into Egypt; but they would not believe this was the voice of the Lord, only a scheme concerted between the prophet and Baruch; or which the former was instigated to deliver as the word of the Lord by the latter, and therefore would not give heed unto it; though the truth of the matter was, it was contrary to their inclination and resolution, and therefore, though they had reason to believe it was the will of God they should abide in their own land, yet they were determined they would not, but go into Egypt, as they, did.

Jeremiah 43:5

Ver. 5. But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces,.... Who were united in their resolution to go into Egypt, contrary to the declared will of God:

took all the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all nations whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah; both such who were left in the land, when the rest were carried captive into Babylon, more particularly mentioned in Jer 43:6; and those, who upon the invasion of the land, and siege of Jerusalem, had fled to other countries, but now were returned from thence, in order to settle in it; having heard that a governor from among the Jews was appointed over it; as from Moab, Ammon, Edom, and other countries; see Jer 40:11; these, some of their own accord, others through persuasion, and others by force, went along with, or were taken and carried by the above captains into Egypt.

Jeremiah 43:6

Ver. 6. [Even] men, and women, and children, and the king's daughters,.... This, according to the supplement of our version, explains who they were that were taken and had into Egypt, persons of every sex, age, and rank; though rather these words design and describe persons distinct from the former, that came out of other countries; see
Jer 41:10;

and every person that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan: even the poor of the land to till it; and to whom he gave fields and vineyards, and committed them to the care and government of Gedaliah, when the rest were carried captive to Babylon; and now these, in some sort, may be said to be carried captive by their own brethren into Egypt:

and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah; whom they forced with them, partly to punish them, and partly to give countenance to their conduct; but not without the will of God, who so ordered it in his providence, that they might have the prophet with then, to reprove them for their sins, and warn them of their danger and ruin, and so leave them inexcusable.

Jeremiah 43:7

Ver. 7. So they came into the land of Egypt,.... They set out from the habitation of Chimham, where they were, Jer 41:17; and proceeded on their journey, till they entered the land of Egypt:

for they obeyed not the voice of the Lord; to continue in Judea, and not to go into Egypt; and though the prophet of the Lord, who was with them, might, as they went along, advise them to go back, they regarded him not, but still went on:

thus came they [even] to Tahpanhes; the same with Hanes, Isa 30:4; and might be so called, as here, from a queen of Egypt of this name,
1Ki 11:19. The Septuagint version, and others after that, call it Taphnas. It is thought to be the Daphnae Pelusiae of Herodotus {f} It was a seat of the king of Egypt, as appeals from Jer 43:9; and no less a place would these proud men stop at, or take up with, but where the king's palace was. Tyrius {g} calls it Tapium, and says it was in his time a very small town.

{f} Enterpe, sive l. 2. c. 30, 107. {g} Apud Adrichem. Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 125.

Jeremiah 43:8

Ver. 8. Then came the word of the Lord to Jeremiah, at Tahpanhes,.... Where he was with the rest the captains carried thither with them; and as soon as he and they had got here, the word of the Lord came unto him, declaring the destruction of this place, and of the whole land. Here Jerom says the prophet was stoned to death;

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 43:9

Ver. 9. Take great stones in thine hand,.... In both his hands, as big as he could carry:

and hide them in the clay in the brick kiln; there was much clay in Egypt, through the overflowing of the Nile, and particularly at this place Tahpanhes, which had its name of Pelusiae from hence; and here was a brick kiln; not a place where bricks were burnt, but where they were foraged; and so here was the clay of which they were made, and in which these stones were to be hid:

which [is] at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes; this brick kiln stood not directly at the entrance into the king's palace, but at the door of a wall of a park or garden, which belonged to the palace, from whence there was an open way to it; here the stones were to be laid. Since a brick kiln so near a king's palace seems not agreeable, Gussetius {h} thinks Nblm signifies a poplar walk, from hnbl, a poplar tree, whose shade is very grateful, **Ho 4:13**; to which the courtiers betook themselves at certain times, and walked in for pleasure;

in the sight of the men of Judah; not in the sight of the Egyptians, who would not understand the design of it, nor were they to be instructed by it; but in the sight of the Jews, who would at once imagine that something was intended, being used to such symbols, and would inquire the meaning of it; and which is explained in Jer 43:10.

{h} Ebr. Comment. p. 470.

Jeremiah 43:10

Ver. 10. And say unto them,.... The men of Judah, now in Egypt:

thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel;
See Gill on "Jer 42:15";

behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; as all men are by creation, and as he was in a very eminent sense, being an instrument in his hand of executing his designs, both on the Jews and other nations; him he would send for, and take to perform his counsel; secretly work upon and dispose his mind to such an undertaking, and lay a train of providences, and, by a concourse of them, bring him to Egypt to do his will:

and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; which he had ordered the prophet to hide, and which he did by him; signifying, that the king at Babylon should come with his army against this city, and should take it, and set up his throne, and keep his court here:

and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them; his tent; he shall place here his beautiful one, as the word {i} signifies; this should be set up where these stones were laid, as if they were designed for the foundation of it, though they were only a symbol of it; and would be a token to the Jews, when accomplished, of the certainty of the divine prescience, and of prophecy, with respect to future events, even those the most minute and contingent.

{i} wryrpv "teutorium elegans", Montanus, Vatablus; "pulchrum", Munster. So Ben Melech.

Jeremiah 43:11

Ver. 11. And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt,.... Here is a various reading: the "Cetib", or textual writing, is, "when it cometh, it shall smite"; which Kimchi rightly interprets of the camp or army of Nebuchadnezzar; and the "Keri", or marginal reading, which we follow, is, "when he cometh, he shall smite"; that is, the king of Babylon; both are to be received: when Nebuchadnezzar should come with his army to Tahpanhes, he would not only take that, but go through the land of Egypt, and subdue and destroy the inhabitants of it, all that dwelt in it, sojourners as well as natives; and so the Jews that were come hither to dwell, against the express command of God, to whom this prophecy was delivered, and to whom it has a particular respect:

[and deliver] such [as are] for death to death; who are appointed to death, either by pestilence or famine; that is, he shall oblige them to flee to, or block them up in, places where they shall perish by one or other of these:

and such [as are] for captivity to captivity: such as are designed to be carried captive, these shall be taken by him, and carried captive into Babylon, and the provinces of it:

and such [as are] for the sword to the sword; who are destined to fall by the sword, these should be slain by the sword of Nebuchadnezzar, and his soldiers; so that, what by one way or another, a general destruction should be made.

Jeremiah 43:12

Ver. 12. And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt,.... Not only men should not be spared, but their gods also, and their temples should be burnt, as was usually done when cities were taken and destroyed: this is ascribed to God, to his wrath and vengeance; idolatry being a sin highly displeasing to him; though the Chaldeans were the instruments of it, yet it being done by the order, direction, and providence of God, it is rightly attributed to him:

and he shall burn them, and carry them away captives; that is, Nebuchadnezzar shall do this; he shall burn their temples, and carry away their idols of gold and silver; so Kimchi, who adds, or the sense is, he shall carry captive their worshippers; but rather the meaning is, he shall burn their idols, such as are made of wood, or any base matter, not worth saving; and he shall carry away with him their idols, such as are made of gold and silver, or any precious matter:

and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment. The Targum is, "he shall spoil the land of Egypt."

The meaning is, that he shall load and cover himself and his army with the spoil of the land of Egypt, as a shepherd covers himself with his garment; and he shall do it as easily as a shepherd puts on his coat; and as completely he shall roll up all the spoil, wealth, and riches of the land, and carry it off, even as a shepherd rolls up the covering of his tent; and, as Kimchi's father observes, as well as puts on his garment, and leaves nothing behind him, when he removes from place to place; and as he is unmindful of his clothes, or what he wears in the heat of the day; but at night, when he returns home from keeping his sheep, puts on his clothes, the best he has; so should the king of Babylon and his army return richly laden with the spoil of Egypt, when he should leave it. Or the sense rather is, he shall cover the land of Egypt with his forces, as a shepherd is covered and wrapped up in his garment against the inclemency of the weather; or else, as Bochart {k} suggests, the destruction of Egypt may be compared to an old worn out garment, or such a mean and sordid garment as shepherds wear:

and he shall go forth from thence in peace: there shall be none to molest and disturb him, to stop him and take away the spoil from him, or hinder his return to his own country; whither he should go in safety, and with great booty.

{k} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 44. col. 456.

Jeremiah 43:13

Ver. 13. He shall break also the images of Bethshemesh, that [is] in the land of Egypt,.... Or, "of Heliopolis", as the Septuagint; the "city of the sun"; and so "Bethshemesh" here signifies the "house of the sun"; either it designs the temple of the sun, or the city where it was worshipped; as Heliopolis was famous for the worship of the sun, and for a magnificent temple in it, built for that purpose, and where abundance of persons resorted on that account, as Herodotus {l} observes; here were many images of the sun; and these now should be broke to pieces, when this city should become the city of destruction, as is foretold it should by Isaiah, Isa 19:18; where the Targum expressly calls it the city Bethshemesh, that is to be destroyed;
See Gill on "Isa 19:18". This is the same city that was formerly called On, and had a priest in Joseph's time, Ge 41:45;

and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire; which is repeated, that it might be taken notice of, and for the confirmation of it; though the words may be rendered, so as to remove the tautology, "and with the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn [it] with fire" {m}; that is, Bethshemesh, or "the house of the sun", that shall not escape, being a principal temple. The gods they worshipped were Mnevis and Apis, which were oxen consecrated to the sun and moon {n}. So says Porphyry {o}, speaking of the Egyptians,

"they consecrate oxen to the sun and moon: that which is sacred to the sun at Heliopolis is called Mnevis, and is the greatest of them: it is very black, because much sun makes human bodies black; and the hairs of its tail, and of its whole body, contrary to other oxen, turn upwards, as the sun makes its course contrary to the pole; its testicles are the largest, because by the heat of the sun venereal desires are excited; hence the sun is said to make nature fruitful. To the moon they dedicate Taurus (or the bull), which they call Apis, and is blacker than others, bearing the signs of the sun and moon, because the light of the moon is from the sun; and the sign of the sun is the blackness of its body, and also the beetle that is under its tongue;"

and these were the images and gods of Bethshemesh or Heliopolis, that were to be destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Of his expedition into Egypt, whereby this prophecy was fulfilled, not only Josephus makes mention, but some Heathen writers gave plain hints of it. The Jewish historian says {p}, that Nebuchadnezzar, five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, led his army into Coelesyria, and took it; and made war with the Ammonites and Moabites; and, having subdued these nations, made a push into Egypt, in order to destroy that, and slew the king of it: and Berosus says {q}, that

"Nebuchadnezzar having settled his affairs in Egypt, and other countries; and having committed to his friends the captives of the Jews, Phoenicians, Syrians, and the nations about Egypt, went to Babylon:"

and Megasthenes {r} relates, that

"he conquered the greatest part of Lybia (or Africa) and Iberia;"

or, as it is elsewhere {s} expressed,

"he led his army into Lybia and Iberia; and, having subdued these, carried colonies of them to the right of Pontus."

{l} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 59. {m} So Schmidt. {n} Vid. Aelian. de Animal. l. 11. c. 11. {o} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 3. c. 13. p. 117. {p} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 7. {q} Apud Josph. Antiqu. ib. c. 11. sect 1. & contra Apion. l. 1. sect. 19. & Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 40. p. 455. {r} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. ib. & contra Apion. l. 1. sect. 20. {s} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 456.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 44:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 44

This chapter contains a sermon of Jeremiah's to the Jews in Egypt, reproving them for their idolatry there; their answer to it, expressing their resolution to continue in their idolatrous practices; and a denunciation of judgments upon them, of which a sign is given. The sermon begins with observing to them the destruction of Jerusalem, and the causes of it, idolatry and contempt of the prophets, Jer 44:1; then follows an expostulation with the present Jews for doing the same things, and exposing themselves and their posterity to the same punishment, Jer 44:7; upon which they are threatened with the sore judgments of God that should come upon them, and cut them off in general, Jer 44:11; yet such were the impudence and obstinacy of this people, that they declared they would not hearken to the prophet, but persist in their idolatry; it having been better with them when they practised it than when they left it, Jer 44:15; to which the prophet replies by observing, that for the idolatry of their fathers their land was become a desolation and a curse, as at this day, Jer 44:20; and assures them that destruction would come from the Lord upon them, which he had swore to, Jer 44:24; and a sign of it is given; the delivery of the king of Egypt into the hand of the king of Babylon, Jer 44:29.

Ver. 1. The word which came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt,.... Or, "unto all the Jews" {t}; the word came to him, that it might be delivered to them; or, "against all the Jews" {u}; they having gone into Egypt contrary to the will of God, and committing idolatry; and the word or sermon is full of threatenings and judgments denounced upon them:

which dwell at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros: this prophecy was delivered after the Jews were come to Tahpanhes, or Daphne; see Jer 43:7; and had divided themselves, and were settled in

different parts of the kingdom: some continued at Tahpanhes, where were the king's court and palace: others went to Migdol, a place near the Red sea, just at the entrance into Egypt, from the land of Canaan, Ex 14:2; called, by Herodotus, Magdolus {w}; and by Adrichomius {x} said to be distant about a mile and a quarter from Pelusium, or Sin, the strength of Egypt, Eze 30:15; others took up their residence at Noph, generally thought to be the city of Memphis. The Targum calls it Mappas; the same which is now called Grand Cairo; or, however, this city is near the place where Memphis stood: others dwelt in the country of Pathros, which perhaps had its name from Pathrusim, a son of Mizraim, Ge 10:13. It is thought by Bochart and others to be the country of Thebais in Egypt, the same with the Nomos Phanturites, or Phaturites, of Pliny {y}; and in this country Jeremiah seems to have been when this word came to him,
Jer 44:15; and from hence sent or carried it to the other places: saying; as follows:

{t} Mydwhyh lk la "ad omnes Judaeos", V. L. Castalio, Cocceius, Schmidt; "erga omnes", Pagninus, Montanus. {u} "Contra omnes Judaeos", Junius & Tremellius; "de, [vel] contra", Piscator. {w} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 159. {x} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 121. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 9.

Jeremiah 44:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... In which manner the prophecies of this book are frequently prefaced; see
Jer 42:15;

ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah; they saw it with their bodily eyes; they could not but serve it in their minds; nay, had an experimental knowledge of it; they suffered it in part themselves, and must be convicted in their own consciences that it was from the hand of the Lord:

and, behold, this day they [are] a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein; lie waste, at this very time; the walls are broken down the houses are demolished; the goods in them carried off; no inhabitants left, or very few, to rebuild the cities, till the land, and dwell therein.

Jeremiah 44:3

Ver. 3. Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger,.... The cause of this desolation was the wickedness they were guilty of; whereby they provoked the anger of God to bring this destruction on them. Sin is always provoking unto God; and though it may not be done on purpose to provoke him, which it sometimes seems to be; yet it eventually does, and is always the cause of punishment: God never punishes man without a cause, or for anything but sin:

in that they went to burn incense, [and] to serve other gods: the particular wickedness they were guilty of, and which was the cause of their ruin, was burning incense to idols, and worshipping them, than which nothing is more provoking to God: and it was an aggravation of their sin, that they were gods

whom they knew not, [neither] they, you, nor your fathers; what they were; from whence they were; their original, and perhaps not their names; however, did not know that they were gods; nor could they prove them to be such; nay, might know that they were not: and now, since this was the sin which brought on the destruction they were eyewitnesses of, it should have been a caution to them that they went not into the same idolatrous practices, which yet they did not avoid; taking no warning from such awful instances of the divine displeasure.

Jeremiah 44:4

Ver. 4. Howbeit, I sent unto you all my servants the prophets,.... As many as he raised up, and employed in the work and service of prophesying; and these were many; and as many as they were, he sent them to them, one after another, to warn them of their sin and danger; but all to no purpose; which was a further aggravation of their wickedness: nay, though he was

rising early, and sending [them]; was very early in his messages to them; gave them timely warning, and let slip no opportunity of admonishing them; and this he did constantly; see **Jer 7:13**;

saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate; all sin is abominable in itself, and hateful to God, especially idolatry; and therefore should not be done; it should be abominable to men, and hateful to them, because it is so to God; and after such a remonstrance as this, to commit it must be very aggravating and provoking.

Jeremiah 44:5

Ver. 5. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear,.... To the prophets sent unto them; to God by the prophets; to the words of his mouth, particularly to the above pathetic expostulation with them; at least, if they heard the words said, they did not attend unto them; they had not such an effect upon them, nor were they wrought upon by them, so as

to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense to other gods; to turn from their sins in general, and from their idolatry in particular; one instance of which is given, and which is put for the whole of idolatrous worship.

Jeremiah 44:6

Ver. 6. Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth,.... Like melted metal, scalding lead, liquefied pitch, or anything of a bituminous and sulphurous nature, which spreads, is consuming, and very intolerable; see Jer 42:18;

and was kindled in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; which, like a fire, burnt up and destroyed these cities, and particularly the large and spacious city of Jerusalem:

and they are wasted [and] desolate, as at this day; now lie in ruins, as may be seen by everyone; the thing is notorious; this is their present case; they are become desolate, and so continue.

Jeremiah 44:7

Ver. 7. Therefore now thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel,.... The same epithets as before, Jer 44:2; with an addition, that his words might carry more weight with them:

wherefore commit ye [this] great evil against your souls; the sin of idolatry, which is a great evil; a sin against God; a giving the glory to another, that belongs to him and not only so, but is against the souls of men; pernicious and ruinous to them, which brings destruction, even eternal wrath and damnation, on them; and this is an interesting argument why it should not be committed; nay, it was not only against God, and against themselves, but against their families, and the interest of them:

to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain; not that they did this great evil or committed idolatry with this intention, to ruin their families and posterity; but so it was eventually; hereby they provoked the Lord to anger, to cut off the men that offered incense to idols; and the women their wives, whom they allowed so to do; and their children, who were brought up in the same practices; so that they would have none to succeed them, to bear their name, and inherit their land; unless God should be merciful, and not deal according to their deserts; for such was the nature of their crime, as to deserve an utter extirpation of them.

Jeremiah 44:8

Ver. 8. In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands,.... Their sinful actions, particularly their idolatry, by worshipping images, the works of men's hands; and though it was the queen of heaven they worshipped, which their hands made not, yet it was before images they did that; besides, the things they did to her were the worlds of their hands, as sacrificing, pouring out drink offerings, and as follows:

burning incense; which they did, not only to her, but

to other gods in the land of Egypt; where they were very numerous:

whither ye be gone to dwell; against the express will and command of God:

that ye might cut yourselves off; as from the worship of God, so from being his people, and from being under his care and protection, and from all privileges temporal and spiritual:

and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth? not that this was their view, end, and design, but this was the event so it was, that they were looked upon as an accursed people of God and man, and their names were taken up for a proverb and a reproach everywhere.

Jeremiah 44:9

Ver. 9. Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers,.... And what judgments it brought upon them; meaning not their more remote ancestors in the wilderness, and the idolatry they committed, and the punishment inflicted upon them for it; but more near, such who lived a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, and whose sins had brought on that; and therefore could not be easily forgotten by them; or, if they were forgotten, it argued great stupidity:

and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives; by whom they were drawn into idolatry, particularly Solomon; and it is in the original text, "the wickedness of his wives" {z}; and Dr. Lightfoot thinks respect is had to Solomon's wives; but it may be understood distributively of everyone of their wives, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it {a}:

and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which you have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? where they had built altars, and worshipped strange gods, they, and their wives, as well as those who were carried captive; and which were the cause of all those evils that came upon them; these, being recent things, could not be forgotten by them; or however should have been remembered, and that so as to have deterred them from going into such practices again, as they now did in Egypt.

{z} wyvn twer "mala mulierum ejus", Schmidt; "et mala foeminarum ejus", Cocceius; "uxorum ejus", V. L. Montanus. {a} "Et mala uxorum cujusque illorum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 44:10

Ver. 10. They are not humbled [even] unto this day,.... Not contrite under a sense of their sins, nor truly penitent for them; not humbled before God nor man, so as to acknowledge them, mourn over them, and forsake them. The Targum is,

"they cease not unto this day;"

that is, from committing the same things; which shows they had no true humiliation and contrition for them. This is to be understood, not of the Jews in Babylon only, but chiefly of those in Egypt; there being a change of person from you to they; the Lord not vouchsafing to speak to them who were so obdurate and impenitent, but of them, and to some other, as the prophet, concerning them:

neither have they feared; the Lord; neither his goodness nor his judgments; or served and worshipped him with reverence and godly fear, as became them:

nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you, and before your fathers; a full proof this that they neither had true repentance for their sins, nor the fear of God in their hearts; for, had they, these would have led them to obedience to the divine will.

Jeremiah 44:11

Ver. 11. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... Because of these sins of idolatry, impenitence, and disobedience:

I will set my face against you for evil; to bring the evil of punishment upon them, for the evil of sin committed by them: this the Lord determined with himself, and resolved to do; which the phrase, "setting [his] face against [them]", is expressive of, by way of retaliation for their setting their faces to go down to Egypt, as well as of his wrath and indignation against them:

and to cut off all Judah; not the whole tribe of Judah; not those that were in Babylon, which were by far the greatest number of that tribe; but those that were in Egypt.

Jeremiah 44:12

Ver. 12. And I will take the remnant of Judah,.... Such as remained of that tribe in the land of Judea after the captivity: and not all of them, but such

that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there: who were bent upon going thither, notwithstanding all the remonstrances made to them to the contrary; and were gone thither, and were now actually sojourners there: this describes such persons who wilfully, and of their own accord, went thither; and excepts those who were over-persuaded or over-powered to go along with them:

and they shall all be consumed, [and] fall in the land of Egypt; not by natural death, one after another; but by the judgments of God, as follows:

they shall [even] be consumed by the sword [and] by the famine; by the sword of the king of Babylon; and by famine, occasioned by a foreign army and sieges:

they shall die; from the least even unto the greatest, by the sword and by the famine; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and to express the universality of the destruction; that it should reach to persons of every age, state and condition, rank and degree, young and old, high and low, rich and poor:

and they shall be an execration, [and] an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; See Gill on "Jer 42:18".

Jeremiah 44:13

Ver. 13. For I will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt,.... Or "visit"; in a way of wrath and vengeance; meaning not the native inhabitants of Egypt; though these should be punished, and in whose punishment the Jews would be involved; but here it means the Jews that dwelt in Egypt, who went thither contrary to the will of God, and there settled:

as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; signifying that the same punishment that came upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and other cities of Judea, should come upon these Jews in Egypt, and as sure as they came upon them; even those which they thought to have escaped, by leaving Judea, and going to Egypt.

Jeremiah 44:14

Ver. 14. So that none of the remnant of Judah,.... Which were left in the land of Judea after the captivity:

which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain; escape either the sword, or the famine, or the pestilence, or remain in the land of Egypt, or in the land of the living; so general should be the destruction:

that they should return into the land of Judah, to the which they have a desire to return there; or, "have lift up their souls {b} to return there": most earnestly desire it, and have raised hopes and expectations of it; for it seems that those Jews that went into Egypt did not go with a design to settle there for ever; but to return to their own land, when there should be better times, and more safety and security there; particularly when they thought the affair of the death of Gedaliah would be no further inquired into:

for none shall return but such as shall escape; out of the hands of Johanan, and the rest of the captains; and should get out of the land of Egypt before the Chaldeans came into it. Some understand this of those that should escape out of Babylon; that none should return to Judea but those of that captivity, who should be released by the proclamation of Cyrus. Jarchi interprets it of Jeremiah and Baruch, whom Nebuchadnezzar removed to Babylon, when Egypt fell into his hands, in the twenty seventh year of his reign, as is related in the Jewish chronicles {c}.

{b} Mvpn ta Myavnm "elevant, [vel] elevantes animam, suam", Pagninus, Vatablus, Calvin; "attolunt animam suam", Schmidt. {c} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 26. p. 77.

Jeremiah 44:15

Ver. 15. Then all the men which knew that their wires had burnt incense unto other gods,.... Which was a rite God appointed to be used in his worship; and is here put for the whole of religious worship, which was given to idols by the Jewish women; this their husbands knew of, and winked at, and did not restrain them from it, as they should; they seem to be themselves irreligious persons, a sort of atheists, who had no regard for the true God, nor any other gods, and cared not who were worshipped:

and all the women that stood by; the wives of the men that stood by their husbands, and other women that stood and heard Jeremiah's sermon, and were conscious to themselves of being guilty of what they were charged with by him:

a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros; in that part of Egypt so called, which was Thebais: here it seems Jeremiah was with that part of the people that took up their residence there; and by this it appears there was a large number of them, men and women, and who were all become idolaters, or connivers at, and encouragers of, such as were: these

answered Jeremiah, saying, one in the name of the rest made a reply, as follows:

Jeremiah 44:16

Ver. 16. [As for] the word that thou has, spoken unto us in the name of the Lord,.... Which they did not believe that it came from the Lord, but was a device of the prophet's, and a lie, as in Jer 43:2; and if it did come from the Lord, their impudence was risen to such a pitch, that they were determined not to regard it:

we will not hearken unto thee: to thy words; neither to thy exhortations, reproofs, or menaces, even though thou comest and speakest in the name of the Lord. This, and what follows, is an unparalleled instance of the pride, obstinacy, enmity, and rebellion of the carnal mind against God.

Jeremiah 44:17

Ver. 17. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth out of our own mouth,.... And not what went out of the mouth of God, or his prophet: but whoever they had resolved on within themselves to do, and had declared with their mouths they would, or had vowed with their lips; so Abarbinel interprets it of a vow; this they were determined to perform, let God and his prophet say what they would:

to burn incense unto the queen of heaven; which, according to Abarbinel, was the moon, which is the queen of heaven, as the sun is king; it was called by the Heathens Coelestis and Urania: but there are some that think that some great star in heaven, that is king over the rest, is meant; so the Targum renders it, the star of heaven; which they understand of the sun, as Kimchi observes; the sun being much worshipped in Egypt; but Kimchi himself derives the word for "queen", here used, not from the root which signifies "to reign"; but from another, which signifies "to work"; and so renders it, "the work", or "frame of heaven"; the sun, moon, and stars; and so the Syriac version is "the host of heaven"; See Gill on "Jer 7:18"; and to this deity, be it what it will, they burned incense; and they were determined to continue it, and all other idolatrous rites and practices particularly:

and to pour out drink offerings unto her; which was another part of ceremonial worship, which the true God required of the people of Israel; but were here resolved to give it to another god:

as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; they plead custom and prescription, antiquity and authority; the examples of ancestors and kings; the general practice of their nation, both in the metropolis of it, and in its several cities, where it not only universally obtained, but was visibly and openly done; and, more, they plead the temporal advantage of it:

for [then] had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil: had fulness of bread, and of all provisions; health, peace, and safety; and no judgment was upon them, seen or felt by them; the sword, famine, or pestilence. The goddess Coelestis, or the moon, which seems to be here meant, was, as Tertullian {d} says "pluviarum pollicitatrix", "the promiser of rains" and so of all good things: or, "were merry" {e}, as the Heathens were at their new moons, when they indulged to their cups, and lived jovially; hence that of Horace {f}.

{d} Apolog. c. 23. {e} Mybwj hyhgw "et eramus hilares", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {f} "Da lunae propere novae, Da noctis mediae, [poculum]". Carmin. l. 3. Ode 19.

Jeremiah 44:18

Ver. 18. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven,.... Or were restrained from it, as the Targum, through the force of the prophet's sermons, or by the authority of their governors: this Abarbinel thinks was in the times of Jehoiakim, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah; but perhaps it only regards some space of time in the latter part of Zedekiah's reign, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, when they refrained from their idolatry; fearing the wrath of God, and what was coming upon them; though Kimchi is of opinion that they never ceased; but they would say, when any evil came upon them, it was because they ceased to burn incense to the queen of heaven, of were not so ready to it as at first:

and to pour out drink offerings to her: another part of worship they performed to her but for a while left off: and from that time they say,

we have wanted all [things], and have been consumed by the sword, and by the famine; wanted all the necessaries of life, meat and drink, and clothing and a habitation to dwell in; and multitudes were destroyed by the sword of the king of Babylon; and others perished with famine during the siege; these evils they imputed to their cessation from idolatry, when it was the very thing that brought them on them.

Jeremiah 44:19

Ver. 19. And when we burnt incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her,.... Which they owned they did, and which they were not ashamed of, and were determined to go on with; and were only sorry that they had at any time omitted such service:

did we make cakes to worship her; or, "to make her glad" {g}, as Kimchi; interpreting the word by an antiphrasis; it having a contrary signification, to grieve or to make sorrowful; and from hence idols have their name sometimes, because in the issue they bring grief and trouble to their worshippers; hence some render it, "to make her an idol" {h}; or them, the cakes, an idol; these had, as Jarchi says, the likeness of the idol impressed upon them:

and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men? they own they did these things but not without the knowledge and consent at least, if not with the presence, of their husbands; hence these words seem to be the words of the women. Some indeed think they speak all along, from Jer 44:16; or one in the name of the rest; it may be one of Zedekiah's daughters; but however, if the men spoke what is said in the preceding verses, the women, being provoked, could hold their peace no longer, but broke in, and uttered these words; though some render the last clause, "without our principal men" {i}; and so take them to be the words of the people in general; who urge, in their own defence, that what they did they did with the direction, approbation, and leading example of their kings and governors.

{g} hbuehl "ad exhilarandum illud", Calvin; "ad laetificaudum eam", Munster, Pagninus. {h} "Idolificando", Piscator; so Ben Melech; "ut faciamus illas idolum", Cocceius. {i} wnyvna ydelbmh "absque praestantibus viris nostris", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 44:20

Ver. 20. Then Jeremiah said unto all the people,.... Immediately, being influenced, directed, and assisted by the Spirit of God; though what he says, in Jer 44:21; he does not declare as coming from the Lord; but what was upon his mind, and was a full refutation of all that had been said: and which he delivered

to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him [that] answer; in which they all agreed, though delivered by one; and to which he made a reply:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 44:21

Ver. 21. That incense that ye burnt in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem,.... To false gods, to the queen of heaven, to the host thereof:

ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land; on which account they pleaded antiquity, authority, and the general consent of the people, as on their side, which the prophet allows; but it all signified nothing:

did not the Lord remember them, and came it [not] into his mind? either the incense they offered up to strange gods, or the persons that did it? did he take no notice of these idolatrous practices, and of these idolaters? he did; he laid up these things in his mind; he showed a proper resentment of them, and in due time punished for them.

Jeremiah 44:22

Ver. 22. So that the Lord could no longer forbear,.... He did forbear a long time, and did not stir up all his wrath, but waited to see if these people would repent of their sins, and turn from them; during which time of his forbearance, things might be well with them, as they had said, and they enjoyed peace and plenty; but persisting in their sins, and growing worse and worse, he could bear with them no longer, but brought down his judgments upon them. The reason is expressed,

because of the evil of your doings, [and] because of the abominations which ye have committed; the incense they had burnt; the drink offerings they had poured out to idols; and such like idolatrous practices, which were evil in themselves, contrary to the law and will of God, and abominable unto him:

therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day; the land of Israel, wasted by the Chaldeans, and left uncultivated, was like a barren wilderness, to the astonishment of all that passed through it, who had known what a fruitful country it had been; the curse of God being apparently on it, and scarce an inhabitant left in it; which was the case at this present instant, as the Jews, to whom the prophet directs his discourse, well knew; and to whom he appeals for the truth of it: now all this was for the sins, particularly the idolatry, they had been guilty of; as is further explained in Jer 44:23.

Jeremiah 44:23

Ver. 23. And because ye have burnt incense,.... Not to Jehovah, but to the queen of heaven; which they owned they did, and determined they would; asserting it was better with them when they did it than when they omitted it; for which reason the prophet particularly mentions it, and assigns it as the cause of the present ruin and destruction of their land, city, and temple:

and because ye have sinned against the Lord; by worshipping idols; all sin is against the Lord, but especially idolatry:

and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord; by his prophets, who cautioned them against idolatry, reproved them for it, and told them what would be the consequence of it; but this they hearkened not unto, which was an aggravation of their sin:

nor walked in his law; the moral law, according to it; which is a rule of walk and conversation:

nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; as not in the moral law, so neither in the ceremonial law, and the rites of that; nor in the judicial law, and the testifications of the will of God in either of them:

therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day: that is, the desolation on their land, as in Jer 44:23;
See Gill on "Jer 44:23".

Jeremiah 44:24

Ver. 24. Moreover Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women,.... To all the people in general, and to the women in particular, who had a principal concern in these idolatrous practices:

hear the word of the Lord, all Judah that [are] in the land of Egypt; all of the tribe of Judah that were in Egypt; not in Pathros only, but in other parts of Egypt; this distinguishes them from those of Judah that were in Babylon, and in other provinces; and tacitly points at their sin in going to Egypt, which was the leading step to then fresh acts of idolatry they had been guilty of; these are called upon to hear the word of the Lord: what the prophet had said before was what was upon his mind without immediate inspiration, or as a direct message from the Lord; but what follows is.

Jeremiah 44:25

Ver. 25. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... Which is an usual preface to prophecies coming from him:

saying; as follows:

ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand; they had said they would burn incense to the queen of heaven, and they had done it; they had been as good as their word, true to it, though in a bad thing: their words and works agreed, and so did the men and their wives: the women had before said they did not perform worship to the queen of heaven without their men; this is acknowledged by the Lord, and their confession is improved against them:

saying, we will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her; they thought, because they made a vow that they would do it, that it was therefore obligatory upon them, and this would be sufficient to justify them before God, and excuse it to him; whereas nothing that is sinful ought to be vowed or performed; and to vow and perform in such a case is doubly criminal: a vow cannot make that lawful which is unlawful; and the performance of it can never be a laudable action:

ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows; they were resolutely set upon it, and nothing would hinder their performance of it; this shows the obstinacy and firmness of their minds: though some think these words are spoken ironically.

Jeremiah 44:26

Ver. 26. Therefore hear ye the word of the Lord, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt,.... See Gill on "Jer 44:24"; since you have made your vows, and will perform them, I will take an oath, and abide by it:

behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord; by his name Jehovah, which is incommunicable, and expressive of his eternity and immutability; or by himself, his name being himself, and than which he can swear by no greater, **Heb 6:13**;

that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, the Lord God liveth: this cannot be understood of the name of the Lord being called upon them, or of their being called by his name, and reckoned his people, which is the sense of Abarbinel; since this respects not a name by which they should be named, but which they should name; and intends their use of the divine name in an oath, of which this is a form, "the Lord God liveth": or as sure as the Lord lives, or by the living God, it is so and so; and especially as used in their vows to burn incense to the queen of heaven, they vowing by the living God that they would do so, which must be very abominable to him; and therefore he solemnly swears there should not be a Jew in all Egypt that should use it; the reason is, because everyone of them that did should be cut off, as follows:

Jeremiah 44:27

Ver. 27. Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good,.... To bring the evil of punishment upon them, the particulars of which are after mentioned, and not the blessings of goodness, as formerly; and this he would be as careful and diligent to bring about, as one that watches all opportunities to do hurt to another; and it must be dreadful to be under the vigilant avenging eye of God:

and all the men of Judah that [are] in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword, and by the famine, until there be an end of them; that is, the greatest part of them, excepting a few that shall escape, hereafter mentioned, particularly Jeremiah and Baruch; but as for the main body of such, who went of their own accord to Egypt, and settled, and fell: into the idolatry of the country; these should all perish one after another, till there were none of them left; either by the sword of the king of Babylon; or by famine, which his army and sieges would produce; or by pestilence, though not here mentioned, yet is in Jer 44:13.

Jeremiah 44:28

Ver. 28. Yet a small number that shall escape the sword,.... The sword of the king of Babylon, and the other judgments, and which would be but very few; "men of number" {k}, as in the Hebrew text, which might easily be numbered; Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah, and some few righteous persons among them, as Kimchi and Abarbinel observe:

shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah; they shall make their escape out of the land of Egypt, whither they did not go willingly; and, by one providence or another, shall come back to their native country, the land of Judea, When the rest will not; which must be a distinguishing your to them:

and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know what words shall stand, mine or theirs; those that are left of the sword, famine, and pestilence, shall know experimentally, by facts laid down, whose words have their effect and accomplishment, stand firm and sure; whether theirs, that promised impunity and safety, peace and prosperity, in their idolatrous practices; or the Lord's, which threatened with ruin and destruction. The Lord is true, and every man a liar; whatever devices are in a man's heart, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.

{k} rpom ytm "viri numeri", Montanus, &c.

Jeremiah 44:29

Ver. 29. And this [shall be] a sign unto you, saith the Lord, that I will punish you in this place,.... In Egypt, as before threatened; and what follows is a confirming sign that so it would be; and which, when observed by some, gave the hint to them to make their escape; though others, being hardened in their idolatry, impenitence, and unbelief, continued, and perished:

that ye may know that my words shall surely stand against you for evil; which sign, when they should see, they might assure themselves that the threatenings of evil to them would certainly be accomplished, as sure as they saw the sign given, which is as follows:

Jeremiah 44:30

Ver. 30. Thus saith the Lord, behold, I will give Pharaohhophra king of Egypt,.... Pharaoh was a common name of the kings of Egypt, who usually had some surname, by which they were distinguished; and the surname of the then present king of Egypt was Hophra; whom the Septuagint and others call Vaphres; and, Herodotus {l} Apries. The Targum renders it Pharaoh the broken; and the Syriac version Pharaoh the lame: now it is here predicted as a sign of the destruction of the Jews in Egypt, which should follow after, that God would deliver this king

into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life; either into the hands of his rebellious subjects, headed by Amasis, by whom he was kept alive for a while after taken, and then put to death, as Herodotus reports; or rather into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar; for Josephus says {m}, that he, in the twenty third year of his reign, which was four or five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, having subdued the Syrians, Ammonites, and Moabites, entered Egypt in a hostile manner, and slew the then remaining king, and set up another; and this is confirmed by what follows:

as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and that sought his life; in like manner, and as sure as he had done the one, he would do the other; and he puts the Jews in mind of what he had done by him, and which they had full and certain knowledge of; and might from hence conclude that this also would be accomplished, here given as a sign of their own ruin; and which, when they saw come to pass, might know that it was at hand; and, indeed, the king of Egypt, in whom they trusted, being taken by his enemies, and his country wasted, they must in course fall a prey to the conqueror.

{l} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 161, 162, 169. & Melpomene, sive l. 4. c. 159. {m} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 7.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 45:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 45

This chapter contains a prophecy, delivered to Baruch for his personal use. The time of it is expressed, Jer 45:1; a reproof is given him for his immoderate grief and sorrow, Jer 45:2; the destruction of the land of Judea is prophesied of; and therefore it was wrong in him to seek great things for himself at such a time; however, he is assured of his own safety, Jer 45:4.

Ver. 1. The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah,.... Who was his amanuensis or scribe; and this word he spake not to him of himself, but in the name of the Lord, as coming from him; so the Targum calls it,

"the word of prophecy which Jeremiah the prophet prophesied concerning Baruch the son of Neriah:"

when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah; not what immediately precede, concerning the destruction of the Jews in Egypt; which were delivered out many years after the writing of the roll by Baruch here referred to; and which was done, as here said,

in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; which was eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem; so that this prophecy does not stand in order, which would more properly have followed the thirty sixth chapter; where we have an account of what Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah in a roll, and read to the people, and after that to the princes; which exposed him to danger, and caused the grief expressed by him in this chapter; but it being written to a private person, is postponed to this place:

saying; as follows:

Jeremiah 45:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch. Whom he knew by name, had a great regard for, and honours with this prophecy; and, being an Israelite, both in a literal and spiritual sense, he addresses him as the God of Israel, and as being his covenant God; in whom he should put his trust, and from whom he might expect safety and protection in the worst of times; and to whose sovereign will, in all the dispensations of his providence, he ought to have humbly and patiently submitted.

Jeremiah 45:3

Ver. 3. Thou didst say, woe is me now!.... What will become of me? I am ruined and undone; this he said in his heart, if not with his lips, perhaps both ways; and when the king gave orders for the apprehending of him and the prophet, being provoked at the roll which he had wrote and read, Jer 36:26;

for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; caused him grief upon grief, sorrow upon sorrow, an abundance of it; for there was a variety of things which occasioned grief and sorrow; the trouble of his office, as secretary to the prophet; the reproach east upon him by the people for it; the grievous things contained in the prophecies he transcribed, concerning the ruin of his people and nation; the king's displeasure at the roll, and his burning it; to which was added the danger he was exposed unto for writing it; and especially, as he might apprehend, for writing it over again, after it was burnt; to which were annexed new threatenings, and such as personally concerned the king;

I fainted in my sighing; or "with" it; he sighed and groaned at what he saw coming upon his country, and particularly upon himself; it quite overcame his spirits; he sunk and swooned away: or "I laboured in my sighing" {n}; amidst his sighs and groans, he prayed to the Lord, and laboured in prayer, that he might be delivered from the evils he feared were coming upon him:

and I find no rest; from his grief, sorrow, and sighing; no cessation of that; no serenity and composure of mind; no answer of prayer from God. The Targum is,

"and I found not prophecy."

And the Jewish commentators, as Jarchi, Kimchi, Abarbinel, and Abendana, from the ancient Midrashes, interpret this grief of Baruch to be on account of his not having the gift of prophecy bestowed on him, which he expected by being a servant of the prophet {o}; and represent him as saying, Joshua ministered to Moses, and the Holy Spirit dwelled upon him; Elisha ministered to Elijah, and the Holy Spirit rested upon him; how different am I from all the disciples of the prophets! "woe is me now!" &c.

{n} tyxnab ytegy "in gemitu meo", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatanblus, "in suspirio meo", Cocceius, Schmidt. {o} Vid. Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 32. p. 286.

Jeremiah 45:4

Ver. 4. Thus shalt thou say unto him,.... This is spoken to Jeremiah, and is an order from the Lord to him, what he should say in his name to Baruch:

the Lord saith thus, behold, [that] which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up; the Jewish nation, both as to church and state; which the Lord had built up as a spacious and beautiful house to dwell in, and had planted as a vineyard, and set it with pleasant plants; but now would demolish this building, and destroy this plantation:

even this whole land; not a few cities only, or only Jerusalem the metropolis, but the whole land of Judea; no part of it but what should be left desolate. So the Targum,

"even the whole land of Israel, which is mine."

Jeremiah 45:5

Ver. 5. Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek [them] not,.... Riches and wealth honour and esteem, peace and prosperity; these were not to be sought after and expected, when the whole nation would be involved in such a general calamity. Baruch perhaps expected that his reading the roll to princes would have been a means of preferring him at court, of advancing him to some post or office, in which he might have acquired wealth, and got applause, and lived in peace and plenty all his days; but this was not to be looked for; when, if he observed, the very roll he wrote and read contained in it prophecies of the general ruin of the nation. The Jews restrain this to the gift of prophecy they suppose Baruch sought after, which was not to be enjoyed out of the land of Canaan:

for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh; not upon every individual person in the world; but upon all the inhabitants of Judea, who should either die by the sword or by famine, or by pestilence, or be carried captive, or be in some distress or another:

but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest; suggesting that he should be obliged to quit his native place and country, and go from place to place; as he did, after the destruction of Jerusalem, along with the prophet; and even into Egypt with the Jews that went there; where his life would be in danger, and yet should be preserved; he should be snatched as a brand out of the burning, when Jerusalem was taken; and in other places, when exposed, though he should lose everything, yet not his life; which should be as dear to him as a rich spoil taken by the soldier, being a distinguishing mercy.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 46:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 46

This chapter contains two prophecies relating to Egypt; one concerning the overthrow of Pharaohnecho, king of it, which was quickly accomplished; and the other concerning the destruction of the land, fulfilled many years after, and both by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and the chapter is concluded with a word of comfort to the people of Israel. It begins with a general title to prophecies in this and the five following chapters, Jer 46:1; then follows a particular prophecy of the route of Pharaoh's army; of the place where, and time when, Jer 46:2; the preparations of the Egyptians for the battle, with a variety of warlike instruments, Jer 46:3; the consternation, flight, and destruction of them, Jer 46:5; notwithstanding their confidence of getting the victory, Jer 46:7; the reason of it, because it was the day of the Lord's vengeance on them, and therefore their ruin was inevitable, Jer 46:10; the consequence of which was shame and confusion, Jer 46:12; next follows another prophecy of the destruction of the land itself by Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 46:13; the places that should be destroyed, Jer 46:14; the multitude that should be slain, Jer 46:15; a description of the calamity; the instrument, manner, and consequence of it, Jer 46:20; the certainty of it, Jer 46:18; and the whole is closed with a promise of the return of the Jews, and of their salvation; though they should not be without divine corrections, Jer 46:27.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles. Or "nations"; distinguished from the Jews; not all the nations of the world, but some hereafter mentioned, as the Egyptians, Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Syrians, Arabians, Persians, and Chaldeans: or "concerning the nations" {p}; the above mentioned; though the prophecies delivered out concerning them are all against them, and not in their favour. Mention is made of Jeremiah's prophesying against all the nations in Jer 25:13; after which follow the several prophecies contained in the next chapters in the Septuagint and Arabic versions, as they stand in the Polyglot Bible.

{p} Mywg le "super gentes", Montanus; "de gentibus", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 46:2

Ver. 2. Against Egypt,.... This is the title of the first prophecy against Egypt; which is the first mentioned, because first accomplished; and because the Jews placed great confidence in and much relied on the Egyptians for help:

against the army of Pharaohnecho king of Egypt; who is by Herodotus {q} called Necos; he was the son and successor of Psammitichus, and was succeeded by his son Psammis; and he by Apries, the same with Pharaohhophra, Jer 44:30; the Targum calls this king Pharaoh the lame:

which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish; of which place
See Gill on "Isa 10:9"; this being in the land of the king of Assyria, as appears from the same place. Pharaohnecho, in Josiah's time, came up against him, in

order to take it from him; but whether he did or no is not certain; see 2Ki 23:29; however, he appeared at the same place a second time, against the king of Babylon, into whose hands it was now very probably fallen, with the whole Assyrian monarchy; and here, in this second battle, his army was routed, as follows:

which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; when he took away from the king of Egypt all that belonged to him between the Nile and Euphrates, so that he came no more out of his land, 2Ki 24:7. Kimchi and Abarbinel think there was but one expedition of Pharaohnecho; and that the siege of Carchemish continued to the fourth year of Jehoiakim; when he met with an entire overthrow from the king of Babylon, which God suffered as a judgment on him for killing Josiah. This, according to Bishop Usher, was in the year of the world 3397, and before Christ 607; and, according to the Universal History, in the year of the world 3396, and before Christ 608.

{q} L. 2. sive Euterpe, c. 158.

Jeremiah 46:3

Ver. 3. Order ye the buckler and shield,.... Both signify one and the same sort of armour, only of a different form, the one being lesser and lighter than the other. Jarchi makes the difference to be, that the former was made of skin, the latter of wood; they were both used to defend the body in war. To order them is not only to prepare them, and get them ready; but to fit them to the body, and to put them on, that they might be in a readiness to engage in battle. The exhortation is made either to the Chaldean army, to prepare to fight against the Egyptians; or to the army of Pharaohnecho, to defend themselves against the king of Babylon, who was coming against them, as Kimchi and Abarbinel, who seem to be in doubt which it should be; but the latter is most probable: and it is either a direction of Pharaoh to his army, to be in readiness; or rather of God, speaking ironically to them, suggesting, that let them do what they would, and make ever such preparations for battle, all would come to nothing, victory would be on the other side;

and draw near to battle; engage the enemy briskly, and with the greatest courage, and use all your military skill; and, when ye have done, it will all be in vain.

Jeremiah 46:4

Ver. 4. Harness the horses,.... Put on their bridles and saddles and gird them: or, "bind the horses" {r}; that is, to the chariots; put them to, as we commonly express it: Egypt abounded in horses, and so no doubt brought a large cavalry, and a multitude of chariots, into the field of battle:

and get up, ye horsemen; upon the horses, or into the chariots, and so be ready to receive the enemy, or to attack him:

and stand forth with [your] helmets; present themselves on horseback, or in their chariots, with their helmets on their heads, to cover them in the day of battle:

furbish the spears; that they may be sharp and piercing, and look bright and glittering, and strike terror in the enemy:

[and] put on the brigandines; coats of mail, to cover the whole body, which were made of iron, consisting of rings, as Kimchi observes.

{r} Myowoh wroa "ligate equos", Montanus, Calvin; "alligate", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 46:5

Ver. 5. Wherefore have I seen them dismayed [and] turned away back?.... The Egyptians, after all this preparation for war, and seeming ardent to engage in battle; and yet, when they came to it, were seized with a panic, and thrown into the utmost consternation, and turned their backs upon their enemy: these are either the words of the prophet, who had a view by a spirit of prophecy, of the consternation, confusion, and flight of the Egyptian army; or of the Lord, who foresaw all this, and represents it as if it was done because of the certainty of it; upbraiding the Egyptians with their pusillanimity and cowardice:

and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back; or, "their mighty ones are broken" {s}; their valiant soldiers and officers, their best troops were broken to pieces, their ranks and files, and thrown into the utmost disorder; and therefore made all the haste they could to escape the fury of the enemy, and fled with the utmost precipitation, and never stopped to look back upon their pursuers; so great their fear:

[for] fear [was] round about, saith the Lord; from whence it came; it was he that put it into them, took away their courage, and made them a "magormissabib", or "fear round about", the word here used; see Jer 20:3. The Targum is,

"they looked not back to resist them that slay with the sword, who are gathered against them round about, saith the Lord;"

their enemies surrounded them, and that was the reason fear was round about them, and both were from the Lord; or as he had said, determined, and foretold it should be.

{s} wtky Mhyrwbgw "et fortes corum contusi sunt, vel coutunduntur", Schmidt, Cocceius, Piscator; "contriti sunt", Vatablus.

Jeremiah 46:6

Ver. 6. Let not the swift flee away, nor the mighty men escape,.... Those that were swift of foot, like Asahel, or carried but light armour, let not such trust to their swiftness or light carriage; nor let the mighty man think to escape by reason of his great strength, to make his way through the enemy, and get out of his hands. Or this may be rendered as future, "the swift shall not flee away", &c. {t} so the Targum; neither the one nor the other shall escape by the nimbleness of their heels, or the stoutness of their hearts:

they shall stumble and fall toward the north, by the river Euphrates; which lay north of Judea, where the prophet was, to whom this word came; and also was to the north of Egypt, whose destruction is here threatened: the place where this route and slaughter would be made was Carchemish, which was situated by that river; on the north side of which city, according to Abarbinel, the battle was; and which sense is mentioned by Kimchi, which the other follows.

{t} owny la "non fugiet", Pagninus, Montanus; "non effugiet", Munster, Tigurine version.

Jeremiah 46:7

Ver. 7. Who [is] this [that] cometh up as a flood,.... These are either the words of the prophet, who having a vision in prophecy of the march of the Egyptian army from the south to the north, which he compares to a flood; in allusion to the river Nile, which used to overflow its banks, and spread itself over the land; because of the vast numbers of which it consisted; because of the noise it made, and, because of its rapidity and force, threatening to bear all down before it; as wondering, asks, who it was, whose army it was, and to whom it belonged? or they are the words of God, who puts this question, in order to, give an answer to it, and thereby upbraid the Egyptians with their arrogance, pride, and vanity; which would all come to nothing:

whose waters are moved as the rivers? whose numerous armies came with a great noise and force, like the openings of the Nile, the seven gates of it; which were very boisterous, especially in hard gales of wind: it is no unusual thing for large armies to be compared to floods and rivers, which move forcibly and swiftly, and make a large spread; see **Isa 8:7**. The Targum is,

"who is this that comes up with his army as a cloud, and covers the earth, and as a fountain of water, whose waters are moved?"

Jeremiah 46:8

Ver. 8. Egypt riseth up as a flood, and [his] waters are moved like the rivers,.... This is the answer to the above question; that it was Egypt that was seen; the king of Egypt, as the Syriac version; he with his army, as the Targum; and which was so numerous, that it seemed as if the whole country of Egypt, all the inhabitants of it, were come along with him; these rose up like the Nile, and moved like the several sluices of it, with great velocity and force, as if they would carry all before them:

and he saith, I will go up; Pharaohnecho king of Egypt said, I will go up from my own land to the north, to meet the king of Babylon:

[and] will cover the earth; with his army: even all, the north country, the whole Babylonish empire; which he affected to be master of, grasping at, universal monarchy:

I will destroy the city, and the inhabitants thereof; which Abarbinel restrains to the city Carchemish, where his army was smitten: but it is better to interpret, the singular by the plural, as the Targum does, "I will destroy cities"; since it was not a single city he came up to take, nor would this satisfy his ambitious temper.

Jeremiah 46:9

Ver. 9. Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots,.... These are either the words of Pharaoh, giving orders to his cavalry and charioteers to make haste and come up to battle, not doubting of victory: or rather of the Lord by the prophet, ironically calling upon the horsemen in the Egyptian army to come on and engage with the enemy, and behave gallantly; and those in the chariots to drive, Jehu like, **2Ki 9:20**, with great swiftness, force, and fury, to make their chariots rattle again, and run about here and there like madmen, as the word {u} signifies, to throw the enemy into confusion and disorder if they could:

and let the mighty men come forth: out of the land of Egypt, as Abarbinel; or let them come forth, and appear in the field of battle with courage and greatness of mind, and do all their might and skill can furnish them with, or enable them to do:

the Ethiopians and the Lybians, that handle the shield; or Cush and Phut, both sons of Ham, and brethren of Mizraim, from whence Egypt had its name, Ge 10:6; the posterity of these are meant. The Cushites or Ethiopians were near neighbours of the Egyptians, and their allies and confederates. The Lybians or Phuteans, as the Targum, were the posterity of Phut, who dwelt to the westward of Egypt, and were the auxiliaries of that nation, and with the Ethiopians and Lydians are mentioned as such in Eze 30:4; as here. The shield was a weapon they much used in war, and were famous for their skill in it, and are described by it. The Egyptians were remarkable for their shields: Xenophon {w} describes them as having shields reaching down to their feet; and which covered their bodies more than the breast plates and targets of the Persians did; which helped them to push forward, having them on their shoulders, so that the enemy could not withstand them:

and the Lydians, that handle [and] bend the bow; these were the posterity of Ludim the son of Mizraim, Ge 10:13; and were the Lydians in Africa, and not in Asia, who sprung from Lud the son of Shem,
Ge 10:22; they were famous for their skilfulness in the use of bows and arrows; see Isa 66:19; now these are called together to use their military skill,

and show all the courage they were masters of; and yet all would be in vain. Bochart {x} endeavours to prove, by various arguments, that these Lydians were Ethiopians; and, among the rest, because they are here, and in Isa 66:19; described as expert in handling, bending, and drawing the bow; which he proves, by the testimonies of several writers, the Ethiopians were famous for; that bows were their armour; and that theirs were larger than others, even than the Persians, being four cubits long; that they were very dexterous in shooting their arrows; took sure aim, and seldom missed.

{u} wllhth "insanite", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt; "insano impetu agitamini", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {w} Cyropaedia, l. 6. c. 14. & l. 7. c. 9. {x} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 26. col. 266.

Jeremiah 46:10

Ver. 10. For this [is] the day of the Lord God of hosts,.... Or, "but this is the day" {y}, &c. notwithstanding this great apparatus for war, and those many auxiliaries the Egyptians would have, yet it would not be their day, in which they should get the better of their enemies; but the Lord's day; the day he had appointed; who is the Lord God of all armies, above and below; and who would bring his own armies together when he pleased, and give them victory:

a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his enemies: the enemies of his people, as the Targum; the Egyptians, who had been of old the implacable enemies of his people Israel; though now, contrary to his will, they too much trusted to them, and relied on them; according to Kimchi, this vengeance was taken on them for killing Josiah:

and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood; that is, the sword of the Chaldeans shall destroy the Egyptians in such vast numbers, that there shall be no more to be slain; or there shall be no desire in the enemy to slay any more; they shall be glutted with their blood. All the phrases are designed to show the carnage that should be made; the vast destruction of the people; the large numbers that should be slain:

for the Lord God of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates; near Carchemish, situated by the river Euphrates, which lay north of Egypt; see Jer 46:6. Here is an allusion to the sacrifices of great persons, which are many; the Lord of hosts had a sacrifice, or a great slaughter of men, his enemies; inflicted punishment on them, wherein his power, justice, and holiness, were displayed; see Isa 34:6.

{y} awhh Mwyh "dies autem", V. L. "atque dies", Junius & Tremellius; "sed dies ille", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 46:11

Ver. 11. Go up into Gilead,.... Still the irony or sarcasm is continued Gilead was a place in the land of Israel famous for balm or balsam, used in curing wounds; see **Jer 8:22**; hence it follows:

and take balm, O virgin, daughter of Egypt; the kingdom of Egypt, as the Targum; so called because of its glory and excellency; and because as yet it had not been conquered and brought under the power of another: now the inhabitants of it are bid to take balm or balsam, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; but this grew not in Gilead beyond Jordan, but near Jericho on this side Jordan, as Bochart {z} has proved from various authors; particularly Strabo {a} says of Jericho, that there is the paradise of balsam, an aromatic plant, and of great esteem; for there only it is produced: and so Diodorus Siculus {b}, speaking of places near Jericho, says, about these places, in a certain valley, grows what is called balsam, from which much profit arises; nor is the plant to be found in any other part of the world: and Justin {c} observes the same; that much riches accrue to the nation from the tax on balsam, which is only produced in this country, in Jericho, and the valley near it; yea, Kimchi himself elsewhere {d} says, that the balsam is not any where in the whole world but in Jericho. The word therefore should be rendered rosin, as also in **Jer 8:22**; as it is by some {e}; and which is used in cleansing, healing, and contracting wounds, and dispersing humours, as Pliny {f} relates; and this here is ordered to be taken, either literally, to cure the vast number of their wounded by the Chaldeans; or rather, figuratively, they are called upon to make use of all means to recover their loss sustained; by recruiting their army, fortifying their cities, and getting fresh allies and auxiliaries; all which would yet be to no purpose:

in vain shalt thou use many medicines; [for] thou shall not be cured; notwithstanding all means made use of to repair its losses; though it should not utterly be destroyed yet should never recover its former glory.

{z} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 51. col. 628, 629. {a} Geograph. l. 16. p. 525. {b}

Bibliothec. l. 19. p. 734. {c} E Trogo, l. 36. c. 3. {d} Comment in 2 Kings xx. 13. So R. Levi Ben Gersom in ib. {e} yru yxq "tolle resinam", Montanus, Munster, Calvin, Grotius. {f} Nat. Hist. l. 24. c. 6.

Jeremiah 46:12

Ver. 12. The nations have heard of thy shame,.... Their shameful defeat and overthrow by the Chaldean army; so, after the manner of prophecy, the thing is related as done; the battle fought, and the victory obtained; and the rumour and fame of it spread among the nations, to the great mortification of this proud people:

and thy cry hath filled the land; the shrieks of the wounded; the cry of the pursued and taken; the lamentation of friends and relations for their dead; with one thing or another of this kind the whole land of Egypt was filled; yea, all the countries round about them, in confederacy with them, were filled with distress for the loss of their own; the calamity was large and spreading, and the rumour of it:

for the mighty man hath stumbled against the mighty, [and] they are fallen both together; either the mighty Egyptians against the mighty Chaldeans; and though the latter were the conquerors, yet lost abundance of men; so that there were mighty ones fell on both sides: or rather, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, the mighty Egyptians in their flight fell, and other mighty ones of them following, stumbled at them, and fell upon them, and so both became a prey to the pursuers; or in their flight the mighty Egyptians stumbled against their mighty auxiliaries before mentioned, Jer 46:9; and so both came into the hands of their enemies. The Targum is, both were slain.

Jeremiah 46:13

Ver. 13. The word that the Lord spake to Jeremiah the prophet,.... This is a new and distinct prophecy from the former, though concerning Egypt as that; but in this they differ; the former prophecy respects only the overthrow of the Egyptian army at a certain place; this latter the general destruction of the land; and was fulfilled some years after the other; Jarchi says, according to their chronicles {g}, in the twenty seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign:

how Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon should come; or, "concerning the coming {h} of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon",

to smite the land of Egypt; who was to come, and did come, out of his country, into the land of Egypt, to smite the inhabitants of it with the sword, take their cities, plunder them of their substance, and make them tributary to him.

{g} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 26. p. 77. {h} ruardkwbn awbl "de venturo Nebuchadretzare", Junius & Tremellius; "de adventu Nebuchadretsaris", Calvin, Munster, Piscator; "de veniendo", Vatablus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 46:14

Ver. 14. Declare ye in Egypt,.... The coming of the king of Babylon, and his intention to invade the land, and subdue it:

and publish in Migdol, and publish in Noph, and in Tahpanhes; of these places See Gill on "Jer 44:1"; these were principal ones in the land of Egypt, where the enemy should come, and which he should lay waste; and therefore the above things are to be published for their warning; and particularly these were places where the Jews that went into Egypt contrary to the will of God resided; and therefore for their sakes also this publication must be made, to let them see and know that they would not be safe there, but would be involved in the general calamity of the nation:

say ye, stand fast, and prepare thee; O Egypt, and the several cities mentioned, and all others; prepare for war, and to meet the enemy, resist and repel him; present yourselves on the frontiers of your country; put yourselves in proper places, and keep your ground:

for the sword shall devour round about thee; the sword of the Chaldeans, into whose hands fell Palestine, Judea, Syria, and other neighbouring countries; and therefore it was high time for them to bestir themselves, and provide for their defence and safety.

Jeremiah 46:15

Ver. 15. Why are thy valiant [men] swept away?.... As with a mighty torrent, or a sweeping rain; so the word is used in Pr 28:3; to which the Chaldean army may be compared; which came with such irresistible force as to drive the Egyptians from their posts, so that they could not stand their ground. The Septuagint renders it,

"why does Apis flee from thee? thy choice ox does not continue."

Which was the god of the Egyptians, they worshipped in the form of an ox; this could not protect them, though thought by them to be very mighty and powerful; so Aelianus {i} says Apis with the Egyptians is believed to be a most powerful deity; yet could not save them; but the word signifies their nobles, their mighty men of war, their generals and officers, at least their valiant soldiers; who yet were not able to stand the tide of power that came against them. The reason was,

because the Lord did drive them; by means of the Chaldeans; he dispirited them; he put them into a panic, and they fled from their posts; there is no standing against the Lord.

{i} De Animal. l. 11. c. 10.

Jeremiah 46:16

Ver. 16. He made many to fall,.... That is, the Lord, by the hand of the Chaldeans, by whose sword multitudes fell in battle:

yea, one fell upon another; they fell in heaps, denoting the multitude of the slain; or rather they fell in flight one upon another; one fell, and then another upon him, as usually they do, when men are frightened and flee precipitantly, as in Jer 46:12;

and they said, arise: not those that fell, which may seem at first sight; but either the strangers in the land of Egypt, as Kimchi, such as the Jews were; who, perceiving the destruction that was coming on Egypt, exhort one another to arise, and get out of it; or rather the auxiliaries of the Egyptians, as the Ethiopians, Lybians, and Lydians,
Jer 46:9; who finding the enemy too strong for them, and they themselves deserted or unsupported by Pharaoh's army, advise one another to quit his service, and provide for their own safety:

and let us go again to our own people, and to the land of our nativity; their own country, where they were born, and their friends and relations lived; that so they might be safe

from the oppressing sword; the sword of the Chaldeans. The Septuagint version is a very bad one, followed by the Arabic, which renders it, "from the Grecian sword"; and so is the Vulgate Latin version, "from the face of the dove"; to countenance which it is said, that the Chaldeans and Assyrians had a dove in their ensigns;
See Gill on "Jer 25:38"; and so a most ancient Saxon translation in the library of Christ's Church in Oxford, "from the face of the sword of the culver" {k}, or "dove"; that is, from their sword, who display their banners in the field with the ensign of a dove; meaning the Chaldeans. The Targum is,

"from the sword of the enemy, which is as wine inebriating;"

which sense is followed by Jarchi.

{k} Apud Gregory's Posthuma, p. 236.

Jeremiah 46:17

Ver. 17. They did cry there,.... Not the Chaldeans, deriding Pharaoh and his army, and mocking them, saying the following words, as some; nor the Egyptians in Egypt, as Kimchi, complaining of their king; much less in Carchemish, as others; since this prophecy refers to another event, time, and place; but the auxiliaries of Egypt in the field of battle; these did cry out aloud, as follows:

Pharaoh king of Egypt [is but] a noise; he boasted and bragged of great things he would do, and does nothing; he promised to bring a large army into the field, and talked big of attacking the enemy with great ardour and fury, and hectored and blustered as if he feared him not, and was sure of victory; but when it came to the push, his courage failed him; and it may be said of him what the man said of his nightingale, "vox et praeterea nihil", a voice, and nothing else. This was not Pharaohnecho, as the Septuagint have wrongly inserted, but Pharaohhophra, Jer 44:30; or it may be supplied thus, "Pharaoh king of Egypt [is a king of] noise" {l}; a noisy, big, and blusterous king in words, but in deeds nothing:

he hath passed the time appointed; to join his auxiliaries, in order to give the enemy battle; and so left them in the lurch, of which they complain; or through his dilatoriness lost the proper opportunity of attacking him. Some indeed understand it, not of the king of Egypt, but of the king of Babylon; as if the sense was this, the Egyptians cried aloud, and encouraged themselves and their allies against the king of Babylon; saying, what Jeremiah the prophet said concerning Pharaoh king of Egypt and his destruction is all mere noise; there is nothing in it; for the time set by him for that event is passed and over: others, because the word has sometimes the signification of a solemn meeting or festival, take the meaning to be, that Pharaoh king of Egypt being brought to utter destruction, as the word for noise may signify, or being a noisy tumultuous prince, who brought ruin on himself and others, has thereby caused the solemn feasts to pass away {m}, or the festivals to cease; whether in a civil or a religious way; but the first sense seems best.

{l} Nwav Myrum Klm "rex Aegypti, [rex] tumultus", Munster, Vatablus; "rex perturbationis", Calvin; so Ben Melech; "rex Aegypti, [vir] strepertus est", Piscator, Junius & Tremellius. {m} dewmh rybeh "transire fecit solennitatem", De Dieu.

Jeremiah 46:18

Ver. 18. [As] I live, saith the King, whose name [is] the Lord of hosts,.... A greater King than either Nebuchadnezzar or Pharaoh; the Lord of the armies of heaven and earth; and who has them all at his command and service; swears by his life, by himself, because he can swear by no greater, to the truth of what follows; for this is the form of an oath:

surely, as Tabor [is] among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, [so] shall he come. Tabor is commonly said to be the mountain on which our Lord was transfigured; but that there is any just foundation for it is not certain. It was a mountain in Galilee, situated on the borders of the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun, Jos 19:12; it was two leagues from Nazareth eastward {n}; three miles from the lake of Gennesaret; ten miles from Diocaesarea to the east; and two days' journey from Jerusalem {o}. Adrichomius {p} says it was a most beautiful mountain, situated in the midst of the plain of Galilee, remarkable for its roundness, and was about four miles or thirty furlongs high, abounding with vines, olives, and fruit trees, with which it was set all over; and gave to those at sea a most delightful sight at a considerable distance. Our countryman, Mr.

Maundrell {q}, who travelled up it, gives this account of it; that it

"stands by itself in the plain of Esdraelon (the same the Scripture calls the valley of Jezreel); after a very laborious ascent (says he), which took up near an hour, we reached the highest part of the mountain: it has a plain area at top, most fertile and delicious; of an oval figure, extended about one furlong in breadth, and two in length: this area is enclosed with trees on all parts, except towards the south."

It is called by the Septuagint, Josephus, and other writers, Itabyrium. Carmel is with great propriety called "Carmel by the sea"; it was situated on the border of the tribe of Asher; and near to it was the river Kishon, Jos 19:26. So Mr. Maundrell {r} says,

"we arrived in two hours at that ancient river, the river Kishon, which cuts his way down the middle of the plain of Esdraelon; and then, continuing his course close by the side of Mount Carmel, falls into the sea at a place called Caypha;"

by which it appears that the mount was near the sea; and Pliny {s} calls it a promontory, and places it on the Phoenician shore; on which he says were the promontory Carmel, and a town upon the mountain of the same name, formerly called Ecbatana. Adrichomius {t} gives it the name of "Carmel of the sea"; and says it was a very high mountain, and woody, abounding with most noble vines, olives, fruit trees, and odoriferous herbs. So Josephus {u} makes mention of Carmel and the sea together; he says, the Zebulonites obtained land as far as the lake of Genezareth, contiguous to Carmel and the sea; and their being near to each other appears from a passage in the Jerusalem Talmud {w}; says

"R. Samuel Bar Chain Bar Judah, in the name of R. Chanina, when the orb of the sun begins to set, a man standing on Mount Carmel, and goes down and dips in the great sea (the Mediterranean sea), and goes up again, and eats his "teruma" (or offering), it is a presumption that he dipped in the daytime;"

and which is also evident from the passage in 1Ki 18:42; where Elijah and his servant are said to be on the top of Mount Carmel, and from thence he bid his servant look towards the sea: now these mountains so situated are taken notice of, either to show the manner of the king of Babylon's coming against Egypt; that as Tabor and Carmel were high mountains in the land of Israel, so should Nebuchadnezzar lift up his head on high, and come with great pride and haughtiness of spirit against the Egyptians; or rather the certainty of his coming, that he should come as sure as those mountains were in the places they were; or, best of all, the certainty of the destruction of the Egyptians, and the truth of this prophecy concerning it; though the Egyptians were as firm, and might think themselves as secure and as immovable, as the above mountains, yet should certainly come to ruin, and the word of God concerning it should stand as firm as they. To this sense agrees the Targum,

"as this word stands firm, that Tabor is among the mountains, and Carmel in the sea, so shall his destruction come."

The words, according to the accents, may be better rendered, "as Tabor among the mountains, [and Carmel also], he shall come into the sea" {x}; that is, Pharaoh, though he lift up his head as high as Tabor and Carmel, he shall be brought low into the depths of the sea; into a most forlorn and deplorable condition, into a very low estate; and perhaps there may be an allusion to the ancient Pharaoh being drowned in the sea; and with this agrees the Syriac version, "Pharaoh shall fall as the fragment of a mountain, and as Carmel, into the midst of the sea"; compare with this Mt 11:23.

{n} Borchard, Breidenbach, &c. in Lightfoot, Chorograph. on John, vol. 2. p. 495. {o} Vid. Reland. Palestina Illustrata, l. 1, c, 51, 331, 383. {p} Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, Zabulon, No. 95. p. 143. {q} Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 113, 114. Ed. 7. {r} Ib. p. 57. {s} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19. {t} Ut supra (Theatrum Terrae Sanctae), Issachar, No. 19. p. 35. {u} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22. {w} T. Bab. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 2. 2. {x} awby Myb lmrkkw Myrhb dwbtk yk "quia sicut Tabor in montibus, et sicut Carmel (scil. in montibus est) ita in mare veniet", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 46:19

Ver. 19. O thou daughter dwelling in Egypt,.... That is, O ye inhabitants of Egypt, that have long dwelt there, in great security, enjoying great plenty, and who promised themselves a long continuance:

furnish thyself to go into captivity; or, "make", or "prepare for thyself vessels of captivity" {y}; or such things as are proper for captives, as suitable clothes to travel in, shoes to walk in, scrip and staff, and the like; expect captivity, and prepare for it:

for Noph shall be waste and desolate without an inhabitant; the city Memphis, as the Targum, and all the versions: this is particularly mentioned, because it was a royal city, as Kimchi observes; and, though a very populous one, its destruction should be so general, that not an inhabitant should be left in it: the devastation of this city is put for that of all the rest, and as a sure token of it and the whole nation going into captivity.

{y} Kl yve hlwg ylk "vase [vel] instrumenta migrationis fac tibi", Piscator, Schmidt; "praepara", Vatablus; "pare", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 46:20

Ver. 20. Egypt [is like] a very fair heifer,.... Like a heifer that has never been under a yoke, it having never been conquered, and brought under the power of another; and like a beautiful, fat, and well fed one, abounding in wealth and riches, in pleasures and delights, in wantonness and luxury, and fit for slaughter, and ready for it. The Targum is,

"Egypt was a beautiful kingdom."

Some think there is an illusion to the gods of Egypt, Apis and Mnevis, which were heifers or oxen, very beautiful, that had fine spots and marks upon them. Apis was worshipped at Memphis, or Noph, before mentioned, as to be wasted; and Mnevis at Heliopolis, the city of the sun, the same with Bethshemesh, whose destruction is prophesied of;
See Gill on "Jer 43:13"; and both these were of various colours, as Ovid {z} says, particularly of one of them, and is true of both. Pomponius Mela {a} observes of Apis, the god of all the people of Egypt, that it was a black ox, remarkable for certain spots; and unlike to others in its tongue and tail. And Solinus {b} says, it is famous for a white spot on its right side, in the form of a new moon: with whom Pliny {c} agrees, that it has a white spot on the right side, like the horns of the moon, when it begins to increase; and that it has a knot under the tongue, which they call a beetle. And so Herodotus {d} says, it is very black, and has a white square spot on the forehead; on the back, the effigies of an eagle; two hairs in the tail, and a beetle On the tongue, To which may be added what Strabo {e} reports, that at Memphis, the royal city of Egypt, is the temple of Apis, the same with Osiris; where the ox of Apis is fed in an enclosure, and reckoned to be a god; it is white in its forehead, and in

some small parts of the body, and the rest black; by which marks and signs it is always judged what is proper to be put in its place when dead. In the Table of Iris {f}, published by Pignorius, it is otherwise painted and described; its head, neck, horns, buttocks, and tail, black, and the rest white; and, on the right side, a corniculated streak. Aelianus {g} says, these marks were in number twenty nine, and, according to the Egyptians, were symbols of things; some, of the nature of the stars; some, of the overflowing of the Nile; some, of the darkness of the world before the light, and of other things: and all agree, that the ox looked fair and beautiful, to which the allusion is; and there may be in the words an ironical sarcasm, flout, and jeer, at the gods they worshipped, which could not save them from the destruction coming upon them, as follows:

[but] destruction cometh, it cometh from the north; that is, the destruction of Egypt, which should come from Chaldea, which lay north of Egypt; and the coming of it is repeated, to denote the quickness and certainty of it: the word used signifies a cutting off, or a cutting up; in allusion to the cutting off the necks of heifers, which used to be done when slain, De 21:4; or to the cutting of them up, as is done by butchers: and the abstract being put for the concrete, it may be rendered, the "cutter up" {h}; or cutter off; men, like butchers, shall come out of Babylon, and slay and cut up, this heifer. So the Targum,

"people, that are slayers shall come out of the north against her, to spoil her {i};"

that is, the Chaldean army, agreeably to the Syriac version,

"an army shall come out of the north against her."

{z} "------variisque coloribus Apis", Ovid. Metamorph. l. 9. Fab. 12. {a} De Orbis Situ, l. 1. c. 9. {b} Polyhistor. c. 45. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 46. {d} L. 3. sive Thalia, c. 28. {e} Geograph. l. 17. p. 555. Ed. Casaubon. {f} Piguorii Mensa Isiaca, tab. 4. {g} De Animal. l. 11. c. 10. {h} Urq "mactator", Grotius. So Jarchi. {i} So in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 32. 2.

Jeremiah 46:21

Ver. 21. All her hired men [are] in the midst of her like fatted bullocks,.... Or, "bullocks of the stall" {k}; soldiers of other countries, that were hired into the service of Egypt, and lived so deliciously there, that they were unfit for war, and were like fatted beasts prepared for the slaughter. The Targum and Jarchi interpret it, her princes {l}; who had the care of this heifer, and of the feeding of it; these themselves were like that, nourished for the day of slaughter:

for they also are turned back, [and] are fled away together; they turned their backs upon the enemy in battle, and fled in great confusion and precipitancy; see Jer 46:15;

they did not stand; and face the enemy, and light him, but fell or fled before him:

because the day of their calamity was come upon them, [and] the time of their visitation; the time appointed by the Lord to visit and punish them, and bring destruction on them for their sins.

{k} qbrm ylgek "velut vituli saginae", Montanus, Cocceius, {l} So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 50. 2.

Jeremiah 46:22

Ver. 22. The voice thereof shall go like a serpent,.... That is, the voice of Egypt, before compared to a heifer, when in its glory; but now it shall not bellow like a heifer in fat pasture, bat hiss like a serpent, when drove out of its hole, and pursued; signifying, that their voice should be low and submissive, and should not speak one big or murmuring word to their conquerors. The voice of the serpent is, by Aristotle {m} said to be small and weak; so Aelianus {n}. Though Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, understand it of the voice of serpents heard afar off; and so it may respect the dreadful lamentation the Egyptians should make, when they should see the Chaldeans come upon them to destroy them; just as serpents in woods make a horrible noise, when they are set on fire, or are cut down, to which there is an allusion in some following clauses. The Targum seems to interpret this of the Chaldean army thus,

"the voice of the clashing of their arms as serpents creeping;"

and of them the following words are certainly meant:

for they shall march with an army; the Targum adds, against you; the meaning is, that the Chaldeans should come with a great army, and march against the Egyptians with great strength, force, and fury:

and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood; with battle axes, as if they came to cut down trees; nor would they spare the Egyptians any more than such hewers do the trees; nor would they be able any more to resist them than trees can resist hewers of wood.

{m} Hist. Animal. l. 4. c. 9. {n} De Animal. l. 15. c. 13.

Jeremiah 46:23

Ver. 23. They shall cut down her forest, saith the Lord,.... The land of Egypt, compared to a forest, for the multitude of its cities and towns, and the inhabitants of them; which should be destroyed by the Chaldeans, as a forest is cut down by hewers of wood; the metaphor is here continued. The Targum interprets this of the princes of Egypt, and the destruction of them;

though it cannot be searched; either the forest of Egypt, which was so thick of trees; that is, the land was so full of towns and cities, that they could not be searched and numbered; and though the way through it seemed impassable, yet was made passable by the hewers of wood: or its destruction would be so general, "that it cannot be searched" {o}; or found out, where this forest was, where those trees grew, not one of them standing: or else this is to be understood of the Chaldean army, which was so great, that it could not be numbered:

because they are more than the grasshoppers, and [are] innumerable; which creatures come in large numbers, and eat up every green tree and herb; and so the Chaldean army, being alike numerous, would easily cut down the trees of this forest, though they were so many.

{o} rqxy al yk "ut non investigetur", Calvin.

Jeremiah 46:24

Ver. 24. The daughter of Egypt shall be confounded,.... Brought to shame before all the nations of the earth, being conquered by the Chaldeans; that is, the kingdom of Egypt, as the Targum; or the inhabitants of it, being subdued and carried captive:

she shall be delivered into the hand of the people of the north; the Chaldeans, who dwelt northward of Egypt, as is manifest from what follows.

Jeremiah 46:25

Ver. 25. The Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saith,.... These titles are often given to the Lord, and set before prophecies that come from him; and, according to Kimchi, the reason why he is here spoken of as the God of Israel was, because the vengeance threatened to the Egyptians should come upon them, as a punishment for using Israel ill; as Shishak king of Egypt, and Pharaohnecho, who slew Josiah:

behold, I will punish the multitude of No; the inhabitants of it, which were many, called "populous No", **Na 3:8**; a famous city in Egypt. Some take it to be Diospolis or Thebes; and others {p} the same that is now called Alexandria; and so the Targum renders it; and which is followed by the Vulgate Latin version: and Jarchi calls it the seignory or government of Alexandria; and takes Amon, the word for "multitude", to signify the prince of this place; and so Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, king of a city called No: rather Jupiter Ammon {q} is meant, an idol of the Egyptians, which had a temple in Thebes, and was worshipped in it; and who had his name from Ham, the son of Noah. Hillerus {r}, by various arguments, endeavours to prove that No is the same city with Memphis, and that No Amon signifies "the habitation of the nourished"; that is, of Apis, which was nourished here. But be he who he will, or the place what it will, he or that would certainly be punished;

and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; Pharaoh, the present king of Egypt, who was Pharaohhophra, and all the land of Egypt; and all their numerous idols, which were many indeed; and the several governors of the nomes or provinces into which the land was distributed; these should be punished, and suffer in the general calamity;

even Pharaoh, and [all] them that trust in him; the Jews that dwelt in Egypt, and who thought themselves safe under his protection; such who went along with Johanan thither, contrary to the will of God; these should not escape punishment, but be involved in the same destruction.

{p} R. David Ganz. Chronolog. par. 2. fol. 10. 1. Elias in Tishbi, p. 11. {q}

Vid. Schmidt in loc & Stockium, p. 71. So Bochart. Phaleg. l. 1. c. 1. col. 5, 6.
{r} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 571, &c.

Jeremiah 46:26

Ver. 26. And I will deliver them into the hand of those that seek their lives,.... Into the hands of the Chaldeans; that is, the king of Egypt, and all his people, and those that trusted in him:

and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of his servants; his general officers, that commanded in his army under him. Berosus {s}, the Chaldean, makes mention of Nebuchadnezzar's carrying the Egyptians captive into Babylon;

and afterwards it shall be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith the Lord; after forty years, as Ezekiel prophesied, Jer 29:13; not that it should rise to the same glory and dignity as before, for it would be but a base kingdom; but whereas it was desolate and uninhabited after this destruction, it should now be inhabited again.

{s} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 1. & contra Apion, l. 1. c. 19.

Jeremiah 46:27

Ver. 27. But fear thou not, O my servant Jacob; and be not dismayed, O Israel,.... The same things are said in Jer 30:10;
See Gill on "Jer 30:10";

for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land their captivity; Grotius thinks the Jews carried into Egypt by Pharaohnecho, along with Jehoahaz, are meant; but it does not appear that any were carried captive along with him, 2Ki 23:33. Jarchi supposes these to be the righteous in Egypt, who were carried thither by Johanan against their will; but though they may be included, even that small remnant that should escape, Jer 44:28; yet the Jews in Babylon, and other provinces, are chiefly designed; and the words are intended to comfort them in their captivity, with a promise of their return, lest they should be discouraged, in hearing that the Egyptians should inhabit their own land again, and they not theirs:

and Jacob shall return, and be in rest, and at ease, and none shall make [him] afraid: this will have its full accomplishment hereafter in the latter day; when the Jews will be converted, and return to their own land, and never be disturbed more, as they have been, ever since their return from the Babylonish captivity. So Kimchi says this passage respects time to come.

Jeremiah 46:28

Ver. 28. Fear thou not, O Jacob, my servant, saith the Lord, for I [am] with thee,.... Though afar off, in foreign lands, and in captivity: this exhortation is repeated, to strengthen their consolation, and them, against their fears of being cast off by the Lord:

for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; the Babylonians and Chaldeans are no more:

but I will not make a full end of thee; the Jews to this day remain a people, and distinct from others, though scattered about in the world:

but correct thee in measure; with judgment, and in mercy:

yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished;
See Gill on "Jer 30:11".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 47:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 47

This chapter contains a prophecy of the destruction of the Philistines chiefly; and also of the Tyrians and Zidonians. The title of the prophecy, Jer 47:1; the instruments of this destruction, who are compared to overflowing waters; which would cause great lamentation in the inhabitants of the places where they should come, Jer 47:2; the noise of their horses and chariots would be so terrible, as to make parents flee and leave their own children, Jer 47:3; at the same time Tyre and Zidon would fall into the hands of the enemy, and have no helper, Jer 47:4; particular places in Palestine are mentioned, that should be

destroyed, Jer 47:5; and all this owing to a commission the Lord gave to the sword, and which therefore would continue to ravage,
Jer 47:6.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines,.... As the former prophecies were against the Egyptians, the friends and allies of the Jews, in whom they trusted; this is against the Philistines, the near neighbours of the Jews, and their implacable enemies: the time of this prophecy was,

before Pharaoh smote Gaza; one of the five cities of the Philistines, a very strong and fortified place, as its name signifies;
See Gill on "Ac 8:26". The Jews, in their chronicle, say {t} this was fulfilled in the eighth year of Zedekiah, when Pharaoh came out of Egypt, while the Chaldeans were besieging Jerusalem; which they hearing of, broke up the siege, and went forth to meet him; upon which he went to Gaza, and destroyed that, and returned to Egypt again. Both Jarchi and Kimchi make mention of this, but say it was in the tenth year of Zedekiah; and which, no doubt, is the truest reading, since the Chaldean army did not come up against Jerusalem until the ninth year of his reign. But it is more likely that this Pharaoh was Pharaohnecho, and that he fell upon Gaza, and smote it, either when he came to Carchemish, or when he returned from thence, after he had slain Josiah. Now this prophecy was delivered out before anything of this kind happened, and when the Philistines were in the utmost peace, and in no fear or expectation of destruction; and the smiting of this single city by the king of Egypt is foretold, as the forerunner and pledge of a greater destruction of the land by the king of Babylon, next mentioned.

{t} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 26. p. 75.

Jeremiah 47:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith the Lord, behold, waters rise up out of the north,.... Meaning an army of men, which should come in great numbers, and with great force and rapidity, like an overflowing flood. So the Targum,

"behold, people shall come from the north;"

that is, from Chaldea, which lay north of Palestine:

and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; or, "the fulness of it" {u}; the land of the Philistines, and carry off the men and cattle, and all the riches thereof;

the city, and them that dwell therein; not any particular or single city, as Gaza; but the several cities of Palestine, and the inhabitants of them:

then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl; not being able to do anything else; not to defend themselves, their families, and property; and seeing nothing but ruin and destruction before their eyes.

{u} hawlmw "et plenitudinem ejus", Schmidt, &c.

Jeremiah 47:3

Ver. 3. At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong [horses],.... The noise of the cavalry of Nebuchadnezzar's army, as they came marching on towards the country of the Philistines; who, being mounted on strong prancing horses, made a great noise as they came along, and were heard at a distance:

at the rushing of his chariots, [and at] the rumbling, of his wheels; the rattling and clatter the chariot wheels made; in which rode the chief officers and generals, with other mighty men: chariots were much used in war in those times:

the fathers shall not look back to [their] children for feebleness of hands; they should be so frightened at the approach of the enemy, and flee with much precipitancy to provide for their own safety, that they should not think of their children, or stay to deliver and save them, the most near and dear unto them; being so terrified as not to be able to lift up their hands to defend themselves, and protect their children. The Targum is,

"the fathers shall not look back to have mercy on [their] children;"

in their fright should forget their natural affection to them, and not so much as look back with an eye of pity and compassion on them; so intent upon their own deliverance and safety.

Jeremiah 47:4

Ver. 4. Because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistines,.... The time appointed by the Lord for their destruction, which should be universal:

[and] to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth; these were cities in Phoenicia, which bordered on the country of the Philistines, who were their auxiliaries in time of distress; but now, being wasted themselves, could give them no help when Nebuchadnezzar attacked them; as he did Tyre particularly, which he besieged thirteen years, and at last destroyed it, and Zidon with it:

for the Lord will spoil the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor; these last are not put by way of apposition, as if they were the same with the Philistines, though they were near of kin to them, coming from Casluhim; who were the posterity of Mizraim, as well as Caphtorim, Ge 10:13; indeed the Philistines are said to be brought from Caphtor, **Am 9:7**; being very probably taken captive by them, but rescued from them; and now in confederacy with them, and like to share the same fate as they. The Targum renders it,

"the remnant of the island of the Cappadocians;"

and so the Vulgate Latin version. Some think the Colchi, others that the Cretians, are meant. R. Saadiah by Caphtor understands Damiata, a city in Egypt; which is the same with Pelusium or Sin, the strength of Egypt, Eze 30:15; and it is usual with the Jews {w} to call this place Caphutkia, the same with Caphtor, they say; and, in Arabic, Damiata.

{w} Misn. Cetubot, c. 13. sect. 11. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Jeremiah 47:5

Ver. 5. Baldness is come upon Gaza,.... The Targum is,

"vengeance is come to the inhabitants of Gaza."

It is become like a man whose hair is fallen from his head, or is clean shaved off; its houses were demolished; its inhabitants slain, and their wealth plundered; a pillaged and depopulated place. Some understand this of shaving or tearing off the hair for grief, and mourning because of their calamities; which agrees with the latter clause of the verse:

Ashkelon is cut off [with] the remnant of their valley; this was one of the live cities of the Philistines; it lay north of Gaza. Herodotus {x} calls Ashkelon a city of Syria, in which was the temple of Urania Venus, destroyed by the Scythians; said to be built by Lydus Ascalus, and called so after his name {y}. Of this city was Herod the king, and therefore called an Ashkelonite; it was now destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, but afterwards rebuilt and inhabited; and with it were destroyed the remainder of the cities, towns, and villages, in the valley, adjoining to that and Gaza; or Ashkelon and Gaza, now destroyed, were all that remained of the cities of the valley, and shared the same fate with them. The Targum is,

"the remnant of their strength;"

so Kimchi, who interprets it of the multitude of their wealth and power;

how long wilt thou cut thyself? their faces, arms, and other parts of their body, mourning and lamenting their sad condition; the words of the prophet signifying hereby the dreadfulness of it, and its long continuance.

{x} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 105. {y} Vid. Bochart. Phaleg l. 2. c. 12. p. 88.

Jeremiah 47:6

Ver. 6. O thou sword of the Lord,.... For though it was the sword of the Chaldeans, yet being appointed and sent by the Lord, and having a commission from him, and being ordered and directed in his providence to do his will, it is called his sword:

how long [will it be] ere thou be quiet? and cease from destroying men; wilt thou not cease till thou hast no more to destroy?

put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still; and make no more havoc among the people: these are either the words of the Philistines, entreating a stop might be put to the ravages of the sword, and that the war might cease, and the desolations of it; or rather of the prophet, commiserating their state as a man, though they had been the avowed enemies of his people; to which the following words of him are an answer, either to the Philistines, showing why their request could not be granted, or as correcting himself.

Jeremiah 47:7

Ver. 7. How can it be quiet,.... There is no reason to believe it will, nor can it be expected that it should; to stop it is impossible, and to request that it might be stopped is in vain:

seeing the Lord hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the seashore? for it had a commission from the Lord to destroy the inhabitants of Ashkelon, and other places, which lay still more towards the sea, as Joppa and Jamne; and indeed all Palestine lay on the coast of the Mediterranean sea:

there hath he appointed it; by an irreversible decree of his, in righteousness to punish the inhabitants of these places for their sins.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 48:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 48

This chapter contains a prophecy of the destruction of Moab, and of the mourning that should be for it; and not only its destruction in general is predicted, but particular places are mentioned, on which it should fall, Jer 48:1; the causes of which were their confidence in their works and riches, their carnal ease and security, and their idolatry, they should now be ashamed of, Jer 48:6; and this destruction is represented both as certain and as near, notwithstanding their mighty warriors and choice young men, Jer 48:14; and then other cities are particularly named, that should share in the calamity, Jer 48:18; and all this because of their insolence to the Lord; their contempt of his people; their pride, arrogance, and haughtiness; their wrath, and their lies, Jer 48:26; and this destruction is further exaggerated by the lamentation of the prophet over Moab in general, and over several particular cities; and by the lamentation of the inhabitants of them, because of the spoiling of their vines, their fruits, and their riches, Jer 48:31; and this is confirmed by the Lord, as to the swiftness of the enemy that should destroy them; the consternation and fear that should seize them; the flight they should be put to; and the consumption and captivity of them, Jer 48:40; and the chapter is concluded with a promise of the return of their captivity in the latter day, Jer 48:47.

Ver. 1. Against Moab thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... The prophecy concerning Moab is introduced with these epithets of God, partly to observe that the God of Israel was the only true God, in opposition to the gods of Moab, and other nations; and partly to point out his omnipotence, being able to perform what he here predicts and threatens; as also to suggest, that for the enmity of the Moabites to his people Israel, and their contempt of them, which is taken notice of in this chapter, and the ill treatment of them, the Lord would now take vengeance on them. Some render it, "concerning Moab" {z}; because every thing that is here said is not against it; the chapter concludes in favour of it; though the far greater part, and ever, all but the last verse, is against it. This prophecy, according to Josephus {a}, had its fulfilment about five years after the destruction of Jerusalem;

woe unto Nebo, for it is spoiled; its walls broken down; its houses demolished; its inhabitants destroyed, and plundered of their riches; this, in prophetic language, is represented as done, because of the certainty of it. Of this city See Gill on "Isa 15:2"; It is thought to be an oracular one, where was a temple of their idol; and from whence their priests gave out oracles, promising peace, and prosperity and safety, to Moab; and therefore the desolation of that is first prophesied of, to show that no dependence was to be had on those lying oracles;

Kirjathaim is confounded [and] taken; a city in the tribe of Reuben, which afterwards came into the hands of the Moabites, Jos 13:19. The word is of the dual form; and it might be a double city, like Jerusalem, consisting of a lower and upper city; or it might be divided by a river; or, as Kimchi and Ben Melech think, it was so called because it had two towers in it. It seems to be the same with Kir of Moab, Kirharesh, and Kirhareseth, Isa 15:1; when it was taken by the Chaldeans, the inhabitants were confounded, as having looked upon the place, and boasted of it, as impregnable;

Misgab is confounded and dismayed; so called from its being built on a high place, and well fortified; though some think that this is not the proper name of a place; but only signifies a high and fortified place both by nature and art; a place of refuge, where persons thought themselves safe; and so the Targum renders it,

"the house of their confidence;"

this, when besieged and taken by the Babylonians, threw the inhabitants into the utmost consternation and confusion. Some take it to be the same with Bamoth, a name of much the same signification, Jos 13:17; see Isa 15:2.

{z} bawml "ad Moab", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "de Moabo", Vatablus, Cocceius. {a} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 7.

Jeremiah 48:2

Ver. 2. [There shall be] no more praise of Moab,.... It shall be no more commended for a rich, populous, and fruitful country, being now laid waste; though the next phrase,

in Heshbon, or "concerning Heshbon" {b}, should be read in connection with this; and then the sense is, there shall be none any more in Heshbon to praise the country of Moab, what a fine and fertile country it is, since that city will be destroyed also; or there will be no more a Moabite to boast of his being an inhabitant in Heshbon, such an utter destruction will be made of it; or there will be no more boasting of Moab, or of any Moabite concerning Heshbon, what a famous, opulent, or strong city that is, since it is no more. Of this city See Gill on "Isa 15:4";

they have devised evil against it; that is, the Chaldeans devised evil against Heshbon, to besiege it, take and destroy it: there is in the expression a beautiful allusion to the name of the city of Heshbon, which has its name from a word that signifies to devise and consult {c};

come, and let us cut it off from [being] a nation: this is what the Babylonians consulted together against Heshbon; and not only against that, a principal city; but against the whole country of Moab, to make such an entire desolation of it, that it should be no more a nation: that which the Moabites with others devised against the people of Israel is now devised against them; a just retaliation this; see
Ps 83:4;

also thou shalt be cut down, O Madmen; or utterly destroyed: it may be rendered, "shall become silent" {d}; the voice of man shall not be heard in it, especially the voice of praise, of boasting, and rejoicing: there is in this clause also an elegant allusion to the name of the place, which comes from a root that signifies to "cut down", or "be silent" {e}. This is thought by Grotius to be the Madiama of Ptolemy {f}:

the sword shall pursue thee; after it has destroyed other cities, it should come in great haste and with great force to Madmen; or it should pursue after the inhabitants, of it, that should make their escape, or attempt to do so. The Targum is,

"after thee shall go out those that slay with the sword."

{b} Nwbvxb bawm tlht dwe Nya "nulla amplius gloriatio Moab in Chesbon", Calvin; "non ultra laus, Moab in Chesbon", Montanus; to the same purpose Vatablus. {c} Nwbvx a bvx "cogitavit", "excogitavit". {d} ymdt "silebis", Montanus; so R. Judah in Ben Melech; "ad silentium redigeris"; so some in Vatablus. {e} Nmdm wmdt. {f} Geograph. l. 6. c. 7.

Jeremiah 48:3

Ver. 3. A voice of crying [shall be] from Horonaim,.... Another city of Moab. The word is of the dual number; and, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, there were two Horons, the upper and the lower; of this place See Gill on "Isa 15:5"; this also should be destroyed; and so a cry of the inhabitants of it should be heard out of it:

spoiling, and great destruction; because the city was spoiled, and a great destruction made in the inhabitants and riches of it.

Jeremiah 48:4

Ver. 4. Moab is destroyed,.... Either the whole nation in general; so the Targum,

"the kingdom of Moab is broken;"

and so Abarbinel; or a city so called, which some take to be the city Areopolis. Jerom {g} says, that Moab is a city of Arabia, now called Areopolis; and which also has the name of Rabbathmoab, or "grand Moab";

her little ones have caused a cry to be heard; seeing their parents killed, and they left desolate, and in the hands of the enemy; and not only so, but just going to be dashed in pieces by them. The Targum interprets it, her governors; and so Jarchi, who thinks they are so called, because they are lesser than kings. Kimchi and Ben Melech suggest, that these are called so by way of contempt. The word "tzeir" signifies both "little" and "great", as the learned Pocock {h} has abundantly proved.

{g} De locis Heb. fol. 87. H. & 93. B. {h} Not. Miscell. in Port. Mosis, p. 17, 18.

Jeremiah 48:5

Ver. 5. For in the going up of Luhith continual weeping shall go up,.... This is another city, which was built on a high hill, which had a considerable ascent to it, whither those that escaped from Horonaim might flee for safety; but as they went up the hill would weep bitterly, and all the way they went, because of the loss of friends and sustenance, and the danger they themselves were still in. Of this place
See Gill on "Isa 15:5";

for in the going down of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction; a place before mentioned, which lay low, in the descent of which, the enemies, the Chaldeans, heard the cries of those that fled from Horonaim, and went up from thence to Luhith, which cry was as follows:

Jeremiah 48:6

Ver. 6. Flee, save your lives,.... These are either the words of the Moabites, their cry of destruction mentioned in the latter part of
Jer 48:5; who, seeing nothing but ruin before their eyes, advise one another to flee in all haste, and save their lives if possible, since nothing else could be saved: or else they are the words of the prophet, giving counsel to the Moabites to betake themselves to flight for the safety of their lives, these being in great danger; so Abarbinel; with whom others agree, only think they are spoken ironically; suggesting, that when they had endeavoured by flight to save their lives, it would be to no purpose; they should not escape the hands of their enemies; which seems to be the truest sense:

and be like the heath in the wilderness; which is called "erice", or "ling", which grows in waste places. Kimchi and Menachem in Jarchi interpret it of a tree that grows in dry and desert places; a low, naked, barren, fruitless shrub; signifying, that, when they were fled from their habitations, they should be as solitary and stripped of all their good things as such a bare and naked shrub in a desert. Kimchi's note is, that when they had left their cities and fled, their cities would be as the heath in the wilderness. The Targum is,

"and be ye as the tower of Aroer, "as they" who dwell in tents in the wilderness."

Jarchi observes that the tower of Aroer was built in the wilderness, and there was no inhabitant round it but those that dwelt in tents; and, the tower standing where there was no inhabitant, it looked like a waste. The Septuagint version is very foreign, "as a wild ass in the wilderness"; which is followed by the Arabic version.

Jeremiah 48:7

Ver. 7. For because thou hast trusted in thy works,.... The strong works and fortifications they had made about their cities, and so thought themselves safe in them; which is the sense of the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and those that follow them. Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it of their cattle and other possessions, as the word is rendered in 1Sa 25:2; which they observe. It may very well be understood of their idols, the works of their hands, in which they placed their confidence; and therefore their chief God after mentioned is threatened to be taken and carried away:

and in thy treasures: their gold and silver, and other riches they had heaped together:

thou shalt be taken: some particular city seems to be meant, the city Moab, or Ar of Moab, Jer 48:4; or Horonaim, Jer 48:5;

and Chemosh shall go forth in captivity, [with] his priests and his princes together; this was the god of the Ammonites, Jud 11:24; and of the Moabites, 1Ki 11:7; hence the Moabites are called the people of Chemosh, Nu 21:29; which Philo the Jew {i} explains thus; that is, thy people and power are found blind, and deprived of sight; and says that Chemosh is interpreted "as groping", or feeling, which is the property of one that cannot see. "Mosh" in Hebrew signifies to grope or feel; and "caph" is a servile letter, and a note of similitude; and by another Jewish writer {k} Chemosh is called the god of the blind. Jerom {l} takes it to be the same idol with Baalpeor, thought by some the Priapus of the Heathens. Camus, the god of festivals and merriment, seems to have had his name from hence; very probably the sun was worshipped by the Moabites under this name, which may be so called from its swiftness; for the Arabic word , "camash", signifies swift and hastening {m}; as the sun is to run its race. The Moabites put their trust in this their deity; and to let them see that he would be of no avail unto them, in this time of their distress, he himself should be taken away by the enemy out of his temple, for the sake of the gold or silver that was upon him, and with him the priests that attended his service; or his worshippers, as the Targum; and the princes of the nation that served him, and supported the worship of him, and defrayed the expenses of it.

{i} Allegor. l. 2. p. 104. {k} R. Iedaia Habadreshi, Bechinat Olam, c. 30. p. 184. {l} Comment in lsaiam, c. 15. 2. {m} Vid. Castell. Lex. Polyglott. col. 1749. & Gol. Lex. Arab. p. 2064.

Jeremiah 48:8

Ver. 8. And the spoiler shall come upon every city,.... That is, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and his army. The Targum is, the spoilers, who came against and took every city of Moab, and wasted them. Josephus {n} makes particular mention of Nebuchadnezzar subduing the Ammonites and Moabites:

and no city shall escape; the spoiler, and destruction by him:

the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the Lord hath spoken; not only the cities, and the inhabitants of them; but the inhabitants of the valleys and plains, as the Targum paraphrases it, should be destroyed; and also the corn that grew upon them, and the flocks and herds that grazed there, exactly as the Lord had foretold.

{n} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 7.

Jeremiah 48:9

Ver. 9. Give wings unto Moab that it may flee and get away,.... That is, give wings to the inhabitants of Moab; signifying that they were in great danger, and there was no probability of escaping it, unless they had the wings of a swift bird, or were as swift as such, and even that would not do; though perhaps their fleeing, and passing away with wings, may signify not their fleeing from danger, and their attempt to escape; but their swift and sudden destruction, compared to the swift flight of a bird; for the last clause may be rendered, "for in flying it shall fly away" {o}. Some render the first clause, "give a flower to Moab", as the Vulgate Latin version; and so the word sometimes signifies, Isa 40:7; and the sense may be, hold up a flower to Moab, or a feather, such as is light, as the down of a thistle, as an emblem of its destruction; which shall pass away as easily and swiftly as so light a thing before the wind; but Jarchi and Kimchi interpret the word as we do, a wing. The Targum is,

"take away the crown from Moab, for going it shall go away into captivity."

The word is used of the plate of gold on the high priest's mitre,
Ex 28:36;

for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein; which expresses the utter destruction of them.

{o} aut aun yk "quia volando volabit", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "quia avolando avolabit", Schmidt; "nam avolabit", Piscator.

Jeremiah 48:10

Ver. 10. Cursed [be] he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully,.... Which is said with respect to the Chaldeans, who were enjoined to destroy the Moabites; which is called the work of the Lord, because he had given them a commission to do it; and which was to be done by them, not by halves, or in a remiss and negligent manner, but fully and faithfully; they were not to spare them, as Saul did the Amalekites, and Ahab Benhadad. This is a general rule, which may be applied to all divine work and service; every man has work to do for God; some in a more public, others in a more private way; all should be done in uprightness and sincerity, with all faithfulness and integrity: it is done deceitfully when men play the hypocrite; and negligently when they are backward to it, lukewarm in it, and infrequent in the performance of it; which brings upon them the curse of God; and which is not a curse causeless, but a legal one; and is no other than the wrath of God in strict justice:

and cursed [be] he that keepeth back his sword from blood; from shedding the blood of the Moabites, when God had given command to do it. The curse is repeated, as Kimchi observes, to confirm the matter, that it might be most assuredly expected; since it would certainly come, if the Lord's work was not done aright.

Jeremiah 48:11

Ver. 11. Moab hath been at ease from his youth,.... Lived in great peace and prosperity from the time they became a kingdom; being very little disturbed with wars by their neighbours, or very rarely; so that they were in very prosperous and flourishing circumstances, which occasioned that pride and haughtiness they were notorious for. This is an emblem of unregenerate men; who, though sinners from their birth, and liable to the curse of the law, subject to the stroke of death, and must come to judgment; yet stupid and quite at ease, having no sight of sin, nor feeling of the burden of its guilt, nor grief or trouble for it; no sense of danger, or fear of hell; but in the utmost security: all which arise from ignorance, hardness of heart, profaneness, and infidelity; thoughtlessness about their immortal souls; putting the evil day far from them; and being under the influence of Satan, who keeps his goods in peace:

and he hath settled on his lees; a metaphor taken from wine; which, the longer it remains on the lees, the better body it has, and the richer and stronger it is; and denotes the great tranquillity of the Moabites; the riches they were possessed of, and in which they trusted. The Targum renders it,

"quiet in their substance;"

herein they were an emblem of unconverted sinners, who are settled and hardened in the corruptions of their nature; and not at all disturbed at the evil of sin; the wrath of God; his judgments on men; the last and awful judgment; or at the terrors of hell; and likewise of such who trust in their own righteousness, and depend upon that for salvation:

and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel; like wine that has never been racked off from the vessel or vessels it was first put into: they were never removed from place to place, but always continued in their land; in which they were an emblem of such who have never seen their own emptiness, and their want of the grace of God, and have never been emptied of sin, nor of self-righteousness:

neither hath he gone into captivity; this explains in proper words the metaphor in the preceding clause: the Moabites had never been carried captive out of their own land into others; an emblem of such who have never seen their captive state to sin and Satan; or ever brought to complain of it, or become the captives of Christ;

therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed; his wealth, riches, and prosperity, continued without any change and alteration; and also his sins and vices, idolatry, pride, luxury, and which were the cause of his ruin; and for that reason are here mentioned; an emblem of unregenerate men, whose taste is vitiated by sin, and continues as it was originally; they relish sin, and disrelish everything that is good; and savour the things that be of man, and not the things of God; and so are in a most dangerous condition.

Jeremiah 48:12

Ver. 12. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord,.... This being their case, they should not continue in it; a change would be made, and that in a very short time, as there was; for, according to Josephus {p}, it was about five years after the destruction of Jerusalem that the Moabites were subdued by the king of Babylon:

that I will send unto him wanderers that shall cause him to wander; the Chaldeans, who wandered out of their own country to Moab, directed by the providence of God to come there to do his work; and who, at first, might be treated by the Moabites with contempt, as vagrants, but would soon be made to know that they would cause them to wander; or would remove them out of their own country into other lands, particularly Babylon, to be vagrants there. The word may be rendered "travellers" {q}; and signifies such that walk with great strength of body, in a stately way, and with great agility and swiftness; in which manner the Chaldeans are described as coming to Moab, and who should cause them to travel back with them in all haste; see word in Isa 63:1. The Targum renders it "spoilers"; according to the metaphor of wine used in Jer 48:11, it may signify a sort of persons that cause wine to go, or empty it from one vessel to another; such as we call "wine coopers"; and this agrees with what follows:

and shall empty his vessels, and break their bottles; depopulate the cities of Moab; destroy the inhabitants of them, and make them barren and empty of men. The Targum is,

"I will send spoilers upon them, and they shall spoil them, and empty their substance, and consume the good of their land;"

see Jer 48:8. The Septuagint version is, "they shall cut in pieces his horns"; which, as Origen {r} interprets them, were a kind of cups anciently used; for in former times they drank out of horns, either of oxen, or other animals; and Pliny {s} says that the northern people used to drink out of the horns of buffaloes, a creature larger than a bull, and which the Muscovites call "thur"; the same is asserted by Athenaeus {t}, and others, that the horns of beasts were drinking vessels before cups were invented.

{p} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 7. {q} Myeu "viatores", Tigurine version. {r} Apud Drusium in fragmentis in loc. {s} Nat. Hist. l. 11. e. 37. {t} Deipnosoph. l. 11. p. 235. Rhodigin. 1. 30.

Jeremiah 48:13

Ver. 13. And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh,.... His idol; see Jer 48:7; of his worship of him, prayers to him, and confidence in him; he not being able to save him from the destruction of the Chaldeans, and being carried captive by them; he himself also going into captivity:

as the house of Israel were ashamed of Bethel their confidence; that is, of the golden calf that was set up in Bethel by Jeroboam, and which the ten tribes of Israel worshipped, and in which they trusted; but that could not save them from being carried captive by the Assyrians; and so were ashamed of it, and of their idolatrous worship, and vain confidence.

Jeremiah 48:14

Ver. 14. How say ye, we [are] mighty and strong men for the war?] The Moabites were proud, haughty, and arrogant; boasted much of their strength and valour; of the strength of their bodies, and fitness for war, and skill in it; and of the strength of their fortified cities; and thought themselves a match for the enemy, and secure from all danger: for this their pride, vanity, and self-confidence, they are here reproved, since their destruction was at hand.

Jeremiah 48:15

Ver. 15. Moab is spoiled,.... The whole country is ruined; which is spoken of as present, though future, after the manner of prophecy, because of the certainty of it:

and gone up [out of] her cities; the inhabitants of Moab were gone up out of their cities, either through fear and flight; or through force, being made to go out of them, and were carried captive. The Targum is,

"the Moabites are spoiled, and their cities are desolate;"

and so Kimchi interprets it,

"the multitude of her cities is made to cease;"

the people of them. It might be as well rendered, "and he is gone up to her cities" {u}; that is, the spoiler {w}, as Kimchi's father rightly interprets it; see Jer 48:8; or it may be rendered, "and his cities, into which he went up" {x}; that is, those are spoiled and destroyed, into which the Moabites used to go up, being built on high places; or whither they went for safety, the enemy being in their country, but in vain:

and his chosen young men are gone down to the slaughter; or, "the choice of his chosen ones" {y}; the select of them, for comeliness, strength, and valour; these being taken, when the enemy entered the cities, were had down to some place of slaughter, and there put to death; or were brought down to the grave, the pit of corruption; unless this can be understood of the choice young men of the enemy, the Chaldean army; who, mounting and scaling the walls of the cities of Moab, went down into them to slay the inhabitants of them; but this is submitted to consideration. All this was not barely said by the prophet, who was but a man, though sent of God; but by the Lord himself, as it follows:

saith the King, whose name [is] the Lord of hosts; who is "the King" by way of eminency; the King of kings, and Lord of lords; mightier than the king of Moab, or even than the king of Babylon; and the Lord of greater armies than either; and therefore what he said should certainly be accomplished.

{u} hle hyrew "et civitates ejus conscendit", Montanus; "ascendit super urbes ejus", Gataker. {w} "Sub. hostis", Vatablus, Calvin; "vastator", Gataker. {x}

"Et urbes ejus in quas ascendit", Schmidt. {y} wyrwxb rxbm "electio electorum ejus", Gataker.

Jeremiah 48:16

Ver. 16. The calamity of Moab [is] near to come,.... As it did come within live years after the destruction of Jerusalem, as observed on Jer 48:12; out of Josephus:

and his affliction hasteth fast: or, "his evil" {z} the evil of punishment for his sin; his utter destruction.

{z} wter "malum ejus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 48:17

Ver. 17. All ye that are about him, bemoan him,.... The neighbouring nations, such as the Ammonites, and others, are called upon to condole the sad case of Moab; all upon the borders of the country of Moab, either within them or without them:

and all ye that know his name; not only that had heard of his fame and glory, but knew in what grandeur and splendour he lived; these have a form of condolence given them:

say, how is the strong staff broken, [and] the beautiful rod! the mighty men of war, the staff of the nation, in which they trusted, destroyed; their fortified cities demolished; the powerful kingdom, which swayed the sceptre, and ruled in great glory, and was terrible and troublesome to others, now pulled down. The Targum is,

"how is the king broken that did evil, the oppressing ruler!"

Jeremiah 48:18

Ver. 18. Thou daughter that dost inhabit Dibon,.... A city in Moab;
See Gill on "Isa 15:2". The Targum is,

"O kingdom of the congregation of Dibon;"

but this was not a kingdom of itself, though a principal city in the kingdom of Moab:

come down from [thy] glory, and sit in thirst; in a dry and thirsty land; in want of all the necessaries of life; in captivity; who before abounded with all good things, inhabiting a well watered and fruitful soil; see Isa 15:9; but now called to quit all their former glory and happiness, their fulness and felicity, and submit to the greatest straits and difficulties:

for the spoiler of Moab shall come upon thee, [and] he shall destroy thy strong holds; the king of Babylon and his army, who spoiled the other cities of Moab; he should come against this also, and take it, and demolish its fortifications, by reason of which it thought itself secure; but these should not be able to protect it.

Jeremiah 48:19

Ver. 19. O inhabitant of Aroer,.... Another city that belonged to Moab, situated on the border of it towards Ammon, near the river Arnon;
See Gill on "Isa 17:2";

stand by the way, and espy; get to the road side where travellers pass, and look out for them:

ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth; whether man or woman you see fleeing, having escaped the army of the Chaldeans:

[and] say, what is done? by the Chaldeans; ask what cities they have taken; what progress they have made; what is done to their cities, that they flee from them? tell all the particulars of things.

Jeremiah 48:20

Ver. 20. Moab is confounded, for it is broken down,.... This is the answer returned, by those that had escaped and were fleeing, to those who inquired of them; who report that the whole country of Moab was in the utmost confusion and consternation; not being able to stand before the enemy, who broke down and destroyed all that was in his way: and therefore calls upon them to

howl and cry; because of the general ruin at the nation, and who must expect themselves to share the same fate; and therefore should prepare themselves and their neighbours for it, as follows:

tell ye it in Arnon, that Moab is spoiled; the country of Arnon, so called from a river of that name, on the banks of which Aroer was situated; the inhabitants of which are desired to spread it all over that part of the country, that Moab was utterly ruined by the Chaldean army; the particulars of which follow:

Jeremiah 48:21

Ver. 21. And judgment is come upon the plain country,.... Of Moab, which was for the most part such, especially that which lay near Arnon; the judgment of God's vengeance, punishment for sin, by the hand of the Chaldeans. The Targum is,

"they that execute vengeance are come:"

upon Holon; a city of Moab; of which see Jos 15:51; it had its name perhaps from the sandy ground on which it stood. Grotius takes it to be the Alabana of Ptolemy:

and upon Jahazah: the same with Jahaz, See Gill on "Isa 15:4"; reckoned by Grotius to be the Jadu of Ptolemy; see Jos 13:18;

and upon Mephaath; of which see Jos 13:18; said by Grotius to be the Maipha of Ptolemy.

Jeremiah 48:22

Ver. 22. And upon Dibon,.... Whose destruction by this time was come upon it, as suggested, Jer 48:18;

and upon Nebo: of which see Jer 48:1;

and upon Bethdiblathaim: the same with Almondiblathaim in Nu 33:46 and Diblath in **Eze 6:14**.

Jeremiah 48:23

Ver. 23. And upon Kirjathaim,.... Of which see Jer 48:1;

and upon Bethgamul; this is nowhere else mentioned in Scripture; supposed by Grotius to be the Maccala of Ptolemy, put for Camala:

and upon Bethmeon: of which see Isa 15:2.

Jeremiah 48:24

Ver. 24. And upon Kerioth,.... Which once belonged to the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:25; from this place Judas Iscariot is by some thought to have his name; as if it was "Ish Kerioth", "a man of Kerioth". Grotius takes it to be the Goiratha of Ptolemy:

and upon Bozrah; not in Idumea, but in Moab; the same with Bezer, Jos 21:36;

and upon all the cities of the land of Moab, for and near; all the rest of the cities not named, whether nearer or farther off from Aroer.

Jeremiah 48:25

Ver. 25. The horn of Moab is cut off,.... The kingdom of Moab, high and strong, his power and strength, by which he defended himself, and offended others, as a beast with his horns; his powerful kingdom, and the glory of it:

and his arm is broken, saith the Lord; so that he cannot hold a sword, or manage any weapon of war against the enemy, or do anything to annoy him, or in his own defence. The Targum is,

"the kingdom of Moab is cut off, and their rulers are broken, saith the Lord;"

and so Ben Melech interprets it of his princes, and his armies, which were the arm of the king, and of the people.

Jeremiah 48:26

Ver. 26. Make ye him drunken,.... Not with wine, but with the cup of divine wrath; with the vengeance of God; with sore judgments, afflictions, and calamities; give him his fill of them, till he is quite intoxicated with them, and has lost his senses, and is brought to madness and distraction, and reels, and staggers, and falls to the ground, like a drunken man; and his state and kingdom is quite ruined: this is said to the enemies of Moab, the king of Babylon and his army:

for he magnified [himself] against the Lord; made himself as great as he; yea, set himself above him; thought himself out of his reach; spoke proudly, haughtily, and contemptibly of him, and blasphemously against him, as if he could not deliver his people, or destroy his and their enemies. The Targum interprets it of the people of God, as in **Zep 2:10**; paraphrasing the words thus;

"bring distress upon them, that they may be like to drunken men; for against the people of the Lord have they magnified themselves:"

Moab also shall wallow in his vomit; as drunken men do: or, he shall "clap", or "dash {a} [his hand] in his vomit": dash his hands and feet against the ground as he lies in his vomit, as persons in such a condition do: or shall wring his hands, and clap them together for sorrow, being sick, and in distress. Some render it, "he shall clap [the hand at] Moab in his vomit" {b}; men shall laugh at him as he lies wallowing in it, or rejoice at his fall and ruin; but this is expressed in the next clause:

and he also shall be in derision; as drunken men are; he shall be derided by others, as others have been derided by him; now it will be his turn.

{a} wayqb bawm qpow "plaudat", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius; "plaudet", Piscator; "complodat", Munster, Tigurine version, Schmidt; "allidet", Lyranus.
{b} "Complodet manus [super] Moabum [jacentem] in vomitu suo", Gataker.

Jeremiah 48:27

Ver. 27. For was not Israel a derision unto thee?.... In the time of his calamity, when the ten tribes were carried captive by the Assyrians some years ago; and of late the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin by the Chaldeans; the Moabites rejoiced at this, which they ought not to have done, upon the common principles of humanity; and especially since they were not only neighbours, but akin; and therefore, according to the law of retaliation, it was but just that they should be had in derision themselves:

was he found among thieves? that is, Israel; that he should be a derision to any, as thieves are when they are taken; men rejoice at it, insult them, and deride them; but was this the case of Israel? had he robbed any? had he done any injury to Moab, or any other? no, verily: why this derision then?

for since thou spakest of him, thou skippedst for joy; or, "shookedst thyself" {c}; whenever the Moabites spoke of the distresses and calamities of Israel, and of their captivity, they laughed till they shook themselves; not only shook their heads, but their whole bodies. The Vulgate Latin version is, "therefore, because of thy words which thou hast spoken against him, thou shall be carried captive"; and Jarchi mentions such a sense of the words, as given by some of their Rabbins; and to this agrees the Targum,

"and because ye have multiplied words against them, therefore ye shall go into captivity."

{c} ddwntt "commovisti te", Vatablus, Calvin; "commoves te", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "motitas te", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 48:28

Ver. 28. O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock,.... Signifying hereby that they would not be in safety in their strongest and most fortified cities, which would be besieged by the enemy, and taken; and therefore are advised to leave them, and flee to the rocks and mountains, that if possible they might be safe there:

and be like the dove, [that] maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth; which, for fear of birds of prey, makes her nest in the side of a hole, or cleft of a rock, that she and her young may be safe from them; and which being pursued by the hawk, flies into a hollow rock or cavern, as Homer {d} observes: but here it intends the place where it makes its nest; which is for the most part in deserts and rocky places, where great numbers of doves resort, and make their nests, as Diodorus Siculus {e} relates; and especially in the holes and clefts of rocks, to which the allusion is in **So 2:14**. The Targum is,

"and be as a dove that leaves her dove house, and comes down and dwells in the bottom of a pit,"

or ditch.

{d} Iliad. 21. v. 495. {e} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 92.

Jeremiah 48:29

Ver. 29. We have heard the pride of Moab,.... Israel, and all the nations round about, had heard of this, and seen or heard of many instances of it; the thing was notorious; according to Kimchi, it is the prophet that here speaks in the name of the nations; but it seems best to understand it of the Lord himself, as appears from the
Jer 48:30; and who here speaks in the plural number, because of the plurality of persons in the Godhead; as he afterwards does in the singular number, to denote the unity of the divine essence:

(he is exceeding proud) his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart; a heap of words to express the same thing; suggesting that the instances of his pride were many, and that it was exceeding great indeed: these many words were little enough; and indeed words were wanting fully to declare it. The same was observed in Isaiah's time, and in much the same language; only more words are here used, to show that his pride was increased since that time; see Isa 16:6.

Jeremiah 48:30

Ver. 30. I know his wrath, saith the Lord,.... Against the Jews, and other nations; what he has threatened to do unto them, and would do if not restrained:

but [it shall] not [be] so; as he has devised in his mind, and threatened in his wrath; all his swelling thoughts and big words shall come to nothing:

his lies shall not so effect [it]; it shall not be according to his words; they will prove lies, and of no effect. Kimchi interprets it of the sons of Moab, who shall not be able to do what they thought to do; and Jarchi of his mighty ones; and the Targum of his nobles, paraphrasing it,

"and their nobles are not right, they do not as is becoming;"

perhaps it may be better understood of his diviners and soothsayers, as the word is used in Isa 44:25; and be rendered, "his diviners have not done right" {f}; they have deceived him with their lying oracles; swelled him with pride; and brought him to ruin, he trusting to them.

{f} wve Nk al wydb "vaniloqui ejus non rectum fecerunt", Cocceius. So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 38. 1.

Jeremiah 48:31

Ver. 31. Therefore will I howl for Moab,.... The prophet, being as a man affected with the miseries of a people very wicked, and so deserving of them; though indeed by this he does not so much design to express the affections of his own heart, as to show what reason the Moabites would have to howl for the calamities of their country; for, as Kimchi observes, the prophet here speaks in the person of the people of Moab; see Isa 16:7;

and I will cry out for all Moab; the whole country of Moab, which should become desolate:

[mine heart] shall mourn for the men of Kirheres; the same with Kirhareseth, a city of Moab, Isa 16:7; whose foundations should be sapped, the city taken, and the men of it put to the sword, or caused to flee; and their case being deplorable, the prophet says his heart should mourn for them like a dove, as Kimchi and Jarchi observe; though it may be rendered, "he shall mourn" {g}; that is, Moab; for the destruction of such a principal city, and the men of it. The Targum renders it,

"for the men of the city of their strength."

{g} hghy "gemet", Montanus.

Jeremiah 48:32

Ver. 32. O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer,.... Sibmah was a city in the land of Moab abounding with vines, but now should be destroyed; and Jazer another city in the same country, which was destroyed before the other; and therefore its destruction should be lamented and wept over, as that had been: or "from", or "after the weeping of Jazer" {h}; when that is over, or from thence will I go in course as the desolation proceeds, to weep for Sibmah: or I will weep for that "more than the weeping of Jazer" {i}; make a greater lamentation for it than for Jazer; or, as some, than Isaiah made for Jazer; of which see Isa 16:9;

thy plants are gone over the sea; the Dead sea; meaning the inhabitants of Sibmah, the governors and common people, who were gone over sea into captivity, as it is generally understood:

they reach [even] to the sea of Jazer; a lake or confluence of water near to Jazer, called a sea; as it was usual with the Jews to call such seas; as the sea of Tiberias, and the like: this spread of the plants seems to refer to the multitudes of those that belonged to Sibmah, and the villages of it, which extended beyond the Dead sea, even to the sea of Jazer; but as fruitful as this vine was, and extensive as its branches were, they should come to destruction:

the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits, and upon thy vintage: the king of Babylon, who came upon them with his army in the summer season, and at the time of their vintage, and devoured the fruits of their vines and fig trees, with which this country abounded; and so impoverished and ruined them. The Targum of the whole is,

"therefore as I have brought an army against Jazer, so I will bring slayers against Sibmah; they that carry them captive have waded; they have passed through the sea; they are come to the sea of Jazer; upon thy harvest, and upon thy vintage, the spoilers are fallen."

{h} ykbm "a fletu", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Schmidt. {i} "Supra fletum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gataker.

Jeremiah 48:33

Ver. 33. And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field,.... Or, from Carmel {k}; not Mount Carmel in the land of Israel; for the prophecy is of Moab; though that reached to Sibmah; but here it signifies any fruitful place, like Carmel, where were good pasturage, corn, and fruit bearing trees, which produced great plenty of good things, and caused joy to the owners of them: but now all being destroyed by the enemy, joy and gladness would cease:

and from the land of Moab; from all parts of it, where there had used to be plenty, and so joy:

and I have caused wine to fail from the wine presses: there being no grapes to put into them, or men to tread them, were there any; or, if put in and trodden, not the owners, but the enemy, should have the wine; so that it should fail from the Moabites; they should be never the better for it. These are the words of the Lord, who has the disposal of the fruits of the earth:

none shall tread with shouting; as treaders in the wine press used to do, to encourage one another, and make their labour more easy, and the time to pass on in it more pleasantly; but now there should neither be treading nor shouting; see Isa 16:10;

[their] shouting [shall be] no shouting; not a shouting of joy, as used to be when they trod out the wine; but a cry of mourning and lamentation, because of the sword of the enemy.

{k} lmrkm "de Carmelo", V. L. "de Charmel", Montanus; "ex Carmelo", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 48:34

Ver. 34. From the cry of Heshbon [even] unto Elealeh,.... Two cities in the land of Moab; of which see Isa 15:4. Heshbon being destroyed, a cry was made by the inhabitants of it, which either reached from thence to Elealeh; or the destruction being carried on to that city, the cry was continued there:

[and even] unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice; another city of Moab; see Isa 15:4; which also was laid waste, and where the Moabites uttered their voice of lamentation on account of it:

from Zoar [even] unto Horonaim, [as] an heifer of three years old: that is, as the destruction should go on to Zoar, and so to Horonaim; of which places see Isa 15:5; so the cry of the distressed, and of those that flee, should also go from place to place; and be as loud, and as strong, and heard as far, as the lowing of a heifer of three years old. Naturalists {l} observe, that the voice in all female creatures is smaller and shriller, excepting the ox; for the voices of the females of that creature is stronger than in the males; and also that the taming of these creatures is when they are three years old, that is the proper time; before it is too soon, and afterwards too late {m}; and then it is their voice is fuller, and their strength firmer, to which the allusion here is; See Gill on "Isa 15:5";

for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate; being disturbed by the Chaldean army, their horses treading them with their feet, and so fouling them; or being mixed with the blood of the slain, and so unfit to drink. A sad case this, to have neither wine nor water;
See Gill on "Isa 15:6"; to which may be added, that Jerom also makes mention of a village in his time called Benamerium, to the north of Zoar; and seems rather the place intended.

{l} Aristotel. Hist. Animal. l. 4. c. 11. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 51. {m} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 45.

Jeremiah 48:35

Ver. 35. Moreover I will cause to cease in Moab, saith the Lord, him that offereth in the high places,.... A burnt offering there; that is, the priest, who shall be taken and carried captive, Jer 48:7; even everyone of them; so that there will not be one left to otter sacrifice:

and him that burneth incense to his gods: Chemosh, and others, the Moabites worshipped: this suggests that idolatry was one of the sins for which they were punished; and as all places and all sorts of persons should suffer in this calamity, so likewise idolatrous places, priests, and worshippers.

Jeremiah 48:36

Ver. 36. Therefore my heart shall sound for Moab like pipes,.... That are sounded on mournful occasions, as at funerals, and the like; see **Mt 9:23**. This the prophet said, as Kimchi observes, in the person of the people, the inhabitants of Moab; whose hearts would yearn and sound for the calamities of their country like the doleful sound of minstrels. So the Targum,

"therefore the Moabites shall sound in their hearts like a harp:"

and my heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kirheres; as for the country of Moab in general, so for this principal city, and the inhabitants of it, in particular; See Gill on "Isa 16:11";

because the riches [that] he hath gotten is perished; either Moab or Kirheres; the abundance of goods they had got together were now lost, falling into the hands of the enemy; and which was matter of lamentation. The Targum is,

"for the rest of their substance they had got were spoiled."

Some understand it of the residue of men that escaped the sword; these perished by famine, or other means; see Isa 15:7.

Jeremiah 48:37

Ver. 37. For every head [shall be] bald, and every beard clipped,.... Men, in times of mourning, used to pluck off the hairs of their head till they made them bald, and shaved their beards; which, as Kimchi says, were the glory of their faces; see Isa 15:2;

upon all the hands shall be cuttings: it was usual with the Heathens to make incisions in the several parts of their bodies, particularly in their hands and arms, with their nails, or with knives, in token of mourning; which are forbidden the Israelites, De 14:1;

and upon the loins sackcloth; this is a well known custom for mourners, to put off their clothes, and put on sackcloth; all these things are mentioned, to show how great was the mourning of Moab for the calamities of it.

Jeremiah 48:38

Ver. 38. [There shall be] lamentation generally,.... Or, "all of it [is] mourning" {n}; the whole country of Moab is in mourning; or all is full of mourning; all persons, places, and things, express nothing but mourning; go where you will, it is to be seen:

upon all the house tops of Moab, and in the streets thereof; the mourning, as it was general, it was public; it was seen by all, and everywhere; See Gill on "Isa 15:3";

for I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein [is] no pleasure, saith the Lord; as an earthen vessel, which the potter does not like, and which is useless and unprofitable to any, and which he takes and dashes into pieces; into a thousand shivers, as the word {o} here signifies, and can never be put together again; or as a filthy unclean vessel a man cannot bear in his sight: Moab is by the Lord called his wash pot,
Ps 60:8. The Moabites were vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction by their own this; and now the time of it was come.

{n} dpom hlk "totus luctus (est) vel omnia luctus (sunt)", Schmidt; "totus erit planctus", Junius & Tremellius; "per omnia erit planctus", Piscator. {o} ytrbv "totalis confractio praedicitur", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 48:39

Ver. 39. They shall howl, [saying], how is it broken down?.... Or, "how is it broken" or "thrown into consternation {p}? they howl"; that is, they howl out these words, or, while they are howling, say, how is Kirheres or Moab broken all to pieces; their strength, power, and glory; their cities, and their mighty men; and are in the utmost fright and confusion? Jarchi takes it to be an imperative, and paraphrases it,

"howl ye over her {q}, and say, how is it broken!"

Kimchi says it may be taken either as in the past or in the imperative;

how hath Moab turned the back with shame? not being able to look their enemies in the face, but obliged to flee before them;

so shall Moab be a derision and a dismaying to all them about him; a derision to some, to their enemies, as Israel had been to them, and so they are paid in their own coin; and a consternation to others, their friends, who would fear sharing the same fate, at the hands of the Chaldeans.

{p} htx Kya "quomodo consternata est", Piscator, Schmidt. {q} wlylyh "ululate", Munster, Piscator; "ejulate", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 48:40

Ver. 40. For thus saith the Lord, behold, he shall fly as an eagle,.... The enemy, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, with his army; who is compared to an eagle for his strength, swiftness, and greediness after the prey:

and shall spread his wings over Moab; as an eagle spreads its wings, which are very large, over the little birds it seizes upon as its prey; so the king of Babylon would bring a numerous army against Moab, and spread it over his country. The Targum is,

"behold, as all eagle which flies, so a king shall come up with his army, and encamp against Moab."

Jeremiah 48:41

Ver. 41. Kerioth is taken,.... The name of a city in Moab, as in Jer 48:24; so Jarchi, and others; but Kimchi and Abarbinel observe, that it may be taken for an appellative, and be rendered "the cities"; everyone of the cities of Moab, which were as easily and quickly taken as one city; these may intend the cities in the plain, as the strong holds those in high places:

and the strong holds are surprised; everyone of them; so that there was not a city, or a fortified place, but what came into the enemies' hands:

and the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs; even the hearts of the soldiers, and the most courageous generals, shall sink within them; and they be not only as timorous as women in common, but as low spirited as a woman when she finds her pains are coming upon her, and the time of her delivery is at hand.

Jeremiah 48:42

Ver. 42. And Moab shall be destroyed from [being] a people,.... For some time, not always; since the captivity of Moab is promised to be returned, Jer 48:47; or from being such a people as they had been, enjoying so much ease, wealth, power, and prosperity. Abarbinel takes it to be a comparative, and renders it, "more than a people"; that is, shall be destroyed more than any other people; but the former sense is best;

because he hath magnified [himself] against the Lord; the Targum is, against the people of the Lord; this is the cause of his destruction;
See Gill on "Jer 48:26".

Jeremiah 48:43

Ver. 43. Fear, and the pit, and the snare, [shall be] upon thee,.... A proverbial expression, showing, that if they escaped one danger, or sore judgment, they should fall into another and greater: the words seem to be taken from Isa 24:17;
See Gill on "Isa 24:17";

O inhabitant of Moab, saith the Lord; what in the prophecy of Isaiah is said of the inhabitants of the earth in general, is here applied to the inhabitants of Moab in particular.

Jeremiah 48:44

Ver. 44. He that fleeth from the fear,.... From terrible enemies he is afraid of, and dares not face them, but flees, in order to escape them:

shall fall into the pit; into some misfortune or another:

and he that getteth out of the pit shall be taken in the snare; laid by the enemy for him, and so shall fall into his hands. Sanctius very ingeniously observes that the allusion is to the hunting of deer, and such like creatures; when first a line of feathers of various colours is placed to frighten them; and if they get over that, then there is a pit dug for them, to catch them in; and if they get out of that, a snare is laid to take them; so that they rarely escape: and thus it would be with the Moabites, if they got rid of a first and second danger, a third would involve them; their destruction was certain, as follows; see Isa 24:18;

for I will bring upon it, [even] upon Moab, the year of their visitation, saith the Lord; in a way of wrath and punishment; for which there was a time fixed, and was now at hand, and would quickly take place, according to the will and word of the Lord, of which Moab might be assured; who is expressed by name, for the sake of explanation, and that it might be manifest who was intended.

Jeremiah 48:45

Ver. 45. They that fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon, because of the force,.... Heshbon was a strong city in the land of Moab, to which many of the Moabites betook themselves in this time of their calamity; thinking they should be sheltered, under the protection of it, from the fury of the Chaldean army; hither they fled, and here they stood, imagining they were safe, "because of the force"; because of the strength of the city of Heshbon, as Kimchi; or because of the force of their enemies, for fear of them, as Kimchi's father; or for want of strength, because they had no more strength to flee, and therefore stopped there, so Jarchi and Abarbinel: but the words should rather be rendered, "they that stood under the shadow of Heshbon"; thinking themselves safe, but now perceiving danger, "fled with strength" {r}; or as swiftly as they could, and with all the strength they had, that they might, if possible, escape from thence:

for a fire {s} (for so it should be rendered, and not "but a fire")

shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon; the same with Heshbon; so called from Sihon, an ancient king of it; the meaning is, that the Chaldeans should make themselves masters of Heshbon, this strong city, in which the Moabites trusted; and from thence should go out like a flame of fire, and spread themselves all over the country, and destroy it: what was formerly said of the Amorites, who took the land of Moab out of the hands of the king of it, and it became afterwards a proverbial expression, is here applied to the Chaldeans; see Nu 21:26; so the Targum, by a flame of fire, understands warriors:

and shall devour the corner of Moab; the whole country, even to the borders of it. The Targum is,

"and shall slay the princes of Moab;"

so great men are sometimes called corners; see Zec 10:4;

and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones; not of the common people that were tumultuous and riotous, but of the great ones, who swaggered and boasted, and made a noise about their strength and riches; but now should have their heads broke, and their pride and glory laid in the dust. So the Targum,

"and the nobles, the children of noise."

{r} Myon xwkm "ex virbus (soil. suis) erunt fugientes", Schmidt. {s} va yk "quia ignis", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 48:46

Ver. 46. Woe be unto thee, O Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth,.... The inhabitants of Moab, who worshipped the idol Chemosh; of which see Jer 48:7; and so called his people, as Israel were called the people of the Lord; now these, notwithstanding their idol, whom they worshipped, and in whom they trusted, should perish; and sad and deplorable would be their condition and circumstances:

for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives; this explains the woe that should come upon them, and in what sense they should perish; since their sons and daughters, who they hoped would have continued their name and nation, were taken, and would be carried captives into Babylon; see Nu 21:29.

Jeremiah 48:47

Ver. 47. Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter day, saith the Lord,.... Some think this is added, not so much for the sake of Moab as of the Jews, to assure them of their return from captivity, as had been promised them, since this would be the case even of Moab. It had a literal accomplishment under Cyrus, as is thought, when they were restored to their land; and certain it is they were a people in the times of Alexander, or King Jannaeus, who subdued them, as Josephus {t} relates: and it had a spiritual one in the times of the Messiah, in the conversion of some of these people, as very probably in the first times of the Gospel; so it will have in the latter day; see Isa 11:14. Kimchi interprets it of the days of the Messiah. For though that people are no more, yet there are a people which inhabit their country, who will, at least many of them, be converted, when the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in; and it is no unusual thing in Scripture for the present inhabitants of many countries to be called after those who formerly inhabited them, as the Turks are often called Assyrians;

thus far [is] the judgment of Moab; that is, either so long, unto the latter days, will the judgment of Moab continue. So the Targum,

"hitherto to execute vengeance of judgment on Moab;"

or rather, thus far is the prophecy concerning the destruction of Moab; this is the conclusion of it; here it ends, being a long one.

{t} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 13. sect 5.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 49:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 49

This chapter contains prophecies concerning the judgments of God on several nations and kingdoms, chiefly bordering on the land of Israel; on the Ammonites, Jer 49:1; on the Edomites, Jer 49:7; on the kingdom of Damascus, or the Syrians, Jer 49:23; on the Kedarenes or Arabians, Jer 49:28; and on the Elamites or Persians, Jer 49:34.

Ver. 1. Concerning the Ammonites, thus saith the Lord,.... Or, "to the Ammonites" {u}; or, "against" them {w}; it will bear to be rendered either way, and all is true; for what is said by the Lord, as follows, is concerning them, their sins, and their punishment, and is directed to them, and is a threatening against them:

hath Israel no sons? hath he no heir? certainly he has, and who ought to possess the land; this is to be understood not of the ten tribes, sometimes called Israel, as distinct from the other two; for these had been long ago carried captive, and left no heirs of their tribes; but of all Israel, including the tribes of

Judah and Benjamin; who, though their brethren of the ten tribes were carried captive, and left no children to inherit, yet, being next in blood, were the lawful heirs of their lands and possessions:

why [then] doth their king inherit Gad? that part of the land of Israel which belonged to the tribe of Gad; this, when the ten tribes were carried captive by the king of Assyria, and the Gadites among the rest, was seized on by the Ammonites, with their king at the head of them, lying near unto them; who might also pretend relation, as being the children of Lot, the brother's son of Abraham; or claim it, as having been their own formerly, and so were the lawful heirs of it, as they imagined; when it of right belonged to the children of Judah and Benjamin: or, "why doth Malcam inherit Gad?" {x} the same with Milcom or Molech, the abomination of the Ammonites, the idol they worshipped,
1Ki 11:5; so Jarchi interprets it. The Ammonites having got possession of the land, set up their idol in it, where temples were built for him, and altars erected, and sacrifices offered to him, so that he might be said to inherit it; and which must be very offensive to, and highly resented by, the God of Israel:

and his people dwelt in his cities: the Ammonites dwelt in the cities belonging to the tribe of Gad, as if they were their own; who are called the people of Milcom, or Molech, just as the Moabites are called the people of Chemosh, from the idol they worshipped, Jer 48:46.

{u} Nwme ynbl "ad filios Ammon", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus. {w} "Contra filios Ammonis", Schmidt; "de [vel] contra", Vatablus; "contra", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {x} dg ta Mklm vry ewdm "cur igitur haereditate possedit Melchom Gad?" V. L. Lutherus, Sanctius, Castalio.

Jeremiah 49:2

Ver. 2. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord,.... Or, "are coming" {y}; as they did, in a very little time after this prophecy:

that I will cause an alarm of war to be heard in Rabbah of the Ammonites; the metropolis of the Ammonites; it was their royal city in the times of David, 1Ki 11:1; called by Polybius {z} Rabbahamana; and by Ptolemy {a} Philadelphia, which name it had from Ptolemy Philadelphus, who rebuilt it; this the Lord threatens with the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war, or the noise of warriors, as the Targum; the Chaldean army under Nebuchadnezzar, who, about five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, subdued the Ammonites, as Josephus {b} relates:

and it shall be a desolate heap; be utterly destroyed; its walls broken down, and houses demolished, and made a heap of rubbish: and

her daughters shall be burnt with fire: Rabbah was the mother city, and the other cities of the Ammonites were her daughters, which are threatened to be destroyed with fire by the enemy; or it may mean the villages round about Rabbah, it being usual in Scripture for villages to be called the daughters of cities; see Eze 16:46; so the Targum here paraphrases it,

"the inhabitants of her villages shall be burnt with fire:"

then shall Israel be heirs unto them that were his heirs, saith the Lord: that is, shall inherit their land again, which the Ammonites pretended to be the lawful heirs of; yea, not only possess their own land, but the land of Ammon too: this was fulfilled not immediately upon the destruction of Ammon, but in part upon the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, when they repossessed their own country; and partly in the times of the Maccabees, when they subdued the Ammonites,

"Afterward he passed over to the children of Ammon, where he found a mighty power, and much people, with Timotheus their captain." (1 Maccabees 5:6)

and will more fully in the latter day, when the Jews shall be converted, and return to their own land, and the children of Ammon shall obey them, Isa 11:14; so Kimchi interprets it; and other Jewish writers understand it of the days of the Messiah, as Abarbinel observes.

{y} Myab "sunt venientes", Montanus, Schmidt. {z} Hist. l. 5. p. 414. {a} Geograph. l. 5. c. 15. {b} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 7.

Jeremiah 49:3

Ver. 3. Howl, O Heshbon,.... Which was a city of Moab, though it formerly belonged to the Amorites; see Jer 48:2; it was upon the border of Ammon, and near to Ai, now destroyed; and therefore is called upon to howl and lament, because its destruction also was near at hand, and might be expected; hence Kimchi gathers, that the Ammonites were destroyed before the Moabites: but some have thought that Heshbon was a double city, divided by a river, which ran through it; and that that city which was on one side of the river belonged to Moab, and that on the other side to Ammon:

for Ai is spoiled; not that which was near Jericho in the land of Canaan, but a city in the land of Ammon, thought to be the Gaia of Ptolemy; this seems to be the first city in the country of Ammon that Nebuchadnezzar would lay waste:

cry, ye daughters of Rabbah; the royal city before mentioned;
See Gill on "Jer 49:2"; either the inhabitants of it, particularly the women, especially the younger women, who would be in the utmost distress on hearing the enemy was so near them, and what had befallen Ai; or the villages about Rabbah, as Kimchi interprets it; that is, as the Targum,

"the inhabitants of the villages of Rabbah:"

gird ye with sackcloth; as a token of calamity and mourning for it, as was usual:

lament, and run to and fro by the hedges; which Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, understand of the enclosures or fences of villages, like those of gardens, fields, and folds, in distinction from walls of cities, and fortified places; but rather it signifies the hedges in the fields, whither, being drove from their habitations, they would seek unto for shelter, and run about among them for safety, lamenting their unhappy case:

for their king shall go into captivity; be taken and carried captive; either their principal governor; or rather Milcom their god, since it follows:

[and] his priests and his princes together; both such as offered sacrifices to him, and attended on and supported his worship: the same is said of Chemosh, the god of the Moabites, Jer 48:7.

Jeremiah 49:4

Ver. 4. Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys,.... Of which there were many in the country of Ammon, fruitful and well watered, which were situated by the

rivers of Arnon and Jabbok, the borders of this country, and in which was the plain of the vineyards; see
Jud 11:13; and indeed the whole country was a vale. For, as Josephus {c} says, the country both of the Moabites and Ammonites were in the valley of Syria, or Coelesyria; that is, hollow Syria, so called from its lying low, or in a valley; for this country lay between the mountains Libanus and Antilibanus, as Strabo {d} says, and brought forth a large increase; in this they gloried, in the produce of these valleys, in the grass, corn, and vines, that grew upon them, and the flocks that fed there; but now should have no occasion to glory, all being swept away by the enemy:

thy flowing valley, or, "thy valley flows" {e}; is overflowed with water, through abundance of rain, which destroyed the fruits of it, so Jarchi; or rather flowed with the blood of the slain, as Kimchi, Ben Melech, and Abarbinel; the enemy having entered it, and made so great a slaughter of men in it:

O backsliding daughter? the Targum is, O foolish kingdom; the whole kingdom of Ammon is meant, or the people of it; who, descending from righteous Lot, may be called backsliders; and, being also idolaters, have this character; for such revolt from the true God, to worship idols: it may be rendered, "refractory", "rebellious" {f}; as all such persons are:

that trusteth in her treasures, [saying], who shall come unto me? dwelling in valleys encompassed with mountains, and in fortified cities, and abounding in wealth and riches, whereby they were able to procure men and arms to defend themselves; thought they were safe from any enemy, and that none could come nigh them, and so dwelt at ease, and in great security.

{c} Ibid. (Antiqu.) l. 1. c. 11. sect. 5. {d} Geograph. l. 16. p. 519, 520. {e} Kqme bz "defluxit vallis tua", V. L. Schmidt; "fluxit", Pagninus, Montanus; "fluit", Cocceius. {f} hbbwvh tbh "O filia pervesa", Schmidt; "pervicax" vel "temeraria", Grotius; "rebellis", Pagninus, Calvin; "refractaria", Montanus.

Jeremiah 49:5

Ver. 5. Behold, I will bring a fear upon thee, saith the Lord God of hosts,.... The terrible army of the Chaldeans, which should strike them with a panic; who thought themselves so secure in their fortresses, trusting in their riches:

from all those that be about thee; meaning either from the Chaldeans, and the neighbouring nations, that should join and surround the Ammonites on all sides; or from all the borders of Ammon round about, where they should come; they would be a "magormissabib", "a fear all round", Jer 20:3:

and ye shall be driven out every man right forth; driven out of their houses, and cities, and villages, and steer their course right forward, and never look behind to see what were become of their families and their friends; everyone having enough to do to provide for his own safety:

and none shall gather up him that wandereth; that is straggling about, and knows not which way to take, and whither to flee for safety; all will be so intent on their own safety, that they will not concern themselves for others, to take them under their care; to take those that are on foot upon their horses or carriages, whom they overtake; or into their houses, as they pass by.

Jeremiah 49:6

Ver. 6. And afterwards I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the Lord. Perhaps by Cyrus; for, in the times of Judas Maccabeus, the children of Ammon were again a large and mighty people,

"Afterward he passed over to the children of Ammon, where he found a mighty power, and much people, with Timotheus their captain." (1 Maccabees 5:6)

Justin Martyr {f} says, that in his time there was a large multitude of Ammonites; but Origen {g}, who was later than he, observes, that not only the Idumeans, but the Ammonites and Moabites, were then called by the common name of Arabians; and these are now the present inhabitants of their country; and when these shall be converted in the latter day; see Isa 60:6; who may be called by the name of the ancient inhabitants; then will this be more fully accomplished: for some refer this to the days of the Messiah, and to the conversion of some of these Heathen people, either in the first times of the Gospel, or in the latter day; See Gill on "Jer 49:2". The Jews {h} understand this as fulfilled in Ammonite proselytes to their religion.

{f} Dialog. cum Tryphone Judaeo, p. 347. {g} Comment. in lib. Job, fol. 2. 1. A. {h} Misn. Yadaim, c. 4. sect. 4. T. B. Beracot, fol. 28. 1.

Jeremiah 49:7

Ver. 7. Concerning Edom, thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... Or, "unto Edom" {i}, thus saith the Lord; or, "against Edom" {k}; all which is true, as observed on Jer 49:1; meaning the Idumeans, the posterity of Esau, who was called Edom. Kimchi thinks this respects time yet future, and points at the destruction of Rome, and the Romans, who with the Jews frequently go by the name of Edom; and Abarbinel is of the same mind. And Cocceius is of opinion that the Jews are meant, and their destruction, with whom the Idumeans were incorporated before the coming of Christ, and had Herod, an Idumean, king over them; but it is best to understand the prophecy properly and literally of the Idumeans themselves;

[is] wisdom no more in Teman? a city in Edom, which had its name from Teman, a grandson of Esau, Ge 36:11; whose descendants were called Temanites; one of which was Eliphaz, a friend of Job's, **Job 2:11**; it was a principal city, famous for men of wisdom; such an one was the person just mentioned: perhaps the grand senate of the country, or the chief counsellors, dwelt here; where schemes were formed for the good of the country in times of war or peace; or schools were kept here for the instruction of persons in various arts and sciences; and which had continued to this time, but now would be no more. The Targum is,

"is there no more wisdom in the south?"

but Jarchi better interprets it of Edom, which lay south to the land of Israel;

is counsel perished from the prudent? it was so, even from those that were the most famous for being prudent and understanding men; they were now at their wits' end, and knew not what course to take, nor what advice to give, in this their time of distress. The Targum renders it "from the children"; the sons of the Temanites, strangely degenerated from their ancestors;

is their wisdom vanished? or corrupted, as the Targum; or does it stink? according to the Rabbinical sense of the word; or infatuated, and become good for nothing? verily it was, it was useless, disregarded and despised.

{i} Mwdal "ad Idumeam", V. L. "ad Edom", Pagninus, Montanus. {k} "Contra", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 49:8

Ver. 8. Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan,.... Another city in Idumea; though some take it to be a country in Arabia, bordering on Edom, and subdued by the Edomites: the inhabitants of this place are advised to "flee" for their lives, since the enemy was just upon them; and "turn back", lest they should fall into his hands; and hide themselves in some deep caverns of the earth, in holes, and dens of rocks, and such like places. It is a prophecy that they should flee from and turn their backs on their enemies, and betake themselves to some very secret places for safety;

for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him; which was determined concerning him, threatened to him, and was his just desert; even the utter destruction of the whole land:

the time of his visitation; the time fixed to visit him in a way of wrath and punishment being come,

Jeremiah 49:9

Ver. 9. If grape gatherers come to thee, would they not leave [some] gleaning grapes?.... If gatherers of grapes, at the time of the vintage, should come into thy fields to gather the grapes, being ripe, would not they leave some for the poor to glean? certainly they would, and not take every cluster. The Targum renders it,

"if thy spoilers, as grape gatherers, should come to thee," &c.

if thieves by night, they will destroy till they have enough; who break into houses by night, these will eat and drink as much as is sufficient, and carry off what serves their turn; but they seldom take away everything they find in a house; they leave some things behind them; but it is suggested that the Chaldeans should take away all from the Edomites, and leave them nothing; see **Ob 1:5**.

Jeremiah 49:10

Ver. 10. But I have made Esau bare,.... By the hand of the Chaldeans; stripped him of everything that is valuable; of his cities, castles, villages, people, wealth, and treasure:

I have uncovered his secret places; where either his substance was hid, or his people; these were made known to their enemies, who seized on both:

and he shall not be able to hide himself; even in his deep places, in the caves and dens of the earth, but his enemy shall find him out:

his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours; his children, as the Targum; and his brethren, the Ammonites and Moabites; and his neighbours, the Philistines; or as many as were with him, and belonged unto him:

and he [is] not: his kingdom is not; he is no more a people and nation, but all destroyed by the sword, or carried captive; or there should be none left of his brethren, and neighbours, and friends, to say to him what follows: "leave thy fatherless children", &c. So Kimchi and Ben Melech say this phrase is in connection with the Jer 49:11.

Jeremiah 49:11

Ver. 11. Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve [them] alive,.... Leave them with me; commit them to my care; I will provide for them; they shall have food and raiment, and want nothing to make them comfortable: to have such a friend or friends, promising such things to a man, when he is obliged to flee and leave his family, or is at the point of death, serves to make him easy; but there would be none left of the Edomites to say such kind words, or do such a friendly part. Some think they are the words of God, either spoken ironically or seriously; suggesting that they should have no children or widows to leave, all should be destroyed; or, if any left, they could not expect that he would take care of them, whom they had so provoked; or that such would be their miserable case, unless he had mercy on them, and took care of their fatherless children, there would be none to do it. Others think it respects a remnant of the Edomites that should be preserved, and be converted to Christ in Gospel times. The Targum takes them to be an address to the people of Israel, paraphrasing them thus:

"you, O house of Israel, your orphans shall not be left, I will sustain them, and your widows shall trust in my word:"

which last clause we render,

let your widows trust in me; which, could they be considered as the words of God, agree well with him, who is the Father of the fatherless, and Judge of the widows, Ps 68:5; and a great encouragement to persons, in such circumstances, to place their confidence in him; and it must be right so to do.

Jeremiah 49:12

Ver. 12. For thus saith the Lord,.... This that follows shows that what goes before is not said by way of promise and comfort, but threatening:

behold, they whose judgment [was] not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunken; meaning either some of the other nations, who had not dealt so ill with the Jews as the Edomites had, at least their sins were not so aggravated as theirs were; they being akin to the Jews, and having used them in a very injurious and scornful manner; or the Jews themselves, who, in comparison of them, had not deserved divine vengeance, signified by a cup, a portion of wrath, and punishment righteously allotted them, and which they had partook of, being carried captive into Babylon: for this is not to be understood strictly of proper justice, but in a comparative sense; for otherwise it was but just and right that they should be treated in the manner they were; only they were not so guilty as these were;

and [art] thou he [that] shalt altogether go unpunished? if lesser sinners are not let go free, how should it be thought that greater ones should? and especially if judgment had begun at God's own people, the wicked Edomite, could not expect to escape;

thou shalt not go unpunished, but thou shalt surely drink [of it]; the cup of wrath and vengeance; or have the just punishment inflicted on them threatened them.

Jeremiah 49:13

Ver. 13. For I have sworn by myself, saith the Lord,.... This he did, because he could swear by no greater, and to show the certain and infallible accomplishment of the event, and the importance of it; and which was so extraordinary, that it was scarce thought credible, and therefore an oath is used to confirm it:

that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; not Rome, as Abarbinel; nor Jerusalem, as Cocceius; nor Bozrah of Moab, Jer 48:24; but Bozrah of Idumea, Isa 63:1; the royal city of Edom, as Kimchi; this should be utterly destroyed, and be spoken of contemptibly, and used proverbially, to express a curse; the Lord curse thee as Bozrah is cursed. It may be put for the whole country of Edom, of which it was the metropolis, since it follows,

and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes; either those in the neighbourhood of it, and belonging to it, it being the capital or mother city; or all the cities in the land of Edom; so general should be the desolation.

Jeremiah 49:14

Ver. 14. I have heard a rumour from the Lord,.... "A hearing" {l}; or a report concerning the destruction of Edom, made to him in a dream or vision, by the spirit of God, as a spirit of prophecy:

and an ambassador is sent to the Heathen; or a messenger; Jeremiah the prophet, as some; or an angel, as Kimchi suggests, sent to gather the nations to war against Bozrah; or a divine impulse, as others, with which the Chaldeans were impressed; which was as a voice to them,

[saying], gather ye together, and come against her, and rise up to the battle; get your forces together, and come against Bozrah or Edom, to invade and subdue it; attack it in a military way, not doubting of victory; see **Ob 1:1**.

{l} hewmv "auditum audivi", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 49:15

Ver. 15. For, lo, I will make thee small among the Heathen,.... Or, "I have given thee", or "made thee" {m}; as if it respected what Edom was at first, a people few in number, and their country not large, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi, and after them Abarbinel: but it rather intends what Edom should be {n}; and which was the reason of gathering the Chaldeans against them, to reduce their number, weaken their strength, and destroy their substance, and so make them a small, feeble, and contemptible people; as follows:

[and] despised among men: for the fewness of their men, the desolation of their country, the consumption of their wealth and riches, their poverty and meanness; see **Ob 1:2**.

{m} Kyttn "posui", Munster; "reddidi", Piscator; "dedi", V. L. Cocceius, Schmidt. {n} Dabo, Pagninus, Montanus. So Ben Melech.

Jeremiah 49:16

Ver. 16. Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, [and] the pride of thine heart,.... Some render it, "thine idol" {o}; see 1Ki 15:13; which, being terrible to them, they thought it might be so to others, and protect them. In the place referred to the word "miphlezeth" is used, and comes from the same root with this, which signifies to be terrible and formidable, and cause to tremble, as the idols of the Gentiles were to their worshippers, and others. The Vulgate Latin version of the above place interprets it of Priapus, which was an idol set up in gardens to frighten birds and thieves from coming thither {p}. So Kimchi observes, that some interpret it here of idolatrous worship or superstition; but it is to be understood either of the roughness and terribleness of their country, abounding with rocks and mountains, which made it inaccessible; or rather of that terror which they struck into their neighbouring nations, by their wealth and riches, their power and strength, their courage and valour, and skill in military affairs; and having such strong cities, fortresses, and fastnesses, natural and artificial, of which they were proud; and, on account of all which, fancied that none would dare to invade them; or, if they did, their attempts would be fruitless; and this deceived them, making them careless and secure:

O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock; the land of Idumea being very hilly and rocky. Jerom {q} says, who lived near it, that all the southern part of Idumea, from Eleutheropolis to Petra and Hailah, had their habitations in caves cut out of rocks:

that holdest the height of the hill; that dwelt on the tops of hills and mountains, and in towers and fortified places built upon them, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; who think respect is had particularly to Mount Seir. The Targum is, "for thou art like to an eagle that dwells in the clefts of the rock, whose high habitation is inn strong place;"

hence it follows:

though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord; signifying, though they might think themselves as safe and as much out of the reach of men as an eagle's nest, and were as high and as secure in their own imaginations; yet they should be come at by their enemies, be fetched out of their strong holds, and reduced to the lowest and most miserable state and condition; of which they might be assured, since the Lord had spoken it, who would do it by the hand of the Chaldeans. The allusion to the eagle is very pertinent to illustrate the self-exaltation and self-security of the Edomites; the eagle being a bird that flies higher than any other, as Kimchi on the place observes, even up to the clouds, and out of sight; hence Homer {r} calls it the high flying eagle; and which builds its nest in high places, in the tops of rocks; so Aristotle {s} says, they make their nests, not in plains, but in high places, especially in cragged rocks; and Pliny {t} relates that they build their nests in rocks; and he also says {u} of the vultures, who seem to be meant by the eagles in Mt 24:28; that they build their nests in the highest rocks, and which no man can reach.

{o} Ktulpt "simulacrum tuum", Pagninus, Vatablus; "idolum", Grotius. So R. Sol. Urbin Ohel Moed, fol. 12. 1. {p} "--------Deus, inde ego furum, aviumque Maxima formido." Horat. Sermon. l. 1. Satyr. 8. ver. 3, 4. "Et custos furum atque avium cum falce saligna Hellespontiaci servet tutela Priapi". Virgil. Georgic. l. 4. ver. 110, 111. {q} Comment. in Obad. fol. 52. C. {r} Iliad. 22. v. 308. {s} De Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 32. {t} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 3. {u} Ibid. c. 6.

Jeremiah 49:17

Ver. 17. Also Edom shall be a desolation,.... Not only Bozrah, its principal city, before spoken of, but the whole country of Idumea should be laid waste; its fortified cities destroyed; its riches plundered; and its inhabitants slain with the sword; or carried captive:

everyone that goeth by it shall be astonished; at the desolation made, so suddenly and so universally:

and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof; rejoice at them; clap their hands, and shake their heads, as the Targum; and hiss with their tongues, insulting and deriding them.

Jeremiah 49:18

Ver. 18. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah,.... Which was so sudden and general, that nothing was left, or any spared; so should it be with Edom:

and the neighbour [cities] thereof, saith the Lord; the cities that were in the plain, Admah and Zeboim:

no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it; that is, of the race of Edom; no Idumean should inhabit it; otherwise those who conquered it should, and doubtless did. There seems to be some allusion to the Dead sea, these cities became, to which Edom is compared, and so were quite uninhabitable.

Jeremiah 49:19

Ver. 19. Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan,.... The Targum rightly interprets it of a king and his army, paraphrasing the words thus,

"behold, a king with his army shall come up against them, as a lion comes up from the height of Jordan;"

not the king of Edom that should come up against Judea, or to defend himself against those that invaded him; but Nebuchadnezzar and his army that should come up against the Edomites from the land of Judea, where Jordan was, having first subdued that; or should come with that strength, fury, and fierceness, as a lion when forced out of its covert near the river Jordan, by the overflowing of its banks, and obliged to betake himself to higher grounds; who, being enraged, roars and tears in pieces all in his way. Monsieur Thevenot {w} says, that Jordan is beset on both sides with little, thick, and pleasant woods; and Mr. Maundrell {x} observes, that

"there is a first and outermost bank to the river, about a furlong, upon a level, before you come to the second bank, to which it may be supposed the river did, and still does, overflow; and the second bank is so beset with bushes and trees, such as tamarisk, willows, and oleanders, &c. that you can see no water till you have made your way through them. In this thicket anciently (and the same is reported of at this day) several sorts of wild beasts were wont to harbour themselves, whose being washed out of the covert, by the over flowings of the river, gave occasion to the allusion,
Jer 49:19."

So Jerom {y} speaks of lions, in his time, taking up their abode by the river Jordan, near which were desert places, reeds, and sedges:

against the habitation of the strong; the land of Edom, a country well fortified, in which mighty men dwelt; particularly Mount Seir, where their king was, and which was "the fold of the mighty"; either of the mighty shepherd, as it may be rendered {z}; or of the strong place {a}; but what is this to a lion?

but I will make him suddenly run away from her; that is, either the mighty shepherd, the king of Edom, from his fold, upon the approach of the lion, the king of Babylon; or else, as it may be rendered, "and I will cause him to run upon it {b} suddenly": that is, cause the king of Babylon to come speedily into the land of Edom, and seize upon it, overrun it, prevail over it, and be master of it, as Jarchi interprets it:

and who [is] a chosen [man that] I may appoint over her? a choice person in Nebuchadnezzar's army, fit to be made a deputy governor over the land of Edom:

for who [is] like me? for wisdom and power; able to do whatever I please, and to furnish those with proper abilities to perform and accomplish whatever I give them in charge and commission to do:

and who will appoint me the time? set a time to dispute the matter with me, or engage in war against me?

and who [is] that shepherd that will stand before me? or king, as the Targum and Ben Melech; any king, prince, or potentate, who, both in Scripture and in other writings, are often called shepherds; the king of Edom is particularly pointed at, whose habitation or fold is before observed: alas! what could such a shepherd do? or how could he stand before the almighty God, or any lion he should send?

{w} Travels, par. 1. B. 2. ch. 41. p. 193. {x} Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 82. Ed. 7. {y} Comment. in Zech. xi. 3. {z} Ntya hwn la "ad caulam fortis", i.e. "pastoris validi et fortis", Schmidt. {a} "Sub. loci robusti", Vatablus; so Ben Melech. {b} hylem wnuyra heygra yk "nam momento currere faciam cum (nempe Nebuchadanosarem) supra eam", De Dieu, Gataker.

Jeremiah 49:20

Ver. 20. Therefore hear the counsel of the Lord that he hath taken against Edom,.... The decree of the Lord; the purpose and resolution he had taken up in his heart against the Idumeans, which was wisely formed, and upon just and good grounds:

and his purposes that he hath purposed against the inhabitants of Teman; a principal place in Edom, the inhabitants of which were famous for their wisdom, Jer 49:7; and therefore are here particularly mentioned; there being no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord, so as to frustrate his purposes and designs, which have always their effect, Pr 19:21;

surely the least of the flock shall draw them out; not the Persians, the least of the sons of Japheth, as some Rabbins in Jarchi {c}; nor the Israelites, as Kimchi, particularly Rachel's sons, or the posterity of Joseph and Benjamin; but the common soldiers, the weakest and most feeble in the Chaldean army: as princes are compared to shepherds, their people are like flocks; and now the least of these in the king of Babylon's army should be a match for the strongest of the Edomites; and should draw them out of their habitations, as dogs or wolves drag sheep out of the folds, and draw about dead carcasses, and devour them. The words are in the form of an oath, "if the least of the flock do not draw them out"; that is, as I live they shall; or I swear by myself they shall certainly do it; so the Targum,

"if they do not draw and kill the mighty of the people:"

surely he shall make their habitations desolate with them; or, "their folds"; the sheep shall be destroyed, and their folds shall be demolished; that is, the inhabitants of Edom shall be slain with the sword, and their cities, towns, and villages, shall be laid waste.

{c} Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 10. 1.

Jeremiah 49:21

Ver. 21. The earth is moved at the noise of their fall,.... Of the Edomites; whose fall was from the height of greatness and glory to a very low condition indeed; and as things, the higher they are from whence they fall, the greater noise they make, so it was with the Edomites; perhaps there may be some allusion to the falling of rocks and hills, with which Edom, abounded: this may respect either the noise and shout of the conquerors, when they fell; or the cry of the Edomites, when taken and destroyed; or the report of their destruction, when it came into the world; which struck the inhabitants of the whole earth with terror and amazement, so that they trembled at it; an hyperbolical expression, as Kimchi observes:

at the cry, the noise thereof was heard in the Red sea, or, "sea of Suph", or "weeds"; where weeds and rushes grew in great abundance, from whence it had its name. This is the Arabian gulf, which washed the shores of Edom, and was called the Red sea from thence, Edom signifying red. The meaning is, that the cry of the slain, or of the conquerors at the slaughter of them, should be heard to the borders of the land, to the sea shore, and by those in ships there; who should carry the report of it to each of the parts of the world.

Jeremiah 49:22

Ver. 22. Behold, he shall come up, and fly as the eagle,.... The Targum is,

"behold, as an eagle comes up and flies, so shall a king come up with his army;"

the king of Babylon with his army, compared to an eagle for his swiftness and voraciousness, as before to a lion for his strength and fierceness:

and spread his wings over Bozrah; besiege that city, invest it, and seize upon it; very fitly are the wings of an army expressed by the wings of this bird, denoting both their extent and force; the same is said concerning Moab, Jer

48:40;

and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Moab be as the heart of a woman in her pangs; when just ready to be delivered; not only weak and timorous, but full of anguish, and: quite dispirited;
See Gill on "Jer 48:41".

Jeremiah 49:23

Ver. 23. Concerning Damascus,.... Or, "unto Damascus" {d}; or, "against Damascus" {e}; that is, "thus saith the Lord"; which is to be repeated from the foregoing instances, Jer 49:1. This is to be understood, not only of the city of Damascus, but of the whole kingdom of Syria, of which Damascus was the metropolis; see **Isa 7:8**;

Hamath is confounded, and Arpad; two cities in Syria; the first is generally thought to be Antioch of Syria, sometimes called Epiphania; and the other the same with Arvad, inhabited by the Arvadim, or Aradians; see 2Ki 18:34; these, that is, the inhabitants of them, as the Targum, were covered with shame, thrown into the utmost confusion and consternation:

for they have heard evil tidings; of the Chaldean army invading the land of Syria, and of their coming against them; and perhaps of their taking of Damascus their capital city; all which must be bad news unto them, and give them great uneasiness:

they are fainthearted; or "melted" {f}; their hearts melted like wax, and flowed like water; they had no heart nor spirit left in them, through fear of the enemy;

[there is] sorrow in the sea, it cannot be quiet: the Targum is,

"fear in the sea, carefulness hath taken hold on them, behold, as those that go down to the sea to rest, and cannot rest;"

or, as other copies, cannot flee. So Jarchi, and Kimchi interpret it, as if the note of similitude was wanting, and the sense this, that the inhabitants of the above places were either like the troubled sea itself, which cannot rest; or like persons in a storm at sea, who are in the utmost uneasiness and distress: or else it designs such that belonged to the kingdom of Syria, that dwelt in the isles of the sea; who were in great fright when they heard of the invasion of their country by the Chaldeans, particularly the Antaradians.

{d} qvmdl "ad Damascum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus. {e} "Contra Damascum", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt. {f} wgmn "liquefacti sunt", Vatablus, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 49:24

Ver. 24. Damascus is waxed feeble,.... Or, "is become remiss" {g}; her hands hang down, not being able through fear and fright to lift them up against the enemy; that is, the inhabitants of Damascus, as the Targum:

[and] turneth herself to flee; instead of going out to meet the enemy, the inhabitants of this city meditated a flight, and turned their backs upon him in order to flee from him, and escape falling into his hands:

and fear hath seized on [her]: or, "she seized on fear" {h}; instead of seizing on arms, and laying hold on them to defend herself with, she seized on that; or however that seized on her, and made her quite unfit to stand up in her own defence:

anguish and sorrows have taken her as a woman in travail;
See Gill on "Jer 49:22"; A phrase often used to express the sudden and inevitable destruction of a people, and their distress and inability to help themselves.

{g} htpr "remissa erit", Junius & Tremellius; "remissa est", Cocceius, Piscator; "remissa facta est", Schmidt. {h} hqyzxh jjrw "et apprehendit tremorem", Munster; "et horrorem apprehendit", Schmidt; "et horrorem febrilem prehendet", Junius & Tremellius; "apprehendet", Piscator.

Jeremiah 49:25

Ver. 25. How is the city of praise not left,.... The city of Damascus, famous for its antiquity, its wealth and riches, strength and power; and with the Heathens for its devotion and superstition. So Julian {i} the emperor calls it,

"the truly city of Jupiter; the eye of the whole east; Damascus the holy and the greatest;"

but more especially for its delightful and pleasant situation. Benjamin Tudelensis {k} says it was, in his time,

"a very great and beautiful city, surrounded with a wall; and the country about it was full of gardens and orchards, fifteen miles' walk on every side of it; and no city in the whole world appeared with such plenty of fruit as that did."

Monsieur Thevenot {l} relates, that

"the city of Damascus is in the middle of a spacious plain, surrounded with hills, but all distant from the town, almost out of sight; those on the north side are the nearest, on which side it hath a great many gardens, full of trees, and most fruit trees; these gardens take up the ground from the hill of the forty martyrs, even to the town; so that at a distance it seems to be a forest."

Mr. Maundrell {m} tells us, that the Turks relate this story of their prophet Mahomet, that,

"coming near Damascus, he took his station at a high precipice, in order to view it; and considering the ravishing beauty and delightfulness of it, he would not tempt his frailty by entering into it; but instantly departed with this reflection on it, that there was but one paradise designed for men, and for his part he was resolved not take his in this world;"

and, adds the same traveller,

"you have indeed from the precipice the most perfect prospect of Damascus; and certainly no place in the world can promise the beholder at a distance greater voluptuousness. It is situate in an even plain of so great extent, that you can but just discern the mountains that compass it on the farther side. In its length it extends near two miles, and is encompassed with gardens, extending no less, according to common estimation, than thirty miles round; which makes it look like a noble city in a vast wood."

Strabo {n} says of this city, that it is worthy of praise, and almost the most famous city of all near Persia. The sense of it either is, how is it that so famous a city was not spared by the enemy, that they did not leave it untouched, but destroyed and demolished it? or how is it that it was not fortified by the inhabitants of it; that a parapet was not built about the wall all around, to strengthen it, and keep out the enemy? This sense, as well as the former, is mentioned both by Jarchi and Kimchi, who direct to **Na 3:8**, for the confirmation of this sense of the word:

the city of my joy! these are either the words of the prophet, who had a great regard to the city of Damascus as ancient, well built, and opulent city, and lamented its destruction; or rather of the king of it, as Jarchi; or of the inhabitants of it, who said this to one another as they fled; so Kimchi: but there is no necessity of rendering it "my joy", only "joy"; for the "jod" affixed may not be considered as a pronoun, but as a paragogic, or a Syriac termination, which is common; though some interpret this of the city of Jerusalem, and as spoken by the Lord, or by the prophet in his name, upbraiding the Syrians for their hatred to it, and disturbance they gave it; and which is now mentioned as one cause and reason of their ruin; see **Am 1:3**.

{i} Opera, par. 2. Ep. 24. p. 145. {k} Itinerarium, p. 54, 55. {l} Travels, par. 2. B. 1. p. I9. {m} Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 121, 122. Ed. 7. {n} Geograph. l. 16. p. 520.

Jeremiah 49:26

Ver. 26. Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets,.... Or "verily" {o} so Jarchi interprets it as an oath; Jehovah swearing that so it should be; that her young men, her choice ones such who were the flower of the city, and on whom its future prosperity depended; these should fall by the sword of the Chaldeans in the streets of the city, when having entered, and taken it:

and all the men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the Lord of hosts; soldiers and officers, men of strength and valour in whom the inhabitants of Damascus trusted for their defence; these should be cut oil by the sword of the enemy at the time of the siege, and taking of it.

{o} Nkl "certe", Gataker.

Jeremiah 49:27

Ver. 27. And I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus,.... Signifying either that, a breach being made there the destruction of the city should begin, and be carried on until it was completed; or it may be understood literally, that first the houses built upon the wall should beset on fire by the Chaldeans, through the divine permission, and according to his order and wilt, and therefore ascribed to him, which should proceed further. Compare with this 2Co 11:32;

and it shall consume the palaces of Benhadad; not only the houses of the common people in general, but particularly the palaces of their king and his nobles; Benhadad being a name of one of the kings of Syria, 1Ki 20:1; and which, according to Kimchi, was the name of the king of Syria at the time of the destruction of Damascus by Nebuchadnezzar. Some think that this was a common name of the kings of Syria, as Pharaoh and Ptolemy with the Egyptians. It signifies the son of Hadad, which was the name of their idol; from whence their kings might be called, as was usual with the Assyrians and Babylonians.

Jeremiah 49:28

Ver. 28. Concerning Kedar, and concerning the kingdoms of Hazor,.... A new prophecy concerning the Arabians; for Kedar was a son of Ishmael, Ge 25:13; whose posterity inhabited Arabia Petraea. Hazor was Petra itself, the metropolis of the country, whose king had several petty kings and kingdoms under him; for this is not the Hazor in the land of Canaan destroyed by Joshua, which had been the head of several kingdoms; and where Jabin king of Canaan afterwards reigned, Jos 11:10 **Jud 4:2**; though some think that some of those Hazorites in Joshua's time made their escape, and fled into these parts, and built a city, and called it after the name of the former:

which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon shall smite, thus saith the Lord: that is, "thus saith the Lord concerning", or "unto", or "against Kedar" {p}, &c. as in Jer 49:1; which the king of Babylon "hath smitten"; the past for the future, common in prophetic language: or, "is about to smite" {q}; would do it in a very little time; for the phrase, "thus saith the Lord", is not to be connected with what follows after, but with what goes before; though indeed the next words are the words of the Lord to the Chaldeans:

arise ye, go up to Kedar; in a hostile manner; invade that country, and possess it:

and spoil the men of the east; the Arabians, which lay east of Judea and Babylon: or, "the children of Kedem" {r}; the same with Kedemah, another son of Ishmael, Ge 25:15; whose posterity dwelt still more to the east; so Kimchi; though the Targum renders it "the children of the east".

{p} rdql "ad Cedar", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "contra Kedarem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "contra Arabian", Schmidt. {q} hkx "percussurus est", Junius & Tremellius, Grotius. {r} Mdq ynb "filios Chedem", Montanus, Vatablus.

Jeremiah 49:29

Ver. 29. Their tents and their flocks shall they take away,.... The Kedarenes were a people whose business chiefly lay in feeding flocks, and of which their substance consisted; and they mostly dwelt in tents, which they removed from place to place, for the sake of pasturage for their flocks; hence they were sometimes called Scenites, and sometimes Nomades; see Ps 120:5; but now both their habitations, such as they were, and their flocks too, wherein lay their riches, would be taken away from them:

they shall take to themselves their curtains, and all their vessels,
and their camels; their curtains made of skins of beasts, of which their tents were made; or with which they were covered to protect them from the inclemencies of the weather; and all the furniture of them, their household goods; their vessels for domestic use; and utensils for their calling and employment; and their camels, which were much used in those countries for travelling from place to place; on which they put their tents, curtains, and vessels, when they removed from one pasturage to another; these they, not the Kedarenes, should take to themselves, and flee with them; but the Chaldeans should seize on them for themselves, as their booty and prey:

and they shall cry unto them, fear [is] on every side; or, "magormissabib", "a fear all round", Jer 20:3; this is the word the Chaldeans shall use, and with it frighten the Kedarenes out of their tents; or by the sound of their trumpets, the alarm of war, and by their shouts and cries, and the clashing of their arms, they shall put them in fear all around: or else the Kedarenes and Hazorites, when they shall see the Chaldean army approaching, shall say one to another, fear is on all sides of us; nothing but ruin and destruction attend us from every quarter.

Jeremiah 49:30

Ver. 30. Flee, get you far off, dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Hazor, saith the Lord,.... The same is said to the inhabitants of Dedan, See Gill on "Jer 49:8";

for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath taken counsel against you, and hath conceived a purpose against you: had determined upon their destruction, and had consulted and contrived ways and means to effect it; and therefore, since so powerful an enemy had such a design upon them, it was high time to flee, and get as far off as they could, and hide themselves in the caverns of the earth.

Jeremiah 49:31

Ver. 31. Arise, get you up unto the wealthy nation,.... Or, "to the nation [that is] at ease" {s}; the people that live quietly and in peace; have no wars with their neighbours, nor any among themselves; which seems to be the better sense of the word, for these Kedarenes were not a very wealthy people: these words do not express the counsel and purpose of Nebuchadnezzar; or are an address of his to his army, commanding them to arise, and invade the country of Arabia; for they are the words of the Lord, and are addressed to him and his army to go up in a hostile manner against the Kedarenes, here described:

that dwelleth without care, saith the Lord; not without the care of their flocks, or without providing things necessary for themselves and families; they were not an indolent people, that lived an idle and inactive life; but they dwelt "confidently", or "securely" {t}, as it may be rendered; they had no thought nor care to defend themselves from an enemy; they had no fear of any, imagining that no one would think it worth while to give themselves any trouble to invade them; their meanness they supposed was a protection to them:

which have neither gates nor bars; to their cities, or to their houses, being in no fear of an enemy to come and plunder them:

[which] dwell alone; being in no alliance with other nations; nor dwelling together in cities, towns, and villages, at least the common people; the greater part of them being scattered up and down, a few in one place, and a few in another; they dwelt for the convenience of feeding their flocks.

{s} wylv ywg la "ad gentem quietam", V. L. Munster, Schmidt; "tranquillam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "pacificam", so some in Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus. {t} hjbl bvwy "habitantem confidenter", V. L. Pagninus; "in fiducia", Montanus; "in fiducia magna", Vatablus; "secure", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 49:32

Ver. 32. And their camels shall be a booty,.... To the Chaldean army, as before, Jer 49:29;

and the multitude of their cattle a spoil; to the same; the Kedarenes had large flocks of sheep, as well as a multitude of camels, on which they lived, and in which their substance lay; see Isa 60:6;

and I will scatter into all winds them [that are] in the utmost corners; them that were gone with their flocks to feed them in the uttermost parts of their land; who, on hearing of the Chaldean army being entered and ravaging their country, would leave their flocks, and flee and be dispersed in the several parts of the world: or, "them that are cut in the corner" {u}; in the corners of their beard; that have their hair cut all around, as the Arabians had; See Gill on "Jer 9:26";

and I will bring their calamity from all sides thereof, saith the Lord; suggesting that Nebuchadnezzar should surround them with his army, and so dispose of his troops, by placing them some in one part, and some in another, that they should not be able to escape on any side. It denotes their utter destruction and desolation.

{u} hap yuwuq "attonsi comam", V. L. "praecisi lateribus", Piscator.

Jeremiah 49:33

Ver. 33. And Hazor shall be a dwelling for dragons, [and] a desolation for ever,.... The city of Hazor, as well as the kingdoms of it; the royal city, where their king and principal men dwelt; even this should be no more inhabited by men, but by dragons, and the wild beasts of the field, and so remain for ever, at least a long time; see Isa 13:20;

there shall no man abide there, nor any son of man dwell in it: signifying the utter desolation of it; See Gill on "Jer 49:18".

Jeremiah 49:34

Ver. 34. The word of the Lord that came unto Jeremiah the prophet against Elam,.... The Persians, as it is commonly understood, who descended from Elam the son of Shem, Ge 10:22; according to Josephus {w}; but rather the country of Elymais is here designed; which, though in the times of Cyrus, was added to, and made a part of, the Persian empire, yet was a country distinct both from Persia and Media; and as such is spoken of by Pliny {x}; though as near unto Persia, and bordering on Media; according to Stephanus {y}, the Elymaites were a country that belonged to the Assyrians; and so Strabo {a} places the Elymaeans in Aturia or Assyria; and it seems very manifest that Elam served under Sennacherib, king of Assyria, when he besieged Jerusalem, Isa 22:6; and afterwards fell into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and became subject to him, which is the calamity here threatened them; for certain it is, that, in Belshazzar's time, Shushan in Elam was the royal seat of the kings of Babylon, **Da 8:2**; now this prophecy against Elam was delivered out

in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah; perhaps in the first year of his reign, ten or eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem; how long before it had its accomplishment is not certain:

saying: as follows:

{w} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4. {x} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 25, 26, 27. {y} De urbibus apud Cocceium in loc. {a} Geograph. l. 16. in principio, 507.

Jeremiah 49:35

Ver. 35. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I will break the bow of Elam,.... The inhabitants of this country were famous for their skill in archery; See Gill on "Isa 22:6"; this the Lord threatens to break, so that it, should be useless, and of no more service to them to defend themselves, or annoy others. Their strength, as the Targum; that in which their great strength and security lay; in which they put their trust and confidence, as follows:

the chief of their might; which may be interpreted, by way of apposition, of their bow, the chief instrument of their might and power; or may design their mighty men, the archers themselves, who should be destroyed, even Elam itself, and all the inhabitants of it; especially their warriors, who should be slain or carried captive.

Jeremiah 49:36

Ver. 36. And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven,.... The Targum interprets it the four kingdoms; see **Da 7:2**. Some think this had its accomplishment in the times of Alexander; or else after his death, in the times of his four successors; but rather in the times of Nebuchadnezzar, who should bring with him, in his army, people that dwelt in the several parts of the world, comparable to the winds for their swiftness and strength; whose blast would be so great as to drive the Elamites to every part of the world, as every light thing is by the wind:

and will scatter them towards all those winds; those four winds, east, west, north, and south:

and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come; those that are driven out of it, forced to flee from it, or are taken captive, should come into the several nations of the world; so that there would not be any in which an Elamite was not.

Jeremiah 49:37

Ver. 37. For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies,.... Frightened; thrown into the utmost consternation, so that they shall have no heart nor spirit to go out against them, and meet them, and defend themselves; but make all haste imaginable to flee from them, such a panic would seize them:

and before them that seek their life; a further description of their enemies; they being such, who, not content with their substance, sought to take away their lives; nothing less would satisfy them, being: cruel and blood thirsty ones:

and I will bring evil upon them, [even] my fierce anger, saith the Lord; and a greater evil than that cannot be; signifying that the destruction that should be made among them would be the effect of the wrath of God upon them for their sins:

and I will send the sword after them, till I have consumed them; that is, those that slay with the sword, as the Targum; these should go after those that fled, and destroy them, till the greater part of them were consumed; for all of them that were taken were not destroyed; or otherwise there would have been none to return from captivity, as is promised at the close of this prophecy.

Jeremiah 49:38

Ver. 38. And I will set my throne in Elam,.... Either when Alexander subdued it, or Cyrus, or rather Nebuchadnezzar, whose palace probably was, as it is certain his successors was, in Shushan in Elam, as before observed from **Da 8:2**. This is called the Lord's throne, because he gave it to him; his conquest of Elam, and his dominion over it, were from him:

and will destroy from thence the king and the princes, saith the Lord; so that there should be no more kings of Elam, and princes and nobles of their own, after this time; and because mention is made of the kings of Elam in the times of Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 25:25; though that is observed in the first year of his reign, some have thought that it is best to understand it or Cyrus, the Lord's servant and anointed; and whose throne might well be called the throne of God, which he gave him, and set him on in an eminent manner, not only there, but elsewhere; see **Ezr 1:2**; and when this country of Elam, or Elymais, became at part of the Persian empire, and never had any more kings to reign over it separately. Some of the Jewish Rabbins {b}, as Kimchi observes, interpret the king and princes of Vashti of Haman and his sons; but very wrongly.

{b} In T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 10. 2.

Jeremiah 49:39

Ver. 39. But it shall come to pass in the latter days,.... Not in the times of Cyrus, when these people enjoyed their liberty, as the Jews and other nations did, freed by him from the Babylonian yoke; which cannot with propriety be called the latter days, being but seventy or eighty years at most after this prophecy; but in the times of the Messiah, often in prophecy called the latter days:

[that] I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the Lord: which was accomplished in a spiritual sense, when some of these people, the Elamites, were converted to Christ, and delivered by him from the captivity of sin and Satan, and were brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God; see **Ac 2:9**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 50:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 50

This and the following chapter contain a long prophecy concerning the destruction of Babylon; and which is expressed in such language, that it may be, and is to be, accommodated to the destruction of mystical Babylon; and several passages in the book of the Revelation are borrowed from hence; and it is intermixed with promises and prophecies of the deliverance of God's people from thence, and of the conversion of the Jews, and the restoration of them to their own which will be at that time; see Jer 50:4. The destruction of Babylon in general is proclaimed and declared, and the manner and cause of it, Jer 50:1; then the enemies of Babylon are stirred up and animated to proceed against her, and execute the judgments of God upon her, Jer 50:14. Next follows the Lord's controversy with her, because of her pride and oppression of his people; and threatens her with the sword, drought, and utter destruction, Jer 50:31; and then a description is given of her enemies, that should be the instruments of her destruction, Jer 50:41; and the chapter is closed with observing, that this is all according to the counsel and purpose of God, Jer 50:45.

Ver. 1. The word that the Lord spake against Babylon,.... Or "to", of "of Babylon" {c}; the city of Babylon, the metropolis of the Chaldean empire; sometimes it signifies the whole country, here the city only, as appears by what follows:

[and] against the land of the Chaldeans; whither the Jews were carried captive, for whose comfort this prophecy is delivered out; and which had subdued other nations, and was become an universal monarchy; these people are mentioned last, because the rest of the nations were to drink the cup of God's wrath at their hands, and then they were to drink it after them; see Jer 25:9; this is to be understood not only of Babylon and its empire, literally taken, but of mystical Babylon and its dependencies; of Rome, and its jurisdiction; of antichrist, and the antichristian states, the last enemies of the church and people of God, who will be destroyed by the pouring out of the seven vials; see Re 15:1. This prophecy, which is called "the word that the Lord spake", for it was from him, the thing was decreed and declared by him, came

by Jeremiah the prophet, to whom the king of Babylon had been very kind; but yet he must be, and was, faithful as a prophet, to deliver what he had from the Lord concerning the ruin of his empire.

{c} lbb la "ad Babel", Montanus; "de Babylone", V. L. "de Babel", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 50:2

Ver. 2. Declare ye among the nations,.... The taking of Babylon; a piece of news, in which the nations of the world had a concern, as well as the Jews, being brought under the Babylonish yoke, from which they would now be freed; and therefore such a declaration must be very acceptable and joyful to them. Some take these words to be the words of God to the prophet; others, the words of Jeremiah to the nations; the meaning is only, that such a declaration should be made, and such things done, as follow:

and publish, and set up a standard; publish, [and] conceal not; cause it to be heard far and near; and, that it may be heard, set up a sign or standard, to gather the people together to hear it; for this standard was not to be set up for the enlisting of men, or gathering them together, to go up and fight against Babylon, since it was now taken; but as a token of victory, and as expressive joy, on account of it; or rather for the reason given; see Isa 13:2;

say, Babylon is taken; this is the thing to be declared, published, and not concealed; but with an audible voice to be pronounced, and rung throughout the several nations of the earth. Thus, when the everlasting Gospel is preached to every nation on earth, and Christ is set up in it as an ensign and standard to the people; it shall be everywhere published, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen", Re 14:6;

Bel is confounded; an idol of the Babylonians, thought by some to be the same with Baal by contraction; he is by the Septuagint called Belus, the name of one of their kings; who might be idolized after his death, as was usual among the Heathen lions: he is said to be "confounded", because he must have been, could he have been sensible of the taking of Babylon, where his temple stood, and he was worshipped, since he was not able to protect it; or rather, because his worshippers were confounded, that gloried in him, and put their trust in him. So the Targum,

"they are confounded that worship Bel;"

See Gill on "Isa 46:1".

Merodach is broken in pieces; another of their idols, which signifies a "pure lord"; some of their kings had this as one of their names,
Isa 39:1. The Targum is,

"they are broken that worshipped Merodach;"

her idols are confounded, her images are broken to pieces; these were their lesser deities, as the other two were their greater ones; all should be destroyed along with it; as all the idols and images of the church of Rome will, when that is destroyed, **Re 9:20**.

Jeremiah 50:3

Ver. 3. For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her,.... The Medes and Persians, which under Cyrus were one nation; and which not only lay north of Judea, where this prophecy came, but of Babylon, against which they were to come; and might lay more north to it, before the enlargement of their dominions; and besides, Cyrus came through Assyria to Babylon, which lay north of it; see Isa 41:25. Thus, as Rome Pagan was sacked and taken by the Goths and Vandals, that came out of the north; so Rome Papal, and the antichristian states, will be destroyed by the Christian princes of the north, or those who have embraced what the Papists call the northern heresy; tidings out of the north shall trouble antichrist, Da 11:44;

which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein; that is, in process of time; for this desolation was not made at once; it was begun by Cyrus, made greater by Darius, and completed by Seleucus Nicator;

they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast; or, "from man to beast" {d}; such as were not slain should either flee away or be carried captive; so that in time none should remain, either of man or beast; see Isa 13:19; and for the accomplishment of it on mystical Babylon see Re 18:2.

{d} hmhb dew Mdam "ab homine et usque ad animal", Pagninus, Montanus; "ad bestiam", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 50:4

Ver. 4. In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord,.... When Babylon shall be taken and destroyed, then what follows shall be accomplished; which, as it respects the conversion of the Jews, shows that this prophecy is not to be restrained to literal Babylon:

the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together: upon the taking of Babylon, in a literal sense, by Cyrus, the children of Israel, or the ten tribes, carried away by the Assyrians, did not return; only the children of Judah, or the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with the Levites, and a few of the other tribes, that might be mixed among them: but when mystical Babylon is fallen, then the whole body of the Jews will be converted, and return to their own land, Israel and Judah; which is foretold in other prophecies, as here, which speak of their general conversion; see Jer 30:3 **Ho 1:11**;

going and weeping; which is another circumstance, which shows that this does not respect the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity; for that was attended with joy, and not with tears; see Ps 126:1; unless it is to be understood of weeping for joy, and of tears of joy, as Kimchi interprets it; but it is better to understand it of that godly sorrow and mourning for sin, which will appear in the Jews at the time of their conversion; particularly for their fathers' ill treatment of the Messiah, their unbelief and rejection of him, and their continued obstinacy and perverseness, and other sins; see Jer 31:9;

they shall go and seem the Lord their God; even David their King, the true

Messiah, who is Lord and God; to him they shall seek for peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life; and acknowledge him to be the Messiah, their Lord, and their God; embrace his Gospel, and submit to his ordinances; see Jer 30:9. The Targum is,

"when they were carried captive, they went weeping; but when they return from the land of their captivity, they shall seek the worship of the Lord their God."

Jeremiah 50:5

Ver. 5. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward,.... Either to Jerusalem, near to which Mount Zion was; or to the land of Israel, so called, from a principal part of it: and this also is not to be understood of their return thither, upon the taking of Babylon by Cyrus, and the liberty he gave them; for they had no need to inquire their way thither, nor do we find any where that they did; for though there might be many among them born in the captivity, who knew not the way; yet there were others that did, and could direct and go before them, even such who had seen the former temple, **Ezr 3:12**; but this suits better with the Jews in the latter day, upon the fall of mystical Babylon, when they shall be converted and return to their own land, and shall ask their way thither; being under a strong impulse of mind, and being bent upon it, and having full resolution to go thither: or else by Zion may be meant the church of God in Gospel times, as it often is; the way into which the converted Jews will ask, being deter mined to give up themselves to it, and become members of it; which way is not a religious education, mere morality, or a bare attendance on worship; but faith in Christ, and a profession of it, and submission to the ordinance of baptism;

[saying], come, and let us join ourselves unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant [that] shall not be forgotten; and then may they be said to "join [themselves] to the Lord", when, under a divine influence, they shall give up themselves to Christ, to be saved by him; when they shall lay hold on him, embrace him, and believe in him; when they shall follow him in his own ways, and cleave unto him with full purpose of heart; and also when they shall join themselves to his people, to the churches of Christ, and abide by his truths and ordinances; to all which they shall stir up and encourage one another; either laying hold on the covenant of grace, which is an everlasting one, and will never be forgotten by the Lord; he is ever mindful of it, and keeps it; which is done when men join

themselves to the Lord, Isa 56:6; or making an agreement or covenant with one another, and the churches to which they join themselves, to walk together in all the ways, ordinances, and commandments of the Lord; which agreement or covenant ought to be perpetually observed, and never forgotten. Kimchi owns that this part of the verse belongs to the days of the Messiah. The Targum is,

"they shall come and be added unto the people of the Lord, and he shall make with them an everlasting covenant, which shall not cease."

Jeremiah 50:6

Ver. 6. My people hath been lost sheep,.... like lost sheep, without a shepherd, going astray the fold, wandering from place to place, having none to take care of them, guide and direct them, or to go in and out before them, and lead them into suitable pastures; so it was with the Jews in the Babylonish captivity, and so it is with them now, and yet the Lord's people still in some sense; he has a design of grace concerning them, a store of mercy for them, and thoughts of peace towards them, which will take place in due time; and such is the case of all God's elect in a state of nature, they are sheep, but lost sheep, and yet his people;

their shepherds have caused them to go astray; from God and his worship, from the true religion; so their civil and ecclesiastical governors, their kings, princes, priests, and prophets, were the causes of leading them into errors, by their laws, doctrines, and examples; so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of their kings; but the Targum seems to understand it of other kings, that carried them captive,

"kings carried them away, rulers spoiled them;"

so their priests and Rabbins now cause them to err from the true Messiah, his Gospel and ordinances, as their false Christs and false prophets have done in all ages since the times of Christ;

they have turned them away [on] the mountains; or, "to" them {e}; where idols were worshipped, as Jarchi; this was their case before and at the Babylonish captivity, though never since: or, "from the mountains" {f}; from the mountains of Israel, and the good pastures there; from the Gospel of Christ, and the ordinances of it;

they have gone from mountain to hill; from one religion to another, from duty to duty, seeking rest and happiness there, in the law of Moses, and traditions of the elders; or from kingdom to kingdom, wandering about from place to place, as they do to this day;

they have forgotten their resting place; either the land of Canaan, which was their rest, De 12:9; or rather God himself, the resting place of his people, Ps 116:7; or the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose person, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and fulness, is the true rest of his people; and which is forgotten when men rest in themselves and their duties, and seek elsewhere than in Christ for peace and comfort.

{e} Myrh "ad montes", Vatablus. So R. Jonah in Ben Melech. {f} "A montibus", Piscator.

Jeremiah 50:7

Ver. 7. All that found them have devoured them,.... As lost and wandering sheep are liable to be found, and to be devoured, by every beast of prey, lions, wolves, and bears; so the Jews were found by their neighbours, their enemies, and especially by the Chaldeans, having forsaken God, and being forsaken by him; and which is their case now, and are often found and seized upon by their enemies, and made a prey of under one pretence or another:

and their adversaries said, we offend not; we are not guilty of any evil, in taking away their lives, or stripping them of their substance:

because they have sinned against the Lord; and therefore are justly punished in this way; and it is no other than what the Lord threatened them with, and foretold by his prophets should come upon them: this they said, not that they feared the Lord, or had any regard to his honour and glory, but to excuse themselves, which would not do; for though they sinned against the Lord, they had not sinned against them, and they had no right to destroy them, and plunder them of their substance; and so it is now, many think it no crime to injure the Jews in their persons and property, because they have sinned against Christ, and rejected him as the Messiah, who is

the habitation of justice; the dwelling place of the saints, the city of refuge and strong tower, whither the righteous run and are safe:

even the Lord, the hope of their fathers; whom their fathers hoped for and expected, he being spoken and prophesied of by all the prophets that were from the beginning of the world, and therefore called the Hope of Israel, Jer 14:8.

Jeremiah 50:8

Ver. 8. Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans,.... This, in the literal sense, is a call to the Jews in Babylon, and in other parts of Chaldea, to go out from thence upon the proclamation of Cyrus; and especially to the chief of them, to animate the rest, and set them an example; such as Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Ezra, and others: and, in the mystical sense, is a call to the people of God in Rome, and the antichristian states, to come out from thence, a little before the destruction thereof, as in Re 18:4; which seems to refer to this passage:

and be as the he goats before the flocks; which walk stately and nimbly, cheerfully and readily, without fear and dread, boldly and confidently, and encourage others to follow them. The Targum is,

"as princes at the head of their people."

Jeremiah 50:9

Ver. 9. For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon,.... The work was of the Lord; it was he that would give a commission and a command to the enemies of Babylon; that would incline them, and stir them up, to come against her; that would direct their motions and guide them thither, so that it would assuredly be; wherefore it behooves the people of God to make haste out of it:

an assembly of great nations from the north country; the Medes and Persians, with their allies and auxiliaries which came with them from the north; as also a collection of Christian nations from the north of Europe against antichrist:

and they shall set themselves in array against her; draw up their army in form of battle, or prepare and dispose their instruments of war for the siege of

Babylon:

from thence shall she be taken; on the north side, from which quarter the enemy should come; or from the place where their army is drawn up in battle array; or suddenly, and at once: so Babylon was destroyed by Cyrus; and the destruction of Rome, or mystical Babylon, will be sudden and at an unawares, Re 18:8;

their arrows [shall be] as of a mighty expert man; or "that bereaves" {g} women of their husbands, and parents of their children: the Medes and Persians were famous for archery, strong to draw the bow, and skilful to guide and direct the arrow. Strabo {h} says of Media major, that it sometimes furnished out thirteen thousand archers to the Elymaeans, or Persians, against the Susians and Babylonians;

none shall return in vain; not one of the arrows but shall do execution, kill a man: or "it", or "he, which" or "who, shall not return in vain" {i}; the assembly of nations, or anyone of the archers or soldiers.

{g} lykvm "orbantis", Pagninus, Vatablus, Piscator. {h} Geograph. l. 11. p. 361. {i} Mqyr bwvy al "quae non redibit frustra", Schmidt; "quae non revertitur frustra", De Dieu; "qui non redit vacuus", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 50:10

Ver. 10. And Chaldea shall be a spoil,.... The land of the Chaldeans, as the Targum, should become a spoil to the enemy, and be plundered of all its riches and treasures; not only Babylon principally, but the whole country it was the metropolis of:

all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the Lord; for though spoilers are generally insatiable, yet so great should be the riches found in Babylon and in Chaldea, that they should have enough, and desire no more; see Re 18:17.

Jeremiah 50:11

Ver. 11. Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage,.... This is addressed to the Chaldeans who destroyed Jerusalem and the land of Judea, once the heritage of the Lord; when they rejoiced at the destruction of God's people, and insulted them in their miseries; and which is the cause and reason assigned of their ruin; for though they had a commission to destroy, yet they exceeded that, and especially by exulting at the ruin of that people, which showed great inhumanity. So the Papists will rejoice at the slaying of the witnesses, but will be repaid in their own coin, Re 11:10;

because ye are grown fat as the heifer at grass: which feeds all the day, and so grows fat. Some copies read, "as the heifer that treads out" {k} the corn; which, according to the law, was not to be muzzled, and so was continually feeding, and grew plump and sleek; and so these Chaldeans, having enriched themselves with the spoils of Judea and other nations, gave themselves up to ease and luxury; and it was at one of their festivals their city was taken, to which there may be some allusion:

and bellow as bulls: or, "neigh as horses" {l}; having got the victory, of which war horses are sensible; or it may denote their impetuous lust after women, whom they forced and ravished, when taken captives by them.

{k} hvd hlgek "sicut vitula exterens", Tigurine version; "triturans", Cocceius, De Dieu. {l} Myrybak ylhut "hinnistis sicut fortes (equi)", Munster, Vatablus, Piscator, Schmidt; "ut caballi", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 50:12

Ver. 12. Your mother shall be sore confounded,.... The monarchy of the Chaldeans; so the Targum and jarchi, your congregation; or rather their metropolis, their mother city, the city of Babylon; which would be confounded when taken, none of her sons being able to defend her: the same will be true of mystical Babylon, the mother of harlots, Re 17:5;

she that bare you shall be ashamed; which is the same as before, in different words:

behold, the hindermost of the nations [shall be] a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert; or, as the Vulgate Latin version, "she shall be the last among the nations"; she that was the head of them, signified by the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's image, shall now be the tail of them, and become like a dry land and desert, without inhabitants, having neither men nor cattle in it; see Jer 50:3; or, as Jarchi and Kimchi, their end, "the latter end" {m} of the kingdom of Babylon; or what should befall that people in their last days would be, that

their land should become a wilderness, the habitants being slain, and none to till it; or Babylon is called the last of the nations, because her punishment, in order of time, was last, as Gussetius {n} thinks;
Jer 25:26.

{m} Mywg tyrxa "finis seu extremitas gentium", Vatablus, Montanus, Schmidt. {n} Comment. Ebr. p. 30.

Jeremiah 50:13

Ver. 13. Because of the wrath of the Lord, it shall not be inhabited,.... That is, Babylon; which the Targum expresses,

"because thou, Babylon, hast provoked the Lord;"

by their idolatry, luxury, ill usage of his people, and profanation of the vessels of the sanctuary; therefore it should be destroyed, and left without an inhabitant in it:

but it shall be wholly desolate; as it now is. Pausanias says {o}, in his time there was nothing but a wall remaining; and Jerom {p} says, he had it from a brother Elamite, or Persian, that Babylon was then a park or place for royal hunting, and that beasts of every kind were kept within its walls: of mystical Babylon, see Re 16:19;

everyone that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues; any traveller that had seen it in its glory would now be astonished to see the desolation of it; and, by way of scorn and derision, hiss at the judgments of God upon it, and rejoice at them, and shake their head, as the Targum.

{o} Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 509. {p} Comment. in Isaiam, fol. 23. C.

Jeremiah 50:14

Ver. 14. Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about,.... This is directed to the Medes and Persians, to dispose of their army in proper places round about the city of Babylon, to besiege it; and to order their instruments of war, fit for that purpose, a convenient manner; since they might be sure of victory, the Lord being wroth with it, and having so severely threatened its ruin:

all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows; the Elamites, or Persians, as before observed, were well skilled in archery; and, as Xenophon {q} reports, Cyrus had in his army, when he came to Babylon, a great number of archers and slingers; and the archers are called upon to draw the bow, who were expert at it, and not spare their arrows, since they would everyone do execution, as in Jer 50:9; and the slingers to "cast [their stones] at her" {r}, for so may be rendered; and thus it is interpreted, by Jarchi and by Kimchi, of casting either arrows or stones:

for she hath sinned against the Lord; which brought the wrath of God upon her; and chiefly the ill treatment of his people was the sin against him he resented.

{q} Cyropaedia, l. 9. c. 1. & l. 7. c. 1. {r} hyla wdy "jacite contra eam", Pagninus, De Dieu; "jacite ad eam", Montanus.

Jeremiah 50:15

Ver. 15. Shout against her round about,.... As soldiers do when they make an assault upon a place, to encourage one another, and dismay the besieged; just as the Israelites did when they surrounded Jericho:

she hath given her hand; submitted to the conqueror, and sued for mercy. The Targum is,

"she is delivered into her hand;"

the hand of the Persians, by two princes of Babylon, who went off to Cyrus, and showed him how to take the city; or rather it was delivered by Zopyrus into the hands of Darius:

her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down; not at the taking of it by Cyrus, but afterwards by Darius; for this respects the conclusion of its destruction, which was progressive and gradual:

for it [is] the vengeance of the Lord: which he decreed, threatened, and took, and that on account of his people, who had been ill treated here; so the Targum, "for it is the vengeance of the people of the Lord:"

and her enemies are called upon to

take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her; that is, to execute the Lord's vengeance, of which the Persians were the instruments; and who were to go according to the law of retaliation, which is a just one; to do to Babylon as she had done to Jerusalem, and other places, she had utterly destroyed. These words seem to be referred to, and much the same are used of mystical Babylon, Re 18:6.

Jeremiah 50:16

Ver. 16. Cut off the sower from in Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest,.... Both sower and reaper: the walls of Babylon took in a large compass of land, where there were corn fields; and which, as Curtius {s} observes, would yield a sufficiency to hold out a siege against an enemy; but being taken, the husbandman would not be spared, as used to be, but should be cut off, and so none to till the ground, or to reap what was upon it; and thus, in course, would be, desolate, as before threatened. The Targum understands this in a figurative sense,

"destroy the king out of Babylon, and take hold of the sword in the time of slaughter;"

and Cocceius interprets the sower of any doctor or bishop in mystical Babylon, and the reaper of such that gather the fruits, and exact obedience; see Re 18:14;

for fear of the oppressing sword; of the Medes and Persians:

they shall turn everyone to his people, and they shall flee everyone to his own land; not those of other nations, as the Jews, who were detained captives there, as Kimchi thinks; for these were not in such fear of the Persians, nor did they flee because of them; but were let go by them, and sent into their own land honourably: but either such who, of other nations, were come to traffic at Babylon; or rather the auxiliaries of other nations, who were either hired or forced into the service of Babylon; these, finding the city taken, would make the best of their way into their own country.

{s} Hist. l. 5. c. 1.

Jeremiah 50:17

Ver. 17. Israel [is] a scattered sheep,.... Or like a sheep that is frightened and drove from the fold, and is dispersed, and wanders about here and there; Israel includes all the twelve tribes:

the lions have driven [him] away; from his own land, and carried him captive, and scattered him among the nations; these lions are afterwards interpreted of the kings of Assyria and Babylon: so the Targum,

"kings have removed them;"

comparable to lions for their strength, fierceness, and voraciousness:

first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; eaten up his flesh; meaning Shalmaneser king of Assyria, who carried captive the ten tribes, that never returned, and therefore said to be devoured:

and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones; or, "boned him" {t}; took out his bones, all his strength and substance; or took the flesh off of them, stripped him of all his wealth and riches, reduced him to his bones, made a mere skeleton of him: we, with Kimchi and Ben Melech, and others, read "broke his bones"; to get the very marrow out, that nothing may be left of him: he took Jerusalem, burnt the temple, and carried captive the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, the strength of Israel; so, between the one and the other, all Israel were like a scattered sheep, dispersed among the nations. Nebuchadrezzar was the then reigning king in Babylon when this prophecy was delivered, and therefore called "this Nebuchadrezzar".

{t} wmue "exossavit eum", Munster, Montanus, Cocceius.

Jeremiah 50:18

Ver. 18. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... Because of this cruel treatment of his people, whose God he was; and being the Lord of hosts, and able to avenge himself on their enemies, he threatens as follows:

behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land; not Nebuchadnezzar, but a successor of his, Belshazzar, who was slain the night Babylon was taken:

as I have punished the king of Assyria; not Shalmaneser, that carried the tribes captive; but a successor of his, Chynilidanus, the last king of Assyria; who was killed when Nineveh was taken, the metropolis of Assyria, and which was done before this prophecy was delivered. These two kings may figuratively design the Turk and Pope, who will both be destroyed at, or just before, the conversion of the Jews, and their return to their own land; which is prophesied of in Jer 50:19.

Jeremiah 50:19

Ver. 19. And I will bring Israel again to his habitation,.... Or "fold" {u}, or place of pasturage; for the metaphor of sheep is still continued. Israel designs not the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the Levites, and a few of the other tribes mixed with them only, but all Israel, together with Judah, as appears from Jer 50:20; and so this prophecy had not its full accomplishment at the Jews' return from the Babylonish captivity; but respects their future conversion, when all Israel shall be saved, and they will return to their own land. Kimchi says this refers to time yet to come; which he prefers to the other sense he mentions, of the return of the captivity of Babylon;

and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon Mount Ephraim and Gilead; which, as they were all fruitful places, and had good pasturage, so they belonged to the ten tribes; which shows that it respects the return of them and the fulness of blessings, both temporal and spiritual, they shall then enjoy.

{u} whwn la "ad habitaculum", vel potius "caulam", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 50:20

Ver. 20. In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord,.... When mystical Babylon shall be destroyed, and the Jews will be converted and brought into their land, and be in possession of every temporal and spiritual mercy; it will then most clearly appear that they are the favourites of heaven, and all their sins are forgiven them, as follows:

the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and [there shall be] none;
and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; not that they will be wholly free from sin; or there will be none in them; or none committed by them; or that their sins are no sins; or that God has no sight or knowledge of them; but that they will not be found upon them, so as to be charged on them in a judicial way; having been removed from them to Christ, and satisfaction made for them by him; who has finished them, and made an end of them, so as that no condemnation or punishment can be inflicted on them for them; wherefore, should they be sought for by Satan, or by the law and justice of God, they will never be found, so as to be brought against them to their condemnation. The reason is,

for I will pardon them whom I reserve; the remnant, according to the election of grace, whom God has chosen in Christ, preserved in him, and reserved for himself, for his own glory, and for eternal happiness; these are pardoned freely for Christ's sake; and being pardoned, no sin is imputed to them; all is removed from them, as far as the east is from the west; covered out of the sight of God; hid from the eye of avenging justice; blotted out as a debt book, which is not legible, or as a cloud which is no more; cast by the Lord behind his back, and into the depths of the sea, and entirely forgotten; never remembered or seen more, but buried in everlasting oblivion and obscurity; see Ro 11:27.

Jeremiah 50:21

Ver. 21. Go up against the land of Merathaim,.... Thought to be the country of the Mardi, which lay part of it in Assyria, and part of it in Armenia; expressed in the dual number, because one part of it lay on one side the Tigris, and the other on the other side. Cyrus, with his army of Medes and Persians, is here called upon; who, according to Herodotus, passed through Assyria to Babylon: and so it may be agreeably rendered, "go by the land of Merathaim"; or the country of the Mardi. Many interpreters take it for an appellative, and not the proper name of a country. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "the land of rulers"; and the Targum,

"the land of the rebellious people;"

and so Kimchi {w}: and to the same sense Jarchi, the land

"that hath exasperated me, and provoked me to anger;"

meaning the land of the Chaldeans, which had ruled over others, rebelled against the Lord, and provoked him to wrath against it. The word, being in the dual number, may, in the mystical sense, respect the two antichrists, the eastern and western, that have ruled over the nations, and rebelled against God, and provoked him; the Turks and Papists, those two rebels, the beast and false prophet, Re 19:20; against whom the Christian princes will be bid to go up;

[even] against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod; the name of a place in Assyria; see Eze 23:23; by which also Cyrus might go up to Babylon, so Jarchi; and the Targum takes it to be the name of a place: but Kimchi and others take it to be an appellative; and so it may be rendered, "the inhabitants of visitation" {x}; because the time was come to visit and punish them for their sins; and may particularly design the inhabitants of Babylon, the city to be visited for its iniquities; and especially mystical Babylon, which shall come up in remembrance before God, Re 16:19;

waste and utterly destroy after them, saith the Lord; either after the destruction of the places before mentioned; or pursue after those that flee and make their escape from thence, and destroy them; or rather their posterity, the remnant of them, as the Targum:

and do according to all that I have commanded thee; either Cyrus, according to all the Lord commanded him by the Prophet Isaiah, as Jarchi; or the seven angels, that are to pour out the vials of wrath on antichrist; the kings of the earth, who are to fulfil the will of God upon the man of sin, Re 16:1.

{w} Mytrm Urah le "contra terram rebellantium", Pagninus; "super", Montanus; "contra terram rebellionum", Schmidt. {x} dwqp ybvwy "habitatores visitationis", Vatablus, Calvin, De Dieu.

Jeremiah 50:22

Ver. 22. A sound of battle [is] in the land,.... In the land of the Chaldeans, as it is expressed in the Septuagint and Arabic versions; the noise of warriors, the clashing of arms, and sound of trumpets, both of the enemy entered into the land, and of the Chaldeans arming themselves in their own defence:

and of great destruction; in the same land; or in Babylon, as Abarbinel supplies it; this is the consequent of the former.

Jeremiah 50:23

Ver. 23. How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken!.... The Targum is,

"how is the king cut down and broken that moved the whole earth!"

The king of Babylon, or the kingdom of Babylon, which was like a hammer for its hardness and strength; and being an instrument, in the hand of God, of beating to pieces and destroying the kingdoms and nations around it; but is now destroyed itself. These are the words either of the prophet, or rather of the people of other nations, wondering how this destruction came about, and rejoicing at it;

how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! this explains who and what is meant by the hammer of the earth, and by its being cut asunder and broken; even the utter destruction of the city and kingdom of Babylon.

Jeremiah 50:24

Ver. 24. I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon,.... Retorting to the stratagem that Cyrus used, in draining the river Euphrates, and marching his army up through it into the midst of the city of Babylon, and took it by surprise, while the inhabitants at night were feasting and revelling: this is said to be a snare laid by the Lord, because it was according to the counsel of his will, and through his directing and overruling providence:

and thou wast not aware; of what the enemy had done, of his march into the city, and taking of it; for, as Herodotus and Aristotle report, one part of the city was seized and taken before the other knew anything of it:

thou art found, and also caught; as wild beasts in a net, or birds in a snare. The Targum is,

"thy sins are sought, and are found, and also thou art taken:"

because thou hast striven against the Lord; as persons litigate a point with each other in courts of judicature, or as warriors strive against each other in battle;

she sinned against the Lord, and offended him, not only by her idolatry and luxury, but by her oppression of his people, and profaning the vessels of his house; as Belshazzar did, the night Babylon was taken. The Targum is,

"for with the people of the Lord thou hast strove."

Jeremiah 50:25

Ver. 25. The Lord hath opened his armoury,.... Alluding to the manner of kings, who have some particular edifice built for an armoury; see **So 4:4**; wherein are provided and laid up all sorts of armour, small and great, which are fetched out from thence, in time of need. This armoury is to be understood of Media and Persia, and other parts, from whence a mighty army, well accoutred, was brought by the powerful providence of God; and indeed the whole world is his armoury, from whence he can raise up instruments to do his will at pleasure; or, "his treasury" {y}; so the Targum; and some think this is said with reference to the treasure of the Lord's house the king of Babylon had seized upon, and now by way of retaliation the Lord would open his treasury to his ruin:

and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation; as a king, when he goes to war, opens his armoury, and takes out armour of every kind, both offensive and defensive, swords, spears, shields, &c. so the Lord would now bring the Medes and Persians, well armed, to be the instruments of his wrath and vengeance on Babylon: or, "the vessels of his indignation" {z}; having some view to the vessels of the sanctuary, as some think, the king of Babylon had taken away and profaned; these may well be applied to the vials of wrath poured out on the antichristian states by the angels, called forth out of the temple,
Re 15:1;

for this [is] the work of the Lord God of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans; which he decreed and ordered to be done; and which, without his power and providence, could never have been done: compare with this
Re 18:8.

{y} wruwa "thesaurum suum", Vulg. Lat. Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt. {z} wmez ylk "vasa irae suae", Vulg. Lat. Pagninus; "vasa indignationis suae", Montanus.

Jeremiah 50:26

Ver. 26. Come against her from the utmost border,.... Or, "from the end" {a}; from the end of the earth; from the Persian gulf, and the Caspian sea, on which the Persians and Medes bordered; from the most distant countries; for the Medes and Persians, who are here called unto, brought others along with them in their army from places still more remote; for this is not to be understood, with the Targum, of entering into Babylon on one "side"; or, with Jarchi, of beginning at one "end" of the city, that it might not be known, and be taken suddenly:

open her storehouses; where her gold, silver, jewels, and other precious things, lay: or, her barns or "granaries" {b}, as the Targum and Kimchi; where the fruits and increase of the earth were laid up; and may figuratively design her cities and fortified places, full of inhabitants, as well as of riches and stores of all kinds:

cast her up as heaps; as heaps of rubbish to make a causeway of, and then tread upon them to make it smooth: or, "as heaps", or "sheaves" {c} of corn; tread upon them as oxen do, and thereby thresh them out; so Jarchi interprets it,

"thresh her as grains of wheat;"

and to this sense the Targum refers,

"consume her substance as they consume heaps of wheat;"

see Re 18:12;

and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left; of the city of Babylon, its inhabitants, wealth, and riches; so complete should the destruction be, Re 18:8.

{a} Uqm "a fine", Vatablus, Montanus, Schmidt; "a fine terrae", Piscator; "ab extremis finibus", Tigurine version, Grotius. {b} hyobam "horrea ejus", Montanus, Cocceius; "granaria ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt. {c} Mymre wmk "sicut acervos, sub. tritici", Vatablus; "frumenti", Piscator.

Jeremiah 50:27

Ver. 27. Slay all her bullocks,.... Or, "all her mighty ones", as the Targum and Vulgate Latin version; her princes and great men, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel; compared to bullocks for their strength, fatness, and fierceness; see Ps 22:12; this may well be applied to the slaughter of kings, captains, and mighty men, at the battle of Armageddon, Re 19:18;

let them go down to the slaughter; to the place slaughter, as oxen do, insensible, and whether they will or not:

woe unto them, for their day is come, the time of their visitation; the time of their destruction, of visiting or punishing them for their sins, appointed by the Lord, which they could not pass; and so a woeful and dreadful time to them.

Jeremiah 50:28

Ver. 28. The voice of them that flee and escape out the land of Babylon,.... The Jews that were captives in Babylon, upon the taking of it, took that opportunity to flee out Of it, and make their escape to their own land, which some of them might do before the proclamation of Cyrus; whose voice declaring to their brethren in Judea what God had done to Babylon, and rejoicing at it, was as if it was heard by the prophet in vision, or under a spirit of prophecy; this also is true of them who will be called out of mystical Babylon, and escape from thence, just before its destruction, Re 18:4;

to declare in Zion the vengeance of the Lord our God, the vengeance of his temple; the vengeance which God took on the Chaldeans for their ill usage of his people, and for plundering and burning his temple; this the Jews, when they came to their own land, declared to their brethren there with joy and pleasure; and a like joy will be expressed when God shall avenge his people on antichrist, for his blasphemy against him, his name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in it,
Re 13:6.

Jeremiah 50:29

Ver. 29. Call together the archers against Babylon,.... The Medes and Persians, who were well skilled in archery, especially the Elamites; see Isa 22:6; hence Horace {d} makes mention of "Medi pharetra"; and Cyrus in Xenophon {e} says, that he had under his command sixty thousand men that wore targets and

were archers;
See Gill on "Jer 50:9". Some render it "many", as the Targum; and the sense is, either gather many together against Babylon, a large army; or cause many to hear the vengeance against Babylon; publish this good news; so the word used by the Targum signifies; and this will be done by Gospel preachers, with respect to mystical Babylon, Re 14:6;

all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape; surround it on every side; besiege it so closely that none may be able to escape:

recompence her according to her work: according to all that she hath done, do unto her; which is the law of retaliation;
See Gill on "Jer 50:15"; and with it compare
Re 18:6;

for she hath been proud against the Lord, against the Holy One of Israel; behaved haughtily and contemptuously towards the Lord and his people; burning the city and temple of Jerusalem; profaning the vessels of it, and ill treating the captive Jews; so the Targum,

"because she hath spoken ill against the people of the Lord, saying words which were not right before the Holy One of Israel;"

which may fitly be applied to antichrist the man of sin, sitting in the temple of God, showing himself as God; opening his mouth in blasphemy against him and his saints, **2Th 2:4**.

{d} Carmin. l. 2. Ode 16. {e} Cyropaedia, l. 2. c. 1.

Jeremiah 50:30

Ver. 30. Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets,.... Or "surely" {f}; it is the form of an oath, according to Jarchi Cyrus, when he took Babylon, ordered proclamation to be made that the inhabitants should keep within doors; and that whoever were found in the streets should be put to death {g}, as doubtless many were:

and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the Lord; as Belshazzar and his guards were {h}; see **Da 5:30**; compare with this

Re 19:18.

{f} Nkl "certe". {g} Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 23. {h} Ibid.

Jeremiah 50:31

Ver. 31. Behold, I [am] against thee, [O thou] most proud, saith the Lord God of hosts,.... Or, O "pride", or O "man of pride" {i}; intolerably proud, superlatively so, as the kings of Babylon were, as Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar likewise, the present king; so the Targum interprets it of a king,

"behold, I send my fury against thee, O wicked king;"

and is applicable enough to the man of sin, that monster of pride, that exalts himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped, **2Th 2:4**; and therefore it is no wonder that the Lord is against him, who resists all that are proud; and woe to him and them that he is against:

for the day is come, the time [that] I will visit thee; in a way of vindictive wrath and justice, for pride and other this; see Jer 50:27.

{i} Nwdz Heb. "superbia", Schmidt; vel "vir superbiae", Piscator; so Abarbinel.

Jeremiah 50:32

Ver. 32. And the most proud shall stumble and fall,.... Or "pride", as before; "the man of pride", who is so proud that he may be called pride itself. The Targum, as before, interprets it a wicked king; and Abarbinel understands it of Belshazzar particularly, who was slain the night that Babylon was taken. It may be understood of the whole kingdom and monarchy of Babylon, which was a superb state; but all its grandeur and glory were brought down and laid in the dust at once, as mystical Babylon will; when it will be said, "Babylon the great", the proud and the haughty, is fallen, Re 18:2;

and none shall raise him up; the kingdom of Babylon shall not be restored train, nor the king of it have any successor, nor the city be rebuilt; compare with this Re 18:21;

and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him; in Babylon, the metropolis of the kingdom, and in all others round about it: it denotes the utter destruction of the whole monarchy. It may be applied to the burning of Rome with fire, and the ruin of its whole jurisdiction; for, when that is destroyed, the cities of the nations all around shall fall, which belong unto it; see
Re 18:8.

Jeremiah 50:33

Ver. 33. Thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... This is a preface to another prophecy, detached from the former, respecting the redemption of the Lord's people by the Messiah; and is used to excite the attention to it, as well as, to assure the truth of it:

the children of Israel and the children of Judah [were] oppressed together; which cannot be well understood of the ten tribes of Israel, and of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, or the whole body of the Jewish people; since these were not oppressed at one and the same time, nor by one and the same monarch and monarchy. The children of Israel, or the ten tribes, were carried captive by Shalmaneser the Assyrian monarch; and the children of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian monarch, a hundred and fifty years after; to say that some of the ten tribes were mixed with the children of Judah, at the time when carried captive into Babylon, and so oppressed together with them, can hardly be thought to answer the import of the phrase, "the children of Israel"; which seems to design the body of that people. It is better therefore to understand it of the whole mystical Israel of God, as in their nature state oppressed by sin and Satan, being under their dominion; or as labouring under the oppressions and persecutions of antichrist; or else of the Jewish people in their present captivity, who will be redeemed from it, and converted, and all Israel shall be saved:

and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go; as the Assyrians and Chaldeans took and held fast literal Israel and Judah; so the elect of God, the Israel he has chosen for himself, are taken captive by sin and Satan, and are held by them, till they are snatched from them by powerful and efficacious grace; and as many of God's Israel are taken and held captive under the antichristian yoke; and as the Jews to this day are in a state of exile and captivity, from which they cannot free themselves.

Jeremiah 50:34

Ver. 34. Their Redeemer [is] strong, the Lord of hosts [is] his name,.... And seeing his name is the Lord of hosts or armies, and has all the armies of heaven and earth at his command; and especially since he is Jehovah, the everlasting and unchangeable I AM; he must be strong and mighty, yea, the Almighty, and so able to redeem his Israel, as the Messiah was, who is here intended; from sin, Satan, and the world; from the law, its curse and condemnation; from death and hell, and wrath to come; as well as to deliver his people from the Romish yoke, and to avenge them on all their enemies:

he shall thoroughly plead their cause; with God and man; he that is the Redeemer of men is their advocate with the Father; with whom he pleads on their behalf his blood, righteousness and sacrifice, for all blessings of grace and glory; and to all charges of law and justice, and their own hearts, and the condemnings of them; and he pleads their cause with men, and rights their wrongs, and avenges the injuries done them by antichrist and others, Re 19:2;

that he may give rest to the land; not to the land of Judea only, but to the whole world; which will be at rest and in peace upon the destruction of mystical Babylon, and the conversion of the Jews, and their return to their own land; as well as the Messiah will give spiritual rest to all the redeemed ones here, and eternal rest, which remains for the people of God, hereafter:

and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon; by the destruction of it and them; and rendering tribulation to them that trouble his people; and by punishing antichrist with the vials of his wrath, and with everlasting damnation, the smoke of whose torment shall ascend for ever and ever, **2Th 1:6**.

Jeremiah 50:35

Ver. 35. A sword [is] upon the Chaldeans, saith the Lord,.... Or, "shall be" {k} or, "O sword, [be thou] on the Chaldeans" {l}; that is, the sword of the Medes and Persians; those that kill with the sword, as the Targum; in the mystic sense, the Christian princes that shall draw the sword against the antichristian states:

and upon the inhabitants of Babylon; the metropolis of Chaldea; the common people in it, as distinguished from those of high rank and degree following:

and upon her princes; Belshazzar and his nobles, who were slain the night Babylon was taken:

and upon her wise [men]; prime ministers, politicians, and counsellors of state; neither high birth nor great wisdom can secure from the sword of the enemy, when it has a commission from God, as it had here.

{k} "Erit", Abarbinel; "irruet", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {l} Mydvk le brx "gladie, super Chaldaeos, scil. veni, ades", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 50:36

Ver. 36. A sword [is] upon the liars,.... Some render it "bars" {m}, as the word sometimes signifies; and interpret it of great men, who are the strength and security of cities and commonwealths; but these are mentioned both before and after. The Targum renders it "diviners"; and so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it {n}; of which there were many among the Chaldeans, who were a lying set of men, who imposed upon and deceived the people; these with their divinations and soothsayings could not save the land, nor themselves, from the devouring sword; nay, their sorceries and divinations were the cause of the ruin of it; see Isa 47:9;

and they shall dote; or, that they may "become foolish" {o}; be infatuated, and act a mad part, and be at their wits' end; not knowing what course to take for their own safety, and much less be able to give direction and advice to others:

a sword [is] upon her mighty men, and they shall be dismayed; the soldiers and their officers, the most valiant and courageous of them; these would be in the utmost fright and consternation at the approach of the enemy; especially when they perceived the city taken, and the carnage made of the king and his nobles.

{m} Mydbh "vectes"; so some in Gataker. {n} "Divinos", V. L. Vatablus, Tigurine version, Calvin, Pagninus; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 84. {o} wlanw "stultescant", Schmidt; "ut stulte agant", Piscator; "et insanient", Pagninus, Montanus.

Jeremiah 50:37

Ver. 37. A sword [is] upon their horses, and upon their chariots,.... Upon the horsemen, and those that rode in chariots; upon the whole cavalry, which should fall into the enemies' hands, and be cut to pieces; see Re 19:18;

and upon all the mingled people that [are] in the midst of her; those of other nations that sojourned in Babylon, or came thither for merchandise; the word having, as Kimchi observes, such a signification; or rather her auxiliaries, troops consisting of other people that were her allies, or in her pay and service:

and they shall become as women; timorous, faint hearted, quite dispirited, unable to act, or defend themselves:

a sword [is] upon her treasures, and they shall be robbed; or they that slay with the sword, as the Targum, the soldiers, shall seize upon her treasures, and plunder them: thus should she be exhausted of men and money, and become utterly desolate.

Jeremiah 50:38

Ver. 38. A drought [is] upon her waters, and they shall be dried up,.... Either on the waters of the land of Chaldea in general, from whence should follow barrenness, and so a want of the necessaries of life; hence Kimchi interprets it of a consumption of riches, and all good things; or on the waters of Babylon, the river Euphrates, which ran through it; the channel of which was diverted by Cyrus, and drained and made so dry, that he marched his army up it into the city. Some say Babylon was taken three times, by this stratagem of turning the river Euphrates another way; first by Semiramis; and after Cyrus by Alexander: this may well be applied to the drying up of the river Euphrates, upon the pouring out of the sixth vial, and to the destruction of the antichristian states, signified by the many waters on which the great whore of Babylon or Rome sitteth, Re 16:12;

for it [is] the land of graven images; much given to idolatry; had idols of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone, **Da 5:2**;

and they are mad upon [their] idols; greatly affected, and much devoted to them; superstitiously mad upon them: or, "they gloried in them"; as the Targum, Vulgate Latin version, and others {p}; they praised and extolled them as true deities; as Belshazzar and his nobles did the very night Babylon was taken, **Da 5:4**; and this their idolatry was one cause of their ruin. The word {q} for "idols" signifies "terrors", or terrible things; because their worshippers stood in fear of them, as Kimchi observes.

{p} wllhty "gloriantur", Vulg. Lat. Schmidt, Munster, Tigurine version. {q} Mymyab "horrendis" vel "terriculamentis", Schmidt, Munster, Calvin; "terricula", Junius & Tremellius.

Jeremiah 50:39

Ver. 39. Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell [there],.... Of these creatures
See Gill on "Isa 13:21"; and
See Gill on "Isa 13:22";

and the owls shall dwell therein; so mystical Babylon when fallen shall become the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird, Re 18:2;

and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; interpreters observe that this was gradually accomplished: it was taken by Cyrus, and made tributary to the Persians; the seat of the empire was removed from it; its walls were demolished by Darius; it was drained both of its inhabitants and its riches through Seleucus Nicator building the city Seleucia {r} near it. In Adrian's time there was nothing but an old wall left; and in Jerom's time it was a park for the king of Persia to hunt in;
See Gill on "Jer 50:13"; and
See Gill on "Isa 13:20";

{r} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 26.

Jeremiah 50:40

Ver. 40. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbour [cities] thereof, saith the Lord,.... Admah and Zeboim:

[so] shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein; the same is said concerning Edom; See Gill on "Jer 49:18".

Jeremiah 50:41

Ver. 41. Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation,.... The Modes and Persians, whose country lay north of Babylon: See Gill on "Jer 50:9";

and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth; the kings of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz, Jer 51:27; and of the Armenians and other nations that Cyrus had subdued and brought with him in his army against Babylon, as Xenophon {s} relates. Ten kings shall be raised up against mystical Babylon, and hate her, and burn her with fire, Re 17:12.

{s} Cyropaedia, l. 5. c. 15.

Jeremiah 50:42

Ver. 42. They shall hold the bow and the lance,.... Or "spear". The Targum interprets it, "shields"; as many in Cyrus's army had {t}; the one an offensive, the other a defensive weapon; or, if bow and lance, the one is used at a distance, the other when near. The Medes and Persians were well skilled in handling the bow, as once and again observed: this very properly describes the armour of the Persians; which were, as Herodotus {u} says, large bows and short spears; and Xenophon {w} observes, that, besides bows and arrows, they had two javelins or lances, one of which they cast, and the other they held and used in their hands, as they found necessary; and so Cyrus {x}, in a speech of his, says that they had breast plates to cover their bodies, and lances or javelins which they could use by throwing or holding, as they pleased:

they [are] cruel, and will not show mercy: not even to infants, but dash them against the stones, Ps 137:8; see Isa 13:17; and
See Gill on "Isa 13:17" and
See Gill on "Isa 13:18"; hence "horribilis Medus", in Horace {y}:

their voice shall roar like the sea; when there is a tempest on it. This does not design the shout of the soldiers, when beginning the onset in battle, or making an attack upon a city besieged; but the noise of their march, their foot, and horse, and chariots, and the clashing of their army; all which, by reason of their numbers, would be very clamorous and terrible:

and they shall ride upon horses; the Persians had a large cavalry, their country abounding in horses:

[everyone] put in array like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon; furnished with armour, and put in a proper disposition, all in rank and file, well accoutred, and full of spirit, prepared to engage in battle, with you, O ye inhabitants of Babylon.

{t} Cyropaedia, l. 5. c. 15. {u} Terpsichore, sive l. 5. c. 49. & Polymnia, sive l. 7. c. 61. {w} Cyropaedia, l. 1. c. 5. {x} Ibid. l. 4. c. 16. {y} Carmin. l. 1. Ode 29.

Jeremiah 50:43

Ver. 43. The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them,.... Belshazzar, as Kimchi; he had the report brought him of the invasion of his land by them; of their approach to Babylon, and design upon it; and of their number, character, and force:

and his hands waxed feeble; as they did when he saw the handwriting upon the wall, **Da 5:6**;

anguish took hold of him, [and] pangs as of a woman in travail; a sudden panic seized him, and he was quite dispirited at once, as a woman in childbirth, when her pains come upon her, and there is no avoiding them; though when those who were with Gobrias and Gadates rushed in upon him, they found him standing up with his sword drawn {z}, but unable to defend himself against such a posse as came in upon him.

{z} Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 23.

Jeremiah 50:44

Ver. 44. Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan,.... What is said of Nebuchadnezzar coming up against Edom is here said of Cyrus coming up against Babylon; for of a king it is to be understood; as the Targum,

"behold, a king with his army shall come up against them, as a lion from the height of Jordan;"

see Jer 49:19;

unto the habitation of the strong; to Babylon; where dwelt the king, his nobles, and his mighty men:

but I will make them suddenly run away from her; as they did from her king Belshazzar, when Gobrias and Gadates entered the royal palace, and seized upon him {a};

and who [is] a chosen [man, that] I may appoint over her? or, "a young man" {b}? such an one Cyrus was, who, by divine appointment, became master and governor of Babylon:

and who will appoint me the time? to enter the lists with me, and litigate the point with me in a court of judicature, or contend with me in battle:

and who [is] that shepherd that will stand before me? or king? not Belshazzar, he could not stand before the Lord: so the Targum,

"there is no king that hath strength before me;"

that is, to withstand him, or hinder what he has appointed and ordered to be done; See Gill on "Jer 49:19".

{a} Ibid. {b} rwxb ym "quis juvenis?" Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 50:45

Ver. 45. Therefore hear ye the counsel of the Lord that he hath taken against Babylon,.... The same is said in Jer 49:20; only, instead of Edom, Babylon is here put, and in the next clause:

and his purposes that he hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans; instead of the inhabitants of Teman, the land of the Chaldeans:

surely the least of the flock shall draw them out; the weakest and most feeble in the army of Cyrus should be more than a match for any in Babylon, and should draw them out, and devour them, as dogs and wolves the sheep out of the flock:

surely he shall make [their] habitation desolate with them;
See Gill on "Jer 49:20".

Jeremiah 50:46

Ver. 46. At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved,.... It being so sudden and unexpected, and so very astonishing:

and the cry is heard among the nations; that Babylon is fallen; which, as applied to mystical Babylon, will be matter of joy to some, and of lamentation to others; see Re 14:8.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 51:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 51

The former part of this chapter is a continuation of the prophecy of the preceding chapter, concerning the destruction of Babylon, Jer 51:1; the latter part of it contains a prophecy of Jeremiah sent to the captives in Babylon by the hand of Seraiah, with the copy of the above prophecy against Babylon, and an order to fasten a stone to it, and cast it into the river Euphrates, as a sign, confirming the utter and irreparable ruin of Babylon, Jer 51:59.

Ver. 1. Thus saith the Lord, behold, I will raise up against Babylon,.... This is not a new prophecy, but a continuation of the former, and an enlargement of it. The Babylonians being the last and most notorious enemies of the Jews, their destruction is the longer dwelt upon; and as they were against the Lord's people the Lord was against them, and threatens to raise up instruments of his vengeance against them:

and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me; that dwell in Babylon, the metropolis of the Chaldeans, the seat and centre of the enemies of God and his people. It is a periphrasis of the Chaldeans; and, so the Targum renders it,

"against the inhabitants of the land of the Chaldeans;"

and so the Septuagint version, against the Chaldeans; and Jarchi and Kimchi observe that according to "athbash", a rule of interpretation with the Jews, the letters in "leb kame", rendered "the midst of them that rise up against me", answer to "Cashdim" or the Chaldeans; however they are no doubt designed; for they rose up against God, by setting up idols of their own; and against his people, by taking and carrying them captive: and now the Lord says he would raise up against them

a destroying wind; a northern one, the army of the Modes and Persians, which should sweep away all before it. The Targum is,

"people that are slayers; whose hearts are lifted up, and are beautiful in stature, and their spirit destroying."

Jeremiah 51:2

Ver. 2. And I will send unto Babylon farmers, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land,.... Or, "strangers that shall fan her" {c}; meaning the Medes and Persians, who should be like a strong wind upon the mountains, where corn, having been threshed, was fanned, and the chaff carried away by the wind; and such would the Chaldeans be in the hand of the Persians, scattered and dispersed among the nations as chaff with the wind, and their cities be emptied of inhabitants, and of their wealth and riches. The Targum is,

"I will send against Babylon spoilers, that shall spoil and exhaust the land:"

for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about; in the time of the siege they shall surround her on all sides, so that none might escape; as Babylon had been a fanner of the Lord's people, now she should be fanned herself, and stripped of all she had; see
Jer 15:7.

{c} Myrz "alienos", Cocceius; some in Vatablus; so Kimchi, Ben Melech, Abendana.

Jeremiah 51:3

Ver. 3. Against [him that] bendeth let the archer bend his bow,.... These are either the words of the Lord to the Medes and Persians, to the archers among them, to bend their bows and level their arrows against the Chaldeans, who had bent their bows and shot their arrows against others; or of the Medes and Persians stirring up one another to draw their bows, and fight manfully against the enemy:

and against [him that] lifteth up himself in his brigandine; or coat of mail; that swaggers about in it, proud of it, and putting his confidence in it, as if out of all danger. The sense is, that they should direct their arrows both against those that were more lightly or more heavily armed; since by them they might do execution among the one and the other:

and spare ye not her young men; because of their youth, beauty, and strength:

destroy ye utterly all her host; her whole army, whether officers or common soldiers; or let them be accoutred in what manner they will. The Targum is,

"consume all her substance."

Jeremiah 51:4

Ver. 4. Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans,.... By the sword, or by the arrows and darts of the Medes and Persians:

and [they that are] thrust through in her streets; either by the one or by the other, especially the latter, since they only are mentioned;
See Gill on "Jer 50:30".

Jeremiah 51:5

Ver. 5. For Israel [hath] not [been] forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the Lord of hosts,.... That is, not totally and finally; for though they might seem to be forsaken, when carried captive by their enemies, yet they were not in such sense as a woman is deprived of her husband when dead, and she is become a widow, as the word {d} used may signify; or when divorced from him; or as children are deprived of their parents, and become orphans; but so it was not with Israel; for thought they were under the frowns of Providence, and the resentment of God they had sinned against, yet the relation between them still subsisted; he was their covenant God and Father, their husband and protector, and who would vindicate them, and avenge them on their enemies:

though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel; which was the reason why they were carried captive, and so seemed to be forsaken of God; or though their land was filled with punishment, with devastation and destruction, yet nevertheless God would appear for them, and restore that and them unto it; or rather this is to be understood of the land of the Chaldeans, as it is by Jarchi and Kimchi; and be rendered, "for their land is filled with [punishment] for sin, from", or "by", or "because of the Holy One of Israel" {e}; by which it appears, that the people of God were not forsaken by him, and were not without a patron and defender of them; since it was a plain case that the land of the Chaldeans was filled with the punishment of the sword and other calamities by the Holy One of Israel, because of the sins they had committed against him, and the injuries they had done to his people. So the Targum,

"for their land is filled with, (punishment for) the sins of murder, by the word of the Holy One of Israel."

{d} Nmla "viduus, [sive] viduatus", Vatablus, Calvin, Montanus; "ut vidua", Pagninus; "orbus", Schmidt. {e} Mva halm Mura yk "quia terra illorum repleta est delicto, [sive] reatu, [vel] poena", Grotius; so some in Gataker. larvy vwdqm "a Sancto Israelis", Montanus, Schmidt; "propter Sanctum Israelis", Vatablus, Calvin, Cocceius; so Ben Melech.

Jeremiah 51:6

Ver. 6. Flee out of the midst of Babylon,.... This is said either to such as were there of other nations upon trade and business, as Kimchi, to get out of it as fast as they could, that they might not be consumed; or to the Israelites, as Jarchi, the Jews that were captives there. This is applied to the people of God in mystical Babylon,
Re 18:4;

and deliver every man his soul; or "life"; from the destruction coming on the city, and the inhabitants of it;

be not cut off in her iniquity; or, "that he be not cut off" {f}; with her, in the punishment inflicted upon her for her iniquities; which is the same as partaking of her plagues, Re 18:4;

for this [is] the time, of the Lord's vengeance; the time fixed by him to take vengeance on Babylon for her sins against him, and the wrongs done to his people:

he will render unto her a recompence; the just demerit of their sins; a recompence or reward by way of punishment for them; see Re 18:6.

{f} wmdt la "ne exscindamini", Junius & Tremellius, Schmidt; "ne committitote ut exscindamini", Piscator.

Jeremiah 51:7

Ver. 7. Babylon [hath been] a golden cup in the hand of the Lord,.... Either so called from the liquor in it, being of a yellow colour, or pure as gold, as the Jewish commentators generally; or from the matter of it, being made of gold, denoting the grandeur, splendour, and riches of the Babylonian empire; which, for the same reason, is called the head of gold, **Da 2:38**; this was in the hand of the Lord, under his direction, and at his dispose; an instrument he make use of to dispense the cup of his wrath and vengeance to other nations, or to inflict punishment on them for their sins; see Jer 25:15; or else the sense is, that, by the permission of God, Babylon had by various specious pretences drawn the nations of the earth into idolatry, and other sins, which were as poison in a golden cup, by which they had been deceived; and this suits best with the use of the phrase in Re 17:4;

that made all the earth drunken; either disturbed them with wars, so that they were like a drunken man that reels to and fro, and falls, as they did, into ruin and destruction; or made them drunk with the wine of her fornication, with idolatry, so that they were intoxicated with it, as the whore of Rome, mystical Babylon, is said to do, Re 17:2;

the nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the nations are mad: they drank of the wine of God's wrath by her means, being engaged in wars, which proved their ruin, and deprived theft of their riches, strength, and substance, as mad men are of their reason; or they drank in her errors, and partook of her idolatry, and ran mad upon her idols, as she did, Jer 50:38; see Re 18:3.

Jeremiah 51:8

Ver. 8. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed,.... Or "broken" {g}; even into shivers, as a cup is; for when it had been used to answer the purposes designed by the Lord, he let it fall cut of his hands at once, and it was broken; or rather he dashed it in pieces, as a potter's vessel. The destruction of Babylon was brought about in a very short time, considering the strength of it; and was unexpected by the inhabitants of it, and by the nations round about; but, when it was come, it was irreparable: so the destruction of mystical Babylon will be in one hour, and it will be an utter and entire destruction,
Re 18:8;

howl for her; as the inhabitants of Babylon, and her friends and allies that loved her, did no doubt; and as the kings and merchants of the earth, and others, will howl for spiritual Babylon, Re 18:9;

take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed: or balsam; see
Jer 46:11; which is said by way of derision and mockery, as Kimchi and Abarbinel observe; or in an ironical and sarcastic manner; suggesting, that, let what means soever be made use of, her wound was incurable, her ruin inevitable, and her case irrecoverable.

{g} rbvt "confracta est", Schmidt; "fracta est", Cocceius; "contrita est", Piscator.

Jeremiah 51:9

Ver. 9. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed,.... These are either the words of the friends of Babylon of her auxiliaries and allies, who did all they could to defend her against the Persians, but to no purpose; it was not in their power to help her; the time of her destruction was come, and there was no avoiding it; or of the prophets and good people of the Jews that were in Babylon, that took pains to convince, the inhabitants of Babylon of their idolatries and other sins, and reform them, that so they might not be their ruin; but all instructions and admonitions were in vain; in like manner many worthy reformers have laboured much to reclaim mystical Babylon, or the church of Rome, from her errors and idolatries; but still she retains them; wherefore it follows:

forsake her, and let us go everyone into his own country; so said the auxiliary

troops that were in the service of the king of Babylon; since we can do him no good, and are ourselves posed to danger, let us desert him, and provide for our safety by hastening to our own country as fast as we can; this was really the case after the first battle of Cyrus with the Babylonians, in which their king Neriglissar was slain: Croesus and the rest of the allies, seeing their case so distressed and helpless, left them to shift for themselves, and fled by night {h}: or so might the Jews say when the city was taken, and they were delivered out of the hands of their oppressors; and so will the people of God say, who shall be called out of mystical Babylon just before its ruin,
Re 18:4;

for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up [even] to the skies: that is, her sins were so many, that they reached even to heaven; and were taken notice of by God that dwelleth there; and were the cause of judgment or punishment being from thence inflicted on her, which was unavoidable, being the decree of heaven, and the just demerit of her sin; and therefore no help could be afforded her; nor was there any safety by being in her; see Re 18:5.

{h} Xenophon, Cyropaedia l. 4. c. 2.

Jeremiah 51:10

Ver. 10. The Lord hath brought forth our righteousness,.... Or "righteousnesses" {i} this, as Kimchi observes, is spoken in the person of the Israelites; not as though the Jews had done no iniquity, for which they were carried captive; they had committed much, and were far from being righteous in themselves, but were so in comparison of the Chaldeans; and who had gone beyond their commission, and had greatly oppressed them, and used them cruelly; and now the Lord, by bringing destruction upon them, vindicated the cause of his people, and showed it to be a righteous one; and that the religion they professed was true, and which the Chaldeans had derided and reproached: this righteousness, not of their persons, but of their cause, and the truth of their holy religion, the Lord brought forth to the light, and made it manifest, by taking their parts, and destroying their enemies:

come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the Lord our God; the Jews encourage one another to return into their own land, rebuild their temple, and set up the worship of God in it; and there declare the wondrous work of God in the destruction of Babylon, and their deliverance from thence; giving him the praise and glory of it; and exciting others to join with them in it, it being the Lord's work, and marvellous in their eyes; and so, when mystical Babylon is destroyed, voices will be heard in heaven, in the church, ascribing salvation, honour, and glory, to God, Re 19:1. All this is true, in an evangelic sense, of such as are redeemed by Christ, and brought out of mystical Babylon, and are effectually called by the grace of God; to these the Lord brings forth the righteousness of Christ, which he makes their own, by imputing it to them; and he brings it near to them, and puts it upon them; it is revealed unto them from faith to faith; it is applied to them by the Spirit of God, and put into their hands to plead with God, as their justifying righteousness; and which is brought forth by him on all occasions, to free them from all charges exhibited against them by law or justice, by the world, Satan, or their own hearts, **Ro 8:33**; and it becomes such persons to declare in Zion, in the church of God, the works of the Lord; not their own, which will not bear the light, nor bear speaking of; but the works of God, of creation and providence; but more especially of grace, as the great work of redemption by Jesus Christ; and particularly the Spirit's work of grace upon their hearts, which is not the work of men, but of God; being a new creation work; a regeneration; a resurrection from the dead; and requiring almighty power, to which man is unfit and unequal: this lies in the quickening of men dead in trespasses and sins; in enlightening such as are darkness itself; in an implantation of the principles of grace and holiness in them; in giving them new hearts and new spirits; and in bringing them off of their own righteousness, to depend on Christ alone for salvation; and which work, as it is begun, will be carried on, and performed in them, until the day of Christ; and, wherever it is, should not be concealed, but should be declared in the gates of Zion, publicly, freely, and fitly and faithfully, to the glory of the grace of God, and for the comfort of his people, to whom every such declaration is matter of joy and pleasure; see Ps 66:16.

{i} wnytqdu "justitas nostras", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 51:11

Ver. 11. Make bright the arrows,.... Which were covered with rust; scour them of it; anoint them with oil, as armour were wont to be; make them neat, clean, and bright, that they may pierce the deeper; hence we read of a "polished shaft", or arrow, one made bright and pure, Isa 49:2; agreeably to this some render the word "sharpen the arrows" {k}; so the Targum. The word has the signification of "choosing"; but, as Gussetius observes {l}, whether the direction be to choose the best arrows, or to scour clean and polish them, the end is the same; namely, to have such as are most fit for use. Joseph Kimchi derives the word from another, which signifies a feather; and so renders it, "feather the arrows" {m}; that they may fly the swifter. These and what follow are either the words of God, or of the prophet; or, as some think, of the Jews about to return to Judea, whose words are continued, exhorting the Medes and Persians to go on with the war against the Chaldeans; but they rather seem to be addressed to the Chaldeans themselves, putting them upon doing these things; and suggesting, that when they had done all they could, it would be to no purpose:

gather the shields; which lay scattered about and neglected in time of peace: or, "fill" them; fill the hands with them; or bring in a full or sufficient number; since there would be now occasion for them, to defend them against the enemy. The Targum, and several versions, render it, "fill the quivers" {n}; that is, with arrows; and so Jarchi: or, "fill the shields" {o}; that is, with oil; anoint them, as in
Isa 21:5;

the Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes; of Cyaxares, or Darius the Mede, and of Cyrus, who succeeded his uncle as king of Media; and indeed the army that came against Babylon was an army of Medes joined by the Persians, Cyrus being employed as general of it by his uncle. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read it, "the spirit of the king of the Medes"; with which the following clause seems to agree:

for his device [is] against Babylon, to destroy it; the device of the king of the Medes, Darius; or rather the device of the Lord, who stirred up the spirit of the kings of the Medes; put it into their hearts to fulfil his will; and gave them wisdom and skill, courage and resolution, to do it; and as he will to the kings of the earth against mystical Babylon, Re 17:16;

because it [is] the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of his temple; his vengeance on Babylon, for the destruction of his temple, and the profanation of it; see Jer 50:28.

{k} Myuxh wrbh "acuite sagittas", V. L. Castalio; "exacuite", Montanus. {l} Ebr. Comment. p. 148. {m} "Ponite pennas in sagittis", so some in Vatablus. {n} Myjlvh walm plhroute tav faretrav, Sept. "implete pharetras", V. L. Castalio, So Syr. this version is prefered by Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 860,

945. {o} "Implete scuta, scil. oleo", Stockius, p. 1098.

Jeremiah 51:12

Ver. 12. Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon,.... This is not said to the Medes and Persians, to put up a flag on the walls of Babylon, as a sign of victory, as Kimchi, Abarbinel, and others think; for as yet the city is not supposed to be taken by what follows; but rather to the Babylonians, to set up an ensign on their walls, to gather the inhabitants together, to defend their city, and the bulwarks of it; which, with what follows, is ironically spoken:

make the watch strong; to guard the city; observe the motions of the enemy, and give proper and timely notice; increase and double it:

set up watchmen; meaning the keepers of the walls; place them upon them, to keep a good look out, that they might not be surprised: this seems to respect the great carelessness and security the whole city was in the night it was taken; being wholly engaged in feasting and revelling, in rioting and drunkenness, having no fear of danger, or concern for their safety; with which they are tacitly upbraided:

prepare the ambushes; or, "liers in wait" {p}; to second or relieve those on the walls upon occasion; or seize unawares the besiegers, should they attempt to scale the walls, and enter the city:

for the Lord hath devised and done that which he spoke against the inhabitants of Babylon; or as he hath devised, so hath he done, or will do: his purposes cannot be frustrated, his counsel shall stand; and therefore had the Babylonians been ever so industrious in their own defence, they could never have prevented their ruin and destruction, which was resolved upon, and accordingly effected.

{p} Mybrah "insidiatores", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 51:13

Ver. 13. O thou that dwellest upon many waters,.... Here Babylon is addressed, either by the Lord, or by the prophet, or the godly Jews; who is described by her, situation, which was by the great river Euphrates; which being branched out into several canals or rivers, both ran through it, and encompassed it; hence mention is made of the rivers of Babylon, Ps 137:1; and a fit emblem this city was of mystical Babylon, which is also said to sit on many waters, interpreted of people and nations, Re 17:1; and which Kimchi here interprets of an affluence of good things, though he admits of the literal sense of the words:

abundant in treasures: of corn, and of the fruits of the earth, and so in condition to hold out a siege, as well as strongly fortified by art and nature, before described; and of gold and silver, the sinews of war, which she had got together, partly by commerce, and partly by the spoil of other nations; and yet neither her situation nor her affluence could secure her from ruin:

thine end is come, [and] the measure of thy covetousness; this flourishing city was now near its end, and with it the whole Babylonish monarchy; the time fixed by the Lord, for the duration of one and the other, was now come; and whereas her covetousness was insatiable, and would have known no bounds, for the enlargement of her dominions, and for the accumulation of more wealth and riches; God set a limit to it, beyond which it should not go; which measure was now filled up, and the time for it expired. The Targum is,

"the day of thy destruction is come, and the time of the visitation of thy wickedness,"

Jeremiah 51:14

Ver. 14. The Lord hath sworn by himself, [saying],.... Or, "by his soul" or "life" {q}; which is himself, than which he cannot swear by a greater, **Heb 6:13**; and the certain performance of what he swears unto need not be doubted of; and indeed the design of the oath is to assure of the truth of the thing, about which, after this, there ought to be no hesitation:

surely I fill thee with men as with caterpillars; or "locusts" {r}; march in vast numbers, and make sad desolation where they come; and to which a numerous army may fitly be compared; and which are here meant, even the army of Cyrus, that should enter Babylon, and fill it, as it did. So the Targum,

"the Lord of hosts hath sworn by his word, if I fill them with armies of many people as locusts:"

and they shall lift up a shout against thee; as soldiers, when they make the onset in battle; or as besiegers, when they make their attack on a city; or as when grape gatherers bring in their vintage, or tread out their wine, to which the allusion is: it signifies that her enemies should get an entire victory, and triumph over her.

{q} wvpnb "per animam suam", Pagninus, Cocceius, Schmidt. {r} qlyk "ut, [vel] quasi brucho", V. L. Cocceius, Montanus, Grotius, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 51:15

Ver. 15. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding. The Targum prefaces the words thus,

"these things saith he who hath made the earth, &c."

The verses Jer 51:16 are the same with Jer 10:12. God is described by his sovereignty, power, and wisdom; and the stupidity of men that trust in idols, and the vanity of them, are exposed, to convince the Babylonians that the Lord, who had determined on their destruction, would surely effect it, and that it would not be in the power of their idols to prevent it. See Gill on "Jer 10:12".

Jeremiah 51:16

Ver. 16. When he uttereth [his] voice, [there is] a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures. See Gill on "Jer 10:13".

Jeremiah 51:17

Ver. 17. Every man is brutish by [his] knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image [is] falsehood, and [there is] no breath in them. See Gill on "Jer 10:14".

Jeremiah 51:18

Ver. 18. They [are] vanity, the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. See Gill on "Jer 10:15".

Jeremiah 51:19

Ver. 19. The portion of Jacob [is] not like them; for he [is] the former of all things: and [Israel is] the rod of his inheritance: the Lord of hosts [is] his name. See Gill on "Jer 10:16".

Jeremiah 51:20

Ver. 20. Thou [art] my battle axe [and] weapons of war,.... This is said by the Lord, either to Cyrus, as some, to which our version inclines, whom God made use of as an instrument to subdue nations and kingdoms, and destroy them; see Isa 45:1; or rather Babylon, and the king of it, who had been the hammer of the earth, Jer 50:23; as it may be rendered here, "thou [art] my hammer" {s}; or, "hast been"; an instrument in his hands, of beating the nations to pieces, as stones by a hammer, and of destroying them, as by weapons of war: this, and what follows, are observed to show, that though Babylon had been used by the Lord for the destruction of others, it should not be secure from it itself, but should share the same fate; unless this is to be understood of the church of God, and kingdom of Christ, which in the latter day will break in pieces all the kingdoms of the earth, **Da 2:44**; which sense seems to have some countenance and confirmation from Jer 51:24 "in your sight". The Targum is,

"thou art a scatterer before me, a city in which are warlike arms;"

which seems to refer to Babylon:

for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms; or, "with thee I have broke in pieces, [and] have destroyed"; the future instead of the past {t}; as the nations and kingdoms of Judea, Egypt, Edom, Moab, Ammon, and others: or, "that I may break in pieces" {u}, &c. and so it expresses the end for which he was a hammer, as well as the use he had been or would be of.

{s} yl hta Upm "malleus es, [vel] fuisti mihi", Pagninus, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt. {t} "Dispersi, perdidi", Lutherus; "conquassavi", Munster; "dissipavi", Piscator. {u} ytupnw "ut dissiparem", Junius & Tremellius; "ut dispergam", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 51:21

Ver. 21. And with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider,.... Or, "have broken": meaning the cavalry of an army, wherein lies its chief strength:

and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider; which were also used in war.

Jeremiah 51:22

Ver. 22. And with thee also will I break in pieces man and woman,.... Or, "have broken"; having no respect to any sex, and to the propagation of posterity:

and with thee will I break in pieces old and young; not sparing men of any age, however useful they might be, the one for their wisdom, the other for their strength:

and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid; who by procreation of children might fill and strengthen commonwealths.

Jeremiah 51:23

Ver. 23. And I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock,.... Or, have broken; which Abarbinel thinks respects the Arabians particularly, who were shepherds, and dwelt in tents; but it rather signifies shepherds and their flocks in general; who were killed or scattered wherever his armies came, which spared none, even the most innocent and useful, and though unarmed:

and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; with which he ploughed his ground: signifying by this, as well as the former, that those were not spared, by which kingdoms were supported and maintained, as shepherds and husbandmen:

and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers; by whom kingdoms and states are governed and protected.

Jeremiah 51:24

Ver. 24. And I will render unto Babylon, and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea,.... Or, "but I will render" {w}, &c. though I have made this use of Babylon, she shall not be spared, but receive her just recompense of reward; not the city of Babylon only, but the whole land of Chaldea, and all the inhabitants of it:

all their evil that they have done in Zion, in your sight, saith the Lord; the sense is, that for all the evil the Chaldeans had done in Judea; the ravages they had made there, the blood they had shed, and the desolation they had made; and particularly for what they had done in Jerusalem, and especially in the temple, burning, spoiling, and profaning that, God would now righteously punish them, and retaliate all this evil on them; and which should be done publicly, before all the nations of the world, and particularly in the sight of God's own people: for this phrase, "in your sight", does not refer to the evils done in Zion, but to the recompense that should be made for them.

{w} ytmlvw "sed rependam", Piscator; "sed retribuam", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 51:25

Ver. 25. Behold, I [am] against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth,.... Babylon is called a mountain, though situated in a plain, because of its high walls, lofty towers, and hanging gardens, which made it look at a distance like a high mountain, as Lebanon, and others: or because it was a strong fortified city; so the Targum renders it, O destroying city: or because of its power and grandeur as a monarchy, it being usual to compare monarchies to mountains; see **Isa 2:2**; here called a "destroying" one for a reason given, because it destroyed all the earth, all the nations and kingdoms of it: the same character is given of mystical Babylon and its inhabitants, Re 11:18:

and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee: in a way of vindictive wrath, pouring it out upon her, and inflicting his judgments on her; laying hold on and seizing her in a furious manner, as a man does his enemy, when he has found him:

and roll them down from the rocks; towers and fortresses in Babylon, which looked like rocks, but should be now demolished:

and will make thee a burnt mountain: reduced to cinders and ashes by the conflagration of it: or, "a burning mountain": like Etna and Vesuvius; we never read of the burning of literal Babylon, but we do of mystical Babylon: see Re 18:8; and with this compare **Re 8:8**. The Targum renders it, a burnt city.

Jeremiah 51:26

Ver. 26. And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations,.... Signifying that it should be so utterly consumed by fire, that there should not be a stone left fit to be put into any new building, especially to be a corner or a foundation stone. The Targum understands it figuratively,

"and they shall not take of thee a king for a kingdom, and a ruler for government:"

but thou shall be desolate for ever, saith the Lord; see
Jer 50:39.

Jeremiah 51:27

Ver. 27. Set ye up a standard in the land,.... Not in Chaldea, but rather in any land; or in all the countries which belonged to Media and Persia; where Cyrus's standard is ordered to be set up, to gather soldiers together, and enlist in his service, in order to go with him in his expedition against Babylon:

blow the trumpet among the nations; for the same purpose, to call them to arms, to join the forces of Cyrus, and go with him into the land of Chaldea:

prepare the nations against her: animate them, stir up their spirits against her, and furnish them with armour to engage with her: or, "sanctify" {x} them; select a certain number out of them fit for such work:

call together the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; the two former are generally thought to intend Armenia the greater, and the lesser; and the latter Ascania, a country in Phrygia; and certain it is that Cyrus first conquered these countries, and had many Armenians, Phrygians, and Cappadocians, in his army he brought against Babylon, as Xenophon {y} relates. The Targum is, declare

"against her to the kingdoms of the land of Kardu, the army of Armenia and Hadeb,"

or Adiabene:

appoint a captain against her; over all these forces thus collected: Cyrus seems to be intended; unless the singular is put for the plural, and so intends a sufficient number of general officers of the army:

cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars; or "locusts" {z}; which though generally smooth, yet some fire hairy and rough; to which the horses in Cyrus's army are compared, for their multitude, the shape of their heads, long manes, and manner of going, leaping, and prancing. So the Targum,

"they shall cause the horses to come up, leaping like the shining locust;"

that is of a yellow colour, and shines like gold. So the word the Targum here uses is used by Jonathan in Le 13:32; of hair yellow as gold, and here to be understood of hairy locusts: and, as Aelianus {a} says, there were locusts of a golden colour in Arabia. And such may be meant here by the Chaldee paraphrase, which well expresses their motion by leaping; see **Joe 2:5**; and which agrees with that of horses. The word rendered "rough" has the signification of horror in it, such as makes the hair to stand upright; see **Job 4:15**; and so some {b} render it here. And Bochart {c}, from Alcamus, an Arabic writer, observes, that there is a sort of locusts which have two hairs upon their head, which are called their horn, which when erected may answer to this sense of the word; and he brings in the poet Claudian {d}, as describing the locust by the top of its head, as very horrible and terrible; and that some locusts? have hair upon their heads seems manifest from **Re 9:8**; though it may be, the reason why they are here represented as so dreadful and frightful may not be so much on account of their form, as for the terror they strike men with, when they come in great numbers, and make such terrible havoc of the fruits of the earth as they do; wherefore the above learned writer proposes to render the words, "as the horrible locusts" {e}.

{x} wvdq "sanctificate", Piscator, Schmidt. {y} Cyropaedia, l. 5. c. 15. & l. 7. c. 21. {z} qlyk "sicut bruchum", Montanus, Schmidt. {a} De Animal. l. 10. c. 13. {b} rmo "horripilantem", Montanus; "qui horret", Piscator, Cocceius. {c} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 2. col. 456. {d} "Horret apex capitis, medio fera lumina surgunt Vertice", &c. Epigram. 13. {e} "Non tam [horrentem], quam [horrendum] sonat".

Jeremiah 51:28

Ver. 28. Prepare against her the nations, with the kings of the Medes,.... At the head of them, Darius and Cyrus. The Syriac version has it in the singular number, the king of the Modes:

the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominions; that is, the inhabitants of it, the common people, with their princes, nobles, governors, as captains of them, under Cyrus, their generalissimo.

Jeremiah 51:29

Ver. 29. And the land shall tremble and sorrow,.... The land of Chaldea, the inhabitants of it, should tremble, when they heard of this powerful army invading their land, and besieging their metropolis; and should sorrow, and be in pain as a woman in travail, as the word {f} signifies:

for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon; or, "shall stand" {g}; be certainly fulfilled; for his purposes are firm and not frustratable:

to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant; this the Lord purposed, and threatened to do; see Jer 50:39.

{f} lxtw "et parturiet", Schmidt. So Ben Melech. {g} hmq "stabit, [vel] stant", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 51:30

Ver. 30. The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight,.... Or, "ceased from fighting" {h} for it seems, upon Cyrus's first coming, the king of Babylon and his army gave him battle; but being overthrown, they retired to the city {i}, and dared never fight more:

they have remained in [their] holds; in the towers and fortresses of Babylon, never daring to sally out of the city, or appear in the field of battle any more; even though Cyrus sent the king of Babylon a personal challenge, to end the quarrel by a single combat {k}:

their might hath failed; their courage sunk and was gone; they had no heart to face their enemy:

they became as women; as weak as they, as the Targum; timorous and fearful, having no courage left in them, and behaved more like women than men:

they have burnt her dwelling places; that is, the enemy burnt their houses, when they entered into the city, to inject terror into them:

her bars are broken; the bars of the gates of the city, or of the palaces of the king and nobles, and of the houses of the people, by the soldiers, to get the plunder; see Isa 45:1.

{h} Mxlhl wldx "cessaverunt a praelio", V. L. "desinent pugnare", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "cessarunt pugnare", Schmidt. So Pagninus, Montanus. {i} Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 5. c. 19. Herodot. l. 1. sive Clio. c. 190. {k} Xenophon, ib. l. 5. c. 10.

Jeremiah 51:31

Ver. 31. One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another,.... That is, one post should be after another, and one messenger after another, post upon post, and messenger upon messenger, as fast as they could run; when one had been with his message, and delivered it, and returned, he meets another; or they met one another, coming from different places:

to show the king of Babylon his city is taken at [one] end; or, "at the end" {l}; we render it "one end", as Kimchi does; at the end where Cyrus's army first landed, when they came up the channel of the river Euphrates they had drained. And so Herodotus {m} says, that when the Babylonians, which inhabited the "extreme parts" of the city, were taken, they that were in the middle of it were not sensible of it, because of the greatness of the city; and the rather, because they were engaged that night in feasting and dancing. Nay, Aristotle {n} says, it was reported that one part of the city was taken three days before the other end knew it, it being more like a country than a city; which does not seem credible, nor is it consistent with the Scripture account of it; however, it was taken by surprise, and some parts of it before the king was aware of it; who very probably had his palace in the middle of it, whither these messengers ran one after another, or from different parts, to acquaint him with it.

{l} huqm "a fine", Montanus; "ab extremitate", Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, De Dieu, Schmidt. {m} L. 1. sive Clio, c. 191. {n} Politic. l. 3. c. 3.

Jeremiah 51:32

Ver. 32. And that the passages are stopped,.... Or "taken", or "seized" {o}; where Cyrus placed soldiers to keep them; these were the passages leading from the river Euphrates to the city, the keys of it; the little gates, that Herodotus {p} speaks of, leading to the river, which were left open that night. Kimchi thinks the towers built by the river side, to keep the enemy out, that should attempt to enter, are meant; these were now in his hands;

and the reeds they have burnt with fire; which grew upon the banks of the river, and in the marshes adjoining to it. Some render it, "the marshes" {q}; that is, the reeds and bulrushes in them, which usually grow in such places. And Herodotus {r} makes mention of a marsh Cyrus came to; the reeds in it he burnt, having many torches, with which he might set fire to them; as he proposed with them to burn the houses, doors, and porches {s}; either to make way for his army, which might hinder the march of it; or to give light, that they might see their way into the city the better: though some think it was to terrify the inhabitants; which seems not so likely, since he marched up to the royal palace with great secrecy. This circumstance is mentioned, to show the certainty of the enemy's entrance, and the taking of part of the city. R. Jonah, from the Arabic language, in which the word {t} here used signifies "fortresses", so renders it here;

and the men of war are affrighted; and so fled, and left the passes, towers, and fortresses, which fell into the hands of Cyrus, as soon as they perceived his army was come up the channel and was landed, and the reeds were burnt.

{o} wvptn "praeoccupata", V. L. "comprehensa", Montanus; "occupati", Tigurine version, Schmidt. {p} L. 1. sive Clio, c. 191. {q} Mymga ta "paludes", V. L. Syr. Grotius; "stagna", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt. {r} L. 1. sive Clio, c. 191. {s} Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 22. {t} "arundinetum feris et hinc munimentum, castellum", Camus apud Golium, col. 33. "castellum, munimentum viarum, arces", Castel. Lex. col. 29.

Jeremiah 51:33

Ver. 33. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... "The Lord of hosts", the Lord God omnipotent, and can do all things; "the God of Israel", and therefore will plead their cause, and take vengeance on Babylon:

the daughter of Babylon [is] like a threshing floor; on which the nations of the earth had been threshed, or punished and destroyed; and now she was like a threshing floor, unto which should be gathered, and on which should be laid, her king, princes, and the people of the land, and be there beat and crushed to pieces. The Targum renders it the congregation of Babylon; and the Septuagint the houses of the king of Babylon; so the Arabic version:

[it is] time to thresh her; not the floor, but the sheaves on it: or, "it is the time to tread her" {u}; as corn was trodden out by the oxen; or rather as threshing floors, being new laid with earth, were trodden, and so made hard and even, and by that means prepared for threshing against the harvest; when the corn would be ripe, cut down, and gathered in, and laid up, as follows:

yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come; when she would be ripe for ruin, and God would, by his instruments, put in the sickle of his wrath, and cut her down, her king, her princes, her cities, and her people; see Re 14:15. The Targum is,

"and yet a very little while, and spoilers shall come to her."

{u} hkyrdh te "tempus calcandi eam", Pagninus, Calvin; "tempus calcare eam", Montanus; "eo tempore quo illa calcari solet", Piscator.

Jeremiah 51:34

Ver. 34. Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me,.... Or "us" {w}; everyone of us: these are the words of Zion and Jerusalem, as appears from Jer 51:35; complaining of the injuries done them by the king of Babylon, who had eaten them up; spoiled their substance, as the Targum; took their cities, plundered them of their riches, and carried them away captive:

he hath crushed me; to the earth; or "bruised" or "broken", even all her bones; see Jer 50:17;

he hath made me an empty vessel; emptied the land of its inhabitants and riches, and left nothing valuable in it:

he hath swallowed me up like a dragon; or "whale", or any large fish, which swallow the lesser ones whole. The allusion is to the large swallow of dragons, which is sometimes represented as almost beyond all belief; for not only Pliny {x} from Megasthenes reports, that, in India, serpents, that is, dragons, grow to such a bulk, that they will swallow whole deer, and even bulls; but Posidonius {y} relates, that in Coelesyria was one, whose gaping jaws would admit of a horse and his rider: and Onesicritus {z} speaks of two dragons in the country of Abisarus in India; the one was fourscore and the other a hundred and forty cubits long;

he hath filled his belly with my delicates; with the treasures of the king and his nobles; with the vessels of the temple, and the riches of the people, which he loaded himself with to his full satisfaction. So the Targum,

"he filled his treasury with the good of my land;"

he hath cast me out; out of my land, and carried me captive; so the Targum.

{w} The "Cetib", or textual reading, is "us"; but the "Keri", or marginal reading, is "me", which our version follows, and so the same in the four following words, in the text. {x} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 14. col. 436. {y} Apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 3. c. 14. col. 436. {z} Apud Strabo. Geograph. l. 15. p. 480.

Jeremiah 51:35

Ver. 35. The violence done to me, and to my flesh, [be] upon Babylon,.... That is, let the injuries done to Zion and her children, be avenged on Babylon; the hurt done to their persons and families, and the spoiling of their goods, and destruction of their cities, houses, and substance:

shall the inhabitant of Zion say; by way of imprecation:

and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say; let the guilt of it be charged upon them, and punishment for it be inflicted on them. The Targum is,

"the sin of the innocent blood which is shed in me;"

let that be imputed to them, and vengeance come upon them for it.

Jeremiah 51:36

Ver. 36. Therefore thus saith the Lord,.... In answer to the prayers of the inhabitants of Zion and Jerusalem, imprecating divine vengeance on Babylon:

behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee; not by words only, but by deeds, inflicting punishment on their enemies:

and I will dry up her sea; the confluence of waters about Babylon; the river Euphrates, the channel of which was drained by Cyrus, by which means he took the city; and this may figuratively design the abundance of riches and affluence of good things in Babylon, which should now be taken from her:

and make her springs dry; deprive her of all the necessaries of life; and stop up all the avenues by which she was supplied with them; and cut off all communication of good things to her.

Jeremiah 51:37

Ver. 37. And Babylon shall become heaps,.... The houses should be demolished, and the stones lie in heaps one upon another, and become mere rubbish:

a dwelling place for dragons; and other wild and savage creatures. Dragons, as Aelianus {a} observes, love to live in desert places, and such now Babylon is; it lies in ruins; and even its palace is so full of scorpions and serpents, as Benjamin of Tudela {b} says it was in his time, that men durst not enter into it; see Jer 50:39;

an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant; an astonishment to neighbouring nations, and to all that pass by; who shall hiss at the destruction of it, and rejoice, there being not so much as a single inhabitant in it; which is its case to this day; see Jer 50:13.

{a} De Animal. l. 6. c. 63. {b} Itinerarium, p. 76.

Jeremiah 51:38

Ver. 38. They shall roar together like lions,.... Some understand this of the Medes and Persians, and the shouts they made at the attacking and taking of Babylon; but this does not so well agree with that, which seems to have been done in a secret and silent manner; rather according to the context the Chaldeans are meant, who are represented as roaring, not through fear of the enemy, and distress by him; for such a roaring would not be fitly compared to the roaring of a lion; but either this is expressive of their roaring and revelling at their feast afterwards mentioned, and at which time their city was taken; or else of the high spirits and rage they were in, and the fierceness and readiness they showed to give battle to Cyrus, when he first came with his army against them; and they did unite together, and met him, and roared like lions at him, and fought with him; but being overcome, their courage cooled; they retired to their city, and dared not appear more;
See Gill on "Jer 51:30";

they shall yell as lions' whelps. Jarchi and other Rabbins interpret the word of the braying of an ass; it signifies to "shake"; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "they shall shake [their] hair"; as lions do their manes; and young lions their shaggy hair; and as blustering bravadoes shake theirs; and so might the Babylonians behave in such a swaggering way when the Medes and Persians first attacked them.

Jeremiah 51:39

Ver. 39. In their heat I will make their feasts,.... I will order it that their feasts shall be id the time of heat, that so they may be made drunk; so Jarchi: or when they are hot with feasting, I will disturb their feast by a handwriting on the wall; so Kimchi; see **Da 5:1**; to which he directs: or when they are inflamed with wine, I will put something into their banquets, into their cups; I will mingle their potions with the wine of my wrath; and, while they are feasting, ruin shall come upon them; and so it was, according to Herodotus and Xenophon, that the city of Babylon was taken, while the inhabitants were feasting; and this account agrees with **Da 5:1**. This text is quoted in the Talmud {c}, where the gloss on it says,

"this is said concerning Belshazzar and his company, when they returned from a battle with Darius and Cyrus, who besieged Babylon, and Belshazzar overcame that day; and they were weary and hot, and sat down to drink, and were drunken, and on that day he was slain;"

and the Targum is,

"I will bring tribulation upon them:"

and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice; in a riotous and revelling way; or that they may be mad and tremble, as R. Jonah, from the use of the word {d} in the Arabic language, interprets it; so drunken men are oftentimes like mad men, deprived of their senses, and their limbs tremble through the strength of liquor; and here it signifies, that the Chaldeans should be so intoxicated with the cup of divine wrath and vengeance, that they should be at their wits' end; in the utmost horror and trembling; not able to stand, or defend themselves; and so the Targum,

"they shall be like drunken men, that they may not be strong;"

but as weak as they:

and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the Lord; not only fall asleep as drunken men do, and awake again; but sleep, and never awake more; or die, and not live again, until the resurrection morn; no doubt many of the Chaldeans, being in a literal sense drunk and asleep when the city was taken, were slain in their sleep, and never waked again. The Targum is, "and die the second death, and not live in the world to come;"

see Re 21:8.

{c} T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 15. 2. {d} "furor ac repentina mors", Camus apud Golium, col. 1634. "tremor, timor mortis aegroto contingens", Giggeius apud Castel. col. 2772. So R. Sol. Urbiu. Ohel Moed, fol. 32. 1. interprets the words of trembling.

Jeremiah 51:40

Ver. 40. I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter,.... To the place of slaughter; who shall be able to make no more resistance than lambs. This explains what is meant by being made drunk, and sleeping a perpetual sleep, even destruction and death:

like rams with he goats; denoting the promiscuous destruction of the prince and common people together.

Jeremiah 51:41

Ver. 41. How is Sheshach taken!.... Not the city Shushan, as Sir John Marsham thinks {e}; but Babylon, as is plain from a following clause; and so the Targum,

"how is Babylon subdued!"

called Sheshach, by a position and commutation of letters the Jews call "athbash"; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel account for it; or else from their idol Shach, the same with Bel, which was worshipped here, and had a temple erected for it; and where an annual feast was kept in honour of it, called the Sacchean feast; and which was observing the very time the city was taken; and may be the true reason of its having this name given it now; See Gill on "Jer 25:26"; the taking of which was very wonderful; and therefore this question is put by way of admiration; it being so well fortified and provided to hold out a long siege:

and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised? for it was taken by stratagem and surprise, before the king and his guards, the army, and the inhabitants of it, were aware; that city, which was matter and occasion of praise to all the world, and went through it; for the compass of it, and height and strength of its walls; the river Euphrates that ran through it, and flowed about it; the temple, palaces, and gardens in it:

how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations! or, "a desolation"; and indeed its being a desolation was the reason of its being an astonishment among the nations; who were amazed to see so strong, rich, and splendid a city brought to ruin in a very short time.

{e} Canon. Chron. p. 607.

Jeremiah 51:42

Ver. 42. The sea is come up upon Babylon,.... A vast army, comparable to the great sea for the multitude thereof, even the army of the Medes and Persians under Cyrus; so the Targum,

"a king with his armies, which are numerous like the waters of the sea, is come up against Babylon:"

she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof; being surrounded, besieged, surprised, and seized upon by the multitude of soldiers in that army, which poured in upon it unawares. Some think here is a beautiful antithesis, between the inundation of Cyrus's army and the draining of the river Euphrates, by which means he poured in his forces into Babylon.

Jeremiah 51:43

Ver. 43. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness,.... Which some understand of Babylon itself, divided into two parts by the river Euphrates running in the midst of it, called by Berosus {f} the inward and outward cities; though rather these design the rest of the cities in Chaldea, of which Babylon was the metropolis, the mother city, and the other her daughters, which should share the same fate with herself; be demolished, and the ground on which they stood become a dry, barren, uncultivated, and desert land:

a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth [any] son of man pass thereby; having neither inhabitant nor traveller; see
Jer 50:12.

{f} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion, l. 1. c. 19.

Jeremiah 51:44

Ver. 44. And I will punish Bel in Babylon,.... The idol of the Babylonians, who had a temple in Babylon, where he was worshipped: the same is called Belus by Aelianus {g}, Curtius {h}, and Pausanias {i}; perhaps the same Herodian {k} calls Belis, and says some take him to be Apollo; for more of him, See Gill on "Isa 46:1"; and
See Gill on "Jer 50:2"; who was punished when his temple was demolished, and plundered of its wealth; this golden image of Belus was broke to pieces, and the gold of it carried away. The Targum is,

"I will visit or punish them that worship Bel in Babylon:"

and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up; the rich offerings made to him when victories were obtained; all success being ascribed to him; and the spoils of conquered enemies, which were brought and laid up in his temple, particularly the vessels of the sanctuary at Jerusalem, which were deposited there; see
2Ch 36:7; and which were restored by Cyrus, **Ezr 1:7**; which restoration of them greatly fulfilled this prophecy; and was a refunding of what was lodged with him, or a vomiting what he had swallowed up; compare with this the story of "Bel and the dragon":

and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him; either to worship him, or bring their presents to him, to ingratiate themselves with the king of Babylon:

yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall; which Bel was not able to defend; and therefore should be deserted by his worshippers. The Targum renders it in the plural, the walls of Babylon; of which,
See Gill on "Jer 51:58". Some think that not the wall of the city is here meant: but the temple of Bel, which was as a wall or fortress to the city; but now should fall, and be so no more; since it is not easy to give a reason why

mention here should be made of the fall of the walls of the city; and seeing express mention is made of this afterwards.

{g} Var. Hist. l. 13. c. 3. {h} Hist. l. 5. c. 1. {i} L. 1. sive Attica, p. 29. {k} Hist. l. 8. c. 7.

Jeremiah 51:45

Ver. 45. My people, go ye out of the midst of her,.... This is a call of the Jews to go out of Babylon, not before the taking of the city by Cyrus; but when he should issue out a proclamation, giving them liberty to return to their own land; which many of them, being well settled in Babylon, would not be ready to accept of, but choose to continue there; wherefore they are urged to depart from thence, because of the danger they would be exposed unto; for though the city was not destroyed by Cyrus upon his taking it, yet it was by Darius Hystaspes some time after. The same call is given to the people of God to come out of mystical Babylon, Re 18:4;

and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord; shown in the destruction of Babylon; See Gill on "Jer 51:6".

Jeremiah 51:46

Ver. 46. And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumour that shall be heard in the land,.... The rumour of war in the land of Chaldea; the report of the Medes and Persians preparing to invade it, and besiege Babylon, in the peace of which city the Jews had peace; and therefore might fear they should suffer in the calamities of it; but, lest they should, they are ordered to go cut of it, and accept the liberty that should be granted by the conqueror, who would do them no hurt, but good; and had therefore nothing to fear from him; and, as a token, assuring them of this, the following things are declared; which, when they should observe, they need not be troubled, being forewarned; yea, might take encouragement from it, and believe that their redemption drew nigh:

a rumour shall both come [one] year and after that in [another] year [shall come] a rumour; in one year there was a rumour of the great preparation Cyrus was making to invade Chaldea, and besiege Babylon; in another year, that is, the following, as the Targum rightly renders it, there was a second rumour of his coming; and who actually did come into Assyria, but was stopped at the river Gyndes, not being able to pass it for want of boats; and, being enraged at the loss of a favourite horse in it, resolved upon the draining it; which he accomplished, by cutting many sluices and rivulets; in doing which he spent the whole summer; and the spring following came to Babylon, as Herodotus {l} relates; when what is after predicted followed:

and violence in the land, ruler against ruler; the king of Babylon came out with his forces to meet Cyrus, as the same historian says; when a battle ensue, in which the former was beat, and obliged to retire into the city, which then Cyrus besieged; and thus violence and devastations were made in the land by the army of the Medes and Persians; and ruler was against ruler; Cyrus against Belshazzar, and Belshazzar against him. Some read it, "ruler upon ruler" {m}; that is, one after another, in a very short time; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel; thus two before Belshazzar, then Darius, and, after Darius, Cyrus.

{l} L. 1. sive Clio, c. 189, 190. {m} lvm le lvm "dominator super dominatorem", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 51:47

Ver. 47. Therefore, behold, the days come that I will do judgment on the graven images of Babylon,.... Because of the connection of these words, some understand Jer 51:46 of the report of the deliverance of the Jews time after time; and yet nothing came of it, which disheartened them; and they were used more cruelly, and with greater violence, by the Chaldeans and their kings, one after another; and "therefore" the following things are said; but the particle may be rendered "moreover" {n}, as some observe; or "surely", certainly, of a truth, as in **Jer 5:2**; the time is hastening on, the above things being done, when judgment shall be executed, not only upon Bel the chief idol, Jer 51:44; but upon all the idols of the Chaldeans; which should be broke to pieces, and stripped of everything about them that was valuable; the Medes and Persians having no regard to images in their worship; though Dr. Prideaux {o} thinks that what is here said, and in Jer 51:44; were fulfilled by Xerxes, when he destroyed and pillaged the Babylonian temples:

and her whole land shall be confounded; the inhabitants of it, when they see their images destroyed, in which they trusted for their safety:

and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her; in the midst of Babylon; where the king and his army were shut up, and dared not move out; and where they were slain when the army of Cyrus entered.

{n} Nkl "praeterea"; so Gataker. {o} Connexion, par. 1. B. 2. p. 101. B. 4. p. 242, 243.

Jeremiah 51:48

Ver. 48. Then the heaven and the earth, and all that [is] therein, shall sing for Babylon,.... At the destruction of her, rejoicing at it; not at the ruin of fellow creatures, simply considered; but relatively, at the righteousness of God in it, and the glory of his justice, and the deliverance of many by it from tyranny and bondage. This seems to be a figurative expression often used, in which the heavens and the earth are brought in as witnesses, approvers, and applauders, of what is done by the Lord. Some indeed interpret it of the angels, the inhabitants of the heavens, and of the Jews, dwellers on earth; and others of the church of God, in heaven and in earth; which, of the two, seems best; the like will be done at the fall of mystical Babylon, Re 18:20;

for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith the Lord; the Medes and Persians that should and did spoil and plunder Babylon; and who came from countries that lay north to it.

Jeremiah 51:49

Ver. 49. As Babylon [hath caused] the slain of Israel,.... In Jerusalem, when that city was taken the Chaldeans, and destroyed:

so at Babylon shall all the slain of all the earth; or "land"; that is, the land of Chaldea; the inhabitants of which fled to Babylon upon the invasion of the Medes and Persians, both for their own safety, and the defence of that city; and where, being slain, they fell; and this was a just retaliation of them for what they had done to Israel. These words may be considered, as they are by some, as the song of the inhabitants of heaven and earth, observing and applauding the justice and equity of divine Providence in this affair; see Re 13:7.

Jeremiah 51:50

Ver. 50. Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still,.... The Jews, who had escaped the sword of the Chaldeans when Jerusalem was taken, and were carried captive into Babylon, where they had remained to this time; and had also escaped the sword of the Medes and Persians, when Babylon was taken; these are bid to go away from Babylon, and go into their land, and not stay in Babylon, or linger there, as Lot in Sodom; or stop on the road, but make the best of their way to the land of Judea:

remember the Lord afar off; the worship of the Lord, as the Targum interprets it; the worship of the Lord in the sanctuary at Jerusalem, from which they were afar off at Babylon; and had been a long time, even seventy years, deprived of it, as Kimchi explains it:

and let Jerusalem come into your mind; that once famous city, the metropolis of the nation, that now lay in ruins; the temple that once stood in it, and the service of God there; that upon the remembrance of, and calling these to mind, they might be quickened and stirred up to hasten thither, and rebuild the city and temple, and restore the worship of God. It is not easy to say whose words these are, whether the words of the prophet, or of the Lord by him; or of the inhabitants of the heavens and earth, whose song may be here continued, and in it thus address the Jews.

Jeremiah 51:51

Ver. 51. We are confounded, because we have heard reproach,.... These are the words of the Jews, either objecting to their return to their land; or lamenting the desolation of it; and complaining of the reproach it lay under, being destitute of inhabitants; the land in general lying waste and uncultivated; the city of Jerusalem and temple in ruins; and the worship of God ceased; and the enemy insulting and reproaching; suggesting, that their God could not protect and save them; and, under these discouragements, they could not bear the thoughts of returning to it:

shame hath covered our faces; they knew not which way to look when they heard the report of the state of their country, and the reproach of the enemy, and through shame covered their faces:

for strangers are come into the sanctuaries of the Lord's house; the oracle, or the holy of holies; the temple, or the holy place, and the porch or court; so Kimchi and Abarbinel; into which the Chaldeans, strangers to God and the commonwealth of Israel, had entered, to the profanation of them, and had destroyed them.

Jeremiah 51:52

Ver. 52. Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will do judgment upon her graven images,.... Destroy their gods, who have reproached the God of Israel, and profaned his sanctuaries; and for that reason; See Gill on "Jer 51:47"; it is an answer to the objection and complaint of the Jews, and is designed for their comfort and encouragement:

and through all her land the wounded shall groan; because of their wounds and pain; and which their idols could not cure, ease, or prevent.

Jeremiah 51:53

Ver. 53. Though Babylon should mount up to heaven,.... Could the walls of it, which were very high, two hundred cubits high, as Herodotus {p} says, be carried up as high as heaven; or the towers of it, which were exceeding high, ten foot higher than the walls, as Curtius {q} says, likewise be raised to the same height:

and though she should fortify the height of her strength: make her walls and towers as strong as they were high; unless this is to be understood particularly of the temple of Bel, in which was a solid tower, in length and thickness about six hundred and sixty feet; and upon this tower another; and so on to the number of eight, towers; and in the last of them a large temple, as the above historian {r} relates: but if these towers could have been piled up in a greater number, even so as to reach to heaven, it would have availed nothing against the God of heaven, to secure from his vengeance. The Targum is,

"if Babylon should be built with buildings as high as heaven, and should fortify the strong holds on high:"

[yet] from me shall spoilers come, saith the Lord; the Medes and Persians, sent

and commissioned by him, who would pull down and destroy her walls and towers, be they ever so high and strong.

{p} L. 1. sive Clio, c. 178. {q} Hist. l. 5. c. 1. {r} Herodot. l. 1. c. 181.

Jeremiah 51:54

Ver. 54. A sound of a cry [cometh] from Babylon,.... Of the inhabitants of it upon its being taken; which is said to denote the certainty of it, which was as sure as if the cry of the distressed was then heard:

and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans; that is, the report of a great destruction there, was, or would be, carried from thence, and spread all over the world.

Jeremiah 51:55

Ver. 55. Because the Lord hath spoiled Babylon,.... By means of the Merits and Persians; these were his instruments he made use of; to these he gave commission, power, and strength to spoil Babylon; and therefore it is ascribed to him:

and destroyed out of her the great voice; the noise of people, which is very great in populous cities, where people are passing to and fro in great numbers upon business; which ceases when any calamity comes, as pestilence, famine, or sword, which sweep away the inhabitants; this last was the case of Babylon. The Targum is,

"and hath destroyed out of her many armies:"

or it may design the great voice of the roaring revelling company in it at their feast time; which was the time of the destruction of he city, as often observed: or the voice of triumphs for victories obtained, which should be no more in it: or the voice of joy and gladness in common, as will be also the case of mystical Babylon, Re 18:22; this "great voice" may not unfitly be applied to the voice of antichrist, that mouth speaking blasphemies, which are long shall be destroyed out of Babylon, Re 13:5;

when her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered; that is, when her enemies come up against her like the waves of the sea: a loud shout will be made by them, which will be very terrible, and silence the noise of mirth and jollity among the Babylonians; see Jer 51:42; though some understand this of the change that should be made among the Chaldeans; that, instead of the voice of joy and triumph, there would be the voice of howling and lamentation; and even among their high and mighty ones, who would be troubled and distressed, as great waters are, when moved by tempests. The Targum is,

"and the armies of many people shall be gathered against them, and shall lift up their voice with a tumult."

Jeremiah 51:56

Ver. 56. Because the spoiler is come upon her, [even] upon Babylon,.... That is, Cyrus, with his army:

and her mighty men are taken; unawares, by surprise:

everyone of their bows is broken; they had no strength to withstand the enemy, and were obliged to yield at once; lay down their arms, and submit:

for the Lord God of recompences shall surely requite; that God to whom vengeance belongs, and will recompense it; who is a God of justice and equity, the Judge of all the earth; he will render tribulation to them that trouble his; and requite his enemies and the enemies of his people, in a righteous manner, for all the evil they have done, as literal, so mystical Babylon; see Re 18:6.

Jeremiah 51:57

Ver. 57. And I will make drunk her princes,.... With the wine of divine wrath; that is, slay them; though there may be an allusion to their being drunk with wine at the feast Belshazzar made for his thousand lords; who are the princes here intended, together with the king and his royal family, **Da 5:1**;

and her wise [men], her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: the counsellors of state, priests, magicians, and astrologers; officers in the army, superior and inferior ones; and the soldiers and warriors, whom Cyrus and his men slew; when they entered the city; compare with this Re 19:18;

and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake; be all asleep in their drunken fits, and be slain therein; and so never wake, or live more. The Targum is,

"and they shall die the second death, and not come into the world to come;"

See Gill on "Jer 51:39";

saith the king, whose name [is] the Lord of hosts; the King of kings and Lord of lords; the Lord of armies in heaven and earth; and can do, and does, what he pleases in both worlds.

Jeremiah 51:58

Ver. 58. Thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... Because what follows might seem incredible ever to be effected; it is introduced with this preface, expressed by him who is the God of truth, and the Lord God omnipotent:

the broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken; or rased up; the foundations of them, and the ground on which they stood made naked and bare, and open to public view; everyone of the walls, the inward and the outward, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it. Curtius says {s} the wall of Babylon was thirty two feet broad, and that carriages might pass by each other without any danger. Herodotus {t} says it was fifty royal cubits broad, which were three fingers larger than the common measure; and both Strabo {u} and Diodorus Siculus {w} affirm, that two chariots drawn with four horses abreast might meet each other, and pass easily; and, according to Ctesias {x}, the breadth of the wall was large enough for six chariots: or the words may be read, "the walls of broad Babylon" {y}; for Babylon was very large in circumference; more like a country than a city, as Aristotle {z} says. Historians differ much about the compass of its wall; but all agree it was very large; the best account, which is that of Curtius {a}, makes it to be three hundred and fifty eight furlongs (about forty five miles); with Ctesias it was three hundred and sixty; and with Clitarchus three hundred and sixty five, as they are both quoted by Diodorus Siculus {b}; according to Strabo {c} it was three hundred and eighty five; and according to Dion Cassius {d} four hundred; by Philostratus {e} it is said to be four hundred and eighty; as also by Herodotus; and by Julian {f} the emperor almost five hundred. Pliny {g} reckons it sixty miles:

and her high gates shall be burnt with fire; there were a hundred of them, all of brass, with their posts and hinges, as Herodotus {h} affirms:

and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary; which some understand of the builders of the walls, gates, and city of Babylon, whose labour in the issue was in vain, since the end of them was to be broken and burned; but rather it designs the Chaldeans, who laboured in the fire to extinguish and save the city and its gates, but to no purpose.

{s} Hist. l. 5. c. 1. {t} L. 1. sive Clio, c. 178. {u} Geograph l. 16. p. 508. {w} Bibl. l. 2. p. 96. {x} Apud Diodor. ib. {y} hbxrh lbb twmwx "mari Babelis lati", Schmidt. {z} Politic. l. 3. c. 3. {a} Hist. l. 5. c. 1. {b} Ut supra. (Bibl. l. 2. p. 96.) {c} Ut supra. (Geograph l. 16. p. 508.) {d} Apud Marsham Canon. p. 590. {e} Vita Apollon. l. 1. e. 18. {f} Orat. 3. p. 236. {g} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 26. {h} L. 1. sive Clio, c. 179.

Jeremiah 51:59

Ver. 59. The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah,.... This word is no other than the above prophecy concerning the destruction of Babylon, contained in this and the preceding chapter; or rather the order the prophet gave this prince to take a copy of it with him to Babylon, and there read it, and their cast it into the river Euphrates, with a stone bound it. Of this Seraiah we read nowhere else: he is further described as

the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon, in the fourth year of his reign; the Jews say {i} that Zedekiah, in the fourth year of his reign, went to Babylon, to reconcile himself to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and took Seraiah with him, and returned and came to his kingdom in Jerusalem; but we have no account in Scripture of any such journey he took. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "when he went from Zedekiah"; as this particle is sometimes {k} elsewhere rendered, **Ge 4:1**; and so the Targum explains it,

"when he went on an embassy of Zedekiah;"

and Abarbinel, by the command of the king; it seems he was ambassador from the king of Judah to the king of Babylon upon some business or another; and Jeremiah took this opportunity of sending a copy of the above prophecy by him, for the ends before mentioned: this was in the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign, seven years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and sixty years before the taking of Babylon; so long before was it prophesied of. The Syriac version wrongly reads it "in the eleventh year"; the year of Jerusalem's destruction; supposing that Seraiah's going with Zedekiah to Babylon was his going with him into captivity:

and [this] Seraiah [was] a quiet prince; one of a peaceable disposition, that did not love war, or persecution of good men; and so a fit person for Zedekiah to send upon an embassy of peace; and for Jeremiah to employ in such service as he did; for, had he been a hot and haughty prince, he would have despised his orders and commands. Some render it, "prince of Menuchah" {l}; taking it to be the proper name of a place of which he was governor; thought to be the same with Manahath, **1Ch 8:6**. The Targum and Septuagint version call him "the prince of gifts": one by whom such were introduced into the king's presence that brought treasure, gifts, or presents to him, as Jarchi interprets it; according to Kimchi, he was the king's familiar favourite, with whom he used to converse and delight himself when he was at rest and at leisure from business. Some take him to be the lord of the bedchamber, or lord chamberlain; and others lord chief justice of peace. The first sense seems most agreeable.

{i} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 25. p. 72, 73. {k} Vid. L'Empereur, Not. in Mosis Kimchii, odoiporia, p. 254, 255. & Noldii Concordant. Ebr, p. 114. No. 577. {l} hxwnm rv "princeps Menuchae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Jeremiah 51:60

Ver. 60. So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon,.... The evil of punishment predicted and threatened: this he delivered, not by word of mouth to Seraiah to relate when he came to Babylon; but he wrote it in a book for him reread; and he wrote it himself; Baruch, his amanuensis, not being now with him:

[even] all these words that are written against Babylon; in this and the preceding chapter: this book written by Jeremiah was a copy of them.

Jeremiah 51:61

Ver. 61. And Jeremiah said to Seraiah,.... At the time he delivered the copy to him:

when thou comest to Babylon; or art come to Babylon, to the city of Babylon, and to the captive Jews there:

and shalt see them; the captives; or rather the great and populous city of Babylon, its high walls, gates, and towers, whose destruction is foretold in this book, and which might seem incredible. Abarbinel interprets it of his looking into the book given him; which he thinks was not to be opened and looked into till he came to Babylon:

and shalt read all these words; not before the king of Babylon and his princes, and yet not privately to himself; but in some proper place, in the presence of the captive Jews, or the chief of them, convened for that purpose.

Jeremiah 51:62

Ver. 62. Then shall thou say, O Lord,.... Acknowledging this prophecy to be of God; believing the accomplishment of it; and praying over it, and for it, like a good man, as doubtless he was:

thou hast spoken against this place; the city of Babylon, where Seraiah is now supposed to be:

to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever; this is the substance of the whole prophecy, that the destruction of Babylon should be an utter and a perpetual one; and which is expressed in the same words that are here used, Jer 50:3.

Jeremiah 51:63

Ver. 63. And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book,.... To the captive Jews; and having also said the above words by way of prayer and approbation:

[that] thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates; a

river by which Babylon was situated. The book, being read, was to be rolled up again, and then a stone tied to it, and cast into the middle of the river, where the waters were deepest, and from whence it could not be taken up; and this was a sign confirming the above prophecy; compare with this what was done by a mighty angel concerning mystical Babylon, in which there is an allusion to this, Re 18:21.

Jeremiah 51:64

Ver. 64. And thou shall say,.... Not only use the above sign and ceremony, but explain the meaning of it to those of his friends who might accompany him; and what he said was in the name of the Lord, as the form and manner in which the following words are delivered show:

thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her; as this book, with the stone bound to it, does, and shall no more rise than that can; the evil of punishment brought on Babylon will sink her to such a degree, that she will never be able to bear up under it; but be so depressed by it as never to rise to her former state and grandeur any more:

and they shall be weary; the inhabitants of it, and have no strength to resist their enemies; or, rather, shall be so weak as not to be able to stand up under the weight and pressure upon them, but shall sink under it; or shall weary themselves in vain to preserve their city from ruin, or restore it when ruined; see Jer 51:58;

thus far [are] the words of Jeremiah; that is, concerning the destruction of Babylon, as is said concerning Moab, Jer 48:47; for what Maimonides {m} says, that though Jeremiah lived some time after, yet ceased to prophesy; or that, when he had finished his prophecy concerning Babylon, he prophesied no more, is not true; for it is certain that many of his prophecies were delivered out after the date of this, though this is recorded last: or the sense may be, thus far are the prophetic words of Jeremiah; and so the Targum,

"hitherto is the prophecy of the words of Jeremiah;"

what follows in the next chapter being historical; for there is no necessity to conclude from hence that that was wrote by any other hand; either, as many have thought, by Ezra; or by the men of the great synagogue, as Abarbinel.

{m} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 45. Vid. Kimchi in loc.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jeremiah 52:1

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 52

This chapter contains the history of the besieging, taking, and destroying of Jerusalem; the moving cause of it, the wicked reign of Zedekiah, Jer 52:1; the instruments of it, the king of Babylon and his army, which besieged and took it, Jer 52:4; into whose hands the king of Judah, his sons, and the princes of Judah, fell; and were very barbarously and cruelly used by them, Jer 52:8. Then follows an account of the burning of the temple, the king's palace, and the houses in Jerusalem, and the breaking down of the walls of it, Jer 52:12; and of those that were carried captive, and of those that were left in the land by Nebuzaradan, Jer 52:15; and of the several vessels and valuable things in the temple, of gold, silver, and brass, it was plundered of, and carried to Babylon, Jer 52:17; and of the murder of several persons of dignity and character, Jer 52:24; and of the number of those that were carried captive at three different times, Jer 52:28; and the chapter is concluded with the exaltation of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and of the good treatment he met with from the king of Babylon to the day of his death, Jer 52:31.

Ver. 1. Zedekiah [was] one and twenty years old when he began to reign,.... Whose name was Mattaniah; and who was set on the throne by the king of Babylon, in the room of his brother's son Jehoiachin, 2Ki 24:17;

and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; so that he was thirty two years of age when he was taken and carried captive into Babylon:

and his mother's name [was] Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah; see 2Ki 24:18.

Jeremiah 52:2

Ver. 2. And he did [that which was] evil in the eyes of the Lord,.... Though we do not read of any idolatry he was guilty of; yet he was disobedient to the word of the Lord, and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet of the Lord, that spoke in his name; and particularly he rebelled against the king of Babylon, and violated the oath he made to him, 2Ch 36:12;

according to all that Jehoiakim had done; an elder brother of his, who reigned after Josiah, and before Jehoiachin.

Jeremiah 52:3

Ver. 3. For through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah,.... Or, "besides the anger of the Lord [that] was in", or "against Jerusalem and Judah" {n}; for their many sins and transgressions committed against him:

till he had cast them out from his presence; out of the land of Judea; out of Jerusalem, and the temple, where were the symbols of his presence; so the Targum,

"till he removed them from the land of the house of his Shechinah;"

or majesty:

that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon: acted a very perfidious part, and broke a solemn covenant made with him by an oath, which was highly displeasing to God, and resented by him; the oath being made in his name, and by one that professed to worship him: this was an additional sin to those of the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, which provoked the Lord to anger. According to our version the sense is, that because of the anger of the Lord for the sins of the Jews, God suffered Zedekiah to rebel against the king of Babylon, that so he might be provoked to come against them, and take vengeance on them; or for his former sins he suffered him to fall into this, to his own and his people's ruin.

{n} hwhy Pa le yk "nam praeter iram Jehovae, quae fuit contra Hierosolymam", Schmidt.

Jeremiah 52:4

Ver. 4. And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign,.... Of Zedekiah's reign:

in the tenth month, in the tenth [day] of the month; the month Tebet, which answers to part of December and part of January; hence the fast of the tenth month, on account of the siege of Jerusalem, **Zec 8:19**;

[that] Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his army, against Jerusalem; from whence it appears that he came in person with his army at first to Jerusalem; but, during the siege, or some part of it, retired to Riblah; perhaps upon the news of the king of Egypt's coming to the assistance of the Jews:

and pitched against it; or encamped against it:

and built forts against it round about; wooden towers, as Jarchi and Kimchi explain it; from whence they could shoot their arrows and cast their stones.

Jeremiah 52:5

Ver. 5. So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. The siege continued about eighteen months; from the tenth day of the tenth month, in the ninth of Zedekiah's reign, to the ninth day of the fourth month, in the eleventh year of his reign; as follows:

Jeremiah 52:6

Ver. 6. And in the fourth month, in the ninth [day] of the month,.... The month Tammuz {o}, which answers to part of June and part of July; hence the fast of the fourth month, for the taking of the city, **Zec 8:19**;

the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land; for the common people; though there might be some in the king's palace, and in the houses of princes and noblemen, and officers of the army; yet none for the soldiers, and the meaner sort of people; who therefore were disheartened and enfeebled, that they could not defend the city, or hold out any longer: the famine had been before this time, but was now increased to a prodigious degree, so that the people had no bread to eat; see Jer 38:9.

{o} T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 18. 2. & Taanith, fol. 28. 2.

Jeremiah 52:7

Ver. 7. Then the city was broken up,.... Either its gates were broke open, some one or other of them; or a breach was made in the walls of it, through which the Chaldean army entered:

and all the men of war fled; the soldiers, with their officers, not being able to stand before the army of the king of Babylon:

and went forth out of the city by night; at which time, very probably, the attack was made, and the gates of the city forced open, or the walls broke down; Josephus {p} says it was taken in the middle of the night:

by the way of the gate between the two walls, which [was] by the king's garden; See Gill on "Jer 39:4";

now the Chaldeans [were] by the city round about; as part of their army entered into it, the other part surrounded it; or, however, were placed at the gates and avenues all around, that none might escape:

and they went by the way of the plain; that is, the men of war or soldiers that fled, together with King Zedekiah, his family and princes; see Jer 39:4.

{p} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 8. sect. 2. Ed. Hudson.

Jeremiah 52:8

Ver. 8. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king,.... Not finding him in his palace, and being informed of his flight, and which way he took:

and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho:
See Gill on "Jer 39:5";

and all his army was scattered from him; when they saw the enemy pursuing them, and near unto them, they left him, as Josephus {q} says, and shifted for themselves.

{q} Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 10. c. 8. sect. 2. Ed. Hudson.)

Jeremiah 52:9

Ver. 9. Then they took the king,.... King Zedekiah, being left alone, excepting some few with him:

and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath; which is supposed to be Antioch in Syria:

where he gave judgment upon him; or "spake with him judgments" {r}: chided and reproached him for his perfidy and ingratitude; expostulated and reasoned with him upon this subject, exposing his iniquity; and then passed sentence upon him, which was after executed;
See Gill on "Jer 39:5".

{r} Myjpvm wta rbdyw "qui cum eo locutus est judicia", Schmidt. So Cocceius.

Jeremiah 52:10

Ver. 10. And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes,.... Or, however, ordered them to be slain;
See Gill on "Jer 39:6";

he slew also all the princes of Judah in Riblah; who, together with the king's sons, were taken with him; or, however, were taken in Jerusalem, and brought to Riblah; which of them is not certain, very probably the former.

Jeremiah 52:11

Ver. 11. Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah,.... After he had seen his children and princes executed, which must be very terrible to him;
See Gill on "Jer 39:7";

and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon; in Jer 39:7; it is said, he bound him, "to carry him" there; here it is affirmed he did carry him thither: and it is added, and put him in prison till the day of his death; from this place only we learn that King Zedekiah was put into a prison, and died a prisoner.

Jeremiah 52:12

Ver. 12. Now in the fifth month, in the tenth [day] of the month,.... Hence the fast of the fifth month, for the burning of the city, which was the month Ab, and answers to part of July and part of August, **Zec 8:19**;

which [was] the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; that is, the nineteenth year of his reign; who reigned in all forty three years, according to Ptolemy's canon:

came Nebuzaradan captain of the guard, [which] served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem; or "stood before the king of Babylon" {s}; ministered to him, was a servant of his, the provost marshal, or chief marshal; he was sent, and came from Riblah to Jerusalem, with a commission to burn the city. In 2Ki 25:8; it is said to be on the "seventh" day of the fifth month that he came thither; here, on the "tenth" day; which difficulty may be solved, without supposing different copies, or any error: he might set out from Riblah on the seventh day, and come to Jerusalem on the tenth; or he might come thither on the seventh, and not set fire to the city till the tenth; or, if he set fire to it on the seventh, it might be burning to the tenth, before it was wholly consumed. The Jews {t} account for it thus,

"strangers entered into the temple, and ate in it, and defiled it, the seventh and eighth days; and on the ninth, towards dark, they set fire to it; and it burned and continued all that whole day, as it is said, **Jer 6:4**;"

R. Johanan was saying, if I had been in that generation, I should have fixed on that day, for the greatest part of the temple was burnt on that day. The authors of the Universal History say {u} it was on Wednesday the eleventh of the fourth month, answering to our twenty seventh of July; but, according to the express words of the text, the city was broke up on the ninth of the fourth month, and burnt on the tenth day of the fifth month; and which was, according to Bishop Usher {w}, the twenty seventh of August, on a sabbath day, and in the year of the world 3416, and before Christ 588; and is placed by them in the same years; and by Mr. Whiston {x} in 589; and by Mr. Bedford {y} in the year 587. This was a month after the taking of the city.

{s} Klm ynpl dme "qui setit coram rege", Schmidt. {t} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 29. 1. {u} Vol 4. p. 189. & vol. 21. p. 61. {w} Annales Vet. Test. p. 131. {x} Chronological Tables, cent. 10. {y} Scripture Chronology, p 684.

Jeremiah 52:13

Ver. 13. And burnt the house of the Lord,.... The temple built by Solomon, after it had stood four hundred and seventy years, six months, and ten days, according to Josephus {z}: but the Jews say it stood but four hundred ten years {a}:

and the king's house; the royal palace; probably that which was built by Solomon, **1Ki 7:1**;

and all the houses of Jerusalem: of any note or strength:

and all the houses of the great [men] burnt he with fire; of the princes and nobles in Jerusalem; it is in the singular number, "and every house of the great one"; or "every great house" {b}; Jarchi interprets it of the synagogue, where prayer was magnified; and others, he says, understood it of the schools, where the law was magnified.

{z} Autiqu. l. 10. c. 8. sect. 5. {a} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 3. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {b} lwdgh tyb lk taw "omnem domum magnatis", Cocceius; "omnemque domum magnam", Pagninus, Montanus, Schmidt.

Jeremiah 52:14

Ver. 14. And all the army of the Chaldeans, that [were] with the captain of the guard,.... Which he brought with him from Riblah, or were left at Jerusalem by those that pursued after Zedekiah when the city was taken, which the captain of the guard now had the command of:

broke down all the walls of Jerusalem round about:
See Gill on "Jer 39:8".

Jeremiah 52:15

Ver. 15. Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive [certain] of the poor of the people,.... That is, of the city, as distinct from the poor of the land of Judea he left, afterwards observed:

and the residue of the people that remained in the city; that died not by the sword or famine, and fled not with Zedekiah: or "even the residue of the people"; and so are the same with the poor people in the former clause; though Kimchi explains it thus,

"some of the poor of the people he carried captive, and some of them he left:"

and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon; that fell off from the Jews, and surrendered to the king of Babylon during the siege; or that voluntarily came in, and put themselves into the hands of the captain of the guard:

and the rest of the multitude; of the people, both in city and country.

Jeremiah 52:16

Ver. 16. But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left [certain] of the poor of the land,.... Of the land of Judea, who lived in the country, and had not been concerned in defending the city against the Chaldeans:

for vinedressers, and for husbandmen; to look after the vineyards and fields, and dress and manure them, that the king of Babylon might receive some advantage by the conquest he had made;
See Gill on "Jer 39:10".

Jeremiah 52:17

Ver. 17. Also the pillars of brass that [were] in the house of the Lord,.... The two pillars in the temple, called Jachin and Boaz, which were made of cast brass, **1Ki 7:15**;

and the bases; which were in number ten, and which were also made of cast brass, and were all of one measure and size; and on which the ten lavers of brass were set, five on the right side and five on the left side of the house, **1Ki 7:37**;

and the brasen sea that [was] in the house of the Lord; called the molten sea; a sea, because of the large quantity of water it held; and brasen and molten, because made of molten brass, **1Ki 7:23**;

the Chaldeans broke, and carried all the brass of them to Babylon: they broke them to pieces, that they might carry them the more easily. This account is given, and which is continued in some following verses, partly to show the accomplishment of the prophecy of Jeremiah,
Jer 27:19; and partly to show that what was left in the temple, at the former captivities of Jehoiakim and Jeconiah, were now carried clear off.

Jeremiah 52:18

Ver. 18. The cauldrons also,.... Or "pots", as it is rendered,
2Ki 25:14; which were made of bright brass, **1Ki 7:45**; these were used to boil the flesh of the sacrifices in:

and the shovels; used to remove the ashes from off the altar of burnt offerings, and were of brass also: the Targum renders them "besoms", whose handles perhaps were of brass:

and the snuffers; the Vulgate Latin translates it "psalteries"; and so Jarchi interprets it of musical instruments; some think "tongs" are meant:

and the bowls; or "basins"; either to drink out of, or to receive the blood of the sacrifice:

and the spoons: ladles, cups, or dishes, vessels used about the sacrifices:

and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered; that is, the priests in the temple:

took they away; the Chaldeans took them away.

Jeremiah 52:19

Ver. 19. And the basins,.... Or "bowls"; these are omitted, 2Ki 25:15; they were of gold, **1Ki 7:50**;

and the firepans; or "censers"; these were those of gold, which belonged to the golden altar, **1Ki 7:50**;

and the bowls; or "basins"; there were a hundred of them made of gold, **2Ch 4:8**;

and the cauldrons; or "pots"; these are not mentioned, 2Ki 25:15; what they should be, that were either of gold or silver, cannot be said:

and the candlesticks; of which there were ten in number, made of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, **1Ki 7:49**;

and the spoons; which were also of gold, **1Ki 7:50**;

and the cups: the word is rendered "bowls", to cover withal, Ex 25:29; it was some kind of instrument or vessel used about the shewbread table, made of pure gold; according to Jarchi, these were little golden forks, upon which they placed the shewbread, to keep it from moulding; according to the Misna {c}, there were four of them:

[that] which [was] of gold [in] gold, and [that] which [was] of silver [in] silver, took the captain of the guard away; that is, everything that was of gold or silver he took away; the golden things by themselves, and the silver things by themselves, as some think.

{c} Menachot, c. 11. sect. 6.

Jeremiah 52:20

Ver. 20. The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brasen bulls,.... The two pillars of Jachin and Boaz before mentioned, and the molten or brasen sea, with the twelve bulls or oxen the sea stood upon, **1Ki 7:25**;

that [were] under the bases; or "by the bases", as Jarchi; or rather, "that were instead of bases" {d}; for the twelve oxen were the bases on which the molten sea stood:

which King Solomon had made in the house of the Lord; this is mentioned to show that these were the selfsame pillars, sea, and oxen, and other vessels, that Solomon made, that were now carried away; for though Ahaz took down the sea from off the brasen oxen, and put it on a pavement of stones, yet it seems not to have been destroyed; and might be restored to its proper place by Hezekiah, or some other prince;

the brass of all these vessels was without weight; there was no weight sufficient to weigh them; the weight of them could not very well be told; they were so heavy, that in Solomon's time the weight of them was not taken, when they were placed in the temple, so neither when they were taken away, **1Ki 7:47**.

{d} twnkmh txt rva "qui erant in loco basium", Piscator,

Jeremiah 52:21

Ver. 21. And [concerning] the pillars, the height of one pillar [was] eighteen cubits,.... As in **1Ki 7:15**; said to be thirty five, **2Ch 3:15**; of the reconciliation of which,
See Gill on "2Ch 3:15":

and a fillet of twelve cubits did compass it; a thread or line of that measure encompassed each of the pillars, **1Ki 7:15**;

and the thickness thereof [was] four fingers; either of the pillar, or the fillet about it; that is, the brass of it was four fingers thick:

[it was] hollow; that is, the pillar was hollow.

Jeremiah 52:22

Ver. 22. And a chapiter of brass [was] upon it,.... Or a coronet of brass, of molten brass, was set upon the top of the pillar:

and the height of one chapiter [was] five cubits; as in **1Ki 7:16**; but in 2Ki 25:17; the height is said to be but three cubits; which is reconciled by the

Jewish Rabbins thus, the three superior cubits of it were with ornaments, the two inferior without any; the whole together was five cubits; but, as ornamented, only three:

with network and pomegranates upon the chapiters round about, all [of] brass; the nets were of chequer work, and wreaths of chain work, and there were seven of them to each chapiter, **1Ki 7:17**;

the second pillar also, and the pomegranates, [were] like unto these; one pillar was exactly like the other, and the ornaments of it the same.

Jeremiah 52:23

Ver. 23. And there were ninety and six pomegranates on a side,.... Or, "to the wind" {e}; to the four winds; towards every corner or wind twenty four, which make up ninety six:

[and] all the pomegranates upon the network [were] an hundred round about; four, standing upon the four angles, made the ninety six a hundred; in **1Ki 7:20**; they are said to be two hundred; and in **2Ch 4:13**; are said to be four hundred upon the two wreaths; which may be accounted for thus, there were two rows of them on each pillar, in every row were a hundred, which made two hundred in one pillar, and four hundred in both. These were the things in the temple carried away in the last captivity.

{e} hxwr "ad ventum", Montanus; "ad omnem ventum", Tigurine version; so Ben Melech; "versus ventos", Schmidt; "ventum versus", Piscator; "in ventum", Cocceius.

Jeremiah 52:24

Ver. 24. And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest,.... That is, out of the temple, where he was ministering, or fled for safety; this is supposed to be the father of Ezra, **1Ch 6:14**;

and Zephaniah the second priest: or deputy priest: the "sagan" of the priests, as the Targum calls him, who was deputed to minister for the high priest, in case anything happened which hindered him from officiating; such an one there always was in later times on the day of atonement, as appears from the Misna {f}; this man is thought to be the same with Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, Jer 21:1;

and the three keepers of the door; that is, of the temple. The Targum calls them three "amarcalin"; who had, as Jarchi says, the keys of the court committed to them. The number seems better to agree with the "gizbarim" or treasurers; of whom, it is said, they never appoint less than three treasurers, and seven "amarcalin" {g}.

{f} Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1. {g} Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 2.

Jeremiah 52:25

Ver. 25. He took also out of the city an eunuch, which had the charge of the men of war,.... The master-master-general of the army:

and seven men of them which were near the king's person which were found in the city; or, "saw the face of the king": or rather, "made to see [his] face" {h}; these were ministers of state, who were always at court, and assisted in councils of state, and introduced persons into the king's presence; in 2Ki 25:19; they are said to be but "five"; but Josephus {i} has seven, as here; perhaps two of them were of less note, and so not reckoned, as Jarchi observes: some will have it, that the two scribes of the judges are left out; but others, more probably, Jeremiah and Baruch, who were first taken, and afterwards dismissed:

and the principal scribe of the host, who mustered the people of the land; or the scribe of the prince of the army, as the Targum; the general's secretary:

and threescore men of the people of the land, that were found in the midst of the city: persons of prime note, who, upon the invasion, betook themselves from the country to the city of Jerusalem with their effects, and to defend it. Josephus {k} calls them rulers or governors.

{h} Klmh ynp yarm "ex videntibus facies, [vel] faciem regis", Montanus, Piscator; "de videre facientibus facies regis", Schmidt. {i} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 8. sect. 5. {k} Ibid.

Jeremiah 52:26

Ver. 26. So Nebuzaradan captain of the guard took them,.... In the city, and made them captives:

and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah; to knew his mind concerning them; how they should be disposed of; and for him to pass sentence on them: as he had done on the king of Judah, his sons, and his princes, in the same place.

Jeremiah 52:27

Ver. 27. And the king of Babylon smote them,.... Or ordered them to be smitten with the sword; to have their heads cut off, according to Josephus {l}:

and put them to death in Riblah in the land of Hamath; these being such, no doubt, who obstinately defended the city, and persuaded the prince and people not to surrender the city into the hand of the Chaldeans; and therefore were put to death in cold blood:

thus Judah was carried away captive out of his own land: at different times, of which this was the completion; and of which a particular account is given, even of the number of the captives at these several times, in Jer 52:28.

{l} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 8. sect. 5.

Jeremiah 52:28

Ver. 28. This [is] the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive in the seventh year,.... That is, of his reign: in 2Ki 24:12; it is said to be in the eighth year of his reign; it being at the latter end of the seventh, and the beginning of the eighth, as Kimchi observes; this was the captivity of Jeconiah: the number of the captives then were

three thousand Jews, and three and twenty; but in 2Ki 24:14; they are said to be ten thousand; which may be reconciled thus, there were three thousand twenty and three of the tribe of Judah, here called Jews; and the rest were of the tribe of Benjamin, and of the ten tribes that were mixed among them; see 2Ki 24:16.

Jeremiah 52:29

Ver. 29. In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar,.... Said to be the nineteenth, Jer 52:12; it was at the end of the eighteenth, and the beginning of the nineteenth, as Kimchi; or this was before the taking of the city, when he raised the siege, and departed to meet the king of Egypt, at which time he might carry captive many, as here said:

he carried away captive from Jerusalem, eight hundred thirty and two persons; which is more likely to be then done than at the taking of the city; when it is very probable a greater number was carried captive, which are not here taken notice of.

Jeremiah 52:30

Ver. 30. In the three and twentieth year of Nebuchadnezzar,.... In this year of his reign, the Jews say {m}, Tyre was delivered into his hands; and he carried off the Jews in Moab, Ammon, and the neighbouring nations, to the number after mentioned; though some think these were the poor people of the land he took from thence, after the murder of Gedaliah, and in revenge of that:

Nebuzaradan captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred forty and five persons; all which being put together make the following sum:

all the persons [were] four thousand and six hundred; this is the sum total of the three mentioned captivities.

{m} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 26. p. 77.

Jeremiah 52:31

Ver. 31. And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah,.... He was eighteen years of age when he was carried captive; so that he must be now fifty five years old; see 2Ki 24:8;

in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth [day] of the month; in the month Adar, which answers to part of February, and part of March: in 2Ki 25:27; the favour shown by the king of Babylon to Jeconiah, after related, is said to be in the twenty seventh day of the month; it might have been determined and notified on the twenty fifth, but not executed till the twenty seventh; or it might be begun to be put in execution on the twenty fifth, and not finished till the twenty seventh, The Jews, in their chronicle, say {n} that Nebuchadnezzar died on the twenty fifth, and was buried; that, on the twenty sixth, Evilmerodach took him out of his grave, and dragged him about, to abolish his decrees, and to confirm what is said of him in Isa 14:19; and on the twenty seventh he brought Jeconiah out of prison; but this is no reconciliation at all; the former is best;

[that] Evilmerodach king of Babylon, in the [first] year of his reign; who succeeded Nebuchadnezzar, having reigned forty three years; this king is called by Ptolemy {o} Iloarudamus; by Abydenus {p} Evilmaluruch; by Josephus {q} Abilamarodach; but by Berosus {r} as here: his proper name was Merodach, a name of one of the Chaldean idols, Jer 50:2. "Evil" was a nickname, which signifies "foolish"; he was called "foolish Merodach", on account of his ill conduct, or bad life: as soon as he came to the throne, he

lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison; that is, he changed his condition for the better; he raised him out of a low estate to a more honourable one; he brought him out of a state of imprisonment and misery into a state of liberty and honour; what was the reason of this is not easy to say. The Jews have a tradition, that Nebuchadnezzar, after seven years' madness, coming to himself, and to his kingdom, and understanding that his son Evilmerodach had been guilty of mal-administration during that time, and particularly that he rejoiced at his madness, cast him into prison, where he contracted a friendship with Jeconiah; and when he came to the throne, upon the death of his father, released him: but others think that Jeconiah being a comely young man, when he was brought a captive to Babylon, and about the age of this prince, he took a liking to him, and, pitying his case, showed him this favour, as soon as he had an opportunity.

{n} Seder Olam, c. 28. p. 81. {o} Canon, Ed. Bainbridge, p. 48. {p} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 41. p. 457. {q} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 8. {r} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 20.

Jeremiah 52:32

Ver. 32. And spake kindly unto him,.... Used him with great familiarity, treated him with great respect: or, "spake good things to him" {s}; comforted him in his captive state, and promised him many favours; and was as good as his word:

and set his throne above the throne of the kings that [were] with him in Babylon; these kings were either petty kings over the several provinces that belonged to the Chaldean monarchy, that were occasionally at Babylon; or rather the kings Nebuchadnezzar had conquered, and taken captive, as Jehoiachin; such as the kings of Moab, Ammon, Edom, &c. these, notwithstanding they were captives, had thrones of state, partly in consideration of their former dignity, and partly for the glory of the Babylonish monarch; now Jehoiachin's throne was higher and more grand and stately than the rest, to show the particular respect the king of Babylon had for him.

{s} twbj wta rbdyw "ac locutus est cum eo bona", V. L. Schmidt.

Jeremiah 52:33

Ver. 33. And changed his prison garments,.... Which were filthy, and of an ill smell; and put on him raiment more comfortable, as well as more honourable, and suitable to his dignity, and more fit to appear in, in the presence of the king and his court:

and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life: either at the same table with the king; or at other near him, in his sight, in the same apartment; though the former seems more likely; and this he did as long as he lived; either Evilmerodach, or rather Jeconiah; though perhaps they both died much about the same time. All this was done about the year of the world 3444, and about five hundred sixty years before Christ, according to Bishop Usher {t} and Mr. Bedford {u}; the authors of the Universal History {w} place it a year earlier.

{t} Annales Vet. Test. p. 138. {u} Scripture Chronology, p. 710. {w} Vol. 21. p. 64.

Jeremiah 52:34

Ver. 34. And [for] his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon,.... This seems to design not food only, and for himself, which he had daily at the king's table, but all necessary provisions for himself, family, and servants:

every day a portion, until the day of his death, all the days of his life; that is, of Jeconiah's; how long he lived after this is not known; he was now fifty five years of age, and cannot be thought to have lived a great while after, having been imprisoned so many years; and it is certain he did not live to the return from the captivity. Of the death of Zedekiah we have no account, only that he died in prison. The Jews say {x} he died at this very time, when Jeconiah was advanced. The account here given of Jeconiah has led some to conclude that this chapter was not written by Jeremiah; since it cannot be well thought he should live so long as to the death of this prince; and, besides, had given an account of the destruction of Jerusalem in the thirty ninth chapter, which he would hardly repeat: though that he might do, partly for the sake of new circumstances here added; and partly as an introduction to the book of the Lamentations, which follows.

{x} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 28. p. 81.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Lamentations 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS

This book very properly follows the prophecy of Jeremiah, not only because wrote by him, but because of the subject matter of it, the deplorable case of the Jews upon the destruction of their city; and has been reckoned indeed as making one book with it; so Dean Prideaux {a} supposes it was reckoned by Josephus {b}, according to the number of the books of the Old Testament, which he gives; but it does not stand in this order in all printed Hebrew Bibles, especially in those published by the Jews; where it is placed in the Hagiographa, and among the five Megilloth; or with the books of Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, and Solomon's Song, read at their festivals, as this on their public fast, on the ninth of Ab, for the destruction of their city; because they fancy it was not written by the gift of prophecy, but by the Holy Ghost, between which they make a distinction; and therefore remove it from the prophets; but this is the most natural place for it. It is sometimes called by the Jews "Echa", from the first word of it, which signifies "how"; and sometimes "Kinoth", "Lamentations", from the subject of it; and so by the Septuagint version "Threni", which signifies the same; and which is followed by the Vulgate Latin, and others, and by us. That Jeremiah was the writer of it is not questioned; nor is the divine authority of it doubted of. The precise place and time where and when he wrote it is not certain: some say he wrote it in a cave or den near Jerusalem; and Adrichomius {c} makes mention of a place, called

"the Prophet Jeremiah's pit, where he sat in the bitterness of his soul, grieving and weeping; and lamented and described the destruction of Jerusalem made by the Chaldeans, in a fourfold alphabet in metre; where Helena the empress, according to Nicephorus, built some wonderful works;"

but it rather seems that he wrote these Lamentations after he was carried away with the rest of the captives to Ramah, and dismissed to Mizpah, at one or other of these places. It is written in Hebrew metre, though now little understood; and the first four chapters in an alphabetical manner; every verse beginning in order with the letters of the alphabet; and in the third chapter it is done three times over; three verses together beginning with the same letter: this seems to be done to make it more agreeable, and to help the memory. Jarchi thinks that this is the same book, which, having been publicly read by Baruch, was cut to pieces by King Jehoiakim, and cast into the fire {d} and burnt; which consisted of the first, second, and fourth chapters, and to which was afterwards added the third chapter; but it is without any reason or foundation; seeing that contained all Jeremiah's prophecies, not only against Israel and Judah, but against all the nations,
Jer 32:2; which this book has nothing of; nor even the words, which are particularly said to be in that, respecting the destruction of Jerusalem by the king of Babylon, Jer 32:29; Josephus {e} seems to have been of opinion that this book of Lamentations was written by Jeremy on account of the death of Josiah, 2Ch 35:25; and in which he is followed by many; but the lamentation made in this book is not for a single person only, but for a city, and even for the whole nation of the Jews; nor is there anything suitable to Josiah, and his case; what seems most plausible is in **La 4:20**; and that better agrees with Zedekiah than with him. It appears plainly to be written after the destruction of the city and temple, and the sad desolation made in the land of Judea, because of the sins of the priests and people; and the design of it is to lament these things; to bring them to repentance and humiliation for their sins, and to give some comfortable hope that God will be merciful to them, and restore them again to their former privileges, for which the prophet prays. The introduction

to it, in the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, is,

"and it came to pass after Israel was carried captive, and Jerusalem laid waste, Jeremiah sat weeping, and delivered out this lamentation over Jerusalem; and said,"

what follows.

{a} Connexion, par. 1. p. 332. {b} Contr. Apion. l. 1. sect. 8. {c} Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 174. No. 224. {d} Vid. T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 26. 1. {e} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 5. sect. 1.

INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS 1

This chapter contains a complaint of the miseries of the city of Jerusalem, and the nation of the Jews; first by the Prophet Jeremiah, then by the Jewish people; and is concluded with a prayer of theirs. The prophet deplores the state of the city, now depopulated and become tributary, which had been full of people, and ruled over others; but now in a very mournful condition, and forsaken and ill used by her lovers and friends, turned her enemies, **La 1:1**; and next the state of the whole nation; being carried captive for their sins among the Heathens; having no rest, being overtaken by their persecutors, **La 1:3**; but what most of all afflicted him was the state of Zion; her ways mourning; her solemn feasts neglected; her gates desolate; her priests sighing, and virgins afflicted; her adversaries prosperous; her beauty departed; her sabbaths mocked; her nakedness seen; and all her pleasant things in the sanctuary seized on by the adversary; and all this because of her many transgressions, grievous sins, and great pollution and vileness, which are confessed, **La 1:4**; then the people themselves, or the prophet representing them, lament their case, and call upon others to sympathize with them, **La 1:12**; observing the sad desolation made by the hand of the Lord upon them for their iniquities, **La 1:13**; on account of which great sorrow is expressed; and their case is represented as the more distressing, that they had no comforter, **La 1:16**; then follows a prayer to God, in which his righteousness in doing or suffering all this is acknowledged, and mercy is entreated for themselves, and judgments on their enemies, **La 1:18**.

Ver. 1. How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people!.... These are the words of Jeremiah; so the Targum introduces them,

"Jeremiah the prophet and high priest said;"

and began thus, "how"; not inquiring the reasons of this distress and ruin; but as amazed and astonished at it; and commiserating the sad case of the city of Jerusalem, which a little time ago was exceeding populous; had thousands of inhabitants in it; besides those that came from other parts to see it, or trade with it: and especially when the king of Babylon had invaded the land, which drove vast numbers to Jerusalem for safety; and which was the case afterwards when besieged by the Romans; at which time, as Josephus {f} relates, there were eleven hundred thousand persons; and very probably a like number was in it before the destruction of it by the Chaldeans, who all perished through famine, pestilence, and the sword; or were carried captive; or made their escape; so that the city, as was foretold it should, came to be without any inhabitant; and therefore is represented as "sitting", which is the posture of mourners; and as "solitary", or "alone" {g}, like a menstruous woman in her separation, to which it is compared, **La 1:17**; or as a leper removed from the society of men; so the Targum,

"as a man that has the plague of leprosy on his flesh, that dwells alone;"

or rather as a woman deprived of her husband and children; as follows:

[how] is she become as a widow! her king, that was her head and husband, being taken from her, and carried captive; and God, who was the husband also of the Jewish people, having departed from them, and so left in a state of widowhood. Jarchi {h} observes, that it is not said a widow simply, but as a widow, because her husband would return again; and therefore only during this state of captivity she was like one; but Broughton takes the "caph" not to be a note of similitude, but of reality; and renders it, "she is become a very widow". Vespasian, when he had conquered Judea, struck a medal, on one side of which was a woman sitting under a palm tree in a plaintive and pensive posture, with this inscription, "Judea Capta", as Grotius observes:

she [that was] great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, [how] is she become tributary! that ruled over many nations, having subdued them, and to whom they paid tribute, as the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and Edomites, in the times of David and Solomon; but since obliged to pay tribute herself, first to Pharaohnecho, king of Egypt; then to the king of Babylon in the times of Jehoiakim; and last of all in the times of Zedekiah; so the Targum,

"she that was great among the people, and ruled over the provinces that paid tribute to her, returns to be depressed; and after this to give tribute to them."

{f} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 3. {g} ddb "sola", V. L. Montanus. {h} E Talmud Bab. Sanhedrin. fol. 104. 1. & Taanith, fol. 20. 1.

Lamentations 1:2

Ver. 2. She weepeth sore in the night,.... Or, "weeping weeps" {i}; two weepings, one for the first, the other for the second temples {k}; and while others are taking their sleep and rest; a season fit for mourners, when they can give their grief the greater vent, without any interruption from others; and it being now a night of affliction with her, which occasioned this sore weeping. Jarchi observes, that it was in the night that the temple was burnt:

and her tears [are] on her cheeks; continue there, being always flowing, and never wholly dried up; which shows how great her grief was, and that her weeping was without intermission; or otherwise tears do not lie long, but are soon dried up, or wiped off:

among all her lovers she hath none to comfort [her]; as the Assyrians formerly were, Eze 23:5; and more lately the Egyptians her allies and confederates, in whom she trusted; but these gave her no assistance; nor yielded her any relief in her distress; nor so much as spoke one word of comfort to her:

all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies; those who pretended great friendship to her, and were in strict alliance with her, acted the treacherous part, and withdrew from her, leaving her to the common enemy; and not only so, but behaved towards her in a hostile manner themselves; for "the children of Noph and Tahapanes", places in Egypt confederate with the Jews, are said to "have broken the crown of their head", **Jer 2:16**. The Targum interprets the "lovers" of the "idols" she loved to follow, who now could be of no use unto her by way of comfort.

{i} hkbt hkb "plorando plorat", Vatablus; "plorando plorabit", Pagninus, Montanus. {k} T. Sanhedr. ib. col. 2.

Lamentations 1:3

Ver. 3. Judah is gone into captivity,.... Not only Jerusalem the metropolis of

Judea was destroyed, but the whole country was ravaged, and the inhabitants of it carried captive into Babylon:

because of affliction, and because of great servitude; because of their sins in oppressing and afflicting their poor brethren, and retaining them in a state of bondage after their seven years' servitude, contrary to the law of God; for which they were threatened with captivity,
Jer 34:13; so the Targum,

"the house of Judah went into captivity, because they afflicted the fatherless and the widows; and because of the multitude of service which they caused their brethren the children of Israel to serve, who were sold unto them; and they did not proclaim liberty to their servants and maidens, who were of the seed of Israel:"

or, "through affliction, and through great servitude" {l}; that is, through the affliction and servitude they suffered by the Chaldeans, into whose hands they fell; though some understand it of the Jews, who, to escape the affliction and servitude of the Chaldeans, went into a kind of voluntary captivity, fleeing to the countries of Moab, Ammon, and Edom, during the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; see
Jer 40:11;

she dwelleth among the Heathen; the uncircumcised and the unclean; and so was deprived of both her civil and religious liberties; having no opportunity of worshipping God, and enjoying him in his courts, as formerly; and which must be very uncomfortable living, especially to those who were truly gracious:

she findeth no rest. The Targum adds,

"because of the hard service to which they subjected her;"

she found no natural rest, being carried from place to place; nor civil rest, being kept in hard bondage; nor spiritual rest, being deprived of the worship and ordinances of God; and being conscious of her sins, which had brought all this misery on her:

all her persecutors overtook her between the straits; having hunted her as men hunt wild beasts, and get them into some strait and difficult place, and then seize on them. The Targum interprets it, between the borders; or between the hedges, as Ben Melech; and so Jarchi, of the borders of a field and vineyard;

and of a ditch on the one side and the other, that there is no room to escape; and who makes mention of a Midrash, that explains it not of place, but time, between the seventeenth day of Tammuz, and the ninth of Ab; see Jer 52:7.

{l} ynem "per afflictionem"; j "hic, non [prae], sed per significat", Grotius; "[vel] prae afflictione, [sub.] a Chaldaeis perpessa"; so some in Vatablus.

Lamentations 1:4

Ver. 4. The ways of Zion do mourn,.... Being unoccupied, as in **Jud 5:6**; or unfrequented: this is said by a rhetorical figure; as ways may be said to rejoice, or look pleasant and cheerful, when there are many passengers in them, going to and fro; so they may be said to mourn, or to look dull and melancholy, when no person is met with, or seen in them; thus Jerusalem and the temple being destroyed, the ways which led from the one to the other, and in which used to be seen great numbers going up to the worship of God, which was pleasant to behold,
Ps 42:4; now not one walking in them, and all overgrown with grass; and those roads which led from the several parts of the land to Jerusalem, whither the ten tribes went up to worship three times in the year, and used to travel in companies, which made it delightful and comfortable, and pleasant to look at, now none to be seen upon them; which was matter of grief to those that wished well to Zion; as it is to all truly godly persons to observe that the ways and worship of God are not frequented; that there are few inquiring the way to Zion above, or travelling in the road to heaven; as also when there are few that worship God in Zion below, or ask the way unto it, or walk in the ordinances of it:

because none come to the solemn feasts. Aben Ezra understands this of the sanctuary itself; which sense Abendana mentions; expressed by the word here used; and so called, because all Israel were convened here; but the Targum and Jarchi more rightly interpret it of the feasts, the three solemn feasts of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, at which all the males in Israel were obliged to appear; but now, the temple and city being in ruins, none came to them, which was a very distressing case; as it is to good men, when upon whatever occasion, either through persecution, or through sloth and negligence, the ministry of the word, and the administration of ordinances, particularly the Lord's supper, the solemn feasts under the Gospel dispensation, are not attended to:

all her gates are desolate; the gates of the temple; none passing through them into it to worship God, pray unto him, praise him, or offer sacrifice; or the gates of the city, none going to and fro in them; nor the elders sitting there in council, as in courts of judicature, to try causes, and do justice and judgment:

her priests sigh; the temple burnt; altars destroyed, and no sacrifices brought to be offered; and so no employment for them, and consequently no bread; but utterly deprived of their livelihood, and had good reason to sigh. The Targum adds,

"because the offerings ceased:"

her virgins are afflicted; or, "are sorrowful" {m}; are in grief and mourning, that used to be brisk and gay, and to play with timbrels at their festivals; so the Targum paraphrases it,

"the virgins mourn because they cease to go out on the fifteenth of Ab, and on the day of atonement, which was the tenth of Tisri, to dance in the dances:"

and she [is] in bitterness; that is, Zion; or the congregation of Israel is in bitterness of spirit, in great affliction and distress; her name might be rightly called Marah; see **Ru 1:20**.

{m} twgwn "moestae", Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis; "moerent", Piscator; "moestitia affectae sunt", Cocceius.

Lamentations 1:5

Ver. 5. Her adversaries are the chief,.... Or, "for the head" {n}; or are the head, as was threatened, De 28:44; and now fulfilled; the Chaldeans having got the dominion over the Jews, and obliged them to be subject to them:

her enemies prosper; in wealth and riches, in grandeur and glory; live in ease and tranquillity, enjoying all outward felicity and happiness; while Zion was in distress; which was an aggravation of it; and yet this was but righteous judgment:

for the Lord hath afflicted her; who is righteous in all his ways: the Chaldeans were but instruments; the evil was from the Lord, according to his will and righteous determination, as appears by what follows:

for the multitude of her transgressions: her children are gone into captivity before the enemy; that is, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea were carried captive by the enemy, and drove before them as a flock of sheep, and that for the sins of the nation; and these not a few, but were very numerous, as Mordecai and Ezekiel, and others, who were carried captive young with Jeconiah, as well as many now.

{n} varl "in caput", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "facti sunt caput", Cocceius.

Lamentations 1:6

Ver. 6. And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed,.... The kingdom removed; the priesthood ceased; the temple, their beautiful house, burnt; the palaces of their king and nobles demolished; and everything in church and state that was glorious were now no more:

her princes are become like harts [that] find no pasture; that are heartless and without courage, fearful and timorous, as harts are, especially when destitute of food. The Targum is

"her princes run about for food, as harts run about in the wilderness, and find no place fit for pasture:"

and they are gone without strength before the pursuer; having no spirit nor courage to oppose the enemy, nor strength to flee from him, they fell into his hands, and so were carried captive; see Jer 52:8. Jarchi observes, that the word for "pursuer" has here all its letters, and nowhere else; and so denotes the full pursuit of the enemy, and the complete victory obtained by him.

Lamentations 1:7

Ver. 7. Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries,.... When carried captive, and in exile in a foreign land; when surrounded with distresses and calamities of various kinds; which are a means sometimes of rubbing up and refreshing the memories of persons with those good things they take little notice of in the times of prosperity; the worth of such things being best known and prized by the want of them: even

all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old; her civil and religious liberties; the word, worship, and ordinances of God; the temple, altars, and courts of the Lord; the ark of the testimony, the symbol of the divine Presence; and the revelation of the will of God by the prophets; their peace, prosperity, and enjoyment of all good things: these were remembered

when her people fell into the hand of the enemy; the Chaldeans. The Targum is,

"into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the wicked, and he oppressed them:"

and none did help her; not the Egyptians, her allies and confederates, in whom she trusted:

her adversaries saw her, [and] did mock at her sabbaths; as the Heathens used to do; calling the Jews Sabbatarians {o}; by way of derision; representing them as an idle lazy people, who observed a seventh day merely out of sloth, and so lost a seventh part of time {p}; or they mocked at them for keeping them in vain; since, notwithstanding their religious observance of them, they were suffered to be carried captive out of their land; or, as Jarchi thinks, the Chaldeans mocked at them for keeping their sabbaths strictly, now they were in other lands, when they neglected them in their own country; or they jeered them with their weekly and yearly sabbaths; suggesting to them that now they had leisure enough to observe them; and that their land ceased from tillage with a witness now: some think, that because of the observance of a sabbath, they were obliged to by their law, therefore the Heathens made them work the harder, and imposed greater tasks upon them on that day than on others, like the Egyptians of old; though the words may be rendered, "they mocked at her cessations" {q}; from joy and pleasure, peace and comfort, and the enjoyment of all good things; so the Targum,

"the enemies saw her when she went into captivity; and they mocked at the good things which ceased out of the midst of her."

{o} "Quod jejunia sabbatariorum". Martial. l. 4. Epigr. 4. {p} "----Cui septima quaeque fuit lux Ignava, et partem vitae non attigit ullam". Juvenal. Satyr. 5. {q} hytbvm le wqxv "irrident cessationes ejus", Junius & Tremellius; "rident propter cesstiones", Piscator.

Lamentations 1:8

Ver. 8. Jerusalem hath grievously sinned,.... Or, "hath sinned a sin" {r}; a great sin, as the Targum; the sin of idolatry, according to some; or of covenant breaking, as others; though perhaps no particular sin is meant, but many grievous sins; since she was guilty of a multitude of them, as in La 1:5;

therefore she is removed; out of her own land, and carried captive into another: or, is "for commotion" {s}; for scorn and derision; the head being moved and shook at her by way of contempt: or rather, "for separation" {t}; she being like a menstruous woman, defiled and separate from society:

all that honoured her despise her; they that courted her friendship and alliance in the time of her prosperity, as the Egyptians, now neglected her, and treated her with the utmost contempt, being in adversity:

because they have seen her nakedness; being stripped of all her good things she before enjoyed; and both her weakness and her wickedness being exposed to public view. The allusion is either to harlots, or rather to modest women, when taken captive, whose nakedness is uncovered by the brutish and inhuman soldiers:

yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward; being covered with shame, because of the ill usage of her, as modest women will, being so used.

{r} hajx ajx "peccatum peccavit", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus. {s} hdynl "in commotionem", Montanus, Vatablus, Calvin. {t} "Ut separata", Grotius; "tanquam ex immunditia separata est", Junius & Tremellius.

Lamentations 1:9

Ver. 9. Her filthiness [is] in her skirts,.... Her sin is manifest to all, being to be seen in her punishment. The allusion is to a menstruous woman, to whom she is compared, both before and after; whose blood flows down to the skirts of her garments, and there seen; by which it is known that she is in her separation. So the Targum,

"the filthiness of the blood of her separation is in her skirts; she is not cleansed from it, nor does she repent of her sins:"

she remembereth not her last end; she did not consider in the time of her prosperity what her sins would bring her to; what would be the issue of them; nay, though she was warned by the prophet, and was told what things would come to at last, yet she laid it not to heart; nor did she lay it up in her mind, or reflect upon it; but went on in her sinful courses:

therefore she came down wonderfully; or, "with wonders" {u}; from a very exalted estate to a very low one; from the height of honour and prosperity to the depth of distress and misery; to the astonishment and wonder of all about her, that so flourishing a city and kingdom should be brought to ruin at once, in so strange a manner; see **Da 8:24**;

she had no comforter; as none to help her against her enemies, **La 1:7**; and to prevent her ruin; so none to pity her, and have compassion upon her, and speak a comfortable word to her now she was in it:

O Lord, behold my affliction: not with his eye of omniscience only, which he did, and, of which she had no doubt; but with an eye of pity and compassion: thus Zion is at once and suddenly introduced, breaking out in this pathetic manner, being in great affliction and distress, having none else to apply to; and the enemy bearing hard upon her, and behaving in a very insolent and audacious manner, transgressing all bounds of humanity and decency; and therefore hoped the Lord would have compassion on her, though she had sinned against him:

for the enemy hath magnified [himself]; behaved haughtily both against God and his people; attributing great things to himself; magnifying his own power and wisdom.

{u} Myalp "mirabiliter", Montanus, Vatablus.

Lamentations 1:10

Ver. 10. The enemy hath spread out his hands on all her pleasant things,.... Meaning not the wealth and riches, the goods and substance, or the rich furniture in their own houses; but the precious things in the house of God, the ark, the table, the altar, the priests garments, and vessels of the sanctuary, and the gifts of the temple, and everything valuable in it; these the enemy stretched out his hands and seized upon, and claimed them as his own; took them as a booty, prey, and plunder. Jarchi {w} interprets the enemy of the Moabites and Ammonites, who seized upon the books of the law, in which are things more desirable than gold and silver, and burnt them; because there was a law in them that forbid them entering into the congregation of Israel; but the Targum better explains it of Nebuchadnezzar the wicked; for he and the Chaldean army are doubtless meant; who plundered and ransacked the temple of all its pleasant, precious, and valuable things:

for she hath seen [that] the Heathen entered into her sanctuary; not into the land of Israel only, the holy land; but into the temple, the sanctuary of the Lord; but called hers, because it was built for her use, that the congregation of Israel might worship the Lord in it; into this with her own eyes, though forced to it, and sore against her will, and to her great grief and trouble, she saw the Chaldeans enter, and ravage and spoil it:

whom thou didst command [that] they should not enter into thy congregation; these Jarchi interprets of the Moabites and Ammonites again; and so does the Targum here; paraphrasing them thus,

"whom thou didst command by the hand of Moses the prophet, concerning Ammon and Moab, that they were not worthy to enter into thy congregation;"

and concerning whom there is an express law forbidding it, De 23:1; and it may be there were Moabites and Ammonites in the Chaldean army, assisting in the taking of Jerusalem; and who entered into the temple when it was taken.

{w} E Talmud. Bab. Yebamot, fol 16. 2.

Lamentations 1:11

Ver. 11. All her people sigh,.... Not her priests only, **La 1:4**; but all the common people, because of their affliction, particularly for want of bread. So the Targum,

"all the people of Jerusalem sigh because of the famine;"

for it follows:

they seek bread; to eat, as the Targum; inquire where it is to be had, but in vain:

they have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul: or, "to cause the soul to return" {x}; to fetch it back when fainting and swooning away through famine; and therefore would give anything for food; part with their rich clothes, jewels, and precious stones; with whatsoever they had that was valuable in their cabinets or coffers, that they might have meat to keep from fainting and dying; to refresh and recruit their spirits spent with hunger:

see, O Lord, and consider; for I am become vile; mean, base, and contemptible, in the eyes of men, through penury and want of food; through poverty, affliction, and distress; and therefore desires the Lord would consider her case, and look with pity and compassion on her.

{x} vpn byvhl "ad reducendum animam", Montanus, Piscator.

Lamentations 1:12

Ver. 12. [Is it] nothing to you, all ye that pass by?.... O ye strangers and travellers that pass by, and see my distress, does it not at all concern you? does it not in the least affect you? can you look upon it, and have no commiseration? or is there nothing to be learned from hence by you, that may be instructive and useful to you? Some consider the words as deprecating; may the like things never befall you that have befallen me, O ye passengers; be ye who ye will; I can never wish the greatest stranger, much less a friend, to suffer what I do; nay, I pray God they never may: others, as adjuring. So the Targum,

"I adjure you, all ye that pass by the way, turn aside hither:"

or as calling; so the words may be rendered, "O all ye that pass by" {y}; and Sanctius thinks it is an allusion to epitaphs on tombs, which call upon travellers to stop and read the character of the deceased; what were his troubles, and how he came to his end; and so what follows is Jerusalem's epitaph:

behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me; as it is natural for everyone to think their own affliction greatest, and that none have that occasion of grief and sorrow as they have; though there is no affliction befalls us but what is common unto men; and when it comes to be compared with others, perhaps will appear lighter than theirs:

wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger; signifying, that her affliction was not a common one; it was not from the hand of man only, but from the hand of God; and not in the ordinary way of his providence; but as the effect of his wrath and fury, in all the fierceness of it.

{y} lk Mkyla awl "O vos omnes", V. L.

Lamentations 1:13

Ver. 13. From above hath he sent fire into my bones,.... Which the Targum interprets of her fortified cities, towns, or castles; as Jerusalem, more especially the temple, and the palaces of the king and nobles in it; which, though burnt by the fire of the Chaldeans, yet, this being according to the determination and by the direction of the Lord, is said to be sent from above, from heaven; so that they seemed to be as it were struck with lightning from heaven; unless it should be thought rather to be understood of the fire of divine wrath, of which the people of the Jews had a quick sense, and was like a burning fever in them:

and it prevails against them; or "it" {z}; that is, the fire prevails against or rules over everyone of the bones, to the consumption of them: or rather, "he rules over it" {a}; that is, God rules over the fire; directs it, and disposes of it, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, to the destruction of the strength of the Jewish nation:

he hath spread a net for my feet; in which she was entangled, so that she could not flee from the fire, and escape it, if she would. The allusion is to the taking of birds and wild beasts in nets; if God had not spread a net for the Jews, the Chaldeans could never have taken them; see Eze 12:13;

he hath turned me back; her feet being taken in the net, she could not go forward, but was obliged to turn back, or continue in the net, not being able to extricate her feet: or, "turned me upon my back"; as the Arabic version; laid me prostrate, and so an easy prey to the enemy; or, as the Targum,

"he hath caused me to turn the back to mine enemies:"

he hath made me desolate [and] faint all the day; the cities being without inhabitants; the land uncultivated; the state in a sickly and languishing condition; and which continued so to the end of the seventy years' captivity.

{z} hndryw "et desaeviit in ea", Munster, Tigurine version; "et contrivit ipsum"; so some in Vatablus. {a} "Et dominatus est ea", Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator.

Lamentations 1:14

Ver. 14. The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand,.... That is, the punishment of her sins was laid upon her by the Lord himself; his hand was in it; it came from him; the Chaldeans were only instruments; and a heavy yoke this was. So the Targum renders it,

"the yoke of my rebellions is made heavy by his hand:"

they are wreathed, [and] come upon my neck; or, "twisted together" {b}; as lines to make a cord; or as several cords to make a rope; or as branches of trees or withes are implicated and entwined; and so the Targum,

"they are twisted together as the branches of a vine."

It denotes the complication of judgments upon the Jewish nation for their sins, with which they were holden as with cords; and which were like ropes about their necks, very heavy and distressing to them, and from which they could not deliver themselves. Mr. Broughton thinks the apostle has reference to this passage; and explains it by the sin that easily besets, or cunningly wraps about, Heb 12:1;

he hath made my strength to fall; by the weight of punishment laid upon her, which she could not stand up under, but sunk and fell: this may be understood of her strong and mighty men; her men of valour and courage, who yet stumbled and fell:

the Lord hath delivered me into [their] hands, [from whom] I am not able to rise up; meaning the Chaldeans; nor were the Jews at last delivered from them by their own strength, but by the means of Cyrus the Persian conquering Babylon.

{b} wgrtvy "involutae", Vatablus; "perplexae", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin; "contortae", Piscator, Grotius, Michaelis.

Lamentations 1:15

Ver. 15. The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty [men] in the midst of me,.... As a causeway is trodden; or as mire is trodden under foot in the streets; so were the mighty and valiant men, the soldiers and men of war, trodden under foot and destroyed by the Chaldeans in the streets of Jerusalem, and in the midst of Judea; the Lord so permitting it:

he hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men; the army of the Chaldeans, which were brought against Jerusalem by a divine appointment and call; against whom the choicest and stoutest of them, even their young men, could not stand; but were crushed and broken to pieces by them. The word for "assembly" sometimes signifies an appointed time; a time fixed for solemn festivals, and for calling the people to them; and so the Targum here,

"he hath called or appointed a time to break the strength of my young men;"

the time of Jerusalem's destruction by the Babylonians:

the Lord hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, [as] in a winepress; in the winepress of his wrath; or however in the winepress of the Babylonians, who are compared to one; into whose hands the Jews falling, were like grapes cast into a winepress, and there trodden by men, in order to squeeze and get out the wine; and in like manner were their blood squeezed out of them and shed. The Targum interprets it of the blood of virginity being poured out, as wine in a press; the virgins of Judah being ravished and defiled by the enemy.

Lamentations 1:16

Ver. 16. For these [things] I weep,.... The congregation of Judah, the godly among them, particularly Jeremiah, who represented them, wept for the sins the people had been guilty of, and for the punishment inflicted on them, or the sore calamities that were brought upon them. The Targum goes into particulars, and paraphrases it thus, "for the little ones that are dashed in pieces, and for the women big with child, whose bellies are ripped up, the congregation of Israel saith, I weep:"

mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water: which doubling of the words seems to express the vehemency of her passion; the greatness of the grief she was overwhelmed with. The Targum is,

"my both eyes flow with tears as a fountain of water:"

because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me; meaning God himself, who is the principal comforter of his people: saints may be comforters of one another, by relating to each other their gracious experiences; praying with one another, and building up each other in their most holy faith; by behaving in a kind, tender, and loving manner to each other; forgiving mutual offences; and conversing together about the glories of heaven, and being for ever with the Lord; but these sometimes are at a distance; or, like Job's friends, are miserable comforters. Ministers of the Gospel are by their character and office "Barnabases", "sons of consolation"; are trained up, appointed, and sent by the Lord to comfort his people; which they do by preaching the Gospel to them purely; by opening the Scriptures of truth clearly; by administering ordinances faithfully, and in all directing to Christ: but these sometimes are removed afar off by persecution or death; or those who bear this name do not perform their work aright. God is the chief comforter of his people; God, Father, Son, and Spirit: the Father comforts with his gracious presence; with views of covenant interest, and of the firmness and stability of it; with the precious promises of the word; with his everlasting and unchangeable love; and with discoveries of his pardoning grace and mercy. The Son is a comforter; one of the names of the Messiah with the Jews {c} is "Menachem", "the Comforter"; and who they say is here meant; and he is called the Consolation of Israel, **Lu 2:25**; who comforts by bringing near his righteousness and salvation; by his peace speaking blood, and atoning sacrifice; by directing to his fulness, and favouring with his presence. And the Holy Spirit is another comforter; who comforts by taking of the things of God, Christ, and the Gospel, and showing them to the saints; by opening and applying the promises to his people; by being the spirit of adoption, and the seal, earnest, and pledge of eternal glory: and thus, by being a comforter, the Lord "relieves the souls" of his people, under the weight of sin, the temptations of Satan, and the various afflictions of life; and prevents their fainting, and returns their souls, as the word {d} signifies; or fetches them back, when fainting and swooning away: but sometimes he withdraws himself, and stands at a distance, at least in their apprehensions; and this is matter of great grief and sorrow to them; which was the case of the church at this time:

my children are desolate: those which should help and relieve her, and be a comfort to her, were destitute themselves: or, were "destroyed" {e}, and were not; and which was the cause of her disconsolate state, as was Rachel's, Jer 31:15;

because the enemy prevailed; that is, over them, as the Targum adds; over her children; and either put them to death or carried them captive.

{c} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 1. {d} yvpn byvm "reducens animam meam", V. L. Montanus; "qui restituat", Tigurine version. {e} Mymmwv "perditi", V. L.

Lamentations 1:17

Ver. 17. Zion spreadeth forth her hands,.... Either as submitting to the conqueror, and imploring mercy; or rather as calling to her friends to help and relieve her. The Targum is,

"Zion spreadeth out her hands through distress, as a woman spreads out her hands upon the seat to bring forth;"

see **Jer 4:31**. Some render the words, "Zion breaks with her hands" {f}; that is, breaks bread; and Joseph Kimchi observes, that it was the custom of comforters to break bread to the mourner; but here she herself breaks it with her hands, because there was none to comfort her:

[and there is] none to comfort her; to speak a word of comfort to her, or to help her out of her trouble; her children gone into captivity; her friends and lovers at a distance; and God himself departed from her; See Gill on "La 1:16";

the Lord hath commanded concerning Jacob, [that] his adversaries [should be] round about him; that he should be surrounded by them, and carried captive, and should be in the midst of them in captivity: this was the decree and determination of God; and, agreeably to it, he ordered it in his providence that the Chaldeans should come against him, encompass him, and overcome him; and that because he had slighted and broken the commandments of the Lord; and therefore was justly dealt with, as is acknowledged in **La 1:18**. So the

Targum,

"the Lord gave to the house of Jacob commandments, and a law to keep, but they transgressed the decree of his word; therefore his enemies encompassed the house of Jacob round about:"

Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them; reckoned filthy and unclean, abominable and nauseous; whom none cared to come near, but shunned, despised, and abhorred; as the Jews separated from the Gentiles, and would not converse with them; so neither now would the Chaldeans with the Jews; but treat them as the offscouring of all things.

{f} hydyb Nwyu hvrp "frangit Sion manibus suis", sub. "panem", Vatablus.

Lamentations 1:18

Ver. 18. The Lord is righteous,.... Or, "righteous [is] he the Lord" {g}; in all these dispensations of his providence, how afflictive and severe soever they may seem to be; however the enemies of the church and people of God might transgress just bounds, and act the cruel and unrighteous part; yet good men will always own that God is righteous in all his ways, and that there is no unrighteousness in him; though they sometimes know not how to reconcile his providences to his promises, and especially to his declared love and affection to them; see
Jer 12:1; the reason, clearing God of all injustice, follows:

for I have rebelled against his commandment; or, "his mouth" {h}: the word of his mouth, which he delivered by word of mouth at Mount Sinai, or by his prophets since; and therefore was righteously dealt with, and justly chastised. The Targum makes these to be the words of Josiah before his death, owning he had done wrong in going out against Pharaohnecho, contrary to the word of the Lord; and the next clause to be the lamentation of Jeremiah upon his death: though they are manifestly the words of Jerusalem or Zion, whom the prophet personates, saying,

hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow; directing herself to all compassionate persons, to hearken and attend to her mournful complaint, and to consider her sorrow, the nature and cause of it, and look upon her with an eye of pity in her sorrowful circumstances:

my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity; in Babylon; being taken and carried thither by the Chaldeans; had it been only her ancient men and women, persons worn out with age, that could have been of little use, and at most but of a short continuance, the affliction had not been so great; but her virgins and young men, the flower of the nation, and by whom it might have been supported and increased; for these to be carried away into a strange land must be matter of grief and sorrow.

{g} hwhy awh qydu "justus ipse est Jehovah", Cocceius. {h} whyp "ori ejus", Pagninus, Montanus; Piscator, Cocceius.

Lamentations 1:19

Ver. 19. I called for my lovers, [but] they deceived me,.... Either her idols, with whom she had committed spiritual adultery, that is, idolatry; but these could not answer her expectations, and help her: or the Egyptians, that courted her friendship, and with whom she was in alliance, and in whom she trusted; and these, in the times of her distress, she called upon to make good their engagements, but they disappointed her, and stood not to their covenant and promises, but left her to stand and fall by herself; this Jerusalem said, according to the Targum, when she was delivered into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar; but these words, "they deceived me", it makes to be the Romans, that came with Titus and Vespasian, and built bulwarks against Jerusalem:

my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city; or died in the city of Jerusalem; not by the sword of the enemy, but through famine; and so, in the Arabic language, the word {i} signifies to labour under famine, and want of food, and perish through it; and if this was the case of their priests that officiated in holy things, and of their elders or civil magistrates, what must be the case of the common people?

while they sought their meat to relieve their souls; or "fetch {k} [them] back"; which were just fainting and dying away through hunger; and who did expire while they were begging their bread, or inquiring in one place after another where they could get any, either freely or for money.

{i} "esurivit et fame ac inedia laboravit", Golius, col. 556. {k} Mvpn ta wbyvyw "et reducerent animam suam", Montanus.

Lamentations 1:20

Ver. 20. Behold, O Lord, for I [am] in distress,.... Thus she turns from one to another; sometimes she addresses strangers, people that pass by; sometimes she calls to her lovers; and at other times to God, which is best of all, to have pity and compassion on her in her distress; and from whom it may be most expected, who is a God of grace and mercy:

my bowels are troubled; as the sea, agitated by winds, which casts up mire and dirt; or as any waters, moved by anything whatsoever, become thick and muddy; or like wine in fermentation; so the word {l}, in the Arabic language, signifies, expressive of great disturbance, confusion, and uneasiness:

mine heart is turned within me; has no rest nor peace:

for I have grievously rebelled; against God and his word; her sins were greatly aggravated, and these lay heavy on her mind and conscience, and greatly distressed her:

abroad the sword bereaveth; this, and what follows in the next clause, describe the state and condition of the Jews, while the city was besieged; without it, the sword of the Chaldeans bereaved mothers of their children, and children of their parents, and left them desolate:

at home [there is] as death; within the city, and in the houses of it, the famine raged, which was as death, and worse than immediate death; it was a lingering one: or, "in the house [was] certain death" {m}; for the "caph" here is not a mere note of similitude, but of certainty and reality; to abide at home was sure and certain death, nothing else could be expected. The Targum is

"within the famine kills like the destroying angel that is appointed over death;"

see **Heb 2:14**; and Jarchi interprets it of the fear of demons and noxious spirits, and the angels of death.

{l} "fermentavit, commiscuit, alteravit, turbavique [mentem]", Castel. col. 1294. {m} twmk tybb "in domo mors ipsa", Munster; "plane mors"; Junius & Tremellius.

Lamentations 1:21

Ver. 21. They have heard that I sigh: [there is] none to comfort me,.... That is, the nations, as the Targum; the neighbouring ones, those that were her confederates and allies; the same with her lovers, as before, as Aben Ezra observes; these being near her, knew full well her sorrowful and distressed condition, being as it were within the hearing of her sighs and groans; and yet none of them offered to help her, or so much as to speak a comfortable word to her:

all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; not only her friends, but foes; meaning the Tyrians, Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, and as the following description of them shows; for it must design others from the Chaldeans, that were the immediate cause of it:

they are glad that thou hast done [it]; brought all this ruin and destruction on Jerusalem, which could never have been done, if the Lord had not willed it; and at this the above mentioned nations rejoiced; see Eze 25:3; there being a considerable stop on the word glad, it may be rendered, as by some, "they are glad; but thou hast done it" {n}; not they, but thou; and therefore must be patiently bore, and quietly submitted to, it being the Lord's doing:

thou wilt bring the day [that] thou hast called; the time of, he destruction of, he Chaldeans, who had the chief hand in the ruin of the Jewish nation, and of those that rejoiced at it; which time was fixed by the Lord, and proclaimed and published by his prophets, and would certainly and exactly come, as and when it was pointed out: some {o} take it to be a wish or prayer, that God would bring it, as he had declared; though others interpret it in a quite different sense, "thou hast brought the day" {p}; meaning on herself, the determined destruction; so the Targum,

"thou hast brought upon me the day of vengeance; thou hast called a time upon me to my desolation:"

and they shall be like unto me; in the same distressed, desolate, and sorrowful condition, being brought to ruin and destruction; which afterwards was the case of the Chaldeans, and all the other nations.

{n} tyve hta yk "laetati sunt; sed tu fecisti", Grotius. {o} "Utinam induceres diem", so some in Vatablus. {p} Mwy tabx "adduxisti diem", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "induxisti [aut] inducis", Vatablus.

Lamentations 1:22

Ver. 22. Let all their wickedness come before thee,.... The Targum adds,

"in the day of the great judgment;"

but it seems to refer to present time, at least to the time fixed by the Lord for their ruin; and which the church imprecates, not from a spirit of revenge, but from a holy zeal for the glory of God; desiring that the wickedness of her enemies might be remembered by the Lord, so as to punish them in righteous judgment for the same:

and do unto them as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions; she owns that what was done to her was for her sins, and therefore could not charge God with injustice; only she desires the same might be done to her enemies, who were equally guilty: some render it, "glean them" {q}; or rather, "gather them as a vintage"; or as grapes are gathered: "as thou hast gathered me"; as thou hast took me, and cast me into the winepress of thy wrath, and there hast trodden and squeezed me; see **La 1:15**; so do unto them:

for my sighs [are] many, and my heart [is] faint; her sighs were many because of her afflictions, and her heart faint because of her sighing.

{q} wml llwe epifullison autoiv, Sept. "vindemia", V. L. Vatablus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Lamentations 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS 2

This chapter contains another alphabet, in which the Prophet Jeremiah, or those he represents, lament the sad condition of Jerusalem; the destruction of the city and temple, and of all persons and things relative to them, and to its civil or church state; and that as being from the hand of the Lord himself, who is represented all along as the author thereof, because of their sins, **La 2:1**; and then the elders and virgins of Zion are represented as in great distress, and weeping for those desolations; which were very much owing to the false prophets, that had deceived them, **La 2:10**; and all this occasioned great rejoicing in the enemies of Zion, **La 2:15**; but sorrow of heart to Zion herself, who is called to weeping, **La 2:18**; and the chapter is concluded with an address to the Lord, to take this her sorrowful case into consideration, and show pity and compassion, **La 2:20**.

Ver. 1. How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger,.... Not their persons for protection, as he did the Israelites at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; nor their sins, which he blots out as a thick cloud; or with such an one as he filled the tabernacle and temple with when dedicated; for this was "in his anger", in the day of his anger, against Jerusalem; but with the thick and black clouds of calamity and distress; he "beclouded" {r} her, as it may be rendered, and is by Broughton; he drew a veil, or caused a cloud to come over all her brightness and glory, and surrounded her with darkness, that her light and splendour might not be seen. Aben Ezra interprets it, "he lifted her up to the clouds": that is, in order to cast her down with the greater force, as follows:

[and] cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel; all its glory, both in church and state; this was brought down from the highest pitch of its excellency and dignity, to the lowest degree of infamy and reproach; particularly this was true of the temple, and service of God in it, which was the beauty and glory of the nation, but now utterly demolished:

and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger; to spare and preserve that; meaning either the house of the sanctuary, the temple itself, as the Targum and Jarchi; or rather the ark with the mercy seat, on which the Shechinah or divine Majesty set his feet, when sitting between the cherubim; and is so called, 1Ch 28:2.

{r} byey "obnubilavit", Montanus, Vatablus; "obnubilat", Cocceius.

Lamentations 2:2

Ver. 2. The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied,.... As he regarded not his own habitation the temple, nor the ark his footstool, it is no wonder he should be unconcerned about the habitations of others; as of the inhabitants of the land of Judea and of Jerusalem, particularly of the king, his nobles, and the great men; these the Lord swallowed up, or suffered to be swallowed up, as houses in an earthquake, and by an inundation, so as to be seen no more; and this he did without showing the least reluctance, pity, and compassion; being so highly incensed and provoked by their sins and transgressions:

he hath thrown down in his wrath the strong holds of the daughter of Judah; not only the dwelling houses of the people, but the most fortified places, their castles, towers, and citadels:

he hath brought [them] down to the ground; and not only battered and shook them, but beat them down, and laid them level with the ground; and all this done in the fury of his wrath, being irritated to it by the sins of his people; even the daughter of Judah, or the congregation thereof, as the Targum:

he hath polluted the kingdom, and the princes thereof; what was reckoned sacred, the kingdom of the house of David, and the kings and princes of it, the Lord's anointed; these being defiled with sin, God cast them away, as filth to the dunghill, and gave them up into the hands of the Gentiles, who were reckoned unclean; and thus they were profaned. Jarchi interprets these princes of the Israelites in common, who were called a kingdom of priests; and makes mention of a Midrash, that explains them of the princes above, or of heaven.

Lamentations 2:3

Ver. 3. He hath cut off in [his] fierce anger all the horn of Israel,.... All its power and strength, especially its kingly power, which is often signified by a horn in Scripture; see **Da 7:24**; this the Lord took away in his fierce anger, and left the land destitute of all relief, help, defence and protection; whether from its king and princes, or from its men of war or fortified places; all being cut off and destroyed:

he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy; either his own right hand, with which he had used to fight for his people, and protect them, but now withdrawing it, left them to the mercy of their enemies; or Israel's right hand, which he so weakened, that they had no power to resist the enemy, and defend themselves:

and he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire [which] devoureth round about; that is, his wrath was like a burning flaming fire, which consumes all around, wherever it comes; thus the Lord in his anger consumed Jacob, and left neither root nor branch.

Lamentations 2:4

Ver. 4. He hath bent his bow like an enemy,.... God sometimes appears as if he was an enemy to his people, when he is not, by his conduct and behaviour; by the dispensations of his providence they take him to be so, as Job did, Job 16:9; he bends his bow, or treads it, for the bending or stretching the bow was done by the foot; and as the Targum,

"and threw his arrows at me:"

he stood with his right hand as an adversary; with arrows in it, to put into his bow or with his sword drawn, as an adversary does. The Targum is,

"he stood at the right hand of Nebuchadnezzar and helped him, when he distressed his people Israel:"

and slew all [that were] pleasant to the eye; princes and priests, husbands and wives, parents and children, young men and maids; desirable to their friends and relations, and to the commonwealth:

in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion he poured out his fury like fire; that is, either in the temple, or in the city of Jerusalem, or both, which were burnt with fire, as the effect of divine wrath and fury; and which itself is comparable to fire; like a burning lamp of fire, as the Targum; or rather like a burning furnace or mountain; see **Na 1:6**.

Lamentations 2:5

Ver. 5. The Lord was as an enemy,.... Who formerly was on their side, their God and guardian, their protector and deliverer, but now against them; and a terrible thing it is to have God for an enemy, or even to be as one; this is repeated, as being exceeding distressing, and even intolerable. Mr. Broughton renders it, "the Lord is become a very enemy"; taking "caph" for a note of reality, and not of similitude;

he hath swallowed up Israel; the ten tribes, or the Jewish nation in general; as a lion, or any other savage beast, swallows its prey, and makes nothing of it, and leaves none behind:

he hath swallowed up all her palaces: the palaces of Zion or Jerusalem; the palaces of the king, princes, nobles, and great men; as an earthquake or inundation swallows up whole streets and cities at once;
See Gill on "La 2:2";

he hath destroyed his strong holds: the fortified places of the land of Israel, the towers and castles:

and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation; exceeding great lamentation, for the destruction of its cities, towns, villages, and the inhabitants of them.

Lamentations 2:6

Ver. 6. And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as [if it were] of a garden,.... The house of the sanctuary or temple, as the Targum; which was demolished at once with great force and violence, and as easily done as a tent or tabernacle is taken down; and no more account made of it than of a cottage or lodge in a vineyard or garden, set up while the fruit was, gathering; either to shelter from the heat of the sun in the day, or to lodge in at night; see **Isa 1:8**;

he hath destroyed his places in the assembly; the courts where the people used to assemble for worship in the temple; or the synagogues in Jerusalem, and other parts of the land:

the Lord hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion; there being neither places to keep them in, nor people to observe them:

and hath despised, in the indignation of his anger, the king and the priest; whose persons and offices were sacred, and ought to be treated by men with honour and respect; but, for the sins of both, the Lord despised them himself, and made them the object of his wrath and indignation, and suffered them to be despised and ill used by others, by the Chaldeans; Zedekiah had his children slain before his eyes, and then they were put out, and he was carried in chains to Babylon, and there detained a captive all his days; and Seraiah the chief priest, or, as the Targum here has it, the high priest, was put to death by the king of Babylon; though not only the persons of the king and priest are meant, but their offices also; the kingdom and priesthood ceased from being exercised for many years.

Lamentations 2:7

Ver. 7. The Lord hath cast off his altar,.... Whether of incense, or of burnt offerings; the sacrifices of which used to be acceptable to him; but now the altar being cast down and demolished, there were no more offerings; nor did he show any desire of them, but the reverse:

he hath abhorred his sanctuary; the temple; by suffering it to be profaned, pulled down, and burnt, it looked as if he had an abhorrence of it, and the service in it; as he had, as it was performed without faith in Christ, love to him, or any view to his glory; see **Isa 1:13**;

he hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; both the walls of the sanctuary, and the walls of the houses of the kin, and princes; especially thee former are meant, both by what goes before and follows:

they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as in the day of a solemn feast; that is the enemy, the Chaldeans, made a noise in the temple, blaspheming God, that had dwelt in it; insulting over the people of God, that had worshipped there; rejoicing in their victories over them; singing their "paeans" to their gods, and other profane songs; indulging themselves in revelling and rioting; making as great a noise with their shouts and songs as the priests, Levites, and people of Israel did, when they sung the songs of Zion on a festival day. The Targum is,

"as the voice of the people of the house of Israel, that prayed in the midst of it in the day of the passover."

Lamentations 2:8

Ver. 8. The Lord hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion,.... Either the wall of the city, as Aben Ezra; or the wall that encompassed the temple, and all the outward courts of it, as Dr. Lightfoot {s} thinks; this the Lord had determined to destroy, and according to his purposes did destroy it, or suffer it to be demolished; and so all were laid open for the enemy to enter:

he hath stretched out a line; a line of destruction, to mark out how far the destruction should go, and bow much should be laid in ruins; all being as exactly done, according to the purpose and counsel of God, as if it was done by line and rule; see Isa 34:11;

he hath not withdrawn his hand from destroying; till he made a full end of the city and temple, as he first designed:

therefore he made the rampart and the wall to lament: the "chel" and the wall; all that space between the courts of the temple and the wall that surrounded it was called the "chel"; and so the Targum, the circumference or enclosure; and these were laid waste together, and so said to lament: according to others they were two walls, a wall the son of a wall, as Jarchi interprets it; an outward and an inward wall, one higher than another; a low wall over against a high wall; which was as a rampart or bulwark, for the strength and support of it:

they languished together; or fell together, as persons in a fit faint away and full to the ground.

{s} Prospect of the Temple, c. 17. p. 1089.

Lamentations 2:9

Ver. 9. Her gates are sunk into the ground,.... Either the gates of the city or temple, or both; being broke and demolished, and laid level with the ground, and covered with rubbish; for as for the Midrash, or exposition, that Jarchi mentions, that the gates sunk into the earth upon the approach of the enemy, that they might not have power over them, through which the ark passed, is a mere fable of their Rabbins; and equally as absurd is the additional gloss of the Targum,

"her gates sunk into the earth, because they sacrificed a hog, and brought of the blood of it to them:"

he hath destroyed and broken her bars; with which the gates were bolted and barred, that so the enemy might enter; it was God that did it, or suffered it to be done, or it would not have been in the power of the enemy:

her king and her princes [are] among the Gentiles; Zedekiah, and the princes that were not slain by the king of Babylon, were carried captive thither; and there they lived, even among Heathens that knew not God, and despised his worship:

the law [is] no [more]; the book of the law was burnt in the temple, and the tables of it carried away with the ark, or destroyed; and though, no doubt, there were copies of the law preserved, yet it was not read nor expounded; nor was worship performed according to the direction of it; nor could it be in a strange land. Mr. Broughton joins this with the preceding clause, as descriptive of the Heathens: "her king and her princes [are] among Heathen that have no law"; see **Ro 2:12**;

her prophets also find no vision from the Lord; there was none but Jeremiah left in the land, and none but Ezekiel and Daniel in the captivity; prophets were very rare at this time, as they were afterwards; for we hear of no more after the captivity, till the coming of the Messiah, but Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; so that there was very little open vision; the word of the Lord was precious or scarce; there was a famine of hearing it, **1Sa 3:1**.

Lamentations 2:10

Ver. 10. The elders of the daughter of Zion sit on the ground, [and] keep silence,.... Who used to sit in the gate on thrones of judgment, and passed sentence in causes tried before them; or were wont to give advice and counsel, and were regarded as oracles, now sit on the ground, and dumb, as mourners; see **Job 2:13**;

they have cast up dust upon their heads; on their white hairs and gray locks, which bespoke wisdom, and made them grave and venerable:

they have girded themselves with sackcloth: after the manner of mourners; who used to be clothed in scarlet and rich apparel, in robes suitable to their office as civil magistrates:

the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground: through shame and sorrow; who used to look brisk and gay, and walk with outstretched necks, and carried their heads high, but now low enough. Aben Ezra interprets it of the hair of their heads, which used to be tied up, but now loosed and dishevelled, and hung down as it were to the ground.

Lamentations 2:11

Ver. 11. Mine eyes do fail with tears,.... According to Aben Ezra, everyone of the elders before mentioned said this; but rather they are the words of the Prophet Jeremiah, who had wept his eyes dry, or rather blind, on account of the calamities of his people; though he himself obtained liberty and enlargement by means thereof:

my bowels are troubled; all his inward parts were distressed:

my liver is poured upon the earth; his gall bladder, which lay at the bottom of his liver, broke, and he cast it up, and poured it on the earth; see Job 16:13; and all this was

for the destruction of the daughter of my people; or, the "breach" of them {t}; their civil and church state being destroyed and broke to shivers; and for the ruin of the several families of them: particularly

because the children and sucklings swoon in the streets of the city; through famine, for want of bread, with those that could eat it; and for want of the milk of their mothers and nurses, who being starved themselves could not give it; and hence the poor infants fainted and swooned away; which was a dismal sight, and heart melting to the prophet.

{t} rbv le "propter contritionem", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; "propter confractionem", Piscator; "propter fractionem", Cocceius.

Lamentations 2:12

Ver. 12. They say to their mothers, where [is] corn and wine?.... Not the sucklings who could not speak, nor were used to corn and wine, but the children more grown; both are before spoken of, but these are meant, even the young men of Israel, as the Targum; and such as had been brought up in the best manner, had been used to wine, and not water, and therefore ask for that as well as corn; both take in all the necessaries of life; and which they ask of their mothers, who had been used to feed them, and were most tender of them; but now not seeing and having their usual provisions, and not knowing what was the reason of it, inquire after them, being pressed with hunger:

when they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city; having no food given them, though they asked for it time after time, they fainted away, and died a lingering death; as wounded persons do who are not killed at once, which is the more distressing:

when their soul was poured out into their mothers' bosom; meaning not the desires of their souls for food, expressed in moving and melting language as they sat in their mothers' laps, and lay in their bosoms; which must be piercing unto them, if no more was designed; but their souls or lives themselves, which they gave up through famine, as the Targum; expiring in their mothers' arms.

Lamentations 2:13

Ver. 13. What thing shall I take to witness for thee?.... What argument can be made use of? what proof or evidence can be given? what witnesses can be called to convince thee, and make it a clear case to time, that ever any people or nation was in such distress and calamity, what with sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity, as thou art?

what thing shall I liken thee to, O daughter of Jerusalem? what kingdom or nation ever suffered the like? no example can be given, no instance that comes up to it; not the Egyptians, when the ten plagues were inflicted on them; not the Canaanites, when conquered and drove out by Joshua; not the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, and Syrians, when subdued by David; or any other people:

what shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for this is one way that friends comfort the afflicted, by telling them that such an one's case was as bad, and worse, than theirs; and therefore bid them be of good heart; bear their affliction patiently; before long it will be over; but nothing of this kind could be said here; no, nor any hope given it would be otherwise; they could not say their case was like others, or that it was not desperate:

for thy breach [is] great like the sea; as large and as wide as that: Zion's troubles were a sea of trouble; her afflictions as numerous and as boisterous as the waves of the sea; and as salt, as disagreeable, and as intolerable, as the waters of it: or her breach was great, like the breach of the sea; when it overflows its banks, or breaks through its bounds, there is no stopping it, but it grows wider and wider:

who can heal thee? it was not in the power of man, in her own power, or of her allies, to recover her out of the hands of the enemy; to restore her civil or church state; her wound was incurable; none but God could be her physician. The Targum is,

"for thy breach is great as the greatness of the breach of the waves of the sea in the time of its tempest; and who is the physician that can heal thee of thy infirmity?"

Lamentations 2:14

Ver. 14. Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee,.... Not the prophets of the Lord; but false prophets, as the Targum; which were of the people's choosing, and were acceptable to them; prophets after their own hearts, because they prophesied smooth things, such as they liked; though in the issue they proved "vain" and "foolish", idle stories, impertinent talk, the fictions of their own brains; and yet they pretended to have visions of them from the Lord; as that within two years Jeconiah, and all the vessels of the temple carried away by the king of Babylon, should be returned; and that he would not come against Jerusalem, nor should it be delivered into his hands; see
Jer 28:2;

and they have not discovered thine iniquity: they did not tell them of their sins; they took no pains to convince them of them, but connived at them; instead of reproving them for them, they soothed them in them; they did not "remove" the covering that was "over [their] iniquity" {u}, as it might be rendered; which they might easily have done, and laid their sirs to open view: whereby they might have been ashamed of them, and brought to repentance for them. The Targum is,

"neither have they manifested the punishment that should come upon thee for thy sins;"

but, on the contrary, told them it should not come upon them; had they dealt faithfully with them, by showing them their transgressions, and the consequences of them, they might have been a means of preventing their ruin: and, as it here follows,

to turn away thy captivity; either to turn them from their backslidings and wanderings about, as Jarchi; or to turn them by repentance, as the Targum; or to prevent their going into captivity:

but have seen for thee false burdens, and causes of banishment; that is, false prophecies against Babylon, and in favour of the Jews; prophecies, even those that are true, being often called "burdens", as the "burden of Egypt", and "the burden of Damascus", &c. and the rather this name is here given to those false prophecies because the prophecies of Jeremiah were reproached by them with it, Jer 23:33, &c. and because these proved in the issue burdensome, sad, and sorrowful ones though they once tickled and pleased; and were the cause of the people's going into exile and captivity they listening to them: or they were "depulsions" or "expulsions" {w}; drivings, that drove them from the right way; from God and his worship; from his word and prophets; and, at last, the means of driving them out of their own land; of impelling them to sin, and so of expelling them from their own country. The Targum renders it,

"words of error."

{u} Knwe le wlg alw "et non revelarunt [legmen] pravitati tuae impositum", Christ. Ben. Miehaelis. {w} Myxwdmw kai exwsmata, Sept. "et expulsiones", Montanus, Vatablus, Calvin; "et ad depulsionem spectantium", Junius & Tremellius; "depulsiones, expulsiones", Stockius, p. 649.

Lamentations 2:15

Ver. 15. All that pass by clap [their] hands at thee,.... Travellers that passed by, and saw Jerusalem in ruins, clapped their hands at it, by way of rejoicing, as well pleased at the sight. This must be understood, not of the inhabitants of the land, but of strangers, who had no good will to it; though they seem to be distinguished from their implacable enemies in **La 2:16**:

they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem; by way of scorn and derision; hereby expressing their contempt of her, and the pleasure and satisfaction they took in seeing her in this condition:

[saying, is] this the city that [men] call the perfection of beauty,
the joy of the whole earth? a complete city, a most beautiful one for its situation; for its fortifications by nature and art; for its spacious buildings, palaces, and towers; and especially for the magnificent temple in it, and the residence of the God of heaven there, and that pompous worship of him there performed; on account of all which, and the abundant blessings of goodness bestowed upon the inhabitants, they had reason to rejoice more than all the men of the world besides; as well as they contributed many ways to the good and happiness of all nations; this is what had been said by themselves, Ps 48:2; and had even been owned by others; by the forefathers of those very persons that now insult over it. So the Targum,

"is this the city which our fathers that were of old said? &c."

nor do they by these words deny, but rather own, that it had been what was said of it; but now the case was otherwise; instead of being a perfect beauty, it was a perfect heap of rubbish; instead of being the joy of the whole earth, it was the offscouring of all things.

Lamentations 2:16

Ver. 16. All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee,.... Or "widened" {x} them; stretched them out as far as they could, to reproach, blaspheme, and insult; or, like gaping beasts, to swallow up and devour:

they hiss and gnash their teeth; hiss like serpents, and gnash their teeth in wrath and fury; all expressing their extreme hatred and abhorrence of the Jews, and the delight they took in their ruin and destruction:

they say, we have swallowed [her] up; all her wealth and riches were corns into their hands, and were all their own; as well as they thought these were all their own doings, owing to their wisdom and skill, courage and strength; not seeing and knowing the hand of God in all this. These words seem to be the words of the Chaldeans particularly:

certainly this [is] the day that we have looked for; we have found, we have seen [it]: this day of Jerusalem's destruction, which they had long looked for, and earnestly desired; and now it was come; and they had what they so much wished for; and express it with the utmost pleasure. In this verse the order of the alphabet is not observed the letter p, "pe", being set before the letter e, "ain", which should be first, according to the constant order of the alphabet; and which was so before the times of Jeremiah, even in David's time, as appears by the ninety ninth Psalm, and others. Grotius thinks it is after the manner of the Chaldeans; but the order of the Hebrew and Chaldee alphabets is the same Dr Lightfoot thinks {y} the prophet, by this charge, hints at the seventy years that Jerusalem should be desolate, which were now begun; the letter e, "ain", in numbers, denoting seventy. So Mr. Bedford {z}, who observes, that the transposition of these letters seems to show the confusion in which the prophet was, when he considered that this captivity should last seventy years. Jarchi {a} says one is put before the other, because they spoke with their mouths what they saw not with their eyes; "pe" signifying the mouth, and "ain" an eye.

{x} wup "dilatant", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {y} Vol. 1. p. 129. {z} Scripture Chronology, p. 685. {a} E Talmud Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 104. 2.

Lamentations 2:17

Ver. 17. The Lord hath done [that] which he had devised,.... It was not so much the Chaldeans that did it, though they ascribed it to themselves; but it was the Lord's doing, and what he had deliberately thought of, purposed and designed within himself; all whose purposes and devices certainly come to pass:

he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old; not only by the mouth of Jeremiah, years ago, or in the times of Isaiah, long before him; but even in the days of Moses; see Le 26:17, &c. De 28:20, &c. So the Targum,

"which he commanded to Moses the prophet from ancient days, that if the children of Israel would not keep the commands of the Lord, he would take vengeance on them:"

he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied; he hath thrown down, or caused to be thrown down, without any pity, the walls of Jerusalem; and not only the houses and palaces in it, but also his own house, the temple:

and he hath caused [thine] enemy to rejoice over thee; giving thorn victory, and putting all into their hands; on which they insulted them, and gloried over them:

he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries; increased their strength and power, their kingdom and authority; and which swelled their pride, and made them more haughty and insolent.

Lamentations 2:18

Ver. 18. Their heart cried unto the Lord,.... Either the heart of their enemies, as Aben Ezra; which cried against the Lord, and blasphemed him; or rather the heart of the Jews in their distress, when they saw the walls of the city breaking down, they cried unto the Lord for help and protection, whether sincerely or not; no doubt some did; and all were desirous of preservation:

O wall of the daughter of Zion! this seems to be an address of the prophet to the people of Jerusalem carried captive, which was now without houses and inhabitants, only a broken wall standing, some remains and ruins of that; which is mentioned to excite their sorrow and lamentation:

let tears run down like a river, day and night; incessantly, for the destruction and desolation made:

give thyself no rest; or intermission; but weep continually:

let not the apple of thine eye cease; from pouring out tears; or from weeping, as the Targum; or let it not "be silent" {b}, or asleep; but be open and employed in beholding the miseries of the nation, and in deploring them.

{b} Mdt la "non taceat", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "ne sileat", Calvin, Michaelis.

Lamentations 2:19

Ver. 19. Arise, cry out in the night,.... That is, O daughter of Zion, or congregation of Israel, as the Targum; who are addressed and called upon by the prophet to arise from their beds, and shake off their sleep, and sloth, and stupidity, and cry to God in the night season; and be earnest and importunate with him for help and assistance. Aben Ezra rightly observes, that the word used signifies a lifting up of the voice both in singing and in lamentation; here it is used in the latter sense; and denotes great vehemency and earnestness in crying unto God, arising from deep distress and sorrow, which prevents sleep:

in the beginning of the watches; either at the first of them; so Broughton renders it, "at the first watch"; which began at the time of going to bed: or at the beginning of each of them; for with the ancient Jews there were three of them; in later times four: or in the beginning of the morning watch, as the Targum; very early in the morning, before sun rising; as they are called upon to pray late at night, so betimes in the mottling:

pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord; use the utmost freedom with him; tell him, in the fullest manner, thy whole case, fit thy complaints; unbosom thyself to him; keep nothing from him; speak out freely all lily soul needs; do all this publicly, and in the most affectionate way and manner, thy soul melted in floods of tears, under a sense of sin, and pressing evils for it. The Targum is,

"pour out as water the perverseness of thine heart, and return by repentance, and pray in the house of the congregation (or synagogue) before the face of the Lord:"

lift up thine hands towards him; in prayer, as the Targum adds; for this is a prayer gesture, as in **La 3:41**;

for the life of thy young children that faint for hunger in the top of every street; pray for them, that they might have food and sustenance, to preserve them alive; who, for want of it, were ready to swoon and die the public streets; in the top of them, where they met, and where was the greatest concourse of people, and yet none able to relieve them.

Lamentations 2:20

Ver. 20. Behold, O Lord, and consider to whom thou hast done this,.... On whom thou hast brought these calamities of famine and sword; not upon thine enemies, but upon thine own people, that are called by thy name, and upon theirs, their young ones, who had not sinned as their fathers had: here the church does not charge God with any injustice, or complain of hard usage; only humbly entreats he would look upon her, in her misery, with an eye of pity and compassion; and consider her sorrowful condition; and remember the relation she stood in to him; and so submits her case, and leaves it with him. These words seem to be suggested to the church by the prophet, as what might be proper for her to use, when praying for the life of her young children; and might be introduced by supplying the word "saying" before "behold, O Lord", &c.

shall the women eat their fruit; their children, the fruit of their womb, as the Targum; their newborn babes, that hung at their breasts, and were carried in their arms; it seems they did, as was threatened they should, Le 26:29; and so they did at the siege of Samaria, and at the siege of Jerusalem, both by the Chaldeans and the Romans:

[and] children of a span long? or of a hand's breadth; the breadth of the palms of the hand, denoting very little ones: or "children handled", or "swaddled with the hands" {c}; of their parents, who are used to stroke the limbs of their babes, to bring them to; and keep them in right form and shape, and swaddle them with swaddling bands in a proper manner; see **La 2:22**; and so the Targum,

"desirable children, who are wrapped in fine linen."

Jarchi {d} interprets it of Doeg Ben Joseph, whom his mother slew, and ate:

shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord? as very probably some were, who fled thither for safety when the city was broken up; but were not spared by the merciless Chaldeans, who had no regard to their office and character; nor is it any wonder they should not, when the Jews themselves slew Zechariah, a priest and prophet, between the porch and the altar; of whom the Targum here makes mention; and to whom Jarchi applies these words.

{c} Myxpj ylle "parvulos qui educantur", Pagninus; "parvulos educationum", Montanus; "educationis", Calvin; "infantes palmationum, [sive] tractationis palmarum", Michaelis; "pueros palmis tractatos", Cocceius. {d} E Talmud Bab. Yoma, fol. 38. 2.

Lamentations 2:21

Ver. 21. The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets,.... Young men and old men, virgins and aged women; these promiscuously lay on the ground in the public streets, fainting and dying for want of food; or lay killed there by the sword of the enemy; the Chaldeans sparing neither age nor sex. The Targum interprets it of their sleeping on the ground,

"young men slept on the ground in the villages, and old men who used to lie on pillows of fine wool, and on beds of ivory;"

but the former sense is confirmed by what follows:

my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword; by the sword of the Chaldeans, when they entered the city:

thou hast slain [them] in the day of thine anger: thou hast killed, [and] not pitied; the Chaldeans were only instruments; it was the Lord's doing; it was according to his will; it was what he had purposed and decreed; what he had solemnly declared and threatened; and now in his providence brought about, for the sins of the Jews, by which he was provoked to anger; and so gave them up into the hands of their enemies, to slay them without mercy; and which is here owned; the church takes notice of the hand of God in all this.

Lamentations 2:22

Ver. 22. Thou hast called, as in a solemn day, my terrors round about,.... Terrible enemies, as the Chaldeans; these came at the call of God, as soldiers at the command of their general; and in as great numbers as men from all parts of Judea flocked to Jerusalem on any of the three solemn feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles. The Targum paraphrases it very foreign to the sense;

"thou shall proclaim liberty to thy people, the house of Israel, by the Messiah, as thou didst by Moses and Aaron on the day of the passover:"

so that in the day of the Lord's anger none escaped or remained; in the city of Jerusalem, and in the land of Judea; either they were put to death, or were carried captive; so that there was scarce an inhabitant to be found, especially after Gedaliah was slain, and the Jews left in the land were carried into Egypt:

those that I have swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed; or "whom I could span", as Broughton; or "handled"; whose limbs she had stroked with her hands, whom she had swathed with bands, and had carried in her arms, and had most carefully and tenderly brought up: by those she had "swaddled" are meant the little ones; and by those she had "brought up" the greater ones, as Aben Ezra observes; but both the enemy, the Chaldeans, consumed and destroyed without mercy, without regard to their tender years, or the manner in which they were brought up; but as if they were nourished like lambs for the day of slaughter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Lamentations 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS 3

This chapter is a complaint and lamentation like the former, and on the same subject, only the prophet mixes his own afflictions and distresses with the public calamities; or else he represents the church in her complaints; and some have thought him to be a type of Christ throughout the whole; to whom various things may be applied. It is indeed written in a different form from the other chapters, in another sort of metre; and though in an alphabetical manner as the rest, yet with this difference, that three verses together begin with the same letter; so that the alphabet is gone through three times in it. Here is first a complaint of the afflictions of the prophet, and of the people, expressed by a rod, by darkness, by wormwood and gall, and many other things; and especially by the Lord's appearing against them as an enemy, in a most severe and terrible manner; shutting out their prayer; being as a bear and lion to them; and giving them up to the cruelty and scorn of their enemies, **La 3:1**; then follows some comfort taken by them, from the mercy, faithfulness, and goodness of God; from the usefulness of patience in bearing afflictions; and from the end of God in laying them upon men; and from the providence of God, by which all things are ordered, **La 3:22**; wherefore, instead of complaining, it would be better, it is suggested, to attend to the duties of examination of their ways, and of repentance, and of prayer, **La 3:39**; and a particular prayer is directed to, in which confession of sin is made, and their miseries deplored, by reason of the hidings of God's face, and the insults of their enemies, **La 3:42**; and then the prophet expresses his sympathy with his people under affliction, and declares what he himself met with from his enemies, **La 3:48**; and relates bow he called upon the Lord, and he heard and delivered him, **La 3:55**; and concludes with a request that he would judge his cause, and avenge him on enemies, **La 3:59**.

Ver. 1. I [am] the man [that] hath seen affliction,.... Had a much experience of it, especially ever since he had been a prophet; being reproached and ill used by his own people, and suffering with them in their calamities; particularly, as Jarchi observes, his affliction was greater than the other prophets, who indeed prophesied of the destruction of the city and temple, but did not see it; whereas he lived to see it: he was not indeed the only man that endured affliction, but he was remarkable for his afflictions; he had a large share of them, and was herein a type of Christ, who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs:

by the rod of his wrath; that is, by the rod of the wrath of God, for he is understood; it is a relative without an antecedent, as in **So 1:1**; unless the words are to be considered in connection **La 2:22**. The Targum is,

"by the rod of him that chastiseth in his anger;"

so Jarchi; but God's chastisements of his own people are in love, though thought sometimes by them to be in wrath and hot displeasure; so the prophet imagined, but it was not so; perhaps some regard may be had to the instrument of Jerusalem's destruction, the king of Babylon, called the rod of the Lord's anger, Isa 10:5; all this was true of Christ, as the surety of his people, and as sustaining their persons, and standing in their room.

Lamentations 3:2

Ver. 2. He hath led me, and brought [me into] darkness,.... Which oftentimes signifies distress, calamity, and affliction, of one sort or another: thus the Jews were brought into the darkness of captivity; Jeremiah to the darkness of a dungeon, to which there may be an allusion; and Christ his antitype was under the hidings of God's face; and at the same time there was darkness all around him, and all over the land; and all this is attributed to God; it being by his appointment, and by his direction and permission:

but not [into] light; prosperity and joy; the affliction still continuing; though God does in his due time bring his people to the light of comfort, and of his gracious presence, as he did the above persons; see Ps 97:11.

Lamentations 3:3

Ver. 3. Surely against me is he turned,.... As an enemy, who used to be a friend; he has so altered and changed the course of his providence, as if his favour and affections were wholly removed; he has planted his artillery against me, and made me the butt of his arrows: or, "only against me"; so Jarchi; as if he was the only person, or the Jews the only people, so afflicted of God:

he turneth his hand [against me] all the day; to smite with one blow after another, and that continually, without ceasing; so the hand of justice was turned upon Christ, as the surety of his people, and he was smitten and stricken of God; while the hand of grace and mercy was turned upon them; see Zec 13:7.

Lamentations 3:4

Ver. 4. My flesh and my skin hath he made old,.... His flesh with blows, and his skin with smiting, as the Targum; his flesh was so emaciated, and his skin so withered and wrinkled, that he looked like an old man; as our Lord, when little more than thirty years of age, what with his sorrows and troubles, looked like one about fifty:

he hath broken my bones; that is, his strength was greatly weakened, which lay in his bones; and he could not stir to help himself, any more than a man whose bones are broken; and was in as much pain and distress as if this had been his case; otherwise it was not literally true, either of the Jews, or of Jeremiah, or of Christ.

Lamentations 3:5

Ver. 5. He hath builded against me,.... Fortresses, as the Targum adds; as when forts and batteries were raised by the Chaldeans against the city of Jerusalem, in which the prophet was:

and compassed [me] with gall and travail; or "weariness" {e}; the same with gall and wormwood, **La 3:19**; as Jarchi observes. The sense is, he was surrounded with sorrow, affliction, and misery, which were as disagreeable as gall; or like poison that drank up his spirits, and made him weary of his life. Thus our Lord was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; perilupov, encompassed with sorrows, Mt 26:38. The Targum is, "he hath surrounded the city, and rooted up the heads of the people, and caused them to fail."

{e} haltw "et fatigatione", Montanus, Vatablus, Castalio.

Lamentations 3:6

Ver. 6. He hath set me in dark places,.... In the dark house of the prison, as the Targum; in the dark dungeon where the prophet was put; or the captivity in which the Jews were, and which was like the dark grave or state of the dead; and hence they are said to be in their graves, Eze 37:12. Christ was laid in the dark grave literally:

as [they that be] dead of old: that have been long dead, and are forgotten, as if they had never been; see Ps 88:5; or, "as the dead of the world" {f}, or age; who, being dead, are gone out of the world, and no more in it. The Targum is,

"as the dead who go into another world."

{f} Mlwe ytmk wv nekrouv aiwnov, Sept. "quasi mortuos seculi", Montanus, Calvin.

Lamentations 3:7

Ver. 7. He hath hedged me about, that I cannot go out,.... When in prison, or in the dungeon, or during the siege of Jerusalem; though the phrase may only denote in general the greatness of his troubles, with which he was encompassed, and how inextricable they were; like a hedge about a vineyard, or a wall about a city, which could not easily be got over:

he hath made my chain heavy; his affliction intolerable. It is a metaphor taken from malefactors that have heavy chains put upon their legs, that they may not make their escape out of prison: or, "my brass" {g}; that is, chains, or a chain made of brass; so the Targum,

"he hath made heavy upon my feet fetters of brass."

{g} ytvxn calkon mou Sept. "aes meum, [vel] chalybem meum", Piscator.

Lamentations 3:8

Ver. 8. Also when I cry and shout,.... Cry, because of the distress of the enemy within; "shout", or cry aloud for help from others without; as persons in a prison do, to make them hear and pity their case: thus the prophet in his affliction cried aloud to God; was fervent, earnest, and importunate in prayer; and yet not heard:

he shutteth out my prayer; shuts the door, that it may not enter; as the door is sometimes shut upon beggars, that their cry may not be heard. The Targum is,

"the house of my prayer is shut."

Jarchi interprets it of the windows of the firmament being shut, so that his prayer could not pass through, or be heard; see **La 3:44**. The phrase designs God's disregard, or seeming disregard, of the prayer of the prophet, or of the people; and his shutting his ears against it. Of this, as the Messiah's case, see Ps 22:2.

Lamentations 3:9

Ver. 9. He hath enclosed my ways with hewn stone,.... Not with a hedge of thorns, or mud walls, but with a fence of stones; and these not rough, and laid loosely together, but hewn and put in order, and well cemented. The Targum is, with marble hewn stones, which are harder than common stones, and not so easily demolished; this may respect the case of the prophet in prison, and in the dungeon, and in Jerusalem, when besieged; or in general his afflictive state, from whence he had no prospect of deliverance; or the state of the Jews in captivity, from which there was no likelihood of a release;

he hath made my paths crooked; or, "perverted my ways" {h}; so that he could not find his way out, when he attempted it; he got into a way which led him wrong; everything went cross and against him, and all his measures were disconcerted, and his designs defeated; no one step he took prospered.

{h} hwe ytbytn "semitas meas pervertit", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Calvin; "contorsit", Michealis.

Lamentations 3:10

Ver. 10. He [was] unto me [as] a bear lying in wait,.... For its prey, which seizes on it at once, and tears it in pieces; such were the Chaldeans to the Jews by divine permission:

[and as] a lion in secret places; lurking there, in order to take every opportunity and advantage, and fall upon any creature that comes that way. The same thing is signified here as before; see **Ho 5:14**.

Lamentations 3:11

Ver. 11. He hath turned aside my ways,.... Or caused me to depart or go back from the way I was in, and so fall into the hand of the enemy that lay in wait, as before. Jarchi interprets the word of thorns, and of scattering the way with thorns, and hedging it up with them, so that there was no passing, **Ho 2:6**; the sense seems to be the same with **La 3:9**;

and pulled me in pieces: as any creature that falls into the hands of a bear or lion. Jarchi says it signifies a stopping of the feet, so that the traveller cannot go on in his way; and in the Talmudic language it is used for the breaking off of branches of trees, which being strowed in the way, hinder passengers from travelling; and this sense agrees with what goes before:

he hath made me desolate; or brought me into a desolate condition, into ruin and destruction, as the Jews were in Babylon.

Lamentations 3:12

Ver. 12. He hath bent his bow,.... Which is put for all the instruments, of war; the Chaldeans were archers, and shot their arrows into the city:

and set me as a mark for the arrow; as a target to shoot at; signifying that God dealt with him, or his people, as enemies, the object of his wrath and indignation; and if he directed his arrow against them, it must needs hit them; there was no escaping his vengeance; see **Job 7:20**.

Lamentations 3:13

Ver. 13. He hath caused the arrows of his quiver,.... Or, "the sons of his quiver" {i}; an usual Hebraism; the quiver is compared, as Aben Ezra observes, to a pregnant woman; and Horace has a like expression, "venenatis gravidam sagittis pharetram" {k}; the judgments of God are often signified by this metaphor, even his four sore ones, sword, famine, pestilence, and noisome beast, De 32:23; these, says the prophet, he caused

to enter into my reins; that is, into the midst of his land and people, or into the city of Jerusalem; or these affected his mind and heart as if so many arrows had stuck in him, the poison of which drank up his spirits, **Job 6:4**.

{i} wtpva ynb "filios pharetrae suae", Montanus, Munster, Cocceius, Michaelis. {k} L. 1. Ode 22.

Lamentations 3:14

Ver. 14. I was a derision to all my people,.... So Jeremiah was to the people of the Jews, and especially to his townsmen, the men of Anathoth, Jer 20:7; but if he represents the body of the people, others must be intended; for they could not be a derision to themselves. The Targum renders it, to the spoilers of my people; that is, either the wicked among themselves, or the Chaldeans; and Aben Ezra well observes, that "ammi" is put for "ammim", the people; and so is to be understood of all the people round about them, the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, that laughed at their destruction; though some interpret it of the wicked among the Jews, to whom the godly were a derision; or of those who had been formerly subject to the Jews, and so their people, though not now:

[and] their song all the day; beating on their tabrets, and striking their harps, for joy; for the word {l} used signifies not vocal, but instrumental music; of such usage of the Messiah, see Ps 69:12.

{l} Mtnygn a Ngn "pulsare istrumentum musicum".

Lamentations 3:15

Ver. 15. He hath filled me with bitterness,.... Or "with bitternesses" {m}; instead of food, bitter herbs; the allusion perhaps is to the bitter herbs eaten at the passover, and signify bitter afflictions, sore calamities, of which the prophet and his people had their fill. The Targum is,

"with the gall of serpents;"

see Job 20:14;

he hath made me drunken with wormwood; with wormwood drink; but this herb being a wholesome one, though bitter, some think that henbane, or wolfsbane, is rather meant, which is of a poisonous and intoxicating nature; it is no unusual thing for persons to be represented as drunk with affliction, Isa 51:17.

{m} Myrwrmb "amaritudinibus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis, "amaroribus", Cocceius.

Lamentations 3:16

Ver. 16. He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones,.... With gritty bread, such as is made of corn ground with new millstones, the grit of which mixes with the flour; or with stony bread, as Seneca {n} calls a benefit troublesome to others; with bread that has little stones mixed with it, by eating of which the teeth are broken, as Jarchi observes: the phrase signifies afflictions and troubles, which are very grievous and disagreeable, like gravel in the mouth, as sin in its effects often proves, Pr 20:17;

he hath covered me with ashes; as mourners used to be; the word rendered "covered" is only used in this place. Aben Ezra renders it, "he hath defiled me"; and Jarchi and Ben Melech, from the Misnah, "he hath pressed me", without measure; see **Lu 6:38**; and so the Targum,

"he hath humbled me:"

but the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it, "he hath fed me with ashes"; which version is defended by Castel {o} and Noldius {p}, and best agrees with the preceding clause; the sense is the same with Ps 102:9.

{n} "Pane lapidoso", Seneca De Beneficiis, l. 7. {o} Lexic. Polyglott, col. 1791. {p} Concordant. Ebr. Part. p. 168. No. 763.

Lamentations 3:17

Ver. 17. And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace,.... From the time the city was besieged by the Chaldeans, and now the people was carried captive; who could have no true peace, being in a foreign land, in an enemy's country, and out of their own, and far from the place of divine worship; nor could the prophet have any peace of soul, in the consideration of these things, the city, temple, and nation, being desolate, though he himself was not in captivity.

I forgat prosperity; or "good" {q}; he had been so long from the enjoyment of it, that he had lost the idea of it, and was thoughtless about it, never expecting to see it any more.

{q} hbwj "bonorum", V. L. "boni", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

Lamentations 3:18

Ver. 18. And I said, my strength and my hope are perished from the Lord. The former of these words signifies, according to Aben Ezra, "my standing", my subsistence, my continuance in being, or my perpetuity; according to Jarchi, my abiding {r} in this world; it is rendered "blood" in Isa 63:3; which is the support of life; and which when gone, or ceases to circulate, a man ceases to be: the sense is, that the prophet, or those he represents, looked upon themselves as dead men, at least of a short continuance; their natural strength was exhausted, and they must quickly die, and had no hope of living, or of enjoying the divine favour, or good things, at the hand of God. Some understand it of spiritual strength to do good, and of hope of having good things, or deliverance from the hand of God, which they were despairing of; for the words are the language of despondency, and betray great, weakness and infirmity; for in the Lord is everlasting strength, and he is the hope of his people, and the Saviour of them in time of trouble, Isa 26:4.

{r} yxun "duratio mea", Montanus; "perennitas mea", Cocceius.

Lamentations 3:19

Ver. 19. Remembering mine affliction and my misery,.... The miserable affliction of him and his people; the remembrance of which, and poring upon it continually, caused the despondency before expressed: though it may be rendered imperatively, "remember my affliction, and my misery" {s}; so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; and Aben Ezra observes, that the words may be considered as a request to God, and so they seem to be; the prophet, and the people he represents, were not so far gone into despair, as to cast off prayer before God; but once more looked up to him, beseeching that he would, in his great mercy and pity, remember them in their distressed condition, and deliver out of it; for none could do it but himself:

the wormwood and the gall; figurative expressions of bitter and grievous afflictions, **La 3:5**.

{s} rkz "recordare", Munster, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius, Michealis.

Lamentations 3:20

Ver. 20. My soul hath [them] still in remembrance,.... That is, according to our version, affliction and misery, compared to wormwood and gall: but the words, "my soul", are fetched from the next clause, where they ought to stand, and this to be rendered, "in remembering thou wilt remember" {t}; or, "thou wilt surely remember", and so expresses the confidence of the prophet, and his firm belief, his faith and hope increasing in prayer, that God would in much mercy remember his people, and their afflictions, and save them out of them:

and is humbled in me; both under the afflicting hand of God, and in view and hope of his mercy: though rather it should be rendered, "and" or "for my soul meditateth within me" {u}; says or suggests such things to me, that God will in wrath remember mercy; see Ps 77:7. So Jarchi makes mention of a Midrash, that interprets it of his soul's waiting till the time that God remembers.

{t} rwkzt rwkz "recordando recordaberis", Luther, Michaelis. {u} yvpn yle xyvtw "meditatur apud me anima mea", Junius & Tremellius; "et animo meo meditor", Castalio.

Lamentations 3:21

Ver. 21. This I recall to my mind,.... Not affliction and misery, but the Lord's remembrance of his people; what he had been used to do, and would do again; and particularly what follows, the abundant mercy of God, and his great faithfulness; these things the prophet fetched back to his mind; and revolved them in his heart; says he,

and therefore have I hope; this revived his hope, which he was ready to say was perished from the Lord, and there was no foundation for it; but now he saw there was, and therefore took heart, and encouraged himself in the grace and mercy of God.

Lamentations 3:22

Ver. 22. [It is of] the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed,.... It was true of the prophet, that he died not in prison, or in the dungeon; and of the people of the Jews, who though many of them perished by the sword, famine, and pestilence, yet God did not make a full end of them, according to his gracious promise, Jer 30:11; but left them a seed, a remnant, from whence the Messiah, the mercy promised, should come, and to which it was owing they were not utterly cut off for their sins: nor are any of the Lord's special people ever consumed; their estates may be consumed, and so may their bodies by wasting diseases, and at last by death; but not their souls, not only as to their being, but as to their well being, here and hereafter; though their peace, joy, and comfort, may be gone for a while, through temptation, desertion, and the prevalence of corruption; and they may be in declining circumstances, as to the exercise of grace, yet the principle itself can never be lost; faith, hope, and love, will abide; nor can they eternally perish, or be punished with an everlasting destruction: all which is to be ascribed not to their own strength to preserve themselves, nor to any want of desert in them to be destroyed, or of power in God to consume them; but to his "mercies" and "goodnesses", the multitude of them; for there is an abundance of mercy, grace, and goodness in God, and various are the instances of it; as in the choice of his people to grace and glory; in the covenant of grace, and the blessings of it they are interested in; in redemption by Christ; in regeneration by his Spirit; in the forgiveness of their sins; and in their complete salvation; which are all so many reasons why they are not, and shall not be, consumed. The words may be rendered, "the mercies" or "goodnesses of the Lord, for they are not consumed", or, "that the mercies of the Lord", &c. {w} Jarchi observes, that "tamnu" is as "tammu"; the "nun" being inserted, according to Aben Ezra, instead of doubling the letter "mem"; and the former makes the sense to be this, in connection with the **La 3:21**; "this I recall to mind the mercies of the Lord, that they are not consumed"; to which agrees the Targum,

"the goodnesses, of the Lord, for they cease not;"

and so the Septuagint, "the mercies of the Lord, for they have not left me"; and to the same sense the Syriac version is, "the mercies of the Lord, for they have no end", and Aben Ezra's note on the text is almost in the same words,

"for there is no end to the mercies of God;"

because his compassions fail not; or, "his tender mercies" {x}; of which he is full, and which are bestowed in a free and sovereign way, and are the spring of all good things, and a never failing one they are; and this is another reason why the Lord's people are not consumed, and never shall, because of the mercies of the Lord, since these shall never fail; for though they are, yet should they fail, they might be consumed; but these are from everlasting to everlasting, and are kept with Christ their covenant head; see Ps 103:17.

{w} wnmt al yk hwhy ydox "quod misericordiae Jehovae deficiunt", vel "defecerunt", so some in Vatablus; "studia Jehovae quod non defecerunt", Cocceius. {x} wmxr "miserationes ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Lamentations 3:23

Ver. 23. [They are] new every morning,.... That is, the tender mercies or compassions of God are, which prove that they fail not; there are instances of them every day, not only in a temporal, but in a spiritual sense; they are ever new, always fresh and vigorous, constant and perpetual; such are the love, grace, and mercy of God, though of old, yet daily renewed in the manifestations thereof; and which make a morning of spiritual light, joy, and comfort; and whenever it is morning with the saints, they have new discoveries of the love of God to them; and these indeed are a bright morning to them, a morning without clouds;

great [is] thy faithfulness; some render it "thy faith concerning thee" {y}; this is a great grace, it is the gift of God, the operation of his Spirit, and to exercise it is a great thing; to this purpose is Jarchi's note,

"great is thy promise, and a great thing it is to believe in thee, that it shall be performed, and that thou wilt observe or keep what thou hast promised to us;"

but the attribute of God's faithfulness is rather meant; which is another reason why the people of God are not consumed, since that never fails; God is faithful to himself, and cannot deny himself; he is faithful to his counsels and purposes, which shall be truly accomplished; and to his covenant and promises, which shall be fulfilled; and to his Son, the surety and Saviour of his people.

{y} Ktnwma "fides tua", V. L. Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "fides quae est de te", Pagninus.

Lamentations 3:24

Ver. 24. The Lord [is] my portion, saith my soul,.... The prophet, or the church, whom he represents, rises and increases in the exercise of faith; from considering the mercies, compassions, and faithfulness of God, concludes a sure and firm interest in him, as a portion and inheritance. The Lord is the portion of his people in life and in death, in time and to eternity; all he is, and has, is theirs; they are heirs of him, and shall enjoy him for ever, and therefore shall not be consumed; he is a portion large and full, inexpressibly rich and great, a soul satisfying one, and will last for ever. And happy are those, who from their hearts, and with their souls, under a testimony of the Spirit of God to their spirits, and through a gracious experience of him, can say he is their portion and exceeding great reward, as the church here did; and these may say with her, as follows:

therefore will I hope in him: for deliverance from all evils and enemies; for present supplies of grace; and for the enjoyment of future glory and happiness.

Lamentations 3:25

Ver. 25. The Lord [is] good to them that wait for him,.... For the enjoyment of him as their portion in this world, and in that to come; for his presence here and hereafter; which they are sometimes now deprived of, but should wait patiently for it; since he has his set time to arise and favour them with it; to such is he "good" communicatively, and in a special way and manner. They that wait for him shall not be ashamed, or disappointed of what they expect; they shall renew their spiritual strength, and grow stronger and stronger; they shall inherit the earth, the new heavens and the new earth; enjoy many blessings now, and have good things laid up for them hereafter, eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Isa 49:23; perhaps some regard may be had to the coming of Christ in the flesh, which the saints then expected, and were waiting for in faith and hope; to whom the Lord was good and gracious in due time, by performing the mercy promised them, Isa 25:9;

to the soul [that] seeketh him; that seeketh him aright; that seeks him by prayer and supplication; that seeks him in his house and ordinances, where he is to be found; that seeks him early, in the first place, and above all things else; that seeks him earnestly, diligently, with his whole spirit, heart, and soul; that seeks his face, his favour, grace, and glory, and all in Christ, through whom all are to be enjoyed. God is good to such souls; he is a rewarder of them in a way of grace; with himself, as their shield and exceeding great reward; with his Son, and all things freely with him; with his Spirit and graces, and with eternal glory and happiness; such find what they seek for, Christ, his grace, and eternal fire; the Lord never forsakes them, nor the work of his hand in them, and they shall live spiritually and eternally; see
Heb 11:6.

Lamentations 3:26

Ver. 26. [It is] good that [a man] should both hope and quietly wait,.... This follows from the former; for if God is good to such, it must be good for them to hope and wait for him; it is both their duty and their interest: and it may be observed, that hope is the ground of patient waiting, and is here promised to it; where there is no hope of a thing, there will be no waiting for it, much less quietly: hope is of things unseen, future, difficult, and yet possible, or there would be no hope; and where there is that, there will be waiting; for "if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it", **Ro 8:25**; here in the original text it is, "hope, and be silent" {z}; or, "a good man will both hope" or "wait, and be silent" {a}; that is, under the present dispensation, though an afflictive one; men should be still, as David exhorts, and be dumb, as he was; and hold their peace, as Aaron did, at such seasons: not that they should indulge a stoical apathy, or be insensible of their condition, and disregard the rod, and him that has appointed it, or be altogether silent and speechless; but should own the hand of God, and their deserts, cry to him for deliverance, be thankful it is no worse, and speak of the gracious dealings of God with them; yet should not murmur and complain, or charge God foolishly; but be resigned to his will, and wait the issue of Providence quietly, even wait

for the salvation of the Lord; for temporal deliverance from outward evils and present afflictions, and for spiritual and eternal salvation. The saints, under the Old Testament, waited for Christ, the author of salvation, appointed and promised by the Lord. He is come, and has obtained salvation, which is published in the Gospel. Sensible sinners are made acquainted with their need of it, and see the fulness and suitableness of it, and are earnestly desirous of knowing their interest in it; this is not immediately had; it is good to wait quietly for it, in an attendance on the word and ordinances; and this being come at, still the complete enjoyment is yet behind: saints are now heirs of it, are kept unto it; it is nearer them than when they believed; Christ will appear unto it, and it becomes them to wait patiently for it; which will be a salvation from the very being of sin; from the temptations of Satan; from all troubles inward and outward; from all troublesome persons and things; from all doubts, fears, darkness, and unbelief; and will consist in perfect happiness and glory, and is worth waiting for.

{z} Mmwdw lyxyw "et expectet et silens", Pagninus, Montanus; "qui et expectat et silet", Piscator. {a} "Bonus ergo et expectabit et silens erit", Schmidt.

Lamentations 3:27

Ver. 27. [It is] good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Either the yoke of the commandments, as the Targum; or of correction, as Aben Ezra; of afflictions, as fatherly chastisements; both senses may be retained. It is good to bear the yoke of the moral law, or the commandments of God, as they are in the hands of Christ, a rule of walk and conversation; a yoke obliging all mankind, and especially saints; it is the duty of all to submit their necks to this yoke; it is but their reasonable service to love the Lord their God, and their neighbour as themselves; as must be judged by all but sons of Belial, who are without this yoke, having cast it off; and especially it is "good" to bear the yoke of Christ, to embrace his doctrines, and profess them, and submit to his ordinances, since his yoke is easy, and leads to true rest, Mt 11:29; it is commendable so to do; since it is a following Christ, and those who through faith and patience have inherited the promises; and, besides, is both pleasant and profitable, being the means of increasing spiritual strength, light, and joy: and it is right to do this "in youth"; which is the choices, time of life, and most acceptable to Christ, and when a man is capable of doing him most service; and especially, if men do not take upon them this yoke in the day of their espousals, and while their first love lasts, it is much if they ever do it after, and therefore should not neglect it: and so it is good to bear the yoke of afflictions, though disagreeable to flesh and blood, to take up the cross, and bear it after Christ, willingly, and cheerfully, and patiently; this is "good", for hereby souls are brought to a sense of sin, to be humbled for it, and confess it; it is a means of purging from it, and preventing it; hereby the graces of the Spirit are tried, exercised, and become brighter; saints are instructed in many useful lessons in the word of God, in humility faith, and fear; herein they enjoy much of the presence of God, and all work for their good, spiritual and eternal. And as there is a close connection between a profession of faith in Christ, and submission to his ordinances, and suffering reproach and persecution for the same; it is good for a than to bear the one, as well as the other, "in his youth"; this will serve to keep him humble, and hide pride from him, which youth are addicted to; to wean him from the world, the lusts and pleasures of it, which are ensnaring to that age; to prevent many sins and evils such might be tempted to go into; and to inure them to hardships, and make them good soldiers of Christ.

Lamentations 3:28

Ver. 28. He sitteth alone,.... Retires from the world, and the men of it, who takes upon him the yoke of Christ; though he is not alone, but God, Father, Son, and Spirit, are with him; and he is with the saints, the excellent of the earth, and has communion with them; and so he is that under the afflicting hand of God bears it patiently, and does not run from place to place complaining of it, but sits still, and considers the cause, end, and use of it. Some render the words in connection with the preceding, it is good "that he sit alone" {b}; it is good for a man to be alone; in his closet, praying to God; in his house or chamber, reading the word of God; in the field, or elsewhere, meditating upon it, and upon the works of God, of nature, providence, and grace:

and keepeth silence, because he hath borne [it] on him: or, "took it on him"; either because he took it upon him willingly, and therefore should bear it patiently; or because he (God) hath put it upon him {c}, and therefore should be silent, and not murmur and repine, since he hath done it, Ps 39:9.

{b} ddb bvy "ut sedeat solus", Gataker. {c} wyle ljn "projecit super ipsum", Tigurine version; "sub. Dominus", Vatablus; "quod imposuerit ipsi Deus", Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis.

Lamentations 3:29

Ver. 29. He putteth his mouth in the dust,.... Of self-abhorrence; sensible of his own vileness and nothingness, his unworthiness, and the unprofitableness of all his duties; ascribing the whole of his salvation to the free grace of God, Job 42:6; humbling himself under the mighty hand of God; not daring to open his mouth in a complaining way against him; but prostrating himself before him to the earth, as the manner of the eastern people in prayer was, to which the allusion is; licking as it were the dust of the earth, under a sense of the distance and disproportion between God and him, who is but dust and ashes; so the Targum adds,

"and is prostrate before the Lord:"

if so be there may be hope; or, "peradventure there is hope" {d}; for, as some interpreters observe, these words do not express hesitation and doubt, but hope and expectation of help, to bear the yoke of God's commandments, and in due time to be delivered from affliction and distress.

{d} hwqt vy ylwa "forte est expectatio", Junius & Tremellius; "fortassis", Piscator, Cocceius; "forte est spes", Michaelis.

Lamentations 3:30

Ver. 30. He giveth [his] cheek to him that smiteth him,.... Either to God that afflicts him, and patiently bears it; see **Isa 9:13**; or rather to men. To be smitten on the cheek is always reckoned a very great affront; to turn the cheek to an injurious man is to give him an opportunity and leave to smite, and signifies the taking of it patiently, and agrees both with our Lord's advice and example, **Mt 5:39**;

he is filled full with reproach; has many reproaches, and the reproaches of many upon him; as such must expect, that take Christ's yoke upon them; see Ps 123:3; and yet revile not again, but esteem reproaches for Christ's sake great riches, and wear them as crowns, and bind them about their necks as chains of gold; esteeming it an honour and a happiness to suffer shame for his name.

Lamentations 3:31

Ver. 31. For the Lord will not cast off for ever. Which is not to be understood of all his creatures; for there are some he does cast off for ever, as the angels that sinned; reprobate men, profligate and abandoned sinners, that live and die impenitent; and unbelievers, carnal professors, and apostates; but not his own special and peculiar people, the people whom he has foreknown and loved with an everlasting love, his spiritual Israel; or, as the Targum supplies it, "his servants"; see Ps 94:14; he may seem for a while to reject them, but not in reality and for ever; as when he hides his face from them, lays his afflicting hand on them, or suffers then, to be afflicted by others, and defers his help, and does not immediately appear to their deliverance and salvation; but in reality he never rejects them from being his people, his servants, and his sons; they have always a place in his heart, and are ever under his eye and care; they continue in his covenant, and abide in his family; and though they may be cast down in their souls, and cast out by men, yet are not cast off by God, neither in youth nor old age, in time or eternity; his love is unchangeable; his purposes firm and unalterable; his counsel, covenant, oath, and promise, immutable; and they are his jewels, his portion, and inheritance; and this is a ground and reason of bearing patiently all afflictions, injuries, and reproaches; for though men cast off, God will not.

Lamentations 3:32

Ver. 32. But though he cause grief,.... As he sometimes does in his own people; by convincing them of sin, and producing in them godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto life, not to be repented of; by correcting and chastising them for it, and by hiding his face from them; all which are grievous to them:

yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies; his mercies are many, both temporal and spiritual, and his compassion is answerable; which he shows to his people by an application of pardoning grace, through the blood of Christ, by sympathizing with them under their afflictions, and delivering from them; by granting them his gracious presence, and restoring to them the joys of his salvation; all which is not according to their merits, but his mercies.

Lamentations 3:33

Ver. 33. For he doth not afflict willingly,.... Or, "from his heart" {e}; he does afflict; for all afflictions are from God, but they do not come from the mere motion of his heart, or are the effects of his sovereign will and pleasure, as the good things he bestows upon his people do, without any respect to any cause or occasion in them; but sin is the cause and occasion of these, as Jarchi well observes: it is with reluctance the Lord afflicts his people; he is as it were forced to it, speaking after the manner of men; see Ho 11:8; he does not do it with delight and pleasure; he delights in mercy, but judgment is his strange act; nor does he do it with all his heart and soul, with all his might and strength; he does not stir up all his wrath: for then the spirit would fail before him, and the souls that he has made; and especially he does not do it out of ill will, but in love, and for their good:

nor grieve the children of men: that is, he does not from his heart, or willingly, grieve the children of men, by, afflicting them; which must be understood of those sons of men whom he has loved, and made his sons and heirs; those sons of men that wisdom's delights were with from everlasting, **Pr 8:31**.

{e} wblm "ex corde suo", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin.

Lamentations 3:34

Ver. 34. To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth. These words, with what follow in **La 3:35**; either depend upon the preceding, and are to be connected with them, "he doth not afflict", &c. **La 3:33**; though he lays his hand on men, he do not crush them under his feet, or break them in pieces, and utterly destroy them, even such, and all such, as are bound in affliction and iron; or, in a spiritual sense, such as are prisoners to sin, Satan, and the law, as all men by nature are; he does not crush these to pieces, though they deserve it, at least not "all" of them; for he proclaims in the Gospel liberty to the captives, and says, by the power of his grace, to the prisoners, go forth, and encourages the prisoners of hope to turn to their strong hold: and also, though he afflicts, he does no injustice to them, does not turn aside their right, or subvert their cause, **Job 8:3**; or rather these depend upon, and are to be connected with, the last clause of **La 3:36**; "the Lord approveth not": as he does not do these things himself, he do not approve of them in others; that they should use captives cruelly, trample upon them like mire in the streets, or as the dust of their feet; particularly regard may be had to the Jews in Babylon, used ill by those that detained them; for though it was by the will of God they were carried captive, yet the Chaldeans exceeded due bounds in their usage of them, and added affliction to their affliction, which the Lord approved not of, but resented, **Zec 1:15**.

Lamentations 3:35

Ver. 35. To turn aside the right of a man,.... The Targum is, of a poor man; not to do him justice in a court of judicature; to cause judgment to incline to the wrong side; to give the cause against a man, to give a wrong sentence; this is disapproved of by the Lord, and forbidden by him:

before the face of the most High; either before the most high God, he being present and among the gods, the judges, when they pass sentence; and yet, to pass a wrong one in his presence, without any regard to him, or fear of him, must be provoking to him: or, "before a superior" {f}, as some render it; before a judge that sits upon the bench; endeavouring by unjust charges, wrong pleas, and false witnesses, to deprive a man of his right; see **Ec 5:8**.

{f} Nwyle ynp dgn "coram facie superioris", Junius & Tremellius.

Lamentations 3:36

Ver. 36. To subvert a man in his cause,.... A poor man, as the Targum, which aggravates it; as by courses and methods taken in an open court, so by secret underhand ways, to get the cause from him, and injure him in his property:

the Lord approveth not; or, "seeth not" {g}; which some understand as spoken by wicked men, who do the above things, and flatter themselves that God sees not, and takes no notice of them, **Eze 9:9**; and others read it interrogatively, "doth not the Lord see?" {h} he does; he sees all the actions of men, nothing is hid from him; but he sees not with approbation; he do not look upon such things with delight and pleasure, but with abhorrence, **Hab 1:13**. The Targum is, "is it possible that it should not be revealed before the Lord?"

{g} har al "non vidit, vel videt", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin. {h} "Non videret?" Piscator.

Lamentations 3:37

Ver. 37. Who [is] he [that] saith, and it cometh to pass?.... Or, "who [that] says [this shall be], and it cometh to pass?" or, "who [is] he [that] saith [this shall] come to pass?" {i} this, or that, or the other thing, he wills and desires, and his heart is set upon:

[when] the Lord commandeth [it] not? has not willed and decreed it, but determined the contrary; for nothing escapes his knowledge and foreknowledge; or can resist his will; or control his power; or frustrate his councils, and counterwork his designs; whatever schemes men form to get riches, obtain honour, do mischief to others, prolong life to themselves, and perpetuate their names to posterity, being contrary to the purpose of God, never succeed; whenever they do succeed in any of the above instances, it is because God has commanded, or he has determined, it should be so; as in the instances of Joseph's brethren, in their usage of him; and of the Jews, in the crucifixion of Christ, Pr 16:9. The Targum is,

"who is the man that saith, and evil is done in the world; but because they have done what was not commanded from the mouth of the Lord?"

{i} So some in Gataker.

Lamentations 3:38

Ver. 38. Out of the mouth of the most High proceed not evil and good?] Certainly they do; they come to pass, both one and the other, as God has pronounced, and his will determined; even "evils", as it is in the plural number; not the evil of sin, or of fault; this comes not out of the mouth of God, but is forbidden and condemned by him; much less is he the author of it, or tempter to it; indeed it is not without his knowledge, nor in some sense without his will; not with his will of approbation, but by his permissive will, which he suffers to be, and overrules for good; but evils here design the judgments of God, or punishment inflicted on sinners, and chastisement on his own people; the evil of affliction, or adverse dispensations of providence, Isa 45:7; they are all by his appointment; he has said or determined what shall be the kind and nature of them; the measure, how far they shall go; and the duration, how long they shall last; and the end and use of them; see **Job 2:10**; and so all good comes from God, who is goodness itself; all created good, as every creature of God is good; every good thing in providence; all temporal good things; as to have a being; to be preserved in it; to have a habitation to dwell in; to have food and raiment, health and long life; these are all by the appointment of God, and according to the determination of his will: all spiritual good things are purposed, promised, and prepared by him in council and covenant; the great good of all, salvation by Christ; this is what God has appointed his son far, and his people to, and fixed the time of it, and all things relating to it; the effectual calling of the redeemed ones is according to his purpose and grace; the persons, thing itself, time, place, and means; also eternal glory and happiness, which is the kingdom prepared, the crown laid up, and inheritance reserved in heaven, according to the purpose of God; all good things, in time and eternity, are as God has pronounced them.

Lamentations 3:39

Ver. 39. Wherefore doth a living man complain?.... Or murmur, or fret and vex, or bemoan himself; all which the word {k} may signify; as the prophet had done in his own person; or as representing the church, **La 3:1**; and here checks himself for it; and especially since the mercies and compassions of God never fail, and are daily renewed; and the Lord himself is the portion of his people, **La 3:23**; and seeing he is good to them that seek him, and it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of God, and to bear the yoke patiently, **La 3:25**; and because of the unwillingness of God to afflict men, and his sympathy and compassion towards them under affliction, **La 3:32**; and especially since all is from the sovereignty of God, who does according to his will; and from whom all good and evil come, **La 3:37**; he is not to be complained of, or against, for anything he does; or to be murmured at; nor should men vex and fret themselves at their own adversity, or at the prosperity of others; or bemoan themselves, as if no case was like theirs, or so bad. It does not become "a man", a reasonable creature, a man grown up, to behave in this manner; as such should quit themselves like men, and conduct as such; a "man" that God is so mindful of, and cares for, and visits every moment, and follows with his goodness continually; a "man", sinful man, that has rendered himself unworthy of the least favour; and yet such is the lovingkindness, favour, and good will of God to man, that he has provided his own Son to be his Saviour; and therefore man, of all God's creatures, has no reason to complain of him; and is a "living" man too, in a natural sense; is upheld in life by the Lord, and has the common mercies of life; is in health, or however in the land of the living; out of hell, where he deserves to be; and therefore should praise, and not complain, Isa 38:19; especially if he is a living man in a spiritual sense; has a principle of spiritual life implanted in him; Christ lives in him, and his life is hid with him in God, and has a right and title to eternal life:

a man for [the punishment] of his sins? the word "punishment" is not in the text; but, admitting the supplement, if a man is a wicked man (and so the Targum interprets it), and is punished for his sins, no injustice is done him; he has no reason to complain; and especially of his punishment in this world, which is greatly less than his sins deserve, **Ezr 9:13**; and if he is a good man, and is chastised for his sins, he ought not to complain "for the chastisement" of them; since it is the chastisement of a father, is in love, and for his good: but the words may be rendered literally, "a man for", or "of his sins" {l}; and be considered as a distinct clause, and as an answer to the former, so Jarchi; if a man will complain, let him complain of his sins; of the corruptions of his heart; of the body of sin and death he carries about with him of his daily iniquities; let him mourn over them, and bemoan himself for them; and if he does this in an evangelic manner, he is happy; for he shall be comforted.

{k} Nnwaty goggusei Sept. "quiritaretur", Junius & Tremellius; "taedio se confecit", Calvin; "fremet", Strigelius; "murmurabit", Cocceius. {l} wajx le rbg "unusquisque propter sua peccata [quiritatur]", Piscator; "vel contra sua peccata fremat", Strigelius.

Lamentations 3:40

Ver. 40. Let us search and try our ways,.... stead of murmuring and complaining, let us search for something that may support and comfort, teach and instruct, under afflictive providences; let us search into the love of God, which, though it cannot be fully searched out, it will be found to be from everlasting to everlasting; and that all afflictions spring from it; and that it continues notwithstanding them: let us search into the covenant of grace, in which provision is made for afflictions in case of disobedience, and for supports under them: let us search the Scriptures, which are written for our comfort; and it is much if we do not find some in the instances, examples, and experiences of other saints therein recorded: let us search after a greater degree of the knowledge of Christ, and of his grace; so shall we be more conformable to his sufferings and death, and patient under our troubles: let us search into our own hearts, and examine ourselves, whether we have true repentance for sin, true faith in Christ; and whether he is in us, or not; and we have a part in him, which will make us easy in every state: let us search into the present dispensation, in order to find out the cause of it, which is sin; and the end of it, which God has in it for our good: let us search "our ways", and "try them", by the word of God, the standard of faith and practice; and see what agreement there is between them: let us try our thoughts, words, and actions, by the law of God, which is holy, spiritual, just, and good; and we shall see how abundantly short they come of it: and let us try "our ways", and compare them with the ways of God, which he has prescribed in his word; and we shall find that the one are holy, the other unholy; the one plain, the other crooked; the one dark, the other light; the one pleasant, and peace is in them, the other not; the one lead to life, the other to death; see Isa 55:7;

and turn again to the Lord; by repentance, as the Targum adds; let us turn out of our sinful ways, upon a search and examination of them; and turn to the Lord, his ways and worship, from whom we have departed, and against whom we have sinned; acknowledging our iniquities, who receives graciously, is ready to forgive, and does abundantly pardon.

Lamentations 3:41

Ver. 41. Let us lift up our heart with [our] hands,.... Lifting up of the hands is a prayer gesture, and is put for prayer itself; see Ps 141:2; but the heart must go along with it, or it is of no avail; the soul must be lifted up to God; there must be an ascending of that unto him, in earnest desires after him; in affection and love to him; in faith and dependence on him; and in hope and expectation of good things from him, Ps 25:1; this is the way in which men return to God, even by prayer and supplication. The Targum is,

"let us lift up our hearts, and cast away rapine and prey out of our hands;"

and Jarchi and Abendana mention a Midrash, that paraphrases it,

"let us lift up our hearts in truth to God, as a man washes his hands in purity, and casts away all filthiness from them;"

see Heb 10:22;

unto God in the heavens; who has made them, and dwells in them; and therefore prayer must be directed to him, as being there; so our Lord taught his disciples to pray, **Mt 6:9**; and which is a very great encouragement to faith in prayer; when it is considered that God is the Maker and possessor of heaven and earth; and that our help is in and expected from him who made all these; and besides the saints have a High Priest, an Advocate with the Father there, to plead their cause for them; and many great and good things are there laid up for them.

Lamentations 3:42

Ver. 42. We have transgressed, and have rebelled,.... Here begins the prayer, the sense of which is directed to, though the words are not dictated; and it begins with confession of sin, as prayer should, especially when in such circumstances as the people of the Jews now were; and with confession of it, as a transgression of the law of God; and as rebellion against him, as every sin is, a breach of his law, a contempt of his authority, and a trampling under foot his legislative power, and an act of hostility against him; and so downright rebellion; every sin being an overt act of that kind; and which is aggravated by the favours before acknowledged to have been received:

thou hast not pardoned; as they apprehended; they had not the discovery and application of pardoning grace and mercy; otherwise pardon of sin with God is past, and includes all sin present and future, as well as past; but temporal afflictions being upon them, they concluded their sins were not pardoned; pardon of sin in Scripture often signifying the removal of such afflictions.

Lamentations 3:43

Ver. 43. Thou hast covered with anger,.... Either himself; not as a tender father, that cannot bear to see the affliction of a child; this does not suit with anger; but rather as one greatly displeased, in whose face anger appears, being covered with it; or who covers his face with it, that he may not be seen, withdrawing his gracious presence; or hast put anger as a wall between thee and us, as Jarchi: so that there was no coming nigh to him: or else it means covering his people with it; so the Targum,

"thou hast covered "us" with anger;"

denoting the largeness and abundance of afflictions upon them; they were as it were covered with them, as tokens of the divine displeasure; one wave and billow after another passing over them. Sanctius thinks the allusion is to the covering of the faces of condemned malefactors, as a token of their being guilty:

and persecuted us; the Targum adds, in captivity; that is, pursued and followed us with fresh instances of anger and resentment; to have men to be persecutors is bad, but to have God to be a persecutor is dreadful:

thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied; had suffered them to be stain by the sword of the enemy, and had shown no compassion to them;
See Gill on "La 2:21"; here, and in some following verses, the prophet, or the people he represents, are got to complaining again; though before he had checked himself for it; so hard it is under afflictions to put in practice what should be done by ourselves and others.

Lamentations 3:44

Ver. 44. Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud,.... With wrath and anger, as a cloud; he wrapped up himself in thick darkness, so as not to be seen or come at: sin, when it appears not pardoned, is as a cloud between God and his people; and this causes him to show his anger and displeasure; which is the cloud about him, Or the hiding of his face. The Targum is,

"thou hast covered the heavens with the clouds of thy glory:"

that [our] prayer should not pass through; in such circumstances God seems to his people to be inexorable; and not a God hearing and answering prayer, as he is; as if there was no access unto him, or audience to be had of him, or acceptance of persons and prayers with him; whereas the throne of grace is always open and accessible: and there is a new and living way for believers always to approach unto God in; he is on a mercy seat, ready to receive and hear their prayers.

Lamentations 3:45

Ver. 45. Thou hast made us [as] the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people. Had given them up into the hands of the Gentiles, the Chaldeans, to be treated as the dirt of the streets, as the sweepings of a house; or the dross of metal; or anything that is vile, mean, and contemptible. The apostle seems to have some reference to this passage; and his words may be an illustration of it, **1Co 4:13**.

Lamentations 3:46

Ver. 46. All our enemies have opened their mouths against us. Like lions and other beasts of prey, to devour us; or in way of scorn and derision; pouring out their reproaches upon us, and scoffs at us, for our religion, and the worship of God, and on account of present miseries and distresses; see **La 2:16**. The Targum adds,

"to decree against us evil decrees."

Lamentations 3:47

Ver. 47. Fear and a snare is come upon us,.... Or, "fear and a pit" {m}; the fear of failing into the pit of ruin and destruction, on the brink of which they saw themselves; or fear seized us, and caused us to flee; and a snare or pit was prepared for us to fall into; so that there was no escaping hence:

desolation and destruction; desolation or devastation of their land; and destruction of their city and temple; and of multitudes of them by the sword, famine, and pestilence; and the rest carried into captivity, excepting a few left desolate in the land.

{m} txpw dxp "pavor et fovea", Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Lamentations 3:48

Ver. 48. Mine eye runneth down with rivers of waters,.... Denoting the greatness of his grief and trouble at the afflictions of his people, and the vast profusion of tears on that account. Here the prophet speaks in his own person, expressing the anguish of his soul he felt, and the floods of tears he shed:

for the destruction of the daughter of my people; for those that were slain of them, or carried captive; see **Jer 9:1**. The Targum is,

"for the destruction of the congregation of my people."

Lamentations 3:49

Ver. 49. Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not,.... From weeping, as the Targum: the prophet was continually weeping; the distresses of his people were always uppermost in his mind; and which so affected him, that it drew tears from his eyes, which constantly trickled down his cheeks:

without any intermission; or, "without intermissions" {n}; there were no stops or pauses in his grief, and in the expressions of it: or it may be rendered, "because [there were] no intermissions" {o}; that is, of the miseries of his people; so Jarchi,

"because there were no changes and passing away;"

that is of evils; and to the same purpose the Targum,

"because there is none that intermits my distress, and speaks comforts to me."

{n} twgph Nyam "a non intermissionibus", Montanus, Calvin; "sine intervallis", Cocceius. {o} "Eo quod nullae sunt intermissiones", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tigurine version.

Lamentations 3:50

Ver. 50. Till the Lord look do: on, and behold from heaven. Disperses and dissipates the cloud that was about him; shines forth and manifests himself, and looks favourably upon his people, and delivers them out of their troubles: this the prophet was in hope of, and was waiting for; but, till it came to pass, could have no rest and comfort. The Targum is, "till he look and behold my injury;"

as if he had regard to his own personal injury done him; but the former sense is best.

Lamentations 3:51

Ver. 51. Mine eye affecteth mine heart,.... Seeing the desolation of his country; the ruins of the city and temple of Jerusalem; and the multitudes of those that were slain, and carried captive; and the distresses the rest were in; this affected his heart, and filled it with grief; as his heart also affected his eyes, and caused them to run down in rivers of water, as before expressed; or, as the Targum,

"the weeping of mine eyes is the occasion of hurt to my soul or life;"

his excessive weeping endangered his life:

because of all the daughters of my city; not Anathoth, his native place, but Jerusalem; so the Targum,

"of Jerusalem my city."

The meaning is, that his heart was affected at seeing the ruin of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; or of the towns and cities round about it, which that was the metropolis of. Some, as Jarchi, render it, "more than all the daughters of my city" {p}; his heart was more affected with those calamities than those of the most tender sex, even than any or all of them.

{p} yrye twnb lkm "supra cunctas filias civitatis meae"; so some in Vatablus; and Jarchi.

Lamentations 3:52

Ver. 52. Mine enemies chased me sore like a bird,.... That is weak and helpless, fearful and timorous; that flees from place to place when pursued; so it was with the prophet, or rather with the people of the Jews he represents; for here and in the following verses he speaks not only of himself, but of them; who, when they fled out of the city, were chased and pursued by the Chaldeans like a bird, till they were taken; see Jer 52:7;

without cause; which may be connected with the word "enemies", so the Targum; who were so without cause; they had done them no injury, to make them their enemies; and without reason pursued and chased them in the manner they did.

Lamentations 3:53

Ver. 53. They have cut off my life in the dungeon,.... Jarchi interprets it,

"they bound me in the prison."

Jeremiah was both in a prison and in a dungeon, where he was deprived of the society of men, as if he had been dead; and he was in danger of losing his life; but whether any respect is had to it here is not certain: it seems rather to respect the people of the Jews in captivity, who were deprived of their rights and liberties, and of the comforts of life; and were like dead men in their graves, to whom they are compared,
Eze 37:11; but since Jeremiah was not dead, nor did he die in the dungeon, Jarchi's sense seems best, and agrees with what follows; and is confirmed by the version of others, who render it, "they shut up my life in the dungeon" {q}; or himself there:

and cast a stone upon me; to see if he was dead, or to prevent him from rising. The allusion is to the putting of stones at the mouths of dens and dungeons, caves and graves, to keep in those there put: or they stoned me, as the Targum; that is, they endeavoured to do it: or the Jews in captivity were like persons stoned to death, or like dead men covered with a heap of stones; for that Jeremiah was stoned to death there is no reason to believe.

{q} yyx rwbb wtmu "concluserunt in fovea vitam meam", Noldius, Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 141, "manciparunt fovea vitam meam", Cocceius.

Lamentations 3:54

Ver. 54. Waters flowed over mine head,.... As in a pit or dungeon, where there is not only mire and clay, but much water, into which persons being put, sink, and are covered therewith; see Ps 69:1; this is to be understood metaphorically of the waters of afflictions, which overflowed and overwhelmed the people of the Jews. Jarchi interprets it of the nations of the world, as much people are often compared to waters; and here the Chaldeans may be particularly intended, whose army overflowed the land of Judea; and, like a mighty torrent, carried away the people, and wealth of it, and brought them into troubles, which were like deep waters:

[then] I said, I am cut off; while the waters are only up to a man's loins, he does not apprehend himself in danger; but there is hope of his wading through, and getting out; but when they rise above his head, his hopes are gone; he reckons it all over with him, and that he is just perishing, and his life in the utmost danger; there being scarce any probability or possibility of saving him; so it was with these people.

Lamentations 3:55

Ver. 55. I called upon thy name, O Lord,.... As in times past, so in the present distress; when all hope was gone, and all help failed, still there was a God to go to, and call upon:

out of the low dungeon; or "dungeon of lownesses" {r}; the lowest dungeon, the deepest distress, a man or people could be in; yet then and there it is not too late to call upon the Lord; and there may be hope of deliverance out of such an estate by him.

{r} twytxt rwbm "e cisterna infimitatum", Piscator.

Lamentations 3:56

Ver. 56. Thou hast heard my voice,.... Either in times past, when he cried unto him, and was delivered; and this was an encouragement to call upon him again in such extremity, who had shown himself to be a God hearing and answering prayer; hence it follows:

hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry; turn not a deaf ear to me, who hast been wont to hear me heretofore; stop not thine ear at my cry now, at my prayer, which he calls his "breathing"; prayer is the breath of a soul regenerated by the Spirit, and is a sign and evidence of life, when it is spiritual;

in it a soul pants after God, and communion with him, and salvation by him. Some render it, "at my gasping" {s}; or "panting", for breath; just ready to expire, unless immediate help is given: or else the whole of this refers to the present time, when the Lord heard and answered, not only the first clause, but this also; which may be rendered, not by way of petition, but affirmation, "thou didst not hide thine ear at my breathing, at my cry" {t}; and this agrees both with what goes before, and with what is expressed in **La 3:57**.

{s} ytxwrl "ad anhelitum meum", Cocceius; "ad respirationem meam", Pagnius, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {t} Mlet la "non avertisti", Grotius.

Lamentations 3:57

Ver. 57. Thou drewest near in the day [that] I called upon thee,.... When persons draw nigh to God in a way of duty, and particularly in this of prayer, and calling on his name; he draws nigh to them in a way of grace and mercy, and manifests himself to them, and works salvation for them. The Targum is,

"thou didst cause an angel to draw near to deliver me in the day that I prayed unto thee:"

thou saidst, fear not; any of thine enemies; or that thou shouldest not be delivered from them; see Isa 41:10.

Lamentations 3:58

Ver. 58. O Lord, thou hast pleaded the cause of my soul,.... Or, causes of "my soul", or "life" {u}; such as concerned his soul and life: not one only, but many of them; and this respects not Jeremiah only, and the Lord's pleading his cause against Zedekiah and his nobles; but the people of the Jews in former times, when in Egypt, and in the times of the judges:

thou hast redeemed my life; by delivering out of the pit and dungeon, where it was in danger; and not only him, but the whole body of the people of old out of Egypt, and out of the hands of their enemies, the Philistines and others.

{u} yvpn ybyr "causas animaa meae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Lamentations 3:59

Ver. 59. O Lord, thou hast seen my wrong,.... Or, "my perverseness" {w}; not that he or they had been guilty of; but the wrong that was done to him and them by their enemies; how perverse and ill natured they had been to them; how badly they had used them; what injuries they had done them; none of which escaped the omniscience of God, to which the appeal is made; and upon this follows a petition:

judge thou my cause; the present one; as thou hast pleaded and judged many already, do me justice, right my wrongs, an, save me from mine enemies; and let it appear to all the world my cause is just, and they are in the wrong.

{w} yttwe "perversitatem", Pagninus, Montanus; "quae exercetur, vel exercebatur in me", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Lamentations 3:60

Ver. 60. Thou hast seen all their vengeance,.... The spirit of revenge in them; their wrath and fury, and how they burn with a desire of doing mischief; as well as their revengeful actions, carriage, and behaviour:

[and] all their imaginations against me; their secret contrivances of mischief, their plots and schemes they devise to do hurt unto me.

Lamentations 3:61

Ver. 61. Thou hast heard their reproach, O Lord,.... Their reproachful words uttered against the prophet and his people, against God himself; their spiteful language, their taunts, and scoffs and jeers:

[and] all their imaginations against me; those he not only saw, as they appeared in their actions; but heard them, as they were expressed by their words; yea, they were manifest to him, while they only were in silent thought forming in the mind.

Lamentations 3:62

Ver. 62. The lips of those that rose up against me,.... This is to be connected with the preceding words; and expresses the same thing in different language. The sense is, that the Lord heard the words which dropped from the lips of his enemies; their sarcasms, flouts, and jeers; their bitter reflections, severe invectives, and scornful language:

and their device against me all the day; or, "their meditation of ill against me"; or, "their speech", or discourse {x}; which all turned upon the same topic. Schultens {y} derives the word from the Arabic word which signifies to mock and scoff, or pursue anyone with ironical and satirical expressions; and so may intend here contumelious and reproachful language.

{x} Mnwygh "meditationem istorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "loquelam eorum", Michaelis. {y} Animadv. Philol. p. 436. "maledixit verborum contumelia insectatus fuit, peculiariter carmine seu satyra, et subsannavit, vituperavit", Golius, col. 2515.

Lamentations 3:63

Ver. 63. Behold their sitting down, and their rising up,.... All their actions; the whole course of their lives; all which fell under the divine omniscience, Ps 139:2; but that is not barely here meant; but that he would take particular notice hereof, and punish for the same. It may have respect both to their lying down at night, and rising in the morning; and to their sitting down at meals, and rising from them; at which times they were always meditating mischief against the people of God, or speaking opprobriously of them; when they made sport of them, as follows:

I [am] their music; or "music maker" {z}; as Samson was to the Philistines; the matter of their mirth; the subject of their song; and the object of their derision.

{z} Mtnygnm "musicus", Gataker.

Lamentations 3:64

Ver. 64. Render unto them a recompence, O Lord, according to the work of

their hands. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render this, and the following verses, not as petitions, but as prophecies of what should be; but they seem rather to be expressed by way of request; and here, that God would deal with them according to the law of retaliation, and requite them according to what they had done; that he would do to them as they had done to the Lord's people, and others; and this is ordered to be done particularly to the Chaldeans, or Babylonians,
Jer 50:15.

Lamentations 3:65

Ver. 65. Give them sorrow of heart,.... That which will cause sorrow of heart; such judgments and punishments as will be grievous to them. Some have observed a likeness between the word here used and that translated "music", **La 3:63**; and think some respect may be had to it; that whereas the people of God had been matter of mirth and music to them, God would give them music, but of another sort; a song, but a doleful one. The Septuagint version renders it, "a covering of the heart"; the word {a} having the signification of a shield, which covers; and may signify blindness, hardness, and stupidity of heart, that they might not see the evils coming upon them, and how to escape them. A modern learned interpreter, Christianus Benedictus Michaelis, would have it compared with the Arabic word , "ganan", which signifies "to be mad", and from whence is "muganah", "madness"; and so the sense be, give them distraction of mind:

lay curse unto them: and what greater curse is there than to be given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart, or to madness and distraction? it may include all the curses of the law denounced against transgressors.

{a} bl tngm uperaspismon kardiav, "tegumentum cordis", Montanus, Vatablus; "obtegumentum cordis", Stockius, p. 199. so Ben Melech; "scutum cordis", V. L. "clypeum cordis", Munster.

Lamentations 3:66

Ver. 66. Persecute and destroy them in anger,.... As they have persecuted the people of God, do thou persecute them; and never leave pursuing them untie thou hast made a full end of them, as the effect of vindictive wrath and vengeance:

from under the heavens of the Lord; which are made by him, and in which he dwells; let them not have the benefit of them, nor so much as the sight of them; but let them perish from under them, Jer 10:11.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Lamentations 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS 4

The prophet begins this chapter with a complaint of the ill usage of the dear children of God, and precious sons of Zion, **La 4:1**; relates the dreadful effects of the famine during the siege of Jerusalem, **La 4:3**; the taking and destruction of that city he imputes to the wrath of God; and represents it as incredible to the kings and inhabitants of the earth, **La 4:11**; the causes of which were the sins of the prophets, priests, and people, **La 4:13**; expresses the vain hopes they once had, but now were given up entirely, their king being taken, **La 4:17**; and the chapter is concluded with a prophecy of the destruction of the Edomites, and of the return of the Jews from captivity, **La 4:21**.

Ver. 1. How is the gold become dim!.... Or "covered" {b}; or hid with rust, dust, or dirt; so that it can scarcely be discerned:

[how] is the most fine gold changed! this may be literally true of the gold of the temple; and so the Targum calls it

"the gold of the house of the sanctuary;"

with which that was overlaid, and many things in it, **1Ki 6:21**; and was sadly sullied and tarnished with the burning of the temple, and the rubbish of it: its brightness was lost, and its colour changed; but though there may be an allusion to that, it is to be figuratively understood of the people of God; for what is here expressed in parabolical phrases, as Aben Ezra observes, is in **La 4:2** explained in proper and literal ones: godly and gracious men, there called the precious sons of Zion, are comparable to gold, even the most fine gold; partly because of their habit and dress; gold of Ophir; clothing of wrought gold; the rich robe of Christ's righteousness; which, for its brightness and splendour, is like the finest gold; and is as lasting and durable as that; and in which the saints look like a mass of pure gold, Ps 45:9; and partly because of the graces of the Spirit in them, which are like gold for their purity, especially when tried; for their value, and the enriching nature of them, and their duration; particularly the graces of faith, hope, love, humility, which are like rows of jewels, and chains of gold, and as ornamental as they; see **So 1:10**; as also because of the doctrines of grace received by them, which are more to be desired than gold, than fine gold; and are better than thousands of gold and silver, by reason of their intrinsic worth and value; for their purity and brightness, being tried and purified, and because of their duration, Ps 19:10; as well as on account of the riches of grace and glory they are possessed of, and entitled to: now this, in either of the senses of it, cannot be lost as to substance, only become dim; may lose its brightness and glory, and like gold change its colour, but not its nature; and; this may be the case of good men, comparable to it; when there is a decline in them, with respect to the exercise of grace; faith in Christ and his righteousness is low, hope not lively, and love waxen cold; when there is a veil drawn over the Gospel, a great opposition to it, and a departure from it; or the doctrines of it are not so clearly and consistently preached; and when there is a failure in a holy walk, and conversation becoming it; all which is matter of lamentation:

the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street; in the literal sense it may regard the costly stones of the temple, which, when that was destroyed, not only lay in heaps; but many of them, at least, were separated and scattered about, and carried into every corner of the city, and the streets of it, and there lay exposed, neglected, and trampled upon; see **1Ki 5:17**; but, in the figurative sense, it designs the people of God; who, though they are taken out of the common quarry and pit of mankind, and are by nature as common stones; yet by the Spirit and grace of God are made living and lively ones, and are hewn and fitted for the spiritual building the church; where they are laid, and are as the stones of a crown, as jewels and precious stones; but when there are animosities, contentions, and divisions among them, so that they disunite, and are scattered from one another, their case is like these stones of the sanctuary; and which is to be lamented. It is by some Jewish writers {c} interpreted of great personages, as princes, and great men of the earth.

{b} Mewy "rubigine obducetur", Montanus; "obtectum [vel] absconditum", Vatablus. So Ben Melech. {c} Vid. R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 50. 1.

Lamentations 4:2

Ver. 2. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold,.... This explains what is meant in **La 4:1**; by gold, fine gold, and stones of the sanctuary; not Josiah and his sons, as some Jewish interpreters; but all the sons of Zion, or children of God; not the inhabitants of Zion literally, but spiritually; see **Zec 9:13**. Zion is the church; her sons are her spiritual seed and offspring that are born of her, she being the mother of them all, and born in her, by means of the word; and brought up by her, through the ordinances, and so are regenerate persons; and these the sons of God: and who are "precious", not in themselves, being of the fallen race of Adam; of the earth, earthly, as he was; of the same mass and lump with the rest of mankind; in no wise better than others, by nature; and have no intrinsic worth and value in them, but what comes by and from the grace of God; nor are they precious in their own esteem, and much less in the esteem of the men of the world; but in the eye of God, and of his son Jesus Christ, and of the blessed Spirit, and in the opinion of other saints; see
Ps 16:3; in what sense these are comparable to fine gold, See Gill on "La 4:1";

how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! they are indeed earthen vessels with respect to their bodies, frail, weak, and mortal; but they are the work of God's hands, even as creatures, and particularly as new creatures, and are a curious piece of his workmanship, and so valuable, and especially by him, who is as tender and as careful of them as the apple of his eye; and yet these are greatly disesteemed by carnal men, are reckoned as the faith of the world, and the offscouring of all things; as earthen vessels, fit for no use but common or dishonourable ones, or to be broke in pieces, and rendered useless and contemptible: see Ps 31:12.

Lamentations 4:3

Ver. 3. Even the sea monsters draw out the breast,.... Which some interpret of dragons; others of seals, or sea calves; but it is best to understand it of whales, as the word is rendered in **Ge 1:21**; and elsewhere: and Bochart {d} has proved, out of various writers, that these have breasts and milk; but that their breasts, or however their paps, are not manifest, but are hid as in cases, and must be drawn out: and so Jarchi observes that they draw their breasts out of a case, for their breasts have a covering, which they uncover: so Ben Melech. Aristotle {e} says, that whales, as the dolphin, sea calf, and balaena, have breasts or paps, and milk, which he makes to be certain species of the whale; and each of these, he elsewhere says, have milk, and suckle their young: the dolphin and sturgeon, he observes {f} have milk, and are sucked; and so the sea calf, he says {g}, lets out milk as a sheep, and has two breasts, and is sucked by its young, as four footed beasts are. Agreeably to which Aelianus {h} relates, that the female dolphins have paps like women, and suckle their young, with great plenty of milk; and the balaena, he says {i}, is a creature like a dolphin, and has milk. And Pliny, speaking of the dolphins, observes {k}, that they bring forth their "whelps", and so the young of this creature are called here in the next clause in the Hebrew text {l}, and nourish them with their breasts, as the balaena; and of the sea calves the same writer says {m} they feed their young with their paps; but the paps of these creatures are not manifest, as those of four footed beasts, as Aristotle observes; but are like two channels or pipes, out of which the milk flows, and the young are suckled;

they give suck to their young ones; as they do, when they are hungry; which is mentioned, as an aggravation of the case of the Jewish women, with respect to their behaviour towards their children, by reason of the famine, during the siege of Jerusalem; which here, and in the following verses, is described in the sad effects of it; and which had a further accomplishment at the destruction of the same city by the Romans: now, though the monsters suckled their young when hungry, yet these women did not suckle theirs;

the daughter of my people [is become] cruel; or, is "unto a cruel one" {n}: that is, is changed unto a cruel one, or is like unto one, and behaves as such, though of force and necessity: the meaning is, that the Jewish women, though before tenderhearted mothers, yet, by reason of the famine, having no milk in their breasts, could give none to their children, and so acted as if they were cruel to them; nay, in fact, instead of feeding them, they fed upon them, **La 4:10**;

like the ostriches in the wilderness; which lay their eggs, and leave them in places easily to be crushed and broken; and when they have any young ones, they are hardened against them, as if they were none of theirs, Job 39:13; and this seemed now to be the case of these women; or, "like the owls", as the word is sometimes rendered; and which also leave their eggs, and for want of food will eat their young, as those women did. So Ben Melech says, it is a bird which dwells in the wilderness, and causes a voice of hooping to be heard.

{d} Hierozoic. l. 1. c. 7. p. 46. {e} Hist. Animal. l. 3. c. 20. {f} Ib. l. 6. c. 12. {g} Ibid. {h} Hist. de Animal. 1. 10. c. 8. {i} Ib. l. 5. c. 4. {k} Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 8. {l} Nhyrwg "catulos suos", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 13. {n} rzkal "in crudelem", Montanus; "sub. mutata fuit", Piscator; "similis est crudeli", Munster.

Lamentations 4:4

Ver. 4. The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst,.... Through want of the milk of the breast, which is both food and drink unto it:

the young children ask bread; of their parents as usual, not knowing how the case was, that there was a famine in the city; these are such as were more grown, were weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts, and lived on other food, and were capable of asking for it:

[and] no man breaketh [it] unto them: distributes unto them, or gives them a piece of bread; not father, friend, or any other person; it not being in their power to do it, they having none for themselves.

Lamentations 4:5

Ver. 5. They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets,.... That were brought up in the king's palace, or in the houses of noblemen; or, however, born of parents rich and wealthy, and had been used to good living, and had fared sumptuously and deliciously every day, were now wandering about in the streets in the most forlorn and distressed condition, seeking for food of any sort, but could find none to satisfy their hunger; and so, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, perished in the ways or streets:

they that were brought up in scarlet: in dyed garments, as Jarchi; clothed with scarlet coloured ones, as was the manner of the richer and better sort of people, Pr 31:21; or, "brought up upon scarlet" {o}; upon scarlet carpets, on which they used to sit and eat their food, as is the custom of the eastern people to this day: these

embrace dunghills, are glad of them, and with the greatest eagerness rake into them, in order to find something to feed upon, though ever so base and vile; or to sit and lie down upon. Aben Ezra interprets it of their being cast here when dead, and there was none to bury them.

{o} elwt yle "super coccinum", Pagninus, Montanus; "super coccino", Piscator, Michaelis.

Lamentations 4:6

Ver. 6. For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people,.... In the long siege of their city, and the evils that attended it, especially the sore famine:

is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom; which was destroyed at once by fire from heaven: or it may be rendered, "the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the sin of Sodom" {p}; though the men of Sodom were great sinners, the Jews were greater, their sins being more aggravated; to this agrees the Targum, which renders the word "sin", and paraphrases the words following thus,

"and there dwelt not in her prophets to prophesy unto her, and turn her by repentance;"

as the Jews had, and therefore their sin was the greater; both senses are true, and the one is the foundation of the other; but the first seems best to agree with what follows:

that was overthrown as in a moment; by a shower of fire from heaven, which consumed it at once; whereas the destruction of Jerusalem was a lingering one, through a long and tedious siege; the inhabitants were gradually wasted and consumed by famine, pestilence, and sword, and so their punishment greater than Sodom's:

and no hand stayed on her; that is, on Sodom; the hand of God was immediately upon her, and dispatched her at once, but not the hands of men; as the hands of the Chaldeans were upon the Jews, afflicting and distressing them a long time, which made their ease the worse.

{p} tajxm----Nwe ldgyw "et ingens fuit iniquitas--prae peccato", Montanus; "et major extitit pravitas--prae peccato", Cocceius. So V. L.

Lamentations 4:7

Ver. 7. Her Nazarites were purer than snow,.... Such who separated themselves by a vow to the Lord, and abstained from drinking wine and strong drink, and by a moderate diet, and often washing themselves, as well as taking great care of their hair, appeared very neat and comely, like snow, without any spot or blemish. Some think such as were separated from others in dignity, very honourable persons, the sons of nobles, are meant, since the word has the signification of a "crown", and interpret it, her princes; Jarchi makes mention of this sense, and rejects it; but it is received by many: and the meaning is, that her young noblemen, who were well fed, and neatly dressed, looked as pure and as beautiful as the driven snow:

they were whiter than milk; this intends the same thing, expressed by another metaphor:

they were more ruddy in body than rubies; or rather "than precious stones"; and particularly "than pearls", which Bochart {q} proves at large are designed by the word used, which are white, and not red; and the word should be rendered, "clearer" or "whiter than pearls", as it is by Lyra and others {r}; and the word in the Arabic language signifies white and clear {s}, as pearls are; and so the phrase is expressive of the beauty and comeliness of these persons: and Ludolphus {t} says, that in the Ethiopic language it signifies "beautiful"; and he translates the whole, "they were more beautiful than pearls"; denoting the clearness of their skins, and the goodness of their complexion:

their polishing [was] of sapphire; or "their cutting, sapphire" {u}; they were as beautiful as if they had been cut out of sapphire, and polished; which is a very precious stone, and looks very beautiful; so smooth were their skins. The Targum is,

"their face or countenance is as sapphire."

Braunius {w} thinks the word used signifies the veins full of blood, which variously intersect the flesh like sapphirine rivers; and that the sense of the words is,

"their bodies were white like snow and milk, yea, shining like pearls (or red in the cheeks, lips, &c. like coral {x}); veins full of blood running between like sapphire, of a most agreeable sky colour; which is, a true description of a most fair and beautiful body."

See **So 5:14**. All this is to be understood of them before the famine, but, when that came upon them, then they were as follow:

{q} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 6. p. 688. {r} Mynynpm Mue wmda "lucidiores corpore margaritis", Bochart; "candidi fuerunt [in] corpore prae margaritis", Noldius. {s} "[camelis tributum], candidus perquam albus", Giggeius; "candidi coloris", Dorcas, Giggeius apud Golium, col. 49, 51. {t} Comment. in Ethiop. Hist. l. 1. No. 107. {u} Mtrzg rypo "sapphirus excisio eorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Calvin; "[quasi] sectio eorum esset ex sapphiro", Munster. {w} De Vestitu Sacerdot. Hebr. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 7. p. 676. {x} So Bootius, Animadv. l. 4. c. 3. sect. 8. p. 144. Lutherus & Osiander in ib.

Lamentations 4:8

Ver. 8. Their visage is blacker than a coal,.... Or, "darker than blackness"; or, "dark through blackness" {y}; by reason of the famine, and because of grief and trouble for themselves and their friends, which changed their complexions, countenances, and skins; they that looked before as pure as snow, as white as milk, as clear as pearls, as polished as sapphire, now as black as charcoal, as blackness itself:

they are not known in the streets; not taken notice of in a distinguished manner; no respect shown them as they walk the streets, as used to be; nay, their countenances were so altered, and their apparel so sordid, as not to be known by their friends, when they met them in public:

their skin cleaveth to their bones; have nothing but skin and bone, who used to be plump and fat:

it is withered, it is become like a stick; the skin wrinkled and shrivelled up, the flesh being gone; and the bone became like a stick, or a dry piece of wood, its moisture and marrow being dried up.

{y} rwxvm Kvx "obscurior ipsa nigredine", Tigurine version; "magis quam nigredo vel carbo", Vatablus; "prae caligines", Calvin; "ex nigredine", Piscator.

Lamentations 4:9

Ver. 9. [They that be] slain with the sword are better than [they that be] slain with hunger,.... Not that they are better with respect to their state after death, but with respect to their manner of dying. They that were slain by the sword of the Chaldeans, as many were, either upon the walls, or in sallies out against the enemy, these felt less pain, and had less terror of mind in dying, than those did who perished by famine; they died a lingering death, as it were by inches, and were in continual pain of body and uneasiness of mind:

for these pine away, stricken through for [want of] the fruits of the field: that is, those that died by famine gradually wasted or "flowed" away, their fluid parts by degrees went off; and though they were not run through with the sword, they were stabbed by famine, and were so distressed in body and mind as if a sword had pierced them; not having the fruits of the field, the corn and the wine, to support nature, and keep them alive. Jarchi's note is,

"they that were slain with hunger were inflated at the smell of the fruits of the field, when the enemies were roasting their flesh upon the grass without the wall; the smell entered into those that swelled by famine, and their bellies burst, and their excrements flowed out; and this is the death worse than that of being slain with the sword."

And to this agrees the Targum,

"more happy are they that are slain with the sword than they that are slain with famine; for they that are slain with the sword flowed when their bellies were burst, by that which they ate of the fruits of the field; and those that were inflated with famine, their bellies burst through "want" of food."

Most interpreters refer this clause to those that died of famine: but Gussetius {z} interprets it of those that were killed with the sword; and renders and paraphrases the words thus, "for they being stabbed, sent out"; by the open wounds, "a flux, [which arose] from the fruits of the field"; their food and nourishment being yet in their belly and veins, and so did not pine away through penury and famine; and their misery was short and light, in comparison of others: and so Abendana.

{z} Comment. Ebr. p. 225.

Lamentations 4:10

Ver. 10. The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children,....

Such as were naturally, and agreeably to their sex, pitiful and compassionate; merciful to the poor, as the Targum; and especially tenderhearted to their own offspring; yet, by reason of the soreness of the famine, became so cruel and hardhearted, as to take their own children, and slay them with their own hands, cut them to pieces, put them into a pot of water, and make a fire and boil them, and then eat them, as follows:

they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people: at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. This strange and unnatural action was foretold by Moses, De 28:56; and though we have no particular instance of it on record, as done at the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, yet no doubt there was, as may be concluded from the words: and at the siege of it by the Romans, when many things here spoken of had a fuller accomplishment, we have a remarkable instance of it, which Josephus {a} relates; an illustrious woman, named Mary, pressed with the famine, slew her own son, a sucking child, boiled him, and ate part of him, and laid up the rest; which was found by the seditious party that broke into her house, which struck them with the utmost horror; See Gill on "La 2:20".

{a} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 4.

Lamentations 4:11

Ver. 11. The Lord hath accomplished his fury,.... Which rose up in his mind, and which he purposed in himself to bring upon the sinful people of the Jews:

he hath poured out his fierce anger; the vials of his wrath in great abundance, even all he meant to pour out upon them:

and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof: not in the strong hold of Zion only, but in the whole city of Jerusalem, which was set on fire by the Chaldeans, as instruments, according to the will of God; and which not only consumed the houses of it, but even the foundations of them; so that it looked as if there was no hope of its ever being rebuilt. Aben Ezra interprets this fire of the famine.

Lamentations 4:12

Ver. 12. The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world,.... Not only the neighbouring nations, and the kings of them, but even such in all parts of the world that knew anything of Jerusalem:

would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy would have entered into the gates of Jerusalem; when it was besieging, they did not believe it would be taken; and when they heard it was, it was incredible to them; it being so strongly fortified by art and nature, with mountains and hills, with walls and bulwarks, and had such a vast number of people in it; and, especially, was the city of the great God, who had so often and so signally preserved and saved it: the "adversary" and "enemy" are the same, and design the Chaldeans. The Targum distinguishes them, and makes Nebuchadnezzar the ungodly to be the adversary; and Nebuzaradan the enemy, who entered to slay the people of the house of Israel, in the gates of Jerusalem; this was a marvellous thing to the nations round about. Titus, when he took this city, acknowledged it was owing to God {b};

"God (says he) favouring us, we fought; God is he that has drawn the Jews out of these fortresses; for human hands and machines could have done nothing against these towers."

{b} Joseph. De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 1.

Lamentations 4:13

Ver. 13. For the sins of her prophets, [and] the iniquities of her priests,.... Aben Ezra interprets this of the prophets of Baal, and the priests of the high places; but though false prophets and wicked priests are meant, yet such as were among the Jews, made choice of and approved of by them: see 2Ch 36:14; not that the people were faultless, but these were the principals, who by their examples led on and encouraged the common people in sin:

that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her; not the blood of innocent children, sacrificed to them by Moloch; but of good men in general, whom they persecuted and slew; and of the true prophets of the Lord in particular, whose blood they shed; and was the sin that brought on the destruction of their city by the Romans, as well as of that by the Chaldeans; see Mt 23:35.

Lamentations 4:14

Ver. 14. They have wandered [as] blind [men] in the streets,.... That is, the false prophets and wicked priests; and may be understood either literally, that when the city was taken, and they fled, they were like blind men, and knew not which way to go to make their escape, but wandered from place to place, and could find no way out; or spiritually, though they pretended to great light and knowledge, yet were as blind men, surrounded with the darkness of ignorance and error, and were blind leaders of the blind:

they have polluted themselves with blood, so that men could not touch their garments; or, "could not but touch it with their garments" {c}; or, "might not" {d}; it was not lawful for them to do it: the sense is either, that, which way soever these men took to make their escape, they found so many dead carcasses in the streets, and such a profusion of blood by them, that they could not but touch it with their garments; or being besmeared with it, were so defiled, that others might not touch them, even their garments; or these men had defiled themselves with the shedding of the blood of righteous persons; so that they were odious to men, and they shunned them as they would do anything that by the law rendered them in a ceremonious sense unclean, and therefore said as follows:

{c} Mhyvwblb wegy wlkwy alb "quem non possunt, quin tangent vestimentis suis", "Junius & Tremellius. {d} "Tangebant eum (nempe sanguinem) vestibus eorum quem non potuerunt", i.e. "jure", Gataker.

Lamentations 4:15

Ver. 15. They cried unto them, depart ye, [it is] unclean,.... Or, O ye "unclean" {e}; that is, the people said so to the priests, being polluted with blood; they abhorred them, did not care they should come nigh them, but bid them keep at distance; they that cleansed others of leprosy were treated as leprous persons themselves, and proclaimed unclean, and shunned as such: and, to show their vehement abhorrence of them, repeated the words,

depart, depart, touch not: that is, touch us not; they who had used to say; to others, stand by yourselves, we are more holy than you, being the Lord's priests and prophets, are treated after the same manner themselves:

when they fled away, and wandered; fled from the city, and wandered among the nations; or when they were swiftly carried away captives, and became vagabonds in other countries:

they said among the Heathens, they shall no more sojourn [there]; being among the Heathens, they took notice of them as very wicked men, and said concerning them, now they are carried out of their own land, they shall never return there any more, and dwell in Jerusalem, and officiate in the temple, as they had formerly done.

{e} amj "immunde", Montanus; "immundi", Strigelius. "gens polluta", Vatablus; "discedite polluti", Gataker.

Lamentations 4:16

Ver. 16. The anger of the Lord hath divided them,.... Or, "the face of the Lord" {f}; the anger that appeared in his face, in the dispensation of his providence, removed them out of their own land, and dispersed them among several countries and nations of the world, and as they now are: these are not the words of the Heathens continued, but of the prophet:

he will no more regard them; or, "he will not add to look on them" {g}, with a look of love, but continue his anger and resentment:

they respect not the persons of the priests, they favour not the elders; which is to be considered either as the sin of the false prophets and priests before described, which was the cause of their punishment; that they east great contempt on the true prophets of the Lord, as Jeremiah and others, and showed no regard to the elders of the people, or those godly magistrates; who would have corrected and restrained them: or else this is said of the nations among whom they were dispersed, as the Targum; who would pay no respect to their characters as priests, or show any pity to them on account of their age.

{f} hwhy ynp "facies Domini", V. L. Montanus, Piscator. {g} Mjybhl Pyowy "non addet aspicere eos", Montanus.

Lamentations 4:17

Ver. 17. As for us, our eyes as yet failed for our vain help,.... Or, "while we were yet" {h}; a nation, a people, a body politic, in our own land, before the city of Jerusalem was taken, we were looking for help, as was promised us; but it proved a vain help, none was given us; for which we kept looking to the last, till our eyes failed, and we could look no longer; no help appeared, nor was there any prospect or probability of it, and therefore gave all up:

in our watching we watched for a nation [that] could not save [us]; not the Romans, as the Targum, but the Egyptians; these promised them help and relief, and therefore in their watching they watched, or vehemently watched, and wistfully looked out for it, but all in vain; for though these made an attempt to help them, they durst not proceed; were obliged to retire, not being a match for the Chaldean army, and so could not save them, or break up the siege, and relieve them.

{h} hnydwe "quum adhuc essemus", Munster: Piscator.

Lamentations 4:18

Ver. 18. They hunt our steps, that we cannot go in our streets,.... The Chaldeans, from their forts and batteries, as they could see, they watched the people as they came out of their houses, and walked about the streets, and shot their arrows at them; so that they were obliged to keep within doors, and not stir out, which they could not do without great danger:

our end is near, for our days are fulfilled; for our end is come; either the end of their lives, the days, months, and years appointed for them being fulfilled; or the end of their commonwealth, the end of their civil and church state, at least as they thought; the time appointed for their destruction was not only near at hand, but was actually come; it was all over with them.

Lamentations 4:19

Ver. 19. Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heavens,.... That fly in the heavens; and which, as they have a quick sight to discern their prey afar off, are very swift to pursue it; they are the swiftest of birds, and are so to a proverb. Apuleius {i} represents the swift pursuit of their prey, and sudden falling upon it, to be like thunder and lightning. Cicero {k} relates of a certain racer, that came to an interpreter of dreams, and told him, that in his dream he seemed to become an eagle; upon which, says the interpreter, thou wilt be the conqueror; for no bird flies with such force and swiftness as that. And this bird is also remarkable for its constancy in flying: it is never weary, but keeps on flying to places the most remote. The poets have a fiction, that Jupiter, being desirous of knowing which was the middle of the world, sent out two eagles of equal swiftness, the one from the east, and the other from the west, at the same moment; which stopped not till they came to Delphos, where they met, which showed that to be the spot; in memory of which, two golden eagles were placed in the temple there {l}. The swiftness and constancy of these creatures in flying are here intended to set forth the speed and assiduity of the enemies of the Jews, in their pursuit after them; who followed them closely, and never ceased till they had overtaken them. The Chaldeans are designed, who pursued the Jews very hotly and eagerly, such as fled when the city was broken up; though not so much they themselves, as being thus swift of foot, as their horses on which they rode; see **Jer 4:13**.

they pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness: or "plain" {m}; there was no safety in either; such as fled to the mountains were pursued and overtaken there; and such who attempted to make their escape through the valleys were intercepted there: the reference is to the flight of Zedekiah, his nobles, and his army with him, who were pursued by the Chaldeans, and taken in the plains of Jericho, Jer 52:7; hence it follows:

{i} Florida, l. 2. {k} De Divinatione, l. 2. p. 2001. {l} Vid. Strabo Geograph. l. 9. p. 289. & Pindar. Pythia, Ode 4. l. 7, 8. & Schmidt in ib. p. 174, 175. {m} rbdmb "in plano", Gataker.

Lamentations 4:20

Ver. 20. The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits,.... Or "the Messiah", or "the Christ of the Lord" {n}; not Josiah, as the Targum; and so Jarchi and others; for though he was the Lord's anointed, and the life of the people, being the head of them, as every king is, especially a good one; yet he was slain, and not taken, and much less in their pits, and that not by the Chaldeans, but by the Egyptians; nor did the kingdom cease with him, or the end of the Jewish state then come, which continued some years after: but rather Zedekiah, as Aben Ezra and others, the last of the kings of Judah, with whom all agrees; he was the Lord's anointed as king, and the

preserver of the lives and liberties of the people, at least as they hoped; but when the city was taken by the Chaldeans, and he fled for his life, they pursued him, and took him; he fell into their hands, their pits, snares, and nets, as was foretold he should; and which are sometimes called the net and snare of the Lord; see Eze 12:13;
See Gill on "La 4:19". Many of the ancient Christian writers apply this to Christ; and particularly Theodoret takes it to be a direct prophecy of him and his sufferings. Vatablus, who interprets it of Josiah, makes him to be a type of Christ; as Calvin does Zedekiah, of whom he expounds the words; and the Targum, in the king of Spain's Bible, is,

"the King Messiah, who was beloved by us, as the breath of the spirit of life, which is in our nostrils."

What is here said may be applied to Christ; he is the life of men, he gives them life and breath, and in him they live and move; their spiritual life is from him, and is maintained and preserved by him; he lives in his people, and they in him, and they cannot live without him, no more than a man without his breath: he is the Christ of God, anointed with the Holy Ghost to the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; and from whom Christians have their holy unction and their name: he was taken, not by the Chaldeans, but by the wicked Jews; who looked upon him as a very mischievous person, as if he had been an evil beast, a beast of prey, though the pure spotless Lamb of God; and they dug pits, laid snares, and formed schemes to take him, and at last did, and with wicked hands crucified him, and slew him; though not without his own and his Father's will and knowledge, **Ac 2:23**;

of whom we said, under his shadow we shall live among the Heathen; in the midst of the nations round about them, unmolested by them, none daring to meddle with them; at least safe from being carried captive, as now they were. Though Jeconiah was taken and carried into Babylon, yet Zedekiah being placed upon the throne, the Jews hoped to live peaceable and quiet lives under his government, undisturbed by their neighbours; the wise and good government of a prince, and protection under it, being sometimes compared in Scripture to the shadow of a rock or tree, Isa 32:2; but now it was all over with them; their hope was gone, he being taken. Something like this may be observed in the disciples of Christ; they hoped he would have restored the kingdom to Israel, and they should have lived gloriously under his government; they trusted that it was he that should have redeemed Israel; but, when he was taken and crucified, their hope was in a manner gone, Lu 24:21. True believers in Christ do live peaceably, comfortably, and safely under him;

they are among the Heathen, among the men of the world, liable to their reproaches, insults, and injuries; Christ is a tree, to which he is often compared, one and another, that casts a delightful, reviving, refreshing, and fructifying shadow, under which they sit with great delight, pleasure, and profit, **So 2:3**; he is a rock, the shadow of which affords rest to weary souls, and shelters from the heat of divine wrath, the fiery law of God, and darts of Satan, and persecutions of men, Isa 32:2; and under his government, protection, and power, they dwell safely, that sin cannot destroy them, nor Satan devour them, nor the world hurt them; here they live spiritually, and shall never die eternally,
Jer 23:5.

{n} hwhy xyvm cristov kuriov, Sept. "Christus Dominus", V. L. "Christus Domini", Pagninus.

Lamentations 4:21

Ver. 21. Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom,.... The land of Idumea, and the inhabitants of it, who did indeed rejoice at the destruction of Jerusalem, **Ob 1:12**; and here, in an ironic manner, are bid to go on with their mirth, if they could, like the young man in
Ec 11:9, as Aben Ezra observes; for it would not last long, their note would soon be changed:

that dwellest in the land of Uz; not the country of Job, which had its name from Uz the son of Nahor, **Job 1:1**; but a country in Idumea, from whence the whole was so called, and that from Uz the son of Dishan, one of the sons of Seir: or else the sense is, that Edom or Idumea, and the inhabitants of it, dwelt upon the borders of Uz; and so agrees very well with the place of Job's residence, which was near the land of Edom. The Targum, according to R. Elias {o}, is,

"rejoice, O wicked Rome;"

but, in the king of Spain's Bible, it is,

"rejoice and be glad, O Constantine (that is, Constantinople), the city of wicked Edom, which art built in the land of Armenia;"

and Jarchi says that Jeremiah prophesies concerning the destruction of the second temple, which the Romans destroyed; but in other copies, and according to Lyra, his words are, Jeremiah here prophesies concerning the destruction of the Roman empire, because that destroyed the temple; and it is usual with him, and other Rabbins, to interpret Edom of Rome;

the cup also shall pass through unto thee; the cup of God's wrath and vengeance; which, as it had come to the Jews, and was passing from one nation to another, in its turn would come to these Edomites; see
Jer 25:15;

thou shall be drunken, and shall make thyself naked; be overcome by it; as persons with wine, or any strong drink, reel to and fro, and fall; and be utterly destroyed, lie helpless and without strength: "and be made naked" {p}, as it may be rendered; stripped of their riches and wealth; or they should strip themselves of their clothes, and behave indecently, and expose those parts which ought to be covered, as drunken persons the sense is, they should be exposed, or expose themselves, to shame and contempt. The Septuagint version is, "and thou shalt be drunken, and pour out" {q}; that is, vomit, as drunken men do; and so Jarchi and Abendana interpret the word of vomiting; and the Targum is,

"and thou shalt be emptied."

{o} In Tishbi, p. 227. {p} yrettw "nudaberis", V. L. {q} kai apoceeiv, Sept. "et eris vomens", Pagninus, Vatablus.

Lamentations 4:22

Ver. 22. The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion,.... In part in the seventy years' captivity in Babylon, and more fully in their present captivity; for, as has been observed, there are some things in the preceding account, which had a further accomplishment in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the distress of the Jews by the Romans. The Targum is,

"and after thine iniquity is fulfilled, O congregation of Zion, and thou shalt be delivered by the hands of the Messiah, and of Elias the high priest;"

he will no more carry thee away into captivity; he, the enemy; or the Lord, as the Targum: that is, thou shall no more be carried captive: this seems to confirm the above observation, that this chapter is a prophecy of what would be, as well as a narrative of what had been; and includes the destruction both of the first and second temple, and of the Jews both by the Chaldeans and Romans; for it is certain, that, after their deliverance from the captivity of Babylon, they have been carried captive, and are now in captivity;

he will visit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom; punish the Edomites for their sins, as is elsewhere threatened, Jer 49:7 **Am 1:11**; which was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar as an instrument; and may have some respect to the destruction of the Romans, when the Jews shall be converted, and return to their own land. The Targum, in the king of Spain's Bible, is,

"and at that time I will visit thine iniquity, O wicked Rome, which art built in Italy, and full of multitudes of the children of Edom; and the Persians shall come and oppress thee, and make thee desolate;"

and so the copy used by Munster:

he will discover thy sins; by the punishment of them; as, when God pardons sins, he is said to cover them; so, when he punishes for them, he discovers them; see Jer 49:10.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Lamentations 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO LAMENTATIONS 5

In this chapter are reckoned up the various calamities and distresses of the Jews in Babylon, which the Lord is desired to remember and consider, **La 5:1**; their great concern for the desolation of the temple in particular is expressed, **La 5:17**; and the chapter is concluded with a prayer that God would show favour to them, and turn them to him, and renew their prosperity as of old, though he had rejected them, and been wroth with them, **La 5:19**.

Ver. 1. Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us,.... This chapter is called, in some Greek copies, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, "the prayer of Jeremiah". Cocceius interprets the whole of the state of the Christian church after the last destruction of Jerusalem; and of what happened to the disciples of Christ in the first times of the Gospel; and of what Christians have endured under antichrist down to the present times: but it is best to understand it of the Jews in Babylon; representing their sorrowful case, as represented by the prophet; entreating that the Lord would remember the affliction they were under, and deliver them out of it, that which he had determined should come upon them. So the Targum,

"remember, O Lord, what was decreed should be unto us;"

and what he had long threatened should come upon them; and which they had reason to fear would come, though they put away the evil day far from them; but now it was come, and it lay heavy upon them; and therefore they desire it might be taken off:

consider, and behold our reproach: cast upon them by their enemies; and the rather the Lord is entreated to look upon and consider that, since his name was concerned in it, and it was for his sake, and because of the true religion they professed; also the disgrace they were in, being carried into a foreign country for their sins; and so were in contempt by all the nations around.

Lamentations 5:2

Ver. 2. Our inheritance is turned to strangers,.... The land of Canaan in general, which was given to Abraham and his seed to be their inheritance; and their field, and vineyards in particular, which came to them by inheritance from their fathers, were now in the hands of the Chaldeans, strangers to God, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, as all Gentiles were, **Eph 2:12**;

our houses to aliens; which they had built or purchased, or their fathers had left them, were now inhabited by those of another country.

Lamentations 5:3

Ver. 3. We are orphans and fatherless,.... In every sense; in a natural sense, their fathers having been cut off by the sword, famine, or pestilence; in a civil sense, their king being taken from them; and in a religious sense, God having forsaken them for their sins:

our mothers [are] as widows; either really so, their husbands being dead; or were as if they had no husbands, they not being able to provide for them, protect and deferred them. The Targum adds,

"whose husbands are gone to the cities of the sea, and it is doubtful whether they are alive."

Some understand this politically, of their cities being desolate and defenceless.

Lamentations 5:4

Ver. 4. We have drunken our water for money,.... They who in their own land, which was a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, had wells of water of their own, and water freely and in abundance, now were obliged to pay for it, for drink, and other uses:

our wood is sold unto us; or, "comes to us by a price" {r}; and a dear one; in their own land they could have wood out of the forest, for cutting down and bringing home; but now they were forced to give a large price for it.

{r} waby ryxmb "in pretio venerunt", Pagninus, Montanus; "caro nobis pretio veniunt", Michaelis.

Lamentations 5:5

Ver. 5. Our necks [are] under persecution,.... A yoke of hard servitude and bondage was put upon their necks, as Jarchi interprets it; which they were forced to submit unto: or, "upon our necks we are pursued" {s}; or, "suffer persecution": which Aben Ezra explains thus, in connection with the **La 5:4**; if we carry water or wood upon our necks, the enemy pursues us; that is, to take it away from us. The Targum relates a fable here, that when Nebuchadnezzar saw the ungodly rulers of the children of Israel, who went empty, he ordered to sow up the books of the law, and make bags or wallets of them, and fill them with the stones on the banks of the Euphrates, and loaded them on their necks:

we labour, [and] have no rest; night nor day, nor even on sabbath days; obliged to work continually till they were weary; and, when they were, were not allowed time to rest themselves, like their forefathers in Egypt.

{s} wnpdrn wnrawu le "super colla nostra persecutionem passi sumus", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin; "vel patimur", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Lamentations 5:6

Ver. 6. We have given our hand [to] the Egyptians,.... Either by way of supplication, to beg bread of them; or by way of covenant and agreement; or to testify subjection to them, in order to be supplied with food: many of the Jews went into Egypt upon the taking of the city, Jer 43:5;

[and to] the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread; among whom many of the captives were dispersed; since from hence they are said to be returned, as well as from Egypt, Isa 11:16.

Lamentations 5:7

Ver. 7. Our fathers have sinned, [and are] not,.... In the world, as the Targum adds; they were in being, but not on earth; they were departed from hence, and gone into another world; and so were free from the miseries and calamities their children were attended with, and therefore more happy:

and we have borne their iniquities; the punishment of them, or chastisement for them: this is not said by way of complaint, much less as charging God with injustice, in punishing them for their fathers' sins, or to excuse theirs; for they were ready to own that they had consented to them, and were guilty of the same; but to obtain mercy and pity at the hands of God.

Lamentations 5:8

Ver. 8. Servants have ruled over us,.... The Targum is,

"the sons of Ham, who were given to be servants to the sons of Shem, they have ruled over us;"

referring to the prophecy of Noah, **Ge 9:26**; or such as had been tributary to the Jews, as the Edomites; so Aben Ezra; the Babylon, an, are meant; and not the nobles and principal inhabitants only, but even their servants, had power and authority over the Jews and they were at their beck and command; which made their servitude the more disagreeable and intolerable:

[there is] none that doth deliver [us] out of their hand; out of the hand of these servants.

Lamentations 5:9

Ver. 9. We gat our bread [with the peril of] our lives,.... This seems to refer to the time of the siege when they privately went out of the city to get in some provision, but went in danger of their lives:

because of the sword of the wilderness: or, "of the plain" {t}; because of the, word of the Chaldean army, which lay in the plain about Jerusalem into whose hand there was danger of falling, and of being cut to pieces.

{t} rbdmh brx ynpm "propter gladium [in] deserto, [sive] plano", Gataker.

Lamentations 5:10

Ver. 10. Our skin was black like an oven, because of the terrible famine. Or "terrors [and horrors of] famine"; which are very dreadful and distressing: or, "the storms of famine"; see Ps 11:6; or, "burning winds" {u}; such as are frequent in Africa and Asia; to which the famine is compared that was in Jerusalem, at the siege of it, both by the Chaldeans and Romans; and as an oven, furnace, or chimney becomes black by the smoke of the fire burnt in it, or under it; so the skins of the Jews became black through these burning winds and storms, or burnings of famine; see **La 4:8**. So Jarchi says the word has the signification of "burning"; for famine as it were burns up the bodies of men when most vehement.

{u} ber twpelz "horrorum famis", Montanus; "terrores, [vel] tremores", Vatablus; "procellas famis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "exustiones", Pagninus, Calvin; "adustiones famis", Stockius, p. 281.

Lamentations 5:11

Ver. 11. They ravished the women in Zion,.... Or "humbled" them {w}; an euphemism; the women that were married to men in Zion, as the Targum; and if this wickedness was committed in the holy mountain of Zion, it was still more abominable and afflicting, and to be complained of; and if by the servants before mentioned, as Aben Ezra interprets it, it is another aggravating circumstance of it; for this was done not in Babylon when captives there; but at the taking of the city of Jerusalem, and by the common soldiers, as is too often practised:

[and] the maids in the cities of Judah; in all parts of the country, where the Chaldean army ravaged, there they ravished the maids. The Targum is,

"the women that were married to men in Zion were humbled by strangers; (the Targum in the king of Spain's Bible is, by the Romans;) and virgins in the cities of Judah by the Chaldeans;"

suggesting that this account has reference to both destructions of the city, and the concomitants and consequences thereof.

{w} wne etapeinwsan, Sept. "humiliaverunt", V. L. Munster.

Lamentations 5:12

Ver. 12. Princes are hanged up by their hand,.... According to some, as Aben Ezra observes, by the hand of the servants before mentioned; however, by the hand of the Chaldeans or Babylonians; see Jer 52:10. Some understand it of their own hands, as if they laid violent hands upon themselves, not being able to bear the hardships and disgrace they were subjected to but I should rather think this is to be understood of hanging them, not by the neck, but by the hand, could any instance be given of such a kind of punishment so early used, and by this people; which has been in other nations, and in more modern times:

the faces of elders were not honoured; no reverence or respect were shown to elders in age or office, or on account of either; but were treated with rudeness and contempt.

Lamentations 5:13

Ver. 13. They took the young men to grind,.... In the mill, which was laborious service; and which persons were sometimes put to, by way of punishment; and was the punishment of servants; see Jud 16:21. Some render it, "the young men bore the grist" {x}; carried the corn, the meal ground, from place to place. The Targum is,

"the young men carried the millstones;"

and so Jarchi, they put millstones upon their shoulders, and burdens so as to weary them. Ben Melech, from their Rabbins, relates, that there were no millstones in Babylon; wherefore the Chaldeans put them upon the young men of Israel, to carry them thither. The Vulgate Latin version is,

"they abused the young men in an unchaste manner;"

suggesting something obscene intended by grinding; see Job 31:10; but the context will not admit of such a sense:

and the children fell under the wood; such loads of wood were laid upon them, that they could not bear them, but fell under them. Aben Ezra understands it of moving the wood of the mill, of turning the wooden handle of it; or the wooden post, the rider or runner, by which the upper millstone was turned: this their strength was not equal to, and so failed. The Targum interprets it of a wooden gibbet, or gallows; some wooden engine seems to be had in view, used as a punishment, which was put upon their necks, something like a pillory; which they were not able to stand up under, but fell.

{x} wavn Nwxj Myrwxb "juvenes farinam portaverunt"; so some in Gataker; "juvenes molam tulerunt", Cocceius; "juvenes ad molendum portant", Junius & Tremellius.

Lamentations 5:14

Ver. 14. The elders have ceased from the gate,.... Of the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, as the Targum; from the gate of the city, where they used to sit and try causes; but now there was nothing of this kind done:

the young men from their music; vocal and instrumental; the latter is more particularly specified, though both may be intended; neither were any more heard; their harps were hung upon the willows on the banks of Euphrates, which ran through the city of Babylon, Ps 137:1.

Lamentations 5:15

Ver. 15. The joy of our heart is ceased,.... ward joy was gone, as well as the external signs of it: it "sabbatized" {y}, as it may be rendered; alluding perhaps to the cordial joy expressed formerly on their sabbaths and other festivals, now not observed; at least, not with that joy, inward and outward, they formerly were:

our dance is turned into mourning; which also was used at their solemn feasts, as well as at their common diversions, Jud 21:21; but now no more of that; but, instead of it, mourning at the calamities they were oppressed with; and at the remembrance of mercies and privileges, civil and religious, they were deprived of.

{y} tbv "sabbatizat".

Lamentations 5:16

Ver. 16. The crown is fallen [from] our head,.... Or, "the crown of our head is fallen" {a}; all their honour and glory as a nation were gone; the glory of their kingdom and priesthood, to both which a crown or mitre belonged; the glory of church and state. Aben Ezra interprets it of the temple, the place of the divine Majesty. Sanctius thinks there is an allusion to the crowns they wore upon their heads at their feasts and festivals; and so the words have a close connection with what goes before:

woe unto us that we have sinned! which had brought all these evils upon them: this is not to be considered as an imprecation or denunciation of misery; but as a commiseration of their case; calling upon others to it, and particularly God himself, to have mercy upon them; for, alas for them! they had sinned, and justly deserved what was come upon them; and therefore throw themselves at the feet of mercy, and implore divine compassion.

{a} wnvar trje hlpn "cecidit corona capitis nostri", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Lamentations 5:17

Ver. 17. For this our heart is faint,.... Our spirits sink; we are ready to swoon and die away; either for this, that we have sinned; because of our sins, they are so many, so great, and so aggravated; or for those distresses and calamities they have brought upon us before mentioned; or for the desolation of Zion, more especially, after expressed; and so the Targum,

"for this house of the sanctuary, which is desolate, our heart is weak:"

for these [things] our eyes are dim; or "darkened" {b} almost blinded with weeping; can scarcely see out of them; or as persons in a swoon; for dimness of sight usually attends faintness of spirit.

{b} wkvx "contenebrati sunt", V. L. "obtenebrati", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Cocceius.

Lamentations 5:18

Ver. 18. Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate,.... Meaning either the city of Jerusalem in general, or the temple in particular, which both lay in ruins: but the latter gave the truly godly the greatest concern; that the seat of divine Majesty should be in such a condition; that the public exercises of religion should cease, and there be no more opportunities of waiting upon God, and worshipping him as heretofore; their civil interest, and the loss of that did not so much affect them as the interest of religion, and what that suffered:

the foxes walk upon it: as they do in desolate places, shunning the company of men; but here they walked in common, and as freely as in the woods and deserts: this was fulfilled in the destruction of the second temple, as well as the first. R. Akiba {c} and his companions were walking together; they saw a fox come out of the holy of holies; they wept, but he laughed or rejoiced; they wept, that in the place where the stranger that drew near should die, now foxes walked upon it; he laughed or rejoiced, because, as this prophecy was fulfilled, so would others that predicted good things.

{c} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 24. 1. 2.

Lamentations 5:19

Ver. 19. Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever,.... The same in his nature and perfections; in his grace and goodness; in his power and faithfulness; in his purposes and promises; though all things else change, are fickle and inconstant, he changes not, but abides the same, without any variableness or shallow of turning; whatever revolutions there are in the world, or alterations in the course of Providence, yet he remains firm and unalterable in his counsel and covenant; though all material things are subject to decay, and even his own sanctuary lay in ruins, yet he himself continued just as he ever was. The eternity and unchangeableness of God are of great use and comfort to his people in times of distress, and to be regarded and observed:

thy throne from generation to generation; though his throne on earth, in Jerusalem, in the temple, was thrown down, yet his throne in heaven remained unshaken; there he sits, and reigns, and rules, and overrules all things here below to his own glory and the good of his people; and this is the saints' comfort in the worst of times, that Zion's King reigns; he has reigned, and will reign, throughout all generations. The Targum is,

"the house of thine habitation in the high heavens; the throne of thy glory to the generations of generations?"

Lamentations 5:20

Ver. 20. Wherefore dost thou, forget us for ever,.... Since thou art firm, constant, and unchangeable, and thy love and covenant the same. God seems to forget his people when he afflicts them, or suffers them to be oppressed, and does not arise immediately for their help; which being deferred some time, looks like an eternity to them, or they fear it will ever be so; at least this they say to express their eager desire after his gracious presence, and to show how much they prize it:

[and] forsake us so long time? or, "to length of days" {d}? so long as the seventy years' captivity; which to be forsaken of God, or to seem to be forsaken of him, was with them a long time.

{d} Mymy Kral "in longitudinem dierum", Pagninus, Montanus.

Lamentations 5:21

Ver. 21. Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned,.... This prayer expresses the sense they had of their backslidings from God, and distance from him; of their inability to turn themselves to the Lord, or convert themselves; and of their need of divine grace, and of the efficacy of that to effect it; see Jer 31:18; for this is to be understood not only of returning them to their own land, and to the external worship of God in it; but of turning them to the Lord by true and perfect repentance, as the Targum; of the conversion of their hearts and the reformation of their lives:

renew our days as of old; for good, as the Targum adds. The request is, that their good days might be renewed; that they might enjoy the same peace and prosperity, and all good things in their own land, as they had done in days and years past: first they pray for repentance; then restoration.

Lamentations 5:22

Ver. 22. But thou hast utterly rejected us,.... That looks as if they had no hope, and were in despair of having their petitions granted; since God had entirely rejected them from being his people, and would never more have mercy on them; but the words may be rendered, "though thou hast in rejecting rejected us" {e}; or else, "unless thou hast utterly rejected us" {f}; or rather by an interrogation, "for wilt thou utterly reject", or "despise us?" {g} surely thou wilt not; such is thy grace and goodness:

thou art very wroth against us; thou hast been, and still continuest to be: or, "wilt thou be exceeding wroth against us?" {h} or continue thy wrath to extremity, and for ever? thou wait not; it is not consistent with, thy mercy and grace, truth and faithfulness; and so it is an argument of faith in prayer, and not an expression of despondency; though the Jews, because they would not have the book end in what is sorrowful and distressing, repeat the foregoing verse; and the like method they take at the end of Ecclesiastes, and the prophecies of Isaiah and Malachi, as Jarchi observes.

{e} wntoam oam Ma yk "quamvis detestatione detestatus es nos", Targ. {f} "Nisi forte repudiando repudiasti nos", Calvin. {g} "Nam an omnino sperneres nos?" Junius & Tremellius. {h} dam-de wnyle tpuq "effervesceres contra nos admodum?" Junius & Tremellius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL

This book is rightly placed after Jeremiah; since Ezekiel was among the captives in Chaldea, when prophesied; whereas Jeremiah began to prophesy long before that captivity, and concerning it. The name of this prophet signifies, as it is commonly interpreted, "the strength of God", or "strengthened by God", as he was, and as he needed to be, having great work to do, and a perverse people to deal with; see **Eze 3:8**; but the learned Hillerus {a} chooses to render it, "God shall prevail"; with which compare Jer 20:7. There was a Levite of this name, of whom mention is made in 1Ch 24:16; whose name is there read "Jehezekel"; and this prophet was a priest, **Eze 1:3**; and both Clemens Alexandrinus {b} and Eusebius {c} cite a Jewish writer of tragedies, of the same name; which some have very wrongly thought to be the same with our prophet; but whether Ezekiel is not the same with Nazaratus or Zabratus, the master of Pythagoras, mentioned by Clemens as such, according to the opinion of some, is a matter of question; and which the learned Selden {d} seems to think probable. According to the judgment and opinion of Jerom {e}, his style is neither very eloquent, nor very rustic; but between both, and has a mixture of each. The visions he saw are very abstruse and difficult of interpretation, especially the vision of the living creatures and wheels; wherefore the Jews {f} forbad the reading of it, as well as the end of this prophecy, until persons were thirty years of age. The divine visions in this book, the whole subject matter of it, its agreement with the prophecy of Jeremiah, and the accomplishment of events predicted in it, prove the authority of it; and its divine authority has always been allowed, both by the Jewish synagogue and the Christian church. There were indeed some ancient Jewish Rabbins, who were perplexed about some things in it, and consulted about laying it aside, because of some words in it, which seemed to them to be contrary to the law of Moses; but R. Chananiah ben Goron, a very famous doctor in those times, withdrew to his chamber, and wrote a commentary, in order to remove those difficulties to satisfaction {g}. This book, in general, contains various visions the prophet saw; several threatenings against the people of the Jews; and prophecies against other nations; and an abundance of comfortable promises of the Messiah, and of blessings of grace by him; and of the state and condition of the Gospel church, and the worship of it. Josephus {h} says Ezekiel left two books written by him; one of which Athanasius {i}: or the author of the Synopsis under his name, thinks is lost; but the learned Huetius {k} is of opinion that the prophecy of Ezekiel, in the times of Josephus, was divided into two parts; the first containing the first thirty nine chapters, and the other the nine last chapters; which is not improbable. If the authorities of Epiphanius {l}, or the writer of the lives of the prophets that goes by his name, and of Isidorus {m}, are of any weight, Ezekiel was born in the land of Sarera; killed by the governor in Babylon; and buried by the people in the field of Maur or Mahurim, in the sepulchre of Shem and Arphaxad. The account R. Benjamin Tudelensis {n} gives is, that there is a synagogue of the Prophet Ezekiel by the river Euphrates; and over against the synagogue sixty towers, ; and between every tower a synagogue. In the court of the synagogue is a library; and behind it the grave of Ezekiel the son of Buzi the priest; and over it a large vault, of a beautiful building, erected by Jeconiah king of Judah, and thirty five thousand Jews, who came with him, when Evilmerodach brought him out of prison; and over the grave a lamp burns night and day. The Cippi Hebraici say {o} he was buried by, the river Hiddekel; and Menasseh ben Israel {p} affirms that he died in Babylon, and was buried there; and so Kimchi {q} says the tradition is.

{a} Onamast. Sacr. p. 224, 320, 845. {b} Stromat. l. 2. p. 344. {c} Praeper. Evangel. l. 9. c. 23. p. 436. & c. 29. p. 439. {d} De Dis Syris, Syntag. 2. c. 1. p. 210, 211. {e} Praefat. in Ezek. tom. 3. fol. 9. D. {f} Praefat. in ib. ad Eustochium, tom 5. fol. 174. G. {g} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 13. 2. & Taanith, fol. 17. 1, 2. & Maimon. Bartenora in Misn. Sabbat, c. 1. sect. 4. {h} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 5. sect. 1. {i} Synops. Sacr. Script. p. 134, 136. tom. 2. {k} Demonstr. Evang. Prop. 4. p. 272. {l} De Prophet. Vit. c. 9. {m} De Vit. & Mort. Sanct. c. 39. {n} Massaot, p. 78, 79. {o} P. 74. {p} De Resurrect. Mort. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 5. {q} In Ezek. xliii. 19.

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 1

This chapter contains a vision, which is the introduction to the prophet's call and commission to perform his office; in the account of which may be observed the time when it was seen, **Eze 1:1**; and the place both where the prophet was when he saw it, and the object or things that were beheld by him; and the original, form, and manner of the vision, **Eze 1:3**; next follow the particulars of it; and first, four living creatures appear, described by their general likeness, as human, **Eze 1:5**; and, in particular, by their faces, feet, hands, and wings, **Eze 1:6**; by their motion and progress, and the spirit by which they were influenced, **Eze 1:12**; and by their forms of light, brightness, and heat, in which they appeared and moved, **Eze 1:13**; and next the wheels, described by their number; for, though they seemed to be as one, they were four; and by their situation on the earth, and by the side of the living creatures, **Eze 1:15**; by their appearance, which was alike in them all, and as the colour of beryl, and as a wheel within a wheel, **Eze 1:16**, by their motion, which was on their sides, and not retrograde, **Eze 1:17**; by their rings or circumferences, which were high, dreadful, and full of eyes, **Eze 1:18**; by their dependence on the living creatures, moving as they, having the same spirit they had, **Eze 1:19**; and then a firmament is seen, described by its situation, over the heads of the living creatures; and by its colour, as the terrible crystal, **Eze 1:22**; by what were under it, the wings of the living creatures of which a more particular account is given, **Eze 1:23**; by what was heard from it, a voice, **Eze 1:25**; and by what was above it, a throne; described by its colour, as a sapphire stone; and by a person on it, who had the appearance of a man, **Eze 1:26**; who, in general, looked like the colour of amber; within which was the appearance of fire from his loins upwards, and from his loins downwards; the fire had a brightness round about it; and that brightness was like a rainbow in a cloud, on a rainy day; and this appearance was no other than that of a divine and glorious Person; which, when seen by the prophet, caused him, through reverence, to fall upon his face; when he heard a voice speaking to him what is recorded in the following chapter, **Eze 1:27**.

Ver. 1. Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year,.... Either from the last jubilee, as R. Joseph Kimchi {r}, Jarchi, and Abendana; or from the time that the book of the law was found by Hilkiah the priest {s}; so the Targum, which paraphrases the words thus,

"and it was in the thirtieth year after Hilkiah the high priest found the book of the law, in the house of the sanctuary, in the court under the porch, in the middle of the night, after the moon was down, in the days of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah;"

or, according to Jerom {t}, from the time of the prophet's birth, who was now thirty years of age, and was just entered into his priestly office; or rather it was the thirtieth year of Nabopolassar, or the father of Nebuchadnezzar: this was the twelfth year of the captivity, reckoning from the third of Jehoiakim, which was the first captivity, and from whence the seventy years are to be reckoned, and also the twelfth of Nebuchadnezzar's reign; and if two years are taken, as Vitringa {u} observes, from the twenty one years, which are given to Nabopolassar in Ptolemy's canon, in which Nebuchadnezzar his son reigned with him, there will be found thirty years from the beginning of Nabopolassar's reign to the fifth of Jeconiah's captivity, when Ezekiel began his prophecy, and which, as Bishop Usher {w}, Mr. Bedford {x}, Mr. Whiston {y}, and the authors of the Universal History {z}, place in the year 593, before the birth of Christ:

in the fourth [month]; the month Tammuz, as the Targum expresses it; which answers to part of June, and part of July:

in the fifth [day] of the month; which some take to be on a sabbath day; because, seven days after, the word of the Lord came to him again **Eze 3:16**; just as John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, **Re 1:10**; between one of whose visions and this there is a very great likeness, as will be seen hereafter:

as I [was] among the captives by the river of Chebar; which is another agreement in circumstance between Ezekiel and John, when they had their visions: John was an exile in Patrons, and Ezekiel among the captives by the river Chebar in Chaldea. Some think this is the same river which is called by Ptolemy {a} Chaboras; and is said by him to pass through Mesopotamia: others say it was a river that was drawn off from the river Euphrates, by the order of one Cobaris, or Gobaris, a governor, from whence it had its name; that the river Euphrates might not, by its rapid course, hurt the city of Babylon; and by the Assyrians it was called Armalchar, or Narmalcha {b}, the king's river; though it seems to be no other than Euphrates itself; and Kimchi observes, that in some copies of the Targum on this place it is interpreted of the river Euphrates; and he says their Rabbins of blessed memory say, that Chebar is Euphrates; and so Abarbinel; see
Ps 137:1. Monsieur Thevenot {c} speaks of a river called Chabur, which is less than Alchabour, another mentioned by him; and has its source below Mosul, and on the left hand to those that go down the Tigris, and at Bagdad loses itself in the Tigris which he takes to be the same as here:

that the heavens were opened; as at our Lord's baptism, and at the stoning of Stephen; and so when John had his vision which corresponds with the following, a door was opened in heaven **Re 4:1**;

and I saw the visions of God; which God showed unto him, and which were great and excellent; as excellent things are called things of God, as mountains of God, and cedars of God, Ps 36:6; and indeed he had a vision of a divine Person, in a human form; to which agrees the Targum, "and I saw in the vision of prophecy, which abode on me, the vision of the glory of the majesty of the Lord."

The Arabic and Syriac versions read, "the vision of God".

{r} Apud R. D. Kimchi in loc. {s} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 26. {t} Preafat. in Ezek. tom. 3. fol. 9. D. {u} Typus Doctrin. Prophetic. sect. 7. p. 41. Vid. Witsii Miscel. Sacr. tom. 1. l. 1. c. 19. {w} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3409. p. 127. {x} Scripture Chronology, p. 681. {y} Chronological Tables, cent. 10. {z} Vol. 21. p. 61. {a} Geograph. l. 5. c. 18. {b} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 26. {c} Travels, par. 2. B. 1. ch. 10. p. 46.

Ezekiel 1:2

Ver. 2. In the fifth [day] of the month,.... The month Tammuz, as before:

(which [was] the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity); the same with Jeconiah and Coniah, as he is sometimes called; he was taken by the king of Babylon, when he had reigned but three months, and his captivity held seven and thirty years, 2Ki 24:8.

Ezekiel 1:3

Ver. 3. The word of the Lord came expressly,.... Or, "in being was" {d}; which phrase denotes the reality, certainty, substantiality and evidence of the word of the Lord to him:

unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi; which Buzi, some say, was Jeremiah. Kimchi observes, that, in the Jerusalem Targum, the Prophet Ezekiel is called the son of Jeremiah the prophet: and Jeremiah was called Buzi because they despised him; this is rejected by Abarbinel; nor is there any reason to believe it, any more than what Nazianzen {e} says, that Ezekiel was a servant of Jeremiah:

in the land of the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar;
See Gill on "Eze 1:1". The Chaldee paraphrase makes the word of the Lord to come to him at two distinct times and places;

"the word of prophecy from before the Lord was with Ezekiel the son of Buzi the priest in the land of Israel: it returned a second time, and spoke with him in the province, the land of the Chaldeans, by the river Chebar:"

and the hand of the Lord was there upon him; by which is meant the gift and word of prophecy, which came with power and efficacy, clearness and evidence; so the Targum, and the

"spirit of prophecy from before the Lord there abode by him;"

by which he saw all later visions, and delivered out the following prophecies; see **2Pe 1:21**.

{d} hyh hyh "essendo fuit", Pagninus, Montanus. Heb. ; "existendo exstitit", Polanus. {e} Orat. 47. vol. 1. p. 724.

Ezekiel 1:4

Ver. 4. And I looked,.... Being under the influence of the Spirit and power of God:

and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north; which some understand of Nebuchadnezzar and his army coming from Babylon, which lay north of Judea: see **Jer 1:14**; but it seems to me to be, with what follows, only an apparatus to the following vision: and is designed to awaken the mind of the prophet, and to fix his attention to what should proceed from hence, and be seen by him; just as the Lord speared in and answered Job out of, the whirlwind, Job 38:1;

a great cloud; as is usual when there is much thunder and lightning; though some understand this also of Nebuchadnezzar's army, which came in great human, swiftly and powerfully, as a cloud:

and a fire infolding itself: in the cloud; rolling within it, when it burst out in thunder and lightning. The Targum renders it, "fire inflamed", the same phrase is used of the storm of thunder, lightning, and hail, in **Ex 9:24**. Some understand this of the wrath of the Babylonian monarch; or of the wrath of God by him; or of the sins of men, the cause thereof:

and a brightness [was] about it; that is, the cloud. This brightness was an emblem of the glory of the divine Being; who was now present, an enlightened the mind of the prophet to see the following things, and which all proceeded from him:

and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber out of the midst of the fire; that is, out of the midst of the fire, and out of the midst of the brightness about it, there was something which was as "the colour of amber"; or, "like the chasmal" {f}; which, the Jews {g} say, is the name of an angel. It is asked {h}, what is "chasmal?" R. Judah says, twhmm va twyx, "fiery animals speaking": who, when God speaks, are silent; and when he does not speak, they speak; but Christ is meant; for the appearance of the man upon the throne is said to be as the colour of "chasmal", **Eze 1:27**. The word, read the contrary way, is the Messiah, or the anointed, or to be anointed. Jarchi thinks it is the name of a colour, nearest to the colour of fire, Junius and Tremellius render it, "a most lively colour"; and perhaps may mean the colour of a burning coal; and Buxtorf translates it, "a coal exceedingly fired"; a clear, burning, red-hot coal; which may denote the pure light of Christ, who is the brightness of his Father's glory; his flaming love for his people; his burning zeal for the glory of God, and the good of his church; and his fiery indignation against his enemies. We render the word amber, as do others; by which must be meant, not that which is the juice of certain trees, which is hardened by the air, and is of a yellowish colour; nor that liquid substance which comes from sea shores and rocks, and, being hardened in the same way, is of the colour of wax; but a sort of mixed metal, compounded of gold and silver; the fifth part of it is silver, as Pliny {i} says, and four parts gold; though Bochart is of opinion that the "qurichalcum", a metal made of gold and brass, is meant; which is the most fine brass; to which the feet of Christ are compared in **Re 1:15**; and so this "chasmal" may denote the two natures in Christ; the preciousness of his person; his brightness and glory; and his great strength and power. R. Abendana {k} conjectures, that the colour of "chasmal" means the colour of some precious stone, as the colour of "tarshish", or "beryl", **Eze 1:16**; and so he that sat upon the throne, in **Re 4:3**; was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone.

{f} lmvxh Nyek "tanquam species hasmal, [vel] chasmal", Calvin, Tigerius version, Starckius; "angeli", Munster; "flammae crepitantis", Montanus; "prunarum ardentissimarum", Polanus; "purissimi aeris", Piscator; hlektrou, Sept. "electri", V. L. Pagninus. {g} Baal Aruch, Philip. Aquinas. Vid. Jarchi & Kimchi ib loc. {h} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 13. 1. 2. {i} Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 4. {k} Not. in Miclol Yophi in loc.

Ezekiel 1:5

Ver. 5. Also out of the midst thereof,.... The fire; or out of the whole that was seen; the whirlwind, cloud, fire, and the brightness about it:

[came] the likeness of four living creatures; not really four living creatures; they appeared like to such they were in the form of such; by which we are to understand, not the four monarchies; nor the four Gospels; nor the angels; but ministers of the Gospel; the true key for the opening of this vision is that which John saw, **Re 4:6**; the four beasts there, or living creatures, as it should be rendered, are the same with these here, and these the same with them; and who manifestly appear to be not only worshippers of the true God, but to be men redeemed by the blood of Christ; and are distinguished from angels, and also from the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the Gospel churches; and so can design no other than the ministers of the word, with whom all the characters of them agree, as in that vision, so in this; see **Re 4:8**. "Creatures" they are; not gods, but men; they are indeed in God's stead, and represent him, being ambassadors of his; but they are frail, mortal, sinful men, of like passions with others; and therefore great allowances must be made for their infirmities and weaknesses: yea, as ministers, they are the creatures of God; he, and not men, has made them able ministers of the New Testament: and they are "living" creatures; they have spiritual life in themselves, and are the means of quickening others; and have need to be, and should be, lively and fervent in their ministrations. Their number, "four", respects the four parts of the, world, to which their commission to preach the Gospel reaches; and whither they are sent, whensoever it is the will and pleasure of God they should got and he has work for them to do;

and this [was] their appearance, they had the likeness of a man; their general likeness was the human form, except in some particulars after mentioned, because they represented men; men humane, tender, kind and pitiful; knowing, and understanding, and acting like men.

Ezekiel 1:6

Ver. 6. And or but everyone had four faces,.... Which are described, See Gill on "Eze 1:10". The Targum multiplies the faces in a strange monstrous manner, paraphrasing the words thus, "each had four faces, and there were four faces to everyone "of them", and every creature had sixteen faces; the number of the faces of the four creatures was sixty and four;"

and everyone had four wings; the seraphim in **Isa 6:2**; and the four beasts or living creatures in **Re 4:8**; had six wings; and so it seems that these had also, from **Eze 1:11**; as will be seen there; nor is this any contradiction to the account here given, since it is not said they had only four wings. The Targum gives the same monstrous account of their wings as of their faces, saying,

"each had four wings, and there were four wings for everyone of them, sixteen wings to every face, and sixty four to every creature; and the number of the wings of the four living creatures were two hundred and fifty six."

Jarchi is of the same opinion, and confirms it in his note on the text, which is this,

""four faces to one"; that is, to the face of a man only were four faces, and so, to the lion, to the eagle, and to the ox, lo, sixteen to a living creature, and so to every living creature; and four wings to everyone of the faces, lo, sixty and four wings to a living creatures and which, according to the Targum of Jonathan, amounts to two hundred and fifty six wings;"

what these wings signified, See Gill on "Eze 1:11";

Ezekiel 1:7

Ver. 7. And their feet [were] straight feet,.... And they went straight forward, as in **Eze 1:12**; they made straight paths for their feet, and walked uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel; did not go into crooked paths, or turn to the right hand, or the left; and having put their hand to the plough of the Gospel neither looked back, nor turned back.

And or "for"

the sole of their feet [was] like the sole of a calf's foot; round, and the hoof divided, and fit for treading out the corn, in which oxen were employed; denoting the firmness and constancy of ministers in their work, treading out the corn of the word for the nourishment of souls, to whom they minister. The Septuagint render it, "their feet were winged"; or "flying", as the Arabic version; in like manner as Mercury, the Heathen god, is painted: this may denote the readiness and swiftness of Gospel ministers to do their master's work; their feet being shod with the preparation of the Gospel, and so very beautiful, **Eph 6:15**. The Targum is,

"the sole of their feet as the sole of feet that are round {l}, and they moved the world where they went;"

and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass; that is, their feet; being burning and shining lights in their conversation, as well as in their doctrine; see **Re 1:15**.

{l} So R. Sol. Urbin, Ohel Moed, fol. 60. 2.

Ezekiel 1:8

Ver. 8. And [they had] the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides,.... "Hands of a man" denote action, according to knowledge; ministers of the Gospel are men of practice and business, as well as have the theory and knowledge of things; and they act like men in a rational way, according to the will of God revealed in the word: and these being "on their four sides", show that they have much work to do all around, on every side; in ministering the word, administering ordinances; visiting their people; giving counsel, caution, comfort, exhortation, instruction, &c. and that they have many hands to do, it with, much grace and strength from above; and they have need of all the hands they have; and what they have they constantly employ, and are steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Briareus, a man of business, is represented by the poets as having a hundred hands. These being "under their wings", show that, besides their public ministrations, they do much work secretly and privately, in their closet and studies, where no eye sees them but the eye of God, as well as in private houses, by their visits and conversation; and is also expressive of their modesty and humility, not doing what they do to be seen of men, nor boasting of their works; but ascribing all to the grace of God, and strength of Christ, by which they perform them, and which give them success The Jews, in the Talmud {m}, interpret this of the hand of God himself which is stretched out under the wings of the living creatures, to receive penitent persons; because it is written wdy, "his hand", but read ydy, "hands". And they four had their faces and their wings; that is, on their four sides; a face and a wing before, and a face and a wing behind, and a face and a wing on each side; and under each wing a man's hand and arm. The

Targum of the whole is,

"and hands, as the hands of a man, were made for them under their wings on their four sides; to take in them coals of fire from between the cherubim under the firmament, which was over their seats, to, put them into the hands of the seraphim, to scatter upon the place of the ungodly, to destroy the wicked that transgress his word; and their faces and their wings were equal to them four;"

see Eze 10:2.

{m} Bab. Pesachim, fol. 119. 1.

Ezekiel 1:9

Ver. 9. Their wings [were] joined one to another,.... "A woman to her sister" {n}, in the Hebrew; denoting the concord, harmony, and agreement of Gospel ministers, and their affection to one another; they preach the same Gospel; administer the same ordinances; do the same work of the Lord; have the same zeal for the glory of God; the same love for Christ, and affection for the souls of men; are of the same mind and judgment, and help each other in the service of the Lord; and especially so it will be in the latter day glory, when the watchmen shall see eye to eye, Isa 52:8;

they turned not when they went; they went everyone straight forward; they go not into the path of error and immorality; they do not become apostates from the truth; they are not of them that draw back unto perdition; they go on in the course of their ministry straightforward; let what will be in their way, nothing diverts them from it; notwithstanding all difficulties and discouragements in themselves; reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions from men; and the temptations of Satan; See Gill on "Eze 1:7".

{n} htwxa la hva "foemina adsororem suam", Montanus, Polanus; "vira, [sive] mulier ad sociam suam", so some in Vatablus.

Ezekiel 1:10

Ver. 10. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man,....

For these living creatures are men, redeemed from among men by the blood of Christ; their business lies with men, to preach the Gospel to them: and they should be humane, kind, and tender in their behaviour towards them; wounded consciences of weak believers, distressed and disconsolate souls, requiring such usage; and they should be men in understanding, have a large knowledge of the Scriptures, of the truths of the Gospel, and of Jesus Christ, since their work is to feed men with knowledge and understanding; and should act the manly part, quit themselves like men in defence of the Gospel, and the truths of it;

and the face of a lion on the right side; denoting the strength of Gospel ministers, the lion being the strongest among beasts, Pr 30:30; and they have need to be strong in the grace of Christ, and in the power of his might, to do the several parts of their work; to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ; to wrestle with principalities and powers, and to bear the infirmities of the weak: and also their courage and fortitude of mind; their boldness in preaching the Gospel of Christ, not fearing the faces of men, nor their revilings; see Pr 28:1;

and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; expressive of the patience of Gospel ministers in bearing the yoke that is upon them, not only of the ministry, but of the weaknesses of saints, and the reproaches and indignities of the wicked; and in instructing those that oppose themselves, and in waiting the issue of their ministry: and also of their laboriousness in their ministrations; particularly in treading out the corn of the word, for the subsistence of the saints: see **1Co 9:9**;

they four also had the face of an eagle; showing their strong and clear sight of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; the eagle having so strong an eye, that it is able to look full and steadfastly upon the sun; and their diligence in searching into the deep things of God, and particularly to find out where the carcass is, a crucified Christ, to feed upon themselves, and to direct others to it likewise. It seems as if these four living creatures had four distinct heads, as well as faces, and that the position of them was in this manner; the face of a man before; the face of a lion on the right side; the face of an ox on the left; and the face of an eagle behind, These four are the most excellent of creatures. The Talmudists have a saying,

"there are four that are proud (or excel) in the world; the lion among beasts; the ox among cattle; the eagle among birds; and man, whom God has exalted above all, for he rules over all {o}."

{o} Apud Schindler. Lex. Pentaglott, p. 267.

Ezekiel 1:11

Ver. 11. Thus [were] their faces: and their wings [were] stretched upward,.... The former clause, "thus [were] their faces", either belongs to Eze 1:10; and the meaning is, this, as now represented, was the likeness of their faces, and this the position of them: or it may be read in connection with the following clause, and be rendered, "and their faces and their wings were stretched upwards"; as they are in the Chaldee paraphrase, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions: "their faces were stretched upwards", showing that the ministers of the Gospel look up to Christ for fresh supplies of gifts and grace, of light, knowledge, wisdom, and strength, to enable them to perform their work: "and their wings were stretched upwards", that is, two of them; not four, as the Arabic version has it; for two covered their bodies, as is after said. Those that were stretched upwards answer to the two with which Isaiah's seraphim flew; for these were, as in the original text, "parted upwards" {p}; though they were joined together at the bottom of them, as in Eze 1:9; yet being spread in flying, they opened wider and wider, and were at a greater distance from each other in their extreme points. This may design the agility, swiftness, and readiness of ministers in the performance of their work;

two [wings] of everyone [were] joined one to another: with which they, covered their heads and faces, as did Isaiah's seraphim, as conscious of their unworthiness and infirmities; looking upon themselves to be less than the least of all saints, unfit to be ministers of the Gospel; acknowledging they have nothing but what they have received and therefore would not glory as though they had not received, and as ashamed of their poor performances and ministrations;

and two covered their bodies; their lower and secret parts called their feet in Isaiah; which however to others beautiful upon the mountains, running and bringing the good news of peace, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; yet sensible of their deficiencies, they cover them, and confess, when they have done all they can, they are but unprofitable servants; from hence it appears that these living creatures had six wings, as the seraphim in Isaiah, and the four beasts in John's vision.

{p} twdwrp "disjunctae", Montanus; "divisae", Calvin, Starckius. So Ben

Melech.

Ezekiel 1:12

Ver. 12. And they went everyone straight forward,.... Or, "over against his face" {q}; for, which way soever they went, whether forward or backward, or on either side, they had a face to go before them, to direct the way, and steer their course; so the ministers of the Gospel have a face to go by and follow after, the word of God, to look to and direct them, which way soever they go, or whatsoever service they are called unto;

whither the spirit was to go they went; which may be meant of their own spirit, will, and inclination; so the Targum,

"to the place where it was their good pleasure to go they went;"

so Jarchi and Kimchi; but this is not always the case, see Ac 16:6; rather the Holy Spirit of God is intended, by whom holy men of God were moved, and spoke formerly; and by whom Gospel ministers are led into the truth, as it is in Jesus; and by whom they are directed where to go, and what to do; and they are sent, and go where the Spirit of God is designed to go, in order to work upon the hearts of men and effectually call them by his grace, which is usually done by the ministry of the word; and therefore Gospel ministers must go, and they do go where the Spirit of God has work to do by them; see Ac 16:6;

[and] they turned not when they went; they had no occasion to turn their bodies, because, which way soever they went, they had a face to go before them, and direct the way; See Gill on "Eze 1:9".

{q} wynp rbe la "coram facie sua", V. L. "in tractam faciei suae", [objectum], Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus; "ante faciem suam", Starckius.

Ezekiel 1:13

Ver. 13. As for the likeness of the living creatures,.... That is, of their bodies; for their faces, feet, hands, and wings are described before:

their appearance [was] like burning coals of fire: because of their ministerial gifts; the gifts of the Spirit are compared to fire, and like coals of fire are to be stirred up, and not covered or quenched; **Ac 2:3**; and because of their clear shining light in the truths of the Gospel; and because of their ardent love to Christ, and the souls of men; the coals whereof give a most vehement flame, which all the waters of reproach and persecution cannot quench, **So 8:6**; and because of their burning zeal for the glory of God, and the interest of the Redeemer; hence they are called "seraphim", fiery or burning **Isa 6:2**;

[and] like the appearance of lamps: so the ministers of the Gospel are compared to lamps, which hold forth the light of the Gospel to the sons of men; they are the lights or lamps of the world, and some of them are bright burning and shining ones, as John was, **Mt 5:14**;

it went up and down among the living creatures; that is, fire went up and down among them; so the Targum,

"and fire inflamed was among the creatures;"

by which may be meant the word of God, comparable to fire,
Jer 20:9; common to all the ministers of the Gospel, by which their minds are enlightened, and their hearts are warmed and filled with zeal, and by which they are the means of enlightening and warming others:

and the fire was bright; and clear, as the word of God is:

and out of the fire went forth lightning; by means of the ministry of the word, the kingdom and interest of Christ spread like lightning in the world, from east to west; so the coming of the son of man in his kingdom and power is compared to lightning, Mt 24:27; it denotes the quick, penetrating, and enlightening power and efficacy of the word.

Ezekiel 1:14

Ver. 14. And the living creatures ran,.... Did their work with great readiness and swiftness; so, especially in the latter day, ministers of the Gospel shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased,
Da 12:4;

and returned; for though before it is said, "they turned not when they went", they kept straight on till they had done their work; but when they have done it, then they return, and give an account of it to him that has sent them: and their running and returning are said to be,

as the appearance of a flash of lightning; very sudden and swift.

Ezekiel 1:15

Ver. 15. Now as I beheld the living creatures,.... While he had the vision of them, and when he was considering their form and likeness, and what should be the meaning of them:

behold, one wheel upon the earth; the Jews {r} understand this of an angel, who stood upon the earth, and his head reached to the living creatures, and his name is Sandalphon; and so many expositors interpret the wheels of angels: but the more common interpretation of them is, that they design the visible world, and all things in it, which are movable and uncertain; though the true interpretation of them, as of the living creatures, is to be fetched from the vision in the fourth chapter of Revelation and as the four living creatures here are the same with the four beasts there; so the wheels are the same with the four and twenty elders, the representatives of Gospel churches, as appears by both being in the same situation; as there is a throne, and next to that the four beasts, and next to them the four and twenty elders, **Re 4:3**; here also is a throne, and next to the throne the four living creatures or cherubim, and next the living creatures, and by the side of them the wheels, Eze 10:1; and this is further manifest by their being both under the same influence and motion; as the four beasts were the first agents and movers, and the four and twenty elders were directed by them, who went before them in their devotion, **Re 4:9**; so the wheels moved as the living creatures did; when the living creatures went, they went; when they stood, the wheels stood; and when the creatures were lifted up, the wheels were also, **Eze 1:19**; and the wheels are a very proper emblem of churches under the Gospel dispensation; partly for their round form, a symbol of perfection; the churches of Christ being more perfect under the gospel dispensation than the church was under the legal one: and partly for their movableness from place to place; churches are not always in the same place; they have been removed from Judea into the Gentile world; and they have wheeled about there, sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another: as also for their changeable state and situation; being sometimes in prosperity, and sometimes in adversity: likewise for the work done by them; many things are done by the help and with the use of wheels; much work is done in and by

the churches of Christ; here the Gospel is preached, ordinances administered, divine worship in all its parts performed, sinners are converted, and saints are edified and comforted; and as, when wheels are in motion, they make a great noise and rattling; so when there is any great work going on in the churches of Christ, it makes a great noise in the world; as at the first preaching and spread of the Gospel, both in Judea, and among the Gentiles; and at the time of the Reformation; and as there will be when antichrist shall be destroyed, and the Gospel shall be spread all the world over,
Re 19:1; to which may be added, that these wheels, together with the cherubim or living creatures, make a chariot; and as the cherubim in the temple are called the chariot of the cherubim, 1Ch 28:18; so the author of Ecclesiasticus in the Apocrypha,

"It was Ezekiel who saw the glorious vision, which was shewed him upon the chariot of the cherubims." (Sirach 49:8)

says, that Ezekiel was shown the glorious vision upon the chariot of the cherubim; and nothing is more common with the Jews than to call this vision of Ezekiel hbkrm, "mercavah", or "chariot". So in the Targum on **1Ki 7:33**; it is said,

"the work of the wheels was as the work of the wheels of the glorious chariot;"

meaning this in Ezekiel; and a chariot is a fit emblem of the churches of Christ, in which he rides about the world, and does his work; see **So 3:9**; and though but one wheel is here mentioned, yet it appears that there were "four", as in **Eze 1:16**; a wheel by every living creature; so though there is but one general assembly and church of the firstborn written in heaven, of which Christ is the head, and for which he gave himself; yet there are many particular congregated churches, which may be signified by the number "four"; partly with respect to the four parts of the world, where Christ has an interest, and which will more manifestly appear in the latter day; and partly with respect to the four living creatures, a wheel to every cherub, a church to every minister and pastor; for though sometimes there have been more pastors than one to a church, when large, yet never more than one church under the care of one pastor: moreover, this wheel or wheels were seen "upon the earth"; which is observed, to distinguish the church militant from the church triumphant in heaven; and to point out the place where the churches are; which though they consist of men that are not of the world, yet they are in the world: as also to denote the firmness of them; they are on the earth, not in the air or sea, where wheels cannot move and rolls; but upon "terra firma", and that to the churches, is

Christ Jesus; and may also signify, that the mutability and movableness of churches are only while they are on earth, in, the present state of things: it follows,

by the living creatures: that is, the wheel or wheels were seen by the side of the living creatures; which is more fully expressed in Eze 10:9; churches are placed by the ministers of the Gospel, to direct them in matters of faith and worship; to put them in motion; to stir them up to the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty; to watch over them in the Lord; and to feed them with spiritual knowledge and understanding:

with his four faces; either the living creatures; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "having four faces": and the meaning is that the wheel or wheels were on, the four sides of the living creatures: or rather, as Jarchi, the wheels, four faces; for upon every wheel there were the same four faces as were in the living creatures, as, is clear from Eze 10:13; there being a great likeness between Gospel churches and Gospel ministers: the "first" was the face of a "cherub" or "ox"; which may denote the patience of Gospel churches, and the members thereof, in bearing afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions, for the sake of Christ; their meditation on the word of God continually, the ox being a creature that chews the cud; and their constancy and laboriousness in the work of the Lord: the "second" was the face of a "man"; which may be expressive of their knowledge and understanding of divine and spiritual things; and of their tenderheartedness, sympathy, and compassion, one towards another, in distressed circumstances: the "third" was the face of a "lion"; signifying their boldness and intrepidity in, the cause of Christ, and the profession of his name: and the "fourth" was the face of an "eagle"; showing that they mount up on the wings of faith and love, as on eagles' wings; that they soar aloft, and dwell on high, and have their affections set on things in heaven, and not on earth. Cocceius interprets the wheel or wheels of the word of God, and the course of the ministry of it, under the influence of the Spirit; and so Starckius of late.

{r} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 13. 2.

Ezekiel 1:16

Ver. 16. The appearance of the wheels, and their work, [was] like unto the colour of a beryl,.... Which is a precious stone; see Ex 28:20; the Syriac version renders it a chrysolite; the Arabic, a jasper; and so may denote the preciousness, glory, and excellency of the churches, and the true members of them, which are as jewels and pearls of great price in the esteem of Christ; and the colour of this stone being a sea green, from whence it has here the name of "tarshish", a word sometimes used for the sea, may signify the fluctuating and uncertain state of the churches in this world, and in their present circumstances:

and they four had one likeness: this shows that there were four wheels, and that they were all alike, as the true churches of Christ are; they are alike gathered out of the world, and consist of the same sort of persons, true believers in Christ; they profess the same faith; they have the same officers and ordinances; keep up the same discipline, and are under the same form of government, and have all the same power and authority:

and their appearance and work [was] as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel; not as if one wheel was comprehended and included in another; for then one must be lesser than another; whereas all the wheels were alike, as for form, so for size; but the work or make of them was in a transverse way, or cross way; just as two hoops may be put together cross ways, and so form four semicircles, and these a globe or sphere; hence this wheel is called lglg, "an orb" or "globe", in
Eze 10:13; and it was on those four semicircles that the four faces of the ox, the man, the lion, and eagle, were engraved; the reason of their being wrought in this form was, for the motion of them; as follows:

Ezekiel 1:17

Ver. 17. When they went, they went upon their four sides,.... On either of their crossing rings, as they were directed by the living creatures, at whose side they stood:

[and] they returned not when they went; they had no need to turn about when they were to go east, west, north, or south, as wheels usually do; but they turned upon the crossing ring, which was towards either of the four points. This denotes the perseverance of the churches, and the true members thereof, in faith and practice; they do not turn back, nor look back, but go right on, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in all his, ways and ordinances.

Ezekiel 1:18

Ver. 18. As for their rings, they were so high, that they were dreadful,.... The circles and circumferences of them were "high": which may denote the visibility and extensiveness of the churches of Christ, especially in the latter day; when they shall be exalted above the mountains and hills, the kingdoms and states of this world; and there shall be such numerous additions to them, that the place will be too strait for the members of them to dwell in, **Isa 2:2**; and "they were dreadful"; terrible, as the churches of Christ will be to their enemies to look at, when they shall be in their exalted state, Re 11:12; or the words may be rendered, "and they had fear" {s}; there was fear and reverence in them; the fear of God, and a reverential affection for him; they were waiting on him, and attending his worship with great reverence and godly fear:

and their rings [were] full of eyes round about them four; everyone of the four wheels, and each of their four semicircles, were full of eyes; expressive of the knowledge of the Gospel, and the truths of it, in church members; their continual looking to Christ for fresh supplies of grace and strength; and their constant watchfulness over each other.

{s} Mhl haryw "et timor illis erat", Cocceius; "et timor ipis", Starckius; "and they were reverent", so Dr. Lightfoot, Prospect of the Temple, &c. c. 38. p. 2055.

Ezekiel 1:19

Ver. 19. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them,.... When the ministers of the Gospel begin the worship of God, and move in acts of devotion, the churches join with them; see **Re 4:9**; and in their lives and conversations they are examples to them; and churches and members ought to walk as they have them, for an example in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity;

and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up; when the ministers of the word have their affections raised, and are in lively frames of soul in preaching the Gospel, generally speaking, so it is with the churches and the members thereof, that sit under their ministrations; their hearts burn within them; their affections are raised, and their souls are lifted up heavenwards, while the Scriptures of truth are opened unto them.

Ezekiel 1:20

Ver. 20. Whithersoever the spirit was to go they went,.... That is, the Spirit of God; wherever that leads and directs, whether in the paths of faith or duty, they follow; they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; he guides their feet in the way of peace, and into all truth; and leads them in a right way to the land of uprightness:

thither [was their] spirit to go; their spirits or souls being regenerated by the spirit of God, are moved and actuated by him, and readily go where that directs:

and the wheels were lifted up over against them; that is, over against the living creatures; being by their sides going where they go, and being lifted up when they are:

for the spirit of the living creature [was] in the wheels; the same Spirit of God, which is a spirit of life, a quickening spirit, and a free spirit; which gives motion and liberty in religious exercises; that which is in the ministers of the Gospel is in the churches of God; there is but one Spirit, and ministers and members are actuated and influenced by it; see **Eph 4:4**.

Ezekiel 1:21

Ver. 21. When those went, [these] went; and when those stood, [these] stood,.... When ministers are active and lively, then the churches are; but when they are indolent, dull, and inactive, then the churches are so likewise:

and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them; See Gill on "Eze 1:19";

for the spirit of the living creature [was] in the wheels; or, "the spirit of life", as in **Eze 1:20**; see Re 11:11.

Ezekiel 1:22

Ver. 22. And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living

creature,.... This was not a real firmament, but the likeness of one; it was like the firmament which God created on the second day, which divided between the waters above and below, and which he called Heaven; and is no other than the airy and starry heavens. Its name is in Hebrew
eyqr, "an expanse"; from its being stretched out as a curtain, and a tent to dwell in; and a "firmament" from its firmness and continuance; and therefore called the firmament of his power, **Ge 1:8**
Ps 150:1; and this visionary one was "over the heads of the living creatures"; which shows that they could not be angels, for those have their habitation in the third heaven, above the firmament; much less in hieroglyphic of the trinity of Persons, who are the three that bear record in heaven, and are not under the firmament; but ministers of the Gospel, who are on earth, and are subject to Christ, whose throne is above the firmament, **Eze 1:26**; and who receive their commission and gifts from him, and are accountable to him. This firmament

[was] as the colony of the tenable crystal; crystal is a very white, transparent, precious stone, resembling ice, from whence it has its name; hence Pliny {t} thought it was no other than ice vehemently frozen; and here it is called "terrible", because exceeding clear and bright, so that there was no looking upon it, without the eyes being dazzled with the glory of it. The sky is called a molten looking glass, in which the glory of God, and his handiwork, may be seen, Job 37:18; and as the throne of Christ was over this crystal firmament, it shows that, though he is in heaven, he sees all that is done on earth, and in his churches, and by his ministers; and the saints also see him by faith, and through the glass of the Gospel: it is only a crystal firmament that is between them,

stretched forth over their heads above; that is, over the heads of the living creatures, as before; said to be stretched out, in allusion to its name, an expanse, as before observed.

{t} Nat. Hit. l. 37. c. 2.

Ezekiel 1:23

Ver. 23. And under the firmament [were] their wings straight, the one toward the other,.... A further account is here given of the wings of the living creatures, which were under the firmament: two of their wings were stretched straight upwards towards the firmament, and joined each other; See Gill on

"Eze 1:9";

everyone had two, which covered on this side; besides the two that were carried straight upright towards heaven, they had other two, which covered their back and belly: and

everyone had two, which covered on that side, their bodies; that is, on each side of their bodies; so that there were in all six wings, as in Isaiah's vision, and in that of the Revelation of John: as their wings in general denote the swiftness and readiness of Gospel ministers to do the work of Christ, for which they exact help and assistance from above, signified by two being stretched straight upwards; see **Eze 1:11**; so covering the several parts of their bodies with the rest shows their modesty and humility, as being ashamed of themselves and their services, when performed in the best manor; it being altogether owing to the grace of God they are what they are, have and do; they themselves being the chief of sinners, and the least of saints, in their own account.

Ezekiel 1:24

Ver. 24. And when they went,.... In their ministrations, preaching the Gospel, and administering ordinances:

I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters: so the voice of Christ, which is no other than his Gospel preached by his ministers, is said to be as the sound of many waters, **Re 1:15**; which is heard a great way off, as the Gospel ministry is, even to the ends of the earth; thither the sound of the apostles' words reached,
Ro 10:18; and which, as they move with great force, yield a pleasant sound of and may denote both the energy of the word, and the delightfulness of it:

as the voice of the Almighty; the Gospel being the word of God, and not of man; which is quick and powerful, and full of majesty, and works effectually in them that believe:

the voice of speech; an articulate voice, a human one, pronounced by men, whom God employs to deliver out his mind and will:

as the noise of an host; the church being militant, to whom they minister; so that their voice, in their ministry, is sometimes reproving, convincing, confuting, contending, and disputing, as well as teaching and instructing. The Targum is,

"and the voice of their words, when they confess and bless the Lord, the living everlasting King, is as the voice of the host of angels on high:"

when they stood, they let down their wings; those two with which they flew, and with them covered their faces, or some part of their bodies, as ashamed of their own unworthiness and imperfections; or this may denote their having done their work, and finished their course.

Ezekiel 1:25

Ver. 25. And there was a voice from the firmament that [was] over their heads,.... Which was the voice of Christ upon the throne, above the firmament, over the heads of the living creatures; which directed them when and where to go, and what to do, and when and where to stop:

when they stood, [and] had let down their wings; either encouraging them to lift them up, and go on in their work, notwithstanding the sense they had of their own weakness and unworthiness; or, having done their work, calling them to himself in heaven.

Ezekiel 1:26

Ver. 26. And above the firmament that [was] over their heads,.... The heads of the living creatures:

[was] the likeness of a throne; a symbol of Christ's kingly power and authority, who is the person that sat upon it; as he is God, he is on the same throne with his Father; as Mediator, he is King of saints, and was so from eternity; he exercised his office before his incarnation; and as he was prophesied of as a King, he came as one, though little known, and his kingdom was not with observation; upon his ascension he was declared Lord and Christ; and will appear on a throne, when he shall come to judge the world, and particularly in the New Jerusalem church state: and this throne was

as the appearance of a sapphire stone; which is a stone very clear and transparent; very hard, solid, and durable; very precious and excellent; and of an azure sky colour; denoting the clear manifestation of Christ's righteous judgments, in the ministration of his kingly office; the duration of his government; the excellency of it; and its heavenly nature and original:

and upon the likeness of the throne [was] the likeness of the appearance of a man above upon it; this was no other than Christ; who, though he was not really man before his incarnation, yet often appeared in the form of a man; and, through his incarnation, he was found in fashion as a man; and was really man, though not a mere man; nor was the person here designed; for that was the appearance and likeness of the glory of the Lord, **Eze 1:28**; and this shows, that when Christ, as man, had done his work, he should sit down upon his throne above the firmament, being made higher than the heavens,

Ezekiel 1:27

Ver. 27. And I saw as the colour of amber,.... That is, the man upon the throne looked like the colour of amber; of which
See Gill on "Eze 1:4";

as the appearance of fire round about within it; which may denote the deity of Christ, or Christ as God, who is a consuming fire to his enemies; a fire enlightening and warming to his people; as a wall of fire protecting them; and as a pillar of fire guiding and directing them, as he did the Israelites in the wilderness; and who has such light and glory in him, as is incomprehensible to us; and therefore this fire appeared round about within, the colour of amber, and under his human nature, through which it broke forth:

from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire; it reached upwards and downwards, as well as all around him:

and it had brightness round about; the fire; which shone through the human nature, and was upon it, in virtue of its union to the Son of God; and through the Gospel, in which, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord is seen; and which will be brighter and brighter in the latter day; which may be signified by the appearance of his loins downward.

Ezekiel 1:28

Ver. 28. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain,.... The rainbow, which is no other than the reflection of the rays of the sun in a thin watery cloud on a rainy day:

so [was] the appearance of the brightness round about it; so Christ is represented as clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow about his head, Re 10:1; which is a token of the covenant of grace, in which Christ is concerned; it is round about him; he is the head mediator, surety, and messenger of it; all the blessings and promises of it are in him; and he is that itself, which is only a reverberation him, the sun of righteousness; and it is also about the throne on which he sits, which is upheld by mercy and truth; and it is ever in his view and he is always mindful of it: this part of the vision agrees with **Re 4:3**;

this [was] the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God: of the divine Shechinah; the Word of God that was made flesh and dwelt among us; whose glory is as the only begotten of the Father; and who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person:

and when I saw [it], I fell upon my face; through fear and reverence of the glorious Person that appeared to him; see **Re 1:17**;

and I heard a voice of one that spake: what is delivered in the following chapter; which contains Ezekiel's commission from Christ, who is the person that spake unto him.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 2

This chapter contains me prophet's call, commission, and instruction to prophesy. The preparation to it is in **Eze 2:1**; being fallen upon his face, he is bid to stand upon his feet, with a promise to speak to him; and the Spirit entering into him, he is set by him on his feet, and he hears what is spoken to him; then follows his mission to the children of Israel, who are described as rebellious, impudent, and stiff-hearted; and to whom he is sent, to render them inexcusable, **Eze 2:3**; and he is exhorted not to be afraid of their words, nor dismayed at their looks, however fierce and furious they might be; but faithfully declare his message, and not be discouraged, should it be without success, **Eze 2:6**; and he is instructed not to be rebellious, as they were; but open his mouth and eat what should be given him, **Eze 2:8**; when, in a visionary way, a hand was seen, and a roll in it, and this spread before him, written within and without, full of lamentation, mourning, and woes, as a symbol of the substance of his prophecy, **Eze 2:9**.

Ver. 1. And he said unto me,.... The glorious Person who sat upon the throne, whose appearance is described in the latter part of the preceding chapter:

son of man; as he was to be that spake unto him; and so it may denote relation, affection, and familiarity; or otherwise it is expressive of humiliation; of the frail, mean, and low estate of man, through the fall, **Ps 8:4**; wherefore some think Ezekiel is thus addressed, lest he should be lifted up, and think himself as one of the angels, because he had seen so great a vision; just as the Apostle Paul was humbled, lest he should be exalted above measure, through the visions and revelations he had, 2Co 12:7. Kimchi mentions this, but assigns another reason; that because he saw the face of a man in the above vision, he let him know that he was right and good in the eye of God; and was the son of man, and not the son of a lion, &c. which is exceeding weak and trifling. Abendana, besides these, mentions some other reasons given; as that because he saw the "mercavah" or chariot, and ascended to the dignity of the angels on high, it is as if it was said, there is none born of a woman, as this; or because he was carried out of the holy land, as Adam was drove out of Eden; and therefore called the son of the first Adam, being drove out of Jerusalem, and out of the temple, where he was a priest. It may be observed, that this is a name which our Lord frequently took to himself in his state of humiliation; and that none but Ezekiel, excepting once the Prophet Daniel, is called by this name; and no doubt the reason of it is, because he was an eminent type of Christ; and particularly in his mission and commission, as a prophet, to the rebellious house of Israel:

stand upon thy feet; for he was fallen upon his face, at the sight of the vision, **Eze 1:28**; when a divine Person speaks, men ought to stand and hear, and be in a readiness to do his pleasure:

and I will speak unto thee; which is said for his encouragement, being spoken by him who has the words of truth and grace, and of eternal life.

Ezekiel 2:2

Ver. 2. And the spirit entered into me,.... Not his own spirit or soul; for it does not appear that that went out of him upon the sight of the vision; nor any of the ministering spirits, the angels, who are never said to enter into the prophets or people of God; but the Holy Spirit of God; the same Spirit that was in the living creatures, and in the wheels; in the ministers, and in the churches; who entered with his gifts to qualify him for his office as a prophet; and who enters with his graces into the hearts of all the saints, to quicken, renew, comfort, and sanctify them:

when he spake unto me; at the same time the Spirit went along with the word; and when the word of Christ is attended with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, it is effectual:

and he set me upon my feet; not he that spake with him, and bid him stand on his feet; but the Spirit; for the word, though it is the word of God, and of Christ, yet is ineffectual without the Spirit; when he enters, he gives the word a place, and it works effectually; when he enters, as the Spirit of life from Christ, the soul is quickened and strengthened; and such that are fallen down stand up; yea, such as are dead arise and stand upon their feet:

that I heard him that spake unto me; so as to understand; for the Spirit, who searches the deep things of God, reveals them to his ministers, and causes them to understand the word of Christ, that they may be able to instruct others in it.

Ezekiel 2:3

Ver. 3. And he said unto me, son of man,.... Now follow his mission and commission, and an account of the persons to whom he was sent:

I send thee to the children of Israel; that were captives in Babylon, in Jehoiakim's captivity; so Christ was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Mt 15:24;

to a rebellious nation, that hath rebelled against me; or, "rebellious Gentiles", {u}; not the nations of the earth, though Ezekiel did prophesy many things concerning them; but the Jews, the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; or the twelve tribes of Israel, called Gentiles, because they joined with them in their idolatries; and, as Kimchi says, were divided in their evil works; some worshipping the gods of the Ammonites; and some the gods of the Moabites; and all guilty of rebellion and treason in so doing against the God of heaven:

they and their fathers have transgressed against me, [even] unto this very day; which is an aggravation of their rebellion; their fathers had sinned, and they had followed their ill examples, and had continued therein to that day; and as they, did to the times of Christ, when they were about to till up the measure of their iniquity, Mt 23:31.

{u} Mydrwmh Mywg la "ad gentes, rebelles", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Starckius.

Ezekiel 2:4

Ver. 4. For [they are] impudent children,.... "Hard of face" {w}; as is commonly said of impudent persons, that they are brasen faced; they had a whore's forehead, and refused to be ashamed, and made their faces harder than a rock, **Jer 3:3**; they declared their sin as Sodam, and hid it not; they sinned openly, and could not blush at it:

and stiffhearted; or, "strong of heart" {x}; whose hearts were like an adamant stone, and harder than the nether millstone; impenitent, obdurate, and inflexible; they were not only stiff-necked, as Stephen says they were in his time, and always had been; but stiff-hearted; they were not subject to the law of God now, nor would they submit to the Gospel and ordinances of Christ in his time, and in the times of his apostles, nor to his righteousness, Ro 10:3;

I do send thee unto them; even to such as they are: this is a repetition, and a confirmation, of his mission; and suggests, that though they were such, he should not refuse to go to them, since he had sent him:

and thou shalt say unto them, thus saith the Lord God: that what he said came from the Lord, and was spoken in his name.

{w} Mynp yvq "duri facie", Pagninus, Vatablus, Calvin, Cocceius, Starckius.
{x} bl yqzx "duri corde", Pagninus, Montanus; "fortes carde", Vatablus, Polanus.

Ezekiel 2:5

Ver. 5. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear,.... Or "cease" {y}; that is, from hearing, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; or from sinning, as the Targum. The sense is, whether they would hear the word of the Lord, as spoken by the prophet, attend unto it, receive it, and obey it; or whether they would reject it, turn their backs on it, and discontinue hearing it; or whether they would so hear as to leave their sinful course of life, or not: this the prophet could not know beforehand, nor should he be concerned about it, or be discouraged if his ministry should be fruitless; since he could not expect much from them:

(for they [are] a rebellious house); or, "a house of rebellion" {z}; a most rebellious one; hard of heart, face, and neck:

yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them; so that they were left without excuse, which was the end of the prophet's being sent unto them; there was little or no hope of reclaiming them; but, however, by such a step taken, they could not say that they had no prophet sent to reprove them for their sins, and warn them of their danger; had they, they would have listened to him, and so have escaped the evils that came upon them,

{y} wldxy "cessaverint", Pagninas, Montanus, Starckius; "desistent", Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {z} yrm tyb "domus rebellionis", Montanus, Calvin, Piscator, Junius & Tremellius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 2:6

Ver. 6. And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them,.... Of any of them, the greatest among them, their princes and nobles; who, by their grandeur and authority, their stern looks, and big words, might awe and terrify him; wherefore it follows:

neither be afraid of their words; of their calumnies, revilings, and reproaches, their scoffs and jeers, their menaces and threatenings:

though briers and thorns [be] with thee; that is, men comparable to such;

wicked men are like to briers and thorns, 2Sa 23:6; are grieving, pricking, and distressing to good men, and are of no worth and value; are useless and unprofitable, and fit fuel for everlasting burning. The Targum is,

"for they are rebellious, and hard against thee;"

so Jarchi and Kimchi explain the first word, Mybro, translated "briers", as signifying rebellious and disobedient; though the former observes, that R. Donesh interprets it of a kind of thorns, of which there are twenty names, and this is one:

and thou dost dwell among scorpions; that is, as the Targum paraphrases it,

"thou dwellest in the midst of a people whose works are like to scorpions."

Some interpret it, as Kimchi observes, of sharp thorns, of a thorny plant that grows in the form of a scorpion {a}; but scorpions here are a kind of serpents, subtle, venomous, and mischievous, which have stings in their tails; which, as Pliny says, they are continually thrusting out, and striking with, that they may lose no opportunity of doing hurt {b}; and fitly describe wicked men their subtlety and mischievous nature,

be not afraid of their words; as before; with which they are like briers, thorns, and scorpions, being very grievous, defamatory, and mischievous:

nor be dismayed at their looks: their frowning furious, and angry countenances; forbidding with which, as well as with their words, the prophet from prophesying unto them:

though, or "for",

they [be] a rebellious house; See Gill on "Eze 2:5".

{a} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 21. c. 15. and l. 22. c. 16. {b} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 25.

Ezekiel 2:7

Ver. 7. And thou shall speak my words unto them,.... Not his own words, but those the Lord should put into his mouth. The Targum is, "and thou shall prophesy the words of my prophecy unto them:"

whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear;
See Gill on "Eze 2:5";

for they are most rebellious; or "rebellion" {c} itself; as the carnal mind is said to be "enmity" itself against God, **Ro 8:7**; which aggravates their character and state.

{c} hmh yrm "rebellio ipsi", Montanus, Polanus, Starckius; "inobedientia sunt", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 2:8

Ver. 8. But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee,.... Which was necessary because he was to speak not his own words, but the Lord's, and therefore ought to hear before he spoke; and indeed those that speak in a public way, for the instruction of others, ought to hear and learn of Christ first:

be not thou rebellious, like that rebellious house; who would not hear what was said unto them; but they were not to be imitated no, not in a lesser degree: the prophet was to avoid everything that looked like rebellion; as in, attention to what was said to him hesitation about it, or backwardness to publish it;

open thy mouth; be ready to receive what should be given, as a symbol of the prophecy he was to deliver. The Targum is,

"incline thy soul, and receive what I give thee."

Jarchi's note is incline thine ear and hear and let it be sweet to thee, as if thou didst eat food for hunger; and Kimchi observes, the intention of the figurative expression is to learn the words of the prophecy, and to remember them:

and eat that I give thee; which may be safely done; for Christ gives his ministers and people nothing but what is wholesome; his doctrines are wholesome words and may be eaten without fear, **1Ti 6:3**.

Ezekiel 2:9

Ver. 9. And when I looked, behold, an hand [was] sent unto me,.... Not of an angel, but of Christ himself, in a visionary way; for this was not a real hand, but the likeness of one, as in **Eze 8:3**; and so the Targum here,

"and I saw, and behold, the likeness of a hand stretched out on the side to me."

This symbol was to show that his prophecy, that he was sent to deliver, was from heaven and came from Christ; and that hand that delivered it to him would protect and defend him:

and, lo a roll of a book [was] therein; held in it, and held forth by it, to the prophet. Books were frequently written on parchment or vellum, and rolled about a stick, in form of a cylinder; and hence they were called volumes or rolls, Ps 40:7. This roll was a symbol of the prophecy of this book.

Ezekiel 2:10

Ver. 10. And he spread it before me,.... Unrolled it, that what was written in it might he seen and read; that so, understanding it, he might deliver the contents of it to the people: thus the Gospel, and the mysteries of it, must be explained by Christ to his ministers; and their understandings must be opened before they will be capable of making them known to others: and

it [was] written within and without; on the back, of the vellum or parchment as well as inside; and such writings were called "opisthographa"; of this kind was the book John saw **Re 5:1**. It was usual only to write on the inside; but when they had a great deal to write, then they wrote on the backside also {d}; so that this roll being thus written denotes the largeness and abundance of the prophecies contained in this book; some respecting the Jews, and others the nations of the world. The Targum is,

"it was written before and behind, what was from the beginning, and what shall be in the end:"

and [there were] written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe; afflictions, chastisements, and punishments, that should be inflicted upon the Jews, and other nations of the world; which, when made known to them, and especially when inflicted on them, would occasion sorrow and distress among them. In the Talmud, "lamentations" are interpreted of the punishments of the righteous in this world; "mourning" of the gift of reward to the righteous in the world to come; and "woe" of the punishments of the wicked in the world to come {e}. The Targum is,

"if the house of Israel transgress the law, the people shall rule over them; but, if they keep the law, lamentation, and mourning, and sorrow, shall cease from them."

{d} "----Aut summi plena tam margine libri Scriptus, et in tergo, nec dum finitus Orestes". Juvenal. Satyr. 1. {e} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 21. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 3

This chapter contains a further account of the prophet's call and mission; of his preparation of him for is work; of, the persons to whom he was sent; of what happened to him upon this; of the nature of his office, and the work of it; and of what followed upon the renewal of his call. His further preparation for prophesying is in **Eze 3:1**; where he is bid to eat the roll showed him, which he did, and found it in his mouth as honey for sweetness; and then he receives fresh orders to go to the people of Israel, and prophesy to them, **Eze 3:4**; and, that he might not be discouraged, an account is given beforehand of the people to whom he was sent; of their language, behaviour, and disposition; by which he could not expect success, **Eze 3:5**; and, for his further encouragement, strength, boldness, resolution, firmness, and presence of mind, are promised him, **Eze 3:8**; also a revelation of mere things to him; all which he should hear, receive, and speak, whether the people would attend to them or not; which ought to be no discouragement to him, since it was not regarded by the Lord, **Eze 3:10**; then follows an account of his being lifted up by the Spirit from the earth, when he heard a voice, which is described by the manner and matter of it; and a noise, both of the living creature's wings, and of the wheels he had seen in a former vision, **Eze 3:12**; and next of his being carried away by the same Spirit; and of the condition he was in, in his own spirit, as he went; and of the strength he received from the Lord; and of the place to which he, was carried; and his state and circumstances, and time of continuance there, **Eze 3:14**; where, after a time mentioned, he has a fresh call to his office, under the character of a watchman, whose business was to hear Christ's words, and warn the house of Israel from him; and who are distinguished into wicked and righteous; and whom the prophet was to warn at his own peril, **Eze 3:16**; and the chapter is concluded with a narration of various events which befell the prophet; he is bid by the Lord to go into the plain, which he did, and there saw the glory of the Lord, as he had before seen it at the river Chebar; which so affected him, that he fell upon his face, **Eze 3:22**; the spirit entered into him, let him on his feet, and spake with him; ordered him what he should do himself, that he should shut himself up in his house, **Eze 3:24**; informed him what the people would do to him; bind him with bands, that he should not come forth, **Eze 3:25**; and what Christ would do to him; strike him dumb in judgment to the people, that he might not be a reprover of them, **Eze 3:26**; but he is told that, when the Lord spoke to him; his mouth should be opened, and he should declare what was said to him, **Eze 3:27**.

Ver. 1. Moreover he said unto me,.... The same glorious Person who had been speaking all along in the preceding chapter; and who was seen by the prophet on a sapphire throne, and described in **Eze 1:26**; the first fifteen verses of this chapter are by Junius and Tremellius made a part of the second:

son of man, eat that thou findest; not anything, but what he found in the hand sent unto him; wherefore the Targum is,

"son of man, receive what is given thee;"

which was the roll, as follows:

eat this roll; not literally, but figuratively, as John is bid to eat the little book, Re 10:9; that is, read it, meditate upon the things contained therein; and digest them, that he might be able to impart them, and make them known to others: it is explained in **Eze 3:10**; by hearing and receiving the words of the prophecy; and so the Targum,

"receive what is written in this roll;"

this is to eat it; as great readers of books are called "helluones librorum", eaters of books, gluttons at them; read them greedily, deeply meditate upon what is in them, and thoroughly digest them; so it becomes all good men to eat the word, to mix it with faith, to receive it in the love of it, and constantly meditate on it, **Ps 1:1**; and especially ministers of the Gospel, **1Th 4:15**;

and go, speak unto the house of Israel; or, as the Targum,

"go, and prophesy to the house of Israel;"

for by eating the roll, in the sense given, he was fit for it; and when ministers of the word have read, and thought of, and digested the truths of the Gospel themselves, then they are prepared to go and enter upon their work, and feed others with knowledge and understanding.

Ezekiel 3:2

Ver. 2. So I opened my mouth,.... To take in the roll, and eat it; he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; he did all that he could towards eating it, but was not sufficient of himself; and therefore it follows:

and he caused me to eat that roll; he, the Lord, put it into his mouth, caused him to eat it, and tilled him with it, according to his promise, Ps 81:10. The efficacy and sufficiency to think of good things, to meditate upon them, receive and digest them, are of God; it is he that makes men prophets, and able ministers. The Targum is,

"and I inclined my soul, and he taught me (or made me wise "with") what was written in this roll."

Ezekiel 3:3

Ver. 3. And he said unto me, son of man, cause thy belly to eat,.... Or "devour" {f}, and consume; that is, concoct and digest; do not cast it out of thy mouth, as soon as thou hast tasted of it; but let it go down into the stomach, and there digest it; and from thence into the belly, that so, upon the whole, virtue may be received, and nourishment come by it:

and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee; eat to satiety; so the Targum,

"son of man, thou shalt satiate thy soul, and fill thy belly, if thou receivest what is written in this roll, which I give thee:"

this was sufficient to qualify the prophet for prophesying, and furnish him with materials enough; and these fit and proper for the discharge of his office; and so such who study the word of God with application become scribes well instructed in the kingdom of heaven; and being filled themselves, are able to bring forth things to the comfort and satisfaction of others:

then did I eat [it], and it was in my mouth, as honey for sweetness; that is, as the roll was spread before him, he looked into it, and read it, and meditated upon it, and laid it up in his memory, in order to deliver it out when commanded; and though it contained things very distressing, and which would occasion lamentation, and mourning, and woe; yet, considering that these were the will of God, and in righteous judgment to men, he could not but acquiesce in and approve of them. All the words that come out of the mouth of God are as sweet as, honey, yea, sweeter than that, Ps 19:10; and so the Targum interprets it of the words of the Lord,

"and I took it, and his words were in my mouth as sweet honey;"

and especially the Gospel, and the truths of it, are like honey; they are gathered by laborious ministers, as honey by the industrious bee, out of the various flowers of the Scriptures, with which being laden, they bring into the hive of the church, and dispose of for general usefulness; these are like honey for healthfulness, for nourishment, and for sweetness to the taste; that which makes the Gospel so are the exceeding great and precious promises in it: its doctrines of grace, and those of peace and reconciliation, of pardon, righteousness, eternal life and salvation, by Jesus Christ; and, above all, Christ himself, who is the sum and substance of it; and all its truths being quickening; comforting, and refreshing: but thou the Gospel is, only sweet when it is eaten; not merely heard, assented to, and superficially tasted of, but eaten and fed upon by faith; and so, it is sweet, not to unregenerate persons, whose taste is not changed; nor to nominal and notional professors, who have only a superficial taste of it; but to true believers in Christ, spiritual men, who judge and discern all things; see Re 10:9.

{f} lkat "devoret, consumat", Vatablus.

Ezekiel 3:4

Ver. 4. And he said unto me, son of man, go,.... After he had eaten the roll; for then was he qualified to prophesy:

get thee unto the house of Israel; to whom he was to prophesy:

and speak with my words unto them: not with his own words; nor with the words of men, the enticing words of man's wisdom; but with the words of Christ; with the taught words of the Holy Ghost; with what is written in the roll; the words of this prophecy are meant. So the Targum,

"and thou shalt prophesy the words of my prophecy unto them;"

in like manner John after he had eaten the little book, is told that he must prophesy before many people, nations, tongues, and kings,
Re 10:9; though Ezekiel was only sent to one nation, as follows:

Ezekiel 3:5

Ver. 5. For thou [art] not sent to a people of a strange speech,.... "Deep of lip" {g}, or "speech"; difficult to be got at and understood:

and of a hard language: or "heavy of tongue" {h} of a barbarous and unknown language, whom he could not understand, nor they him; and so would have been barbarians to one another; and consequently it could not be thought his prophesying among them, could have been of any use. This may be considered, either by way of encouragement to the prophet to go on his errand to such a people; since as he could understand them, and they him he might hope to meet with success; or, however he could deliver his message so as to be understood: or as an aggravation of the impiety perverseness and stupidity of the Israelites; that though the prophet spoke to them in their own language, yet they would not hear nor receive his words:

[but] to the house of Israel; who were a people of the same speech and language with the prophet; all spoke and understood the language of Canaan; nor were the things he delivered such as they were altogether strangers to being the same, for substance, which Moses, and the other prophets, had ever taught.

{g} hpv yqme "profundi labii", Vatablus; "profundorum labio", Polanus, Cocceius; "profundi sermonis", Starkius. {h} Nwvl ydbk "graves linguae", Montanus; "gravium lingua", Polanus.

Ezekiel 3:6

Ver. 6. Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language,.... The prophet was sent, not to different nations, of different languages; but to one nation of the same language; indeed several of his prophecies concern other nations, as the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Tyrians, Philistines, Egyptians, and Assyrians; but then these had a relation to the, people of Israel, and were chiefly on their account; and therefore he was not sent to those nations to deliver his prophecies unto them, but to the people of Israel only; and so had no difficulty on his part concerning their language, which he would have had, had he been sent to the barbarous nations;

whose words, thou canst not understand: the prophet being, only used to the language of the Jews and not having the gift of speaking with and understanding divers tongues; as the apostles of Christ had, when they were sent to many people of different languages, and which is here tacitly intimates:

surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee; which is an aggravation of the obstinacy and disobedience of the people of Israel; that had the barbarous nations been favoured with the same means of instruction they were they would have been obedient; see Mt 11:21; for though they could not understand the prophet's language, nor he theirs; yet, as Kimchi observes, they would have sought for an interpreter to have explained the prophecy to them. The thing is very strongly affirmed, "surely", verily, tmab, "of a truth"; as the same Jewish writer interprets al Ma; and both he and Jarchi take it to be the form of an oath. Some render the words, "if I had not sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee" {i}; and the sense is, either that if the Lord had not sent him to the Israelites, but to the peopled a strange speech, they, the people, would have hearkened to him: or, if the Lord had not sent the prophet, but he had gone of himself, as the false prophets in their own name, the Israelites would have hearkened to him; such was their perverseness and rebellion: others render the words, "if not", or had it not been for their strange speech and hard language, "I would have sent thee to them" {k}, the barbarous nation, and "they would have hearkened unto thee"; but the first sense seems best; which is confirmed by the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and the Oriental versions.

{i} Kytxlv Mhyla al Ma "si non ad eos misissem te", Vatablus; "si non misero te", Montanus; "si non mitterem", Pagninus. {k} "Si non misissem te ad eos", Calvin.

Ezekiel 3:7

Ver. 7. But the house of Israel would not hearken unto thee,.... "They are not willing" {l}; they have no desire, no inclination, to hear and hearken; but the reverse; they were capable of hearing and understanding his speech and language, and though he was sent unto them by the Lord: and indeed the reason why they did not hearken to him was not because they rejected him and his words, but because they rejected the Lord and his words; they were the words of the Lord, and his reproofs; and therefore they would not hearken to them as follows:

for they will not hearken unto me; and which is an argument why the prophet should bear with patience their disregard to him and his words, and their neglect and contempt of them; for, seeing they would not hear the Lord, how could he exact they should hear him? and therefore he should not be uneasy at it; see Joh 15:20;

for all the house of Israel [are] impudent and hardhearted; or, "strong of front, and hard of heart" {m}; they had a whore's forehead, an impudent face, that could not blush and be ashamed; and hearts of stone, like a rock, and harder than the nether millstone, on which no impressions, could be made by all the admonitions and reproofs given them; see **Eze 2:4**; and this was the case of all of them in general, excepting some very few; which shows the sad degeneracy of this people.

{l} wbay al "non cupient", Montanus; "non volunt", Cocceius; "non illi volentes", Starckius. {m} bl yvqw xum yqzx "obfirmati fronte et duri corde", Polanus, Starckius; "obfirmati frontis et duri cordis", Piscator.

Ezekiel 3:8

Ver. 8. Behold, I have made the, face strong against their faces,.... Not that the prophet should have the same sort of impudence and confidence they had; but that God would "give" {n} him such a face, as it is in the Hebrew text, such spirit and courage, that he should neither be ashamed of the words of the Lord, nor afraid to speak them to this people; so that he should be a match for them; they should not be able to outface him, or look him out of countenance; he should behave with an undaunted spirit, and with great intrepidity, amidst all opposition made to him: the Lord fits his ministers for the people he sends them to, and gives them courage and strength proportionate to the opposition they meet with; as their day is, their strength is; and all that invincible courage, boldness, and strength, with which they are endowed, it is all from the Lord, and a gift of his:

and thy forehead strong against their foreheads; which is the same thing in different words.

{n} Kynp ta yttn "dedi faciem tuam", V. L. Vatablus, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 3:9

Ver. 9. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead,.... Or, "than a rock" {o}; the "adamant" has its name in Greek, because it cannot be conquered or subdued, neither by the hammer, nor by fire; the one cannot break, nor this other consume it; land it is called "shamir" in Hebrew, from its preserving itself from both; it will cut iron in pieces, which is harder than stone, and therefore must be harder than that. Bochart takes it to be the same with "smiris", a hard stone, which jewellers use to polish their gems with; see Jer 17:1. The design of the simile is to set forth the courage and fortitude of mind the prophet was endowed with, in order to face an impudent and hardhearted people;

fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they [be] a rebellious house; See Gill on "Eze 2:6".

{o} rwum "rupe", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Piscator; "prae rupe", Cocceius; "ex rupe", Starckius; "prae petra", Montanus.

Ezekiel 3:10

Ver. 10. Moreover he said unto me, son of man,.... The same glorious Person as before continued speaking to him, and added, as follows:

all my words that I shall speak unto thee; not only what he had spoken to him, but what he should hereafter; for he did not tell all at once what he should say, but gradually, revealing his mind to him by little and little; but then he was to receive all that he should say, and reject nothing, nor shun to declare the whole counsel of God:

receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears; what the Lord says should not only be diligently attended to, and heard with eagerness, but should be received, in the love of it, into the heart, and laid, up in the mind and memory, in order to be delivered out to others at a proper time.

Ezekiel 3:11

Ver. 11. And go, get thee to them of the captivity,.... Not in the times of Hoshea king of Israel, by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, for these were placed in the cities of the Medes, 2Ki 17:6; but in the times of Jeconiah king of Judah, **Eze 1:2**;

unto the children of thy people; the Jews, which were in the land of Chaldea:

and speak unto them, and tell them: the words the Lord spoke to him:

thus saith the Lord God; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: See Gill on "Eze 2:5".

Ezekiel 3:12

Ver. 12. Then the spirit took me up,.... Not the wind, nor an angel, but the Spirit of God; who took up the prophet from the ground, from the place where he was, among the captives by the river Chebar, and had seen the glorious vision described in the first chapter; and had had his call and mission, as expressed in the second chapter, and hitherto in this; and was carried by him to another company of captives, who were at another place by the same river, as appears by comparing **Eze 1:1**, with **Eze 3:15**; for this was not done in a visionary way, as Kimchi thinks, but in reality; not in spirit, but in body; just as the Spirit caught away Philip from the eunuch, **Ac 8:39**;

and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing; of the living creatures and wheels, as is afterwards explained:

[saying], blessed [be] the glory of the Lord out of his place; either out of heaven, the place where his glory is manifested; so the Targum, out of the place of his Shechinah or majesty; or out of the temple, from between the cherubim over the mercy seat, from whence he was about to remove, Eze 10:4. These words may be considered either as a doxology of the church, and people of God, ascribing glory, blessing, and praise unto him; not only on account of the perfections of his nature, but because of his works of nature, providence, and grace, and even for his righteous judgments on men. Maimonides {p}, by his place, understands the essence of God. Or as a lamentation for the departure of the blessed and glorious majesty of God from the temple, which seemed to be threatened; for the words may be rendered, "the blessed glory of the Lord out of his place" {q}; that is, it is just ready to go out of his place.

{p} Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 8. p. 12. {q} dwbk Kwrb "benedictam gloriam Jehovae e loco ipsius, migrantem", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus.

Ezekiel 3:13

Ver. 13. [I heard] also the noise of the wings of the living creatures,.... Which they clapped, when they uttered the preceding words;
See Gill on "Eze 1:24";

that touched one another; or "kissed, a woman her sister" {r}; denoting their affection and agreement in the doxology or ascription of glory to God; see **Eze 1:9**;

and the noise of the wheels over against them: the living creatures; for the wheels were by the living creatures, and went over against them, as they went, **Eze 1:15**; ministers and churches join together in this doxology:

and a noise of a great rushing; which is repeated for the confirmation of the thing, and to express the greatness of the noise made by the living creatures and wheels, like that of thunder or an earthquake; it is said to be like the noise of great waters, **Eze 1:24**.

{r} htwxa la hva twqyvm "attingentium [more osculantium], vira ad sororem suam", Vatablus; "osculantium", Polanus, Starckius. So Ben Melech.

Ezekiel 3:14

Ver. 14. So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away,.... Lifted him up from the earth, and carried him through the air:

and I went in bitterness; full of trouble and sorrow, that the Lord was departing from the temple; that his people had been guilty, of such crimes they had, and were such an impudent, and hardhearted people they were; and that such judgments were coming upon them he had seers written in the roll, full of lamentations, mourning, and woe:

in the heat of my spirit; the Targum and Vulgate Latin render it, "in the indignation of my spirit"; his spirit was hot and angry, he was froward and unwilling to go on the errand, to prophesy sad and dismal things to his people:

but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me; the Spirit of the Lord powerfully wrought upon him, and obliged him to go; and the hand of the Lord strengthened him, and removed his frowardness and perverseness of spirit. The Targum is,

"and prophecy from before the Lord was strong upon me;"

so Kimchi interprets it of the hand of prophecy; the Spirit of the Lord, as a spirit of prophecy, came upon him, with great impulse upon his spirit, and he could not refuse going to his people, to declare it to them.

Ezekiel 3:15

Ver. 15. Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib,.... For it seems the captive Jews were disposed of at different places, and there were some at this place; for this was the name of a place, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe; as were Telmelah, and Telharsa, **Ezr 2:59**; it signifies "a heap of new fruit", and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it: not that there were such at this time here; and the captives were beating out the ripe ears of corn, as "abib" signifies; whence the month Abib has its name, and which was the first month with the Jews; whereas it was in the fourth month when Ezekiel was here, and there could no ears of new corn, **Eze 1:1**; according to Junius, this Telabib was a tract in Mesopotamia, reaching from Mount Masius to the river Euphrates, and lay between two rivers, Chebar and Saocoras; and he thinks the captive Jews were placed here, partly that they might be secured safe from getting away, or returning from their captivity; and partly that they might secure and defend the place from enemies, it being through inundations uninhabited, and so exposed unto them:

that dwelt by the river of Chebar; See Gill on "Eze 1:1";

and I sat where they sat; there is a double reading here; the "Cetib" or writing is rvaw, which Junius takes to be the name of a river the prophet calls Haesher, the same with Saocoras, connecting it with the preceding clause, "that dwelt by the river of Chebar and Haesher"; the "Keri" or marginal reading is bvaw, "and I sat" or "dwelt"; but both signify the same thing, Since rva is from hrv, which in Chaldee signifies to dwell {s}; and the "Keri" is confirmed by the Targum, which we follow. The sense is, that he placed himself among the captives,

and remained there astonished among them seven days: at the change of place and company; at the sad condition his people were in; and, above all, at the dreadful things he had to deliver to them. The Targum renders it, "silent"; through grief and trouble. So many days Job's friends kept silence, when they came to visit him, and saw his distress, **Job 2:13**. Or he might be waiting all this time for orders and instructions to prophesy; or to prepare the people to attend with more reverence and earnestness, to hear what he had to say when he should break silence. The Septuagint render it the reverse, "conversing in the midst of them".

{s} Vid. Hillerum de Arcano Kethib & Keri, l. 2. p. 329.

Ezekiel 3:16

Ver. 16. And it came to pass at the end of seven days,.... Some think it was on the sabbath day he had the following declaration made to him, and instructions given him; but this is not certain; nor does it follow, or to be concluded, from such a way of speaking:

that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying; the Targum is, "the word of prophecy from before the Lord."

Ezekiel 3:17

Ver. 17. Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel,.... Not in a civil sense, a watchman of a town or city, or of the whole country, but in an ecclesiastical sense. So the Targum renders it by Pylm, "a teacher"; whose business it was to instruct the people in divine things, to warn them of their evil ways, and of the danger they exposed them to; such were the prophets of old, and such are the ministers of the New Testament: the office is the same with that of bishops or overseers; and lies in watching over the souls of men, as shepherds over their flocks, that they go into right pastures, and not astray, and so preserves them from beasts of prey; and as watchmen of cities, to give the time of night, and, notice of approaching danger; to the discharge of which office are necessary quick sight, diligence in looking out, sobriety and vigilance, courage, constancy, and faithfulness: and they are "sons of men" that are put into this office, and not angels; sons of fallen Adam, sinful men; men subject to infirmity, weak, frail, mortal men, and oftentimes of a mean and low extraction, and greatly unworthy of so high an honour; but Christ counts them faithful, and puts them into this office; they are not made and constituted watchmen or ministers by themselves or by others, but by him; and they are given by him as such to the church of God: "son of man, I have given thee a watchman" {t}, &c. they become watchmen through gifts bestowed upon them, qualifying them for this office; and they themselves are gifts to the churches over whom they are placed, signified by "the house of Israel"; for a church is a house of Christ's building, and where he dwells, and a family named of him, which he takes care of, and consists of Israelites indeed;

therefore hear the word at my mouth; for, as the prophets of old, so the ministers of the Gospel are first to hear what Christ says; and then deliver out his doctrine, called the doctrine of Christ, and the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus. So the Targum,

"and thou shalt receive the word from my Word;"

the word of prophecy, or the word of the Gospel, from Christ the essential Word;

and give them warning from me; in his name and stead, and as from his mouth, to take care of sinning against him, dishonouring his name, and wounding their own souls; that they live soberly, righteously, and godly, and adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour; that they avoid all appearances of evil, and shun the company of wicked men; the house of Israel, or church of God, are to be warned to be careful who they take into their communion, and to exclude such that are bad in principle and practice; to beware of innovations in worship, and of false teachers and false doctrines; and that they do not forsake the word, worship, and ordinances of God's house, but fill up their places, and perform all duties incumbent on them. The Targum is,

"and thou shalt warn them from sinning before me."

{t} Kyttn hpu "speculatorem dedi", V. L. Polanus, Cocceius, Starckius. So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Ezekiel 3:18

Ver. 18. When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die,.... Not only a corporeal but an eternal death for this is what the law threatens with, and there the Lord says this; and this is the wages, end, and issue of sin, if grace prevent not:

and thou givest him not warning; of the evil nature of sin, and of the danger it exposes to:

nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way; to abstain from it, and live another course of life:

to save his life; for such warning, caution, exhortation, and doctrine, may be a means of converting a sinner from the evil of his way, and of saving a soul from death, **1Ti 4:16**;

the same wicked [man] shall die in his iniquity; with the pollution and guilt of sin upon him, and so be punished for it; see **Joh 8:24**;

but his blood will I require at thine hands; thou shalt be answerable for him; his death shall be laid to thy charge, and thou shalt be chastised for thy negligence; see Ac 20:26.

Ezekiel 3:19

Ver. 19. Yet if thou warn the wicked,.... Of his sin and danger; lay before him his evil, and show him the sad consequences of going on in a course of sin, and warn him to flee from wrath to come:

and he turn not from his wickedness, and from his wicked way; does not repent of it, nor abstain from it:

he shall die in his iniquity; and for it, and that very righteously:

but thou hast delivered thy soul; thou hast done the duty of thine office; thou art clear from the charge of negligence and sloth, and from being answerable for the death of the sinner; and shalt save thyself, though not the wicked man; see **1Ti 4:16**.

Ezekiel 3:20

Ver. 20. Again, when a righteous [man] doth turn from his righteousness,.... This is to be understood not of one that is truly righteous, or is justified by the righteousness of Christ; for such can never turn from that righteousness, or be in an unjustified state; seeing that is the righteousness of God, and an everlasting one; but of one that is denominated righteous, from "his" own righteousness, from a righteousness "which he hath done", as is afterwards expressed; one that is outwardly righteous before men, that is outwardly reformed, that has a righteousness of his own, consisting of a little negative holiness, and a few moral performances; from such righteousness a man may apostatize, and go into a vicious course of life:

and commit iniquity; live in sin, make a trade of it; lead a life, the whole series and course of which is nothing else but sin; in this sense, one that is born of God, and has the righteousness of Christ revealed from faith to faith unto him, and lives by faith upon it, cannot commit sin, **1Jo 3:9**;

and I lay a stumbling block before him; the Targum renders it, "the stumbling block of sins"; which designs either an occasion of sinning, which God permits, leaving him to his own lusts, and suffering him to fall thereby; and by this means he is discovered to be what he is, not a truly righteous man, but only one in appearance; that looked like a righteous person, but secretly a sinner, and now the Lord by such means exposes him openly; so Jarchi and other Jewish Rabbins; but Kimchi's father interprets the stumbling block of prosperity in this world {u}: or rather the punishment of sin is meant, as Kimchi himself observes; and the Septuagint renders it "torment"; since this follows up on his turning from righteousness, and committing sin; and seems to be explained by the next clause:

he shall die; the second death:

because thou hast not given him warning: of the dreadful evil of apostasy, and the sad estate of apostates, and the danger they are in, their last estate being worse than the first:

he shall die in his sin; of apostasy, and for it, being never to be recovered and brought to repentance:

and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; according to the "Keri" or marginal reading it is, "his righteousnesses"; all his works of righteousness which he hath done; and which reading is followed by the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and the eastern versions; these shall not be remembered, neither in this world nor in that to come; no account shall be taken of them, nor shall they be reckoned as a righteousness unto him:

but his blood will I require at thine hand; See Gill on "Eze 3:18".

{u} Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 86. 2.

Ezekiel 3:21

Ver. 21. Nevertheless, if thou warn the righteous [man],.... Every righteous man, that is so in a judgment of charity, whether truly righteous or not, which the event shows; who should be warned not to trust in their own righteousness, but to depend on the righteousness of Christ; that they be careful to maintain good works, to avoid sin, and live holy lives and conversations, as follows:

that the righteous sin not; not that there is any just man that does good, and sins not; the best of men are often sinning in thought, word, or deed; but he is to be warned that he does not continue in sin, and lead a sinful coups of life; which is contrary to his character, and to his faith in Christ for righteousness, which is attended with good works:

and he doth not sin; the warning and exhortation given him having so good an effect, through the power of divine grace, as to be a means of preserving him from a vain conversation:

he shall surely live; spiritually and comfortably now, and eternally hereafter:

because he is warned; that being a means, and with the divine blessing taking effect:

also thou hast delivered thy soul; See Gill on "Eze 3:19".

Ezekiel 3:22

Ver. 22. And the hand of the Lord was there upon me,.... At Telabib, **Eze 3:15**. The Targum interprets "the hand of the Lord" of the spirit of prophecy, which remained upon him there; but it seems to design a fresh impulse of the Spirit, a powerful emotion of the split upon his spirit, stirring up to attention to what might be said unto him:

and he said unto me; the same glorious Person, the Lord Christ, described in **Eze 1:26**;

arise, go forth into the plain; or "the valley" {w}; the Arabic version renders it, "the desert"; a solitary place, free from noise and hurry, and from the company and conversation of men; and so more fit for retirement and contemplation, and for attention to divine orders. What plain this was is not certain; Kimchi thinks it was the plain in which Babel was built, and where the Lord showed the prophet what he had in his providence done in this place formerly, in confounding the languages of men, and causing their devices to cease;

and I will there talk with thee; when alone, sedate, and composed; so God sometimes brings his people into a low and humble state and condition, into the valley of humility, and there grants them communion with himself; see **Ho 2:14**; perhaps the allusion to a custom among the Jews of revealing secrets to others in fields and deserts, and such like solitary places; see Ge 31:4 {x}.

{w} heqbh la "in istam convallem", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, "in vallem", Vatablus, Coeceius; "in vallem, quasi fissum locum", Starckius. {x} Vid.

Menasseh Ben Israel, Spes Israelis, p. 110.

Ezekiel 3:23

Ver. 23. Then I arose and went forth into the plain,.... He was obedient to the heavenly vision, which was owing to the hand of the Lord being upon him; the power of the Spirit and grace of God influences and engages to obedience; he went forth where he was ordered, though he knew not what would be said to him, or what he should see there:

and, behold, the glory of the Lord stood there; the glorious Person described in **Eze 1:26**;

as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar; **Eze 1:1**; which vision was repeated for greater certainty, and to confirm the prophecies delivered to him, and to encourage him in the performance of his office:

and I fell on my face; as he did before, when he first saw this glorious object, **Eze 1:28**.

Ezekiel 3:24

Ver. 24. Then the spirit entered into me,.... Again; the Spirit of God, that was in the wheels and living creatures: see **Eze 2:2**;

and set me upon my feet; as he had done before, when in the same prostrate condition, **Eze 2:2**;

and spake with me; either the Spirit that entered into him, and set him upright; or rather the Lord Christ, the glory of the Lord that stood where he was, and appeared to him:

and said unto me, go, shut thyself within thine house: this was not said ironically, but in earnest; and the reason either was, because the people were not fit for reproof and correction, as Jarchi thinks, being a rebellious people; or that the prophet might receive further instructions, and have all the words of his prophecy delivered to him, before he began to prophesy. Some think this shutting up was an emblem of the siege of Jerusalem. It may seem strange that the prophet should be bid to go into the plain, where the Lord promised to talk with him; and this is all that is said to him, to go home, and shut himself up in his house: but it should be observed, that this was not the only thing for which he went into the plain: he was to have, and had, a fresh view of the glory of the Lord, and of the vision he had before, for the further confirmation of him; besides, this moving him from place to place, before he prophesied, might be partly to try his faith, and partly to preserve him from the violence of the people; who, had he delivered his message at once, might have been so provoked, as to have fallen upon him, and destroyed him; as well as to prepare them to receive his prophecies with more respect and reverence, when they saw he did not rashly, and at once, deliver them out to them.

Ezekiel 3:25

Ver. 25. But thou, O son of man, behold, they shall put bands upon thee,.... Or, "bands shall be put upon thee"; either visionally, or really; not by angels, but by the Jews, who, taking the prophet for a madman by his motions and gestures; would bind him, and keep him within doors: or figuratively this may be understood of the sins of the people, their rebellion and obstinacy, which hindered the prophet from prophesying among them as yet; and so this is observed to conciliate his mind to the divine order, to shut up himself for a while in his own house, and be silent: or else by these bonds may be meant the divine order itself, which restrained him from doing his office as yet. So the Targum,

"behold, I have appointed the words of my mouth upon thee, as a band of ropes with which they bind;"

and shall bind thee with them; which some think is emblematical of the Jews being bound by the Chaldeans:

and thou shall not go out among them; to converse with them, or prophesy unto them. The Septuagint version renders it, "shall not go out from the midst of them"; as if he should be taken out of his own house by the Jews, and be bound by them, and kept among them, and not able to get away from them; but it is to be understood of his being bound in his own house, and not able to go out of that to them; and may signify, that in like manner the Jews should not be able to go out of Jerusalem when besieged by the Chaldeans.

Ezekiel 3:26

Ver. 26. And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shall be dumb,.... Which is to be understood not literally, as if he was really struck dumb, as Zechariah was; see **Eze 4:9**; but that such silence should be charged upon him by the Lord, that he should be as if his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth, as Kimchi interprets it, and as if he was a dumb man: and so the Septuagint version renders it, "I will bind thy tongue"; lay an embargo upon it, that is, it shall be silent; and this sense is confirmed by what follows:

and shall not be to them a reprover; which was in judgment to them, and a giving them up to their own hearts' lusts; for, though reproofs were disagreeable to them, and they chose to be without them, yet they were necessary for them, and might have been useful to them; but they provoking the Lord, he takes away his word from them, and commands his prophet to be silent, and let them alone, to go on in their sins without control; which was a sore judgment upon them:

for they [are] a rebellious house; See Gill on "Eze 2:5".

Ezekiel 3:27

Ver. 27. But when I speak with thee,.... Either when I have made an end of speaking to thee, when I have told thee all my mind, and have given thee all the instructions and prophecies thou art to deliver out; or when I shall speak to thee again, and give thee orders to speak:

I will open thy mouth; loose thy tongue, cause thee to break silence, and thou shall speak freely and fully all that I command thee; fulness of matter, and freedom of speech, are both from the Lord; liberty and opportunity of speaking are at his pleasure; and when he speaks his servants must prophesy, **Am 3:8**;

and thou shalt say unto them, thus saith the Lord God; so and so, whatsoever he is pleased to order to be spoken; not that the following words are what were to be said to the people; but they are said to the prophet for his own use, that he might not be uneasy at the unfruitfulness and failure of his ministry:

he that heareth, let him hear; if any will hearken to what is sent to them, as few of them will, it is very well:

and he that forbeareth, let him forbear; or, "he that ceaseth, let him cease" {y}; he that ceaseth from hearing, let him do so, do not mind it, or be discouraged at it:

for they [are] a rebellious house; See Gill on "Eze 2:5". The Targum is,

"he that receiveth, let him receive instruction; and he that ceaseth, let him cease from sinning, for it is a rebellious people."

{y} ldxy ldxhw "et qui cessat cesset", Pagninus, Tigurine version, Starckius; "qui desistere volet desistat", Piscator; "qui desistit [audire], desistet". So some in Vatablus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 4

This chapter contains a prophecy of the siege of Jerusalem, and of the famine that attended it. The siege is described by a portrait of the city of Jerusalem on a tile, laid before the prophet, **Eze 4:1**; by each of the actions, representing a siege of it, as building a fort, casting a mount, and setting a camp and battering rams against it, and an iron pan for a wall, between the prophet, the besieger, and the city, **Eze 4:2**; by his gesture, lying first on his left side for the space of three hundred ninety days, and then on his right side for the space of forty days, pointing at the time when the city should be taken, **Eze 4:4**; and by setting his face to the siege, and uncovering his arm, and prophesying, **Eze 4:7**; and by bands being laid on him, so that he could not turn from one side to the other, till the siege was ended, **Eze 4:8**; the famine is signified by bread the prophet was to make of various sorts of grain and seeds, baked with men's dung, and eaten by weight, with water drank by measure, which is applied unto the people; it is suggested that this would be fulfilled by the children of Israel's eating defiled bread among the Gentiles, **Eze 4:9**; but upon the prophet's concern about eating anything forbidden by the law, which he had never done, cow's dung is allowed instead of men's, to prepare the bread with, **Eze 4:14**; and the chapter is concluded with a resolution to bring a severe famine on them, to their great astonishment, and with which they should be consumed for their iniquity, **Eze 4:16**.

Ver. 1. Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile,.... Or "brick" {z}. The Targum renders it, a "stone"; but a tile or brick, especially one that is not dried and burned, but green, is more fit to cut in it the figure of a city. Some think that this was ordered because cities are built of brick; or to show the weakness of the city of Jerusalem, how easily it might be demolished; and Jerom thinks there was some design to lead the Jews to reflect upon their making bricks in Egypt, and their hard service there; though perhaps the truer reason may be, because the Babylonians had been used to write upon tiles. Epigenes {a} says they had celestial observations of a long course of years, written on tiles; hence the prophet is bid to describe Jerusalem on one, which was to be destroyed by the king of Babylon;

and lay it before thee: as persons do, who are about to draw a picture, make a portrait, or engrave the form of anything they intend:

and portray upon it the city; [even] Jerusalem; or engrave upon it, by making incisions on it, and so describing the form and figure of the city of Jerusalem.

{z} hnbl "laterem", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Polanus. Piscator. {a} Apud Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56.

Ezekiel 4:2

Ver. 2. And lay siege against it,.... In his own person, as in **Eze 4:3**; or draw the form of a siege, or figure of an army besieging a city; or rather of the instruments and means used in a siege, as follows:

and build a fort against it: Kimchi interprets it a wooden tower, built over against the city, to subdue it; Jarchi takes it to be an instrument by which stones were cast into the city; and so the Arabic version renders it, "machines to cast stones"; the Targum, a fortress; so Nebuchadnezzar in reality did what was here only done in type,
2Ki 25:1; where the same word is used as here:

and cast a mount about it; a heap of earth cast up, in order to look into the city, cast in darts, and mount the walls; what the French call "bastion", as Jarchi observes:

set the camp also against it; place the army in their tents about it:

and set [battering] rams against it round about; a warlike instrument, that had an iron head, and horns like a ram, with which in a siege the walls of a city were battered and beaten down. Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret the word of princes and generals of the army, who watched at the several corners of the city, that none might go in and out; so the Targum seems to understand it {b}. The Arabic version is, "mounts to cast darts"; See Gill on "Eze 21:22".

{b} So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 50. 9.

Ezekiel 4:3

Ver. 3. Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan,.... Which Kimchi thinks, for its metal, represented the hardness of the hearts of the people of Israel; and, for its colour, the blackness of their sins: though others are of opinion, this being a pan in which things are fried, it may signify the miseries of the Jews in captivity; the roasting of Ahab and Zedekiah in the fire, and particularly the burning of the city: others, the wrath of God against them, and his resolution to destroy them: but rather, since the use of it was as follows,

and set it [for] a wall of iron between thee and the city, it seems to represent all such things as are made use of by besiegers to screen them from the besieged; such as are now used are trenches, parapets, bastions, &c. for the prophet in this type is the besieger, representing the Chaldean army secure from the annoyance of those within the walls of the city:

and set thy face against it; with a firm resolution to besiege and take the city; which denotes both the settled wrath of God against this people, and the determined purpose of the king of Babylon not to move from it until he had taken it:

and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it; as an emblem of the army of the Chaldeans besieging it, which is confirmed by the next clause:

this [shall be] a sign to the house of Israel; of the city of Jerusalem being besieged by the Babylonians; this was a sign representing it, and giving them assurance of it.

Ezekiel 4:4

Ver. 4. Lie thou also upon thy left side,.... Some think this was not in reality, but in vision, as Kimchi observes; and so Maimonides {c}; and in like manner they understand his eating and drinking by measures and preparing food, as he is directed in a following part of this chapter: but others are of opinion that all this was really done. The reasons given on both sides are not despicable. It is urged against the reality of the fact, that the prophet, without a miracle, could never have lain so long on one side; and besides, this seems to be contradicted by a later account, of his sitting in his house before the expiration of those days; since from the fifth day of the fourth month of the fifth year, in which he began to prophesy, Eze 1:1, (and this order was seven days after that at least, Eze 3:15), to the fifth day of the sixth month of the sixth year, when we find him sitting, Eze 8:1; were but four hundred and thirteen days; and if seven are taken out from thence, there are but four hundred and six; whereas the whole time of his lying for Israel and Judah were four hundred and thirty; and it is further observed, that it does not seem decent that the prophet should be obliged really to eat such bread as he was ordered to make. On the other hand it is observed, that the order of portraying the siege of Jerusalem on a the, and setting an iron pan for a wall, seem to direct to the doing of real facts, and to that this order is subjoined, without any mark of distinction; besides, the prophet was to have this portrait in view, while he was lying on his side, and uncover his arms, which seem to denote real facts: and was to prophesy, not by words, for he was to be dumb, Eze 3:26; but by facts; and he was to do all this in the sight of his people; and if the order to make a cake of bread was not to be really performed in the manner directed, there would have been no occasion of deprecating it. The learned Witsius {d}, who has collected the arguments on both sides, is inclined to the latter; and observes from others, that some persons have lain longer on one side than the prophet, without a miracle: particularly a certain paralytic nobleman, who lay sixteen years in such a manner: and as for the computation of time, Cocceius is of opinion that the forty days for Judah are included in the three hundred and ninety for Israel; and which indeed seem to be the whole number, Eze 4:9; and which at once solves the difficulty; and besides, the force of the objection may be taken off by observing, that the fifth year might be intercalated, and consist of thirteen months, which was common with the Jews to have a "Veadar", or intercalated month: nor is it dishonourable nor unusual for the Lord to call his dear servants sometimes to hard and disagreeable service, as both these cases seem to be,

when he has ends of his own glory, and the good of others, to be answered thereby. And the lying on the left side for the sins of the house of Israel was, as Jarchi thinks, because that Samaria, which was the head of the ten tribes, lay to the left of Jerusalem: see
Eze 16:46; or rather, because the left hand is not so honourable as the right; it may show that the Lord had not such an esteem for Israel us for Judah;

and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it; not to atone for it, but to show what was the cause of their captivity; far herein the prophet was no type of Christ, but represented the people of Israel; who had been grievously sinning against God, during the term of time hereafter mentioned, and now would be punished for it; for by "iniquity" is meant the punishment of it, which is often the sense of the word used; see **Ge 4:13**;

[according] to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity: which are particularly declared in **Eze 4:5**.

{c} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 46. {d} Miscel. Sacr. tom. 1. l. 1. c. 12. sect. 14, 15, &c.

Ezekiel 4:5

Ver. 5. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity,.... Or the iniquity which for so many years they have been guilty of; that is, the punishment of it:

according to the number of the days; a day for a year;

three hundred and ninety days; which signify three hundred and ninety years; and so many years there were from the revolt of the ten tribes from Rehoboam, and the setting up the calves at Dan and Bethel, to the destruction of Jerusalem; which may be reckoned thus: the apostasy was in the fourth year of Rehoboam, so that there remained thirteen years of his reign, for he reigned seventeen years; Abijah his successor reigned three years; Asa, forty one; Jehoshaphat, twenty five; Joram, eight; Ahaziah, one; Athaliah, seven; Joash, forty; Amaziah, twenty nine: Uzziah, fifty two; Jotham, sixteen; Ahaz, sixteen; Hezekiah, twenty nine; Manasseh, fifty five; Amos, two; Josiah, thirty one; Jehoahaz, three months; Jehoiakim, eleven years; Jeconiah, three months and ten days; and Zedekiah, eleven years; in all three hundred and ninety years. Though Grotius reckons them from the fall of Solomon to the carrying captive of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser. According to Jerom, both the three hundred and ninety days, and the forty days, were figurative of the captivities of Israel and Judah. The captivity of Israel, or the ten tribes, began under Pekah king of Israel, 1Ki 15:29; when many places in the kingdom were wasted; from whence, to the fortieth year of Ahasuerus, when the Jews were entirely set at liberty, were three hundred and ninety years {e}; and the captivity of Judah began in the first year of Jeconiah, which, to the first of Cyrus, were forty years. The Jewish writers make these years to be the time of the idolatry of these people in their chronicle {f} they say, from hence we learn that Israel provoked the Lord to anger, from the time they entered into the land until they went out of it, three hundred and ninety years. Which, according to Jarchi and Kimchi, are, to be reckoned partly in the times of the judges, and partly in the times of the kings of Israel; in the times of the former, a hundred and eleven years: from Micah, till the ark was carried captive in the days of Eli, forty years; and from the time of Jeroboam to Hoshea, two hundred and forty; which make three hundred and ninety one: but the last of Hoshea is not of the number, since it was in the ninth year of his reign the city of Samaria was taken. So Jarchi. Kimchi's reckoning is different. Abarbinel is of opinion that these years describe the four hundred and thirty years of Israel's bondage in Egypt; though, he says, they may be understood of the time of the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam, from whence, to the destruction of Jerusalem, were three hundred and ninety years; which sense is best, and is what is first given;

so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel; as many days as answer to these years; by the house of Israel is meant not merely the ten tribes, who had been carried captive long before this time, but such of them also as were mixed with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

{e} Vid. Lyra in loc. {f} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 26. p. 73.

Ezekiel 4:6

Ver. 6. And when thou hast accomplished them,.... The three hundred and ninety days, by lying so long on the left side, bearing the sins of the house of Israel in this way; or, as Cocceius renders the words, "and thou shall accomplish them, and thou shalt lie", &c. {g}, that is, thou shalt so accomplish these days, that thou mayest lie through forty days on the right hand, and then make bare thine arm, and prophesy against Jerusalem; for he thinks the forty days are part of the three hundred and ninety, as before observed: and so

Piscator's note is, "when thou shalt accomplish", &c. namely, when there shall remain yet forty days, as appears by comparing **Eze 4:9** with this verse and **Eze 4:5**; so Polanus interprets the passage: then

lie again on thy right side; that is, for Judah; which tribe, as Jarchi observes, lay to the south, and so to the right of Jerusalem; see
Eze 16:46; or rather the prophet lay on the right side for Judah, because more honourable, and in greater esteem with the Lord; nor were their sins so many, or continued in so long as those of the ten tribes; and therefore they, and the punishment of them, are borne a less time by the prophet, as follows:

and thou shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: which some think answers to the forty years of Manasseh's evil reign; others reckon from the thirteenth of Josiah to the end of Zedekiah, and others from the eighteenth of Josiah to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was five years after the carrying of Zedekiah captive:

I have appointed thee each day for a year; which is not only the key for the understanding of the forty days, but also the three hundred and ninety.

{g} tbkvw hla ta tylkw "et absolves hos, et decumbes", Cocceius, Starckius; "et consummabis haec, et jacebis", Montanus.

Ezekiel 4:7

Ver. 7. Therefore thou shalt set thy face toward the siege at Jerusalem,.... All the while he was lying either on the left side or the right, his face was to be directed to the siege of Jerusalem, portrayed upon the tile, and to all the preparations made for that purpose, to show that all had reference to that and that it wound certainly be; for, as the prophet represented the Chaldean army the directing and setting his face to the siege shows their resolution and inflexibleness, that they were determined upon taking the city, and nothing should divert them from it:

and thine arm [shall be] uncovered; which was usual in fighting in those times and countries; for, wearing long garments, they were obliged to turn them up on the arm, or lay them aside, that they might more expeditiously handle their weapons, and engage with the enemy: in this form the soldiers in Trajan's column are figured fighting; and it is related that the Africans used to fight with their arms uncovered {h}; thus Scanderbeg in later times used to fight the

Turks. The design of the phrase is to show how ready, diligent, and expeditious, the Chaldeans would be in carrying on the siege. The Targum renders it,

"thou shalt strengthen thine arm;"

and so do the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions:

and thou shall prophesy against it: meaning not so much by words, if at all, but by these actions, gestures, and habit; for they all foretold what would certainly come to pass.

{h} Vid. Lydium de Re Militari, l. 4. c. 3. p. 160.

Ezekiel 4:8

Ver. 8. And, behold, I will lay hands upon thee,.... Representing either the besieged, signifying that they should be taken and bound as he was; or rather the besiegers, the Chaldean army, which should be so held by the power and providence of God, that they should not break up the siege until they had taken the city, and fulfilled the whole will and pleasure of God; for these bands were an emblem of the firm and unalterable decree of God, respecting the siege and taking of Jerusalem; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"and, lo, the decree of my word is upon thee, as a band of ropes;"

and to this sense Jarchi interprets it; and which is confirmed by what follows:

and thou shall not turn thee from one side to another till thou hast ended the days of thy siege; showing that the Chaldean army should not depart from Jerusalem until it was taken; for though, upon the report of the Egyptian army coming against them, they went forth to meet it; yet they returned to Jerusalem, and never left the siege till the city fell into their hands, according to the purpose and appointment of God. Kimchi that the word for siege is in the plural number, and signifies both the "siege" of Samaria and the siege of Jerusalem; but the former was over many years before this time: by this it appears that the siege of Jerusalem should last three hundred and ninety days; indeed, from the beginning to the end of it, were seventeen months, 2Ki 25:1; but the siege being raised by the army of the king of Egypt for some time, Jer 37:5, may reduce it to thirteen months, or thereabout; for three hundred and ninety days are not only intended to signify the years of Israel's sin and wickedness, but also to show how long the city would be besieged; and so long the prophet in this symbolical way was besieging it.

Ezekiel 4:9

Ver. 9. Take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches,.... The first of these was commonly used to make bread of; in case of want and poverty, barley was used; but, for the rest, they were for cattle, and never used for the food of men but in a time of great scarcity; wherefore this was designed to denote the famine that should attend the siege of Jerusalem; see
2Ki 25:3;

and put them in one vessel; that is, the flour of them, when ground, in order to be mixed and kneaded together, and make one dough thereof; which mixed bread was a sign of a sore famine: the Septuagint call it an earthen vessel; a kneading trough seems to be designed:

and make thee bread thereof, [according] to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon thy side; the left side, on which he was to lie three hundred and ninety days: and so as much bread was to be made as would suffice for that time; or so many loaves were to be made as there were days, a loaf for a day:

three hundred and ninety days shalt thou eat thereof; no mention is made of the forty days, perhaps they are understood, a part being put for the whole; or they were included in the three hundred and ninety days. The Septuagint and Arabic versions read only a hundred and ninety days.

Ezekiel 4:10

Ver. 10. And thy meat which thou shall eat [shall be] by weight, twenty shekels a day,.... To eat bread by weight was a sign of a grievous famine; see Le 26:26; a shekel, according to Josephus {i}, weighed four Attic drachms, or half an ounce, wherefore twenty shekels weighed ten ounces; so that the bread the prophet had to eat was but ten ounces a day:

from time to time shall thou eat it; at the certain time of eating, or but once a day; from a set time in one day to the same in another; as from morning to morning, or from noon to noon, or from evening to evening; see Jer 37:21.

{i} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 2.

Ezekiel 4:11

Ver. 11. Thou shall drink also water by measure,.... Not wine, but water; and this not as much as he would, but a certain measure; which shows great want of it, and expresses a very distressed condition see **La 5:4**;

the sixth part of an hin; a hin held twelve logs, or seventy two egg shells, or about three quarts of our measure; and the sixth part of one were two logs, or twelve egg shells, and about a pint of our measure; so that it was but a pint of water a day that the prophet was allowed, as a token of the great scarcity of it in the siege of Jerusalem:

from time to time shalt thou drink: as before.

Ezekiel 4:12

Ver. 12. And thou shalt eat it [as] barley cakes,.... That is, the bread made of wheat, barley, beans, lentiles, millet, and fitches, was to be made in the form of barley cakes, and to be baked as they; not in an oven, but under ashes; and these ashes not of wood, or straw, or turf, but as follows:

and thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of men, in their sight: the prophet was to take human dung, and dry it, and then cover the cakes or loaves of his mixed bread with it, and burn it over them, and with it bake it; which must be a very disagreeable task to him, and make the food very nauseous, both to himself and to the Jews, in whose sight it was done; and this shows scarcity of fuel, and the severity of the famine; that they had not fuel to bake with, or could not stay till it was baked in an oven, and therefore took this method; as well as points at what they were to eat when carried captive, as follows:

Ezekiel 4:13

Ver. 13. And the Lord said, even thus shall the children of Israel,.... Not the ten tribes only, or those who were among the other two, but all the Jews in captivity:

eat the defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them; so called, not because mixed, but baked in the above manner; which was a symbol of the defilements which they should contract upon various accounts, by dwelling among the Gentiles; so that this foretells their captivity; their pollution among the nations of the world; and that they should not be the holy people to the Lord they had been, and had boasted of. The Jews {k} cite this passage to prove that he that eats bread without drying his hands is as if he ate defiled bread.

{k} T. Bab. Sota, fol, 4. 2.

Ezekiel 4:14

Ver. 14. Then said I, ah, Lord God!.... The interjection "ah" is expressive of sighing and groaning, as Jarchi; or of deprecation, as the Targum, which paraphrases it,

""and I said", receive my prayer, O Lord God:"

behold, my soul hath not been polluted; not meaning that his soul had not been polluted with sin, or with an evil thought, as Kimchi interprets it; but by his soul he means the inward part of his body, his stomach and belly; which had not been defiled by taking in meats which were unclean by the law, as follows:

for from my youth up, even till now, have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; these were forbidden to be eaten by the law; and such that did were defiled, and obliged to bathing in water, Le 17:15; and from those the priests more especially were careful to abstain, as Kimchi observes; and such an one was the prophet; see Ac 10:14;

neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth; corrupt or, putrefied, or whatsoever was unclean by law, as swine's flesh, or any other. The argument is, that since he had never eaten of anything forbidden by the law of God, he could by no means think of eating that which was abhorrent to nature; as bread baked with men's dung was.

Ezekiel 4:15

Ver. 15. Then he said to me,.... The Lord hearkened to the prophet's prayer and argument, and makes some abatement and alteration in the charge he gave him:

lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung: that is, allowed him to make use of the one instead of the other, in baking his mingled bread:

thou shalt prepare thy bread therewith; having gathered cow's dung, and dried it, he was to burn it, and bake his bread with it, which is meant by preparing it. In some parts of our nation, where fuel is scarce, cow's dung is made use of; it is gathered and plastered on the walls of houses, and, being dried in clots, is taken and burnt.

Ezekiel 4:16

Ver. 16. Moreover he said unto me, son of man,.... What follows opens the design, and shows what was intended by the symbol of the miscellany bread, baked with cow dung, the prophet was to eat by measure, as, well as drink water by measure: namely, the sore famine that should be in Jerusalem at the time of the siege:

behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: that is, take away bread, which is the staff of life, the support of it, and which strengthens man's heart; and also the nourishing virtue and efficacy from what they had. The sense is, that the Lord would both deprive them of a sufficiency of bread, the nourishment of man; and not suffer the little they had to be nourishing to them; what they ate would not satisfy them, nor do them much good; see Le 26:26;

and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; that they might not eat too much at a time, but have something for tomorrow; and to cause their little stock to last the longer, not knowing how long the siege would be:

and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment; that such a judgment should fall upon them, who thought themselves the people of God, and the favourites of heaven.

Ezekiel 4:17

Ver. 17. That they may want bread and water,.... Or, "because they shall want" {l} &c. therefore they shall eat the one, and drink the other, by weight; or they shall do this till there shall be none to eat and drink:

and be astonished one with another; when they shall find they cannot relieve one another; and not knowing what method to take for the support of nature:

and consume away for their iniquity; their flesh upon them black through famine, putrid and noisome; and they wasting, pining, and consuming; reduced to skin and bones; and disagreeable to look upon; and all because of their sins and iniquities.

{l} Neml "eo quod", Munster, Vatablus; "propterea", Tigurine version.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 5

This chapter is of the same argument with the former; and contains a type of Jerusalem's destruction; an explanation of that type; what were the reasons of God's judgments on that city; and the nature, rise, and end of them. The type is in **Eze 5:1**; the explanation of that type is in **Eze 5:5**; the reasons of the severe judgments threatened are changing the statutes of the Lord, and not walking in them, and defiling the sanctuary with their abominations, **Eze 5:6**; an account of the judgments of God, answerable to each of the parts in the type, **Eze 5:12**; the ends of these judgments are, with respect to God, the accomplishment of his anger, and the satisfaction of his justice; with respect to the Jews, bringing them to an acknowledgment that he had spoken in his zeal; and, with respect to the nations, their instruction and astonishment, **Eze 5:13**; and the chapter is concluded with an assurance that these judgments would be sent, **Eze 5:16**.

Ver. 1. And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife,.... Or, "sword" {m}. The word signifies any sharp instrument, by which anything is cut off, or cut asunder; what is here meant is explained by the following:

take thee a barber's razor. The Septuagint and Arabic versions read this in conjunction with the former, thus, "take thee a knife", or "sword, sharper than a barber's razor"; and so the Syriac version, "take thee a sword sharp as a barber's razor"; this sharp knife, sword, or razor, signifies, as Jarchi interprets it, Nebuchadnezzar; and very rightly; so the king of Assyria is called in **Isa 7:20**:

and cause [it] to pass upon thine head, and upon thy beard; the "head" was a symbol of the city of Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea; the "beard", of the cities, towns, and villages about it; and the "hair" of both, of the common people; compared to hair for their numbers, for their levity and unsteadiness, and for their being the beauty and ornament of the places where they lived; and the shaving of them denotes their disgrace and destruction, and mourning on account thereof:

then take thee balances to weigh and divide the [hair]. The Syriac version adds, "into three parts"; signifying, that several distinct punishments would be inflicted on them, and these according to the righteous judgment of God; balances being a symbol of justice.

{m} brx "gladium", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Starckius.

Ezekiel 5:2

Ver. 2. Thou, shall burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city,.... Of Jerusalem, as portrayed upon the tile, **Eze 4:1**; or the prophet was now in Chaldea. The burning of the third part of the hair with fire denotes such who were destroyed by the pestilence and famine during the siege; see **La 5:10**; or it denotes the burning of the city itself, when the siege was over; since it follows:

when the days of the siege are fulfilled; for, when it was taken, it was burnt with fire, Jer 52:13;

and thou shall take a third part, [and] smite about it with a knife; which designs those that fled out of the city whim it was broken up, and were pursued after, and overtook by the Chaldean army, and cut off by the sword, Jer 52:7;

and a third part thou shall scatter in the wind; which intends those that fled, and were dispersed into several countries, as Moab, Ammon, and especially Egypt, whither many went along with Johanan the son of Kareah, Jer 43:5;

and I will draw out a sword after them; and destroy them; which, as it was threatened, Jer 42:16; so it was accomplished when Egypt was subdued by Nebuchadnezzar. The Septuagint and Arabic versions, in every clause, read a "fourth part", instead of a "third"; but wrongly.

Ezekiel 5:3

Ver. 3. Thou shall also take thereof a few in number,.... These are they that were left in the land of Judea by Nebuzaradan, for vinedressers and husbandmen, and such as returned out of Egypt into the land of Judah, Jer 44:28;

and bind them in thy skirts; in the pockets of them; signifying both the very small number of them, and their preservation. Jarchi and Kimchi interpret these of those that were carried captive to Babylon, and lived there, and were preserved, and returned again.

Ezekiel 5:4

Ver. 4. Then take of them again,.... Of that small number preserved:

and cast them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire: this was fulfilled in Gedaliah and the Jews that were with him, over whom the king of Babylon had made him governor, who were slain by Ishmael, Jer 41:1;

[for] thereof shall a fire come forth into all the house of Israel; from this barbarous murder of Gedaliah and his men, judgment came upon all the house of Israel; a war commenced between Ishmael and Johanan the son of Kareah; and afterwards Nebuzaradan carried captive great numbers of them that were left in the land. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "from these shall a fire come forth", &c. which Jarchi interprets of these intimations given the prophet, from whence judgments should come upon all the house of Israel. It may be understood of those that were left in the land, and of such who returned from the captivity; for whose sins, and those of their posterity, the wrath of God came forth upon all the house of Israel, to the utter destruction of their

nation, city, and temple, by Titus Vespasian.

Ezekiel 5:5

Ver. 5. Thus saith the Lord God, this [is] Jerusalem,.... A type or sign of it; it may refer to both the former and latter type. It is the city of Jerusalem that is designed by the city portrayed upon the tile; and the same is signified by the head of the prophet that was to be shaved; that being not only the chief city of Judea, but of the whole world, as follows:

I have set it in the midst of the nations; as the chief of them; and distinguished it from them by peculiar favours and blessings, natural and spiritual; being seated in a land flowing with milk and honey; and having the house and worship of God in it; and where were the symbols of his presence, and his word and ordinances; and therefore should have excelled them in true religion, devotion, and holiness, and set an example to them. The Jews generally understand this of the natural situation of Jerusalem. Jarchi interprets it of the middle of the world; as if it was mathematically placed in the centre of the earth. Kimchi says it was in the midst of the continent; and so its air was better than others; and these sort of writers {n} often speak of the land of Israel being in the navel or centre of the earth; they say {o} that the sanhedrim sat in the middle of the world; and therefore is compared to the navel, **So 7:2**; because it sat in the temple, which was in the middle of the world; but the former sense is best; though Jerom gives in to the latter:

and countries [that are] round about her: this is a proposition of itself; fire former clause being distinguished from it by the accent "athnach"; and should be rendered thus, "and the countries [are]", or "[were], round about her" {p}; on the east was Asia, on the west Europe on the south Africa and Libya, and on the north Babylon, Scythia, Armenia, Persia, and Pontus; and was mere conspicuous, eminent, and honourable than them all, having greater privileges, prerogatives, and excellencies; and therefore should have exceeded them in its regard to the laws and statutes of God, which she did not; hence this is said, in order to upbraid her for her ingratitude, as appears by the following words.

{n} Kimchi in Ezek. xxxviii. 12. {o} T. Bab. Sanhedrin. fol. 37. 1. & Gloss. in ib. {p} twura hytwbybow "et circa eam [erant] terrae", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 5:6

Ver. 6. And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations,.... So they changed their glory for that which did not profit; and the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man; and the truth of God into a lie, Jer 2:11; or, "for wickedness" {q}; for judgments and laws that were not good, and which to observe was wickedness. The word rendered "changed" signifies to "rebel against" or to "transgress": and the may be, she, that is, Jerusalem, has "rebelled" against my judgments, and "transgressed" {r} them in a wicked manner, even to a greater degree than the nations of the world. The Targum and Jarchi interpret it changed as we do:

and my statutes more than the countries that [are] round about her. "Judgments" and "statutes", are the same laws and ordinances of worship, being just and righteous, and firm and unalterable; unless it should rather be thought that "judgments" belong to the moral law, being given forth by the Lord as a judge, and founded upon judgment and righteousness; and "statutes" to the ceremonial law, being of positive institution and appointment, and to last so long as it was the pleasure of the lawgiver:

for they have refused my judgments and my statutes; they refused to comply with them, and to yield an obedience to them, and that with loathing, disdain, and contempt, as the word {s} signifies,

they have not walked in them; they did not make them the role of their walk and conversation; they showed no regard to them; they went out of the way of them, into crooked paths, with the workers of iniquity.

{q} hevrl "ut improbe ageret", Cocceius. {r} rmt "transgressa est, [vel] rebellis fuit", Calvin; "refractaria {s} "Verbum" oam "significat spernere, reprobare, rejicere, idque ex contemptu et fastidio", Polanus.

Ezekiel 5:7

Ver. 7. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Having observed their sins, and which are still enlarged upon, the Lord proceeds to denounce his judgments against them:

because ye multiplied more than the nations that [are] round about you; not in numbers, nor in wealth and riches, or in blessings and privileges, and therefore grew wanton and forgetful; though this was true: but in sins and wickedness, which abounded among them, and in which they exceeded the nations round about them; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"because that ye have sinned more than the people that are round about you:"

[and] have not walked in my statutes, neither have kept my judgments; which as repeated to show the certainty of fact, and how much the Lord resented it:

neither have done according to the judgments of the nations that [are] round about you. The Syriac version leaves out the negative particle and renders the words thus, "but ye have done the judgments of the nations which are round about you"; and it may be observed, that it is omitted in parallel text, Eze 11:12; and this is what the Jews are often reproved for, that they followed the laws and customs of the Gentiles, and worshipped their gods; and the opposition to the preceding clause seems to require this sense; but the retaining the negative particle is confirmed by the Targum, Masora, and the Septuagint and Arabic versions; and also by the Talmud {t}, which reconciles the passage with the parallel text before mentioned, thus,

"according to those things which are right among them (the Gentiles) ye have not done; [but] according to what are corrupt among them ye have done;"

and the meaning is, either that they did not walk according to the law and light of nature, which the Gentiles had, and attended to, **Ro 2:14**; or that they did not follow them in their conduct and behaviour; they were not so zealous for the true God as the Heathens were for their idols; they were not so tenacious of the laws and worship the true God of Israel as the Gentiles were of their superstitious rites and ceremonies; the Gentiles did not change their gods, and manner of worship, but retained what, they received from their ancestors time immemorial; but the Jews changed their glory for that which did not profit, **Jer 2:11**.

{t} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 39, 9.

Ezekiel 5:8

Ver. 8. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, behold, even I, [am] against thee,.... Or, "behold, I [am] against thee, even I" {u}; who am the Lord God omnipotent, great King, and a dreadful one; and a terrible thing it is for a people to have the mighty God against them; or for any to fall into the hands of the living God: this is repeated to show that it certainly was so; and that the Lord was set upon it; and determined to come forth against them in the way of his judgments, as follows:

and will execute judgments in the midst of thee, in the sight of the nations; that is, inflict punishments upon them for their disregard to his righteous judgments, which should take place in the midst of them, and consume them all around; and should be so manifest as to be seen by all the nations about them.

{u} yna Mg Kyle ynnh "ecce ego ad te, etiam ego", Pagninus, Montanus; "ecce ego contra te, etiam ego", Starckius.

Ezekiel 5:9

Ver. 9. And I will do in thee that which I have not done,.... In any other nation, or to any other people; not in the old world, when the flood was brought upon the world of the ungodly; not in Sodom and Gomorrah, when they were destroyed by fire from heaven; not in Egypt, when he inflicted his plagues on Pharaoh and his people; nor among the Canaanites, when they were drove out of their land for their abominations:

and whereunto I will not do any more the like; at least not of a long time; and, besides, this may not only refer to the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, but also by the Romans:

because of all thine abominations; the wickednesses of all sorts that were committed among them, which were abominable to the Lord, and particularly their idolatries; these were the causes why he would do, or suffer to be done, things that were never seen, known or heard of before; and are as follow:

Ezekiel 5:10

Ver. 10. Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee,.... Which was long ago threatened by the Lord, and prophesied of by Moses, Le 26:27; and was fulfilled at several times in the people of Israel, as at the siege of Samaria, **2Ki 6:28**; at the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, **La 4:10**; and at the siege of the same city by Titus Vespasian, as Josephus {w} relates; for though these instances only show that mothers ate their children, yet no doubt the fathers took part with them; and if mothers, who are naturally more tender, could do this, it is much more reasonable to suppose that fathers did the same:

and the sons shall eat their fathers; this, though nowhere recorded, yet doubtless was done; it being as reasonable to think that a son might eat his father as a father his son, though both monstrously shocking:

and I will execute judgments in thee; punishments, such as pestilence, famine, and sword, after mentioned:

and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds; that is, those that remain, and are not cut off, by the above judgments, shall be carried captive into Babylon, or be dispersed in to Egypt, Ammon, Moab, and other places: this had a full accomplishment in the dispersion of the Jews into the several parts of the world, when they were destroyed by the Romans.

{w} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 4. Ed. Hudson.

Ezekiel 5:11

Ver. 11. Wherefore, [as] I live, saith the Lord God,.... This is a form of an oath, and shows that what is after said should certainly be done; God would not repent of it, nor revoke it:

surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary, with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations: that is, with their idols and idolatrous worship, which were detestable and abominable to the Lord; so Manasseh not only built altars for Baal in the house of the Lord, but set up in it a graven image of the grove, 2Ki 21:3;

therefore will I also diminish [thee]; as they lessened his glory by such abominable actions, so he threatens that he would lessen their privileges and blessings; as they took away from him the worship and honour that were due to him, so he would take away from them their civil and church state, his sanctuary, word, and ordinances, and deprive them of everything that was valuable and excellent. The Targum paraphrases it,

"I will cut off the strength of thine arm;"

weaken her power:

neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity; when in the greatest misery and distress. The Targum is,

"my Word shall not spare, &c."

Ezekiel 5:12

Ver. 12. A third part of them shall die with the pestilence,.... This, with what follows, explains the division of the hair into the three parts, and what was done with them; and shows that the burning of one third part denotes their being destroyed by the pestilence, mentioned along with burning coals, **Hab 3:5**; and by famine, as follows:

and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee; and though there is no account of the former, yet there is of the latter; and no doubt but the pestilence raged, as well as the famine, at the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar:

and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; signified by the third part of the hair, smitten with a knife; and intends such as perished by the sword of the Chaldeans at the taking of the city, and when they fled out of it; and so are properly said to fall round about it:

and I will scatter a third part into all the winds; the greatest part of which were carried into Babylon, and others into other parts;
See Gill on "Eze 5:2";

and I will draw out a sword after them; particularly after them that went into Egypt. The Septuagint and Arabic versions read a "fourth part" in each clause, as before; and make it out thus, "a fourth part of thee shall be consumed with death (the pestilence); and a fourth part of thee shall be consumed with famine in the midst of thee; and a fourth part of thee I will scatter to every wind; and a fourth part of thee shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will draw out the sword after them".

Ezekiel 5:13

Ver. 13. Thus shall mine anger be accomplished,.... Finished, perfected, consummated, by bringing the above judgments upon them, pestilence, famine, and sword, and by scattering them to every wind: what had been threatened long, and only some drops of it were let fall in times past, now was poured forth to the uttermost:

and I will cause my fury to rest upon them; to continue and abide upon them, and not move, at least for the space of threescore and ten years; see **Zec 1:12**;

and I will be comforted; by taking vengeance on them; so satisfying his justice, and easing him of his enemies; see **Isa 1:24**; a speech after the manner of men; who, when they have been affronted, and have avenged themselves, are easy in their minds, and satisfied:

and they shall know that I the Lord have spoken [it] in my zeal; that is, they shall find by experience that what the Lord had spoken by his prophets, and had threatened to bring upon them, was said in earnest, and arose from a jealousy for his own glory; this will be a clear case, and out of question:

when I have accomplished my fury in them; by the utter destruction of them; as follows:

Ezekiel 5:14

Ver. 14. Moreover I will make thee waste,.... That is, their land; which, being without inhabitants, lay untilled; and so became barren and unfruitful:

and a reproach among the nations that [are] round about thee, in the sight of all that pass by; who, seeing it in this desolate condition, shall throw out their taunts and jeers upon it, as in **La 2:15**.

Ezekiel 5:15

Ver. 15. So it shall be a reproach and a taunt,.... The subject of the reproaches and taunts of the enemy; see Jer 24:9; this is repeated for the greater confirmation of it:

an instruction; or "discipline", or "correction" {x}. The meaning is, that the

Gentiles, seeing the judgments of God upon the Jews, would hereby learn righteousness, forsake their sins, amend their ways, and fear, the Lord:

and an astonishment unto the nations that [are] round about thee; being amazed that such judgments should fall upon a people that had been so highly favoured of God; and at their stupidity, hardness, and incorrigibleness under them:

when I shall execute judgments in thee in anger and in fury, and in furious rebukes; a heap of words, not only denoting the certainty of divine judgments, but the greatness and fierceness of divine wrath, in the execution of them; that these were not fatherly chastisements, rebukes in love, but the effects of vindictive justice:

I the Lord have spoken [it]; or those things, as the Arabic version; and as sure as I have spoken, I will do. The Targum is,

"I the Lord have decreed in my word;"

and so in **Eze 5:13**; where it is added, and I will confirm or accomplish.

{x} rowm "disciplina", Pagninus; "castigatio", Vatablus, Starckius.

Ezekiel 5:16

Ver. 16. When I shall send upon them the evil arrows of famines,.... Either famine itself, which is as an arrow; it is taken out of the quiver of the Lord of hosts, and is shot by him; and moves swiftly when it has a commission; and is very destructive: or arrows which bring on a famine, such as drought, excessive rains, blasting, mildew, locusts, &c. or arrows which the famine brings, as leanness, faintness, blackness, and death; and, in either sense, are evil ones; and are sent of God for the following end:

which shall be for [their] destruction, [and] which I will send to destroy you; God's design in sending them was to destroy, and that was answered; and a very destroying arrow famine is, and therefore called evil:

and I will increase the famine upon you; or "gather {y} [it] upon", or "against you"; as if it was an army with bows and arrows:

and will break your staff of bread: take away the virtue from the little they had,

that that should not nourish and satisfy;
See Gill on "Eze 4:16".

{y} Mkyle Poa "famen congregabo, super vos", V. L. Pagninus; "famen colligam super vos", Montanus, Polanus, Starckius.

Ezekiel 5:17

Ver. 17. So will I send upon you famine, and evil beasts,.... Famine is repeated for the further confirmation of it; and "evil beasts" are added, by whom are meant, not the Chaldeans, comparable to such; but literally lions, wolves, hears, &c. which are threatened the Jews, in case of disobedience, Le 26:22; and which sometimes were sent,
2Ki 17:24;

and they shall bereave thee; that is, of her children, whom the evil beasts should destroy; they not being able to defend themselves against them, as men can:

and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee, and I will bring the sword upon thee; the pestilence, famine, sword, which is meant by blood, and evil beasts, are the Lord's four sore judgments; see
Eze 14:21.

I the Lord have spoken [it]: who was able to perform it, and did, both at the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and by Titus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 6

This chapter contains a prophecy of the desolation of the whole land of Israel, and a promise that a remnant should escape, with a lamentation for the sad destruction, signified by some gestures of the prophet. The order to the prophet to deliver out the prophecy is in **Eze 6:1**; the several parts of the land of Israel or Judea, to which the prophecy is directed, are signified by mountains, hills, rivers, and valleys, on which the sword should be brought, **Eze 6:3**; the desolation is described, and the cause of it suggested, the idolatry of the people, **Eze 6:4**; the promise of a remnant that should escape, who should remember the Lord, loath themselves for their sins, acknowledge him, and that his word was not in vain, is in **Eze 6:8**; the lamentation, signified by the prophet's smiting with his hand, and stamping with his foot, for the sins of the people, and the judgments that should come upon them, is in **Eze 6:11**; a particular enumeration of these judgments follows, and of the places where they should be executed, **Eze 6:12**; the end of them was to bring them to the knowledge and acknowledgment of the Lord, against whom they had sinned and offended by their idolatry, as the places where their slain fell would show, **Eze 6:13**; and the chapter is concluded with a resolution to bring this desolation on them, **Eze 6:14**.

Ver. 1. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. That is, the word of prophecy from the Lord, as the Targum: this, according to Junius, was delivered out by the prophet on a sabbath day, the twenty first of the fifth month, and in the sixth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity; and so was more than a year after the vision at Chebar, **Eze 1:1**.

Ezekiel 6:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, set thy face towards the mountains of Israel,.... Or cities of Israel, the inhabitants of them; not the ten tribes, for they had been carried captive long before this time, even in the times of Hezekiah; unless it can be thought that this prophecy is designed to show the reason of their captivity, which was their idolatry; or that it is directed to those of them which remained in the land, and were mixed with the other tribes; but rather the land of Judea is intended, in which were many mountains, and one part of it was called the hill country, **Lu 1:39**; and the mountains are mentioned, against which the prophet is ordered to direct his face, and look unto; partly because idolatry was much practised upon them; and partly to show the stupidity of the Jews, and the failure of the prophecy among them; that it was as well, or better, to speak to the mountains, than to them; for since they had so often put away the word of God from them, they were unworthy of it; wherefore such a direction to the prophet comes some degree of indignation and resentment:

and prophesy against them; as that the sword should be upon them, and the high places built upon them should be destroyed: or "unto them" {a}; direct the prophecy to them; speak to them as if they were capable of hearing: or "concerning them", as the Syriac version; and so the Targum, concerning their desolation.

{a} Mhyla "ad eos", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "ad illos", Piscator.

Ezekiel 6:3

Ver. 3. And say, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God,.... Since the people of the Jews would not hear the word of the Lord, the mountains are called upon to hear it; unless the inhabitants of the mountains are meant:

thus saith the Lord God to the mountains and to the hills, to the rivers and to the valleys: these are addressed, because idols were worshipped here; as upon the mountains and hills, so by rivers of water, and also in valleys, as in the valley of Hinnom idols were worshipped; upon mountains and hills, because they thought themselves nearer to heaven; by rivers, because of purity; and in valleys, because shady and obscure, and had something solemn and venerable in them:

behold I, [even] I, will bring a sword upon you; that is, upon the idolaters, which worshipped in these places; otherwise different instruments, as pick axes, &c. would have been more proper. The Targum paraphrases it,

"them that kill with the sword;"

meaning the Chaldeans, who doubtless are intended:

and I will destroy your high places; the temples and altars, built on high places, and devoted to idolatrous worship, as follows:

Ezekiel 6:4

Ver. 4. And your altars shall be desolate,.... Being pulled down; or because the priests and worshippers would now be slain, and there would be none to attend them:

and your images shall be broken; the "images of the sun" {b}. The word for images has its derivation from heat; and were so called, either from the heat of the sun, to whose worship they were devoted, or from the heat of the love and affections of their worshippers:

and I will cast down your slain [men] before your idols; before your dung, or your "dunghill gods" {c}; for the word used has the signification of dung, **Eze 4:12**. The Targum renders it,

"before the carcass of your idols;"

where they committed idolatry, there they should be slain; which points at the cause of their punishment.

{b} Mkynmx "simulacra vestra solis", Pagninus; "solaria vestra", Vatablus; "subdiales statuae vestrae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus. {c} Mkylwlg ynpl "coram stercoreis diis vestris", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus; "coram stercoribus vestris", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 6:5

Ver. 5. And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols,.... Which is repeated for the confirmation of it:

and I will scatter your bones round about your altars: which were reckoned a pollution of them; see 2Ki 23:14.

Ezekiel 6:6

Ver. 6. In all your dwelling places your cities shall be laid waste,.... Which denotes that the desolation should be general, wherever they had cities and places to dwell in; the idolatry being universal, as is said in **Jer 2:28**;

and the high places shall be desolate; meaning such as were in cities; as, before, such as were built upon mountains and hills; see 2Ki 23:5;

that your altars may be laid waste and desolate; as they must be, the cities being destroyed in which they were set up:

and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down; such as were made of gold and silver, or of wood and stone; the same words are used for them as in **Eze 6:4**;

and your works may be abolished; not only the works of their hands, but of their brain; whatever they had devised, and was contrary to the pure word and worship of God.

Ezekiel 6:7

Ver. 7. And the slain shall fall in the midst of you,.... The word for slain is in the singular number, which perhaps is put for the plural; and so the Septuagint renders it; unless it should design some principal person that should be slain; but, as King Zedekiah was not slain when the city was taken, only his sons and his princes, it seems best to understand it of the multitude that were slain in the midst of the land, not only in Jerusalem, but in all the cities of Judea; and denotes how general and public the destruction would be:

and ye shall know that I [am] the Lord; the only true God, and Governor of the world; who only is to be worshipped, feared, and served, and not idols.

Ezekiel 6:8

Ver. 8. Yet will I leave a remnant,.... Not in Judea, but in Babylon, and in the countries where they should be dispersed, as follows:

that ye may have [some] that shall escape the sword among the nations; which was threatened to be drawn, and sent after them, Eze 5:2; but all should not perish by if; some should escape; for this was not the time to make a full end of them:

when ye shall be scattered through the countries; that is, of Egypt, Ammon, Moab, and Assyria; for this respects their dispersion at the time of the Babylonish captivity, and not their present dispersion.

Ezekiel 6:9

Ver. 9. And they that escape of you shall remember me,.... Either my grace and mercy to them, as Jarchi; or the fear of me, as the Targum; and so return by repentance, and worship the Lord their God, being influenced by his kindness and goodness to them: even when

among the nations, whither they shall be carried captive; so that their afflictions should be sanctified and made useful to them: in prosperity men are apt to forget God; in adversity they are brought to a sense of themselves and duty; and happy it is when chastening dispensations are teaching ones, and bring to God, and not drive from him:

because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me: by committing spiritual adultery, which is idolatry. The sense is, either that he was grieved at heart with their idolatry, which was the reason of their being carried captive, which, when they were sensible of, wrought repentance in them; or that he was full of compassion towards them; his heart was tender and pitiful towards them, though they departed from him in such a dreadful manner, justly to be resented by him. The Targum is,

"I have broken their foolish heart;"

and so the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions, "I have broken their whorish heart"; by afflictive providences humbled them, and brought them to repentance:

and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols; they committed fornication with their heart and eyes in a spiritual sense, as wicked men do in a natural sense; see **2Pe 2:14**;

and they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations; abominable idolatry, **1Pe 4:3**; when men remember God, against whom they have sinned, and consider how grieving sin is to him; and when they are broken for it themselves, they then loathe their sins, and themselves for it; and where all this is there is true repentance.

Ezekiel 6:10

Ver. 10. And they shall know that I [am] the Lord,.... As in **Eze 6:7**;

[and that] I have not said in vain; either within himself, in his own purposes and decrees; so the Targum, "I have not in vain decreed in my word;"

or by the mouth of the prophets:

that I would do this evil unto them; in carrying them captive, and dispersing them in other lands; for this is not the evil of sin, but the evil of punishment, or of affliction.

Ezekiel 6:11

Ver. 11. Thus saith the Lord God, smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot,.... These are gestures of persons in distress and agony, who, to show their trouble and grief, smite one hand against the other; or smite with the hand upon the thigh, as in Jer 31:19; and "stretch out", or "make a distension with the foot" {d}; as it is in the Hebrew text; extend their thighs; throw out their feet; stamp with them; beat the earth, and make it shake, as the Syriac version; all expressive of anguish and sorrow:

and say, alas, for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! the word "alas", or "woe", as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, an interjection of mourning and lamentation, explains the above gestures; and what follows shows the cause of all; namely, the sins and abominations committed by the house of Israel; which they being insensible of, and unconcerned about, the prophet is ordered to take such a method to awaken them out of their stupidity and lethargy; and the rather, since the heaviest of judgments were coming upon them:

for they shall fall by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; which are threatened in **Eze 5:12**; and the persons on whom they should be separately executed are mentioned in **Eze 6:12**.

{d} Klgrb eqr "extende pede tuo", Pagninus, Montanus, Polanus; "fac distensionem cum pede tuo", Munster; "divarica pedes tuos": Calvin.

Ezekiel 6:12

Ver. 12. He that is far off shall die of the pestilence,.... That flies from the enemy into the wilderness, or into other countries, thinking himself safe there, the plague shall seize him, and he shall die of that; there is no fleeing from

God, and escaping his hand; when he resolves to punish for sin, he has various ways to execute his wrath:

and he that is near shall fall by the sword; that is out of the city, and near it, attempting to get away; but within the reach of the enemy, shall be slain by him:

and he that remaineth, and is besieged, shall die by the famine; that abides in the city, and does not attempt to go out; but continues in the siege, hoping the enemy will be obliged to depart, shall perish by the grievous famine. The Targum is,

"he that remains, and goes into the cities of siege, shall die with famine:"

thus will I accomplish my fury upon them; which before had been gradually, by little and little, falling upon them, in order to bring them to repentance; but being incorrigible, wrath is brought upon them to the uttermost; and God fulfils the whole counsel of his will in their destruction.

Ezekiel 6:13

Ver. 13. Then shall ye know that I [am] the Lord,.... Whom they had denied, by serving other gods; but now by those punishments their eyes would be opened to see, and be obliged to acknowledge, that there was no God but the Lord:

when their slain [men] shall be among their idols round about their altars; as is threatened, **Eze 6:5**; by which it will appear that the idols whom they worshipped could not save them; since they should fall just by them, round about the altars on which they sacrificed unto them; which idols were placed, and altars for their worship built,

upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains: mountains and high hills were usual places of idolatry among the Heathens, in which the Jews imitated them, and particularly Herodotus {e} says of the Persians, that, going up to the highest parts of mountains, they offered sacrifice to Jupiter; so they called the whole circle of the heavens:

and under every green tree, and under every thick oak; see 1Ki 14:23; here their slain were to fall, where they committed their idolatry:

even in

the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols; or dunghill gods; yet, though they were such, sweet savour or incense was offered to them; wherefore, in righteous judgment, here their carcasses should fill and lie, and rot and stink.

{e} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 131.

Ezekiel 6:14

Ver. 14. So will I stretch out mine hand upon them,.... Not unto them, in a way of mercy; but upon, or against them, in a way of judgment. The Targum paraphrases it,

"and I will lift up the stroke of my power upon them;"

his mighty hand of vengeance:

and make the land desolate; by destroying the inhabitants of it:

yea, more desolate than the wilderness towards Diblath, in all their habitations; so the Syriac version renders it, "and I will make this land more desolate than the land of Diblath"; but other versions, "I will make the land desolate from the wilderness of Diblath"; to which the Targum agrees; or, "from the wilderness to Diblath": Kimchi and Ben Melech think this is the same with Riblath; as Deuel is put for Reuel in **Nu 1:14**; which was in the land of Hamath, and which, Jerom says, was in his times called Epiphania in Syria; here it was that Nebuchadnezzar brought Zedekiah, and slew his sons before him, Jer 39:5; this, though in Hamath in Syria, was on the borders of the land of Israel, Nu 34:8; so that "hence from the desert of Diblath", as the Arabic version renders it, "even to Jerusalem", as may be supplied, takes in the whole land, and shows that it should be utterly desolate. There is a Bethdiblathaim mentioned in Jer 48:22; as in Moab; and there is also Almondiblathaim, which was one of the stations of the Israelites; and seems to be in Moab, or on its borders, Nu 33:46; and appears, by the places named with it, to be the same as that in Jeremiah; and so was part of that terrible wilderness through which the Israelites passed; and to which the desolation of the land of Israel by the Chaldeans is compared; and which serves to confirm our version, which makes the desolation to be greater than that:

and they shall know that I [am] the Lord; the true God; the one and only Lord God; who never changes his purposes; fulfils his promises and threatenings; and there is no escaping his mighty hand.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 7

This chapter contains a prophecy of the speedy destruction of the Jews, as being just at hand; of the particular judgments that should come upon them; of the horror that should seize them, and the distress that all ranks of men among them should be in, a few only escaping, who are described as in mournful circumstances. The destruction in general is denounced as being very near; the end being come, which is often repeated; and as it is represented as sudden, so without mercy; which is declared, **Eze 7:1**; the particular judgments, sword, pestilence, and famine, are mentioned in **Eze 7:15**, and the few that should escape are compared to mourning doves, **Eze 7:16**; the trembling, horror, and shame that should be upon all, are intimated in **Eze 7:17**; the unprofitableness of their gold and silver to deliver them, and the unsatisfying nature of these things, are expressed, **Eze 7:19**; the profanation and destruction of their temple are prophesied of, **Eze 7:20**; and for their murder, rapine, and oppression, it is threatened that their houses should be possessed by the worst of Heathens, and their holy places defiled; and one calamity should come upon another; when their application to prophets, priests, and ancient men for counsel, would be in, vain, **Eze 7:23**; and king, prince, and people, should be in the most melancholy and distressed circumstances, **Eze 7:27**.

Ver. 1. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. Or again, as the Arabic version; for this is a distinct prophecy from the former; though of the same kind with it; and was delivered out, either immediately upon the former; or, however, some time between that and the following in the next chapter, which has a date to it. The Targum calls it the word of prophecy from the Lord.

Ezekiel 7:2

Ver. 2. Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God unto the land of Israel,.... The inhabitants of it; not the ten tribes, who were already carried captive; but the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and those that were with them, who dwelt in the land. The mountains, hills, rivers, and valleys, were before addressed; now the land itself: what the Lord by the prophet said unto the land, or the people of it, follows:

an end: for here a colon is to be placed; that is, the end of God's patience and forbearance; he would bear with them no longer, at least but a very little while; the time of vengeance was coming upon them, and an utter consumption should be made of them; see **La 4:18**;

the end is come upon the four corners of the earth, or "land"; for not the whole world, and the end of that, as in Mt 24:3, are meant; but the land of Judea and the destruction of it, which should be general; upon the four wings of it, as in the Hebrew text; that is, in all parts of it, east, west, north, and south. The Targum is,

"the punishment of the end, or the punishment determined to come upon the four winds of the earth;"

see **Re 7:1**; and this punishment was just going to be inflicted on them; for this prophecy was in the sixth year of King Zedekiah; and in the ninth year of his reign Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem; and in the eleventh year took it, 2Ki 25:1.

Ezekiel 7:3

Ver. 3. Now [is] the end [come] upon thee,.... This is repeated for the confirmation of it, and for the sake of application of it to the people of Israel, of whom he had before spoken in the third person; but now in the second, in order to arouse them, and excite attention:

and I will send mine anger upon thee; the token of it, the punishment of their sins:

and I will judge thee according to thy ways; pass sentence, and execute it, as their evil ways and practices deserved:

and I will recompense, or "put upon thee" {f},

all thine abominations; cause them to bear as a burden the just punishment of their detestable iniquities; which would be more than they would be able to bear, though not more than they deserved.

{f} Kyle yttn "ponam super te", Pagninus; "dabo super te", Montanus; "reponam super te", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus.

Ezekiel 7:4

Ver. 4. And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity,.... Though the punishment will be heavy, and the lamentation will be great; see **Eze 5:11**;

but I will recompense thy ways upon thee; the evil of punishment for the evil of sin, the righteous demerit of their actions:

and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee; not taken away, unatoned for, and indeed not repented of. The Targum is,

"and the punishment of thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee:"

and ye shall know that I [am] the Lord; to whom vengeance belongs; who takes notice of sinful actions, and punishes for them; to whom appertain the perfections of omniscience, omnipotence, and punitive justice.

Ezekiel 7:5

Ver. 5. Thus saith the Lord God,.... Here should be a stop, a colon, requiring attention to what follows, it being something awful and terrible:

an evil, an only evil, behold, it cometh; meaning the destruction of the city and temple; which, though but one, was such an one as was never known before nor was there any like it. The Targum is,

"evil after evil, lo, it cometh;"

one evil after another; when one evil is gone, another comes, as in **Eze 7:26**. The Syriac version is, "behold, evil for evil comes"; the evil of punishment for the evil of sin.

Ezekiel 7:6

Ver. 6. An end is come, the end is come,.... These words, so often repeated, show the eagerness and concern of the prophet's mind; the speed and haste destruction was making; and the great stupidity of the people, which required such a frequent repetition:

it watcheth for thee; that is, their damnation slumbered not, but was awake, and waited till the time was up, which was just at hand, for it to take place; see **2Pe 2:3**;

behold, it is come; either the end, or rather the evil before mentioned; it was just at the door; it denotes the certainty of it, and its near approach.

Ezekiel 7:7

Ver. 7. The morning is come upon thee, O thou that dwellest in the land,.... That is, early ruin was come, or was coming, upon the inhabitants of Judea, which before is said to be awake, and to watch for them; and now the day being broke, the morning come, it hastened to them. Some, because this word {g} is used in Isa 18:5; for a crown or diadem, think a crowned head, a king, is here meant; particularly Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the instrument of the destruction of Jerusalem. So the Targum,

"the kingdom is revealed upon or against thee, O inhabitant of the land."

Jarchi interprets it of the morning setting as the sun does, its light and glory disappearing; and so denotes a dark and gloomy day;

the time is come; the appointed time of Jerusalem's ruin, the time of her visitation;

the day of trouble, or "noise" {h},

[is] near; either of the Chaldean army, its chariots and horses, and of their

armour; or of the howling and lamentation of the Jews:

and not the sounding again of the mountains; not like the echo of a man's voice between the mountains, which is only imaginary, but this is real; so Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it: or this was not like the shoutings of the vintage, which were joyful ones, Isa 16:9; but this the voice of lamentation and sorrow, doleful sounds. Jarchi says the word signifies the cry of the voice, proclaiming or calling on persons to fly to the tops of the mountains, which now should not be; and so the Targum,

"and there is no fleeing or escaping to the tops of the mountains."

{g} hrypuh "corona", Tigurine version, so some is Vatablus; "cidaris matutina", Montanus. {h} hmwhm "tumultus", Montanus, Piscator, Starckius; "strepitus", Calvin; "clamoris", Vatablus.

Ezekiel 7:8

Ver. 8. Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee,.... It might be very well said to be shortly, or near at hand, that the Lord would bring down his judgments upon this people; since it was some time in the sixth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity that this prophecy was delivered; and it was in the ninth year that Nebuchadnezzar came up against Jerusalem; so that it was but about three years before God would begin to pour out his fury on them:

and accomplish mine anger upon thee; not only send it, and begin to express it, but go on to finish it, till he had spent all his fury upon them he meant and threatened, and their sins deserved:

and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and I will recompense thee for all thine abominations; which is repeated from **Eze 7:3**, for the confirmation of it, and to show the certainty of it, that nothing would prevent it.

Ezekiel 7:9

Ver. 9. And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity,.... This verse is the same with **Eze 7:4**; only instead of "I will recompense thy ways upon thee", here it is, I will recompense thee according to thy ways upon thee and thine abominations [that] are in the midst of thee; which have both the same sense, showing the equity and justice of the divine proceedings: and to the clause, it is added,

and ye shall know that I [am] the Lord that smiteth; with the rod of his anger, inflicts punishment for sin. The Syriac version is, "that smiteth them"; the Jews, by suffering them to be carried captive: and so the Targum,

"I am the Lord that bringeth upon you a smiting,"

or the blow; the sense is, that when it came, they should be sensible that it was the Lord's doing. See Gill on "Eze 7:4".

Ezekiel 7:10

Ver. 10. Behold the day, behold, it is come,.... That is, the day of trouble and distress, said to be near, **Eze 7:3**;

the morning is gone forth; See Gill on "Eze 7:7";

the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded; both these phrases may be understood of Nebuchadnezzar; he was the rod, with which the Lord smote his people, as the Assyrian monarch is called the rod of his anger, Isa 10:5: and was a very proud prince, and had budded and blossomed, and had brought forth much bad fruit of that kind; see **Da 3:15**; or these may be separately considered; the rod may be interpreted of Nebuchadnezzar, which had been growing up, and preparing for the chastisement of the people of the Jews, and now was just ready to be made use of; and "pride" may respect the sin of that people, which was the cause of their being smitten with this rod, as the following words seem to indicate. The Targum is,

"a ruler hath budded, a wicked one hath appeared."

Ezekiel 7:11

Ver. 11. Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness,.... Some understand this of the Chaldeans, who came with great violence against the Jews, and were a rod in the hand of the Lord, to scourge them for their wickedness; and this seems to be the sense of the Targum,

"spoilers are risen up to visit the wicked;"

but rather the violence, oppression, and rapine of the Jews are meant, and mentioned as the cause of their punishment; for this their oppression of the poor and needy, the widow and the fatherless, among them, God suffered the king of Babylon, a wicked prince, to come and chastise them:

none of them [shall remain], nor of their multitude, nor of any of theirs; meaning not the Chaldean army, as if they came not of themselves, but of God, and much less were cut off, for they returned to their own land again; but the Jews, who either should die in the siege with the famine and pestilence, or be put to death by the sword, or be carried into captivity:

neither [shall there be] wailing for them; the destruction should be so general, that there would be but few left to mourn; and those that were left would be struck with such a stupor and amazement at the calamity, that they would not be capable of mourning; or with such a dread of the enemy, that there would be no place for lamentation over their dead friends and relations.

Ezekiel 7:12

Ver. 12. The time is come, the day draweth near,.... According to the Targum, the time of the recompence of iniquities, and the day of punishment of sins; of the sins of the Jews, by the Chaldean army, which no doubt is true; but it seems chiefly to refer to what follows: and the sense is, the time was coming on, in which

let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn; it is usual for the buyer of houses or lands to rejoice, because an addition is made to his estate, and especially when he has made, as he thinks, a good purchase; and the seller, he mourns because he is obliged to part with his estate to pay his debts, and so is reduced in his circumstances; but now the time was coming when the one would have no occasion to rejoice, nor the other to mourn; not the buyer rejoice, because, being carried captive, he cannot enjoy his possessions; nor the seller mourn, because, if he had not sold his house or field, he must have left it:

for wrath [is] upon all the multitude thereof; upon the whole body of the Jewish nation, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, buyer and seller; those that are in good circumstances, and those that are in bad ones; so that hereby they were all upon a level, in the same case and condition.

Ezekiel 7:13

Ver. 13. For the seller shall not return to that which is sold,.... In the year of jubilee, because he shall be in captivity: according to the law in Le 25:13, when a man had sold his possession, he returned to it again, if alive, in the year of jubilee; let it come sooner or later, within thirty, or twenty, or ten years after the sale, be it as it will: now the Babylonish captivity being seventy years, in that time there must be a jubilee; and yet those that had sold their estates, being captives in another land, could not return to them:

although they were yet alive: either though what they have sold is in being, and in good condition; or rather, though they that have sold them are in the land of the living, but, not being in their own land, cannot possess:

for the vision [is] touching the whole multitude thereof; the prophecy of the destruction of the Jews is general, and respects the whole body of the people; men of all ranks and degrees, the buyer and the seller, the rich and the poor:

[which] shall not return; void and of no effect, but shall be fully accomplished; see Isa 54:11; though some think this refers not to prophecy, but to the people, who did not upon it return by repentance; in this sense it is taken by Jarchi and Kimchi; and so the Targum,

"for the prophets prophesied to the whole multitude of them to return by repentance, and they returned not:"

neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life: either secure himself from danger by his unrighteous mammon, his ill gotten goods; or think to escape by his daring impiety, and vicious course of life, continued in without repentance.

Ezekiel 7:14

Ver. 14. They have blown the trumpet, even to make all ready,.... That is, the Jews, when they understood that the enemy was approaching, blew the trumpet, to give the inhabitants of their several cities and towns warning of it; that they might gather together, provide themselves with armour, and put themselves in a posture of defence, or go forth to meet the enemy, and stop his progress: or, "blow ye the trumpet", so the Septuagint and Arabic versions; and so may be considered as an irony or sarcasm; blow the trumpet, as an alarm of war, and see what will be the effect of it:

but none goeth to the battle: not having courage enough to face the enemy, but instead of that find to the fortified cities, and particularly to Jerusalem: the reason of this timidity and cowardice was,

for my wrath [is] upon all the multitude thereof; the intention of God was to destroy them all by one means or another; and therefore a heart was not given them to defend themselves, or oppose the enemy.

Ezekiel 7:15

Ver. 15. The sword [is] without,.... Without the city, where the enemy was besieging; so that those that went without, in order to make their escapes fell into their hands:

and the pestilence and the famine within; within the city; so that such who thought themselves safe in their own houses died by those judgments:

he that [is] in the field shall die by the sword; by the hands of the Chaldeans:

and he that [is] in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him; and he shall die by the hand of God.

Ezekiel 7:16

Ver. 16. But they that escape of them shall escape,.... Some few should escape the pestilence, famine, and sword, and flee to the mountains, where they should live a very miserable and uncomfortable life; so that this is no contradiction to the wrath of God being upon the whole multitude, **Eze 7:12**; as it follows:

and shall be on the mountains; whither they shall flee, when the city is broken up and taken; and so the Syriac version reads it, in connection with the preceding words, "and they that escape of them shall escape to the mountains"; barren and desert places, where they shall find no subsistence, nor have any agreeable company and conversation, but live in solitude and distress:

like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning, everyone for his iniquity: like doves that live in valleys, or gather together there, and hide themselves in the holes of the rocks, on the sides of the valleys, from birds of prey; or are so called, to distinguish them from wild doves, which, when they have lost their mates, make a very mournful noise, though not loud and clamorous. So those Jews that escaped, being in such an uncomfortable condition, turned out of house and home, and deprived of their substance, should lament their fate; not in loud cries, lest they should be heard by the enemy and taken, but in secret sighs, and in a mournful tone; acknowledging to God, and to one another, their sins; they now became sensible of, which brought these calamities upon them. So God's people, the remnant according to the election of grace, who "escape" the general ruin sin has brought on mankind, are for the most part "upon the mountains", in an afflicted and persecuted state; they are like "doves" for their harmlessness, amiableness, cleanness, modesty chastity, sociableness, and timorous disposition; and like doves "of the valleys", in a low estate, through corruption, temptation, desertion, affliction, and persecution; and "mourn" over their own "iniquity", the sin of their nature, their unbelief and various transgressions being committed against a God of love, contrary to his grace, grieving to his Spirit, and dishonourable to his Gospel; and being what break their bereave them of comfort, and deprive them of communion with God.

Ezekiel 7:17

Ver. 17. All hands shall be feeble,.... No strength in them, to lay hold on weapons of war to defend themselves, or fight the enemy; no heart nor courage in them, to go forth and meet him; and even afraid to lift up their voice in mourning, lest they should be heard, and pursued, and taken:

and all knees shall be weak [as] water; tremble and beat one against another, for fear of the enemy; or, "shall flow with water,"

as the Targum; either with sweat or urine, which are sometimes both caused by fear.

Ezekiel 7:18

Ver. 18. They shall also gird [themselves] with sackcloth,.... As a token of mourning, Ge 37:34;

and horror shall cover them: either the horror of a guilty conscience, or the perpetual dread and terror of the enemy:

and shame [shall be] upon all faces; because of their sins and transgressions, which they shall now be convinced of; or because of their desolate condition, their sins had brought them into:

and baldness upon all their heads; through the plucking off of the hair of their heads in their distress; for to make baldness as a token of mourning for the dead was forbidden the Jews, De 14:1.

Ezekiel 7:19

Ver. 19. They shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed,.... As being of no use unto them to preserve them from famine and pestilence, and as being an hinderance to them in their flight from the enemy. Kimchi observes that this may be interpreted of their idols of gold and silver, which shall now be had in contempt by them, and cast away, when they shall find they cannot save them from ruin; see **Isa 2:20**;

their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord; these can neither deliver from temporal judgments nor from wrath to come; see Pr 10:2; nor idols made of them:

they shall not satisfy their souls, nor fill their bowels; gold and silver cannot be eaten; these will not satisfy the craving appetite, nor fill the hungry belly: the words show that the famine would be so great, that bread could not be got for any money; and therefore gold and silver would be of no avail; since they could not be fed upon, or give any satisfaction to a famishing soul; nor could idols of gold and silver neither:

because it is the stumbling block of their iniquity; what was the occasion of their iniquity, covetousness, and idolatry, at which they stumbled, and fell into sin, and so into punishment for it.

Ezekiel 7:20

Ver. 20. As for the beauty of his ornament, he set it in majesty,.... Or, "for pride" {i}. The gold, silver, jewels, riches, and treasure, which the Lord gave to this people, they made a bad use of; and instead of contributing to the support of his worship and interest, and of giving liberally to the poor, they converted it to their own pride and luxury: or rather the temple, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it, is meant; which was a beautiful structure, and adorned with gifts, and set for glory, majesty, and excellency by the Lord; yea, where his excellent Majesty dwelt himself:

but they made the images of their abominations [and] of their detestable things therein; or, "of it" {k}; that is, of their gold and silver, which is another bad use they put their riches to: or rather "in it" {l}; that is, the temple; where, having made their idols, they placed them; see **Jer 7:30**;

therefore have I set it far from them; that being destroyed, and they being carried away captive into a strange land, far from that.

{i} Nwagl "in superbiam", V. L. Calvin, Starckius. {k} wb "ex eo", Tigurine version. {l} "In eo". Pagninus, Montanus, Polanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Starckius.

Ezekiel 7:21

Ver. 21. And I will give it into the hands of the strangers for a prey,.... The Babylonians, who lived in a foreign country, and were strangers to the commonwealth of Israel; the temple was suffered of the Lord to fall into their hands as a prey; who spoiled it of all its riches and glory, and carried away the vessels of gold, of silver, and of brass, and other valuable things; see Jer 52:17;

and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil; meaning the same persons, and the same thing, and the same use they should make of it; for not the wicked of the world in general are meant, but of the land, or this land; the land of Babylon, where the prophet was:

and they shall pollute it; by entering into it and spoiling it, by pillaging and burning it.

Ezekiel 7:22

Ver. 22. My face will one turn also from them,.... Deny them his presence, and withdraw his protection from them; show them no favour, nor afford them any help and succour in their distress, when they cry unto him; so the Targum,

"I will cause my Shechinah to remove from them:"

unless the Chaldeans are meant, as some think, whose robberies and ravages the Lord would wink at, and not restrain, but suffer them to plunder and spoil at pleasure: since it follows,

and they shall pollute my secret [place]; the holy of holies, by going into it, which none but the high priest might do, and he but once a year; though the Targum understands this of the Jews, and makes it to be a reason of what is threatened in the preceding clause, rendering it thus,

"because they have profaned the land of the house of my Shechinah:"

for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it; as did the king of Babylon and his army; and afterwards, in the second temple, Antiochus, Pompey, and Titus Vespasian.

Ezekiel 7:23

Ver. 23. Make a chain,.... To bind them; not the robbers, the Chaldeans, but the Jews; in order either to bring them to the bar to be tried for capital crimes hereafter mentioned, or to be led bound in chains into captivity; see **Ne 3:10**;

for the land is full of bloody crimes; or, "judgment of bloods" {m}; capital crimes, such as are deserving of death, particularly murder, or shedding of innocent blood; so the Targum interprets it of sins of murder:

and the city is full of violence; rapine, oppression, and injury done to the poor, the widow, and the fatherless; meaning the city of Jerusalem, where was the great court of judicature, and where justice ought to have been administered.

{m} Mymd jpvm "judicio sanguiuum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Polanus, Starckius; "criminibus capitalibus", Piscator; "sanguianariis judiciis", Castalio.

Ezekiel 7:24

Ver. 24. Wherefore I will bring the worst of the Heathen,.... The Chaldeans, notorious for their cruelty, savageness, and barbarity:

and they shall possess their houses; which they have built, and thought to have lived and died in, and left them to their children for an inheritance; but the Chaldeans, and not their children, became their heirs, and inherited their houses and lands:

I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease; or, "the pride of the mighty ones" {n}; the noble and the rich; their wealth and substance, by which their pride and grandeur were supported, being takes away from them:

and their holy places shall be defiled; the temple, in which were the holy place, and the holy of holies: or, "they that sanctify them"; the priests that offered sacrifices, which only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; even these holy persons and things, as well as holy places, would be defiled.

{n} Myze Nwag "superbiam fortium", Calvin; "superbiam robustorum", Starckius.

Ezekiel 7:25

Ver. 25. Destruction cometh,.... Upon the temple, city, nation, and people; the king of Babylon, the destroyer of the Gentiles, and now of the Jews, being on his way, Jer 4:7;

and they shall seek peace, and [there shall be] none; that is, the Jews will seek to make peace with the Chaldeans; but the latter will not hearken to them, but go on with the siege, till they have taken the city, put part to the sword, and carried the other captive.

Ezekiel 7:26

Ver. 26. Mischief shall come upon mischief,.... One misfortune or calamity after another; first one unhappy event, and then another, as was Job's case. The Targum is,

"breach upon breach shall come {o}:"

and rumour shall be upon rumour; that the Chaldean army is in such a place; and then that it is in another place still nearer; and then that it is but a few miles off, and, will be here immediately: rumours of wars, as well as wars, themselves, are very distressing; see Mt 24:6;

then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; apply to him for a prophecy, to know the event of things, whether and when they might expect a deliverance:

but the law shall perish from the priest; whose lips should keep knowledge, and from whose mouth the law, the doctrine and interpretation of it, might be expected; but now either there would be no priests at all; or such as were would be ignorant and unlearned, and incapable of instructing the people:

and counsel from the ancients; with whom it usually is; and which is of great service in a time of distress: this therefore adds greatly to the calamity, that there would be no prophet to tell them what should come to pass; no priest to instruct them; nor senator or wise man to give them counsel.

{o} So R. Sol. Urhin. Ohel Moed, fol. 96. 1.

Ezekiel 7:27

Ver. 27. The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation,.... Meaning one and the same person, Zedekiah not being able to save himself and his people; and who falling into the hands of the king of

Babylon, his children were slain before him; then his own eyes put out, and he bound in chains, and carried captive to Babylon,
Jer 39:6;

and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled; weakened through fear and distress; incapable of business, and unable to help themselves and others; and the more so, when they found their case desperate; which was manifest by the mourning and desolation of their king, in whom their confidence had been placed:

I will do unto them after their way; or, "for their way" {p}; because of their evil ways and works:

and according to their deserts will I judge them; take vengeance on them, as the Targum: or, "in their judgments will I judge them" {q}; the same measure they have meted out to others shall be measured out to them, **Mt 7:1**:

and they shall know that I [am] the Lord; the only Lord God, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, true and faithful, holy, just, and good.

{p} Mkrdm "pro viis ipsorum", Calvin; "pro via ipsorum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus, {q} Mjpva Mhyjpvmbw "et in", sive "pro judiciis eorum judicabo eos", Calvin, Polanus, Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 8

This chapter contains a vision the prophet had of the idolatry of the Jews, which was the cause of their destruction. The time when, place, where, and persons with whom he was, when the hand of the Lord came upon him, are mentioned, **Eze 8:1**; then follows a description of the divine Person that appeared to him, **Eze 8:2**; and an account is given how he was in a visionary way brought to Jerusalem, and to the temple, where he saw the glory of the God of Israel, and the idolatry of the people, **Eze 8:3**; which latter was gradually represented to him; first the image of jealousy in the entry at the gate of the altar northward, **Eze 8:5**; then greater abominations through a hole in the wall, by which he saw their idols, in the form of reptiles and four footed beasts, portrayed on the wall, **Eze 8:6**; next seventy of the ancients of Israel, among whom were one mentioned by name, offering incense to these idols, **Eze 8:11**; after this, greater abominations still are showed him, at the north of the temple, women weeping for Tammuz, **Eze 8:13**; and then again far greater ones, twenty five men, between the porch and the altar, with their backs to the temple, and their face to the east, worshipping the sun, and putting the branch to the nose, **Eze 8:15**; wherefore it is reasoned to deal with them in fury, without any mercy, pity, and compassion, **Eze 8:18**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth [month], in the fifth [day] of the month,.... This was the sixth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin; the sixth month was the month Elul, which answers to part of August, and part of September. The Septuagint and Arabic versions wrongly render it, the fifth month. The fifth day of the month is thought to have been the sabbath day, which seems probable by what follows; this was just a year and two months from the first vision, **Eze 1:1**;

[as] I sat in mine house; in Chaldea, by the river Chebar; he was now sitting, the time of lying on his side, both right and left, being now up, even four hundred and thirty days. It was in the fifth year, and on the fifth of Tammuz, that the first vision was; seven days the prophet sat with them of the captivity at Telabib; at the end of which he was ordered to lie on his side; first on his left side three hundred ninety days, and then on his right side forty days: now reckoning from the middle of Tammuz, to the fifth of Elul in the sixth year, were but, as Kimchi observes, four hundred days; but this being, as another Jewish writer says {r}, an intercalated year, by the intercalation of a month, which consisted of thirty days, the whole number was completed, and the prophet was now sitting: or it may be this position is observed, because he was now teaching and instructing the people, which was frequently done sitting; See Gill on "Mt 5:1"; and this in his own private house, being now in captivity, and having neither temple nor synagogue to teach in;

and the elders of Judah sat before me; to hear the word of the Lord from his mouth, the law explained, or any fresh prophecy delivered by him; or to have his advice and counsel in their present circumstances. These were the elders of Judah that were carried captive along with Jehoiachin; though some think they were those that were at Jerusalem, and that all this was only in a visionary way; but the former sense seems most agreeable; seeing this was previous to the vision, and with what goes before describes the time, place, and witnesses of the vision;

that the hand of the Lord fell there upon me; which the Targum interprets of the spirit of prophecy, which came with power upon him: it denotes the energy and efficacy of the Spirit of God in throwing him into an ecstasy, and acting upon him, and revealing to him the things he did; which are related in the following verses.

{r} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 26. p. 73. Vid. Kimchi in loc.

Ezekiel 8:2

Ver. 2. And then one beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire,.... The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "behold the likeness of a man"; reading vya, "a man", for va, "fire"; but without supposing such a reading, for which there is no foundation, this likeness may very well be understood of the likeness of a man; since mention is made of his joins in the next clause, and of his hand in **Eze 8:3**; and the description agrees with the appearance of a man in **Eze 1:26**; it was usual for the Son of God, who doubtless is here meant, to appear in a human form; and so Junius and Tremellius supply the words,

"and lo a likeness "of a man", as in the appearance of fire:"

it was the form of a fiery man that was seen, as he is further described:

from the appearance of his loins, even downward, fire; his lower parts, thighs, legs, and feet; expressive either of the light of grace communicated from Christ to his people; or of his fervent love towards them, or flaming zeal for God and his house; or rather of his wrath against an idolatrous people; see **Re 1:15**; a like description is in **Eze 1:27**;

and from his loins, even upward, as the appearance of brightness; his upper parts, back, belly, breast, shoulders, arms, head, &c. which may denote his incomprehensible majesty and glory; his glory being the glory of the only begotten, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. The Targum renders both the one and the other part of the description thus,

"and I saw, and twelve a likeness as the look of fire, the look of glory, which the eye cannot see, nor is it possible to look upon it; and beneath the look of fire, and the look of glory, which the eye cannot behold, nor is it possible to contemplate it; and above, as the look of brightness:"

as the colour of amber: or "chasmal": which some take to be the name of an angel. The Syriac version is, "as the look of God";
See Gill on "Eze 1:4"; and
See Gill on "Eze 1:27".

Ezekiel 8:3

Ver. 3. And he put forth the form of an hand,.... That is, he that appeared in the likeness of a man, and with so much glory and splendour, out of the midst of the fire and brightness which were about him, put forth the form of a hand, that looked like a man's hand; for this appearance was not real, only visionary; and this seems to design the Spirit of God sent forth by Christ, sometimes called the finger of God, Lu 11:20; as appears by what follows:

and took me by a lock of mine head; without hurting him, showing his power over him; and by this means raising him from his seat, as it seemed to the prophet:

and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and heaven; took him off of his seat, and out of his house, lifted him up in the air, and carried him through it, as he thought; for this was not real and local; in like manner as the spirit caught away Philip, **Ac 8:39**; but in vision, as follows:

and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem; so it was represented to him in a true vision, which was of God, and not of Satan, that he was carried from Chaldea to Jerusalem; not that he really was, for he was still in Chaldea; and here in vision was he brought again, and found himself to be when that vision was over,
Eze 11:24; but things so appeared to him, as if he was actually brought to Jerusalem by the power of the Spirit of God:

to the door of the inner gate: not of Jerusalem, but the temple, or rather the court, the inner court; see Eze 10:3; and so it should be rendered "to the door of the gate of the inner court" {s}; and thus it is explained by Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech:

that looketh toward the north; for there were gates on every side:

where [was] the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy; some graven image, perhaps the image of Baal; so called, because it provoked the Lord to jealousy, De 32:21. Gussetius {t} suggests, that lmo, "Semel", here may be the same with Semele; who, in the opinion of the Heathens, made Juno jealous.

{s} tymynph rev xtp la "ad ostium portae interioris, [sub.] atrii", Pagninus, Vatablus, Piscator. {t} Ebr. Comment. p. 903.

Ezekiel 8:4

Ver. 4. And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel [was] there,.... In the temple, between the cherubim, where the Shechinah or the glory of the divine Majesty dwelt; for as yet he had not removed, though provoked to it, and as he afterwards did; or he was here to destroy the idols, and both city and temple, for the idolatry of the people; or this is here mentioned, to show the baseness and wickedness of the people, that they should place an idol where the Lord himself was:

according to the vision that I saw in the plain; it was the same glorious Person he saw in the temple whom he had before seen in the plain, **Eze 3:22**; and that was the same he had seen in the vision by the river Chebar, **Eze 1:3**.

Ezekiel 8:5

Ver. 5. Then said he unto me, son of man,.... That is, the glorious Person described above in this vision, the glorious God of Israel, seen by the prophet in the temple, he spoke unto him, calling him son of man; a name by which he often goes in this prophecy:

lift up thine eyes now toward the north; of the mountain of the house without the court, as Jarchi interprets it:

so I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north: being obedient to the heavenly vision:

and behold northward at the gate of the altar; at the northern gate of the inner court, where was the altar of burnt offering, brought by Ahaz; to the north of

the altar he built in imitation of that at Damascus,
2Ki 16:10; and here stood

this image of jealousy in the entry; or the image of this jealousy; the image before mentioned, which provoked the Lord to jealousy; this stood at the entry of the northern gate, which led into the inner court, and to the altar.

Ezekiel 8:6

Ver. 6. He said furthermore unto me, son of man,.... He continued his speech to the prophet, saying

seest thou what they do? the idolatrous Jews, who had set up a graven image at the northern gate of the court, where the altar was, and were sacrificing to it:

[even] the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here; for to set up an idol where he was, and an altar by his altar, and to sacrifice to Baal, and not to him, or to Baal along with him, or besides him, or to any other idol, were very abominable to the Lord: even to such a degree,

that I should go far from my sanctuary? be obliged to leave it, not being able to bear such abominable idolatries: or, "that they should go far from my sanctuary" {u}; depart from the true worship and service of it, and fall into idolatry:

but turn thee yet again; from the north to the south it may be; however, to some other part of the temple:

[and] thou shalt see greater abominations; or, "great abominations" {w}; for there is no necessity of rendering it "greater": but the meaning is, that he should see other great abominations besides what he had seen, than which there could not be anything well greater.

{u} yvdqm lem hqxrl "ut longius recedant, [vel] abeant, [sub.] Israelitae a sauctuario meo", Vatablus; and to this sense are the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; "ad longe recedendum", Cocceius. {w} twldg twbewt "abominationes magnas", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Piscator, Cocceius. Starckius.

Ezekiel 8:7

Ver. 7. And he brought me to the door of the court,.... Of the inner court, the court of the priests and Levites. Dr. Lightfoot {x} says this was the east gate, and most common way of entrance; and in that gate the sanhedrim used to sit in these times; and there the prophet sees their council chamber painted about with imagery:

and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall; of one of the chambers of the priests and Levites, where they lay.

{x} Prospect of the Temple, c. 28. p. 2018.

Ezekiel 8:8

Ver. 8. Then said he unto me, son of man, dig now in the wall,.... And so make the hole larger; that he might have a fuller view of what was to be seen within the wall:

and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door; an opening, by which he could go into the cell or chamber, and take a full view of what was to be seen there. All this was visionary, for in reality the prophet did not dig, nor could he, not having anything to dig with; but so things appeared to his mind in the vision: first a little hole, by which he could discern there was a room; then, by making use of some means, a large door appeared, at which there was an entrance into it.

Ezekiel 8:9

Ver. 9. And he said unto me, go in,.... Into the room or chamber the door opened into:

and behold the wicked abominations they do here; the idolatries there committed, wicked in themselves, and abominable to God.

Ezekiel 8:10

Ver. 10. So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things,.... As beetles and others, worshipped for gods:

and abominable beasts; unclean ones; not only oxen, but dogs and cats, and other impure creatures; for such were the gods of the Egyptians, from whom the Jews took their deities:

and all the idols of the house of Israel; which were many, even as numerous as their cities:

portrayed upon the wall round about; the pictures of them were drawn and placed around the wall of the room or chamber; and where they were worshipped by the priests and Levites, and members of the sanhedrim; and this was not in one chamber only, but in many, as appears from **Eze 8:12**.

Ezekiel 8:11

Ver. 11. And there stood before them,.... Before the pictures, as the Vulgate Latin version expresses it, praying, sacrificing, and offering incense unto them:

seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel; the whole sanhedrim, or great court of judicature among the Jews, as Kimchi; or at least there is an allusion to that number, which were appointed in Moses' time to be officers over the people, and govern and direct them, Nu 11:16; which shows how sadly depraved and corrupted the state was, that not the common people only, but the civil magistrates, the chief rulers and governors, were given to idolatry; and those that should have taught the people the right way led them wrong; and it is still a further aggravation of their crime that they should do this in the chambers of the priests and Levites, where they ought not to have been:

and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan; who was either the prince of the sanhedrim, or at least a person of great note and esteem; and shows the corruption to be general, from the least to the greatest: Shaphan was a scribe in Josiah's time, who had a son named Ahikam, perhaps the father of this, 2Ki 22:3; in Eze 11:2; he is said to be the son of Azur, and one of the princes of the people:

with every man his censer in his hand; to offer incense to the idols portrayed on the wall; and which they did, for it follows:

and a thick cloud of incense went up; there were many that offered; and perhaps they offered a large quantity, being very liberal and profuse in this kind of devotion to their idols.

Ezekiel 8:12

Ver. 12. Then said he unto me, son of man, hast thou seen,.... Here should be a stop, as the accent "segolta" shows; hast thou taken notice of, hast thou considered, what thou hast seen, the amazing shocking abominations committed by these men? it follows, and the question is to be repeated, "hast thou seen"

what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark? their deeds being evil, such as will not bear the light, of which they had reason to be ashamed before men; and which they imagined would not be seen by the Lord, though the darkness and the light are both alike to him:

every man in the chambers of his imagery? the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "in his hidden" or "secret chamber"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "in the hidden place of his bedchamber". The Targum is,

"in the chamber of the house of his bed;"

in his bedchamber; that is, in those chambers of the temple, which belonged to the priests and Levites, on the walls of which were portrayed the images and pictures of their gods. Here they had their secret rites or mysteries performed, in imitation of the Heathens; who had the several mysteries of their religion privately observed; to which none were admitted but those that were initiated into them; as those of Osiris among the Egyptians; of Ceres with the Grecians; and of Bona Dea among the Romans; as Junius observes. Though some interpret this of the imaginations of their minds, according to which they framed to themselves deities, and a form of worship;

for they say, the Lord seeth not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth; this they gave as a reason of their idolatry, because the Lord took no notice of them, did not help them when in distress; but, as they concluded, had forsaken them; therefore they betook themselves to the gods of the Egyptians, Syrians, and other nations, for their assistance and protection: for these words are not the language of Epicureans, or such who deny the providence of God in general; who think that God takes no notice of the lower world, only of the upper one, as Kimchi and others interpret them; for these elders of Israel were not so ignorant and stupid as to deny the general providence of God, only distrusted his particular care of them.

Ezekiel 8:13

Ver. 13. He said also unto me, turn thee yet again,.... Towards the north, as before; See Gill on "Eze 8:6";

[and] thou shall see greater abominations that they do; or: "the great abominations"; for so the words may be strictly rendered; nor does it appear that what follows, though great abominations, were greater than the creeping things, four footed beasts, and other idols, or dunghill gods, portrayed upon the walls, which the elders of Israel burnt incense to.

Ezekiel 8:14

Ver. 14. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house, which [was] towards the north,.... By "the Lord's house" no doubt is meant the temple, which the Targum here calls the house of the sanctuary of the Lord; that gate of the temple (for the temple had several gates) which was to the north was the gate called Teri or Tedi, and was very little used {y}. In this part of the temple were the sacrifices offered; and therefore it was the greater abomination to commit idolatry where the Lord was more solemnly worshipped:

and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz: they were not in the court of the women, where they should have been; but at the northern gate, near the place of sacrifice; and they were sitting there, which none but the kings of the house of Judah, and of the family of David, were allowed in the temple {z}; but, what was the greatest abomination, they were weeping for Tammuz. Jarchi says this was an image, which they heated inwardly, and its eyes were of lead; and these being melted with the heat, it seemed to weep; wherefore (the women) said, it asks for an offering: but not the idol, but the women, wept. Kimchi relates various interpretations of it;

"some (he says) expound it by an antiphrasis, "making Tammuz glad"; in the month of Tammuz they made a feast to the idol, and the women came to make him glad: others say, that with great diligence they brought water to the eyes of the idol called Tammuz, and it wept; signifying that it desired they would worship it: others interpret the word Tammuz as signifying "burnt"; (from the words in **Da 3:19**; anwtal azml, "to heat the furnace";) as if should say, they wept for him, because he was for they burnt their sons and daughters in the fire, and the women wept for them. He further observes, that Maimonides {a} writes, that he found written in one of the books of the ancient idolaters, that there was a man of the idolatrous prophets, whose name was Tammuz; who called to a certain king, and commanded him to worship the seven stars, and the twelve signs of the zodiac, for which the king put him to a violent death; and, the same night he died, all the images from the ends of the earth gathered together to the temple of Babylon, to a golden image which was the image of the sun; and this image was hanging between the heavens and the earth, and it fell into the midst of the temple, and so all the images round about it; and it declared unto them what had happened to Tammuz the prophet; and all the images wept and lamented all that night; and when it was morning, they all fled to their temples at the ends of the earth; and this became an everlasting statute to them, that at the beginning of the first day of the month Tammuz, every year, they lament and weeps for Tammuz; and there are others that expound Tammuz the name of a beast which they worship;"

but, leaving these interpretations, Tammuz was either the Adonis of the Grecians; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it Adonis; who was a young man beloved by Venus, and, being killed by a boar, his death was lamented by her; and, in respect to the goddess, an anniversary solemnity was kept by men and women lamenting his death, especially by women. So Pausanias, speaking of a certain place, there (says he) the women of the Argives (a people in Greece) mourn for Adonis {b}. Lucian {c} gives a particular account of this ceremony, as performed at Byblus, a city in Phoenicia, not far from Judea; from whence the Jews might have borrowed this custom.

"I have seen (says he), in Byblus, a large temple of Venus Byblia, where they performed the rites unto Adonis, and I was a spectator of them. The Byblians say the affair relating to Adonis (or his death) by a boar happened in their country; and, in memory of it, every year they beat themselves, lament and offer sacrifice, and great mourning goes through the whole country; and when they beat themselves and mourn, they sacrifice to Adonis as dead; but the day following they pretend he is alive; and they shave their heads, as the Egyptians do at the death of Apis;"

and indeed it is thought by some that this Tammuz is the Osiris of the Egyptians; the same with Mizraim, the first king of Egypt, who, being slain in battle, his wife his ordered that he should be worshipped as a god, and a yearly lamentation made for him; and indeed Osiris and Adonis seem to be one and the same, only in different nations called by different names. Mention is made in Plato {d} of Thamus, a king that reigned at Thebes over all Egypt, and was the god called Ammon; no doubt the same with this Tammuz; and who is here called, in the Syriac and Arabic versions, Thamuz or Tamuz; he seems to be the same with Ham; and Egypt was called, the land of Ham, Ps 105:27; and it is most probable the Jews borrowed this piece of idolatry from the Egyptians their neighbours; with whom they were now very familiar, and from whom they expected help against the Chaldeans; but as there were such shocking obscenities used in this idolatrous service, it is most amazing that the Jewish women, who had been instructed in the law and worship of God, should ever go into it. Gussetius {e} thinks that Bacchus, the god of wine, is meant; and gives several reasons for it; and among the rest observes, that in the fourth month, called Tammuz from him, the vine was forming in ripe grapes; near the beginning of a fifth month, it was pressed out, and tunned up; and by the next month, having done fermenting, it was stopped up, which represented him buried; and for which the weeping was in this month.

{y} Misn. Middot, c. 5. sect. 3. {z} Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 2. sect. 4. {a} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 29, p. 426. {b} Corinthiaca, sive l. 2. p. 121. {c} De Dea Syria. Vid. Theocriti, adoniazousai, Idyll. 15. {d} Phaedrus, tom. 3. p. 974, Ed. Serran. {e} Ebr. Comment. p. 903. So Luther apud Dieteric. Antiqu. Bibl. par. 2. p. 132.

Ezekiel 8:15

Ver. 15. Then said he unto me, hast thou seen [this], O son of man?.... This shocking piece of idolatry, women weeping for Tammuz:

turn thee yet again, [and] thou shalt see greater abominations than these; or, "great abominations besides these" {f}.

{f} hlam twldg twbewt "abominationes magnas praeter istas", Calvin.

Ezekiel 8:16

Ver. 16. And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house,.... The court of the priests, where they offered sacrifice, and into which none might come but themselves:

and, behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar; the porch that led into the temple, and the brasen altar, the altar of burnt offerings, which was a very sacred place, and reckoned more holy than the court of the priests {g}

[were] about five and twenty men; the number, more or less, not being exactly known; who they were, whether the priests or princes of the people, is not certain; probably some of both:

with their backs towards the temple of the Lord; that is, the most holy place, which they were obliged to, in order to do what is afterwards affirmed of them; for the sanctuary was built to the west, that in their worship the Jews might not look to the east, as the Gentiles did; wherefore these men, that they might imitate the Gentiles in their idolatry, turned their backs to the most holy place; which is an aggravation of their impiety; casting the utmost contempt on God, his worship, and the place of it:

and their faces towards the east: when the sun rises:

and they worshipped the sun towards the east; as many nations did, though forbidden the Jews by an express law of God, **De 4:19**; yet this they fell into, and had horses and chariots devoted to this idolatry; see 2Ki 21:3. The word rendered "worshipped" is compounded of two words; one signifying to "corrupt", the other to "worship": showing that, by worshipping the sun, they corrupted themselves, and the house of God; and so the Targum renders it,

"and, lo, they corrupted themselves, worshipping in the east the sun;"

and so it is explained in the Jerusalem Talmud,

"they corrupted the temple, and worshipped the sun;"

but Kimchi thinks the word {h} consists of the verb in the past tense, and of the participle; and that the sense is, when the prophet saw the men worshipping the sun to the east, as amazed at it, put this question to those that went in, "do ye worship also?" {i} so Ben Melech.

{g} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 184. 4. {h} Mtywxtvm. {i} Vid. Hottinger. Smegma Orientale, l. 3. par. 1. c. 24. p. 154. who rather is of opinion that the word is compounded of the participle and the particle ta, or the pronoun Mta.

Ezekiel 8:17

Ver. 17. Then he said unto me, hast thou seen [this], O son of man?.... Took notice of and considered this piece of idolatry, worshipping the sun toward the east:

is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? could these things, which are such dreadful abominations, committed here in the temple, be reckoned light things by them, as surely they cannot? yet these are not all that they have done:

for they have filled the land with violence; with rapine and oppression; doing injury to the poor and needy, the widow and the fatherless, in all places:

and have returned to provoke me to anger; by other instances of idolatry:

and, lo, they put the branch to their nose; a laurel, or olive, or vine branch, which idolaters carried in their hands, and put to their nose, in honour of the idol they worshipped; in like manner as they kissed their hand at the sight of the sun, Job 31:26; and which the Jews did in imitation of the Heathen. This is one of the eighteen places in which there is "tikkun sopherim", or a "correction of the scribes"; who, instead of "my nose", direct to read "their nose"; hence the words are differently interpreted by the Jewish commentators; who, by hrwmz, rendered "branch", think an ill smell is meant; arising either from their posteriors, their back being towards the temple; or from the incense which they offered up to their idols; so Kimchi and Menachem in Jarchi; agreeably to which Fortunatus Scacchus {k} understands this, not of any branch used by idolaters, which they put to the nose of their idol, or their own, for the honour of that; but of the censer which the Israelites used, contrary to the command of God, and which they put to their nose to enjoy a forbidden smell; see Eze 16:18; but Gussetius {l} gives another sense of the words, rendering them, "they send forth a branch to their anger"; the Israelites are compared to a vine, as in **Isa 5:1**; sending forth bad branches, idolatrous actions, as here in this chapter; and to these bad branches they sent forth or added another, even anger against God, the prophets, true believers, and right worshippers of God; and therefore he also would deal in fury and wrath, as in **Eze 8:18**; so Dr. Lightfoot {m} renders it,

""they send the branch to my wrath", or "to their own wrath"; that is, to what they have deserved; as if it was said, in the same manner that anyone puts wood to the fire, the branch of the wild vine, that it may the more quickly be burnt; so do these put the branch to my wrath, that it may burn the more fiercely; hence it follows, "therefore will I also deal in fury", &c."

The Targum is,

"and, lo, they bring shame (or confusion) to their faces;"

what they do turns to their own ruin and destruction; as follows:

{k} Sacror. Eleaochr. Myrothec. l. 2. p. 536. {l} Ebr. Comment. p. 231. {m} Heb. & Talmud. Exercitat. in Johan. xv. 6.

Ezekiel 8:18

Ver. 18. Therefore will I also deal in fury,.... Being provoked by such abominable idolatries, and such horrid insolence, and most contemptuous treatment:

mine eye shall not spare: neither will I have pity: see **Eze 5:11**;

and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice; very pressingly and earnestly for help, being in great distress:

[yet] will I not hear them; as they turned their backs on him, he will turn a deaf ear to them, and not regard their cries. The Targum is,

"they shall pray before me, with a great voice, and I will not receive their prayer."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 9

In this chapter is contained a vision, representing the destruction of the idolatrous Jews, and the preservation of the godly that were among them, in which different persons were employed; they that were concerned in the destruction of the idolaters are described by their office; they had charge over the city; by their form and appearance, men; by their number, six; by the quarter from whence they came, the way of the higher gate northward; and by the weapons they had in their hands, slaughter ones; and by their place and posture, standing beside the brasen altar, **Eze 9:1**; among these were one clothed in linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side; to whom the glorious God of Israel, who was removed from the cherub to the threshold of the house, gave orders to go through the city of Jerusalem, and mark those that mourned over the abominations of it, **Eze 9:3**; and the rest he ordered to go through the city, and slay all of every age, and sex, and state, except those that had the mark; beginning at the sanctuary, and filling the courts with the slain; which orders were obeyed, **Eze 9:5**; upon which the prophet expostulates with the Lord, and intercedes for the people; but is not heard, because of the abounding of iniquity among them; their frequent shedding of blood; their perversion of justice; and their abominable infidelity and atheism; for which reasons he was determined to show them no mercy, **Eze 9:8**; and the chapter is closed with a report made by the man clothed with linen, that he had done as was commanded him, **Eze 9:11**.

Ver. 1. He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice,.... That is, the glory of the Lord God of Israel, whom the prophet saw in the temple, and who directed him from place to place, and showed him all the abominations committed there: this loud voice of the Lord was not so much to excite the attention of the prophet, as to call together the ministers of his vengeance; and to show the greatness of his indignation, and the vehemence of his wrath, which was stirred up by the sins of the people:

saying, cause them that have the charge over the city to draw near; or,

"who were appointed over the city,"

as the Targum; that is, the city of Jerusalem; by whom are meant either the ministering angels, who had been the guardians of it, but now were to be employed another way; or the princes of the Chaldean army, who had a charge against the city to destroy it; see Isa 10:6. The Syriac version is, "draw near, ye avengers of the city"; and the Septuagint and Arabic versions are "the vengeance of the city draws nigh":

even every man [with] his destroying weapon in his hand; weapons of war, as bows and arrows, sword and spear; see **Jer 6:22**.

Ezekiel 9:2

Ver. 2. And, behold, six men,.... Either angels the form of men; or the generals of Nebuchadnezzar's army, as Kimchi interprets it; whose names are, Nergalsharezer, Samgarnebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergalsharezer, Rabmag, Jer 39:3; these six executioners of God's vengeance are, in the Talmud {n}, called

"wrath, anger, fury, destruction, breach, and consumption:"

came from the way of the higher gate, Kimchi observes, from the Rabbins, that this is the eastern gate called the higher or upper gate, because it was above the court of the Israelites. Maimonides {o} says, the upper gate is the gate Nicanor; and why is it called the upper gate? because it was above the court of the women; see 2Ki 15:35;

which lieth toward the north: where were the image of jealousy, and the women weeping for Tammuz, and other idolatrous practices were committed; which were the cause of the coming of these destroyers: moreover, the Chaldean army with its generals came out of the north; for Babylon lay north or northeast of Jerusalem; and so this gate, as Kimchi says, was northeast; and he adds, and Babylon was northeast of the land of Israel; see **Jer 1:13**;

and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; as ordered, **Eze 9:1**, a different word is here used; it signifies a hammer, with which rocks are broken in pieces, as the above mentioned Jewish writer observes. The Septuagint render it an axe or hatchet:

and one man among them; not one of the six, but who made a seventh. The Jews say this was Gabriel {p}; but this was not a created angel, as they; nor the Holy Spirit as Cocceius; but the Son of God, in a human form; he was among the six, at the head of them, as their leader and commander; he was but one, they six; one Saviour, and six destroyers:

[was] clothed with linen; not in the habit of a warrior, but of a priest; who, as such, had made atonement for the sins of his people, and intercession for them; and this may also denote the purity of his human nature, and his unspotted righteousness, the fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints: and

with a writer's inkhorn by his side; or "at his loins" {q}; nor a slaughter weapon, as the rest; but a writer's inkhorn; hence Kimchi takes him to be the king of Babylon's scribe; but a greater is here meant; even he who took down the names of God's elect in the book of life; and who takes an account, and keeps a book of the words, and even thoughts, of his people and also of their sighs, groans, and tears; see **Mal 3:16**; but now his business was to mark his people, and distinguish them from others, in a providential way; and keep and preserve them from the general ruin and destruction that was coming upon Jerusalem: or, "a girdle on his lions", as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it; and so was prepared and fit for business; which sense of the word is approved of by Castel {r}; and he asks, what has an inkhorn to do at a man's loins? but it should be observed, that it was the custom of the eastern people to carry inkhorns at their sides, and particularly in their girdles, as the Turks do now; who not only fix their knives and poniards in them, as Dr. Shaw {s} relates; but the "hojias", that is, the writers and secretaries, hang their inkhorns in them; and by whom it is observed, that that part of these inkhorns which passes between the girdle and the tunic, and holds their pens, is long and flat; but the vessel for the ink, which rests upon the girdle, is square, with a lid to clasp over it:

and they went in; to the temple, all seven:

and stood beside the brasen altar; the altar of burnt offering, so called to distinguish it from the altar of incense, which was of gold; here they stood not to offer sacrifice, but waiting for their orders, to take vengeance for the sins committed in the temple, and at this altar; near to which stood the image of jealousy, **Eze 8:5**.

{n} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 1. {o} Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 6. {p} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 77. 1. & Gloss. in ib. {q} wyntmb "in lumbis suis", Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {r} Lexic. Polyglott. col. 3393. {s} Travels, p. 227. Ed. 2.

Ezekiel 9:3

Ver. 3. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was,.... That is, the glorious God of Israel; or the glorious Shechinah, and divine Majesty, which dwelt between the cherubim over the mercy seat in the most holy place, removed from thence, as a token of his being about to depart from the temple, which in a short time would be destroyed. The Targum is,

"the glory of the God of Israel departed in the cherub on which he dwelt, in the house of the holy of holies;"

the cherubim removed with him, and were his chariot in which he rode; see Eze 10:18;

to the threshold of the house; of the holy of holies, as Jarchi interprets it; and so was nearer to the brasen altar, where the seven men stood, to give them their orders; of which an account follows:

and he called to the man clothed with linen, which [had] the writer's inkhorn by his side; he, being the principal person, is called first; and his business being to preserve the Lord's people shows that this was the first care of God.

Ezekiel 9:4

Ver. 4. And the Lord said unto him,.... This shows that a divine Person is meant by the glory of the God of Israel:

go through the midst of the city; that is, as it is next explained,

through the midst of Jerusalem; the city the six men had the charge over or against, **Eze 9:1**;

and set a mark upon the foreheads; not the Hebrew letter t, as some say, because in the form of a cross, and so signifying salvation by the cross of Christ; for this letter has no such form, neither in the characters used by the Jews, nor by the Samaritans, at least in the present character; though Origen and Jerom on the place say that the letter "tau" had the form of a cross in the letters the Samaritans used in their time; and this is defended by Walton {t}, who observes, that Azariah in his Hebrew alphabet gives a double figure, one like that which is in present use, and another in the form of a cross, called St. Andrew's cross, and as it appears in some shekels; and in the Vatican alphabet, which Angelus E Roccha published, the last letter has the form of a cross; as have the Ethiopic and Coptic alphabets, which, it is certain, sprung from the ancient Hebrew; and so Montfaucon says {u}, in some Samaritan coins, the letter "thau" has the form of a cross; which, if Scaliger had met with, he says he would never have opposed the testimonies of Origen and Jerom; though, after all, it seems to be no other than the form of the Greek "x"; and so the Talmudists say {w} the high priest, was anointed on his forehead in the same form: some think this letter was the mark, because it is the first letter of the word hrwt, "the law"; as if it pointed out such who were obedient to it; or of the word hyxt "thou shall live". It is a Rabbinical fancy, mentioned by Kimchi {x}, that Gabriel had orders to write the letter t in ink upon the foreheads of the righteous, and in blood upon the foreheads of the wicked; in the one it signified hyxt, "thou shall live", and in the other twmt, "thou shall die"; but, as Calvin observes, rather, if this letter could be thought to be meant, the reason of it was, because it is the last letter of the alphabet; and so may signify, that the Lord's people marked with it are the last among men, or the faith of the world; or that such who persevere to the end shall be saved: but the word signifies, not a letter, but a mark or sign; and so it is interpreted in the Septuagint version, and by the Targum, Jarchi, Kimchi, and others; and denotes the distinction the Lord had made by his grace between them and others; and now by his power and providence in the protection of them; for the, Lord knows them that are his, and will preserve them. The allusion is either to the marking of servants in their foreheads, by which they were known who they belonged to, **Re 7:3**; or to the sprinkling of the posts of the Israelites' houses with blood, when the firstborn of Egypt were destroyed, Ex 12:22;

of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof; the abominations were those abominable idolatries mentioned in the preceding chapter, and those dreadful immoralities hinted at in **Eze 9:9**; all which were grieving and distressing to godly minds, because they were contrary to the nature and will of God; transgressions, of his righteous law; and on account of which his name was dishonoured, and his ways blasphemed and evil spoken of; for these they sighed and groaned in private, and mourned and lamented in public; bearing their testimony against them with bitter expressions of grief and sorrow, by groans, words, and tears; and such as these are taken notice of by the Lord; he comforts those that mourn in Zion, and preserves them.

{t} Supplementum de Sicl. Formis, p. 37. 3. Prolegom. 3. de lingua Hebr. sect. 36. {u} Palaeograph. Graec. l. 2. c. 3. {w} T. Bab. Ceritot, c. 1. fol. 5. 2. {x} Vid. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 1.

Ezekiel 9:5

Ver. 5. And, to the others he said in mine hearing,.... To the other six men that had the slaughter weapons in their hands:

go ye after him through the city; that is, after the man clothed with linen; for he was sent out first to take care of the righteous, and preserve them; and the rest were not suffered to stir till he was gone; and then they are bid to go after him. The Syriac version is,

"to them that were with him he said to them before me, go through the city after me;"

as if these were the words of the man clothed with linen to the other six; and so the Arabic version; of it the other is the true reading, and gives the right sense, as the following words show:

and smite; the inhabitants of the city:

let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity; not that the Chaldeans were inclined to mercy and pity, for they were a cruel and barbarous people; but this is said to show the resentment of God against the sins of the Jews; and that it was his will they should act the severe part they did.

Ezekiel 9:6

Ver. 6. Slay utterly old [and] young, both maids, and little children, and women,.... All, of them objects of compassion, because of their age and sex; and yet none to be spared; and which orders were exactly obeyed; see 2Ch 36:17;

but come not near any man on whom [is] the mark; these were not to be slain; and though some were carried captive, as Daniel, and others; yet it was for their good and God's glory; see **Re 7:3**;

and begin at my sanctuary; the temple, the house of God, and the priests and Levites that dwelt there. The Septuagint version is, "begin at my saints"; those who professed themselves to be the saints of the Lord, and were separated and devoted to his service; and so the Rabbins say {y}, do not read yvdqmm, "at my sanctuary"; but yvdwqmm, "at those that sanctify me", or "my sanctified ones"; which they interpret of those that keep the whole law, from "aleph" to "tau"; see **1Pe 4:17**;

then they began at the ancient men which [were] before the house; the seventy elders of Israel, who offered incense to the idols portrayed upon the walls of the chambers of the temple, **Eze 8:10**; these they slew first.

{y} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 4. 1.

Ezekiel 9:7

Ver. 7. And he said unto them, defile the house,.... The temple; do not be afraid of slaying any person in it, for fear of defiling it; they have defiled it with their abominations, and now do you defile it with their blood:

and fill the courts with the slain; the court of the priests, and the court of the Israelites, and the court of the women, and all the chambers where the priests and Levites were, and had their images portrayed:

go ye forth; from the brasen altar by which they stood, and out of the temple, after they had done their business there, and had slain all they should:

and they went forth, and slew in the city; they went out of the temple, and slew in the city all but those that had the mark.

Ezekiel 9:8

Ver. 8. And it came to pass, while they were slaying them,.... That were in the city:

and I was left; in the temple; and the only one that was left there, the rest were slain; for there were none marked in the temple, only in the city, **Eze 9:4**;

that I fell upon my face; as a supplicant, with great humility:

and cried, and said; being greatly distressed with this awful providence:

ah, Lord God! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel; the ten tribes had been carried captive before; there only remained the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and these were now threatened with an utter destruction:

in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem? shown in the destruction of men, both in the city and temple, by famine, pestilence, and sword.

Ezekiel 9:9

Ver. 9. Then he said unto me,.... In order to satisfy the prophet, and make him easy, and show the equity and justice of the divine proceedings:

the iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah [is] exceeding great; it cannot be well conceived or expressed how great it is; it abounded and superabounded: this is the answer in general, but in particular it follows:

and the land is full of blood; of murders, as the Targum interprets it; of shedding of innocent blood; and even of all atrocious and capital crimes:

and the city full of perverseness; or of perversion of judgment, as the Targum; the city of Jerusalem, where was the highest court of judicature, where the sanhedrim of seventy one sat to do justice and judgment, have nothing but perversion and injustice:

for they say, the Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not; does not concern himself with human affairs, and takes no notice of what is done below; and, having imbibed such atheistical principles, were hardened in sin, and gave themselves over to all iniquity; having no restraints upon them from the consideration of the providence of God, and his government of the world: or else the sense is, that the Lord had withheld his mercy and favours from them; and therefore they showed no regard to him, and looked upon all their evils and calamities as fortuitous events, and not as ordered by him as punishments for their sins.

Ezekiel 9:10

Ver. 10. And as for me also,.... As they have not spared the poor and the needy, the widow and the fatherless, but have perverted their judgment, and shed innocent blood:

mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, [but] I will recompence their way upon their head; deal with them by the law of retaliation, and reward them according to their deserts; see **Eze 7:4**.

Ezekiel 9:11

Ver. 11. And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which [had] the inkhorn by his side,.... **Eze 9:2**; to whom the orders were given to mark the mourners in the city, **Eze 9:4**. The Syriac version is, "then I saw the man", &c. which must direct him to observe and call to mind the distinguishing goodness of God to his own people:

reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me; meaning that the righteous were marked, and had been preserved, while the others were slain. Christ, as man and Mediator, sustains the character of a servant; as such he has commands enjoined him, which he has obeyed; he has done all he was to do; he has fulfilled the whole will of God, and wrought out the complete salvation of his people; a report of which he made when here on earth, Joh 17:4; and will do again at the last day; when all his people will be gathered in, and he shall deliver the kingdom to the Father, and present them all to him, having been kept by his power, saying, "lo, I and the children thou hast given me", **Isa 8:18**; when all will be done as was commanded, and he undertook, and the report made accordingly. Ben Melech observes, that the "Keri", or marginal reading is,

"according to all which thou hast commanded me;"

as if he should say, there is nothing wanting of all that was commanded.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 10

In this chapter is a vision, very much like that in the first chapter, with some difference, and with a different view, the design of it being to represent the wrath of God against Jerusalem, and his departure from the city and temple. A throne much like that in **Eze 1:26** is described,
Eze 10:1; orders are given from it to scatter coals over the city,
Eze 10:2; the situation of the cherubim when these orders were given,
Eze 10:3; the removal of the glory of the Lord from the cherub to the threshold of the house, and the consequences of it; the house filled with smoke; the court with the brightness of the Lord's glory; and the sound of the cherubim's wings heard to the outer court, as the voice of God, Eze 10:4; the orders of taking and scattering fire over the city executed, and the manner in which they were, Eze 10:6; a description of the cherubim and the wheels, much like that in the first chapter, Eze 10:8; the departure of the glory of God from the threshold to the east gate of the Lord's house, with the motion of the cherubim and wheels along with him, Eze 10:18; and the chapter is concluded with observing, that the cherubim are the same with the living creatures seen in the vision of the first chapter, and had the same form, likeness, and motion, Eze 10:20.

Ver. 1. Then I looked, and, behold,.... After the vision of the destruction of the greater part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem by the six men with slaughter weapons, and of the preservation of a few by the man clothed with linen; another vision is seen by the prophet, in some things like to that he saw, of which there is an account in the first chapter; though in some circumstances different, and exhibited with a different view; partly to represent the destruction of Jerusalem by fire, and partly the Lord's removal from it, before or at that time:

in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim; the same with the living creatures, **Eze 1:22**; where the firmament or expanse of heaven is said to be over their heads, as here; See Gill on "Eze 1:22":

there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne; See Gill on "Eze 1:26".

Ezekiel 10:2

Ver. 2. And he spake unto the man clothed with linen,.... That is, the God of

Israel, or the glory of the Lord, that sat upon the throne before described; he gave orders to the man clothed in linen, who appears in another character, and represents the Chaldean or Roman army:

and said, go in between the wheels, [even] under the cherub; the singular for the plural, the "cherubim"; the wheels were under these; the churches are under their ministers, their pastors, guides, and governors; or rather, since the wheels were by the cherubim, it should be rendered, as by some, "unto the cherub", or "cherubim" {a}:

and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter [them] over the city; these "coals of fire" were an emblem of the wrath of God against Jerusalem, and of the destruction of it by fire; and these being fetched from between the cherubim, show that the cause of this wrath and ruin was the ill treatment of the prophets of the Lord; see 2Ch 36:15; as the destruction of the same city afterwards by the Romans was owing, as to the rejection and killing of the Messiah, so to the prosecution of his apostles, **1Th 2:15**;

and he went in my sight; in the sight of the prophet, as it appeared to him in vision he saw him go in, as he was ordered, between the wheels, and under the cherubim; but as yet he did not see him take the coals of fire, and much less scatter them; these were afterwards done, as related in the other part of the vision.

{a} bwrkl txt la "in locum cerubinorum, [vel] cheruborum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ad cherubim", Tigurine version; which is approved by Noldius, p. 84. No. 398.

Ezekiel 10:3

Ver. 3. Now the cherubim stood on the right side of the house,.... According to the Targum, it was the south side of the house; and so Jarchi interprets it opposite to the north, where the gross idolatries were committed, **Eze 8:3**; standing at the greatest distance from them, and bearing their testimony against them:

when the man went in; they stood as it were in a levee, through which the man passed, waiting upon him; paying a respect to him; assenting to what he did; and approving of it: this circumstance is mentioned, because they were not always in this position, only at this time; nor did they continue so; we afterwards hear of their motion:

and the cloud filled the inner court; the court of the priests, not as a token of God's presence, as at the dedication of the temple; but rather of judicial blindness and darkness, which the people of the Jews were left unto.

Ezekiel 10:4

Ver. 4. Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub,.... Or, "cherubim"; those that were upon the mercy seat, between which the Shechinah or glorious majesty of God dwelt, in the most holy place: this is a token and intimation of the Lord's leaving of the temple; and a little before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, to which this vision chiefly, if not together, refers, a voice was heard in the temple,

"let us go hence {b}:"

[and stood] over the threshold of the house; either of the holy of holies, from whence he was removing; or rather of the holy place, the court of the priests, the inward court, and so open to the outward court, and view of the people in it:

and the house was filled with the cloud; the temple, being forsaken of God, was filled with darkness; as an emblem of that blindness which is come upon the Jews, and will continue on them till the fulness of the Gentiles brought in:

and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory; either the inward court, as the glory of the Lord passed through it, from the holy of holies; or rather the outward court, of which mention is made in Eze 10:4; the glory of the Lord being on the threshold Of the house, which looked towards that, and so enlightened it. This outward court signifies the Gentiles; who, when the Lord removed from the Jewish nation and people, were favoured with the glorious light of the Gospel, and ordinances of Christ; whereby they were enlightened, and filled with the knowledge of the Lord; with the knowledge of him, who is the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person; so through the fall of the Jews salvation came to the Gentiles, Ro 11:11.

{b} Josephus de Bello Judaeorum, l. 6. c. 5, sect. 3.

Ezekiel 10:5

Ver. 5. And the sound of the cherubim's wings was heard [even] to the outer court,.... Or outward court. The sound of the Gospel, which is a joyful sound; a sound of love, grace, and mercy; of life, liberty, peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; the sound of this in the swift ministry of the apostles, signified by the "cherubim's wings", went into all the earth, and throughout the whole Gentile world; by which many souls were quickened and enlightened; many churches were formed; and the glory of the Lord, being revealed, was seen by all flesh; and the whole world was filled with the brightness of the Lord's glory, as it will be again, and more abundantly, in the latter day: and this sound was

as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh; the Gospel is as thunder, which is the voice of God; and the ministers of it are "Boanergeses", "sons of thunder", **Mr 3:17**: it shakes the conscience; shows men their danger; and points at the Saviour: it is not the word of man, but in deed and in truth the word of God: it is the voice of Christ, who is the Almighty; and it appears to be so, by its powerful effects, when attended with a divine energy, in quickening dead sinners; enlightening dark minds; unstopping deaf ears; softening hard hearts; and turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; it is so when God speaks in it, and by it; when it comes not in word only, but in the Holy Ghost, and in power.

Ezekiel 10:6

Ver. 6. And it came to pass, [that] when he had commanded the man clothed with linen,.... After the orders were given by him that was upon the throne to the man thus described:

saying, take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubim; as in Eze 10:2;

then he went in; immediately, into the place where the wheels and cherubim were; even under the firmament of heaven, and the throne that was in it:

and stood beside the wheels, or "wheel"; to see what it was, as Kimchi thinks;

or rather in order to go in between them, as he was bid to do,
Eze 10:2.

Ezekiel 10:7

Ver. 7. And [one] cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubim,.... One of the four living creatures, or cherubim, put out his hand from among the rest:

unto the fire that [was] between the cherubim; so fire is said to go up and down among them, **Eze 1:13**; to which the reference is here:

and took [thereof], and put [it] into the hands of [him that was] clothed with linen: denoting, as before observed, that it was for the ill usage of the ministers of God's word that wrath came upon the people of the Jews, and the destruction of their city by fire; so wrath will come upon antichrist, and the antichristian states, for their usage of the ministers and churches of Christ, and in consequence of the prayers, and by the instigation of such persons; see **Re 6:9**; so one of the four beasts or living creatures, the same with the cherubim here, is said to give to the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, Re 15:7;

who took [it], and went out; took the fire, and went out of the temple, and scattered it upon the city of Jerusalem; so representing the Chaldean, or rather the Roman army, burning it with fire; see Mt 22:7; where they are called the armies of the King of kings.

Ezekiel 10:8

Ver. 8. And there appeared in the cherubim,.... The Septuagint version is, "I saw the cherubim"; and so the Syriac version, "I saw in the cherubim"; what follows:

the form of a man's hand under their wings; one of them put forth his hand, which was seen by the prophet, as declared in Eze 10:7; but this was only the "form" of one; which is observed to show that it is not to be taken literally, but as seen in the vision of prophecy; and being under their wings denotes secrecy and privacy: and the whole being applied to the ministers of the word is expressive of their activity and diligence in the work of the Lord, both in

private and in public; and that they make no boast nor show of their works and labours, and ascribe nothing to themselves, but all to the grace of God that is with them, 1Co 15:10;
See Gill on "Eze 1:8".

Ezekiel 10:9

Ver. 9. And when I looked, behold, the four wheels by the cherubim,.... The churches by the ministers: of these "wheels", and why the churches are so called, and of their number "four", and their situation "by" the cherubim, See Gill on "Eze 1:15";

one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: a minister to a church; every church has its own pastor, elder, or overseer, by it, and over it:

and the appearance of the wheels [was] as the colour of a beryl stone; a precious stone of a sea green; See Gill on "Eze 1:16". The Targum renders it in general, "a precious stone"; the Septuagint version, "a carbuncle"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "a chrysolite".

Ezekiel 10:10

Ver. 10. And [as for] their appearances, they four had one likeness,.... They were exactly like one another; they were all composed of the same matter, had all the colour of a beryl stone, were all in the same form of a wheel; and in matter, form, and shape, entirely tallied and agreed one with another, as true Gospel churches do:
See Gill on "Eze 1:16";

as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel: not included in one another, but were formed in a cross or transverse way;
See Gill on "Eze 1:16".

Ezekiel 10:11

Ver. 11. When they went, they went upon their four sides,.... Which four sides they had, by being made in the transverse way before mentioned; just as the New Jerusalem church state is said to be foursquare, Re 21:16; and this may denote the uniformity of Gospel churches in every state and condition, prosperous and adverse; and the constancy of their walk, conduct, and conversation:

they turned not as they went: neither to the right hand or the left, but went on in the path of faith and duty, keeping close to the word of God, and keeping up a conversation, discipline, and worship, according to it:

but to the place where the head looked they, followed it; meaning either the rulers, guides, and governors of churches, pastors and elders; whose faith and conversation are followed by the members: or rather Christ himself, the head of the church, who is to be followed whithersoever he goes or directs: unless by the head is meant the same as the spirit, **Eze 1:20**; the Spirit of God, by whom the true members of Gospel churches are led, and after whom they walk. The Targum is,

"the place to which the first turned (or looked), after it they went;"

that is, the first of the wheels; and so may signify that the primitive churches are the pattern after which all the churches in after ages are to go;

they turned not as they went; this is repeated partly for the confirmation of it; and partly to excite attention to it, as being worthy of observation; See Gill on "Eze 1:17".

Ezekiel 10:12

Ver. 12. And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings,.... This is to be understood not of the wheels, to whom body or flesh, backs, hands, and wings, do not belong, but of the cherubim; and the sense is, that as the wheels were alike, and had one and the same form and appearance, so had the cherubim; they were exactly alike in their body, backs, hands, and wings; denoting the agreement between Gospel ministers, in their doctrine, work, and conversation:

and the wheels [were] full of eyes round about; that is, the rings or circles of the wheels, as in **Eze 1:18**; signifying that churches consisted of enlightened persons, who had a sight of their sin and danger, and looked to Christ for salvation, and walked circumspectly, and watched over one another:

[even] the wheels that they four had: the wheels that belonged to the four living creatures or cherubim.

Ezekiel 10:13

Ver. 13. As for the wheels, it was cried to them in my hearing,.... Or they were called, as the prophet heard in the vision, by the following name:

O wheel, or, "the wheel": for though there are several particular churches, yet they make up but one general assembly and Church of the firstborn, written in heaven; and will be all together in their perfect state, signified by the round form of the wheel;
See Gill on "Eze 1:15".

Ezekiel 10:14

Ver. 14. And everyone had four faces,.... That is, everyone of the wheels, for of these the words are continued; and which agrees with **Eze 1:15**;
See Gill on "Eze 1:15":

the first face [was] the face of a cherub; this being in the room of the ox's face, **Eze 1:10**, shows that the face of an ox and a cherub are the same; and that the living creatures have the general name of cherubim, from the face of an ox; and are so called from brk, which in the Syriac and Chaldee languages signifies to "plough", that creature being made use of in such service:

and the second face [was] the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle; how these are applicable to Gospel churches, and the true members of them,
See Gill on "Eze 1:15".

Ezekiel 10:15

Ver. 15. And the cherubim were lifted up,.... From the earth;
See Gill on "Eze 1:19";

this [is] the living creature that I saw by the river Chebar: a river in Chaldea, where the prophet was when he had the vision of the living creatures recorded in the "first" chapter; and hence it is out of doubt that the living creatures and the cherubim are the same.

Ezekiel 10:16

Ver. 16. And when the cherubim went, the wheels went by them,.... Ministers being guides to the churches in doctrine, worship, devotion, and conversation; See Gill on "Eze 1:19";

and when the cherubim lifted up their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also turned not from beside them; ministers and churches go together; if the one remove, the other do also; they cannot long subsist without each other; and, generally speaking, as are the light, knowledge, zeal, affection, and devotion of the one, such are those of the other; See Gill on "Eze 1:19".

Ezekiel 10:17

Ver. 17. When they stood, [these] stood,.... When the one were inactive, lifeless, and without motion, making no progress in knowledge, experience, and practice, the other were so likewise;
See Gill on "Eze 1:21";

and when they were lifted up, [these] lifted up themselves [also]; like people, like priest, whether in things commendable or not, **Ho 4:9**;

for the spirit of the living creature [was] in them; the same spirit that was in the cherubim was in the wheels; and the same Spirit of God, who is a "spirit of life" {c}, as the words may be rendered, is in the churches, as in the ministers; generally speaking, if the one are lively, the other are also, and both move as they are acted by the Spirit; and also their motion from place to place, which is spoken of in Eze 10:18, is directed by the Spirit; see Ac 16:6.

{c} hyxh xwr pneuma bwhv, Sept. "spiritus vitae", V. L. Starckius.

Ezekiel 10:18

Ver. 18. Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house,.... Whither he had removed from the cherub or the cherubim, between the mercy seat, Eze 10:4; taking another step towards a general departure from the temple and city, of which this was another signal and warning:

and stood over the cherubim: not on the mercy seat from whence he came, for hither he returned not; but over the cherubim or living creatures seen in the vision, which were under the throne in the firmament of heaven; an emblem, as we have seen, of Gospel ministers: and this may denote the exaltation of Christ, who is the glory of the Lord, the brightness of his Father's glory, above sheen; his protection of them, and presence with them; for, let him move where he will, he will not depart from his faithful ministers; he will be with them to the end of the world.

Ezekiel 10:19

Ver. 19. And the cherubim lifted up their wings,.... As birds do, when they are about to remove and fly away; these being upon the motion, ready to depart, as well as the glory of the Lord:

and mounted up from the earth in my sight: the land of Judea, where the Gospel was first preached; but this being slighted and despised, the apostles and first ministers of the Gospel took their flight from thence, and turned to the Gentiles:

when they went out, the wheels also [were] beside them: wherever they went in the Gentile world, their ministry was successful, souls were converted, and churches formed; when the glory of the God of Israel departed from the temple, and from the city of Jerusalem, and from the land of Judea, the Gospel ministry and the Gospel church state were removed likewise, and carried and fixed elsewhere:

and [everyone] stood at the door of the east gate of the Lord's house; that is, the glory of the God of Israel, and the cherubim, and the wheels, they stood together in one place, the eastern gate of the temple, one of the outward gates: the gate of the court of the Israelites, or outward court, which looked to the east; which shows that they were just going, and leaving the house or temple desolate, no more to return to it; see Mt 23:38; the next remove was into the city, and then to a mountain on the east side of it; see Eze 11:23; it was in the eastern part of the world that the Gospel was first preached, after it was carried from Judea:

and the glory of the God of Israel [was] over them above; both over the cherubim and the wheels; great gifts were bestowed upon the ministers, and great grace was upon the churches; and the presence of God was with both, and a glory on them, and on that glory a defence.

Ezekiel 10:20

Ver. 20. This [is] the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel, by the river of Chebar,.... This is repeated from
Eze 10:15; not only for the confirmation of it; but with an addition, to show that the appearance of the man upon the throne, **Eze 1:26**, is no other than the God of Israel; and inasmuch as Christ is there meant, for the Father never appeared in a human form, it follows that Christ is the God of Israel, under whose power, protection, and influence, the cherubim, his ministers, are; and so this is a proof of the true and proper deity of Christ:

and I knew that they [were] the cherubim; not by having seen the cherubim on the mercy seat, and comparing these forms with them, which none but a high priest could ever see; for, though Ezekiel was a priest, it does not appear that he was a high priest; but by the forms of them he had seen carved on the doors and walls of the temple, **1Ki 6:29**.

Ezekiel 10:21

Ver. 21. Every one had four faces apiece,.... Every one of the four living creatures, or cherubim, had four faces; which were the face of a man, of a lion, of an ox, and of an eagle, **Eze 1:10**;

and everyone four wings: the Septuagint version reads eight wings; and the Syriac version "six"; so many in all indeed they had,
See Gill on "Eze 1:23";

and the likeness of the hands of a man [was] under their wings;
See Gill on "Eze 10:8".

Ezekiel 10:22

Ver. 22. And the likeness of their faces [was] the same faces,.... Or their faces were like the same,

which I saw by the river of Chebar; which prove that the living creatures and the cherubim must be the same:

their appearance and themselves; were exactly the same there was no difference in their faces or in their bodies:

they went everyone straight forward; their motion as well as their form were alike; they kept one even course, looking right on, and their eyes right before them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 11

This chapter contains an account of the sins of the princes of Judah; a prophecy of their destruction; some comfortable, promises respecting those of the captivity; and the chapter is closed with the finishing of the vision of the Lord's removing from Jerusalem; and the whole being ended, the prophet related it to the men of the captivity. In Eze 11:1; the prophet, is shown five and twenty men, among whom were two he knew, and are mentioned by name, and were princes of the people; and he is told that these men devised mischief, and gave bad advice to the people, Eze 11:2; wherefore he is bid to prophesy against them, Eze 11:4; which he accordingly did, the Spirit of the Lord falling upon him, Eze 11:5; declaring that their secret evils were known, as well as their public ones; and that, seeing they had multiplied their slain, and had feared the sword, the sword should come upon them; some should fall by it, and others should be carried captive; the consequence of which would be, that God would be known, and his justice acknowledged, it being what their sins deserved, Eze 11:6; upon this prophecy being delivered out, one of the princes before named died immediately; which filled the prophet with great concern, and put him upon expostulating with God, Eze 11:13; wherefore, for his comfort, he is told, that though the inhabitants of Jerusalem had insulted their brethren that were carried captive, and looked upon the land of Israel as their own possession, that God would be a little sanctuary to them; that he would gather them out of all lands, and give them the land of Israel; that they should come thither, and remove all idolatry from it, and should have regenerating and renewing grace given them, to walk in the statutes and ordinances of the Lord, by which they should appear to be his people, and he to be their God, Eze 11:14; but as for such that continued in their abominable idolatries, these should receive a just recompence of reward, Eze 11:21; after which follows an account of the entire removal of the glory of the Lord from the city of Jerusalem, Eze 11:22; and the prophet being, in vision, brought again to Chaldea, reports the whole he had seen to them of the captivity, Eze 11:24.

Ver. 1. Moreover, the spirit lifted me up,.... From the inner court of the temple, where the prophet was, according to the last account of him, **Eze 8:16**; it was the same Spirit that took him by the lock of his head, and lifted him up, as in **Eze 8:3**; and perhaps in the same manner:

and brought me unto the east gate of the Lord's house, which looketh eastward; where were the cherubim, and the wheels, and the glory of God above them, Eze 10:19;

and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men; not the same as in **Eze 8:16**; for they were in a different place, between the porch and the altar; and about different service, they were worshipping there; and seem to be men of a different order, priests; whereas these were at the door of the eastern gate, sitting as a court of judicature, and were civil magistrates; though Jarchi and Kimchi take them to be the same. Some say Jerusalem was divided into twenty four parishes, districts, or wards, and everyone had its own head, ruler, and governor; and that there was one who was the president over them all, like the mayor and aldermen of a city;

among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur; not the same that is mentioned in **Eze 8:11**; he was the son of Shaphan, this of Azur; he was one of the seventy of the ancients of Israel, this one of the twenty five heads or rulers of the people; he seems to have been a prince; by having a censer in his hand, this was a priest: the Septuagint and Arabic versions call him Jechoniah:

and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah; these two are mentioned by name, as being principal men, and well known by the prophet; and the latter is observed more especially for what befell him, hereafter related:

princes of the people; men who were entrusted with power and authority to exercise the laws of the nation; and who should have been reformers of the people, and ought to have given them good advice, and set them good examples; whereas they were the reverse, as follows:

Ezekiel 11:2

Ver. 2. Then said he unto me, son of man,.... That is, the Lord, or, the Spirit of the Lord, that lifted him up:

these [are] the men that devise mischief; or "vanity" {d}; this is to be understood not of the two only that are named, though it may of them chiefly; but of all the twenty five, who formed schemes for the holding out of the siege, and for the security of the city, and of themselves in it, which was all folly and vanity:

and give wicked counsel in this city; either in ecclesiastical affairs, to forsake the worship of God, and cleave to the idols of the nations; or in civil things, as follows:

{d} Nwa "vanitatem", Calvin, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius; "vanum", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 11:3

Ver. 3. Which say [it is] not near, let us build houses,.... Meaning that the destruction of the city was not near, as the prophet had foretold, Eze 7:3; and therefore encourage the people to build houses, and rest themselves secure, as being safe from all danger, and having nothing to fear from the Chaldean army; and so putting away the evil day far from them, which was just at hand: though the words may be rendered, "it is not [proper] to build houses near" {e}; near the city of Jerusalem, in the suburbs of it, since they would be liable to be destroyed by the enemy; but this would not be condemned as wicked counsel, but must be judged very prudent and advisable: and the same may be objected to another rendering of the word, which might be offered, "not in the midst to build houses"; or it is not proper to build houses in the midst of the city, in order to receive the multitude that flock out of the country, through fear of the enemy, to Jerusalem for safety; since by this means, as the number of the inhabitants would be increased, so provisions in time would become scarce, and a famine must ensue, which would oblige to deliver up the city into the hands of the besiegers; wherefore the first sense seems best. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render them, "are not the houses lately built?" and so not easily demolished, and are like to continue long, and we in them;

this [city is] the cauldron, and we [be] the flesh; referring to, and laughing at, what one of the prophets, namely Jeremiah, had said of them, comparing them to a boiling pot, **Jer 1:13**; and it is as if they should say, be it so, that this city is as a cauldron or boiling pot, then we are the flesh in it; and as flesh is not taken out of a pot until it is boiled, no more shall we be removed from hence till we die; we shall live and die in this city; and as it is difficult and dangerous to take hot boiling meat out of a cauldron, so it, is unlikely we should be taken out of this city, and carried captive; what a cauldron or brasen pot is to the flesh, it holds and keeps it from falling into the fire; that the walls of Jerusalem are to us, our safety and preservation; nor need we fear captivity.

{e} Mytb twnb bwrqb al "non in propinque aedificandae domus", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Polanus; "non in propinquo aedificare domos", Montanus, Piscator, Starckius.

Ezekiel 11:4

Ver. 4. Therefore prophesy against them,.... Evil things against them, things that are disagreeable to them; since they flatter themselves with good things, and cry peace and safety, let them know that destruction is coming upon them: or, "concerning them" {f}; what will befall them, and that it will be otherwise with them than they imagine:

prophesy, O son of man; this is repeated, not only to stir up the prophet to the performance of his work and office, not fearing the faces, and revilings, and mockings of men; but to show the indignation of the Lord at their scoffs and jeers, and the certain accomplishment of what should be predicted.

{f} Mhyle "de eis", V. L. "super eos", Pagninus, Montanus.

Ezekiel 11:5

Ver. 5. And the spirit of the Lord fell upon me,.... In an extraordinary manner, and afresh, and enlightened his mind, and showed him things that should come to pass; and filled him with boldness and courage to declare them. The Targum interprets it of the spirit of prophecy:

and said unto me, speak; what I shall show and put into thy mouth, that speak out; be not afraid, but boldly declare all that I give thee in commission to say:

thus saith the Lord, thus have ye said, O house of Israel; as in Eze 11:3; which perhaps was said in secret, and spoken privately, but known by the Lord; and it was not only the princes that said it, but the whole body of the people joined in with it, and agreed to it; though it is very probable they were influenced by the former:

for I know the things that come into your mind, [everyone of] them; not only their scoffing words, but the thoughts of their hearts; not one of them escaped the knowledge of God; the consideration of which should command an awe on men, and engage them to a watchfulness over their thoughts, words, and actions.

Ezekiel 11:6

Ver. 6. Ye have multiplied your slain in this city,.... Had killed many of the prophets of the Lord that had been sent unto them, and had shed much innocent blood; and not only had unjustly condemned many to die, and had put them to death without a cause; but also the death of all those that were slain while the city was besieging, and when it was taken, were owing to their advice and counsel, in encouraging them to hold out, and not deliver up the city; fancying they should be able to defend it, contrary to the declarations of the Lord by the prophet; wherefore their death is laid to such advisers, and they are called their slain:

and ye have filled the streets thereof with the slain; such numbers of innocent persons being put to death, as in the times of Manasseh, 2Ki 21:16; or so many dying of the famine, pestilence, and sword, during the siege, and at the taking of Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 11:7

Ver. 7. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Applying the parabolical expressions they had derided, and explaining them, in a different sense from what they had put upon them:

your slain whom ye have laid in the midst of it, they [are] the flesh; the prophets they had killed; the persons, who had died innocently for crimes laid to their charge they had not been guilty of; and such who had fallen by one judgment or another since the siege, they were the persons intended by "the flesh", and not such as were alive; and therefore could promise themselves nothing from this proverb they had taken up, and scoffed at:

and this [city is] the cauldron; that holds the slain, and in which they will lie and continue, and not the living:

but I will bring you forth out of the midst of it: where they promised themselves safety, and a long continuance; yet should not abide, but be carried captive.

Ezekiel 11:8

Ver. 8. Ye have feared the sword,.... Of the Chaldeans; and therefore they sent to the Egyptians for help. The Targum is,

"ye have been afraid of them that kill with the sword;"

and not afraid of the Lord; see Mt 10:28;

and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord God; or those that kill with the sword, as the Targum; meaning the Chaldeans, who were sent by the Lord, and, when they took the city, put many to death by the sword, and carried captive others.

Ezekiel 11:9

Ver. 9. And I will bring you out of the midst thereof,.... Jerusalem, the cauldron, as they said it was, and where they thought they should be safe; this is repeated, to express the certainty of it, and to excite their attention to it, and remove their vain confidence:

and deliver you into the hands of strangers; the Chaldeans:

and will execute judgments among you; punishments for sin, such as famine, pestilence, sword, and captivity.

Ezekiel 11:10

Ver. 10. Ye shall fall by the sword,.... Of the Chaldeans; not in the city of Jerusalem, but out of it, when it was broken up, and they fled:

I will judge you in the border of Israel; that is, inflict punishment on them, particularly by the sword; which was done at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where the sons of Zedekiah were slain, and all the princes of Judah, Jer 52:9; and this was on the border of the land of Israel, Nu 34:8;

and ye shall know that I [am] the Lord; who knows things, and foretells them before they are; and am able to accomplish all that is threatened; and am just and righteous in all my ways and works; and who am known by the judgments executed by me.

Ezekiel 11:11

Ver. 11. This [city] shall not be your cauldron,.... It was one, as in Eze 11:7; but not theirs; it was the cauldron for the slain, for the dead, but not the living:

neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst of it; or, "and ye shall be" {g} or, "but ye shall be"; the negative is understood, and rightly supplied by us; though the Targum renders it without it,

"but ye shall be in the midst of it, as flesh that is boiled in the midst of a pot:"

[but] I will judge you in the border of Israel; this is repeated, that they might take notice of it, and to assure them that so it would be.

{g} wyht Mtaw "et vos critis", Montanus, Cocceius.

Ezekiel 11:12

Ver. 12. And ye shall know that I [am] the Lord,....
See Gill on "Eze 11:10";

for ye have not walked in my statutes, neither executed my judgments; which is the reason why the Lord would judge them on the border of Israel, and deliver them up into the hands of strangers; nor can he be thought to act the severe and cruel part to them, when this their disobedience is observed; since they had his statutes and his judgments made known to them, which were not known to other nations, and yet they regarded them not; wherefore it was but righteous in him to inflict his judgments upon them; and which is the more aggravated by what follows, and which still more clearly shows the justice of the divine proceedings against them:

but have done after the manners of the Heathens that [are] round about you; or, "the judgments of the Heathens" {h}; regarded them, and acted according to them, when they slighted and disobeyed the judgments of the Lord; instead of worshipping of him according to his revealed will, they served the idols of the nations round about them, and gave into all their superstitious rites and ceremonies.

{h} Myywgh yjpvmk "juxta judicia genitium", Pagninus, Montanus; "secundum jura gentium", Junius & Tremellius; Piscator; "secundum judicia gentium", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 11:13

Ver. 13. And it came to pass when I prophesied,.... Or, "as I prophesied" {i}; that is, while he was prophesying, or declaring the above things from the mouth of the Lord, concerning the slaughter of the Jews by the sword, and the captivity of the rest:

that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died; one of the princes of the people, and was among the five and twenty men the prophet saw at the door of the east gate of the temple, Eze 11:1; this man dropped down dead on a sudden, just as Ananias and Sapphira at the feet of Peter, **Ac 5:5**. It was in a vision Ezekiel saw this, and in the temple; but no doubt at the same time this prince died at his own house, whose death was notified to the prophet in this way;

then fell I down upon my face; as greatly surprised at the event, and filled with concern at what would be the issue of this providence; looking upon it as a pledge and earnest, a token and forerunner, of the utter destruction of the people:

and cried with a loud voice; expressing the vehemency of his affection, and the earnestness of his supplication:

and said, ah, Lord God! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel? or, "art thou making?" {k} the ten tribes had been carried captive many years ago, and a large number of the other two tribes in Jeconiah's captivity, so that there were but a remnant left in the land; and, upon the sudden and awful death of this prince, the prophet feared the Lord was going to make an utter end of them at once; which he deprecates.

{i} yabnhk "me prophetante", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus. {k} hve hta "tu faciem", Montanus, Starckius.

Ezekiel 11:14

Ver. 14. Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,.... In answer to his prayer. The Targum calls it,

"the word of prophecy from the Lord;"

this was by way of comfort to the captives in Babylon, as the former was by way of threatening to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 11:15

Ver. 15. Son of man, thy brethren, [even] thy brethren, the men of thy kindred,.... Or, "of thy redemption" {l}; to whom the right of redemption of his lands and possessions belonged, as it did to those that were next akin. The Septuagint, by a mistake of the word, render it, "the men of thy captivity"; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions, following them. It is true those were his fellow captives who are here meant; some of them that were carried captive were his brethren by blood, and all by nation and religion; and these phrases, and the repetition, of them, are designed not only to excite the prophet's attention to, and to assure them of what is after declared; but to take off his concern for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who had used his brethren ill, and to turn his thoughts and affections towards his friends in Chaldea. Kimchi thinks that these three expressions refer to three captivities; the captivity of the children of Gad and Reuben; the captivity of Samaria, or the ten tribes; and the captivity of Jehoiachin. It follows,

and all the house of Israel wholly [are] they; or,

"all the house of Israel, all of them,"

as the Targum; that is, all the whole house of Israel. The Septuagint render it, "all the house of Israel is made an end of"; the Syriac version, "shall be blotted out"; and the Arabic version, "shall be cut off"; all wrong; since these words are not a threatening to the ten tribes, or those of the Jews in captivity, for all that follows is in favour of them; but only point at the persons the prophet is turned unto, and who are the subject of the following discourse. A colon, or at least a semicolon, should be here put; since the accent "athnach" is upon the last word;

unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, get ye far from the Lord; Kimchi interprets it, from the land of the Lord, the holy land; they being carried captive into a foreign country. The Targum is,

"from the fear of the Lord;"

the worship of the Lord; they being at a distance from the temple, and the service of it. These words are an insult of the inhabitants of Jerusalem upon the captives, suggesting that they were great sinners, and for their sins were taken away from their own land, and carried to Babylon; and that they deserved to be excommunicated from the house and people of God, and were so; and indeed this is a kind of a form of excommunication of them:

unto us is this land given in possession; you have forfeited your right to it, and are disinherited; we are sole heirs, and in the possession of it, and shall ever continue in it. The Syriac version reads this and the preceding clause as if they were the word of the Israelites to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, thus;

"because they said to them, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, depart from the Lord, for unto us is given this land for an inheritance."

The Arabic version indeed makes them to be the words of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but render the last clause thus; "to you" (that is, "the Israelites") "is given the land for an inheritance".

{l} Ktlag yvna "viri redemptionis tua", Montanus, Heb. "viri redempturae tuae", Piscator.

Ezekiel 11:16

Ver. 16. Therefore say, thus saith the Lord God,.... Since they were so insulted and ill treated by their brethren the Jews:

although I have cast them afar off among the Heathen; both the ten tribes, even all the house of Israel, who were carried into Assyria, and placed in the cities of the Medes, in Halath and Habor, by the river Gozan, 2Ki 17:6; and those of the Jews in Jeconiah's captivity, among whom were Ezekiel, and his brethren, and his kindred:

and although I have scattered them among the countries; and therefore, what with the distance of the place where they were, and the dispersion of them among the people where they resided, their case might seem to be desperate; and that there was no probability, and scarce any possibility, of their being preserved as a people, and of their restoration to their own land:

yet will I be to them a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come; their dwelling place, as he has been to his people in all generations their protection from all their enemies, in whom, and by whose power, they should be safe; and whose presence they should enjoy, though deprived of public ordinances, of temple worship and service; though they were at a distance from the great sanctuary, the temple, the inhabitants of Jerusalem boasted of, yet the Lord would make up the want of that to them with himself. The Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi {m} interpret this of the synagogues, which were second to the temple, the Israelites had in foreign countries, where they prayed to the Lord, and worshipped him, and enjoyed his presence. It may be rendered, "the sanctuary of a few" {n}; they being but few, especially that were truly godly, that were carried captive: or, "a sanctuary for a little while" {o}; that is, during seventy years, and then they should be returned, as follows.

The Targum is,

"I have given them synagogues, second to my sanctuary, and they are as few in the provinces where they are carried captive."

{m} Ex T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 29. 1. {n} jem vdqml "ad sanctuarium paucitatis", Calvin; "in sanctuarium paucorum", Cocceius. So Ben Melech says the word is a substantive in some copies. {o} Paulisper, Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Castalio.

Ezekiel 11:17

Ver. 17. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, I will even gather you from the people,.... The Babylonians, Medes, and Persians, where they had been carried captive:

and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered; that is, out of Chaldea and Media, out of which they should come in a body, and not singly, or in small numbers, as they did when Cyrus issued out his proclamation:

and I will give you the land of Israel; not only the Jews of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, but many of the ten tribes came out of Babylon with Zerubbabel, and settled in the land of Israel; and hither they came also in later times, even those that settled in other countries; at their several festivals, and about such time more especially that the Messiah was expected, and continued there; and this will have a fuller completion at the restoration of the Jews in the latter days.

Ezekiel 11:18

Ver. 18. And they shall come thither,.... That those of the captivity shall come to the land of Israel, they or their posterity:

and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof; the idols of the nations, that had been there introduced, detestable to God and all good men:

and all the abominations thereof from thence; idols, as before, even all of them, so that idolatry should be wholly rooted out; this had its accomplishment under Zerubbabel, Ezra, Haggai, &c. when the worship of God was restored, and there was a reformation of many abuses in religion; and again in the times of the Maccabees; and will have a greater fulfilment at the time of the conversion of the Jews; when everything that is detestable and abominable among that people will be removed; of which conversion the following words are a prophecy.

Ezekiel 11:19

Ver. 19. And I will give them one heart,.... In opposition to a divided heart, Ho 10:2; divided between the true God and idols, wavering and halting between two opinions, sometimes serving God, and sometimes Baal; a heart to pursue one way of worship, and to serve the Lord with one shoulder or consent, Jer 32:40; a heart sincere to God and man, in opposition to a double or hypocritical one,
Ps 12:2; a heart single to the honour and glory of God, and firmly attached to his word and worship: also concord, harmony, an unity of affections to one another, so as to be of one heart and one soul, as the first Christians were, who were Jews, **Ac 4:32**; and an unity of judgment, an oneness of principle and practice, as there ought to be, **1Co 1:10**; and all this is the gift of God, and flows from his grace and favour. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "another heart"; different from what they had before;

and I will put a new spirit within you; meaning either the Holy Spirit of God, the author of, regeneration and renovation: this is represented by the ancient Jews {p} as the same with the Spirit of the Messiah that moved upon the face of the waters, **Ge 1:2**; or the spirit of man, the seat of this renewing work; or rather the work itself, called "a new man", "a new creature", **Eph 4:24**; and this is a new frame and disposition of mind, in which are new principles of light and life, grace and holiness; a new understanding of themselves and state, of God and of Christ, of divine things and Gospel truths; new affections for God, and all that is good; new desires after grace and righteousness, after God and communion with him, after his word and ordinances, and conformity to Christ; new purposes and resolutions to serve the Lord, and glorify him; new delights and joys, and in short all things become new. Instead of "within you", the Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions, read, "in them"; and to this the Targum agrees;

and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh; a heart hardened by sin, and confirmed in it; destitute of spiritual life, senseless and stupid as to spiritual things; stubborn and inflexible, on which no impressions are made by corrections, admonitions, and instructions of superiors; and so an impenitent one: this God only can remove; men cannot soften their own hearts; nor can ministers work upon them; nor will judgments themselves bring men to repentance: it is the work of God only; who does it by his word, with which he breaks the rock in pieces; by the discoveries of his love, with which he melts the heart that is harder than the nether millstone; by giving repentance to them, by working faith in them, to look to a crucified Christ and mourn, and all this by "his" Spirit: this is said to be taken "out of their flesh"; not their body, but their nature corrupted by sin, **Joh 3:6**; which shows that this hardness is natural to men, and rooted in them, and that it requires omnipotence to remove it;

and will give them an heart of flesh; a sensible and penitent one; a soft and tender one; a sanctified and spiritual one; one flexible and obsequious to the will of God; on which impressions are made; on which the laws of God are written; into which the doctrines of the Gospel are transcribed, Christ is formed, and the fear of God is implanted, with every other grace, all which are the gifts of God, and owing to his efficacious grace. The Targum of the whole is,

"and I will give them a fearing heart, and a spirit of fear I will put in their bowels (or in the midst of them); and I will break the heart of wickedness, which is as hard as a stone, out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart fearing before me to do my will."

{p} Zokar in Gen. fol. 107. 3.

Ezekiel 11:20

Ver. 20. That they may walk in my statutes,.... Have their conversation ordered according to the will and word of God; to which there is neither will nor power, till God gives a new heart and spirit, or works in them both to will and to do:

and keep mine ordinances, and do them; all things appertaining to religion and worship, both in public and private:

and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; it will appear by walking in the statutes of the Lord, and by keeping his ordinances, that they are his people, made willing in the day of his power to serve him; and by having covenant blessings bestowed on them, the grace of God wrought in them, his fear upon them, and new hearts and spirits given them, that he is their covenant God and Father; by this means, what under the prevalence of idolatry was hid, will now be made manifest.

Ezekiel 11:21

Ver. 21. But [as for them],.... Who remained in Jerusalem, and were not carried captive, but continued in their, own land, and worshipped idols, the same as in Eze 11:15;

whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations; not images of gold and silver, which cannot be said to have a heart; but devils and evil spirits worshipped in them, who are well pleased and delighted with the worship given them; so that the hearts of the devils worshipped, and the hearts of the idolatrous worshippers, were alike and agreed; wherefore their hearts were very different from those before mentioned; so far from having one heart, that their hearts were double and divided, partly after God, and partly after their idols; and so far from walking in the statutes of the Lord, that they were walking after the will of their idols, and in the worship of them; which were abominable and detestable to God, and all good men. The Targum is,

"and after the worship of their idols, and of their abominations, their heart wanders."

I will recompense their ways upon their own heads, saith the Lord God, that is, punish them according to their deserts, by the sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity.

Ezekiel 11:22

Ver. 22. Then did the cherubim lift up their wings,.... In order to remove, as in Eze 10:19;

and the wheels beside them; which were lifted up also along with the cherubim:

and the glory of the God of Israel [was] over them above; both cherubim and wheels.

Ezekiel 11:23

Ver. 23. And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city,.... Of Jerusalem, whither it was removed from the door of the east gate of the temple, Eze 10:19; though no mention is made of such removal; and now, having left the temple, it leaves the city:

and stood upon the mountain, which [is] on the east side of the city; either waiting for the repentance of the inhabitants of it, leaving them with reluctance; or in order to bring down his judgments upon it, and behold its destruction and ruin: this mountain was the mountain of Olives, as the Targum interprets it: and so Jarchi and Kimchi; see Zec 14:5. Christ stood on this mountain and wept over Jerusalem, and from hence he ascended to heaven. This Jarchi calls the third remove of the Shechinah or glory of the God of Israel. The Rabbins say {q} it removed ten times, and reckon them thus,

"from the mercy seat to the cherub; from the cherub to the cherub; from the cherub to the threshold; from the threshold to the court; from the court to the altar; from the altar to the roof; from the roof to the wall; from the wall to the city; from the city to the mountain; from the mountain to the wilderness; and from the wilderness it ascended and sat in its own place, according to **Ho 5:15**."

{q} T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 31. 1.

Ezekiel 11:24

Ver. 24. Afterwards the spirit took me up,.... From the east gate of the temple, whither he had brought him; when he had been shown, and everything had been told him, necessary for the reproof of the Jews in Jerusalem, and for the comfort of the captives:

and brought me in vision by the spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity; all this was done in vision; so it appeared to the prophet, under the influence of the divine Spirit of God, as if he was carried to Jerusalem, and there saw and heard all he did, and then was brought back again to Chaldea; whereas this was only mental, not corporeal; he was all the while in Chaldea, though things were so represented to his mind as if he had been removed from place to place:

so the vision that I had seen went up from me; he returned to himself, and became as another man, or as he was before; and found himself in his own house, and among the elders of Judah This shows that the vision was from heaven, and therefore it is said to go up from him; and that prophecy was not of the will of men, but of God; and that the prophets were not always under the influence of a prophetic spirit; but this came and went, and was only with them at certain times.

Ezekiel 11:25

Ver. 25. Then I spake unto them of the captivity,.... The elders of Judah, and others with them, at Telabib, where the prophet had a house:

all the things the Lord had showed me; all the visions contained in the preceding chapters, from the beginning of the fourth chapter to the end of this: as the portraying Jerusalem on a tile, and lying on his side for a long time, as an emblem of the siege of that city; the barley cakes, denoting a famine; the sharp knife with which he cut off his hair, signifying the destruction of its inhabitants; how he was brought to Jerusalem, what idolatries he saw in the temple; the vision of the six men with slaughter weapons, and of another with a writer's inkhorn by his side; and also the vision of the cherubim and wheels, and the glory of the God of Israel, and their departure from the city and temple, together with what was threatened to the Jews in Jerusalem, and was promised to them in Chaldea; all which the prophet faithfully related, and kept back nothing that the Lord had made known unto him by words or signs.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 12

In this chapter, under the sign of the prophet's removing household goods, is represented the removal of the king of Judah and his people from their own land into captivity; and under another sign, of the prophet's eating and drinking with quaking, and trembling, and carefulness, is set forth, either the famine that should be during the siege of Jerusalem, or the desolations following the taking of it; and the chapter is concluded with a reproof of the Jews flattering themselves that these prophecies respected times a great way off, and therefore hoped they would never be accomplished. The preface to the first sign is in Eze 12:1; which describes the people of the Jews as rebellious, and given up to judicial blindness and hardness; and suggests the cause of all their calamities: the order to prepare goods for removing, to show to the people; for digging a wall; carrying the stuff out in their sight, on his shoulders, at twilight; and covering his face when he did it, is in Eze 12:3; the execution of this order, which is declared in part for the whole, is in Eze 12:7; then follows the explication of this sign, Eze 12:8; and the application of it, first to King Zedekiah, in whom should be fulfilled several of the particulars mentioned, Eze 12:12; and to the people about him, and his army that should be scattered and fall by the sword,
Eze 12:14; the end of which should be, that the Lord should be known, his power, truth, and righteousness, by a few that should escape the famine, pestilence, and sword, Eze 12:15. The second sign, with the explication and application of it, is in Eze 12:17; and the chapter is closed with a reproof of the Jews; the proverbial expression they used, and which the Lord resented, is cited Eze 12:21; and the prophet is bid to assure them that it should cease, or there should be no room for it; and also every vain vision and flattering divination, Eze 12:23; and that the word of the Lord should not be prolonged, but should quickly and certainly be accomplished; and that their hopes of the contrary were in vain, Eze 12:25.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord came unto me, saying. The word of prophecy, as the Targum; the vision of the cherubim being over, this, very likely, immediately followed upon the former; though the exact time of the prophecy cannot be fixed, because the date is not given; it must be between the sixth month of the sixth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, **Eze 8:1**; and the fifth month of the seventh year,
Eze 20:1.

Ezekiel 12:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house,.... The captives in Babylon, who murmured at their present condition and circumstances, and looked upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem to be in happy ones, and believed they would continue in them, as the false prophets persuaded them; not believing the prophets of the Lord; and encouraged them to stand out against the king of Babylon, repenting that they had surrendered to him, and hoped they should by their means be delivered see the same character of them, **Eze 2:3**;

which have eyes to see, and see not: they have ears to hear, and hear not; they had natural sense and understanding, and means and opportunities of being better informed, and of knowing the true state of things, and how they were, and would be; but they wilfully shut their eyes against all light and evidence, and stopped their ears, and would not hearken to the words of the prophets:

for they [are] a rebellious house; stubborn, obstinate, and self-willed: or, "a house of rebellion" {r}.

{r} yrm tyb "domus rebellionis", Montanus, Vatablus, Starckius; "domus inobedientiae", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 12:3

Ver. 3. Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing,.... Or, "vessels of captivity" {s}, such as persons take along with them when they go a journey, or into a far country; such as a staff, scrip, purse, shoes, &c. or household goods; such as tables, chairs, and the like, which are removed when a person goes from one house to another; by which sign they of the captivity were to be taught that Zedekiah and the people of the Jews should in like manner be carried captive into Babylon; which they were not willing to believe, and the false prophets had told them the contrary:

and remove by day in their sight; be carrying the stuff out, day by day, several days running, as Jarchi from Menachem interprets it; that they may see and take notice of it, and ask the reason of it; which, when known, they might send to their correspondents at Jerusalem, and acquaint them with it:

and thou shall remove from thy place to another place in their sight; from the house in which he dwelt, to another house at some distance; yet so as to be seen by them, both from whence and whither he moved:

it may be they will consider; or "see" {t}; make use of their eyes, and of their understandings, and think better of things. The Targum is,

"perhaps they will fear;"

the Lord, and regard his prophets, and be afraid of his judgments:

though they [be] a rebellious house; such who are the most obstinate may be reclaimed.

{s} hlwg ylk "vasa transmigrationis", Pagninus, Montanus, Starckius; "instrumenta migrationis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus. {t} wary ylwa "fortasse visuri sunt", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "fortasse videbunt", Piscator, Starckius.

Ezekiel 12:4

Ver. 4. Then shall thou bring forth thy stuff by day in their sight,.... Bring it forth, that they may be spectators of it; and "by day", that it might be manifest to them what was carried out; and this day by day, till all was removed:

as stuff for removing; that is intended to be removed from one place to another, and is carried away in the daytime, in the view of everyone:

and thou shall go forth at even in their sight; as a man, having removed his goods in the daytime, goes forth himself at evening: this denotes the flight of Zedekiah from Jerusalem in the night, Jer 39:4;

as they that go forth into captivity: with a sorrowful countenance, in a mournful habit, and with airs and gestures showing anger, anxiety, and distress; with a bundle on their shoulders, and a staff in their hands.

Ezekiel 12:5

Ver. 5. Dig thou through the wall in their sight,.... The wall of the house where

he was, as an emblem of the city of Jerusalem closely besieged, from whence there was no escape but by digging through the wall this showed the manner in which Zedekiah made his escape, by the way of the gate, between the two walls which was by the king's garden,
Jer 52:7;

and carry out thereby; not his stuff, as before; but provisions for himself, necessary for his journey or flight; as no doubt Zedekiah and those with him did.

Ezekiel 12:6

Ver. 6. In their sight shall thou bear [it] upon [thy] shoulders,.... The bundle, packed up for his use and service, carried out through the wall dug by him. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, as if he himself was to be carried out upon the shoulders of another, thus: "in their sight, upon the shoulders, thou shall be carried"; but the former sense is best:

[and] carry [it] forth in the twilight; signifying the same as before:

thou shall cover thy face, that thou see not the ground; or "land"; not the land of Israel, but the land of Chaldea, where the prophet was: this shows that great shame and confusion which should attend the king of Judah when he fled, and great fear and terror also; and likewise his regard to his eyes being put out by the king of Babylon; so that he saw not the land into which he was carried captive, Jer 52:11;

for I have set thee [for] a sign unto the house of Israel; to show unto them by deeds, as well as by words, what should befall them; see **Isa 8:18**.

Ezekiel 12:7

Ver. 7. And I did so as I was commanded,.... Though it might seem ridiculous in the sight of men, and he be bantered and despised for it; yet, it being the will of God, he was obedient to it; as it becomes the servants of the Lord to be with all readiness and cheerfulness; even in things for which they may be laughed at by others:

I brought forth my stuff by day, as stuff for captivity; brought his goods out of his house, in order to be had to another place, as a type of the captivity of his countrymen the Jews:

and in the even I digged through the wall with mine hand; not with an iron instrument, with which walls are dug; but with his hand, he having no such instrument with him, and being in haste, and also that it might be done without noise; denoting the suddenness of Zedekiah's flight, and the haste he was in; not having time and leisure to take proper instruments with him, he and his men pulled out the stones of the wall with their own hands, and silently made their way through and escaped; see Eze 12:12;

I brought [it] forth in the twilight, [and] I bare [it] upon [my] shoulder in their sight: that it might be a sign and emblem of the above things to them, and they might learn some instructions from it.

Ezekiel 12:8

Ver. 8. And in the morning came the word of the Lord unto me, saying. That is, in the morning after he had done all the above things commanded him; explaining the meaning of them, and showing to whom they belonged.

Ezekiel 12:9

Ver. 9. Son of man, hath not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said unto thee,.... The Jews that were in captivity; for with these the prophet was, and before their eyes he had done the above things; and they only could put the following question to him, who were "the rebellious house"; Eze 12:2;

what dost thou? this they put not seriously, as desirous of being informed what was meant by all this; but as deriding the prophet for acting such a weak and silly part: this the Lord knew they had done, and therefore directs the prophet to make a proper answer; though some think the sense is, "hath not the house of Israel said unto thee, what dost thou?" no, they have not; they take no notice of it; never say one word about it, or inquire into the meaning of it; quite careless, thoughtless, and stupid; wherefore, though they will not ask anything concerning it, yet begin with them, and show them the design of it.

Ezekiel 12:10

Ver. 10. Say thou unto them, thus saith the Lord God,.... In answer to their sneering question; or notwithstanding their stupidity and indolence, and in order to awaken them out of it:

this burden [concerneth] the prince in Jerusalem; the present reigning prince in Jerusalem, King Zedekiah. The sense is, either that that burden of goods the prophet carried out on his shoulders had a regard to the king of Judah and his captivity, and was an emblem of it; or rather that the burden of prophecy, or that sorrowful calamity predicted by the above sign or type, had relation to that prince, and would be fulfilled in him; and so the Targum,

"upon the prince is the burden of this prophecy;"

in like manner Jarchi interprets it of prophecy:

and all the house of Israel which [are] among them; they were also concerned in it, and would be carried captive with their prince.

Ezekiel 12:11

Ver. 11. Say, I [am] your sign,.... Which represents you, and shows what will befall you:

like as I have done, so shall it be done unto them; as he had carried out his stuff, and had removed it from one place to another, so they should be carried away out of their own land into a foreign country, as follows:

they shall remove, [and] go into captivity; the Babylonish captivity.

Ezekiel 12:12

Ver. 12. And the prince that [is] among them,.... Zedekiah their king that reigned over them, in whom they trusted, and under whose government they thought themselves safe and secure:

shall bear upon [his] shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth; out of

Jerusalem, where his palace and throne were, leaving the main of his riches behind him; only should carry away what he could on his shoulder, a bundle of his most valuable effects, or provisions for his flight: or, as Kimchi and Ben Melech think, his clothes, for lighter march, and more speedy haste:

they shall dig through the wall to carry out thereby; it seems by this, that when the king, and his nobles and servants, made their escape, they not only went forth between two walls, but broke through one, in order to get away; which was done, not by the king himself, but by his servants; so the Targum,

"in a wall shall they dig to bring him out by it;"

and therefore the number is changed, not "he", but "they, shall dig", &c. though in the following words the singular is again used:

he shall cover his face, that he see not the ground with [his] eyes; either through shame at leaving the city, his palace, and all his grandeur. The Targum is,

"he shall cover his face because he hath sinned:"

or that he might not be known and be discovered who he was; and so it was through fear of being betrayed by a false friend, or taken by the enemy: or else this may respect his having his eyes put out at Riblah, so that he could not see with them the land he was carried into; though it rather seems to refer to his first escape out of Jerusalem with a mask or vizor on him, which might hinder his seeing the ground he went upon; and which, in his fright, he could not attend to, looking out here and there, not being able to keep his eye long upon any place. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it, "that he may not be seen with the eye, and he shall not see the land".

Ezekiel 12:13

Ver. 13. My net also will I spread upon him,.... Meaning the Chaldean army, which the Lord raised up, and brought against him, and gave success unto:

and he shall be taken in my snare; as a bird is taken in the snare of the fowler; or a wild beast by the hunter. The Jews have a tradition, which is mentioned both by Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abendana on the place, that there was a cave which reached from Zedekiah's house to the plains of Jericho, by the way of which he fled; and that God prepared a deer, which went upon the top of the cave; and the Chaldeans pursued it; and when it came to the mouth of the cave, Zedekiah was coming out, and they took him:

and I will bring him to Babylon [to] the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it; his eyes being put out at Riblah, Jer 39:7. The Prophet Jeremiah says that his eyes should behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, Jer 34:3; and yet here Ezekiel says that he should not see the land of the Chaldeans. Josephus {u} observes, that Zedekiah thought these two prophecies contradicted each other, and therefore gave credit to neither; but they both proved true; he saw the king of Babylon at Riblah; but his eyes being there put out, he saw not Babylon, whither he was carried captive:

though he shall die there; as he did, Jer 52:11.

{u} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 10. c. 7. sect. 2. and c. 8. sect. 2.

Ezekiel 12:14

Ver. 14. And I will scatter to every wind all that [are] about him to help him,.... Either his bodyguards, the men of war that were with him when he fled, Jer 52:7; or his auxiliary troops, the Egyptians, whom he had taken into his pay for his assistance:

and all his bands: or "wings" {w}; the wings of his army. The Targum interprets it his army; these were all scattered from him when he was taken, Jer 52:8;

and I will draw out the sword after them: which fled into Egypt, and other countries; so that they did not escape, though they went not into captivity; see **Eze 5:12**.

{w} wypga "alas militum", Montanus; "alas ejus", Cocceius, Starckius; so Ben Melech.

Ezekiel 12:15

Ver. 15. And they shall know that I [am] the Lord,.... God omniscient, and can and do foresee and foretell future events, when the above things shall come to pass; and omnipotent, able to do what he purposed and declared he would; and true and faithful to his word, and holy and righteous in all his ways and works:

when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries; of Egypt, Babylon, Media, and other places.

Ezekiel 12:16

Ver. 16. But I will leave a few men of them,.... Or, "men of number" {x}; of a small number, such as are easily reckoned up; which will require no great skill in numbers, nor trouble to count them:

from the sword, from the famine, and from the pestilence; during the siege of Jerusalem, and at the breaking of it up; but then they should be carried captive into other countries:

that they may declare all their abominations among the Heathen whither they come; who, observing their calamities, and distresses, would read their sin in their punishment; and conclude they must have been guilty of great enormities, who were punished in such a manner; so that their punishment was a visible and standing declaration to the Heathens of the abominable sins they had been guilty of: or else the end of reserving a few of them from the above capital judgments was, that they being brought to a sense of their sins by their afflictions, might freely confess them, express their repentance for them, and justify God in his proceedings towards them:

and they shall know that I [am] the Lord; not the Heathens, among whom this declaration would be made; but the Jews, brought under a conviction of their sin, and of the justice of God in his dealings with them.

{x} rpom yvna "viros numeri", Montanus, Vatablus; "homines numero", Starckius.

Ezekiel 12:17

Ver. 17. Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying. Here follows another sign of the desolation of the Jews, which the prophet was unto them;

as the former signified their going into captivity, this their famine and distress at the siege of Jerusalem, and the dreadful calamities attending and following that.

Ezekiel 12:18

Ver. 18. Son of man, eat thy bread with quaking,.... As one in surprise or fear, or that has got an ague upon him:

and drink thy water with trembling and with carefulness; fearing want of it, or as apprehensive of danger of its being taken away; see **Eze 4:16**.

Ezekiel 12:19

Ver. 19. And say unto the people of the land,.... Of Chaldea, where the prophet now was; not the natives of the land, but the Israelites, who were captives in it; who were ready to murmur and repine at their own case, as miserable; and at that of the Jews at Jerusalem, as happy; and therefore they are taught by this sign, as well as by the following prophecy, that they were mistaken:

thus saith the Lord God of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; or to them, or "concerning" them {y}; whom the captives in Chaldea thought lived so happily, and would continue so:

[and] of the land of Israel; or, "upon the land of Israel" {z}; inhabitants on it; to this sense the Targum and Septuagint Version interpret it, and also Kimchi:

they shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment; meaning at the siege of Jerusalem, when they could not eat and drink in peace; but, while they were eating and drinking, were disturbed and put into fear and surprise by the besiegers; and also, hearing that their provisions would not hold out, were careful how they ate and drank, and were frightened with the thoughts of being reduced to extreme want:

that her land may be desolate from all that is therein; or, "from its fulness" {a}; men and cattle, cities, towns, houses, vineyards, fields, fruits, and plenty of all good things. Jarchi expounds it of riches:

because of the violence of all them that dwell therein; not the violence of the

Chaldeans, making a prey of all they met with, plundering cities and towns, and making forage of the fruits of the earth, by which means the land was desolate; but the rapine, oppression, and injustice of the Jews, which were the cause of all these calamities which came upon their country.

{y} Mlvwry ybvwyl "habitatoribus Hierosolymorum", Montanus, Starckius; "de habitatoribus", Piscator; "de habitantibus Hierosolymam", Cocceius. {z} larvy tmda la epi thv ghv tou israhl, Sept. "super terram Israel", Calvin; "in terram Israelis", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; so Ben Melech. {a} halmm "a plenitudine sua", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 12:20

Ver. 20. And the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste,.... Not only the city of Jerusalem, but the other cities of Judea; as they were by the Chaldeans, which were then full of inhabitants:

and the land shall be desolate; the whole land of Judea be destitute of men and cattle, and lie uncultivated, and become barren and unfruitful:

and ye shall know that I [am] the Lord; who were then captives in Babylon, as well as those who should be dispersed among the nations would; see Eze 12:15.

Ezekiel 12:21

Ver. 21. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. After he had been a sign unto the people, in the two instances above mentioned; and they had hardened themselves against the belief of the things signified by them, because the time of their accomplishment was not yet.

Ezekiel 12:22

Ver. 22. Son of man, what [is] that proverb [that] ye have in the land of Israel,.... Which question is put, as ignorant of it, but as filled with indignation at the impiety and boldness of those that used it, and in order to expose the wickedness and folly of it:

saying, the days are prolonged; the days of affliction and distress; the time of Jerusalem's destruction, and of the Babylonish captivity, these were not to be of a long time; and therefore they were ready to flatter themselves they would never be, at least in their days; and hence, because judgment was not immediately executed, their hearts were set in them to do evil; and thus they abused the patience and long suffering of God, and they used this and the following expression so often, and so long, that they became proverbial to them:

and every vision faileth? or "perishes" {b}; every prophecy comes to nothing; no one is fulfilled; at least because not at, once, therefore they concluded it never would, or, however, hoped it never would; and so pleased themselves, and continued in their impenitence and unbelief, and contempt of prophecy.

{b} dba "peribit", Munster, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Piscator; "periit", Starckius.

Ezekiel 12:23

Ver. 23. Tell them therefore,.... Plainly and boldly, with the greatest assurance and confidence, as from God himself:

thus saith the Lord God, I will make this proverb to cease; by quickly accomplishing the things which they, by this proverb, represented as at a great distance, and what would never be brought about:

and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; when the things predicted shall take place:

but say unto them, the days are at hand, and the effect of every vision; the time is hastening on, and will quickly come, when every prophecy shall be fulfilled: it was in the sixth year of Jehoiachin's captivity that these prophecies were delivered out; and in the ninth year Nebuchadnezzar came with his army, and besieged Jerusalem; so that the days were at hand; in three years' time there began an accomplishment of the above predictions, which were scoffed at in the proverb used.

Ezekiel 12:24

Ver. 24. For there shall be no more any vain vision,.... Or prophecy; such as the false prophets had given out, that the people should be in peace and safety, and not be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon; which they gave heed to, and so encouraged the lying prophets to go on prophesying smooth things; when the prophecies of the true prophets were accomplished, then the false ones were rejected, and their prophecies no more regarded; nor could there be any more a place for them, or a reception of them:

nor flattering divination within the house of Israel; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, "in the midst of the children of Israel"; and so the Targum; but Kimchi says, that copies that so read are wrong; and which is confirmed by the Masora, which observes, that the reading is so in all places but in this. The Syriac version renders it "doubtful prediction"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "ambiguous divination"; like the prophecies and answers of the Heathen oracles, which were delivered in terms of doubtful signification, and might be taken in more senses than one. The Septuagint version is, "he that divines for grace"; in order to ingratiate himself into the people, to gain their good will, or their money, or both; and therefore divines smooth things, and flatters them with that which is most agreeable to their inclination; but when they shall see the city taken, and themselves carried captive, they will no more regard such soothing diviners, who pretended from the stars to tell what shall come to pass, as the Arabic version suggests.

Ezekiel 12:25

Ver. 25. For I [am] the Lord: I will speak,.... A sovereign Being, immutable and eternal; who will speak by his prophets what is his mind and will shall be done:

and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; the word of prophecy delivered out in his nature by the true prophets never fails, but is always accomplished; as that was which respected the siege or Jerusalem, and captivity of the Jews:

it shall be no more prolonged: the judgment threatened shall be inflicted, and that in a very short time:

for in your days, O rebellious house; while they were living; which they hoped would never be, at least not till after their death; whereas, within live or six years after this, all came to pass:

will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord God of hosts; not only the prophecy of their ruin should be given out in their days, but accomplished in that time; which they might depend upon, since he who said it is the mighty God, the Lord of armies in heaven and in earth.

Ezekiel 12:26

Ver. 26. Again, the word of the Lord came to me, saying. This is repeated to confirm what was before spoken, and that they might assure themselves that there would be a certain and speedy accomplishment of what the Lord had said by his prophet.

Ezekiel 12:27

Ver. 27. Son of man, behold, [they of] the house of Israel say,.... Either they of the ten tribes in Babylon, or the Jews in Judea, who were also Israelites: these the Lord directs the prophet to take notice of, and be a witness of what they said; since he himself, as a prophet, was concerned in it:

the vision that he seeth [is] for many days [to come], and he prophesieth of the times [that are] afar off; that is, according to them, the vision that Ezekiel the prophet saw concerning their ruin; and the prophecy which he delivered out relating to that was not to be fulfilled as yet; there were many days and years still to come; it was at a great distance, and so they put away this evil day far from them; they own that he had a vision and prophecy, but it respected future times, and distant ages; and therefore they did not trouble themselves with it; it gave them no great concern, because they considered it as afar off.

Ezekiel 12:28

Ver. 28. Therefore say unto them, thus saith the Lord God,.... Carry this message to them from me, whether they will hear it or not; so shall it be:

there shall none of my words be prolonged any more; the fulfilment of prophecies delivered in the name of the Lord by the prophets shall be no longer deferred, but shall quickly be:

but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord God: one jot and tittle of it shall not pass away till all be fulfilled; sooner may heaven and earth pass away than that shall; it is for ever settled in heaven, and shall be fulfilled on earth; he that has said it is of one mind, and none can turn him; and is able to do whatsoever he pleases.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 13

It being said in Eze 12:24; that there should be no more a vain vision, nor a flattering divination; the prophet is ordered to prophesy against the false prophets and prophetesses, Eze 13:1; the former are described as prophesying out of their own hearts, Eze 13:2; as foolish ones, following their own spirit, and seeing nothing, Eze 13:3; they are compared to foxes in the deserts, Eze 13:4; and are represented as unconcerned to stand in the gap for the people, Eze 13:5; and as seeing vanity and lying divination; wherefore the Lord was against them, Eze 13:6; what they are threatened with are, that they should not be in the assembly of God's people; nor written in the writing of the house of Israel; nor enter into the land of Israel, Eze 13:9; the reason of which was, because they seduced the Lord's people, by speaking peace to them when there was none; which is figuratively expressed by building a wall, and daubing it with untempered mortar, Eze 13:10; upon which the wall is threatened to be rent, and caused to fall with a stormy wind; signifying the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldean army; and the false prophets to have the wrath of God poured on them who doubted it, Eze 13:11; and then follows the order to the prophet to prophesy against the false prophetesses, and set his face against them, and pronounce woe upon them in the name of the Lord; who are described as prophesying out of their own hearts; sowing pillows to all armholes; and making kerchiefs on the head of all sorts of persons; and which they did for poor small gain, and to the detriment of immortal souls, good and bad, Eze 13:17; wherefore the Lord threatens to tear off their pillows and kerchiefs, and deliver his people out of their hands, no more to be hunted by them, Eze 13:20; the reason of which was, because they saddened the hearts of the righteous, and strengthened the hands of the wicked, Eze 13:22; and the chapter is concluded with a resolution that they should see no more vanity nor divine divinations; and that the Lord's people should be delivered from them, and they should know that he was the Lord, Eze 13:23.

Ver. 1. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. Giving orders to prophesy against the false prophets and prophetesses, which were either in the land of Israel, of whom the prophet had notice; or rather who were among the captives in Babylon, where Ezekiel now was.

Ezekiel 13:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel,.... Who called themselves so, and were accounted such by others; though they were not true, but false prophets; and so the Targum calls them:

that prophesy; that is, smooth things to the people; promising a speedy return from the captivity; or that Jerusalem should not be taken by the Chaldeans, and the inhabitants of it, and of the land, be carried captive:

and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts; who were not sent of God, nor spake from him; but of themselves, what came into their heads, and was agreeable to their fancies, imaginations, and carnal hearts; such are false teachers, that go forth without being sent, and teach not according to the word of God, but according to their own carnal reasonings; so the Targum,

"according to the will of their hearts;"

what they pleased themselves:

hear ye the word of the Lord; which came from the Lord himself, and not from man, meaning the following prophecy; so the written word of God should be attended to, both by teachers and hearers, as the only rule of faith and practice; see **Isa 8:20**.

Ezekiel 13:3

Ver. 3. Thus saith the Lord God, woe unto the foolish prophets,.... The false prophets, as the Targum; who are foolish, as all are who are not sent of God, and furnished by him with wisdom and knowledge, and who prophesy out of their own hearts; for what else but folly can proceed from thence? this must be a great mortification to these prophets to be called foolish, when they reckoned themselves wise men, being vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds, and were accounted so by others; but what is wisdom with men is foolishness with God:

that follow their own spirit; or "walk after it" {c}; and not the Spirit of God, who leads into all truth; they pretended to a spirit of prophecy, but it was their own spirit and the dictates of it they followed, and not the Spirit of the Lord; and therefore it is no wonder that they prophesied false things, and led the people wrong; as all such teachers do, who give way to their own fancies and imaginations, and forsake the word of God, and do not implore the assistance and teachings of the blessed Spirit:

and have seen nothing; no vision, as the Syriac version renders it; they pretended to have revelations of things future from the Lord, but they had none; what they saw were vain visions and lying divinations, and were as nothing, and worse than nothing; yea, they said what they never saw.

{c} Mxwr rxa Myklh "qui ambulant post spiritm suum": Pagninus, Calvin, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 13:4

Ver. 4. O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes of the deserts. The false prophets, as the Targum; these are called Israel's prophets, because received, embraced, and encouraged by them; not the Lord's, for they were not sent by him, nor had any messages from him; and such are comparable to foxes, for their craftiness and cunning, and lying in wait to deceive, as these seduced the Lord's people, Eze 13:10; and such are false teachers, who walk in craftiness, and handle the word of God deceitfully, and are deceitful workers; and to foxes in the deserts, which are hungry and ravenous, and make a prey of whatsoever comes within their reach, as these prophets did of the people, Eze 13:19. Kimchi interprets "deserts" of breaches and ruinous places in the walls of a vineyard, where the foxes lie, or through which they enter into the vineyard and spoil it; as these false prophets entered in among the Israelites, like to a vineyard, and did them much hurt and damage, by insinuating themselves among the weak, and those of little faith, which the above writer compares to breaches in vineyards; see **So 2:15**. It may be the deserts may have respect to the land of Chaldea, where Israel was carried captive, and where these foxes, the false prophets, could play their part to advantage; not being under the notice and restraints of the sanhedrim at Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 13:5

Ver. 5. Ye have not gone up into the gaps,.... Or "breaches" {d}; so the Targum. The allusion is to breaches made in the walls of a city when besieged; at which time those within gather together in great numbers to meet the enemy, and prevent his entrance by the breaches. These words are either spoken to the princes of Israel, the civil magistrates; or to the prophets, who seeing the sins of the people, like a mighty torrent, opening a breach for the wrath and judgments of God to pour in upon them, should have called them, and importunately pressed them to repentance and reformation, and to have put up their prayers, and made intercession to God for them; neither of which they did, and therefore are here blamed; see Eze 22:30;

neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel; or a "fence", a fortification. The Vulgate Latin renders it, "a wall"; a new wall, which is generally made by the besieged within, when a breach is made upon them: it signifies the same as before. Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of repentance and good works; and so the Targum, which paraphrases the words thus,

"neither have ye done for yourselves good works, to deprecate for the house of Israel, to stand to pray for them:"

to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord: when he came forth in battle array against them, with great wrath and indignation, in the way of his righteous judgments. The Targum is,

"when warriors come up against them in the day of the wrath of the Lord;"

when the Chaldeans came against them by the will of God, he being angry with them.

{d} twurpb "in fracturas", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version; "rupturas", Calvin, Piscator, Starckius.

Ezekiel 13:6

Ver. 6. They have seen vanity, and lying divination,.... The visions the false prophets pretended to see were nothing but the fruit of their own fancies and imaginations, and had nothing real in them; and what they divined or foretold should be were all lies, and never came to pass, and never would:

saying the Lord saith: and the Lord hath not sent them; they came to the people with a lie in their mouths, giving out that the Lord spoke by them; when they had no mission from him; nor any commission to say what they did; or any warrant from him for their prophecies:

and they have made [others] to hope that they would confirm the word; or, "that the word would be confirmed" {e}; that what was said by them would have its accomplishment; and that their prophecies would be fulfilled. By their solemn way of speaking; by the use they made of the name of the Lord; by the strong assurances they gave, and by their frequent repetition of their predictions, the people were brought to hope and believe that the event would answer to what they said; wherefore, instead of bringing them to a sense of their sins, and repentance for them, whereby the judgments of God would have been prevented, they hardened them in them, and hastened their ruin.

{e} rbd Myql "ut praestet verbum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus; "ratum fore", Grotius; "eventurum esse", Castalio.

Ezekiel 13:7

Ver. 7. Have ye not seen a vain vision,.... A vision only in pretence, and not in reality; the effect of their own fancy, and not anything shown them by the Lord:

and have ye not spoken a lying divination; delivered out a known lie, saying they had it from the Lord, when they had it not; or a prophecy that will deceive, and be without effect, and in the issue prove a falsehood:

whereas ye say, the Lord saith [it]; albeit I have not spoken? this is a proof that what they gave out for a vision and prophecy was a vain and false one; seeing they pretended they had it from the Lord, when he never spoke a word to them, or by them.

Ezekiel 13:8

Ver. 8. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... This is what he says, and it may be depended on will come to pass; though the other he said not, they said he did, but was a lying divination:

because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies; which will in the issue prove so, lying and deceitful; what never came from God, but from themselves and the father of lies, and would never be accomplished:

therefore, behold, I [am] against you, saith the Lord God; or, "I unto you"; which may be supplied thus, "I come", or "will come, unto you" {f}; in a way of providence, and chastise and punish you; see **Re 2:16**; or I will be your adversary; and a sad thing it is for any to have God to be against them; there is no contending with him; none ever hardened themselves against him, and prospered; men are but with him as stubble, or as thorns and briers to a consuming fire.

{f} Mkyla ynnh "ecce ego ad vos", V. L. "sub. venio", Grotius; "veniam", Piscator, Starckius; "venturus sum cum ira mea", Vatablus.

Ezekiel 13:9

Ver. 9. And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies,.... Meaning, by his hand, not the true spirit of prophecy, attended with a divine power and energy, as in **Eze 1:3**; but the wrath and power of God seizing on them and punishing them. So the Targum,

"and the stroke of my power shall be upon the false prophets, &c."

The sense is, that they should feel the weight of his hand, and the lighting down of his arm with the indignation of his wrath, by inflicting punishment upon them:

they shall not be in the assembly of my people; shall have no place in the church of God, nor fellowship with the saints; they shall not join with them in religious worship here; but either shall be left by the righteous judgment of God to separate themselves from them, or shall be excluded their communion; and much less shall they stand in the congregation of the righteous hereafter: or, "they shall not be in the secret", or "council of my people" {g}; shall not be consulted by them on any account, civil or religious; or not be let into the secret counsels of the Lord, as the Lord's people be, who are his favourites and his friends; see Ps 25:14. The Targum is,

"in the good secret which is hidden for my people they shall not be:"

neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel; their names shall not be in the roll or register of those that return from captivity, as in Ezra it but shall die in their exile; they shall not be in the list and catalogue of the citizens of any city in the land of Israel, particularly of Jerusalem, the chief city; see **Isa 4:3**; and it should appear that their names were never written in the Lamb's book of life; or that they ever were among the number of God's elect, the true and spiritual Israel of God. So the Targum,

"and in the writing of eternal life, which is written for the righteous of the house of Israel, they shall not be written;"

see Ps 69:28;

neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; should not return to the land of Israel, when the captives should at the end of the captivity; nor enter into the land of Canaan, the heavenly rest, which remains for the people of God; for into the New Jerusalem state shall nothing enter that makes an abomination, or a lie, as these prophets had done; see Re 21:27;

and ye shall know that I [am] the Lord God; omniscient, omnipotent, true and faithful, holy, just, and good.

{g} wyhy al yme dwob "in secreto populi mei non erunt", Montanus; "in arcano", Munster; "in comilio", Junius & Tremellius, Calvin, Polanus; "in concilio", Vatablus.

Ezekiel 13:10

Ver. 10. Because, even because they have seduced my people,.... Who were so by profession; otherwise such who are truly the people of God, though they may be deceived in civil things, yet not in religious matters, at least not totally and finally; in this sense it is impossible to deceive the elect of God; but as false teachers are deceivers, they lie in wait, and use all means to deceive them, and do deceive nominal professors, which is resented by the Lord; and this is given as a reason of their punishment; and which is doubled, as in Le 26:43; to show the heinousness of their sin, and the certainty of their punishment:

saying, peace, and [there was] no peace; giving out that peace would be made with the king of Babylon; that the captives would return to their own land, where, with those that were in it, they would enjoy great prosperity; when no such thing came to pass, nor would; but the contrary was certain, by the predictions of the true prophets sent by the Lord:

and one built up a wall; one of the false prophets, and of the chief of them, gave out that Jerusalem would continue a walled city, and abide firm and impregnable against the Chaldean army, and would never be taken:

and, lo, others daubed it with untempered [mortar]; others of the false prophets, observing that what the first had delivered out was pleasing to the people, not only assented to it, but strongly affirmed it; and, with colourings and specious arguments, made it look more plausible and probable; when, alas! the whole was no other than like putting a parcel of loose stones or bricks together, and throwing some slushy stuff upon them, as, moistened sand without lime, or clay without straw, as the Targum and Vulgate Latin versions render it; which would never cement the bricks or stones together. R. Joseph Kimchi interprets it of bricks not burnt: so false teachers imitate the true ministers of the word, in preaching peace; but then they do not direct aright where it is to be had, which is only in Christ; or the proper persons, sinners pressed with the guilt of sin, and seeking for ease and peace in a right way; but publish it to those to whom it does not belong, for there is no peace to the wicked; and put them upon making peace themselves by their own works of righteousness, and their legal repentance, and outward humiliation; or promise it to them, though they have no faith in Christ, and are not sensible of their sin and danger: these men are builders, but not wise master builders; they do not build upon the foundation Christ, but build up a wall without him; leaving him out of the building who is the chief corner stone; deliver out some loose and unconnected doctrines, that are not according to the Scriptures, nor consistent with each other; and encourage the people to perform some loose duties and cold services, without the cement of faith and love; and which is no other than building upon the sand, or with it; though they fancy it to be a wall, a shelter, and protection to them, from the wrath and justice of God, and by which they shall climb up to heaven; which will prove a bowing wall, and a tottering fence; and in these mistakes they are buoyed up by false teachers, and are flattered as being in a fair way for eternal happiness.

Ezekiel 13:11

Ver. 11. Say unto them which daub [it] with untempered [mortar],.... The false prophets, that flattered the people with peace, prosperity, and safety:

that it shall fall; the wall they have built and daubed over; the city of Jerusalem shall be taken and destroyed; the predictions of the prophets shall prove lies; and the vain hopes and expectations of the people fail:

there shall be an overflowing shower; that shall wash away the wall with its untempered mortar; meaning the Chaldean army, compared to an overflowing shower of rain, for the multitude of men it, and the force, power, and noise, with which it should come, bearing down all before it; see **Isa 8:7**;

and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; upon the wall, and break it down: or, "ye, O great hailstones, shall cause [it] to fall" {h}; or, "I will give great hailstones, [and] it shall fall" {i}. The word "elgabish", which in some copies is one word, and in others two, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, is either the same with "gabish", which signifies a precious stone, and is rendered pearl in Job 28:18; or it may be, as it seems to be, an Arabic word; and Hottinger {k} takes it to be "gypsus", or lime, or the "lapis laminosus", or slate; so the Lord threatens to rain down lime or slate upon them from heaven, which should destroy the wall built with untempered mortar:

and a stormy wind shall rend [it]; this seems to signify the same as the overflowing shower, the Chaldean army, compared to a strong tempestuous wind; see **Jer 4:11**; as the hailstones, may signify the king of Babylon, with his princes, nobles, and generals.

{h} hnlpt vybgla ynba hntaw "et vos, O lapides grandinis, ruere facietis [aedificium]", Munster. {i} "Et dabo lapides grandinis, qui corruere facient [parietem]", Pagninus. {k} Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 7. p. 119.

Ezekiel 13:12

Ver. 12. Lo, when the wall is fallen,.... Jerusalem is taken:

shall it not be said unto you; the false prophets, by the people who had been deceived by them:

where [is] the daubing wherewith ye have daubed [it]? what is become of all your promises of peace, and assurance of safety and prosperity; your smooth words and plausible arguments; your specious pretences, and flattering prophecies? thus would they be insulted by those they had deceived, as well as laughed at by such who disregarded their predictions, and believed the prophets of the Lord.

Ezekiel 13:13

Ver. 13. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Confirming what he had before bid the prophet say, Eze 13:11;

I will even rend [it] with a stormy wind in my fury; stormy winds sometimes rend rocks asunder, 1Ki 19:11; and much more feeble tottering walls; what is before ascribed to the stormy wind is said to be done here by the Lord himself, making use of that as an instrument; stormy winds fulfil his word, Ps 148:8; the cause of which is his wrath, which made the dispensation, or the invasion of the Chaldean army, the more terrible; and this is mentioned in all the following clauses:

and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in [my] fury to consume [it]; which, coming from the Lord, and attended with his wrath and fury, must needs bring on utter ruin and destruction. The whole is paraphrased by the Targum thus,

"and I will bring a mighty king with the force of tempests; and a destroying people as a prevailing rain in my fury shall come; and kings, who were powerful as hailstones, in wrath to consume."

Ezekiel 13:14

Ver. 14. So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered [mortar],.... Which is repeated and expressed in these words, both for the sake of confirmation and explanation of what is before said:

and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered; meaning the city of Jerusalem, and by these phrases declaring the utter destruction of it; whereby also would be discovered the vain assurances and lying predictions of the false prophets, and which would appear to be entirely groundless: so the Targum,

"and I will destroy the city in which ye have prophesied false prophecies; and I will cause it to fall to the ground, and its foundations shall be discovered:"

and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst of it; the false prophets perished in the destruction of Jerusalem, and not one of them escaped:

and ye shall know that I [am] the Lord; who is true to his word, and able to accomplish it, whether of punishment or of threatening.

Ezekiel 13:15

Ver. 15. Thus will I accomplish my wrath upon the wall,.... Or upon the city, as the Targum; pour out all his indignation, and inflict just punishment upon the city of Jerusalem and its inhabitants:

and upon them that have daubed it with untempered [mortar]; the false prophets: so the Targum,

"and the false prophets that prophesy in it false prophecies:"

and will say unto you, the wall [is] no [more], neither they that daubed it; neither the city of Jerusalem, nor the prophets that prophesied of its safety; nor their false prophecies; nor the vain hopes of the people they fed them with: so the Targum,

"there is no city, nor false prophets."

Ezekiel 13:16

Ver. 16. [To wit], the prophets of Israel, which prophesy concerning Jerusalem,.... This explains who are meant by those that daubed with untempered mortar:

and which see visions of peace for her; not in reality, but in pretence; they boasted that they had visions and revelations from the Lord, and assured the people they should enjoy great peace and prosperity; but these, as they are before called, were vain visions and lying divinations: there seems to be in this an allusion to the name of Jerusalem, which, according to some, signifies,

"they shall see peace:"

and [there is] no peace, saith the Lord God; not to the wicked; nor to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who listened to the false prophets; nor to the false prophets themselves.

Ezekiel 13:17

Ver. 17. Likewise, thou son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people,.... The false prophetesses; for as there were women in some ages, who had the true spirit of prophecy, as Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah, Ex 15:20; so there were some that pretended to it, who had it not, as Noadiah in the times of Nehemiah, **Ne 6:14**; and such there were in the times of Ezekiel; against whom he is bid to set his face, and look them out of countenance, and make them ashamed; who, contrary to the modesty of the sex, had impudently taken upon them to prophesy to the people; and such have been since in the times of the Gospel, as Jezebel, **Re 2:20**; and Prisca, Maximilia, Quintilia, and others:

who prophesy out of their own heart; as the men did, Eze 13:2; what their own hearts suggested to them; what came into their minds, and their own fancies and imaginations led them to; what was according to their carnal affections and desires, and agreeable to those that heard them:

and prophesy thou against them; declare their prophecies false; warn the people from giving heed to them; and foretell what shall befall them for deceiving the people.

Ezekiel 13:18

Ver. 18. And say, thus saith the Lord God, woe to the [women] that sew pillows to all armholes,.... Or, "put pillows to all elbows" {l}; thereby signifying that they might be at ease, and rest secure, and look upon themselves as in the utmost safety, and not fear any enemy, the invasion of the Chaldeans; or that their city would be destroyed, and they carried captive, as the prophets of the Lord had foretold:

and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature; whether taller or lower; the word stature, according to Kimchi, is used, because the people stood when they inquired of these prophetesses whether they should have peace or not, or good or evil should befall them: or, "of every age", as the Septuagint version; young or old; they put these kerchiefs, or "veils" {m}, as some render the word, upon all sorts of persons (for they refused none that came to them they could get any thing by), upon their heads, either as a token of victory and triumph, signifying that they should have the better of their enemies, and rejoice over them; or to make them proud, and suggest to them that they should never be stripped of their ornaments; or else, as the former sign shows that they lulled them asleep upon pillows, and led them on in a carnal security, so they kept them in blindness and ignorance: and this they did,

to hunt souls; to bring them into their nets and snares; to catch them with their false prophecies, and deceive them by their fallacious signs, and superstitious rites and ceremonies, and so ruin and destroy them {n};

will ye hunt the souls of my people; that cleave to me, and regard my prophets; will ye endeavour to ensnare those, and seek to destroy their peace and comfort, and even their souls? ye shall not be able to do it:

and will ye save the souls alive [that come] unto you? and inquire of you how things will be, and listen to your lying divinations; can you save them from the ruin and destruction that is coming upon them? no, you will not be able to do it; and what wickedness is it in you to attempt the one or the other? The Targum is,

"the souls of my people can ye destroy or quicken? your souls, which are yours, can you quicken?"

the sense is they could neither do the one nor the other; and yet such was their iniquity, that they sought to do both.

{l} twrptml "applicantibus, [sive] accommodantibus", Gataker; "conjungentibus, vel adunantibus", Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 947.
ylyua lk le twtok "pulvillos super omnes cubitos manus", Calvin; "pro omnibus

cubitis manuum", Piscator. {m} "Velamina", Polanus. So Kimchi and Ben Melech. {n} Gussetius thinks that by the words rendered "pillows" and "kerchiefs" are meant "nets", with which they covered their heads and arms; for, otherwise, what connection is there between the above things and hunting? Ebr. Comment. p. 395, 565.

Ezekiel 13:19

Ver. 19. And will ye pollute me among my people,.... Defile the name of the Lord, by abusing it, to cover their wicked designs and practices, pretending they were seat by him, when they were not; that what they said came from him, though he spoke not by them; and that it was his will they declared, when it was their own, and what came out of their own hearts and heads: so the Targum, "will ye pollute my will among my people"; to profane his name among the Gentiles was a great sin, but to pollute it among his own people was greater; attempting to draw them aside from his fear and worship, and that for gain, for small gain too:

for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread; which shows them to be abandoned creatures, that were ready to do or say anything for the meanest trifle; their consciences were seared; they gave up themselves to work wickedness with greediness, and for filthy lucre's sake, and for a small portion of that; which exaggerates their sin and folly; see
Pr 28:21;

to slay the souls that should not die; by threatening the captives in Babylon, who had surrendered themselves in Jehoiachim's time, with destruction and death; who ought to have been comforted in their exile, and whom the Lord in his own time would deliver:

and to save the souls alive that should not live; by promising the inhabitants of Jerusalem long life, safety, and prosperity; when they should either die by the sword, famine, and pestilence; or be carried captive, which was as death; for so they did, or attempted to do, both the one and the other, by their false prophecies, as follows:

by your lying to my people that hear [your] lies? their false prophecies, which some hearkened to, and believed; and others were intimidated by, and feared that so it would be.

Ezekiel 13:20

Ver. 20. Wherefore thus saith the Lord God, behold, I [am] against your pillows,.... Not only had an abhorrence of them, but was determined to destroy them, detect their fallacies, and expose the folly of such actions, and them to shame and contempt:

wherewith ye there hunt the souls to make [them] fly; to the places where they prophesied; into the toils and nets they spread for them, in order to catch them with their divinations and prophecies, and make a gain of them: or, "into the gardens", or "groves" {o}; there to commit idolatry, Isa 65:3;

and I will tear them from your arms; by which it seems that those pillows were not only put under the arms of those that came to inquire of these female prophets or fortune tellers; but they put them under their own arms, and lay upon them as if they were asleep, and in a trance or ecstasy; and so the kerchiefs or veils were upon their heads, which covered their faces, to show that they were quite retired from the world, and wholly attentive to the visions and revelations they pretended were made them by the Lord; and which they gave out, in this superstitious way, to the credulous people that flocked about them:

and will let the souls go, [even] the souls that ye hunt to make [them] fly; which were captivated with their superstitions; drawn into their nets and snares; decoyed into the gardens, where they were prevailed upon to sacrifice to idols, and were taken with their soothsaying and lying divinations; these the Lord promises to break the snare for them, and set them at liberty, and preserve them from that ruin and destruction they were ready to come into; see Ps 124:7.

{o} twxrpl "in floralia", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Starckius; "in floridis hortis", Piscator.

Ezekiel 13:21

Ver. 21. Your kerchiefs also will one tear,.... From their heads; discover their tricks, and expose them to the contempt of the people, and destroy both them and their works:

and deliver my people out of your hand; from being hunted, ensnared, and deceived by them:

and they shall be no more in your land to be hunted; but should either flee into Egypt, and other countries, for shelter, or be carried captive into Babylon:

and ye shall know that I [am] the Lord; see Eze 13:9.

Ezekiel 13:22

Ver. 22. Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad,.... By polluting the name of the Lord; by hunting and decoying souls into their destructive nets; and by threatening such who would not give heed to their superstitious rites, lying divinations, and false prophecies: so false teachers make the hearts of such sad, who, having seen the insufficiency of their own righteousness, trust in the righteousness of Christ, and are justified by it; by teaching such doctrines as depreciate the love and grace of God the Father; making his love dependent on the creature; his covenant conditional, and salvation to be by works, and not by grace; as detract from the person, offices, and grace of Christ; denying his deity and divine sonship; making light of his blood, and setting up man's righteousness against his: and such as are injurious to the Spirit's work; ascribing regeneration and conversion to man's free will; giving such marks and signs of grace as are not to be found in any, and representing it as what may be entirely lost:

whom I have not made sad; nor would he have them made sad by others; neither by false prophets and their lies, nor by any other means; neither by anything within them, nor anything without them; not by any or all of their spiritual enemies: he would have them comforted; the covenant of grace, and the promises of it, are made for such a purpose; the Scriptures are written for this use; ordinances are designed for this end; ministers are appointed for this work; and this is the office of the divine Spirit; and the Son of God himself was sent on this account:

and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way; by repentance and reformation; and so far were the wicked from returning from it in this way, that they were emboldened in sin, and hardened in it; and were more frequent and open in the commission of it; and that through the prophecies of these false prophetesses; as wicked men are by the doctrines of false teachers: and particularly

by promising him life; or that he should live long, and enjoy much peace and prosperity in the land of Israel, and not be carried captive into Babylon; and so false teachers harden men in sin, by giving them hopes of eternal life, though they continue in their evil ways; or upon the foot of universal redemption, and upon their repentance, as the fruit of their own free will; and therefore take their swing of sin, as believing that Christ died for all men, and so for them, and therefore shall be saved, live as they will; and that it is in their power to repent when they please, and therefore procrastinate it to the last.

Ezekiel 13:23

Ver. 23. Therefore ye shall see no more vanity, nor divine divinations,.... They should not be suffered any longer to impose upon the people; and they should be so sufficiently exposed, that the people would not give heed to their vain visions and lying divinations any more; and no gain coming to them hereby, they would not be disposed to make pretensions to them, as they had done: or the sense is, that they should perish in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem; and so they and their false prophecies would cease together:

for I will deliver my people out of your hand, and ye shall know that I [am] the Lord; see Eze 13:21.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 14

In this chapter are contained the displeasure of God at hypocritical idolaters that sought unto him, and at the false prophets; the judgments that should come upon them, and which should not be averted by the intercession of the best of men; and yet a promise that a remnant should be saved. The elders of Israel are said to sit before the prophet, Eze 14:1; to whom the Lord gives an account of them,
Eze 14:2; and orders the prophet what he should say to them, that the Lord would answer them himself, Eze 14:4; and that he should bid the house of Israel repent and turn from their idols, or else the Lord would set his face

against them, and cut them off, both them and the false prophets they sought unto; and this is threatened in order to reform them, and continue them his covenant people, Eze 14:6; and then the judgment of famine is particularly threatened; to avert which, the prayers of the best of men would be of no effect, Eze 14:12; and next the judgment of noisome beasts, with the same intimation,
Eze 14:15; likewise the sword, Eze 14:17; and also the pestilence, Eze 14:19; and much less when they should be all sent together, Eze 14:21; and the chapter is concluded with a promise that a remnant should be saved; which would be a comfort to the captives of Babylon, and accounts for what the Lord had done, or would do, in Jerusalem, Eze 14:22.

Ver. 1. Then came certain, of the elders of Israel unto me,.... The Syriac version adds, "to consult the Lord"; by the prophet. These, according to Kimchi, were the elders of the captivity, the heads of the captives that were now in Babylon with Ezekiel: but there are others that think they were some that came from Jerusalem to Babylon on some business or another; and having heard much of the prophet, came to visit him, and to hear his prophecies, and inquire of the Lord by him:

and sat before me; silent and pensive, as persons in anxiety and distress; or as hearers of him, for sitting is a hearing gesture; they sat and heard with great attention, gravity, and seriousness, with seeming affection and reverence; and all this was not in a visionary way, but was a real fact; see Eze 33:31.

Ezekiel 14:2

Ver. 2. And the word of the Lord came unto me,.... While the elders were sitting before him, and whispered secretly and powerfully the following things in his ears:

saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 14:3

Ver. 3. Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart,.... Though they look so grave and demure, seem so devout and religious, and hear with so much attention and reverence, and express such a desire of consulting me by thee, they are no other than idolaters; and though they are at such a distance from their native place, and have not their idols with them, yet they have them in their fancy and imagination, and their hearts are after them, and are set upon them; these engross their affections, they are near and dear unto them, notwithstanding all their pretensions: or, they "have caused their idols to ascend upon their heart" {p}; their hearts are the altars on which they worship them, and the throne on which they have placed them; they are held in the highest esteem by them, and have the greatest honours done them, and have the ascendant over them; even their "dunghill" gods, as the word {q} signifies; though they are but dung, filthy and abominable, these they lay upon their hearts; and what else is man's righteousness, when made an idol of, trusted to, and depended on? it is no other, as the apostle says, than "loss" and "dung", **Php 3:8**; and so every carnal lust that is gratified and indulged is no other than an idol, or a dunghill god, set up in the heart:

and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face; whenever they had an opportunity of so doing; for their hearts were not only inwardly affected to idols, but they outwardly worshipped them; set them before them, and bowed the knee to them, and prayed: and these idols are called "the stumbling block of their iniquity", because by worshipping these they fell into sin, and so into ruin; they were the occasion of their sin, and of their punishment; they stumbled at them, and fell, even though they were before their eyes; nay, they set them themselves before their face, which shows their obstinacy and resolution to continue in idolatry, though it would be their ruin:

should I be inquired of at all by them? suffer them to come near me, and put a question to me, or be consulted by them through thee? no, I will not: or, "am I seriously inquired of by them?" so some {r} render the words; no, I am not; or, "being asked, shall I answer them?" so the Targum and Vulgate Latin version: or, "answering shall I answer them" {s}? no, I wilt not, they deserve no answer from me; they shall have none other of me than such an one as follows.

{p} Mbl le Mhylwlg wleh "ascendere fecerunt idola sua in, [vel] super cor suum", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin. {q} Mhylwlg "stercoreos deos suos", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "stercora sua", Cocceius; "stercora ipsorum", Starckius. {r} Mhl vrda vrdah "an [igitur serio] interrogor ab eis?" Piscator. {s} "An respondeudo respondebo illis?" Starckius. So Sept. Ar.

Ezekiel 14:4

Ver. 4. Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them,.... That is, speak unto them as a prophet, and as from the Lord, and say what follows; so the Targum,

"prophesy unto them and say unto them;"

thus saith the Lord God, every man of the house of Israel, that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face; let him be who he will, one in public office, an elder of Israel, or a private person; no respect will be had, no distinction made, nor favour shown; being an idolater in heart and practice, secretly and openly, he shall bear the punishment of his sin:

and cometh to the prophet: the Prophet Ezekiel, as the elders of Israel now did, or any other prophet of the Lord: the Vulgate Latin version adds, "inquiring of me by him"; expecting to have an answer, and one according to their wishes:

I the Lord will answer him that cometh; that cometh to the prophet; or, as the Targum,

"that cometh to ask instruction of me:"

here is a various reading, a "Keri" and a "Cetib"; we follow the Keri, or marginal reading, ab, "that cometh"; and so does the Targum; but the "Cetib", or written text, is hb, "in it", thus; "I the Lord will answer him in it" {t}; in the question he puts to the prophet, or to the Lord by him; or in that time, immediately; but not with smooth things, as he expects, but with terrible things in righteousness; not in a way of grace and mercy, but in a way of judgment; not as he desires, but as he deserves:

according to the multitude of his idols; in proportion to the number of his gods, and his idolatrous actions, shall the answer or punishment be: or these words may be connected with the word cometh, and be read thus, "that cometh with the multitude of his idols" {u}; with his heart full of idols, set up there; which is an instance of his hypocrisy, seen and detected by the Lord; and of his impudence, in daring to come unto him in such a manner; and of his folly, to expect a gracious answer from the Lord, this being his case. The Targum understands it quite otherwise, as if the answer the Lord would give would be a kind and agreeable one, paraphrasing this clause thus,

"although he is mixed (implicated or entangled) in the multitude of the worship of his idols."

{t} "Eodem {tempore]", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "in illo tempore", Piscator; "in ea re", Cocceius, Starckius. {u} wylwlg bwrb ab "ipsi venienti in multitudine idolorum suorum", Pagninus, Montanus.

Ezekiel 14:5

Ver. 5. That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart,.... By which they are ensnared, and drawn aside to their ruin; being given up to strong delusions, to believe a lie, and worship idols; God threatening to answer them by righteous judgments, and thereby take the wickedness, the hypocrisy, and idolatry, that were in their hearts, and expose and make it manifest unto others; or, by punishing them, to draw out the corruption and sin that were in them, that it might be seen what a wicked people they were. The Targum interprets the text in another way,

"that I may bring near the house of Israel, and put repentance into their hearts;"

because they are all estranged from me through their idols; they grew shy of God and his worship, when they fell into idolatry. Alienation from God, from the life of God, from the law of God, from the worship of God, and of the affections from him, is owing to some idol or another set up in the heart, or before the eye; whatever is worshipped besides God, or gains the ascendant in the heart, alienates from him; and God will not admit of a rival, he cannot and will not bear it; and for this reason he inflicts punishment, or answers in a terrible way.

Ezekiel 14:6

Ver. 6. Therefore say unto the house of Israel,.... Deliver out the following exhortation to repentance unto them; for God's end, in all his threatenings and judgments, is to bring men to repentance:

thus saith the Lord God, repent, and turn [yourselves] from your idols; or, "turn, and cause to be turned from your idols" {w}; turn yourselves from the worship of idols, as the Targum, and do all that in you lies to turn others from the same; particularly your wives and young men, as Kimchi: and the rather they were obliged to do this, since in all probability they had been the means of drawing them into idolatry:

and turn away your faces from all your abominations; their idols, detestable to God, and ought to have been so to them; these he would have them turn their faces from, not so much as look at them, much less worship them, that they might not be ensnared by them; this is said, in opposition to their setting of them before their face, Eze 14:3.

{w} wbyvhw wbwv "convertimini, et facite converti", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

Ezekiel 14:7

Ver. 7. For everyone of the house of Israel,.... King and subjects, princes and people, high and low, rich and poor, of every rank, sex, and age:

or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel; the proselytes; whether of righteousness, such as were circumcised, and embraced the Jewish religion; or of the gate, who were only inhabitants with them; one as another were obliged to worship the God of Israel, and abstain from idolatry; there was but one law to the Israelite and to the stranger, respecting this matter:

which separateth himself from me; from the worship of God, and so from communion with him; turns his back on him, and becomes an apostate from him, by joining himself with idols:

and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face; these things are repeated, partly to observe the heinousness of the sin they were guilty of; and partly to show the stupidity of this people, which required things to be said over and over, before they could take them in, and be convinced of their evil:

and cometh to a prophet to inquire of him concerning me; this explains what such persons would come to a prophet for, Eze 14:4; and exposes their hypocrisy:

I the Lord will answer him by myself; not by the prophet to whom he comes, but by himself: or, "in my word", as the Targum; yet not by words, but by blows; not in mercy, but in wrath; and in such manner, that it shall appear to come from the Lord, and to be according to truth and justice.

Ezekiel 14:8

Ver. 8. And I will set my face against that man,.... And look him out of countenance, notwithstanding all his daring impudence and presumption in coming to a prophet of the Lord, and inquiring of him by him, when guilty of gross idolatry; which mast needs be the case, when the face of God is set against a man. The Targum renders it, "my fury", or "wrath"; and indeed that is what is meant; when God sets his face against a man, he pours out his wrath, or inflicts punishment on him; see Ps 34:16. Jarchi's note is,

"as a man that says I am at leisure from all business, and I will attend to this;"

laying aside all other business, wholly giving himself up to one thing, on which he is set. Dreadful is a man's case, when the Lord thus sets himself against him!

and will make him a sign and a proverb; a spectacle of horror to look at, because of his misery; and a proverb, to be took up, and spoke of, as Zedekiah and Ahab were, Jer 29:22;

and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; by a sudden death, which the Jews call death from heaven, or by the immediate hand of God; and which is answering by himself, as in Eze 14:7;

and ye shall know that I [am] the Lord; that is, those that remain, are not cut off, but are reclaimed by these examples from idolatry, and are brought to repentance, the remnant among them that should be saved; these should know and acknowledge the Lord was omniscient, and knew the hypocrisy of those men above described; and was omnipotent, and could make good his threatenings, and inflict deserved punishment; and that he was holy, just, and true, in all his ways.

Ezekiel 14:9

Ver. 9. And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing,.... That is pleasing to men, and is not true, in hope of reward and applause, but it never comes to pass, and his expectations are not answered:

I the Lord have deceived that prophet; by sending a lying spirit to him, as to Ahab's prophets, 1Ki 22:22; by giving him up to strong delusions, to believe a lie, and publish it, **2Th 2:11**; and to his own heart's lusts; being willing, for the sake of gain, to prophesy smooth things, though false to the people, promising them peace when there was none; and then by frustrating his predictions, and disappointing him of his ends and views. R. Saadiah interprets this, as Kimchi observes, of God revealing and making it manifest that he was deceived; but more is meant by it than this, or even a bare permission; for though God is not the author of sin, yet he wills it to be done for wise ends and purposes, and sometimes in a way of judgment, as a punishment for sin; and which was the case here; both with respect to the prophet that deceived, who as the fruit of his sin, his covetousness, was given up in just judgment to a reprobate mind; and the people that were deceived, who, rejecting the true prophets of the Lord, were willing to have smooth things prophesied to them:

and I will stretch out my hand upon them; his avenging hand; the stroke of his power, as the Targum; a heavy one, and that for giving heed to a lying spirit; for uttering falsehood, and that with a wicked design, to gain the applause of the people, or for filthy lucre's sake:

and I will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel; by some sore judgment or sudden death, and so be made a public example of.

Ezekiel 14:10

Ver. 10. And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity,.... Both the false prophet, and those that sought unto him, and were deceived by him; and which being laid according to the strictness of divine justice, is intolerable: sad is the case when a man is obliged to bear his own sins, and the punishment of them, and has no surety to undertake for him, and be a mediator between God and him, and make atonement for him:

the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seekest [unto him]; they being both alike culpable, each pursuing the desires of their own evil hearts; the one seeking for smooth things to be spoken to him; the other speaking them, in order to gratify him, and for the sake of gain; the one being a false prophet, and the other seeking to and inquiring of him, though he was such, slighting and rejecting the true prophets of the Lord; both being deceived, and both blind, and so should fall into the same ditch, being under the same judicial blindness and hardness of heart. The Targum is,

"according to the sin of him that comes to learn and learns not; according to the sin of the false prophet shall it be."

Ezekiel 14:11

Ver. 11. That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me,.... Or from his worship, as the Targum; from the law of God, and obedience to it: sin is a going astray from God, a deviation from his commandments; it leads men out of the way of their duty into wrong paths, which issue in ruin, if grace prevent not; and sometimes the means which God makes use of for the restoring of his own people, and bringing them back to himself, are the punishments which he inflicts upon others; and which is his end in so doing, as it was here; that the false prophets, and those that followed them, being made examples of, might be a warning unto others, and caution them against falling into the same sins, that so they might not bear the same punishment; or be a means of reclaiming them from their errors, and for the future beware of going astray again:

neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions; for every transgression, as it is an aberration from the law of God, so it is of a defiling nature: it defiles the mind and conscience, yea, the whole man, from which there is no cleansing but by the blood of Christ; it is loathsome in itself, contrary to the pure and holy nature of God, and abominable to a gracious mind, and therefore to be avoided; and which may be learnt from the punishment of it on others:

but that they may be my people and I may be their God, saith the Lord God; that is, that they may behave as such, and that it may appear that God is their God, and they are his people.

Ezekiel 14:12

Ver. 12. The word of the Lord came again unto saying. At the same time as before, continuing the prophecy, and a denunciation of judgments; for it does not seem to begin a new prophecy. The Targum renders it, the word of prophecy from the Lord.

Ezekiel 14:13

Ver. 13. Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously,.... That is, the inhabitants of the land, when they are in general become sinners against God and his law; and not merely sinners, as all men are, but grievous ones, notorious sinners, guilty of very gross enormities, of great prevarication, perfidy, and treachery; for God is a God longsuffering, and has great patience with a people; and does not usually come forth in his judgments against nation, until sin has universally prevailed among them, and they are guilty of grievous abominations, and those continued in: but when this is the case,

then will I stretch out mine hand upon it; his hand of vindictive wrath and justice, and cause it to fall heavily, and men to feel it:

and will break the staff of the bread thereof; take away bread corn from the nation, the support of human life; which is that unto it, and the stay of it, as a staff is to a decrepit old man, that cannot walk without one; or take away the virtue of it, so as though it might be had and eaten, yet not be nourishing; see **Eze 4:16**;

and will send famine upon it; by causing a drought, restraining rain, sending mildew, locusts, caterpillars, &c. to eat up the fruits of the earth:

and will cut off man and beast from it; the latter for the sake of the former, and both through want of food.

Ezekiel 14:14

Ver. 14. Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it,.... In the sinning land, and made intercession for it, that the famine might be removed, and the inhabitants of it be saved alive, this would not be granted; though they were men that found favour in the sight of God, and were eminent for prayer, and successful in it, and the means of saving many; as Noah his family, by preparing an ark according to the will of God; and Daniel was an instrument of saving the lives of his companions, and of the wise men of Chaldea; and Job, by his prayer for his friends, prevented the wrath of God, that was kindled against them, coming upon them; and yet, if they had been upon the spot at

this time, their intercession for this people would have been of no avail; the decree was gone forth, and was not to be called in; it was unalterable, and God was inexorable: nor could it have been depended upon, if this declaration had not been made, that their prayers would have been effectual, had they been upon the spot, and put them up for this nation; since it might be observed, that the old world was not saved from a deluge in Noah's time, only he and his family; nor were the people of the Jews preserved from captivity in Daniel's time, nor even he himself; nor were Job's children saved, though he was greatly concerned for them: it may be observed from hence, that there was such a man as Job, as well as Noah and Daniel; and that the latter, though a young man, not above thirty years of age, at this time, yet was become very famous, not only for his dignity and grandeur in Babylon, but for his religion and piety; and is placed between those two great men, Noah and Job; and being a person now living, precludes any argument being formed by the Papists, in favour of the intercession of departed saints; and which would not be conclusive from such a supposition as here made, had they been all such as had departed this life; see
Jer 15:1; the design of the whole is only to show that the prayers of the best of men would not have prevailed with the Lord to avert his judgments from a people that had so grievously sinned against him:

they should deliver [but] their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord; as Noah was saved at the time of the flood; Daniel in the captivity; and Job midst his great afflictions: this is to be understood not of the eternal salvation of the souls of these men, which is not, nor can it be, by works of righteousness done by the best of men; by these men cannot be justified in the sight of God, and so not saved; but of temporal salvation, of the salvation of their souls or lives from temporal calamities. Besides, these men had knowledge of another and better righteousness than their own, and believed in it, and trusted to it, even the righteousness of faith, the righteousness of Christ received by faith Noah was both an heir and a preacher of the righteousness which is by faith; and Daniel knew that it was one branch of the Messiah's work to bring in everlasting righteousness; and Job was fully persuaded that his Redeemer lived, by whom he should be justified, Heb 11:7.

Ezekiel 14:15

Ver. 15. If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land,.... Evil and hurtful ones; not so much those that are poisonous as pernicious; such, as lions, tigers, foxes, wolves, and bears, that are very ravenous and devouring, and especially in a time of famine before threatened; though sometimes God makes use of lesser creatures to do damage to a land, and the fruits of it, as locusts, caterpillars, &c. but the former seem to be intended here, which sometimes God threatens and sends to a people disobedient and rebellious; see Le 26:22;

and they spoil it; or, "make it childless" {x}; they or I bereave the inhabitants of it of their children; or bereave it of other cattle that are tame, as sheep and oxen, as well as of men and women also, and even destroy the fruits of the earth:

so that it be desolate; having neither men nor cattle, corn or tillage, or any other fruit; all being destroyed by the evil beats, who have commission to pass through it, and lay it waste wherever they come, without control:

that no man may pass through because of the beasts; for fear of them: not only the inhabitants of the land should be destroyed by them, but even travellers, such as come from other countries, would not choose to pass through it because of the beasts; so that it would on this account be destitute both of inhabitants and of travellers; and must be a most desolate place, where only wild beasts were to be seen, ranging about at pleasure.

{x} hylkv "orbaturas eam", Pagninus, Montanus; "orbaturas eam", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "orbam fecere illam", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 14:16

Ver. 16. [Though] these three men [were] in it,.... Above named, Noah, Daniel, and Job; as they were not, two of them not being in the land of the living, and the other in Babylon; but if all three had been in a land so threatened, and used all the interest they had with God, by fervent prayer and supplication, to have called in the wild beasts, and chained them up, and to preserve the people from being destroyed by them, it would have been all in vain; the Lord was determined upon the destruction of them, and by means of these, as one of his sore judgments:

[as] I live, saith the Lord God; or by my life; for it is an oath with which God swears by himself, who has life in himself, and is the author and giver of life to others, and can take it away when, and in what manner, he pleases; and this oath is used, to show the unalterableness of the judgment threatened, it being

decreed and sworn to: God's word or decree, and his oath, are two immutable things, in which he cannot lie, and from which he never departs:

they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; meaning not adult persons, but little ones, infant sons and daughters; such as had not been guilty of the actual sins and transgressions their parents were charged with; even these they should not deliver by their prayers and supplications from being destroyed by noisome beasts, God punishing the iniquities of the fathers upon the children; and much less should they deliver those that were adult, and had committed the same idolatries and other sins their parents had; no, not even their own sons and daughters; for no exception is made but of themselves, as follows:

they only shall be delivered: as Noah with his family was in the ark, when amidst wild beasts; and Daniel in the lions den; and Job, with whom the beasts of the field were at peace, **Job 5:23**;

but the land shall be desolate; see Eze 12:20.

Ezekiel 14:17

Ver. 17. Or [if] I bring a sword upon that land,.... The land which had grievously sinned; the same land into which a famine should come, and through which evil beasts should pass; to which, if the Lord should add, as he would, a third judgment, the sword; suffer a foreign enemy to come in among them, and destroy them. So the Targum,

"or if those that slay with the sword I should bring upon that land;"

the Chaldean army, as he did; the sword has its commission from God; war is not by chance; the invasion of a foreign enemy is from the Lord; and all the mischiefs and ravages of a tumultuous army are all by divine order:

and say, sword, go through the land; not only enter the borders of it, or proceed far in it, but even go through it; which is terrible indeed! but if the Lord bids it go, it must go, and does; it is a servant of his, and punctually obeys his commands; that is, such are those that use it, however profane and wicked they may be in themselves, as generally armies consist of dissolute persons; yet these are under a divine direction, and are obedient to the will of God, though they may know it not. So the Targum, "and I say that they that kill with the sword pass through the land:"

so that I cut off man and beast from it; by the sword; the one being destroyed as an enemy, the other for food.

Ezekiel 14:18

Ver. 18. Though these three men [were] in it,.... Before mentioned:

[as] I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters: believe me no more, or be it so and so, if they do; it is in the form of an oath, and in the same manner it is expressed in
Eze 14:16;

but they only shall be delivered themselves; their own souls or lives, and by their righteousness, as in Eze 14:14.

Ezekiel 14:19

Ver. 19. Or [if] I send a pestilence into that land,.... Or the plague, which is the destruction that wastes at noon day; this is from the Lord, and a sore judgment it is:

and pour out my fury upon it in blood; or, "by blood" {y}; by corrupting the blood, which is done when a man is seized with the pestilence. The Targum renders it, "with slaughter"; by slaying a great number of persons by that disease, as a token of fury and wrath, because of their transgressions. It may be rendered, "because of blood" {z}; and so express the cause and reason of the judgment, the shedding of innocent blood:

to cut off from it man and beast; man by the pestilence, and beast by some contagious distemper or another.

{y} Mdb "per sanguinem", Piscator. {z} "Propter sanguinem", Vatablus.

Ezekiel 14:20

Ver. 20. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, [were] in it,.... Who are again mentioned by name, as in Eze 14:14; and are the three men referred to in Eze 14:16;

[as] I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; not so much as an only son, or an only daughter, no, not even a single child: the plural number is used before, as in Eze 14:16; here the singular, to show how resolutely determined the Lord was upon the destruction of the land; that even the prayers of the best of men among them should not prevail with him to save a single person, no, not a single infant: they

shall [but] deliver their own souls by their righteousness;
See Gill on "Eze 14:14".

Ezekiel 14:21

Ver. 21. For thus saith the Lord God, how much more,.... If the Lord would not be entreated by such good men as those mentioned, for a land that had sinned against him, to whom he only sends some one of the above judgments, either famine, or noisome beasts, or the sword, or the pestilence, how much more inexorable and deaf to all entreaties must he be; or if anyone of those judgments makes so great a desolation in the land, then how much greater must that detraction be,

when I send my four sore judgments on Jerusalem: or "evil" {a} ones; as they are to men, though righteously inflicted by the Lord; when all these four are sent together, what a devastation must they make! namely,

the sword, and the famine, and the, noisome beast, and the pestilence,
to cut off from it man and beast; three of them, it is evident, were sent upon Jerusalem at the time of its siege by Nebuchadnezzar, the sword, famine, and pestilence; and no doubt the other, even the noisome beasts; and if not literally, yet figuratively, for Nebuchadnezzar himself is compared to a lion, **Jer 4:7**.

{a} Myerh "mala", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Starckius; "pessima", Junius & Tremellius, Vatablus.

Ezekiel 14:22

Ver. 22. Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant,.... That is, in Jerusalem, on which God's four sore judgments should be sent: though in a sinful land, as before described, where only one judgment was sent, there was no escape, not so much as a son or a daughter were delivered; yet here, where four sore judgments came together, there is a remnant that are saved; and which being wonderful, and beyond all expectation, is introduced with a "behold", not only as a note of attention, but of admiration:

that shall be brought forth, both sons and daughters; that is, which should be brought forth out of Jerusalem when taken, and should not be destroyed either by famine, or by noisome beasts, or by the sword, or by the pestilence; and these, many of them, both sons and daughters; some of each sex, that should be the means of propagating a posterity, that should return again, and repeople the land, and continue for many ages, as they have done: this is said with respect to Eze 14:16;

behold, they shall come forth unto you; come out of Jerusalem, and their own land, into Babylon, to the captives already there; with whom Ezekiel now was, and to whom he is speaking:

and ye shall see their way and their doings; their wicked course of life and evil actions; which now being convinced of, and humbled for, they shall ingenuously acknowledge and confess to their brethren in captivity: though some think this is to be understood of wicked and reprobate men, that should be not at all reformed by the judgments of God, but continue in their wicked course; which the godly captives seeing, would conclude from thence their manner of life before, and so the righteous judgment of God upon them; and their being a remnant preserved is thought not to be in a way of mercy, but judgment; who though they escaped each of the four sore judgments, yet had a worse inflicted on them, even captivity:

and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, [even] concerning all that I have brought upon it; that is, they should be satisfied with the justice of God, and be reconciled to the providence of God, in bringing destruction upon Jerusalem; which perhaps before they murmured at, or had hard thoughts of God concerning it; but now hearing the confessions of those that were brought from thence to them, or seeing their wicked lives and conversations, they would now be fully satisfied that God was righteous in all that he had done; and that, instead of being rigorous and severe, he had been kind and merciful.

Ezekiel 14:23

Ver. 23. And they shall comfort you, when ye see their ways and their doings,.... Not that their sinful ways and doings would be comfortable to them, but either their acknowledgments of them, and repentance for them; or, seeing their dissolute manner of life, it would be a means of composing their minds, and making them easy under the providence; being now satisfied that God was just in bringing upon them all the evils he had, and that they were punished according to their deserts, and less than their sins deserved:

and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord God; that there was just reason for it; that he was sufficiently provoked to do it; and that it was necessary it should be done, for his own honour, and the good of others.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 15

The destruction of Jerusalem is again prophesied of in this chapter, and is set forth under the simile of a vine tree, which, for its uselessness, is committed to the fire. The simile is in Eze 15:1; the application of it in Eze 15:6.

Ver. 1. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. The destruction of Jerusalem had been represented under various types and similes before, as of a siege, and a sharp razor; and here of a fruitless and useless vine, only fit for the fire; which was delivered out by a spirit of prophecy. The Targum calls it the word of prophecy, as usual.

Ezekiel 15:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, what is the vine tree more than any tree,.... Or, "the wood of the vine than any wood" {b}; it is not better than other wood; it is not so good as any other wood; nay, it is good for nothing. The fruit of the vine tree is good, but its wood is of no use: a vine tree, if it bears fruit, is valuable; but if it does not, it is of no account. The people of the Jews are often compared to a vine, who, while they brought forth good fruit, were in esteem; but, when they became like an empty and fruitless vine, were rejected as good for nothing, Ps 80:8; they were originally no better than others; what they had were owing to the grace and goodness of God; and when they degenerated, they were the worst of all people:

[or than] a branch which is among the trees of the forest? a vine tree that bears fruit is better than a tree of the forest, or than a branch of one that is unfruitful; but a vine tree that does not bear fruit is not so good; because the wood of the one may be useful when the other is not; though the words may be better rendered, even "the branch [of a wild vine] which is among the trees of the forest" {c}; and so it explains what vine tree is spoken of; not a fruitful one in the vineyards, but a wild and barren one in the forest. So Jarchi paraphrases the words,

"not of the vine in the vineyards, which bears fruit, speak I unto thee; but of the branch of the vine which grows in the forests;"

and so Kimchi,

"I do not ask thee of the vine tree which beareth fruit, for that is valuable; but of the branch (of the wild vine) which is among the trees of the forest, and is as they that do not bear fruit, concerning that I ask thee; for even it is not as the trees of the forest; for the trees of the forest, though they do not bear fruit, they are fit to do work of them, to make vessels of them, and to floor houses with them; but the wood of this vine is not so."

{b} Ue lkm Npgh Ue "lignum vitis prae omni ligno", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Starckius. {c} hrwmzh "surculus", Cocceius; "surculus vitis", Starckius; "vitis sylvestris", Munster. So Ben Melech interprets the branch, of a vine.

Ezekiel 15:3

Ver. 3. Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work?.... The carpenter and joiner, the house or ship builder, are employed in; as to build houses of, make beams, rafters, floors, &c. build ships with, make masts of, &c. or any vessel or utensil for the use of man? it never is; it is not fit for any such purpose.

Pliny {d} speaks of some rarities made of the wood of vines, but not things of common use; and these not of any vines, but of some peculiar ones, favoured by the air and soil

or will [men] take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? it is not fit to make a peg of to hang a hat on; and much less for anything that requires more strength.

{d} Nat. Hist. l. 14. c. 1.

Ezekiel 15:4

Ver. 4. Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel, That is; a vine tree when cut down, or a branch when cut off, it is good for nothing else; and that is the use it is generally put to; see Joh 15:6; and this, it is suggested, would be the end of the Jewish nation; who were become by their sins like a wild vine, and were fit fuel for the fire of divine wrath:

the fire devoureth both the ends of it; the branch cast into it, and so is quickly consumed. Kimchi explains this by **Isa 9:12**; "the Syrians before, and the Philistines behind, and they devour Israel with open mouth"; and Abendana of the ten tribes; but it seems only to design how soon the fire takes it; and how inevitable the consumption is when it is fired at both ends:

and the midst of it is burnt: presently; it being dried, and reduced to a brand by the heat of the fire at both ends: this Kimchi interprets of the city of Jerusalem, which was in the midst of the land:

is it meet for [any] work? no; for if it was not fit for any work when cut down, or cut off, much less when burnt in the fire.

Ezekiel 15:5

Ver. 5. Behold, when it was whole it was meet for no work,.... Before it was cut into pieces, and east into the fire, it was not fit to make so much as a pin of to hang anything on; so Israel, when all together, before the ten tribes were carried captive, or the Jews before the captivity of Jeconiah, were useless and unfruitful, and to every good work reprobate:

how much less shall it be meet yet for [any] work when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned? as its wood is good for nothing before it is burned, its ashes are useless after.

Ezekiel 15:6

Ver. 6. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Now follows the application of the simile:

as the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel; to be burnt, as other trees of the forest are, and along with them:

so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem; to be destroyed along with other nations by the Chaldeans; they being no better, but as bad, if not worse, like wild vines among forest trees; and therefore must fare no better: this was the decree and determination of the Lord.

Ezekiel 15:7

Ver. 7. And I will set my face against them,.... In wrath to destroy them; see Eze 14:8; and

they shall go out from [one] fire, and [another] fire shall devour them: from one calamity to another; those that escaped the famine and pestilence in the city fell by the sword; and those that escaped famine, sword, and pestilence, were carried into captivity, and there passed from one hardship and affliction to another. The Targum is,

"I will execute my vengeance on them, because of the words of the law, which were given out of the midst of fire; they have transgressed, and people who are strong as fire shall consume them."

Some, as Abendana observes, interpret the fire, out of which they went, of Sennacherib, out of whose hand the Lord delivered them; and the fire which devoured them, of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and it may be rendered, "they have gone out" {e}, &c.

and ye shall know that I [am] the Lord, when I set my face against them; he is known by his judgments to be the Lord God omnipotent, holy, just, and true.

{e} wauy "exiverunt", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 15:8

Ver. 8. And I will make the land desolate,.... The land of Judea uncultivated, men and beast being cut off; see Eze 14:15;

because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord God; acted a treacherous and perfidious part; apostatized from God, having committed idolatry, which was the cause of their ruin; and therefore it was not without a cause that the Lord did what he did, in it; see Eze 14:23.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 16

In this chapter the Jewish nation is represented under the simile of a female infant, whose birth, breeding, marriage, grandeur, and conduct, are described, in order to show the wickedness and ingratitude of, his people; who, on account thereof, are threatened with judgments; though mercy is promised to a remnant that should repent. The prophet is directed to make known to Jerusalem her abominable sins, Eze 16:1; and, in order to this, is bid to take up the following parable of a female infant; whose descent, birth, and wretched condition, at the time of it, are pointed at, Eze 16:3; which are expressive of the low and forlorn estate of the Jews originally; and then follow the benefits and blessings of God bestowed upon them, both in their infant and adult state; the preserving them alive in Egypt, and their multiplication there; and afterwards the covenant made with them, when brought out from thence; and the Lord's espousal of them to himself, as his own people, having a strong affection for them, Eze 16:6; the large provision of good things he made for them, both in the wilderness, and especially in the land of Canaan; the riches he bestowed upon them, and the flourishing and prosperous kingdom he raised them to, which made them famous among all the nations round about them, Eze 16:9; and yet, after all this, such was the ingratitude of this people, as to commit spiritual whoredom, that is, idolatry, to a very great degree, Eze 16:15;

which is aggravated by their converting and applying the good things which the Lord gave them to idolatrous uses, Eze 16:16; by sacrificing their sons and daughters to idols, which were the Lord's, Eze 16:20; by not calling to mind the former wretched estate out of which they were brought, Eze 16:22; by building high places in every street and way, and there committing idolatries, Eze 16:23; by the various nations, whose examples they followed, and with whom they joined, as the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans, Eze 16:26; and by the great difference between them and all other harlots, whom they exceeded,
Eze 16:30; wherefore, on account of all this, they are threatened to be dealt with as an adulterous woman; made a spectacle of; condemned to die, to be stripped, stoned, and burned, Eze 16:35; and, that the Lord might appear to be just in executing such judgments on them, they are declared to be as bad as the Hittites and Amorites their parents; and worse than their sisters Samaria and Sodom; and therefore could expect to fare no better than they; and should become proverb and a byword, and bear their sins, shame, and punishment, in the sight of their neighbours, and be despised by them, Eze 16:44; nevertheless, the covenant of grace made with his chosen people among them should stand firm; which being manifested to them, would be a means of bringing them to a sense of sin, shame for it, and an acknowledgment of the Lord's grace and goodness to them Eze 16:60.

Ver. 1. Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. The word of prophecy from the Lord, as the Targum; the following representation was made to him under a spirit of prophecy.

Ezekiel 16:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations. That is, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as the Targum; these are mentioned instead of the whole body of the people, because that Jerusalem was the metropolis of the nation, whose sins were very many and heinous: called "abominations", because abominable to God, and rendered them so to him; particularly their idolatries are meant; which, though committed by them, and so must be known to them, yet were not owned, confessed, and repented of by them, they not being convinced of the evil of them; in order to which the prophet is bid to set them before them, and show them the evil nature of them; and which he might do by writing to them, for he himself was now in Chaldea with the captives there. The Targum is, "son of man, reprove the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and show them their abominations."

Ezekiel 16:3

Ver. 3. And say, thus saith the Lord God unto Jerusalem,.... To the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as the Targum:

thy birth and thy nativity [is] of the land of Canaan; here the Jewish ancestors for a time dwelt and sojourned, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and so the Targum, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret the first word, "thy habitation" or "sojourning" {f}: but whereas it follows, "and thy nativity", this does not solve the difficulty; which may be said to be of the land of Canaan, because their ancestors were born here; for though Abraham was a Chaldean he was called out of Chaldea into the land of Canaan, where Isaac was born; and so was Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes; besides, the Israelites were the successors of the Canaanites in their land, and so seemed to descend from them; and it is not unusual for such to be reckoned the children of those whom they succeed; to which may be added, that they were like to the Canaanites in their manners, particularly in their idolatries; and so their children, as such, are said to be the offspring and descendants of those whose examples they follow, or whom they imitate; see the history of Susannah in the Apocrypha:

"So he put him aside, and commanded to bring the other, and said unto him, O thou seed of Chanaan, and not of Juda, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust hath perverted thine heart." (Susannah 1:56)

thy father [was] an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite; Abraham and Sarah, who were, properly speaking, the one the father, the other the mother, of the Jewish nation, were Chaldeans; and neither Amorites nor Hittites; yet, because they dwelt among them; are so called; and especially since before their conversion they were idolaters, as those were; besides, the Jews who descended from Judah, and from whom they have their name, very probably sprung from ancestors who might be Amorites and Hittites: since Judah married the daughter of a Canaanite, and such an one seems to be Tamar, he took for his son Er, and by whom he himself had two sons, Pharez and Zarah, from the former of which the kings of Judah lineally descended, Ge 37:2; besides, the Jews were the successors of these people, and possessed their land, and imitated them in their wicked practices, **Am 2:10**; and these two, the Amorite and Hittite, of all the seven nations, are mentioned, because they were the worst, and the most wicked, Ge 15:16. The Jews {g} say Terah the father of Abraham, and his ancestors, came from Canaan.

{f} Kytyrkm "habitationes tuae", Pagninus, Calvin; "mansiones tuae", Montanus; "habitatio tua", Vatablus, Grotius; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 30. 1. {g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 44. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

Ezekiel 16:4

Ver. 4. And [as for] thy nativity, in the day thou wast born,.... Which refers either to the time when Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldeans, who had before been an idolater; or rather to the time when the children of Israel were in Egypt, and there grew and multiplied, and became a numerous body of people; who, upon their coming out of it, were brought into some form, and became a nation or body politic, which may be called the day of their birth as a people; see **Ho 2:3**;

thy navel was not cut; alluding to what is done to a newborn infant, when the midwife immediately takes care to cut the navel string, by which the child adheres to its mother, and takes in its breath and nourishment in the womb; but now, being of no longer use that way, it is cut and tied up, for the safety both of mother and child, who otherwise would be in great danger; and this denotes the desperate condition the Israelites were in when in Egypt, where they were greatly oppressed and afflicted, and in very imminent danger of being destroyed; to which the Targum refers it:

neither wast thou washed in water to supple [thee]: which also is done, to an infant as soon as born, to cleanse it from the menstruous blood, to make the flesh sleek, and smooth, and amiable; which, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, is done in hot water:

thou wast not salted at all; which was done, either by sprinkling salt upon it, or using salt and water {h}, as a detersive of uncleanness, to prevent putrefaction, to dry up the humours, and harden the flesh, and consolidate the parts:

nor swaddled at all; to bring the several members of the body into form and shape; see **Lu 2:7**; and these things being of necessity to be done immediately, were, as Kimchi observes, lawful to be done even on a sabbath day, according to the traditions of the elders {i}.

{h} Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 25. {i} Vid. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 129. 2.

Ezekiel 16:5

Ver. 5. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee,.... Or, "one of these" {k}; not so much as one of them: sad must be the case of an infant, when it meets with no tender heart or kind hand from midwife, nurse, or mother, to do these things for it: this is expressive of the helpless, forlorn, and unpitied state of the Israelites in Egypt; who, when their lives were made bitter with hard bondage, had no mercy shown them by Pharaoh and his taskmasters, **Ex 1:14**. So the Targum,

"the eye of Pharaoh did not spare you to do one good thing for you, to give you rest from your bondage, to have mercy on you:"

but thou wast cast out in the open field; alluding to infants exposed by their unnatural parents, or unkind nurses, and left in an open field, or any desert place, to perish for want, unless some kind providence appears for them: this open field may design the land of Egypt, whither Jacob and his posterity were, being driven out of Canaan by a famine; and where, after the death of Joseph, they were exposed to the hardships and cruelties of the Egyptians; and who, commanding their male children to be slain, doubtless occasioned the exposing of many of them, as well as Moses, to which some reference may be had; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"and he (Pharaoh) decreed a full decree to cast your male children into the river, to destroy you when you were in Egypt:"

to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born; the Israelites were loathsome to the Egyptians, as every shepherd was an abomination to them, and such were they, Ge 46:34; and all this may be applied to the state and condition of men by nature, even of God's elect, whose extraction is from fallen man; descend immediately from unclean parents; are conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; can have no communication of grace from their parents, or others; by whom they cannot be washed from their sins, or sanctified, or clothed, or made righteous; but are in a hopeless and helpless condition; and are loathsome and abominable to God, and to themselves too, when they come to see the state they are in.

{k} hlam txa "unum ex istis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus; "unum ex his", Pagninus, Montanus, Starckius.

Ezekiel 16:6

Ver. 6. And when I passed by thee,.... Alluding to a traveller passing by where an infant lies, exposed, and looks upon it, and takes it up; or it may be to Pharaoh's daughter walking by the river side, when she spied the ark in which Moses was, and ordered it to be taken up, and so saved his life:

and saw thee in thine own blood; keeping up the simile of a newborn infant, that has nothing done to it, but is all over covered with menstruous blood; denoting the wretched and miserable estate the Jews were in when in Egypt; when they were not only loathsome and abominable to the Egyptians, and ill used and unpitied by them; but were in danger of being utterly destroyed, and ready to expire. The word rendered "polluted" signifies "trodden underfoot" {l}; like mire in the streets; and so denotes both pollution and distress; so the Israelites were trodden under foot by the Egyptians, when they made them to serve with rigour, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"for it was manifest before me that you were afflicted in your bondage;"

as they then sighed and cried because of their bondage, the Lord looked upon them with an eye of pity and compassion, and delivered them, Ex 1:14;

I said unto thee, [when thou wast] in thy blood, live: yea, I said unto thee, [when thou wast] in thy blood, live; the Lord preserved them and saved them alive, when they were near to ruin, and delivered them by the hands of Moses, which was as life from the dead; and this he did of his own sovereign good will and pleasure, and not for any worth or merit, in them, any goodness or righteousness of theirs; for this he did when they were in their blood, pollution, and guilt; and which, that it might be observed, is repeated. The word for "blood", which is thrice mentioned, is in the plural number, "bloods"; and denotes not the blood of circumcision, and the blood of the passover; for, or by which, the Lord had mercy upon them, and redeemed them, as the Targum and Jarchi interpret it; but the abundance of it, as upon a newborn infant; and the great pollution and distress in which the Israelites were, through the many murders committed on them by their enemies. The whole is an emblem of the state and condition the elect of God are in, when they are quickened by him; who are by their first birth unclean; under the pollution, power, and guilt of sin; wallowing and weltering in it; deserving of the wrath of God, and liable to punishment for it; trodden under foot, quite neglected and despised in all appearance; and are both hopeless and helpless: when the Lord "passes" by them, not by chance, but on purpose, knowing where they are; and this he often does by the ministry of the word, under which they are providentially cast; and where he "sees" them, and looks upon then, not merely with his eye of omniscience, much less with an eye of scorn, contempt, and abhorrence; but with an eye of pity and compassion, and even of complacency and delight in their persons, though not in their sins: and when he speaks life into them, a principle of spiritual life; or quickens them by his word, so that they live a life of faith and holiness, which issues in everlasting life: this flows from divine love, and is the effect of divine power; it is of pure rich grace, and not of man's merit; as his case, being in his blood, and dead in sins, show; see **Eph 2:4**.

{l} toowbtm "conculcatam", Pagninus, Montanus, Starckius; "praebentem conculcandam te", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Piscator.

Ezekiel 16:7

Ver. 7. I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field,.... Or, "made thee millions" {m}; like the spires of grass in the field. This refers to the multiplication of the children of Israel in Egypt, especially after the death of Joseph, and even while they were sorely afflicted, and likewise in later times. Jacob went down to Egypt with seventy five persons only, but when his posterity returned from thence, they were above six hundred thousand that were able to go forth to war,
Ge 46:27; see **Ex 1:7**;

and thou hast increased and waxed great; and became large families, kindreds, and tribes, as the Targum interprets it; as a child grows up, and becomes adult:

and thou art come to excellent ornaments; or, "ornament of ornaments" {n}; as a young woman, when she is grown up, comes to wear better and finer clothes than in infancy; perhaps there is an allusion to the jewels the Israelites brought out of Egypt with them: this may be applied to the laws, statutes, and ordinances given them, which were an "ornament of grace" unto them, **Pr 1:9**;

[thy] breasts are fashioned; swelled and stood out; were come to a proper size and shape, as in persons grown and marriageable; see **So 8:10**;

and thine hair is grown; an euphemism, expressive of puberty, which in females was at twelve years of age:

whereas thou [wast] naked and bare; in a state of infancy. Jarchi and Kimchi interpret this of the Israelites being without the commandments. The whole of what is here said, may be applied to quickened and converted persons, who grow in grace, and increase in spiritual knowledge; and are adorned with the ornaments of grace and good works; and attend to the word and ordinances, which are the church's breasts; who, while in their nature state, were naked and destitute of righteousness and grace.

{m} hbbr "millia dedi", Pagninus, Montanus; "in multa millia", Tigurine version; "in myriadem te auxi", Piscator; so Ben Melech. {n} Myyde yde "ornamenta ornamentorum", Pagninus, Montanus; "in ornamentum ornamentorum", Calvin; "pulchritudinem pulchritudiuum", Starckius; so Ben Melech; "elegantiam elegantiarum", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 16:8

Ver. 8. Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee,.... Which the Targum refers to the Lord's appearance to Moses in the bush;
See Gill on "Eze 16:6";

behold, thy time [was] the time of love; which the Targum explains of the time of redemption of the people of Israel out of Egypt, which was an instance of the great love of God unto that people; and which time was fixed by him; and when it was come, at the exact and precise time, the redemption was wrought; see Ge 15:13; and so there is a set time for the calling and conversion of God's elect, who are therefore said to be called according to purpose; and, when that time comes, all means are made to concur to bring it about: and this is a time of love; for though the love of God to his people is before all time, yet it is manifested in time; and there are particular times in which it is expressed unto them; and the time of conversion is one of them; and indeed it is the first time that there is a manifestation and application of the love of God made to the souls of his people: and this is a "time of loves" {o}; as it is in the original text; denoting the large abundance of it which is now shown forth; and the various acts of it now done; as bringing of them out of a most miserable condition, out of a horrible pit; plucking them as brands out of the burning; quickening them when dead in sin; speaking comfortably to them, and applying pardoning grace and mercy to their souls: and it may include both the love of God to his people, and their love to him; for now is the love of their espousals, and the kindness of their youth, **Jer 2:2**; the grace of love is now implanted, to God and Christ, to his people, word, worship, and ordinances, which before had no place in them:

and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; the Lord espoused the people of Israel to himself in the wilderness, after he had brought them out of Egypt, and took them under the wings of his protection; both which this phrase may be expressive of; see **Ru 3:9**. Some understand this of his giving them the spoils of the Egyptians, and also the law: it may very well be applied to the righteousness of Christ, which is often compared to a garment, for which the skirt, a part, is put; and this is put on as a garment, and answers all the purposes of one; and particularly covers the nakedness of men, which their own righteousness will not do; this the Lord spreads over his people, and covers them with; and being clothed with this, they shall not be found naked:

yea, I sware unto thee; to his love expressed to his people, and to his covenant he entered into with them, neither of which shall ever be removed; and this makes to their abundant comfort; see Ps 89:3;

and entered into covenant with thee, saith the Lord God; as he did with the people of Israel at Horeb, and which was a sort of a marriage contract with them; see De 29:1; the covenant of grace was made from everlasting with Christ, and the elect in him; but is made manifest at conversion, when the Lord makes himself known unto them as their covenant God; leads them to Christ the Mediator of it; sends his Spirit down into their hearts, to make them partakers of the grace of it; and shows them their interest in the blessings and promises of it; all which may be meant by the phrase here used:

and thou becamest mine; as Israel did at the time before mentioned, became the Lord's peculiar people, and were avouched as such by him, Ex 19:5; so, in conversion, those who before were secretly the Lord's by electing and redeeming grace, become openly his by calling and sanctifying grace.

{o} Mydwd te "tempus amorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Piscator, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 16:9

Ver. 9. Then washed I thee with water,.... Brought the Israelites out of the mean, abject, servile, and sordid state in which they were, when among the mortar, bricks, and pots, into a state of liberty; so the Targum,

"and I redeemed you from the servitude of the Egyptians; and I removed the strength of dominion from you, and brought you into liberty;"

perhaps some reference may be had to the ceremonial ablutions enjoined them; they were washed before the covenant was made with them at Mount Sinai, just referred to; their priests, sacrifices, vessels, and all unclean persons, were to be washed, and purifications were prescribed them:

yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee: as with an inundation overflowing; so the word {p} signifies; very fitly is this mentioned, since in Eze 16:6; they are said to be "polluted in their blood", and now washed from it: all men are defiled with sin, originally, naturally, internally, and universally; nor can they cleanse themselves by anything they can do, God only can; and this he promises to do; and this he does, not with water baptism, which does not take away sin, original or actual; nor with the washing of regeneration, or by regenerating grace; though that is sometimes compared to water; which, among other things, is of a cleansing nature; and of which men are born again, and by it sanctified; and which is done by the Spirit, who is a spirit of judgment and burning, by whom the faith of the daughter of Zion is washed away; and because this is done by the word and ordinances as means, hence these are called waters; see Eze 36:25; yet hereby men are not "thoroughly" washed; though a clean heart is created in them, a new man is formed in righteousness and true holiness; yet the filthiness of the old man remains, which appears in thoughts, words, and actions; but the thorough washing is by the blood of Christ; that is the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; with this men are washed by Christ from their sins; this has a purgative and cleansing nature; and it cleanses from all sin, and justifies from everyone; so that hereby a man thoroughly washed is clear of all sin, none to be found or seen in him; he is without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and has solid peace in his soul; his heart being sprinkled with this blood from an evil conscience, and, being purged, has no more conscience of sin; so that this is expressive of the fulness of justifying and pardoning grace:

and I anointed thee with oil; alluding to the anointing oil, with which the priests, tabernacle, and vessels, were anointed; or to the land of Canaan, a land of oil olive, into which the Israelites were brought; or to the custom of washing and anointing women before marriage; see **Ru 3:3**; and to the use of oil in baths, which was frequent: this may spiritually design the grace of the Spirit, which, like the oil on Aaron's head, is exceeding "precious", as are faith, hope, and love; and, like the "pure" oil for the candlestick, productive of purity of heart, lip, and life; of a delightful smell, as are the church's ointments she has from Christ, **So 1:3**; and very cheering and refreshing, and therefore called oil of gladness, Ps 45:7; and ornamental and beautifying, as all grace is; and oil will not mix with another liquor, as grace will not with sin and corruption, and is of an abiding nature: now it is God that anoints with this; this oil comes from the God of all grace; is fro, in Christ the Holy One, and out of his fulness; from him the head it descends to all his members, and is applied by the blessed Spirit; see **2Co 1:21**.

{p} Kymd Pjva "ut inundans eluerem sanguinem tuum", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "inundavi sanguines tuos", Montanus; "affundendo ablui", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 16:10

Ver. 10. I clothed thee also, with broidered work,.... Or, "with needle work" {q}; with garments of divers colours, like Joseph's coat; perhaps it may refer to the rich raiment borrowed of the Egyptians, when they came out from thence. So the Targum,

"and I clothed you with various garments, the desirable things of your enemies;"

and which, with their other clothes, waxed not old all the while they were in the wilderness; see Ex 12:35; this may be expressive, either of the various graces of the Spirit of God, with which the saints are clothed and adorned; and, when exercised by them, are said to be put on as a garment, **Col 3:12**; or rather of the righteousness of Christ, called "raiment of needle work", Ps 45:14;

and shod thee with badgers' skin; the same the covering of the tabernacle was made of, Ex 26:14; and though the word here used may not design the creature we so call, yet may intend one whose skin was fit for shoe leather, and was very beautiful, and perhaps durable; reference may be had to the shoes of the Israelites in the wilderness, which waxed not old, De 29:5. Some think only the hyacinth or purple colour is here meant; and so the Septuagint version renders the word; agreeably to which Bochart {r} gives this version of the words, "I shod thee with the purple"; that is, with shoes of a purple colour; and it is very probable that of this colour were the shoes wore by the Jewish women of the first rank; since, as the same writer has not only shown from Procopius that great personages in other nations used to wear such, as the Persian and Roman emperors; who, in their own countries only, might wear them; but this was the custom of neighbouring provinces, particularly the Tyrian women, as Virgil {s} plainly suggests. Bynaeus {t} is of opinion that they were of a red or scarlet colour; and that the words should be rendered, "I shod thee with scarlet"; that is, with scarlet coloured shoes; which he observes have been in great esteem and use among persons of figure and quality; and, be they of what colour they will, they were, no doubt, made of skins of value, fine, soft, and pliable; as the Targum paraphrases it,

"I put precious shoes (or shoes of value) upon your feet:"

and therefore cannot be well thought to be made of badgers' skins, of which it was never known that shoes were made; with those indeed quivers and shields have been covered, and of those the harness of horses and collars of dogs have been made; but not men's shoes, and much less the shoes of delicate women. This may denote the agreeable walk of the saints, having their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; or a conversation agreeable to the Gospel of Christ; which is very beautiful, and in which they are enabled to continue by the power and grace of God; see Lu 15:22;

and I girded thee about with fine linen; as the high priest was with the linen girdle of the ephod, Ex 28:8. So the Targum,

"and I separated from you the priests, that they might minister before me with linen mitres, and the high priest in garments of divers colours;"

all the saints are made priests to God, and art girt about with the girdle of love, which constrains them to fear and serve the Lord with all readiness and cheerfulness: and with the girdle of truth, which they cause to cleave and keep close unto them; see **Eph 6:14**;

and I covered thee with silk. The Targum interprets this of the clothing of the high priest; but, if respect is had to that, silk cannot be intended; for, as the Jews themselves say {u}, the priests were not clothed for service, in the house of the sanctuary, but with wool and linen; and indeed, though the Jewish commentators in general, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, and others {w}, as well as our version, take the word here used to signify silk; yet, as Braunius {x} observes, it does not appear that this was known among the Jews in the times of Ezekiel, nor even before the times of Christ; nor was it known among the Romans before the times of Augustus. The word seems to be derived from an Arabic word {y}, which signifies to colour or paint clothes; and may be rendered painted or coloured cloth, or garments; and so the Targum renders it died or coloured garments; and so Aquila translates it by anyinon, a "flowered garment", either painted or wrought with flowers; and so Jerom, and the Vulgate Latin, by "polymitium", a garment of divers colours; and may signify; as before, the rich apparel of the Jews, and the plenty of good things enjoyed by them; see Lu 16:19; and, in a mystical sense, the beautiful clothing of the church, with the robe of Christ's righteousness, and the graces of the Spirit.

{q} hmqr "veste acupicta", Vatablus, Grotius; "acupicto", Montanus, Cocceius, Starckius. {r} Hierozoicon, par. 2. l. 3. c. 31. col. 992. {s} "Virginibus Tyriis mos est gestare pharetram, Purpureoque alte suras vincire cothurno". Aeneid l. 1. {t} De Calceis Hebr. l. 1. c. 5. sect. 16. {u} Misn. Celaim, c. 9. sect. 1. {w} yvm "serico", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Starckius. So Buxtorf, Stockius, &c. {x} De Vestitu Sacerdot. Hebr. l. 1. c. 8. p. 168, 169. {y} "coloravit, pinxitque pannum. Hinc" "coloratus, pinctusque, pannus", Golius, col. 2678, 2679. Castel. col. 996.

Ezekiel 16:11

Ver. 11. And I decked thee also with ornaments,.... The Targum interprets this of the ornament of the words of the law; see **Pr 1:8**; but may be as well understood of good works done in obedience to them, from a right principle, and to right ends; which adorn professors of religion, their profession, and the doctrines of Christ, which they profess, **1Ti 2:9**; or rather the graces of the Spirit, which are all of them very ornamental to the saints, as faith, hope, love, humility, &c. and are in the sight of God of great price, **1Pe 3:3**;

and I put bracelets upon thine hands; which the Targum also explains of the law, written on two tables of stone, and given by the hands of Moses; the words of which, as Jarchi says, were put one against another, five against five;

"hands" being the instruments of action may denote good works, which the Lord enables his people to perform; and which appear beautiful, as hands with bracelets on them, when they spring from love, are done in faith, and with a view to the glory of God:

and a chain on thy neck; this the Targum understands of sanctification, paraphrasing it,

"and with the holiness of my great name I sanctified you;"

and may be applied to the graces of the Spirit, which are as a chain, whose links are inseparably joined together; for, where one grace is, there are all the rest, faith, hope, charity, &c. see **So 1:10**; or else to the blessings of grace, which also are linked together, and cannot be parted; where the one is, the other are likewise, **Eph 1:3** **Ro 8:30**; and both graces and blessings make the saint very beautiful.

Ezekiel 16:12

Ver. 12. And I put a jewel on thy forehead,.... The same with the nose jewel, which was hung upon the forehead, and reached down to the nose and mouth; and, however disagreeable it may seem to us, was reckoned very ornamental in the eastern countries, **Isa 3:21**; and where now, as in Persia, as well as in all the Levant, the women put rings through their noses, which they pierce with needles, as Monsieur Thevenot {z} relates; so Dr. Shaw {a} says that nose jewels are used still by the Levant Arabs. The Targum applies it to the ark, thus,

"and I put the ark of my covenant among you;"

but may be better applied a public profession of religion, which every good man ought to make, and take up from principles of grace received; this is bearing the name of Christ and the name of his Father in their foreheads; which is very ornamental to the believer, and well pleasing to Christ, Ro 10:9;

and earrings in thine ears. The Targum is,

"and the clouds of my glory overshadowed you;"

but it may be better interpreted of the spiritual ears God gives his people in conversion; by which they hear his word, so as to understand it; hear the voice of Christ, so as to distinguish it from the voice of a stranger; and hear his Gospel, so as to believe and receive it, approve of it, and love it, and act in conformity to it:

and a beautiful crown upon thine head. The Targum paraphrases it thus,

"and an angel, sent from before me, led at the head of you:"

referring to Ex 23:20; with which Jarchi compares **Mic 2:13** but may be better illustrated by the beautiful crown of twelve stars, the doctrine of the twelve apostles of Christ, said to he upon the head of the church; and is upon the head of every believer that holds the mystery of the faith in pure conscience; that holds fast the faithful word, and will not let it go, that so no man may take away his crown,
Re 12:1.

{z} Travels, par. 2. B. 2. c. 9. p. 94. {a} Travels, p. 241. Ed. 2.

Ezekiel 16:13

Ver. 13. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver,.... The Targum interprets it of the tabernacle adorned with gold and silver, and linen curtains, of various dies and colours; but it refers to the ornaments, bracelets, chain, earrings, and crown before, mentioned; see
Ps 45:9;

and thy raiment [was of] fine linen, and silk, and broidered work;
See Gill on "Eze 16:10"; with this compare
Re 19:8;

thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil; which did not a little contribute to her beauty and comeliness; see **Da 1:15**; this the Targum explains of the manna with which the Lord fed the Israelites in the wilderness, and was good, like fine flour, and honey, and oil; and had, as Jarchi says, the taste of them all: but may be better applied to spiritual provisions believers are fed with; to the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, which are as nourishing and strengthening as bread of fine flour; as sweet as honey to the taste; and which make fat and plump, and cause the face to shine as oil:

and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom; the Targum is,

"and ye became rich, and were greatly strengthened, and prospered, and ruled over all kingdoms;"

and had its accomplishment, as Kimchi observes, when the time of the kingdom of the house of David came: land is true of all believers, who are a kingdom of priests, a royal priesthood, kings and priests unto God; have a kingdom of grace; now, which can never be moved, and lies in righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost; and are heirs of a kingdom of glory hereafter.

Ezekiel 16:14

Ver. 14. And thy renown went forth among the Heathen for thy beauty,.... Which consisted of the above things: with this compare **De 6:4** Ps 48:2; the church's beauty lies in the righteousness of Christ imputed, to her; in the holiness of Christ reckoned unto her; in the blood of Christ being upon her, by which she is washed and cleansed, justified and pardoned; and in the graces of the Spirit of Christ implanted in her; and in the salvation of Christ she is interested in; and in the presence of Christ, which is the beauty of the Lord upon her; and in being in Gospel order, and having Gospel ordinances; see Ps 45:11;

for it [was] perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God; all the outward happiness and prosperity of the Israelites in the days of David and Solomon, or at other times, was not, as Kimchi observes, of themselves, but of the Lord: and so the comeliness of the saints and people of God is not of themselves; they are by nature black and deformed; they are defiled with original and actual sin; they are as an unclean, thing; they are corrupt, abominable, and loathsome; and as they have not their comeliness by nature, so not by art; as it is not native to them, it is not acquired by them; they do not obtain it by their humiliation, repentance, and services; these cannot remove their natural blackness and uncomeliness, or wash away their sins, and render them beautiful in the sight of God, Jer 13:23 **Jer 2:22**; but they have their comeliness from another, from Christ, who is altogether lovely; and from his righteousness, which is put on them; and so they are in him, and, through that, perfectly comely, a perfection of beauty, all fair, and

without spot, even the fairest in the whole creation, complete in Christ, and perfect in him,
Ps 50:2.

Ezekiel 16:15

Ver. 15. But thou didst trust in thine own beauty,.... As the Jews did in external gifts bestowed upon them; in their outward prosperity and grandeur; in their riches, wealth, and wisdom; and in the extent of their dominions, as in the days of David and Solomon; and in such things men are apt to; put their trust and confidence, and to be elated with, and grow proud and haughty, as a woman because of her beauty: so some professors of religion trust in a form and profession of it; in speculative knowledge, and in outward duties and services; being unconcerned for inward purity and: holiness; and not trusting in the righteousness of Christ, the real beauty of saints:

and playedst the harlot because of thy renown; or "name" {b}; which the Jews got among the nations round about them, for their wisdom, riches, and power; which was a snare unto them, as a woman's beauty is to her; and they were admired and courted, and complimented by their neighbours, and so drawn into idolatrous practices, as women into fornication and adultery by the admirers of them: idolatry, which is here meant, is frequently signified by playing the harlot, or by fornication and adultery: or "thou playedst the harlot in thy name" {c}; alluding to the custom of harlots, notorious infamous ones, who used to set their names over the apartments, to direct men unto them; and so it may denote how famous and notorious the Jews were for their idolatries, and how impudent in them. Jarchi interprets this of the calf of the wilderness, and other idolatries which the tribe of Dan committed there; but it rather respects the idolatries committed from the times of Solomon to the captivity, which were many, and often repeated; and though sometimes a stop was put to them by pious princes, yet broke out again: so trusting in a man's own righteousness, or in any outward thing, is idolatry; and also false worship and superstitious observances:

and pouredst out thy fornication on everyone that passed by: which expresses the multitude of their idolatries; the measure of them, which ran over; the fondness they had for every idol of their neighbours; like a common strumpet, that prostitutes herself to everyone, not only to the men of her own place and city, but to all strangers and travellers; so the Jews, not content with the idols they had, embraced all that offered or their neighbours could furnish them with:

his it was; or "to him it was"; her desire, her lust, her fornication; everyone that passed by, that would might enjoy her; so the Jews were reader to fall in with every idol and every idolatrous practice. The Targum renders this clause,

"and it is not right for thee to do so;"

to commit and multiply idolatry.

{b} Kmv le "propter nomen tuum", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator. {c} "In nomine tuo", V. L. Munster, Tigurine version, Grotius; "super nomen tuum", Starckius; "cum nomine tuo", Junius & Tremellius.

Ezekiel 16:16

Ver. 16. And of thy garments thou didst take,.... Which were made of fine linen, silk, and broidered work; which God had given them, and they were richly clad with:

and deckedst thy high places with divers colours; that is, with garments of divers colours; either they erected tents on their high places, made with these; or they covered their altars with them, which were on their high places for the ornament of them, as harlots deck their beds to allure their lovers; see **Pr 7:16**; or "thou hast made for thyself high places spotted" {d}; so the word is rendered in
Ge 30:32; alluding to garments spotted with the flesh by adulterers. The Targum is, "thou hast made for thyself high places covered with idols": and so the Septuagint version renders it, "idols sewed together". The word, in the Talmudic language {e}, has the signification of sewing. These idols were decked as children's babies are; and so the Syriac version, "thou hast made for thyself babies"; images like babies, richly dressed with their garments above described, such as the papists now have;

and playedst the harlot thereon; committed idolatry on the high places; or "with them" {f}; that is, with the images and idols decked with their garments, which were set on those high places:

[the like things] shall not come, neither shall it be [so]; the like idolatries shall set be committed any more; and after the Babylonish captivity worshipping of idols was not practised by the Jews; nor is it to this day: or such "things have not come yet", and there "shall not be" the like {g}; the sense is, there never were such idolatries committed by this people before; and there hover shall be, or will be, the like afterwards. Kimchi's note is,

"the high places shall not come as these; as if it was said these shall not be in futurity; and there shall not be a man or a people that shall make like these for multitudes;"

so Ben Melech; and twmb, "high places", does agree with twab, "come". The Targum joins this with the preceding clause,

""and playedst the harlot" with them, as is not right and fit"

{d} twalj twmb Kl yvetw "et fecisti tibi excelsa maculosa", Montanus; "excelsa conspera maculis", Calvin; "latis maculis interstincta", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus. {e} T. Bab. Gittin. fol. 45. 2. Misn. Celim, c. 27. sect. 6. {f} Mhyle "iisque", Ar. Interp. {g} hyhy alw twab al "non eventurae sunt [tales scortationes], nec erit [qui sic scortetur]", Piscator.

Ezekiel 16:17

Ver. 17. Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold, and of my silver, which I had given thee,.... Or "thy glorious vessels of gold and silver" {h}; meaning either the vessels of gold and silver in the temple, as Jerom thinks, which they converted to idolatrous uses; or rather their own household vessels of gold and silver which God had given them, as the bounties of his providence, and he had still a right unto, and which they made use of to the dishonour of his name; which argued great ingratitude in them:

and madest to thyself images of men; images in the shape of men; some were in the shape of women, others in the shape of men; here only male images are mentioned, because the idolatrous Jews are represented by an adulterous woman committing adultery, with men; and these were made by themselves, of their jewels of gold and silver; or of their golden and silver vessels, which they had to eat and drink out of; these, they melted down and made idols of them in the form of men, just as the molten calf was made of the earrings of the women, Ex 32:3; to which some refer this passage: and as it was a piece of egregious folly in themselves to part with their jewels and plate for such purposes, and of great ingratitude to God, their benefactor, so of the grossest stupidity and ignorance to worship images so made; which was equally as stupid, or more so, than if a woman should embrace the image of a man, instead of a man himself, as it follows:

and didst commit whoredom with them: the images: that is, idolatry, which is spiritual adultery.

{h} ypokmw ybhzm Ktrapt ylk "vasa gloriae tuae de auro meo, et de argento meo", Pagninus, Montanus; "vasa tua insigniora et elegantiora, facta ex auro meo?" Vatablus.

Ezekiel 16:18

Ver. 18. And tookest thy broidered garments, and coveredst them,.... The images of men, the idols they worshipped; see Jer 10:4; so the Papists at this day cover their idols, the images of the Virgin Mary, and other saints, with rich apparel, to draw the attention, admiration, and reverence of the people to them:

and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them; the oil which the Lord gave them for food, the land of Canaan being a land of oil olive; or which was to light the lamps in the temple with; or was used in sacrifice to the Lord, particularly in the meat offerings; and the incense, which was offered unto him on the altar of incense; these were set upon the altars of idols, and before them, the male images before mentioned; see **Ho 2:8**.

Ezekiel 16:19

Ver. 19. My meat also which I gave thee,.... Or "my bread" {i}; a general name for all eatables. The Targum renders it,

"my good things."

The Jews apply it to the manna, which, they say, descended the same day the molten calf was made, and they set it before it. This interpretation Jarchi and Kimchi make mention of; it includes what follows:

fine flour, and oil, and honey, [wherewith] I fed thee; for the land of Canaan was a land of wheat, of which fine flour was made; and of olives, from whence was the best oil; and a land flowing with milk and honey; and which was given by the Lord, and so he might be said to feed them with them: and instead of glorifying him, and being thankful for them, and using them in the manner they ought,

thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour; that is, they made a meat offering of their fine flour, oil, and honey, and set it before their idols; to gain their favour and good will; to appease them, and render them propitious; supposing it would be acceptable unto them; all these things were used in meat offerings and sacrifices unto the Lord, excepting honey, and that was forbid; but was in use among the Gentiles; see **Le 2:1**;

and [thus] it was, saith the Lord God; all this idolatry, ingratitude, and folly, have been committed; it is most notorious, there is no denying it; I, who am the Lord God omniscient, affirm it. The Targum puts it by way of question, and even of astonishment and admiration,

"are not all these things done, saith the Lord God!"

{i} ymxlw "et panem meum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Starckius.

Ezekiel 16:20

Ver. 20. Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters,.... Their own flesh and blood; which were more than to take their clothes, and cover their idols with them, and their food, and set it before them to part with them was much, but to part with these, and that in such a shocking manner as after mentioned, was so irrational and unnatural, as well as impious and wicked, as is not to be paralleled; and what increased their wickedness was, that these were not only their own, but the Lord's:

whom thou hast borne unto me; for, though they were born of them, they were born unto the Lord, the Creator of them, the Father of their spirits, and God of their lives, and who had the sole right to dispose of them; nor was it in the power of their parents to take away their life at pleasure; for the Lord only has the sovereign power of life and death:

and these hast thou sacrificed unto them: the male images before mentioned;

one of which was Molech, who is here particularly designed:

to be devoured; in the arms of that image; or to be consumed by fire, in which they were burnt, when sacrificed unto it. The Targum is,

"for oblation and worship;"

[is this] of thy whoredoms a small matter; which was so dreadfully heinous and inhuman, yet by some reckoned a small matter; this was not the least of their idolatries, but, of all, the most shocking, and the most aggravated: or the sense is, is it a small thing that thou shouldest play the harlot, or worship idols? is it not enough for thee to do so, but thou must sacrifice thy children also to them? and which are not only thine, but mine, as follows:

Ezekiel 16:21

Ver. 21. That thou hast slain my children,.... By creation, as all born into the world are; and by national adoption, as all the Jewish children were; and particularly the firstborn were eminently his, and which are here designed, as Jarchi interprets it; for they were the children that were slain and sacrificed to Molech; see Eze 20:26;

and delivered, them to cause them to pass through [the fire] for them? for the sake of idols, for the worship of them; this they did before they were slain; they first caused them to pass through between two fires, and so dedicated them to the idol, and then slew them; or slew them by burning them in the fire, or by putting them into the arms of the "idol", made burning hot.

Ezekiel 16:22

Ver. 22. And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms,.... Or idolatries, which were abominable to God, and were many; of which that just mentioned was not one of the least:

thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth; the destitute and forlorn condition then in, and what favours were then bestowed:

when thou wast naked and bare, [and] wast polluted in thy blood;

See Gill on "Eze 16:6";
See Gill on "Eze 16:7"; which is mentioned to upbraid the Jews with their ingratitude; they forgetting the miserable condition they were in in Egypt, and what great things the Lord had done for them in bringing them out from thence, and the obligations they were laid under to him: and yet, after all this, to commit such abominable iniquities, and in the midst of them all never once call to mind what they had received from him; which might have been a check to their idolatries, but so it was not.

Ezekiel 16:23

Ver. 23. And it came to pass after all thy wickedness,.... This refers either to what goes before, so Kimchi; and the sense is, it shall be again as it was at first, after and because of all the above wickedness committed, thou shalt be left naked and bare, and destitute of all that is good: or rather to what follows in the next clause; and the meaning is, to all this wickedness before mentioned, which was so great that it might be thought nothing more could be added to it; and yet the following things were, as building an eminent place, and high places, in all streets and heads of ways:

woe, woe unto thee, saith the Lord of hosts; which is repeated, to show the indignation of the Lord against all this wickedness; to arouse their attention to their sin and punishment, and to show the certainty of it; and it may be it denotes both their misery in this world, and in that to come. The Targum of the whole is,

"what shall be in thine end for all thy wickedness? the prophet said unto her, woe unto thee, because thou hast sinned; woe unto thee, because thou art not converted, saith the Lord God."

Ezekiel 16:24

Ver. 24. [That] thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place,.... Or a "brothel" {k}; and so the Septuagint version, "a whoring house"; not content to commit idolatry privately, they built a public place for idolatrous worship. The Targum renders it, "altar", The word has the signification of a pit or ditch; with which compare Pr 22:14;

and hast made thee an high place in every street; of Jerusalem, and other cities;

it was usual to erect high places in streets, where altars were built, and idols set up to be worshipped: it denotes the public manner in which they committed idolatry, and the multitude of their idols; which shows their impudence and hardness of heart.

{k} bg oikhma pornikon, Sept. "lupanar", V. L. "prostibulum", so some in Starckius.

Ezekiel 16:25

Ver. 25. Thou hast built thy high place at every head of the way,.... Where two or more ways, or two or more streets, met; and so was most conspicuous, and was seen from different parts; which shows the same as before:

and hast made thy beauty to be abhorred; by the Lord himself, Who otherwise greatly desires and delights in the beauty of his people, when they worship him, Ps 45:11; and by all good men, and such as fear the Lord, who cannot but abhor such idolatrous practices, and those that are guilty of them; and even by the Heathens themselves, to whom the Jews became mean and despicable, when they fell into idolatry, and under the displeasure of God, whom they forsook; as a common strumpet becomes, in process of time, loathsome to her quondam lovers:

and hast opened thy feet to everyone that passed by; an euphemism, signifying the exposing to view the privities or secret parts, in order to allure to impure embraces; and the meaning is, that the Jews were ready to receive any idol, and give into any idolatrous worship that offered to them, and even courted and solicited the Gentiles to join with them in all idolatrous practices:

and multiplied thy whoredoms; or idolatries; the number of their idols being answerable to their cities, and even were as many as the streets and heads of ways in them.

Ezekiel 16:26

Ver. 26. Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians,.... By entering into leagues and alliances with them, and seeking to them for help and assistance against their enemies; from whose bondage they had formerly been delivered, and whose society they were cautioned against; and yet they forsook the Lord, and joined themselves to them by solemn covenant; and not only so, but fell into the worship of their idols, who were a people of all others the most superstitious, and given to idolatry; and many of their idolatrous rites and ceremonies were received and retained by the Jews, as the worshipping of Tammuz, and other idols:

thy neighbours, great of flesh: being their neighbours, and full of power and strength to assist them, they courted their friendship and alliance; and their idolatries being many and monstrous, were the more courted by them: the allusion is to women of shameless impudence and insatiable lust, who covet men, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and their issue as horses, Eze 23:20; flesh here signifies the privy parts of men; so Ben Melech;

and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke my anger; multiplied their idolatries, which they learned of the Egyptians, a people much given thereunto; and which were abominable and highly provoking to God, **1Pe 4:3**. The Targum is,

"thou hast increased thine idols."

Ezekiel 16:27

Ver. 27. Behold, therefore I have stretched out my hand over thee,.... His chastising and correcting hand, to show his resentment at their sins, and bring them to a sense of them, and repentance for them:

and have diminished thine ordinary [food]; their stated allowances, the common mercies and blessings of life they had been indulged with, but now were lessened; and particularly a famine was brought upon them, as well as they were deprived of other favours for their sins; God dealing with them as husbands with their wanton wives, who keep them to stricter allowance, and closer confinement, in order to check and tame them:

and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines; which perhaps may refer to the times of Ahaz, when the Philistines invaded the cities of the low country, and of the south of Judah, and took many of their cities, and brought Judah low,
2Ch 28:18;

which are ashamed of thy lewd way: of their inconstancy in changing their religion, relinquishing the worship of the true God, and embracing that of others, when they abode by their ancient religion and worship, **Jer 2:10**. The Targum is,

"to whom if I had sent my prophets, they would have been ashamed;"

see Mt 11:21.

Ezekiel 16:28

Ver. 28. Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians,.... By entering into alliances with them, and worshipping their idols; which was done in the times of Ahaz, who sent to Tiglathpileser king of Assyria for help, and to Damascus for the fashion of the altar there, and built one according to it, **2Ki 7:10**;

because thou wast unsatiable; not content with the alliance and idolatries of the Egyptians:

yea, thou hast played the harlot with them; with the Assyrians:

and yet couldest not be satisfied; with their idols, and the worship of them, but sought out for new gods, and new modes of worship; like a lewd woman, who having prostituted herself to one, and to another, yet remains insatiable, and seeks out for other lovers.

Ezekiel 16:29

Ver. 29. Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan,.... Or, "with the land of Canaan" {l}; with the inhabitants of it, doing the same evils, committing the same idolatries, as the old inhabitants of Canaan did; and so the Targum,

"and thou hast multiplied thine idols, that thou mightest be joined to the people of Canaan:"

or, "to the land of Canaan" {m}; like to the land of Canaan; according to the abominations of the Canaanites, doing as they did. Jarchi takes the word

Canaan to signify a "merchant", as it does in Ho 12:7; and the land of Canaan to be the same with the land of Chaldea, called a land of traffic, and Babylon the city of merchants, Eze 17:4; since it follows,

unto Chaldea: but the sense is, that the Jews were not content with the idolatries in the land of Canaan, but sent even to Chaldea, a remote country, to fetch new idols from thence; see Eze 23:14. The Targum is,

"to walk in the laws of the Chaldeans;"

their religious ones, their rites and ceremonies respecting idolatrous worship:

and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith; but still wanted other idols and modes of worship; not being content with the gods of the Egyptians, nor of the Assyrians, nor of the Canaanites, nor of the Chaldeans.

{l} Nenk Ura la "cum terra Canaan", Munster, so some in Vatablus, Tigurine version, Noldius, p. 39. No. 288. {m} "ad terram Canaan", so some in Vatablus. Approved by Kimchi and Ben Melech.

Ezekiel 16:30

Ver. 30. How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord God,.... Through sin; and being destitute of the grace of God, and so unable to resist any temptation, or oppose any corruption or lust, but carried away with everyone that offers; indulging every lust, and yet not satisfied; weak as water, unstable, fickle, and inconstant, seeking after new gods, and new kinds of worship. The Targum is,

"how strong is the wickedness of thy heart!"

the stronger the wickedness of the heart, the weaker, the heart is:

seeing thou doest all these [things]; all the idolatries before mentioned; which was an argument not of her strength, but weakness, and yet of boldness, impudence, and resolution, to have her will:

the work of an imperious whorish woman; a whore, as she is impudent, is imperious, is one that rules and governs. The Targum is, who rules over herself; does what she pleases, will have her will and way, and cannot bear any contradiction; and who rules over others, such as are her gallants, obliging them to do as she commands. Jarchi's note is,

"over whom her imagination (or corruption) rules."

Ezekiel 16:31

Ver. 31. In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way,.... Or brothel house, as before; See Gill on "Eze 16:24"; which showed her to be a whore, and an imperious one:

and makest thine high place in every street;
See Gill on "Eze 16:24";

and hast not been as an harlot: a common one, or as a harlot usually is:

in that thou scornest hire; which they do not; for it is for hire they prostitute themselves; and have their names, both in our language, and in the Latin tongue, from, thence.

Ezekiel 16:32

Ver. 32. [But as] a wife that committeth adultery,.... Who has a husband, and is provided for with all the necessaries of life, with food and clothing; and so has no need to prostitute herself for a livelihood, as common strumpets do; but does it purely for the satiating of her lust: and such were the people of the Jews, they were married to the Lord, who took care of them, and provided everything for them, and acted the part of a husband to them; so that it was the weakness of their hearts, and the strength of their corruptions, which led them to depart from him, and commit idolatry; which in them was adultery, while the sin of the Gentiles was as simple fornication:

[which] taketh strangers instead of her husband; that takes other men into her bed instead of her husband, not for the sake of gain, but lust; and this was the case of the Jews, who were a wicked people, an idolatrous generation; who took strange gods to worship instead of the true God, who had been a husband to them, Jer 31:32.

Ezekiel 16:33

Ver. 33. They give gifts to all whores,.... Gifts are usually given to whores, by those who commit whoredom with them; it is for the sake of these they prostitute their bodies, nor will they do this without gain; see Ge 38:16;

but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers; the Jews gave the Egyptians and Assyrians money, to gain their friendship, and procure alliances with them; see 2Ki 16:8; and were at great expenses with their idols, and in support of their idolatrous worship:

and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom; they courted the nations all around them for their favour and friendship, and bribed them into it, as the word {n} signifies.

{n} Mtwa ydxvt "munerans eos", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "et muneratis eos", Piscator; "et largita es ipsis", Cocceius; "donasti illis", Starckius.

Ezekiel 16:34

Ver. 34. And the contrary is in thee from [other] women in thy whoredoms,.... Of which an instance is given before, and another is added, with the repetition of the former:

whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms; the Jews followed the examples, customs, and practices of the Gentiles, in worshipping of their idols; but the Gentiles did not follow the Jews, they kept to their own gods, and did not worship the God of Israel; which with respect to their own gods would have been fornication; and whereas it is usual for men to follow after whorish women, and solicit them by gifts and presents, or promises, and not for them to follow the men, court and solicit them; on the other hand, the Jews, who are compared to a whorish woman, followed after their lovers, and not their lovers after them: or, "after thee there was not", or "shall not be fornication" {o}; like to thine; it being such as never had been, nor never would be the like again:

and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary; to all other lewd women, who take, but give no reward.

{o} hnwz al Kyrxaw "et post te non fornicatio fuit", Pagninus, Montanus; "nec post te fuit sic fornicatum", so some in Vatablus; "post te non erit fornicatio", Calvin.

Ezekiel 16:35

Ver. 35. Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the Lord. The sentence about to be pronounced; adjudging to be slain with the sword, to be stoned and burned; the crime for which is to be read in the name of harlot, justly given to an apostate people; as it often is to the church of Rome in the book of the Revelation. The Targum is,

"whose works are as an harlots; O congregation of Israel, receive the words of the Lord;"

which follow:

Ezekiel 16:36

Ver. 36. Thus saith the Lord God, because thy filthiness was poured out,.... Or, "thy brass" {p}. The word is used by the Rabbins {q} for the bottom of a thing; and is here accordingly, by Kimchi and Ben Melech, interpreted of a woman's lower part; the same with her nakedness next mentioned; and from whence, by reason of her inordinate lust, and the frequent exercise of it, and that with many different persons, a gonorrhoea, as Jarchi explains it, or a filthy flux flowed, and was poured out on her lovers; from whence the filthy disease, the "lues venerea":

and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers; which she discovered or exposed to view herself, in order to entice her lovers to lie with her, and for the sake thereof; see Eze 16:25;

and with all the idols of thine abominations; or abominable idols, which were so in themselves, were abominable to God, and made the worshippers of them so likewise; these are distinguished from her lovers, the Egyptians and Assyrians, her confederates, and by means of whose alliance she fell into idolatry:

and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; the idols, to whom they were dedicated and sacrificed; and for whose sake, and for the worship of them, they were caused to pass through the fire, and were burnt in it; and by such shocking murders, as well as idolatrous practices, the depravity of their nature, the wickedness of their hearts, their hypocrisy, treachery, and infidelity, were discovered and made known.

{p} Ktvxn ton calkon sou, Sept. "aes tuum", Montanus, Vatablus, Calvin, Tigurine version, Starckius; "virus tuum", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Piscator, Grotius; "aerugo tua", Cocceius. {q} Misn. Celim, c. 8. sect. 3. Vid. T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 41. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

Ezekiel 16:37

Ver. 37. Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure,.... Or, "with whom thou hast mixed" {r}; in unlawful embraces, joined in sinful alliances, or in idolatrous practices:

and all [them] that thou hast loved; the Egyptians and Assyrians, whose friendship and idolatrous customs they were fond of:

with all [them] that thou hast hated; as the Philistines, Moabites, and Ammonites:

I will even gather them round about against thee; as they were in the Chaldean army, which consisted of many nations:

and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness; as a just retaliation for discovering it herself, as in Eze 16:36; than which nothing can be more disagreeable to the sex. The Milesian virgins were restrained from suicide by a law, which ordered that such should be drawn naked through the market place. This is to be understood of the spoiling of the city and temple.

{r} Mhyle tbre rva "quibus commixtuisti cum illis", Starckius.

Ezekiel 16:38

Ver. 38. And I will judge thee as women that break wedlock,.... The marriage covenant, defile the marriage bed, and were adulteresses, who by the law of Moses were to be punished with death, Le 20:10;

and shed blood are judged; who also were punished with death according to the original law in **Ge 9:6**; the Jews were not only guilty of spiritual adultery, that is, idolatry; but also of murder, by sacrificing their infants to idols; and murder often follows upon adultery, as Kimchi observes; and, these people were guilty of shedding innocent blood on other accounts; but the first mentioned is chiefly designed here:

and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy; by way of retaliation; blood being shed, blood is given, and that in wrath and vengeance; the allusion is to a jealous and abused husband, that avenges himself of the person that has injured him; see Re 16:6.

Ezekiel 16:39

Ver. 39. And I also will give thee into their hand,.... Into the hand of their lovers and enemies that should be gathered against them, the Assyrians and Chaldeans, with others that joined them, as in
Eze 16:37;

and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thine high places; the city of Jerusalem, the temple, and altars; and not only these, but even the high places and altars which were set up for idolatrous uses; all should be destroyed by the Chaldean army. The Targum is,

"and they shall destroy thy walls, and thy high places shall be destroyed:"

they shall strip thee also of thy clothes; as persons commonly are when taken captives:

and shall take thy fair jewels; or, "the vessels of thy glory" {s}; the vessels of the sanctuary of gold and silver, and their own household furniture, with all their riches and substance:

and leave thee naked and bare; as at first when in Egypt; see
Eze 16:7.

{s} Ktrapt ylk "vasa decoris tui", V. L. "instrumenta ornatus tui", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "vasa ornatus tui", Piscator, Starckius.

Ezekiel 16:40

Ver. 40. They shall also bring up a company against thee,.... An army, so the Targum; the Chaldean army:

and they shall stone thee with stones: cast out of their engines and slings, by which they battered the walls, as well as killed the inhabitants; and so the Targum renders it, with sling stones; the allusion is to the stoning of adulterous persons, De 22:24;

and thrust thee through with their swords; such as attempted to escape out of the city, or fell into the hands of the enemy when it was taken, were slain with the sword.

Ezekiel 16:41

Ver. 41. And they shall burn thine houses with fire,.... As the houses in Jerusalem were by Nebuchadnezzar's army, even the temple, the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and the houses of great men, even all the houses in the city, Jer 52:13; and as was commanded to be done to idolatrous cities, De 13:16; and this also may be said in allusion to the burning of adulterous persons, Ge 38:24;

and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women; or provinces, as the Targum; meaning the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, who would rejoice in their ruin; the judgments design those before mentioned:

and I will cause thee to cease from playing the harlot, and thou also shalt give no hire any more; their idols, high places, and altars, being demolished, and they plundered of their substance; and after the Babylonish captivity the Jews never returned to idolatry any more.

Ezekiel 16:42

Ver. 42. So will I make my fury towards thee to rest,.... When the Jews should cease from their idolatries, and no more worship the gods of the nations, then the fury of the Lord, and the effects of it, should cease: God no longer contends with a people than while they are sinning; when a reformation is brought about, by afflictions or judgments, his end is answered, and he puts a stop to the spread of his wrath and fury; or if is made to rest, because there is nothing left for it to work upon, a total consumption of people and substance being made by it: or it may be rendered, "I will make my fury to rest upon thee" {t}; and the sense be, that his wrath should abide upon them, and not remove until an utter end was made of them; though the first sense seems best to agree with what goes before, and follows after:

and my jealousy shall depart from thee; as it does from a man when he has utterly rejected his wife because of whoredom, and is divorced from her; and his burning jealousy has satisfied itself, and there is no other way to operate and show itself in; or when a woman returns to her husband and gives him satisfaction, keeps close unto him, and lives chastely with him, having relinquished her former lewd ways and practices:

and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry: the effects of his anger cease, his judgments averted, and he at peace with them, and they with him; for he retains not his anger for ever: though some understand this of his being quiet and at ease in the destruction of the Jews; there being no more to wreak his vengeance upon.

{t} Kb ytmx ytxnhw "et requiescere faciam iram meam in te", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatsblus, Cocceius.

Ezekiel 16:43

Ver. 43. Because thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth,.... The low estate they were once in, and the great favours bestowed upon them, which laid them under great obligation to serve the Lord, and him only; but these they forgot, which highly provoked him, and caused him to do the things he did; see Eze 16:22:

and hast fretted me in all these [things]; irritated, provoked him, moved him to wrath and anger, stirred up in his breast a tumult, speaking after the manner of men; this they did by their ingratitude, idolatry, and other sins:

behold, therefore, I also will recompense thy way upon [thine] head, saith the Lord God; retaliate their evils, punish them according as their sins deserved, and in a way which they led unto:

and thou shall not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations; or add to all thine abominable idolatries this shocking piece of wickedness, the sacrificing of their children to their idols: or rather the words may be rendered, "for thou hast not taken this thought" (or counsel) "upon" or "concerning all thine abominations" {u}; to repent of them and turn from them So the Targum,

"and thou hast not taken counsel to thyself, to turn from all thine abominations."

Or, as Jarchi,

"thou hast hot taken counsel to put the, heart upon thine abominations to turn from them;"

and he observes, that the word here used always signifies counsels either good or evil. There is a double reading of this clause; we follow the "Keri", or marginal reading; but the "Cetib", or textual writing or reading, is, "and I have not done according to this lewdness above all thine abominations"; and so expresses the mercy and long suffering of God {w}.

{u} Kytbewt lk le hmz ta tyve alw "et non fecisti cogitationem super omnibus abominationibus tuis", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin; "nec tamen fecisti", &c. Vatablus, Grotius. {w} This is followed by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Luther, Starckius, and others.

Ezekiel 16:44

Ver. 44. Behold, everyone that useth proverbs,.... That affects a proverbial way of sneaking that is witty and facetious, and has a talent at satirizing and scoffing, as some have had; such were Lucian and others:

shall use [this] proverb against thee; signifying that the sins of the Jews should be well known and exposed, and they should become the subject of the gibes and jeers of men:

saying, as [is] the mother, [so is] her daughter; an ancient and common proverb, used to express a likeness and agreement between persons their nature and disposition, in their behaviour, conduct, and conversation. So the Targum, "as are the works of the mother, so those of the daughter;"

the mother is the land of Canaan, and the daughter the congregation of Israel, as Kimchi. The Jews were the successors of the old Canaanites, and they imitated them in their practices; and, because both of their succession and imitation, they are called the daughter of them; a bad daughter of a bad mother.

Ezekiel 16:45

Ver. 45. Thou [art] thy mother's daughter,.... Exactly like her; they that have known the one must know the other. The Targum is,

"wherefore art thou become the daughter of the land of Canaan, to do according to the works of the people?"

that loatheth her husband and her children; a true character of an adulteress; and which agrees both with the mother the Canaanites, and with the daughter the Jews; who both despised, rejected, and forsook God their husband, Creator, and lawgiver, and sacrificed their children to idols; see Eze 16:20;

and thou [art] the sister of thy sisters; the true genuine sister of them, Samaria and Sodom after mentioned; being not only allied to them in blood, more nearly to the one more remotely to the other, but exceedingly alike in manners, religion, and worship:

which loatheth their husbands and their children; as before:

your mother [was] an Hittite, and your father an Amorite; these the Israelites succeeded in their land, and followed their customs;
See Gill on "Eze 16:3". The Targum is,

"was not your mother Sarah among the Hittites? and she did not do according to their works; and your father Abraham was among the Amorites, and he walked not in their counsels."

Ezekiel 16:46

Ver. 46. And thine elder sister [is] Samaria,.... The metropolis of the ten tribes; "sister" to the Jews, because of the same descent, having one and the same father; the "elder" or "greater" {x}, because more in number and power; the kingdom of Israel consisted of ten tribes, and the kingdom of Judah but of two; and the ten tribes also were the first in the apostasy from the true worship of God:

she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand; as Samaria the sister was the metropolis of the ten tribes, her daughters are the other cities and towns belonging thereunto; and so the Targum renders it, she and her villages; these were situated to the north of the land of Israel, as Judah was to the south, which with the Jews were left and right; as a man standing with his face to the east has the north on his left and the south on his right side:

and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, [is] Sodom and her daughters; where Lot the kinsman of Abraham lived, and from whom sprung the Ammonites and Moabites. Sodom was a lesser kingdom than that of Judah, and which lay to the south; that is, to the right of it; even that and the other cities, which perished with it, called her daughters, as Admah, Zeboim, &c.

{x} hlwdgh "major", V. L. Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Ezekiel 16:47

Ver. 47. Yet hast thou not walked after their ways,.... But in ways more evil; were not content to keep pace with them, and do as they did; but outwent them, outstripped them in wickedness:

nor done after their abominations; but committed greater abominations than they did; sins of a more heinous nature, and attended with more aggravated circumstances; having more power and wealth, more Wisdom and understanding; the means of grace, the word and ordinances of God:

but, as [if that were] a very little [thing]; to commit the sins that Samaria and Sodom did: or, "it was loathing [to thee] as a little thing" {a}; they despised and loathed their sins as too mean and little, and not flagitious and enormous, or bold and daring enough to be committed; and looked upon them, with contempt, as sneaking sinners, that had no soul nor spirit in them, or taste for sinful pleasures, in comparison of them: or the sense is, it would have been a little thing, comparatively speaking, had they only walked after the ways and abominations of Samaria and Sodom, and stopped there; but they had greatly exceeded them; and so the Targum,

"if thou hadst walked in their ways, and done according to their abominations, thy sin had been small."

Kimchi interprets it of a small time that the Jews continued in the ways and worship of God, after the captivity of the ten tribes, which were carried away in the sixth year of Hezekiah; so that there were but three and twenty years left of his reign, when his son Manasseh succeeded him, and was more wicked than all before him; and these three and twenty years are the little time here spoken of and within a very little time, and

thou wast corrupted more than they in all their ways; this explains what is meant by not walking after their ways and abominations; they were greater sinners than they; more corrupt in their principles and practices; more hardened in them, and more difficult to be reclaimed from them; see Mt 11:23.

{a} jq jemk "tanquam parvum, fastidio fuit hoc", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus; "velut parum fastidi", Starckius.

Ezekiel 16:48

Ver. 48. [As] I live, saith the Lord God,.... This is an oath, which the Lord God swore; who, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, by his life; and this he did to confirm what he had and was about to say, that the sins of Judah were greater than those of Samaria and Sodom; which might not be easily believed, but it was as true as he was the living God:

Sodom thy sister hath, or done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters; that is, the inhabitants of Sodom, and of the villages adjacent, as the Targum, had not committed such gross iniquities as the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the towns and villages about it, and of other cities of Judah.

Ezekiel 16:49

Ver. 49. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom,.... Namely, the first after mentioned, the source and spring of the rest; the causes and means of which are declared; and the same, as is suggested, was the sin of Jerusalem: namely,

pride; which was the sin of the devils, and the cause of their ruin; the sin of our first parents, by which they fell, and destroyed themselves, and their posterity; and is the prevailing, governing, sin of human nature: it has been the ruin of kingdoms and states, of cities and particular persons; a sin hateful to God, and destructive to man:

fulness of bread; the land of Sodom was very fruitful before it was destroyed; it was like the garden of the Lord, Ge 13:10; it brought forth plentifully, so that there was great fulness of provision, of all sorts of food, which is meant by bread: this, considered in itself, was not sinful, but a blessing; it was the Lord's mercy and goodness to them that they had such plenty; but it was their sin that they abused it; luxury and intemperance, eating and drinking to excess, are here meant; which led on to that sin, and kindled the flames of it, and were the fuel to it, which has its name from them; and, besides, this fulness of good things enjoyed by them was the source of their pride, and served to increase that, as before mentioned:

and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters; or, "peace of rest" {b}; prosperity and ease, security and quietness, at leisure, and without labour; two words are used to express the same thing, and to denote, as Kimchi observes, the abundance of it: sloth and idleness, as they often arise from the goodness and fruitfulness of a country, said fulness of provision, so they are the cause of much sin and wickedness; for, if persons are not employed in some business or another, either of the head or hand, they will be doing evil:

neither did she strengthen the hands of the poor and needy; though she had such abundance of food to supply them with, and so much leisure to attend to their distress; but her pride would not suffer her to do it; and she was too idle and slothful to regard such service; perhaps more is intended than is expressed; that she weakened the hands of the poor and needy, and cruelly oppressed them; which is often done by proud men, in great affluence and at leisure, which they abuse to bad purposes.

{b} jqvh twlvw "quies otii, [vel] otium quietas"; so some in Vatablus; "prosperitas otii", Castalio; "tranquillitas quietas", Starckius.

Ezekiel 16:50

Ver. 50. And they were haughty,.... Sodom and her daughters, the inhabitants of that place, and the cities adjacent; they lifted up themselves above God and man; they were above regarding the poor and needy; and were elated and swelled with their plenty and prosperity, and behaved very insolently, both to fellow citizens and strangers; see
Ge 19:4;

and committed abomination before me; perhaps referring to that sin, which has its name from them; a sin abominable to God, and scandalous to human nature; and which they committed openly and publicly, neither fearing God, nor regarding men; and are said to be sinners before the Lord, Ge 13:13;

therefore I took them away as I saw [good]; both as to time and manner, as he in his sovereignty thought most fit and proper, by raining fire and brimstone on them, and setting them forth as an example of the vengeance of eternal fire: or, "when I saw" {c}; their sin and wickedness, as soon as he saw it; see Ge 18:20. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it, "as thou sawest", or "hast seen"; appealing to the Jews themselves, who were very well acquainted with the fact; for the destruction of Sodom was notorious and flagrant.

{c} ytyar rvak "cum vidi", Cocceius; so some in Vatablus; "postea quam", Tigurine version, Piscator, Starckius.

Ezekiel 16:51

Ver. 51. Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy sins,.... The sins of Samaria, or the ten tribes, of which Samaria was the metropolis, were the worshipping of the calves at Dan and Bethel; but the gods of Judah were according to the number of their cities, and they even set up their idols in the temple of Jerusalem, **Jer 2:28** **Eze 8:5**; and, besides, their sins were aggravated by the benefits privileges they enjoyed; having the temple, the place of worship, among them; the priests of the Lord to officiate for them; the prophets to instruct and teach them; and many good kings to rule over them, who encouraged them in the pure worship of God, and set them examples; as also by their not taking warning at the captivity of the ten tribes, which were some years before; so that they were guilty of great ingratitude and obduracy:

but thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they; than Samaria and her daughters, or the ten tribes; or than Sodom and Samaria, since both are intended in the next clause:

and hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done; justified them in what they did; countenanced them in their wickedness, by doing the same abominations, and more, and much greater; saying, in effect, that they did right in what they did; and, by exceeding them in sin, made them to appear righteous in comparison of them; and gave them an opportunity of saying, in excuse for themselves, that the men of Judah had been guilty of more and greater sins than they, and yet had not been punished as they had been.

Ezekiel 16:52

Ver. 52. Thou also which hast judged thy sisters,.... Sodom and Samaria, by censuring and condemning them for their sins; see 2Ch 13:8; in which sense Jarchi and Kimchi interpret the word; or by defending and patronizing them, acquitting and absolving them, by committing the same sins, and more heinous ones:

bear thine own shame for thy sins that thou hast committed more abominable than they; look upon thy sins, and blush at them; confess them with shame and confusion of face; take shame to thyself for them, in that thou hast censured and condemned these sins in others thou hast been guilty of thyself; and the rather, since thy sins are greater, and attended with more aggravating circumstances, than those thou hast blamed in others; or this is a prophecy of their punishment for their sins, when they should be carried captive, and be put to shame before their neighbours: or, "thou shalt bear" {d}; shame is the fruit of sin, sooner or later:

they are more righteous than thou; in comparison of her; though neither of them were righteous in the sight of God, yet comparatively one was more righteous than another, having committed fewer sins, and lesser abominations:

yea, be thou confounded also, and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters; this is repeated in stronger expressions, and with the reasons of it, to show the great confusion they should be brought unto, and the certainty of it, the more to strike and affect their minds with it.

{d} yav ta imperat. pro fut. i.e. "confunderis", Vatablus.

Ezekiel 16:53

Ver. 53. When I shall bring again their captivity,.... The captivity of Sodom and Samaria, as after mentioned:

the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters; which some understand as what never will be, as it never yet has been: Sodom remains to this day a dead sea, and the ten tribes are not returned:

then [will I bring again] the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them; that is, it shall never be brought again, according to the above sense; but rather this is to be understood of the calling of the Gentiles, comparable to Sodom for their wickedness, as the great city of Rome is, Re 11:8; and of the calling of God's elect among the ten tribes, scattered up and down among the Gentiles, by the preaching of the apostles; and when the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in then will follow the conversion of the Jews, and all Israel will be sawed,
Ro 11:25; for it is certain those sisters, Sodom and Samaria, were to be restored, and received into the church, and given to her for daughters, Eze 16:61; thus the conversion, of the Gentiles is signified by bringing again the captivity of Moab and Ammon, in
Jer 48:47.

Ezekiel 16:54

Ver. 54. That thou mayest bear thine own shame,.... So long as the captivity remains; even until Sodom and Samaria, the Gentiles, and the ten tribes, are called and converted:

and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done; or, "for all that thou hast done" {e}; for and because of all the abominable sins they had been guilty of:

in that thou art a comfort to them; to Sodom and Samaria; countenancing them in their sins; justifying their iniquities, and strengthening their hands in their wickedness, by doing the same, and greater abominations; or in partaking of the same punishment with them, captivity; this being a kind of solace to them, that they were not punished alone; so Jarchi.

{e} tyve rva lkm "propter omnia quae fecisti", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Piscator.

Ezekiel 16:55

Ver. 55. When thy sisters, Sodom, and her daughters, shall return to their former estate,.... The Jews, as Jerom says, are of opinion, that in the days of their vainly expected Messiah Sodom will be restored to its ancient state, and be as the garden of God, and as the land of Egypt; and Jarchi interprets the bringing again the captivity of Sodom, in Eze 16:53; by the Lord's healing the land of brimstone and salt, and placing inhabitants in it; and it is asserted by the Jews {f} that Sodom and Gomorrah shall be rebuilt in future times, in the times of the Messiah, according to the sense of this passage: but this is not to be understood in a literal sense, of the rebuilding of Sodom and cities adjacent, and of restoring them to their former fruitfulness and fertility, and of the inhabitants to their former prosperity, and much less to their former state of wickedness; but spiritually, of the conversion of Gentile sinners to their ancient and happy estate in Christ:

and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate; to the knowledge of the Messiah, and the pure worship of God:

then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate; the conversion of Judah, and of Israel or the ten tribes, here meant by Samaria, is frequently prophesied of, as what will be at the same time,
Jer 23:6.

{f} Shemot Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 101. 3.

Ezekiel 16:56

Ver. 56. For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth,.... Or, "was not for a hearing", or "a report, in thy mouth" {g}; the destruction of Sodom, though it was such an awful judgment of God, so flagrant and notorious, was visible and just at hand; yet it was not taken notice of, nor talked of; it was not the subject of conversation among friends; it was not reported from father to son, or heard of the one by the other; it was not regarded, nor was warning taken by it, which might have been, had it been more frequently mentioned; but they did not care, or neglected to speak of it; though it was "an ensample to those that should after live ungodly", **2Pe 2:6**; yet it was not for instruction to them, as the Targum paraphrases it; they learned nothing by it; or Sodom was so infamous for sin and punishment, that they scorned to make mention of its name; and yet they were as great Or greater sinners, and deserving of sorer punishment:

in the day of thy pride; or "prides", or "excellencies" {h}; in the time of their prosperity, in the days of David and Solomon, and other kings of Judah. Prosperity is apt to make men proud, and to lift them above themselves; and to forget what they have been, and what they may be; and to neglect observing the judgments of God on others, and to take warning by them.

{g} Kypb hewmvl "in auditu in ore tuo", Pagninus, Montanus; "in auditum", Vatablus. {h} Kynwag Mwyb "in die superbiarum tuarum", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin; "in die excellentiarum tuarum", Piscator; "in die erectionum tuarum", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 16:57

Ver. 57. Before thy wickedness was discovered,.... By the punishment of it, by the judgments of God brought upon them; then they were humbled, who before were proud and haughty; and might speak and think of the vengeance of God on Sodom, which before they made no mention of. It is a sad thing only to know sin, and to have it discovered only by the punishment of it:

as at the time of [thy] reproach of the daughters of Syria, and all [that are] round about her, the daughters of the Philistines; this seems to refer to the times of Ahaz, when the Syrians smote the men of Judah; and carried many of them captive; and the Philistines invaded the cities of the low country, and southern parts of Judah, and took many of them, 2Ch 28:5; at which time the wickedness of the Jews was discovered; and it was a plain case they had sinned against the Lord, by his suffering their enemies to come upon them, and prevail over them; which was to their reproach. The Syrians reproached them, and so did the Philistines:

which despise thee round about; they spoiled and plundered them on all sides; and treated them with scorn and contempt, who before were formidable and terrible to them: thus it is with a people when they are left of God, they are despised by men.

Ezekiel 16:58

Ver. 58. Thou hast borne thy lewdness and thine abominations,.... Openly and publicly; their abominable iniquities were written as it were upon their foreheads, and were to be seen of all men; their sin was to be read in their punishment, which is meant by bearing their lewdness and abominations; namely, the punishment due unto them:

saith the Lord; who always speaks what is just and true; this is added to denote the truth of what had been, and the certainty of what would be, as follows:

Ezekiel 16:59

Ver. 59. For thus saith the Lord God,.... And what he says may be depended upon as truth, and what will certainly come to pass:

I will even deal with thee as thou hast done; reward them according to their works; or execute the law of retaliation upon them; and reject them, as they had rejected him; and cast them off from being his people, since they had forsook him as their God; they being the aggressors and transgressors of the covenant, he was under no obligation by virtue of that to bless and protect them:

which hath despised the oath by breaking the covenant; the covenant at Mount Sinai; or which was made in the plains of Moab, which had an oath annexed to it, De 29:12; but by breaking the covenant, which they did by their many abominations, they despised the oath by which they were sworn to keep it; and therefore it was but just with God to do with them as they had done with him and his covenant. The words are by some rendered, "I might even deal with thee as thou hast done" {i}, &c. I should be justified in so doing, and you could not justly complain of me; but I will not, as follows:

{i} tyve rvak Ktwa tyvew "ego quidem agerem tecum, quemadmodum fecisti mecum", Tigurine version.

Ezekiel 16:60

Ver. 60. Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth,.... The covenant made with them at Sinai, quickly after they came out of Egypt, when they were, both as a body politic and ecclesiastical, in their infant state; for, as Kimchi says, all the while they were in Egypt, and until they, came into the land of Canaan, were called the days of their youth; and to this covenant, which had the nature of a matrimonial contract, the, prophet refers when he speaks of the "love" of their "espousals", and the "kindness" of their "youth", **Jer 2:2**; this covenant the Lord remembered, and made good his part, though they neglected theirs; and it was particularly remembered when Christ was made under this law, and became the fulfilling end of it to his people; yielding perfect obedience to it, and bearing the penalty of it in their room and stead; for here begins a declaration of the grace and mercy of God to the remnant, according to the election of grace, which were among this degenerate people, and whom the Lord had a special regard unto:

and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant; the covenant of grace, made with the Messiah and his spiritual seed; which is confirmed of God in Christ; ordered in all things and sure; whose promises are yea and amen in Christ; and the blessings of it, the sure mercies of David; a covenant that shall never be broken, made void, or removed; but will continue for ever. This is the new covenant, or the covenant of grace, as exhibited and administered under the New Testament; see **Heb 8:8**.

Ezekiel 16:61

Ver. 61. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed,.... When covenant grace is manifested and applied, it brings persons to a sense of their sins, and to an ingenuous acknowledgment of them, with shame and blushing; they remember their evil ways in which they have walked, and blush at the thoughts of what they have been guilty of; and how they have sinned against a God of love, grace, and mercy; and what vile ungrateful creatures they have been:

when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger; Samaria and Sodom, Eze 16:46; the ten tribes, or Benjamin and Simeon, whose part was in Judah, as Ben Melech; rather the Gentiles, even of all nations, ancient and modern, great and small, where the Gospel should come, and such of them as are called and converted by it; these, according to this prophecy, should be received into the communion of the church, to participate of all the privileges and ordinances of it, under the Gospel dispensation. The passage respects the calling of the Gentiles, and the incorporating of them into the Gospel church state. The Syriac version renders it, "when I shall receive thy sisters", &c. which the Targum interprets of greater and lesser provinces:

and I will give them unto thee for daughters; to be nursed up by the church, through the ministry of the word and ordinances, where they have a place, and a name better than that of sons and daughters; become members of the church, and so daughters of Jerusalem, the mother of us all, **Ga 4:26**; to the laws, rules, and ordinances of which they submit, and yield an obedience, as daughters to their mother. The Targum is,

"I will deliver them unto thee for obedience."

The Septuagint renders it, "for edification"; to be built up on their, most holy faith:

but not by thy covenant: made with the Israelites at Sinai, which genders to bondage, and under which the Jewish church with her children were in bondage, **Ga 4:24**; but by virtue of the covenant of grace made with Christ; one article of which is, "[I] will be [their] father, and [they] shall be my sons and daughters", **2Co 6:18**; or not on condition of observing the rites and ceremonies of the law, under which the former covenant was administered, the Gentiles being freed from that, the ceremonial law being abrogated by Christ; or, not because thou hast kept the covenant made with thee, therefore I give thee those (for that thou hast broken), but of my own mere grace and favour, so Jarchi: or I will give daughters to thee, which are not of thy covenant, of thy law, so Kimchi; who are not of the same religion, meaning the Gentiles; and so the phrase is the same with that in Joh 10:16; "which are not of this fold". There is an ancient exposition of the Jews, mentioned by Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, which renders it, "but not of that patrimony"; and explains it of the inheritance which God gave to Abraham between the pieces; as if the persons intended by those who are given for daughters did not belong thereunto.

Ezekiel 16:62

Ver. 62. And I will establish my covenant with thee,....

See Gill on "Eze 16:60"; and which is repeated for the comfort of the Lord's people, being ashamed upon the remembrance of their evil ways; and to show the certainty of it, as well as because it is a matter of the greatest importance:

and thou shalt know that I [am] the Lord; a covenant keeping God; true and faithful to my promises, and able to make them good: this is a principal blessing of the covenant of grace, to know the Lord,
Jer 31:34.

Ezekiel 16:63

Ver. 63. That thou mayest remember, and be confounded,.... The more souls are led into the covenant of grace, and the more they know of God in Christ, and of him as their covenant God and Father, the more they remember of their former evil ways, and reflect upon them with shame and confusion:

and never open thy mouth any more; against God, and the dispensations of his providence; against his Gospel, truths, and ordinances; against his people, the followers of Christ, and particularly the Gentiles; seeing they will now see themselves as bad and worse than ever they were; for this may have a special regard to the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, when they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn, Zec 12:10; and remember the evil ways of their ancestors, and their own stubbornness and infidelity, and be ashamed thereof; and say not one word by way of complaint of the judgments of God that have been upon them as a nation so long:

because of thy shame; because they will now be ashamed of their opposition to Christ and his Gospel; of their rejection and treatment of him; and of the evil things they have been guilty of:

when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God; God may be said to be pacified, or propitious, when he is at peace with men, his anger is turned away, his law and justice are satisfied, reconciliation and atonement are made for sin, and he signifies that for Christ's sake; and especially when his pardoning love and grace is manifested and applied: and this pacification is made, not by men themselves, by their obedience, or repentance, or faith; but by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; which, when made known to the conscience; or when this atonement, propitiation, and pacification is received by faith; or there is a comfortable sense of pardon, through the blood of Christ, for all sins and transgressions that have been committed in heart and life; it has such an effect, as to cause men to remember and call to mind their former evil ways, and to fill them with shame for them, and to put them to silence, so as never more to open their mouths to excuse their sins; or commend themselves and their own righteousness; or to murmur against God, or censure others. This is the nature of pardoning grace and mercy.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 17

Under the simile of two eagles and a vine are represented the kings of Babylon and Egypt, and the condition of the Jews, who are threatened with ruin for their perfidy; and yet a promise is made of the raising up of the house of Judah, and family of David, in the Messiah. The prophet is bid to deliver a riddle or parable to the house of Israel, Eze 17:1. The riddle or parable is concerning two eagles and a vine, which is delivered, Eze 17:3; and the explanation of it is in Eze 17:11; and then the destruction of the Jews is threatened for their treachery to the king of Babylon, Eze 17:16; and the chapter is closed with a promise of the Messiah, and the prosperity of his kingdom, Eze 17:22.

Ver. 1. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. After the prophet had been sent to charge the Jews with breaking the covenant with God, he is sent to rebuke and threaten them for breaking covenant with men, even with the king of Babylon; by whom they were in part carried into captivity, and another part remained in the land, as will be hereafter seen.

Ezekiel 17:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, put forth a riddle,.... A dark saying, but a smart one: "whet a whetting" {k}, as in the Hebrew; something at first sight difficult to be understood, yet amusing and entertaining; and, when solved, very useful and instructive:

and speak a parable unto the house of Israel; or, "concerning the house of

Israel" {l}; as the Targum and Syriac version; something relating to them, and what would aptly describe and represent their case; for the prophet was bid to take such a method, not to hide things from them, but rather the more strongly to represent them to them; seeing hereby their attention would be excited, and things would be more fixed in their memories, and they would be put upon studying the meaning of them; and when explained to them, and understood, which was quickly done, they might be the more affected with them.

{k} hdyx dwx, Heb. "acue acumen", Piscator. {l} larvy tyb la "de domo Israelis", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus.

Ezekiel 17:3

Ver. 3. And say, thus saith the Lord God,.... The riddle is not the prophet's, nor the parable his, but the Lord God's; and exceeding beautiful and apt it is, to signify the things designed by it; the wisdom of God is greatly displayed in it:

a great eagle; which is Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, as it is explained, Eze 17:12; who is compared to an eagle for his power and authority, that being the king of birds, and for his swiftness and voracity in conquering and subduing kingdoms; see Jer 48:40;

with great wings; so the Babylonish monarchy is signified by a lion with eagle's wings, **Da 7:4**; and the two parts of the Roman empire, into which it was divided at the death of Theodosius, are called two wings of a great eagle, Re 12:14; and so here it may denote the large kingdoms and provinces which belonged to the Babylonian monarchy; see **Es 1:1**;

longwinged; or having a "long member" {m}; meaning the body of the wing, which was long; and so, as the wings spread, may signify the breadth of his dominion, this the length of them, and both their extensiveness:

full of feathers; of cities, towns, people, armies, wealth, and riches:

which had divers colours; or an "embroidery" {n}; like that of the weaver, only needle work, consisting of various colours; and so it alludes to such eagles as are called the golden eagle, and "asterias", from their golden colour, and their being spotted like stars, and which are said to be of the largest size, as Bochart, from Aelianus {o}, observes; and may signify people of divers languages, customs, manners, and circumstances, subject to the government of the king of

Babylon:

came unto Lebanon; the northern border of the land of Judea, and invaded it; where were the mountain and forest of Lebanon, famous for the cedars that grew there, from whence the whole land may here take its name, as being more apt for the allegory used: or the city of Jerusalem, where were the temple built of the cedars of Lebanon, as many of its palaces and houses also were; whither the king of Babylon came, and took it, and who came northward, as Babylon was:

and took the highest branch of the cedar; by the "cedar" is meant, either the nation in general, or the royal family in particular; and by the "highest branch" the then reigning king, Jeconiah with the princes and nobles of the land, who were taken and carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar; see 2Ki 24:14.

{m} rbah Kra "longa corpore", Castalio; "longa membris", Munster, Grotius; "longo membrorum ductu", Pradus. {n} hmqrh wl rva, Heb; "opus phrygionicum", Piscator. {o} Aelian. Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 39.

Ezekiel 17:4

Ver. 4. He cropped off the top of his young twigs,.... By which are meant the princes of the land, or the several branches of the royal family; the top of which was King Jeconiah, who was but young and tender, being but eighteen years of age when he began his reign, and this was within three months after; and who was no more able to withstand the force of the king of Babylon, than a tender twig so ravenous a bird as an eagle, 2Ki 24:8; whose superior power and strength is signified by the cropping off of a tender twig:

and carried it into a land of traffic; not into the land of Canaan, as the Septuagint, and some other versions, literally render it; but into Babylon, which was become a place of great merchandise, through the great concourse of people to it, and the large additions made to the empire:

he set it in a city of merchants; meaning the city of Babylon, perhaps in particular, as distinct from the country before mentioned: the word for "merchants" signifies "apothecaries" or "druggists" {p}; and may design such merchants as traded in sweet spices and aromatic drugs. The words may be rendered, "and brought it out of the land of Canaan" {q}; out of which Jeconiah and his nobles were carried by the king of Babylon; so the particle la sometimes signifies "from", or "out of", as in **1Ki 8:30**; and others {r}, "and in a city of merchants he set it"; in Babylon, famous for merchants; whom the Jews, being captives, were obliged to attend in a servile manner.

{p} Mylkwr "aromatariorum", Junius & Tremellius, Polinus. So Stockius, p. 1017. {q} Nenk Ura la "tetra Chanaan", Texelius, Phoenix, l. 3. c. 4. sect. 6. p. 205. {r} Vid. Noldii Concord. Part. Ebr. p. 56.

Ezekiel 17:5

Ver. 5. He took also of the seed of the land,.... Of the land of Judea, a native of it, not a stranger; not one of another country, a Babylonian; not one of his own nobles or princes, did Nebuchadnezzar, the eagle, take and set upon the throne of Judea, but one of their own, even one of the king's seed, of the blood royal, as it is explained,
Eze 17:13, Mattaniah, the uncle of Jeconiah, whom the king of Babylon called Zedekiah, and made him king in his room:

and planted it in a fruitful field; in the land of Judea, and in Jerusalem the royal city:

he placed [it] by great waters; many people, Re 17:15; over whom he ruled, and by whom he was supported in his royal dignity:

[and] set it [as] a willow tree; which loves moist places, and grows up thick: unless it should be rendered, "he set it with great circumspection" {s}; took a great deal of care and caution in placing him upon the throne; he made a covenant with him, took an oath of him, and hostages for the performance of it, Eze 17:13. The Targum is,

"a planted vine he set it,"

to make it agree with what follows; but the word in the Chaldee and Arabic languages signifies a kind of willow, as we render it, as Ben Melech observes {t}.

{s} wmv hpupu "circumspectissime posuit illud, Junins & Tremellius, Polanus; "cum magna circumspectione", Piscator; "circumspecte, Cocceius, Starckius. {t} And so it does; see Castel, col. 3220, 3221. and in this way Jarchi and Kimchi interpret the word, in which they are followed by many; so

R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 73. 1. nevertheless, the sense of it here is disapproved of by Castel, who observes, what has a willow to do with a vine? col. 3222. and commends the Greek version, which renders it, epiblepomenon, "conspicuous", to be seen; and so others translate it, "in superficie", V. L. Grotius; yet the "safsaf" of the Arabs is a tree by which they understood the "abeile" or poplar tree; see Shaw's Travels, p. 432. Ed. 2.

Ezekiel 17:6

Ver. 6. And it grew,.... King Zedekiah reigned and prospered, and the kingdom flourished under him:

and became a spreading vine of low stature; not so flourishing as it had been heretofore, in former reigns; it did not rise up to a cedar, as it had been, but was like a vine, which, though flourishing, does not rise up high, but runs upon the ground, and is dependent on something else; so the king and kingdom of Judah, though in tolerable circumstances, yet were humble and dependent on the king of Babylon:

whose branches turned towards him; the eagle, Nebuchadnezzar, to whom the people of the Jews were tributary:

and the roots thereof were under him; they were rooted and settled in their own land, yet under the power, and at the dispose, of the Babylonish monarch:

so it became a vine; a flourishing kingdom in some measure, though attended with some degree of weakness and dependence as a vine:

and brought forth branches, and shot forth sprigs; increased in people and in riches; particularly the king had many children, so that there was a prospect of a succession, and of a more flourishing estate, and a continuance of it, Jer 52:10.

Ezekiel 17:7

Ver. 7. There was also another great eagle,.... Hophra king of Egypt, a very powerful prince, whom Herodotus {u} calls Apries; and says he was the most happy and fortunate, after Psammitichus, of all the kings that were before;

though not so mighty as the king of Babylon; therefore all the same things are not said of the one as of the other:

with great wings and many feathers: had large dominions, but not go extensive as the former, and therefore is not said to be "longwinged" as he; and had "many feathers", but not "full" of them, nor had it such a variety; he had many people, and much wealth, and a large army, but not equal to the king of Babylon:

and, behold, this vine did bend her roots towards him; Zedekiah, and the people of the Jews under him; inclined to an alliance with the king of Egypt, and gave him some private intimations of it:

and shot forth her branches towards him; sent ambassadors to acquaint him with it, Eze 17:15;

that he might water it by the furrows of her plantation; Nebuchadnezzar had planted this vine, and made furrows for the watering of it, and by his means it was become prosperous and flourishing; but Zedekiah, not content with the greatness and glory he had raised him to, sought to the king of Egypt to help him with horses and people, in order to free himself from subjection to the king of Babylon, and to increase his lustre and glory: the allusion is thought to be to the trenches and canals of the river Nile, by which the land of Egypt was watered: the words may be rendered, "out of the rivulets of her plantation" {w} which best agrees with watering.

{u} L. 2. sive Euterpe, c. 161. {w} hejm twgrem "ex rivulis [loci in quo] plantata est", Gussetius, p. 642. such as run between beds in gardens, of which this word is sometimes used; hence some render it "ex areolis", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus, so Ben Melech; or ditches and canals, such as were made out of the river Nile to water the land; "a fossa plantarii sui", Texelius, ut supra, p. 209.

Ezekiel 17:8

Ver. 8. It was planted in, a good soil, by great waters,.... As is expressed in Eze 17:5; this was done by the king of Babylon, who had raised Zedekiah from a low estate to a high one, and set him on the throne of Judah, over many people; and put him in such a condition, and in such circumstances, that he and his people might have been very happy, could they have been content:, for his view was,

that he might bring forth branches, and that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine; that he and his people might grow numerous and rich, and be a prosperous and flourishing kingdom; this is mentioned to aggravate the ingratitude of Zedekiah, and the people of the Jews, in rebelling against the king of Babylon, who had used them well, and of whom they had no reason to complain.

Ezekiel 17:9

Ver. 9. Say thou, thus saith the Lord God,.... Tell Zedekiah and his people, in the name of the Lord, what will be the issue of his ingratitude and treachery to the king of Babylon, and his vain confidence in the king of Egypt:

shall it prosper? the vine, the kingdom of Judah, and Zedekiah the king of it; can it be thought that prosperity will attend such conduct as this? was is it ever known that persons guilty of such vices ever succeeded?

shall he not pull up the roots thereof; the first eagle, Nebuchadnezzar, being provoked by the rebellion of the king of Judah and his people; will he not come against them, and utterly destroy them, and root them up from being a people and a nation?

and cut off the fruit thereof, that it wither? the sons of the king, and of the nobles, and people of the land; so that the kingdom shall be ruined, and no hope left of its ever being restored again; which is the case of a vine when withered:

it shall wither in all the leaves of her spring; whereas it had been a springtime with this vine, under the influence of the king of Babylon, its leaves were green and flourishing; but now should wither, not as leaves do in autumn, which is to be expected, but in spring, which must be fatal; signifying, that in the midst of their prosperity, and when there was the greatest hope and expectation of a continuance and increase of it, utter ruin should come upon them:

even without great power or many people to pluck it up by the roots thereof; signifying with what ease the king of Babylon would take Jerusalem, and the land of Judea, its king and its princes, and utterly destroy them; he would have no need of a large army, or to employ all his forces, a few, were sufficient to do it; even as it does not require many hands to pluck up, a vine by the roots, a single person is equal to it.

Ezekiel 17:10

Ver. 10. Yea, behold, [being] planted,.... Supposing it ever so well planted, as first by Nebuchadnezzar; and still put into a better condition by the assistance of the king of Egypt, as was imagined:

shall it prosper? it shall not; their own strength, with the help of the king of Egypt, will not be able to protect them from the rage of the king of Babylon:

shall it not utterly wither, when the east wind toucheth it? which is very hurtful to vines, and by which is meant the Chaldean army; for Babylon, as Kimchi observes, lay northeast of the land of Israel; and it signifies how easily the destruction would be brought about, it would be only a touch of the east wind, and this vine would wither away atones:

it shall wither in the furrows where it grew; notwithstanding its being watered by Egypt, or the help and assistance that could afford it; or amidst all its prosperity, and the means of it, and the springing growing hope it had; or in the very country itself where it had been planted, and had flourished; Zedekiah and his princes were taken in the plains of Jericho, and his children and princes were put to death in Riblah, Jer 52:8.

Ezekiel 17:11

Ver. 11. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. Here follows the explanation of the above riddle and parable, which the prophet from the Lord had orders to deliver.

Ezekiel 17:12

Ver. 12. Say now to the rebellious house,.... It had been a rebellious house to God, and to his prophets, before; see **Eze 2:5** and

See Gill on "Eze 2:5"; and now, besides this was rebellious to the king of Babylon, to whom they were in some measure subject, Eze 17:15;

know ye not what these [things mean]? the riddle and parable concerning the two eagles and the vine; suggesting that they must be very inattentive, and very stupid, if they did not know the meaning of them; for though the things intended were delivered in an enigmatical and parabolical way, yet they were easily to be understood by all that know the affairs of the Jewish nation; being things that were lately transacted there, and were obvious to everyone's view; but if they were so stupid and blockish as not to understand them, the prophet had the following order, to explain them to them:

tell [them], behold, the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem; so that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is meant by the first "eagle", and the land of Judea, and particularly Jerusalem, by Lebanon, it came unto, Eze 17:3. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read this and the following verses in the future; as if these were things that were yet to come to pass, whereas they are related as things already done; and so the Targum renders all in the past sense, as the history of them requires it should:

and hath taken the king thereof, and the princes thereof, and led them with him to Babylon; the king of Judea, and the princes of it; Jeconiah and his nobles, who had been carried captive into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar; for Ezekiel was among these captives, **Eze 1:2**; see 2Ki 24:12; so that it appears that by the "twigs" of the cedar the princes of the land are designed; and by the "top" of them King Jeconiah; and by "the land of traffic" the land of Chaldea; and by the "city of merchants" the city of Babylon, Eze 17:4; whither they were carried.

Ezekiel 17:13

Ver. 13. And hath taken of the king's seed,.... One of the royal family, signified by the seed of the land, Eze 17:5. Mattaniah, son of King Josiah, and uncle to King Jeconiah; whom Nebuchadnezzar took and made king of Judea, and called him Zedekiah, which signifies the "justice of the Lord": to put him in mind of doing justly, by observing the covenant and oath after mentioned, or that he must expect vengeance:

and made a covenant with him, and hath taken an oath of him; he gave him the throne and kingdom upon certain conditions to be performed, and for the perform once of which he made him swear by the God of Israel; see 2Ch 36:13;

he hath also taken the mighty of the land: or, "the rams of the land" {x}; the principal men of it for wisdom, riches, and valour, the princes and nobles of it; which he did, as to weaken the nation, that it might not be so capable of rebelling against him, so to be hostages for the performance of the covenant entered into; and this is meant by planting the seed with circumspection, Eze 17:5.

{x} Urah ylya "arietes terrae", Montanus.

Ezekiel 17:14

Ver. 14. That the kingdom might be base,.... Low or humble; its king but a viceroy, a tributary to the king of Babylon; and the subjects obliged to a tax, payable to him; and this is intended by the vine being of "low stature", Eze 17:6;

that it might not lift up itself; above other neighbouring kingdoms and states; and particularly that it might not rebel against Nebuchadnezzar, but be kept in a dependence on him, and subjection to him:

[but] that by keeping of his covenant it might stand; continue a kingdom, and Zedekiah king of it; so that it was for their good that such a covenant was made, and it was their interest to keep it; for, had it not been made, it would have ceased to have been a kingdom, and would have become a province of the Babylonian monarchy, and have been put under the government of one of Nebuchadnezzar's princes or captains; and, should they break it, would endanger the ruin of their state, as the event showed. In the Hebrew text it is, "to keep his covenant, to make it stand"; or, "to stand to it" {y}; that is, as it should seem, to make the covenant stand firm. The Targum is,

"that it might keep his covenant, and serve him;"

Nebuchadnezzar.

{y} hdmel wtyrb ta rmvl "ad custodiendum pactum ejus, ad astandum ei", Montanus; "ad servandum foedus suum, ad consistendumm", Starckius.

Ezekiel 17:15

Ver. 15. But he rebelled against him,.... Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon, broke the covenant he entered into, and violated his oath:

in sending his ambassadors into Egypt; to form an alliance with the king of it, and obtain help from him to break off the Babylonian yoke; this is signified by the vine "bending [its] roots, [and] shooting forth [its] branches [towards] another great eagle", the king of Egypt,
Eze 17:7;

that they might give him horses and much people; with both which Egypt abounded, 1Ki 10:28; but in Judea there was a scarcity, as of horses, so of men, by means of the multitude of captives which the king of Babylon had carried away; wherefore Zedekiah sent to Egypt for both, for recruits of men; and for horses to form a cavalry, to free himself from the king of Babylon, and defend himself and people against him:

shall he prosper? shall he escape that doeth such [things]? that is guilty of breaking an express law of God, which forbids the kings of Israel multiplying horses, and sending to Egypt for them, De 17:16; and placing confidence in an arm of flesh, Isa 31:1; and of such base ingratitude to the king of Babylon, who had set him upon the throne, and put him in a comfortable and flourishing condition:

or shall he break the covenant, and be delivered? shall one guilty, as of the other crimes, so of breach of covenant, and of perjury, escape the vengeance of God and man? he shall not.

Ezekiel 17:16

Ver. 16. [As] I live, saith the Lord God,.... This is the form of an oath, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; the Lord swears, in his wrath, by himself, by his life; this shows how much he resented, what Zedekiah had done, and how sure and certain his ruin was:

surely in the place [where] the king [dwelleth] that made him king; in Babylon, where Nebuchadnezzar dwelt, that made Zedekiah king of Judah; which is mentioned, to point out the ingratitude of that prince to the king of Babylon:

whose oath he despised, whose covenant he broke; the oath of fealty and, allegiance, which Zedekiah took to Nebuchadnezzar; and the covenant entered into between them, by which the former held the kingdom of Judea of the latter: the oath he made light of, though solemn, one made by the God of Israel; and the covenant he broke, though ratified by an oath; in which things were given to him he could not claim, at least possess, but by the courtesy of the conqueror; these sins were displeasing to God: oaths and covenants, though made with conquerors, and with Heathen princes, are to be kept:

[even] with him; that is, with Nebuchadnezzar:

in the midst of Babylon he shall die; when first taken he was had to Riblah, and there his eyes were put out; and after that he was carried to Babylon, and put in prison, and there died, Jer 52:9.

Ezekiel 17:17

Ver. 17. Neither shall Pharaoh, with [his] mighty army and great company, make for him in the war,.... The king of Egypt, to whom Zedekiah applied for horses and men to help him; though he should come with a great army, and a large multitude of people, yet should be of no use to Zedekiah, nor do any hurt to Nebuchadnezzar, or hinder him from taking Jerusalem:

by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons; that is, when Nebuchadnezzar should besiege Jerusalem, and raise mounts, and build fortifications, in order to take the city, and destroy its inhabitants; as he did, Jer 52:4; the Egyptian army should not be able to hinder him going on with the siege, and taking the city; for though the siege was broke up for a time, upon the approach of Pharaoh's army, yet Nebuchadnezzar, having conquered the Egyptians, returned again to the siege of Jerusalem, and took it; see Jer 37:5.

Ezekiel 17:18

Ver. 18. Seeing he despised the oath, by breaking the covenant,.... This is repeated again, to show the heinousness of the sin Zedekiah had been guilty of, and what was the cause of his ruin:

when, lo, he had given his hand; to the king of Babylon, to testify his hearty agreement with him, and that he might depend upon the oath and covenant being sacredly observed by him. This was a rite for custom frequently and early used in different nations, when covenants and agreements were entered into; we find it used in the times of Homer {z}; and among the Romans. When Antoninus, Lepidus, and Octavius made peace, the historian says {a}, they joined their hands together. Virgil {b} speaks of the same ceremony used by Anchises to Achaemenides, for confirmation of friendship. Though some understand this of his giving the hand to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and entering into an alliance with him, and broke the covenant and oath made to the king of Babylon; and so the Targum,

"and, lo, he stretched out his hand to Pharaoh:"

and hath done all these [things]; been guilty of such and so many crimes, as ingratitude, perjury, covenant breaking, and vain confidence:

he shall not escape; divine vengeance, just and proper punishment for his sins.

{z} ceirav t' allhlwn labethn kai pistwsate, Iliad. 6. {a} Florus, Hist. Rom. Gest. l. 4. c. 5. {b} "Ipse pater dextram Anchises, haud malta moratur, Dat juveni atque animum praesenti pignore firmat". Aeneid. l. 3. prope finem.

Ezekiel 17:19

Ver. 19. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, [as] I live,.... A repetition of the oath of God as before, expressing his indignation at the king of Judah, and the certainty of his ruin:

surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken; the Lord calls it his oath, because it was made and taken in his name, 2Ch 36:13; and his covenant, because it was agreeable to his will, and was made in his sight, and he was solemnly appealed to at the making of it; all which were an aggravation of Zedekiah's sin in violating them, and made his punishment the heavier:

even it will I recompense upon his own head; he shall personally bear the punishment due to such crimes. The Targum is,

"I will revenge his way upon his head."

Jarchi thinks this refers to the putting out of his eyes; and Kimchi takes notice of the same sense.

Ezekiel 17:20

Ver. 20. And I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare,.... See Gill on "Eze 12:13"; where the same words are used, and of the same person:

and I will bring him to Babylon; though, as it is said in the place referred to, he should not see it, his eyes being put out before he was brought thither:

and I will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me; for though it was breaking covenant and oath with a Heathen prince, yet it was a trespass against God, in whose name they were made; and his being laid in prison at Babylon, and kept there to the time of his death, was the Lord's pleading with him, and judging of him; it was a reproof for his sins, and a condemnation of him and them.

Ezekiel 17:21

Ver. 21. And all his fugitives with all his bands shall fall by the sword,.... So those of his army that fled, and attempted to make their escape, when the city of Jerusalem was taken, as many as fell into the Chaldean army, which was round about the city, at least a great number of them, fell by the sword of the Chaldeans, Jer 52:7;

and they that remain shall be scattered towards all winds; and so it was, that such that escaped the sword were either carried captive into Babylon, or fled some one way, and some another, even into all parts, east, west, north, and south:

and ye shall know that I the Lord have spoken [it]; the Targum adds, by my word, and will do it; who is the Lord God omniscient and omnipotent, just and righteous; faithful and true, as to his word of promise, so of threatening.

Ezekiel 17:22

Ver. 22. Thus saith the Lord God,.... Lest it should be thought, by the above prophecies, that the tribe of Judah should be utterly lost, and the family of David extinct, and the promise to him void, that he should have one of his seed to sit upon his, throne for evermore,
Ps 132:11; it is here in a figurative manner signified, that of his seed the Messiah should be raised up, by whom the church and kingdom of God would be brought into a flourishing state and condition:

I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar; Nebuchadnezzar had took one of the family of David, and set, him upon the throne, signified by taking of the seed of the land, and planting it, Eze 17:5; but without success; wherefore the Lord here promises that he will "also", take one and plant it, which should thrive and prosper: by the "high cedar" is meant the Jewish nation, which the Lord chose and set on high above all nations of the earth distinguishing it with peculiar blessings and favours; for which reason it may be compared to the high and spreading cedar; see Nu 24:5; and by "the highest branch" of it the tribe of Judah, who prevailed above his brethren, because from him came the chief ruler, **1Ch 5:2**; and from whence the Messiah was to come, and did, Ge 49:10 **Re 5:5**;

and set [it]; namely, the slip taken from the highest branch of the high cedar; or one that should descend from the Jewish nation, and particularly from the tribe of Judah, more fully described in the next clause:

I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one; and by the "top" and "young twigs" of the highest branch of the cedar, or of the chief tribe in Israel, are meant the house and family of David, the royal family, and the descendants of it, the chief of the tribe of Judah; and by the "tender one" is designed the Messiah; and so Jarchi interprets it; and which interpretation is mentioned by Kimchi, though he would have Zerubbabel intended; and owns it to be the sense of the Targum, which is this,

"I will bring one of the kingdom of the house of David, which is like to a high cedar, and I will raise him up an infant from his children's children;"

and so Abendana observes, that from Shealtiel, the son of Jeconiah, comes forth the King Messiah, who shall rule over all the world, and under whom every bird of wing shall dwell. The Messiah is often called a "branch" in prophecy, **Isa 4:2**; and here a "tender twig" or branch, as in Isa 53:2; a "tender plant"; which is expressive of the meanness of his descent, David's family being very low at the time of his birth, and of the contemptible appearance he made in the form of a servant; having also all the sinless infirmities of the human nature on him, as well as was attended with poverty, griefs, and sorrows of various kinds; and so made a very unpromising appearance of being the great Prophet, Priest, and King in Israel: and now by the "cropping off" of this tender twig seems to be designed not the incarnation of the Messiah, but his sufferings and death; whereby he was cut off, not for himself, but for the sins of his people, and in which his divine Father had a considerable hand, Isa 53:8; and to which is owing the great fruitfulness of his kingdom and interest, Joh 12:24; moreover, this may respect not only the person of the Messiah, and his mean appearance in the world; but also his church and interest, which were at first like a little stone cut out of the mountain, and like a grain of mustard seed, the least of all seeds, **Da 2:34**; the Gospel, which was the instrument of raising the church of God, was very contemptible, because of its subject, a crucified Christ; and the first preachers of it were mean and illiterate persons; those that received it were the poor of this world, and those but a few, and they the offscouring of all things;

and will plant [it] on a high mountain and eminent; which may be expressive not of the incarnation of Christ, but rather of his ascension to heaven after his death, and resurrection from the dead; and the constitution of him upon that as Lord and Christ, or the setting of him up as King over God's holy hill of Zion, the church of God: and no doubt but there is an allusion to Mount Zion, and to Jerusalem, from whence the Gospel first went forth, and where the first Gospel church was planted; and being said to be on a mountain high and eminent, may note both the visibility and stability of the church of Christ.

Ezekiel 17:23

Ver. 23. In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it,.... In the highest part of the land of Israel, as Jerusalem is said to be by the Jewish writers; the land of Israel, they say, particularly Kimchi upon the place, was higher than all other lands, and Jerusalem was the highest part of that land; here the Messiah preached and wrought his miracles, even in the mountain of the Lord's house, the temple; and here the first Christian church was planted and established:

and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar; that is, the tender twig or branch cropped off, set and planted as before described: by the "boughs" or "branches" it brings forth may be meant believers, who are as branches in Christ; are of the same nature with him, united to him; have a communication of life and grace from him; are supported and strengthened by him; and so, abiding in him, persevere to the end; see Joh 15:4; and the same may be said of particular churches; and by "fruit" it is said to bear may be designed the persons of the chosen, redeemed, and called; who are the fruit of Christ's death, and of the ministration of his Gospel, Joh 12:24; or the blessings of grace which are in him, come from him, and are communicated by him; even fill spiritual blessings, as justification, pardon, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life; in short, both grace and glory; and thus he becomes and appears to be a "goodly cedar", in his person, office, and grace, to his people, to whom he is altogether lovely; being full of grace and truth, **So 5:16**; and in his kingdom and interest, especially in the latter day, when the kingdoms of this world shall become his:

and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell; by whom are designed converted sinners of all sorts, and of all nations, Jews and Gentiles; compared to birds, because weak, defenceless, and timorous; exposed to danger; and wonderfully delivered; are subject to wander and go astray; and for their chirping and warbling notes: now these may be said to "dwell" under the "shadow" of the "branches" of this "goodly cedar", Christ and his church; that is, under the ministration of the word and ordinances, which is a very delightful and refreshing shadow, a very safe and fruitful one, **So 2:3**; and here saints choose to dwell, and determine to abide and continue, as it is their interest and happiness so to do; and what a flocking and tabernacling of these birds here will there be in the latter day, where they will chirp and sing in the height of Zion? Isa 66:4; compare with this
Mt 13:32; where our Lord is thought by some to allude to this passage.

Ezekiel 17:24

Ver. 24. And all the trees of the field shall know,.... All the nations of the World, and the great ones, and the mighty men of the earth, shall know, own, and acknowledge, when the above things are accomplished:

that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: some by the high and green tree understand Zedekiah, who was brought low; and by the "low" and "dry tree", Jeconiah, who was raised by the king of Babylon, Jer 52:11; this is Jarchi's sense, and is mentioned by Kimchi: others, by the former, think Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonish monarchy are intended, which were brought down; and, by the latter, the house of David, and kingdom of Judah, which were exalted: though rather by the one are meant the people of the Jews, once the people of God, but now cast off; and by the other the Gentiles, called by the grace of God, and received by him: though it seems best of all to interpret the "high and green tree" of the mighty kingdoms of this world, which will be put down by Christ; and the "low and dry tree" of his kingdom and interest, which shall flourish and spread abundantly, and be an everlasting kingdom; see **Da 2:44**;

I the Lord have spoken and have done [it]; because the prophecy of it is sure, and because of the certainty of the fulfilment of it, it is said to be done as soon as it was spoken of.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 18

This chapter contains an answer to an objection of the Jews to the dealings of God with them in a providential way. The objection is expressed in a proverb of common use among them, and complained of as being without cause, Eze 18:1; however, for the future, no occasion should be given them to use it; for, though God could justify his proceedings upon the foot of his sovereignty, all souls being his; yet he was determined none but the sinner himself should suffer,
Eze 18:3; and puts various cases for the illustration and vindication of his proceedings; as that a just man, who is described by his proper characters, as abstaining from several sins specified, and doing what is right and good, should surely live, Eze 18:5; but that the son of such a just man, being the reverse of his father's character, should surely die, Eze 18:10; and again, the son of such a wicked man, observing the heinousness of his father's sins, and abstaining from them, though his father should die in his iniquities, he should not die for them, but live, Eze 18:14; by which it appears that the dealings of

God with the Jews were not according to the proverb used by them, but quite agreeable to his resolution; that the sinner, be he a father or a son, shall die for his own sins; and that the righteous man's righteousness shall be upon him, and the wicked man's sin upon him, and accordingly both shall be dealt with, Eze 18:19; which is further illustrated by a wicked man's turning from his sinful course, and doing righteousness, and living in that righteousness he has done; which is more agreeable to God that he should live, and not die in sin, Eze 18:21; and by a righteous man turning from his righteousness, and living a vicious life, and dying in it, Eze 18:24; from both which instances this conclusion follows, that God is to be justified; and that his ways are equal, and the Jews' ways were unequal, and their complaint unjust, Eze 18:25; and the same instances are repeated in a different order, and the same conclusion formed, Eze 18:26; upon which the Lord determines to judge them according to their own ways, their personal actions, good or bad; and exhorts them to repentance and reformation; and closes with a pathetic expostulation, with them, Eze 18:30.

Ver. 1. And the word of the Lord came unto me again, saying. The word of prophecy from the Lord, as the Targum; and its being mentioned is coming from the Lord is to give it weight and authority. This is a distinct sermon or prophecy from the former, and was sent and delivered out at another time.

Ezekiel 18:2

Ver. 2. What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel,.... This is spoken to the Jews in Babylon, who used the following proverb concerning the land of Israel; not the ten tribes, but the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, concerning the desolation of the land, and the hardships the Jews laboured under, since the captivity of Jeconiah, and they became subject to the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar: this expostulation with them suggests that they had no just cause, or true reason, to make use of the proverb; that it was impious, impudent, and insolent in them, and daring and dangerous; and that they did not surely well consider what they said. The proverb follows:

saying, the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? that is, as the Targum explains it,

"the fathers have sinned, and the children are smitten,"

or punished, as the ten tribes for the sins of Jeroboam, and the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin for the sins of Manasseh; hereby wiping themselves clean; and as if they were innocent persons, and free from sin, and were only punished for their forefathers' sins, and so charging God with injustice and cruelty; whereas, though the Lord threatened to visit the iniquity of parents upon their children, and sometimes did so, to deter parents from sinning, lest they should entail a curse, and bring ruin upon their posterity; yet he never did this but when children followed their fathers' practices, and committed the same sins, or worse; so that this was no act of unrighteousness in God, but rather an instance of his patience and long suffering; see
Jer 31:29.

Ezekiel 18:3

Ver. 3. [As] I live, saith the Lord God,.... This is a form of an oath; the Lord here swears by his life, by himself, because he could swear by no greater, **Heb 6:13**; and it expresses how displeased he was with the above proverb, and how much he resented it, as well as the certainty of what follows; which, it might be depended on, would be assuredly done, since the Lord not only said it, but swore unto it:

ye shall not have [occasion] any more to use this proverb in Israel; signifying that he would no longer defer the execution of his judgments, but immediately bring them upon them; so that or the future there would be no use of the proverb; no occasion to make mention of it in the next generation; and, moreover, that he would make it so manifest to themselves and others, by his dealings with them, that it should be seen, and known, and acknowledged by all, that it was for their own sins and transgressions that they were visited and corrected.

Ezekiel 18:4

Ver. 4. Behold, all souls are mine,.... By creation; they being the immediate produce of his power; hence he is called "the Father of spirits", Heb 12:9, or the souls of men; these he has an apparent right unto; a property in; a dominion over; they are accountable to him, and will be judged impartially by him:

as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; and therefore must be thought to have as great a respect and affection for the one as for the other;

for the soul of a son as for the soul of a father; and not deal partially in favour of the one, and cruelly and unrighteously with the other:

the soul that sinneth, it shall die; the soul that continues in sin, without repentance towards God, and faith in Christ, shall die the second death; shall be separated from the presence of God, and endure his wrath to all eternity: or the meaning is, that a person that is guilty of gross sins, and continues in them, shall personally suffer; he shall endure one calamity or another, as the famine, sword, pestilence, or be carried into captivity, which is the death all along spoken of in this chapter; the Lord will exercise no patience towards him, or defer punishment to a future generation, his offspring; but shall immediately execute it upon himself.

Ezekiel 18:5

Ver. 5. But if a man be just,.... Not legally, as to be wholly free from sin, for there is no such just man, **Ec 7:20**; but evangelically, through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto him; and who has a principle of grace and holiness wrought in him; a man of a just principle and good conscience; who is disposed by the grace of God to that which is just and right; for this seems to refer to the inward frame of the mind, as distinct from actions, and as the source of them, as follows:

and do that which is lawful and right; or "judgment" {c} and "justice"; true judgment and justice, as the Targum; that which is just and right by the law of God, and is so between man and man; the particulars of which follow:

{c} hqduw jpvm "judiciam et justitiam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Ezekiel 18:6

Ver. 6. [And] hath not eaten upon the mountains,.... Where temples and altars were built for idols, and sacrifices offered up to them; and where feasts were kept to the honour of them, and the sacrifices to them eaten; see **Eze 6:13**; for otherwise it was not unlawful to eat common food on mountains, as well as on other places; but here it denotes idolatrous practices; and the Targum is,

"and hath not served idols on the mountains:"

neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel; their "dunghill gods" {d} as the word signifies; as not to the idols of the Gentiles, so not to those of Israel, as the calves at Dan and Bethel; these he does not worship, nor pray unto, or invoke, nor even give a pleasant and favourable look unto; but turned from them with abhorrence and contempt:

neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife; been guilty of adultery, by lying with another man's wife; or by marrying one divorced, not having committed fornication; which divorces were common among the Jews, and marrying such so divorced, Mt 19:19;

neither hath come near to a menstruous woman: a woman in her monthly courses, even his own wife; who, according to the law, was set apart for her uncleanness for a certain term of time; during which she was not to be touched, nor anything she sat or lay upon; and all conjugal acts to be abstained from, Le 15:19.

{d} ylwlg la "ad stercoreos deos", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "ad stercora", Piscator, Cocceius.

Ezekiel 18:7

Ver. 7. And hath not oppressed any,.... By fraud or force, particularly the poor, to the great grief and hurt of them:

[but] hath restored to the debtor his pledge; which was pawned; not embezzling it, or keeping it beyond the time fixed by the law of God, De 24:12;

hath spoiled none by violence; has not committed theft and robbery, or done injury to any man's person and property:

hath given his bread to the hungry; which was his own; what he had laboured for, and come by honestly, and so had a right to dispose of; and being merciful, as well as just, eats not his morsel alone, but distributes it to the poor and hungry, Isa 58:7;

and hath covered the naked with a garment; as Job did, as well as the former, and for which Dorcas is commended, Job 31:17.

Ezekiel 18:8

Ver. 8. He [that] hath not given forth upon usury,.... Money, victuals, or any other thing, which was forbidden the Jews to take of their brethren, though they might of strangers, De 23:19;

neither hath taken any increase: or interest; or rather something over and above the interest money or use, as a gratuity for lending it upon the said interest:

[that] hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity; not only that now mentioned, but all others; who, having inadvertently engaged in that which is sinful, as soon as it appears to him to be so, gets out of it, and abstains from it as soon as possible:

hath executed true judgment between man and man; whether in office as a judge, who sits on the bench for that purpose; or as an arbitrator chosen to decide matters in controversy between one man and another, and that does everything just and right between man and man.

Ezekiel 18:9

Ver. 9. Hath walked in my statutes,.... Respecting the worship of God and true religion; being observant of all laws and ordinances relating thereunto:

and hath kept my judgments to deal truly; in things moral and civil among men; regarding all such laws of God as oblige to such things:

he [is] just; such a man is a just man, at least externally; and if he does all these things from a right principle, without trusting to them for justification before God, and acceptance with him, but looking to the righteousness of Christ for these things, he is truly, and in the sight of God, a just man:

he shall surely live, saith the Lord God; spiritually and comfortably here, and an eternal life hereafter; or rather he shall not be distressed with famine, sword, or plague, or go into captivity; but shall live in his own land, and eat the good things of it; and this shall be his case, let his father have been what he will, ever so great a sinner.

Ezekiel 18:10

Ver. 10. If he beget a son [that is] a robber, a shedder of blood,.... But if this just man beget a son that is a thief and a murderer, as he may; for grace is not conveyed by natural generation, though sin is: a good man has often bad children, even such as are guilty of capital crimes, as a "robber", a "highwayman", a "breaker up", or "through", as the word {e} signifies; one that breaks through walls, and into houses, and breaks through all the laws of God and man; and sticks not to shed innocent blood in committing his thefts and robberies, as these sins often go together; such an one was Barabbas, whose name signifies the son of a father, and perhaps his father might be a good man:

and [that] doeth the like to [any] one of these [things]; or that does anyone of these things, whether theft or murder.

{e} Uyrp "effractorem", Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Piscator, Grotius.

Ezekiel 18:11

Ver. 11. And that doeth not any of those [duties],.... Before mentioned, which his father did, but the reverse of them; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "and in the way of his righteous father does not walk"; does not tread in his steps, and work righteousness as he did:

but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife; has been guilty of idolatry and adultery;
See Gill on "Eze 18:6".

Ezekiel 18:12

Ver. 12. Hath oppressed the poor and needy,.... Who are weak, and have none to help them, and stand by them, and so are oppressed by such a man. This serves to explain the clause, in Eze 18:7;

hath spoiled by violence; his neighbour's goods; taken them away from him by force:

hath not restored the pledge; to the borrower before sunset, but kept it for his own use; taking the advantage of the poverty of him that borrowed of him:

and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols; whether of the Gentiles, or of the house of Israel:

hath committed abomination; either idolatry, the sin just before mentioned, which was an abomination to the Lord; or else approaching to a menstruous woman, since this follows the other in Eze 18:6; and is not mentioned, unless it is designed here; and so Kimchi interprets it; but Jarchi understands it of the abominable and detestable sin of sodomy: it may regard any and every sin that is abominable in the sight of God.

Ezekiel 18:13

Ver. 13. Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase,.... Contrary to the law of God; See Gill on "Eze 18:8";

shall he then live? by virtue of his father's righteousness and goodness, free from calamities, and in the quiet possession of the land of Israel, and the good things of it:

he shall not live; but go into captivity, and be destitute of the good things of life he has enjoyed; and, without repentance, shall never have eternal life:

he hath done all these abominations; before mentioned; theft, murder, idolatry, adultery, oppression of the poor, and usury, sins against both tables of the law:

he shall surely die; the death of affliction, or undergo temporal punishment; and not only die corporeally, but eternally too, if grace prevent not: "in dying he shall die" {f}; as in the Hebrew text; he shall die both the first and second death; his father's goodness shall not save him from either:

his blood shall be upon him; or "bloods" {g}; the innocent blood he has shed, which he must answer for being guilty of, and shall not escape righteous judgment, and his own blood, the destruction of himself; he shall be the cause of his own ruin, and bring just punishment on his own head.

{f} tmwy twm "moriendo morietur", Pagninus, Montanus. {g} wymd "sanguines ejus", Montanus.

Ezekiel 18:14

Ver. 14. Now, lo, [if] he beget a son,.... That is, the wicked man before mentioned; if he begets a son who proves a good man, which sometimes is the case, as Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, and Josiah the son of Amon:

that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done; not every particular action, but the principal of them; however, the several sorts and kinds of sin he was addicted to, and which were done publicly enough, and obvious to view; and yet does not imitate them, as children are apt to do:

and considereth: the evil nature and tendency of them; how abominable to God; how contrary to his law; how scandalous and reproachful in themselves, and how pernicious and destructive in their effects and consequences. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, read, "and feareth":

and doeth not such like; he fears God; and because the fear of God is before his eyes, and on his heart, which was wanting in his father, therefore he cannot do the things he did; the fear of offending him, the fear of his goodness, and of his judgments, both have an influence to restrain from sin.

Ezekiel 18:15

Ver. 15. [That] hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife. See Gill on "Eze 18:6"; where the same things are mentioned as here, and in the same order; only that clause, "neither hath come near to a menstruous woman", is here omitted.

Ezekiel 18:16

Ver. 16. Neither hath oppressed any,.... See Gill on "Eze 18:7".

hath not withholden the pledge; or, hath not pledged the pledge {h}. The meaning is, not that he had not given one, but had not taken one. So the

Targum,

"the pledge he hath not taken;"

or, if he did, he did not keep it beyond the time the law directs, but restored it to him whose it was;

neither hath spoiled by violence, [but] hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment. The rest of the verse is the same with Eze 18:7.

{h} lbx al lbx "pignus non pignoravit", Vatablus; "pignus non acceperit in pignus", Pagninus; "pignori", Montanus.

Ezekiel 18:17

Ver. 17. [That] hath taken off his hand from the poor,.... When he perceived it lay heavy upon him, withdrew it from hurting him, and forbore to do it when it was in his power, and perhaps eased him of the hardships his father had laid upon him; which was very kind and humane:

[that] hath not received usury nor increase; See Gill on "Eze 18:8";

hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; had not only negative, but positive holiness: not only abstained from things sinful, but did that which was just and right, both with respect to God and man; observed the worship of God, and did justice to mankind:

he shall not die for the iniquity of his father; or be punished for his father's sins, with sword, famine, pestilence, or captivity; shall not die a corporeal death, and much less eternal death, on that account:

he shall surely live; in his own land, and in the enjoyment of the good things of life; and having the grace and fear of God, and acting from gracious principles, with a view to the glory of God, he shall live eternally, though the son of a wicked man.

Ezekiel 18:18

Ver. 18. [As for] his father,.... It shall be otherwise with him:

because he cruelly oppressed; or, "oppressed an oppression"; or, "with an oppression" {i}; oppressed the poor, and had no mercy on them, but used them in the most rigorous manner:

spoiled his brother by violence; took away the spoil of his brother; spoiled him of his substance; did injury to his person and property, and all the mischief that lay in his power:

and did [that] which [is] not good among his people; neighbours, citizens, and countrymen; did nothing which was good, as he ought to have done; but everything that was bad, which he should not have done:

lo, even he shall die in his iniquity: and for it; it shall not be forgiven him; he shall be punished for it with death, with the death of affliction; and with corporeal death, as a punishment for sin; and with eternal death, dying in his sins, and in a state of impenitence. These instances, put every way, most clearly show the equity of God; the justness of his proceedings in providence; and how inapplicable the proverb in Eze 18:2 was to them; and that such that sin, and continue therein, shall die for their own iniquities, and not for the sins of others.

{i} qve qve "oppressit oppressionem", Pagninus, Montanus; "oppressit oppressione", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius.

Ezekiel 18:19

Ver. 19. Yet say ye, why?.... Why do you say so? why do you go on to assert that which is not fact, or which is contrary to fact, contrary to what we feel and experience every day, to say that children are not punished for their parents' sins? these are the words of the murmuring, complaining, and blaspheming Jews, quarrelling with the prophet, and with the Lord himself:

doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? have not we proof of it every day we live? are not our present case and circumstances a full evidence of it? or the words may be rendered, "why does not the son bear the iniquity of the father?" so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; or, as the

Targum,

"why is not the son punished for the sins of the father?"

and so they are an objection, which is foreseen might be made, and is here anticipated, to which an answer is returned; and so the Syriac version introduces it, "but if they said", &c. then adds, "tell them", as follows:

when, or "because"

the son hath done that which is lawful [and] right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them: this is the reason why he shall not bear his father's sins, or be punished for them; intimating that they had not done these things that made the complaint, or put the, question; but had committed the same sins their fathers had, and so were punished, not for their fathers' sins, but their own: for otherwise the man that does what is just and right with God, and between man and man,

he shall surely live; See Gill on "Eze 18:17".

Ezekiel 18:20

Ver. 20. The soul that sinneth, it shall die,.... This is repeated from Eze 18:4, for the further confirmation of it:

the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; that is, as the Targum paraphrases it,

"the son shall not be punished for the sins of the father, nor shall the father be punished for the sins of the son."

This is to be understood of adult persons, and of actual sins; for of such only the prophet speaks throughout the whole chapter, or of temporal, and not of eternal punishment:

the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him; he shall be rewarded with temporal good things in this life, according to his righteousness; which, as the Targum says, shall "remain" upon him; see
Ps 112:9; he shall eat of the fruit of his own doings, **Isa 3:10**; this is true of a man that is evangelically righteous, or is so through the imputation of Christ's

righteousness to him; which is upon him as a robe to clothe him, and will always remain on him, being an everlasting righteousness, and will answer for him in a time to come:

and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him; and not another; his sin shall remain on him unatoned for, unexpiated, not taken away or forgiven; the punishment of it shall be on him, and abide upon him.

Ezekiel 18:21

Ver. 21. But if the wicked,.... So far is the Lord from punishing the sins of one man upon another, that he will not punish a man for his own sins: if he

will turn from all his sins that he hath committed: if he truly repents of them, and thoroughly forsakes them; for it must not be one sin only, but all; every sin is to be loathed and mourned over, and sorrow expressed for it, and to be forsaken; not one sin is to cherished and retained, but all to be relinquished: or the repentance and conversion may be justly questioned whether they be sincere:

and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right; as the repentance and turning from sin must be general, so also obedience to the commands of God, both moral and positive; respect is to be had to all his ordinances, which are all of them to be esteemed as right and lawful, and to be observed: this is bringing forth fruits meet for repentance:

he shall surely live, he shall not die; he shall live in his own land, and not go into captivity. Kimchi's note is, he shall live in this world, and not die in the world to come; so Ben Melech.

Ezekiel 18:22

Ver. 22. All his transgressions that he hath committed,.... Before his repentance, conversion, and obedience:

they shall not be mentioned unto him; they shall not be charged upon his conscience, or brought against him in providence; he shall not be upbraided with them, or punished for them; but they shall be forgiven him, at least in such sense as to prevent temporal calamity and ruin:

in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live; he shall live "in" it, though not "for" it; this will be the fruit and consequence of his obedience and righteousness, that he shall live and not die, in the sense that has been already given, according to the tenor of the law,
Le 18:5.

Ezekiel 18:23

Ver. 23. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God,.... Perish by sword, famine, or pestilence, or go into captivity; this, though the Lord's will and work, yet is his strange work; mercy is his delight. This is to be understood not absolutely; for the Lord does take pleasure in these things, as they fulfil his word, secure the honour of his truth and holiness, and glorify his justice, and especially when they are the means of reclaiming men from the evil of their ways; but comparatively, as follows:

[and] not that he should return from his ways, and live? that is, it is more pleasing to God that a man should repent of his sins, and forsake his vicious course of life, and enjoy good things, than to go on in his sins, and bring ruin on himself, here and hereafter.

Ezekiel 18:24

Ver. 24. But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness,.... This is to be understood, not of a truly righteous man; for no man can be so denominated from his own righteousness; but from the righteousness and obedience of Christ; and such a man cannot turn from his righteousness; for that is the righteousness of God, and can never be lost; and is an everlasting one, and will always endure; and with which eternal life is inseparably connected: but this is to be interpreted of one that is reckoned so from his own righteousness, what he himself has done, and not from another, from the righteousness of Christ, which he has wrought out; he is one that is righteous in his own esteem, and in the account of others; who is outwardly righteous before men; who trusts in himself that he is righteous, and trusts to his own righteousness; see Eze 33:13; whose righteousness is not an evangelical one, but either a ceremonial righteousness, or at most a mere moral one, consisting of some negative holiness, and a few moral performances, as appears from Eze 18:5; and from such a righteousness as this a man may turn, commit iniquity, sin and die; see **2Pe 2:20**; and is no proof or instance of the apostasy of real saints, true believers, or truly righteous men; besides, this man is represented as a transgressor, or "prevaricator", as the word signifies; a hypocrite, a man destitute of the truth of grace, and of true righteousness:

and committeth iniquity; makes a trade of sinning; goes into a vicious course of life, and continues in it; which a truly gracious man, one that is born again, and has true faith in Christ's righteousness, by which he is justified, can never do, **1Jo 3:8**;

[and] doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked [man] doeth; such as theft, murder, adultery, idolatry, oppression of the poor, and giving upon usury, Eze 18:10;

shall he live? in his own land, in peace and prosperity, enjoying all manner of good things? he shall not; much less shall he live an eternal life, so living and dying:

all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: or, "all his righteousnesses" {k}; all the good works which he has done will never come into any account, or be of any avail; as they merited nothing, they will meet with no reward; they will not preserve him from present calamity, which his now sinful life exposes him to, nor secure him from eternal ruin; these may be mentioned and pleaded by himself, but to no purpose; God will not mention them, nor take any notice of them, nor the Judge at the great day of account, **Mt 7:22**;

in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die; or, for his hypocrisy, "prevarication" {l}, and vicious course of life he now lives in, a death of affliction shall come upon him; great calamities and distresses in this world; and, if grace prevent not, eternal death in the other; if he dies in his trespasses and sins, he will die the second death.

{k} wytwqdu lk "omnes justitiae ejus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius.

{l} wlemb "propter prvevaricationem ipsius, [vel] suam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus.

Ezekiel 18:25

Ver. 25. Yet ye say,.... Notwithstanding these plain instances, which show the equity of God in his proceedings, and vindicate his justice in the dispensations of his providence; yet such was the blindness and stupidity of these people, or rather their stubbornness, obstinacy, and impudence, that they still insisted upon it that

the way of the Lord is not equal; just and right; is not even, according to the rules of justice and equity; or is not ordered aright, is not steady, and firm, and consistent with himself, and the declaration of his will; a very bold and blasphemous charge, and yet the Lord condescends to reason with them about it:

hear now, O house of Israel; the ten tribes that were now in captivity; or the Jews that were carried captive with Jeconiah, with those that were still in Jerusalem and Judea; these are called upon to hear the Lord, what he had to say in vindication of himself from this charge, as it was but just and reasonable they should:

is not my way equal? plain and even, constant and uniform, according to the obvious rules of justice and truth? can any instance be given to the contrary? what is to be said to support the charge against me? bring forth your strong reasons if you cart, and prove what is asserted:

are not your ways unequal? it is plain they are; your actions, your course of life, are manifest deviations from my law, and from all the rules of righteousness and goodness; it is you that are in the wrong, and I in the right.

Ezekiel 18:26

Ver. 26. When a righteous [man] turneth away from his righteousness,.... This is repeated for the further confirmation of it, and to raise their attention to it; to make it more plain and manifest to them, and to fix it upon their minds:

and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them: or, "he shall die for them" {m}; both for his turning away from his righteousness, and for his committing iniquity:

for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die; in both respects. This is repeated to denote the certainty of it.

{m} Mhyle "propter illa", Pagninus, Piscator, Grotius, Cocceius; so some in Vatsbins.

Ezekiel 18:27

Ver. 27. Again, when the wicked [man] turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed,.... Repents of his sins, and forsakes the vicious course of life he has lived:

and doeth that which is lawful and right; or "judgment" and "righteousness" {n}; that which is agreeable to the law and will of God, and is just and right between man and man:

he shall save his soul alive; from famine, pestilence, the sword, or captivity; he shall be preserved, and not be involved in calamities and distress: or, "shall quicken his own soul" {o}; which, in a spiritual sense, is only done by the Spirit and grace of God, and not by man himself; nor is the enjoyment of eternal life by the works of men, but through the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ.

{n} hqduw jpvm "judicium et justitiam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Cocceius. {o} hyxy wvpn ta awh "animam suam vivificabit", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin; "vivificat", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 18:28

Ver. 28. Because he considereth,.... Being come to himself, and in his right mind, he considers the evil of his ways; what they lead to; what they deserve at the hand of God; and what he may expect, should he continue in them; see Eze 18:14;

and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed; not only repents of them, but reforms from them; and that not from one, or a few of them, but from them "all"; which shows the truth, reality, and sincerity of his repentance; there being a change of mind, a change of actions and conversation follows:

he shall surely live, he shall not die; See Gill on "Eze 18:21". Jerom interprets the just man turning from his righteousness, of the Jews leaving the author of righteousness, denying the son of God, and smiting the heir; and the wicked man turning from his wickedness, of the Gentiles, and of their conversion of faith.

Ezekiel 18:29

Ver. 29. Yet saith the house of Israel, the way of the Lord is not equal,.... Though the case was put so many ways, and the thing was made so clear and plain, by the instances given; as, if a man was a just man, let his father be what he would, he should live; but, if his son was a wicked man, he should die; yet, if his son should do well, he should not die for his father's sins, his father only should suffer for his iniquity; and then again, on the one hand, if a seemingly righteous man become an apostate, he should be treated as such; but, on the other hand, if a wicked man repented and reformed, things would go well with him; by all which it most clearly appeared that God did not, and would not, punish children for the sins of their fathers, unless they themselves were guilty of the same; and that the methods of Providence in dealing with men in this world, as they were good or bad, were equal and right, and to be justified:

O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal? This is an appeal to their own consciences, upon the evidence before given.

Ezekiel 18:30

Ver. 30. Therefore will I judge you, O house of Israel,.... The case being fairly stated, the charge removed, instances to the contrary given, the Lord, as Judge, proceeds to bring the controversy to an issue, and to pass the definitive sentence, and to deal with them in the way of his providence as they deserved:

everyone according to his ways, saith the Lord God; not according to the ways of their father, but according to their own ways: this refers, not to the last and general judgment, but to some sore temporal punishment, which God, as the righteous Judge, would inflict upon them for their sins, according to the just desert of them; but whereas, notwithstanding all their wickedness, insolence, and blasphemy, the Lord was desirous of showing mercy to them, rather than proceed to strict justice; he exhorts and advises them to the following things:

repent, and turn [yourselves] from all your transgressions; this is to be understood of a national repentance for national sins, to prevent national judgments, being an address to the whole house of Israel; and not of evangelical repentance, which is the gift of God, and of an external reformation, as the fruit of it; and not of the first work of internal conversion, which is by the powerful and efficacious grace of God; though, were both exhorted to, it would not prove that these are in the power of men, only show the want and necessity of them, and so be the means of God's bringing his chosen people to them. The phrase, "yourselves", is not in the original; both words used signify "to turn"; and may be rendered and explained thus, "turn" yourselves, and "cause [others] to turn" {p}; let every man turn himself from his evil courses, and do all he can to turn his brother, or his neighbour, from the same; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech interpret them. The Targum is,

"turn you to my worship, and remove from you the worship of idols:"

so iniquity shall not be your ruin; meaning temporal ruin, as it deserved, and they were threatened with; and which might be prevented by repentance and reformation: or, "shall not be a stumbling block to you" {q}; an hinderance, an obstruction in the way of their enjoyment of temporal blessings.

{p} wbyvhw wbwv "convertimini et facite converti", Pagninus, Montanus, "sub. proximos"; so some in Calvin; "quisque suam fratrem", Munster, Vatablus. {q} lwvkml Mkl hyhy alw "et non erit vobis in offendiculum", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.

Ezekiel 18:31

Ver. 31. Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed,.... As unprofitable and pernicious, to be abhorred and abstained from, and to be cast off, as loads and burdens upon them. Kimchi interprets it of the punishment of their sins, which might be cast off, or escaped, by repentance; perhaps it is best to interpret it of the casting away of their idols, by which they transgressed; see
Eze 20:7;

and make you a new heart and a new spirit; which the Lord elsewhere promises to give, and he does give to his own elect;

See Gill on "Eze 11:19"; and if here to be understood of a regenerated heart and spirit, in which are new principles of light, life, and love, grace and holiness, it will not prove that it is in the power of man to make himself such a heart and spirit; since from God's command, to man's power, is no argument; and the design of the exhortation is to convince men of their want of such a heart; of the importance of it: and which, through the efficacious grace of God, may be a means of his people having it, seeing he has in covenant promised it to them. The Targum renders it,

"a fearing heart, and a spirit of fear;"

that is, a heart and spirit to fear, serve, and worship the Lord, and not idols; and so the amount of the exhortation is, yield a hearty reverential obedience to the living God, and not to dumb idols; or that they would be hearty and sincere in their national repentance and reformation they are here pressed unto:

for why will ye die, O house of Israel? which is to be understood, not of an eternal death; since the deaths here spoken of was now upon them, what they were complaining of, and from which they might be recovered, Eze 18:2; but temporal calamity and affliction, as in **2Co 1:10**; and so in the following words.

Ezekiel 18:32

Ver. 32. For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth,.... Which is not to be interpreted simply and absolutely, and with respect to all persons afflicted and punished by him; for he does take delight in the exercise of "judgment" and "righteousness", and "laughs" at the "calamity" of wicked men, **Jer 9:24**; but comparatively, as in **Ho 5:6**. The sense is, that he takes no pleasure in the afflictions, calamities, and captivity of men, which are meant by death here; but rather that they would repent and reform, and live in their own land, and enjoy the good things of it; which shows the mercy and compassion of God to sinners:

wherefore, he renews his exhortation,

turn [yourselves], and live ye; or, "ye shall live" {r}; I take no delight in your present deaths, your captivity; it would be more agreeable to me would you turn from your evil ways to the Lord your God, and behave according to the laws I have given you to walk by, and so live in your own land, in the quiet possession of your goods and estates.

{r} wyxw "et vivetis", Pagninus, Montanus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 19

The subject matter of this chapter is a lamentation for the princes and people of the Jews, on account of what had already befallen them, and what was yet to come, Eze 19:1. The mother of the princes is compared to a lioness, and they to lions; who, one after another, were taken and carried captive, Eze 19:2; again, their mother is compared to a vine, and they to branches and rods for sceptres, destroyed by an east wind, and consumed by fire, Eze 19:10.

Ver. 1. Moreover, take thou up a lamentation,.... These words are directed to the Prophet Ezekiel, to compose a doleful ditty, a mournful song, such as was used at funerals; and by it represent the lamentable state of the nation of the Jews and their governors, in order to affect them with it, with what was past, and present, and yet to come:

for the princes of Israel; or, "concerning them" {s}; the princes meant are Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah, who were kings, though called princes, these words being synonymous; or, if so called by way of diminution, the reason might be, because they were tributary, either to the king of Egypt, or king of Babylon.

{s} larvy yayvn la "de principibus Israel", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus, Starckius; so Ben Melech.

Ezekiel 19:2

Ver. 2. And say, what [is] thy mother?.... That is, say so to the then reigning prince, Zedekiah, what is thy mother like? to what is she to be compared? by whom is meant, not the royal family of David only, or Jerusalem the metropolis of the nation, but the whole body of the people; and so the Targum interprets it of the congregation of Israel. The answer to the question is,

a lioness; she is like to one, not for her strength and glory, but for her cruelty and rapine; for her want of humanity, mercy, and justice:

she lay down among lions; that is, kings, as the Targum interprets it Heathen princes, the kings of the nations about them, as of Egypt and Babylon, Jer 50:17; so called for their despotic and arbitrary power, tyranny, and cruelty: now this lioness, the people of the Jews, lay down among them, joined with them in leagues and marriages, and learned their manners, and became of the same temper and disposition:

she nourisheth her whelps among young lions; princes, as the Targum explains it; either the princes of Judah, who were become like young lions, fierce and cruel; or the princes of other nations, among whom the children of the royal family were brought up; or, however, they were trained up in the principles of such, even of arbitrary and despotic power, and were taught to oppress their subjects, and not execute justice and mercy among them.

Ezekiel 19:3

Ver. 3. And she brought up one of her whelps,.... Or sons, as the Targum: or, "made him to ascend" {t}, as the word signifies; to mount the throne; this was Jehoahaz, whom the people of the land took and anointed him, and made him king in the stead of Josiah his father,
2Ki 23:30;

it become a young lion; that is, a king, as the same Targum explains it, and a tyrannical and arbitrary one:

and it learned to catch the prey; being instructed by evil counsellors, he soon learned to oppress his subjects, to get their substance from them, and do many evil things, as he is said to do, 2Ki 23:32;

it devoured men; or a man, Adam, the people of Israel, so called,
Eze 34:31; as the Jews frequently observe; it ate up and destroyed their liberties, privileges, and property.

{t} letw "et ascendere fecit", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.

Ezekiel 19:4

Ver. 4. The nations also heard of him,.... The neighbouring nations, particularly the Egyptians; the fame of his behaviour reached them; they were informed how he used his own subjects, and what designs he had formed, and what preparations he was making against his neighbours; wherefore they thought it proper to oppose his measures in time, and to hinder him from proceeding and putting his projects into execution, by coming out against him, and fighting with him, as they did:

he was taken in their pit; alluding to the manner of hunting and taking lions, and such like beasts of prey; which was done by digging pits, and covering the mouths of them with straw, as Jarchi observes, into which in their flight they fell unawares: so Pharaohnecho king of Egypt came out against Jehoahaz, and took him, and put him in bonds at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might reign no more in Jerusalem, after he had been on the throne but three months, 2Ki 23:31;

and they brought him with chains into the land of Egypt; or, "with hooks" {u}; in his nose, as in Isa 37:29; or with a bridle, as the Septuagint; or with branches, as the Syriac version, in his jaws; the Targum renders it in chains, as we do: it is certain that Jehoahaz was put in bonds or fetters, and carried into Egypt, where he died,
2Ki 23:33.

{u} Myxxb "in, [vel] cum hamis", Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 19:5

Ver. 5. Now when she saw,.... That is, his mother, as the Syriac version expresses it; not his natural mother; as the mother of Sisera looked out and waited for him; but the congregation of Israel, as Jarchi interprets it, the body of the Jewish people:

that she had waited; for the return of Jehoahaz out of Egypt, which was expected for some time: or, "that she was become sick"; or "weak" {w}, and feeble, and brought to a low estate by his captivity, and by the tax the king of Egypt put upon her:

[and] her hope was lost; of his return to her any more, and so of being eased of the tribute imposed, and of being restored by him to liberty and glory; for the Lord had declared that he should return no more to his native country, but die in the place where he was carried captive, Jer 22:10;

then she took another of her whelps; or sons, as the Targum:

[and] made him a young lion: a king, as the same Targum paraphrases it; that is, Jehoiakim, the brother of Jehoahaz, who before was called Eliakim, but his name was changed by Pharaohnecho; and though he is said to make him king, yet it was by the consent of the people of the Jews.

{w} hlxwn yk "quod infirmatus esset", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 19:6

Ver. 6. And he went up and down among the lions,.... The kings, as the Targum; kings of neighbouring nations, as Pharaoh king of Egypt, and Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and sometimes he was subject to the one, and sometimes to the offer: and his going up and down among them may denote his continuance as a king; for whereas his brother reigned but three months, he reigned eleven years:

he became a young lion; an oppressive prince, a cruel and tyrannical king:

and learned to catch the prey, [and] devoured men; he was notorious for his acts of injustice and arbitrary power; for the detaining the wages of workmen, and for his oppression, violence, and rapine, and shedding of innocent blood, Jer 22:13.

Ezekiel 19:7

Ver. 7. And he knew their desolate palaces,.... He took notice of the palaces or seats of the richest men of the nation, and pillaged them of their treasure and wealth, and so they became desolate: it may be rendered, he "knew their widows" {x}: or, "his own widows"; whom he made so; he slew the men to get their substance into his hands, and then defiled their widows:

and he laid waste their cities; by putting the inhabitants to death; or obliging them to leave them, and retire elsewhere, not being able to pay the taxes he imposed upon them, partly to support his own grandeur and luxury, and partly to pay the tribute to the king of Egypt:

and the land was desolate, and the fulness thereof, by the noise of his roaring; by his menaces and threatenings, edicts and exactions, he so terrified the inhabitants of the land, that though it was full of men and riches, it became in a great measure destitute of both; the people left their houses, both in city and country, and fled elsewhere with the remainder of their substance that had not fallen into his hands: his menacing demands being signified by roaring agrees with his character as a lion, to which he is compared, Pr 19:12.

{x} wytwnmla edyw "et cognovit viduas ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; "viduas eorum", Vatablus, Starckius; so R. Joseph Kimchi. Which sense is approved by Gussetius, Ebr. Comment. p. 312. R. Jonah interprets it, "he broke their palaces"; so Calvin, and some in Vatablus, and R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 96. 1.

Ezekiel 19:8

Ver. 8. Then the nations set against him,.... Or, "gave against him" {y}; that is, their voice, as Kimchi; they called to one another, to gather together against him; they gave their counsel against him; they, joined together, agreed, and combined against him, and disposed their armies, and set them in array against him:

on every side from the provinces; Nebuchadnezzar and his auxiliaries, which consisted of the people of the provinces all around, who were brought together, and placed round about Jerusalem, at the siege of it; particularly the bands of the Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites, 2Ki 24:1;

and spread their net over him; which may be expressive both of the policy, crafty and secret contrivances and designs, of Jehoiakim's enemies; and of their external force and hostile power against him:

he was taken in their pit; which they dug for him, or by the means which they contrived for his ruin, and which they put in execution and effected: the metaphor of a lion is carried on, and the manner of taking one is alluded to, which is commonly in pits, as Pliny {z} says; and the Arabs now dig a pit where lions are observed to enter, and covering it over slightly with reeds, of small branches of trees, they frequently decoy and catch them {a}.

{y} wyle wntyw "et ediderunt vocem"; Vatablus. {z} "Capere eos ardui erat quondam operis, foveisque maxime". Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16. {a} Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 172. Ed. 2.

Ezekiel 19:9

Ver. 9. And they put him in ward in chains,.... Or "in an enclosure"; or "in a collar with hooks" {b}; put a collar of iron, as is said, about his neck, which had hooks in it, and to those hooks chains were put, in which he was led a prisoner; and it is certain that he was bound in fetters, in order to be carried to Babylon though it is thought he never reached thither, but died by the way 2Ch 36:6;

and brought him to the king of Babylon; to Nebuchadnezzar, who came up against him with his army of many nations, he having rebelled against him; and, being taken by his soldiers, was brought to him in chains, wherever he was, whether without the gates of Jerusalem, or at any other place; for it is not certain where he was: however,

they brought him into holes; places of confinement, one after another, in his way to Babylon; where, it seems, before he came thither, he died, and was cast out on a dunghill, and had no burial, as Jeremiah foretold, Eze 22:18;

that his voice should no more be heard in the mountains of Israel; in the kingdom of Israel, to the terror of its inhabitants, threatening them with death, if they did not answer his exorbitant demands; nor was it ever heard any more: the allusion still is to a lion traversing the mountains, and roaring after its prey, to the terror of other creatures.

{b} Myxxb rgwob "in claustro uncis adhibitis", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "in claustrum in hamis", Montanus; "in claustro in hamis", Starckius; "in cavea hamis", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 19:10

Ver. 10. Thy mother [is] like a vine in thy blood,.... Another simile is here made use of, relating to the same persons; the same that were compared to a lioness are here compared to a vine, as the people of the Jews frequently are, Ps 80:8; the same person is here addressed, the then reigning prince, Zedekiah, whose mother, the Jewish people, from whence he sprung, had been in times past, and still was, like a vine; and especially with respect to his blood, the royal family from, chore he descended: the allusion is to the use of blood laid to the roots of vines, by which they became more fruitful. It may have regard; as Calvin thinks, to the original of the Jewish nation, who, when in their blood, or as soon as they were born, that is, as soon as they became a nation, were at first like a flourishing vine. Some render the words, "in thy likeness"; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech; to which the Targum agrees,

"the congregation of Israel, when it did according to the law, was like to a vine, &c."

planted by the waters; for in those hot countries vines required water, and thrived the better for bring near to them, or for being in watery places; this may denote the many privileges, blessings, laws, and ordinances, which were for the advantage of the Jewish people; both in their civil and ecclesiastical state:

she was fruitful and full of branches, by reason of many waters; grew populous, rich, and wealthy.

Ezekiel 19:11

Ver. 11. And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bear rule,.... That is, many sprung from her, and rose up in that nation who were fit to hold sceptres to be kings, rulers and governors, and were such. So the Targum.

"and there were in her strong rulers, kings that were, highly to subdue kingdoms;"

such as David, Solomon, and at hers after them: or this may refer to the times

of Josiah, and at his death, who left behind him several sons, who became kings, besides other princes of the blood; as his brother Mattaniah, who also was king: and some even carry this to Zedekiah himself, who had many children, who seemed to be strong rods, fit for sceptres, or sceptre bearers; that is, to be kings. The allusion seems to be to the sceptres of the ancients, which were no other than walking sticks, cut off of the stems or branches of trees, and decorated with gold, or studded with golden nails. Thus Achilles is introduced by Homer {c} as swearing by a sceptre; which, being cut off of a trunk of a tree left on the mountains, and stripped of its bark and leaves, should never more produce leaves and branches, or sprout again: and such an one, he observes, the Grecian judges, en palamhv
foreousi, carry in their hands. Sometimes they were made of the "oleaster" {d}, or wild olive, the same as a shepherd's staff; for what shepherds were to their flocks, that were kings to men;

and her stature was exalted among the thick branches; as the body and trunk of a tree rises up higher than the branches, which are thickest about the middle of it, and so more eminent and conspicuous; thus it was with the nation of the Jews, and the royal family in it, that appeared more glorious and excellent among the nobles and princes of it; or, as the Targum expresses it,

"it was lifted up in its strength above its own kingdom;"

or rather the sense is, that in the days of David and Solomon, and some others, it greatly exceeded all the kingdoms of the nations round about it:

and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches; was seen and taken notice of for the multitude of her people, and the grandeur of her state.

{c} Iliad. 1. l. 234, &c. {d} Paschal. de Coronis, l. 6. c. 19. p. 406, 407.

Ezekiel 19:12

Ver. 12. But she was plucked up in fury,.... This vine being turned into a degenerate plant of a strange vine; or the people of the Jews becoming wicked, disobedient to God, and disregarding his laws and ordinances, the wrath of God came upon them, and let in the Assyrians among them, who carried off ten tribes at once; and the tribes of Judah and Benjamin not taking warning hereby, but continuing and increasing in sinful courses, great part of them were carried captive into Babylon, with their king Jeconiah, who succeeded Jehoiakim before mentioned; when the kingdom seemed to be utterly ruined and destroyed, and is what is here referred to:

she was cast down to the ground; a phrase expressive of, he entire overthrow of the nation; for a vine, though plucked up, yet, if immediately planted again, might grow; but being plucked up, and left on the ground, and there lie, there is no hope of it; so that this denotes the desperate case of this people at this time, being in captivity. So the Targum paraphrases both clauses,

"and it was rooted up with strength out of the land of the house of the Shechinah, and translated into another land;"

and the east wind dried up her fruit; Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and the Chaldean army, compared to an east wind, because hurtful and pernicious, as that is to trees and fruit, and because Babylon lay northeast of Judea; the people of, he land are meant by the fruit of the vine, with their wealth and riches, which were seized upon and wasted, or carried into Babylon. So the Targum,

"and a king strong as the east wind slew her people;"

her strong rods were broken and withered; or, "strong rod"; the singular for the plural; which may design King Jeconiah particularly, who with his mother, wives, princes, and officers, and the mighty of the land, even all the mighty men of valour, with the craftsmen and smiths, were taken and carried captive, 2Ki 24:14;

the fire consumed them; the wrath of God, which is often compared to fire, the same with fury in the beginning of the verse; which shows that it was for sin, which had provoked the Lord to wrath and anger, that all this ruin came upon the Jewish nation. The Targum is,

"her strong governors removed, and were carried captive; and the people which are strong, as fire consumed them."

Ezekiel 19:13

Ver. 13. And now she [is] planted in the wilderness,.... In the land of Babylon, which though a very fruitful country, yet, because of the hardships and miseries which the Jews were exposed unto in it, was a wilderness to them:

in a dry and thirsty ground; which is a periphrasis or description of a wilderness, Ps 63:1; and designs the same place as before; where the Jews were deprived of their liberties, and had not the opportunities of divine worship, the word and ordinances; and were destitute of the comforts both of civil and religious life. Unless this is to be understood of the land of Judea, which by the devastation made in it by the king of Babylon, and the multitudes that were carried captive by him out of it, it became like a desert, a dry and thirsty land; and so the vine planted in it signifies the remainder of the people left in it, alter this great destruction; when it looked like a vine plucked up, and thrown down, and left on the ground, dried up with the east wind, and burnt with fire; and thus it fared with the remnant in a little time after, as the next words show.

Ezekiel 19:14

Ver. 14. And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches,.... By "her branches" are meant the rest of the Jews left in the land; and by the "rod" of them King Zedekiah, now on the throne, when this prophecy was given out; the "fire" said to go out of him signifies his rebellion against the king of Babylon, his breaking covenant and oath with him, which greatly provoked the Lord, and brought down the fire of his wrath upon him, 2Ki 24:20;

[which] hath devoured her fruit; destroyed the people by sword, famine pestilence, and captivity; yea, the city and temple of Jerusalem, with the palaces and houses therein, were burnt with material fire; their king was taken, and his eyes put out; his sons were slain, and all the princes of Judah:

so that she hath no strong rod [to be] a sceptre to rule; none to be king, or succeed in the kingdom; and there never was a king after of the family of David, or of the tribe of Judah, till Shiloh the Messiah came; though there were princes and governors, yet no sceptre bearer, no king. The Targum of the whole is,

"and there came people who were strong as fire, and, because of the sins of her pride, slew her people; and there were not in her strong rulers, kings that are mighty to subdue kingdoms;"

this [is] a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation; that is, this prophecy, as the Targum, is a lamentation, or matter of lamentation; what of it had been already fulfilled occasioned lamentation; and, when the rest should be fulfilled, it would be the cause of more. Lamentable was the case of the Jews already, but it would be still more so when all that was foretold of them should be accomplished. It denotes the continuance of the sad estate of that people; and perhaps may refer to their present condition, which will continue till they are turned to the Lord.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 20

The prophecy in this chapter is occasioned by some of the elders of Israel coming to inquire of the Lord; when the prophet is bid to tell them that he would not be inquired of by them. The reason of which were their abominations he is ordered to make known unto them, Eze 20:1; and then proceeds the narration of them; first of what their fathers committed in Egypt; of God's goodness to them, and their ingratitude; how that though he promised and swore that he would bring them from thence, when he charged them to abstain from the idolatry of that people where they were, nevertheless they did not, for which he threatened them with his wrath to consume them; yet such was his goodness as to spare them, and bring them out of that land, Eze 20:5; being brought out of Egypt into the wilderness, the Lord gave them statutes and ordinances to observe, particularly sabbaths, as a sign between him and them, but these they despised and broke; wherefore the Lord threatened to consume them in the wilderness, and not bring them into the land of Canaan; yet such was his kindness and mercy to them, that he did not make an utter end of them in the wilderness, Eze 20:10; and whereas he exhorted their posterity not to imitate their parents, but to walk in his statutes and judgments, and observe his sabbaths, yet they would not; which drew out his resentment against them, and he threatened to scatter them among the Heathens; but, for his name's sake, that that might not be polluted among the heathen, he spared them, and did not cut them off, only gave them up to do things very pernicious to them, Eze 20:18; and even when they were brought into the land of Canaan, they were guilty of blasphemy against God, and of idolatry on every high hill they saw, Eze 20:27; but whereas it might be objected, what is all this to the present

generation? it is observed, that they imitated their fathers, and were guilty of the same idolatries, and therefore the Lord would not be inquired of by them, Eze 20:30; and threatens to rule them with fury, and plead with them, as he had pleaded with their fathers in the wilderness, Eze 20:32; nevertheless he suggests that there would be a remnant among them, when he should have purged the rebels and transgressors from them, that he would deal graciously with in a covenant way; who should serve him in his holy mountain, where he would require and accept their sacrifices, in whom he would be sanctified; and who should know him, and loathe themselves, when made sensible of the distinguishing favours bestowed upon them,
Eze 20:37; and the chapter is closed with a prophecy dropped against Jerusalem, denouncing utter destruction on it, Eze 20:45.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass in the seventh year,.... Of Zedekiah's reign, and of the captivity of Jeconiah; from whence the dates of Ezekiel's visions and prophecies are taken, **Eze 1:2**; two years, one month, and five days, after Ezekiel began to prophesy, and eleven months and five days after the preceding prophecy:

in the fifth [month], the tenth [day] of the month; the month Ab, which answers to our July and August; on this day afterwards Jerusalem was twice destroyed, first by the Chaldeans, and then by the Romans:

[that] certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord; by the prophet; these were either some of the elders that were carried captive, who came to inquire how long they should continue in this state; or what methods they should use to free themselves from it; or what they should do while they were in it; whether it would be advisable that they should conform to the customs of the Heathens among whom they were; or what would be the case of those that were left in Judea: or else these were sent by Zedekiah to pay the king of Babylon his tax, or to negotiate some affair with him relating to the captives; and who took this opportunity of consulting the Lord by the prophet what methods should be taken to throw off the yoke, and to know what was the mind of God in it; but these things are uncertain, as are also the persons the inquirers; though the Jews say {e} they were Ananias, Azarias, and Misael; which is not probable, since they were good men, whereas these seem to be hypocritical persons:

and sat before me; with great seriousness and devotion seemingly, waiting for an answer.

{e} Seder Olam Rabba apud Abarbinel in loc.

Ezekiel 20:2

Ver. 2. Then came the word of the Lord unto me,.... While the elders were sitting before him, by an impulse upon his mind, dictating things unto him:

saying: as follows:

Ezekiel 20:3

Ver. 3. Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them,.... Give them this for an answer from me:

thus saith the Lord God, are ye come to inquire of me? no; not seriously, heartily, and in good earnest, determining to abide by the advice and counsel that might be given; or how can you have the face to inquire of me, when guilty of such abominations?

[as] I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you; knowing their wickedness and hypocrisy, which were detestable to him, and therefore would not hear what they had to say, nor give them any answer, or direct them what they should do. Sad is the case of persons when the Lord will not be inquired of by them! it is plain he has no favours to bestow upon them; for, when he has, he will put them upon inquiring of him for them, to do them unto them, Eze 36:37; this was the case of Saul, whom God, when he inquired of him, would not answer in any of his usual ways, 1Sa 28:6.

Ezekiel 20:4

Ver. 4. Wilt thou judge them, son of man?.... Excuse them, patronise them, defend their cause, and plead for them? surely thou wilt not; or rather, wilt thou not reprove and correct them, judge and condemn them, for their sins and wickedness? this thou oughtest to do:

wilt thou judge [them]? this is repeated, to show the vehemency of the speaker, and the duty of the prophet:

cause them to know the abominations of their fathers: the sins they committed, which were abominable in themselves, and rendered them abominable unto God, and what came upon them for them; by which they would be led to see the abominable evils which they also had been guilty of, in which they had imitated their fathers, and what they had reason to expect in consequence of them.

Ezekiel 20:5

Ver. 5. And say unto them, thus saith the Lord God,.... Here begins the account of their fathers; of God's unmerited goodness to them, and of their sins and transgressions against him, and how it fared with them:

in the day when I chose Israel; to be his peculiar people, above all people on the face of the earth; when he declared his choice of them, and made it appear that he had chosen them, and distinguished them, by special blessings and favours bestowed on them:

and lifted up mine hand to the seed of the house of Jacob; the posterity of Jacob or Israel, to whom the Lord swore that he would do such and such things for them; of which the lifting up the hand was a token; it is a gesture used in swearing, Da 12:7; and so the Targum,

"and I swore unto them by my word:"

and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt: by his name Jehovah; by the prophets he sent unto them, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam; and by the miracles he wrought among them:

when I lifted up mine hand unto them, saying, I [am] the Lord your God: making promise of it, declaring it unto them, confirming it with an oath; see **Heb 6:17**.

Ezekiel 20:6

Ver. 6. In the day [that] I lifted up my hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt,.... Not only promised and swore to it, but exerted his power in the miracles he wrought, by bringing plagues upon the Egyptians, to oblige them to let them go forth from thence:

into a land that I had espied for them; which he had in his eye and in his heart for them; which he had in his mind provided for them, and was determined in his purposes to bring them to; and which he, as it were, looked out for them, and singled out as the best and most suitable for them:

flowing with milk and honey; a phrase often used, to express the fruitfulness of the land, of Canaan, and the great plenty of provisions in it:

which [is] the glory of all lands; that is, either which fertility, signified by milk and honey, is the glory of all lands, or makes all countries desirable where they are found; or else, which land of Canaan, being so fruitful, is more glorious or desirable than any other country; it greatly surpassing all others in its situation, soil, and climate. The Targum is,

"which is the praise of all provinces;"

that is, was praised and commended by the inhabitants of all other provinces for the plenty in it; which must needs be very great, to support so large a number of inhabitants in it, and yet its compass but small.

Ezekiel 20:7

Ver. 7. Then I said unto them,.... Having promised and swore to do such great and good things for them; which must lay them under an obligation to regard what he should command them: promises and blessings of goodness are great incentives to duty, and lay under great obligation to it:

cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes; which should be so, meaning idols; but which his eyes were taken with, and were lifted up unto, as his gods; though they ought to have been rejected with the utmost abhorrence, as abominable:

and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt; their "dunghill gods", as the word {f} signifies; which to worship, as it was an abomination to God, was defiling to themselves; yet these they were fond of, and prone to worship them; their eyes and their hearts were after them; and they needed such cautions and instructions as these, backed with the following strong reason against such idolatry:

I [am] the Lord your God; their Creator and Benefactor, their covenant God; the only Lord God, and whom only they ought to serve and worship; to whom they were under ten thousand obligations; and who was infinitely above all the idols of Egypt.

{f} ylwlgb "stercoreis diis", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "stercoribus", Piscator, Cocceius.

Ezekiel 20:8

Ver. 8. But they rebelled against me,.... All sin is rebellion against God, an act of hostility, especially idolatry; it is refusing homage and casting off allegiance to him:

and would not hearken unto me; to his word by his prophets; so the Targum,

"they rebelled against my word, and would not receive my prophets:"

they did not every man cast away the abominations of his eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of the Gentiles; whence it appears that there were some among them that did give in to the idolatry of the Egyptians; and could not be prevailed upon to relinquish it, notwithstanding the favours shown them, and the promises made unto them. The Jewish writers, Jarchi and Kimchi, say that there were many of these wicked men among the Israelites when Moses was sent to them; and that they died in the time of the three days' darkness, so that the Egyptians did not see their fall, and rejoice at it;

then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them; he threatened them, by his prophets, that he would bring down deserved wrath upon them, like a mighty shower of rain:

to accomplish mine anger against them; to bring it upon them to the utmost, and consume them with it:

in the midst of the land of Egypt; and so not bring them forth from thence, is he had promised; but cut them off in it, for their sins and rebellions.

Ezekiel 20:9

Ver. 9. But I wrought for my name's sake,.... In a way of grace and mercy; did well by thorn, did what he promised to do; not for any merits of theirs, but for his own honour, and the glory of his name:

that it should not be polluted before the Heathen, among whom they [were]; be spoken evil of, which is a polluting it; saying, either that he was not true to his word, in not doing what he promised; or else that it was not in his power to perform; either of which would reflect dishonour on his name, and so defile it:

in whose sight I made myself known unto them; by the wonders he wrought; and who, by one means or another, became acquainted with the promises of God to Israel, that he would bring them out of Egypt, and settle them in the land of Canaan: wherefore for the honour of his name he exerted his power,

in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt; as he did, as follows:

Ezekiel 20:10

Ver. 10. Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt,.... It was the Lord that brought them out from thence with a mighty hand and outstretched arm; that obliged Pharaoh to let them go, and gave them favour in the eyes of the Egyptians, that they went out unmolested by them:

and brought them into the wilderness; before they went into the land of Canaan; here they had freedom from their bondage, and were in a wonderful manner provided for by the Lord, guided, supported, preserved, and at last brought to the promised land.

Ezekiel 20:11

Ver. 11. And I gave them my statutes,.... The precepts of his law, the law on Mount Sinai, of which there were not the like among other nations; nor were they given unto them, but were a special gift unto Israel, and greatly to be valued, **De 4:8**;

and showed them judgments: the nature, use, and excellency of the the necessity and advantage of observing them: the same as before, called "statutes", because appointed, fixed, and certain, being of inviolable and lasting obligation; and "judgments", being according to strict justice and equity: these, though they were originally written on man's heart, yet so obliterated by sin that there was need not only of their being afresh written and published, but of their being taught and made known; or of pointing out the use of them, and obligation to them:

which [if] a man do, he shall live in them; or "by them" {g}; in the land of Canaan, enjoying all the blessings of a long and happy life: reference seems to be had to Le 18:5. The Targum adds,

"in eternal life;"

but eternal life is not to be obtained by the works of the law, since no man can perfectly obey or fulfil it, but is the pure gift of the grace of God.

{g} Mhb "per ea", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Piscator; "propter ea", Pagninus.

Ezekiel 20:12

Ver. 12. Moreover, also, I gave them my sabbaths,.... The Targum is,

"the days of the sabbaths;"

or sabbath days, the seventh day sabbaths, which recurring throughout the year are many; but, besides these, there were the year of remission, for the seventh year sabbath; and the jubilee year, the great sabbath of all, once in fifty years; yea, Kimchi thinks the feasts, such as the passover, &c. are included: now these are distinguished from the statutes and judgments, or the precepts of the law, which were of a moral nature; these being ritual and ceremonial, and were peculiar to the Jews, and continued but for a while; however, they were gifts, and valuable ones, of considerable use and significance:

to be a sign between me and them; of his being their God, and they being his people; of his favour and good will to them, and of the, obligations they were under to him; of his having separated and distinguished them from all other nations of the world; these sabbaths being only given to them as a memorial of their deliverance out of Egypt, and as a pledge of their entering into the land of rest; and of the future rest to be enjoyed by Christ, and in heaven, to all eternity; for these were shadows of things to come, **Col 2:16**;

that they might know that I [am] the Lord that sanctify them; separate them from other nations, and, by such means and opportunities, begin and carry on the work of sanctification in them; for the sabbaths, and the services of them, were useful to such purposes; as Lord's days, and the work of them, are now.

Ezekiel 20:13

Ver. 13. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness,.... Where they were wholly at the mercy of God, entirely dependent upon him; and miracles were wrought every day for the sustaining and preservation of, them from famine, wild beasts, and enemies; yet they rebelled against the Lord; provoked him bitterly by their manifold transgressions, their ingratitude, unbelief, and idolatry; and this not a few of them only, but the whole body of the people, the house of Israel, the whole family, and that for the space of forty years,
Ps 95:9;

they walked not in my statutes; did not make them the rule of their walk and conversation, and steer the course of their lives and actions by them, as they ought to have done:

and they despised my judgments; as not worthy their notice and regard, as useless and unprofitable; nay, had an aversion to them, and a loathing of them, as the word {h} signifies; such is the corrupt and wicked heart of man; it is enmity against God and his law, and all that is good:

which [if] a man do, he shall even live in them;
See Gill on "Eze 20:11";

and my sabbaths they greatly polluted; or "profaned", or "[made them] common" {i}; that is, with other days; by going out for manna on them; by gathering sticks upon them; by doing their own work, speaking their own words, and seeking their own pleasure, and worshipping false deities:

then I said, I would pour out, my fury upon them in the wilderness to consume them; that they should not enter into the land of Canaan; as the generation that came out of Egypt were consumed in the wilderness, excepting two; as the Lord threatened, Nu 14:35.

{h} woam "abjeoerunt", Pagninus; "reprobaverunt", Montanus. {i} wllx "prophanarunt", Vatablus, Piscator, Cocceius.

Ezekiel 20:14

Ver. 14. But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the Heathen,.... See Gill on "Eze 20:9"; who would be ready to say it was for want of power, or faithfulness, or, goodness, that he did not bring them into the promised land; or there was no such land to bring them to God's own glory was concerned, and that is his ultimate end in all he does; and is of more weight with him than any other argument whatever:

in whose sight I brought them out; from Egypt, into the wilderness; this was done publicly in the sight of the Egyptians, they urging them to be gone.

Ezekiel 20:15

Ver. 15. Yet also I lifted up mine hand unto them in the wilderness,.... Swore unto them, as in Eze 20:5;

that I would not bring them into the land which I had given [them]; by promise to their fathers, and to them. This is to be understood of the generation that came out of Egypt, that received the ill report the spies made, and murmured against the Lord; wherefore he swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest; or he would not bring them into the land of Canaan, save Caleb and Joshua; and accordingly none else entered but them, though their posterity did; and so both his oath to them, that they should not enter, and his oath to Abraham, that he would give to his seed the land, had their accomplishment, Nu 14:23; a land

flowing with milk and honey, which [is] the glory of all lands;
See Gill on "Eze 20:6".

Ezekiel 20:16

Ver. 16. Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths,.... Which were just causes of divine resentment and anger; See Gill on "Eze 20:13";

for their heart went after their idols; which they had served in Egypt; and that led them off from the true worship and service of God; no man can serve two masters; if he holds to the one, and his heart is towards him, he will despise the other; and yet these idols were no other, as the word signifies, than dunghill gods, as in Eze 20:16; and such are all worldly things, in comparison of God, that the heart of man is going after.

Ezekiel 20:17

Ver. 17. Nevertheless, mine eye spared them from destroying them,.... Utterly, so as to leave neither root nor branch; for though the whole generation died excepting two, either by the immediate hand of God in wrath, or else by ordinary deaths; yet there was a generation raised up in their stead, to whom mercy was shown:

neither did I make an end of them in the wilderness; that they should be no more a nation and people; though the carcasses of them that believed not fell in the wilderness, and never saw the good land, yet their posterity was spared to see it, and did.

Ezekiel 20:18

Ver. 18. But I said unto their children in the wilderness,.... Or, "then I said" {k}; his judgments and statutes being neglected and despised by them, and good instructions and kind providences being of no use unto them, the Lord turns to their posterity while yet in the wilderness: what follows seems to refer to those directions, instructions, and exhortations given in the book of Deuteronomy by Moses, in the plains of Moab, a little before the children of Israel went over Jordan into the land of Canaan:

walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments; they were not only not to imitate their parents in their open sins and transgressions of God's law; but they were not to follow them in the observance of such rules of worship, which were of their own devising, and they had formed into a law: this makes greatly against such who think it a very heinous sin to relinquish the religion of their ancestors, or that in which they were brought up; but if this does not appear to be according to the word of God, the statutes and judgments of our fathers should stand for nothing, yea, should be rejected:

nor defile yourselves with their idols; idolatry, as it is abominable to God, is defiling to men, and renders them loathsome to him; and it being what their fathers practised will not excuse them; for, as it was defiling to their fathers, it is no less so to their children.

{k} rmaw "postea dixi", Piscator.

Ezekiel 20:19

Ver. 19. I [am] the Lord your God,.... Not only that had made them and preserved them, but had chose them above all people to be his people; who had made a covenant with them, and had distinguished them by his favours from all others:

walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; which he had given unto their fathers, and they had neglected and despised; those contained in the decalogue, and in the whole book of Deuteronomy, and elsewhere,

Ezekiel 20:20

Ver. 20. And hallow my sabbaths,.... Or keep them holy, by abstaining from worldly business on them; by observing all the duties of religion, private and public, to be performed on such days:

and they shall be a sign between me and you; of present and future good; See Gill on "Eze 20:12";

that ye may know that I [am] the Lord your God; not only acknowledge him to be the Lord their God, by observing his laws, and sanctifying his sabbaths; but also have a larger experience of his grace and goodness, as their covenant God.

Ezekiel 20:21

Ver. 21. Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me,.... After the death of their fathers, when they were come into the plains of Moab, and just going to enter the land; they rebelled against the Lord, and greatly provoked him, by joining themselves to Baalpeor, the idol of Moab, they worshipped, Nu 25:3;

they walked not in my statutes, neither kept my judgments to do them; they did as their fathers before them; though they saw with their eyes the judgments of God upon them, yet this did not deter them from following their evil ways:

which [if] a man do, he shall even live in them;
See Gill on "Eze 20:13";

they polluted my sabbaths; just as their fathers had done, taking no warning by them, and what befell them:

then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish mine anger against them in the wilderness; twenty and four thousand died on account of the idolatry of Baalpeor, Nu 25:9.

Ezekiel 20:22

Ver. 22. Nevertheless I withdrew mine hand,.... When it was stretched out against them, as in the above instance, and did not utterly consume them. The Targum is,

"and I turned away the stroke of my might:"

and wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted in the sight of the heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth.
See Gill on "Eze 20:9" and
See Gill on "Eze 20:14".

Ezekiel 20:23

Ver. 23. I lifted up mine hand also to them in the wilderness,.... Swore unto them, as in Eze 20:5;

that I would scatter them among the Heathen, and disperse them through the countries; after they came to be settled in the land of Canaan, they sinning against the Lord; which was fulfilled in the times of the Babylonish captivity, and in their destruction by the Romans; but was threatened and foretold while they were in the wilderness, Le 26:33; with this compare Ps 106:26.

Ezekiel 20:24

Ver. 24. Because they had not executed my judgments,.... Had not done that which was right and just, as the Lord commanded them:

but had despised my statutes, and had polluted my sabbaths; as their fathers had done:

and their eyes were after their fathers' idols; which they had learned to serve in Egypt, or brought with them from thence; these the eyes and the hearts of their children were after, as theirs find been; and they were more desirous, encouraged, and emboldened to serve them, because they were their fathers'; but this would not excuse their sin; yea, it was rather an aggravation of it, that they should follow them in such practices, for which they had been often reproved and punished.

Ezekiel 20:25

Ver. 25. Wherefore I gave them also statutes [that were] not good,.... Yea, were very bad; not the moral law, and the statutes of it; for that is holy, just, and good, though the killing letter and ministration of condemnation and death to the transgressors of it; indeed those laws were both good and bad to different persons, as Abendana observes; good to those that observed them, but not good to those that transgressed them, the issue of which was death: rather these were the statutes and rites of the ceremonial law, which were not in their own nature good; nor did they arise from the nature and holiness of God, but from his will; and though very good and useful under the legal dispensation, until the Messiah came, especially when attended to by faith, and with a view to him; yet had the sanction of death to many of them, that a man could not live by them: but it may be, the punishments inflicted on them for their sins, by the plague, by fire, and by serpents, are meant; which may be called "statutes" and "judgments", because ordered and appointed by the Lord, and according to justice: or, as many, both Jews and Christians, think, the idolatrous laws, usages, and customs of other nations, the traditions of their fathers, their wicked laws and statutes, and their own; which, being left to a reprobate mind, they were suffered to walk in, to their hurt and ruin; which is sometimes the sense of the word give; and so here, he "gave", that is, he permitted them to observe such statutes; and this sense is countenanced and confirmed by Eze 20:26; to which agrees Jarchi's note,

"I delivered them into the hand of their imagination (or corrupt nature) to stumble at their iniquity;"

see **Ro 1:28**. Kimchi interprets them of laws, decrees, tribute, and taxes, imposed upon them by their enemies that conquered them. The Targum is,

"and I also, when they rebelled against my word, and would not obey my prophets, cast them far off, and delivered them into the hands of their enemies; and they went after their foolish imagination, and made decrees which were not right:"

and judgments, whereby they should not live; yea, which were deadly and destructive to them; which brought ruin, destruction, and death upon them; for more is designed than is expressed: this was the effect of following the customs of the nations, and of walking in the statutes of their fathers, and of their own; whereas, had they walked according to the judgments and statutes of God, moral and ceremonial, they had lived comfortably and prosperously.

Ezekiel 20:26

Ver. 26. And one polluted them in their own gifts,.... Suffered them to defile themselves; or declared them to be, and treated them as polluted persons, in the gifts and sacrifices which they offered to idols, particularly their firstborn: as the next clause explains it:

in that they caused to pass though [the fire] all that openeth the womb; this very likely they did, when they sacrificed to Baalpeor, the same with Molech, Nu 25:3;

that I might make them desolate; their families, by stripping them of their children, their firstborn, and strength:

to the end that they might know that I [am] the Lord; a righteous God, in punishing men for sin, in a way it deserves. Some interpret this, not of causing the firstborn to pass through fire to an idol; but of causing them to pass, or of setting them apart, to the Lord, according to the law in Ex 13:12; where the same word is used as here; and the sense is that God declared them to be impure in or with all their gifts, by commanding them to cause their firstborn to pass to him, which they were obliged to redeem; which sense is approved of by Gussetius {l}; and so Abendana, taking the words to refer to both, gives this sense of them,

"I pronounced them impure, and removed them far from me, instead of sanctifying them; because they caused everyone that opens the womb to pass from me, whom I commanded to give to me for holiness, but they have given them to idolatry;"

rather, according to Braunius {m}, the words may be understood of God's rejecting and causing the firstborn to pass from him, and not suffering them to offer gifts and sacrifices unto him; which may be meant by pronouncing them impure, or polluting them in their gifts; this was after the worship of the golden calf; when he took Aaron and his sons in their room.

{l} Ebr. Comment. p. 576, 939. {m} Selecta Sacra, l. 4. c. 11. p. 522.

Ezekiel 20:27

Ver. 27. Therefore, son of man, speak unto the house of Israel, and say unto them,.... The elders of Israel, Eze 20:1; who came in the name of the whole body, and represented them, and by whom the following message is sent unto them; or the prophet by them might speak unto them, as he is ordered:

thus saith the Lord God, yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me; besides what they did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, when they were come into the land of Canaan, such was their ingratitude, that to all the rest they added this wickedness, to sacrifice to other gods on every high hill, and in all thick trees; which was a blaspheming the name of God, and casting reproach upon him:

in that they have committed a trespass against me; idolatry is meant, described in Eze 20:28; and which they committed, not through ignorance and weakness, but voluntarily, against light and knowledge; and obstinately, notwithstanding all the remonstrances made unto them, and cautions, exhortations, and reproofs given them.

Ezekiel 20:28

Ver. 28. [For] when I had brought them into the land,.... Brought them out of Egypt through the wilderness into the land of Canaan, through so many difficulties, by such displays of power, goodness, and truth:

[for] the which I lifted up mine band to give it to them; which he swore he would give unto them, and which he did, and so fulfilled his word and oath; and which was an instance of his bounty and goodness; and not owing to any merits of theirs; which he did, and so fulfilled his word and oath; and which was an instance of his bounty and goodness, and not owing to any merits of theirs:

then they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees; as soon as they had got into the land, and took a view of it, they at once fixed their eyes upon the high hills and groves, as proper places to set up their idols on, and perform idolatrous worship in; in the one place more openly, and in the other more secretly, as they might judge proper and necessary; in which they imitated the Heathens, who had their temples, idols, altars, and sacrifices, amidst groves and thick trees. So Herodotus {n} relates of the temple of Diana at Bubastis in Egypt, that at the entrance of it there were rivulets from the Nile, which flowed about it here and there, shaded with trees; and within were a vast grove of the largest trees, planted about the temple; and which he afterwards calls trees reaching to heaven:

and they offered there their sacrifices; either to the God of Israel, as some of them sometimes did, and which was sinful; for though they might offer sacrifices, as were commanded, to a right object, yet not in the proper place: or rather to their idols; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions,

to their own gods; which they had made to themselves, and had chose and approved of:

and there they presented the provocation of their offering; or their offering which provoked the wrath of God against them; being such as either he had not appointed, or was offered in a wrong place, or the wrong object; than which nothing could be more provoking to him; it was giving his glory to another, and his praise to graven images:

there also they made their sweet saviour; incense to their deities. The Targum is the worship of their sacrifices:

and poured out there their drink offerings; libations of wine: all kind of sacrifices were offered up here by them; which shows to what lengths in idolatry they ran, and how dreadfully guilty they were.

{n} Euterpe: sive l. 2. c. 138.

Ezekiel 20:29

Ver. 29. Then I said unto them,.... By his prophets that he sent unto them:

what is the high place where, unto you go? what is the name of it? what is the use of it? to what end do you go there? is there not an altar built by my order and command to sacrifice upon is this high place better than that? does it answer a better end and purpose?

and the name thereof is called Bamah unto this day; or a high place. The Septuagint also leaves the word untranslated, and calls it Abama; and the Arabic version Abbana; so they called their altars after the Gentiles, by whom they are called bwmoi; nor were they ashamed of it, but persisted in so calling them, from the first use of them to the present time. These are often called, Bamah and Bamot in the books of Kings. Jarchi says it is a term of reproach, as if it was said, Bamah----in what is it to be accounted of?

Ezekiel 20:30

Ver. 30. Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God,.... To the elders, as before:

are ye polluted after the manner of your fathers? they were:
and commit ye whoredoms after their abominations? spiritual adultery; that is, idolatry, in the same abominable manner? they did, as appears by what follows:

Ezekiel 20:31

Ver. 31. For when ye offer your gifts,.... And sacrifices to idols. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it,

the firstfruits of your gifts; it may design their firstborn; see Eze 20:26 as the following clause seems to explain it:

when ye make your sons to pass through the fire; or between two fires to Moloch, as their fathers had done before them;

ye pollute yourselves with all your idols, even unto this day; by worshipping idols, or dunghill gods, as the word signifies, as often observed; they defiled themselves with those filthy things, which they continued to do to that very day, and so became more and more polluted; and were as their fathers had been, and therefore must expect to be used in like manner:

and shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? can you think that I will suffer you to come and inquire of me or to make your requests to me? or can you hope to have an answer from me; at least a favourable one, such as you could wish for?

as I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you; so confirming again with an oath what he had before declared, Eze 20:3, wherefore they might assure themselves that they would not be acceptable to him, neither their persons nor petitions, or be regarded by him.

Ezekiel 20:32

Ver. 32. And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all,.... What they had contrived in their own breasts, and laid a plan of, and would gladly have brought about, should be frustrated, take no effect, and come to nothing:

that ye say, we will be as the Heathen; live without God; not be in subjection to him, or under his government, or be called by his name, or attend to his word, worship, and ordinances; but join ourselves to them; enter into alliance, and intermarry with them; carry on trade and commerce with them, and embrace the same religion; and then we shall prosper as they do, as well as no more incur the reproach of singularity or preciseness in religion:

as the families of the countries: being incorporated into them, dwelling with them, and joining with them in the same exercises of religious worship:

to serve wood and stone; images made of wood and stone. Strange! that a people that had a revelation from God, and such an experience of his power and goodness, should ever form such a scheme, or once think of entering into such measures, so grossly absurd and scandalous.

Ezekiel 20:33

Ver. 33. As I live, saith the Lord God,.... The form of an oath; the Lord swears by his own life, used more than once before; it supposes something of moment, and the certain performance of it:

surely with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm; from which none can escape, and which none can withstand:

and with fury poured out: like floods of water, in a violent hasty shower of rain; it denotes the abundance of divine wrath, and the sudden and sure execution of it:

will I rule over you; not in a gentle and merciful way, but with great rigour and severity; though they had contrived to withdraw themselves from under his domination and government, by joining with the Gentiles, and conforming to their laws and customs, and complying with their religious rites and idolatrous practices; yet they should not be able to accomplish their designs; they should be so far from being free men, as they promised themselves, that whereas they did not choose to be his voluntary and faithful subjects, he would keep a watchful eye and a strict hand over them as rebels, and rule them with a rod of iron, as well as with a sceptre of righteousness; and would be King over them, and they should be subject to his authority, whether they would or not.

Ezekiel 20:34

Ver. 34. I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered,.... The Egyptians, Ammonites, and others;

where they went for safety and protection, and among whom they intended to settle, and had formed a scheme to cast off the yoke of God and his worship, and be no more a nation or people under his government; but mix themselves with these nations, and become a part of them, and join with them in all matters, civil, commercial, and religious; but here the Lord will not suffer them to continue, but will bring them out from hence:

with a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out: as before, Eze 20:33 though some think this is to be understood as a favour to the Israelites, who should be brought out of the countries of the idolatrous Gentiles by mighty power, and with marks of wrath and displeasure upon the nations; designing hereby the good of his people, that they might be reduced to his government, and live happily and comfortably under him, and not be destroyed and lost among the nations.

Ezekiel 20:35

Ver. 35. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people,.... Into Babylon, and into captivity there, which they thought to avoid by fleeing to other countries. Some think that those inhospitable nations are meant, Syro-media, Caspia, Hyrcania, Iberia, and others, into which many of the Jews were brought, who sought to live elsewhere than at Babylon; and others are of opinion that this respects the time of their return from Babylon to their own land, between which lay a wilderness, here referred to; but perhaps the prophecy respects the present state of the Jews, in which they have continued ever since their destruction by the Romans; through whom they have been brought among the several nations of the world, particularly the Roman empire, compared to a wilderness; and represented as a populous one, as it is, and in which the beast, or antichrist, now is; see Re 17:3 and there will I plead with you face to face; judge, condemn, and take vengeance, or inflict punishment on them in the most public manner, as he now does. The Targum is, "and I will take vengeance on you face to face".

Ezekiel 20:36

Ver. 36. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt,.... Which was opposite the land of Egypt, near unto it, on the borders of it; and into which the people immediately went, when they came out of Egypt, and passed the Red sea; and the Arabic version is, "when I brought them out of the land of Egypt."

This refers to the controversy the Lord had with the Israelites for murmuring upon the report of the spies; and the sentence he passed upon them, that they should not enter into the land of Canaan, but their carcasses should fall in the wilderness, Nu 14:29:

so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God; take vengeance on them, as the Targum; who disbelieve the Messiah, reject him, and will not have him to reign over them; these are now punished, by a dispersion of them in the wilderness of the nations, where they die and perish, and see not their own land.

Ezekiel 20:37

Ver. 37. And I will cause you to pass under the rod,.... That is, such whom God will not take vengeance on, and shall not die in the wilderness of the people; but whom he will have mercy on, and show favour to, and bring at length into their own land; these he indeed will bring under the rod of correction and chastisement, by which they shall be brought to a sense of sin, a confession of it, humiliation for it, and to seek to Christ for salvation from it; or under the rod of his word, the rod of his strength, he sends out of Zion the Gospel, the power of God unto salvation; by which they shall be brought to agree unto and comply with the way of salvation by Christ; to submit to his righteousness; to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel, and be subject to the ordinances of it: or the allusion is to shepherds, in taking an account of their flocks, or at the tithing of them, who strike and mark them with their rod, Le 27:32, and thus, as the Lord has in election distinguished his sheep from others, taken an exact account of them, and set his seal or mark of foreknowledge on them; so in effectual calling he separates them from others, takes special knowledge of them, and sets his mark of sanctification on them. This will be the case of the converted Jews in the latter day:

and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: or, "the discipline of the covenant", as the Syriac Version; the same with the rod of correction, being what is provided in covenant for the good of the covenant ones. This covenant is the covenant of grace; the bond of which are not faith, repentance, and new obedience; for these are parts and blessings of the covenant; nor any outward ordinance; not circumcision formerly, nor baptism and the Lord's supper now;

which persons may submit to, and yet not be in the covenant: but it designs that which makes the covenant firm, sure, and lasting; which are the everlasting love of God, from whence it springs; his unchangeable counsel, according to which it proceeds; his solemn oath, that it shall never be removed; his faithfulness, which will not suffer it to be made void; and his power, which will accomplish every article of it; and the blood of Christ, which ratifies and confirms it. So Kimchi interprets it, "I will bind you in a covenant, that ye shall not go out of it for ever": or it is that which binds persons, or lays them under obligation to love, fear, and serve the Lord; and that is the love of God and Christ, and the exceeding great and precious promises of the covenant; and now into this sure, firm, and obliging covenant the Lord has brought all his chosen ones in eternity, when it was first made with Christ; and into which he may be said to bring them in time; as he will the converted Jews, when he manifests it to them, and applies the blessings and promises of it; shows them it, and their interest in it.

Ezekiel 20:38

Ver. 38. And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me,.... All men are enemies, and enmity itself, against God; and every sin is an act of hostility and rebellion against him; every transgression and violation of his law is a casting off of allegiance to him, and a trampling upon and despising his legislative power and authority; wherefore rebels and transgressors of his law are put together; the one being explanative of the other. The people of the Jews were always more or less a rebellious people; so they were in the times of Moses, and all the while that he was with them, and were notoriously so in the times of Ezekiel; and therefore are often so described in this book; but they were not all so; such as were, the Lord here declares that he would single them out, as goats from among his sheep he brought under the rod, and purge them as chaff from the wheat; that sinners in Zion should be no more in the congregation of the righteous:

I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn; or "countries"; wherever they have been pilgrims and sojourners, as they now are; wherever they are; it looks as if, a little before or when the remnant of God, according to the election of his grace, shall be converted, that the rest shall be collected together into some one place, and be destroyed as rebels:

and they shall not enter into the land of Israel; when the converted Jews shall;

an emblem of carnal Israelites, wicked professors, being not admitted into the New Jerusalem, and being excluded from the kingdom of heaven:

and ye shall know that I am the Lord; that knows all things, can do all things, and will faithfully and punctually perform all that is promised, threatened, or predicted.

Ezekiel 20:39

Ver. 39. As for you, O house of Israel,.... The then present house of Israel, and the elders of it, who were upon the spot with the prophet:

go ye, serve ye everyone his idols; or dunghill gods; since they liked not to serve the true God: this is not giving them leave to serve idols, or approving their idolatrous practices; but is said "ironically", as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, who compare it with Ec 11:9:

and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me; not only serve them now, but for the future; seeing ye choose not to hearken to my voice, to obey my laws, and to worship me, and me only; for it suggests, that it was better to attend to the service of the one, or of the other, and not halt between two opinions; but either, if the God of Israel was the true God, then serve him, and him only; but if Baal, or any other Heathen deity, was so, then serve them, and keep serving them:

but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts and with your idols; to worship him along with them, and them along with him; to pretend they worshipped him in them, and offered their gifts and sacrifices to him through them; and so made use of his name as a cover to their idolatrous practices: this was a polluting his name, and was abominable to him.

Ezekiel 20:40

Ver. 40. For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord God,.... Alluding to Mount Zion, or Moriah, on which the temple was built, on the highest part of the land of Israel, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; here the Gospel church is meant, comparable to a "mountain" for its firmness and durableness; said to be a "holy" one, because consisting of holy persons, performing holy worship to a holy God; and represented as "high", being established, as it will be in the latter day, upon the top of the mountains, and be very visible and glorious:

there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve me: when all Israel shall be saved, or converted; and, the rebels and transgressors being purged away from them, they shall join themselves to the Gospel church, and in it serve the Lord, according to the rules of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; even all of them that shall enter into their own land and dwell in it; the rest being not admitted to it:

there will I accept them; their persons, and their sacrifices of prayer and praise, being offered up, in the name and faith of Christ, that altar which sanctities every gift; see Isa 56:7:

and there will I require your offerings, and the firstfruits of your oblations, with all your holy things; meaning the offering up of their persons: bodies, and souls, as a living, holy, and acceptable sacrifice, which he would require of them as their reasonable service; together with all holy duties of prayer, praise, and beneficence; sacrifices with which God is well pleased through Christ and his sacrifice; and which are the only sacrifices he now requires under the Gospel dispensation; for ceremonial ones he does not require, seek after, enjoin, or accept; these are done away and made void by the sacrifice of his son; only it may be observed, as in other places and prophecies of Gospel times, that New Testament worship is expressed by the phrases, forms, and usages suited to the Old Testament; see
Ps 40:6.

Ezekiel 20:41

Ver. 41. I will accept you with your sweet savour,.... Their sins being expiated by the sacrifice of Christ, which is unto God for a sweet smelling savour; and their persons being, clothed with the robe of his righteousness, and the garments of his salvation, all whose garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; the Gospel being the savour of life unto life unto them; and the savour of the knowledge of Christ being communicated to them by it; and also the savour of his good ointments, the graces of the Spirit, being imparted to them:

when I bring you out of the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; which will not only be locally and literally true of them, when the Jews are converted, that they shall be collected together out of all nations where they now are dispersed, and return to their land; but spiritually also, they being effectually called out from among the, men of the world, and to leave their former company, customs, and lusts:

and I will be sanctified in you before the Heathen; the Gentiles, Christian men; who will take notice of the power, and grace, and goodness of God, in the conversion and restoration of them, and praise and glorify him on account of it; and when he will be visibly feared, served, and worshipped, in the midst of them.

Ezekiel 20:42

Ver. 42. And ye shall know that I am the Lord,.... The one only Jehovah, that keeps covenant; performs promises; is faithful to his word; is kind, gracious, and merciful, as well as mighty and powerful; and all this they shall experimentally know, and publicly own and acknowledge:

when I shall bring you into the land of Israel; which will be the Lord's doing; his hand and his power will be signally seen in it; this is one of the places in prophecy, which clearly asserts that the Jews, when converted, shall be brought into their own land again:

into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand, to give it to your fathers; that is, which he swore he would give unto them.

Ezekiel 20:43

Ver. 43. And there ye shall remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled,.... Their rejection of the Messiah; their continued disbelief of him; their obstinacy, hardness, and impenitence; their adherence to the traditions of the elders, to the making void the word of God; together with the most flagrant immoralities that ever any people were guilty of, and which are of a very defiling nature, and made them abominable in the sight of God; these now the Spirit of God convincing them of, they will remember with shame and confusion, and mourn over them in an evangelical way; and the more so, when they shall find themselves reinstated in their own land, enjoying all civil and religious privileges and liberties under Christ their King, whom they will now know, own, and serve; see Zec 12:10:

and ye shall loath yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed; against God and Christ; against the law of the one, and the Gospel of the other. Sin is a loathsome thing to God; and it is so to his people When they are thoroughly convinced of it, and they loath themselves for it; and never more so than when they have the greatest instances and clearest discoveries of the love and grace of God in Christ to them; then they blush, are ashamed of themselves and their sins, and are confounded when they perceive the Lord is pacified towards them, and their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake: sin never appears more odious and loathsome than when viewed in the glass of pardoning love; see **Ezr 9:6**.

Ezekiel 20:44

Ver. 44. And ye shall know that I am the Lord,.... Jehovah their righteousness, their Redeemer and Saviour, Lord and King; they shall know Christ, and him crucified, and God in Christ as their covenant God;
See Gill on "Eze 20:42"; when I have wrought with you for my name's sake; in the thorough conversion of them; not that there is any cooperation with God in that work; ministers indeed are coworkers, not as efficients, but instruments; persons converted are wholly passive in the first work of conversion or regeneration; and in all later actings move as they are acted, turn being turned, walk and run being drawn, not being able to do anything as of themselves: but the phrase signifies a working in favour of them; doing great things for them, and good things in them, well pleasing in his sight, and good unto them; plucking them as brands out of the burning; taking them out of the hands of Satan; calling them out of darkness into light, and bringing them out of bondage into liberty; and all this

for his own name's sake, of his own will and pleasure, according to his abundant mercy, and for the glory of his rich grace:

not according to your wicked ways, not according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord God; had he, they must have perished in their sins, and been miserable for ever; but he neither proceeds according to the bad works nor the good works of men, in calling and converting them, but according to his own purpose and grace, **2Ti 1:9**, their evil works do not hinder his grace when he is resolved to work, and their good works do not merit it; he acts freely, and in a sovereign way.

Ezekiel 20:45

Ver. 45. Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. Or the word of prophecy, as the Targum. Here begins a new prophecy, and most properly a new chapter should here begin; for the next chapter is of the same argument with this, and an explanation of it, and an enlargement upon it. And here Ben Melech begins one; and so Junius and Tremellius, Piscator, and Castalio.

Ezekiel 20:46

Ver. 46. Son of man, set thy force toward the south,.... The land of Judea, which lay south of Babylon, where the prophet now was, as Babylon lay north of that, **Jer 1:14** to set his face was to speak freely and boldly, with courage and constancy, and without fear and dread, to the inhabitants of it; and as a token of the Lord's face being set against them for their sins. The Targum is,

"take a prophecy towards the way of the south."

And drop thy word toward the south; or prophesy, as the Targum; doctrine or prophecy being compared to rain, and the delivery of it to the dropping or distilling of rain; which falls gently, gradually, successively, and oftentimes with weight, and to good purpose; see
De 32:2, which metaphorical phrase is explained in the next clause:

and prophesy against the forest of the south field; the city of Jerusalem, in the land of Judea, which was very full of people, as a forest of trees; but these barren and unfruitful, as the trees of the wood generally are; and a rendezvous of wicked persons, comparable to beasts of prey, that haunt in woods and forests.

Ezekiel 20:47

Ver. 47. And say to the forest of the south,.... To the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea:

hear the word of the Lord; attend to it, and receive it, believe it, and take warning from it:

thus saith the Lord God, behold, I will kindle a fire in thee; in Jerusalem; meaning that he would send great calamities among them, the sword of the Chaldean army, famine, and pestilence; and that at last it should be burnt with fire, and the remainder of the inhabitants be carried captive:

and it shall devour every green tree, and every dry tree; all sorts of persons should be consumed by one or other of the above calamities, high and low, rich and poor, good and bad; and if good men should suffer, comparable to green trees, which fire will not so easily burn, not being fit fuel for it; then much more bad men, who were by far the most numerous, comparable to dry trees, and so fit fuel for the flames, and easily consumed thereby:

the flaming flame shall not be quenched or, the "flame, flame"; or, "the flame of flame" {o}; signifying either the succession of these calamities one after another; or the force and strength of them, which should not be abated until the ruin of the city was completed:

and all faces from the south to the north shall be burnt therein; which some understand of an utter destruction of the Jews, either by sword, famine, and pestilence, or by captivity from Jerusalem or Judea unto Babylon; but rather the meaning is, that all the inhabitants thereof should suffer, from one end of it to the other, from Beersheba to Dan, the country lying in such a position.

{o} tbhlv tbhl "flamma flamma, pro flamma continua et perpetua", Vatablus; "flamma inflamatissima", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus "flamma flammae", Montanus, Piscator.

Ezekiel 20:48

Ver. 48. And all flesh shall see that I the Lord have kindled it,.... Not only the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea should see the hand of the Lord in their destruction; but even all the neighbouring nations, the case was so clear and plain, the matter so visible:

it shall not be quenched; no stop put to it by all the art and power of man; so that it was a clear point that it was the Lord's doing.

Ezekiel 20:49

Ver. 49. Then said I, ah Lord God!.... The Septuagint version is, "by no means, Lord, Lord"; that is, let me not be sent on such an errand; at least, let it not be delivered in such figurative terms; or let not such a general calamity befall the people. The Targum is,

"receive my prayer, O Lord God;"

the prophet here either complains of the usage he had met with after delivering the above prophecy; or rather of what he had met with before, and which he expected again; and therefore desired either that he might be excused delivering the prophecy; or, however, that it might be delivered not in obscure and enigmatical terms, but in plain and easy ones:

they say of me, doth he not speak parables? as before, of a lion and her whelps; and of a vine, and its rods and branches, Eze 19:1 and now here again, of a fire, and a forest, and trees of it, green and dry; things not easily understood, and so not attended to and regarded; as if they should say, this man brings us nothing but parables, riddles, and enigmas, and such sort of unintelligible stuff, not worth minding; and rather appears as a man delirious and mad than a prophet. Wherefore Ezekiel seems to desire that he might be sent to them with a message more plainly expressed; and which might excite their attention and regard, and not expose him to their ridicule and contempt; and accordingly we find it is explained and expressed in clearer terms in the next chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 21

This chapter contains an explanation of a prophecy in the latter part of the preceding chapter; and a new one, concerning the sword of the Chaldeans, and the destruction of the Jews and Ammonites by it. The prophecy of the fire in the forest is explained, Eze 21:1, upon which the prophet is directed to show his concern at it by sighing, in order to awaken the attention of the people to it, Eze 21:6, then follows a prophecy of a very sharp and bright sword, which

should do great execution upon the people and princes of Israel; and therefore the prophet, in order to affect them, with it, is bid to howl and cry, and smite on his thigh; and smite his hands together, and the Lord says he would do so; all which is designed to set forth the greatness of the calamity and the distress, Eze 21:8, next the prophet is ordered to represent the king of Babylon as at a place where two ways met, and as at a loss which way to take, and as determined by divination to go to Jerusalem first,
Eze 21:18, and then Zedekiah, the then reigning prince of Israel, has his doom pronounced on him, and he is ordered to be stripped of his regalia; and an intimation is given that there should be no more king over Israel of the house of David until the Messiah came, Eze 21:26 and the chapter is concluded with a prophecy of the destruction of the Ammonites in their own land, which should certainly be, though their diviners might, say the contrary,
Eze 21:28.

Ver. 1. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. Upon the above excuse or complaint about speaking in parables; wherefore the prophet is ordered to speak in plainer language to the people. It is very probable that the prophet delivered the prophecy recorded in the latter part of the preceding chapter in the figurative terms in which he received it; and he here is bid to explain it to the people, or to repeat it to them in clearer expressions.

Ezekiel 21:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem,.... Which shows that this city was meant by "the south", Eze 20:46:

and drop thy word toward the holy places; which also are meant by the south in the passage referred to, even the holy land, holy city, and holy temple; or the temple itself is only meant, with the courts adjoining to it; or as consisting of three parts, as Kimchi, the porch, the temple, and the oracle; or the outward court, the holy place, and the holy of holies; and it may respect all other places for sacred worship, as their synagogues, both in city and country; which were not to be spared any more than the temple, nor were they, Ps 74:7. Jarchi thinks that the destruction both of the first and second temple is here intended; and which sense Kimchi also mentions.

And prophesy against the land of Israel: by which it appears that this is intended by the "forest of the south field": even the numerous inhabitants of it in general, as well as the city of Jerusalem,

Eze 20:46.

Ezekiel 21:3

Ver. 3. And say to the land of Israel,.... The inhabitants of it, signified by the "forest of the south field", Eze 20:47:

thus saith the Lord, behold, I am against thee; and sad it is to have the Lord against a people, a nation, a city, or a family, or a particular person; for there is no contending with him, or standing before him; there is always a reason for it, it is for sin when God is against a people, even his own professing people:

and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath; bring the Chaldean army out of Babylon; which interprets what is meant by the "fire" he would kindle in the land of Israel, Eze 20:47, namely, the sword of the enemy, which he would bring upon it; or war, with all its desolating train of judgments:

and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked; meant by the green and dry tree, Eze 20:47, who, though they shall not perish everlastingly together, yet may fall together in temporal calamities; the one may be chastised, and the other condemned; or the one be carried captive for their good, as Ezekiel and Daniel, &c. and others be cut off by sword and famine; and such as were captives, never the better for their captivity. The Targum is,

"I will remove out of thee thy righteous ones, that I may destroy thy wicked ones."

Some think that only such who were righteous in appearance, or in their own sight, are here meant. R. Saadiah Gaon, as Kimchi quotes him, interprets them of such as were righteous to Baal, and served him continually, in distinction from such as were wicked to him, and did not serve him continually; and both were wicked before the Lord, and therefore justly cut off.

Ezekiel 21:4

Ver. 4. Seeing then that I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked,.... Some by the sword, some by famine, some by pestilence, and others by captivity; and, upon the whole, none spared, but the land left desolate:

therefore shall my sword go forth out of his sheath against all flesh, from the south to the north; the Chaldean army shall go out of their own land against all the inhabitants of Judea, from Beersheba to Dan; this explains what is meant by all faces being burnt from the south to the north, Eze 20:47, namely, the general destruction of the Jews by the Chaldeans.

Ezekiel 21:5

Ver. 5. That all flesh may know that I the Lord have drawn forth my sword out of his sheath,.... The same with kindling a fire in Judea,
See Gill on "Eze 20:48":

it shall not return any more; that is, into its sheath, until it has done all its work; meaning that the Chaldean army should not return to their own land until they had executed the whole will of God upon the Jews; this is the fire that should not be quenched, Eze 20:48 and here ends the explanation of the said prophecy.

Ezekiel 21:6

Ver. 6. Sigh, therefore, thou son of man, with the breaking of thy loins,.... As if thy loins were broke, and go as if they were, and sigh as thou goest; or as a woman in travail, having her hands upon her loins as ready to break, and in the utmost distress; or heave, and groan, and sigh, till the girdle of the loins is broke, and by these motions and gesture show the miserable state of this people, and how much thou art affected with it:

and with bitterness sigh before their eyes; in the sight and hearing of the captives at Babylon; who would take care, by some means or other, to inform their brethren at Jerusalem of it, how the prophet sighed and groaned, under an apprehension and assurance of a dreadful calamity coming upon them; using along with his sobs and sighs, and brinish tears, doleful words and bitter lamentations.

Ezekiel 21:7

Ver. 7. And it shall be, when they say unto thee, wherefore sighest thou?....

Which he was to do that purpose, that they might be put upon asking him the reason of it; whether it was on his own personal amount, or on account of his family or particular friends; or whether on a public account, either because of what should befall the captives there, or their countrymen in Judea and Jerusalem:

that thou shalt answer, for the tidings, or, the "report" {p},

because it cometh; the report of the Chaldean army approaching and invading Judea, and besieging Jerusalem, which he had from the Lord; and the thing itself was just at hand, and would shortly and certainly be; and that was the thing that affected him, and caused such sorrow and sighing:

and every heart shall melt; like wax, for fear of the enemy; even such who then disbelieved the report, and laughed at it as an idle story:

and all hands shall be feeble; and not able to hold a sword, or strike a stroke:

and every spirit shall faint; yea, such who had the greatest spirits, and were the most bold and undaunted, shall be quite dispirited, no heart nor courage to defend themselves or their country:

and all knees shall be weak as water; they shall not be able to stand upon their legs, and fight like men in their own defence; nor even be able to flee away, and make their escape: or,

shall flow with water {q}; either with sweat, or with urine, through fear of the enemy:

behold, it cometh, and shall be brought pass, saith the Lord God; let no man therefore put this evil day far from him, or treat this report as an idle tale, or a thing at a distance, and which may never come to pass; for it is now a coming, and in a very little time will be accomplished; for the Lord has said it, who cannot lie, whose counsel shall stand, and will do all his pleasure.

{p} hewmv la, epi th aggelia, Sept.; "propter rumorem", Vatablus, Cocceius; "propter [vel] ad auditum", Paginus, Montanus. {q} Mym hnklt "fluent aquis", Munster, Tigurine version, so Ben Melech; "manabunt ut aqua" Cocceius.

Ezekiel 21:8

Ver. 8. Again, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. Either this is a new prophecy of another sword, distinct and different from that of the Chaldeans, even of the sword of the Romans, as Cocceius thinks or it is a further explanation of the former, and an enlargement upon it.

Ezekiel 21:9

Ver. 9. Son of man, prophesy and say, thus saith the Lord,.... Deliver out the following prophecy in the name of the Lord:

say, a sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished; it is not only drawn out of its sheath, as before, but is made sharp and bright, and ready for use. It is repeated, either to show the certainty of it, or to express the terror and anguish of mind on account of it; persons in distress generally repeating that which is the occasion of it. The Targum interprets it of two swords, the sword of the Babylonians, and the sword of the Ammonites; first the one was to be used, and then the other: this latter, Jarchi and Kimchi observe, was fulfilled by Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slaying Gedaliah, sent for that purpose by Baalis king of the Ammonites, Jer 40:14, but if two distinct swords are meant, I should rather think the sword of the Chaldeans, and the sword of the Romans, are intended. Cocceius, before observed, interprets it only of the latter; but Abendana both of the sword of the king of Babylon, and of the sword of the Romans.

Ezekiel 21:10

Ver. 10. It is sharpened to make a sore slaughter,.... To cut easily, and wound deeply, and make a slaughter of men, like beasts for sacrifice; a sacrifice to the justice of God for their sins, and so acceptable to him; and it is he indeed that sharpens it, or prepares the instruments of his vengeance, whether Chaldeans, or Romans, or both; and gives them might and courage to execute his will with great keenness of wrath and fury:

it is furbished that it may glitter; and so strike terror on those against whom it is drawn, and for whom it is prepared, as glittering armour does:

should we then make mirth? sing, and dance, and feast, and indulge ourselves in all kind of mirth and jollity, when this is the case, a drawn, sharp, glittering sword hangs over our heads? no, surely! there is good reason for you to lament and sigh, as I do; you ask me the reason of it, this is it; is there not a cause? there is; it is not a season for mirth; but for weeping and lamentation. The words may be rendered, "or let us rejoice" {r}; that is, if we can, ironically spoken.

It contemneth the rod of my son, as every tree; thus says the Lord God, this sword so sharpened and brightened despises the rod or sceptre (for so the word signifies) of Israel my son, my firstborn, and makes no more of it than a common stick, and cuts it to pieces, and destroys it; signifying hereby the easy destruction of the sceptre and kingdom of Judah by the sword of the Chaldeans or Romans. Some understand it of Christ the Son of God. The words may be rendered, "it is the rod of my son, it despiseth every tree" {s}; this sword, prepared, is no other than the rod of iron, which the Son of God makes use of to rule his enemies with, and break them in pieces; and no tree, high and low, can stand before it; it cuts down all, and destroys them, be they what they will; see **Ps 2:7**. Cocceius interprets the former clause, "or we shall make merry" {t}, of the Father and of the Son, and of their delight and pleasure, while wrath was executed on their enemies.

{r} vyvn "laetemar", Castalio; "gaudeamus", Glassius. {s} Ue lk toam ynb jbv "virga est filii me ilia spernit, [vel] quae spermit omne lignum", Tigurine, version, Piscator, the margin of our Bibles. {t} "Aut hilarabimur", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 21:11

Ver. 11. And he hath given it to be furbished, that it might be handled,.... Either Nebuchadnezzar, or rather God, or the Son of God, prepared and brightened the sword, that it might be handled and made use of, either by the Chaldeans or Romans, to the destruction of the Jews. The Targum is,

"he gave their vengeance to be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon."

The sword is sharpened and furbished, to give it into the hand of the slayer; either the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar; or the Roman emperor, Titus Vespasian.

Ezekiel 21:12

Ver. 12. Cry, howl, son of man,.... Not only sigh, but cry; and not cry only, but howl; signifying hereby that this would be the case of the Jews when these calamities should come upon them; and, in order to affect them with them before hand, the prophet is ordered to act such a part, as well as to express his sympathy with them:

for it shall be upon my people; that is, the sword, or the calamity signified by it; this should be not upon other nations, but upon the Lord's own people; such who professed themselves to be his people, and whom he had distinguished from all others; this is said, to affect the prophet the more, they being both the Lord's people, and his also:

and it shall be upon all the princes of Israel; who were slain in Riblah by the king of Babylon, Jer 52:10, the sword spared neither people nor princes.

Terrors, by reason of the sword, shall be upon my people; upon the rumour of the invasion, and when besieged in the city, and when attempting to make their escape by flight: or "my people are fallen by the sword" {u}, as some:

smite therefore upon thy thigh; as one grieved in spirit, in great distress and anguish; see Jer 31:19.

{u} So R. Sol Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 59. 1.

Ezekiel 21:13

Ver. 13. Because it is a trial,.... As all afflictions and calamities are, especially to the people of God they try their faith and patience, and every other grace; and also to wicked men, they try them, whether they will repent or not:

and what if the sword contemn even the rod? the sceptre: the king of Judah, and his family; not only come upon and cut off the people and the princes, but the royal family also; and even overturn the tribe of Judah, as the word also signifies; and subvert the government of it, of which the rod or sceptre is an ensign; this would be a sore trial indeed, and yet it is intimated that so it should be:

it shall be no more, saith the Lord God; the rod or sceptre shall be no more in one of David's line, of the tribe Judah, until the Messiah comes, Eze 21:27. I should choose to render the words thus, "for it is a trial, but what?" {w} what an one is it? or for what is it? what will be the fruit, effect, and issue of it?

if also the sceptre despises; the king despises the trial, the affliction, the calamity, and is not brought to repentance by it:

it shall be no more, or "it shall not be" {x},

saith the Lord God; it, the sceptre, shall be taken away, and not restored to the house of David, until the Messiah comes.

{w} hmw Nxb yk "quum fuit probatio quid tandem fuit?" Junius & Tremellius, Polanus. {x} hyhy al, "non erit", V. L. "scilicet sceptrum", Mariana.

Ezekiel 21:14

Ver. 14. Thou, therefore, son of man, prophesy, and smite thine hands together,.... As being in the greatest agony for what is coming upon thy people: or "strike hand to hand" {y}; clap them together, as encouraging the enemy with his drawn, sharp, and glittering sword, to make use of it, and do execution with it:

and let the sword be doubled the third time; some think this has reference to the three captivities of Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah: others to the threefold calamity in Zedekiah's time; the first, the taking of him; the second, the taking of the city; the third, the carrying captive the residue along with Gedaliah: or to the three times the Chaldeans came against Jerusalem, after this prophecy; first with Nebuchadnezzar, in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, and took him and the city; then with Nebuzaradan, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, and burnt the city and temple; and again in the twenty third of Nebuchadnezzar, and carried away the remnant of the people, Jer 52:5:

the sword of the slain: by which many should be slain:

it is the sword of the great men that are slain: of the sons of the kings, and of the princes and nobles of the land:

which entereth into their privy chambers; where they should endeavour to hide themselves from it, but in vain, none should escape; their privy chambers could not secrete nor secure them: or "which remains with them"; as that which is laid up, and reserved in a privy chamber, as De Dieu, from the use of the word in the Ethiopic language, renders it.

{y} Pk la Pk Khw "percute manum ad manum", Pagninus, Polanus; "volum ad volam"; Montanus; "feri manum ad manum", Starckius.

Ezekiel 21:15

Ver. 15. I have set the point of the sword against all their gates,.... The word rendered "point" is nowhere else used, and is differently translated: by some the "fear" of the sword {z}, as Menachem and Kimchi; by others the "cry" of the sword, or of those that are slain with it, as Jarchi; and the Targum paraphrases it,

"those that slay with the sword:"

some, as both Jarchi and Kimchi, observe, by an inversion of the letters of the alphabet, called "athbash", render it, the "slaughter" of the sword; and De Dieu and Dr. Castel, from the use of the word in the Ethiopic language, the "destruction" of it, or, the power of it. The meaning is, that the enemy, with their swords drawn, should be placed at every gate of the city of Jerusalem, or of their houses, pointed towards them; which would be very terrible, and sore destruction to them.

That their hearts may faint; seeing nothing but death before their eyes, and no way to escape it:

and their ruins be multiplied; of their families, and of their houses.

Ah! it is made bright; to terrify the more, as in Eze 21:10, appearing as a flaming sword, and so causing fear; the prophet expresses his sorrow and concern for it. The Targum is,

"woe! the sword is drawn out to kill."

It is wrapped up for slaughter; in its sheath or scabbard, that it might not rust or be blunted, it being furbished and brightened; but this seems contrary to its

being drawn out of its sheath, as in
Eze 21:3. Kimchi renders it, therefore, "sharpened", as in
Eze 21:10 and so the Targum,

"it is sharpened to destroy;"

the more easily and speedily.

{z} brx txba "terrorem gladii", Munster, Pagninus, Montanus.

Ezekiel 21:16

Ver. 16. Go thee one way or another,.... Go to some one place: or "unite thyself" {a}; to other swords, or join other soldiers holding swords; the address is to the sword, to steer its course some one way, and slay as it goes along, sparing none:

either on the right, or on the left; or south, or north; so the Targum,

"unsheathe, and slay on the south, and destroy on the north:"

whithersoever thy face is set; or prepared, as the Targum, or appointed for destruction; this is the usual interpretation: but why may not the words be an apostrophe to the prophet, to go alone or single, either to the right or left, south or north, as his face was set, Eze 21:2, sighing and crying, smiting his hands together, in order to affect the minds of the people with the sense of their calamities coming upon them?

{a} ydxath "unito Montanus", Piscator, Polanus; "unitor te", Starckius; "in unum dirigitor", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 21:17

Ver. 17. I will also smite my hands together,.... As well as the prophet was bid to do, Eze 21:14, either expressing a concern for the calamity of the people, or indignation at their sins: or rather as encouraging their enemies to make use of the sword pointed at them, and, as it were, rejoicing at their destruction for the honour of his justice. The Targum is,

"and even I will bring vengeance upon vengeance:"

and I will cause my fury to rest; when the sword has done its business, and just vengeance is taken, the fury of the Lord shall cease; it shall proceed no further, it shall be kept within due bounds, and no more or further rage:

I the Lord have said it; who is omnipotent, and can do all things, and will do everything that he has said, whether in a way of promise or threatening.

Ezekiel 21:18

Ver. 18. The word of the Lord came unto me again,.... Immediately after the former; for this respects the same prophecy about the sword, and the way of its coming, and the cause of it:

saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 21:19

Ver. 19. Also thou, son of man, appoint thee two ways, that the sword of the king of Babylon may come,.... Describe or draw out upon a table or tile, as in **Eze 4:1**, or on the ground, two roads, such as are described in maps; which it may be supposed the king of Babylon would take, either the one or the other, in order to make war against some king or another:

both twain shall come forth out of one land; both ways must be drawn as coming from one country, even Babylon;

and choose thou a place, choose it at the head of the way to the city; fix upon some spacious place, where Nebuchadnezzar may be supposed to bring his army, as a proper rendezvous for them to muster them in; and let be where two ways meet, that lead to cities, one to one city, and another to another: and it seems that upon the desert of Arabia, through which the king of Babylon came, there was such a place, where two ways met, and one led to Jerusalem, and the other to Rabbath; and this is the place the prophet was to describe, and where in fact Nebuchadnezzar came.

Ezekiel 21:20

Ver. 20. Appoint a way,.... Mark out a way, describe a road, draw one out upon the ground, or point out one upon a table, or tile:

that the sword may come; in which the sword will come; or those that kill with the sword, as the Targum, even the Chaldean army under Nebuchadnezzar:

to Rabbath of the Ammonites; which was the metropolis of the Ammonites, and is now called Philadelphia, as Jerom writes; it is so called, to distinguish it from others of the same name; see 2Sa 12:26:

and to Judah in Jerusalem, the defenced city; which was so both by nature and art; it had mountains round about it, and had been fortified by several kings from the time of David, as Solomon, Hezekiah, and Manasseh. Judah is said to be in it; though it would seem more properly that Jerusalem was in Judah, because that people from all parts of Judah, upon hearing of the king of Babylon's intention and near approach to invade their land, fled to Jerusalem, being a fortified place, for security. Now the prophet is bid to describe a way hither; not that one and the same way led to Rabbath and Jerusalem; but he was to describe a way from the place where Nebuchadnezzar stopped, which led to Rabbath, and another which led to Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 21:21

Ver. 21. For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways,.... That is, he would stand there; the prophet knew that it was certain it should be, and therefore represents it as if it was; he had, by a spirit of prophecy, seen, that when the king of Babylon was come to such a place, on the borders of the desert of Arabia, where the road from Babylon parted, where two ways met, the one leading to Jerusalem on the right, and the other to Rabbath on the left, he should make a full stop with his army, and consider which way he should take, whether that which led to Jerusalem, or that which led to Rabbath. It is very probable, when he came out of Babylon, his scheme was to make an attempt on both these important places, and take them; but be had not determined which to attack first, and was still doubtful; and now being come to the two roads, which led to the one and the other, it was necessary to make a halt, consider, and conclude, which course to steer; to determine which, he thought proper "to use divination", which was performed in the following manner:

he made his arrows bright; being made of iron or steel; in the brightness of which diviners looked, and made their observations, and accordingly directed what was to be done; as they did by looking into the brightness of a man's nails, as David Kimchi observes; though his father, Joseph Kimchi, was of opinion that the word has the signification of casting of arrows, or causing them to fly in the air; and supposes that Nebuchadnezzar cast up arrows into the air, and observed on which side they fell, and so judged which way to take; to this agrees the Targum,

"with a bow he cast out arrows;"

so the Syriac and Arabic versions {b}. Jerom says the way of divining by arrows was this: arrows, with the names of the cities inscribed upon them, were put into a quiver, and mixed together; and the city upon the arrow which came out first was first attacked. To this agrees the Vulgate Latin version, which renders the words, "mingling the arrows"; and Dr. Pocock {c} prefers this sense of the word, which he observes so signifies in the Arabic language; and who gives an account of the use of divination by arrows among the Arabians, who much used it; though forbidden by Mahomet, as Schultens {d} observes. Their custom was this; when a man was about to marry a wife, or go a journey, or do any business of importance, he put three arrows into a vessel; on one was inscribed,

"my lord hath commanded me;"

on another,

"my lord hath forbid me;"

the third had nothing on it. If the first he took out had the command upon it, then he proceeded with great alacrity: but if it had the prohibition, he desisted; and if that which had nothing inscribed on it, he laid it by, till one of the other two was taken out; and there is to this day a sort of divination by arrows used by the Turks; it is commonly for the wars, though it is also performed for all sorts of things; as to know whether a man should undertake a voyage, buy such a commodity, or the like. The manner of doing it, as Monsieur Thevenot {e} relates, is this; they take four arrows, and place them with their points against one another, giving them to be held by two persons; then they lay a naked

sword upon a cushion before them, and read a certain chapter of the Alcoran; with that the arrows fight together for some time, and at length the one fall upon the other: if, for instance the victorious have been named Christians (for two of them they call Turks, and the other two by the name of their enemy), it is a sign that the Christians will overcome; if otherwise, it denotes the contrary. The Jews {f} say, that in the present case of Nebuchadnezzar, that when he or his diviner cast the arrow for Antioch, or for Tyre, or for Laodicea, it was broke; but when he cast it for Jerusalem, it was not broke; by which he knew that he should destroy it. This is that sort of divination which is called "belomancy": he consulted with images; or "teraphim"; images in which, as Kimchi says, they saw things future; Heathen oracles, from whence responses were made; these were images for private use, such as were the "lares" and "penates" with the Romans; these Laban had in his house in which Rachel stole from him; and are supposed to be such as are made under certain constellations, and their influences capable of speaking; see Zec 10:2, as Aben Ezra on
Ge 31:34 observes, with which men used to consult about things future or unknown; and this is thought to be one reason why Rachel took away these images from her father, that he might not, by consulting with them, know which way Jacob fled {g} with such as these the king of Babylon consulted, that he might know which way he should take:

he looked in the liver; of a beast slain, and made observations on that to direct him; as used to be done by the Aruspices among the Romans. This is that sort of divination which is called "hepatoscopy", or inspection into the liver; for though the Aruspices or Extispices, so called from their looking into the entrails of a beast, and making their observations on them, used to view the several inward parts, yet chiefly the liver, which they called the head of the intestines; and if this was wanting, or the head in it, the chief part of it, it was an ill omen; thus, in the month that Claudius Caesar was poisoned, the head of the liver was wanting in the sacrifice; or if the liver was livid, vicious, had any pustules upon it, or any purulent matter in it; or was touched, cut and wounded with the knife of the sacrificer, it foreboded great evils and misfortunes; or if the extreme part of the liver, which is called the fibre, was so placed, that from the lowest fibre the livers were replicated, or there was a double liver, this was a token for good, and portended joy and happiness {h}: moreover, they used to divide the bowels or entrails into two parts, and so the liver; the one they called "familiaris", by which they judged what would befall themselves and their friends; the other "hostilis", what concerned their enemies; according to the habit, colour, and position they were in, they concluded what would befall the one and the other {i}. Lucan {k} and Seneca {l} particularly have respect to this: and the king of Babylon here having two people to deal with, the Ammonites and the Jews, he inspects the liver of a creature slain for sacrifice, that he might judge which was best and safest for him to attack; which was less threatening, and more easy to be overcome {m}: this divination used to be made with calves, kids, and lambs {n}.

{b} So R. So. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 25, 2, interprets the word. {c} Specimen Arab. Hist. p. 327. {d} Animadv. in Job, p. 169, 170. {e} Travels, par. 1. B. 1. ch. 6. p. 36. {f} Midrash Tillim in Psal. lxxix. 1. {g} See Godwin's Moses and Aaron, l. 4. c. 9. {h} Vid. Alex. ab flex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 25. & Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 37. {i} Vid. Valtrinum de Re Militari Roman. l. 1. c. 6. p. 27. Liv. & Ciceron. in ib. {k} "Cernit tabe jecur madidum, venasque minaces, Hostili de parte videt", &c. Pharsal. l. 1. {l} "Hostile valido robore insurlit latus." Oedipus, Act. 2. {m} Vid. Lydium de Re Militari, l. 1. c. 3. p. 9, 10. {n} Pausanias, l. 6. p. 345.

Ezekiel 21:22

Ver. 22. At his right hand was the divination for Jerusalem,.... All his divinations, whether by arrows, or by images, or by liver, all directed him to his right hand, to turn to that which led to Jerusalem; and thus what appeared to him to be the effect of divination was overruled by the providence of God, to direct him to go and do what he designed he should:

to appoint captains to open the mouth in the slaughter; upon which he appointed his several captains and officers their distinct bodies of men they were to lead on to the siege of Jerusalem; and give them the word of command when to attack the place, scale the walls, or make breaches in it, and fall upon the enemy, and make a slaughter of them. The word for "captains" signifies "rams"; and Joseph Kimchi interprets it of battering rams, to beat down walls; but these are after mentioned; and is both by Jarchi and David Kimchi explained of general officers of the army; and so the Targum,

"to appoint generals to open the gates, that the slayer may enter by them:"

to lift up the voice with shouting; which is usually done in sieges, when a shout is made, and a place is stormed; both to animate the besiegers, and to terrify the besieged:

to appoint battering rams against the gates; to break them down, or break through them, and so make way for the army to enter in; these were engines used in sieges, to beat down walls, and make breaches in them, that the besiegers might enter; so called from the iron heads of them, which resembled rams; and are thus described by Josephus {o},

"the ram is a huge beam, not unlike the mast of a ship; the top of it is capped with a thick piece of iron, in the form of a ram's head, from whence it has its name: this is hung by the middle with ropes to another beam, which lies across, supported by a couple of posts; and thus hanging equally balanced, is, by a great number of men violently thrust backwards and forwards, and so beats the wall with its iron head; nor is there any tower so strong, or wall so broad, as to resist its repeated strokes."

Vitruvius {p} says it was invented by the Carthaginians at the siege of Cadiz; but Pliny {q} affirms it was invented by Epeus at the siege of Troy; but the first mention of them is made by Ezekiel here, and in **Eze 4:2**, and Diodorus Siculus {r} affirms they were not known in the times of Sardanapalus, when Nineveh was taken by Arbaces. The Targum interprets it of officers set at the gates, as before; and so Jarchi:

to cast a mount; made up of earth, to raise their batteries upon: and

to build a fort; to cast out their arrows from thence, and protect the besiegers; See Gill on "Eze 4:1".

{o} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 19. Vid. Valtrinum de Re Militari Roman. l. 5. c. 6. p. 526. {p} De Architectura, l. 10. c. 19. {q} Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56. {r} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 113.

Ezekiel 21:23

Ver. 23. And it shall be unto them as a false divination in their sight,.... That is, the Jews shall laugh at this divination as a vain thing, as a Heathenish practice, and of which nothing would come; and even at the prophet's account of it, and his prophecy concerning the king of Babylon coming to invade them; they looked upon them all as of a piece, trusting to their false prophets, who assured them that they should not be delivered into his hands:

to them that have sworn oaths; a description of the Jews, who had with their king Zedekiah sworn allegiance to the king of Babylon; which oaths they had violated, taking others to the king of Egypt; or, "because they were bound by oaths to them" {s}; meaning either the Egyptians, who had bound themselves by oaths to protect the Jews; and therefore they feared nothing from this pretended divination and prophecy, as they judged them to be, though they had not kept faith with the Chaldeans themselves; or the Jews, because of the Egyptians who had entered into an alliance with them, confirmed by oaths; and this had made them secure, on this they depended. The Targum takes the words as if they signified "seven times seven"; and gives this strange paraphrase of them, accounting for the vain confidence of the Jews;

"and their divinations were lies in their eyes, and the enchantments with which he enchanted them; for they knew not that he had observed forty nine times (i.e. his arrows, images, and liver), and an answer was returned upon the word, till the time came to him in which they should be delivered into his hands:"

but he will call to remembrance the iniquity: that is, Nebuchadnezzar would call to mind the perfidy and perjury of the king of Judah, in breaking covenant with him, and violating his oath. Some think that the Chaldeans that were with Nebuchadnezzar were not satisfied at first that it was a true divination that was made, they being set upon the taking of Rabbath first; but Nebuchadnezzar, remembering and putting them in mind of the treachery of Zedekiah, reconciled them to it, and determined them in the expedition against the Jews:

that they may be taken; as birds in a snare, or beasts in a net, and be carried captive.

{s} Mhl twebv yebv "quia obstrieti jurameutis eis suat", Piscator.

Ezekiel 21:24

Ver. 24. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Because of their vain confidence, added to their perjury and perfidy:

because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered; their old sins, by committing new ones, both against the Lord, and against the king of Babylon:

in that your transgressions are discovered, so that in all your doings your sins do appear; both in their religious and civil actions; in the worship of God, and in their covenants and agreements with men; their sins were exposed and manifest to all, not only to God, who was provoked thereby, but to men, to the nations round about; particularly to Nebuchadnezzar, who was enraged by them:

because, I say, that they are come to remembrance; both before the Lord, and the king of Babylon:

ye shall be taken with the hand; as easily as a bird is, when in the snare. The Targum is,

"ye shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon;"

which is no doubt the sense of the passage.

Ezekiel 21:25

Ver. 25. And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel,.... Meaning Zedekiah, the then reigning prince; who is so called, because he had profaned or violated the oath and covenant he made with the king of Babylon, as well as because of other sins he was guilty of; and his being a prince of Israel was an aggravation of his crimes: now, though it is "not fit" in common, or for ordinary persons, "to say to a king thou art wicked, and to princes ye are ungodly", Job 34:18, yet a prophet from the Lord, and in his name, may say so; and he ought, when he has a commission from God for it:

whose day is come; the time of his downfall and ruin; and so the Targum,

"whose day of destruction is come:"

when iniquity shall have an end; a stop put to the torrent of it, both in the king and his subjects; they not having the opportunity and means of sinning in captivity as before; or when the measure of iniquity is filled up, then comes punishment; or when the punishment of iniquity shall be completed. So the Targum,

"the time of the recompence of his sins."

Ezekiel 21:26

Ver. 26. Thus saith the Lord God, remove the diadem, and take off the crown,.... That is, from Zedekiah; and as these are the regalia and ensigns of royal dignity, taking them off signifies the deposition of him as a king, the stripping him of his kingly power and authority: an earthly crown is a corruptible and fading one, at most it continues but during this life, and sometimes not so long; it does not always sit firm; sometimes it is tottering and shakes, and sometimes quite fails off to the ground; it is taken from the head of one, and put upon the head of another, by him who gives the orders in the text, and has the sovereign disposal of crowns and kingdoms; who sets up one, and puts down another. The "diadem" was a royal tire of the head, wore in common; the "crown" was put on at certain times; both signify one and the same thing, royal dignity; though the former is sometimes used as an ornament of the priesthood, as the latter of kingly power; hence the Targum,

"remove the diadem (or mitre) from Seraiah the high priest, and I will take away the crown from Zedekiah the king;"

but the latter is only meant; besides, as Kimchi observes, it was not Seraiah, but Jehozadak his son, that was carried captive with Zedekiah:

this shall not be the same; this royal dignity shall not continue the same; the kingdom shall not be in the same lustre and glory, nor in the same hands:

exalt him that is low: either Jeconiah now in captivity; and which was fulfilled when Evilmerodach lifted up his head, and set his throne above the thrones of the kings in Babylon, Jer 52:31, or Zerubbabel, of the seed of Jeconiah, who was born in the captivity, and became prince of Judah; or rather the Messiah, who was of a low extraction; born of mean parents; was as a root out of a dry ground; appeared in the form of a servant, poor and lowly; yet, when he had done his work, was highly exalted at the right hand of God; far above angels, principalities, and powers; as well as set upon the throne of his father David:

and abase him that is high; the then prince upon the throne, Zedekiah; who was high and lifted up, but should be pulled down and humbled, as he was.

Ezekiel 21:27

Ver. 27. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it,.... The crown and kingdom of

Judah; which being expressed three times, has not respect, as Kimchi thinks, to the three generations, in which the crown ceased after the captivity, as those of Asir, Shealtiel, Pedaiah; and in the fourth generation was restored to Zerubbabel; for he was no king, nor was there any of David's line after; nor were the Maccabees or Hasmoneans properly kings; but the phrase denotes the utter abolition of the kingly power, and the certainty of it, which could not be restored, notwithstanding the attempts made by Gedaliah and Ishmael; all their schemes were overturned, and so in successive ages and may also denote and include the troubles that were in the Jewish state, not only during the captivity, but from that time unto the Messiah's coming; there were nothing but overturnings, overturnings till that time came:

and it shall be no more; a kingdom governed by one of the seed of the then present family, or of the seed of David; there shall be no more a king of his race, as there was not till Shiloh came, intended in the next clause:

until he come whose right it is; the right of the crown and kingdom of Israel; which belongs to Jesus the Messiah, being descended from a race of kings of the house of Judah, and of the seed of David: or,

to whom the judgment is {s}; to whom the Father hath committed all judgment, **Joh 5:22** all power of judging both his church and people, and the whole world:

and I will give it him; the crown and kingdom, which is his right; put him in the possession of it, as he was at his resurrection and ascension; and which will more fully appear in the latter day, when all kingdoms will become his; especially he has, and will appear to have, the throne of his father David, and of his kingdom there will be no end, **Lu 1:31**. This is understood and interpreted of the Messiah, by R. Abendana {t}, a modern Jew.

{s} jpvmh wl rva "cujus est judicium", Pagninus, Starckius; "[vel] jus", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Piscator. {t} Not. in Ben Melech, Miclol Yophi in loc.

Ezekiel 21:28

Ver. 28. And thou, son of man, prophesy, and say,.... Here begins a new prophecy, or rather an enlargement on part of the former; two ways being marked out for the sword of the Chaldeans to come in; the one leading to

Jerusalem, the other to Rabbath of the Ammonites; the prophecy being finished concerning the former, here an account is given of the latter; how the sword should move that way, and what execution it would do:

thus saith the Lord God concerning the Ammonites, and concerning their reproach; Nebuchadnezzar, agreeably to the above prophecy, having taken his route to Jerusalem, as his divination directed him, and destroyed that, returned to Babylon, without making any attempt upon the Ammonites; which so flushed them, that they insulted the Jews, and laughed at their destruction, as if their God whom they served could not save them; attributing their safety and prosperity to the idols they worshipped; see Eze 25:1:

even say thou, the sword, the sword is drawn for the slaughter; the same sword of the Chaldeans, which was drawn for the slaughter of the Jews, is now drawn for the slaughter of the Ammonites; and which is repeated for the certainty of it, and to inject terror; and this, as Josephus {u} says, was accomplished five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, in the twenty third year of Nebuchadnezzar:

it is furbished, to consume because of the glittering; being brightened and made sharp, it not only terrified with its glittering, but was more fit and prepared to cut and destroy; see Eze 21:9.

{u} Antiqu. Jud. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 7.

Ezekiel 21:29

Ver. 29. Whiles they see vanity unto thee, whiles they divine a lie unto thee,.... The Ammonites had their seers, soothsayers, diviners, and false prophets, which they are bid to be aware of, and are cautioned against hearkening to, Jer 27:3, these told them they were in the utmost safety, and that the king of Babylon would not come against them; or, if he did, would not succeed, when his sword was drawn and furbished for the destruction of them:

to bring thee upon the necks of the slain, of the wicked; that is, of the Jews who were slain by the sword of the Chaldeans for their wickedness; and these diviners by their vain divination and lies would bring the Ammonites into the same condition, to be slain as they were; and as it were to fall upon their necks, as one slain person upon another; and so the Targum, "to deliver thy neck as the necks of the slain, of the wicked:"

it may be rendered, "to put thee to the necks of the slain" {w}; or, as Kimchi, "with the necks of the slain"; though some understand it, as if the diviners by their lies, promising peace and prosperity, encouraged the Ammonites to insult the Jews, and as it were to trample upon the necks of the dead:

whose day is come, when their iniquity shall have an end; along with Zedekiah their king; a description of the Jews;
See Gill on "Eze 21:27".

{w} yllx yrawu la Ktwa ttl "ut ponant te cum cervicibus interfectorum", Munster, Tigurine version; "applicando te ad cervices confossorum", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus.

Ezekiel 21:30

Ver. 30. Shall I cause it to return into his sheath?.... The drawn and furbished sword of the Chaldeans? no, I will not; it shall never return or be put up until the Ammonites are utterly consumed. Some read these words in the imperative, as the Targum,

"return the sword to its sheath;"

so the Vulgate Latin version, "return to thy sheath"; and so may be considered as a direction to the Ammonites to put up their swords, and not stand in their own defence, since it would be to no purpose; though Jerom, and Grotius after him, take the words to be an apostrophe to the drawn sword of the Chaldeans to sheath itself, having done its work upon the Jews and Ammonites; or to the Chaldeans to return to Babylon, and where they also should be punished; and so interpret all that follows of the destruction of the Babylonians by the Medes and Persians; but the first sense is best:

I will judge thee in the place where thou wast created, in the land of thy nativity; not in the place where their father Ammon was born, which was at Zoar; but where they first became a kingdom and state, a body politic; or where the present generation of them were born; they should not be carried out of their own land, but destroyed in it.

Ezekiel 21:31

Ver. 31. And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee,.... Like a mighty flood, which should sweep them away for their sins and transgressions; and particularly for their reproaches of God and his people, which caused his indignation to rise, and him to pour it out upon them in such a manner:

I will blow against thee in the fire of my wrath; as men put metal into a furnace, and then blow upon it, in order to melt it, and consume the dross; and which fire, so blown, is exceeding fierce and very consuming; who can stand against such a blast as that of the wrath of God, not only kindled, but blown with his breath like a stream of brimstone?

and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men; or "burners" {x}; that burn with fierce anger, barbarous and inhuman, that would show no mercy nor compassion, such were the Chaldeans, **Hab 1:6**:

and skilful to destroy; though like brutes or beasts of prey for their cruelty; yet, like men, rational, cunning, and artful to devise ways and means to destroy men; well versed in the art of war; and thoroughly learned in all the lessons and methods of violence and destruction.

{x} Myreb "ardentium", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus; "urentium", so some in Vatablus.

Ezekiel 21:32

Ver. 32. Thou shalt be for fuel for the fire,.... Easily consumed, as briers and thorns cast into a furnace; such are wicked men to the fire of God's wrath:

thy blood shall be in the midst of the land; such large numbers shall be slain everywhere, that the land shall flow with the blood of them; who shall lie unburied, and rot, and putrefy upon the ground:

thou shalt be no more remembered; but lie in everlasting oblivion, as they do to this day; the name of an Ammonite being nowhere mentioned and heard of:

for I the Lord have spoken it; who never alters the thing that is gone out of his lips; and sooner shall heaven and earth pass away than one word of his. The Targum is, "for I the Lord have decreed by my word;"

and his counsel shall stand, and every purpose and resolution of his shall be accomplished.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 22

In this chapter a catalogue or list of the sins of the Jews is given; a comparison of them to dross is made, and they are dealt with accordingly; and a complaint is lodged against all ranks and orders of men for their sins; on account of which, there being no intercessor for them, they are threatened with captivity and destruction. The prophet is ordered to judge them, and lay before them their abominable sins,
Eze 22:1, of which a long list is given, as murder, idolatry; contempt of parents; oppression of the stranger, fatherless, and widow; negligence of holy things; profanation of the sabbath; tale bearing, lewdness and uncleanness of various sorts; bribery, usury, extortion, and dishonest gain, Eze 22:3 for which the Lord threatens to deal with them in a manner that would be intolerable to them; that he would carry them captive, and scatter them among the Heathen, Eze 22:14, they are compared to dross, and as such should be gathered into a furnace, and melted down, Eze 22:17, all ranks and orders of men are complained of, because of their sins, and threatened, Eze 22:23, the prophets for their voraciousness, rapine, murder, and lies, Eze 22:25, the priests, for their violation of the law, neglect of holy things, and profanation of the sabbath, Eze 22:26, the princes, for their cruelty, murder, and dishonest gain, Eze 22:27, the people of the land, for their oppression and robbery, Eze 22:29, and there being none to stand in the gap for them, the Lord threatens to pour out his wrath upon them, and consume them, Eze 22:30.

Ver. 1. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me..... The word of prophecy from the Lord, as the Targum, another prophecy:

saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 22:2

Ver. 2. Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody city?.... Or, "city of bloods" {y}? the city of Jerusalem, in which was shed the blood of the prophets sent unto her; the doubling of the word denotes the vehemency with which it was expressed: wilt thou plead for and excuse such a city as this? surely no; so some: or wilt thou do thy work and office as a prophet? hast thou courage enough to do it? will thou rebuke and reprove? as the Targum; wilt thou examine her case, judge truly, and condemn her, as thou oughtest to do? hast thou an inclination to take this affair in hand? then be directed to it, as follows:

yea, thou shalt show her all her abominations; lay them before her; convict her of them; show her the evil of them, and the punishment they deserve; every kind of sin she was guilty of; for, as for particular acts, it was impossible to reckon them; those sins that were the most flagrant, and most frequently committed, and which were abominable to the Lord, and rendered her so in his sight, are intended.

{y} Mymd rye ta "civitatem sanguinum", V. L. Munster, Montanus.

Ezekiel 22:3

Ver. 3. Then say thou, thus saith the Lord God,.... For though the prophet was to sit as judge, yet in the name of the King of kings, under whose authority he acted:

the city sheddeth blood in the midst of it; openly and impudently, in the face of all, and in great abundance; even innocent blood, as the Targum has it: murders were frequent and common, either through quarrels, or through unrighteous judgments in courts of judicature:

that her time may come; to fill up the measure of her iniquity, and to receive the just punishment of her sins. So the Targum,

"the time of her destruction:"

and maketh idols against herself, to defile herself; being guilty, not only of murder, but of idolatry; she was an idol maker and an idol worshipper; and which was against herself, as well as against God; to her own ruin and destruction, as well as to his dishonour; and it is no wonder she should be defiled with such dunghill gods as these were, as the word used signifies. The Targum renders it, "in the midst of her"; and Kimchi interprets it, by "her", or "above her", upon the mountains and hills.

Ezekiel 22:4

Ver. 4. Thou art become guilty in thy blood that thou hast shed,.... Not only she contracted guilt by the innocent blood she shed, but she was tried and found guilty; her guilt was notorious, plain, and evident, as well as exceeding great, and much aggravated:

and hast defiled thyself in thine idols which thou hast made: she not only made them, in doing which she sinned; but polluted herself with them, by worshipping them; her mind and conscience were defiled with them; and which brought such a stain and pollution, as could not be removed by anything that she could do: there are both pollution and guilt in sin, and neither can be removed but by the blood of Christ; and, unless removed that way, punishment must follow:

and thou hast caused thy days to draw near, and art come even unto thy years; to full age, to ripeness for judgment; she had hastened by her sins her days of affliction and distress appointed for her, and was come to years of maturity to suffer for her sins; the years of her captivity, which would soon take place; years in which she would have no pleasure:

therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the Heathen, and a mocking to all countries; who, instead of praising them for their idolatry, would deride them for leaving the God of their fathers, which they did not; and insult over them in their affliction and distress, though they joined with them in idolatrous practices.

Ezekiel 22:5

Ver. 5. Those that be near, and those that be far from thee, shall mock thee,.... The neighbouring nations, as the Edomites, Philistines, Moabites, and Ammonites; and distant ones, as the Babylonians, Medes, and Persians; all that either hear of, or see their misery, shall rejoice at it, and triumph over them:

which art infamous and much vexed; or they shall say, O thou of an infamous name and character; who hast defiled thy name, got a blot upon it, and lost thy credit by thy conduct and behaviour; and now fretting and vexing under the afflictions and calamities that lie upon thee: or whose tumults are many, as the Targum; who hast been full of noise, and factions, and tumults; thou art now come to a righteous end.

Ezekiel 22:6

Ver. 6. Behold, the princes of Israel,.... Those that belonged to the royal family, or the nobles of the land, or the members of the grand sanhedrim of the nation:

everyone were in thee to their power to shed blood; everyone exerted himself to the uttermost, according to his ability, to shed blood, or cause it to be shed; everyone strove, as it were, who should shed most, to exceed each other in this abominable sin.

Ezekiel 22:7

Ver. 7. In thee have they set light by father and mother,.... Through whom they received their being from God; by whom they were brought into the world, brought up and educated; and to whom they owed great respect, honour, and obedience; but, on the contrary, they wanted affection to their persons, showed great disrespect to their commands, and treated them with irreverence and contempt; a sin of a very heinous nature, of the first magnitude; reckoned among the very Heathens as next to contempt of God, and disobedience to him; is directly contrary to a law of God, and threatened with a curse, and a severe punishment,
Ex 20:12 by the connection of the words with the preceding, the princes of Israel seem intended; the children of the nobles, and the sons and daughters of the king; who, it might have been thought, by the character they bore, the station they were in, and the politeness of their education, would have behaved in another manner; and if this sin prevailed among them, no doubt it did among those of a lower class, who are always influenced by such examples:

in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger; the proselyte, as the Septuagint; him that was converted to me, as the Syriac version; which is an aggravation of the sin, that it was not merely a stranger that came about civil business, but one who came from foreign parts to worship the Lord at Jerusalem, as the Ethiopian eunuch did: now, to oppress such an one, either by private frauds, or by injustice in a court of judicature; to exact upon him for food or lodging; or circumvent and overreach him in trade and commerce; or distress him by vexatious lawsuits, when ignorant of the laws and customs of the country; at a distance from his friends, and in want of money, must be a very great evil; and yet even the princes themselves in Jerusalem were guilty of it:

in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow; that were weak and helpless, and had none to protect them, father and husband being dead; when, according to their first rank and station as princes, they ought to have been the defenders of them; but, instead of that, distressed, afflicted, and grieved them.

Ezekiel 22:8

Ver. 8. Thou hast despised mine holy things,.... The holy place, the temple, and the worship of it; holy persons, the priests that officiated there; holy sacrifices offered up by them; the holy word of God read and explained; and all holy ordinances there administered. These words are directed to Jerusalem, the holy city, and to the inhabitants of it, who ought to have been holy men:

and hast profaned my sabbaths; by doing their own work, and neglecting the service of God; and which was an inlet, as it usually is, to all manner of sin.

Ezekiel 22:9

Ver. 9. In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood,.... Innocent blood, as the Targum; such who go from house to house, as pedlars do, with their wares or spices, as the word {a} signifies; hence the Syriac version renders it "merchants"; and carry tales and lies of innocent persons, and stir up others against them to wrath and revenge, and shed their blood; or that go to the courts of judicature, and there accuse innocent persons, and bear false witness against them, to the taking away of their lives. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it "thieves": who commonly are murderers: and in thee they eat upon the mountains; that is, there were such in Jerusalem who used to go to the mountains where idols were worshipped, and eat the things that were sacrificed to them; or partook of the feast made to the honour of them. So the Targum, "in thee they served idols on the mountains:"

in the midst of thee they commit lewdness; a general word for all manner of uncleanness, as adultery, fornication, incest, &c. of which some particulars follow.

{a} lykr yvna "homines mercaturae, [vel] aromatis"; so Ben Melech observes.

Ezekiel 22:10

Ver. 10. In thee have they discovered their father's nakedness,.... Or, "he discovered" {b}, or "uncovered", it being in the singular number; though the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read in the plural; this, though committed, was done but by a few; it being a sin not so much as named among men, as for a man to lie with his father's wife, **1Co 5:1** as Reuben did,
Ge 35:22 and which is expressly forbidden; and is mentioned first as the capital sin of uncleanness, Le 18:6:

in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution; ravished and deflowered such women who had their menstrues; to lie with such was prohibited by the law of God, Le 18:19, so that here was a double sin committed; a rape of a woman, whether married or unmarried, at the time of her purgation or sickness; and such a copulation, which at another time would be lawful, ought to be abstained from at such a time, as prejudicial to themselves, and to their posterity, as well as contrary to the divine law.

{b} hlg "revelavit", Montanus; "discooperuit", Vatablus; "retegit", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "[sub.] filius", Piscator.

Ezekiel 22:11

Ver. 11. And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife,.... The sin of adultery, which is an abominable sin; it is so to God, and it should be so to man: or, "a man hath committed" {c}; some man of note, a great man; for this sin prevailed among the princes and nobles: or "everyone"; it being a general vice, which obtained among all ranks, high and low, rich and poor:

and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; his wife's daughter, or his son's wife, contrary to Le 18:15:

and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter: his own sister, begotten of the same father, though it may be not born of the same mother; yet the relation is too near for marriage; and besides, it is a rape that is here intended; and the uncovering of the nakedness of a sister, whether by father or mother's side, whether born at home or abroad, is prohibited, Le 18:9, and some have thought that all these acts of uncleanness were committed in honour of their idols, and when they worshipped them on the mountains, Eze 22:9.

{c} hve-vyaw "et vir fecit"; Cocceius.

Ezekiel 22:12

Ver. 12. In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood..... Innocent blood, as the Targum; judges upon the bench, whose office it is to take the part of the innocent, and clear him from unjust charges; and protect him from the violence of wicked and unreasonable men; that lay things to his charge, which, if true, would require blood; and yet men in such offices took bribes to bring in the innocent guilty, and pass sentence of death on him; which is a most shocking iniquity indeed: to take bribes in pecuniary matters is very wicked; but to do it in cases which affect life is most dreadfully cruel: or if it is to be understood of such persons who take bribes to bear false witness against a man, to the taking away of his life, it is a very heinous and detestable sin; for, as for a set of jurymen bribed to bring in a wrong verdict, which would be equally a most enormous crime; such a custom to try causes to be determined by a jury did not obtain among the Jews:

thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion; not content with moderate usury, and increase, and even that were forbid the Jews among themselves; so greedy were they of gain at any rate, that they extorted it of their neighbours, in the most violent and oppressive manner. Kimchi, by her "friends or neighbours", understands the Assyrians and Egyptians; to whom she gave gifts, extorted by oppression from her own people, to get help of them:

and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord; to seek for help from me; or they had forgotten his law, which forbids the above sins; they had forgotten the instructions, cautions, and directions he had given them. The Targum is,

"and hast forsook my worship;"

forgetfulness of God is the cause of all sin.

Ezekiel 22:13

Ver. 13. Behold, therefore, I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made,.... As one amazed at it; or as filled with indignation against it; or as grieved and distressed at it; so Jarchi and Kimchi: or else as rejoicing at the punishment going to be inflicted on them for it. So the Septuagint renders it,

"I will bring my hand upon them;"

and the Targum,

"behold, I will bring my vengeance upon thee for the sins of mammon, &c.

Jarchi and Kimchi observe from their Rabbins, that four and twenty sins are recited by Ezekiel; but the final sentence of punishment is for rapine or dishonest gain, which is the greatest evil of all, **1Ti 6:10**:

and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee; the innocent blood shed in the midst of her; not so much by thieves and cutthroats, as under a pretence of justice which was very abominable indeed; against which the Lord expresses just and strong resentment.

Ezekiel 22:14

Ver. 14. Can thine heart endure,.... Or "stand" {d}: surely it must fall within thee; become like water, and melt as wax, be it ever so hard and adamantine:

or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee? surely they must become weak, and drop, and not be able to hold a weapon for defence:

and, if this would be the case, when God should deal with the Jews for their sins, by sending the Chaldean army to besiege their city, and take it; how will it be with sinners at the day of judgment, and to all eternity, when the awful sentence shall be pronounced, "go ye cursed"; when the wrath of God shall be poured out upon them; when they shall be cast into hell, where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched? this will be intolerable by the most stout hearted sinner; no heart will be strong enough to stand up under it, or hands to keep it off:

I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it; he who is the mighty God, the eternal and unchangeable Jehovah; he has said it, that he will deal with impenitent sinners in a way of wrath, and he will be as good as his word; he will certainly accomplish it; it is in vain for men to flatter themselves to the contrary; or to put away the evil day far from them; it shall surely be. The Targum is,

"I have decreed by my word, and I will establish it."

{d} dmeyh "num quid stabit cor tuum?" Paginus, Montanus; "consistet" Munster, Vatablus, Piscator; "perstabit", Junius and Tremellius, Polanus; "constabit", Coeccius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 22:15

Ver. 15. And I will scatter thee among the Heathen, and disperse thee in the countries,.... Not only cause them to be carried captive to some one place, as Babylon; but to be scattered and dispersed throughout the various provinces of it, and in other nations, as chaff is by the winds; signifying hereby the power by which it would be done; their weakness, who would not be able to hinder it; and the uncomfortable condition they would be in:

and will consume thy filthiness out of thee; by destroying some filthy persons, and reforming others; by bringing them by means of those afflictions to a sense of their sins, and to forsake them; and so would be refined as silver from its dross in a furnace: it may have a particular reference to their idolatry, that filthy sin, which they were cured of, and purged from, by their captivity, and to which they returned no more.

Ezekiel 22:16

Ver. 16. And thou shalt take thine inheritance in thyself in the sight of the Heathen,.... No longer be the inheritance of God, but their own; and not have God to be their portion and inheritance, but themselves; and a poor portion and inheritance that must be, being in captivity, poverty, and distress; enjoying neither their civil nor religious liberties, as heretofore; it would be now manifest to the Heathens that they were forsaken of God, and left to themselves. Some render it, "and thou shalt be profaned, or polluted in thyself" {e}; shalt be known to be so to thyself, as well as appear so to others. The Targum is,

"I will be sanctified in thee before the people:"

and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; able to do what I say; faithful to my word; omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent; and this thou shalt not only know, but own and acknowledge, when these calamities take place, and have their effect.

{e} Kb tlxnw "et prophana effecta in te", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "prophana efficeris", Piscator; "et polluta eris in te", Grotius; "et prophnata eris in te", Starckiss; "et prophanaberis in te", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 22:17

Ver. 17. And the word of the Lord came unto me,.... The word of prophecy from the Lord, as the Targum:

saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 22:18

Ver. 18. Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross,.... Vile, despicable, useless, and unprofitable; to which the wicked of the earth are compared, Ps 119:119 and here the Lord's professing people, they differing nothing from them, being sadly degenerated; formerly they were as silver, and so they might be reckoned among themselves; but to God, who is omniscient, the searcher of the hearts and reins, who saw all their actions, and knew the spring of them, in his sight they were as dross:

all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace: or "crucible" {f}; where they are put together, in order to be set in the furnace, and melted down. It is not usual to put so many different metals together for melting, but separately; but here it seems to intend a mixture of them all together; and so the Targum and Septuagint render it,

"all they as brass, &c. are mixed;"

several metals of the baser sort are here mentioned, by a gradation from the better to the worse; tin being not so good as brass, and iron of less value than either, and lead than any of them. Some think the different characters of the people are here described; impudent persons by "brass"; hypocrites by "tin"; cruel and savage ones by "iron"; and such as were sottish and stupid by "lead"; or, as others, covetous ones:

they are even the dross of silver; once they were like silver, precious and valuable, while they retained the true religion, and the worship of God, and behaved agreeably to their character in the performance of all good works, and were in outward flourishing circumstances; but now degenerated from the pure worship of God, and sunk into idolatry and wickedness, and become poor and miserable.

{f} rwk "catinus", Junius and Tremellius, Polanus, Grotius, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 22:19

Ver. 19. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, because ye are all become dross,.... King, princes, nobles, prophets, priests, as well as the common people; the apostasy was general, in city and country; scarcely any exceptions to be made:

therefore will I gather you into the midst of Jerusalem; from the several parts of the country, thinking they should be safe there, when the design of God by this providence was the destruction of them in it.

Ezekiel 22:20

Ver. 20. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace,.... As refiners of metal do; though not together, as here, but each metal apart. Silver is here mentioned, to denote that those who were truly good should suffer in this calamity, and be tried and purified by it:

to blow the fire upon it, and to melt it; the metal being covered with fuel, this is kindled and blown upon, to cause the greater heat, in order to melt it down; expressive of the wrath of God, as follows:

so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury; from the several parts of the land unto the city of Jerusalem: this they thought was for their good and safety, but it was in wrath, and in order to ruin:

and I will leave you there, and melt you; that is, I will leave you in the city of Jerusalem, to the sword, famine, and pestilence, to be destroyed by them; or with fire at the burning of the city: or, "I will rest" {g}; as the refiner does; having put his metal into the furnace, and blown the fire, sits still till all is melted.

{g} ytxnhw "et requiescam", Mercerus; "et requiescere faciam", Paguinus, Montanus, Vatablus.

Ezekiel 22:21

Ver. 21. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath,.... Not only gather them in wrath, as before; but blow upon them in wrath, which is often compared to fire in Scripture; and besides, the city and temple of Jerusalem were to be burnt, and were burnt with material fire, in consequence of God's displeasure against his people:

and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof; of the city of Jerusalem; be destroyed by one judgment or another in it; or perish in the conflagration of it.

Ezekiel 22:22

Ver. 22. As silver is melted in the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof,.... This is repeated for the greater confirmation of it; and the people might assure themselves that it would verily be, as was threatened:

and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you; feel it upon them; be sensible of it, and acknowledge it; and that it is the Lord's doings, and righteously done; these are they who are meant by the silver, who, though cast into the furnace, were not destroyed, only purified, and made the better and brighter for their afflictions.

Ezekiel 22:23

Ver. 23. And the word of the Lord came unto me,.... The word of prophecy from the Lord, as the Targum:

saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 22:24

Ver. 24. Son of man, say unto her, thou land,.... Thou land of Israel, as the Targum:

thou art not cleansed; from filthiness, by the fire of divine judgments; or reformed from sins, by the instructions, cautions, and exhortations of the prophets; none of these things had any effect upon her to make her wiser and better. So the Targum,

"a land not cleansed it is, and good works are not done in it, to protect it in the day of cursing:"

nor rained upon in the day of indignation; no cooling shower to quench the fire of divine wrath; nothing to avert or stop the judgments of God; no refreshment and comfort from the doctrines of the prophets, which fell like rain: it is a judgment upon a people to have no rain, either in a temporal or spiritual sense; see Zec 14:17. In the Talmud {h}, this text is brought to prove that the flood did not come upon the land of Israel.

{h} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 113. 1.

Ezekiel 22:25

Ver. 25. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof,.... Not of the prophets of the Lord, but of her prophets; such as were agreeable to her, the false prophets. The Targum renders it,

"a company of scribes;"

the interpreters of the law; these entered into a confederacy together against the true prophets, and agreed to prophesy the same things, to flatter the people with peace and prosperity, when sudden destruction was at hand:

like a roaring lion ravening the prey; that roars when hungry, and while it is tearing the prey in pieces; so these false prophets thundered out their menaces against the true prophets, and those that adhered to them; clamouring against them as enemies to the state; and threatening them with accusations to it; and carrying on a judicial process against them:

they have devoured souls; persecuted men to death, that would not give credit to their prophecies; and destroyed the souls of those that did, with their false doctrines and prophecies:

they have taken the treasure and precious things; of those they destroyed; or of others, for prophesying smooth things to them; filthy lucre being the principal thing they had in view:

they have made her many widows in the midst thereof; by persecuting their husbands to death for not believing their prophecies; or by persuading to hold out the siege, under a notion of deliverance; whereby the lives of many were lost by the sword, famine, and pestilence, to whose death they might be said to be accessary.

Ezekiel 22:26

Ver. 26. Her priests have violated my law,.... Or, "forced it" {i}; they gave a wrong explanation of it, made it speak what it should not; they wrested the sense and meaning of it, and did and taught things contrary to it; they broke it themselves, who should have instructed others in it, and exhorted them to have kept it, and encouraged them by their own example:

and have profaned my holy things; sacrifices and oblations, which were only to be offered and eaten by holy persons; they made them common to others who should not have partook of them:

they have put no difference between the holy and the profane; between holy persons and things, and profane persons and things; they made no difference in their practice between the one and the other; but promiscuously conversed with holy and profane persons, and used holy and profane things, without distinguishing one from the other:

neither have they showed the difference between the unclean and the clean: they did not show to the people, as was the duty of their office, what was clean or unclean for sacrifice; what was clean and allowed to be eaten, and what was unclean and forbid to be eaten; nor who were clean and who were unclean persons for conversation; who were to be kept company with, and who not:

and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths; were not careful to observe them themselves, and connived at them that broke them; they might have seen men carrying burdens, and doing other servile works on such days, but they turned their eyes another way, and would not look at them; and when they did see them were silent, and would not reprove them:

and I am profaned among them; for the law of God being profaned, his institutions profaned, and his sabbaths profaned, he himself was profaned; inasmuch as he was not sanctified by them, through the just observation of those things. The Targum is,

"my will is profaned among them."

{i} ytrwt womx "vim faciunt legimeae", Junius & Tremellius: Polanus; "vim fecerunt", Cocceius: Starckius.

Ezekiel 22:27

Ver. 27. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey,.... The king and his nobles, those of the first rank and quality, who ought to have protected the persons and property of the meaner sort; these were like "wolves" themselves, subtle, voracious, and cruel, preying upon harmless persons, as those creatures do upon the sheep and lambs:

to shed blood; innocent blood, as the Targum:

and to destroy souls; take away lives, under a pretence of treasonable practices, and all with a view to get dishonest gain; that their estates may be forfeited, their goods confiscated, and got into their hands.

Ezekiel 22:28

Ver. 28. And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar,.... Palliated their sins, declared it to be right to shed the blood they did; and seize on the estates of men; but this, though it might for a while satisfy the consciences of these princes, and stop the clamours of the people against them; yet would not last long, but be like the building of a wall with bad stuff, which will not stand; and daubing it with mortar, which will soon wash off. So the Targum,

"and the false prophets which are in the midst of her are like to those that build a wall, and daub it with mere clay, without straw;"

See Gill on "Eze 13:10".

Seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them; pretending visions from God, when what they see, or pretend to see, is nothing but vanity and emptiness, mere delusions; and prophesying good things, peace and prosperity, when they are all lies; giving out they have messages from God, and are ordered to foretell that happy times will be, when it is all falsehood:

saying, thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken; herein mimicking the true prophets, who came in the name of the Lord, and usually prefaced their prophecies with a thus saith the Lord; and so did these false prophets, when the Lord said nothing to them, and gave them no commission to speak in his name, or say the things they did.

Ezekiel 22:29

Ver. 29. The people of the land have used oppression,.... The common people, the more powerful among them, such as were in greatest authority in cities and towns, in neighbourhoods and families, the richest among them; these oppressed the poor, and those that were under them, the servants of them, and tenants to them, and who were not able to defend themselves against them: the

Septuagint and Syriac versions understand this of the prophets using the people of the land ill:

and exercised robbery; such who had not the power as others had, became thieves and robbers, went on the highway, and took men's money from them; broke up houses, and plundered them, and stole away their goods:

and have vexed the poor and needy; by their oppressions, rapines, and robberies, when they should rather have relieved them:

yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully; or, "without right or judgment" {k}; in a very unjust manner, contrary to the due course of law, against all equity and justice; which the Israelites were warned and ordered not to do, in many passages of Scripture; and for this reason, because they had been strangers in Egypt.

{k} jpvm alb "absque judicio", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, "non in judicio", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 22:30

Ver. 30. And I sought for a man among them,.... among the princes, priests, prophets, and people of the land, who acted the part as above described; for otherwise, no doubt, there were good people in the land, as Jeremiah, Baruch, and others, but not among these:

that should make up the hedge; that was broken down by the transgressions of the people, who exceeded all bounds of law and justice; one that would restrain them from sinning, and reform them, and set them a good example; one, as the Targum has it,

"whose works were good;"

a good man, that would endeavour by his influence to stop the breaking in of sin, and the consequences of it:

and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; in the gap that sin had made, at which the Lord was entering as a man of war to destroy the transgressors; one that should present himself to the Lord on the behalf of the people; seek mercy for them, as the Targum; interpose between

God and them, and act the part of an intercessor; pray for them, as Moses did for the people of Israel, that he would not destroy them; see Ps 106:23:

but I found none; no reformer of them, no repairer of the breach, nor restorer of paths, to dwell in; no intercessor for them, as Abraham for Sodom, Moses for Israel; or any, like Aaron, that stood between the living and the dead to stay the plague.

Ezekiel 22:31

Ver. 31. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them,.... Like a mighty torrent, carrying all before it:

I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath; by the sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity:

their own way have I recompensed on their heads, saith the Lord; brought just punishment upon them, such as their ways and works deserved;

"the vengeance of their way,"

as the Targum.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 23:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 23

In this chapter the idolatries of Israel and Judah are represented under the metaphor of two harlots, and their lewdness. These harlots are described by their descent; by the place and time in which they committed their whoredoms; by their names, and which are explained,
Eze 23:1, the idolatries of Israel, or the ten tribes, under the name of Aholah, which they committed with the Assyrians, and which they continued from the Egyptians, of whom they had learned them, are exposed,
Eze 23:5, and their punishment for them is declared, Eze 23:9 then the idolatries of Judah, or the two tribes, under the name of Aholibah, are represented as greater than those of the ten tribes,

Eze 23:11, which they committed with the Assyrians, Eze 23:12, with the Chaldeans and Babylonians, Eze 23:13 in imitation of the Egyptians, reviving former idolatries learnt of them, Eze 23:19, wherefore they are threatened, that the Chaldeans, Babylonians, and Assyrians, should come against them, and spoil them, and carry them captive, Eze 23:22, and the prophet is bid to declare the abominable sin of them both, Eze 23:36, and to signify that they should be judged after the manner of adulteresses, should be stoned, and dispatched with swords, their sons and their daughters, and their houses burnt with fire; by which means their adulteries or idolatries should be made to cease, Eze 23:45.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord came unto me,.... The word of prophecy, as the Targum; another prophecy, one upon the same subject, as in Eze 16:1,

saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 23:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, there were two women,.... Or two nations and kingdoms, the kingdom of Israel or the ten tribes, and the kingdom of Judah or the two tribes. So the Targum,

"son of man, prophesy concerning two provinces, which are as two women:"

the daughters of one mother; either Sarah the wife of Abraham, from whom they sprung; or because they were originally one kingdom and nation; so they were when they came out of Egypt, and during the times of the judges, and in the reigns of David and Solomon; but became two in the days of Rehoboam the son of Solomon, from whom ten tribes revolted, and set up a separate kingdom, with Jeroboam at the head of it.

Ezekiel 23:3

Ver. 3. And they committed whoredoms in Egypt,.... When they were but one body, one nation; and while they sojourned as strangers in that land they learned and practised the idolatries of it, Jos 24:14, and so the Targum,

"and they erred in Egypt, after the worship of their idols they erred, and there they corrupted their works:"

they committed whoredoms in their youth; as soon as they were come out of Egypt, and were formed into a political and ecclesiastical state, had the law of God given them, and promised obedience to him, and were espoused by him, which times are called the days of their youth and espousal, **Jer 2:2**, and then were they guilty of whoredom, or spiritual adultery, which idolatry, in making and worshipping the golden calf, after the manner of Egypt; and in joining themselves to Baalpeor, the god of the Moabites, Ex 32:1;

there were their breasts pressed, there they bruised the teats of their virginity; that is, the Egyptians, who drew them into idolatry, and with whom they committed it; which is expressed by the actions of adulterous persons, suggesting that, before this, they were as chaste and pure virgins to God, adhered to his worship, and served him only, and were not defiled with the superstition and idolatry of the Heathens: or, "they made {l} the teats or paps of their virginity"; that is, made them swell and increase, being impregnated by them, and their idolatry completed; or to move and heave being pressed.

{l} ydd wve "fecerant mammas", Starckius; "fecerent ut earam mammae agrerent", Gussetius; "sese commovendo scilicet, in contentione libidinis aestuantes, et pectoris anheli reciprocationem sequentes", ib. p. 652. "ibi subagitarunt ubera virginum", Coeccius.

Ezekiel 23:4

Ver. 4. And the names of them were Aholah the elder,.... Or, "the greater" {m} meaning the ten tribes of Israel, which were more in number than Judah, and greater in power and riches; their name, Aholah, signifies "her tent or tabernacle", which was entirely their own, and not the Lord's: their worship, and places of worship, were of their own appointing, namely, their calves at Dan and Bethel; God had nothing to do with them, there he did not dwell; his tabernacle was not there, that was at Salem, Ps 76:1:

and Aholibah her sister; which name signifies "my tent or tabernacle is in her": this is the name of Judah or the two tribes, in which stood the temple of the Lord, where he was worshipped, and where he dwelt: some think these were proper names of two Egyptian harlots; others think there is allusion to the wife of Esau, Ge 36:2:

and they were mine; or, "I had them {n}"; when they were together; they were originally espoused unto him; he avouched them to be his people, and they avouched him to be their God; he chose them for himself above all other people, and they professed themselves to be his, and promised to serve and worship him; and for a while did continue in his service and worship: and they bare sons and daughters; to the Lord, whom they brought up in the fear of God, and taught them to serve him: the phrase is expressive of their increase, and of their happiness and prosperity, while they adhered to the pure worship of God:

thus were their names; this is the application of them: "Samaria is Aholah"; or Aholah signifies Samaria, which was the metropolis of Ephraim, and belonged to the ten tribes, and is put for the whole, **Isa 7:9**: "and Jerusalem Aholibah"; or Aholibah designs Jerusalem, the head city of Judah, and stands for the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

{m} hlwdgh "major", Junius and Tremellius, Polanus, Starckius. {n} yl hnyyhtw "et habui eos", V. L. Heb.; "facte sunt mihi", Piscator; "[sub] uxores", Grotius.

Ezekiel 23:5

Ver. 5. And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine,.... His married wife, and so ought to have cleaved to him alone: or, under me {o}; under his cover, power, and protection, and therefore it was their interest to serve him only: or, "instead of me" {p}; or, as the Syriac version, "besides me": they worshipped other gods in the room of the true God, or other gods besides him. The Targum is,

"and Aholah erred from my worship;"

the ten tribes fell into idolatry, when they were God's professing people:

and she doted on her lovers; whom she loved even to madness; she was mad with love, to the idols, temples, altars, and idolatrous worship of the Heathens; particularly doted "on the Assyrians her neighbours"; who were become so by the conquest of Syria; and these they treated as their neighbours, and sought to have them to be their allies and confederates; courted their help and assistance, and gave them much money for that purpose; as Menahem gave to Pul king of Assyria a thousand talents of silver, to confirm the kingdom in his hand, 2Ki 15:19.

{o} ytxt "sub me", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Tigurine version. Piscator, Cocceius, Starckius. {p} "Exteros excipiens loco meo", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus.

Ezekiel 23:6

Ver. 6. Which were clothed with blue,.... A colour the Assyrians were fond of, and clothed their soldiers in, and was taking to the eye; and is mentioned, because that men, finely clothed find beautifully arrayed, are more engaging to women, who are fond of dress:

captains and rulers; men of power and authority in military and civil affairs, either in the camp, or in the court; officers either in the army, or in the king's palace; and which was a recommendation of them:

desirable young men; for their youth, strength, beauty, and honourable employments and offices:

horsemen riding upon horses: of which there was a scarcity in Judea; wherefore such were the more desirable to them, as appearing more grand, and being more serviceable and helpful to them.

Ezekiel 23:7

Ver. 7. Thus she committed her whoredoms with them,.... Entered into alliance with them, and joined them in their idolatrous worship:

with all them that were the chosen men of Assyria; before described by their habit, office, and age:

and with all on whom she doted; had an insatiable desire and lust after:

with all their idols she defiled herself; worshipped all the idols the Assyrians did; and which were defiling, as they must needs be, since, as the word used signifies, they were dunghill gods.

Ezekiel 23:8

Ver. 8. Neither left she her idols brought from Egypt,.... Though the Israelites took in the gods of the Assyrians into their worship, they did not relinquish the golden calves set up at Dan and Bethel, in imitation of the Egyptian deities; the idolatrous worship of which they learned in Egypt, and brought from thence:

for in her youth they lay with her; the Egyptians enticed the Israelites to idolatry when among them, as soon as they began to be a people; See Gill on "Eze 23:3":

and they bruised the breasts of her virginity; who before retained the pure worship of God, and was like a chaste virgin:

and poured their whoredom upon her; expressive of the numerous acts of idolatry committed together by them.

Ezekiel 23:9

Ver. 9. Wherefore I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers,.... To destruction; their persons, families, riches, and kingdom itself:

into the hand of the Assyrians, on whom she doted; first into the hands of Pul, then Tiglathpileser, then Shalmaneser, all kings of Assyria, by whom they were spoiled or carried captive; by the two first in part, by the last wholly; see 2Ki 15:19.

Ezekiel 23:10

Ver. 10. These discovered her wickedness,.... That is, stripped them of all their substance:

they took her sons and her daughters; and carried them captive:

and slew her with the sword; put an end to the kingdom of Israel, or the ten tribes, and which was never recovered to this day:

and she became famous among women; or among the provinces, as the Targum; she became famous, or rather infamous, among other nations; was talked of for her sins, her whoredoms and idolatries, and the vengeance of God upon her for them; she became a byword and a proverb among the kingdoms of the world for her wickedness and her destruction:

for they had executed judgment upon her; that is, the Assyrians, who were the instruments in God's hand in doing justice to her, and inflicting his judgments on her, and for that she became famous.

Ezekiel 23:11

Ver. 11. And when her sister Aholibah saw this,.... The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, when, they saw the idolatries the ten tribes fell into, and the destruction which came upon them for the same; instead of receiving instruction, and taking caution by all this,

she was more corrupt in her inordinate love than she; in courting the friendship, alliance, and help of their Heathen neighbours:

and in her whoredoms more than her sister in her whoredoms; guilty of more idolatries than the ten tribes, as in the times of Manasseh; see **Jer 2:28**.

Ezekiel 23:12

Ver. 12. She doted upon the Assyrians her neighbours,.... As in the times of Ahaz, who sent to Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria, for help; and from whence he took the pattern of an altar, and had one built like it at Jerusalem, and offered upon it, 2Ki 16:7,

captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously; or "perfectly" {q}; with all kind of precious garments, and of all manner of colours; not with blue only, but purple, scarlet, crimson, &c.

horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men;
See Gill on "Eze 23:6".

{q} lwlkm "omni genera pulchrarum vestinto", Pagninus; "absoluto vestira", Montanus; "perfectione, [sive] universitate, [sub.] vestium", Vatablus; "perfectissime", Janius & Tremellius, Polanus; "perfecto ornatu", Piscator; "vestitos accurate", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 23:13

Ver. 13. Then I saw that she was defiled,.... With idols, and the worship of them, Eze 23:7:

that they took both one way; the same way of idolatry; worshipped the same idols, lived the same course of life, were guilty of the same sin, both Israel and Judah.

Ezekiel 23:14

Ver. 14. And that she increased her whoredoms,.... Added to the number of her idols, increased her idols, and even was guilty of more than her sister:

for when she saw men portrayed on the wall; of the temple, as idols were, **Eze 8:10** or upon the wall of a private house, where they were worshipped as household gods:

the images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion: the images of their heroes, who after death were deified; and these, being drawn upon the wall with vermilion, which, being mixed with ceruse, made a flesh colour, were worshipped; as Bel, Nebo, Merodach, which are names of their idols, Isa 46:1 or these were graven on the walls, or etched out upon them with minium or red lead; or rather were "painted" {r}, as some render the word, with minium, vermilion, or cinnabar, which are the same; See Gill on "Jer 22:14", and it may be observed, that it was usual with the Heathens to paint the images and statues of their gods with these. Thus Virgil {s} represents Pan, the god of Arcadia, coloured red with minium or vermilion; and Pausanius {t} speaks of the statue of Bacchus being besmeared with cinnabar: and Pliny {u} says the face of the image of Jupiter used to be anointed with minium or vermilion on festival days; and observes, that the nobles of Ethiopia used to colour themselves all over with it; this being the colour of the images of their gods, which they reckoned more august, majestic, and sacred. Hence the Romans, in their triumphs, used to paint themselves with vermilion; particularly it is said of Augustus Caesar, that he did this to make himself the more conspicuous and respectable, after the example of the Assyrians and Medes {w}: and the triumphers chose to be rubbed all over with a red colour, that they might, according to Isidore {x}, resemble the divine fire.

{r} rvvb Myqqx "depictas sinopide", Pagninus; "pictas minio", Piscator. {s} "Pan deus Arcadiae venit, quem vidimus ipsi Sanguineis ebuli baccis, minioque rubentern." Bucolic. Eclog. 10. {t} Achaica, sive l. 7. p. 452. & Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 520. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 7. {w} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 6. p. 332. {x} Originum, l. 18. c. 2.

Ezekiel 23:15

Ver. 15. Girded with girdles upon their loins,.... As a token of dignity and authority; see Isa 11:5, which was the peculiar custom of the Babylonians, as Kimchi, from the Talmudists, observes: "exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads"; having turbans of various colours upon their heads, after the manner of the Persians:

all of them princes to look to; bore the resemblance of kings, princes, and the great men of the earth, and whose images indeed they were; even of such who in their lifetime were famous for military exploits, or for some excellency or another, either real or pretended, and after death reckoned among the gods, and worshipped:

after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity; either where these heroes were born whose images were portrayed; or where Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, was born, and so called from thence the land of their nativity; putting them in mind of their original, and of the idolatries of their ancestors, which they were now returning to.

Ezekiel 23:16

Ver. 16. And as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she doted upon them,.... As lustful women, on the sight of the pictures of men, fall in love with them, and are mad after them; such a vehement desire after the idols of the Chaldeans prevailed, upon seeing their images:

and sent messengers unto them in Chaldea; to make alliances with the

Chaldeans, and to have their idols, and worship them.

Ezekiel 23:17

Ver. 17. And the Babylonians came to her in the bed of love,.... Entered into alliance with the Jews, and worshipped together in the same idols' temple. Jarchi thinks this refers to the messengers of the king of Babylon to Hezekiah; who were gladly received by him, and to whom he showed all the treasures of his house:

and they defiled her with their whoredom; or with their idols, as the Targum; they drew them into their idolatrous practices; which were defiling them, and by which they were corrupted from the simplicity of the true worship of God:

and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them: or "plucked", or "disjoined from them" {y}; the Chaldeans, broke league and covenant with them, hating them as much as before they doted upon them; this was done in the times of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, who rebelled against the king of Babylon, 2Ki 24:1 as it often is the case with lewd women, when they have satisfied their lust with their gallants, loath and despise them, and cast them off.

{y} Mhm hvpn eqtw "avulsa est", Munster; "et luxata est anima ipsius ab eis", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus.

Ezekiel 23:18

Ver. 18. So she discovered her whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness,.... The Jews did not cease from their idolatries when they broke with the Babylonians; but were rather more frequent and impudent in them, and courted the friendship and alliance of other Heathen nations, and their worship; even as a lewd woman, when she has cast off her former lovers, does not leave her lewdness, but seeks after others; and by her impudence in discovering her whoredoms, and her nakedness, and by all the signs of a prostitute, draws in others to commit lewdness with her:

then my mind was alienated from her, like as my mind was alienated from her sister; as a virtuous husband is alienated from an adulterous wife, and cannot admit her to his bed and board, so the mind of the Lord was alienated from the

Jews, because of their idolatries; nor could he favour them with his presence, and the blessings of his providence and goodness, as he had formerly done; even as his mind had been alienated, on the same account, from the ten tribes of Israel, and which he showed by suffering them to be carried captive.

Ezekiel 23:19

Ver. 19. Yet she multiplied her whoredoms,.... Though the Lord frowned upon the Jews in the times of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, yet still they went on, and increased their alliances and idolatries with the Heathen nations:

in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt; they called to mind with pleasure the idolatries of their fathers in Egypt, and committed the same themselves; they sent ambassadors to Egypt, in the times of Zedekiah, for help and assistance, and to enter into alliance with them, when they renewed among them the idolatries of that nation; see Eze 17:15.

Ezekiel 23:20

Ver. 20. For she doted upon their paramours,.... Or "concubines" {z}; the neighbouring nations and allies of the Egyptians, whose friendship the Jews courted, and whose idols they served: the Septuagint and Arabic versions wrongly read the Chaldeans:

whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses; by "flesh" is meant the "membrum virile", which in asses is very large, and therefore dedicated to Priapus by the Heathens; and vast is the profusion of seed in coitus by horses, to which the flesh and issue of the Egyptian paramours are compared; who were very libidinous, and therefore desirable to insatiable women; all which serves to express the eagerness of the people of the Jews after idolatry.

{z} Mhyvglp "equecubinas eorum", Vatablus, so Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "concubitores", Munster, Tigurine version; "cinaedos", Castalio; and, as Ben Melech observes, these were men, and not women.

Ezekiel 23:21

Ver. 21. Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth,.... By committing the same; the same idolatries their fathers committed in Egypt they now committed, being in alliance with the same people: or,

thou causest to be visited the lewdness of thy youth {a}; by the Lord, who remembered their sins, and punished them for them:

in bruising thy teats by the Egyptians for the paps of thy youth: committing spiritual fornication, that is, idolatry with them; signified by pressing and bruising the breasts and paps of virgins, by corporeal fornication with them.

{a} Kyrwen tmz ta ydqptw "et visitasti scelus adolescestiae, vel pueritiae tuae", Piscator, Starckius; i.e. "visitari fecisti a Deo", a Lapide.

Ezekiel 23:22

Ver. 22. Therefore, O Aholibah, thus saith the Lord God,.... Or, ye two tribes of Benjamin and Judah, hear what the Lord says unto you:

behold, I will raise up thy lovers against thee; the Chaldeans, whom they had formerly loved, and in whose alliance they were, and whose idols they worshipped:

from whom thy mind is alienated; having broke covenant with them, and cast off their yoke, and rebelled against them:

and I will bring them against thee on every side; to besiege and encompass Jerusalem on every side with their army, as they did, so that there was no escaping.

Ezekiel 23:23

Ver. 23. The Babylonians, and all the Chaldeans,.... Both the inhabitants of the city of Babylon, called in the Hebrew text the children of Babylon, and all the inhabitants of the several parts of the country of Chaldean, of which Babylon was the metropolis:

Pekod, and Shoa, and Koa; the Vulgate Latin version, and so Jerom, take these words to be appellatives, and render them noblemen, tyrants, and princes; as some mentioned by Jarchi do, governors, princes, and rulers; and Kimchi {b} thinks they are the titles of the Babylonian princes spoken of in Jeremiah, as Nebuzaradan. Nebushasban, Rabsaris, Rabmag, &c. Jer 39:3, but with others they are the proper names of persons or places: and so the Targum calls them, Pekodaites, Shoaites, and Koaites; that is, the inhabitants of places so called; and certain it is that Pekod was a province of Babylon, Jer 50:21: which, according to Junius, lay between the two rivers Tigris and Lycus, and in which was the famous city of Nineveh; and, according to him, Shoa, or the Shoaites, lay between the rivers Lycus and Gorgus, among where were the Adiabeni, and the town called Siai by Ptolemy; and the Koaites were situated in the inward part of Assyria, by Arbelitis, where formerly was the fortified town of Koah, by historians called Gauga; and by Strabo Gaugamela. Grotius thinks that Pekod are the Bactriani; and that Shoa is Siai in Armenia with Ptolemy; and that Koa is Choana of Media, with the same Ptolemy; but, be they who they will, they were such people as were to come with the Chaldean army against the Jews:

and all the Assyrians with them: which were now one people with the Chaldeans and Babylonians, by whom formerly the ten tribes were carried captive:

all of them desirable young men, captains and rulers, great lords and renowned, all of them riding upon horses; persons of high rank and dignity, in chief offices at court or in the camp, all in the bloom and strength of youth; men of name and renown for their honour and valour; and all well mounted, a famous cavalry of them; and who before were lovely on these accounts, when they were their gallants and lovers, their confederates and allies, but now formidable and terrible being their enemies; see Eze 23:5.

{b} So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 51. 1.

Ezekiel 23:24

Ver. 24. And they shall come against thee with chariots, wagons, and wheels,.... With "chariots", in which were their princes and great men, their chief commanders, generals, and captains, and in which they fought, as was usual in those times; and with "wagons", to carry their provisions and warlike stores; and with "wheels", that is, either with chariots and wagons that ran upon wheels, or with wheels for them in case they should break down; the first of these words here, according to some Jewish interpreters, as Donesh in Jarchi, signifies warlike instruments in general; and the second word is used for chariots: and so the whole is paraphrased by the Targum,

"and they shall come against thee with instruments of war, with chariots and wheels;"

all which denotes how well prepared they should be, and with what swiftness they would come:

and with an assembly of people, which shall set against thee buckler, and shield, and helmet, round about; a multitude of people, a vast army gathered out of all the provinces of Babylon, having bucklers and shields about their bodies, and helmets on their heads to protect and defend them; and these should surround the city of Jerusalem. So the Targum,

"an army of people, armed with shields and helmets, shall set themselves against thee round about:"

and I will set judgment before them, and they shall judge thee according to their judgments; that is, I will deliver you into their hands, and they shall judge and condemn you; not according to my laws and yours, but according to their own laws, according to the customs and usages among them, according to the law of nations; they shall deal with you as rebels and covenant breakers, such Zedekiah was; he broke covenant with the king of Babylon, and rebelled against him: and this was fulfilled when he fell into his hands, and when he slew his children before his face, and then put out his eyes.

Ezekiel 23:25

Ver. 25. And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee,.... As a jealous husband, enraged against his adulterous wife, falls upon her in his fury, and uses her with great severity; so the Jews having committed spiritual fornication, that is, idolatry, and departed from the Lord, he threatens to stir up the fury of his jealousy, and punish them severely by the Chaldeans, as follows:

they shall take away thy nose and thine ears, and thy remnant shall fall by the sword; as gallants use their harlots when they leave them, or jealous husbands their adulterous wives, disfiguring them, that they may be marked and known what they are, and be despised by others; and as has been the custom in some countries, particularly with the Egyptians, to cut off the noses of adulterous persons; here it is to be understood figuratively: by the "nose", according to Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, is meant the king, who is higher than his people, as the nose is the highest part in a man's face; and by the "ears" the priest, who caused a noise to be heard when he entered into the temple with his bells; or rather because it was the priest's office to attend to the word of God, and teach it the people; in general, these denote everything that was excellent among the Jews, their city, temple, king, kingdom, princes, priests, and prophets, which should be demolished and removed; and by the remnant is meant the common people, that should come into the hands of the Chaldeans, and fall by their sword. So the Targum paraphrases it,

"thy princes and thy nobles shall go into captivity, and thy people shall be killed with the sword:"

they shall take thy sons and thy daughters, and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire; take and carry their sons and daughters captive, and burn with fire the city left by them. Thus the Targum,

"they shall carry thy sons and daughters captive, and the beauty of thy land shall be burnt with fire;"

that is, the city of Jerusalem, the temple, the king's palaces, the houses of the great men, and others in it, which were all burnt with fire when taken by the Chaldeans, Jer 52:13.

Ezekiel 23:26

Ver. 26. They shall also strip thee out of thy clothes,.... As such who are taken captives are usually served:

and take away, thy fair jewels; their ornaments of every kind: or "the vessels of thy glory" {c}; Kimchi observes this may be meant either of the garments of the priests, and the vessels of the sanctuary; or of whole spoil of the city in general, whether in the temple, or in other houses.

{c} Ktrapt ylk "vasa gloria tuae", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "instrumenta ornatus tui", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Piscator; "vasa ornatus tui", Starckius.

Ezekiel 23:27

Ver. 27. Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee,.... That is, their idolatry; for, after this captivity, the Jews never were guilty of idolatry any more:

and thy whoredom brought from the land of Egypt; the idolatry which they learned there, and brought from thence; so the Targum,

"the worship of thine idols, which was with thee when thou wast in the land of Egypt:"

so that thou shall not lift up thine eyes unto them; to the idols of Egypt, to pray unto them, and worship them:

nor remember Egypt any more; with any delight and pleasure, and so as to desire an alliance with them, and help from them, or to join with them in their idolatries: so the Targum,

"and the idols of the Egyptians thou shalt remember no more."

Ezekiel 23:28

Ver. 28. For thus saith the Lord God, I will deliver thee into the hand of them whom thou hatest,.... The Chaldeans and Babylonians, before loved by her, and doted upon, but now hated and rebelled against; and to fall into such hands must be a sore judgment; and this the Lord threatens to bring upon the Jews for their sins; and he having said it, it might be depended upon it would be performed; and, for the greater certainty of it, it is repeated in different words:

into the hand of them from whom thy mind is alienated;
See Gill on "Eze 23:17".

Ezekiel 23:29

Ver. 29. And they shall deal with thee hatefully,.... The Chaldeans should hate the Jews as much as before they loved them, when they came into the bed of love to them, Eze 23:17 and as much as the Jews hated them; which they showed by their severe and rigorous usage of them, putting some to the sword, carrying the rest captive, and employing them in hard service and labour; and, which is still worse, and an aggravation of all this:

and shall take away all thy labour; whatever they got by labour, that they should not enjoy, but should be taken away from them:

and shall leave thee naked and bare: stripped of all the necessaries and conveniences of life:

and the nakedness of thy whoredoms shall be discovered, both thy lewdness and thy whoredoms; it shall then be manifest to all that thou hast been guilty of idolatry, and hast departed from the Lord thy God, which has caused him to bring these judgments upon thee for thy sins. The Targum paraphrases the latter part of the clause thus,

"the sins of thy wicked counsels, and thy pride."

It seems to be a heap of words, to express the grossness of their idolatries, which now should be exposed.

Ezekiel 23:30

Ver. 30. And I will do these things unto thee,.... What the Chaldeans did God is said to do, because he suffered them to do these things, as a punishment for their sins; yea, it was according to his will, and by his orders. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, "they have done these things unto thee"; that is, the Chaldeans. The Targum is,

"thy sins are the cause of these things unto thee;"

that is, their idolatry and other iniquities. Hence the Syriac version is very particular,

"for thy whoredoms these things shall be done unto thee;"

and the Arabic version,

"thy whoredom hath done (or is the cause of) these things unto thee,"

as follows:

because thou hast gone a whoring after the Heathen, and because thou art polluted with their idols; imitated them in their idolatries; worshipped the same dunghill gods as they did, as the word signifies; with which it was no wonder they should be polluted, and become abominable unto God.

Ezekiel 23:31

Ver. 31. Thou hast walked in the way of thy sister,.... Samaria, or the ten tribes of Israel; followed them in their idolatrous practices, were guilty of the same:

therefore will I give her cup into thine hand; the cup of her vengeance, as the Targum; inflict the same punishment on the two tribes as on the ten, and suffer them to be carried captive as they had been.

Ezekiel 23:32

Ver. 32. Thus saith the Lord God, thou shall drink of thy sister's cup deep and large,.... That is, partake of the same punishment, which was very great, signified by a deep and large cup, which holds much:

thou shall be laughed to scorn, and had in derision; by the nations round about, who, instead of pitying them under their troubles, will rejoice at them; just as drunken men are laughed at, when intoxicated and reeling about:

it containeth much; the cup of wrath and vengeance; as much as will last severity years drinking. The Targum connects this with the preceding clause,

"and thou shalt be for derision and for laughter, because of the greatness of the tribulation that shall come upon thee."

Ezekiel 23:33

Ver. 33. Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow,.... Sorrow is the effect of drunkenness; these two generally go together; when a man is filled with the one, he is with the other; this expresses the greatness of the sorrow and distress of the Jews in captivity:

with the cup of astonishment and desolation; their punishment would be so great, and their condition be so desolate, that it should astonish them, and bereave them of their senses; and they should be like mad men, as their actions in the following verse show:

with the cup of thy sister Samaria; the same punishment as inflicted on the ten tribes.

Ezekiel 23:34

Ver. 34. Thou shalt even drink it, and suck it out,.... The very dregs of it, that which lies at the bottom, which is the most nauseous and the most pernicious; not through love to it, but through force, shall be obliged to it; see Ps 75:8:

and thou shall break the sherds thereof; and suck them, so that not a drop of the liquor shall be lost; even what has penetrated into the earthen vessel, which this cup is supposed to be; and therefore it shall be broken to pieces, and these pieces sucked, that all may be got out; suggesting that there will be no abatement of the punishment, it shall be endured to the utmost: or it may be an allusion to drunkards, who, having drunk up their liquor, and become drunk, break their glasses, pots, and cups, and to which the next clause agrees:

and pluck off thine own breasts; as men in their drunken fits, being like mad men, tear their own flesh; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"thou shall tear thy flesh;"

so the Jews, under punishment for sin, and pressed with the guilt of it, through indignation at themselves should tear their flesh, and particularly pluck off their breasts: the allusion is to fornication, to which idolatry is compared, in which those parts are particularly affected; see Eze 23:21, the Syriac version renders this and the former clause thus, "thou shall shave thine hair and cut off thy breasts"; Kimchi thinks by the "breasts" are meant the oral and written laws, which ceased in the time of the captivity; but without any foundation:

for I have spoken it, saith the Lord; and therefore it shall be done.

Ezekiel 23:35

Ver. 35. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, because thou hast forgotten me,.... His word, worship, and ordinances, and did not attend unto them, but worshipped strange gods: so the Targum,

"because thou hast left my worship:"

and cast me behind thy back; or, as the same paraphrase,

"hast cast the fear of me from before thine eyes;"

or out of thy sight, his laws and statutes; see **Ne 9:26**, as men cast behind their backs that which they have no value for and loath, and which they do not care to see, and choose to forget:

therefore bear thou also thy lewdness and thy whoredoms; that is, the guilt of their sins, the punishment of their idolatries, and shame and confusion for them.

Ezekiel 23:36

Ver. 36. The Lord said moreover unto me, son of man, wilt thou judge Aholah and Aholibah?.... Plead the cause of Israel and Judah? say any thing in their defence, and in excuse of them? or intercede and pray for them, that threatened judgments may not come upon them? no, do nothing of this kind; if thou wilt do anything, do as follows:

yea, declare unto them their abominations; their abominable sins, their murders, adulteries, and idolatries; set them in a true light before them, in all their aggravated circumstances; that, if it can be, they may be brought to a true sight and sense of them, to repent of them, be ashamed of them, loath them, confess them, and forsake them.

Ezekiel 23:37

Ver. 37. That they have committed adultery,.... Either literally, adultery with their neighbours' wives, which was a prevailing sin with this people; or figuratively, spiritual adultery, that is, idolatry:

and blood is in their hands; the Targum is,

"they have shed the blood of innocents with their hands;"

the blood of prophets and righteous men, sent unto them; and the blood of their infants in sacrificing to idols, as after mentioned:

and with their idols have they committed adultery; by worshipping them, which is spiritual adultery; and this being so explicitly mentioned, it seems to be distinguished from corporeal adultery in the first clause, which may be only there designed; and so Kimchi thinks:

and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through the fire, to devour them; their children, who were the Lord's by national adoption, and who ought to have been trained up in the worship and service of God, were, in a most barbarous and unnatural manner, caused to pass through the fire, for or to the idols Molech and Baal; and that not merely by way of lustration and dedication, which was sometimes done by passing between two fires, but so as to be devoured and destroyed by the fire.

Ezekiel 23:38

Ver. 38. Moreover this they have done unto me,..... The following piece of wickedness, which was very provoking to the Lord:

they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day; as they caused their children to pass through the tire to their idols, by entering into the sanctuary when they had so done, and were thus defiled, and by offering sacrifices to their idols in it; or under pretence of serving the Lord, when they had just been guilty of murder and idolatry:

and have profaned my sabbaths; not only by doing their own worldly and civil business, but by slaying their infants on those days, and sacrificing them to idols.

Ezekiel 23:39

Ver. 39. For when they had slain their children to their idols,.... This explains more clearly what is before said, that by causing their children to pass through the fire was a slaying them; and that their passing through it "for them" was for their idols, and unto them; see
Eze 23:37, and how when they had been guilty of such shocking wickedness,

then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; not that they came into the temple on purpose to profane it; but coming into it, being themselves defiled with the murder of their infants, and offering sacrifices to idols, or performing a hypocritical service to the Lord, this was in the event a profanation of the sanctuary:

and, lo, thus they have done in the midst of mine house; set up idols there, and worshipped them; as they did in the temple itself, in the times of Ahaz and Manasseh; see **Jer 7:30**.

Ezekiel 23:40

Ver. 40. And furthermore, that ye have sent for men to come from far,.... From Egypt, Assyria, and Chaldea, to treat with them, and enter into alliances and confederacies with them, and to join them in their idolatrous practices; these Heathen nations did not send to the Jews, but the Jews to them; they did not court their friendship and alliance, but the Jews courted theirs:

unto whom a messenger was sent; to court their favour, and solicit a confederacy, and to desire that ambassadors might be sent to reside among them:

and, lo, they came; these Heathen courts listened to the proposal, and accordingly sent their plenipotentiaries and ambassadors to them, who came in their masters' name, and with their credentials; and for the reception of whom great preparations were made, as follows:

for whom thou didst wash thyself, paintedst thy eyes, and deckedst thyself with ornaments; just as harlots do to make themselves agreeable to their

lovers; who use washes and paint, as Jezebel did, and dress themselves in their best clothes, and adorn themselves in the best manner they can. Harlots had their particular attire, by which they were known, **Pr 7:10** and they not only used bagnios or baths, but washes for their face, to make them look beautiful; and particularly painted their eyes, to make them look larger; for large eyes in women, in some nations, were reckoned very handsome, particularly among the Greeks: hence Juno, in Homer {d}, is called
bowpiv the ox eyed, as some translate it; or rather the large eyed Juno: and the Grecian women, in order to make their eyes large, made use of a powder mixed with their washes, which shrunk their eyebrows, and caused their eyes to stand out, and look fuller and larger; and such was the paint which Pliny, {e} calls stibium, and says, it was by some named "platyophthalmon", because in the beautiful eyebrows of women it dilated the eyes; and it seems that painting with something of this nature was used by the Jewish women, in imitation of the Heathens, for the same purpose, especially by harlots; hence the phrase of rending the face, or rather the eyes, with paint, **Jer 4:30**, so the Moorish women now, as Dr. Shaw {f} relates, to add a gracefulness to their complexions, tinge their eye lids with "alkahol", the powder of lead ore; and this is performed by first dipping into this powder a small wooden bodkin, of the thickness of a quill, and then drawing it afterwards through the eyelids, over the ball of the eye; and which is properly a rending the eyes indeed, as the prophet calls it, with powder of "pouk", or lead ore: so, for the gratifying these idolatrous ambassadors, idols were set up, altars built, and sacrifices prepared; and, in order to their public entry, and to show how acceptable they were, palaces were fitted up for them; and the streets through which they passed decorated, and all public marks of esteem and affection given them; to this the Targum seems to have respect, paraphrasing the words thus,

"and, lo, they came to the place thou hadst prepared; thou hast adorned the streets, and appointed palaces."

{d} Iliad. 1. l. 550. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 6. {f} Travels, p. 229. Ed. 2.

Ezekiel 23:41

Ver. 41. And satest upon a stately bed,.... Or honourable {g}, a bed of state: either a throne, a royal seat under a canopy, on which the king of Judah sat to receive foreign ambassadors; or a stately bed at a feast, made for the entertainment of them; it being usual in the eastern nations to sit on beds at eating, to which the next clause agrees. The allusion is to a harlot sitting on a bed decked out by her to allure men to lie with her; see **Pr 7:16**:

and a table prepared before it; before the bed, furnished with the richest provisions to treat the ambassadors with; or this may design an altar built for them to offer on it sacrifices to their idols, according to the customs of their countries:

whereupon thou hast set mine incense and mine oil; which were the gifts of God to this people, and which they should have used in his service; but with these they treated the ministers of Heathen princes; scenting the room where they were entertained with incense, and anointing their heads and feet with oil, for their pleasure and refreshment; or they offered these on the altars of the idols to them.

{g} hdwbk "honorato", Junius and Tremellius, Polanus, Coeccius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 23:42

Ver. 42. And a voice of a multitude being at ease was with her,.... With Aholibah, with the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin: or, "in her", in Jerusalem; or "in it", or "about it" {h}; the bed, or table, or both: these were either the people of the many nations that came in great numbers with the ambassadors, as their retinue, and for the greater splendour of them; and who came, not to make war, but in a peaceable way, being invited to come; or these were a confluence of the Jewish people, who came from all parts to see the public entry of these ambassadors; who were quite easy with it, since they came as the ambassadors of their allies and friends, in whose alliance they thought themselves safe and happy; and therefore welcomed them with their loud huzzas:

and with the men of the common sort were brought Sabeans from the wilderness; or, "and with men because of a multitude of men" {i}; that is, with those men that came from several parts on this occasion, for the sake of a greater number, and of making a greater appearance, the Sabeans that dwelt in the desert of Arabia were fetched from thence; or their neighbours round about Moab and Ammon, that dwelt in the wilderness, were sent for, and brought to make the solemnity the greater; so Jarchi; and to this sense the Targum renders it, "because of the multitude of men that came round about on every side from the wilderness,"

Some render it, "drunkards from the wilderness" {k}; a parcel of drunken fellows that lived in the wilderness, rustic, brutish, people; these were brought as fit persons to drink healths, and roar on this occasion:

which put bracelets upon their hands, and beautiful crowns upon their heads; that is, the Jews put these ornaments upon the hands and heads of these men of the common sort, and the Sabeans with them, and these poor country drunken fellows too, that they might make the better appearance when they met and huzzaed the ambassadors at their entry; or which Sabeans and other foreigners put these ornaments on Aholah and Aholibah, and enticed them to the worship of their idols, and taught them idolatry.

{h} hb "in ea", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "in illa", Cocceius, Starckius, "in illo", Piscator; "circa eam", a Lapide. {i} Mda brm Myvna law "et cum viris ut multiplicarent homines" Pagninus; "ut adessent multi homines", Munster; "prae multitudine hominum", Tigurine version, Cocceius, Starckius; "propter multiplicare homines", Vatablus. {k} rbdmm Myabwo "ebrosi ex deserto", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 99. 1.

Ezekiel 23:43

Ver. 43. Then said I unto her that was old in adulteries,.... That had been an old adulterer or idolater; meaning either Aholah the ten tribes, who from Jeroboam's time had been guilty of idolatry; or Aholibah the two tribes, who had remained longer in their own country, and had been long given to idolatry; or both of them, as some think, the whole body of the people of Israel, who had been addicted to idolatry ever since they came out of Egypt, and so was like an old harlot indeed: now the Lord said "unto her", or "concerning her" {l}; in his own mind, after the manner of men. So the Targum,

"I said concerning the congregation of Israel, whose people are old in sins:"

will they now commit whoredoms with her, and she with them? will they commit adultery with such an old harlot? are they not weary of her? and will they not rather loath and despise her? as it is common when such prostitutes grow old; and what pleasure can she take, thus advanced in years, in such impurities? suggesting that alliances and confederacies between the Jews and the nations of the world could not be agreeable on either side, especially to the former; but so it was, and so were their idolatries likewise. The Targum is,

"now she will leave her idols, and return to thy worship; but she returned not."

{l} hlbl "de inveterata illa", Vatablus.

Ezekiel 23:44

Ver. 44. Yet they went in unto her,.... Made a league with one another, and joined in idolatrous worship:

as they go in unto a woman that playeth the harlot; with the same heat of lust, with the same greediness and eager desire as young men do when they go into a brothel house where a beautiful harlot lives:

so went they in unto Aholah and unto Aholibah; the lewd women, the ten tribes of Israel, and the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which apostatized from God, and committed idolatry; with these the Sabeans before mentioned, and other nations, joined in idolatrous worship.

Ezekiel 23:45

Ver. 45. And the righteous men,.... Some understand this of the prophets, who were really righteous men; and foretold the righteous judgments of God that should come upon the idolatrous Jews, which was a judging them: others, of righteous men in general, who will one and all agree that persons guilty of such crimes ought to suffer the punishment adequate to them, and usually inflicted on such; but rather the Babylonians are here meant; who, though not righteous in themselves, or truly so, yet were so in comparison of the wicked Jews, who had a divine revelation, and knew better than to commit such idolatries; whereas these were Gentiles that knew not God, nor his will. So the Targum,

"and righteous men in respect (or comparison) of them;"

that is, of Israel and Judah; and they may be also called so, because they were the executioners of justice, the instruments of inflicting God's righteous judgments on the Jews; and, among other things, for their perfidy and treachery to them; so that they would appear just in the eyes of other nations for treating them as they did:

they shall judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women that shed blood; that is, according to the law concerning such persons; and shall condemn them to suffer the punishment denounced on such, and shall execute it on them:

because they are adulteresses, the blood is in their hands; are guilty, not only of corporeal uncleanness, but of spiritual adultery; that is, idolatry; and of the murder of their prophets and righteous men, and even of their own children sacrificed to idols; than which nothing can be more unnatural and barbarous for women to do.

Ezekiel 23:46

Ver. 46. For thus saith the Lord God, I will bring up a company upon them,.... Or, "do thou bring up a company upon them" {m}, or "against them". The Targum represents it as spoken to the prophet, thus,

"prophesy that armies shall come up against them."

Kimchi interprets it as we do, "I will bring up", &c. and so others {n}. By this "company" is to be understood the Chaldean army, whom God in his providence, and in righteous judgment, would bring up against the Jews; styled a "convocation" {o}, assembly or congregation, in allusion to the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, that took cognizance of such crimes, and judged and condemned for them:

and will give them to be removed and spoiled; or, "for a removing", and a "spoil" {p}; that is, he would give the Jews into the hands of the Chaldean army; their persons to be carried captive into other lands, and their substance to be spoiled and plundered.

{m} lhq Mhyle hlea anagage ep' autav oclon, Sept.; "adduc super eas coetum", V. L. "ascendere tac contra eas, [vel] eaos, coetum", Cocceius, Starckius. {n} "Facium ascendere", Pagninus; "adducam", Munster, Tigurine version; "quum adduxero", Piscator. {o} lhq "congretio", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "consessus judicum", Grotius, Starckius. {p} zblw hwezl "commotioni et directioni", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Piscator; "in commotionen et in praedam", Starckius.

Ezekiel 23:47

Ver. 47. And the company shall stone them with stones,.... Which was the punishment of adulterers and idolaters, De 13:10, this seems to refer to the Chaldean army casting out stones from their slings and engines into the city of Jerusalem, when they besieged it, by which they killed some, and beat down the houses, which fell upon others, and destroyed them. So the Targum,

"and the army shall stone them with the stones of a sling:"

and dispatch them with their swords; cut them in pieces with them, such as sallied out of the city upon them, or they found without, or by any means fell into their hands:

they shall slay their sons and their daughters; when they broke into the city, and took it; or when they found them making their escape, and hiding themselves in secret places:

and burn up their houses with fire; as they did; the temple, the king's palace, the houses of noblemen, and all the houses in Jerusalem; see Jer 52:13.

Ezekiel 23:48

Ver. 48. Thus will I cause to cease lewdness out of the land,.... There being no opportunity for it, nor any to commit it; what were not destroyed by famine, sword, and pestilence, during the siege, were carried captive; and, when they returned, were never more given to idolatry; see Eze 23:27:

that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness; that is, that all provinces, as the Targum, all kingdoms; states, churches, and people, hearing and reading the judgments of God on this people for their idolatry, may learn to shun it; it is even an instruction to us, at this distance, not to commit idolatry, as they did, 1Co 10:7. The church of Rome ought to observe this.

Ezekiel 23:49

Ver. 49. And they shall recompense your lewdness upon you,.... Or, "give your lewdness" {q}; the punishment of it; the just recompence of reward for their idolatry:

and ye shall bear the sins of your idols; the shame, and guilt, and punishment of their sins committed in worshipping idols:

and ye shall know that I am the Lord God; the only Lord God who is to be worshipped, and not idols; jealous of my honour and glory, and true to my word; who can and will accomplish all I have said; this the Jews knew and acknowledged when in captivity, and returned from it, as they will more fully when they shall be converted in the latter day.

{q} hnktmz wntnw "et dabunt scelus vestrum", V. L. Montanus, Cocceius, Starckius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 24:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 24

Is this chapter the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem is prophesied of; the former under the parable of a boiling pot; the latter is represented by the sudden death of Ezekiel's wife. The time of this prophecy was that very day the king of Babylon began the siege of Jerusalem, Eze 24:1, the parable of the boiling pot, Eze 24:3, the explanation and application of it to the city of Jerusalem, Eze 24:6, the prophet is told of the death of his wife, and bid not to mourn on that account, which accordingly came to pass, Eze 24:15, upon the people's inquiring what these things meant, he informs them that hereby was signified the profanation of the temple; and that their distress should be so great, that they should not use any set forms of mourning, but pine away and die, Eze 24:19, and the chapter is closed with assuring the prophet, that the day these things should come to pass, a messenger should be sent him, to whom he should open his mouth, and be no more dumb, Eze 24:25.

Ver. 1. Again, in the ninth year,.... Of Jehoiachin's captivity, from which the dates of Ezekiel are, and of Zedekiah's reign, which commenced together:

in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month; the month Tebet, which answers to part of our December, and part of January; so that it was at the latter end of December when this prophecy was given out; at which time Jerusalem was besieged by the king of Babylon, even in the winter season:

the word of the Lord came unto me, saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 24:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, write thee the name of the day,.... That is, what day of the week it was, as well as what day of the month; as whether the first, or second, or third, &c.: for the Jews had no other names for their days, as we have:

even of this same day; according to Bishop Usher {r}, it was the 30th of January, and the fifth day of the week (Thursday); A.M. 3414, or 590 before Christ. Mr. Whiston {s} places it at 3413 A.M. or 591 before Christ. The prophet is bid to observe it punctually, and write it exactly, that there might be no mistake; to set it down in his pocket book; or it may be in some public register, that it might not only be remembered by him, but known by the people; that so when they should hear the fact afterwards related, and exactly agreeing with this prediction, they would acknowledge him to be a true prophet; since this would be a confirmation of the word of the Lord coming to him:

the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day; or "drew nigh" {t}; brought up his army to it, and laid siege against it, and prepared everything to carry it on; which he very probably did in person, though he afterwards retired, and left the command of his army with his generals; and this was exactly the day before mentioned; see 2Ki 25:1. The Prophet Ezekiel was now in Chaldea, many miles from Judea, and yet had this account the very selfsame day, even from the Lord himself, who is omniscient and omnipresent.

{r} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3414. {s} Chronological Tables, cent. 10. {t} Kmo "appropinquavit", Pagninus, Vatablus; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 84. 2. "adjunxit se", Montanus

Ezekiel 24:3

Ver. 3. And utter a parable to the rebellious house,.... The people of the Jews so called, not so much on account of their rebellion against the king of Babylon, which caused him to come against them, as on account of their rebellion against God, and the breach of his laws; see **Eze 2:3**. The prophet is bid to represent to them, in a figurative and emblematic way, the miseries that were coming upon them for their wickedness, namely, under the parable of a boiling pot:

and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God; speaking in his name, and as coming from him, and clothed with his authority; that the following parable might not be thought to be a fancy and chimera of his own: "set on a pot, set it on"; set a pot on the fire, and do it quickly. This "pot" is the city of Jerusalem, which was to be brought into great distress and ruin; not a cauldron of brass, wherein the inhabitants should be as safe as if they had walls of brass about them, as they vainly boasted, Eze 11:3, but a seething pot, such an one as Jeremiah saw, to which, it may be, reference is here had, **Jer 1:13**, in which the people should be destroyed:

and also pour water into it; which, as it is some time a boiling, may denote the length of the siege of the city, which held two years; and of the troubles and miseries attending it; and of the greatness of them, which were as intolerable as boiling water. The Targum is,

"prophesy that armies shall come against this city; and also there shall be given unto it length of time to receive the siege."

Ezekiel 24:4

Ver. 4. Gather the pieces thereof into it,.... fire being made, and the pot set on, and water poured into it, the next thing is, to put in the pieces that are to be boiled; and these are to be gathered; meaning the people of the land, that were to be gathered from the several parts of it, for their security, as they thought; but the event proved it was for their ruin: even every good piece, the thigh and the shoulder; the princes and gentry, the great and the mighty, the rich and wealthy of the people; who, upon the invasion, got together in Jerusalem, to secure their persons and substance:

fill it with the choice bones; or with those pieces that have the choice bones, that are full of marrow; the strongest among the people; the soldiers, or such as were fit for war; the best of their militia, brought hither to defend the city; but, in fact, to be slain, as they were. The Targum is,

"gather the princes thereof into the midst of her, every terrible man and warrior; fill her with the army of the people."

Ezekiel 24:5

Ver. 5. Take the choice of the flock,.... King, princes, nobles, magistrates, priests and rulers of the people:

and burn also the bones under it: or, "put a pile of bones under it" {u}; the bones of them that are slain in it; denoting the great slaughter of them; or the bones of the innocent that had been murdered in it; which were the cause of these judgments coming upon them; and caused the wrath of God to burn the more hotly against them; or the bones of the wicked:

and make it boil well; the pot; that the water may be very hot and boiling; denoting the severity of the judgments of God in the city, to the destruction of many by sword, famine, and pestilence:

and let them seethe the bones of it therein; that the strongest among them may be weakened and destroyed by the length and severity of the siege, and the judgments attending it. The Targum is,

"bring near the kings of the people, and even join auxiliaries with them; hasten the time of it yea, let her slain be cast in the midst of her."

{u} hytxt Mymueh rwd "pyram ossium sub ipsa", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Starckius. rwd "rogus, strues materiae combustibililis rotunda", Stockius, p. 223.

Ezekiel 24:6

Ver. 6. Wherefore thus saith the Lord God, woe to the bloody city,.... Here the parable begins to be explained; and shows that by the pot is meant the city of Jerusalem, called the bloody city, because of the blood of the prophets, and of righteous persons, and of innocent babes, that was shed in it; and which was the cause of the judgments of God coming upon her, which would issue in her destruction, and therefore "woe unto her"; see Mt 23:37:

to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it; when a pot boils, a scum arises, and appears upon the top of the water, which the cook usually takes off: this denotes the filthiness and wickedness of the people of the Jews, which would work up and be seen by the judgments of God upon them; yet should not be removed, but continue on them, unrepented of, and unpardoned. It signifies that they would remain hardened in their sins; and that the judgments of God would have no effect upon them to bring them to repentance; and that God would have no mercy on them, or pardon their sins:

bring it out piece by piece: the people that were in Jerusalem, of every class and rank, of every age and sex; suggesting that they should not be all destroyed at once, but some at one time, and some at another; some in one way, and some in another; some by famine, others by the pestilence, and others by the sword; some by sallying out upon the enemy; others by endeavouring to make their escape privately, and fall into their hands:

let no lot fall upon it; to save some, and destroy others, as is often done in war; signifying that all were destined to destruction, some way or another; and none should be spared; they that escaped the pestilence should die by famine; and they that escaped them both should die by the sword; and they that escaped all three should be carried into captivity. The Targum is,

"captivity upon captivity shall go out with her, because repentance was not in her."

Ezekiel 24:7

Ver. 7. For her blood is in the midst of her,.... The blood of innocent persons shed in the midst of her, openly and publicly, cried for vengeance:

she set it upon the top of a rock; where it could not soak in, as when spilled upon soft earth: this denotes her openness and impudence in shedding blood, as not being ashamed of it, or afraid of punishment for it, but as rather glorying in it; perhaps there may be some allusion to the tops of hills and mountains, where idolatry was committed, attended with shedding human blood:

she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust; she did not take any methods to hide her sin; having no sense of the heinousness of it, nor any consciousness of guilt, or any remorse or repentance; respect is had to a law which obliged to cover blood shed with dust,
Le 17:13. The Targum of the whole is,

"because innocent blood which is shed in the midst of her; with pride and with a high arm she shed it; she shed it not through ignorance, that she might repent of it."

Ezekiel 24:8

Ver. 8. That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance,.... Into the heart and mind of God, into his face, speaking after the manner of men; observing such gross and open wickedness, he determined within himself to show his resentment, manifest his wrath and displeasure, and take vengeance on such capital and impudent offenders:

I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it might not be covered; by way of just retaliation; that as her sin was publicly committed, and no repentance shown for it, so her punishment should be open and manifest to all the world, and no forgiveness should be granted her. The Targum is,

"I have revealed their sins, because they have shed innocent blood openly, that it might not be forgiven."

Ezekiel 24:9

Ver. 9. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, woe to the bloody city,....
See Gill on "Eze 24:6":

I will even make the pile for fire great; a large pile of wood, a great quantity of fuel to maintain the fire, and keep the pot boiling; meaning the vast army of the Chaldeans, which the Lord would bring against Jerusalem, which should closely besiege it, and vigorously attack it, until it had executed the fury of the wrath of God, comparable to fire, and of his judgments upon it. The Targum is,

"even I will multiply her destruction."

Ezekiel 24:10

Ver. 10. Heap on wood, kindle the fire,.... This is said either to the prophet, to do this in an emblematic way; or to the Chaldean army, to prepare for the siege, encompass the city, begin their attacks, and throw in their stones out of their slings and engines, and arrows from their bows:

consume the flesh; not entirely, since it is afterwards to be spiced; but thoroughly boil it; denoting the severe sufferings the inhabitants should undergo before their utter ruin:

spice it well; pepper them off; batter their walls, beat down their houses, distress them by all manner of ways and means; signifying that this would be grateful to the Lord, as his justice would be glorified in the destruction of this people; and as the plunder of them would be like a spiced and sweet morsel to the enemy; whose appetites would hereby be sharpened and become keen, and to whom the sacking and plundering the city would be as agreeable as well seasoned meat to a hungry man:

and let the bones be burnt; either under it, or rather in it; even the strongest and most powerful among the people destroyed, who should hold out the longest in the siege. The Targum of the whole is,

"multiply kings; gather an army; order the auxiliaries, and prepare against her warriors, and let her mighty ones be confounded."

Ezekiel 24:11

Ver. 11. Then set it empty upon the coals thereof,.... The city, when emptied of its inhabitants and substance, like a pot that is boiled over, and all in it boiled away, or taken out; burn it with fire, as the city of Jerusalem when taken and plundered was:

that the brass of it may be hot, and burn; as brass will when set on coals: or, "the bottom of it" {w}; so Ben Melech observes, from the Misnah, that the lower part or bottom of a pot, cauldron, or furnace, is called the brass of it; and so the sense is, make the fire burn so fierce as to burn the bottom of the pot; or the canker and rust of it, which the following words explain:

and that the filthiness of it may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed; the abominable wickedness of this people; since they were not reformed and brought to repentance for it by the admonitions and instructions given them, and by the chastisements and corrections laid upon them, they with their sins should be consumed in this terrible manner. The Targum is,

"I will leave the land desolate, that they may become desolate; and that the gates of her city may be consumed; and that those that work uncleanness in the midst of her may melt away, and her sins be consumed."

{w} htvxn "fundum ejus", Pagninus, Vatablus.

Ezekiel 24:12

Ver. 12. She hath wearied herself with lies,.... With serving idols, which were lying vanities; by trusting to the alliances of neighbouring nations, which deceived her; or by committing sin, in which there was no satisfaction; or it may be understood of wearying of God with their sins, and particularly with her lying promises of repentance and reformation:

and her great scum went not forth out of her; notwithstanding her promises; or notwithstanding the admonitions given, and the chastisements inflicted on her, yet she continued hardened in her sins, impenitent and unreformed:

her scum shall be in the fire; like a pot that boils over, its scum falls into the fire, and is consumed there; and in no other way, but by the fire of divine judgments, or the burning of the city, could the wickedness thereof be consumed. The Targum is,

"and they shall not go out of her that work iniquity; in the fire shall she be burnt, because of the multitude of her sins."

Ezekiel 24:13

Ver. 13. In thy filthiness is lewdness,.... Consummate wickedness joined with impudence, and an obstinate persisting in it; though her sins were so abominable and filthy, yet she was not ashamed of them, nor could be reclaimed from them; but, like a lewd woman, or an old harlot, was bold and impudent:

because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged; made use of means for the purgation of them, by his prophets, and by exhortations and instructions given by them, and by various corrections and chastisements; but all in vain, and to no purpose, they were all without effect:

thou shall not be purged from thy filthiness any more till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee; there was no other way left to purge her from her sins, but by the fire of his wrath, and the fury of his anger, in her utter destruction.

Ezekiel 24:14

Ver. 14. I the Lord have spoken it; it shall come to pass,.... What God has said shall be accomplished; his word shall not return void and empty, or be without effect:

and I will do it; being God omnipotent and unchangeable:

I will not go back; from his word, or the thing threatened and denounced; nothing should prevail upon him to act such a part:

neither will I spare; show any mercy or compassion, or abate of the punishment due:

neither will I repent; or change the course and method of Providence; but abide by the decree gone forth, and the sentence pronounced, and thoroughly execute it; a heap of words ascertaining the truth of what is predicted:

according to thy ways and according to thy doings shall they judge thee, saith the Lord God; that is, the Chaldeans shall judge and condemn thee, and execute my judgments on thee in a just and righteous manner, as thy evil ways and works deserve.

Ezekiel 24:15

Ver. 15. Also the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. Next follows the other sign, by which the Lord shows the destruction of the temple.

Ezekiel 24:16

Ver. 16. Son of man, behold,.... This is said to raise the attention of the prophet, something strange and unusual, interesting and affecting, being about to be delivered:

I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke; meaning his wife; who very probably was of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to; however, of an amiable disposition, and in her conjugal relation very agreeable to the prophet; and, no doubt, a truly religious woman, and upon all account's desirable to him. This lovely object of his affection the Lord, who is the sovereign disposer of all persons, signifies he would take away from him by death unto himself; that is, suddenly and at once; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "with a sudden stroke"; as sometimes persons are struck with death at once with an apoplexy or palsy. The Targum renders it, with the pestilence; it was what the Jews call death by the hand of heaven, by the immediate hand of God; and, it may be, without any intervening disease; or, however, without any train of disorders which lead on to death:

yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep; on account of the dead; neither privately nor publicly, inwardly or outwardly, though so near and dear a relation; and though it would seem strange, and be charged with want of natural affection, and with a brutish insensibility:

neither shall thy tears run down; his cheeks, by which vent would be given to his grief, and his mind somewhat eased; but all care was to be taken to prevent any gushing of them out of his eyes, and especially that they did not run down in any quantity on his cheeks, and to be seen; though they might seem to be but a proper tribute to the dead.

Ezekiel 24:17

Ver. 17. Forbear to cry,.... Groan or howl, or make any doleful noise: or, "be silent" {x}: which the Talmudists {y} interpret of not greeting any person:

make no mourning for the dead; use none of those rites and ceremonies commonly observed for deceased relations and friends, particularly and especially for a wife; who is one of the seven persons for whom mourning is to be made, according to the Jewish canons {z}; and which the ties of nature, nearness of relation, and especially mutual and cordial affection, where that has taken place, require; and though a wife is not expressly mentioned among those, for whom a priest might defile himself by attending their funerals, yet must be included among those akin to him, if not solely designed, as Jarchi thinks; whose note on Le 21:2, is, there are none his kin but his wife; so that Ezekiel, though a priest, was not exempted from the observation of funeral rites, but obliged to them, had he not been forbid by a special order from the Lord: the particulars of which follow:

bind the tire of thine head upon thee; cap or turban, wore on the head, as a covering of it, and ornament to it, as the word used signifies; and the priests' bonnets were for glory and beauty,
Ex 28:40, and such was the tire about the prophet's head, since he was a priest; and which, in time of mourning, was taken off, and it was customary for mourners to be bare headed; and though the high priest might not uncover his head and rend his clothes for the dead,
Le 21:10, yet other priests might, unless they had a particular and special prohibition, as Ezekiel here; see Le 10:6 and yet it seems, by some instances, particularly that of David's mourning for Absalom, that the head was covered at such a time, 2Sa 19:5 and Kimchi on the place expressly says, that it was the way and custom of mourners to cover themselves; and certain it is, that in later times, however, it has been the usage of the Jews to cover their heads in mourning; for this is one of the things expressly forbid in the Jewish canons, as Maimonides {a} says, to be used in mourning for the dead, namely, making bare the head; and covering the head is what mourners are obliged to {b}; this Gejerus {c} reconciles, by observing, that at the first of the mourning they used to take off of their heads what they wore for the sake of ornament, such as the tire, or bonnet here; but after a while covered themselves with veils when they went abroad, or others came to them. Jarchi interprets this of the "tephillim", or phylacteries the Jews wore about their heads; and so the Talmud {d}; and the Targum is,

"let thy "totaphot" or frontlets be upon thee;"

of which interpretation Jerom makes mention; but these things do not appear to be in use in Ezekiel's time:

and put on thy shoes upon thy feet: which used to be taken off, and persons walked barefoot in times of mourning, 2Sa 15:30, and this custom continues with the Jews to this day; and which they say is confirmed by this passage. One of their canons {e} runs thus,

"they do not rend garments, nor pluck off the shoe for any, until he is dead;"

which supposes they do, and should do, when he is dead: and this is one of the things, their writers {f} say, is forbidden a mourner for the dead, namely, to put on his shoes; and they ask, from whence it appears that a mourner is forbid to put on his shoes? the answer is, from what is said to Ezekiel, "put on thy shoes upon thy feet": which shows that in common it was not right nor usual to do it; and it is their custom now for mourners, when they return from the grave, to sit seven days on the ground with their feet naked {g}:

and cover not thy lips; as the leper did in the time of his separation and distress, who put a covering upon his upper lip, Le 13:45 and as mourners did, who put a veil upon their faces:

and eat not the bread of men: of other men; or "of mourners" {h}, as the Targum; such as used to be sent to mourners by their friends, in order to refresh and revive their spirits; and who, they supposed, through their great grief, were not careful to provide food for themselves; and this they did to comfort them, and let them know that, though they had lost a relation, there were others left, who had a cordial respect for them, and heartily sympathized with them: and, according to the traditions of the Jews {i}, a mourner might not eat of his own bread; but was obliged to eat the bread of others, at least his first meal, and on the first day of his mourning; though he might on the second, and on the following days; and this they endeavour to establish from this place of Scripture. What their friends used to send them at such a time were usually hard eggs and wine. Eggs, because round and spherical, and so a proper emblem of death, and might serve to put in mind of it, which goes round, is with one today, and with another tomorrow; and wine, to cheer their spirits, that they might forget their sorrow {k}. They also used to eat at such times a sort of pulse, called lentiles, to show by what sort of food they lost their birthright, or firstborn {l} And such like things were used by the Romans in their funeral feasts, as beans, parsley, lettuce, lentiles, eggs, &c. {m}, and as the Romans had their "parentalia", and the Greeks their paradeipna, so the Jews had also very sumptuous feasts on such occasions: not only great personages, as kings and nobles, made them; so Archelaus, made a magnificent one for the people, on the death of his father Herod {n}, after the custom of the country; but even the common people were very profuse and lavish in them; and which, as Josephus {o} observes, was the cause of great poverty among them; for so prevalent was the custom, that there was a necessity of doing it, or otherwise a man would not have been reckoned a holy man; see Jer 16:7.

{x} Md "tace", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus. {y} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 15. 1. {z} Maimon. Hilchot Ebel, c. 2. sect. 1. Buxtorf. Jud. Synagog. c. 49. p. 708. {a} Maimon. Hilchot Ebel, c. 5. sect. 1. {b} Schulchan Aruch, lib. Jore Dea, c. 380. sect. 1. c. 386. sect. 1, 2. {c} De luctu Ebr. c. 11. sect. 5. p. 250. {d} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 11. 1. Moed Katon, fol. 15. 1. Succa, fol. 25. 2. {e} Messech, Semachot, c. 1. sect. 5. {f} Maimon. Hilchot Ebel, c. 5. sect. 1. Schulchan Aruch, lib. Jore Dea, c. 380. sect. 1. 382. sect. 1, 2. {g} Buxtorf. Jud. Synagog. c. 49. p. 706. {h} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 11. 1. Moed Katon, fol. 15. 1. Succa, fol. 25. 2. {i} T. Bab. Moed Katan, fol. 27. 2. Maimon. Hilchot Ebel, c. 4. sect. 9. Schulchan Aruch, lib. Jore Dea, c. 378. sect. 1. {k} Buxtorf. Jud. Synagog. c. 49. p. 708. {l} Hieron. ad Paulam super obitu Blesillae, tom. 1. operam, fol. 54. L. {m} Vid. Kirchman. de Funer. Rom. l. 4. c. 7. p. 591. {n} Joesph Antiqu. l. 17. c. 8. sect. 4. {o} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 1. sect. 1.

Ezekiel 24:18

Ver. 18. So I spake unto the people in the morning,.... Did the duty of his office as a prophet; exhorted and instructed the people, particularly informed them of what had been said to him by the Lord, the evening or night before, concerning the death of his wife, and how he was to behave under such a providence; which he told them of before hand, that, when it came to pass, they might have a further proof of his being a true prophet of the Lord:

and at even my wife died; suddenly, as it was said she should; this shows who is meant by the desire of his eyes, and what by the taking it away;

and I did in the morning as I was commanded; neither moaned, nor sighed, nor wept, nor shed a tear, nor used any of the common ceremonies of mourning, but dressed and ate as at other times, as he was ordered to do; this was the next morning after his wife died. So the Syriac version, "in the morning of the other day;"

and the Arabic version,

"in the morning of the following day."

Thus whatever the Lord commands is to be done, though ever so contrary to the customs of men, or to natural inclinations and affections.

Ezekiel 24:19

Ver. 19. And the people said unto me,.... Either seriously, as being desirous of knowing what was meant by all this; since they had reason to believe that it was not out of want of affection in Ezekiel to his wife that he so behaved; and therefore there must be some hidden meaning in it, which they should be glad to be informed of: or in a ludicrous manner, deriding the prophet for his conduct, and despising what he meant to instruct them in hereby:

wilt thou not tell us what these things are to us, that thou doest so? for they suspected it vas not on his own account, but to signify something to them, that these things were done; and laughing at him, they say, to what purpose are these things done? if you do not tell us for what reason they are done, instruct us by words, and not by actions; these were his fellow captives in Babylon.

Ezekiel 24:20

Ver. 20. Then I answered them,.... And gave them an account of the design of the whole, and what was signified hereby:

the word of the Lord came unto me, saying; ordering him to do all he did; for he did nothing of himself, but all according to the divine will; and who also directed him to say the following things to the people, by way of explanation.

Ezekiel 24:21

Ver. 21. Speak unto the house of Israel,.... By word of mouth, to those who were upon the spot with him in Chaldea: and by a messenger, or a letter, to them that were in Judea:

thus saith the Lord of hosts, behold, I will profane my sanctuary; the temple, built for him, and where he dwelt, and was worshipped; where duties performed and holy sacrifices offered up formerly; this he now says he would profane, that is, would bring the Chaldeans against Jerusalem, who should take it, and enter into the temple, and so profane it, and make it common, yea, utterly destroy it:

the excellency of your strength, desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth; all which is said of the temple; it was the pride and glory of the Jews, what they boasted of, and put their confidence in, and reckoned their strength and security; it was as dear and as desirable to them as Ezekiel's wife was to him, the emblem of it; the destruction and desolation of which would be pitied by them, and would sensibly affect them upon hearing of it, even in prophecy:

and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword; whom they had left behind them in Judea, when they were carried captive with Jehoiakim, and to whom they hoped to return, as their false prophets had assured them; but so it should not be, for these should die by the sword of the Chaldeans, when the city of Jerusalem should be taken, and the temple profaned; and this should be the case of the sons and daughters of those who then should be carried captive, that should be left in the land; as was the case of Gedaliah, and those that were with him.

Ezekiel 24:22

Ver. 22. And ye shall do as I have done,.... When his wife died, and as he was ordered by the Lord; the meaning of Which they were now inquiring:

ye shall not cover your lips; as a token of mourning; nor use any other of their country rites and ceremonies, for fear of provoking their enemies, in whose hands they shall be:

nor eat the bread of men; or "of mourners", as the Targum; there shall be none to comfort them, or send bread to them; they shall all be alike mourners.

Ezekiel 24:23

Ver. 23. And your tires shall be upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet..... As will be necessary while travelling, and when carrying captive to a foreign country, as now will be their case:

ye shall not mourn nor weep; shall not dare to do it, because of their enemies; and, moreover, so great should be their miseries and calamities, that they should be struck dumb, and quite astonished and stupefied with them; that they should not be able to vent their sorrow by an outward act of mourning:

but ye shall pine away for your iniquities; without any true sense of them, or godly sorrow for them, but in wretched hardness of heart, and black despair:

and mourn one towards another; not to God, confessing their sins, being contrite and penitent; but to one another, fretting, murmuring, and complaining at the hand of God upon them: this seems to denote the private way of mourning they should use for fear of the enemy, when they could get together by themselves, as well as their disregard to God, against whom they had sinned.

Ezekiel 24:24

Ver. 24. Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign,.... These are the words of the prophet concerning himself; observing that in all the above things he was a sign to the Jews of what should befall them, and what should be their case:

and according to all that he hath done shall ye do; however it might be then a matter of scorn and derision:

and when this cometh: when this prophecy comes to pass, and all these calamities come upon the city and temple:

ye shall know that I am the Lord God; omniscient, omnipotent, true, and faithful.

Ezekiel 24:25

Ver. 25. Also, thou son of man, shall it not be in the day,.... This question is to be answered in the affirmative:

when I take from them their strength; their king and kingdom, their princes and nobles, their soldiers and men of might and war, their wealth and substance, their city and the inhabitants of it; or rather their temple, in which they placed their strong confidence: so the Targum,

"in the day when I shall take from them the house of their sanctuary;"

and which is called "the joy of their glory"; what they rejoiced and gloried in:

the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their mind, their sons and their daughters; for to these may those phrases be applied; as well as to the temple; they being desirable to them, to be spared and continued, and on whom the affections of their hearts were set, and for whose welfare they were very solicitous. So some render it "the burden or care of their souls" {p}; though the Targum applies this, as the other to the temple, paraphrasing it,

"and the delight of their eyes shall be taken from them, and the beloved of their souls, which is better to them than their sons and their daughters."

{p} Mvpn avm ta "onus animae eoram", Munster; "curam, [vel] solicitudinem"; so some in Vatablus.

Ezekiel 24:26

Ver. 26. That he that escapeth in that day shall come unto thee,.... That is, that one that should escape the hands of the Chaldeans, when the city should be taken, should directly make the best of his way to the prophet:

to cause thee to hear it with thine ears; all the particulars of the destruction of the city and temple, as it had been represented to him in vision; when he would see the exact agreement between prophecy and facts; see Eze 33:21.

Ezekiel 24:27

Ver. 27. In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped,.... And shall freely converse with him about the several facts and circumstances of taking and burning the city and temple, and of the usage of the inhabitants:

and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb; for from this time to the taking of Jerusalem, which was about eighteen months, the prophet had nothing to say to the people of the Jews, and so was dumb with respect to them; but was employed in prophesying against other nations, as the following chapters show, unto chapter thirty three, in which we have an account of the messenger that escaped to him; but after that his mouth was opened, and he prophesied to them again:

and thou shalt be a sign unto them; as they will then own and acknowledge:

and they shall own that I am the Lord; who have foretold these things, and accomplished them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 25:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 25

In this chapter the prophet foretells the judgments of God upon the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Philistines, for their ill usage of the Jews; on the Ammonites, Eze 25:1, on the Moabites, Eze 25:8, on the Edomites, Eze 25:12, on the Philistines, Eze 25:15.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord came unto me,.... After he had done prophesying to the Jews, he is bid to prophesy against the Gentiles, the nations that lay nearest the Jews: saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 25:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites,.... Who were of the posterity of Lot, implacable enemies of the Jews; who hated their religion, and envied their wealth and happiness; against these the prophet is bid to "set his face"; to look that way where they lived, and to put on a frowning countenance, and a menacing aspect: "strengthen thy face", as the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it; look boldly at them:

and prophesy against them; deliver out the following prophecy concerning them.

Ezekiel 25:3

Ver. 3. And say unto the Ammonites,.... Either to their ambassadors at Babylon, or merchants there; or by letters to them, the prophet being in Chaldea, at a distance from them:

hear the word of the Lord God; not Chemosh their idol, nor their lying oracles, but the word of the true and living God; which is always accomplished, and is never frustrated:

thus saith the Lord God, because thou saidst, aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; that is, expressed joy, as the Targum paraphrases it, at the destruction of the temple, when it was burnt by Nebuchadnezzar; it was foreknown by the Lord that they would do so, and are here threatened before hand; for as yet the temple was not destroyed; a proof this of God's prescience of future contingencies:

and against the land of when it was desolate; the country of the ten tribes, which had been desolate from the sixth year of Hezekiah, when the people of it were carried captive by Shalmaneser king of Assyria; this also was matter of joy to the Ammonites:

and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity; the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who were carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar; part of which had already been carried captive under Jeconiah, and the rest would be, and were, under Zedekiah; which completed the destruction of Israel and Judah, and gave the utmost pleasure to their enemies the Ammonites; who were so impious as to rejoice at the destruction of their temple, the place of their religious worship, which they abhorred; and so inhuman as to express the delight and satisfaction they had in the ruin of their fellow creatures and neighbours, and who were originally related to them; this brutish and barbarous behaviour of theirs is resented by the Lord.

Ezekiel 25:4

Ver. 4. Behold, therefore, I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession,.... The Chaldeans and Syrians, which were on the east side, as Jarchi; or the Medes and Persians, as Kimchi, which lay more eastward; or it may be the Arabians, who are commonly called the men of the east; who were a part of Nebuchadnezzar's army, and whom he might reward with this country, when taken by him; for this prophecy, according to Josephus {q}, was fulfilled five years after the destruction of Jerusalem:

and they shall set their palaces in thee, and make their dwellings in thee; or, "their camps and their tents" {r}; and so the Syriac version renders it, their armies and their tents; who should subdue them, and take possession of their cities and fields, and enjoy what they found there:

they shall eat thy fruit, and drink thy milk; the fruit of their land, their vineyards and fields, and the milk of their flocks and herds, which was commonly drank in those countries; these are put for the whole of their substance. So the Targum,

"they shall eat the good of thy land, and spoil thy substance."

{q} Antiqu. l. 16. c. 9. sect. 7. {r} Mhytwryj "arces suas", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus, Coeccius. Mhynkvm "tentoria sua", V. L. "tabernacala sus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 25:5

Ver. 5. And I will make Rabbath a stable for camels,.... Creatures much used by the eastern nations, especially the Arabians; who pitching their tents about Rabbath, the royal city, the metropolis of the children of Ammon, would convert the houses, and even palaces in it, into stables for their camels. This city, in Jerom's time, as he says, was called Philadelphia, from Ptolemy Philadelphus, who rebuilt it.

And the Ammonites a couching place for flocks; that is, the land of the Ammonites should be made a place for flocks of sheep to lie down in, which the Arabians would bring and feed upon it:

and ye shall know that I am the Lord; omniscient, and sees and observes all your insults upon the children of Israel and Judah; and omnipotent, able to perform all that is threatened; and immutable, bringing about all that is here prophesied of.

Ezekiel 25:6

Ver. 6. For thus saith the Lord God,.... Their sin and punishment are further enlarged upon:

because thou hast clapped thine hands, and stamped with thy feet: gestures expressive of joy and gladness, Isa 55:12, the Ammonites clapped their hands together, and leaped and skipped for joy, when they heard of the calamities of the Jews; who yet had more reason to be sorrowful, since they might expect their turn would be next; for the king of Babylon had a design against them, at the same time he came against Jerusalem, and was in doubt for a while which he should attack first; see Eze 21:20:

and rejoiced in heart with all thy despite against the land of Israel; they had a secret joy in their heart, which they expressed by gestures, in the most spiteful and scornful manner they were capable of; which showed the wretched malignity of their dispositions against the children of Israel; they hated them with a perfect hatred.

Ezekiel 25:7

Ver. 7. Behold, therefore, I will stretch out mine hand upon thee,.... In just retaliation for clapping their hands against his people; and which hand of the Lord they would find to be a heavy one, and which they would not be able either to resist or bear. The Targum is,

"I will lift up the stroke of my power upon thee:"

and will deliver thee for a spoil to the Heathen; to the Chaldeans first, and then to the Arabians, to be spoiled and plundered by them of their wealth and substance: some render it, "for meat" {s} unto them; to be devoured and consumed by them:

and I will cut thee off from the people, and I will cause thee to perish out of the countries; so as to be no more a people and a country; or be reckoned among the people and countries; or have any alliance with them, or help from them:

I will destroy thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; who has said and done all this; See Gill on "Eze 25:5".

{s} gbl "in cibum", Montanus, Gussetius. This is the Cetib or textual writing; but the Keri or marginal reading is Nbl, "in direptionem", Pagninus, Cocceius; "in praedam", Junius & Tremeilius, Piscator. Both come to much one and the same sense, as Ben Melech observes, for food was of the spoil; and one word answers to another by "athbash", which is a certain form of placing the alphabet;
See Gill on "Jer 25:26.

Ezekiel 25:8

Ver. 8. Thus saith the Lord God,.... By his servant the prophet, to whom the word of the Lord came; as concerning the Ammonites, so likewise concerning the Moabites, as follows:

because that Moab and Seir do say; that is, the Moabites, and the Edomites, which latter are meant by Seir, that being the seat of them; these lived near one another, and bore a like enmity to the Israelites and Jews, and had the same sentiments concerning them, and said the same things of them: only Moab is mentioned in the Septuagint and Arabic versions: the Moabites are first prophesied of, and then the Edomites, who both joined in saying, behold, the house of Judah is like unto all the Heathen; it fares no better with them than with the rest of the nations, who do not profess and serve the same God they do; they are fallen into the hands of the king of Babylon, as well as others; and have no more security against him, nor protection from him, than other people; they pretend to serve and worship the one only living and true God, and to be his covenant people, and to be favoured with privileges above all other nations; and yet are brought into the same miserable circumstances, and left in them, as others are; where is the God they boast of, and their superior excellence to the rest of the world? thus blasphemously, as well as wickedly, did they insult them, which was provoking to the Lord. The Targum renders it interrogatively,

"in what do the house of Judah differ from all people?"

and so the Septuagint,

"behold, are not the house of Israel and Judah in like manner as all nations?"

Jerom, on the place, relates a fable of the Jews, that when the city and temple were opened, the Ammonites, Moobites, and Edomites, went into the temple, and saw the cherubim over the mercy seat, and said, as all nations worship images, so Judah hath the idols of their religion. Jarchi makes mention of such a Midrash, but with some difference.

Ezekiel 25:9

Ver. 9. Therefore, behold, I will open the side of Moab from the cities,.... Or, "the shoulder of Moab" {t}; that part of their country where their greatest strength lay, So the Targum renders it,

"the strength of Moab;"

where their principal cities were, their frontier towns, and fortified places, as appears by what follows:

from his cities which are on his frontiers; or, "from his Ars" {u},

from his cities which are at his end; at the extreme part of the land, upon the borders of his countries; the two cities of Ar and Aroer,
Nu 21:28:

the glory of the country; as the above cities were, and what follow:

Bethjeshimoth; this was formerly in the tribe of Reuben, now in the possession of the Moabites, and one of their principal cities,
Jos 13:20:

Baalmeon; the same with Bethbaalmeon, and which was also of the tribe of Reuben, Jos 13:17, in Jerom's time it was a large village in Moab, about nine miles from Heshbon: some think by Meon is meant Menes, or Osiris the god of the Egyptians, and so this might be a temple of his; or at least he might have a temple in it, from whence it had its name:

and Kirjathaim; or the double city, built also by the Reubenites,
Nu 32:37, now in the hands of the Moabites, ten miles from Medeba; on this side of the country of Moab, and through these cities, the Lord threatens to

open a way for their enemies to enter in and destroy them, as follows:

{t} Ptk ton wmon, Sept.; "humerum", V. L. Montanus. {u} Myrehm "ab ipsis", Haris, Junius & Tremellius, Polanus.

Ezekiel 25:10

Ver. 10. Unto the men of the east with the Ammonites, and I will give them in possession,.... Or, "against the Ammonites", as the Targum; that is, way should be made for the same people of the east, the Chaldeans or Arabians, that came against the Ammonites and destroyed them, to enter into the land of Moab and possess it, as they had done the land of Ammon:

that the Ammonites may not be remembered among the nations: the name of that people, which is entirely lost; and Moab likewise, which underwent the same fate.

Ezekiel 25:11

Ver. 11. I will execute judgments upon Moab,.... For though the Chaldeans and Arabians were the instruments of their ruin, their destruction was of the Lord; it was his hand that was upon them, and his vengeance that was executed on them, for their hard sayings against his people; for though he had spoke against them in his providence, and chastised them for their sins, yet he will not suffer others to speak against them:

and they shall know that I am the Lord; that takes part with Judah, and will avenge himself of all their enemies.

Ezekiel 25:12

Ver. 12. Thus saith the Lord God,.... Concerning Seir or the Edomites, the prophecy concerning the Moabites being finished:

because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance: or, "revenging a revenge" {w}; the Edomites bore an old grudge against the Jews, not only because their father Jacob had got the birthright and blessing from their father Esau; but because they were made tributaries to them in David's time, and afterwards severely chastised by Amaziah; these things they laid up in their minds, and vowed revenge whenever they had an opportunity; and now one offered at the destruction of Jerusalem, which they took:

and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them: not only by rejoicing at the destruction of the Jews, but by encouraging the Babylonians in it; assisting them therein, joining with them in plundering the city, and in cutting off those with the sword who endeavoured to make their escape; see Ps 137:7.

{w} Mqn Mqnb "in ulciscendo ultionem", Montanus, Starckius.

Ezekiel 25:13

Ver. 13. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Because of such base and barbarous usage, from a people that were originally brethren:

I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; by the army of Nebuchadnezzar, by the sword of the Chaldeans, and by famine and pestilence, and such like sore judgments; in which the hand of God is manifestly seen:

and I will make it desolate from Teman; a very principal city of Edom, so called from Teman, the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, Ge 36:15 it lay in the south of the land of Idumea; the Targum renders it, "from the south":

and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword; of the Babylonians; this was another city of Edom, it lay in the north of that country; so that hereby is signified that destruction should go through it from the southern to the northern parts of it.

Ezekiel 25:14

Ver. 14. And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by fie hand of my people Israel,.... This was fulfilled in the times of the Maccabees, when Judas Maccabins overthrew and conquered them,

"Then Judas fought against the children of Esau in Idumea at Arabattine, because they besieged Gael: and he gave them a great overthrow, and abated their courage, and took their spoils." (1 Maccabees 5:3)

and when Hyrcanus took their cities, and subdued them, and they became Jews, as Josephus {x} relates; though Kimchi thinks this refers to future time, and is yet to be accomplished; and it is, by the ancient Jews {y}, understood of the times of the Messiah: some choose to understand the phrase,

by the hand of my people Israel, the same hand by which judgment was inflicted upon Israel; suggesting that by the same hand vengeance would be inflicted on the Edomites, namely, by the Babylonians:

and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; that is, shall execute all the anger and fury, or all that punishment in anger and fury, which the Lord in righteous judgment has appointed them to, and has determined shall be performed upon them, by the children of Israel or the Babylonians, as his instruments:

and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord God; the meaning is, they shall feel it, and be sensible of it, and know that it comes from the Lord himself; full of resentment against them, and highly displeased at their behaviour towards his people Israel.

{x} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 9. sect. 1. {y} In Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 179. 3.

Ezekiel 25:15

Ver. 15. Thus saith the Lord God,.... Once more, and concerning another enemy of the people of Israel, and who had been of old an implacable one:

because the Philistines have dealt by revenge: for what they suffered in the times of Saul, when Goliath was slain by David, and their army was discomfited; and for the overthrow of them by David, when he came to throne; and for his burning their images, and subduing them, 1Sa 17:51, this revenge they took in the time of Ahaz, 2Ch 28:18, and very probably also showed their spite at the time of Jerusalem's destruction:

and have taken vengeance with a despiteful heart, to destroy it for the old hatred; which they bore to the people of Israel, from their first settlement in

Canaan; from the times of the judges, particularly Samson; and from the times of Saul and David: it was an old grudge they bore, they had spite and malice in their hearts, and wanted an opportunity to vent it; having determined to take vengeance when they could, and utterly destroy them from being a people; very likely, through despite, they assisted the Chaldean army: or, this they did "with a perpetual hatred" {z}; they did everything they could, in a spiteful and malicious way, to perpetuate the hatred between them and Israel.

{z} Mlwe tbya "inimictias perpetuas", Pagninus; "iuimietia perpetua", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator

Ezekiel 25:16

Ver. 16. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Because of such wretched malice and despiteful usage:

behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines; as is foretold, Jer 47:1,

and I will cut off the Cherethims: one of the tribes of the Philistines, a principal part of their country, which lay to the south,
1Sa 30:14, there is a beautiful play on words {i} in the Hebrew:

and destroy the remnant of the seacoast; as that of Ashdod, Caphtor, and Ashkelon, formerly spoiled by other persons; what they left should now be utterly destroyed; see Isa 20:1

{a} Mytrk ta ytrkhw.

Ezekiel 25:17

Ver. 17. And I will execute great vengeance upon them with furious rebukes,.... By way of retaliation for their vengeance and fury, wrath and malice, against his people; suggesting, that the judgments inflicted on them, for quantity and quality, should be very great:

and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall lay my vengeance upon them; they shall see the hand of God in it, acknowledge his justice, and confess that their gods were idols, and that the God of Israel is the only true God.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 26:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 26

This chapter contains a prophecy of the destruction of Tyre. The time of the prophecy, Eze 26:1, the cause of the destruction of it, rejoicing at the ruin of Jerusalem, Eze 26:2, the instruments of it, many nations, particularly the king of Babylon, Eze 26:3, the manner in which it shall be done, Eze 26:8, the lamentation of other isles, and the princes of them, on account of it, Eze 26:15, the utter destruction of it, so as never to be found any more, Eze 26:19.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass in the eleventh year,.... Of Jehoiachin's captivity and Zedekiah's reign, the same year that Jerusalem was taken:

in the first day of the month; but what month is not mentioned; some have thought the first month, and so it was the first day of the year; others the fourth, the same in which the city of Jerusalem was taken; but more probably the fifth, the first of which was twenty days after the taking it; in which time the news of it might be brought to Tyre, at which she rejoiced; and for which her destruction is threatened, and here prophesied of:

that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 26:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, aha,.... As rejoicing at her destruction, and insulting over her in it; which was barbarous and inhuman, and resented by the Lord:

she is broken that was the gates of the people; through whose gates the people went in and out in great numbers; a city to which there was very popular, not only for religion, from all parts, at their solemn feasts, but for merchandise from several parts of the world; and was now full of people before its destruction, the inhabitants of Judea having fled thither for safety, upon the

invasion made by the king of Babylon; but now the city was broken up, as it is said it was, by the Chaldean army,
Jer 52:7, its gates and walls were broken down, and lay in a ruinous condition. The Targum is,

"she is broken down that afforded merchandise to all people."

She is turned unto me; either the inhabitants of Jerusalem, which escaped and fled to Tyre for refuge; or the spoil taken out of it, which was carried there to be sold; and even the captives themselves to be sold for slaves, which was one part of the merchandise of Tyre; see
Eze 27:3, or the business, trade, and merchandise carried on in Jerusalem, were brought to Tyre upon its destruction; so Jarchi and Kimchi. The Targum is,

"she is turned to come unto me;"

which favours the first sense; all may be intended.

I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste; or, "I shall be filled" {b}; with inhabitants, riches, and wealth, with merchants and merchandise, Jerusalem her rival being destroyed; this was what gave her joy; and is a common thing for persons to rejoice at the fall or death of those of the same trade with them; hoping for an increase of theirs by means of it, which yet is sinful.

{b} halma "implebor", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 26:3

Ver. 3. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Who knew the thoughts of the inhabitants of Tyre, and what joy possessed their hearts, and which their lips expressed; and who informs the prophet of it, though at a great distance, and declares his resentment at it:

behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus; and nothing can be more dreadful and formidable than to have God against a nation, city, or a particular person: Tyre was a type of antichrist, who will express a like joy at the death of the witnesses; thinking that the merchandise of Rome will be increased greatly, and there will be nothing to interrupt it,
Re 11:10, but God will show his displeasure, and bring sudden destruction on

it:

and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up; the Chaldean army, consisting of soldiers of many nations; who for their number, noise, and fury, are compared to the raging waves of the sea. So the Targum,

"I will bring up against thee an army of many people, as the sea ascendeth in the raging of its waves;"

the ten kings shall hate the whore, and destroy her, even those very people she reigns over, compared to many waters, Re 17:15.

Ezekiel 26:4

Ver. 4. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus.... Undermining them, or breaking them down with their battering rams:

and break down her towers; with axes, Eze 26:9 built upon the walls; erected for the defence of the city, and for watchmen to stand in, to look out from them for the enemy, and observe his motions, as well as for soldiers to fight from:

and I will scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock; a bare smooth rock, which has not any surface of earth upon it. So the Targum,

"I will give her for the smoothness of an open rock."

Tyre was built upon a rock; and whereas the inhabitants had brought earth thither, and laid it upon it, in order to make gardens and orchards, and plant flowers and trees; this should be all removed, and it should become a bare rock, as it was at first. It denotes the utter destruction of it. It has its name from a word which signifies a rock;
See Gill on "Isa 23:1".

Ezekiel 26:5

Ver. 5. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea,.... Where only fishermen would be seen washing their nets, and then spreading them upon this rock, where Tyre stood, to dry them and this has been confirmed by travellers, who have seen fishermen spreading and drying their nets, and having no other habitations on it but the huts of these men. Huetius {c} relates, that he remembered one Hadrian Parvillarius, a Jesuit, a candid and learned man, particularly in the Arabic language, who lived ten years in Syria; and to have heard him say, that when he saw the ruins of Tyre, its rocks to the sea, and scattered stones on the shore, and made clean smooth by the sun, waves, and wind, and only used for drying fishermen's nets, it brought to his mind this passage of the prophet; as it did to Mr. Maundrell {d} when on the spot, a few years ago; who says,

"you see nothing here but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, &c. there being not so much as one entire house left; its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly upon fishing; who seem to be preserved in this place by divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, viz. "that it should be as the top of a rock", &c.":

so Dr. Shaw {e} says, this port, small as it at present, is choked up to that degree with sand and rubbish, that the boats of these poor fishermen, who now and then visit this once renowned emporium and "dry their nets upon its rocks and ruins", can with great difficulty only be admitted:

for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God; and therefore it should certainly come to pass, as it has:

and it shall become a spoil to the nations; the army of many nations, that besieged it for thirteen years under Nebuchadnezzar.

{c} Evangel. Demonstrat. prop. 6. p. 328. {d} Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 48, 49. Ed. 7. {e} Travels, p. 273. Ed. 2.

Ezekiel 26:6

Ver. 6. And her daughters which are in the field shall be slain by the sword,.... That is, the inhabitants of the cities, towns, and villages, on the shore near it, and which were subject to it; as such cities are frequently in Scripture called the daughters of the place to which they belong: or their daughters literally, that should get out of the city, and endeavour to make their escape; yet should fall into the enemies' hands, who would not spare them on account of their sex or age. The Targum favours the former sense, as most of the Jewish writers do, which is,

"and the inhabitants of the villages which are in the field shall be killed by the sword:"

and they shall know that I am the Lord: the true God, and not Hercules or Apollo, or any other idols they worshipped; when they shall see all these things exactly accomplished, now prophesied of; which none but the omniscient God could foretell.

Ezekiel 26:7

Ver. 7. For thus saith the Lord God,.... What follows; and declares by name the person that should be the instrument of this ruin, and the manner in which it should be brought about:

I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon; a prince whose name was terrible, having conquered many nations: the Lord is said to bring him against Tyre, because, he inclined his heart to steer his course this way; encouraged him to this work; led and protected his army; and, at last, gave him success: it held out thirteen years against him, and then was taken. The siege began, according to Mr. Whiston {f}, A.M. 3650 or before Christ 586; and was taken A.M. 3663 or before Christ 573; according to Bishop Usher, {g}, it began A.M. 3419 or before Christ 585; and was taken A.M. 3432 or before Christ 572. The Phoenician historians make mention of the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar; and Berosus speaks of his subduing the whole country of Phoenicia, in which Tyre was; with whom agree Philostratus and Megasthenes {h}:

a king of kings from the north; who had many kings tributaries to him; the metropolis of whose kingdom lay somewhat, though not fully, north to Tyre:

with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people: with a very numerous army, consisting of a large cavalry; horses being very numerous in the countries subject to him; and which he mounted his men on, both for their more easy travelling, and for their better fighting, and for the terror of their enemies.

{f} Chronological Tables, cent. 10. {g} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3419, 3432. {h} Apud Joseph. adv. Apien. l. 1. c. 19, 20, 21.

Ezekiel 26:8

Ver. 8. He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field,.... The first thing he would do would be to destroy the cities, towns and villages on the continent, near to Tyre, and dependent on it, as in
Eze 26:6, and so the Targum is here, as there:

and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee; a fort built of wood, and a mount made of earth, from which stones might be cast out of their engines, and arrows shot from their bows into the city, to the damaging of the houses, and the hurt of the inhabitants:

and lift up the buckler against thee; or "shield"; that is, as the Targum paraphrases it,

"set against thee such who are armed with shields;"

to repel the arrows shot out from the city, and so defeat the design of them.

Ezekiel 26:9

Ver. 9. And he shall set engines of war against thy walls,.... Which some Jewish writers understand of crossbows, out of which stones or arrows were cast; but rather, according to Kimchi and Jarchi, they were warlike machines, invented to throw large stones against the walls of a place, to beat them down. Some think they were the same with the battering rams, used in sieges for the demolishing of walls; which was a late invention of those times, Ezekiel being the first writer, it is said, that makes mention of them:

and with his axes he shall break down thy towers; the word here used signifies anything made of iron, as swords, spears, hammers, and axes; the latter, being more proper to demolish towers, is here pitched on by our translators. The Targum renders it, "with stones of iron"; that is, with iron balls cast out of their engines.

Ezekiel 26:10

Ver. 10. By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee,.... The dust raised by the feet of the horses so numerous, should rise in such quantities, and to such a height, as to be like a cloud, which should cover the city; an hyperbolical way of speaking, as Kimchi observes; as is also the following clause:

thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots; at the shouts of the horsemen upon every attack, and the rattling of the chariot wheels running to and fro, in carrying on their designs:

when ye shall enter into thy gates; that is, then particularly shall such a shout be made by the horsemen, and such rattling of the chariots, as will even make the walls of the city to shake; an excess of expression, signifying the prodigious noise made at their entrance into it: as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach; or, "according to the entrance of a city broken up" {i}; when its walls are broken down, and a gap is made; at which men rush in in great numbers, and with great force and clamour.

{i} heqbm rye yawbmk "tanquam introitus civitatis diruptae", Montanus; "dissipatae", Pagninus; "quemadmodum ingrediuntur urbem disruptam", Piscator; "quemadmodum intratur urbs praerupta", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 26:11

Ver. 11. With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets,.... Such a number of horses running to and fro in the streets, and prancing upon the pavements, shall break them up, and destroy them, so that they shall be mere mire and dirt:

he shall slay thy people by the sword; such as would not lay down their arms and submit; or their principal ones, who encouraged the inhabitants to hold out the siege to such a length of time as they did; which might provoke Nebuchadnezzar to use them with more severity:

and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground: where their soldiers were placed for defence; their citadel and other towers: or, "the statues of thy strengths" {k}; their strong statues made of marble, &c. erected as trophies of victories obtained by them; or to the honour of some worthy magistrates, and principal citizens; or of their confederates and allies; or rather of their deities, such as Hercules and Apollo, their tutelar gods; which, though chained as they were, that they might not depart, shall now fall to the ground, unable to protect themselves or their worshippers: all that is here said, concerning the destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, seems to be understood of old Tyre, which was upon the continent; for this account agrees not with the isle.

{k} Kze twbum "statuae fortitudinis tuae", Pagninus, Montanus; "columnas tuas robustas", Cocceius; "columnas ruboris tui", Starckius.

Ezekiel 26:12

Ver. 12. And they shall make a spoil of thy riches,.... The Chaldean army, when they entered the city, and got possession of it, would plunder it, and divide the riches of it among them:

and make a prey of thy merchandise; of the merchants' goods, laid up in their warehouses for sale, which was greatly hindered by this long siege; compare with this Re 18:11:

and they shall break down thy walls; the walls of their houses; mention being made before of breaking down the walls of the city, towers, and garrisons:

and destroy thy pleasant houses; or, "houses of thy desire" {l}; the most desirable ones in the city; the houses of their princes and chief magistrates; their summer houses; or which were most delightfully situated towards the sea, to have the prospect and advantage of that:

and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water; of the sea, near unto or about it; into which they cast the rubbish of the demolished houses, stones, timber, and dust, and so left it bare and naked: or rather this was fulfilled when Alexander, with the ruins of old Tyre, its stones, timber, and rubbish, and trees from Lebanon, made a causeway from the continent to the island; and by that means took it, after seven months' toil and labour of this sort {m}.

{l} Ktdmx ytb "domos desiderii tui", Montanus, Vatablus. {m} Curt. Hist, l. 4. c. 2. 4.

Ezekiel 26:13

Ver. 13. And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease,.... As this city abounded with riches, so with carnal mirth and pleasure; it was a "joyous city", Isa 23:7, the inhabitants lived merrily and jovially; were much given to music, which was very diverting and amusing to foreigners that traded with them; but now it would be all over with them; there would be no more songs, nor any to sing them:

and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard; neither vocal nor instrumental music; and this will be one day the case of Rome, of which Tyre was a type, Re 18:22.

Ezekiel 26:14

Ver. 14. And I will make thee like the top of a rock,.... Smooth and bare; See Gill on "Eze 26:4":

and thou shall be a place to spread nets upon;
See Gill on "Eze 26:5":

thou shalt be built no more: this must be understood with some restriction and limitation; as that it should not be built any more in the same stately manner; or be raised to royal dignity, and be governed in the grand manner it had been; or be built upon the same spot; or after its last destruction, to which the prophecy may have respect; it being usual in Scripture for prophecies to regard what is more remote as well as more near; for, upon the destruction of it by Nebuchadnezzar, it was to be restored after seventy years, according to Isaiah's prophecy,
Isa 23:15 and, many years after this, new Tyre was besieged, taken, and destroyed by Alexander; and after this it was rebuilt; we read of it in the New Testament; See Gill on "Ac 21:3", and in Jerom's time it was a most noble and beautiful city, as he on this passage observes; indeed, as Kimchi says, who lived near a thousand years after Jerom, the city then built in his time called Tyre was built upon the continent near the seashore; whereas Tyre destroyed by Alexander was built in the midst of the sea, and was as the top of a rock. It has since been destroyed by Saladine, in the year 1291; and now quite uninhabited, unless by fishermen, who wash, dry, and mend their nets here:

for I the Lord have spoken it, saith, the Lord God; and therefore it shall be accomplished, as it has been; no more of his returning void, and becoming of no effect. The Targum is,

"because I the Lord have decreed by my word, saith the Lord God;"

it is a determination and resolution of his, and none can disannul it. Abendana thinks that hitherto the prophecy is concerning the first destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, and what follows is concerning the destruction of it by Alexander.

Ezekiel 26:15

Ver. 15. Thus saith the Lord God to Tyrus,.... By his prophet, who very probably delivered this prophecy to the ambassadors of Tyre at Babylon; or to some of their merchants that traded there; or sent it in a letter to them:

shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall; when they hear the noise of Tyre being taken, it will make them tremble, as fearing their turn will be next; that if a city so well fortified by nature and art, so well supplied with men and money, that had held out the siege so long, should at last surrender; what should they, the neighbouring isles, do, if attacked, who were so inferior to it? and besides, they might have much of their goods in it, in which they traded with the inhabitants of it, trusting to its great strength, and which would now give them a sensible concern. The Targum renders it, the suburbs; and anther Jewish {n} writer, the villages; those that were near to Tyre:

when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee? upon the enemy's entrance, putting to the sword all they meet with; when those that are wounded shall cry, either to have their lives spared, or through the pain and distress occasioned by their wounds.

{n} R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 42. 2.

Ezekiel 26:16

Ver. 16. Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones,.... The kings of the islands of the sea shall lay aside their regalia, all their royal grandeur, and the ensigns of it; leave their thrones of state, and sit in an humble posture:

and lay away their robes, and put off their broidered garments; their royal robes and raiment of needlework curiously embroidered, and richly wrought, such as princes wear; so did the king of Nineveh in token of humiliation, **Jon 3:6**. The Septuagint and Arabic versions understand the first clause of their taking their mitres, or diadems, from their heads:

they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall tremble from head to foot in every joint, as if they were covered with it, as with a garment; or, being clothed with sackcloth, as mourners used to be, shall shake and tremble, being used to other and better clothing:

they shall sit upon the ground; as Job did, and his friends, with dust and ashes on their heads, as persons in distress were wont to do, **Job 2:8**:

and shall tremble at every moment; continually, every hour, minute, and moment of the day: or, "at the breaches" {o}; so Jarchi; that is, those made upon Tyre; fearing lest the same should be made upon them; so the Targum, "because of their breaches"; or at the ruin and destruction they fear will be their case also:

and be astonished at thee; that a city so wealthy and mighty should be brought so low; see Re 18:9.

{o} Myegrl "super repentino casu suo", V. L.

Ezekiel 26:17

Ver. 17. And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say unto thee,.... The following mournful song:

how art thou destroyed that wast inhabited of seafaring men; or, "of the seas": by men who used the seas, and traded by sea to different parts of the world; and was frequented by persons that came by sea thither, by the great ocean, by the Red sea, the Mediterranean sea, and others; or, which was surrounded by the sea. So the Targum,

"that dwellest in the midst of the sea:"

"the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea"; fortified by the sea, and against it; strong in shipping and naval stores; so as to be formidable to others, and mistress of the sea. The Targum is,

"which dwell in the strength of the sea;"

and had the strength and riches of it brought unto it; and so was famous all the world over for its commerce, wealth, and power; but now ruined and undone:

she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it! the sea; on all that used the seas; or on all the inhabitants of the islands of the sea; who all stood in fear of Tyre and her inhabitants, and were obliged to strike their sails to their ships.

Ezekiel 26:18

Ver. 18. Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall,.... The isles near unto it, the isles of the Mediterranean sea; the inhabitants of them, the merchants who from thence traded with Tyre, the seafaring men of those places; partly on account of losses sustained hereby, and partly through fear of the same calamities coming upon themselves; see Re 18:11: yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure; as at the cry of the wounded, and the number of the slain; so on account of those that should be carried away captive by the Babylonians; as well as at the departure of those that should be obliged to fly to other colonies, Isa 23:6, so that, upon one account or another, it shall be entirely stripped of its inhabitants.

Ezekiel 26:19

Ver. 19. For thus saith the Lord God,.... Both to the terror of Tyre, and for the comfort of his people:

when I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; whose trade is ruined, whose inhabitants are destroyed, and whose walls are broken down, and become a mere waste and desert; where no person or anything of value are to be seen:

when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and the great waters shall cover thee:

the waters of the sea shall rush in and overflow the city, the walls of it being broken down; just as the old world, and the cities of it, were overflowed with the deluge, to which the allusion may be; whether this was literally accomplished on Tyre is not certain; perhaps it is to be taken in a figurative sense, and to be understood of the large army of the Chaldeans that should come up against it, and overpower it. So the Targum,

"when I shall bring up against them an army of people, who are many as the waters of the deep, and many people shall cover thee; see Re 17:15."

Ezekiel 26:20

Ver. 20. When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit,.... The grave, and make thee like to them:

with the people of old time; either the people of the old world, or, however, who have been dead long ago:

and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth; where the dead are laid:

in places desolate of old: long ago unfrequented by men; as such places be as are for the burial of the dead:

with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; all the inhabitants being free among the dead; a heap of words made use of to express the same thing, for the confirmation of it; namely, that the condition of Tyre should be like that of dead men, who have been of old dead, and are remembered no more. Jarchi interprets the "pit", of hell; as if this respected their everlasting perdition, as well as temporal ruin; it may be applied to the beast which goeth into perdition,
Re 17:8:

and I shall set glory in the land of the living; in the land of Israel; so the Targum; and it is interpreted by the Jewish expositors and others the same way; and which may be called "the land of the living"; because the living God was worshipped in it; living men in a spiritual sense dwelt there, who offered up living sacrifices unto God, and who had the promise and pledge of eternal life; and which was the "glory" of all lands, as it is sometimes called, where the same word is used as here, Eze 20:6, which had its accomplishment in some respects at the Jews' return from Babylon; but, as Tyre here is a type of antichrist, it may be observed, that, at the time of his fall and destruction, God will put a glory upon his church and people, upon which there shall be a defence; see **Isa 4:5**. This is interpreted by the Talmudists {p} of the resurrection of the dead, when they that die in the land of Israel shall live.

{p} Vid. Kimchi in loc. & T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 111. 1.

Ezekiel 26:21

Ver. 21. I will make thee a terror,.... To all the isles round about, who shall shake and tremble at the ruin of Tyre, as before observed; or to herself, being brought into a most terrible and distressed condition:

and thou shall be no more: in the same place and situation, in the same happy state and condition:

though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God: this is true of the antitype, Babylon, or antichrist, Re 18:21.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 27:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 27

This chapter contains a lamentation on Tyre; setting forth her former grandeur, riches, and commerce; her ruin and destruction; and the concern of others on that account. The prophet is bid to take up his lamentation concerning it, Eze 27:1, observing her situation and magnificence, of which she boasted, Eze 27:3, describing the excellency of her shipping and naval stores, Eze 27:5, declaring who were her mariners, pilots, and caulkers, Eze 27:8, her military men,
Eze 27:10 her several merchants, and the things they traded in with her in her fairs and markets, Eze 27:12, then follows an account of her destruction, Eze 27:26, the lamentation of pilots and mariners because of it, Eze 27:28, and of the kings and inhabitants of the isles, and merchants of the people, Eze 27:33.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord came again unto me,.... Upon the same subject, the destruction of Tyre:

saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 27:2

Ver. 2. Now, thou son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus. Compose an elegy, and sing it; make a mournful noise, and deliver out a funeral ditty; such as the "praeficae", or mournful women, made at funerals, in which they said all they could in praise of the dead, and made very doleful lamentations for them: this the prophet was to do in a prophetic manner, for the confirmation of what was prophesied of by him; and it may teach us, that even wicked men are to be pitied, when in distress and calamity.

Ezekiel 27:3

Ver. 3. And say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea,.... Of the Mediterranean sea; at the eastern part of it, not above half a mile from the continent; and so fit for a seaport, and a harbour for shipping; so mystical Tyre sits on many waters, Re 17:1:

which art a merchant of the people for many isles; the inhabitants of many isles brought the produce of them to her; who took them off their hands, or sold them for them to others; these came from several quarters to trade with her in her markets; and who supplied other isles and countries with all sorts of commodities, for which they either resorted to her, or she sent by ships unto them; so Rome is represented as the seat of merchandise, Re 18:7:

thus saith the Lord God, O Tyrus, thou hast said; in thine heart, in the pride of it, and with thy mouth, praising and commending thyself; which is not right:

I am of perfect beauty: built on a good foundation, a rock; surrounded with walls and towers; the streets arranged in order, and filled with goodly houses; having a good harbour for shipping, and being a mart for all manner of merchandise, Jerusalem being destroyed, Tyre assumes her character, Ps 48:2.

Ezekiel 27:4

Ver. 4. Thy borders are in the midst of the seas, Fixed by the Lord himself, and which could never be removed. Tyre stood about half a mile from the continent, surrounded with the waters of the sea, till it was made a peninsula by Alexander:

thy builders have perfected thy beauty. The Sidonians were the first builders of the city, as Justin {q} says; who began and carried on the building of it to the utmost of their knowledge and skill; and which was afterwards perfected by other builders, who made it the most beautiful city in all those parts; unless this is to be understood of her shipbuilders, who brought the art of building ships in her to such a perfection, as made her famous throughout the world; since they are immediately spoken of without any other antecedent.

{q} Ex Trago, l. 18. c. 3.

Ezekiel 27:5

Ver. 5. They have made all thy ship boards of fir trees of Senir,.... The same with Sion and Hermon, which the Sidonians called Sirion, and the Amorites Shenir, De 3:9 here, it seems, grew the best of fir trees, of which the Tyrians made boards and planks for shipping; of these the two sides of the ship, as the word {r} here used in the dual number is thought to signify, or the fore and hind decks, were made. The Targum is,

"with fir trees of Senir they built for thee all thy bridges;"

the planks from which they went from one ship to another; but these are of too small consequence to be mentioned; rather the main of the ship is intended, which was built of fir planks; but ours made of oak are much preferable:

they have taken cedars from Lebanon, to make masts for thee; large poles for the yards and sails to be fastened to, for receiving the wind necessary in navigation; called the main mast, the foremast, the mizzenmast, and the boltsprit; all these are only in large vessels; whether the Tyrians had all of these is not certain; some they had, and which were made of the cedars of Lebanon; which, being large tall trees, were fit for this purpose. The Tyrians {s} are said to be the first inventors of navigation.

{r} Mytwxl "tabulata duplicia", Munster; "duas tabulas", Vatablus. {s} "Prima ratem ventis credere docta Tyros." Catullus.

Ezekiel 27:6

Ver. 6. Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars,.... To row the ships with; for their ships probably were no other than galleys, which were rowed with oars, as were the ships of first invention. Bashan was a country in Judea where oaks grew; see **Isa 2:13**. The country of Judea in general was famous for oaks; it abounded with them in the times of Homer {t}, who speaks of Typho being buried in a country abounding with oaks, among the rich or fat people of Judea; and he seems to design Bashan particularly, of which Og was king, whom he calls Typho, and of whose bed he makes mention in the same place; hence several places in Judea had their names from the oaks which grew, there, as Elonmoreh, Allonbachuth, Elonmeonenim, Elontabor, and Elonbethhanan, Ge 12:6 and which one would have thought were fitter to make their ships of; but of these only their oars were made:

the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory, brought out of the isles of Chittim; the benches for the towers to sit on, or for others in the cabin and decks; but that these should be wholly of ivory is not very probable; nor was ivory brought from the isles of Chittim, but from other parts; nor is it easy to say who the company of the Ashurites were; some say the Assyrians; but why they should be so called is not plain. Jarchi makes Myrva tb to be but one word, which signifies box trees, as it is used in Isa 41:19 and he supposes that these benches, or be they what they will, were made of box trees covered or inlaid with ivory. So the Targum,

"the lintels of thy gates (the hatches) were planks of box tree inlaid with ivory;"

which box, and not the ivory, was brought from the isles of Chittim; either from Cyprus, where was a place called Citium; or from Macedonia, from whence box was fetched; or from the province of Apulia, as the Targum; where there might be plenty of it, as in Corsica, and other places, where particularly the best box grows, as Pliny {u} says. Jerom interprets Cittin of Italy; and Ben Gorion says {w} that Cittim are the Romans.

{t} cwrw enidruoent', ioudhv en pioni dhmw. Homer. Iliad. 2. Vid. Dickinson, Delphi Phoenicix. c. 2. p. 13, 16. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 16. {w} Heb. Hist. l. 1. c. 1. p. 7.

Ezekiel 27:7

Ver. 7. Fine linen with broidered work from Egypt,.... From whence came the finest and whitest linen; and which they embroidered with needlework, which looked very beautiful. Pliny {x} says there were four sorts of linen in Egypt, called Tanitic, Pelusiac, Butic, and Tentyritic, from the names and provinces where they were produced; of the second sort the garments of the high priest among the Jews were made; for they say {y}, on the day of atonement he was in the morning clothed with Pelusiac garments; that is, with garments made of linen which came from Pelusium, a well known city in Egypt; and which Jarchi {z} says was the best, and in the greatest esteem; and one of the Misnic commentators says {a} that the linen from Pelusium is fine and beautiful, and comes from the land of Raamses; and observes, that, in the Jerusalem Targum, Raamses is said to be Pelusium; but though they are not one and the same place, yet they are both in the same country, Egypt, and near one another; and with this sort of linen the priests of Hercules were clothed, according to Silius {b}; and so the vv, "shesh", or linen, of which the garments of the Jewish priests in common were made, was linen from Egypt; and which their Rabbins {c} say is the best, and is only found there. The Phoenicians, of which Tyre was a principal city, took linen of Egypt, and traded with other nations with it, as well as made use of it for themselves; particularly with the Ethiopians, the inhabitants of the isle of Cernes, now called the Canaries, who took of them Egyptian goods, as linen, &c.; in lieu of which they had of them elephants' teeth, the skins of lions, leopards, deer, and other creatures {d}: now such fine linen as this

was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail: not content with canvass or coarse linen, which would have done as well, they must have the finest Egyptian linen, and this very curiously embroidered, to make their sails of they spread upon their masts, to receive the wind; at least this they spread "for a flag" {e}, standard or ensign, as, the word may be rendered; when they hoisted up their colours on any occasion, they were such as these: "blue and purple, from the isles of Elishah, was that which covered thee"; meaning not garments made of cloth of these colours, which the master of the vessel or mariners wore; but the tilts, or tents, or canopies erected on the decks, where they sat sheltered from the rain, wind, or sun; these were made of stuff died of a violet and purple colour, the best they could get; and which they fetched from the isles of Elishah, or the Aegean sea, from Coa, Rhodia, Nisyrus, and other places famous for purple, as Tyre itself afterwards was. The Targum is,

"from the province of Italy;"

or of Apulia, as others {f}; see Re 18:12.

{x} Nat. Hist. l. 19. c. 1. {y} Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 7. {z} Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 34. 2. {a} Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, ib. {b} "----Velantur corpore lino, Et Pelusiaco praefulget stamine vertex." L. 3. de Bell. Punic. {c} Aben Ezra in Exod. xxv. 4. {d} Vid. Reinesium de Lingua Punica, c. 2. sect. 13. {e} owl "in signum, [sive] vexillum", Gussetius; so some in Bootius. {f} So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 48. 1.

Ezekiel 27:8

Ver. 8. The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners,.... Zidon was a city in Phoenicia, near to Tyre, and older than that, by whose inhabitants it was built; see the notes on Isa 23:2 and Arvad was an island in Phoenicia, to the south of Zidon, not far from Tyre. Mr. Maundrell {g} says it is about a league distant from the shore; and is now called by the Turks Ruad. It seemed to the eye to be not above four to six hundred yards long, and wholly filled up with tall buildings like castles: its ancient inhabitants, he observes, were famous for navigation, and had a command upon the continent as far as Gabale later mentioned, Dr. Shaw {h} says it is at present called Rouwadde; and that the prospect of it from the continent is wonderfully magnificent; promising at a distance a continued train of fine buildings and impregnable fortifications; but this is entirely owing to the height and rockiness of its situation; for at present all the strength and beauty it can boast of lies in a weak unfortified castle, with a few small cannon to defend it; so that the prophecy of Jeremiah appears to be fulfilled,

Arpad is confounded, Jer 49:23. This is the Aradus of Strabo, and other writers; and which he says is distant from the land, two and an half miles, and is about a mile in circumference; and is said to be built by the Sidonians {k}; the inhabitants of it are the same with the Arvadite, Ge 10:18, these places brought up abundance of seafaring men, and which furnished Tyre with rowers, as the word {l} signifies; which was the most slavish work in navigation:

thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots; such, as had learnt the art of navigation; were well versed in geography; understood the charts; knew the shores of different places; where were creeks and promontories, rocks and sands; these were brought up among themselves, and made pilots or governors, as the Targum renders it; who have their names here from the "ropes" {m} the sails are fastened to; and which they loosened or contracted, as they saw fit.

{g} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 19. Ed. 7. {h} Travels, p. 267. Ed. 2. {k} Geograph. 1. 16. p. 518. {l} Myjv "remiges", V. L. Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus, Cocceius, Starckius. {m} Kylbwx a lbx "funis, ita dicuntur a contrahendis aut laxandis funibus veli", Vatablus.

Ezekiel 27:9

Ver. 9. The ancients of Gebal,.... A promontory of the Phoenicians, the same with the Gabale of Pliny {n}, and with the land of the Giblites, Jos 13:5. It was by the Greeks called Byblus; and so the Septuagint here render the words, the elders of Bybli or Byblus, a place once famous for the birth and temple of Adonis; it is now called Gibyle. Mr. Maundrell {o} says it is pleasantly situated by the seaside, and that at present it contains but a little extent of ground, yet more than enough for the small number of its inhabitants; it is compassed with a dry ditch, and a wall with square towers in it, at about every forty yards' distance; on its south side it has an old castle; within it is a church; besides which it has nothing remarkable; though anciently it was a place of no mean extent, as well as beauty, as may appear from the many heaps of ruins, and the fine pillars that are scattered up and down in the gardens near the town. The old experienced workmen of this place were employed by the Tyrians in mending and refitting their ships, and in the caulking of them, as follows:

the wise men thereof were in thee thy caulkers; or, "the strengtheners of thy breaches" {p}, or "chinks"; the seams and commissures of the planks; which they stopped with tow, oakum, or such like stuff; at least this is what is used now, whatever might be by those wise men; and it seems by this that it was reckoned a very great art and mystery, and which only wise men were masters of, at least such the Tyrians employed. The Targum renders it,

"providing thy necessaries;"

as if they were the ships' husbands:

all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandise; ships from all parts were in her harbours, which brought goods into her, and carried goods out of her, by way of merchandise. So the Targum,

"all that go down into the sea, and the ships; they were rowers, and they brought merchandise into the midst of thee;"

the goods of merchants from divers places; and carried back commodities again they traded for at Tyre; see Re 18:19.

{n} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 20. {o} Journey &c. p. 33, 34. {p} Kqdb yqyzxm "roborantes scissuram tuam", Montanus; "instaurantes fissuras tuas", Munster, Tigurine version; "rimas tuas", Vatablus; "instauratores rupturaram tuarum", Piscator.

Ezekiel 27:10

Ver. 10. They of Persia, and of Lud, and of Phut, were in thine army, thy men of war,.... As the Tryrians were a trading people, they hired foreign troops into their service, to fill their garrisons, defend their city, and fight for them in time of war; and these were of various nations, and the most famous for military skill and valour; as the Persians, a people well known, and famous for war in the times of Cyrus, and before, and well skilled in shooting arrows; and they of Lud, or the Lydians, a people in Greece, renowned for war before the times of Croesus their king, as well as in his time; and they of Phut, the Lybians, a people in Africa, skilful in drawing the bow,
Isa 66:19:

they hanged the shield and helmet in thee; in their garrisons and towers, or places of armoury; which were defensive weapons, the one for the body, the other for the head; this they did in times of peace, when there was no occasion to use them, or when they were off their guard, and not on duty; see **So 4:4**:

they set forth thy comeliness; it being an honour to the Tyrians to have such soldiers in their service. The Targum is,

"they increased thy splendour;"

added to their glory.

Ezekiel 27:11

Ver. 11. The men of Arvad, with thine army were upon thy walls round about,.... Placed there for the defence of the city, to watch against an enemy, lest it should be surprised; here they were upon the patrol day and night; see Isa 62:6, these were the men of the same place before mentioned, Eze 27:8 which furnished Tyre both with mariners and soldiers:

and the Gammadims were in thy towers: not the Medes, as Symmachus renders it; nor the Cappadocians, as the Targum; much less were they images of their tutelar gods, as Spencer thinks, of a cubit long; nor "pygmies", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; which to mention would not be to the honour of their militia; though Kimchi and Ben Melech call them dwarfs, men of a small stature, of a cubit high, from whence they are supposed to have their name; so Schindler {q}: rather they were the inhabitants of some place in Phoenicia; either of Ancon; which in Greek signifies a cubit, as Gamad does in Hebrew; or of Gammade, the same which Pliny {r} corruptly calls Gamale. Hillerus {s} thinks the word signifies "ambidexters", or left handed men, such as Ehud:

they hanged their shields upon thy walls roundabout. Kimchi and Ben Melech observe it was a custom in some places to hang such weapons upon the tops of towers, and upon the walls of them; which might be done, either that they might be ready to take up and make use of, whenever occasion required; or to dismay their enemies, and to show them that they were provided for them:

they have made thy beauty perfect; besides the beauty of her buildings and shipping, there was the beauty of her militia; which was increased by the soldiers from Persia, Lydia, and Lybia, and added to by the men of Arvad, but completed by the Gammadim; and particularly being glided, as probably they were, looked very glittering and beautiful in the rays of the sun.

{q} Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 319, 320. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 91. {s} Onomast. Sacr. p. 159.

Ezekiel 27:12

Ver. 12. Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches,.... Some understand this of the sea, which is sometimes called Tarshish; so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it here: and the Targum,

"from the sea, or they of the sea bring merchandise into the midst of thee:"

that is, those who lived upon the coasts, or on the isles, of the Mediterranean sea. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it the Carthaginians, who were a colony of the Tyrians, and no doubt traded with them; but it seems most likely, with others, to intend Tartessus in Spain, a place not far from that where Cadiz now stands; a country which abounded with riches, and with the following things:

with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs; Pliny {t} says, that almost all Spain abounded in metals of lead, iron, brass, silver, and gold; which takes in the several things here mentioned, excepting tin; and that the Spaniards might have from our Cornwall, which they might import into Tyre: though the Phoenicians carried on a commerce with our isle of Britain themselves, whither they came for tin, and disposed of other goods they brought with them. Gussetius {u} observes, that the word Kynwbze does not signify the place of trade and traffic, as it is commonly rendered; but respects the goods traded in, and the manner of trafficking with them, by way of "exchange", as the word should be rendered; and the sense is, that the things before mentioned were what they gave in exchange, battered, and "left", with the Tyrians, for other goods they took of them; and so it is to be understood in all the following places where the word is used. So Ben Melech says it is expressive of merchandise.

{t} Nat. Hist. l. 3. c. 3. {u} Ebr. Comment. p. 594, 595.

Ezekiel 27:13

Ver. 13 Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they [were] thy merchants,.... Javan designs Greece, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it; especially that part of it called Ionia, from Javan the son of Japheth, Ge 10:2 and Tubal, and Meshech, were also sons of Japheth; the former are the Iberi and Albanians, as Jerom and others, among whom were a city called Thabilaca, by Ptolemy {w}; and the latter the Cappadocians, with whom is a city called Mazaca {x}.

They traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy markets; or, "the souls of men" {y}; they bought up men and women in the several countries to which they belonged, or where they traded, and brought them to Tyre, and sold them for slaves; and the Ionian and Grecian slaves were had in great esteem: and the best brass, of which vessels were made, was had from Corinth, Delus, and Aeginetus; according to Pliny {z}, Cappadocia was famous for it also: in the first of these merchandises Tyrus was remarkably a type of antichrist, who is said to deal in such wares, the souls of men, Re 18:13. The word here rendered "markets", Gussetius {a} also observes, does not design the place of commerce, but the act of negotiation or trade; and so it is rendered by many {b}.

{w} Geograph. l. 5. c. 12. {x} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1. {y} Mda vpnb "animabus hominum", Pagninus, Vatablus, Cocceius, Starckius. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 34. c. 2. {a} Ebr. Comment. p. 642. {b} Kbrem thn emporian bou, Sept.; "negotiationem tuam", Tigurine version; "in commercio tuo", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus; "mercaturam tuam", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 27:14

Ver. 14. They of the house of Togarmah,.... The Targum is,

"they of the province or country of Germany."

Jerom understands it of Phrygia, near to which was Cappadocia; and perhaps is here meant, since it abounded with what these people are said to trade with Tyre in:

these traded in thy fairs with horses, horsemen, and mules; for the Cappadocians paid for their yearly tribute to the Persians fifteen hundred horses, and two thousand mules, as Bochart {c} from Strabo observes; and as they sold horses and mules to the Tyrians, so likewise horsemen, men that were skilled in riding and taking care of horses; and these were sold along with the horses, as servants for that purpose.

{c} Phaleg. c. 11. col. 178.

Ezekiel 27:15

Ver. 15. The men of Dedan were thy merchants,.... Not Dedan in Idumea or Edom, but in Arabia, from Dedan the son of Raamah, Ge 10:7:

many isles were the merchandise of thine hands; that is, many isles took off their manufactures from them, in lieu of what they brought them, which were as follow:

they brought thee for a present; that they might have the liberty of trading in their fairs and markets; or rather for a reward, or as a price, for the goods they had of them:

horns of ivory and ebony; Kimchi reads them as separate things; and which the Targum confirms, "horns, ivory, and ebony"; elks' horns, or horns of goats, as the Targum; and "ivory", or the teeth of elephants; and "ebony", which is a wood of a very black colour, hard and heavy, and of which many things are made. The Targum takes it for the name of a fowl, and renders it peacocks; so Jarchi; see **2Ch 9:21**, but Ben Melech much better interprets it of a tree, called in Arabia "ebenus". Solinus makes it peculiar to India {d}; and so Virgil {e}.

{d} Polyhistor. c. 65. {e} "----Sola India nigrum fert ebenum.----" Virgil. Georgic. 1. 2.

Ezekiel 27:16

Ver. 16. Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making,.... Which they took off of their hands, and for them brought the following things:

they occupied in thy fairs with emeralds; precious stones of a green colour: Jarchi renders it "carbuncles", other precious stones of a different colour; and so the word is translated by Pagninus, Montanus, Grotius, the French, and Diodate; sometimes called "carchedonies", and which the Apostle John calls the "chalcedony", Re 21:19, the same with rubies; and so the word here used is rendered by Luther; and, by Abarbinel, precious stones of great value; see **Pr 3:15**, from whence the Syrians had these to trade with at Tyre cannot be easily said; the modern rubies, which are thought to be the true and genuine carbuncles of the ancients, seldom exceed the weight of twenty carats; yet some say the Emperor Rudolphus the second had a ruby as big as a little hen's egg, bought at sixty thousand ducats, and supposed to be worth more; and that Regulus Decan had one of thirty four carats, bought at six minas of gold, that is, a hundred and ninety two pounds of gold; and that the great Mogul had one, which cost a million four hundred and twenty five thousand florins; and that there are some which exceed the weight of fifty carats {f}; but there were few, if any of these, that came to the market of Tyre; however, no doubt, some valuable ones were here sold.

Purple, and broidered work, and fine linen; cloth of purple colour, raiment of needlework curiously embroidered, and linen of the best sort. So the Targum,

"purple clothes, and wrought with a needle, and linen of different colours;"

and of such they made their sails, tilts, and tents; see Eze 27:7.

And coral, and agate; the first is a sea plant.

"This opinion is now so well established, that all other sentiments seem almost precluded. P. Kircher supposes entire forests of it at the bottom of the sea; and M. Tournefort, that able botanist, maintains, that it evidently multiplies by seed, though neither its flower nor seed be known. However, the count de Marsigli has discovered some parts therein, which seem to serve the purpose of seeds and flower, it vegetates the contrary way to all other plants; its foot adhering to the top of the grotto, and its branches shooting downwards, there are properly but three kinds of coral, red, white, and black; the white is the rarest and most esteemed; but it is the red that is ordinarily used in medicine; the places for fishing it are the Persian gulf, Red sea, coasts of Africa towards the bastion of France, the isles of Majorca and Corsica, and the coasts of Provence and Catalonia {g}."

Perhaps the Syrians might have theirs from the Red sea, or the Mediterranean. The other, the "agate", is a precious stone, the same with the "achates", first found in Sicily, as Isidore says {h}, by a river of the same name; is of a black colour, according to him, having in the middle black and white circles joined and variegated; but they are of different colours, and of different degrees of transparency. The word is variously rendered; by some the ruby; by others the carbuncle; by others the chalcedony; and by others crystal; it is hard to say what is meant. Now the Phoenicians or Tyrians were so deeply engaged in trade with the Syrians, that it became a common proverb, the Phonicians against the Syrians {i}; when like are set against like, as the Egyptians against the Egyptians, Isa 19:2.

{f} Vid. Braunium de Vestitu Sacerdot. Hebr. 1. 2. c. 11. p. 669. {g} Chambers's Cyclopaedia in the word "Coral". {h} Origin, l. 16. c. 11. {i} Vid. Reinesium de Lingua Punic. c. 2. sect. 12.

Ezekiel 27:17

Ver. 17. Judah, and the land of Israel, they were thy merchants,.... The inhabitants of Judah and Israel; the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the other ten tribes of Israel, they all merchandised with the Tyrians, being near unto them:

they traded in thy market wheat of Minnith; the name of a place, Jud 11:33, where probably the best wheat grew; so the Targum renders it; the Tyrians were supplied with wheat from the land of Israel, in the times of Solomon, long before this, **1Ki 5:11** as they were in the times of Herod, long after, Ac 12:20, it was four miles from Esbus or Heshbon, in the way to Philadelphia, according to Eusebius:

and Pannag; which some take to be the name of a place, where the best wheat also was; which some say was Phoenicia, or the land of Canaan. The Septuagint render it "ointments": and the Latin interpreter of the Targum "balsam"; with which agrees Josephus ben Gorion {k}, who says that at Jericho grew the balsam tree, from whence came a precious oil, which oil is "pannag": and Hillerus {l} translates it balsam: it follows,

and honey, and oil: with which the land of Canaan abounded; for it was a land of oil olive and honey, a land that flowed with milk and honey, **De 8:8** so that they had enough for themselves, and to spare for their neighbours, and which they carried to the market of Tyre:

and balm; or balsam, of which there was plenty at Gilead, and near Jericho, however at the latter; we read of the balm of Gilead, **Jer 8:22**. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it "rosin"; and so the Targum; and this the Tyrians might make use of in their ships {m}. The balm, or balsam plant, was peculiar to Judea, as Pliny {n}; at least it was the place of it until transplanted into other countries; and so says Solinus {o}.

{k} Hist. 1. 4. c. 22. p. 379. {l} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 903. {m} Vid. Scheffer. de Militia Navali, p. 43. 319. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 25. {o} Polyhistor. c. 48.

Ezekiel 27:18

Ver. 18. Damascus was thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making,.... Of the many things manufactured at Tyre, the inhabitants of Damascus, once the chief city of Syria, took some:

for the multitude of all riches: in lieu of the vast quantity of rich things there made, they traded with them for them:

in the wine of Helbon, and white wool; Helbon very probably is the same with the Chalybon of Ptolemy {p}, which he places in Syria; a place famous for wine, as Strabo {q} reports; the kings of Persia, he says, through riches fell into luxury, so that they would have wheat brought from Assos in Aeolia, and Chalybonian wine out of Syria, and water from Eulaeus (the river Ulai in **Da 8:2**), which was lightest of all; and so Athenaeus {r} says, the kings of the Persians drink only Chalybonian wine; which, says Posidonius, was made at Damascus in Syria, from whence the Persians transplant vines: Helbon is thought to be the same with Aleppo; the grapes there are all white, and make a strong wine, as Monsieur Thevenot {s} relates; and who also observes, that the wines of Damascus are treacherous and strong: and the wool they bought was such as it came off of the backs of the sheep, and the purer and whiter sort of it; which was brought to Tyre, and by them bought, and dyed purple, for which dye the Tyrians were famous.

{p} Geograph. l. 5. c. 15. {q} Ibid. l. 12. p. 505. {r} L. 1. c. 22. {s} Travels, part 2. B. 1. c. 5. p. 25. & c. 7. p. 33.

Ezekiel 27:19

Ver. 19. Dan also and Javan, going to and fro, occupied in thy fairs,.... Either the inhabitants of the tribe of Dan in general; or of Laish, sometime called Dan, and in later times Caesarea Philippi, which was in that tribe: though Grotius thinks that Taprobane, or the isle of Zeilan, is meant, where, and not in Dan, were the things after mentioned, in plenty; and where also, according to

Ptolemy {t}, was a city called Dana or Dagana: and Bochart takes Javan not to be Greece, but a people of a country in Arabia, the metropolis of which was Uzal; and so he renders it, as some of the Greek versions do, Javan of Uzal, or Asel, to distinguish it from the other Javan, Eze 27:13, where also, and not in Greece, the sweet spices grew, which these are said to trade in:

bright iron, cassia, and calamus, were in thy market; brought from the above places; polished iron or steel, and the sweet spices of cassia and calamus, or the aromatic cane or reed, which came from afar, **Jer 6:20**.

{t} Geograph. l. 7. c. 4.

Ezekiel 27:20

Ver. 20. Dedan was thy merchant in precious cloths for chariots. Or, "cloths of freedom" {u}; such as freemen and even nobles wore; and yet so extravagant were the Tyrians, that they bought these to line or cover their chariots with; this is different from the Dedan in Eze 27:15, and is either Dedan in Edom or Idumea, Jer 49:8, or in Arabia, the inhabitants of which descended from Dedan, a grandson of Abraham, Ge 25:3, which agrees with the following.

{u} vpx ydgbb "pannis libertatis", Vatablus, Piscator; "ingenuorem", Junius & Tremellius. So Ben Melech, and R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 30. 2.

Ezekiel 27:21

Ver. 21. Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar,.... Arabia was a large country, divided into three parts, Arabia Deserts, or the desert; Arabia Petraea, or the rocky; and Arabia Felix, or the happy. Kedar was in Arabia Petrea; its inhabitants were called Kedarenes, descended from Kedar, a son of Ishmael, Ge 25:13, they were chiefly shepherds, and dwelt in tents, to which the allusion is in **So 1:5**, these princes were the rich and wealthy among them, who bought up the cattle of the meaner sort, and brought them to Tyre. In Jerom's time Kedar was the country of the Saracens. The Targum calls them the princes of Nebat, the same with Nebajoth, the firstborn of Ishmael, and brother of Kedar, Ge 25:13.

They occupied with thee: or, "they were the merchants of thine hand {w}"; that took off her manufactures from her, in lieu of "the lambs, and rams, and goats", they brought to market, for her food and sacrifices; keeping of sheep being their chief employment: "in these were they thy merchants": they supplied them with their cattle, and took their wares of them for them.

{w} Kdy yrxo "negotiatores manus tuae", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "mercatores manna tuae", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 27:22

Ver. 22. The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were thy merchants,.... This Sheba was the son of Raamah, Ge 10:7 who settled in Arabia Felix; where, according to Ptolemy {x}, is a city called Rhegma; and so Raamah is pronounced in the Septuagint version of Ge 10:7:

they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices; as with myrrh and frankincense, with which they abounded: Pliny {y} says that the Arabians paid annually to the kings of Persia a thousand talents of frankincense; and that the Sabaeans {z} boiled their food, some with wood of frankincense, and others with wood of myrrh:

and with all precious stones, and gold; as jaspers, emeralds, carbuncles, and others, which Pliny {a} says are found in Arabia; and mention is made of the gold of Sheba, Ps 72:15 and Bochart thinks that Ophir, from whence the famous gold of that name was fetched, was in Arabia Felix; and it may be observed, that the queen of Sheba gave great quantities of gold, of spices, and of precious stones, to Solomon; and that he had much of these kinds yearly from the spice merchants, and kings of Arabia, 1Ki 10:10,
See Gill on "Isa 60:6".

{x} Geograph. l. 6. c. 7. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 17. {z} "----Solis est thurea virga Sabaeis". Virgil. Georgic. l. 2. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 37.

Ezekiel 27:23

Ver. 23. Haran, and Canneh, and Eden,.... Haran was a city of Mesopotamia, the same with Haran, where Abraham dwelt awhile, **Ac 7:2**, the Charrae of the Parthians, famous for the defeat of Crassus. Canneh is thought to be the same with Calneh, Ge 10:10, afterwards called Ctesiphon; and here, by the Targum, Netzibin, a place not far from Tigris; and Eden also was between Tigris and Euphrates. All three places seem to be in Mesopotamia, and not far from each other; the latter is thought by some to be the place where the garden of Eden was.

The merchants of Sheba; this was another Sheba, distinct from that in Eze 27:22, this Sheba was the son of Jokshan, a son of Abraham by Keturah, Ge 25:3, these were the Sabaeans, who were not far from the former, and dwelt near the Persian sea.

Ashur and Chilmad were thy merchants; or dealt in "thy merchandise"; took goods of them. Ashur designs the Assyrians, who had their name from Ashur, the builder of Nineveh, Ge 10:11 and Chilmad is by the Targum rendered Media; and by Grotius thought to be the Gaala of Media in Ptolemy {b}; and so Hillerus {c} takes it to be a city of Media.

{b} Geograph. l. 6. c. 2. {c} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 108.

Ezekiel 27:24

Ver. 24. These were thy merchants in all sorts of things,.... Either all before mentioned throughout the chapter, or rather those only in the preceding verse; also these were merchants in various things after mentioned, and which were the best and most perfect of the kind, as the word {d} used signifies:

in blue cloths, and broidered work; these the Assyrians took of them, a colour in which they much delighted; see Eze 23:6:

and in chests of rich apparel bound with cords, and made of cedar, among thy merchandise; rich apparel, such as scarlet cloaks, as the Targum, and blue cloths as before; these were well packed up in chests made of "cedar", which they had from Lebanon, and so fit to be put on board a ship, and carried into any part of the world. The Targum adds,

"and sealed with a signet;"

as things well packed up and bound sometimes are, being of worth and value. Some render it, "in chains"; or, "chains were among thy merchandise" {e}; such as chains of gold, wore about the neck; and take the word to be of the sam meaning with that in **So 1:10**.

{d} Myllkmb "rebus perfectissimis", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Cocceius, Starckius. {e} Ktlkrmb Myzraw "et torquibus in negotiatione tua", Pagninus; "et torques fuerunt in nundinis tuis", Vatablus. So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 71. 2.

Ezekiel 27:25

Ver. 25. The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in market,.... The ships of the sea in general; for Tarshish is used for the sea; these from all parts came to Tyre with their several wares, the product of their country from whence they came, and, finding a good market for them at Tyre, spoke greatly in her praise, or, "were thy princes", or "thy chief ones, in thy market" {f}; these brought the principal things into it, and took off the chief that were in it, which were of the produce of Tyre:

and thou wast replenished; with goods from all parts, with every thing for their necessity, convenience, pleasure, and delight, and to carry on a traffic with all nations:

and made very glorious in the midst of the seas; with great riches, stately towers and buildings. Here ends the account of Tyre's greatness; next follows her ruin and destruction.

{f} Kytwrv "principes", V. L. Montanus, Castalio, Starckius; "praecipuae", Tigurine version, Grotius. So some in Vatablus.

Ezekiel 27:26

Ver. 26. Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters,.... Here the city of Tyre is compared to a vessel at sea, with great propriety, it being built in the sea, and its trade chiefly there; and its rulers and governors, or the inhabitants of it, to rowers; literally the men of Zidon and Arvad were her rowers, Eze 27:8, the straits, difficulties, and distresses these brought Tyre into, are compared to great waters; who, by some unadvised step or another, provoked the king of Babylon to come against them with his army, and lay siege unto them:

the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas; a wind very fatal to ships and mariners; see Ps 48:7, by it are meant Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldean army; so called, because of their great force and fury; and because Babylon, from whence they came, lay somewhat to the east of Tyre. So the Targum,

"a king who is strong as the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas."

Ezekiel 27:27

Ver. 27. Thy riches,.... That vast mass of wealth Tyre had got by her trade and merchandise, were all lost, at once, and came to nought, which had been many years gathering; see Re 18:17:

and thy fairs; to which there were such great resorts from all parts, and where such a prodigious traffic was carried on, were now interrupted by the siege, and put to an end upon the ruin of the city:

thy merchandise; the goods both imported and exported; the wares that were brought in from foreign parts, and sold in her, and what was taken from her in lieu of them; now nothing more of this kind; and what goods were in her, whether her own or others, were all lost and destroyed:

thy mariners; who were the inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad, Eze 27:8, these perished with her:

and thy pilots; who were the wisest, most skilful, and best learned in the art of navigation, and who were of the city itself, these were no more, Eze 27:8:

thy calkers: the wise and ancient men of Gebal, Eze 27:9:

and the occupiers of the merchandise; that traded in her markets and fairs, mentioned from Eze 27:12:

and all thy men of war that are in thee: to fight for her and defend her; the

Persians, Lydiaus, and Lybians, the men of Arvad, and the Gammadims, Eze 27:10:

and in all thy company, which is in the midst of thee; the great concourse of people, whether natives or foreigners:

these all shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin: the walls and banks being demolished, the sea broke in upon it, and washed all away in it, and left it a bare rock; see Eze 26:4.

Ezekiel 27:28

Ver. 28. The suburbs shall shake at the sound of the cry of thy pilots. Or governors, as the Targum; and so the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions: the allegory of a ship wrecked is still continued: the sense is, that such should be the cry of the principal men of the city when it should be taken, that the noise of it would be heard upon the continent, and in the towns and villages belonging to Tyre, which would make the inhabitants of them tremble: or,

at the sound of the cry of thy pilots the waves are moved, or "tremble" {g}; which beat very strong at the time of her fall into the sea.

{g} twvrgm wvery "commoti sunt fluctus jactni", Junius & Tremellius; "contremiscent fluctus", Piscator.

Ezekiel 27:29

Ver. 29. And all that handle the oar, the mariners, and all the pilots of the sea,.... Inferior officers, and the common people; though this may be literally understood of all sorts of seafaring people, differently employed in ships; some at the oar; some at the sails; and others at the helm; but all shall quit their posts,

and shall come down from their ships; either there being no further business for them, an entire stop being put to trade, through the fall of Tyre; or because of danger, and to save themselves, would leave the ship, and betake to their boats, and make for land: hence it follows, they shall stand upon the land; upon the continent, being safely arrived; looking upon the shipwrecks, and bewailing the loss of Tyre, as in the next verse.

Ezekiel 27:30

Ver. 30. And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee,.... The rulers and governors of the city, for having taken a false step in provoking the enemy, and then holding out the siege no longer, as it was thought they might and would: or rather "over thee", or, "for thee" {h}; mourning over the city, and lamenting its sad case; see
Re 18:9:

and shall cry bitterly; with great weeping, howling, and shrieking:

and they shall cast dust upon their heads; a custom used in the eastern countries, in time of mourning and sorrow; see Re 18:19:

and they shall wallow themselves in ashes: or roll themselves in them, another custom used in mourning; see **Jer 6:26**.

{h} Kyle "de te", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, "super te"; Piscator, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 27:31

Ver. 31. And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee,.... Either by shaving their heads, or tearing off their hair, as mourners in distress have been used to do:

and gird them with sackcloth; about their loins, as was very customary in such distressed cases:

and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing; not in show only, but in reality; not like the "preficae" or mourning women, though the allusion may be to them, who only mourned outwardly; but these from the very heart, and in great bitterness of spirit this is expressive of the inward grief of their minds on this melancholy occasion, as what follows declares the lamentation they expressed vocally; see Re 18:19.

Ezekiel 27:32

Ver. 32. And in their wailing they shall takes up a lamentation for thee,.... A mournful song, such as was used at funerals, or in times of calamity; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it:

and lament over thee; saying the following ditty;

what city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea? as there was none like it a few years ago for riches, splendour, and glory, so now there is none like it for misery and ruin; see Re 18:18. The Targum is,

"who is as Tyre? there is none like unto her in the midst of the sea;"

she is not now Tyre the renowned, but Tyre the destroyed; destroyed in the midst of the sea, from whence she had her riches and her glory: or, "as one dumb or silent in the midst of the sea"; she, in whom was heard the voice of joy and singing, is now mute, and nothing more of that kind is heard in her see Re 18:22.

Ezekiel 27:33

Ver. 33. When thy wares went forth out of the seas,.... When they were took out of ships, which came to Tyre from all parts, and were landed on the shore, and put up in warehouses, and exposed in markets and The Targum is,

"when thy merchandise went out from among the nations;"

being brought from all parts thither:

thou filledst many people; by selling them in their markets commodities they wanted, for which they came from all quarters; and by sending them to others in ships, where they knew they stood in need of them, and would fetch them a good price; and they had enough to answer the demands of all, and to supply them to the full:

thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and pithy merchandise; by taking off the goods of their subjects, whereby they were able the better to pay their taxes, and support them in their grandeur and dignity; as well as by furnishing them gold and silver, and precious stones, which they gave for the produce of their country; or by the toll and custom of the goods imported or exported.

Ezekiel 27:34

Ver. 34. In the time when thou shall be broken by the seas in the depths of the waters..... By the Chaldean army, which came upon them like the waves of the sea, Eze 26:3 by which they were overpowered and destroyed; just as a ship on the mighty waters is dashed and broke to pieces by the waves thereof:

thy merchandise, and all thy company in the midst of thee, shall fall; trade shall cease, and the mixed multitude of traders from all parts shall be seen no more; the natives of the place shall perish; mariners and soldiers, and persons of every rank and degree, age, and sex. The Targum renders it,

"all thine armies."

Abendana suggests that this respects the destruction of Tyre by Alexander the great.

Ezekiel 27:35

Ver. 35. All the inhabitants of the isles shall be astonished at thee,.... Both near and afar off; and not only the inhabitants of the isles, properly so called, but all that dwelt on the continent by the seaside; who would all be amazed when they heard of the ruin of Tyro, which they thought inexpugnable, by reason of its natural and artificial strength:

and their kings shall be sore afraid; that it will be their turn next; and as well knowing that they were less able to contend with so mighty a monarch as the king of Babylon, or Alexander the great, than Tyre was; see Re 18:9:

they shall be troubled in their countenance; their inward passions of grief and fear shall be seen in their countenances; which will wax pale, be dejected, distorted, and furrowed.

Ezekiel 27:36

Ver. 36. The merchants among the people shall hiss at thee,.... As Tyre had done at Jerusalem, Eze 26:2 as she hoped to make better markets upon the fall of Jerusalem, and therefore rejoiced at it; so these merchants upon her fall will hope that her trade will come into their hands, and therefore despise her, hiss, and laugh at her in her abject state. The Targum is,

"shall be astonished at thee;"

struck with wonder, and even with a stupor at her fall: "and thou shalt be a terror"; not only to thyself, but to kings and merchants, and to all the inhabitants of the isles, and to all that trade by sea; who will be struck with surprise and dread when they hear of thy destruction; see Re 18:9:

and never shall be any more; upon the same spot, and in the same grandeur and glory: some understand this only of a long time, as seventy years, when it was rebuilt; see Isa 23:15, it may respect its last destruction, since which it has not been, nor now is, or ever will be: this will be true of mystical Babylon, the antitype of Tyre,
Re 18:21.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 28:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 28

This chapter contains a prophecy of the destruction of the prince of Tyre; a lamentation for the king of Tyre; a denunciation of judgments on Zidon, and a promise of peace and safety to Israel. The order given the prophet to prophesy of the ruin of the prince of Tyre, Eze 28:1, the cause of his ruin, his pride on account of his wisdom and riches, which rose to such a pitch, as to make himself God, Eze 28:2, the manner in which his destruction shall be accomplished, Eze 28:7, the lamentation for the king of Tyre begins Eze 28:11, setting forth his former grandeur and dignity, Eze 28:13, his fall, and the cause of it, injustice and violence in merchandise, pride because of beauty and wisdom, and profanation of sanctuaries, Eze 28:16, next follow the judgments on Zidon, Eze 28:20, and the chapter is concluded with a promise of the restoration of the Jews to their own land, and of great tranquillity and safety in it, Eze 28:24.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord came again unto me,.... With another prophecy; as before against the city of Tyre, now against the king of Tyre:

saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 28:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyre,.... Whose name was Ethbaal, or Ithobalus, as he is called in Josephus; for that this was Hiram that was in the days of Solomon, and lived a thousand years, is a fable of the Jewish Rabbins, as Jerom relates: this prince of Tyre is thought by some to be an emblem of the devil; but rather of antichrist; and between them there is a great agreement, and it seems to have a prophetic respect to him:

thus saith the Lord God, because thine heart is lifted up: with pride, on account of his wisdom and knowledge, wealth and riches, as later mentioned:

and thou hast said, I am a god; this he said in his heart, in the pride of it, and perhaps expressed it with his lips, and required divine homage to be given him by his subjects, as some insolent, proud, and haughty monarchs have done; in which he was a lively type of antichrist, who shows himself, and behaves, as if he was God, taking upon him what belongs to God; pardoning the sins of men; opening and shutting the gates of heaven; binding men's consciences with laws of his own making, and dispensing with the laws of God and man; and calling himself or suffering himself to be called God, and to be worshipped as such; See Gill on "2Th 2:4":

I sit in the seat of God; in a place as delightful, safe and happy, as heaven itself, where the throne of God is; so antichrist is said to sit in the temple of God, in the house and church of God; where he assumes a power that does not belong to him, calling himself God's vicegerent, and Christ's vicar; see **2Th 2:4**, and the Arabic version here renders it "in the house of God": it follows,

in the midst of the seas; surrounded with them as Tyre was, and lord of them as its king was; sending his ships into all parts, and to whom all brought their wares; thus the whore of Rome is said to sit upon many waters, Re 17:2:

yet thou art a man, and not God; a frail, weak, mortal man, and not the mighty God, as his later destruction shows; and as the popes of Rome appear to be, by their dying as other men; and as antichrist will plainly be seen to be when he shall be destroyed with the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming:

though thou set thine heart as the heart of God; as if it was as full of wisdom and knowledge as his; and thinkest as well of thyself, that thou art a sovereign as he, and to be feared, obeyed, and submitted to by all.

Ezekiel 28:3

Ver. 3. Behold; thou art wiser than Daniel,.... That is, in his own opinion; or it is ironically said. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it by way of interrogation, "art thou not wiser than Daniel?" who was now at the court of Babylon, and was famous throughout all Chaldea for his knowledge in politics, his wisdom and prudence in government, as well as his skill in interpreting dreams. The Jews have a saying, that

"if all the wise men of the nations were in one scale, and Daniel in the other, he would weigh them all down."

And perhaps the fame of him had reached the king of Tyre, and yet he thought himself wiser than he; see **Zec 9:2**, antichrist thinks himself wiser than Daniel, or any of the prophets and apostles; he is wise above that which is written, and takes upon him the sole interpretation of the Scriptures, and to fix the sense of them:

there is no secret that they can hide from thee; as he fancied; he had sagacity to penetrate into the councils of neighbouring princes, and discover all plots and intrigues against him; he understood all the "arcana" and secrets of government, and could counterwork the designs of his enemies. Antichrist pretends to know all mysteries, and solve all difficulties, and pass an infallible judgment on things; as if he was of the privy council of heaven, and nothing was transacted there but he was acquainted with it, and had full knowledge of the mind of God in all things.

Ezekiel 28:4

Ver. 4. With thy wisdom and with thy understanding thou hast gotten thee riches,.... Through skill in navigation and trade, for which the Tyrians and their princes were famous, they acquired great wealth: so antichrist, by carnal policy, and hellish subtlety, has amassed vast treasures together; the sale of pardons and indulgences has brought immense riches into the pope's coffers:

and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures; in great quantities; see Re 18:3.

Ezekiel 28:5

Ver. 5. By thy great wisdom and by thy traffic,.... Or, "by thy great wisdom in thy traffic" {i}; through great skill in trade and commerce:

hast thou increased thy riches; to a very great degree, a prodigious bulk; so antichrist has done, especially through trafficking with the souls of men, which is one part of his merchandise, as it was of Tyre, Re 18:13:

and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches; which are apt to puff up and make men highminded, and swell them with a vain opinion of themselves, and to make haughty, insolent, and scornful, in their behaviour to others; thus elated with worldly grandeur and riches, the whore of Rome is represented as proud, vain, and haughty, Re 18:7.

{i} Ktlkrb "in negotione tua", V. L. Pagninus, Starckius; "in mercatura tua", Junius & Tremellius.

Ezekiel 28:6

Ver. 6. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Now follows the punishment threatened, because of all this pride, haughtiness, and blasphemy:

because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; seeking thine own glory; setting up thyself above all others; assuming that to thyself which belongs to God; and making thyself equal to him, or showing thyself as if thou wast God; See Gill on "Eze 28:2".

Ezekiel 28:7

Ver. 7. Behold, therefore, I will bring strangers upon thee,.... The Chaldean army, who not only lived at a distance from Tyre, but were unknown to them, not trading with them; nor are they mentioned among the merchants of Tyre: these, in the mystical sense, may design the angels that shall pour out the vials on the antichristian states, the kings of Protestant nations:

the terrible of the nations; as the Babylonians were, very formidable to the world, having conquered many countries, and their armies consisting of men of all nations, mighty, courageous, and expert in war; and alike formidable will the Protestant princes be to the antichristian powers, when they shall with their united strength attack them:

and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom; their beautiful city and spacious buildings, the palaces of their king and nobles, their walls and towers erected with so much art and skill; or their forces, the men of war within their city, which made their beauty complete, so well skilled in military affairs, Eze 27:10, or their ships, and the merchandise of them, and the curious things brought in them: even everything that was rich and valuable, the effect of their art and wisdom: all which may be applied to the city of Rome, when it will be taken, ransacked, and burnt, Re 18:8:

and they shall defile thy brightness; profane thy crown, cast down thy throne, destroy thy kingdom, and all that is great and glorious in thee; thus the whore of Rome shall be made bare and desolate,
Re 17:16. The Targum renders it,

"the brightness of thy terror;"

which shall no more strike the nations, or affect them.

Ezekiel 28:8

Ver. 8. They shall bring thee down to the pit,.... Or, "to corruption" {k}; to the grave, the pit of corruption and destruction; so antichrist shall go into perdition, into the bottomless pit from whence he came,
Re 17:8:

and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas; that die in a sea fight, whose carcasses are thrown overboard, and devoured by fishes.

{k} txvl "ad corruptionem".

Ezekiel 28:9

Ver. 9. Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God?.... When thou art in the enemies' hands, and just going to be put to death, wilt thou then confidently assert thy deity, and to his face tell him that thou art God? surely thy courage and thy confidence, thy blasphemy and impiety, will leave thee then; a bitter sarcasm this! and so the pope of Rome, the antichristian beast, when taken, and just going to be cast into the lake of fire along with the false prophet, will not have the impudence to style himself God, or to call himself Christ's vicar on earth:

but thou shalt be a man, and no god, in the hand of him that slayeth thee; that is, thou shalt appear to be a poor, weak, frail, mortal, trembling, dying man, when got into the hand of the enemy, and he is just going to put an end to thy life; where will be then thy boasted deity?

Ezekiel 28:10

Ver. 10. Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised,.... Or the death of the wicked, as the Targum; the first and second death, temporal and eternal: the former

by the hand of strangers, the Chaldeans, in various shapes; and the latter will follow upon it: it may denote the various kinds of death which the inhabitants of Rome will die when destroyed, some by famine, some by pestilence, and others by fire; when these plagues shall come upon her in one day, Re 18:8.

for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God; and therefore it shall surely come to pass; strong is the Lord that will judge, condemn, and destroy mystical Babylon, or Tyre.

Ezekiel 28:11

Ver. 11. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me,.... After the prophecy concerning the ruin of the prince of Tyre, the word of the Lord came to the prophet, ordering him to take up a lamentation on the king of Tyre:

saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 28:12

Ver. 12. Take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus,.... Who is before called the prince of Tyre; and who he was See Gill on "Eze 28:2", the bishop of Rome was first only a "nagid", a prince, ruler, governor, and leader in the church; afterwards he became a king, a head, even over other kings, princes, and states; perhaps this may also point to his twofold power, secular and ecclesiastical, and so he is represented by two beasts, Re 13:1, here a lamentation or funeral ditty is ordered to be taken up and said for him, to denote his certain destruction and ruin; though some have thought the fall of the angels, and others the fall of Adam, is referred to; several passages are interpreted of Adam in the Talmud {l}:

and say unto him, thus saith the Lord God, thou sealest up the sum; or "pattern" {m}; of everything that is excellent; thou art in all things, consummately so, as that nothing could be added; that is, in his own esteem and account. Junius thinks it refers to the sealing of goods exported, for which a duty was to be paid, without doing which merchandise was not allowed. Antichrist would not suffer any to buy or sell but such as receive his mark or seal on their right hand, or in their forehead, Re 13:16. Cocceius renders it, "the sealer of the measure" {n}; and takes it to be an allusion to the custom of sealing measures, used in buying and selling; and that it respects the man of sin, who takes upon him the power of making rules and canons for faith and practice:

full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty; a most accomplished man for parts and person in his own conceit: antichrist assumes to himself a perfect knowledge of the Scriptures, and sets up himself as an infallible judge of controversies; and glories in the splendour and order of his church, and the government of it.

{l} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 1. {m} tynbt "exemplar, [sive] specimen", Tigurine version: Castalio. {n} "Signator mensurae", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 28:13

Ver. 13. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God,.... Not only in Eden, but in the garden which was in Eden, and was of the Lord's immediate planting; and therefore called the garden of God, as well as because of its excellency, fragrancy, and delight; not that the king of Tyre was literally there, or ever dwelt in it; but his situation in Tyre was as safe, and as pleasant and delightful, as Adam's was in the garden of Eden, at least in his own imagination. So the Targum,

"thou delightest thyself with plenty of all good things and delectable ones, as if thou dwellest in the garden of God;"

in the mystical sense, this designs the church of God, which is an Eden, a garden, a paradise; see **So 4:12** and where antichrist first appeared, and took his seat, and seated himself as if he was God, **2Th 2:4**:

every precious stone was thy covering; not only the covering of his head, his crown, was decked with jewels and precious stones of all sorts; but his clothes, the covering of his body, were adorned with them. So the Targum,

"all precious stones were set in order upon thy garments."

Kimchi renders it "thine hedge", or "fence" {o}; and takes it to be an hyperbole, as if his house, or garden, or vineyard, were fenced with precious stones. This fitly describes the whore of Rome arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones,
Re 17:4. The pope's triple crown is stuck with them, and a cross of precious stones is upon his slipper, when he holds out his toe to be kissed:

the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold. Writers differ very much about these stones; and it is difficult to say what answer to the Hebrew words here used. The stone "sardius", or the sardine stone, is of a blood colour, commonly called a cornelian, and is found in Sardis and Sardinia, from whence some say it has its name. The "topaz" is a hard transparent stone, said to be of a beautiful yellow or gold colour by those who confound it with the chrysolite; otherwise the true topaz is of a fine green colour, as Pliny {p} and Isidore {q}; the best is what is found in Ethopia, Job 28:19. The "diamond" is a precious stone, the first in rank, value, hardness and lustre; the most perfect colour is the white. The "beryl" is a stone of a pale green colour, thought to be the diamond of the ancients: the word is "tarshish", and thought by some the "chrysolite". The "onyx" resembles a man's nail, from whence it has its name: the word "shoham" here used is supposed to mean the "sardonyx", a compound of the "sardian" and "onyx" stones. The "jasper" is a stone of various colours and spots, variegated like a panther; hence the Targum here renders it "pantherin"; the most valuable is the green spotted with red or purple. The "sapphire" is a stone of an azure colour or sky blue, exceeding hard and transparent. The "emerald" is of an exceeding fine green colour, very bright, and clear, and delightful to the eye; but is rather intended by the next word, as the "carbuncle" by this, which is a stone of the ruby kind, and very rare; see Isa 54:12. "Gold" is mentioned along with them, and last of all, as being less valuable; but chiefly because these stones were set in gold, as the Targum paraphrases it; these are nine of the stones which were in the breastplate of the Jewish high priest {r}, whom the king of Tyre might have knowledge of and imitate, as it is certain the pope of Rome does in some things:

the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created; either born into the world; or made a crowned king; against which time, drums, and pipes, and such like instruments of music, were prepared in Tyre, and at them made use of by way of rejoicing: and as this was literally true of the king of Tyre at his coronation, so of the bishop of Rome at his creation and inauguration, which is attended with bells ringing, drums beating, trumpets sounding; and so in mystical Babylon is heard, though the time is coming when it will not be heard, the voice of harpers, musicians, pipers, and trumpeters, Re 18:22.

{o} So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 14. 2. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 38. c. 8. {q} Origin. l. 16. c. 7. {r} Vid. Braunium de Vestitu Sacerdot. Heb. l. 2. c. 12-19.

Ezekiel 28:14

Ver. 14. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth,.... In allusion to the cherubim over the mercy seat, which covered it with their wings; and which, as the ark of the testimony and all the vessels of the tabernacle were anointed, were so likewise; in all probability the king of Tyre is called a "cherub" because of his wisdom and power; "anointed", because of his royal dignity; and "that covereth", because of his office, which was to protect his people; all which he either was, or ought to be, or was in his own opinion so: antichrist makes great boasts of his wisdom, power, and authority, as a teacher, pastor, or bishop, the cherubim being symbolical of the ministers of the word; and of his being anointed by men, that he may be the cover and shield of the church; and of his being the Lord's anointed, and the vicar of Christ, and head and protector of the church, as he calls himself {s}. The Targum understands all this of regal power, and renders it,

"thou art a king anointed for a kingdom:"

and I have set thee so; from whom all kings have their sceptres, crowns, and kingdoms; and by whom they reign; and who can put them down as well as set them up at his pleasure. It may be rendered, "I have given thee" {t}; or suffered thee to be so, as the word "give" is often used; it is by divine permission that antichrist has taken such power to himself, and in judgment to them over whom he rules, who are given up to believe a lie; yea, God "put", or, as it is in the original text, "gave" it into the hearts of the kings to agree and give their kingdom to the beast, Re 17:17:

thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; not on Sinai, nor on Zion; on neither of which was the king of Tyre; nor was this literally true of him; for to say, as Kimchi does to illustrate it, that Hiram king of Tyre assisted Solomon with materials to build the temple, is very foreign; but this is true of the antitype of the king of Tyre, antichrist; who has set his foot on God's holy mountain the church; here he first appeared and stood, as before observed on the preceding verse:

thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire; which some understand of the precious stones with which the king of Tyre was adorned, which glittered like fire; though rather they design the people of God, those living lively stones of which the spiritual house is built; who, for their clear light, and burning zeal and love, may be said to be as stones of fire; and among these the bishop of Rome, or the antichristian king of Tyre, first walked: so Kimchi interprets them of the Israelites, who were a holy people; and Jarchi of the kings of Israel, who were as the ministering angels; the seraphim perhaps he means, so called from their burning and flaming love. The Targum is,

"and over the holy people thou hast thought to rule."

{s} Vid. Gurtler. Voc. Typic. Prophet. Explicat. p. 238. {t} Kyttn "et dedi te", Montanus.

Ezekiel 28:15

Ver. 15. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created,.... From the time that Tyre became a kingdom, or this king was set over it, everything was wisely conducted, and all things happily succeeded; so when the church of Rome was first formed in the times of the apostles, it was laid on a good foundation; it was set up according to the rule of the word; its bishop or pastor was one of a sound judgment, a good life and conversation, and so continued In succession for a considerable time; these held the true faith and doctrine of Christ, and kept it incorrupt, and lived holy lives:

till iniquity was found in thee; pride, blasphemy against God, and contempt of his people, as well as violence and deceit; all this was found in the king of Tyre in later times: so in the church of Rome, when the man of sin was revealed, there were pride, haughtiness, and ambition, found in it; blasphemy against God and Christ, and the saints: false doctrine, false worship, superstition, and idolatry.

Ezekiel 28:16

Ver. 16. By the multitude of thy merchandise,.... With the several nations of the earth, who came to the markets and fairs of Tyre, and to whom she sent her goods:

they have filled the midst of thee with violence; or, as the Targum,

"thy treasures are filled with rapine;"

with ill gotten goods, as the pope's coffers are through his merchandise of the souls of men, and the great trade that is driven in pardons and indulgences:

and thou hast sinned; by this unjust and ungodly way of dealing:

therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; Mount Zion, the church of the living God, where he dwells, and is worshipped, and on which the Lamb stands with his hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name and his Father's on their foreheads, Re 14:1, these will have no communion with the church and pope of Rome; will not receive his mark, nor worship his image; from this mountain, and the inhabitants of it, he stands excluded as a profane person, with whom they will have nothing to do; and hence he persecutes them to the utmost of his power:

and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire; from among the people of God, who have the clear light of the Gospel, and a sincere love for Christ; these withdrew themselves from his jurisdiction and government; and with whom his name, power, and authority perish, especially when they shall have got the victory over him, Re 15:1. Kimchi paraphrases it,

"from the midst of the saints who are the Israelites, comparable to stones of fire;"

and Jarchi's note is,

"that thou mayest not take a portion with the righteous;"

have no part, lot, or fellowship with them. The Targum is,

"I will destroy thee, O king that art anointed, because thou thoughtest to rule over the holy people."

Ezekiel 28:17

Ver. 17. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty,.... Riches, wealth, power, and authority; see Eze 28:5, as the pope of Rome is, because of his dignity, the pomp and splendour of the Roman church, and the gaudy appearance it makes:

thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness; outward lustre and glory, which dazzled his eyes so that he could not see things in a true light; but neglecting the word of God, and setting up his own infallibility, corrupted his doctrine and worship, and became foolish, stupid, and sottish:

I will cast thee to the ground; from the throne and pinnacle of honour, to the lowest state and condition:

and I will lay thee before kings: prostrate at the feet of them, who heretofore has set his feet on the necks of them; or he shall fall before them, and be destroyed by them, when they shall hate the whore, and make her desolate, and burn her flesh with fire, Re 17:16: that they may behold thee; with contempt and disdain, and as an instance and example of divine vengeance.

Ezekiel 28:18

Ver. 18. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities,.... Or, "thy palaces", as Kimchi; the palace of the king, and the palaces of the nobles, where much iniquity was committed, and which was the cause of their being defiled or destroyed by the Chaldeans; or it may design their sacred places, their temples, where their gods were worshipped, and idolatry committed. This may be applied to the places of religious worship among the Papists, their churches; which, instead of being adorned, are defiled with their images and image worship, and other acts of superstition and will worship:

by the iniquity of thy traffic; as by bringing in ill gotten goods into the sacred places of Tyre, as they were accounted, so by selling pardons; praying souls out of purgatory for money; by simony, or buying and selling ecclesiastical benefices; and such like spiritual merchandise in Roman churches:

therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee; sin, and the punishment of it, as Kimchi; which, for sin committed in the midst of them, should consume as fire; or some from among themselves, that should stir up and cause internal divisions, which should issue in their ruin; as the unclean spirit that shall go out of the mouth of the beast, dragon, and false prophet, to gather the antichristian kings to battle, will end in their ruin, Re 16:14. The Targum is,

"I will bring people who are strong as fire, because of the sins of thy pride they shall destroy thee."

Alexander, when he took Tyre, ordered all the inhabitants to be slain, excepting those that fled to the temples, and the houses to be set on fire {u}; which literally fulfilled this prophecy; and which may also have respect to the destruction of Rome by fire, because of the sins committed in it, Re 18:8:

and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, in the sight of all them that behold thee; the kings and merchants of the earth, who shall stand and look on the city as it is burning, and when reduced to ashes; which denotes the utter destruction of it, Re 18:9. The Targum is,

"I will give thee as ashes on the earth, &c.'

and shall be no more accounted of.

{u} Curtius, Hist. l. 4. c. 4. p. 75.

Ezekiel 28:19

Ver. 19. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee,.... At thy fall; that such a mighty city, and powerful prince, should be destroyed at once; that, from such a height of prosperity, they should be brought to so low an estate of adversity; this will be the astonishment of kings, merchants, and others, that knew the riches, power, and flourishing estate of Rome, as before observed:

thou shalt be a terror; to the said persons, who will be afraid to come nigh for fear of the same torments and punishment, Re 18:10, or, though thou "hast been a terror"; or "terrors"; exceeding terrible to others in time past, yet now, as the Targum,

"I will give thee (or make thee) as if thou wast not:"

and never shalt thou be any more; as thou hast been, or after thy last destruction; so mystical Tyre or Babylon shall be no more, when once destroyed, Re 18:21.

Ezekiel 28:20

Ver. 20. Again, the word of the Lord came unto me,.... After the prophecy of the destruction of the prince and king of Tyre, concerning a neighbouring city:

saying as follows:

Ezekiel 28:21

Ver. 21. Son of man, set thy face against Zidon,.... An ancient city, near to Tyre, and in confederacy with it, greatly given to idolatry and superstition; and may design all the antichristian states in the communion of the church of Rome:

and prophesy against it; the prophet is bid to look towards this place with a stern countenance, as before against Tyre; threatening it with ruin, and prophesying of it, in the following manner.

Ezekiel 28:22

Ver. 22 And say, thus saith the Lord God,.... The eternal Jehovah, the only true God, the Maker of heaven and earth; this is said by way of preface to the prophecy, and to assure of the fulfilment of it, as well as in opposition to the gods of the Zidonians:

behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; angry with thee, and will come out against thee in my wrath, because of thine idolatries and impieties. The Targum is,

"behold, I send my fury upon thee, O Zidon:"

I will be glorified in the midst of thee; not by the conversion of them; nor by acts of religious worship truly performed by them: by prayer, confession of sin, or thanksgiving; but by his judgments executed in the midst of them; by pouring out the vials of his wrath on them, as it follows:

and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall have executed judgments in her; for the Lord is known, by the judgments he executes, to be that pure, holy, just, and sin avenging God he is, as well as omniscient and omnipotent; and this even Heathens and antichristian persons are obliged to acknowledge, **Ps 9:15**:

and shall be sanctified in her; that is, shall appear, be declared and owned, to be a God, just and holy, in all his ways and works.

Ezekiel 28:23

Ver. 23. And I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets,.... The plague and the sword, which are two of God's sore judgments, and often go together; the pestilence slays them that are within, and the sword those the enemy meets with in the streets:

and the wounded shall be judged; that is, punished; or "shall fall" {w}, die and perish:

in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; this was literally fulfilled in Zidon, either by Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldean army, which besieged it on every side; or by Artaxerxes Ochus the Persian, who took it, and destroyed it; and will have its accomplishment on the antichristian states, eastern and western, when the vials shall be poured out upon them, Re 16:1:

and they shall know that I am the Lord God; who am able to foretell things to come, and to accomplish them.

{w} llpn pesountai, Sept.; "corruent", Pagninus, Vatablus; "cadet", Montanus; so Kimchi and Ben Melech; and which is approved of by Gussetius.

Ezekiel 28:24

Ver. 24. And there shall be no more a pricking brier to the house of Israel,.... To the church of God, Jews or Gentiles, particularly to the Jews, who will now be converted; all the enemies of Christ and his people will now be destroyed, who have been very grievous and distressing to them by their furious persecutions; the pope and Turk will be no more, nor any of the antichristian powers; the beast and false prophet will be taken and cast into the lake of fire; and there will be none to hurt and destroy in all the holy mountain, Re 19:20:

nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them that despised them; the same thing in other words as before; wicked men, especially tyrannical princes, furious persecutors of the saints, are like thorns and briers, not only unfruitful, useless, and unprofitable, but pricking, grieving, and hurtful to good men, by their persecutions, revilings, and reproaches, and whose end is to be burned. The Targum of the whole is,

"and there shall be no more to the house of Israel a king that doth evil (or hurt), or a governor that oppresses all round about them that spoil them:"

and they shall know that I am the Lord; the house of Israel, the Jews now converted, they shall know the Lord Christ, and acknowledge him to be their Lord and King.

Ezekiel 28:25

Ver. 25. Thus saith the Lord God, when I shall have gathered the house of Israel,.... Not at the return of them from captivity in Babylon; for the ten tribes or house of Israel did not then return; though there might some few of those tribes, as a pledge of what would be hereafter; but in the latter day, upon the destruction of antichrist, when all Israel shall be saved: and when they will be collected

from the people among whom they are scattered; in the several nations of the world, in Asia, Africa, and Europe:

and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the Heathen; being believed in by them; prayed unto and worshipped in a spiritual manner by them; professed and owned to be their Saviour and Redeemer in the face of the whole world, Christians and even Heathens, whom before they rejected: then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob; the land of Canaan, given by promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; which last is only here mentioned, because it was his posterity that was to possess it; not all Abraham's, only those in the line of Isaac; nor all Isaac's, only those in the line of Jacob; but all his; and this they will do when they are converted in the latter day, and be no more a vagabond people, as they now are.

Ezekiel 28:26

Ver. 26. And they shall dwell safely therein,.... There being none to make them afraid, all their enemies being destroyed, and they also under the protection of Christian princes:

and they shall build houses and plant vineyards; signifying their continuance in their land, and their enjoyment of the blessings of it. Cocceius understands this of churches gathered in the name of Christ; of which no doubt there will be many in Judea, as in the first times of the Gospel, and more abundantly:

yea, they shall dwell with confidence: in the utmost safety and security, having nothing to fear from any quarter:

when I have executed judgment upon all those that despise them round about them; took vengeance on them, and utterly destroyed them that despised or spoiled them, even all around them; they will all be cut off, so that there will be none to give them the least disturbance:

and they shall know that I am the Lord their God: not only God, as before, Eze 28:24, but their God, their Lord and their God, their Redeemer and Saviour, whom they formerly denied, persecuted, and pierced.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 29:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 29

This chapter contains a prophecy against Pharaoh king of Egypt; and of the destruction of the land of Egypt; and of the restoration of it after a certain time. The time of prophecy is noted, Eze 29:1, the order to prophesy against Pharaoh, who is described as a large fish, lying in his rivers, and boasting of them, Eze 29:2, his destruction and the manner of it, Eze 29:4, the reason of it, his treachery to the Jews,
Eze 29:6, hence the whole land of Egypt is threatened with desolation, from one end to the other, so as to be uninhabited by man or beast for the space of forty years, Eze 29:8, but shall not arrive to their former glory as a kingdom, nor be any more the confidence of the house of Israel, Eze 29:15, then follows a prophecy seventeen years after this, showing the reason why Egypt was given to the king of Babylon, Eze 29:17, and the chapter is closed with a promise of happiness to Israel, Eze 29:21.

Ver. 1. In the tenth year, in the tenth month, in the twelfth day of the month,.... In the tenth year Jeconiah's captivity, and Zedekiah's reign. The Septuagint version has it, the twelfth year; and the Arabic version, the twelfth month; and the Septuagint version again, the first day of the month; and the Vulgate Latin, the eleventh day of it. This month was the month Tebet, and answers to part of December, and part of January. This prophecy was delivered before that concerning Tyre, though placed after it, because fulfilled after it, which gave

Nebuchadnezzar Egypt as a reward for besieging and taking Tyre:

the word of the Lord came unto me, saying; as follows.

Ezekiel 29:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, set thy face against Pharaoh king of Egypt,.... Pharaoh was a name common to all the kings of Egypt; the name of this king was Pharaohhophra, Jer 44:30, and who, by Herodotus {x}, is called Apries:

and prophesy against him, and against all Egypt; prophesy of his destruction, and of the destruction of the whole land that is under his dominion.

{x} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 161.

Ezekiel 29:3

Ver. 3. Speak, and say, thus saith the Lord God,.... The one only, living, and true God, the almighty, eternal, and unchangeable Jehovah, which the gods of Egypt were not:

behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt; who, though so great a king, was not a match for God, yea, nothing in his hands; nor could he stand before him, or contend with him; or,

I am above thee {y}; though the king of Egypt was so high above others, and thought so highly of himself, as if he was a god; yet the Lord was higher than he:

the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers; the chief river of Egypt was the Nile, which opened in seven mouths or gates into the sea, and out of which canals were made to water the whole land; and which abounding with rivers and watery places, hence the king of it is compared to a great fish, a dragon or whale, or rather a crocodile, which was a fish very common, and almost peculiar to Egypt; and with which the description here agrees, as Bochart observes; and who also remarks that Pharaoh in the Arabic language signifies a crocodile; and to which he may be compared for his cruel, voracious, and mischievous nature; and is here represented as lying at ease, and rolling himself in the enjoyment of his power, riches, and pleasures:

which hath said, my river is mine own, and I have made it for myself; alluding to the river Nile, which his predecessors had by their wisdom cut out into canals, for the better watering of the land; and which he might have improved, so that it stood in no need of rain, nor of the supplies of other countries, having a sufficiency from its own product; though he chiefly designs his kingdom, which was his own, and he had established it, and made himself great in it; for the last clause may be rendered, either, "I have made it", as the Syriac version, the river Nile, ascribing that to himself which belonged to God; or, "I have made them", the rivers among whom he lay, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; or, "I have made myself", as the Vulgate Latin version; that is, a great king. So the Targum,

"the kingdom is mine, and I have subdued it."

Herodotus says of this king, that he was so lifted up with pride, and so secure of his happy state, that he said there was no God could deprive him of his kingdom {z}. This proud tyrannical monarch was an emblem of that beast that received his power from the dragon, and who himself spake like one; of the whore of Babylon that sits upon many waters, and boasts of her sovereignty and power, of her wealth and riches, of her ease, peace, pleasure, prosperity, and settled estate,
Re 13:2.

{y} Kyle "super te", Montanus. {z} Herodot. Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 169. & l. 11. c. 163.

Ezekiel 29:4

Ver. 4. But I will put hooks in thy jaws,.... The allusion is to fishhooks, which are taken by fishes with the bait into their mouths, and stick in their jaws, by which they are drawn out of the river, and taken. The king of Egypt being before compared to a fish, these hooks design some powerful princes and armies, which should be the ruin of Pharaoh; one of them, according to Junius and Grotius, was Amasis, at the head of the Cyreneans and Greeks; and another was Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; see Job 41:1:

and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales; the people of his kingdom, especially his soldiers, generals, princes, and great men, to cleave to him, follow him, and go out with him in his expedition against Amasis. The Targum is,

"I will kill the princes of thy strength with thy mighty ones:"

and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers: alluding to the crocodile, to which he is compared, which sometimes comes out of the river, and goes on dry land. The king of Egypt was brought out of his kingdom by the following means: Amasis, with the Cyreneans and Greeks, having seized upon Lybia, and drove the king of it from thence, he applied to Pharaoh for help, who gathered a large army of Egyptians, and led them out into the fields of Cyrene, where they were defeated by Amasis, and almost all perished, and the king saved himself by flight; upon which the Egyptians mutinied and rebelled against him, and Amasis became their king:

and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales; the common people of Egypt; for the above numerous army consisted only of Egyptians, whom he gathered from all parts, drained his rivers of them, and almost exhausted his country hereby; he had indeed in an army, after this battle with Amasis, thirty thousand auxiliaries, Carians and Ionians; but these were not the fish of his rivers. The Targum is,

"I will make thy kingdom to cease from thee, and all the princes of thy strength with thy mighty ones shall be killed;"

with which the history agrees. The allusion to the crocodile is here very just and pertinent, which is a fish full of scales. Monsieur Thevenot {a}, who saw many of them, says, that

"the body of this fish is large, and all of a size; the back is covered with high scales, like the heads of nails in a court gate, of a greenish colour, and so hard that they are proof against a halberd; and it has a long tail covered with scales like the body;"

and another traveller says {b} they have scales on their back musket proof, and therefore must be wounded in the belly; but another traveller {c} says, this is a vulgar report that a musket shot will not pierce the skins of the crocodiles, for upon trial it is found false; yet all writers, ancient and modern, allow it to have very firm scales on its back, which render it capable of bearing the heaviest strokes, and to be in a measure impenetrable and invincible; so Herodotus {d} says, it has a skin full of scales, on the back infrangible; or, as Pliny {e} expresses it, invincible against all blows and strokes it may be stricken with; and so says Aristotle {f}, with which Aelian {g} agrees, who says that the crocodile has by nature a back and tail impenetrable; for it is covered with scales, as if it was armed as one might say, not unlike to hard shells.

{a} Travels, par. 1. B. 2. c. 72. p. 245. {b} Mandelsloe in Harris's Voyages, &c. vol. 1. p. 759. {c} Tavernier in ib. p. 835. {d} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 63. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 25. {f} Hist. Animal: l. 2. c. 10. {g} De Animal. l. 10. c. 24.

Ezekiel 29:5

Ver. 5. And I will leave thee thrown into the wilderness, thee, and all the fish of thy rivers,.... Where fish in common cannot live, but die as soon almost as out of the water, and on dry land, excepting those that are of the amphibious kind. This wilderness designs the deserts of Lybia and Cyrene, where the battle was fought between Hophra and Amasis; and where the Egyptian army perished, only their king, before compared to a crocodile, which lives on land, as well as in water, escaped. The Targum is,

"I will cast thee into a wilderness, and all the princes of thy strength:"

thou shalt fall upon the open fields thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered, this is to he understood of his army; for what is proper to an army is sometimes ascribed to the head or general of it; which fell by the sword in the fields of Lybia and Cyrene and was so discomfited, that the remains of it could not be brought and gathered together again: or the sense is, that those that were slain were left in the open fields, and had no burial; they were not gathered to the grave, as Kimchi interprets it; and so the Targum,

"upon the face of the field thy carcass shall be cast; it shall not be gathered, nor shall it be buried:"

this was only true of the carcasses of the soldiers slain in battle, not of the king, who fled, and afterwards in another battle was taken by Amasis, and strangled in the city of Sais, where he was buried among his ancestors, as Herodotus {h} relates:

I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the heaven; that is, his army; as the armies of the kings, beast, and false prophet, will be at the battle of Armageddon, when the two latter will be taken and cast alive into the burning lake, of which this monarch was an emblem, Re 19:17.

{h} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 169.

Ezekiel 29:6

Ver. 6. And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord,.... Who could eject their king from his kingdom, and deliver him into the hands of his enemy; though he thought no God could, as he boastingly said, before observed:

because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel; alluding to the country of Egypt, which abounded with reeds that grew upon the banks of the river Nile, and other rivers. This signifies that either the Egyptians were weak, and could not help the people of Israel when they applied to them; or rather that they were treacherous and deceitful, and would not assist them, according to agreement; and were even pernicious and hurtful to them, as a broken reed; see Isa 36:6. The Targum renders it,

"the staff of a reed broken."

Ezekiel 29:7

Ver. 7. When they took hold of thee by thy hand,.... When the Israelites entered into an alliance and confederacy with the Egyptians, called for their assistance according to treaty, and put their confidence in them:

thou didst break and rend all their shoulder; as a reed which a man puts under his armhole, and leans upon, and it breaks under him, the splinters run into the flesh up to the very shoulder, and tear the flesh to pieces; so, through Zedekiah's trusting to the king of Egypt, he rebelled against the king of Babylon, which brought on his ruin, and the destruction of his kingdom:

and when they leaned upon thee thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand; when they put their confidence in the king of Egypt, and sent to him for help when besieged by the king of Babylon, and he failed them, they were obliged to raise up themselves, as a man is forced to do when his staff breaks under him, whose loins before were bowed, but now erects himself, and stands and walks as well as he can without it; so the Jews were forced to stand upon their own legs, and exert all the force they had, and make all the efforts they could against the king of Babylon, being left in the lurch by the king of Egypt; in which, though they were rightly served for their vain confidence and not trusting in the Lord, yet the treachery of the Egyptians was resented by him, as follows:

Ezekiel 29:8

Ver. 8. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Because of the pride of the king of Egypt, asserting the river to be his own, and made by him for himself; and because of his perfidy to the house of Israel:

behold, I will bring a sword upon thee; or those that kill with the sword, as the Targum; first a cival war, occasioned by the murmurs of the people, on account of the defeat of their army at Cyrene; which issued in the dethroning and strangling of this king, as before observed and setting up another; which cival commotions Nebuchadnezzar took the advantage of, and came against Egypt with a large army:

and cut off man and beast out of thee; for what with the civil wars among themselves, and what with the devastations of the king of Babylon's army, putting men to the sword, and seizing upon the beasts for their food, to support such an army in a foreign land, it was pretty well stripped of both.

Ezekiel 29:9

Ver. 9. And the land of Egypt shall be desolate and waste,.... Men few or none being left in it, to till it, nor cattle found upon it:

and they shall know that I am the Lord; by these judgments executed upon them, now foretold; and which when come to pass, they will be obliged to acknowledge the omniscience and omnipotence of Jehovah:

because thou hast said, the river is mine, and I have made it;
See Gill on "Eze 29:3"; this insolent expression was highly resented by the

Lord, as appears by the repetition of it. The Targum is here, as before,

"the kingdom is mine, and I have subdued it;"

but, notwithstanding this vaunt, he could not keep it.

Ezekiel 29:10

Ver. 10. Behold, therefore, I am against thee, and against thy rivers,.... Against the king of Egypt, and against his subjects, the many people he ruled over; as the Lord is against spiritual Egypt, and the head of it, and the antichristian states, signified by many waters, rivers, and fountains; see Re 11:8:

and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate; partly by a civil war, and partly by a foreign enemy; especially those parts of it which were the seat of war:

from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia; or the tower of Seveneh; according to Herodotus {i}, Syene was a city of Thebais, where he was told were two mountains, which gave rise to the Nile. Pliny {k} says it was six hundred twenty five miles from Alexandria; and it is by him, as well as Strabo {l}, placed under the tropic of Cancer; who both say, in the summer solstice, at noon, no shadow is cast there; to which the poet Lucan {m} refers, It is now called Essuaen; which city, as Mr. Norden {n} says, who lately travelled in those parts, is situated on the eastern shore of the Nile; and he relates that there remain still some marks of the place where the ancient city stood; as to the rest, it is so covered with earth, that there is nothing but rubbish, from which, in some places, one would judge that there were formerly magnificent buildings here. The utter destruction of which, with the rest of Egypt prophesied of, appears to have been fulfilled. This place is famous for being the place of the banishment of Juvenal the poet, where he died, being eighty years of age. The tower of Syene, Jerom says, remained to his days, and was subject to the Roman government, where are the cataracts of the Nile; and to which place, from our sea, he says, the Nile is navigable: but, according to Pliny. {o}, Syene itself was on the border of Ethiopia; and so say Pausanias {p} and Solinus {q}: and, according to Seneca {r}, it was the extreme part of Egypt. So Josephus {s} says the south border of Egypt is Syene, which separates it from Ethiopia; and that between Pelusium (the entrance of Egypt) and Syene are two hundred and fifty miles. It lay between Egypt and Ethiopia, so that it might seem doubtful to which it belonged. It seems better therefore to take "Migdol", rendered a "tower", for the proper name of a place, as the Septuagint do; and such a place there was in Egypt, Jer 44:1, a town on the Red sea, Ex 14:2, so that the one was on the border of Egypt on one side, and the other on the other: and the words may be rendered {t}, "from Migdol to Syene, even to the border of Ethiopia"; from one end of it to the other: it denotes the utter desolation of the country, from one end to the other. Unless by Cush, rendered "Ethiopia", is meant Arabia, as it often is, and is thought by some to be intended here; which was on the northern border of Egypt, as Syene was, a city in Thebais, near to Ethiopia, on the southern border of it; so that this describes Egypt from south to north; but the former account seems best.

{i} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 28. {k} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 73. {l} Geograph. l. 2. p. 65, 78. {m} "Umbras nusquan flectente", Syene. Pharsal. l. 2. v. 587. {n} Travels in Egypt and Nubis, vol. 1. p. 143. vol. 2. p. 97, 103. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 9. {p} Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 518. {q} Polyhistor, c. 45. {r} Apud Servium in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 6. p. 1011. {s} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 10. sect. 5. {t} See Prideaux's Connexion, part 1. B. 2. p. 93. So the words are rendered by Hillerus, Onomast. Sacr. p. 672. who observes, that Syene is now called by the Arabs "Asuan", from the Ethiopic word "Wasou", which signifies to terminate or finish, this being the border of Ethiopia.

Ezekiel 29:11

Ver. 11. No foot of man shall pass through it,.... This must be understood not strictly, but with some limitation; it cannot be thought that Egypt was so depopulated as that there should not be a single passenger in it; but that there should be few inhabitants in it, or that there should be scarce any that should come into it for traffic; it should not be frequented as it had been at least there should be very few that travelled in it, in comparison of what had:

no foot of beast shall pass through it: no droves of sheep and oxen, and such like useful cattle, only beasts of prey should dwell in it:

neither shall it be inhabited forty years: afterwards, Eze 29:17, a prophecy is given out concerning the destruction of it by Nebuchadnezzar, which was in the twenty seventh year, that is, of Jeconiah's captivity; now allowing three years for the fulfilment of that prophecy, or forty years, a round number put for forty three years, they will end about the time that Cyrus conquered Babylon, at which time the seventy years' captivity of the Jews ended; and very likely the captivity of the Egyptians also. The Jews pretend to give a reason why Egypt lay waste just forty years, because the famine, signified in Pharaoh's dream, was to have lasted, as they make it out, forty two years; whereas, according to them, it continued only two years; and, instead of the other forty years of famine, Egypt must be forty years uninhabited: this is mentioned both by Jarchi and Kimchi.

Ezekiel 29:12

Ver. 12. And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate,.... As Judea and others, made desolate by the king of Babylon:

and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years; such as Thebes, Sais, Memphis, and others; which should share the same fate as Jerusalem and other principal cities in other countries, which fell into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar:

and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries; such as were not carried captive into Babylon fled into other countries, as Arabia, Ethiopia, and other places, Berosus {u} makes mention of this captivity of the Egyptians under Nebuchadnezzar the son, which no other writer does.

{u} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 1.

Ezekiel 29:13

Ver. 13. Yet thus saith the Lord God, at the end of forty years,.... Reckoning from its devastation by Nebuchadnezzar to the taking of Babylon by Cyrus:

will I gather the Egyptians from the people whither they were scattered; from Babylon, and other places; Cyrus very probably being stirred up by the Lord to proclaim liberty to the Egyptians, as he did to the Jews, to return to their own land; and at the same time restored Amasis to the quiet possession of his kingdom, who must be still alive; since, according to Diodorus Siculus {w}, he reigned fifty five years; though, according to Herodotus {x}, he reigned but forty four years.

{w} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 62. Ed. Rhodoman. {x} Thalia, sive l. 3. c. 10.

Ezekiel 29:14

Ver. 14. And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt,.... For what is done by men, under the direction and influence of divine Providence, is said to be done by the Lord, as this was, though by the means of Cyrus:

and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros; which was a part of the land of Egypt; perhaps so called from Pathrusim, the son of Mizraim, from whom Egypt had its name, Ge 10:14. Bochart takes it to be Thebais, a principal country in Egypt:

into the land of their habitation; or nativity, where they were born, and where they before dwelt:

and they shall be there a base kingdom; as it is at this day more especially, to which it has been gradually reduced, having passed into various hands, and come under the power and dominion of different states: whatever might be the case and circumstances of it under Cyrus, Cambyses his son entered into it, made sad devastation in it, and an entire conquest of it; and though it revolted under Darius Hystaspes, it was subdued again, and brought into a worse state than before by Xerxes: it revolted again in the reign of Darius Nothus, and was at last by Ochus totally subdued; and from that time the Egyptians never had a king of their own nation to reign over them. Along with the Persian empire it came into the hands of Alexander without any opposition; and, after his death, fell to the share of Ptolemy, one of his captains; and, though some of the first kings of that name were of considerable note and power, yet Egypt made a poor figure under the reigns of several of them. When the Roman empire obtained, it became a province of that, and continued so for six or seven hundred years; and then it fell into the hands of the Saracens, when it sunk into ignorance and superstition, the Mahometan religion being established in it, with whom it continued until about the year of Christ 1250; when the Mamalucks, or Turkish and Carcassian slaves, rose up against their sovereigns, the sultans of Egypt, and usurped the government, in whose hands it was until the year 1517; when Selim the ninth, emperor of the Turks, conquered the Mamalucks, and put an end to their government, and annexed it to the

Ottoman empire; of which it is a province to this day {x}, being governed by a Turkish basha, with twenty four begs or princes under him, who are raised, from being servants, to the administration of public affairs; and so it is become a base kingdom indeed, if to be called one {y}.

{x} Written about 1730. Editor. {y} See all this at large, with the proofs of it, in Dr. Newton's Dissertations on Prophecies, from p. 382. to 394.

Ezekiel 29:15

Ver. 15. And it shall be the basest of the kingdoms,.... That belonged to the Persian monarchy, or to the Macedonian empire, being more kept under than the rest, lest it should regain its former strength and glory; though it became more famous in the times of some of the Ptolemies, yet never recovered its former greatness; and is now exceeding base indeed, as appears from the preceding note:

neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations; so as to conquer them, and make them tributary to it, as it had done:

for I will demolish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations; for though they made war upon other nations in the time of the Lagidae, yet they did not subdue them, and annex them to their kingdom, being much weakened both as to men and money.

Ezekiel 29:16

Ver. 16. And it shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel,.... It having been treacherous to them, and moreover subdued by the Chaldeans, the Jews, even after their return from captivity, put no more confidence in them; it being now become as it is here prophesied it would, the basest of the kingdoms, more weak, and in a more abject state, than the rest, and so despised by its neighbours, as it was by the Jews:

which bringeth their iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after them; as they had done in time past, when they looked after them for help, and expected it from them, and trusted in them, and served their idols; which brought to the Lord's remembrance former iniquities and idolatries, for which he punished them; but now they should do so no more:

but they shall know that I am the Lord God; not the Egyptians, but the Israelites; who being returned from captivity, shall acknowledge and serve the only true God, and no more worship the idols of the nations.

Ezekiel 29:17

Ver. 17. And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year,.... Of Jeconiah's captivity; or of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abendana, from Seder Olam Rabba {z}, observe; though it was in the thirty fifth year of his reign that Tyre was taken by him; and after that Egypt was given him:

in the first month, in the first day of the month: the month Nisan, which answers to part of March, and part of April. According to Bishop Usher {a}, it was on the twentieth of April, on the third day of the week (Tuesday), in 3432 A.M.or before Christ 572. Mr. Whiston {b} makes it to be a year sooner. This prophecy is not put in its proper place, as to order of time, since it was sixteen or seventeen years after the preceding, and the last of Ezekiel's prophecies; but is here placed, because it relates to the same subject as the former, the destruction of Egypt.

The word of the Lord came unto me, saying; as follows:

{z} C. 26. p. 77. {a} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3432. {b} Chronological Tables, cent. 10.

Ezekiel 29:18

Ver. 18. Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon,.... The same with Nebuchadnezzar; he goes by both names in Scripture, nor is the difference very great:

caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus; in besieging it thirteen years {c} before he was able to take it; during which time his army suffered much hardship, was greatly fatigued and wearied, by the various military works they were engaged in, to carry on the siege so long a time:

every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: the heads of the soldiers became bald with wearing their helmets so long, or carrying baskets of earth and timber upon them, to make mounts with; and the skin of their shoulders was peeled off, either with their armour, or by carrying burdens on them for the above purpose; or, as Jerom says, from the Assyrian annals, to make a causeway to join the island to the continent, that so they might come at it with their battering rams, and demolish it:

yet hath he no wages; nor his army, for Tyrus; for besieging it; for, as the same Jerom observes when the Tyrians found that the city was like to be taken by him, their gold and silver, and whatsoever was valuable that was with them, they put on and sent it to other islands; or, as others say, that when Tyre on the continent, which was what Nebuchadnezzar besieged, was about to be taken, the inhabitants transplanted their riches to the island at some distance, where new Tyre was afterwards built; however, what with the consumption of their riches during this thirteen years' siege, and the removing their effects to other places before the taking of the city there was scarce anything left for the plunder of king of Babylon's army, so that he and that had nothing to requite them:

for the service that he had served against it: it must have cost him a great deal of money to support such a numerous army for so long a time, as well as the siege was very toilsome and laborious; and yet, when the city was taken, there was nothing found in it to answer this expense and labour.

{c} Hist. Physic. spud Joseph. adv. Aplon, l. 1. c. 21.

Ezekiel 29:19

Ver. 19. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Since this was the case, that the king of Babylon had been working for nothing, and had spent much blood and treasure, as well as time, to little purpose and advantage to himself;

behold, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; which will make him a sufficient recompence for his loss of time, men, and money, before Tyre; and though the conquest of Egypt was made easy to him, by the internal divisions and wars which were among the Egyptians; yet these were suffered, and ordered by the providence of God, to bring about this his will, by way of righteous punishment of the Egyptians, for their treachery to his people, and other sins:

and he shall take her multitude, of soldiers, and of inhabitants, and carry them captive:

and take her spoil, and take her prey; that which the Egyptians had spoiled other nations of and made a prey of that should now become the spoil and prey of the Chaldeans:

and it shall be the wages for his army; with this the king of Babylon would be able to pay off the arrears of his army; which had lain so long against Tyre; or this would be a recompence to them for all the hardships they there sustained.

Ezekiel 29:20

Ver. 20. I have given him the land of Egypt for labour wherewith he served against it, That is, against Tyre; meaning not Nebuchadnezzar merely or only, but his army also, who did the main of the service and labour, and had the plunder of the country for it; though the kingdom itself was given to their king, and annexed to his monarchy:

because they wrought for me, saith the Lord God; not intentionally, but eventually; they did not design to do any service for God; they only sought to serve themselves with the riches and wealth of those they subdued; and yet while they besieged Tyre, and when they took it, and while they were ravaging, plundering, and subduing Egypt, they were doing the Lord's will and work, and executing his righteous judgments on these enemies of his for their sins; wherefore he rewarded them sufficiently: none ever are employed by him but he gives them their wages; even though they are wicked and ungodly men, verily they have their reward.

Ezekiel 29:21

Ver. 21. In that day will I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth,.... Not at the time of Egypt's destruction, unless it can be thought that this refers to the advancement of Daniel in the court of Babylon; or to the taking of Jehoiachin out of prison, and setting his throne above the rest of the kings; which events came to pass a little after this: but rather this respects the time of

Egypt's restoration forty years after, when Cyrus came to the throne, and proclaimed liberty to the Jews to return to their own land, and build their city and temple, under the government of Zerubbabel their prince: besides, it may not be limited to either of these times, but may regard the famous day, when the kingdom of Israel, in a spiritual sense, should flourish under the Messiah, the Horn of salvation, and Branch of David, often promised to bud forth, and was fulfilled in Jesus,
Ps 132:17. The Targum is,

"in that day will I bring redemption to the house of Israel."

And I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; in prophecy among them, as the Targum; who after this, might deliver other prophecies, though we have no account of them; or he should have boldness and courage when he and they should see his prophecies fulfilled, by which it would appear that he was a true prophet of the Lord:

and they shall know that I am the Lord; who sent the prophet, and from whom he had these prophecies, and by whom they were fulfilled.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 30:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 30

This chapter is a continuation of the prophecy against Egypt, both against the country and the king of it. It is introduced with expressions of lamentation, because of the destruction coming on,
Eze 30:1, and not only Egypt, and the cities thereof, should be destroyed, but all her friends, associates, and allies; the Ethiopians, Lydians, Lybians, and others, Eze 30:4. Nebuchadnezzar and his army were to be the instruments of her ruin,
Eze 30:10, particular cities are mentioned by name, which should suffer much, and become desolate, Eze 30:13 and then Pharaoh king of Egypt himself is threatened with broken arms, and his people to be scattered among the nations,
Eze 30:20, and the king of Babylon is again mentioned, whose arms should be strengthened to do all this, Eze 30:24.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord came again unto me,.... Whether this prophecy was delivered about the time of that in the former part of the preceding chapter, namely, in the tenth year, tenth month, and twelfth day of it; or whether about the time that was which is recorded in the latter part of the chapter, in the seven and twentieth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, is not easy to say; I am inclined to think it was about the time of the latter, since the time of the fulfilment of it is said to be near, Eze 30:3:

saying: as follows:

Ezekiel 30:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, prophesy and say, thus saith the Lord God,.... Prophesy against Egypt's king and inhabitants, and in the name of the Lord thus speak against them:

howl ye; ye Egyptians, and also ye Ethiopians, and all others after named, which should share in the destruction of Egypt; this is said to give them notice of it, and prepare them for it:

woe worth the day! or, "alas for the day!" {d} O the unhappy day! what a sad dismal day is this! O that we should ever live to see such wretched times!

{d} Mwyl hh "bah diei", Munster, Vatablus; "heu diei", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 30:3

Ver. 3. For the day is near,.... The day of Egypt's destruction, the time fixed for it:

even the day of the Lord is near; the day appointed by him, and in which he would make himself known by the judgments he executed: Kimchi observes, that, the same year this prophecy was delivered, Egypt was given into the hands of the king of Babylon:

a cloudy day; or; "a day of cloud" {e}; which was seldom seen in Egypt in a literal sense, rarely having any rain, their country being watered by the Nile; but now, in a figurative sense, the clouds would gather thick and black, and threaten with a horrible tempest of divine wrath, and of ruin and destruction:

it shall be the time of the Heathen: both when the Heathen nation of the Chaldeans should distress and conquer others; and when Heathen nations, as the Egyptians, Ethiopians, and others, should be destroyed by them. The Targum is,

"it shall be the time of the breaking or destruction of the people."

{e} Nne Mwy "dies nubis", V. L. Pagniaus, Montanus, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 30:4

Ver. 4. And the sword shall come upon Egypt,.... The sword of the Chaldeans shall come upon the Egyptians, by which they should be cut off; it having a commission from the Lord for that purpose:

and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt; Ethiopia being a neighbouring nation to Egypt, shall be in a panic when it shall hear of the sword of the Chaldeans being in Egypt, and of the ravages made by it, of the multitudes slain with it; fearing it will be their turn next to fall into the same hands, and in the same manner; and the rather, not only as they were neighbours, but allies:

and they shall take away her multitude; that is, the Chaldeans shall carry captive vast numbers of the Egyptians; such as fell not by the sword should not escape the hand of the enemy, but be taken and carried into other lands. Egypt was a very populous country; according to Agrippa's speech in Josephus {f}, there were in it 7,500,000 persons from Ethiopia to Alexandria, besides the inhabitants of the latter, as might be gathered from the tribute each person paid; hence they are compared to the trees of a forest that cannot be searched, and to grasshoppers innumerable, Jer 46:23, but now their numbers should be lesser:

and her foundations shall be broken down; either in a literal sense, the foundations of the cities, towers, and fortified places in Egypt, should be undermined and destroyed, and consequently the buildings on them must sink and fall; or in a figurative sense, her king, princes, magistrates, laws, and government, which are the support of a state, should be removed, and be of no more service.

{f} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 4.

Ezekiel 30:5

Ver. 5. Ethiopia, Lybia, and Lydia,.... Or, "Cush, Phut, and Lud". Cush and Phut were both sons of Ham, from whom Egypt is sometimes called the land of Ham; and Lud or Ludim was the son of Mizraim, the son of Ham, the common name of Egypt in Scripture, Ge 10:6. Cush is by us rendered Ethiopia; and is thought by some to be a part of Arabia, which lay near to Egypt. Phut and Lud are properly enough rendered Lybia and Lydia; and both these, with Ethiopia, are represented as the allies and confederates of Egypt, Jer 46:9.

And all the mingled people; the Syriac version renders it, "all Arabia": and so Symmachus, according to Jerom; though others think they are the Carians, Ionians, and other Greeks, which Pharaohapries got together to fight with Amasis {g}: and "Chub"; or "Cub"; the inhabitants of this piece are thought to be the Cobii of Ptolemy {h}, who dwelt in Mareotis, a country of Egypt; though some, by a change of a letter, would have them to be the Nubians, a people in Africa; and so the Arabic version here reads it. Of these Strabo {i} says, on the left of the stream of the Nile dwell the Nubians, a large nation in Lybia; and which he afterwards mentions along with the Troglodytes, Blemmyes, Megabarians, and Ethiopians, that dwell above Syene: and so Ptolemy {k} speaks of them along with the Megabarians, and as inhabiting to the west of the Avalites: and Pliny {l} calls them Nubian Ethiopians, whom he places near the Nile: and a late traveller {m} in those parts informs us that the confines of Egypt and Nubia are about eight miles above the first cataract (of the Nile); Nubia begins at the villages of Ellkalabsche, and of Teffa; the first is to the east of the Nile, and the second to the west.

And the men of the land that is in league shall fall with them by the sword; all the nations above mentioned, with whomsoever should be found that were confederates with Egypt, should share the same fate with them. The Septuagint render it, "and those of the children of my covenant"; as if the Jews were meant that were in Egypt, who are sometimes called "the children of the covenant", and of "the promise", **Ac 3:25**, and so some interpret the place; but it takes in all the allies of Egypt, and does not design the Jews, at least not them only.

{g} See Prideaux's Connexion, part 1. p. 93. {h} Geograph. l. 4. c. 5. {i} Geograph. l. 17. p. 541, 563. {k} Geograph. l. 5. c. 8. {l} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 30.

{m} Norden's Travels in Egypt and Nubia, vol. 2. p. 131, 132.

Ezekiel 30:6

Ver. 6. Thus saith the Lord, they also that uphold Egypt shall fall,.... That is, by the sword; either their allies and auxiliaries without, that supported the Egyptians with men and money; or their principal people within, their nobles that supported their state with their estates, their counsellors with their wisdom, their soldiers with their valour and courage:

and the pride of her power shall come down; or the power they were proud of, the dominion and grandeur they boasted of; the greatness of their king, and the largeness of their empire, with the wealth and riches of it:

from the tower of Syene shall they fall in it by the sword, saith the Lord God; or rather, from "Migdol to Syene"; so the Septuagint and Arabic versions, from one end of Egypt to the other; the sword would ravage, and multitudes fall by it, in all cities and towns, between the one and the other; which denotes the general slaughter that should be made; See Gill on "Eze 29:10".

Ezekiel 30:7

Ver. 7. And they shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate,.... Or among them, shall be ranked with them, and be as desolate as they are; as Judea and other countries, ravaged by the same enemy:

and her cities shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted; undergo the same fate as they have done, as Jerusalem and others. The cities of Egypt were very numerous; Diodorus Siculus {n} says, that in ancient times Egypt had cities and villages of note, more than 18,000. Herodotus {o} writes, that it was said, that under King Amasis there were 20,000 cities in it; and the first mentioned writer {p} says, under Ptolemy Lagus they were reckoned more than 30,000; and, according to Theocritus {q}, under Ptolemy Philadelphus they were 33,339.

{n} Bibl. l. 1. p. 19. {o} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 177. {p} Bibl. l. 1. p. 19. {q} Idyll. 17. v. 82.

Ezekiel 30:8

Ver. 8. And they shall know that I am the Lord,.... The Egyptians shall know the Lord to be the true God, and acknowledge him to be omniscient and omnipotent, that should so exactly foretell their destruction, and accomplish it:

when I have set a fire in Egypt: a war there; the heat of battle, very devouring and consuming, as well as very grievous and terrible, as fire is. The Targum is,

"when I shall give (or set) people that are strong as fire against Egypt;"

the army of the Chaldeans:

and when all her helpers shall be destroyed; her auxiliaries, the neighbouring nations in alliance with them, before mentioned.

Ezekiel 30:9

Ver. 9. In that day shall messengers go forth from me in ships,.... Either by the river Nile, or by the Red sea, to Arabia Felix, which some think is meant by Ethiopia. Cush or Ethiopia was encompassed about with water, so that there was no coming to it but by ships; see **Ge 2:13**, compare with this Isa 18:1, the messengers here were either such who under a divine impulse, or however by the providence of God, were directed to go to Ethiopia, and tell them the news of the destruction of Egypt; or these were messengers sent by the king of Babylon, to demand a surrender of their country to him; or it may design him himself, and his army, who marched thither to subdue that country also, after the conquest of Egypt. So the Targum,

"at that time messengers shall go forth from before me with legions;"

and because all this was by the appointment and providence of God, they are represented as messengers sent by him:

to make the careless Ethiopians afraid; with the news of the fall of Egypt their confederate, and of a mighty army coming against them; who had dwelt securely and confidently, at ease and unconcerned, without any sense of danger, or fear of any enemy:

and great pain shall come upon them, as in the day of Egypt; either as of old, when the plagues were on Egypt, and especially when they were drowning in the Red sea; or as of late, when the sword was in Egypt, and ravaging there:

for, lo, it cometh; the same day was coming on them as came on Egypt, the day of the Lord, a cloudy one, and the time of the Heathen; it was certain, just at hand, and there was no escaping it; see Eze 30:3.

Ezekiel 30:10

Ver. 10. Thus saith the Lord God, I will make the multitude of Egypt to cease,.... The vast numbers of people that inhabited Egypt; some of its cities were very populous, especially the city No, after mentioned; but now the numbers should be greatly lessened, and the whole land sadly depopulated: or the "noise" {r}, "tumult", and hurry of it; which is very great where there are large numbers of people, and which ceases when they are cut off. The Syriac version renders it, the riches of Egypt. Now the instrument God would make use of to do all this is mentioned by name, as follows,

by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; the then greatest monarch in the world.

{r} Nwmh ta "strepitum", Vatablus, Cocceius.

Ezekiel 30:11

Ver. 11. He and his people with him,.... He and his army, consisting chiefly of Chaldeans; though there were of other nations among them, as were in his army when he besieged Jerusalem, as seems to be suggested in the next clause:

the terrible of the nations shall be brought to destroy the land; the Chaldeans, the most fierce, cruel, and terrible of all people, and others the most terrible that could be collected out of all nations under the yoke of the king of Babylon; and all of them terrible to the nations against whom they came, as now against Egypt to destroy it; see **Hab 1:6**:

and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain; go through the land with their drawn swords, and kill all they meet; and not put them up till they have quite depopulated the land, and filled it with dead carcasses.

Ezekiel 30:12

Ver. 12. And I will make the rivers dry,.... Egypt was a country that abounded with rivers; however, with canals cut from the river Nile; its wealth and riches very much depended here on, partly on account of the multitude of fishes taken out of them, and the paper reeds that grew upon their banks; but chiefly because the whole land, was watered by them, and made exceeding fruitful, rain being not so common in it; so that to dry up the riven was in effect to take away their substance and dependence; besides, hereby the way was made easy and passable for the enemy; there was nothing to obstruct him, he could overrun and ravage the land at pleasure:

and sell the land into the hand of the wicked; the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar, who were wicked idolaters, men of flagitious lives, and of merciless and cruel dispositions; who would show no favour to the inhabitants of the land, when delivered up to them, which is called a selling it; for, as things sold are delivered to the buyer, so should this land be to them; which though they had no right to it before, yet by the event of war, and disposal of divine Providence, came to have a property in it, given them by him who is the proprietor of all lands; and after them into the hands of the Persians, under Cambyses, and Ochus; who were very wicked and cruel princes, and may be reckoned among the terrible or violent ones of the nations in the preceding verse; and then into the hands of the Grecian, Romans, Saracen, Mamaluck, and now the Turks, all very wicked people:

and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers; the Babylonians, people of another country and distant, of another language, and with whom they had no commerce, alliance, and friendship, and so would not spare them, and their land, when in their possession; and so all the rest above mentioned, into whose hands they successively fell:

I the Lord have spoken it; determined it, prophesied of it; and it shall come to pass, as it did accordingly.

Ezekiel 30:13

Ver. 13. Thus saith the Lord God, I will also destroy the idols,.... With which Egypt abounded, making an idol of all sorts of creatures, rational and irrational, animate and inanimate, and in which they trusted; wherefore these being destroyed, they had nothing to put their confidence in:

I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; called Moph, **Ho 9:6** and which we there rightly render Memphis, as many versions do here, and was very famous for idolatry: here stood the temple of Serapis, and the temple of other idols; here Isis and Osiris were worshipped; and it was in Jerom's time, as he says, the metropolis of the Egyptian superstition. It was built by Menes {s}, the Mizraim of the Scriptures, the first king of Egypt; though Diodorus Siculus {t} makes Uchoreus to be the founder of it. Some interpreters take this city to be the same with what is now called Alkair, or Grand Cairo; or, however, that this is built upon the same spot, or near the same place that was, in which I have followed them on Isa 19:13 whereas Cairo stands right over against old Memphis, the Nile being between them, on the east side of it, and Memphis on the west; as is clear from Herodotus {u}, and from the charts of Dr. Shaw, and Mr. Norden; and who observe, that some take the place of it to have been where a village now stands, Dr. Shaw calls Geza, and Mr. Norden Gize:

and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt; that is, a native of that country; or that should rule over the whole of it, and in that grandeur the kings of Egypt had before; or, however, not dwell in Memphis, which was the seat of the kings of Egypt, but now should be so no more: when Egypt was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, it was under the Babylonians; and then under the Persians; and then under the Greeks; and afterwards under the Romans; since under the Saracens and Mamalucks; and now in the hands of the Turks; so that it never recovered its former glory; and indeed, after Nectanebus was driven out of it by Ochus, king of Persia, it never after had a king:

and I will put a fear in all the land of Egypt; a panic in all the inhabitants of it; as soon as they shall hear of the king of Babylon entering into it, their courage, bravery, and fortitude, shall at once leave them, and they shall be dispirited, and have no heart to defend themselves, and oppose the enemy.

{s} Herodot, Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 99. {t} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 46. {u} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 99.

Ezekiel 30:14

Ver. 14. And I will make Pathros desolate,.... A country in Egypt;
See Gill on "Eze 29:14", perhaps it was the first place that Nebuchadnezzar entered, and so went from place to place in the order hereafter mentioned:

and I will set fire in Zoan; or Tunis, a famous city in Egypt in the times of Moses, Nu 13:22. The Targum and Septuagint version call it Tanis here; and from hence a nome in Egypt was called the Tanitic nome. This city was burnt down by the king of Babylon: the place now built on the spot is called Mansourah, as Dr. Shaw {w} says:

and I will execute judgment in No. The Vulgate Latin version renders it Alexandria; and so does the Targum; of which place Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech interpret it; and so does Jerom; which, though built after these times by Alexander, and called so after his name, yet is supposed to be built on or near the place where ancient No stood. The city is now called Scanderoon, or Scanderea; the Turks calling Alexander Scander: here the judgments of God were executed in the destruction of it by the Chaldean army; and great devastations have been made in it since it was rebuilt by Alexander, by the Saracens, who destroyed all places where they came; so that, as Dr. Shaw {x} observes, it is somewhat extraordinary that the greatest part of the ancient walls, together with their respective turrets, should have continued entire quite down to this time. The Septuagint version calls it Diospolis, or the city of Jupiter, as does the Arabic version, that is, of Jupiter Hammon; the city of Thebes, where he was worshipped; as it is in a following verse called Hammon No; though Hillerus {y} thinks neither of these places are meant, neither Alexandria nor Diospolis; but Memphis, as it is rendered by the Septuagint in the next verse;
See Gill on "Na 3:8".

{w} Travels, p. 304. Ed. 2. {x} Ib. p. 292. {y} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 571, &c.

Ezekiel 30:15

Ver. 15. And I will pour out my fury upon Sin, the strength of Egypt,.... Either the city Sais, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; or rather Pelusium, as the Vulgate Latin version, so called from "pelos" which signifies "clay" in the Greek language; and the same "Sin" signifies in the Chaldee, Ps 18:43, and as

now called Tineh, from
Nyj, "clay": it had a very fine haven, and may be called the strength of Egypt, it lying at the entrance of it; and having a strong fortified tower, it was difficult to enter into it; but could not stand before the wrath and fury of the Lord of hosts, when he sent the Chaldeans to it. It is thought by some to be the same with Pithom, built by the first of the pastor kings of Egypt, and fortified by him, **Ex 1:11**, according to Manetho {z}, he put into it a garrison of two hundred and forty thousand men; and the same writer says it contained ten thousand acres of land; according to Adrichomius {a}, it was two and a half miles in compass, and near it was a vast hollow, which extended to Mount Cassius, and which made the way into Egypt on that side difficult; and is now, as he says, called "campus de Gallo"; in which he is mistaken, as well as Thevenot, and others, who take it to be the same with Damieta:

and I will cut off the multitude of No; the numerous inhabitants of it; hence called "populous No", **Na 3:8**, or "Hamon No";
See Gill on "Eze 30:14"; here, as before observed, the Septuagint version renders it Memphis; as does also the Arabic version. Some take it, as before, to be the Egyptian Thebes, where was a temple dedicated to Jupiter Hammon; and which city, Pausanias {b} says, was reduced to nothing in his time.

{z} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 14. {a} Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 122, 123. {b} Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 509. Vid. Juvenal. Satyr. 15. ver. 6.

Ezekiel 30:16

Ver. 16. And I will set fire in Egypt,.... Kindle a war there, which shall consume it; see Eze 30:8:

Sin shall have great pain; as a woman in travail, seeing its destruction is just at hand; the same with Pelusium, as before:

and No shall be rent asunder, the walls of it shall be broken down by the enemy, or a breach shall be made in it, like the breach of waters which were about it; see **Na 3:8**:

and Noph shall have distresses daily: that is, Memphis, as before; enemies shall surround it daily, as the Targum; shall besiege and distress it, until it is taken: or, "in the daytime"; their enemies should not come as thieves in the night, openly in the day. Abendana interprets it of their unfortunate day, their star being unlucky.

Ezekiel 30:17

Ver. 17. The young men of Aven and of Phibeseth shall fall by the sword,.... Aven is the same with On, of which Potipherah was priest in Joseph's time and whose daughter he married, Ge 41:45, the same with Heliopolis, or Bethshemesh, the city of the sun, see Jer 43:13,
See Gill on "Jer 43:13"; where was the temple of the sun, and where it was worshipped; and so it is rendered by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions. It is called here "Aven", or "vanity", because of the vain and idolatrous worship here performed. Phibeseth is the Bubastis of Herodotus, and called by other writers Bubastus; hence there was a nome or province in Egypt called the Bubastic nome, mentioned by Ptolemy {c}, and others. In this was a temple built to the honour of Diana, where she was worshipped and Herodotus {d} says, that Bubastis, in the Greek tongue, is Diana; here she was worshipped in the form of a cat; and Stephanus {e} observes, that the Egyptians call a cat Bubastus; and it is also said that dead cats salted were buried in this city, as being sacred: according to Diodorus Siculus {f}, it was built for the sake of Isis; and Hillerus {g} says, that in the Abyssine language it was called "Phy' mly' sith"; that is, the portion of the wife, namely of Isis married to Osiris, by whom this city was built to the honour of her; as appears by the pillar of Isis, on which these words are inscribed,

"for me the city of Bubastia is built; be glad, be glad, O Egypt, which brought me up."

This place is now called Bishbesh, according to Dr. Shaw {h}: now the young men of both these places, though they might exert themselves in the defence of them, yet should fail therein, and fall by the sword of the Chaldeans:

and these cities shall go into captivity; the rest of the inhabitants of the cities of Aven and Pibeseth, that shall not fall by the sword, shall be carried captive into other lands. Joseph Kimchi supplies "women" instead of "cities"; and thinks, that as the males are mentioned before, the females are understood here. The Targum is,

"they that served them shall go into captivity;"

that served the idols worshipped in these cities.

{c} Geograph. l. 4. c. 5. {d} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 59, 138, 156. {e} De Urbibus. {f} Bibliothec l. 1. p. 24. {g} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 672. {h} Travels, p. 306. Ed. 2.

Ezekiel 30:18

Ver. 18. At Tehaphnehes also the day shall be darkened,.... The same with Hanes in Isa 30:4 and Tahapanes in **Jer 2:16** and Tahpanhes, Jer 43:7, it was a royal seat of the kings of Egypt: there was in Solomon's time a queen of Egypt of this name, and perhaps it might be so called from her, 1Ki 11:19. It is generally thought to be the Daphne of Pelusium, it being near that city; though Junius takes it to be a place in another part of Egypt, at a great distance, which Herodotus {i} calls Tahcompso, an island encompassed by the Nile; and by Ptolemy {k} called Metacompso: now at this place the day should be darkened; or should "restrain" {l}, as it may be rendered; that is, its light; it should be a calamitous and mournful time with the inhabitants of it:

when I shall break there the yokes of Egypt; the yokes they put upon the necks of others, who now should be freed from them: or, "the sceptres of Egypt", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; the regalia of their kings, which might lie in this place; it being a royal seat where Pharaoh had a house, as appears from Jer 43:9:

and the pomp of her strength shall cease in her; all that grandeur and magnificence which appeared in the courts of the kings of Egypt in this place:

as for her, a cloud shall cover her; as for this city, a cloud of calamity shall cover it, so as its glory shall not be seen. The Targum is,

"a king with his army shall cover her as a cloud ascends and covers the earth:"

and her daughters shall go into captivity; which may be taken either in a literal sense for the daughters of the inhabitants of this place, which must be a great affliction to their tender parents, to have them forced away by rude soldiers, and carried captive into distant lands; or in a figurative sense, for the villages and the inhabitants of them round about this city; it being usual to represent a city as a mother, and its villages as daughters; and so the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi interpret it.

{i} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 29. {k} Geograph. l. 4. c. 5. {l} Kvx "prohibuit", Montanus; "vitavit", Munster; "cohibuit", Cocceius; "probibebit, arcebit", Vatablus; so Ben Melech.

Ezekiel 30:19

Ver. 19. Thus will I execute judgments in Egypt,.... In the several provinces, and in the several cities of it before mentioned, and in all other places; even the judgments of fire, famine, sword, and captivity:

and they shall know that I am the Lord; God omniscient and omnipotent, by the, judgments executed; and own the same: this more especially they did, when the Gospel was preached among them, and many were converted by it in the times of the apostles.

Ezekiel 30:20

Ver. 20. And it came to pass in the eleventh year,.... Of Zedekiah's reign, and Jehoiachin's captivity; some little time after the prophecy in Eze 19:1, here the prophecies come into their order again, being interrupted by those of a much later date, at the end of the preceding chapter, and the former part of this:

in the first month, in the seventh day of the month; the month Nisan, which answers to part of March, and part of April; the seventh day must be about the twenty ninth of March; but, according to Bishop Usher {m}, it was on the twenty sixth of April, on the third day of the week (Tuesday), in 3416 A.M. or before Christ 588: this was given out three months and two days before Jerusalem was taken:

that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying; as follows:

{m} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3416.

Ezekiel 30:21

Ver. 21. Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt,.... Not Pharaohnecho, king of Egypt, whose army was overthrown at Carchemish by the king of Babylon, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim; when the latter took from the former all that belonged to him between the river of Egypt and the river Euphrates; by which he was so weakened and dispirited, that he could not stir any more out of his own land,
Jer 46:2 and of him Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; but Pharaohhophra, or Apries, who was defeated by the Cyreneans, and saved himself by flight; See Gill on "Eze 29:4":

and, lo, it shall not be bound up to be healed, to put a roller to bind it; a metaphor taken from chirurgeons, who, having set broken bones, put on a bandage or rollers of linen, or such like stuff, to keep them tight; but nothing of this kind should be done; hereby suggesting that Egypt should receive such a blow or wound as would be incurable; see
Jer 46:11:

to make it strong to hold the sword; which it should not be able to do, or to make war any more, at least with success, or to defend itself.

Ezekiel 30:22

Ver. 22. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, behold, I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt,.... The then present king of Egypt, whose name was Hophra or Apries, Jer 44:30:

and I will break his arms, the strong, and that which was broken: both his arms, the sound and the broken one, his whole power, strength, and dominion; meaning that that part of his kingdom which lay between the two rivers of Egypt and Euphrates, that had been taken away by the king of Babylon, should remain so; and the other part of his kingdom should fall a prey to him also:

and I will cause the sword to fall out of his hand; so that he should be so far from being so able to make use of the sword, that he should not be able to hold it; it should drop out of his hand; nor should he be able to take it up again, and make war, either offensive or defensive.

Ezekiel 30:23

Ver. 23. And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations,.... Among the several provinces of Babylon, and other places, where the Chaldeans should carry or send them:

and will disperse them through the countries: the same thing repeated in different words for the confirmation of it.

Ezekiel 30:24

Ver. 24. And I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon,.... Give him a commission to make war; direct his councils; supply him with all necessaries; animate and encourage his soldiers; and give him success in all his enterprises:

and put my sword in his hand; which confirms the above sense, that he should have power and authority from the Lord to attack the king of Egypt, and should gain a victory over him; since it was not his own sword he drew, but the sword of the Lord of hosts; which coming from him, and having his commission, cannot fail of doing execution;

but will break Pharaoh's arms; as before in Eze 30:21:

and he shall groan before him with the groanings of a deadly wounded man; that is, before the king of Babylon; by whom, as an instrument, his arms shall be broken, and his power destroyed; and he be like a man in the agonies of death, just expiring, not able to speak, but groaning out his life under the inexpressible anguish of broken bones, and none to set them.

Ezekiel 30:25

Ver. 25. But I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon,.... Which is repeated for the sake of confirmation:

and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down: as when a man's arms are broken; and he shall not be able to lift them up and defend himself:

and they shall know that I am the Lord; namely, the Egyptians, as in Eze 30:19:

when I shall have put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall stretch it out on the land of Egypt; that is, when he shall have a commission to carry the war into Egypt; and he shall spread desolation over all the land, cutting off the inhabitants of it everywhere, as before described in this chapter.

Ezekiel 30:26

Ver. 26. And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them among the countries,.... Of which they might assure themselves, since the Lord had before spoken it, and here again repeats it:

and they shall know that I am the Lord; whose name alone is Jehovah, and does whatsoever he pleases; sets up kings, and puts them down; strengthens and weakens kingdoms just as seems good in his sight; none having any power but what is given by him, and which he can take away when he thinks fit.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 31:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 31

This chapter contains a confirmation of the preceding prophecy, of the ruin of the king of Egypt, by the example of the king of Assyria, to whom he was like in grandeur and pride, and would be in his fall. The time of the prophecy is observed, Eze 31:1, the prophet is ordered to give the following relation to the king of Egypt, Eze 31:2 in which the king of Assyria is compared to a large and flourishing cedar, for the extent of his dominions, the prosperous state of his empire, and his exaltation above all other princes, which drew upon him their envy Eze 31:3, wherefore because of his pride, his heart being lifted up with these things, Eze 31:10, ruin came upon him; which is described by the instruments and manner of it, and the effects following it; mourning and fear in some, solace and comfort to others, and destruction to his associates, Eze 31:11, wherefore Pharaoh is called upon to consider all this, who was like to him in greatness and pride, and should have the like fate with him; nor could his greatness any more secure him than it did the Assyrian monarch, Eze 31:18.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass in the eleventh year,.... Of Zedekiah's reign, and

Jeconiah's captivity:

in the third month, in the first day of the month: the month Sivan, which began on the twentieth of our May, and answers to part of May, and part of June; this was about seven weeks after the former prophecy, and about five weeks before the destruction of Jerusalem; according to Bishop Usher {n}, this was on the nineteenth of June, on the first day of the week, in 3416 A.M. or before Christ 588:

that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying; as follows:

{n} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3416.

Ezekiel 31:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt,.... To Pharaohhophra, the then reigning king; not to him personally by word of mouth, for the prophet was now in Chaldea; but by delivering out a prophecy concerning him, and which he might have an opportunity of sending to him:

and to his multitude; the multitude of his subjects, of which he boasted, and in whom he trusted:

whom art thou like in thy greatness? look over all the records of time, and into all the empires, kingdoms, and states that have been; draw a comparison between thyself and the greatest potentate that ever was; fancy thyself to be equal to him; this will not secure thee from ruin and destruction; for as they have been humbled, and are fallen, so wilt thou be: pitch for instance on the Assyrian monarch, whose empire has been the most ancient, extensive, and flourishing, and yet now crushed; and as thou art like him in greatness, at least thou thinkest so, so thou art in pride, and wilt be in thine end; to assure of which is the drift of the following account of the king of Assyria.

Ezekiel 31:3

Ver. 3. Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon,.... Here grew the tallest, most stately, broad and flourishing ones. This sense is, that he was as one of them; comparable to one, for his exaltation and dignity; for the largeness of his dominion, the flourishing circumstances of it, and its long duration; that empire having lasted from the times of Nimrod unto a few years of the present time; for this is to be understood, either of the monarchy itself, or of Esarhaddon; or rather of Chynilidanus, or Saracus, the last king of it. The Septuagint, and Arabic versions render it the "cypariss" in Lebanon; but not that, but the cedar, grew there, and which best suits the comparison:

with fair branches; meaning not children, nor nobles, nor subjects; but provinces, many and large, which were subject to this monarch:

and with a shadowing shroud; power, dominion, authority, a mighty army sufficient to protect all that were under his government, and subject to it:

and of an high stature: exalted above all the kings and kingdoms of the earth:

and his top was among the thick boughs; his kingly power, headship, and dominion, was over a multitude of petty princes and states, comparable to the thick boughs and branches of a tree: or, "among the clouds"; as the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it; above the heights of which the Assyrian monarch attempted to ascend, Isa 14:14.

Ezekiel 31:4

Ver. 4. The waters made him great,.... The waters of the river Tigris, near to which stood the city of Nineveh, the metropolis of the Assyrian monarchy; the traffic brought by which river made it rich and great, and the whole empire, and the king of it:

the deep set him up on high, with her rivers running round about his plants; the vast trade by sea, the profits and commodities of which were conveyed through various rivers, which ran about the provinces of the empire, which were as plants in a field; and by which they were enriched, and the whole empire, and the king of it, were raised to a prodigious pitch of wealth and power:

and sent out little rivers to all the trees of the field; so that the common people, comparable to the trees of the field for their number and usefulness, all received profit and advantage hereby: or else by waters and the deep may be meant the multitude of people, as in

Re 17:15, which increased his kingdom, filled his provinces, supplied his colonies, and enlarged his power and riches. The Targum is,

"by the people he was multiplied; by his auxiliaries he became strong; he subjected kings under his government; and his governors he appointed over all the provinces of the earth."

Ezekiel 31:5

Ver. 5. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field,.... His majesty, grandeur, and glory, were advanced above all princes, nobles, and people; all ranks and degrees of men, let them be compared to trees taller or lower:

and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long; the provinces of his empire became more numerous, and were spread far and near, and reached to distant countries:

because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth; either the vast number of people, which were daily increasing, and were sent out to people distant colonies, newly subdued or planted; or because of the great traffic which was carried on in different parts, and the advantages arising from it. The Targum is,

"therefore he was lifted up in his strength above all the kings of the earth, and his army was multiplied, and his auxiliaries prevailed over many people, through his victories"

Ezekiel 31:6

Ver. 6. All the fowls of the heavens made their nests in his boughs,.... People from all parts of the world, under the whole heavens, flocked to his dominions, and settled themselves in one province or another; promising themselves protection, prosperity, and peace under his government:

and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young; even people of a more savage disposition, being either conquered by him, and placed in his provinces; or coming thither of their own accord, took up their residence there, built houses, planted vineyards, married wives, begat children, and settled their families there:

and under his shadow dwelt all great nations; under his protection, care, and government, many large kingdoms and states were; yea, all were either subject to him, or sought to be his friends and allies: this explains the above figurative expressions. The Targum is,

"by his army he subdued all the strong towers; and under his governors he subjected all the provinces of the earth; and in the shadow of his kingdom dwelt all the numerous people."

Ezekiel 31:7

Ver. 7. Thus was he fair in his greatness,.... Amiable, lovely, delightful to look upon in the greatness of his majesty, in his royal glory and dignity:

in the length of his branches; in the extent of his empire, and the provinces of it:

for his root was by great waters; his kingdom was well established, firmly rooted among a multitude of people; from whom he had a large revenue to support his throne and government, and the dignity of it; by tribute, taxes, customs, and presents; and through the large trade and traffic of his subjects in different parts, from whence he received great profit and advantage. The Targum is,

"and he became victorious by his auxiliaries, by the multitude of his mighty ones, so that his terror was upon many people."

Ezekiel 31:8

Ver. 8. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him,.... That is, could not rise so high as this cedar, and overtop him, and obscure his glory; even those that were most excellent, which grew in Eden, near to which Babylon stood, and where a mighty king dwelt. The sense is, that the greatest kings and potentates in the whole world, which is like a garden planted by the Lord, were not equal to the king of Assyria, and much less exceeded him in grandeur, wealth, and power:

the fir trees were not like his boughs: lesser kings and princes, comparable to fir trees for the beauty, regularity, order, and flourishing condition of their kingdoms; yet these were but petty states, and not to be compared even with the provinces of the king of Assyria:

and the chesnut trees were not like his branches; lesser states still: which, though well set, and well spread, and full of people, yet not answerable to some countries that were in the provinces that belonged to the Assyrian empire:

not any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty; no king, prince, or potentate whatever in the whole world, was to be compared to him for royal majesty and greatness. The Targum is,

"mighty kings could not prevail against him, because of the strength of his power, which he had from the Lord; rulers could not stand before his army, and mighty men could not prevail against his auxiliaries, because of the strength of power he had from the Lord; there is none like to him in his strength."

Ezekiel 31:9

Ver. 9. I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches,.... Or provinces, the extensiveness of his dominions: all his power and strength, riches and wealth, grandeur and glory, and the vast dominions he was possessed of, were all from the Lord; as whatever kings have are, though they are too apt to ascribe it to themselves; but all are from him, by whom kings reign:

so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him; all the kings of the earth, though they dared not openly speak against him, or oppose him; yet they inwardly grieved at and secretly grudged his grandeur and majesty, superior to theirs, and wished themselves in his stead; and could gladly have done anything, were it in their power, to eclipse his glory, and bring him lower. This is the case of all that are in any eminence, or are conspicuous to others, or in any exalted station above others, be it what it will; whether they have superior gifts and endowments of mind; or greater riches, and larger possessions; or are in high places of honour, trust, and profit. The Targum is,

"I have made him beautiful by the multitude of his mighty ones; and all the kings of the east trembled before him, because of the strength of his power, which he had from the Lord."

Ezekiel 31:10

Ver. 10. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Having described the greatness of the Assyrian monarch; now follows the account of his fall, and the cause of it, pride:

because thou hast lifted up thyself in height; this is either an address to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who, though he did not rise up so high as the Assyrian monarch in glory and grandeur; yet he lifted up himself, and thought himself superior to any; which reason he must be brought down: or the words are directed to the Assyrian monarch, by a change of person frequent in Scripture; who, though he was raised by the Lord to the height of honour and dignity he was, yet ascribed it to himself:

and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs; the multitude of provinces over which he became head and governor;
See Gill on "Eze 31:3":

and his heart is lifted up in his height; with pride, insolence, and contempt of God and men; of which see the instances in
Isa 10:8.

Ezekiel 31:11

Ver. 11. I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the Heathen,.... Or, into the hand of the mightiest of the nations {o}; the mightiest prince among them. Some understand this of Arbaces the Mede, by whom Sardanapalus had been defeated long before this time: others of Merodachbaladan king Babylon, by whom Esarhaddon the Assyrian monarch was vanquished; or rather Nebuchadnezzar, who was called Nabopolassar; who, in the first year {p} of his reign, in conjunction with Cyaxares king of Media, took Nineveh, the metropolis of the Assyrian monarchy; and this was by the appointment of God, and under the direction of his providence, and through the success he gave to the arms of these princes, according to his own decrees and prophecies. Some render it, "into the hand of the god of the nations" {q}; yet meaning either Cyaxares or Nebuchadnezzar; so called because of their great power and might, and which they had from the Lord:

he shall surely deal with him; or, "in doing he shall do to him" {r}; he shall do with him as he pleases he shall easily manage him, though so powerful; and deal with him according to his deserts; or, as the Targum, he shall take vengeance on him, as he did:

I have driven him out for his wickedness; out of his court and palace; out of his royal city Nineveh; out of his kingdom and dominions; and he shall reside and reign no more there; and all this for his wickedness, pride, and oppression, and other sins: when God strips men of their honour, riches, power, and dominion, it is because of their abuse of them; for some sin, or sins, or wickedness they have been guilty of, both against him and men; and therefore it is but just and righteous in him to dethrone such princes, and drive them from their seats.

{o} Myywg la dyb "in manum fortissimi gentium", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "potentissimi", Piscator. {p} Seder Olam Rabba, p. 69. {q} "In manum dei gentium", Montanus, Starckius; "deo gentium", Castalio. {r} wl hvey wve "faciendo faciet ei", Pagninus, Montanus; "faciendo faciebat ipsi", Starckius.

Ezekiel 31:12

Ver. 12. And strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off,.... Cut off the boughs and branches of this cedar, and cut him down to the ground; that is, utterly destroyed him, his empire and monarchy: these "strangers" were the Medes, who lived in a country distant from Assyria; and "the terrible of the nations", the cruel and merciless Chaldeans, the soldiers of the king of Babylon's army; see Eze 30:11:

and have left him upon the mountains, like a tree cut down there, and its boughs and branches lopped off, which roll down from thence into the valleys, and by the rivers of water signifying his depression from a high and exalted state to a very low one, as follows:

and in all the valley his branches are fallen, and his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; signifying that many provinces and countries under his dominion were broken off, and by force taken away from him; or they broke off and revolted of themselves, and either set up for themselves, and recovered their former power and authority; or gave up themselves to the conqueror. The

Targum is,

"and in all valleys his army fell, and his auxiliaries were scattered by all the rivers of the land:"

and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him: those that joined themselves to his empire, put themselves under his protection, or sought his friendship and alliance, now withdrew themselves from him, and left him alone to shift for himself; as frightened birds and beasts will do, when a tree is cut down and fallen, in the boughs or under the shadow of which they dwelt. The Targum paraphrases it,

"from the shadow of his kingdom."

Ezekiel 31:13

Ver. 13. Upon his ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain,.... Or, "on his fall" {s}; the fall of this tree: and all the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches as when a tree is cut down, and its lopped off branches and boughs lie here and there, either the birds and beasts that before dwelt in it or under it, though for a while frightened away, return unto it; or others come: the birds come and sit upon the boughs, and pick up what they can find on them; and the beasts browse upon the branches: this may signify that even those people who before put themselves under the protection of this monarch, or sought alliance with him, now preyed upon his dominions; or the Medes and Babylonians, the conquerors, seized on the provinces of the empire, and plundered them of their riches, The Targum understands it literally of the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, feeding upon the carcasses of the slain; which is no bad sense of the passage; thus,

"upon the fall of his slain all the fowls of heaven have dwelt, and upon the carcasses of his army all the beasts of the field have rested."

{s} wtlpm le "super prolapse ejus", Cocceius; "super cadivum truncum ejus", Junius & Tremellius.

Ezekiel 31:14

Ver. 14. To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height,.... The end proposed by the Lord in the destruction of the king of Assyria, and the use to be made of it, is this; that the kings of the earth take warning hereby, who rule over a multitude of people, comparable to waters, and who abound in riches and wealth; that they are not elated with pride and vanity, because of their exalted estate, their grandeur, and dignity; and do not behave insolently against God, on whom they depend; nor haughtily and in an oppressive manner towards their own subjects, over whom they rule:

neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs; affect universal monarchy, as he did; and set up themselves over all kingdoms and states, as he had over them, and make all subject to them:

neither their trees stand up in their height, that drink water; that is, kings and potentates, who rule over the people, and are supplied and supported by them in their exalted stations, by the tribute and taxes they pay them and so abound in riches and power, should not trust in the height of honour and power they are raised to, and treat contemptuously God and man; but consider what they are, that they are but men, and are in slippery places, where there is no standing long, and especially when death comes, as follows:

for they are delivered unto death in the nether parts of the earth; they are mortal by nature, as other men; they are appointed to die, and will be delivered into the hands of death, when the time is come, who will not spare them because of their crowns and sceptres; and when they will be laid in the grave, in the lowest parts of the earth, who used to sit upon elevated thrones of state:

in the midst of the children of men, with those that go down to the pit; the grave, where they are upon a level with the poorest and meanest of their subjects. The Targum is,

"that all the kings of the east might not be lifted up with their strength, nor exercise tyranny over the kingdoms; nor all that hold a kingdom lift up themselves in their own strength, for all are delivered unto death, &c."

Ezekiel 31:15

Ver. 15. Thus saith the Lord God, in the day when he went down to the grave,.... The Assyrian monarch; when his monarchy was destroyed, and he ceased to be king, and was stripped of all his majesty, power, and authority, and was as one dead, and laid in the grave, and buried:

I caused a mourning: that is, for him, in the waters, and among the trees, among the people and the kings of the earth, as follows:

I covered the deep for him; with mourning, with thick darkness, which set him up on high Eze 31:4:

and I restrained the floods thereof, and the great waters were stayed; which made him great, Eze 31:4, signifying by all this that the kingdoms of the world, comparable to the sea, of which his monarchy consisted, and all the inhabitants and people of them, comparable to floods and great waters, were affected with the fall of this great monarch, and thrown into consternation by it; not knowing what the event of things would be, stood still, and knew not what course to take; all business was stopped, especially all traffic by sea, and all trade and commerce every where; a stagnation of everything for a while:

and I caused Lebanon to mourn for him; where he was a cedar, Eze 31:3, this may respect the whole empire he was head of, particularly the kingdom of Syria, on the borders of which Lebanon was; and was a part of the Assyrian empire, which must mourn and be concerned at the fall of it:

and all the trees of the field fainted for him: all the kings of the earth that were in alliance with him, or subject to him, trembled for fear that their destruction would be next; or as doubtful and concerned what would be their condition, under the yoke of another. The Targum is,

"tribulation covered the world, and the provinces were forsaken, and many people trembled, and all the kings of the people smote the shoulder because of him."

Ezekiel 31:16

Ver. 16. I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall,.... As, when a large cedar was cut down and fell in Lebanon, the noise of it was heard at a distance; so when this mighty monarch and monarchy fell, the nations of the world, and the kings of them, heard of it far and near, and shook through fear of what would be the consequence, lest they should fall also in like manner:

when I cast him down to hell, or "the grave",

with them that descend into the pit; in common with other men that die, and are buried: it may refer to his subjects and soldiers that perished with him, who were slain by the sword, and were buried with him, and he with them; no distinction being made between them:

and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water; the greatest kings and potentates of the world, the chief and principal of the Assyrian empire; all that ruled over multitudes of people, and partook of their wealth and riches, and were supported in grandeur and dignity; who had been in the state of the dead before this time:

shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth; when they see so mighty a monarch depressed, and brought as low as they, into the same state of meanness and contempt; as it is some kind of solace for persons in distress to have partners with them: this is a poetic expression, representing the dead as rejoicing to see others in the same condition with themselves. The Targum is,

"all the kings of the east, the governors, and those that are rich in substance, all that hold a kingdom, are comforted in the lower part of the earth."

Ezekiel 31:17

Ver. 17. They also went down to hell with him,.... To the grave with him; many of his nobles, princes, generals, soldiers, and subjects:

unto them that be slain with the sword; to be buried and lie with them who had fallen by the sword, as a just punishment for their iniquities:

and they that were his arm; either that leaned on his arm, were dependents upon him; or his ministers, his instruments, whom he employed under him as his deputies, to govern the several provinces that belonged to him; or rather his allies and auxiliaries, who helped and assisted him on occasion:

that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the Heathen; in the midst of the nations subject to the Assyrian empire; such who put themselves under the protection of it, lived comfortably under it, and continued with it to the last; these shared the same fate as that did. The Targum is, "his governors are broken, whom he strengthened in the midst of the kingdom."

Ezekiel 31:18

Ver. 18. To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden?.... Among all the kings and potentates of the earth; pitch on whom you will, say which of them all, even the greatest of them for majesty and glory, for wealth and riches, power and authority, and extent of dominion, you are equal to; name the king of Assyria, if you please, before described, though you are not equal to him; and if you were, this would not secure you from ruin; since, as great as he was, he fell, and so will you: this is said to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and is an application of the preceding parable to him; suggesting, that let him be as high as any ever was, or he could imagine himself to be:

yet shall thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth; the grave, and lie in the same depressed and humble state as the greatest monarchs that ever were on earth do:

thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised; the wicked, as the Targum; the uncircumcised in heart; who belong not to God, or his people, and have no communion with either, but are shut out of the kingdom of heaven, and have their portion with devils and damned spirits:

with them that be slain by the sword; in a way of judgment for their sins:

this is Pharaoh, and all his multitude, saith the Lord God; this account represents Pharaoh, his grandeur, his pride, and his ruin; this shows what will be the end of him, and of his numerous subjects. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "so will be Pharaoh", &c. in like manner will he fall, and all his people with him; for the Lord God has said it, and it shall assuredly come to pass. The Targum is,

"to whom art thou like now in glory and greatness among the kings of the east? and thou shall be brought down with the kings of the east into the lower part of the earth; in the midst of sinners thou shalt sleep, with those that are slain by the sword; this is Pharaoh, and all his multitude, saith the Lord God."

Ezekiel 32:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 32

This chapter contains two more prophecies concerning the destruction of Egypt. The date of the first is given, Eze 22:1, in which the king of Egypt is compared to a large fish taken in a net, and brought to land, and left on it, to be the prey of the fowls of the air and beasts of the field, Eze 32:2, and the ruin of that kingdom is further amplified by the casting of it on the mountains and valleys; by the land flowing with its blood; by the darkness of the heavens; by the vexation in the hearts of many people; and by the amazement of kings and nations, Eze 32:5, the means and instruments of all which will be the king of Babylon and his army, Eze 32:11, the devastation made by him, which would be such as would cause lamentation in other nations, is described, Eze 32:13, then follows the other prophecy, whose date is given, Eze 32:17, the prophet is bid to lament the fall of Egypt, which is represented under the funeral of a corpse, Eze 32:18, saluted by those gone down to the grave before, or were become desolate; which are mentioned, to assure Egypt of its destruction, Eze 32:21 as the Assyrian empire, and all its provinces, Eze 32:22, the Persians and Medes, with all their dominions, Eze 32:24, the posterity of Meshech and Tubal, or the Scythians, those warlike people, Eze 32:26, the Edomites, the princes of the north, and all the Zidonians, Eze 32:29 which would be a comfort, though a poor one to the king of Egypt and his subjects, to have such company with them, Eze 32:31.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass in the twelfth year,.... Of Jeconiah's captivity, above a year and a half after the taking of Jerusalem; the Syriac version reads in the eleventh year:

in the twelfth month, in the first day of the month; the month Adar, which answers to part of our February, and part of March; the Septuagint version reads it the tenth month: according to Bishop Usher {t}, this was on the twenty second of March, on the fourth day of the week (Wednesday), 3417 A.M.or 587 years before Christ:

that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying; as follows:

{t} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3417.

Ezekiel 32:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt,.... Pharaohhophra, or Apries; say a funeral dirge for him; this is ordered, not out of honour and respect to him, or in compassion for his misery and ruin, but to assure him of it:

and say unto him, thou art like a young lion of the nations; for strength and fierceness, for cruelty and tyranny, which he exercised, not in one nation only, but in many; a lively emblem of the beast of Rome, spiritually called Egypt and Sodom, compared to a leopard, bear, and lion, Re 11:8:

and thou art as a whale in the seas; or rather "like a crocodile" {u}, which was common in the rivers of Egypt, but not the whale; which also has not scales, nor does it go upon land, nor is it taken in a net; all which is said of this creature here, and in Eze 29:3 and to the crocodile there is an allusion in the name of Pharaoh, in the Arabic language, as Noldius from Camius observes {w}; see Eze 29:3:

and thou camest forth with thy rivers; or, "by thy rivers" {x}; as the crocodile in the river Nile, by the arms of it, or canals made out of it, sometimes went out from thence to other parts: or, "out of thy rivers" {y} upon the land, as the crocodile does; so the king of Egypt went forth with his armies out of his own land, into other countries, to disturb them, as follows: or rather, "camest forth in thy rivers" {z}; as the crocodile puts forth its head out of the water for respiration:

and thou troublest the waters with thy feet, and foulest their rivers; just as the feet of men or beasts, in shallow waters, raise up the mud or clay at the bottom, and so foul them; this best agrees with the crocodile, which has feet; Grotius thinks, for this reason, the sea horse is intended; the meaning is, that Pharaoh with his soldiers entered other nations, made war upon them, and disturbed their peace and tranquillity. The Targum is,

"thou hast been strong among the people, as a whale in the seas, thou hast fought with thine army; and thou hast moved the people with thine auxiliaries, and thou hast wasted their provinces."

{u} Myntk "similis es crocodile", Noldius, Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 375. {w}

Ibid. No. 1306. {x} Kytwrhnb "per flumina tua", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Polanus. {y} "Ex fluminibus tuis", Starckius. {z} "In fluviis tuis", V. L. Piscator; "in fluminibus tuis", Cocceius

Ezekiel 32:3

Ver. 3. Thus saith the Lord God,.... The Lord God Almighty, who is able to manage this fierce and turbulent creature, this mighty monarch and disturber of the nations:

I will therefore spread out my net over thee with a company of many people; meaning the Chaldean army, which the Lord would instigate, and by his providence bring against the king of Egypt, and surround him as fishes in a net, and take him and his people; see Eze 12:13:

and they shall bring thee up in my net; out of his rivers, out of his fortresses, out of his own land, and carry him captive, or destroy him.

Ezekiel 32:4

Ver. 4. Then will I leave thee upon the land,.... Like a fish that is drawn out of the waters with a net or hook, and laid on dry land, and left gasping and expiring, where it cannot long live:

I will cast thee forth on the open field; the same in different words, signifying that his army should fall in battle by the sword of the Cyreneans, or Chaldeans, or both, and be left on the surface of the earth unburied:

and will cause all the fowls of the heavens to remain upon thee, and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee; which may be understood either literally of the fowls of the air, that should light upon the slain carcasses, and rest on them till they had satisfied themselves with their flesh; and of the beasts of the field that should gather about them from all parts, and fill themselves with them; see Re 19:17 or figuratively of the soldiers of the enemy's army, that should plunder them, and enrich themselves with the spoil.

Ezekiel 32:5

Ver. 5. And I will lay thy flesh upon the mountains,.... The remainder of it, left by the birds and beasts of prey, and who might carry it thither; or it intends such of the Egyptians who should flee to the mountains for safety, but should fall by the hands of the enemy there. So the Targum,

"and I will give the flesh of thy slain upon the mountains."

And fill the valleys with thy height; his huge army, and with which he prided and lifted up himself, and thought himself safe in; which should fall in such great numbers as to cover the plains and valleys where the battle was fought. Jarchi observes, that the word for "height" has with some the signification of "worms"; and so the Syriac version renders it, "and the valleys shall be filled with thy worms"; bred in the carcasses of the slain: and so the Vulgate Latin version, "with corrupt matter"; such as issues out of putrefied wounds. The Targum very rightly paraphrases it,

"the valleys shall be filled with the carcasses of thine army."

Ezekiel 32:6

Ver. 6. And I will also water with thy blood the land wherewith thou swimmest,.... Where he resided, over which he ruled; alluding to his being compared to a fish, a whale, or a crocodile; and which land abounded with all good things, and he with them; instead of being watered with the waters of the Nile, by which it became fruitful, it should now be flooded with the blood of his army:

even to the mountains; an hyperbolical expression, signifying the vast quantity of blood that should be shed; see the like in Re 14:20:

and the rivers shall be full of them; of the carcasses of his army, and of the blood of them; they should lie about everywhere, on mountains and valleys, on the land and in the rivers; and which should now be turned into blood, as the rivers of Egypt of old were; and which figure is used to express the destruction of the antichristian states; see **Ex 7:20**.

Ezekiel 32:7

Ver. 7. And when I shall put thee out,.... As a candle is put out, or some great light or blazing torch is extinguished; such was the king of Egypt in his splendour and glory; but now should be like a lamp put out in obscure darkness, and all his brightness and glory removed from him, Job 18:5:

I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; with the smoke that should arise at the extinguishing of this lamp; or they should be covered with mourning, or clad in black, at the destruction of this monarch and his monarchy:

I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light; all which figures are sometimes made use of to denote the dissolution of kingdoms and states: the "heaven" being an emblem of a kingdom itself; the "sun" of an emperor or king, or kingly power; the "moon" of the queen, or of the priesthood; the "stars" of nobles, princes, counsellors, and such like eminent persons, useful in government; who being destroyed or removed, the light and glory, the prosperity and happiness of a kingdom, are gone; see Isa 13:10. The Targum is,

"tribulation shall cover thee when I shall extinguish the splendour of the glory of thy kingdom from heaven; and the people of thine army shall be lessened, who are many as the stars; a king with his army shall cover thee as a cloud that ascends and covers the sun, and as the moon, whose light does not shine in the day."

Ezekiel 32:8

Ver. 8. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee,.... Or, "all the lights of the light" {a}; the rest of the luminaries of heaven; the other five planets, as Kimchi, besides the sun and moon:

and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God; as there must needs be, the sun, moon, and stars, and all the lights of heaven, being darkened above: there seems to be an allusion to the thick darkness that was formerly over the land of Egypt; and this is a figure and representation of that darkness that shall be in the kingdom of the beast, or spiritual Egypt, yet to come; see Ex 10:21. The Targum is, "tribulation as darkness shall cover thy land."

{a} rwa yrwam lk "omnia luminaria lucis", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius.

Ezekiel 32:9

Ver. 9. I will also vex the hearts of many people,.... With anger and grief, with fear and dread, with consternation and amazement:

when I shall bring thy destruction among the nations; or, "thy breach" {b}; the news of it, the tidings of their destruction; which by one means or another should come to their ears, and fill them with concern and great anxiety of mind, so rich and powerful a kingdom being subdued, and the king of Babylon made so great thereby, and fearing they fall a prey unto him also. The Targum renders it,

"when I shall bring the broken of thy war;"

that is, the soldiers that should be wounded in battle, their limbs broke, and they taken captive, and brought among the nations, dismal spectacles to look at; and which should be brought

into countries, which thou hast not known; at a distance from Egypt, and which had no commerce nor communication with them, nor were their friends and allies; yet as their destruction would reach their ears, so it would affect their hearts, and fill them with vexation and grief; not so much on account of Egypt, as the growing power of Nebuchadnezzar, and the danger they were in of falling into his hands.

{b} Krbv "fractionem tuam", Piscator, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 32:10

Ver. 10. Yea, I will make many people amazed at thee,.... That so potent a state, and such a flourishing kingdom, should at once be so easily subdued and conquered: and their kings shall be horribly afraid for thee; because of her destruction, lest their turn should be next; so the kings of the earth will be afraid when God's judgments are executed on mystical Egypt; see Re 18:9:

when I shall brandish my sword before them; the sword of the king of Babylon after mentioned, called the Lord's, because it was by his appointment and permission, and came by the direction of his providence, and was succeeded by his power: this glittering sword being brandished over Egypt, in the sight of the nations round about, was terrible to them; dreading that it would not be put up until it was sheathed in them, or they felt the effects of it:, or, "when I shall cause it to fly before them" {c}; in their sight, and upon the borders of their countries; expressive of the swiftness of its motion, the sudden destruction it brought on Egypt, and its nearness to them. The Targum is,

"when I shall bring upon thee those that kill with the sword."

And they shall tremble at every moment; from moment to moment, or continually; they shall never be free from fear:

every man for his own life, in the day of thy fall; not kings for their subjects, or subjects for their kings, but every man for himself; expecting every moment that the sword which flew and ravaged through Egypt, and now hovered over them, would be instantly plunged in them.

{c} wppweb "cum volare fecero", Munster, Tigurine version. Abendaus mentions such a sense of the word.

Ezekiel 32:11

Ver. 11. For thus saith the Lord God, the sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee. Upon Pharaoh and his kingdom; having a commission and a direction from the Lord, and which would be the instrument of the destruction before threatened. The Targum is,

"those that slay with the sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon or against thee;"

his army, sword in hand.

Ezekiel 32:12

Ver. 12. By the swords of the mighty will I cause thy multitude to fall,.... Pharaoh's numerous subjects; or his army, as the Targum; the vast number of soldiers in it, whose carcasses should fall in battle by the sword of the Chaldeans, the mighty men of Nebuchadnezzar's army:

the terrible of the nations all of them; which army consisted of men of several nations, and those the most terrible, fierce, and cruel, by whose swords this slaughter should be made:

and they shall spoil the pomp of Egypt; cut off the king, the princes of the blood, the nobility and gentry, the prime of the nation; plunder the king's palace of all the wealth and riches in it, the treasury of the kingdom; destroy the metropolis of it; demolish its cities and fortified places, and take away all its strength and glory:

and all the multitude thereof shall be destroyed: all the people of the land, high and low, rich and poor; the destruction shall be general, all ranks and degrees of men shall share in it.

Ezekiel 32:13

Ver. 13. I will destroy also all the beasts thereof from beside the great waters,.... Which used to graze beside the river Nile, and the canal, of it, in the plains and meadows, valley, and hills, which these ran by; meaning both horses, which Egypt abounded with, and would be good booty for the Chaldeans, and oxen and sheep, which they would kill for present use, or drive away for future service:

neither shall the foot of man trouble them any more, nor the hoofs of beasts trouble them; there should so few remain of men and beasts, that the waters of the rivers would not be disturbed, either by men passing over them, and doing any business upon them, or by beasts drinking at them.

Ezekiel 32:14

Ver. 14. Then will l make their waters deep,.... Either the water, of Egypt literally, the waters of the Nile: no canals being cut from it, to carry the water to the several parts of the land, the land being depopulated, and no business done: or, figuratively, other nations, compared to waters for their numbers, who before had been disturbed by the Egyptians; but now they being destroyed, these would be at ease, like troubled waters, which subside, and:

become deep and clear, when there is none to trouble them:

and cause their, rivers to run like oil, saith the Lord God; very slowly, as if, they were mourning the unhappy condition of the land; or smoothly, clearly, undisturbed, as before. The Targum is,

"there will I cause the people to rest, and I will lead their kings quietly, saith the Lord God."

Ezekiel 32:15

Ver. 15. When I shall make the land of Egypt desolate,.... The cities being demolished, the inhabitants destroyed with the sword, or carried captive:

and the country shall be destitute of that whereof it was full; men and cattle, corn and other fruits of the earth, wealth and riches, pomp and grandeur:

when I shall smite all them that dwell therein; with the sword of the Chaldeans:

then shall they know that I am the Lord for God is known in the perfections of his nature, omnipotence, omniscience, holiness, justice, &c. by the judgments he executes; for this is not to be understood of a spiritual knowledge of him, but of a terrible conviction of the truth of his being and attributes, by the awful dispensations of his providence.

Ezekiel 32:16

Ver. 16. This is the lamentation with which they shall lament her,.... The Egyptians themselves, or rather they that are after mentioned. The Targum is,

"the prophet said, a lamentation is this prophecy, and it shall be for a lamentation;"

he was bid at the beginning of it to take up a lamentation, and now at the end of it he pronounces it to be one, and that it should be sung as such:

the daughters of the nations shall lament for her; either literally understood, it being the business and custom of women to say or sing the funeral dirge, or the lamentation at the interment of the deceased; or figuratively, the inhabitants of other nations. So Ben Melech and the Targum,

"the villages of the people shall lament her";

that is, the inhabitants of them, who were in alliance with Egypt, and under its protection:

they shall lament for her, even for Egypt, and for all her multitude; for the desolation of the land, and for the vast numbers of people that should be slain with the sword, or carried captive:

saith the Lord God; which is added for the confirmation of it; for what he has spoken shall be done.

Ezekiel 32:17

Ver. 17. It came to pass also the twelfth year,.... Another prophecy of the like kind was delivered out the same year as before:

in the fifteenth day of the month; of the twelfth month, the month Adar, which is not here expressed, because mentioned before, Eze 32:1, it was about a fortnight after the other prophecy. The Septuagint and Arabic versions read it,

"it came to pass in the twelfth year, the first month, the fifteenth day of the month;"

according to which this prophecy was before the other, which is not to be supposed.

Ezekiel 32:18

Ver. 18. Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt,.... Sing a funeral song or dirge, or compose one, to be sung by the mourning women, on account of the vast numbers of the inhabitants of Egypt that shall be slain; for the prophet himself would not mourn, but rejoice, on this occasion; but this is said to show the certainty of the destruction, and the lamentation that would be made on that account:

and cast them down, even her and the daughters of the famous nations; Egypt, and all those countries, and the inhabitants of them, that were in alliance and friendship with her; that is, declare by prophecy that they shall be cast down and destroyed, or be brought down from the height of grandeur and prosperity in which they now were:

unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down to the pit; not unto stately sepulchres built on high, such as were made for the kings of Egypt; but unto common pits or graves, dug in the lower parts of the earth, where the meaner and common sort of people were buried; there should be no distinction between them and others, they should have one common burial. The Targum is,

"son of man, prophesy concerning the multitude of Egypt, and break her, even her, and the villages of the mighty people; prophesy that they shall be delivered unto the lowest earth, with those that go down to the pit of the house of perdition."

Ezekiel 32:19

Ver. 19. Whom dost thou pass in beauty?.... This question the prophet is bid to put to Egypt; what nation is there, or has been, that thou excellest in wisdom, in riches, or in strength, in the multitude of subjects, or extent of dominions, that thou thinkest thyself secure from destruction? look over other kingdoms and states mightier than thou, or at least equal to thee, and see how they are brought to ruin, and expect that this will quickly be thy case:

go down, and be thou laid with the uncircumcised; go down to the grave, and take thy place, and lie there among the wicked and most profligate of mankind, and such as might be most despised by the Egyptians, since they used circumcision. The Targum is,

"go down and sleep with sinners."

Ezekiel 32:20

Ver. 20. They shall fall in the midst of them that are slain by the sword,.... The Egyptians shall fall in battle by the sword of the Chaldeans:

she is delivered to the sword; Egypt is given to the sword, to perish by it, for her sins, according to the just appointment of God:

draw her and all her multitudes; to the place of burial; not in pomp and splendour, as great persons are drawn in hearses; but in great disgrace, as carcasses are dragged unto a common pit or grave, and cast into it: this is said to the Chaldeans, who had a commission from the Lord to slay Egypt, and to bury her, and all her people.

Ezekiel 32:21

Ver. 21. The strong among the mighty shall speak to him,.... The strongest of them, such who have excelled others in strength and courage, famous for military exploits, who have been generals of armies, great warriors, and conquerors; and yet with all their might and strength could not withstand death, but were subdued by it, and brought down to the grave; these are, by a poetical figure, represented as meeting Pharaoh king of Egypt, when he came to his grave, saluting and welcoming him to the state of the dead in which they were; taking a sort of comfort in it, and insulting him as being as weak as they; see
Isa 14:9, which they should do

out of the midst of hell, or the grave, "Hades", the state of the dead:

with them that help him; the associates, allies, and friends of Pharaoh, his auxiliaries that fell with him, and were brought to the grave at the same time with him; these should be greeted, saluted, and welcomed in like manner:

they are gone down; to the grave; those mighty ones that are represented as speaking, and the Egyptians and their helpers who are spoken to:

they lie uncircumcised; among them that are so, Eze 32:19:

slain by the sword; of their enemies, who got the victory over them.

Ezekiel 32:22

Ver. 22. Ashur is there, and all her company,.... In the state of the dead, or in a most desolate and ruinous condition; the great Assyrian monarchy, the kings of it, the princes, nobles, generals, soldiers, and the vast number of subjects in all the dominions of it; all his army, as the Targum; this, with what follows, shows who the mighty are, that should meet and address the king of Egypt at his funeral:

his graves are about him; either the graves of Pharaoh and his multitude are round about the graves of the Assyrian monarch and his subjects, as Kimchi; or rather the graves of his subjects and soldiers are round about him: it seems to represent the king of Assyria as having a more stately monument, and the graves of his people as lesser ones round about him, but all in the same condition:

all of them slain, fallen by the sword of their enemies, the Medes and the Babylonians, by whom the Assyrian monarchy was destroyed.

Ezekiel 32:23

Ver. 23. Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit,.... Or vault, where lay the king of Assyria, and those who fell by the sword with him, who are represented as lying in graves all around him; the nearest to him those who were in the highest posts, and most valiant and courageous, and next the common soldiers, as follows:

and her company is round about her grave not Pharaoh's company round about the grave of the Assyrian monarch; but the company of the king of Assyria, or his army, as the Targum, round about grave; or lying about in the ruins of his kingdom:

all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living; even they who now are in the state of the dead, and can no more disturb and distress any, while they were alive, or in the world, struck terror in all neighbouring states and kingdoms; threatening destruction to them, and obliging them to submit to their tyranny and exactions. Jarchi interprets this of the land of Israel; and the Jewish writers commonly understand by the land of the living the land of Canaan wherever they meet with it; because here men worshipped the living God, and lived before him; and the inhabitants of this land were often terrified by the king of Assyria. So the Targum,

"because they ruled in the land of Israel."

Ezekiel 32:24

Ver. 24. There is Elam and all her multitude round about her grave,.... The kingdom of the Medes and Persians lying in ruin, and the potent kings thereof in the state of the dead; with their army, as the Arabic version, slain and destroyed, and placed round about the grave of the king of Persia; for of him rather it is to be understood than of the king of Assyria, or of Egypt, as some:

all of them slain, fallen by the sword; either of the Scythians in the reign of Cyaxares; or of Nebuchadnezzar a few years before this, in the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah; see Jer 49:34:

which are gone down uncircumcised into the nether parts of the earth; unholy persons, profane sinners, destitute of the grace of God; who were gone down into the grave, and even into hell and everlasting destruction, as their sins deserved:

which caused their terror in the land of the living; made a great noise in the world, and struck a panic in neighbouring nations, invaded and conquered by them; this they did while living, but now, being in the state of the dead, nothing was to be feared from them: yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit; were obliged to submit to death, and a shameful one, by the hands of their conquerors, and to be laid with ignominy in the grave with others, without any mark of distinction; all being upon a level, cast into the same pit of destruction, and into the lower parts of it; though their king might have a magnificent sepulchre erected for him, as follows:

Ezekiel 32:25

Ver. 25. They have set her bed in the midst of the slain, with all her multitude,.... The grave is called a bed, Isa 57:2, whereon is put the sepulchral chest or coffin, in which the body is laid, and rests as on a bed. It may here design a stately sepulchre or coffin in it, with a magnificent monument over it for the king of Elam, with his army, and the generals of it slain in battle, placed all around him, in less stately beds, coffins, and graves, as explained in the next clause:

her graves are round about him; the king of Persia and his grave, surrounded with the graves of his soldiers and officers:

all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword: though their terror was caused in the land of the living, yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit; which is repeated for the confirmation of it:

he is put in the midst of them that be slain; the king of Elam or Persia; he is laid among the slain, having fallen with them, and his grave is placed in the midst of them.

Ezekiel 32:26

Ver. 26. There is Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude,.... The Scythians, a powerful and warlike people; and all their armies, as the Targum; with their leaders, generals, and commanders, as lying in their graves next to the Assyrians and Elamites, or

her graves are round about him; not the king of Egypt, nor the king of Assyria, nor the king of Persia; but the chief commander of the Scythians, called the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, Eze 38:2:

all of them slain by the sword; of Halyattes, king of Lydia, and Cyaxares, king of Media, who was assisted by the former in subduing the Scythians:

though they caused their terror in the land of the living; as they did in Media, and other countries, and especially in some parts of Asia.

Ezekiel 32:27

Ver. 27. And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised,.... That is, shall not lie in such state, or be buried with such pomp and magnificence, and have such sepulchral monuments erected to their memory, as other heroes among the Heathens have had; such as the mighty kings of Assyria and Persia before mentioned:

which are gone down to hell, or "the grave",

with their weapons of war; which were never taken from them, and which they held in their hands to the last, being never conquered, and died at last a natural death, and not by the sword; or which were carried in state before their hearse at the time of interment, as is the custom to this day so to do at the funeral of great warriors, generals, and officers:

and they have laid their swords under their heads; as a sign and token, as Jarchi says, that the sword did not rule over them, that they did not fall by it; either their statues and sepulchral monuments were adorned with these, and other instruments of war, as was the grave of Misenus by Aeneas {d}; and as is still the custom where the heads of such mighty ones are laid, to engrave them on them: or, literally, their swords and other weapons of war were put in their graves under their heads; as it was usual, in former times, in some places to put swords, shields, and other armour, in the graves of military men, as were in the grave of Theseus, on the bier of Alexander the great, and others, as reported by Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, and Sophocles {e}: now the Scythians were not buried: after this grand and pompous manner:

but their iniquities shall be upon their bones; or the punishment of their sin should be, that their bones should lie unburied and scattered about, or be dug up and broke to pieces, and treated with inhumanity and contempt, as a just reward for their savageness, and cruelty:

though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living: not only the terror of the common people, but even of the most powerful kings and mighty warriors.

{d} Vid. Virgil. Aeneid. l. 6. & Seneca, l. 4. controvers. 4. {e} Vid. Lydium de Re Militari, l. 6. c. 7. p. 250, 251. & Kirchman, de Funer. Roman. l. 3. c. 18.

Ezekiel 32:28

Ver. 28. Yea, thou shalt be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised,.... Kimchi, and so others, think this is said to Pharaoh king of Egypt; but rather it respects the prince of the Scythians, who should fall into the hands of Heathens, and be destroyed by them:

and shalt lie with them that are slain with the sword; be buried with them, or in like manner as they are; and not as mighty warriors, who die a natural death in their own country, and are buried in a stately and magnificent manner; but like those that fall by the sword of the enemy, and are thrown into one common pit.

Ezekiel 32:29

Ver. 29. There is Edom, her kings, and all her princes,.... In the next place, near the graves of the above mentioned, and in the same ruinous and desolate condition, lie the famous kingdom of Idumea, and the several kings and dukes of it, from the first setting of it up, to its last destruction prophesied of, Eze 25:12, of many of which mention is made, Ge 36:15:

which with their might are laid by them that are slain with the sword; who, notwithstanding their powerful armies, and prowess and skill in war, yet are conquered, and destroyed, and laid in graves in like manner as all others slain by the, sword of the enemy are:

they shall lie with the uncircumcised; for though they themselves were circumcised, being the descendants of Esau the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, on whose seed circumcision was enjoined; yet this did not secure them from a violent death, and an ignominious burial; they being uncircumcised in heart, wicked and ungodly men, and so should be joined in their death and burial with such:

and with them that go down to the pit; the common receptacle of the slain.

Ezekiel 32:30

Ver. 30. There be the princes of the north,..... The kings of Babylon, according to Kimchi, which lay north of Judea; or the princes of Syria, Damascus, and Tyre, especially the latter, which commonly goes along with Zidon, being near it, as follows:

and all the Zidonians. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "and all the hunters"; but wrongly; as also the Septuagint and Arabic versions, which read the princes or soldiers of Assyria. The Zidonians or inhabitants of Zidon are meant as the Targum; a famous maritime city, as Tyre also was, in Phoenicia:

which are gone down with the slain; into the grave, being conquered and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar; see Eze 28:21:

with their terror they are ashamed of their might, the number and strength of their armies, the valour and courage of their soldiers, and the fortifications of their cities, in which they trusted, and of which they boasted; but yet could not preserve them from ruin:

and they lie uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword; in common with other profane and wicked persons that have fallen by the sword as they have done:

and bear their shame with them that go down to the pit;
See Gill on "Eze 32:24".

Ezekiel 32:31

Ver. 31. Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over his multitude,.... That is, when Pharaoh is brought to the grave, and into the state of the dead, he shall look about him, and see who lie by him; and he shall behold the above mentioned kings of Assyria, Persia, Idumea, and the princes of Tyre and Zidon, and all their mighty armies, generals and soldiers, in the same condition with himself; and this shall be some solace to him in his own death, and at the loss of so great a kingdom, such numerous subjects, and a vast army, that others as rich, as powerful as himself, lie in the same low and miserable condition; though such comfort as this must be poor comfort indeed! and yet this is all the comfort wicked men have in hell, that they have company with them there:

even Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword. Pharaohhophra and his numerous army slain by the sword of the king of Babylon. This explains who is meant by Pharaoh and his multitude: and that this would certainly be his case it is added,

saith the Lord God; he hath spoken it, and it shall be done; whose words are continued in the next verse.

Ezekiel 32:32

Ver. 32. For I have caused my terror in the land of the living,.... Or, "his terror" {f}; there is a double reading. The Keri or marginal reading, which we follow has it "my terror" {g}; but the Cetib or writing is his terror; and so read the Septuagint. Syriac, and Arabic versions; both may be taken, and the sense be, I have caused or suffered him, Pharaoh king of Egypt, to be a terror to the nations about him, particularly to the land of Israel, which the Targum expressly mentions as the land of the living; and now I will terrify him who has terrified others:

and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircumcised with those that are slain with the sword; shall have a common burial with other Heathen nations; even with such, who, in a way of judgment, have perished by the sword of their victorious enemies, as he will:

even Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord God; the king of Egypt, his subjects, and his soldiers, as numerous as they are; and thus ends this doleful ditty, and funeral dirge or lamentation, composed, taken up, and sung for Pharaoh as ordered, thereby to assure him of his certain destruction.

{f} wtytx "terrorem ejus", Grotius; "consternationem ejus", Starckius. {g} ytytx "terrorem meum", Pagninus, Munster, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Polanus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 33:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 33

This chapter treats of the prophet's duty, and the people's sins; contains a vindication of the justice of God; a threatening of destruction to those who remained in the land after the taking of the city; and a detection of the hypocrisy of the prophet's hearers. The duty of a watchman in general is declared, Eze 33:1, an application of this to the prophet, Eze 33:7: the sum of whose business is to warn the wicked man of his wickedness; and the consequence of doing, or not doing it, is expressed, Eze 33:8, an objection of the people, and the prophet's answer to it, Eze 33:10, who is bid to acquaint them, that a righteous man trusting to his righteousness, and sinning, should not live; and that a sinner repenting of his sins should not die, Eze 33:12, the people's charge of inequality in the ways of God is retorted upon them, and removed from the Lord, and proved against them, Eze 33:17, then follows a prophecy, delivered out after the news was brought of the taking of the city, threatening with ruin those that remained in the land, confident of safety, and that for their sins, which are particularly enumerated, Eze 33:21, and the chapter is closed with a discovery of the hypocrisy of those that attended the prophet's ministry, Eze 33:30.

Ver. 1. Again the word of the Lord came unto me,.... After the delivery of various prophecies concerning the ruin of other nations, the Ammonites, Tyrians, and Egyptians, a fresh prophecy comes from the Lord concerning the Jews:

saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 33:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, speak to the children of thy people,.... The Jews, of whom the prophet was; and designs those who were with him in the captivity; and who, having behaved so ill, the Lord will not own them for his people, but calls them the prophet's people, and the children of them:

and say unto them, when I bring the sword upon a land; a foreign enemy with an army to invade it, or any other judgment; for there is no public calamity whatever that comes upon a people, but what is by the order, direction, or permission of the Lord. The Targum is,

"those that kill with the sword;"

an army of men that enter into a land sword in hand, with an intent to conquer and destroy: if the people of the land take a man of their coasts: that lives upon their borders, and so is acquainted with all the places where it is most likely an enemy should enter; or a man out of the midst of them, as the Targum; so this phrase sometimes signifies, Ge 47:2, one of their own people, who might be thought to have their good and safety at heart, and might be trusted:

and set him for their watchman: on some place of eminence; on the walls, or in a tower of a frontier town, from whence he might descry the enemy coming at a distance.

Ezekiel 33:3

Ver. 3. If what he seeth the sword come upon the land,.... Or those that kill with the sword, as the Targum; as soon as he observes a body of armed men, more or less, marching towards the borders of the land with a manifest intention to enter and invade it:

he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; warn the people by blowing the trumpet, the signal agreed on; by which they would understand that an enemy was at hand, or danger near; or warn them by word of mouth, as well as by the trumpet, where he could do it, and when it was necessary.

Ezekiel 33:4

Ver. 4. Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh no warning,.... Does not mind the notice given him; is incredulous of the danger he is in, or negligent of providing for his safety; fancies it is an alarm, and nothing else; and imagines there is no real danger, or what is a mere trifle; or, that the enemy is at a great distance, and it is time enough to provide for his defence:

if the sword come and take him away; those that kill with the sword, as the Targum, come suddenly on him, and take away his life, or carry him captive: his blood shall be upon his own head; the guilt of his slaughter, as the Targum; the sin will be his own; it must be brought in wilful murder; no blame can be laid upon any but himself; the watchman will be clear.

Ezekiel 33:5

Ver. 5. He heard the sound of the trumpet,.... The alarm of the enemy being at hand, and so was inexcusable:

and took not warning; which that gave him:

his blood shall be upon him; the fault shall be imputed to himself, and not another; and he must bear it himself, and answer for it, and not the watchman:

but he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul; who, hearing the sound of the trumpet, prepares for his own defence, and provides for his safety, he shall save his life, and not fall into the enemies' hands.

Ezekiel 33:6

Ver. 6. But if the watchman see the sword come,.... Or those that kill with the sword, as the Targum is; so far doing the duty of his office as to be in the watchtower, and not asleep:

and yet blow not the trumpet: to give the people notice of the enemy, and of their danger:

and the people be not warned; but in the utmost security, not apprehending themselves to be in any danger at all:

if the sword come and take any person from among them; even though but a single person:

he is taken away in his iniquity: having had no time to have it set before him, and to be convinced, and to repent of it, and seek for pardoning mercy for it; it is a dreadful thing thus to be taken out of the world, and snatched into hell at once:

but his blood will I require at the watchman's hands; he shall be punished for not doing his duty, for not giving the due warning of danger, on which account the man was surprised with the enemy, and taken away unawares; and therefore his death shall be laid to the watchman, and he must be answerable for it.

Ezekiel 33:7

Ver. 7. So thou, O son of man,.... Here begins the application of the parable to the prophet himself, describing his office and his duty:

I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; which is repeated from **Eze 3:17**,
See Gill on "Eze 3:17". The Targum is,

"I have appointed thee a teacher;"

a spiritual watchman; so pastors, teachers, ministers of the Gospel, are watchmen, **2Ti 4:5**:

therefore thou shalt hear the word from my mouth, and warn them from me.

The Targum is,

"thou shalt receive the word from my Word, and warn them from sinning before me."

Ezekiel 33:8

Ver. 8. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man,.... Order the prophet to say so to him, and as follows; See Gill on "Eze 3:18".

Ezekiel 33:9

Ver. 9. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way,....
See Gill on "Eze 3:19".

Ezekiel 33:10

Ver. 10. Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel,.... Such of them as were with him in the captivity: thus ye speak, saying; reasoning and arguing within and among themselves; which the Lord heard, and made known to the prophet, who is bid to repeat it to them in order to give an answer:

if our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them; as the prophet said they should, Eze 24:23, with which he had concluded his prophecies to them; and now they take it up, and argue against themselves, and against him; if our sins and transgressions are laid upon us, and we must answer for them; if the guilt of them is charged on us, and they are unexpiated and unatoned for; and the punishment of them is, or will be, inflicted on us, and we do, and must pine away, and be consumed in them, and by them:

how should we then live? as thou promisest us upon repentance; it is all over with us; there is no hope for us; what signify our repentance, or thy promises of life unto us? these things can never hang together, that we should live, and yet pine away in our sins; so that these are the words of persons both despairing, and making the prophet to say things opposite and contradictory, and which would not admit of a reconciliation; see Eze 37:11.

Ezekiel 33:11

Ver. 11. Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord,.... The following is the answer returned from the Lord by the prophet to their above complaint and reasoning; to which is premised the oath of God, showing the certainty, reality, and sincerity of what is said, which might be depended on as true:

I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, &c.
See Gill on "Eze 18:23",
See Gill on "Eze 18:31",
See Gill on "Eze 18:32":

Ezekiel 33:12

Ver. 12. Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people,.... See Gill on "Eze 33:2". The purport of what the prophet is bid to say in this and some following verses is, that the righteousness of a man that trusts in it, he sinning and not repenting, shall not save him; and that the wickedness of a repenting sinner shall not damn him:

the righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; this must be understood, not of a truly righteous man, or of the righteousness of Christ, by which such an one is made so; for that righteousness does deliver those to whom it is imputed, from sin and the condemnation of it, even in the day of his transgression, which is every day of his life; for there is not a just man that does good, and sinneth not; and in the day when his sin is shown him, and he is convinced of it, this removes the guilt of it; and in the day it will be sought for, or he may be charged with it, and when the sins of others will be brought to an account, the righteousness by which he is justified will deliver him from avenging justice; from the curse of the law; from the wrath of God; from eternal death, and everlasting damnation; but this is to be interpreted of one that is not truly righteous, and of a man's own righteousness; and which he trusts to, as is afterwards expressed; and may and does turn from: this can never deliver a man in the day of his transgression from the guilt and condemnation of it; for a man's own righteousness is but what he ought to do; and, was it ever so perfect, yet, should he commit one single sin, it would not justify him from it, or deliver him from the curse of the law and wrath of God due unto it:

as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; when he is truly convinced of his sin, and the evil of it; is heartily sorry for it, after a godly sort; ingenuously confesses it, and departs from it; applies to Christ, to his blood and righteousness, for pardon and acceptance; though his wickedness has been ever so great, or attended with ever such aggravating circumstances, yet it shall not damn him; or he shall not fall by it into hell and everlasting perdition; but shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation:

neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth; he cannot live by it, nor for it; as it cannot justify him, it cannot save him, or bring him to heaven, or entitle him to eternal life; he is not able to live comfortably now; when his sin is charged upon him, his righteousness will not relieve him; and much less will he be able to live happily hereafter; he must and will die in his sins, being found in them, for anything his own righteousness can do for him: this is the same with the former clause, and is repeated in different words for the confirmation of it; self-righteous persons not being easily convinced of the truth of these things.

Ezekiel 33:13

Ver. 13. When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live,.... A happy life, here and hereafter; an eternal life, and not die the second death: this must be understood, should he appear a truly righteous person; one that does not trust to his own righteousness, but to the righteousness of Christ, and lives by faith on that; looking for the hope of righteousness through it, and behaving agreeably to his character:

but if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity; as he will by trusting to it; if he trusts to it for acceptance with God, and justification in his sight, and thinks himself proof against all temptation to sin on account of it; and that he has righteousness enough to make amends for sins committed, or for other sins he may commit; and which he may venture upon through this false notion, and so be led on to an open course of sinning, and series of committing iniquity:

all his righteousness shall not be remembered; God will take no notice of it; it shall be of no avail to justify him from sin, and secure him from wrath; it will be as if it never had been:

but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it; an eternal death, which is the just wages of sin; from which a man's own righteousness can never deliver him, though the righteousness of Christ does deliver from it; see Pr 10:2.

Ezekiel 33:14

Ver. 14. Again, when I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die,.... That is, provided he continues in the same course of life, impenitent and unbelieving:

but if he turn from his sin; repent of it, and forsake it:

and do that which is lawful and right; or "judgment and justice"; do that which is agreeably to the law of God, and what is right between man and man; lives soberly, righteously, and godly, as well as denies ungodliness and worldly lusts; whereby it appears that his repentance is genuine and true.

Ezekiel 33:15

Ver. 15. If the wicked restore the pledge,.... His neighbour's raiment, which he has taken as a pledge for money lent him; and which, according to the law, was to be restored before sunset, Ex 22:26 which wicked men did not attend unto; but when such a man is brought to a sense of his wickedness, and repentance for it, as an evidence of it he would restore the pledge:

and give again that he had robbed; to him whom he had robbed; as a thief was obliged to do, four or five fold, according to the law, Ex 22:1, and which, when a man did voluntarily, from the convictions of his own mind, and not by force of the civil magistrate, it was a sign of true repentance; see Lu 19:8:

and walk in the statutes of life; the rule of life and conversation, and to the keeping of which the promise of long life is annexed; and which preserve persons from dying a shameful death by the hand of the civil magistrate; statutes, which, if a man do, he shall live in them; see Eze 20:11:

without committing iniquity; not living entirely without sin, which the best of men do not; but without committing grosser sins, as before; and without making a trade of sinning, and living in it:

he shall surely live, he shall not die; he shall live comfortably now, and happily hereafter; he shall live a spiritual life, and not die the second death.

Ezekiel 33:16

Ver. 16. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him,.... Imputed to him; placed to his account; charged upon him, or ever be spoke of to him, either now, or at the day of judgment, by way of accusation and complaint, or to his condemnation:

he hath done that which is lawful and right; has repented of his sin; looked to Christ by faith for the pardon of it; and laid hold on his righteousness for his justification; and being influenced and assisted by the grace of God, has done that which is right and good in the sight of God and man:

he shall surely live; he now lives a life of faith and holiness; he shall continue to live, and persevere to the end, and inherit eternal life; see Eze 18:21.

Ezekiel 33:17

Ver. 17. Yet the children of thy people say,.... "Not my people"; for surely the children of God could never say what follows; and one would think that even no man could say it, after so much had been said by the Lord concerning the righteous and the wicked, and his dealings with them, which must appear to be just and right, good and gracious; and yet such were the atheism, the perverseness and peevishness of these people, they went on to say as they had done before:

the way of the Lord is not equal: is not according to the rules of justice and equity. The Targum is,

"the ways of the goodness of the Lord are not made plain (or exposed) unto us."

The answer to which is,

but, as for them, their way is not equal; according to the rule of the divine word; as for God, his way and methods, both of providence and grace, were right and good; See Gill on "Eze 18:25".

Ezekiel 33:18

Ver. 18. When the righteous turneth from his righteousness,.... This and what is said in the following verse are clear instances of the equality, justness, and goodness of the ways of God; and are again repeated, if possible, to make it clear and plain to them that their charge and complaint were groundless; See Gill on "Eze 18:24",
See Gill on "Eze 18:26".

Ezekiel 33:19

Ver. 19. But if the wicked turn from his wickedness,....
See Gill on "Eze 18:27".

Ezekiel 33:20

Ver. 20. Yet ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal,.... Still obstinately persisting in their false charges, notwithstanding plain proofs to the contrary:

O ye house of Israel, I will judge you everyone after his ways;
See Gill on "Eze 18:30".

Ezekiel 33:21

Ver. 21. And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity,.... Of Jeconiah's captivity, when Ezekiel with others were carried into Babylon; see **Eze 1:2**

in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month; which was a year, four months, and some days, after the city of Jerusalem was taken; for that was destroyed in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, and so of the captivity, and in the fifth month, and tenth day of the month.
2Ki 25:2. It is much it was not known at Babylon before; though so it might,

and yet not one that escaped came to Ezekiel sooner to give him an account of it, which he had seen with his eyes. The Syriac version reads it, in the "eleventh year"; and so makes it but a few months after the destruction; and it may be observed that it is promised by the Lord, Eze 24:26, that on the day the city was taken, one should escape, and bring the prophet the news; that is, directly, immediately, in a very short time, as soon as it was possible that he could arrive to him; and yet, as taken notice, here were a year and almost five months before he reached him, which seems pretty strange. The difficulty may be solved in this manner: Ezekiel reckons from the captivity of Jeconiah, which began in the month Chisleu; and the computation in 2Ki 25:2, is from Zedekiah's reign, which is to be reckoned from the month Nisan, and from the first Nisan of his reign; for it is a rule with the Jews, {h} that the beginning of the year for kings is the first of Nisan; so that the tenth month from the captivity is the sixth from Nisan; whence it appears there was not a full month from the city being burnt to the news being brought to Ezekiel; which was time short enough, in such a troublesome season, to take a journey from Jerusalem to Babylon; for Zedekiah not being crowned before the Nisan following the captivity, the computation of his reign did not begin till that Nisan, which makes this difference in the chronology. According to Bishop Usher {i}, this messenger came to Ezekiel the twenty fifth of January, the fourth day of the week (Wednesday), in 3417 A.M. or before Christ 587:

that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me; as it was foretold and promised he should, Eze 24:26:

saying, the city is smitten; the city of Jerusalem; the walls were broken down, the houses burnt, and the whole destroyed.

{h} Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 1. {i} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3417.

Ezekiel 33:22

Ver. 22. Now the hand of the Lord was upon me in the evening, afore he that was escaped came,.... The prophet felt a divine impulse on his mind; he was under the influence of a spirit of prophecy, and knew before the messenger came to him what his message was, and was prepared to receive it, and to prophesy upon it; for this is to be understood of prophecy, as the Targum,

"prophecy from before the Lord was with me in the evening {k};"

see **Isa 8:11**:

and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; the hand of the Lord, or the power of the Lord, had done it, as he promised he would, **Eze 3:27** so that he spoke freely and boldly, and continued to do so from the evening, to the time the messenger came to him in the morning, to all those that were with him:

and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb: as he had been for three years past; for though he had been prophesying against several nations, yet these prophecies were not delivered, it is very likely, by word of mouth, but by writing, and sent into those countries by proper messengers; but now the prophet's mouth is opened by the Spirit of God, as it was said it should, when this messenger should come to him,
Eze 24:27 and from this time he was not silent, but prophesied to his people, the Jews, verbally, as he was bid to do by the Lord.

{k} So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 54. 2.

Ezekiel 33:23

Ver. 23. Then the word of the Lord came unto me,.... After the messenger had delivered his message, and he had received it, and conversed with him about it:

saying: as follows:

Ezekiel 33:24

Ver. 24. Son of man, they that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel,.... The places which were laid waste by Nebuchadnezzar's army, going and returning, in and about Jerusalem, and in several parts of Judea; these were they that were left in the land after the destruction, to people and plant it; or who, having fled to distant parts, were now returned, and took possession of it, though it was in a wretched condition, a mere waste or desert; and yet they were lifted up with it, and proud and haughty, as their language shows: for thus they speak,

saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land; he was but one, and had no child, when the promise of inheriting the land was made unto him; and he was but a single worshipper of God, and yet he had this favour and privilege:

but we are many; the land is given us for inheritance: so they oppose themselves to Abraham, and argue from the lesser to the greater; that if a single person was vouchsafed to inherit it, then much more many, and those of his seed; and to whom the land was particularly given for an inheritance, and who were now in the possession of it, as Abraham never was; and, being many, were able to defend their right, and secure themselves in the enjoyment of it; all which reasoning shows their pride and vanity, though they were under such humbling circumstances; their land being waste, their numbers lessened, and the enemy had but just left it, having made dreadful devastations in it; and which had had no influence upon them to reform them, or bring them to repentance, as the following verses show.

Ezekiel 33:25

Ver. 25. Wherefore say unto them, thus saith the Lord God,.... Send them this message in writing, as from the Lord; for the prophet was now in Chaldea, and could not deliver it by word of mouth to those that inhabited the wastes of Israel; but he could tell it to the messenger that came to him, who had escaped from Jerusalem; or send it by him, or some other:

ye eat with the blood; or rather "upon", or "by" the "blood" {l}; contrary to the law in Le 19:26 which is a different law from that in **Ge 9:4**, and from that in **Le 3:17** and refers to an idolatrous practice of the Heathens, which these Jews imitated; who, having slain and offered their sacrifices to devils, sat down round about the blood of them, and ate their food or part of their sacrifice by it, as Kimchi on the text observes. The account Maimonides {m} gives of the Zabians is this,

"you must know (says he) that the blood is reckoned very unclean and impure by the Zabians, yet is eaten by them, because they think it is the food of devils; and that he that eats it by this means obtains some communications with them; so that they converse familiarly with him, and reveal things future to him, which the vulgar commonly attribute to devils: notwithstanding there were some among them, with whom it seemed very grievous and difficult to eat blood (for it is a thing which the nature of man abhors); these used to slay some beast, and take its blood, and put it in a vessel, or in a hole dug in the earth, and eat the slain beast, sitting in a circle about the blood; imagining to themselves, in so doing, while they ate the flesh the devils ate the blood, and that this is their food; and by this means friendship, fraternity, and familiarity were contracted between them, because they all ate at one table, and sat on one seat; besides, they were of opinion that the devils appeared to them in dreams, and told them things to come, and were of much advantage to them;"

and accordingly it follows:

and lift up your eyes towards your idols; make your devotion, and pray unto them, and worship them, and expect help and assistance from them:

and shed blood; innocent blood, as the Targum; they were guilty of murder as well as of idolatry, or shedding of blood, in sacrifice to idols:

and shall ye possess the land? can such wretches as you, such gross idolaters and murderers, ever think that you are the children of Abraham, and have a right to the inheritance of this land, or shall long continue in the possession of it, living in such abominable iniquities as these?

{l} Mdh le "super sanguinem", Munster, Montanus, Cocceius, Starckius; "juxta sanguinem"; so some in Vatablus. {m} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 46. p. 484.

Ezekiel 33:26

Ver. 26 Ye stand upon your sword,.... You trust in it, and think to support yourselves by it, and secure your possession and right of it by that means. So the Targum,

"you stand in your strength:"

ye work abomination; that which is abominable to God, and not fit to be named among men; Jarchi interprets it of sodomy: the word is in the feminine gender, and may be rendered, "ye women work abomination"; referring to that unnatural lust the apostle speaks of, **Ro 1:26** so Ben Melech:

and ye defile everyone his neighbour's wife; were guilty of adultery; and which was so common, that scarce any were free from it, and therefore is charged upon the whole body of them:

and shall ye possess the land? such vile creatures as these, guilty of the abominations for which the land formerly spewed out its ancient inhabitants, the Canaanites? and the present possessors might expect the same, as being very unworthy inheritors of it, whatever high thoughts they might have of themselves.

Ezekiel 33:27

Ver. 27. Say thou thus unto them, thus saith the Lord God,.... Send or write unto them in the name of the Lord, after this manner,

as I live, which is the form of an oath; the Lord swears by himself his life, because he could swear by no greater, and for the confirmation of what follows:

surely they that are in the wastes shall fall by the sword; by their own sword, falling out one with another; or by the sword of Ishmael Jer 41:2 or by the sword of the Chaldeans, who revenged the death of Gedaliah and others; even such who dwelt amidst the ruins of the city of Jerusalem, and other places, that were become desolate through the ravages of the enemy:

and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured; of which it may be supposed there were the greater numbers, since the land was so depopulated: and they that be in the forts, and in the caves, shall die of the pestilence; such as were in fortified cities, or in caverns of the earth, dug in rocks and mountains, where, in neither of them, men and beasts could easily come at them; here the Lord would send his arrow, the plague, that flies by day, and reach them, and destroy them; none can escape his hands; these are three of the Lord's sore judgments, the sword, pestilence, and noisome beasts.

Ezekiel 33:28

Ver. 28. For I will lay the land most desolate,.... Or, "desolation" and "desolation" {n}; one desolating judgment shall follow upon another, until it is completely desolate; it was very desolate already, through the ravages of the Chaldean army; but it should become more so, through other judgments here threatened them:

and the pomp of her strength shall cease; some understand this of the temple, which was the most pompous building in the land, and in which they placed their strength and confidence: but this was destroyed already: it is rather to be interpreted of whatsoever riches, power, and glory, were yet remaining, which should be removed:

and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate; which used to abound with vines and olives, with flocks and pastures:

that none shall pass through; not only there should be no inhabitant, but no traveller in it, or very few, because of the sword in one part, the pestilence in another, and wild beasts in other places, and a general barrenness and unfruitfulness; so that a traveller would be both in great danger, and in want of provisions to supply himself and cattle.

{n} hmvmw hmmv "desolationem et solitudiem", Montanus; "vastitatem et solitudinem", Starckius.

Ezekiel 33:29

Ver. 29. Then shall they know that I am the Lord,.... An omniscient Being, that could foresee and foretell what would come to pass; and omnipotent, able to do whatever he pleased, and true and faithful to his word; and a sovereign Lord, whose will cannot be resisted; this they should see, own, and acknowledge:

when I have laid the land most desolate, because of all their abominations which they have committed: for though he is a sovereign Lord, yet he does not execute his judgments in an arbitrary way, merely cause it is his will, but because of the abominable sins committed by men, which provoke the eyes of his glory.

Ezekiel 33:30

Ver. 30. Also, thou son of man,.... I have something to say to thee, and inform thee of, not only concerning the Jews in Judea, what they say, and what will befall them; but concerning those that are with thee, and what they say of thee, and what will be the issue of it:

the children of thy people still are talking against thee; not the Lord's people, but his own people, which was the more cutting to him to hear of, and the more ungrateful in them; though indeed they were but children, who acted a weak part, and the less to be regarded; these spake against the prophet: they could not say he was no prophet, he had his credentials and commission from the Lord, which were well known, and many of his prophecies had been fulfilled; they could not speak against his doctrine, which was of God; nor against his conversation, which was agreeable to his character and office; but they said some things in a ludicrous and jocose manner, in a slighting and contemptuous way, as showed they had little reverence and respect for him, and were careless and indifferent about hearing him; at least had little regard to this matter, or the subject of his ministry, which they had no great value for: and this they did still; they had been long at it; it was their common talk and constant business, though the prophet knew nothing of it, and thought they had the greatest respect for him, speaking fair to his face, and behaving with decency towards him; but the Lord knew it, and resented it, and informs him of it: and this they did continually, from time to time,

by the walls, and in the doors of the houses; privately and secretly; "by the walls", where they used to get together and sun themselves, and pass away their time, by talking against the prophet; and, when they did, would place themselves against the walls, that nobody might overhear them; and they would sometimes stand in the porches of their houses, and, as their neighbours and acquaintance passed by, would call them in, and hold a chat about the prophet; and jeer and laugh at him, and what he had said: and speak one to another,

every man to his brother, saying, come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord; let us go and amuse ourselves for an hour or two with what the prophet says; perhaps we shall hear some new thing, which may be pleasing and diverting: for, not their spiritual profit did they seek, but to have their ears tickled, and their fancies pleased.

Ezekiel 33:31

Ver. 31. And they come unto thee as the people cometh,.... As the people of God, who came to the prophets's house to hear him preach the word, and explain it for their spiritual profit and edification these came when they did, and as early and constantly, and with seeming pleasure:

and they sit before thee as my people; with great decency and reverence, and very gravely and demurely, and with seeming devotion, and stay the time out till the whole service is over; as scholars sit at the feet of their masters, to hear and learn their doctrines. So the Targum,

"and they come unto thee as the men the disciples come:"

and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; they gave him the hearing, and seemed attentive, but did not understand what they heard, at least did not put it in practice; they were only hearers, and not doers of the word, and like to the foolish man in **Mt 7:26**:

for with their mouth they show much love: by the motions of their lips while hearing, and other gestures, as well as by what they said afterwards, they seemed pleased and delighted with what they heard; made huge encomiums upon it, and spoke much in the praise of the preacher. The Targum is the reverse,

"they made game with their mouth."

But their heart goeth after their covetousness;

"after the money they had taken away by force,"

as the Targum; after the world, and the things of it; after their secular affairs, so that they wished the sermon over, that they might be at them; or, however, did not so diligently attend to what was said, but the cares of the world choked the word, and made it unfruitful to them; these were like the seed that fell among thorns, the thorny ground hearers, Mt 13:22.

Ezekiel 33:32

Ver. 32. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice,.... Whose voice, and the music of it, are regarded, and not the matter of the song, but the manner in which it is sung; so these people did not so much attend to what the prophet said as the manner of his delivery; they were delighted with the harmony of his voice, the eloquence of his speech, the propriety of his expressions, the eloquence and aptness of his diction, and the cadency of his words, and not with the excellent doctrines he delivered; they were affected and pleased no otherwise than if they had been at a concert of music; or had been entertained by one that understood not only vocal music, but could "play well on an instrument" at the same time, and make both agree together; which yields much pleasure to lovers of music. The Gospel is a lovely song indeed; "a song of loves" {o}, as it may be rendered; of the love of God, and of the love of Christ; and the voice of a Gospel minister is a pleasant charming voice to those that understand it, but to others it is a voice, and nothing else; they may be delighted with his accents, but not with his matter: for they hear thy words, but they do them not; which is repeated, that it might be observed.

{o} Mybge ryvk "sicut canticum astorum", Vatablus.

Ezekiel 33:33

Ver. 33. And when this cometh to pass,.... The prophecy before delivered out, concerning the desolations in the land of Israel, by the sword, pestilence, and wild beasts:

lo, it will come; whatever is predicted by the Lord; in the mouth of his prophets, certainly comes to pass: then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them; and acknowledge it; and particularly that Ezekiel was one, a true prophet of the Lord, by the exact accomplishment of his predictions.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 34:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 34

In the former chapter the prophet prophesies against the people of the Jews, both those of the captivity, and those who were not; and here against the shepherds of Israel. This he is bid to do, Eze 34:1, whose cruelty to the flock, negligence and unfaithfulness are exposed, Eze 34:3, for which reasons they are threatened to be deprived of their office, Eze 34:7, and the Lord promises to take the care of the flock upon himself, to seek out his sheep, and feed them, and do every kind office to them, Eze 34:11 and then the strong of the flock, that oppressed the weak, are threatened with

punishment,
Eze 34:17 and the promise of the Messiah, as the shepherd of the flock, is made, under whom all prosperity and happiness might be expected,
Eze 34:23.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord came unto me,.... The date of this prophecy is not given; however, it seems to have been delivered after the destruction of Jerusalem; the causes of which are mentioned, the sins of the people and their governors, which the prophet is directed to expose:

saying: as follows:

Ezekiel 34:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel,.... Or, "concerning" {p} them; the governors of them, as the Targum and Jarchi; their political governors, their kings, princes, and civil magistrates of every order and degree; so Kimchi interprets it of kings; and it was common with the eastern nations, and with the Greeks, to call kings shepherds; and one and the same word; in the Greek language, signifies to feed sheep, and to govern people; see Ps 78:72, also their ecclesiastical governors are intended, prophets, priests, Levites, scribes, and Pharisees; these were bad shepherds, or they would not have been prophesied against; and though they were shepherds of Israel, this must be done:

prophesy, and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds: that the message to them might be the more regarded, it is ordered to be delivered in the name of the Lord; otherwise they would have been apt to have despised it, and charged the prophet with impertinence and rudeness:

woe be to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves! that is, themselves only, and not the flock: had they fed the flock, as well as themselves, they would not have been blamed; but they took no care of the people over whom they were set only minded their own affairs, to get riches and honour, but neglected the good of the people, yea, cruelly oppressed them:

should not the shepherds feed the flocks? undoubtedly they should; it is their duty, the business of their office, so to do; kings to rule over their subjects, defend their persons and property, and secure their privileges and liberties to them; and ecclesiastical rulers, ministers of the word, should feed the flock or church of God committed to them with knowledge and understanding; see **Jer 3:15**.

{p} yewr le "de pastoribus", V. L. Grotius; "super pastores", Pagninus, Montanus.

Ezekiel 34:3

Ver. 3. Ye eat the fat,.... The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it, "the milk"; the words for fat and milk differ only in the points; and this was not unlawful, for

who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? **1Co 9:7**, provided it was done with moderation, that they ate some, but not all; but these rulers milked their subjects too much, oppressed them with heavy taxes, and got their substance into their own hands. The Targum is,

"ye eat the good;"

they got possessed of the best of their substance; as did also their ecclesiastical rulers, who were greedy shepherds, that could never have enough; they looked for their gain from their quarter, and even devoured widows' houses, Isa 56:11:

ye clothe you with the wool: the pure wool, as the Targum, the finest of it; they fleeced the flock, and stripped the people of their riches; and minded nothing but their own backs and bellies:

ye kill them that are fed; or, that "are fat" {q}; the richest of the people they brought accusations and charges against for capital crimes; and so put them to death under a colour of justice, that they, might get their estates into their hands:

but ye feed not the flock; did not govern the people well, by doing justice and judgment among men, as became civil magistrates; did not deliver out words of faith and sound doctrine, to feed the souls of men with, which is the duty of those that preside in the church of God.

{q} hayrbh "quod pingue est", Vatablus, Bochartus; "pinguem", Cocceius, Starckius. So Ben Melech.

Ezekiel 34:4

Ver. 4. The diseased have ye not strengthened,.... Such, in the civil polity, who were poor, and in necessitous circumstances, were not relieved; such who were injured and oppressed by others were not vindicated; and such as were forced to flee to other countries, or were carried captive, no care was taken, or methods used, to ransom them, and, bring them back; all which may be meant by this and the following metaphors, taken from the evil things that befall a flock of sheep: and such who were weak through spiritual diseases, their prophets and teachers took no care to cure them of their diseases, and to strengthen these feeble minded ones with divine cordials and spiritual food, and confirm them in the faith:

neither have ye healed that which was sick; by directing them to the great Physician of souls, and to his precious blood for healing and pardon of sin:

neither have ye bound up that which was broken; whose consciences were wounded, and hearts broken, with a sense of sin; or who had fallen to the breaking of their bones, and should be restored in a spirit of meekness and dealt gently with, as surgeons do in setting and binding up broken bones:

neither have ye brought again that which was driven away; or, "was gone astray" {r}; being seduced by false teachers; and yet, though it was known they were, no care nor pains were taken to reclaim and restore them:

neither have ye sought that which was lost; that wandered of their own accord, and perished for want of knowledge, and were lost for lack of a guide to direct them, and no one would do this good office to them:

but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them; in an arbitrary and tyrannical way, lording it over God, s heritage, **1Pe 5:3**.

{r} txdnh "vagam aut errantem", Bochartus, and some in Vatablus.

Ezekiel 34:5

Ver. 5. And they were scattered because there is no shepherd,.... No good one;

there were shepherds, but they were idol shepherds, good for nothing, and it was all one as if there were none: so, in Christ's time, there were the Scribes and Pharisees; yet, since these did not feed the people with wholesome doctrine, they are said to be as sheep without a shepherd, and scattered abroad, as here from the fold, and from one another; dispersed here and there, seeking food, and none, which moved his compassion, **Mt 9:36**, in the political sense it may refer to their captivity, and their dispersion among the nations, having no king: So the Targum,

"and they were scattered without a governor."

And they became meat to all beasts of the field when they were scattered; the Targum is,

"and they were delivered to all the kingdoms of the people to be consumed;"

such as the Assyrians, Babylonians, Ammonites, Moabites, and others; and may be applied to false teachers, those grievous wolves, which spare not the flock, into whose hands members of churches, professors of religion, fall, when neglected by their shepherds.

Ezekiel 34:6

Ver. 6. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill,.... As sheep do, when gone astray, go from mountain to hill; so the people of Israel fled from place to place, through the cruelty of their rulers, or through the force of the enemy, being carried captive into many kingdoms and nations, signified by mountains; and perhaps there is some allusion, to their worshipping of idols on hills and mountains, being drawn into it by the false prophets:

yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth; so great and general was the dispersion by the several captivities: the Lord has sheep, or some of his elect, some that belong to his flock, in all parts of the world:

and none did search or seek after them; but he will himself, as in Eze 34:11, for he will lose none of them; but this does not excuse the shepherds.

Ezekiel 34:7

Ver. 7. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord. Or, "ye governors", as the Targum, both civil and ecclesiastical; ye kings, princes, and magistrates; ye prophets and teachers of the people, who ought to have attended to the word of grace, to the doctrines of the Scriptures, and fed the people with them; but, since you have not, hear the word of threatening from the Lord, and the just punishment that shall be inflicted on you.

Ezekiel 34:8

Ver. 8. As I live, saith the Lord,.... It is an oath, and which he swore in his wrath, being provoked with the shepherds for their misadministration:

surely, because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd; a prey to all the kingdoms of the people, being without a governor, as the Targum; or to false teachers, there being no spiritual pastors to take care of them:

neither did my shepherds search for my flock; that was scattered, and carried captive, and became a prey to others; even those that were of God's appointing, as the kings of Israel, their priests and prophets; for both their civil polity and ecclesiastical hierarchy were of God, though the ends thereof were not answered, or the persons put into office did not do their duty:

but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock:
See Gill on "Eze 34:2",
See Gill on "Eze 34:3".

Ezekiel 34:9

Ver. 9. Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord. This is repeated, that it might be observed, and for the confirmation of it; it might be depended upon that what follows would be accomplished, unless they changed their conduct and behaviour; and, to leave them inexcusable, they are again called upon to hear what the Lord should say unto them. The Targum is,

"therefore, O ye wicked governors, return to the law, and I will have mercy on you; hearken to the doctrine of the law, and receive the word of the Lord."

Ezekiel 34:10

Ver. 10. Thus saith the Lord God, behold, I am against the shepherds,.... His heart was against them; his hand was against them; his face was against them, to cut them off. The Targum is,

"behold, I will send my fury upon the governors;"

and there was good reason for it, they were against him and his glory, against his flock, his people, his cause, and interest; sad it is for any to have God against them, and to be against God; for none ever hardened themselves against him and prospered, **Job 9:4**:

and I will require my flock at their hand; the full tale of them that have been committed to their care, and will punish them for the neglect of them; their blood, their life, and the loss of them, I will require at their hands; thus he punished Zedekiah and his princes, and the priests and prophets:

and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; take the kingdom from them, as he did from Zedekiah; abolish the ecclesiastical hierarchy among the Jews; cut off three shepherds in one month, the priests, prophets, and scribes of the people; and put the flock into other hands, the apostles and ministers of the Gospel:

neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; enrich themselves with the substance of the people:

for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them; who, instead of being shepherds to feed the flock, were no other than wolves in sheep's clothing, and ravenous lions and bears, which devoured the flock; but this they should do no longer.

Ezekiel 34:11

Ver. 11. For thus saith the Lord God,.... Since the shepherds are so negligent, careless, and cruel:

behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out; as he did the

Jews, in all countries where they were, so his elect in all places where they are: he is the omniscient God, and knows them that are his, and can call his own sheep by name; he knows the places where they are; for he has fixed the bounds of their habitation, and was delighting himself in the habitable parts of the earth, where he knew they would be, even before the world was; he knows the time of finding them, which he himself has fixed, and which is a time of love, and a time of life; and he can distinguish them, notwithstanding the filth they have contracted by their sins and transgressions, and from the crowd they are among: and he is the omnipotent God, that can take them out of what hands soever they may be, or in whatsoever state and condition they are; though in the hands of Satan, in the paws of that devouring lion, and in a pit wherein is no water, in a horrible pit, the mire and clay: he that says this is the owner and proprietor of them; and that is the reason why he searches and seeks them out; and which he repeats for the confirmation of it, and to show the vehemence of his affection towards them, and how bent he is upon it, and how eager and resolute in his pursuit after them: he searches for his chosen people among the ruins of Adam's fall, in whom they fell as others; among the men of the world, where they are; among the dust of the earth, where his lost piece of silver and those pearls lie; among the mountains of sin or self-righteousness, where these sheep are wandering; and he never leaves off seeking and searching till he has found them: and what moves him to it is not their nature, for they are no better than others; nor their numbers, for they are few; but his love to them, the relation he stands in to them as their shepherd, his interest and property in them, his covenant on their account, and also his own glory.

Ezekiel 34:12

Ver. 12. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered,.... That is, when they have been scattered, and are got together again; then he goes among them, to see if there are any missing, and in wheat condition they are, and what they want:

so will I seek out my sheep, and deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day; such as, in a literal sense, the time of the captivity was, when the Jews were dispersed in the various provinces of Babylon, and other countries; and which was a time of darkness and affliction to them. The time of Adam's fall was a dark and cloudy day; when all sinned in him, and were made sinners by his disobedience; when the sentence of condemnation and death passed upon all, and they became liable to utter ruin and destruction; when darkness and ignorance seized all human nature; when all mankind were separated from God, and set at a distance from him; in consequence of which the children of God, his sheep, were scattered abroad. A time of unregeneracy is a cloudy and dark day with God's elect; they are in darkness, and walk in darkness, and are darkness itself, till made light in the Lord: and so is a time of desertion; when the Lord's people are laid in darkness, and the deeps, and both sit and walk therein, and see no light; when they can neither see the Lord, nor hear from him, nor have any communion with him; when the sun of righteousness is withdrawn or eclipsed; and they cannot see their interest clear in spiritual and eternal things: as is also a time of persecution with the churches of Christ; when both ministers and people are scattered abroad, and their eyes cannot behold their teachers; and moon and stars are not seen for many days, Gospel ministers and Gospel ordinances: and the same is a time of blasphemy and error; and when it is neither day nor night, as is the present season; but there is no day so cloudy and dark but the shepherd can see his sheep, and will look them out, though they cannot see him.

Ezekiel 34:13

Ver. 13. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land,.... Which was in part fulfilled when the Jews were delivered from the Babylonish captivity; and which may well be ascribed to the Lord, since it was he that stirred up Cyrus, king of Persia, to proclaim their liberty; and which raised the spirit of the people to go up upon it, and build the temple in Jerusalem, **Ezr 1:1**, though it will have a more full accomplishment in the latter day, when these people shall be gathered out of all countries where they are dispersed, and return to their own land, and embrace the true Messiah, and be all saved; of which there was a pledge and presage in the apostles' time, on the day of Pentecost; when some out of all nations were collected together at Jerusalem, and heard the wonderful things of God in their own language, and were converted; and afterwards, wherever the Gospel came in the Gentile world, it was first preached to the Jews, and was the power of God to salvation first to them; by which means the sheep of Christ, the elect of God among them, in each of the parts of the world, were gathered in: but this need not be confined to the Jews only; since the Lord had other sheep beside them, even among the Gentiles, in all parts of the world; whom he searches for, and effectually calls by his grace, and separates them from the rest of the world, and brings them into his churches, and among his people:

and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers: not upon the barren mountains of Sinai and Horeb, or with the works of the law; for there is no righteousness, life, and salvation by them, and so no peace and comfort, or food for faith; but upon the mountains of Israel, the churches of Christ, comparable to mountains for their height, visibility, immovableness, and for their pasturage: here the great Shepherd, the Lamb Christ Jesus, is, even on Mount Zion; here his under shepherds are, who feed the flock with knowledge and understanding; here the word of God is preached, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus, by which souls are nourished up to everlasting life; in these mountains the feast of fat things is made; here the green pastures are, the sheep are made to lie down in; and here the lilies grow, among whom Christ feeds; and by these mountains run the "rivers" of everlasting love and covenant grace, the streams of Gospel doctrines, and the waters of Gospel ordinances, to the great refreshment of the saints; here the Lord feeds his people:

and in all the inhabited places of the country; in the private dwellings of the saints, as well as in public assemblies.

Ezekiel 34:14

Ver. 14. I will feed them in a good pasture,.... Or with good food, as the Targum: such as the fulness of grace in Christ, where believers go in and out, and find pasture; and where they may feed to the full, have bread enough, and to spare; and may draw water with joy out of the full wells of salvation: this is good food; food indeed, in opposition to that which was typical, or is imaginary; this is spiritual food, suitable to the spirits of men, brought by the Spirit of God, and relished by a spiritual man; this is savoury food, soul satisfying and soul strengthening food; this is nourishing food, and what will endure to everlasting life: and such is the Gospel, the promises and doctrines of it, in which there is a variety of food; milk for babes, and meat for strong men; sweet to the taste, and health to the bones; salutary and nourishing, and which makes glad the heart; and of the same kind are the ordinances of the Gospel, the breasts of consolation, the goodness and fatness of the Lord's house; which he makes his people partakers of, and satisfies them with.

And upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be; there shall they lie in a good fold; of the same nature and use are the churches of Christ as a fold is to the sheep; as that they are separated, divided, and distinguished from others;

as into a fold, the sheep of Christ are gathered into churches; where they lie together, are united and knit together in love, and where they have communion with one another, and keep each other warm, and stir up one another to love and good works; whereby the vitals of religion are preserved; here they are kept in the night season, and fed in the winter; these like a fold are a sort of fence unto them, and a preservation of them from wolves and bears; and here they lie down, and have spiritual rest, ease, and safety: and as in a fold there are lambs, and sheep, and goats, so in churches there are different sorts folded together, weaker and stronger Christians; and some only nominal ones, who will be separated at the last day. A fold may be taken down, and removed from place to place, and so may visible congregated churches; the candlestick may be removed out of its place, the word and ordinances; and so a Gospel church state may be carried from place to place; and there is but one fold for Jews and Gentiles, and this is a good one; see Joh 10:16.

And in a fat pasture shall they feed on the mountains of Israel; on the feast of fat things there, and so become fat and flourishing;
See Gill on "Eze 34:13".

Ezekiel 34:15

Ver. 15. I will feed my flock,.... This is repeated for the further confirmation of it, that it might be depended upon that the Lord would feed his people in the manner before promised; and it gives a reason why he would do it, because they were his flock; he had a right unto them, a property in them; they were separated and distinguished from others by him, as the church of God is; and which is also purchased by Christ, and gathered out of the world by his Spirit and grace; and therefore he will feed them, or take care that they shall be fed, Ac 20:28:

and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord; in the good fold provided for them; where they have both rest and safety, and also plenty of suitable food;
See Gill on "Eze 34:14". The Targum is,

"I will govern my people, and will cause them to dwell safely, saith the Lord God;"

The Septuagint and Arabic versions add, "and they shall know that I am the Lord".

Ezekiel 34:16

Ver. 16. And I will seek that which was lost,.... As all men are in Adam, and through his fall, and by their own actual transgressions; and so the elect of God among the rest; who are lost not with respect to God's knowledge of them, love to them, and care for them; but with respect to their knowledge of him, affection for him, and regard to his will, service, and glory; they are lost to themselves, they know not where they are, what is their state and condition, and how to get out of it; they cannot help themselves, nor can any other creature help them; and they see themselves to be in this lost and undone condition, when they are enlightened by the Spirit of God: but they are not irretrievably lost, for they are preserved in Christ Jesus; and he has been sent to seek and to save them; which he has done by redeeming them from sin, Satan, and the law; and, in the effectual calling, he goes after them, he sends his Gospel to them, and his Spirit unto them, and returns them to himself, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls; and whereas after this they go astray like lost sheep, he seeks and looks them up, and restores their souls, Ps 119:176:

and bring again that which was driven away; through the power and prevalence of unbelief, from holding fast to the head Christ, departing at least partially from the living God; from dealing by faith with his precious person, blood, and righteousness; and from the precious promises, as not belonging to them, and refusing to be comforted by them; but the Lord brings back such again, and causes them to believe: Thomas is a notorious instance of this, Joh 20:24, such also who are driven away through the force of Satan's temptations from the throne of grace; from the word and ordinances; and from private conversation with the saints, being hypocrites, as he suggests unto them; these the Lord brings back, by rebuking the tempter, and delivering out of his temptations: likewise such as are driven out of the right way of truth, and carried away with the error of the wicked, through the influence of bad pastors or false teachers,
Jer 23:1, these will he restore again; for it is impossible the elect of God should be finally deceived: moreover, such as are driven away by the force of persecution, and scattered abroad, in God's due time have rest, and return to their folds again; see
Jer 50:17:

and will bind up that which was broken; such who have broken hearts, broken with a sense of sin; made truly contrite by the Spirit and grace of God, through

the word; which is a hammer to them, that breaks the rocky heart in pieces; to these the Lord has respect; their broken hearts are acceptable to him; he dwells with them, to revive them; he speaks and restores comforts to them; pours in oil and wine into their wounds, like the good Samaritan, and binds them up; see
Ps 147:3 and such who have broken bones, who have fallen into sin to the breaking of their bones, to the destroying of their peace, joy, and comfort, as David, Peter, and others have done; he sets their broken bones, and restores the joys of his salvation; and causes the bones which were broken to rejoice; at the discoveries of his pardoning grace and mercy, Ps 51:8:

and will strengthen that which was sick; sick through sin, as all men are; sick of sin, as sensible sinners be; sickly and weak, and ready to die, as fallen professors, backsliders, are; sick of love, through want of the discoveries of it; long after them; cannot be easy without them, as Christ's spouse sometimes is; and sick for want of food, faint and languid for want of spiritual refreshment; as the persons were Christ had compassion on, being as sheep without a shepherd, **Mt 9:36** each of these the Lord strengthens with the discoveries and applications of pardoning grace; with the flagons of his love, and apples of his promises; with the food of the Gospel, which strengthens men's hearts; and with grace out of his fulness, whereby they are strengthened against sin, snares, and temptations, and to exercise grace, and do the will of God:

but I will destroy the fat and the strong; that are full of themselves, lifted up with pride, conceited with their riches or righteousness, and despise others, whom they thrust with side and shoulder, and push with their horns, Eze 34:21. So the Targum interprets it of wicked men,

"and I will consume the ungodly and sinners;"

but the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "I will keep the fat and the strong"; in the plight and condition in which they are, and make them still stronger, and more fat and flourishing; so Jerom interprets it of saints and godly persons; and this agrees with the preceding clauses; only the original Hebrew text is against it, which does not admit of a various reading; and this rendering seems to arise in the Septuagint, the others follow, from the mistake of a similar letter: "I will feed them with judgment"; meaning either the whole flock, consisting of fat and lean cattle, making a distinction between them, Eze 34:17, feeding them with discretion, and judging them according to their deserts; or else the fat and the strong ones, by inflicting righteous vengeance on them, feeding them with wormwood and gall; or his own people and sheep only. So the Targum, "I will govern my people with judgment"; in righteousness, goodness, truth, and faithfulness.

Ezekiel 34:17

Ver. 17. And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord God,.... Having done with the shepherds, and the complaint against them, the Lord proceeds to take notice of the flock, or the people themselves, and the evils that were among them; for in the Lord's own flock, in the nation and church of Israel, as now in the visible congregated churches of Christ, there were two sorts of persons, some good, others bad; some that behaved well, and others ill; some were sheep, and others goats:

behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats: between the smaller and weaker cattle, the sheep and the lambs; and the larger and stronger cattle, the rams and he goats; by which latter may he meant persons of superior power and authority, of greater wealth and riches, and of more wisdom and knowledge, at least in their own conceits; and who were oppressive and injurious to the poor and common people, and less knowing, at least as they thought; who may be intended by the former: now, the Lord, as he observed a difference between them, he would make this manifest, and take the part of the one against the other; even the part of the weaker against the stronger. The Targum is,

"behold, judge between man and man, sinners and the ungodly."

Ezekiel 34:18

Ver. 18. Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture,.... This is directed to the rams and he goats, to the people of power and wealth, or who had the key of knowledge and instruction; who, by their conduct, showed as if it was not enough for them to eat and drink the best of things themselves, to enjoy their wealth and riches, and keep their posts of honour and profit, and the revenues of them, in church and state:

but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? but they must oppress the poor, by taking away from them that little they have; or by making their lives uncomfortable to them, by their severities and exactions; so that that small pittance they had, they cannot enjoy with any pleasure, The allusion is to beasts in pasture, which tread down and put dung what they do not eat, which makes what is left unfit for others; and to cattle, at ponds of water, which having drank, foul the rest with their feet; as camels particularly are said to do; so that others cannot drink after them, at least not so agreeably: this may be applied to the Scribes and Pharisees, and such as they were, who devoured widows' houses, and made void the word and commandments of God, by their traditions; teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; and so polluted the pure waters of the sanctuary; defiled the Scriptures of truth, and delivered out such doctrines as were not food and drink to the souls of men, and yet were obliged to receive them; and such are heretical persons, who sometimes arise out of the churches, are a part of the flock, that corrupt the word of God, pervert the Scriptures, and handle them deceitfully; and may be said to tread down and trample upon the wholesome truths of the Gospel, and to muddy the clear doctrines of grace; so that the children of God cannot, as they desire, have the pure, unmixed, sincere milk of the word.

Ezekiel 34:19

Ver. 19. And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet,.... They are forced to do it, not being able to come at any thing else; being as sheep without a shepherd, or worse:

and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet; which, as it cannot be agreeable and relishing, so neither wholesome; as the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees; the traditions of the elders; the false doctrines of false teachers, whose words eat as do a canker. The Targum of the whole verse is,

"and my people eat the residue of the food of your ministers, and drink the residue of the drink of your ministers."

Ezekiel 34:20

Ver. 20. Therefore thus saith the Lord God unto them,.... To the rams and he goats of the flock, that use the pastures and defile the waters after this manner, and make them unfit for the lesser cattle; or that use the poor people of God after this sort:

behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle. The Targum is,

"between the rich man and the poor man;"

this is repeated, and in very strong terms, for the confirmation of it: this the Lord promised to do, and he has done it by his son, to whom he committed all judgment; and who, in the days of his flesh, made a difference between those who were full of themselves, self-righteous persons; who were self-sufficient, and needed not repentance, nor any other righteousness but their own; who trusted in themselves, and despised others: and may be meant by the "fat cattle": and between those who were low and mean in their own eyes, humble and meek, weary and heavy laden, hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of another: now for judgment did Christ come, that they which see not might see, and those who saw might be made blind; he called the one, and not the other, to repentance; made known the things of the Gospel to babes, and hid them from the wise and prudent; rejected the one, and had compassion on the other; see **Joh 5:22**, and when he comes a second time, he will judge between these, and separate them; and set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left, Mt 25:31.

Ezekiel 34:21

Ver. 21. Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder,.... As the stronger cattle do the lesser:

and pushed all the diseased with your horns; as horned cattle do those they dislike, and bear an antipathy to; which to do to the diseased is great cruelty: sheep, it is said, will take some care of those that are diseased among them, and bring them to places of sunshine and shelter; but here the horned part of the flock, and in health, are represented as acting a barbarous part to the weak and diseased: this may denote such as are in power and authority, using it to the hurt and detriment of those that are under them, and whom they should relieve and protect: it may be applied to the anathemas and excommunications of the Jews, who pronounced those an accursed and ignorant people that believed in Christ, and expelled such out of their synagogues that professed his name; and to their persecutions of the apostles and first Christians:

till he have scattered them abroad; or "without" {s}; that is, without the land.

The Targum is,

"through the provinces;"

obliged them to quit their country, and go unto other parts, as the first preachers of the word did; who, upon the persecution at the death of Stephen, were scattered abroad everywhere, **Ac 8:1**.

{s} huwxh la "foras", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus, Cocceius, Starckius,

Ezekiel 34:22

Ver. 22. Therefore will I save my flock,.... Or redeem my people, as the Targum; that is, by his son, after described, as his shepherd and servant:

and they shall no more be a prey: to Satan the roaring lion; nor to such horned cattle, their persecutors; nor to false teachers, who lie in wait to deceive; nor shall they ever perish, being the sheep of Christ, hand, and under the care of him the shepherd, spoken of in the next verse:

and I will judge between cattle and cattle; between man and man, as the Targum; that is, between good and bad men, the persecutors and the persecuted. See Gill on "Eze 34:17".
See Gill on "Eze 34:20".

Ezekiel 34:23

Ver. 23. And I will set up one shepherd over them,.... Or governor, as the Targum; an excellent one of a thousand, the only one; in comparison of whom others are not to be named; for though there are under shepherds, as magistrates and ministers of the word, he is the principal one; that is, Christ, called the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, and the chief Shepherd, and the only one; and who became so by the constitution and appointment of Jehovah the Father; who chose him, called him, and intrusted him with all his sheep: who sent him to seek and save his lost sheep; for whom he died, rose again, and is accountable: he is more particularly called the one Shepherd, with respect to Jew and Gentile; see Joh 10:16:

and he shall feed them; the flock, even the poor of the flock, thrust at and pushed by others: he shall feed them by his ministers, as under shepherds in his churches, where his word is preached, and his ordinances are administered; he shall feed them with himself, the bread of life; with his flesh and blood, which are meat and drink indeed; with covenant grace, blessings, and promises; with the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; he feeds his babes with milk, his strong men with meat, and all with the wholesome words of faith and good doctrine, whereby he nourishes them up to everlasting life; and this he

shall do, not by force, but willingly: it denotes the certainty of it; it may be depended on:

even my servant David; not David himself literally; who though a shepherd, and the servant of the Lord, yet had been dead many years before this prophecy was delivered; nor Zerubbabel, who was of his seed; for though a servant of the Lord, and a prince or governor of Judah, yet not a king, and much less a king or prince for ever; as this person is said to be, Eze 37:24, but the Messiah, as is expressly owned by Kimchi; who says, this is the Messiah that shall arise from his seed in the time of salvation: he is called David because his name agrees with him, which signifies "beloved", he being beloved of God and man; and because the son of David, of his seed according to the flesh; and because David was an eminent type of him, in his person, offices, afflictions, wars, victories, and exaltation; and because he was David's Lord and representative, and in whom his everlasting kingdom is established. The same is called the servant of the Lord, as he often is in Scripture, being so in his office capacity as Mediator; and because he took upon him the form of a servant; did the work of one; and was of the Lord's choosing, calling, supporting, and glorifying:

he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd; which is repeated for the greater confirmation of it.

Ezekiel 34:24

Ver. 24. And I the Lord will be their God,.... The God of them Christ is the shepherd of, and whom he feeds; the sheep and poor of the flock: this is the great blessing of the everlasting covenant, and than which there cannot be a greater, to have the Lord, the everlasting and unchangeable Jehovah, to be a covenant God and Father:

and my servant David a Prince among them; who should reside among them, dwell with them, by granting them his spiritual presence, and so rule over them, protect and defend them; even he who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, and is exalted, a Prince and a Saviour of his people Israel; he is such a Shepherd as that he is a Prince; and such a Prince as that he is a Saviour and under whose princely government is the greatest safety:

I the Lord have spoken it; and therefore it shall assuredly be. The Targum is,

"I the Lord have decreed it in my word;"

he had determined it within himself, and promised it in covenant, and spoke of it in prophecy, and it should be fulfilled.

Ezekiel 34:25

Ver. 25. And I will make with them a covenant of peace,...., Such the covenant of grace is, made with Christ from everlasting; in which Jehovah proposed terms of peace, and which Christ undertook to answer, and became the peacemaker; and from this article concerning the peace and reconciliation of men the covenant is so called; see Isa 54:10, this the Lord promises to make known to his people his flock, to show them their interest in it, and to make it good unto them; for otherwise it was made with Christ, and with them in Christ from all eternity. The Septuagint and Arabic versions read,

"I will make with David a covenant of peace:"

and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land; which was literally fulfilled when the Jews returned from Babylon; during their captivity, the land being uninhabited, evil beasts increased in it, and possessed it; but upon their return these ceased, being either destroyed, or driven away: but figuratively these design wicked men, who, for the malignity of their nature, manners, and conversation, are called evil beasts, as the Cretians were, **Tit 1:12**, particularly false teachers may be designed; those grievous wolves that spare not, but wrong the flock; but now shall be no more, being either forced to quit their place, or truly converted; so that the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid; which will be the peaceable and comfortable state of the church in the latter day; when there will be none to hurt and

destroy in the Lord's holy mountain,
Isa 11:6:

and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods; not only in their houses, but in the fields, and even in the wilderness, and in the woods, where wild beasts used to resort; but now being clear of all, and under the protection of such a Shepherd and Prince as David the servant of the Lord, they shall have no dread upon their mind, no fear of any danger; but dwell in the utmost security, lie down and sleep in peace and safety, the Lord sustaining them; and whom they shall serve without fear of any enemy all their days, in righteousness and holiness, being delivered out of the hands of them all.

Ezekiel 34:26

Ver. 26. And I will make them, and the places round about my hill, a blessing,.... Alluding either to the city of Jerusalem, and the places adjacent; or to the temple, and the houses about it. So the Targum,

"I will cause them to dwell round about the house of my sanctuary;"

and so Kimchi interprets it of the temple. Some Christian interpreters, by the "hill" or mountain, understand Christ; and not amiss; who may be compared to one for height; he being higher than the kings of the earth, or than the heavens and angels there, as man and Mediator; as well as is God over all, blessed for ever; and for fruitfulness, from whom the saints have all theirs, either in grace or good works; and for shade, he being the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; which yields delight and refreshment, and is a protection from the heat of a fiery law, flaming justice, the wrath of God and man, and the fiery darts of Satan; and for shelter and security, there being salvation in him, when none in other hills and mountains; and for duration and immovableness, being the same today, yesterday, and for ever: and now the persons about him are such who are made nigh by his blood; brought to him by his powerful and efficacious grace; are worshippers about the throne where he sits; such as cleave to him, and follow him wherever he goes, and shall be with him to all eternity; these he makes a blessing, or most blessed. So the Targum renders it,

"and they shall be blessed;"

they are blessed in Christ their head; they are blessed through him as their

Redeemer and Saviour, who was made a curse for them; they are blessed through being in him, and by the imputation of blessings to them from him, and through the application of them by his Spirit; their persons are blessed, and so are the places or habitations where they dwell: or rather this may be understood of the church of God, often compared to a hill for its height and eminence; for its fertility and fruitfulness; for its stability and firmness; and in allusion to the hill of Zion for its holiness, and being the place of the divine residence; see Ps 15:1 now, the persons about this hill are those who are come to Mount Zion the church of God; being brought there by the Lord himself, and who take up their abode there; who lie about this hill, as flocks of sheep, in their several folds or congregated churches; see Jer 23:3 and these the Lord makes a blessing to one another, by their spiritual conversation, prayers, and services of love; and to the world, to kingdoms and states, to cities, towns, and neighbourhoods, and to particular families, where they are placed; and even to the world in general; for they are the light, stay, and stability of it; and without which it would be in darkness, corrupt and putrefy, and not continue long:

and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; which, in the spiritual sense, may design the Gospel; which, like a shower of rain, comes from God; descends from heaven; is a gift of God; which falls according to divine direction; refreshes, revives, and makes fruitful; brings a plenty of divine blessings with it; and comes in season, at its proper time; and is a word in season to weary souls:

there shall be showers of blessings; which the Gospel brings with it; spiritual blessings, blessings of grace; such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life: these, like showers, come from God; are free grace gifts of his, of which there is a large abundance; and which descend on Mount Zion the church of God; which is another Gerizim, on which the blessings are pronounced, Ps 133:3.

Ezekiel 34:27

Ver. 27. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit,.... Such as are trees of righteousness, rooted in Christ, and planted in his church, and watered with his grace; these bring forth, bear, and are filled with the fruits of righteousness by him:

and the earth shall yield her increase; the fallow ground of men's hearts being broke up, and the seed of the word and of divine grace being sown in them, they bring forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold; see Ps 67:1, this, and what goes before, may be literally understood of the land of Canaan, and the fruitfulness of it, when the Jews shall again possess it; to which the next clause seems to have some respect:

and they shall be safe in their land; no enemy to disturb them, to invade or do any acts of violence to them: this will be when the Jews are converted, and become Christians; and antichrist destroyed; they will have none but Christian powers about them, who will be their protection. This is true, in a spiritual sense, of all the saints, who are under the care and government of Christ their Shepherd and Prince:

and shall know that I am the Lord; Jehovah their righteousness, Saviour and Redeemer:

when I have broken the bands of their yoke; of sin, Satan, and the law, and of all enemies:

and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them; or made them their servants, to whom they were subject; literally, the nations of the world, among whom they are dispersed; and figuratively, sin, whose servants men in a state of nature are; and Satan, by whom they are led captive; and the law, under which they are held as transgressors; and all other spiritual enemies; see **Lu 1:74**.

Ezekiel 34:28

Ver. 28. And they shall no more be a prey to the Heathen,.... To the Papists, who shall now be perished out of the land, Ps 10:16:

neither shall, the beasts of the land devour them; neither that beast which rose up out of the sea, nor that which came up out of the earth, Re 13:1, the pope, both in his secular and ecclesiastic power, being destroyed. So the Targum,

"and the kingdoms of the earth shall not consume them;"

the antichristian kingdoms:

but they, shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid;
See Gill on "Eze 34:25";
See Gill on "Eze 34:27".

Ezekiel 34:29

Ver. 29. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown,.... Or, "for a name"; or, "of a name" {t}; a famous one: this is to be understood, not of the Jewish nation itself, as the Targum,

"and I will raise up for them a plantation for standing;"

or which shall continue; but of the Messiah, and not of his incarnation, when he sprung up as a tender plant out of the dry ground, and as a branch out of the roots of Jesse, being on that account often spoken of as a branch; see Isa 11:1, but of him in a more raised and exalted state, as grown up to a stately tree, a goodly cedar, as in Eze 17:23 when his interest and kingdom should be great and glorious in the world, as it will be at the time of the conversion of the Jews; and it is spoken of his manifestation to them as a plant of renown, or as a renowned plant, the true vine and tree of life; or as a famous renowned person, one of name; whose glorious names and titles are Shiloh, the Messiah, Immanuel, Jehovah our righteousness, Jesus the Saviour, the Word of God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords:

and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land; the Targum is,

"they shall no more move from place to place through famine in the land;"

and which is to be understood, not of hunger through a famine of bread and water, but of hearing the word of the Lord; which they shall now have, and hear, and believe, and so have food for their souls, and hunger no more; as those do not who believe in Christ, **Joh 6:35**, for this plant raised up for them, and pointed out to them, the tree of life, Christ Jesus, bears all manner of precious fruit, sweet to the taste, and nourishing to the souls of his people; under his shadow they sit, and his fruit is sweet to them; and with him is bread enough, and to spare; so that there is no want, nor fear of consumption with hunger, where he is:

neither bear the shame of the Heathen any more; being called by them Jews, in away of taunt, a proverb, and a curse; and outcasts, whom none seek after; but now they shall no more be termed forsaken, or called desolate, but instead thereof Hephzibah and Beulah; see
Jer 30:17.

{t} Mvl ejm "plantato in nemen", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Starckius; "plantam celebri nomine", Tigurine version; "plantam in nomen", Vatablus.

Ezekiel 34:30

Ver. 30. Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God am with them,.... Granting them his gracious and powerful presence, by all the above instances of his goodness and favour to them:

and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord God: and not utterly cast off, as they seemed to be; the divine Shechinah now being returned to them, which had departed from them; the "loammi" that was written on them being now wiped off from them.

Ezekiel 34:31

Ver. 31. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men,.... This is observed, to show that all that had been said in this chapter concerning sheep, and a flock of sheep, was to be understood, not in a literal sense, but in a figurative one, of such as were rational and spiritual persons; a set of men whom the Lord had chosen, and separated from others, as his peculiar flock; and whom he took a special care of, and led them to, and fed them in, green pastures of his own providing; they are the souls of men that Christ is the Shepherd and Bishop of, **1Pe 2:25**. The Talmudists {u} frequently make use of this text, to prove that Israelites are only called men, and not the Gentiles; see Mt 15:26

and I am your God, saith the Lord God; which is often repeated for the certainty of it, because a blessing of the greatest importance, and which includes all others in it; see Eze 34:24.

{u} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 61. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 114. 2. & Ceritot, fol. 6. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 35:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 35

This chapter is a prophecy of the destruction of Edom, which is threatened, Eze 35:1, the cause of it, their hatred and slaughter of the Israelites, Eze 35:5, their claim of the lands of Israel and Judah for possession, Eze 35:10, their blasphemies against the people of God, and the Lord himself, Eze 35:12, the aggravation of their ruin, which was irretrievable; that when it was well with others, it should go ill with them; by way of just retaliation, Eze 35:14.

Ver. 1. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me,.... After the prophecy concerning the shepherds of Israel, and the goats of the flock, and of their oppressions of the sheep and lambs, the weak of the flock; and concerning the Messiah, and the blessings of grace promised the church in the latter day; came another concerning the destruction of her enemies, under the name of Seir or Edom:

saying: as follows:

Ezekiel 35:2

Ver. 2. Son of man set thy face against Mount Seir,.... Which had its name from Seir the Horite, who first possessed it; and was succeeded in it by Esau and his posterity, the Edomites; see Ge 36:8 **De 2:12**, so that the country of Edom or Idumea is here intended, and the inhabitants of it; who are put for the enemies of the church and people of God in general, as these were the enemies of Israel and Judah; and particularly for Rome, which, as it was spiritually called Egypt and Sodom, so it may be called Edom, as it often is by the Jews: now the prophet is bid to turn his face towards this mountain or country, and look sternly at it, and severely threaten it. The Targum is,

"take up a prophecy against it;"

which is expressed in the next clause:

and prophesy against it; foretell things contrary to it, which relate to its destruction, as follows:

Ezekiel 35:3

Ver. 3. And say unto it, thus saith the Lord God,.... The prophet was not upon the spot, and could not direct his speech immediately to the Edomites; but he might send this prophecy to their ambassadors at Babylon; or in a letter to them in their own land, in the name of the Lord:

behold, O Mount Seir, I am against thee: not the face of the prophet only, but the face of God himself was against them; and a terrible thing it is for any to have God to be against them, whether a nation, or a particular person. The Targum is,

"behold, I send my fury upon thee:"

and I will stretch out mine hand against thee; which was able to reach them wherever they were: and which, being stretched out, cannot be turned back; and, where it lights, falls heavy indeed; namely, his mighty hand of power and wrath. The Targum is,

"and I will lift up the stroke of my power upon thee;"

that is, lift up his hand and strike powerfully; the consequence of which must be as follows:

and I will make thee most desolate; their land, cities, towns, and villages, all should be utterly laid waste; see Re 17:16, so it follows:

Ezekiel 35:4

Ver. 4. I will lay thy cities waste,.... Such as Dedan, Teman, Bozrah, and other cities of Idumea mentioned in Scripture; and figuratively may design all within the jurisdiction of Rome, the several cities of the antichristian states, called "the cities of the nations"; which will fall at the pouring out of the vials, Re 16:19:

and thou shalt be desolate; thoroughly and entirely, and remain so:

and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; that has done all this; that the hand of God was in it; and that this is a punishment inflicted by him, for their sins after mentioned; but not that they should know the Lord spiritually and savingly, and so as to yield obedience to him, and own and acknowledge him to be their God; though this may be the case of a remnant among them; see Re 11:13.

Ezekiel 35:5

Ver. 5. Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred,.... There was an old grudge and enmity subsisting in the posterity of Esau against the posterity of Jacob, because the latter supplanted the former, and got the birthright and blessing from him; and which was discovered in all ages, and at all opportunities, and on all occasions which offered; and such has been the hatred of the church of Rome against the true professors and followers of Christ, as their bloody persecution of them in all ages have shown:

and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity: when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans, the Edomites not only rejoiced at it, and took part of the spoil, but stood in the crossways, and slew those that made their escape; or drove them back upon the sword of the enemy; or delivered them into their hands; which was barbarous and inhuman usage of their neighbours and brethren; see **Ob 1:10**. The Targum is,

"and thou didst deliver the children of Israel into the hands of those that slay with the sword, in the time of their destruction:"

in the time that their iniquity had an end; when either the measure of that was full; or when they received for it full correction and chastisement; at the consummation of that.

Ezekiel 35:6

Ver. 6. Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord God,.... The form of an oath; the Lord swears by himself, because he could swear by no greater; and which he never does but in matters of importance, and for the confirmation of them, as the following is:

I will prepare thee unto blood; prepare them for war, which will issue in slaughter and blood, such as the battle at Armageddon, Re 16:14: or, "I will make thee blood" {w}; nothing else but blood; a mere "Aceldama", a field of blood; turn thee into blood, as the sea, rivers, and fountains will be, at the pouring out the second and third vials, Re 16:3:

and blood shall pursue thee; the guilt and vengeance of blood; or the avengers of the blood of the saints; the angels that shall pour out the vials of wrath on Rome; the ten kings that shall hate the whore. So the Targum;

"they that slay with the sword shall pursue thee;"

or the shedders of blood, as Ben Melech:

saith thou hast not hated blood; Jarchi reads it; "hast hated blood": which he interprets of the blood of the sacrifices; as others, mentioned by him, of the blood of circumcision; and others, of his brother, who was his flesh and blood, and hated by him; but it is a figurative phrase, by which less is expressed than is intended. The sense is, thou hast loved blood; thou hast delighted in shedding blood; hast thirsted after it, and drank plentifully of it, and even been drunk with it, as the whore of Rome is said to be, Re 17:5:

even blood shall pursue thee; this is repeated for the confirmation of it; and this was measure for measure; a just retaliation; having shed blood, it was but right that blood should pursue, and be given, Re 16:5.

{w} Kvea Mdl "in sanguinem redigam te", Munster; "in sanguinem faciam te", Grotius; "sanguinem faciam te", Coceeius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 35:7

Ver. 7. Thus will I make Mount Seir most desolate,.... By shedding the blood of the inhabitants of it; and as Rome will be, when it will be utterly burnt with fire, as that city will, and the flesh of the whore also, and made desolate; and when all the vials shall be poured out on the antichristian states under her jurisdiction, Re 16:1:

and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth: every traveller that passeth to and fro; it shall no more be frequented by merchants; nor will there be any merchandise any more in it, Re 18:11.

Ezekiel 35:8

Ver. 8. And I will fill his mountains with his slain men,.... Not only Mount Seir, but all the rest of the mountains, in Idumea; where they shall flee for refuge, and the enemy shall pursue them, and slay them; and where their carcasses will fall in such numbers, as to cover the mountains with them; compare with this Re 19:18:

in thy hills, and in thy valleys, and in all thy rivers, shall they fall that are slain with the sword: expressive of the greatness and universality of the slaughter, that it should be a general one everywhere; hence rivers and fountains are said to become blood, through the number of the slain, Re 16:3.

Ezekiel 35:9

Ver. 9. I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return,.... To their former dignity and glory; should not be built and inhabited again, but lie waste for ever: this agrees with what is prophesied of Edom, **Mal 1:4** and will be true of Rome or Babylon when destroyed; it will never rise more, but be like a millstone in the midst of the sea, Re 18:21:

and ye shall know that I am the Lord; See Gill on "Eze 35:4".

Ezekiel 35:10

Ver. 10. Because thou hast said, these two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it,.... Meaning either Idumea he was now possessed of, and Israel he hoped to be, upon the people of it being carried captive; or rather the two nations of Israel and Judah, and their countries; which he pleased himself with would fall into his hands, as next heir to them; the posterity of his brother being dispossessed of them. This may denote the claim that Rome makes upon each of the Protestant nations and countries; and which she will think all her own, and that she is in the possession of them, upon the slaying of the witnesses; and when she will say, "I sit a queen, and am no widow", Re 18:7.

Whereas the Lord was there; and heard their words, as Kimchi; and knew their thoughts, as Jarchi; so the Targum,

"and before the Lord the thoughts of the heart were manifest."

The land of Judea was Immanuel's land; and as the Lord had been in it, and granted his gracious presence in the tabernacle and temple, so he still continued his powerful presence in it, to protect and keep it for his people; who should return to it after their captivity, and inhabit it until the Messiah came, who was to be born in it. Or it may be rendered, "though the Lord was" or "dwelt there" {x}; denoting the great impiety and daring wickedness of the Edomites, to think and talk of possessing a country that was the Lord's, and where he was: and this holds good of the true reformed churches of Christ; the Lord is there, and therefore, though they may be brought very low, and antichrist may triumph over them, and imagine he has got them under his power again, where they shall continue; yet on a sudden his destruction will come, and their deliverance. Or, "where the Lord was" {y}; but he has now departed, and will never return more, the temple being destroyed; so they said, encouraging themselves.

{x} hyh Mv hwhyw "licet Dominus ibi habitaverit", Piscator. So Syr. {y} "Ubi Jehovah fuit", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "et Jehovah ibi fuit", Starckius.

Ezekiel 35:11

Ver. 11. Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord,.... An oath, as before in Eze 35:6:

I will do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them: as thou hast been angry with them, and hated them, and done mischief to them, so will I be angry with thee, and hate thee, and inflict punishment on thee; I will retaliate all the anger, envy, and hatred showed unto my people, and punish thee according to thy just demerits. So the Romish antichrist shall be dealt with; he who has led into captivity shall go into it, and he that has killed with the sword shall be killed by it. Babylon shall be rewarded double, as she has rewarded, others, Re 13:10.

And I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee; the Targum is,

"and I will reveal myself to do good unto them, when I shall have taken vengeance on thee:"

after the destruction of antichrist, the knowledge of God, and of Christ, will be spread among Jews and Gentiles, even all the world over, so universally, so clearly and distinctly, as never was before, Da 12:4.

Ezekiel 35:12

Ver. 12. And thou shall know that I am the Lord,.... By the judgments executed upon Edom, and so upon antichrist; for God is known by the judgments he executes, both by good and bad men, **Ps 9:16**:

and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel; the people of Israel and Judah literally, and the churches and people of God figuratively: so antichrist is said to open his mouth in blasphemies, and to blaspheme the tabernacle of God, and them that dwell in heaven; that is, the church of God, and the saints of the most High; which are heard and observed by the Lord, and resented by him, and for which he will punish, Re 13:6:

saying, they are laid desolate, they are given up to consume; or, "for food" {z}; to possess and live upon; the inhabitants of them being carried captive or slain, so that there were none to enjoy the fruits of them; and therefore the Edomites concluded that the Israelites were forsaken of God, and that he would no more regard them, and that their land was theirs, which gave them great joy; see Re 11:10.

{z} hlkal eiv katabrwma, Sept.; "in cibum", Vatablus, Cocceius, Starckius, So Syr.

Ezekiel 35:13

Ver. 13. Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me,.... Or, "magnified against me" {a}; spoke great swelling words of vanity, or had a mouth opened to speak great things and blasphemy against God, as antichrist is said to do, Re 13:5, what is spoken against the Lord's people is taken by him as spoken against himself:

and have multiplied your words against me; not in prayer, by deprecations or supplications, as the word {b} used sometimes signifies; but in reproaches and calumnies, vilifying expressions and hard speeches, against his people, in great numbers; which is all one as if they were directed against him:

I have heard them; these the Lord takes notice of, and will call to an account for, either here or hereafter; see **Jude 1:15**.

{a} yle wlydgt "magnificastis contra me", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus, Cocceius, Starckius. {b} Mtrtex ab rte "orare suppliciter".

Ezekiel 35:14

Ver. 14. Thus saith the Lord God, when the whole earth rejoiceth,.... When it shall go well with the world in general, and the inhabitants of it; when they shall enjoy great peace and prosperity. Jarchi has a very good note upon this clause,

"when I shall take my kingdom; for then the earth will rejoice, as it is said, the Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice;"

so when Christ takes to himself his great power, and reigns, his church and people will rejoice, Re 11:16, as well as at the destruction of antichrist, as follows:

I will make thee desolate; for so some render it, "the whole earth rejoiceth when I make thee desolate"; or, "so shall all the earth rejoice in the desolation which I shall make for thee" {c}; see
Re 18:20 and which agrees with what follows:

{c} "Sic laetabitur omnis terra in desolatione quam faciam tibi", Vatablus.

Ezekiel 35:15

Ver. 15. As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate,.... So Edom rejoiced at the destruction of Jerusalem, **Ob 1:12**, and so the followers of the man of sin will rejoice at the slaying of the witnesses, Re 11:10, which is resented by the Lord, and therefore adds,

so will I do unto thee; make thee desolate, as is explained in the next clause:

thou shall be desolate, O Mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it; not that mount only, but all the land of Edom, called Idumea; the destruction shall be general, as it was, and irretrievable; and so not Rome only, but all the antichristian states, will be destroyed, when God comes forth in his wrath against them:

and they shall know that I am the Lord; the Lord God omniscient and omnipotent; who, having foretold all this, shall accomplish it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 36:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 36

This chapter is a prophecy concerning the desolations of the land of Israel, and the causes of them; of the return of the people to it, and the fruitfulness of it; and of spiritual blessings bestowed upon them in the latter day. And first, for the comfort of the people of Israel, it is observed that their enemies that insulted them will suffer the vengeance of God's wrath, particularly the Edomites, Eze 36:1, that the land of Israel should again become fruitful, its cities rebuilt, men and beasts be multiplied upon it, and be no more liable to destruction, nor bear any more the reproach of the Heathen, Eze 36:8, the causes of its desolation and destruction, the sins of its inhabitants, especially bloodshed, idolatry, and profanation of the name of God, Eze 36:16, nevertheless the Lord promises to have mercy on them, and return them to their own land, not for their sakes, but for his own name's sake, Eze 36:21, then follow promises of spiritual blessings to them: as purification from all sin by the blood of Christ; regeneration by his Spirit and grace; and evangelical obedience as the fruit of that, Eze 36:25, and others of a mixed kind, respecting partly temporal and partly spiritual blessings, Eze 36:28, for all which it is expected of the Lord that he should be prayed unto for them; particularly their inhabitation in their own land, and the multiplication of them in it, with which the chapter concludes, Eze 36:37.

Ver. 1. Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel,.... The land of Judah, which was very mountainous, at least one part of it, called the hill country, **Lu 1:39** and now the country being cleared of men through the captivity, and other desolating judgments, there were none but bare mountains to speak unto: or, "prophesy concerning the mountains of Israel" {d}; the inhabitants of them, or those that should be restored to them, concerning their future happiness and comfort: some render it, "against the mountains of Israel" {e}; but the later prophecies of them are in their favour, and not against them:

and say, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord; concerning the destruction of their enemies, and concerning the temporal blessings that should be bestowed on them.

{d} larvy yrh la "de montibus Israelis", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus. {e} "Contra montes Israelis", Vatablus.

Ezekiel 36:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith the Lord God,.... By the mouth of the prophet, who was bid to prophesy:

because the enemy had said against you, aha: rejoicing at the calamity of God's people, particularly the Edomites or Idumeans, as in the preceding chapter; and who are chiefly meant; and also the Ammonites and Tyrians, Eze 25:3:

even the ancient high places are ours in possession; or, "the high places of the world shall be unto us for a possession" {f}; the land of Israel, according to Kimchi and others, was the highest part of the world, Jerusalem the highest part of that land, and the temple was built on the highest part of the city; and all these the Edomites claimed as their own, the land, city, and temple, and thought themselves sure of the same, as if they had them in actual possession; even the hilly part of the country, which had been so from the creation, and where stood many of the fortified and frontier towns and cities; which as strong as they were, or had been, they fancied would easily fall into their hands, now such desolations were made in the land.

{f} wnl htyh hvrwml Mlwe twmb "excelsa seculi haereditario jure futura sunt nobis", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "celsa seculi haereditas evenit nobis", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 36:3

Ver. 3. Therefore prophesy and say, thus saith the Lord God,.... Who heard all the enemy said, and knew all their designs and purposes, their schemes and devices:

because they have made you desolate; ravaged their country, destroyed their cities, burnt their temple, and carried them captive, and left the land without men or cattle:

and swallowed you up on every side; all their neighbours, being their enemies, were like ravenous beasts of prey, gaping upon them with their mouths; and, observing the low condition into which they were brought by the king of Babylon, helped forward the destruction; and everyone shared in the spoil and plunder nearest to them they could conveniently come at:

that ye might be a possession to the residue of the Heathen; either to those that were left in the land by the king of Babylon, or to the rest of the Heathen nations round about them:

ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people; reproached, defamed, and made a proverb and byword, by every foul mouthed prating fellow.

Ezekiel 36:4

Ver. 4. Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord,.... As in Eze 36:1, here repeated to raise and quicken their attention to what was about to be said to them:

thus saith the Lord God to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken; before only the mountains are spoken to, though the whole land was included; here the several particulars are given, which describe the whole, and which suffered in the calamity, and the inhabitants that dwelt in them or near them; who only can be supposed to hear the word of the Lord, though places are only mentioned, because of the great depopulation of them:

which became a prey and derision to the residue of the Heathen that are round about; to the Tyrians, Philistines, Edomites, Ammonites, and Moabites; who mocked the Jews, rejoicing at their destruction by the king of Babylon, and seized upon as a prey to themselves what he left: or these are the residue of the Heathens round about Judea; who remained after the judgments threatened were executed on the above nations, foretold in chapters twenty five and twenty six, see Eze 36:36.

Ezekiel 36:5

Ver. 5. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Because these Heathens have acted such an unkind and cruel part to Israel:

surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken; in his fierce wrath and hot displeasure, resenting the ill usage of his people; hot with indignation against their enemies, having a fervent zeal for his own glory, and an affectionate concern for the good of his people. It is in the original text in the form of an oath, "if I have not spoken", &c. {g}; let me be reckoned a liar, or not God; believe me that I have spoken, and in this warm manner; and have not only foretold in prophecy, and threatened the destruction of these nations, but have resolved and determined upon it in my own mind. So the Targum,

"if I have not in the fire of my vengeance decreed in my word:"

against the residue of the Heathen, and against all Idumea; or Edom; the Edomites, even all of them, who of all the Heathen were the most inveterate and implacable enemies of the Jews, though related to them, and are therefore particularly mentioned as the objects of the divine vengeance: the reason follows,

which have appointed my land into their possession; this land where his chosen people dwelt, and which he chose for them, and gave unto them; the land where he himself dwelt, and granted his presence; where his temple was, and he was worshipped. So the Targum,

"the land of the house of my majesty."

Now this the Lord took ill at their hands, and resented, that they should lay out this land for themselves, and determine upon it as a possession and inheritance of theirs.

With the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey; with the utmost joy they joined Nebuchadnezzar's army when he invaded the land of Judea and besieged Jerusalem, out of pure malice and spite to the people of the Jews, in order to eject them from the possession of their land, that it might become a prey to them; see
Ps 137:7.

{g} al Ma "si non", Cocceius, Starckius; "[sub.] mentiar", Junius & Tremellius; "non ero Deus", Piscator.

Ezekiel 36:6

Ver. 6. Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel,.... And the inhabitants of it, for their comfort, in this their time of distress:

and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, thus saith the Lord God, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury; with great zeal for his honour, and the interest of his people; and with indignation at his and their enemies:

because ye have borne the shame of the Heathen; their calumnies and lies, their reproaches and scoffs, their injuries and abuses; all which were resented by the Lord, and therefore he determines to punish for them.

Ezekiel 36:7

Ver. 7. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... This being the case, the people of God being in distress, and under shame and disgrace, and the enemy insulting them, and triumphing over them:

I have lifted up mine hand; solemnly swore; lifting up of the hand being a rite used by men when they swore, Ge 14:22:

surely the Heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame; the punishment of their shame; that which is justly due to them for reproaching and putting to shame the people of God: or they shall be a laughing stock to others, and be reproached and derided themselves, and so be paid in their own coin; a just retaliation this for their treatment of the Jews.

Ezekiel 36:8

Ver. 8. But ye, O mountains of Israel,.... Literally understood, as appears by what follows; for though they could not hear what was said, the proprietors of them could, now in captivity; and the efficacy of the word should be seen on them, producing the following effects:

ye shall shoot forth your branches; that is, the trees that grew upon them should; the vines, and the olive trees, planted on hills and mountains, as was usual, as appears from the mount of Olives, and other places:

and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; not only put forth branches, but bear fruit; and which should be given to the right owners, the people of Israel, and not to the Heathens, who had claimed the ancient mountains for their possession:

for they are at hand to come; the Israelites; either by repentance, as Kimchi; or by a return from the Babylonish captivity, which was about forty or fifty years after this prophecy; and which was but a shadow and figure of their restoration in the latter day, yet to come; which might be said to be at hand, or near, with respect to God, with whom two or three thousand years are as nothing. The Targum is,

"for the day of my redemption is near to come."

Ezekiel 36:9

Ver. 9. For, behold, I am for you,.... For the mountains, that they might be cultivated and become fruitful, and be of advantage to their proprietors, and appear beautiful and lovely to behold, as well as to be useful:

and I will turn unto you; the Lord had turned from them, and left them a prey to the enemy, whereby they were become desolate; but now he would turn unto them, and bless them, and make them fruitful, and return the right owners of them to them, who should greatly improve them:

and ye shall be tilled and sown; manured and cultivated, and sown with wheat and barley, as in former times.

Ezekiel 36:10

Ver. 10. And I will multiply men upon you,.... Who should inhabit the cities on the mountains, and increase very much:

all the house of Israel, even all of it: not the Heathens should be multiplied on them, but the Israelites, all of them, and them only; all the tribes of Israel, the ten tribes as well as the other; and which is repeated for the confirmation of it: by this it appears that the prophecy has a further view than to the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity; for all did not return, many remained in the provinces of Babylon; and those that returned were chiefly of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; but few of the rest came with them. Kimchi thinks the words have respect to the ten tribes, which he says are hid to this day; so Ben Melech.

And the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded; in a literal sense; as well as the church of God, and inheritance of Christ, shall then be in a flourishing condition.

Ezekiel 36:11

Ver. 11. And I will multiply upon you man and beast,.... Not only men, but beasts also, of which the mountains had been deprived, being killed by the enemy for present use, or drove off for future subsistence; but now there should be an increase of them, which should feed upon the herbage of the mountains, and the rich pastures on them, to the great advantage of the proprietors:

and they shall increase and bring forth; or, "multiply and increase" {h}; both men and beasts:

and I will settle you after your old estates; that is, you mountains shall be inhabited by those that formerly dwelt in you, and you shall be enjoyed by your right owners; by those who had you in possession from the beginning, from the times of Joshua; by whom you were settled on them by lot, according to their several tribes:

and will do better unto you than at your beginnings; not that the land should be better or more fruitful than in the times of Joshua, who led the people into and found it a land flowing with milk and honey, and abounding with all kind of fruit; or that the people should be more flourishing in temporal things than in the times of David and Solomon; for no such fruitfulness and prosperity took place upon the return from the Babylonish captivity: but rather this is to be understood of spiritual blessings and privileges in the times of the Messiah; and particularly when the Jews will be converted in the latter day:

and ye shall know that I am the Lord; that is, the inhabitants of the mountains of Israel, the converted Jews, shall know and own the Messiah, and that he is Jehovah, the eternal God, and not a mere man.

{h} wrpw wbrw "multiplicabuntur et crescent", Pagninus, Montanus; "multiplicabunter et fructificabunt", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 36:12

Ver. 12. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you,.... And not beasts, as during the captivity; and that without fear of wild beasts, or any enemy; and not as travellers upon them, but as inhabitants of them; who shall walk to and fro upon them, as the owners of them, and doing their proper business there:

even my people Israel; and them only: some read it, "with my people Israel" {i}; as if other men, Gentiles called by grace, should dwell with the Jews at this time, particularly at their restoration in the latter day; which may be true, and, which seems to be the sense of the whole sixtieth chapter of Isaiah's prophecy:

and they shall possess thee, and thou shall be their inheritance; that is, thou mountain; a change of number, meaning everyone of the mountains, even the whole land of Canaan, which was given to the Israelites for an inheritance; and was typical of the eternal inheritance in heaven:

and thou shall no more henceforth bereave them; of men, or of children; or be no more the cause of their being childless, or of bereaving them of men; sins committed on the mountains being the cause of provoking the Lord to bereave them; or men should be no more killed upon them, as they had been.

{i} larvy yme ta "cum populo meo Israele", Junius & Tremcellius.

Ezekiel 36:13

Ver. 13. Thus saith the Lord God, because they say unto you,.... The Heathens that dwelt round about the land of Judea said to the mountains, or to the whole land,

thou land devourest up men; eats up the inhabitants of it; which is part of the ill report the spies, in the times of Moses, brought on it, Nu 13:32, to which the allusion is here; suggesting, that either the air was unwholesome; or that the land did not produce a sufficiency of food to support the inhabitants of it; or that the curse of God was upon it; and that one judgment or another was ever on it; either famine, or pestilence, or the sword of the enemy, or internal broils among themselves, or wild beasts, whereby the inhabitants of the land were wasted and consumed:

and hast bereaved thy nations; the several tribes, of men and children; so that they were diminished and depopulated: the allusion seems to be to miscarrying women, or such who kill their children in the womb, and become abortive.

Ezekiel 36:14

Ver. 14. Therefore thou shalt devour men no more,.... Or they shall be no more destroyed in thee by pestilence, famine, sword, or other means:

neither bereave that nations any more, saith the Lord; or, "thou shalt not cause them to fall any more" {k}, for so it is written, as in Eze 36:15, though the marginal reading is, "thou shalt not bereave", which we follow; and both are to be received, since miscarriages often come by falls.

{k} ylvkt al "non impingere facies", Montanus, Vatablus; "non offendere facies", Starckius.

Ezekiel 36:15

Ver. 15. Neither will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the Heathen any more,.... Their calumnies and revilings, their scoffs and jeers:

neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more; or be any more a taunt and a curse, a proverb and a byword of the people; or be their laughing stock, and the object of their derision:

neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord God; by famine, sword, or pestilence, or any other judgment caused by sin: or, "thou shalt not bereave" {l}, as the marginal reading is; and which the Targum and many versions follow: now what is here promised, in this and the preceding verse, had not its full accomplishment upon the Jews' return from the Babylonish captivity; for since that time their men have been devoured, and their tribes have been bereaved of them by famine, sword, and pestilence; and they have heard and bore the shame and reproach of the nations where they have been dispersed, and do to this day; wherefore these prophecies must refer to a future restoration of that people.

{l} "Non orbabis", Starckius.

Ezekiel 36:16

Ver. 16. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me,.... Here begins another prophecy, which was delivered about the same time with the former:

saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 36:17

Ver. 17. Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land,.... The land of Canaan, which the Lord their God gave unto them; a land abounding with all good things, where they dwelt in great ease, plenty, and prosperity; and which also was a holy land, peculiarly chosen of God for his worship and service:

they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: by their sinful ways and evil works: sin is of a defiling nature; it defiles the bodies and souls of men; it defiles their own, and it defiles others; it defiles a land, and the inhabitants of it, and makes them loathsome and abominable to a pure and holy God:

their way was before me, as the uncleanness of a removed woman: of a menstruous woman in the time of her separation; when she was debarred the company of her husband, and might not enter into the sanctuary of the Lord: this shows what an evil thing sin is, what an uncleanness it is in the sight of God, how abhorrent sinful ways are to him; and though he was the husband of these people, yet, because of their sins, he separated from them, and removed them from and out of their land, as not fit to be in his presence, nor to live there.

Ezekiel 36:18

Ver. 18. Wherefore I poured my fury on them,.... Like a mighty flood that carries all before it, in just retaliation

for the blood they had shed upon the land; the innocent blood, as the Targum; the blood of righteous men, that opposed and reproved them for their sinful ways; the blood of the prophets, that were sent to warn them of them; and especially the blood of the Son of God; for this prophecy reaches further than to the times of the Babylonish captivity:

and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it; or, "for their dung" {m}; their dunghill gods; not only for their idols, and their idolatry, before the Babylonish captivity, which they after that were free from; but for the traditions of their elders, they set up against and above the word of God; and their own legal righteousness, their idols, the works of their hands, which wore as dung; and through their attachment to which they rejected Christ and his righteousness; and which brought wrath upon them, and them into their present captivity.

{m} Mhylwlgb "stercoreis diis suis", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "stercoribus suis", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 36:19

Ver. 19. And I scattered them among the Heathen,.... First by the Chaldeans, in the various provinces of Babylon; and next by the Romans, in the various parts of the world; and in this condition they now are:

and they were dispersed through the countries; or blown about as chaff, stubble, or any such like thing, is by the wind:

according to their way and according to their doings I judged them; condemned and punished them as their evil ways and wicked works deserved, according to the rules of justice and equity; so that no injustice was done them, nor could any fault be justly found in the proceedings of God towards them.

Ezekiel 36:20

Ver. 20. And when they entered unto the Heathen, whither they went,.... When the Jews went into the Heathen countries, whither they were carried captive, either by the Chaldeans, or by the Romans:

they profaned my holy name; by their irreligion and immorality; by their violation of both tables of the law; by their wicked lives and conversations, whereby they gave the enemy an occasion to reproach them, their religion, and their God, **Ro 2:24**:

when they said to them, these are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land; these are the men that boast they are the people of the Lord, whom he has chosen above all people, and see what a wicked people they are; for their sins they are driven out of the land, and become our captives: or though they were the Lord's people, as they pretend, and were under his care and protection; yet he was not able to keep them in their own land, and deliver them out of our hands, but they are carried captive by us; and thus the name of God, his being and perfections, were blasphemed, and his word, worship, and worshippers, were ridiculed by them. The Targum is,

"if these are the people of the Lord, how is it that they are gone out of the land of the house of his majesty?"

Ezekiel 36:21

Ver. 21. But I had pity for my holy name,.... Had pity on the Jews for his name's sake, and not theirs; or he had a tender concern for his own honour and glory:

which the house of Israel had profaned among the Heathen, whither they went; and therefore was resolved to take a method for the glorifying of it, and that in a way of special grace and mercy to his people;
See Gill on "Eze 36:20".

Ezekiel 36:22

Ver. 22. Therefore say unto the house of Israel,.... This is an order to the prophet, the son of man, Eze 36:17:

thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel; what he hereafter promises to do for them, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual; which he did, not on account of any deserts or worthiness in them; for they had none, having done nothing to merit his favour, but, on the contrary, everything to provoke the eyes of his glory:

but for my holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the Heathen, whither ye went; for the honour of his holy name, for the glory of his holy word, holy worship, and holy religion; all which were traduced and reproached among the Heathen, by reason of the ungodly behaviour of the Jews.

Ezekiel 36:23

Ver. 23. And I will sanctify my great name,.... The same with his holy name; for his greatness lies in his holiness; which name he sanctifies when he clears it from all charges and imputations; when he makes it appear to be holy and himself to be glorious in holiness; when he vindicates the honour of his name, not in a way of punishment, as he justly might, but in a way of grace and mercy; he sanctifies his name when he proclaims it, a God gracious and merciful; for it was in this way and manner he determined to make himself illustrious and glorious, and do honour to his name:

which was profaned among the Heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; this is repeated again and again, to show the heinousness of this sin, how ill he took it at their hands, and what a concern it gave him:

and the Heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes; when the Lord shall fulfil his promises, and deliver his people; when he shall sanctify, justify, and save them; and he shall be sanctified, served, and worshipped by them, and among them: it will be taken notice of by infidels themselves; and they shall hereby know, and be obliged to acknowledge, that the God of Israel is the only Lord God; that he is true and faithful to his word, righteous and holy, in his ways, the Lord God omniscient and omnipotent.

Ezekiel 36:24

Ver. 24. For I will take you from among the Heathen,.... The Chaldeans and other nations, among whom they were carried captive; and the Papists, among whom many of them now are, often called Heathens and Gentiles in Scripture: this will be fully completed at the time of the Jews' conversion in the latter day: the phrase fitly expresses the act of divine grace, in taking his people from among the world by the effectual calling:

and gather you out of all countries; to himself, and to his Son, and to his church, and to some certain place from whence they will go up in a body to their own land, as follows: see **Ho 1:11**:

and will bring you into your own land; into the land of Canaan literally understood, as well as into the church of God here, and into the heavenly country hereafter, of which Canaan was a type.

Ezekiel 36:25

Ver. 25. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you,.... Not baptismal water, as Jerom; an ordinance indeed of the Gospel, and to which the Jews will submit when converted; and which is performed by water, but not by sprinkling, nor does it cleanse from sin; and is administered by men, and is not an operation of God, as this is: rather the regenerating grace of the Spirit; though this does not purify from all sin, and besides is intended in the next verse: it seems best to understand it of the blood of Christ, the blood of sprinkling, and of justification from sin, and pardon of it by it; so Kimchi and Jarchi interpret of purification by atonement; and the Targum is,

"I will forgive your sins, as one is cleansed by the water of sprinkling, and the ashes of a heifer, which is for a sin offering:"

and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you; the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin; by it men are justified from all things, and are made perfectly pure and spotless in the sight of God; they are cleansed from original sin, the pollution of their nature; from all actual sins and transgressions, which are very defiling; from sins of heart, lip, and life; even from such as are idols, set up in the heart, and served.

Ezekiel 36:26

Ver. 26. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you,.... A "new heart" and a "new spirit" are one and the same; that is, a renewed one; renewed by the Spirit and grace of God; in which a new principle of life is put; new light is infused; a new will, filled with new purposes and resolutions; where new affections are placed, and new desires are formed; and where there are new delights and joys, as well as new sorrows and troubles; the same which in the New Testament is called the "new man", and the new creature, **Eph 4:24**. The Targum paraphrases it,

"a heart fearing, and a spirit fearing;"

where the true fear of God is, a truly gracious heart; and which is purely the gift of God, and is the fruit of his rich grace, abundant mercy, and great love:

and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh; the Targum is,

"and I will break the heart of the wicked, which is hard as a stone;"

this is a heart hardened by sin, and confirmed in it; destitute of spiritual life and motion; senseless and stupid, stubborn and inflexible; on which no impressions are made; and which remains hard and impenitent: now this is in "the flesh", in corrupt nature; and this hardness of heart is natural to men; and all who have it are after the flesh, or are carnal; and it requires omnipotence to remove it; it cannot be taken out by men of themselves: nor by ministers of the word; nor by the bare mercies and judgments of God; but by the powerful and efficacious grace of God; giving repentance unto life; working faith in the soul, to look to a crucified Christ; and shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, which softens and melts it; all which is done by the Spirit, and frequently by means of the word. This is interpreted, in the Talmud {n}, of the evil imagination, or corruption of nature; and is one of the names of it, a stone; and it refers, it is said {o}, to the time or world to come, the days of the Messiah:

and I will give you an heart of flesh; a heart sensible of sin and danger; a penitent one, soft and tender, through the love and fear of God; a spiritual and sanctified heart; submissive to the will of God; flexible and obsequious to the commands of Christ; on which impressions are made by the grace of God; where the laws of God are written, the Gospel of Christ is put; where Christ himself is formed; where are the fear of God, faith, hope, and love, and every other grace.

{n} T. Bab. Succah, fol. 52. 1. {o} Debarim Rabba, fol. 242. 2. & Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 3. 2.

Ezekiel 36:27

Ver. 27. And I will put my Spirit within you,.... My Holy Spirit, as the Targum; the Spirit of holiness; the author of internal sanctification, of the new heart and spirit, and of the fleshy one before mentioned; and through whose grace and strength the saints do what is after said they shall do:

and cause you to walk in my statutes: men are first made alive by the Spirit of God, and have spiritual strength put into them, who of themselves can do nothing; by means of which they are enabled to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, and to continue in the observation of them; which walking in them supposes:

and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them; being constrained by the love of God; influenced by the grace of Christ; and strengthened by the blessed Spirit: and such persons observe and do them willingly and cheerfully; from a principle of love; in faith, and to the glory of God; without any mercenary and selfish views; without trusting to, and depending upon, what is done for salvation.

Ezekiel 36:28

Ver. 28. And ye shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers,.... Not only shall be brought into it, but shall inhabit it, and continue there, and that in great safety and plenty; and which will be the more valued and esteemed, and reckoned a great blessing to enjoy; because this land is the gift of God, and what he gave to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by promise so long ago, and to their seed; of which promise it appears he is not unmindful:

and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God; which is the sum and substance of the covenant of grace; which will now be renewed, and the blessings of it applied. The Jews will appear to be the people of God by their effectual calling and conversion; and God will show himself to be their God, by his presence with them, his protection of them, and that communion with himself he will admit them to: see Jer 31:1, "the loammi" will be taken off, and they will be again declared to be the covenant people of God, **Ho 1:9**.

Ezekiel 36:29

Ver. 29. And I will also save you from all your uncleannesses,.... From all their filthy lusts of pride, envy, malice, covetousness, whoredom, blasphemy, and infidelity, to which the Jews are now addicted; but at this time shall be saved from the power and dominion of them by the sanctifying grace of the Spirit; and from the guilt and pollution of them by the blood of Christ sprinkled on them; and this, not from one, or some of them only, but from all of them; all Israel will be saved, and they will be saved from all their sins, Ro 11:25:

and I will call for the corn, and will increase it; which shall answer to the call of God, as a servant to his master; and shall spring up out of the earth in great abundance; and which shall grow, and increase, and bring forth much fruit; and yield bread to the eater, and seed to the sower: and which is to be understood, not of corn in a literal sense only, but of corn in a spiritual sense; of all spiritual provisions, the word and ordinances, and especially the corn of wheat, Christ Jesus; who is the sum and substance of the Gospel and his ordinances, and is in them food for the faith of his people; see **Zec 9:17**: and

lay no famine upon you; neither a famine of bread, or of water; nor of hearing the word of the Lord; but shall have plenty of provisions, both for soul and body; see **Am 8:11**.

Ezekiel 36:30

Ver. 30. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field,.... The fruit of trees that grow in gardens, and orchards, and vineyards, as pomegranates, apples, olives, grapes, &c. and the corn and grass of the field; so that there shall be great plenty of each of these, and no want of anything for man or beast: and by these are mystically designed spiritual blessings; the fruits of righteousness, with which the saints, who are trees of righteousness, shall be laden; and an increase of gifts and grace in the churches of Christ, and the members of them:

that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the Heathen; who upbraided them with it, that they were forced to go to other nations for food, as in the times of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and that their land wanted rain, and waited for it; which, if it had not, became barren; whereas the Egyptians particularly needed it not, their land being watered yearly with the overflowings of the Nile: or the sense is, they should not be reproached with their penury and want of the things of life; and spiritually, that they should not be upbraided by the Gentiles with their want of the Gospel, and their contempt of it, their blasphemy and their unbelief; since they should now have it, receive, embrace, and love it, and feed upon it.

Ezekiel 36:31

Ver. 31. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways,.... That were of their own choosing; in which they walked, and delighted to walk: and very evil ones they were; opposite to the ways of God; such as open violation of the law of God; neglect of his worship; idolatry, and many other sins, before the captivity; adhering to the traditions of their elders; and setting up their own righteousness as a justifying one afterwards; also their disbelief and rejection of the Messiah; their blasphemy against him, and persecution of his interest and people: now these will all be remembered with shame and confusion when the Lord shall bestow upon them the above blessings, spiritual and temporal; especially when a new heart and spirit shall be given them; the goodness of God will have such an influence upon them as to refresh their memories with former sins, and bring them to repentance for them; as well as to affect their minds, and make them thankful for present mercies: sins, which were before forgotten, or were not thought to be sins, shall now come fresh in their minds, with all their aggravated guilt:

and your doings that were not good: far from being so, they were very evil, contrary to the law of God and Gospel of Christ; as they will at this time appear to themselves to be:

and shall loath yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations; their sins will be abominable to them, as they are in themselves, and to the Lord; and they will not only loath them, but themselves for them, when they shall come to have a true sight of them in their own colours, and a true sense of the evil nature of them; and this shall not be expressed only in the sight of men, and so as to be observed by them; but in their own sight, secretly and within themselves, under a clear and full conviction of their sins. The Syriac version is, "your faces shall be wrinkled"; as men's are when they are displeased with themselves for what they have done. The Targum is,

"and ye shall groan when ye shall see, because of your sins, and because of your abominations;"

which is the case of sensible sinners, **2Co 5:4**.

Ezekiel 36:32

Ver. 32. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord,.... Not for any worth or worthiness in them; for any merit or desert of theirs; for any goodness in them, or works of righteousness done by them; no, it purely flowed from his own unmerited grace and goodness; for his own sake, and for his own glory, will he do it; see **De 9:4**:

be it known unto you; this the Lord would have this people take notice of, who were very fond of their own righteousness and merits, and to trust therein, and ascribe much thereunto, as most men are too apt to do; and therefore, to take down their pride, and take them off of their boastings and vain opinions of themselves, he would have them know and acknowledge this; and be so far from placing any of the favours bestowed on them to the account of the merit of their good works, that they ought to take shame for their evil ones, as follows:

be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel; as men are when they are brought to a true sight and sense of them, and reflect upon the evil of them, and are brought to true repentance for them; see Eze 16:61.

Ezekiel 36:33

Ver. 33. Thus saith the Lord God, in the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities,.... By the free and full pardon of them; by sprinkling clean water on them, the blood of Christ on their consciences; and by applying the righteousness of Christ to them for their justification; as well as by creating clean hearts in them, for their sanctification; and enabling them by grace to escape and abstain from the pollutions of the world:

I will also cause you to dwell in the cities; that is, of Judea, which, as well as Jerusalem, shall be rebuilt and inhabited, as follows:

and the wastes shall be builded: such cities and towns as lay in ruins: temporal prosperity shall go along with or follow spiritual blessings to the people of the Jews at their conversion; or they shall dwell in the churches of Christ, which are as cities compact together, well regulated, and where Jews and Gentiles at this time will be fellow citizens.

Ezekiel 36:34

Ver. 34. And the desolate land shall be tilled,.... The land of Judea, which lay desolate during the captivity, and which now is under the dominion of the Turks, and in a ruinous state, shall be manured and cultivated, and become fruitful, as it formerly was: or the people of the Jews, who, in a spiritual sense, are like barren and uncultivated ground; these shall have the fallow ground of their hearts ploughed up, and the seeds of grace, truth, and righteousness, shall be sown in them, and they shall bring forth the fruit of good works:

whereas it lay desolate in the eyes of all that passed by: as the land of Canaan now does to every traveller in it, that observes it, and compares it with what it once was; and as the present state of the Jews is, in the eyes of every Christian pilgrim and traveller, that takes notice of their blindness and ignorance, their unbelief and hardness of heart.

Ezekiel 36:35

Ver. 35. And they shall say,.... Either the neighbouring nations that lived round about the land of Israel, Eze 36:36, or rather the travellers, as before, who having as they passed by observed what it had been, and now see what it is; these shall say to one another:

this land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; for delight and fruitfulness: this may well be applied to the flourishing and fruitful state of the church of God, consisting of converted Jews, in the latter day:

and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited; which, as it will be true of cities in a literal sense, so of the churches of Christ in Judea in a spiritual sense; which will be rebuilt by the grace of God, fenced and fortified by his almighty power, and inhabited by true believers.

Ezekiel 36:36

Ver. 36. Then the Heathen that are left round about you,.... Not cut off by the judgments which came upon them, according to the prophecies in chapter twenty five and twenty six, the residue of the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Tyrians; and, in the mystical sense, this may design the residue of the antichristian states not destroyed by the vials of God's wrath; see Re 11:13:

shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate; this work of rebuilding Jerusalem, and other cities of Judea, and planting desolate places with trees, and all manner of corn and herbage for man and beast, as well as of building up and planting churches, will appear so manifestly the work of God, and not of men; which is brought about by his wonderful providence, or more surprising grace; that even the Heathen round about will take notice of it, and own and acknowledge it to be the Lord's work:

I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it; he has spoken of it by his prophets; he has promised it in his word, and he will surely do it; for he is true and faithful to his promises, and able to perform.

Ezekiel 36:37

Ver. 37. Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel,.... Besought and prayed unto for the accomplishment of the above promises, as well as what follows: for though God has promised and will perform, yet he expects that his people will apply to him for it; it is our duty to put the Lord in mind of his promises, to plead them with him, and pray unto him for the fulfilment of them. The Syriac version is, "even for this I seek Israel"; and so the Arabic version; as if the sense was, that the Lord will seek the people of Israel wherever they are, and find them out, and call them by his grace, and gather them out of all countries, and bring them into their own land: "to do it for them"; everything before promised, and what next follows:

I will increase them with men like a flock; as a flock of sheep is increased, which is a very increasing creature: or, "as a flock of men" {p}; it signifies that the people of the Jews will be very numerous at their conversion; see **Ho 1:10**.

{p} Mda Nauk "sicut gregem hominum", V. L. Syr.; "sicut pecus hominus", Montanus; "pecudes hominum", Pagninus.

Ezekiel 36:38

Ver. 38. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts,.... Like flocks of sheep, which were consecrated and set apart for holy uses, for sacrifices; even like the flocks of sheep, which were brought to Jerusalem to be offered in sacrifice at the three solemn festivals in the year; especially at the passover, when the Jews came from all parts of the country to slay and eat their passover; and every family had a lamb, which in all must be a great number: we read of thirty thousand lambs and three thousand bullocks given at one time for this service by King Josiah, besides what was given by the princes,
2Ch 35:7. The Targum is,

"as the holy people, as a people that is cleansed, and comes to Jerusalem at the feasts of the passover:"

or, "as the flock of the Holy Ones" {q}; either of the holy God, Father, Son, and Spirit; or of holy men, who are made holy or sanctified by the Spirit of God:

so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; or with men that are like sheep for meekness, harmlessness, patience, cleanness, society, and usefulness; and not with such as are comparable to unclean beasts, or beasts of prey; so it denotes both the quantity of persons that shall inhabit Judea, and dwelt both in the cities and churches there, and the quality of them.

{q} Myvdq Nauk "sicut oves sanctorum", Vatablus, Gussetius, Starckius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 37:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 37

This chapter contains a prophecy of the Jews' return from captivity to their own land; of the union of the each tribes with one another; and of the glorious kingdom of Christ among them. Their restoration is represented by a vision of dry bones made alive; the place in which they were; the condition they were in; and the manner in which they were made to live, are described, Eze 37:1, the explication and application of this vision to the Jews, Eze 37:11, their union is signified by a sign or emblem of two sticks, which became one in the hand of the prophet,
Eze 37:15, the meaning of this is shown, Eze 37:18, then follow promises of their return to their own land, in express words; of their being one kingdom, under one King, Christ, the antitype of David, of their sanctification; of their covenant interest in God, made manifest to them; and of his presence, and dwelling among them,
Eze 37:21.

Ver. 1. The hand of the Lord was upon me,.... The Spirit of the Lord, a powerful impulse of his upon the prophet; the Targum interprets it a spirit of prophecy; See Gill on "Eze 1:3":

and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord: out of the place where he was to another; not really, but visionally, as things appeared to him, and as they were represented to his mind by the Spirit of God:

and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones: of men, as the Targum adds: this valley, Kimchi thinks, was the same by the river Chebar, where the prophet had his visions at first. R. Jochanan says it was the valley of Dura, and these the bones of them that were slain by Nebuchadnezzar there, **Da 3:1**. Rab says these were the children of Ephraim, slain by the men of

Gath, **1Ch 7:20**. Some of the Jewish Rabbins think there was a real resurrection at this time. R. Eliezer says, the dead Ezekiel quickened stood upon their feet, sung a song, and died. R. Eliezer, the son of R. Jose the Galilean, says, they went up into the land of Israel, married wives, and begat sons and daughters. R. Judah ben Bethira stood upon his feet, and said, I am of their children's children, and these are the "tephillim" my father's father left me {r}; but these are all fabulous and romantic: others of them understand the whole in a parabolical way: these bones, and the quickening of them, were an emblem of the restoration of the Jews from their captivity, who were in a helpless and hopeless condition, as appears from Eze 37:11, and of the conversion of that people in the latter day, which will be as life from the dead; and of the revival of the interest and church of Christ, when the slain witnesses shall rise, and ascend to heaven; and of the resurrection of the dead at the last day; and may be applied unto and be used to illustrate the quickening of dead sinners, by the efficacious grace of the Spirit of God.

{r} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 2. Vid. Kimchi & Abendana in loc.

Ezekiel 37:2

Ver. 2. And caused me to pass by them round about,....

Round, round {s}; several times round, that he might take exact notice of them, of their number, situation, and condition:

and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; as the Jews were in captivity; and as they will be when they shall be converted; and as the number of Christians will be in the spiritual reign of Christ; and as the dead will be at the time of their resurrection, both of the just and unjust:

and, lo, they were very dry; through length of time they had lain there, exposed to wind and weather; the flesh being wholly consumed from off of them, and the marrow within quite dried up; so that there was no probability or hope, humanly speaking, of their being quickened: these are a fit emblem of men in a state of nature and unregeneracy, who have no spiritual life, but are dead in trespasses and sins; have no sense of sin or danger; no strength to redeem and regenerate themselves, or do anything that is spiritually good; have no spiritual motion; no inward desires after God, or affection to him; no lifting up of the heart to him, or going out of the soul in faith and love to Christ; but in themselves entirely lifeless, helpless, and hopeless.

{s} bybo bybo "circum circa", Pagninus; "undique undique", Montanus.

Ezekiel 37:3

Ver. 3. And he said unto me, son of man, can these bones live?.... Is there any probability of it? is there any reason to believe they shall live? can any ways and means be devised, or any methods taken, to cause them to live?

and I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest; the prophet does not pronounce at once that it was improbable and impossible; he knew indeed it was not probable, or possible, that these bones should revive of themselves; and he knew that neither he nor any creature could quicken them; but he wisely refers it to an omniscient and omnipotent God, who knew what he could and what he would do: the conversion of sinners is not of themselves, nor of ministers, but of God; it is wholly owing to his will and power, **Joh 1:13** nothing else can make it probable, or possible.

Ezekiel 37:4

Ver. 4. Again he said unto me, prophesy upon these bones,.... Or, "over these bones" {t}; or, "concerning these bones" {u}; foretell that they shall live; tell others of it, and them also:

and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord; the word of prophecy concerning you, as the Jews did in Babylon: so unconverted sinners may be preached unto, and their lost and miserable estate in which they are, like dry bones, may be set before them: they may be called upon to attend the external ministry of the word; and they are capable of hearing it with their bodily ears; though it is not profitable to them, for want of faith, yet faith comes hereby; and therefore it is right to attend upon the means, and hear the word.

{t} hlah twmueh le "super ossa haec", Starckius. {u} "De ossibus istis", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Piscator.

Ezekiel 37:5

Ver. 5. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones,.... By the prophet, who was sent to prophesy over them:

behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live; and none could do this but the living God, who breathed the breath of life into Adam at first, and he became a living soul; to which there seems to be an allusion here; and when the Lord puts his Spirit into men, or bestows his grace on them, then they shall live, and not till then.

Ezekiel 37:6

Ver. 6. And I will lay sinews upon you, and I will bring up flesh upon you,.... That is, before he should cause breath to enter into them; for though it is first mentioned, it is the last done: this is the orderly process; first sinews are laid to join the bones together; then flesh is laid to cover them, and fill up all vacancies, and form muscles to make the bones capable of motion:

and cover you with skin; both bones, sinews, and flesh; for this is uppermost of all, and which makes the whole smooth and beautiful. Job expresses his formation in much such language, "thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews",
Job 10:11:

and put breath in you, and ye shall live; which is repeated for the confirmation of it:

and ye shall know that I am the Lord; the Lord God omnipotent, the Lord gracious and merciful, and your Lord and God: so men, when they are called by grace, know the Lord, they did not before; having an experience of his powerful and efficacious grace upon their hearts, they know him to be theirs and own and acknowledge him, and profess him before men.

Ezekiel 37:7

Ver. 7. So I prophesied as I was commanded,.... The prophet was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; he was right to observe the orders and instructions given, whatever were the issue and success of them; that he was to leave with the Lord, and did. So Gospel ministers prophesy or preach according to the commission given them, and leave their work with the Lord: this was the first prophesying; for there is another after mentioned: these two are carefully to be observed and distinguished, different effects following the one and the other: this was a prophesying to the dry bones, upon them, over them, and concerning them; and what is next related was the consequence of it;

and as I prophesied, there was a noise; or, "a voice" {w}; this, in the literal sense, was the proclamation by Cyrus, giving the Jews leave to return to their own land, **Ezr 1:1**, at the revival of the interest of Christ, a great voice will be heard from heaven, saying to the witnesses, come up hither, Re 11:12, and at the descent of Christ to raise his dead first, there will be the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, **1Th 4:16**, and, as while the prophet was prophesying, there was not only his voice heard, but the voice of God, perhaps a thunder clap: so in the ministry of the Gospel there is a voice heard, which, at first, is only externally heard; men hear a noise, a voice, but it is a confused one; they do not know what to make of it, and yet it has some effect upon them; it causes a noise in them, an outcry about sin, and hell, and damnation; and yet, at present, no spiritual life or breath is in them:

and behold a shaking; of the bones; a rattling among them, as may be conceived must be where there is, as here, a tumbling of dry bones one over another, to get to their proper bone: so in the first effect of the word upon the conscience of a sinner, which works wrath there, there is a shaking and trembling through fear of damnation; which in some issues in real conversion, as in Saul and the jailer, **Ac 9:6**, but in others it goes off again, and comes to nothing, as in Felix, Ac 24:25:

and the bones came together, bone to his bone: so the Jews scattered up and down in the provinces of Babylon gathered together upon the proclamation of Cyrus, and went up in a body to their own land; as they will do also at the time of their conversion, **Ho 1:11**, thus, when persons are only under slight convictions, they may gather together, and have their religious meetings and societies, and yet be only a parcel of dry bones, without any spiritual life and breath in them.

{w} lwq yhyw "et exstitit vox", Cocceius, Starckius; "et fuit vox", Montanus.

Ezekiel 37:8

Ver. 8. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them,.... And they began to look like men, in the shape of men, and were a body of them, as the Jews did when gathered together:

and the skin covered them above; and so looked comely and beautiful, as in the proper form of men; as did the Jews enriched and protected by Cyrus: and this may be an image of such persons so far wrought upon under the word as to look like Christians; to have the form of godliness, and appear outwardly righteous before men, submitting to ordinances, and performing the duties of religion; and yet no principle of spiritual life in them; but, like Adam's body, of the earth, earthly, and breathless, before the breath of life was breathed into it; so here, but there was no breath in them; no spirit in the Jews to return to their land, though they had liberty, till the Lord stirred up their spirits, **Ezr 1:5**, all this, in a spiritual sense, shows how far persons may go under temporary convictions by the word, and yet not be living Christians.

Ezekiel 37:9

Ver. 9. Then said he unto me, prophesy unto the wind,.... Before he had been prophesying to the bones, and over them; and something was done, but not to purpose, breath being wanting; wherefore he is bid to prophesy a second time, and that not to bones, but to the "wind", afterwards rendered "breath"; and may allude to the soul or breath of man reentering the body, as at a resurrection, which causes it to live: it signifies the "spirit" {x}, for the same word is used for the wind, for breath, and for the spirit; and in the mystical sense may be applied to the Spirit of God: and if ever ministers prophesy or preach to purpose, it must be with a view to the Spirit of God, both to assist them in their work, and to make their ministrations effectual; without which, how many formal professors soever may be made, not one dead sinner will be quickened. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "concerning the Spirit": and to discourse concerning the person, operations, and grace of the Spirit, is one part of the Gospel ministry, and a means of the conversion of sinners.

Prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind; ministers must not only preach, but they must pray for the Spirit to accompany the word with his power, and make it the savour of life unto life:

thus saith the Lord, come from the four winds, O breath; or "spirit": because the Jews were to be brought from each of the parts where they were, as they will be at their conversion in the latter day; and so the Lord has a people in each of the parts of the world, that lie dead in sin, and must be quickened by the Spirit:

and breathe upon these slain, that they may live; though not slain with the sword, yet being as dead men, who are slain by death, are so called: so in a spiritual sense men are slain by sin, and are slain by the words of the Lord's mouth; killed with the law, the killing letter; and it is only the Spirit of God that can give them life; and the breath or spirit here is applied to the Spirit of the Messiah by the ancient Jews {y}.

{x} xwrh "ad spiritum", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Starckius; "alloquens spiritum", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus. {y} Zohar in Nunb. fol. 92. 1.

Ezekiel 37:10

Ver. 10. So I prophesied as he commanded me,.... The second time he prophesied to the wind, as he had done to the bones, as he was ordered: and the issue of it was,

and breath came into them; or, "the spirit"; a spirit of courage in the Jews, to go up to their own land; the Spirit of life from Christ, which will enter into the witnesses slain, and revive them; and into the Jews in the latter day, and convert them; and which enters into dead sinners, and quickens them; and this he does while ministers are preaching the Gospel to them; see Re 11:11:

and then lived; as men do spiritually, when the Spirit of God has produced a principle of spiritual life in them; they live by faith on Christ, in union and fellowship with him; they live in newness of life, and a holy life and conversation; and shall live and reign with Christ upon the first resurrection, and for evermore:

and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army; as the Jews did when they returned from the Babylonish captivity; they were many, and in a posture of defence; and as they will be in the latter day, when converted, **Ho 1:10**, and as the number of the saints will be upon the first resurrection, **Re 7:9**, so when men are quickened by the Spirit of God, "they stand upon their feet"; they stand in the grace of God, and on the foundation Christ; they stand by faith in him, and in the doctrine of faith, and in the house of God; and they stand firm against all their enemies: they are an "army"; they are in a military state; fighting against sin, Satan, and the world; and though few in comparison of others, yet considered by themselves are very numerous; and as they will appear when the Jews will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in; and especially when they will be all gathered together at the coming of Christ.

Ezekiel 37:11

Ver. 11. Then he said unto me, son of man,.... Here follow the explication and application of the above vision:

these bones are the whole house of Israel; an emblem of them, of their state and condition in the Babylonish captivity, and of them in their present state; and of the whole Israel of God, while in a state of unregeneracy: this phrase takes in the ten tribes, as well as the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah, which returned from Babylon; and shows that respect is had to something more than that restoration barely:

behold, they say, our bones are dried; the house of Israel say we are like dry bones indeed; we have no spirit, nor strength, nor courage, nor life in us:

and our hope is lost; of being delivered from the present captivity; or of the Messiah's coming; or of ever enjoying their own land, and of the promises of those things made unto them:

we are cut off for our parts; from the land of Israel, and have no hope of possessing it again, whatever others have; indeed they are cut off from the olive tree, and are cut down like a tree, both as to their civil and church state. The Targum is,

"and we are perished;"

it is all over with us; we are lost and undone; all the expressions show the desperate and despairing condition they were in.

Ezekiel 37:12

Ver. 12. Therefore prophesy, and say unto them,.... For their comfort, in order to revive their hope, and encourage their faith, in these distressed circumstances:

thus saith the Lord, behold, O my people: they were his people still, and he had a covenant interest in them, and they in him, though in such a low estate; and which was the ground of his care of them, and concern for them, and or doing all the good things to them after mentioned; all proceeded from his covenant, and the grace of it, and their relation to him:

I will open your graves, and cause you to come out of your graves; the cities and prisons in Chaldea and other places; where they were confined and held captives, and out of which they could no more deliver themselves than a dead man of himself can rise up out of his grave: this is both an emblem of the resurrection of the dead at the last day {z}, when they shall come forth out of their graves at the voice of Christ, some to the resurrection of life, and others to the resurrection of damnation; and of dead sinners, raised out of the graves of sin by the power and efficacy of the grace of God; see **Joh 5:25**:

and bring you into the land of Israel; to dwelt in it, and abide there, and be no more dispossessed of it; as they will not, any more, when once settled in it, upon their conversion in the latter day.

{z} To which it is applied in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 152. 2, & Taanith, fol. 2. 2.

Ezekiel 37:13

Ver. 13. And ye shall know that I am the Lord,....
See Gill on "Eze 37:6":

when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves; which is doing that for them which none but the omnipotent God could do; and they seeing his hand and power, his grace and mercy in it, will know, own, and acknowledge him.

Ezekiel 37:14

Ver. 14. And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live,.... Not only a spirit of

courage to go up into their own land, and live a civil and comfortable life there; but the Spirit of God, as a spirit of grace and supplication, of truth and holiness, of faith and adoption; and as a spirit of life, having produced a principle of life in them, and so should live spiritually and soberly, righteously and godly; see
Eze 36:27:

and I shall place you in your own land; settle them there in peace and quietness, in safety and security and in enjoyment of all mercies and privileges, temporal and spiritual:

then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord; that all this was a promise of his, foretold by him, notified to them by his prophets, and now fully accomplished exactly; which they would observe with wonder and thankfulness, and give him the glory of it.

Ezekiel 37:15

Ver. 15. The word of the Lord came unto me again,.... Immediately or quickly after he had the above vision of the dry bones, and the explanation of it:

saying: as follows:

Ezekiel 37:16

Ver. 16. Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick,.... Or "wood" {a}; a stick of wood; or table, as the Targum; a board or plank. The Septuagint version renders it a "rod"; and so the Arabic; an emblem of a kingdom or government, as this was:

and write upon it; the following words:

for Judah, and the children of Israel his companions; for the tribe of Judah, and the tribe of Benjamin, which adhered together, and as many of the other tribes which joined them; the godly and religious of the rest of the tribes, who could not give into the idolatry of Jeroboam:

then take another stick; like the former:

and write upon it; these words:

for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions; for the tribe of Ephraim, and the other nine tribes, which together made up one kingdom. It should be observed, that in the times of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, there was a division in the kingdom of Israel; ten tribes revolted from him, and only the two whole tribes of Judah and Benjamin continued with him; and from that time to the captivity, and even during that, as it seems, there were continual animosities and bickerings between the two kingdoms, on account both of their political and religious affairs, especially the latter; and an union between them this emblem is designed to signify, as will hereafter appear. Jeroboam, the first king of the ten tribes, was of the tribe of Ephraim; and Samaria, the metropolis of the kingdom, was in that tribe; hence Ephraim often stands for all the ten tribes, for the kingdom of Israel, as distinct from that of Judah. Writing words on sticks or rods seems to be in allusion to what was done Nu 17:2.

{a} dxa Ue "lignum unuin", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Ezekiel 37:17

Ver. 17. And join them one to another into one stick,.... Clap the sticks, planks, boards, or tables, to one another; glue them together, or set them so close to one another, that they may seem as one stick, plank, board, or table:

and they shall become one in thine hand; they shall look as if they were one. R. Joseph Kimchi, the father of David, thinks they really became one, by means of a miracle wrought; but there is no need to suppose this; it is enough that they appeared to be so.

Ezekiel 37:18

Ver. 18. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying,.... The children of Israel and Judah in captivity, of which people Ezekiel was and to whom he was sent as a prophet; who seeing him take two sticks, and write on them, and then join them together, would naturally put such a question to him:

wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these? for they concluded he had some meaning in it, and that it was not a mere childish diversion and amusement; and therefore would desire that he would let them know what it was: whether they would ask this seriously or in banter, out of curiosity or in contempt, as they sometimes did; it matters not, he was to give them an answer, as follows; though, by the manner of their putting the question, it looks as if they were doubtful whether he would or not; since they had treated him in a sneering way on such like occasions before.

Ezekiel 37:19

Ver. 19. Say unto them, thus saith the Lord God,.... Here follows the explanation of the sign or emblem:

behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows: that is, the kingdom of Israel, consisting of the ten tribes, of which Ephraim was the chief:

and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah; with the kingdom of Judah:

and make them one stick; these two kingdoms one kingdom:

and they shall be one in my hand: in Christ, the hand and arm of the Lord; one under his care, government, and protection, as after explained: this had in part, and as a shadow of what was to come, its fulfilment upon the Jews' return from Babylon; when many of the ten tribes, as well as the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, came from thence, and became one nation and kingdom under one prince, until the coming of Christ; and it had a further accomplishment in the union of converted Jews and Gentiles in one body: but this is chiefly designed as an emblem of the union of the Jews one to another, when they shall be converted in the latter day; when they shall join together in seeking the Lord, and David, their King, the Messiah; who shall be the one King over them, as is afterwards said; and when all animosities shall cease, both among them, and among all the spiritual Israel of God in general; see
Isa 11:13

Ezekiel 37:20

Ver. 20. And the sticks whereon thou writest,.... Or art about to write the above things, according to order and direction:

shall be in thine hand before their eyes; shall be held up to them to look at for some time, and observe the cement of the two sticks; and learn and lay up in their minds what is meant by this emblem; and be assured that what is hereafter said as a further explication of it shall certainly be fulfilled.

Ezekiel 37:21

Ver. 21. And say unto them, thus saith the Lord God,.... Or, as the Targum,

"thou shalt prophesy to them;"

for what follows is a prophecy of what shall be in the latter day:

behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the Heathen, whither they be gone, or, "from among the Gentiles" {b}; not only the Chaldeans, where they were carried captives; but from among the nations where they are now dispersed, and among whom they go freely of their own accord from place to place, for the sake of traffic: and this phrase, "whither they be gone", or "are going" {c}, travelling about from one country to another, better describes the present Jews, and their state, than those in the Babylonian captivity:

and will gather them on every side, or, "round about" {d}; from the several parts of the world where they are:

and bring them into their own land; the land of Canaan, given by the Lord to their fathers, and to them their posterity, for an inheritance; though now in the possession of others, who, it seems, are not the right owners.

{b} Myywgh Nybm "e medio ipsarum gentium", Junius & Tremellius; "ex gentibus", Starckius; "e [vel] medio gentium", Piscator, Cocceius. {c} wklh "ambulant, vel ambulantes sunt". {d} bybom "circumquaque", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Starckius.

Ezekiel 37:22

Ver. 22. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, &c;] As they were in the times of David and Solomon, who were both types of the Messiah; and to whose times is referred this prophecy by the ancient Jews {e}, as then to have its accomplishment:

and one king shall be king to them all, not Zerubbabel, nor Nehemiah, nor Judas Maccabaeus; for these were neither of them kings; and much less such as reigned for ever, as it is said this king shall, Eze 37:25, besides, he is expressly said to be David, that is, the Messiah the son of David; and this clause is by a modern Jewish {f} writer applied to him:

and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all; which is the very thing the two sticks made one were an emblem of.

{e} Zohar in Gen. fol. 85. 4. {f} R. Abendana, Not. in Miclol Yophi in 1 Kings xi. 39.

Ezekiel 37:23

Ver. 23. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols,....

With their dung, or dunghill gods {g}; either with the idols of the Gentiles, or their own: after their return from the Babylonish captivity, the Jews were no more addicted to idolatry; and the image worship of the Papists is an abhorrence to them at this day, and a stumblingblock to them in their embracing Christianity: and when they are effectually called and converted to Christ; they will no more have respect to the idols, the works of their own hands; or to the idol of their own righteousness, which they have set up, and have gone about to establish, and to make to stand; they will then see it to be as filthy rags, defiling to them, instead of justifying of them; and therefore shall reject it, and no more defile themselves with it; but seek the righteousness of Christ, which justifies from all sin, and renders pure and spotless in the sight of God,

nor with their detestable things; or "abominations" {h}; the traditions of the elders, which they have preferred to the word of God, and made the rule of their faith, worship, and conversation; which has made them detestable unto God:

nor with any of their transgressions; particularly their disbelief of Christ and their blasphemy against him; nor shall they indulge themselves in those sins which now prevail among them, as pride, covetousness, uncleanness, fraud, and tricking in their trade and commerce:

but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned; as wherever they dwell they do; they are notorious for their wickedness; but God will bring them out of all these places, where they have lived in sin, and been the occasion of it to some, as well as followed the example of others:

and will cleanse them; by sprinkling clean water upon them; by applying the blood of Christ to them, which cleanses from all sin see Eze 36:25:

so they shall be my people, and will be their God; the "loammi" will be taken off, and the covenant of grace shall be renewed with them, and made manifest to them; and the blessings and promises shall be applied to them, and particularly this; see Jer 31:1.

{g} Mhylwlgb "diis stercoreis suis", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "stercoribus suis", Cocceius, Starckius. {h} Mhyuwqvb "abominandis suis", Starckius; "abominationibus", Pagninus, Cocceius.

Ezekiel 37:24

Ver. 24. And David my servant shall be king over them,.... The King Messiah, as Kimchi interprets it; and so Abarbinel {i} and others; being of the seed of David, and of whom David was an eminent type; and who, as Mediator, is the Lord's servant, and as man appeared in the form of one: this shows that this prophecy looks further than the times of deliverance from the Babylonish captivity:

and they all shall have one shepherd: or king, the same as before: kings are called shepherds; see Eze 34:23:

and they shall also walk in my judgments, and keep my statutes, and do them; not the statutes and ordinances of the ceremonial law, which are abolished; and which the Jews, when converted, shall have no regard unto; but rather the precepts of the moral law, and chiefly the evangelic ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper; which ordinances they shall walk in, and attend unto with constancy and pleasure; and which statutes they shall keep, as they have been delivered, impartially, without delay, in faith and love, and with a view to the glory of God; see Eze 36:27.

{i} Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 47. 4. Vid. Sepher Ikkarim, l. 2. c. 28.

Ezekiel 37:25

Ver. 25. And they shall dwell in the land which I have given to Jacob my servant,.... Abraham and Isaac are not mentioned, as Kimchi observes, because they had other children, who did not inherit the land; only Jacob, because the land was given to him, and his seed alter him:

wherein your fathers have dwelt; and so the more desirable to them; and whose inhabitation and possession of it were a pledge of theirs:

and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their children's children for ever; unto the end of the world, or personal coming of Christ: and so everything after promised them is said to be for ever: this shows that this prophecy had not its accomplishment in the return of the Jews from Babylon to their own land; since they have been dispossessed of that again, in which state they now are; but that it refers to time to come, when, being converted to Christ, they shall possess their land again, and dwell in it, as long as the sun and moon endure:

and my servant David shall be their prince for ever; or their king, as the Targum; and which cannot be understood of any temporal prince, but of the King Messiah, whose throne is for ever and ever; whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and who shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever and ever, Ps 45:6 and to whom it is applied by several Jewish writers {k}.

{k} T. Bab. Sanhedrin. fol. 98. 2. Ben Melech in Psal. cxliv. 14. Abendana Not. in Miclol Yophi in Hagg. ii. 23. Abarbinel, Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 8. 4. & 26. 1.

Ezekiel 37:26

Ver. 26. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them,.... So the covenant of grace is called, Isa 54:10, one principal article of which is peace and reconciliation made between God and his people by the blood of Christ, agreed on in that covenant, from whence it has its name: now here it signifies that this covenant should be made known to the converted Jews, and their interest in it; in virtue of which they shall see that peace is made for them by the blood of Christ; and shall have a true conscience peace in themselves, through that blood of the covenant being sprinkled on them; and be at peace with converted Gentiles, and even with their worst enemies, enjoying all kind of prosperity, temporal and spiritual:

it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; it shall not wax old, and vanish away, as the former covenant did; under which they were before the coming of Christ, which was exhibited in types and shadows, legal sacrifices and carnal ordinances; and besides, God will always have a covenant people among them from this time to the end of the world; so that a "loammi" shall no more be written upon them:

and I will place them, and multiply them; that is, place them in their own land, and increase their number there: or, "I will give them" {l}; a place in their land, and every blessing temporal and spiritual: so the Targum,

"I will bless them, and multiply them:"

and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore; not any material temple, but his word and ordinances; in which he will grant his spiritual presence with them, and which shall continue to the end of the world.

{l} Myttn "dabo eos", Montanus, Piscator; "dabo ipsos", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 37:27

Ver. 27. My tabernacle also shall be with them,.... The symbol of his presence: the meaning is, that he shall dwell in them by his Spirit and grace; and everyone of them shall be the temple of the living God, in whom he will walk and dwell:

yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people; which is repeated for the confirmation of it; see Eze 37:23.

Ezekiel 37:28

Ver. 28. And the Heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel,.... Or the Gentiles, the converted Gentiles, shall observe and take notice of the gracious dealings of God with his people the Jews; that he calls them with an holy calling; implants principles of grace and holiness in them; separates and consecrates them for his service, and enables them to walk holily, soberly, and righteously:

when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore; when his worship shall be set up among them; his Gospel shall be preached unto them, and received by them; and his ordinances administered unto them; and which shall continue till the second coming of Christ.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 38:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 38

This chapter gives an account of an enemy of the Jews, under the name of Gog, that shall invade their land, and disturb their peace, after they are settled in it; who is described by the countries over which he rules; and against whom the prophet is bid to set his face, and prophesy of him, the Lord being against him; and who would cause him to return from Judea unsuccessful, Eze 38:1, the number of his confederates, their warlike accoutrements and preparations for the invasion of the land of Israel, are foretold, Eze 38:4, his wicked designs and intentions to spoil and plunder the inhabitants of it, Eze 38:10, the notice taken of his projects by the merchants of Tarshish and others, Eze 38:13, his coming up to invade the land is again observed for the certainty of it; and the place from whence, and the time when he should come, are mentioned, as well as God's design in it, and which had been before predicted by his prophets, Eze 38:14, and the chapter is concluded with a denunciation of divine wrath, which shall be terrible to all the inhabitants of the earth, and to all creatures in heaven, earth, and sea; when he and his forces shall be destroyed by the sword, by pestilence, and by dreadful storms and tempests, Eze 38:18, of which destruction a fuller account is given in the next chapter.

Ver. 1. And the word of the Lord came unto me,.... At the same time as the preceding prophecy did, as the copulative and shows; which predicts the restoration and conversion of the Jews; the union of their tribes under the King Messiah; and their settlement in their own land: and this respects some disturbance they should meet with upon it, for a short time, by a powerful enemy hereafter described:

saying; as follows:

Ezekiel 38:2

Ver. 2. Son of man, set thy face against Gog,.... Of the phrase, "setting the face towards", or "against", See Gill on "Eze 6:2" See Gill on "Eze 21:2" See Gill on "Eze 25:2" but who this Gog is the prophet is bid boldly to face, and intrepidly declare the wrath of God against, interpreters are divided about. Calmet {m} thinks that Cambyses and his army are meant by Gog and Magog, which to mention is enough; and it is the opinion of St. Ambrose {n} that the Goths who ravaged the Roman empire in the fifth and sixth ages are meant: others, who suppose this prophecy was fulfilled after the Jews' return from the Babylonish captivity, and before the coming of Christ, take Gog to be a common name of the kings of the lesser Asia and Syria, or the Seleucidae, who distressed the Jews in the times of the Maccabees; the chief of whom was Antiochus Epiphanes, who is supposed, to be more especially designed, and was a type of antichrist; and they are the more strengthened in this opinion, because they find, in Pliny {o}, that the city of Hierapolis in Syria was called by the Syrians Magog; and they fancy the name of Gog is the same with Gyges a king of Lydia, whose country was called from him Gygea, or Gog's land, who was grandfather to Croesus; and which country came into the hands of Cyrus, and from the Persians into the hands of the Greeks, and so to the Seleucidae; for which reason they may bear this name in this prophecy; but it is certain that the prophecy refers to what should be in "latter years", and in the "latter days",
Eze 38:8, phrases which respect the times of the Messiah, the Gospel dispensation, and oftentimes the latter part of that; and even those times when the Jews shall return to their own land, and continue in it for ever, as the preceding prophecy, with which this is connected, shows; and so the Jews always understand it of an enemy of theirs yet to come. Cocceius is of opinion, that the Romish antichrist is meant; and that Gog signifying the covering or roof of a house, fitly points him out; who puts himself between God and man, as the roof is between heaven and earth; and who keeps out the light of divine things, the heat of love, and rain of spiritual blessings, from the church; and

compares with this the veil over all nations, Isa 25:7 and the covering cherub, Eze 28:14, but I rather think the Turk is here meant, the eastern antichrist, in whose possession the land of Judea now is; and which, when recovered by the Jews, will greatly exasperate him, and he will gather all his forces together to regain it, but in vain. The learned Vitringa {p}, though he is of opinion that this prophecy, according to its first and proper sense, respects the kings of Syria, the persecutors of the church, that should bring large and well disciplined armies into the land of the people of God, gathered out of the northern nations, and Scythians, and would be defeated in the land of Canaan; yet mystically intends the Turks, the Scythian nation and northern people, who, by a like attempt, will infest the church of the people of God, and invade their country; and this he makes no doubt of is the proper aspect of Gog and Magog: and Samuel Dauderstat, a Lutheran divine, has wrote a dissertation, "De Antichristo Orientali", concerning the eastern antichrist, which he explains of Gog and Magog: and Michael Buckenroder, another Lutheran, has written upon the irruption to be made by Gog and Magog into the mountains of Israel {q}. Osiander thus explains the several names mentioned; by Gog I think the Turk is meant, by Magog the Tartarian, by Meshec the Muscovites, and by Tubal the Wallachians; and Starckius on the place observes, that if this prophecy is yet to be fulfilled, we shall easily find our Gog, and point out his metropolis Constantinople; so that I am not singular in my opinion. Gog signifies "high" {r} and eminent, one in a very exalted station: it comes from the same root, and has the same signification, as Agag, to whose height and exaltation there is an allusion in Nu 24:7, where the Samaritan and Septuagint versions read Gog: it is the same with , "Jagog", by which name the Arabians called the Scythians that lived far east, particularly those that were situated to the north of China beyond Imaus, as Golius {s} observes; and Josephus {t} says that the posterity of Magog are called Scythians, and these inhabited Tartary; and there, as Paulus Venetus {u} affirms, are the countries of Gog and Magog, which they call Gug and Mungug now; from hence came the Turks, even from Tartary, which is called by the eastern writers Turchestan, whence they had their name; and so may with great propriety be called by the name of Gog; their emperor also being a high and mighty one, whose empire must be destroyed; and which is signified by the passing away of the second woe, and the drying up of the river Euphrates,
Re 11:14, upon which passages this and the following chapter may be thought a good commentary: and so the Jews {w} make Gog to be the general of the Ishmaelites or Turks, as Armillus of the Christians, and who shall reign in the kingdom of Magog or Scythia. Gog is the name of a man, **1Ch 5:4**, as it is here, and not of a country. The country of Gog is called, as follows,

the land of Magog, of which Gog is king, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it: it may be supplied in connection with the former clause,

set thy face against Gog, in the land of Magog; or, "against Gog", against "the land of Magog", so Kimchi. The countries of Jagog and Magog, according to the Arabic geographer {x}, are surrounded by Mount Caucasus, which Bochart {y} conjectures has its name from thence; it being in the Semi-Chaldee language, the language of the Colchi and Armenians, Noxgwg, "Gog-hasan", or Gog's fortress. This land of Magog is the same with Cathaia or Scythia, that part of Tartary from whence the Turks came; and which perhaps may come into their hands again before this prophecy is fulfilled; and even now the Turk calls himself king of Tartary; and the Magog of Pliny in Syria, the same with Aleppo, is in his dominions; which Maimonides {z} also takes notice of as in Syria, though he seems to distinguish it from Haleb or Aleppo; however, according to him, they were near to one another; though some {a} think the place in Pliny is corrupted, and that it ought to be read Magog, as it is, by Maimonides, Magbab. Gog is further described as

the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: some render it, "prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal"; taking Rosh, as the rest, for the name of a place, a part of Scythia, from whence the Russians came, and had their name. So it is rendered by the Septuagint, Symmachus, and Theodotion; and some later Greek writers {b} make mention of a country called Ros, which, they say, is a Scythian nation, situated between the Euxine Pontus and the whole maritime coast to the north of Taurus, a people fierce and wild. Meshech and Tubal were the brethren of Magog, and sons of Japheth, Ge 10:2, whose posterity inhabited those counties called after their name; who, according to Josephus {c}, are the Cappadocians and Iberians; and among the former is a place called Mazaca, which has some affinity with Meshech; and there was a country called Gogarene {d}, a part of Iberia. According to Bochart {e}, these are the Moschi and Tybarenes, people that dwell near the Euxine sea, and under the dominion of the Turk; wherefore the Grand Turk may be called the chief prince of them:

and prophesy against him: foretell his ruin and destruction, which is hinted before. Mention is made of his invasion of the land of Judea, and that for the comfort of the Jews, that they might have nothing to fear from this formidable army.

{m} Dictionary in the words "Gog" and "Magog". {n} "De fide ad Gratianum", l. 2. sect. 4. col. 144. tom. 4. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 23. {p}

Comment. in Jesaiam, vol. 1. p. 954. {q} Vid. Calmet. Bibliotheca Sacra, art. 67. p. 442. {r} Hiller. Ononmastic. Sacr. p. 67, 406, 477. {s} Lexic. Arabic in Rad. col. 26. {t} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1. {u} Apud Schindler. Lex. Polyglott. col. 288. And Harris's Voyages and Travels, vol. 1. p. 604. {w} Vid. Huls. Theolog. Jud. par. 2. p. 511. {x} Geograph. Arab. par. 9. clim. 5. lin. 22, 23. {y} Phaleg. l. 3. c. 13. col. 187. {z} Hilchot Terumot, c. 1. sect. 9. {a} See Hyde Not, in Peritsol. Itinera Mundi, p. 42. {b} Zonaras, Cedrenus, & Joan. Curopalates apud Selden. de Synedriis, l. 2. c. 3. sect. 6. {c} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1. {d} Strabo. Geograph. l. 11. p. 364. {e} Phaleg. l. 3. c. 13. col. 188.

Ezekiel 38:3

Ver. 3. And say, thus saith the Lord God, behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. Which is repeated for the confirmation of it, that so it would certainly be; that the Lord, the mighty God, and King of kings, would in his providence frown upon him, and appear against him; and his titles are repeated also, to show that all his greatness, grandeur, and power, would not protect him from the vengeance of God.

Ezekiel 38:4

Ver. 4. And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws,.... Or, I will put hooks in thy jaws, and with them turn thee back; or rather, "turn thee about" {f}; and lead thee where and as I please; for this is not to be understood of God's putting hooks into his jaws, and leading him back from his enterprise of invading the land of Judea; as he put a hook in the nose and a bridle in the lips of the king of Assyria, and brought him back from Jerusalem, Isa 37:29, but of his using him thus in his providence to draw him to the land of Israel, out of his own land, as fishes are drawn with the hook out of the water. The sense is, that he would so work upon and influence the heart of Gog, that he should be inclined to come out of his own land and invade Judea; just as the Lord is said to draw Sisera and his army, **Jud 4:7**, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe. So the Targum,

"I will persuade thee, and put hooks in thy jaws;"

that is, incline his heart to take such a step, which should be to his destruction:

and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army; all his janizaries, and large army out of Turkey, and other parts of his dominions:

horses and horsemen; the Turkish armies, chiefly consisting of cavalry;
See Gill on "Re 9:16":

all of them clothed with all sorts of [armour]; or completely clothed, as the Targum; for the word "armour" is not in the text; and besides, their armour is particularly mentioned afterwards; and so Kimchi has it, with all kind of ornaments, richly clothed and decorated, especially the principal officers, and, so made a fine show: even a

great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords; or large armies, as the Targum; the Turks have always been used to bring prodigious large armies into the field; See Gill on "Re 9:16".

{f} Kytbbwv "circumducam te", Piscator; "circumagam te", Grotius.

Ezekiel 38:5

Ver. 5. Persia, Ethiopia, and Lybia with them,.... These are the confederates or auxiliaries of the Turks, which shall join with them in this expedition. Persia is a neighbouring kingdom to the Turks, and may fall into their hands before this comes to pass; and is in a fair way for it at this time, through the internal divisions in it; however, it will be confederate with them. Ethiopia or Cush does not design the country of the Abyssines in the dominions of the Great Mogul, but Arabia Chusea, which lay between Judea and Egypt, and is now in the hands of the Turks; and Lybia or Phut is the name of one of the sons of Ham, Ge 10:6 who, according to Josephus {g}, founded Lybia; and from him the inhabitants of it were called Phuteans (as they are here by the Targum); and he observes that there is a river of his name in Mauritania. Lybia is a country in Africa, to the west of Egypt and subject to the Turks:

all of them with shield and helmet; the Lybians are described by Jeremiah, Jer 46:9, as

those that handle the shield; and the Egyptians, to whom the Lybians were near neighbours, and whom they might imitate in their warlike arms, as in other things, wore shields down to the feet, as Xenophon {h} relates.

{g} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 2. {h} Cyropaedia, l. 6. c. 14. & l. 7. c. 11.

Ezekiel 38:6

Ver. 6. Gomer, and all his bands,.... Or all his army, as the Targum. Gomer was the eldest son of Japheth, Ge 10:2, from whom descended the people called by the Greeks Galatians, or Galio-Grecians, as Josephus {i} says, who before were from him called Gomarians: others think that Phrygia, and the inhabitants of it, are meant; but, whether one or the other, they were both people of the lesser Asia, which is now in the hands of the Turks:

the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands; Togarmah was one of the sons of Gomer, Ge 10:3 whose posterity, according to the Greeks, as Josephus {k} says, were the Phrygians; but others rather think the Cappadocians descended from him; and that Togarmah designs their country, which also is a part of the Turkish dominions; See Gill on "Eze 27:14". Several moderns, as Calmet {l} observes, believe that the children of Togarmah peopled Turcomania in Tartary, and Scythia, and which he approves of; and the Turks are mentioned by Ben Gorion {m} as one of the ten families of Togarmah. The Targum renders it here the province of Germany; as it is also interpreted in the Talmud {n}, but wrongly:

and many people with thee; from other places and nations, besides those named; especially out of the lesser Asia, as Pamphylia, Cilicia, and other places; and perhaps from Tartary, and elsewhere,

{i} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1. {k} Ibid. {l} Dictionary in the word "Togarmah". {m} Heb. Hist. l. 1. c. 1. p. 3. {n} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 10. 1.

Ezekiel 38:7

Ver. 7. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself,.... All warlike stores and provisions: this is ironically said; and suggests that he would do so, and yet all would be in vain, and to no purpose:

thou and all thy company, that are assembled unto thee; or all thine armies, as the Targum, gathered out of his dominions, and made up of his auxiliaries and allies; let them all be furnished with arms, and everything proper for the expedition designed:

and be thou a guard unto them; the general of them; let them observe and obey thy word of command; guide and direct, guard and protect them in their march; and take care of them when entered the land of Judea, that they are not exposed to any unnecessary danger, or cut off by any stratagem or ambush: this is also sarcastically said; signifying that let him use all the care and caution that a wise and prudent general can do, yet he and his army should perish.

Ezekiel 38:8

Ver. 8. After many days thou shalt be visited,.... After the Ottoman empire has stood a long time, as it has already; when the many days will be ended that Israel should be without a king and a prince, &c. **Ho 3:4**, then shall Gog or the Turk be visited of God, not in a way of grace, but vengeance; he shall be punished for all his iniquities, and his punishment or destruction will be brought about in the following manner:

in the latter years thou shall come into the land that is brought back from the sword; that is, into the land of Judea, the right owners of which shall now be returned unto it; who have been for many years drove and kept out of it by the sword of their enemies; see Jer 31:2 and these "latter years" are the same with the "latter days", in which these people shall seek the Lord and the Messiah, and fear him and his goodness, and return to their own land, **Ho 3:5**, when the Turks, enraged at it, will raise a numerous army, and enter it, in order to repossess it. The description of the Jews, who are most manifestly pointed at, is continued: and

is gathered out of many people against the mountains of Israel; or rather, "to the mountains of Israel" {o}; for it seems to design the land of Judea, that is, the people of it; who shall be gathered out of the several nations where they are now dispersed, and brought into their own land; described by the mountains of Israel, because a mountainous country, and a very fruitful one; Eze 34:13, and not the army of Gog gathered out of many nations, as before observed, to march against the people of the Jews; though this seems to be the sense of the Targum, "in the end of years thou shalt come into the land, against which are turned those that slay with the sword, who are gathered out of many people against the mountains of the land of Israel:"

which have been always waste: of a longer time than the seventy years' captivity, even ever since the destruction of it by the Romans; and if the time of the carrying captive of the ten tribes by Salmanezer is respected, it is longer still:

but it brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them; that is, the people of the Jews, the proprietors of the land of Israel, shall now be brought forth out of each the nations where they are scattered, and shall inhabit their own land, and dwell in the utmost security, having nothing to fear from their most potent enemies, even Gog himself; and though he shall come against them in the following manner.

{o} larvy yrh le "ad montes Israel", Pagninus, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 38:9

Ver. 9. Thou shall ascend and come like a storm,.... That comes suddenly, looks black and terrible, and causes darkness and horror; makes a great noise, and is very threatening of danger; signifying, that the Turks will come into the land of Judea suddenly to surprise it, and with great wrath and fury, and threaten them with utter destruction; so the king of the north is said to come like a whirlwind, which many interpret of the Turk also, Da 11:40:

thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land; with darkness and distress; suggesting the vast number of his army, which should overspread the land of Judea, as it follows:

thou and all thy bands, and many people with thee; his own army should be very numerous, and this increased by his confederates, or such who will voluntarily join him in this expedition.

Ezekiel 38:10

Ver. 10. Thus saith the Lord, it shall also come to pass,.... Who is the Lord

God omniscient, and knows the thoughts of men's hearts afar off; which, though they are contingent and voluntary, yet certain to the foreknowledge of God; who knows them before they are conceived, and can foretell what they will be, and which come to pass accordingly: it is now above two thousand years ago since this was said, and as yet is not fulfilled, but certainly will be: that

at the same time shall things come into thy mind; when the Jews shall be in their own land, dwelling in great security; and when Gog or the Turk shall make preparation to disturb them, and shall enter into their land suddenly and furiously; many thoughts shall come into his mind, many schemes and devices, but not good ones:

and thou shall think an evil thought; to do mischief to the Jews; to disturb their peace, to dispossess them of their land, and plunder their substance.

Ezekiel 38:11

Ver. 11. And thou shall say,.... What came into his mind, and what he thought of; this he shall say to his privy counsellors and ministers of state; or to the generals and officers of his army; or to his confederates and allies, and even to them all, to have their opinion and approbation of it; and to encourage them to join him, and go with him:

I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; a land which has nothing but villages in it, and those no walls about them to protect them: this he said by way of contempt; and the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it "the abject land"; and to observe how easily he could conquer it, there being nothing in his way to hinder him, or give him trouble:

I will go to them that are at rest, and dwell safely: as the Jews will do in the latter day, when they shall own and acknowledge the Messiah, Jer 23:5, and dwell in their own land, where they will be quiet and peaceable, and think and do no harm to any, nor mistrust their neighbours doing any harm to them; but shall live in the utmost tranquillity and security; and which Gog or the Turks will take the advantage of; and from hence promise themselves an easy conquest of them:

all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates; no walls to their cities; no gates to walls; nor bars to gates; but without either; being under the protection of God, and putting their trust in him, who is a wall of fire round about his people; and is better to them, than gates with bars.

Ezekiel 38:12

Ver. 12. To take a spoil, and to take a prey,.... These are the words of Gog continued; suggesting that he should have no occasion to fight; should have nothing else to do but to seize upon the goods and plunder the substance of these people:

to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited: such as were before desolate, and had lain long so, but now peopled and cultivated; these he would attack and demolish, and make a spoil and prey of:

and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations; a description of the Jews, as before; Eze 38:8

which have gotten cattle and goods; so that it should seem that Gog or the Turks will not immediately attack the Jews upon their possession of the land of Judea; but some time after, when they have settled in it, and have acquired much wealth and riches in cattle and goods, and then think to have a fine booty of them:

that dwell in the midst of the land; or, "the navel of the land" {p}; which may design Jerusalem, situated in the midst of the land of Israel, and so called the navel of it, as that is in the midst of the body; as Enna is said by Cicero to be the navel of Sicily: or, as Kimchi thinks, the land of Israel itself is meant; which is in the midst of the world, and so the navel of it; though the former seems best.

{p} Urah rwbj le epi ton omfalon thv ghv, Sept.; "in [vel] super umbilico terrae", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 38:13

Ver. 13. Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish,.... These are not any of the people that shall come along with Gog on his expedition; but some neighbouring nations bordering on Judea, who will address him in the following manner, as he passes through them, or by them. Sheba and Dedan design the Arabians inhabiting that part of Arabia which lay near to Judea, even Arabia Petraea and Felix; and the merchants of Tarshish are the Tyrians and Zidonians that traded by sea, as Tarshish sometimes signifies; or to Tartessus in Spain, where they had much traffic; and may design the people of those places that will at this time be living in Palestine, that trade by sea to foreign parts. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it the "Carthaginian merchants", or "the merchants of Carthage":

with all the young lions thereof; which some interpret of sea pirates, for their cruelty and voraciousness. The Targum paraphrases it, all the kings thereof; and so Kimchi thinks kings and princes are meant; but the Septuagint version renders it, all their villages; and so the Syriac version, all the cities:

shall say unto thee, art thou come to take a spoil? either out of compassion to the people of the Jews; or rather by way of congratulation, and as expressive of joy at it; or else out of envy that they have no share in it; suggesting that they would gladly join with him, and partake of the booty:

hast thou gathered thy company together to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil? all which it is supposed might easily be done; only they might wonder that so rich a potentate as the Turk should give himself the trouble to raise such an army, and come so far, for cattle and goods, and silver and gold of which he had such plenty. Gog gives no answer, but God does.

Ezekiel 38:14

Ver. 14. Therefore, son of man, prophesy, and say unto Gog,.... Since these are his thoughts and designs, and those his big words, and which he will endeavour to put in practice, and be applauded for it by others; deliver this prophecy to him, or concerning him:

thus saith the Lord God, in that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shall thou not know it? that Israel are returned to their own land? that they dwell in it safely? that they have abundance of cattle, gold, and silver that they have no walls, gates, and bars to protect them? that they live without fear or suspicion of any enemy to annoy them, and therefore may be easily surprised and taken? this, when it comes to pass, will soon be known by the Turks, through their spies and informers: or, "shall thou not know?" {q} or experience the divine vengeance for thy wicked thoughts, intentions, and attempts against Israel? he should. So the Targum,

"shalt thou not know the vengeance of my power?"

or shalt thou not know that all attempts to make them uneasy and uncomfortable will be in vain?

{q} edt "experturus esses", Junius & Tremellius; "experieris, scil. poenam meam", Piscator.

Ezekiel 38:15

Ver. 15. And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts,.... Whose original was from Scythia, or Cathaia in Tartary, that lies to the north of China; and who will bring with him many people from the Euxine and Caspian seas, and from the northern parts of lesser Asia; and the Turk is, by many interpreters, thought to be the king of the north, in Da 11:44 as before observed:

thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses; the Turkish armies consisting chiefly of horse, as has been observed on Eze 38:4:

a great company, and a mighty army; for quantity many, for quality strong and mighty. The Targum is,

"many armies, and much people;"

the Turks usually have large armies; See Gill on "Eze 38:4".

Ezekiel 38:16

Ver. 16. And thou shall come up against my people of Israel,.... Which is repeated for the certainty of it; and not for his comfort, but his ruin; not to the terror of Israel, but for the glory of God:

as a cloud to cover the land; the land of Israel, so great should be his army; See Gill on "Eze 38:9",

it shall be in the latter days; of the Gospel state, or kingdom of the Messiah, when the Jews shall be converted, and are returned to their own land, **Ho 3:5**:

and I will bring thee against my land; not to possess it, nor to hurt it, or to any injury to the people of it: but

that the Heathen may know me; the Pagan kingdoms of China, and others; who by God's judgments on the Turks will come to the knowledge of the true God, and acknowledge him, and will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, Re 11:15:

when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes; that is, when God shall appear to be a holy and just God, in inflicting deserved punishment on the enemies of his people; when his omniscience and omnipotence, his power and faithfulness, and other perfections of his will be displayed, in fulfilling those prophecies concerning Gog or the Turks; infidels will be convinced of the truth of divine revelation; of the God of Israel being the true God; of Jesus being the Messiah; and of the Christian religion being of God, and shall profess the same. The, Targum is,

"that the people may know the vengeance of my power, when I shall be sanctified in thee, who shall see thy vengeance, O Gog."

Ezekiel 38:17

Ver. 17. Thus saith the Lord God,.... Putting the question that follows:

art thou he of whom I have spoken of old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I will bring thee against them? certainly thou art he: but who were the prophets that prophesied of Gog before Ezekiel, since he is the first that makes mention of him? to this it may be replied, that though he is not mentioned by name, yet he might be prophesied of under other names, as by Isaiah under the name of Leviathan, Isa 27:1 and by Micah under the name of the Assyrian, **Mic 5:5**. The Jews {r} say that Eldad and Medad prophesied of him, which Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abendana remark; who all observe, agreeably to the Talmudists in the place referred to, that these two are the prophets meant; and therefore it is directed to be read not "shanim", years, but "shenaim", two; namely, those two prophets prophesied one prophecy at one time, or together; but this is not to be depended upon: it should be observed, that this must be considered as spoken at the time of the accomplishment of this prophecy, and so may have respect to the Prophet Ezekiel himself, or to Joel, **Joe 3:1**, and to Zechariah, Zec 14:1, and even to the book of the Revelation, Re 16:14.

{r} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 17. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

Ezekiel 38:18

Ver. 18. And it shall come to pass at the same time, when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God,.... As before prophesied of and described:

that my fury shall come up in my face; as a man's blood rises up in his face, and his colour appears, when he is wroth and angry: or, "in my nose" {s}; as men when they are angry puff and blow, expand their nose, breathe through it; but against whom is all this wrath and fury? Starckius, a modern interpreter, thinks it is against the land of Israel, against the church; but it rather seems to be against Gog himself; the Lord being provoked at his attempt against the land of Israel, and the wicked designs he had to spoil and plunder it.

{s} ypab "in nasum meum", Piscator, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 38:19

Ver. 19. For in my jealousy, and in the fire of my wrath, have I spoken,.... Not against his people Israel, but against Gog, who had thought evil against them, and now was about to put it in practice; and therefore in zeal for his own glory, and for the good of his people, and in indignation against his and their enemies, he declares, resolves, and determines:

surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; not a consternation among the people of Israel frightened at the armies of Gog, and the terrible appearance they shall make, and the devastations they threaten; but in Gog himself, and his army, through the wrath of God upon them, and the vengeance he will take of them in the land of Israel, they will enter upon to destroy; not but that there may be some dread in the minds of the Jews upon the appearance of so formidable an army in their land: this shaking, according to Jarchi, will be by thunder and lightning. Kimchi understands it of an earthquake, in a literal sense, and compares with it Zec 14:4, see also Re 16:18, which speaks of an earthquake that will be about this time.

Ezekiel 38:20

Ver. 20. So that the fishes of the sea shall shake at my presence,.... From whence it appears that this great shaking shall not be on account of the army of Gog, and the devastations that it shall make; but on account of the powerful presence of God, which will be manifest in the destruction of his army: and what is here said of the shaking of the fishes of the sea,

and the fowls of the heaven, and the beast of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the earth, must be understood figuratively and hyperbolically, as Kimchi observes, and in allusion to earthquakes, which both shake and terrify all kind of creatures; the blow given to Gog will be so terrible, that all nature will seem to be thrown into a convulsion and agitation by it; see **Jer 4:24**:

and the mountains shall be thrown down; as they are sometimes by earthquakes; and as the mount of Olives will at this time cleave asunder; and perhaps other mountains will, as Kimchi observes, see
Zec 14:2:

and the steep places shall fall; the Targum renders the word "towers"; and so the Syriac version, and Piscator: the word signifies stairs or steps {t}, such as in a ladder; and is translated "stairs", **So 2:14** it seems to me to design such mounts as are raised by besiegers of a city, by means of which they may be able to scale the walls of it, which Jarchi suggests; though he says he had heard it said that these, are rocks bending over and hanging, and appear as if they were falling; which agrees with our version; and it may be observed, in some of those precipices, there are like stairs or steps to go up them:

and every wall shall fall to the ground: this shows that the words are not to be taken literally, but figuratively; only to express how sensibly the power of God should be felt and perceived by all creatures, and in all parts of the land; since now the Jews will dwell in a land of unwalled villages, and in cities without

walls, bars, and gates; see
Eze 38:11.

{t} twgrdmh "gradus", Munster, Pagninus, Montanus.

Ezekiel 38:21

Ver. 21. And I will call for a sword against him,.... That is, against Gog; or, as I would choose to render the words, "for I will call for a sword", so the particle is rendered, Eze 38:19 and which Noldius {u} agrees to; and this gives a reason why there should be such a commotion in the land of Israel; because the Lord, who has the swords of princes at his command, will call for the Christian kings to come to the assistance of the Jews, and fight against the Turk: who will pursue him

throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God; throughout the land of Israel, which is mountainous; and is called the Lord's, because he hath chosen it for his people, given it to them, and now dwelt among them; and in all parts of it where the enemy is, the sword of the Jews, and of those princes that should come in to their assistance at the call of God, shall be sent against them, and cut them off: and not only so,

but every man's sword shall be against his brother; as the swords of the Midianites were, **Jud 7:22**, and of the enemies of Jehoshaphat, 2Ch 20:22. The Turkish army will consist of a mixed people of many nations, who will quarrel among themselves, and destroy one another.

{u} Concordant. Ebr. Partic. p. 285, 286.

Ezekiel 38:22

Ver. 22. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood,.... Not only the sword of the Jews and the sword of Christian princes shall be drawn against him, and the sword of Gog's soldiers against one another; but the Lord himself would plead with him by his judgments, or take vengeance on him, as the Targum; and send a pestilence in his army, which should destroy vast numbers of it; as the army of Sennacherib was destroyed by one when before Jerusalem; and make a great slaughter among them by that and other judgments:

and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain; a horrible tempest of divine wrath, Ps 11:6 as he came into the land of Israel like a storm, so he shall be destroyed by one much more terrible:

and great hailstones; such as were cast upon the Canaanites, Jos 10:11 and as there will be on men, the enemies of the church of God, at the pouring out of the seventh vial, Re 16:21:

fire and brimstone; as God rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah, Ge 19:24, signifying that in like manner will God deal with those enemies of his people; so at the battle of Armageddon, which seems to be the same with this here, the beast and the false prophet will be taken alive, and cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, Re 19:20, and to this rain or tempest of fire and brimstone upon Gog there is an allusion in Re 20:9.

Ezekiel 38:23

Ver. 23. Thus will l magnify myself, and sanctify myself,.... Show the greatness of his power, and the strictness of his justice and holiness, and glorify these, and all other of his perfections, in the destruction of the enemies of his people:

and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord; Heathen nations shall now come to the knowledge of the true God, and his Son Jesus Christ, and of the Christian religion, and shall embrace and profess it; See Gill on "Eze 38:16", the kingdoms of the world will now become the Lord's, Re 11:15.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 39:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 39

This chapter is a continuation of the prophecy of the destruction of Gog, which is both repeated, and more largely described, Eze 39:1, then follows an account of the burning of his weapons of war, which will last seven years in burning, during which time there will be no need of the use of wood, Eze 39:9, and of the burial of him, and many of his army; the place where, and the time that will be taken up in doing this, even seven months, are observed, Eze 39:11, and every feathered fowl and beast of the field are called upon to feed on the flesh of those that are left unburied, Eze 39:17 and by all this the glory of the Lord will be seen, known, and acknowledged, both by the Heathens, and by the house of Israel, Eze 39:21, and the former will also be informed that the present captivity of the Jews has been for their sins and transgressions, Eze 39:23, and the chapter is concluded with a promise of their return from captivity, when they shall know the Lord, and their interest in him; who will after this no more hide his face from them, but pour out his Spirit upon them, under whose influence they shall ever continue, Eze 39:25.

Ver. 1. Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog,.... As he had been ordered to do before, and must still continue to do it:

behold, I am against thee, O Gog; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and to inject terror into him; for terrible it is to have God against any:

the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; See Gill on "Eze 38:2", the Septuagint version adds "Ros" here as there.

Ezekiel 39:2

Ver. 2. And I will turn thee back,.... Not from the land of Israel; for thither it is said in the latter part of the text he would bring him; but the meaning is, that he would "turn him about", as the word {w} signifies, in his own land, and lead him about at his pleasure, and bring him out of it, unto the land of Israel; signifying hereby that the providence of God would be greatly concerned in this affair; and in which much glory would be brought unto him by the destruction of such a potent enemy of his people; which is the design of bringing him out;
See Gill on "Eze 38:4":

and leave but a sixth part of thee; meaning, not that a sixth part only should escape the vengeance of God, and all but a sixth part be destroyed in the land of Israel; for it looks as if the whole army would be utterly destroyed, and none left; but that, when he should come out of his own country upon this expedition, a sixth part of his subjects only should be left behind; five out of six should accompany him; so numerous should his army be, and so drained his country by this enterprise of his. Some render the words, "will draw thee out with an hook of six teeth" {x}; that is, out of his own land; and this clause stands in the same place and order as the phrase and "put hooks into thy jaws" does in Eze 38:4 and so may be thought to explain one another, and agrees with what follows: for, as for the sense of it given by Joseph Kimchi and others,

"I will judge thee with six judgments {y}, Eze 38:12, pestilence, blood, an overflowing rain, hailstones, fire, and brimstone,"

it must be rejected; seeing as yet the account of his punishment is not come to; only an account is given how and by what means he shall be drawn out of his own land; wherefore much better is the Targum,

"I will persuade thee, and I will seduce thee;"

so Jarchi seems to understand it: and the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "I will lead thee", agreeably to what follows:

and will cause thee to come up from the north parts;
See Gill on "Eze 38:15"

and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel; not to inherit them, but to fall upon them, as in Eze 39:4.

{w} Kytbbv "circumducam te", Piscator; "circumagam", Grotius. {x} Kytavv "harpagone sextuplici extraham te", Vinarienses apud Starckius. So Buxtorf. {y} "Sex poenis, [sive] plagis afficiam te", Munster, Tigurine version.

Ezekiel 39:3

Ver. 3. And I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand,.... In which it is usually held, to have the arrow fitted to it:

and I will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand; where they are commonly held when put into the bow, and then the bow is drawn with it; signifying hereby, that though he should come into the land of Israel, he should not succeed; he would be stripped of his armour, and it would be useless to him: bows and arrows are put for all kind of warlike instruments; and are particularly mentioned because they were chiefly used in war when this prophecy was delivered.

Ezekiel 39:4

Ver. 4. Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel,.... Be slain, and his carcass lie there; so the Targum,

"upon the mountains of the land of Israel thy carcass shall be cast:"

thou and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee; Gog and his army, auxiliaries and allies:

I will give thee to the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured: a great part of his army being slain, should not be buried, but be devoured by birds of prey, and savage beasts; such as eagles and vultures of the former sort, and lions, bears, wolves, &c. of the latter. This was always reckoned a very sore judgment and dreadful calamity, not to have a burial, but to be exposed to birds and beasts of prey; this was threatened to the Israelites, in case of disobedience to the law of God, De 28:26 and to the wicked Jews in the times of Jeremiah; and to that evil king of Judah, Jehoiakim, Jer 16:4 and is lamented as one of the greatest evils that could befall good men, Ps 79:2, and nothing was more dreadful among the Heathens themselves; hence Homer {z}, among the many calamities Achilles was the cause of to the Grecians, mentions this as one, that he was the means of giving the bodies of a great number of their heroes to the dogs, and to the fowls of the air; so Virgil {a} represents the want of a burial, and being left to be fed upon by birds of prey, as severe a punishment of a wicked man as can be wished for.

{z} Iliad. 1. l. 4, 5. {a} "----non te optima mater Condet humi, patriove onerrabit membra sepulchro Alitibus linquere feris". Aeneid. l. 10.

Ezekiel 39:5

Ver. 5. Thou shalt fall upon the open field,.... Some part of his army should fall upon the mountains, and others upon the plain; wherever they will be found, they will be destroyed, either by the sword of the Jews and Christian princes, or by God's judgments from heaven:

for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God; and therefore it should surely come to pass, since no word of his ever fails; this is added to assure of the truth of it, since it might be thought incredible that so large an army should be destroyed.

Ezekiel 39:6

Ver. 6. And I will send a fire on Magog,.... On the land of Magog; see Eze 38:2, while Gog is in the land of Israel, and he and his army perish there, his country shall be destroyed by fire, or by some judgment or judgments of God, which shall consume like fire. The Septuagint version renders it, "I will send a fire on Gog"; but he before is said to fall upon the mountains of Israel; his country is meant; it designs the destruction of the Ottoman empire:

and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: that belong to the Turkish dominions; not only the habitants of the Continent shall be consumed, but those that dwell in islands, and think themselves safe and secure, and so live carelessly; or such who live on the sea coasts, it being usual in Scripture to call such places isles; and may intend those who dwell near the Exine and Caspian seas:

and they shall know that I am the Lord: by his judgments executed upon them.

Ezekiel 39:7

Ver. 7. So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel,.... That is, his perfections; his holiness and justice in punishing their enemies; his truth and faithfulness in fulfilling his promises to them; his power in inflicting judgments on Gog and his army; and his goodness in their preservation and protection:

and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: either the Heathens round about who before blasphemed it, saying that God was not able to deliver his people from such a potent enemy; but now their mouth will be stopped, and they will not dare to speak any more after this manner: or else the Israelites, who shall be so influenced by the grace and goodness of God unto them, as to fear the Lord and his goodness, and not dare to commit the sins they formerly did, whereby his name was polluted and blasphemed among the Heathens:

and the Heathen shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel; they shall know, by these judgments and providences, that he is the true God, and they shall acknowledge and confess it; and that he is a holy and just God, and dwells in Israel, and grants his gracious as well as powerful presence to his people; nor shall they dare to molest them any more.

Ezekiel 39:8

Ver. 8. Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord God,.... That is, the salvation of his people, and the destruction of their enemies; the prophecy concerning all this is come to pass, and the whole is accomplished; thus, because of the certainty thereof, it is represented as if the time was actually come, and the thing was really done; for the event is as sure as if it was now fulfilled:

this is the day whereof I have spoken; by the Prophet Ezekiel and others; See Gill on "Eze 38:17".

Ezekiel 39:9

Ver. 9. And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth,.... Out of their houses into the streets, where Gog's soldiers will lie dead, and their armour by them; or rather out of their cities, where they dwelt safely, and where they kept themselves, and were secure from the enemy: these seem to be distinct from the militia of Israel, engaged in battle with Gog; these were the inhabitants that will stay at home, and yet share in the spoil and plunder; see Ps 68:12, these, after the battle is over, and the victory obtained, of which they will have information, will then march out without fear into the open fields and mountains, where the army of Gog will fall, Eze 39:4:

and shall set on fire and burn the weapons; the armour of Gog's army, which they shall find lie by the dead, or upon them; or which they that flee will cast away; these they shall gather together, and lay on a heap, and burn, as sometimes has been the practice of conquerors; or rather they shall take them to their own houses, and make fuel of them, and burn them, instead of wood out of the fields and forests, as the following verse shows:

both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows; which were the weapons that Gog and his associates used; see Eze 38:4,

and the handstaves, and the spears; the "handstaves" were either half pikes or truncheons, as some think; or javelins, as others:

and they shall burn them with fire seven years; which some take to be a certain number for an uncertain, and others an hyperbolical expression; but when it is considered what a vast army this of Gog's will be, and what prodigious numbers of weapons of all sorts must be carried by them, and the little use of fire in those hot countries: it may be very well taken in a literal sense, and the meaning be, that so great will be the quantity of warlike weapons that will be found and gathered, that they will serve for fuel for the space of seven years.

Ezekiel 39:10

Ver. 10. So that they shall take no wood out of the field,.... During that seven years; or they shall have no need to do so, as the Syriac version; having a sufficiency of armour:

neither cut down any out of the forest: out of the forest of Lebanon, or any other, where they used to fetch wood for their necessary uses; but so great a quantity of armour shall now be brought home by them to their houses, that they should have no need to be at the trouble and expense of fetching wood from the forests:

for they shall burn the weapons with fire; the reason of which will be, because they will have no occasion for them hereafter; for when this battle is over, which seems to be the same with that at Armageddon, there will be an entire destruction of all the enemies of Christ and his church; the world will be cleared of them, and there will be war no more, and so no more use of weapons; this will be the last battle that will be fought; see **Isa 2:4**:

and they shall spoil those that spoil them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord God: not only take their weapons and burn them, but strip them of their garments, and take away their gold, and silver, and jewels, and everything of value they shall find about them.

Ezekiel 39:11

Ver. 11. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... When this destruction of the army of Gog shall be made:

that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel; or, "a place there, a grave in Israel" {b}; he that thought to have subdued the whole land, and taken possession of it, shall have no more of it than just a place for a grave, to be buried in; a place fit for a grave, as the Targum; and where that will be is next observed: "the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea"; a valley through which travellers used to pass from Syria, Babylon, and other places, to Egypt and Arabia Felix, which lay east of the sea; not the Mediterranean sea, which lies west of Judea; but either the Dead sea, the sea of Sodom, a sulphurous lake, to which there may be an allusion,
Re 19:20 or the sea of Chinnereth, or Genesareth, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi; the same with the sea or lake of Tiberias and Galilee, mentioned in the New Testament; which sense is approved of by Gussetius {c}; where was a passage from the land of Canaan to the east of the same sea. Calmet {d} thinks it stands for the great road at the foot of Mount Carmel, to go from Judea, Egypt, and the country of the Philistines, into Phoenicia, which road was to the east of the Mediterranean sea.

And it shall stop the noses of the passengers; or the passengers shall stop their noses, because of the ill smell of the carcasses {e}; or their mouths, the mouths of blasphemers, who shall no more blaspheme the God of Israel, when they shall observe this monument of his power, in the destruction of his and his people's enemies. It may be rendered, "it shall stop the passengers {f}; from passing that way, because of the multitude of the carcasses that shall fall there", and which is the reason of their being buried out of the way; this sense Jarchi takes notice of. The Targum is,

"and it is near to two mountains;"

as if this clause described the situation of the valley.

And there shall they bury Gog, and all his multitude; all his army, such of it as the fowls and beasts had not devoured, and the bones they had left; not his army only, but himself also, the Sultan or Grand Seignior of the Turks, the general of his mighty army: this was not true of Antiochus; he died not, nor was he buried in the land of Israel.

And they shall call it the valley of Hamon-gog: Hamon signifies a multitude; and this name will be imposed upon the place of Gog's sepulchre, because of the multitude slain and buried here, and to perpetuate the memory of it: there never was yet a place of this name in the land of Israel, which shows that this event is yet future. Calmet takes it to be the valley of Jezreel, in which he thinks the army of Cambyses was defeated, after the death of that prince; wrongly taking Cambyses and his army for Gog and Magog.

{b} rbq Mv Mwqm "locum ibi sepulchrum", Starckius; "locum ubi sit sepulchrum", Cocceius. {c} Ebr. Comment. p. 585. {d} Dictionary in the word "Vale" {e} So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 66. 2. {f} Myrbeh ta ayh tmoxw "et erit illa obturans transeuntes", Starckius; "et erit illa frenans transeuntes", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 39:12

Ver. 12. And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them,.... So long time will the burial of Gog's army take up, because of the multitude of it, and by reason their bones will be scattered here and there; which will require time to gather them together, and bring them to one place: the reason of the burial of them will be, partly out of humanity, which the Christian religion, which will then be embraced by the Jews, teaches and encourages; and partly because of the disagreeable sight and ill smell of the carcasses of the slain, and to prevent the air being infected therewith, which might cause noxious diseases. Jarchi gives the reason of it, because Gog is of the seed of Japheth, who covered his father's nakedness, and therefore worthy of a funeral: but a better reason follows,

that they may cleanse the land: not from ceremonial uncleanness, a place being unclean, by the ceremonial law, where dead carcasses, or the bones of dead men, lay; for the ceremonial law, as it is abrogated, will now be disused by the Jews themselves, when converted; but from natural pollution, before mentioned.

Ezekiel 39:13

Ver. 13. Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them,.... That is, a great number of the common people of the land of Israel, especially of those that dwell near the field of battle, shall be employed in burying the slain; and which they will be very ready to do, for the reasons above mentioned:

and it shall be to them a renown; or, "for a name" {g}; they shall be commended for their humanity to their enemies, and shall be spoken of with honour, as being the peculiar people of God, whom he has so remarkably appeared for, protected, and defended:

the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord God; the day that will be renown to them will be to the glory of God; whose greatness, goodness, power, and wisdom, will be seen in saving his people, and destroying their enemies.

{g} Mvl "in nomen", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 39:14

Ver. 14. And they shall sever out men of continual employment,.... That is, the principal of the house of Israel, their magistrates and governors, shall select certain persons, to be daily employed in the following work, till ended:

passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it; these men will be appointed to go through the land of Israel, to gather up such carcasses and bones of dead men as remain anywhere after the seven months' burial before observed; and all passengers or travellers shall be assisting to them in it, both in directing where any such carcasses and bones may lie, and in bringing them to the common place of burial; that so the land may he thoroughly cleansed from such disagreeable objects:

after the end of seven months shall they search or begin to search, as the Targum; when seven months are ended, in which the people in general will be employed in burying the dead; these men before mentioned will be sent out into each part of the land, to search in caves, and dens and ditches; among thickets, thorns, and briers, where the slain may fall; or where soldiers, being wounded, might betake themselves and die; or their carcasses or bones be dragged and left by beasts and fowls; to find them out, and bring them to the place of interment.

Ezekiel 39:15

Ver. 15. And the passengers that pass through the land,.... Not along with the searchers, but that travel through it upon business in it, or in other lands:

when any seeth a man's bone, then shall he set up a sign by it; as he passes along, if he happens to see a human bone in the way, or hard by, he shall stop and lay a stone, or a heap of stones, by it, or some such mark or token, signifying that a man's bone lies there:

till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog, that is, which sign shall continue till searchers come that way and take up the bone, and carry it to be buried in the valley of Hamon-gog; for carcasses and bones were not to be buried in the place where they were found, but to be brought and interred in this common place of sepulture.

Ezekiel 39:16

Ver. 16. And also the name of the city shall be Hamonah,.... The name of the city nearest to this place, where Gog and his multitude shall be buried, shall be called Hamonah from thence, which signifies a multitude; or Polyandrion, as the Septuagint version, a place where many graves are; or perhaps a new city will be built near this place, and so called, to perpetuate the memory of it; or else, as Kimchi observes, Jerusalem will be so called, from the multitude of those that will be slain near it; but, however, neither that nor any other city in the land of Israel have ever bore any such name; from whence it may be concluded that this prophecy does not refer to the times of Antiochus, or any yet past, but to time to come:

thus shall they cleanse the land; thoroughly and completely, so that not a bone shall be left unburied.

Ezekiel 39:17

Ver. 17. And thou, son of man, thus saith the Lord God,.... What the prophet is ordered by the Lord to say is to creatures not then in being, nor yet; and, were they, they could not understand his words; but however, when the time comes, partly by an instinct in nature, and partly by a particular direction of Providence, they will be gathered together upon so great a slaughter of men; for what follows, though mentioned in this place, will be between the slaughter of Gog's army, and the burial of it, as Kimchi well observes; after the burial such an invitation would be impertinent; and which is made not for the sake of creatures, but of men, to denote the certainty of this great carnage that shall be made:

speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field; this must be understood of such fowls, and such beasts, as devour dead carcasses, for all will not feed on them; a like invitation is given after the battle at Armageddon, the same with this here, Re 19:17 only with this difference, there an angel is said to cry, here the prophet; there to the fowls only, here to the beasts of the field also; no doubt respect there is had to this passage:

assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifices that I do sacrifice for you; such a slaughter of men is called a sacrifice, because there is a likeness between that and the killing of beasts for sacrifice; besides, these enemies of God and his people will fall a victim to his justice, as well as be a repast for fowls and beasts, who are invited, as to a feast, to feed upon them; and there being so much of the power and providence of God in all this, it is ascribed to him, and is called "the supper of the great God",
Re 19:17:

even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel; where Gog's army will fall, Eze 39:4, and in such vast numbers, that it may well be called a great sacrifice; the sacrifice of a great army by the great God, and for such great number of creatures:

that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood; the flesh and blood of the sacrifices, even of slain men, which carnivorous creatures delight in. The Targum is,

"draw near everywhere round about to the slain, which I slay for you with a great slaughter upon the mountains of Israel, and ye shall eat the flesh, and drink the blood."

Ezekiel 39:18

Ver. 18. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty,.... Of the soldiers, men of strength and courage, and fit for war, with which the army of Gog will abound:

and drink the blood of the princes of the earth: both the princes of his own family and court, and those of his allies and auxiliaries that will come along with him:

of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks; which the Targum Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret of kings, princes, dukes, rulers, and governors; and so does John, in the Revelation, of kings, captains, and mighty men, Re 19:18:

all of them fatlings of Baasha; which was a country in Israel, very fruitful, and full of pastures, where much fat cattle were bred; and to which these great personages in Gog's army are compared, for their bulk, strength, and wealth. So the Targum,

"all of them rich in substance."

It may be rendered, "all of them the merie of Bashan"; for "meri" is the name of an ox or buffle; and Jarchi says that a fat ox is called in the Arabic language "almari" {h}.

{h} Vid. Bochart. de Script. Animal. par. 1. l. 2. c. 28. col. 284.

Ezekiel 39:19

Ver. 19. And ye shall eat fat till ye be full,.... The fat of men; and such as before described generally are fat, and of which they shall have enough; and, though voracious creatures, shall eat to satiety:

and drink blood till ye be drunken; as men are with wine, who become mad with it; and so birds and beasts of prey grow fiercer by drinking blood: the meaning is, they should have their fill of the flesh, fat, and blood, of slain men:

of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you; the Targum is,

"of the flesh of the slain, which I have slain for you;"

See Gill on "Eze 39:17".

Ezekiel 39:20

Ver. 20. Thus shall ye be filled at my table with horses and chariots,.... With the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, as John interprets it, Re 19:18, and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions: and with the flesh of men that ride in chariots used in war; for chariots themselves cannot be eaten; and with these the birds and beasts of prey will be filled at the Lord's table, which he will furnish for them on the mountains of Israel, on the field of battle, where Gog and his army will fall: and thus as the Lord's supper is called the table of the Lord, 1Co 10:21, so this table of the Lord is called the supper of the great God, Re 19:17, this is further explained,

with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God; that is, with the flesh of valiant men, generals, captains, officers of all sorts, and common soldiers, even of all men, great and small, bond and free, Re 19:18.

Ezekiel 39:21

Ver. 21. And I will set my glory among the Heathen,.... The glory of his divine perfections, particularly his power and his goodness, in destroying the enemies of his people, and saving them; which will be set in a clear point of view to the Heathen, that they cannot but observe it; and this is the ultimate end of this strange event, as it is of all that the Lord does, even his own glory, subordinate to which is his people's good:

and all the Heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them; his vengeance and power, as the Targum; the punishment inflicted by his mighty hand on Gog and his army: these Heathens are the Pagan kingdoms of China, &c. and of Tartary, Persia, and the whole Turkish dominions, being Mahometan, which are no better than Heathen; these will be converted to the Christian religion, in consequence of this event; for this will be the passing away of the Turkish woe, which will make way for the sounding of the seventh trumpet; and when these kingdoms will become Christ's, and way be made for the kings of the east to come over to him, Re 11:14.

Ezekiel 39:22

Ver. 22. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God,.... That has chosen them, redeemed them, called them, manifested his covenant love and grace to them, and protected and defended them: this destruction of their enemies will be a proof of it; and they will hereby be led into a clearer knowledge of him, and of his goodness to them; and make a more firm and constant profession of him,

even from that day and forward, to the end of time; for after this the Jews will no more apostatize, but will for ever remain the people of God and Christ.

Ezekiel 39:23

Ver. 23. And the Heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity,.... Before this they thought the captivity of the Jews, and all their distresses, were owing to their own weakness, and the weakness of the God they served, and to the superior strength of their enemies, and the power of their gods; but now, by this strange and amazing destruction of Gog and his army, they will see that it was not owing to those things, but to the sins and transgressions of the people of the Jews:

because they transgressed against me; prevaricated with him, acted a perfidious and treacherous part to him, as the word {i} signifies; which they did, when they delivered Jesus of Nazareth, the true Messiah, into the hands of the Gentiles, to be crucified; it is their disbelief of Christ, and rejection of him, and maltreatment of him, that is here more especially pointed at; and which is the cause of their present long captivity and exile, and of all the afflictions and troubles they have since met with: so the Targum renders it,

"they dealt falsely with my Word;"

the Word made flesh, the incarnate Saviour:

therefore hid I my face from them; took no notice of them, showed them no favour, took no care of them; disregarded their prayers and cries, and removed his presence from them, and all the tokens of it. So the Targum,

"I caused my Shechaniah (or majesty) to remove from them;"

and thus it has been ever since, and now is:

and gave them into the hand of their enemies; the Romans, who took away their place and nation; which they feared would be the case, should many believe in Christ; but the true reason of it was because they did not believe in him, Joh 11:48:

so fell they all by the sword; that is, through the sword of the conquering Romans; they fell into their hands; some perished by the sword, and others were carried into captivity; and all were punished for their iniquity, trespass, and perfidy.

{i} yb wlem "praevaricati essent contra me", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 39:24

Ver. 24. According to their uncleanness,.... Not ceremonial, but moral; they were an impure and adulterous generation, as our Lord calls them, Mt 12:39:

and according to their transgressions have I done unto them; or "rebellions", as the Targum renders it; or defections, as the word {k} signifies; their rebellions against the King Messiah; their defections from him; their contempt of him, and rejection of his yoke, and non-submission to his ordinances; according to the desert of such crimes, the Lord dealt with them;

"took vengeance on them,"

as the Targum is; in the destruction of their nation, city, and temple: "and hid my face from them"; or caused his Shechaniah to remove from them, as the same paraphrase; See Gill on "Eze 39:23".

{k} Mhyevpk "secundum defectiones eorum", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Starckius; "pro defectionibus ipsorum", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 39:25

Ver. 25. Therefore thus saith the Lord,.... The Jews having been long punished for their sins; and being brought to repentance for them, and to faith in Christ, as they will be in the latter day: hence it follows,

now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob; or the captives of Jacob, the people of Israel, that have been carried captive into all lands; these shall be gathered from thence, and brought into their own land:

and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel; all the twelve tribes; which shows that this has not respect to the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity; for then the Lord had mercy on the house of Judah only; or the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; but their return from their present captivity, and future conversion,

when all Israel shall be saved; as the fruit and effect of the rich sovereign grace and mercy of God unto them, Ro 11:25:

and will be jealous for my holy name; or, "zealous" {l} for the glory of it, that it be no more blasphemed among the Heathen; and that it be glorified among his own people.

{l} ytanq "assumam zelum", V. L. "zelabo", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 39:26

Ver. 26. After that they have borne their shame,.... And disgrace, among the nations where they are scattered; being captives, exiles, in distress and affliction, and under the manifest tokens of the divine wrath and vengeance: it may be rendered, "and they shall bear their shame" {m}; that is, as Jarchi glosses it,

"when I shall do good to them, and not render to them according to their wickedness, then they shall bear their shame, and be confounded, and not able to lift up their face;"

as penitent persons, under a sense of divine wrath, blush, and are ashamed to look up to God; see **Ezr 9:6**. Menachem interprets the word in the sense of atonement and forgiveness, as it is used in
Ps 32:11, as if the meaning was, then they shall have their sins, which caused shame, forgiven them. Kimchi's gloss is,

"they shall carry in their mouths, and make mention of their shame they had in captivity."

And all their transgressions whereby they have transgressed against me; that is, the punishment of all their trespasses in their captivity, or the shame of them, being now brought to repentance; and which will be aggravated to them, when they remember that these were committed by their forefathers, and since approved of by them.

When they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid; as they did in the times of Christ; they were in entire peace, and no enemy disturbed them; and were in the possession of their own land, and enjoyed the blessings of it, and had their religious as well as civil liberties; and yet rejected the Messiah, his doctrine, ordinances, and salvation by him.

{m} Mtmlk ta wvnw "et portabunt", Pagninus, Montanus, V. L. Grotius; "et ferent ignominiam suam", Starckius.

Ezekiel 39:27

Ver. 27. When I have brought them again from the people,.... That is, then shall they be ashamed, and repent of all their trespasses and sins:

and gathered them out of their enemies lands; from the provinces of their enemies, as the Targum; when they are collected together in a body out of each of the nations where they are now dispersed, and brought to their own land:

and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; when they shall publicly repent of their sins, and forsake them, and seek the Lord their God, and the King Messiah, and embrace and profess him, and acknowledge that God has been righteous and holy in all his dispensations towards them.

Ezekiel 39:28

Ver. 28. Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God,....
See Gill on "Eze 39:22";

which caused them to be led into captivity among the Heathen; for their sins and transgressions: and so the Targum adds,

"because they sinned before me:"

but I have gathered them into their own land; being now penitent for their sins, and believing in the Messiah: and so the Targum,

"and now, because they are converted, I have gathered them, &c."

and have left none of them any more there; among the Heathen, or in the land of their enemies; everyone shall be returned to the land of Canaan, be they where they will, as when they came out of Egypt: and this is typical of the salvation of God's elect, or mystical Israel; not one of them shall be lost or perish, but all shall be brought to repentance: this again shows, that this prophecy did not respect the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity; since then many were left behind.

Ezekiel 39:29

Ver. 29. Neither will I hide my face any more from them,.... The Jews, upon their future conversion, will always have the worship of God among them, and his presence with them; he will always take notice of them; they will ever be under his protection and care; he will never remove his Shechinah from them any more, as the Targum: a further proof that this refers to future times; for, after their return from Babylon, God did hide his face, and remove his presence from them, and left them to ruin and destruction by the Romans:

for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God; this refers not to the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, but to one that is yet to come, when the Jews will be converted in the latter day; after which God will no more depart from them, nor shall they depart from him; see Zec 12:10.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 40:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 40

This and the eight following chapters contain a vision of a city and temple herein described, and are thought to be the most difficult part of the whole Bible. The Jews forbid the reading of it till a man is arrived to thirty years of age; and then he must expect to meet with things in it he does not understand, and which must be left until Elijah comes to explain them. Many Christian commentators have omitted the exposition of these chapters; and all acknowledge the difficulties in them. Something however may be got out of them, relating to the Gospel, and Gospel church state, which I am fully persuaded is intended by the city and temple; for that no material building can be designed is clear from this one observation; that not only the whole land of Israel would not be capable of having such a city as is here described built upon it, but even all Europe would not be sufficient; nor the whole world, according to the account of the dimensions which some give of it. The circumference of the city is said to be about eighteen thousand measures, Eze 48:35; but what they are is not certain. Luther makes them to be thirty six thousand German miles; and a German mile being three of ours, the circuit of this city must be above a hundred thousand English miles; and this is sufficient to set aside all hypotheses of a material building, either of city or temple, the one being in proportion to the other. The Jews dream of a third temple to be built, by their vainly expected Messiah; but nothing is more clear than that the true Messiah was to come into the second temple, and by that give it a greater glory than the former ever had; as is evident from **Hag 2:6** and, according to Malachi, he was to come suddenly into his temple, which could be no other than the then present one, **Mal 3:1**, and into which Jesus came, and where he often appeared and taught, as well as entered into it with power and authority, as the Lord and proprietor of it; by which he appeared to be the true Messiah, as by many other characters; see **Lu 2:22**. There are some who think that Solomon's temple, as it was before it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and as it was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, is here described; and that partly to let the Jews know what a glory to their nation they lost by their sins; and partly that they might have a complete pattern for the rebuilding of it, as well as to comfort them under its present ruins; but there is no agreement between them. This temple was to be built at a distance from the city, several miles; according to some ten, others twenty, and by the best account twenty seven miles; see Eze 45:1, whereas Solomon's temple, and that built by Zerubbabel, were in the city of Jerusalem: nor from either of these flowed waters, which rose up to a river, on the bank of which were many trees for food and medicine, and whose waters were healing, and quickened wherever they came, as from this, Eze 47:1, nor do we ever read of the east gate of these temples always shut, as this, Eze 44:2, and besides, both these temples were profaned and destroyed; whereas this shall never be, but God will dwell in it forever, Eze 43:7, neither place, structure, nor worship, agree. Nor is this city here the same with the New Jerusalem John had a vision of; for though he borrows some of his expressions to describe it from hence; and in some things there is an

appearance of agreement, as of the river of water of life, and the tree of life on both sides of the river, Re 22:1, yet the description agrees not, either with respect to its gates, or its compass; and though there was no temple in that John saw, as there was none in this, it being without the city; yet here is a temple in this vision, and the greatest part of it is taken up in the description of it. It remains that this must be understood mystically and figuratively of the Gospel church, which is often spoken of as a city and temple, Heb 12:22 and which began to have its accomplishment in the first times of the Gospel, immediately after the death and resurrection of Christ; when his disciples had a commission to preach the Gospel to all nations; and who accordingly did, even before the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the material temple, so that Gospel churches were planted in all parts of the world; and especially this was the case, when the Roman empire, called the whole world, became Christian: though the further and greater accomplishment of this vision will be in the latter day; when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea; when Jews and Gentiles will be converted, and Gospel churches be set up everywhere; so that the Gospel church state, or kingdom of Christ, signified by the great mountain in **Da 2:35**, and by this large city here, will fill the whole earth: and the rather this may be thought to be the design of this vision to represent it, as it follows the prophecies of the Jews' settlement in their own land; and of the destruction of Gog, or the Turk, attempting to dispossess them; of which in chapters 37-39. In this chapter are first an account of the vision in general, the time, manner, and place of it, Eze 40:1, a description of the person, the builder and owner of the house; and by whom the prophet is shown each of the parts and dimensions of it, whom he calls to him for that purpose, Eze 40:3, and then a particular account is given, which begins with the outward wall around the house, Eze 40:5, then the east gate, with its posts, porch, and chambers, and the outward court with its chambers, Eze 40:6, then the gate of the outward court to the north, with its chambers, and the gate of the inner court over against that, Eze 40:20, then the gate to the south, with its posts, arches, and chambers, Eze 40:24, then the inner court to the east, its gate, chambers, and arches, Eze 40:32, then the north gate, with its posts, chambers, and arches, Eze 40:35, in the porch of which are the tables, on which the sacrifices are slain,
Eze 40:39, after which are described the chambers for the singers and the priests, Eze 40:44, then the inner court and altar in it; and the chapter is concluded with the dimensions of the porch of the house, Eze 40:48.

Ver. 1. In the five and twentieth year of our captivity,.... That is, from Jeconiah's captivity, from whence this prophet begins his dates: he calls it our captivity, because he himself was then carried captive; and this was twenty years after his first vision; see **Eze 1:1**:

in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month; the Jews had two beginnings of their year, the one on civil accounts, which was in the autumnal equinox, in the month Tisri, which answers to part of our September; and if this is meant here, the tenth day of it was the day of atonement, in which the Jews were to afflict their souls; but on this day the prophet has a view of the Gospel church, which receives the atonement by the sacrifice of Christ: the other beginning of the year, which was on ecclesiastic accounts, was in the vernal equinox, the month Nisan, which answers to part of our March; and the tenth day of it was the day that the passover lamb was separated from the flock, and kept up till the fourteenth; the time between Christ's public entry into Jerusalem, and his being sacrificed as the passover for us. Some interpreters go one way, some the other: it is not easy to determine which is meant; though I think more probably the latter, since church affairs are chiefly here represented. This, according to the Talmudists {n}, was the year of the jubilee: Bishop Usher {o} places it in the year of the world 3430 A.M., and before Christ 574; and makes the day to be the thirtieth of April, and the third day of the week (Tuesday); and, as to the year, Mr. Whiston {p} agrees with, him:

in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten; taken, broken up, and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar; its walls demolished; its houses burnt, and inhabitants put to the sword, or carried captive. This was in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, to which add the fourteen years from hence and they make twenty five, as reckoned from Jeconiah's captivity:

in the self-same day the hand of the Lord was upon me, and brought me hither; that is, on the tenth day of the month, of the new year, begin when it will. The Spirit of the Lord, which is sometimes called the finger of God, and the power of God, this fell upon him, or was laid on him, and impressed his mind and soul; and he in a visionary way, as appears by what follows, was brought into, the land of Israel, and to Jerusalem, according as things were represented to his mind; though, as to his body, he was still in the land of Chaldea. The Targum interprets "the hand of the Lord" the spirit of prophecy; see **Eze 1:3**.

{n} T. Bab. Eracin, fol. 12. 1. {o} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3430. {p} Chronological Tables, cent. 10.

Ezekiel 40:2

Ver. 2. In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel,.... Or by the spirit of prophecy, as the Targum again; that is, being under the impressions of the Spirit of God, it appeared to him, in a visionary way, as if he was really brought out of Chaldea, and set in the land of Israel; see **Eze 8:3**, as John was carried away in the spirit to see the New Jerusalem, Re 21:10:

and set me upon a very high mountain; as John also was, that he might have a view of this large city and temple, which were to fill the whole world: thus Christ was taken up to an exceeding high mountain, to be shown the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, **Mt 4:8**, it is needless to inquire what this mountain was, whether Moriah, on which the temple was formerly built, or any other mountain near Jerusalem, since no material temple is exhibited to be built upon it; nor would such a mountain, especially Zion or Moriah, have been a proper place, if material temple at Jerusalem was here designed, which must have stood upon it; but this is visionary, as well as the city and temple; if it respects anything, it may the strength, the visibility, and exalted state of the church of Christ in the latter day; see **Isa 2:2**:

by, which was as the flame of a city on the south: the prophet in the vision, and as to his view of things coming from Babylon, which lay north of Judea, has a prospect of the south of the city and temple; and, first, there appeared to him, to the south of the mountain on which he stood, the plan of a city; or which was as one, for the city is not described till last; the description is of the temple first; and which for its wall, gates, courts, and towers, looked more like a city than a temple; nothing is more common than for the church of Christ to be compared to a city, especially as in the latter day; see Ps 87:3.

Ezekiel 40:3

Ver. 3. And he brought me thither,.... Being brought into the land of Israel in vision, and to a high mountain in it, by which were as the frame of a city; he was from thence brought to the city or temple itself, which looked like one:

and, behold, a note of attention and admiration:

there was a man; one in human form; not a created angel, but the Messiah, the builder and owner of the city and temple, whom it was proper the prophet should first have a view of; and by whom he was to be made acquainted with the several parts and dimensions of those buildings: he is called a "man", not that he was a mere man, but the eternal God; or otherwise he would not have been fit to be the architect or builder of such a fabric; nor as yet was he really man, but is so called, because it was determined he should, and it was agreed by him that he would become man, and it was foretold as a certain thing; and besides, he often appeared in a human form before his incarnation, as he now did, being most suitable to the prophet, and making himself more familiar to him; as well as it was preludium of his future incarnation, and of what he be when this vision would be fulfilled:

whose appearance was like the appearance of brass; denoting the glory and splendour of his divine Person, being the brightness of his Father's glory; also the glory of his human nature, in his state of exaltation, and the glory of his office, as Mediator; and especially the glory and brightness he will appear in when this vision will take place, with which he shall enlighten the whole earth, and slay antichrist; see Re 18:1, also it may denote his purity and holiness in both his natures, divine and human; not only in the former, but in the latter, in which he is free from sin, original and actual; and even now from sin imputed, having made full satisfaction for it, without which he will appear when he comes a second time, **Heb 9:28**, this may likewise point at his great strength, as God, and man, and Mediator; who has made the world, and holds all creatures in being; who is the mighty Redeemer of his people; has bore their sins, and conquered their enemies; supports their persons; bears their burdens, and supplies them with strength: once more, it may intend his duration; who, though he was once dead, is alive, and lives for ever; his priesthood is unchangeable; his kingdom an everlasting one; and he the same yesterday, today, and for ever, and his years fail not:

with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed: one in one hand, and the other in the other hand; the one to measure greater, the other lesser matters; and both signify the sacred Scriptures, the rule and measure of faith and practice; and to which, in the latter day, all will be reduced; the doctrines then preached will be quite agreeable to them; the ordinances will be administered as they were first delivered; the form, order, and discipline of the churches, will be according to the primitive pattern; there will be no deviation from it; see **Zec 2:1**:

and he stood in the gate; of the house or temple, as being Lord and proprietor of it; having the keys of it, to open and shut, let in and keep out, at his pleasure; see **Heb 3:6** and as the guide of the prophet, to lead him into each of the courts and apartments, and give him the dimensions of them, that he might show them to the house of Israel, to be observed by them; and here, as Cocceius observes, he stands, invites and calls persons to come into his house, and partake of all the privileges and entertainments of it; see **Pr 1:20**, yea, here he stands, as being not so much the doorkeeper, as the door and gate itself; as he is the way to his Father, the gate that leads to eternal life, so the door into a Gospel church; see Joh 14:6.

Ezekiel 40:4

Ver. 4. And the man said unto me, Son of man,.... The glorious and illustrious Person before described, who appeared in a human form, spoke to the prophet, calling him "the Son of man", a title often bestowed upon him in this prophecy; and here used to put him in mind of his original and decent, and of his meanness and unworthiness; thereby teaching him humility, which is necessary in order to receive instruction, and learn the knowledge of divine things: and also he might use this free and familiar way of speaking, both to express his philanthropy or good will to men, and to take off all terror from the mind of the prophet at his appearance; that he might more diligently attend to what he should see and hear, which he next advises him to:

behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears; look with both eyes, and hear with both ears; that is, look wistfully, and hear attentively; for if persons only have a glance or superficial view of anything or hear in a careless and indifferent manner, what they see and hear will make little impression upon them; nor will they retain, but soon forget it, and be incapable of relating it unto others:

and set thy heart upon all that I shall show thee; let thy mind be intent upon it; thoroughly consider it, and ponder it within thy heart; let it engross all thy thoughts and affections; so it will be imprinted upon thy mind, and be remembered by thee; for, unless a man's heart is taken with what he sees and hears, it will soon be gone from him; and besides, these were things of great moment and importance, which were about to be shown the prophet: as Moses had the pattern of the tabernacle shown him in the mount; and as David had the pattern of the temple given him by the Spirit and in writing, which were both typical of the church; and as John had a view of the New Jerusalem; so the prophet here is shown the form and order of the Gospel church in the latter day:

for to the intent that I might show them unto thee art thou brought hither; this was the design of his being brought in a visionary way out of Chaldea into the land of Israel, that he might have a view of the fabric after described; and there it was highly proper that he should diligently view it, and listen attentively to everything that was said to him about it; and the rather, as he was to relate the whole to others, as follows:

declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel; to the people of Israel then in captivity; and to the church of God in every age, to whom this prophecy should come, and by whom it should be read; that the people of God in all succeeding times might know what will be the state and condition of the church of Christ in the latter day; and how far they now come short of Gospel order and discipline; see Eze 43:10. It becomes the ministers of the word faithfully to declare what has been shown them, whether respecting doctrine or practice, even all things, and keep back nothing that may be profitable and useful.

Ezekiel 40:5

Ver. 5. And behold, a wall on the outside of the house round about,.... The first thing that presents itself to the view of the prophet, after the sight of the architect or chief builder, is a wall encompassing this strange and wondrous building; which was like the frame of a city, as before observed: this wall was five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad; see Eze 42:20, now this wall was both for separation and protection; that it was for separation is certain from Eze 42:20, it was to separate between the sanctuary land the profane place; that is, between the church and the world: the people of God were always a distinct and separate people; they were so from eternity, are so in time, and will be so to all eternity; they were distinguished from others by the everlasting love, of God; by his eternal choice of them, and taking them into the covenant of his grace, in consequence of it; and by the redeeming grace of Christ, who has redeemed them out of every kindred, people, and nation; and by the efficacious grace of God, in the effectual calling, by which they are separated from the world, and become a distinct people from them; and so they will be in the resurrection morn, and in the day of judgment, and in heaven for evermore: and what separates and distinguishes them is not any native goodness in them, nor any good thing done by them; but the purpose and grace of God, like a wall built firm and sure; not upon the works of men, but the will of God; and is unalterable and eternal; a wall that can never be battered down:

it is this by which the church is enclosed as a vineyard and garden, to which it is sometimes compared, because separate and distinct from the waste, common, and field of the world; as here to a building encompassed by a wall, and divided from it: the church of Christ in all ages does or should consist of persons gathered out of the world, separated from it by the grace of God; but in the latter day it will more visibly appear to consist of such: it will be openly distinguished from the world, by the purity of its doctrines; by the faithful administration of ordinances; strictness of its discipline, and by the holy lives of the members of it; these, by the grace of God, will be a wall of separation round about it, to keep out profane persons and things; moreover, a wail is for protection, preservation, and safety; and such a wall the Lord himself will be to his people; he will be round about them, on their side, and on every side of them: yea, a wall of fire to enlighten, warm, and comfort them, and to consume their enemies, **Zec 2:5** he will be a wall about his church in his love to them, with which he encompasses them; and which is built, not on their loveliness, love, or obedience, but upon his sovereign will and pleasure; and the dimensions of which, its length, breadth, height, and depth, are unmeasurable: it is a wall impregnable; it can never be broken down, and secures from all enemies whatever; and so he will be in his power, by which his saints are kept as persons in a garrison, or any fortified place well walled about, and which is invincible; to which may be added salvation by Jesus Christ, which will be for the walls and bulwarks of the city and church of God in the latter day, to which belong the prophecies in Isa 26:1, which salvation flows from the love of God; is secured by his purpose; established in his covenant; wrought out by Christ, and is an everlasting one; and is the firm security and safety of his church and people now, hereafter, and to all eternity:

and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit, and an hand breadth; as in Eze 40:3 and this being the measure used in taking the dimensions of the whole building, it was proper it should be explained what it was, before they are taken, and the account given: it consisted of six cubits; but then as these differ, there being a common cubit, and a sacred or royal one, it was necessary it should be clearly pointed at, as it is; by observing that these cubits were to be understood of a cubit and a hand's breadth; the common cubit were eighteen inches, a foot and a half, or half a yard; and a hand's breadth were three inches; so that this measure consisted of three yards and a half. Some indeed are of opinion that the hand's breadth is to be added only to the six cubits, and not to each of them; but the text is clear and express that these cubits were by or according to a cubit and a hand's breadth. So the Targum paraphrases it, "and in the man's hand measuring reeds, one of which was six cubits by a cubit, which is a cubit and a hand's breadth;"

and this is confirmed by what is said in Eze 43:13,

the cubit is a cubit and a hand's breadth; to which may be added, that such was the royal cubit at Babylon, where Ezekiel now was, according to Herodotus {q}; who says,

"the royal cubit is larger by three fingers than that which was usually measured with, or the common cubit;"

in this way Jarchi and Kimchi understand it; though they make the common cubit to be but five hands' breadth, or fifteen inches, and this six hands' breadth, or eighteen inches: what this mystically signifies,
See Gill on "Eze 40:3",

so he measured the breadth of the building one reed, and the height one reed; not of the whole building of the house or temple, but of the wall before mentioned; the breadth or thickness of which was one reed, or three yards and a half; and the height of it was the same; denoting the great security, safe protection, and strong defence of the church of God.

{q} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 178.

Ezekiel 40:6

Ver. 6. Then came he unto the gate which looketh toward the east,.... Or, "whose face is the way to the east" {r}; to the east of the house or temple; not to the eastern gate of the wall about the house; but to the eastern gate of the outward court; see Eze 40:20, for the man came from the wall he had measured unto this gate; which, with the other gates after mentioned, spiritually design Christ himself, who is the way, door, and gate, Joh 14:6 and this eastern gate more especially, where the prince sat, Eze 44:3, and which led into the outward court; and over against which was another that led into the inner court, and so straight on to the holy of holies, at the west end of the house. Christ and faith in him, and a profession of him, are the way into the outward visible church, and to the external ordinances of it, baptism and the Lord's supper; he is also the way or gate that leads into the inner court, or into spiritual communion and fellowship with God; he is the way of access to the Father, and through whom saints have communion with him; for there is no coming to him, nor enjoyment of him, but through a mediator; and Christ is he, and he only, by whom we can draw nigh to God, have audience of him, and acceptance with him: he is the gate also that leads to eternal life; the way to heaven and happiness lies through his person, blood, and righteousness; he is the only way, the new and the living way; the plain way, and open gate, yet strait and narrow:

and went up the stairs thereof; or the steps unto it, which were seven; see Eze 40:22 and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions express it here, and read, "seven steps"; according to Jarchi, there were twelve steps, which he takes from the Misnah {s}; that there was a "chel" of ten cubits, and there were there twelve steps. It is certain that to the north and south gates there were but seven steps; though Lipman {t} observes, that it is possible there might be a greater declivity on the east side, which required so many steps. Some of the Jewish writers think this is to be understood of the height of the court of Israel above this court; as if it was said, from this court they went up seven steps to the court of Israel; but the plain meaning, as Lipman {u} observes, is, that these steps were without the gate, and are the height of the court from the mountain of the house to it: these Cocceius very ingeniously illustrates by the seven trumpets in the Revelation; which indeed are so many steps or gradual advances towards the kingdom of Christ, and the glorious and spiritual state of his church in the latter day; which will be introduced by the blowing of the seventh trumpet, when the mystery of God will be finished, and the kingdoms of this world become Christ's, Re 10:7 perhaps the man leading the prophet up these steps or stairs to the gate may signify the gradual increase of spiritual light and knowledge of the saints, in the person, offices, and grace of Christ, the way, the truth, and the life; indeed the whole work of grace on the heart is gradual; it is carried on by degrees; it is but begun, not yet finished, particularly the work of faith; believers proceed from one step to another; first see Christ by faith, then go to him, then lay hold on him, and retain him; their faith increases, and they go from strength to strength; and sometimes it grows exceedingly; the advances in it are many and manifest:

and measured the threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad; of the same measure. The Hebrew word {w} signifies both a threshold and the upper lintel; and the one may intend the one; and the other the other, and both these: some think they point at the two Testaments; or, as others, the two natures in Christ, and the strength of them, who is the gate, the way to God, the Mediator between him and man, and the mighty Redeemer. Cocceius, because mention

is made of a third threshold,
Eze 40:7, fancies that these three thresholds design the three witnesses, Father, Word, and Spirit; which three are one, and found in one gate, which is Christ; so that he that believes in him believes in all three; and he that has the one has the other: but it is a mistake of this learned man that these three thresholds belong to one gate; for that after mentioned is the threshold of the inner, and not the outer gate. Jarchi and Kimchi understand not the thresholds of the gate, but the posts of it.

{r} hmydqh Krd wynp rva "facies ejus via ad orientem", Montanus; "eujus facies, ejus", Vatablus. {s} Middot, c. 2. sect. 3. {t} Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 9. fol. 2. 2. {u} lbid. {w} Po "sumitur pro inferiore limine, et pro superliminari, sive superiore limine", Capellus, Sanctius.

Ezekiel 40:7

Ver. 7. And every little chamber was one reed long, and one reed broad,.... The length and breadth were equal, three yards and a half long and broad; a perfect square. There were several of these little chambers or apartments in this building, at each of the gates, and in other places after mentioned; of these chambers which were in the gates of the courts; as there were also others, according to Kimchi, on the wall of the mountain of the house; Lipman {x} says there is no mention made of them in the building of the second temple: these design not the hearts of particular believers, where Christ has a place, takes up his residence, and takes his rest; nor the many mansions in Christ's Father's house in heaven, where the saints shall dwell with him to all eternity; but each of the congregated churches of Christ. The fabric described in this and the following chapters intends the Gospel church state in general; and these little chambers the several particular churches which will be set up in all parts of the world, east, west, north, and south. These may be called "chambers", partly for their secrecy, **2Ki 6:12** here the Lord's hidden ones are, who, though well known to him, are unknown to the world; here the secrets of God's heart, of his love, grace, and covenant, are made known to his people; here Christ, whose name is secret, and the mysteries of his grace, are revealed to babes, while they are hid from the wise and prudent; and besides, the affairs of Christ's churches should be kept secret, and not published to the world: and partly for safety; see 1Ki 20:30, church fellowship, the word and ordinances, being the means of strengthening faith, and preserving from apostasy; salvation is as walls and bulwarks to them; and the roof of them, which is

Christ, see Eze 40:13, secures from all inclemencies, from the wind, storms, and tempests of divine wrath; he having bore it, and delivered from it; and from the scorching heat of persecution, and from all afflictions, as well as from the temptations of Satan, so as to be hurt and destroyed by either of them: likewise they may be called chambers, because quiet resting places, as well as secret, safe, and sure ones, Isa 32:18, these are the resting places of God, who has desired them, and dwells in them; and of Jesus Christ, where his rest is glorious, and where he gives spiritual rest to his people; and especially these will be such to the saints in the latter day, and great shall be the abundance of it: as also because of that communion and fellowship herein enjoyed, both among themselves, and with Father, Son, and Spirit; see **So 1:4**, to which may be added, that here souls are begotten and born again to Christ; these are the chambers in which they are conceived and brought forth, **So 3:4**, and these may be said to be "little" chambers, in comparison of the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which includes all the elect of God, and redeemed of the Lamb, a number which no man can number; as that is called little in comparison of the whole world, that lies in wickedness; and besides, those that dwell in these chambers are little and contemptible in the eyes of the world, as they are low and mean in their own eyes; even each less than the least of all saints: now these little chambers or churches are represented of an equal measure, denoting that they will be exactly according to the pattern of God's word; will have the same officers, the same doctrines and ordinances, and the same laws and rules; and will be of equal authority, not having one more power than another, or one over another; but entirely independent of each other: and being foursquare, as the New Jerusalem is said to be, Re 21:16, may denote the perfection of them; that they will now be brought entirely to answer the rule of the word; and also the firmness and stability of them:

and between the little chambers were five cubits; not a wall five cubits thick, as the Targum; and so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it {y}; but a space of five cubits, or of two yards and a half, one foot and three inches; so that these chambers were not contiguous; but a space was left between, which made them more airy; and by which means they had more of the benefit of the light, and heat of the sun, and afforded commodious places to walk in; all which shows the churches of Christ to be separate, distinct, and independent communities; and yet may have a communication with each other; as well as they all share the advantage of the light and heat of Christ the sun of righteousness rising on them:

and the threshold of the gate by the porch of the gate within was one reed: or three yards and a half; this gate within was that which lay westward, and was nearer the temple; between which and the outer gate before mentioned was a porch, on both sides of which were little chambers; and the threshold or thresholds (one being put for both) were of the same dimensions with those of the thresholds of the other; and so point to the same things.

{x} Tzarath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 4. fol. 2. 1. {y} So Lipman. Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 4. fol. 2. 1.

Ezekiel 40:8

Ver. 8. He measured also the porch of the gate within, one reed. This was either the measure of the breadth of the porch between the opposite chambers on both sides; or rather of the length of that space, which was between the third little chamber and the last gate; and such a space must be supposed to be between the first gate and the first little chamber, which space were three yards and a half; which shows how spacious the churches of Christ will be, and how exactly measured.

Ezekiel 40:9

Ver. 9. Then measured he the porch of the gate, eight cubits,.... This could not be the length of the porch from gate to gate, or from east to west, as Lipman {z}; since there were five cubits between every little chamber; but the breadth of it from north to south, and was four yards and two feet over:

and the posts thereof two cubits; these were columns or pillars placed on each side of the porch, or at the portal of the gate, of two cubits, or a yard and half a foot thick; which, added to the other eight cubits, made the entrance ten cubits, as in Eze 40:11 what these posts, pillars, or columns signify, see on Eze 40:14:

and the porch of the gate was inward; this was the porch of the inward gate; or this was the measure of the porch within the gate.

{z} Ibid. (Lipman. Tzaurath Beth Hamikdash), sect. 6.

Ezekiel 40:10

Ver. 10. And the little chambers of the gate eastward,.... Where the man now was, and was measuring; and the like chambers there were in the other gates, and of the same measure; of which chambers
See Gill on "Eze 40:7":

were three on this side, and three on that side; three on the right side of the porch to the north, and three on the left side of it to the south:

they three were of one measure; one reed, or three yards and a half square, as in Eze 40:7

and the posts had one measure on this side and on that side; on the right and left, north and south of the inward gate of the porch, which measure was two cubits, Eze 40:9.

Ezekiel 40:11

Ver. 11. And he measured the breadth of the entry of the gate, ten cubits,.... Five yards, two feet and a half: this was the measure of the eastern gate, whether outward or inward; for they were both of a measure, as appears from the thresholds being alike:

and the length of the gate, thirteen cubits; that is, the height of it; it was seven yards and three inches high; a prodigious gate this! a fit emblem of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the open door, the gate of life, through which whoever enters shall be saved; and there is room for multitudes to enter.

Ezekiel 40:12

Ver. 12. The space also before the little chambers was one cubit on this side,.... Or, "a border" {a} of half a yard and three inches to the front of the chambers; where those that belonged to them might walk, or have seats to sit on; such a space there was before the three little chambers on the north side of the porch:

and the space was one cubit on that side: a space or border of the same measure was to the front of the three little chambers on the south side of the porch: this may denote the Christian liberty of the members of Gospel churches; which they may use without any breach of piety towards God, or of charity one to another:

and the little chambers were six cubits on this side, and six cubits on that side; they were of the same measure, those on one side, as those of the other, even six cubits square; or one reed, which is the same; see Eze 40:7,
See Gill on "Eze 40:7".

{a} lwbg "terminus", Munster, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Ezekiel 40:13

Ver. 13. He measured then the gate from the roof of one little chamber to the roof of another,.... That is, the whole porch, from the extreme part of the roof of one of the little chambers on the north side, to the extreme part of the roof of another of the little chambers on the south; of the roof of these chambers, and the spiritual meaning of it,
See Gill on "Eze 40:7":

the breadth was five and twenty cubits; reckoning six cubits to one chamber on one side, and six to one chamber on the other side, which make twelve; and a cubit and a half to each back wall of the chambers on the north and south; or two cubits to the spaces before the chambers, and a cubit and a half to each of the caves of the chambers, which either way make fifteen cubits; and ten cubits the breadth of the gate; in all five and twenty cubits; or fourteen yards and three inches:

door against door; not the door of the outward gate against the door of the inward gate; nor the door of one of the little chambers at the east, to the door of another at the west, running lengthways, and so affording a sight quite through the temple; but the door of one of them on the north side over against the door of another on the south, they answering exactly to each other; which still more confirms the similarity and equality of Gospel churches; See Gill on "Eze 40:7".

Ezekiel 40:14

Ver. 14. He made also posts of threescore cubits,.... Jerom thinks, that between the outward wall which surrounded this building, and the building itself, these posts or pillars were placed for ornament, which took up the space of sixty cubits; but rather these design the posts or columns of the gate, which supported the arch over it, on which were rooms or stories, and these were sixty cubits high; for of their height is this measure to be understood. So the Targum,

"and he made posts, sixty cubits was their height;"

in the Targum, in the Polyglot Bible by Montanus, it is,

"and he made sixty posts, their height a cubit:"

and to this agree Jarchi and Kimchi; these were thirty five yards high, the height of the temple ordered to be built by Cyrus, **Ezr 6:3**. The man that measured is said to "make" these posts, he being the builder as well as the measurer of this edifice; and might be said to make these as, by measuring, he pointed out the size and proportion of them: these posts may design the true members of Gospel churches, such who are pillars in the house of God; of which see more on Eze 40:16, compare the phrase of "making" these posts or pillars with **Re 3:12**:

even unto the post of the court round about the gate; that is, there was the same measure to every post or pillar in every court, at every gate round about; at the southern and northern gates, as at this eastern one; they were all exactly of the same measure as the posts in this; so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it.

Ezekiel 40:15

Ver. 15. And from the face of the gate of the entrance,.... That is, from the outward gate as you went into the porch, and was to the east, so called from people's passing and repassing {b} in it; so Jarchi takes it to be the eastern gate; the Targum calls it the middle gate:

unto the face of the porch of the inner gate; which opened at the other end of the porch, into the outward court, and was to the west: from gate to gate

were fifty cubits; as he measured the breadth of the porch before, Eze 40:13, here the length; there were three chambers six cubits long, which made eighteen; and between each chamber were five cubits, which were ten cubits; and the space between the chambers and the gates at each end were six cubits each; Eze 40:8, which make twelve more; and then allow ten cubits for the thickness of both walls of each gate, and there will be fifty cubits, or twenty nine yards and half a foot.

{b} Vid. R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 9. 1.

Ezekiel 40:16

Ver. 16. And there were narrow windows to the little chamber,.... The walls being sloped both within and without, that the light let in might be spread the more: as those "little chambers" signify the several congregated churches of Christ in the Gospel dispensation;
See Gill on "Eze 40:7", so these windows design the word and ordinances therein administered, which are the means of letting light into them; see **So 2:9**, in attending on these, the light of God's countenance is enjoyed, which lies in the discoveries of his love; in the manifestations of himself; in his gracious presence, and in communion with him; than which nothing is more desirable or delightful: through these ordinances Christ the sun of righteousness shines in upon his people; he looks in at these windows, and shows himself through these lattices; he is seen through the glass of the Gospel; he is held forth in the ordinance of the supper; and by means thereof the souls of God's people are enlightened, comforted, and warmed: also in this way are communicated the illuminations of the Spirit, both at first conversion, and in after discoveries of the things freely given of God; of the doctrines of the Gospel; of the blessings of grace, and of the glories of heaven. The Gospel itself is a great and glorious light; and the ministers of it are the light of the world, and of the churches; and by the light being diffused through these little chambers, the churches, those who are in them see to walk on in Christ, as they have received him, and becoming his Gospel, and their profession of it; and also see to work, not for life, justification, and salvation, but to evidence their faith, and adorn their profession; to glorify God by their shining lights, and to cause others to glorify him; and by the whole, the light of joy, peace, and comfort, is transmitted to all the inhabitants of Zion. These windows are said to be "narrow", or "shut", or "closed" {c}; that is, comparatively, not absolutely, for then they would be of no use. The ordinances of the Gospel dispensation are no doubt clearer, and the light of it larger, than of the legal dispensation, but this light has been darkened by the Papacy; and though it increased at the Reformation, yet before the latter day glory will break forth it will be as a twilight, neither clear nor dark, day nor night, Zec 14:6 and though the light that then will break out will

be exceeding great, as the light of the sun, and that as the light of seven days, Isa 30:26, yet in comparison of the light of the New Jerusalem state, when there will be no need of the sun or moon, but the Lord will be the everlasting light of his people; and in comparison of the ultimate glory, when the saints shall see face to face; the light even of this dispensation will be like what is let in at narrow windows; see Re 21:23.

And to their posts within the gate round about; that is, to the posts of the doors that led into these chambers, over the lintel of them, were windows to let in light to those that were entering them, as well as were in them; and so there were to all the chambers round about the porch on one side and the other, between the two gates:

and likewise to the arches; or "porches" {d}; to these doors, to which there were windows giving light to those that passed through:

and the windows were round about inward; in all the chambers within the grand porch, on the north and south:

and upon each post were palm trees; that is, on every post, column, or pillar, belonging to the chambers; and very probably on all the other before mentioned, Eze 40:9, these posts or pillars signify either the ministers of the Gospel; so called for their strength, being mighty in the Scriptures, able ministers of the New Testament, capable of retaining and defending the truths of the Gospel, and of bearing reproach and persecution for them, and also the infirmities of weak believers; and for their stability, being steadfast and immovable in the work and cause of Christ, and not to be taken off from it either by the frowns or flatteries of men; and for their usefulness, in supporting the cause and interest of the Redeemer, and the minds of weak Christians, as well as the glorious truths of the Gospel; and may with great propriety be called the pillar and ground of truth; see **Pr 9:1**, yea, all true believers, and proper members of the churches of Christ, are pillars there, and such as shall never go out, **Re 3:12**, the word {e} used has the signification of strength, as pillars should be strong; and such believers are, not in themselves, but in Christ, in his power and grace, and through his Spirit; whereby they can do all things, perform all duties, exercise all grace, and engage with all enemies. They are like pillars that stand firm and stable; grounded in the love of God; secured in election grace; settled in the everlasting covenant; laid on the sure foundation Christ, and established in the truths of the Gospel; so that they never go out of the heart of God, the hands of Christ, the family of the saints, or church of God. They are as pillars; some more useful to support in an external way the interest of religion, giving liberally to the maintenance of ministers, the relief of the poor, and the defraying of all necessary charges; and others to strive and contend for, and so maintain and preserve, the truths and ordinances of the Gospel; and others to comfort and confirm weak believers. Now on these posts or pillars were "palm trees" painted, two on each, one on one side, and one on the other, as appears from Eze 40:26, which are also an emblem of true believers in Christ; see Ps 92:12 comparable to them for their uprightness, Jer 10:5 these looking upwards to Christ by faith, and moving heavenwards in their affections and desires, and being upright in heart and life; and for their bearing pressures, and growing the more under them, as the palm tree does. Saints have many weights on them, a body of sin and death, reproaches, afflictions, and persecution; but they bear up under all, and are not left to desert the cause, they are engaged in; yea, grow the more hereby, in numbers and grace, like the children of Israel, **Ex 1:12** the force of the palm tree is in its top or head; if that is taken away it dies: Christ is the believers' head, from him they have their life, grace, strength, nourishment, and fruitfulness; could they be separated from him, all would be gone. The palm tree grows best in sunny places, is fruitful, an ever green, and lasts long: and such are the people of God; they grow most under the warm beams of divine love, and rays of the sun of righteousness; in the churches of Christ, where the Gospel is preached, and ordinances administered, which make their hearts burn within them; they are fruitful in grace and good works, retain their leaf of profession, and never perish. Once more, the palm tree is a token of joy and victory, and has been used on such occasions, Le 23:40, and may denote the victory and joy upon it, which saints have through Christ, over sin, Satan, the world, and death.

{c} twmja "clausae", Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {d} twmlal "in vestibulis", Vatablus, Montanus, Piscator; "porticibus", Cocceius, Starckius. {e} lya "fortitudo, hinc" la "fortis".

Ezekiel 40:17

Ver. 17. Then brought he me into the outward court,.... The divine and glorious Person in human form, having brought the prophet up to the eastern gate, and through it, and the porch that belonged to it, to the inner gate of it, which lay westward; and having measured that gate, its threshold, the porch, the posts or pillars, and little chambers in it; introduced him into a spacious piece of ground, that lay open to the air, and surrounded the whole building; and answers to the court of the Israelites in the temple, where they worshipped promiscuously, good and bad: and so may design the outward visible state of the Gospel church, consisting of good and bad, of wise and foolish virgins; like a field that has both wheat and tares in it; or a corn floor that has wheat and chaff upon it; which in the latter day will grow worse and worse, and be given to the Gentiles, Re 11:2 but shall be recovered again, and make a considerable part of this fabric; which represents the state of the church, and the outward administration of the word and ordinances in it, and the visible fellowship of the saints together in them.

And, lo, there were chambers; in the outward court, in various parts of it; which signify, as before, visible congregated churches, formed according to the order of the Gospel; in which the word is preached, ordinances administered, and saints have fellowship one with another. It is a different word here used from that in Eze 40:7, and is by some rendered "cells, storehouses, treasuries" {f}; and here, the unsearchable riches of Christ are preached, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in him are brought forth, and presented to the view of the saints.

And a pavement made for the court round about; as this court went round about the whole building, so there was a pavement upon it all around. The word {g} used has the signification of a "burning coal". Probably this pavement appeared as made of stones of various colours, of black, white, and red, like a chequered work of black and white marble; or as made of the porphyry stone, which is variegated with divers colours. This pavement was for those that dwelt in the chambers to walk in, and converse together: and it may denote the walk of the saints, both in the ordinances of the Gospel, and in their outward conversation, as becoming it; in love to them that are within, and in wisdom towards those that are without: and this is walking as on a pavement, on firm ground, in a plain and even way, where there is no occasion of stumbling; it is walking clean, in righteousness and holiness, and not in the mire and dirt of sin; and it is pleasant walking in the courts of the Lord, and in the ways and paths of wisdom; and beautiful it is to see the saints walk harmoniously and comfortably together here, conversing with each other, and building up one another upon their most holy faith.

Thirty chambers were upon a pavement; according to some, fifteen on each side of the eastern gate, as you came out of it into the court; or rather, according to Cocceius's tables, these were all around the court, eight to the east, eight to the north, eight to the south, and six to the west; or, as Villalpandus, seven to the east and west each, and eight to the north and south apiece. This suggests that there will be visible congregated churches in the latter day in all parts of the world, east, west, north, and south; see Isa 43:5.

{f} twkvl "cellae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus, Cocceius, Starckius; pastoforia, Sept; "gazophylacia", V. L. {g} hpur "pruna ardens", Isa. vi. 6.

Ezekiel 40:18

Ver. 18. And the pavement by the sides of the gates over against the length of the gates was the lower pavement. That is, this pavement, which went along by every gate, and answered the length of them, and what appertained to them, east, west, north, and south, was either lower than the pavement in the inward court, adjoining to this, to which there was an ascent by steps; or the middle part of this pavement rose up in a convex form, and on all sides there was a declivity; by which means all filth was washed away, and it was kept clean, and always fit to walk on. This distinction of a higher and lower pavement, whether on one account or another, may point out; the one, the believer's walk by faith on Christ; and the other, his walk in the ordinances of Christ, and in all becoming conversation.

Ezekiel 40:19

Ver. 19. Then he measured the breadth from the fore front of the lower gate,.... That is, from the front of the inner eastern gate before mentioned, Eze 40:7, called the lower gate, in respect of the gate opposite to it, which led into the inner court, to which there was an ascent of eight steps; and which the Targum calls the middle gate, because it lay between the eastern outward gate, and the gate of the inward court. Now there were from hence,

unto the fore front of the inner court without, an hundred cubits; to the outside of the gate was such a length, or fifty eight yards and one foot:

eastward and northward; as so it was from east to west, so from north to south, and from south to north; there was just the same distance from the gate that led into the outward court to that which led into the inward court, on all sides; see Eze 40:23 a man may be a long while an outward court worshipper before he is an inward court worshipper; the passage through the one to the other is long.

Ezekiel 40:20

Ver. 20. And the gate of the outward court that looked toward the north,.... Or the north gate of this building: having finished the dimensions of the eastern gate, those of the north gate are taken:

he measured the length thereof, and the breadth thereof; as he had the eastern gate, and which were the same; and so of the south gate, Eze 40:24, which denotes the uniformity in religion in the latter day, in the way of entrance into the churches, and in doctrine, discipline, worship, and ordinances.

Ezekiel 40:21

Ver. 21. And the little chambers thereof were three on this side, and three on that side,.... As in the eastern gate, and the measures the same, Eze 40:7. Gospel churches in the latter day will be all on the same plan, and modelled according to the same pattern, and be in just the same order, one as another:

and the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, were after the same measure of the first gate; the eastern gate: believers will be all pillars in the church of God, and partakers of the same like precious faith:

the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits; see Eze 40:13.

Ezekiel 40:22

Ver. 22. And their windows, and their arches, and their palm trees, were after the measure of the gate that looked towards the east,.... Eze 40:14, signifying that the light of the churches, their privileges, and flourishing condition, will be alike everywhere, as in one part of the world, so in another; see Isa 52:8:

and they went up unto it by seven steps; or stairs, Eze 40:6, the number of them is not there mentioned as here, but the same in both;
See Gill on "Eze 40:6":

and the arches thereof were before them; the steps; or "within" them, as the Septuagint; the steps led to the arches of the gate, or to the porch of it, which were more inward.

Ezekiel 40:23

Ver. 23. And the gate of the inward court was over against the gate toward the north, and toward the east,.... Or, "and as to the east" {h}; that is, the north gate of the inner court was directly opposite to the north gate of the outward court; just as the eastern gate of the inward court was in a straight line opposite to the eastern gate of the outward court:

and he measured from gate to gate an hundred cubits; from the north gate of the outward court to the north gate of the inward court; and it was exactly of the same distance from one another as on the left side; see Eze 40:19.

{h} Mydqlw.

Ezekiel 40:24

Ver. 24. After that he brought me toward the south,.... Having taken the dimensions of the east and north gates, the prophet was had on the south side of the building:

and behold a gate toward the south; that led to the southern part of this fabric, and to the outward court there, exactly like the other two; there was no difference in them, which raised the prophet's wonder and attention; for, as Lipman {k} says, there was no outward court in the second temple, but to the east of the inward; and it did not encompass the other sides; and so the more wonderful:

and he measured the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, according, to these measures; the measures of the east and north gates, which were just alike; for these all signified but one gateway or door into the church below, into heaven above, or into the presence of God here and hereafter, which is Christ, Joh 14:6.

{k} Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 17.

Ezekiel 40:25

Ver. 25. And there were windows in it, and in the arches thereof round about,.... That is, in the little chambers, though not expressed; and in the porches of them on each side, as you passed from the outer to the inner gate:

like those windows; that were in the chambers that were in the east and north gates, Eze 40:7,

the length was fifty cubits, and the breadth five and twenty cubits; see Eze 40:13.

Ezekiel 40:26

Ver. 26. And there were seven steps to go up to it,.... To the south gate, as there were to the east and north gates, Eze 40:6:

and the arches thereof were before them; See Gill on "Eze 40:22":

and it had palm trees, one on this side, and another on that side, upon the posts thereof; that is, on the posts of this gate were palm trees, two on each post, one on one side, and the other on the other: this verse shows us how many palm trees were painted on the posts, and how they were disposed of; See Gill on "Eze 40:16".

Ezekiel 40:27

Ver. 27. And there was a gate in the inner court toward the south,.... Which answered to the gate of the outward court before mentioned:

and he measured from gate to gate toward the south an hundred cubits; from the gate of the inward court, to the gate of the outward court southward, were just the same dimensions as in the east and north gates, and between their respective ones, Eze 40:19.

Ezekiel 40:28

Ver. 28. And he brought me to the inner court by the south gate,.... Having done with the outer court, east, north, and south, the prophet is brought into the inner court by the south gate, which was nearest to enter by. No mention is made of a western gate, there was one in Solomon's temple; for there were porters appointed westward by David, and fixed by Solomon, **1Ch 9:24**, but Josephus {l} says, in the second temple the western part had no gate, but a continued wall; for those that came out of the captivity, as Kimchi on Eze 40:5 observes, built it (as much as they could) according to the form of what they saw in Ezekiel's temple, which shall be in time to come.

And he measured the south gate according to these measures; the gate which led into the inner court; for the south gate, which led to the outward court, he had measured before, Eze 40:21.

{l} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 2. Vid. Lipman, Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 12.

Ezekiel 40:29

Ver. 29. And the little chambers thereof, and the posts thereof, and the arches thereof, according to these measures,.... These were at the gate of the inner court; and so they stand in Cocceius's tables; and were of the same measure with the little chambers, posts, and arches, that were at the several outward gates before described; and design the churches and members of them as spiritual worshippers, who, besides the outward form, have the power of godliness:

and there were windows in it, and in the arches thereof round about; these are not said to be narrow, as the other; which perhaps may denote the greater and more increasing light of the churches, ministers, and members:

it was fifty cubits long, and five and twenty cubits broad: that is, the space or portico where these chambers were; and this was the same measure with that where the other chambers were, Eze 40:13.

Ezekiel 40:30

Ver. 30. And the arches round about were five and twenty cubits long,.... That is, high; this was the height of them; these were the frontispiece of the gate to the inner court without, and faced the outward court, as appears by the following verse; these were a kind of portico over the eight steps to this gate after mentioned; they were fourteen yards and three inches high, from the bottom to the top of them:

and five cubits broad; two yards and a half, one foot and three inches; and which very probably were the breadth of the steps that came up to them: none of these arches were in the second temple, as Lipman {m} observes.

{m} Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 22.

Ezekiel 40:31

Ver. 31. And the arches thereof were toward the outward court,.... And so not within the gate of the inward court, but on the outside of it, towards the outward court, at the front of the gate as you went in:

and palm trees were upon the posts thereof; of the gate, or of these arches or porticos; signifying that none should enter here but righteous persons; this is the gate of the righteous, Ps 118:19,
See Gill on "Eze 40:16";

and the going up to it had eight steps; one more than the ascent to the outward gates; some say eight more, and make these to be fifteen, answerable to the fifteen steps by which the Levites went up from the court of the women to the court of Israel {n}, and sung upon them the fifteen songs of degrees, mentioned in the Psalms: but here are only eight; and denote the gradual progress of believers in faith and holiness; and that the nearer they come to the holy of holies, the greater their proficiency should be, and more advances made in the knowledge of divine things.

{n} Misna Succa, c. 5. sect. 4. Lipman. Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 24.

Ezekiel 40:32

Ver. 32. And he brought me into the inner court toward the east,.... Into that part of it which lay to the east, having gone through that which lay to the south:

and he measured the gate according to these measures; that is, the eastern gate of the inner court; for the eastern gate that led to the outward court he measured first, Eze 40:6, and this was according to the measure of that, and of the rest.

Ezekiel 40:33

Ver. 33. And the little chambers thereof,.... These, and what follow in this verse, are exactly the same with those of the south gate of the inner court, Eze 40:29.

Ezekiel 40:34

Ver. 34. And the arches thereof were toward the outward court,.... As those of the south gate, Eze 40:31, and the palm trees on the posts, and the steps up to it, the same as there.

Ezekiel 40:35

Ver. 35, 36, 37. And he brought me to the north gate,.... That is, of the inner court, for he had measured before the north gate that led to the outward court, Eze 40:20, and here the little chambers, posts, arches, and steps, in all things agree with those of the other gates: what were observed in it different from the rest, an account is given of it in the following verse.

Ezekiel 40:36

Ver. 36. See Gill on "Eze 40:35".

Ezekiel 40:37

Ver. 37. See Gill on "Eze 40:35".

Ezekiel 40:38

Ver. 38. And the chambers, and the entries thereof, were by the posts of the gates,.... Of the north gate; the plural for the singular; for not at the other gates, only at the north gate, were the sacrifices slain and washed; as under the law, only on the north side of the altar, **Le 1:11**, now, by the posts of this gate, or at the entrance of it on one side,

stood a cell or chamber, and a door into it {o}, as the words may be rendered; for they are singular in the text:

where they washed the burnt offering; its legs and inwards, **Le 1:9**, according to the law, there were lavers in Solomon's temple, to wash the sacrifices in, **2Ch 4:6**, but there was no such cell or chamber there for such a purpose as here: and as this refers to Gospel times, and to the church in the latter day, no legal sacrifice can be intended here, which are all abolished; but this must be mystically and spiritually understood, and designs no other than the sacrifice of Christ, a sweet smelling savour to God: that this kind of offering was typical of the sacrifice of Christ is clear from Heb 13:11, which whether of the herd, a bullock, represented Christ in his strength and laboriousness; or of the flock, and was either a sheep, an emblem of the innocence and patience of Christ; or a goat, which pointed him out as in the likeness of sinful flesh, traduced as a sinner, and made so by imputation; or of fowls, turtle doves, denoting his meekness and modesty; and all without spot or blemish signified the purity of his, nature and life; and these being burnt with fire were expressive of the pain and shame he endured when he bore our sins, and the wrath of God was poured on him as fire; the washing of the burnt offering denotes the purity of Christ's sacrifice, being offered up without spot. Some, as Polanus, have thought the ordinance of baptism is here designed, as the Lord's supper is by the tables next mentioned; and it is a note of Starchius upon the passage, that,

"he who is washed in the divine laver may be regaled with the heavenly feast."

{o} hxtpwhkvlw "et cubiculum, et ostium ejus", Pagninus, Montanus; "caeterum fuit cella, et ostium ejus", Tigurine version.

Ezekiel 40:39

Ver. 39. And in the porch of the gate were two tables on this side, and two tables on that side,.... This is still the north gate of the inward court, which had a porch that reached from the outward to the inner gate of it, in which were three little chambers on each side,
Eze 40:36, between each of which were a space of five cubits,
Eze 40:7, so that there were two such spaces on each side; and in these spaces, as Starckius well conjectures, these tables were placed, two on one side, and two on the other: the use of them was,

to slay thereon the burnt offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; all typical of the sacrifice of Christ: concerning the "burnt offering", as such, See Gill on "Eze 40:38"; and as for the "sin offering" and "trespass offering", which in the Hebrew language signify sin and guilt itself, they represented Christ, who had no sin in his nature, nor ever did any in his life, yet was made sin for his people; having all their sins laid upon him, with all that belong unto them, or are deserved by them: these were, the one for errors, strayings, and sins of ignorance; the other for known and wilful sins; and both show that Christ is a sacrifice for all sorts of sin, even for the most vile and enormous: now these tables were for those sacrifices to be slain upon them, or to be laid upon them, being slain; and signify in Gospel times the table of the Lord, 1Co 10:21 or the ordinance of the Lord's supper; in which there is not a reiteration, but a commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ; here he is evidently set forth as crucified and slain; his death as a sacrifice is shown, and held forth to the faith of the Lord's people, for their joy and comfort, **Ga 3:1**.

Ezekiel 40:40

Ver. 40. And at the side without, as one goeth up to the entry of the north gate, were two tables,.... Or, "the door of the north gate" {p}; not the first, upon coming up the eight steps; but passing through that gate, and along the porch where the three little chambers and the two tables on each side were, before mentioned; and coming to the inmost gate, which opens directly into the inward court, on the outside of that towards the altar, were two other tables, for the same use as before:

and on the other side, which was at the porch of the gate, were two tables;

there were two on one side of the gate, and two on the other, that is, the last gate of the porch, in all eight tables; four within the spaces between the little chambers in the porch, and four as you come out of it, on each side of the last gate.

{p} hnwpuh revh xtpl "ad ostium portae aquilonaris", Junius & Tremellius. So Cocceius and Starckius.

Ezekiel 40:41

Ver. 41. Four tables were on this side, and four tables were on that side, by the side of the gate,.... These are the same tables repeated, to observe more diligently the situation and use of them; there were four on the right hand, two between the little chambers in the porch, and two on the outside of the inmost gate; and there were four on the left hand, two between the little chambers there, and two on the other side of the said gate:

eight tables, whereupon they slew their sacrifices; the four tables last mentioned were for the same use as the four first;
See Gill on "Eze 40:39".

Ezekiel 40:42

Ver. 42. And the four tables were of hewn stone,.... These are either the same tables as before, the four that were on one side, and the four that were on the other; they were all made of hewn stone: in the second temple they were made of marble; so it is said in the Misnah {q},

"the marble tables were between the pillars;"

and they were made of marble, as the commentators {r} say, because that cools the flesh, and preserves it from corruption: they were both decent and durable; and may denote the continuance of the ordinance of the Lord's supper till his second coming; and which is a decent and becoming ordinance, as well as perpetual: or these were other four tables, as Cocceius thinks; and which he places without the porch, near the cell or chamber, where the burnt offering was washed, Eze 40:38, and these are said to be for that, as follows, for the burnt offering: and also for the sin offering, and for the trespass offering, though they are not mentioned:

of a cubit and an half long, and a cubit and an half broad; just a foursquare:

and one cubit high; these were the dimensions of each table:

whereupon also they laid the instruments wherewith they slew the burnt offering and the sacrifice: the knives with which they slew the creatures offered, and cut them to pieces, and the bowls and basins in which they received their blood; these were laid upon the tables, as the sacrifices were: and may signify, that in the ordinance of the Lord's supper are not only represented the sacrifice of Christ, but the means, instruments, causes, and occasion of it; the sins of his people, for which he was wounded and bruised in his body, and with which he was pierced in his soul; and here we may look on him whom we have thus pierced, and mourn; and yet rejoice that there is healing by his stripes, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice.

{q} Tamid, c. 3. sect. 5. & Middot, c. 3. sect. 5. {r} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Ezekiel 40:43

Ver. 43. And within were hooks, a hand broad, fastened round about,.... These, very probably, were fastened on the posts of the gate, near which were the washing room for the sacrifices, Eze 40:38, on which they were hung, when they were flayed, or the skin took off: in the slaughter house in the second temple, to the north of the altar, there were eight low stone pillars, upon which were boards of cedar foursquare, and iron hooks were fixed in them; and there were three rows of them in each, on which they hung the sacrifices {s}, which were one above another; on the lowest they hung a lamb, on the middlemost a ram, and on the highest a bullock; these hooks stood out a hand's breadth from the pillars {t}: such like iron hooks were fixed on the walls and pillars in the court, where they slew the passover lamb, on which they hung it, and skinned it {u}: this may denote either, as Cocceius suggests, the exaltation of Christ, who suffered and was raised for our justification; or rather the lifting of him up, and holding him forth to view, as a suffering Saviour, in the ministry of the word, and in the ordinance of the supper.

And upon the tables was the flesh of the offering: here another word is used, and may design that part of the flesh of the sin offering that was eaten by the priest, **Le 6:25** so that these tables were feasting tables also; as the table of the Lord, or the ordinance of the Lord's supper, is a feast of fat things, a feast of love; a table where the flesh of Christ is laid, which is meat indeed, and only to be fed upon by those that are made kings and priests unto God. Now these tables being many show that there will be a large number of Gospel churches everywhere; and wherever they are there will be tables: the ordinance of the Lord's supper will be celebrated in the four parts of the world; at present it is chiefly in the northern part, and where these tables were seen in this vision.

{s} Misn. Tamid, c. 3. sect. 5. & Middot, c. 3. sect. 5. {t} Lipman. Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 34. {u} Misn. Pesachim, c. 5. sect. 9.

Ezekiel 40:44

Ver. 44. And without the inner gate were the chambers of the singers,.... These singers are true believers in Christ, members of Gospel churches; whose duty and privilege it is to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; which is a part of internal, spiritual, and evangelical worship, **Eph 5:19**, these are the spiritual harpers, that have harps in their hands, and make melody in their hearts, and are able to sing the songs of electing, redeeming, calling, pardoning, justifying, and adopting grace; these deservedly have a place in the churches of Christ, in the inward court, being inward court worshippers, even all such who sing with the spirit and the understanding; for these chambers were in the inward court: the prophet being brought through the inner northern gate, into the open space between the inward court, saw these chambers; for it follows,

in the inner court, which was at the side of the north gate; in that part of the court which lay near the north gate, where now the prophet and his guide were:

and their prospect was toward the south; that is, some of these chambers, one row of them, were by the side of the north gate, and these faced the south; north and south being opposite to each other:

one at the side of the east gate, having the prospect toward the north: another row of chambers for the singers was in that part of the inner court which was on the side of the east gate, on the north side of it, and so faced the north part of the court. The Septuagint version, if admitted, makes the sense of it more clear, but different,

"and he brought me into the inner court, and behold two chambers in the inner court; one at the back of the gate that looks to the north, bearing to the south; and one at the back of the gate to the south, looking to the north."

Ezekiel 40:45

Ver. 45. And he said unto me,.... The illustrious Person that appeared in a human form, measuring the several parts of the temple, said to the prophet, as follows:

this chamber, whose prospect is toward the south; the row of chambers that were on the side of the north gate, facing the south:

is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the house; that observe the keeping of it; observe all the laws and ordinances of God's house, and are careful that the worship of God may be maintained and preserved, to his glory, and their mutual edification: and which is, or should be, the concern, not of ministers only, but of all true believers, who are priests unto God; that present their bodies and souls before him, as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice, which is their reasonable service; and offer up the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise to him, through Christ, **Re 1:6**.

Ezekiel 40:46

Ver. 46. And the chamber whose prospect is towards the north,.... The row of chambers on the side of the east gate; that side of it that was towards the north, and which the chambers in it faced:

is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar; the ministers of the Gospel, that take care of the altar, of public worship; that preach the Gospel, and administer ordinances; and who are to be taken care of themselves, and live of the Gospel, and have everything provided for them that is necessary, **1Co 9:13**:

these are the sons of Zadok, among the sons of Levi; these Levites, or priests, were of the family of Zadok; who descended from Aaron, and was the eldest house of Aaron, to whom the priesthood belonged; though it had been usurped a long time by the family of Ithamar; but, in Solomon's time, Abiathar, of that family, was dispossessed of it, and Zadok was placed in his stead, whose name signifies "just", or righteous; and was a type of Christ, the holy and just One, whose spiritual children and offspring are here meant:

which come near to the Lord to minister unto him; both preachers and people, who have near access to God through Christ, and minister before him in holy things, in praying, preaching, administering ordinances, and attending on the same.

Ezekiel 40:47

Ver. 47. So he measured the court,.... The inward court, where the prophet and his guide now were; and the gates leading to which he had been measuring, with the chambers, arches, and tables belonging thereunto:

an hundred cubits long, and an hundred cubits broad, foursquare; the floor, or area of this court, which was a hundred cubits in length and breadth; so that it was a perfect square, equilateral, east, west, north, and south, and above fifty yards each way; such a court as never was in any temple whatever: hence Kimchi observes, there was no such court in the second temple; no, nor in the first neither: in the second temple, the length of the court of Israel, according to Abarbinel, was a hundred and thirty five cubits, and the breadth eleven, but this was a hundred by a hundred; these things, says Lipman {u}, are wonderful in my eyes: this denotes the large increase of the church, and of spiritual worshippers, in the latter day; and the foursquare of it signifies the order, perfection, and stability of it; see Re 21:16:

and the altar that was before the house; the altar of burnt offering, which stood before the house or temple, in the midst of the inward court; so that it might be seen by all in the inward court and chambers; and even by all in the outward court, through the several gates, which directly opened and led to it. This was typical of Christ, the altar, we Christians have a right to eat of; which sanctifies every gift offered upon it, and which every worshipper should by faith look unto for the expiation of their sins. The dimensions of this altar were now taken, and are given in Eze 43:13.

{u} Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 27.

Ezekiel 40:48

Ver. 48. And he brought me to the porch of the house,.... Having passed through the inner court, and measured that, he came to the body of the fabric, the principal part of it, the house or temple; to the porch that led into it. Here of right a new chapter should begin, for this and the next verse more properly "belong" to the following chapter. This porch was a large roof, and was a covering both from cold winds and storms, and from the scorching heat of the sun; and was an emblem of Christ, the hiding place from the wind, and the covert from the tempest of divine justice and vengeance, and the wrath of God; and from the heat of a fiery law, of Satan's fiery darts or temptations, and of the persecutions of men: it was also, as is thought, a place for the priests to pray in, before they went into the temple; as Christ is the way in which the priests of the Lord go unto him, and pray before him; in whose name, and for whose righteousness sake, they present their supplications to him.

And measured each post of the porch, five cubits on this side, and five cubits on that side; these posts stood, one on the north side of the porch, and the other on the south, and were each five cubits thick:

and the breadth of the gate was three cubits on this side, and three cubits on that side; this gate signifies Christ, the door, or gate, or way of entrance into the spiritual temple the church, Joh 10:1 and it had two leaves, that on the north was three cubits broad, and that on the south was of the same measure: this two leaved gate may show, that both Jews and Gentiles, being converted, may enter into the Gospel church; as they will in the latter day, when the Jews shall be called, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in; here will be an open door set; the gate will be wide enough to let them all in, **Re 3:8**.

Ezekiel 40:49

Ver. 49. The length of the porch was twenty cubits,.... From east to west; from the first gate of it to the last; which led directly into the house, or temple:

and the breadth eleven cubits; which may be thus accounted for; two cubits apiece being allowed for each post, and three for each leaf of the door that were hung upon them, and one for the upright post in the middle on which they shut; in all eleven:

and he brought me by the steps whereby they went up to it; as there was an ascent of seven steps to the several gates that led into the outward court; and another of eight steps, which led from that to the gates of the inner court; so there was an ascent from the inner court to the porch of the house, or temple; but how many steps there were is not said. The Septuagint and Arabic versions read ten steps; and the Vulgate Latin version eight steps. According to the Misnah {w}, there were twelve in the second temple; so say Jarchi and Kimchi, with whom Josephus {x} agrees. Cocceius thinks there could not be more than two, since the ground of the inward court and temple were continued; but as their number is not given, a determination cannot be made; only it may be observed, that the saints' progress in the knowledge of Christ, and of divine things, and in faith and holiness, is gradual.

And there were pillars by the posts, one on this side, and another on that side; one on the north side, and the other on the south, somewhat like the two pillars of Jachin and Boaz, in Solomon's temple; which some apply to the ordinances of the Gospel saints partake of at their entrance into the Gospel church; but rather they are an emblem of Christ, the supporter of his church, and of all those that aright enter into it; and who, through his grace and strength, become pillars there also, **Re 3:12**, he is their Jachin, who establishes them on himself, the sure foundation; and their Boaz, in whom their strength is, and from whom they have it to exercise grace, discharge duty, and persevere to the end.

{w} Middot, c. 2. sect. 3. {x} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 41:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 41

In this chapter the divine and illustrious Person, the prophet's guide, brings him to the temple itself, and gives the dimensions of the posts and doors, both of the holy and the most holy place, Eze 41:1, then of the wall of the house, its side chambers, the winding about to them, and the doors of them, Eze 41:5, next of a building before the separate place, its doorposts, narrow windows, and galleries,
Eze 41:12, after that each of the ornaments of the house are described, Eze 41:18, then the altar of incense, Eze 41:22, and the chapter is concluded with

observing the decorations and lights on the doors, porch, and side chambers of the temple and sanctuary,
Eze 41:23.

Ver. 1. Afterward he brought me to the temple,.... Having measured the porch into it, its posts, and gate. This is the body of the building, which was the "frame" of a city first shown, the principal fabric; for hitherto he had been only measuring the outward and inner courts, and their gates, and what were in them; but now he is come to the house itself, called a temple; by which not only particular Gospel churches are called, **1Co 3:16**, but the Gospel church state in general, **Zec 6:12**, and especially as in the latter day; so the Philadelphian church state, which represents the spiritual reign of Christ, or the glory of the latter day, is called the temple of my God, **Re 3:12**, which will be a holy temple to the Lord where he will dwell in a gracious manner, and be worshipped in spirit and in truth; and here his glory will be seen; it will be built up of precious and costly stones, even living and lively ones; a spiritual house to offer up the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise: and, as in the material temple or holy place stood the candlestick and table of shewbread; here the light of the Gospel will burn clearly; and Christ the bread of life be held forth in the ordinance of the supper; where, as at a table, saints shall have intimate fellowship with him:

and measured the posts, six cubits broad on the one side, and six cubits broad on the other side these were the posts of the door of the temple, and stood on each side of it, on the north and south; and this was the thickness, six cubits or a reed each, three yards and a half; this was the frontispiece of the door of the palace of the King of kings:

which was the breadth of the tabernacle; the tabernacle of Moses; that is, these posts, or this frontispiece, were as broad as the whole tabernacle of Moses was; which had eight boards in the breadth, each board being a cubit and a half, made twelve cubits, just the breadth of these two posts, Ex 26:16, this shows how far superior the Gospel church is to the old synagogue; how larger is the one, and the entrance into it wider, than the other. Some understand by "the tabernacle" the upper lintel, of the same breadth with the posts; and was in a recurve, and as a covering to the door; so the Jewish commentators, and others that follow them.

Ezekiel 41:2

Ver. 2. And the breadth of the door was ten cubits,.... The temple door: great care is taken to observe and give the dimensions of the doors and gates of various places; to put us in mind of Christ the door and gate into the church, and into fellowship with God: this was as broad again as the door of Solomon's temple; for that was but the fourth part of the wall of it, five cubits, **1Ki 6:1**:

and the sides of the door were five cubits on the one side, and five cubits on the other side; the side walls of the door, both on the north and south, were five cubits each; which, with the ten, the breadth of the door, made twenty; and is just the breadth of the temple or holy place afterwards given:

and he measured the length thereof forty cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits; that is, the length of the temple from east to west, and the breadth of it from north to south, were of this measure; which exactly answers to the dimensions of Solomon's temple, a figure of the Gospel church, as this; see **1Ki 6:2**.

Ezekiel 41:3

Ver. 3. Then went he inward,.... Through the temple or holy place he had measured, to the holy of holies:

and measured the post of the door two cubits; this was the door into the most holy place; there was one in Solomon's temple; but in the second temple there was none; but two rails instead of it, which were rent at the death of Christ; and two cubits was the thickness of the post, on which this door was shut:

and the door six cubits, and the breadth of the door seven cubits; this door was a two leaved one; each leaf consisted of three cubits broad, and the post in the middle on which they shut one cubit broad, which made seven: though some think that the side walls of the door are meant, as in Eze 41:2, which were each seven cubits; and the breadth of the door, six cubits, made twenty cubits; which was the breadth of the most holy place, as answering to the breadth of the holy place, as in the next verse.

Ezekiel 41:4

Ver. 4. So he measured the length thereof twenty cubits,.... That is, of the most holy place, from east to west; which was the measure of it in Solomon's temple, **1Ki 6:20**:

and the breadth twenty cubits before the temple: that is answerable or according to the breadth of the temple or holy place; which was also twenty cubits in breadth: this stood at the west end of it, and was equal in breadth to it; see **1Ki 6:2**:

and he said unto me, this is the most holy place; the divine Person in human form said to the prophet, take notice of this building; this answers to the most holy place in the temple. This was an emblem of the most holy and perfect state of the church on earth; it represents the New Jerusalem church state, that holy city, and into which nothing shall enter that defiles; and, as in the most holy place, the divine Shechaniah or majesty of God dwelt; so here will dwell in person the God-man and Mediator, the head of the church, our Lord Jesus; whose tabernacle will now be with men, in this perfect state, raised from the dead, and he will dwell among them: and as this most holy place in its dimensions is a foursquare, so is the holy city described; denoting its stability and perfection; see Re 21:2.

Ezekiel 41:5

Ver. 5. After he measured the wall of the house six cubits,.... Or a reed, three yards and a half thick: this was the wall of the holy of holies, or which divided that from the holy place, and was not in the second temple; or rather the wall of the temple, the whole house or building, both of the holy place, and of the most holy, which were contiguous: such a strong wall is the Lord to his church, and especially will be in the latter day, when salvation will be for walls and bulwarks against all enemies, and to preserve from all hurt and danger, Isa 26:1, the New Jerusalem also will have a wall great and high, and made of a precious stone, Re 21:12:

and the breadth of every side chamber four cubits round about the house on every side; or, "of every rib" {y}; as ribs are to the body, so were these side chambers or buildings to the fabric, as Ben Melech observes, who interprets them of beams: adjoining to the above wall were chambers all around the holy place and the most holy on each side, north and south; for there could be none on the east, that being the entrance into the holy, and so into the most holy place; and the floor of these chambers were four cubits, or two yards and a foot broad; that is, those of the lower storey: these were for the priests, where they lodged, and laid up and ate their most holy things, and put their garments in which they ministered; see Eze 42:13, and design, as the chambers everywhere do, particular congregated churches; where such as are made priests to God by Christ have a place, and communion with God in holy things; and appear in the righteousness of Christ, and in the beauties of holiness.

{y} eluh "costae", Piscator, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 41:6

Ver. 6. And the side chambers were three, one over another, and thirty in order,.... There were three stories of them, and thirty in every storey, in all ninety; there were such chambers round about Solomon's temple, and so many stories of them, though their number is not expressed, **1Ki 6:5**, but Josephus {z} says they were thirty, and one above another, three stories of them, as here. Some think twelve were on the north side, twelve on the south, and six on the west; or fifteen on the north, and fifteen on the south. The Misnic doctors {a} say there were thirty eight in the second temple, fifteen on the north side, fifteen on the south, and eight on the west. The Targum is,

"the chambers were chamber over chamber thirty three, eleven in a row;"

and so some {b} understand it, that they were in all but thirty three, eleven in the first storey, as many in the second, and the same number in the third; and place them four in the north, four in the south, and three in the west, so Starckius; but the first account seems best. This denotes the number of churches in Gospel times, especially in the latter day; when there will be large conversions, and room enough for all the converts: and as there are many mansions in heaven for all the saints; so there will be room enough in the New Jerusalem, the more perfect state of the church on earth, to hold the whole palm bearing company, whose number no man can number; and all the nations of them that are saved, who will walk in the light of it, **Re 7:9**:

and they entered into the wall which was of the house for the side chambers round about, that they might have hold, but they had not hold in the wall of the house; the beams of the floors of those side chambers rested indeed upon the wall of the house which was built for them; but were not inserted into it, or laid in it, as we see in some buildings; but there were projections or buttresses

in the wall, or what are called narrowed rests, **1Ki 6:6** or rebatements of the breadth of a cubit, on which they were laid and rested; and so it was in the upper stories, as in the lowermost; there being an abatement of a cubit in the thickness of the wall in each storey, as in the following verse. This shows the firmness of this spiritual building resting upon such a wall and such buttresses as God himself is to it;
See Gill on "Eze 41:5".

{z} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 3. sect. 2. {a} Misn. Middot, c. 4. sect. 3. {b} Lipman. Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 69. fol. 10. 1.

Ezekiel 41:7

Ver. 7. And there was an enlarging, and a winding about still upward to the side chambers,.... These chambers, as they rose up in stories one above another, were larger and larger; those in the middlemost storey were larger than those in the lower storey by a cubit; so much being taken out of the thickness of the wall, to make the rests or rebatements for the beams of the floor to rest upon, by which so much was gained in breadth for the chambers; and those in the upper storey, for the same reason, were a cubit broader than those in the middle, and two cubits broader than the lowermost; the floor of the first and lower storey was four cubits broad, Eze 41:5 the floor of the second five cubits; and the floor of the third or uppermost six cubits. The wall of the temple at the bottom was six cubits thick, Eze 41:5, at the middlemost storey five cubits; and at the uppermost four: and all this may denote the enlargement of the church of Christ, as it comes nearer the heavenly state; the present state of the church may be signified by the lower storey, where the chambers are narrowest; the state of the church in the latter day glory, or spiritual reign of Christ, by the middlemost, when it will be enlarged; its converts being very numerous, Isa 49:19 and the New Jerusalem church state by the uppermost storey; which city or state will be very large, and next to heaven, or the ultimate glory; see Re 21:16. The "winding" that went upwards to the side chambers were winding stairs, which went up from one storey to another, higher and higher; see **1Ki 6:8**. The Misnic doctors say {c}, that in the second temple these winding stairs went from one side of the temple to the other, from the north east to the northwest; by which they went up to the roofs of these chambers and to the upper room over the sanctuary. These may signify the various afflictions and tribulations, trials and exercises, in which the Lord leads his people, and by which the churches of Christ pass from one state to another:

for the winding about of the house went still upward round about the house: not on the outside, but within; properly round about the chambers, which are here called the house:

therefore the breadth of the house was still upward; became broader and broader, as it rose up higher and higher:

and so increased from the lowest chamber to the highest by the midst; from being only four cubits broad in the lowest storey, it became five cubits in the middlemost, and from thence six cubits in the highest.

{c} Misn. Middot, c. 4. sect. 5.

Ezekiel 41:8

Ver. 8. I saw also the height of the house round about,.... Not of the temple itself, but of the chambers, and the three stories of them, which went round about it; and particularly the height of the highest storey, which yet is not given: it could not be so high as the temple itself; for then there would have been no room for windows to let in light into it:

the foundations of the side chambers were a full reed of six great cubits; not of the lowest storey of them, for that was but four cubits broad, Eze 41:5, nor of the middlemost, which was five; but of the uppermost, which was six; and these were cubits of the largest size, a hand's breadth larger than the common cubit, and made one full reed, or three yards and a half; see Eze 40:5, these foundations signify the same as the twelve foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem; and which are no other than the one foundation Christ, ministerially laid by his twelve apostles; and who is the only foundation of his church and people, and is a sure one, Re 21:14.

Ezekiel 41:9

Ver. 9. The thickness of the wall, which was for the side chambers without, was five cubits,.... This is the outward wall of the chambers, north and south,

which was five cubits thick, made of stone;
See Gill on "Eze 41:5",

and that which was left was the place of the side chambers that were within; this was a void space, not built upon, which was before the chambers that stood within it; and was a space to walk in for those that dwelt in the chambers, or to go in from chamber to chamber; which also was five cubits in breadth, as appears from the next verse. This may denote the communion of churches, and the members of them one with another.

Ezekiel 41:10

Ver. 10. And between the chambers was the wideness of twenty cubits,.... Not the side chambers before mentioned, as if there was the space of twenty cubits between each chamber; for another word is used; more probably the meaning is, that between the side chambers, or the void space before them of five cubits, and the chambers which were in the court facing them, was such a wideness of twenty cubits:

round about the house on every side; on all sides of the temple, where the above chambers were, west, north, and south.

Ezekiel 41:11

Ver. 11. And the doors of the side chambers were towards the place that was left,.... These opened to the void space before them; that is, those of the lower storey; the others must open to the winding staircase that led down to it:

one door toward the north, and another door toward the south; which is not to be understood as if each chamber had two doors; but either of the two doors, which opened at the top of the staircase to the north and south; or of the doors of those chambers, which were on the north, and opened towards it; and of those that were on the south, that opened to that: indeed the Misnic doctors say {d} that each chamber had three doors; one to the chamber on the right; another to the chamber on the left; and a third to the upper chamber: and in the north east corner were five doors; one to the chamber on the right; and one to the upper chamber; a third to the winding stairs; a fourth to the little gate; and the fifth to the temple; these signify the free entrance of men into the churches of Christ in the latter day, whose gates shall be opened to let in the righteous nation; and shall stand open continually, that the forces of the Gentiles and their kings may be brought, Isa 26:2 and in the New Jerusalem there are gates, east, west, north, and south, even twelve of them, and at them twelve angels; and which gates shall not be shut day nor night, Re 21:12:

and the breadth of the place that was left was five cubits round about; the void space that was left before the side chambers; see Eze 41:9.

{d} Misn. Middot, c. 4. sect. 3.

Ezekiel 41:12

Ver. 12. Now the building that was before the separate place,.... The "separate place" is the holy of holies, which was separated by a vail under the second temple, and by a wall as in this, and the first from the holy place: "before or over against" which was a building, as it is rendered, Eze 41:15, a new building, not before taken notice of: and it was situated

at the end toward the west: or "sea" {e}, the Mediterranean sea, which lay west to the land of Canaan. The meaning is, that this building was to the west of the temple, at which end stood the holy of holies, and this near to that: what building is here meant is not easy to say, there being nothing in the first or second temple which answered to it: it seems to be a new building; and what the mystical sense of it is cannot be easily guessed at. Cocceius thinks, that as the holy of holies signifies the heavenly or more perfect state of the church on earth, this, being over against it, or behind it, as in Eze 41:15, may design heaven itself, the happiness and glory of the saints treasured up and reserved there:

it was seventy cubits broad; Jerom seems to have the same mystical sense in view; since he observes, that after labours and perils, and the floods and shipwrecks of this world for seventy years, we come to enjoy the eternal rest:

and the wall of the building was five cubits thick round about; which may answer to the vast gulf fixed between the godly in heaven, and the wicked in hell; so that there is no going the one to the other,
Lu 16:26:

and the length thereof ninety cubits; there are no outgoings to this building, as

Hafenrefferus {f}, a German divine, observes; so that those that are brought into it shall ever remain in it, which is the case of the saints in heaven.

{e} Myh "ad mare, Piscator; obversa mari", Cocceius, Starckius. {f} Apud Starckius in loc.

Ezekiel 41:13

Ver. 13. So he measured the house, an hundred cubits long,.... The whole temple, the parts of which he had measured; and this is the sum total:

and the separate place, and the building, with the walls thereof, an hundred cubits long; these are the several parts of the house or temple: the "separate place", the holy of holies, the building, the sanctuary or holy place; which, with the walls thereof, made a hundred cubits in length from east to west, thus; the thickness of the wall of the east porch, six cubits; the passage through the porch, eleven cubits; the wall between the porch and the temple, six cubits; the temple or holy place, forty cubits; the wall between that and the most holy place, two cubits; the holiest of all, twenty cubits; the thickness of the west wall, six cubits; the chambers at the end of it, four cubits; and the outer wall of them, five cubits; in all a hundred cubits: for this cannot be understood of the separate place, and the building before it, or rather behind it; since the separate place, or holiest of all, was twenty cubits, and the building ninety cubits; besides the thickness of each wall, five cubits a piece; in all a hundred and twenty.

Ezekiel 41:14

Ver. 14. Also the breadth of the face of the house, and the separate place toward the east,.... The whole front of the temple, the holy and most holy place, which looked to the east: and was measured from north to south,

an hundred cubits: which some reckon thus; the breadth of the temple twenty cubits; the thickness of the outward walls, twelve cubits; the side chambers, eight cubits; the walls of these chambers, five cubits on each side: the breadth of the void space, five cubits on each side; and twenty cubits round about the house; so that the length and breadth of this structure was the same, and made a perfect foursquare, as the city of the New Jerusalem is said to be, Re 21:16.

Ezekiel 41:15

Ver. 15. And he measured the length of the building over against the separate place,.... Which was ninety cubits, as appears from Eze 41:12, when measured by itself:

which was behind it; that is, behind the separate place, or holiest of all, at the back of it, at the west end. Noldius {g} renders the words, "he measured the length of the building before the separate place, and behind it"; or its back part, as the Syriac, and interprets it thus; that he measured the building or the porch which was before the temple, that is to the north; and the porch opposite to it, that is to the south: this "building" behind it, with the Jews {h}, is the same with Bethchaliphoth {i}, or the house of knives, which the priests used in sacrificing:

and the galleries thereof on the one side, and on the other side, an hundred cubits; as the above is the length of this building from east to west, this is the breadth of it from north to south; the breadth of the building itself was seventy cubits, Eze 41:12, and the galleries on the north and south sides of it, and the thickness of the walls, which were five cubits each, made thirty more; in all a hundred cubits; which is equal to the breadth of the temple, as in the preceding verse: these galleries, or balconies, or porticos, supported by pilasters, design places for the saints to walk in, converse, and commune with one another; and where Christ the King of saints is held forth, and seen in his beauty and glory; see **Zec 3:7**:

with the inner temple, and the porches of the court; or, "and the inner temple" {k}, &c. that is, and he also measured the inner temple or holy of holies, with all the porches, chambers, and their walls, and with all the spaces and appendages to it, which were of the same measure; see Eze 41:15.

{g} Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 104. No. 521. {h} Lipman. Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 50. {i} Misn. Middot, c. 4. sect. 7. {k} ymynph lkyhhw "et templum interius", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 41:16

Ver. 16. The door posts and the narrow windows,.... Of the inner temple or holy of holies; for this is what is last mentioned; of the door posts of it, see Eze 41:3, in the holy of holies, both in Moses's tabernacle, and Solomon's temple, were no windows; Jehovah dwelt in thick darkness, **1Ki 8:12**, but in this inner temple, or the more perfect state of the church on earth, there will be much light: these windows are said to be "narrow", that is, without, but broad within; and let in a great deal of light, which, though not discerned by those without, yet comfortably enjoyed by those within; and will be so great, that there will be no need of the sun or moon; Christ the Lamb will be the light of this state; and the nations of the saved and their kings will walk in the light of it, Re 21:23:

and the galleries round about on their three stories; these seem to be the same with the side chambers, which were three storey high, and were on the three sides of the house, west, north, and south; see Eze 41:6:

over against the door, cieled with wood round about: with cedar wood, as the Targum: or, "answerable were the doors cieled with wood" {l}; door, for doors; that is, the doors of these side chambers, which answered to one another, were lined with cedar wood; all which doors, door posts, windows, and galleries, were severally measured:

and from the ground up to the windows; from the bottom of the floor of the most holy place up to the windows, which were above the third storey of the side chambers, he measured also:

and the windows were covered; either by the jetting out of the side chambers, so that they could not well be seen in the courts below; or they were lattice windows with such small holes as at a distance were scarcely discernible; or were covered with curtains within; or being very narrow on the outside, though broad within, looked as if they were covered; denoting how impenetrable the glories of this state are to those that are without, Re 22:15.

{l} bybo Ue Pyxv Poh dgn "contra uniuscujusque limen, stratumque ligno per gyrum in circuitu", V. L. Capellus.

Ezekiel 41:17

Ver. 17. To that above the door, even unto the inner house,.... The meaning is, either there were such windows as before described above the door of the eastern gate, that led into the holiest of all, and even unto the inner house, or holy of holies: and without; and to all the side, chambers that were built without it:

and by all the wall round about within and without; both within the holy place, and without, in the places adjoining to it, on all sides, west, north, and south; or all were cieled with cedar wood, that it might be more capable of being ornamented, either with gold, or with the decorations mentioned in the following verses: or the sense is, that all these were measured exactly: for it follows, "by measure"; or to all these "were measures" {m}; the dimensions were taken; every thing in the Gospel church state, whether in its less or more perfect state, will be all according to rule and measure.

{m} twdm "mensuras accepit", Munster; "in omnibus mensurae [monstratae sunt]", Tigurine version.

Ezekiel 41:18

Ver. 18. And it was made with cherubim and palm trees,.... That is, all the wall of the house round about was ornamented with these, even both of the holy and of the most holy place; with these the curtains of Moses's tabernacle, and the vail that divided between the holy and the most holy place, were decorated; as also the walls, both of the sanctuary and oracle, in Solomon's temple, Ex 26:1. The former, according to the commonly received notion, were an emblem of angels; the latter of true believers, or holy upright men: why these are called palm trees, See Gill on "Eze 40:16",

so that a palm tree was between a cherub and a cherub; these were so placed all around, that there was first a cherub, next a palm tree, and then a cherub again, and so on; and if angels and saints are meant, and that notion could be supported, which some have given into, that the number of men redeemed by Christ is the same with that of the angels that fell, and their places are filled up by them; this would serve to illustrate it, particularly as these were all around the walls of the most holy place; a type of heaven, as here of the New Jerusalem state; that as there was a cherub and a palm tree, a cherub and a palm tree, throughout all the house, so an angel and a saint, an angel and a saint, throughout all the mansions in the holy city, and in the heavenly glory:

and every cherub had two faces: which, by what follows, were the faces of a man, and of a lion. The "cherubim" Ezekiel saw in his first vision had four faces, **Eze 1:10** and so these must be supposed to have, though only two were seen; because these were carved or painted on the walls, so that the hindmost faces, those of the ox and eagle, could not be perceived.

Ezekiel 41:19

Ver. 19. So that the face of a man was toward the palm tree on the one side,.... The cherubim in this verse are the same with the living creatures this prophet saw by the river Chebar, and which he knew to be the cherubim, Eze 10:20 and the same with John's four beasts or living creatures in **Re 4:7** and he being the last that wrote concerning them, gives the clearest account of them; and by which the best judgment may be formed about them; and from which it appears that they are men redeemed by the blood of Christ; and as they are on the one hand distinguished from angels, so on the other from the four and twenty elders, or common Christians, **Re 4:8** and plainly design the ministers of the word, and who are everywhere to be understood by them: their having the face of a man shows they are men, and have to do with men, and should be humane, kind, and tender, knowing and understanding as men; See Gill on "Eze 1:10", and their face being

towards the palm tree shows that they should be upright and sincere in their doctrine, ministry, and conversation; that they should bear all weights and pressures laid upon them patiently; and rise up heavenwards in their affections and desires, and in their expectation of help and assistance in their work, and triumph in Christ, through whom they are conquerors; the palm tree being an emblem of these things:

and the face of a young lion toward the palm tree on the other side; this face of the cherubim denotes the strength of Gospel ministers they have from Christ to do their work, defend the Gospel, withstand gainsayers, and support the weak, and bear with their infirmities; as also their boldness, courage, and intrepidity, in preaching the Gospel of Christ without fear of men; of this their face, and the other two not mentioned here, See Gill on "Eze 1:10":

it was made through all the house round about; that is, the cherubim and palm trees were carved or portrayed in the form and order here described throughout the holy of holies, as Jarchi interprets the house; and signifies that Gospel ministers shall have a place, and peculiar honour done them, in the New Jerusalem state, who will be particularly rewarded then, Re 11:18.

Ezekiel 41:20

Ver. 20. From the ground unto above the door,.... From the floor of the holy of holies to above the door of it to the east, where was the entrance into it; or from thence to the cieling, as the Septuagint version: "were cherubim and palm trees made"; either in rows one above another, quite up to the place mentioned; or they were made so large, that each cherub and palm tree reached from the ground to above the door, or to the cieling:

and on the wall of the temple: that is, they were not only thus placed in the holiest of all; but in the temple, or holy place on the wall of it all around; and shows, that in the state of the church in the latter day, which this part of the building represents more especially, will be great numbers of Gospel ministers, who will faithfully and uprightly preach it to men; see Da 12:4.

Ezekiel 41:21

Ver. 21. The posts of the temple were squared,.... Or, were "foursquare" {n}; the two posts on each side the door, the lintel and the threshold, made a square; the posts themselves were not round, as pillars, but flat and square; and the upper part was not arched, as in some buildings, but square. Jarchi says he had heard that the posts of Solomon's temple were foursquare; but that is not certain; however, these were. The Vulgate Latin version renders it "four cornered"; as doors formerly were: this was the ancient way of building, as Philander {o} observes; almost everything in this wonderful building was foursquare; denoting the firmness, stability, and perfection of all things in it:

and the face of the sanctuary; the appearance of the one as the appearance of the other; that is, the front of the holy of holies was like that of the temple; they both had the same appearance, though one was larger than another. The posts of the one were squared, even as the posts of the other; showing that the same is the way of entrance into the Gospel church and into the New Jerusalem church state, and even into the heavenly glory, which is Christ; and, whether in the less or more perfect state of the church on earth, there are the same precious faith, and love, and communion, though different degrees. The

Targum is,

"and the face of the house of the propitiatory; and its appearance as the appearance of its glory;"

which Jarchi interprets, as the appearance of the throne of glory, seen by the prophet at the river Chebar, **Eze 1:26**.

{n} hebr "quadratus", Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {o} Not. in Vitruvium de Architect. l. 4. c. 6. p. 153.

Ezekiel 41:22

Ver. 22. The altar of wood was three cubits high, and the length thereof two cubits,.... This was the altar of incense, and was typical of Christ in his intercession and mediation. It was made of "wood"; that in the tabernacle of Moses was of shittim wood, a kind of cedar; and that in Solomon's temple was of cedar, Ex 30:1 and may signify the human nature of Christ, in which he mediates and intercedes; which is excellent as the cedars: fair and beautiful, strong, durable, and incorruptible: though its original is of the earth, as wood: or was made of a woman; of the earth, earthly; but produced without sin. This altar, both in the tabernacle and temple, was covered with gold; as it was fit it should be with some hard substance that would bear incense to be burned on it; and therefore was called the golden altar, Ex 30:3 and so the altar at which our Lord officiates as Mediator and Intercessor is called a golden one, **Re 8:3**, which may denote the deity of Christ, that gives virtue to his mediation; or the glorification of his human nature in heaven, in which he ministers; and also the preciousness of his intercession, and the duration of it. The incense burnt on this altar may signify both the mediation of Christ, which is pure and holy, though for sinners; large and frequent, continually made, and very fragrant and acceptable; and the prayers of the saints which are offered up on this altar, which sanctifies them; and through the much incense, which perfumes them, whereby they ascend up to God, and are sweet odours to him, being fragrant and fervent, pure and holy. This altar in the tabernacle of Moses, and probably in the temple of Solomon, though its dimensions there are not given, was foursquare,
Ex 30:2 very likely so was this; and indeed the Septuagint version adds,

and the breadth two cubits; which, being the same with its length, made it foursquare; and so may point at the firmness, unchangeableness and perfection of this part of Christ's priesthood, his intercession, which is true of the whole of it, **Heb 7:19** and it may be observed, that the altar here was a cubit longer, and a cubit broader, as well as a cubit higher, than the Mosaic one, Ex 30:2. Kimchi says this altar was not like to that which Moses or Solomon, or the children of the captivity, made; it was larger than any of them; which shows that the intercession of Christ our high priest is larger and more extensive than that of the priests under the law; they offered incense only for the people of Israel: but Christ, as he is the propitiation, so the advocate for Gentiles, as well as Jews; though not for the whole world of men, yet for the world of the elect; and of all blessings of grace and glory for them, **1Jo 2:1** and, moreover, that under the Gospel dispensation there would be more praying souls, and more use made of the Mediator, of his name, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and intercession; and a greater spirit of grace and supplication poured out, especially in the latter day; hence we read of Christ's much incense, Joh 16:23:

and the corners thereof, and the length thereof, and the walls thereof, were of wood; that is, the horns that were at the four corners of it; and the top of it, which was its length and breadth; and the sides of it, called its walls, were all of wood, though covered with gold. The mystical sense of which has been given; only it may be observed, that the four corners or horns of it may denote the strength of Christ's intercession; and to which men have recourse, and lay hold on for their relief, even from all parts of the world, east, west, north, and south:

and he said unto me, this is the table that is before the Lord; that is, either the altar before described is the table before the Lord, which he has spread, and where his people feed in his presence; the intercession of Christ being a feast to the faith of saints: or it may be, that the divine guide of the prophet, turning himself to the right hand of the altar, pointed to the table of shewbread, which stood in the same place; and said this or that which stands yonder is the table before the Lord; and which also was typical of Christ, the true bread that comes down from heaven, who is the food of his people; for quality, the finest of the wheat; for quantity, enough and to spare; for savour, such as gracious souls desire always to have; for duration, continual bread, set forth by priests, and only eaten by them; and, like that,

bread of faces, as the shewbread is called {p}; denoting the intercession of Christ, the Angel of God's presence; and who always appears in the presence of God for his people, bearing on him the names of the children of Israel, to which the twelve shewbread loaves answered. The "table" on which they were set signifies the communion saints have with Christ in his word and ordinances; which are called a feast, of which Christ is the sum and substance; and where, as at a table, he sits and favours them with fellowship with himself; see **Pr 9:2** The Jews {q} have an observation upon this text, that it begins with an altar, and ends with a table; and further observe, that, while the temple stood, the altar atoned for a man, but now a man's table atones for him: but this is not a man's table, but the Lord's table; and Christ the sacrifice held forth on this table does indeed atone for a man.

{p} Mynp Mxl "panis facierum", Exod. xxv. 30. {q} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 55. 1. Chagiga, fol. 26. 1. Menachot, fol. 97. 1.

Ezekiel 41:23

Ver. 23. And the temple and the sanctuary had two doors. Or the house of propitiatory, as the Targum; that is, the most holy place; not two doors apiece, but each had one door, which made two; the door of the temple was ten cubits broad, and the door of the most holy place six cubits, Eze 41:2 showing the door is wider, and more enter into the outward visible church, or less perfect state, even some bad, as well as good, than the door of the Jerusalem church state, or heavenly glory, into which fewer enter.

Ezekiel 41:24

Ver. 24. And the doors had two leaves apiece, two turning leaves,.... Each of these doors had two leaves, which met in a middle post, and might be opened either singly or together, as occasion required;
See Gill on "Eze 40:48":

two leaves for the one door, and two leaves for the other door; two for the door of the temple, and two for the door of the most holy place; or each leaf of both doors had two foldings; as there were two leaves in a door, there were two foldings in every leaf; so that the door might be opened wider or narrower, as was thought fit; denoting the greater number of persons let in, and the greater light and knowledge had, at one time than at another; see **1Ki 6:31**.

Ezekiel 41:25

Ver. 25. And there were made on them, on the doors of the temple,.... Both of the holy, and the most holy place:

cherubim and palm trees, like as were made on the walls; the doors of both places had the same decorations as the walls of each;
See Gill on "Eze 41:18";
See Gill on "Eze 41:19";
See Gill on "Eze 41:20"; and so it was in Solomon's temple, **1Ki 6:32**, a cherub and a palm tree on each leaf, or on each folding of a leaf, according as it would admit of:

and there were thick planks upon the face of the porch without; on the outward front of the porch were some thick wainscot boards, which projected as a cover to the entrance into it; or, as it may be rendered, also on

the thick piece of wood in the front of the porch without {r}; which, as Starckius thinks, was a large wooden bar, which shut and held in the folding leaves of the door; and on this, or these thick planks, were cherubim and palm trees.

{r} Uwxhm Mlwah ynp la Ue bew "etiam denso ligno in fronte vestibuli extrinsecus", Junius & Tremellius; "et trabs lignea ante vestibulum erat foris", Starckius.

Ezekiel 41:26

Ver. 26. And there were narrow windows,.... See Eze 41:16:

and palm trees on the one side and on the other side, on the sides of the porch; upon the posts that were on each side the porch, north and south; Eze 40:16:

and upon the side chambers of the house, and thick planks; that is, there were palm trees upon the side chambers, which were in number thirty, Eze 41:6 and upon the planks also; every part of this fabric within and without were ornamented.

Ezekiel 42:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 42

In this chapter are a description of some chambers in the northern part of the outward court, Eze 42:1, an account of the use made of them by the priests, Eze 42:13, the measuring of the area, or whole compass of ground, on which the whole building before measured stood, with the wall that surrounded it, Eze 41:15.

Ver. 1. Then he brought me forth into the utter court, the way toward the north,.... After the dimensions of the gates and courts of this building had been shown, and that of itself, the holy and most holy place, with the ornaments thereof; the prophet is brought by his guide into the outward court, which encompassed the building to the north part of it; probably he came out of the north gate of the house into it. So the Targum renders it,

"by the way of the gate which is open to the way of the north:"

and he brought me into the chamber that was over against the separate place; or holy of holies; see Eze 41:12, over against or before this, to the north of it, were a chamber or chambers; the singular being put for the plural; whither the prophet was brought to take a view of, being a new and distinct building from all others he had seen before; unto one of them, or to the place of them, as Jarchi, where they stood: there were two rows of them opposite to each other, and a walk between them; they are afterwards called the north and south chambers,
Eze 42:13:

and which was before the building toward the north; this chamber or chambers were over against or before the whole fabric, to the north of it. The Jews here confess their ignorance, there being nothing in the first or second temple answerable to these. Lipman {s} expressly says these chambers were not in the second temple; perhaps they may design the Protestant reformed churches in the northern parts of the world; the religion of Protestants is by the Papists called the northern heresy: and if our northern churches are here pointed at and described, it is a great honour that is done them, to have a particular apartment allotted them in this wonderful building; compare Ps 48:2.

{s} Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 71.

Ezekiel 42:2

Ver. 2. Before the length of an hundred cubits was the north door,.... That is, the north door of the house opened to a space that lay between that and the chambers, which was a hundred cubits long:

and the breadth was fifty cubits; or the sense is, that the prophet was brought, as Noldius renders the words {t},

to a place whose length was an hundred cubits towards the north door; so that they describe the length and breadth of these chambers, the whole of them; and to this agrees the Arabic version: this account of them makes them larger than Solomon's temple, **1Ki 6:2**, which may signify the largeness of these churches; the number of men in them; and the abundance of spiritual blessings and privileges, of light and knowledge, peace and joy, possessed by them: but the measure being oblong, and not foursquare, as the city of the New Jerusalem, Re 21:16, shows they are not yet come to stability and perfection.

{t} Concord. Ebr. Partic. p. 82.

Ezekiel 42:3

Ver. 3. Over against the twenty cubits which were for the inner court,.... Starckius thinks that the breadth of the chambers being fifty cubits, is here parted, and disposed of, and accounted for. The chambers were in two rows over against each other; that row which looked to the south, and so to the temple, was twenty cubits broad; and because it led to the temple, its court is called the inner court:

and over against the pavement which was for the utter court: or that row which was over against the pavement of the outward court, to the north, was also twenty cubits broad, which make forty; and the walk of ten cubits between them, Eze 42:4, account for the breadth of the fifty cubits:

was gallery against gallery in three stories; or, there was post before post in three stories {u}; each chamber had a post or pillar, so Jarchi; which distinguished or divided one from another, and ran up with the chambers three storey high; and as the chambers, so these posts in both rows answered to one another. These may denote the ministers of the Gospel, who are as pillars in the house of God, and churches of Christ; and every distinct church has its pillar or pastor, **Pr 9:1**.

{u} Myvlvb qyta ynp la qyta "postis ante postem in triplici", Starckius.

Ezekiel 42:4

Ver. 4. And before the chambers was a walk of ten cubits' breadth inward,.... That is, within side, or between the two rows of chambers, there was a walk of this breadth, for those that lodged in the chambers to walk in for their pleasure and profit, and to converse with one another. Such who by these "chambers" understand places of retirement for private devotion, or the duties of the closet, which fit and prepare for public worship, as these chambers were near and in sight of the temple, so by this walk then Christian conference and conversation is intended; and shows, that the whole of religious time is not to be spent between the church and the chamber; but some part of it should be allotted for spiritual discourse, about gracious experiences, the truths of the Gospel, and the duties of religion; but as chambers design churches, this walk denotes the outward walk and conversation of the saints; which should be according to the rule of God's word, as becomes the Gospel, and worthy of the calling wherewith they are called. Starckius applies this to the decalogue or ten commandments, which is a broad way, Ps 119:32 and the moral law, as in the hands of Christ, is a rule of walk and conversation to believers under the Gospel: and besides, there "was a way of one cubit"; which led into the chambers, and out of them into the broad walk: this is a narrow way, as Christ is said to be, **Mt 7:14** and whoever profess faith in him, and in this way enter into a Gospel church state, and into the kingdom of heaven, must be attended with much affliction and persecution, and pass through many tribulations; and there being both a broad walk and a narrow way, and these lying near one another, and a passage from the one to the other, may denote that the churches and people of God are sometimes in prosperity, and sometimes in adversity; one while they walk at liberty, as in a large place; and at other times in great straits and difficulties:

and their doors toward the north; that is, the doors of that row of chambers nearest the temple; these opened to the north into the walk of ten cubits;

though one would think that the row opposite to them, their doors must be to the south, into the broad walk between them; unless this is to be understood of the doors that opened into the way of one cubit, and were to the north in both rows; but then the way of one cubit could not in both lead into the broad walk.

Ezekiel 42:5

Ver. 5. Now the upper chambers were shorter,.... The chambers were in three stories, as in the following verse, one above another; the middlemost were shorter than the lowermost, and the upper shorter than either; just the reverse of the chambers in Eze 41:7, they were not so high from the floor to the ceiling, nor so broad from side to side. The reason follows:

for the galleries were higher than these; or, "ate out of these" {w}, "than the lower, and than the middlemost of the building"; the meaning is, that the galleries or balconies in the middlemost and upper chambers were taken, out of them, and so made them lesser than the lower ones, and the upper ones lesser than either; or the posts or pillars, as the word may be rendered, see Eze 42:3, which supported the chambers, took more out of the uppermost than the others, and so made them shorter. This may signify the diversity of gifts and grace, of light and knowledge, and of liberty and comfort, in the churches; and that, as those that are uppermost have most light, they are usually the least, and fewest members in them; who are the few names in Sardis, **Re 3:4**, and are generally more straitened, afflicted, reproached, and persecuted.

{w} hnhm wlkwy Keri, wlkay "comedebant ex ipsis", Mariana; "demordebant ab illis", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 42:6

Ver. 6. For they were in three stories,.... Not only the galleries or posts, but the chambers; they were one over another; there were the lowermost, middlemost, and uppermost; which, as before, may denote the difference in churches, and the different states, conditions, and characters of those that are in them; some being fathers, others young men, and others little children: or their different offices and relations; some being pastors, others deacons, and others private members: or their knowledge of and profession of faith in the doctrine of the

Trinity, the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; and their being baptized in the name of the three divine Persons; and their being built on Christ the foundation, a habitation for God through the Spirit:

but had not pillars as the pillars of the courts; those which supported the porticos and galleries in the courts of the temple, not pillars so thick and strong as they: so the churches represented by these chambers, though they have Gospel ministers, which are as pillars, and valuable members, which are as such, that shall not go out; yet they have not those external supports from great and rich men, but consist generally of the poor of this world, as churches on a civil establishment have, who are supported by the state:

therefore the building was straitened more than the lowest and the middlemost from the ground; the upper part of it, or the uppermost chambers, were more straitened, and had less room in them, than the middlemost, and the middlemost than the lowest; suggesting, that the more heavenly and spiritual men are, the farther they depart from the men of the world and their conversation, from the sentiments and practices of natural men, the more they are exposed to their scorn and contempt, and are the more afflicted and straitened by them.

Ezekiel 42:7

Ver. 7. And the wall that was without over against the chambers,.... This wall separated and distinguished the chambers from the outward court, as well as was a protection of them; and signifies the grace and power of God, which separates his true churches from the world, and is the security of them; See Gill on "Eze 11:5"

this was towards the utter court, on the fore part of the chambers; or front of them, which seems to be to the north of them; since their doors were towards the north, Eze 42:4, though Cocceius makes it to be to the west, which better agrees with what follows:

the length thereof was fifty cubits; which answers to the breadth of the chambers, Eze 42:2 and what is called length here, with respect to the wall, is called the breadth with respect to the chambers. The wall of divine protection is equal to the length and breadth, and even the whole compass, of the churches of Christ.

Ezekiel 42:8

Ver. 8. For the length of the chambers that were in the utter court was fifty cubits,.... Which was the reason why the wall was of the same length, that it might be answerable to them; here length is put for breadth; see Eze 42:2, this measure was from the north to south, as Lipman {x} observes:

and lo, before the temple were an hundred cubits; as the breadth of the wall and chambers was fifty, so in length, as they were over against the temple, they were an hundred cubits, as in Eze 42:2, unless the account is to be taken thus; that the row of chambers towards the north were fifty cubits long, and the row towards the south over against the other was fifty cubits, and so both made a hundred; to which sense is the Septuagint version,

"for the length of the chambers that look to the outward court was fifty cubits, and those (that is, those that looked to the temple, or were before that) answered to them, the whole a hundred cubits;"

that is, both rows made a hundred cubits; but rather, as Lipman {y} says, the chambers contained from east to west a hundred cubits.

{x} Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 71. {y} Ibid.

Ezekiel 42:9

Ver. 9. And from under these chambers,.... Or, "from the lower part of these chambers" {z}; or, "from the lowest" of them there was a space, as may be supplied, and as is by Cocceius and Starchius; and as there was a wall to the west of them, so there was a void space to the east; and as follows:

the entry on the east side: or, "he that brought me from the east" {a}, as the Keri; and coming eastward to these chambers, one must needs go through this space:

as one goeth into them from the utter court; if a man went eastward into those chambers from the outward court he must go through this space, which lay to the east of the lowest chambers: or the sense is, that from under the north chambers to the south was an entry on the east side, which led from one to the other.

{z} halh twkvlh txtymw "et ab ima, parte exedrarum", Vatablus; "et infra calles has [fuisse spatium]", Cocceius, Starckius. {a} aybmh Mydqhm "is qui deducebat me ab oriente", Junius & Tremellius; "quumque is qui introduxerat me ab orientes", Piscator.

Ezekiel 42:10

Ver. 10. The chambers were in the thickness of the wall of the court toward the east,.... As there were chambers in the northern part of the outward court, some which looked to the north, and others to the south, so likewise some to the east; and these were built on the breadth, as it may be rendered, of the court wall to the east; signifying there will be churches raised in all the northern parts of the world:

over against the separate place, and over against the building; as the other chambers were; See Gill on "Eze 42:1".

Ezekiel 42:11

Ver. 11. And the way before them was like the appearance of the chambers which were toward the north,.... The way before these eastern chambers was exactly like to that of the northern chambers; which was either the way of one cubit into them, or the walk of ten cubits before them, or both; signifying that the way into Gospel churches is the same everywhere, and the walk and conversation of the saints the same in all places:

as long as they, and as broad as they; which seems to confirm that both the way and the walk are meant, which were the same in those eastern chambers as in the northern; the way being as long, of one cubit, and the walk as broad, of ten cubits:

and all their goings out were both according to their fashions, and according to their doors; the form and fashion of them were alike; they were built three stories high, were as long, and as broad, and the upper shorter than the middlemost and lowest; the way of going into them, and coming out of them, were just the same; their doors were in the same position: in Gospel churches there are the same ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper; the same laws and rules; the same privileges and immunities; the same graces in the members of them, like precious faith, hope, and love; whatever difference there may be in temporal things, there is none in spiritual ones; be they rich or poor, their communion is equal, their benefits the same.

Ezekiel 42:12

Ver. 12. And according to the doors of the chambers that were toward the south,.... That is, the doors of these eastern chambers were exactly like to the doors of the southern chambers, as well as to the northern ones:

was a door in the head of the way; or beginning of the way; the door opened into the way of one cubit, and that led into the walk of ten cubits; and such a way and walk were before these eastern chambers as were before the southern and northern ones:

even the way directly before the wall toward the east, as one entereth into them: or, "also a way before the wall direct, a way to the east, as one goes into them" {b}; which seems to describe such a way from under these eastern chambers as were from under the northern or southern chambers, Eze 42:9.

{b} Nawbb Mydqh Krd hnygh trdgh ynpb Krd "viae, [inquam], quae erat ante maceriam rectam orientem versus, qua venitar ad illas", Junius & Tremellius; Piscator; "via ante maceriam recta, via orientis in introitu illarum", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 42:13

Ver. 13. Then said he unto me,.... The divine Person that measured and described these chambers, and brought the prophet to take a view of them, said to him, as follows:

the north chambers, and the south chambers, which are before the separate place, they be holy chambers; these are the two rows of chambers before described, which were southward and northward to each other, though both in the northern part of the outward court; these were for holy persons to dwell in, and for holy things to be done in, as the churches of Christ are; they consist of holy persons, men called with a holy calling, and in them the holy word of God is preached, and holy ordinances administered:

where the priests that approach unto the Lord shall eat the most holy things; which is to be understood not of the ministers of the Gospel, for whom a proper maintenance is to be provided, and who should live of the Gospel they preach; but of all the saints, who are made priests to God by Christ; and who approach unto the Lord by him, in his name and righteousness, and by the faith of him, with true hearts, in a spiritual manner; and which is profitable to themselves, and acceptable to God; for whom spiritual provisions are made in his house: these have most holy things to eat of, the holy word of God, the law part of which is holy, just, and good; and the Gospel part is our most holy faith, which is food for faith, savoury and salutary, milk for babes, and meat for strong men; and which is found and eaten, and digested by them: also our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the most holy, and is the sum and substance of the word and ordinances, and the food of believers, the bread of life, the hidden manna, the Lamb of God, and fatted calf; whose flesh and blood are meat and drink indeed, and are eaten and fed upon by faith.

There shall they lay the most holy things; lay up the word of God in their minds and memories, and remember the love of God, his sufferings and death, and the benefits arising from them, particularly in the ordinance of the supper:

and the meat offering; the "minchah", or bread offering, made of fine flour, typical of Christ, the bread of life:

and the sin, offering, and the trespass offering; both typical of Christ, made sin for his people; and who, by one sacrifice of himself, has made atonement for it, and an end of it; See Gill on "Eze 40:39", these were called the most holy things, and were laid up in the sanctuary for the priests and their families to live upon, **Le 6:17**:

for the place is holy: the place of these chambers holy, as the temple itself, where these most holy things and holy persons were.

Ezekiel 42:14

Ver. 14. When the priests enter therein,.... Into the holy place, these holy chambers, and approach unto God, and eat of the most holy things, and minister therein to the Lord:

then shall they not go out of the holy place into the utter court; denoting, not that the ministers of the word should not concern themselves in secular employments, but give themselves up to the word and prayer, though so to do is right; but the perseverance of the saints in the house and worship of God, in grace and holiness, and in all the duties of religion; these should not relinquish their profession, desert their station and the service of God, and return to the world; but continue as pillars in the temple of God, and go no more out, but abide by the truths and ordinances of the Gospel:

but there they shall lay their garments wherein they minister, for they are holy; these signify Christ's robe of righteousness and garments of salvation, that fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints; and fitly represented by the linen garments of the priests, in which they ministered in their office, and were like them holy, pure, and spotless; in these only saints appear before God, and present their supplications to him, not for their own, but for Christ's righteousness sake, making mention of that only; and herein they have acceptance with God now, and shall be introduced into his presence hereafter, and behold his face, clothed with these garments, and serve him for ever:

and shall put on other garments, and shall approach to those things which are for the people; these are the conversation garments of the saints, which are not fit to appear in before God, being attended with imperfection and sin; but very proper to appear in before men, among whom their lights should shine, and their good works be seen, for the adorning of the doctrine of Christ, the recommending of the Christian religion, and the stopping of the mouths of gainsayers: for this respects not the different habits of ministers, when they are in their ministrations, and out of them; though the allusion is to the priests under the law, who wore their priestly garments only in the temple, and while ministering there, and never elsewhere, or when among the common people on civil accounts: so Josephus says {c}, the priests only wore their holy garments when they ministered; at other times they appeared in the habit of private persons; with which agrees what Maimonides {d} says, their garments are not upon them when they are not ministering in the priestly office, but then they are clothed as laymen; or when, as the Targum here has it,

"they were mingled with the people."

There were places in the temple where they put on and off their clothes, and where they were laid up. So Adrichomius {e} says, speaking of the temple,

"there were rooms, otherwise called treasuries, and priests' apartments, which were houses on the side of it, like towers, long, broad, and high; in which the priests, when they went into the sanctuary, put off their common woollen garments, and put on their holy linen ones; and, when they had performed their holy services, laid them up there again."

And another writer, quoted by Solomon Ben Virga {f}, observes, that

"here (that is, the temple) was a house for the priest whose office it was to clothe the rest of the priests at the time of service; and he gave to everyone of them four sorts of garments, as were commanded, and fetched them out of the chests of the wardrobe; and on every chest, which were at the walls of this house, that is, above everyone of them, was the name of the garment, that there might be no mistake nor confusion when they were wanted."

And this agrees with what is said in the Misnah {g}, that there was one that was appointed over the priests' garments, and who might be properly enough called the master of the wardrobe; on which one of the commentators says {h}, his business was

"to clothe the priests at the time of service, and to unclothe them after service was done, and to keep the garments of the priesthood in the chambers made for that purpose."

Very wrongly, therefore, is the learned Selden {i} charged by Mr. Shoringham {k}, with a mistake, in denying that the priests wore their holy garments at any other time but when they were at divine service.

{c} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 7. {d} Cele Hamikdash, c. 10. sect. 4. {e} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. Jerusalem, No. 92. p. 161. {f} Shebet Judah, fol. 43. 2. Ed. Gentii, p. 464. {g} Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1. {h} Bartenora in ib. {i} De Success. in Pontif. Heb. l. 2. c. 7. Vid. ib. de Synedriis, l. 3. c. 11. sect. 6. & Braunium, de Vestitu Sacerdot. Hebr. l. 2. c. 25. {k} Ad Codicem Joma, c. 7. sect. 1. p. 78, 79.

Ezekiel 42:15

Ver. 15. Now when he had made an end of measuring the inner house,.... The holy place, and the holy of holies, with all the courts and chambers belonging to them; even the whole building within the compass of the outermost wall, and all that pertained unto it; the chambers last mentioned, as well as the rest, the dimensions of, which are given in this and the two preceding chapters:

he brought me forth toward the gate whose prospect is toward the east: not to the east gate of the outward wall, but to the east gate which led into the outward court; the gate he was first brought unto, and which was first measured, Eze 40:6: and measured it round about; not the east gate, nor the outward wall that went all round the house; though this was measured, and its dimensions given, last of all; nor the house itself, which had been measured already; or the figure of it, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; but all that space that was between this building and the wall that surrounded it; the area or compass of ground on which the building stood.

Ezekiel 42:16

Ver. 16. He measured the east side,.... He began with that, being at the east gate: the building was foursquare, and so was the wall about it, and had each four equilateral sides, which were separately measured; here the east side, from the two angles of it, the north and south points:

with the measuring reed; which consisted of six cubits, and which cubits were larger than the common sort by a hand's breadth; so that a measuring reed measured three yards and a half: and the whole measure of the east side were

five hundred reeds: which make one thousand seven hundred and fifty yards:

with the measuring reed round about; not round about the building, since only one side, as yet, was measured; but round about that side, or from angle to angle, or from one side to the other: having finished one side, he went to another, until he had measured all round; but did not go four times round it, only once.

Ezekiel 42:17

Ver. 17. He measured the north side, five hundred reeds,.... From the two angles of that side, east and west; and it was of the same dimension as the east side, just five hundred reeds, or one thousand seven hundred and fifty yards:

with a measuring reed round about; he measured with the same reed, from point to point; and having measured this side, he went to another.

Ezekiel 42:18

Ver. 18. He measured the south side, five hundred reeds,.... From the two angles of that side, east and west; and it amounted to just the same number of reeds, even five hundred reeds, or one thousand seven hundred and fifty yards:

with the measuring reed; the same as before; here, and in the next verse, the phrase "round about" is not used, but is to be understood; and having been repeated, there was no need of mentioning it again.

Ezekiel 42:19

Ver. 19. He turned about to the west side,.... And took the dimensions of that, from angle to angle, the south and north points of it:

and measured five hundred reeds, with the measuring reed; and it was exactly of the same measure with the other three sides.

Ezekiel 42:20

Ver. 20. He measured it by the four sides,.... Which were equilateral, parallel to each other, each measuring five hundred reeds; which in all made up two thousand reeds, or seven thousand yards: this shows that no material building can be designed; never was an edifice of such dimensions; this seems rather to describe a city than a temple; and denotes the largeness of the Gospel church state in the latter day, when the Jews will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in:

it had a wall round about: the same with that in Eze 40:5:

five hundred reeds long, and five hundred broad; it was foursquare, as the building was, and exactly answered to that in its dimensions. The Jews say {l} the mountain of the house was five hundred cubits by five hundred; that is, a perfect square of five hundred cubits on every side, two thousand cubits in the whole compass about. Josephus {m} says the whole circuit was half a mile, every side containing the length of a two hundred and twenty yards. Now, says Doctor Lightfoot {n}, if any will take up the full circuit of the wall that encompassed the holy ground, according to our English measure, it will amount to half a mile and about one hundred and sixty six yards; and whosoever will likewise measure the square of Ezekiel, Eze 42:20, will find it six times as large as this, Eze 40:5, the whole amounting to three miles and a half, and about one hundred and forty yards, a compass incomparably larger than Mount Moriah divers times over; and by this very thing is showed that that is spiritually and mystically to be understood; wherefore these measures no doubt did, as Mr. Lee {o} observes, signify the great fulness of the Gentiles, and that compass of the church in Gospel days should be marvellously extended. The use of it was,

to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place: the church and the world; the world is profane, and lies in wickedness, and the men of it ought not to be admitted into the church of God, and partake of holy things in it; a difference must be made between the precious and the vile; and greater care will be taken in the latter day of the admission of members into Gospel churches, Isa 52:1,
See Gill on "Eze 40:5".

{l} Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 1. {m} Antiqu. l. 15. c. 11. sect. 3. Ed. Hudson. {n} Prospect of the Temple, c. 2. p. 1051. {o} Temple of Solomon portrayed, &c. p. 241.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 43:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 43

The temple or house of God being measured, the worship of God in it is pointed out and observed in this and the following chapter; and which, though evangelical, is expressed in the language of the Old Testament. An account is given of the glory of the Lord returning to the house, and the way he did, and his taking possession of it, which the prophet was favoured with a view of, Eze 43:1, a promise is made of his continuance there, provided his people behaved

as they should,
Eze 43:6, an order is given to the prophet, to show them the form and fashion, the laws, orders, and ordinances of the house to them, to be observed by them, Eze 43:10, then follows the measuring of the altar of burnt offerings; which, though measured before in chapter forty, the dimensions are here given, Eze 43:13, and the chapter is concluded with directions about the consecration of it,
Eze 43:18.

Ver. 1. Afterward he brought me to the gate,.... The dimensions of this wonderful building being finished, the prophet's divine guide brought him from the wall about it, he had last measured, to the gate he first had him to, after he had observed to him the same wall, Eze 40:5:

even the gate that looketh toward the east; or, as the Targum, which was open to the way of the east. The reason of his being brought hither follows.

Ezekiel 43:2

Ver. 2. And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east,.... The God of Israel is Jehovah the Father, the covenant God of literal Israel; and the covenant God and Father of the whole spiritual Israel, or his elect, whether Jews or Gentiles; whom he has taken into covenant, loves, cares, provides for, and protects: Christ, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, whose glory is the glory of the only begotten of the Father, is here meant; and who has the same glorious attributes, the same glorious names, and the same worship, honour, and glory, his Father has; and in whom, as Mediator, is displayed the glory of all the divine perfections: he is said to "come from the way of the east"; which agrees with him in his character as the rising sun of righteousness; and with his incarnation, when as the day spring from on high, from heaven, he visited us, was born in the east, where his star appeared; from this part of the world his Gospel first came; here it was first preached, and churches planted; and though these parts have been forsaken by him a long time, he will return hither again; when he will dry up the river Euphrates, and make way for the kings and kingdoms of the east to be converted to him, **Re 7:2**, to which a "behold" is prefixed, as a note exciting attention, and raising admiration; as it was matter of wonder and joy to the prophet, to see the glory of the Lord returning to his house, the same way he departed, Eze 10:4:

and his voice was like a noise of many waters; this is to be understood of his Gospel, in which he speaks to men, and which is a voice of love, grace, and mercy; of peace and reconciliation; of pardon and righteousness; of life, liberty, and salvation: and the metaphor here used is expressive of the swiftness of its motion in the world; of its general spread in it, and all over it; of the noise it will make, as it always does among men, wherever it comes; and of the rapidity and force of it, being attended with almighty power; and is a soul shaking, heart melting, soul quickening, enlightening, alluring, and comforting voice; see Da 10:6. The Targum is,

"and the voice of them that bless his name is as the voice of many waters."

The Septuagint and Arabic versions, the voice of the camp or army.

And the earth shined with his glory; with the brightness of his glory, as the Targum; with his glorious Gospel, in which the glory of his person, office, and grace, is displayed; this will be spread all over the earth, and that will be enlightened by it: it will remove the darkness and infidelity, error, superstition, idolatry, and all false doctrines from the world, and the darkness of calamity and distress from the church; which will cast a lustre and glory upon it; and with the brightness of which the Lord will destroy antichrist, and by it set up his kingdom in the world, and reign before his ancients gloriously: this will bring on Zion's light and glory, to which kings will come, and upon which will be a defence; Re 18:1.

Ezekiel 43:3

Ver. 3. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw,.... Recorded in the first, ninth, and tenth chapters of this book; the form in which the glory of the God of Israel now appeared was like to what he then saw; in each of which visions was the likeness of a throne, and on it the appearance of the glory of God:

even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city; the city of Jerusalem; not that the prophet destroyed it, or came to destroy it himself, which was to be done, and was done, by the Chaldeans; but to foretell the destruction of it; which prediction of his made it as certain as if it was done. So the Targum, "when I prophesied to destroy the city;"

and this was, when he was bid to cause, in a visionary and prophetic manner, six men, with their destroying weapons, to draw near unto it, and smite it; at which time he saw the glory of the God of Israel go up from the cherub, **Eze 9:1**.

And the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; the four living creatures and the wheels; the throne of sapphire stone, and the glorious appearance above it, **Eze 1:3** only with this difference, then he saw the glory of the God of Israel departing, especially in the last vision, but now returning:

and I fell upon my face; in reverence of such glorious majesty: affected with such a display of grace and goodness, and sensible of his own unworthiness to behold it: the clearer and fuller views saints have of the grace and glory of Christ, the more humble they are; see **Isa 6:1**.

Ezekiel 43:4

Ver. 4. And the glory of the Lord came into the house, &e.] Before described and measured; and being fitted and prepared, the builder and owner of it comes and takes up his residence in it; as Christ will do in his church, more especially and more visibly in the latter day:

by the way of the gate whose prospect is towards the east; which was the direct way into the outward court, and so to the inward court, and into the holy, and into the most holy place; and was the way by which he departed from hence, Eze 10:18.

Ezekiel 43:5

Ver. 5. So the Spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court,.... The prophet was fallen down on his face, upon the sight of the glory of the Lord, and there he lay, until a wind came, as the word signifies; or the Holy Spirit, which is compared to the wind, for its invisible and irresistible power, came and took him up: humble souls are regarded by the Lord; he raises them up, and exalts them, and brings them into nearer and more intimate communion with God; and gives them clearer views still of the glories of Christ's person, grace, and love: and it is the Spirit of God only that does this, and that to priests only, such an one as Ezekiel was; for none but priests went into the inner court:

and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house; the body of it; both the holy and the most holy place, with all its courts and apartments; so the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle when that was set up in the temple of Solomon, when it was built; and the glory of the Lord will fill the church of God, yea, the whole earth, in the latter day, **Isa 6:3**, of this Christ's personal appearance in the second temple, which gave it a greater glory than the former, was an emblem and pledge, **Hag 2:7**, here, it may be observed, no mention is made of a cloud, as at the setting up of the tabernacle, and dedication of the temple; denoting the clear light of the Gospel in those times, and how the glory of the Lord will be seen with open face by all the saints.

Ezekiel 43:6

Ver. 6. And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house,.... The holy place, the prophet being in the inward court: this is Jehovah the Father, the God of Israel, whose glory entered into it; who utters his voice out of Zion; who speaks in his church by his word, and the ministers of it; and which is to be heard and regarded, not as the word of man, but as the word of God:

and the man stood by me: whom he saw at first with a measuring line in his hand, Eze 40:3, and with whom he had been all along, and had seen him measure the house, and all belonging to it: he stood by him as the Mediator between God and him; as the medium of communion with him; as the advocate with the Father: he stood by him to interpret what was said to him; to guide him further into the knowledge of divine things; to assist him, protect and defend him, to continue him in fellowship with God, and to preserve him in grace to glory. Here is an appearance of the three Persons in the Godhead; the Father speaking to the prophet out of the house; the Son in human form standing by him; and the Spirit of the Lord, who had took him up from the ground, and had brought him into the inner court.

Ezekiel 43:7

Ver. 7. And he said unto me, son of man,.... A kind, usual, and singular appellation, given to this prophet: these are the words either of the man that stood by him, so the Arabic version; or of Jehovah, speaking out of the house to him:

the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet: that is, this house, the church of God, is the place where the throne of the Lord is set; where he rules and reigns; where he sets his feet, and is his resting place; even his, whose throne is the heaven, and the earth his footstool; here Christ, as King of saints, dwells, and here he walks and shows the glory of his majesty:

where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever; not Carnal, but spiritual Israel; such as are Israelites indeed, or which the church will be full in the latter day, both Jews and Gentiles; and in the midst of these will Jehovah dwell, and grant his gracious presence, and never more depart from them: this shows that this house or building can not be understood of the second temple; since the Lord did not dwell in that for ever, but has left that house desolate hundreds of years ago: some Jewish writers {p} have owned that it belongs to the times of the Messiah:

and my name shall the house of Israel no more defile, or "profane"; or cause to be blasphemed by immoralities, or false doctrines, or superstition and will worship; denoting the holiness of life, purity of doctrine and worship, in the churches of Christ in the latter day; see **Isa 4:3**:

neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom: that is, idolatry, which is spiritual fornication; such as the kings of Israel, and their subjects, were often guilty of, before their captivity in Babylon, though not after; nor will they ever return to it in the latter day, when converted; for they will never espouse the idolatries of Rome; and those kings and people that bear the name of Christians, and yet commit fornication with the whore of Babylon, shall do so no more after these times, Re 17:2:

nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places; or, and "their high places" {q}; that is, by both; by the carcasses of their kings being buried in or near the house of God; so the Targum adds, at their death {r}; or by human carcasses being sacrificed to Molech or Milcom, which signifies their king: or else the idols themselves are so called, because lifeless and abominable; see Jer 16:18, and the worship of which the kings of Israel encouraged by precept and practice, order and example, and therefore called theirs; and also by their high places, which they made for idolatrous worship, and which were made where the carcasses of their kings were laid, as Ben Melech observes; and all which were done, especially in the reigns of Manasseh and Ammon: but now nothing of this kind shall be hereafter, or any thing now similar to it, in the antichristian state.

{p} Vid. R. Isaac Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 51. {q} twmb "et excelsis suis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {r} So Abendana takes this word to signify "in [their] death"; their carcasses being buried in their gardens, as Manasseh, 2 Kings xxi. 18.

Ezekiel 43:8

Ver. 8. In their setting of their threshold by my threshold,.... The threshold is the way of entrance into the house; when men open any other way of entrance into the house of God than he has directed, it is setting up their threshold by his: the Gospel way of entrance into the church of Christ is Christ himself, and faith in him, and a profession of it, and submission to the ordinance of baptism, Joh 10:1 **Ac 2:41** but when men make carnal descent, religious education, mere morality and civility, the way of entrance into church communion; this is opposite to God's way, and is resented by him; this shall not be hereafter:

and their post by my post; which is done when the ordinances of men are substituted in the room of the ordinances of God, or set upon a level with them; when the ordinances of God are changed and altered, or that brought into his worship which he has not commanded; and the commandments of men are taught for the doctrines of God: so the Pharisees set up the traditions of the elders as equal to the written word, and, made it of no effect by them; as the Papists do, by setting up their traditions, under the name of the traditions of the apostles, and of the church, upon a level with the Scriptures; and the same is done when men set up their own doctrines, concerning the Persons in the Godhead, concerning the power and purity of human nature, and the way of redemption; and oppose their own works to the grace of God, in justification, pardon, and salvation; the allusion is to the setting up of altars and idols in the house of the Lord, by his altar, 2Ki 21:4:

and the wall between me and them; that these sins and abominable practices were a wall of separation between God and them, and caused him to hide himself from them, withdraw his presence, and deny them communion with him, Isa 49:2, some render it, "for" or "so that there was but a wall between me and them" {s}; so near were their thresholds, posts, and altars, to his:

they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: by their false doctrines, idolatrous worship, and immoral lives; such abominations as before mentioned:

wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger; as the Jews are now, and all the antichristian states will be.

{s} Mhynybw ynyb ryqhw "ita ut paries [tantum esset] inter me et illos", Piscator.

Ezekiel 43:9

Ver. 9. Now let them put away their whoredom,.... Idolatry, superstition, and will worship, with which the corrupt church of Rome abounds; and whatever appearance thereof is in the reformed churches:

and the carcasses of their kings far from me; their idols;
See Gill on "Eze 43:7",

and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever; now though the Jews were never guilty of idolatry after their return from the Babylonish captivity, nor even to this day; yet the Lord has departed from them, and left them to blindness and stupidity, they having rejected the Messiah he sent unto them; which shows that this passage refers not to those times, but to future times; when the whole Israel of God shall be cleared of all corruptions in doctrine and worship, and the Lord will take up his abode with them, and no more depart from them.

Ezekiel 43:10

Ver. 10. Thou son of man, show the house,.... That is, the house the prophet had seen measured, its gates, courts, and all belonging to it; which he was at first bid to observe, that he might show it to others; the house that the glory of the Lord was now come into, and had filled; and which is no other than the Gospel church in its perfection and glory in the latter day. This the prophet, who is addressed under his usual character in this book, is bid to show "to the house of Israel"; either to the captives in Babylon, among whom he was, and to whom he often speaks in this book, being sent with a message to them: and this he is ordered to show them, both to comfort them in their present state, with a view of what would be hereafter; and to humble them, and bring them to a sense of their sins, and shame for them, which had brought them into the condition they were, and so greatly short of this happy one: or else to the Jews in the first times of the Gospel; the prophet representing the apostles of Christ, who delivered out the form of a Gospel church state to the believing ones, far superior to that they had been in, and into which they entered: or rather he represented the ministers of the word in the latter day, showing to the Christians of those times the order, worship, and discipline of a pure Gospel church, who have been greatly deficient in their observance of them; and which is the work and business of Gospel ministers to do, as well as to preach the doctrine of the Gospel:

that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; how far short they have come of the model of true Gospel churches, and of observing the order, and maintaining the ordinances, and keeping up the discipline of such churches; and when persons are brought to blush and be ashamed, it looks as if they had a true sight and sense of their mistakes, and of repentance for them:

and let them measure the pattern; that is, of the house, and what belongs to it; by which they will see their defects, and correct them; see Re 11:1.

Ezekiel 43:11

Ver. 11. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done,.... As sinful and, criminal, at least as very imperfect and defective, and not answerable to the pattern shown them, from which they have sadly deviated; if made sensible of this, and they acknowledge it with shame, not only the house in general, but the particulars of it, are to be shown with them; for, to sensible and penitent persons, more grace, light, knowledge, and judgment in divine things, are given:

shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof; the form and order of a Gospel church; which is not national, provincial, or parochial, nor Presbyterian, but congregational; consisting of persons called out of the world by the grace of God, and who are incorporated and knit together in Gospel bonds; among whom the word of God is faithfully preached, and the ordinances truly administered, and furnished with proper officers, pastors, and deacons; the one to take care of the spiritual, the other of the temporal affairs of the church; and to see a church in such form and order, and thus organized, is a very beautiful sight.

And the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof; the gates and way of entrance into it, which is only by Christ, and a profession of faith in him; and care should be taken that none be admitted but such who appear to be regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God; to be righteous through the righteousness of Christ; and that keep the truth, and hold the doctrines of the Gospel: and also the way and manner of excluding unworthy persons, such who are immoral in their lives, and erroneous in their principles, should be observed. And all the forms thereof; the decorations of it, signified by the cherubim and palm trees; so Jarchi and Kimchi; and these expressive of ministers of the word, and faithful men: this is often repeated, that it might be the more observed; for to have ministers to answer such characters is of great consequence.

And all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof; the ordinances are those of baptism and the Lord's supper, which are to continue until the second coming of Christ: the laws are, besides the moral law, in the hands of Christ the lawgiver, the law of loving one another, called the law of Christ, and his new commandment; and all the laws relating to worship and discipline, concerning the reproof of members, in case of private or public offences; and concerning the exclusion of disorderly or heretical persons:

and write it in their sight; the plan and model of this house, and all things belonging to it, that they may have it before them, as the rule of their conduct and behaviour:

that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them; for all this is shown, not for mere speculation, and to gratify curiosity, but in order to be put in practice; all these rules, laws, and ordinances, are to be kept in faith, from a principle of love, in the name and strength of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God.

Ezekiel 43:12

Ver. 12. This is the law of the house,.... Which follows, the more general one, which comprehends the rest:

upon the top of the mountain; denoting the exaltation and visibility of the church of Christ in the latter day, as well as its firmness and stability; see **Isa 2:2**:

the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy; all belonging to it shall be as the most holy place in the temple, sacred to the Lord; laws, ordinances, doctrines, worship, members, ministers, all holy; nothing said or done, or have a place here, but what is holy; see
Zec 14:20:

this is the law of the house; the principal one, according to which are directed and governed.

Ezekiel 43:13

Ver. 13. And these are the measures of the altar after the cubits,.... Of the altar of burnt offering, which though measured before, the dimensions were not given till now; see Eze 40:47, this altar was a type of Christ, Heb 13:10 with respect to his deity, which is greater than the sacrifice of his human nature, the support of it, which sanctified it, and gave virtue and efficacy to it, and rendered it acceptable to God, Mt 23:19 and the measures of it are said to be after the cubits used in the measuring of places and things belonging to this house, described; and what these were appears by what follows:

the cubit is a cubit and an hand breadth; not the common cubit, but what was larger than that by a hand breadth, or three inches:

even the bottom shall be a cubit, and the breadth a cubit; or, "the bosom" {t}; that is, the foundation of the altar, as the Targum and Jarchi; the basis, foot, or settle of it; this was a cubit high, and a cubit broad:

and the border thereof by the edge thereof round about shall be a span; the edge or "lip" {u}, of this bottom or settle, was a cubit broad, for the priests to stand and go round the altar, and to this there was a border of a span, or half a cubit, to prevent their slipping; or else to keep the blood, poured at the foot of the altar, from running upon the pavement:

and this shall be the higher place of the altar; or the projection or jetting of it out beyond others, which was further than any other part; otherwise it was the lower part of the altar.

{t} qyx "sinus", Montanus; "gremium", Munster, Cocceius, Starckius. Ben Melech interprets it the middle of the altar. {u} htpv "labium ejus", Pagninus, Montanus.

Ezekiel 43:14

Ver. 14. And from the bottom upon the ground, even to the lower settle,.... From the basis or foundation of the altar, as it stood upon the ground, to the lower settle or "court" {w}, as it is called, where the priests stood; and in which they could walk round the altar, to do their business:

shall be two cubits, and the breadth one cubit; that is, two cubits high, and one broad:

and from the lesser settle or court, to the greater settle or court, shall be four cubits, and, the breadth one cubit; the lowermost settle is called the lesser, not in quantity, but in height, it being but two cubits high from the ground; but the upper settle was four cubits from that, and one broad, for the priests to walk on round about; in all six cubits from the bottom.

{w} hrzeh "atrium auxilii", Montanus.

Ezekiel 43:15

Ver. 15. So the altar shall be four cubits,.... That is, from the greater settle; so that in the whole it was ten cubits high, the same with Solomon's, **2Ch 4:1** some make this to be eleven cubits high, one higher than Solomon's; it is here called "Harel", the mountain of God, because it looked like a mountain in the court, for its size: it was on a mountain our Lord was offered up a sacrifice for the sins of his people; and which was far superior to all other sacrifices, and for more persons than those sacrifices offered up on the altar of burnt offerings.

And from the altar and upward shall be four horns; or, "from Ariel" {x}; which was the focus or hearth where the wood was laid, and the fire kindled, called "Ariel"; which some render the lion of God, because, as the Jewish Rabbins {y} say, the fire of the altar lay upon it in the form of a lion; or rather, because like a lion it devoured the sacrifices: this name of the altar agrees well with Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah; who was strong to bear the sins of men, and the wrath of God for them, whereby they are no more; though it rather signifies the fire of God, which consumed the sacrifice, and denoted the wrath of God on Christ, and also the divine acceptance of his sacrifice: now from hence and upwards were four horns at the four corners of the altar; which denote the strength of Christ, to save all that come unto God by him, and his being a refuge to them that by faith lay hold upon him; and that he is accessible to persons that come from all parts, from the four corners of the earth.

{x} lyarahm "ab Hareil", Starckius. {y} Misn. Middot, c. 4. sect. 7.

Ezekiel 43:16

Ver. 16. And the altar shall be twelve cubits long, twelve broad,.... The length of it, from east to west, was twelve cubits; and the breadth, from north to south, was the same; so that it was a proper foursquare, as follows: Christ the altar, or the doctrine of his sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of men, is the doctrine of the twelve apostles of Christ, and embraced by the twelve times twelve, the 144,000 that belong unto him:

square in the four squares thereof; as the altar in the tabernacle, and Solomon's temple, were, Ex 27:1, denoting the largeness of Christ's sacrifice, the perfection of it, and its stability and permanency, to take away the sin, of his people.

Ezekiel 43:17

Ver. 17. And the settle shall be fourteen cubits long and fourteen broad in the four squares thereof,.... Here Kimchi confesses his ignorance. Jarchi interprets it, the top of the altar, with the place of the horns, and of the feet of the priests, and was twenty eight cubits by twenty eight, the fourteen mentioned being to be measured from the middle {z}; and he seems to be right in making it to be the upper part of the altar, and not the lower settle, as some; the focus or hearth where the wood was laid, and the sacrifice burnt; and which had a projection of a cubit on each side, and so made the twelve cubits, the length and breadth of the altar, fourteen:

and the border about it shall be half a cubit; or the enclosure, as the Targum; the ledge about it, which went round the altar, to keep the fire or sacrifice from falling, or that the feet of the priests might not slip: the Jews expound it of the horns:

and the bottom thereof shall be a cubit about; or the foundation, as the Targum; which was between the altar, and the border on which the priests walked, when they went round it, to do the business of it: here Kimchi owns his ignorance again;

and his stairs shall look towards the east; steps to the altar were forbidden by the law of Moses, Ex 20:26 wherefore, as the height of the altar of Solomon, and so of the second temple, required some way and method of ascent to the top of it, to do the business upon it; the Jews had what they call "kibbesh", a way made of earth thrown up, which rose gradually, and led to the top of it, and was about two and thirty cubits long, and sixteen broad {a}; but here steps or stairs are expressly mentioned, which show that this refers to times when the Mosaic and ceremonial laws should be abolished. These stairs were placed eastward, so that those that went up them looked toward the west, toward the temple and house of God, where he dwelt; and turned their backs to the east, or rising sun, in direct opposition to the worshippers of the sun, whose faces were to the east. How many steps or stairs there were to the altar is not said; Starckius conjectures there might be twelve or fourteen of them, and allows for each step half a cubit; but as the altar was ten, or, as others, eleven cubits high, there should be twenty steps or more, of such a measure. These may signify the several ways and means of coming to, and increasing in, the knowledge of the doctrine of the altar, or of Christ's satisfaction for sin; as hearing, reading, prayer, meditation, &c.

{z} So Lipman. Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 40. Vid. Misn. Middot, c. 3. sect. 1. {a} So Lipman. Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 43.

Ezekiel 43:18

Ver. 18. And he said unto me, son of man, thus saith the Lord God,.... This is the voice of the Lord continued, speaking out of the house to the prophet; see Eze 43:6:

these are the ordinances of the altar: not what go before, concerning the measures of it, but what follow, concerning the sacrifices to be offered on it:

in the day when they shall make it, to offer burnt offerings thereon, and sprinkle blood thereon; this plainly shows that this altar is the altar of burnt offerings; such were to be offered on it, and the blood of them to be sprinkled thereon, as follows; that is, upon the horns, corners, and border of it, Eze 43:20.

Ezekiel 43:19

Ver. 19. And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites, that be of the seed of Zadok,.... Who, in Solomon's time, was put in the room of Abiathar; see Eze 40:46, his name signifies a "righteous" one, a type he was of Jesus Christ the righteous; and here his seed signify the seed of Christ, such whom he makes priests unto the Lord; to these, in a visionary way, the prophet was to give this altar, for them to serve at, and eat of; and all the rites and ordinances to observe and keep; and the sacrifices to offer on it, after mentioned:

which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord God;
See Gill on "Eze 40:46":

a young bullock for a sin offering: typical of Christ, strong and laborious, able to bear the sins of his people; to become a sin offering, and to be made sin itself for them.

Ezekiel 43:20

Ver. 20. And thou shalt take of the blood thereof,.... Ezekiel being a priest. This must be understood in a visionary way; for, as Kimchi observes, Ezekiel did not live to come up out of the captivity, but died, and was buried in the land of Babylon, and so did not actually do this: though it is a mere dream of the same writer, that this is to be understood of the resurrection of the dead, when he supposes Ezekiel will be high priest, though Aaron be present; or however be the second, or deputy to him.

And put it on the four horns of it, and on the four corners of the settle, and upon the border round about; that is, on the four horns of the altar, and on the four corners of the settle which went round it, for the priests to walk on, and do their business; either the uppermost, or as others the lowermost, and as some both; and also on the border or ledge that enclosed the settle. The prophet's doing this, putting the blood on these several things, represents the nature of the Gospel ministry, and the business of it; which is to hold forth the blood of Christ, and the blessings of grace through it, as redemption, peace, pardon, righteousness, and life.

Thus shall thou cleanse and purge it; the altar; thus Christ, though without sin, and needed no cleansing and purging for himself, yet was sanctified by his own blood; that he might sanctify his people, and perfect by his sacrifice them that were sanctified,
Joh 17:19.

Ezekiel 43:21

Ver. 21. Thou shalt take the bullock also of the sin offering,.... Which was appointed for the sin offering, according to the divine direction, Eze 43:19, the prophet was to take it out of the herd, and separate it from the rest for this purpose, and deliver it into the hands of one of the priests:

and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the house; that is, one of the sons of Zadok should receive it of the prophet, and burn it in its proper place; not within the house, without the court, but within the wall of the house: this burning of it was typical of the dolorous sufferings of Christ; See Gill on "Eze 40:39", or of the zeal and fervency of the ministers of the Gospel, in preaching a crucified Christ in the proper place, in the house and church of God: without the sanctuary; the holy place or temple, properly so called; or without the camp, typical of Christ's suffering without Jerusalem, and of his being preached not only there, but in the Gentile world; see Heb 13:11, this was the work of the first day of the consecration of the altar.

Ezekiel 43:22

Ver. 22. And on the second day thou shalt offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering,.... Jarchi observes, that this was not in the tabernacle, but ordered to be in future time by him that speaks; instead of this, another ram was appointed by the law,
Ex 29:15, this shows the ceremonial law to be changeable, and now abolished: this was typical of Christ, without spot and blemish, and yet figured by the

goat, being made sin for his people:

and they shall cleanse the altar, as they did cleanse it with the bullock; See Gill on "Eze 43:20".

Ezekiel 43:23

Ver. 23. When thou hast made an end of cleansing it,.... The altar, by the sacrifices of the bullock and the kid, on the first and second days; then, on the third day,

thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the flock without blemish; all these sacrifices point at the one sacrifice of Christ; which was pure and perfect, and once offered up for the sins of many, and needs no reiteration; only the doctrine of it is to be frequently inculcated in the ministry of the word and ordinances.

Ezekiel 43:24

Ver. 24. And thou shalt offer them before the Lord,.... Upon the altar of burnt offering, which stood before the house or temple where Jehovah dwelt, Eze 40:47:

and the priests shall cast salt upon them; which was to be used in all sacrifices under the law, **Le 2:13**, this may denote the savoury doctrines and lives of the ministers of the Gospel, who thereby recommend the truths they deliver, concerning a crucified Christ, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, to others; see **Mt 5:13**:

and they shall offer them up for a burnt offering unto the Lord; throughout the whole seven days of the consecration and cleansing of the altar, as follows:

Ezekiel 43:25

Ver. 25. Seven days shalt thou prepare every day a goat for a sin offering,.... By this it appears that the altar was seven days a consecrating and cleansing; and that on each day a goat was prepared and offered, typical of Christ, as before observed. Here Kimchi owns that this was not according to the order of Moses, or was done by those that came out of the captivity of Babylon; and is obliged to confess that there will be a change or an innovation in the order of sacrifices in time to come, or under the Messiah.

They shall also prepare a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock without blemish; which, either one or all of them, should be offered up on each of the seven days; See Gill on "Eze 43:23".

Ezekiel 43:26

Ver. 26. Seven days shall they purge the altar, and purify it,.... Which denotes the perfect purity and sanctification of it; which how to be applied to Christ, See Gill on "Eze 43:20";

and they shall consecrate themselves: the priests shall consecrate themselves, or devote themselves to the service of the altar; so Gospel ministers to the ministry of a crucified Christ: or they themselves should consecrate the altar by the above rites: or rather it may be literally rendered,

and they shall fill its hands, or "their own hands" {b}; that is, either they shall fill the sides of the altar with sacrifices, as much as it could hold; or the hands of the priests with parts of the sacrifice, or with gifts, as a token of their being inaugurated into, and invested with, the priestly office: so Gospel ministers should have their hands full of, or be filled with, the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and with the knowledge of Christ, his person, offices, grace, righteousness, and sacrifice, that they may minister unto others.

{b} There is a double reading of the words; the Cetib or textual reading is wdy, "its hand"; the Keri or marginal reading is
wydy, "their own hands".

Ezekiel 43:27

Ver. 27. And when these days are expired,.... The seven days of consecration, and all these rites and sacrifices observed:

it shall be, that upon the eighth day, and so forward; that is, on the first day of the week, or Lord's day, the Christian sabbath, the next day after the seventh, and so upon every return of it; in which Christian ministrations are exercised, the word preached, ordinances administered, and works of righteousness and charity done; see
Joh 20:19.

The priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; or "thank offerings" {c}; preach Christ and him crucified to the people, and offer up the sacrifices of prayer and praise unto God for them:

and I will accept you, saith the Lord God; through Christ the Mediator, in whom he is well pleased; who is the altar on which such sacrifices are accepted, and become well pleasing to God, Isa 56:7.

{c} Mkymlv "eucharistica vestraz", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Piscator.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 44:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 44

This chapter treats of the eastern gate of the temple being appropriated to the use of the prince, Eze 44:1, of the sin of the Lord's people, in admitting strangers and unholy persons into the sanctuary, either to officiate or communicate there, Eze 44:4 of the degrading of the Levites, that went astray, assigning them inferior posts and service in the house of God, Eze 44:10 and of the establishment of the sons of Zadok in their ministry, who were faithful, Eze 44:15, then follow various laws relating to their garments; shaving of their heads; drinking wine; their marriage; performance of their ministerial work; their regard to the dead, and their food and maintenance, Eze 44:17.

Ver. 1. Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary,.... The prophet was brought by his divine guide, from the altar of burnt offerings, which stood before the house, where he had given him the dimensions of it, and the ordinances concerning it, to the temple or holy place, called the outward sanctuary, in distinction from the inward sanctuary, or holy of holies; and to one of the gates of it, which was a gate of the inner court:

and which looketh toward the east: the eastern gate, and was the same he had been at before, and therefore is said to be brought back the way of it; see Eze 43:1:

and it was shut; when he was there before, it was open; for he saw the glory of the Lord enter into the house by the way of it; but now it was shut, and for that reason, because he had entered into it; signifying, among other things, that he would never return, or remove from thence any more. The Misnic doctors {d} interpret this of one of the little doors to the great gate of the temple, that had two little doors, one in the north, the other in the south; that which was in the south no man ever entered in by, and this they say is understood here; but it is not a little door, but a gate here spoken of, and that the eastern one; of which more in the following verses.

{d} Misna Middot, c. 4. sect. 2.

Ezekiel 44:2

Ver. 2. Then said the Lord unto me, this gate shall be shut,.... In time to come, as Jarchi interprets it, in the latter day; it was shut, and it should continue to be shut:

it shall not be opened; any more; though it has been, yet hereafter no more:

and no man shall enter in by it, into the house of the Lord,

because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it; the same with the glory of the God of Israel, Eze 43:2:

therefore it shall be shut; no one being to enter after him. Various are the sentiments of expositors concerning this gate. Some of the ancients have interpreted it of the Virgin Mary, by whom Christ came into this world in human nature, being born of her, a virgin, who had never known man, and as is thought never did after the birth of Christ; nor were any afterwards born of her; no man might come into the world by her, by that self-same way the incarnate God did, and for that reason. This sense is approved of, not only by Papists, but by many Protestant writers. Others understand it of the Scriptures, the word of God, which as it is a sealed book to men learned and unlearned, so a gate shut up; it cannot be opened by a mere natural man, or be understood by

the light of nature; none can open it but the Lion of the tribe of Judah; who gives the spiritual knowledge of it to whom he pleases, the perfect knowledge of which is reserved to a future state; and there are some things in it which will be always shut, and ever secrets; as the modus of the subsistence of the three Persons in the Godhead; the generation of the Son, the procession of the Spirit, and the union of the two natures in Christ; see Isa 29:11, others think that the gate of heaven, or the way to eternal glory and happiness, is meant; which was shut by the sin of man, and could never be opened again by any mere man; but Christ by his blood has opened the way into it; and has entered into it, not as a private, but public person, representing all his people; and none but those that belong to him, that are members of him, shall enter there; as none but Christ personal, so none but Christ mystical: but I am rather of opinion, since this whole fabric, as we have seen, is an emblem of the church of Christ on earth in the latter day, the way into that is designed here; and its being shut signifies, that, as the church is a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, and is only for the use of Christ, and should be a chaste virgin to him, he should have all her heart, affection, and faith; so it should not be pervious unto others; no natural or unregenerate man should enter into it; and when the Lord shall have taken up his residence in the church in the latter day, in a more spiritual and glorious manner than ever, there shall no more come into her the uncircumcised and the unclean,
Isa 52:1, and especially in the New Jerusalem state nothing shall enter that defiles, or makes an abomination, or a lie, Re 21:27 none but those that are Christ's, that are true members of his, and one with him; and this sense agrees with what follows in this chapter, and receives light and confirmation thereby; in which the Lord complains of the Israel and church of God in these its present declining times, that unregenerate persons were admitted into the sanctuary of the Lord, to communicate with the saints, and officiate there, Eze 44:7 and commends such who are faithful ministers and members, who are established therein, Eze 44:15.

Ezekiel 44:3

Ver. 3. It is for the prince: the prince shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord,.... Or, "as for the prince, the prince shall sit in it" {e}; in the gate which is shut to others: not the high priest, as Jarchi, though he might have a particular seat in the temple, as Eli had in the tabernacle, **1Sa 1:9**, where he might eat the bread and flesh of holy things: nor the political prince, the king of Israel, though he might have a place in the temple peculiar to himself; see

2Ch 6:12
2Ch 24:31, and the Jews say only the kings of the house of David were allowed to sit in the sanctuary: but the King Messiah, as Kimchi and Ben Melech rightly interpret it, is here meant; who before, in this prophecy, is called David a Prince, Eze 34:24, he who is the Prince of peace; Michael the great Prince; the Prince of life, and the Prince of the kings of the earth; the Messiah the Prince. Such who interpret the gate of the gate of heaven understand this of Christ's sitting down there at his Father's right hand, on the same throne with him, having done his work, and being at ease, and in honour; and of his enjoyment of glory there, as the heavenly glory is sometimes signified by a feast, by sitting down at a table, and eating bread in the kingdom of God, **Mt 8:11**, and so it may intend his being in the presence of God with the utmost delight and joy; having that glory he had with him before the world was, and all power in heaven and in earth; dispensing gifts and grace to men, and receiving honour and glory from them, and seeing the travail of his soul with satisfaction: but why may it not be understood, more consistent with the scope of the vision, of his sitting in his church, at his table there with his saints, eating with them, and they with him, in his word and ordinances before the Lord? see **So 1:12**,

he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same; which some explain of Christ's ascension to heaven, and descent from thence in the same way; he went up to heaven in the eastern part of the world, from the mount of Olives, to the east of Jerusalem; and in like manner shall he descend, and his feet shall stand on that mount, **Ac 1:11**, but it may be interpreted of his going in and out of his church at his will and pleasure; and affording his gracious presence and fellowship with himself in his house and ordinances,

{e} wb bvy awh ayvn ayvnh ta "veruntamen ad principem quod attinet, princeps ipse inquam", &c. Piscator; "quantum ad principem"; "princeps sedebit in ea", Noldius, Ebr. Part. Concord. p. 120.

Ezekiel 44:4

Ver. 4. Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house,.... The north gate of the inward court, whither he was brought from the east gate, which was shut: this, and what follow, may have some respect to the churches in these our northern parts of the world, in their now declining circumstances, which are aptly represented in some following verses; but will hereafter be filled with the glory of the Lord, as follows:

and I looked, and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord; as he had seen at the eastern gate, Eze 43:2:

and I fell upon my face; as he had done before, under a sense of the greatness and glory of the divine Majesty, and of his own vileness and unworthiness; see Eze 43:3.

Ezekiel 44:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord said unto me, son of man,.... This is still the voice of the Lord speaking out of the house to the prophet, Eze 43:6:

mark well; or, "set thine heart" {f}; be attentive to what is about to be said, as being of great concern and importance:

and behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears all that I say unto thee; heart, eyes, and ears, are all to be employed in the most diligent manner in regarding the things hereafter delivered; the same expressions exciting attention were used at the first of this vision,
Eze 40:4: concerning all the ordinances of the house of the Lord, and all the laws thereof; See Gill on "Eze 43:11",

mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary; the way of entrance into the Gospel church, and the manner of exclusion from it, and the laws and rules concerning these; the prophet is bid particularly to observe these well, because it was in these things God's professing people chiefly offended, as appears by what follows; they were not so careful as they should have been in the admission of persons among them, or in the exclusion of delinquents.

{f} Kbl Myv "pone cor tuum", V. L. Vatablus, Paguinus, Montanus; "pone ad cor tuum", Starckius.

Ezekiel 44:6

Ver. 6. And thou shalt say to the rebellious, even to the house of Israel,.... This is a character of literal Israel from the beginning, De 9:24, and frequently given it in this prophecy, Eze 2:2 Eze 3:9 and well agrees with these declining churches in the latter day, and even in our times; it represents them as rebellious, because of their disregard to the ordinances of God's house, and to the laws and rules of it; and are not only called "rebellious", but "rebellion" {g} itself; expressive of the greatness of their sin, and the aggravations of it:

thus saith the Lord God, O ye house of Israel, let it suite you of all your abominations; that is, let the abominations you have committed, will worship and superstition, paying a regard to the doctrines and commandments of men, be sufficient; stop and proceed no further; relinquish those things which are so abominable in my sight; let the time past suffice to have wrought them; cease entirely from them; see 1Pe 4:3, these abominations are more particularly expressed in the following words.

{g} yrm la "ad inobedientiam", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 44:7

Ver. 7. In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers,.... Unregenerate men, who are in a state of alienation and estrangement to divine and spiritual things: strangers to God; to the true knowledge of him in Christ; to the fear and love of God; to the true grace of God in conversion; and to communion with him: strangers to Christ, to his person and offices; to the way of peace, life, and salvation by him; to his righteousness; to faith in him, love of him, and fellowship with him: strangers to the Spirit; to his person, to regeneration and sanctification by him; to the graces of the Spirit, faith, hope, love, humility, self-denial, &c.; to the things of the Spirit, which they neither know nor savour; and to the several offices he performs, as a comforter, the Spirit of adoption, an earnest and sealer: strangers to their own hearts, and the plague of them, and sin that dwells in them: strangers to the nature of sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of it; to the deceitfulness of sin, and the consequences of it; to true repentance for it, and to the right way of atonement of it, by the blood of Christ: strangers to the Gospel of Christ, and the truths of it; and to the saints and people of God:

and uncircumcised in heart; who never were pricked in the heart for sin, or felt any pain there on account of it; never had the hardness of their heart removed, or the impurity of it discovered to them; never were filled with shame and loathing because of it; or ever put off the body of sins in a course of conversation; or renounced their own righteousness:

and uncircumcised in flesh; carnal, as they were born; men in the flesh, in a state of nature, mind and savour the things of the flesh, and do the works of it; having never been taught by the grace of God to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to abstain from fleshly ones: or, who put their trust in the flesh, in outward things, in carnal privileges, and external righteousness: these the Lord complains were brought

to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house: either to be members here, and partake of all the ordinances and privileges of the Lord's house; or to officiate here as priests and ministers of the Lord:

when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood; which, under the law, were the Lord's; and here signify the ministry of the word and ordinances, the goodness and fatness of the Lord's house; and especially the ordinance of the Lord's supper, that feast of fat things; in which Christ, the true and living bread of God, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed, is represented to the faith of God's people:

and they have broken my covenant, because of all your abominations: that is, have broken the rule of the divine word and everlasting Gospel by such abominations; by admitting such ministers and members, the one to administer, the other to partake of, Gospel ordinances: this is the true state of the case of most of the reformed churches in our days; it is to be feared that there are multitudes of unregenerate ministers in them; that they are full of carnal professors; and notorious it is that the ordinance of the Lord's supper is prostituted to wicked persons, and to answer ends it never was designed for; which must be an abomination to the Lord.

Ezekiel 44:8

Ver. 8. And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things,.... That is, have not kept and retained the holy doctrines of the Gospel; nor observed the holy ordinances of it, as they were first delivered:

but ye have set keepers of my charge in my sanctuary for yourselves; meaning either, that such as were in public office did not attend to it; but were idol shepherds, and left the flock, their care and charge, to others, to surrogates and curates, to do their work for them; while they indulged themselves in sloth and idleness: or that the members and hearers set up preachers for themselves, according to their lusts, agreeable to their own carnal sentiments, without any regard to the will and glory of God.

Ezekiel 44:9

Ver. 9. Thus saith the Lord God,.... This that follows is the law and rule to be observed, and which will be observed by the churches in the latter day, though so little regarded now:

no stranger uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary; of these See Gill on "Eze 44:7" unregenerate men may not be admitted members of a Gospel church; for that is holy, and holiness becomes it; but they are unholy, and as unfit to be received as swine into a king's palace; saints and they cannot talk together, their language being different, they are barbarians to one another; nor can they walk together, being not agreed in sentiment and practice; besides, such persons disquiet the churches of Christ by their quarrelsome behaviour in it, and immoral conversation out of it; and are dangerous and infectious persons, whether heterodox in principle, or immoral in life: and much less should such be admitted to public service, to preach the word, and administer ordinances; since they should be holy that bear the vessels of the Lord, his name, and Gospel; they are blind and ignorant, and so not apt and fit to teach others; they are dumb, and cannot speak to cases they are strangers to, as those of wounded consciences, tempted and deserted, or backslidden ones; they will bring in strange doctrines, foreign to the Scriptures, and the experience of saints; and it is no wonder they are unsuccessful in their ministry, and churches do not thrive under them; to which, among other things, we must impute the great decline of religion, even among Protestant dissenters, who, it is to be feared, have too many of this character among them: but there should not be here

of any stranger that is among the children of Israel; though they are among them, nay, though they are the children of them, and have had a religious education; yet being strangers to the grace of God, should not be admitted members, and much less ministers, of the churches of Christ.

Ezekiel 44:10

Ver. 10. And the Levites that are gone away far from me,.... These Levites were priests, as appears from Eze 44:13, who professed themselves Gospel preachers, ministers of the reformed churches; but departed from the reformation principles; erred from the faith; and either mixed it with the doctrines of men, or wholly dropped, concealed, or dissembled it; departed from the word of God, as the rule of faith and practice; and set up their own reason as their guide in matters of religion; were gone off from the pure worship of God and his ordinances, and entirely neglected the discipline of his house:

when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; though there may be an allusion to some apostasy of literal Israel, under the Old Testament, and from whence language may be borrowed to express this; either to the Israelites joining themselves to Baalpeor in the fields of Moab, in the time of Phinehas, who was zealous and faithful to the Lord, from whom Zadok descended after mentioned: or to the defection in the times of Jeroboam and Rehoboam, when all Israel forsook the word of the Lord: or to the times of Ahaz, when Uriah the priest made an altar like to that at Damascus by the king's order; and which idolatrous practices increased in the times of Manasseh; when, no doubt, many of the priests and Levites, either through fear of kings, or on account of gain, and for the sake of their livelihood, departed from the Lord and his worship: but the reference is to a defection in the times of the New Testament, and in the latter days of those times; not to the falling away of the church of Rome, and its departure from the faith and order of the Gospel, predicted **2Th 2:3**, though, no doubt, some truly godly ministers have been carried away with the errors of that church, and afterwards restored, as these Levites: but the case here referred to is the declension in the reformed churches; their formality; their great imperfection in the service of God; their departure from the doctrine of faith they once heard and received, which they are called upon to repent of; their defiling themselves with superstition and will worship, and going after the idols of their own hearts, corrupt reason, the doctrines and inventions of men, and carnal rites and ceremonies; see **Re 3:1**:

they shall even bear their iniquity; that is, the Levites, priests, or ministers; they shall bear the shame and disgrace, when they come to see their errors, and the punishment and chastisement of their sin, of which hereafter.

Ezekiel 44:11

Ver. 11. Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary,.... Though degraded from their office as priests and ministers of the word, yet being restored from their sins and errors, shall have a place in the house of God, and do their work there in a less honourable and a more servile way; as in former times, when ministers had sinned foully, and were degraded from their office, upon repentance they were not restored to that, but only admitted to lay communion; see 2Ki 23:9:

having charge at the gates of the house; like those sort of Levites who were porters and doorkeepers in the temple, or like our sextons or pew openers now:

and ministering to the house; employed as the Gibeonites were in hewing wood and bringing water for the use of the sanctuary, or in repairing of it; learning and exercising the business of smiths, masons, and carpenters:

they shall slay the burnt offering, and the sacrifice for the people; not bring it to the altar, and offer it there; only slay it, and skin it for the priests; which is not to be understood literally, there being no such sacrifice in Gospel times; but to denote the menial service and inferior post that such shall be employed in; if they have no trade, they shall learn one, in order to get a livelihood for themselves, and be serviceable to the interest of religion in a lower way; but ministers of the word they shall not be:

and they shall stand before them to minister unto them; either before the priests, whose servants they shall be, or before the people; signifying that those that sin publicly shall be rebuked before all.

Ezekiel 44:12

Ver. 12. Because they ministered unto them before their idols,.... Had officiated for them in the priest's office, their idols being in the courts of the Lord at the same time; or preached unto them false doctrines, such as are not agreeable to the word of God; and led them into superstition and will worship, and confirmed them therein:

and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; or, "were for a stumbling block of iniquity" {h}; unto them the means of their stumbling and falling; by their ministrations, teaching them unsound doctrine; and by their practices and example, leading them into a way of false worship, and dissoluteness of life and conversation; who ought to have been examples to them in word and conversation, in faith and purity:

therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord; to smite and afflict them, and chastise them for the same; or, "upon them", or "concerning them" {i}; and so it may be expressive of an oath, of which lifting up the hand is a sign; wherefore, that what the Lord had said of them might be believed and expected, he swears to it:

and they shall bear their iniquity; which is repeated for the confirmation and certainty of it; see Eze 44:10, what is meant by it follows.

{h} Nwe lwvkml "in offendiculum iniquitatis", Pagninus, Montanus; "offendiculo ad iniquitatem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "offendiculo pravitatis", Starckius. {i} Mhyle "super eos", Pagninus, Montanus; "super ipsos", Starckius; "super ipsis", Cocceius.

Ezekiel 44:13

Ver. 13. And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of priest unto me,.... To bring the sacrifice to the altar, and offer it there; to sprinkle the blood, or burn the fat, or the incense; to intercede for the people, or bless them; see **Ho 4:6**:

nor to come near to any of my holy things in the most holy place; to do any business, either in the holy or in the most holy place; to offer holy things, or eat of them. The sense is, that these degraded ministers, who had sinned so greatly, and had fallen so foully, though restored by repentance; yet should not preach the word, nor administer any ordinance:

but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed; that is, the shame of their abominations, of their abominable principles and practices, which they have held and maintained; being publicly disgraced and degraded, and so notoriously distinguished.

Ezekiel 44:14

Ver. 14. But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house,.... To be watchmen or porters in it; to open and shut the doors of it; to sweep and keep it clean; to repair and mend it, and to do such like works, as it follows:

for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein; in a servile way; but not as priests or ministers of the word.

Ezekiel 44:15

Ver. 15. But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok;.... The priests who were of the tribe of Levi, whom the Lord chose and separated, to minister to him, and so had a lawful call to this office, and were regularly invested with it; and design true and lawful, as well as faithful, ministers of the word; these are called the sons of Zadok, who descended from Eleazar the son of Aaron in the line of Phinehas, to whom the Lord promised the everlasting priesthood, and who was put into this office by Solomon in the room of Abiathar, **1Ki 2:35**, his name signifies "righteous", and was a type of Christ; who, as a divine Person, is essentially righteous; as man, truly and perfectly so; and, as Mediator, God's righteous servant; and who, by his obedience and sufferings, is the author of righteousness to his people; who are his spiritual seed and offspring; children given him of his Father; who have his sonship and adoption through him, and are born of him, his Spirit, and grace; and these are made righteous by him, through his righteousness imputed to them, and may be rightly called sons of Zadok: and this agrees with all the saints; and who, under the Gospel dispensation, are all priests, and offer up themselves, souls and bodies, and their spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, unto God by Christ; though all have not a right to preach the word, and administer ordinances, as ministers lawfully called have, and who seem to be more particularly designed here; and such as are regenerated persons, and justified by Christ's righteousness, and preach the doctrine of free justification by it, are the only fit persons for such an office:

that kept the charge of my sanctuary, when the children of Israel went astray from me; that kept and held fast the pure doctrines of the Gospel, committed as a sacred depositum to them, without mixture, and without wavering, with courage and valour; though a greater number were on the other side, and though they were reproached and persecuted for it; and who taught the people to keep the ordinances of the Gospel as they were first delivered, in faith and love, and without sinister ends, and so administered them themselves; and such faithful ministers and members of churches, especially in a time of great declension and general defection, God takes notice of, and has promised them great and good things; see **Re 2:7** they shall come near to me to minister unto me; in holy things to his people, which is called ministering unto him; as to pray to him for them; lo preach to them in his name, and administer ordinances: all the saints indeed are priests, and may draw nigh to God through Christ; men are at a distance from him, through sin; there is no coming near to him but by Christ; and this coming near is not local, but spiritual, and includes all acts of worship, particularly prayer; and is a great favour and blessing:

and they shall stand before me, to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God; which, under the law, were both the Lord's; the one was burnt, and the other sprinkled, on divers things, and in various places: here it may respect the administration of the ordinance of the Lord's supper, that feast of fat things, and which may be eminently called the goodness and fatness of the house of God; and in which the blood of Christ is represented as shed for the remission of sins, and as spiritual drink indeed to believers; and the sacrifice of Christ is commemorated, the feast being kept in remembrance of that.

Ezekiel 44:16

Ver. 16. They shall enter into my sanctuary,.... Both to officiate, and to participate, which strangers and uncircumcised persons might not do, Eze 44:9:

and they shall come near to my table to minister unto me; which some understand of the altar of burnt offering, which was as a table, and the sacrifice on it was the food of the Lord, **Le 3:11**, others, the altar of incense; see Eze 41:22. Kimchi interprets it of the table of shewbread; but, whatever is meant in the letter, the mystical sense is, the ordinance of the Lord's supper, called the Lord's table, 1Co 10:21, a table richly spread, and well furnished with spiritual provision: here Christ himself sits, bids his people welcome, eats with them, and they with him; and here all the saints are guests, and ministers in particular officiate:

and they shall keep my charge; continue to do so; for this they did before, Eze 44:15, but now should be confirmed in their office, and never be displaced, as others; they that honour God he will honour, **1Sa 2:30**.

Ezekiel 44:17

Ver. 17. And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court,.... The priests before described; when they enter the right way into a true Gospel church, consisting of such who are internally renewed, and have an inward work of grace upon their hearts, and are inward court worshippers; either as private Christians, to pray together, to praise the Lord, to hear his word, and sit down at his table; or as public ministers, to preach the Gospel, and administer ordinances:

they shall be clothed with linen garments; meaning not the outward conversation garments of the Lord's people; nor their inward garment of sanctification; but the robe of Christ's righteousness, and garments of salvation; that fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints; and which, though but one, serves for many; and answers not only all the purposes of a garment, but even of many, of change of raiment: like a garment, it is on, and not in, the saints; it is put upon them by imputation; and, like a garment, it covers them, protects them from all injuries, keeps them warm and comfortable, and beautifies and adorns them; and is compared to linen for its whiteness and purity; see **Re 3:18** and in this all the people of God, ministers and private Christians, perform all their services in the house of God; making mention of this, and of this only, whereby they become acceptable unto God, Ps 71:16:

and no wool shall come upon them, while they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within; it is certain that the priests under the law had wool upon them in the time of their ministry; for the purple, blue, and scarlet, as the Jewish writers {k} observe, were all of them dyed wool; of which, with other things, the girdle common to all the priests, and the ephod and breast plate of the high priest, were made,
Ex 28:5, and which they wore in their common service: to the Jews in general it was not lawful to wear a garment of linen and woollen, Le 19:19 and therefore, as Josephus says {l}, to the priests only it was allowed to wear such a garment; and it is common with the Jewish doctors {m} to observe, that

"the priests were not clothed to minister in the temple but with wool and linen;"

indeed, on the day of atonement, the high priest, when he went into the holiest of all, had only linen garments on him; and of the service of this day Jarchi interprets the text; but Kimchi rightly objects, that the holiest of all cannot be called a court; and besides, it is said in the plural number,

they shall be clothed, and minister; whereas only the high priest went into the most holy place; and therefore he truly observes, that this is a new thing to be done in future times: and this is true of the spiritual priesthood of saints and ministers of the Gospel, who are to have no wool upon them in their ministrations, whether in a more private or public way; who are, and should profess to be, justified by the righteousness of Christ only, without any works of their own to be joined with it; which to do is unnecessary, indecent, and dangerous: wool is observed to be the clothing of brute beasts, and therefore not a fit emblem of the clothing of saints; and likewise of such as are most slow, and sluggish, and inactive {n}, and so an emblem of sloth; and which ought not to be in any of the people of God, and especially in ministers, who of all men should not be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. It may be further observed, that clothes made of wool are heavy, and render unfit for business, and cause sweat, which is offensive; and which seems to be a reason,
Eze 44:18, why wool should not be upon them, only linen garments wore by them; that they might be more quick and expeditious in the dispatch of business, and avoid everything that gives offence, that the ministry may not be blamed: woollen clothes are also liable to moths, and worms, and to contract filth; and may signify that the priests of the Lord should be clear of carnal and sensual lusts; these should not be upon them, or they under the predominance of them, and particularly avarice; they should feed the flock, and not fleece it and clothe themselves with the wool of it, Eze 34:2. The phrase, "and within", or "in the house", seems to denote some place distinct from the inner court, even the more inmost place of the temple, the holy of holies; which signifies heaven itself, into which only the high priest entered once a year, typical of Christ's entering into heaven; and who has opened a way, and given all his people, who are priests unto God, boldness to enter there also by prayer, in the exercise of faith and hope; and which service they perform in the righteousness of Christ, and that only; see **Heb 9:8**.

{k} Jarchi and Aben Ezra in Exod. xxv. 4. {l} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 11. {m} Misna Kilaim, c. 9. sect. 1. Maimon. Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 12. {n} "Lana segnissimi corporis excrementum est et prophanus vestitus, itaque lanea vestis videtur desidiam, et segnitiem indicare", Apuleius.

Ezekiel 44:18

Ver. 18. And they shall have linen bonnets upon their heads,.... Denoting gravity and modesty, subjection to God, and authority among men under him; and also purity of doctrine, and clearness of light and knowledge:

and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; expressive of chastity; see Ex 28:40:

they shall not gird themselves with anything that causeth sweat; so not with wool, which is apt to cause sweat; and is thought to be the reason why it is forbidden in the preceding verse; and so this girdle must be different from the priest's girdle under the law, for that had wool in it: sweat is of an ill smell, and very offensive; and may denote unsound doctrine and immorality in life and conversation, which give offence, and cause the ministry to be blamed, to which is opposed the girdle of truth and holiness, **Eph 6:14**. The Talmudic doctors interpret this of the place of girding, which is liable to sweat; and they say {o},

"they used not to gird neither below the loins, nor above the arm holes; but over against, or about the armholes;"

which is observed by Jarchi and Kimchi on the text; and the Targum is,

"they shall not gird upon or about the loins, but about the heart;"

that is, about the breast or paps; hence Christ our great High Priest is described as girt about the paps with a golden girdle, **Re 1:13** so these are girt that are made priests by him; denoting their hearty zeal and affection for the truths of his Gospel, and the honour of his name, and their readiness to serve and glorify him: or,

they shall not gird themselves loosely {p}; in a negligent manner, which is both indecent, and hinders business.

{o} T. Bab. Zevachim, fol. 18. 2. & 19. 1. {p} ewyb wrgxy al "non cingent seipsos modo instabili, nempe neglectim circumponendo cingulum nimis laxum", Gussetius, p. 315. The Tigurine version is, "quae non adstringent arctius".

Ezekiel 44:19

Ver. 19. And when they go forth into the utter court,.... Out of the inner court where they minister, when they have done their service:

even into the utter court to the people; out of the church into the world, where the people are, doing their business, whether good men or bad:

they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers; the north and south chambers;
See Gill on "Eze 42:13",
See Gill on "Eze 42:14":

and they shall put on other garments; which are their outward conversation garments, which are proper to appear in before men, for the honour of religion; though not sufficient to appear in before God, and render acceptable unto him:

and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments; the garments of the priesthood were reckoned holy, whatsoever was holy, that which it touched accounted holy also; and therefore, to preserve a difference between the priests and the common people, they were not to wear their holy garments but in the time of service; or lest any superstitious notion should obtain among the people, that they were sanctified by touching their clothes; as the Papists give out, that if a man is buried in a monk's cowl, he shall be saved: or the sense is, that they should not possess the minds of the people with a notion of any real sanctity in their garments; or that their conversation garments, or good works, can be of any service to them: this may be opposed to works of supererogation.

Ezekiel 44:20

Ver. 20. Neither shall they shave their heads,.... As the priests and worshippers of Isis and Serapis did, as Jerom on the text observes; and as the Romish priests now do, from whom the Lord's faithful ministers must be distinguished:

nor suffer their locks to grow long; as the Nazarites, that a distinction might be preserved between those who were and were not such; or rather, after the manner of women, their locks hanging down, and flowing about their shoulders, as a token of levity, wantonness, effeminacy, pride, and vanity; see

1Co 11:14:

they shall only poll their heads; observe a medium between both; neither shave their heads close, nor let their hair grow long, but keep it in an even moderate length; for which reason godly men of the last age among us were called "round heads".

Ezekiel 44:21

Ver. 21. Neither shall any priest drink wine,.... That is, to excess, immoderately, so as to be inebriated with it, Le 10:9, should not be given to it, and greedy of it, and drink it so as to disguise themselves: this is reckoned among the qualifications of a Gospel minister, **1Ti 3:3**, otherwise it is not forbidden good men, or ministers of the word, to drink wine, for health's sake, and for the refreshment of nature, provided it is done in moderation, **1Ti 5:23**, and particularly care should be taken that they drink it in such a manner,

when they enter into the inner court: to attend divine service, since immoderate drinking affects the memory; and such may forget the law and doctrines of the Lord they are to deliver or hear; and may put them upon saying and doing that which is improper and indecent: drunkenness in any Christian professor is abominable, especially in a minister of the word; and when it appears in his ministration, it is scandalous to the last degree.

Ezekiel 44:22

Ver. 22. Neither shall they take for their wives a widow,.... Who has been not only another man's, but at her own will, and done her own pleasure, and been her own mistress, and so not easily brought into subjection, and to behave as becoming her station:

or her that is put away; or, "thrust forth" {q}; out of doors; whose husband has given her a bill of divorce; since she may be suspected of having done some ill thing:

but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel; virgins, and not of the families of unconverted persons, who have been brought up in an irreligious way, but of godly families, and who have had a religious education:

or a widow that had a priest before: and so used to religious exercises, and to the manner of living of such persons. All good men should be careful whom they marry, and especially ministers of the Gospel; who are here supposed and allowed to marry, contrary to the church of Rome, which forbids her priests to marry. It is observed by some, and with great propriety, that in the latter days antichristian churches will be disowned; and that godly faithful ministers will become pastors, and take the care of such churches, who are like a chaste virgin espoused to Christ, and such who have had faithful pastors over them before. This seems to refer to the law concerning the marriage of the high priest, Le 21:13, and what is there enjoined him is here enjoined all the priests of the Lord; and therefore, as Kimchi rightly observes, this is a new rule respecting future times.

{q} hvwdg "expulsam", Montanus, Heb; "ejectam", Piscator.

Ezekiel 44:23

Ver. 23. And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the profane,.... Persons and things; not in a ceremonial, nor merely in a moral, but in an evangelical sense, between truth and error; between the doctrine which is according to godliness, and that which is corrupt and unsound, and eats as cloth a canker; between holy worship, and superstition; between holy duties, and profane and Heathen rites and ceremonies; and between persons sanctified by the Spirit and grace of God, and unconverted ones:

and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean; impure persons, doctrines, and manners, and those which are agreeable to the word of God; the sense is, that they shall take pains to instruct persons in the knowledge of divine things, and shall do it truly, faithfully, and sincerely.

Ezekiel 44:24

Ver. 24. And in controversy they shall stand in judgment,.... When any controversy arises among the saints concerning civil things, this shall not be carried into a court of judicature, of the men of the world; but it shall be brought before the church, and there heard, tried, judged, and determined; the ministers of the word there presiding, who shall give the definitive sentence, and stand to it, and abide by it, **1Co 6:1** and when any controversy arises about the doctrines of the Gospel, or modes of worship, or rules of discipline, they shall rise up, discuss the point, determine the question, pass the sentence, and not depart from it:

and they shall judge it according to my judgments; not according to their own judgments, or according to their own fancies, or the reasonings of their own minds, but according to those directions and rules given in the word of God; which is profitable for the settling and establishing true doctrine, and the reproof and correction of error, and for the instruction of men in the paths of righteousness:

and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; which assemblies are the churches of Christ, gathered according to Gospel order; where the saints assemble together for divine worship, and where the Lord grants his presence; and where his word is preached, and his ordinances administered, and so called his; and of which assemblies Gospel ministers are the masters, and where they preside; and whose business is to observe the laws and statutes the Lord has made, and to interpret them unto the people, and enforce them on them, and see that they are kept by them:

and they shall hallow my sabbaths; such times as are appointed for divine worship; these they shall keep holy themselves, in the exercise both of private and public worship, and shall exhort and stir up all with whom they are concerned to do the same.

Ezekiel 44:25

Ver. 25. And they shall come at no dead person to defile themselves,.... Shall not come into places where they are, nor touch them, nor attend their funerals, Le 21:1, that their work might not be interrupted, or they through grief and sorrow be made unfit for it, **Mt 8:22**, this, in a spiritual sense, may signify, that they should have no conversation or fellowship with men dead in trespasses and sins; and should abstain from all dead works, as all sinful ones are:

but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves; by coming near them, touching them, at least attending their funerals, because of their near relation to them, and that natural sympathy and affection that must be in them: all sorrow and mourning for dead relations is not forbidden saints, nor ministers of the word; provided it is in moderation, and not to excess, and is not for gracious persons, as those without hope; and should as little as possible break in upon the duties of their office, **1Th 4:13**.

Ezekiel 44:26

Ver. 26. And after he is cleansed,.... From any sin or iniquity, failing and imperfection, that he has been guilty of at such seasons, in mourning for the dead, by a fresh application of the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin; typified by the water of separation, made of the ashes of the red heifer, by which those who were in this way ceremoniously unclean were cleansed, **Heb 9:13**:

they shall reckon unto him seven days; that is, seven days shall be reckoned from the time of his cleansing, before he enters on public service again: according to the old law, seven days were reckoned from the defilement to the purification; here seven more are numbered after the purification is made; and therefore, as Kimchi truly notes, this is a new law or rule, to be observed in after times.

Ezekiel 44:27

Ver. 27. And in the day that he goeth into the sanctuary,.... Into the house and church of God, after his cleansing, and when the seven days from thence are up:

unto the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary; among the inward court worshippers, to minister in things to them; to preach the Gospel, and administer Gospel ordinances:

he shall offer his sin offering, saith the Lord God; though he has been privately cleansed in the fountain of Christ's blood, in which he has washed for sin and uncleanness; yet when he comes into the house of the Lord, he must acknowledge his sins and imperfections over Christ the sin offering; which he must bring in the arms of his faith, and so enter into the courts of the living God, and do the service of the sanctuary.

Ezekiel 44:28

Ver. 28. And it shall be unto them for an inheritance,.... Either the sin offering, or the priesthood, and the perquisites belonging to it: or,

they shall have an inheritance {r}; but what shall it be? God himself:

I am their inheritance; the Lord is the portion and inheritance of his people, who are made priests unto him, whether in a private or public capacity; they are heirs of God, he is their portion in the land of the living, and forever: God in all his perfections is theirs; and though incommunicable, they have the use and advantage of them, so far as they are capable and stand in need of them; as his eternity, immutability, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, grace, mercy, goodness, truth, and faithfulness: he is theirs in all his persons; God the Father is their covenant God and Father; the Son of God is their Head and Husband, their Saviour and Redeemer, Mediator and Peacemaker, their Prophet, Priest, and King; his blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and faithfulness, theirs, and even all that he is and has: the Spirit of God is their convincer and enlightener, their quickener and sanctifier; their Comforter, and the Spirit of adoption to them, the seal and earnest of their future glory; and God under every character is theirs, as the God of nature and providence, and as the God of all grace; and this is an inheritance rich and large, a soul satisfying portion, an inconceivable and an inexhaustible one.

And ye shall give them no possession in Israel; so the priests and Levites had none under the law, but were provided for in another way, Nu 18:20, the Lord's people and priests, under the Gospel dispensation, for the most part are the poor of this world, who have no share in the possessions of it; their good things are not here, but in the world to come, and in God himself: "I am their possession"; the Lord is enjoyed by them now; his love is shed abroad in their hearts; they have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, and communion with the Holy Ghost; and which is infinitely better than all the possessions of this world; and besides, provision is made for their outward maintenance, as follows:

{r} hlxnl Mhl htyhw "habebunt etiam hereditarium aliquid", Tigurine version.

Ezekiel 44:29

Ver. 29. They shall eat the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering,.... Which were typical of Christ; the meat offering, or rather bread offering, it being made of fine flour, was a type of Christ the bread of life; and the sin and trespass offerings pointed at his being made sin and a sacrifice for it; which the people and priests of the Lord in a spiritual sense eat, feed, and live upon by faith: and besides, as the priests under the law had a part in all these offerings, whereby they and their families were maintained, **Le 2:3**, so it is the will and ordination of Christ, that as those that ministered about holy things, and waited at the altar, should live of them, and partake with that, so they that preach the Gospel should live by it, **1Co 9:13**:

and every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs; or, "every devoted thing" {s}; that is, to holy uses, what the people willingly offer to support the interest of religion; signifying that the ministers of the word shall live upon the free contributions of the people.

{s} Mrx lk "omne anathema", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "omne devotum", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 44:30

Ver. 30. And the first of all the first fruits of all things, and every oblation, of all of every sort of your oblations shall be the priests,.... Suggesting, that their offerings or contributions, which should be made out of their substance, should be in proportion to it, and early as well as free; see **Pr 3:9**:

ye shall also give unto the priest of your dough; either of the first they made of the new corn of the year, or a piece or cake of whatsoever at any time they made; signifying, that the ministers of the word, that communicate spiritual things to men, should partake of their carnal ones, and have a part and share with them in all good things, in all the enjoyments of life, **1Co 9:11**:

that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house; that is, that he, the priest or minister of the word, that partakes of the above things, and is comfortably provided for and supported, may pray to the Lord for such who liberally contribute to him; that a blessing may come and abide upon them and their families, and prosperity and success may attend them in their worldly business and employments of life; as well as they and theirs may be blessed with all spiritual blessings, with grace here, and glory hereafter.

Ezekiel 44:31

Ver. 31. The priests shall not eat of anything that is dead of itself, or torn,.... They shall have no need to eat of such things, being plentifully provided for with better; nor will it become them so to do through avarice, not allowing themselves to enjoy what is liberally given them. Here the Jewish doctors {t} observe that it is said, the priests shall not eat of these things, suggesting that Israelites might; this puzzles them, therefore they say, Elijah will explain this verse; and the gloss says, till Elijah comes, and explains it to us, we know not how to explain it. In the mystic sense it may signify, that the priests of the Lord should have no communication with such as are dead in sin, or are given to rapine and violence, and should abstain from everything of this kind themselves.

Whether it be fowl or beast; whether Pharisees and high flown professors of religion, or earthly and worldly persons, and such that are immersed in carnal pleasures, in sensual and brutish lusts. The allusion is to the law in Le 17:15, which was common to all Israelites, priests and people.

{t} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 45. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 45:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 45

This chapter treats of the division of the land in future time, and the persons and uses for which it is to be made; one part being for the sanctuary, and the priests that serve in it, and for their houses for them to dwell in, Eze 45:1, another for the Levites and their chambers, Eze 45:5, and another for the city, for the Israelites in common, Eze 45:6, and the last for the prince; and of the situation and extent of it, Eze 45:7 and of the righteous administration of civil government in the time of the spiritual reign of Christ, in abstinence from violence and exactions, and doing justice, for which orders and directions are given, Eze 45:9, then of the oblations of the people of the land, Eze 45:13, and next of those that are to be prepared by the prince, Eze 45:17, and the times of the offering of them, at the beginning of the year, on the feasts of the passover and tabernacles, Eze 45:18, the rules for which are so different from the Mosaic law, as show the abrogation of that; and that all this is to be understood in a spiritual and evangelic sense.

Ver. 1. Moreover, when ye shall divide by lot the land, for inheritance,.... This is not to be understood literally of the division of the land of Israel; which agrees not with the division of it begun by Moses, and finished by Joshua, upon his conquest of it, and the introduction of the people of Israel into it; nor was such a division as this made when the Jews returned from Babylon; nor is there any reason to expect the like when they shall be converted in the latter day; nor is it meant typically of the heavenly inheritance, which saints obtain in Christ by lot, **Eph 1:11**, of which the earthly Canaan was a type; though some in this way interpret it: but since the whole vision respects the church of Christ on earth, it must be meant mystically and spiritually of the kingdom of Christ, and the settlement and establishment of it throughout the whole world, according to the allotment and determination of God; and they are a distinct and special people that are admitted into this state; it is by the distinguishing grace of God that they are taken into the Gospel church, and have a part and share in all the privileges and immunities of it.

Ye shall offer an oblation unto the Lord, an holy portion of the land; which should be lifted up as the heave offering was, and dedicated to the Lord: this designs such persons who are separated from the world, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, who shall be brought by the ministers of the word to the Lord, as trophies of his efficacious and victorious grace, ascribing the whole glory of their conversion to him; and these shall present themselves, souls and bodies, a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice to him; see Isa 66:20.

The length shall be the length of five and twenty thousand reeds, and the breadth shall be ten thousand; the kind of measure is not expressed in the original, so that it is a question whether reeds or cubits are meant; some think the latter, and the rather, because mention is made of them, Eze 45:2, and it is added,

and of this measure shall thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand; which, if understood of cubits, will greatly reduce the length and breadth of this holy portion of the land; wherefore it is best to take the largest measure, since that seems better to answer the design of the Holy Ghost in this passage; and the rather, since this measure is more proper to measure land with, and is that which the measurer is said to have in his hand, Eze 40:5, and besides, the measure of the sanctuary, said to be five hundred square, Eze 45:2 was measured with the measuring reed, and not the cubit, Eze 42:16, and which therefore must be supplied here; and a measuring reed being six cubits, by a cubit and a hand's breath, Eze 40:5, makes this portion of land to be more than six times larger than if it was supposed to be measured by the cubit; and twenty five thousand of this measure, according to Cornelius à Lapide, made five hundred miles, which was three times as large as the land of Canaan; that being, as Jerom {u} says, a hundred and sixty miles long, and forty six broad; and is a proof, that the land of Canaan literally taken is not here meant; but the whole is designed to set forth the amplitude and large extent of the church of Christ in the world, in the times the vision refers to.

This shall be holy in all the borders thereof round about; that is, this portion of land measured out, and distinguished from the rest: holiness of heart and life shall appear in all the subjects of Christ's kingdom, and members of his church, which becomes his house for ever.

{u} Ad Dardanum, tom. 3. fol. 21. I. K.

Ezekiel 45:2

Ver. 2. Of this there shall be for the sanctuary,.... Or temple, the house before described in the preceding chapters:

five hundred in length, and five hundred in breadth, square round about: that is, five hundred reeds square, as is manifest from Eze 42:16, and this denotes the largeness, perfection, and stability of the church of Christ, which the sanctuary was a type of:

and fifty cubits round about for the suburbs thereof; which were a void place of fifty cubits round about the sanctuary, measuring from the wall to that; this was done in reverence to the holy place, and to show that we should not rush hastily into the house of God, and church of Christ, but first pass through the suburbs or open place. Cubits being here mentioned, show that reeds are to be understood where the kind of measure is not expressed.

Ezekiel 45:3

Ver. 3. And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth of ten thousand,.... Not that the sense is, that of and according to the cubit measure last mentioned, this length and this breadth should be measured; but "after this measure", as Starckius renders it, and as the particle is rendered, Da 11:23 and which Sanctius mentions; and Jerom seems to have understood it in this light: and the sense is, that after he had finished the measure of five hundred reeds square, and fifty cubits round, he should proceed to measure the rest of the twenty five thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth:

and in it shall be the sanctuary, and the most holy place; that is, in the midst portion of land, consisting of the above measures, be the holy place, and the holy of holies; this is, but a further explanation of the two preceding verses.

Ezekiel 45:4

Ver. 4. The holy portion of the land shall be for the priests, the ministers of the sanctuary,.... That is, the rest of it, which is not for the sanctuary, shall be for the use of the priests that minister in holy things in the sanctuary; either the ministers of the Gospel, who shall have a sufficient maintenance from the churches of Christ, as the priests had under the law: or it may be meant of all the saints, who are priests unto God, and serve and worship him in his sanctuary; who shall all be satisfied with the goodness and fatness of his house, the word and ordinances, and the blessings of grace conveyed by them:

which shall come near to minister unto the Lord; these sons of Zadok, these faithful ones, in the worst of times; see Eze 44:15:

and it shall be a place for their houses; in this large spot shall be many congregated churches, houses of the living God, where his priests and people dwell, and will be serving and praising him:

and an holy place for the sanctuary; which may denote the church of God in general, as houses may do particular churches.

Ezekiel 45:5

Ver. 5. And the five and twenty thousand, of length, and ten thousand of breadth,.... This seems to be another portion of the land, distinct from the former, though of the same measure; see Eze 48:13:

shall also the Levites, the ministers of the house, have for themselves; separate from the priests, to whom they ministered, and were as numerous; or more numerous, than they; this is still designed to set forth the largeness of the church, and the great numbers of its members, who will all be accommodated and supplied with good things:

for a possession for twenty chambers; which some understand of twenty rows of chambers; by which may be meant particular congregated churches, as we have seen all along in this vision, erected for the better use and convenience of the saints in all places and parts of the world, where they are called.

Ezekiel 45:6

Ver. 6. And ye shall appoint the possession of the city, &e.] Which is something distinct from the house or temple, which was as the frame of a city, being so large, and consisting of so many parts, Eze 40:2 and seems also different from the city in Eze 48:30, the measures of the one and of the other not agreeing. Starckius thinks that this city prefigures the academies that should be among Christians, in which the priests or ministers of the word should teach those that came out of all parts unto them; but I am rather of opinion that the civil state of the people of God is here meant, as it will be in the spiritual reign of Christ; when all civil power and authority will not as yet be put down, only it will come into the hands of the saints, and be administered by Christian kings and princes.

Five thousand broad, and five and twenty thousand long, over against the oblation of the holy portion; five thousand reeds in breadth are allowed less for the civil than the church state; and though they are contiguous, and there is a connection between them, yet are separate from each other; the material temple was in the city of Jerusalem; but the holy portion, in which the sanctuary shall be, is without the city, and the city over against that; hence John seems, to have borrowed his idea and language, "I saw no temple therein", Re 21:22, though speaking of another city: the church and the world shall be no more mixed together; Christ's kingdom is not of this world, nor to be fixed on a civil establishment:

it shall be for the whole house of Israel; they shall all be under one and the same form of government; I do not say they shall be all under one temporal king or prince; but all Christian kings and princes shall exercise the same kind of rule and government; so that, as their church state will be uniform, their civil state or polity will be alike.

Ezekiel 45:7

Ver. 7. And a portion shall be for the prince,.... Meaning not the civil magistrate; though he ought to be supported in his dignity and authority, and in such manner that he may be under no temptation to oppress his subjects; and who ought to be, and at this time will be, the protector of the Lord's people, both in their civil and church state; but the Prince Messiah, of whom see Eze 44:3, to whom God will divide a portion with the great; Jacob shall be his portion, the Heathen his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth his possession,
Isa 53:12:

on the one side and on the other side of the oblation of the holy portion, and of the possession of the city; on each side, both of the holy portion, in which are the sanctuary, the houses of the priests, and the chambers of the Levites, and also of the city for the house of Israel; so that his portion will lie, or he be placed, on each side both of the church state and civil state of the Lord's people, and so be the protector of both; he will be a wall of fire round about them, a covert and a hiding place for them; he will be near them, and they to him; he will be on every side of them, and preserve them from persecuting enemies, and false teachers; they shall enjoy his word, his ordinances, and Gospel ministers, and be kept in the utmost peace and prosperity of all kinds; he will protect and defend them, both in their civil and religious liberties, and none shall make them afraid.

Before the oblation of the holy portion, and before the possession of the city; or rather, "over against" them {w}, as it is rendered,
Eze 41:15 so, as the possession of the city was over against the holy portion, the portion of the prince was to be over against them both:

from the west side westward, and from the east side eastward; which explains on which sides of them it lay:

and the length shall be over against one of the portions; that is, against everyone of the portions:

from the west border unto the east border; now as there is no measure given to the portion of the prince, but the whole space eastward and westward is left for it, it shows the large extent of Christ's kingdom; that his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; his Gospel shall be preached everywhere; the Spirit shall be poured down upon all flesh to make it successful; multitudes shall be everywhere converted, and churches set up in all places; the kingdoms of the world will become Christ's, even all the Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan nations; Christ will be King over all the earth, and his name shall be one; there will be but one religion everywhere, Ps 72:8. Some of the Jewish writers interpret this of the King Messiah, to whom they suppose is here allotted the thirteenth part of the land: so Kimchi says,

"to Israel belong twelve parts or portions, and to the prince the thirteenth part; the portion of the prince is as the portion of one of the tribes in length and in breadth, excepting that within the inheritance of the prince should be an oblation,"

as in Eze 45:13, and Maimonides {x} says,

"the King Messiah takes out of all lands, subdued by the Israelites, one part out of thirteen; and this thing is a statute for him and his sons for ever;"

which seems plainly to refer to this passage in Ezekiel; though there are some who understand him of any anointed king of Israel, as being his right: but the learned Selden {y} is of opinion that he is speaking of the King Messiah, and has respect to this distribution; and rightly observes, from the same author {z}, that all that was subdued by him was his own, and he could dispose of it at his pleasure to his servants and soldiers.

{w} ynp la "contra faciem", V. L. {x} Hilchot Melachim, c. 4. sect, 8. {y} De Jure Naturae & Gentium, l. 6. c. 16. {z} Maimon Hilchot Melachim, c. 4. sect. 10.

Ezekiel 45:8

Ver. 8. In the land shall be his possession in Israel,.... Or, "as for the land, it shall be his for a possession in Israel" {a}; the people of the land shall be a people for possession, as in **1Pe 2:9** or a peculiar people of his throughout all Israel; all the spiritual Israel, whether Jew or Gentile, shall be Christ's possession and inheritance:

and my princes shall no more oppress my people; neither ecclesiastical princes, as the Scribes and Pharisees formerly, nor civil magistrates; not the one with false doctrines, carnal rites and ceremonies; nor the other with heavy taxes, and rigorous exactions:

and the rest of the land shall they give to the house of Israel according to their tribes; the spiritual and mystical Israel, Jews and Gentiles, who shall now inherit the earth, and possess all temporal good things, as well as spiritual ones.

{a} hzxal lw hyhy Ural "de terra vel quod attinet ad terram, sive terrae (illud), erit in possessionem in Israel", Starckius.

Ezekiel 45:9

Ver. 9. Thus saith the Lord, let it suffice you, O princes of Israel,.... Christian kings and princes, for such there shall be in those times; and who will have large and ample salaries provided for them, as they should have to support their dignity; and with which they should be content, as they will be, and not encroach upon the properties of their subjects:

remove violence and spoil; from your administration; the sense is, do not use violence, and exercise rapine and spoil, let these be far from you; seize not on the goods of your subjects, or spoil them of them by heavy taxes and impositions, or by vexatious lawsuits, and unjust sentences:

and execute judgment and justice; between men; let everyone enjoy his own property; and when any matter of controversy arises about it, fairly hear and examine the case, and do justice:

take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord; such as had been exacted of them in former times by tyrannical and unjust princes: or, "your expulsions" {b}; driving them from their houses, estates, fields, and vineyards; either by taking them away from them, and annexing them to their own, as Ahab did; or by levying such taxes upon them they could not pay, and so were obliged to leave their inheritances and possessions. This, and some following verses, contain rules for regulating the civil state of the people of God in the latter day; which did not take place upon the Jews' return from Babylon, as appears from **Ne 5:15** but will be strictly observed by Christian princes in the latter day glory; see Isa 40:17.

{b} Mkytvwrg "delulsiones vestras", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus; "expulsiones vestras", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 45:10

Ver. 10. Ye shall have just balances,.... That is, take care that true weights and just measures be used in trade and commerce, that so one man may not impose upon and cheat another; which is the business of the civil magistrate to look after:

and a just ephah, and a just bath; and not make the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit, as some did, **Am 8:5** the "ephah" was a measure for dry things, as wheat, barley, &c. and the "bath" for liquid things, as wine oil, &c. as Jarchi and Kimchi observe; see Le 19:35.

Ezekiel 45:11

Ver. 11. The ephah and the bath shall be of one measure,.... The one held as much of dry things as the other of liquor; which, according to Bishop Cumberland, were seven wine gallons, four pints, and a little more:

that the bath may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer; this "homer" must be carefully distinguished from another measure, called "omer", written without an "h", which was but the tenth part of an "ephah", Ex 16:36:

the measure thereof shall be after the homer: "as the homer was", so should the ephah and bath be, just the tenth part of it.

Ezekiel 45:12

Ver. 12. And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs,.... This is a rule for money or coin; the shekel was a silver coin, and is generally reckoned about the value of two shillings and six pence of our money, so a gerah about three half pennies: Bishop Cumberland reckons the shekel more exactly at two shillings and four pence farthing, and a little more, and the gerah at eleven grains of silver; see Le 27:25:

twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your maneh; these were several pieces of money; one was a twenty shekel piece, which according to the common account was fifty shillings of our money; another was a five and twenty shekel piece, which was three pounds, two shillings, and sixpence; and a third was a fifteen shekel piece, which was one pound thirteen and sixpence; and together made a maneh or pound, which consisted of sixty shekels, or seven pounds, ten shillings; by which the other pieces should be tried, whether they were of just weight: the sense of the whole is, that no adulteration of coin should be made, which is very prejudicial in civil affairs.

Ezekiel 45:13

Ver. 13. This is the oblation that ye shall offer,.... Not at the dedication of the temple, to be built in time to come, as Kimchi thinks; nor for the daily sacrifices, as others; but for the maintenance of the priests, that is, the ministers of the Gospel; for here begin the rules for the right ordering of ecclesiastical affairs of those times:

the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of wheat, and ye shall give the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of barley: this confirms that an "ephah" was for dry measure, of wheat and barley; and as it was the tenth part of an homer, a sixtieth part of an homer of wheat and barley was to be given for this service; that is, if a man had an homer of wheat or of barley, he was to give a sixtieth part of it for the use of the ministers of the Lord: the meaning is, that the people should give freely and liberally, according to their substance, for their support and maintenance,

Ezekiel 45:14

Ver. 14. Concerning the ordinance of oil, the bath of oil,.... This shows that the bath was for liquid measure; and as oil was a part of food with the Jews, as well as used in their offerings, a rule is given for the distribution of that to the Lord's ministers, that they may have everything convenient for them:

ye shall offer the tenth part of a bath out of a cor; which was the same measure with the "homer", only another name for it, as follows:

which is an homer of ten baths, for ten baths are an homer; so that if a man had an homer or ten baths of oil, he was to give a hundredth part of it for the use of the priests and Levites, or ministers of the word; a greater portion of wheat or barley is given than of oil, because there is a greater expense in families of the one than of the other.

Ezekiel 45:15

Ver. 15. And one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred,.... As provision is before made for bread and oil, so here for meat for the servants of the Lord: if a man had two hundred lambs in his flock, one of them was to be given to them; it may be observed, that this plainly refers to times when the Mosaic dispensation should be abrogated; not tithes of all things are to be given to the priests, as heretofore; only the sixtieth part of wheat and barley, the hundredth part of oil, and but one lamb of two hundred; and which denotes the moderate maintenance of Gospel ministers, with which they should be contented, and the people should not grudge to give; nothing extraordinary or extravagant being required of them: this lamb was to be taken

out of the fat pastures of Israel; or, out of the watery places {c}; out of those fields which were well watered, and produced good pasture, which fattened the sheep and lambs that were fed in them; and denotes that the best of the kind is to be given to the Lord, and to his servants, or for the support of his interest; not the lean and the lame, the halt and the blind, **Mal 1:8**:

for a meat offering, and for a burnt offering, and for peace offerings; not that the lamb was given for all these; but the wheat and the oil for the meat offering, and the lamb for the burnt offering and peace offerings. The sense may be, that this provision of wheat and barley, oil and lambs, or the sufficient maintenance signified by them, was in the room of the meat offering, burnt offerings, and peace offerings, which fell to the share of the priests under the legal dispensation:

to make reconciliation for them, saith the Lord God; either to this end, that the ministers of the Gospel, who have the word of reconciliation committed to them, might cheerfully and faithfully dispense it to the people; or that they, by these liberal and generous contributions of theirs to the maintenance of them, might testify that they have truly by faith received the atonement by the sacrifice of Christ.

{c} hqvmm "de irriguo", Montanus, Vatablus; "ex irriguis pascuis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus.

Ezekiel 45:16

Ver. 16. All the people of the land shall give this oblation,.... None shall be exempted from it; all according to their capacity and ability shall contribute to the support of the ministry, and the service of religion:

for the prince in Israel; not the high priest, nor the civil magistrate, but the Prince Messiah: or rather "to the prince in Israel" {d}; what the people shall do in this way, they shall do it as to the Lord, freely and cordially, and for his honour and glory; and he will take it as done to himself; see Mt 10:41.

{d} ayvnl "principi", Castalio, Cocceius, Starckius; so Abendana,

Ezekiel 45:17

Ver. 17. And it shall be the prince's part to give burnt offerings,.... Or, "upon the prince shall be the burnt offerings" {e}; it shall lie upon him to provide them; who is not the high priest, as Jarchi; nor the civil magistrate or king, as Menachem; but Christ, who is both Prince and Priest; and whose sacrifice of himself is designed by these, and the other sacrifices after mentioned, of which the sacrifices were all typical; though he is but one, they many, his answers to them all, and is one for all; and though his is but once offered up, they often, because of the fulness of efficacy in the one, and the want of it in the other; and though in itself infinitely superior to these. Of the burnt offerings, and of their being typical of Christ,
See Gill on "Eze 40:39",

and meat offerings, and drink offerings; the meat offerings, which were rather bread offerings, were made of fine flour, with oil poured, and frankincense put thereon, **Le 2:1** and were typical of Christ, compared to a corn of wheat dying in the earth, and bringing forth fruit, Joh 12:24 and to wheat as bruised and ground into fine flour, kneaded and baked, which may denote his various sufferings, and so made bread of; he being the true and living bread, which gives life to men. The "oil" poured upon this offering may signify the grace of the Spirit without measure on Christ; and the "frankincense" how savoury and acceptable he is to his people. The "drink offering" was of wine, which went along with other sacrifices, and was very acceptable to God; and may denote the blood of Christ, which is drink indeed; and his love expressed in shedding it, which is better than the choicest wine; both these are held forth, Christ's flesh, which is meat, and his blood, which is drink, in the ordinance of the supper, administered by his priests, whom he furnishes with such offerings to set before his saints:

in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, and in all solemnities of the house of Israel; in the feasts of the passover, tabernacle, and pentecost, which were all figures of Christ; of his being the passover sacrificed for us, of his tabernacling in our nature, and of the effusion of his Spirit; and the "new moons", and "sabbaths", and "solemn days", are only Old Testament phrases to express the times of New Testament worship; see Isa 66:23, as monthly days for the administration of the ordinance of the supper, and the Lord's day for the preaching of the word, and other parts of public worship; in all which the sacrifice of Christ, his blood, righteousness, and satisfaction, make a principal part:

he shall prepare the sin offering; which also was a type of Christ; of which See Gill on "Eze 40:39", and this, with the

meat offering; and the burnt offering, of which before, were to be prepared by the prince himself, or our Lord Jesus Christ: and also the "peace offerings", or thank offerings {f}; his own thank offerings for himself and his people; see Joh 11:41 and the thank offerings of them, or their sacrifices of praise, which become acceptable through him, Heb 13:15, and even himself, for whom the saints offer thanks to God, **2Co 9:15**, and as the end of all the legal sacrifices was

to make reconciliation for the house of Israel; so this is the end and use of the sacrifice of Christ, typified by them, to make peace for the Israel of God; which could not be made by them, by their obedience, repentance, or faith; and yet was necessary to their happiness, to their communion with God, and enjoyment of him; this Christ has made by his obedience, sufferings, and death, whereby he has fulfilled the law, satisfied justice, and made atonement for sin: this is all at his expense, and is meant by his "preparing" these offerings; which denotes his ready and cheerful engagement to become a sacrifice; his voluntary offering up himself unto God, or giving himself an offering and a sacrifice unto him; and also his furnishing his ministers with proper matter for their ministrations in all the solemn times and seasons thereof, which is the doctrine of his sacrifice and satisfaction, or salvation by a crucified Christ; and so as the people are to offer to their maintenance, Christ the Prince takes care to furnish them for their ministry.

{e} twlweh hyhy ayvnh lew "et super principem erunt holocausta", V. L. Starckius; "nam principi incumbet [dare] holocausta", Junius & Tremellius.
{f} Mymlvh ta "eucharistica", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Piscator.

Ezekiel 45:18

Ver. 18. Thus saith the Lord God,.... Here begins the account of the times and seasons in which the above sacrifices should be prepared and offered; or that which was signified by them be held forth in the ministry of the word to the faith of God's people:

in the first month, in the first day of the month; the month Nisan, as Kimchi observes, who adds,

"which is the month of redemption, in which Israel were redeemed out of Egypt, and in which they shall be redeemed in time to come:"

this month answers to part of our March and part of April; it was the first month in the year with the Jews for their ecclesiastical affairs; so that the first day of this month was New Year's Day:

thou shall take a young bullock without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary; or, "make a sin offering for it" {g}; here the Jews are puzzled; since, according to the law of Moses, in the beginnings of their months, they were to offer a burnt offering of two young bullocks and a ram, &c. Nu 28:11, whereas here only one bullock, and that a sin offering; wherefore R. Jochanan and R. Judah say, this must be left till Elijah comes to explain it; and as much at a loss are they how to account for it that Ezekiel should do this, whom they suppose to be the person spoken to; and therefore imagine this will be done by him after the resurrection, not being able to see that this shows the abrogation of the law of Moses; and that not the Prophet Ezekiel, but Christ the Prince and Priest, is here addressed; and whose sacrifice is designed by the young bullock without blemish; a type of him both in his strength and purity; and by which his sanctuary, his church and people, have all their sins expiated; and particularly the sins of the year past, this being represented as done on New Year's Day, which the annual atonement prefigured.

{g} tajx "expiatoque", Piscator; "expiabis", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 45:19

Ver. 19. And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering,.... An emblem of the blood of Christ, who was made sin for his people, and an offering for their sin; and which blood cleanses from all sin:

and put it upon the posts of the house; of the house of God, the sanctuary or temple; upon everyone of the posts of it, which stood at the entrance into it. The Targum is

"upon the threshold of the house:"

and upon the four corners of the settle of the altar; or four horns of it; see Eze 43:14:

and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court; that is, of the temple: this is also a new rule or law about putting the blood of the sacrifice into these various places, of which nothing is said in the law of Moses; and shows that admission into the church of God, and the right participation of Christ, the altar, and the blessings of his grace, as well as entrance into heaven itself, are all through the blood of Christ.

Ezekiel 45:20

Ver. 20. And so thou shall do the seventh day of the month,.... Of the first month Nisan; here is another new rule or law, as Kimchi owns, of which no mention is made in the law of Moses:

for everyone that erreth, and for him that is simple: so shall ye reconcile the house; or, "expiate" it {h}; make atonement for it; that is, for the house of God, the whole church, all his people; particularly for fallen believers, who have gone astray, either in principle or practice; through ignorance and simplicity, through the prevalence of corruption, the temptations of Satan, and the snares of this world; but are recovered again, and brought to repentance; to whom the doctrines of peace and reconciliation, of free and full pardon by the blood of Christ, and of atonement of all their sins by his sacrifice, are to be preached for the comfort and refreshment of their souls; and they are to be received into the church, having their consciences sprinkled by the blood of Christ; the same things being done on this day as on the first. Jarchi thinks these words are to be transposed thus,

and ye shall reconcile, or "expiate the house from the man that erreth, and the simple one": quite contrary to the design of the text, which directs to the reception, and not the exclusion, of such persons.

{h} Mtrpkw "ut expietis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "et expiabitis", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 45:21

Ver. 21. In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month,.... Of the month Nisan, that day fortnight from the cleansing of the sanctuary; and that day week from the expiation of the house, and the recovery and reception of backsliders:

ye shall have the passover; Christ the passover sacrificed for us; held forth in the ministry of the word, and in the ordinance of the Lord's supper; for the passover was a type of Christ: his purity and strength were signified by the lamb without blemish, a male of the first year; his separation to his office, his death, and the time of it, by the taking of this lamb from the flock some time before, and by slaying it between the two evenings; the manner of feeding on him, with fervent faith, and as a whole Saviour, attended with true repentance, and being willing also to suffer for him, by the lamb being eaten not raw, nor sodden, but roasted, and all of it, and with bitter herbs; and the security of his people by his blood from wrath and ruin, through the sprinkling it upon their consciences, by the sprinkling the blood of the passover on the lintel and door posts of the Israelites, which the Lord seeing passed by, and destroyed them not; and the new rules of keeping this passover, after observed, show that this respects not the type, but the antitype:

a feast of seven days; kept a whole week; and indeed Christ the passover is by faith to be lived upon throughout the week, as well as on Lord's days, and indeed in every week:

unleavened bread shall be eaten; and not leavened; with reference to which the Gospel feast is to be kept, not with old leaven, with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, **1Co 5:7**.

Ezekiel 45:22

Ver. 22. And upon that day,.... The fourteenth day of the month Nisan; the first day of the passover, as Kimchi observes:

shall the prince prepare for himself, and for all the people of the land, a bullock for a sin offering; here everything again is new, as the above Jewish writer observes; no one circumstance according to the law of Moses; which shows that this respects Gospel times; when the law would be null and void, the types and shadows gone, and the antitype take place, Christ the sum of all; under the law, every family was to prepare a lamb for themselves; but here the prince is to prepare for himself, and all the people of the land; by that it was to be a lamb, here a bullock, and that for a sin offering; whereas not a bullock, but a goat, was used for a sin offering. Christ himself is this Prince, and who has prepared himself a sacrifice, even for himself, his church, which is mystically himself; and to make atonement for all those sins which he took upon himself by imputation, and made his own; even for all his chosen people, and for all their sins: of his preparing this sacrifice, both to be offered up, and to be held forth in the ministry of the word, See Gill on "Eze 45:17", and who is very fitly represented by a bullock for his labouriousness and strength, in bearing the sins of his people, when he became an offering for them.

Ezekiel 45:23

Ver. 23. And seven days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt offering to the Lord,.... Which is as follows:

seven bullocks and seven rams without blemish daily the seven days; that is, a bullock and a ram for each day:

and a kid of the goats daily for a sin offering; all which were typical of Christ, signified by the "bullock", for his labour and patience; by the "ram", for his strength; and by the kid of the goats, for his likeness of sinful flesh, and having the sins of his people reckoned to him; which made him of ill savour to the justice and holiness of God, and for which he fell a sacrifice. This is also different from the law of Moses, which required two young bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs,
Nu 28:19 and therefore Jarchi confesses he knew not how to make this Scripture stand, or establish the sense of it.

Ezekiel 45:24

Ver. 24. And he shall prepare a meat offering of an ephah for a bullock,.... Of the meat offering, See Gill on "Eze 45:17", this was to consist of an ephah of fine flour; and for every bullock on each of the seven days of the passover was a meat offering of such a quantity to be made:

and an ephah for a ram; a like quantity of fine flour was to be made into a meat offering for every ram on the same days:

and an hin of oil for an ephah; to every ephah of fine flour was, to be allowed an hin of oil, which, according to Bishop Cumberland, was a gallon and two pints, being the sixth part of an ephah or bath: here also, as Kimchi observes, will be an innovation in the offerings in future times, whether we will or not, he says; and Jarchi confesses his ignorance of these things; since, according to the law, three tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour were only allowed to make a meat offering for one bullock, and two tenth parts for a ram, Nu 28:12, this may denote the more abundance of grace, and of the knowledge of Christ, under the Gospel dispensation, and especially in the latter day glory.

Ezekiel 45:25

Ver. 25. In the seventh month, in the fifteenth day of the month,.... The month Tisri, which answers to part of our September and October:

shall he do the like in the feast of the seven days; the feast of tabernacles, which began the fifteenth of Tisri, and was kept seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, which is not here taken notice of: this feast was in commemoration of the Jews dwelling in tabernacles in the wilderness; and was typical of Christ's tabernacling in our nature, or of his incarnation; and which feast is to be kept in Gospel times, and particularly in the latter day, by believing in the incarnate Saviour, and in all the blessings flowing from his incarnation; and by attending the Gospel feast, his word and ordinances, which hold him forth as the only Saviour; See Gill on "Zec 14:16", now, the same things are to be done at this feast as at the feast of the passover:

according to the sin offering, according to the burnt offering, and according to the meat offering, and according to the oil: that is, so many bullocks and rams for the burnt offering, and a kid of the goats for the sin offering, as before; and the same quantity of fine flour and oil for the meat offering: this also is a new thing, as Kimchi observes; for, according to the law, the sacrifices at the feast of passover, and at the feast of tabernacles, were very different; and it might be further observed, that no notice is taken of the feast of pentecost, or first fruits; and the whole confirms what has been already observed, that this shows the abrogation of the Mosaic economy; and that these things are to be understood in a spiritual and evangelic sense.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 46:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 46

This chapter treats of the shutting of the eastern gate of the inner court on working days, and opening it on sabbaths and new moons, for the prince and people to worship in, Eze 46:1, gives a further account of the sacrifices of both at these seasons, and of their different ways of going in and out, Eze 46:4, delivers some rules about the prince's disposing of his gifts to his sons and servants, Eze 46:16 and describes the places for the priest's baking and boiling the sacrifices,
Eze 46:19.

Ver. 1. Thus saith the Lord God,.... Which is premised, to raise the greater attention to what is about to be said: the gate of the inner court that looketh towards the east; the eastern gate of the inner court; the court of the priests, where stood the altar of burnt offerings, and where they offered the sacrifices for atonement; and seems, in the mystical sense, to design the ministry of the Gospel, which is a ministry of reconciliation; which holds forth Christ as the altar saints have a right to eat of; and who is the sacrifice for sin, and has made reconciliation for it; and, where this is preached, he, the angel descending from the east, comes; here appears the rising sun, the sun of righteousness, who arises on those that fear his name, and love his Gospel, with healing in his wings: this gate

shall be shut the six working days; which seems to be the same with the gate of the outward sanctuary, Eze 44:1 said to be always shut, and never opened; but by what follows here it appears that that must be understood with some exception and limitation: the six working days are the six days of the week in which men should labour, and do all the work and business of their callings, that they may thereby provide for themselves and families, and have wherewith to give to the poor; during which time the public ministry of the word is intermitted, that men may not be taken off of their necessary and lawful employments; and that the ministers of the word may have sufficient time to prepare in their studies for their ministerial service:

but on the sabbath it shall be opened; by which is meant, not the Jewish sabbath now abrogated in the times this vision refers to; but the Lord's day, called by this Jewish name: and this being opposed to the six working days, shows that it ought to be kept by abstinence from all civil, corporeal, and servile works, as well as from dead works or sins, and in the exercise of all religious duties, private and public; and particularly in attendance on the ministry of the word, the gate now opened; and which is sometimes expressed by opening the door of faith, and is called an open door; and may be said to be so when ministers have an opportunity without, and great freedom within themselves, to preach it; and when the doors of men's hearts are opened to attend to it, and many souls are gathered to Christ, and into his churches, by it; see Ac 14:27:

and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened; on stated monthly days, in which the churches of Christ meet together for religious service: the new moon, which is an emblem of new light, and an increase of it, is very suitable to express the Gospel dispensation; in which, as Cocceius observes, there are some particular seasons that may be called so; as the coming of Christ into the world; his resurrection from the dead; the pouring forth of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; the destruction of the temple, and temple service; the peace and prosperity of the Christian churches in the times of Constantine; the morning star of the reformation; and the call of God's people out of Babylon at the destruction of it; at all which times there has been, or will be, an opening of this eastern gate, or a free, and glorious ministration of the Gospel. Some think these six working days design this life, which is the time of working, after which there will be none but an eternal sabbath or rest; and that, for the present, saints live and walk by faith, and not by sight; divine and heavenly things are greatly shut up, and out of sight; but then it will be new moon, as well as sabbath, and all things will be seen clearly; but the former sense I think is best, which yet I leave to the judgment of others. This Kimchi says is a new thing, that will be in time to come.

Ezekiel 46:2

Ver. 2. And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without,.... That is, by the way of the porch of the eastern gate, even the outermost gate of the porch; for, as every gate had a porch, so every porch had two gates, one at one end, and the other at the other; now this was the outermost gate of the porch, which looked to the outward court, and not that which led into the inner:

and shall stand by the post of the gate; this denotes the presence of Christ, the Prince with his people waiting at Wisdom's gate, and watching at the posts of her door. The allusion seems to be to the king's pillar in the temple, where he used to stand, 2Ch 23:13. Some understand this of Christ's incarnation, of his entrance into the world, and his standing before his Father, and praying for his people, as he did in the garden, and a little before his death, as recorded Joh 17:1.

and the priests shall prepare his burnt offerings, and his peace offerings; that is, shall offer them. The meaning is, that the ministers shall preach Christ and him crucified, who, by his sacrifice, has made atonement for sin, and peace for his people; though some interpret this of the concern the priests had in the crucifixion and death of Christ:

and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate; of the other gate that led into the inner court, and where he could see all that was done in it: or bow {i}; which it is observed he did, when he fell prostrate in the garden, and when he expired on the cross, and was at the threshold of the gate of heaven launching into eternity: worship and adoration, or bowing, be ascribed to Christ as man; see **Joh 4:22**:

then shall he go forth; out of this world to his Father, and be seen no more, until the restitution of all things; though this and the preceding may be understood of Christ's mystical worshipping; or of his people, who are one with him; and of their departure from public worship, when it is over:

but the gate shall not be shut until the evening; of the sabbath, or new moon; or the evening of the world, the second coming of Christ; the Gospel ministry and ordinances will continue till then, and no longer; and this is owing to his powerful and prevalent intercession in heaven, whither he is gone then the door will be shut, and not before,
Mt 25:10.

{i} hwxtvh "incurvaverit se", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "incurvato se", Piscator.

Ezekiel 46:3

Ver. 3. Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the Lord,.... Publicly, and in a spiritual manner; attending the ministration of the word and ordinances with constancy and fervency; praying to God, praising his name, and hearing his word with attention; and performing all the duties of religious worship. The allusion is to the people of Israel meeting at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, Ex 29:42: "in the sabbaths, and in the new moons"; at their stated weekly and monthly meetings; see Isa 66:23.

Ezekiel 46:4

Ver. 4. And the burnt offering the prince shall offer unto the Lord in the sabbath day,.... In Eze 45:17, it is said to be the prince's part to give and prepare sacrifices in the feasts, new moons, sabbaths, and all solemnities; and there follows an account of them, for New Year's Day, and for the feasts of passover and tabernacles; and here an account is given of those for the sabbaths and new moons; which is very properly reserved for this place, to follow the account of the opening of the eastern gate at those seasons: and the burnt offering for the sabbath shall be

six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish; according to the law of

Moses, only two lambs were the burnt offering for this day, besides the continual one, Nu 28:9, here Jarchi confesses his ignorance; and Kimchi says it is a new thing; and indeed it is, and is a proof of the ceremonial law being now abolished. These seven denote the perfect sacrifice of Christ, by which he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified; and being without blemish, the purity and holiness of it; and as the people of God on the six working days commit much sin, and contract much guilt, the sacrifice of Christ is signified by six lambs, which it is necessary they should hear of, and it should be set before them in the ministry of the word on Lord's days, which is meant by the offering of it; that they may by faith apply it to themselves, to the removal of sin from their consciences, and take the comfort of it; as the one ram may denote the one sacrifice of Christ, though typified by many; and who, like the ram, is the leader and guide of the flock: now, more creatures being offered for this burnt offering than under the law, denotes the clearer knowledge of the sacrifice of Christ under the Gospel, and the more extensive efficacy of it, to the removal of the guilt of sin from the Lord's people.

Ezekiel 46:5

Ver. 5. And the meat offering shall be an ephah for a ram,....
See Gill on "Eze 45:24":

and the meat offering for the lambs as he shall be able to give; or, and "the gift of his hand" {k}; it was fixed and stinted under the law, Nu 28:9, but now should be free and voluntary, and according to the ability of the giver; that is, the preacher of the word, who officiates for the prince, and in his name, and sets before the people the meat, or rather bread offering, Christ the bread of life, freely, and according to the ability and measure of the gift of grace bestowed upon him:

and an hin of oil to an ephah; which was also a larger quantity than under the law, denoting the larger measure of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, signified by oil, given unto the ministers of the word, and the people also; See Gill on "Eze 45:24".

{k} wdy ttm "donum manus ejus", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 46:6

Ver. 6. And in the day of the new moon it shall be a young bullock without blemish,.... This is also different from the law of Moses, which required two young bullocks and a ram, and seven lambs,
Nu 28:11, whereas here only one bullock:

and six lambs, and a ram; they shall be without blemish; and here Kimchi acknowledges again that this is a new thing to be done in future time. Some have observed, that the seven lambs under the law showed that perfection might be hoped for and expected; but, there being but six now, that this is not yet attained, nor will be till the saints get to heaven; though perfection is come by the priesthood of Christ, whose sacrifice is a perfect and complete one, and by which his people are perfected, and they are complete in him, yet they have no perfection in themselves.

Ezekiel 46:7

Ver. 7. And he shall prepare a meat offering, an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram,.... See Gill on "Eze 45:24":

and for the lambs according as his hand shall attain unto, and an hin of oil to an ephah; See Gill on "Eze 46:5".

Ezekiel 46:8

Ver. 8. And when the prince shall enter, he shall go in by the way of the porch of that gate,.... See Gill on "Eze 46:2";

and he shall go forth by the way thereof; the same way he came in, he shall go out; not so the people; and, to introduce the manner of their going in and out, this is repeated concerning the prince.

Ezekiel 46:9

Ver. 9. But when the people of the land shall come before the Lord in the solemn feasts,.... To worship the Lord, to pray and praise; to honour the Lord, and keep the solemn feast of love, the Lord's supper:

he that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worship shall go out by the way of the south gate; and he that entereth in by the way of the south gate shall go forth by the way of the north gate; that so such as were coming in, and going out, might not meet, and stop and hinder one another in going out and coming in: no mention is made of entering in by the east gate, which was only for the prince,
Eze 44:1, and there was no entering in, or going out, on the west:

he shall not return by the way of the gate he came in, but shall go forth over against it; signifying, that those that come to the house of God to worship, and join in communion with the saints, should not return to their former ways and practices; to their former rites, customs, and ceremonies in religion, used by them; and to their former principles and errors in doctrines; and to their former sinful courses of life; but go straight on and thorough stitch with it in their profession of Christ and his Gospel, and in the practice of spiritual and evangelic worship; see **Lu 9:62**.

Ezekiel 46:10

Ver. 10. And the prince in the midst of them,.... Christ in the midst of his people while worshipping; this situation of him agrees with all the descriptions of him; as the Angel in the midst of the bush on fire, and not consumed; as among the myrtle trees in the bottom; as walking in the midst of his golden candlesticks; as the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God; and as King, Priest, and Prophet, in his house; and with all the declarations and promises of his grace; and which is true in fact: and the phrase is expressive of his presence, not merely of his essential, powerful, and providential presence, common to all, but of his gracious presence with his people; he is in the midst of them, to assist them in every service; to protect them from every enemy; to sympathize with them in all their troubles; to deliver out of them; to supply them with all needful grace; and to rule over them, and defend them: and his being here shows that he is to be seen of all, to be come at and enjoyed by them; than which nothing is more desirable, and nothing more encouraging in the worship of God:

when they go in, shall go in; and when they go forth, shall go forth; when they go to the throne of grace, for grace and mercy to help in time of need, he goes with them; their access is through him; he introduces their persons, presents their petitions, is their advocate and intercessor for them, and for his sake they are heard and accepted: when they go into the house of God, and to the ordinances of it; when they go in and out to find pasture, he goes in with them, and before them, as the shepherd of the flock, and leads them into green pastures; he teaches them how to go in and out, and to behave themselves in the church of God; he is their guide, by way of instruction, both by his word and by his Spirit: when they go out from public service to their own houses, he goes with them, and by his Spirit brings to their remembrance what they have heard; and when they go forth into the world again, and the business of it, he goes forth with them, to preserve them from the evil of the world, and to keep them from falling; and when they go forth out of the world at death, he is with them through the dark valley; he sees them safe over Jordan's river, and introduces them into the heavenly Canaan, into his kingdom and glory, where they are for ever with him.

Ezekiel 46:11

Ver. 11. And in the feasts, and in the solemnities,.... Or, "appointed times" {l}; for public worship, for the ministration of the word and ordinances, which are feasts and solemn seasons;
See Gill on "Eze 45:15". Kimchi observes a difference between these two; and that though all feasts are called solemnities, or fixed seasons, Le 23:4, yet there are some solemnities that are not feasts, **Ge 1:14**:

the meat offering shall be an ephah to a bullock, and to the lambs as he is able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah; the same to be done on all feasts and solemnities as on the sabbath day;
See Gill on "Eze 46:5".

{l} Mydewmbw "et statis temporibus", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 46:12

Ver. 12. Now when the prince shall prepare a voluntary burnt offering, or peace offerings voluntarily unto the Lord,.... That is, on week days, distinct from sabbath days, new moons, feasts, and solemnities, of which before; and seems to have respect to week day lectures, in distinction from the weekly and monthly stated times, for the ministry of the word and administration of the

Lord's supper; in which lectures the principal thing insisted on must be the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and peace and reconciliation made by his blood; for the Gospel, which is to be preached in season and out of season, is the ministry of reconciliation, or the word preaching peace by Jesus Christ; and which should at all times be held forth, to the faith of God's people; which is meant by the preparation of these offerings: and being voluntary ones show not only that Christ's sacrifice was a willing one, and offered without any reluctance, with all readiness and cheerfulness; but also that week day lectures are voluntary things, which men are not under necessary obligation to attend unto, either ministers or people, but is a matter of free choice, as their circumstances will admit; and yet are acceptable to God, and agreeable to the will of Christ, the Prince, said to prepare these free will offerings:

one shall then open him the gate that looketh toward the east: the place where he stood and worshipped on the sabbath day; on the evening of which it was shut, and remained so the six days of the week,
Eze 46:1 only when it was the prince's pleasure to offer a sacrifice, or to have the word preached, it was opened by one of the porters of the gates; or there was an open exercise of the ministry of the word, by one of the preachers of it:

and he shall prepare his burnt offerings, and his peace offerings, as he did on the sabbath day; the same doctrine, respecting the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ, must be delivered at such times, as on Lord's days:

then he shall go forth; and after his going forth one shall shut the gate; on the sabbath day, or the Lord's day, it was not to be shut till the evening, because that day is wholly to be devoted to the service of God; men are not to find their own ways, nor do their own work, nor seek their own pleasure; but on week days, when the lecture is over, the gate is shut immediately, and persons may return to their worldly business directly.

Ezekiel 46:13

Ver. 13. Thou shalt daily prepare a burnt offering unto the Lord,.... Called the daily sacrifice, **Da 8:11** typical of Christ's sacrifice, which has a continual daily virtue in it, to take away the sins of his people; and which ought to be looked unto faith, and pleaded by them for that purpose every day **Joh 1:29**:

of a lamb of the first year without a blemish; a type of Christ the Lamb of God, without spot and blemish, strong and able, and so fit and proper to be a sacrifice for the sins of others:

thou shalt prepare it every morning; or, "morning by morning" {m}; this seems to be said not to the prince, but rather to the prophet, and indeed to every believer; who should, every morning he rises, look to Christ as the atoning sacrifice for sin, whose blood continually cleanses from it, and who is always in the midst of the throne as a lamb that had been slain, and ever lives to make intercession; and as the mercies of the Lord's people are renewed every morning, they should renew their thankfulness to God as often, and bring this lamb with them, through whose sacrifice their sacrifices of praise become acceptable. No mention is made of the evening sacrifice; see Ex 29:38, which some think is included in the morning burnt offering. Kimchi thinks that in future time this was not to be offered, only the morning sacrifice; but the true reason is, Christ has appeared once in the evening of the world, and offered up himself; yea, it was literally in the evening, or decline of the day, when he suffered, or between the two evenings, whereby he answered the type of the passover lamb; hence no evening sacrifice is mentioned, Christ's being offered up.

{m} rqbb rqbb "in mane, in mane", Montanus, Vatablus.

Ezekiel 46:14

Ver. 14. And thou shalt prepare a meat offering for morning,.... That is, for the daily burnt offering to go along with it; prayer and thanksgiving for our temporal and spiritual food, which should be done every morning:

the sixth part of an ephah, and the third part of an hin of oil, to temper with the fine flour; to mix with it, and moisten it: under the law, only a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour, and a fourth part of a hin of oil, were ordered to make this meat offering of, Ex 29:40, wherefore Kimchi observes, this is a new thing in time to come: the reason of it is this; to show us, that as the blessings of grace abound under the Gospel dispensation, we should abound in our thanksgiving to God:

a meat offering, continually, by a perpetual ordinance unto the Lord; these sorts of sacrifices are never to cease; and so the Jews {n} themselves say,

"in future time, or in the days of the Messiah, all sacrifices shall cease; but the sacrifice of praise shall not cease."

{n} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 153. 1.

Ezekiel 46:15

Ver. 15. Thus shall they prepare,.... This shows that not a single person is meant in the preceding verses, but all the Lord's people; who are all priests unto God, and who are to offer up daily spiritual sacrifices unto him:

the lamb, and the meat offering, and the oil every morning, for a continual burnt offering; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and to excite a careful and constant attention to it.

Ezekiel 46:16

Ver. 16. Thus saith the Lord God,.... Having finished the account of the sacrifices of the prince and people, the monthly, weekly, and daily ones; here his gifts are treated of, which are two fold; some given to his sons, others to his servants:

if the prince give a gift to any of his sons; Christ, the Prince, has sons; he that is the Prince, of peace is the everlasting Father; he has children given unto him, whom he preserves; a seed promised him in covenant, which shall always endure; a family he is master of, and cares for; for whose sake he became incarnate, suffered, and died: they are sons by adopting grace, and in their adoption he has a great concern; they are predestinated to it by him; they receive it through him; he gives them power to become the sons of God, and they are manifestatively so through faith in him; they appear to be his sons, or are evidenced as such by their regeneration, which also is of him: it is by his Spirit they are regenerated; it is his grace that is implanted in them; it is he himself that is formed in them, and his image that is stamped upon them; it is owing to his word and Gospel as the means and to his resurrection as the virtual cause of it; it is in his church they are born, yea, of her, to whom he stands in the relation of a husband, and so they are sons brought forth to him by her; and these are princes by birth, have a free and princely spirit, and are brought up and provided for as such: now to these Christ gives gifts; gifts of special grace, all sorts of grace; sanctifying grace, faith, hope, love, repentance, &c.; justifying grace, the gift of righteousness; pardoning grace;

adopting grace; all supplies of grace; spiritual strength, peace, joy and comfort; and persevering grace, to hold out to the end: and he also gives glory or eternal life; this is with him, in his hands; he has a power to give and he does give it, to all his sons; all which, being once given, ever continue.

The inheritance thereof shall be his sons', it shall be their possession by inheritance; that is, it shall ever remain with them, shall never be taken away from them; these are gifts and calling without repentance, irreversible blessings, which are for ever: sanctifying grace is a well of living water, springing up unto eternal life; faith, hope, and love, always abide; Christ's justifying righteousness is an everlasting one; pardon of sin is of all sin, past, present, and to come, and is never made void or called in; once children of God, and always such; and the inheritance of heaven is incorruptible, never fading, and eternal; and all this flows from the unchangeable love of God and Christ to these sons of the prince.

Ezekiel 46:17

Ver. 17. But if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants,.... Who are not his sons, but his hired servants, and who serve him in a mercenary way; such are unregenerate ministers of the word, who preach Christ in pretence, and not in reality, for by ends, to serve themselves, and not him, or to advance his glory; and all carnal professors, who have only an outside of religion, a form of godliness without the power of it: to these Christ gives gifts, the gifts of nature, wealth, and riches, to some, to whom he gives not grace; these are his left hand blessings, which are given to the men of the world, who have their portion in this life: to others external means, the word and ordinances, but not internal special grace; yea, to some, gifts for the ministry, so as to be able to prophesy or preach in his name, which are meant by the talents, and pounds in the parable; some of which were given to slothful and unprofitable servants; see **Mt 7:20**.

Then it shall be his to the year of liberty; the servant's to whom it is given, as long as the prince pleases; who when they make no use, or an ill use of them, takes them away in lifetime, and gives them to those that have more, and employ them to better purpose,
Zec 11:17, or however at death, which is a time of liberty from civil bondage, the servant is free from his master; and when good men are freed from the oppression of others, and from sin, Satan, and the world, and are delivered into

the glorious liberty of the children of God; this is a year of liberty indeed to them; and then all external gifts to others, as riches, are held no longer; the word and ordinances no more enjoyed; prophesying, speaking with tongues, and all mere natural knowledge, cease, and vanish away, 1Co 13:8, the allusion is to the year of jubilee, when liberty was proclaimed throughout the land, and every man returned to his possession, and to his family, Le 25:10, and so the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it of the year of jubilee; a type of the heavenly glory, and of the joy of the Lord, which Christ's faithful servants enter into; and when there will be a manifest difference between them and slothful servants, and the gifts of the one and of the other, and of their use of them, as well as between sons and servants:

after it shall return to the prince; signifying that such gifts are not durable; they are revertible to the donor of them; who will call these servants to an account for them at death or judgment, if not in time of life:

but his inheritance shall be his sons' for them; the prince's inheritance shall be theirs; for being sons they are heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: or that which is given them for an inheritance shall always continue; it shall never be taken from them or returned; but it shall be their own, for themselves, and enjoy it for ever; which is a confirmation of what is said in the preceding verse.

Ezekiel 46:18

Ver. 18. Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression, to thrust them out of their possession,.... Christ, the Prince, will never do this; he will never take any part of his people's inheritance from them, or thrust them out of the possession of any benefit or blessing of grace; they have chosen that good part which shall never be taken from them, Lu 10:42, this is said, not as a direction to the prince, as a law enjoined him, or a caution to him against oppression; but as expressing his clemency, grace, and goodness to his subjects, and their safety and security under him:

but he shall give his sons inheritance out of his own possession; whatever Christ gives his sons, whether present grace, or future glory, it is out of his own possession; for all that the Father has are his; all the blessings of goodness are with him; all the fulness of grace is in him; the eternal inheritance is reserved with him in heaven; and it is all his own he gives, and not another's:

that my people be not scattered every man from his possession; or, "that therefore my people may not be scattered every" "men from his possession" {o}; because what is given them, and they are in possession of, was Christ's own, and not another's; and which he had a right to dispose of, and therefore they need not fear being dispossessed by another claimant.

{o} yme wupy al rva Neml "ideo ne dispergantur populus meus", Starckius.

Ezekiel 46:19

Ver. 19. After he brought me through the entry, which was at the side of the gate,.... The north gate of the inner court, where the prophet was last, Eze 44:4, through an entry, by the side of that, he was brought by the man his guide:

into the holy chambers of the priests; see Eze 42:13:

and, behold, there was a place in the two sides westward; or, "on their sides westward" {p}; on the west side of the chambers; the Targum is at the west end of them: the use of this place follows,

{p} Mtkryb "in lateribus ejus vel eorum, in extremo", Starckius.

Ezekiel 46:20

Ver. 20. Then said he unto me,.... Declaring what this place was, and what it was for:

this is the place where the priests shall boil the trespass offering, and the sin offering; this was the priests' kitchen, in which they prepared the sacrifices that were to be eaten; and which were typical of Christ, who was made sin, and became a sacrifice for the sins of his people, whether presumptuous ones, or sins of ignorance; the doctrine of whose sacrifice and satisfaction is a principal part of the Gospel ministry; and which should be delivered, not in a raw, crude, and indigested manner; but the Scriptures should be diligently searched into, to get a clear and distinct understanding of it; and these should be constantly meditated on, and thoroughly studied: ministers should examine their doctrine by the word of God before they deliver it; and take heed unto it that it is right, according to the oracles of God, and the proportion of faith; and take care to deliver it in the best manner, not in a cold lukewarm way, but with fervency of spirit; all which may be meant by the boiling of these sacrifices; it seems to design the laborious and diligent employ of Gospel ministers in their studies, preparatory to their public work in the house of God; and suggests that they should not come thither unprepared, and deliver out unpremeditated matter; or set before the Lord's people undigested food; or offer that in the sanctuary of the Lord which cost them no pains or trouble: this place, and so the boiling places in Eze 46:24, are to be understood of the closets, studies, and places of retirement, where the ministers of the word employ their time and thoughts in preparing for their public ministry; for these were without the sanctuary, on the side of the priests' chambers, and in the corners of the outward court:

where they shall bake the meat offering; or "bread offering" {q}; made of fine flour and oil; typical of Christ the bread of God, the food of believers, who is set forth as such to them in the ministry of the Gospel: the baking of this signifies the same as the boiling of the other before; see **Le 2:1**:

that they bear them not out in the utter court, to sanctify the people; that they might not be carried through the outer court, where the common people were; lest they should think it was lawful for them to eat of them as Kimchi observes, when they belonged to the priests only; or lest they should touch them, and become holy thereby, and so for the future be employed in sacred service, and obliged to quit the duties of their calling, which would, introduce confusion in the commonwealth; see **Hag 2:12**, the Targum is,

"lest they be mixed with the people."

The design seems to be to show, that the doctrine of peace, pardon, atonement, and satisfaction for sin, is only to be preached as belonging to such that truly repent of sin, and believe in Christ; and particularly that the ordinance of the Lord's supper, in which the sacrifice of Christ is held forth and commemorated, is to be administered, not to men in common, but to holy and regenerate persons; to do otherwise would be to cast pearls before swine, and give that which is holy to dogs.

{q} hxnmh, "the minchah."

Ezekiel 46:21

Ver. 21. Then he brought me forth into the utter court,.... From the holy chambers of the priests, and from viewing the place where they boiled the sacrifices, and baked the meat offering:

and caused me to pass by the four corners of the court; in each of the four corners of the outward court there was another court; signifying that there will be courts or churches in the several parts of the world in the latter day.

Ezekiel 46:22

Ver. 22. In the four corners of the court there were courts joined,.... To the side walls of the outward court, which met in right angles: or, "were made with chimneys" {r}, as some render it; that the smoke of the fire of the kitchens in them, and the steam of the boiled flesh, might ascend through them. So the Jewish writers, as Jarchi and Kimchi, from the Misnah {s}, generally interpret the word, that these courts were made so as to let out the smoke, and were not roofed or floored over {t}; and in which treatise and also by Maimonides {u}; the uses of them in the second temple are observed: for in answer to the question, what do they serve for? it is said, at the southeast was the chamber of the Nazarites, where they boiled their peace offerings, and shaved their hair, and put them under the pot; at the northeast was the wood chamber, where the priests that had blemishes wormed the wood; and any wood, in which a worm was found, was rejected from the altar: at the northwest was the chamber of the lepers: of that which was at the southwest, saith R. Eliezer Ben Jacob, I have forgot (some render it found) of what use it is; but Abba Saul says, there they put the wine and oil, wherefore it was called the oil chamber. These four chambers, according to the same treatise, were in the four corners of the court of the women, and consisted of forty cubits long, but were not roofed; and so, they say, they will be in future time, according to this passage of Scripture. These places, as Dr. Lightfoot {w} observes, are called by the prophet "courts", and in everyone of them places to boil the sacrifices in; and yet they are allotted to other uses in the Misnah, and which seem to require that they should be roofed; all which may consist together, he says: for, grant everyone of these spaces to be built within, with chambers round about, there might be very fair chambers, and yet a good handsome open court in the middle; at either end chambers of ten cubits broad, and yet an open space of twenty cubits between; and on either side chambers of seven or eight cubits broad, and yet an open space of fourteen or sixteen cubits between: thus therefore, adds he, it seems to be, that there were fair chambers round about, which were roofed over as other buildings; and in the middle was an open court, round about which were boiling ranges, whose chimneys went up in the inner walls of the chambers, or the walls to the open place: thus the inner court served for boiling places, and the rooms round about for other uses; see the two following verses. The measure of the courts were,

of forty cubits long, and thirty broad; an oblong quadrangle:

these four corners were of one measure; the courts that were in these four corners were, of the same measure, as to length and breadth; denoting the equality of Gospel churches, being of the same faith, order and discipline, power and authority.

{r} twrjq twrux "atria caminata", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus, Cocceius; "fumosa", Tigurine version, Castalio; "fumigata", Starckius. {s} Middot, c. 2. sect. 5. {t} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {u} Hilchot Beth Habechira, c. 5. sect. 8. {w} Prospect of the Temple, c. 18. p. 1092, 1093.

Ezekiel 46:23

Ver. 23. And there was a row of building round about in them,.... Within the courts, not on the outside of them: these were either chambers to eat the sacrifices in when boiled; or they were sheds which covered the cooks, and the meat they were boiling, from the rain, &c.: the Targum renders it,

"and walls were made to them round about;"

to the court: and so Jarchi and Kimchi interpret this row of building of a stone wall:

round about them four; the four courts at the four corners:

and it was made with boiling places under the rows round about; under these rows of building, chambers or sheds; or under these stone walls were furnaces, and coppers, and caldrons, set on them, for the boiling of the sacrifices.

Ezekiel 46:24

Ver. 24. Then said he unto me, these are the places of them that boil,.... The kitchens, in which those whose business it was to boil the sacrifices did it; and who they were are next declared:

where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifice of the people; these seem to be the Levites, as distinct from the priests before mentioned; though in this prophecy they are both used of the same persons; see Eze 44:15, the sacrifice of the people were the peace offerings, which the people might eat of, but were first to be boiled; typical of peace and reconciliation made by Christ, held forth in the ministry of the word, called from thence the word of reconciliation: of the boiling of sacrifices, See Gill on "Eze 44:15". The Targum is,

"the holy sacrifices of the people;"

see Ro 12:1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 47:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 47

This chapter gives an account of the vision of the holy waters, and of the borders of the holy land, and the division of it to Israelites and strangers. The waters are described by the original and spring of them, Eze 47:1, by the progress and increase of them, Eze 47:3, by the healing and quickening nature of them, and the places where they were so, and were not, Eze 47:8, and by the trees which grew upon the banks of them, Eze 47:6. The borders of the holy land are fixed, Eze 47:13, the northern border, Eze 47:15, the eastern border, Eze 47:18, the southern, Eze 47:19, and the western, Eze 47:20, which is to be divided by lot to the tribes of Israel, and the strangers that sojourn among them, Eze 47:21.

Ver. 1. Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house,.... The door of the temple, even of the holy of holies; hither the prophet is said to be brought again, or "brought back" {x}; for he was last in the corners of the outward court, viewing the kitchens or boiling places of the ministers; but now he was brought back into the inner court, and to the door that led into the holiest of all:

and, behold! for it was matter of admiration, as well as of observation and attention:

waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward; this is a new thing, to which there was nothing like it, either in the first or second temple. Ariateas {y} indeed relates what he himself saw,

"a never failing conflux of water, as of a large fountain, naturally flowing underneath, and wonderful receptacles under ground; to each of which were leaden pipes, through which the waters came in on every side, for about half a mile about the temple, and washed away the blood of the sacrifices;"

and so the Talmudists {z} say, there was an aqueduct from the fountain of Etam, and pipes laid from thence to supply the temple with water, for the washing and boiling of the sacrifices, and keeping the temple clean: but these waters are quite different; they are such as came out of the temple, and not what were carried by pipes into it; nor were they a common sewer to carry off the filth of it, but formed a delightful and useful river. The fountain of them is not declared, only where they were first seen to issue out,

under the threshold of the house eastward; the threshold of the door of the most holy place; so that they seem to take their rise from the holy of holies, the seat of the divine Majesty, and throne of God, with which agrees Re 22:1, and so the Talmudists {a} say, that this fountain came first from the house of the holy of holies, under the threshold of the door of it, which looked to the east:

for the fore front of the house stood toward the east; the holy of holies was at the west end of the temple; but the front of it, and so the door into it, was to the east, and from hence these waters flowed:

and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house; they are said to "come down", because the temple was high built upon the top of a mountain; and "from under", that is, the threshold of the door of it; or rather in subterraneous passages, till they appeared from under that; and this was "on the right side of the house"; that is, on the south side: for, suppose a man standing with his face to the east, as the prophet did, when he turned himself to see which way the waters flowed, having his face to the west when he first saw them come out; the south then must be on his right hand, and so it follows:

at the south side of the altar; of the altar of burnt offerings, which stood before the house.

{x} ynbvyw "reduxit me", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Starckius. {y} Hist. 70. Interpret. p. 32, 33. Ed. Oxon. 1692, {z} T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 41. Cippi Hebr. p. 10. {a} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 77. 2.

Ezekiel 47:2

Ver. 2. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward,.... Out of the inward court where he was, by the way of the north gate, the eastern gate being shut:

and led me about the way without unto the utter gate, by the way that looketh eastward; and from thence he had him round to the outward eastern gate, where he was at first, Eze 40:6, to meet the flow of waters that came through the inward and outward courts eastward:

and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side; that is, on the south side of the gate, in a small quantity, and in a very still and easy way, like water out of the mouth of a vial, as the word {b} signifies. So Bartenora {c}, who understands this gate of the water gate, interprets the right side of the south; and observes, that the prophet first saw the waters come out very small, like the horns of a locust; but when they came to this gate, they became like water as it flows out of the mouth of a small pitcher: and from this whole account of the waters, it is plain they cannot be understood literally, but figuratively; and which confirm this to be the sense of the whole vision. They may be applied unto, and serve to illustrate, the love of God; the secret spring of which is in the heart and will of God; ran under ground from all eternity; channelled in Christ; broke up and issued forth in the mission of him into the world, under the threshold of him, the door of the church; and in and by him, the altar, sacrifice, and propitiation; wherein the love of God in an especial manner is manifested; and which has its heights and depths, immeasurable and unfathomable, **Eph 3:18**, these waters also may be applied to the grace of the Spirit of God in regeneration and conversion; which is compared to water, for its cleansing, fructifying, and refreshing nature; to "waters", for the abundance of it; and this flows from the God of all grace through Christ, and out of his fulness is gradually increased, and becomes a well, yea, rivers of living water,

Joh 7:37, but it seems best to understand them of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; which, like water, cools those who are inflamed with the heat of the fiery law; extinguishes the thirst of sensible sinners, and refreshes them; cleanses and purifies their souls, which is instrumentally done with the washing of water by the word; and makes them fruitful and flourishing: this is not of men, but God; comes from heaven, the holy of holies; and out of the house and church of God; from Zion and Jerusalem, by Christ the door, and points to him the way; and is chiefly concerning him, the altar, his sacrifice and satisfaction, peace, atonement, and propitiation by him; see **Isa 2:3**.

{b} Mykpm "manabant tanquam e phiala", Junius & Tremellius; "phialabant", Junius; "destillabant", Cocceius, Starckius. {c} In Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 4.

Ezekiel 47:3

Ver. 3. And when the man that had the line in his hand,.... The same as in Eze 40:3 and is no other than Christ, who appeared in a human form to the prophet; and who hitherto had only made use of the measuring reed in taking the dimensions of the house, and what appertained to it; but now he uses the line of flax he had in his hand, in measuring the waters as they ran; by which line is meant the Scriptures, the word of God, by which all doctrines are to be measured: this is the rule that both preachers and hearers are to go by; and, as by the direction of this person the waters flowed where he would have them, so the doctrines of the Gospel are preached by the order of Christ where he pleases; see Lu 24:47, and these move in a direct line, as those waters did; error is crooked, and has its windings and turnings; but truth is straight and even; all the words of Wisdom are right, and there is nothing froward, perverse, or crooked in them, **Pr 8:8**:

went forth eastward; which was the course the waters took by his direction; the Gospel was first spread in the eastern part of the world, in Asia, where many churches were planted by it; it has been since in the south, in Africa, particularly in the times of Austin, when these waters, the doctrines of grace, flowed largely; and they have been since in the north and west, in Europe, in our northern climes; all which perhaps may be signified by the right side, or south side, by which these waters flowed, and by the prophet's going to the north gate, and about, to see them; but in the latter day they will move eastward again, when the kings of the east and their kingdoms shall become Christ's; see Re 16:12:

he measured a thousand cubits; or, "a thousand by the cubit {d}"; the Targum is,

"a thousand cubits by the cubit;"

with his line from the eastern gate of the house, at the right side of which the waters ran out; this was about half a mile:

and he brought me through the waters: not the thousand cubits he had measured; but when he came to the end of them, he made the prophet to cross the waters, to go through them across, that he might observe the depth of them:

and the waters were to the ankles; were ankle deep, a few inches: or, "to the soles"; for, as R. Jonah thinks, a may be additional; and
op, in the Syriac language, signifies a part of the hand, **Da 5:5**, and, applied to the feet, designs the soles of them; and then the sense is, the waters were so shallow, that they only covered the soles of the feet: this may signify the ministry of John the Baptist, who, though greater than the prophets, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he; and of the disciples of Christ, before the effusion of the Spirit: or may design the more easy doctrines of the Gospel; those waters which Christ's lambs may wade in; that milk which new born babes desire, and are fed with; those plain truths of the word, which those of the weakest capacity are able to take in, receive, and embrace; in the knowledge of which, though fools, they err not; such as salvation by Christ alone; justification by his righteousness; peace and pardon by his blood; which are so plain, as to be understood by every truly gracious soul, though of ever so mean a capacity: or it may intimate the small spread of the Gospel at first in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee.

{d} hmab Pla "mille in cubito", Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus.

Ezekiel 47:4

Ver. 4. And again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees,.... The man with his line measured another thousand cubits straight on from the first; and then bid the prophet cross and ford them again, and then they were knee deep:

again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins; a third time he measured a thousand cubits still onward, and ordered the prophet to wade through them, when they were risen so high as to reach his loins. The waters to the knees and loins may signify the greater knowledge of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it, the apostles had after the Spirit was poured forth; and the greater spread of it in the world, among Jews and Gentiles: or else may design those doctrines of the Gospel, and mysteries of grace, which are more sublime, and more difficult to understand; which require some pains to search into, and get the knowledge of; as concerning predestination, election, the covenant of grace, and the eternal transactions between the Father and the Son, &c. which are meat for strong men, who have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil.

Ezekiel 47:5

Ver. 5. Afterward he measured a thousand,.... A fourth time a thousand cubits. Some think these four measurings respect the preaching of the Gospel in the four parts of the world; but rather they refer to four remarkable seasons of the ministry of it; as in the times of John the Baptist, and the disciples of Christ before his death; in the primitive churches of the three first centuries; at the time of the Reformation; and in the latter day glory, which is the fourth and last measuring:

and it was a river that I could not pass over; the prophet could not set his foot on the bottom, and wade through it, and cross over it, as he had done before:

for the waters were risen, waters to swim in; not to walk in:

a river that could not be passed over; by any man, on his feet; only by swimming, and perhaps not by that, at least not without difficulty: this may signify the large spread of the Gospel in the latter day, when the earth shall be filled with it, as the waters cover the sea; and the great light into it, and knowledge of it, that men shall then have,
Isa 11:9, and yet that there are some doctrines exceeding deep, out of the reach and penetration of men, called the deep things of God, which human reason cannot attain, and where it cannot fix its foot, **1Co 2:9**, and which are only to be reached and embraced in the swimming arms of faith; and, though believed, cannot be accounted for, as to the modus of them, and are not to be dived into; such as the trinity of Persons in the Godhead, and the distinct manner of their subsisting in it; the generation of the Son; the procession of the Spirit; the incarnation of Christ; the union of the two natures in his person; the resurrection of the dead, &c.

Ezekiel 47:6

Ver. 6. And he said unto me, son of man, hast thou seen this? &c]. That is, the man that measured the waters said to the prophet, hast thou carefully observed all this from whence the waters flowed? from what small beginnings they rose, and gradually increased? how they first issued forth, as out of a vial; and now, in the space of about two or three miles, are become a deep river, and impassable? it is right and profitable to observe the rise and progress of the Gospel; what a spread it has had in the world, and what it will have:

then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river; there to stand and observe the nature of the waters, and the course of them; the multitude of fish in them; and the trees which grew upon the banks of them; of all which some account is given in the following verses.

Ezekiel 47:7

Ver. 7. Now when I had returned,.... To the brink of the river:

behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side, and on the other; here was a new wonder observed, which had not been before; and therefore this note of admiration, "behold!" is prefixed; on a sudden sprung up trees on each side of the river, of a perfect stature, and full of fruit; which the prophet had not seen when he went along with the man on the bank of it, as he measured the waters; but now being returned, sees this wonderful sight; an emblem of true Christians, believers, and regenerate persons, who are trees of righteousness, planted by the river of divine love; watered with the grace of God, and doctrines of the Gospel; whereby they become fruitful in good works, and are to be seen wherever the Gospel comes with power and efficacy; see **Ps 1:3**, or, "an exceeding large tree" {e}; so John saw but one tree, which was on each side of the river, which he calls the tree of life, Re 22:2, but here it seems to be put for many, as appears from Eze 47:12.

{e} dam br Ue "arbor multa admodum", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 47:8

Ver. 8. Then said he unto me,.... The man that measured the waters spoke to the prophet again, and showed him the course of the waters; the quickening and healing virtue of them, and the multitude of fish in them:

these waters issue out toward the east country; the Gospel was first preached in the eastern parts of the world; See Gill on "Eze 47:3", or "towards the first, or east Galilee" {f}; in Galilee Christ began to preach, and wrought his first miracle; here he called his disciples, and chiefly conversed; and here he had the greatest followers, and some of the first Christian churches were formed here after his ascension, **Mt 4:12**:

and go down into the desert; or wilderness, the wilderness of the people, the Gentiles; to whom the Gospel was carried when rejected by the Jews, and who before were like a desert, but now became as a fruitful field, Isa 35:1. The Jews {g} interpret this of the plain, or the sea of Galilee or Tiberius, at which Christ called his disciples; near to this he delivered his discourses concerning himself, the bread of life, and eating his flesh, and drinking his blood; here he met with his disciples after his resurrection, and enjoined Peter to feed his sheep and lambs; see **Mt 4:18**:

and go into the sea; the Dead sea, or sea of Sodom, the lake Asphaltites, where nothing is said to live; an emblem of dead sinners; and may represent the worst of sinners, as the Sodomites were; and to such the Gospel was sent, and became effectual to salvation: or it may rather design the great ocean, and may signify the whole world, and all the nations of it, to which the Gospel, by the commission of Christ, was to be preached; see **Da 7:2**. The Targum is,

"and go through the sea into the great sea;"

it may be rendered, "and go toward the west" {h}; the Mediterranean sea being to the west of Judea, it is often put for the west; and so the sense may be, that these waters should flow east and west, as the living waters in Zec 14:8, the same with those, are said to do; and all the Jewish writers think there is such a division of the waters intended, and that they had two streams or rivers; which may receive some confirmation from the next verse, where the word for rivers is of the dual number, and signifies two rivers. The sense of the whole is, that the Gospel should be first preached in Judea and Galilee; then among the Gentiles throughout the Roman empire; and in the latter day especially throughout the world, when it shall be covered with it as the waters cover the sea, Isa 11:9:

which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed; that is, which waters of the river being directed and brought into, either the Dead sea, or the great ocean, the waters of the one, or of the other, were healed; and of bituminous and bitter waters were made clear, sweet, and wholesome; and signify the change made in sinful men by means of the Gospel, who are thereby quickened, made partakers of the grace of God, and have their sins pardoned, which is often meant by healing in Scripture, Ps 103:2, pardon of sin flows from the love and grace of God; is the great doctrine of the Gospel, and by which the Lord speaks peace and pardon, and communicates healing of all spiritual diseases to sinners sensible of them; see Ps 107:20.

{f} hnwmdqh hlylgh la "in Galileam prinam", Junius & Tremellius; "ad Galileam anteriorem", Cocceius, Piscator, Starckius; "Galileam orientalem", Munster; so some in Vatablus, Tigurine version; so the Targum. {g} Tosaphta Succa in Jarchi & Kimchi in loc.; so in Ben Melec. {h} hmyx wabw.

Ezekiel 47:9

Ver. 9. And it shall come to pass that everything that liveth, which moveth,.... That is, every living man; everyone that lives naturally or corporeally, that lives, moves, and has his being in God, as all men have, Ac 17:28,

whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live; or, "the two rivers" {i}; the waters divided as before, east and west; not the two Testaments, Old and New; nor the two ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper; but the Gospel, which, wherever it shall come with power, and to whomsoever it so comes, they shall live spiritually; not to whomsoever it is preached, for to some it is not profitable; see
Eze 47:11, but is the savour of death unto death; but to all to whom it is accompanied by the Spirit of God it is the savour of life unto life; the Spirit that gives life, and is the means of it: indeed, the love of God is the river of water of life, Re 21:1, it is the spring of spiritual life to dead sinners, and what revives drooping saints, quickens their graces, faith, hope, and love; enlivens and cheers their spirits, and greatly influences true religion and godliness, and very much promotes the life and power of it: and so the grace of the Spirit is living water, by which dead sinners are quickened; the work of grace in saints is revived, and which always continues and issues in eternal life, **Joh 4:10**, but the Gospel, and its doctrines, are rather intended; which are the means of quickening those who are dead in trespasses and sins; serve greatly to

invigorate the graces of the Spirit in the hearts of God's people; to influence their lives and conversations; to support them under afflictions, and to nourish them up to everlasting life; and point out the way to eternal life, and give a true account of it.

And there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither; that is, a multitude of fish in the Dead sea, where none lived before, and owing to those waters coming thither: it signifies the great number of living Christians, true believers, who shall appear wherever the Gospel is truly, purely, and powerfully preached; of these see more in the next verse:

for they shall be healed; See Gill on "Eze 47:8":

and everything shall live whither the river cometh; not only shall live as before, but continue to live, shall never die; their graces shall not die, nor shall they themselves die the second death, but shall have eternal life; because of the purpose of God, who has ordained them to it; and the promise of God, who is faithful to it; and because of the security of their life in Christ, to whom they are united; and because of the indwelling of the Spirit of life in them. So the Targum,

"they shall remain in every place where the waters of the river come."

{i} Mylxn "duo torrentes", Pagninus, Montanus; "geminus torrens", Tigurine version, Cocceius; "fluvius geminus", Starckius.

Ezekiel 47:10

Ver. 10. And it shall come to pass,.... In Gospel times: what follows had a fulfilment in the first times of the Gospel, and will have a greater in the latter times of it:

that the fishers shall stand upon it; upon the brink of the river, or the shore of the sea, whose waters will be healed by this river running into them. These "fishers" are the apostles of Christ, who, of fishermen, were made fishers of men by him; to whom he gave a call, and a commission, and gifts qualifying them to preach the Gospel; whereby they caught men, and brought them to Christ; and so were the instruments of saving them, even of great numbers, both in Judea, and in the Gentile world; of which some instances of their fishing, after their call to the ministry, were emblematical; **Mt 4:18**, likewise all other ministers of the Gospel are here meant, especially those that will be in the latter day; compared to fishers for the meanness and contemptibleness of their employment in the eyes of the world; for their labouriousness in it, and for their patient waiting for success therein; and for the bad weather, storms, and tempests, they are exposed unto, the reproach and persecution of men; and their being the happy means of drawing souls out of the abyss of sin and misery unto Christ, for life and salvation: and their "standing" upon the brink of the waters to catch fish may denote their constancy their work; their strict attachment to the doctrines of the Gospel, and their waiting for success in it.

From Engedi even unto Eneglaim; two places, which, according to Jerom, lay, the latter one at the entrance of the Dead sea, and the former at the end of it; but Reland {k} observes that this could not be, if Josephus is to be credited, who makes Engedi to be about forty miles from Jerusalem {l}; therefore could not be far from the beginning of the Dead sea, and not where it ended; since the Dead sea, or the lake of Asphaltites, was in length seventy three miles, and, consequently, Engedi must be more than seventy five or ninety miles from Jerusalem; but that it was at the beginning of it is still further manifest from the same writer making the lake to be just such a number of miles from Jerusalem {m} as he does Engedi; and whereas Engedi was on the western shore of the lake, as appears from Pliny {n}, it is probable there was another city on the eastern shore, opposite to it, called Eneglaim; and there was a city on that side, the name of which was Agallim, which, according to Eusebius, was eight miles from Areopolis: and so it may signify the extent of the Gospel ministry, which, in the latter day, will be from one end of the earth to the other; and which took a large circuit in the times of the apostles, and particularly by the Apostle Paul, Ro 15:19.

They shall be a place to spread forth nets; that is, the above said places shall be made use of for that purpose; which design the Gospel, and the ministry of it, compared to a net, for its meanness in the esteem of the world; and yet is a piece of curious artifice and wisdom, even the manifold wisdom of God, and is contrived for the gathering in of sinners to Christ; and, though it may be like a net "per accidens", the means of troubling the world, and drawing out the corruptions of the men of it; yet its principal design, and the use that is made of it, is to draw souls out of the depths of sin unto the grace of Christ; see Mt 13:47, the spreading and casting of nets design the preaching of the Gospel, and the opening and explaining the doctrines of it, which are shut up and hidden to men; and to do which requires wisdom and skill, strength, diligence, and patience, and is done at a venture; and sometimes is cast where fish are, and sometimes not; but here, and at this time, with great success.

For their fish shall be according to their kind, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many: that is, there shall be fish of all sorts, small and great, and in large numbers, as in the great ocean, or as in the Mediterranean sea. These signify regenerated persons, who are born of water and the Spirit by the word of God, which is their element; they cannot live but in these waters of the sanctuary, and where the doctrines of grace are preached. Now many of all nations, and men of all ranks, will be called; kings, princes, nobles, as well as peasants; men high and low, rich and poor, and multitudes of them, like the fishes of the sea; which will be the case when the Jews will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in.

{k} Palestina Illustrata, I. 2. p. 449. & l. 3. p. 763. {l} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 1. sect. 2. {m} Antiqu. l. 15. c. 6. sect 2. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 17.

Ezekiel 47:11

Ver. 11. But the miry places thereof, and the marshes thereof,.... That is, of the sea; the waters of which were healed, by the waters of the sanctuary coming into them: but the ditches and lakes, the miry and marsh ground, separate from the sea, which lay near it, and upon the borders of it,

shall not be healed; these design the reprobate part of the world, obstinate and perverse sinners, that abandon themselves to their filthy lusts, and sensual pleasures; that wallow like swine in the mire and dirt of sin; are wholly immersed in the things of this world, mind nothing but earth and earthly things, and load themselves with thick clay; whose god is their belly, and who glory in their shame: also hypocrites and apostates may be here meant, who, despising the GospeL, and the doctrines of it, put it away from them, and judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life, and so receive no benefit by it; but, on the contrary, it is the savour of death unto death unto them; see **Isa 6:9**:

they shall be given to salt; left to the hardness of their hearts; given up to the lusts of them; devoted to ruin and destruction and remain barren and unfruitful, as places demolished and sown with salt are; see De 29:23, or made an example of, as Lot's wife was; that others may learn wisdom, and shun those things that have been the cause of their ruin. The Targum is, "its pools and lakes shall not be healed; they shall be for salt pits."

Ezekiel 47:12

Ver. 12. And by the river on the banks thereof, on this side and on that side,.... On each side of the river, on the banks of it:

shall grow all trees for meat; such as bear fruit, that may be eaten, and is good for food: by these "trees" are meant truly gracious souls, converted persons, real Christians, true believers in Christ; who like trees have a root, are rooted in the love of God, in the person and grace of Christ, and have the root of the matter in them, the grace of the blessed Spirit; and who also is their sap, of which they are full, and so grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ; grow up in him, and grow upwards and heavenwards in their affections and desires, and in the exercise of faith and hope: they are the trees of the Lord, trees of righteousness, good trees, that bring forth good fruit; and are often in Scripture compared to trees the most excellent, as palm trees, cedars, olives, myrtles, &c. and wherever the Gospel comes, these trees arise, and are watered and made fruitful by it; sometimes in lesser, and sometimes in greater numbers, as in the first times of the Gospel, and as they will in the latter day; see Ps 92:12:

whose leaf shall not fade; as the leaves of trees in autumn do, and drop off and fall; to which some professors of religion are compared, who bear no fruit, only have the leaves of a profession, and this they drop when any trouble or difficulty arises, **Jude 1:12**, but true believers, as they take up a profession on principles of grace, they hold it fast without wavering; their root, seed, and sap, remain, and so never wither and die in their profession; see **Ps 1:3**:

neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed; which are the graces of the Spirit, and good works flowing from them: the graces of the Spirit are abiding ones, as faith, hope, and love; these never die, are an incorruptible seed, a well of water springing up unto everlasting life; and good works, which are fruits meet for repentance, and evidences of faith, and by which trees are known to be good, always continue to be wrought by believers, in the strength and grace of Christ, from whom they have all their fruits of every kind, Ho 14:8:

it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months; or, "first fruits" {o}; that is, everyone of these trees, or every true believer, shall be continually in the exercise of grace, and the performance of duty; they shall be constant and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; they shall never cease from yielding fruit, or doing good; they shall still bring it even in old age; see Ps 92:14:

because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; because the waters, which issued out of the sanctuary, ran by these trees, and watered them, and made them fruitful, and therefore called their waters: the fruitfulness of these trees, true believers, is not owing to themselves, to their free will and power; to their own industry, diligence, and cultivation; but to the supplies of grace they receive by means of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; which bring forth, or cause to bring forth fruit, wherever they come with power, **Col 1:6**:

and the fruit thereof shall be for meat; not for saints themselves, who live not, neither on their graces, nor their works; though indeed they do eat the fruits of their doings, **Isa 3:10**, that is, enjoy good things, consequent on their works, through the free favour and good will of God; but for meat for others; for their fruit, which appears in their words and actions, are very beneficent to others; their fruit is a tree of life, Pr 11:30 and their lips feed many, Pr 10:21, with knowledge and understanding; with the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; and with the comfortable experience they have of its truths and promises: yea, their fruit are meat and food for Christ himself; who comes into his garden, and eats his pleasant fruits, feeds and feasts, and delights himself with his own grace in his people, and the exercise of it, **So 4:9**:

and the leaf thereof for medicine; or, "for bruises" {p}; for the healing of them, which is only done by the blood of Christ; who is the only physician, the sun of righteousness, that rises with healing or pardon in his wings; and the whole language of this passage is borrowed from hence by John, and applied to Christ the tree of life, Re 22:2 and the Gospel professed by true believers directs to him for healing, or for the remission of sin, and is the means of applying it,
Ps 107:20 and a cheerful constant profession of Christ and his Gospel, which is the Christian's leaf, does good like a medicine, both to the Christian himself, and to others; who are animated and encouraged thereby to go on with pleasure in the ways of God.

{o} rkby "afferet primitiva", V. L. Vatablus; "primogenita", Starckius. So Ben Melech. {p} hpwrtl "ad contritionem, vel ad sanitatem contritionis", Vatablus; "ad fractionem sanandam", Pagninus. So Ben Melech.

Ezekiel 47:13

Ver. 13. Thus saith the Lord God, this shall be the border,.... Of the land of Israel, as described in the following verses; which being different from, and much larger, and more extensive, than it was in the times of Moses or Joshua, or than it was either before or after the captivity in Babylon, shows that this must be understood either of the land of Canaan, as it will be when possessed and inhabited by the Jews, upon their conversion in the latter day; or rather of the church of Christ, which is far greater than it was under the former dispensation; and especially it will be still more extensive hereafter, when Christ's kingdom will be from sea to sea, and his dominion from the river to the ends of the earth; and from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, his name shall be great among the Gentiles. This subject is reassumed from Eze 45:1 after the insertion of various things of moment and importance there, a reserve upon the division of the land is made of a holy portion of it, for the sanctuary; for the priests, the ministers of it; for the Levites, the ministers of the house; and for a possession of the city, and of the prince; and the rest to be given to the house of Israel, the boundaries of which, are here fixed:

whereby ye shall inherit the land, according to the twelve tribes of Israel; by which are meant, not literal Israel, or according to the flesh, these being not all Israel, or the children of God, and so not heirs, and shall not inherit; but spiritual Israel, or the special people of God, that shall dwell in the church, and enjoy all the privileges of it; these are the sealed ones of all the tribes of Israel, an equal number out of each tribe; see **Re 7:4**. Joseph shall have two "portions" for his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and in virtue of the birthright which fell to him on the forfeiture of it by Reuben; he was an eminent type of Christ, with whom the saints are joint heirs; and who has two portions, one for himself as Mediator, and another for them.

Ezekiel 47:14

Ver. 14. And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another,.... That is, the twelve tribes shall equally inherit it; one tribe shall not have more, and another less, but each alike: this was not the case, at the division of the land, in the times of Moses and Joshua; for to such tribes as were very numerous a greater inheritance was given; and to those that were fewer in number a lesser inheritance, Nu 26:54, and upon the return from the Babylonish captivity, as the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were the largest, and indeed the only tribes that returned as such, they had the share of the land; but as this respects the dispensation, it signifies, that those who are true Israelites indeed shall share in the same Gospel church state, the privileges and immunities of it alike, with all the blessings of grace and eternal glory; they being all one in Christ Jesus, **Ga 3:28**:

concerning the which I lifted up my hand to give it unto your fathers; that is, swore that he would give unto them the land of Canaan; typical of the Gospel church state and the heavenly glory; which are as sure to all the seed, by the word and oath of God, as that was:

and this land shall fall unto you for inheritance; by lot, by the appointment of God, and a goodly one it is, Ps 16:6.

Ezekiel 47:15

Ver. 15. And this shall be the border of the land toward the north side,.... The description of the borders of the land begins on the north side; because the Gospel, and the interest of Christ, would be, as they now are, chiefly in the northern part of the world, before the latter day glory takes place, and from thence spread into the other parts of it:

from the great sea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad; the line of this border shall begin at the Mediterranean sea, commonly called the great sea, and so proceed to Hethlon, a city in Syria Damascene, and from thence to Zedad; of which see Nu 34:8, the description is taken all along from the places which were on the border of Canaan, or in countries adjacent to it, which plainly point out the enlargement of it.

Ezekiel 47:16

Ver. 16. Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim,.... The line of the northern border should be drawn on by Hamath, the same with Antiochia in Syria, since called Epiphania, as Jerom observes, from Antiochus Epiphanies; and go on by Berothah, a city of Hadadezer king of Zobah, **2Sa 8:8**, the same with the Barothena of Ptolemy {q}, placed by him in Syria; and from thence the line would be carried on to Sibraim, a city in Arabia Deserta:

which is between the border of Damascus; the chief city in Syria: and the border of Hamath; before mentioned. Calmet {r} imagines it to be that which Ishmael Abulfeda calls Hovvarin; which he says is a village of the country of Ems or Hamath, to the southeast of the city.

Hazarhatticon, which is by the coast of Hauran; this seems to be explanative of Sibraim, which lay between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; and therefore is called the middle town or village, as "Hazarhatticon" signifies; and lay by the coast of Hauran, which Jerom calls a town of Damascus, with which it is mentioned,
Eze 47:18, from whence the country adjacent is called Auranitis, as this place is here by the Septuagint. The Targum calls Hazar the fish pool of the Agbeans; but for what reason, and what is meant by it, I know not.

{q} Geograph. l. 5. c. 19. {r} Dictionary, in the word "Sibraim".

Ezekiel 47:17

Ver. 17. And the border from the sea shall be Hazarenan, the border of Damascus,.... Which was the furthermost part and end of the northern border, as fixed by Moses, Nu 34:9:

and the north northward, and the border of Hamath; if this is carrying on the border further, it seems to be another Hamath, distinct from the former, Eze 47:16,

and this is the north side: of the land, and the description of the northern border of it, from the Mediterranean sea to Hazarenan.

Ezekiel 47:18

Ver. 18. And the east side ye shall measure Hauran,.... The line of the eastern border of the land shall begin at Hauran or Auranitis; see
Eze 47:16, which lay to the south {s} of Damascus: and it follows,

and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea; and so from Damascus, the metropolis of Syria; and likewise from Gilead, a mountain and country beyond Jordan; and also from that part of the land of Israel near to

Jordan; and so from the northern border to the east sea, or sea of Galilee or Tiberias:

and this is the east side: of the land, or the eastern border of it, reaching from Hauran to the lake of Gennesaret, or to the Salt sea, the sea of Sodom; see Nu 34:10.

{s} Vid. Reland Palestina Illustrata, l. 1. c. 22. p. 107.

Ezekiel 47:19

Ver. 19. And the south side southward from Tamar,.... Not Jericho, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, called by this name from the palm trees which grew near it; according to Jerom, this is Palmyra, so called for the same reason; but it is rather Engedi, called Hazazontamar, 2Ch 20:2, the line of the southern border began here, and went on,

even to the waters of strife in Kadesh; to the waters of Meribah in Kadesh; so called, from the strivings of the children of Israel with the Lord there, Nu 20:1:

the river to the great sea; it proceeded by the river of Egypt, the river Sihor, the Nile, which is before Egypt, Jos 13:3 and so on to the Mediterranean sea:

and this is the south side southward; the south side of the land, and the southern border of it.

Ezekiel 47:20

Ver. 20. The west side also shall be the great sea from the border,.... From the border of Egypt, and the river of it, to the Mediterranean sea, is the west side of the land, and the western border of it; hence the western point is often expressed in Scripture by the sea:

till a man come over against Hamath; Antioch in Syria; see Eze 47:16

this is the west side; of the land, and of the western border of it.

Ezekiel 47:21

Ver. 21. So shall ye divide this land unto you,.... As thus bounded, east, west, north, and south:

according to the tribes of Israel; See Gill on "Eze 47:13".

Ezekiel 47:22

Ver. 22. And it shall come to pass,.... In the last days, under the Gospel dispensation:

that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you; who were Israelites, both by natural descent, and by the Spirit and grace of God: the Gospel was first preached to Israel after the flesh, and made effectual to the conversion of many of them; and the first churches were made up of them, and they shared all the blessings and privileges thereof; as they also will in the latter day, when converted:

and to the strangers that sojourn among them; not such as were strangers to spiritual and divine things; for this would contradict the rule in Eze 44:9, but converted Gentiles, so called because of their natural descent and civil state, being, with respect to both, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; yet were to be, as they have been, and will be, taken into the same Gospel church state with the believing Jews:

which shall beget children among you; not only in a natural, but in a spiritual sense; be the means of begetting many souls again to the lively hope of a glorious inheritance:

and they shall be unto you as born in the country among the children of Israel; that is, the children begotten by the Gentiles shall be considered all one as those of the children of Israel, being born again of the same Spirit and grace; and so have an equal right to the same privileges, and to which they shall be admitted:

they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel; this is a new thing, and what in a literal sense was never granted; for though in the times of Moses and onward, and by his direction from the Lord, such as have been called proselytes of the gate, and proselytes of righteousness, have been admitted to various privileges, by conforming to certain rules, rites, and ceremonies, yet never were allowed to have any inheritance in the land; and, after the captivity, Ezra and Nehemiah drove out the strangers, who by affinity with some had got among them: but this respects Gospel times, and the coalition of Jews and Gentiles in the same church state; where there is no difference, but Christ is all in all; where they are admitted to the same ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper; partake of the same blessings of grace, and promises of the word, and have an equal right to the heavenly inheritance: **Eph 3:6**, is the best commentary on this passage; which contains the same mystery the Apostle Paul was acquainted with,

that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel;
See Gill on "Eph 3:6". See **Eph 2:12**.

Ezekiel 47:23

Ver. 23. And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth,.... Whatsoever particular congregation or church these strangers and sojourners (as all the Lord's people are in this world, and even in their church state), or those Gentiles before described, shall be nearest unto, and to which they shall propose themselves for communion, they shall be readily admitted:

there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord God; allow him a name and a place; put him in the possession of all church privileges and immunities; look upon him as a member, a brother, a fellow citizen, as an heir together of the grace of life, and as equally entitled to the inheritance of the saints in light; and for this they have the authority and order of Jehovah himself.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ezekiel 48:1

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 48

In this chapter an account is given of the portions of the twelve tribes in the land of Israel; seven to the north of the sanctuary, Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, and Judah, Eze 48:1, between which and Benjamin lay the holy portion of the land, for the sanctuary and the priests of it, and for the Levites, and for the city and its suburbs, and for the prince, Eze 48:8 then the portions of the other five tribes to the south of the sanctuary, Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad, Eze 48:23, after which the city is described by its outlets, north, east, south, and west; by its twelve gates, three at each point; by its circumference and by its name, Eze 48:30.

Ver. 1. Now these are the names of the tribes,.... That shall inherit the land; and an account is given of each of the portions of it they shall have for an inheritance; by which are meant, not the twelve tribes of Israel literally, among whom the land was never so divided as here, either in Joshua's time, or after the captivity of Babylon, but the Christian church, or the people of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, as in **Re 7:4**, built upon the doctrine of the twelve apostles of Christ: the stranger sojourners are not here mentioned, who, according to the preceding chapter, were equally to inherit with the children of Israel, but are included; they being Israelites indeed, and fellowheirs, and all one in Christ, be they of whatsoever nation.

From the north end to the coast of the way of Hethlon, as one goeth to Hamath: the division of the land, and the distribution of the portions, begin at the north, and so go on to the south, by the way of Hethlon and Hamath; of which see Eze 47:15 and along

by Hazarenan, the border of Damascus, northward to the coast of Hamath; see Eze 47:17:

for these are his sides east and west; the sides of the tribe of Dan next mentioned, and so of every other tribe; which was measured from east to west, and consisted of 25,000 reeds foursquare, as appears from Eze 48:8:

a portion for Dan; or, "Dan one" {t}; either one tribe, or one portion. This tribe has its portion first assigned it, though it was provided for last in Joshua's time, and not sufficiently neither, Jos 19:40, and is left out in Revelation chapter seven, having fallen into idolatry; but here being provided for first, confirms what our Lord says, that the first shall be last, and the last first, Mt 19:30, and shows that the chief of sinners are received by Christ, and provided for by him, with grace here, and glory hereafter, who come to him, and believe in him; and that their inheritance is of grace, and not of works.

{t} dxa Nd "Dan una", Cocceius, Starckius; "Danis tribus una", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "pro Dane portio una", Munster, Tigurine version, Piscator.

Ezekiel 48:2

Ver. 2. And by the border of Dan,.... Next to it, just by it, closely adjoining to it; for it should be observed, that these tribes, and their inheritances, are contiguous to each other; which denotes the union of true Christians, or believers in Christ, with each other; they are members one of another, one body, one bread, and all one in Christ; and their harmony, unity, and concord, their comfortable communion and fellowship with each other; especially as it will be in the latter day, when they shall no more grieve and vex each other, nor separate from one another; but the two sticks shall be one in the hand of the Lord,
Isa 11:13:

from the east side unto the west side; being just in the same position as the former tribe, and of the same measure and extent:

a portion for Asher; an inheritance for the tribe of Asher, the "blessed" of the Lord with all blessings, spiritual and eternal: and it should be known, once for all, that the portions of the several tribes are exactly alike: true believers have the same covenant God and Father for their portion; the same Lord, Redeemer, and Saviour, Head and Husband, Jesus Christ; they are members of the same body; partake of the same Spirit, and his graces; obtain like precious faith; are called in one hope of their calling; have a right to the same privileges and ordinances, and will share in the same heavenly inheritance, **Eph 4:4**.

Ezekiel 48:3

Ver. 3. And by the border of Asher, from the east side even unto the west side, a portion for Naphtali. Close to the tribe of Asher and his inheritance, in the same direction from east to west, lay the part assigned to the tribe of Naphtali: such Christians who are wrestlers with God in prayer, and against their spiritual enemies, and strive and contend for the doctrines of the Gospel, may be designed.

Ezekiel 48:4

Ver. 4. And by the border of Naphtali, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Manasseh. Just in like manner, next to Naphtali lay the tribe of Manasseh, and the portion of land appointed for that tribe; even such Christians who "forget" the things that are behind, and reach to those that are before; forget their former companions, their own people, and father's house, their carnal lusts and pleasures, and their own works of righteousness, and follow after Christ and his righteousness.

Ezekiel 48:5

Ver. 5. And by the border of Manasseh, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Ephraim. Close to the tribe of Manasseh, and the inheritance of it, which is no more reckoned a half, but a whole tribe, and has an inheritance equal to the rest, lay the tribe of Ephraim, and the inheritance assigned to that; even to such believers as are fruitful in grace and good works. Joseph is not mentioned, as in Eze 47:13, the two portions there given him being here allotted to his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

Ezekiel 48:6

Ver. 6. And by the border of Ephraim, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Reuben. Who, through his sin, lost his birthright; but now, his sin being forgiven and forgotten, has a portion assigned him upon the border of Ephraim, and next to the tribe of Judah; when in Moses and Joshua's time it lay on the other side Jordan: this points to such persons that shall have their lot and portion in spiritual things; that "see the Son", that look to Christ alone for righteousness, peace, pardon, and eternal life.

Ezekiel 48:7

Ver. 7. And by the border of Reuben, from the east side unto the west side, a portion for Judah. Such who "confess" the Lord before men, and "praise" his name for all blessings, temporal and spiritual, they receive from him: these seven tribes already mentioned, as they lay contiguous to each other, and had portions and inheritances alike assigned to them; so they were all of them to the north of the sanctuary and city after mentioned.

Ezekiel 48:8

Ver. 8. And by the border of Judah, from the east side unto the west side, shall be the offering,.... Or the oblation of a holy portion of the land unto the Lord before made mention of, Eze 45:1 this was close by the tribe of Judah, and in the same direction with that and the rest of the tribes, proceeding in length from east to west: this takes in the whole allotted to the sanctuary, the priests, the Levites, the city, and the prince; each of which are taken notice of in the following verses:

which they shall offer of five and twenty thousand reeds in breadth; from north to south; which makes, as the Jews {u} say, seventy five miles; some make it seventy seven, and others more:

and in length as one of the other parts, from the east side unto the west side; that is, equal to one of the portions allotted to anyone of the tribes, which were alike: what this measure was is not said, but was the same with the breadth; since the whole oblation was five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand, Eze 48:20:

and the sanctuary shall be in the midst thereof; of the holy portion of land; see Eze 45:3, not in the tribe of Judah or Benjamin; nor in the city of Jerusalem, as before; but many miles from thence.

{u} Jarchi & Kimchi in loc. e Siphri; so Lipman. Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, fol. 1. 1.

Ezekiel 48:9

Ver. 9. The oblation that ye shall offer to the Lord,.... That which belonged to the sanctuary, and to the priests, which was taken and separated for that use; which here, and in the following verses, is particularly and separately considered:

shall be of five and twenty thousand in length; that is, five and twenty thousand reeds from east to west:

and of ten thousand in breadth; from north to south; see Eze 45:3.

Ezekiel 48:10

Ver. 10. And for them, even the priests, shall be this holy oblation,.... This holy portion of land, excepting that which is for the sanctuary, is to be for the use of the priests to build houses on to dwell in; signifying, that the ministers of the Gospel are to be taken care of, and sufficient provision made for their maintenance; see
Eze 45:4:

toward the north five and twenty thousand in length, and toward the west ten thousand in breadth, and toward the east ten thousand in breadth, and toward the south five and twenty thousand in length; to the north and south five and twenty thousand reeds each; and to the east and west ten thousand each; all this belongs to the priests, excepting the place for the sanctuary, that stood in the middle of it, as repeated in the following clause: and the sanctuary of the Lord shall be in the midst thereof; as in Eze 48:8.

Ezekiel 48:11

Ver. 11. It shall be for the priests that are sanctified,.... That are set apart by the Lord; called by him to this office, and sanctified with the gifts and graces of his Spirit; and so fitted and qualified for the work:

of the sons of Zadok, which have kept my charge, which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray; ministers faithful to the Lord in the worst of times; and who are and wil be taken notice of by him, both now and hereafter, Mt 25:21,
See Gill on "Eze 44:15",
See Gill on "Eze 44:16".

Ezekiel 48:12

Ver. 12. And this oblation of the land that is offered shall be unto them a thing most holy,.... Be peculiarly theirs, and not converted to any other use; but be accounted most sacred, and not alienable, or made use of by other persons, or to other purposes by the border of the Levites; it should be continued, and reach unto their border; or where that should begin, and their part assigned them, which is next considered.

Ezekiel 48:13

Ver. 13. And over against the border of the priests,.... Next to their border, close to it, running parallel with it:

the Levites shall have five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth; for accommodations for them; for chambers to lodge in, and other uses; all concerned in the house and worship of God shall be provided for with everything necessary and convenient for them;
See Gill on "Eze 45:5":

all the length shall be five and twenty thousand, and the breadth ten thousand; all the length of the land, both for the priests and Levites, should be five and twenty thousand reeds, and the breadth of the land for both ten thousand reeds: this is repeated for the certainty of it, and to prevent any mistake about it.

Ezekiel 48:14

Ver. 14. And they shall not sell of it,.... Any part of it that is allotted to them, neither the priests nor the Levites; simony is not to be practised:

neither exchange; for any other land in lieu of it:

nor alienate the first fruits of the land; or appropriate them to any other use than that of the priests and Levites: whatever is appointed for ecclesiastic uses ought not to be converted to any other; nor should church privileges be parted with on any account: ministers and other officers, nay, even private Christians, should not part with their Christian liberty, nor with any of the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel:

for it is holy unto the Lord; what is separated and devoted to religious uses is sacred to the Lord.

Ezekiel 48:15

Ver. 15. And the five thousand that are left in the breadth over against the five and twenty thousand,.... Which belonged to the Levites, which was a square of twenty five thousand reeds by twenty five thousand; by the side of, or parallel to, the twenty five thousand in length, ran twenty five thousand in breadth, two ten thousands, as in the portion of the priests, Eze 48:10 so in theirs, Eze 48:13, the residue whereof, five thousand,

shall be a profane place for the city, for dwelling, and for suburbs; to build a city upon for the Israelites to dwell in, and suburbs to be inhabited by those that were not of the city; or for fields and gardens, to supply the city with things necessary and convenient; though the Jewish commentators, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, say the suburbs were an open place, where were neither houses, nor fields, nor gardens: when this spot for the city and suburbs is said to be a "profane place", it is to be understood comparatively, with respect to the portion for the priests and Levites; otherwise it was a part of the holy oblation; or rather, that it was common to all the people of Israel, who might all dwell in it; and therefore Symmachus and Theodotion render it laikon. This "city" signifies the Gospel church, often compared to a city in Scripture, being compact together; consisting of Christians knit together in love, of the same sentiment, and joining in religious worship: a city seated on an eminence; well founded; built on the rock Christ Jesus; its buildings large and beautiful, and of lively stones; its inhabitants many, the fellow citizens of the saints; these inhabitants, of all nations, of every rank, age, and sex; and very healthful, none of them sick and diseased; healed of all maladies; living in a wholesome air, by a river, the streams whereof make glad this city, and the inhabitants of it; who have many privileges, being Christ's freemen; governed by good laws, under proper officers appointed to explain them, and see them executed: a city well fortified with the bulwarks of salvation; the city of solemnities, and of the great King. The suburbs of it are for such who are not yet of it, but are waiting at Wisdom's gates, and at the posts of her door, hoping for admittance ere long:

and the city shall be in the midst thereof; of the area of five thousand reeds.

Ezekiel 48:16

Ver. 16. And this shall be the measures thereof,.... Of the city:

the north side four thousand and five hundred; that is, measures or reeds:

the south side four thousand and five hundred, and on the east side four thousand and five hundred, and the west side four thousand and five hundred; in all eighteen hundred measures or reeds, as in
Eze 48:35 which denotes the largeness of the Gospel church, especially in the latter day; when Jews and Gentiles will be converted, and multitudes, east, west, north and south, will be gathered to it; and as it is an equilateral square, this shows the perfection, firmness, stability, and duration of the church of Christ; so the holy city, the New Jerusalem, is for the same reasons said to be foursquare,
Re 21:16.

Ezekiel 48:17

Ver. 17. And the suburbs of the city shall be toward the north two hundred and fifty,.... That is, so many reeds: and

toward the south two hundred and fifty; which make five hundred; and these being added to four thousand five hundred, north and south, make five thousand:

and toward the east two hundred and fifty, and toward the west two hundred and fifty; which being added to four thousand five hundred, east and west, make five thousand; and so an equilateral square on each side, length and breadth.

Ezekiel 48:18

Ver. 18. And the residue in length over against the oblation of the holy portion shall be ten thousand eastward, and ten thousand westward,.... What remained in length, which ran parallel with the holy portion of the land, after five thousand reeds were taken out for the city and suburbs, were twenty thousand; ten thousand to the east, and ten thousand to the west:

and it shall be over against the oblation of the holy portion; that is, that space as yet undisposed of, the twenty thousand reeds, ten on the east, and ten on the west of the city, were close to, and ran even with, the oblation of the holy portion assigned to the priests and Levites:

and the increase thereof; or what these twenty thousand reeds of land should produce, or could be made of them:

shall be for food for them that serve the city; not the Gibeonites given to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, as Jarchi interprets it; which sense is justly rejected by Kimchi; since, as he observes, the Gibeonites shall not dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, nor minister in time to come: but either civil magistrates, who serve the church of Christ, when they secure the peace of it, protect and defend it; as they will, especially in the latter day, when these officers will be peace, and these exactors righteousness do all things justly and equitably; and when kings shall be nursing fathers and queens nursing mothers to the church; and it is but right they shall be provided for suitably to their rank, dignity, and office, and tribute be given to whom tribute is due: or ministers of the word, who are the church's servants, and serve it in preaching the Gospel, and administering the ordinances of it; and go by various names, as husbandmen concerned in ploughing, sowing, reaping, and gathering in the harvest; as labourers in the vineyard, and employed in planting, watering, pruning, and propping the vines; and as stewards of the mysteries and manifold grace of God, to give to everyone in the city and family his portion of meat in due season; and as guides and governors, engaged in taking care of the good order and discipline of it; as watchmen, that go about it, or are set on the walls of it: and it is the will of God they should be comfortably provided for, and eat of the fruit of the field and vineyard they labour in; and of the milk of the flock they take care of; and reap carnal things where they have sowed spiritual, things: or else private believers, who serve the interest of Christ and one another by love; praying with and for one another; bearing one another's burdens, and building up each other on their most holy faith: and for whom "food", or "bread" {u}, as in the original, both temporal and spiritual, is provided; both being to be had of the Lord, with whom there is enough, and to spare; Christ is the bread of life, and his word and ordinances are the provisions of Zion; which all that serve the city or church of God may partake of.

{u} Mxll "in panem", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.

Ezekiel 48:19

Ver. 19. And they that serve the city shall serve it out of all the tribes of Israel.

Whether they be civil magistrates, or ministers of the word, they shall be of Israel, and be Israelites indeed; and shall be taken out of the several tribes; some out of one tribe, and some out of another; all shall have the honour, as well as the labour, of serving the church and interest of Christ; yea, all true Israelites shall contribute as much as in them lies to the service of it.

Ezekiel 48:20

Ver. 20. All the oblation shall be five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand,.... Or, "every oblation" {w}; everyone of the oblations; that for the priests and the sanctuary; that for the Levites, and that for the city, its suburbs, and the maintenance of those that served the city; each were a square of five and twenty thousand reeds:

ye shall offer the holy oblation foursquare, with the possession of the city; taking in the possession of the city, or what that possessed, the oblation of land for that, and its suburbs, and for produce to support those that served it, should be a foursquare of the above dimensions.

{w} hmwrth lk "omnis oblatio", Pagninus, Montanus.

Ezekiel 48:21

Ver. 21. And the residue shall be for the prince,.... Not the civil magistrate, but the Prince Messiah; the King, Governor, and Protector of his church and people:

on the one side and on the other of the holy oblation, and of the possession of the city: his portion shall lie on each side of the portion for the sanctuary, the priests and Levites, and for the city and its appurtenances; so that he will be the guardian and preserver of them all; See Gill on "Eze 45:7":

over against the five and twenty thousand of the oblation toward the east border, and westward over against the five and twenty thousand toward the west border; or, "before the face" {x} "of the five and twenty thousand of the oblation", &c.; that is, next to the tribe of Judah, close by that, and just before the holy oblation of five and twenty thousand reeds, both eastward and westward, should be the portion of the prince on one side:

over against the portions for the prince; or, "over against" these shall be that

for the prince {y}; parallel with the portions of the several tribes before described shall be that of the prince, which belongs to him:

and it shall be the holy oblation; and the sanctuary of the house shall be in the midst thereof; that is, the holy oblation of the land for the priests and Levites, and the sanctuary should be between that part of the prince's portion which lay next to Judah, and that which lay next to Benjamin; of which in the next verse.

{x} ynp la "ante facies", Pagninus; "ante faciem", Starckius. {y} ayvnl Myqlx tmel "ex adverso portionum, [id vero] principis erit", Tigurine version; "juxta portiones, principi erit", Cocceius, Starckius.

Ezekiel 48:22

Ver. 22. Moreover, from the possession of the Levites, and from the possession of the city,.... Or, "beyond" these, as it may be rendered, on the other side of them; or, "except" {z} these:

being in the midst of that which is the prince's; between his two portions; or, as it is next explained,

between the border of Judah, and the border of Benjamin, shall be for the prince; that is, all beyond and excepting that which belonged to the priests and Levites, the sanctuary and the city, were the prince's, which lay between Judah and Benjamin: or thus it was; before the holy oblation one part of the prince's portion ran, parallel with the tribe of Judah, east and west; after the holy oblation on the other side, another part of his portion touched the tribe of Benjamin, and ran parallel with the east and west: and so were between them both, as well as on each side of the holy oblation: all this denotes the nearness of Christ to his church and people; his protection of them on all sides; and the largeness of his interest and kingdom; see Eze 45:7.

{z} tzxam.

Ezekiel 48:23

Ver. 23. As for the rest of the tribes,.... Not yet mentioned, which lay to the south of the sanctuary, and are as follow:

from the east side to the west side, Benjamin shall have a portion;

the sons of God's right hand, who are as near and dear to him as a man's right hand is to him. Judah and Benjamin are nearest to the holy oblation, sanctuary, city, and prince; the one to the north of them, the other to the south; these tribes being faithful to God, and with his saints, when others departed from him; the Lord takes great notice of his faithful ones, and honours them, Ho 11:12.

Ezekiel 48:24

Ver. 24. And by the border of Benjamin, from the east side unto the west side, Simeon shall have a portion. Close by the border of Benjamin, running east and west, Simeon's part and inheritance in the land shall be; even such true Israelites as "hear", understand, and believe the Gospel, and practise what they hear. This tribe is not now to be divided and scattered in Israel, or to have its inheritance in Judah, as formerly, Ge 49:5, but to be distinct, and have a portion by itself.

Ezekiel 48:25

Ver. 25. And by the border of Simeon, from the east side unto the west side, Issachar a portion. Next, closely adjoining to Simeon's inheritance, and in the same direction, shall be Issachar's; such Christians as shall have the "rewards" of grace for their services and sufferings in times of tribulation.

Ezekiel 48:26

Ver. 26. And by the border of Issachar, from the east side unto the west side, Zebulun a portion. In like manner, next to Issachar's inheritance, and bordering on it, shall be Zebulun's; who shall be no more a haven for ships, having a different situation and allotment; and may describe such Christians as dwell in Christ, and he in them.

Ezekiel 48:27

Ver. 27. And by the border of Zebulun, from the east side unto the west side, Gad a portion. The last of the tribes; a "troop" of overcomers, who are more than conquerors over all their enemies through Christ: all Christians shall have their part and portion in the church below, and in all the privileges and immunities of it; and in the church above, in all the glories and blessedness thereof.

Ezekiel 48:28

Ver. 28. And by the border of Gad, at the south side southward,.... Of the sanctuary of the Lord, of the portion of the priests and Levites, of the city, and what belonged to that, and of the prince's portion. The description begins at the northern part of the land, and ends in the southern:

the border shall be even from Tamar unto the waters of strife in Kadesh; and to the river toward the great sea;
See Gill on "Eze 47:19".

Ezekiel 48:29

Ver. 29. This is the land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance,.... This is the land, as thus described; and these the tribes of Israel, or the Israelites indeed, who shall have their respective shares in it, as thus allotted to them for their inheritance; which is not of a worldly, but spiritual nature; and a goodly heritage it is, a place and a name better than sons and daughters; namely, a place in the house and church of God; and a right to enjoy all the ordinances of it:

and these are their portions, saith the Lord God; which he has appointed to them, of his grace bestows on them, and of which they may be assured, since he has said it: no mention is made of any cities of refuge in this division of the land, as in Joshua's time, because now the antitype of them is come, the Messiah, to whom all sensible sinners are directed to flee; and there is no other asylum for them, nor salvation in any other but in him; and besides, in this period there will be no manslayers, nor any that will hurt and destroy in all the holy mountain; and so no need of cities of refuge, Isa 11:9.

Ezekiel 48:30

Ver. 30. And these are the goings out of the city,.... The gates of it, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it, by which they went out of it, and into it; and also the sides of it. The Lord here returns to the city again, to give an account of its circumference and name:

on the north side four thousand and five hundred measures; the north side of the city measured so many measures; that is, reeds, as Jarchi explains it.

Ezekiel 48:31

Ver. 31. And the gates of the city shall be after names of the tribes of Israel,.... According to number of them, twelve, and called by their names; the names of the several tribes being written on them; see Re 21:12, this shows that all true Israelites indeed, Israel not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, have a right of entrance into, and communion with, the church of God; even the whole Israel of God, whom he has chosen for himself; Christ has redeemed by his blood, and the Spirit calls by his grace, and sanctifies; these are all, be they Jews or Gentiles, fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: these gates, though twelve, with respect to the twelve tribes that enter in at them, and the twelve apostles of the Lamb that direct unto them, and whose doctrine they embrace and profess that go in by them; yet are but one in the main, which is Christ, faith in him, and a profession of it, and a professed subjection to his Gospel and ordinances, Joh 10:1:

three gates northward; for those that lay on that side to enter in at:

one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, and one gate of Levi: these tribes, and so the rest, were not placed according to their encampment about the tabernacle in the wilderness, or as they were placed by Joshua in the land of Canaan; which shows that the tribes literally considered are not intended. Levi had a gate, though it had not a portion in the manner the other tribes had.

Ezekiel 48:32

Ver. 32. And at the east side four thousand and five hundred,.... Measures or reeds: this side was equal to the north, as the rest were to this; the whole city in its circumference making an equilateral square:

and three gates; which were as follow:

one gate of Joseph, one gate of Benjamin, one gate of Dan; Joseph is here as having a gate, though he is not mentioned as having a portion; but his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who are here omitted; which made room for Levi's name to be inserted; and Dan, who had his portion first, is here placed in the middle, no order being observed; the whole being mystical and spiritual.

Ezekiel 48:33

Ver. 33 And at the south side four thousand and five hundred measures,.... The south side of the city measured just the same as the north and east sides did:

and three gates; were on that side, as on the others:

one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun; at which these tribes entered, or those they represent.

Ezekiel 48:34

Ver. 34. At the west side four thousand and five hundred,.... Measures or reeds; so many were the length of this side; the same with north, south, and east, and made a foursquare; and such the city was, as the New Jerusalem is said to be, Re 21:16:

with their three gates: one gate of Gad, one gate of Asher, one gate of Naphtali; the situation of these gates on all sides, east, west, north, and south, show that in the latter day people will flock from all quarters to the church of Christ, and that there will be an open and free access of all persons into it; see **Isa 2:2**.

Ezekiel 48:35

Ver. 35. It was round about eighteen thousand measures,.... Putting the numbers together which each side made, the circumference of the city was eighteen thousand measures; which, according to Cornelius a Lapide, were thirty two thousand miles; which shows that no city literally taken can be here meant, but mystically and spiritually the church of Christ, which will be of great extent in the latter day; and a large one it had need to be, to hold all nations that will flow into it; it will be spread all over the world; the world will become the church; the kingdoms of it will become Christ's; the little stone will become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth; the kingdom and interest of Christ, which is his church, will be from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth; even from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same. Some Jewish writers {a}, not knowing what to make of these large measures, say that they have respect to the eighteen thousand worlds God is said {b} to make, which these were a similitude, figure, or exemplar of; but those Jews are nearer the true sense of them, who say {c} that this is to be understood of Jerusalem above, or as it will be in future time, in the world to come, the dispensation of the Messiah, **Ga 4:26**:

and the name of the city from that day shall be, the Lord is there; the Gospel church has other names, as Jerusalem, Mount Zion, the Lord our righteousness, Hephzibah and Beulah, a city not forsaken, Heb 12:22, but here it is called "Jehovah Shammah", the Lord is there, or dwells there; which is to be understood of his presence in it; not in a general way, as he is in all places, and with all his creatures, continually, constantly, and everywhere working in a providential manner; but of his gracious presence in a special way and manner: in this sense Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, are in the Gospel church, and will be more manifestly in the latter day; Jehovah the Father, as the Father of Christ, blessing them with all spiritual blessings in him; granting them his presence in him, and communion with him, through him; as their Father providing all good things for them, and as the God of all grace unto them: Jehovah the Son, as the master of the family taking care of it, as a son in his own house, and the first born among his brethren; as the prophet in the midst of his church, teaching and instructing; as the high priest in the midst of the golden candlesticks, lighting and trimming them; as the King in Zion, to rule and govern, protect and defend it; showing himself in all the glories of his person, and the riches of his grace, according to his promise, Mt 28:20. Jehovah the Spirit is here to qualify men with gifts for the ministry, to apply the word, and make it useful; as a Spirit of grace and supplication, and to help the Lord's people in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; and to be their comforter and remembrancer. Jehovah here does and will display his glorious perfections; his power in the preservation of his saints; his wisdom in

the guidance and direction of them; his truth and faithfulness in the performance of promises to them; his purity and holiness in the sanctification of them; his love, grace, and mercy, in the large discoveries made unto them; in short, he will appear all glorious to them, and will be the glory in the midst of them, Ps 46:5 **Zec 2:5** the date from whence this will commence is "that day"; either from the beginning of the Gospel dispensation, that famous day made by the rising of the sun of righteousness; or from the day and date of Christ's promise of his presence, Mt 28:20 or from the time the Gospel church state was set up; or from the day this city will be rebuilt and restored, the Lord will more visibly and manifestly grant his presence to the inhabitants of it, and never more depart from them; see
Isa 42:12, The Targum is,

"the name of the city which is separated from the day, the Lord will cause his Shechaniah to dwell there."

The Jews {d} produce this place to show that Jerusalem is called Jehovah, and say, do not read Shammah, "there", but Shemah, "its name"; and the Socinians from hence would disprove the incommunicableness of the name Jehovah to a creature, but without effect; since this city is not called simply Jehovah, but with an additional epithet; and this is to be understood, not in a divided, but compound sense, as the altar in
Ex 17:15, and the mount in Ge 22:14.

{a} Lipman. Tzurath Beth Hamikdash, sect. 79. {b} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. {c} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 2. & Succah, fol, 45. 8. {d} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Daniel 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL

This book is called, in the Vulgate Latin version, "the Prophecy of Daniel"; and in the Syriac and Arabic versions "the Prophecy of Daniel the Prophet". This Daniel was of the children of Judah, that were carried captive into Babylon with Jehoiakim; and was of princely blood, if not of the royal seed, as appears from, **Da 1:3**. Josephus {a} is express for it, that he was of the kindred and family of Zedekiah: and Saadiah Gaon {b} says he was of the seed of Hezekiah, and so fulfilled the prophecy in 2Ki 20:18. As to what the author of the "Lives of the Prophets", ascribed to Epiphanius, says {c}, that he was born in upper Bethabara, not far from Jerusalem, it is not to be depended on; or that his father's name was Sabaam, according to a tradition mentioned by the true Epiphanius {d}. The Jews {e} would have it that this book was not written by Daniel himself, but by the men of the great synagogue; though it is evident, from the book itself, that Daniel is the writer of it, as from **Da 7:1**. That he wrote books, which were received, read, and believed by the Jews as of God, is affirmed by Josephus {f}; and the Jews in general acknowledge that this book was written by the influence of the Holy Spirit, but not by prophecy; they, without any foundation, distinguishing between the Holy Spirit and prophecy. And so Maimonides says {g}, it is the general consent of their nation, that this book is among the holy writings, but not among the Prophets; nor will they allow Daniel to be a prophet: the reasons they give are frivolous; what seems to have induced them to degrade him is the manifest prophecy of the time of the Messiah's coming in this book, which sometimes they are obliged to own is fixed in it. They tell us a story of Jonathan ben Uzziel, that having finished his paraphrase of the Prophets, thought to have wrote one on the Hagiographa, or holy writings, among which they place the book of Daniel; but was forbid by "Bath Kol", or a voice from heaven, giving this as a reason, because that in it is contained the end of the Messiah {h}, the precise time of his coming; and the gloss on the passage adds, by way of explanation,

"in the book of Daniel;"

though elsewhere they would have it, that after it was made known to Daniel, it was taken away from him. For so, they say {i}, there are two men to whom the end was revealed, and afterwards it was hidden from them; and these are they, Jacob and Daniel: from Daniel, according to Da 12:4, "but thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book &c.", from Jacob, Ge 49:1, "that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days". Yet the prophecy of Daniel was so clear, with respect to the time of the Messiah's coming, that one of their Rabbins, who lived about fifty years before the coming of Christ, asserted that the time of the Messiah, as signified by Daniel, could not be deferred longer than those fifty years {k}; and a most glaring prophecy it is, and sufficient to denominate Daniel a prophet, as well as many more contained in this book. And, after all, Maimonides himself owns, that he, and the other writers of the Hagiographa, or holy writings, may be called prophets in general. And Aben Ezra observes of Daniel, in his preface, that he delivered out prophecies of things now past, and of things to come; yea, he expressly calls him a prophet on **Da 1:17**. And Jacchiades, another of their commentators on this book, says that he attained to the highest degree of prophecy. To which may be added the testimony of Josephus {l}, who says he was one of the greatest prophets, and to be preferred to others; since he not only predicted things future, but fixed the time when they should come to pass. And, above all, and what should satisfy us Christians, he is expressly called a prophet by our Lord, Mt 24:15. There are no other authentic writings of Daniel, which bear his name; the stories of Susannah, and of Bel and the Dragon, which make the "thirteenth" and "fourteenth" chapters in the Greek of Theodotion, and in the Vulgate Latin version, are apocryphal and spurious. The Oriental writers make Daniel the author of a volume, entitled, "Principles relating to the Explanation of Dreams". And there is another book in the king of France's library, with this title, "Odmath-al-mantoul ân Daniel al-nabi"; which contains predictions of the Prophet Daniel, received by tradition from him. This is a book which abounds with falsities, forged by the Mahometans, and founded on the real prophecies of Daniel {m}. This book, written by him, is partly historical, relating facts in which he was concerned; and partly prophetic, of things that should happen from his time to the end of the world, and especially of the Messiah and his kingdom; and it is written partly in Hebrew, and partly in Chaldee. This great man, as he was both in nature and grace, in religion and politics, lived throughout the captivity, but does not seem ever to have returned into Judea; but continued in the courts of the kings of the Medes and Persians, to take care of the affairs of his people the Jews. Where he died, and was buried, is not certain. Some say in Babylon; and others, which is more likely, at Susa on the Tigris, where he was in the third year of Cyrus, Da 10:1. So says Abulfeda {n}; with which agrees the account of Benjamin of Tudela {o}.

{a} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 10. sect. 1. {b} Comment. in Dan. i. 5. {c} Pseudo-Epiphan, de Vit. Prophet. c. 10. {d} Contra Haeres. haeres. 55. {e} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. {f} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 10. sect. 7. {g} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 45. {h} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 3. 1. {i} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 84. 4. {k} R. Nehumiah apud Grotium, de Ver. Relig. Christ. I. 5. sect. 14. {l} Ibid. (Antiqu. l. 10. c. 10. sect. 7.) ut supra. {m} Calmet's Dictionary, in the word "Daniel". {n} Apud Schickard. Not. in Purim. {o} Itinerar. p. 86.

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL 1.

This chapter begins with an account of the first captivity of the Jews, in the times of Jehoiakim; of which captivity Daniel was one, and it is mentioned on his account, **Da 1:1**, who, with others, were selected by the order of the king of Babylon, to be educated in the learning of the Chaldeans, and to be maintained at his expense, in order to be his ministers, **Da 1:3**, but Daniel and his three companions refused the king's meat and wine, lest they should be defiled; in which they were indulged by their governor, after trial being made, that they were fairer and fatter for it, **Da 1:8**, and, at the end of the time appointed, they appeared to have a large share of knowledge, wisdom, and learning; upon which they were taken into the king's court and service, **Da 1:17**, and the chapter is concluded with observing the long continuation of Daniel here, even to the first year of Cyrus, **Da 1:21**

Ver. 1. In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah,.... At the close of it, and at the beginning of the fourth, which was the first of Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 25:1. Jerusalem seems to have been taken twice in his time, and two captivities in it: the first was in the third or fourth year of his reign; when humbling himself, he was restored to his kingdom, though he became a tributary to the king of Babylon; Daniel and his companions, who were carried captive with him, were retained as hostages; but after three years he rebelled, but it was not until his eleventh year that Nebuchadnezzar came against him again, took him, and bound him, in order to carry him to Babylon, but he died by the way; see
2Ki 24:1, some, as Jarchi and Saadiah Gaon, make this to be the third year of his rebellion, and the last of his reign; they suppose that he was conquered by the king of Babylon, and became subject to him in the fifth year of his reign; that he served him three years, and rebelled against him three years: at the end of which

came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it; with his army, and took it; and the same way it is accounted for in the Jewish chronicle {p} according to Bishop Usher {q}, this was in the year of the world 3398 A.M., and before Christ 607 or 859; according to Mr. Bedford {r}, 605.

{p} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 25. in principio. {q} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3398.
{r} Scripture Chronology, p. 676.

Daniel 1:2

Ver. 2. The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand,.... And the city of Jerusalem too, or he could not have took the king, and so the Syriac version renders it,

and the Lord delivered it into his hands, and Jehoiakim, &c.: this was from the

Lord, because of his sins, and the sins of his ancestors, and of his people; or otherwise the king of Babylon could not have taken the city, nor him, because of the great power of the Jews, as Jacchiades observes:

with part of the vessels of the house of God; not all of them; for some, as Saadliah says, were hid by Josiah and Jeremiah, which is not to be depended on; however, certain it is that all were not carried away, because we read of some of the vessels of the temple being carried away afterwards, in Jeconiah's time, 2Ki 24:13, and still there were some left, as the pillars, sea, bases, and other vessels, which were to be carried away, and were carried away by the king of Babylon, in Zedekiah's time, Jer 27:19:

which he carried into the land of Shinar, to the house of his god; which Jarchi understands both of the men that were carried captive, and the vessels that were taken out of the temple; but the latter seem only to be intended, since of men Jehoiakim is only spoken of before; and it does not appear he was ever carried into Babylon; but it is certain the vessels of the temple were carried thither; which is meant by the land of Shinar, where Babylon stood, and where the tower of Babel was built, Ge 10:2, the same, as Grotius thinks, with the Singara of Pliny {s} and Ptolemy {t}. So the Targum of Onkelos, on Ge 10:10, interprets the land of Shinar the land of Babylon; likewise the Jerusalem Targum on
Ge 10:10, and the Targum of Jonathan on Ge 11:2 **Zec 5:11**, only on Ge 10:10, he paraphrases it the land of Pontus. So Hestiaeus {u} an ancient Phoenician writer, calls Shinar Sennaar of Babylonia. It seems to have its name from ren, which signifies to "shake out"; because from hence the men of the flood, as Saadiah says, or the builders of Babel, were shook out by the Lord, and were scattered over the face of the earth. And as the tower of Babel itself, very probably, was built for idolatrous worship, for which reason the Lord was so displeased with the builders of it; so in this same place, or near it, now stood an idol's temple, where the king of Babylon, and the inhabitants thereof, worshipped, here called "the house of his gods" {w}, as it may be rendered; for the Babylonians worshipped more gods than one; there were Rach, Shach and Nego, from whom Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, are supposed to have their names given them by the Chaldeans, **Da 1:7**. Rach is thought to be the sun, whose priests were called Rachiophantae, observers of the sun; Shach, to which Sheshach is referred by some, Jer 51:41, for which a feast was kept once a year for five days, when servants had the rule and government of their masters; and Nego either was worshipped for the sun, or some star, so called from its brightness. Venus was also had in veneration with the Babylonians, whom they called Mylitta; in whose temple many acts of uncleanness and

filthiness were committed, as Herodotus {x} relates. And, besides these, there were Merodach, Nebo, and Bel; of which see Isa 46:1, the latter seems to have been their chief deity, and who was called Jupiter Belus; and with whom were the goddesses Juno and Rhea. And in the city of Babylon stood the temple of Bel, or Jupiter Belus, which was extant in the times of Herodotus, and of which he gives an account {y}, and is this:

"the temple of Jupiter Belus had gates of brass; it was four hundred and forty yards on every side, and was foursquare. In the midst of the temple was a solid tower, two hundred and twenty yards in length and breadth; upon which another temple was placed, and so on to eight. The going up them was without, in a winding about each tower; as you went up, in the middle, there was a room, and seats to rest on. In the last tower was a large temple, in which was a large bed splendidly furnished, and a table of gold set by it; but there was no statue there; nor did any man lie there in the night; only one woman, a native of the place, whom the god chose from among them all, as the Chaldean priests of this deity say."

Diodorus Siculus says {z} it was of an extraordinary height, where the Chaldeans made observations on the stars, and could take an exact view of the rise and setting of them; it was all made of brick and bitumen, at great cost and expense. Here the vessels of the sanctuary were brought by Nebuchadnezzar, to the praise and glory of his idols, as Jarchi and Jacchiades observe; to whom he imputed the victory he had obtained over the Jews. Even these

he brought into the treasure house of his god; very probably this was the chapel Herodotus {a} speaks of, where was a large golden statue of Jupiter sitting, and a large golden table by it, and a golden throne and steps, reckoned by the Chaldeans at eight hundred talents of gold. And Diodorus Siculus {b} relates that there were three golden statues, of Jupiter, Juno, and Rhea. That of Jupiter was as one standing on his feet, and, as it were, walking, was forty feet in length, and weighed a thousand Babylonian talents (computed three millions and a half of our money). That of Rhea was of the same weight, sitting upon a throne of gold, and two lions standing at her knees; and near to them serpents of a prodigious size, made of silver, which weighed thirty talents. That of Juno was a standing statue, weighing eight hundred talents; in her right hand she held the head of a serpent, and in her left a sceptre set with precious stones; and there was a golden table, common to them all, forty feet long, fifteen broad, and of the weight of fifty talents. Moreover, there were two bowls of thirty talents, and as many censers of three hundred talents, and three cups of gold; that which was dedicated to Jupiter weighed a thousand two hundred

Babylonian talents, and the other six hundred. Here all the rich things dedicated to their god were laid up, and here the king of Babylon brought the treasures and rich vessels he took out of the temple of Jerusalem; and to this agrees the testimony of Berosus {c}, who says, that with the spoils of war Nebuchadnezzar took from the Jews and neighbouring nations, he adorned the temple of Belus. The riches of this temple, according to historians, are supposed to be above one and twenty millions sterling {d}, even of those only which Diodorus Siculus gives an account of, as above.

{s} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 24. {t} Geograph. l. 5. c. 18. {u} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 1. c. 4. sect. 3. {w} wyhla tyb "domum deorum suorum", Cocceius, Michaelis. {x} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 199. {y} Ibid. c. 181. {z} Biblioth. 1. 2. p. 98. Ed. Rhodoman. {a} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 183. {b} Biblioth. I. 2. p. 98. {c} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 1. {d} Vid. Rollin's Ancient History, vol. 2. p. 70. and Universal History, vol. 4. p. 409.

Daniel 1:3

Ver. 3. And the king spake unto Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs,.... That is, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon spake to this officer of his, whose name was Ashpenaz; which, according to Saadiah, signifies a man of an angry countenance; but Hillerus {e} derives it from the Arabic word "schaphan", as designing one that excels in wit and understanding; for which reason he might have the command of the eunuchs, many of which the eastern princes had about them, particularly to wait upon their women, or to educate youth, as the Turks have now; though, as R. Jeshuah in Aben Ezra observes, the word signifies ministers, and may intend the king's nobles and courtiers, his ministers of state; and so this Ashpenaz may be considered as his prime minister, to whom he gave orders,

that he should bring certain of the children of Israel; whom he had taken and brought captive to Babylon, and were disposed of in some part or another of the city and country; and out of these it was his will that some should be selected and brought to his court:

and of the king's seed, and of the princes: or, "even {f} of the king's seed, and of the princes"; not any of the children of Israel, but such as were of the blood royal, or of the king of Judah's family, or some way related to it; or, however, that were of princely birth, the children of persons of the first rank, as the word {g} may signify; or of nobles and dukes, as Jarchi interprets it.

{e} Onomast. Sacr. p. 752, 753. {f} hkwlmh erzmw, so w is sometimes rendered; see Noldius. p. 276. {g} Mymtrp "ex Graeca voce" prwtov, Grotius, Junius.

Daniel 1:4

Ver. 4. Children in whom was no blemish,.... Not mere children, but young men of fifteen or twenty years of age; about which age Daniel is by Aben Ezra supposed to be when he was carried captive; and less than this be cannot well be thought to be, since, in a few years after, he was put into posts of the greatest eminence and importance: such were ordered to be selected that had no deformity or defect in any parts of their body, or wanted any, as an eye, or a hand, &c.; or, "in whom was not anything" {h}; vicious or immoral, or scandalous in their character:

but well favoured; of a good complexion, a ruddy countenance, and a healthful look. So Curtius {i} says, that, in all barbarous or uncivilized countries, the stateliness and size of the body is had in great veneration; nor do they think any capable of great services or actions, to whom nature has not vouchsafed to give a beautiful form and aspect. And Aristotle {k} says it was reported, that, in Ethiopia, civil offices of government or magistracy were distributed according to the bulk or beauty of men, the largeness and tallness of their bodies, or the comeliness of them; and not only among them, but this has always been the custom of the eastern nations, to choose such for their principal officers, or to wait on princes and great personages, and continues to this day. Sir Paul Ricaut {l} observes,

"that the youths that are designed for the great offices of the Turkish empire must be of admirable features and pleasing looks, well shaped in their bodies, and without any defects of nature; for it is conceived that a corrupt and sordid soul can scarce inhabit in a serene and ingenious aspect; and (says he) I have observed not only in the seraglio, but also in the courts of great men, their personal attendants have been of comely lusty youths well habited, deporting themselves with singular modesty and respect in the presence of their masters: so that when a pascha, aga, spahee, travels, he is always attended with a comely equipage, followed by flourishing youths, well clothed, and mounted in great numbers; that one may guess at the greatness of this empire by the retinue, pomp, and number of servants, which accompany persons of quality in their journeys."

And no doubt Nebuchadnezzar had some of these ends in view, in ordering such persons to be selected and brought up at his expense; that they might be both for service and usefulness, and for his grandeur and glory.

And skilful in all wisdom: in the wisdom of the Jews, or had a liberal education according to the custom of their country; or were young men of good capacities, capable of being instructed, and of improving themselves in all kind of wisdom:

and cunning in knowledge; or "knowing knowledge" {m}; having a large share of the knowledge of their own country, customs, and laws, civil and religious: and understanding science; the liberal arts and sciences; or however were persons of a good genius, and of retentive memories; young men of capacity, diligence, industry, and application, and of great docility, and so very promising to make great and useful men:

and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace; not only strength of body, which was requisite to a long waiting there, as sometimes they were obliged to do; but strength of mind, courage, and undauntedness, to stand before the king and his nobles, without showing a rustic fear, and timidity of mind:

and whom they might teach the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans; or, "the book and language of the Chaldeans" {n}; book for books; such as contained their literature, history, and philosophy, mathematics, the knowledge of the stars, in which they excelled, as well as architecture and military skill; and it was necessary they should learn the Chaldean language, which differed from the Hebrew chiefly in dialect and pronunciation, that they might be able to read those books of science, and to speak with a good accent, and readily, before the king and his nobles; or rather the sense is, that they might understand the Chaldean language, the manner of reading, writing, and pronouncing it
rpo, translated "learning", may signify the letters of the language, the Scripture or manner of writing, as Saadiah and Aben Ezra interpret it; which must be first learned in any language, in order to attain the knowledge of it; so it seems to be used in Isa 19:12. "I am not learned, or know not a book or letters" see **Joh 7:15** and Nwvl, translated "tongue", may signify the rules, idioms, and properties of the language; the nature, genius, and dialect of it, and

signification of the words and phrases used in it to be learned, so as to be thorough masters of it, understand it, speak it, and pronounce it well. But here a difficulty arises, since the form and character of the letters of the Chaldee and Hebrew languages now in use are the same; it may seem unnecessary that Hebrew youths should be put to school to learn the Chaldean letters and language, though the dialect and idioms of the two languages might in some things differ; but let it be observed, that it might be, and it is not improbable, that the letters of the Chaldean language were not the same then as they are now; and Hottinger {o} expressly says, that the ancient Chaldee character is not known; not to say anything of the difference of the Hebrew letters then from what they are now, which some have surmised: besides, it is a clear case that the Chaldee and Syriac languages are the same, as appears from **Da 2:4**, where the Chaldeans are said to speak to the king in Syriac; and yet, what follows is no other than Chaldee, their mother tongue, in which it was most proper and agreeable to speak to the king: and as it is the opinion of many learned men now that these languages are the same, so it was the sense of the ancient Jews. Says R. Samuel Bar Nachman {p}, let not the Syriac language be mean in thine eyes, or lightly esteemed by thee; for in the law, in the prophets, and in the Hagiographa, the holy blessed God has imparted honour to it; in the law, Ge 31:47, in the prophets, Jer 10:11, in the Hagiographa, **Da 2:4** in all which places it is the Chaldee language that is used; and that which was spoken in Babylon, the head of the Chaldean empire, is called the Syriac; for Cyrus, when he took that city, ordered a proclamation to be made, by men skilled, suristi, in the Syriac language, that the inhabitants should keep within doors, and that those that were found without should be slain {q}; which orders were published in that language, that they might be universally understood, being the language of the common people. So Herodotus, speaking of the Assyrians, says {r}, these by the Greeks are called Syrians, and by the barbarians Assyrians, among whom were the Chaldeans: and, as Strabo observes {s}, the same language or dialect was used by those without Euphrates, and by those within; that is, by the Syrians, strictly so called, and by the Babylonians or Chaldeans: and elsewhere {t}, the name of Syrians reached from Babylon to Sinus Issicus; and, formerly, from thence to the Euxine sea. Now it is certain that the form and character of the letters in the Syriac language are very different from the Hebrew, and difficult to be learned, and might be those which these Hebrew youths were to be taught at school, as well as the rudiments of it; and it is as evident that the language of the Jews, and that of the Syrians, Chaldeans, and Babylonians, were so different, that the common people of the former did not understand the language of the latter when spoke, as appears from
2Ki 18:26 so that there was an apparent necessity for the one to be taught the

language of the other, in order to understand it.

{h} Mwam "quidquam quod obstet", Gussetius. {i} Histor. l. 6. c. 5. {k} Politic. l. 4. c. 4. tom. 2. p. 224. {l} Present State of the Ottoman Empire, B. 1. c. 5. p. 13. {m} ted yedyw "et scientes scientiam, Pagninus, Montanus, intelligentes scientiam", Calvin. {n} Nwvlw rpo "librum et linguam", Jo. Henr. Michaelis. {o} Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 3. p. 35. {p} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 74. fol. 65. 4. {q} Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 23. {r} Polymnia, sive l. 7. c. 63. {s} Geograph. I. 2. p. 58. {t} Ibid. l. 16. p. 507.

Daniel 1:5

Ver. 5. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat,.... Every day a portion was ordered them, from the king's table, of the richest dainties he himself ate of; which was done not only as an act of royal munificence and generosity, and in respect of their birth and breeding; but also as a bait and snare to allure and entice them, to make them in love with the country and condition in which they were, and to forget their own; as well also in order to preserve their well favoured look and good complexion, and fit them for their study of language and literature; which might be hindered for want of the necessaries of life, or by living on gross and coarse food:

and of the wine which he drank; which, as it was of various sorts, so of the best and most excellent; and which, moderately drank, conduces to the health of the body, and cheerfulness of the mind; and which are both useful to forward learned studies:

so nourishing them three years; this was the time fixed for their acquiring the learning and language of the Chaldeans; during which they were to be provided for from the king's table, and at his expense, as above; which term of time was judged sufficient for their learning everything necessary to qualify them for the king's service; and in which time it might be thought they would forget their own country, customs, religion, and language, and be inured to the place and persons where they were, and be satisfied and easy with their condition and circumstances:

that at the end thereof they might stand before the king; that is, at the end of three years they might be presented to the king for his examination and approbation, and be appointed to what service he should think fit; and particularly that they might be in his court, and minister to him in what post it should be his pleasure to place them. Some in Aben Ezra, and which he himself inclines to, read and interpret it, "that some of them might stand before the king"; such as he should choose out of them, that were most accomplished and most fit for his service; so Jacchiades.

Daniel 1:6

Ver. 6. Now among these were of the children of Judea, &e.] Among those youths that were selected from the rest, and brought up in the above manner, and for the above purposes, who were of the tribe of Judah, and very likely of the house of David, and of royal descent, were the four following persons:

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; who are particularly mentioned, because they were the most famous and renowned of them, and are concerned in the subsequent history and account of facts: their names are expressive and significant: Daniel signifies "God is my Judge"; Hananiah may be interpreted "God is gracious to me"; Mishael is by some thought to be the same as Michael, "he who is God", or "as God"; and by others, "asked of God", by his mother, as Samuel was by Hannah, so Saadiah interprets it; and Azariah may be explained, "God is my help", or "helps me".

Daniel 1:7

Ver. 7. Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names,.... Other names, Chaldee names, according to the names of the gods of that country, for honour and glory, as Saadiah observes; which was done either to make them more acceptable to the court and courtiers of the king of Babylon; and to show that they were his servants, and naturalized subjects; and chiefly to cause them to forget the names their fathers gave them, and out of hatred to them, having all of them in them the names of the true God, El or Jah; and, most of all, that they might forget the God of their fathers, whose names they bore. This prince of the eunuchs seems to be the same with the master of the eunuchs, Ashpenaz, before mentioned, so Jacchiades; but some take him to be another person: what he did in changing the names of these four Hebrew youths was not his own idea and by his own authority, but by the order of the king; **Da 5:12**:

for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; which signifies "Bel hath hid and treasured"; or Bel's treasurer, or the keeper of his treasures; see **Da 1:2**. Bel was the chief idol of the Chaldeans, Isa 46:1, and Daniel was named according to him, as Nebuchadnezzar himself says, **Da 4:8** and differs but in one letter from the name of a successor of his, Belshazzar, **Da 5:1**, hence Daniel is thought by Broughton, and others, to be the Belesis of Diolorus Siculus: or it may be he had this name given him from "beltis" or "baaltis" {u}, a queen and goddess of the Babylonians, and may be compounded of that and "azer":

and to Hananiah of Shadrach; which some interpret a "tender pap", or "breast": others, the "king's messenger", or "the messenger the sun". The word "rach" signifies a "king" with the Chaldeans, as it did with the Egyptians, as may be observed in the word "abrec", the king's father, in Ge 41:43 and is used by them of the sun, the prince of planets, whom they worshipped: others, "the inspiration of the sun", their idol. Hillerus {w} explains it of fire, the object of their adoration:

and to Mishael of Meshach; or; "of Shach", which was a name of a god or goddess of the Chaldeans, they worshipped; at the celebration of whose feast they were when Babylon was taken by Cyrus:

and to Azariah of Abednego; or "a servant, or worshipper of Nego". The word signifies "shining brightness": which some understand of fire worshipped by them; others of the bright planet Venus; and others of Lucifer, or the morning star. Saadiah takes it to be the same with Nebo, by a change of a letter, which was a god of the Chaldeans; see
Isa 46:1.

{u} Vid Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p 38. &. l. 9. c. 41. p. 456. {w} Onomast. Sacr. p. 924.

Daniel 1:8

Ver. 8. But Daniel purposed in his heart,.... It being proposed to him to be brought up in the manner before described, he revolved it in his mind; he well weighed it, and considered it with himself, and came to a resolution about it. This is to be understood of him, not to the exclusion of his three companions, who were of the same mind with him, as appears by what follows; but perhaps it was first thought of by him; at least he first moved it to them, to which they consented; and because he was the principal in this affair, it is ascribed to him as his purpose and resolution:

that he would not defile himself with the portion the king's meat; by eating of it; partly because it might consist of what was forbidden by the law of Moses, as the flesh of unclean creatures, particularly swine, and fat and blood, and so defile himself in a ceremonial sense; and partly because, though it might be food in itself lawful to be eaten, yet part of it being first offered to their idol "Bel", as was usual, and the whole blessed in his name, it would have been against his conscience, and a defiling of that, to eat of things offered to, or blessed in the name of, an idol:

nor with the wine which he drank; which was as unlawful as his food; being a libation to his gods, as Aben Ezra observes; otherwise wine was not forbidden; nor was it disused by Daniel, when he could partake of it in his own way, Da 10:3:

therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself; he did not, in a surly, still, and obstinate manner, refuse the meat and drink brought; but prudently made it a request, and modestly proposed it to the prince of the eunuchs, that had the care and charge of him and his companions; and who also joined with him in this humble suit, as appears by what follows.

Daniel 1:9

Ver. 9. Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. Even before this request was made; as he gave to Joseph favour in the sight of Potiphar, and of the keeper of the prison; for whatever favour is shown to good men by bad men is from the Lord; for though Daniel's ingenuity, the goodness of his temper, and his modest behaviour, his excellent natural parts, and other accomplishments, might be a means of ingratiating him into the favour of this officer; yet all would have been insufficient to recommend him to him, or to overcome his prejudices on account of religion, if the Lord had not wrought upon his heart to show kindness and tenderness to him; which appeared not only by his past usage of him; but, when he presented his supplication to him, he did not put on a stern countenance, and answer him roughly, and threaten him if he did not comply with the king's orders; but in a mild and gentle manner, as follows:

Daniel 1:10

Ver. 10. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king,.... This he said, not as refusing and denying the request of Daniel; but as hesitating about it, divided in his own mind, between love and tenderness to Daniel, and fear of the king: it is as if he should say, I could freely out of respect to you grant you your request; were it not for duty to my lord the king, reverence of him, and especially fear of his wrath and displeasure: who hath appointed your meat and your drink; has ordered it himself, both the quality and quantity, both what and how much; whose will is his law, and cannot be resisted, but must be obeyed; and though I should indulge you in this matter, and it may be concealed for a while, yet it cannot be always a secret, your countenance will betray it:

for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? than the other Jewish youths that were selected at the same time, and brought up in the same manner, and for the same ends. Some {x} render it, "than the children of your captivity"; who were taken and brought captive to Babylon when they were; but the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "than those of the same age" {y}; their contemporaries, that were born about the same time, and brought up together in the same way: or, than those of your own nation? as some {z} translate it: and now, when they should be presented together to the king, the difference would be observable; Daniel and his companions would appear of a pale complexion, of thin and meagre looks, and dark dismal countenances, like persons angry, fretful, and troubled; as the word signifies {a}; when their contemporaries would appear fat and plump, cheerful and pleasant; which would naturally lead into an inquiry of the reason of this difference:

then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king; I shall commit a trespass, of which I shall be found guilty, and be condemned to die, and lose my head for it; and now, as if he should say, I leave it with you; can you desire me to expose myself to so much danger? I would willingly grant your favour, but my life is at stake.

{x} Mklygk "secundum captivitatem vesture", Gejerus; "in captivitate vestra; sic quidam legunt cum" b, Vatablus. {y} The word is only used in this place; but in the Arabic language
"gil" is an age or generation, as in the Arabic version of Gen. vi. 9. Matt. i. 17. and xxiii. 36. Luke xi. 50, 51. So, in the Talmudic language, wlyg Nb is one that is born in the same hour, and under the same planet, as the gloss explains

it in T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 27. 2. {z} So Hottinger, who says the word in the Arabic language signifies a nation or country; and renders the words, "qui secundum nationem et gentem vestram", Smegma Orientals, l. 1. c. 7. p. 134. {a} Mypez see Gen. xl. 6. 2 Chron. xxvi. 19. 1 Kings xx. 43. and xxi. 4. Prov. xix. 3. 12. so Ben Melech.

Daniel 1:11

Ver. 11. Then said Daniel to Melzar,.... The prince of the eunuchs, having put off Daniel with the above answer, seems to have left him; or, however, Daniel, finding he could not obtain of him what he sought for, applies to Melzar, a subordinate officer, whom he hoped to find more pliable; and it may be that Ashpenaz might suggest it to him to apply to this person, and signify that if he could prevail upon him to give him other food instead of the king's; who might be under a temptation from profit, being a meaner officer; he for his part would wink at it, so be it he came not into any danger himself; however, be it as it will, Daniel did apply to this man, whose name was Melzar, for so most take it to be the proper name of a man; which, according to Hillerus {b}, signifies one "in full splendour". Josephus calls {c} him Aschanes; though some think it is the name of an office, as a steward, or the like; but whether it is expressive of his name, or his office, he is described as one

whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; to give them their food at proper time.

{b} Onomast. Sacr. p. 600. {c} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 10. sect. 2.

Daniel 1:12

Ver. 12. Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days, &e.] Here Daniel manifestly includes his companions, and makes his request for himself and them; desiring that they might be tried ten days with different sort of food and drink, and see whether any alteration would be made in them for the worse; which was a proper time for such a trial; for in that time it might be reasonably supposed that their food, if it had any bad effect on them, would appear. Saadiah makes these ten days to be the days between the first day of the year and the day of atonement; but without any foundation:

and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink; instead of the king's meat, pulse, beans, pease, vetches, lentiles, rice, millet, and the like. The word {d} used signifies anything sown, all kinds of roots, herbs, and fruits; and, instead of wine, water; meat and drink, it may be thought, that persons of such birth and education had not been used to; and yet they preferred these to the king's dainties, by eating and drinking of which their consciences would be in danger of being defiled.

{d} Myerzh Nm apo twn spermatwn, Sept.; "de seminibus", Montanus; "de sativis", Cocceius.

Daniel 1:13

Ver. 13. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee,.... And be thoroughly examined, whether any alteration is made therein for the worse:

and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat; who were either Chaldean youths brought up in this manner; or rather young men of the Jews, who were not so scrupulous as Daniel and his companions, and made no objection to eating the king's food; let their countenances and ours be compared together:

and as thou seest deal with thy servants: if there is no difference, or we are not the worse for abstaining from the king's meat, then grant us our request, and continue to indulge us in this manner; but, if otherwise, do as thou wilt. Daniel, no doubt, in putting the matter on this issue, as it should turn out at the end of ten days, had a revelation or assurance from God how it would be, or he would never have ventured to put it to such a trial.

Daniel 1:14

Ver. 14. So he consented to them in all this matter,.... Or, "hearkened to them" {e}; being convinced that it was a very reasonable request, and the matter was fairly put; and especially as he saw, if it succeeded to their wish, it would be to his profit; since the meat and drink of these four persons would be his perquisite, and fetch him money; pulse and water being to be obtained at an easy rate:

and proved them ten days; tried the experiment, by giving them pulse and water only during this time, in order to see how it would agree with them; and whether any visible alteration could be discerned in their countenances, so as to bring him or his master into suspicion and danger.

{e} Mhl emvyw "auscultans eis", Junius & Tremellius, Broughtonus; "auscultavit eis", Pisator, Cocceius.

Daniel 1:15

Ver. 15. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and fatter in flesh,.... At the time fixed for the trial of them, when they came to be examined, they appeared to be of a better complexion, and a more healthful look, and even plumper and fatter, with good solid flesh, and not swelled up as persons in a dropsy:

than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat: who appeared at the same time, and were compared with them, being under the care of the same persons: now this was owing to the blessing of divine Providence, as Jacchiades observes; for, how healthful soever pulse may be, or the several things designed by it, particularly rice, of which Aben Ezra on the place gives great encomiums, as very salutary and nourishing, and a purifier of the blood; yet neither that, nor any of the things before mentioned, tend to make persons fat in flesh, as these were.

Daniel 1:16

Ver. 16. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat,.... To himself, as the Syriac version adds; he took and carried it to his own family, and made use of it himself; and the portion of four such young gentlemen, maintained at the king's expense, and who had their provision from his table, must be, especially in the course of three years, of great advantage to this man and his family; for this was continued, as the word signifies, and may be rendered, "and Melzar was taking away &c." {f}; so he did from time to time; and thus, by serving the Lord's people, he served himself:

and the wine that they should drink; which he also took for his own use:

and gave them pulse; to eat, and water to drink, as the Syriac version adds, and which they desired; when he found this agreed so well with them, and he could safely do it without exposing himself to danger, and being to his profit and advantage.

{f} avn "fuit ferens", Montanus; "auferens", Piscator, Gejerus; "perseveravit auferre cibum"; Cocceius; "erat capiens", Michaelis.

Daniel 1:17

Ver. 17. As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom,.... As they prospered in their bodies, they succeeded in their studies, and improved in their minds, and became great proficients in all kind of lawful and useful knowledge; not owing so much to their own sagacity and diligence, and the goodness and ability of their teachers, as to the blessing of God on their instructions and studies; for, as all natural, so all acquired parts are to be ascribed to God; and which these were favoured with by him in a very great manner, to answer some purposes of his. This is to be understood, not of magic art, vain philosophy, judicial astrology, to which the Chaldeans were addicted; but of learning and wisdom, laudable and useful, both in things natural and political; for these men, who scrupled eating and drinking what came from the king's table, would never indulge themselves in the study of vain, curious, and unlawful knowledge; much less would God have blessed the study of such things, and still less be said to give them knowledge and skill therein:

and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams; besides knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, in languages and sciences, in common with the other young men; he had the honour of seeing very remarkable visions of future things, and of interpreting dreams; and this not by rules of art, such as the Oneirocritics use, but by the gift of God; of which many singular instances follow in this book.

Daniel 1:18

Ver. 18. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in,.... That is, at the end of three years; which was the time appointed for their education, and when they were to be brought before the king for his examination and approbation:

then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar; even all the young men that were taken from among the children of Israel and Judah, as well as the four children before and after mentioned, appears by what follows. This was done by Asphenaz, and not Melzar.

Daniel 1:19

Ver. 19. And the king communed with them,.... He asked them several questions upon the several articles of literature in which they had been educated, to try and see what proficiency they had made; he discoursed with them on various topics of learning, that he might be able to form a judgment of them, and of their capacities, and what employments under him they would be most fit for, and capable of. This shows that the king was a man of learning and good sense, as well as prudence, to be capable of taking such a step as this:

and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; for their learning and knowledge: after the king had gone through the examination of all the youths, these four appeared to be the greatest proficients, and were accordingly taken notice of and distinguished:

therefore stood they before the king; ministered unto him, became his servants, and even came to be of his privy council, especially Daniel; see Pr 22:29.

Daniel 1:20

Ver. 20. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired of them,.... At the time of their examination before him, when he put questions to them, which they gave a ready, pertinent, and solid answer to: and afterwards, when he had occasion to consult them on any affair,

he found them ten times, or ten hands {g} better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm; than all the magi and sophies, the enchanters, diviners, soothsayers, and such who pretended to judicial astrology, and to judge of and foretell things by the position of the stars; these young men were able to give more pertinent answers to questions put to them, and better advice and counsel when asked of them, than all the persons before described, throughout the king's dominions.

{g} twdy rve "decem manibus", Montanus.

Daniel 1:21

Ver. 21. And Daniel continued,.... In Babylon, and at court there, and in the favour of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors:

even unto the first year of King Cyrus: by whom Babylon was taken, and when the seventy years' captivity of the Jews were at an end; which time Daniel was there, for the sake of observing which this is mentioned: not that Daniel died in the first year of Cyrus; or went from Babylon with the rest of the Jews to Jerusalem upon the proclamation of Cyrus, as Jacchiades thinks; for we hear of him at the river Hiddekel, in the third year of Cyrus, Da 10:1, but he was till this time in the court of the kings of Babylon; and afterwards in the courts of the kings of Media and Persia; for when it is said he was there, it does not so much intend his being there as the state and condition in which he was there; namely, as a favourite and prime minister; for he is said to prosper in the reign of Darius and Cyrus, **Da 6:28**. This is that Cyrus who was prophesied of by name, near two hundred years before he was born, by the Prophet Isaiah, Isa 44:28, which were sure prophecies, and to be depended upon; and had their exact accomplishment in him. Heathen writers report many things, as presages and predictions of his future greatness; they tell us some dreams, which his grandfather Astyages had concerning his daughter Mandane, the mother of Cyrus; which the interpreters of dreams in those days explained of a future son of hers, that was to be lord of all Asia {h}: and Megasthenes {i} relates a prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar, who before his death foretold to the Babylonians that a calamity should befall them, which neither his progenitor Belus nor Queen Beltis could avert; which was, that a Persian mule should bring them under subjection, assisted by a Mede; which is understood of Cyrus, who was a Medo Persian; his father was Cambyses king of Persia, and his mother Mandane was daughter of Astyages king of Media; and he, with Darius the Mede, or however with his army, conquered Babylon: and he is also supposed to be the mule in the Pythian oracle that should be king of the Medes; by which Croesus was deceived, who concluded a mule would never be a king; and therefore, as his kingdom was safe till there was such an one, it must be for ever so {k}. The birth, parentage, and education of this prince, together with his victories, and particularly his taking of Babylon, are recorded by Xenophon in his history, in great agreement with this book of Daniel. Plutarch says {l} that Cyrus, or Coresh, as his name is in Hebrew, in the Persian tongue signifies the sun; and the name of the sun, Cheres, is pretty near in sound to it in the Hebrew tongue; and of the same signification and derivation with Cyrus, or Coresh, seems to be Carshena, one of the seven princes of Persia. Cyrus is remarkably famous for the edict he published in favour of the Jews, giving them liberty to go to their own land, and rebuild their temple, **Ezr 1:1**, according to Cicero {m}, out of Dionysius the Persian, he lived to be seventy years of age; and died after a reign of seven years, according to Xenophon {n}; and of nine years, according to Ptolemy's canon; the one reckoning from the time he became sole monarch of the empire; the other from his reigning in partnership with his uncle Cyaxares, or Darius the Mede.

{h} Herodoti Clio, sive l. 1. c. 107, 108. Justin. e Trogo, l. 1. {i} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 456, 437. {k} Herodotus, Clio. sive l. 1. c. 55. {l} In Vita Artaxerxis. {m} De Divinatione, I. 1. {n} Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 45.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Daniel 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO DANIAL 2

The subject of this chapter is a dream which Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed, but had forgot; upon which he calls his magicians and astrologers together, to tell him it, and the interpretation of it; threatening them with death if they did not, and promising them great rewards and honour if they did, **Da 2:1**, they urge the unreasonableness of the demand, and the impossibility of the thing; which so highly incensed the king, that he ordered their immediate destruction, **Da 2:7**, Daniel and his companions being in danger, he goes in to the king, and desires time, and he would show him what he had dreamed; which being granted, he spent it in prayer to God, **Da 2:14**, and the thing being revealed to him, he gave thanks to God, **Da 2:19**, and being introduced to the king, he both told him his dream, and the interpretation of it; which concerned the four monarchies of the world, and the everlasting kingdom of the Messiah, **Da 2:24**, upon which he was highly honoured, and greatly promoted by the king, **Da 2:46**.

Ver. 1. And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar,.... It was in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign that Daniel was carried captive, Jer 25:1, three years Daniel had been under tutors; at the end of which he was presented to the king, as is related in the preceding chapter; and yet the following dream was in the second of his reign: this creates a difficulty, which is solved by some thus: in the second year after the destruction of the temple, so the Jewish chronicle {o}, with which Jarchi agrees; others, as Aben Ezra, in the second year of his monarchy, after he had subdued all the nations round about; and so Josephus says {p}, it was in the second year after the destruction of the Egyptians. R. Moses the priest, in Aben Ezra, would have it to be the second year to his reign, to the end of it, when there were only two years wanting to it; a very unusual way of reckoning indeed! and therefore justly rejected by Aben Ezra: but all these dates are too late, since Daniel long before these times was well known, and in great fame for his wisdom; whereas, at this time, it does not appear that he was much known, or in great request: it is better either to render it, "in the second year", that is, after Daniel and his companions had been presented to the king, and promoted;

even in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, as opposed to the reign of Darius or Cyrus, in which he flourished also: or rather this was the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reigning alone; for he had been taken into partnership in the throne with his father before his death, as Berosus {q} observes, which is said to be two years; so that this second year was the fourth year of his reign, reckoning from the time he reigned conjunctly with his father, though the second of his reigning alone: yet it seems best of all to render the words, with Noldius {r}, but in the second year, in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar; that is, in the second year of Daniel's ministry in or under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar; who continued at court under different reigns, till the first of Cyrus: this was, according to Bishop Usher {s}, and Mr. Whiston {t}, in the year of the world 3401 A.M., and before Christ 603. Mr. Bedford {u} places it in 604:

Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams; which, though but one, yet, relating to various things, the several parts of the human body, and the different metals the form he saw was made of, as well as the four monarchies it signified, is called "dreams". Jacchiades says, he first dreamed the dream, and then the interpretation of it; which is the reason of the plural number: wherewith his spirit was troubled; it gave his mind a great deal of trouble while he was dreaming it; and when he awaked, though he could not recover it, yet he had some confused broken ideas of it; it had left some impressions upon him, which gave him great uneasiness, and the more as he could not recollect any part of it; his mind was agitated, and tossed to and fro, and under the greatest perplexity:

and his sleep brake from him; went away from him, through the strangeness of the dream, and the effect it had upon him.

{o} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 28. p. 80. {p} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 10. sect. 3. {q} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 19. {r} Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 452. No. 1405. {s} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3401. {t} Chronological Tables, cent. 9. {u} Scripture Chronology, p. 677.

Daniel 2:2

Ver. 2. Then the king commanded to call the magicians,.... He ordered his servants in waiting to send immediately for the wise men, the philosophers of that age and kingdom, that studied the things of nature, and the natural causes of things:

and the astrologers; that cast nativities, and pretended by the position and influence of the stars to know what would befall men:

and the sorcerers; or wizards, that made use of familiar spirits, and the help of the devil; necromancers that consulted the dead, in order to get knowledge of future things:

and the Chaldeans; so called, not from their country; for probably all the preceding were Chaldeans by nation; but inasmuch as the study of judiciary astrology, and other unlawful arts, greatly obtained in Chaldea; hence those that were addicted to them had this name {w}:

for to show the king his dreams; both what it was he dreamed, and what the interpretation or meaning of it was: so they came, and stood before the king; they came immediately, with great readiness and willingness, esteeming it a great honour done them to be sent for by the king, and admitted into his chamber; and hoping it would turn much both to their credit and profit; and being come, they stood waiting his will and pleasure.

{w} Vid. Juvenal. Satyr. 6. A. Gellii Noet. Attic, l. 1. c. 9. Cicero de Divinatione, I. 1.

Daniel 2:3

Ver. 3. And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream,.... What before is called dreams is here expressed in the singular, a dream; for it was but one dream, though it contained in it various things; this the king could remember, that he had a dream; for it had left some impression on his mind, though he could not call to mind what it was about. Aben Ezra makes mention of one of their Gaons or Rabbins, that affirmed that Nebuchadnezzar knew his dream, but was willing to try the wise men; but, as he observes, he could not surely believe the words of Daniel:

and my spirit was troubled to know the dream; both that, and the meaning of it; he says nothing as yet about the interpretation of it; concluding that, if they could tell him the dream, they could explain it to him; or then it would be time enough to inquire after that.

Daniel 2:4

Ver. 4. Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in, Syriac,.... These spake, either because the interpretation of dreams particularly belonged to them; or else as being the chief of the wise men, and of greatest authority; or as chosen by the rest, and spake in their name; and indeed this appellation may include them all, being all of the same country, though they might differ in their profession: they spake in the Syriac or Babylonish language, the same with the Chaldee, being their mother tongue, and that of the king too; and therefore could more easily speak it themselves, and be more easily understood by him, than if they had spoke in another; See Gill on "Da 1:4" and from hence, to the end of the "seventh" chapter, Daniel writes in Chaldee; the things he treats of chiefly relating to the Chaldeans:

O king, live for ever; which is a wish of long life, health, and prosperity; and does not intend an everlasting continuance in this world, or an eternal life in another, to the knowledge of which they might be strangers: this was an usual form of salutation of kings in these eastern nations; like to this is that of

Sinaetus, a Persian, to Artaxerxes Mnemon {x}

"O King Artaxerxes, reign for ever;"

so said {y} Artabazus, a faithful friend of Darius, to Alexander the great, when he met him with the friends and relations of Darius,

"O king, may you flourish in perpetual happiness:"

tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation; this was not the thing that was asked of them, but the dream itself; and if that had been told them, they promise more than there is reason to believe they would have fulfilled, had that been done; it is more than the Egyptian magicians could do, even when Pharaoh had told them his dream: this they said partly to get time, and partly to make a show of their skill and knowledge; though in a very vain and arrogant manner.

{x} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 1. c. 32. {y} Curtius, l. 6. c. 5.

Daniel 2:5

Ver. 5. The king answered and said to the Chaldeans,.... In the same language they spoke to him:

the thing is gone from me; either the dream was gone from him; it was out of his mind, he had forgot it, and could not call it to remembrance; he had been dreaming of monarchies and kingdoms, which are themselves but dreams and tales, and empty things that pass away, and which he might have learned from hence: or, as it may be rendered, "the word is confirmed by me" {z}. Saadiah says, that some observe that the word here used has the signification of strength or firmness; and so Aben Ezra interprets the word, is stable and firm; to which agrees the Syriac version,

"most sure is the word which I pronounce;"

referring not to the dream, but to what follows the king's declaration, both with respect to threatenings and promises:

if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof;

the king speaks as if he thought it was in their power, but they were unwilling to do it; though no doubt, had they been able, they would have readily done it, both for their credit and advantage:

ye shall be cut in pieces; not only cut in two, but into various pieces, limb by limb, as Agag by Samuel, and the Ammonites by David; and which was a punishment often inflicted in the eastern nations; as Orpheus was cut to pieces by the Thracian women, and Bessus by order of Alexander the great {a}; much the same punishment as, with us, to be hanged, drawn, and quartered:

and your houses shall be made a dunghill; be destroyed, and never rebuilt more, but put to the most contemptible uses: and this was common among the Romans; when any were found plotting against the government, or guilty of treason, they were not only capitally punished, but their houses were pulled down, or the names of them changed; or, however, were not used for dwelling houses; so the house of Caius Cassius was pulled down and demolished for his affectation of government, and for treason; and that of M. Maulins Capitolinus, who was suspected of seizing the government, after he was thrown from the rock, was made a mint of; and that of Spuflus Melius for the same crime, after he had suffered, was by reproach called Aequimelium; and of the like kind many instances are given {b} and so among the Grecians; Pausanias {c} relates of Astylus Crotoniata, that by way of punishment, and as a mark of infamy upon him for a crime he had done, his house was appointed for a public prison. Herodotus {d} reports Leutychides, general of the Lacedemonians in Thessalian expedition, that having received money by way of bribery, for which he was tried and condemned, though he made his escape, his house was demolished; and the same usage and custom remains to this day in France: thus the unhappy Damien, a madman, who of late stabbed the French king; one part of his sentence was, that the house in which he was born should be pulled down, as he himself also was pulled and cut to pieces; see
2Ki 10:27.

{z} adza ynm atlm "verbum a me firmum, [vel] firmatum", Michaelis; "a me decretum et statutum", L'Empereur. {a} Vid. Curtium, l. 7. c. 5. p. 206. {b} Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 23. {c} Eliac. 2. sive l. 6. p. 366. {d} Erato, sive I. 6. p. 72.

Daniel 2:6

Ver. 6. But if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof,.... Which he was extremely intent upon to know; and therefore makes use of every way to obtain it, first by threatenings, to terrify, and next by promises, to allure:

ye shall receive of me gifts, and rewards, and great honour; gold, silver, jewels, rich apparel, houses, lands, and great promotion to some of the highest places of honour, trust, and profit, in the kingdom, as Daniel afterwards had:

therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof; at once, directly, without any more ado; for the king was impatient of it.

Daniel 2:7

Ver. 7. They answered again, and said,.... Or, a "second" {e} time; repeating the same words, having nothing more to say:

let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation thereof; the first part was but right and reasonable, though the latter was mere boasting and arrogancy.

{e} twnynt deuteron, Sept.; "secundo", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ar.

Daniel 2:8

Ver. 8. The king answered and said, I know of certainty,.... I see plainly and clearly what you are at, and am fully assured you mean nothing, but that

ye would gain the time: or buy {f}, or redeem time, as in **Eph 5:16**, prolong time, put off the answer to longer time; spin out time, as people do in buying and selling; or have it in their possession and power when to answer; and so by gaining time, or being master of it, might hope something would turn up to their advantage, and extricate them out of their present difficulties:

because ye see the thing is gone from me; the dream he could not remember; or because the decree was certain which he had determined concerning them; See Gill on "Da 2:5".

{f} Nynbz Nwtna ande yd "quod tempus vos emitis", Pagninus, Munster;

"ementes", Montanus; "vos tempus redimere", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Daniel 2:9

Ver. 9. But if ye will not make known unto me the dream,.... For the present he does not insist upon the interpretation, only the dream itself, at least this is now only mentioned; concluding that if they could do the one, they could do the other, as is after observed:

there is but one decree for you; for them all; and that was the decree of death; which should never be revoked or mitigated, or the sentence be changed for another; but should certainly be executed, and in which they were all involved, not one should escape:

for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me; framed a deceitful answer to impose upon and screen yourselves:

till the time be changed; either that he could remember his dream, and tell them it himself; or all the images and impressions of it were wore off his mind, so that they could tell him anything, and he not be able to disprove them; or he would grow indifferent to it, and his passionate desire after it cool, and he be careless whether he knew it or not; or he or they should die; or he might be engaged in other affairs, and be called abroad to war, as he had been; or some thing or other turn up, whereby they might escape the ruin threatened. Saadiah fixes the time to noon, when the conversation of kings ceased, and they were otherwise engaged:

therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof; for by being able to tell a dream that was past, it might be concluded they were able to tell what was to come, signified by that dream; and if they could not declare what was past, how should it be thought that they could foretell things to come?

Daniel 2:10

Ver. 10. The Chaldeans answered before the King, and said,.... As follows, in order to appease his wrath, and cool his resentment, and bring him to reason:

there is not a man upon the earth can show the king's matter; or, "upon the dry land" {g}: upon the continent, throughout the whole world, in any country whatever; not one single man can be found, be he ever so wise and learned, that can show the king what he requires; and yet Daniel afterwards did; and so it appears, by this confession, that he was greater than they, or any other of the same profession with them: this is one argument they use to convince the king of the unreasonableness of his demand; it being such that no man on earth was equal to; another follows:

therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler; there neither is, nor never was, any potentate or prince, be who he will; whether, as Jacchiades distinguishes them, a "king" over many provinces, whose empire is very large; or "lord" over many cities; or "ruler" over many villages belonging to one city; in short, no man of power and authority, whether supreme or subordinate:

that asked things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean; never was such a thing required of any before; no instance, they suggest, could be produced in ancient history, or in the present age, in any kingdom or court under the heavens, of such a request being made; or that anything of this kind was ever insisted upon; and therefore hoped the king would not insist upon it; and which no doubt was true: Pharaoh required of his wise men to tell him the interpretation of his dream, but not the dream itself.

{g} atvby le "super aridam", Pagninus, Montanus; "super arida", Cocceius; "super arido", Michaelis.

Daniel 2:11

Ver. 11. And it is a rare thing the king requireth, &e.] Meaning not scarce, or seldom heard of; for they had before asserted it never had been required; but that it was hard and difficult, yea, with them, and as they supposed with any other, impossible to be done:

and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh; these men own there was a God, though, they held, more than one; and the omniscience of God, though they seem to have no notion of his omnipresence; and to suggest as if he had no concern with mortals; had no regard to men on earth, nor communicated the knowledge of things unto them. Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Saadiah, interpret this of angels, who are incorporeal; but the superior deities of the Gentiles are rather designed; who were supposed to dwell in heaven, and to have no conversation with men on earth; these, it is owned, could declare to the king what he desired, and no other; and therefore should not persist in his demand on them.

Daniel 2:12

Ver. 12. For this cause the king was angry, and very furious,.... Not only because they could not tell his dream, and the interpretation of it; but because they represented him as requiring a thing unreasonable and impossible, which had never been done by any potentate but himself, and could never be answered but by the gods: this threw him into an excess of wrath and fury; which in those tyrannical and despotic princes was exceeding great and terrible:

and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon; not only those that were now in his presence, but all others; concluding from this instance that they were an useless set of men, yea, deceivers and impostors.

Daniel 2:13

Ver. 13. And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain,.... Or, "and the wise men were slain" {h}, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions render it; and so Saadiah: orders were given by the king to his proper officers, and his edict was published, and his will made known in the usual manner; upon which the wise men, at least some of them, were slain; very probably those who were in the king's presence, and at court; and the officers were gone out to slay the rest:

and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain; who had the character of wise men, and might be envied at court, and so the officers took this opportunity, having these orders, to slay them: there was, no doubt, a particular providence, that Daniel and his friends should not be at court at this time; both that the vanity of the Chaldean wisdom and arts might be the more manifest and made known, and the divine and superior wisdom and knowledge of Daniel might be more conspicuous, and his fame be spread in Babylon, and in other provinces.

{h} Nyljqtm aymykxw "et sapientes interficiebantur", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Piscator, Michaelis.

Daniel 2:14

Ver. 14. Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom,.... In a discreet manner, using soft words and gentle language, humbly and modestly inquiring what should be the meaning of all this. The Vulgate Latin version is, "he inquired of the law and decree" {i}; what was the reason of the king's orders, which this officer had in commission to execute; with which others agree: or, "he made to return the counsel and decree" {k}, as some choose to render it; he stopped the execution of it for the present, by his inquiries and prudent behaviour but neither seem to agree with what follows; the first sense is best:

to Arioch the captain of the king's guards: there was a king of this name, Ge 14:1, this man, according to the Septuagint version, and others that follow it, was the chief of the king's cooks; and Aben Ezra says the word in the Arabic language so signifies: or, as it may be rendered, "the chief of the slaughterers" {l}; the executioners of malefactors, so Jarchi; he was the king's chief executioner, with which agrees the business he was now charged with: the Vulgate Latin version calls him the prince of the militia; and others the king's provost marshal:

which was gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon; who by the king's order went forth from the court into the city, to slay all in Babylon who went under the character of wise men; they were not among those that could not answer the king's demand, since they declared none could do it; and therefore he ordered them all to be slain, as a set of useless men in his kingdom.

{i} Mejw aje byth "interrogavit de lege et decreto", V. L.; "super consilio", Munster, Calvin; "de eo consilio", Castalio. {k} "Redire fecit consilium et statutum", Pagninus, Montanus; "reverti fecit", Michaelis. {l} ayxbj br "principem carnificum", Montanus, Grotius.

Daniel 2:15

Ver. 15. And he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain,.... Or governor {m}; over the persons before mentioned; either the king's guard or militia, or cooks or executioners: before, the manner in which Daniel answered is observed; here, the matter of it, as follows:

why is the decree so hasty from the King? or, "why this rash", hasty, or cruel (as the Vulgate Latin version) decree from the king? for so it was: what is the cause and reason of it?

then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel; who before was ignorant of it; he was not with the wise men before the king; either they did not care he should go with them, and therefore called him not; or he did not choose to go himself, being under no temptation by the rewards offered, and especially having no summons from the king himself: this being his case, Arioch informs him of the whole affair; how that the king had dreamed a dream, and forgot it; and had sent for the wise men to tell him both it and the interpretation; but they not being able to do it, and declaring also that it was impossible to be done, the king had given orders to slay all of that character.

{m} ajylv "dominatori", Junius &, Tremellius, Piscator, Broughtonus,

Daniel 2:16

Ver. 16. Then Daniel went in,.... Or "went up" {n}; to the king's palace, which might be built on an eminence; or into his chamber, where he probably was; or in some upper room, very likely introduced by Arioch; and which was a bold and daring action in them both: in Arioch, to cease from doing his orders, and entering into the king's presence before he had; and in Daniel, to appear before him, having the name of a wise man, when the king was in such a fury; all which was owing to the providence of God, that wrought upon the heart of Arioch, to listen to what Daniel said, and inspired them both with courage to go in to the king:

and desired of the king that he would give him time; not two or three days, but only that night, till morning, as Saadiah observes; and this with a view not to read books, or study any art; or, by reasoning with himself, or conversation with others, to get knowledge; but to pray to God:

and that he would show the king the interpretation; that is, of his dream, and the dream itself; being persuaded in his own mind that God would hear his prayers, and make it known to him. The king granted him his request, though he upbraided the wise men of their design to gain time; but perhaps, upon the sight of Daniel, he remembered him again, and how superior in wisdom he was to all his magicians and wise men; and besides, Daniel gave him hope, yea, assurance, of showing his dream, and the interpretation of it, which his mind was very eager after; but chiefly this subsiding of his wrath, and his indulging Daniel in his request, were owing to the overruling providence of God.

{n} le "ascendit", Gejerus.

Daniel 2:17

Ver. 17. Then Daniel went to his house,.... Which Sanctius thinks was in the king's palace; very probably it might be near it, somewhere in the city of Babylon; for that it should be twenty miles from that city, as Benjamin of Tudela relates {o}, is not likely; since Arioch's orders reached to none but the wise men of Babylon, and where he sought for and found Daniel; hither he went, to be alone, and to seek the Lord in secret:

and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions; who either dwelt in the same house with him, or not far off; whom he sent for and acquainted with all that had passed, both between the king and the wise men, and the consequence of that; and between him and the king, and what promise he had made, relying on his God and theirs.

{o} Itinerarium, p. 76.

Daniel 2:18

Ver. 18. That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret,.... His view in sending for them, and informing them of this whole affair, was to engage them in prayer to God with him; even to that God that made the heaven, and dwells there, and is above all, and sees and knows what is done in earth, and rules both in heaven and in earth according to his will; to entreat his mercy, whose mercies are manifold, and not plead any merits of their own; and that he would, in compassion to them, and the lives of others that were in danger, make known this secret of the king's dream, and the interpretation of it; which could never be found out by the sagacity of men, or by any art they are masters of: this Daniel requested of them, as knowing that it was their duty and interest, as well as his, to unite in prayer unto God on this account, and that the joint and fervent prayer of righteous men avails much with him:

that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon; which they were in danger of: this was the mercy they were to implore, being in distress, and this the interest they had in this affair; a strong argument to induce them to it.

Daniel 2:19

Ver. 19. Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision,.... That is, after Daniel and his companions had importunately sought the Lord by prayer, the secret of the king's dream, and the interpretation of it, were made known to Daniel, and to him only; he being the person designed in Providence to be raised to great honour and dignity by means of it; this was done either the same night, or the night following, and, as some think, in a dream, and that he dreamed the same dream Nebuchadnezzar did, which he remembered, though the king forgot it; or, however, the same image was represented, to him, whether sleeping or waking, and the meaning of it given him:

then Daniel blessed the God of heaven: gave thanks to him, that he had heard his prayer, and indulged him in his request; which thanksgiving, blessing, or praise, is expressed in the following words:

Daniel 2:20

Ver. 20. Daniel answered and said,.... That is, he began his prayer, as Jacchiades observes, or his thanksgiving, and expressed it in the following manner:

blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: a form of blessing God, or a wish that he may be blessed by men for evermore; for there is that in his name, in his nature, in his perfections, and in his works, which require that praise be given him now, and to all eternity:

for wisdom and might are his; "wisdom" in forming the scheme of things, and "might" or power in the execution of them; "wisdom" in revealing the secret of the dream to Daniel, and "might" to accomplish the various events predicted in it: for what Daniel here and afterwards observes has a very peculiar regard to the present affair, for which his heart was warm with gratitude and thankfulness.

Daniel 2:21

Ver. 21. And he changeth the times and the season,.... Not only of day and night, summer and winter, and times and seasons of prosperity and adversity; but all the changes and revolutions in states and kingdoms, in all times and ages, are from him; and particularly those pointed at in the following dream, in the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman monarchies:

he removeth kings, and setteth up kings; he is King of kings, and Lord of lords; by him they reign, and continue on their thrones, as long as he pleases; and then he removes them by death or otherwise, and places others in their stead; and who are sometimes raised from a low estate; and this he does in the ordinary course of Providence; see Ps 75:6 and particularly Daniel might have in view the removal of the Babylonian monarchs, and setting up kings of the race of the Medes and Persians; and then the degrading them, and advancing the Grecians to the height of monarchy; and then reducing of them, and raising the Romans to a greater degree of power and authority; and at last crushing them all in their turns, to make way for the kingdom of his Son:

he giveth wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: an increase of wisdom and knowledge, to wise politicians and counsellors of state, to form wise schemes of peace or war, to make wise laws, and govern kingdoms in a prudent manner; and to wise master builders or ministers of the word, to speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, to diffuse the knowledge of Christ everywhere, and make known the mysteries of grace to the sons of men; particularly to Daniel and his companions, who were wise and knowing men, the interpretation of the king's dream.

Daniel 2:22

Ver. 22. He revealeth the deep and secret things,.... The purposes of his own heart, which are the deep things of God, and the secrets that belong to him, and which are opened in providence by the execution of them; the "arcana imperii", or secrets of state, committed to men designed for government; the secrets or mysteries of grace, the deep things of the Gospel, made known to

Gospel ministers; and particularly the deep and impenetrable secret of the king's dream, and the interpretation of it, revealed to Daniel:

he knoweth what is in the darkness; the actions of men committed in darkness; the schemes that are drawn in the privy councils and cabinets of princes; yea, the thoughts of men's hearts, which he in the utmost recesses of them, as well as their dreams in the night season; and particularly this of the king's, and which must have been buried in darkness, had he not revealed it:

and the light dwelleth with him; he is light itself, and the Father of lights; the light of nature, grace, and glory, is with him, and from him; the light of the word, the light of prophecy, and the light of the glorious Gospel; and also the Light of the world, the sun of righteousness, the Messiah; and of him some of the ancient Jews interpret this passage. R. Aba Serungia {p}, mentioning this passage, "and the light dwelleth with him", adds, this is the King Messiah, as it is said, "arise, shine", &c.; and his commentator {q} observes, that the sense of it is, he (God) retains the Messiah with himself, and does not send him forth unto us; see Ps 43:3, and elsewhere {r}, in answer to the question, what is the name of the Messiah? among others, this is said, his name is Light, as it is said, "and the light dwelleth with him": and this is a name that is often given to Christ, and he takes to himself in the New Testament; see **Joh 1:7** where he is called the "Light", that Light, the true Light, and the Light of the world; as he is both of Jews and Gentiles, even of all his people throughout the world: indeed, the light of nature, which every man has, is from him, as the Creator of all; and the light of grace, and the increase of it, which any are favoured with, is given by him; and all the light of knowledge in divine things, and of spiritual joy and comfort, beams from him the sun of righteousness: the light of the latter day, which will be so very great, as to be as the light of seven days, and to make the sun and moon unnecessary in a figurative sense, will be owing to him; as well as all that light of life and glory, the saints shall possess to all eternity, will be communicated through him: and Christ, who is this light, "dwells" with God; he who is the same with the divine Word, was with God, and dwells with him to all eternity; in the fulness of time this Word or Light was made flesh, or was clothed with it, and dwelt with men; when it was, that be came a light into the world, of which he often speaks; and having done his work, ascended to heaven, and now dwells with God in human nature; and will come again, and dwell with men on earth a thousand years, when he will be the light of the New Jerusalem state; and, after that, will take his people with him to heavens, and dwell with God, and they with him, for evermore. This shows that this Light, or the divine "Logos", is a person distinct from God the Father, with whom he dwells; that he is an eternal one, God never being without this Light and Word; and that he is all abiding light to his saints, and will be for evermore.

{p} In Bereshit Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 1, 3. {q} Auctor. Yade Moseh in ib. {r} Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2.

Daniel 2:23

Ver. 23. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God my fathers,.... His remote ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and more near progenitors, to whom God had made promises, and revealed his secrets in time past, and still continued his favours to Daniel; for which he was abundantly thankful, and owned and confessed the goodness of God to him, and praised him on account of it:

who hast given me wisdom and might; or "strength" {s}; courage and fortitude of mind, to go in to the king when in his fury, to promise to show his dream, and the interpretation of it; and strength of faith in prayer to God to obtain it, and who gave him wisdom to know it: Jacchiades interprets this might of power to save his own life, and the life of others:

and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee; for though it was only made known to Daniel, yet it was in consequence of the united prayers of him and his companions, to which he ascribes it; which shows his great modesty and humility, not to attribute it to his own prayer, and the interest he had in God, as a God hearing prayer:

for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter; or "word" {t}; which he required of the wise men, namely, his dream, and the interpretation of it; this being made known to Daniel, he communicated it to his friends.

{s} atrwbg "fortitudinem", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "robur", Piscator. {t} tlm "verbum", Junius & Tremellius, Broughtonus, Michaelis; "sermonen", Pagninus, Montanus; "quod dicit rex", Cocceius.

Daniel 2:24

Ver. 24. Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch,.... Into his apartments at court, or wherever he was in quest of the wise men, of which Daniel had knowledge; this he did as soon as the secret was revealed to him, though not before he had given thanks to God:

whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon; this is a description of Arioch, from the office assigned him by King Nebuchadnezzar, who had appointed him to see this his will and pleasure accomplished:

he went and said thus unto him, destroy not the wise men of Babylon: that is, do not go on to destroy them, for some he had destroyed; this Daniel said, not from any special love he bore them, though some of them might have been his preceptors in the language and literature of the Chaldeans, and so he might have a natural affection for them, and indeed might say this out of common humanity; but this did not arise from any love he had to their wicked arts, which he abhorred, but from love of justice; for, however wicked these men might be, or however deserving of death on other accounts, yet not on this account, for not doing what was impossible for them to do:

bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation; that is, of the dream, and that itself: by this it seems that Daniel, as yet, was not so well known at court, nor of so much esteem and authority there, as to go in to the king of himself, but needed one to introduce him; and which confirms what has been supposed on **Da 2:16**.

Daniel 2:25

Ver. 25. Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste,.... As knowing how impatient the king was to have his dream, and the interpretation of it, told him; and how pleasing this would be to him, and be a means of ingratiating and establishing him in his affections, as well as for the sake of saving the lives of the wise men:

and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah: as if he had made it his business to inquire after a man capable of answering the king's demands; whereas he sought after Daniel at first, not for this purpose, but to destroy him; and now Daniel made his application to him for introduction to the king, and was not looked after by Arioch; but he here did as courtiers do, make the most of everything to their own advantage, to insinuate themselves into the favour of princes: it looks by this as if Arioch did not know of Daniel's having been with the king before, and of the promise he had made him; that granting him time, he would satisfy him in the matter requested, which he was now ready to do, as he had told Arioch; and therefore he adds,

that will make known unto the king the interpretation; that is, of his dream.

Daniel 2:26

Ver. 26. The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar,.... The name given him by the prince of the eunuchs, **Da 1:7**, and by which he was known to Nebuchadnezzar; and very likely he called him now by this name, which is the reason of its being mentioned:

art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? this he said, either as doubting and questioning, or as admiring that one so young should be able to do that, which his seniors, the wise men in Babylon, could not do; or he put this question, as impatient to hear what he must expect from him, whether the performance of his promise, or such an answer as the wise men had given him.

Daniel 2:27

Ver. 27. Daniel answered in the presence of the king,.... Boldly, and without fear:

and said, the secret which the king hath demanded: so he calls it, to show that it was something divine, which came from God, and could only be revealed by him, and was not to be found out by any art of man:

cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers show unto the king; this he premises to the revelation of the secret, not only to observe the unreasonableness of the king's demand upon them, and the injustice of putting men to death for it; but that the discovery of the whole might appear to be truly divine, and God might have all the glory; it being what no class of men whatever could ever have made known unto him. The last word, rendered "soothsayers" {u}, is not used before; the Septuagint version leaves it untranslated, and calls them Gazarenes; and so Saadiah says, it is the name of a nation or people so called; but Jarchi takes them to be a sort of men that had confederacy with devils: the word signifies such that "cut" into parts, as the soothsayers, who cut up creatures, and looked into their entrails, and by them made their judgment of events; or as the astrologers, who cut and divide the heavens into parts, and by them divide future things; or determine, as Jacchiades says, what shall befall men; for the word is used also in the sense of determining or decreeing; hence, Saadiah says, some interpret it of princes, who by their words determine the affairs of kingdoms: by some it is rendered "fatalists" {w}, who declare to men what their fate will be; but neither of these could show this secret to the king.

{u} Nyrzg sectores, Cocceius, Gejerus. {w} "Fatidici", Munster, Tigurine version; "qui de homine determinant hoc, vel illo modo ipsi eventurum esse", Jacchiades.

Daniel 2:28

Ver. 28. But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets,.... By this Daniel meant to inform the king that there was but one God, in opposition to the notion of polytheism, that obtained among the Heathens; that this one God is in heaven, and presides over all persons and things on earth; and that to him alone belongs the revelation of secrets, and not to Heathen gods, or to any magician, astrologer, &c.; and of this kind was the king's dream, a secret impenetrable by men:

and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days: in the latter days of his monarchy, which should be subverted, and succeeded by another; and in ages after that, during the Persian, Grecian, and Roman monarchies; and in the days of the Messiah, even in the latter of his days:

thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; which were of God, and of great importance; and, that the king might observe it, Daniel introduces these words with what goes before, and says what follows:

Daniel 2:29

Ver. 29. As for thee, O king,.... So far as thou hast any concern in this matter, or with respect to thee, the following was thy case; these the circumstances and situation in which thou wert:

thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, which should come to pass hereafter; as he lay on his bed, either sleeping or waking, very probably the latter, his thoughts were employed about this great monarchy he had erected, and what would be the issue of it; and was very desirous of knowing what successors he should have in it, and how long it would continue, and what would be the fate of it; when he fell asleep upon this, and had a dream agreeable to his waking thoughts:

and he that revealeth secrets: a periphrasis of the God of heaven, as in the preceding verse:

maketh known unto thee what shall come to pass; this he did by the dream he gave him, though he had forgot it; and now by restoring that, and the interpretation of it, by Daniel.

Daniel 2:30

Ver. 30. But as for me,.... As to the part I have in this affair, I can ascribe nothing to myself; it is all owing to the God of heaven, the recovery of the dream, and its interpretation:

this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living: not that he thought or affirmed that he had more wisdom than any man living, as the Vulgate Latin version and others suggest; but as the king might think he had, by revealing this secret to him, and that it was owing to that; but that he had not such wisdom, and, whatever he had, which was the gift of God, it was not through that, or any sagacity and penetration into things he was master of, superior to others, that it was revealed to him; and therefore would not have it placed to any such account; this he said in great modesty, and in order to set the king right, and that God might have all the glory:

but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king; meaning not only himself, and his companions concerned with him, that they might be promoted to honour and dignity, but the whole body of the Jews in captivity, with which they were in connection; that they might meet with more civil and kind treatment, for the sake of the God they worshipped, who revealed this secret to the king: or, "but that they might make known", &c. {x}; the three Persons in the Godhead, as some; the angels, as others; the ministers of God, as Aben Ezra: or rather it may be rendered impersonally, but that the interpretation might be made known to the king {y} as by the Vulgate Latin, as it follows:

and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart; both what they were, which were forgotten, and the meaning of them.

{x} Nwedwhy-Nhl "sed ut notificarent", Pagninus, Montanus; "indicent", Vatablus. {y} "Sed ut interpretatio regi manifesta fieret", V. L. "eo fine ut indicetur", De Dieu.

Daniel 2:31

Ver. 31. Thou, O king, sawest,.... Or, "wast seeing" {z}; not with the eyes of his body, but in his fancy and imagination; as he was dreaming, he thought he saw such an appearance, so it seemed to him, as follows:

and behold a great image; or, "one great image" {a}; not painted, but a massive statue made of various metals, as is afterwards declared: such, though not so large as this, as the king had been used to see, which he had in his garden and palace, and which he worshipped; but this was of a monstrous size, a perfect colossus, and but one, though it consisted of various parts; it was in the form of a great man, as Saadiah and Jacchiades observe; and represented each of the monarchies of this world governed by men; and these being expressed by an image, show how vain and delusory, how frail and transitory, are the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them:

this great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee: right over against him, and near him, as he thought; so that he had a full view of it, and saw it at its full length and size, and its dazzling lustre, arising from the various metals of gold, silver, brass, and iron, it was made of; which was exceeding bright, and made it look very majestic:

and the form thereof was terrible; either there was something in the countenance menacing and horrid; or the whole form, being so gigantic, struck the king with admiration, and was even terrible to him; and it may denote the terror that kings, especially arbitrary and despotic ones, strike their subjects with.

{z} tywh hzh "videns fuisti", Montanus, Michaelis; "videns eras", Vatablus.

{a} aygv dx Mlu "imago una grandis", Pagninus, Montanus; "imago una magna", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius; "simulachrum unum magnum", Michaelis.

Daniel 2:32

Ver. 32. This image's head was of fine gold,.... The prophet begins with the superior part of this image, and descends to the lower, because of the order and condition of the monarchies it represents: this signifies the Babylonian monarchy, as afterwards explained; called the "head", being the first and chief of the monarchies; and compared to "fine gold", because of the glory, excellency, and duration of it:

his breast and his arms of silver; its two arms, including its hands and its breast, to which they were joined, were of silver, a metal of less value than gold; designing the monarchy of the Medes and Persians, which are the two arms, and which centred in Cyrus, who was by his father a Persian, by his mother a Mede; and upon whom, after his uncle's death, the whole monarchy devolved:

his belly and his thighs of brass; a baser metal still; this points at the Macedonian or Grecian monarchy, set up by Alexander, signified by the "belly", for intemperance and luxury; as the two "thighs" denote his principal successors, the Selucidae and Lagidae, the Syrian and Egyptian kings; and these of brass, because of the sounding fame of them, as Jerom.

Daniel 2:33

Ver. 33. His legs of iron,.... A coarser metal than the former, but very strong; and designs the strong and potent monarchy of the Romans, the last of the four monarchies, governed chiefly by two consuls: and was divided, in the times of Theodosius, into the eastern and western empire, which may be signified by the two legs:

his feet part of iron and part of clay {b}; or some "of them of iron, and some of them of clay" that is, the ten toes of the feet, which represent the ten kingdoms the western empire was divided into, some of which were potent, others weak; for this cannot be understood of the same feet and toes being a mixture, composed partly of one, and partly of the other; since iron and clay will not mix together, **Da 2:43** and will not agree with the form of expression. Jerom interprets this part of the vision of the image to the same sense, who lived about the time when it was fulfilling; for in his days was the irruption of the barbarous nations into the empire; who often speaks of them in his writings {c}, and of the Roman empire being in a weak and ruinous condition on the account of them. His comment on this text is this,

"the fourth kingdom, which clearly belongs to the Romans, is the iron that breaks and subdues all things; but his feet and toes are partly iron, and partly clay, which is most manifestly verified at this time; for as in the beginning nothing was stronger and harder than the Roman empire, so in the end of things nothing weaker; when both in civil wars, and against divers nations, we stand in need of the help of other barbarous people."

And whereas he had been blamed for giving this sense of the passage, he vindicates himself elsewhere by saying {d},

"if, in the exposition of the image, and the difference of its feet and toes, I interpret the iron and clay of the Roman kingdom, which the Scripture foreshows should be first and then weak, let them not impute, it to me, but to the prophet; for so we must not flatter princes, as that the truth of the holy Scriptures should be neglected; nor is the general disputation of one person an injury;"

that is, of any great moment to the government.

{b} Pox yd Nwhnmw lzrp yd Nwhnm "ex illis quidam ex ferro, et excillis quidam ex luto", Gejerus. {c} Opera, tom. 1. in Epitaph. Nepotian. fol. 9. I. ad Gerontiam, fol 32. E. & in Epitaph. Fabiolae, fol. 68. H. {d} Prooem. in Comment. in Esaiam. I. 11. fol. 65.

Daniel 2:34

Ver. 34. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands,.... Or, "wast seeing" {e}; the king continued looking upon the image that stood before him, as he thought, as long as he could see it, till he saw a "stone": an emblem of the Messiah, as it often is in Scripture, Ge 49:24, because of his strength, firmness, and duration; and so it is interpreted here by many Jewish writers, ancient and modern, as well as by Christians; and also of his kingdom, or of him in his kingly office; see **Da 2:44**. In an ancient book {f} of theirs, written by R. Simeon Ben Jochai, the author interprets this stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, to be the same with him who in Ge 49:24, is called the Shepherd and Stone of Israel; as it is by Saadiah Gaon, a later writer; and in another of their writings {g}, reckoned by them very ancient, it is said, that the ninth king (for they speak of ten) shall be the King Messiah, who shall reign from one end of the world to the other, according to that passage, "the stone which smote the image", &c. **Da 2:35** and in one of their ancient Midrashes {h}, or expositions, it is interpreted of the King Messiah: and so R. Abraham Seba {i}, on those words, "from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel", Ge 49:24; observes, the King Messiah does not come but by the worthiness of Jacob, as it is said, "thou sawest, till that stone cut out without hands, because of Jacob". This is said to be "cut out without hands"; that is, the hands of men, as Saadiah and Jacchiades explain it; not cut out by workmen, as stones usually are out of quarries; but was taken out by an unseen hand, and by invisible power, even purely divine: this may point at the wondrous incarnation of Christ, who was made of a woman, of a virgin, without the help of a man, by the power of God; see **Heb 8:2**, and at his kingdom, which was like a single stone at first, very small, and was cut out and separated from the world, and set up and maintained, not by human, but divine power, and being of a spiritual nature, **2Co 5:1**:

which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces; this seems to represent this image as in a plain, when, from a mountain hanging over it, a stone is taken by an invisible hand, and rolled upon it; which falling on its feet, breaks them to pieces, and in course the whole statue falls, and is broken to shivers; this respects what is yet to be done in the latter day, when Christ will take to himself his great power, and reign, and subdue, and destroy the ten kings or kingdoms that are given to antichrist, and him himself, and the remainder of the several monarchies, and in which they will all end.

{e} tywh hzx "videns eras", Montanus, Michaelis. {f} Zohar in Gen. fol. 86. 2. {g} Pirke Eliezer, c. 11. fol. 12. 2. {h} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 13. fol. 209. 4. {i} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 63. 2.

Daniel 2:35

Ver. 35. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together,.... The feet, the basis of the image, being broken, the whole body of it fell, and with its own weight was broken to pieces; an emblem this of the utter dissolution of all the monarchies and kingdoms of the earth, signified by these several metals:

and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; which is exceeding small and light:

and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; for the several metals, and the monarchies signified by them, which were no more: the allusion is to the manner of winnowing corn in the eastern countries upon mountains, when the chaff was carried away by the wind, and seen no more:

and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the earth; Christ's kingdom, from small beginnings, has increased, and will more and more, until the whole earth is subject to it: this began to have its accomplishment in the first times of the Gospel, especially when the Roman empire, as Pagan, was destroyed by Constantine, and the kingdom of Christ was set up in it; and it received a further accomplishment at the time of the Reformation, when Rome Papal had a deadly blow given it, and the Gospel of Christ was spread in several nations and kingdoms; but it will receive its full accomplishment when both the eastern and western antichrists shall be destroyed, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the Lord's and his Christ's, Re 11:15.

Daniel 2:36

Ver. 36. This is the dream,.... Which Nebuchadnezzar dreamed, but had forgot, and was now punctually and exactly made known to him; for the truth of which he is appealed unto; for, no doubt, by this account, the whole of his dream, and every circumstance of it, were brought to his mind:

and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king; for though both the dream, and the interpretation of it, were only revealed to Daniel; yet he joins his companions with him, partly because they were now present, and chiefly because they were assisting to him in prayer for it.

Daniel 2:37

Ver. 37. Thou, O king, art a king of kings,.... Having many kings subject and tributary to him, or would have; as the kings of Judah, Ammon, Moab, and others, and who were even his captives and prisoners; see Jer 52:32. Jarchi and Saadiah join this with the next clause, "the God of heaven", and interpret it of him thus, thou, O King Nebuchadnezzar, "the King of kings, who is the God of heaven, hath given unto thee", &c.; so some in the Talmud understand it of God {k}; but this is contrary to the accents:

for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory; that is, a very powerful, strong, and glorious kingdom, famous for its mighty armies, strong fortresses, and great riches, from all which the king had great honour and glory; and this he had not by his ancestors, or his own military skill and prowess, but by the favour and gift of God.

{k} T. Bab. Shebuot, fol. 35. 2.

Daniel 2:38

Ver. 38. And wheresoever the children of men dwell,.... Not in every part of the habitable world, but in every part of his large dominion inhabited by men:

the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thine hand; all parks, chases, and forests (so that none might hunt or hawk without his permission), as well as the persons and habitations of men, were at his dispose; showing the despotic power and sovereign sway he had over his subjects:

and hath made thee ruler over all: men, beasts, and fowl: he not only conquered the Egyptians, Tyrians, and Jews, and other nations about them; but, according to Megasthenes {l} he exceeded Hercules in strength, and conquered Lybia and Iberia, and carried colonies of them into Pontus; and, as Strabo {m} says, carried his arms as far as the pillars of Hercules:

thou art this head of gold; or who was represented by the golden head of the image he had seen in his dream; not he personally only, but his successors Evilmerodach and Belshazzar, and the Babylonish monarchy, as possessed by them; for this refers not back to the Assyrian monarchy, from the time of Nimrod, but to its more flourishing condition in Nebuchadnezzar and his sons; called a "head", because the first of the monarchies; and golden, in comparison of other kingdoms then in being, and because of the riches of it, which the

Babylonians were covetous of; hence Babylon is called the golden city, Isa 14:4 and it may be, because not so wicked and cruel to the Jews as the later monarchies were: from hence the poets have been thought by some to have taken their notion of the golden, silver, and iron ages, as growing worse and worse; but this distinction is observed by Hesiod, who lived many years before this vision was seen.

{l} Apud Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 456. {m} Geograp. I. 15. p. 472.

Daniel 2:39

Ver. 39. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee,.... This is the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, signified by the breasts and arms of silver, an inferior metal to gold; this rose up, not immediately after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, but after his successors, when Belshazzar his grandson was slain, and Babylon taken by Cyrus; now though this monarchy was as large at the first as the Babylonish monarchy, nay, larger, as it had Media and Persia added to it, new conquests made by Cyrus, and was as rich and as opulent in his times; yet in later kings it shrunk much, in its peace and prosperity, grandeur and glory, as in the times of Cambyses and the Magi; and especially in the reigns of Cyrus the younger, and of Artaxerxes Mnemon; and at last ceased in Darius Codomannus, conquered by Alexander; and was worse than the former monarchy, being more cruel under some of its princes to the people of the Jews:

and another third kingdom of brass: this is the Grecian monarchy, which succeeded the Persian, and therefore called the third kingdom, and is signified by the belly and thighs of brass of the image
See Gill on "Da 2:32";

which shall bear rule over all the earth; not the land of Israel, as Saadiah restrains it, but the whole world, as Alexander did, at least in his own opinion; who thought he had conquered the whole world, and wept because there was not another to conquer; and it is certain he did subdue a great part of it. Justin {n} says,

"that when he was returning to Babylon from the uttermost shores of the sea, it was told him that the embassies of the Carthaginians and other cities of Africa, and also of Spain, Sicily, France, Sardinia, and some out of Italy, were waiting for his coming; the terror of his name so struck the whole world, that all nations complimented him as their king destined for them."

And Pliny reports {o} of Macedonia, that

"it formerly (that is, in the times of Alexander) governed the world; this (says he) passed over Asia, Armenia, Iberia, Albania, Cappadocia, Syria, Egypt, Taurus, and Caucasus; this ruled over the Bactrians, Medes, and Persians, possessing the whole east; this also was conqueror of India."

{n} Ex Trogo, l. 12. c. 13. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 10.

Daniel 2:40

Ver. 40. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron,.... This is not the kingdom of the Lagidae and Seleucidae, the successors of Alexander, as some have thought; for these are designed by the thighs in the third kingdom; and, besides, the kingdom of Christ was to arise in the time of this fourth kingdom, which it did not in that; nor the kingdom of Gog, or the empire of the Turks, as Saadiah, Aben Ezra, and Jarchi; but the Roman empire, which is compared to iron for its strength, firmness, and duration in itself; and for its power over other nations; and also for its cruelty to the Jews above all others, in utterly destroying their city, temple, and nation:

forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; so this kingdom has subdued and conquered all others; not the Jews only, but the Persians, Egyptians, Syrians, Africans, French, Germans, yea, all the world:

and as iron that breaketh, or "even as iron breaketh all these",

shall it break in pieces, and bruise; all nations and kingdoms; hence Rome has been called the mistress of the world, and its empire in Scripture is called the whole world, Lu 2:1.

Daniel 2:41

Ver. 41. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and

part of iron,.... That is, some of the toes of the feet were of iron, and others of them of clay: these toes, which are ten, as the toes of men are, design the ten kings or kingdoms, into which the western Roman empire was divided, by the coming in of the Goths, and Hunns, and Vandals, into it; and are the same with the ten horns of the beast, and the ten kings which gave their kingdoms to it, Re 13:1,
See Gill on "Re 17:12",
See Gill on "Re 17:13",
See Gill on "Re 17:17",
See Gill on "Da 7:24", some of which were strong like iron, and continued long; others were like clay, and of a less duration:

the kingdom shall be divided; which some understand of the division of it into the eastern and western empires; but rather it means the division of the latter into the ten kingdoms, set up in it by the barbarous nations. Abarbinel and Jacchiades interpret it of the Roman empire being divided into Mahometans and Christians, very wrongly:

but there shall be in it of the strength the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay; notwithstanding this irruption and inundation of the northern nations into the empire; yet still retained, something of the strength and power of the old Romans, which were mingled among those barbarous nations, comparable to miry clay.

Daniel 2:42

Ver. 42. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay,.... Or some of them of iron, and so were strong and powerful, as some of these kingdoms were; and some of clay, and so were weak and easily crushed, and did not stand long:

so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken; this is not unfitly interpreted by some of the two fold power which has prevailed in these ten kingdoms, through the policy of the pope of Rome, the secular and ecclesiastic power; the latter often encroaching upon and prevailing over the other, which has tended to the weakening of these states.

Daniel 2:43

Ver. 43. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay,.... That is, iron among the clay; otherwise iron and clay will not mix and cement together, as is affirmed in the latter part of the verse; but as some of these toes were of iron, and others of clay, or some part of them were iron, and some part of them of clay,

they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; the Romans shall mix with people of other and many nations that shall come in among them, and unite in setting up kingdoms; or these kingdoms set up shall intermarry with each other, in order to strengthen their alliances, and support their interests: thus France, Spain, Portugal, and other nations; those of the royal families marry with each other, with such views:

but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay; and yet these ties of marriage and of blood shall not cause them to cleave to and abide by one another; but ambition and worldly interests will engage them to take part with each other's enemies, or to go to war with one another, to the weakening and hurting each other; and thus the potsherds of the earth will dash one another to pieces; and those who are more powerful, like the iron, will trample the weaker like miry clay under their feet.

Daniel 2:44

Ver. 44. And in the days of these kings, &c. Not of the Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian kings; nor, indeed, of the old Roman kings, or emperors; but in the days of these ten kings, or kingdoms, into which the Roman empire is divided, signified by the ten toes, of different power and strength. Indeed the kingdom of Christ began to be set up in the times of Augustus Caesar, under whom Christ was born; and of Tiberius, under whom he was crucified; and was continued and increased in the reigns of others, until it obtained very much in the times of Constantine; and, after it suffered a diminution under the Papacy, was revived at the Reformation; but will not be set up in its glory until Christ has overcome the ten kings, or kingdoms, and put it into their hearts to hate and burn the antichristian whore; and when she and all the antichristian states will be destroyed by the pouring out of the vials: and then in their days

shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; this is the kingdom of the Messiah, as is owned by both ancient and modern Jews: so it is said in an ancient book {p} of theirs, "in the time of the King Messiah, Israel shall be one nation in the earth, and one people to the holy blessed God; as it is written, in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, &c.";

and in another of their writings {q}, esteemed very ancient, it is said,

"the Ishmaelites shall do fifteen things in the earth in the last days; the last of which mentioned is, they shall erect an edifice in the temple; at length two brothers shall rise up against them, and in their days shall spring up the branch of the Son of David; as it is said, in the days of these kings, &c.";

and both Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret this kingdom of the kingdom of the Messiah; and so Jacchiades, a much later writer, says the last kingdom is that of the Messiah: and another modern Jewish writer says {r}, in the time of the King Messiah there shall be but one kingdom, and but one King; and this the King, the true Messiah; but the rest of the kingdoms and their kings shall not subsist in his time; as it is written, "in the days of these kings &c."; which kingdom is no other than his church on earth, where he reigns; has his throne; holds forth his sceptre; gives out his laws, and is obeyed: and, though this is already in the world, yet it is not so visible, stable, and glorious, as it will be at the close of the fourth monarchy, which is meant by its being set up, confirmed, and established; and this will be done by the God of heaven, the Maker and possessor of it, and who dwells in it, and rules there, and over all the earth; and therefore Christ's church, or kingdom, is often called the kingdom of heaven; and when it is thus established, it will ever remain visible; its glory will be no more eclipsed; and much less subverted and overthrown, by all the powers of earth and hell. Christ was set up as King from everlasting, and the elect of God were appointed and given him as a kingdom as early; and in and over these he reigns by his Spirit and grace in time, when they are effectually called, and brought into subjection to him; these are governed by laws of his making: he is owned by them as their Lord and King, and they yield a ready and cheerful obedience to his commands, and he protects and defends them from their enemies; and such a kingdom Christ has always had from the beginning of the world: but there was a particular time in which it was to be set up in a more visible and glorious manner: it was set up in the days of his flesh on earth, though it came not with observation, or was attended with outward pomp and grandeur, it being spiritual, and not of this world; upon his ascension to heaven it appeared greater; he was made or declared Lord and Christ, and his Gospel was spread everywhere: in the times of Constantine it was still more glorious, being further extended, and enjoying great peace, liberty, and prosperity: in the times of Popish darkness, a stop was put to the progress of it, and it was reduced into a narrow compass; at the Reformation there was a fresh breaking of it out again, and it got ground in the world: in the spiritual reign it will be restored, and much more increased, through the Gospel being preached, and churches set up everywhere; and Christ's kingdom will then be more extensive; it will be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth; it will be more peaceable and prosperous; there will be none to annoy and do hurt to the subjects of it; it will be no more subject to changes and revolutions, but will be in a firm and stable condition; it will be established upon the top of the mountains, and be more visible and glorious, which is here meant by its being "set up": especially this will be the case in the Millennium state, when Christ shall reign before his ancients gloriously and they shall reign with him; and this will never be destroyed, but shall issue in the ultimate glory; for now all enemies will be put under the feet of Christ and his church; the beast and false prophet will be no more; and Satan will be bound during this time, and after that cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, with all the wicked angels and men:

and the kingdom shall not be left to another people; as the Babylonian monarchy to the Medes and Persians; the Persian monarchy to the Greeks; and the Grecian monarchy to the Romans; but this shall not be left to a strange people, but shall be given to the saints of the most High; see **Da 7:27**:

but it shall break in pieces and subdue all these kingdoms; the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman; the three former in the latter, which has swallowed them up; besides, the rest of these monarchies, which are all signified by beasts in an after prophecy, are said still to live, though their dominion is taken away, **Da 7:12**, the same nations are in being, though not as monarchies, and have not the same denomination, and are in other hands; now these, and whatsoever kingdoms shall exist, when this shall be set up, shall be either broke to pieces, and utterly destroyed, or become subject to it; see 1Co 15:24:

and it shall stand for ever: throughout time in this world, and to all eternity in another; it will be an everlasting kingdom; which is interpreted by Irenaeus {s}, an ancient Christian writer in the second century, of the resurrection of the just; his words are,

"the great God hath signified by Daniel things to come, and he hath confirmed them by the Son; and Christ is the stone which is cut out without hands, who shall destroy temporal kingdoms, and bring in an everlasting one, which is the resurrection of the just; for he saith, the God of heaven shall raise up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed;"

this is the first resurrection, which brings on the personal reign, in which the righteous shall reign with him a thousand years; see
Re 20:5.

{p} Zohar in Gen. fol. lxxxv. 4. {q} Pirke Eliezer, c. 30. fol. 31. 2. {r} R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 45. {s} Adv. Haeres. l. 5. c. 26.

Daniel 2:45

Ver. 45. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands,.... See Gill on "Da 2:34"

and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; of which the image was made he had seen in his dream; and which represented the several monarchies of the world in succession, and described their nature, condition, and circumstances, and the ruin of them; See Gill on "Da 2:35"

the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; after his own death, and in his own monarchy; and what will be the fate of succeeding ones; what will come to pass in each of the ages of time, and what will be done in the last days; what an everlasting kingdom there will be, when the kingdoms of this world shall be no more; and this the "great" God, who is great in knowledge as well as power, made known to him, which none else could; and by which he appears to be great, and above all gods, as Nebuchadnezzar afterwards owns; and which Daniel here suggests to him; see Isa 45:21:

and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure; this is certainly the dream the king had dreamed, for the truth of which he appeals to him; and the interpretation of it given would be most surely and faithfully accomplished, on which he might depend; for since the dream had been so distinctly related to him, he had no room to doubt of the true interpretation of it.

Daniel 2:46

Ver. 46. Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel,.... Imagining there was something of divinity in him, that he could so exactly tell him his dream, which was past and gone; and give him the interpretation of it, respecting things to come, which he concluded none but God could do; and therefore, after the manner of the eastern people, threw himself prostrate to the earth, with his face to it, and gave religious adoration to Daniel; for that this cannot be understood of mere civil respect appears by his following orders; and had he not thought that Daniel was something more than a man, he, a proud monarch, would never have behaved in this manner to him; but, being struck with amazement at the relation of the dream, and the interpretation of it, he forgot what both he and Daniel were; the one a mighty king, the other a mere man, a servant, yea, a captive: this shows that he was not exasperated at the account of the fall of his monarchy, as might have been expected, but was filled with wonder at the revelation made:

and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him; rising from the ground, he gave orders to his servants about him, some of whom might be the priests of Bel, that they would bring a meat offering, and incense with it, and offer them to him as to a god; but, though this was ordered, we do not read it was done; for it cannot be thought that Daniel, who had scrupled eating the king's food, and drinking his wine, lest he should be defiled, and afterwards chose rather to be cast into a den of lions than to omit prayer to God, would ever suffer such a piece of idolatrous worship to be paid to him; and though he could not hinder the king's prostration and adoration, which were very sudden; yet it is highly probable he reasoned with the king upon it, and earnestly desired that no such undue honours should be paid to him; declaring that this knowledge was not of himself, but of God, to whom the glory ought to be given.

Daniel 2:47

Ver. 47. The king answered unto Daniel,.... By which it appears that Daniel interposed and expostulated with the king, and prevented the oblation to him as a god, and instructed him in the knowledge of the true God he ought to worship; as the following confession of the king more clearly shows:

and said, of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods; the God of Daniel and his companions, and of the people of the Jews, to whom they belonged, is above all gods that are named and worshipped by men: this appeared at this time for the present, though it did not last long, as the following chapter shows, a most glaring truth; that the God of Israel was above all his gods, and whom his magicians and people worshipped, and above all others:

and a Lord of kings; that rules over them, and disposes of them; sets them up and pulls them down at his pleasure; and transfers their kingdoms from one to another, as he learned by the interpretation of his dream, to which he may in this refer:

and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret; of the dream, and the interpretation of it; which he could never have done, had not his God been a revealer of secrets, and revealed it to him.

Daniel 2:48

Ver. 48. Then the king made Daniel a great man,.... Advanced him to posts of great honour and dignity he was a great man before in spiritual things, in which he was made great by the Lord; and now he was made a great man in worldly things, through the providence of God; those that honour him he will honour:

and gave him many great gifts: gifts great in value, and many in number; rich garments, gold, silver, precious stones, and large estates to support his honour and grandeur; and which Daniel accepted of, not merely for his own use, but to do good with to his poor brethren the Jews in captivity:

and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon; the whole monarchy was divided into several provinces, over each of which was a deputy governor; this of Babylon was the chief of them, Babylon being the metropolis of the empire; the whole government of which, and all belonging to it, was given to Daniel; a proof of the king's high esteem for him:

and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon; here was an university consisting of several colleges, over each of which there was a governor, and Daniel was the president of them all; or the principal or chancellor of the university: this office he might accept of, that he might have an opportunity of inculcating true knowledge, and of checking and correcting what was impious and unlawful.

Daniel 2:49

Ver. 49. Then Daniel requested of the king,.... Being in his favour, he improved it to the advantage of his friends, whom he did not forget in his elevated state; but made suit to the king for them to be put into places of trust and honour, which the king listened to:

and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon; that is, under Daniel, who was made ruler over it; these were deputies under him, appointed to take care of some affairs, which would have been too troublesome to him, and would have took up too much of his time from court; where he chose to be, to improve his interest on behalf of the church of God. De Dieu thinks, from the use of the word in Chaldee, and from what answers to it in the Arabic language, that it was agriculture, the fruits of the field, and the revenues arising from thence, which these men had the care of: this Daniel got for them; that as they had assisted him in their prayers to God, to obtain the dream, and the interpretation of it, so they might share with him in his honours and profits he had on the account thereof; and probably he might suggest this to Nebuchadnezzar, which the more easily engaged him to grant the request:

but Daniel sat in the gate of the king; either as judge there, or to introduce persons into the king's presence: or it may be rendered, "in the king's court" {t}; he was chief man at court, and always resided there; he was prime minister and privy counsellor: it was usual with the eastern nations to call their court a "port", as the Turks do at this day; the Ottoman court is called "the Port".

{t} aklm ertb "in aula regis", Grotius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Daniel 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL 3

In this chapter an account is given of a golden image made by Nebuchadnezzar; its size; and where placed, Da 3:1, a summons to all his princes, governors, and officers, to attend the dedication of it, Da 3:2, a proclamation commanding men of all nations to fall down and worship it, at hearing the sound of music, Da 3:4, an accusation of the Jews to the king, particularly Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, for not worshipping it, **Da 3:8**, the king's sending for them in rage, and threatening to cast them into a fiery furnace if they continued to disobey his will, **Da 3:13**, their answer, which showed an inflexible resolution at all events not to comply with it, **Da 3:16** the king's order to heat the furnace seven times hotter than usual, and cast them into it, which was executed; the consequence of which was, they that cast them in were destroyed through the vehement heat of the furnace, but the three Jews were unhurt, **Da 3:19**. Nebuchadnezzar's amazement at the sight of four persons, instead of three; and these loose, walking in the midst of the fire without hurt; and one of them like the Son of God, which he observed to his counsellors, **Da 3:24**, upon which he called to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, to come out of the furnace, which they did in the presence of his princes, governors, and officers, having received not the least harm in their persons or clothes, **Da 3:26** and then the king, praising the God of the Jews, published an edict that none should speak against him on pain of death; and restored the three men to their former dignity, **Da 3:28**.

Ver. 1. Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold,.... Not of solid gold; but either of a plate of gold, and hollow within; or of wood overlaid with gold; for otherwise it must have took up a prodigious quantity of gold to make an image of such dimensions as follow; this be ordered his statuaries or workmen to make for him; whether this image was for himself, or his father Nabopolassar, or for his chief god Bel, or as a new deity, is not easy to say; however, it was made for religious worship: the reasons that moved him to it cannot be ascertained; it might be out of pride and vanity, and to set forth the glory and stability of his monarchy, as if be was not only the head of gold, but as an image all of gold; and to contradict the interpretation of his dream, and avert the fate of his empire signified by it; or to purge himself from the jealousies his subjects had entertained of him, of relinquishing the religion of his country, and embracing the Jewish religion, by his praise of the God of Israel, and the promotion of Jews to places of trust and honour; or this might be done by the advice of his nobles, to establish an uniformity of religion in his kingdom, and to prevent the growth of Judaism; and it may be to lay a snare for Daniel and his companions; of which we have an instance of the like kind in chapter six. When this image was made is not certain; some think in a short time after his dream before related; if so, he soon forgot it, and the God that had revealed it. The Septuagint and Arabic versions place it in the eighteenth year of his reign; and some are of opinion that it was after his victories over the Jews, Tyre, Egypt, and others; and that being flushed therewith, in the pride of his heart, ordered this image to be made; and out of the spoils he brought with him from the various countries he had conquered. Mr. Whiston {u} places this fact in the year of the world 3417 A.M., and before Christ 587; and so Dr. Prideaux {w}, who makes it to be in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, agreeably to the above versions. Mr. Bedford {x} puts it in the year before Christ 585:

whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits; a common cubit being half a yard, it was thirty yards high, and three yards broad; but Herodotus {y} says the king's cubit in Babylon was three fingers larger than the usual one; and, according to that, this image must be thirty five yards high, and three yards and a half broad; but since there is so great a disproportion between the height and breadth, some have thought that the height includes the pedestal on which it stood; and, allowing twelve cubits for that, the height of the image was forty six cubits. Diodorus Siculus {z} makes mention of a statue of gold in the temple of Belus, which Xerxes demolished, which was forty feet high, and contained a thousand Babylonish talents of gold, which, at the lowest computation, amounts to three millions and a half of our money; which image Doctor Prideaux {a} conjectures was this image of Nebuchadnezzar's; but this seems not likely, since the one was between thirty and forty yards high, the other but thirteen or fourteen; the one in the plain of Dura, the other in the temple of Bel:

he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon; that so it might be seen of all, and there might be room enough for a vast number of worshippers together. The Septuagint version calls this place the plain of Deeira, which some take to be the Deera of Ptolemy {b}; but that is in the province of Susiana; rather this is Duraba {c}, which he places near the river Euphrates, in the province of Babylon. Aben Ezra says, this is the place where the children of Ephraim fell, and where the Chaldeans slew the Jews when they came into captivity. In the Talmud {d} it is said,

"from the river Eshal unto Rabbath is the valley of Dura;"

in Arabic , "dauro" signifies "round"; it was a round valley. The Jews have a notion that this was the valley in the land of Shinar where the tower of Babel was built; and observe, that

"although the design of that generation was not accomplished, yet after their times their punishment was made manifest, in that they said, "let us make us a name", Ge 11:4 for Nebuchadnezzar having wasted and subverted many kingdoms, and destroyed the sanctuary, thought it possible to put in execution the wicked design of the age of the dispersion; hence it is said, **Da 3:1**, "King

Nebuchadnezzar made an image, &c. and set it up", arwd teqbb, "in the valley of generation", in the province of Babylon, which is the valley spoken of in Ge 11:2 what therefore they could not do, he attempted to do; hence he gathered all the people to worship the image, which agrees with Ge 11:4, for he put a certain vessel of the vessels of the temple on the mouth of it (the image), on which was engraven the divine name, that he might render ineffectual the intention of the dispersed generation but the Scripture says, Jer 51:44, "and I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up, and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him"; for Daniel came and caused that vessel that was swallowed to be taken out of the mouth of the image, whence it fell, and was broke to pieces, which is the same as that in Ge 11:4 {e}."

{u} Chronological Tables, cent. 10. {w} Connexion, &c. par 1. B. 2. p. 87. {x} Scripture Chronology, p. 709. {y} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 178. {z} Bibliothec. Hist. I. 2. p. 98. Ed. Rhod. {a} Connexion, &c. par. 1. B. 2. p. 103. {b} Geograph. l. 6. c. 3. {c} lbid. l. 5. c. 20. {d} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 2. {e} Kabala Denudata, par. 1. p. 671.

Daniel 3:2

Ver. 2. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes,.... He sent letters, or dispatched messengers, into the several provinces of his empire, and parts of his dominions, to convene all the peers of his realm, and governors of provinces, and all officers, civil, military, and religious, expressed by various names and titles:

the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces; who are particularly and distinctly designed is not easy to say. Jacchiades thinks they answer to the same offices and officers which now obtain in the Turkish empire; princes are the "bashaws"; governors the "beglerbegs"; captains the "agas" of the janizaries; judges the "kadies"; treasurers the "dephterdaries"; the counsellors the "alphakies"; and "zayties the sheriffs"; their chief doctors their "muphties", as L'Empereur; and the rulers of the provinces the "zangiakies" or "viziers"; but, be they who they will, they were the principal men of the empire, both in things civil, military, and ecclesiastic, who were ordered

to come to the dedication of the image, which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; for though it was made and set up, it was not a proper object of worship till dedicated; and which was done by burning incense, blowing trumpets, &c. now these great men were gathered together on this occasion, because of the greater honour done hereby to the king and his image; and also by their example to engage the populace the more easily to the worship of it; and likewise as being the representatives of them since they could not all be collected together in one place; and it may be it was done, as some think, to ensnare Daniel and his companions. Philostratus {f} makes mention of an officer at Babylon that had the keeping of the great gate into the city; which some take to be the same with the first sort here mentioned; who first offered the golden statue of the king to be worshipped before he would permit any to enter into the city, which perhaps might take its rise from the worship of this golden image.

{f} De Vita Apollonii, l. 1. c. 19.

Daniel 3:3

Ver. 3. Then the princes, the governors, and captains,.... And all the rest of the officers before mentioned, having received their orders from the king, in obedience to them,

were gathered together unto the dedication of the image Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; at great expense, and with much fatigue and trouble, they came from all parts to attend this great solemnity:

and they stood before the image Nebuchadnezzar had set up; they stood and looked at it, and viewed its several parts; they stood and beheld it with wonder, its richness and largeness; they stood and attended to all the rites and ceremonies of the dedication of it; they stood and were ready to fall down and worship it, when the word of command was given; so obsequious were they to the king's will.

Daniel 3:4

Ver. 4. Then an herald cried aloud,.... That his voice might be heard all over the plain; or if it should be thought that one was not sufficient to be heard throughout, which probably was the case, and where; so great a number being assembled together, all could not hear one man, the singular may be put for the plural; and many being set in different places in the plain, and speaking different languages, might proclaim when the image was dedicated, as follows:

to you it is commanded; by the king's authority:

O people, nations, and languages; the several kingdoms, states, and provinces, that belonged to the Babylonian monarchy, and spoke different languages, as now represented by their several governors and officers; as the Armenians, Parthians, Medes, Persians, &c.

Daniel 3:5

Ver. 5. That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet,.... So called of the horn of which it was made; a sort of trumpet; so the Jews had trumpets of rams' horns:

flute; or pipe, or whistle, so called for its hissing noise; it is used of the shepherd's pipe or whistle; see Zec 10:8,

harp; an instrument of music used by David, and much in use among the Jews, and other nations;

sackbut; or "sambuca"; which, according to Athenaeus {g}, was a four stringed instrument, an invention of the Syrians; and Strabo {h}, a Greek writer, speaks of it as a barbarous name, as the eastern ones were reckoned by the Grecians:

psaltery; this seems to be a Greek word, as does the next that follows, rendered "dulcimer"; but in the original text is "symphonia"; which does not signify symphony, or a concert or consort of music, but a particular instrument of music. Maimonides {i} makes mention of it as a musical instrument, among others; Servius {k} calls it an oblique pipe; and Isidore {l} describes it a hollow piece of wood, with leather stretched upon it, and beat upon with rods or sticks, something like our drum: the king of Babylon might have Grecian musicians, or, however, Grecian instruments of music, in his court, as the Grecians had from the eastern nations:

and all kinds of music; that could be had or thought of; and this was done in honour to this idol, and to allure carnal sensual persons to the worship of it, according to the order given:

ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up; when they heard the music sound, immediately they were to repair to the plain where the image stood, and pay their adoration to it; or to fall down prostrate in their own houses in honour of it; and perhaps persons were appointed in all cities and towns throughout the empire to play this music; at hearing which, all people, nations, and tongues, were to bow down, in token of their religious regard unto it.

{g} Deipnosoph. I. 4. {h} Geograph. l. 10. p. 324. {i} Hilchot Celim, c. 10. sect. 14. {k} In Virgil. Aeneid. I. 11. {l} Originum, l. 3. c. 21.

Daniel 3:6

Ver. 6. And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth,.... Who refuses to worship it, or wilfully neglects it; which would be interpreted a contempt of it, and of the king's command:

shall in the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; such as were used to burn stones in for lime, as Jarchi observes: the music was to draw, the furnace was to drive, men to this idolatrous worship; the one was to please and sooth the minds of men, and so allure them to such stupid service; the other to frighten them into obedience. This is the first time that mention is made of "hours" in the sacred Scriptures; it was very probably the invention of the Chaldeans or Babylonians; for Herodotus {m} says the Greeks received the twelve parts of the day from the Babylonians.

{m} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 109.

Daniel 3:7

Ver. 7. Therefore at that time,.... Such a severe edict being published, threatening with so terrible a punishment:

when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music; not only at Babylon, and that lived near the plain of Dura, but in all places where it was played:

all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; what through love of music, the fear of the furnace, regard to superstition and idolatry, and to the king's command, men of all nations and languages gave it homage and worship.

Daniel 3:8

Ver. 8. Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near,.... That is, to King Nebuchadnezzar, either in his palace at Babylon, or more likely in the plain of Dura:

and accused the Jews; particularly Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, as after mentioned, of not obeying the king's command, to worship the golden image: these Chaldeans at the time of adoration had their eyes upon the Jews, particularly those three men, to observe how they would behave; and as they stood up while the others fell down, they were easily observed; wherefore they immediately hasten to the king, to give this information against them; whose places of trust and honour they envied, and now hoped to be put into them in their place and if these were the Chaldeans, or some of them, whose lives these men had been the means of saving, as is probable, they acted a very ungrateful part. Should it be asked, how came these three men to be present? it may be answered, they came here in obedience to the king's orders, as his officers, who had summoned them to this place; which they judged their duty to do, though they determined not to worship his image, should he require it; or they came here on purpose to bear their testimony against such idolatry. No mention is made of Daniel; very probably he was not here; for what reasons cannot be said; however, no accusation is laid against him; perhaps he was too great to be meddled with, being high in the king's favour.

Daniel 3:9

Ver. 9. They spake and said to Nebuchadnezzar,.... Having got access unto him, and within his hearing, they expressed themselves in the following manner:

O king, live for ever; this they said to show their fidelity and hearty attachment to him, and their regard to his welfare, and the continuance of his life; and the rather to ingratiate themselves into his affections, and gain audience of him; See Gill on "Da 2:4".

Daniel 3:10

Ver. 10. Thou, O king, hast made a decree,.... According to his own mind and will, and which he had published as such to his subjects:

that every man; let him be who he will, high or low, rich or poor, in whatsoever station or condition:

that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music; such as had been just then blown or played on:

shall fall down and worship the golden image; which the king had ordered to be made and set up, and now dedicated, and had been worshipped by men of all ranks.

Daniel 3:11

Ver. 11. And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth,.... The image; the above is the decree, this that follows the sanction of it:

that he should be cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace; See Gill on "Da 3:6".

Daniel 3:12

Ver. 12. There are certain Jews,.... Men, by birth, by nation, and religion, despicable, foreigners, exiles, and captives; this they observe by way of contempt, and tacitly suggest that they were never worthy of the king's regard, and improper persons to be put in places of profit and trust, and that the king had done a wrong thing in advancing them:

whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon; not to see that the streets, ways, and walls, were kept in order, as Saadiah observes; for this is mentioned as an aggravation of their crime, that, being set in such high places, should be guilty of such ingratitude to the king, and set such a bad example to his subjects:

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; by name; they say nothing of the common people of the Jews, who either were not present, being employed in a servile manner, or were below their notice; nor of Daniel, who was above them, and out of their reach, and whom the king himself, as Aben Ezra observes, had ordered an oblation to be offered to; or perhaps he was not there, being sick, or on the king's business elsewhere; for that he was present, and worshipped, can never be imagined by any that know his character. The Jews, who do not show all the respect that is due unto Daniel, say {n} some very idle and foolish things of him, as reasons why he was not present at this time. It is asked,

"where did Daniel go? says Rab, to dig a large river in Tiberias; some copies read, in a mountain; but Samuel says, to fetch the seed of herbs, food for beasts; and R. Jochanan says, to fetch swine from Alexandria in Egypt there were three in the consultation about his absence at this time, the holy blessed God, Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel himself. The holy blessed God said, let Daniel be gone, that it may not be said, they (the three children) were delivered by his merits; Daniel said, I will be gone from hence, that I may not fulfil that, "the graven images of their gods shall ye burn"; Nebuchadnezzar said, let Daniel be absent, that it may not be said he burnt his God in the fire."

These men, O king, have not regarded thee; showed no respect to his person and authority; they disobeyed his orders, and were guilty of rebellion against him, and contempt of majesty: the proof follows,

they serve not thy gods; whom the king and the nation worshipped, as Bel, Nebo, Merodach, and others:

nor worship the golden image, which thou hast set up; they did not bow down to it, in reverence of it, as had been ordered; this they knew would he most provoking to the king.

{n} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1.

Daniel 3:13

Ver. 13. Then Nebuchadnezzar, in his rage and fury,.... Which did not became him as a man, much less as a king, and still less as engaged in devotion and religion;

commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; that is, immediately before him; who very probably were not afar off: he did not order them in his wrath and fury to be slain directly, as he did the wise men and soothsayers in another case; but to be brought before him, and examined first, that he might know the truth of these allegations against them; which shows, amidst all his rage, he retained still some respect for them, and esteem of them:

then they brought these men before the king; which they had not much trouble to do, being very ready to come and answer for themselves, and give an account of their conduct, and their reason for it.

Daniel 3:14

Ver. 14. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, is it true,.... What I have heard of you, what you are charged with and accused of; surely it cannot be; so Aben Ezra and Saadiah interpret the word as we do, and all the Oriental versions: it is only used in this place: it is expressed by way of admiration, as Jacchiades observes; it being incredible to the king, what he could never believe, unless it appeared plain in his own eyes. Some {o} render it, is it a "desolation?" so Jarchi; is my decree such? or should you not obey it? was this suffered, nothing but disorder and desolation would follow in the kingdom: or, "is it of purpose?" as others {p}; have you done this willingly and knowingly, or through imprudence and inadvertency? if the latter, it is pardonable; if not, it cannot be borne with. De Dieu, from the Syriac use of the word, renders it, "is it a joke?" are you serious, and in good earnest, or in joke, "that ye worship not my gods? or do you mock me and them?"

O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; on whom I have conferred so many favours, raised from a low to a high estate, and yet used by you in this manner:

do ye not serve my gods; one would think he had no need to have asked this question; since he must needs know, that, by their nation and religion, they served only one God, and could serve no other; and that by their daily practice they never did, in which they were indulged:

nor worship the golden image that I have set up? it is for the sake of this the question is put; this was the thing his heart was set upon; and such was his pride, that he could not bear any control in it.

{o} aduh "nunquid desolatio?" Montanus. So Jacchiades, and some in Ben Melech. {p} "An certo consilio?" Junius & Tremellius; "sive ex proposito?" Piscator; so Rabbenu Hai in Ben Melech; "an de industria?" Cocceius; "num revera, [vel] studiose?" Michaelis.

Daniel 3:15

Ver. 15. Now if ye be ready that at what time ye shall hear,.... The meaning is, that if they were disposed in mind, which the king was very desirous they should, both for his own honour, and for their safety, for whom he had a regard; and were willing to comply with his orders, and readily yield obedience to his will, and worship his idol; the following would be a signal to them, and all would be well with them: or it may be rendered, "when now ye shall be, that at what time ye shall hear" {q}; for the word signifies future, as well as "ready", and is by some so translated; and the sense is, when it shall be, or for the future, that they should hear

the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music; which was played not once only, but perhaps at certain times every day, and designed to be continued:

ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; it is well; so doing the king's wrath would be appeased, their lives would be preserved, and they continued in his favour, and in their honourable posts:

but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; immediately, without any delay; no reprieve will be granted, and much less a pardon:

and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? he knew their confidence in the God of Israel, which he attempts to break and remove; he foresaw the objection they would make, which he endeavours to anticipate by this proud and vain boast, forgetting what he himself had said, **Da 2:47**.

{q} Nydyte Nwkytya Nh "si futuri estis", Gejerus.

Daniel 3:16

Ver. 16. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king,.... In a mild and gentle manner, without affronting his majesty, or insulting his gods, and yet without the least degree of servile fear or fawning flattery:

O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter; about worshipping the image; we are not solicitous about a choice of words, or in what manner to draw up our answer, it is ready in our mouths; we have no need to take time and consider of this matter, and think what to say, we are at a point about it: as thou art peremptory in thy will to have thine image worshipped, we are as resolute, as determined, never to worship it; so that there is no need to spend time in a debate about it; thou art come to a conclusion, and so are we: or in this matter, about the power of our God to deliver, we are not solicitous about an answer to that; we leave him to defend himself, and his own power, against such insults upon him.

Daniel 3:17

Ver. 17. If it be so,.... That we must be cast into the fiery furnace, as thou hast threatened:

our God whom we serve; for though they did not serve the gods of the Babylonians, they did not live without God in the world; they believed in the one true God, the God of Israel, their covenant God and Father; whom they worshipped, had an interest in, and who had and would have a regard for them: he, say they,

is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; either to prevent their being cast into it, or to preserve them unhurt in it, and to bring them safe out of it: instances of his power in other cases, such as the passage of the Israelites through the Red sea safe, when their enemies were drowned, with others, confirmed their faith in this:

and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king; they might have a well grounded hope and persuasion of deliverance, arising partly from former instances of the divine power and goodness in such like cases; and partly from the consideration of the glory of God, which would be greatly conspicuous herein; and chiefly because of the king's defiance of God, and blasphemy against him, which they had reason to believe would be taken notice of; for it does not appear that they had any foresight of certain deliverance, or any secret intimation of it to them, or a full assurance of it, as is evident by what follows:

Daniel 3:18

Ver. 18. But if not,.... If our God does not think fit to exert his power, and deliver us, which we are well assured he is able to do; if it is not his will, we are content, we are resigned unto it:

be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, be it as it will, whether we are delivered or not; we are not sure of the one, but we are at a point as to the other:

nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up; come life, come death, we are ready; we had rather die than sin: they were all of one mind, and agreed in this matter; a noble instance of spiritual fortitude and courage!

Daniel 3:19

Ver. 19. Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury,.... Nettled at the answer given him; perceiving his threats made no impression on these three men, and that they were resolutely determined at all events not to obey his will:

and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; not only to what it was in times past, when they were his favourites, and he smiled upon them; but with respect to what it was while they were under examination, and he was trying to bring them to his will; when finding it impracticable, fury rose up, and showed itself in the furrows and frowns of his forehead; in the sharpness of his nose; in his sparkling eyes, foaming mouth, and gnashing teeth, and that general redness his face was covered with:

therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated; this seems to be a furnace for this purpose, and where it was usual to burn malefactors; it being a common punishment with the Chaldeans; see Jer 29:22 the order was to put seven times more fuel in the furnace, that it might be so much the hotter, and burn so much the fiercer; which order of the king shows indeed the greatness of his wrath and fury, but at the same time that it had transported him out of his sense and judgment; since so fierce a fire was the better for the three men, supposing them to have died as he intended; who would have been the sooner dispatched by it, and so not suffer so much pain and torment as in a slow fire, or less heat; but this was overruled by the providence of God, that so it should be, that the miracle of their walking in it unsinged and unhurt, and their deliverance out of it, might appear the greater.

Daniel 3:20

Ver. 20. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army,.... The most famous for courage of mind, and strength of body, that were in all his army:

to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego either their hands or their feet, or both; unless it can be thought that they were all three bound together in one bundle, and so cast into the furnace; which is not improbable, as Gejerus observes; seeing the king afterwards wondered to see them walk separately in the furnace: there was no need to bind them, for they would not have resisted; and if he ordered this to secure them from the power of their God, it was vain and foolish:

and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace: if they were all three bound together, it required some able bodied men to take them up and cast them in, especially if the furnace was above them; though it is more probable that it was a more depressed place, or below them, and so the cast was more easy.

Daniel 3:21

Ver. 21. Then these men were bound in their coats,.... Their upper coats, cloaks, or mantles, as Aben Ezra and Jacchiades; though, according to the use of the word in the Arabic language, the "femoralia" {r} or breeches are meant:

their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments: their turbants on their heads, which were usually wore in those countries; and their stockings and shoes, and other under garments, as waistcoats and shirts; which through haste or negligence, or with design, were kept on them, to make their torment the greater; but were intended by the Lord to make the miracle the more conspicuous. According to Cocceius {s} and Bynaeus {t}, the first of these words signifies the outward covering of the body, as cloaks, &c.; the second the covering of the feet, as socks, shoes, and sandals; and the third the covering of the head, as caps, turbants, helmets, &c.; the last the inner garments that were under the upper ones:

and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace; in the manner and circumstances before related.

{r} Nwhylbrob "cum femoralibus", Pagninus; so Syr. Ar.; "cum braccis suis", V. L. {s} Expos. Dict. Chald. col. 1022. rad vyjp. {t} De Calceis Hebr. l. 2. c. 10. sect 4, 5, 6, 7.

Daniel 3:22

Ver. 22. And therefore, because the king's commandment was urgent,.... Or was ordered to be obeyed in haste, and with expedition and dispatch, hence the men were cast into the furnace with clothes on; or those that cast them were not so careful of themselves:

and the furnace exceeding hot; being heated seven times more than usual:

the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; which came out of the furnace, being so excessive hot, and the smoke along with it; so that when those men took up the three children, and brought them so near to it as was necessary to cast them in, the flame and smoke catched their breath, and suffocated them; who might be men that advised the king to such cruel measures, or however were very ready, out of ill will to these good men, to execute them, and therefore righteously perished in their sins: in the Apocrypha it is said, that the flame issued out forty nine cubits above the furnace.

"So that the flame streamed forth above the furnace forty and nine cubits." Song of the Three Holy Children 1:24

Daniel 3:23

Ver. 23. And these three men fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. The fire not so much as destroying what they were bound with, and much less them; but being bound they fell, and there they lay for the present, unbound and alive; when those that cast them in were destroyed. In the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, follow sixty seven verses, containing the song of Azariah and his companions in the furnace, which are not in the Hebrew text.

Daniel 3:24

Ver. 24. Then Nebuchadnezzar was astonished, At the burning of those that cast the three men into the furnace, as Jacchiades; or he might be seized with a panic, and his spirits filled with fear and dread, the word {u} is by some said to signify, and this from the immediate hand of God:

and rose up in haste; from the place where he was, and went to the mouth of the furnace, to see what was become of those that were cast into it:

and spake and said unto his counsellors; who had advised him to do what he had done, out of envy and ill will to these Jews:

did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? that is, was there not an order of council for it? and was it not done according to it?

they answered and said, true, O King; it was certainly so: thus they are brought to bear a testimony to the truth of this; it was not only the king that gave the orders, and saw them obeyed, but his counsellors also; and which they own, and serves to corroborate the truth of the miracle.

{u} hwt "expavit", Munster, Piscator, Michaelis; "trepidavit", Gejerus; so Ben Melech from the Targum on Gen. xxvii. 33; "trepidus", Junius & Tremellius.

Daniel 3:25

Ver. 25. He answered and said, lo, I see four men loose,.... Not bound as the three were, when cast in; but quite at liberty in their hands and feet, and separate from one another. As this fiery furnace may be an emblem of the fiery trials and afflictive dispensations the children of God pass through in this world, being not joyous, but grievous to the flesh, though useful to purge and purify; so this and some other circumstances attending these good men in the furnace are applicable to the saints in such cases; for though afflictions are sometimes themselves called cords, with which men are said to be bound, yet by means of them they are loosed from other things from the power and prevalence of sin over them; from the world, and the things of it, they sometimes too much cleave and are glued unto; from a spirit of bondage, and from doubts and fears; their hearts under them being comforted and enlarged with the love of God; he knowing, visiting, and choosing them in the furnace of affliction; or making known himself to them, his love and choice of them; whereby their souls are set at liberty, and the graces of his Spirit are drawn forth into a lively exercise, through his love being shed abroad in them.

Walking in the midst of the fire; the furnace being large enough to walk in, and where they took their walks as in a garden; nor were they concerned to come out of it; nor uneasy at being in it; the violence of the fire being quenched, as the apostle says, referring to this instance, Heb 11:34. Saadiah says, the angel Gabriel, who is over the hail, came and cooled the fire of the furnace. So afflictions are a path to walk in, the narrow way to eternal life, through which all must enter the kingdom of heaven, of which there will be an end. Walking in it supposes strength, which God gives his people at such seasons; and when they have his presence they are unconcerned; none or these things move them, nor can they separate them from the love of Christ; they walk on with pleasure and delight, sing the praises of God, as did Paul and Silas in a prison, and as many martyrs have done in the flames: conversing with Christ, and with his people, they pass on, and pass through the more cheerfully, and are not anxious about their deliverance, but leave it with God to work it in his own time and way; nay, are ready to say with the disciples, it is good for them to be here; and indeed it was better for these good men to be with Christ in the fiery furnace, than to be with Nebuchadnezzar in his palace without him.

And they have no hurt; either in their bodies, or in their garments, neither of them being burnt; they suffered no pain in the one, nor loss in the other. Afflictions do no hurt to the people of God; not to their persons, which are safe in Christ, and to whom he is a hiding place and covert, as from the storm and tempest, so from the force of fire, that it shall not kindle upon them to hurt them; nor to their graces, which are tried, refined, and brightened hereby; faith is strengthened, hope is encouraged, and love made to abound. All the afflictions of the saints are in love, and are designed for good, and do work together for good to them that love God; they are sometimes for their temporal, and often for their spiritual good, and always work for them an exceeding weight of glory.

And the form of the fourth is like the Son of God; like one of the angels, who are called the sons of God; so Jarchi, Saadiah, and Jacchiades; but many of the ancient Christian writers interpret it of Christ the Son of God, whom Nebuchadnezzar, though a Heathen prince, might have some knowledge of from Daniel and other Jews in his court, of whom he had heard them speak as a glorious Person; and this being such an one, he might conclude it was he, or one like to him; and it is highly probable it was he, since it was not unusual for him to appear in a human form, and to be present with his people, as he often is with them, and even in the furnace of affliction; see Isa 43:2, to sympathize with them; to revive and comfort them; to bear them up and support them; to teach and instruct them, and at last to deliver them out of their afflictions.

Daniel 3:26

Ver. 26. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace,.... He came so nigh before, as to see at a distance four persons walking in it; now he comes nearer, as near as he could with safety:

and spake and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God; he not only spake to them in a different tone than he did before; not in wrath and fury, but mildly and gently, with great respect unto them, and reverence of them; and not only calls them by the names he and his courtiers had given them, but styles them the servants of the most high God; he owns their God was a God above his: the Chaldeans worshipped fire, but the God of the Jews had power over that, and could restrain the force of it at pleasure; and he acknowledges that these men were faithful worshippers of him; who had in this wonderful manner appeared for them, and thereby approved their faith and confidence in him, and their service of him; see Ac 16:17:

come forth, and come hither; that is, come out of the furnace, and come to the place where I and my nobles are:

then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire; as they had been cast into it by the king's order, therefore they did not presume to go out of it without the same; nor were they concerned about coming out; they had very agreeable and delightful company, and had reason to say it was good for them to be there; however, when they had the king's order, they immediately obeyed it.

Daniel 3:27

Ver. 27. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together,.... Either by the order of the king, or of their own accord, to see the miracle that was wrought:

saw these men; saw them walking in the furnace, saw them come out of it at the king's call, and saw them when they were out, and examined them thoroughly; so that they had ocular demonstration, full proof and conviction, of the truth of what was done:

upon whose bodies the fire had no power; to blister, scorch, burn, and consume them, as it has usually over the bodies of men, or any creature:

nor was an hair of their head singed; which is easily done with the weakest flame; and this must be understood of the hair of their eyebrows and beards also; see Lu 21:18:

neither were their coats changed; neither the substance, nor form, nor colour of them, but were just as they were when cast into the furnace; the same holds good of all their other garments, their interior ones, with their turbants, shoes, and stockings:

nor the smell of the fire had passed on them; as will upon persons that stay at any time in a place where there is much fire and smoke; and especially where much combustible things are burnt, as pitch, sulphur, and the like, as in furnaces; and very probably in this, which had been so vehemently heated; and yet there was no smell of it on their garments; all which serve to make the miracle the more wonderful.

Daniel 3:28

Ver. 28. Then Nebuchadnezzar spake and said,.... In the presence of his princes and prime ministers of state, and made the following confession, to the praise and glory of the true God; which was extorted from him at this time through the force of conviction; for it does not appear to be a thorough conversion; nor did he relinquish his gods, and the worship of them:

blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; he does not call him his God, but theirs, as he had called him the God of Daniel before, **Da 2:47**:

who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him; the fourth man he saw in the furnace he now calls an angel of God; for the Heathens had notions of some being the messengers of the gods: this seems to favour the sense of those who think an angel is designed by the fourth person; though it does not follow that a created one must be meant; for it may be understood of the Angel of God's presence, the uncreated Angel, Jesus Christ; who, being sent by his divine Father; came and delivered these three persons from being consumed in the fire, who had in so strong a manner expressed their confidence in God, which the king now remembers and observes; see **Da 3:17**:

and have changed the king's word; made it null and void, refused to obey it, knowing it was their duty to obey God rather than man; so that the king was forced to change his word, and, instead of obliging them to worship his image, blesses their God:

and yielded their bodies; freely gave them up, without any resistance, into the hands of those who were ordered by the king to take and bind them, and cast them into the furnace, to which also they readily yielded themselves: so the Septuagint and Arabic versions add, "to the fire",

that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God; they chose rather to deliver up themselves to death, to be burnt in a furnace, than to serve any other god than the God of Israel; such was their constancy and firmness of mind; such their attachment to the true God, and their faithfulness to him.

Daniel 3:29

Ver. 29. Therefore I make a decree,.... Or, a "decree is made by me" {w}; which is as follows:

that every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; anything indecent, blasphemous, or by way of contempt: he does not give orders that their God should be worshipped or signify that he would worship him himself, and quit his false deities; no, only that he should not be spoken against, as very probably before this time he was, to the great grief of these good men; and to whom, therefore such an edict would be grateful, though no more could be obtained; by which it was enacted, that any such person, so blaspheming and reproaching,

shall be cut to pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill;
See Gill on "Da 2:5";

because there is no other god that can deliver after this manner; no, not even Bel himself, as was plain; for he could not deliver the men at the mouth of the furnace, that cast in these three, for they were destroyed by the force of the flame and smoke that came out; but the true God delivered the three men cast in, even in the midst of it; this was beyond all contradiction, and therefore he could not but own it.

{w} Mej Myv ynm "a me proponitur edictum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Broughtonus; "a me positum decretum", Montanus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Daniel 3:30

Ver. 30. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon,.... He restored them to their places of trust and profit, and increased their honours: or, "made them to prosper", as the word {x} signifies; they flourished in his court, and became very great and famous. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add,

"and he counted them worthy to preside over all the Jews that were in his kingdom."

{x} xluh "prosperare fecit", Munster; "prosperari jussit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "prosperos felicesque fecit", Gejerus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Daniel 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL 4

This chapter was written by Nebuchadnezzar himself; and was either taken out of his archives, or given by him to Daniel, who under divine inspiration inserted it into this work of his; and a very useful instruction it contains, showing the sovereignty of God over the greatest kings and potentates of the earth, and this acknowledged by one of the proudest monarchs that ever lived upon it. It begins with a preface, saluting all nations, and declaring the greatness and power of God, **Da 4:1** then follows the narrative of a dream the king dreamed, which troubled him; upon which he called for his wise men to interpret it, but in vain; at length he told it to Daniel, **Da 4:4**: the dream itself; which being told, astonished Daniel, the king being so much interested in it, **Da 4:10**, the interpretation of it, with Daniel's advice upon it, is in **Da 4:20** the fulfilment of it, time and occasion thereof, **Da 4:28**. Nebuchadnezzar's restoration to his reason and kingdom, for which he praises God, **Da 4:34**.

Ver. 1. Nebuchadnezzar the king,..... This and the two following verses are annexed to the preceding chapter in the Hebrew Bible, and in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; as if the author of the division of the chapters thought that Nebuchadnezzar proposed by this public proclamation to celebrate the praise of the Lord, on account of the wonderful deliverance of the three Jews from the fiery furnace; whereas they are a preface to a narrative of a dream, and an event which concerned himself, and most properly begin a new chapter, as they do in the Syriac and Arabic versions. The edict begins, not with pompous and extravagant titles, as was the manner of the eastern monarchs, and still is, but only plainly "Nebuchadnezzar the king"; for he was now humbled under the mighty hand of God; whether his conversion was real is not evident; yet, certain it is, he expresses himself in stronger language concerning the divine Being and his works, and under a deeper sense of his sovereignty and majesty, than ever he did before. This proclamation is directed

unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; belonging to his kingdom, as Aben Ezra; and these were many; besides the Babylonians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans, also the Medes and Persians, the Egyptians, the Jews, and the nations round about them; and also the Spaniards, Moors, and Thracians, with others: but there is no reason to limit this to his own subjects, though first designed; for it was his desire that all people whatever in the known world might read, hear, and consider, what the grace of God had done unto him, with him, and for him, and learn to fear and reverence him:

peace be multiplied unto you: a wish for all kind of outward happiness and prosperity, and an increase of it; thus it becomes a prince to wish for all his subjects, and even for all the world; for there cannot be a greater blessing than peace, nor a greater judgment than war. This phrase is borrowed from the common salutation in eastern countries, and is used often in the New Testament for spiritual and eternal peace.

Daniel 4:2

Ver. 2. I thought it good,.... Or, "fair" {y} and beautiful, highly becoming me, what was my duty, and what might be profitable and beneficial to others, and make for the glory of the great God of heaven and earth:

to show the signs and wonders the high God hath wrought toward me; to declare by writing the wonderful things God, who is above all, the most high God, had done unto him, by giving him a wonderful dream, exactly describing his future case and condition, and then as wonderful an interpretation of it, and which was as wonderfully fulfilled, and, after all, in a wonderful manner restoring him to the exercise of his reason, and the administration of his kingdom, after both had departed from him.

{y} rpv "pulchrum", Montanus, Grotius, Gejerus, Michaelis; "decet me", Junius & Tremellius.

Daniel 4:3

Ver. 3. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders!.... They are great, very great, exceeding great; so great that it cannot be said, nor even conceived how great they are, what a display of wisdom, power, and goodness is in them; they are wonderful beyond expression and conception; and so strong and mighty as not to be resisted and made void by all the powers of nature, earth, or hell; and if this may be said of his works of providence, and his miracles of that, how much more of his works and miracles of grace!

his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; Nebuchadnezzar's reign, though a long one, had an end, and so have all others; but the kingdom of God is for ever; the kingdom of providence, and also of grace; the kingdom of his Son, the Messiah, as in **Da 2:44** from whence Nebuchadnezzar had learnt this:

and his dominion is from generation to generation; or, "with generation and generation" {a}; it goes along, and continues with all generations, and will do so to the end of time.

{a} rdw rd Me "cum generatione et generatione", Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis; "cum omni aetate", Piscator.

Daniel 4:4

Ver. 4. I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house,.... Being returned from his wars, and having obtained victory over the Egyptians, and other nations, and made himself an universal monarch; and now was in entire rest from all his enemies; enjoying himself in his family, and among his courtiers, and nothing to disturb him from any quarter. Josephus {b} says this was a little after the history of the former chapter; but it must be many years after that: he reigned forty five years; one year after this dream, it came to pass; it was seven years fulfilling, and he lived after his restoration a year or two; so that this must be about the thirty fifth year of his reign. Bishop Usher {c} and Mr. Whiston {d} place it in the year of the world 3434 A.M., and before Christ 570; and so Dr. Prideaux {e}. Mr. Bedford {f} puts it in the year 569:

and flourishing in my palace: in health of body, in rigour of mind, abounding with riches; indulging himself in all sensual pleasures; adored by his subjects, caressed by his courtiers, and in fame throughout the whole world: a new palace was built by him, of which **Da 4:30**, being, as Dr. Prideaux {g} says, four times as large as the old one; eight miles in compass; surrounded with three walls; and had hanging gardens in it, he made for his wife.

{b} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 10. c. 10. sect. 6. {c} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3434. {d} Chronological Tables, cent. 10. {e} Connexion, p. 92. {f} Scripture Chronology, p. 710. {g} Connexion, &c. par. 1, B. 2. p. 102.

Daniel 4:5

Ver. 5. I saw a dream which made me afraid,.... Things were represented to his fancy in a dream, as if he saw them with his eyes, as the tree, its leaves and fruit; the shaking and cutting it down to the stump, &c.; and though he did not understand the meaning of it, yet he thought it portended some evil, which threw him into a panic; he was afraid that something bad would befall him, though he knew not what: thus God can make the minds of the greatest men uneasy amidst all their glory, pride, and pleasure:

and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me; the thoughts that came into his mind while he was upon his bed dreaming, and the things which were represented to his fancy in his brain, he remembered when awake, gave him a great deal of trouble and uneasiness, what should be the meaning of them, and what would be the issue and event of these things.

Daniel 4:6

Ver. 6. Therefore made I a decree,.... Published a proclamation; signifying it was his mind and will

to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before him; all together, supposing that one or other of them, or by consulting together, would be able to explain things to his satisfaction, and make him more easy:

that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream; for though they could not tell the interpretation of his former dream, because he could not relate to them the dream itself; which, if he could, they promised him the interpretation; but now he could remember it, and therefore might expect they would make known the interpretation of it to him.

Daniel 4:7

Ver. 7. Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers,.... See Gill on "Da 2:2",

and I told the dream before them, but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof; because they could not; before they pretended, if the dream was told, they could give the interpretation of it; but now, though it was told, they could not do it; which shows the vanity of their art, the falsehood of their pretensions, and that they were but jugglers and impostors.

Daniel 4:8

Ver. 8. But at the last Daniel came in before me,.... Whether sent for or no is not clear; the reason why he came not with the rest might be because he did not associate with them; nor did they care he should be among them, and present at this time; and it may be the king had forgot the knowledge he had of dreams; or, however, did not choose to send for him until he had tried all his wise men; and so it was ordered by the providence of God, and which is the chief reason of all, that he should come last, that the skill of the magicians might appear first to be baffled, and that Daniel, or rather Daniel's God, might be more known, and might be glorified:

whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; so called by him and his courtiers, after the name of his god Bel, with which this name of Daniel begins; See Gill on "Da 1:7":

and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods: meaning either the holy angels, as Saadiah or speaking in his Heathenish manner, having imbibed the notion of many gods, some holy, and some impure; or it may be, speaking in the dialect of the Jews, he may mean the one true God who is holy, and from whom alone is the spirit of prophecy or of foretelling things to come; which he knew by former experience Daniel had:

and before him I told the dream, saying; as follows:

Daniel 4:9

Ver. 9. O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians,.... So he called him, either because he excelled them in knowledge, and was greater than they, as Jacchiades; though not of their rank and order, which Daniel would have scorned to have been among, and reckoned of; so that this would have been no compliment, but a grief unto him; or because he was appointed by the king chief over them, and even over their governors;
See Gill on "Da 2:48":

because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee;
See Gill on "Da 4:8";

and no secret troubleth thee; any ways perplexes thy mind to find it out; it is easy to thee to come at; it gives thee no manner of trouble to get knowledge of it; there is no secret hidden from thee; all is plain before thee, and with the utmost facility canst thou reveal it:

tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen; that is, the meaning of them; for the king remembered this his dream, and afterwards tells it very particularly:

and the interpretation of it; it may be rendered, "that is, the interpretation of it" {h}; for that only was what the king wanted.

{h} hrvpw "id est, interpretationem ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Broughtonus, Michaelis.

Daniel 4:10

Ver. 10. Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed,.... So things appeared to my fancy thus; they ran in my head or brain in a dream in my bed, as if I saw them with my eyes, as follows; for so I thought,

I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth; an emblem of a powerful prince well settled, and strongly supported in his power and government; so the Assyrian monarch, Eze 31:3 and here Nebuchadnezzar himself, as it is afterwards explained; who was well established in his monarchy, the metropolis of which was Babylon; and which stood pretty much in the midst of the then known world:

and the height thereof was great; taller than trees in common; denoting the superiority of the Babylonian monarch over all kings and kingdoms of the earth.

Daniel 4:11

Ver. 11. The tree grew, and was strong,.... Grew higher and broader, taller and thicker, increased in boughs and branches, and became strong and stable, that no winds nor storms could move it: this shows the increasing power of Nebuchadnezzar, the enlargement of his dominions, and the stability of his empire:

and the height thereof reached unto heaven; higher than any on earth;

expressive of his dominion over all nations and people of the earth; or of his ambition of deity itself; and so Saadiah illustrates it by Isa 14:14. "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds &c.":

and the sight thereof to the end of the earth: being so high, it was seen afar off; the fame of this great monarch reached to the ends of the earth; the eyes of all were turned to him; some looking upon him with wonder, others with envy.

Daniel 4:12

Ver. 12. The leaves thereof were fair,.... Or "branches" {i}, as some; and design either the provinces belonging to his empire, which were very large and flourishing; or the governors of them under him, as Saadiah, who made no small and contemptible figure; his princes were altogether kings:

and the fruit thereof much; great revenues from all parts of the empire were brought to him:

and in it was meat for all; the produce of the several countries, and the trade carried on in them, brought in a sufficient livelihood to all the inhabitants:

the beasts of the field had shadow under it; the inhabitants of the several Heathenish nations under him, and even those that were most savage, were protected in their lives and properties by him; so princes should be a screen, a protection to their subjects:

and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof; which Saadiah interprets of the Israelites, in opposition to the foreign nations, comparable to the beasts of the field:

and all flesh was fed of it; all his subjects shared in the good things his victorious arms brought into his empire; all enriched, or however made comfortable, and had a sufficiency of food and raiment; so that there was no reason to complain of him as oppressive to his subjects.

{i} hype "ramus ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus; "ramos ejus", Junius & Tremellius; "rami ejus", Piscator.

Daniel 4:13

Ver. 13. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed,.... The king goes on to relate what other things presented themselves to his imagination in his dream, concerning this tree which signified himself:

and, behold, a watcher: which Saadiah interprets of Bath Kol; but Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Jacchiades, and Ben Melech of an angel; so called because incorporeal, ever watches, and never sleeps, and is always attentive to, and observant of, the commands of God so the angels in the fragment of Enoch are called "egregori", watchers; and the same word is here used in the Alexandrian copy. Some {k} render it "an enemy", "an holy one": according to the sense of the word in 1Sa 28:16, and produce it to show that angels are called enemies:

and an Holy One; one of the holy angels that never sinned, nor left their first estate, but continued in it; in which they are established by Christ, and are impeccable; are perfectly pure and holy in their nature and actions: such an one came down from heaven; the place of their abode, as it seemed to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream.

{k} Lex. Kabalist. in voce bwya p. 54, 55.

Daniel 4:14

Ver. 14. He cried aloud,.... Or, with strengths; {l} being a mighty angel, and that he might be heard far and near:

and said thus, hew down the tree; remove this mighty monarch from his throne; take away his government from him: this is said to fellow angels employed in the affairs of Providence, and the execution of them, to bring about an event so momentous:

and cut off his branches; take away his provinces, each of the parts of his dominion, from him:

shake off his leaves: cause his deputy governors to shake off their allegiance to him:

and scatter his fruit; the revenues of his vast empire, and let others take them:

let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches; those that have either voluntarily betook themselves to him for protection; or have been carried captive by him, and have lived under his shadow, whether of the more barbarous nations, or more civilized, as the Jews; let them take the opportunity of withdrawing from him, and returning to their own lands; see Jer 51:9.

{l} lyxb "in virtute", Montanus; "cum robore", Gejerus; "fortier", Cocceius, Michaelis; "strenue", Junius & Tremellius, Broughtonus.

Daniel 4:15

Ver. 15. Nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth,.... Let him not be utterly destroyed, or his life taken away; but let him continue in being; though in a forlorn condition, yet with hope of restoration; for a tree may be cut down to the stump, and yet revive again, Job 14:7 and let his kingdom remain:

even with a band of iron and brass; which some think was done to preserve it and to show that his kingdom remained firm and immovable; but that is meant by the former clause, **Da 4:26**, rather the allusion is to his distracted condition afterwards related; it being usual to bind madmen with chains of iron or brass, to keep them from hurting themselves and others, as in **Mr 5:4**:

in the tender grass of the field; where his dwelling should be, not in Babylon, and in his fine palace, living sumptuously as he now did; but in the field, grazing there like a beast, and like one that is feddered and confined to a certain place:

and let it be wet with the dew of heaven; suggesting that this would not only be his case in the daytime; but that he should lie all night in the field, and his body be wet all over with the dew that falls in the night, as if he had been dipped in a dyer's vat, as the word {m} signifies; and Jarchi says it has the signification of dipping; and not be in a stately chamber, and on a bed of down, but on a plot of grass, exposed to all the inclemencies of the air:

and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth; instead of feeding on royal dainties, as he had all his days, let him eat grass like the beasts of the field, as it seems he did.

{m} ebjuy "tingatur", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster; "intingatur", Junius & Tremellius; "tingetur", Piscator, Michaelis.

Daniel 4:16

Ver. 16. Let his heart be changed from man's,.... Not as to the substance, but as to the quality:

and let a beast's heart be given unto him; from a human heart, let it be changed into a brutal one; let him be deprived of the use of reason, and have no more exercise of it than a brute has; let him be wholly governed by the animal senses, and behave and act as a beast does; be as senseless, stupid, and savage, as that: and such a heart Nebuchadnezzar had; not that his rational soul departed from him, then he must have died; but the powers of it were sadly vitiated and depraved; his understanding, imagining himself to be a beast, not a man; his judgment, in not distinguishing the actions of a beast from those of a man; his memory of things past utterly failed; he forgot what he had been, and was; his will, inclination, and fancy, were towards brutal things, and ran upon deserts, fields, and grass; and he shunned the society of men:

and let seven times pass over him: while in this condition; let him remain so long in it; not seven months, as Abarbinel, and others; nor seven half years, or three years and a half, as some in Theodoret; dividing the year into two parts, summer and winter; and suppose, that seven of these seasons passed over him before he recovered; but seven years are meant, as Jarchi, Saadiah, and Jacchiades, as the phrase is used in **Da 7:25**, so many years the temple of Solomon was building, which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed, and so long this madness must remain upon him: no notice is taken of this affair by Heathen writers, only Abydenus {n} says, that being under a divine afflatus, he foretold the destruction of the Babylonian empire by a Persian mule (meaning Cyrus), and by a Mede, and immediately, hfanisto, he disappeared; which some have understood of this time of his madness, which quickly followed upon this dream.

{n} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 457.

Daniel 4:17

Ver. 17. This matter is by the decree of the watchers,.... That is, the cutting down the tree, and what is signified by it, was with the advice, consent, and approbation of the watchers, by whom is generally understood angels; not that they were the authors of this decree, but approvers of it; and were ready, not only to subscribe it, but to execute it; it being against a wicked man, and an oppressor of the Lord's people: they are represented as assessors with God; called into a consultation with him; alluding to the manner of kings and princes, who have their privy council, whom they advise with on occasion; though, properly speaking, nothing of this nature is to be attributed to God, only after the manner of men; see 1Ki 22:19

and the demand by the word of the Holy Ones; the same as before, in other words; watchers and Holy Ones being the same, the holy angels;
See Gill on "Da 4:13": and the decree and the demand the same; or the request {o}, or petition; which shows what concern they had in the decree; they only requested it might pass, or be carried into execution; though some understand this of saints on earth, who, in their prayers and supplications, requested for the judgments of God to come down upon this proud monarch: though, after all, it may be best to interpret the whole of the three Persons in the Godhead, who are perfectly pure and holy, essentially and inderivatively; and may be called watchers, because they watch over the good, to bring it upon the Lord's people; and over the evil, to bring it upon their enemies: and to them well agree the decree and the demand; and the rather this may be thought to be the true sense, since this decree is called the decree of the most High, **Da 4:24**, and who is expressed in the next clause:

to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men; though men have kingdoms on earth, and multitudes subject to them, yet they are not absolute sovereigns; there is a God that is higher than they, at whose control they are, and does whatsoever he pleases in their kingdoms, of which the event signified in this dream was a proof; and would be brought about on purpose to make it appear that those that live on earth (for, as for the dead, they know nothing what is done on it), both princes and people, might be sufficiently convinced of the truth of it:

and giveth it to whomsoever he will; that is, the kingdom; he takes it from one, and gives it to another; pulls down one, and sets up another, as he pleases; see **Da 2:21**:

and setteth up over it the basest of men; or, "the lowest of men" {p}; men of the meanest and lowest rank and condition of life, as David was taken from the sheepfold, and made king of Israel; perhaps respect is had to Nebuchadnezzar himself; not to his person, as Saadiah, who says he was short, and low of stature; but to his llater state and condition, when he was taken from among the beasts of the field, and restored to his throne and kingdom.

{o} atlav "petitio", Pagninus, Montanus; "postulatio", Munster; "hoc postulatum", Junius & Tremellius; "petitio haec", Piscator. {p} Myvna lpv "humliem hominum". Montanus, Grotius; "humilem inter homines", Pagninus; "humilem virorum", Michaelis; "humillimum hominum", Cocceius.

Daniel 4:18

Ver. 18. This dream I King Nebuchadnezzar have seen,.... So things were represented to him by a vision in a dream:

now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof; at once, directly; as he was well assured he could, by what he had already done; having both told him his dream when forgotten by him, and the meaning of it; and therefore doubted not but he could interpret his dream, being told him:

forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation; he had sent for them, even all of them; he had told them his dream, but they could not interpret it; see **Da 4:6**:

but thou art able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee; he not only knew his ability from former experience, but for the reason here given; of which he might have more proofs than one, that the Spirit, not of impure deities, of the gods and demons of the Heathens, but of the one true, living, and holy God, who knows all things, dwelt in him; see **Da 4:9**.

Daniel 4:19

Ver. 19. Then Daniel (whose name was Belteshazzar) was astonied for one hour,.... Not at the difficulty of interpreting the dream, which was plain and easy to him; but at the sad and shocking things he saw plainly by the dream were coming upon the king: and though he was a wicked prince, and justly deserved such treatment; and thus he continued for the space of an hour like one thunder struck, filled with amazement, quite stupid, dumb, and silent:

and his thoughts troubled him; both about what should befall the king, and how he should make it known to him:

the king spake and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee: he saw by his countenance the confusion he was in, and imagined there was something in the dream which portended evil, and made him backward to relate it; and therefore encouraged him to tell it, be it what it would:

Belteshazzar answered and said, my lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies; which is as if he had said, I could have wished, had it been the will of God, that what is signified by the dream might have befallen not the king, but his enemies; this he said, not merely as a courtier, but as one that heartily wished and prayed for his peace and prosperity; and to show that he had no ill will to the king in the interpretation of the dream, but was his hearty faithful servant and minister; and yet suggests that something very dreadful and distressing was intended for him; and hereby he prepared him the better to receive it.

Daniel 4:20

Ver. 20. The tree which thou sawest, &e.] In these two verses is related part of the dream, which respects the flourishing estate of Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom; See Gill on "Da 4:10",
See Gill on "Da 4:11",
See Gill on "Da 4:12".

Daniel 4:21

Ver. 21. See Gill on "Da 4:20".

Daniel 4:22

Ver. 22. It is thou, O king, that art grown, and become strong,.... Here begins the interpretation of the dream: the tree was an emblem of King Nebuchadnezzar, of his greatness, and growing power and strength:

for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven; he overtopped all the kings of the earth, exceeding them in honour and power, and aspired to deity itself; See Gill on "Da 4:11"

and thy dominion to the end of the earth; as far as Hercules's pillars, as Strabo {q} says he came. Grotius interprets it, as far as the Caspian and Euxine sea, and the Atlantic ocean.

{q} Geograph. l. 15. p. 472.

Daniel 4:23

Ver. 23. And whereas the king saw a watcher, and an Holy One,.... Here is related another part of the dream, which respects the cutting down of the tree, or the miserable condition the king should be brought into; see **Da 4:13**.

Daniel 4:24

Ver. 24. This is the interpretation, O king,.... Of this part of the dream, namely, what follows in the two next verses:

and this is the decree of the most High; called before the decree of the watchers, **Da 4:17**, and is no other than the decree of that sovereign and absolute Being, whose purposes are unfrustrable:

which is come upon my lord the king; the decree had passed concerning him, and would be most certainly fulfilled: and, because of the certainty of it, it is represented as if it was; for it would shortly and surely come upon him, exactly as it was determined, and by the dream signified.

Daniel 4:25

Ver. 25. That they shall drive thee from men,.... From conversation with men, as unfit for it; from his court and palace, from his nobles and princes. Saadiah interprets this of the angels: it may be rendered impersonally or passively, as in **Da 4:33**, "thou shalt be driven from men" {r}; not by his family, his wife and children; or by his nobles, who are afterwards said to seek him; but by the most high God, and to show his power over him; and it may be by means of his ministering angels; or he was driven by his own fancy and imagination, which was suffered of God to prevail over him, judging himself not a man, but a beast; and so it was most agreeable to him to live with beasts, and not men:

and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; in the open air, or in some den and cavern, instead of being in his court, and among his nobles; a strange change of condition indeed! and in which he was preserved by divine Providence:

and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen; imagining himself to be a beast, he should choose this sort of food, and eat it, and feed upon it with a gust, as if he had really been one; and besides, having no other food, would be obliged to eat this, as well as his degenerate and depraved imagination led him to it:

and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven; strip him of his clothes, and leave him naked; so that he should have nothing to shelter him from the dew and rain, and other inclemencies of the heavens; and this his frenzy might lead him to do of himself:

and seven times shall pass over thee; which some understand of weeks, others of months, others of the seasons of winter and summer; but it is best to interpret it of seven whole years; See Gill on "Da 4:16":

till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will; this was done, as for the instruction of men in general, so of Nebuchadnezzar in particular; that his proud heart and haughty spirit might be brought down, and be made to acknowledge that there was a God higher than he, that judgeth in the earth, and that rules and overrules, and disposes of all things in it according to his will and pleasure; see **Da 4:17**

{r} Nyrrj Kl "truderis", Michaelis.

Daniel 4:26

Ver. 26. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots,.... That is the watchers and the Holy Ones; or it was commanded: this was the order given by the most High:

thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee; signifying that another king should not be set up in his place; and though the kingdom and administration of it would depart from, him for a while, yet it would be restored again, and be firm and stable:

after that thou shall have known that the heavens do rule; that is, that God, who is the Maker of the heavens, and dwells there, is known and acknowledged by thee to rule on the earth; from the government of which he was desirous of excluding him, and taking it to himself; see Lu 15:18.

Daniel 4:27

Ver. 27. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee,.... Since this is the true interpretation of the dream, and such evils are like to befall thee according to it, permit me, though thou art a king, and I am thy minister or servant, to give thee some advice; and let it be taken in good part, as done with a good design, and a hearty concern for thy welfare:

and break off thy sins by righteousness; this advice carries in it a tacit charge of sins, and a reproof for them; which shows the faithfulness of Daniel: these sins probably, besides pride, intemperance, luxury, and uncleanness, were tyranny, rapine, violence, and oppression of his subjects, to which righteousness is opposed; and by which, that is, by a course and series of righteous living, by administering public justice, and giving to everyone their due, he is advised to break off his sinful course of life; to break off the yoke of his sins upon his neck; to cease from doing evil, and to learn to do well:

and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; to his poor subjects, and especially to the poor captives the Jews, Daniel might chiefly bear upon his mind, whom the king had ill used, shown no compassion to, and had greatly distressed; but is now counselled to relieve their wants, and give generously to them out of the vast treasures he was master of:

if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity; peace or prosperity; perhaps by such a conduct there may be a reprieve for a while, the evil portended and threatened by this dream may be deferred for a time; and though the decree of the most High cannot be altered, yet the execution of it may be protracted, and prosperity be lengthened out. Daniel could not assure the king of this; but as there was a possibility, and even a probability of it, as in the case of Nineveh, and others, whose ruin was threatened, and yet upon repentance was prolonged; it was highly advisable to try the experiment, and make use of such a conduct, in hope of it; and the rather, since the humiliation of princes, and their reformation, though but external, is observed by the Lord, as in the case of Ahab. Aben Ezra, Jacchiades, and Ben Melech, render it, "if it may be an healing of thine error"; that is, the pardon of thy sins, that they may be forgiven thee; see **Ac 8:22**.

Daniel 4:28

Ver. 28. All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. All that was signified in the dream, his madness, the removal of him from the administration of government, and the brutal life he lived for seven years; for this was not a mere parable or fiction, as some have thought, framed to describe the state and punishment of a proud man, but was a real fact; though it is not made mention of by any historians, excepting what has been observed before out of Abydenus {n},
See Gill on "Da 4:16", yet there is no reason to doubt of the truth of it, from this relation of Daniel; and is further confirmed by his observing the same to Belshazzar his grandson some years after it was done, as a known thing, and as an unquestionable matter of fact, **Da 5:20**.

{n} Apud Eubseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 457.

Daniel 4:29

Ver. 29. At the end of twelve months,.... After the dream, and the interpretation of it; which, according to Bishop Usher {s}, Dean Prideaux {t}, and Mr. Whiston {u}, was in the year of the world 3435 A.M., and before Christ 569, and in the thirty sixth year of his reign: one whole year, a space of time, either which God gave him to repent in, or which he obtained by attending for a while to Daniel's advice:

he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon; or "upon the palace" {w};

upon the roof of it, which in the eastern countries was usually flat and plain; and so Abydenus {x}, in the above cited place, represents him, wv anabav epi ta basilhia, as ascending upon his royal palace; when, after he had finished his oration on it, he disappeared. From hence he could take a full view of the great city of Babylon, which swelled him with pride and vanity, and which he expressed in the next verse; See Gill on "Da 4:4", where also mention is made of his palace, the new one built by him. The old palace of the kings of Babylon stood on the east side of the river Euphrates, over against it, as Dean Prideaux {y} observes; on the other side of the river stood the new palace Nebuchadnezzar built. The old one was four miles in circumference; but this new one was eight miles, encompassed with three walls, one within another, and strongly fortified; and in it were hanging gardens, one of the wonders of the world, made by him for the pleasure of his wife Amyitis, daughter of Astyages king of Media; who being taken with the mountainous and woody parts of her native country, and retaining an inclination for them, desired something like it at Babylon; and, to gratify her herein, this surprising work was made: though Diodorus Siculus {z} says it was made by a Syrian king he does not name, for the sake of his concubine; and whose account of it, and which is given from him by Dean Prideaux {a}, and the authors of the Universal History {b}, is this, and in the words of the latter:

"these gardens are said to contain a square of four plethra, or four hundred feet on each side, and to have consisted of terraces one above another, carried up to the height of the wall of the city; the ascent, from terrace to terrace, being by steps ten feet wide. The whole pile consisted of substantial arches up on arches, and was strengthened by a wall, surrounding it on every side, twenty two feet thick; and the floors on each of them were laid in this order: first on the tops of the arches was laid a bed or pavement of stones, sixteen feet long, and four feet broad; over this was a layer of reed, mixed with a great quantity of bitumen; and over this two courses of brick, closely cemented with plaster; and over all these were thick sheets of lead, and on these the earth or mould of the garden. This floorage was designed to retain the moisture of the mould; which was so deep as to give root to the greatest trees, which were planted on every terrace, together with great variety of other vegetables, pleasing to the eye; upon the uppermost of these terraces was a reservoir, supplied by a certain engine with water from the river, from whence the gardens at the other terraces were supplied."

And it was either on the roof of the palace, as before observed, or perhaps it might be upon this uppermost terrace, that Nebuchadnezzar was walking, and from whence he might take a view of the city of Babylon; the greatness of which, as set forth by him, he prided himself with, in the following words:

{s} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3435. {t} Connexion, &c. part. 1. p. 105. {u} Chronological Tables, cent. 10. {w} lkyh le "super palatium", Vatablus; "super palatio", Cecceius, Michaelis. {x} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 457.) {y} Connexion, &c. part 1. B. 2. p. 102. {z} Biliothec. I. 2. p. 98. {a} Ibid. {b} Vol. 4. B. 1. ch. 9. p. 409, 410.

Daniel 4:30

Ver. 30. The king spake and said,.... Either within himself, or to his nobles about him; or perhaps to foreigners he had took up with him hither to show the grandeur of the city:

is not this great Babylon, that I have built; he might well call it great, for, according to Aristotle {c}, it was more like a country than a city; it was, as Pliny {d} says, sixty miles in compass within the walls; and Herodotus {e} affirms it was four hundred and fourscore furlongs round, and such the "greatness" of it, and so beautified, as no other city was he ever knew; See Gill on "Jer 51:58", though the king seems to have gone too far, in ascribing the building of it to himself; at least he was not the original builder of it; for it was built many hundreds of years before he was born, by Nimrod or Belus, who were the same, Ge 10:10, and was much increased and strengthened by Semiramis, the wife of his son Ninus; therefore to her sometimes the building of it is ascribed; but inasmuch as it might be in later times greatly neglected by the Assyrian kings, Nineveh being the seat of their empire; Nebuchadnezzar, when he came to the throne, and especially after he had enriched himself with the spoils of the conquered nations, greatly enlarged, beautified, and fortified it: and Berosus {f} relates, that he not only adorned the temple of Bel therewith, but of the city which was of old he made a new one, and fortified it, built three walls within, and as many without; and another royal palace contiguous to his father's, which greatly exceeded it; and hanging gardens in it, which looked at a distance like mountains, for the pleasure of his wife; and now, because he had done so much to the repairing, enlarging, and fortifying of this city, he takes the honour to himself of being the builder of it: and this was done, he says,

for the house of the kingdom; that it might be the seat of the empire, and a proper place for the royal family to dwell in, to have their palace, and keep their court in:

by the might of my power; through the great riches he was possessed of, which he employed in many great works, as before related, to the advantage of this city; he takes all to himself, and excludes all instruments, and even God himself; though, unless the Lord build the city, in vain the builders build, Ps 127:1:

for the honour of my majesty? not so much for the benefit of the city, for the good of his subjects, as for the honour and glory of himself; to show his riches, power, and grandeur, and to make his name immortal to future ages.

{c} Politic. l. 3. c. 3. {d} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 26. {e} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 178. {f} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 1. & contr. Allion, 1. 1. sect. 19.

Daniel 4:31

Ver. 31. While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven,.... Before the king had done speaking in the above boasting manner, an articulate voice from heaven was heard by him, and all about him, formed by the angels, and much like what the Jews call Bath Kol; see Ac 12:21, so Abydenus {g}, in the account he gives of Nebuchadnezzar's oration to the people, relates, that when the king had spoke it, paracrhma hfanisto, immediately he disappeared:

saying, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, the kingdom is departed from thee; that is, the administration of it; for he was not deposed, or declared to be no longer king; his office was not taken away from him, and another king set upon the throne; only the administration was taken into other hands, either of his wife or son, or his nobles; he being unfit for it, till such time as his reason returned to him.

{g} Apud Euseb. ut supra. (Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 457.)

Daniel 4:32

Ver. 32. And they shall drive thee from men,.... According to the interpretation of the dream given by Daniel, which this voice from heaven confirms; See Gill on "Da 4:25", where the same things are said as here.

Daniel 4:33

Ver. 33. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar,.... Whence it appears that this was a true history, and a matter of fact; and not a parable or allegory, as Origen thought, describing the fall of Lucifer or Satan; but relates what befell Nebuchadnezzar himself: nor was the change real as to soul and body; for then he would not have been the same person, not Nebuchadnezzar, and so not he himself punished, but the beast into which he was changed: and though there was a strange alteration, both in his body and mind; in some parts of his body, and perhaps in his voice, in his senses of feeling, tasting, and smelling, in his palate, and appetite, and stomach; in his rational powers, understanding, judgment, and memory; so that he acted like a beast, and choosing to live as one; yet so as to retain the essential parts of a man; his case was, that at once he fell raving mad and distracted, when they first bound him with chains, that he might not hurt himself and others, and afterwards turned him loose into the woods among the wild beasts; or perhaps into one of his parks, among the deer, hares, foxes, and such like creatures; whither he might incline to go, fancying himself to be a beast, and delight to be among them:

and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen; which he did by choice: so Aben Ezra reports of one in the island of Sardinia, who fled from his parents, and lost his reason, and lived among deer for many years, and went upon his hands and feet like them; and the king of the island going a hunting one day, caught many deer, and among them this man, that was taken for one: his parents came and owned him, and spoke to him, but he answered not; they set before him bread and wine, to eat and drink, but he refused; they then gave him grass with the deer and he ate that; and in the middle of the night made his escape to the deer or the field again.

And his body was wet with the dew of heaven: lying all night in the woods or fields without clothing:

till his hair was grown like eagles' feathers: thick, black, and strong; the hairs of his head having not been cut, not his beard shaved for seven years: the Septuagint and Arabic versions read, "as lions":

and his nails like birds' claws: the nails of his fingers and toes were hard, long, and sharp, like theirs, having not been cut during this time; this shows that the seven times are not to be understood of weeks or months, but of years. Some have understood all this as a real metamorphosis, and that Nebuchadnezzar was changed into a beast; the upper part of him was the form of an ox, and the lower part that of a lion, as Epiphanius {h}; so Cyril {i} says of him, that he was changed into a beast, lived in a desert, had the nails and hair of a lion, ate grass like an ox; for he was a beast, not knowing who gave him the kingdom; and so others; closely adhering to the letter of the text, but wrongly, for reasons before given: nor is it to be ascribed merely to any natural disease of body, or melancholy in him, by which the fancy may be so disturbed, as for a person to imagine himself a beast; for though this was the case, yet not through any diseases, such as is called the lycanthropy; an much less to any witchcraft, or any diabolical art, exercised on him; but to the mighty hand of God, taking away the use of his reason, and throwing him into madness and distraction for the demonstration of his power, and humbling the pride of an insolent monarch; not but that God could, if it had been his pleasure, have changed him into a brute, as he turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt; and as a certain wicked nobleman in Muscovy was turned into a black dog, barking and howling, upon uttering horrible blasphemies against God for some judgment upon him, as Clurerius {k} relates, who had it, he says, from both ear and eye witnesses of it; but such a judgment was not inflicted on Nebuchadnezzar, not are such things usual. Herodotus {l} reports, though he himself did not credit it, of some people among the Scythians, that were every year, for a few days, changed into wolves, and then returned to their former shape again; and Pomponius Mela {m} relates the same of the same people; and the poets frequently speak of such transmutations; but these are all fictions and delusions.

{h} De Prophet. Vit. & Inter. C. 10. {i} Cateches. 2. sect. 11. {k} Apud Bucheim Dissertat. de metamorfwsei Reg. Nebuchad. in Thesaur. Philol. Dissert. tom. 1. p. 890. {l} Melpomene, sive l. 4. c. 105. {m} De Situ Orbis, l. 2. c. 1.

Daniel 4:34

Ver. 34. And at the end of the days,.... Of the time fixed in the dream; that is, at the end of seven years, as Jarchi rightly interprets it; this according to

Bishop Usher {n}, Dean Prideaux {o}, and Mr. Whiston {p}, was in the year of the world 3442 A.M., and before Christ 563, in the forty second year of his reign; after which he lived but one year, reigning from the death of his father forty three years, and according to the Jewish accounts forty five; they reckoning from the beginning of his partnership in the kingdom with his father, and his first coming with an army into Syria.

I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven: for, during the seven years he ate grass like an ox, his eyes were fixed upon the earth, looking out for his food, and especially if he went on all four, as the beasts do; but now standing upright, in his erect form as a man, he looked upwards; though this phrase does not merely design his looking up to the heavens, and viewing them from his bodily eyes; but his sense and consideration of the divine Majesty in heaven, his praying to him, lifting up the eyes being a prayer gesture, and his devotion towards him;

and mine understanding returned to me; his understanding as a man, which he had been deprived of during this time; and so came to know in what state and condition he was, by whom brought into it, and for what reason;

and I blessed the most High; the most high God, he whose name alone is Jehovah, the God of gods, who is higher than the highest; him the king blessed for returning his understanding and reason to him, and restoring him to his senses; for which he had just cause to be thankful, for a greater blessing cannot be enjoyed;

and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever; the living and true God, the author of life to all that have it, and who upholds in it; who lives in and of himself, and for evermore; which no mere man, even the most exalted and dignified, does:

whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation; See Gill on "Da 4:3".

{n} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3442. {o} Connexium, &c. part. 1. p. 106. {p} Chronological Tables, cent. 10.

Daniel 4:35

Ver. 35. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing,.... That is, by the most high God, in comparison of him; and that not only the common people, but magistrates, princes, and kings, and even so great a monarch as Nebuchadnezzar; they are like mere nonentities, nothing as to existence, substance, greatness, glory, and duration, when compared with him: for this is to be understood not absolutely as in themselves; for as such they are something; their bodies are something in their original, and especially in their make, form, and constitution, and even in their dissolution; and their souls are yet more valuable, are of more worth than the whole world, being immaterial and immortal; but comparatively with respect to God, in whom they live, and move, and have that being they have, and by whom they are supported in it; al whose glory and grandeur is fading and passing away, and continuance is but very short; and all nothing with God, the Being of beings, whose glory is inconceivable, and with whom a thousand years are as one day, and who is from everlasting to everlasting: and this meant chiefly of the rational inhabitants of the earth; not of the beasts of the field, the cattle on a thousand hills, and the innumerable reptiles of the earth, which also are the inhabitants of it; but of men, the principal ones, and of all of these, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free; not as in their own account, and that of others; for they are something in their own esteem, and seem so in the eyes of others, who judge according to the outward appearance; but they are nothing in the account of God: and as this is true of them in things natural and civil, it is much more so in things spiritual, or relating to everlasting salvation: in these men are nothing, and counted as nothing; no use is made of them, or any account is had of anything done by them; these have no causal influence in their salvation; they are nothing in God's choice of them to eternal life, which is all of mere sovereign grace; nothing in redemption, which is only by Jesus Christ; nothing in regeneration, which is alone by the Spirit and grace of God; nothing in justification, which is not by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of Christ; in short, they are nothing in their salvation from first to last, which is all of grace, and not of works. Jarchi and Saadiah interpret this of an atom or mote in a sunbeam, which is seen flying about, but cannot be laid hold on, having no substance, and disappears when the sun shines not; see Isa 40:15.

And he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; he orders the angels, which are the host of heaven, to stand or go where he pleases; and he disposes of men on earth, and puts them into such stations, and such conditions and circumstances, and appoints them such business and services, as he thinks meet. The angels are "the army of heaven", or the heavenly host; so called for their number, there being legions of them, even an innumerable company; and for their military use, being employed to fight for the people of God, to encamp about them, and protect them: those who formerly belonged to them, that sinned against God, he cast them down to hell, without showing them any mercy; and the rest he chose and confirmed in Christ, and all according to his sovereign will; and these he makes use of according to his pleasure, to minister to the heirs of salvation in life, to convoy their souls to heaven at death, and to gather in all the elect at the last day. The "inhabitants of the earth" are the men of it, as before, with whom he does as he pleases in things temporal and civil, making some rich, and others poor; raising some to great honour and dignity, while others live in meanness, poverty, and disgrace: and in things spiritual; he loves whom he will; he chooses whom he pleases; he redeems whom he wishes from among men; he regenerates and calls by his grace, of his own will; and reveals Christ, and the great things of the Gospel, to whom it seems good in his sight; he does what he will with his own; he bestows grace and glory on whomsoever be pleases, as free grace gifts, without any merit of the creature, according to his sovereign will and pleasure.

And none can stay his hand: stop his power, resist his will, or hinder him from acting, or cause him to cease from his work, which he is bent upon; his will in both worlds is sovereign and arbitrary, and his power uncontrollable. It was so in creation, he said, and it was done; it is so in providence, he does what he pleases; there is nothing done without his knowledge and will, and there is no counsel against the Lord: it is so in his works of grace; in the great work of redemption; no difficulties could discourage or hinder Christ from the performance of that arduous work, he being the mighty God: and in the work of grace upon the heart of a sinner, when God begins to work, none can let; not corruptions within, nor Satan without; nor can anything hinder the carrying of it on; not indwelling sin, nor the snares of the world, nor the temptations of Satan. The purposes of God cannot be disannulled; his hand cannot be held, stopped, or turned back from the execution of them; he will do his will and his work in the world, and in his churches, and on particular persons, maugre all the opposition of men and devils.

Or say unto him, what dost thou? what is this thou hast done? and wherefore hast thou done it? why was it not done in another form and manner, and for other ends and purposes? see Isa 45:9, all such like questions are vain and foolish, and are despised by the Lord; he gives no account of his matters unto the children of men. Some may with wonder say, "what has God wrought!" but none ought to say, in a complaining and murmuring way, "what dost thou?" and should they, it is of no avail, he will do what he pleases.

Daniel 4:36

Ver. 36. At the same time my reason returned unto me,.... Or, "my understanding" {q}; this he repeats, not only to express the certainty of it, but the sense he had of the greatness of the favour, and of which what he said at this time is a full proof:

and for the glory of my kingdom mine honour and brightness returned unto me: or "form" {r}, as the Septuagint; his majestic form, that royal majesty, that appeared in his countenance formerly, returned again; which graced him as a king, and made for the glory of his kingdom, and the administration of his office. Jarchi renders it, "and to the glory of my kingdom I returned"; and to the same purpose the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions. This whole clause is wanting in the Syriac version. Jarchi interprets "brightness" of the form of his countenance; and Jacchiades of the light of it, the sparkling lustre and majesty of it. A strange change and alteration this!

And my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; who very likely had the administration of government in their hands during this time; and as the dream, and the interpretation, were publicly known, and they had seen the first part of it fulfilled in the king's madness and miserable state, they had reason to believe the latter part also, and therefore waited for the accomplishment of it at the end of seven years; when they sought for him, and sought unto him, very probably by the direction of Daniel, who was at the head of them; and this may be the reason why another prince was not set upon the throne, because they expected his return to it at the expiration of these years; and in the mean while held the reins of government in their own hands, but now delivered them up to him:

and I was established in my kingdom; as Daniel had told him, in the interpretation of his dream, that his kingdom should be sure to him, Da 4:26:

and excellent majesty was added unto me; or, more majesty {s}; he had more honour and grandeur than he had before; more respect was shown him, and homage paid him: his latter end, like Job's, was greater than his beginning.

{q} yednm "intellectus meus", Cocceius, Michaelis. {r} ywyz, h morfh mou, Sept.; "forma mea", Tigurine version, "figura mea", Munster. {s} aryty wbr "magnificentia amplior", Pagninus, Montanus; "amplitudo major", Junius & Tremellius; "magnificentia major", Piscator; "majestas amplior seu major",

Michaelis.

Daniel 4:37

Ver. 37. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven,.... Now he knew that the heavens ruled, and that there was a God and a King there, above all gods and kings; who had brought him low, and raised him up again, and to whom were owing all his present glory and magnificence, and therefore worthy of his highest praises; and which he in the most public manner gave by words before his lords and counsellors, and by writing under his own hand, by this edict and proclamation:

all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: everything he does in providence, and every step he takes therein, are according to truth and righteousness; he is true to his word, and righteous in his works, as he had been to him:

and those that walk in pride he is able to abase; not only that show it now and then, but always, and in everything; in their looks and gestures, in their talk and walk, and throughout the whole of their conversation; in whom it is public, visible, notorious, and constant; but let them carry their heads ever so high, and be as proud and haughty as they will, God is able to humble them; he has various ways of doing it. Such as are proud of their outward beauty, or the strength of their bodies, he can, by sending a disease upon them, make their beauty to consume like a moth, and weaken their strength in the way; such as are elated with their wealth and substance, and with honours conferred upon them, or dignity they are raised to, he can soon strip them of all their riches by one providence or another, and bring down those that stand in slippery places of honour and dignity to destruction in a moment; and such as pride and plume themselves with their wit and knowledge, the natural endowments of their mind, he can take away their reason and understanding from them, as he did from this monarch, and put them upon a level with brutes: such who behest of their own righteousness and good works, and trust in themselves, that they are righteous and holy persons, and despise others; and think to be justified and saved by them, and not to be beholden to any other, but be their own saviours; these the Lord, by his Spirit, can humble, by showing them the impurity of their nature; their impotence to that which is spiritually good; the imperfection of their best righteousness to justify them in his sight; so that they shall appear to be polluted and defiled creatures, who thought themselves very holy; and to be very weak and insufficient of themselves, to do anything spiritually good, who gloried in the power and strength of their free will; and see that their best works are no other than filthy rags, and to be renounced in the business of their justification and salvation: in short, he humbles by showing them that all their temporal good things are owing to the good providence of God, and are dependent on it; and that all they have in spirituals is owing to the grace of God, and not to any desert of theirs; in consequence of which they become meek and lowly, and walk humbly with their God, who before walked in the pride of their hearts, and in the vanity of their minds. And a power to do this is peculiar to God himself; none but God can look upon him that is proud, and abase him, and bring him low; and sooner or later, by one means, or in one way or another, he will stain the pride of all glory: it is his usual way to abase him that exalts himself, and exalt him that humbles himself; see Job 40:11, pride being a most hateful sin to him, contrary to his nature and glory, to his grace and to his Gospel; the first sin of angels and men. And of abasement and humiliation of such proud ones, Nebuchadnezzar was an instance in various respects; who was one of the proudest monarchs upon earth, yet was humbled with a witness; but, after all, whether truly converted, is a question.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Daniel 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL 5

This chapter gives an account of a feast made by King Belshazzar, attended with drunkenness, idolatry, and profanation of the vessels taken out of the temple at Jerusalem, **Da 5:1**, and of the displeasure of God, signified by a handwriting on the wall, which terrified the king, and caused him to send in haste for the astrologers, &c. to read and interpret it, but they could not, **Da 5:5**, in this distress, which appeared in the countenances of him and his nobles, the queen mother advises him to send for Daniel, of whom she gives a great encomium, **Da 5:9**, upon which he was brought in to the king, and promised a great reward to read and interpret the writing; the reward he slighted, but promised to read and interpret the writing, **Da 5:13** and after putting him in mind of what had befallen his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar, and charging him with pride, idolatry, and profanation of the vessels of the Lord, **Da 5:18** reads and interprets the writing to him **Da 5:24**, when he had honour done him, and was preferred in the government, **Da 5:29** and the chapter is concluded with an account of the immediate accomplishment of ancient prophecies, and of this handwriting, in the slaying of the king of Babylon, in the dissolution of the

Babylonish monarchy, and the possession of it by Darius the Mede, **Da 5:30**.

Ver. 1. Belshazzar the king made a great feast,.... This king was not the immediate successor of Nebuchadnezzar, but Evilmerodach, Jer 52:31, who, according to Ptolemy's canon, reigned two years; then followed Neriglissar, his sister's husband, by whom he was slain, and who usurped the throne, and reigned four years; he died in the beginning of his fourth year, and left a son called Laborosoarchod, who reigned but nine months, which are placed by Ptolemy to his father's reign, and therefore he himself is not mentioned in the canon; and then followed this king, who by Ptolemy is called Nabonadius; by Berosus, Nabonnedus {t} by Abydenus {u}, Nabannidochus; by Herodotus {w}, Labynitus; and by Josephus {x}, Naboandelus, who, according to him, is the same with Belshazzar; whom some confound with the son of Neriglissar; others take him to be the same with Evilmerodach, because he here immediately follows Nebuchadnezzar, and is called his son, **Da 5:11**, and others that he was a younger brother, so Jarchi and Theodoret; but the truth is, that he was the son of Evilmerodach, and grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, which agrees with the prophecy in Jer 27:7, for though Nebuchadnezzar is called his father, and he his son, **Da 5:2** this is said after the manner of the eastern nations, who used to call ancestors fathers, and their more remote posterity sons. He had his name Belshazzar from the idol Bel, and may be rendered, "Bel's treasurer": though, according to Saadiah, the word signifies "a searcher of treasures", of his ancestors, or of the house of God. Hillerus translates it, "Bel hath hidden". This king

made a great feast; or "bread" {y}, which is put for all provisions; it was great, both on account of plenty of food, variety of dishes, and number of guests, and those of the highest rank and quality. On what account this feast was made is not easy to say; whether out of contempt of Cyrus and his army, by whom he was now besieged, and to show that he thought himself quite safe and secure in a city so well walled and fortified, and having in it such vast quantities of provision; or whether it was on account of a victory he had obtained that morning over the Medes and Persians, as Josephus Ben Gorion {z} relates; and therefore in the evening treated his thousand lords, who had been engaged in battle with him, and behaved well: though it seems to have been an anniversary feast; since, according to Xenophon and Herodotus, Cyrus knew of it before hand; either on account of the king's birthday, or in honour to his gods, particularly Shach, which was called the Sachaenan feast; See Gill on "Jer 25:26" see Gill on "Jer 51:41" which seems most likely, since these were praised at this time, and the vessels of the temple of God at Jerusalem profaned, **Da 5:2**, this feast was prophesied of by Isaiah, Isa 21:5 and by

Jeremiah, Jer 51:39, it had its name from Shach, one of their deities, of which See Gill on "Da 1:4" see Gill on "Da 1:7" the same with Belus or the sun. The feasts kept in honour of it were much like the Saturnalia of the Romans, or the Purim of the Jews; and were kept eleven days together, in which everyone did as he pleased, no order and decorum being observed; and, for five of those days especially, there was no difference between master and servant, yea, the latter had the government of the former; and they spent day and night in dancing and drinking, and in all excess of riot and revelling {a}; and in such like manner the Babylonians were indulging themselves, when their city was taken by Cyrus, as the above writers assert {b}; and from the knowledge Cyrus had of it, it appears to be a stated feast, and very probably on the above account. According to Strabo {c}, there was a feast of this name among the Persians, which was celebrated in honour of the goddess Anais, Diana, or the moon; and at whose altar they placed together Amanus and Anandratus, Persian demons; and appointed a solemn convention once a year, called Saca. Some say the occasion of it was this; that Cyrus making an expedition against the Sacse, a people in Scythia, pretended a flight, and left his tents full of all provisions, and especially wine, which they finding, filled themselves with it; when he returning upon them, finding some overcome with wine and stupefied, others overwhelmed with sleep, and others dancing and behaving in a bacchanalian way, they fell into his hands, and almost all of them perished; and taking this victory to be from the gods, he consecrated that day to the god of his country, and called it Sacaea; and wherever there was a temple of this deity, there was appointed a bacchanalian feast, in which men, and women appeared night and day in a Scythian habit, drinking together, and behaving to one another in a jocose and lascivious manner; but this could not be the feast now observed at Babylon, though it is very probable it was something of the like nature, and observed in much the same manner. And was made "to a thousand of his lords"; his nobles, the peers of his realm, governors of provinces, &c.; such a number of guests Ptolemy king of Egypt feasted at one time of Pompey's army, as Pliny from Varro relates {d}; but Alexander far exceeded, who at a wedding had nine (some say ten) thousand at his tables, and gave to everyone a cup of gold, to offer wine in honour of the gods {e}; and Pliny reports {f} of one Pythius Bythinus, who entertained the whole army of Xerxes with a feast, even seven hundred and eighty eight thousand men.

And drank wine before the thousand; not that he strove with them who should drink most, or drank to everyone of them separately, and so a thousand cups, as Jacchiades suggests; but he drank in the presence of them, to show his condescension and familiarity; this being, as Aben Ezra observes, contrary to the custom of kings, especially of the eastern nations, who were seldom seen in public. This feast was kept in a large house or hall, as Josephus {g} says, afterwards called the banqueting house, **Da 5:10**.

{t} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. {u} Apud Euseb. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 457. {w} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 188. {x} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 2. {y} Mxl "panem", Montanus, Piscator. All food is called bread, Jarchi in Lev. xxi. 17. {z} Hist. Hebr. l. 1. c. 5. p. 24. {a} Athenaei Deipnosophist. l. 14. c. 10. ex Beroso & Ctesia. {b} Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 23. Herodot. Clio, sive l. 1. c. 191. {c} Geograph. l. 11. p. 352, 353. {d} Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 10. {e} Plutarch. in Vit. Alexand. {f} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 10.) {g} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 2.

Daniel 5:2

Ver. 2. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine,.... As he was drinking his cups, and delighted with the taste of the wine, and got merry with it: or, "by the advice of the wine" {h}, as Aben Ezra and Jarchi interpret it, by a personification; as if that dictated to him, and put him upon doing what follows; and which often puts both foolish and wicked things into the heads of men, and upon doing them: then he

commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels, which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; what these vessels were, and the number of them, we learn from the delivery of them afterwards to the prince of Judah by Cyrus, **Ezr 1:9**, these were put into the temple of Bel by Nebuchadnezzar, **Da 1:2** and from thence they were now ordered to be brought to the king's palace, and to the apartment where he and his nobles were drinking:

that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein; Saadiah says, this day the seventy years' captivity ended; and so, in contempt of the promise and prophecy of it, he ordered the vessels to be brought out and drank in, to show that in vain the Jews expected redemption from it.

{h} armx Mejb "vino dictante", Tigurine version.

Daniel 5:3

Ver. 3. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem,.... That is, the servants to whom the orders were given fetched them from the temple of Bel, and brought them to the king's house; and though only mention is made of golden vessels, yet no doubt the silver ones were also brought, according to the king's command:

and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them; by which they were profaned, being dedicated to holy uses, but now put to common use, and that by such impious persons; and who did it, not on account of the value and antiquity of these vessels, and in admiration of them, and to the honour of their festival; but in contempt of them, and in a profane and scurrilous way, as follows:

Daniel 5:4

Ver. 4. They drunk wine,.... That is, out of the vessels of the temple at Jerusalem, and perhaps till they were drunk:

and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone; for they had gods of all these materials;
See Gill on "Da 1:2", and these they praised by offering sacrifices unto them; or rather by singing songs, and drinking healths, and by ascribing all their victories over the nations of the world to them; as that by their means they had got such large dominions, and such great wealth and treasures, and particularly these vessels of gold and silver; and so insulted and triumphed over the God of Israel, and defied the prophecies and promises of the deliverance of them that went under his name.

Daniel 5:5

Ver. 5. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, &c. From heaven, as Jarchi; or they came forth as if they came out of the wall: this was done by the power of God, though it might be by the intervention or means of an angel; so Josephus Ben Gorion {i} says, that an angel came and wrote what follows; and Saadiah says it was Gabriel, called a man, Da 11:21, but this is conjecture; however, at the very time the king and his nobles were feasting and revelling, praising their idols, and reproaching the God of Israel, this wonderful phenomenon appeared:

and wrote over against the candlestick, upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; this candlestick was either upon the table, as Saadiah; or affixed to the wall, or hung as a chandelier in the midst of the hall; or, be it where it will, right over against it this hand appeared, and wrote, that, by the light of it, it might be clearly and distinctly seen: though Gussetius {k} thinks, not a candlestick, but a "buffet", is meant; where stood the drinking cups and vessels, and which he takes to be more agreeable to the signification of the word; and moreover observes, that it is not likely this feast should be made in the night, or at least it is not certain it was, or that it was yet night when this affair happened: however, this writing was upon the plaster of the wall, made of lime, and was white; and if the writing was with red colour, as Ben Gorion says, it was the more visible:

and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote; the back part of the hand; had he only seen a writing, but no hand writing it, he might have thought it was done by some present; but seeing a hand, and only part of one, or however not any other members of the body of a man, nor a man himself, it struck him with surprise, and he concluded at once there was something extraordinary in it; whether any other saw the hand besides himself is not certain; however, he saw it for whom it was particularly designed.

{i} Hist. l. 1. c. 5. p. 24. {k} Ebr. Comment. p. 424.

Daniel 5:6

Ver. 6. Then the kings countenance changed,.... Or, "his brightness" {l}; his ruddy countenance, his florid looks, his gay airs; all his jollity and mirth, that appeared in his face, were changed into paleness, sadness, and confusion:

and his thoughts troubled him; what should be the meaning of this; perhaps he might immediately fear it presaged ruin and destruction to him; the sins of his former life might at once come into his thoughts, and those particularly he had now been guilty of; his luxury and intemperance, his idolatry and profanation of the vessels of the sanctuary, which his conscience might accuse him of, and give him great distress and trouble:

so that the joints of his loins were loosed; or, "the girdles of his loins" {m}; which were loosed or broke, through the agitation he was in; or he was all over in a sweat, so that he was obliged to loose his girdle; or, as persons in great fear and consternation, he was seized with a pain in his back; it opened as it were; nor could he hold his urine; as Grotius and others; see Isa 45:1, where this seems to be prophesied of:

and his knees smote one against another; as is the case of persons in a great tremor, or under a panic. "Et subito genua intremuere timore".--Ovid.

{l} yhwyz "splendores ejus", Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis. {m} hurx yrjq "cingula lumborum ejus", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius.

Daniel 5:7

Ver. 7. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers,.... Or, "with strength" {n}; with a strong voice, as loud as he could; which is expressive of the fright he was in, and of his eagerness and impatience of information; laying aside all decency, and forgetting his royal majesty, like a man out of his senses, quite distracted, as it were: of the "astrologers", &c.
See Gill on "Da 1:20",
See Gill on "Da 2:2", this was the usual course the kings of Babylon took, when they had matters of difficulty upon them, as appears from **Da 2:2** and though they found it oftentimes fruitless and vain, yet still they pursued it; so besotted and addicted were they to this kind of superstition:

and the king spake and said to the wise men of Babylon; who were presently brought in from the several parts of the city where they dwelt, and probably many of them might be at court at that time; and being introduced into the hall where the king and his nobles were, he addressed them in the following manner;

whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof: pointing to the writing upon the wall, which continued; and which neither the king nor any about him could read or interpret, and therefore both are required to be done:

he shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck; or "with purple" {o}; the colour wore by persons of rank and figure; and the chain of gold was an emblem of honour and dignity, and more to be regarded for that than for the value of the gold of which it was made:

and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom; not rule over the third part of the kingdom, as Aben Ezra; but be the third man in the kingdom; next to the king and the queen mother, or to the king and the heir apparent; or one of the third principal rulers; or one of the three presidents of the kingdom, as Daniel afterwards was.

{n} lyxb "cum virtute", Vatablus; "in virtute", Montanus; "fortiter", Cocceius; "cum robore", Michaelis. {o} anwgra "purpura", Vatablus, Pagninus; Montanus; Grotius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Daniel 5:8

Ver. 8. Then came in all the king's wise men,.... The whole college of them, the persons before described; over whom, in Nebuchadnezzar's time, Daniel was the chief of the governors, **Da 2:48**, these came in readily, in hope of getting both riches and honour:

but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof; for if they could not do the former, it must be impossible to do the latter; of the reason of which, various are the conjectures {p}: as that, though these words were written in Chaldee, yet in characters, as the Samaritan or Phoenician, they did not understand; or were written without points, and so they knew not which were the proper ones to put to them; or they were written according to the position of the letters of the alphabet, called "athbash", of which
See Gill on "Jer 25:26", or the words were placed so as to be read backward, or else downward, and not straightforward; or they were all in one word; or only the initial letters of words; but the true reason was, that it was so ordained by the Lord, that they should not be able to read and interpret them; this being reserved for another man, Daniel, that he might have the honour, and God the glory.

{p} Vid. Jac. de Clerice Dissertat. de Epulo Belshazzar, in Thesaur. Theolog. Philol. vol. 1. p. 885.

Daniel 5:9

Ver. 9. Then was King Belshazzar greatly troubled,.... A second time, and perhaps more than before; since he had conceived some hope that his wise men would have informed him what this writing was, and the meaning of it; but finding that they were nonplussed by it, it gave him still greater uneasiness:

and his countenance was changed in him; again; very likely, upon the coming in of the wise men, he had a little recovered himself, and became more composed and serene; which appeared in his countenance; but, upon this disappointment, his countenance changed again, and he turned pale, and looked ghastly:

and his lords were astonished; were in the utmost consternation and confusion, when they understood that the writing could neither be read nor interpreted; neither the dignity of their station, nor their numbers, nor their liquor, could keep up their spirits; so that the king had not one with him, to speak a comfortable word to him, or give him any advice in this his time of distress; they were all in the same condition with himself.

Daniel 5:10

Ver. 10. Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house,.... Not the wife of Belshazzar, as Porphyry would have it; but rather the queen mother, as Jacchiades, the widow of Evilmerodach his father, whose name was Nitocris; and is spoken of, by Herodotus {q}, as a very prudent woman; and as this seems to be by her words and conduct: though Josephus {r} says it was his grandmother, she who had been the wife of Nebuchadnezzar; and of this opinion were some mentioned by Aben Ezra; whose name was Amyitis; and it appears, by what she says afterwards, that she was well acquainted with affairs in his time; and, being an ancient woman, might be the reason why she was not among the ladies at the feast in the banqueting house; but came into it, without being sent for, on hearing the consternation and distress the king and his lords were in, and the moanful despairing words they expressed on this occasion:

and the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever; the usual salutation given to the kings of Babylon, and other eastern monarchs; see **Da 2:4**:

let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed; at this affair, as if it could never be understood, and the true meaning of it be given; but be of good: cheer, and put on a good countenance; there is hope yet that it may be cleared up to satisfaction.

{q} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 185, 188. {r} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 2.

Daniel 5:11

Ver. 11. There is a man in thy kingdom,.... She does not say in his court; very probably, after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, perhaps in one of the former reigns, he was removed from his offices; for, had he been in one, very likely the queen would have described him by it; and this seems to receive confirmation by the question Belshazzar put to him upon his coming into his presence,

art thou that Daniel, &c.; and only says that he had heard of him, **Da 5:13**:

in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; something divine, something more than human; she uses the very words of Nebuchadnezzar; which seems to confirm that opinion, that she was his widow, **Da 4:8**:

and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; "light" in the knowledge of things obscure; understanding in the interpretation of dreams; and "wisdom" in things both human and divine, like that of an angel of God, as Jacchiades interprets "Elohim": of this instances were given in the days of his grandfather, for so Nebuchadnezzar was; nor is it unusual for a grandfather to be called a father, and even a more remote ancestor; which instances were, telling him his dream when he had forgot it, as well as the interpretation of it; and explaining his dream or vision of the tree cut down to its stump; of which see Daniel chapters two and four:

whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers, **Da 2:48** she seems tacitly to upbraid him with his neglect of such a man, or with turning him out of his office, when so great a prince as his grandfather was took so much notice of him, and so highly advanced him.

Daniel 5:12

Ver. 12. Forasmuch as an excellent spirit,.... A superior spirit to all the wise men in Babylon for natural knowledge and political wisdom; and he had yet a more excellent spirit which she knew nothing of, and was no judge of; a spirit of real grace, and true piety and devotion:

and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams; of which interpreting two of Nebuchadnezzar's was a proof:

and showing hard sentences: or explaining enigmas and riddles, or proverbial, parabolical, and figurative phrases and expressions:

and dissolving of doubts: or untying knots, solving problems, and answering knotty, intricate, and difficult questions:

were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar; the prince of his eunuchs gave him that name, perhaps by the king's order; however, it was confirmed by him; he called him by it, and says it was according to the name of his god; see **Da 1:7**:

now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation; this she was confident of, from the knowledge she had of the above facts.

Daniel 5:13

Ver. 13. Then was Daniel brought in before the king,.... Proper officers being sent to seek and find him; and having fetched him from his house or apartment where he lived, which seems to have been in the city of Babylon, though not very probably at court as formerly, he was introduced in form into the king's presence;

and the king spake and said unto Daniel, art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? by which it appears he did not know him, at least had forgot him; not having admitted him to any familiarity with him, as his grandfather had done; and though the queen had given such great commendations of him, yet the king does not treat him with that respect as might have been expected, and as Nebuchadnezzar did, **Da 4:9**, but seems to reproach him with his servile condition, being a captive whom his grandfather had brought out of Judea, as it were triumphing over him and his people; which shows the haughtiness of his heart, and that it was not brought down by this consternation and fright he was thrown into.

Daniel 5:14

Ver. 14. I have even heard of thee,.... Very probably he had heard often of him, though he did not think fit to honour him, and use him with that familiarity his grandfather had; or however he had now just heard of him by the queen, whose encomiums of him he recites in her own words:

that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee; which are the express words of his mother, **Da 5:11**.

Daniel 5:15

Ver. 15. And now the wise men; the astrologers, have been brought in before me,.... For it seems they came not of themselves, or upon hearing his loud cry; but were sent for by him, and came by his orders, and were introduced into his presence by the proper officers:

that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof; pointing to the writing upon the wall:

but they could not show the interpretation of the thing; nor even read it; though it may be some of them might attempt to read it, and did read it in their way, as well as they could, or at least pretended to read; yet could make no manner of sense of it, which was the thing the king was intent upon.

Daniel 5:16

Ver. 16. And I have heard of thee,.... That is, by the queen, which he repeats for the sake of observing what she had said of him, and which gave him encouragement to send for him:

that thou canst make interpretations; of dreams, and of things hard to be understood:

and dissolve doubts; untie knots, solve difficulties, and answer hard and intricate questions:

now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof; that which is upon the wall before thee, and which the wise men of Babylon could not:

thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom; the same reward he had proposed to the astrologers and soothsayers, **Da 5:7** but what was no temptation or motive to Daniel, as appears by what follows:

Daniel 5:17

Ver. 17. Then Daniel answered and said before the king,.... With great freedom, boldness, and intrepidity:

let thy gifts be to thyself; remain with thee; I neither want them, nor desire them; nor will I receive them on condition of reading and interpreting the writing:

and give thy rewards to another; which he had promised to those that could read and interpret the handwriting on the wall; even to be clothed with scarlet, have a golden chain, and be the third ruler in the kingdom. It may be rendered, "or give thy rewards to another" {s}; either keep them thyself, or give them to whomsoever thou pleasest: should it be asked, why Daniel refused gifts now, when he received them from Nebuchadnezzar? it may be answered, he was then young, and wanted them, and could make use of them for the benefit of his countrymen, but now was old, and needed them not; besides, he knew then that the captivity would continue long, but that it was now just at an end, and the monarchy coming into other hands, when these gifts and rewards would be of little use; as also this king was a very wicked one, worse than his grandfather, and he did not choose to receive from him; and especially since the interpretation of the writing would be bad news to him; as well as to let him know that he did not do these things for fee and reward, but for the glory of God; and that as he had freely received such knowledge, he freely communicated it: and therefore adds,

yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation; in reverence of him as a king, and in subjection to him, and to satisfy him in this matter; for he refused his gifts, not from pride and vanity, and a supercilious contempt of the king and his affairs; nor as being doubtful of success in reading and interpreting the writing; which he well knew he was able to do, and therefore promises it.

{s} bh Nrxal Ktybzbnw "tua tibi dona et munera habeto: aut in alios conferto": Castalio.

Daniel 5:18

Ver. 18. O thou king,.... "Hear" {t}, O king; so Aben Ezra supplies it; what he was about to say first, in order to prepare him for the meaning of the handwriting, and the cause of it; or, "thou knowest", as Saadiah supplies it; namely, what follows:

the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom: a very large one, which reached to the ends of the earth: this was not to be ascribed to his predecessor that left it to him; or to his victorious arms, which increased it; or to his idol gods, to whom he attributed it; but to the most high God, from whom promotion alone cometh; and who, being above all gods and kings, sets up, and pulls down, as he pleases; he gave him his large dominions:

and majesty, and glory, and honour; greatness among men; glory and honour from them, on account of the majesty of his person and kingdom; the victories he obtained, and the great things he did to make him famous while he lived, and to perpetuate his memory after death.

{t} So Pagninus, Munster.

Daniel 5:19

Ver. 19. And for the majesty that he gave him,.... The greatness of his power, the largeness of his dominions, and the vast armies he had at his command:

all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him; not only those that were subject to him, but those that had only heard of him: who dreaded his approach unto them, and their falling into his victorious hands, and being made vassals to him:

whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; he ruled in an arbitrary and despotic manner, and kept the power of life and death in his own hands; whom he would he put to death, though ever so innocent; and whom he would he preserved from death, though ever so deserving of it; he had no regard to justice, but acted according to his own will and pleasure. Jacchiades renders the last clause, "whom he would he smote": but both the punctuation of the word, and the antithesis in the text, require the sense our version gives, and which is confirmed by Aben Ezra and Saadiah:

and whom he would he set up: and whom he would he put down; according to his pleasure, he raised persons from a low estate to great dignity, and put them into high posts of honour and profit, as he did Daniel: and others he as much debased, turned them out of their places, and reduced them to the lowest degree of disgrace and poverty; and all according to his absolute and irresistible will, without giving any reason for what he did.

Daniel 5:20

Ver. 20. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened it pride,.... When his heart was elated with his successes and victories, with the enlargement of his dominions, and with his grandeur and glory he had arrived unto; and his pride increased yet more, till he was strengthened and hardened in it: or, "to deal proudly" {u}; and behave haughtily to God and man: or, "to do wickedly", as Jarchi interprets it; for pride and haughtiness of mind puts men, especially great men, kings and monarchs, on doing things extremely vile and wicked:

he was deposed from his kingly throne; not by his nobles and subjects, but by the hand of God, which struck him with madness, and made him unfit for government; obliged him to quit the throne, and to range among the beasts of the field, as is afterwards observed:

and they took his glory from him; the watchers, the angels, or the divine Persons that ordered the tree to be cut down to the roots, Da 4:14, or it may be rendered impersonally, "and his glory was taken from him" {w}; his glory as a man, being deprived of his reason, and acting like a brute beast; and his glory as a king, which departed from him for a season, while he was driven from men, from his royal palace and court, and lived among beasts, and fed as they did, as follows:

{u} hdzhl "ad superbe agendum", Junius & Tremellius; "ad superbiendum", Piscator, Michaelis; "ut superbe ageret", Cocceius. {w} hnm wydeh hyrqyw "et gloria ejus ablata est", V. L.; "honor ejus translatus fuit", Michaelis.

Daniel 5:21

Ver. 21. And he was driven from the sons of men,.... From their company, and from conversation with them; his madness was of that kind, that he chose rather to be with beasts than men; it drove him from men, and made him more desirous of being with beasts; or it was so intolerable, that his family, friends, and courtiers, were obliged to remove him from them, from his palace and court, and from all conversation with men, which he was incapable of through his frenzy and madness:

and his heart was made like the beasts; to have the same affections and desires as they have; to crave the same things they did, and like what they liked, and live as they lived: or, "he put his heart with the beasts" {x}; either Nebuchadnezzar himself chose to be with them, and delighted in a beastly life; or God did it; he put such a heart into him, or so disposed it, that it became brutish; though to read the words impersonally, as before, seems best:

and his dwelling was with the wild asses; in a wilderness or field; or rather in some enclosed place, in one of his parks, where such creatures were kept for hunting; among these he dwelt, as being like them, having lost the use of his reason, and so was become stupid and sottish as they:

and they fed him with grass like oxen; as they are fed, and which he chose above any other food:

and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; being without clothes, and lying naked in some open place all night:

till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will: till he came to his senses, and was brought to see and own the sovereign dominion of the one, true, and living God, over all the kingdoms of the earth, and that they are at his dispose; **Da 4:32**.

{x} ywv atwyx Me hbblw "cor ejus cum bestiis posuit", Vatablus, Calvin; "animum suum cum bestis posuit", Cocceius.

Daniel 5:22

Ver. 22. And thou his son, O Belshazzar,.... His grandson;
See Gill on "Da 5:1":

hast not humbled thine heart; so as to acknowledge the most high God, and his dependence on him; to own him as his Sovereign, by whom he held his crown and kingdom, and to whom he was accountable; but, on the contrary, lifted up his heart in pride and haughtiness against him:

though thou knewest all this; either by the relation of others, his father and mother, and others; or being an eyewitness of it himself; wherefore his sin was the more aggravated, since he had had an example before him of pride being humbled in a very awful manner, and yet took no warning by it.

Daniel 5:23

Ver. 23. But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven,.... Who made it, and dwells in it; from whence he beholds all the actions of the children of men, and will bring them to an account for them; and yet, though so high and great, such was the insolence of this king, that he dared to lift up himself against him, as if he was above him, and greater than he; and indeed so it may be rendered, "above the Lord of heaven" {x}; which showed his great pride and vanity, his want of knowledge, both of himself, and of the true God. This name of God is the same with Beelsamen {y}; by which the Phoenicians used to call him:

and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee; that is, his servants by his orders had brought the vessels of the temple at Jerusalem, which Nebuchadnezzar had took from thence, and set them upon his table for him and his company to drink out of; which is an instance of the pride of his heart, and of his daring boldness and impiety; see **Da 5:2**:

and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drank wine in them; even that very day or night: this Daniel had knowledge of by some means or another; and his intelligence was so good that he could with great certainty affirm it:

and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone; see **Da 5:4**:

which see not, nor hear, nor know; no more, than the various metals and

materials of which they are made; and therefore it must be great madness and folly to praise such as gods that are below men, and even brutes; have neither the sense of animals, nor the knowledge of men; see
Ps 115:4:

and the God in whose hand thy breath is; who gave it to him at first, and as yet continued it in him, and could take it away when he pleased: and whose are all thy ways; counsels and designs, works and actions; under whose direction and control they all are; the events, issue, and success of which all depend upon him; see Jer 10:23:

him hast thou not glorified; by owning him as the only true God; ascribing all he was and had unto him, and giving due worship, adoration, and honour to him; but, on the contrary, setting up his idol gods above him, and treating him, and everything belonging to him, with ignominy and contempt.

{x} aymv yrm le "super Dominum coeli", Montanus; "super Dominum scelorum", Michaelis. {y} Sanchoniatho apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. c. 9. p. 34.

Daniel 5:24

Ver. 24. Then was the part of the hand sent from him,.... That is, from God: being thus reproached and blasphemed, at that very instant, and for that reason, because the vessels of his sanctuary were profaned, and idol gods were praised, and he despised; he caused part of a hand, the writing fingers of it, to appear on the wall of the king's palace:

and this writing was written; which was then upon the wall, and he points to it.

Daniel 5:25

Ver. 25. And this is the writing that was written,.... They are such and such letters, and so to be read, as follows:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN; which are Chaldee words, and may be literally rendered, "he hath numbered, he hath numbered"; that is, God hath certainly, perfectly, and exactly numbered; "he hath weighed", God hath weighed thee, Belshazzar; "and they divide the kingdom"; that is, the Medes and Persians, as appears from the following interpretation:

Daniel 5:26

Ver. 26. This is the interpretation of the thing,.... Or, "word" {z}; for they might all seem as one word; or this is the sense of the whole:

MENE; as for this word, it signifies,

God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it; God had fixed the number of years, how long that monarchy should last, which he was now at the head of, and which was foretold, Jer 25:1, and also the number of years that he should reign over it; and both these numbers were now completed; for that very night Belshazzar was slain, and the kingdom translated to another people: and a dreadful thing it is to be numbered to the sword, famine, and pestilence, or any sore judgment of God for sin, as sometimes men are; so more especially to be appointed to everlasting wrath, and to be numbered among transgressors, among the devils and damned in hell.

{z} atlm "sermonis", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "verborum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Broughtonus; "verbi", Cocceius; "illius verbi", Michaelis.

Daniel 5:27

Ver. 27. TEKEL,.... As for the meaning of this word, and what it points at, it is this:

thou art weighed in the balances: of justice and truth, in the holy righteous law of God; as gold, and jewels, and precious stones, are weighed in the scales by the goldsmith and jeweller with great exactness, to know the worth of them:

and art found wanting; found to be adulterated gold, reprobate silver, bad coin, a false stone; found to be a worthless man, a wicked prince, wanting the necessary qualifications of wisdom, goodness, mercy, truth, and justice. The Scriptures of truth, the word of God, contained in the books of the Old and New Testament, are the balances of the sanctuary, in which persons, principles, and practices, are to be weighed; and sad it is where they are found light and wanting: men, both of high and low degree, when put here, are lighter than vanity. The Pharisee, or self-righteous person, when weighed in the balance of God's law, which is holy, just, and good, will be found wanting of that holiness and righteousness he pretends to, and appear to be an unholy and an unrighteous man; his righteousness, neither for the matter of it, nor manner of performing it, being agreeable to that law, and so no righteousness in the sense of it, **De 6:25**, it being imperfect, and so leaves him to the curse of it, **Ga 3:10**, and not being performed in a pure and spiritual manner that it requires, is rejected by it; and miserable will be the case of such a man at the day of judgment, when his works will be found wanting, and not answerable to the demands of a righteous law, and he without the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness, and so naked and speechless. The hypocrite, and formal professor, when weighed in the balance of the Scripture, will be found wanting the true grace of God; his faith will appear to be feigned, and his hope groundless, and his love to be in word and in tongue only, and not at all to answer to the description of true grace given in the word of God; and bad will it be with such persons at last, when at the bridegroom's coming they will be destitute of the oil of true and real grace; only have that which is counterfeit, and the mere lamp of an outward profession, which will then stand them in no stead, or be of any avail unto them: in the same balances are the doctrines and principles of men to be weighed; and, such as are according to them are solid and weighty, and are comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; but such as are not are light, and like wood, hay, and stubble, which the fire of the word will reveal, try, and burn up, not being able to stand against it; and if these are weighed in the balances, they will be found wanting of real truth and goodness, and be but as chaff to wheat; and what is the one to the other? there is no comparison between them; and dreadful will be the case of false teachers, that make and teach an abomination and a lie; and of those that are given up to believe them, these will not be able to stand the trying hour of temptation, and much less the last and final judgment. Sad for preachers of the word to be found wanting in their ministry, and hearers to be wanting in their duty; not taking care neither what they hear, nor how they hear, or whether they put in practice the good they do hear.

Daniel 5:28

Ver. 28. PERES,.... The singular of "Pharsin", **Da 5:25**. The sense of this word is,

thy kingdom is divided: which, though it consisted of various provinces, united under Belshazzar, now should be broken and separated from him:

and given to the Medes and Persians; to Darius the Mede, and to Cyrus the Persian, who was a partner for a while with his uncle Darius in the government of the empire: there is an elegant play on words in the words "Peres" and "Persians"; and a grievous thing it is to sinners, not only to have body and soul divided at death, but to be divided and separated from God to all eternity; and to hear that sentence, "depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels".

Daniel 5:29

Ver. 29. Then commanded Belshazzar,.... As soon as he had heard the writing read and interpreted; instead of being full of wrath, as might have been expected, he orders the reward promised to be given, to show he had a regard to his word and honour, as a king; and to secure his credit with his nobles and people; and perhaps he might not understand, by Daniel's interpretation, that the destruction of him and his kingdom was so near at hand as it was; or he might put this evil day far from him, and hope it might be prevented:

and they clothed Daniel with scarlet; the king's servants by his orders: or,

that they should clothe Daniel with scarlet {a}; these were his orders; but whether executed is not certain; probably not, since the king was slain the same night; and so the rest of the clauses may be read,

and should put a chain of gold about his neck, and should make proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom; all which was the reward promised to him that should read and interpret the writing, Da 5:7, but that this was done, the king's death being so sudden, does not appear; and therefore it is needless to inquire the reasons of Daniel's acceptance after his refusal.

{a} wvyblhw "ut induerent", Gejerus.

Daniel 5:30

Ver. 30. In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain. Not by a servant of his own, as Jacchiades; or by an eunuch, one of his guards, as Saadiah and Joseph ben Gorion {b}; but by Gadales and Gobryas, who led

Cyrus's army up the river Euphrates into the city of Babylon, its course being turned; the inhabitants of which being revelling and rioting, and the gates open, these men went up to the king's palace; the doors of which being opened by the king's orders to know what was the matter, they rushed in, and finding him standing up with his sword drawn in his own defence, they fell upon him, and slew him, and all about him, as Xenophon {c} relates; and this was the same night the feast was, and the handwriting was seen, read, and interpreted. This was after a reign of seventeen years; for so Josephus says {d}, that Baltasar or Belshazzar, in whose reign Babylon was taken, reigned seventeen years; and so many years are assigned to him in Ptolemy's canon; though the Jewish chronicle {e} allows him but three years, very wrongly, no more of his reign being mentioned in Scripture: see **Da 7:1**. His death, according to Bishop Usher {f}, Mr. Whiston {g}, and Mr. Bedford {h}, was in the year of the world 3466 A.M., and 538 B.C. Dean Prideaux {i} places it in 539 B.C.

{b} Hist. Heb. l. 1. c. 6. p. 26. {c} Cyropaedia, l. 7. sect. 22, 23. {d} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 4. {e} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 28. p. 81. {f} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3466. {g} Chronological Tables, cent. 10. {h} Scripture Chronology, p. 711. {i} Connexion, &c. par. 1. p. 120.

Daniel 5:31

Ver. 31. And Darius the Median took the kingdom,.... This was Cyaxares the son of Astyages, and uncle of Cyrus; he is called the Median, to distinguish him from another Darius the Persian, that came after, **Ezr 4:5**, the same took the kingdom of Babylon from Cyrus who conquered it; he took it with his consent, being the senior prince and his uncle. Darius reigned not long, but two years; and not alone, but Cyrus with him, though he is only mentioned. Xenophon {k} says, that Cyrus, after he took Babylon, set out for Persia, and took Media on his way; and, saluting Cyaxares or Darius, said that there was a choice house and court for him in Babylon, where he might go and live as in his own:

being about threescore and two years old; and so was born in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar, the year in which Jechoniah was carried captive, 2Ki 24:12, thus God in his counsels and providence took care that a deliverer of his people should be raised up and provided against the appointed time. Darius was older than Cyrus, as appears by several passages in Xenophon; in one place {l} Cyaxares or Darius says, "since I am present, and am "elder" than Cyrus, it is fit that I should speak first;"

and in another place {m}, Cyrus, writing to him, says,

"I give thee counsel, though I am the younger"

and by comparing this account of the age of Darius with a passage in Cicero, which gives the age of Cyrus, we learn how much older than he Darius was; for, out of the books of Dionysius the Persian, he relates {n}, that Cyrus dreaming he saw the sun at his feet, which he three times endeavoured to catch and lay hold upon, but in vain, it sliding from him; this, the Magi said, portended that he should reign thirty years, and so he did; for he lived to be seventy years of age, and began to reign when he was forty; which, if reckoned from his reigning with his uncle, then he must be twenty two years younger; or if from the time of his being sole monarch, then the difference of age between them must be twenty four years; though it should be observed that those that make him to reign thirty years begin his reign from the time of his being appointed commander-in-chief of the Medes and Persians by Cyaxares {o}, which was twenty three years before he reigned alone, which was but seven years {p}; and this account makes but very little difference in their age; and indeed some {q} have taken them to be one and the same, their descent, age, and succession in the Babylonian empire, agreeing.

{k} Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 36. {l} Ibid. l. 6. c. 2. {m} Ibid. l. 4. c. 21. {n} De Divinatione, l. 1. {o} See the Universal History, vol. 5. p. 181. and vol. 21. p. 64, 65. {p} Xenophon, Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 45. {q} Nicol. Abrami Pharus Vet. Test. l. 12. c. 24. p. 338. Pererius in ib, Graeci Patres apud Theodoret. Orat. 6. in Daniel.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Daniel 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL 6

This chapter gives an account of Daniel's being cast into the den of lions, and the causes of it, and the steps leading to it; and also of his wonderful deliverance out of it, and what followed upon that. It first relates how Daniel was made by Darius first president of the princes of the kingdom, which drew their envy upon him, **Da 6:1**, and that these princes finding they could get no occasion against him, but in religion, proposed to the king to make a law forbidding prayer to any god for thirty days, which they got established, **Da 6:5**, and Daniel breaking this law, is accused by them to the king; and the penalty, casting into the den of lions, is insisted on to be executed, **Da 6:10**, which the king laboured to prevent, but in vain; and Daniel is cast to the lions, to the great grief of the king, **Da 6:14**, who visited the den the next morning, and to his great joy found Daniel alive, **Da 6:19**, upon which, by the law of retaliation, his accusers, their wives, and children, were cast into it, **Da 6:24**, and an edict was published by the king, commanding all in his dominions to fear and reverence the God of Daniel, **Da 6:25**.

Ver. 1. It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes,.... This is the same Darius mentioned in the latter part of the preceding chapter; who, as soon as he took the kingdom of Babylon, divided it into a hundred and twenty provinces, as Jacchiades observes; as was the manner of the Medes and Persians. So Darius the son of Hystaspes divided the kingdom of Persia into twenty provinces, and set governors over each, according to Herodotus {r}; to these hundred and twenty provinces seven more were afterwards added, through the victories of Cyrus and Cambyses, and Darius Itystaspes, **Es 1:1**. Josephus {s}, through forgetfulness, makes these princes and provinces three hundred and sixty:

which should be over the whole kingdom; or, "in the whole kingdom" {t}; in the several parts of it, and take care of all things relative to the civil government of it, both for the honour and advantage of the king, and the good of the subjects.

{r} Thalia, sive l. 3. c. 89. {s} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 4. {t} atwklm lkb "in toto regno", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius; "toti regno", Junius & Tremellius.

Daniel 6:2

Ver. 2. And over these three presidents,.... To whom the hundred and twenty princes were accountable for their conduct, and to whom the people might apply for redress of grievances, if oppressed; perhaps the whole empire was divided into three greater parts, and each part had forty provinces in it, and over it a president or deputy of the king; to whom the princes of each province gave in the account of what they received for the king, and what use they made of it:

(of whom Daniel was the first:) or "one" {u}, who was now an old man, having been about seventy years in Babylon, and had had a large experience of the affairs of civil government, being advanced in the times of Nebuchadnezzar to high posts; and very probably Darius had heard of the wisdom of Daniel before he came to the kingdom, as well as the king of Tyre, Eze 28:3 and might be informed of his prediction of Belshazzar's death, and the change of the empire: and of Belshazzar's promise to make him the third ruler in the kingdom; and he might also himself observe in him an uncommon sagacity and fitness for business of this sort. Josephus {w} says, that Darius took Daniel with him into Media, and made him one of the three presidents; and indeed no mention is made in this history of the nobles of Babylon, but only of the Medes and Persians:

that the princes might give account unto them, and the king should have no damage: or loss in his revenues, through the fraud and bad management of the princes of the provinces; since they might be discovered and checked by the presidents, who were to audit their accounts: or, "have no trouble" {x}; in looking over and passing the accounts of the princes.

{u} dx eiv, Sept.; "unus", V. L. Syr. Ar. Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis. {w} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 4. {x} qzn awhl al opwv mh enoclhtai, Sept.; "ne rex molestia afficeretur", Pagninus; "ut rex illo levaretur gravamine", Munster.

Daniel 6:3

Ver. 3. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes,.... Not only above the princes, but the presidents, being the first of them, as before: or, "he was victorious above them" {y}; he got more credit and applause than they did, being more exact, diligent, and laborious, faithful, and conscientious:

because an excellent spirit was in him; meaning not a spirit of grace, piety, and religion, which the Heathen king was no judge of, nor valued him for it, though it was in him; but a spirit of knowledge of civil affairs, and of prudence in managing them, and of integrity throughout the whole of his conduct:

and the king thought to set him over the whole realm; or, "wherefore the king thought" {z}, &c.; because there was such a spirit in him, which so qualified him for public business, he began to think of abolishing his triumvirate of presidents, and making Daniel his viceroy over the whole empire, which very probably they had got some knowledge of; and this, as well as being above them, drew the envy of them on him, and put them upon the following scheme.

{y} xuntm "victorem se gerebat", Piscator, Michaelis. {z} aklmw "ideo rex", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Daniel 6:4

Ver. 4. Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom,.... Concerning the management of the affairs of the kingdom, he being prime minister of state; the presidents and princes joined together in this inquiry; the princes, because Daniel was so strict and exact in looking into their accounts, that no fraudulent measures were taken to cheat the king of his revenue; and the presidents, because he was preferred above them:

but they could find none occasion nor fault; or "corruption" {a}, that he had been guilty of any mis-administration, or any corrupt practices:

forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him; no mistake in his accounts; no blunder in his management of things; nothing done amiss, neither wilfully, nor through ignorance, negligence, or inadvertence; so faithful and upright, so prudent and discreet, so exact and careful, that the most watchful observers of him, and these envious, and his most implacable enemies, could find no fault in him, or anything, or the colour of it, to ground an accusation upon.

{a} htyxv "corruptela", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Michaelis; "corruptionem", Gejerus.

Daniel 6:5

Ver. 5. Then said these men,.... To one another:

we shall not find any occasion against this Daniel; whom they speak of with great disdain and contempt, calling him this Daniel, this fellow, though in the highest post in the kingdom:

except we find it against him concerning the law of his God; about his religion; not that they thought he would be prevailed upon to break the law of his God in any respect; but they knew he was tenacious of the Jewish religion, and of all the laws, rites, and ceremonies of it; if therefore they could get an act passed, and signed by the king, which would any ways affect his religion, or any branch of it, or prohibit the performance of it for any time, they hoped to get an advantage of him, knowing that he would not on any consideration forsake or neglect that; which being said by his enemies was greatly to his honour.

Daniel 6:6

Ver. 6. Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king,.... Having consulted the matter, and agreed upon and formed a scheme among themselves, and drawn up a bill or decree in form, ready to be signed by the king, whom they hoped to persuade to it; and for that end they got together, and went in a body to him. The word {b} signifies to assemble in a tumultuous and noisy way; they thought, by their number and noise, their bustle and bluster, to carry their point. Ben Melech compares it with **Ps 2:2**:

and said thus unto him, O King Darius, live for ever; this they said as courtiers, professing subjection to him, and affection for him, wishing him health, long life, and happiness.

{b} wvgrh "tumultuarie convenerunt", Montanus; "cum tumultu accurrerent", De Dieu; "convenerunt gregatim et cum strepitu", Gejerus.

Daniel 6:7

Ver. 7. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains,.... There were but three presidents, and Daniel was one of them, so that these "all" were but "two"; they made the most of it they could; and very probably not all and everyone of the other officers mentioned were present; but they were willing to make their request appear as general as they could, in order that it might have the greater weight with the king:

have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree; that is, they had met together, and had drawn up a bill that might be passed into a law by having the royal assent, and be made sure and firm by the king's signing it; which is as follows:

that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions; by which law all invocation of their own gods was prohibited for a month, as well as of the living and true God; but this they stuck not at, provided they could gain their point against Daniel; and they were obliged to express it in this general way, to cover their designs; for had they mentioned a particular deity, as the God of the Jews, or the God of Daniel, their views would have been seen into by the king; and not only religious invocation is here forbidden, but all civil requests are prohibited: servants might not ask anything of their masters, nor children of their parents, nor wives of their husbands, nor one neighbour of another; for this seems not to be limited to asking any thing of a man worshipped as a god; though Saadiah says there were some in Darius's kingdom that believed in, worshipped, and prayed to a man; but all men are excluded, except Darius himself, of whom only anything was to be asked for thirty days; which was not only a deifying him, but exalting him above all gods and men; and suggesting as if it was in his power to answer all the exigencies of his subjects, and supply all their wants, many of which it was impossible for him to do. Josephus {c} mentions this law in a different manner; as if the design of it was to give the people an intermission from devotion for such a time, and that they were neither to pray to Darius, nor any of the gods, during it; whereas the exception is express, "save of thee, O king". The sanction or penalty of it is, casting into the den of lions; the king's den of lions, as Jarchi, where his lions were kept; as it is usual with princes: this very probably was a punishment common in the eastern nations, as casting the Christians to the lions was usual with the Romans.

{c} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 5.

Daniel 6:8

Ver. 8. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing,.... For they had not only agreed upon it among themselves what to propose, as to the substance of it; but they had drawn it up in writing, ready to be signed, which they urge to have done immediately:

that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not; when once signed by the king: mention being made of both the Medes and Persians, shows that these two nations were now united in one government; that Darius and Cyrus were partners in the empire; and it is easy to account for it why the Medes are mentioned first; because Darius was the Mede, and Cyrus the Persian; the one the uncle, the other the nephew; but afterwards, when a Persian only was on the throne, then the Persian is mentioned first, **Es 1:19**.

Daniel 6:9

Ver. 9. Wherefore King Darius signed the writing and the decree. Moved to it by the number and importunity of his principal men; and chiefly through affectation of deity, which this law gave him; and that he might have an opportunity of ingratiating himself into his new subjects by his munificence and liberality, not being aware of the snare laid for his favourite, Daniel.

Daniel 6:10

Ver. 10. Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed,.... This he knew, either by the relation of others, or by the public proclamation of it through the city; however, he did not know of it till it was signed, or otherwise he might have prevented it by applying to the king, in whom he had great interest; but, now the thing was done, he did not solicit the abrogation of it, knowing it was in vain; nor did he go to the king with complaints against his enemies, showing the design they had in it; but let things take their own course, he being determined to be found in his duty, be it as it would:

he went into his house: he left the court at the proper time of prayer, and went to his own house to perform it; he did not, in defiance of this law, go to prayer in the court, or in the streets, but retired home, as he was used to do:

and his windows being opened; not to be seen of men, but that he might have a clear view of the heavens, where his God dwelt, to whom he prayed, and be the more affected with the consideration of his greatness and glory:

in his chamber toward Jerusalem; it was not in the lower part of the house, nor on the top of the house, in either of which he might be more easily seen; but in his chamber, where he was wont to retire, the windows of which were opened "towards Jerusalem"; not towards the king's palace, as if he prayed to him, and so eluded the decree; nor towards the east, as the Heathens did; but towards Jerusalem, which lay to the south of Babylon; and that, either because of his remembrance of that city, his affection to it, and concern for its re-edification; or having some respect to the words of Solomon, **1Ki 8:33**, &c.; and so, according to the Jewish writers, it was the custom of their people. Ben Gersom, on the above place, says, that though they did not pray within the temple, yet they prayed, turning themselves towards it, as much as possibly they could; and even when it was destroyed, as now, yet they in praying turned to the place where it had stood, as Saadiah, Aben Ezra, and Jarchi observe: and chiefly Daniel did this, because the temple was a type of Christ, through whom the persons and prayers of the saints are acceptable unto God:

he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed; kneeling is a prayer gesture, a token of reverence and humility; this was done three times a day, morning, noon, and evening; see Ps 55:17, in the morning, before he went out about the king's business; at noon, when he returned home to dinner; and at evening, when all his work was done, and he was about to retire to bed; the hours of prayer with the Jews seem to have been the third, sixth, and ninth; that is, at nine in the morning, twelve at noon, and three in the afternoon; see **Ac 2:1**:

and gave thanks before his God; for the benefits he daily received from him; or he "confessed before him" {d}; the sins he had been guilty of, and owned the favours he partook of:

as he aforetime did; as it had been his custom from his youth upward, and therefore would not omit it now, on account of this edict.

{d} adwm "confitebatur", V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Calvin, Cocceius.

Daniel 6:11

Ver. 11. Then these men assembled,.... Gathered together, and went in a body to Daniel's house; knowing his times of prayer, and where, and in what manner, he used to pray, to see if they could find him at it as aforetime; that so they might have to accuse him with it. Saadiah says, they found a girl, and asked her what Daniel was doing? she told him that Daniel was on his knees, praying to his God in his chamber; immediately they went, and found as she had said:

and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God; they went into his house, and up into his chamber, the doors not being locked, pretending perhaps business with him, and saw him at his devotions; so that they were able, upon their own knowledge, to bring in an accusation against him for breach of the king's law, and prove it.

Daniel 6:12

Ver. 12. Then they came near,.... They went immediately from Daniel's house to the king's palace, and into the king's presence; which they could do, either by virtue of their offices, or being admitted by the proper officer in waiting:

and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; at first they said nothing about Daniel, but about the decree, to get it recognized, and afresh ratified and confirmed; lest, under some pretence or another, the king should change it:

hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any god or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? they do not say peremptorily that he had signed such a decree, but put the question to him, that they might have it affirmed by himself:

the king answered and said, the thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not; it is true that such a decree is made and signed, and it is an unalterable one; such as is every established and signed decree of the Medes and Persians: it is as if he had said, it is very true what you put me in mind of, and I will never recede from it, or nullify and make it void.

Daniel 6:13

Ver. 13. Then answered they, and spake before the king,.... Having obtained what they desired, a ratification of the decree, they open the whole affair to him they came about:

that Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king: they call him "that Daniel"; by way of contempt; and, to make him the more despicable, represent him not only as a foreigner, but a captive, and therefore ought to have been humble and obedient, as Jacchiades observes; and a Jewish captive too, of all people the most odious; and, though he had been raised from a low estate to great honour and dignity, yet such was his ingratitude, that he made no account of the king, nor of his orders, but despised him:

nor the decree that thou hast signed; the decree concerning making any petition to God or man for a month, which was signed with the king's own hand, and was firm and stable; and of which Daniel could not be ignorant, and therefore wilfully, and in a contemptuous manner, acted contrary to it:

but maketh his petition three times a day; to whom they say not whether to God or man; but in this general way accuse him which they thought best and safest; they feared, had they mentioned his God, something might have been said in his favour to excuse him; and to aggravate the matter, they observe the frequency of his doing it, three times; so that it was not a single fact he is charged with, but what he had repeated again and again.

Daniel 6:14

Ver. 14. Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself,.... Or "at it" {e}; or "with him"; with Daniel, not so much for what he had done, but that he had not done it with more caution, or more privately, that it might not have been known: or rather, as we render it, "with himself", that he should so rashly sign the decree, without considering the consequences of it; for he now found that he was circumvented by his princes, and that their design was not his honour and glory, but the destruction of Daniel: or the sense in general is, that what he heard was very disagreeable, afflictive, and distressing to him:

and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; he resolved, if possible, to do it; he applied his mind to it; he turned his thoughts wholly that way, and contrived all ways and means to effect it: R. Mattathiah, in Saadiah, interprets the phrase of his offering money as a ransom for his life:

and he laboured till the going down of the sun to save him; from the will of the princes, and from the jaws of the lions: very probably it was early in the morning these princes found Daniel at prayer, who went immediately to the king with their accusation; so that he was all day labouring with all his might and main to find out ways and means to save his darling favourite; he studied to put such a sense upon his decree, that it might not reach Daniel's case; he strove to make the princes easy, and to persuade them to drop the affair, and not insist on the execution of the decree.

{e} yhwle "super eo", Montanus; "super ipsum", De Dieu.

Daniel 6:15

Ver. 15. Then these men assembled to the king,.... Who had left him for a while to consider of the case; or they departed to consult among themselves about the king's proposals to them; or went home to their own houses to dinner, and returned in a body; they came in a tumultuous way, as the word signifies; see **Da 6:6**, they cluttered about him, and were very rude and noisy, and addressed him in an authoritative and threatening manner:

and said unto the king, know O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, that no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed; they perceived that he was desirous of altering or nullifying the decree he had made, which to have done would have been to his reputation; and to this they oppose a fundamental law of the realm, that no decree ratified by the king could be altered; to attempt to do this would be a breach of their constitution, and of dangerous consequence; it would lessen the king's authority, and be a means of his subjects rising up in rebellion against him: for that there was such a law, the king knew as well as they; nor do they say this by way of information, but to urge him to the execution of the decree; and there is no doubt to be made that there was such a fundamental law, though a foolish one, and which afterwards continued, **Es 1:19**, but the instance which some writers give out of Diodorus Siculus {f}, concerning Charidemus, a general of the Athenians, whom another Darius king of Persia condemned to die for the freedom of speech he used with him and afterwards repented of it, but in vain; for his royal power, as the historian observes, could not make that undone which was done; this is no proof of the immutability of the laws of the Persians, since the king's repentance was after the general's death, which then was too late.

{f} Bibliothec. Hist. l. 17. p. 510.

Daniel 6:16

Ver. 16. Then the king commanded,.... Being overawed by his princes and fearing they would conspire against him, and stir up the people to rebel; and consulting his own credit lest he should be thought fickle and inconstant; he ordered the decree to be put in execution against Daniel, and delivered his favourite into their hands:

and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions; not the princes but proper officers employed by them: according to the additions to this book of Daniel, there were seven lions in this den, in the Apocrypha:

"And in the den there were seven lions, and they had given them every day two carcases, and two sheep: which then were not given to them, to the intent they might devour Daniel." (Bel 1:32)

but, according to Joseph ben Gorion {g}, there were ten, who used to devour ten sheep, and as many human bodies every day; but this day they had no food, and ate nothing, that they might be more greedy, and devour Daniel the sooner:

now the king spake and said unto Daniel; being brought into his presence, in his palace, before he was cast into the den; or at the mouth of the den whither the king accompanied him:

thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee; he calls the Lord Daniel's God, not his own, as he was not, he served other gods; yet he suggests that Daniel was right in serving him continually, in praying to him daily, the very thing for which he was cast to the lions; and expresses his confidence that his God he served would deliver him from being devoured by them; which he might conclude, from, the innocency, integrity, and faithfulness of Daniel, and from his being such a peculiar favourite of God as to be indulged with the knowledge of future things; and perhaps he might have heard of the deliverance of his three companions from the fiery furnace: though the words may be rendered, as they are by some, as a wish or prayer, "may thy God &c. deliver thee" {h}; I cannot, I pray he would; it is my hearty desire that so it might be.

{g} Hist. Heb. l. 1. c. 10. p. 34. {h} Knbzvy "liberet te", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Grotius, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Daniel 6:17

Ver. 17. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den,.... Not a heap of stones, but a single one, a very large one, sufficient to stop up the mouth of the den, that nothing might enter in at it, or be cast into it: this stone was brought by proper persons, and a sufficient number of them, according the order of the king, or his princes, or both; for what Jarchi says, of there being no stones in Babylon, only bricks, and of the angels bringing this stone out of the land of Israel, is all fabulous: but for what end it should be brought and laid is not easy to say; if it was laid here by the order of the princes, it could not surely be to keep any of his friends from going in to deliver him, for who would venture himself there? nor to keep Daniel in it, since it might be concluded, that, as soon as ever he was cast in, he would be seized upon by the lions and devoured at once; unless it can be thought, that these men saw, that when he was thrown in, the lions did not meddle with him; which they might attribute to their having been lately fed, and therefore, that he might be reserved till they were hungry, they did this: if it was by the order of the king, which is very likely, the reason might be, he believed, or at least hoped, that God would deliver him from the lions; but lest his enemies, seeing this, should throw in stones or arrows, and kill him, the mouth of the den was stopped, so Jarchi and Saadiah: no doubt but this was so ordered by the providence of God, as well as the sealing of it, that the miracle of the deliverance might appear the more manifest:

and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of the lords; that none might dare to remove it; so the stone that was laid at the door of Christ's sepulchre was sealed with a seal, Mt 27:66, the reason of sealing it follows,

that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel: the view the lords had in it was, that the king might not change the sentence passed on Daniel, or take any methods to deliver him; and the view the king had in it might be, that should he be saved from the lions, as he hoped he would, that no other sentence might pass upon him, or he be delivered to any other kind of death.

Daniel 6:18

Ver. 18. Then the king went to his palace,.... After he had accompanied Daniel to the den, and he was cast into it, the stone was laid to the mouth of it, and that sealed; this was after sunset, for he had laboured till then to serve him, **Da 6:14**, perhaps it was late at night:

and passed the night fasting; vexed for what he had done, in signing the decree; fretting because he could not save Daniel, and his heart full of grief for him, and so had no stomach to eat; went to bed without his supper, lay all night fasting, and would not eat a bit nor drink a drop of anything:

neither were instruments of music brought before him; as used to be after supper, and played upon; his heart was too full, and his mind and thoughts so intent on Daniel's case, that he could not listen to music, or bear the sound of it. Jarchi interprets it a "table", to sit down at, and eat, being furnished and well served, as was usual; but this is implied in the preceding clause. Aben Ezra, Saadiah, and Jacchiades, explain by songs and musical instruments, harps and psalter and Saadiah adds, girls to sing and dance. De Dieu, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, thinks that incense is meant, which was used at feasts, and in the palaces of princes.

And his sleep went from him; while he was up he could take no pleasure in eating and drinking, and hearing music; and when he was in bed, he could not sleep for thinking what he had done, and what was the case of Daniel.

Daniel 6:19

Ver. 19. Then the king arose very early in the morning,.... Or, "in the morning with light" {i} as soon as ever light appeared, or the day broke: the word for morning is doubled, and one of the letters in it is larger than usual; and all which denote not only his very great earliness in rising, but his earnestness and solicitude for Daniel, to know whether he was alive or not:

and went in haste unto the den of lions; he did not send a servant, but went in person, and with as much expedition as possible, though a king, and an old man; this shows the great love and strong affection he had for Daniel, and his concern for his good and welfare.

{i} ahgnb-arprpvb "summa aurora cum luce", Junius & Tremellius; "in tempore aurorae cum luce", Piscator.

Daniel 6:20

Ver. 20. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel,.... Expressing grief and sorrow his heart was full of; it was rather like howling than speaking; thus he cried before he saw Daniel, or heard him speak:

when he was near to the den {k}, as it may be rendered; and he was between hope and fear about Daniel's safety; when within sight of the den, and hearing of Daniel, should he be alive to speak: but when he came nearer and saw him, then

the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God; art thou alive? this is a plain case, that the God whom thou servest is the living God, since he has saved thee; and that thou art a true and faithful servant of his, seeing he has wrought such deliverance for thee:

is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? has he made it to appear that he is able to deliver from them? has he really done the thing? he could scarcely believe for joy, being filled with amazement; for these words are not to be considered as expressive of any doubt or hesitation he had of the power of God to save him; for he had declared he had before, yea; his confidence that he would deliver him; but of his wonder and admiration at it, the thing being so extraordinary and amazing.

{k} abgl hbrqmb "cum appropinquasset ad foveam", Pagninus; "quumque appropinquaret ad foveam", Piscator.

Daniel 6:21

Ver. 21. Then said Daniel unto the king,.... Whose voice he knew, though the tone of it was so much altered:

O king, live for ever; he does not reproach him for delivering him into the hands of his enemies, and suffering him to be cast into that place, which he might have prevented, had he had more resolution; he knew it was done with reluctance, though with weakness; which he does not upbraid him with, but freely forgives him, and wishes him health, long life, and prosperity.

Daniel 6:22

Ver. 22. My God hath sent his angel,.... Daniel takes up the king's expression, and confirms it; he asserts God to be his God, of which he had given him a proof in sending his angel to him that night; either one of the ministering spirits about him, or the Angel of the covenant, the same with him, said to be like the Son of God, that was seen in the fiery furnace, even the Messiah in human form:

and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me; by taking away hunger from them, or by striking terror into them; so that they had either no inclination to hurt him, or were afraid of him:

forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; either before God, or before his Angel, Daniel appeared to be an innocent and righteous person; therefore the Lord pleaded his cause, and made it to appear that he was just, and his cause good; for this is not to be understood of the merits of his works, and the causality of them to justify and save; for here he is speaking not of the righteousness of his person, but of his cause; and not of eternal, but temporal salvation:

and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt: either to his person or government; nothing that was criminal and sinful, but what was just and right, serving daily his God; and this was plain to the king, what he knew and owned; and though he had acted contrary to the decree the lords had craftily obtained, yet it was not out of disrespect to the king, but in obedience to his God; and in doing of which he had done nothing prejudicial to the king's interest.

Daniel 6:23

Ver. 23. Then was the king exceeding glad for him,.... For Daniel, because of his safety, because he was alive, and in health, and unhurt; and the speech he made was very acceptable to him, agreeable to his sentiments, and which he was satisfied was just and true: or "with", or "for himself" {l}; being now eased of a guilty and distracted conscience:

and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den; that is, he ordered those that were with him, his servants that attended him, either to roll away the stone, and so let him out; or to let down ropes, and draw him out, or ladders by which he might ascend; for one would think it would not have been safe for them to have gone down into it, to take him up: these orders the king gave without the consent of his lords, being animated to it by the miracle wrought:

so Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him; no bruise by throwing him into the den, no wound was made by the lions, or his flesh in the least torn by them:

because he believed in his God; served and worshipped him; of which service and worship faith is a particular branch, and is put for the whole, and without which it is not pleasing and acceptable to God; he trusted the Lord, he committed himself to his power and providence; he left himself wholly in the hands of the Lord, to dispose of him, whether for life or death, as he pleased; he believed he was able to deliver him, but he was not anxious about it: for this seems not to design any particular act of faith, with respect to this miracle wrought for him, but his general trust and confidence in God; and the apostle seems to have reference to this, when among other things he ascribes to faith the stopping of the mouths of lions, Heb 11:33.

{l} yhwle "apud se", Piscator; "apud illum", Michaelis.

Daniel 6:24

Ver. 24. And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel,.... Not all the hundred and twenty princes, and the two presidents; but the chief of them, who were most busy in getting the decree signed; watched Daniel's house, and what he did there; brought the charge against him to the king, and were most solicitous and urgent to have the decree put in execution against him:

and they cast them into the den of lions; the servants of the king, who were sent to fetch them, and who brought these by the king's orders, cast them into the same den of lions that Daniel had been in: thus often the pit wicked men dig for others, they fall into themselves; so Haman man was hanged on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai:

them, their children, and their wives; which might be according to the laws of this monarchy in capital offences, relating to affairs of state, as this was for an accusation of a prime minister of state, to take away his life; though such things were common with arbitrary princes, for the terror of others; so Haman and his sons were hanged up by Ahasuerus: this may seem cruel and inhuman, though it might be that the wives and children of these men advised them to do what they did, and were encouragers and approvers of it. Josephus {m} relates, that the enemies of Daniel, when they saw no hurt came to him, would not ascribe it to the providence of God, but to the lions being full of food; upon which the king ordered much meat to be given them, and then the men to be cast in to them, to see whether because of their fulness they would come unto them or not:

and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came at the bottom of the den; the lions seized them at once; and though they did all they could to defend themselves, fighting with them; yet the lions were too powerful for them, and overcame them, and not only tore off their flesh, but broke their bones in pieces, and that as they were falling, before they came to the bottom, or the lower part of the den; this was a plain proof that it was not through fulness, or want of appetite, that the lions did not fall upon Daniel and devour him: this affair happened in the first year of Darius, which, according to Bishop Usher {n}, and Dean Prideaux {o}, and Mr. Whiston {p}, was in the year of the world 3466 A.M., and 538 B.C.; Mr. Bedford {q} places it in 537 B.C.

{m} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 6. {n} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3466. {o} Connexion, &c. part 1. p. 125, 128. {p} Chronological Tables, cent. 10. {q} Scripture Chronology, p. 711.

Daniel 6:25

Ver. 25. Then King Darius,.... Being thoroughly convinced of the miracle, and of the powerful interposition of divine Providence in it, and of the omnipotence of God, and of his concern in the government of the world; that all might be acquainted with the same,

wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; he being at the head of the Babylonish monarchy, which included many nations and people of various languages; and which was increased, and still increasing, by the victories of Cyrus, who was partner with him in the empire; see **Da 3:4**:

peace be multiplied unto you; an increase of all kind of prosperity; an usual salutation or wish with the eastern people.

Daniel 6:26

Ver. 26. I make a decree, that in every dominion of my kingdom,.... In every province of his large empire; this explains who are meant by all people, nations, &c. before mentioned; namely, such as were within his dominions; for to no other could his decree reach: this decree is very different from that he had made a few days before, forbidding any man to ask anything of any god or man for the space of a month; but now his order is,

that men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; that they would serve with fear and trembling, and reverence and adore the God that Daniel served and worshipped; and who manifestly appeared to be his God, and to be the true God, by his wonderful deliverance of him:

for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever; that has life in himself, and is the author and giver of life to others, and ever remains so, without any variation or shadow of turning; he is everlasting and unchangeable, permanent and immutable in his nature; steady and steadfast in his purposes and promises, in his conduct in the government of the world, and in the course of his providence:

and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end; unto the end of time; other kingdoms will he destroyed, but his will not; all other rule, dominion and authority will be at an end but his will continue for ever; his kingdom is an everlasting one: this doctrine Darius had learned from Daniel, as Nebuchadnezzar before had done; see **Da 2:44**.

Daniel 6:27

Ver. 27. He delivereth and rescueth..... As he did the three companions of Daniel from the fiery furnace, and now Daniel himself from the lions' den:

and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth; which are out of the common course of nature, and not according to the laws of it; such as hindering the natural force of fire from burning, as in the case of the three children; and stopping the mouths of lions from devouring Daniel as follows:

who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions; or "from the hand" {r} of them; from their destroying paws, and devouring jaws; which was nothing less than a miracle, and a proof of the divine omnipotence and of his power of doing wonders.

{r} dy Nm "de manu", Montanus, Cocceius.

Daniel 6:28

Ver. 28. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius,.... This Daniel, of whom so much has been said all the preceding chapters, and who had been so lately and so wonderfully delivered from the lions' den, the same flourished throughout the reign of Darius the Mede; continued a favourite with the king; retained his honour and dignity; and kept his posts and places of trust and profit. Darius the Mede reigned two years; though Jarchi says he reigned but one, and was slain in war; for which he refers to Joseph ben Gorion, who has not a word of it.

And in the reign of Cyrus the Persian; who, as Jacchiades says, was the son-in-law of Darius, and inherited the kingdom after him; which is true, for he married the daughter of Cyaxares or Darius who was his uncle, and succeeded him as sole monarch of the empire: he reigned with him the two years he had the government of the Babylonish monarchy; and when he died, it solely devolved on him, who reigned seven years after, as Xenophon {s} relates; but the canon of Ptolemy ascribes nine years to his reign, which includes the two years he was partner with Darius. Daniel was in the same favour with this prince as the former, who in the first year of his reign proclaimed liberty to the Jews to return to their country, and build their temple; whether Daniel lived throughout his reign is not certain; he was alive in the third year of it, as appears from Da 10:1, some take Darius and Cyrus to be one and the same person, and render this last clause as explanative of the former, "even", or, "that is, in the reign of Cyrus the Persian" {t}.

{s} Cyropaedia, l. 8. c 45. {t} Vid Nicolai Abram. Pharus Vet. Test. l. 12. c. 24. p. 338.

Daniel 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL 7

This chapter contains Daniel's vision of the four beasts, The time, place, manner, writing, and declaration of the vision, **Da 7:1**, the rise of the beasts, and the description of them, **Da 7:2**, the judgment of God upon them, especially the last, and the delivery of universal monarchy to his Son, **Da 7:9**, the interpretation of the vision at the request of Daniel, being greatly affected with it, **Da 7:15**, a particular inquiry of his about the fourth beast, concerning which a full account is given, **Da 7:19**, all which caused in him many thoughts of heart, and reflections of mind, **Da 7:28**.

Ver. 1. In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon,.... Daniel having finished the historical part of his book, and committed to writing what was necessary concerning himself and his three companions, and concerning Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius the Mede, proceeds to the prophetic part, and goes back to the first year of Belshazzar's reign, seventeen years before his death, and the fall of the Babylonish monarchy last mentioned; for so long Belshazzar reigned, according to Josephus {u}; and with which agrees the canon of Ptolemy, who ascribes so many years to the reign of Nabonadius, the same, with Belshazzar: he began to reign, according to Bishop Usher {w}, Dean Prideaux {x}, and Mr, Whiston {y}, in the year of the world 3449 A.M., and 555 B.C.; and in the first year of his reign Daniel had the dream of the four monarchies, as follows:

Daniel had a dream: as Nebuchadnezzar before had, concerning the same things, the four monarchies of the world, and the kingdom of Christ, only represented in a different manner: or, "saw a dream" {z}; in his dream he had a vision, and objects were presented to his fancy as if he really saw them, as follows:

and visions of his head came upon his bed; as he lay upon his bed, and deep sleep was fallen on him, things in a visionary way were exhibited to him very wonderful and surprising, and which made strong impressions upon him:

then he wrote the dream: awaking out of his sleep, and perfectly remembering the dream he had dreamed, and recollecting the several things he had seen in it; that they might not be lost, but transmitted to posterity for their use and benefit, he immediately committed them to writing:

and told the sum of the matters; the whole of what he had dreamt and seen; or however the sum and substance of it, the more principal parts of it, the most interesting things in it, and of the greatest importance: when it was daylight, and he rose from his bed, and went out of his chamber, he called his friends together, and told them by word of mouth what he had seen in his dream the night past; or read what he had written of it, which was as follows:

{u} Antiqu. Jud. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 4. {w} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3449. {x} Connexion, &c. part. 1. p. 114. {y} Chronological Tables, cent. 10. {z} hzx Mlx "somnium vidit". V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, &c.

Daniel 7:2

Ver. 2. Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night,.... He declared he had had a vision by night, and this was the substance of it:

and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea: the east, west, north, and south winds, broke out from each of their quarters, and rushed in upon the great sea; either the Mediterranean, so called in comparison of the sea of Sodom, and the sea of Tiberias in Judea; or upon the waters of the main ocean, and raised up its waves, and seemed as it were to be striving and fighting with them, and put them into a strange agitation; by which may be meant the whole world, and the kingdoms and nations of it, because of its largeness, inconstancy, instability, and disquietude; see Re 17:15, and by the "four winds" some understand the angels, either good or bad, concerned in the affairs of Providence on earth, either by divine order or permission; or rather the kings of the earth raising commotions in it, striving and fighting with one another, either to defend or enlarge their dominions; and which have been the means in Providence of the rising up of some great state or monarchy, as after appears.

Daniel 7:3

Ver. 3. And four great beasts came up from the sea,.... Which are afterwards interpreted of four kings or kingdoms, **Da 7:17**, which rose up in the world, not at once, but successively, and out of the sea or world, through the commotions and agitations of it; and these are the four monarchies, Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman; compared to "beasts", because of the rapine and violence, cruelty, oppression, and tyranny, by which they were obtained, set up, supported, and maintained; and to "great ones", being not like single separate kingdoms, as the kingdom of Israel, and the like, but consisting of many kingdoms and nations, and so like beasts of an enormous size:

diverse one from another; in their situation, language, manner, strength, and power; hence expressed by divers sorts of beasts, as the lion, bear, leopard, &c.; as in Nebuchadnezzar's dream by different metals, gold, silver, brass, and iron.

Daniel 7:4

Ver. 4. The first was like a lion,.... That which rose up first, the kingdom of the Babylonians, as the Syriac version expresses it; or the Assyrian monarchy, founded by Nimrod, increased by the Assyrians, and brought to its height under Nebuchadnezzar by the Babylonians and Chaldeans; this is said to be like a "lion" for its strength and power, for its greatness, dignity, and majesty; the same with the head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's dream; see **Jer 4:7**:

and had eagles' wings; denoting the celerity and swiftness with which Nebuchadnezzar ran, or rather flew, over several kingdoms and countries, and added them to his empire; see **Jer 4:13**:

and I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked; it was retarded and stopped in its conquests; it could fly no further, nor make any new acquisitions; yea, it was deplumed and stripped of some of its dominions, the Medes and Persians falling off, and making war with it:

and it was lifted up from the earth; or, "with which it was lifted up from, the earth" {a}; with which wings it raised itself up, and lifted itself above other kingdoms and nations; but now were plucked, and could not soar aloft as formerly; its glory and majesty, power and strength, were lessened, whole provinces revolting, as in the times of Evilmerodach, Neriglissar, and Belshazzar:

and made stand upon the feet as a man; it did not fly like an eagle as before, and overrun countries, and waste them; or go upon all four, as a beast; but stood on its feet, its two hinder legs, like a man; signifying that it abated, in the reigns of the above princes, of its strength and fierceness, and became more mild and tractable, and was reduced within bounds like other kingdoms:

and a man's heart was given to it; instead of a lion like heart, that was bold and intrepid, and feared nothing, it became weak and fearful, and timorous like the heart of man, especially in Belshazzar's time; not only when he saw the handwriting on the wall, to which Jacchiades refers this; but when he was so fearful of Cyrus that he shut himself up in Babylon, and durst not stir out to give him battle, as Xenophon {b} relates; and when the city was taken, the Babylonians were obliged to deliver up their arms, employ themselves in tilling their fields, and to pay tribute to the Persians, and always salute them as their lords and masters, as the same historian {c} says; see Jer 51:30.

{a} aera Nm tlyjnw "quibus efferebatur e terra", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "per quas efferebatur supra terram", Grotius. {b} Cyropaedia, l. 5. c. 10. {c} Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 24.

Daniel 7:5

Ver. 5. And, behold, another beast, a second, like to a bear,.... Another monarchy, and which succeeded the former, and rose up upon the ruins of it, the Medo-Persian monarchy; and so the Syriac version prefixes to this verse, by way of explanation,

"the kingdom of the Medes"

like to a bear, less generous and strong than the lion; more rough and uncivil, but equally cruel and voracious; which describes the Medes and Persians as a fierce and cruel people, and less polished, and more uncivilized, than the Chaldeans; and answers to the silver breasts and arms in Nebuchadnezzar's dream; see Isa 13:17:

and it raised up itself on one side; either of the lion, the first beast it destroyed; or rather on one side of itself, on the side of Persia; from whence Cyrus came, who was the principal instrument of raising this empire to the pitch it was brought unto. Some render it, "and it raised up one government" {d}; one empire out of many nations and kingdoms it subdued:

and it had three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it; that is, three ribs covered with flesh, which, it was devouring; the bear being very voracious, and a great flesh eater: these, according to some, signify three kings that followed Darius the Mede; Cyrus, Ahasuerus, and Darius; so Jarchi and Jacchiades; and, according to Jerom, three kingdoms, the Babylonian, Median, and Persian: but neither of these kings nor kingdoms can be said to be in its mouth, and between its teeth, as ground and devoured by it, unless the Babylonian; wherefore it is better interpreted by others, as Theodoret, the three parts of the world it conquered, westward, northward, and southward, **Da 8:4**, though it is best of all, with Sir Isaac Newton and Bishop Chandler, to understand by them Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt; which countries were ground and oppressed by the Medes and Persians, as the ribs of any creature are ground in the mouth of a bear:

and they said thus unto it, arise, devour much flesh; which Jerom refers to Haman's orders to destroy the Jews in the times of Ahasuerus; but it is much better applied by others to Cyaxares or Darius sending for Cyrus to take upon him the command of his army; and to the Hyrcanians, Gobryas, and others, inviting him to avenge them on the Babylonians, promising to join and assist him, as Xenophon {e} relates: or rather this is to be interpreted of the divine will, and of the conduct of Providence by means of angels stirring up the spirit of Cyrus, and of the Medes and Persians, to attack and subdue many nations, and particularly the Babylonians, and fill themselves with their wealth and substance; hence they are styled the Lord's sanctified, whom he ordered and called to such service; see
Isa 13:3.

{d} tmyqh rx rjvlw "quae dominatum unum erexit", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "et dominatum quendana erexit", Piscator. {e} Cyropaedia l. 1. c. 22. l. 4. c. 4, 24.

Daniel 7:6

Ver. 6. After this I beheld, and, lo another, like a leopard,.... Another beast, another monarchy, a third monarchy succeeding the Persian monarchy, and which rose up on the ruins of that; Darius king of the Persians being beaten by Alexander king of Macedon, who was the instrument of setting up the Grecian monarchy here intended; compared to a leopard, a smaller creature than a lion; signifying that this monarchy arose from a small beginning; and a crafty one, Alexander having many wise counsellors of his father's about him, though he himself was rash and hasty; and a spotted one, denoting the various virtues and vices of Alexander, and his inconstancy in them; sometimes exercising the one, and sometimes the other; or rather the different nations, and the manners of them, he conquered, of which this empire consisted; not to say anything of the cruelty and swiftness of this creature, which are both to be observed in this conqueror:

which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; denoting the swiftness of Alexander in his conquests; who in a few years made himself master of the whole world, at least as he thought, whose empire was greater than that of Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans, to whom only two wings of an eagle are given, **Da 7:4**. Says Jerom,

"nothing was more swift than the conquest of Alexander, from Illyricum and the Adriatic sea, unto the Indian ocean, and the river Ganges; he rather ran through the world by victories than by battles, and in six years subdued part of Europe, all Asia even unto India,"

to which may be added all Egypt, Syria, and Palestine. Arimazes being master of a rock in Sogdiana, which was thought inaccessible and impregnable, Alexander sent a messenger to him to demand the delivery of it to him; but, among other things he proudly said, he asked the messenger, with a sneer, if Alexander could fly; which, when the messenger reported, nettled him much, that he should be insulted because he had not wings; and vowed that the next night he would make him believe that the Macedonians did fly; and accordingly they found ways and means to get to the top of it, which, when the governor saw, he declared that Alexander's soldiers had wings {f}:

the beast also had four heads; which signify the four kingdoms into which the Grecian empire was divided after Alexander's death, under four of his generals, who were heads or governors of them: Macedonia under Antipater, or, as others, Cassander; Egypt under Ptolemy; Syria under Seleucus; and Asia under Antigonus, or, as others, Lysimachus:

and dominion was given to it; the dominion of the whole world, or, however, a very large dominion; and this was given of God, and according to his will, and the ordering of his providence; for to nothing else can it be ascribed, that with thirty thousand men Alexander should beat an army of six hundred thousand; and with such a handful of men subdue so many kingdoms and nations, and that in the space of a few years.

{f} Curt. Hist. l. 7. c. 11.

Daniel 7:7

Ver. 7. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast,.... Not in another night, as Jarchi; but in the same night, and in the same visions of it; only after he had seen the other three successively, then last of all he saw this fourth beast; and more being said of this than of the rest, shows that this was the principal thing in the vision to be observed, as being to endure until, and having a close connection with, the kingdom of the Messiah; which, arising, shall destroy it, and take place of it: this is not the Turkish empire, as Aben Ezra, and others: nor the kingdom of the Seleucidae, as Grotius, and others; to which neither the characters, nor the duration of it, agree; but the Roman empire, which succeeded the Grecian, so Gorionides {g}:

dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; exceeding powerful, as the Roman empire was, and terrible to all the kingdoms of the earth; its armies, wherever they came, struck terror among the nations, and threw them into a panic, killing, wasting, robbing all they met with {h}; and especially it was terrible to Christians, by their persecutions of them, as both Rome Pagan and Rome Papal have been. Rome has its name from strength with the Greeks, and from height with the Hebrews, as Jerom {i} observes:

it had great iron teeth; which may design its generals and emperors, such as Scipio, Pompey, Julius Caesar, and others; which crushed and devoured all that came in their way: this monarchy answers to the legs and feet of iron in Nebuchadnezzar's dream:

it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it; it devoured nations, broke kingdoms in pieces, and brought them in subjection to them; reducing them to the greatest servitude, and obliging them to pay heavy taxes and tribute:

it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it: in its original, language, laws, customs, and forms of government; it was such a monster, that no name could be given it; there was no one beast in nature to which it could be compared; it had all the ill properties of the other beasts, for craft, cruelty oppression, and tyranny; and therefore John describes this same beast as being like a leopard, having the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion. Re 13:2:

and it had ten horns; which are explained of ten kings or kingdoms, **Da 7:24**, the same with the ten toes in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and with the ten kings that received power as kings with the beast or ten kingdoms, into which the Roman empire was divided about the time of the rise of antichrist,see Gill on "Re 17:12".

{g} (Curt. Hist.) l. 3. c. 15. p. 221. {h} Raptores Orbis, &c. Taciti Vita Agricolae, c. 30. {i} Adv. Jovinian. l. 2. fol. 32. L.

Daniel 7:8

Ver. 8. I considered the horns,.... The ten horns of the fourth beast; these the prophet particularly looked at, took special notice of them, carefully observed them, their number, form, and situation, and pondered in his mind what should be the meaning of them:

and, behold; while he was attentive to these, and thinking within himself what they should be, something still more wonderful presented:

there came up among them another little horn; not Titus Vespasian, as Jarchi; nor the Turkish empire, as Saadiah; nor Antiochus Epiphanes, as many Christian interpreters; for not a single person or king is meant by a horn, but a kingdom or state, and a succession of governors; as by the other ten horns are meant ten kings or kingdoms; besides, this little horn is a part of the fourth, and not the third beast, to which Antiochus belonged; and was to rise up, not in the third or Grecian monarchy, as he did, but in the fourth and Roman monarchy; and was to continue until the spiritual coming of Christ; or, until his kingdom in a spiritual sense takers place; which is not true of him: and since no other has appeared in the Roman empire, to whom the characters of this horn agree, but antichrist or the pope of Rome, he may be well thought to be intended. Irenaeus {k}, an ancient Christian writer, who lived in the second century, interprets it of antichrist; of whom having said many things, has these words:

"Daniel having respect to the end of the last kingdom; that is the last ten kings among whom their kingdom should be divided, upon whom the son of perdition shall come; he says that ten horns shall be upon the beast, and another little horn should rise up in the midst of them; and three horns of the first be rooted out before him; and, "behold", saith he, "in this horn were eyes as the eyes of man", &c.; of whom again the Apostle Paul, in **2Th 2:8** declaring together the cause of his coming, thus says, "and then shall that wicked one be revealed &c.""

and in a following chapter {l} the same writer observes,

"John the disciple of the Lord in the Revelation hath yet more manifestly signified of the last time, and of those ten kings in it, among whom the empire that now reigns (the Roman empire) shall be divided; declaring what shall be the ten horns, which were seen by Daniel; saying, "the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, &c."; therefore it is manifest, that of these he that is to come shall slay three, and the rest shall be subject to him, and he shall be the eighth among them;"

and Jerom on the place says, that this is the sense of

"all ecclesiastical writers, that when the Roman empire is destroyed, there shall be ten kings who shall divide it among them; and an eleventh shall arise, a little king, who shall conquer three of the ten kings; and having slain them, the other seven shall submit their necks to the conqueror:"

who he further observes is not a devil or demon, but a man, the man of sin, and son of perdition; so as that he dare to sit in the temple of God, making himself as if he was God: now to the Roman antichrist everything here said answers: he is a "horn", possessed of power, strength, authority, and dominion, of which the horn is an emblem; a "little" one, which rose from small beginnings, and came to his ecclesiastic power, from a common pastor or bishop, to be a metropolitan of Italy, and then universal bishop; and to his secular power, which at first was very small, and since increased; and yet in comparison of other horns or kingdoms, but little; though, being allowed to exercise a power within others, is, or at least has been, very formidable: this "came up among" the other horns; when the northern barbarous nations broke into the empire and set up ten kingdoms in it, this little horn sprung up among them; and while they were forming kingdoms for themselves, he was contriving one for himself; they rose at the same time and reigned together; see Re 17:12:

before whom, there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots; before whom three kings or kingdoms fell, and were subdued as in **Da 7:20** which, according to Mr. Mede {m}, were the kingdoms of the Greeks, of the

Longobards, and of the Franks; but, according to Sir Isaac Newton {n}, they were the exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the senate and dukedom of Rome; or, according to the present bishop of Clogher {o}, the Campagnia of Rome, the exarchate of Ravenna, and the region of Pentapolis, which were plucked up by Pipin and Charlemagne, kings of France, and given to the pope; and were confirmed to him by their successor Lewis the pious, and is what is called the patrimony of St. Peter; in memory of which a piece of Mosaic work was made and put up in the pope's palace, representing St. Peter with three keys in his lap; signifying the three keys of the three parts of his patrimony; and to show his sovereignty over them, the pope to this day wears a triple crown:

and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man; in some monstrous births there have been eyes in the knees, and in the belly above the navel {p}; but never was there known such a monster as this, to have a horn, and eyes in the horn; horns some monsters have but not eyes in them: these may design the pretended sanctity and religion of the pope of Rome or antichrist, who, though a beast, would be thought to be a man, a religious creature; or his pretended modesty, humanity, and courtesy, when he is all the reverse; or rather his insight into the Scriptures he makes pretension to, setting himself up as an infallible judge of them, and of all controversies: though they seem better to design what he really has than what he pretends to; and may denote his penetration and sagacity, his craft and cunning, and sharp looking out to get power and dominion, temporal and spiritual; and his watchfulness to keep it, that it is not encroached upon, and took away from him; and also all means and instruments by which he inspects his own and others' affairs; particularly the order of the Jesuits, which are his eyes everywhere, spies in all kingdoms and courts, and get intelligence of what is done in the councils and cabinets of princes: how many eyes this horn had is not said; nor is it easy to say how many the pope of Rome has; he has as many as Argus, and more too, and these sharp and piercing:

and a mouth speaking great things as that he is Christ's vicar on earth, Peter's successor, head of the church, and universal bishop; that he is infallible, and cannot err; that he has all power in heaven, earth, and hell; that he can forgive sin, grant indulgences, make new laws, and bind the consciences of men; dispense with the laws of God and men; dispose of kingdoms, and remove and set up kings at pleasure, with many others of the like kind; see Re 13:5.

{k} Advers. Haeress, l. 5. c. 25. {l} Ibid. c. 26. {m} Works, B. 4. p. 779. {n} Observations on Daniel, p. 75-78, 80, 88. {o} Inquiry into the Time of the

Messiah's coming, p. 28. {p} Vid. Schott. Phyica Curiosa, l. 5. c. 25. p. 711, 712.

Daniel 7:9

Ver. 9. I beheld till the thrones were cast down,.... On which the governors of the above monarchies sat; and those of the ten kings, signified by the ten horns; and also that of the little horn. The prophet kept looking on the objects before him, till he in his dream, and the visions of the night, saw all those empires and kingdoms demolished, and all rule, power, and authority, put down, and way made for the glorious kingdom of the Messiah, and his saints with him; to this sense Aben Ezra, Saadiah, and Jacchiades, interpret the word used; but the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "until the thrones were set up" {q}; for the judges to sit upon to try, judge, and condemn the four beasts or monarchies; in order to make way for the kingdom of the Son of man to take place in the spirituality and glory of it: here are more thrones than one; see
Re 20:4, one for the Ancient of days, and another for him who was like to the Son of man, brought near before him; and so the Jews {r} say, here were two thrones pitched and prepared, one for the Ancient of days, and another for David, that is, the Messiah, or Son of David; and so Jarchi paraphrases the words,

"the thrones were pitched and prepared to sit upon in judgment:"

and this sense is confirmed by the use of the word in **Ezr 7:24** and in the Targum on 2Ki 18:14 and to this agrees best the following clause:

and the Ancient of days did sit; on one of the thrones pitched, as chief Judge: this is to be understood of God the Father, as distinct from the Messiah, the Son of God, said to be like the Son of man brought unto him, **Da 7:13** and is so called, not only because he is from everlasting, and without beginning of days; but chiefly because he is permanent, and endures for ever; his years fail not, and of his days there will be no end; and he will be when these empires, signified by the four beasts, will be no more; and very fit to be Judge of them, because of his consummate wisdom and prudence, signified also by this phrase; and the divine Father of Christ is still more proper, because it is in Christ's cause the judgment will proceed; and this in order to introduce him openly into his dominions in the world:

whose garment was white as snow; denoting the purity of his nature, the brightness of his majesty, and his uncorruptness in judgment:

and the hair of his head like the pure wool; signifying his venerableness, gravity, wisdom, and ripeness of judgment; being wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working:

his throne was like the fiery flame; expressive of him, as awful and formidable, as a consuming fire; and of his piercing judgment, and the severity of it:

and his wheels as burning fire; the wheels of his throne; alluding to such seats and thrones as were made to turn about, and to be moved from place to place; denoting the power and providence of God everywhere; the clear view he has of all things, in all places; and his swiftness in the execution of his judgments.

{q} wymr Nwork "subsellia posita sunt", Tigurine version; "solia posita sunt", Piscator, Cocceius; "throni elati sunt", Pagninus, Montanus. {r} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 1. & Gloss in ib.

Daniel 7:10

Ver. 10. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him,.... Or, "a river of fire" {s}; which denotes the copious judgments of God, the abundance of them; the full flow of his wrath, and the fierceness of it; and also its rapidity, which cannot be resisted and stopped:

thousand thousands ministered unto him; attended upon him, waiting his orders, and ready to execute them; an innumerable company of angels, Ps 103:20:

and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; to be judged by him; the numerous inhabitants of the several monarchies, with their kings; particularly all the antichristian states, and the worshippers of the beast, whom the whole world went after, Re 13:3:

the judgment was set; that is, the court was set; the Judge was upon the bench, and all his assessors and apparitors about him, and that ministered to him:

and the books were opened; both to take the trial in writing, and to produce evidence against the criminals; the book of God's purposes and decrees concerning these beasts; the book of prophecies relating to them; the book of God's remembrance, and of their own consciences, with respect to the evils committed by them; and the book of records, statutes, and laws made in such cases; even the book of the Scriptures, which contains the revelation of the will of God. In some things there is a likeness between this and the last and future judgment, and in other things a disagreement; the Judge in both is a divine Person, the eternal God, omniscient, omnipotent, holy, just, and true, which is absolutely necessary for carrying on such a process; none but God over all is equal to such a work: in the last judgment, as in this, there will be thrones; the throne of God and of the Lamb, particularly a great white throne, a symbol of purity, justice, and equity, on which the Judge himself will sit, and execute judgment, from whose presence the earth and heaven will flee away; and besides, there will be other thrones for the martyrs of Jesus, and true professors of his name, to sit upon as spectators, witnesses, and approvers of the solemn procedure, and shall reign with Christ a thousand years: likewise the number of the persons judged, as here, will be very great, even innumerable; all, both small and great, as to age or dignity, will stand before the Judge, to be judged by him, and receive their sentence from him; and there will be books for that purpose, as here, even the same, and particularly the book of life, in which, if a man's name is not written, he will be cast into the lake of fire; see Re 20:4, but in other things they differ; here the Judge is God the Father, the first Person in the Trinity, called the Ancient of days, distinguished from Christ, said to be like the Son of man; whereas the last and future judgment will be committed to the Son of God, the second Person, who is ordained Judge of quick and dead; and who will come a second time to judge the world in righteousness; and, though the description of the Ancient of days will agree well enough with him, he having the same glorious perfections his Father has, which qualify him for a Judge; see **Re 1:14**, yet it is certain not he, but his divine Father, is intended: nor in the account of the future judgment is there any mention of "a fiery stream" issuing forth before him, as here, for the burning of the body of the beast; unless the lake of fire may be thought to answer to it, into which will be cast all such who have no part in the Lamb, nor a name in his book of life: however, the accounts of both are very awful and striking; and this may be considered as a type, example, presage, and pledge, of the future judgment; this will be at the beginning of the spiritual reign of Christ, when antichrist will be destroyed with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming; the judgment of the saints will be at the beginning of his personal reign, even of the quick and dead, those that will be found alive, and those that will be raised from the dead, at his appearing and kingdom; and the judgment of the wicked will be at the close of it, or at the end of the Millennium; see Re 20:5.

{s} rwn-yd rhn "fluvius ignis", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Daniel 7:11

Ver. 11. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake,.... Or, "from the voice" {t}; from the time it was heard, the prophet continued looking to see what would be the issue of all this; especially from the time he heard the little horn speak such blasphemous things against God, and Christ, and his people, which were so intolerable, that he concluded some notice would be taken of them in a way of correction and punishment; and the rather, when he saw the Judge appear with so much majesty and grandeur, and all things prepared for a judicial process:

I beheld even till the beast was slain; the fourth beast, the Roman monarchy, to which a period will be put, and be utterly abolished in every form and shape, and with it the little horn or Papacy; when the beast on which the whore of Rome sits and rules, and by whom she is supported, will go into perdition; and she herself shall be made desolate and naked, her flesh eaten, and she burned with fire by the ten horns, or kings, that shall rise up against her, being filled with hatred to her, Re 17:3:

and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame; when Rome with all its power and wealth shall cease, and be no more, the whole body of the antichristian states shall perish; the city of Rome shall be burnt with fire; the beast and false prophet shall be taken and cast into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone, Re 18:8.

{t} lq Nm "a voce", Montanus, Cocceius; "ex quo coepit vox", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius; "ex quo audita fuit vox", Piscator.

Daniel 7:12

Ver. 12. As concerning the rest of the beasts..... The other three which represent the Babylonian, Persian and Grecian monarchies:

they had their dominion taken away; not at this time when the fourth beast, or Roman empire, is destroyed, but long ago; and not together, but successively; the dominion was taken away from the Babylonians, and given to the Persians; and then their dominion was taken away, and given to the Grecians; and after that the dominion of the Grecians was taken away from them, and given to the Romans: the prophet having observed what became of the fourth beast, he was most intent upon, just in a few words takes notice of the fate of the other three, before this:

yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time: these monarchies did not at once become extinct, as the fourth beast or monarchy will, but by degrees; and the kingdoms of which they consisted are still in being, though in another form of government, and in different hands; whereas, when the fourth monarchy is destroyed, all rule and authority will be put down, and the kingdom be given to Christ and his saints, as follow:

Daniel 7:13

Ver. 13. I saw in the night visions,.... Very probably the same night in which he had the dream and vision of the four beasts; but this that follows, being a new object presented, is introduced and prefaced after this manner; as well as, being something wonderful and worthy of attention, has a "behold" prefixed to it:

and, behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven; not Judas Maccabaeus, as Porphyry; nor the Roman people, as Grotius; nor the people of Israel, as Aben Ezra; nor the people of the saints of the most High, as Cocceius; but the Messiah, as most Christian interpreters, and even the Jews themselves, both ancient and modern, allow. In the ancient book of Zohar {u} it is said,

"in the times of the Messiah, Israel shall be one people, to the Lord, and he shall make them one nation in the earth, and they shall rule above and below; as it is written, "behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven"; this is the King Messiah of whom it is written, "and in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven, set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed", &c. **Da 2:44**"

So in the Talmud {w} this prophecy is thus reconciled with another, concerning the Messiah, in **Zec 9:9**, to what R. Alexander said, R. Joshua ben Levi objects what is written,

and, behold, one like to the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven; and it is written, "poor, and riding upon an ass": which is thus adjusted,

"if they (the Israelites) are worthy, he (the Messiah) comes with the clouds of heaven; but if they are not worthy, he comes poor, and riding on an ass;"

and so it is interpreted in their ancient Midrashes {x}, or expositions, as well us in more modern ones: Jarchi on the text says,

"he is the Messiah;"

and so R. Saadiah Gaon and Jacchiades, this is Messiah our righteousness; and Aben Ezra observes, that this is the sense R. Jeshua gives, "that one like to the Son of man" is the Messiah; and he adds, it is right, only along with him must be joined the holy people, who are the Israelites: and, with the Jews, Anani, which signifies "clouds", is the name of the Messiah, founded upon this text, in the Targum of **1Ch 3:24**, where mention is made of the name of a person, Anani, it is added,

"who is the Messiah that is to be revealed;"

so in an ancient book called Tanchuma {y}, speaking of Zerubbabel, it is asked, from whence did he spring? it is answered from David, as it is said, **1Ch 3:10** "and Solomon's son was Rehoboam", &c.; and so all in the line are mentioned unto Anani, **Da 7:24** and then it is asked, who is this Anani? this is the Messiah, as it is said, **Da 7:13**:

and I saw in the visions of the night, and, behold, one like to the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven. He is said to be "as", or "like the Son of man", in agreement with the style of these visions, **Da 7:4**, or because as yet he was not really incarnate, only appeared in a human form; or this as is not a note of similitude, but of truth and reality, as in **Joh 1:14** or because he was more than a man: and his coming with the clouds of heaven denotes the majesty, visibility, and swiftness, with which he came to take open possession of his kingdom and glory. Saadiah interprets them of the angels of heaven, with which he will be attended:

and came to the Ancient of days; his divine Father, from whom, as man and

Mediator, he receives his mediatorial kingdom, is invested with it, and insisted it, to it; see **Re 5:7** this is not to be understood of his first coming in the flesh, which was from his Father, and not to him; nor of his ascension to heaven, exaltation and session at the right hand of God, when he indeed received the kingdom from the Father, and was made and declared Lord and Christ; but this seems to respect what shall be upon the destruction of the fourth beast, when Christ shall receive and take to himself his great power, and reign, and more visibly appear by his Father's designation and appointment, and his open glory, to be King and Lord over all:

and they brought him near before him; not Elijah the prophet, as Jacchindes; rather the angels, as others; or the saints by their prayers, who hasten to, and hasten thereby, the coming and kingdom of Christ in a more spiritual and glorious manner; or it may be rendered impersonally,

"he was brought near before him,"

as by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

{u} In Gen. fol. 85. 4. Ed. Sultzbac. {w} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. {x} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 13. fol. 209. 4. Midrash Tillium apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 10. c. 1. {y} Apud Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 85. 2.

Daniel 7:14

Ver. 14. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom,.... That is, a large, powerful, and glorious kingdom; not but that he had a kingdom before, but now it will be more extensive, and appear in greater glory: this will be fulfilled when the kingdoms of this world shall become his, and all nations shall serve and worship him, Re 11:15, as follows:

that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him; embrace his Gospel, submit to his ordinances serve and worship him in every religious duty; every people, of all nations, and of every language under heaven; which will be the case when the everlasting Gospel will be preached to them all with success, Re 14:6:

his dominion is an everlasting dominion; it shall never have an end, as the rest of the monarchies, signified by the four beasts, have had, or will have; see Ps

14:6:

which shall not pass away; or be removed from one to another, like the above monarchies:

and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed; or "corrupted" {z} abolished and brought to nothing, as the said monarchies were one by another; and, at last, all of them by the stone cut out of the mountain; see **Da 2:44**.

{z} lbxtt "corrumpetur", Pagninus, Montanus; "corrumpitur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceeus.

Daniel 7:15

Ver. 15. I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body,.... Or "sheath" {a}; the soul being in the body as a sword in its scabbard; where it was "cut" {b} and pierced, as the word signifies; and was wounded, distressed, and grieved at the vision seen; not at the sight of the Son of man, and the glorious and everlasting kingdom given to him; but of the four beasts, and especially the last, and more particularly the little horn, and the look, and words, and actions of that, as well as the awful scene of judgment presented to his view:

and the visions of my head troubled me; the things he saw, which appeared to his fancy as real things, gave him a great deal of uneasiness, and chiefly because he did not understand the meaning of them; it was not so much the things themselves, as ignorance of them, that cut him to the heart, and grieved and troubled him; for what is more so to an inquisitive mind, that has got a hint of something great and useful to be known, but cannot as yet come to the knowledge of it?

{a} hndn wgb "in medio vaginae", Montanus; "intra vaginam", Munster, Vatablus. {b} tyrkta "transfixus est", Junius & Tremellius, Polanus; "succisus, [vel] excisus est", Munster.

Daniel 7:16

Ver. 16. I came near unto one of them that stood by,.... To one of the angels that attended, either the throne of judgment, or, the Son of man in his approach to his divine Father:

and asked him the truth of all this; the substance of these visions; what these images, presented to his view, were shadows and representations of; so type and truth, shadow and substance, are opposed to each other. The real meaning of all this was what he asked; nor need any be ashamed to ask of whomsoever they can hope to get knowledge of truth, and especially of superiors, of the angels of the churches, or pastors of them:

so he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things; he interpreted everything in the vision to him, and gave him the true meaning and real design of the whole, as follows: this was asked and told, not when Daniel was awake, and was considering of what he had dreamed; but in his dream, in his vision by night; this was all transacted in a visionary way, both the things and the interpretation of them.

Daniel 7:17

Ver. 17. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings,.... Or kingdoms, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; and so Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Saadiah; so the fourth beast is called the fourth kingdom, **Da 7:23** or a succession of kings in four kingdoms or monarchies, comparable to beasts for their strength, cruelty, and tyranny: these are the words of him that stood by, of one of the angels Daniel applied to, to know the meaning of his dream; and might be better rendered, "as to these {c} great beasts, which are four"; for their quality beasts, for their quantity great, and for number four. The meaning is,

four kings shall arise out of the earth; or kingdoms; which have an earthly original and foundation; are supported by earthly and worldly means, and with earthly and worldly views; and are different from the kingdom of Christ and his saints, which is not of the world, though it may be in it: this explains what is meant by the great sea, from whence these beasts are said to come up, **Da 7:3**, nor is it any material objection that the first of these kingdoms, the Babylonian, was risen already, and almost at an end; since the denomination is taken from the larger number; three of them were to arise, and the first was of the same original with them; thus it is said, Da 11:2, that three kings of Persia should stand up, and yet Cyrus, who was one of them, reigned already.

{c} "Quod attinet", Michaelis.

Daniel 7:18

Ver. 18. But the saints of the most High,.... Or, "of the most high Ones" {d}, Father, Son, and Spirit, separated by God the Father in election, and in that sense his servants, or sanctified ones, **Jude 1:1**, and redeemed by the Son, and sanctified with his blood, or their sins atoned by it, and to whom he is made sanctification, and so his saints, Heb 13:12 and sanctified by the Spirit, who in conversion implants principles of grace and holiness in them, **1Co 6:11**, or, "the saints of high" {e}, places or things; who are born from above, and are called with a high and heavenly calling, towards which they are pressing, reckoning themselves strangers here below:

these shall take the kingdom; or "receive" {f} it, as a free gift from God; and not by force, and rapine, and violence, as the beasts did:

and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever; after the four monarchies are destroyed, a fifth kingdom shall be set up; and this will be given to, and put into the possession of, the saints; they shall have the rule and government in the world, even in the whole world, as well as reign with Christ spiritually; which manner of rule shall last long; and then after the first resurrection they shall reign with him a thousand years on earth, and afterwards in heaven to all eternity. There is another rendering and sense of the words given, "and they (the beasts) shall receive the kingdom of the saints of the most High" {g}, &c.; and so Saadiah interprets them,

"and these kingdoms shall receive the kingdom of Israel, who are the saints of the most High, until the world to come, until the Messiah reigns;"

and this way go many others, who understand the words of those several monarchies possessing the land of Judea, and ruling over it; and of the continuance of it in the hands of Papists or Turks for a long, time, even until the glorious kingdom of Christ takes place; but this does not agree with the accentuation of the words, their form of construction, their connection, and strong manner of expression, "for ever and ever"; and especially if compared with **Da 7:22**.

{d} Nynwyle yvydq "sanctorum altissimorum", Pagninus, Montanus;

"sanctorum excelsorum", Junius & Tremellius. {e} "Sancti exceisoram, sel locorum", Piscator. {f} Nwlbqy "accipient", Munster, Piscator, Tigurine version. {g} "Suscipient regnum sanctorum", Pagninus, Montanus; "sortientur, [vel] obtienebunt regnum", Calvin; so Polanus, Sanctius.

Daniel 7:19

Ver. 19. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast;.... What it represented, what kingdom or monarchy was meant by it; for, by the above answer of the angel, he understood the four beasts signified four kings or kingdoms; the three first he pretty well understood; at least he was not so solicitous about them as about the fourth; and this he was desirous of having a very particular and exact account of; it threatening, by its appearance, a great deal of trouble to the world, and especially to the church of God:

which was diverse from all the others; or, "from all them", or "those" {h}, the other three beasts:

exceeding dreadful; to other kingdoms and nations:

whose teeth were of iron; of these parts of its description, see on **Da 7:7**,

and his nails of brass; this is a new circumstance, not before mentioned, and here added with great propriety: "nails" belonging to a beast of prey, and these said to be of "brass", to denote its strength, cruelty, and voraciousness in tearing its prey, to pieces; and, moreover, to show that this kingdom has somewhat of the nature of the third or Grecian monarchy, said to be of brass in Nebuchadnezzar's dream; some out of that kingdom being taken into the Roman militia, as, Theodoret observes; and soldiers are to a king what nails are to a beast:

which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; some kingdoms and provinces were destroyed by it, and the rest were made subject to it; see **Da 7:7**.

{h} Nyhlk Nm "a cunctis ipse", Pagninus, Montanus; "ab omnibus illis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Daniel 7:20

Ver. 20. And of the ten horns,.... That is, Daniel desired to know the truth of the ten horns, or the meaning of them what they signified, and who they pointed at, of which in **Da 7:7**, here it is added,

that were in his head; observing the situation of them; thought the horns of a beast could hardly be thought to be elsewhere:

and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; particularly he was very desirous to know the meaning of a single horn, which rose up among the rest, and before which three of the other horns fell, being plucked up by the roots:

even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things: See Gill on "Da 7:8":

whose look was more stout than his fellows; than the other beasts, or rather than the other horns; either than his fellow bishops, claiming an authority over them, as being universal bishop; or than the kings and princes of the earth, setting up himself above all that is called god, emperors and kings; taking to himself all power in heaven and in earth; a power to depose kings, and absolve their subjects from allegiance to them, and even over the consciences of men; so that his look is more bold and impudent than others, as well as more fierce and terrible, threatening kings and kingdoms with his bulls, anathemas, and interdicts: or, "whose appearance is greater than his fellows" {i}; in pomp and splendour, making a greater show and figure than the kings of the earth, and claiming a superiority over them.

{i} htrbx Nm br hwzxw "cujus aspectus", Munster; "et aspectus ejus major sociis suis", Pagninus.

Daniel 7:21

Ver. 21. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints,.... The same little horn before described; not Antiochus Epiphanes, who made war with the Jews, as many think; or the Roman Caesars, that persecuted the church of Christ, as others; nor Titus Vespasian, who fought against Israel, as Saadiah; but antichrist, or the pope of Rome; and this refers to the wars of the popes with the Waldenses, which began in the year 1160, and continued long, and with the two witnesses at the close of their testimony, Re 11:7, this Daniel had a view of in vision; not while he was inquiring of the angel, but before, though not mentioned till now; and was a reason he was so very inquisitive about this little horn, because of its war with the saints, and its success, as follows:

and prevailed against them: as the popes and their abettors did against the Waldenses and Albigenses, whom they slew in great numbers, and got the victory over; as the beast also, the same with this little horn, will overcome the witnesses, and slay them, Re 11:7.

Daniel 7:22

Ver. 22. Until the Ancient of days came,.... Not locally, by change of place, he being the omnipresent God; but in a providential way, to check and put a stop to the power and prevalency of the little horn over the saints; for this is the terminus or end of that; which puts a period to it; for when the Ancient of days comes in the exertion of his power and providence, he will come and sit as a Judge upon this little horn or antichrist, and judge, and condemn, and punish it; see **Da 7:9**:

and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; their characters vindicated from all calumny and false aspersions; their adversaries condemned and punished; and power, dominion, and authority, given to them with Christ; see **Da 7:27**:

and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom;
See Gill on "Da 7:18"; till which time the little horn or antichrist will reign and rage, and prevail over the saints, but no longer.

Daniel 7:23

Ver. 23. Thus he said,.... The person that stood by, the angel, of whom Daniel made his inquiries, and who answered him, as follows:

the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom on earth; which shows that the angel, by four kings, **Da 7:17**, meant four kingdoms, that should successively arise in the earth, and out of it, one after another; and this kingdom is not the kingdom of the Seleucidae, nor the Turkish, but the Roman empire; for this is to continue until the kingdom of Christ takes place; see **Da 7:7**:

which shall be diverse from all kingdoms; from the kingdoms and monarchies that were before it; particularly as a kingdom, in its form of government, both when Pagan and when Papal; see **Da 7:7**:

and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces: not the whole land of Judea only, as some read and interpret it; but the whole world, which the Romans became masters of; and the phrases used denote the destruction and desolation they made, wherever they carried their arms, and the cruelty and tyranny they exercised, and the vast profusion of blood made by them, both among the Heathens they subdued, and the Christians they persecuted.

Daniel 7:24

Ver. 24. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise,..... Or ten kingdoms which sprung out of the Roman empire, or into which it was broken and divided upon the dissolution of it, about A.D. 476; which, according to Mr. Mede {k}, were thus divided, A.D. 456,

1. Britons; 2. Saxons; 3. Franks; 4. Burgundians; 5 Visigoths; 6. Suevians and Alanes; 7. Vandals; 8. Almanes; 9. Ostrogoths; 10. Greeks.

The list Bishop Lloyd {l} has given of them is,

1. Hunns, who erected their kingdom in that part of Pannonia and Dacia, which was from them called Hungary, about A.D. 356. 2. Ostrogoths, who settled themselves in the countries that reach from Rhetia to Maesia, even to Thrace, about 377; and afterwards came into Italy under Alaricus, in 410. 3. Visigoths, who settled in the south parts of France, and in Catalonia, about 378. 4. Franks, who seized upon part of Germany and Gaul, A.D. 410. 5. Vandals, who settled in Spain; afterwards set up their kingdom in Africa, A.D. 407; their king Gensericus sacked Rome, 455. 6. Suevians and Alans, who seized the western parts of Spain, A.D. 407; and invaded Italy, 457. 7. Burgundians, who came out of Germany, into that part of Gaul called from them Burgundy, 407. 8. Herules, Rugians, and Thoringians, who settled in Italy under Odoacer, about A.D. 476. 9. Saxons, who made themselves masters of Great Britain about the same time, 476. 10. Longobards, called likewise Gopidae, who settled in Germany, about Magdeburg, A.D. 383; and afterwards succeeded the

Heruli and Thuringi in Hungary, about the year 826.

Sir Isaac Newton {m} reckons the ten kingdoms in the following order:

1. the kingdom of the Vandals and Alans in Spain and Africa; 2. of the Suevians in Spain; 3. of the Visigoths; 4. of the Alans in Gallia; 5. of the Burgundians; 6. of the Franks; 7. of the Britons; 8. of the Hunns; 9. of the Lombards; 10. of Ravenna;

who gives an account of the various kings of these kingdoms; and these, as the same learned writer says {n}, whatever was their number afterwards, they are still called the ten kings from their first number; and though they have not always been in the same form and order, yet they have been generally about, if not exactly, the same number; as they are now near the same; and may be thus reckoned, as the kingdoms of France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Great Britain, Sardinia, Denmark, the two Sicilies, Swedeland, Prussia, and Poland; of which see more
See Gill on "Re 17:12".

And another shall rise after thee: not Titus Vespeasian, as Jarchi and Saadiah; nor the nation of Gog and Magog, as Jacchiades: but the pope of Rome, or antichrist; who came to his power as universal bishop, and as a horn or temporal prince, after the above kingdoms arose; not after they were at an end, but after they were constituted and established, as it was proper they should first be; since they were to give their strength, power, and kingdom, to the antichristian beast, by which it became a horn or temporal prince, Re 17:13. The Septuagint render it, "behind them"; which Mr. Mede {o} interprets of his springing up unawares, imperceptibly, unnoticed, and unobserved by them, till he overtopped them.

And he shall be diverse from the first; from the first ten horns, kings or kingdoms; having, besides a secular power and temporal authority, an ecclesiastical and spiritual one; a power not only over the bodies and estates of men, but over their souls and consciences; and even over the other horns and kingdoms, which they had not over one another; and so was different from them all:

and he shall subdue three kings; designed by the three horns plucked up by the roots, and which fell before him; of which See Gill on "Da 7:8".

{k} Works, B. 3. c. 14. p. 661. {l} Apud Lowth in loc. {m} Observations on

Daniel, c. 6. p. 47. {n} Ibid. p. 73. {o} Works, B. 4. ep. 24. p. 778.

Daniel 7:25

Ver. 25. And he shall speak great words against the most High,.... Or, "at the side of the most High" {p}; setting himself up as a rival, and upon an equality with him; taking the names and characters of holiness, infallibility, yea, of deity itself, unto him; claiming a power to forgive sin, which is peculiar to God; and preferring his own laws, doctrines, and traditions, to the word of God:

and shall wear out the saints of the most High; by his wars with them, and murders and massacres of them; by taking away their lives and their substance; so lessening their numbers, and weakening their strength and power, wear them out, as a garment is wore out, as the word {q} signifies; utterly consume and destroy them, at least in his own apprehensions; which will be the case when the witnesses will be slain, Re 11:8, and especially will wear out their patience, or however thoroughly exercise it. The word {r}, in the Arabic language, signifies "to afflict and handle roughly"; and such usage the saints have met with, more or less, in all ages, from the man of sin.

And think to change times and laws: to alter the forms and constitutions of kingdoms, and the customs and usages of them; yea, to set up and pull down kings at pleasure; see **Da 2:21**, or to change the use of times and seasons, by setting apart days as holy for canonized saints; and appointing such days in a week, and such a season in the year, for abstinence from meats; and even to change the laws of God and man, by dispensing with both, and making new ones of his own:

and they shall be given into his hand; either the saints he makes war with, and wears out, who shall be overcome by him; or the times and laws, which he shall not only have it in his mind and purpose to change, but shall have it in his power to do it, and shall do it:

until a time, and times, and the dividing of time; by "a time" is meant a year, the longest part of time; by "times", two years; and "the dividing of time", half a year; in all three years and a half, which is the same with 1260 days, or forty two months, the time of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and of the reign of antichrist; so long shall he continue, exercising his power and authority, his wrath and rage, and blasphemy, and no longer; see Re 11:2.

{p} ayle dul "ad regionem, [sive] latus Altissimi", Calvin; "juxta Altissimum". Cocceius; "ex parte Altissimi", Munster. {q} alby palaiwsei Sept.; "deteret", Junius & Trmellius, Piscator; "abolebit", Montanus; "absumet" Munster; "consumet", Vatablus. {r} "ingrato et duriore modo tractavit, affixit", Giggeius apud Golium, col. 325. Erpenius apud Castel. col. 363. So Michaelis on the place observes.

Daniel 7:26

Ver. 26. But the judgment shall sit,.... As in **Da 7:10**, the court shall sit, the Judge shall take the bench, and all things be prepared for the arraignment, trial, condemnation, and punishment, of the little horn or antichrist, when the above time is up; God the Father, the Ancient of days, and Christ, said to be like the Son of man, brought near to him, shall sit as Judges, attended by the holy angels:

and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end; either the angels, or rather the saints of the most High; particularly the Christian princes, into whose hearts God will put it to hate the whore, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; so that there shall be an utter end of antichrist; he shall be stripped of all his power and authority; his destruction will be inevitable and irrecoverable; he shall never come out of it; it shall continue to the end of the world, to the end of time.

Daniel 7:27

Ver. 27. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High,.... Not only the dominion that shall be taken away from the little horn or antichrist, and from all the antichristian states, but the dominion of all others throughout all the earth, and under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of God, and the true professors of faith in Christ. The kingdoms of this world will become Christ's, and Christian princes will be kings of them everywhere; and not only the royal power and authority will be vested with them, but all the grandeur and state belonging to them will be theirs; as well as all the saints in general shall reign in a spiritual manner with Christ, enjoying all ordinances, and all religious liberties, as well as civil, and be free from all persecutions.

Whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him; the people of the saints of the most High, all shall be subject to them, all dominions, and the governors of them; or Christ the head of them, under and with whom they reign. So Saadiah {s} paraphrases it,

"the kingdom of the King Messiah is an everlasting kingdom, and his government is to generation and generation, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

This spiritual reign of Christ, which will take place in a more glorious manner at the destruction of antichrist, will continue until the Millennium, or the personal reign of Christ, begins; and after that will be the ultimate glory, in which Christ and his people will reign to all eternity.

{s} And R. Isaac in Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 44. applies it to the Messiah.

Daniel 7:28

Ver. 28. Hitherto is the end of the matter,.... Of the angel's words, and of the interpretation of those things Daniel was desirous of being informed about, and of the whole dream and vision Daniel had; and indeed this is the end and issue of all events in Providence, the kingdom and glory of Christ with his people:

as for me Daniel: with respect to his frame of mind, and the state of his body, when he awaked from this dream, and reflected upon it, and especially upon that part of it which affected the people of God:

my cogitations much troubled me; when he thought of these powerful monarchies, their strength and cruelty, and what the people of God would suffer under them, and especially under the fourth beast or monarchy, and ignore particularly under the little horn or antichrist:

and my countenance changed in me: turned pale: he looked sorrowful and dejected, because of the afflictions of God's people; though the issue of them, one would have thought, would have inspired him with joy and pleasure:

but I kept the matter in my heart; laid it up in his memory; pondered it in his mind; meditated upon it; and well weighed the several things observed to him; that he might be thoroughly master of them, and make them known to others, and leave them in writing for the benefit of the church of God in future ages.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Daniel 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL 8

This chapter contains the vision of a ram and he goat, and the interpretation of it. It begins with observing the time and place of the vision, **Da 8:1**, then describes the ram seen; by the place of his situation; by his two horns; and by his pushing several ways with so much force and fury, that none could stand before him, or deliver: out of his hands, **Da 8:3** next the he goat appears, and is described by the part from whence he came; the swiftness of his motion; the notable horn between his eyes; and his running to ram in great fury, smiting him between his horns, casting him to the ground, and trampling upon him, and none to deliver, **Da 8:5** but, after waxing great and powerful, its horn was broken, and four more rose up in its stead, and out of one of them a little horn, **Da 8:8** which little horn is described by its power and prevalence to the south and to the east, towards the pleasant land, the host of heaven, and the Prince of the host; and by it the stars were cast down and trampled upon, the daily sacrifice made to cease; the place of the sanctuary cast down, and truth itself, **Da 8:9**, and upon inquiry it appeared that these sacred things were to continue in this desolate condition unto 2300 days, **Da 8:13**. Daniel being desirous of knowing the meaning of this vision, the Angel Gabriel is ordered by Christ to give him an understanding of it; who drew near to him, and awaked him out of his sleep, and gave him the interpretation of it; **Da 8:15**, which is as follows; the ram; with two horns, signifies the kings of Media and Persia; the rough goat, the king of Greece; and the great horn the first king, Alexander the great; and the four horns, four kingdoms which rose up out of the Grecian empire upon his death, **Da 8:20**, and the little horn a king of fierce countenance, Antiochus Epiphanes; who is, described by his craft, and cunning, by his power and might, and by the destruction he should make; **Da 8:23**, this vision the angel assures the prophet was true, and bids him shut it up, since it was for many days, **Da 8:26**, upon which Daniel fainted, and was sick for a time; but afterwards recovered, so as to be able to do the king's business; but astonished at the vision himself, and which was not understood by others, **Da 8:27**.

Ver. 1. In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar,.... Which some say {t} was the last year of his reign; but, according to Ptolemy's canon, he reigned seventeen years; and so says Josephus {u}; however, this, as well as the preceding vision, were seen before what happened recorded in the "fifth" and "sixth" chapters. The following vision was seen by Daniel, according to Bishop Usher {w} and Dean Prideaux {x} in the year of the world 3451 A.M., and 553 B.C. Mr. Bedford {y} places it in 552 B.C.; and Mr. Whiston {z}, very wrongly, in 537 B.C., two years after the death of Belshazzar. The prophet having, in the preceding chapters, related what concerned the Chaldeans, he wrote in the Chaldee language; but now, henceforward, writing of things which concerned the Jews more especially, and the church and people of God in later times, he writes in the Hebrew tongue.

A vision appeared unto me, even to me Daniel; and not another; which is said for the certainty of it; whether it was seen by him waking, or in a dream, as the former vision, is not certain; it seems rather as if he was awake at first, though he afterwards fell prostrate to the ground, and into a deep sleep; yet the Syriac version takes it to be a dream, and so renders the first clause of the next verse: "after that which appeared to me at the first"; at the beginning of Belshazzar's reign, in the first year of it, recorded in the preceding chapter; which was concerning the four monarchies in general, and particularly concerning the fourth or Roman monarchy, of which a large account is given; and the Chaldean monarchy being near at an end, here the two monarchies between, namely, the Persian and Grecian, are in this vision described.

{t} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 28. p. 81. {u} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 4. {w} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3451. {x} Connexion, &c part 1. p. 117. {y} Scripture Chronlogy, p. 710. {z} Chronological Tables, cent. 10.

Daniel 8:2

Ver. 2. And I saw in a vision,.... The following things:

and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; not in reality, but so it seemed to him in the vision; as Ezekiel, when in Babylon, seemed in the visions of God to be at Jerusalem, **Eze 8:3**. This city Shushan, or Susa, as it is called by other writers, and signifies a "lily", was so called from the plenty of lilies that grew about it, or because of the pleasantness of it; it was the metropolis of the country Susiana, which had its name from it, and was afterwards the royal seat of the kings of Persia. This was first made so by Cyrus; for Strabo {a} says, that he and the Persians having overcome the Medes, observing that their own country was situated in the extreme parts, and Susa more inward, and nearer to other nations, being, as he says, between Persia and Babylon, set his royal palace in it; approving both the nearness of the country, and the dignity of the city. Here the kings of Persia laid up their treasures, even prodigious large ones; hence Aristagoras told Cleomenes, that if he could take that city, he would vie, and might contend, with Jupiter for riches {b}; for hither Cyrus carried whatever money he had in Persia, even forty thousand talents, some say fifty {c}. Alexander {d}, when he took this city, found a vast quantity of riches in it. It is called here a palace; and so it is spoken of by Herodotus {e}, Diodorus Siculus {f}, Pausanius {g}, Pliny {h}, and others, as a royal city, where were the residence and palace of the kings of Persia; but the royal palace was not in it at this time; the kings of Babylon had their palace and kept their court at Babylon, where Daniel was; but in vision it seemed to him that he was in Shushan, and which was represented to him as a palace, as it would be, and as the metropolis of the kingdom of Persia, which he had a view of in its future flourishing condition, and as destroyed by Alexander; for, as before observed, it was Cyrus that first made it a royal city; whereas this vision was in the third year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon. Some versions render it, a "tower" or "castle"; and so several writers, as Strabo {i} Plutarch {k} and Pliny {l}, speak of the tower or castle in it. Diodorus Siculus {m} says, when Antigonus took the tower of Susa, he found in it a golden vine, and a great quantity of other works, to the value of fifteen thousand talents; and out of crowns, and other gifts and spoils, he made up five thousand more. And Polybius {n} relates, that though Molon took the city, yet could not take the fortress, and was obliged to raise the siege, so strong it was. It must be a mistake of Pliny {o} that this city was built by Darius Hystaspes; he could only mean it was rebuilt, or rather enlarged, by him, since it was in being long before his time, and even a royal city in the times of Cyrus. Strabo {p} says it was built by Tithon the father of Merenon, was in compass a fifteen miles, of an oblong figure, and the tower was called after his father's name Mernnonia; and Shushan itself is called, by Herodotus {q}, Susa Memnonia. At this day, with the common people, it goes by the name of Tuster {r}. The east gate of the mountain of the house, which led to the temple at Jerusalem, was called Shushan. Some say {s} there was a building over this gate, on which the palace of Shushan was portrayed, from whence it had its name. The reason of this portrait is differently given; the Jewish commentators on the Misnah {t} commonly say that this was ordered by the kings of Persia, that the people of Israel might stand in awe of them, and not rebel against them. Their famous lexicographer {u} says, that this was done, that the Israelites, when they saw it, might remember their captivity in it. But a chronologer {w} of theirs gives this as the reason, that the children of the captivity made this figure, that they might remember the miracle of Purim, which was made in Shushan; and this, he says, is a good interpretation of it. This city was in the province of Elam; that is, Persia, as it is also called, Isa 21:6 for Josephus {x} says the Persians had their original from the Elamites, or Elameans; and Pliny {y} observes, that Elymais joined to Persia; and the country of Susiane, so called from Susa its chief city, was, according to Strabo {z} and Ptolemy {a1}, a part of Persia: and here Daniel in vision thought himself to be; and a very suitable place for him to have this vision in, which so much concerned the affairs of Persia.

And I saw in a vision, and I was by the river Ulai; that is, in vision; it seemed to the prophet that he was upon the banks of the river Ulai; the same with the Eulaeus of Strabo {b1}, Pliny {c1}, Ptolemy {d1}, and others, which ran by, and surrounded, the city of Shushan, or Susa; the water of which was so light, as Strabo {e1} observes, that it was had in great request, and the kings of Persia would drink of no other, and carried it with them wherever they went. Herodotus {f1} and Curtius {g1} make mention of the river Choaspes, as running by Susa, and say the same things of its water; from whence it might be concluded it was one and the same river, called by different names; though Strabo takes notice of them together, as if they were distinct; yet he, from Polycletus {h1}, makes them, with Tigris, to disembogue into the same lake, and from thence into the sea. The river which runs by Shushan, now called Souster, according to Monsieur Thevenot {i1}, is Caron, and comes from the hills about it, and is thought to be the Choaspes of the ancients; near to which, as he was told, is a hill that now goes by the name of Choasp; so that, upon the whole, they seem to be one and the same river {k1}. Josephus says {l1}, that Daniel had this vision in the plain of Susa, the metropolis of Persia, as he went out with his friends, that is, out of the city: and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "by the gate Ulai"; a gate of the city of Shushan so called: and so Saadiah Gaon interprets it a gate; but the former sense is best.

{a} Geograph. l. 15. p. 500. {b} Herodoti Terpsichore, sive l. 5. c. 48. {c} Strabo. ib. p. 502. {d} Curtius, l. 5. c. 2. Plutarch. in Vita Alexandri, Diador. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 17. p. 540. {e} Terpsichore, sive l. 5. sect. 48. {f} Bibliothec. l. 17. p. 539. {g} Laconice, sive l. 3. p. 175. {h} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 27. {i} Geograph. l. 15. p. 500. {k} In Vita Alexandri. {l} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 27.) {m} Bibliothec. l. 17. p. 540. {n} Hist. l. 5. p. 249. {o} Ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 27.) {p} Geograph. l. 15. p. 500. {q} Polymnia, sive l. 7. c. 151. {r} Hiller. Onomastic. Sacr. p. 658, 935. {s} Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn.

Celim, c. 17. sect. 9. {t} Maimon & Bartenora in Misn. Kelim, c. 17. sect. 9. & Middot, c. 1. sect. 3. {u} R. Nathan, Sepher Aruch in voce Nvv, fol. 160. 3. {w} R. Abraham Zacuth, Sepher Juchasin, fol. 65. 2. {x} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 27. {z} Geograph. l. 15. p. 500. {a1} Geograph. l. 6. c. 3. {b1} Geograph. p. 501, 505. {c1} Ut supra, (Nat. Hist.) l. 6. c. 23, 27. {d1} Geograph. l. 6. c. 3. {e1} Ut supra, (Geograph.) p. 505. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 27. {f1} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 188. Terpsichore, sive l. 5. c. 49, 52. {g1} Ut supra. (Curtius, l. 5. c. 2.) {h1} Geograph. l. 15. p. 501. {i1} Travels, part 2. B. 3. c. 9. p. 153. {k1} See the Universal History, vol. 5. p. 124. {l1} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. sect. 7.

Daniel 8:3

Ver. 3. Then I lifted up mine eyes,.... To see what was to be seen in this place, where he in the vision was brought; he lifted up the eyes of his understanding, being enlightened by the vision of prophecy, and the eyes of his body, to which objects of corporeal things formed in the fancy were represented:

and saw, and, behold; he saw something wonderful in a visionary way, and which struck his mind, and raised his attention:

there stood before the river; the river Ulai, near Shushan, the palace, the seat of the kings of Persia, to the east:

a ram, which had two horns; a symbol of the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, signified by the two horns, **Da 8:20**, an emblem of power and dominion, and sometimes used to signify kings and kingdoms; see **Da 7:24** and these as united in one monarchy, under one monarch, Cyrus, and continued in his successors unto the times of Alexander; and therefore called "a ram", or "one ram" {m}, as in the original; and which in sound has some likeness to Elam or Persia: and this kingdom or monarchy may be signified by it, partly because of its strength and power, and partly because of its riches, as some think, as well as because it is a fighting creature; and it may be chiefly because this monarchy was mild, and kind, and gentle to the Jewish nation: and it is very remarkable, that, according to Ammianus Marcellinus {n}, the ram was the royal ensign of the Persians; whose kings used to wear for a diadem something made of gold, in the shape of a ram's head, set with little stones:

and the two horns were high; grew straight up on high, and so were different from the usual horns of a ram, which are crooked; denoting the great power, authority, wealth, and riches, these two kingdoms rose up unto:

but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last; I think the words might be rendered better, "and the first was higher than the second, but it ascended, or grew up, higher at last" {o}; the kingdom of the Medes was the first kingdom, and it was at first superior to the kingdom of Persia; but afterwards the kingdom of Persia became greater than that, under Cyrus and his successors: and Sir John Chardin says {p}, that rams' heads, with horns one higher than another, are still to be seen in the ruins of Persepolis.

{m} dxa lya "aries unus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. {n} Hist. l. 19. {o} hnwrxab hle hhbghw tynvh Nm hxbg txahw. {p} Travels, vol. 3.

Daniel 8:4

Ver. 4. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward,.... That is, with his horns, as rams do; these kingdoms using all their power and strength, wealth and riches, in fighting with and subduing nations, and pushing on their conquests in all parts here mentioned; to the west, Babylon, Syria, Asia, and part of Greece; to the north, Iberia, Albania, Armenia, Scythia, Colchis, and the inhabitants of the Caspian sea; and to the south, Arabia, Ethiopia, Egypt, and India; all which places were conquered by Cyrus and his successors. No mention is made of the east, because this ram stood in the east, facing the west; and at the right and left were the north and south; and so Cyrus is said to come from the east, Isa 46:11.

So that no beast might stand before him: no, not the first beast, the Babylonian monarchy, which; fell into the hands of Cyrus; nor any other king or kingdom he and his successors fought against:

neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; or power; Croesus, the rich king of Lydia, and other allies of the king of Babylon, assisted him against Cyrus, and endeavoured to prevent his falling into his hands, but all in vain:

but he did according to his will, and became great; none being able to oppose him, he carried his arms where he pleased, and imposed what tribute he thought fit, and obliged them to do whatever was his will; and so became great in power and dignity, in riches and wealth: this monarchy was very large and extensive, and very rich and wealthy, in the times of Cyrus and his successors; and especially in the times of Darius, the last monarch of it, conquered by Alexander, who is described as follows:

Daniel 8:5

Ver. 5. And as I was considering,.... The ram, and the strange things done by him; wondering that a creature of so little strength, comparatively with other beasts, should be able to do such exploits: and thinking with himself what should be the meaning of all this, and what would be the issue of it,

behold, an he goat came from the west; which is interpreted of the king or kingdom of Grecia, which lay to the west of Persia; and a kingdom may be said to do what one of its kings did; particularly Alexander, king of Macedon, in Greece, who, with the Grecian army under him, marched from thence to fight the king of Persia; and which might be signified by a "he goat", because of its strength, its comeliness in walking, and its being the guide and leader of the flock: and also it is remarkable, that the arms of Macedon, or the ensigns carried before their armies, were a goat, ever since the days of Caranus; who following a flock of goats, was directed to Edessa, a city of Macedon, and took it; and from this circumstance of the goats called it Aegeas, and the people Aegeades, which signifies "goats"; and put the goat in his arms {q}.

On the face of the whole earth; all that lay between Greece and Persia, all Asia; yea, all the whole world, at least as Alexander thought, who wept because there was not another world to conquer: hence Juvenal says {r}, "unus Pelloeo juveni non sufficit orbis"; one world was not enough for this young man.

And touched not the ground; as he went; he seemed rather to fly in the air than to walk upon the earth; with such swiftness did Alexander run over the world, and make his conquests: in six or eight years time he conquered the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, Babylon, Egypt, and all the neighbouring nations; and afar off, Greece, Thrace, Illyricum, and even the greatest part of the then known world: hence the third or Grecian monarchy under him is said to be like a leopard, with four wings of a fowl on its back {s}, See Gill on "Da 7:6" he conquered countries as soon almost as another could have travelled over them; in his marches he was swift and indefatigable. Aelianus {t} reports, that he marched, clad in armour, thrice four hundred, that is, twelve hundred furlongs, upon a stretch; and, before his army could take any rest, fought his enemies, and conquered them. Some render the words, "whom no man touched in the earth" {u}; that is, none could oppose, resist, and stop him; he bore down and carried all before him; there was no coming at him, so as to touch him, or hurt him; he was so swift in his motions, and so powerful in his army.

And the goat had a notable horn between his eyes; or, "a horn of vision": which in **Da 8:21** is interpreted of the first king of Greece, that is, when it became a monarchy; who was Alexander the great; and very properly called a "horn", being possessed of great power and authority; and a notable one, very remarkable and famous, as he has been in all ages since: "a horn of vision" {w} as it may be rendered; a very visible and conspicuous one, to be seen afar off, and which attracted the eyes of all unto it: its situation was "between the eyes of the goat", denoting his sagacity, wisdom, prudence, craft, and cunning; being attended and surrounded with his father Philip's wise counsellors as Parmenio, Philotas, Clitus, and others. It is remarkable that by the Arabs Alexander is called Dulcarnaim, or Dhilcarnain; that is, one having two horns {x}: the reason of which was, he affected to be the son of Jupiter Hammon, and therefore at feasts and public entertainments would put on the purple and horns of Hammon: hence, as Clemens of Alexandria observes {y}, he is by the statuaries represented as horned, or wearing horns; but then, as Arnobius {z} and others take notice, Hammon is made by the painters and statuaries to have ram's horns; whereas it seems more likely that Alexander's were goat's horns, since the goat was in the arms of Macedon; and so Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, who mimicked Alexander in his armour, is said to have goat's horns on his helmet, upon the top of his crest {a}; and to such ensigns is the allusion here.

{q} Justin ex Trogo, l. 7. c. 1. {r} Satyr. 10. {s} Alexander was remarkable for the agility of his body, as appeared by his mounting his horse Bucephalus (Plutarch in Vita Alexandri), to the admiration of his father, and all that beheld him; as well as famous for the quick marches of his army, and his very swift and expeditious execution of his signs. "Plurimum pedum celeritate pollebat"; he greatly excelled in swiftness of foot, says the historian: and again, "armatusque de navi, tripudianti similis prosiluit"; he leaped armed out of the ship like one that danced (Suppl. in Curt. l. 1. p. 16. l. 2. p. 26) And he himself, speaking of the countries he had conquered, says, "quas tanta velocitate domuimus": and elsewhere, "cujus velocitatem nemo valuisset effugere". And of Bessus it is said, that "Alexandri celeritate perterritus". And Cobares, the magician calls him "velocissimus rex" (Curt. Hist. l. 6. c. 3. & l. 7. c. 4. 7.). And another historian says (Justin ex Trogo, l. 11. c. 2. & l. 12. c. 9.) that having observed the enemy's city forsook by them, "sine ullo satellite desiliit

in planitiem urbis": and again, "tanta celeritate instructo paraloque exercitu Graeciam oppressi; ut quem venire non senserant, videre se vix crederant". {t} Var. Hist. l. 10. c. 4. {u} Urab egwn Nyaw quem neme attingebat in terra, Junius & Tremellius. {w} twzh Nrq "cornu visionis", Montanus; "visibile sive visendum", Vatablus; "conspicuum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {x} See Gregory, de Aeris & Epochis, c. 11. p. 158, 159. {y} Protreptic. ad Gentes, p. 36. {z} Adv. Gentes, l. 6. p. 233. {a} Plutarch. in Vita Pyrrhi.

Daniel 8:6

Ver. 6. And he came to the ram that had two horns,.... Alexander being chosen and made by the states of Greece captain general of all Greece against the Persians, marched from thence with his army, passed the Hellespont, and entered into the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, signified by the ram with two horns, and came up to Darius Codomannus, possessed of this large monarchy, and at the head of a numerous army:

which I had seen standing before the river; the river Ulai, near to Shushan, the royal seat of the kings of Persia; here Darius stood in his royal majesty and dignity, as the defender of his empire, and unconcerned at the attempt of Alexander, having nothing to fear, as he thought, from such a puny adversary:

and ran unto him in the fury of his power; or, "heat of his power" {b}; which denotes the haste Alexander made with his army into Asia; his eager desire, and the fervour of his mind to engage with the Persians: the historian says, that he passed the Hellespont into Asia, "incredibli ardore mentis accensus"; fired with an incredible ardour of mind: and a little after, having conquered the rebels of Pisidia, he marched against Darius, "summo mentis ardore"; with the greatest ardour of mind, and with no less alacrity {c}; which exactly agrees with the sacred text. The running of the he goat to the ram in a hostile way is described in allusion to the manner of those creatures when they fight with one another, or attack an enemy.

{b} wxk tmxb "fervore virtutis suae", Munster; "cum ardore virium suarum", Cocceius; "in aestu robaris sui", Michaelis. {c} Supplem. in Curt. l. 2. p. 26, 28.

Daniel 8:7

Ver. 7. And I saw him come close unto the ram,.... Though the distance between Greece and Persia was very great, and many rivers and mountains in the way, which seemed impassable; Alexander got over them all, and came up to Darius, and fought several battles with him, and entirely defeated him, though greatly inferior in number to him, as follows:

and he was moved with choler against him; exceedingly embittered against him; exasperated and provoked to the last degree, by the proud and scornful message he sent him; calling himself king of kings, and akin to the gods, and Alexander his servant; ordering his nobles to take Philip's madding stripling, as he called him in contempt, and whip him with children's rods, and clothe him in purple, and deliver him bound to him; then sink his ships with the mariners, and transport all his soldiers to the further part of the Red sea {d}:

and smote the ram; in three battles, in each of which the Persians were smitten and routed by the Grecians: first at the river Granicus, where Alexander with thirty thousand foot, and five thousand horse, met the Persians, though more than five times his number, being, as Justin {e} says, six hundred thousand, and got the victory over them; here twenty thousand of the Persian footmen, and two hundred and fifty of their horse, were slain, and not more than thirty nine of the Macedonians killed {f}: Plutarch {g} says, it was reported that the Persians lost twenty thousand footmen, and two thousand five hundred horse; and from Aristobulus he says, that the Macedonians lost only thirty four men, of which twelve were footmen: and Diodorus Siculus {h} relates that the Persians lost more than ten thousand footmen, and not less than two thousand horse, and more than twenty thousand were taken: according to Justin {i}, of Alexander's army there only fell nine footmen, and a hundred and twenty horsemen: others say, that, of the Macedonians, twenty five men of Alexander's own troop fell in the first attack, about sixty other of the horsemen were killed, and thirty of the footmen {k}; so different are the accounts of the slain in this battle; however, the victory appears to be very great, whereby Sardis, with all Darius's rich furniture, fell into the hands of Alexander, and all the provinces of the lesser Asia submitted to him. The next battle was fought at Issus its Cilicia, where Darius had an army, according to Plutarch {l}, consisting of six hundred thousand men; according to Justin {m}, four hundred thousand footmen, and a hundred thousand horsemen, which was routed by Alexander; when a hundred thousand of the Persian footmen, and ten thousand of their horsemen, were slain; and only, on Alexander's side, five hundred and four of the footmen wounded, thirty two wanting, and a hundred and fifty of the horsemen killed {n}: here also the accounts vary; Plutarch {o} says above a hundred and ten thousand of the Persians were slain: according to Diodorus Siculus {p}, there fell of them a hundred and twenty thousand footmen, and not less than ten thousand horsemen; and of the Macedonians three hundred footmen, and about a hundred and fifty horsemen: according to Arrian {q}, the Persians lost ten thousand horsemen, and ninety thousand footmen: according to Justin {r}, sixty one thousand footmen, and ten thousand horsemen, were slain, and forty thousand taken; and of the Macedonians there fell one hundred and thirty footmen, and one hundred and fifty horsemen; but, be it as it will, the victory was exceeding great, whereby the camp of Darius, his mother, wife, and children, and all his riches at Damascus, fell into the hands of Alexander, with all Syria. The third and last battle was fought near Arbela, or rather at Gaugamela in Assyria, when Alexander with fifty thousand men beat Darius with an army of eleven hundred thousand men; Plutarch {s} says ten hundred thousand; forty thousand of which were slain, and of the Macedonians only three hundred or less were wanting {t}; according to Arrian {u} thirty thousand were slain; but Diodorus Siculus {w} says ninety thousand: this was the decisive battle; after this Babylon and Persepolis were taken by Alexander, and he became master of the whole empire, which is intended in the next clause:

and brake his two horns; conquered the Medes and Persians, the two kingdoms united in one monarchy, but now destroyed; another monarchy, the Grecian, took its place:

and there was no power in the ram to stand before him there was no strength in tim whole empire sufficient to resist, oppose, and stop him; though vast armies were collected together, these were soon broken and routed, and Darius at the head of them was forced to fly and make his escape in the best manner he could;

but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: not Darius personally, for he was slain by Bessus, one of his own captains; but the Persian empire, it ceased to be, and was no longer in the hands of the Persians, but was taken from them by Alexander; and all the glory and majesty of it were defaced and despised; the famous city and palace of Persepolis were burnt in a drunken fit, at the instigation of Thais the harlot:

and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand; not his armies, nor his generals, nor his allies, nor his offers to Alexander of his daughter in marriage, and part of his kingdom; all were in vain, and to no purpose; he and his whole empire fell into the conqueror's hands, and there was no remedy against it. Josephus {x} says, that when Alexander was in his way to Jerusalem, Jaddus, the high priest, met and accompanied him into the city and temple, and showed him this prophecy of Daniel, that some one of the Grecians should abolish the empire of the Persians; and, thinking himself to be intended, was greatly pleased. Gorionides {y} says the high priest, whom he calls Ananias, said to Alexander, on showing him the prophecy, thou art this he goat, and Darius is the ram; and thou shall trample him to the ground, and take the kingdom out of his hand; and he greatly strengthened the heart of the king.

{d} Supplem. in Curt. l. 2. p. 27. {e} Trogo, l. 11. c. 6. {f} Supplem. in Curt. l. 2. p. 28. {g} In Vit. Alexandri. {h} Bibliothec. l. 17. p. 503. {i} E Trogo, l. 11. c. 6. {k} Universal History, vol. 5. p. 297. {l} In Vit. Alexandri. {m} E Trogo, l. 11. c. 9. {n} Curtius, l. 3. c. 11. {o} In Vita Alexandri. {p} Bibliothec l. 17. p. 515. {q} Exped. Alex. l. 2. {r} E. Trogo, l. 11. c. 9. {s} Vit. Alexandri. {t} Curtius, l. 4. c. 16. {u} Ut supra, (Exped. Alex.) l. 3. {w} Biblioth. l. 17. p. 536. {x} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 8. sect. 5. {y} Heb. Hist. l. 2. c. 7. p. 88.

Daniel 8:8

Ver. 8. Therefore the he goat waxed very great,.... The Grecian monarchy, under Alexander, became very powerful, and was very extensive; he not only conquered the Persian empire, but also the Indies, yea, the whole world, as he imagined; and indeed he did bring into subjection to him the greatest part of the then known world; and he was very great in his own esteem, at least reckoned himself lord of the world, called himself the son of Jupiter Ammon, and affected to be worshipped as a god:

and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; when the Grecian monarchy was established, and became very powerful, and reached to the greatest part of the earth, then Alexander the first king of it, a great horn, and powerful monarch, died, or was broken; not as the two horns of the ram, by the power of the enemy; not by violence, but by intemperance, in a drunken fit, or, as was suspected, by poison; and that when he was in the height of his glory, swelled with his victories; and that in the prime of his days, when in his full strength, being in the "thirty third" year of his age:

and for it, or in the room and stead of it {z}, came up four notable ones; or, "four horns of vision" {a}; very famous and conspicuous, like that in **Da 8:5**, which were the four kingdoms into which the empire was divided some time after Alexander's death, and the four kings that were over them: the kingdoms were those of Egypt, Greece, Asia, and Syria. Ptolemy was king of Egypt, to which belonged Lybia, Palestine, Arabia, and Caelesyria. Cassander was king of Macedonia and Greece. Lysimachus was king of Asia, to which belonged Thrace, Bithynia, and other places; and Seleucus was king of Syria, and of the eastern countries: these are the four heads of the leopard, or third beast, which signifies the Grecian monarchy, **Da 7:6** and these were

toward the four winds of heaven; east, west, north, and south: Egypt, with its appendages, lay to the south; Asia, and what belonged to that, to the north; Macedonia and Greece to the west; and Syria to the east: and thus was the Grecian empire divided into four kingdoms, among the successors of Alexander: there were some partitions of it before this into provinces among governors, under the brother and son of Alexander; but after the battle of Ipsus, in which Antigonus, one of Alexander's captains, and a very principal, active, and ambitious man, was slain, and his army routed; the four confederate princes against him, above named, divided by consent the empire between them into separate kingdoms, and became really, and not in title only, kings of them {b}; which is what is here prophesied of.

{z} hytxt "loco ejus, [vel] illius", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis. {a} ebra twzx "quatuor [cornua] conspicua", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "cornua aspectus quatuor", Michaelis. {b} See Prideaux's Connexion, part 1. B. 8. p. 558, 559.

Daniel 8:9

Ver. 9. And out of one of them came forth a little horn,.... Meaning not the kingdom of Titus Vespasian, as Jarchi; nor the kingdom of the Turks, as Saadiah; but the kingdom of Antiochia, as Aben Ezra and Jacchiades; or rather Antiochus Epiphanes, who sprung from the kingdom of the Seleucidae in Syria, or from Seleucus king of Syria, one of the four horns before mentioned: this is that sinful root said to come out from thence, in the Apocrypha:

"And there came out of them a wicked root Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king, who had been an hostage at Rome, and he reigned in the hundred and thirty and seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks." (1 Maccabees 1:10)

called "a horn", because he had some power and authority, and which he usurped and increased in; though but a "little" one in comparison of Alexander the great horn; or at his beginning, being an hostage at Rome; from whence he got away by stealth, and seized the kingdom of Syria, which belonged to his elder brother's son, whom he dispossessed of it; and by mean, artful, and deceitful methods, got it into his hands, who had no right unto it, nor any princely qualities for it:

which waxed exceeding great toward the south; towards Egypt, which lay south of Syria; into which Antiochus entered, and fought against Ptolemy Philometer, king of it, took many cities, and besieged Alexandria; and in all probability would have subdued the whole country, had not the Romans {c} restrained him, by sending their ambassador Popilius to him, who obliged him to desist and depart;

"17 Wherefore he entered into Egypt with a great multitude, with chariots, and elephants, and horsemen, and a great navy, 18 And made war against Ptolemee king of Egypt: but Ptolemee was afraid of him, and fled; and many were wounded to death. 19 Thus they got the strong cities in the land of Egypt and he took the spoils thereof. 20 And after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt, he returned again in the hundred forty and third year, and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude," (1 Maccabees 1)

and toward the east; towards Armenia and Persia, the Atropatii in Media, and the countries beyond the Euphrates, whom he made tributary to him; in the Apocrypha:

"Wherefore, being greatly perplexed in his mind, he determined to go into Persia, there to take the tributes of the countries, and to gather much money." (1 Maccabees 3:31)

"1 About that time king Antiochus travelling through the high countries heard say, that Elymais in the country of Persia was a city greatly renowned for riches, silver, and gold; 2 And that there was in it a very rich temple, wherein were coverings of gold, and breastplates, and shields, which Alexander, son of Philip, the Macedonian king, who reigned first among the Grecians, had left there." (1 Maccabees 6) and toward the pleasant land; the land of Judea, so called because of its delightful situation, and great fruitfulness; and because God chose it above all others for his habitation; where his word, and worship, and ordinances, were observed and enjoyed; and where the Messiah should be born and dwell; into this Antiochus led his army, and greatly afflicted and distressed it; he made himself master of most places in Galilee and Judea. The Arabic version reads "toward the west"; no mention is made of the north, because there he himself reigned; Syria being north to Egypt, as that was south to Syria; hence afterwards the king of Egypt is called the king of the south, and the king of Syria the king of the north.

{c} See Joseph. Antiqu. l. 12. c. 5. sect. 2.

Daniel 8:10

Ver. 10. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven,.... The people of the Jews, the army of the living God, the church militant, among whom were many of the citizens of heaven, whose names are written there; such was the insolence of this king, as to molest and disturb them:

and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped them; some of the common people he persecuted and destroyed, or prevailed upon them, either by threats or flatteries, to relinquish their religion; and even some of the "stars", the lights of the people, the priests and Levites, that ministered unto them; or the princes, and elders of the people, whom he slew, as Jacchiades interprets it; or removed from their posts so that they could not do their office; or they turned apostates; and those that did not he barbarously put to death, and insulted over them, and used them in a very contemptuous manner, as old Eleazar, the mother and her seven sons; see 2 Maccabees chapter 7.

Daniel 8:11

Ver. 11. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince host,.... Either the high priest Onias, whom he disposed of his office, and put Jason a wicked man into it; or Judas Maccabeus, the prince of the Jewish nation; or rather, as Jacchiades, God himself, the Lord God of Israel, the King, Prince, Governor, and defender of them, whom Antiochus blasphemed; whose worship he puts stop to; and whose temple he profaned, and ill used his people; all which was against God himself, and is a proof of the pride and insolence of this king:

and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away; the lambs in the morning and evening were forbid to be sacrificed; or they could not be offered, because the altar was pulled down, or profaned; and so all other sacrifices were made to cease, as well as this, which is put for all: or, "from him" {d}, the prince, "the daily sacrifice was taken away"; either from the priest, who used to offer it; or from God, to whom it was offered:

and the place of his sanctuary was cast down: not that the temple was destroyed by him, but it was profaned and rendered useless; the worship of God was not carried on in it, but the image of Jupiter was set up in it, and it was devoted to the service of an idol; yea, the altar was pulled down, and all the vessels and ornaments of the temple were taken away and destroyed; in the Apocrypha:

"And the table of the shewbread, and the pouring vessels, and the vials, and the censers of gold, and the veil, and the crown, and the golden ornaments that were before the temple, all which he pulled off." (1 Maccabees 1:22)

"Now Jerusalem lay void as a wilderness, there was none of her children that went in or out: the sanctuary also was trodden down, and aliens kept the strong hold; the heathen had their habitation in that place; and joy was taken from Jacob, and the pipe with the harp ceased." (1 Maccabees 3:45)

"And lo, the heathen are assembled together against us to destroy us: what things they imagine against us, thou knowest." (1 Maccabees 3:52)

{d} wnmm "ab eo", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, "ab ipso", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.

Daniel 8:12

Ver 12. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression,.... Which some interpret of a garrison of soldiers placed by Antiochus, through his sin and wickedness, to hinder the oblation of the daily sacrifice, as Grotius: others, of a host of apostates among the Jews, who advised Antiochus against the daily sacrifice, and to kill swine, and offer them on the altar, as Jacchiades; or rather it may be rendered, "and the host was given over", or "delivered", i.e. to the enemy, "because of the transgression against the daily sacrifice" {e}; that is, because of the transgression of the priests or the people, in neglecting the daily sacrifice, the host or people of the Jews were delivered up into the hands of Antiochus; or they were delivered up, together with the daily sacrifice, for their sins {f}. The word abu is by Jarchi and Ben Melech interpreted a set time, a fixed time which shall have an end; and Calvin inclines to this sense, that though the daily sacrifice would be taken away, because of the transgression of the people, yet it was only for a certain time, and would be restored again when that time was up; and so is spoken for the comfort of the Lord's people:

and it cast down the truth to the ground: that is, the little horn Antiochus, or his host and army; he did all that in him lay to extirpate and abolish true religion and godliness; he cut in pieces the copies of the book of the law, and burnt them, called the law of truth in **Mal 2:6**, as Jacchiades observes, and put to death the professors of the truth; and showed all the contempt of true doctrine and worship he was capable of; see the Apocrypha:

"57 And whosoever was found with any the book of the testament, or if any committed to the law, the king's commandment was, that they should put him to death. 58 Thus did they by their authority unto the Israelites every month, to as many as were found in the cities. 59 Now the five and twentieth day of the month they did sacrifice upon the idol altar, which was upon the altar of God. 60 At which time according to the commandment they put to death certain women, that had caused their children to be circumcised." (1 Maccabees 1)

and it practised, and prospered; he did what he pleased, and he succeeded in his attempts for a while, there being none to oppose him.

{e} evpb dymth le Ntnt abuw "exercitusque traditus est propter trangressionem contra res circa illud juge sacrificium", Vatablus. {f} "Et exercitus tradetur una cum sacrificio jugi ob praevaricationem", Michaelis.

Daniel 8:13

Ver. 13. Then I heard one saint speaking,.... An angel, either a created angel, pure and holy in his nature, as Gabriel; or the uncreated Angel Jesus Christ, the

Word of God; what he was speaking of is not said; perhaps Daniel did not hear what he said, though he heard him speaking, or perceived that he spake; yet did not understand what he said, or what was the subject of his discourse; very probably it was something relative to the vision now seen:

and another saint said unto that certain saint that spake; another angel said to him that spake, whose name is unknown, only called such an one, or Palmoni, which some render "the wonderful numberer"; or, "the numberer of secrets", or "that has all secrets numbered" {g}; and apply it to Christ, whose name is "Pele", wonderful; the eternal Word of God, that is in the bosom of the Father, and knows all secrets, and the number of times and seasons, how long they will last; what created angels know not, he does; and therefore they apply to him for instruction and knowledge in hidden things:

how long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot? that is, how long will this vision last? or when will this prophecy be at an end, and have its full and final accomplishment? how long will the sacrifice be taken away, or made to cease? how long will that transgression, that abomination, making the temple desolate, the image of Jupiter Olympius set up by Antiochus, continue in it? how long shall it be given to him, or he be permitted to tread under foot, and use in the most contemptuous manner, the temple of the Lord, and his people?

{g} ynwmlpl "illi qui occulta in numerato habet", Junius & Tremellius.

Daniel 8:14

Ver. 14. And he said unto me,.... That is, "Palmoni", the wonderful person, to whom the angel put the above question, gave the answer to it; not unto the angel that asked it, but unto Daniel that stood by; knowing that it was for his and his people's sake the question was asked, and therefore gave the answer to him, as follows:

unto two thousand and three hundred days; or so many "mornings" and "evenings" {h}; which shows that not so many years, as Jacchiades, and others, are meant; but natural days, consisting of twenty four hours, and which make six years, three months, and eighteen days; and reckoning from the fifteenth day of the month Cisleu, in the year 145 of the Selucidae, in which

Antiochus set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, in the Apocrypha:

"Now the five and twentieth day of the month they did sacrifice upon the idol altar, which was upon the altar of God." (1 Maccabees 1:59)

to the victory obtained over Nicanor by Judas, on the thirteenth day of the month Adar, Anno 151, are just 2300 days; which day the Jews kept as an annual feast, in commemoration of that victory; and from that time enjoyed peace and rest from war {i}: this way goes L'Empereur after Capellus; but others begin from the defection of the people from the pure religion by Menelaus, Anno 141; though Antiochus did not enter on his impieties till the following year; and, reckoning from the sixth day of the sixth month in that year, to the twenty fifth day of Cisleu in the year 148, when the Jews offered the daily sacrifice on the new altar of burnt offerings, in the Apocrypha:

"Now on the five and twentieth day of the ninth month, which is called the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and eighth year, they rose up betimes in the morning, 53 And offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of burnt offerings, which they had made. " (1 Maccabees 4:52)

were just six years, three months, and eighteen days: and so it follows,

and then shall the sanctuary be cleansed; as it was by Judas Maccabeus at the time above mentioned; when he purified the holy places, sanctified the courts, rebuilt the altar, renewed the vessels of the sanctuary, and put all in their proper places; in the Apocrypha:

"41 Then Judas appointed certain men to fight against those that were in the fortress, until he had cleansed the sanctuary. 42 So he chose priests of blameless conversation, such as had pleasure in the law: 43 Who cleansed the sanctuary, and bare out the defiled stones into an unclean place. 44 And when as they consulted what to do with the altar of burnt offerings, which was profaned; 45 They thought it best to pull it down, lest it should be a reproach to them, because the heathen had defiled it: wherefore they pulled it down, 46 And laid up the stones in the mountain of the temple in a convenient place, until there should come a prophet to shew what should be done with them. 47 Then they took whole stones according to the law, and built a new altar according to the former; 48 And made up the sanctuary, and the things that were within the temple, and hallowed the courts. 49 They made also new holy vessels, and into the temple they brought the candlestick, and the altar of burnt offerings, and of incense, and the table. 50 And upon the altar they burned incense, and the lamps that were upon the candlestick they lighted, that they might give light in the temple. 51 Furthermore they set the loaves upon the table, and spread out the veils, and finished all the works which they had begun to make." (1 Maccabees 4)

Indeed, as Antiochus was a type of antichrist, and his persecution of that desolation made by antichrist in the church; these 2300 days may be considered as so many years, which will bring it down to the end of the sixth Millennium, or thereabout; when it may be hoped there will be a new face of things upon the sanctuary and church of God, and a cleansing of it from all corruption in doctrine, discipline, worship, and conversation.

{h} rqwb bre "vespero matutina", Castalio; "vespertina matutinaque tempora", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {i} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 12. c. 10. sect. 5.

Daniel 8:15

Ver. 15. And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision,.... The whole of the preceding vision, concerning the ram, he goat, and little horn, and what were done by them; the prophet not only affirms he saw this vision, but repeats the affirmation, expressing his own name, partly for the sake of emphasis, and partly for the greater confirmation of his words; wherefore it was a most impudent thing Porphyry to say, that the true Daniel never saw this vision; but what is here related was written after Antiochus's reign, and falsely ascribed to him. It being so clear a prophecy concerning Alexander, and the destruction of the Persian empire by him, this acute spiteful Heathen had no other way of evading the evidence of it in favour of true religion but by this false and lying assertion:

and I sought for the meaning; that is, of the vision; for a more perfect, clear, and explicit meaning of it; something he had learnt concerning the latter part of it, relating to the desolation of the temple, and the continuance of it, from what passed between the two saints or angels; but he was desirous of knowing more; which he either signified by making application to the angel that stood near him; or rather by secret ejaculations in prayer to God; and he, who is afterwards described as a man, though the eternal God that knows all things, knew the secret desires of his soul, and immediately took care they should be answered:

then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man: not really a man, but in form and appearance; not Gabriel, or any created angel in human form, in which angels sometimes appeared but the eternal Son of God, who was to be incarnate, and was often seen in the form of a man before his incarnation; in like manner he was now seen by Daniel, right

over against {k} whom he stood; this is the same with the speaking saint, or Paimoni the wonderful One, in **Da 8:13**. Jacchiades says, this is the holy blessed God; as it is indeed the Immanuel, God that was to be manifested in the flesh.

{k} ydgnl "ex adverso mei", Michaelis.

Daniel 8:16

Ver. 16. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai,.... Near to which Daniel was, **Da 8:2** and it seemed to him as if the appearance of the man was in the midst of the river, between the banks of it, from whence the voice came; or between the arms of it, it bending and winding about; or rather between Shushan and the river; or between the prophet and that: this voice was the voice of the person that appeared as a man in the preceding verse:

which called, and said, Gabriel; the voice was loud, audible, and commanding; even to an angel, one of great note, Gabriel, the man of God, the mighty one; and shows, that the person that made this appearance, and spoke in this authoritative way, was the Lord, and head of angels, even of all principalities and power, at whose beck and command they are:

make this man to understand the vision; the above vision of the ram, he goat, and little horn; give him a full explanation of it; tell him what the several figures mean, represented in it; that he may have a clear understanding of all things contained in it; the saints and people of God are sometimes instructed by angels, and particularly the prophets of old were; and which was more common in the times of the former dispensation than now; for God has not put in subjection to angels the world to come, or the Gospel dispensation, **Heb 2:5**.

Daniel 8:17

Ver. 17. So he came near where I stood,.... The angel immediately obeyed the divine Person in human form, and came near the prophet, in order to instruct him, and carry on a familiar conversation with him:

and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face; not being able to bear the glory that attended him; and especially when he considered him as the messenger of a divine Person sent to instruct him, and being conscious of his own frailty and weakness:

but he said unto me, understand, O son of man: give attention in order to understand the vision, which the angel, by a divine command, was about to give him the full meaning of; and which he could not so well attend unto in his present circumstance and posture; and therefore suggests he should shake off his fear, and stand on his feet, and listen to what he was about to say: he calls him "son of man", a title only given to him and Ezekiel; and so may be considered as a mark of honour and respect, as being one greatly beloved and honoured by the Lord; or to express his tender regard to him, and accommodating himself to him, considering he was a frail mortal man; or to put him in mind that he should so consider himself, though now among angels, and favoured with revelations of secrets, that so he might not be exalted with them above measure:

for at the time of the end shall be the vision; or rather, "for a time is the end of the vision" {l}; there is a set, fixed, and determined time, when the vision shall end, and have its full accomplishment; namely, when the 2300 days are expired.

{l} Nwzxh Uq tel "ad tempus, finis visionis", Munster, Montanus, Calvin.

Daniel 8:18

Ver. 18. Now as he was speaking with me,.... Addressing him in the above manner:

I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground; through fear he fell prostrate to the ground, and swooned away, which issued in a deep sleep; and so was unfit to attend to the explanation of the vision the angel was sent to give him; and which was not through indifference to it, or neglect of it; but through human weakness, his nature not being able to bear up under such circumstances, which struck him with such fear and dread:

but he touched me, and set me upright; he jogged him out of his sleep, and took him, and raised him up, and set him on his feet; or, "on his standing" {m}; which Ben Melech explains, as he "was standing at first"; and so in a better posture to attend to what was about to be revealed unto him.

{m} ydme le "super stare meum", Montanus, Gejerus; "super stationem meam", Michaelis.

Daniel 8:19

Ver. 19. And he said, behold, I will make thee know,.... Or, "make known unto thee" {n}; what he knew not, even things future: particularly

what shall be in the last end of the indignation; the indignation of God against the people of Israel, in the sore affliction and persecution of them by Antiochus, which he suffered to be; here the angel suggests that that should not remain always, but should have an end; and he would inform the prophet what should be at the close; or rather, as Noldius {o} renders it, "what shall be unto the last end of the indignation"; all that should come to pass from the beginning of the Persian monarchy, signified by the "ram", quite through the Grecian monarchy, designed by the "he goat", unto the end of the persecution by Antiochus; for, certain it is, the angel informed the prophet of more things than what concerned the last part and, closing scene of these sorrowful times; even of all the above said things, which intervened between the setting up of the Persian monarchy, and the sufferings of the Jews in the times of Antiochus; and so Aben Ezra interprets it, here

"is declared the wrath of God upon Israel in the days of wicked Greece, and in the days of Antiochus, until the Hasmonaeans cleansed the temple:"

for at the time appointed the end shall be; the end of that indignation or affliction, and so of this vision or prophecy: there was a time appointed by God for the fulfilment of the whole; and when that time was come all would be accomplished; the indignation would cease, and the persecution be at an end.

{n} Keydwm "ego notum faciam tibi", Piscator; "indicaturus tibi sum", Michaelis. {o} Concord. Ebr. Partic. p. 180. No. 809.

Daniel 8:20

Ver. 20. The ram which thou sawest having two horns,.... Here begins the particular explanation of the above vision, and of the first thing which the prophet saw in it, a ram with two horns: which two horns, he says,

are the kings of Media and Persia; Darius the first king was a Mede, and Cyrus, that succeeded him, or rather reigned with him, was a Persian: or rather the ram with two horns signifies the two kingdoms of the Medes and Persians united in one monarchy, of which the ram was an emblem; See Gill on "Da 8:3" for Darius and Cyrus were dead many years before the time of Alexander; and therefore could not personally be the two horns of the ram broken by him; nor is it to be understood of the kings of two different families, as the one of. Cyrus, and the other of Darius Hystaspes, in whose successors the Persian monarchy continued till destroyed by Alexander, as Theodoret.

Daniel 8:21

Ver. 21. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia,.... Including all the kings of it, from Alexander to the end of the Grecian monarchy; or rather the kingdom of Greece, which began in him, and continued until it was destroyed by the Romans: this was signified by the rough or hairy goat, especially when Alexander was at the head of it, for his strength and prowess, his swiftness in his marches over rocks and mountains, his majesty and grandeur, and also his lust and uncleanness;
See Gill on "Da 8:5":

and the great host that is between his eyes is the first king; this is Alexander, who, though he was not the first king of Macedon, his father Philip, and others, were kings before him; yet was the first king of the Grecian monarchy, which took place on the Persian monarchy being destroyed by him.

Daniel 8:22

Ver. 22. Now that being broken,.... That is, the great horn Alexander, the first king of the Grecian monarchy; whose death, either by drunkenness, or by poison, is here expressed by being "broken". The sense is, he being dead, or upon his death, whereas four stood up for it; four horns rose up in the room and stead of the great one broken; see **Da 8:8** these signified that

four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation; which were the kingdoms of Egypt, Asia, Macedonia, and Syria, into which the Grecian monarchy was divided after the death of Alexander; and the first kings of them were all of the Grecian or Macedonian nation, and not Egyptians, Armenians, Syrians, &c.:

but not in his power; they did not rise and stand up in the power and strength, in the grandeur and magnificence, of Alexander; they were not equal, but greatly inferior to him, though they were notable horns, or famous kingdoms, as in **Da 8:8**. Saadiah interprets it, not of his seed or offspring; these were not his sons that were the heads of these kingdoms; but his captains or generals.

Daniel 8:23

Ver. 23. And in the latter time of their kingdom,.... Toward the close of the kingdom of the four kings that divided Alexander's kingdom; for though they were four distinct kings, and had four separate kingdoms, yet these all belonged to one kingdom or monarchy, the Grecian empire; and when that was decreasing, and coming into the hands of the Romans, there rose up, stood, and flourished awhile, King Antiochus, afterwards described, who began to reign in the hundred and thirty seventh year of the Seleucidae,

"And there came out of them a wicked root Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king, who had been an hostage at Rome, and he reigned in the hundred and thirty and seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks." (1 Maccabees 1:10)

and 166 B.C., and the same year that he set up the abomination of desolation in the temple at Jerusalem, as Mr. Mede {p} has observed, Aemilius the Roman consul conquered Perseus king of Macedon, whereby all Greece came into the hands of the Romans; so that this king may be truly said to arise and stand in the latter part of the Grecian empire, when that was declining, and the Roman empire was taking place:

when the transgressors are come to the full; many among the Jews, who apostatized from their religion, turned Heathens, even some of the priests, when their number was completed, and they had filled up the measure of their iniquities; in the Apocrypha:

"In those days went there out of Israel wicked men, who persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us: for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow. &c." (1 Maccabees 1:11)

a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up; meaning Antiochus; as is generally agreed, both by Jewish and Christian interpreters, and to whom these characters agree: he was "hard of face" {q}, as it may be rendered; an impudent brasen faced man, who had no shame nor fear in him; regarded neither God nor man; committed the most atrocious crimes in the most public manner; and particularly was daring and impudent in his blasphemy against God and the true religion; and it may also signify that he was cruel, barbarous, and inhuman, especially to the Jews, as his persecution of them abundantly proves: and his "understanding dark sentences", or "riddles" {r}, which he could both propose and answer, shows him to be sagacious and cunning, well versed in wicked craft and policy; he had the art of inveigling and deceiving men; it was by deceit and cunning he got the kingdom from his nephew; and, by the wicked art of persuasion he was master of, he seduced many of the Jews to relinquish their religion, and embrace Heathenism; and so well skilled he was in wicked politics, that he could cover his own designs, and penetrate into the secrets of others; according to Jacchiades, he was skilful in the art of magic and astrology. This is the little horn that was to rise out of one of the four horns or kingdoms; as Antiochus did from that of Seleucus, and stood and reigned more than twelve years.

{p} Works, B. 3. c. 11. p. 654. {q} Mynp ze "durus facie", Calvin, Piscator; "validus facie", Michaelis. {r} twdyx "aenigmata", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Calvin, Piscator, Polanus.

Daniel 8:24

Ver. 24. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power,.... He should possess a large kingdom, and that should be increased by conquests:

but not in his power {s}, the power of Alexander; he should not arrive to that greatness he did, as in Da 8:22 so Jacchiades: or, "in his own power" {t}; for it was not so much by his own courage and valour, by any heroic actions of

Antiochus, he became so great, as by craft and deceit: through sedition he procured the death of his father and eider brother; and by fraud got the kingdom from his nephew; and through the perfidy of Menelaus and Jason, the high priests of the Jews, and other apostates, he obtained what dominion he had over the Jews; and it was by the assistance of Eumenes king of Pergamos, and his brother Attalus, that he kept the kingdom he had usurped, who stood by him, in order to check the growing power of the Romans; and more especially it was by a power given him from above, or by the permission and providence of God, who suffered him to be so great, and to prevail particularly over the Jews; because of their sins, as Aben Ezra and Saadiah observe, to chastise them for them: so his antitype, antichrist, became great and powerful, through craft and policy, and by the help of the ten kings that gave their kingdoms to him:

and he shall destroy wonderfully; or beyond all credit, countries, cities, towns, and their inhabitants; he slew fourscore thousand Jews in three days' time, bound forty thousand, and sold as many,

"And there were destroyed within the space of three whole days fourscore thousand, whereof forty thousand were slain in the conflict; and no fewer sold than slain." (2 Maccabees 5:14)

or, "he shall destroy wonderful things" {u}; the temple, and the wonderful things of worth and value in it, so Saadiah and Jacchiades; he took away the vessels of the temple, the golden lamps, the ark, and table of gold, &c.:

and shall prosper and practise; for a while do what he pleased, none being able to oppose and hinder him; see **Da 8:12**

and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people; by the "mighty" may be meant the Egyptians, Parthians, and other nations he made war with; and by the "holy people" the Jews, who were sanctified and separated from other people by the Lord, to be a peculiar people; among whom were his holy temple, his holy priests, his holy word, ordinances, and worship; multitudes of these he destroyed, as before observed. Jacchiades interprets this of the sons of Aaron, the holy priests of the Lord, whom he slew.

{s} wxwkb "robore ipsius", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {t} "In fortitudine sua", Pagninus, Montanus; "per virtutem suam", Munster. {u} twalpn "mirabilia", Montanus, Polanus.

Daniel 8:25

Ver. 25. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand,.... His schemes were laid in such deep policy, and he managed so artfully and craftily in the execution of them, that he commonly succeeded; as in getting the kingdom of Syria from his nephew; and, under a pretence of peace and friendship, and to defend Philometer king of Egypt, a minor, and by large promises to the nobles of the land, made himself master of it; and by deceitful methods he prevailed in Judea; see Da 11:21:

and he shall magnify himself in his heart; swell with pride, on account of success, through his policy, craft, and cunning, and think himself above all mortals, and equal to God himself; yea, as his antitype antichrist, exalt himself above all that is called God; fancy that he could command the seas, weigh the mountains in scales, and reach heaven itself, in the Apocrypha:

"And thus he that a little afore thought he might command the waves of the sea, (so proud was he beyond the condition of man) and weigh the high mountains in a balance, was now cast on the ground, and carried in an horselitter, shewing forth unto all the manifest power of God." (2 Maccabees 9:8)

and by peace shall destroy many; under a pretence of peace enter into countries and destroy the inhabitants of them, as in Egypt and Judea; or, by leagues and treaties of peace, outwitting those he made peace with; so some political princes do themselves more service, and their enemies more hurt, by treaties than by battles: or "in peace" {w}; when at peace with them, or while they are in peace and tranquillity; coming upon them unexpectedly at an unawares, when they did not so much as dream of war:

he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; not the high priest, as Grotius; nor Michael, as Aben Ezra; but God himself, as Saadiah and Jacchiades; who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, the only Pontentate, to whom all the princes above and below are subject; him Antiochus stood up against, when he profaned his temple at Jerusalem, forbid his worship, persecuted and destroyed his people, and set up the image of Jupiter in his house:

but he shall be broken without hand; alluding to his being a horn; it is expressive of his death, and the manner of it; that he should not die by the hand of an enemy in battle, nor be assassinated by the hand of a ruffian, but be cut off by the immediate hand of God. Jacchiades says, that by the providence of God he fell ill of a bad disease, and at the cry of one of his elephants his chariot was overturned, and he fell on the ground, and his bones were broken. Of his death, and the manner of it, in the Apocrypha:

"Now when the king heard these words, he was astonished and sore moved: whereupon he laid him down upon his bed, and fell sick for grief, because it had not befallen him as he looked for." (1 Maccabees 6:8)

"But the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, smote him with an incurable and invisible plague: or as soon as he had spoken these words, a pain of the bowels that was remediless came upon him, and sore torments of the inner parts;" (2 Maccabees 9:5)

"So that the worms rose up out of the body of this wicked man, and whiles he lived in sorrow and pain, his flesh fell away, and the filthiness of his smell was noisome to all his army." (2 Maccabees 9:9)

which was much like that of Herod's, Ac 12:23, being stricken with a violent disorder in his bowels: his body covered with worms; his flesh flaked off, and emitted such a stench, as was intolerable to his army. Aben Ezra says, he fell from the roof of a house, and was broken, and died.

{w} hwlvb "in pace", Calvin, Vatablus; "in tranquillitate", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Daniel 8:26

Ver. 26. And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true,.... That is, of the 2300 evenings and mornings, or natural days; unto which time the daily sacrifice was to cease, and the sanctuary and host trodden under foot; and then the sanctuary would be cleansed. This account is "true", and not only to be believed, but is clear and plain, and to be literally understood of so many days, of such a term of time exactly, having no obscurity in it:

wherefore shut thou up the vision; the whole vision of the ram and he goat, and the little horn: the meaning is, that he should keep it to himself, and conceal it from men; not from his own people, for whose sake it was given, but from the Chaldeans, whose destruction was near; and who would be succeeded by the Persians, who might be disgusted with this prophecy, should they see it, it foretelling the destruction of their empire: or this order was given to suggest to Daniel that the fulfilment of it would be deferred some time, during which it would not be so easy to be understood as when it was near accomplishing and accomplished; and then prophecy and facts might be compared together:

for it shall be for many days; it were three hundred years, or more, from the reign of Belshazzar to the death of Antiochus, in which this vision ends.

Daniel 8:27

Ver. 27. And I Daniel fainted and was sick certain days,.... Or, "then I Daniel fainted" {x}; after he had seen the vision, and had thought upon it, and considered the afflictions that were to come upon the people of God, and the condition the temple, and the worship of it, would be in; these so affected his mind, that he not only fainted away, and was struck with a kind of stupor and amazement, but had a fit of illness upon him, which continued some days; such a nearness and sympathy there are between the soul and body:

afterwards I rose up; from the bed in which he had laid some days ill:

and did the king's business; by which it appears, that, upon the death of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel was as yet continued in the service of the king of Babylon, though perhaps not in the same posts as before, and was not a favourite at court, and so much known as he had been; and also that he was not in reality at Shushan, when he had this vision, but at Babylon:

and I was astonished at the vision; at the things contained in it, which were of so much importance, respecting the kingdoms of the earth, especially the Persian and Grecian empires, and the state of his own people the Jews:

but none understood it: to whom he showed it; none but himself, who was made to understand it by the angel, **Da 8:16**.

{x} So Noldius, Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 309.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Daniel 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL 9

This chapter contains a prayer of Daniel, and the answer to it. The time, occasion, and manner of his prayer, or circumstances of it, are observed, **Da 9:1**, the parts of it, an address unto God, under various suitable epithets and characters, **Da 9:4** confession of sin, of his own, of the inhabitants of the land, kings, princes, and people, which are largely dwelt upon and exaggerated, **Da 9:5** and petitions for mercy, **Da 9:16**, then the answer follows; the time when it was ordered and given, and the person by whom it was sent, are expressed, **Da 9:20** who delivered to him the vision of the seventy weeks to be considered by him; in which both the work of the Messiah, and the time of his coming, are clearly pointed out, **Da 9:24**.

Ver. 1. In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes,.... This is the same with Darius the Median, that took the kingdom after the death of Belshazzar; so called, to distinguish him from Darius the Persian; and yet Porphyry has the gall to assert that this was Darius the Persian, under whom the temple was built, that Daniel might appear to live later than he did: Ahasuerus, whose son he was, is not he that was the husband of Esther, and was many years later than this; but the same with Astyages king of the Medes, and who is called Ahasuerus, in the Apocrypha:

"But before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineve, which was taken by Nabuchodonosor and Assuerus: and before his death he rejoiced over Nineve." (Tobit 14:15)

the father of Cyaxares, the same with this Darius, who was uncle to Cyrus that conquered Babylon, and made him king of it, and of the whole empire; for this was not the first year of his reign over Media, where he had reigned many years before, but over Chaldea, as follows:

which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; by Cyrus his nephew; who having taken Babylon, and settled his affairs, undertook a journey to Persia, and made Media in his way; where he met with his uncle Cyaxares, the same with this Darius, and delivered the kingdom of Babylon to him, and married his daughter, with whom he had for her dowry the kingdom of Media, as Xenophon {y} relates. Now it was in the first year of his reign over the

Chaldeans that Daniel had the following vision of the seventy weeks; which, according to Bishop Usher {z} and Mr. Whiston {a}, was in the year of the world 3467 A.M. and 537 B.C. Dean Prideaux {b} places it in the year 538; and Mr. Bedford {c} in the year 536.

{y} Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 36. {z} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3467. {a} Chronological Tables, cent. 10. {b} Connexion, &c. part 1. p. 125, 128. {c} Scripture Chronology, p. 711.

Daniel 9:2

Ver. 2. In the first year of his reign,.... Which was also the first of Cyrus, who was partner with him in the kingdom; in which year ended the seventy years' captivity of the Jews, and proclamation was made to have their liberty to go up to Jerusalem, and build the temple, **Ezr 1:1**, reckoning from the third, or the beginning of the fourth, of Jehoiakim king of Judah, when the desolation of the land began, and Daniel himself was carried captive; and which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, during whose reign, and that of his son, and son's son, the Jews were to be detained captives, **Da 1:1**.

I Daniel understood by books; the sacred Scriptures, which, though a prophet, he was not above reading; and, though a prime minister of state, yet found time to look into these divine oracles; which he read, studied, thoroughly considered, and well weighed in his mind; whereby he came to have knowledge of

the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem; Daniel might possibly have heard this prophecy of Jeremiah from his own mouth, before he went to Babylon; since the first intimation of it was in the first year of Jehoiakim, Jer 27:1, and after this the prophecy might be sent to Babylon for the use of the captive Jews there; and indeed a copy of all his prophecies was no doubt brought thither at the last captivity of the people; so that it is easy to account for it how Daniel came by it; and it is plain it was now before him; for he uses the very word, twbrx, "desolations", which Jeremiah does, Jer 25:9, the prophecy of the seventy years' captivity, and of deliverance from it at the expiration of that term, stands in Jer 25:12, which Daniel carefully read over, thoroughly considered, and as he full well knew what was the epoch of them, or when they begun, he found that they were just ready to expire; and this set him to the work of prayer, as in the following verses. From hence it is manifest that the law was not burnt, nor the Scriptures lost, in the Babylonish captivity; so that none knew what were or would be done by the Lord, as is falsely asserted in the Apocrypha:

"For thy law is burnt, therefore no man knoweth the things that are done of thee, or the work that shall begin. &c." (2 Esdras 14:21)

Daniel 9:3

Ver. 3. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications,.... He set apart some time on purpose for this service, distinct from his usual stated times of prayer, as well as from his civil business and employment; and he not only set his face toward Jerusalem, as he used to do, **Da 6:10**, the more to affect his mind with the desolations the city and temple lay in; but towards the Lord God, the sovereign Lord of all, who does according to his will in heaven and in earth, the Governor of the universe, the one true God, Father, Son, and Spirit: and this denotes the intenseness of his spirit in prayer; the fixedness of his heart; the ardour of his mind; the fervency of his soul; his holy confidence in God; the freedom and boldness he used in prayer, and his constancy and continuance in it; which is a principal means, and a proper manner of seeking God. The Septuagint version, agreeably to the Hebrew text {d}, renders it, "to seek prayer and supplications"; such as were suitable and pertinent to the present case; most beneficial and interesting to him and his people, and most acceptable to the Lord:

with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes; as was usual on extraordinary occasions, in times of public mourning; and this he did, to show his sense of the divine Being, and of his own unworthiness to ask or receive anything of him; his great humiliation for the sins of the people; and to distinguish this prayer of his from ordinary ones, and to affect his own heart in it, with the sad condition his nation, city, and temple were in; and therefore abstained from food for a time, put sackcloth on his loins, and ashes on his head, or sat in them.

{d} Mynwnxtw hlpt vqbl tou ekzhthsai proseuchn kai dehseiv, Sept; "ad quaerendum orationem et deprecationes", Montanus; "ad quaerendam orationem et supplicationem", Cocceius.

Daniel 9:4

Ver. 4. And I prayed unto the Lord my God,.... Not to idols, nor to angels or saints departed; but to the Lord God of heaven and earth, who is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, &c.: a God hearing and answering prayer; and to whom he directed his prayer, not only as the God of nature and providence, but as his own covenant God and Father; thereby encouraging his faith in him, and using his interest with him: and made my confession; of his own sins, and of the sins of his people; of the favours bestowed on him and them; of his justice in afflicting them, and his mercy in appointing a time for their deliverance; of his own faith in him, love to him, and submission to his will:

and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God; great in his being and perfections, and in all his works of nature, providence, and grace; "and dreadful" in his threatenings and judgments, in his wrath and vengeance: or, to be "feared" {e}; and reverenced by all men, especially by his saints; and particularly when they draw near unto him, as Daniel now did; and that because of his greatness and goodness: this Daniel observes to raise in his mind a proper awe and reverence of God, whose presence he was now approaching:

keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; faithful to his word of promise; large and liberal in the distribution of his grace and mercy to such that love him sincerely and heartily; and, as an evidence of it, observe his precepts from a principle of love, and with a view to his glory: respect seems to be had to Ex 20:6, this is observed, by the prophet, to encourage his own faith, and that of others, as to the fulfilment of the promise of their deliverance from captivity at the end of the seventy years; and to raise, in his mind and theirs, love to God, who was thus merciful; and to show the obligations they lay under, in gratitude, to keep his commandments.

{e} arwnh "reverendus", Vatablus; "summe reverende", Junius & Tremellius; "metuende", Cocceius.

Daniel 9:5

Ver. 5. We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled,.... Some think there is a gradation in these words; that they had committed some sins through error and ignorance; others through infirmity and obliquity, or in the perverseness of their spirits, and the crookedness of their ways; and others wilfully and in malice, in the wickedness of their hearts; and others were open acts of hostility against God, casting off his yoke, and refusing obedience to him, and obstinately persisting therein. Jacchiades refers them to sins of actions, words, and thoughts, which they proudly and presumptuously committed. This heap of phrases seems to be used to take in all kind of sin committed by them, and rather to exaggerate than to extenuate them, and to confess them with all their aggravated circumstances; and Daniel puts in himself among the body of the people, as being a member of it, and as well knowing he was not without sin; and therefore willingly took his part in the blame of it, in confession of it, and confusion for it:

even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments; both of a moral and positive nature, which were enjoined by the law of Moses, as the rule of their conduct; but from this they swerved.

Daniel 9:6

Ver. 6. Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets,.... To their explanations of the laws and judgments of God; to their admonitions, reproofs, and counsels; these they did not attentively listen to, nor give credit to them, nor yield obedience to them; but despised and rejected them, though they were the true prophets and servants of the Lord; such as Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others:

which spake in thy name; they came by the authority of God, being sent by him; they delivered their message in his name, being his ambassadors; and which as it was an honour done to this people to have such men sent unto them, so it was an aggravation of their sin that they showed no respect to them; since their words were not their own, but the Lord's, which they spoke to all sorts of persons:

to our kings; one after another, as to Ahaz, Manasseh, Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah; kings of the house of David, and over the land of Judah:

our princes; princes of the blood, nobles, and courtiers:

and our fathers; meaning not only their immediate ancestors, but their subordinate rulers, civil magistrates, judges or elders of the people, as Jacchiades interprets it:

and to all the people of the land: of Judea; the common people, as distinguished from persons of rank and figure before expressed. These several persons are named, partly to observe how faithful the prophets were in delivering their message to all sorts of persons, high and low, not fearing the faces of any; and partly to show that none could plead ignorance, or excuse themselves with that, since all had had sufficient warning and instruction: as also to observe, that the sin of rejecting the true prophets of the Lord was universal among them, all were guilty of it.

Daniel 9:7

Ver. 7. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee,.... It is essential to him, it is his nature, and appears in all his works; he is perfectly pure, holy, and righteous; he is just, and without iniquity; and there is no unrighteousness in him, nor any to be charged upon him, on account of anything done by him: punitive justice belongs to him; nor is he to be complained of because of his judgments, which are righteous altogether; nor had the prophet, or any of his countrymen, just reason to complain of the evils brought on them; the desolations of their land, city, and temple, and their captivity in a strange land; by all which no injustice was done, nor could they charge the Lord with any: and with him also is righteousness wrought out by his Son, to justify sinners that believe in him; he has accepted of it, and imputes it without works.

But unto us confusion of face, as at this day; both on account of their sins, which stared them in the face, loaded their consciences with guilt, and filled them with shame; and on account of their punishment, the miserable condition in which their country was and they themselves were at that day; which declared to all the world what sinners they had been, and what sins they had committed, which had brought this ruin upon them, and them into such sad circumstances:

to the men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; or, "man of Judah" {f}; to every man of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; who once dwelt in that land flowing with milk and honey, and now in a strange land for their sins; and to every inhabitant of that renowned city of jerusalem, the metropolis of the nation, the seat, of the kings of Judah; yea, the city of the great King, where the temple stood, and divine worship was performed, but now lay in ruins, through the iniquity of its inhabitants, and therefore had just reason to be ashamed:

and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are afar off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of the trespass that they have trespassed against thee; shame and confusion of face also belonged to the ten tribes of Israel; to such of them as were mixed with the Jews in Babylon, or were in those parts of Assyria that lay nearest to it; and to those that were at a greater distance, in Media, Iberia, Colchis, and other places; yea, in all kingdoms and countries where they were dispersed for their trespass against the Lord; particularly in worshipping the calves at Dan and Bethel, and other acts of idolatry and impiety.

{f} hdwhy vyal "vire Judae", Cocceius.

Daniel 9:8

Ver. 8. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face,.... Which is repeated, to show how much the mind of the prophet was affected with it, and to fix a sense of it in the minds of others; as well as to suggest that he wanted words fully to express that shame that everyone ought to take to themselves; and also in order to introduce what follows, and that to observe that all ranks and degrees of men were concerned in it:

to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee; these had each of them sinned against the Lord, by not hearkening to his prophets, who reproved them for their sins, and warned them of their danger, **Da 9:6** and therefore had reason to be ashamed of them before him; as well as to observe the low estate in which the royal family, princes, elders, and people in Babylon, were, being exposed to shame and reproach before all the world.

Daniel 9:9

Ver. 9. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses,.... Mercy is his nature, and what he delights in; it is abundant, and he is plenteous in it the fountain of mercy is with him, and numerous are the streams which flow from it, called "the multitude of his tender mercies"; all temporal favours spring from hence, and so do all spiritual blessings, the sure mercies of David; and particularly the forgiveness of sin, which is the Lord's prerogative, and is according to the tender mercies of our God, and the riches of his grace; and is of all sins, and of all sorts of sinners; he doth abundantly pardon all that apply to him for it, and forgives all trespasses; see Ps 130:4:

though we have rebelled against him: there is mercy with the Lord, and forgiveness with him, even for rebellious ones; which is an exaggeration and illustration of his pardoning grace and mercy: or, "for we have sinned against him" {g}; so that it is a plain case that he is merciful and has forgiven our iniquities, since he has spared us, and not destroyed us, and now is about to put an end to our captivity, according to his promise; and if he had not mercy on us, and did not forgive our sins, we must perish in them, and there would be no hope of salvation for us.

{g} wndrm yk "quia rebellavimus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Polanus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Daniel 9:10

Ver. 10. Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God,.... Speaking in the law, and by his prophets; for what was spoken there, and by them, should have been considered, not as the word of man, but as the word of God, and should have been attended to and obeyed; for despising that and them was interpreted as despising the Lord, and refusing to hearken to him, and obey his voice; which was a sin highly provoking to him, and resented by him:

to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets; by Moses and others; for it seems to include the system of laws which were delivered by Moses, and were many; and the doctrines of the prophets, which were explications and enforcements of them: and these the Lord set before them by both, as a rule to walk by, and a path to walk in; and not to do this was very sinful in them, and greatly displeasing to him.

Daniel 9:11

Ver. 11. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law,.... Even God's professing people, on whom he had bestowed distinguishing favours and blessings, and gave them such a law as no other people had, and yet they transgressed it; not a few, or the greatest part only, but the whole body of them: and indeed there is no man that lives without sin, or the transgression of the law, in thought, word, or deeds; no, not a just man; but these transgressed the law in a very heinous manner, both the first as well as the second table of it, committing idolatry, and all manner of impiety, in which they continued:

even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; by departing from the law, and the precepts of it; from God and his worship; from the temple of God, and the service of it; and from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin: it seems to have some respect to the separation of the ten tribes under Jeroboam, who set up the calves at Dan and Bethel, that the people might not obey the voice of the Lord, in going to worship at the solemn feasts in Jerusalem:

therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God: that is, the just punishment of their sins was inflicted on them; or the curse the law threatened the transgressors of it with was come upon them in its large extent, and overflowed them like a flood; which God swore he would bring upon them, if they transgressed his law; or which they by an oath imprecated and pronounced upon themselves, should they not hearken to it, but transgress and disobey it:

because we have sinned against him; and therefore this curse was not a causeless one; sin, the transgression of the law, was the cause of it.

Daniel 9:12

Ver. 12. And he hath confirmed his words which he spake against us,.... That is, he hath made good his threatenings of wrath and vengeance, in case of disobedience to his law:

and against our judges that judged us; kings, and inferior governors, that ruled over them, who perverted justice, and did not execute righteous judgment; and against them the Lord performed what he threatened:

by bringing upon us a great evil; the desolation of the whole land, the destruction of Jerusalem; the death of many by the sword, famine, and pestilence, and the captivity of the rest; all which was a great punishment considered in itself, but, when compared with their offences, was less than they deserved:

for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem; its walls broken down, its houses burnt with fire, even the palaces of the king and nobles, and the temple of the Lord itself; and all its inhabitants destroyed, dispersed, or carried captive; see **La 1:12**.

Daniel 9:13

Ver. 13. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us,.... As it is there threatened it should, and as it is there foretold it would come upon them, so it has; even the selfsame things, in the same manner, and with the same circumstances, as there foretold; which is a proof of the omniscience, omnipotence, and faithfulness of God, and an evidence of the truth of divine revelation; see
Le 26:1:

yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God; during the seventy years captivity, they might have prayed, and doubtless did, in a lifeless, formal manner; but not sincerely and heartily, in faith and with fervency, under a sense of sin, with confession of it, and true repentance for it, and so as to forsake it, as follows:

that we might turn from our iniquities; for since they did not pray against sin, and entreat the Lord to enable them to turn from it, and forsake it, but continued in a course of disobedience, their prayer was not reckoned prayer:

and understand thy truth; either the truth and faithfulness of God, in fulfilling both his promises and his threatenings; or his law, which is truth, as Jacchiades interprets it; for, had they prayed aright, they would have had an understanding given them of divine truths, both with respect to doctrine and practice; of which they were ignorant, as prayerless persons usually are.

Daniel 9:14

Ver. 14. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us,.... The evil of punishment; he watched the fit and proper time to bring it upon them; indeed, he watches over the evil of sin, to bring upon men the evil of chastisement or punishment, Job 14:16, but the latter is here meant; see Jer 31:28, the word used has the signification of hastening; and so Jarchi and Saadiah explain it, "he hath hastened" {h}: the almond tree, as the latter observes, has its name from hence, because it prevents other trees, and is quicker in putting out its blossom than they, **Jer 1:11** and so this may denote the purity of the Lord; his displicency at sin; his strict justice in punishing it; and his diligence and activity in executing judgment for it, which slumbers not, as some imagine:

for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth; the prophet is all along careful to clear God from any imputation of injustice in any of his works, even in his strange work, punitive justice; though he watches over the evil to bring it, yet he is righteous in so doing; no charge of unrighteousness is to be exhibited against him on this account:

for we obeyed not his voice; neither in his word, nor in his providences; neither by his prophets, nor by his judgments; and being guilty of the evil of fault, it was but just they should bear the evil of punishment.

{h} dwqvy "festinavit", Paguinus, Vatablus.

Daniel 9:15

Ver. 15. And now, O Lord our God,.... The Lord of the whole earth in general, the sovereign Ruler of the universe, and the God of Israel in a special and peculiar manner; which is used to encourage faith in prayer, and carries in it a tacit argument or plea with God to be heard, in what he was about to say in behalf of Israel; and to which purpose also is the following description of God, from an ancient benefit he had granted to that people:

that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand; which though it may be considered as an aggravation of their sin, that after this they should behave so wickedly, as to be carried captive for their sins, out of the land they were brought into; yet it seems to be mentioned to put the Lord in mind of his former favours to them, and of his promise that he would bring them out of Babylon, as he had brought them out of Egypt, Jer 16:14:

and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; by the many wonders wrought in Egypt, and at the Red sea, when Israel was brought from thence; as particularly by slaying the firstborn of Egypt, dividing the waters of the sea, and destroying the Egyptians in it, as Saadiah observes; the memory and fame of which continued to that day, and will continue throughout all ages: and the prophet suggests, that he would also get a name or renown in the world, and among his people, should he deliver them from their present captivity; but for this they had nothing to plead but his promise and mercy; for, as for them, they were obliged to confess themselves sinners, and unworthy of such a favour:

we have sinned, we have done wickedly; the prophet knows not how to leave off confessing sin; there had been so much committed, and there was so much need of confessing it.

Daniel 9:16

Ver. 16. O Lord, according to all thy righteousness,.... Or "righteousnesses" {i}; which he had been used to exercise in the world, in all ages of it; either punishing wicked men according to their deserts, to which respect may be had here; since turning away wrath from his people would issue in turning it upon their enemies, which would be in righteous judgment or in fulfilling his promises; and so it signifies his faithfulness, of which there had been so many instances in times past, and gave encouragement to believe the performance of those not yet accomplished: or this may be understood of his goodness, and kindness, which is sometimes meant by his righteousness see Ps 31:1 and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "in all thy mercy"; and Jacchiades paraphrases the words thus,

"O Lord, according to all the multitude of thy righteousness, and of thy kindness, which thou dost in the world:"

I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem; the city of the great King, which he chose for his residence, in which the temple, was, and where he was worshipped; and the prophet earnestly entreats, that the marks of divine displeasure, which were upon it, might be removed; that the punishments or judgments inflicted, as the effects of the anger and wrath of God, might cease, and the city be rebuilt, and restored to its former glory:

thy holy mountain; the temple, devoted to the worship and service of God; or Mount Moriah, on which it stood:

because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us; their neighbours, the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Tyrians, and Philistines; who rejoiced at their destruction, and jeered at them and their religion, and scoffingly said, where were their temple of which they boasted, and their God in whom they trusted? the cause of all this is owned to be their own sins, and the sins of their ancestors, which they their posterity continued in; and therefore do not lay the fault wholly upon them, but take the blame to themselves.

{i} Kytwqdu "justitias tuas", Vatablus, Calvin, Gejerus, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Daniel 9:17

Ver. 17. Now therefore, O our God,.... This being our miserable case, and the seventy years' captivity being at an end, and thou still our covenant God, whom we profess and worship:

hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications; which he had put up in an humble manner, consisting of various petitions for grace and mercy before expressed:

and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate; the temple; its walls demolished, its altars thrown down, and the whole in ruins; a melancholy scene! the Lord, suffering these things, seemed to frown upon it, and upon his people, that used to serve him there; wherefore it is entreated that he would smile upon it again, and upon them, and cause it to be rebuilt, and his worship restored in it: and this is asked

for the Lord's sake: that is, for Christ's sake, who is Lord of all, especially of his chosen people, by creation, redemption, and marriage, as well as by their own consent and profession; and for whose sake, and in whose name, all requests are to be made to God, he being the only Mediator between God and man; and for the sake of whose blood, righteousness, and mediation, all the blessings of goodness are given unto men; and who also was Lord and proprietor of the temple, and was to come into it, as well as was the antitype of it.

Daniel 9:18

Ver. 18. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear,.... The petitions now put up, for Christ's sake:

open thine eyes, and behold our desolations; the city and temple a heap of rubbish, and the whole land forsaken of its inhabitants, and lying waste and uncultivated, or, however, at most possessed by enemies; and things being thus, it seemed as if the Lord shut his eyes to them, and therefore is desired to open them, and look with pity and compassion on the case of his people, and deliver them out of all their troubles:

and the city which is called by thy name; or, "on which thy name is called" {k}; as Jerusalem was, being called the city of our God, the city of the great King, Ps 48:1 and in which also his name was called upon, both by the inhabitants of it in their private houses, and by the priests and Levites, and others, in the temple, which stood in it:

for we do not present our supplications before thee; or, "cause them to fall before thee" {l}; expressing the humble and lowly manner in which they presented their petitions to God, and respecting the gesture they used in prayer, bowing themselves to the ground, and falling prostrate upon it; and as was the custom of the eastern people when they supplicated their princes: and this Daniel, in the name of his people, did; not, says he,

for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies; not pleading their good works and righteous actions, and the merits of them, which had none in them, and were no other than as filthy rags, and could not recommend them to God, or be used as a plea and argument to obtain any good thing from him; but throwing themselves upon the abundant grace and mercy of God in Christ, mercy they pleaded, and not merit; and made mention of the righteousness of Christ, and not their own; as all good men, who are truly sensible of themselves, and of the grace of God, will do.

{k} hyle Kmv arqn rva "super quam invocatum est nomen tuum", Vatablus, Pagninus, Calvin; "super qua nomen tuum nuncupatum est", Cocceius. {l} Mylypm "nos cadere facientes", Montanus; "nos cadere facimus", Gejerus, Michaelis.

Daniel 9:19

Ver. 19. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive,.... That is, hear the prayers and supplications that have been presented, and forgive the sins that have been confessed; show both, by removing present calamities, and restoring to former prosperity and privileges:

O Lord, hearken, and do; not only listen to what has been said, and give an answer by speaking, but work salvation and deliverance:

defer not, for thine own sake, O my God; these words seem to be directed to Christ the Son of God, and who is the true God, and the God of his people; who is three times in this verse before called Adonai, for whose sake prayer and supplication were made, **Da 9:17** and here again, for his own sake, he is entreated not to "defer" the fulfilment of the promise of delivering the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, the seventy years being now up, or just expiring; and also that he would not defer his own coming for the redemption of his people, which no doubt Daniel had in his mind, and was wishing and waiting for:

for thy city and thy people are called by thy name; Jerusalem, the city of the great King, Christ, and a type of his church and people, who are also called by his name, and call upon him.

Daniel 9:20

Ver. 20. And while I was speaking and praying,.... Speaking to God in prayer; for it seems his prayer was vocal, and not mental only:

and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel; Daniel, though so holy and good a man, was not without sin, and thought it his duty to confess it before the Lord; and which he did in the first place, and then the sin of his people; which is the way to succeed with the Lord for the application of pardoning grace, and the enjoyment of other mercies and blessings:

and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; for the temple, and the service of God in it; which was the first and principal thing that lay upon the heart of the prophet, and he was most importunate and solicitous for.

Daniel 9:21

Ver. 21. Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer,.... Which is repeated, that it might be observed, that while he was in prayer, before he had finished it, or got off of his knees, an answer was sent him; see
Isa 65:24:

even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning; either at the beginning of Belshazzar's reign, in the third year of it, **Da 8:1**, or rather "before", as the Syriac version renders it; before this time, in the vision of the ram and he goat, **Da 8:16**, when he saw this angel Gabriel that appeared in a human form, and he knew this to be his name, by a man's voice calling him by it; and now he knew him to be the same angel by his appearance and voice; at the sight of whom he does not seem to be terrified, as before, having had free conversation with him, and being made acquainted by him with many secrets; and no doubt inwardly rejoiced to see him again, as hoping and believing he had something to communicate to him:

being caused to fly swiftly; having an order from the Lord, and being strengthened by him to make quick dispatch to Daniel, which is signified by flying swiftly; and for which reason angels are represented as having wings, to denote their celerity and quick dispatch of business: or "flying with weariness" {m}, as some render it; he made such haste as to be weary with it; as he appeared in the form of a man, he looked like one out of breath, and panting for it, occasioned by his swift flight; and which expresses the haste he made, according to his orders, and his eagerness to bring to Daniel the welcome tidings of the coming of the Messiah, and the time of it, which angels desired to look into:

touched me about the time of the evening oblation; the time of offering the evening sacrifice; which, though not now offered, the altar being destroyed, and the Lord's people in a foreign land; yet the time was observed by them, and which was the time of prayer, being about the ninth hour of the day, or three o'clock in the afternoon, see **Ac 3:1**, as the time of the morning sacrifice was another hour of prayer; at which time very likely Daniel began, and continued till now, since he was fasting, **Da 9:3** and this was the time when Christ, the antitype of the daily sacrifice, was offered up; of the time of whose coming, sufferings, and death, the angel here brings an account: and, in order to excite the attention of Daniel to it, "touched him"; for he, being on his knees, and intent in prayer, might not at first observe him; and therefore gives him a gentle touch, to let him know he was present, and had something to say to him; and to suggest to him to break off his prayer, to which he had brought an answer, as well as to lift him up, and encourage familiarity with him.

{m} Peyb Pem "volans in lassitudine", Montanus; "cum lassitudine, [vel] fatigatione", so some in Vatablus; "cum, lassitudine", as others in Michaelis.

Daniel 9:22

Ver. 22. And he informed me, and talked with me,.... He informed him, by talking with him, of the will of God, to restore the captivity of his people, to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, and of the coming of the Messiah: or, "he caused me to attend" {n}, "and talked with me"; he excited his attention to what he had to say, and caused him to advert to his discourse, in order to understand it:

and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth; just now come from heaven, from the presence of God, and by his order:

to give thee skill and understanding; or, "to instruct thee in understanding" {o}; to teach thee the knowledge and give thee the understanding of secret things, which otherwise could not be known; such as particularly the time of the coming of Christ, which the angels themselves knew not till it was revealed; and being made acquainted with it, one of them is employed to make it known to Daniel; who is the only prophet that fixes the exact time of it, and was favoured with this divine and heavenly skill of knowing it, and of being the publisher of it to others.

{n} Nbyw "attendere fecit", Michaelis. {o} hnyb Klykvhl "ad imbuendum te intelligentia", Piscator; "ad docendum te intelligentiam", Micaelis.

Daniel 9:23

Ver. 23. At the beginning of thy supplications,.... As soon as ever he began to pray. This circumstance shows how ready the Lord is to hear the prayers of his people; and yet it was not owing to the prayers of the prophet, and to any intrinsic virtue or merit in them that the Lord did what he afterwards declares should be done; and, besides, more is revealed and promised than Daniel asked for:

the commandment came forth; either the order from the Lord to the angel, dispatching him on this errand to the prophet, to acquaint him with his mind and will; or the proclamation of Cyrus, to let the people of the Jews go free, and go up to Jerusalem to build their city and temple, published that morning, just about the time Daniel began to pray, the seventy years' captivity being completely finished; see **Da 9:25**:

and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved; or, "art desires" {p}; all desire, exceedingly desired; very lovely, amiable, and delightful, in the sight of God, and all good men: or, "that thou art greatly beloved" {q}; thus the angel came from God, out of heaven, to show it to him, to make it appear that he was highly in the favour of God, in that he made known his secrets to him:

therefore understand the matter; or "word" {r}; attend to the word; advert to the form of speaking used, and labour to get the knowledge of it:

and consider the vision; this vision, as Japhet; the following vision or prophecy of the seventy weeks; think of it well, as being a matter of great importance and consequence.

{p} twdwmx "desideria", Michaelis; "vir desideriorum", Pagninus, Munster, Piscator; so Ben Melech. {q} yk "quod dilectus tu sis", Cocceius; "quod desideria tu sis", Michaelis. {r} rbdb "in verbo", Montanus; "verbum", Pagninus; "ipsum verbum", Junius & Tremellius; "sermonem", Cocceius.

Daniel 9:24

Ver. 24. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city,..... Or, "concerning thy people, and concerning thy holy city" {s}; that is, such a space of time is fixed upon; "cut out" {t}, as the word signifies; or appointed of God for the accomplishment of certain events, relative to the temporal good of the city and people of the Jews; as the rebuilding of their city and temple; the continuance of them as a people, and of their city; the coming of the Messiah to them, to obtain spiritual blessings for them, and for all the people of God; who also were Daniel's people and city in a spiritual sense, to which he belonged; and likewise what was relative to the utter ruin and destruction of the Jews as a people, and of their city: and this space of "seventy" weeks is not to be understood of weeks of days; which is too short a time for the fulfilment of so many events as are mentioned; nor were they fulfilled within such a space of time; but of weeks of years, and make up four hundred and ninety years; within which time, beginning from a date after mentioned, all the things prophesied of were accomplished; and this way of reckoning of years by days is not unusual in the sacred writings; see Ge 29:27. The verb used is singular, and, joined with the noun plural, shows that every week was cut out and appointed for some event or another; and the word, as it signifies "to cut", aptly expresses the division, or section of these weeks into distinct periods, as seven, sixty two, and one. The first events mentioned are spiritual ones, and are not ascribed to any particular period; but are what should be done within this compass of time in general, and were done toward the close of it; and are first observed because of the greatest importance, and are as follow:

to finish the transgression; not the transgression of Adam, or original sin, which, though took away by Christ from his people, yet not from all men; nor the actual transgression of man in general, which never more abounded than in the age in which Christ lived; but rather the transgressions of his people he undertook to satisfy for, and which were laid on him, and bore by him, and carried away, so as not to be seen more, or to have no damning power over them. The word used signifies "to restrain" {u}; now, though sin greatly abounded, both among Jews and Gentiles, in the age of the Messiah; yet there never was an age in which greater restraints were laid on it than in this, by the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Christ in Judea and by the apostles in the Gentile world:

and to make an end of sins; so that they shall be no more, but put away and abolished by the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ for them, as to guilt and punishment; so that those, for whose sins satisfaction is made, no charge can be brought against them, nor the curse of the law reach them, nor any sentence of it be executed, or any punishment inflicted on them; but are entirely and completely saved from all their sins, and the sad effects of them. Our version follows the marginal reading; but the textual writing is, "to seal up sins" {w}; which is expressive of the pardon of them procured by Christ; for things sealed are hid and covered, and so are sins forgiven, Ps 32:1,

and to make reconciliation for iniquity: to expiate it, and make atonement for it; which was made by the sacrifice of Christ, by his sufferings and death; whereby the law and justice of God were fully satisfied, full reparation being made for the injury done by sin; and this was made for all kind of sin, expressed here by several words; and for all the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of the Lord's people; to do which was the grand end of Christ's coming into the world; see **Heb 2:17**: and to bring in everlasting righteousness; which is true only of the righteousness of Christ, by which the law is magnified and made honourable, justice satisfied, and all that believe in him justified from all their sins: this Christ, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, has wrought out, and brought into the world; and which phase designs, not the manifestation of it in the Gospel; nor the act of imputation of it, which is Jehovah the Father's act; nor the application of it, which is by the Spirit of God; but Christ's actual working of it out by obeying the precept and bearing the penalty of the law: and this may be truly called "everlasting", or "the righteousness of ages" {x}, of ages past; the righteousness by which the saints in all ages from the beginning of the world are justified; and which endures, and will endure, throughout all ages, to the justification of all that believe; it is a robe of righteousness that will never wear out; its virtue to justify will ever continue, being perfect; it will answer for the justified ones in a time to come, and has eternal life connected with it:

and to seal up the vision and prophecy; not to shut it up out of sight; rather to set a mark on it, by which it might be more clearly known; but to consummate and fulfil it: all prophecy is sealed up in Christ, and by him; he is the sum and substance of it; the visions and prophecies of the Old Testament relate to him, and have their accomplishment in him; some relate to his person and office; others to his coming into the world, the time, place, and manner of it; others to the great work of redemption and salvation he came about; and others to his miracles, sufferings, and death, and the glory that should follow; all which have been fulfilled: or, "to seal up the vision and prophet" {y}; the prophets were until John, and then to cease, and have ceased ever since the times of Jesus; there has been no prophet among the Jews, they themselves do not deny it; Christ is come, the last and great Prophet of all, with a full revelation of the divine will, and no other is to be expected; all that pretend to set up a new scheme of things, either as to doctrine or worship, through pretended vision or prophecy, are to be disregarded:

and to anoint the most Holy; not literally the most holy place in the temple; figuratively, either heaven itself, anointed, and prepared for his people by the Messiah's ascension thither, and entrance into it; or rather most holy persons, the church and people of God, typified by the sanctuary, the temple of God; and in a comparative sense are most holy, and absolutely so, as washed in the blood of Christ, clothed with his righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit; and by whom they are anointed, some in an extraordinary and others in an ordinary way, and all by the grace of Christ: or it may be best of all to understand this of the Messiah, as Aben Ezra and others do; who is holy in his person, in both his natures, human and divine; sanctified and set apart to his office, and holy in the execution of it; equal in holiness to the Father and the Spirit; superior in it to angels and men, who have all their holiness from him, and by whom they are sanctified; and of whom the sanctuary or temple was a type; and who was anointed with the Holy Ghost as man, at his incarnation, baptism, and ascension to heaven; and Abarbinel owns it may be interpreted of the Messiah, who may be called the Holy of holies, because he is holier than all other Israelites.

{s} Kme le "de populo tuo", Helvicus. {t} Kthn "decisae", Pagninus: Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis. {u} alkl "cohibendo", Junius & Tremellius; "ad cohibendum", Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; "ad coercendum", Cocceius. {w} Mtxl "obsignando", Junius & Tremellius; "ad sigilandum", Montanus; "ut obsignet", Piscator. {x} Mymlwe qdu "justitiam seculorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis. {y} aybnw "et prophetam", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Daniel 9:25

Ver. 25. Know, therefore, and understand,.... Take notice and observe, for the clearer understanding of these seventy weeks, and the events to be fulfilled in them, what will be further said concerning them, the beginning of them, their distinct periods, and what shall be accomplished in them:

that from the time of the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem; this commandment is the beginning of the seventy weeks or four hundred and ninety years, and from it they are to be reckoned; and which designs not the proclamation of Cyrus in the first year of his reign, which was only to rebuild the temple, and not the city of Jerusalem, **Ezr 1:1**, nor the decree of Darius Hystaspes, which also only regards the temple, and is only a confirmation of the decree of Cyrus, **Ezr 6:1** and for the same reasons it cannot be the decree in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes; which only confirmed what his predecessors had granted concerning the temple, and provision for sacrifices, and exemption of the priests from toll, tribute, or custom, **Ezr 7:7**, but has not a word of building the wall and streets of Jerusalem, as that has, which was made in the twentieth year of his reign; and seems therefore to be the commandment or decree here referred to, **Ne 2:1**, and this is the general epoch of the seventy weeks, and where the first seven begin; though Gussetius {a} thinks that the word rbd does not signify any edict or decree, but a "thing"; and designs the thing itself, restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem; and that the following date is to be reckoned, not from any order to rebuild that city, but from the thing itself, from the moment when it first began to be rebuilt: and as singular is the notion of Tirinus {b}, who is of opinion that this is to be understood of the going out, or the end of the word; not whereby the holy city was ordered to be built, but when it was really built; and so begins the account from the dedication of the new city, in the twenty third year of Artaxerxes, Ne 12:27. There are others who suppose that not any human word, decree, commandment, or order, is here meant, but a divine one; either the word of the Lord to Jeremiah, foretelling the seventy years' captivity of the Jews, and their deliverance from it; and reckon these four hundred and ninety years from the destruction of the first temple, to the destruction of the second temple, as Jarchi, Saadiah, Jacchiades, and others; but between these two destructions was a course of six hundred and fifty six or six hundred and fifty seven years: others take the beginning of the seventy weeks to be from the going forth of the commandment to the angel, at the beginning of Daniel's prayers, as Aben Ezra; and to end at the destruction of the second temple; but, for a like reason, this must be rejected as the other; since this space of time will outrun the seventy weeks near one hundred and twenty years: it is best therefore to interpret this of a royal edict, the order or commandment of a king of Persia to rebuild Jerusalem; and it seems correct to reckon the number given, either from the seventh, or rather from the twentieth, of Artaxerxes Longimanus before mentioned; and either these reckonings, as Bishop Chandler {c} observes, are sufficient for our purpose, to show the completion of the prophecy in Christ:

"the commencement of the weeks (as he remarks) must be either from the seventh of Artaxerxes, which falls on 457 B.C. or from the twentieth of Artaxerxes; (add to 457 B.C., twenty six years after Christ, which is the number that four hundred and eighty three years, or sixty nine weeks, exceeds four hundred and fifty seven years); and you are brought to the beginning of John the Baptist's preaching up the advent of the Messiah; add seven years or one week to the former, and you come to the thirty third year of A.D. which was the year of Jesus Christ's death or else compute four hundred and ninety years, the whole seventy weeks, from the seventh of Artaxerxes, by subtracting four hundred and fifty seven years (the space of time between that year and the beginning of A.D.) from four hundred and ninety, and there remains thirty three, the year of our Lord's death. Let the twentieth of Artaxerxes be the date of the seventy weeks, which is 455 B.C. and reckon sixty nine weeks of Chaldean years; seventy Chaldee years being equal to sixty nine Julian; and so four hundred and seventy eight Julian years making four hundred and eighty three Chaldee years, and they end in the thirty third year after Christ, or the passover following {d}";

the several particulars into which these seventy weeks are divided:

unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; by whom is meant, not Cyrus, as Jarchi and Jacchiades; who, though called Messiah or anointed, Isa 44:28, cannot be intended; for this prince was to be cut off after seven, and sixty two weeks, or four hundred and eighty three years; whereas Cyrus died ages before this, and even died before the expiration of the seven weeks, or forty nine years; nor Joshua the high priest, or Zerubbabel, as Ben Gersom and others nor Nehemiah as Aben Ezra; nor Artaxerxes, which R. Azariah {e} thinks probable; for to none of these will this character agree, which denotes some eminent person known by this name; nor the work ascribed to him, **Da 9:24**, nor can it be said of either of them that they were cut off, and much less at such a period as is here fixed: it is right to interpret it of the promised and expected Saviour, whom the Psalmist David had frequently spoken of under the name of the Messiah, and as a King and Prince; see **Ps 2:2** and who is David, the Prince Ezekiel before this had prophesied of, Eze 34:24, and is the same with the Prince of peace in the famous prophecy of him in **Isa 9:6**. The Syriac version, though not a literal one, gives the true sense of the passage, rendering it,

"unto the coming of the King Messiah;"

unto which there were to be seven, and sixty two weeks, or sixty nine weeks, which make four hundred and eighty three years; and these being understood of eastern years, used by the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Persians, consisting of three hundred and sixty days, reckoning thirty days to a month, and twelve months to a year, there were just four hundred and eighty three of these from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes to the thirty third of the vulgar era of Christ, and the nineteenth of Tiberius Caesar, in which he suffered. Sir Isaac Newton {f} thinks the seven weeks unto Messiah, which he detaches from the sixty two, respects the second coming of Christ, when he shall come as a Prince, and destroy antichrist, and that it takes in the compass of a jubilee; but when it will begin and end he does not pretend to say; but the true reason of the sixty nine weeks being divided into seven, and sixty two, is on account of the particular and distinct events assigned to each period, as follows:

the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times; that is, within the space of seven weeks, or forty nine years, reckoning from the twentieth of Artaxerxes; when the Jews had a grant to rebuild their city and wall, and were furnished with materials for it; and which was done in very troublesome times; Nehemiah, and the Jews with him, met with much trouble from Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, while they were setting up the wall of the city, and filling the streets with ranges of houses, Nehemiah chapters four and five for which the space of seven weeks, or forty nine years, were cut out and appointed; and that this event belongs solely to this period is clear from the Messiah's coming being appropriated to the period of the sixty two weeks; which leaves this entirely where it is fixed.

{a} Ebr. Comment. p. 177, 329. {b} Chronolog. Sacr. p. 44. {c} Answer to the Grounds and Reasons, &c. p. 139. {d} See these seventy weeks more largely considered, in a Treatise of mine, concerning the prophecies of the Old Testament respecting the Messiah, &c. p. 64-78. {e} Meor Enayim, c. 41. fol. 134. 2. {f} Observations on Daniel, p. 132, 133, 134.

Daniel 9:26

Ver. 26. And after threescore and two weeks,.... To be reckoned from the end of the seven weeks, or forty nine years, which, added to them, make four hundred and eighty three years:

shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; by whom is designed the same with Messiah the Prince in **Da 9:25**, not Onias the high priest, as a late writer {g} would have it, an upright person, and of great holiness, taken off by an unjust death; since he was dead many years before the expiration of these weeks; nor Hyrcanus the high priest, slain by Herod, as Eusebius {h} thinks; in whom the succession of the ancient priests terminated, and with whom the priestly unction perished; which indeed bids fairer than the former; but he was not a person of so much note as to be pointed at in such a prophecy; besides, the priesthood continued much longer: nor is King Agrippa intended, as Jarchi and Abarbinel, who, they say, was the last king of the Jews, and was slain by Vespasian at the destruction of Jerusalem; which is not true; he was not properly king of the Jews, having only Galilee for his jurisdiction; was not slain by Vespasian; was a confederate of the Romans, lived some years after the destruction of the city, and at last died in peace; but Jesus the true Messiah is intended, with whom the character, dates, and death, and the manner of it, entirely agree: now to his death were to be four hundred and eighty three

years; which years ended, as we have observed, in the thirty third year of the vulgar era of Christ, and the nineteenth of Tiberius; when Jesus the true Messiah was cut off in a judicial way; not for any sins of his own, but for the sins of his people, to make satisfaction for them, and to obtain their redemption and salvation; see Isa 53:8: or "he is not", as Jarchi, no more in the land of the living, is dead; see
Jer 31:15, or "there is", or "will be, none for him", or "with him" {i}, to help and assist him in his great work, Isa 63:5. The Vulgate Latin version is, "they shall not be his people"; the Jews rejecting him shall have a "loammi" upon them, and be no more the people of God. Gussetius {k} better renders it, "he hath not"; or he has nothing, so Cocceius; all things were wanted by him, that is, by Christ; he had neither riches, nor clothes, nor any to stand by him, or to accompany him:

and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; that is, the people of the Romans, under Vespasian their prince, emperor, and general, should, in a little time after the cutting off of the Messiah, enter into the land of Judea, and destroy the city of Jerusalem, and the temple that stood in it; though some understand this of Messiah the Prince that should come in his power, and in a way of judgment upon the Jewish nation, and destroy them for their rejection of him; whose people the Romans would be, and under whose direction, and by whose orders, all these judgments should be brought upon the Jews; but many of the Jewish writers themselves interpret it of Vespasian, as Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Abarbinel, and Jacchiades:

and the end thereof shall be with a flood: the end of the city and temple, and of the whole nation, should be by the Roman army, which, like a flood, would overspread the land, and carry all before it. It denotes the number, power, and irresistible force of the enemy, and the sad devastation made by them:

and unto the end of the war desolations are determined; from the beginning of the war by the Romans with the Jews, to the end of it, there would be nothing but continual desolations; a dreadful havoc and ruin everywhere; and all this appointed and determined by the Lord, as a just punishment for their sins.

{g} Scheme of literal Prophecy, &c. p. 183. {h} Demonstrat. Evangel. l. 8. p. 396, 397. {i} wl Nyaw "et non [erit] ei", Pagninus; "et nullus [erit] pro co", Vatablus. {k} Comment. Ebr. p. 33.

Daniel 9:27

Ver. 27. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week,.... Sixty nine of the seventy weeks being accounted for, and the several events observed to be fulfilled in them; the angel proceeds to take notice of the remaining "one" week, or seven years, and what should be done within that space of time: a covenant should be confirmed with many; which is not to be understood of the Messiah's confirming the covenant of grace with many, or on account of all his people, by fulfilling the conditions of it, and by his blood and sacrifice, through which all the blessings of it come to them; for this is not for one week only, but for ever; but this is to be interpreted of the Roman people, spoken of in the latter part of the preceding verse; who, in order to accomplish their design to destroy the city and temple of Jerusalem, made peace with many nations, entered into covenant and alliance with them, particularly the Medes, Parthians, and Armenians, for the space of one week, or seven years; as it appears they did at the beginning of this week {l}:

and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; the daily sacrifice of the Jews, and all their other offerings; and which was literally fulfilled "in the half part" {m} of this week, as it may be rendered; towards the close of the latter half of it, when the city of Jerusalem, being closely besieged by Titus, what through the closeness of the siege, the divisions of the people, and the want both of time and men, and beasts to offer, the daily sacrifice ceased, as Josephus {n} says, to the great grief of the people; nor have the Jews, ever since the destruction of their city and temple, offered any sacrifice, esteeming it unlawful so to do in a strange land:

and at the same time, in the same half part of the week,

for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate; that is, the Roman people shall make the land of Judea desolate, for the overspreading of their abominations or idolatries in it. The words may be rendered, as by some, "upon the wing", the battlements of the temple,

shall be the abominations, or "idols of the desolator", or "of him that makes desolate" {o}; so Bishop Lloyd; meaning either the ensigns of the Roman army, which had upon them the images of their gods or emperors; and being set up in the holy place, and sacrificed to, nothing could be a greater abomination to the Jews; or else the blood of the zealots slain on these battlements, by which the holy place was polluted; see

Mt 24:15:

even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate; that is, either these abominations shall continue in the place where they are set until the utter destruction of the city and temple; or the desolation made there should continue until the consummation of God's wrath and vengeance upon them; until the whole he has determined is poured out on this desolate people; and which continues unto this day, and will till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, Lu 21:24. Some, as Bishop Lloyd, render it, "upon the desolator" {p}; meaning the Romans; and the sense they take to be is, that this vengeance shall continue upon the Jews until it is turned upon the head of those who have made them desolate: now this "one week", according to the sense given, must begin in the sixty third year of the vulgar era of Christ, about thirty years after the expiration of the sixty nine weeks; since it ends in the seventieth year of the same era, in which was the destruction of Jerusalem, the grand event assigned to it in this famous prophecy; when it might have been expected it should have begun at the end of the sixty nine weeks, and run on in a direct line from them. The true reason of its being thus separated from them is the longsuffering and forbearance of God to the people of the Jews, who gave them, as to the old world, space to repent; but his grace and goodness being slighted, things began to work at the beginning of this week towards their final ruin, which, in the close of it, was fully accomplished: from the whole of this prophecy it clearly appears that the Messiah must be come many hundred years ago. The Jews are sensible of the force of this reasoning; so that, to terrify persons from considering this prophecy, they denounce the following curse, "let them burst, or their bones rot, that compute the times" {q}. R. Nehemiah, who lived about fifty years before the coming of Christ, declared the time of the Messiah, as signified by Daniel, could not be protracted longer than those fifty years {r}. The Jews also say the world is divided into six parts, and the last part is from Daniel to the Messiah {s}.

{l} See Marshall's Chron. Treat. p. 271. {m} ewbvh yuxw "et in dimidio hebdomadis", Montanus, Michaelis; "dimidio septimanae", Cocceius. {n} De Bello, Jud. l. 6. c. 2. {o} Mmwvm Myuqv Pnk lew "desolator", Piscator, Gejerus; "desolans", Covveius; "stupefaciens", Montanus. {p} Mmwv le "super obstupescentem", Montanus; "in stupendem", Cocceius, {q} T. Bab. Sanhedrin. fol. 97. 2. {r} Apud Grotium de Ver. Rel. Christ l. 5. sect. 14. {s} Caphtor Uperah, fol 17. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Daniel 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL 10

This chapter is an introduction to the prophecies contained in the two following chapters; and begins with an account of Daniel's mourning and fasting, preparatory to the vision he had, Da 10:1, and of the appearance of Christ to him, with the time and place of it; who is described by his clothing, and the several parts of his body, which were very glorious, he appearing in a human form, Da 10:4, then follows an account of the effects it had upon him, Da 10:7, and of what encouragement and strength he received from him, by words and touches, to listen to what he said; and to expect a discovery and an understanding of things of moment and importance, which should be in future times, Da 10:10.

Ver. 1. In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia,.... Not of his being king of Persia only, but of the Medopersian empire, after he had subdued the Babylonian empire, and annexed it to his dominions; and this is not to be reckoned from the time of his taking Babylon, and putting the government of it into the hands of his uncle Darius, with whom he jointly reigned; but from the time of his uncle's death, when he was sole monarch of the whole empire: he reigned thirty years, as Cicero {t}, from a Persian writer, relates; which is to be reckoned from the time of his being appointed by his uncle commander-in-chief of the Persian and Median armies; for from his taking of Babylon to his death were but nine years; and so many years the canon of Ptolemy assigns to his reign, taking in the two years he reigned with his uncle; for from his being sole monarch, after the death of Cyaxares, or Darius the Mede his uncle, were but seven years; which, according to Xenophon {u}, is the whole of his reign, who reckons it from thence; and it was in the third of these that Daniel had the visions contained in this and the two following chapters; which, according to Bishop Usher {w}, and Dean Prideaux {x}, was in the year of the world 3470 A.M. and 534 B.C. Mr. Bedford {y} places it in the year 533 B.C.: how long Daniel lived after this is not certain; very probably he died quickly after, since he must be in a very advanced age; for the third year of Cyrus being the seventy third of his captivity, as Dean Prideaux {z} observes; and if he was eighteen years of age, as that learned man thinks is the least that can be supposed at the time of his carrying into Babylon, he must have been in the ninety first year of his age at this time; or if he was but fifteen years of age at that time, which is the opinion of Aben Ezra on **Da 1:4**, he must be in the third year of Cyrus eighty eight years of age. The Dutch annotators observe, that Daniel lived in the court of Babylon above seventy seven years, which will carry his age to a greater length still. Jarchi on **Da 1:21** asserts Daniel to be the same with Hatach in **Es 4:5** and so the Targum on that place, who lived in the times of Ahasuerus, supposed to be Xerxes: now between the third of Cyrus, and the beginning of Xerxes's reign, is mentioned a space of seventy one years, which, added to the least number eighty eight before given, will make Daniel now to be one hundred and fifty nine years old, when Ahasuerus or Xerxes began his reign; which is not only an age unfit for such business Hatach was employed in; but agrees not with the period in which Daniel lived, when it was not usual for men to live so long, and must be exploded as fabulous:

a thing was revealed unto Daniel; a secret, which he otherwise could never have known; and which was a singular favour to him, and showed him to be a friend of God, a favourite of his; and this respected the Persian and Grecian monarchies; the various kings of Egypt and Syria, and what should befall them; and the times of Antiochus, and the troubles the Jews would have through him:

(whose name was called Belteshazzar); a name given him by the prince of the eunuchs; see **Da 1:7**:

and the thing was true; was not a false vision, a mere fancy of the brain, an empty conjecture, a delusion of the mind, like the divination and soothsaying of the Gentiles, but a real thing, that was sure and certain, and would be fulfilled, and might be depended upon: but the time appointed was long; ere the whole would be accomplished; for it reached to the times of Antiochus, three hundred years after this, yea, to the resurrection of the dead, and the end of all things: or, "a great host", or "army" {a}; a vast appearance of things were represented to him; not a host of angels, as Saadiah; but a vast number of facts, like an army of them, and which respected armies and battles; or it may denote the force, power, and efficacy of the word that was true, which should not fail, but be certainly fulfilled:

and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision; that is, Daniel understood "the word" {b}, or words of the prophecy, in which it was expressed; they were clear and plain, and not obscure, dark, and doubtful; and he had a clear view of each of the parts of it, of the whole series of things, the connection of facts, and their dependence on one another, and their certain accomplishment; he saw them in their order, as they were presented to him in vision and prophecy; and was not at any loss about the meaning of any part of them, or the words by which they were signified.

{t} De Divinatione, l. 1. {u} Cyropaedia, l. 8. c. 45. {w} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3470. {x} Connexion, &c. par. 1. p. 161, 162. {y} Scripture Chronology, p. 718. {z} Ut supra. (Connexion, &c. par. 1. p. 161, 162) {a} lwdg abuw "et militia magna", Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus; "militia seu belligeratio ingens", Michaelis. {b} rbdh ta "verbum", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster.

Daniel 10:2

Ver. 2. In those days I Daniel was mourning,.... Either on account of what had been revealed to him in the last vision or prophecy of the seventy weeks; by which it appeared what wickedness the people of the Jews would be guilty of in cutting off the Messiah; and what desolations would come upon their land, city, and temple, for such usage of him: as also because of the present case of his people; many of them continuing in the country of Babylon, when they had liberty to return to their land: or because of the hinderance the Jews met with in rebuilding their city and temple, who had returned thither; of which Daniel had an account, and which caused him to mourn in secret: and so he continued

three full weeks; or, "three weeks of days" {c}; so called, to distinguish them from weeks of years, mentioned in the preceding chapter.

{c} Mymy Myebv hvlv "tribus hebdomadibus dierum", Munster, Calvin, Tigurine version; "trium hebdomadarum diebus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, so Junius & Tremellius, Medus.

Daniel 10:3

Ver. 3. I ate no pleasant bread,.... Or, "bread of desires" {d}; such as was made of the finest of the wheat, and was eaten in the courts of princes where Daniel was: according to some Jewish Rabbins in Ben Melech, hot bread is meant; but in general it means the best of bread, such as had good qualities to make it desirable; and this Daniel refrained from, while he was humbling and afflicting himself on this sorrowful occasion, but ate coarse bread, black and grainy:

neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth; not delicate meat, as of fish, fowl, deer, and the like, as Saadiah observes; but contented himself with meaner fare; nor did he drink generous wine, as he had used to do, living in a king's court, and which his old age made necessary for him, since he could come at it; but he abstained from it, and other lawful pleasures of nature, the more to give himself up to acts of devotion and contemplation:

neither did I anoint myself at all, until three whole weeks were fulfilled; which was wont to be frequently done by the Jews, especially at feasts; and by the Persians every day, among whom he now was; but this he refrained from, as was usual in times of fasting and humiliation; see **Mt 6:17**.

{d} twdmx Mxl "panem desideriorum", Pagninus, Montanus; "desiderabilium", Junius & Tremellius; "desiderabilem", V. L. Vatablus, Piscator.

Daniel 10:4

Ver. 4. And in the four and twentieth day of the first month,.... Of the third year of Cyrus, as Jacchiades; or rather of the Jewish year, the month Ab or Nisan, which answers to part of March and April; so that Daniel's fast began on the third day of the month, and lasted to the twenty fourth, in which time was the Jewish passover; and by this it seems it was not now kept; and perhaps in those times was not used to be observed by the Jews in a foreign land:

as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; the same with the Tigris, called by both names from the swiftness and rapidity of its motion, "hiddekel" signifying both sharp and swift; and tigris, in the Persian language, a dart; see **Ge 2:14**. This is the same river the Targum of Jonathan on **Ge 2:14** calls Diglath; and is by Pliny {e} called Diglito, who observes that it has the name of Tigris from its swiftness; so he says the Medes call an arrow; likewise Curtius {f} takes notice of the same, and says that it is named Tigris from the celerity with which it flows; for in the Persian language they call a dart "tigris": so dx signifies in the Hebrew language "sharp" or "polished", as an arrow is; and lq, "swift", as an arrow flies, and both make Hiddekel: now this river was near Shushan, where Daniel resided; nay, Benjamin of Tudela {g} says, that the river Hiddekel divides the city of Shushan, over which is a bridge, on one side of which Jews dwelt, at the time he was there; unless he means that it cuts and divides the province of Elam in Persia, he had before been speaking of; and so Diodorus Siculus {h} says, that both Euphrates and Tigris pass through Media into Mesopotamia; wherefore it is no wonder to hear of Daniel by the side of the river Hiddekel or Tigris: here Daniel was, not in vision, but in person, having others with him, as appears from a following verse; by it he was walking, contemplating, praying, or conversing.

{e} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 27. {f} Hist. l. 4. c. 9. {g} Itinerarium, p. 86. {h} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 99.

Daniel 10:5

Ver. 5. Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked,.... Being excited to it, by an object presented, of an unusual appearance, which engaged his attention, and caused him to look wistly at it:

and, behold a certain man clothed in linen; not Gabriel, but the Son of God, the Messiah; who, though not as yet incarnate, yet was so in the counsel and purpose of God; had agreed in covenant to be man, was promised and prophesied of as such; and now appeared in a human form, as he frequently did before his incarnation, as a pledge of it, and showing his readiness to assume human nature: he appears here "clothed in linen", in the habit of a priest; which office he sustains, and executes by the sacrifice of himself, and by his prevalent intercession; and may denote his purity and innocence, as well as direct us to his spotless righteousness he is the author of, which is like fine linen, clean and white, Re 19:8:

whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz; or of Fez, which is the best gold. Some take it to be the same with the gold of Ophir, often spoken of in Scripture; so the Targum on Jer 10:9, renders Uphaz by Ophir. Ptolemy {i} makes mention of a river called Phasis in the island of Taprobane or Zeilan, where Bochart {k} seems to think Ophir was, from whence the gold of that name came; and the same geographer {l} takes notice of a city and river of the same name in Colchis; perhaps the same with Pison, which encompassed Havilah, where was good gold, **Ge 2:11**, and both Strabo {m} and Pliny {n} say that much gold was found in that country, and taken out of rivers there; and was so plentiful, that even chambers were made of gold, Some think that this was an island in India called Paz or Topaz, and might with the Jews go by all three names, Paz, Topaz, and Uphaz {o}; however, it is certain, that very fine gold, even the finest gold, is here designed: and the loins of this illustrious Person being girded with a girdle made of it, as it may be expressive of his royal dignity, so likewise of his readiness to do any service he was employed in, as man and Mediator; and especially the great work of man's redemption and salvation, for the sake of which he would really become man, as he has, as well as now he appeared as one; see **Re 1:13** where Christ is said to be "girt with a golden girdle"; and such an one was this; and which is to be understood, not of his girdle as a King, which is a girdle of faithfulness and righteousness, Isa 11:5, all his administrations of government being just and true; though such a girdle well suits him, and his character in the discharge of every office, as well as his kingly office; nor of his girdle as a Prophet, which is the girdle of truth, which all his faithful ministers are girt with, **Eph 6:14**, and he in a more eminent manner, who is full of grace and truth, and by whom both came, and who is truth itself; but of his girdle as a Priest; for as such is he here habited, and such a girdle the priests used to wear, even the girdle of the ephod, made of gold, blue, purple, and fine twined linen, Ex 28:8, and this is the girdle of love, which constrained Christ to become the surety and substitute of his people; to take upon him their nature, and their sins; to offer himself a sacrifice for them, and to be their advocate with the Father; and the form and matter of this girdle being round about him, and of gold, may denote the perfection, duration, and eternity of his love.

{i} Geograph. l. 7. c. 4. {k} Phaleg. l. 2. c. 27. col. 141. {l} Ptolem. Geograph. l. 5. c. 10. {m} Geograph. l. 11. p. 343. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 3. {o} Hiller. Onomastic. Sacr. c. 8. p. 141.

Daniel 10:6

Ver. 6. His body also was like the beryl,.... That is, that part of it which was not covered with the linen garment, and was seen, was like such a precious stone, said to be of an azure and sky colour, signifying he was the Lord from heaven; though, according to its name, it should be of a sea colour, greenish; and so, according to some, the beryl is. Cocceius thinks the sardonyx is meant, which is of a flesh colour, and so more fit to express the comeliness of a human body; the beryl, being of a different colour, seems not so apt to set forth the agreeable colour of a man. Braunius {p} is of opinion that the chrysolite is meant, a stone of a golden colour; and takes the sense to be, that such was the lustre of the golden girdle about his loins, that the rest of the parts of the body about it appeared as if all of gold:

and his face the appearance of lightning; exceeding bright, very dazzling to the eye, and striking terror to the mind; expressive of something very awful and majestic; and agrees well with Christ the sun of righteousness, whose face or countenance at his transfiguration on the mount, and when John saw him in a visionary way, was as the sun shineth in his strength, in the summer solstice, or at noonday, Mt 17:2, from whom is all the light of knowledge and truth, of joy, peace, and comfort, of grace and glory; and which darts as swiftly and as powerfully from him as the rays of the sun, or as lightning from one end of the heaven to the other; and irradiates and illuminates as brightly and clearly:

and his eyes as lamps of fire; denoting his omniscience of all persons and things; and how piercing and penetrating his eyes are into the affairs of men and states, by whom they are clearly seen, and to whom they are exactly known; and how fierce and terrible his wrath is towards his enemies, and whose looks must inject dread and terror into them; see Re 19:12:

and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass; denoting his great strength for action, his stability and firmness, and the glory of his power, in trampling upon his enemies, and subduing them; especially as displayed in the redemption of his people, when his own arm wrought salvation for them; when he came travelling in the greatness of his strength, and trod the winepress of his father's wrath alone; when he set his feet on the necks of his and his people's enemies, and got an entire victory over sin, Satan, and the world, under whose feet they are, and ever will be subject:

and the voice of his words; not of the law, which was a voice of words, which they that heard entreated they might hear no more, and were very sonorous and dreadful; but rather of the Gospel, of the words and doctrines of grace and truth, which proceeded out of the mouth of Christ, and were such as were wondered at; which is a voice of love, grace, and mercy, sweet, charming, and alluring, powerful and efficacious; and the words of it are the words of peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation; yea, this voice of Christ may take in his voice and words of commands, his ordinances and institutions, which he requires an obedience unto; and even his threatenings of wrath and ruin to wicked men, as well as his gracious and precious promises to his people: and this voice of his is said to be

like the voice of a multitude; of a great many men together; whose voice is heard a long way off, and is very strong and powerful: or,

as the voice of noise {q}; which may be understood either of the noise of a multitude of men, or of the sea, or of many waters; see **Re 1:15** and may intend the power and efficacy of his words, whether in his doctrines, or in his judgments, in a way of grace and comfort, or of wrath and vengeance.

{p} De Vestitu Sacerdot. Hebr. l. 2. c. 17. sect 10, 11, 12. p. 721, 722. {q} Nwmh lwqk "ut vox tumultus", Montanus, "[vel] strepitus", Piscator, Michaelis.

Daniel 10:7

Ver. 7. And I Daniel alone saw the vision,.... The object or person described; though he was not alone when he saw it, yet he alone saw it; the eyes of his body and mind being quicker than the rest, the Lord strengthening and enlightening both; for this was a peculiar and distinguishing favour granted to him:

for the men that were with me saw not the vision; at least not so clearly and distinctly as Daniel did; they might have some confused sight of an object that appeared very terrible; but, being struck with consternation, they had not presence of mind to look at it; and so could neither form nor retain scarce any idea of it: or their eyes might be held, and their sight clouded; or be stricken with a kind of blindness, or want of sight for a time, as the men of Sodom were; or the object was of such a nature, that without special illumination it could not be seen: the like happened to Elisha's young man, who saw not the chariots and horses of fire the prophet did, and to the men that were with the Apostle Paul, **2Ki 6:17**, who these men were, that were with Daniel, is not material to know; whether they were his three companions, who had been cast into the fiery furnace; or the Prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, as Jarchi and Saadiah say from their Rabbins {r}; neither of which are likely, since these, being good men and prophets, would doubtless have been favoured with the same vision: but rather they were the servants of Daniel, who waited upon him, he being now a great man in the Persian court; and these men being very likely Heathens, profane and unregenerate men, were not fit and prepared to see such a vision:

but a great quaking fell upon them: or "for", so Noldius; giving a reason why they saw not, because or the great fear and trembling upon them; either at the glimmering sight of this strange appearance, which they knew not what to make of; or rather at the sound of his voice, which was so very loud and terrible:

so that they fled to hide themselves; among the trees that grew upon the banks of the Tigris, as Adam among the trees of the garden; or in some wood or forest hard by; or in some caves and dens, which might be near at hand: this not only shows the confusion and consternation they were in, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it,

they fled with terror; or

through it, as the Syriac version; but serves to confirm the truth of the vision, that it was not a mere fancy and imagination of Daniel.

{r} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 2.

Daniel 10:8

Ver. 8. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision,.... Which was great indeed, both with respect to the object now seen, and with respect to the subject matter, the things afterwards revealed, the nature, use, and importance of them; and it was so wisely ordered by the Lord, that the men with Daniel should be seized with a panic, and flee and leave him alone; that they being removed from him, he might have the secrets of the Lord revealed to him as a peculiar favourite of his, and hear and see the things he did:

and there remained no strength in me: either through the intenseness of his mind upon the object before him, and to what he said; or through the awe he was struck with at the sight of him; his blood running back to the heart to secure that; his nerves loosened; his hands weak and hanging down; his knees feeble, and spirits faint, just ready to sink and swoon away:

for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption; the form of his countenance was marred; his forehead wrinkled; his eyes sunk; the sprightliness and vivacity of them gone; his cheeks turned pale; his lips quivering; his joints trembling; his vigour and health impaired; all nature convulsed; and he lifeless and spiritless, like a dead carcass:

and I retained no strength; or, "restrained" {s} it not; his strength; could not keep it from going out of him, either of body or mind; he could not rally the powers of nature, so depressed was he with the vision: all which is observed, both to exaggerate the greatness of the vision, and the favour and goodness of God after shown him; as well as to observe the weakness of human nature, not being able to bear the sight of a divine Person, or such discoveries the Lord is sometimes pleased to make, without being strengthened and supported in an extraordinary manner.

{s} ytrue al "non cohibui", Gejerus.

Daniel 10:9

Ver. 9. Yet heard I the voice of his words,.... Though he was struck with so much awe, and his spirits so greatly depressed, and his body reduced to so low a condition; yet he was capable of attending to the voice, and of hearing the articulate sounds pronounced, and of understanding what was said:

and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground; as soon as he heard his words, he fell upon his face to the ground, either in a way of worship and adoration, of prayer and supplication, as the Arabic version suggests; or through awe and reverence of the speaker, as well as through faintness of spirits; and these being quite exhausted, as it were, might be the reason of his falling into a deep sleep; unless it can be thought he was lulled into it, through the sweetness of the voice he had heard.

Daniel 10:10

Ver. 10. And, behold, an hand touched me,.... Not the hand of the man clothed with linen, whose voice he heard, and whose hand was like polished brass, Da 10:6, but the hand of one distinct from him, one of his attendants, Da 12:5 that had the similitude of the sons of men, Da 10:16, and whose hand was softer, and nearer a human one; very probably the hand of the Angel Gabriel in human form, who had touched him before, when in the like circumstances, **Da 8:16**:

which set me upon my knees, and upon the palms of my hands; or, "which caused him to move" {t}; from the prostrate condition in which he was, and raised him up a little upon his hands; so that, with a little difficulty, he might be able to raise himself to stand upright.

{t} yneynt "movere fecit me", Pagninus, Montanus; "commovit me", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius; "movit me", Tigurine version, Michaelis.

Daniel 10:11

Ver. 11. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved,.... Or, "a man of desires" {u}; a most desirable man, lovely to God and men; the same epithet Gabriel gives him, **Da 9:22**, which confirms the sentiment, that it is he that touched Daniel, and is here speaking, distinct from the glorious Person before described:

understand the words that I speak unto thee; attend unto them, in order to understand them; and which he was sent to give him an understanding of, as in **Da 8:16**, which is a further confirmation that this is Gabriel:

and stand upright; being upon his hands and knees, Da 10:10, but now is bid to "stand on his standing" {w}, or his station; upon his feet, in an erect posture, which was fittest for attention, and most decent and becoming a hearer and learner of the mind of God, from one of his messengers: and therefore, the more to excite him to such a posture, he adds,

for unto thee am I now sent: of God, and particularly to the prophet, and that after three weeks' fasting and mourning: this is another proof that not the glorious Person before described, but an angel of his, is meant, since he is said to be "sent" to Daniel:

and when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling: he got up and stood upon his feet, as the angel had bid him, but trembling and tottering, not yet recovered from his fainting fit; like a man that has been ill, and got upon his legs again, trembles and totters as he goes or stands: and also, though the angel was kind and serviceable to him, set him on his knees and hands, and spoke to him in a tender manner; yet the appearance of such a divine messenger had such an effect upon him, as we find such appearances used to have on good men.

{u} twdmx vya "vir desideriorum", V. L. {w} Kdme-le dme "sta super stare tuum", Montanus, Calvin; "sta in statione tua", Piscator; "super statione tua", Michaelis.

Daniel 10:12

Ver. 12. Then said he unto me, fear not, Daniel,.... Perceiving him to shake and tremble, and to be intimidated at his presence, he speaks comfortably to him, and encourages him to lay aside his fears, that he might be more capable of attending to what he was about to say to him; and which had a tendency of themselves to remove his fears, and increase his confidence in the Lord:

for from the first day thou didst set thine heart to understand; not so much the former visions which he had an understanding of, as the future state of his people; or rather, the reason of their present distressed condition, being hindered by their enemies in rebuilding their city and temple:

and to chasten thyself before thy God; to humble himself in prayer, and to afflict himself by fasting:

thy words were heard; his prayers were heard, and an answer ordered to be given, the very first day he began to pray, and fast, and mourn, though it was now full three weeks since; just as, at the beginning of his former supplications, Gabriel had a commandment to go and show him that they were heard, **Da 9:23**:

and I am come forth for thy words; on account of his prayers, to bring an answer to them; the reason why he came no sooner, when it was three weeks since he received his order, is as follows:

Daniel 10:13

Ver. 13. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days,.... Which was just the time Daniel had been mourning and fasting, Da 10:2, and the angel had had his instructions to acquaint him with the Lord's answer to his prayers: by "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" is not to be understood the then reigning king of Persia, Cyrus, or his son Cambyses; who either of them would have been called rather king of Persia; nor were they able to withstand an angel, and such an one as Gabriel; nor is a good angel meant, the tutelar one of this kingdom; for it cannot be reasonably thought that good angels should militate against one another; but an evil angel, either Satan, the prince and god of this world, or one of his principal angels under him, employed by him to do what mischief he could in the court of Persia, against the people of God, the Jews; and with this sense agree the contests ascribed to Satan and the Angel of the Lord concerning Joshua, **Zec 3:1** and to Michael and the devil disputing about the body of Moses, **Jude 1:9** and to Michael and his angels, and the devil and his angels, warring in heaven, Re 12:7, now Gabriel's business in the court of Persia was to work upon the minds of the king of Persia and his nobles, and to influence their counsels, and put them on such measures as would be in favour of the Jews, and be encouraging to them to go on in the rebuilding of their city and temple: in this he was withstood and opposed by an evil spirit that counterworked him; by exasperating the spirit of Cambyses against them; by stirring up the Samaritans to corrupt the Persian courtiers with gifts, to take their part against the Jews; and by influencing them to accept of their gifts, and act in their favour; and this business on the angel's hands, to oppose these measures, detained him at the Persian court for the three weeks Daniel had been fasting and praying:

but, lo, Michael one of the chief Princes, came to help me; called in the New Testament an Archangel, the Prince of angels, the Head of all principality and power; and is no other than Christ the Son of God, an uncreated Angel; who is "one", or "the first of the chief Princes" {x}, superior to angels, in nature, name, and office; he came to "help" Gabriel, not as a fellow creature, but as the Lord of hosts; not as a fellow soldier, but as General of the armies in heaven and earth, as superior to him in wisdom and strength; and he helped him by giving him fresh counsels, orders, and instructions, which he following succeeded:

and I remained there with the kings of Persia; with the king of Persia and his nobles, putting into execution the orders Michael had given him, and so baffled the designs of the evil spirit; and this retarded him from being with the prophet one and twenty days. The Septuagint and Arabic versions very wrongly render the words, "and I left him there with the kings of Persia"; as if Michael was left there by Gabriel, whereas it was just the reverse.

{x} dxa "primus", Junius & Tremellius.

Daniel 10:14

Ver. 14. Now I am come to make thee to understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days,.... The contest being over with the prince of Persia, and having got an advantage, and carried his point in favour of the Jews; he came directly to Daniel, to inform him of what should befall the people of the Jews in the succeeding monarchies, especially in the times of Antiochus; and even of all that should befall them until the Messiah came, as Aben Ezra rightly interprets it; for the last days generally design the days of the Messiah;

see
Ge 49:1:

for yet the vision is for many days; before it will be accomplished; reaching not only to the times of Antiochus, three hundred years after this, but even to the times of antichrist, of whom he was a type; and to the resurrection of the dead, and the end of time, as the two next chapters show; see **Hab 2:3**.

Daniel 10:15

Ver. 15. And when he had spoken such words unto me,.... As before related, concerning the contest between him and the prince of Persia; and especially concerning what would befall the people of the Jews in the latter day:

I set my face toward the ground; not being able to look up; his eyes were fixed upon the earth like one confounded and thunderstruck, filled with amazement and wonder:

and I became dumb; not able to speak a word, as is the case of persons sometimes in surprise, or through excess of any of the passions: this arose either from the majesty of the angel; or rather from the nature and importance of the things he said; or from a consciousness of his own impurity, and so of his unworthiness to converse with so exalted a creature, and to be favoured with such secrets. The Arabic version is, "and I supplicated"; very wrongly.

Daniel 10:16

Ver. 16. And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men,.... Not the man clothed with linen, or Christ; but either the same angel, Gabriel, who appeared more manifestly to him in a human form; or another of the attendants of Christ, who also had the similitude of a man:

touched my lips; with his hand, as the Prophet Isaiah's were, by a seraph, with a live coal from the altar, **Isa 6:7**, thereby restoring him to his speech, and giving him freedom and boldness to make use of it; and removing from him his impurity, and a sense of it, which occasioned his silence:

then I opened my mouth, and spake freely, and yet with all becoming modesty:

and said unto him that stood before me, O lord; the angel that appeared in the likeness of a man, and stood before the prophet, and touched his lips, whom he calls "lord"; not because of sovereignty and dominion over him, which belong to Christ, as the Creator of all things, and Head of the church; but for honour's sake, being a noble and exalted creature:

by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me; on sight of the glorious object represented to him in the vision, pains seized his body in all parts of it, sharp and pungent, like those of a woman in travail. Gussetius {y} interprets it of the knuckle bones, which turned in the pan of them, like the hinges of a door, of which the word is used, Pr 26:14, and this through the tendons being loosed by the dissipation of the spirits; and this sense the Vulgate Latin version gives countenance to,

my joints are dissolved; the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, are, "my inward parts or bowels are turned in me: and I have retained no strength"; See Gill on "Da 10:8".

{y} Comment. Ebr. p. 713.

Daniel 10:17

Ver. 17. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord?.... Or, "talk with that my lord?" {z} pointing to the man clothed in linen, who appeared so glorious, and whom Daniel knew to be more than a man; and therefore he, who was a mere mortal sinful man, and reckoned himself a servant of the angel of the Lord that was now before him, and had touched him, and was conversing with him, and to whom he was greatly inferior, must be very unfit and unworthy to have conversation with one that was infinitely above him; "with such an one", his Lord, as Noldius {a} renders it, as Christ the Son of God, the Head of angels, King of kings, and Lord of lords; what was he, dust and ashes, that he should speak unto him, or be admitted to any discourse with him? so sensible was he of the greatness of Christ, and of his own frailty, sinfulness, and nothingness;

for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me; as soon as ever he saw this great and glorious person; See Gill on "Da 10:8":

neither is there breath left in me: when he fainted away, and became like a dead man; and though he was raised up again, and set upon his feet, and had a little recovered his speech, yet it was with great difficulty that he breathed and spoke; as it is with men when their spirits are greatly oppressed, it is as if their life and soul were gone out of them, and they move more like dead than living men.

{z} hz ynda Me "cum domino meo illo", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Junius & Tremellius. {a} Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 353.

Daniel 10:18

Ver. 18. Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man,.... Or one like a man again touched him; the same that touched him before, Da 10:16, perhaps Gabriel, since he uses the same language in the following verse as he does Da 10:11:

and he strengthened me; both in body and mind, by his free and familiar conversation with him, and the comfortable words he spoke to him, a divine power accompanying them for that purpose.

Daniel 10:19

Ver. 19. And said, O man, greatly beloved,..... Or, "man of desires", as before, Da 10:11, which shows it to be the same here speaking as there, and probably Gabriel:

fear not; for a man has nothing to fear, from men or devils, that is beloved of the Lord; and especially from good angels, how glorious and majestic soever they are:

peace be unto thee; all prosperity of body and soul; inward peace of mind, a freedom from all hurry of thought, and commotion of the passions, and eternal peace and joy in the world to come:

be strong, yea, be strong; take heart, pull up the spirits, be of good courage, play the man; be strong in the Lord, and in his grace, and fear nothing: the word is repeated for the greater encouragement:

and when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened: divine power going along with his word; the prophet found his bodily strength renewed, his spirits revived, his heart cheerful, and his soul comforted, and all fear and dread removed from him; which was owing to the energy of divine grace; for otherwise not only men, but angels too, would speak in vain:

and said, let my lord speak, for thou hast strengthened me; and so was able to bear the sight of him, support in his presence, and hear his words, and take in what he said, which before he was unfit for; so an angel may be an instrument of strengthening a saint, yea, a prophet, and even our Lord Jesus Christ himself as man, Lu 22:43.

Daniel 10:20

Ver. 20. Then said he, knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee?.... He had told him before, Da 10:12, that it was on account of his prayers, and to bring an answer to them; and particularly to inform him what would befall his people in the latter day; and now, lest, through the hurry of his spirits, he had not observed it, or had forgot it, he reminds him of it, to stir up his desire the more after the knowledge of particulars, which he was now about to relate unto him: and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia; the evil spirit, in the court of Persia, he had been contesting with before, and had got the better of by the help of Michael; but since this good angel had been with Daniel, the evil one had been working upon the king and counsellors of Persia, and had wrought them up to an indifference unto, or carelessness about, the affairs of the people of the Jews, and to listen to their adversaries, whereby the building of the city and temple went on heavily and slowly; and so things were, through the evil influence of Satan, more or less, until the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus: and, indeed, Satan was continually soliciting mischief against the Jews, and stirring up enemies to them in the court of Persia, as long as that monarchy lasted, though he had not always the wished for success; the times of Esther and Mordecai are a proof of this:

and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come; meaning, when he was gone forth from the court of Persia, having done his business he was sent about; confounded the schemes and baffled the designs of the evil spirit, conquered him, and obliged him to give way, and cease from being troublesome any more, and obtained peace and rest for the Jews, and settled their affairs: the Persian monarchy being translated to the Grecians, the evil spirit began to work among them, to put them on doing mischief to the people of God; as in Alexander himself, who set out against them, but was pacified by the meeting of the high priest; and more especially in his successors; and above all in Antiochus, who was a violent persecutor of them; which this clause, as well as the following prophecy, has a respect unto.

Daniel 10:21

Ver. 21. But I will show that which is noted in the Scripture of truth,.... Not in the written word, though there are many things relating to what should befall the Jews in the latter day, especially in De 28:1 but in the decrees and purposes of God, which are sometimes signified by a book, and things written in it; because so particular and distinct, and so sure and certain, and which will be most truly, infallibly, and punctually performed: these are "noted", marked, engraven, in the eternal mind of God; they are "in writing", and they are "truth" {b}, as it may be rendered, since there is a distinguishing accent between "Scripture" and "truth": they are written in the book of God's decrees, and are his true and faithful words and sayings, and will most surely be accomplished: now these are the deep things of God, which angels themselves know nothing of, till they are revealed unto them: the angel here having a revelation of such of them as concerned the future monarchies of the earth, and the case of the Jews under them, promises to show them to Daniel; which was the work he was appointed to do:

and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your Prince; Christ the Prince of the kings of the earth, he was the Prince, Protector, and Guardian of the people of the Jews; he is the Angel that went before them in the wilderness, and guarded them in it, and guided them into the land of Canaan; he is the Angel of God's presence, that bore, carried, and saved them all the days of old, and was their King and their God, their Defender and Deliverer, still; he took their part, and was on their side; yea, he was on the side of, and took part with, them that were for them, the holy angels; and there was none but him that exerted his power, and strengthened Gabriel to act for them in "these things" relating to their peace and prosperity: or, "against these" {c}, as it may be rendered; against the princes of Persia and Greece, the evil spirits that worked in these kingdoms, in the children of disobedience there; and had it not been for him, and the exertion of his mighty power, it would have been soon all over with the people of the Jews; as it would be now with the church of Christ, of which they were typical, but the Lord is on their side; Michael the Archangel, and his angels under him, fight for it, protect and defend it; and since he is for his people, who shall be against them? or to what purpose will an opposition be? the gates of hell cannot prevail against the church of God, the saints of the most High.

{b} tma btkk Mwvrh ta "quod exaratum est in Scripto, [in Scripto] verace", Piscator. {c} hla le "contra illos", Piscator, Gejerus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Daniel 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL 11

In this chapter the angel makes good his promise to Daniel, that he would show him what was written in the Scripture of truth, concerning the monarchies of the earth, and what would befall his people the Jews in the latter days; and after he had observed that he had strengthened and confirmed Darius the Mede, who was the first king of the then present flourishing monarchy, Da 11:1, he foretells the number of the kings of Persia, and particularly describes the fourth, Da 11:2 predicts the rise of the Grecian monarchy under Alexander the great, and the disposition of it after his death, Da 11:3 and then proceeds to give an account of the two principal kingdoms of that monarchy, into which it was divided, the Seleucidae and Lagidae; and of their kings, the king of Egypt, and the king of Syria, under the names of the king of the south, and the king of the north, and of their power and agreement, Da 11:5 and then of their various wars between themselves and others, and the success of them, Da 11:7, and particularly of Antiochus, his character and manner of coming to the kingdom, and of his wars with the king of Egypt, and the issue of them, Da 11:21 and of his persecution of the Jews, and the distress he should bring on them, and the use it should be of to the godly among them, Da 11:30, and then his antitype, antichrist, is described; the western antichrist, his character and actions, Da 11:36 then the eastern, his power, wealth and riches, hail and rain, Da 11:40.

Ver. 1. Also I, in the first year of Darius the Mede,.... These words more properly belong to the preceding chapter, and should have concluded that, and the "eleventh" chapter should have begun in the next verse; and they are not the words of Daniel, as Jerom and others; but of the angel telling Daniel, not only what he had been lately doing, and would do in the court of Persia for his people; but what he had done in the beginning of that monarchy, the very first year that Darius the Mede became king of Babylon, and head of the whole monarchy; see **Da 5:30**, the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "in the first year of Cyrus"; which was the same time; for Darius and Cyrus reigned together.

Even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him; not Michael your Prince, as Jarchi; for he being no other than the Son of God, an uncreated Angel, needed not the help and assistance of a created one, nor could receive any strength and confirmation from such an one; unless this is to be understood, not with respect to Michael himself abstractly considered, but as in relation to the people of the Jews, on whose side Michael was; and so this angel took part with him and them, and as his minister served them both, in defending them, and taking care of their affairs at this time; so Jacchiades paraphrases it, to confirm and strengthen Israel: but it seems rather to design Darius, and the sense to be, that this angel strengthened Darius and Cyrus in their good intentions to let the people of Israel go free and give them full liberty and encouragement to go into their own land, and rebuild their city and temple; about which some doubts and hesitations might arise in their minds, and objections be made by some of their nobles and courtiers to it, being moved and influenced by an evil spirit, the adversary of this good angel; but he attended them so closely, and so strongly suggested to them what they should do in this case, that he carried his point on behalf of the Jews; for this respects not so much the destruction of the Chaldean monarchy, and the establishing the Persian monarchy on the ruins of it, and settling Darius on the throne, and strengthening his kingdom and interest, as the confirmation of him and Cyrus in their designs in favour of the Jews. The Syriac version is, "from the first year of Darius the Mede, he rose up to help me, and assist me"; as if the angel was still speaking of Michael, who came to his help against the prince of Persia, and was the only one that held with him, and had done so from the beginning of the Persian empire; but the Hebrew text will not admit of such a translation.

Daniel 11:2

Ver. 2. And now will I show thee the truth,.... And nothing but the truth; what will most certainly come to pass, and may be depended on, even what is written in the book of God's decrees, "the Scripture of truth", and which would appear in Providence in later times; and this he proposed to deliver to him, not in figurative, dark, and obscure expressions, but clearly and plainly, in language easy to be understood:

behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; which were Cyrus, who reigned alone after the death of Darius the Mede, his uncle; Cambyses, the son of Cyrus; and Darius Hystaspes. There was another between Cambyses and Darius, called Smerdis the magician, who reigned but seven months, and being an impostor is left out, as he is in Ptolemy's canon; not that these were all the kings of Persia after Darius the Mede; for, according to the above canon, there reigned six more after them; but because these kings had a connection with the Jews, and under them their affairs had different turns and changes, respecting their restoration and settlement, and the building of their city and temple; as also because these kings "stood", and the monarchy under them was strong and flourishing, whereas afterwards it began to decline; and chiefly it is for the sake of the fourth king that these are observed, who laid the foundation of the destruction of the Persian monarchy by the Grecians.

And the fourth shall be far richer than they all: this is Xerxes, who exceeded his predecessors in wealth and riches; enjoying what they by their conquests, or otherwise, had amassed together, to which he greatly added; Cyrus had collected a vast deal of riches from various nations, especially from Babylon: God gave him "the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places", Isa 14:3, Cambyses increased the store by his victories, and the plunder of temples wherever he came; out of the flames of which were saved three hundred talents of gold, and 2300 talents of silver, which he carried away, together with the famous circle of gold that encompassed the tomb of King Ozymandias {d}: and Darius, the father of Xerxes, laid heavy taxes upon the people, and hoarded up his money; hence he was called by the Persians kaphlov {e}, the huckster or hoarder: and Xerxes came into it all, and so became richer than them all; of whom Justin says {f}

"si regem species; divitias, non ducem laudes: quarum tanta copia in regno ejus fuit, ut cum flumina multitudine consumerentur, opes tamen regiae superessent."

And by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia; through his vast riches, which are the sinews of war, he collected a prodigious army out of all provinces, which he raised to make war against the Grecians; being moved to it by Mardonius, a relation of his, who was very ambitious of being at the head of a large army {g}; three years were spent in preparing for this expedition, and forces were gathered out of all parts of the then known habitable world; out of all the west, under Hamilcar, general of the Carthaginians, with whom he made a league; and out of all the east, under his own command: his army, according to Justin {h}, consisted of 700,000 of his own, and 300,000 auxiliaries; Diodorus Siculus {i} makes it much less, to be about 300,000 men; but Dr. Prideaux {k}, from Herodotus and others, computes, that putting all his forces together by sea and land, by the time he came to the straits of Thermopylae the number of them were 2,641,610 men; and Grotius, from the same writer reckons them 5,283,000, to which others add two hundred and twenty {l} with these he marched into Greece, where, after having done much mischief, he was shamefully defeated and obliged to retire, and was murdered by Artabanus the captain of his guards. The words may be rendered {m}, "he shall stir up all, even the realm of Grecia"; by the preparation he made, and the vast army he brought into the field, he raised all the cities and states of Greece to combine together to withstand him; and this step of his is what irritated the Grecians, and put them upon later attempts to avenge themselves on the Persians for this attack upon them; and which they never desisted from, till they had ruined the Persian empire, which they did under Alexander; and so he, in his letter to Darius, says {n},

"your ancestors entered into Macedonia, and the other parts of Greece, and did us damage, when they had received no affront from us as the cause of it; and now I, created general of the Grecians, provoked by you, and desirous of avenging the injury done by the Persians, have passed over into Asia."

And it is for the sake of this, the destruction of the Persian empire by Alexander, that this expedition of Xerxes is here hinted at; and to pave the way for the account of Alexander and his successors, in the following part of this prophecy.

{d} See the Universal History, vol. 5. p. 194. {e} Herodot. l. 3. sive Thalia, c. 89. {f} E Trogo, l. 2. c. 10. {g} Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 11. par. 2. p. 3. Ed. Rhodoman. {h} E Trogo, l. 2. c. 10. {i} Ut supra, (Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 11.) par. 2. p. 2. {k} Connexion, &c. part 1. B. 4. p. 233, 234. {l} See the Universal History, vol. 5. p. 233. {m} Nwy twklm ta lkh ryey "excitabit universos, nempe regnum" Graciae, Michaelis. {n} Apud Arrian. Exped. Alexand. l. 2.

Daniel 11:3

Ver. 3. And a mighty king shall stand up,.... Not in Persia, but in Greece; Alexander the great, who rose up a hundred years after the above expedition of Xerxes, and "stood" and flourished, and conquered all he attacked, none being able to resist him; and is rightly called a "mighty king", a very powerful one: this is the notable horn in the he goat, which being exasperated by the ram, the Persians, and their invasion of Greece, pushed at them, and destroyed them, **Da 8:5**: that shall rule with great dominion; not in Greece only but in the whole world, at least as he thought, and really did over a very great part of it; for, as Jerome says, having conquered the Illyrians, Thracians, Greece, and Thebes, he passed into Asia; and, having put to flight the generals of Darius, he took the city of Sardis, and afterwards India.

And do according to his will; not only in his own army, sacrificing his best friends at his pleasure; but with his enemies, conquering whom he would, none being able to withstand him; all things succeeded to his wish; whatever he attempted he performed. His historian {o} says of him,

"that it must be owned he owed much to virtue, but more to fortune, which alone of all mortals he had in his power;"

since, by the benefit of it, he seemed to do with nations whatever he pleased; he was sovereign in all things, and set himself to be worshipped as a deity.

{o} Curtius, l. 10. c. 5.

Daniel 11:4

Ver. 4. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken,.... When Alexander was risen up to his highest pitch of grandeur, was sole monarch of the world, in the height of his ambition, in the prime of his days, he was cut off by death; his kingdom remained no more one, but became many, was seized by different persons, his generals, and so broke to pieces:

and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; which seem to have respect to the four horns or kings, which came up in his place, **Da 8:8**, and among whom his kingdom was parted; Ptolemy reigned in Egypt to the south; Antigonus in Asia to the north; Seleucus in Babylon and Syria to the east; and Cassander in Macedonia to the west:

and not to his posterity; for though he had two sons, one by Barsine, whose name was Hercules, who was living at his death; and another by Roxane, born after his death, whose name was Alexander; yet they were both destroyed by Cassander, or his means, that he might enjoy Macedonia {p}:

nor according to his dominion which he ruled; their dominion was not so large and powerful as Alexander's was, being divided into several parts; see **Da 8:22**: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others besides those; either besides his posterity, who had no share in it, and so, with respect to his family, was like a tree plucked up by the roots, and, as to their concern in it, withered away at once; or, besides the four governors before mentioned, there were others that had, at least for a while, some lesser shares in the kingdom, as Eumenes, Philotas, Leonnatus, and others; but, at length, all were reduced to the kings of Egypt and Syria, the Lagidae and Seleucidae, which the following part of the prophecy chiefly concerns; and, besides these, for the Romans also, to whom this kingdom came.

{p} Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 19. p. 739. & l. 20. p. 761.

Daniel 11:5

Ver. 5. And the king of the south shall be strong,.... That is, the king of Egypt, which lay south to Syria, as Syria lay north to Egypt; and therefore the king of the one is called the king of the south, and the other the king of the north, throughout this prophecy; and by the king of the south, or Egypt, is here meant Ptolemy Lagus, one of Alexander's generals, who had Egypt for his share; and a very powerful king he was; for he reigned over Egypt, Lybia, Cyrene, Ethiopia, Arabia, Phoenicia, Coelesyria, Cyprus, and several isles in the Aegean sea, and many cities in Greece:

and one of his princes; not of Ptolemy king of Egypt, but of Alexander the great; and this is Seleucus Nicator, afterwards called king of the north, having Syria for his part, which lay to the north of Egypt, as before observed:

and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; that is, be a greater and more powerful prince than Ptolemy king of Egypt:

his dominion shall be a great dominion; even greater than the others; for he reigned over Macedonia, Greece, Thrace, Asia, Syria, Babylonia, Media, and all the eastern countries as far as India; even from Taurus to the river Indus, and so likewise from Taurus to the Aegean sea: these two are only mentioned, who shared the Persian monarchy, because the Jews were only affected by them, for the sake of whom this prophecy is delivered.

Daniel 11:6

Ver. 6. And in the end of years they shall join themselves together,.... The two kings of Egypt and Syria; not the two former kings, but their successors: the king of Egypt was Ptolemy Philadelphus, the second king of Egypt, the son of Ptolemy Lagus; this is the king of Egypt who collected such a vast number of books into his library at Alexandria, and got the law of Moses translated into Greek: the king of Syria was Antiochus, surnamed Theos; this name was first given him by the Milesians, upon his delivering them from the tyranny of Timarchus governor of Caria; he was the third king of Syria; Seleucus Nicator the first, Antiochus Soter the second, and this the third: there had been very great wars between these kings for many years; and now, being weary of them, they entered into confederacies and alliances with each other, and which were designed to be strengthened by a marriage next mentioned; this is thought to be about seventy years after the death of Alexander: {q}

for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement; this was Bernice, daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus king of Egypt, who carried her to Pelusium, and from thence sailed with her to Seleucia in Syria; where he met with Antiochus king of Syria, to whom he gave her in marriage, with a vast dowry of gold and silver; hence she was called fernoforov; and the marriage was celebrated with great solemnity {r}: and this was "to make agreement", or "to make things right or straight" {s}; that were wrong and crooked before; to put an end to wars and discords; to make peace and cultivate friendship; to strengthen alliances, and confirm each other in their kingdoms:

but she shall not retain the power of the arm; unite the two kingdoms, and secure the peace of them, which was the thing in view; nor retain her interest in her husband, nor her power at court; for, as soon as her father was dead, Antiochus dismissed Bernice from his bed, and took Laodice his former wife again, by whom he had had two sons, Seleucus Callinicus, and Antiochus Hierax {t}:

neither shall he stand, nor his arm; neither Antiochus; for Laodice, knowing that by the late treaty the crown was settled upon the children of Bernice, who already had a son by him, and sensible of his fickleness, and fearing he might divorce her again, and take to Bernice, got him poisoned by his servants: nor Bernice his queen, called "his arm"; who fleeing to Daphne for shelter, on hearing what was done, was there slain; or it may be his son he had by her, so it follows:

but she shall be given up; into the hands of Seleucus Callinicus, the son of Laodice; whom she placed on the throne after the death of his father; and who sent to Daphne to slay Bernice, which was accordingly done {u}:

and they that brought her; into Syria; that attended her from Egypt at her marriage, and continued with her in the court of Syria, and fled with her to Daphne:

and he that begat her: or, "whom she brought forth"; as in the margin; her little son, who was murdered at the same time with her; for her father died before:

and he that strengthened her in these times; either her husband, or her father, who were both dead before, and so stood not, and could not help her; unless this is to be understood of her brother, and the cities of the lesser Asia, who, hearing of her distress at Daphne, set out for her relief, but came too late; she and her son were both slain first {w}.

{q} See the Universal History, vol. 9. p. 384. {r} Ibid. p. 196. & Jerom. in loc. {s} Myrvym twvel "ad faciendum reetitudines", Pagninus, Michaelis; "ut faciat rectitudines", Montanus; "recta", Calvin. {t} Universal History, vol. 9, p. 196, 197. {u} Ibid. {w} Justin, l. 27. c. 1.

Daniel 11:7

Ver. 7. But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate,.... Or, "out of a branch of her roots a shoot thereof shall stand or rise up" {x}; by "her roots" are meant her ancestors, particularly Ptolemy Lagus; by "a branch" from thence, Ptolemy Philadelphus her father; and by the "shoot" out of that, or its plantation, as the Vulgate Latin version, is designed her brother, Ptolemy Euergetes; who succeeded her father in the kingdom, and stood firm in it; "upon his basis" {y}, as some render it:

which shall come with an army; or, "to an army" {z} as soon as he heard of his sister's case, he put himself at the head of an army, and marched to her relief; but coming too late, he, and the forces of the lesser Asia, which came for the same purpose, joining him, resolved to revenge the death of his sister and her son, went with his army into Syria, as next foretold:

and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north; the king of Syria, Seleucus Callinicus: Ptolemy entered into Syria itself, as Polybius {a} says, into the fortified cities of it, and took them, the singular being put for the plural; unless Seleucia itself is particularly designed, which Ptolemy seized, and put a garrison of Egyptians in it, which held it twenty seven years {b}:

and shall deal against them; besiege and take them at his pleasure; the king of Syria not being able to stand against him and defend them:

and shall prevail; over the king of Syria, and conquer great part of his dominions, as he did: he took Syria and Cilicia, and the superior parts beyond Euphrates, and almost all Asia, as Jerome relates; and had it not been for a sedition in his own kingdom, which called him home, he had made himself master of the whole kingdom of Seleucus, as Justin {c} says.

{x} wnk "plantatio ejus", V. L. {y} "Super basi sua", Pagninus, Gejerus. {z} lyxh la "ad exercitum", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Michaelis. {a} Hist. l. 5. {b} See Prideaux, Connexion, part 2. B. 2. p. 100. {c} Ut supra. (Justin, l. 27. c. 1.)

Daniel 11:8

Ver. 8. And shall also carry captive into Egypt their gods, with their princes,.... Jerom relates, from the historians he conversed with, that Ptolemy carried captive with him into Egypt two thousand five hundred images; among which were many of the idols which Cambyses, when he conquered Egypt, carried from thence; and Ptolemy replacing them in their proper temples, gained him the affection of his people the Egyptians, who were much addicted to idolatry; hence they gave him the name of Euergetes, that is, "the benefactor":

and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; the same writer reports, that he brought with him out of Syria, and the places he conquered, forty thousand talents of silver, and precious vessels; vessels of gold and silver, a prodigious number:

and he shall continue more years than the king of the north; according to the canon of Ptolemy, this king of Egypt reigned twenty five years; and, as Dr. Prideaux {d} observes, outlived Seleucus king of Syria four years.

{d} Connexion, part 2. B. 2. p. 81.

Daniel 11:9

Ver. 9. So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom,.... Into his own kingdom, the kingdom of Egypt; or into the kingdom of Syria, the kingdom of Seleucus, and conquer great part of it, and ravage and spoil it:

and shall return into his own land; the land of Egypt; he shall go and come with ease, and as he pleases, none to hinder him; and come back with a great spoil, as before related: Cocceius renders it, and something "shall come in the kingdom of the king of the south, and he shall return to his own land"; and thinks this refers to the sedition raised there, before mentioned, which obliged him to return sooner than he intended. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "and he shall enter into the kingdom of the king of the south, and he shall return to his own land": that is, Seleucus should attempt to enter into the kingdom of Ptolemy king of Egypt, in revenge of his having entered into his country and spoiled it; but shall be obliged to return to his own land without any success: and so Justin {e} says, that he fitted out a great fleet, which was destroyed by a violent storm; and after this he raised a great army to recover his dominion, but was defeated by Ptolemy, and fled in great terror and trembling to Antioch; and this suits well with what follows.

{e} Ut supra, (Justin, l. 27.) c. 2.

Daniel 11:10

Ver. 10. But his sons shall be stirred up,.... Not of the king of the south, or Egypt, but of the king of the north, or Syria; the sons of Seleucus Callinicus, who died, as Justin {f} says, by a fall from his horse; these were Seleucus Ceraunus and Antiochus, who was afterwards called the great: these being irritated and provoked by what Ptolemy Euergetes had done in revenge of his sister, taking part of their father's kingdom from him, and carrying off so rich a booty, joined together, and exerted themselves to recover their dominions from him:

and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: or, "a multitude of men, even large armies" {g}; which they put themselves at the head of, in order to make war with the king of Egypt:

and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through; this is to be understood of Antiochus; for Seleucus dying in the third year of his reign, being slain in Phrygia, through the treachery of Nicator and Apaturius, as Jerom relates; or, as others, poisoned; Antiochus succeeded him, and alone headed the armies they had collected; and with which, like an inundation of water, to which armies are sometimes compared, he attacked Seleucia, and took it; and entered into Coelesyria, and overran it, being delivered into his hands by the treachery of Theodotus, who governed there for Ptolemy, whom he had offended: after this he came to Berytus, entered the province by a place which the countrymen called "the face of God"; and which Grotius, not improbably, takes to be Phanuel: took the town of Botris, and set fire to Trieres and Calamus, or Calene: he next invaded Palestine, and took several places in it; went as far as Rabata Massane, or Rabatamana, a city in Arabia, the same with Rabbathammon, which surrendered to him {h}:

then shall he return, and be stirred up even to his fortress: the spring following he returned with a numerous army, and came to Raphia, a fortified city in Egypt, which lay between that and Palestine; where, as Strabo {i} says, Ptolemy the fourth (i.e. Philopator) fought with Antiochus the great.

{f} Ibid. (Justin, l. 27.) c. 3. {g} Mybr Mylyx Nwmh "multitudinem, copias amplas", Junius & Tremellius. {h} Vid. Polybium, l. 5. p. 256, 260, 261, 262. and Universal History, vol. 9. p. 216, 218, 219. {i} Geograph. l. 16. p. 522.

Daniel 11:11

Ver. 11. And the king of the south shall be moved with choler,.... This is Ptolemy Philopator, who succeeded Ptolemy Euergetes in the kingdom of Egypt; so called ironically, because of his murder of his father and mother, as Justin {k} relates; the same, though naturally sluggish and slothful, was provoked and exasperated at the proceedings of Antiochus, retaking Coelesyria, invading Palestine, and coming up to the borders of his kingdom:

and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: he assembled an army, and marched with them, from the interior part of his kingdom, to the border of it, to Raphia, a city between Rhinocorura and Gaza; where he met with Antiochus, and a battle was fought, as before observed:

and he shall set forth a great multitude; this is true of both kings, their armies were very large; that of Ptolemy king of Egypt consisted, according to Polybius {l}, of seventy thousand foot, five thousand horse, and seventy three elephants and that of Antiochus king of Syria consisted of sixty two (some say seventy two) thousand foot, six thousand horse, and a hundred and two elephants: the former army, that of the king of Egypt, seems rather designed, if the preceding clause is consulted; though the latter, that of Antiochus, best agrees with what follows:

but the multitude shall be given into his hand: that is, the multitude of the army of Antiochus should be delivered into the hands of Ptolemy Philopator, and so it was; for Antiochus lost ten thousand footmen, and three hundred horsemen; four thousand footmen were taken, three elephants slain, and two wounded, which afterwards died, and most of the rest were taken {m}: this victory is ascribed to Arsinoe, the sister and wife of Ptolemy, who ran about the army with her hair dishevelled, and by entreaties and promises greatly encouraged the soldiers to fight; of which see third Maccabees chapter one and with which Polybius {n} agrees.

{k} E Trogo, l. 29. c. 1. {l} L. 5. p. 266. {m} Polybius, l. 5. p. 269. {n} Ibid. p. 268.

Daniel 11:12

Ver. 12 And when he hath taken away the multitude,.... That is, when Ptolemy king of Egypt had defeated the large army of Antiochus, killed great numbers of them, and taken many:

his heart shall be lifted up; with pride, through the victory he obtained; and so he gave himself up to sensuality and luxury, judging himself now safe and secure in the possession of his kingdom: or, this may refer to his insolence, when he entered into Judea, went to Jerusalem, and forced his way into the holiest of all to offer sacrifice upon his victory; of which see third Maccabees chapter one:

and he shall cast down many ten thousands; or "many thousands", as the

Vulgate Latin version; or rather "ten thousand" {m}, either of the Jews, when he went into their country; or of the army of Antiochus the king of the north, as Jacchiades: and it may be rendered, "though he shall cast down many thousands" {n}; that is, cast them down to the earth, slay them, as he did, even ten thousand of them, the number here mentioned:

yet he shall not be strengthened by it; for Antiochus escaped out of his hands, nor did he pursue his victory, and take all the advantages of it, as he might have done; for, as the historian {o} says, had he added valour to his fortune, he might have spoiled Antiochus of his kingdom; but, content with the recovery of the cities he lost, made peace, and greedily took the advantage of ease, and rolled himself in luxury, uncleanness, and intemperance.

{m} twabr "decem millia", Pagninus, Montanus, so Ben Melech. {n} lyphw "etiamsi dejiciet", Gejerus; "quamvis prostraverit", Michaelis. {o} Justin, l. 30. c. 1.

Daniel 11:13

Ver. 13. For the king of the north shall return,.... As Antiochus king of Syria did, upon the death of Ptolemy Philopator, who was succeeded by his son Ptolemy Epiphanes, a minor of five years of age: Antiochus took the advantage of this minority, and entered into a league with Philip king of Macedon, to divide the kingdom of Egypt between them; and marched an army into Coelesyria and Palestine, and made himself master of those countries:

and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former; bring a larger army into the field than he had done before, which Jerom says he brought out of the upper parts of Babylon; some say it consisted of three hundred thousand footmen, besides horsemen and elephants:

and shall certainly come (after certain years) with a great army, and with much riches; with all manner of provisions to supply his numerous army, and all proper accommodations for it; money to pay his soldiers, and beasts of burden to carry their baggage from place to place: this was about fourteen years after the former battle, as Dr. Prideaux {p} observes; and, according to Bishop Usher's annals, thirteen years.

{p} Connexion, par. 2. B. 2. p. 140.

Daniel 11:14

Ver. 14. And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south,.... The king of Egypt, Ptolemy Epiphanes being a minor; and while he was such, Antiochus king of Syria, and Philip king of Macedon, joined in alliance together, as before observed, to seize upon his kingdom, and divide it between them; and accordingly Antiochus began the war in Coelesyria and Phoenicia, and Philip went against Egypt and Samos, or Caria, according to Polybius {q}. Agathocles and Agathoclea, favourites of the former king of Egypt, laid a scheme of taking the regency into their hands during the minority of the young king; and these, being persons of dissolute lives, were hated by the Egyptians, which caused insurrections and seditions among themselves; and Scopas, a principal general in the army of the king of Egypt, formed a design of taking the government to himself:

also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision: this is directed to the Prophet Daniel, and respects the Jews his countrymen, at least some of them, refractory persons that broke through all laws of God and men; seditious men, disturbers of the public peace, and who lived upon the spoil and plunder of others; these either took the advantage of the disturbances in Egypt, and went thither, and plundered what they could, in a bold and audacious manner, and so helped to fulfil this prophecy; or during the troubles in their own land, through the kings of Egypt and Syria, took the opportunity of committing thefts and robberies in a very daring manner, whereby they brought upon them those evils threatened in the law to such persons; and particularly when the Egyptians prevailed, they sided with them against Antiochus, especially such who apostatized from their religion to please the king of Egypt; but were afterwards punished by Antiochus, as it follows:

but they shall fall: be cut off and destroyed, as those apostates that were of Ptolemy's party were by Antiochus, when he invaded Judea, and became master of Jerusalem; see third Maccabees chapter one. Some understand this of the apostate Jews, who fled with Onias the high priest to Egypt, and were there honourably received by Ptolemy, and obtained leave to build a temple there, under pretence of fulfilling the vision or prophecy in Isa 19:19, which continued many years to the times of the Romans, by whom it was destroyed; but this does not agree with the reign of this king of Egypt; for it was in the times of Ptolemy Philometor that this affair happened, as Josephus {r} relates.

Sir Isaac Newton interprets it of the Samaritans {s}.

{q} Hist. l. 3. in initio. {r} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 3. sect. 1. {s} Vid. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 12. c. 4. sect. 1.

Daniel 11:15

Ver. 15. So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities,.... That is, Antiochus the great, king of Syria, should come into Coelesyria and Phoenicia, which was the part of the kingdom of Egypt he was to have by the league with Philip king of Macedon; and this is a prophecy of his expedition into those parts, and the success of it. Scopas, a general of Ptolemy, being sent by him into Coelesyria, had took many of the cities of it, and the land of Judea; but Antiochus, coming into those parts with his army, beat Scopas at the fountains of Jordan, and destroyed great part of his forces, and retook the cities of Coelesyria that Scopas had made himself master of, and subdued Samaria; upon which the Jews voluntarily submitted to him, and received him into their city, as Josephus {t} relates; and Polybius {u}, as quoted by him, says, that Scopas being conquered by Antiochus, he took Batanea, Samaria, Abila, and Godara, and that the Jews in a little time surrendered to him; and so Livy says {w}, that Antiochus reduced all the cities that Ptolemy had in Coelesyria into subjection to him; and these are the most fenced cities pointed at in this prophecy, against which the king of Syria cast up mounts, in order to take them; or placed battering engines before them, as the word also signifies, as Kimchi observes {x}, by which stones were cast into the besieged cities:

and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand; all the forces of the king of Egypt mustered together would not be able to withstand the power of Antiochus, who would, as he did, carry all before him; not their most powerful armies, nor most courageous generals, nor valiant soldiers, the choicest of them, nor any auxiliaries called in to their assistance; for when Scopas was beaten by Antiochus at Jordan, he fled to Sidon with ten thousand soldiers, where he was shut up in a close siege; and though Ptolemy sent his famous and choicest commanders to his relief, Eropus, Menocles, and Damoxenus, as Jerome relates; yet they were not able to raise the siege, but by famine were forced to surrender; and he and his men were dismissed naked.

{t} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 3. sect. 3. {u} Histor. l. 16. apud Joseph. ib. {w} Hist. l.

33. {x} Sepher Shorash. rad. llo.

Daniel 11:16

Ver. 16. But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him,.... Antiochus the great, who came against Ptolemy king of Egypt, would do in those parts where he came as he pleased; take cities, and dispose of them at his pleasure; the army of the king of Egypt not being able to oppose him, and stop his conquests in Coelesyria and Phoenicia; nor should they hinder his entrance into Judea:

and he shall stand in the glorious land; Judea, so called, not only because of its fertility, but chiefly because of the worship of God in it; here Antiochus stood as a victorious conqueror; the Jews readily submitting to him, and received him into their city, and assisted him in reducing the castle where Scopas had placed a garrison of soldiers:

which by his hand shall be consumed; by his numerous army, and the foraging of his soldiers, eating up and destroying the fruits of the earth wherever they came; otherwise the land of Judea, and the inhabitants of it, were not consumed and destroyed by him at this time; but rather brought into more flourishing circumstances, having many favours and privileges bestowed on them by him, on account of the respect they showed him; for, on his coming to Jerusalem, the priests and elders went out to meet him, and gladly received him and his army, and furnished him with horses and elephants, and helped him in reducing the garrison Scopas had left {y}, as before observed: hence some render the words, "which by his hand was perfected" {z}; restored to perfect peace and prosperity, which had been for some years harassed and distressed by the Egyptians and Syrians, in their turns being masters of it; the elders, priests, and Levites, he freed from tribute, gave them leave to live according to their own laws, granted them cattle and other things for sacrifice, and wood for the repairing and perfecting of their temple. The letters he wrote on this account are to be seen in Josephus {a}.

{y} Josephus, ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 12. c. 3. sect. 3.) {z} wdyb hlkw "et perficietur per eum", Grotius. {a} Josephus, ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 12. c. 3. sect. 3.)

Daniel 11:17

Ver. 17. He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom,.... Antiochus, having conquered Coelesyria, Phoenicia, and Judea, should set his face towards the land of Egypt, having a greedy desire after it, and bend his mind and forces that way; form a design of invading it, and for that purpose determine to bring all the forces he could master together throughout his dominions. So Justin {b} says, that upon the death of Ptolemy Philopator, Antiochus king of Syria determined to seize on Egypt. The Vulgate Latin version is, "that he might come to lay hold on his whole kingdom"; to seize the whole kingdom of the king of Egypt:

and upright ones with him: meaning, as many think, the Jews, so called to distinguish them from the Heathens, and even from those Jews who had took on the side of Ptolemy, and had changed their religion; but these persevered in it, which Antiochus approved of; and had now a great opinion of them, and had bestowed many favours upon them, as before observed; wherefore he might take some of them, and they might choose to go with him on this expedition, and especially to assist in his intended agreement with the king of Egypt, and the marriage of his daughter to him; in bringing about which they were to have a concern, as being reckoned men of probity and uprightness: or rather the sense is, according to the Vulgate Latin version,

and he shall do right things; in show and appearance: or "he shall make agreement", or peace, as Aben Ezra; enter into covenants of alliance and marriage, upon seeming just conditions, with a great show of sincerity and uprightness:

thus shall he do; in the following manner: or, "and he shall do" {c}; that is, succeed in his proposals:

and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her; this was the stratagem he used; finding he could not obtain the kingdom of Egypt by force of arms, for fear of the Romans, who were the guardians of the king of Egypt, he proposed to give his daughter Cleopatra to him in marriage, a beautiful virgin; and therefore called the "daughter of women"; or rather because she was as yet under the care of the women she was first committed to, as Gussetius {d} observes; and so he did marry her, and gave for her dowry Coelesyria, Samaria, Judea, and Phoenicia {e}: this was done at Raphia {f}, a fortified city of Egypt, where the famous battle had been fought between him

and Ptolemy Philopator; see
Da 11:10 and if the former clause is rendered, as I think it may, "he shall also set his face to enter into the fortress of the whole kingdom"; this is the place intended, where he was desirous of going to meet the king of Egypt, and execute this scheme of his; which, though done under a plausible pretence of peace, and of putting ahead to their quarrels, was with a view to get his kingdom into his hands; "corrupting" his daughter to betray the counsels of her husband; or to put him to death by poison, or otherwise, that he might seize the kingdom on her behalf; or it may be rendered, to "corrupt" or "destroy it" {g}, the kingdom; he married his daughter to the king of Egypt with this view, to obtain the kingdom from him:

but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him; being married, she forgot her own people, and her father's house, and cleaved to her husband; took his part, and not her father's, yea, took part with her husband against her father; for ambassadors were sent out of Egypt by both her husband and herself, congratulating the Romans on the victory Acilius gained over Antiochus her father, and that he had drove him out of Greece, exhorting them to carry their army into Asia {h}; and thus he was disappointed of his design in this marriage: and this may be the meaning of the expression here; for it may be rendered, "it shall not stand" {i}; his counsel shall not stand, his scheme shall not take place, but fall to the ground, and come to nothing:

and it shall not be for him; the kingdom shall not be his, he shall never possess it, as he did not.

{b} E Trogo, I. 31. c. 1. {c} hvew "et faciet", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Gejerus; "efficietque", Junius & Tremellius. {d} Ebr. Comment. p. 540. {e} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 12. c. 4. sect. 1. {f} Liv. Hist. l. 35. c. 13. p. 597. {g} htyxvhl "ad corrumpendum illam", Montanus, Gejerus. {h} Liv. ibid. l. 37. c. 3. p. 633. {i} dwmet al "et non succedet hoc", Grotius

Daniel 11:18

Ver. 18. After this he shall turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many,.... Finding himself disappointed in his design on the kingdom of Egypt, he turned his face, and steered his course another way, and with a large fleet sailed into the Aegean sea; and, as Jerom relates, took Rhodes, Samos, Colophon, and Phocea, and many other islands; and also several cities of Greece and Asia, which lay on the sea coasts; it being usual with the Jews to call such maritime places islands:

but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; the reproach that Antiochus cast upon the Romans, by seizing on their provinces, taking their cities, doing injuries to their allies, and treating their ambassadors with contempt: this the Romans wiped off by taking up arms against him, and gaining victories over him both by sea and land. The "prince" here may design the Romans in general, who, on their own behalf, or for their own honour, sent out armies and fleets against him, to put a stop to his insults over them; or some particular leader and commander of theirs, not a king, but a general or admiral, as Marcus Acilius, who beat him at the straits of Thermopylae; also Livius Salinator, who got the victory over his fleet about Phocea, where he sunk ten of his ships, and took thirteen; likewise Aemilius Regillus, who got the better of his fleet at Myonnesus, near Ephesus; and especially Lucius Scipio, who, in a land fight, beat him at Mount Siphylus, with an army of thirty thousand against seventy thousand, killed fifty thousand footmen of Antiochus's army, and four thousand horsemen, and took fourteen hundred prisoners, with fifteen elephants and their commanders {k}, and so drove him out of lesser Asia:

without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him; without any reproach to the Roman general; the reproach which Antiochus cast upon the Roman nation was turned upon his own head, by the many victories obtained over him by sea and land, and especially by the last and total defeat of him; for no other terms of peace could he obtain, but to pay all the expenses of the war, quit all Asia on that side Taurus, and give hostages, and his own son was one, in the Apocrypha:

"10 And there came out of them a wicked root Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king, who had been an hostage at Rome, and he reigned in the hundred and thirty and seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks." (1 Maccabees 1:10)

{k} See Liv. Hist. l. 36. & 37.

Daniel 11:19

Ver. 19. Then he shall turn his face towards the fort of his own land,.... After his defeat he fled with a few to Sardis, and from thence to Apamea, so Livy; and to Susa, and to the further parts of his dominions, as Jerom; or rather he betook himself to Antioch his capital city, called here "the fort of his own land", where he was obliged to continue:

but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found; the expenses of the war which Antiochus agreed to pay being reckoned at fifteen thousand Euboean talents, five hundred talents were to be paid down; two thousand five hundred at the ratification of the treaty by the senate of Rome; and the other twelve thousand to be paid yearly, at a thousand talents each year: now, being either in want of money, or through covetousness, he attempted to rob the temple of Jupiter Elymaeus, and went by night thither with his army for that purpose; but the thing being betrayed, the inhabitants got together, and slew him, with all his soldiers, as Justin {l} relates. Strabo {m} says, that Antiochus the great endeavouring to rob the temple of Bel, the barbarians near to (Elymais) rose of themselves, and slew him; and so never returned to Syria any more, but died in the province of Elymais, being slain by the Persians there, as related, and was never found more, or was buried; and this was the end of this great man, of whom so many things are said in this prophecy, and others follow concerning his successors. He died in the thirty seventh year of his reign, and the fifty second of his age {n}.

{l} E Trogo, l. 32. c. 2. {m} Geograph. l. 16. p. 512. {n} See the Universal History, vol. 9. p. 270.

Daniel 11:20

Ver. 20. Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom,.... This was not Antiochus Epiphanes, as Theodoret, he is designed in the next verse; nor Ptolemy Epiphanes; as Porphyry, for he did not succeed Antiochus the great; nor Tryphon, tutor to Antiochus, as some Jewish writers; but Seleucus Philopator, the eldest son of Antiochus the great; who succeeded him, and was settled in his kingdom in his father's room, and stood upon his basis; and might well be called a raiser of taxes, being not only a covetous man, and a lover of money above all things; and therefore laid heavy taxes on his subjects, to gratify his avarice; but was indeed obliged to it, to raise the thousand talents yearly to pay the Romans, which his father had laid himself under obligation to do; and this took up the whole life of this his successor; for as there were twelve thousand talents to pay, a thousand each year, and Seleucus reigned in all but twelve years at most, he did nothing but raise taxes yearly to pay this tribute. It may be rendered, "then shall stand upon his basis": or, "in his room", as the Vulgate Latin version, in the room of Antiochus the great, "one that causes the exactors to pass through the glory of the kingdom" {o}; that causes tax gatherers to go through the kingdom, and collect the tax of the people, who are the glory of the kingdom, especially the rich, the nobility, and gentry; or money, which is the glory of a nation: or, "shall cause the exactors to pass over to the glory of the kingdom"; that is, cause a tax gatherer to go over from Syria to the glorious land, or the glorious part of his dominion, the land of Judea; and so may have respect particularly to Heliodorus his treasurer, whom he sent to Jerusalem to demand the treasure of money he heard was laid up in the temple there; in the Apocrypha:

"Now when Apollonius came to the king, and had shewed him of the money whereof he was told, the king chose out Heliodorus his treasurer, and sent him with a commandment to bring him the foresaid money." (2 Maccabees 3:7)

but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle; or, within a few years, as Grotius and Prideaux render it; "days" being often put for years. Seleucus reigned but twelve years at most, which were but few in comparison of the long reign of his father, which was a reign of thirty seven years; and he died not through the rage of the populace, or through the sedition and rebellion of his subjects, nor in war, with a foreign enemy; but through the treachery of Heliodorus his treasurer, by whom he was poisoned, as is supposed; either for the sake of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was at that very time returning from Rome, where he had been an hostage ever since the defeat of his father, the money being now paid, which was stipulated; or rather on his own account, having a design to seize the kingdom for himself.

{o} twklm rdh vgwn rybem wnk le dmew "stabit autem super basillius, qui transire faciet exactorem per decus regni", Michaelis.

Daniel 11:21

Ver. 21. And in his estate shall stand up a vile person,.... Upon his basis or stand, in the same place where Seleucus Philopator stood, succeeded Antiochus Epiphanes his brother, called "vile", being a very immoral man, given to drunkenness, lasciviousness, uncleanness, and unnatural lusts, and a violent persecutor of the church of God. The word signifies "despicable" {p}; he was a vile person, and justly condemned for his vices, and also for that mean and ignoble life he had lived at Rome, having been an hostage there for eleven or twelve years; and though the other hostages were changed at three years' end, yet he remained; which shows what little account he was of even with his father; and was in no esteem with the people, among whom, by his freaks and frolics, he made himself very ridiculous; by rambling about streets with a servant or two; conversing with tradesmen about their trades; drinking with strangers, and people of low life; revelling at merry bouts with young people; putting on strange habits; throwing away his money among the rabble, and stones at those that followed him; washing at public baths among the common people; all which, and many others, are reported {q} of him by historians; hence he was called by some Epimanes the madman; though he took to himself the title of Epiphanes the "illustrious", the reverse of his character. This is the little horn in **Da 8:9** and who was an eminent type of antichrist, with whom his character agrees, as well as other things:

to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom; neither his father, nor his brother, nor the peers and people of the land of the kingdom of Syria; they never once thought of making him king; they neither chose him, nor called him, nor crowned him:

but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries; pretending to take it, not for himself, but for his nephew Demetrius, the son of his brother Seleucus, now an hostage at Rome, in his stead; so that the states opposed him not, but quietly admitted him, thinking all was safe for the rightful heir and successor; and when he had got possession for his nephew, he obtained it for himself by his flattering speeches to the nobles, and his gifts among the citizens, and his great pretensions to clemency and humanity; or these "flatteries" may refer to the artifices he used to gain Eumenes king of Pergamus, and Attalus his brother, to assist him against Heliodorus the usurper; and the promises of friendship and assistance against the Romans he made to them, and by whose help he came peaceably to the kingdom.

{p} hzbn "despectus", Pagninus, Montanus; "contemptus", Vatablus, Piscator, Tigurine version. {q} See Prideaux's Connexion, par. 2. B. 3. p. 153, 154, Out of Athenaeus, Diodorus, &c. and the Universal History, vol. 9. p. 276, 277, 289, 290.

Daniel 11:22

Ver. 22. And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflown from before him, and shall be broken,.... That is, by the help of the forces of Eumenes and Attalus, which were like an inundation of water, the party that were on the side of Heliodorus the usurper were bore down, crushed, and destroyed; and thereby Antiochus had a peaceable settlement in the kingdom: or, "the arms of a flood shall be overflowed from before him, and be broken" {r}; either the arms of Heliodorus, the forces he had got together; or the armies of the Egyptians, which, like an overflowing flood, had used to run over Judea, Coelesyria, Phoenicia, and other places, and carry all before them, now should be overflowed, and bore down themselves; of which see more on Da 11:25:

yea, also the prince of the covenant; which some understand of Judas Maccabaeus, as Jerome and Jacchiades; others more probably of Onias the high priest, whom Antiochus deposed in the first year of his reign, and sold the priesthood to Jason his younger brother for four hundred and forty talents of silver; and who also promised to give him one hundred and fifty more for a license to erect a place of exercise for the training up of youth, according to the fashion of the Greeks; which Antiochus greedily embraced, the public treasury being empty through the large tribute paid to the Romans the last twelve years; in the Apocrypha:

"7 But after the death of Seleucus, when Antiochus, called Epiphanes, took the kingdom, Jason the brother of Onias laboured underhand to be high priest, 8 Promising unto the king by intercession three hundred and threescore talents of silver, and of another revenue eighty talents: 9 Beside this, he promised to assign an hundred and fifty more, if he might have licence to set him up a place for exercise, and for the training up of youth in the fashions of the heathen, and to write them of Jerusalem by the name of Antiochians. 34 Wherefore Menelaus, taking Andronicus apart, prayed, him to get Onias into his hands; who being persuaded thereunto, and coming to Onias in deceit, gave him his right hand with oaths; and though he were suspected by him, yet persuaded he him to come forth of the sanctuary: whom forthwith he shut up without regard of justice. 35 For the which cause not only the Jews, but many also of other nations, took great indignation, and were much grieved for the unjust murder of the man." (2 Maccabees 4)

Others think Seleucus Philopator his brother is meant, which is not probable, his death being before described; rather Demetrius his nephew, with whom he covenanted to hold the kingdom for him, or through whom the covenant and peace with the Romans was continued so long, he being an hostage at Rome; though others are of opinion that Trypho, a peer of the realm of Egypt, is designed, who was the principal person concerned in a covenant made between Antiochus and Ptolemy Philometor king of Egypt; though it is more likely that Ptolemy himself is the person intended.

{r} wpjvy Pjvh twerzw "et brachia inundationis inundabantur", Cocceius, Michaelis "brachia inundantia", Piscator.

Daniel 11:23

Ver. 23. And after the league made with him,.... The prince of the covenant; either Demetrius his nephew, or Ptolemy Philometor king of Egypt, with whom a league was made in the lifetime of Cleopatra, the sister of Antiochus, and mother of Ptolemy:

he shall work deceitfully; either with the princes and people of Syria, by good words and fair speeches, and by gifts and presents, to get the kingdom for himself, though he had covenanted with his nephew to hold it for him, and resign it to him at his return; and with the Romans, and among his friends in the senate, he artfully worked to detain him at Rome: or else with the king of Egypt, pretending great friendship to him, and to take the care and tuition of him during his minority; and at his coronation he sent one Apollonius to be present at it, and to congratulate him upon it; in the Apocrypha:

"Now when Apollonius the son of Menestheus was sent into Egypt for the coronation of king Ptolemeus Philometor, Antiochus, understanding him not to be well affected to his affairs, provided for his own safety: whereupon he came to Joppa, and from thence to Jerusalem:" (2 Maccabees 4:21)

for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people; either he went into the heart of Syria with a small number of men at first, and gathered together a large army; or into Phoenicia with a handful of men, where he ingratiated himself into the affections of the people by words and gifts, and became strong; or he went up into Egypt accompanied only with a few, lest, the Egyptians should be suspicious of him; but these it is said were valiant men, whom he placed in the forts of Egypt, and so became master of it, which is an instance of his deceitful working; and Sutorius, an ancient historian, as quoted by Jerom, says that he subdued Egypt to himself with a very small number of people.

Daniel 11:24

Ver. 24. He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province,.... Or, "into tranquillity, and the fattest places of the province" {s}; that is, into such places as were in great tranquillity, and men thought themselves safe and secure, and had no suspicion of his designs upon them, and which abounded in wealth and riches: these were either the principal cities in the kingdom of Syria, which he visited in order to establish himself in their good opinion of him; or the chief places of the province of Phoenicia, where he endeavoured to make himself acceptable by his munificence; or it may be the best parts of the kingdom of Egypt are meant, the richest of them, such as Memphis, and the places about it; where, as Sutorius in Jerome says, he went; and which places being fat, producing a large increase, and abounding in wealth, invited him thither; and which wealth he took, and scattered among his friends and soldiers, as in a following clause:

and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; none of his ancestors, more near or more remote; not Antiochus the great, nor Seleucus Ceraunus, nor Seleucus Callinicus, nor Antiochus Theos, nor Antiochus Soter, nor Seleucus Nicator, the founder of the Syrian empire; for, however greater these might be in power or riches, they were inferior to him in success; though they all, or most of them, however, had their eye upon Egypt, and would gladly have been masters of it; yet none of the kings of Syria prevailed over it, as Antiochus did; and this may also refer to what follows:

he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches; which he took from the places or rich cities he entered into; and these he plentifully and liberally dispersed among his followers, his soldiers, "the small people" he became strong with, Da 11:23, whereby he gained their affections, and attached them to his interest; and in this his liberality and munificence he is said to abound above all the kings that were before him, in the Apocrypha:

"He feared that he should not be able to bear the charges any longer, nor to have such gifts to give so liberally as he did before: for he had abounded above the kings that were before him." (1 Maccabees 3:30)

and the character Josephus {t} gives of him is, that he was a man of a large and liberal heart:

yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds; the fortresses of

Egypt; as he got into the fat and richest parts of it, and distributed the wealth of them among his favourites and followers, which answered a good purpose; so he had his eye upon the fortified places of the kingdom, and contrived ways and means to get them into his possession, as Pelusium, and other places; and how to keep them when he had got them, which he did:

even for a time; till Ptolemy Philometor was at age, and freed himself from him; or till the Romans {u} put a stop to his power.

{s} ynmvmbw hwlvb "in quietem et in pinguia", Montanus; "in tranquillitatem et opima", Cocceius; "in tranquillitatem et in pinguissima", Michaelis. {t} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 7. sect. 2. {u} Vid. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 19. c. 5. sect. 2.

Daniel 11:25

Ver. 25. And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army,.... That is, Antiochus shall arouse himself, and exert his courage, and gather a large and powerful army, and set out with them to fight with Ptolemy Philometor, king of Egypt; this is his second expedition into Egypt, as is observed in the Apocrypha:

"About the same time Antiochus prepared his second voyage into Egypt:" (2 Maccabees 5:1)

before he went into Egypt more privately, with a few men, under a pretence of friendship; but now more openly as an enemy, with a large army; so it is said in the Apocrypha:

"17 Wherefore he entered into Egypt with a great multitude, with chariots, and elephants, and horsemen, and a great navy, 18 And made war against Ptolemee king of Egypt: but Ptolemee was afraid of him, and fled; and many were wounded to death." (1 Maccabees 1)

and he entered into Egypt with a great multitude, with chariots, and with elephants, and with horses, and with a great fleet; which account exactly agrees with this prophecy, and serves to illustrate it:

and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; this is Ptolemy Philometor, king of Egypt, who, hearing of the preparations of Antiochus, and of his design to enter his kingdom, gathered a large army together to give him battle:

but he shall not stand; the king of Egypt could not stand against Antiochus; the two armies met between Mount Casius and Pelusium, where they came, to a battle, and Antiochus got the victory: upon his second victory over the forces of Ptolemy, he took Pelusium, and led his army into the very heart of the kingdom, and had it in his power to have cut off all the Egyptians, to a man; he made himself master of Memphis, and all the rest of Egypt, except Alexandria, which held out against him {w}:

for they shall forecast devices against him; Antiochus, and those that assisted him with their counsels, formed schemes against Ptolemy, which succeeded: the loss of the battle was not owing to want of the necessary preparations for it; or to an insufficient number of men; or to a defect of military skill and courage; but to the treachery of his own courtiers and commanders, particularly Eulaeus and Lennaeeus to whom the blame was laid, and to the desertion of Ptolemy Macron; which is more clearly expressed in the following verse.

{w} See the Universal History, vol. 9. p. 280, 281.

Daniel 11:26

Ver. 26. Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him,.... Those of his own household, his familiar friends, his courtiers and counsellors, and the generals of his army; his destruction, or the loss of the battle, was owing either to the bad counsels they gave him, or to their desertion of him, being corrupted by Antiochus:

and his army shall overflow: that is, the army of Antiochus, like a mighty inundation of water, which carries all before it, should overflow, or bear down and destroy, the army of Ptolemy, and overrun all Egypt, as it did, as before related; no more resistance being to be made to it than to a rapid flood of water:

and many shall fall down slain: of the army of the king of Egypt. The account given of this affair in the Apocrypha:

"18 And made war against Ptolemee king of Egypt: but Ptolemee was afraid of him, and fled; and many were wounded to death. 19 Thus they got the strong cities in the land of Egypt and he took the spoils thereof." (1 Maccabees 1)

Josephus says {x}, that Antiochus,

"being with a great army at Pelusium, and circumventing Ptolemy Philometor by fraud, seized on Egypt; and being in the parts near to Memphis, and taking it, he hastened to Alexandria to besiege it, and got Ptolemy, reigning there, into his hands."

{x} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 5, sect. 2.

Daniel 11:27

Ver. 27. And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief,.... Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria, and Ptolemy Philometor, king of Egypt, the latter being now in the hands of the former; whether he was taken by him, or voluntarily came to him, is not certain; but though they seemed to carry it very friendly to one another, yet at the same time they were contriving in their minds to do as much mischief to each other as they could:

and they shall speak lies at one table: at an entertainment at Memphis, where they met to eat food together, which shows great familiarity; or at the council table, where they pretended to consult each other's good, and to secure the peace of both kingdoms, but imposed on each other with lies. Antiochus pretended a great respect for Ptolemy, and that he had nothing more at heart than to take care of his affairs, and defend him against his brother Euergetes, whom the Alexandrians had set up for king; when his design was no other than to seize the kingdom of Egypt for himself: on the other hand, Ptolemy seemed greatly satisfied with his uncle's protection, and to place great confidence in him; when his view was to disappoint his scheme, and come to an agreement with his brother; neither of them meant what they said:

but it shall not prosper; the consultations they held, the schemes they laid, succeeded not; the peace made between them did not last:

for yet the end shall be at the time appointed; by the Lord, by whom all events are predetermined; whose counsel shall stand, notwithstanding all the devices in the hearts of men, and of kings themselves: the end of this peace between these two kings, and the end of the wars between them, yea, the end of the two kingdoms, when they should cease, and come into other hands; all was fixed to a time appointed of God, and should surely come to pass, as he had decreed.

Daniel 11:28

Ver. 28. Then shall he return into his land with great riches,.... That is, Antiochus, with the spoils of Egypt, and the gifts and presents he had received there; so the author of the first book of Maccabees says,

"20 And after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt, he returned again in the hundred forty and third year, and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude, 21 And entered proudly into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof," (1 Maccabees 1)

that is, of the era of the Selucidae, and the fifth or sixth year of his reign:

and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; not the covenant he had made with Ptolemy, which was a fraudulent one; but the covenant between God and the Jews; whereby they became a distinct and peculiar people, having a religion, laws, and ordinances, different from all others; for which reason they were hated by other nations, and particularly by Antiochus; and his heart was the more enraged against them at this time, for the following reason; a false rumour being spread in Judea that Antiochus was dead, Jason took the opportunity to recover the office of high priest from his brother Menelaus; and, with a thousand men, took the city of Jerusalem, drove his brother into the castle, and slew many he took for his enemies. Antiochus, hearing of this, concluded the whole nation of the Jews had revolted from him; and therefore took Judea in his way from Egypt, in order to suppress this rebellion; in the Apocrypha:

"5 Now when there was gone forth a false rumour, as though Antiochus had been dead, Jason took at the least a thousand men, and suddenly made an assault upon the city; and they that were upon the walls being put back, and the city at length taken, Menelaus fled into the castle: 6 But Jason slew his own citizens without mercy, not considering that to get the day of them of his own nation would be a most unhappy day for him; but thinking they had been his enemies, and not his countrymen, whom he conquered. 11 Now when this that was done came to the king's ear, he thought that Judea had revolted: whereupon removing out of Egypt in a furious mind, he took the city by force of arms," (2 Maccabees 5)

and he shall do exploits; in Jerusalem, very wicked ones indeed! he ordered his soldiers to slay all they met, without mercy, old and young, women and children, virgins and young men; and in three days' time eighty thousand were slain, forty thousand bound, and no less sold: he went into the temple, and took all the vessels in it, and all the gold and silver, and hidden treasures of it, to the value of a thousand and eight hundred talents, in the Apocrypha:

"12 And commanded his men of war not to spare such as they met, and to slay such as went up upon the houses. 13 Thus there was killing of young and old, making away of men, women, and children, slaying of virgins and infants. 14 And there were destroyed within the space of three whole days fourscore thousand, whereof forty thousand were slain in the conflict; and no fewer sold than slain. 15 Yet was he not content with this, but presumed to go into the most holy temple of all the world; Menelaus, that traitor to the laws, and to his own country, being his guide: 16 And taking the holy vessels with polluted hands, and with profane hands pulling down the things that were dedicated by other kings to the augmentation and glory and honour of the place, he gave them away. 21 So when Antiochus had carried out of the temple a thousand and eight hundred talents, he departed in all haste unto Antiochia, weening in his pride to make the land navigable, and the sea passable by foot: such was the haughtiness of his mind." (2 Maccabees 5)

"23 He took also the silver and the gold, and the precious vessels: also he took the hidden treasures which he found. 24 And when he had taken all away, he went into his own land, having made a great massacre, and spoken very proudly. 25 Therefore there was a great mourning in Israel, in every place where they were;" (1 Maccabees 1)

and return to his own land; having done these exploits, he made what haste he could to Antioch, with the spoils of Egypt, and the plunder of the temple at Jerusalem, in the Apocrypha:

"And when he had taken all away, he went into his own land, having made a great massacre, and spoken very proudly." (1 Maccabees 1:24)

"So when Antiochus had carried out of the temple a thousand and eight hundred talents, he departed in all haste unto Antiochia, weening in his pride to make the land navigable, and the sea passable by foot: such was the haughtiness of his mind." (2 Maccabees 5:21)

Daniel 11:29

Ver. 29. At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south,.... At the time appointed of God, he should return from Syria again to Egypt; which was his third expedition thither, and was occasioned by the Alexandrians setting up the brother of Ptolemy Philometor for king; wherefore he hastened to Egypt with a large army, under a pretence of restoring the deposed king; but in reality to seize the kingdom for himself {y}:

but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter; this expedition should not succeed so well as the two former, as it did not; he could not carry his point, neither subdue Egypt, nor get any of the two brothers into his hands, as he had done before; the reason of which follows:

{y} See the Universal History, vol. 9. p. 282, 409.

Daniel 11:30

Ver. 30. For the ships of Chittim shall come against him,.... Ptolemy king of Egypt, and his brother, being come to an agreement, sent an embassy to the senate of Rome, to implore their help and assistance against Antiochus, who was preparing to besiege them in Alexandria; upon which they sent their ambassadors Caius Popilius Laenas, Caius Decimus, and Caius Hostilius, in ships from Macedonia {z}, or Greece, to Antiochus, to require him to desist from making war upon Ptolemy, and that he quit the land of Egypt; see Nu 24:24. Macedonia is called the land of Cittim, in the Apocrypha:

"And it happened, after that Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came out of the land of Chettiim, had smitten Darius king of the Persians and Medes, that he reigned in his stead, the first over Greece," (1 Maccabees 1:1)

"Beside this, how they had discomfited in battle Philip, and Perseus, king of the Citims, with others that lifted up themselves against them, and had overcome them:" (1 Maccabees 8:5)

Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Saadiah, and Jacchiades, interpret it of the Romans; and, according to Gorionides {a}, Cittim are the Romans; and Jerom here interprets them of them; and Bochart has proved at large {b} that they are meant. The word seems to be used both of Grecians and Romans, and here of Romans in Grecian ships:

therefore he shall be grieved, and return; being obliged to it, sore against his will: as soon as he saw Popilius, with whom he had contracted a friendship while he was an hostage at Rome, he offered his hand to kiss; but Popilius refused it, and observed that private friendship should give way to public interest; and then produced the decree of the senate, and delivered it to him, and required his answer; but Antiochus delaying, telling him he would consult his friends, Popilius, with a rod in his hand, drew a circle round him, and bid him consult his friends directly; adding that he should not stir from that circle till he had given a positive answer; which roughness struck him, and, hesitating a little, he replied he would obey the senate, as Justin {c}, Livy {d}, Velleius Paterculus {e}, and other historians, relate; and upon which he at once departed with his army, though fretted and vexed to the last degree:

and have indignation against the holy covenant; the Jews, God's covenant people; on whom he gratified his revenge, sending Apollonius, with an army of twenty two thousand men, to whom he gave orders to slay the men, and sell the women and children; and who committed many outrages in the city and temple: now it was the daily sacrifice was made to cease, and the abomination of desolation set up, as in the following verse, and all that done predicted in **Da 8:10**, this was two years after his former expedition into Egypt, and the havoc he made upon his return from thence, and in the eighth year of his reign, and one hundred and forty fifth of the Seleucidae; in the Apocrypha:

"And spake peaceable words unto them, but all was deceit: for when they had given him credence, he fell suddenly upon the city, and smote it very sore, and destroyed much people of Israel." (1 Maccabees 1:30)

"He sent also that detestable ringleader Apollonius with an army of two and twenty thousand, commanding him to slay all those that were in their best age, and to sell the women and the younger sort:" (2 Maccabees 5:24)

so shall he do; such wicked deeds as before declared, in his wrath and fury against the Jews, being provoked at his disappointment in Egypt:

he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant: apostate Jews, who had renounced their religion, forsook the law of God, and the ordinances of his worship, and turned Heathens; of whom it is said, agreeably to the language of this prophecy, and seemingly with a view to it,

that they made themselves uncircumcised, and departed from the holy covenant, in the Apocrypha:

"And made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen, and were sold to do mischief." (1 Maccabees 1:15)

with these Antiochus kept an intelligence, and held a correspondence, in order not only to know the affairs of the Jews from time to time, but to draw them off from their religion, and propagate Heathenism among them; such as Jason, Menelaus, and others; in the Apocrypha:

"12 So this device pleased them well. 13 Then certain of the people were so forward herein, that they went to the king, who gave them licence to do after the ordinances of the heathen: 14 Whereupon they built a place of exercise at Jerusalem according to the customs of the heathen: 15 And made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen, and were sold to do mischief. 43 Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed unto idols, and profaned the sabbath. 44 For the king had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem and the cities of Juda that they should follow the strange laws of the land, 45 And forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the temple; and that they should profane the sabbaths and festival days:" (1 Maccabees 1)

{z} Vid. Liv. Hist. l. 45. c. 10. {a} Heb. Hist. l. 1. c. 1. p. 7. {b} Phaleg. l. 3. c. 5. {c} E Trogo, l. 34. c. 2, 3. {d} Hist. l. 45. c. 12. {e} Roman. Histor. l. 1.

Daniel 11:31

Ver. 31. And arms shall stand on his part,.... Powerful armies sent by him into Judea; garrisons of soldiers placed in Jerusalem; mighty generals and commanders who fought for him, as Lysias, Philip the Phrygian, Andronicus, Apollonius, Bacchides, and others:

and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength; the temple, which stood in Jerusalem, a fortified city, and was itself a building strong and stable; and especially it was so called, because here the mighty God had his residence, the symbol of which was the ark of his strength, and here he gave strength unto his people: this holy place, sacred to his worship and service, the commanders and soldiers of Antiochus defiled by entering into it, who were men unholy and unclean; by making it a place of luxury and rioting, of whoredom, and all manner of uncleanness; by bringing things into it which were not lawful, and filling the altar with what was abominable, in the Apocrypha:

"4 For the temple was filled with riot and revelling by the Gentiles, who dallied with harlots, and had to do with women within the circuit of the holy places, and besides that brought in things that were not lawful. 5 The altar also was filled with profane things, which the law forbiddeth." (2 Maccabees 6)

particularly by erecting a high place upon the altar, and sacrificing swine upon it, as Josephus {f} relates; with which agrees what is said of Antiochus, in the Apocrypha in is written that he ordered:

"46 And pollute the sanctuary and holy people: 47 Set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh, and unclean beasts:" (1 Maccabees 1)

and shall take away the daily sacrifice; the sacrifice of the lamb in the morning, and in the evening, which the priests were hindered from offering, by the crowds of Heathens in the temple; or prohibited by the order of Antiochus; for he forbad burnt offerings, sacrifice, and libation, to be made in the temple, in the Apocrypha:

"Set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh, and unclean beasts:" (1 Maccabees 1:47)

and Josephus {g} expressly says, that he forbad the daily sacrifices to be offered, which were used to be offered to God, according to the law: and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate; either a garrison of Heathen soldiers in the temple, which drove the priests and people from it, and made it desolate; or rather an idol in it, it being usual in Scripture to call idols abominations, as they are to God and all good men; the image of Jupiter Olympius, as is thought, which was placed upon the altar of God by Antiochus, on the fifteenth day of the month Cisieu, in the hundred and forty fifth year of the Seleucidae, and is called the abomination of desolations, in the Apocrypha:

"And whosoever was found with any the book of the testament, or if any committed to the law, the king's commandment was, that they should put him to death." (1 Maccabees 1:57)

and the temple itself was ordered to be called the temple of Jupiter Olympius, in the Apocrypha:

"And to pollute also the temple in Jerusalem, and to call it the temple of Jupiter Olympius; and that in Garizim, of Jupiter the Defender of strangers, as they did desire that dwelt in the place." (2 Maccabees 6:2)

and what with this and other things that were done, the temple and city were left desolate; for it is said in the Apocrypha:

"Now Jerusalem lay void as a wilderness, there was none of her children that went in or out: the sanctuary also was trodden down, and aliens kept the strong hold; the heathen had their habitation in that place; and joy was taken from Jacob, and the pipe with the harp ceased." (1 Maccabees 3:45)

It may be rendered, "the abomination that maketh astonished" {h}; for it struck the people of the Jews with astonishment; it amazed and stupefied them, when they saw such an idol placed in their temple. The Karaite Jews, who by the others are called Sadducees, give a very foreign interpretation of this passage, which Aben Ezra observes:

"it is marvellous (says he) that the wise men of the Sadducees should explain this of future time, and say that this sanctuary is Mecca, where the Ishmaelites or Turks keep a feast; "the daily sacrifice", to be removed, their five prayers; and the "abomination" set up is their idolatrous worship."

Sir Isaac Newton understands all this of the Romans, and their building a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, where the temple in Jerusalem had stood.

{f} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 5. sect. 4. {g} Ibid. {h} Mmwvm Uwqyvh "abominationem obstupefacientem", Montanus; "quae obstupefaciet", Calvin.

Daniel 11:32

Ver. 32. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupted by flatteries,.... That forsook the law of God, the book of the covenant, and did things contrary to it; and particularly violated the covenant of circumcision, drawing on the foreskin, and becoming uncircumcised; as well as rejected other ordinances of religious worship the Jews by covenant were obliged to observe: these apostates Antiochus corrupted by good words and fair speeches, by gifts and presents; and they became his tools, to do his pleasure, and were his instruments to seduce the Jews to renounce their religion, and give in to his idolatry; such as Jason, Menelaus, and others; in the Apocrypha:

"Now when the kingdom was established before Antiochus, he thought to reign over Egypt that he might have the dominion of two realms." (1 Maccabees 1:16)

"Now such was the height of Greek fashions, and increase of heathenish manners, through the exceeding profaneness of Jason, that ungodly wretch, and no high priest;" (2 Maccabees 4:13)

"Yet was he not content with this, but presumed to go into the most holy temple of all the world; Menelaus, that traitor to the laws, and to his own country, being his guide:" (2 Maccabees 5:15)

"But they that had the charge of that wicked feast, for the old acquaintance they had with the man, taking him aside, besought him to bring flesh of his own provision, such as was lawful for him to use, and make as if he did eat of the flesh taken from the sacrifice commanded by the king;" (2 Maccabees 6:21)

but the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits; such who knew the Lord God of Israel to be the true God, and owned and acknowledged him as such; and not only professed him, but served and worshipped him, having a spiritual knowledge of him, and communion with him; and therefore could not be drawn off from him and his worship by flatteries or frowns, by promises or menaces: these were strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; they held fast their religion, and the profession of it, and were proof against all allurements or threatenings, and endured racks and tortures, all sorts of punishment, and death in every shape, with the greatest constancy and courage; such as Eleazar, the mother and her seven sons, and others; as well as others did many valiant actions in the defence of themselves and country, as Mattathias, Judas Maccabaeus, and his brethren; to which heroic actions the apostle refers in Heb 11:34, so Josephus {i} says,

"that many of the Jews indeed, some willingly, and others through fear of punishment, obeyed the king's commands; but the more approved, and those of generous minds, had a greater regard to the customs of their country than to the punishment threatened to the disobedient; and for this being continually harassed, and enduring grievous punishments, died; some were scourged, and their bodies mutilated, and being yet alive and breathing, were crucified; women and their children, whom they crucified, were by the king's orders strangled, and hanged about the necks of their parents that were crucified;"

In the Apocrypha:

"60 At which time according to the commandment they put to death certain women, that had caused their children to be circumcised. 61 And they hanged the infants about their necks, and rifled their houses, and slew them that had circumcised them. 62 Howbeit many in Israel were fully resolved and confirmed in themselves not to eat any unclean thing. 63 Wherefore the rather to die, that they might not be defiled with meats, and that they might not profane the holy covenant: so then they died. 64 And there was very great wrath upon Israel." (1 Maccabees 1)

{i} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 5. sect. 4.

Daniel 11:33

Ver. 33. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many,.... Such as had a better understanding of divine things than others, had more light and knowledge in the sacred Scriptures, in the law of God, and in his mind and will, and were capable of teaching others; and such as these the Lord raises up among his people in the worst of times, in the times of the greatest apostasy and declension; and these are enabled to perform their duty, to instruct the people in theirs, teach them what they should do, and how they should behave; exhort them to retain the doctrines and ordinances of their holy religion, and not embrace the doctrines and inventions of men, will worship, superstition, and idolatry; and so they instructed the ignorant, strengthened the weak, and established the wavering; such were Mattathias the priest of Modin, and Eleazar, one of the chief scribes, in the Apocrypha:

"In those days arose Mattathias the son of John, the son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, from Jerusalem, and dwelt in Modin." (1 Maccabees 2:1)

"Eleazar, one of the principal scribes, an aged man, and of a well favoured countenance, was constrained to open his mouth, and to eat swine's flesh." (2 Maccabees 6:18)

Auk applies this to the times of the apostles, who he thinks are here meant; so Sir Isaac Newton:

yet they shall fall by the sword; by the sword of Antiochus and his soldiers; as multitudes of the Jews did, even both the instructors and the instructed, who would not comply with his orders:

and by flame; some were burnt alive in caves, where they fled for shelter; and others as the mother and her seven sons, were cast into heated caldrons of brass; in the Apocrypha:

"And others, that had run together into caves near by, to keep the sabbath day secretly, being discovered by Philip, were all burnt together, because they made a conscience to help themselves for the honour of the most sacred day." (2 Maccabees 6:11)

"3 Then the king, being in a rage, commanded pans and caldrons to be made hot: 4 Which forthwith being heated, he commanded to cut out the tongue of him that spake first, and to cut off the utmost parts of his body, the rest of his brethren and his mother looking on. 5 Now when he was thus maimed in all his members, he commanded him being yet alive to be brought to the fire, and to be fried in the pan: and as the vapour of the pan was for a good space dispersed, they exhorted one another with the mother to die manfully, saying thus," (2 Maccabees 7)

by captivity; so it is expressly said of Antiochus, that he carried captive women and children and at another time ordered the women and children to be sold for slaves, in the Apocrypha:

"Insomuch that the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled because of them: whereupon the city was made an habitation of strangers, and became strange to those that were born in her; and her own children left her." (1 Maccabees 1:38)

"He sent also that detestable ringleader Apollonius with an army of two and twenty thousand, commanding him to slay all those that were in their best age, and to sell the women and the younger sort:" (2 Maccabees 5:24) and by spoil many days; being plundered of their substance, their houses rifled, and their goods carried away; and this distress lasted "days", a short time only; Josephus {k} reckons it at three years and a half. All this Cocceius interprets of the persecutions of the Christians by the Romans; and likewise Sir Isaac Newton.

{k} De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 1. sect. 7.

Daniel 11:34

Ver. 34. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help,.... When the Jews shall be thus harassed and distressed by Antiochus and his armies, to the ruin of many, by the several sorts of punishments inflicted on them; they should be helped and eased a little by Mattathias, a priest of Modin, and his five sons, commonly called the Maccabees; Porphyry himself interprets this of Mattathias: the help and assistance which he and his sons gave to the Jews was but "little"; if we consider they were persons of a small figure, began with a handful of men, and could do but little, especially at first; and though great exploits were done by them, considering their number and strength, yet they were not able to restore the land to its former glory and liberty; nor did this help of theirs last long, but the enemy returned with great fierceness and cruelty, and sadly afflicted the people of the Jews. Cocceius understands this of the help the Christians had under Constantius Chlorus, and Constantine the great; and so does Sir Isaac Newton, who agrees with him in interpreting this and the preceding verse: he interprets "arms", in Da 11:31, of the Romans, and so Jacchiades; and makes this to be the beginning of the fourth kingdom that should "stand", wnmm, "after him"; that is, after Antiochus; so the particle, he observes, is used in Da 11:8, and it must be owned this is the sense in which it is sometimes used, of which Noldius {l} has given instances: and this seems to agree with the thread of history, and introduces the Romans, who must have a place in this prophecy, in a very proper manner; and carries on the account of things, through the times of Christ, his apostles, the first ages of Christianity under persecution, until the rise of antichrist, Da 11:36 and throws light upon the text in Mt 24:15, the language of which seems best to agree with Da 11:31, and, if so, must respect something to be done, not in the times of Antiochus, but after the times of Christ.

But many shall cleave to them with flatteries; seeing Mattathias and his sons succeed, some of those, who had been apostates from their religion, or not heartily friends to it, joined them, but not sincerely; pretended to be on their side, and commended their bravery and courage; and being ambitious of honour and fame, took with them, in order to share the glory of their actions; such were Joseph the son of Zachariah, and Azarias, in the Apocrypha:

"56 Joseph the son of Zacharias, and Azarias, captains of the garrisons, heard of the valiant acts and warlike deeds which they had done. 57 Wherefore they said, Let us also get us a name, and go fight against the heathen that are round about us." (1 Maccabees 5)

and those under whose clothes were found idols, or what belonged to them, at Jamnia, when they were slain, in the Apocrypha:

"Now under the coats of everyone that was slain they found things consecrated to the idols of the Jamnites, which is forbidden the Jews by the law. Then every man saw that this was the cause wherefore they were slain." (2 Maccabees 12:40)

and Rhodocus, a soldier of the Jewish army, who betrayed their secrets, in the Apocrypha:

"But Rhodocus, who was in the Jews' host, disclosed the secrets to the enemies; therefore he was sought out, and when they had gotten him, they put him in prison." (2 Maccabees 13:21)

Cocceius applies this to antichrist and his followers pretending to be for Christ and his church, but were not.

{l} Concord. Part. Ebr. p. 557.

Daniel 11:35

Ver. 35. And some of them of understanding shall fall,.... Not into sin, or from the religion they profess; and the doctrines they have an understanding of, and have instructed others in; but into distresses and calamities for their steadfast adherence to the word, worship, and ordinances of God:

to try them, and purge and make them white; to try their faith, patience, and other graces, and whether they would hold fast their profession, and persevere in the good ways of God; and to purge and separate them from others, that were like chaff, hypocrites, that so they might be manifest, both the one and the other; and these good men appear to be sincere and upright: moreover, the best of men have their dross, and chaff, and spots, to be removed from them; and this is one way of doing it, even by afflictions: the allusion, in the first word, is to the melting, purifying, and refining of metals, gold and silver; the second to the winnowing of a grain floor, and separating the chaff from the wheat; and the third to the cleansing and whitening of cloths, and taking the spots out of them by the fuller. Afflictions are the furnace in which the Lord refines and purifies his people; the fan with which he purges his floor; and the fuller's soap with which he makes his people white; by all this the iniquity of Jacob is purged, and the fruit of it is to take away sin, Isa 27:9, so that afflictions are not hurtful, but beneficial to the saints, even those more violent ones, severe persecutions.

Even to the time of the end; because it is yet for a time appointed; these distresses, calamities, and persecutions, would have an end, and the time for it was appointed of God; as yet it was not come, but quickly would, and then an end would be put to the third or Grecian monarchy; a hint of the Roman power over that being given, Da 11:30, hence we have no further account of Antiochus or his sons. Very remarkable are the words of Aemilius Sara {m},

"the Assyrians first were possessors of monarchy; then the Medes; afterwards the Persians; then the Macedonians; from that time the kings, Philip and Antiochus, who sprung from the Macedonians, being conquered, not long after Carthage was subdued, the supreme power of empire came to the Roman people;"

of whom, under one character or another, the following part of the prophecy is chiefly to be understood. So another historian says {n}, Antiochus being drove out of Asia, the Romans first set footing there; and another {o} observes, that Antiochus being defeated by L. Cornelius Scipio, he took the name of Asiaticus, because he had conquered Asia; as his brother was called Africanus, from his subduing Africa: wherefore Asia and Africa being now in the hands of the Romans, the supreme power might well be said to be with them; and therefore, henceforward, are only spoken of, and particularly the Roman antichrist.

{m} De annis populi Romani apud Velleii Paterculi Hist. Roman. l. 1. c. 6. {n} "Festi Breviarium, prope initium". {o} Eutropii Hist. Rom. l. 4. So Plutarch. in

Vita Scipionis Africani.

Daniel 11:36

Ver. 36. And the king shall do according to his will,.... Not Antiochus, for he could not do as he would, being curbed by the Romans, as has been observed; and there are many things which follow that cannot be applied to him; rather the Roman people, under the name of a king or kingdom, rising up to universal monarchy, upon the decline of the Grecian empire, are meant; and who did what they would, subdued kingdoms at pleasure, and gave laws to the whole world; and particularly in the little horn, or Rome Papal, antichrist, **Da 7:8**, of which Antiochus was a type, and is called by the same name, **Da 8:9** and the transition is easy from the type to the antitype, with whom everything said agrees: for the pope of Rome, claiming infallibility, does, or has done, whatsoever he pleases; regarding neither the laws of God nor man, but dispensing with both at his pleasure; coining new doctrines; appointing new ordinances; setting himself up above councils and princes; taking upon him a power to depose kings and set them up as he pleases; with many other things done by him in an arbitrary and despotic way, both civil and religious; and with none does the character agree as with him, as well as what follows:

and magnify himself above every god; that is so called, whether angels whom he commands, or the kings of the earth he claims an authority over, those gods in heaven, and gods on earth; which is the exact description of antichrist, as given by the apostle, who has manifestly a reference to this passage, See Gill on "2Th 2:4",

and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods; the true God, to whom angels and civil magistrates are subject, being his creatures, and acting under him; but such is the arrogance of the man of sin, that he takes upon him to speak against God, and such things as are astonishing; and it may be extremely wondered at that he should dare to speak them, as to call himself God on earth; to take such things to himself, which only belong to God, as by claiming all power in heaven, earth, and hell; power to bind the consciences of men, and impose what he pleases on them; to make new articles of faith; to pardon the sins of men; to open and shut the gates of heaven when he pleases; with other blasphemies against God, his mouth, given him to speak, utters; see Re 13:5:

and shall prosper until the indignation be accomplished; the wrath of God upon the Jewish nation for their rejection of the Messiah; until the time of their conversion is come; and then antichrist shall be destroyed, to make way for it; till that time he shall prosper and flourish, more or less, until the 1260 days or years are ended, the date of his reign, Re 11:2:

for that that is determined shall be done; all the decrees and purposes of God shall be accomplished; all respecting the state and condition of the people of God under antichrist, particularly the people of the Jews, and concerning the reign and ruin of antichrist.

Daniel 11:37

Ver. 37. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers,.... Of the apostles of Christ, from whom he pretends to descend, and whose successor he would be thought to be: now their God was the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they worshipped and adored, believed in, embraced, professed, and preached; but whom antichrist disregards, though he would be thought to be his vicar on earth; yet slights him, yea, opposes and acts contrary to him, in his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, and therefore is rightly called antichrist:

nor the desire of women; or "wives" {p}; not desirous of having wives, or enjoying women in lawful marriage; but forbidding his priests to marry, as is notoriously a tenet of antichrist, and foretold by the apostle, in agreement to this prophecy, **1Ti 4:3**, otherwise, none more lustful or desirous of women in an unlawful way than the Romish priests:

nor regard any god; either the true God, and his laws, or any god in a metaphorical sense, any king or potentate on earth; showing no respect to any authority, or to any laws, divine or human:

for he shall magnify himself above all; above all gods, real or nominal, as in **2Th 2:4**.

{p} Myvn "conjuges", Gejerus.

Daniel 11:38

Ver. 38. But in his estate shall he honour the god of forces,.... Or god Mahuzzim {q}; departed saints and their images, whom the Papists make their protectors, defenders, and guardians: the word signifies towers, strong holds, fortresses; and by these titles the martyrs, saints departed, are called by the ancient fathers, who first introduced the worship of them: So Basil {r}, speaking of the forty martyrs, says,

"these are they, who obtaining our country, like certain towers, afford us a refuge against the incursion of enemies:"

and a little after thus addresses them,

"O ye common keepers of mankind, the best companions of our cares, the suffragans of our prayers and wishes, "most powerful" ambassadors with God, &c.:"

and elsewhere {s} he prays,

"that God would keep the church unmoved, and fortified with the great towers of the martyrs;"

so Chrysostom {t} calls them patrons and protectors. Or, "with God he shall honour" {u}; these along with him, or besides him; these shall be the objects of religious worship and honour, as they are: and that "in his estate"; or in his room and stead, that is, of the true God, our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man; and yet angels and departed saints are set up as mediators in his stead:

and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour; the host, the wafer, the breaden god, made a god by the words of a muttering priest; this is such a god as the apostles, and Peter particularly, from whom the popes of Rome pretend to, derive their succession, never knew, nor once dreamed of; and yet this is received as a god, bowed unto, and worshipped, and honoured:

with gold, silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things; with rich and costly ornaments, with which the pyxis or box, in which it is carried in procession, is adorned.

{q} Myzem hwhlalw "deum Mahuzim", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus. {r} Homil. in 40. Martyr. p. 151. {s} Homil. de Martyr. Mamant. p. 167. {t} Sermo in Berenice, Homil. l. in 1 Thess. See Mede's Works, B. 3. p. 673, 674. {u} "Ad,

[vel] juxta deum Mahuzzimos in sede ejus honorabit", Medus, p. 667, 671.

Daniel 11:39

Ver. 39. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god,.... Or, "in the strong holds of Mahuzzim" {w} that is, in the temples, churches, and chapels, dedicated to angels and departed saints; deck and adorn their images with gold, silver, precious stones, and with desirable things, which is notorious; as well as commit the grossest idolatries with this strange breaden god; which they hold up in such places, cringe and bow to, and pay all religious worship and adoration to it:

whom he shall acknowledge, and increase with glory; as really God; the wafer being transubstantiated into the very body and blood of Christ, as is said; and own it as such, as very God, and heap religious honour and glory upon it, which is due to Christ:

he shall cause them to rule over many; that is, the Mahuzzim, the departed saints; one shall rule over England, and be the patron and defender of it, as St. George; another over Scotland, as St. Andrew; another over Ireland, as St. Patrick; another over France, as St. Dennis; another over Spain, as St. James:

and shall divide the land for gain; or "price" {x}; the whole Romish jurisdiction, all antichristian states, which are divided among those tutelar saints; each of them have their proper country assigned them they are to defend; but this is not done without gain arising to the pope of Rome from those countries, as by firstfruits, annates, Peter's pence, &c.

{w} Myzem yrubml "munitionibus Mahuzim", Pagninus, Montanus. {x} ryxmb "pro pretio", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Daniel 11:40

Ver. 40. And at the time of the end,.... At the end of the time appointed of God, when antichrist is arrived to the height of his power and authority:

shall the king of the south push at him; not Philometor king of Egypt; nor is Antiochus meant in the next clause by the king of the north; for, after he was required by the Romans to quit the land of Egypt, there was no more war between him and the king of Egypt; rather therefore the Saracens are meant by the king of the south, as Mr. Mede {y} and Cocceius think, who came from the south, from Arabia Felix: and so Gravius interprets it of the king or caliph of the Saracens, and his successors; who, extending their empire through Asia and Africa, repressed the attempts of the Roman antichrist affecting primacy in the east; and this way goes Mr. Mede, who takes them to be the same with the locusts in **Re 9:3**, that distressed antichrist:

and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind; not Antiochus, as before observed; but either emperors, kings, and Christian princes, the chief of which was Godfrey of Bullain, who was crowned king of Jerusalem, as Cocceius: or the Turks, as Jacchiades, so Mr. Brightman on the place, and Mr. Mede; who were originally Tartars or Scythians, and came from the north, the same with the horsemen at Euphrates, **Re 9:15**, who also came against antichrist; for he seems to be the "him" they both came against; both the king of the south, and the king of the north, the two woes that came upon Christendom the Saracens are the first woe, and the Turks the second; and who chiefly afflicted the antichristian states, and came like a whirlwind upon them, suddenly, swiftly, and with great rapidity and force:

with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; which well agrees with the Turks, whose armies chiefly consist of horse:

and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow, and pass over; into the countries belonging to antichrist; particularly the Greek or eastern empire; which they overran like a flood, seized it for themselves, and set up an empire for themselves, which still continues; as well as entered into some parts of Europe, and did much damage.

{y} Works, B. 3. p. 674.

Daniel 11:41

Ver. 41. He shall enter also into the glorious land,.... The land of Israel, as the Syriac version expresses it; or the land of Judea, which the Turk entered into, and got possession of, and still retains, notwithstanding all the attempts made by the European princes to get it out of his hand:

and many countries shall be overthrown; of which the eastern empire listed as

Bithynia, Mysia, Lycaonia, Phrygia, and Carlo, and to the Hellesport and the Euxine sea, conquered by Ottoman and his son Urchenes; Callipolis, Hadrianople, by Amurath; Thessalia, Macedonia, Phocis, Mysia, and Bulgaria, by Bajazet; and at last Constantinople itself by Mahomet the second, which put an end to the eastern empire: though perhaps those countries and places may be here more especially meant which lay near Judea, and fell into the hands of the Turk when that did; as Comagene of Syria, Antioch, Damascus, Tripolis, Berytus, Sidon, and all Palestine, and all the sea coast to Egypt:

but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon; by which according to Jerom is meant Arabia, left untouched by him; so Mr. Mede interprets them of Arabia and Petraea, which some of the above people formerly inhabited, as Jacchiades observes; and which Arabians were never subdued by the Turks, but are independent of them to this day; yea, the Turks pay a yearly tribute to them for the passage of their pilgrims to Mecca, as well as pay for the canyons that pass through their country, as is affirmed {z} by modern travellers; and yet it may be observed that these countries did not escape Antiochus, who particularly took Rabbath, the metropolis of Ammon.

{z} See Dr. Newton's Dissertations on the Prophecies. p. 53, 54, &c.

Daniel 11:42

Ver. 42. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries,.... Before mentioned, and take possession of them and rule over them, as the Turk does to this day:

and the land of Egypt shall not escape; the hands of the Turk by whom it was taken from the Mamalucs; and is now a province of the Turkish empire, and governed by a Turkish basha, with twenty four princes under him {a}. This was not true of Antiochus, who, after he had been checked by the Romans, never entered into Egypt, and much less became master of it, as the Turk now is.

{a} Ibid. (See Dr. Newton's Dissertations on the Prophecies) p. 394.

Daniel 11:43

Ver. 43. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt,.... The land of Egypt, as it is a very large, so a very rich country, abounding with gold, silver, and precious things; all which came into the hands of the Turk along with it; for when Selim, the ninth emperor of the Turks, conquered the Mamalucs he caused five hundred of the chiefest Egyptian families to be transported to Constantinople; as likewise a great number of Mamalucs' wives and children, besides the sultan's treasure, and other immense riches {b}.

And the Lybians and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps; at his command and pleasure; shall follow him, being taken captive, or go where he orders them; that is, in all things shall be obedient to him. So we find that these very people will be in the army of Gog or the Turk, when he shall march against the land of Judea, to recover it from the Jews, when possessed of it, Eze 38:5. These people, the Africans and Ethiopians, are near to Egypt, and therefore mentioned with it, and never were under the power of Antiochus, as Jerome observes; but are now subject to the Ottoman empire, and make a part of it; which is a very strong evidence of the Turk being the king of the north here spoken of.

{b} See Dr. Newton's Dissertations on the Prophecies, p. 393.

Daniel 11:44

Ver. 44. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him,.... This and the following verse respect times and things yet to come, and the interpretation of them is not so certain: perhaps this clause may have a regard to the news brought to the Turk, of the Jews, upon their conversion, being about to return to their own land, from the eastern and northern parts of the world, where they chiefly are at this day; which will greatly alarm him, since their land is part of his dominions: or it may be, out of the east may come tidings of some commotions and disturbances in the eastern part of the world, as Tartary, &c. which he may fear would be of bad consequence to the Ottoman empire; and news out of the north, of the northern Christian princes preparing to assist the Jews in the repossession of their country; all which may give him great uneasiness.

Therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many; hearing the Jews are preparing to return to their own country, or that they have got possession of it, he will be provoked to the last degree, and raise a prodigious army, and march out of his own land with them to Judea;

and will come like a storm, with the utmost rage and fury, and like a cloud for number, and threaten utter ruin and destruction to the nation of the Jews; this will be his end in view in coming out, but he will not be able to accomplish it; of all which see Eze 38:2, where the Turk, and this expedition of his, are prophesied of, and where he goes by the name of Gog.

Daniel 11:45

Ver. 45. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace,.... Or "pavilion" {c}; the tents for his princes and generals that come with him; which shall be placed about his own, and where he will think himself safe and secure, and sure of victory. Symmachus renders the words, "the tents of his cavalry" {d}; or the stables of his horses; which agrees well enough with the Turks, whole cavalry is usually very large, their armies chiefly consisting of horsemen; such he shall bring into the land of Judea, and place them as after mentioned, as if he had got the day, and had obtained a settlement. The word used has the signification of covering and clothing; hence some translate it, "the tents of his curtain" {e}; tents covered with curtains or veils, such as the tents of kings, generals, and principal officers, were covered with, distinguished from others by the splendour and magnificence of them. It seems to be derived from the same root as the ephod, a curious garment wore by the high priest among the Jews; hence Saadiah interprets it here a covering figured and wrought very artificially; and it is by some rendered "the tents or tabernacles of his tunic or clothing" {f}. And it is an ingenious conjecture of a learned man of our own country {g}, that it may refer to an ancient custom of the Roman emperors, who used before a battle to have a scarlet coat spread over their tents, or hung up upon a spear, to give notice of it, as appears from Plutarch, Isidore, and others; and so this furious enemy of the church of God is here represented as setting up his bloody flag or ensign, and preparing for battle, threatening with utter desolation and destruction. And this will be

between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain; in the mountain or mountains of the land of Israel, upon which it is certain Gog or the Turk shall come, and there he shall fall, Eze 39:2, particularly the mountains about Jerusalem, and more especially Mount Zion, or Moriah, as Jacchiades; on which the temple was built formerly, and was glorious and holy on that account, and for which reason the epithets may be retained; though it will now be glorious and holy, through a glorious and holy people, the Jews, become Christian, residing and worshipping in Jerusalem; whose situation is between two seas, the Mediterranean sea to the west, and the sea of Sodom, or the Syrian or Persian sea, to the east, called the hinder and the former seas in Zec 14:8. Some take the word wndpa, "Apadno", translated "palace", for the proper name of a place, Theodoret takes it to be a place near Jerusalem; and Jerom says it was near Nicopolis, which was formerly called Emmaus; where the mountainous parts of Judea begin to rise, and lay between the Dead sea on the east, and the great sea on the west, where he supposes antichrist will pitch his tent: and Porphyry, as he relates, who interprets the whole of Antiochus, places it between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates; he says that Antiochus went on an expedition against Artaxis, king of Armenia, and, having slain many of his army, pitched his tent in the place Apadno, which is situated between two large rivers, Tigris and Euphrates; and that he afterwards went to the top of a mountain, in the province of Elymais, the further part of Persia to the east, with a design to rob the temple of Diana; but being discovered by the people was obliged to flee, and that he died with grief in Tabes, a town in Persia: and Father Calmet is of opinion that a place between those two rivers before mentioned is meant, and translates the words thus,

"he shall pitch his tents in Apadno of the two seas;"

or in Padan of two rivers, Mesopotamia, situated between the Euphrates and the Tigris, two large rivers, and justly compared with the sea, particularly for their inundations. Dr. Goodwin {h} expresses his fears that our British isles are here invaded, which so eminently stand between the seas, and which God has made the eminent seat of the church in these latter days; and his fears would seem to be too well grounded, were the Romish or western antichrist here designed; but the Turk, or the eastern antichrist, is manifestly spoken of, as appears by the context: and the reason why he is so much observed, and so many things said of him, is, because the Jews have, and will have, the greatest concern with him, their country being in his hands; and it is for their sakes chiefly that the whole of this prophecy is delivered out; however, both antichrists, the one and the other, shall come to utter destruction, as follows: "yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him"; he shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, he and his princes, his generals, and captains, and mighty men; the whole Ottoman empire shall be destroyed, signified by the drying up of the river Euphrates, which is in his dominions, Re 16:12, and of the vast multitudes that shall come with him, Persia, Ethiopia, Lybia, Gomer, and Togarmah, Eze 38:5 and the numerous provinces he is master of; none shall be able to help him, or save him from ruin: of the destruction of the Turk, under the name of Gog, see Eze 39:1.

{c} wndpa "praetorii sui", Vatablus. So Aquila in Drusius. {d} tav skhnav tou ippostasiou autou, Symm.; "papiliones equitatus sui", interpr. Hieronymo; "[vel potius] tentoria equilis sui, [seu] stabuli equorum suorum", Fuller. {e} "Tentoria aulaei sui", Schindler, col. 108. {f} "Tentoria tunicae suae", Fuller; "tentoria hujus amietus", Cocceius, Lex. col. 57. {g} Fuller. Miscell. Sacr. l. 5. c. 18. So Lydius, De Re Miliari, l. 4. c. 2. p. 155, 156. {h} Exposition of the Revelation, part 2. p. 166.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Daniel 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL 12

This chapter begins with an account of a time of exceeding great trouble to the people of God, who are comforted with the consideration of Michael the great Prince being on their side, and with a promise of deliverance, with the resurrection of the dead, and the glorious state of wise and good men upon that, Da 12:1, and Daniel is ordered to shut up and seal the book of the prophecy, until a time when it should be better understood, Da 12:4, next follows a question put by an angel to Christ, and his answer to it, with respect to the time of the fulfilment of those wonderful events, Da 12:5. Daniel, not understanding what he heard, asks what would be the end of those things, Da 12:8 in answer to which he is bid to be content with what he knew; no alteration would be among men; things would be neither better nor worse with them, Da 12:9, a time is fixed for the accomplishment of all, Da 12:11, and it is promised him that he should have rest after death, and rise again, and have his lot and share with the blessed, Da 12:13.

Ver. 1. And at that time shall Michael stand up,.... The Archangel, who has all the angels of heaven under him, and at his command, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ; who is as God, as the name signifies, truly and really God, and equal in nature, power, and glory, to his divine Father: "he shall stand up"; which is not to be understood of his incarnation, or manifestation in the flesh, for this refers to times long after that; yet neither of his personal appearance in the clouds of heaven, and standing upon the earth in the latter day; but of his spiritual presence among his people, and protection of them, and continuance with them: this respects the spiritual reigns of Christ, the Lamb's standing upon Mount Zion, and the 144,000 with him, Re 14:1, and this will be at that time, when the eastern antichrist, the Turk, will be destroyed; for the words are closely connected with the last verse of the preceding chapter; and when also the western antichrist, the pope of Rome, will come to his end; for, as they rose, so they will fall, much about the same time; and then Christ will rise and stand up, as the glorious Head of the church, and as a triumphant Conqueror over all his enemies, and take to himself his great power, and reign, and that kingdom which of right belongs to him.

The great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people; the King of kings, and Lord of lords, the Prince of the kings of the earth; great in his person, and in his office; great in dignity, power, and authority; who always did, and ever will, stand on the side of the true Israel of God: he espoused their cause very early; he wrought out salvation for them in time; he intercedes for them now in heaven, and will appear to be their patron and defender against all their enemies in the latter day: here it seems to have special regard to the people of the Jews, Daniel's people; whom Christ shall appear unto, and for, in an eminent manner, to convert and save them, help and assist them, protect and defend them.

And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; that is, ever since the world was, from the beginning of it, from the creation of the world; not only from the time that the Jews became a people, which was at their coming out of Egypt, as some understand it, but from the beginning of time; and so our Lord interprets it, who seems to have this passage in view in
Mt 24:21, there have been many great and sore troubles in the world, great confusions in it, and convulsions of it, strange and amazing changes in it; very afflictive and distressing times have been to each of the kingdoms, nations, and cities, which have been entirely overthrown; but never was any like to this; which respects not the distresses of the Jews in the times of Antiochus, or at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; nor does it seem to respect them at all, at least they will have no further share and concern in it, than as they will be in connection with other people, among whom they will be at this time; and it will be to them rather a time of deliverance and salvation than of distress; but it is that time of trial, and hour of temptation, that shall come upon all the world, **Re 3:10** as it may concern the church and people of God, it is the last struggle of the beast, of antichrist, at the time of his downfall and ruin, when he will make his last effort; this will be the last persecution of the saints, which will be short and sharp; the slaying of the witnesses, which will affect

the whole interest of Christ everywhere; and as this concerns others, it designs the pouring out of the vials of God's wrath upon all the antichristian states, and all those judgments and calamities which will come upon the nations of the world, signified by the harvest and vintage; see Re 14:14, &c.: and this time of trouble, for the nature, quality, and extent of it, will exceed any and all that ever were in the world.

And at that time thy people shall be delivered; the Jews, the people of Daniel; these shall be delivered not only from the then present outward troubles, not only from their present captivity and afflictions, but from their spiritual evils; from the bondage of sin, and the captivity of Satan; their disbelief of the Messiah; their confidence in their own righteousness, and attachment to the traditions of their fathers; they shall be turned from their transgressions, and return to the Lord their God, and David their King, and shall be truly converted, and spiritually and eternally saved, Ro 11:25.

Every one that shall be found written in the book; in the book of life, as Jacchiades; in the book of God's eternal purposes and decrees, concerning the salvation of his people by Christ; for it is according to these that God saves and calls men, whether Jews or Gentiles, **2Ti 1:9**.

Daniel 12:2

Ver. 2. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,.... Which is not to be understood in a figurative and metaphorical, sense, as by R. Jeshuah the Jew, Porphyry the Heathen, and by some Christian writers; neither of the deliverance of the Jews from the troubles of Antiochus, or their present captivity; nor of the spiritual resurrection of them, or others, from their state of infidelity to a profession of the Gospel, which in some is real, in others only hypocritical; but, in a literal sense, of the resurrection of the dead at the last day, which, with respect to the righteous, will take place upon the personal appearance of Christ at first, **1Th 4:16**, for, as death is oftentimes compared to "sleep", in which the senses are bound up, and the body is in a state of inactivity; see
Joh 11:11, so the resurrection from the dead is expressed by awaking out of sleep, when the body shall rise fresh and vigorous, in full health and strength, as a man out of a comfortable sleep; see Ps 17:15. The word "many" is used, either because, as all will not sleep, so all will not be awaked; there will be some that will be alive and awake at Christ's coming, 1Co 15:51, or, as it

signifies, a multitude, Ps 97:1 and so here the innumerable multitude of the dead, who are afterwards distributively considered; and indeed the word is sometimes used for "all"; see **Ro 5:15**:

some to everlasting life; to the enjoyment of everlasting life and happiness with Christ in the world to come; a phrase often used in the New Testament, though never before in the Old; expressive of that felicity and bliss which the saints enjoy in heaven after this life is over, first in the separate state of the soul, and then, at the resurrection, in soul and body, and of the everlasting continuance of it; they that shall enjoy this are those that are written in the Lamb's book of life, or are ordained unto eternal life; who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, regenerated by his Spirit and grace, justified by his righteousness, adopted into the family of God, are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; these are the dead in Christ, which rise first:

and some to shame and everlasting contempt; wicked men, who lived in a course of sin in this world, without any remorse or shame; but, when they shall rise from the dead, they will rise with all their sins upon them, and with a full conviction of them in their consciences; and will be ashamed of them, and to appear before God the Judge of all; and will be had in contempt by the Lord, by elect angels, and all good men; and this reproach shall never be wiped off; see Isa 66:24. Our Lord seems manifestly to have respect to this passage, when he speaks of men coming out of their graves at the last day, "some unto the resurrection of life, and others unto the resurrection of damnation", **Joh 5:28** and upon these words it may well be thought the Apostle Paul grounded his faith of the resurrection of the dead, both just and unjust, Ac 24:15, and though the resurrection of both is spoken of here and elsewhere together, yet it will be at distinct periods of time; the resurrection of the just at the beginning of the thousand years, and that of the wicked at the end of them, Re 20:5, between which will be the intermediate state of the saints dwelling with Christ on earth; where they will be favoured with his presence, and the rewards of his grace, to which the following verse has respect.

Daniel 12:3

Ver. 3. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament,.... That are wise, not in things natural and civil, but in things spiritual; who are wise unto salvation; that are wise to know themselves, their state and condition by nature; their impurity and impotence; the insufficiency of their own righteousness; the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the dangerous circumstances they are in; that are wise to know Christ, and him crucified; to believe in him, and trust in him for everlasting life and salvation: these at the resurrection shall shine, both in body and soul; their bodies shall be fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ; their souls shall be filled with perfect light and knowledge, and be completely holy, without any sin upon them; and this light and glory that will be upon both soul and body will be like the brightness of the heavens when the sun is risen; yea, it will be like the brightness and glory of the sun itself, as our Lord affirms; having, as it seems, respect to this passage, Mt 13:43. Some render it, "they that instruct" {i}; or make others wise, and so restrain it to ministers of the word; but the more general sense is best; and, besides, they are more particularly described in the next clause:

and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever; or, "that justify many" {k}; that teach the doctrine of a sinner's free justification by the righteousness of Christ; that lead and direct souls sensible of sin, and of the weakness of their own righteousness, to the righteousness of Christ, as being that only which justifies before God; otherwise it is God alone that justifies men, by imputing the righteousness of his Son unto them: but these show men the way of justification, or that which God takes to justify sinners; and this being the principal doctrine of the GospeL, they are denominated from it; and no man deserves the name of a Gospel minister that does not preach it, though this is not all that they preach; they preach all other doctrines of the Gospel in connection with it, and also instruct men thus justified to live soberly, righteously, and godly: now, as these are stars in the church of Christ below, who receive their light from Christ the sun of righteousness, and communicate it to his people; so they will continue stars in the Millennium state, and appear exceeding glorious, having the glory of God and Christ upon them, and not only then, but to all eternity. These words are applied to the days of the Messiah by the Jews {l}.

{i} Mylykvm "erudiunt", Munster; "erudientes", Junius & Tremellius; "qui alios instituerint", Grotius. {k} yqydum "justificantes", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; "qui justificaverint", Calvin, Piscator. {l} Shemot Rabba sect. 15. fol. 102. 4.

Daniel 12:4

Ver. 4. But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words,.... Of the book, in which he had wrote the visions and prophecies delivered to him: this he is bid to "shut up", to keep it from the common and profane people, who would only burlesque it; and to keep it to himself, as a peculiar treasure committed to his care; and though it was not kept from the saints and people of God, from their reading it, yet he was not to interpret and explain it to them; it was to remain a secret until the time of its accomplishment was come, or, however, near at hand; so that this denotes the obscurity of the prophecy, and the great difficulty of understanding it; it being like a book that is shut and sealed, as follows, see **Re 5:1**:

and seal the book, even to the time of the end; till the time comes appointed for the fulfilment of it, which shows that it reached to times at a great distance; that till these times were come, or near, it would be as a sealed book, and yet the accomplishment of it would be sure and certain, as what is sealed is:

many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased; that is, towards the end of the time appointed, many persons will be stirred up to inquire into these things delivered in this book, and will spare no pains or cost to get knowledge of them; will read and study the Scriptures, and meditate on them; compare one passage with another; spiritual things with spiritual, in order to obtain the mind of Christ; will peruse carefully the writings of such who have gone before them, who have attempted anything of this kind; and will go far and near to converse with persons that have any understanding of such things: and by such means, with the blessing of God upon them, the knowledge of this book of prophecy will be increased; and things will appear plainer the nearer the accomplishment of them is; and especially when accomplished, when prophecy and facts can be compared together: and not only this kind of knowledge, but knowledge of all spiritual things, of all evangelic truths and doctrines, will be abundantly enlarged at this time; and the earth will be filled and covered with it, as the sea with its waters; see Isa 11:9.

Daniel 12:5

Ver. 5. Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two,.... Other two angels, besides the man clothed with linen, Da 12:6 or rather besides the angel who had given Daniel the long account of things that were to come to pass, in the preceding chapter, and the beginning of this; whom Daniel, being attentive to that account, had not observed before; but now, that being finished, he looks about him, and takes notice of those other two who were standing, being ministering spirits to Christ, and ready to execute his orders:

the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river; Hiddekel or Tigris, as appears from Da 10:4. The reason of this position was chiefly on account of Christ, the man clothed with linen, who stood upon or above the water of the river, in the midst of it; and to show that they were waiting upon him, and ready to go every way he should send them to do his will; and also on account of Daniel, that he might hear what was said, whether to Christ, or to one another; since, being at such a distance, their voice must be loud; and indeed the design of all that follows to the end of the chapter is to inform him, and by him the church and people of God in all future ages, of the time and end of all these things before delivered in the prophecy.

Daniel 12:6

Ver. 6. And one said to the man clothed with linen,.... One of the angels on one side of the bank of the river spoke to Christ, who appeared in a human form, as a presage of his future incarnation; and as clothed in linen, expressive of his priestly office, and of his purity and holiness, which qualified him for it; See Gill on "Da 10:6". Which of the angels it was that spake is not said, or on which side of the river he stood; very probably each of them spake in their turn, and joined: in the same request to Christ:

which was upon the waters of the river: or above {m} them; denoting his power and dominion over men, kingdoms, and nations, sometimes signified by waters, and even over those the most tumultuous and raging:

how long shall it be to the end of these wonders, these wonderful things before predicted, concerning the state and condition of the people of God, their troubles and afflictions, the fall and ruin of antichrist, and the glorious things that shall follow upon that: angels, as they are inquisitive creatures, and pry into the mysteries of grace, so into those of Providence; especially such as concern the church of God, for whom they have a great regard; of the secrets of which they have no knowledge until revealed unto them; though this question seems to be put not so much for their own sakes as for the sake of Daniel, who was present, but had not that courage and presence of mind as they had; nor could use that freedom with Christ as they did, at least at first, till encouraged by their example.

{m} ymyml lemm "super aquas", Pagninus; "desuper aquas", Montanus;

"supra aquas", Calvin, Cocceius, Michaelis.

Daniel 12:7

Ver. 7. And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river,.... Christ, as he appeared in a human form, and as the High Priest our profession, and as the Mediator that has power over all flesh; so he pronounced articulate sounds with a human voice, and so loud, clear, and distinct, that Daniel could hear every word he said, and for whose sake it was said:

when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven; the lifting up of the right hand is a gesture used in swearing, and the lifting up of both hands is either for the greater solemnity of the action, or with respect to the two angels that stood one on one side of him, and the other on the other, that both might be eyewitnesses of this solemn affair; though lifting up both hands is often a prayer gesture, and there may be a mixture of both in this action, of both praying and swearing; Christ, as the High Priest, intercedes for his church and people, that their faith fail not till the end of their troubles comes:

and sware by him that liveth for ever; by the living God, the immortal One, who only hath immortality. Maimonides {n} interprets it, "by the Life of the world"; that is, by God, who is the Life of the world, that gives life and being to all creatures; all live, and move, and have their being in him, and so is greater than all, and by whom an oath is only to be taken. Christ, as man, swears by his divine Father, who, as such, was greater than he; though, if we understand it of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, the one, only, true, and living God, there is no impropriety in Christ's swearing by himself the living God, which is a character he sometimes bears; see **Heb 3:12**, what he here swears to is,

that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; that it would be so long to the end of these wonderful things; or that the troubles of the church would last so long, and, at the end of that date here fixed, a glorious scene would open, and amazing things appear, to the great joy and comfort of the saints. "Time" signifies a prophetic year, or 360 years; and "times" two prophetic years, or 720 years; and half a time half a prophetic year, or 180 years, in all 1260 years; which is the exact date and duration of the reign of antichrist, of the church's being in the wilderness, and of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and of the treading under foot the holy city, expressed both by 1260 days, and by forty two months, which are the same; see

Re 11:2:

and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people: that is, either, "when he (God) shall have finished the scattering the power of the holy people", the Jews; when the dispersion of them, who were formerly a holy people to the Lord, and shall be so again, will be over; and they shall be gathered out of all nations where they have been dispersed, and, being converted, shall return to their own land: or, "when he" (antichrist) "shall have done scattering", the church and people of God in general; when his wars with the saints, and victories over them, will be ended; and particularly when the slaying of the witnesses will be over, at which time there will be a great scattering of the saints; they will be as sheep without a shepherd, their pastors being smitten, slain, or removed into corners; all which things will be fulfilled about the end of the date before mentioned:

and then all these things shall be finished; or, as the same glorious Person explains it, "time will be no longer, and the mystery of God will be finished", Re 10:6, the time of antichrist's reign, and of the troubles of the church, and the witnesses' prophesying in sackcloth, will be protracted no longer than the time, and times, and half a time, or the 1260 days, or forty months, that is, 1260 years; then all the afflictions of the church will be at an end, and glorious times will succeed, as before spoken of; the spiritual reign of Christ, the first resurrection, and the Millennium, in their order.

{n} Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 72. p. 146. So R. Joseph Albo, Sepher Ikkarim, l. 1. c. 69. Mlweh yxb "per vitam aeternitatis", so some in Gejerus.

Daniel 12:8

Ver. 8. And I heard, but understood not,.... Daniel heard what Christ said, in answer to the angel, but he did not understand the meaning of it, which he ingenuously confesses; he did not understand what was meant by "time", and "times", and "half a time"; what kind of time this was, and when and how it would end, and which he was very desirous of knowing:

then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? he applied not to the angel that put the above question, but to the man clothed with linen; to Christ, whom he perceived to be a divine Person, a Person of dominion, power, and authority, superior to angels, and his Lord and God; and who only could resolve the question he puts, which is somewhat different from that of the angel's, Da 12:6, that respects the length of time, to the accomplishment of these things; this the quality at the end of them, what kind of end they should have; or what the signs, symptoms, and evidences of the end of them, by which the true end of them might be known. Mr. Mede renders it, "what are these latter times?" perhaps it might be rendered better, "what is the last of these things?" {o} what is the last thing that will be done, that so it may be known when all is over?

{o} hla tyrxa hm "quid erit novissimum horum?" Munster; "postremum horum?" Calvin.

Daniel 12:9

Ver. 9. And he said, go thy way, Daniel,.... About thy business; attend to civil affairs, the affairs in which he was concerned in the king's court, and ask no more questions concerning this matter; but be content with the prophecies that have been delivered to thee, and with what knowledge thou hast of them: or he is bid to go and write in a book the several visions he had seen, and the predictions related to him; that he might read them, and meditate on them at his leisure, and transmit them to future posterity, for their use: or go the way of all flesh, prepare for death and eternity; for in the present state he was not to expect a full revelation of these things; but should rest satisfied with what he knew, and assure himself with the full performance of them, and that he should have his share of the blessed times in the Millennium, and of the ultimate glory, as in Da 12:13.

For the words are closed up, and sealed till the time of the end; that is, till the time comes, or draws near, that they shall be accomplished; till then they would not be clearly understood, but remain in a great measure dark and obscure, though sure and certain: it is suggested they would not always remain so; time is the best interpreter of prophecy, and, the nearer the time of the accomplishment of it is, the clearer it appears, things leading the way to it being gradually fulfilled; but clearest of all when it is accomplished; then it is no more shut and sealed, but open and manifest; See Gill on "Da 12:4".

Daniel 12:10

Ver. 10. Many shall be purged, and made white, and tried,.... Though Christ does not give, in plain, clear, and explicit terms, an answer to the above question, when, and how, and what would be the end of the church's troubles and afflictions; yet he here points out the use of them, which for the present should be chiefly attended to; and, when duly considered, would be a means of causing the saints to endure them with more patience and cheerfulness: many should be hereby made more pure and holy, and more free from their spots, their chaff, and their dross; their corruptions, and the power of them, weakened; their graces tried, and become more bright and shining; and they themselves a greater ornament to the religion they profess: hereby they should be "purified", or cleansed from the chaff of their sins; or be separated, as the chaff is by the fan, from hypocrites and ungodly men, who would not be able to endure persecution for the sake of the Gospel: and "be made white"; as cloth is by the fuller; freed both from their own spots in their garments, being led to the blood of Christ to wash their garments, and make them white therein; which afflictions may be the means of guiding them to, under the direction of the blessed Spirit; and from such persons who were spots in their feasts of love: and "be tried", as gold and silver in the furnace, and so be rid of their own dross, and of the wicked of the earth, who are like unto it; see the note on Da 11:35.

But the wicked shall do wickedly; go on in a course of sin, and be never the better for the afflictive dispensations of Providence; these either mean formal professors, that turn apostates from the faith, and become openly wicked livers; or the profane world in common; and particularly furious persecutors of the saints: such as each of these there will be till the end of things come; see Re 22:11:

and none of the wicked shall understand; neither the doctrines of the Gospel spiritually and experimentally; nor the providences of God, and what he is doing in the world; and particularly not the prophecy of this book, and especially what has been just delivered:

but the wise shall understand; more or less of each of these things, such as are wise unto salvation; that search the Scriptures, seek to God by prayer, and are much in meditation, and make use of every help for the understanding of divine things, and even of these prophecies; and especially towards the close of time, as the accomplishment of them draws near.

Daniel 12:11

Ver. 11. And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away,.... This is in part an answer to the above questions, as they relate to the end of things: some dates are given, by which it might in general be known when and how these things would end: and these dates begin with the removal of the daily sacrifice; that is, the doctrine of atonement and satisfaction for sin by the sacrifice of Christ, the antitype of the daily sacrifice under the law; this was taken away by antichrist, when he got to his height; when he established the doctrine of works, and opposed the merits of men to the merits of Christ, and his own pardons, indulgences, penances, &c. to the satisfaction of Christ:

and the abomination that maketh desolate; image worship; the abomination of the Mass, and other acts of idolatry and superstition:

there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days; from the beginning of the reign of antichrist to the end of it are one thousand two hundred and sixty days or years, or forty two months, which is the same, according to Re 13:5, here thirty days or years are added, which begin where the other end, and is the time allotted for the conversion of the Jews, and other things, making way for the kingdom of Christ; and which the reign of antichrist was an hinderance of, but should now immediately take place.

Daniel 12:12

Ver. 12. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the one thousand three hundred five and thirty days. Which is an addition of forty five days or years more, beginning at the end of one thousand two hundred and ninety, and make up this sum; during which time the vials will be poured out upon all the antichristian states, and the Turkish empire be destroyed, and all the enemies of Christ and his church removed, and clear way made for the setting up of his kingdom in the world in a more visible and glorious manner; and therefore happy is the man that will be found waiting for these times, and live to enjoy them. There are various ways taken in the computation and application of these one thousand three hundred and thirty five days by Jews and Christians. Lipman {p} the Jew makes them to be the same with "time", and "times", and "half a time", Da 12:7, "time" he supposes, designs the space of four hundred and eighty years, from the Israelites going out of Egypt to the building of the first temple; times the space of four hundred and ten years which is as long as that temple stood; and "half a time" half of these two spaces, that is, four hundred and forty five years; all which make up one thousand three hundred and thirty five; but strange it is that time should signify a larger space than "times". Much more ingenious is the computation of Jacchiades on the text, who makes the account to describe the space of time from the days of Daniel to the end of the world. He supposes there were three thousand three hundred and ninety one years, from the beginning of the world to Daniel; he then takes and joins the one thousand two hundred and ninety days in the preceding verse, which he understands of years with the one thousand three hundred and thirty five days or years in this, which make together two thousand six hundred and twenty five; and, added to the above, the whole is six thousand and sixteen years; which agrees with the opinion of Elias, in the Talmud {q}, that the world shall stand six thousand years. Many Christian interpreters {r} apply it to the times of Antiochus; and reckon them thus, understanding them of days; and not years; from the time of his taking away the daily sacrifice, to the restoration of it by Judas Maccabaeus, were three years and a half and some days, in all one thousand two hundred and ninety, as in the preceding verse; during which time the temple was profaned by idolatrous worship, the altar demolished, and the daily sacrifice ceased, and was a time of great distress with the Jews; and which, though greatly alleviated by the success of Judas, yet their calamities were not over until the death of Antiochus, which happened forty five days after; and these, added to the above number, make one thousand three hundred and thirty five days; at the close of which it was happy times with them, being delivered from so cruel and powerful an enemy; and therefore blessed were they that waited and came to this time. This passage Mr. Brightman applies to the Turkish empire; and thinks that time, and times, and half a time; Da 12:7, measure the space of the power of that empire; "time" signifying one hundred years; "times" two hundred years; "half a time", fifty years; in all three hundred and fifty years; which added to one thousand three hundred, when that empire began, the date ends in one thousand six hundred and fifty, when he supposes, it would begin to decline; to which, if you add forty five days or years, as here, it will bring it down to one thousand six hundred and ninety five, when he thought it would be utterly extinct; but time has shown this to be a mistake. Mr. Mede {s} thinks these numbers are to be reckoned from the profanation of the temple by Antiochus; and that the first number, one thousand two hundred and ninety, ended in the year of Christ one thousand one hundred and twenty three, when antichrist was come to his height, and was discerned by many to be the person that was prophesied of as such; and the latter number, one thousand three hundred and thirty five ended in the year of Christ one thousand one hundred and sixty eight, when the Waldenses, Albigenses, and others separated from the church of Rome as antichristian, upon which violent persecutions were raised upon them: but then not happy, but miserable times, followed on these; unless this blessedness spoken of is to be applied to the martyrs that died for the sake of Christ, as in Re 14:13. Another learned man {t} was of opinion that these numbers are to be counted from the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian, A.D. 71, from whence the first number fell on the year 1361, at which time the school at Prague was founded by Charles king of Bohemia, and the errors and tyranny of antichrist began to be openly opposed by the same; and the second number ended in the year 1406, when the light of the Gospel broke out more clearly; so that the angel here pronounces those blessed who overlived these first seeds of the Gospel being brought to light; but something of great importance and cause of more joy, is here intended. Wherefore, upon the whole, it seems best to interpret these numbers as at first, of the date of the reign of antichrist, and as showing the full and certain end of it; when there will be blessed times, halcyon days indeed!

{p} Nizzachon, No. 332. {q} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. {r} Broughton in loc. L'Empereur, Not. in Jacchiad. in loc. Huls. Theolog. Jud. par. 1. p. 77, 78. {s} Works, B. 3. p. 720. {t} Henr. Wolphius lib. de tempore apud Brightman in loc.

Daniel 12:13

Ver. 13. But go thou thy way till the end be,.... Prepare for death and expect to be under the power of it, to lie in the grave, till the end of the world, until the resurrection morn:

for thou shalt rest; from all toil and labour, from all sin and sorrow; his body in the grave, his soul in the bosom of Christ: and stand in thy lot at the end of the days; signifying that he should rise again from the dead, have his part in the first resurrection, his share of the glory of the Millennium state, and his portion in the heavenly inheritance of the saints; the antitype of Canaan, which was divided by lot to the children of Israel: and, in the faith and hope of this, it became him to be contented and satisfied; believing the accomplishment of all that had been shown him, and looking for the blessedness which was promised him. Agreeable to which is the paraphrase of Jacchiades;

"but thou, O Daniel, go to the end of thy life in this world; and, after thou art dead, rest in the rest of paradise; and at the end of days thou shall stand and live in the resurrection of the dead, and shall enjoy thy good lot in the world to come"

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hosea 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA

This book, in the Hebrew Bibles, at least in some copies, is called "Sopher Hosea", the Book of Hoses; and, in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, "the Prophecy of Hoses": and, in the Syriac version, "the Prophecy of Hoses the Prophet". It is the first of the twelve lesser prophets, so called, not because they were of less value, credit, and authority, than the other prophets; but because of their smallness in bulk; and which, as Kimchi says, upon the authority of their Rabbins, were put together in one book, that no one of them might be lost, because of their smallness; and Josephus {a} reckons them but as one book; and they are quoted in the New Testament under the name of the Book of the Prophets {b}. This prophet was one of them, and therefore placed here; though, as Kimchi, in his preface to this book, and R. David Ganz {c}, observe, his prophecy was before the prophecy of Isaiah; and yet he was not the first of these minor prophets, as to order of time; not only Jonah, but Joel and Amos, were before him; and so they are placed by some writers; according to Mr. Whiston {d}, he began to prophesy about the year of the world 3196 A.M. and 808 B.C. Mr. Bedford {e} places him in 804 B.C. His name is the same with Joshua and Jesus, and signifies a saviour; and he was not only, as all the true prophets of the Lord and faithful ministers of the word are, the means and instruments in the hand of God of saving people; but he was a type of Christ the Saviour, as well as prophesied concerning him, and salvation by him. Of his parentage, and the time of his prophesying, see **Ho 1:1**, by which it appears that he lived in several reigns, and to a very great age. He chiefly prophesied against the ten tribes of Israel; reproved them for their sins; exhorted them to repentance; threatened them with destruction in case of impenitence; and comforted the truly godly with the promise of the Messiah, and of the happy state of the church in the latter day. His style, is short and concise; in some places sententious, and without connection, obscure and difficult of interpretation; and in others very pathetic and moving. Of the divine inspiration and authority of this book there is no room to doubt; since passages out of it are quoted and referred to by Christ and his apostles; by Christ himself, **Mt 9:13** **1Pe 2:10** There are some things said of the descent, death, and burial of this prophet, not to be depended on. Pseudo Epiphanius {f} and Isidorus {g} say he was of the tribe of Issachar, and born in Belomoth or Bethlemoth; and that he died in peace, and was buried in his own country; but, according to a tradition of the Jews {h}, he died in Babylon, and was buried in Tzapheth, a city in upper Galilee; but all this is uncertain, and not very probable, and is of no importance to be known.

{a} Contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 8. {b} Acts vii. 42. {c} Tzemach David, fol. 12. 2. {d} Chronological Tables, cent. 7. {e} Scripture Chronology, B. 6. ch. 2. p. 645. {f} De Prophet. Vit. &c. c. 11. {g} De Vita & Mort. Sanct. c. 41.

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 1

After the general inscription of the book, in which the author, penman, and time of this prophecy, are expressed, **Ho 1:1**, the people of Israel are reproved for their idolatry, under the representation of a harlot the prophet is bid to marry, which he is said to do, **Ho 1:2**, and their ruin and destruction are foretold in the names of the children he had by her, and by what is said on the occasion of the birth of each, **Ho 1:4**, but mercy and salvation are promised to Judah, **Ho 1:7** and the chapter is concluded with a glorious prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles, and the calling of the Jews in the latter day; and of the union of Judah and Israel under one Head and Saviour, Christ; and of the greatness and glory of that day, **Ho 1:10**.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord that came unto Hosea,.... Whose name is the same with Joshua and Jesus, and signifies a saviour; he was in some things a type of Christ the Saviour, and prophesied of him, and salvation by him; and was the instrument and means of saving men, as all true prophets were, and faithful ministers of the word are: to him the word of the Lord, revealing his mind and will, was brought by the Spirit of God, and impressed upon his mind; and it was committed to him to be delivered unto others. This is the general title of the whole book, showing the divine original and authority of it:

the son of Beeri; which is added to distinguish him from another of the same name; and perhaps his father's name was famous in Israel, and therefore mentioned. The Jews have a rule, that where a prophet's father's name is mentioned, it shows that he was the son of a prophet; but this is not to be depended upon; and some of them say that this is the same with Beerah, a prince of the Reubenites, who was carried captive by Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, **1Ch 5:6**, but the name is different; nor does the chronology seem so well to agree with him; and especially he cannot be the father of Hosea, if he was of the tribe of Issachar, as some have affirmed:

in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel; from whence it appears that Hosea prophesied long, and lived to a great age; for from the last year of Jeroboam, which was the fifteenth of Uzziah, to the first of Hezekiah, must be sixty nine years; for Jeroboam reigned forty one years, and in the twenty seventh of his reign began Uzziah or Azariah to reign over Judah, and he reigned fifty two years, 2Ki 14:23, so that Uzziah reigned thirty seven years after the death of Jeroboam, through which time Hosea prophesied; Jotham after him reigned sixteen years, and so many reigned Ahaz, 2Ki 15:23, so that without reckoning any part, either of Jeroboam's reign, or Hezekiah's, he must prophesy sixty nine years, and, no doubt, did upwards of seventy, very probably eighty, the Jews say ninety; and allowing him to be twenty four or five years of age when he begun to prophesy, or only twenty (for it is certain he was at an age fit to marry, as appears by the prophecy), he: must live to be upwards of a hundred years; and in all probability he lived to see not only part of Israel carried captive by Tiglathpileser, which is certain; but the entire destruction of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser, which he prophesied of. Jeroboam king of Israel is mentioned last, though prior to these kings of Judah; because Hosea's prophecy is chiefly against Israel, and began in his reign, when they were in a flourishing condition. It appears from hence that Isaiah, Amos, and Micah, were contemporary with him; see **Isa 1:1**, within this compass of time Hosea prophesied lived Lycurgus the famous lawgiver of the Lacedemonians, and Hesiod the Greek poet; and Rome began to be built.

{h} Shalsheleth Hakabala, fol. 12. 1.

Hosea 1:2

Ver. 2. The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea,.... Or "in Hosea" {i}; which was internally revealed to him, and was inspired into him, by the Holy Ghost, who first spoke in him, and then by him; not that Hosea was the first of the prophets to whom the word of the Lord came; for there were Moses, Samuel, David, and others, before him; nor the first of the minor prophets, for Jonah, Joel, and Amos; are by some thought to be before him; nor the first of those contemporary with him, as the Jewish writers interpret it, which is not certain, at least not all of them; but the meaning is, that what follows is the first part of his prophecy, or what it began with; by which it appears he was put upon hard service at first, to prophesy against Israel, an idolatrous people, and to do it in such a manner as must be disagreeable to a young man:

and the Lord said to Hosea, go, take thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms; a woman given to whoredom, a notorious strumpet, one taken out of the stews, and children that were spurious and illegitimate, not born in lawful wedlock. Some think this was really done; that the prophet took a whore, and cohabited with her, or married her which, though forbidden a high priest, was not forbid to a prophet; and had it been against a law, yet the Lord commanding it made it lawful, as in the cases of Abraham's slaying his son, and the Israelites borrowing jewels of the Egyptians; but this seems not likely, since it would not only look like countenancing whoredom, which is contrary to the holy law of God; but must be very dishonourable to the prophet, and render him contemptible to the people; and, besides, would not answer the end proposed, to reprove the spiritual adultery or idolatry of Israel, but rather serve to confirm in it; for how should that appear criminal and abominable to them, which was commanded the prophet by the Lord? others think that the woman he is bid to marry, though before marriage a harlot, was afterwards reformed; but this is directly contrary to **Ho 3:1** and besides, the children born of her, whether reformed or not, yet in lawful wedlock could not be called children of whoredom; nor would the above end be answered by it, since such a person would be no fit representative of Israel committing spiritual adultery or idolatry, and continuing in it; and moreover, whether this or the former was the case, the prophecy must be many years delivering; it must be near a year before the first child was born, and the same space must be between the birth of each; so that here must be a long and frequent interruption of the prophecy, which does not seem likely: nor is it probable that he took his own wife, which is the opinion of others, and gave her the character of a whore, and his children with her, and called them children of whoredom, in order to represent and reprove the idolatry of Israel: what Maimonides {k}, and the Jewish writers in general, give into, is more agreeable, that this was all done in the vision of prophecy; that it so seemed to the prophet in vision to be really done, and so he related it to the people; but this is liable to objection, that such an impure scene of things should be represented to the mind of the prophet by the Holy Spirit of God; nor can the relation of it be thought to have any good effect upon the people, who would be ready to mock at him, and reproach him for it. It seems best therefore to understand the whole as a parable, and that the prophet, in a parabolical way, is bid to represent the treachery, unfaithfulness, and spiritual adultery of the people of Israel, under the feigned name of an unchaste woman, and of children begotten in fornication; and to show unto them that their case was as if he had taken a woman out of the stews, and her bastards with her; or as if a wife married by him had defiled his bed, and brought him a spurious brood of children. So the Targum interprets it, "go, prophesy a prophecy against the inhabitants of the idolatrous city, who add to sin:"

for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord; or

"for the inhabitants of the land erring, erred from the worship of the Lord,"

as the Targum; that is, the inhabitants of the land of Israel have committed idolatry, which is often in Scripture signified by adultery and whoredom; as an adulterous woman deals treacherously with her husband, so these people had dealt with God, who stood in such a relation to them; see **Jer 3:1**, this interprets the parable, and shows the reason of using the following symbols and emblems.

{i} evwhb en wshe, Sept.; in Hosea, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Tarnovius. {k} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. 46. Aben Ezra & Kimchi in loc.

Hosea 1:3

Ver. 3. So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim,.... In the course of prophesying he made mention of this person, who was a notorious common strumpet; and suggested hereby that they were just like her; or these were fictitious names he used to represent their case by Gomer signifies both "consummation" and "consumption" {l}; and this harlot is so called, because of her consummate beauty, and her being completely mistress of all the tricks of one; or, being consummately wicked, a perfect whore, common to all; and because her ruin and destruction, persisting in such practices, were inevitable, and so a fit emblem of the present and future condition of Israel. Diblaim may be considered either as the name of a man, a word of the same form with Ephraim; or of a woman, the mother of Gomer; or else of a place, the wilderness of Diblath, **Eze 6:14** and signifies "a cake of dried figs" {m}; which, in that country, was reckoned delicious eating; and so denotes, either that both the sin and ruin of this people were owing to their luxury, or indulging themselves in carnal pleasures, through the great affluence they were possessed of; or that their original was from a wilderness, and for their sins should be reduced to a desolate state again:

which conceived and bare him a son; whose name, and what he was an emblem of, are declared in the following verse. The Targum is,

"and he went and prophesied over them, that if they returned, it should be forgiven them: but, if not, as fig tree leaves drop off, so should they; but they added, and did evil works."

{l} A rad. rmg "perfecit, desiit", Gussetius. {m} Vox Mylbd "significat massas ficuum compressarum et siccatarum", Rivetus, Tarnovius.

Hosea 1:4

Ver. 4. And the Lord said unto him call his name Jezreel,.... Which some interpret the "seed of God", as Jerom; or "arm of God", as others; and Kimchi applies it to Jeroboam the son of Joash, who was strong, and prospered in his kingdom; but it rather signifies "God will sow", or "scatter" {n}; denoting either their dissension among themselves; or their dispersion among the nations, which afterwards came to pass; and so the Targum, "call their name scattered"; and alluding also to the city of Jezreel, where some of the idolatrous kings of Israel lived, and where much blood had been shed, which should be avenged, as follows:

for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu; not the blood of Naboth the Jezreelite, that was shed by Ahab; but the blood of Joram the son of Ahab, and seventy other sons of his, and all his great men, kinsfolks and priests, shed by Jehu in this place; and though this was done according to the will of God, and for which he received the kingdom, and it was continued in his family to the fourth generation; yet, inasmuch as this was not done by him from a pure and hearty zeal for the Lord and his worship, and with a sincere view to his glory, but in order to gain the kingdom, increase his power, and satiate his tyranny and lust; and because, though he destroyed one species of idolatry, the worship of Baal, yet he continued another, the worshipping of the calves at Dan and Bethel, and regarded not the law of the Lord, and so his successors after him; and were the means of causing many to sin, and so consequently of the ruin of many souls, whose blood would be required of them, which some take to be the meaning here; this is threatened; see **2Ki 9:24**. It may be observed, that God sometimes punishes the instruments he makes use of in doing his work; they either over doing it, exercising too much cruelty; and not doing it upon right principles, and with right views, as the kings of Assyria and Babylon, Isa 10:5. It is here said to be but a little while ere this vengeance would be taken, it being at the latter end of

Jeroboam's reign when this prophecy was delivered out; and his son Zachariah, in whom the kingdom as in his family ceased, reigned but six months, being conspired against and slain by Shallum, who reigned in his stead, 2Ki 15:8. The Targum is,

"for yet a little while I will avenge the blood of those that worship idols which Jehu shed in Jezreel, whom he slew because they served Baal; but they turned to err after the calves which were in Bethel; therefore I will reckon that innocent blood upon the house of Jehu:"

and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel; that is, in the family of Jehu; Zachariah the son of the then reigning prince being the last, and his reign only the short reign of six months; unless this has reference to the utter cessation of this kingdom as such in the times of Hoshea by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, 2Ki 17:6.

{n} A rad. erz "seminavit, disseminavit", Schmidt.

Hosea 1:5

Ver. 5. And it shall come to pass at that day,.... When the Lord shall take vengeance on the family of Jehu, and deprive them of the kingdom of Israel, and shall punish the idolatrous kings that succeed:

that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel; of which valley see Jos 17:16. It is now called the plain of Esdraelon; as it is in the Apocrypha:

"And to those among the nations that were of Carmel, and Galaad, and the higher Galilee, and the great plain of Esdrelom," (Judith 1:8)

the great plain of Esdraelon; according to Adrichomius, {o} it is two miles broad, and ten miles long; its soil exceeding rich and fruitful, and abounding with grain, wine, and oil; all travellers agree they never saw the like: one says {p} of this plain or valley, formerly the lot of the tribe of Issachar, this is the most fertile portion of the land of Canaan, where that tribe might well be supposed to have "rejoiced in their tents", De 33:18, at present, indeed, it is not manured, as another traveller {q} observes, and yet very fruitful; who says, it is of a vast extent, and very fertile, but uncultivated, only serving the Arabs for pasturage; and, according to the same writer, the ancient river Kishon runs through the middle of it: from the largeness of it, it is frequently called by writers the great plain or valley; and sometimes, from the places near it, or on it, the great plain of Legio, the great plain of Samaria, the great plain or valley of Megiddo, 2Ch 35:22, and the great plain of Esdraelon, and here the valley of Jezreel; Jezreel or Esdraela being situated in this great plain or valley between Scythopolis and Legio, a very large village, as Jerom says {r} it was in his days; and also on this passage observes, that Jezreel, from whence this valley had its name, is now near Maximianopolis, and was the metropolis of the kingdom of Samaria, near which were very large plains, and a valley of a very great length, extending more than ten miles: here Ahab had a palace in his days, near to which was Naboth's vineyard, and where God revenged his blood: this city is called by Josephus {s} Azare and Azarus, or Izarus; and in the times of Gulielmus Tyrius {t} it went by the name of Little Gerinum. The "bow" is put for all instruments of war, and everything in which confidence was put, which was weakened or removed from them: this refers either to Menhchem's slaughter of Shallum, and wasting some parts of the land of Israel, 2Ki 15:14, or rather it may be to a battle fought between Hoshea king of Israel and Shalmaneser king of Assyria in this valley, which was not far from Samaria; in which the former was defeated, and the latter, having the victory, proceeded to Samaria, besieged and took it, 2Ki 17:6 though of the action the Scripture is silent; but it is not improbable. The Targum is,

"I will break the strength of the warriors of Israel in the valley of Jezreel;"

which seems to confirm the same conjecture. Some render it, "because of the valley of Jezreel" {u}; that is, because of the idolatry, bloodshed, and other sins, committed there.

{o} Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 35, 37. {p} Dr. Shaw's Travels, tom. 2. c. 1. p. 275. Ed. 2. {q} Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 57. Ed. 7. {r} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 92. I. {s} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 13. sect. 6, 8. {t} Tyr. Hist. l. 22. c. 26. {u} laerzy qmeb "propter vallem Jisreelis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator,

Hosea 1:6

Ver. 6. And she conceived again, and bare a daughter,.... One of the weaker sex; denoting the weaker state of the kingdom of Israel after Jeroboam, as Kimchi thinks; Zachariah his son reigning but six months, and Shallum the son

of Jabesh, his successor, reigned but one month,
2Ki 15:8:

and God said unto him, call her name Loruhamah; which signifies, "she hath not obtained mercy": and what follows explains it to the same sense. The Targum is,

"and they added and did evil works; and he said unto him call their name, who obtained not mercy by their works:"

for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; as he had heretofore, sparing them time after time, though they continued to sin against him; but now he would spare them no longer, but deliver them up into the hands of their enemies, as he did a part of them, first into the hands of Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and then to Shalmaneser,
2Ki 15:29, otherwise, in the latter day, mercy will be shown them again, especially in a spiritual way, when they shall be converted, and believe in Christ, and all Israel shall be saved, as well as possess their own land again; see **Ho 1:10**:

but I will utterly take them away; out of their land, from being a kingdom and nation, which was done by Shalmaneser, another king of Assyria, 2Ki 17:6, or, "bringing I will bring into them", or "against them" {w}; that is, an enemy, the same king of Assyria: or, "but forgetting I will forget them" {x}, as some render it, and remember them no more, till the fulness of time comes: or, "through pardoning I have pardoned", or "spared them" {y}; that is, in times past. The Targum is,

"but if they return, pardoning I will pardon them;"

which will be done in the latter day.

{w} Mhl ava avn "adducendo adducam contra cos", Munster; "importando importabo eis", Drusius; so Kimchi and Ben Melech. {x} "Obliviscendo obliviscar eorum", V. L. Pagninus. {y} "Quamvis omnino condonaverim eis", Piscator; "quamvis haetenus condonando condonaverim eis", so some in Drusius.

Hosea 1:7

Ver. 7. But I will have mercy on the house of Judah,.... The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which retained the true worship of God among them; see Ho 11:12 and though they often sinned against the Lord, he showed them mercy, and spared them longer than the ten tribes; and though he suffered them to be carried captive into Babylon, he returned them again after seventy years: this is mentioned as an aggravation of the punishment of Israel, that Judah was spared, when they were not; and to show that God will have a people to seek and serve him, and, when he rejects some, he will make a reserve of others:

and will save them by the Lord their God; by his own arm and power, and not theirs, or any creature's; nor by any warlike means or instruments whatever, as follows:

and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen: which may respect either the deliverance of the Jews from the invasion and siege of Sennacherib's army; which was done without shooting an arrow, or drawing the sword, or engaging in a pitched battle, or by a cavalry rushing into his camp, discomfiting his army, and pursuing them; but by an angel sent from heaven, which in one night destroyed a hundred and fourscore and five thousand, 2Ki 19:35 or else refers to Cyrus being stirred up by the Lord to issue forth a proclamation, giving liberty to the Jewish captives to go free, without price or reward; and so was brought about, not by the might and power of man, but by the Spirit of the Lord; see **Ezr 1:1** though a greater salvation is pointed at, or at least shadowed forth, by this, even the spiritual and eternal salvation of God's elect by Christ; which is the fruit of mercy, and not the effect of the merits of men; is obtained not by human power, or by man's righteousness; but by the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Jehovah our righteousness, the Lord God of his people; who stands in a relation to them prior to his being the Saviour of them; to which work and office he is equal, being the eternal Jehovah, and the true and living God. So the Targum,

"and I will save them by the Word of the Lord their God;"

the eternal Word, that was with God, is God, and became incarnate, God in our nature.

Hosea 1:8

Ver. 8. Now when she had weaned Loruhamah,.... That is, when Gomer had weaned her daughter of this name, **Ho 1:6**. This some interpret of the people of Israel being deprived of the word and ordinances, compared to milk and breasts, having a famine of them; and so were like children weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts; though others think this is expressive of the patience of God in bearing with this people, after he had before threatened them with the subversion of their kingdom and state; and even after the prophecy had took place in part, in causing the kingdom to cease in the house of Jehu, he bore with them about forty years before they were entirely carried captive; suckling and weaning, before the conception and birth of another child, denoting some stop and stay; but rather this intends the taking away some part of the land of Israel, as a child when weaning is taken away from its mother; and may respect the carrying captive many of the Israelites in divers parts, particularly out of Gilead, Galilee, and Naphtali, by Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, 2Ki 15:29. This cannot be understood of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, as Cocceius; for this is a resumption and continuation of the prophecy concerning the ten tribes, after inserting a promise of the salvation of Judah, in the preceding verse:

she conceived and bare a son: according to Kimchi, as the weaning of Loruhamah points at the times of weakness, from Zachariah the son of Jeroboam to the times of Pekahiah, when the reigns were short and troublesome; so this son conceived and born represents the state of the nation in the times of Pekah; who reigned twenty years, and was too powerful for the kingdom of Judah, slew multitudes of them, and carried others captive, and assisted Rezin king of Syria against Ahaz king of Judah: but, according to the series of the prophecy, it seems best to agree with the times of Hoshea king of Israel, who was not so bad as some of his predecessors; was a man of spirit and courage; cast off the Assyrian yoke, and neglected to give presents to the king of Assyria; and Samaria in his time held out a three years' siege against that king, 2Ki 17:1. The Targum is,

"and the generation of them who are carried captive among the nations are found not to have obtained mercy by their works, but they added and did evil works."

Hosea 1:9

Ver. 9. Then said God, call his name Loammi,.... Which Aben Ezra interprets of the children of the ten tribes horn in captivity, who never returned; but it rather signifies the ten tribes themselves, who were carried captive and had this name given them for the reason following:

for ye are not my people; though he had chosen them to be his people above all people, and had distinguished them from others by various blessings and privileges; yet they did not behave as such to him; they did not serve, obey, and worship him, but the calves at Dan and Bethel; and therefore did not deserve the name of his people: hence he says,

and I will not be your or "yours" {a}; that is, as we supply it, and so Aben Ezra, "your God"; will not behave toward you as such; will not take you under my care and protection, or continue you in your land, and in the enjoyment of the blessings of it; will not be your King, patron, and defender, but give you up into the hands of your enemies. This respects the captivity of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser,
2Ki 17:6. The Targum is,

"for ye are not my people; because ye do not confirm the words of my law, my word shall not be your help."

{a} Mkl hyha al "non ero vester", Pagninus; "nec ego sum futurus vester", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Hosea 1:10

Ver. 10. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered,.... Though called Loammi, and rejected from being the people of God; yet there is a time when their number, according to the promise made to Abraham, shall be as the sand of the sea, and the stars of heaven; which, as the one cannot be measured, the other cannot be numbered; which was to be not at the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, when some of the ten tribes of Israel returned with them, as Theodoret and others think; for they were but few that then returned: but rather at the first times of the Gospel, when multitudes that came from various parts of the world were converted at the day of Pentecost, and greater numbers; who were met with in the ministry of the word, in the various parts of the world, where they were dispersed, and the Gospel came, to whom Peter and James wrote their epistles; and not these only are meant, but the vast numbers of Gentiles, who were effectually called by grace everywhere, and were true Israelites, the spiritual seed of Abraham; and to whom the Apostle Paul applies these words, producing them as a testimony of the election and calling, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, **Ro 9:24**, and which will have a further accomplishment in the latter day, when the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in, the Jews will be converted, and all Israel saved, Ro 11:25, then the numbers of the Israel of God, both of Jews and Gentiles, will be as the sand of the sea indeed!

and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God; that is, in such places where it used to be said, here live Pagans, Turks, or Jews, who worship not the true God, or at lease not aright, nor believe in Christ, and profess his name; "there it shall be said to them", by the Lord himself, by his Spirit witnessing their relation to them, and by all good men, and even by the world in general; not only that they are "the people of God", but have a superior privilege, a greater character, and a higher relation, the sons of the living God; the sons of God, not by nature, as Christ; nor by creation, as angels; nor by office, as civil magistrates; or by profession merely, as nominal Christians; but by adopting grace; which exceeds all other blessings, even of sanctification and justification; makes men honourable; is attended with various privileges, and always continues. The epithet "of the living God" is not without cause put; it stands in opposition to dead idols before worshipped by some who will now be the children of God; and who, as he has life in himself, gives it to others; to all natural life and breath, and to his children spiritual and eternal life; and, as he lives forever, so shall they his sons likewise. The Targum is,

"and it shall be in the place where they have been carried captive, when they transgressed the law; and it was said to them, ye are not my people; there they shall be converted and increased (or made great); and it shall be said to them, O ye people of the living God."

Hosea 1:11

Ver. 11. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together,.... Not at the return from the Babylonish captivity; for, though some of the ten tribes might be mixed with the Jews when they went into captivity, and came out with them, and others might join them from the various nations where they had been dispersed; yet they did not gather together with them in a body, only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, those were the chief; of the children of Israel, but few, **Ezr 1:5**. Some refer this to the first times of the

Gospel, when the Galileans were gathered to Christ by his ministry, who inhabited the countries where some of the tribes of Israel dwelt; and who might, at least some of them, descend from them: and when those in Jerusalem and in Judea, who also believed in Christ, united with them in their profession of him, and in affection to one another; or to the time of Christ's death, by which the whole Israel of God, who were scattered abroad, were gathered together in one; and even Jews and Gentiles were made one body, and one new man in Christ, the partition wall being broken down: or to the times of the apostles, who were successful in the conversion and gathering of many of the Jewish nation, and also of the Samaritans; and of forming churches in Judea and Samaria under one head, in whom they agreed; and likewise of many others, both Jews and Israelites, in the various parts of the world, where they carried the Gospel; and who coalesced with the believing Gentiles in one church state, under Christ their head: though it seems best to interpret this of the latter day, when the children of Israel and Judah shall join together in seeking the Lord their God, and the true Messiah, and shall be turned, and gathered to him; when they shall be no more two kingdoms or two nations, but be one under the Messiah, who shall he their King and Prince; when all their animosities shall be laid aside, and they shall no more envy or vex one another; but shall meet together in the same church state, and worship the Lord with one shoulder and consent, being of one mind and sentiment in religious things, and when all Israel shall be saved, **Jer 1:4**
Isa 11:13

and appoint themselves one head; not Sennacherib, as Aben Ezra, very absurdly; nor Hezekiah, nor Josiah, as others; nor Elijah the prophet, as some in Kimchi; nor Zerubbabel, to which the Targum seems to incline, paraphrasing it,

"one head of the house of David;"

but better, as Jarchi, David their King; that is, the Messiah, as Kimchi and Ben Melech expressly interpret it; and so Abarbinel {b}, though he understands it of the Messiah the son of Joseph; and undoubtedly the same is meant by the one head, as David their King and Prince, **Ho 3:5** even Christ, who is the Head of angels, yea, the Head of every man, but in a special and peculiar sense the head of the body, the church; he is the federal and representative Head of his people, both in eternity and in time; and in such sense a Head to them, as a king is head of his subjects, a husband of his wife, a father of his family, and a master of his servants; and also as a natural head is to its body, of the same nature with it; in union to it; lives the same life; is above it, and more excellent than it: a perfect Head Christ is, there being nothing wanting in him as such; he has his eyes set upon his people; his ears are open to their cries; he smells a sweet saviour of rest in their persons and services; he tastes and eats their pleasant fruits, and feels all their infirmities, troubles and afflictions; and has a tongue to speak a word in season for them: there are no vicious humours in this Head to affect the body; no deformity in it, and all fulness therein to supply its wants; he is an everliving and everlasting Head, and the one, and only one; there is no other, neither the pope of Rome, nor any other; nor will true Israelites acknowledge any other: and though this Head is of God the Father's appointing, who has given him to be the Head; set him as King over Sion; raised him up to be a Prince and a Saviour; yet he is also of the saints' choosing and appointing; they approve of him as such, embrace him, own him, and submit to him, as the Jews will at the last day, though their forefathers have rejected him:

and they shall come up out of the land; not of Israel, as Schmidt, who interprets this of the apostles going out from thence, and spreading the Gospel in the world; but out of each of the lands and countries where Israel and Judah have been dispersed, and return to their own land; see **Jer 3:18**. So the Targum,

"and they shall come up out of the land of their captivity:"

or it may be understood, figuratively and spiritually, of their coming up out of their captivity to sin, Satan, the law, and the world, as well as out of their present temporal captivity:

and out of the earth {c}, as it were, as it may be rendered; out of their earthly state, from the graves of sin, leaving their earthly affections, and becoming spiritual and heavenly minded; willing to quit all that is dear unto them, even the country in which they were born and long lived, to follow Christ their Head and King:

for great shall be the day of Jezreel; or, though great has been or is the day of Jezreel {d}; though it has been a great and long day of trouble and affliction to them, signified by Jezreel; see **Ho 1:4**, yet all these good things promised shall surely be accomplished: indeed the day of Jezreel may be taken in a good sense, not for a time of dispersion and distress, but of great comfort, joy, and happiness; the word signifying, according to some, the seed of God, or the arm of God: and Jerom applies it to Christ, the seed of God; and the whole Gospel dispensation may be called his day, the day of salvation, the joyful day the

Lord has made: or rather by Jezreel, the seed of God, are meant his spiritual offspring, the children of Judah and Israel; who shall now be gathered, by the arm of God, his powerful and efficacious grace, and that in large numbers, so that great will be their day; so the Targum paraphrases it,

"for great will be the day of their gathering."

It respects the latter day glory, when will be the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles; when there will be great peace and prosperity; great love and unity; great holiness and purity; great light and knowledge; great enjoyment of God, and of the presence of the Redeemer great glory upon the churches, and upon that a defence: in short, all the great and glorious things spoken of will now be completed; perfect deliverance from all afflictions and troubles; an entire destruction of all enemies; and a full enjoyment of the word and ordinances, in the purity of them, and large conversions everywhere.

{b} Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 53. 3. {c} Urah Nm "e terra". {d} yk "quamvis"; so some in Drusius, Rivet.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hosea 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 2

This chapter is an explanation of the former, proceeding upon the same argument in more express words. The godly Israelites are here called upon to lay before the body of the people their idolatry, ingratitude, obstinacy, and ignorance of the God of their mercies; and to exhort them to repentance, lest they should be stripped of all their good things, and be brought into great distress and difficulties; all their joy and comfort cease, and be exposed to shame and contempt, **Ho 2:1**, yet, notwithstanding, many gracious promises are made unto them, of their having the alluring and comfortable word of the Gospel; of a door of hope; of salvation being opened to them; of faith in the Lord, and affection to him as their husband; of the removal of all idolatry from them; of safety from all enemies; of their open espousal to Christ; of his hearing of their prayers, and giving them plenty of all good things; and of their multiplication, conversion, and covenant relation to God, **Ho 2:14**.

Ver. 1. Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah. These words are to be considered either in connection with the latter part of the preceding chapter, and as directed to the sons of the living God, who had not been, but now were, "Ammi", the Lord's people; and who had not, but now have, "Ruhamah", obtained mercy; which grace and mercy shown them, it became them to speak of one to another, to affect their hearts mutually with it, and to glorify God for it, **Mal 3:16** as also to speak of it to their carnal relations, that so, if it was the will of God, it might be of use to them, to show them the state they were in, the danger of it, their need of the grace and mercy of God, and the hope there was by their own instance and example of obtaining it; see **Ro 9:1**, or as directed to the converted Jews that appointed Christ their Head, and believed in him; exhorting them to own the believing Gentiles as their brethren and sisters, since they were the spiritual seed of Abraham their father, and walked in the steps of his faith; and to call them Ammi and Ruhamah, since they, who were not the people of God, now were, and who had not obtained mercy, now have obtained mercy, **1Pe 2:10**, or else they may be considered as in connection with the following words,

plead with your mother; and that either as spoken to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who were the people of God, retained the pure worship of God, and obtained mercy of the Lord, **Ho 1:7**,

"O ye Ammi and Ruhamah, that are the Lord's people, and he has had mercy on; stir up and exhort your brethren and sisters of the ten tribes, for so they were, notwithstanding their separation, 1Ki 12:4, to contend with their mother, the body of the nation, about idolatry and departure from God;"

or as spoken to the godly among the ten tribes, who were the real people of God, and sharers in his grace and mercy; the remnant he reserved for himself, who had not bowed their knees to idols; or as the command of God by the prophet, to the people of Israel, to exhort one another to contend with their mother, who were, as yet, the Lord's people, had mercy shown them, when this prophecy was delivered out; though, in case of obstinacy and impenitence, they were threatened with a "Loammi" and "Loruhamah"; so Schmidt, who thinks that "ammi" and "ruhamah" are put by way of "apposition [to] your brethren [and] sisters", in which he seems to be right. Aben Ezra thinks the words are spoken ironically, like those in Ec 11:9, and others, but without reason. The Targum is,

"O ye prophets, say to your brethren, and my people, and I will have mercy on your congregation;"

but whether the words are spoken to the Jewish converts who first believed in Christ, were his people, received grace and mercy from him, and stood in the relation of brethren and sisters to one another, both in a natural and spiritual sense, to stir up one another to reprove their mother, the Jewish church, for rejecting Christ, saying, as follows:

Hosea 2:2

Ver. 2. Plead with your mother, plead,.... The congregation of Israel, as the Targum; the body of the Jewish nation, which, with respect to individuals, was as a mother to her children; see Mt 21:37, that is, lay before her, her sin in rejecting the Messiah, the Head and Husband of his true church and people; endeavour to convince her of it; reprove her for it; expostulate with her about it; argue the case with her, and show her the danger of persisting in such an evil, as the apostles did, **Ac 2:23**

for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband; for though there had been such a relation between them, yet it was now dissolved; she had broken the marriage covenant and contract, and God had given her a bill of divorce, Jer 31:32 or, however, as she behaved not as a wife towards him, showing love and affection, honour and reverence, and performing duty, and yielding obedience; so he would not carry it as a husband towards her, nourishing and cherishing her, providing for her, and protecting and defending her; but leave her to shift for herself, and to the insults and abuses of others; having been guilty of idolatry, which is spiritual adultery, as the Israelites before the captivity were; and as the Jews in Christ's time were guilty of rejecting the word of God, and preferring their own traditions to it: hence it follows,

let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, or "from her face" {e},

and her adulteries from between her breasts; alluding to the custom of harlots, who used to paint their faces, and to allure with their looks, words, and actions, and to make bare their breasts, or adorn them, or carry in them what were enticing and alluring. These adulteries and whoredoms, which are the same thing, may signify the many idolatries of the people of Israel before their captivity, and which were the cause of it; or the sins of the Jews before their dispersion; or their evil works, as the Targum, by which they departed from

God and the true Messiah, and went a whoring after other lovers: thus they rejected, transgressed, and made of none effect the commandments of God by their traditions; paid tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and neglected the weighty matters of the law; sought not the honour of God, but that which comes from men; and therefore confessed not the true Messiah, though under convictions of him, and went about to establish their own righteousness, and submitted not to his; these were the idols of their hearts, and the whoredoms and adulteries the Jewish converts, that truly believed in Christ, are ordered to exhort them to put away. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are, "I will take away her whoredoms &c.",

{e} hynpm "a facie sua", Calvin, Pagninus, Piscator, Cocceius; "a faciebus suis", Montanus, Schmidt.

Hosea 2:3

Ver. 3. Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born,.... Alluding to the case of an infant when born, which comes naked into the world; and referring to the state and condition of the Israelites in Egypt, which was the time of their nativity, as a people and church; see Eze 16:4, and when they were in a state of servitude and bondage, and had no wealth and substance, and without possessions and lands, and had no country of their own to inhabit; and signifying that this should be their case again, if they persisted in their idolatry, impenitence, and unbelief; as has been the case of the ten tribes upon their captivity, when they were stripped of all their wealth and riches, carried away out of their own land, and scattered among the nations, and have never returned since; and as was the case of the Jews in their last destruction, for the rejection of Christ, they were stripped of their civil and religious privileges, of their temporal and spiritual mercies as a nation and church; what they feared is come upon them, that the Romans would come and take away their place and nation, Joh 11:48

and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land; having some respect to her former condition in the wilderness, where they had no food nor drink but what they had from God, as Abarbinel thinks; or else to the destruction and consumption of them in the wilderness, their carcasses falling there, who sinned against the Lord, as the Targum and Jarchi; and denoting the utter destruction of their commonwealth and church, when their land was laid waste, their city destroyed, their house and temple left desolate and burnt, and they deprived of all the necessaries of life, which was their case at their last destruction by the Romans; and to this day they are as they are described, **Ho 3:4**:

and slay her with thirst; after their vainly expected Messiah, which has brought them to desperation; or with a thirst, not for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord, **Am 8:11**, the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, being taken away from them, and the clouds ordered to drop down no rain upon them; that is, the ministers of the word not to preach the Gospel to them; and so are left destitute of the means of grace, and of spiritual life, and of escaping eternal death, Mt 21:43. The Targum of the whole is,

"lest I remove my Shechinah from her, and take away her glory, and set her forsaken, as in the days of old, before she came to my worship; and my fury shall remain upon her, as it remained upon the people of that generation that transgressed my law in the wilderness; and I will set the land desolate, and kill her with thirst."

Hosea 2:4

Ver. 4. And I will not have mercy upon her children,.... The posterity of the Jews in succeeding ages, until the time of their conversion comes; they persisting in the sins of their forefathers, filling up the measure of their iniquities; remaining in their obstinate rejection of the Messiah, and in the same impenitence and unbelief, and having his blood imprecated upon them:

for they be the children of whoredoms; begotten and born in whoredom, spurious and illegitimate; or that commit whoredoms; imitate their parents; are guilty of the same vices; a generation of vipers. So the Targum,

"for they are children that commit idolatry;"

retain the traditions of the elders; go about to establish their own righteousness, and reject the Messiah.

Hosea 2:5

Ver. 5. For their mother hath played the harlot,.... Or committed idolatry;

which is the reason why she is to be pleaded with, and why the Lord will not own her as his wife, or be a husband to her; and why she is to be exhorted to put away her whoredoms from her; and was in danger of all the above evils coming upon her, continuing in the same practice; and why her children were children of whoredoms. Though the connection may be with the verse following, "for" or "because their mother hath played the harlot", &c. "therefore I will hedge up her way", &c.

She that conceived them hath done shamefully; all sin is shameful and scandalous, especially adultery; it brings a reproach and a blot upon a person, that will not be wiped off; and so idolatry, worshipping stocks and stones instead of the living God; and particularly the sin of the Jewish church, in rejecting the true Messiah and his righteousness, and setting up their own, and tenaciously adhering to the traditions of the elders; and so departing from the true God, and his word and worship, which is no other than spiritual adultery or idolatry. The Targum is,

"because their congregation hath erred after the false prophets, their teachers are confounded;"

and which Jarchi interprets of the wise men that teach doctrines, who are ashamed because of the people of the earth; to whom they say, ye shall not steal, and yet they steal themselves; see **Ro 2:21**. Or, "she hath made ashamed" {f}; her husband, and her children: or, "she is confounded" {g}, and "ashamed" herself, for what she has done.

For she said, I will go after my lovers; her idols, as the ten tribes did after the calves at Dan and Bethel. So Kimchi's father interprets it of the sun, moon, and stars, they worshipped: though he himself understands it of the Assyrians and Egyptians they were in alliance with, and trusted in. Some join together the Gentile nations and their gods. Or else it may be understood of the Jews seeking to the Romans, and courting their favour and friendship; desiring to be governed not by their own kings, but by the Romans {h}; declaring they had no king but Caesar, and rejecting Christ as such, Joh 19:12 or rather of their beloved tenets, concerning traditions, the rites and ceremonies of the law, self-righteousness, &c.: the words are expressive of impudence, obstinacy, and self-will; resolving to pursue their own fancies and have their own wills, be it as it would.

That give me my bread and any water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink; "or drinks" {i}; wine and other liquors, as Kimchi; these take in everything belonging to food and raiment, and all the necessaries, and even delights and pleasures, of life: bread and water; all sorts of food: wool and flax; all sorts of clothing, both woollen and linen, for outward or inward covering: and oil, and drinks, or liquors; everything for pleasure and delight; all which she ascribed not to God, from whence all good things come; but, which was an aggravation of her sin, to her lovers, her allies, or her idols; as the Jews did their plenty of victuals to the queen of heaven, and their worship of her, Jer 44:17 and as, in the times of Christ, they ascribed not only their enjoyment of temporal good things, but their righteousness, life, and salvation, to their observance of traditions, rites, and ceremonies, and the externals of religion.

{f} hvybwh "pudefecit", Junius apud Rivet. {g} "Confusa, [vel] pudefacta", Pagninus, Montanus; "pudore suffusa est", Gussetius. {h} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 17. c. 13, sect. 2. {i} yywqv "potationes meas", Montanus, "potiones meas", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "potus meos", Cocceius, Schmidt.

Hosea 2:6

Ver. 6. Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns,.... As fields and vineyards are fenced with thorn hedges to keep out beasts; or rather as closes and fields are fenced to keep cattle in, from going out and straying elsewhere; which may be expressive of afflictions, aud particularly wars among them, that they could not stir out and go from place to place: and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths: to go to Dan and Bethel, and worship the calves there, as some; or to go to the Egyptians and Assyrians for help, as Jarchi and Kimchi; though it was by the latter that they were hedged in, and walled and cooped up, when the city of Samaria was besieged three years: rather this respects the straits and difficulties the Jews have been reduced to by the destruction of Jerusalem, and the continuance of them ever since; so that they are not able to offer their daily sacrifice, kill and eat their passover lamb, and perform other rites and ceremonies they used in their own land; which they would fain perform, though abolished by Christ, but are restrained by this hedge and wall, the destruction of their temple and altar, and not being suffered to possess their land; hence they are said to be without a sacrifice and an ephod. **Ho 3:4**.

Hosea 2:7

Ver. 7. And she shall follow after her lovers,.... Before mentioned; that is, in her affections and desires, with great eagerness and earnestness, as men pursue what they are bent upon; otherwise, being hedged in and walled up, she could not go after them in a proper sense:

but she shall not overtake them; they fleeing from her, and she pent up:

she shall seek them, but shall not find them; shall not be able to enjoy them, or act according to her wishes and desires, with respect to the performance of sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies, as before observed:

then shall she say; in her heart, finding all endeavours fruitless, and that the things sought after were never to be had; the hedges and wall, the obstructions in the way, were never to be removed, while in such a pursuit; wherefore after a long time, many hundreds of years, even in the latter day, being convinced of her sin and folly in rejecting Christ, and pursuing after other objects, she will take up the following resolution:

I will go and return to my first husband; either the God of Israel, whom the ten tribes departed from by worshipping the calves Jeroboam set up; but in the latter day will seek the Lord their God again, who was a husband to them, and shall cleave to him again, and all Israel shall be saved: so the Targum,

"I will go and return to the service of my first master, for it was well with me when I served him; henceforth I will not serve idols:"

or Christ, who was promised and prophesied of as a husband to the Jewish church, Isa 54:5 and whom they believed in, and expected as such, but when he came rejected him; but now being convinced of their error shall seek David their King, appoint themselves one head, and embrace Christ as their husband, and adhere to him; see **Ho 3:5**:

for then was it better with me than now; while in the faith, and hope, and expectation of the true Messiah; having a spiritual apprehension of him, true faith in him, and comfort from him, as held forth in the promise; being then possessed of the good land, in the enjoyment of the word and ordinances, and of all religious and civil privileges, but now deprived of them. This may be applied to the case of true believers in Christ, having partially departed from him, and being restored. Christ is a husband to them, who has betrothed them to himself, and they have given themselves to him, and have been loved, nourished, cherished, and provided for by him, and for a while had much nearness, familiarity, and communion with him; but unbelief prevailing, first love waxing cold, and being got into a carnal and sleepy frame, neglect both private and public worship, fall into sin, and removed from church communion, and so may be said to have departed from Christ their husband; but being recovered by divine grace, and sensible of their sins, resolve to return to him again by repentance and acknowledgment, by doing their first works, and by attendance on his word and ordinances; instigated hereunto very much by remembering how it has been with them when they kept close to him, and observing the difference between those times and the present; how they had then the presence of God and Christ, and communion with them, and the secret discoveries of the love of God; in what lively exercise the graces of the Spirit were; what delight and profit they had in ordinances, and what peace, joy, and comfort, in their souls; all which now they want; see Job 29:2.

Hosea 2:8

Ver. 8. For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil,.... This is a reason, not of her resolution to return to her first husband, but to go after lovers, and of her ascribing these things to them, **Ho 2:5**, and why the Lord would behave towards her as he determined to do, **Ho 2:6**, this ignorance was wilful and affected, and therefore blameable; she might have known, but she would not; she did not set her mind to know; she did not consider who gave her these things, nor behave as if she knew, as Jarchi: or she did not own and acknowledge God to be the author and giver of them, as she should have done; which was ingratitude rather than ignorance, and is a heinous sin, and to be resented; since all good things, temporal and spiritual, as daily bread, all the necessaries of life, signified by these things, so the word, and ordinances, and spiritual gifts, which they may be emblems of, come from God, and should be acknowledged; but the Jews, as in the times of Isaiah, did not know him, and acknowledge his benefits, **Isa 1:2**, so, in the times of Christ, they did not know him to be the God of Israel, God over all, blessed for ever; from whom, and for whose sake, who was to be, and was born of them, they enjoyed the privileges they did, **Joh 1:10**.

And multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal; the relative "which" may refer to all that goes before; and the sense be, that these gifts of God, and which should have been owned as such, and employed in his service, and to his glory; some were made use of in meat and drink offerings to Baal;

and others in decking themselves to appear in his worship to his honour; or in ornamenting the idol therewith, or in making it thereof, so the Targum and Syriac version: and all this may be said to be done, when these things are spent in the service of other lords than the Lord himself; when they are abused to sinful purposes, and consumed on the lusts of men, to gratify their sensuality, pride, and vanity, which the Jews did.

Hosea 2:9

Ver. 9. Therefore will I return, and take away,.... Or, "take away again" {k}; an usual Hebraism:

my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof; for though these are the gifts of God to men for their use, and to dispose of for the good of others; yet he retains his property in them, and can and will call them to an account for their stewardship; and, when he pleases, take away both their office, and the good things they were intrusted with, not making a right use of them; and this he does in his own appointed time and season, or at such a time when these are at the best, and the greatest good is expected from them, and which therefore is the more afflictive; as in the time of harvest and vintage, so Kimchi, when corn and grapes are fully ripe; or, as the Targum, in the time of the corn being on the floor, and of the pressure of the wine:

and will recover my wool, and my flax, given "to cover her nakedness"; or, "I will take away"; by force and violence, as out of the hands of thieves, and robbers, and usurpers, who have no right to them, being forfeited; these were given to cover her nakedness, but not to deck herself with for the honour of her idols, or to cherish pride and superstition; see Mt 23:5 these were all taken away when the Romans came and took away their place and nation, Joh 11:48. The Septuagint and Arabic versions give the sense as if these were taken,

that they might not cover her nakedness, or "shame"; but that it might be exposed, as follows:

{k} ytxqlw bwva "iterum capiam", Drusius; "recipiam", Liveleus.

Hosea 2:10

Ver. 10. And now will I discover her lewdness in the lovers,.... The people, her lovers, as the Targum; which is by many understood of the Egyptians and Assyrians; but rather means the Romans, whom the Jews courted as their friends: though it seems best to interpret it in a more general way, that the sin and folly of the Jews in rejecting Christ, and adhering to their beloved tenets, should be discovered and made manifest to all in the most public manner by their punishment; by being scattered among the nations, and becoming a taunt, reproach, and a curse everywhere: and none shall deliver her out of my hand; none of her lovers, as Kimchi, nor any other: it denotes the utter, total, and final destruction of the Jews, wrath being come upon them to the uttermost; and which is irrecoverable by human help, has continued for many hundred years, and will until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, or till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, Lu 21:24.

Hosea 2:11

Ver. 11. I will also cause all her mirth to cease,.... As it must in course, this being her case, as before described, whether considered in individuals, or as a body politic, or in their church state, as follows:

her feast days; which the Jews understand of the three feasts of tabernacles, passover, and pentecost; typical of Christ's tabernacling in human nature; of his being the passover sacrificed for us; and of the firstfruits of the Spirit; which being come, the shadows are gone and vanished, and these feasts are no more: her new moons, and her sabbaths; the first day of every month, and the seventh day of every week, observed for religious exercises; typical of the light the church receives from Christ, and the rest it has in him; and he, the body and substance of them, being come, these are no more, **Col 2:16**:

and all her solemn feasts; all others, whether of God's appointment or their own; all are made to cease of right, if not in fact; the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, being abolished by Christ, and the Jews without a priest, sacrifice, and ephod, **Eph 2:14**.

Hosea 2:12

Ver. 12. And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees,.... Which are mentioned for the rest, being the most fruitful and beneficial: this was done when Judea was invaded, overrun and wasted, by the Roman army; and when many were cut down, as Josephus observes, to build forts, and cast up mounts against Jerusalem; so that, he, says {l}, the appearance of the earth was miserable, for what before was adorned with trees and gardens, looked now like a wilderness:

whereof she hath said, these are my rewards that my lovers have given me; alluding to the hire of harlots, given them by their gallants; these she ascribed, as she did before her bread, water, wool, flax; and oil, **Ho 2:5**, not to God, the author and giver of them, but to the people her lovers, as the Targum; or to her idols, or to her beloved tenets, and doing according to them; and which is here mentioned as a reason of the divine resentment, and why he destroyed these fruitful trees:

and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them; make the vines and fig trees like forest trees, barren and unfruitful; the fruitful land of Judea should be turned into a forest, or become like a desert or wilderness, and all the fruits of it should be eaten up by wild beasts; by their enemies, compared to the beasts of the field, particularly the Romans, the fourth beast; see Isa 56:9.

{l} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 1.

Hosea 2:13

Ver. 13. And, I will visit upon her the days of Baalim,.... That is, punish them for all the idolatries committed by their forefathers, in the days that the several Baals, as Baalpeor, and Baalberith, and others, were worshipped by them; they their children, though not worshipping these Baalim, yet other lords, lusts and idols, they set up of themselves, and in their own hearts; see Mt 23:32:

wherein she burnt incense to them; to the Baalim; this one species of idolatrous worship being put for the rest:

and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels; with her best and richest attire; the latter word signifying in the Arabic language, as Jarchi observes, the ornaments of women; this was done to grace the idolatrous worship, and for the honour of the idols:

and she went after her lovers; the traditions of the elders; the weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law now abolished, and their own legal righteousness:

and forgot me, saith the Lord: or, "left my worship", as the Targum; forgot and rejected the true Messiah, his word and ordinances.

Hosea 2:14

Ver. 14. Therefore, behold, I will allure her,.... Since these rough ways will not do, I will take another, a more mild and gentle way; instead of threatening, terrifying, and punishing, I will allure, persuade, and entice, giving loving words and winning language: or "nevertheless", or "notwithstanding" {m}: so Noldius and others render the particle; though they have thus behaved themselves, and such methods have been taken with them to no purpose, yet I will do as follows: the words may be understood of the call and conversion of the people of God, the spiritual Israel of God, both Jews and Gentiles, in the first times of the Gospel, as **Ho 2:23** is quoted and applied by the Apostle Paul, **Ro 9:24** and be understood also of the call of the believing Jews out of Jerusalem, before the destruction of it, Lu 21:21, from whence they removed to Pella, as Eusebius {n} relates: and of the apostles out of the land of Judea into the wilderness of the people, the Gentile world, to preach the Gospel there; where vineyards or churches were planted; the door of faith and hope, were opened to the Gentiles, that had been without hope; and the conversions now made, both among Jews and Gentiles, opened a door of hope, or were a pledge of the conversion of the Jew, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles in the latter day; to which times also these words may be applied, when the Jews shall be allured and persuaded to seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and join Gospel churches in the wilderness of the people, and shall have abundance of spiritual consolation and joy; and they may also be applied to the conversion of sinners in common, and set forth the methods of God's grace in dealing with them: there is throughout an allusion to Israel's coming out of Egypt, from whence the Lord allured and persuaded them by Moses and Aaron; and then brought them into the wilderness, where he fed and supplied them, and spoke comfort to them, and gave them the lively oracles; and whence, from the borders of it, they had and entered into the vineyards in the land of Canaan; and in the valley of Achor ate of the grain of the land, which was a door of hope to them they should enjoy the whole land; and when they rejoiced exceedingly, particularly at the Red sea, at their first coming out. The word rendered "allure" signifies to persuade {o}, as in **Ge 9:27** and in conversion the Lord persuades men, not merely by moral persuasion, or the outward ministry of the word, but by powerful and efficacious grace; opening the heart to attend to things spoken, and the eyes of the understanding to behold wondrous things in the word of God; working upon the heart, and removing the hardness and impenitence of it; quickening the soul, drawing it with the cords of love, and sweetly operating upon the will: and on a sudden and unawares making the soul like the chariots of Amminadib, or a willing people; persuading it to true repentance for sin, to part with sins and sinful companions, and with its own righteousness, and to come to Christ, and to look to him, and lay hold on him as the Saviour, and to submit to his ordinances: moreover, the Lord persuades men at conversion of his love to them, and of their interest in Christ, and all the blessings of grace in him. Kimchi's note is,

"I will put into her heart to return by repentance;"

and compares with it Eze 36:26. The Targum is,

"I will subject her to the law."

And bring her into the wilderness: so in conversion the Lord calls and separates his people from the world, as the Israelites were from the Egyptians, when brought into the wilderness; and when they are solitary and alone, as they were, and so in a fit circumstance to be spoken unto, and to hear comfortable words, as follows; and when the Lord feeds them with the grain of heaven, with hidden manna, the food of the wilderness; and when they come into trouble and affliction for the sake of Christ and his Gospel. Some understand this of the church into which they are brought, because separate from the world, and attended with trouble; but this is rather a garden than a wilderness. Some, as Noldius and others, render it, "when" or "after I have brought her into the wilderness" {p}; so after the Lord has shown men their sin and danger, their wilderness, desolate, state and condition, and stripped them of all help elsewhere; or has brought them under afflictive dispensations of Providence; then he does what he said before, and follows after.

And speak comfortably unto her; or, "speak to her heart" {q}, as in Isa 40:2 as he does when he tells them their sins are forgiven; that he has loved them with an everlasting love; what exceeding great and precious promises he has made unto them; and when he speaks to them by the Spirit and Comforter, who takes his and the things of Christ, and shows them unto them; and in his word, written for their consolation; and by his ministers, who are "Barnabases", sons of comfort; and in the ordinances, those breasts of consolation. The Targum is,

"and I will do for her wonders and great things, as I did for her in the wilderness; and by the hand of my servants the prophets I will speak comforts to her heart."

The Jewish writers {r} interpret this of the Messiah's leading people into a wilderness in a literal sense; they ask where will he (the Messiah) lead them? the answer of some is, to the wilderness of Judea, **Mt 3:1**; and of others is, to the wilderness of Sihon and Og (the wilderness the Israelites passed through when they came out of Egypt): they, who are on the side of the first answer, urge in favour of it
Ho 12:9 and they who are for the latter produce this passage.

{m} Nkl "atqui, [vel] attamen", Glassius. {n} Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 5. {o} hytpm "persuadendo inducam eam", Munster; "persuadebo illi", Calvin; "persuadens, [vel] persuadebo illi", Schmidt. {p} rbdmh hytklhw "postquam duxero eam in desertum", Calvin, Drusius, "quum deduxero", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {q} hbl le "ad cor ejus", Pagniaus, Cocceius; "super cor ejus", Munster, Montanus, Schmidt. {r} Shirhashhirim Rabba, fol. 11. 2. Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2.

Hosea 2:15

Ver. 15. And I will give her vineyards from thence,.... Either from the wilderness into which she is brought; or from the time of her being brought there, allured and spoke comfortably to; which are put for all temporal blessings, and as emblems of spiritual ones: and so from the time that the Lord deals thus graciously, as before expressed, he gives more grace, larger measures, and continual supplies of it, and withholds nothing good, comfortable, and useful to them: the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "her vinedressers"; and the Targum, her governors:

and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; this valley was so named from Achan, who was stoned in it in the days of Joshua; who is by Josephus {s}, Theodoret {t}, and others, called Achar, and so in **1Ch 2:7** and the signification of its name is the valley of trouble, because that he both troubled Israel by his evil actions, which brought them into distress; and because he was here troubled himself, being here punished for his sin, **Jos 7:24**. Jerome {u} says it lies to the north of Jericho, and is still called by its old name by the inhabitants of it. Some take it to be the same with the valley of Engedi, which it is certain was near Jericho. Now as the valley of Achor was at the entrance of the Israelites into the land of Canaan, and gave them hope of possessing the whole land; so what the people of God enjoy at first conversion lays a foundation for hope of eternal glory and happiness; as the Lord's being given them as their portion, Christ as their Saviour, and all things freely with him; the Spirit and his grace as the earnest and pledge of the eternal inheritance: grace and glory are so strictly connected, that the one is a door of hope to the other.

And she shall sing there; either in the wilderness, where the Lord speaks comfortably to her; or in the vineyards she has from thence; alluding to the songs of joy at the time of vintage, or pressing of the grapes: or in the valley of Achor, there rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, singing the songs of electing, redeeming, pardoning, and justifying grace:

as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt: as when the people of Israel were first brought into their civil and ecclesiastic state, which were the days of their youth as a people; and that was when they came out of Egypt, and had passed the Red sea, at the shore of which they sung; and to which is the allusion here; see Ex 15:1 this passage is applied to the times of the Messiah in the Talmud {w}.

{s} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 10, 14. {t} Comment. in loc. {u} De locis Hebr. fol. 88. B. tom. 3. {w} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 111. 1.

Hosea 2:16

Ver. 16. And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord,.... The Gospel day, the times of the Gospel dispensation, the latter part of them; at the time of the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles; at the time when God will allure and persuade them to seek the Messiah, and they shall turn to him; when he shall speak comfortably to them, and give them a door of hope, and all spiritual blessings, and cause them to sing as when they came out of Egypt:

that thou shalt call me Ishi; or, "my husband" {x}; returning to Christ their first husband, and being received by him, shall have faith and interest in him, and full assurance of it; and shall not only be allowed to call him their husband, but in the strength of faith, and with great freedom of soul, shall call him so, and say as the church did, "my beloved is mine, and I am his", So 20:16: or, "my man" {y}; the man the Lord, the man Jehovah's fellow, Immanuel God with us, God in human nature; and so more manifestly points at Christ, who, most properly speaking, stands in the relation of a husband to his people: or, "my strength", as some interpret it; the husband being the strength, protection, and defence of the wife, the weaker vessel; so Christ is the strength of his saints, in whom they have righteousness and strength, and through whose strength they can do all things:

and shalt call me no more Baali; which signifies my husband too, and is used of God and Christ; he is called Baal, and the church is called Beulah, because married together, Isa 45:5 but it signifies a lordly and imperious husband; and the other word, "Ishi", a loving one: so Jarchi observes that the sense is, that they should serve the Lord from love, and not fear; "Ishi" being a word expressive of marriage and love, and "Baali" of lordship and fear: hence some have thought this to be the reason why the one should be used, and the other not, under the Gospel dispensation; because saints now have not the spirit of bondage to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby they call God their Father, and Christ their husband: though rather the reason is, because the word "Baal", as R. Marinns observes, is of doubtful signification, an ambiguous word, used for the idol Baal, as well as signifies lord and husband; and therefore to be laid aside, lest, when they mentioned it, it should be thought they spoke of Baal, and not of the Lord; or should be led to think of that idol, and remember him.

{x} yvya "maritus meus", Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus, "marite mi", Schmidt. {y} "Vir meus", V. L. "mi vir", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Liveleus.

Hosea 2:17

Ver. 17. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth,.... Out of the mouth of Israel, as Saadiah; out of the mouth of the converted Jews, and even out of the mouth of the Gentiles, as Kimchi owns; the several Baals, as Baalpeor, Baalberith, and Baalzebub, and others: the names of them should be no more used, should not be spoken of, unless with detestation and abhorrence; not with honour and respect, with love and affection, or so as to yield worship and homage to them; or otherwise their names may be lawfully mentioned, as in

Ro 11:4, there seems to be some reference to the law in
Ex 23:13, the sense is, that idolatry shall be utterly abolished, even of every kind; not the worship of Baalim only, but of all other idols: and so the Targum is,

"and I will take away the name of the idols of the people out of their mouth;"

and may design the idolatry of the church of Rome; their worship of images of gold and silver, wood, brass, and stone in whose communion are many of the Jews at this time; but when the time of their conversion comes, all this will be abolished among them, and among the Gentiles also:

and they shall no more be remembered by their name; or made mention of by name; the same thing as before, in other words, repeated for the confirmation of it.

Hosea 2:18

Ver. 18. And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field,.... That is, so as to be at peace with them, as the Targum is; see **Job 5:23**, the sense is, the Lord here promises this unto them, and that it shall be as sure and firm, and to be as much depended upon, as if it was established and settled by covenant, and should be enjoyed as a covenant mercy and blessing; and the creatures should as strictly observe it, and answer to it, as if bound by covenant: and this should reach not only to the beasts of the field, the wild beasts of prey, "but the fowls of heaven"; as the locusts and others, as Kimchi observes, which should not eat up the fruits and increase of the earth: "and the creeping things of the ground": as serpents and scorpions, as the same writer suggests. Some think this was fulfilled in the first times of the Gospel, when the apostles took up serpents, and trod on scorpions, without any hurt; but then nothing was more common than for the Christians to be thrown to the lions, and devoured by beasts of prey. Others refer it to the last days, the times of the restitution of all things, when they suppose all creatures will be restored to their paradisiacal estate, and be in entire subjection to men. Rather the sense is, that whereas noisome beasts, and other things, were one of God's sore judgments, with which he threatened his people, when they sinned against him, now they should no more be hurt by them in a way of judgment; and, indeed, should cease from being among them, so that they should be in no fear of them any more; see
Le 26:22. Though the words may be understood figuratively and mystically,

either of deliverance from all spiritual enemies by Christ, as sin, Satan, and the world, and all others; or of freedom from all wicked men, cruel and crafty ones, open and secret persecutors of the saints: persecution will cease at the time of the Jews' conversion; antichrist, and all the antichristian states, will be destroyed; the beast and false prophet will be taken and cast into the furnace of fire; the old serpent, the devil, will be bound, during the Millennium; and there will be none to hurt in God's holy mountain, neither in the spiritual nor personal reign of Christ.

And I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth; all the instruments of war shall be no more, these mentioned being put for all the rest; and there shall be no more battles fought after that at Armageddon; swords shall be beat into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks; there shall be no more wars, nor rumours of wars, but perfect external peace from all enemies on all sides, as well as spiritual and internal peace in the breast of the saints; and of both there shall be abundance, and without end, Ps 72:7:

and will make them to lie down safely; under the protection of the King Messiah, David their Prince, who shall be over them, and whom they shall own, acknowledge, and serve, and so dwell in the utmost safety and security, not fearing any enemy whatever; they may lie down on their couches at meals, or on their beds at night for rest, or as flocks of sheep in their folds and pastures, and none make them afraid; see Jer 23:5.

Hosea 2:19

Ver. 19. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever,.... Which is taking them into a marriage relation with himself; and is to be understood not of the whole body of God's elect, who were secretly betrothed to in the everlasting covenant from eternity; for is respects what is yet to come; but of the people the Jews, when converted in the latter day, when will be the marriage of the Lamb with them, and with the fullness of the Gentiles then brought in; of which see Re 19:7, who will then return to their first husband; and though the Jews have been divorced, they will be received again, and be afresh betrothed; a new covenant or contract will be made with them, and which shall last for ever, Jer 31:31 and this may be applied to every particular soul at conversion, which is the day of their open espousals to Christ; and they are visibly brought into a marriage relation with him, than which nothing is more near; they become flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone, yea, one spirit with him, and are indulged with near communion with him; and hence is that sympathy he has with them in all their afflictions, temptations, and exercises, and takes that as done to him which is done to them, whether good or ill; hence all their debts or sins become his, and he satisfies for them, and his righteousness becomes theirs: this is a very endearing relation; there is a mutual delight and complacency they take in each other; and a most able one it is; hence they are called by his name, Christians, and partake of his honour; he is King, and they queen; and a very beneficial relation it is, for all that Christ is, and has, are theirs; and a most marvellous and wondrous thing it is that he should betroth them to himself, when he is the Son of the living God, himself the true God, God over all blessed for ever, the Maker and Governor of the world, and heir of all things; and though they in their secret betrothment were considered as sinless creatures, yet in their open espousals at conversion are fallen sinners, in a very low estate indeed; under sentence of condemnation and death; devoid of the image of God; depraved, polluted, and guilty creatures; in deep debt, and extreme poverty; it is as if a prince, heir apparent to the throne, should take a convict or condemned malefactor out of her cell, or a common strumpet out of the stews, or a bankrupt and beggar from the dunghill, and marry her: and this relation will continue "for ever": the marriage covenant or contract is an everlasting one; the bond of union, which is everlasting and unchangeable love, is indissoluble; death cannot take place in either party; both shall live forever; and this is a strong proof of the final perseverance of the saints.

Yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness; either in truth, in sincerity, heartily, and without any hypocrisy or dissimulation; or consistent with righteousness, with his love of righteousness and holiness, and hatred of sin: or rather in his own justifying righteousness; not in their own righteousness, which is as rags; for though he finds them in such rags, he strips them of them, and puts on the wedding garment, the robe of his own righteousness, and garment of salvation; when they become as a bride, adorned with ornaments, and so made ready for the nuptials, and in this he betroths them; see
Isa 61:10:

and in judgment: in sanctification, according to some, the work being now begun by the Spirit of God, as a spirit of judgment; or in a judicious way, not rashly and precipitantly, but with mature deliberation, and of choice arising from judgment; or rather absolving them from the sentence of condemnation and death by his righteousness, and protecting and defending them from their enemies, for the sake of which, and other things, he takes them into this relation;

and in lovingkindness, and in mercies: denoting both the love, which is the spring and source of this relation, and not any merits of theirs; and the kind and tender manner in which he betroths them; as well as the numerous favours he bestows upon them; as pardon of sin; justification of life; spiritual peace; supplies of all grace, and eternal life; all the effects of free grace, unmerited love, and sovereign mercy.

Hosea 2:20

Ver. 20. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness,.... Which lies in keeping the marriage contract inviolable; Christ will never suffer his faithfulness to fail, nor break his covenant; as he is faithful to his Father that appointed him, so he is, and will be, to his church and people, and to every believer, to whom he is espoused; and it is he that makes them faithful unto him, and gives them faith to believe in him, receive, embrace, own, and acknowledge him as their husband: and in this sense some understand it, rendering it, "in faith" {z}; so the Targum and others. This is the third time the word "betroth" is used, or this promise made; which, according to Jerome, refers to them espousing of the Jews in Abraham, at Mount Sinai, and in the times of Christ; and, according to Kimchi, to the three captivities of the Jews, in Egypt, in Babylon, and that in which they now are: and some Christian writers think the mystery of the Trinity is here pointed at; and the sense to be, that all the three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, would espouse them: but rather it is so often repeated to confirm it, and express the certainty of it, which might, on many accounts, seem a thing incredible.

And thou shall know the Lord; that the Messiah is Jehovah, and that he is their husband; they shall all know him, from the least to the greatest; they shall have a saving knowledge of him, which will issue in eternal life; they shall own him, and acknowledge him, serve and obey him, as their Lord, Head, and Husband, as well as love him, and believe in him. The Targum is,

"and ye shall know to fear before the Lord;"

see Jer 31:34. Let it be observed, here are no conditions throughout, it is only "I will", and "thou shalt".

{z} hnwmab "in fide", V. L. &c.

Hosea 2:21

Ver. 21. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... When these espousals shall be made, when the marriage of the Lamb will be come, and his bride will be betrothed to him; then the whole creation, the heavens and the earth, shall contribute of their riches and plenty to make a marriage feast for them; or then shall the spouse of Christ, in a very visible and plentiful manner, by virtue of the marriage union between them, partake of all his good things, both temporal and spiritual; and especially the latter, as signified by the former; but yet in the use of means, and as the effect of prayer, as follows:

I will hear, saith the Lord; the petitions of his new married bride, which he cannot deny her :or, "I will answer" {a}; men oftentimes hear, and answer not; but when the Lord hears his people, he answers them, and grants them their requests; he is a God hearing and answering prayer. So the Targum,

"I will receive your prayer, saith the Lord."

I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; in these and the following words is an elegant personification, a figure by which inanimate creatures are represented as persons speaking, praying, asking, and being heard and answered; and a beautiful climax, or a chain of second causes linked together, and as depending upon the first cause, the Lord himself; the heavens are represented as desiring the Lord of nature, the Maker and Supporter of them, having been like brass, and shut up, that they might have leave to let down their refreshing dews, and gentle showers of rain, upon the earth; and the earth as being dry and thirsty, as gaping, opening its mouth, and imploring these benign influences of the heavens; and both as answered: for so it may be rendered, "I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth" {b}; the Lord promises to answer the desires of the heavens, and allow them to drop their dew, and distil their rain; and so they shall answer the cravings of the earth. The spiritual sense may be, according to Schmidt, Christ is he on whom all blessings depend; "heaven" may signify the Holy Spirit Christ gives, who intercedes with him for the saints; the "earth" the ministration of the word and ordinances, by which the Spirit is given, invoked by the ministers of them. Or, as Cocceius, the "heavens" may design the ministers of the church, who govern in it, and who pray and plead for help, assistance, and success; and the "earth" the audience, the common people, who also pray, and are heard and answered, when ministers let down the dew and rain of evangelical doctrine upon them, and water them, and refresh them with it; and such precious seasons as these, as the fruit of prayer, will the saints have in the latter day.

{a} hnea "respondebo", Calvin, Drusius, Tarnovius, Cocceius. {b} Mymv ta hnea "respondebo coelo, et illud respondebit terrae", Cocceius, Drusius.

Hosea 2:22

Ver. 22. And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil,.... Or "answer" here the corn, and vines, and olive trees, are represented as requesting the earth to be let into it, and receive moisture from it, that they may grow and increase, and bring forth fruit; by which may be meant the fruits and graces of the Spirit, and all spiritual gifts, communicated by means of the word and ordinances; or the fruits brought forth by the church, under the ministry of the word; which serves like "corn" to nourish and strengthen; like "wine" to comfort, cheer, and revive; and like "oil" to heal and soften, as well as make glad,

And they shall hear Jezreel; or "answer"; that is, these trees and fruits shall answer to the requests and desires of Jezreel, who shall be abundantly blessed with them. By "Jezreel" is not meant the name of a place, as Aben Ezra; but the people of Israel, who had before been signified by a son of the prophet of this name, **Ho 1:4**, and which name is here continued, to show how unworthy they were of such favours in themselves, and the riches of God's grace in bestowing them on them: or else the word here has a different signification; whereas before it signified their being scattered and dispersed, here their being the seed of God; and which is confirmed by the following words,

I will sow her unto me, &c.: the sum of the whole is, that at the prayers of the Lord's people abundance of spiritual blessings shall be bestowed upon them from Christ by the Spirit, under the ministration of the word and ordinances. The Targum of both verses is,

"I will command the heavens, and they shall let down rain upon the earth; and the earth shall produce corn, and wine, and oil, and they shall be sufficient for the captivity of the people."

Kimchi says this belongs to the time of salvation; and Aben Ezra to time to come.

Hosea 2:23

Ver. 23. And I will sow her unto me in the earth,.... That is, Jezreel, or the people of God, the church betrothed; this is another blessing following upon the marriage relation between Christ and his people, both Jews and Gentiles, in the latter day, a multiplication of a spiritual seed and offspring. So Kimchi and Aben Ezra observe, that the words signify that the people of Israel shall increase and be fruitful as the seed of the earth. These now are good seed which the Lord sows; such as are born not of corruptible but incorruptible seed; are quickened by the Spirit of God; have a good work of grace begun in them; and though they may lie for some time under the clods in darkness and obscurity, yet shall rise up in the green blade of a lively profession, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness. Seed for sowing is the choicest and most precious, and of greatest esteem and value, and is separated from the rest for that use, though but little and small in quantity in comparison of it; all which is applicable to the people of God. This is said to be sown "in the earth or land"; either in their own land, the land of Israel, into which they shall now be brought, Eze 21:22 or in the field of the world, the nations and people of the earth, according to Zec 10:9 or rather in the churches of Christ on earth, the churches in the Gentile world, into which the Jews, when converted, shall be brought, and increase and multiply; and this will be all the Lord's doing.

I will sow her: he will quicken and convert them, and place and plant them in Gospel churches, though ministers may be instruments in his hands; and all their fruitfulness and increase will be "unto him", for his service, the promotion of his interest, and for his honour and glory. The Targum is,

"I will establish you before me in the land of my Shechinah or majesty."

And I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy; upon Loruhamah, or the people of Israel, signified by her, **Ho 1:6** and also the Gentiles, for to both Jews and Gentiles the apostle applies the words in **Ro 9:24** and they were fulfilled in part in his time, by the conversion of some of the Jews, and by the calling of the Gentiles; but will have a larger accomplishment in the latter day, when all Israel shall obtain mercy, and be saved; see Ro 11:26 and are applicable to the people of God at all times, when called by grace; for though before conversion there is mercy for them in the heart of God, which is from everlasting; and in his purpose and resolution to bestow; and which is displayed in his choice of them, considered in the decree of the means as fallen creatures, and so vessels of mercy; and which is laid up in covenant for them, which is full of the sure mercies of David; and appears in the mission of Christ, and their redemption by him; and in sparing and saving them before calling; as well as in their regeneration, which is the fruit of abundant mercy;

yet is not manifested to them till converted, when they openly obtain it: the Lord has mercy on them, and brings them out of the horrible pit of the state of nature; plucks them as brands out of the burning; opens the prison doors, knocks off their fetters, and sets them free; feeds their hungry and clothes their naked souls; heals their diseases, and pardons their iniquities, and saves them with an everlasting salvation.

And I will say to them which were not my people, thou art my people; or to "Loammi", the people of Israel, signified by the prophet's child of that name, **Ho 1:9**, who should no more be called so, but "Ammi", my people, **Ho 2:1**, which, as before observed, was in part fulfilled in the first times of the Gospel; but will be more fully accomplished at the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles; who though chosen to be the people of God, and are so federally, and were given in covenant to Christ as such, and so redeemed and saved by him from their sins; yet are not till conversion laid hold on by the Lord, and formed as his people for himself, and are without knowledge of him, and communion with him: nor are they called his people by themselves or others; but, when converted, they have the characters, and enjoy the privileges, of God's people; they have the witness of the relation to themselves by the Spirit of God, and are known and acknowledged by others; the Lord says this unto them, and avouches them for his people:

and they shall say, thou art my God; in the strength of faith, under the testimony of the Spirit of God, they shall claim their interest in God, as their covenant God in Christ; which is made known in effectual calling by the work of grace on their hearts; by the blessings of grace bestowed on them; and by the Lord's dwelling among them, and his protection of them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hosea 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 3

In this chapter is an order to the prophet to love an adulterous woman beloved of her friend, and by this parable to express the love of God to Israel, and their ingratitude to him, **Ho 3:1**, the prophet's execution of that order, making a purchase of her, and a covenant with her, which set forth the captive, servile, mean, and abject state of that people, **Ho 3:2**, which is explained of their being deprived for a long time of civil and ecclesiastic government, **Ho 3:4**, and the chapter is concluded with a prophecy and promise of their conversion to Christ in the latter day, **Ho 3:5**.

Ver. 1. Then said the Lord unto me,.... Or, as the Targum,

"the Lord said unto me again";

for the word yet or again is to be joined to this, and not the following clause; and shows that this is a new vision, prophecy, or parable, though respecting the same persons and things:

go, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress; not the prophet's wife, not Gomer, but some other feigned person; beloved either of her own husband, as the Targum and Jarchi, notwithstanding her unchastity and unfaithfulness to him; or of another man, as Aben Ezra, who had a very great respect for her, courted her, and perhaps had betrothed her, but had not yet consummated the marriage; and, though a harlot, loved her dearly, and could not get off his affections from her, but hankered after her; or of the prophet, as Kimchi, who paraphrases it,

"thou shall love her, and be to her a friend;"

to protect and defend her, as harlots used to have one in particular they called their friend, by whose name they were called, and was a cover to them. The sense is, that the prophet was to go to the people of Israel, and deliver this parable to them, setting forth their state and condition, and their behaviour towards God, and his great love to them, notwithstanding all their baseness and ingratitude; it was as if a woman that was either married or betrothed, or that either had a husband or a suitor that so dearly loved her, that though she was guilty of uncleanness, and continued in it, yet would not leave her; and which is thus expressed by the Targum,

"go, deliver a prophecy against the house of Israel, who are like a woman dear to her husband; and though she commits fornication against him, yet he so loves her that he will not put her away:"

according to the love of the Lord toward the children of Israel; or such is the love of the Lord to them; for though they were guilty of idolatry, intemperance, and other immoralities, yet still he loved them, and formed designs of grace and goodness for them. And thus, though God does not love sinners as such; yet he loves them, though they are sinners, and when and while they are such; as appears by his choice of them, and covenant with them, by Christ's dying for them while sinners, and by his quickening them when dead in trespasses and sins:

who look to other gods; or "though they look to other gods" {c}; look to them and worship them, pray unto them, put their trust in them, and expect good things from them:

and love flagons of wine, or "tubs of grapes" {d}; or of wine made of them; or lumps of raisins, cakes or junkets made of them and other things, as the Septuagint; and may respect either the drunkenness and intemperance of the ten tribes; see Isa 28:1, they loved, as Kimchi says, the delights of the world, and not the law and commandments of God; or the feasts that were made in the temples of their idols they loved good eating and drinking, and that made them like idolatry the better for the sake of those things; see Ex 32:6, for the Heathens used to eat and drink to excess at their sacrifices: hence Diogenes {e} the philosopher was very angry with those who sacrificed to the gods for their health, yet in their sacrifices feasted to the prejudice of their health.

{c} Mynp Mhw "quamvis respiciant", Piscator. {d} Mybne yvyva "dolia uvarum", Pagninus, Montanus, Zanchius; "soa", some in Drusius. {e} Laertius in Vit. Diogenis, p. 382.

Hosea 3:2

Ver. 2. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver,.... Or, "fifteen shekels", which was about one pound seventeen shillings and six pence of our money, reckoning a shekel at two shillings and six pence; though some make it to be but two shillings and four pence; this was but half the price of a servant, Ex 21:32, and alludes to the dowry which men used to give to women at their marriage; see
1Sa 18:25. The word here used has the signification of digging; hence the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "I dug her"; and the abettors and defenders of it think it refers to the digging, or boring the ears of a servant that chose to continue with his master, Ex 21:6, but the word is used in the sense of buying, **Ge 1:5**, and so Jarchi says it has the sense of merchandise or bargaining; and in the sea coasts he observes, that they call hrykm, a purchase, hryk. Perhaps the word is better rendered by the Septuagint and Arabic versions, "hired"; and "cara" in the Arabic language signifies "to hire"; so it is used in Ac 28:30. So

with the Turks, as Monsieur Thevenot {f} observes, a letter out of beasts to hire is called "moucre" or "moukir", which comes from the Arabic word "kira", he says, which signifies to let or hire; and is here fitly used of a harlot. The Jews have many whims and fancies about these fifteen pieces of silver. The Targum, and Pesikta in Jarchi, take them to respect the fifteenth day of Nisan, on which the Israelites were redeemed out of Egypt; according to Aben Ezra, they design the fifteen kings of Judah, from Rehoboam to the captivity, reckoning the sons of Josiah as one, being brethren; according to others, in Kimchi, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the twelve tribes; and, according to Abarbinel, the fifteen prophets that prophesied of the redemption:

and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley; a "homer" held ten "ephahs", and a "lethec", or "half homer", five "ephahs", or so many bushels, these making the number fifteen: again, according to Saadiah, they design Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, and the twelve tribes; and, according to Aben Ezra, the number of the high priests in the kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem, a homer making thirty seahs, and a half homer fifteen, in all forty five; but according to others, in Kimchi, these design the forty five days between the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt and their receiving the law: but, leaving these fancies, as the number of shekels given for her was but a low price, and shows what an estimate was made of her; and barley being the coarsest of grain, and bread made of it, that of the worst sort, which the poorer people eat; may be expressive of the captive, servile, mean, and abject state of the people of Israel, from the time of their captivity to their conversion to Christ, as is after more fully explained.

{f} Travels, part 2. B. 1. ch. 3. p. 11.

Hosea 3:3

Ver. 3. And I said unto her,.... Having bought or hired her; this was the covenant or agreement he made with her,

thou shall abide for me many days; dwell alone in some solitary and separate place, and have no conversation with any, especially with men; live like a widow that has lost her husband, and so wait for a long time till the prophet should think fit to take her to his house and bed:

thou shall not play the harlot, and thou shall not be for another man; neither prostitute herself, as she had done to her lovers; nor marry another, but keep herself chaste and single:

so will I also be for thee; wait for thee, and not take another wife; or will be thy husband, after having made proper trial and full proof of thy conduct and behaviour: the Targum paraphrases it thus;

"say, O prophet, to her, O congregation of Israel, your sins are the cause that you are carried captive many days; ye shall give yourselves to my worship and not err, nor serve idols, and even I will have mercy on you."

The whole is explained in the following words:

Hosea 3:4

Ver. 4. For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince,.... Without any form of civil government, either regal or without any civil magistrate, either superior or subordinate, of their own; being subject to the kings and princes of other nations, as the ten tribes were from their captivity by Shalmaneser, to the coming of Christ, which was about seven hundred years; and from that time the tribes of Judah and Benjamin have had no kings and princes among them, for the space of nineteen hundred years, which may very well be called "many days". This answers to the harlot's abiding for the prophet many days, in the parable:

and without a sacrifice; the daily sacrifice, which has ceased as long as before observed; and any other sacrifice of slain beasts, as the passover lamb, &c.; the Jews not thinking it lawful to offer sacrifice in a strange land, or any where but upon the altar in Jerusalem; and to this day have no such sacrifices among them, though they have no notion of the abrogation of them, as the Christians have; but so it is ordered in Providence, that they should be without them, being kept out of their own land, that this and other prophecies might be fulfilled:

and without an image, or "statue": such as were made for Baal, or as were the calves at Dan and Bethel; and though the people of Israel were very subject to idolatry, and set up images and statues for worship before their captivities, yet since have nothing of image worship among them, but strictly observe the command.

And without an ephod; a linen garment wore by the high priests under the law, to which the breastplate was fastened, which had in it the Urim and Thummim; and which were wanting in the second temple, and have been ever since; so that these people have been so long without this way and means of inquiry of God about future things, see **Ezr 2:63**, this may be put for the whole priesthood, now ceased in a proper sense; and so the Septuagint render it, "without a priesthood"; so that the Jews are without any form of government, civil or ecclesiastical; they have neither princely nor priestly power: "and without teraphim"; which some understand to be the same with the Urim and Thummim; and so the Septuagint render it, "without manifestations"; by which they are thought to mean the Urim, which according to them so signifies: but the word is generally thought to design some little images or idols, like the penates or household gods of the Romans, which were consulted about future things; and so the Jews commonly understand it, and some describe them thus {g},

"what are the "teraphim?" they slay the firstborn of a man, cut off his head, and pickle it with salt and oil, and inscribe on a plate of gold the name of an unclean spirit, and put that under his tongue; then they place it in a wall, and light candles before it, and pray unto it, and it talks with them."

But now, according to this prophecy, the Jews in their captivity should have no way and means of knowing future things, either in a lawful or unlawful manner; see Ps 74:9. How the whole of this prophecy is now fulfilled in them, hear what they themselves say, particularly Kimchi;

"these are the days of the captivity in which we now are at this day; we have no king nor prince out of Israel; for we are in the power of the nations, and of their kings and princes; and have no sacrifice for God, nor image for idols; no "ephod" for God, that declares future things; and no "teraphim" for idolatry, which show things to come, according to the mind of those that believe in them;"

and so Jarchi

"without a sacrifice in the sanctuary in Judah; without an image of Baal in Samaria, for the kings of Israel; without an ephod of Urim and Thummim, that declares hidden things; and "teraphim" made for a time to speak of, and show things that are secret;"

and to the same purpose Aben Ezra. The Targum is, "without a king of the house of David, and without a ruler over Israel; without sacrifice for acceptance in Jerusalem; and without a high place in Samaria; and without an ephod, and him that shows;"

i.e. what shall come to pass. The Syriac version renders the last clause, "without one that offers incense"; and the Arabic version, "without one that teaches".

{g} Pirke Eliezer, c. 36. fol. 40. 1.

Hosea 3:5

Ver. 5. Afterward shall the children of Israel return,.... The ten tribes of Israel, and also the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which are included in the name of Israel, as Aben Ezra interprets it; and these are joined together in parallel places; see Jer 30:3 for though they did not go into captivity together, yet their return and conversion will be at the same time; and they are all spoken of under the name of Israel by the Apostle Paul, when he foretells their conversion and salvation, Ro 11:26. The "return" of them, here prophesied of, does not barely mean their return to their own land, which will be at this time; see Jer 30:3, but their return to the Lord by repentance; when they shall repent of, and turn from, their sinful course of life, and particularly of their unbelief and rejection of the true Messiah, and embrace him; and of their traditions and false ways of worship, which they shall discard; and of their own righteousness they shall now renounce; and shall turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, and believe in him for righteousness, life, and salvation:

and seek the Lord their God, and David their King; these may be considered either as two distinct persons, Jehovah the Father, and the Messiah, as in Eze 34:23 and so the Targum,

"and seek the worship of the Lord their God, and obey Messiah the Son of David their King;"

who will be both equally sought after, and unto, by them; and which is a proof of the divinity of the Messiah, and of his equality with God his Father; as well as points out the right way in which Jehovah is to be sought, namely, with Christ, or in him, in whom he is a God gracious and merciful; and to seek and know both the one and the other is eternal life, Joh 17:3 or else all this is to be understood of the Messiah, rendering the words, "and seek the Lord their God, even David their King" as also Jer 30:9, may be rendered; and so these are all epithets, titles, and characters of him: he is Jehovah, the everlasting I AM; the true God, and eternal life; Immanuel, God with us; God in our nature, manifest in the flesh; the Son of David, and his antitype, often called David in Scripture. Ps 89:3, King of kings, King of the saints, of his church, and will be owned as such by the Jews at the time of their conversion, though they have rejected him; but now they will receive him, and be subject to him; they will seek to him for salvation, for the pardon of their sins, for righteousness, for rest, for food, for protection and safety, and to serve and obey him: and this seeking will not be out of curiosity, or in a carnal way, or for selfish ends; nor hypocritically; but with their whole hearts, and diligently, and in earnest. Not only the Targum interprets this of Messiah the Son of David, but Aben Ezra on the place says, this is the Messiah; and it is applied to him, and his times, by other Jewish writers, both ancient and modern. In an ancient book {h} of theirs, speaking of David, it is said, the holy blessed God is well pleased with him in this world, and in the world to come; in this world, as it is written, "and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake", 2Ki 20:6, and in the world to come, as it is written,

they shall seek the Lord their God, and David their King, &c.; David was King in this world, and David shall be King in the time to come. And in both Talmuds the words are applied to the Messiah; in one of them {i}, after quoting this text, it is added, the Rabbins say this is the King Messiah; if of the living, David is his name; if of the dead, David is his name. And in the other {k}, it is said, when Jerusalem is built, David comes; that is, the Son of David, the Messiah; which is proved by this passage, "afterwards the children of Israel shall return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King"; that is, as the gloss interprets it, after they shall return to the house of the sanctuary, or the temple: so Abarbinel, both in his commentary upon this place, and elsewhere {l}, as he interprets the "one head" in **Ho 1:11**, of Messiah ben Ephraim, whom he, with the rest of his tribe, feign shall perish in war; so he observes, that then Israel shall seek David their King, the rod out of the root of Jesse, whom the Lord shall choose, and cause to reign over them. And another of their later writers {m} interprets the passage of the Messiah, and produces it to prove against the Christians that he should come in the end of days, or in the latter days; as it is plain and certain that our Jesus, the true Messiah, came at the end of the Jewish world, in the last days of their civil and church state; see **Heb 1:1**,

and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter day; not man, but the

Lord; not his wrath and vengeance, but his goodness; not with a servile, but with a godly filial fear; a fear influenced by the blessings of goodness they shall now be partakers of, particularly pardoning grace and mercy, Ps 130:3, they shall fear the Lord, who is good, and goodness itself, and Christ, in whom the goodness of God is displayed, and who is prevented with the blessings of goodness for his people: it may be rendered, they "shall fear", or "come fearing to the Lord, and his goodness" {n}, being sensible of their sin, danger, and misery; they shall flee to the Lord as to their city of refuge, and to the blessings of his goodness they see their need of; and this they shall do in haste, as Aben Ezra interprets it, comparing it with Ho 11:11. The Septuagint version is, "they shall be amazed at the Lord, and his good things"; the Syriac version, "they shall know the Lord, and his goodness": the Arabic version, they shall confess the Lord, and his benefits; the Targum,

"they shall give themselves to the service of the Lord, and his goodness shall be multiplied, which shall come to them in the end of days;"

or, as Aben Ezra, in the end of the prophecy of the prophets, in future time, in the times of the Messiah; which, as Kimchi serves, are always meant by the last days; and here it signifies the latter day of the last days, or of the Gospel dispensation.

{h} Zohar in Exod. fol. 93. 3. {i} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 1. {k} T. Bab Megillah, fol. 18. 1. {l} Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 55. 4. {m} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 44. {n} wbwj law hwhy la wdxpw "pavebunt ad Dominum", Montanus; "providi accedent ad Jehovam, et ad bonitatem ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius; "et cum timore venient ad Jehovam, et ad bonum ejus", Schmidt; so Ben Melech interprets it, "they shall fear, and be afraid of him, flow to him, and to his goodness"; and which, he says, Saadiah explains of his glory, agreeably to Exod. xxxiii. 19.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hosea 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 4

This chapter contains a new sermon or prophecy, delivered in proper and express words, without types and figures, as before; in which the people of Israel are summoned to appear at the tribunal of God, to hear the charge brought against them, and the sentence to be pronounced upon them, and which would be executed. They are charged with sins of omission and commission; with want of truth and mercy to men, and with ignorance of God; with swearing, lying, murder, theft, and adultery, **Ho 4:1**, the punishment threatened is the sword, famine, and pestilence; which should affect the whole land, and all creatures in it, men, beasts, fowls, and fishes, **Ho 4:3**, then the priests and false prophets are threatened with falling into calamities along with the people, and with rejection from their office, and forgetfulness of their posterity, and a taking away their glory from them, because of their striving with the true prophets; their rejection of knowledge; forgetfulness of the law of God; covetousness, adultery, and drunkenness, **Ho 4:4**, then the discourse is turned to the people again, who are charged with divination and idolatry, which is spiritual adultery; and therefore, by way of retaliation, their wives and daughters would be left to commit adultery and fornication, **Ho 4:12**, and the chapter is concluded with advice to Israel not to tempt Judah to sin; or to Judah not to do the like, after the example of Israel, who were backsliders, idolaters, left of God and alone; guilty of bribery, and the like shameful things, and would be suddenly filled with shame, **Ho 4:15**.

Ver. 1. Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel,.... The people of the ten tribes, as distinct from Judah, **Ho 4:15**, the prophet having finished his parables he was ordered to take up and deliver, and his explanations of them, and concluded with a gracious promise of the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, enters upon a new discourse, which begins with reproof for various sins; since what had been delivered in parables and types had had no effect upon them, they are called upon to hear what the Lord would say to them by the prophet, in more clear and express terms; silence is ordered, and attention required to what follows:

for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land; the land of Israel; against him they had sinned, before him they stood guilty; he had something, yea, many things, against them; a charge is brought into open court, the indictment is read, an answer must be made: God is the antagonist, that moves and brings on the controversy in a judicial way, and who can answer him for one of a thousand? or stand before him, or in court with him, when he marks iniquity? the charge is as follows,

because there is no truth; none that do or speak truth; that are true and faithful men, true to their word, and faithful to their trust; no truth of grace in them, nor truth of doctrine held and received by them; truth failed from among them, and none were valiant for it; no truth or civil faith with respect to men, nor any truth of word or worship with respect to God:

nor mercy: to poor and indigent creatures; no compassion shown them; no offices of humanity or acts of beneficence exercised towards them; though these are more desirable by the Lord than, and are preferred by him to, all ceremonial sacrifices, **Ho 6:6**, or no piety, religion, godliness, powerful godliness, which has the promise of this life, and that to come:

nor knowledge of God in the land; in the land of Israel, where God was used to be known; where he had been worshipped; were his word had been dispensed, and his prophets had been sent, and his saints that knew him, and his mind and will, formerly had dwelt; but now a company of atheists, at least that lived as such, and had no true spiritual saving knowledge of God, and communion with him; they had not true love to him, nor a godly reverence of him, which this implies; and that was the source of all the wickedness committed by them, afterwards expressed. The Targum is,

"there are none that do truth, nor dispense mercy, nor walk in the fear of the Lord, in the land."

Hosea 4:2

Ver. 2. By swearing, and lying,.... Which some join together, and make but one sin of it, false swearing, so Jarchi and Kimchi; but that swearing itself signifies, as the Targum interprets it; for it not only takes in all cursing and imprecations, profane oaths, and taking the name of God in vain, and swearing by the creatures, but may chiefly design perjury; which, though one kind of "lying", may be distinguished from it here; the latter intending "lying" in common, which the devil is the father of, mankind are incident unto, and which is abominable to God, whether in civil or in religious things: "and killing, and stealing and committing adultery"; murders, thefts, and adulteries, were very common with them; sins against the sixth, eighth, and seventh commandments:

they break out; through all the restraints of the laws of God and man, like an unruly horse that breaks his bridle and runs away; or like wild beasts, that break down the fences and enclosures about them, and break out, and get away; or like a torrent of water, that breaks down its dams and banks, and overflows the meadows and plains; such a flood and deluge of sin abounded in the nation. Some render it, "they thieve" {o}; or act the part of thieves and robbers: and the Targum,

"they beget sons of their neighbours' wives;"

and so Abarbinel interprets it of breaking through the hedge of another man's wife; but these sins are observed before:

and blood toucheth blood; which some understand of sins in general, so called, because filthy and abominable; and of the addition and multiplication of them, there being as it were heaps of them, or rather a chain of them linked together. So the Targum,

"and they add sins to sins."

Others interpret it of impure mixtures, of incestuous lusts, or marriages contrary to the ties of blood, and laws of consanguinity, Le 18:6, or rather it is to be understood of the great effusion of blood, and frequency of murders; so that there was scarce any interval between them, but a continued series of them. Some think respect is had to the frequent slaughter of their kings; Zachariah the son of Jeroboam was slain by Shallum, when he had reigned but six months; and Shallum was slain by Menahem when he had reigned but one month; and this Menahem was a murderer of many, smote many places, and ripped up the women with child; Pekahiah his son was killed by Pekah the son of Remaliah, and he again by Hoshea, 2Ki 15:8.

{o} wurp "latrocinantur, [vel] latrones agunt", Schmidt

Hosea 4:3

Ver. 3. Therefore shall the land mourn,.... Because of the calamities on it, the devastations made in it; nothing growing upon it, through a violent drought; or the grass and corn being trodden down, or eaten up, by a foreign army:

and everyone that dwelleth therein shall languish; that is, every man, an inhabitant thereof, shall become weak, languish away, and die through wounds received by the enemy; or for want of food, or being infected with the wasting and destroying pestilence:

with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; the one shall die in the field for want of grass to eat, and the other shall drop to the earth through the infection of the air:

yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away; or "gathered" {p}; to some other place, so as to disappear; or they shall be consumed and die, as Kimchi interprets it; and as all these creatures are for the good of men, for sustenance, comfort, and delight, when they are taken away, it is by way of punishment for their sins. So the Targum,

"the fishes of the sea shall be lessened for their sins."

{p} wpoay "congregabuntur", V. L.; "collgentur", Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Schmidt.

Hosea 4:4

Ver. 4. Yet, let no man strive, nor reprove another,.... Or rather, "let no man strive, nor any man reprove us" {q}; and are either the words of the people, forbidding the prophet, or any other man, to contend with them, or reprove them for their sins, though guilty of so many, and their land in so much danger on that account: so the Targum,

"but yet they say, let not the scribe teach, nor the prophet reprove:"

or else they are the words of God to the prophet, restraining him from striving with and reproving such a people, that were incorrigible, and despised all reproof; see **Eze 3:26** or of the prophet to other good men, to forbear anything of this kind, since it was all to no purpose; it was but casting pearls before swine; it was all labour lost, and in vain:

for thy people are as they that strive with the priest; they are so far from receiving correction and reproof kindly from any good men that they will rise up against, and strive with the priests, to whom not to hearken was a capital crime, De 17:12. Abarbinel interprets it, and some in Abendana, like the company of Korah, that contended with Aaron; suggesting that this people were as impudent and wicked as they, and there was no dealing with them. So the Targum,

"but thy people contend with their teachers;"

and will submit to no correction, and therefore it is in vain to give it them. Though some think the sense is, that all sorts of men were so corrupt, that there were none fit to be reprovers; the people were like the priests, and the priests like the people, **Ho 4:9**, so that when the priests reproved them, they contended with them, and said, physician, heal thyself; take the beam out of your own eye; look to yourselves, and your own sins, and do not reprove us.

{q} vya hkwy law "et ne reprehendito quisquam, [scil.] nos", Schmidt.

Hosea 4:5

Ver. 5. Therefore shall thou fall in the day,.... Either, O ye people, everyone of you, being so refractory and incorrigible; or, O thou priest, being as bad as the people; for both, on account of their sins, should fall from their present prosperity and happiness into great evils and calamities; particularly into the hands of their enemies, and be carried captive into another land: and this should be "in the day", or "today" {r}; immediately, quickly, in a very short time; or in the daytime, openly, publicly, in the sight of all, of all the nations round about, who shall rejoice at it; or in the day of prosperity, while things go well, amidst great plenty of all good things, and when such a fall was least expected:

and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night: or the false prophets that are with you, as the Targum, and so Jarchi; either with you, O people, that dwell with you, teach you, and cause you to err; or with thee, O priest, being of the same family, as the prophets, many of them, were priests; now these should fall likewise into the same calamities, as it was but just they should, being the occasion of them: and this should be in the night; in the night of adversity and affliction, in the common calamity; or in the night of darkness, when they could not see at what they stumbled and fell, and so the more uncomfortable to them; or as the one falls in the day, the other falls in the night; as certainly as the one falls, so shall the other, and that very quickly, immediately, as the night follows the day:

and I will destroy thy mother; either Samaria, the metropolis of the nation; or the whole body of the people, the congregation, as the Targum, and Kimchi, and Ben Melech, being as a mother with respect to individuals; and are threatened with destruction because the corruption was general among prophets, priests, and people, and therefore none could hope to escape.

{r} Mwyh "hodie", Munster, Montanus, Drusius, Tarnovius, Rivet; "hoc tempore", Pagninus. So Kimchi and Ben Melech.

Hosea 4:6

Ver. 6. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge,.... This is not to be understood of those who are the Lord's people by special grace; for they cannot he destroyed, at least with everlasting destruction; God's love to them, his choice of them, covenant with them, the redemption of them by Christ, and the grace of God in them, secure them from such destruction: nor can they perish through want of knowledge; for though they are by nature as ignorant as others, yet it is the determinate will of God to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, in order to salvation; and that same decree which fixes salvation as the end, secures the belief of the truth as the means; and the covenant of grace provides for their knowledge of spiritual things, as well as other spiritual blessings; in consequence of which their minds are enlightened by the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, and they have the knowledge of God and Christ given them, which is life eternal. But this is to he understood of the people of the ten tribes of Israel, who were nationally and nominally the people of God, were so by profession; they called themselves the people of God; and though they were idolaters, yet they professed to worship God in their idols; and as yet God's "loammi" had not taken place upon them; he still sent his prophets among them, to reprove and reform them, and they were not as yet finally rejected by him, and cast out of their land. These may be said to be "destroyed", because they were threatened with destruction, and it was near at hand, they were just upon the brink of it; and because of the certainty of it, and this "through the lack of knowledge": either in the people, who were ignorant of God, his mind, and will, and worship, and without fear and reverence of him, which was the cause of all the abominations they ran into, for which they were threatened with ruin; or in the priests, whose business it was to teach and instruct the people; but instead of teaching them true doctrine, and the true, manner of worship, taught them false doctrine, and led them into superstition and idolatry; and so they perished through the default of the priests in performing their office; which sense is confirmed by what follows:

because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shall be no priest to me; the priests that Jeroboam made were of the lowest of the people, ignorant and illiterate men, 1Ki 12:31 and they chose to continue such; they rejected with contempt and abhorrence, as the word signifies, the knowledge of God, and of all divine things; of the law of God, concerning what was to be done, or not to be done, by the people; and of all statutes and ordinances relating to divine worship, and the performance of the priestly office: and though there might be some of Aaron's line that continued in the land of Israel, and in their office; yet these affected the same ignorance, and therefore the Lord threatens them with a rejection from the priesthood; or, however, that they should be no priests to him, or in his account, but should be had in the utmost abhorrence and contempt, The word here used has a letter in it more than usual {s}, which may signify the utter rejection of them, and the great contempt they were had in by the Lord; this was to take place, and did, at the captivity by Shalmaneser.

Seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God: which he had given them, who was their God by profession; and which they had forgot as if they never had read or learnt it; and so as not to observe and keep it themselves, nor teach and instruct others in it:

I will also forget thy children; have no regard to them, take no notice and care of them, as if they were never known by him; meaning either the people in general, their disciples and spiritual children; or else their natural children, who should be cut off, and not succeed them in the priesthood. The words are very emphatic, "I will forget them, even I" {t}; which expresses the certainty of it more fully, as well as more clearly points at the justness of the retaliation.

{s} Kaoamaw; the last a is superfluous; the reason of the word being so written. Ben Melech confesses his ignorance of. {t} yna Mg "etiam ego", Pagninus, Montanus, Zanchius, Cocceius, Rivet, Schmidt.

Hosea 4:7

Ver. 7. As they were increased, so they sinned against me,.... As the children of the priests increased and grew up, they sinned against the Lord, imitating their parents; they were as many sinners as they were persons, not one to be excepted: this expresses their universal depravity and corruption. Some understand it of their increase, as in number, so in riches, wealth, honour, dignity, and authority, and yet they sinned more and more; which shows their ingratitude. So the Targum,

"as I have multiplied fruits unto them, &c."

Therefore will I change their glory into shame, take away their priesthood from them, so that they shall be no more priests, and as if they never had been; and reduce them to a state of poverty, meanness, and disgrace; and cause them to go into captivity with the meanest of the people; and be in no more honour, but subject to as much scorn and contempt as they.

Hosea 4:8

Ver. 8. They eat up the sin of my people,.... That is, the priests did so, as the Targum, the priests of Jeroboam; they ate up the sacrifices which the people brought for their sins: and their fault was, either that they ate that which belonged to the true priests of the Lord, so Jarchi; or they did that, and had no concern to instruct the people in the right way; all that they regarded were good eating and drinking, and living voluptuously; and were altogether careless about instructing the people in the nature of sacrifices, and in the way of their duty: or this may regard the Bacchanalian feasts, as some think, which the people made in the temples of idols, and so sinned; and of which the priests greatly partook, and encouraged them in, and so were partakers not only of their banquets, but of their sins.

They set their heart on their iniquity: either their offerings for their iniquity, or their iniquity itself: or, "lift up their soul" {u} to it; diligently looking after it, not caring how much they committed; since the more sin offerings would be brought which would be to their advantage. Though some think the sin of whoredom, frequently and impudently committed at these idol feasts, is meant, which the priests were much addicted to, and very greedy of; they committed cleanness with greediness, **Eph 4:19**.

{u} wvpn wavy Mnwe law "et ad iniquitatem eorum levaverunt animam suam", Montanus, Pagninus, Tigurine version; "attollunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "et ad iniquitatem eorum tollunt anumam suam", Schmidt.

Hosea 4:9

Ver. 9. And there shall be, like people, like priest,.... No difference between them in their festivals, the one being as greedy of committing intemperance and uncleanness as the other, and in their common conversation of life; though the priests ought both to have given good instructions, and to have set good examples; but instead of that were equally guilty as the people, and so would be alike in their punishment, as it follows:

and I will punish them for their ways; their evil ways, as the Targum; their wicked manner of life and conversation, both of the people and the priests; especially the latter are meant: or, "I will visit upon him his ways" {w}; upon everyone of the priests, as well as the people; which visit must be understood in a way of wrath and vengeance:

and reward them their doings; reward them according to their doings, as their sins deserve, and as it is explained in the next verse: or, "I will return their doings to them" {x}; bring them back again, when they seemed to be past and gone, and set them before them, and charge them with them, and punish for them.

{w} wykrd wyle ytdqpw "et visitabo super eum vias ejus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt. {x} wl byva wyllemw "et opera ejus redire faciam", Zanchius.

Hosea 4:10

Ver. 10. For they shall eat, and not have enough,.... Namely, the priests; for of them the words are continued, who ate of the sacrifices of the people, and of feasts made in honour of idols; and yet, either what they ate did not satisfy or nourish them, or else their appetites were still greedy after more of the same kind: or this may respect a famine, either at the siege of Samaria, or in their captivity; when they who had lived so voluptuously should have so little to eat, that it should not satisfy them: or though, as others, they eat to the honour of their idols, expecting to be blessed with plenty by them, they shall not have it:

they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase; that is, their offspring; they shall not beget children, so the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi; or the children they beget shall quickly die; yea, though they commit whoredom in the idol's temple with that view, where the women prostituted themselves for that purpose:

because they have left off to take heed to the Lord; to his word, and worship, and ordinances, which they formerly had some regard unto, but now had relinquished: or, "the Lord they have forsaken", or "left off to observe" {y}; his ways, his word, and worship. R. Saadiah connects this with the following words, they have forsaken the Lord to observe fornication and wine; but wrongly.

{y} rmvl wbze hwhy ta "Jehovam desierunt observare", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Rivetus, Liveleus; "ad observandum", Schmidt; "reliquerunt observare", Cocceius; "deseruerunt observare", so some in Vatablus.

Hosea 4:11

Ver. 11. Whoredom and wine, and new wine, take away the heart. Uncleanness and intemperance besot men, deprive them of reason and judgment, and even of common sense, make them downright fools, and so stupid as to do the following things; or they take away the heart from following the Lord, and taking heed to him, and lead to idolatry; or they "occupy" {z} the heart, and fill it up, and cause it to prefer sensual lusts and pleasures to the fear and love of God: their stupidity brought on hereby is exposed in the next verse; though it seems chiefly to respect the priests, who erred in vision through wine and strong drink, and stumbled in judgment, Isa 28:7.

{z} bl xqy "occupant cor", so some in Calvin and Rivet; "occupavit cor", Schmidt.

Hosea 4:12

Ver. 12. My people ask counsel at their stocks,.... Or "at his wood" {a}, or stick; his wooden image, as the Targum; their wooden gods, their idols made of wood, mere stocks and blocks, without life or sense, and much less reason and understanding, and still less divinity. Reference is here had either to the matter of which an idol was made, being the trunk of a tree, or a block of wood; as the poet {b} introduces Priapus saying, "olim truncus eram ficulnus, inutile lignum": or to sticks of wood themselves, without being put into any form or shape; for so it is reported {c}, that the ancient idolaters used to receive for gods, with great veneration, trees or pieces of wood, having the bark taken off; particularly the Carians worshipped for Diana a piece of wood, not hewed, squared, or planed {d}: though the first seems rather to be the sense here; and either was extremely foolish. And yet such was the stupidity of this people, whom God had formerly chose for his people and had distinguished them by his favours from others, and they had professed themselves to be his people, and as yet were not utterly cast off, as to forsake him and his divine oracles, and all methods of knowing his will; as to ask counsel of such wooden deities in matters of moment and difficulty, what should be done by them, or concerning things to come.

And their staff declareth unto them; what methods are to be taken by them in the present case, or what shall come to pass, as they fancy; that is, either their idol, made of a staff or stick of wood, or a little image carried on a staff; such as probably were the teraphim they consulted, instead of the Urim and Thummim; and imagined they declared to them what they should do, or what would befall them. Kimchi's father interprets it of the false prophets on whom they depended, and whose declarations they received as oracles. Perhaps some respect is had to a sort of divination used among the Heathens by rods and staves, called "rhabdomancy", which the Jews had learnt of them; like that by arrows used by Nebuchadnezzar, Eze 21:21. This was performed by setting up a stick or staff, and as that fell, so they judged and determined what was to be done. The manner, according to Theophylact on the place, was this,

"they set up two rods, and muttered some verses and enchantments; and then the rods falling through the influence of demons, they considered how they fell, whether forward or backward, to the right or the left; and so gave answers to the foolish people, using the fall of the rods for signs."

The Jews take this to be forbid by that negative precept, De 18:10, "there shall not be found among you any that useth divination". So Jarchi and Baal Hatturim on that text explain a diviner by one that holds his staff; and the former adds and says, shall I go, or shall I not go? as it is said, "my people ask counsel at their stocks", &c.; the manner of which they thus describe {e},

"when they are about to go on a journey, they inquire before they set out, i.e. whether it will be prosperous or not; and the diviner takes a branch of a tree, and takes off the bark on one side, and leaves it on the other, and then throws it out of his hand; if, when it falls, the bark is uppermost, he says, this is a man; then he casts it again, and if the white is uppermost, this is a woman; to a man, and after that a woman, this is a good sign, and he goes his journey, or does what be desires to do: but if the white appears first, and after that the bark, then he says, to a woman, and after that a man, and he forbears (that is, to go on his journey, or do what he desired): but if the bark is uppermost in both (throws), or the white uppermost in both, to a man after a man, and a woman after a woman, then his journey (as to the success of it) is between both; and so they say they do in the land of Slavonia."

And from the Slavonians, Grotius says, the Germans took this way of divination, of which Tacitus {f} gives an account; and it seems by him that the Chaldeans also had it, from whom the Jews might have it. This way of divination by the staff is a little differently given in Hascuni: {g} the diviner measures his staff with his finger, or with his hand; one time he says, I will go; another time, I will not go; but if it happens, at the end of the staff, I will not go, he goes not.

For the spirit of whoredom hath caused them to err; a violent inclination and bias of mind to idolatry, which is spiritual adultery, and a strong affection for it, stirred up by an evil spirit, the devil; which so wrought upon them, and influenced them, as to cause them to wander from the true God, and his worship, as follows:

and they have gone a whoring from under their God; or

"erred from the worship of their God,"

as the Targum; from the true God, who stood in the relation of a husband to them; but, led by a spirit of error, they departed from him, and committed spiritual adultery, that is, idolatry; which is explained and enlarged upon in the next verse.

{a} wueb "in ligno suo", V. L. Montanus, Calvin; "liguum suum", Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {b} Horat. Sermon. l. 1. Satyr. 8. {c} Alexand. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 26. {d} Arnobius adv. Gentes, l. 6. p. 232. {e} Moses Kotsensis praecept. neg. 52. {f} De Moribus German. c. 10. {g} Apud Drusium in Deut. xviii. 10.

Hosea 4:13

Ver. 13. They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains,.... The highest part of them, nearest to the heavens, where they built their altars to idols, and offered sacrifice unto them, as we often read in Scripture they did:

and burn incense upon the hills; to their idols, which was one kind of sacrifice put for all others:

under oaks, and poplars, and elms; and indeed under every green tree that grew upon them, where there were groves of them raised up for this purpose; see **Jer 2:20**:

because the shadow, thereof is good; the shadow of these trees, of each of them, was large, and preserved them from the sultry heat of the sun, as well as hid them from the sight of men; they could perform their idolatrous rites, as well as gratify their impure lusts, with more privacy and secrecy; and perhaps they thought the gods delighted in such shady places, and that these were frequented by spirits, and the departed souls of men; in such places the Heathens, whom the Jews imitated, built their temples, and offered their sacrifices {g}. The "oak" is a very spreading tree; its branches are large, and its shadow very great: hence the religious Heathens in ancient times used to live under them, and worship them as gods, and dedicate temples to them, because they furnished them with acorns for food, and a shelter from the rain, and other inclemencies of the heavens {h}; particularly the oak was consecrated to Jupiter, as appears from what Virgil says {i}. The oak at Dodona is famous for its antiquity, where were a fountain and groves, and a temple dedicated to the same Heathen deity; and from whence oracles were given forth {k}. The Druids here in Britain chose to have their groves of oaks; nor did they perform any of their sacred rites without the leaves of them: hence Pliny {l} says they had their name. The "poplar" mentioned is the white poplar, as the word used signifies, and which affords a very hospitable shadow, as the poet {m} calls it; and this was a tree also with the Heathens sacred to their gods, particularly to Hercules {n}; because it is said he brought it first into Greece from the river Acheron, where it grew; and the wood of no other tree would the Eleans use, in preparing the sacrifices for Jupiter Olympius {o}. The "elm" is also a very shady tree; hence Virgil {p} calls it "ulmus opaca, ingens": and under this tree sacrifices used to be offered to idols, as is evident from **Eze 6:13**, where the same word is used as here, though it is there rendered an "oak"; but that it is different from the oak appears from these two words being read together, so that they cannot be names of one and the same tree, **Isa 6:13**, where it is rendered the "teil tree", as distinct from the oak. Now these trees being very shady ones, and under which the Gentiles used to perform their religious rites, the Jews imitated them therein, which is here complained of.

Therefore your daughters shall commit whoredoms, and your spouses shall commit adultery; or their "sons' wives" {q}; either spiritually, that is, commit idolatry by the example of their parents and husbands; or corporeally, being left at home while their parents and husbands were worshipping their idols upon the mountains, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi: and so this is to be considered as a punishment of the idolatry of their parents and husbands; that as they commit spiritual adultery against God, or idolatry, their daughters and wives shall be given up to such vile affections, or by force shall be made to commit corporeal adultery against them; or rather the sense is, led by the example of their parents and husbands, whom they see not only sacrifice to idols in the above places, but commit uncleanness with harlots there, they will throw off all shame, and commit whoredom with men: for so the words may be rendered, "hence your daughters", &c.; so Abarbinel.

{g} "Lucus in urbe fuit media, laetissimus umbra: Hic templum Junoni ingens Sidonia Dido Condebat." Virgil. Aeneid. l. 1. {h} Vid. Chartarii Imagines Deorum, p. 5. {i} "Sicubi magna Jovis antiquo robore quercus, Ingenteis tendat ramos------", Georgic. l. 3. "Altissima quercus erat Jovis signum", Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 12. {k} Vid. Pausan. Attica, sive l. 1. p. 30. Achaica, sive l. 7. p. 438. Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 490. & Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 2. {l} Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 44. {m} "Qua pinus ingens albaque populus, Umbram hospitalem consociare amant Ramis------" Horat. {n} "Populus Alcidae gratissima", Virgil. Bucolic. Eclog. 7. Vid. Aeneid. l. 1. "Herculi populus", Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 1. {o} Pausan. Eliac. 1. sive l. 5. p. 313. {p} Aeneid. l. 6. {q} Mkytwlk "nurus vestrae", Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator, Liveleus, Cocceius, Schmidt, Gussetius.

Hosea 4:14

Ver. 14. I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredoms, nor your spouses when they commit adultery,.... Either not punish them at all, so that they shall go on in sin, and to a greater degree, to the disgrace and reproach of their parents and husbands; or not as yet, or not so severely in them, because it was by their example they were led into it. Jarchi's note is very impertinent, that God threatens them with the disuse of the bitter waters of jealousy. The words are by some rendered interrogatively, "shall I not punish your daughters?" &c. {r}; verily I will; and not them only, but their parents and husbands too, who deserve more severe corrections:

for themselves are separated with whores, and sacrifice with harlots; they separated themselves to Baalpeor, that shameful idol, **Ho 9:10**, the Priapus of the Gentiles, in whose idolatrous worship many obscene rites were used; these men separated themselves from their wives, as well as from God and his worship, and from the company and conversation of men, and in private committed uncleanness with the women that attended, and with the female priests that officiated at the worship of idols; those "sanctified" ones, as the word may be rendered; and after that ate of things offered to idols with them. So the Targum,

"they associated themselves with whores, and ate and drank with harlots."

Some versions understand the latter of catamites, or sodomitical persons, and of the wickedness practised by them in such places.

Therefore the people that doth not understand; the law, as the Targum; what is to be done, and what to be avoided; the difference between the true and false religion; have no knowledge of divine and spiritual things, at least are very wavering and unsettled in their minds about religion, having thought little, and know less, of the matter:

shall fall: into idolatry and adultery, led by such examples. So the Septuagint version, "is implicated with a whore"; or "embraces a whore", as the Syriac and Arabic versions; see **Pr 7:22** or shall fall into calamities, ruin, and destruction; shall be dashed, as the Targum; so the Arabic interpreter of **Mr 9:26**, uses the word: though Aben Ezra and Kimchi say, that in the Arabic language it signifies to be perplexed and disturbed, so as not to know what to do {s}. The first sense seems to be best, of being scandalized, offended, and stumbling and falling into sin; and which Abarbinel suggests, and it agrees with what follows concerning Judah.

{r} So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schmidt. {s} Vid. R. Sol. Urbin, Ohel Moed, fol. 43. 2.

Hosea 4:15

Ver. 15. Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend,.... That is, though the Israelites, the people of the ten tribes, committed adultery, both corporeal and spiritual, in their idolatrous worship, as before observed, to which they had been used ever since the times of Jeroboam the first, and were hardened therein, and from which there were little hopes of reforming them; yet let not the men of Judah be guilty of the same crimes, who have as yet retained the pure worship of God among them; where the house of God is, and the priests of the Lord officiate, and sacrifices are offered up to him according to his will, and all other parts of religious service are performed: or the whole seems to be directed to Israel, as an exhortation to them, that though they had given into such abominations, yet should be careful not to offend Judah, or cause them to stumble and fall, and become guilty of the same sins, and so be exposed to the same punishment; and which would be an aggravation of Israel's sin, to draw others into it with them:

and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven; to worship idols in those places; otherwise it might be lawful to go to them on any civil accounts: Gilgal was upon the borders of the ten tribes, between them and Judah, where Joshua circumcised the Israelites; kept the first passover in the land; and where the ark and tabernacle were for a time; and perhaps for these reasons was chosen for a place of idolatrous worship: Bethaven is the same with Bethel, the name Jacob gave it, signifying the house of God; but when Jeroboam set up one of his calves here, the prophets, by way of contempt, called it Bethaven, the house of iniquity, or the house of an idol; though there was a place called Bethaven near Bethel, and Ai, as Kimchi observes, and as appears from **Jos 7:2**, yet Bethel was sometimes so called, as it seems to be here, because of the idolatry in it; and so the Talmudists {u} say, the place called Bethel is now called Bethaven. Now the question is, whether Judah or Israel are here addressed; many interpreters carry it in the former sense, as if the men of Judah were dissuaded from going to these places for worship, when the temple, the proper place of worship, was in their own tribe; but the speech seems rather to be directed to the Israelites, to stop going to these places for worship; for being so near to Judah, they might be the means of ensnaring and drawing them into the same idolatrous practices:

nor swear, the Lord liveth; or swear by the living God, so long as they worshipped idols; for it was not well pleasing to God to have his name used by idolaters, or joined with their idols: especially as they meant their idol when they swore by the Lord.

{u} T. Hieros Avoda Zara, fol. 43. 1.

Hosea 4:16

Ver. 16. For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer,.... A heifer or young cow Israel is compared unto; the rather, because of the object of their idolatrous worship, the calves at Dan and Bethel: the Septuagint calls them "heifers": which they are hereby put in mind of, and upbraided with; as also to express their brutish stupidity in worshipping such idols, in which they obstinately persisted: and so were like a "refractory" and "untamed" heifer, as some {w} render it, which will not be kept within bounds, either within doors or without, but breaks through, and passes over, all fences and enclosures; as they did, who transgressed the laws of God, and would not be restrained by them: or like a heifer unaccustomed to the yoke, which will not submit to it, but wriggles its neck from under it: so the Israelites would not be subject to the yoke of the law of God, were sons of Belial, children without a yoke; or like one, though yoked, yet would not draw the plough, but slid back in the furrows, even though goaded; so they, though stimulated by the prophets, whose words were as goads and pricks to push them on, yet would not hearken to them, but pulled away the shoulder, and slid back from the ways and worship of God; hence called backsliding Israel, **Jer 3:6**, and this is either a reason why Judah should not follow their example, because backsliders, or why they should be punished, as follows:

now, or "therefore" {x},

the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place: not that they were like lambs for the good properties of them, innocence, harmlessness, meekness, and patience; nor fed as the Lord feeds his lambs, and gathers them in his arms; but either as a heifer in sheep pasture, in short commons, for that creature cannot live where sheep and lambs can; or rather as a lamb that is alone, separate from the flock, not under the care of any shepherd; but exposed to every beast of prey upon a large common, on a wild desert and uncultivated place; afraid of every thing it hears and sees; bleating after its dam, of whose sustenance and nourishment it is destitute; and so is expressive of the state and condition of Israel in captivity, in the large Assyrian empire; and dispersed among the nations, where they were weak and helpless, destitute of all good things, and exposed to all dangers, and to every enemy. Aben Ezra and Kimchi understand the words in a good sense, that the Lord would have fed them as lambs in a large place, in an affluent manner, but that they rebelled and backslided: and to this sense the Targum seems to incline, which paraphrases the whole verse thus,

"for as an ox which is fattened and kicks, so Israel rebels because of the multitude of good things; now the Lord will lead them as a choice lamb in a valley,"

or plain: and so Noldius, "though Israel is refractory", &c.

notwithstanding the Lord will feed them, &c.; and indeed the phrase is used in a good sense in Isa 30:23, but there herds and flocks are spoken of, and not a single lamb, as here; though Kimchi thinks the singular is put for the plural, lamb for lambs.

{w} hrro "refractaria", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius, Schmidt; "indomita", Calvin, Drusius. {x} htew "quare, ideo, nunc itaque", Schmidt; "igitur nunc", Coeceius.

Hosea 4:17

Ver. 17. Ephraim is joined to idols,.... That is, the ten tribes of Israel, frequently so called after their separation from the rest, because that Jeroboam, by whom the revolt was made, was of that tribe; and because that tribe was the principal of them, and Samaria, the metropolis of their kingdom, was in it: and so the Targum here renders it,

"the house of Israel are joined to idols;"

to the calves at Dan and Bethel; to Baal, and other idols, they worshipped: the phrase expresses their strong affection for them, their constant worship of them, and their obstinate persisting therein, and the difficulty there was of bringing them off of it; they cleaved to their idols, were glued, and as it were wedded unto them, and there was no separating of them; as men are, who are addicted to the lusts of the flesh, to the mammon of unrighteousness, or to their own self-righteousness, or to any idol they set up in their hearts as such: hence it follows,

let them alone: which are either the words of the Lord to the prophet, enjoining him to prophesy no more to them; to reprove them no more for their sins, since it was all to no purpose, there was no reclaiming them, so Jarchi and Kimchi; and therefore let them alone, let them go on in their sins, and in their errors, and in their superstition and idolatry; see **Eze 3:26**. God was determined to let them alone himself, and therefore bids his prophet to do so likewise: and sad is the case with men when he lets them alone, and will not disturb their consciences any more by jogs and convictions, but gives them up to a seared conscience, to hardness of heart, and to their own lusts; when he will not hedge up their way with thorns, or distress them with afflictive providences, and hinder them from going on in a course of sin and wickedness; nor give them restraining grace, but suffer them to go on in the broad road, till they drop into hell; and says of them,

let him that is filthy be filthy still, Re 22:11 or else they are the words of the prophet to the men of Judah, to have nothing to do with Israel, since they were such backsliders and idolaters; to have no communion and conversation with them, but let them be alone, and worship alone for them; since what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness, light with darkness, Christ with Belial, a believer with an infidel, or the temple of the living God with idols and idolaters? **2Co 6:14**, some take them to be the words of the prophet to God concerning Israel, approving of his righteous judgments, in threatening to feed them as a lamb in a large place; dismiss him thither, suffer and leave him to feed there. The Targum interprets it of their sin, and not their punishment,

"they have left their worship;"

the service of God.

Hosea 4:18

Ver. 18. Their drink is sour,.... In their stomachs, having drank so much that they cannot digest it; hence nauseous eructations, with a filthy stench, are belched out; so it is a charge of drunkenness which Ephraim or the ten tribes were addicted to, and are accused of,
Isa 28:1 or "their drink is gone" {y}; it has lost its colour, brightness, smell, and flavour; it is turned to vinegar; expressive of the general corruption and depravity of manners and religion among them; see **Isa 1:22** or "their drink departeth", or "causeth to depart"; or "is refractory" {z}; that is, it made them refractory, like a refractory belief, as before; caused them to depart from God and his worship, and led them into all sin and irreligion, particularly what follows:

they have committed whoredom continually; corporeal whoredom, which drunkenness leads to; and spiritual whoredom or idolatry, which they had committed, and continued in, ever since the days of Jeroboam the son of

Nebat, and increased therein:

her rulers with shame do love, give ye; or "her shields" {a}; those that should have been the protectors of Israel, compared before to a heifer; and preserved them not only from their external enemies, but from all innovations in religion; and which we rightly enough render "rulers", civil and ecclesiastic, kings, princes, and priests; see
Ps 47:9, these "loved, give ye", which was a "shame" to them: the sense is, either they loved gifts and bribes, and were continually saying, "give, give", when causes were to be tried, and so perverted justice and judgment, which was very shameful; or they loved wine and strong drink, and therefore required it to be continually given them, which was very scandalous in rulers more especially, Pr 30:4; or they loved whoredom, both in a corporeal and spiritual sense, and desired more harlots and more idols, and added to their old ones, which was very abominable and ignominious. So the Targum,

"they turned themselves after fornication they loved, which brought shame unto them;"

and these may be considered as so many reasons why Judah should have nothing to do with Israel.

{y} Mabo ro "recessit potus eorum", Montanus, Drusius; "recessit vinum eorum", Schmidt. {z} "Recedere fecit inerum eorum", Tarnovius; "refractarium est merum eorum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {a} hyngm "clypei ejus", Montanus, Vatablus; "scuta ejus", Drusius, Tarnovius; "cujus clypei", Cocceius.

Hosea 4:19

Ver. 19. The wind hath bound her up in her wings,.... That is, the wind in its wings hath bound up Ephraim, Israel, or the ten tribes, compared to a heifer; meaning, that the wind of God's wrath and vengeance, or the enemy, the Assyrian, should come like a whirlwind, and carry them swiftly, suddenly, and irresistibly, out of their own land, into a foreign country: the past tense for the future, as is common in prophecy, because of the certainty of it; so Jarchi and Joseph Kimchi: but Aben Ezra, David Kimchi, Abarbinel, and Abendana, render it "she", that is, Israel, "hath bound up the wind in her wings" {b}; meaning that they had laboured in vain in their idolatrous worship; and it was all one as if a than should attempt to gather the wind, and bind it up in the skirts of his garment, and when he opens them there is nothing to be found: and to this sense is the Targum,

"the works of their great men are not right, as it is impossible to bind the wind in a wing;"

referring to the sins of their rulers, as before: or rather the sense is, the wind shall get into the loose skirts of the garments of, he Israelites, which shall be as a sail to it, as Schmidt observes, and shall carry them into distant lands; which falls in with the first sense of the words, and is best:

and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices: they of the ten tribes, the people of Israel; or their shields, their rulers, as Aben Ezra, shall be filled with shame, being disappointed of the help they expected from their idols, to whom they offered sacrifices; and the more, inasmuch as they will find that these idolatrous sacrifices are the cause of their ruin and destruction. The Targum is,

"because of the altars of their idols;"

and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, "because of their altars".

{b} hypnkb htwa xwr rru "ligavit illa ventum in alis suis", Munster, Calvin, Tigurine version.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hosea 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 5

The design of this chapter is to expose the sins of Israel and of Judah, and to declare the judgment of God upon them for them. Men of all ranks in Israel are summoned to attend to the charge brought against then, and the sentence on them, **Ho 5:1**. The charge exhibited is, that they were guilty of in, hating men to the slaughter of idolatrous sacrifices, though they had been sufficiently rebuked and corrected, **Ho 5:1**; of both corporeal and spiritual adultery, whereby they were defiled, and which was well known to the Lord, **Ho 5:3**; of obstinate persistence in impenitence, owing to the efficacy of an unclean spirit in them, and their want of the knowledge of God, **Ho 5:4**; of open pride, which stared them in the face, and for which they fell into calamities, and Judah with them, and should not be able with all their sacrifices to find favour with God, who had withdrawn himself from them, **Ho 5:5**; also of treacherous dealing with the Lord by their spiritual adultery, and begetting strange children, **Ho 5:7**; next their punishment is denounced, of which notice was to be given them by the sound of the trumpet, as an alarm of war, or as calling for mourning, **Ho 5:8**; since Ephraim would become desolate, of which notification had been made among the tribes, **Ho 5:9**; and wrath would be poured out in great abundance on the princes of Judah, who were very wicked men, **Ho 5:10**; and Ephraim would be oppressed and broken by the judgment of God, who would be as a moth unto them, and also rottenness to Judah, because they followed the commandments of men, **Ho 5:11**; and, what was still more provoking, when they were sensible of their calamities and distresses, they sought not help from the Lord, but from men that could do them no good; and therefore he threatens to be as a devouring lion to them, **Ho 5:13**; and yet the chapter concludes with a promise of the conversion of these people, after the Lord had dealt with them in an angry manner, **Ho 5:15**.

Ver. 1. Hear ye this, O priests,.... Though idolatrous ones, who called themselves priests, and were reckoned so by others, though not of the tribe of Levi, but such as Jeroboam had made priests, or were their successors; and there might be some of the family of Aaron and tribe of Levi, that might continue in the cities of Israel, and who gave in to the idolatrous worship of those times. Some render it "princes" {c} and the word signifies both:

and hearken, ye house of Israel; not the kingdom of Judah, as Kimchi, for this is manifestly distinguished from Israel in this chapter; nor the sanhedrim, to which sense Aben Ezra seems to incline; but the ten tribes, the whole kingdom of Israel, the common people in it:

and give ye ear, O house of the king; of the king of Israel, who, at this time, is thought to be Menahem; the royal family, the princes of the blood, and all that belonged to the king's court; all of every office, priestly or kingly, of every rank, high and low, are called upon to hearken to what is about to be said, both concerning their sin and punishment:

for judgment [is] toward you: either to know and do that which is just and right; it belonged to the priests to know and teeth divine judgment, to instruct the people in the knowledge of the judgments, statutes, and laws of God; and it belonged to, the king to execute human judgment, to do justice and judgment according to the laws of God, and of the realm; and it belonged to the people to attend to both: so the Targum, "does it not "belong" to you to know judgments?"

or rather this is to be understood of punitive justice and judgment, of the sentence of condemnation, or denunciation of punishment for sin: the reasons of which follow,

because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor; these were two high mountains in the land of Israel; the former was near Hermon and Lebanon, and the same with Gilead, Jos 11:3; the latter was a mountain in Galilee, between Issachar and Zebulun, six miles from Nazareth: it was, according to Joseph ben Gorion {d} almost four miles high, had on the top of it a plain of almost three miles; the true Josephus {e} says is was three and a quarter miles; See Gill on "Jer 46:18"; the Jews {f} have a tradition, that Jeroboam set spies upon these mountains at the time of the solemn feasts, to watch who went to them out of Israel, and to inform against them; but these could not command all the roads leading to Jerusalem. It may be these mountains were much infested with hawkers and hunters, to which there may be an allusion; and the sense be, ye priests, people, and king, are like to those that set snares and nets on those hills, as they to ensnare and catch creatures, so ye to ensnare and draw men into idolatrous practices; or rather, since there is no note of comparison, the meaning is, that they set up altars, and offered sacrifices on these hills, and thereby ensnared not only those of their own tribes, but drew and enticed many of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to fall in with the same idolatrous practices.

{c} Mynhkh "significat sacerdotes et principes", vid. 2 Sam. viii. 18. "Sacerdotes ac domum regis", i.e. "regem cum principibus et aulicis", Liveleus. {d} Hist. Heb. l. 4. c. 25. p. 635. {e} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 1. sect. 9. {f} Jarchi ex Tanehuma, Abendana ex Midrash.

Hosea 5:2

Ver. 2. And the revolters are profound to make slaughter,.... The revolters are the king, priests, and people, who had revolted from the true worship and ways of God unto idolatry. These formed deep laid schemes, and took crafty methods, like hawkers; who lay themselves flat upon the ground to manage their snares and nets, and observe the creatures that fall into them, and take them, and whom they artfully decoy, to which the allusion is; and that either to slay those who would not comply with their false worship; or rather to multiply the sacrifices of slain beasts, and offer them with a great show of devotion and religion, and thereby beguile, entice, and ensnare simple and unwary souls; so the Targum,

"they sacrifice to idols abundantly;"

and which, in the sight of God, was mere slaughter and butchery:

though I [have been] a rebuker of them all; king, priests, and prophets; those idolaters, revolters, or worshippers of Baal, as Aben Ezra calls them: this is to be interpreted either of the prophet, who had freely, faithfully, and openly reproved all orders of men for their departure from God and his worship, and for their idolatrous practices; or of the Lord himself, which comes to the same sense, who had rebuked them by his prophets, and corrected them by his judgments, but to no purpose: and therefore they could not plead ignorance, or excuse themselves upon that account.

Hosea 5:3

Ver. 3. I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me,.... Though they may cover their designs from men, and seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and make plausible pretences for what they do, and put on an appearance of religion; yet God, who knows all men, and their hearts, cannot be deceived; he judges not according to outward appearance; all things are naked and open to him; nor can any hide themselves from him; he knows their persons, intentions, and designs, as well as actions. Kimchi interprets Ephraim of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who was of that tribe; others, of the tribe itself, and Israel of the other nine tribes; others take Ephraim for the ten tribes, and Israel for the two tribes: but it is best to understand Ephraim and Israel of the same, even of the ten tribes; whose works, as the Targum paraphrases it, the Lord knew, particularly what follows:

for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom; both corporeal and spiritual adultery, which frequently went together, as observed in the preceding chapter: the Lord knew their corporeal whoredom, though ever so secretly committed, and their spiritual adultery or idolatry, under all the specious pretences of worshipping him; which was an abhorrence to him, as well as a pollution to them:

[and] Israel is defiled; with the same sins; for all sin is of a defiling nature, and especially those mentioned, which defile body and soul, and render men loathsome and abominable in the sight of God.

Hosea 5:4

Ver. 4. They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God,.... Either their evil doings; they will not leave, as the Targum and Jarchi {g}; their evil ways and worship, their adultery and idolatry; which was necessary to repentance and true conversion to God, whom they yet professed to be their God, though they had so sadly departed from him: or their good works; they did not choose to do them, which were leading steps to repentance and conversion, or fruits and evidences of it: they had no mind to repent of their sins, and turn from them to the Lord; they had no thought, care, or concern, about these things, but obstinately persisted in their sins and in their impenitence: their wills were wretchedly depraved and corrupted; their hearts hard, perverse, and obstinate; they had no will to that which is good:

for the spirit of whoredom [is] in the midst of them; an unclean spirit, that prompts them to and pushes them on to commit corporeal and spiritual whoredom; the bias and inclination of their minds were this way which put them upon such evil practices; the spirit of error, which caused them to err, as the Targum and Kimchi; the lying spirit in the false prophets which encouraged them therein; and even himself, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience:

and they have not known the Lord; ignorance of God, his nature and perfections, his will, word, and worship, was the cause of their idolatry, and other sins; see **Ho 4:1**; and this was wilful and affected ignorance; they knew not, nor would they understand: they rejected the knowledge of God, and the means of it; so the Targum,

"and they sought not instruction (or doctrine) from the Lord."

{g} So R. Sol. Urbin. fol. 68. 2.

Hosea 5:5

Ver. 5. And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face,.... Or, "does" or "shall answer to his face" {h}; contradicts him, convicts him, and fills him with shame; the pride of his heart, and of his countenance, and which appears in all his actions, and which is open and manifest to all, shall stare him in the face, and confound him; even all the sinful actions done by him in a proud and haughty manner, in contempt of God and of his laws, shall fly in his face, and fill him with dread and horror. The Targum is,

"the glory of Israel shall be humbled, and they seeing [it]:"

instead of greatness, glory, and honour, they formerly had, they shall be in a mean low condition, even in their own land, before they go into captivity; and which their eyes shall behold, as Kimchi explains the paraphrase; and to this sense Jarchi and Aben Ezra incline; and so read the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. Some understand this of God himself, who, formerly, at least, was the pride, glory, and excellency of Israel; of whom they were proud, and boasted, and gloried in; even he shall be a swift witness against them: and

therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; that is, the ten tribes shall fall by and for their iniquities, such as before mentioned, into ruin and misery; it has respect to their final destruction and captivity by the Assyrians; they first fell into sin, and then by it into ruin: see Ho 14:1;

Judah also shall fall with them; the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, as they fell into idolatry, and were guilty of the same crimes, so should be involved in the same or like punishment, though not at the same time; for the Babylonish captivity, in which Judah was carried captive, was many years after Israel was carried captive by the Assyrians: unless this is to be understood of the low, afflicted, and distressed condition of Judah, in the times of Ahaz, by Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria, who had a little before carried captive part of Israel, and by others; and in which times Judah fell into idolatrous practices, and fell by them; see 2Ki 15:29.

{h} wynpb hne "respondebit", Montanus, Zanchius, Tarnovius, Rivet, Schmidt; "respondit", Cocceius.

Hosea 5:6

Ver. 6. They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord,.... Not only the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, to whom Kimchi, Aben Ezra, and Abarbinel, restrain the words; but the ten tribes of Israel also, who, when in distress, and seeing ruin coming upon them, should seek the Lord; seek help from him against their enemies, and the pardon of their sins; seek his face and favour, and to appease his wrath, by bringing a multitude of sacrifices out of their flocks and herds; such a number of them, as if they brought all their flocks and herds with them; but not with true repentance for their sins, nor with faith in the great sacrifice, which legal sacrifices, rightly performed, prefigured. Kimchi refers this to the times of Josiah; but, as it respects Israel as well as Judah, it seems to design some time a little before the ruin of them both:

but they shall not find [him]; shall not find grace and mercy with him; he will not be favourable to them, will not afford them any help, but give them up to utter ruin and destruction; as he did Israel at the Assyrian captivity, and Judah at the Babylonish captivity:

he hath withdrawn himself from them; the glory of the Lord departed from them; his Shechinah, or divine Majesty, as the Targum, removed from them, because of their idolatry, and other sins; they sought him not where and while he was to be found; and therefore, when they sought him, found him not, because he had withdrawn his presence from among them, being provoked by their iniquities.

Hosea 5:7

Ver. 7. They have dealt treacherously against the Lord,.... Which was the reason of his departure from them; as a woman deals treacherously with her husband when she is unfaithful to him, and commits adultery; so Israel and Judah dealt treacherously with the Lord, who stood in the relation of a husband to them in covenant, by committing idolatry;

for they have begotten strange children; either of strange women, the daughters of idolatrous Heathens they married, so the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi; or rather their natural children, though born of Israelitish or Jewish parents, both such; yet being educated by them in an idolatrous way, and brought up in the commission of the evils their parents were guilty of, are said to be strange children to the Lord, alienated from him and his worship, and as such to be begotten:

now shall a month devour them with their portions; the Jews understand this literally of the month Ab, the time of Jerusalem's destruction, so Jarchi and R. Jeshuah in Aben Ezra and Ben Melech; or the month Tammuz, in which the city was broke up, and the month Ab, in which it was destroyed, as Kimchi; or rather, which is also a sense he mentions, it signifies a short time, a very little while before the destruction should come; and compares it with Zec 11:8; though, according to the Targum, it is to be understood of every month; and so denotes the continual desolation that should be made, until they were utterly destroyed; but others seem better to interpret it of their new moon, or first day of the month, which they observed in a religious way, by offering sacrifice, &c. and on which they depended; but this should be so far from being of any service to them, that it should turn against them; and, because of the idolatry committed in them, the Lord would hate them, and destroy them on account of them; even their farms, and fields, and vineyards, which were their portions and inheritances; see **Isa 1:13**; unless it is rather to be understood of the parts of the beasts slain in sacrifice on those days, to appease the Lord; which would be so far from doing it, that they would provoke him yet more to wrath, and slay them.

Hosea 5:8

Ver. 8. Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, [and] the trumpet in Ramah,.... As an alarm of war, to give notice that the enemy is at hand, just ready to invade the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and bring destruction upon them; according to the Targum, the words are directed to the prophets,

"O ye prophets, lift up your voice like a trumpet;"

to declare to the people of Judah their sins and transgressions, and the punishment that would be inflicted on them for them; or it may be, this is a call of the people to fasting, mounting, and lamentation, as in **Joe 2:1**. Gibeah is the same which is called "Gibeah of Saul", 1Sa 11:4; it being the birth place of that prince; and which Josephus {i} calls Gabathsaoule, and interprets it the hill of Saul, and says it was distant from Jerusalem about four miles; though elsewhere {k} he represents it as but two and a half miles; perhaps in the latter place there is a corruption in the number; for, according to Jerom, it was near Ramah, which was seven miles from Jerusalem; he says it is called also "Gibeah of Benjamin", 1Sa 13:2; because it was in that tribe, as was also Ramah; which, according to Eusebius {l}, was six miles from Jerusalem; these were near to each other; see Jud 19:13; so that the calamity threatened is what respects the two tribes:

cry aloud [at] Bethaven; the same with Bethel, or a place near unto it, in the tribe of Benjamin, or on the borders of Ephraim; see **Ho 4:15**. According to the above writer {m}, it lay about twelve miles from Jerusalem; in the way to Sichem; and being upon the borders both of Benjamin and Ephraim, it sometimes belonged to Israel, and sometimes to Judah; see 2Ch 13:19; and seeing, as Jerom observes, that Benjamin was at the back of it (for where the tribe of Benjamin ended, not far in the tribe of Ephraim, according to him, was this city built), it therefore very beautifully follows,

after thee, O Benjamin; that is, either the enemy is after thee, O Benjamin, is just at hand, ready to fall upon thee, and destroy thee, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech; or rather, after the trumpet is blown in Gibeah and Ramah, cities which belonged to Benjamin, let it he blown, either in Bethaven, on the borders of Benjamin and Ephraim; or let it be blown in the tribe of Judah, so that all the twelve tribes may have notice, and prepare for what is coming upon them.

{i} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 1. {k} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 8. {l} Apud Reland Palestina Illustrata, l. 3. tom. 2. p. 963. {m} Apud Reland. ib. p. 637.

Hosea 5:9

Ver. 9. Ephraim shall he desolate in the day of rebuke,.... The country of the ten tribes shall be laid desolate, the inhabitants of them destroyed either by the sword, or famine, or pestilence, and the rest carried captive, as they were by Shalmaneser; and this was the day of the Lord's rebuke and chastisement of them: or of the reward of their sins, as the Targum, when the Lord punished them for them; and this is what the trumpet was to be blown for, in order to give notice of, or to call for mourning on account of it:

among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be; this desolation was foretold by the prophets, and published in all the tribes of Israel, as what should certainly come to pass; and therefore they could not plead ignorance of it, or say they had no notice given them, or they would have repented of their sins. The Targum is,

"in the tribes of Israel I have made known the law;"

so Jarchi; which they transgressed, and therefore were made desolate; or the word of truth, as Kimchi; the true and faithful word, that if they walked in his ways, hearkened unto him, it would be well with them; but, if not, he would destroy their land, and carry them captive.

Hosea 5:10

Ver. 10. The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound,.... Or landmark, which to do was contrary to the law, De 19:14; and has always been reckoned a heinous sin among all nations, and is only done by such who have no regard to right and wrong, and by them secretly; and such were the kings, princes, and nobles of Judah; they secretly committed the grossest iniquities, yea, were abandoned to their vile lusts, and could not be contained within any bounds. The "caph" here used is, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, not a note of similitude, but of certainty; and then the sense is, that the princes of Judah did remove the bound; either, in a literal sense, by force and violence seized on the possessions and inheritances of their neighbours which lay next to theirs; or, in a figurative sense, they broke through all bounds and limits, and transgressed the laws of God and men, being not to be restrained by either:

[therefore] I will pour out my wrath upon them like water; in great abundance, and with such force and vehemence, as not to be stopped, but utterly destroy; like a flood of water, which overflows the banks, or breaks them down, and carries all before it; or like the flood of water that came upon the earth, and carried off the world of the ungodly; in like manner should the wrath of God be poured down from heaven upon these princes without measure, exceeding all bounds, in just retaliation for their removing the bounds of their neighbours, or transgressing the laws of God: this was fulfilled either in the times of Ahaz, when Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, as well as Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, greatly afflicted Judah, 2Ch 28:1; or at the time of the Babylonish captivity.

Hosea 5:11

Ver. 11. Ephraim [is] oppressed, [and] broken in judgment,.... Here the prophet again returns to the ten tribes, who were oppressed and broken, either by their own judgments, as the Targum; by the tyranny of their kings, and the injustice of their judges, who looked only for the mammon of unrighteousness; or by the judgment of their enemies, the Assyrians, the taxes they laid upon them, the devastations they made among them, and by whom, at last, they were carried captive; or by the judgments of God upon them; for all the enemy did was by his permission, and according to his will:

because he willingly walked after the commandment; not after the commandment of God, but after the commandment of men, as Aben Ezra; or after the commandment of the prophets of Baal, as Jarchi; or after the commandment of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, as Kimchi, by worshipping the calves at Dan and Bethel he set up there.

Hosea 5:12

Ver. 12. Therefore [will] I [be] unto Ephraim as a moth,.... Which eats garments, penetrates into them, feeds on them privately, secretly, without any noise, and gradually and slowly consumes them; but at last utterly, that they are of no use and profit: this may signify the various things which befell the ten tribes in the reigns of Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah, which secretly and gradually weakened them; and the utter consumption of them in the times of Hoshea by Shalmaneser:

and to the house of Judah as rottenness; as rottenness in the bones, Pr 12:4; which can never be got out or cured; or as a worm that eats into wood, as Jarchi interprets it; and gets into the very heart of a tree, and eats it out: thus the Lord threatens the house of Judah, or the two tribes, with a gradual, yet thorough, ruin and destruction.

Hosea 5:13

Ver. 13. When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah [saw] his wound,.... That their civil state were in a sickly condition, very languid, weak, feeble, and tottering, just upon the brink of ruin; see **Isa 1:6**;

then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to King Jareb; that is, the ten tribes, or the king of them, went and met the Assyrian king; and Judah the two tribes, or the king of them, sent ambassadors to King Jareb; which sense the order of the words, in connection with the preceding clause, seems to require: by the Assyrian and King Jareb we are to understand one and the same, as appears from the following words, "yet could he not heal &c.", whereas, if they were different, it would have been expressed, "yet could they not heal &c.", and the king of Assyria is meant, who: also is called King Jareb, or rather king of Jareb {n}; see Ho 10:6; for this does not seem to be the name of the king of Assyria himself; though it may be that Pul, or Tiglathpileser, or Shalmaneser, might have more names than one, whoever is meant; but rather it is the name of some place in Assyria, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, from which the country may be here denominated; though the Targum takes it to be, not the proper name of a man or place, but an appellative, paraphrasing it,

"and sent to the king that shall come to avenge them;"

and so other interpreters {o} understand it, rendering it, either the king that should defend, as Tremellius; or the king the adversary, or litigator, as Cocceius, Hillerus {p}, and Gussetius {q}; a court adversary, that litigates a point, contends with one, and is an advocate for another; or, as Hiller elsewhere {r} renders it, the king that lies in wait: this was fulfilled with respect to Ephraim, when Menahem king of Israel, or the ten tribes, often meant by Ephraim, went and met Pul king of Assyria, and gave him a thousand talents to depart out of his land; perceiving his own weakness to withstand him, and in order to strengthen and confirm the kingdom in his hand, 2Ki 15:19; or when Hoshea king of Israel gave presents to Shalmaneser king of Assyria, and became a servant to him, till he could get stronger, and shake off his yoke, 2Ki 17:3; and with respect to Judah it had its accomplishment when Ahaz king of Judah sent messengers to Tiglathpileser king of Assyria to come and help him against the kings of Syria and Israel, finding he was not strong enough to oppose them himself, 2Ki 16:7; now all this was highly provoking to the Lord, that when both Israel and Judah found themselves in a weak condition, and unable to resist their enemies, instead of seeking to him for help they applied to a foreign prince, and which proved unsuccessful to them:

yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound; but, on the contrary, afflicted them, hurt and destroyed them; there being a "meiosis" in the words, which expresses less than is designed; for though, with respect to Ephraim or Israel, Pul king of Assyria desisted from doing any damage to Israel, yet a successor of his, TiglathPileser, came and took several places of Israel, and carried the inhabitants captive; and at last came Shalmaneser, and took Samaria, the metropolis of the land, and carried all the ten tribes captive, 2Ki 15:29; and so, with respect to Judah, Tiglathpileser, whom Ahaz sent unto for help, not only did not help and strengthen him, but afflicted him, 2Ch 28:20; thus when sensible sinners see their spiritual maladies, and feel the smart of their wounds, and make a wrong application for relief, to their tears, repentance, and humiliation, and to works of: righteousness, or to anything or person short of Christ the great Physician, they meet with no success, find no relief until better directed.

{n} bry Klm la "ad regem", Jarchi, Zanchius, Liveleus, Drusius; so Luther in Tarnovius. {o} bry "altorem", V. L. "qui eum vindicaret", Tigurine version; "propugnaturum", Junius & Tremellius; "qui litigaret", Piscator. {p} Onomast. Sacr. p. 219. {q} Ebr. Comment. p. 780. {r} Onomast. Sacr. p. 430.

Hosea 5:14

Ver. 14. For I [will be] unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah,.... Being provoked by their above conduct and behaviour in seeking to others, and not to him, for help, he threatens to punish them in a more public and severe manner; not be to them only as a moth and rottenness, but as a lion, and as a young lion, creatures strong and fierce, that destroy and devour all that come into their hands, and from whom there is no deliverance: thus the Lord was both to Israel and Judah, by means of the Assyrians and Babylonians; the former are compared to a lion, that devoured Israel; and the latter to a young lion, that broke the bones of Judah; see Jer 50:17; and last of all by means of the Romans, especially to Judah:

I, [even] I, will tear and go away; as a lion tears its prey in pieces it seizes upon, and goes away, and leaves it torn, having satisfied itself; and is in no fear of being pursued, or any vengeance taken on him for what he has done; so the Lord would destroy Israel and Judah, and leave them in their ruinous state, none being able to rise up and avenge their cause. The "I" is doubled, to express the certainty of it:

I will take away, and none shall rescue [him]; as the lion, having glutted itself with its prey, takes the rest away, and carries it to its den, where none dare come and take it from him; so the Lord signifies, that those of Israel and Judah that perished not by the sword of the enemy, or by famine or pestilence, should be carried captive, and none should be able to return them till he pleases: under the wrath and displeasure of God, and under this tearing, rending, and afflictive dispensation, they now are, and will continue till the time of their conversion.

Hosea 5:15

Ver. 15. I will go [and] return to my place,.... Leave the countries of Israel and of Judah, where he had used to grant his gracious and spiritual presence unto his people, and watched over them, and cared for them, and bestowed many favours on them, and go up to heaven, the place of his more glorious presence, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret it; and there, as it were, shut himself up, particularly with respect to these people, as if he had no more thought of them, or concern for them: this is to be understood in a sense becoming and agreeable to the omnipresence of God:

till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; till the Israelites acknowledge their idolatry, and the Jews their disbelief and rejection of the Messiah, and all other sins; till they ingenuously confess themselves to be guilty, or know and acknowledge they have sinned, as the Targum; and then humbly seek the face and favour of God, the remission of their sins from him, and acceptance with him:

in their affliction they will seek me early; in the morning, betimes, early, and earnestly; which affliction may be understood both of the Assyrian and Babylonish captivity; or rather of their present affliction toward the close of it, when they shall be sensible of their sins, and confess them, and look to him whom they have pierced, and mourn, and seek for pardon, righteousness, and salvation, from him; and so all Israel shall be saved, of whose conversion this is a prophecy.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hosea 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 6

This chapter gives an account of some who were truly penitent, and stirred up one another to return to the Lord, encouraged by his power, grace, and goodness, **Ho 6:1**; and of others, who had only a form of religion, were very unstable in it; regarded more the ceremonial law, and the external sacrifices of it, than the moral law; either that part of it which respects the love of the neighbour, or that which concerns the knowledge of God; and dealt treacherously with the Lord, transgressing the covenant, **Ho 6:4**; particularly the city of Gilead is represented as full of the workers of iniquity, and is charged with bloodshed, **Ho 6:8**; yea, even the priests were guilty of murder and lewdness, **Ho 6:9**; and Israel, or the ten tribes in general, are accused of whoredom, both corporeal and spiritual, with which they were defiled, **Ho 6:10**; nor was Judah clear of these crimes, and therefore a reckoning day is set for them, **Ho 6:11**.

Ver. 1. Come, and let us return unto the Lord,.... The Septuagint and Arabic versions connect these words with the last clause of the preceding chapter, adding the word, "saying"; and so the Targum and Syriac version, "they shall say"; and very rightly as to the sense; for they are the words of those persons under the afflicting hand of God; and, being brought thereby to a sense of their sins, acknowledge them, and seek to the Lord for pardon, and encourage one another so to do; as Israel and Judah will in the latter day, when the veil shall be taken off their minds, the hardness of their heart removed, and they shall be converted, and turn to the Lord, and seek him together, weeping as they go; having both faith in Christ, and repentance towards God, by which they will return unto him; see **2Co 3:16**; so all sinners sensible of their departure from God by sin, and of the evil and danger of it, repent of it, and loath it, confess and acknowledge it, depart from it, and forsake it; and return to the Lord, having some view and apprehension of him as a God, gracious and merciful in Christ; imploring the forgiveness of their sins, with some degree of faith and confidence in him; and not having only love to their own souls, and the welfare of them, but also to the souls of others, exhort and encourage them to join with them in the same acts of faith, repentance, and obedience. The Targum is,

"let us return to the worship of the Lord;"

from which they have sadly departed. The arguments or reasons follow,

for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up; the same hand that has torn will heal and that has smitten will bind up, and none else can; and therefore there is a necessity of returning to him for healing and a cure, De 32:39; and his tearing is in order to heal, and his smiting in order to bind up; and, as sure as he has done the one, he will do the other, and therefore there is great encouragement to apply to him; all which the Jews will be sensible of in the last day; and then the Lord, who is now tearing them in his wrath, and smiting them in his sore displeasure, both in their civil and church state, dispersing them among the nations, and has been so doing for many hundred years, will "bind up the breach of his people, and heal the stroke of their wound", Isa 30:26; and so the Lord deals with all his people, who are truly and really converted by him; he rends their heart, tears the caul of it; pricks and cuts them to the heart; smites them with the hammer of his word; wounds their consciences with a sense of sin; lets in the law into them, which works wrath, whereby they become broken and contrite; and all this in order to their turning to him that smites them, and be healed, and in love to their souls, though for the present grievous to bear: and then the great Physician heals them by his stripes and wounds; by the application of his blood; by means of his word, the Gospel of peace and pardon; by a look to him, and a touch of him by faith; by discoveries of his love, and particularly his pardoning grace and mercy, which as oil and wine he pours into the wounds made by sin, and binds them up; and which he heals universally, both with respect to persons and diseases, for which he is applied unto, and infallibly, thoroughly, and perfectly, and all freely.

Hosea 6:2

Ver. 2. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up,.... The Jews, in their present state, are as dead men, both in a civil and spiritual sense, and their conversion and restoration will be as life from the dead; they are like persons buried, and, when they are restored, they will be raised out of their graves, both of sin and misery; see Ro 11:15; the time of which is here fixed, after two days, and on the third; which Jarchi interprets of the two temples that have been destroyed, and of the third temple to be built, which the Jews expect, but in vain, and when they hope for good times: Kimchi explains it of their three captivities, in Egypt, Babylon, and the present one, and so Ben Melech, from which they hope to be raised, and live comfortably; which sense is much better than the former: and with it may be compared Vitringa's {s} notion of the text, that the first day was between Israel's coming out of Egypt and the Babylonish captivity; the second day between that and the times of Antiochus, which was the third night; then the third day followed, which is the times of the Messiah: but the Targum comes nearer the truth, which paraphrases the words thus,

"he will quicken us in the days of consolation which are to come, and in the day of the resurrection of the dead he will raise us up;"

where by days of consolation are meant the days of the Messiah, with which the Jews generally connect the resurrection of the dead; and if we understand them of the last days of the Messiah, it is not much amiss; for the words respect the quickening and raising up of the Jews in the latter day, the times of Christ's spiritual coming and reign: and these two and three days may be expressive of a long and short time, as interpreters differently explain them; of a long time, as the third day is a long time for a man to lie dead, when there can be little or no hope of his reviving, Lu 24:21; or of a short time, for which two or three days is a common phrase; and both true in this case: it is a long time Israel and Judah have been in captivity, and there may seem little hope of their restoration; but it will be a short time with the Lord, with whom a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years: and this I take to be the sense of the words, that after the second Millennium, or the Lord's two days, and at the beginning of the third, will be the time of their conversion and restoration, reckoning from the last destruction of them by the Romans; for not till then were Israel and Judah wholly in a state of death: many of Israel were mixed among those of Judah before the Babylonish captivity, and many returned with them from it; but, when destroyed by the Romans, there was an end of their civil and church state; which will both be revived on a better foundation at this period of time: but if this conjecture is not agreeable (for I only propose it as such), the sense may be taken thus, that in a short time after the repentance of Israel, and their conversion to the Lord, they will be brought into a very comfortable and happy state and condition, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual;

and we shall live in his sight; comfortably, in a civil sense, in their own land, and in the possession of all their privileges and liberties; and in a spiritual sense, by faith on Jesus Christ, whom they shall now embrace, and in the enjoyment of the Gospel and Gospel ordinances; and the prophet represents the penitents and faithful among them as believing and hoping for these things. This may be applied to the case of sensible sinners, who, as they are in their natural state dead in sin, and dead in law, so they see themselves to be such when awakened; and yet entertain a secret hope that sooner or later they shall be revived and refreshed, and raised up to a more comfortable state, and live in the presence of God, and the enjoyment of his favour. The ancient fathers generally understood these words of Christ, who was buried on the sixth day, lay in the grave the whole seventh day, and after these two days, on the third, rose again from the dead; and to this passage the apostle is thought to have respect, 1Co 15:3; and also of the resurrection of his people in and with him, and by virtue of his: and true it is that Christ rose from the dead on the third day, and all his redeemed ones were quickened and raised up together with him as their head and representative, **Eph 2:5**; and his in virtue of his being quickened that they are regenerated and quickened, and made alive, in a spiritual sense; he is the author of their spiritual life, and their life itself; see **1Pe 1:3**; and not only in virtue of his resurrection is their spiritual resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace, but even their corporeal resurrection at the last day; and as, in consequence of their spiritual resurrection, they live in the sight of God a life of grace and holiness by faith in Christ, and in a comfortable view and enjoyment of the divine favour; so they shall live eternally in the presence of God, where are fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore: but the first sense is best, and most agreeable to the context and scope of it.

{s} Comment. in Isa. viii. 20.

Hosea 6:3

Ver. 3. Then shall we know, [if] we follow on to know the Lord,.... The word "if" is not in the original text, and the passage is not conditional, but absolute; for as persons, when converted, know Christ, and not before, when he is revealed to them, and in them, as the only Saviour and Redeemer, so they continue and increase in the knowledge of him; they earnestly desire to know more of him, and eagerly pursue those means and methods by which they attain to a greater degree of it; for so the words are, "and we shall know, we shall follow on to know the Lord" {t}; that grace, which has given the first measure of spiritual and experimental knowledge of him, will influence and engage them to seek after more. The Jews, when they are quickened, and turn to the Lord, will know him, own and acknowledge him, as the Messiah, the only Redeemer and Saviour; and will be so delighted with the knowledge of him, that they will be desirous of, and seek after, a larger measure of it; and indeed they shall all know him, from the least to the greatest, when the covenant of grace shall be renewed with them, manifested and applied to them. The words may be considered as a continuation of their exhortation to one another from **Ho 6:1**; thus, "and let us acknowledge, let us follow on to know him" {u}; let us own him as the true Messiah, whom we and our fathers have rejected; and let us make use of all means to gain more knowledge of him: or let us follow after him, to serve and obey him, which is the practical knowledge of him; let us imitate him, and follow him the Lamb of God, embrace his Gospel, and submit to his ordinances. So Kimchi interprets it, "to know him"; that is, to serve him; first know him, then serve him;

his going forth is prepared as the morning; that is, the Lord's going forth, who is known, and followed after to be more known; and is to be understood, not of his going forth in the council and covenant of grace from everlasting; nor of his incarnation in time, or of his resurrection from the dead; but of his spiritual coming in the latter day, with the brightness of which he will destroy antichrist; or of his going forth in the ministration of the Gospel, to the conversion of Jews and Gentiles, the light of which dispensation will be very great; it will be like a morning after a long night of darkness with the Jewish and Pagan nations; and be as grateful and delightful, beautiful and cheerful, as the morning light; and move as swiftly and irresistibly as that, and be alike growing and increasing: and so the words are a reason of the increasing knowledge of the Lord's people in those times, because he shall go forth in the ministration of the word like the morning light, which increases more and more till noon; and of the evidence and clearness of it, it being like a morning without clouds; with which agrees the note of Joseph Kimchi,

"we shall know him, and it will be as clear to us as the light of the morning without clouds:"

and also of the firmness and certainty of it; for both the increasing knowledge of the saints, and the going forth of Christ in a spiritual manner, is "firm" and "sure" (which may be the sense of the word {w}) as the morning; for, as sure as the night cometh, so also the morning;

and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter [and] former rain unto the earth; in the land of Israel they had usually two rains in a year; the one in autumn, or quickly after the seed was sown; the other in the spring, when the corn was ripe, and harvest near, and which was very reviving and refreshing to the earth, and the fruits of it; and such will be the coming of Christ unto his people, in the ministration of the Gospel in the latter day, which will drop as the rain, and distil as the dew, as the small rain on the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass; and in the discoveries of his favour and love to them, and in the distribution of the blessings of his grace among them. Much the like phrases are used of the spiritual coming of Christ in the latter day, Ps 72:6. The Targum is,

"and we shall learn, and we shall follow on, to know the fear of the Lord, as the morning light, which darts in its going out; and blessings will come to us as a prevailing rain, and as the latter rain which waters the earth."

{t} hwhy ta tedl hpdrn hednw "sciemusque, sequemur ad sciendum Dominum", Montanus; "et cognoscemus, et persequemur ad cognoscendum

Jehovam", Zanchius; "sciemus persequemur", Liveleus. {u} "Cognoscamus, [sive] agnoscamus, et persequautur scientiam Dominis", Schmidt. {w} Nwkn "firmum certum notat", sic quidam in Schmidt; "firmatus ac stabilitus", Tarnovius.

Hosea 6:4

Ver. 4. O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee?.... Or, "for thee" {x}? The Lord having observed the effect and consequence of his going and returning to his place, of his leaving his people for a long time under afflictions and in distress; namely, their thorough conversion to him in the latter day, and the blessings attending it; returns to the then present times again, and to the state and condition in which Ephraim and Judah, the ten and two tribes, were; and speaks as one at a loss, and under difficulties, to know what to do with them and for them; how as it were to give them up to ruin and destruction; and yet, having tried all ways with them, and in vain, asks what further was to be done, or could be done, to bring them to a sense of their sins, to reform them, and cause them to return to him;

for your goodness [is] as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth way; meaning not the goodness of God bestowed upon them, and the mercy he showed to them; but the goodness that appeared in them, and all the good things done by them, their repentance, reformation, holiness, and righteousness; these, which were only in show, did not last long, came to nothing, and disappeared; like a light cloud in the morning, which vanishes away when the sun rises; or like the dew that falls in the night, which is quickly dried up and gone, after the sun has been up a small time. Thus it was with Ephraim, or the ten tribes, in the time of Jehu; there was a show of zeal for religion, and a reformation from idolatry; but it did not go on, nor last long; and with the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin in the times of Hezekiah and Josiah, who did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord; but then the Jews, in the times of their successors, returned to their former evil ways. And so the best works, holiness and righteousness of men, can no more stand before the justice of God, and the strict examination of it, than a thin light morning cloud, or the small drops of dew, before the light, force, and heat of the sun; nor do formal and carnal professors continue in these things; they may run well for a while, and then drop their profession and religion, and turn from the holy commandment. And this being the case, what can they expect from the Lord?

{x} Kl "in tuum commodum", Schmidt.

Hosea 6:5

Ver. 5. Therefore have I hewed [them] by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth,.... Sharply reproved them for their sins by the prophets, who were as lapidaries that cut stone, or us hewers of timber that cut off the knotty parts; so these by preaching the terrors of the law, which is a killing letter, and by delivering out the threatenings of the Lord, and denouncing his judgments upon them for their sins, cut them to the heart, and killed them; for their foretelling and prophesying of their being slain, ruined, and destroyed, was a slaying of them; see **Jer 1:10**. The Targum is,

"because I admonished them by the message of my prophets, and they returned not, I will bring upon them those that slay, because they have transgressed the word of my will."

But the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and so Aben Ezra and Joseph Kimchi, understand these words, not of hewing, and cutting, and slaying of the people by the prophets, but of the cutting and slaying the prophets themselves, and read the words, "therefore have I cut off the prophets, and slain them &c.", either the false prophets, some of them that caused the people to err, that they might not repent, as Aben Ezra; as the prophets of Baal in the times of Elijah, and the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time, who were in the way of the people's repentance, reformation, and reception of Christ; these he cut off, and their doctrine, and condemned by his own, and the doctrine of his apostles, the words of the Lord's mouth; see Zec 11:8; and this he did for the good of his people, in answer to the question put by himself in **Ho 6:4**; so Schmidt interprets it: or else the true prophets of God, who were exposed to death, to be cut off and slain, for the messages they were sent with: or those messages were such as were killing to them to carry them, and deliver them; and they were so constantly employed, early and late, in such service, that for the work of the Lord they were often nigh unto death: but our version, and the sense agreeable to it, scent best;

and thy judgments [are as] the light [that] goeth forth; that is, their judgments, the people's, a sudden change of person: meaning either the statutes and judgments prescribed them by the Lord, and to be observed by them; which were clear and plain as the light at noon day, and therefore could not plead any excuse of ignorance of them, that they did not observe them: or the judgments of God upon them for their sins; which were open and manifest to all, and increasing like the light, more and more, and no more to be resisted than that; and the righteousness of God in them was very conspicuous; his judgments were manifest, and the justice of them. Some understand this of the judgments or righteousnesses of the saints, both imputed and inherent, **Ro 5:16**; which appear light and clear, the darkness of pharisaism being removed by Christ. The Targum is,

"my judgment goes forth as the light."

Hosea 6:6

Ver. 6. For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice,.... That is, the one rather than the other, as the next clause explains it. Sacrifices were of early use, even before the law of Moses; they were of divine appointment, and were approved and accepted of by the Lord; they were types of Christ, and led to him, and were continued unto his death; but in comparison of moral duties, which respect love to God, and to our neighbour, the Lord did not will them, desire them, and delight in them; or he had more regard for the former than the latter; see 1Sa 15:22; nor did he will or accept at all of the sacrifices ordered to the calves at Dan and Bethel; nor others, when they were not such as the law required, or were not offered up in the faith of Christ, attended with repentance for sin, and in sincerity, and were brought as real expiatory sacrifices for sin, and especially as now abrogated by the sacrifice of Christ. And as these words are twice quoted by our Lord, at one time to justify his mercy, pity, and compassion, to the souls of poor sinners, by conversing with them, **Mt 9:13**; and at another time to justify the disciples in an act of mercy to their bodies when hungry, by plucking ears of corn on the sabbath day, Mt 12:7; "mercy" may here respect both acts of mercy shown by the Lord, and acts of mercy done by men; both which the Lord wills, desires, and delights in: he takes pleasure in showing mercy himself, as appears by his free and open declarations of it; by the throne of grace and mercy he has set up; by the encouragement he gives to souls to hope in his mercy; by the objects of it, the chief of sinners; by the various ways he has taken to display it, in election, in the covenant of grace, in the mission of Christ, in the pardon of sin by him, and in regeneration; and by his opposing it to everything else, in the affair of salvation. And he likewise has a very great regard to mercy as exercised by men; as this is one of the weightier matters of the law, and may be put for the whole of it, or however the second table of it, which is love to our neighbours, and takes in all kind offices done to them; and especially designs acts of liberality to necessitous persons; which are sacrifices God is well pleased with, even more than with the ceremonious ones; these being such in which men resemble him the merciful God, who is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil;

and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings; which were reckoned the greatest and most excellent sacrifices, the whole being the Lord's; but knowledge of God is preferred to them; by which is meant, not the knowledge of God, the light of nature, which men might have, and not him; nor by the law of Moses, as a lawgiver, judge, and consuming fire; but a knowledge of him in Christ, as the God and Father of Christ, as the God of all grace, gracious and merciful in him; as a covenant God and Father in him, which is through the Gospel by the Spirit, and is eternal life, Joh 17:3; this includes in it faith and hope in God, love to him, fear of him and his goodness, and the whole worship of him, both internal and external. These words seem designed to expose and remove the false ground of trust and confidence in sacrifices the people of Israel were prone unto; as we find they were in the times of Isaiah, who was contemporary with Hoses; see **Isa 1:12**. The Targum interprets them of those that exercise mercy, and do the law of the Lord.

Hosea 6:7

Ver. 7. But they, like men, have transgressed the covenant,.... The false prophets, as Aben Ezra, whom he threatened to cut off and slay, **Ho 6:5**; or rather Ephraim and Judah, whose goodness was so fickle and unstable; and who, instead of doing acts of mercy, and seeking after the true knowledge of God and his worship, which are preferable to all sacrifices, they transgressed the law of God, which they promised at Mount Sinai to obey; the precepts of the moral law, even of both tables, which concern both God and man; and also the ceremonial law, by appointing priests to sacrifice who were not of the tribe of Levi, as did Ephraim or the ten tribes under Jeroboam; and by offering sacrifices to their calves, and by not observing the solemn feasts; and the precepts relating to both these laws constitute the covenant made with the children of Israel at Sinai, Ex 24:3; which they transgressed, either "like Adam" {y} the first man, as Jarchi; who transgressed the covenant of works in paradise God made with him, and all mankind in him: or like the men of old, the former generations, as the Targum; meaning either the old inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites; or the men of the old world at the time of the flood, who were a very wicked and abandoned generation of men; or like men in common, depraved and degenerated, fickle and inconstant, vain and deceitful, and not at all to be depended upon; especially like the lower sort of men, the common people, who have no regard to their word, covenant, and agreement; or particularly like such men that are given to penury, and make no conscience of oaths and covenants ever so solemnly made: or, as others read the words, "but they have transgressed the covenant like man's" {z}; making no more account of it than if it was a man's covenant;

there have they dealt treacherously against me; in the covenant they entered into, by breaking it, not performing their promises; and eve in the very sacrifices they offered, and were so fond of, and put their confidence in; either by offering such sacrifices as were not legal, or by offering them to idols, under a pretence of offering them to God, which was dealing treacherously against him; and in all other acts of religion, in which they would be thought to have regard to the covenant of God, his laws and precepts, and to be very serious and devout, yet acted the hypocritical part, were false and deceitful, and devoid of all sincerity: or there, in the promised land, where the Lord had so largely bestowed his favours on them; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, agreeably to the Targum, which paraphrases it thus,

"and in the good land, which I gave unto them to do my will, they have dealt falsely with my word."

{y} Mdak "sicut Adam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Castilio, Grotius, Cocceius. {z} "Tanquam hominis, [sub.] pectum", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Zanchius.

Hosea 6:8

Ver. 8. Gilead [is] a city of them that work iniquity,.... The chief city in the land of Gilead, which lay beyond Jordan, inhabited by Gad and Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh; and so belonged to the ten tribes, whose sins are here particularly observed. It had its name from the country, or the country from that, or both from the mountain of the same name. It is thought to be Ramothgilead, a city of refuge, and put for all the cities of refuge in those parts, which were inhabited by priests and Levites; and who ought to have had knowledge of the laws, and instructed the people in them, and observed them themselves, and set a good example to others; but, instead of this, the whole course of their lives, was vicious; they made a trade of sinning, did nothing else but work iniquity; and this was general among them, the city or cities of them consisted of none else; and all manner of iniquity was committed by them, particularly idolatry; for so the words may be rendered, "a city of them that serve an idol" {a}; not only at Dan and Bethel, but in the cities of the priests, idols were set up and worshipped; this shows the state to be very corrupt:

[and is] polluted with blood; with the blood of murderers harboured there, who ought not to have been admitted; or with the blood of such who were delivered up to the avenger of blood, that ought to have been sheltered, and both for the sake of money; or with the blood of children, sacrificed to Moloch: the word used has the signification of supplanting, lying in wait, and so is understood of a private, secret, shedding of blood, in a deceitful and insidious way: hence some render it, "cunning for blood" {b}; to which the Targum seems to agree, calling it a city

"of them that secretly or deceitfully shed innocent blood."

It has also the signification of the heel of a man's foot, and is by some rendered, "trodden by blood" {c}; that is, by bloody men: or "footed" or "heeled by blood" {d}; that is, such an abundance of it was shed, that a man could not set his foot or his heel any where but in blood.

{a} Nwa ylep tyrq "civitas operantium idolum", V. L. {b} Mdm hbqe "callida et astuta sanguine", so some in Vatablus; "callida sanguine", Castslio. {c} "Calcata a sanguine", Piscator. {d} "Vestigiata a sanguine", Capellus, Tarnovius; "vestigis sanguinolentis", Juuius & Tremellius.

Hosea 6:9

Ver. 9. And as troops of robbers wait for a man,.... As a gang of highwaymen or footpads lie in wait in a ditch, or under a hedge, or in a cave of a rock or mountain, for a man they know will come by that way, who is full of money, in order to rob him; or, as Saadiah interprets it, as fishermen stand upon the banks of a river, and cast in their hooks to draw out the fish; and to the same purpose is Jarchi's note from R. Meir:

[so] the company of priests murder in the way by consent; not only encourage murderers, and commit murders within the city, but go out in a body together upon the highway, and there commit murders and robberies, and divide the spoil among them; all which they did unanimously, and were well agreed,

being brethren in iniquity, as well as in office: or, "in the way of Shechem" {e}; as good people passed by Gilead to Shechem, and so to Jerusalem, to worship there at the solemn feasts, they lay in wait for them, and murdered them; because they did not give into the idolatrous worship of the calves at Dan and Bethel: or, "in the manner of Shechem" {f}; that is, they murdered men in a deceitful treacherous manner, as the Shechemites were murdered by Simeon and Levi: Joseph Kimchi interprets this of the princes and great men, so the word "cohanim" is sometimes used; but the context seems to carry it to the priests:

for they commit lewdness; or "enormity"; the most enormous crimes, and that purposely, with deliberation devising and contriving them.

{e} hmkv "Sichemam versus", Gussetius, Schmidt; approved by Reinbeck. De Accent. Heb. p. 442. "qua itur Sichem", Tigurine version; "qua via ad Shechemum [factum] occidunt", Junius & Tremellius; "quae ducit ad Sichermum", Piscator. So Abendana. {f} "Sicemice", so some in Drusius.

Hosea 6:10

Ver. 10. I have seen an horrible thing in the house of Israel,.... Idolatry, the calves set up at Dan and Bethel, which God saw with abhorrence and detestation; or the prophet saw it, and it made his hair stand on end as it were, as the word {g} signifies, that such wickedness should be committed by a professing people:

there [is] the whoredom of Ephraim; in the house of Israel is the whoredom of Jeroboam, who was of the tribe of Ephraim, and caused Israel to sin, to go a whoring after idols; or the whoredom of the tribe of Ephraim, which belonged to the house of Israel, and even of all the ten tribes; both corporeal and spiritual whoredom, or idolatry, are here meant:

Israel is defiled; with whoredom of both kinds; it had spread itself all over the ten tribes; they were all infected with it, and polluted by it; see **Ho 5:3**.

{g} hyrwrev a rev "pilus".

Hosea 6:11

Ver. 11. Also, O Judah, he hath set an harvest for thee,.... That is, God hath set and appointed a time of wrath and vengeance for thee, which is sometimes signified by a harvest, Re 14:15; because thou hast been guilty of idolatry also, as well as Ephraim or the ten tribes: or rather it may be rendered, "but, O Judah" {h}, he, that is, God, hath set an harvest for thee; appointed a time of joy and gladness, as a time of harvest is:

when I returned, or "return" {i},

the captivity of my people; the people of Judah from the Babylonish captivity; so that here is a prophecy both of their captivity, and of their return from it: and it may be applied unto their return from their spiritual captivity to sin, Satan, and the law, through the Gospel of Christ and his apostles, first published in Judea, by means of which there was a large harvest of souls gathered in, and was an occasion of great joy.

{h} Mg "sed", V. L. Munster, Grotius. {i} ybwvb "cum ego reduco", Calvin.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hosea 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 7

This chapter either begins a new sermon, discourse, or prophecy, or it is a continuation of the former; at least it seems to be of the same argument with the latter part of it, only it is directed to Israel alone; and consists of complaints against them because of their manifold sins, and of denunciations of punishment for them. They are charged with ingratitude to God, sinning in a daring manner against mercy, and with falsehood, thefts, and robberies, **Ho 7:1**; with want of consideration of the omniscience of God, and his notice of their sins, which surrounded them, **Ho 7:2**; with flattery to their king and princes, **Ho 7:3**; with adultery, which lust raged in them like a heated oven, **Ho 7:4**; with drunkenness, aggravated by drawing their king into it, **Ho 7:5**; with raging lusts, which devoured their judges, made their kings to fall, and brought on such a general corruption, that there were none that called upon the Lord, **Ho 7:6**; with mixing themselves with the nations of the earth, and so learning their ways, and bringing their superstition and idolatry into the worship of God, so that they were nothing in religion, like a half baked cake, **Ho 7:8**; with stupidity and insensibility of their declining state, **Ho 7:9**; with pride, impenitence, and stubbornness, **Ho 7:10**; with folly, in seeking to Egypt and Assyria for help, and not to the Lord; for which they would be taken as birds in a net, and sorely chastised, **Ho 7:11**; with ingratitude, hypocrisy, and deceitfulness; for all which they are threatened with destruction, **Ho 7:13**.

Ver. 1. When I would have healed Israel,.... Or rather, "when I healed Israel" {k}; for this is not to be understood of a velleity, wish, or desire of healing and saving them, as Jarchi; nor of a bare attempt to do it by the admonitions of the prophets, and by corrections in Providence; but of actual healing them; and by which is meant, not healing them in a spiritual and religious sense, as in **Ho 6:1**; but in a political sense, of the restoring of their civil state to a more flourishing condition; which was done in the times of Jeroboam the son of Joash, as Kimchi rightly observes; who restored the coast of Israel, from the entering of Hamath, unto the sea of the plain, 2Ki 14:25;

then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria; some refer this to the times of Jeroboam the first, and that the sense is, that the Lord having cured Israel of the idolatry introduced by Solomon, quickly a new scene of idolatry broke out in Ephraim, or the ten tribes, of which Samaria was the metropolis; for Jeroboam soon set up the calves at Dan and Bethel to be worshipped; but it does not appear that Israel was corrupted with the idolatry of Solomon, and needed a cure then; nor was Samaria built in Jeroboam's time: others apply it to the times of Jehu, who, though he slew the worshippers of Baal, and broke his images, and destroyed him out of Israel, yet retained the worship of the calves at Dan and Bethel,
2Ki 10:25; so, though they were healed of one sort of idolatry, another prevailed. It is right, in both these senses, that the iniquity of Ephraim, and wickedness or wickednesses of Samaria, are taken for the idolatrous worship of the golden calves; but then it respects the times of Jeroboam the second, the son of Joash, in whose days Israel was prosperous; and yet these superstitious and idolatrous practices of worship were flagrant and notorious, were countenanced by the king and his courtiers that dwelt at Samaria, as is clear from **Am 7:10**; which was an instance of great ingratitude to the Lord;

for they commit falsehood; among themselves, lying to one another, and deceiving each other; or to God, deal falsely with him, are guilty of false worship, worshipping idols, which are vanities and lies:

and the thief cometh in, [and] the troop of robbers spoileth without; which may be interpreted either of their sins, their sins in general, both private and public; and their sins of theft and robbery in particular; both such as were committed in houses by the thief privately entering there, and by a gang of robbers in the streets, or on the highway: so the Targum,

"in the night they thieve in houses, and in the day they rob on the plain,"

or fields: or else of punishment for their sins; and then the words may be rendered {l}, "therefore the thief entereth in, and the troop" or "army spreads without"; this thief was Shallum, who came in to kill and to steal; he slew Zachariah the son of Jeroboam, after he had reigned six months, and usurped the kingdom, and so put an end to the family of Jehu, according as the Lord had threatened, **2Ki 8:12**; the troop or army is the Assyrian army under Pul, who came against Menahem, king of Israel, of whom he exacted a tribute, and departed, 2Ki 15:19; so Cocceius.

{k} yaprk "dum curo", Junius & Tremellius; "dum medeor", Piscator, Zanchius, Calvin; "quando sanavi, vel sano", Schmidt. {l} Uwxb dwdg jvp awby bngw "ideo fur ingreditur", Munster. So some in Drusius.

Hosea 7:2

Ver. 2. And they consider not in their hearts [that] I remember all their wickedness,.... That is, the people of the ten tribes, and the inhabitants of Samaria, whose iniquity and wickedness are said to be discovered, and to be very notorious: and yet "they said not to their hearts" {m}, as in the original text; they did not think within themselves; they did not commune with their own hearts; they did not put themselves in mind, or put this to their consciences, that the Lord saw all their wicked actions, their idolatry, falsehood, thefts, and robberies, and whatsoever they were guilty of; that the Lord took notice of them, and put them down in the book of his remembrance, in order to call them to an account, and punish them for them:

now their own doings have beset them about; or, "that now their own doings", &c. {n}; they do not consider in their hearts that their sins are all around them, on every side, committed by them openly, and in abundance, and are notorious to all their neighbours, and much more to the omniscient God: and that they are before my face; so the Targum,

"which are revealed before me;"

were manifest in his sight, before whom all things are; but this they did not consider, and therefore went on in that bold and daring manner they did. Some understand these clauses of the punishment of their sins, which should surround them on every side, that they should not be able to escape, like persons closely besieged in a city, that they cannot get out; alluding to the future siege of Samaria, when it would be a plain case, though they did not now think of it, that all their sins were before the Lord, and were observed by him.

{m} Mbbll wrmay lbw "et non dicebant ad cor suum", Cocceius; "et non dicunt cordi suo", Schmidt. {n} Mhyllem Mwbbo hte "quod circumdent ipsos opera eorum", Schmidt.

Hosea 7:3

Ver. 3. They make the king glad with their wickedness,.... Not any particular king; not Jeroboam the first, as Kimchi; nor Jehu, as Grotius; if any particular king, rather Jeroboam the second; but their kings in general, as the Septuagint render it, in succession, one after another; who were highly delighted and pleased with the priests in offering sacrifice to the calves, and with the people in attending to that idolatrous worship, by which they hoped to secure the kingdom of Israel to themselves, and prevent the people going to Jerusalem to worship: it made them glad to the heart to hear them say that God was as well pleased with sacrifices offered at Dan and Bethel, as at Jerusalem:

and the princes with their lies; with their idols and idolatrous practices, which are vanity and a lie; though some interpret this of their flatteries, either of them, or their favourites; and of their calumnies and detractions of such they had a dislike of.

Hosea 7:4

Ver. 4. They [are] all adulterers,.... King, princes, priests, and people, both in a spiritual and corporeal sense; they were all idolaters, given to idols try, eager of it, and constant in it, as the following metaphors show; and they were addicted to corporeal adultery; this was a prevailing vice among all ranks and degrees of men. So the Targum,

"they all desire to lie with their neighbours' wives;"

see **Jer 5:7**;

as an oven heated by the baker; which, if understood of spiritual adultery or idolatry, denotes their eagerness after it, and fervour in it, excited by their king, or by the devil and his instruments, the priests and false prophets; and if of bodily uncleanness, it is expressive of the heat of that lust, which is sometimes signified by burning; and is stirred up by the devil and the corrupt hearts of men to such a degree as to be raised to a flame, and be like a raging fire, or a heated oven; see **Ro 1:27**;

[who] ceaseth from raising; that is, the baker, having heated his oven, ceaseth from raising up the women to bring their bread to the bake house; or he ceaseth from waking, or from watching his oven; he lays himself down to sleep, and continues in it:

after he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened; having kneaded the dough, and put in the leaven, he lets it alone to work till the whole mass is leavened, taking his rest in the mean while: as the former clause expresses the vehement desire of the people after adultery, spiritual or corporeal, this may signify their continuance in it; or rather the wilful negligence of the king, priests, and prophets, who, instead of awaking them out of their sleep on a bed of adultery, let them alone in it, until they were all infected with it.

Hosea 7:5

Ver. 5. In the day of our king,.... Either his birthday, or his coronation day, when he was inaugurated into his kingly office, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi; or the day on which Jeroboam set up the calves, which might be kept as an anniversary: or, "it is the day of our king" {o}; and may be the words of the priests and false prophets, exciting the people to adultery; and may show by what means they drew them into it, saying this is the king's birthday, or coronation day, or a holy day of his appointing, let us meet together, and drink his health; and so by indulging to intemperance, through the heat of wine, led them on to adultery, corporeal or spiritual, or both:

the princes have made [him] sick with bottles of wine: that is, the courtiers who attended at court on such a day to compliment the king upon the occasion, and to drink his health, drank to him in large cups, perhaps a bottle of wine at once; which he pledging them in the same manner, made him sick or drunk: to make any man drunk is criminal, and especially a king; as it was also a weakness and sin in him to drink to excess, which is not for kings, of all men, to do: or it may be rendered, "the princes became sick through the heat of wine" {p}, so Jarchi; they were made sick by others, or they made themselves so by drinking too much wine, which inflamed their bodies, gorged their stomachs, made their heads dizzy, and them so "weak", as the word {q} also signifies, that they could not stand upon their legs; which are commonly the effects of excessive drinking, especially in those who are not used to it, as the king and the princes might not be, only on such occasions:

he stretched out his hand with scorners; meaning the king, who, in his cups, forgetting his royal dignity, used too much familiarity with persons of low life, and of an ill behaviour, irreligious ones; who, especially when drunk, made a jest of all religion; scoffed at good men, and everything that was serious; and even set their mouths against the heavens; denied there was a God, or spoke very indecently and irreverently of him; these the king made his drinking companions, took the cup, and drank to them in turn, and shook them by the hand; or admitted them to kiss his hand, and were all together, hail fellows well met. Joseph Kimchi thinks these are the same with the princes, called so before they were drunk, but afterwards "scorners".

{o} wnklm Mwy "dies regis nostri", V. L. Calvin, Tigurine version, Tarnovius, Cocceius, Schmidt. {p} Nyym tmx Myrv wlxh "argotarunt principes a calore vini", Liveleus; "morbo afficiunt se calore ex vino", Tarnovius. {q} "Quem infirmant principes aestu a vino", Cocceius; "infirmum facerunt", Munster; "infirmant", Schmidt.

Hosea 7:6

Ver. 6. For they have made ready their heart like an oven, whiles they lie in wait,.... The prince, people, and scorners before mentioned, being heated with wine, and their lust enraged, they were ready for any wickedness; for the commission of adultery, lying in wait for their neighbours' wives to debauch them; or for rebellion and treason against their king, and even the murder of him, made drunk by them, whom they now despised, and waited for an opportunity to dispatch him:

their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire; as a baker having put wood into his oven, and kindled it, leaves it, and sleeps all night, and in the morning it is all burning, and in a flame, and his oven is thoroughly heated, and fit for his purpose; so the evil concupiscence in these men's hearts, made hot like an oven, rests all night, devising mischief on their beds, either against the chastity of their neighbours' wives, or against the lives of others, they bear an ill will to, particularly against their judges and their kings, as **Ho 7:7**; seems to intimate; and in the morning this lust of uncleanness or revenge is all in a flame, and ready to execute the wicked designs contrived; see **Mic 2:1**. Some by "their baker" understand Satan; others, their king asleep and secure; others Shallum, the head of the conspiracy against Zachariah.

Hosea 7:7

Ver. 7. They are all hot as an oven,.... Eager upon their idolatry, or burning in their unclean desires after other men's wives; or rather raging and furious, hot with anger and wrath against their rulers and governors, breathing out slaughter and death unto them:

and have devoured their judges; that stood in the way of their lusts, reproved them for them, and restrained them from them; or were on the side of the king they conspired against, and were determined to depose and slay:

all their kings have fallen; either into sin, the sin of idolatry particularly, as all from Jeroboam the first did, down to Hoshea the last; or they fell into calamities, or by the sword of one another, as did most of them; so Zachariah by Shallum, Shallum by Menahem, Pekahiah by Pekah, and Pekah by Hoshea; see 2Ki 15:1. So the Targum,

"all their kings are slain:"

[there is] none among them that calleth unto me; either among the kings, when their lives were in danger from conspirators; or none among the people, when their land was in distress, either by civil wars among themselves, or by a foreign enemy; such was their stupidity, and to such a height was irreligion come to among them!

Hosea 7:8

Ver. 8. Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people,.... Either locally, by dwelling among them, as some of them at least might do among the Syrians; or carnally, by intermarrying with them, contrary to the command of God; or civilly, by entering into alliances and confederacies with them, as Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel did with Rezin king of Syria, **Isa 7:2**; or by seeking to them for help, calling to Egypt, and going to Assyria, as in **Ho 7:11**; so Aben Ezra; or morally, by learning their manners, and conforming to their customs, especially in religious things: though some understand this as a punishment threatened them for their above sins, that they should be carried captive into foreign lands, and so be mixed among the people, and which is Jarchi's sense: but it is rather to be considered as their evil in joining with other nations in their superstition, idolatry, and other impieties; and it is highly offensive to God when his professing people mix themselves with the world, keep company with the men of it, fashion themselves according to them, do as they do, and wilfully go into their conversation, and repeat it, and continue therein, and resolve to do so: for so it may be rendered, "he will mix himself" {r}; it denotes a voluntary act, repeated and persisted in with obstinacy;

Ephraim is a cake not turned; like a cake that is laid on coats, if it is not turned, the nether part will be burnt, and the upper part unbaked, and so be good for noticing; not fit to be eaten, being nothing indeed, neither bread nor dough; and so may signify, that Ephraim having introduced much of the superstition and idolatry of the Gentiles into religious worship, was nothing in religion, neither fish nor flesh, as is proverbially said of persons and things of which nothing can be made; they worshipped the calves at Dan and Bethel, and Yet swore by the name of the Lord; they halted between two opinions, and were of neither; they were like the hotch potch inhabitants of Samaria in later times, that came in their place, that feared the Lord, and served their own gods: and such professors of religion there are, who are nothing in religion; nothing in principle, they have no scheme of principles; they are neither one thing nor another; they are nothing in experience; if they have a form of godliness, they deny the power of it; they are nothing in practice, all they do is to be seen of men; they are neither hot nor cold, especially not throughout, or on both sides, like a cake unturned; but are lukewarm and indifferent, and therefore very disagreeable to the Lord. Some take this to be expressive of punishment, and not of fault; either of their partial captivity by Tiglathpileser, when only a part of them was carried captive; or of the swift and total destruction of them by their enemies, who would be like hungry and half starved persons, who meeting with a cake on the coals half baked, snatch it up, and eat it, not staying for the turning and baking it on the other side; and thus it should be with them. So the Targum,

"the house of Ephraim is like to a cake baked on coals, which before it is turned is eaten."

{r} llwbty awh "miscebit sese", Zanchius.

Hosea 7:9

Ver. 9. Strangers have devoured his strength,.... Or his substance, as the Targum; his wealth and riches, fortresses and strong holds: these strangers were either the Syrians, who, in the times of Jehoahaz, destroyed Ephraim or the Israelites, and so weakened them, as to make them like the dust by threshing, 2Ki 12:7; or the Assyrians, first under Pul king of Assyria, who came out against Menahem king of Israel, and exacted a tribute of a thousand talents of silver, and so drained them of their treasure, which was their strength, 2Ki 15:19; and then under Tiglathpileser, another king of Assyria, who came and took away from them many of their fortified places, and carried the inhabitants captive, 2Ki 15:29;

and he knoweth [it] not; is not sensible how much he is weakened by such exactions and depredations; or does not take notice of the hand of God in all this; does not consider from whence it comes, what is the cause of it, and for what ends;

yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not; or, "old age has sprinkled itself upon him" {s}; or, "gray hairs are sprinkled on him"; gray hairs, when thick, are a sign that old age is come; and, when sprinkled here and there, are symptoms of its coming on, and of a person's being on the decline of life; and here it signifies the weak and declining state of Israel, through the exactions and depredations of their neighbours, and that theft utter ruin was near; and yet they did not know nor consider their latter end, nor repent of their sins and acknowledge them, and return unto the Lord, and implore his mercy: so carnal professors, who mix with the men of the world, that are strangers to God and godliness, and everything that is divine and good, are devoured by them; they lose their time and substance, and their precious souls, and are not aware of it. The symptoms of the declining state of the church of God are at this time upon us, and yet not taken notice of; such as great departures from the faith; a number of false teachers risen up; great failings off of professors, and of such who have made a great figure in the church; a small number of faithful men; great coldness and lukewarmness to spiritual things; little faith on the earth; great neglect of Gospel worship and ordinances; much sleepiness and drowsiness; great immorality and profaneness: as also the symptoms of the declining state of the world, and of its drawing to its period; as wars, and rumours of wars, famine, pestilence, and earthquakes in divers places; volcanos, burning mountains, eruptions of subterraneous fire, which portend the general conflagration; and yet these things are little attended to.

{s} wb hqrz hbyv "canities sparsit se in eo", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt; "cani sparsi sunt", Tigurine version; "canities aspergit eum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Latin writers: "sparserit et nigras alba senecta comas". Propert. l. 3. Eleg. 4. "Jam mihi deterior canis aspergitur aetas". Ovid. de Ponto, l. 1. Eleg. 5.

Hosea 7:10

Ver. 10. And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face,....
See Gill on "Ho 5:5"; notwithstanding their weak and declining state, they were proud and haughty; entertained a high conceit of themselves, and of their good and safe condition; and behaved insolently towards God, and were not humbled before him for their sins. Their pride was notorious, which they themselves could not deny; they were self-convicted, and self-condemned:

and they do not return to the Lord their God; by acknowledgment of their sins, repentance for them, and reformation from them; and by attendance on his worship, from which they had revolted; so the Targum,

"they return not to the worship of the Lord their God:"

nor seek him for all this; though they are in this wasting, declining, condition, and just upon the brink of ruin, yet they seek not the face and favour of the Lord; they do not ask help of him, or implore his mercy; and though they have been so long in these circumstances, and have been gradually consuming for many years, yet in all this time they have made no application to the Lord, that he would be favourable, and raise their sinking state, and restore them to their former glory.

Hosea 7:11

Ver. 11. Ephraim also is like a silly dove, without heart,.... Or understanding; which comes and picks up the corns of grain, which lie scattered about, and does not know that the net is spread for it; and when its young are taken away, it is unconcerned, and continues its nest in the same place still; and, when frightened, flees not to its dove house, where it would be safe, but flies about here and there, and so becomes a prey to others. Thus Ephraim, going to Egypt and Assyria for help, were ensnared by them, not having sense enough to perceive that this would be their ruin; and though they had heretofore suffered by them, yet still they continued to make their addresses to them; and instead of keeping close to the Lord, and to his worship and the place of it, and asking counsel and help of him they ran about and sought for it here and there:

they call to Egypt; that is, for help; as Hoshea king of Israel, when he sent messengers to So or Sabacon king of Egypt, for protection and assistance, 2Ki 17:4. Such a foolish part, like the silly doves, did they act; since the Egyptians had been their implacable enemies, and their fathers had been in cruel bondage under them:

they go to Assyria; send gifts and presents, and pay tribute to the kings thereof, to make them easy; as Menahem did to Pul, and Hoshea to Shalmaneser, 2Ki 15:19. Some understand this last clause, not of their sin in going to the Assyrian for help; but of their punishment in going or being carried captive thither; and so the Targum seems to interpret it,

"they go captive, or are carried captive, into Assyria."

Hosea 7:12

Ver. 12. When they shall go,.... That is, to Egypt or Assyria:

I will spread my net upon them; bring them into great straits and difficulties; perhaps the Assyrian army is meant, which was the Lord's net, guided, and directed, and spread by his providence, and according to his will, to take this

silly dove in; and which enclosed them on all sides, that they could not escape; see Eze 12:13. Hoshea the king of Israel was taken by the Assyrian, and bound and shut up in prison; Samaria the capital city was besieged three years, and then taken,
2Ki 17:4;

I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; though they fly on high, soar aloft, and behave proudly, and fancy themselves out of all danger; yet, as the flying fowl, the eagle, and other birds, may be brought down to the earth by an arrow from the bow, or by some decoy so should they be brought down from their fancied safe and exalted state, and be taken in the net, and become a prey to their enemies:

I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard; what was written in the law, and in the prophets, were read and explained in the congregations of Israel on their stated days they met together on for religious worship; in which it was threatened, that if they did not observe the laws and statutes of the Lord their God, but neglected and broke them, they should be severely chastised and corrected with his sore judgments, famine, pestilence, the sword of the enemy, and captivity: and now the Lord would fulfil his word, agreeably to what had often been heard by them, but not regarded; see Le 26:1.

Hosea 7:13

Ver. 13. Woe unto them, for they have fled from me,.... From the Lord, from his worship, and the place of it; from obedience to him, and the service of him; as birds fly from their nests, and leave their young, and wander about; so they had deserted the temple at Jerusalem, and forsaken the service of the sanctuary, and set up calves at Dan and Bethel, and worshipped them; and, instead of fleeing to God for help in time of distress, fled further off still, even out of their own land to Egypt or Assyria: the consequence of which was, nothing but ruin; and so lamentation and woes:

destruction unto them, because they have transgressed against me; against the laws which God gave them; setting up idols, and worshipping them, and so broke the first table of the law; committing murder, adultery, thefts and robberies, with which they are charged the preceding part of this chapter, and so transgressed the second table of the law; and by all brought destruction upon themselves, which was near at hand, and would certainly come, as here threatened; though they promised themselves peace, and expected assistance from neighbouring nations, but in vain, having made the Lord their enemy, by breaking his laws:

though I have redeemed them; out of Egypt formerly, and out of the hands of the Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and others, in the times of the judges; and more lately in the times of Joash and Jeroboam the second, who recovered many cities out of the hands of the Syrians. Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret this of the good disposition of God towards them, having it in his heart to redeem them now from their present afflictions and distresses, but that they were so impious and wicked, and so unfaithful to him:

yet they have spoken lies against me; against his being and providence, being atheistically inclined; or pretending repentance for their sins, when they were hypocrites, and returned to their former courses; or setting up idols in opposition to him, which were vanity to him; attributing all their good things to them, and charging him with all their evils. Abendana reads the words interrogatively, "should I redeem them, when they have spoken lies against me?" {t} no, I will not.

{t} Mdpa yknaw "et ego redimerem eos?" so some in Rivet.

Hosea 7:14

Ver. 14. And they have not cried unto me with their heart,.... In their distress, indeed, they cried unto the Lord, and said they repented of their sins, and promised reformation, and made a show of worshipping God; as invocation is sometimes put for the whole worship of God; but then this was not heartily, but hypocritically; their hearts and their mouths did not go together, and therefore was not reckoned prayer; nothing but howling, as follows:

when they howled upon their beds; lying sick or wounded there; or, as some, in their idol temples, those beds of adultery, where they pretended to worship God by them, and to pray to him through them; but such idolatrous prayers were no better than the howlings of clogs to him; even though they expressed outwardly their cries with great vehemency, as the word used denotes, having one letter more in it than common:

they assemble themselves for corn and wine: either at their banquets, to feast upon them, as Aben Ezra; or to the markets, to buy them, as Kimchi suggests;

or rather to their idol temples, to deprecate a famine, and to pray for rain and fruitful seasons; or if they gather together to pray to the Lord, it is only for carnal and worldly things; they only seek themselves, and their own interest, and not the glory of God, and ask for these things, to consume them on their lust. The Septuagint version is, "for corn and wine they were cut", or cut themselves, as Baal's priests did, when they cried to him, 1Ki 18:28; and Theodoret here observes, that they performed the Heathen rites, and in idol temples made incisions on their bodies:

[and] they rebel against me: not only flee from him transgress his laws but cast off all allegiance to him and take up arms, and commit hostilities against him. The Targum joins this with the preceding clause,

"because of the multitude of corn and wine which they have gathered they have rebelled against my word;"

and to the same sense Jarchi; thus, Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked.

Hosea 7:15

Ver. 15. Though I have bound [and] strengthened their arms,.... As a surgeon sets a broken arm and swathes and binds it, and so restores it to its former strength, or at least to a good degree of strength again, so the Lord dealt with Israel; their arms were broken, and their strength weakened, and they greatly distressed and reduced by the Syrians in the times of Jehoahaz; but they were brought into a better state and condition in the times of Joash and Jeroboam the second; the former retook several cities out of the hands of the Syrians, and the latter restored the border of Israel, and greatly enlarged it; and as all this was done through the blessing of divine Providence, the Lord is said to do it himself. Some render it, "though I have chastised, I have strengthened their arms" {u}; though he corrected them for their sins in the times of Jehoahaz, and suffered their arms to be broken by their enemies, for their instruction, and in order to bring them to repentance for their sins; yet he strengthened them again in the following reigns:

yet do they imagine mischief against me; so ungrateful were they, they contrived to do hurt to his prophets that were sent to them in his name, to warn them of their sins and danger, and exhort them to repent, and forsake their idolatrous worship, and other sins; and they sought by all means to dishonour the name of the Lord, by imputing their success in the reigns of Joash and

Jeroboam to their idols, and not unto him; and so hardened themselves against him, and in their evil ways.

{u} Mtewrz ytqzx ytroy ynaw "castigavi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus, Cocceius, Tarnovius.

Hosea 7:16

Ver. 16. They return, [but] not to the most High,.... To Egypt, and not to Jerusalem, and the temple there, and the worship of it; to their idols, and not to him whose name alone is Jehovah, and is the most High all the earth, the God of gods, and Lord of lords, and King of kings; though they made some feint as if they would return, and did begin, and take some steps towards repentance and reformation; but then they presently fell back again, as in Jehu's time, and did not go on to make a thorough reformation; nor returned to God alone, and to his pure worship they pretended to, and ought to have done: or, "not on high, upwards, above" {w}; their affections and desires are not after things above; they do not look upwards to God in heaven for help and assistance, but to men and things on earth, on which all their affection and dependence are placed:

they are like a deceitful bow; which misses the mark it is directed to; which being designed to send its arrow one way, causes it to go the reverse; or its arrow returns upon the archer, or drops at his feet; so these people deviated from the law of God, acted contrary to their profession and promises, and relapsed into their former idolatries and impieties, and sunk into earth and earthly things; see Ps 78:57;

their princes shall fall by the sword: either of their conspirators, as Zachariah, Shallum, Pekahiah, and Pekah; or by the sword of the Assyrians, as Hoshea, and the princes with him, by Shalmaneser;

for the rage of their tongue; their blasphemy against God, his being and providences; his worship, and the place of it; his priests and people that served him, and particularly the prophets he sent unto them to reprove them;

this [shall be] their derision in the land of Egypt; whither they sent, and called for help; but now, when their princes are slain, and they carried captive into a foreign land, even those friends and allies of theirs shall laugh and mock at them. The Targum is,

"these [were] their works while they were in the land of Egypt;"

or rather the words may be rendered, "this is their derision, [as of old] in the land of Egypt" {x}; that is, the calves they now worshipped, and to which they ascribed all their good things, were made in imitation of the gods of Egypt, their Apis and Serapis, which were in the form of an ox, and which their fathers derided there; and these were justly to be derided now, and they to be derided for their worship of them, and ascribing all their good things to them; and which would be done when their destruction came upon them.

{w} le al "non supra", Montanus; "non sursum", De Dieu, Gussetius; "non erecte", Cocceius. {x} Myrum Urab Mgel wz "haec, [seu] quae est subsannatio, [sicut olim] in terra Aegypti", Schmidt.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hosea 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 8

This chapter treats of the sins and punishment of Israel for them, as the preceding; it is threatened and proclaimed that an enemy should come swiftly against them, because of their transgression of the covenant and law of God, **Ho 8:1**; their hypocrisy is exposed, **Ho 8:2**; they are charged with the rejection of that which is good, and therefore should be pursued by the enemy, **Ho 8:3**; with setting up kings and princes without consulting the Lord, **Ho 8:4**; and with making of idols, particularly the golden calves, which would be of no use to them, disappoint them, and at last be broke to pieces, **Ho 8:4**; their seeking to their neighbours for help, and entering into alliances with them, are represented as vain and fruitless, and issuing in their ruin and destruction, **Ho 8:7**; their sins of multiplying altars, contrary to the law of God, and in contempt of it, and offering sacrifices to the Lord, are observed; and they with a visitation from him, **Ho 8:11**; and the chapter is concluded with some notice and Judah, the one building temples, and multiplying fenced cities, which should be by fire, **Ho 8:14**.

Ver. 1. [Set] the trumpet to thy mouth,.... Or, "the trumpet to the roof of thy mouth" {t}; a concise expression denoting haste, and the vehemence of the passions speaking; they are either the words of the Lord to the prophet, as the Targum,

"O prophet, cry with thy throat as with a trumpet, saying;"

Aben Ezra take them to be the words of the Lord the prophet, and the sense agrees with Isa 58:1. The prophet is here considered as a watchman, and is called upon to blow his trumpet; either to call the people together, "as an eagle to the house of the Lord" {u}, as the next clause may be connected with this; that is, to come as swiftly to the house of the Lord, and hear what he had to say to them, and to supplicate the Lord for mercy in a time of distress: or to give the people notice of the approach of the enemy, and tell them that

[he shall come] as an eagle against the house of the Lord; "flying as an eagle over" {w} or "against the house of the Lord": or they are the words of the Lord, or of the prophet, to the enemy, to blow his trumpet, and sound the alarm of war, and call his army together, and bid them fly like an eagle, with that swiftness and fierceness as that creature does to its prey, against the house of the Lord; meaning not the temple at Jerusalem, but the nation of Israel, formerly called the house and family of God, and still pretended to be so. There may be some allusion to Bethel, which signifies the house of God, where they practised their idolatry. This is to be understood, not of Nebuchadnezzar, sometimes compared to an eagle, Eze 17:3; for not the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem is here meant; nor of the Romans, as Lyra seems to understand it, the eagle being the ensign of the Romans; but of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, compared to this creature for his swiftness in coming, his strength, fierceness, and cruelty; this creature being swift in flight, and a bird of prey. So the Targum interprets it of a king and his army,

"behold, as an eagle flieth, so shall a king with his army come up and encamp against the house of the sanctuary of the Lord."

Some reference seems to be had to De 28:49;

because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law; the law that was given to Israel by Moses at the appointment of God, to which they assented, and promised to observes: and so it had the form of a covenant to them: the bounds of this law and covenant they transgressed, and dealt perfidiously with, and prevaricated in, and wilfully broke all its commands, by their idolatry, murder, adultery, theft, and other sins.

{t} rpwv Kkx la "adhibita palato tuo buccina", Junius & Tremellius; "adhibe palato buccinam", De Dieu; "ad palatum tuum buccinam", Schmidt. {u} hwhy tyb le rvnk "similis aquilae in domum Jehovae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {w} "Super domum Domini", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Schmidt; "contra domum Jehovae", Liveleus.

Hosea 8:2

Ver. 2. Israel shall cry unto me, my God, we know thee. In their distress they shall cry to the Lord to help them, and have mercy on them, as they used to do when in trouble, Isa 26:16; when the eagle is come upon them, and just ready to devour them; when Samaria is besieged with file Assyrian army, their king taken prisoner, and they just ready to fall into the hands of the enemy, then they shall cry to God, though in a hypocritical manner; own him to be the true God, and claim their interest in him, and pretend knowledge of him, and acquaintance with him; though they have not served and worshipped him, but idols, and that for hundreds of years; like others who profess to know God, but in works deny him, **Tit 1:16**. Israel is the last word in the verse, and occasions different versions: "they shall cry unto me"; these transgressors of the covenant and the law, these hypocrites, shall pray to God in trouble, saying, "my God, we Israel", or Israelites, "know thee"; or, "we know thee who are Israel" {x}; and to this sense is the Targum,

"in every time that distress comes upon them, they pray before me, and say, now we know that we have no God besides thee; redeem us, for we are thy people Israel;"

why may they not be rendered thus, "they shall cry unto me; my God, we know thee, Israel" shall say? Castalio renders them to this sense, "my God", say they; but "we know thee, Israel"; we, the three Persons in the Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit, we know thy hypocrisy and wickedness, that it is only outwardly and hypocritically, and not sincerely, that thou criest unto and callest upon God.

{x} larvy Kwnedy yhla wqezy yl "ad me clamant, Deus mi, novimus te nos Israel", De Dieu; "clamabunt ad me, O Deus meus, nos Israelitae cognoscimus te", Tigurine version, so Tarnovius; "mihi vocant, Deus mi, cognovimus, [vel] agnoscimus te Israel", vel "nos lsrael, seu Israelitae", Schmidt.

Hosea 8:3

Ver. 3. Israel hath cast off [the thing that is] good,.... Or "rejected [him that is] good" {y}; that is, God, as Kimchi observes; for there is none good but him, Mt 19:17; he is the "summum bonum", "the chiefest good" to men, and is essentially, originally, and infinitely good in himself, and the fountain of all goodness to his creatures; and yet Israel has rejected him with detestation and contempt, as the word {z} signifies, though they pretended to know him, which shows their hypocrisy; and therefore it is no wonder that their prayers were rejected by him: or they rejected the good word of God, the law, or doctrine contained in it, and the good worship, service, and fear of God, and indeed everything that was good, just, and right. Cocceius renders it, "the good One", or he that is God, the good God, "hath cast off Israel". This reading of the words Drusius also mentions, and seems to like best, and as agreeing with what follows; so Rivet; but the position of the words in the Hebrew text, and the accents, do not favour it;

the enemy shall pursue him; who is before compared to an eagle, which flies swiftly, and pursues its prey with eagerness and fierceness: Shalmaneser is meant, who should invade the land, come up to Samaria, besiege and take it; nothing should stop him, nor should Israel escape from him, since they had cast off the Lord, and everything that was good. The Targum is,

"the house of Israel have erred from my worship, for the sake of which I brought good things upon them; henceforward the enemy shall pursue them."

{y} bwj larvy xnz "deseruit Israel bonum, i. e. Deum", Vatablus, Munster, Tarnovius, Zanchius. {z} "Abominatus est", Calvin, Zanchius.

Hosea 8:4

Ver. 4. They have set up kings, but not by me,.... Not by his authority, order, and command; not by asking advice of him, or his leave, but of themselves, and of their own, accord: this refers to the case of Jeroboam their first king, after their separation from the house of David, and from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; for though his becoming king of Israel was according to the secret will of God, and by his overruling providence; yet it was done without his express orders, and without asking counsel of him, or his consent, and of their own heads; and many of his successors were conspirators, and set up themselves with the consent of the people, to the dethroning of others, and upon the slaughter of them, as Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea: the people of Israel had no right to choose a king for themselves; the right was alone in the Lord; it was he that chose, appointed, and constituted their kings, De 17:15; thus Saul, David, and Solomon, were chose and appointed by him, 1Sa 10:24; it was not the person of Jeroboam chosen God disliked; but their taking it upon them to choose and set him up without his leave;

they have made princes, and knew [it] not; that is, they set up subordinate governors, judges, civil magistrates, elders of the people, over them, without his approbation, and such as were very disagreeable to him; otherwise he knew what was done by them, as being the omniscient God, but he did not approve of what they did. Some observe, that v, in the word used, is put for o, and should be rendered, "they have removed", so Jarchi and Japhet; that is, they have set up kings, and they have removed them; they have took it upon them to make and pose kings at pleasure, without seeking the Lord about it, when this is his prerogative, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, **Da 2:21**; which sense makes a strong and beautiful antithesis;

of their silver and their gold have they made their idols; some of their idols were made of silver, others of gold; particularly the calves at Dan and Bethel, which are called the golden calves, because made of gold; as was the calf in the wilderness, 1Ki 12:28; see
Isa 46:6;

that they may be cut off: which denotes not the end, intentions, and design of making these idols of silver and gold, but the event thereof; namely, either the destruction of the idols themselves, which, for the sake of the silver and gold they were made of; were cut in pieces by a foreign enemy; or the gold and silver were cut off from the people, their riches and wealth were wasted by such means; or rather the people were cut off, everyone of them, because of their worship of them, or this would be the case.

Hosea 8:5

Ver. 5. Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast [thee] off,.... Or, is the cause of thy being cast off by the Lord, and of being cast out of thine own land, and carried captive into another; the past tense is used for the future, as is common in prophetic writings, to denote the certainty of the thing: or "thy calf hath left thee" {a}; in the lurch; it cannot help thee; it is gone off, and forsaken thee; it has "removed" itself from thee, according to the sense of the word in **La 3:17**; as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; or is removed far from thee, being carried captive itself into Assyria; for, when the king of Assyria took Samaria, he seized on the golden calf for the sake of the gold, and took it away; see Ho 10:5; or "he hath removed thy calf" {b}; that is, the enemy, taking it away when he took the city; or God has rejected it with the utmost contempt and abhorrence: the calf is here, and in the following verse, called the calf of Samaria, because this was the metropolis of the ten tribes, in which the calf was worshipped, and because it was worshipped by the Samaritans; and it may be, when Samaria became the chief city, the calf at Bethel might be removed thither, or another set up in that city:

mine anger is kindled against them: the calves at Dan and Bethel, the singular before being put for the plural; or against the if of Samaria, and Samaria itself; or the inhabitants of it, because of the worship of the calf, which was highly provoking to God, it being a robbing him of his glory, and giving it to graven images:

how long [will it be] ere they attain to innocency? or "purity" {c}; of worship, life, and conversation: the words may be rendered thus, "how long?" {d} for there is a large stop there; and this may be a question of the prophet's, asking how long the wrath of God would burn against the people, what; would be the duration of it, and when it would end? to which an answer is returned, as the words may be translated, "they cannot bear purity" {e}; of doctrine, of worship of heart, and life; when they can, mine anger will cease burning: or, as the Targum,

"as long as they cannot purify themselves,"

or be purified; so long as they continue in their sins, in their superstition and idolatry, and other impieties, and are not purged from them.

{a} Klge xnz "dereliquit vitulus te", Lutherus; "descruit te vitulus tuus", Schmidt. {b} "Elongavit sc. hostis, vitalum tuum", Schindler. {c} Nwyqn "munditiem", Calvin, Rivet, Schmidt. {d} ytm de "quousque?" Zanchius, Pareus, Cocceius. {e} Nwyqn wlkwy al "non possunt innocentiam praestare", Cocceius; "quamdiu non poterunt animum adjungere ad innocentam", Zanchius; "usquedum non poterunt ferre innocentiam", Pareus.

Hosea 8:6

Ver. 6. For from Israel [was] it also,.... That is, the calf was from Israel; it was an invention of theirs, as some say; they did not borrow it from their neighbours, as they did other idols, but it was their own contrivance: but this tines not seem to be fact; for the calf, the making of it indeed, was of themselves, but the worship of it they borrowed from the Egyptians; with this difference, the Egyptians worshipped a living cow or ox, these the golden image of a calf: but rather the sense is, that this calf was made by the advice of Israel, by the advice of Jeroboam their king, and of their princes, they assenting to it, so Aben Ezra; or the gold and silver of which it was made was exacted on them, and collected from them, as the Targum and Jarchi; or workmen were employed by them to make it; and so it was of them also, as any other work that was done by their advice and direction, and at their expense; and therefore could never have any divinity in it, any more than other things they did; though this is commonly interpreted as having respect to the making of the golden calf by Aaron, that this also was of Israel as well as that:

the workman made it; therefore it [is] not God; a strong and invincible reason this; for, since the call was the work of an artificer, of the goldsmith or founder, it could not be God; there could not be deity in it; for a creature cannot make a God, or give that which itself has not; if the workman was not God, but a creature, if deity was not in him, he could never give it to a golden image, a lifeless statue fashioned by him: this, one would think, should have been a clear, plain, striking, and convincing argument to them, that their calf was, as the Targum has it,

"a deity in which there was no profit:"

but the calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces; or "for {f} the calf of Samaria", &c. being another reason to prove it could not be God; if the former would not convince them, this surely would, when they should see it broke to pieces by the enemy, from whom it could not save itself; and therefore could not be a god that could be of any service to them, or save them. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "for the calf of Samaria shall become spiders webs": and Jerom says he learned it of a Jew that the word so signifies; but his Jew imposed upon him: it, does not appear to be any where so used, either in the Bible, or in any other writings. Kimchi interprets it shivers, fragments, broken pieces of anything. Jarchi says it signifies, in the Syriac language, beams, planks, and boards, pieces of them; so the Targum and Ben Melech from the Rabbins; or rather the dust which falls from them in sawing, sawdust; to dust as small as that should this calf be reduced, as the golden calf was ground to powder by Moses, to which, it is thought, there is an allusion.

{f} yk "nam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "quia", Schmidt; "quoniam", Pagninus, Montanus.

Hosea 8:7

Ver. 7. For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind,.... The sense is, the Israelites took a great deal of pains in the idolatrous worship of the calves, and made a great stir, bustle, and noise in it, like the wind; were very vainglorious and ostentatious, made a great show of religion and devotion, and promised themselves great things from it, peace and plenty, wealth and riches, all prosperity and happiness, enjoyed by Heathen nations; but this was lost labour, it was labouring for the wind, or sowing that; they got nothing by it, or what was worse than nothing; it proved not only useless, but hurtful, to them; for, for their idolatry, and continuance in it, the whirlwind of God's wrath would be raised up against them, and the Assyrian army, like a vehement storm of wind, would rush in upon them, and destroy them; so they that sow to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, **Ga 6:8**;

it hath no stalk; what they sowed did not rise up above ground; or, if it did, it did not spring up in a blade or stalk, which was promising of fruit; no real good, profit, and advantage, sprung from their idolatrous practices:

the bud shall yield no meal; yea, though it rise up into a stalk, and this stalk produced ears of corn, yet those so thin, that no meal or flour could be got out of them, and so of no worth and use:

and if so be it yield: any meal or flour:

the strangers shall swallow it up; the Israelites should not be the better for it; it should till come into the hands of foreigners, the Assyrian army. The meaning is, that if they did prosper and increase in riches, yet they should not long enjoy them themselves, but be pillaged and spoiled of them; as they were by the exactions of Pul, and by the depredations of Shalmaneser, kings of Assyria. So the Targum, "if they got substance, the nations shall spoil them of it."

Hosea 8:8

Ver. 8. Israel is swallowed up,.... Not only their substance, but their persons also, the whole nation of them, their whole estate, civil and ecclesiastic: it notes the utter destruction of them by the Assyrians, so that nothing of them and theirs remained; just as anyone is swallowed up and devoured by a breast of prey; the present is put for the future, because of the certainty of it:

now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein [is] no pleasure; when Shalmaneser took Samaria, and with it swallowed up the whole kingdom of Israel, he carried captive the inhabitants of it, and placed them among the nations, in "Halah, Habor, by the river Gozan", and in the cities of the Medes, 2Ki 17:6; where they lived poor, mean, and abject, and were treated with the utmost neglect and contempt; no more regarded than a broken useless vessel, or than a vessel of dishonour, that is made and used for the ease of nature, for which no more regard is had than for that service: thus idolaters, who dishonour God by their idolatries, shall, sooner or later, be brought to disgrace and dishonour themselves.

Hosea 8:9

Ver. 9. For they are gone up to Assyria,.... Or, "though they should go up to Assyria" {g}; to the king of Assyria, to gain his friendship, and enter into alliance with him; as, when Pal king of Assyria came against them, Menahem king of Israel went forth to meet him, and gave him a thousand talents of silver to be his confederate, and strengthen his kingdom, 2Ki 15:19; yet this hindered not but that Israel was at length swallowed up by that people, and scattered by them among the nations; for this is not to be understood of their going captive into the land of Assyria, as the Targum interprets it:

a wild ass alone by himself; which may be applied either to the king of Assyria, and be considered as a description of him, to whom Israel went for help and friendship; who, though he took their present, and made them fair promises, yet was perfidious, unsociable, and inhuman, studied only his own advantage, and not their good: or to the Israelites that went to him, who were as sottish and stupid as the ass, and as headstrong and unruly as that, and, like it, lustful, and impetuous in their lusts; running to and fro for the satisfying of them, and taking no advice, nor suffering themselves to be controlled, and, being alone, became an easy prey to the Assyrian lion: or yet they should be as "a wild ass alone by itself" {h}; notwithstanding all the methods they took to obtain the friendship and alliance of the king of Assyria, yet they should be carried captive by him, and dwell in the captivity like a wild ass in the wilderness; and so it is to be understood here, agreeably to Job 24:5; otherwise, as Bochart {i} has proved from various writers, these creatures go in flocks:

Ephraim hath hired lovers; by giving presents to the kings of Assyria and Egypt, to be their allies and confederates, patrons and defenders, 2Ki 15:19; who are represented as their gallants, with whom Ephraim or the ten tribes committed adultery, departing from God their Husband, and liege Lord and King, and from his true worship; see Eze 16:26. R. Elias Levita {k} observes, that some interpret the words, "Ephraim made a covenant with lovers".

{g} wle hmh yk "quamvis, etiamsi ascenderint"; so Schmidt observes it may be rendered, though he chooses to render it by "quando", "when they should go up", &c. {h} wl ddwb arp "erunt onager, qui solitarius sibi est", Schmidt. {i} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 16. col. 870. {k} Tishbi, p. 267.

Hosea 8:10

Ver. 10. Yea, though they have hired among the nations,.... That is, lovers, as before; got into confederacies and alliances with the nations about them, thinking thereby to strengthen their hands, and secure themselves and their kingdom; particular regard may be had to the Egyptians, as distinct from the Assyrians, whom they privately engaged on their side to shake off the Assyrian yoke, or their obligation to send yearly presents to the Assyrian king:

now will I gather them; either the Assyrians against them, to invade their land, besiege their city, and take and carry them captive; or the Israelites in a body into the city of Samaria, and there be cooped up, and taken and destroyed, or carried captive; for this is not to be interpreted of the collection of them out of their captivity, as the Targum and Jarchi, but of the gathering of them together for their destruction:

and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes; the tax or

tribute imposed upon them by the king of Assyria, whose princes were altogether kings, Isa 10:8; and who used to be called king of kings, being at the head of a monarchy, which had many kings subject to it; as the kings of Babylon were afterwards called,
Eze 26:7; this may refer to the yearly present or tribute, which Hoshea king of Israel was obliged to give to the king of Assyria, which he was very uneasy at, and did not pay it, which drew upon him the resentment of the Assyrian king; and that sorrow and uneasiness which that tribute gave the king of Israel and his people were but little and small in comparison of what they after found; it was the beginning of sorrows to them: and so some render the words, "they began" {l}; that is, to sorrow and complain "a little"; or this may refer to their burdens and oppressions when in captivity, which were laid upon them by the king of Assyria, and the princes, the rulers, and governors of the several places where the Israelites were carried captive: even the "few [that] shall remain" {m}, as some render it; and not die by famine, pestilence, and sword. Kimchi and Ben Melech think there is a deficiency of the copulative and between king and princes; which is supplied by the Targum, and by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, which read, "the king and princes".

{l} wlxyw "incipient", Calvin; "ceperunt enim paululum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Zanchius, Drusius, Tarnovius, so Ben Melech. {m} jem wlxyw "et remanebunt pauci", Schmidt; a rad. lwx "durare, permanere".

Hosea 8:11

Ver. 11. Because Ephraim hath, made many altars to sin,.... Not with an intention to commit sin, but to offer sacrifice for sin, and make atonement for it, as they thought; but these altars being erected for the sake of idols, and sacrifices offered on them to them, they sinned in so doing, and were the cause of sin in others, who were drawn into it by their example; as they were made to sin, or drawn into it, by Jeroboam their king, These altars were those set up at Dan and Bethel, and in all high places, and tops of mountains, where they sacrificed to idols; and which was contrary to the express command of God, who required sacrifice only at one place, and on one altar, De 12:5; typical of the one altar Christ, and his alone sacrifice, who is the only Mediator between God and man; and they are guilty of the same crime as Ephraim here, who make use of more, or neglect him;

altars shall be unto him for sin; either these same altars, and the sacrifices offered on them, shall be reckoned and imputed to him as sins, trod shall be the cause of his condemnation and punishment: or, "let the altars be unto him for sin", so some {n}; since he will have them, let him have them, and go on in sinning, till he has filled up the measure of his sins, and brought on him just condemnation; or else other altars are meant, even in the land of Assyria, where, since they were so fond of multiplying altars, they should have altars enough to sin at, whereby their sins would be increased, and their punishment for them aggravated. The Targum is,

"seeing the house of Ephraim hath multiplied altars to sin, the altars of their idols shall he to them for a stumbling block,"

or ruin; so sin is taken in a different sense, both for guilt, and the punishment of it.

{n} ajxl twxbzm wl wyh "santo ergo illi altaria ad peccandum", Rivet.

Hosea 8:12

Ver. 12. I have written to him the great things of my law,.... Which was given by Moses to Israel at the appointment of God, in which were many commands, holy, just, and true; a multiplicity of them, as the Targum, relating to the honour of God, and the good of men; many excellent and useful ones of a moral nature, and others of a ceremonial kind; and particularly concerning sacrifices, showing what they should be, the nature and use of them, and where and on what altar they should be offered; and which pointed at the great sacrifice of the Messiah, who is both altar, sacrifice, and priest: and these things were frequently inculcated by the prophets, who from time to time were sent unto them; so that the Lord was continually writing these things to them by them, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech interpret it; hence they could not plead ignorance, and excuse themselves on that account. The law sometimes not only designs the law of the decalogue, and the ceremonial law, respecting sacrifices, &c. but all the books of Moses, in which are written many great and excellent things concerning Christ, his person, offices, and grace; yea, all the books of the prophets, the whole of Scripture, which is by inspiration of God, and is the writing and word of God, and not men; and of which holy men of God were the "amanuenses"; and in which many valuable and precious things are recorded, even all the works of God, of creation, providence, and grace; yea, the various thoughts, counsels, and purposes of his heart, relating to the salvation of men, are transcribed here; and the manifold grace of God, or each of the doctrines of grace, are contained herein, especially in the doctrinal and evangelical part of it, which is sometimes called the law of the Lord, even of Christ; and the law or doctrine of faith; see Ps 119:18; here are delivered and held forth the great doctrines of a trinity of Persons in the Godhead; of the everlasting love of God to his people, and of their choice in Christ before the world began; of the covenant of grace; of the incarnation of Christ; of redemption by him; of peace, pardon, righteousness, and atonement, through him; of eternal salvation by him; these things are written, and to be read and referred unto, and observed as the rule of faith and practice, and not unwritten traditions, pretended revelations, reveries, and dreams of men; and written they were, not for the use of the Israelites only under the former dispensation, but for the learning and instruction of us Gentiles also, **Ro 3:2**;

[but] they were counted as a strange thing; the laws respecting sacrifices more especially, and the place where they were to be offered, which are the things mentioned in the context, had been so long disregarded and disused by Ephraim or the ten tribes, that when they were put in mind of them by the prophets, they looked upon them as things they had no concern with; as laws that belonged to another people, and not to them: and so the great things of divine revelation, the great doctrines of the Gospel, are treated by many as things they have nothing to do with, not at all interesting to them; yea, as nauseous and despicable things, deserving their scorn and contempt, very ungrateful and disagreeable, and in this sense strange, as Job's breath was to his wife Job 19:17; and also as foreign to reason and good sense, and what cannot be reconciled thereunto: so the Athenians charged the doctrines of the Apostle Paul as strange, irrational, and unaccountable, Ac 17:20.

Hosea 8:13

Ver. 13. They sacrifice flesh [for] the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat [it],.... Or, "as to the sacrifices mine offerings" or "gifts, they sacrifice flesh, and eat it" {o}; these sacrifices, which, according to the law, should given to God when they offered them, they did not give them to him, they took them to themselves, and ate them; they were carnal offerings, and offered with a carnal mind, without faith and piety, without any regard to the glory of God, but merely for the sake of caring: the Targum interprets it of sacrifices got by rapine, which God hates, Isa 61:8;

[but] the Lord accepteth them not; neither the sacrifices, nor the sacrificers, but despised and abhorred them; no sacrifice was acceptable to God but what was

offered according to law, and where he directed, and in the faith of Christ, and through him:

now will he remember their iniquities, and visit their sins; he will not pardon them, but punish for them; so far were their sacrifices making atonement for them, as they expected, they added to the measure of their iniquities:

they shall return into Egypt; either flee thither for refuge, many of them it seems did, when the king of Assyria entered their land, and besieged Samaria; where they lived miserably, as in exile, and were there buried, and never returned to their own land any more; see **Ho 9:3**; or they should be carried captive into Assyria, where they should be in a like state of bondage as their fathers were in Egypt. Some render it, "they return into Egypt" {p}; and consider it not as their punishment, but as their sin; that when the Lord was about to visit them for their transgressions, they being made tributary to the Assyrians, instead of returning to the Lord, and humbling themselves before him, they sent to the king of Egypt for help,
2Ki 17:4.

{o} wlkayw rvb wxbzy ybhbh yxbz "quod attinet ad sacrificia donariorum meorum, sacrificant illi quidem carnem, et comedunt", Piscator, De Dieu; "quantum ad sacrificia", &c. Schmidt. So Reinbeck. De Accent. Hebr. p. 445.
{p} wbwvy Myrum hmh "illi in Aegyptum redeunt", Cocceius; "revertuntur", Schmidt. So Tarnovius.

Hosea 8:14

Ver. 14. For Israel hath forgotten his Maker,.... The Creator and Preserver of everyone of them, and who had raised them up to a state and kingdom, and had made them great and rich, and populous, and bestowed many favours and blessings on them; and yet they forgot him, to give him glory, and to serve and worship him:

and buildeth temples; to idols, as the Targum adds; to the calves at Dan and Bethel, at which places, as there were altars set up, and priests appointed, so temples and houses of high places built to worship in; see 1Ki 12:31;

and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities; to protect them from their enemies, which was not unlawful; but that they should put their trust and confidence in them, and not in the Lord their God, which was their sin; when they saw the ten tribes carried captive by the Assyrians, they betook themselves to such methods for their security, but were not careful to avoid those sins which brought ruin upon Israel:

but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof; that is, an enemy, that should set fire to their cities, particularly Jerusalem their chief city, and burn the temple of the Lord, the palaces of their king and nobles, and all the fine houses of the great men; which was done many years after this prophecy, by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Jer 52:13.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hosea 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 9

This chapter is an address to Israel or the ten tribes, and contains either a new sermon, or is a very considerable part of the former upon the same subject, the sins and punishment of that people. It begins with an instruction to them, not to rejoice in their prosperity, as others did; since it would soon be at an end, because of their idolatry, which was everywhere committed, and for which they expected a reward of temporal good things, **Ho 9:1**; but, on the contrary, they are threatened with famine, with want both of corn and wine, **Ho 9:2**; and with an ejection out of their land into foreign countries; where they should be obliged to eat things unclean by their law, **Ho 9:3**; and where their sacrifices and solemnities should be no more attended to, **Ho 9:4**; yea, where their carcasses should fall and be buried, while their own country and houses lay waste and desolate, **Ho 9:6**; for, whatsoever their foolish and mad prophets said to the contrary, who pretended to be with God, and know his will, and were a snare to them that gave heed unto them, and brought hatred on them, the time of their punishment would certainly come, **Ho 9:7**; and their iniquities would be remembered and visited; seeing their corruptions were deep, like those that appeared in Gibeah, in the days of old, **Ho 9:9**; they acting the same ungrateful part their fathers had done, of whom they were a degenerate offspring, **Ho 9:10**; wherefore for these, and other offences mentioned, they are threatened with being bereaved of their children, and drove out of their land, to wander among the nations, **Ho 9:11**.

Ver. 1. Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as [other] people,.... But rather mourn and lament, since such a load of guilt lay upon them, and they had so highly provoked the Lord to anger by their sins, and punishment would quickly be inflicted on them; and though they might be now in prosperity, through Jeroboam's success against their enemies, who by his victories had enlarged their border; yet they should not rejoice at it, as other people used to do on such occasions, by illumination of houses, making fires in the streets, feasting, and the like, since this prosperity would be but short lived: or if it was on account of the league made by Menahem with the king of Assyria, this would not last long; or on account of a good harvest, they need not so much rejoice as they that rejoice in harvest, since there would quickly be a famine among them: or rather it may respect rejoicing at their idols, and in their idolatrous worship, as other people, which is forbidden; such as instituting plays to the honour of them, making feasts before them, and dancing about them; whatever others might do, who knew not the true God, had not his law before them, nor his prophets sent to them to make known his will; who had been brought up in idolatry, adhered to their gods, and never forsook them; it ill became Israel to do the like. So the words may be rendered, "rejoice not, O Israel", at an idol {q}, or idols, "as [other] people", idolatrous ones; the word signifies "similitude" {r} or "likeness", which an idol is:

for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God; playing the harlot with many lovers; committing adultery with stocks and stones; worshipping idols, and so departing from God, the true God, they had professed to be their God, their God in covenant; who stood in the relation of a husband to them, but they proved treacherous to him, and were guilty of spiritual adultery, which is idolatry; and therefore had no cause to rejoice as other nations that never left their gods, but to take shame to themselves, and mourn over their sad departure; see **Ho 1:3**;

thou hast loved a reward upon every corn floor; alluding to the hire of a harlot, prostituting herself for it on a corn floor, or any where else, and that for a measure of corn, or for bread: it may point either at their giving the times of their corn floors to their idols, instead of giving them to the Lord; or to their ascribing their plenty of corn, and all good things to their worship of them, which they called their rewards, or hires their lovers gave them, **Ho 2:5**; or to their erecting of altars on their corn floors; as David erected one to the true God on the threshing floor of Araunah, 2Sa 24:24; and which they might do, either by way of thanksgiving for a good harvest, which they imputed to them; or in order to obtain one, but in vain, as follows. The Targum is,

"for you have erred from the worship of your God; you have loved to serve idols on all, corn floors."

{q} lyg la "super similitudine, [seu] idolo" Schmidt. {r} lyg signifies a likeness of age, stature, and complexion, in Dan. i. 10. an idol is the similitude or likeness of anything in heaven or is earth, Exod. xx. 4.

Hosea 9:2

Ver. 2. The floor and the winepress shall not feed them,.... Though their expectations from their worship of idols were large, they should find themselves mistaken; for there would not be a sufficiency of corn on the floor, nor of wine in the press, to supply them with what was necessary for their sustenance; either through a blight upon their fields and vineyards, or through the invasion of an enemy, treading them down, and spoiling and foraging them: or else supposing a sufficient quantity of corn and wine got in; yet those blessings should be either turned into curses, or carried off by the enemy, that they should do then, no good; or if they enjoyed them, yet they should receive no nourishment from them; but should become lean, and look like starved and famishing creatures in the midst of plenty; by all which it would appear that their idols could neither give them a sufficiency of provisions, nor make those nourishing to them they had:

and the new wine shall fail in her; in the congregation or land of Israel: or, "shall lie to her" {s}; shall not answer their expectations, but disappoint and deceive them; whereas they expected great plenty from the promising prospect of the vines, these by one means or another should be destroyed, so that they would yield but little, and balk them; see **Hab 3:17**.

{s} hb vxky "mentietur in ea", Pagninus, Montanus, Zanchius; "mentietur isti", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Liveleus, Schmidt.

Hosea 9:3

Ver. 3. They shall not dwell in the Lord's land,.... The land of Israel, or Canaan; which, though all the earth is the Lord's, was peculiarly his; which he had chosen for himself, and for this people; where he had his temple, and caused his Shechinah or divine Majesty to dwell in a very special manner, and where his worship and service were performed. So the Targum calls it the land of the Shechinah or majesty of the Lord. Sometimes it is called Immanuel's land, where the Messiah Immanuel, God with us, was to be born, and dwell, and where he did. Kimchi wrongly interprets this of Jerusalem only; and others of Judea; but it designs the whole land of promise, which God save by promise to the fathers of this people, and put them in the possession of, the tenure of which they held by their obedience; but they not living according to will, and in obedience to his laws, who was Lord of the land, sole Proprietor and Governor of it, he turned them out of it, and would not suffer them to continue any longer in it; and which was a great punishment indeed, to be driven out of such a land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and where they had been favoured with privileges and blessings of every kind;

but Ephraim shall return to Egypt; or the ten tribes; that is, some of them, who should flee thither for refuge and sustenance; when the Assyrian should invade their land, and besiege Samaria, they should go thither again, where their ancestors had formerly been in a state of bondage: this is prophesied of them, De 28:68;

and they shall eat unclean [things] in Assyria; that is, Ephraim or the ten tribes, the far greater part of there, should be taken captive, and carried into Assyria, and there eat food which by their law was unclean, as things sacrificed to idols, swine's flesh, and many others; or food that was not fit for men to eat, which nature abhorred; such bread as Ezekiel was bid to make and eat, **Eze 4:9**. This may be understood even of them that went to Egypt for help against the Assyrians, or for shelter from them, or for food to eat in the time of famine; who should be brought back again, and carried into Assyria, and there live a miserable and an uncomfortable life; who had been used to enjoy corn and wine, and plenty of all good things, to which these unclean things may be opposed.

Hosea 9:4

Ver. 4. They shall not offer wine [offerings] to the Lord,.... This is either a threatening of the cessation of sacrifices, being carried into Assyria, a strange land, where it was not lawful to offer sacrifice, there being no temple nor altar to offer in or at; and so as they would not offer to the Lord when they should, now they shall not if they would: or this respects not, the future time of their exile, but their present time now, as Kimchi observes; and so is a reproof of their present sacrifices, which are forbidden to be observed; because they were offered not in faith, nor in sincerity, but hypocritically, and before their calves:

besides, the future tease is sometimes put for the present; and this way goes Schmidt;

neither shall their sacrifices be pleasing unto him; unto the Lord, if they were offered; and is a reason why they should not, because unacceptable to him, and that for the reasons before mentioned:

their sacrifices [shall be] unto them as the bread of mourners: all that eat thereof [shall be] polluted; as all that ate of the bread of such who were mourning for their dead, that partook of their funeral feasts, or ate bread with them at any time during their mourning, were defiled thereby, according to the Levitical law, and were unqualified for service, Le 21:1; so the sacrifices of these people being offered up with a wicked mind instead of atoning for their sins, more and more defiled them; and, instead of being acceptable to God, were abominable to him:

for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the Lord; in the captivity there was no house of the Lord for them to bring it into; and, when in their own land, they did not bring their offerings to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, as they should have done, but offered them before their calves at Dan and Bethel; and which is the thing complained of, that the bread for their souls, that is, the offerings accompanied with the "minchah", or bread offering, for the expiation of the sins of their souls, were not brought into the house of the Lord (the future for the present); or else, this being the case, their sacrifices were reckoned by the Lord as no other than common bread, which they ate for the sustenance of their lives.

Hosea 9:5

Ver. 5. What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the Lord?] Since their sacrifices now were so disagreeable and displeasing to the Lord, and so unavailable to themselves, what would they do when in captivity, "in the solemn day", the seventh day of the week, appointed by the Lord for rest and religious worship; and in the first day of the month, which also was to be solemnly observed, by offering sacrifice, &c. and on feast days of the Lord's instituting, as the feasts of the passover, pentecost; and tabernacles? seeing those that carried and held them captive would not allow them time for such solemnities; nor would they be furnished with proper sacrifices; nor could they be accommodated with a proper place to offer them at; nor be able, in a strange land, and under hardships and miseries, to express that joy that is suitable to such occasions: thus should they learn, by sad experience, the want of those means and opportunities of serving the Lord, which in their own land they rejected and despised. Jarchi and Kimchi interpret this of the destruction of Israel, and of punishment inflicted on them at the time appointed by the Lord; and which would be a solemn time, a feast with the Lord, to which he should invite their enemies, and they should spill their blood as the blood of sacrifices; and when he would display the glory of his justice, truth, and faithfulness, before all the world. And it is asked, what will you do then? whither will you flee for help? or what sacrifice can you offer up to the Lord to atone for sin, or appease his wrath? will you be able to rejoice then? no, your joy will be turned into mourning; see Isa 10:3.

Hosea 9:6

Ver. 6. For, lo, they are gone, because of destruction,.... That is, many of the people of Israel were gone out of their own land to others, particularly to Egypt, because of the destruction that was coming upon them, and to avoid it; because of the Assyrian army which invaded their land, and besieged Samaria, and threatened them with entire destruction; and upon which a famine ensued, and which is thought by Kimchi to be here particularly meant;

Egypt shall gather them up: being dead; for they shall die there, perhaps by the pestilence, and never return to their own country, as they flattered themselves; and they shall make preparations for their funeral:

Memphis shall bury them; or they shall be buried there; which was a principal city in Egypt, here called Moph, in Isa 19:13, Noph. It was the metropolis of upper Egypt, and the seat of the Egyptian kings. In it, as Plutarch says {t}, was the sepulchre of Osiris; and some say its name so signifies. Near to it were the famous pyramids, as Strabo {u} says, supposed to be built for the sepulchre of them. Herodotus {w} places these pyramids at Memphis, and says there were three of them; the largest had several subterraneous chambers in it; the next in size had none; the smallest was covered with Ethiopic marble. Strabo, in the place referred to, speaks of many pyramids near it, of which three were very remarkable, and expressly says they were the burying places of the kings. Diodorus {x} agrees with these, as to the number of them, but places them fifteen miles from Memphis. Pliny {y} places them between Memphis and the Delta, six miles from Memphis; pretty near to which is Strabo's account, who in the above place says, they stood forty furlongs, or five miles, from the city.

Near it was the lake of Charon or Acherusia, over which he ferried dead bodies from Memphis to the pyramids, or to the plains of the mummies, the Elysian fields. Now since this was so famous for the burying places of kings, there may be an allusion to it in this expression. Here also were buried their deities, the Apis or ox when it died;

the pleasant [places] for their silver, nettles shall possess them; such beautiful edifices as were made for the repositories or treasure houses for their silver; or were built or purchased at great expense of silver; or were decorated with it; now should lie in ruins, and be like a waste, desert, and desolate place, all overrun with nettles, and uninhabited:

briers [shall be] in their tabernacles; their dwelling houses, which being demolished, briers shall grow upon the ground where they stood, and overspread it; another token of desolation. The Targum interprets it of living creatures, beasts of prey, that should dwell there; wild cats particularly.

{t} De Iside & Osir. p. 359. {u} Geograph. l. 17. p. 555. {w} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 8. 126, 127. {x} Bibliothec. l. 1. p 57. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 12.

Hosea 9:7

Ver. 7. The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come,.... In which the Lord would punish the people of Israel for their sins, and reward them in a righteous manner, according as their evil works deserved; which time, being fixed and appointed by him, are called "days"; and these, because near at hand, are said to be "come"; and this is repeated for the certainty of it:

Israel shall know [it]; by sad experience, that these days are come; and shall acknowledge the truth of the divine predictions, and the righteousness of God in his judgments. Schultens {z}, from the use of the phrase in the Arabic language, interprets it of Israel's suffering punishment; with which agrees the Septuagint version, "Israel shall be afflicted", or it shall go ill with him; and to the same purpose the Arabic version:

the prophet [is] a fool; so Israel said, before those days came, of a true prophet of the Lord, that he was a fool for prophesying of evil things, but now they shall find it otherwise. So the Targum, "they of the house of Israel shall know that they who had prophesied to them were true prophets;"

but rather this is to be understood of false prophets, who, when the day of God's visitation shall come on Israel in a way of wrath and vengeance, will appear both to themselves and others to be fools, for prophesying good things to them, when evil was at hand:

the spiritual man [is] mad; he that was truly so, and prophesied under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, was accounted a madman for speaking against the idolatry of the times, and foretelling the judgments of God that would come upon the nation for it; but now it would be manifest, that not he, but such who pretended to be spiritual men, and to be directed and dictated by the Spirit of God, when they promised the people peace, though they walked after the imagination of their hearts, were the real madmen; who pursued the frenzies and fancies of their own minds, to the deception of themselves and the people, and called these the revelations of God, and pretended they came from the Spirit of God:

for the multitude of thine iniquities, and the great hatred; that is, either those evil days came upon them for their manifold sins and transgressions, which were hateful to God, and the cause of his hatred of them; or they were suffered to give heed to those foolish and mad prophets, because of their many sins, especially idolatry; and because of their great hatred of God, and of his true prophets, and of his laws and ordinances, of his word, will, and worship, and of one another, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart, to believe a lie, and whatsoever those false prophets declared unto them, because they did not like to retain him in their knowledge, to walk according to his law, and to believe his prophets. The Targum is,

"but the false prophets besotted them, so as to increase thy transgression, and strengthen thine iniquities."

{z} Animadv. Philol. in Job, p. 78.

Hosea 9:8

Ver. 8. The watchman of Ephraim [was] with my God,.... Formerly the watchmen of Ephraim, or the prophets of Israel, were with the true God, whom the prophet calls his God; as Elijah and Elisha, who had communion and intimacy with him; had revelations and instructions from him; and were under the direction and inspiration of his Spirit, and prophesied in his name things according to his will, and for the good of his people: or "the watchman of Ephraim [should be] with my God"; on his side, and promote his worship and service, his honour and interest; and give the people warning from him, having heard the word at his mouth: but now they were not with him, nor for him, nor did as they should: or one that bore this character of a watchman in the ten tribes, pretended to be such a one, and would be thought to be with God, and to have his mind and will, and to be sincere for his glory:

[but] the prophet [is] a snare of a fowler in all his ways; the false prophet, the same with the watchman, instead of guiding and directing Ephraim in the right way in which he should go, lays snares for him in all the ways he takes, to lead him wrong, and draw him into sin, particularly into idolatry, both by his doctrine and example:

[and] hatred in the house of his God; and so became detestable and execrable it the house of his own god, the calf at Bethel, in the temple there: prophesying such things as in the event prove false, and drawing into such practices as brought on ruin and desolation. The Targum interprets it, of laying snares for their prophets, their true prophets; and Kimchi and Jarchi of slaying Zechariah the prophet in the temple.

Hosea 9:9

Ver. 9. They have deeply corrupted [themselves], as in the days of Gibeah,.... Not the false prophets and watchmen only; but rather Ephraim, or the ten tribes, through their means became extremely corrupt in principle and practice; they had most sadly degenerated, and were deeply sunk and immersed in all manner of wickedness, and rooted in it, and continued obstinate and incorrigible, so that there was no hope of reformation among them; they had got to as great a pitch of wickedness, and were guilty of the like uncleanness, lewdness, barbarity, and cruelty, as were acted by the men of Gibeah, with respect to the Levite and his concubine, Jud 19:1; for Gibeah of Benjamin is here meant, where the people asked a king, and rebelled against the words of the prophet, as some in Jarchi interpret it:

[therefore] he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins: that is, God, my God, as the prophet calls him in **Ho 9:8**, will not forgive and forget their sins; pardon being often expressed by a non-remembrance of sins; but will make inquiry after them, and visit them in a way of wrath and vengeance, and punish for them as they deserve: they being obstinate and impenitent, and persisting in their sins, like the men of Gibeah and Benjamin.

Hosea 9:10

Ver. 10. I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness,.... Not Jacob or Israel personally, with the few souls that went down with him into Egypt; for these died in Egypt, and never returned from thence, or came into the wilderness to be found; nor Israel in a spiritual sense, the objects of electing, redeeming, and calling grace; though it may be accommodated to them, who in their nature state are as in a wilderness, in a forlorn, hopeless, helpless, and uncomfortable condition; in which the Lord finds them, seeking them by his Son in redemption, and by his Spirit in the effectual calling; when they are like grapes, not in themselves, being destitute of all good, and having nothing but sin and wickedness in them; for, whatever good thing is in them at conversion, it is not found, but put there; but the simile may serve to express the great and unmerited love of God to his people, who are as agreeable to him as grapes in the wilderness to a thirsty traveller; and in whom he takes great delight and complacency, notwithstanding all their sinfulness and unworthiness; and bestows abundance of grace upon them, and makes them like clusters of grapes indeed; and such were many of the Jewish fathers, and who are here intended, even the people of Israel brought out of Egypt into the wilderness of Arabia, through which they travelled to Canaan: here the Lord found them, took notice and care of them, provided for them, and protected them, and gave them, many tokens of his love and affection; see De 32:10; and they were as acceptable to him, and he took as much delight and pleasure in them, as one travelling through the deserts of Arabia, or any other desert, would rejoice at finding a vine laden with clusters of grapes. The design of this metaphor is not to compare Israel with grapes, because of any goodness in them, and as a reason of the Lord's delight in them; for neither for quantity nor quality were they like them, being few, and very obstinate and rebellious; but to set forth the great love of God to them, and his delight and complacency in them; which arose and sprung, not from any excellency in them, but from his own sovereign good will and pleasure; see **De 7:6**;

I saw your fathers as the first ripe in the fig tree at her first time; the Lord looked upon their ancestors when they were settled as a people, in their civil and church state, upon their being brought out of Egypt, with as much pleasure as a man beholds the first ripe fig his fig tree produces after planting it, or the first it produces in the season, the fig tree bearing twice in a year; but the first is commonly most desired, as being most rare and valuable; and such were the Israelites to the Lord at first, **Mic 7:1**. This is observed, to aggravate their ingratitude to the Lord, which soon discovered itself; and to suggest that their posterity were like them, who, though they had received many favours from the Lord, as tokens of his affection to them, and delight in them; yet behaved in a most shocking and shameful manner to him:

[but] they went to Baalpeor: or "went into Baalpeor" {a}; committed whoredom with that idol, even in the wilderness where the Lord found them and showed so much regard to them; this refers to the history in Nu 25:1. Baalpeor is by some interpreted "the lord" or "god of opening": and was so called, either from his opening his mouth in prophecy, as Ainsworth {b} thinks, as Nebo, a god of Babylon, had his name from prophesying; or from his open mouth, with which this idol was figured, as a Jewish writer {c} observes; whose worshipper took him to be inspired, and opened their mouths to receive the divine afflatus from him: others interpret it "the lord" or "god of nakedness"; because his worshippers exposed to him their posteriors in a shameful manner, and even those parts which ought to be covered; and this is the sense of most of the Jewish writers. So, in the Jerusalem Talmud {d}, the worship of Peor is represented in like manner, and as most filthy and obscene, as it is by Jarchi {e}, who seems to have taken his account from thence; and even Maimonides {f} says it was a known thing that the worship of Peor was by uncovering of the nakedness; and this he makes to be the reason why God commanded the priests to make themselves breeches to cover their nakedness in the time of service, and why they might not go up to the altar by steps, that their nakedness might not be discovered; in short, they took this Peor to be no other than a Priapus; and in this they are followed by many Christians, particularly by Jerom on this place, who observes that Baalpeor is the god of the Moabites, whom we may call Priapus; and so Isidore {g} says, there was an idol in Moab called Baal, on Mount Fegor, whom the this call Priapus, the god of gardens; but Mr. Selden {h} rejects this notion, and contends that Peor is either the name of a mountain, of which Isidore, just now mentioned, speaks; see Nu 23:28; where Baal was worshipped, and so was called from thence Baalpeor; as Jupiter Olympius, Capitolinus, &c. is so called from the mountains of Olympus, Capitolinus, &c. where divine honours are paid him; or else the name of a man, of some great person in high esteem, who was deified by the Moabites, and worshipped by them after his death; and so Baalpeor may be the same as "Lord Peor"; and it seems most likely that Peor is the name of a man, at least of an idol, since we read of Bethpeor, or the temple of Peor, in De 34:6;

and separated themselves unto [that] shame; they separated themselves from God and his worship, and joined themselves to that shameful idol, and worshipped it, thought by many, as before observed, to be the Priapus of the Gentiles, in whose worship the greatest of obscenities were used, not fit to be named: so that this epithet of shame is with great propriety given it, and aggravates the sin of Israel, that such a people should be guilty of such filthy practices; though Baal, without supposing him to he a Priapus, may be called "that shame", for Baal and Bosheth, which signifies shame, are some times put for each other; so Jerubbaal, namely Gideon, is called Jerubbesheth, **Jud 8:35**; and Eshbaal appears plainly to be the same son of Saul, whose name was Ishbosheth, **1Ch 8:33**; and Meribbaal is clearly the same with Mephibosheth **1Ch 8:34**; yea, it may be observed that the prophets of Baal are called, in the Septuagint version of 1Ki 18:25;
profhtav thv aiscunhv, "the prophets of that shame"; every idol, and all idolatry being shameful, and the cause of shame, sooner or later, to their worshippers; especially when things obscene were done in their religious rites, as were in many of the Heathens in which the Jews followed them; see **Jer 3:24**;

and [their] abominations were according as they loved: or, "as they loved them", the daughters of Moab; for it was through their impure love of them that they were drawn into these abominations, or to worship idols, which are often called abominations; or, as Joseph Kimchi reads the words, and gives the sense of them, "and they were abominations as I loved them"; that is, according to the measure of the love wherewith I loved them, so they were abominations in mine eyes; they were as detestable now as they were loved before.

{a} wab hmh "ingressi sunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Drusius. {b} Annotations on Numb. xxv. 3. {c} Racenatensis in Capito, apud Drusium in loc. {d} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 28. 4. {e} Perush in Numb. xxv. 3. {f} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 45. p. 477. {g} Origin. l. 8. c. 11. p. 70. {h} De Dis Syris, Syntagma 1. c. 5. p. 162, 163. See Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p. 73, &c.

Hosea 9:11

Ver. 11. [As for] Ephraim, their glory shall flee away like a bird,.... That is, suddenly, swiftly, and irrecoverably, and never return more; which some understand of God their glory, and of his departure from them, as in **Ho 9:12**; others of their wealth and riches, and whatever was glorious and valuable among them, which should fly away from them in a moment, when taken and carried captive; rather their numerous posterity, in which they were very fruitful, according to their name, and in which they gloried, as children are the glory of their parents, Pr 17:6; which sense agrees with what follows, and which explains the manner of their fleeing away, and the periods of it:

from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception; that is, some of them, as soon as they were born; others while in the womb, being abortives; or, however, when they should, or as soon as they did, come from thence; and others, as soon as conceived, never come to any thing; or not conceived at all, as Kimchi interprets it, the women being barren.

Hosea 9:12

Ver. 12. Though they bring up their children,.... Though this be the case of some, as to be conceived, carried in the womb to the full time, and be born, and brought up to a more adult age, and appear very promising to live, and perpetuate the names of their fathers and their families:

yet will I bereave them; their parents of them, by the sword, famine, pestilence, or by carrying them captive into a foreign country:

[that there shall] not [be] a man [left]; in the whole land of Israel, but all shall be destroyed, or carried captive; or, "from men" {i}; that is, either from being men, as the Targum; though they are brought up to some ripeness, and a more adult age than others, yet arrive not to such a time and age as to be called men, as Kimchi observes; or from being among men, being either taken away by death, or removed from the society of men to live among beasts, and to he slaves like them:

yea, woe also to them, when I depart from them; withdraw my presence, favour, and protection from them; or remove my Shechinah from them, as the Targum; and leave them to the spoil and cruelty of their enemies, which would be a greater calamity and judgment than the former. The Septuagint, and so Theodotion, render it, "woe is to them, my flesh is of them"; which some of the ancients interpret of the incarnation of Christ, not considering that the words are spoken of Ephraim, or the ten tribes; whereas the Messiah was to spring, and did, from the family of David, and tribe of Judah.

{i} Mdam "ab homine", Montanus, Tigurine version, Schmidt; "ut non sint homines", Pagninus.

Hosea 9:13

Ver. 13. Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, [is] planted in a pleasant place,.... That is, either as the city of Tyre, a very famous city in Phoenicia, was situated in a very pleasant place by the sea, and abounded in wealth and riches, and was well fortified, and seemed secure from all danger, and from all enemies; so Ephraim or the ten tribes, the kingdom of Israel, were in like circumstances, equal to Tyre, as the Targum paraphrases it, in prosperity and plenty; yet as the prophet in the vision of prophecy saw that Tyre, notwithstanding all its advantages by power and wealth, by art and nature, would be destroyed, first by Nebuchadnezzar, and then by Alexander; so by the same prophetic spirit he saw that Ephraim or the ten tribes, notwithstanding their present prosperity, and the safety and security they thought themselves in, yet should be given up to ruin and destruction by the hand of the Assyrians; or it may be rendered thus, "Ephraim as", or "when I saw it, unto Tyre" {k}; reaching unto that place, and bordering upon it, as part of the ten tribes did; I saw it, I observed it, took a survey of it, and I perceived it was "planted in a pleasant place"; like a tree planted in a fruitful soil, well rooted, and in a flourishing condition; so were they, abounding with all good things, and having a numerous offspring; from all which they promised themselves much happiness for ages to come:

but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer; to sacrifice them to Moloch, as some; so the Targum,

"they of the house of Ephraim have sinned in slaying their children to the service of idols;"

with which Jarchi agrees; but rather the sense is, with Kimchi, and others, when their enemies shall come against them, as the Assyrian army, they shall go out with their sons to fight with them, and these shall be destroyed and murdered by them; it will be like leading lambs to the slaughter to be butchered and devoured by them.

{k} rwul ytyar rvak "quando vidi usque ad Tyrum", Schmidt.

Hosea 9:14

Ver. 14. Give them, O Lord: what wilt thou give them?.... The prophet foreseeing the butchery and destruction of their children, his heart ached for them; and, to show his tender affection for this people, was desirous of putting up a supplication for them; but was at a loss what to ask, their sins were so many, and so aggravated, and the decree gone forth for their destruction: or, "give them what thou wilt give them" {l}; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, what thou hast threatened before to give them, **Ho 9:11**; do not give them to be butchered and murdered before the eyes of their parents by their enemies; but rather let them die in the womb, or as soon as born; so it follows:

give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts; the latter being a sign of the former, as physicians observe; or the words may be rendered disjunctively, give them one, or the other; that is, to the wives of the people of Israel, if they conceive, let them miscarry, prove abortive, rather than bring forth children to be destroyed in such a cruel manner by murderers; or if they bear them to the birth, and bring them forth, let their breasts be dried up, and afford no milk for their nourishment; and so die for lack of it, rather than fall into the hands of their merciless enemies: thus, of two evils, the prophet chooses and prays for the least. Some interpret this as a prediction of what would be, or an imprecation of it; but it rather seems a pathetic wish, flowing from the tender affection of the prophet, judging such a case to be preferable to the former; see Lu 23:29; though the other sense seems best to agree with what follows, and which is favoured by the Targum,

"give thou, O Lord, the recompence of their works; give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts."

{l} Ntt hm Mhl Nt "da eis quod daturus es", Junius & Tremellius, Vatablus, Grotius; "da illis id quod dabis", Schmidt.

Hosea 9:15

Ver. 15. Ah their wickedness [is] in Gilgal,.... A place in the ten tribes, where the covenant of circumcision was renewed in Joshua's time; the first passover was kept in the land of Canaan, and the people of Israel ate the firstfruits of the land; where the tabernacle was for a while, and sacrifices were offered up to the Lord: but now things were otherwise; all manner of iniquity was committed in it, especially idolatry; for which it was chosen by idolaters, because it had formerly been famous for religious worship: here, though not to the exclusion of other places, as Dan and Bethel, was the above sin committed; here it begun and spread itself, and had the measure of it filled up; here began the first departure from the Lord, rejecting him, and asking a king in the days of Samuel, as Kimchi and Abarbinel observe; and here were high places and altars erected for idolatry; and this is now the reason of the above threatenings of God, and the predictions of the prophet. Grotius thinks there is a mystical sense in the words, and that they have reference to the sin of the Jews in crucifying Christ on Golgotha; which, in the Syriac language, is the same with Gilgal; but both the people spoken of, and the place, are different:

for there I hated them; or "therefore" {m}, because they sinned so greatly against him in a place where they had formerly worshipped him; their sacrifices there, instead of being acceptable, were the more abominable to him, as they were offered there where his tabernacle once was, and sacrifices were offered to him according to his will:

for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house; not out of the house of my sanctuary, or the temple, as the Targum; unless this is to be understood of losing the opportunity of going to the temple at Jerusalem, which those of the ten tribes had while they were in their own land, which the few godly persons among them then took, and made use of; but now their idolatry increasing in Gilgal, and other places, they should be carried captive; and, if they would, could not go up to the house of the Lord, and worship him there: or rather this may design, either the visible church of God, out of which they would be now ejected; or their native country, where they had been, as the family and household of God; but now should be so no more, but, as afterwards said, wanderers among the nations, and no more reckoned as belonging to the Lord, and under his paternal care and protection:

I will love them no more; which is not to be understood of the special love and favour the Lord bears to his own people in Christ, which is everlasting and unchangeable; but of his general and providential favour and regard unto these people, which he had manifested in bestowing many great and good things upon them; but now would do so no more; he would do nothing to them, or for them, that looked like love, or be interpreted of it, but all the reverse; and, by his behaviour to them, show that they were the objects of his aversion and hatred; and this was to continue, and has continued, and will continue unto the time of their conversion in the latter day, when "all Israel shall be saved", Ro 11:26;

all their princes [are] revolters; from God and his worship, who should have set a good example to the people; and since these were perverse and rebellious against God, it is no wonder that the people in general apostatized. This is to be understood of their king as supreme, and all subordinate rulers; of their judges and magistrates of every order; of all their governors, both civil and ecclesiastic; and not at Gilgal only, but in all the land. There is an elegant play on words {n} in the original, the beauty of which cannot be expressed in the translation.

{m} yk "ideo", Rivet. {n} Myrro Mhyrv "Sharehem Sorerim".

Hosea 9:16

Ver. 16. Ephraim is smitten,.... The people of the ten tribes, the kingdom of Israel, who had been like a tree planted in a pleasant place, **Ho 9:13**; and were in very flourishing circumstances in the times of Jeroboam the second; but now were like a tree smitten with thunder and lightning, or hail stones, and beat to pieces; or with the heat of the sun, or with blasting winds, or by worms; as in the succeeding reigns, by the judgments of God upon them; by civil wars, conspiracies, and murders among themselves; and by the exactions of Pul and depredations of Tiglathpileser kings of Assyria; and quickly would be smitten again; the present being put for the future, because of the certainty of it, as usual in prophetic writings; or be utterly destroyed by Shalmaneser, and be no more a kingdom:

their root is dried up; like the root of a tree that has no sap and moisture in it, and can communicate none to the body and branches of the tree, which in course must die. This may be understood of their king, princes, nobles, and chief men, the support and strength of the nations; and of parents and heads of families, cut off by one judgment or another:

they shall bear no fruit; as a tree thus smitten, and its root dried up, cannot; so neither, this being their case, there would be none to beget, nor any to bear children, and bring them forth; called the fruit of the womb, in allusion to the fruit of trees:

yea, though they bring forth; though some of them should be spared, women with their husbands, and should procreate children:

yet will I slay [even] the beloved [fruit] of their womb; their children they should bring forth, on whom their affections were strongly set; and the rather, as they were but few, and from whom they had raised expectations of building up their families; even these the Lord would stay, or suffer to be slain, either by the sword of the enemy, or by famine, or by pestilence, or by some disease or another; so that there should be no hope of a future posterity, at least of no great number of them.

Hosea 9:17

Ver. 17. My God will cast them away,.... With loathsomeness and contempt, having sinned against him, and done such abominable things; cast them out of their own land, as men not fit to live in it; cast them out of his sight, as not able to endure them; cast them away, as unprofitable and good for nothing; reject them from being his people; no more own them in the relation they had stood in to him; nor show them any more favour, at least until the conversion of them in the times of the Messiah. These are the words of the prophet, who calls the Lord his God, whom he worshipped, by whom he was sent, and in whose name he prophesied; and this in opposition to, and distinction from Israel, who worshipped other gods, and who had cast off the true God, and were now, or would be, cast away by him, and so no longer their God:

because they did not hearken unto him; to his word, as the Targum; to him speaking by his prophets; to the instructions, admonitions, threatenings, and predictions delivered to them from him; they did not obey his law, regard his will, or attend his worship; which was the cause of the rejection of them, and a just one:

and they shall be wanderers among the nations; being dispersed by the Assyrians in the several nations of the world, where they were fugitives and vagabonds; as their posterity are to this day.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hosea 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 10

This chapter is of the same argument with the former, and others before that; setting forth the sins of the ten tribes, and threatening them with the judgments of God for them; and exhorting them to repentance, and works of righteousness. They are charged with unfruitfulness and ingratitude; increasing in idolatry, as they increased in temporal good things, Ho 10:1; with a divided heart, and with irreverence of God, and their king; and with false swearing, covenant breaking, and injustice,
Ho 10:2; and are threatened with a removal of their king, and with the destruction of their idols, and places of idolatry, which should cause fear in the common people, and mourning among the priests,
Ho 10:1. It is observed, that their sin had been of long continuance, though the Lord had been kind and good unto them, in chastising them in love, giving them good laws, sending his prophets to exhort them to repentance and reformation, but all in vain, Ho 10:9; wherefore they are threatened with the spoiling of their fortresses, the destruction of the people, and the cutting off of their king,
Ho 10:14.

Ver. 1. Israel [is] an empty vine,.... The people of Israel are often compared to a vine, and such an one from whence fruit might be expected, being planted in a good soil, and well taken care of; see
Ps 80:8; but proved an "empty vine", empty of fruit; not of temporal good things, for a multitude of such fruit it is afterwards said to have; but of spiritual fruit, of the fruit of grace, and of good works, being destitute of the Spirit of God, and his grace; and, having no spiritual moisture, was incapable of bringing forth good fruit: or, "an emptying vine" {o}; that casts its fruit before it is ripe; these people, what fruit they had, they made an ill use of it; even of their temporal good things; they emptied themselves of their wealth and riches, by sending presents, or paying tribute, to foreign princes for their alliance, friendship, and help; or by consuming it on their idols, and in their idolatrous worship. The Targum renders it,

"a spoiled vine {p};"

spoiled by their enemies, who robbed them of their wealth and riches, and trampled them under foot. The Septuagint version, and those that follow that, understand it in a sense quite the reverse, rendering it, "a flourishing vine";

putting forth branches, leaves, and fruit; and which the learned Pocock confirms from the use of the word in the Arabic language: but then it follows,

he bringeth forth fruit unto himself; all the good works done by them were not to the praise and glory of God, as fruits of righteousness are, which come by Jesus Christ; but were done to be seen of men, and to gain their applause and esteem, and so were for themselves; and all their temporal good things they abounded with were not made use of in the service of God, and for the promoting of his glory, and of true religion among them; but either consumed on their own lusts, or in the service of idols: or, "the fruit is like unto himself" {q}; as was the vine, so was its fruit: the vine was empty, and devoid of goodness, and so the fruit it produced. The Targum is,

"the fruit of their works was the cause of their being carried captive:"

according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars: as the Israelites increased in riches and wealth, their land bringing forth in great abundance, they erected the greater number of altars to their idols, and multiplied their sacrifices to them; this was the ill use they made of what fruit they did produce:

according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images; of richer metal, and more ornamented, and more of them, according to the plenty of good things, corn, and wine, and oil, their land produced; thus abusing the providential goodness of God to such vile purposes!

{o} qqwb Npg "vitis evacuans", Drusius, Rivetus, Schmidt; so Stockius, p. 149. {p} So Calvin. {q} wl hwvy yrp "fructum aequat sibi", Mercerus; "fracture facit similem sibi", Schmidt.

Hosea 10:2

Ver. 2. Their heart is divided,.... Some say from Hoshea their king, who would have reformed them from their idolatry, and returned them to the true worship of God; but of that there is no proof; better from one another, their affections being alienated from each other, by their discords and animosities, their conspiracies against their kings, and the murders of them, and the civil wars among themselves; they also not being of one mind, but disagreeing in their sentiments about their idols; some being for one, and some for another: or rather from God himself, from the fear of him, from his worship and service; or from the law, as the Targum; or their hearts were divided between God and their idols, as in Ahab's time between God and Baal; they pretended to worship God when they worshipped the calves, and so shared the service between them; or it may be rendered, "their heart flatters" {r} them; as if they had done that which was right and good, and were guilty of no evil, nor would any punishment be inflicted on them:

now shall they be found faulty; be convicted of their sin and folly, and appear guilty; when they shall be punished for their idolatry, and their idols not able to save them, as the destruction of them next mentioned will fully evince: or, "now shall they become desolate" {s} their land shall be desolate, and they carried captive:

he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images: that is, the king of Assyria shall do all this, or God by him: or, "behead their altars" {t}; take off the top of them, as the Targum; the horns of them, which might be made of gold, or other ornaments which were of value; and therefore became the plunder of the enemy; and who also would break in pieces their images, for the sake of the metal, gold or silver, of which they were made; as was usually done by conquerors, and to show their entire power over the conquered, that even their gods could not deliver them out of their hands.

{r} Mbl qlx "adblanditur cor eorum", Schmidt. {s} wmvay hte "nunc desolabuntur", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Drusius; so Kimchi and Ben Melech. {t} Prey "decollabit", Drusius, Piscator, Tarnovius, De Dieu; "decervicabit", Cocceius.

Hosea 10:3

Ver. 3. For now they shall say, we have no king,.... This they would say, either when they had one; but by their conduct and behaviour said they had none; because they had no regard unto him, no affection for him, and reverence of him; but everyone did what was right in his own eyes: or during the interregnum, between the murder of Pekah, which was in the twentieth year of Jotham, and the settlement of Hoshea, which was in the twelfth of Ahaz; see 2Ki 15:30; or when the land of Israel was invaded, and their king was shut up in prison, and Samaria besieged, so that it was as if they had no king; they had none to protect and defend them, to sally out at the head of them against the enemy, and fight their battles for them; or rather when the city was taken, the altars broke down, their images spoiled, and they and their king carried captive:

because we feared not the Lord: did not serve and worship him, but idols; and this sin, casting off the fear of the Lord, was the source and cause of all their troubles and sorrows; of the invasion of their land; of the besieging and taking their city, and having no king to rule over them, and protect them:

what then should a king do to us? if they had one, he could be of no service to them; for since they had offended God, the King of kings, and made him their enemy, what could an earthly king, a weak mortal man, do for them, or against him? it was now all over with them, and they could have no expectation of help and deliverance.

Hosea 10:4

Ver. 4. They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant,.... Those are other crimes they were guilty of, for which the wrath of God could not be awarded from them by a king, if they had one, or by any other. They had used vain and idle words in their common talk and conversation; and lying and deceitful ones to one another in trade and commerce, in contracts and promises; and so had deceived and overreached one another: they had belched out many "oaths of vanity" {u}: or vain oaths and curses; their mouths had been full of cursing and bitterness; and they made covenants with God, and their king, and with other kings and princes, and with one another, and had not kept them; and now for these things God had a controversy with them:

thus judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field; either the judgment of God, his wrath and vengeance for the above sins, rose up and spread itself in all their cities, towns, and villages; or rather the judgment and justice they pretended to execute, instead of being what it should have been, useful and beneficial to the people, like a wholesome herb, sprung up like hemlock, bitter and poisonous, and spread itself in all parts of the kingdom. Injustice is meant; see **Am 6:12**.

{u} awv twla "execrationes vanitatis", Schmidt.

Hosea 10:5

Ver. 5. The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Bethaven,.... Or, "the cow calves" {w}, as in the original; so called by way of derision, and to denote their weakness and inability to help their worshippers; and so Bethel, where one of these calves was, is here, as elsewhere, called Bethaven; that is, the house of iniquity, or of an idol, by way of contempt; and may take in Dan also, where was the other calf, since both are mentioned; unless the plural is put for the singular: now the land of Israel being invaded by the enemy, the inhabitants of Samaria, which was the metropolis of the nation, the king, nobles, and common people that dwelt there, and were worshippers of the calves, were in pain lest they should be taken by the enemy; or because they were, these places falling into his hands before Samaria was besieged, or at least taken; and these calves being broken to pieces, which they had worshipped, and put their trust in, they were afraid the ruin of themselves and children would be next, and was not very far off:

for the people thereof shall mourn over it; either the people of Samaria, the same with the inhabitants of it; or rather the people of Bethaven, where the idol was; but now was broke to pieces, or carried away; though it is generally interpreted of the people of the calf, the worshippers of it, who would mourn over it, or for the loss of it, being taken away from them, and disposed of as in Ho 10:6. The Jews {x} have a tradition, that, in the twentieth year of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglathpileser king of Assyria came and took away the golden calf in Dan; and, in the twelfth year of Ahaz, another king of Assyria (Shalmaneser) came and took away the golden calf at Bethel:

and the priests thereof [that] rejoiced on it; the Chemarims, as in **Zep 1:4**; or "black" {y} ones, because of their meagre and sordid countenances, or black clothing: the same word the Jews use for Popish monks: here it designs the priests of Bethaven, or the calf, who before this time rejoiced on account of it, because of the sacrifices and presents of the people to it, and the good living they got in the service of it; but now would mourn, as well as the people, and more, because of being deprived of their livelihood. Some read the words without the supplement "that, the priests thereof rejoiced on it"; which some interpret according to a tradition of the Jews mentioned by Jerom, though by no other, as I can find; that the priests stole away the golden calves, and put brasen and glided ones in the place of them; so that when they were carried away the people mourned, taking them to be the true golden calves; but the priests made themselves merry with their subtle device, and rejoiced that their fraud was not detected; but rather the word here used, as Pocock and others have observed, is of that kind which has contrary senses, and signifies both to mourn and to rejoice; and here to mourn, as perhaps also in **Job 3:22**; and so Ben Melech observes, that there are some of their interpreters who understand it here in the sense of mourning:

for the glory of it, because it is departed from it; either because of the glory of the calf, which was gone from it, the veneration it was had in, the worship which was given to it, and the gems and ornaments that were about it; or rather the glory of Bethaven, and also of Samaria, and indeed of all Israel, which was carried captive from them; that is, the calf, which was their god, in which they gloried, and put their trust and confidence in.

{w} twlgel "vaccas, V. L. "ad. vitulas", Pagninus, Montanus; "propter vitulas", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ob vitulas, Cocceius. {x} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 22. p. 60, 61. {y} wyrmk "atrati ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Hosea 10:6

Ver. 6. It shall also be carried unto Assyria [for] a present to King Jareb,.... Or, "he himself" {z}; not the people of Samaria, or of Bethaven, or of the calf, but the calf itself; which, being all of gold, was sent a present to the king of Assyria, here called Jareb; either Assyria, or the king of it; See Gill on "Ho 5:13"; this was done either by the people of Israel themselves, to appease the king of Assyria; or rather by the Assyrian army, who reserved the plunder of this as a proper present to their king and conqueror, to whom not only nations, but the gods of nations, were subject:

Ephraim shall receive shame; for worshipping such an idol, when they shall see it broke to pieces, and the gold of it made a present to the Assyrian king, and that it could not save them, nor itself:

and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel; of giving in to such idolatry, contrary to the counsel, mind, and will of God; or of the counsel which they and Jeroboam took to set up the calves at Dan and Bethel, and thereby to keep the people from going up to Jerusalem,
1Ki 12:28; as well as of their counsel and covenant with the king of Egypt against the king of Assyria, 2Ki 17:4.

{z} wtwa Mg "etiam ipsemet", Pagninus, Montanus; "etiam ipse", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "etiam ille", Cocceius; "etiam ille ipse", Schmidt.

Hosea 10:7

Ver. 7. [As for] Samaria,.... The metropolis of the ten tribes of Israel, and here put for the whole kingdom:

her king is cut off; which some understand of Pekah, who was killed by Hoshea; others of several of their kings cut off one after another, very suddenly and quickly, as the metaphor after used shows; or rather Hoshea the last king is meant, who was cut off by the king of Assyria; the present tense is used for the future, to denote the certainty of it. Aben Ezra thinks the verb "cut off" is to be repeated, Samaria is "cut off, her king [is] cut off"; both king and kingdom destroyed. So the Targum,

"Samaria is cut off with her king:"

as the foam upon the water; as any light thing flowing upon it; as the bark of a tree, as Kimchi and Abarbinel; or as the scum upon a boiling pot of water, as Jarchi, and the Targum; or as foam, which is an assemblage of bubbles upon the water; such are kings and kingdoms, swell, look big and high for a while; but are mere bubbles, empty things; and are often suddenly, quickly, and easily destroyed; so Samaria and her king were by the Assyrian army; the Lord of hosts, the King of kings, being against them.

Hosea 10:8

Ver. 8. The high places also of Aven,.... Bethel, which is not only as before called Bethaven, the house of iniquity; but Aven, iniquity itself; the high places of it were the temple and altars built there for idolatrous service, which were usually set on hills and mountains:

the sin of Israel shall be destroyed; that is, which high places are the sin of Israel, the occasion of sin unto them; and where they committed sin, the sin of idolatry, in worshipping the calves; these should be thrown down, demolished, and no longer used:

the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; lying in ruins, these shall grow upon them, the people and priests being carried captive that used to sacrifice upon them; but now they shall lie deserted by them, being destroyed by the enemy:

and they shall say to the mountains, cover us; and to the hills, fall on us; not that the high places and altars shall say so in a figurative sense, according to R. Moses in Aben Ezra; but, as Japhet, they that worshipped there, the priests and people of Samaria, Bethaven, and even of all Israel, because of their great distress; and, as persons in the utmost consternation, and in despair, and confounded, and ashamed, shall call to the mountains and hills where they have been guilty of idolatry to hide and cover them from the wrath of God; see Lu 23:30 **Re 6:16**.

Hosea 10:9

Ver. 9. O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah,.... This has no respect, as the Targum, and others, to Gibeah of Saul, of which place he was, and the choosing him to be king; but to the affair of the Levite and his concubine at Gibeah in the days of the judges, and what followed upon it, Jud 19:1; suggesting, that the sins of Israel were not new ones; they were the same with what were committed formerly, as early as the history referred to, and had been continued ever since; the measure of which were now filling up: or, as Aben Ezra and Abarbinel interpret it, "thou hast sinned more than the days of Gibeah"; were guilty of more idolatry, inhumanity, and impurity, than in those times; and yet the grossest of sins, particularly unnatural lusts, were then committed:

there they stood; either the men of Gibeah continued in their sins, and did not repent of them; and stood in their own defence against the tribes of Israel, and the Benjamites stood also with them, and by them; and stood two battles, and were conquerors in them; and, though beaten in the third, were not wholly destroyed, as now the Israelites would be: or the tribes of Israel stood, and continued in, and connived at, the idolatry of the Levite; or rather stood sluggish and slothful, and were not eagar to fight with the Benjamites, who took part with the men of Gibeah; which were their sins, for which they were worsted in the two first battles, and in which the present Israelites imitated them:

the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them; the two first battles against the men of Gibeah and the Benjamites, who are the children of iniquity, the one the actors, and the other the abettors and patrons of it, did not succeed against them, but the Israelites were overcome; and the third battle, in which they got the day, did not overtake them so as utterly to cut them off; for six hundred persons made their escape; but, in the present case prophesied of, it is suggested, that as their sins were as great or greater than theirs, their ruin should be entire and complete: or the sense is, that they were backward to go to battle; they were not eager upon it; they did not at once espouse the cause of the Levite; they did not stir in it till he had done that unheard of thing, cutting his concubine into twelve pieces, and sending them to the twelve tribes of Israel; and then they were not overly anxious, but sought the Lord, as if it was a doubtful case; which backwardness was resented in their ill success at first; and the same slow disposition to punish vice had continued with them ever since; so Schmidt.

Hosea 10:10

Ver. 10. [It is] in my desire that I should chastise them,.... Or, "bind them" {a}, and carry them captive; and by so doing correct them for their sins they have so long continued in: this the Lord had in his heart to do, and was determined upon it, and would do it with pleasure, for the glorifying of his justice, since they had so long and so much abused his clemency and goodness:

and the people shall be gathered against them; the Assyrians, who, at the command of the Lord, would come and invade their land, besiege their city, and take it, and bind them, and carry them captive:

when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows; when, like heifers untamed, and bound in a yoke to plough, do not make and keep in one furrow, but turn out to the right or left, and make cross furrows; so it is intimated that this was the reason why the Lord would correct Israel, and suffer the nations to gather together against them, and carry them captive, because they did not plough in one furrow, or keep in the true and pure worship of God; but made two furrows, worshipping partly God, and partly idols: or, "when they", their enemies, "shall bind them", being gathered against them, and carry them captive, they shall make them plough in "two furrows", the one up, and the other down; and to this hard service they shall keep them continually. There is a double reading of this clause; the "Cetib", or textual writing or reading, is, "to their two eyes", or "fountains": alluding, as Jarchi observes, to the binding of the yoke on oxen on each side of their eyes: or to the fountains in the land of Israel, the abundance of wine, milk, and honey; for the sake of which the people got together, broke in upon them, and bound them, in order to drink of. So Gussetius {b} renders the words, "and they shall bind them to drink of their fountains". The "Keri" or marginal reading is, "their two iniquities"; which the Septuagint follows, rendering it,

"in chastising them, or when they are chastised for their two iniquities;"

so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; meaning either their worshipping the two calves at Dan and Bethel; or their corporeal and spiritual adultery; or their forsaking the true God, and worshipping idols; see **Jer 2:13**. Schmidt understands all this, not as a punishment threatened, but as an instance of the love of God to them, in chastising them in a loving and fatherly way; which had a good effect upon them, and brought them to repentance; partly in the times of the judges, but more especially in the days of Samuel, when they behaved well; and particularly in the reigns of David and Solomon; and when the people were gathered, not "against", but "to" them; either became proselytes to them, or tributaries, or coveted their friendship; and when they themselves lived in great concord, in one kingdom, under one king, like oxen ploughing in two contiguous furrows.

{a} Mroaw "et, [vel] ut vinciam eos", Junius & Tremellius, Drusius, Grotius; "colligabo eos", Cocceius. {b} Comment. Ebr. p. 591, 892.

Hosea 10:11

Ver. 11. And Ephraim [is as] an heifer [that is] taught, [and] loveth to tread out [the corn],.... Like a heifer taught to bear the yoke, and to plough; but learned it not, as the Targum; does not like it; chooses to tread out the corn where it can feed upon it, its mouth not being then muzzled, according to the law; oxen or heifers were used both in ploughing and treading out corn, to which the allusion is. The sense is, that Ephraim or the ten tribes were taught to bear the yoke of the law, and yield obedience to it, and perform good works; but did not like such a course of life; had no further regard for religion than as they found their own worldly profit and advantage in it: or they did not care to labour much in it; they liked the fruit and advantage arising from working, rather than the work itself; and thus, like a heifer, doing little, and living well, they grew fat, increased in power, wealth, and riches; and so became proud and haughty, and kicked against the house of David, and rent themselves from it; and set up a kingdom of their own, and lived and reigned according to their own will and pleasure, like a heifer without yoke and muzzle:

but I passed over upon her fair neck; or, "the goodness of her neck" {c}; which is expressive of the flourishing and opulent state and condition of the ten tribes, especially in the times of Jeroboam the second, which made them proud and haughty: but the Lord was determined to humble them, and first in a more light and gentle manner; or caused the rod of correction to pass over them more lightly; or put upon them a more easy yoke of affliction, by causing Pul king of Assyria to come against them; and to get rid of whom a present was given him, exacted of the people; and afterwards Tiglathpileser, another king of Assyria, who carried captive part of their land; and this not having its proper effect, the Lord was determined to proceed against them in a heavier manner:

I will make Ephraim to ride; some, taking the future for the past, render it, "I have made Ephraim to ride" {d}; that is, to rule and govern, having royal dignity and power given them, and that greater than that of Judah; and ride over the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who were sometimes very much afflicted by them; and this is thought to be the sense of the following phrases,

Judah shall plough, [and] Jacob shall break his clods; or, "break the clods for him" {e}; for Ephraim while he rides, and uses them very hard; as in the days of Joash and Pekah, kings of Israel, when many of the tribes of Judah were slain by them, 2Ki 14:12; but rather the meaning is, "I will cause to ride on Ephraim" {f}; that is, the Assyrians shall ride upon them, get the dominion over them, carry them captive, and use them to hard service and bondage, as a heifer rid upon by a severe rider while ploughing; and the other tribes shall not escape, though they shall not be so hardly dealt with: "Judah shall plough, and Jacob shall break his clods"; these shall be carried captive into Babylon, and employed in hard and servile work, but more tolerable; as ploughing and breaking clods are easier than to ride upon; and as they had hope of deliverance at the end of seventy years; whereas no promise of return was made to the ten tribes, which is the sense some give; but Pocock and others think that these words regard the tender and gentle methods God took with these people to bring them to obedience to his law. Ephraim being teachable like a heifer, he took hold of her fair neck, and stroked it to encourage her, and accustom her to the hand, and to the yoke; and then put the yoke of his law upon them, add trained them up in his institutions, and used also gentle methods to keep them in obedience; and also set Judah to "plough", and Jacob to "break the clods", prescribed for them; and employed them in good works, in the duties of religion, from whence answerable fruit might have been expected; saying to them, by his prophets, as follows:

{c} hrawu bwj le "super bonitatem cervicis ejus", Montanus; "super bonitatem colli ipsius", Schmidt; "super praestantiam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {d} bykra "equitare feci", Munster, Rivet. {e} wl ddvy "occabit ei", De Dieu; "occabit illi?" Schmidt. {f} "Equitare faciam in Ephraim", Lyra, Tarnovius; "equitare faciam super Ephraim", so some in Calvin.

Hosea 10:12

Ver. 12. Saw to yourselves in righteousness,.... Not the seed of grace, which bad men have not, and cannot saw it; and which good men need not, it being sown in them already, and remaining; rather the seed of the word, which should be laid up in their hearts, dwell richly in them, and be kept and retained by them; though it is best of all to understand it of works of righteousness; as sowing to the flesh is doing the works of the flesh, or carnal and sinful acts; so sowing "unto righteousness" {g}, as it may be rendered, is doing works of righteousness; living soberly and righteously; doing works according to the word of righteousness, from good principles, and with good views, with a view to the glory of God: and which will be "sowing to themselves", turn to their own account; for though such works are not profitable to God, as to merit anything at his hands; yet they are not only profitable to others, but to those that do them; for though not "for", yet "in keeping" the commands of God there is "great reward",
Ps 19:11. Reap in mercy; or "according to mercy" {h} not according to the merit of works, for there is none in them; but according to the mercy of God, to which all blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternaL, are owing; and such who sow to the Spirit, or spiritual things, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting; not as the reward of debt, but of grace; not as of merit, but as owing to the mercy of Christ, **Ga 6:9** **Jude 1:21**;

break up your fallow ground; that is, of their hearts; which were like ground unopened, unbroken, not filled and manured, nor sown with seed, but overrun with weeds and thistles; and so were they, hard and impenitent, destitute of grace, and full of sin and wickedness, and stood in need of being renewed in the spirit of their minds; which this exhortation is designed to convince them of, and to stir them up to make use of proper methods of obtaining it, through the efficacious grace of God; see **Jer 4:5**;

for [it is] time to seek the Lord: for his grace; as the husbandman seeks, prays, and waits for rain, when he has tilled his ground, and sowed his seed, to water it, and make it fruitful, that he may have a good reaping time, a plentiful harvest; and as there is a time to seek for the one, so for the other:

till he come and rain righteousness upon you; that is, Christ, whose coming is as the rain, **Ho 6:3**; and who, when he should come, whether personally by his incarnation, or spiritually by his gracious presence, would rain a plentiful rain of the doctrines of grace, and the blessings of it, such as peace pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by him; particularly the justifying righteousness wrought out by him, which is fully manifested in the Gospel, the ministration of that righteousness, and is applied unto, and put upon, all them that believe: or "till he come and teach you righteousness" {i}; as Christ did when come; he taught the word of righteousness in general, and the righteousness of God in particular, and directed men to seek it; declared he came to fulfil all righteousness, and taught men to believe in him for it, and that he is their righteousness, and the end of the law for it; as well as he taught them to live righteously and godly; see **Joe 2:23**. The Targum is,

"O house of Israel, do for yourselves good works; walk in the way of truth; establish for yourselves the doctrine of the law; behold, at all times the prophets say to you, return to the fear of the Lord; now shall he be revealed, and bring righteousness to you."

But these exhortations were vain and fruitless, as appears by what follows:

{g} hqdul "ad justitiam", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Drusius, Tarnovius, Cocceius. {h} dox ypl "ad os miserecordiae", Montanus; "secundum misericordiam", Pagninus; "secundum pietatem", Cocceius, Schmidt. {i} Mkl qdu hrwyw "et doceat justitiam vos", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Hosea 10:13

Ver. 13. Ye have ploughed wickedness,.... Contrived it, and took a great deal of pains to commit it; by ploughing sowed it, and which sprung up in a plentiful crop: it may denote their first sins, from whence all others arose; as their irreligion and infidelity; their apostasy from God; their idolatry and contempt of his word and prophets:

ye have reaped iniquity; abundance of other sins have sprung up from thence; a large harvest of them have been reaped and got in; or great numbers of other sins have been committed; one sin leads on to another, and these proceed "ad infinitum"; wickedness is of an increasing nature, and grows worse and worse, and proceeds to more ungodliness: many understand this of the punishment or reward of sin:

ye have eaten the fruit of lies; as a sweet morsel though bread of deceit; which could not profit them, nor yield them in the issue the pleasure it promised them, and they hoped for from it:

because thou didst trust in thy way; in the worship of their idols, and in their alliances with neighbouring nations, and promised themselves great prosperity and happiness from hence:

and in the multitude of thy mighty men; their valiant soldiers, their numerous armies, and the generals of them, well skilled in war, and courageous; and also in their auxiliaries, which they had from the Egyptians and others; these they put their confidences in, to protect them; and so in their garrisons and fortresses, as the following words show:

Hosea 10:14

Ver. 14. Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people,.... Because of their wickedness and vain confidence, the Assyrian army should invade them; which would cause a tumultuous noise to be made throughout the tribes in all cities and towns, a cry, a howling, and lamentation; especially among fearful and timorous ones as women and children; who would be thrown into a panic at hearing the news of a powerful foreign enemy entering their country, and laying waste all before them; a voice of clamour, as Jarchi observes, crying, flee, flee:

and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled; the strong holds, in which they put their confidence for safety; everyone of these should be taken and demolished by the enemy, in all parts of the kingdom; so that there should be none left to flee unto no place of retreat:

as Shalman spoiled Betharbel in the day of battle; that is, Shalmaneser king of Assyria, his name being abbreviated, as Bethaven is called Aven, Ho 10:8; who had lately, though there in no account of it elsewhere, spoiled this place, demolished its fortresses, and destroyed the inhabitants of it; which is thought to be either the city of Arbel beyond Jordan, in the Apocrypha:

"Who went forth by the way that leadeth to Galgala, and pitched their tents before Masaloth, which is in Arbela, and after they had won it, they slew much people." (1 Maccabees 9:2)

which Josephus {k} calls a city of Galilee, and sometimes a village; and which, according to him, was not far from Sipphore, and in lower Galilee near to which thieves and robbers dwelt in caves and dens, difficult to come at; and so a Jewish writer {l} places Arbel between Sipphore and Tiberias; and elsewhere {m} mention is made of the valley of Arbel, near to these places: and Jerom {n} says, there was the village Arbel beyond Jordan, on the borders of Pella, a city of Palestine; and another of this name in the large plain, nine miles from the town of Legio: and he also speaks of an Arbela, the border of the tribe of Judah to the east; perhaps the same with Harbaalah, whence Arbela, or the mount of Baalah, Jos 15:11; now one or other of these places might be laid waste by this king of Assyria, in the first year of Hoshea, when he came up against him, and made him tributary: though some think Arbela in Assyria or Armenia is meant, famous for the utter defeat of Darius by Alexander, four hundred years after this, when it might have been rebuilt, and become considerable again: some of the Jewish writers {o} say there was a place near Nineveh so called; Benjamin of Tudela says {p}, from Nineveh to Arbel is one "parsa", or four miles: and others {q} think Samaria itself is meant; but that cannot be, since the destruction of that city is here prophesied of, which should be as this: some conjecture it was the temple of a deity called Arbel, as Schmidt: but, be it what or where it will, here was a great devastation and slaughter made; which at this time was well known, and to which the desolation that would be made in the land of Israel is compared. The Vulgate Latin version is, "as Salmana was wasted by the house of him who judged Baal in the day of battle"; which patrons and defenders of interpret of the slaughter of Zalmunna by Jerubbaal, that is, Gideon; but the names of the one and the other are very different; nor does the text speak of the slaughter of a prince, but of the destruction of a city, and not of Shalman, but of Arbel; and refers not to an ancient, but recent history. Mr. Whiston {r} places the spoil of Arbela in the year 3272 A.M. or before Christ 732;

the mother was dashed in pieces with [her] children: women big with child, or having their children in their arms, had no mercy shown them, but were destroyed together; so it had been at Arbel, and would be again in Israel, which was dreadful to think of: according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, Arbel was the name of a great man in those days, whose family, meant by beth or a house, was thus cruelly destroyed.

{k} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 11. sect. 1. & l. 14. c. 15. sect. 4. In Vita sua, sect. 69. p. 922, 934. {l} Juchasin, fol. 65. 1. {m} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 2, 3. & Taaniot, fol. 69. 2. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 34. 3. {n} De locis Heb. fol. 87. L. {o} Juchasin, ut supra. (fol. 65. 1.) {p} Itinerar. p. 62. {q} Juchasin, ib. (fol. 65. 1.) R. Joseph Kimchi in David Kimchi in loc. {r} Chronological Tables, cent. 8.

Hosea 10:15

Ver. 15. So shall Bethel do unto you, because of your great wickedness,.... Or, "because of the evil of your evil" {s}; their extreme wickedness, and exceeding sinfulness; the evil of evils they were guilty of was their idolatry, their worshipping the calf at Bethel; and this was the cause of all their ruin: God was the cause of it; the king of Assyria the instrument; but the procuring or meritorious cause was their abominable wickedness at Bethel; which therefore should be as Betharbel; yea, the whole land should be, on the account of that, like unto it, or be spoiled as that was. Or the words may be rendered, "so will he do unto you, O Bethel" {t}; that is, either God, or Shalman or Shalmaneser, shall do the same to Bethel as he did to Betharbel; utterly destroy it and its inhabitants, showing no mercy to age or sex;

in a morning shall the king of Israel be utterly cut off; meaning Hoshea the last king of Israel, and the kingdom entirely destroyed; so that afterwards there was no more king in Israel, nor has been to this day; there was not only an utter destruction of that king, but of all kingly power and government, and ever since the children of Israel have been without a king, **Ho 3:4**; and this was to be done, and was done, in a "morning": in the beginning of his reign, as Joseph Kimchi; but this seems not so well to agree with the history, since it was in the ninth year of his reign that Samaria was taken: but the sense is, either that it would be certainly done, as sure as the morning came; or suddenly and quickly, as the morning light breaks forth; or in the morning of prosperity, when they were expecting light and good days, from their alliance with the king of Egypt, against the king of Assyria.

{s} Mkter ter ynpm "propter malitiam malitiae vestrae", Pagninus, Cocceius, Schmidt. {t} la-tyb Mkl hve hkk "sic faciet vobis, [Deus], O Bethel", Drusius; "sic faciet vobis [Salman], O Bethel", Schmidt.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hosea 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 11

This chapter gives an account of the free and ancient love of God to Israel, and of the benefits and blessings of goodness he bestowed upon them; and of their ingratitude in not owning them, nor hearkening to his prophets, but sacrificing and burning incense to idols, Ho 11:1; wherefore they are threatened with disappointment of relief from Egypt, with captivity into Assyria, and with the ravages of the sword in all places, being a people bent to backsliding, and incorrigible, Ho 11:5; and yet, notwithstanding all this, the bowels of the Lord yearn after them, and promises of mercy are made to them; that they shall not utterly be destroyed, but a remnant shall be spared; which in the latter day shall be called and follow after the Lord, the King Messiah, and be returned from their captivity, and be resettled in their own land, and replaced in their own houses, Ho 11:8; the chapter is concluded with an honourable character of Judah, Ho 11:12.

Ver. 1. When Israel [was] a child, then I loved him,.... Or, "for Israel [was] a child" {u}; a rebellious and disobedient one, therefore his king was cut off in a morning, and he has been, and will be, without a king many days; yet still "I loved him": or, "though Israel [was] a child" {w}; a weak, helpless, foolish, and imprudent one, "yet I loved him": or, "when a child"; in the infancy of his civil and church state, when in Egypt, and in the wilderness; the Lord loved him, not only as his creature, as he does all the works of his hands, but with a more special love than he loved others; choosing them to be a special people above all others; giving them his law, his statutes, and his judgments, his word and his worship, which he did not give to other nations. So he loves spiritual and mystical Israel, all the elect of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, when children, as soon as born, and though born in sin, carnal and corrupt; yea, before they are born, and when having done neither good nor evil; and so may be expressive both of the earliness and antiquity of his love to them, and of the freeness of it, without any merits or motives of theirs;

and called my son out of Egypt, not literal Israel, as before, whom God called his son, and his firstborn, and demanded his dismission from Pharaoh, and called him, and brought him out of Egypt with a mighty hand and outstretched arm; and which was a type of his calling spiritual Israel, his adopted sons, out of worse than Egyptian bondage and darkness: but his own natural and only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; for these words are expressly said to be fulfilled in him, **Mt 2:15**; not by way of allusion; or by accommodation of phrases; or as the type is fulfilled in the antitype; or as a proverbial expression, adapted to any deliverance; but literally: the first and only sense of the words respects Christ, who in his infancy was had to Egypt for shelter from Herod's rage and fury, and, when he was dead, and those that sought the life of Jesus, he was by an angel of the Lord, warning Joseph of it, called out of Egypt, and brought into Judea, **Mt 2:19**; and this as a proof of the love of God to Israel; which as it was expressed to him in his infancy, it continued and appeared in various instances, more or less unto the coming of Christ; who, though obliged for a while to go into Egypt, must not continue there, but must be called from thence, to be brought up in the land of Judea; to do his miracles, preach his doctrines, and do good to the bodies and souls of men there, being sent particularly to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and, above all, in order to work out the salvation and redemption of his special people among them, and of the whole Israel of God everywhere else; which is the greatest instance of love to them, and to the world of the Gentiles, that ever was known, **Joh 3:16** **1Jo 2:2**.

{u} yk "quia", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius. {w} "Quamvis sit puer", Tarnovius, Rivet.

Hosea 11:2

Ver. 2. [As] they called them, so they went from them,.... That is, the prophets of the Lord, the true prophets, called Israel to the worship and service of God; but they turned a deaf ear to them, and their backs upon them; and the more they called to them, the further they went from them, and from the way of their duty; see Ho 11:7. So the Targum,

"I sent the prophets to teach them, but they wandered from them;"

Moses and Aaron were sent unto them, and called them out of Egypt, but they hearkened not unto them; see **Ex 6:9**; in later times the prophets were sent unto them, to exhort them to their duty, and to reclaim them from their evil ways, but they despised and refused to attend to their advice and instructions; and this was continued to the times of Israel, or the ten tribes, departing from the house of David, and setting up idolatrous worship; and during their revolt and apostasy: but all in vain. So after Christ was called out of Egypt, he and his apostles, and John the Baptist before them, called them to hearken to him, but they turned away from them. Aben Ezra interprets it of the false prophets, who called them to idolatry, and they went after them. Schmidt understands it of the Israelites calling one another to it, and going after it, for their own sakes, and because it pleased them, and was agreeable to them;

they sacrificed to Baalim, and burnt incense to graven images: they joined themselves to Baalpeor, and worshipped the golden calf, fashioned with a graving tool, in the wilderness; they sacrificed to Baalim, one or another of them, in the times of the judges, and of Ahab, and committed idolatry with other graven images, of which burning incense is a part. And the Jews in Christ's time, instead of hearkening to him and his apostles, followed the traditions of the elders, and the dictates of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were their Baals, their lords and masters and they sought for life and righteousness by their own works, which was sacrificing to their net, and burning incense to their drag; all this was great ingratitude. Next follows a narrative of other benefits done to this people.

Hosea 11:3

Ver. 3. I taught Ephraim also to go,.... All the tribes of Israel and Ephraim, or the ten tribes with the rest; these the Lord instructed in the way of his commandments, and taught them to walk therein; he his angel before them, to conduct them through the wilderness; yea, he himself went before them in the pillar of cloud by day, and in the pillar of fire by night, to which history this seems to refer. So the Targum,

"I, by an angel sent by me, led Israel in the right way."

The allusion seems to be to a mother or nurse accommodating herself to her child, beginning to go; she stoops down, sets it on its feet, and one foot before another, forms its steps, teaches it how to go, and walks its pace with it. And in like manner the Lord deals with his spiritual Israel, his regenerated ones, who become like little children, and are used as such; as in regeneration they are quickened, and have some degree of spiritual strength given them, they are taught to go; they are taught what a Saviour Christ is, and their need of him; they are instructed to go to him by faith for everything they want, and to walk by faith on him, as they have received him; and having heard and learned of the Father, they go to Christ, **Joh 6:45**; and are taught also to go to the throne of grace for all supplies of grace; and to the house of God, to attend the word and ordinances, for the benefit of their souls; and to walk in the ways of the Lord, for his glory, and their good;

taking them by their arms; or "on his own arms" {x}; bearing and carrying them in his arms, as a father his son; see **De 1:31**
Nu 11:12; so the Lord deals with his spiritual Israel, either holding them by their arms while walking, as nurses their children, to help and ease them in walking, and that they may not stumble and fall; so the Lord holds up the goings of his people in his ways, that their footsteps slip not, and upholds them with the right hand of his righteousness: or taking them up in his own arms when weary, he carries them in his bosom; or, when they are failing or fallen, lays hold on them, and takes them up again; and so they are not utterly cast down, whether the fall is into sin, or into some calamity and affliction; when he puts underneath his everlasting arms, and bears them and keeps them from sinking, as well as from a final and total falling away. Abarbinel, and others after him, interpret this of Ephraim taking up and carrying in his arms Baalim, the graven images and golden calves; which is mentioned as an instance of ingratitude; but very wrongly;

but they knew not that I healed them; of the diseases of Egypt, or preserved them from them: this includes the whole of their salvation and deliverance from Egypt, and all the benefits and favours accompanying it, which they imputed to their idols, and not to the Lord; see Ex 15:26. "Healing", in a spiritual sense, generally signifies the forgiveness of sin, which the Lord's people may have, and not know it; and, through want of better light and knowledge, may also ascribe it to their repentance, humiliation, and tears, when it is alone owing to the grace of God, and blood of Christ.

{x} wytwewrz le "super brachiis suis", Montanus; "super brachia sua", Piscator; "in brachis sua", Cocceius.

Hosea 11:4

Ver. 4. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love,.... As Ephraim is compared to a heifer in the preceding chapter, here he is said to be drawn; but not with such cords and bands as cattle are, but with such as men are; in a rational and gentle way, in a kind, loving, tender, humane, friendly, and fatherly way and manner; so the Lord drew Israel on in the wilderness, till he was brought to Canaan's land, by bestowing kind favours upon them, and by making precious promises to them. So the Lord deals with his spiritual Israel; he draws them out of the present state and circumstances, in which they are by nature, to himself, and to his Son, and to follow after him, and run in the ways of his commandments; and which he does not by force and compulsion against their wills, nor by mere moral persuasion, but by the invincible power of his grace, sweetly working upon them, and attracting them; he does it by revealing Christ in them, in the glories of his person and in the riches of his grace, and by letting in his love into their hearts; and by kind invitations, precious promises, and divine teachings, attended with his powerful and efficacious grace; see Jer 31:3;

and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws; as one that is merciful to his beast; as a kind and humane husbandman, when his cattle have been hard at work, takes off their bridles or muzzles, or the yokes on them, fastened with a halter about their jaws, that they may have liberty to feed on food set before them, as the next clause shows. So the Targum,

"my word was to them as a good husbandman, who lightens the shoulder of oxen, and looses "the bridles" on their jaws."

This may refer to Israel's deliverance from their bondage in Egypt; and be spiritually applied to Christ, the essential Word of God, breaking and taking the yoke of sin, Satan, and the law from off his people, and bringing them into the liberty of the children of God. Schmidt reads and interprets the words quite otherwise, "and I was to them as they that lift up the yoke upon their jaws"; not remove it from them but put it on them; expressing their ignorance and ingratitude, who, when the Lord drew them in the kind and loving manner he did, reckoned it as if he put a yoke upon them, and treated them rather as beasts than men; but this seems not to agree with what follows:

and I laid meat unto them: or declined, or brought it down to them, to their very mouths; referring to the manna and quails he rained about their tents. So the Targum,

"and, even when they were in the wilderness, I multiplied to them good things to eat."

And thus in a spiritual sense the Lord gives meat to them that fear him, while in the wilderness of this world; he brings it near, and sets it before them, in the ministry of the word and ordinances; even that meat which endures to everlasting life, the flesh of Christ, which is meat indeed; and the doctrines of the Gospel, which are milk for babes, and strong meat for more experienced saints.

Hosea 11:5

Ver. 5. He shall not return into the land of Egypt,.... Ephraim or Israel, the ten tribes: and the Septuagint and Arabic versions express them by name, though they give a wrong sense of the words, rendering them, "and Ephraim dwelt in Egypt"; he did so indeed with the other tribes formerly; but here it is said he shall not go thither again to be a captive there, but shall go into bondage more severe than that in Egypt, even into captivity in Assyria: rather the sense is, they should not go thither for shelter, at least not as a body, though some few of them might, as in **Ho 9:3**; the far greater part of them should he carried captive by the Assyrians: or they should not return to Egypt to seek for help and assistence, as they had done; either they ought not to do it, nor would there be any need of it, did they but return to the Lord, as Kimchi observes; or rather they should now be so straitly shut up in Samaria, besieged so closely by the enemy, or else carried into distant lands, that, if they would, they could not apply to Egypt for relief;

but the Assyrian shall be his king; the king of Assyria shall be king over the ten tribes, whether they want him or not; they shall be forced to acknowledge him as their king, and be subject to him, being taken and carried captive into his land:

because they refused to return: to the Lord, from whom they had backslidden, and to his pure worship, word, and ordinances, they had departed from, setting up the calves at Dan and Bethel; they refused to relinquish worshipping idols instead of the true God; thus ungratefully behaving to him for all the above favours bestowed upon them; wherefore they are righteously threatened with captivity and bondage in Assyria.

Hosea 11:6

Ver. 6. And the sword shall abide on the cities,.... Or "shall fall" {y}, and continue; meaning the sword of the Assyrians, whereby Ephraim should be brought into subjection to them, and the king of Assyria become king over them; his sword should be drawn, and rest upon them, not only on their chief city Samaria, besieged three years by him, but upon all their other cities, which would fall into his hands, with the inhabitants of them:

and shall consume his branches, and devour [them]; that is, the towns and villages adjoining to the cities; which were to them as branches are to a tree, sprung from them, and were supported by them; and, being near them, prospered or suffered as they did: some render it, "his bars" {z}, as the word is sometimes used, and interpret it of the great men and nobles of the land. So the Targum,

"and it shall slay his mighty men, and destroy his princes;"

with which Jarchi agrees;

because of their own counsels; which they took and pursued, contrary to the counsel of God, the revelation of his mind and will; particularly in setting up idolatrous worship, and continuing in it, notwithstanding all the admonitions, exhortations, counsels, and threatenings of God by his prophets; or else because of their counsels with the Egyptians, and their covenants with them, for help against the Assyrian, whose yoke they were for casting off, and refused to pay tribute to; which provoked him to draw his sword upon them, which made the havoc it did in their cities, and the inhabitants of them.

{y} hlx "cedet", Calvin; "incidet", Schmidt; "irruet", Zanchius, Drusius, Liveleus. {z} wydb "vectes ejus", Schmidt. So some in Drusius.

Hosea 11:7

Ver. 7. And my people are bent to backsliding from me,.... There is a propensity in thorn to it, through prevailing corruption in them; they are inclined unto it, the bias of their minds is that way; they are bent upon it, and pertinaciously abide in it; nor will they be reclaimed from it, by all the means and methods made use of, even though they had been, and professed themselves to be the people of God. Some understand this, not of their backsliding and aversion from God; but either of his return to them, or of their return to him, rendering the words, "and my people are in suspense" {a}; like a man that hangs in the air, as Aben Ezra, neither ascends nor descends; that is, they are in doubt of what should be done to thorn, or they themselves should do: either "about my return" {b}; that is, to them; whether after all they may expect that God would be kind and merciful to them, so Abarbinel: or "about return to me" {c}; whether they should or not, inclining rather not to return. So the Targum,

"my people divide (or hesitate) to return to my law;"

with which Jarchi agrees, paraphrasing it,

"when the prophets instruct them to return unto me, they are in suspense whether to return or not;"

but Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe the word is always used in a bad sense, of aversion or backsliding, and that the word is in another form when used for repentance or returning;

though they called them to the most High; that is, the prophets of the Lord called them to turn from their idols, and return to the most high God, the true and the living God, from whom they had backslidden, and to his true worship, they had neglected and forsaken:

none at all would exalt [him]; the most high God, and give him the praise and glory due to his name; but, on the other hand, extolled their idols, and ascribed all their good things to them: or "none would exalt them" {d} the prophets of the Lord that called them; would not give that honour to them that was due to their office, or pay any regard to them, or to their admonitions and advice, but depreciated them, and reproached and persecuted them: or "none at all would lift up": that is, their head, as Aben Ezra, toward the heaven, and to God in it, to whom they were called; but kept looking on the earth, and to earthly things, particularly to their idols; and did not lift up or erect their ears, to hearken to what was said to them, but were deaf to all counsel and reproof. The Targum is,

"they walked not in an erect stature."

Agreeably to which the former clause may be rendered, as by some, "and they called them to things above"; but none would look upwards;
See Gill on "Ho 7:16".

{a} Myawlt "suspensi haerent", Junius & Tremellius; "suspensi", Montanus, Schmidt. {b} ytbwvml "ad reditum meum", V. L. {c} "Circa redire ad me", Castalio. {d} Mmwry al "eos non exaltabit", Schmidt.

Hosea 11:8

Ver. 8. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? [how] shall I deliver thee, Israel?.... That is, as usually interpreted, into the hand of the enemy, or unto wrath, ruin, and destruction; for, notwithstanding all the sins of this people before observed, and the punishment threatened to be inflicted on them, the Lord is pleased here, and in the following verses, to give some intimations of his goodness, grace, and mercy to them; not to the whole body of them, for they as such were given and delivered up to the enemy, and carried captive, and dispersed among the nations, and were never recovered to this day; but to a remnant among them, according to the election of grace, that should spring from them, for the sake of which they were not all cut off by the sword; but were reserved as a seed for later times, the times of the Messiah, which the prophecy in this and the following words has respect unto; not only the first times of the Gospel, when some of the dispersed of Israel were met with by it, and converted under it; but the last times of it; times yet to come, when all Israel shall be saved; and may be applied to the elect of God, in all ages, and of all nations, The words are generally understood as a debate in the divine mind, struggling within itself between justice and mercy; justice requiring the delivery of these persons unto it, and mercy being reluctant thereunto, pleading on their behalf; and which at last gets the victory, and rejoices against judgment. There is a truth in all this; justice seems to demand that sinners, as such, who have injured and affronted him, be given up to, him, and suffer the curse of the law, according to their deserts, and be delivered unto death, even eternal death, as well as to temporal punishments; and which might be expected would be the case, by the instances and examples of the angels that sinned, and of the men of the old world, and of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah; but mercy cannot bear it, pleads against; it, and asks how can it be done, since these are my children, my dear child, on, pleasant ones, as Ephraim was, my chosen and my covenant ones, and, besides, for whom provision is made in Christ for the satisfactions of justice? But the sense is rather this, "how might" or "could I give thee up; Ephraim? how might" or "could I deliver thee, Israel" {e}? that is, with what severity might I deal with thee? and how justly and righteously could I do it? since thy sins are so many, and so great;

how shall I make thee as Admah? [how] shall I set thee as Zeboim? two cities that were utterly destroyed by fire from heaven, along with Sodom and Gomorrah, De 29:23; how justly could I have made thee, and put thee in, the same condition and circumstances, as those two cities, and the inhabitants of them, who were so severely punished for their sins, and were never restored again? signifying, that inasmuch as they were guilty of the same or like heinous sins, was he utterly to destroy them, and cut them off from the face of the earth, he should not exceed the due bounds of justice. To this sense Schmidt interprets the words. The design of which is to show the greatness of Ephraim's sins, as deserving the uttermost wrath and vengeance of God, and to magnify the riches of God's grace in their salvation, as next expressed; and it is true of all God's elect, who, considered as sinners in Adam, and by their own transgressions, both before and after conversion, deserved to be treated according to the rigour of justice; but God is merciful to them, according to his choice of them, covenant with them, and provision he has made in Christ, and upon the foot of his satisfaction;

mine heart is turned within me; not changed; for there is no shadow of turning with the Lord, neither in his mind and purposes, which he never turns from, nor can be turned back; nor in his affections for them; as his heart is never turned from love to hatred, so neither from hatred to love; or his love would not be from everlasting, as it is, and he rest in it as he does; but this expresses the strong motion of mercy in him towards his people, springing from his sovereign will and pleasure, and what is elsewhere signified by the troubling, soundings, and yearnings of his bowels towards them; see Jer 31:20; with which compare **La 1:20**;

my repentings are kindled together; not that repentance properly belongs to God, who is neither man, nor the Son of Man, that he should repent of anything, Nu 23:19; he repents not of his love to his people, nor of his choice of them, nor of his covenant with them, nor of his special gifts and grace bestowed on them; but he sometimes does what men do when they repent, he changes his outward conduct and behaviour in the dispensations of his providence, and acts the reverse of what he had done, or seemed to be about to do; as, with respect to the old world, the making of Saul king, and the case of the Ninevites, **Ge 6:6**; so here, though he could, and seemed as if he would, go forth in a way of strict justice, yet changes his course, and steers another way, without any change of his will. The phrase expresses the warmth and ardour of his affections to his people; how his heart burned with love to them, his bowels and inward parts were inflamed with it; from whence proceeded what is called repentance among men, as in the case of Jeremiah, Jer 20:9. The Targum is, "the word of my covenant met me; my mercies (or bowels of mercies) were rolled together."

{e} Knta Kya "quam juste et misere desolatum te dabo? dare jure deberem et possem?" Schmidt. So Luther and Tarnovius.

Hosea 11:9

Ver. 9. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger,.... That is, his wrath and fury to the uttermost; his people are deserving of his wrath as others, being by nature children of wrath as the rest; which they are sensible of under spiritual conviction, and therefore flee from it, where they may be safe: and though the Lord often chastises and afflicts them, yet not in wrath; or however but in a little wrath, as it seems to them; he does not stir up all his wrath, nor any in reality; all being poured upon his Son, their surety, who saves and delivers them from wrath to come;

I will not return to destroy Ephraim; or "again", or "any more, destroy" {f} him; not twice; he might be destroyed when carried captive into Assyria; but the remnant that shall spring from him in the latter day shall not be destroyed, but saved. The Targum is,

"my word shall not return to destroy the house of Israel;"

or I will not return from my love and affections to them, I will never be wroth with them any more; nor from my mercy to them, which is from everlasting to everlasting; or from my covenant, promise, and resolution to save them, they shall not be punished with everlasting destruction:

for I [am] God, and not man; a God gracious and merciful, longsuffering, slow to anger, and pardoning sin, and not man, cruel, revengeful, implacable, who shows no mercy when it is in the power of his hands to avenge himself; or God that changes not in his purposes and counsels, in his love and affections, and therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed, and not man that repents, is fickle, inconstant, and mutable; or God that is faithful to his covenant and promises, and not man that lies and deceives, promises and never performs. The Targum is, "seeing I am God, my word remains for ever, and my works are not as the works of the flesh (or of men) who dwell upon the earth;"

the Holy One in the midst of thee; being in the midst of his people, he protects and defends them, and so they are safe; and being the Holy One there, he sanctifies them, and saves them, in a way consistent with his own holiness and justice: or there is "a Holy One", or Holy Ones, the singular put for the plural, "in the midst of thee" {g}; and therefore thou shalt not be destroyed for their sakes, as Sodom would not, had there been ten righteous persons in it, to which some think the allusion is:

and I will not enter into the city; in a hostile way to destroy or plunder it; but this is not to be understood either of Samaria or Jerusalem, which were entered into in this manner. The Targum is,

"I have decreed by my word that my holy Shechinah shall be among you, and I will not change Jerusalem again for another city;"

which sense the Jewish commentators follow; but, as this respects Gospel times, the meaning seems to be, that God would dwell among his people everywhere, and would not be confined to any city or temple as heretofore; but wherever his church and people were, there would be his temple, and there he would dwell.

{f} txvl bwva al "non perdam amplius", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "non iterum destruam", Cocceius. {g} vwdq Kbrqb "[est] sanctus", i.e. "[sancti], in medio tui", Rivetus.

Hosea 11:10

Ver. 10. They shall walk after the Lord,.... That is, after the Messiah, who is Jehovah our righteousness; that Jehovah the Jews pierced, and now shall mourn at the sight of, being converted to him; for these are the chosen of God among that people, who in the latter day shall partake of the grace and favour before expressed, in consequence of which they shall be set a seeking the Lord their God, and David their King; and, finding him, shall follow after him, as sheep go after their shepherd, being led by him into green pastures; as subjects follow their prince, obeying his commands and orders; as soldiers march after their leader and commander, so these after Christ, the great Captain of their salvation, part of whose armies they will make: they will walk under the influence of his grace, having life, strength, guidance, and direction, from him, which walking implies; they will walk not after the flesh, as they now do, but after the Spirit of Christ, taking him for their guide, by whom they will be led into all truth, as it is in Jesus; they will walk in his ways, in all the paths of faith and holiness, truth and righteousness; in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, according to his word. The Targum is,

"they shall go after the worship of the Lord;"

he shall roar like a lion: the Lord Christ they walk after; who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Israelites shall now follow after; receiving, embracing, and confessing him the true Messiah. So the Targum,

"and his Word shall be as a lion that roars;"

Christ, the essential Word of God: and so Jarchi, according to Lyra, interprets it of the Messiah to come; who is compared to a lion for his strength and courage, and for the fierceness of his wrath against his enemies; and his voice, in his word, is like the roaring of a lion, exceeding loud, and reaching far, even the uttermost parts of the earth; as it did in the first times of the Gospel, and will in the last; and which the Jews particularly, in each of the parts of the world, will hear, and Gentiles also, and be affected with it; for it will be also very strong, powerful, and efficacious; which is another reason of its being compared to a lion roaring; see **Joe 3:16**;

when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west; the children of Israel, the children of God, his adopted ones, whom he has predestinated to the adoption of children; these, through the first impressions of Christ's voice or word upon them, shall startle, and be set a trembling, and be astonished, as Saul was, when called and converted; as it is reported of the lion, that, when it roars, other beasts are so terrified that they are quite stunned and amazed, and are not able to stir; but though the first sound of the voice of Christ may have some effect upon the Jews, yet this will not cause them to tremble at him so as to flee from him, but to cause them to flee to him: for the phrase is expressive of motion towards him, and to their own land, as appears from Ho 11:11; when filled with a sense of his majesty and grace, they shall approach him with a holy awe of him, with fear and trembling: or "come with honour" {h}; agreeably to 1Sa 16:4; having high, honourable, and grand sentiments and apprehensions of him; so that this trembling, at least, issues in a godly and filial fear and reverence of him, suitable to their character as children. The phrase, "from the west", or "from the sea" {i}, meaning the Mediterranean sea, which lay west of Judea, and is often used for the west, may signify the western or European part of the world, where the Jews for the most part are, and from whence they will be gathered. The Targum is,

"for he shall roar, and the captives shall be gathered from the west."

{h} wdrxyw "et cum honore accedent", Schmidt. {i} Mym "a mari", Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schmidt.

Hosea 11:11

Ver. 11. They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt,.... They shall come from thence with fear and trembling; which may allude to the trembling of birds at the roaring of a lion, or to the trembling motion of their wings in flying; and denotes the swiftness of the motion of the Israelites and Jews to Christ, and to his church and people, and to their own land, under divine influence and direction: or "shall come with honour" {k}; with all readiness and cheerfulness, in the obedience of faith:

and as a dove out of the land of Assyria; which is expressive of the same things, the dove being both a timorous and swift creature. Birds in common are very timorous, and tremble at any noise, and fearful of everything that disturbs them, and therefore make all the haste and speed they can to get out of the way, and to do which they are naturally provided; and more especially the dove is always represented as very fearful and trembling, especially when pursued by the hawk, as the poet {l} observes. Though, it may be, these figures may only signify, as the weak and impotent state of the Jews, considered in themselves at this time, so the quick speed and haste they shall make to their own land. And perhaps there may be something alluded to in the text, that may refer to the dove as peculiar to Assyria, as it should seem to be. Now it is said of Semiramis, an ancient queen of Assyria, that being exposed when an infant, was nourished by doves, and at her death was turned into one; and from hence it is not only said she had her name, which signifies a dove, in the Syriac tongue, but doves by the Syrians were worshipped as deities {m}. And Derceto, a Syrian goddess, supposed to be her mother, having a temple at Askelon, perhaps the above story may be the reason why the inhabitants of that place reckoned doves so sacred that they did not kill them; for Philo {n}, who lived there some time, having observed great numbers of them in the highways, and in every house, asked the reason of it; and he was answered, that the citizens were of old forbid the use of them: and it may be further observed, that, in honour of Semiramis, the kings of Assyria bore a dove in their coat of arms {o}; but whether there is any thing peculiar or no in this reference is not certain: and, besides what has been observed of the fearfulness of this creature, and its swiftness and haste it makes in flying, it may also denote the characters of meekness, humility, and harmlessness, which the Jews, now converted, will have by the grace of God, as well as their mournful disposition. Egypt and Assyria are particularly mentioned, as they generally are where the return of Israel and Judah into their own land is prophesied of, Isa 11:11; and may signify the Turks, in whose possession these countries are, and among whom many Jews live: and the one lying to the south, and the other to the north of Judea, and the west being observed before, this shows that these people should be gathered from all parts of the world, where they are dispersed; the east is not mentioned, because their land they will be returned unto lies there;

and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord; it is not said in towns and cities, and fortified places, but in houses, signifying that they should dwell in their own land, in a civil sense, securely, and in their habitations, under their vines and fig trees, being in no fear and danger of enemies, and live in the utmost safety, under the government and protection of the King Messiah; or, in a spiritual sense, they will be placed in the congregations of the saints in the churches of Christ, which will be as dove houses to them, and whither they shall fly as doves to their windows, Isa 60:8; and it is observed of doves, that they fly the swiftest when they make to their own houses: and at last, as all the people of God will, they will be placed in the mansions of glory, in Christ's Father's house, those everlasting habitations. These words, "saith the Lord", are added, for the certain and sure accomplishment of all this. The Targum of the whole is,

"as a bird which comes openly, so shall they come who are carried captive into the land of Egypt; and as a dove that returns to its dove house, so shall they return who are carried into the land of Assyria; and I will return them in peace to their houses, and my word shall be their protection, saith the Lord."

{k} wdrxy "cum honore advenient", Schmidt. {l} "Sic ego, currebam, sic me ferus ille premebat, Ut fagere accipitrem penna trepidante columba, Ut solet accipiter trepidas urgere columbas". Ovid. Metamorph. l. 5. Fab. 10. {m} Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 92, 93, 107. {n} Apud Euseb. Evangel.

Praepar. l. 8. p. 398. {o} Vid. Gregor. Posthuma, p. 235.

Hosea 11:12

Ver. 12. Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit,.... Here properly we should begin a new chapter, as many interpreters and commentators do; for the prophet, or the Lord by him, in Ho 11:11, having finished his predictions concerning the call and conversion of the Israelites, and their return to their land, here begins a new discourse, by comparing the characters of Ephraim and Judah, and thence descends to the sins and punishment of both. The former, namely, Ephraim or Israel, that is, the ten tribes, surrounded either the prophet, to hear him prophesy, and professed a great regard to what he said; though it was all deceit and flattery: or rather the Lord himself, whom they pretended to serve and worship when they worshipped the calves at Dan and Bethel; and would have it thought they did not worship them, but the Lord in them, and by them, as the Papists now say of their images and image worship; but let them not deceive themselves, God will not be mocked: or when they did at any time seem to approach unto him in any branch of religious worship, either to pray unto him, or to praise him, it was not done with sincerity; it was only with their mouths, not with their hearts; these agreed not together, but, like their ancestors of old, "they did flatter, him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongues", Ps 78:36; and so all such professors of religion, who are not sincere in their service and worship of God; or meet together to speak and hear false doctrines, which are lies in hypocrisy; or attend to superstition and will worship, and set up ordinances and institutions of their own, neglecting those which are of God, do as Ephraim did, encompass the Lord with lies and deceit;

but Judah yet ruleth with God; a theocracy was as yet acknowledged and supported among them; God ruled in the midst of them, and; they ruled with him; their kings ruled in the fear of God, and according to his laws, statutes, and appointment, and not their own; particularly in the days of Hezekiah, which may be here respected, the people retained and practised the true worship and service of God: which, as it is the truest liberty, so is the highest honour and dignity: such are rulers with God, as all the Lord's people, all that believe in Christ, are; they are made by his grace kings and princes; and they appear to be so by their new birth; they are clothed, fed, and guarded as princes, as the sons of a king, as kings themselves; they have the riches and power of kings; they are possessed of a kingdom of grace now, which is within them, and where grace reigns, through righteousness, over their lusts and corruptions; and great power, like princes, have they in prayer with God, and are heirs of the kingdom of glory, as well as shall reign with Christ on earth. Gussetius renders it, "Judah yet weeps with God": as his father Jacob did, imitating him, as in Ho 12:4;

and is faithful with the saints; which Kimchi's father interprets of God himself; and so Lyra, and according to him Jarchi: and then the sense is, "and he", that is, God, "is faithful with the saints"; in fulfilling all his counsels, purposes, and designs of grace concerning them; in making good his covenant with them, and his promises unto them; and by bringing them to the enjoyment of all that grace and glory he calls them to: but this is rather an epithet of Judah, who kept to the word and worship of the true God, as the saints of old, their ancestors, had done; walked in the good old way, in the way of good men, and kept the paths of the righteous; abode by the true priests of the Lord, who were set apart and sanctified for that office; and hearkened to the prophets, the holy men of God, who spake to them, being moved by the Holy Spirit: and adhered firmly "to the holy things" {p}, as it may be rendered; to the holy temple, and the worship in it; to the holy sacrifices, altars, &c. when the ten tribes departed from them: and so this may be applied to the faithful in Christ Jesus, that believe in him truly, and continue in the faith of him in all ages; and who are "faithful with the Holy Ones" {q}; the same with God in the former clause; so Kimchi interprets it, and so the word is used in **Pr 9:10**; see Jos 24:19; that is, with Father, Son, and Spirit; with the Father, when they worship him in spirit and truth; with the Son, when they cleave to him with full purpose of heart; with the Spirit, when they walk after him, and give to each the glory due unto them: or rather, "faithful with holy men" {r}; sanctified by the Spirit and grace of God; as they are, when they hold fast the faith delivered to the saints without mixture or wavering, with courage and manliness; though the greater number is against them, and they are reproached and persecuted for so doing; when they abide by the ordinances of Christ, as they were delivered, and keep them in faith and love, without sinister views; when they continue steadfastly in the communion of the saints, attending with them on the word and ordinances, and do not forsake their assembling together; and when they constantly exhort and stir up one another to the duties of religion, and faithfully admonish and reprove each other as there is occasion for it.

{p} Myvwdq "[rebus] sanctis", Rivetus. {q} "Cum diis sanctis", Munster, Vatablus. So Ben Melech. {r} "Cum sanctis", i.e. "hominibus", Drusius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hosea 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 12

This chapter contains complaints and charges both against Israel and Judah, and threatens them with punishment in case they repent not, which they are exhorted to: and first Ephraim is charged with idolatry, vain confidence in, and alliances with, foreign nations, Ho 12:1; and then the Lord declares he has a controversy with Judah, and will punish the inhabitants of it for their sins, Ho 12:2; which are aggravated by their being the descendants of so great a man as Jacob, who got the advantage of his elder brother, had much power with God, and received favours from him, and they also, Ho 12:3; and therefore are exhorted to turn to God, wait on him, and do that which is right and good, Ho 12:6. Ephraim is again in his turn charged with fraudulent dealing in trade, and with oppression, and the love of it; and yet pretended he got riches by his own labour, without wronging any, Ho 12:7; nevertheless, the Lord promises them public ordinances of worship, and joy in them, and the ministry of his prophets, Ho 12:9; though for the present they were guilty of gross idolatry, Ho 12:11; which is aggravated by the raising of Jacob their progenitor from a low estate, and the wonderful preservation of him, and the bringing of them out of Egypt, Ho 12:12; and the chapter is closed with observing Ephraim's bitter provocation of God, for which his reproach should return unto him, and his blood be left upon him, Ho 12:14.

Ver. 1. Ephraim feedeth on wind,.... Which will be no more profitable and beneficial to him than wind is to a man that opens his mouth, and fills himself with it: the phrase is expressive of labour in vain, and of a man's getting nothing by all the pains he takes; the same with sowing the wind, and reaping the whirlwind, **Ho 8:7**; and so the Targum has it here,

"the house of Israel are like to one that sows the wind, and reaps the whirlwind all the day;"

and this refers either to the worship of idols, and the calves in particular, and the vain hope of good things promised to themselves from thence; or to their vain confidence in the alliances and confederacies they entered into with neighbouring nations; from which they expected much, but found little:

and followed after the east wind; a wind strong and vehement, burning and blasting, very noxious and harmful; so that, instead of receiving any profit and advantage either by their idolatry or their covenants with other nations, they were only in these things pursuing what would be greatly to their detriment: or they would be no more able to attain by such methods what they sought for, than they would be able to overtake the east wind, which is a very swift and fleeting one; so that this clause exposes their folly, in expecting good things from their idols, or help from their neighbours;

he daily increaseth lies and desolation; while they multiplied idols, which are lies fallacious and deceitful, and idolatrous rites and acts of worship, they do but increase their desolation and ruin, which such things are the cause of, and will certainly bring them unto; or, not content with the daily increase of their idolatries among themselves, they continually persecute, spoil, and plunder those who do not give into their false worship: so the Targum,

"lies and spoil they multiply;"

idolaters are generally persecutors:

and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians: and gave tribute and presents to their kings, as Menahem did to Pul, and Hoshea to Shalmaneser, not to hurt them, and to help and assist them against their enemies, and to strengthen their kingdom; see 2Ki 15:19;

and oil is carried into Egypt: one while they sent presents to the Assyrians, to obtain their favour and friendship: and at another time to the Egyptians; nay, they sent to So king of Egypt, at the same time they were tributary to Assyria, and, conspiring against him, brought on their ruin; and oil was a principal part of the present sent; for this was carried not by way of traffic, but as a present: so the Targum,

"and they carried gifts to Egypt;"

see Isa 57:9. The land of Israel, being a land of oil olive, was famous for the best oil, of which there was a scarcity in Egypt, and therefore a welcome present there, as balsam also was; see
Ge 37:25.

Hosea 12:2

Ver. 2. The Lord hath also a controversy with Judah,.... The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, as well as the ten tribes; for though they had ruled with God, and had been faithful with the saints in the first times of the apostasy of Israel; yet afterwards they sadly degenerated, and fell into idolatry likewise, particularly in the time of Ahaz, in which Hosea prophesied; and therefore the Lord had somewhat against them; nor would he spare them, but reprove them by the prophets, and rebuke them in his providences; bring them to his bar, and lay before them their evils, and threaten them with punishment in case of impenitence, as follows:

and will punish Jacob according to his ways; all the posterity of Jacob, whether Ephraim or Judah; those of the ten tribes, or of the two, who all descended from Jacob: or, "will visit according to his ways" {s}; if right, and agreeably to the mind and word of God, in a way of grace and mercy; but if wrong, crooked, and perverse, then in a way of punishment; for visiting is used both ways:

according to his doings will he recompense him; as they were good or bad; if good, will reward them with a reward of grace; if bad, with vengeance. The Targum paraphrases it,

"according to his right works."

{s} wykrdk-dqpl "ad visitandum juxta vias ejus", Pagninus, Montanus; "visitabit secundum vias ejus", Piscator.

Hosea 12:3

Ver. 3. He took his brother by the heel in the womb,.... That is, Jacob took his brother Esau by the heel, as he came forth from his mother's womb; the history of it is in Ge 25:25. It is here observed, upon mentioning the name of Jacob in Ho 12:2, meaning the posterity, of the patriarch; but here he himself is intended, and occasionally taken notice of, to show how very different his posterity were from him, and how sadly degenerated; as well as to upbraid them with ingratitude, whose ancestors, and they also, had received such and so many favours from the Lord; Jacob the patriarch was a hero from the womb, but they transgressors from it; this action of his observed was a presage and pledge of his having the superiority of his brother, and of his getting the birthright and blessing from him. So the Targum,

"prophet, say unto them, was it not said of Jacob, before he was born, that he would be greater than his brother?"

see **Ro 9:11**. In this action there was something divine, miraculous, and preternatural; it was not the effort of nature merely, but contrary to it, or at least above it; and not done by chance, but ordered by the providence of God, as a prediction and testification of his future greatness, and even of his posterity's, in times yet to come, as Kimchi observes, who refers to **Ob 1:18**;

and by his strength he had power with God; the Targum is, with the angel, as in Ho 12:4; he is called a man in the history of this event in Ge 32:24; not that he was a mere man, since he is here expressly called God, and afterwards the Lord God of hosts; and there it is evident, from the context, he was a divine Person, and no other than the Son of God; who, though not as yet incarnate, appeared in a human form, as a presage of his future incarnation; though this was not a mere apparition, spectre, or phantasm, as Josephus {t} calls it; for it was not in a dream, or in a visionary way, that this wrestling and striving was between this divine Person in this form and Jacob, but in reality; it was a real substance which the Son of God formed, animated, actuated, and assumed, for that time and purpose, and then laid it aside; which touched Jacob, and he touched that, laid hold on it, and held it fast, and strove with it, and had power over it, and over God in it; even over him that is God over all, the true God and eternal life, the Lord Jesus Christ; not a created God, or God by office, but by nature; as the perfections that are in him, and the works and worship ascribed to him, declare: now Jacob had power over him "by his strength"; not by his natural strength; either of his body, which could not have been equal to the strength of this human body assumed for the time, as it was used and managed by a divine Person, unless he had been extraordinarily assisted and strengthened; or of his mind and soul, not by any spiritual strength he had of himself; but by what he had from this divine Person, with whom he wrestled; who put strength into him, and supported and increased the power and strength of faith in prayer; so that he prevailed over him, and got the blessing, for which reason his name was called Israel, Ge 32:28.

{t} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 20. sect. 2.

Hosea 12:4

Ver. 4. Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed,.... This is repeated in different words, not only for the confirmation of it, it being a very extraordinary thing, and difficult of belief; but to direct to the history here referred to, where the person Jacob prevailed over is called a man, and here the angel; and so Josephus {u} calls him a divine Person; not a created angel, not Michael, as the Rabbins say, unless the Messiah is meant by him; nor Jacob's guardian angel, as Kimchi, every man being thought by some to have one; and much less Esau's evil angel, that was against Jacob, as Jarchi and Abarbinel; for of him he would never have sought nor expected a blessing; but an uncreated Angel, the Son of God, the same that went before the Israelites in the wilderness, and that redeemed Jacob from all evil, Ge 48:16; called an Angel, being so not by nature, for he is superior to angels in both his natures, divine and human; but by office, being sent to reveal the will of God, and to do the work of God in the redemption and salvation of men; the same that is called the Angel of the great council in the Greek version of **Isa 9:6**; and the Angel of God's presence, Isa 63:9; and the Angel or messenger of the covenant, **Mal 3:1**; the phrases used denote, as before, the power and prevalence Jacob had with this divine Person in prayer; whereby he obtained the blessing of him, even deliverance from his brother Esau, as well as others respecting him and his posterity;

he wept, and made supplication unto him; not the angel, entreating Jacob to let him go, as Jarchi and Kimchi, and so some Christian interpreters; who think that an angel in human form may be said to weep, as well as to eat and drink; and the rather, since this angel was not the conqueror, but the conquered; and since Christ, in the days of his flesh, both prayed and wept, and shed tears; but the case here is different; and though he was prevailed over, it was through his own condescension and goodness: but rather Jacob is meant, as Abarbinel and others; who wept not on account of the angel's touching his thigh, and the pain that might put him to; for he was of a more heroic spirit than to weep for that, who had endured so much hardship in Laban's service, in heat and cold; and besides, notwithstanding this, he kept wrestling with him, and afterwards walked, though haltingly: but he wept either because he could not get out the name of the person he wrestled with; or rather the tears he shed were for the blessing he sought of him; for it is joined with his making supplication, and is expressive of the humble, yet ardent, affectionate, fervent, and importunate request he made to obtain it; and here we have another proof of the deity of Christ, in that supplication was made to him, and he is here represented as the object of that part of religious worship, prayer, as he often is in the New Testament. This circumstance is not expressed in

Ge 32:1, though it may be gathered from what is there said; however, the prophet had it by divine inspiration; and the truth of it is not to be doubted of, being not at all inconsistent with, but quite agreeable to, that history;

he found him [at] Bethel; either the angel found Jacob in Bethel, as he did more than once, both before and after this time,
Ge 28:12; it is good to be in Bethel, in the house of God; happy are those that dwell there, and are found there living and dying, doing the will and work of God there: or rather Jacob found God or the angel in Bethel; God is to be found in his own house, there he comes and blesses with his gracious presence; here Christ the Angel of his presence is; here he meets with his people, and manifests himself unto them. There is in the words a tacit reflection on Israel, or the ten tribes, that bore the name of Jacob; the patriarch found God in Bethel, Christ the Angel of the Lord; but now, instead of him, there was a calf set up in this place, Israel worshipped; and therefore it was called Bethaven, the house of an idol, or iniquity, instead of Bethel, the house of God;

and there he spake with us; not with Esau and his angel, concerning Isaac's blessing of Jacob, as Jarchi; nor with Jacob and his angel, as the father of Kimchi; nor with the prophet, and with Amos, to reprove Israel there for the worship of the calves, as Kimchi himself; but with all the Israelites, of whom the prophet was one; who were then in the loins of Jacob, when he conversed with God, and God with him, at Bethel: or, as Saadiah interprets it, "for us" for our sakes, on our account; or "concerning us"; concerning the multiplication of Jacob's posterity, and the giving the land of Canaan to them, as the Lord did at both times he appeared to Jacob in Bethel; see
Ge 28:14; and it is in the house of God, where Christ is as a son, that he speaks with and to his people, even in his word and ordinances there.

{u} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 1. c. 20. sect. 2.)

Hosea 12:5

Ver. 5. Even the Lord God of hosts,.... The God Jacob had power over, the Angel he prevailed with, to whom he made supplication with weeping, and who spake with him and his in Bethel, is he whose name is Jehovah; who is the true and living God, the Lord of hosts and armies both in heaven and in earth; of all the angels in heaven, and the legions of them; and of the church militant, and all the saints, who are the good soldiers of Christ, his spiritual militia; and he is the Captain of the Lord's host, and of their salvation, and to whom all the numerous hosts of creatures, be they what they will, are subject: this is observed, to set off the greatness of the person Jacob wrestled with, and his wondrous grace, in condescending to be overpowered by him:

the Lord [is] his memorial: or his name, Jehovah, which belongs to this angel, the Son of God, as to his divine Father; and which is expressive of his divine existence, of his eternity and immutability; this is his memorial, or the remembrancer of him; which puts his people in all ages in remembrance of him, what he is, what an infinite, almighty, and all sufficient Being he is; and he is always to be believed in, and trusted to, and to be served, adored, and worshipped. The Targum adds, to every generation and generation.

Hosea 12:6

Ver. 6. Therefore turn thou to thy God,.... Judah, with whom the Lord had a controversy, is here addressed and exhorted to return to the Lord, from whom they had backslidden; and this is urged, from the consideration of their being the descendants of so great a man as Jacob; whose example they should follow, and make supplication to the Lord as he did; and from this instance of their progenitor might encourage themselves, that God, who was his God, and their God, would be gracious and merciful to them, and that they should prevail with him likewise, and obtain the blessing, and especially since he is the everlasting and unchangeable Jehovah. Turning to the Lord, as it supposes a going astray from him, so it signifies a turning from idols, and all vain confidences; and is done by renewed acts of faith and trust in the Lord, and repentance towards him; and cannot be performed aright without grace and strength from him, of which Ephraim was sensible, Jer 31:18; as well as the encouragement to it is from a view of God as a covenant God, and as gracious and merciful, So Aben Ezra interprets it of divine help, of turning by thy God, that is, by the help and assistance of thy God; and, indeed, conversion to God, whether at first, or after, is through his powerful and efficacious grace. Kimchi explains it, "thou shalt rest in thy God" {w}; when want follows is performed, comparing it with Isa 30:15. The Targum is,

"and thou shall be strong in the worship of thy God;"

keep mercy and judgment; or, "observe" {x} them to do them; to show mercy to persons in misery, to the poor and indigent, which is what the Lord desires and delights in, more than in ceremonial sacrifices; and is a principal part of

the moral law, as "judgment" is another; the exercise of justice, both public and private; passing a righteous sentence in courts of judicature, and doing that which is right between man and man; owing no man anything, but giving to all their due; doing no injury to any man's person, property, or character; which are fruits meet for true repentance; and when they spring from faith and love, and are done with a view to the glory of God, and good of men, are acceptable to the Lord; these are the weightier matters of the law,
Mt 23:23;

and wait on thy God continually; both in private prayer, and for an answer to it, and in public worship and ordinances, in hope of meeting with him, and enjoying his presence; for this takes in the whole of religious worship, private and public, and all religious exercises, as invocation of God, trust in him, and expectation of seed things from him; and may have a respect to the Messiah, and salvation by him, and a waiting for him and that; as Jacob did, and his posterity should, and many of them were in this posture, before and at his coming; see
Ge 49:18; Agreeable to this the Targum is,

"and wait for the redemption or salvation of thy God continually."

{w} bwvt Kyhwlab "in Deo tuo conquiesce", Drusius. {x} rmv "observa", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Hosea 12:7

Ver. 7. [He is] a merchant,.... Here is a change of person from "thou" to "he", from Judah to Ephraim, who is said to be a "merchant"; and if that was all, there is nothing worthy of dispraise in it; but he was a cheating merchant, a fraudulent dealer, as appears by what follows: or he is Canaan, or a Canaanite {y}; more like a descendant of Canaan, by his manners, than a descendant of Jacob. But the Canaanites dealing much in merchandise, their name became a common name for a merchant, as a Chaldean for an astrologer; and as the children of Israel possessed their land, so they followed the same business and employment of life; which, had they performed honestly, would not have been to their discredit; but they were too much like the Canaanites, of whom Philostratus {z} says, they were covetous and fraudulent; and this was Ephraim's character. The Targum is, "be you not as merchants;"

the balances of deceit [are] in his hand; he used false weights and measures; made the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsified the balances by deceit; had wicked balances, and deceitful weights, and the scant measure, which is abominable, **Am 8:5**; they pretended to weigh everything exactly they bought or sold; but cheated either by sleight or hand, holding the balances as they should not; or had one pair of scales and weights to buy with, and another to sell by, contrary to the law of God, Le 19:35;

he loveth to oppress; instead of keeping and doing mercy and justice, they oppressed the poor, ground their faces, defrauded them of their due, and by secret and private methods cheated them in their dealings with them, and brought them to poverty and distress; and this they took delight and pleasure in, which showed a want of a principle of honesty in them, and that they were habituated to such a course of life, and were hardened in it, and had no remorse of conscience for it, but rather gloried in it.

{y} Nenk canaan, Sept. "Chanaan", V. L. Tigurine version; "Chanauaeum" refers, Munster. {z} Apud Grotium in loc.

Hosea 12:8

Ver. 8. And Ephraim said, yet I am become rich,.... Notwithstanding they took such unjust methods, as to use deceitful balances, they prospered in the world, got abundance of riches; and therefore concluded from thence that their manner of dealing was not criminal, at least not so bad as the prophets represented to them; and so promised themselves impunity, and that what they were threatened with would not come upon them; and, as long as they got riches, they cared not in what manner; and inasmuch as they prospered and succeeded in their course of trading, they were encouraged to go on, and not fear any evil coming upon them for it. According to Aben Ezra and Kimchi, the sense is, that they became rich of themselves, by their own industry and labour, and did not acknowledge that their riches, and power to get them, were of God. They gloried in them as their own attainments; and which they had little reason to do, since they were treasures of wickedness, and mammon of unrighteousness, which in a day of wrath would be of no service to them;

I have found me out substance; they found ways and means of acquiring great riches, and large estates, by their own wisdom and cunning, and all for themselves, for their own use, to be enjoyed by them for years to come; and they were reckoned by them solid and substantial things, when a mere shadow, emptiness, and vanity; and were not to be employed for their own use and advantage only, but should have been for the good of others; nor were they to be attributed to their own sagacity, prudence, and management, but to the providence of God, admitting they had been got in ever so honourable and just a manner;

[in] all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that [were] sin: here again Ephraim, or the people of Israel, vainly ascribe all their wealth and riches to their own labour, diligence, and industry, and take no notice of God and his providence, or of his blessing upon them; and pretend to be very upright and honest in their dealings, and that what they got were very honestly got, and would bear the strictest scrutiny; and that if their course of trade was ever so narrowly looked into, there would be nothing found that was very bad or criminal, that they could be justly reproached the; only some little trifling things, that would not bear the name of "sin", or deserve any correction or punishment; so pure were they in their own eyes, so blinded and hardened in sin, and fearless of the divine displeasure; like the adulterous woman, wiped their mouths when they had eaten the sweet morsels of sin, and said they had done no wickedness, Pr 30:20; or which was involuntary, and not done knowingly, as Kimchi and Abendana: or rather, as Ben Melech renders it, "no iniquity and sin"; and so others: or, best of all, "no iniquity or sin", as Noldius {a}; no iniquity, or any kind of sin at all. Thus, as Ephraim was charged before with idolatry and lies in religion, so here with fraudulent dealings, and getting riches in an illicit way in civil things; and of whose repentance and reformation there was no hope.

{a} Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 104. No. 522.

Hosea 12:9

Ver. 9. And I [that am] the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt,.... Ephraim being so very corrupt in things, both religious and civil, and so very impenitent and impudent, is let alone to suffer the just punishment of his sins; but Judah being called to repentance, and brought unto it, gracious promises are here made unto him, to be fulfilled in the times of the Messiah, either at the first or latter part of them; especially the last is to be understood, when indeed all

Israel shall return to the Lord, and be saved; and then it will appear, that the Lord, who was their God, as was evident from his bringing them out of Egyptian bondage, and continued to be so from that time to the Babylonish captivity, and even to the times of the Messiah, will now be their God most clearly and manifestly, having redeemed them from worse than Egyptian bondage; from the bondage of sin, Satan, the law, the world, and death; even the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, they will now seek and embrace, who is God over all, and equal to such a work of redemption and salvation; Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, our Lord and our God, the God of the Jews now converted, as will be acknowledged, as well as of the Gentiles: and he

will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast; alluding to the feast of tabernacles, kept in commemoration of the Israelites dwelling in tents in the wilderness,
Le 23:42; typical of Christ's incarnation, expressed by his tabernacling among men in human nature, **Joh 1:14**; and which feast, though abolished by Christ with the rest, yet it is said will be kept by converted Jews and Gentiles in the latter day; which can be understood no otherwise than of their embracing and professing the incarnate Saviour, partaking of the blessings of grace that come by him, and attending on those ordinances of public worship instituted by him; see Zec 14:16; and which booths, tents, or tabernacles, the Israelites dwelt in at that feast, were also typical of the churches of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, and which are here meant; and in which it is here promised the converted Jews shall dwell, as they had been used to do in their booths at the solemn feast of tabernacles. These Christian churches resembling them in the matter of them; believers in Christ, the materials of such churches, being compared to goodly trees, to willows of the brook, to palm trees, olive trees, and myrtle trees, with others, the branches of which were used at the above feast, to make their tabernacles with; see Le 23:40; and in the use of them, which was to dwell in during the time of the said feast; as the churches of Christ are the tabernacles of the most High, the dwelling places of Father, Son, and Spirit; and the habitation of the saints, where they dwell and enjoy great plenty and prosperity, tranquillity and security; and here it particularly denotes that joy, peace, and the converted Jews shall partake of in the churches of Christ in the latter day; of which the feast of tabernacles was but a shadow, and which was attended with much rejoicing, plenty of provisions, and great safety.

Hosea 12:10

Ver. 10. I have also spoken to the prophets,.... Or, "I will speak" {b}; for this respects not the Lord's speaking by the prophets of the Old Testament who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; though all they said were for the use of, and profitable unto, Christian churches; but his speaking by the apostles, prophets, and teachers, under the Gospel dispensation; by whom the doctrines of grace have been more clearly dispensed, and which are no other than the voice of Christ speaking in them; and which it is both a privilege to hear, and a duty to attend unto; see **Eph 4:11**;

and I have multiplied visions: or, "will multiply visions" {c}; more than under the former dispensation, as was foretold by Joel, **Joe 2:28**; see **Ac 2:16**; witness the visions of the Apostles Peter, Paul, John, and others: or this may respect the more clear sight and knowledge of Gospel truths in the times of the Messiah, then under the Mosaic economy; see **2Co 3:13**;

and used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets: or, "will use similitudes" {d}; for this is to be understood, not of the types and figures used by the Lord under the legal dispensation, to represent spiritual things, as the brasen serpent, passover lamb, manna, and the sacrifices of the law; nor of the similitudes used by the prophet Hosea, taking a wife and children of whoredoms, to set forth the case and condition of Israel, and of the comparisons he makes of God, to a lion, leopard, bear, &c. or by any other of the former prophets; but of parables and similitudes used in Gospel times; not only such as Christ used himself, who seldom spoke without a parable; see Mt 13:11; but which he used by the ministry of his apostles and prophets, and which are to be met with in their discourses and writings; see **1Co 3:6**; and especially such seem to be meant that respect the conversion of the Jews, and the glory of the church in the latter day, Ro 11:16.

{b} ytrbdw "et loquar", Piscator, Liveleus, Drusius, Cocceius, Schmidt. {c} ytybrh Nwzx "visionem multiplicabo", Vatablus, Liveleus, Drusius, Schmidt. {d} hmda "assimilabo", Montanus, Schmidt; "similitudinibus utar", Castalio, Liveleus.

Hosea 12:11

Ver. 11. [Is there] iniquity [in] Gilead?.... Idolatry there? strange that there should be, seeing it was a city of the priests; a city of refuge; or there is none there, say the priests, who pretended they did not worship idols, but the true Jehovah in them: or, "is [there] not iniquity", or idolatry, "in Gilead" {e}? verily there is, let them pretend to what they will: or, "is [there only] iniquity in it" {f}? that the men of it should be carried captive, as they were by TiglathPileser, before the rest of the tribes; see 2Ki 15:29; no, there is iniquity and idolatry committed in other places, as well as there, who must expect to share the same fate in time: or, "is Gilead Aven?" {g} that is, Bethaven, the same with Bethel; it is as that, as guilty of idolatry as Bethel, where one of the calves was set up:

surely they are vanity: the inhabitants of Gilead, as well as of Bethel, worshipping idols, which are most vain things, vanity itself, and deceive those that serve them, and trust in them:

they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal: to idols, as the Targum adds; and so Jarchi and Kimchi; according to Aben Ezra, they sacrificed them to Baal; this shows that Gilead was not the only place for idolatry, which was on the other side Jordan, but Gilgal, which was on this side Jordan, was also polluted with it. The Vulgate Latin version is,

"in Gilgal they were sacrificing to bullocks;"

to the calves there, the same as were at Dan and Bethel; so, in the Septuagint version of 1Ki 12:29; it was formerly read: and so Cyril {h} quotes it, "[he] (Jeroboam) set the one (calf) in Gilgal, and the other [in] Dan"; hence the fable that Epiphanius {i} makes mention of, that, when Elisha was born, the golden ox or heifer at Gilgal bellowed very loudly, and so loud as to be heard at Jerusalem. The Targum makes mention of an idol temple here; and as it was near to Bethel, as appears from 1Sa 10:3; and from Josephus {k}; and so Jerom says {l}, hard by Bethel; some suspect another Gilgal; hence it might be put for it; however, it was a place of like idolatrous worship; it is mentioned as such along with Bethaven or Bethel, in **Ho 4:15**; see also **Ho 9:15**;

yea, their altars [are] as heaps in, the furrows of the fields; not only in the city of Gilgal, and in the temple there, as the Targum; but even without the city, in the fields they set up altars, which looked like heaps of stones; or they had a multitude of altars that stood as thick as they. So the Targum,

"they have multiplied their altars, like heaps upon the borders of the fields;"

and the Jewish commentators in general understand this as expressive of the number of their altars, and of the increase of idolatrous worship; but some interpret it of the destruction of their altars, which should become heaps of stones and rubbish, like such as are in fields. These words respect Ephraim or the ten tribes, in which these places were, whose idolatry is again taken notice of, after gracious promises were made to Judah. Some begin here a new sermon or discourse delivered to Israel.

{e} Nwa delg Ma "an [non in] Galaad iniquitas?" Vatablus. {f} "En [in] Gileade [tantum] iniquitas?" Piscator. {g} "Num Gilead Aven?" Schmidt. {h} Apud Reland. Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. l. 3. p. 783. {i} De Vita & Interitu Prophet. c. 6. & Paschal. Chronic. p. 161. apud Reland. ib. {k} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 9. {l} De locis Hebr. fol. 91. M.

Hosea 12:12

Ver. 12. And Jacob fled into the country of Syria,.... Or, "field of Syria" {m}; the same with Padanaram; for "Padan", in the Arabic language, as Bochart has shown, signifies a field; and "Aram" is Syria, and is the word here used. This is to be understood of Jacob's fleeing thither for fear of his brother Esau, the history of which is had in Ge 28:1; though some interpret this of his fleeing from Laban out of the field of Syria into Gilead, Ge 31:21; and so make it to be introduced as an aggravation of the sin of the inhabitants of Gilead, that that place, which had been a refuge and sanctuary to their ancestor in his distress, should be defiled with idolatry; but the words will not bear such a construction, and the following seem to militate against it:

and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept [sheep]; and so the last clause is supplied by the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi: this was after his flight into Syria, and before he fled from Laban, whom he served seven years for Rachel; and then served him by keeping his sheep seven years more for the same: though it may be understood of his two wives, thus; he served seven years for a wife, for Rachel intentionally, but eventually it was for Leah; and then he kept sheep seven years more for his other wife Rachel; the history of this is in Ge 29:1. This is mentioned to show the meanness of Jacob the ancestor of the Israelites, from whom they had their original and name; he was a fugitive in the land of Syria; there he was a Syrian ready to perish, a very poor man, obliged to serve and keep sheep for a wife, having no dowry to give; and this is observed here to bring, down the pride of Israel, who boasted of their descent, which is weak and foolish for any to do; and to show the goodness of God to Jacob, and to them, in raising him and them from so low an estate and condition to such eminency and greatness as they were; and to upbraid their ingratitude to the God of their fathers, and of their mercies, whom they had revolted from, and turned to idols.

{m} Mra hdv "agrum Aram", Montanus; "in agrum Syriae", Vatablus, Drusius, Rivet, Schmidt.

Hosea 12:13

Ver. 13. And by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt,.... Or, "by the prophet"; the famous and most excellent prophet Moses, who, by way of eminency, is so called; him the Lord sent, and employed, and made use of him as an instrument to bring his people out of their bondage in Egypt; in which he was a type of Christ the great Prophet of the church, raised up like unto him, and the Redeemer of his people from sin, Satan, and the world, law, hell, and death, and all enemies:

and by a prophet he was preserved; by the same prophet Moses was Israel preserved at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; where they were kept as a flock of sheep from their powerful enemies, and brought to the borders of Canaan's land. Some understand this last clause of Joshua, by whom the Israelites were safely conducted through Jordan into the land of Canaan, and settled there; and particularly were brought by him to Gilgal, where the covenant of circumcision was renewed, and the first passover in the land kept, but now a place of idolatry, as before mentioned; and which sin was aggravated by this circumstance: but the design of this observation seems to be to put the Israelites in remembrance of their low estate in Egypt, and of the goodness of God to them in delivering them from thence, which they had sadly requited by their degeneracy and apostasy from him; and to him unto them how much they ought to have valued the prophets of the Lord, though they had despised them, since they had received such benefits and blessings by the means of a prophet.

Hosea 12:14

Ver. 14. Ephraim provoked [him] to anger most bitterly,.... The Vulgate Latin version supplies it, me; that is, God, as Kimchi; or his Lord, as it may be supplied from the last clause of the verse; the sense is the same either way: it was God that Ephraim or the ten tribes provoked to stir up his wrath and vengeance against them; notwithstanding all the favours that they and their ancestors had received from him, they provoked him in a most bitter manner, to bitter anger, vehement wrath and fury: or, "with bitternesses" {n}; with their sins, which are in their own nature bitter, displeasing to God; and in their effects bring bitterness and death on those that commit them; meaning particularly their idolatry, and all belonging to it; their idols, high places, altars, &c. The word here used is rendered "high heaps" {o}, Jer 31:21; and is here by Kimchi interpreted of altars, with which, and their sacrifices on them, they provoked the Lord to anger:

therefore shall he leave his blood upon him; the blood of innocent persons, prophets, and other good men shed by him; the sin of it shall be charged upon him, and he shall bear the punishment of it. So the Targum,

"the fault of innocent blood which he shed shall return upon him:"

or "his own blood shall be poured out upon him" {p}; in just retaliation for the blood of others shed by him, and for all the blood sired by him in idolatrous sacrifices, and other bloody sins; or his own blood being shed by the enemy shall remain upon him unrevenged; God will not punish those that shed it:

and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him: that is, as he has reproached the prophets of the Lord for reproving him for his idolatry, and reproached fire Lord himself, by revolting from him, and neglecting his worship, and preferring the worship of idols to him; so, as a just recompence, he shall be delivered up into the hands of the enemy, and become a reproach, a taunt, and a proverb, in all places into which he shall be brought. God is called "his Lord", though he had rebelled against him, and shook off his yoke, and would not obey him; yet, whether he will or not, he is his Lord, and will show himself to be so by his sovereignty and authority over him, and by the judgments exercised on him. Some understand this of the Assyrian king, become his lord, by taking and carrying him captive, the instrument in God's hand of bringing him to reproach; but the former sense seems best.

{n} Myrwrmt "amaritudinibus", Pagninus, Vatablus, Piscator, Schmidt. {o} And is so understood by R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 64. 1. {p} vwjy wyle wymdw kai to aima autou epi auton ekcuyhsetai, Sept. so Syr. & Ar. "ideo sanguis ejus super eum diffundetur, [sive] effundetur", Zanchius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hosea 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 13

This chapter begins with observing the different state and condition of Ephraim before and after his idolatry, Ho 13:1; his increase in it, Ho 13:2; and therefore his prosperity was very short lived, which is signified by various metaphors, Ho 13:3; and his sins are aggravated by the former goodness of God unto him his great ingratitude unto God, and forgetfulness him, Ho 13:4; hence he is threatened with his wrath and vengeance in a very severe manner, Ho 13:7; for which he had none to blame but himself; yea, such was the grace and goodness of God to him, that though he had destroyed himself, yet there were help and salvation for him in him, Ho 13:9; though not in his king he had desired, and was given, and was took away in wrath, Ho 13:10; but his sin being bound up and hid, and he foolish and unwise, sharp corrections would be given him, Ho 13:12; and yet a gracious promise is made of redemption from death and the grave by the Messiah, Ho 13:14; but, notwithstanding this, and all his present prosperity, he would be blasted in his wealth and riches; and Samaria the metropolis of his country would he desolate; and the inhabitants of it be used in the most cruel manner, because of their rebellion against God, Ho 13:15.

Ver. 1. When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel,.... Or, with trembling, as Jarchi: so Jeroboam, who was of the tribe of Ephraim, spake before Solomon, a great king, as he observes. R. Moses the priest interprets it of Jeroboam; but it may be understood of the tribe in general, and especially of the heads of it, at anytime before it fell into idolatry; when they spake with submission and humility, they were attended to by the other tribes in all consultations and debates, and great deference was paid unto them; and they were find in great esteem, and highly honoured, agreeably to that common saving of our Lord, "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted", Lu 14:11; or, "when [he] spake [there was] trembling" {q}; either the neighbouring nations, when he threatened them with war: or among the other tribes of Israel, when he spake in counsel, and with authority, they rose up and heard him with great reverence and respect; see Job 29:8. So the Targum, "when anyone of the house of Ephraim spake, trembling laid hold on the people; they became princes in Israel."

Some refer this to the times of Joshua, who was of that tribe, and whom the Israelites feared as they had feared Moses, **Jos 4:14**; others to the times of Gideon and Jephthah, with whom the tribe of Ephraim expostulated, **Jud 8:1**; but others interpret it of Jeroboam's idolatry, of his setting up the worship of the calves, which he did upon his exalting himself, and setting himself up as king of the ten tribes; and, in some agreement with this, Schmidt understands, by "trembling", a terrible and horrible thing, idolatry, which he commanded and appointed; and which he "bore" or "carried", as the word {r} is interpreted by him, and may be; that is, his sin, and the punishment of it, which Jeroboam and his posterity did bear; and so it agrees with what follows:

but, or "and",

when he offended in Baal, he died; or when he sinned, and became guilty of more idolatry still, by worshipping Baal, as well as the calves, which was done in the times of Ahab, 1Ki 16:31; when Ephraim or the kingdom or Israel fell into distresses and calamities, sunk in their grandeur and authority, declined in their wealth and riches, and were insulted by their enemies, particularly by Benhadad king of Syria, who sent to Ahab, and challenged his silver and gold, his wives and children, as his own, 1Ki 20:3; and so they gradually decreased in credit and reputation, in power and authority, in wealth and substance, and at last were delivered to the sword of the enemy, and to captivity, which was their civil death.

{q} ttr-rbdk "quum loqueretur--tremor erat", Pagninus, Vatablus; "terror erat", Zanchius, Drusius. {r} awh avn "portavit ipse, [sub.] iniquitatem suam", Schmidt.

Hosea 13:2

Ver. 2. And now they sin more and more,.... Since the times of Jeroboam, and also of Ahab, adding other deities to the calves, and to Baal, as follows; increasing the number of their idols, and their idolatrous sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies: this they did in the times the prophet, who prophesied after the times of as it is common with evil men and seducers to wax worse and worse, and to proceed to more ungodliness, and from evil to evil; such is the way of idolaters, they stop not, but run into greater absurdities and grosser idolatries:

and have made them molten images of their silver: which is to be understood, not of the calves, or of Baal, made of gold, which they purchased with their silver; but of other images they had in their houses, or carried about with them, made of their silver, of their plate, which they melted and cast images of it, of whatsoever shape or form they pleased:

[and] idols according to their own understanding; which were entirely of man's device, and had nothing divine in them, either as to matter or form, but wholly the invention of the human brain; or, "according to their own likeness", as the Targum, and so other Jewish interpreters; after the form of a man, and yet were so weak and stupid as to account them gods:

all of it the work of the craftsmen; of silversmiths and founders, and such like artificers; the same, or of the same sort, with the craftsmen that made shrines for Diana, Ac 19:24; and therefore such a work, wrought by such hands, could never be a deity, or have anything divine in it; they must be as stupid and senseless as the work itself to imagine there should: and yet

they say of them; the false prophets, or the idolatrous priests, say of such idols:

let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves: let those that bring their sacrifices, or those that offer them, pay religious worship and adoration to the calves; which they signified by kissing the idols they sacrificed to, either their mouths, or their hands; or, if out of their reach, they kissed their own hands in token of honour to them; which rites were commonly used among the Heathens. Cicero {s} says at Agrigentum, where was a temple or Hercules, where the people not only used to show a veneration to his image by prayers and thanksgivings, but they used to kiss it. So Apuleius {t} speaks of a beautiful virgin, the report of whose beauty brought together a vast number of citizens and strangers; who, amazed at the sight of her, put their right hand to then mouths, the first finger resting upon the thumb erect, and gave her reverence with religious adoration, as if she had been the goddess Venus herself; and Minutius Felix {u} says of Caecilius, that, observing the image of Serapis (probably much like one of these calves), putting his hand to his mouth, according to the superstitious custom of the common people, with his lips smacked a kiss; and so Pliny {w} observes, in worshipping, the right hand is used for a kiss, turning about the whole body, which to do to the left was reckoned the more religious; hence it is observed {x} of Aemilius, a derider of and scoffer at things divine, that he would never make supplication to any god, nor frequent any temple; and if he passed by any place of worship, he reckoned it a crime to put his hand to his lips by way of adoration, or on account of that; and it seems to have obtained as early as the times of Job among idolatrous people, that, upon the sight of the sun or moon, they immediately with their mouth kissed their hands; see Job 31:26; hence Lucian {y}, speaking of the Indians, says, rising early in the morning, they worship the sun, not as we, who think the prayers are finished when the hand is kissed; and Tertullian {z}, addressing the Heathens in his time, thus bespeaks them, most of you, out of an affectation of worshipping the celestial bodies at the rising of the sun, move and quaver your lips; hence kissing is used for the worship of the Son of God, **Ps 2:12**. Some read the words, "let those that sacrifice a man {a} kiss the calves"; as if it respected the abominable practice of sacrificing men to Moloch; or intimated that men were sacrificed to the calves at Bethel.

{s} In Verrem, l. 4. Orat. 9. c. 13. {t} Metamorphos. sive de Asino Auero, l. 4. p. 60. {u} Octavius, p. 2. {w} Nat. Hist. l. 28. c. 2. {x} Apuleii Apolog. p. 226. {y} peri orchsewv. {z} Apolog. c. 16. {a} Mda yxbz "immolatores hominem, [vel] immolantes homines", Vatablus; "sacrificantes hominem", Montanus, Calvin, Schmidt; so some in Abenda. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin render it as an imperative, "sacrifice men"; and the Syriac version, "O ye that sacrifice men".

Hosea 13:3

Ver. 3. Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud,.... Which, however promising it is, soon disappears when the sun is risen; signifying that the idolatrous Israelites, king, priests, and people, should be no more; their kingdom would cease, all their riches and wealth would depart from them, and they and their children be carried captive into a strange land:

and as the early dew it passeth away; as soon as the heat of the sun is felt, when the earth is left dry; so these people, though they seemed to be in great prosperity, and to be very fruitful in children, and in substance, and promised themselves much more; yet in a little time their land would become desolate, and they stripped of all that was dear and valuable to them these metaphors are used in **Ho 6:4**;

as the chaff [that] is driven with a whirlwind out of the floor; signifying that these idolatrous people were like chaff, fight and empty, useless and unprofitable, fit for nothing but burning; and that they would be driven out of their own land through the Assyrian, that should come like a whirlwind with great three and power, as easily and as quickly as chaff is drove out of a threshing floor of corn with a strong blast of wind; see **Ps 1:5**;

and as the smoke out of the chimney; which rises up in a pillar, and is so on dissipated by the wind, or dissolved into air; and is no sooner seen but it disappears; see Ps 68:2. All these similes show how easily, suddenly, and quickly, the destruction of this idolatrous nation would be brought about.

Hosea 13:4

Ver. 4. Yet I [am] the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt,.... Which brought thee out from thence, as the Targum; and ever since, from that time to this, had shown a regard unto them, as the Lord their God, both in the wilderness, as later mentioned, and in the land of Canaan, where they had been continued, and followed with instances of goodness to that day, and yet find sinned in so gross a manner; which argued great ingratitude in them, and forgetfulness of the Lord, and his mercies:

and thou shalt know no God but me; they ought to have known, acknowledged, and worshipped no other god, as was enjoined them in the law: or, "thou knowest not" {b}; they did not know any other, which they in their own consciences were obliged to confess, if appealed to; however, they should know no other; by sad experience they would find that there was no other that could be of any service to them; their images and idols being unable to help them:

for [there is] no saviour besides me; that could save them out of their troubles, and deliver them out of their distresses; no other that is, or can be, the author, either of temporal or of spiritual and eternal salvation.

{b} edt al "non novisti, [vel] cognovisti", Liveleus, Drusius, Rivet.

Hosea 13:5

Ver. 5. I did know thee in the wilderness,.... Where there were no food nor drink, where were scorpions, serpents, and beasts of prey; there the Lord knew them, owned them, and showed a fatherly affection for them, and care of them; and fed them with manna and quails, and guided and directed them in the way, and protected and preserved them from their enemies, and from all hurt and danger. So the Targum explains it,

"I sufficiently supplied their necessities in the wilderness:"

in the land of great drought; or, "of droughts" {c}; the word is only used in this place; and is by Aben Ezra interpreted a dry and thirsty land; and so he says it signifies in the Arabic language and the same is observed by the father of Kimchi, and by R. Jonah {d}; but is by some rendered "torrid" {e}, or "inflamed", as if it had the signification of a Hebrew word which signifies a flame: and the Targum takes it to be akin to another, which signifies to "desire", rendering it,

"in a land in which thou desirest everything;"

that is, wants everything. The first seems best, and is a fit a description of the wilderness, which was a place of drought, wherein was no water, **De 8:15**.

{c} tbwalt Urab "an terra siccitatum", Vatablus, Drusius, Schmidt. {d} Apud R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed. fol. 35. 1. {e} "In terra torridonum locorum", Montanus; "torridissima", Junius & Tremellius, Heb. "infammationum", Piscator.

Hosea 13:6

Ver. 6. According to their pasture, so were they filled,.... When they came into the land of Canaan, which was a land flowing with milk and honey, they were like a flock of sheep brought from short commons to a good pasture; and there they tilled themselves to the fail, and indulged to luxury and excess, pampered themselves, and made provision for the flesh to fulfil its lusts, and became carnal and sensual:

they were filled, and their hearts were exalted: they were elated with their plenty, and grew proud and haughty, and attributed their fulness not to the goodness of God, but to their own excellency and merit; and put their trust and confidence in their affluence, and not in the Lord; and thought themselves safe and secure, and out of all danger, and concluded it would never be otherwise with them:

therefore have they forgotten me; the Author of their beings, the Father of their mercies, and God of all their comforts; they forgot to give him praise and glory for their abundance; to place their trust and have their dependence on him, and to serve and worship him; this was the consequence of their luxury and pride. The Targum is,

"therefore they left my worship;"

they waxed fat, and kicked, and lightly esteemed and forsook the God and Rock of their salvation, De 32:15.

Hosea 13:7

Ver. 7. Therefore I will be unto them as a lion, Because of their idolatry, ingratitude, luxury, and especially their forgetfulness of God, which is last mentioned, and with which the words are connected. By this and the following metaphors are set forth the severity of God's judgments upon them for their sins, and their utter destruction by them. Some observe the word {f} here used signifies an old lion, which, though slower in the pursuit of its prey, is more cruel when it has got it; see **Ho 5:14**;

as a leopard by the way will I observe [them]; which is a quick sighted, vigilant, crafty, and insidious creature, which lurks in trees, and watches for men and beasts that pass by the way, and seizes on them. The lion makes his onset more openly, this more secretly; and both express the various ways God would take in his providence to chastise these people for their sins, and that he would watch over them to do them hurt, as he had to do them good, and take the proper opportunity of doing it, and execute his purpose with great wrath and fury, to their utter ruin; see **Jer 5:6**. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "as a leopard by the way of Assyria" {g}, or "the Assyrians"; and so some interpreters take the sense to be, that God would watch them in their way to Assyria for help, and blast their designs, disappoint them of their expected assistance, and surprise them with his judgments; see **Ho 5:13**; and there was a mountain in Syria, called the mountain of the leopards, where they used to haunt, and from whence they came out to take their prey, to which there is a reference in **So 4:8**; which was two miles from Tripoli (a city of Syria) northward, three from the city Arces southward, and one from Mount Lebanon {h}; and such is the vigilance and agility of leopards, that they will sometimes, as Pliny {i} says, mount thick trees, and hide themselves in the branches, and leap at once, and unawares, upon those that pass by, whether men or beasts, as before observed; wherefore, with great propriety, is this simile used. The Targum is, "my word shall be", &c.

{f} lxv "vetus leo", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {g} rwva Krd le data thn odon assuriwn Sept. "in via Assyriormm", V. L. "super via Assyriae", Schmidt; "in via Assyria", Liveleus, Cocceius. {h} Adrichomii Thestrum Terrae Sanct. p. 186. {i} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 73.

Hosea 13:8

Ver. 8. I will meet them as a bear [that is] bereaved of her whelps,.... Which is a fierce cruel creature at any time, but especially when this is its case, being very fond of its whelps; and having taken a great deal of pains to lick them into form, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, it is the more enraged at the loss of them, and therefore falls upon man or beast it meets with the utmost fury: the phrase is expressive of the fiercest rage; see Pr 17:12;

and will rend the caul of their hearts: the pericardium, which is a membrane or skin that encloses the heart, and which when pierced is immediate death: perhaps some respect is had to the closing of their hearts to God, the hardness of them against him and his ways, and their inattention to his word; and now he will open them, not in a way of grace and mercy, but of wrath and fury; as a bear, when it seizes a man, sticks his claws in his breast, tears it open, and makes his way at once to the heart, fetches it out, and sucks his blood:

and there will I devour them like a lion; either in their cities and houses, when taken by the enemy; or in the way, in which they would be observed; or in their captivity: or there may be put for then, and so denotes the time when he would be all this to them before mentioned, and then he would utterly destroy them:

the wild beast shall tear them: which literally is one of God's sore judgments, but here figuratively designs the Assyrian, and who is meant as the instrument of God's vengeance in all the other expressions; and is sometimes compared to a lion, and that as concerned with Israel; see
Jer 50:17; which is much better than by these four sorts of creatures to understand the four monarchies which Israel suffered by. The Targum is,

"my word shall meet them as a bear bereaved, and I will break the wickedness of their hearts, &c."

Hosea 13:9

Ver. 9. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself,.... Though the Lord was a lion, a leopard, and a bear to them, yet their destruction was not owing to him, but to themselves; he was not chargeable with it, but they only; the fault and blame was theirs; their own sins brought it on them, and provoked him to such righteous wrath and vengeance before expressed: this is said to clear the Lord from any imputation of this kind, and to lay it where it should be It may be rendered, "it hath destroyed thee" {k}; either the calf, as Kimchi, and the worshipping of that, their idolatry; or their king, as others, taking it from the following verse by way of anticipation; or rather it may refer to all their sins before observed, their idolatry, luxury, and ingratitude. Gussetius {l} thinks the word yb has the signification of "burning", as in **Isa 3:24**; and renders it, "burning in me hath destroyed thee, [even] in him who is thy help"; that is, by their sins they had made God their enemy, who is a consuming fire, and whose burning wrath destroyed them, in whom otherwise they would have had help. Now though this may primarily regard the destruction of the civil state and kingdom of Israel for their sins, yet it may be applied to the spiritual and eternal state of men. Man is a lost, ruined, and undone creature; he is depraved and corrupted in his whole nature, soul and body; the image of God in him is marred and spoiled; there is no holiness in him, nor any righteousness upon him; no will nor power to that which is good; though he has not lost the natural liberty of his will, he has lost the moral liberty of it, and is a slave to his lusts, and a vassal to Satan; he has no true knowledge of that which is good, no inclination to it, nor strength to perform it he is dead in sin, and dead in law; he is under the curse of it, and in the open way to everlasting ruin and destruction; and is in himself both helpless and lifeless; and he is a self-destroyed creature; his destruction is not owing to Satan only, though he was an instrument of the ruin of mankind; nor to the first parents of human nature only, in whom all men naturally and federally were, in whom they sinned, and with whom they fell; but to their own actual sins and transgressions. However, their destruction is not to be charged upon God, or ascribed to any decree of his, which is no cause of man's damnation, but sin only; nor to any sentence of condemnation passed by him, or the execution of it, which both belong to him as a righteous Judge; but to themselves and their sins, as is owned both by good men, who under true and saving convictions acknowledge their damnation would be just, if God should execute it on them; and by bad men, even the damned in hell; this will be the never dying worm, the remorse of a guilty conscience, that they have brought all this ruin on themselves;

but in me [is] thine help; not in themselves, not in any creature, but in the Lord alone; the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; the essential Word, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, on whom his divine Father has laid the help of his people; and who has helped them, and saved them from their sins, the cause of their destruction, and from wrath, which they deserved by reason of them; and has brought them out of a wretched state, a pit wherein is no water, into a comfortable, glorious, and happy one, and delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies; and helps them to what they want, to holiness, righteousness, and strength; to all supplies of grace here, and glory hereafter. Some render the particle as causal, "for in me", &c. {m} and so make it to be a reason either proving that God could not be the cause of their destruction, because in him was their help, and in him only; or that their destruction was owing to themselves; "for in" or "against me, against thine help"; thou hast transgressed and rebelled; so Jarchi.

{k} Ktxv "perdidit te", Vatablus, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Zanchius, De Dieu, Rivet; "corrupit te", Cocceius. {l} Comment, Ebr. p. 367. {m} yb yk "quia in me", Montanus, Calvin, Schmidt.

Hosea 13:10

Ver. 10. I will be thy King, where [is any other] that may save thee in all thy cities?.... Governor, Protector, and Defender; and so confirming what is before said, that their help was in him: or, as the Targum, Abarbinel, and others {n}, "where is thy king now, that he may serve thee in all thy cities?" whom they had asked, rejecting the Lord, and in whom they had put their trust and confidence for help; and now either having no king, he being taken away from them by death, or by the enemy; or if they had, he being unable to help them in their distress; they are ironically asked where he was, that he might exert himself and save them, if he could, in all the cities of the land, where the enemy were come, a, a had besieged and took them:

and thy judges, of whom thou saidst give me a king and princes? that is; where are thy king and his nobles, his courtiers and his counsellors, and all judges, magistrates, and governors subordinate to him? let them arise for thy help, if they can, by their policy or power, by their counsel, or by their arms; for judges and princes design such as were of the king's court and council, or acted in government under his direction and influence; for though these are not expressly mentioned, when they asked for a king, yet are implied; since there is no king without a court and nobles to attend him, to advise with, and to act under him. This refers to the story in **1Sa 8:6**, &c. and seems to be the leading step to Israel's ruin and destruction as a state.

{n} Kklm yha "ubi Rex tuus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Zanchius, Liveleus, Drusius, Cocceius, Schmidt, Targum. So Noldius, Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 101. No. 496.

Hosea 13:11

Ver. 11. I gave thee a king in mine anger,.... Not the king of Assyria, sent to waste and destroy them, and carry them captive, as some, for of him the next clause cannot be said; nor Jeroboam, the first king of the ten tribes, as others, who was not given in anger to Israel, but to Solomon; rather Saul, as Kimchi and Aben Ezra, the first king of all Israel; and who was given at the request of the people, though in anger and resentment, they rejecting God their King; or it may design the kingly office and power in general, in a succession of kings from him the first of them:

and took [him] away in my wrath; not Jeroboam, who does not appear to be taken away by death in wrath; rather Saul, who died in battle with the Philistines, and fell on the mountains of Gilboa: but it may be rendered better, "I will take him away" {o}; and refers not to Zedekiah the last king of Judith, as some in Kimchi; but to Hoshea, the last king of the ten tribes; for it is of there more especially the words, both in the text and context, are spoken; and so it respects the entire removal of kingly power from them, which ceased in Hoshea; see **Ho 3:4**.

{o} xqaw "et auferam", Zanchius, Piscator, Cocceius, V. L. "recipiam", Drusius; "accipiam", Schmidt.

Hosea 13:12

Ver. 12. The iniquity of Ephraim [is] bound up; his sin [is] hid. Which Kimchi restrains to the sin of the calves, and worshipping them; and others to the request of a king, the context speaks of: but it seems best to understand it in a more general sense of these, with all other sins, which were bound up, and not loosed, or were not remitted and forgiven, they being impenitent, and persisting in their sins; and which were bound up as in a bag or purse, in order to be opened and brought forth in proper time in open court, and be took cognizance of in a judiciary way; with which agrees an expression in Job 14:17; or which were laid up among the treasures of divine omniscience, in the mind of God, and not forgotten by him, as they might be thought to be, and would in due time be brought to light, and vengeance took on them. So the Targum,

"the sins of the house of Ephraim are treasured up; they are reserved to punish all their offences;"

see De 32:34.

Hosea 13:13

Ver. 13. The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him,.... Upon Ephraim, or the ten tribes; that is, afflictions, distresses, and calamities, which are often in Scripture compared to the pains and sorrows of a woman in childbirth; and may denote the suddenness and inevitableness of them; see Isa 13:8. So the Targum,

"distress and trouble shall come upon them, as pains on a woman with child;"

which may respect the invasion of their land, the siege of Samaria, and their captivity;

he [is] an unwise son; taking no warning by his ancestors, by their sins, and what befell them on account of them, but persisting in his sins, and in impenitence and hardness of heart: so the Targum,

"he is not wise to know my fear:"

for he should not stay long in [the place of] the breaking forth of children: that is, in the womb, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; though the Targum and Jarchi understand it of the stool or seat of women in travail. The sense is, either that he is foolish and unwise, that he does not endeavour to extricate

himself from these troubles; or rather to prevent them by repentance, by leaving his idols, and returning to the Lord; or that, should he do so, be would soon be delivered from all his sorrows, and not stay a moment longer in them. Though the words may be better rendered, "for he stays not", or "would not stay, the time for the breaking forth of children" {p}; now this time is the time of the Gospel dispensation, the time of the Messiah's birth, the fulness of time appointed for his coming, and the time of the church's ringing forth many children in a spiritual sense; see
Isa 54:1; for which Ephraim or the ten tribes should have waited, but did not, which was their folly and their ruin; they did not "stand", or continue, in the belief and expectation of the Messiah, and in the true worship of God, but left that, and served idols; and so continued not to the times of the Messiah, when the blessings mentioned in the following verse would be obtained and enjoyed; so Schmidt.

{p} Mynb rbvmb dmey al te yk "nam tempus non subsistet in partitudine filiorum", Cocceius; "quia tempus non stat in utero puerorum", Schmidt; "quia tempore non stetissent in raptura alvi filiorum", Montanus.

Hosea 13:14

Ver. 14. I will ransom them from the power of the grave,.... That is, "when" or "at which time" before spoken of, and here understood, as the above interpreter rightly connects the words, "I will" do this and what follows:

I will redeem them from death; these are the words, not of Jehovah the Father, as in **Ho 1:7**; but of the Son, who redeemed Israel out of Egypt, which was a typical redemption, Ho 13:4; in whom is the help of his people laid and found, Ho 13:9; the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; who is the true God, the mighty God, and so equal to this work of redemption and who is also the near kinsman of the redeemed as one of the words here used implies, and so to him belonged the right of redemption: the persons redeemed are not Israel after the flesh, but spiritual Israel, whether Jews or Gentiles; a special and peculiar people, chosen of God, and precious, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; and who, in their nature state, are under sin, in bondage to it, and liable to the curse of the law, the wrath of God, hell and damnation; which are meant by the "grave" and "death", and so needed a Redeemer to ransom them: for the word for "grace" should be rendered "hell" {q}, as it often is; and "death" intends not corporeal one only, but eternal death, or the second death; and both signify the wrath of God due to sin, and which God's elect are deserving of, and Christ has bore, and delivered them from; and the curse of the law, which he has redeemed them from, being made a curse for them; and eternal death, the equivalent to which he has suffered, and so has saved them from it, and all this by redeeming them from their sins, the cause of it; and which he has done by giving a redemption or ransom price, which is his blood, his life, yea, himself, and which the first of the words here used imports. It is indeed true, that, in consequence of all this, there will be a redemption by him from a corporeal death, and from the grave; not as yet, for the ransomed of the Lord die as others, and are laid in the grave, the house appointed for all living; but in the resurrection morn there will be a redemption, a deliverance of the bodies of the saints from the grave, from mortality and corruption; yea, of them from the moral corruption of sin, and all the defilements of it, as well as from all afflictions and diseases, and from death itself, which shall have no more dominion over them; to which purpose the words are applied by the apostle; See Gill on "1Co 15:55"; and so by some ancient Jews {r} to the Messiah, and his times;

O death, I will be thy plagues; O grace, I will be thy destruction; that is, the utter destruction of them for the plague or pestilence is a wasting destruction, Ps 91:6; it is the same which in New Testament language is the abolishing of death, **2Ti 1:10**; which is true of eternal death with respect to the redeemed, which Christ's death is the death of, he having by his death reconciled them to God, and opened the way to eternal life for them, which he has in his hands to give unto them; and of corporeal death and the grave, which Christ has utterly destroyed with respect to himself having loosed the builds of death, and set himself free, and on whom that shall have no more dominion; and, with respect to his pie, he has destroyed him that had the power of it, which is the devil; he has put away and abolished sin, the cause of it; he has took away that which is its sting; so that it may be truly said, as the apostle quotes these words, "O death, where is thy sting?" he has removed the curse from it, and made it a blessing; he has abolished it as a penal evil, so theft it is not inflicted as a punishment on his people; and in the last day will entirely deliver them from the power of that, and of the grave; and then that which has slain its millions and millions, a number not to be numbered, will never slay one more: and that grave, which devoured as many, will never be opened more, or one more put into it; and then it may be said, "O grave, where is thy victory?" thou shall conquer no more, but be at an end; see 1Co 15:55;

repentance shall be hid from mine eyes; that is, the Lord will never repent of his decree of redemption from hell, death, and the grave; nor of the work of it by Christ; nor of the entire destruction of these things; which being once done, will never be repented of nor recalled, but remain so for ever.

{q} lwav "inferni", Schmidt. {r} Gloss. Heb. in Lyra in loc. Vid. Galatin. Arcan. Cathol. Ver. l. 6. c. 21.

Hosea 13:15

Ver. 15. Though he be fruitful among [his] brethren,.... This is not spoken of Christ, as some think, who take the words to be a continuation of the prophecy concerning the Redeemer, who should increase his brethren, and bring many to him; and be as noxious to hell and death as the east wind is to persons and things, and dry up the fountains and springs of hell and death; the sins of men he should abolish, and be victorious over all his enemies, and divide their spoils: but they are rather the words of Christ himself concerning Ephraim, in connection with Ho 13:13; expressing his character and state, and explaining the sorrows and calamities that should come upon him for his folly, in not staying the time of the breaking forth children; and to be understood either of his spiritual fruitfulness in the last days; when Israel shall return to the Lord by repentance, and believe in the true Messiah, and bring forth the fruit of good works, as an evidence of it, along with their brethren, those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and so all Israel should be saved; which yet should not hinder the distresses and destruction that should come upon the ten tribes by the Assyrians, afterwards declared: or rather of his political fruitfulness, in allusion to his name; increasing in numbers, abounding in power and authority, in wealth and riches; either before the sin of the calves, as Kimchi, before he fell into idolatry; or afterwards, particularly in the times of Jeroboam the second, who enlarged the border of Israel; and in later times, when the kings of Israel entered into alliance with the Assyrians, and enjoyed peace and prosperity, and thought themselves secure of the continuance of it. Some render it, "because he is fierce" {s}; or "like a wild ass's colt"; not only foolish and unwise, but fierce and unruly among his brethren, and would not stay the time of the breaking forth of children: therefore

an east wind shall come: which is very vehement, cold, blasting, and exceeding noxious and pernicious to fruit; meaning Shalmaneser king of Assyria, who came from the east; his kingdom, the land of Assyria, lying, as Kimchi observes, eastward to the land of Israel. So the Targum,

"now will I bring against him a king strong as a burning wind;"

so the king of Babylon and his army are compared to a strong and violent wind, **Jer 4:11**;

the wind of the Lord shall come up from the wilderness; the same is called the "wind of the Lord", partly to denote the strength and vehemency of it, as mountains of the Lord, and cedars of the Lord, signify great and mighty ones; and partly to show that this enemy would come at the call of the Lord, by his direction and appointment. So the Targum,

"by the word of the Lord, through the way of the wilderness shall he come up;"

this circumstance, "from the wilderness", is mentioned, not only because winds from thence usually blow more strongly and violently, but because the way from Assyria to the land of Israel lay through a wilderness;

and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up; his land wasted and destroyed; his fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, trodden down and ruined, which yielded a large increase; trade and commerce stopped, and so all the springs and fountains of wealth and riches dried up; as well as their wives and children destroyed, as often mentioned, which were the source and spring of their continuance as a people in ages to come;

he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels; not Christ, nor Ephraim, but the Assyrian; who, entering into their cities, would plunder them of all their "vessels of desire" {t}, or desirable ones; their vessels of gold and silver; all their rich household goods and furniture of value; all their wealth and riches treasured up by them, their gold, silver, precious stones, rich garments, &c. So the Targum,

"he shall destroy the house of his treasures, and shall lay waste the city of his kingdom; he shall spoil the treasuries, all vessels of desire."

{s} ayrpy "ille fero modo aget", Cocceius; "ferox eat, notat ferum, [vel] ferocem esse sicut onagrum", Schmidt, Burkius. So R. Jonah in Ben Melech.
{t} hdmx ylk lk "omnium vasorum desiderii", Montanus; "omnis vasis desiderii", Schmidt.

Hosea 13:16

Ver. 16. Samaria shall become desolate,.... With this verse the fourteenth chapter begins in the Hebrew copies, and in the Targum, and in many versions; but seems better to conclude the present chapter; since it is in close connection with Ho 13:15, and explains the figurative expressions there used. Samaria was the head of Ephraim, **Isa 7:9**; or the metropolis of the ten tribes of Israel; whose desolation is here prophesied of, and was accomplished by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, signified by the east wind; by whom it was not only besieged and taken, but very probably its houses were demolished, its walls broken down, and razed to the very foundation; see 2Ki 17:5; and, as this was the head city, it may be put for all the rest, and even for the whole land, which was at the same time laid waste. The Targum is,

"Samaria shall be guilty;"

that is, shall be found guilty of many sins; her transgression shall be revealed, as Jarchi, become manifest by the just punishment inflicted on her;

for she hath rebelled against her God; and bitterly provoked him to wrath and anger, as the word {u} signifies; by relinquishing him and his worship, and by serving idols, the calves at Dan and Bethel, Baal and other idols; when the Lord was their God, not only by creation, as of all men, but by the choice he made of them, and the covenant he made with them; by a national adoption of them, attended with various blessings and privileges, and by their profession of him; all which were an aggravation of their rebellion against him;

they shall fall by the sword: the inhabitants of Samaria, and of the land, particularly the men thereof; and especially their armed men, their men of war, that fought for them, and defended them; these should fall by the sword of the Assyrian;

their children shall be dashed to pieces; against stones, walls, and pavements; who should have perpetuated their name to future ages, and inherited their possessions:

and their women with child shall be ripped up; things which are often done by cruel enemies, when cities are sacked and plundered; and which Shalmaneser might be provoked unto by the perfidy of the king of Israel, and by the city of Samaria holding out a three years' siege. This, though we have no account of as done at that time, yet no doubt was; even as the same things are predicted of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, and which were to be done to them, in retaliation for them, though there is no narrative of them; see Ps 137:8.

{u} ttrm "ad amaritudinem concitavit", V. L. "significat amaricare, [vel] amaritudine replere", Rivet.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hosea 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 14

This chapter concludes the book, with gracious promises to repenting sinners, to returning backsliders. It begins with an exhortation to Israel to return to the Lord, seeing he was their God, and they had fallen by sin from prosperity into adversity, temporal and spiritual, Ho 14:1; and they are directed what to say to the Lord, upon their return to him, both by way of petition, and of promise and of resolution how to behave for the future, encouraged by his grace and mercy, Ho 14:2; and they are told what the Lord, by way of answer, would say to them, Ho 14:4; and what he would be to them; and what blessings of grace he would bestow on them; and in what flourishing and fruitful circumstances they should be, Ho 14:5; and the chapter ends with a character of such that attend to and understand those things; and with a recommendation of the ways of the Lord, which are differently regarded by men, Ho 14:9.

Ver. 1. O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God,.... From whom they had revolted and backslidden; whose worship and service they had forsaken, and whose word and ordinances they had slighted and neglected, and had served idols, and had given into idolatry, superstition, and will worship; and are here exhorted to turn again to the Lord by repentance and reformation, to abandon their idols, and every false way, and cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart; and the rather, since he was their God; not only their Creator, Preserver, and kind Benefactor, but their God, by his special choice of them above all people; by his covenant with them; by his redemption of them; and by their profession of him; and who was still their God, and ready to receive them, upon their return to him: and a thorough return is here meant, a returning "even unto" {w}, or quite up to the Lord thy God; it is not a going to him halfway, but a going quite up to his seat; falling down before him, acknowledging sin and backslidings, and having hold upon him by faith as their God, Redeemer, and Saviour: hence, from the way of speaking here used, the Jews {x} have a saying, as Kimchi observes, "great is repentance, for it brings a man to the throne of glory;"

the imperative may be here used for the future, as some take it; and then it is a prediction of the conversion of Israel, "thou shalt return, O Israel" {y}; and which was in part fulfilled in the first times of the Gospel, which met with many of the Israelites dispersed among the Gentiles, and was the means of their conversion; and will have a greater accomplishment when all Israel shall be converted and saved:

for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity; or "though thou art fallen" {z}; into sin, and by it into ruin, temporal and spiritual; from a state of great prosperity and happiness, both in things civil and religious, into great adversity, and calamities of every sort; yet return, repent, consider from whence thou art fallen, and by what; or thou shall return, be recovered and restored, notwithstanding thy fall, and the low estate in which thou art. The Targum is,

"return to the fear of the Lord."

{w} hwhy de "asque ad Dominum", Montanus, Tigurine version, Oecolampadius, Schmidt, Burkius. {x} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 86. 1. {y} hbwv "revertere", i. e. "reverteris", Schmidt. {z} tlvk yk "etsi corruisti", Luther apud Tarnovium.

Hosea 14:2

Ver. 2. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord,.... Not mere words without the heart, but such as come from it, and express the true sense of it; words of confession, as the Targum; by which sin is acknowledged, and repentance declared, and forgiveness asked. Kimchi's note is a very good one;

"he (that is, God) does not require of you, upon return, neither gold nor silver, nor burnt offerings, but good works; therewith confessing your sins with your whole hearts, and not with your lips only;"

and which best agrees with evangelical repentance and Gospel times, in which ceremonial sacrifices are no more; and not any words neither; not tautologies and multiplicity of words, or words of man's prescribing, but of the Lord's directing to and dictating; the taught words of the Holy Ghost, which he suggests and helps men to, who otherwise know not how to pray, or what to pray for; and these expressed under a sense of sin, and sorrow for it, and in the strength of faith, and are as follow:

say unto him, take away all iniquity; which is to be understood, not of the taking away of the being of sin; which, though very desirable, is not to be expected in this life: nor of the expiation of sin by the sacrifice of Christ, which is done already; he has taken the sins of his people from them to himself, and has bore them, and carried them away, and removed them out of the sight of divine justice, which is satisfied for them: nor of the taking away of the power and dominion of sin; which is done by the Spirit of God, and the efficacy of his grace on the hearts of converted persons: nor of an extinguishing all sense of sin in men; for none have a quicker sense of it than pardoned sinners, or are more humble on the account of it, or more loath it; but of the taking of it away from the conscience of a sensible truly penitent sinner or backslider, by a fresh application of pardoning grace and mercy: sin is a burden, a heavy one, when the guilt of it is charged and lies upon the conscience; pardon of sin applied is a lifting up, as the word here used signifies, a taking off of this burden from it, a causing it to pass away; which is done by the fresh sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, which purges the conscience from sin, and clears it from the guilt of it, and speaks peace and comfort; and which is the blessing here prayed for, and every backslider, sensible of his case, sees he stands in need of, and even to have "all" taken away; for, if but one sin remains, and the guilt of it continues, he can have no peace, nor stand up under it; but, when God forgives sin, he forgives "all" sin;

and receive [us] graciously; receive into grace and favour, that is, openly and manifestly; the free love and favour of God is always the same, but the manifestations of it are different; sometimes more or less, and sometimes scarce any, if any at all, and is the ease here; and therefore a petition is made for the remembrance of it, for a renewed discovery and application of it: or accept us in a gracious manner; acceptance with God is not on account of the merits of men, but his own grace and mercy; not through any works of righteousness done by them, which are impure and imperfect; but through Christ the Beloved, in whom God is well pleased with the persons, and services, and sacrifices of his people, and receives all for his sake, and which is here asked for; as well as that he would take them into his protection, and open affection. It is, in the original text, only, "receive good" {a}; meaning either their good hearts, made so by the grace of God; their broken hearts and contrite spirits, which are sacrifices not despised by him, but acceptable to him through Christ: or their good words they were bid to take, and did take, nod use; their good prayers offered up through Christ, in his name, and in the exercise of faith, which are the Lord's delight: or their good works, done from a principle of love, in faith, to the glory of God, and with which sacrifices he is well pleased: or rather, as the same word signifies, to give as well as receive; see Ps 68:18. It may be rendered, "give good" {b}; take good, and give it to us, even all good things, temporal and spiritual, especially all spiritual blessings in Christ; all which good things come from God, and are his gifts; particularly the good Spirit of God, and his grace, which the Lord gives to them that ask; and all supplies of grace from Christ; and more especially, as some interpreters of note explain it, the righteousness of Christ imputed and applied; which goes along with pardoning grace, or the taking away of sin, **Zec 3:4**; and is the good, the better, the best robe; a gift, the gift of grace; a blessing received from the Lord, and to be asked for of him:

so will we render the calves of our lips; not calves, bullocks, and oxen, for sacrifice, as under the law; but the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving for pardoning grace, for a justifying righteousness, and for all good things: these are the fruit of the lips, as the apostle interprets it, Heb 13:15; and which are sacrifices more acceptable to God than calves of a year old, or an ox or bullock that has horns and hoofs, Ps 69:30. This shows that the text and context refer to Gospel times, to the times of the Messiah; in which the Jews themselves say all sacrifices will cease but the sacrifice of praise. The Targum is,

"turn to the worship of the Lord, and say, let it he with thee to forgive sins, and may we be received as good, and the words of our lips be accepted with thee as bullocks for good pleasure upon the altar."

{a} bwj xq "accipe bonum", Pagninus, Montanus: Munster, Cocceius, Schmidt, Burkius. {b} "Acceptum confer bonum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius.

Hosea 14:3

Ver. 3. Ashur shall not save us,.... This is still a continuation of the words repenting and returning Israel are directed to make use of before the Lord, declaring they would not do any more as they had done; to Assyria, or the kings of Assyria, as the Targum, for help, and desire assistance, and expect deliverance and salvation from thence; see **Ho 5:13**;

we will not ride upon horses; to seek for help elsewhere; or go to Egypt for them, as they had done; or put their trust in them for safety, in a time of war; or think to make their escape by them when in danger; see Ps 20:8;

neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, [ye are] our gods; that is, say so to, or concerning, their idols, which were made by their hands, or by their orders, as they had formerly done to the golden calf in the wilderness, and to the calves at Dan and Bethel; see
Ex 32:4; now, by all these expressions is meant, that they would determine not to put any confidence in any creature, or in any creature performance; that they would not trust in their own merits, but in the mercy of God through Christ for the of their sins; nor in any works of righteousness for their justification before God, and acceptance with him; nor expect salvation in any other way than by the free grace of God, and his abundant mercy in Christ:

for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy; and in thee only; hereby declaring that the Lord was the only Saviour; that there was salvation in Christ, and in no other; and that they would have no other saviour but him; that they would look to the mercy of God proclaimed in him, and communicated from and through him, the mercy seat, and to his mercy alone for eternal life; in whom the most destitute persons, as the fatherless, who are destitute of friends, of help and assistance, of counsel and advice, find favour, kindness, and mercy, even such as are most hopeless and helpless; which is a great encouragement to look to the Lord, to trust in him, and hope in his mercy.

Hosea 14:4

Ver. 4. I will heal their backslidings,.... This and what follows is the Lord's answer to the above prayer; and this clause particularly is an answer to that petition, "take away all iniquity", Ho 14:2; sins are diseases, natural and hereditary, nauseous and loathsome, mortal, and incurable but by the grace of God, and blood of Christ; backslidings are relapses, which are dangerous things; Christ is the only Physician, who heals all the diseases of sin, and these relapses also; he will do it, he has promised it, and never turns away any that apply to him for it; and which he does by a fresh application of his blood, whereby he takes away sin, heals the conscience wounded with it, and restores peace and comfort; which is a great encouragement to take words, and return unto him; see **Ho 6:1**;

I will love them freely; this is in answer to that petition, "receive us, graciously"; or "receive good", or rather "give good", Ho 14:2; not that the love of God or Christ begins when sinners repent and turn to him, or he applies his pardoning grace, since his love is from everlasting; but that in so doing he manifests his love, and will continue in it, nor shall anything separate from it: and this love, as it is freely set upon the objects of it, without any merits of theirs, or any motives in them, but flows from the free sovereign will and pleasure of God in Christ; so it is as freely manifested, and continues upon the same bottom, and is displayed in a most liberal and profuse donation of blessings of grace to them: this love is free in its original, and is liberal and bountiful in the effects of it; and makes the objects of it a free, willing, and bountiful people too:

for mine anger is turned away from him: from Israel, which, under former dispensations of Providence, seemed to be towards him, at least when under his frowns, resentment, and displeasure, as is the case of that people at this day; but when they shall return to the Lord, and he shall manifest and apply his pardoning grace to them, his anger will appear no more, and they shall be in a very happy and comfortable condition, as Israel or the church declares, Isa 12:1; which refers to the same times as these words do; see Ro 11:26; and compare
Ps 85:2; where a manifestation of pardoning grace is called the Lord's turning himself from the fierceness of his anger; and especially this suits with Gospel times, satisfaction being made for sin by the sacrifice of Christ.

Hosea 14:5

Ver. 5. I will be as the dew unto Israel,.... To spiritual Israel, to those that return to the Lord, take with them words, and pray unto him, whose backslidings are healed, and they are freely loved; otherwise it is said of apostate Israel or Ephraim, that they were "smitten, [and] their root dried up, [and bore] no fruit", **Ho 9:16**. These words, and the whole, context, respect future times, as Kimchi observes; even the conversion of Israel in the latter day, when they shall partake of all the blessings of grace, signified by the metaphors used in this and the following verses. These words are a continuation of the answer to the petitions put into the mouths of converted ones, promising them many favours, expressed in figurative terms; and first by "the dew", which comes from heaven, is a great blessing of God, and is quickening, very refreshing and fruitful to the earth: and the Lord is that unto his people as the dew is to herbs, plants, and trees of the earth; he is like unto it in his free love and layout, and the discoveries of it to them; which, like the

dew, is of and from himself alone; is an invaluable blessing; better than life itself; and is not only the cause of quickening dead sinners, but of reviving, cheering, and refreshing the drooping spirits of his people; and is abundance, never fails, but always continues, Pr 19:12; and so he is in the blessings of his grace, and the application of them; which are in heavenly places, in Christ, and come down from thence, and in great abundance, like the drops of dew; and fall silently, insensibly, and unawares, particularly regenerating grace; and are very cheering and exhilarating, as forgiveness of sin, a justifying righteousness, adoption, &c.
De 33:13; and also in the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, which distil as dew; these are of God, and come down from heaven; seem little in themselves, but of great importance to the conversion of sinners, and comfort of saints; bring many blessings in them, and cause great joy and fruitfulness wherever they come with power, De 32:2. The Targum is,

"my Word shall be as dew to Israel;"

the essential Word of God, the Messiah; of whose incarnation of a virgin some interpret this; having, like the dew, no father but God, either in his divine or human nature; but rather it is to be understood of the blessings of grace he is to his people as Mediator; being to them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, and every other, even their all it, all:

he shall grow as the lily; to which the church and people of God are sometimes compared, especially for their beauty and comeliness in Christ, Solomon in all his glory not being arrayed like one of these; particularly for their unspotted purity, being clothed with fine linen, clean and white, the white raiment of Christ's righteousness, and having their garments washed and made white in his blood; see **So 2:1**; and here for its growth. The root of the lily lies buried in the earth a long time, when it seems as if it was dead; but on a sudden it springs out of the earth, and runs up to a great height, and becomes very flourishing; which is not owing to itself, it "toils not"; but to the dew of heaven: so God's elect in a state of nature are dead, but, being quickened by the grace of God, spring up on a sudden, and grow very fast; which is not owing to themselves, but to the dews of divine grace, the bright shining of the sun of righteousness upon them, and to the influences of the blessed Spirit; and so they grow up on high, into their Head Christ Jesus, and rise up in their affections, desires, faith and hope to heavenly things, to the high calling of God in Christ, and become fruitful in grace, and in good works. The Targum is, "they shall shine as the lily;"

see **Mt 6:29**;

and cast forth his roots as Lebanon; as the tree, or trees, of Lebanon, as the Targum; and so Kimchi, who adds, which are large, and their roots many; or as the roots of the trees of Lebanon, so Jarchi; like the cedars there, which, as the word here used signifies, "struck" {c} their roots firm in that mountain, and stood strong and stable, let what winds and tempests soever blow: thus, as in the following, what one metaphor is deficient in, another makes up. The lily has but a weak root, and is easily up; but the cedars in Lebanon had roots firm and strong, to which the saints are sometimes compared, as here; see Ps 92:12; and this denotes their permanency and final perseverance; who are rooted in the love of God, which is like a root underground from all eternity, and sprouts forth in regeneration, and is the source of all grace; is itself immovable, and in it the people of God are secured, and can never be rooted out; and they may be said to "strike" their roots in it, as the phrase here, when they exercise: a strong faith in it, and are firmly persuaded of their interest in it; see **Eph 3:17**; they are also rooted in Christ, who is the root of Jesse, of David, and of all the saints; from whom they have their life, their nourishment and fruitfulness, and where they remain unmoved, and strike their roots in him, by renewed acts of faith on him, claiming their interest in him; and are herein so strongly rooted and grounded, that all the winds and storms of sin, Satan, and the world, cannot eradicate them; nay, as trees are more firmly rooted by being shaken, so are they; see **Col 2:7**. The Targum is,

"they shall dwell in the strength of their land, as a tree of Lebanon, which sends forth its branch."

{c} Kyw "percutiet", Montanus, Tarnovius, Rivet, Cocceius; "figet", Calvin, Pareus; "defiget"; Zanchius; "et infiget", Schmidt; "incutiet", Drusius.

Hosea 14:6

Ver. 6. His branches shall spread,.... As the well rooted cedars in Lebanon; see Nu 24:6. This respects the propagation of the church of God, and the interest of Christ in the world, as in the first times of the Gospel, and will be in the latter day; when the Gospel shall be spread everywhere; churches set up in all places; the Jews converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in; and these like spreading branches, and fruitful boughs, abounding in grace and good works. The Targum is,

"they shall multiply or increase with sons and daughters:"

and his beauty shall be as the olive tree; which lies in its being laden with excellent fruit, and being always green; for which reasons particular believers, and the whole church of God, are sometimes compared to it; having that fatness in them, with which God and men are honoured; and that true grace, which is signified by oil in the vessels of the heart, and is called the unction and anointing of the Holy One; and they persevering in this grace to the end, which is evergreen and durable, immortal, and dies not; see Ps 52:8. Here again it may be observed, that the trees of Lebanon, though they had strong roots, and spreading branches, yet were not fruitful; and the deficiency of that metaphor is supplied by this of the olive:

and his smell as Lebanon; as the trees of Lebanon, the cedars, trees of frankincense, and other odoriferous trees and plants, which grew upon it; here what is wanting in the olive tree, whose smell is not so grateful, is made up by this simile of the trees of Lebanon, and the smell of them; which may denote the sweet and grateful smell the Lord smells in his people, or his gracious acceptance of them in Christ; whose garments of righteousness and salvation on them are as the smell of Lebanon; and whose graces in them exceed the smell of all spices; and whose prayers are odours, and their praises a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to God; see **So 4:10**. Some render it, "as incense" {d} called "lebonah" in Hebrew, from whence the mountain is thought to have its name, frankincense growing upon it. So the Targum,

"and their smell as the smell of the incense of spices."

Jarchi says, as the sanctuary, which was made of the cedars of Lebanon.

{d} "Ut thuris", Grotius.

Hosea 14:7

Ver. 7. They that dwell under his shadow shall return,.... Either under the shadow of Lebanon, as Japhet and Jarchi; the shadow of that mountain, or of the trees that grew upon it; or under the shadow of Israel, the church, to which young converts have recourse, and under which they sit with pleasure; or rather under the shadow of the Lord Israel was called to return unto, and now return, Ho 14:1; as the Israelites will in the latter day. So the Targum,

"and they shall be gathered out of the midst of their captivity, they shall dwell under the shadow of their Messiah;"

thus truly gracious persons sit under the shadow of Christ, who come to themselves, and return unto the Lord; even under the shadow of his word and ordinances, where they desire to sit, and do sit with delight and pleasure, as well as in the greatest safety; and find it a very refreshing and comfortable shadow to them; even a shadow from the heat of avenging justice, a fiery law, the fiery darts of Satan, and the fury of the world; and, like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, exceeding pleasing and cheering to weary travellers; see **So 2:3**
Isa 25:4;

they shall revive [as] the corn: which first dies, and then is quickened; or which, after a cold nipping winter, at spring revives again: thus do believers under the dews of divine grace, under the shadow of Christ, and the influences of his Spirit: or, "shall revive [with] corn" {e}; by means of it; by which may be signified the corn of heaven, angels' food, the hidden manna, the Gospel of Christ, and Christ himself, the bread of life; by which the spirits of his people are revived, their souls upheld in life, and their graces quickened; which they find and eat, and it is the joy and rejoicing of their hearts:

and grow as the vine: which, though weak, and needs support, and its wood unprofitable; yet grows and spreads very much, and brings forth rich fruit in clusters: so the saints, though they are weak in themselves, and need divine supports, and when they have done all they can are unprofitable servants; yet through the power of divine grace, which is like the dew, they grow in every grace, and are filled with the blessings of it, and bring forth much fruit to the glory of God:

and the scent thereof [shall be] as the wine of Lebanon; like the wine of those vines which grow on Mount Lebanon, and judged to be the best. On Mount Lebanon, about the midway between the top and the bottom of it, there is now a convent called Canobine, situated in a very pleasant place; and Le Bruyn in his travels relates, that it is preferable to all other places on account of its wines, which are the richest and finest in the world; they are very sweet, of a red colour, and so oily that they stick to the glass. At Lebanon was a city called by the Greeks Ampeloessa, from the excellency of its wine, as Grotius from Pliny {f} observes. Gabriel Sionita {g} assures us, that even to this day the wines of Libanus are in good reputation. Kimchi relates from Asaph, a physician, that the wines of Lebanon, Hermon, and Carmel, and of the mountains of Israel and Jerusalem, and of the mountains of Samaria, and of the mountains of Caphtor Mizraim, were the best of wines, and exceeded all others for scent, taste, and medicine. Japhet interprets it, the smell of their vine afar off was as the wine of Lebanon; and so Kimchi, the smell of the wine of the vine, to which Israel is compared, is like the smell of the wine of Lebanon. This may denote the savouriness of truly converted gracious souls, of their graces, doctrines, life, and conversation. Some choose to render it, "their memory {h} [shall be] as the wine of Lebanon"; so the Targum interprets it of

"the memory of their goodness;"

the saints obtain a good report through faith, and have a good name, better than precious ointment; their memory is blessed; they, are had in everlasting remembrance; the memory of them is not only dear to the people of God in after ages; but the memory of their persons, and of their works, is exceeding grateful to God and Christ.

{e} Ngd wyxy zhsontai sitw, Sept. "vivent tritico", V. L. "vivificabunt frumento", Munster, Castalio; so Syr. & Ar. {f} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 18. {g} Apud Calmet, Dictionary, on the word "Wine". {h} wrkz "memoria ejus", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Tarnovius, Cocceius, Castalio, Schmidt, Burkius.

Hosea 14:8

Ver. 8. Ephraim [shall say], what have I to do any more with idols?.... This is to be understood, not of apostate Ephraim, as in the times of the prophet, who was so wedded and glued to the idols, that there was no hope of getting him from them; and therefore is bid to let him alone, **Ho 4:17**; but of Ephraim Israel returning to God at his call, under the influence of his grace, in the latter day, Ho 14:1. Idols are the same with the works of their hands, Ho 14:3; and to be interpreted, not of graven or molten images, to the worship of which the Jews have not been addicted since their captivity to this day; see **Ho 3:4**; but of the idols of their hearts, their impiety, their unbelief, their rejection of the Messiah, which, at the time of their conversion, they will loath, abhor, and mourn over; likewise the traditions of their elders, they are now zealous and tenacious of, and prefer even to the written word; but will now relinquish them, and embrace the Gospel of Christ; as well as the idol of their own righteousness they have always endeavoured to establish; but shall now renounce, and receive Christ as the Lord their righteousness. The like to this is to be found in common in all truly penitent and converted sinners; who, being made sensible of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, detest and abhor it, and declare they will have nothing to do with it; not but that it continues in them, and has to do with them, and they with that; yet not so as to live and walk in it; to yield their members as instruments of it; to serve and obey it as their master; to make provision for it, and to have the course of their lives under the direction and power of it; and so likewise, being convinced of the imperfection and insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them, they will have nothing to do with that in the business of justification before God, and acceptance with him: now these are the words of the Lord, affirming what Ephraim should say, as Kimchi rightly observes; he promises for him, as he well might, since it is he that gives repentance to Israel, and works in his people principles of grace, and enables them both to will and to do, to make such holy resolutions, and perform them. Some render the words, "O Ephraim, what have I to do" {i}? &c. and take them to be words of God concerning himself, declaring he would have nothing to do with idols, nor suffer them in his service, nor should they; for "what concord hath Christ with Belial?" or "what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" **2Co 6:15**; but the former sense is much best; rather what Schmidt suggests is more agreeable, who, rendering the words in the same way, makes them to be the words of a believing Gentile returning and dwelling under the shadow of Israel; so he interprets Ho 14:7, and takes this to be the language of such an one throughout. The Targum is,

"they of the house of Israel shall say, what [is it] to us to serve idols any more?"

I have heard [him]; says the Lord; Ephraim bemoaning himself, repenting of his sins, and confessing them; his prayers for pardon and acceptance, and the resolutions made by him in the strength of divine grace, Ho 14:2; see Jer 31:18; and this is what his idols he once served could not do, who had ears, but heard not; but the Lord not only heard, but answered, and granted his request. So the Targum,

"I by my Word will receive the prayer of Israel, and will have mercy on him:"

and observed [him]; looked at him, and on him; with an eye of pity and compassion; with a favourable and propitious look, as the Lord does towards those that are poor, and of a contrite spirit; observed the ways and steps he took in returning to him; marked his tears and humiliations, groans and moans, and took notice of his wants in order to supply them;

I [am] like a green fir tree: these are the words of the Lord continued; though some take them to be the words of Ephraim; or, as Schmidt, of the Gentile believer, like those of David, Ps 52:8; but they best agree with Christ, who may be compared to such a tree, as he is to many others in Scripture; because a choice one, as he is to his Father, and to all believers, chosen and precious, lovely and beloved; a tall tree, so Christ is highly exalted as Mediator, higher than the kings of the earth, above the angels in heaven, yea, higher than the heavens. The boughs of this tree, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe, bend downward so low as to be laid hold on; Christ, though the high and lofty One, dwells with humble souls, and suffers himself to be laid hold upon by the faith of everyone that comes to him. Pliny says {k}, that this tree is of a cheerful aspect, smooth, and scarce any knots upon it; and its leaves so thick that a shower of rain will not pass through it: Christ is most amiable, and altogether lovely to look at in his person and fulness; and he looks in a loving smiling manner upon his people; he is without any knot of sin or corruption in him, as to principle or practice; and is a delightful shade from the wrath of God, or rage of man, from the heat of a fiery law, and the darts of Satan: and as this tree, as here, is ever green, so he is always the same; he ever lives, and his people in him, and by him; his fulness always continues to supply them. Once more, the fir tree is the habitation of the stork, an unclean creature by the law of God; so Christ is the dwelling place of sinners, he receives them, and converses with them, Ps 104:17. The Septuagint version renders it, "as a thick juniper tree": which naturalists say {l} has such a virtue in it, as by the smell to drive away serpents. So the old serpent the devil was drove away by Christ in the wilderness, in the garden, and on the cross; and resisting by faith, holding out his blood and righteousness, causes him to flee from the saints, The Arabic version is, "as the fruitful cypress tree"; which is of a good smell, and its wood very durable; and so may be expressive of the savour of Christ, his righteousness and sacrifice, the graces of his Spirit, and of his duration. Some take this to be a promise that Ephraim should be as a green fir tree, so Aben Ezra; with which agrees the Targum,

"I by my word will make him as the beautiful fir tree;"

and to which sometimes the saints are compared; see
Isa 41:19; and this being a tree that bears no fruit, it follows, to make up that defect in the metaphor,

from me is thy fruit found; from Christ are all the spiritual blessings of grace, peace, pardon, righteousness, adoption, a right and meetness for eternal life, and that itself; all the fruits and graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, love, &c. and all good works, which spring from union with him, are done in his strength, and influenced by his grace and example; see **Php 1:11**.

{i} dwe yl hm Myrpa "Ephraim, [vel] O quid mihi amplius", &c. Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Tigurine version, Castalio, Cocceius, Schmidt, Burkius. {k} Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 10. {l} Varinus apud Rivet. in loc.

Hosea 14:9

Ver. 9. Who [is] wise, and he shall understand these [things]? prudent, and he shall know them?.... Contained in this book, and particularly in this chapter; which expresses so much of the goodness of God and grace of Christ to Israel; though it may be applied to the whole Scripture, and to all the mysteries and doctrines of the Gospel, respecting Christ and his grace; and be a recommendation of these to the consideration of every wise and prudent man; where he will find enough to exercise his wisdom and understanding; though he need not be discouraged in his search and inquiry into them. It suggests as if there were but few such wise persons, and that they are the only wise men that do know and understand these things; and all others are but fools, let them be thought as wise as they will:

for the ways of the Lord [are] right; straight, plain, even, according to the rules of, justice and equity; there is no unrighteousness in them; none in the ways in which he himself walks; either in his ways and methods of grace, his decrees and purposes, his counsels and covenant; or in his providential dispensations; nor in those he directs others to walk in, the paths of faith and doctrine; or the ways of his commandments:

and the just shall walk in them; such as are, justified by the righteousness of Christ, and have ills grace wrought in them, and live righteously; these walk, and continue to walk, in the ways of God; which shows that the doctrine of justification by Christ's implored righteousness is no licentious doctrine:

but the transgressors shall fall therein; the transgressors of the law of God, not being used to his ways, as Kimchi's father observes, stumble in them and fall;

or rather, as Jarchi and the Targum, they fall into hell, into ruin and destruction, because they walk not in them; though the sense seems to be, that as Christ himself, so his ways and his word, his doctrines and his ordinances, are stumbling blocks to wicked men, at which they stumble, and fall, and perish; see **Lu 2:34** **Ro 9:33**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joel 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOEL

In some Hebrew Bibles this prophecy is called "Sepher Joel", the Book of Joel; in the Vulgate Latin version, the Prophecy of Joel; and in the Syriac version, the Prophecy of the Prophet Joel; and the Arabic version, the Prophet Joel; and so the Apostle Peter quotes him, **Ac 2:16**. His name, according to Hillerus {a}, signifies "the Lord is God"; but others derive it from lay, which in "Hiphil" is lyawh, and signifies "he willed, acquiesced, or is well pleased, so Abarbinei; and hence Schmidt thinks it answers to Desiderius or Erasmus. According to Isidorus {b}, he was born at Bethoron, in the tribe of Reuben, and died and was buried there; and so says Pseudo-Epiphanius {c}. In what age he lived is not easy to say. Aben Ezra expressly affirms there is no way to know it; and so R. David Ganz {d} says, his time we know not; and likewise Abarbinel. Some think he prophesied about the same time Hoses did, after whom he is next placed; and so Mr. Whiston {e} and, Mr. Bedford {f} make him to prophesy much about the same time with Isaiah and Hoses, about eight hundred years before Christ; but, in the Septuagint version, this book is in the fourth order, and not Hoses, but Amos and Micah, are placed before him; and so the author of Juchasin {g} puts the prophets in this order, first Hoses, then Amos, next Isaiah, then Micah, and after him Joel. Some of the Jewish writers, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abendana relate, make Joel contemporary with Elisha, and say he prophesied in the, lays of Jehoram the son of Ahab, when the seven years' famine called for came upon the land, **2Ki 8:1**. Both in Seder Olam Rabba and Zuta {h} he is placed in the reign of Manasseh; and so in Hilchot Gedolot, as Jarchi observes. And it seems indeed as if he prophesied after the ten tribes were carried captive, which was in the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign, since no mention is made of Israel but with respect to future times, only of Judah and Jerusalem, But, be it when it will that he prophesied, there is no doubt to be made of the authenticity of this book, which is confirmed by the quotations of two apostles out of two: Peter and Paul, **Ac 2:16**.

{a} Onomast. Sacr. p. 856. {b} De Vita & Mart. Sanct. c. 4. {c} De Vita Proph. c. 14. {d} Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 14. 2. {e} Chronological Tables, cent. 7. and 8. {f} Scripture Chronology, B. 6. c. 2. p. 646. {g} Fol. 12. 1, 2. {h} P. 55, 105. Ed. Meyer.

INTRODUCTION TO JOEL 1

This chapter describes a dreadful calamity upon the people of the Jews, by locusts and, caterpillars, and drought. After the title of the book, **Joe 1:1**; old men are called upon to observe this sore judgment to their children, that it might be transmitted to the latest posterity, as that the like to which had not been seen and heard of, **Joe 1:2**; and drunkards to awake and weep, because the vines were destroyed, and no wine could be made for them, **Joe 1:5**; and not only husbandmen and vinedressers, but the priests of the Lord, are called to mourn, because such destruction, was made in the fields and vineyards, that there were no meat nor drink offering brought into the house of the Lord, **Joe 1:8**; wherefore a general and solemn fast is required throughout the land, because of the distress of man and beast, **Joe 1:14**; and the chapter is concluded with the resolution of the prophet to cry unto the Lord, on account of this calamity, **Joe 1:19**.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. Who this Pethuel was is not known; Jarchi takes him to be the same with Samuel the prophet, who had a son of this name, **1Sa 8:2**; and gives this reason for his being called Pethuel, because in his prayer he persuaded God; but the long span of time will by no means admit of this, nor the character of Samuel's son agree with Joel; and therefore is rightly denied by Aben Ezra, who observes, however, that this man was an honourable man, and therefore his name is mentioned; and gives this as a rule, that whenever any prophet mentions the name of his father, he was honourable. Perhaps, it is here observed, to distinguish him from another of the same name; and there was one of this name, Joel, a high priest in the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, according to Seder Olam Zuta {i} and Abarbinel {k}; in whose time Joel is by some thought to prophesy.

{i} Fol. 104. {k} In Meyer. Anotat. in ib. p, 626.

Joel 1:2

Ver. 2. Hear this, ye old men,.... What the prophet was about to relate, concerning the consumption of the fruits of the earth, by various sorts of creatures, and by a drought; and these are called upon to declare if ever the like had been known or heard of by them; who by reason of age had the greatest opportunities of knowledge of this sort, and could remember what they had heard or seen, and would faithfully relate it: this maybe understood of elders in office, as well as in age;

and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land; or "earth", not of the whole earth; but of the land of Judea; who were more particularly concerned in this affair, and therefore are required to listen attentively to it:

hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? that is, not the selfsame thing, but anything equal to it; a judgment of the same kind and nature, and of the same degree. By this question it seems the like had never been in the memory of any man living; nor in former times, in the days of their ancestors, as could be averted upon report; or attested on the credit of annals, chronicles, or other methods of conveying the history of ages past. As for the plague of locusts in Egypt, though they were such as; never find been, nor would be there any more; yet such or greater, and more in number than those, might be in Judea; besides, they continued but a few, lays at most, these four years successively, as Kimchi observes; and who thinks that in Egypt there was but one sort of locusts, here four; but the passage he quotes in Ps 78:46; contradicts him; to which may be added
Ps 105:34.

Joel 1:3

Ver. 3. Tell ye your children of it,.... Give them a particular account of it; describe the creatures and their number as near as you can; say when they begun and how long they continued, and what devastations they made, and what was the cause and reason of such a judgment, your sins and transgressions:

and [let] your children [tell] their children, and their children other generation; or, "to the generation following" {l}; let it be handed down from one generation to another that it may be a caution to future posterity how they behave and lest they bring down the like awful judgments on them. What this referred to was as follows:

{1} rxa rwdl "posteritati sequenti", Vatablus; "generationi posterae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius.

Joel 1:4

Ver. 4. That which the palmer worm hath left hath the locust eaten,.... These, with the two following, are four kinds of, locusts as Jarchi observes; though it is difficult to fix the particular species designed; they seem to have their names from some peculiar properties belonging to them; as the first of these from their sheering or cropping off the fruits and leaves of trees; and the second from the vast increase of them, the multitude they bring forth and the large numbers they appear in:

and that which the locust hath left hath the canker worm eaten; which in the Hebrew language is called from its licking up the fruits of the earth, by which it becomes barren:

and that which the canker worm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten; which has its name from wasting and consuming all that comes in its way: now these came not together, but followed one another; not one one year, and another the second, and so on throughout four years, as Kimchi thinks; for though the calamity lasted some years as is manifest from **Joe 2:25**; yet it is not reasonable, that, for instance what the palmer worm left the first year should remain in the fields and vineyards, on the fig trees and vines till the next year for the locust to consume and is on:, but rather these all appeared in succession in one and the same year; and so what the palmer worm left having eaten up what was most agreeable to them, the locust came and devoured what they had left; and then what they left was destroyed by the canker worm, which fed on that which was most grateful to them; and last of all came the caterpillar, and consumed all the others had left; and this might be continued for years successively: when this calamity was, we have no account in sacred history; whether it was in the seven years' famine in the days of Elisha, or the same with what Amos speaks of, **Am 4:6**; is not easy to say: and though it seems to be literally understood, as the drought later mentioned, yet might be typical of the enemies of the Jews succeeding one another in the destruction of them. Not of the four monarchies, the Babylonians, Persians, Grecians, and Romans, as Lyra and Abarbinel; since the Persians particularly never entered into the land of Judea and wasted it; though this is the sense of the ancient Jews, as Jerom relates; for he says the Hebrews interpret the "palmer worm" of the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Chaldeans, who, coming from one climate of the world,

destroyed both the ten and the two tribes, that is, all the people of Israel: the locust they interpret of the Medes and Persians, who, having overturned the Chaldean empire, carried the Jews captive: the "canker worm" is the Macedonians, and all the successors of Alexander; especially King Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, who like a canker worm sat in Judea, and devoured all the remains of the former kings, under whom were the wars of the Maccabees: the "caterpillar" they refer to the Roman empire, the fourth and last that oppressed the Jews, and drove them out of their borders. Nor of the several kings of Assyria and Babylon, who followed one another, and wasted first the ten tribes, and then the other two, as Tiglathpileser, Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar, so Theodoret; since this prophecy only relates to the two tribes. Rather therefore this may point at the several invasions and incursions of the Chaldean army into Judea, under Nebuchadnezzar and his generals; first, when he came up against Jerusalem, and made Jehoiakim tributary to him; a second time, when he carried Jehoiachin and his family into Babylon, with a multitude of the Jews, and their wealth; a third time, when he besieged Jerusalem, and took it, and Zedekiah the king, and carried him captive; and a fourth time, when Nebuzaradan came and burnt the temple, and the houses of Jerusalem, and broke down the walls of it, and cleared the land of its inhabitants and riches; see
2Ki 24:1.

Joel 1:5

Ver. 5. Awake, ye drunkards, and weep: and howl, all ye drinkers of wine,.... Who are used to neither, either to awake or to howl, being very prone to drowsiness upon their drinking bouts, and to mirth and jollity in them; but now should be awake, and sober enough, not as being a virtue in them, but through want of wine; and for the same reason should howl, as follows:

because of the new wine, for it is cut off from your mouth; the locusts having spoiled the vines and eaten the grapes, no new wine could be made, and so none could be brought in cups to their mouths; nor they drink it in bowls, as they had used to do; and which, being sweet and grateful to their taste, they were wont to drink in great abundance, till they were inebriated with it; but now there was a scarcity, their lips were dry, but not their eyes. The word, Kimchi says, signifies all liquor which is squeezed by bruising or treading.

Joel 1:6

Ver. 6. For a nation is come up upon my land,.... A nation of locusts, so called from their great numbers, and coming from foreign parts; just as the ants are called a "people", and the conies a "folk",
Pr 30:25; and which were an emblem of the nation of the Chaldeans, which came up from Babylon, and invaded the land of Judea; called by the Lord "my land", because he had chosen it for the habitation of his people; here he himself had long dwelt, and had been served and worshipped in it: though Kimchi thinks these are the words of the inhabitants of the land, or of the prophet; but if it can be thought they are any other than the words of God, they rather seem to be expressed by the drunkards in particular, howling for want of wine, and observing the reason of it:

strong, and without number; this description seems better to agree with the Assyrians or Chaldeans, who were a mighty and powerful people, as well as numerous; though locusts, notwithstanding they are weak, singly taken, yet, coming in large bodies, carry all before them, and there is no stopping them:

whose teeth [are] the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion; or "the grinders" {m} of such an one; being hard, strong, and sharp, to bite off the tops, boughs, and branches of trees: Pliny {n} says, locusts will gnaw with their teeth the doors of houses; so the teeth of locusts are described in **Re 9:8**; this may denote the strength, cruelty, and voraciousness of the Chaldean army.

{m} tweltm "molares", Pagninus, Mercerus, Burkius. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.

Joel 1:7

Ver. 7. He hath laid my vine waste,.... That is, the locust, which spoiled the vines in Judea, the singular being put for the plural, by gnawing the branches, biting the tops of them, and devouring the leaves and the fruit; and so not only left them bare and barren, but destroyed them: this may emblematically represent the Assyrians or Babylonians wasting the land of Judea, the vine and vineyard of the Lord of hosts; see **Isa 5:1**;

and barked my fig tree; gnawed off the bark of them; locusts are not only harmful to vines, as is hinted by Theocritus {o}, but to fig trees also: Pliny {p} speaks of fig trees in Boeotia gnawn by locusts, which budded again; and mentions it as something wonderful and miraculous that they should: and yet Sanctius observes, that these words cannot be understood properly of the locusts, since fig trees cannot be harmed by the bite or touch of them; which, besides their roughness, have an insipid bitter juice, which preserves them from being gnawn by such creatures; and the like is observed of the cypress by Vitruvius {q}; but the passage out of Pliny shows the contrary. Some interpret it of a from or scum they left upon the fig tree when they gnawed it, such as Aben Ezra says is upon the face of the water; and something like this is left by caterpillars on the leaves of trees, which destroy them;

he hath made it clean bare; stripped it of its leaves and fruit, and bark also:

and cast [it] away; having got out all the juice they could:

the branches thereof are made white; the bark being gnawed off, and all the greenness and verdure of them dried up; so trees look, when this is their case: and thus the Jews were stripped by the Chaldeans of all their wealth and treasure, and were left bare and naked, and as the scum and offscouring of all things.

{o} Idyll. 5. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 17. c. 25. {q} De Architectura, l. 2. c. 9. p. 70.

Joel 1:8

Ver. 8. Lament like a virgin,.... This is not the continuation of the prophet's speech to the drunkards; but, as Aben Ezra observes, he either speaks to himself, or to the land the Targum supplies it, O congregation of Israel; the more religious and godly part of the people are here addressed; who were concerned for the pure worship of God, and were as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ, though not yet come, and for whom they were waiting; these are called upon to lament the calamities of the times in doleful strains, like a virgin:

girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth; either as one that had been betrothed to a young man, but not married, he dying after the espousals, and before marriage; which must be greatly distressing to one that passionately loved him; and therefore, instead of her nuptial robes, prepared to meet him and be married in, girds herself with sackcloth; a coarse hairy sort of cloth, as was usual, in the eastern countries, to put on in token of mourning: or as one lately married to a young man she dearly loved, and was excessively fond of, and lived extremely happy with; but, being suddenly snatched away from her by death, puts on her widow's garments, and mourns not in show only, but in reality; having lost in her youth her young husband, she had the strongest affection for: this is used to express the great lamentation the people are called unto in this time of their distress.

Joel 1:9

Ver. 9. The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the Lord,.... The meat offering was made of fine flour, oil, and frankincense; and the drink offering was of wine; and, because of the want of corn and wine, these were not brought to the temple as usual; and which was matter of great grief to religious persons, and especially to the priests, as follows:

the priests, the Lord's ministers, mourn; partly because they had no work to do, and could not answer to their character, the ministers of the Lord, in ministering about holy things, and bringing the sacrifices and offerings of the people to him; and partly because of their want of food, their livelihood greatly depending on the offerings brought, part of which belonged to them, and on which they and their families lived.

Joel 1:10

Ver. 10. The field is wasted,.... By the locust, that eat up all green things, the grass and herbs, the fruit and leaves of trees; and also by the Chaldeans trampling on it with their horses, and the increase of which became fodder for them:

the land mourneth; being destitute, nothing growing upon it, and so looked dismally, and of a horrid aspect; or the inhabitants of it, for want of provision:

for the corn is wasted; by the locusts, and so by the Assyrian or Chaldean army, before it came to perfection:

the new wine is dried up: in the grape, through the drought after mentioned: or, "is ashamed" {r}; not answering the expectations of men, who saw it in the cluster, promising much, but failed:

the oil languisheth; or "sickens" {s}; the olive trees withered; the olives fell off, as the Targum, and so the oil failed: the corn, wine, and oil, are particularly mentioned, not only as being the chief support of human life, as Kimchi observes, and so the loss of them must be matter of lamentation to the people in general; but because of these the meat and drink offerings were, and therefore the priests in particular had reason to mourn.

{r} vybwh "erubuit", Tigurine version, Mercer, Liveleus; "puduit", Drusius, Tarnovius; "pudefit", Cocceius. {s} llma "infirmatum est", Montanus. So some in Vatablus.

Joel 1:11

Ver. 11. Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen,.... Tillers of the land, who have took a great deal of pains in cultivating the earth, dunging, ploughing, and sowing it; confusion may cover you, because of your disappointment, the increase not answering to your expectations and labours:

howl, O ye vinedressers; that worked in the vineyards, set the vines, watered and pruned them, and, when they had done all they could to them, were dried up with the drought, or devoured by the locusts, as they were destroyed by the Assyrians or Chaldeans; and therefore had reason to howl and lament, all their labour being lost:

for the wheat and for the barley: because the harvest of the field is perished; this belongs to the husbandmen, is a reason for their shame and blushing, because the wheat and barley were destroyed before they were ripe; and so they had neither wheat nor barley harvest. The words, by a transposition, would read better, and the sense be clearer, "thus, be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen, for the wheat and for the barley: because the harvest", &c. "howl, O ye vine dressers"; for what follows:

Joel 1:12

Ver. 12. The vine is dried up,.... Withered away, stripped of its leaves and fruits, and its sap and moisture gone: or, "is ashamed" {t}; to see itself in this condition, and not answer the expectation of its proprietor and dresser:

and the fig tree languisheth; sickens and dies, through the bite of the locusts:

the pomegranate tree: whose fruit is delicious, and of which wine was made: the palm tree also; which bears dates:

and the apple tree; that looks so beautiful, when either in bloom, or laden with fruit, and whose fruit is very grateful to the palate; so that both what were for common use and necessary food, and what were for delight and pleasure, were destroyed by these noisome creatures:

[even] all the trees of the field are withered; for locusts not only devour the leaves and fruits of trees, but hurt the trees themselves; burn them up by touching them, and cause them to wither away and die, both by the saliva and dung, which they leave upon them, as Bochart, from various authors, has proved:

because joy is withered away from the sons of men; this is not given as a reason of the above trees dried up and withered, but of the lamentation of the vinedressers and husbandmen: or else the particle
yk is merely expletive, or may be rendered, "therefore", or "truly", or "surely" {u}, "joy is withered", or "ashamed"; it blushes to appear, as it used to do at the time of harvest; but now there was no harvest, and so no joy expressed, as usually was at such times; see **Isa 9:3**.

{t} hvybwh "confusa est", V. L. "pudefacta est", Cocceius; "pudet", Drusius.
{u} yk "ideo", Grotius; "imo", Piscator; "sane", Mercer.

Joel 1:13

Ver. 13. Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests,.... Prepare and be ready to raise up lamentation and mourning; or gird yourselves with sackcloth, and mourn in that, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi supply the words; see **Jer 4:8**;

howl, ye ministers of the altar; who served there, by laying on and burning the sacrifices, or offering incense:

come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God; that is, come into the house of the Lord, as Kimchi; into the court of the priests, and there lie all night, in the sackcloth girded with; putting up prayers to God, with weeping and lamentations, that he would avert the judgments that were come or were coming upon theme:

for the meat offering and the drink offering are withholden from the house of your God; See Gill on "Joe 1:9".

Joel 1:14

Ver. 14. Sanctify yea a fast,.... This is spoken to the priests, whose business it was to appoint a fast, as the Targum renders it; or to set apart a time for such religious service, as the word signifies; and to keep it holy themselves, and see that it was so kept by others: Kimchi interprets it, prepare the people for a fast; give them notice of it, that they may be prepared for it:

call a solemn assembly; of all the people of the land later mentioned: or, "proclaim a restraint" {w}; a time of ceasing, as a fast day should be from all servile work, that attendance may be given to the duties of it, prayer and humiliation:

gather the elders: meaning not those in age, but in office:

[and] all the inhabitants of the land; not the magistrates only, though first and principally, as examples, who had been deeply concerned in guilt; but the common people also, even all of them:

[into] the house of the Lord your God; the temple, the court of the Israelites, where they were to go and supplicate the Lord, when such a calamity as this of locusts and caterpillars were upon them; and where they might hope the Lord would hear them, and remove his judgments from them, **1Ki 8:37**;

and cry unto the Lord; in prayer, with vehemence and earnestness of soul.

{w} hrue warq "vocate retentionem", Montanus; "proclamate diem interdicti", Junius & Tremellius, Heb. "interdictum", Piscator; "edicite coetum cum cessatione", Cocceius.

Joel 1:15

Ver. 15. Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord [is] at hand,.... A time of severer and heavier judgments than these of the locusts, caterpillars, &c. which were a presage and emblem of greater ones, even of the total destruction of their city, temple, and nation, either by the Chaldeans, or by the Romans, or both:

and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come; unawares, suddenly, and irresistibly: there is in the Hebrew text an elegant play on words, which may be rendered, as "wasting from the waster", or "destruction from the destroyer, shall it come" {x}; even from the almighty God, who is able to save and destroy, and none can deliver out of his hands; see Isa 13:6; the word signifies one powerful and victorious, as Aben Ezra observes; and so it does in the Arabic language.

{x} ydvm dvk "uti vastitas a Deo vastatore", Drusius.

Joel 1:16

Ver. 16. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes?.... Such an interrogation most strongly affirms; it was a matter out of all question, they could not but see it with their eyes; it was a plain case, and not to be denied, that every eatable thing, or that of which food was wont to be made, was cut off by the locusts, or the drought, or by the Assyrian or Chaldean army:

[yea], joy and gladness from the house of our God; the harvest being perished, there were no firstfruits brought to the temple, which used to be attended with great joy; and the corn and vines being wasted, no meat offerings made of fine flour, nor drink offerings of wine, were offered, which used to make glad God and man; nor any other sacrifices, on which the priests and their families lived, and were matter of joy to them; and these they ate of in the temple, or in courts adjoining to it. So Philo {y} the Jew says of the ancient Jews, that

"having prayed and offered sacrifices, and appeased the Deity, they washed their bodies and souls; the one in lavers, the other in the streams of the laws, and right instruction; and being cheerful, turned themselves to their food, not going home oftentimes, but remaining in the holy places where they sacrificed;

and as mindful of the sacrifices, and reverencing the place, they kept a feast truly holy, not shining either in word or deed."

{y} De Plantatione Noe, p. 237.

Joel 1:17

Ver. 17. The seed is rotten under their clods,.... Or "grains" {z} of wheat or barley, which had been sown, and, for want of rain, putrefied and wasted away under the clods of earth, through the great drought; so that what with locusts, which cropped that that did bud forth, and with the drought, by reason of which much of the seed sown came to nothing, an extreme famine ensued: the Targum is,

"casks of wine rotted under their coverings:"

the garners are desolate; the "treasuries" {a}, or storehouses, having nothing in them, and there being nothing to put into them; Jarchi makes these to be peculiar for wine and oil, both which failed, **Joe 1:10**;

the barns are broken down; in which the wheat and barley had used to be laid up; but this judgment of the locusts and drought continuing year after year, the walls fell down, and, no care was taken to repair them, there being no, use for them; these were the granaries, and, as Jarchi, for wheat particularly:

for the corn is withered; that which sprung up withered and dried away, through the heat and drought: or was "ashamed" {b}; not answering the expectation of the sower.

{z} twdrp "grana", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Tarnovius, Cocceius, Bochartus. So Ben Melech, who observes they are so called, because they are separated and scattered under the earth. {a} twrua "thesauri", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Vatablus, Piscator. {b} vybwh "confusum est", V. L. "puduit", Drusius; "pudore afficit", Cocceius.

Joel 1:18

Ver. 18. How do the beasts groan?.... For want of fodder, all green grass and herbs being eaten up by the locusts; or devoured, or trampled upon, and destroyed, by the Chaldeans; and also for want of water to quench their thirst:

the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; the larger cattle, as oxen; these were in the utmost perplexity, not knowing where to go for food or drink:

yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate; which have shepherds to lead and direct them to pastures, and can feed on commons, where the grass is short, which other cattle cannot; yet even these were in great distress, and wasted away, and were consumed for want of nourishment.

Joel 1:19

Ver. 19. O Lord, to thee will I cry,.... Or pray, as the Targum; with great vehemency and earnestness, commiserating the case of man and beast: these are the words of the prophet, resolving to use his interest at the through of grace in this time of distress, whatever others did:

for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness; or, "of the plain" {c} though in the wildernesses of Judea, there were pastures for cattle: Kimchi interprets them of the shepherds' tents or cotes, as the word {d} is sometimes used; which were will not to be pitched where there were pastures for their flocks: and so the Targum renders it, "the habitations of the wilderness"; these, whether pastures or habitations, or both, were destroyed by fire, the pastures by the locusts, as Kimchi; which, as Pliny {e} says, by touching burn the trees, herbs, and fruits of the earth; see **Joe 2:3**; or by the Assyrians or Chaldeans, who by fire and sword consumed all in their way; or by a dry burning blasting wind, as Lyra; and so the Targum interprets it of a strong east wind like fire: it seems rather to design extreme heat and excessive drought, which burn up all the produce of the earth:

and the flame hath burnt all the trees of the field; which may be understood of flashes of lightning, which are common in times of great heat and drought; see Ps 83:14.

{c} rbdm "non tantum desertum significat sed et campum sativum", Oecolampadius. "A place of pasture for cattle", Ben Melech. {d} twan "caulas", Piscator. So Ben Melech. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.

Joel 1:20

Ver. 20. The beasts of the field cry also unto thee,.... As well as the prophet, in their way; which may be mentioned, both as a rebuke to such who had no sense of the judgments upon them, and called not on the Lord; and to express the greatness of the calamity, of which the brute creatures were sensible, and made piteous moans, as for food, so for drink; panting thorough excessive heat and vehement thirst, as the hart, after the water brooks, of which this word is only used,
Ps 42:1; but in vain:

for the rivers of waters are dried up; not only springs, and rivulets and brooks of water, but rivers, places where were large deep waters, as Aben Ezra explains it; either by the Assyrian army, the like Sennacherib boasts Isa 37:25; and is said to be done by the army of Xerxes, wherever it came; or rather by the excessive heat and scorching beams of the sun, by which such effects are produced:

and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness;
See Gill on "Joe 1:19"; and whereas the word rendered pastures signifies both "them" and "habitations" also; and, being repeated, it may be taken in one of the senses in **Joe 1:19**; and in the other here: and so Kimchi who interprets it before of "tents", here explains it of grassy places in the wilderness, dried up, as if the sun had consumed them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joel 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOEL 2

In this chapter a further account is given of the judgment of the locusts and caterpillars, or of those who are designed by them, **Joe 2:1**; the people of the Jews are called to repentance, humiliation, and fasting, urged from the grace and goodness of God, his jealousy and pity for his people, and the answer of prayer that might he expected from him upon this, even to the removal of the calamity, **Joe 2:12**; a prophecy of good things, both temporal and spiritual, in the times of the Messiah, is delivered out as matter and occasion of great joy, **Joe 2:21**; and another concerning the effusion of the Spirit, which was fulfilled an the day of Pentecost, **Joe 2:28**; and the chapter is concluded with the judgments and desolations that should come upon the land of Judea after this, for their rejection of Christ, though the remnant according to the election of grace should be delivered and saved from the general destruction, **Joe 2:30**.

Ver. 1. Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain,.... This is spoken to the priests, whose business it was to blow the trumpets for calling solemn assemblies to meet in Zion, the temple built there, called from thence the holy mountain of God. Here the trumpet is ordered to be blown with a broken quivering voice, a tarantantara, to give notice of approaching danger by the locusts, or those enemies signified by them, and to prepare for it, and return to God by repentance;

let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; at the judgments of God coming upon them, and the alarm of them:

for the day of the Lord cometh, for [it is] nigh at hand; the time fixed by him to punish a wicked people, and to pour out his wrath and vengeance on them; the day of his visitation, not in love, but in anger.

Joel 2:2

Ver. 2. A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness,.... Alluding to the gloomy and thick darkness caused by the locusts, which sometimes come in prodigious numbers, like thick clouds, and darken the air; so the land of Egypt was darkened by them, Ex 10:15; historians and travellers relate, as Bochart {f} has shown, that these creatures will fly like a cloud, and darken the heavens at noonday, cover the sun, and hinder the rays of it from touching the earth; though all these phrases may be expressive of great afflictions and calamities, which are often in Scripture signified by darkness, as prosperity is by light; see **Isa 8:22**;

as the morning spread upon the mountains; as the morning light, when it first appears, diffuses itself in a moment throughout the earth, and is first seen on the tops of the mountains {g}; so these locusts, and this calamity threatened, should suddenly and at once come, and be spread over the whole land; and which could no more be resisted than the morning light. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, in connection with the next clause, "as the morning spread upon the mountains, a people much and mighty"; but the accents will not admit of it; though it may seem a little improper that the same thing should be as a dark day, and: the morning light; wherefore Cocceius understands the whole of the day of Christ, which was light to many nations, and darkness to the wicked Jews:

a great people and a strong; numerous and mighty, many in number, mighty in strength; so the locusts are represented as a nation and people for might and multitude, **Joe 1:6**; an emblem of the Chaldeans and Babylonians, who were a large and powerful people:

there hath not been ever the like, neither shall any more after it,
[even] to the years of many generations; that is, in the land of Judea; otherwise there might have been the like before in other places, as in Egypt, and since in other countries. Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, account for it thus; that it was never known, before or since, that four kinds of locusts came together; as for the plague of Egypt, there was but one sort of them, they say; but it is best to understand it of the like not having been in the same country: and such a numerous and powerful army as that of the Chaldeans had not been in Judea, and made such havoc and desolation as that did; nor would any hereafter, for many generations, even until the Romans came and took away their place and nation.

{f} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 5. p. 479. {g} "Postera vix summos spargebat lumine montes Orta dies----", Virgil. Aeneid. 12.

Joel 2:3

Ver. 3. A fire devoureth before them, and behind them aflame burneth,.... This is not to be understood of the heat of the sun, or of the great drought that went before and continued after the locusts; but of them themselves, which were like a consuming fire; wherever they came, they devoured all green grass, herbs, and leaves of trees, as fire does stubble; they sucked out the juice and moisture of everything they came at, and what they left behind shrivelled up and withered away, as if it had been scorched with a flame of fire: and so the Assyrians and Chaldeans, they were an emblem of, destroyed all they met with, by fire and sword; cut up the corn and herbage for forage; and what they could not dispense with they set fire to, and left it burning. Sanctius thinks this refers to fire, which the Chaldeans worshipped as God, and carried before their armies as a sacred and military sign; but this seems not likely:

the land [is] as the garden of Eden before them; abounding with fields and vineyards, set with fruitful trees, planted with all manner of pleasant plants, and all kind of corn growing upon it, and even resembling a paradise:

and behind them a desolate wilderness; all green grass eaten up, the corn of the field devoured, the vines and olives destroyed, the leaves and fruit of them quite gone, and the trees themselves barked; so that there was just the same difference between this country before the calamities described came upon it, and what it was after, as between the garden of Eden, or a paradise, and the most desolate wilderness; such ravages were made by the locusts, and by those they resembled:

yea, and nothing shall escape them; no herb: plant, or tree, could escape the locusts; nor any city, town, or village, nor scarce any particular person, could escape the Chaldean army; but was either killed with the sword, or carried captive, or brought into subjection. The Targum interprets it of no deliverance to the ungodly.

Joel 2:4

Ver. 4. The appearance of them [is] as the appearance of horses,.... in their running, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; they came with, as much swiftness and eagerness, with as much fierceness and courage, as horses rush into the battle. Bochart {h} has shown, from various writers, that the head of a locust is in shape like that of a horse; and Theodoret on the text observes, that whoever thoroughly examines the head of a locust will easily perceive that it is very like the head of a horse; see **Re 9:7**. The Chaldeans are often represented as strong and mighty, fierce and furious, and riding on horses exceeding swift, **Jer 4:13**;

and as horsemen, so shall they run; with great agility and swiftness. The particle "as" is observed by some, against those interpreters that apply this wholly to the enemies of the Jews, and not the locusts; and it seems indeed best to favour them; but Theodoret observes, that the "as" here may be taken, not as a note of similitude, but as used for the increase and vehemency of the expression.

{h} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 5. p. 474, 475.

Joel 2:5

Ver. 5. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of that mountains shall they leap,.... The motion of the locusts is leaping from place to place; for which the locusts have legs peculiarly made, their hindermost being the longest; wherefore Pliny {i} observes, that insects which have their hindermost legs long leap locusts; to which agrees the Scripture description of them: "which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth; even those of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind", Le 11:21; which words, as Dr. Shaw {k}, observes, may bear this construction: "which have knees upon" or "above their [hinder] legs, to leap withal upon the earth"; and he observes, that the hbrah, "locust", has the two hindermost of its legs or feet much stronger, larger, and longer, than any of the foremost; in them the knee, or the articulation of the leg and thigh, is distinguished by a remarkable bending or curvature, whereby it is able, whenever prepared to jump, to spring and raise itself with great force and activity; and this fitly resembles the jumping of chariots on mountains and hills, which are uneven, and usually have stones lie scattered about, which, with the chains and irons about chariots, cause a great rattling; and the noise of locusts is compared to the noise of these, which is represented as very great; some say it is to be heard six miles off, as Remigius on the place; and Pliny says {l}, they make such a noise with their wings when they fly, that they are thought to be other winged fowls; see **Re 9:9**. Chariots were made use of in war, and the Chaldeans are said to have chariots which should come like a whirlwind, **Jer 4:13**;

like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble; as they are before compared to fire, and a flame of fire that devoured all things as easily as the fire devours stubble, so here to the crackling noise of it; see **Ec 7:6**;

as a strong people set in battle array: that is, as the noise of a mighty army prepared for battle, just going to make the onset, when they lift up their voices aloud, and give a terrible shout; for this clause, as the other two, refer to the noise made by the locusts in their march; an emblem of the terribleness of the Chaldeans in theirs, who were heard before they were seen.

{i} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 48. {k} Travels, p. 420. Ed. 2. {l} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.

Joel 2:6

Ver. 6. Before their face the people shall be much pained,.... Or, "at their presence"; at the sight of them they shall be in pain, as a woman in travail; into such distress an army of locusts would throw them, since they might justly fear all the fruits of the earth would be devoured by them, and they should have nothing left to live upon; and a like consternation and pain the army of the Assyrians or Chaldeans upon sight filled them with, as they expected nothing but ruin and destruction from them:

all faces shall gather blackness; like that of a pot, as the word {m} signifies; or such as appears in persons dying, or in fits and swoons; and this here, through fear and hunger; see **Na 2:10**.

{m} rwrap "fuliginem", Montanus; "luridum ollae colorem", Tigurine version, Tarnovius; "ollam pro nigore ollae", Drusius.

Joel 2:7

Ver. 7. They shall run like mighty men,.... Like men of war, in a hostile way, as soldiers run upon their enemy with undaunted courage and bravery. Bochart from Pisidas describes the locusts' manner of fighting, who says, they strike not standing, but running:

they shall climb the wall like men of war; scale the walls of cities as besiegers do; walls and bulwarks cannot keep them out; all places are accessible to them, walled cities, towns, yea, even houses, Ex 10:6;

and they shall march everyone on his ways; in his proper path, following one another, and keeping just distance:

and they shall not break their ranks; or "pervert their ways", as the word signifies in the Arabic language, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, observe; that is, decline not from their paths, as the Septuagint version; proceed in an orderly way, keep rank and file; so they are said to go forth in bands, Pr 30:27; and to encamp, **Na 3:17**. Jerom on the text relates what he saw with his own eyes:

"this we lately saw (says he) in this province (Palestine); for when swarms of locusts came, and filled the air between heaven and earth, they flew in such order, by the disposition and command of God, that they kept their place like chequered squares in a pavement fixed by the hands of artificers; so as not to decline a point, nor even I may say a nail's breadth;"

they keep as exact order as if military discipline was known and observed by them. Some render it, "they shall not ask their way" {n}; being unconcerned about it, moving on in a direct line securely.

{n} Mtxra Nwjbey al "non interrogabunt [isti ab illo] de semitis suis", some in Vatablus, and others in Kimchi and Abendana.

Joel 2:8

Ver. 8. Neither shall one thrust another,.... Press upon another, thrust him out of his place, or push him forward, or any ways straiten and distress him, or in the least hinder him in his progress:

they shall walk everyone in his path; or "highway" {o}; everyone should have his path, and keep in it, and it should be as roomy to him as if he had a highway to walk in by himself, and in which he could not err:

and when they shall fall upon the sword; on which they would pitch without any fear or dread of it:

they shall not be wounded: or "cut to pieces" {p} by it; it not being easy for the sword to pierce and cut them, through the smoothness and smallness of their bodies; see **Re 9:9**; and besides, their numbers being so great, the loss of a few by the use of a sword, or a dart, or any such flying projectile, as the word {q} signifies, would be of little consequence, and avail very little to the utter rout, or cutting of them in pieces. Kimchi observes that the word signifies haters of gain; and to this sense Jarchi explains it; and so the Targum,

"they go to the place whither they are sent, they slay, and receive not mammon;"

they are not, as other enemies, to be appeased by money, as Kimchi interprets it. The Targum is, they are not to be bribed, as soldiers sometimes may be, and so depart; see Isa 13:17; and to this sense are other versions {r}.

{o} wtlomb "per aggerem suum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "via elevata", Drusius; "via strata sua", Cocceius. {p} weuby "verbum significat discidit", Amos ix. 1. Tarnovius, so Ben Melech. {q} xlv deb "per missile", Cocceius; so Bochartus, Castalio, Drusius, Burkius; "super missile", Montanus. {r} "Non avari erunt", Montanus; "nec lucro inhiant", Tigurine version; "non studebunt avaritiae", so some in Vatablus.

Joel 2:9

Ver. 9. They shall run to and fro in the city,.... Leap about from place to place, as locusts do; see Isa 33:4; and as the Chaldeans did when they became masters of the city of Jerusalem; they ran about from place to place to seize upon their spoil and plunder:

they shall run upon the wall; which before they climbed, now they shall run upon, and go from tower to tower, as the Chaldeans did, and broke clown the walls and fortifications:

they shall climb up upon the houses, and enter in at the windows, like a thief; so the locusts entered into the houses of the Egyptians,
Ex 10:6; and Pliny says {s}, they will eat through everything, and even the doors of houses. Theodoret on the place observes, that not only this may be done by enemies, what is here said,

"but even [we have often seen] it done by locusts; for not only flying, but even creeping up the walls, they enter into houses at the windows."

{s} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.

Joel 2:10

Ver. 10. The earth shall quake before them,.... The inhabitants of it, because of the desolating judgments they bring with them, and those enemies that are signified by them:

the heavens shall tremble; being obscured by them:

the sun and moon shall be dark; the locusts sometimes come in such large numbers as to intercept the rays of the sun. Pliny {t} says they sometimes darken it; and though some thought they did not fly in the night, because of the cold; this he observes is owing to their ignorance, not considering that they pass over wide seas to distant countries; and this will account for it how the moon also may be darkened by them, and the stars, as follows:

and the stars shall withdraw their shining; though all this may be understood in a figurative sense of the great consternation that all sorts of persons should be in at such calamities coming upon the land, either by locusts, or by enemies; as the king, queen, nobles, and the common people of the land, signified by sun, moon, and stars, heaven and earth.

{t} Ibid. (Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.)

Joel 2:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army,.... Either the army of the locusts, whom Pliny {u} calls "pestis deorum", "the plague of the gods"; and the Arabians frequently style them the army of God. It is a tradition of theirs that locusts fell into the hands of Mahomet, with this inscription on their backs and wings,

"we are the army of the most high God;"

and because they were, for that reason Mahomet made a law that none should kill them; See Gill on "Re 9:3". These creatures are certainly at his beck and command; he can "command the locust to devour the land", **2Ch 7:13**; which may be meant by his uttering his voice here; though Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of the Lord's giving notice of this judgment by his prophets before it fame: or this may design the army of the Assyrians or Chaldeans, of which the locusts were all emblem, and which were of the Lord's mustering together, and was at his command; and who is here represented as a General at the head of his army, making a speech to them to animate and encourage them to the battle, and to give them the word of command when to begin the onset:

for his camp [is] very great; or numerous, as both the locusts and Chaldeans were:

for [he is] strong that executeth his word; or "strong is it"; namely, the camp and army of the locusts; which, though feeble in themselves, separately considered; yet being in such large bodies, and the Lord at the head of them, and strengthened by him, were able to fulfil his word; which he can make the least and meanest of his creatures do: or the Assyrian or Chaldean army, which was both numerous and mighty: which the Targum may refer unto, paraphrasing the words,

"for strong are the executors of his word:"

for the day of the Lord [is] great and very terrible, and who can abide it? the day appointed by the Lord to take vengeance on the Jews for sin; and this, being the day of his wrath, is very dreadful and intolerable; so any season may be called, in which God remarkably pours down his wrath on men of their sins; see **Re 6:17**. Such was the time of Jerusalem's destruction, both by the Chaldeans and Romans.

{u} Ibid. (Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.)

Joel 2:12

Ver. 12. Therefore also now, saith the Lord,.... Before this terrible and intolerable day, which is near at hand, comes; before these judgments and calamities threatened take place, though just at hand; serious repentance is never too late, now is the accepted time; see
Lu 19:42;

turn ye [even] to me with all your heart; against whom they had sinned, and who had prepared his army against them, and was at the head of it, just ready to give the orders, and play his artillery upon them; and yet suggests, that even now, that if they turned to the Lord by true repentance, not, feignedly and hypocritically, but cordially and sincerely, with true hearts, and with their whole hearts, he was ready to receive and forgive them. The Targum is,

"turn ye to my worship with all your heart:"

and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; external signs of inward grief and sorrow, testifying their hearty return to the Lord; which, though, without the heart, signify nothing, yet should be shown where hearty repentance is, for the honour and glory of God.

Joel 2:13

Ver. 13. And rend your heart, and not your garments,.... Which latter used to be done in times of distress, either private or public, and as a token of grief and sorrow, Ge 37:34; nor was it criminal or unlawful, the apostles themselves used it, Ac 14:14; nor is it absolutely forbidden here, only comparatively, that they should rend their hearts rather than their garments; or not their garments only, but their hearts also; in like sense as the words in **Ho 6:6**; are to be taken as rending garments was only an external token of sorrow and might be done hypocritically. Where no true repentance was, the Lord calls for that, rather than the other; and that they would show contrition of heart and brokenness of spirit under a sense of sin, and in the view of pardoning grace and mercy; which is here held forth, to influence godly sorrow and evangelical repentance; the acts of which, flowing from faith in Christ are much more acceptable to the Lord than any outward expressions of grief; see Ps 51:17. The Targum is,

"remove the wickedness of your heart but not with the rending of your meats;"

the rending of the garment goes to the heart some say to the navel {w}:

and turn unto the Lord your God; consider him not as an absolute God, and as an angry one, wrathful and inexorable; but as your covenant God and Father as your God in Christ, ready to receive backsliding sinners and prodigal sons; yea all sinners sensible of sin that flee to him for mercy through Christ:

for be [is] gracious and merciful; he is the God of all grace, and has laid up a fulness of it in Christ; and he gives it freely to them that ask it of him without upbraiding them with their sins; he is rich and plenteous in mercy, and ready to forgive; be delights in showing mercy, and in them that hope in it; and this is no small encouragement to turn to the Lord, and seek mercy of him: and, besides, he is

slow to anger; he is not hasty to stir it up, and show it; he bears with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath; and his longsuffering to his own people issues in their salvation: he waits to be gracious to them; and, though he may seem to be angry, he does not stir up all his wrath their sins deserve nor does he retain anger for ever:

and of great kindness; both in a providential way, and in a way of special grace through Christ; whom he has provided as a Saviour, and sent him into the world as such, and saves sinners by obedience sufferings, and death: these characters of God are taken out of
Ex 34:6; and are admirably adapted to engage and encourage sensible souls to turn to the Lord by acts of faith in him, and repentance towards him; see Isa 55:7; and it is added,

and repenteth him of the evil; which the sins of men deserve; and he has threatened on account of them; not that he ever changes the counsels of his will, but alters the course of his providence, and the manner of his conduct towards men, according to his unalterable repentance otherwise does not properly belong to God, Nu 23:19; but is ascribed to him after the manner of men; and is used to express his compassion men; how ready he is to receive and forgive returning sinners and not execute the threatened and deserved evil and to bestow all needful good; see **Jon 3:10**. The Targum is,

"and he recalls his word from bringing on the evil."

{w} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 26. 2.

Joel 2:14

Ver. 14. Who knoweth [if] he will return and repent,.... Which some understand of man, and of his returning and repentance; either thus whosoever he be that knows the ways of repentance, he will return, and God will repent of this evil: which sense is mentioned by Kimchi and Ben Melech: or he that knoweth that iniquity is on him will return and repent; so Jarchi, with which agrees the Targum,

"he that knows that sins are in him will return from them, and he shall obtain mercy; and whoever repents, his sins shall be forgiven him;"

but rather they are to be understood of God, as some in Kimchi, and paraphrase it, who knows? perhaps God may return; and this is the sense of Aben Ezra, and seems to be most correct; and to be interpreted, either as carrying some doubt in it; not as if it was questionable whether God will give pardon to repenting sinners, but whether he will at once remove the present affliction and chastisement; which may be thus expressed to check the presumption and awaken the security of the people, and rouse them from their sluggishness and stupidity: or rather as expressive of hope that God would return and change the dispensation of his providence, and repent of the evil he had threatened, or brought upon them; which might be justly grounded upon the character before given of him, and that from the revelation of himself, and the proclamation of his own perfections; see **Jon 3:9**;

and leave a blessing behind him; meaning not behind God himself, as if he was departed, or about to depart, for which there was no great concern, provided he left a temporal blessing with them; but behind the army of the locust, after that had made all the devastation it did: or rather "cause to leave"; stop the locust in its progress, and not suffer it to make a total desolation, but cause it to leave some of the fruits of the earth behind it. So Aben Ezra gives the sense of the words,

"perhaps God will return, and cause the locust to leave a blessing;"

and to the same purpose Jarchi, of which they make a meat offering and a drink offering, as follows:

[even] a meat offering and a drink offering to the Lord your God; at least leave so much of the wheat, that a meat offering might be made of it; and so many of the vines, as that so much wine might be produced by them as would furnish out a drink offering to be offered to the Lord, agreeably to the laws given about these; for which the greatest concern is expressed, this being cut off and withheld from the house of the Lord, by reason of the present scarcity, **Joe 1:9**; which shows a truly pious and religious mind, having more at heart the worship of God than themselves and families.

Joel 2:15

Ver. 15. Blow the trumpet in Zion,.... For the calling of the people together to religious duties, which was one use of the silver trumpets made for and blows by the priests, Nu 10:2;

sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; See Gill on "Joe 1:14".

Joel 2:16

Ver. 16. Gather the people,.... The common people, all the inhabitants of the land, **Joe 1:14**; summon them to meet together in the temple, in order to humble themselves before God for their sins, and implore his mercy, and seek his face to remove his judgments, or avert them:

sanctify the congregation; see that they are sanctified and prepared for a fast, as the law directs in such cases; that they may be clean and free from all ceremonial impurities; that their bodies and clothes be washed, and that they abstain from their wives, and from all lawful pleasures, as well as sinful ones:

assemble the elders; both in age and authority; that they, by their presence and example, might influence others to attend such a service:

gather the children and those that suck the breast; who were involved in the common calamity and distress, were obliged to fasting and whose cries might affect parents, and engage them the more to humiliation and repentance for their sins, which brought such, miseries, not only upon themselves, but upon their tender infants; and they might think their cries would move the pity and compassion of God; all which is suggested in the note of Kimchi:

let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet; where they are adorning themselves and preparing for an interview with each other; or where they are enjoying each other's embraces and the pleasures of the matrimonial state. The sense is, let them put off their nuptial robes, and deny themselves their lawful pleasures, and betake themselves to fasting mourning, and prayer; see **1Co 7:5**. This refers to a custom among the Jews at the time of espousals when the bridegroom and bride were introduced into the nuptial chamber, where the marriage was completed; and, according to the Jewish writes it was not finished before: the blessing of the bridegroom and bride did not complete the marriage but the bringing of them into the chamber did; and then they were said to he married, though as yet they had not cohabited and then, and not before a man might enjoy his wife {x}: and the marriage chamber was nothing else but a linen cloth or garment spread upon four poles over the head of the bridegroom and bride; this they called hpwx {y}; the word is here rendered a "closet" and the same with the "chamber"; and their leaving and coming out of this signifies their abstaining from the lawful enjoyment of each other, which now they had a right unto.

{x} Maimon. Hilchot Ishot, c. 10. sect. 2, 4. Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. Eben

Hezer, c. 55. sect. 2, 3. {y} R. Elias Levita, Tishbi in hpx p. 119.

Joel 2:17

Ver. 17. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar,.... Not the altar of incense which stood in the holy place; but the altar of burnt offering, where the priests used to stand and do service; but now having nothing to do of that kind, they are called upon to weep and pray between that and the porch of the temple; where they might be seen and heard by the people in the outward court which the porch led into: this is thought by some to be the same situation with that between the temple and the altar, Mt 23:35;

and let them say, spare thy people, O Lord; they are directed to plead, not in a way of justice, but mercy; that though it might be just with God to destroy these people, who were called by his name; yet it is entreated that he would not, but in mercy spare them, and not cut them off in his sore displeasure, which the present judgment threatened them with: there seems to be an argument for mercy suggested, in the relation these people stood in to God, they are "thy people", whom thou hast chosen, and who are called by thy name; though this was also an aggravation of their sin; and the same may be observed in what follows:

and give not thine heritage to reproach: the people whom he had chosen for his inheritance, and the land of Canaan he had given to them for an inheritance; both which would be given to reproach if such a famine should ensue that they must be obliged to go into other countries for food:

that the Heathen should rule over them; as they would, should they be forced to leave their own country, and settle in theirs for the sake of food: or "to be a proverb", or "byword, among the Heathen", as Jarchi. This clause Jerom thinks opens the mystery, and explains who are meant by the mighty nation under the name of locusts, the enemies of the Jews; though this does not necessarily follow, take the words in either sense, as explained: it seems indeed very likely, that though the locusts may be understood literally, yet may be considered as an emblem of the Assyrian or Chaldean army, as we have all along observed; and, as the same ancient writer observes, when we read of the locusts, we should think of the Chaldeans, in which thought we may be confirmed by this clause:

wherefore should they say among the people, where [is] their God? they boast of as their Creator and Benefactor, their Protector and Defender, that gave them a land flowing with milk and honey, and abounding with all blessings? what is become of that? and where is he now? which the Gentiles would say in a reproaching blaspheming way, should they be reduced to famine by the locusts, or fall into the hands of their enemies; than which kind of reproach and blasphemy there is nothing more cutting to religious minds: see Ps 42:10; and this, as well as the former is used as an argument with God for mercy. The Targum is,

"where are they that are redeemed by the Word of your God?"

Joel 2:18

Ver. 18. Then will the Lord be jealous for his land,.... Or "zealous" for it; for the honour of it, and the good of its inhabitants, and for the glory of his own name, it being the chief place in the world for his worship and service; and his indignation will be moved against those who have brought desolation on it:

and pity his people; as a father his children, who had suffered much, and had been reduced to great distress by the locusts, or by their enemies: this the prophet foretells would be done upon their repentance, fasting, prayers, and tears; or, as some think, this is a narrative of what had been done, and the prophet was a witness of; that the people meeting together with their princess and priests, and humbling themselves before the Lord, and crying to him, he expressed a zeal and compassion for them, and delivered them out of their troubles; for though their humiliation is not expressed, it may be understood and supposed, as doubtless, it was fact.

Joel 2:19

Ver. 19. Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people,.... By his prophets, as Kimchi: or, "the Lord answered and said" {a}; while they were praying and weeping, or as soon as they cried unto him; or, however, praying to him, they might assure themselves that he heard them, and would answer them both by words and deeds:

behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil; that is, cause the earth to bring forth corn, as wheat and barley, and the vines and olive trees to bring forth grapes and olives, from which wine and oil might be made: this is, according to some interpreters, to be understood of an abundance of spiritual blessings:

and ye shall be satisfied therewith; or, "with it"; with each and every of the above things, corn, wine, and oil; they should not only have them, but have enough of them, even to satiety:

and I will no more make you a reproach among the Heathen; for want of food, and as if forsaken of God. The Targum is,

"and I will not give you any more the reproaches of famine among the people;"

see **Joe 2:17**.

{a} Neyw "et respondit", Piscator, Drusius, Burkius.

Joel 2:20

Ver. 20. But I will remove far off from you the northern [army],.... The army of the locusts, which came from the northern corner, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; and is the first sense Jarchi makes mention of; though he says their Rabbins {b} interpret it of the evil imagination hid in the heart of men; and the two seas, later mentioned, of the two temples, first and second, destroyed by it; so, Kimchi says, they explain this verse of the days of the Messiah, and observes, the same sense they give; but Jarchi mentions another, according to which a people coming from the north are designed, even the kings of Assyria; and with this agrees the Targum, which paraphrases it,

"and the people which come from the north I will remove far off from you;"

and indeed locusts do not usually come from the north, but from the south, or from the east; it was an east wind that brought the locusts into Egypt, Ex 10:13; though the word "northern" may be used of the locusts in the emblem, because the Assyrians or Chaldeans came from the north to Judea:

and will drive him into a land barren and desolate: where there are no green grass, herbs, plants, and trees, to live upon, and so must starve and die:

with his face towards the east sea; the front of this northern army was towards the east sea, into which it was drove and fell; that is, the sea of Chinnereth, or Gennesareth, the same with the lake of Tiberias, often mentioned in the New Testament; or the Salt sea, the same with the lake Asphaltites, or Dead sea, which was where Sodom and Gomorrah formerly stood, as is usually said; and both these were to the east of the land of Israel, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; and so either of them might be called the "eastern sea":

and his hinder part towards the utmost sea; the rear of this army was towards the utmost sea, or hinder sea, as it is called in Zec 14:8; the western sea, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, the same with the Mediterranean sea, which lay to the west of the land of Israel; so the Egyptian locusts were cast into the Red sea, Ex 10:19; and Pliny {c} observes, that they are sometimes taken away with a wind, and fall into seas and lakes, and adds, perhaps this comes by chance; but what is here related came not by chance, but by the will and providence of God:

and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up: that is, the stink and ill savour of the locusts shall come, up out of the seas and lakes into which they fell, and where they died and putrefied; or, being cast up from thence upon the shares, gave a most noisome stench; so Jerom on the place says,

"in our times we have seen swarms of locusts cover the land of Judea, which upon the wind rising have been driven into the first and last seas; that is, into the Dead and Mediterranean seas; and when the shores of both seas have been filled with heaps of dead locusts, which the waters have thrown up, their rottenness and stench have been so very noxious as to corrupt the air, and produce a pestilence among men and beasts;"

or this may be understood of the fall and ruin of the enemies of the Jews, signified by these locusts; and some apply it to Sennacherib's army smote by the angel, when there fell in one night a hundred and fourscore and five thousand of them in the land of Israel, and lay unburied, 2Ki 19:35; Theodoret interprets the seas of armies; the first sea of the army of the Babylonians, by which Nineveh the royal seat of the Assyrians was destroyed; and the other sea of the army of the Persians, who, under Cyrus, took Babylon, the metropolis of the Chaldean empire:

because he hath done great things; evil things, as the Targum; either the locust, which had done much mischief to the fruits of the earth; or the enemy, signified by it, who had behaved proudly, and done much hurt to the inhabitants of Judea: or, "though he hath done great things" {d}, as some render it, yet all this shall come to him. Some interpret it of God, "for he (God) hath done", or "will do, great things" {e}; in the removing of the locusts, or in the destruction of those enemies they represented, as is expressly said of him in **Joe 2:21**.

{b} Vid. T. Bab. Succah, fol. 52. 1. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29. {d} twvel lydgh yk "quamvis magna gesserit", Gataker. {e} "Quia magnifica Jehovah agit", Junius & Tremellius; "aget", Piscator, Liveleus, Castalio.

Joel 2:21

Ver. 21. Fear not, O land,.... O land of Israel, as the Targum, and the inhabitants of it; neither of the locusts, who had so terrified them, and had done so much mischief, and threatened more; nor of their enemies, the Assyrians or Chaldeans, and their powerful armies, or any other; but, on the contrary,

be glad, and rejoice; at the removal of the locusts, and at the destruction of their enemies:

for the Lord will do great things; good things, in opposition to the evil things done by the locusts, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech observe; or by the destroying army of the king of Assyria, by delivering the Jews out of the Babylonish captivity; and in the times of the Maccabees, and especially in the times of Christ, which are quickly prophesied of in this chapter; and which prophecies some interpreters begin here, it not being unusual for the prophets to pass directly from things temporal to things spiritual, and especially to the great deliverance and salvation by Christ, and also by temporal blessings to design spiritual ones.

Joel 2:22

Ver. 22. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field,.... Which before groaned, and were perplexed for want of pasture, and cried because of the drought, **Joe 1:18**; perhaps the Gentiles may be here designed, in the mystic and spiritual sense, in distinction from the Jews, the children of Zion, in **Joe 2:23**;

for the pastures of the wilderness do spring; grass in abundance springs up in them, and covers them, so that there was plenty of food for the beasts of the field:

for the tree beareth her fruit; brings forth and bears fruit suitable to it, agreeable to its nature:

the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength; send forth their branches, put forth their buds, their leaves and fruit. This and the preceding clause cannot be understood as a reason why the beasts of the field should not be afraid, for they relate not to them, but to men; and may serve to confirm the mystic sense of the words, as they may refer to the great fruitfulness produced in the wilderness of the Gentile world, through the preaching of the Gospel in the times of the Messiah; which are more clearly pointed at in **Joe 2:23**; and which were introduced with great outward peace and plenty; and the Jews {f} by the tree bearing her fruit, in the preceding clause, understand barren trees bearing fruit.

{f} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 112. 2.

Joel 2:23

Ver. 23. Be glad then, ye children of Zion,.... The people of the Jews, and especially the spiritual and believing part of them; such as were born again, that were born of Zion, and born in Zion, and brought up by her, and in her; the children of that Zion or Jerusalem that is the mother of us all; and who were looking for the Messiah, and to whom it would be good news and glad tidings to hear of his coming, **Zec 9:9**;

and rejoice in the Lord your God; not in any creature or creature enjoyment, but in the Lord. The Targum is,

"in the Word of the Lord your God;"

in Christ the essential Word; see **Php 3:3**; though rather Jehovah the Father, the giver and sender of Christ, is here meant, because of what follows; and who is to be rejoiced in by his people, not as an absolute God, but as in Christ, and as their covenant God and Father in him; who has chosen them for himself, and is their portion and inheritance; which are reasons sufficient why they should rejoice in him, and others follow:

for he hath given you the former rain moderately; or rather, "for he hath given you the teacher of righteousness" {g}; to which agrees the Targum,

"for he hath returned to you your teacher in righteousness;"

and so Jarchi paraphrases the words, and interprets them of the prophets in general,

"your prophets that teach you to return unto me, that I may justify you;"

and R. Japhet says that hrwm signifies a prophet that should teach them in the way of righteousness; not Isaiah, as Grotius; but the King Messiah as Abarbinel interprets it; who is the teacher sent from God, and given by him, as his presence with him, and the miracles done by him, sufficiently prove, **Joh 3:2**; for which he was abundantly qualified, being the omniscient God, and the Son of God that lay in the bosom of his Father; is the Wisdom of God, as Mediator; had the Spirit of wisdom on him, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in him; and who is able to make his teachings effectual, and to qualify others for such work. This office he performed personally on earth, both in a doctrinal way, and by way of example; and now executes it by his Spirit, and by his ministers: and a "teacher of righteousness" he may be truly said to be; since he not only taught the Gospel, the word of righteousness in general; but in particular directed men to seek in the first place the righteousness of God, which is no other than his own; and pronounced those happy that hungered after it: he declared he came to fulfil all righteousness, even the law for righteousness; and taught men to believe in him for it, and to live righteously and godly. Aben Ezra observes, that the phrase is the same with "the sun of righteousness", **Mal 4:2**; which is said of Christ the author of righteousness, who is our righteousness made so by imputation, the Lord our righteousness: or, as here, "a teacher unto, or for righteousness" {h}, all which is matter of joy and gladness; see Isa 61:10;

and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first [month]; alluding to the two seasons of the year in which rain was given to the Jews; the former rain fell in Marchesvan, which answers to our September and, October, part of each, at their seedtime; and the latter in Nisan, the first month of their ecclesiastical year, and answers to part of March and April, and fell some time before their harvest; and these former and latter rains now fall about the same time. So Dr. Shaw {i} observes, that "the first rains in these countries (Syria, Phoenicia, and the Holy Land) usually fall about the beginning of November; the latter sometimes in the middle, sometimes toward the end, of April:"

and elsewhere he says {k},

"in Barbary the first rains fall some years in September, in others a month later; the latter rains usually fall in the middle of April:"

and the same traveller relates {l}, that

"upon the coast (of Egypt) from Alexandria, all along to Damiata and Tineh, they have their former and latter rains as in Barbary and the Holy Land."

This rain spiritually designs the doctrine of the Gospel, which is sometimes compared to rain, De 32:2; because as rain it comes from God, descends from heaven, is a divine gift, both as to the ministry and experience of it; it tarries not for man, neither for his desires nor deserts; falls according to divine direction, sometimes here, and sometimes there; is a great blessing, and brings many with it, revives, refreshes, and makes fruitful. Jerom interprets these two rains of the first receiving of doctrine, and of a more perfect knowledge of it; as also of the two Testaments, the Old and New: but it may be better interpreted of the preaching of the Gospel by John the Baptist, and by Christ; or by Christ, and then by his apostles; or of the first and second ministration of apostles, first to the Jews, then to the Gentiles; or of the coming of Christ in the flesh, for the same word is used here as in the former clause, and of his spiritual coming in the latter day, both which are compared to rain, **Ho 6:3**.

{g} hqdul hrwmh "doctorem justitiae", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Munster. {h} "Doctorem ad justitiam", Tigurine version, Mercerus, Castalio, Drusius, Cocceius, Burkius. {i} Travels, tom. 2. par. 2. c. 1. p. 335. Ed. 2. {k} Ib. tom. 1. part 3. sect. 2. p. 137. {l} Ib. tom. 2. part 2. c. 2. sect. 3. p. 377.

Joel 2:24

Ver. 24. And the floors shall be full of wheat,.... The churches of Christ, which will now be in Judea, and in the Gentile world, which are his "floors", **Mt 3:12**; and which will be set up everywhere through the preaching of the Gospel, the descent of the former and latter rain; these will be full of precious souls gathered in, compared to wheat, and of the choice and excellent, doctrines of the Gospel, and of all spiritual provisions, Mt 13:30;

and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil; with the wine of Gospel doctrine, and the oil of true grace; there shall be a flow, an overflow, a redundancy of these, both in the ministers of the word and private Christians, in whom the grace of God shall abound and superabound; see **Ro 5:20**.

Joel 2:25

Ver. 25. And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten,.... Or "I will recompense to you the years" {m}; give you fruitful ones, as a full compensation for those in which the locust ate up the fruits of the earth for some years running:

the canker worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer worm; of which see **Joe 1:4**;

my great army which I sent among you; as in **Joe 2:11**; the Targum of the whole is,

"and I will recompense unto you good years, in the room of the years in which the people, nations, and tongues, the governors and kingdoms of vengeance, spoiled you, my great army which I sent among you;"

and Kimchi observes, that the sense of the Targumist is, that this verse is a prophecy of the days of the Messiah; as no doubt it is, in which the Lord has done for his people, as Moses prayed he would, "make [them] glad according to the days wherein [he] afflicted [them], and the years wherein [they had] seen evil", Ps 90:15; the times of the Messiah, in which so many good things come to the people of God, are a sufficient recompence for what they endured in times past. Of the Mahometan notion of locusts being the army of God, See Gill on "Joe 2:11".

{m} Mkl ytmlvw "et rependam vobis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus, Tarnovius; "compensabo", Grotius, Cocceius.

Joel 2:26

Ver. 26. And ye shall eat in plenty,.... Or, "in eating eat" {n}; most surely eat, and in great abundance; which Hebraism not only denotes the certainty of a thing, but the increase and abundance of it; see Ge 22:17; there is plenty of spiritual provisions held forth under the Gospel dispensation: much in God, in his goodness, grace, and love, truth and faithfulness; in his covenant, the blessings and promises of it: much in Christ, who is compared to many things eatable; is called the Lamb of God, the fatted calf, the hidden manna, the tree of life, and the bread of God; everything in him, and that belongs to him, is food for faith; his flesh is meat indeed, his blood is drink indeed; the fulness of grace in him; the righteousness wrought out by him; the salvation he is the author of; upon all which the believer lives by faith: much in the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, compared to honey for sweetness of taste; to milk for its nourishing nature, easiness of digestion, and the suitableness of it for babes; and to strong meat fit for men: and there is groat plenty also in the ordinances of the Gospel, particularly in the Lord's supper, the feast of fat things, where saints are invited to eat and drink abundantly; which eating is not a bare attendance on outward ordinances, or a superficial taste of the things in them, but a feeding upon them by faith, receiving and digesting them;

and be satisfied; eat to satiety; eat and be full, so as to be entirely contented, and desire no other sort of food; thus saints, as Naphtali, are satisfied with the favour and love of God, having a delightful sensation of it, and a full persuasion of interest in it; with Christ as the bread of life, so as not to hunger after other; with his righteousness, as not to seek any other; and with his salvation, being so suitable to them; and with the goodness and fatness of the Lord's house, his word and ordinances;

and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you; acknowledge him to be the giver of all this spiritual food, and that they are unworthy of it; ascribe it entirely to the grace of God, who has done wonders for them; in wonderfully setting them apart for himself in eternal election; in making such a well ordered covenant with them in Christ; in sending him to be their Saviour and Redeemer; in calling them out of darkness into marvellous light; in bestowing such love upon them, as to call them and make them his children, and also heirs of him and eternal glory; see Ps 22:26;

and my people shall never be ashamed; because they shall always have food to eat; shall never be disappointed, when they rightly apply for it in proper places and times; and not be like the troops of Tema, and companies of Sheba, **Job 6:19**; they shall not be ashamed of their faith and hope, and expectation of good things promised them; nor of the word and ordinances, and the profession they have made of Christ in this world; nor shall they be ashamed at his coming; but shall be placed at his right hand, and received into his kingdom, and shall be led by him to fountains of living water, and be satisfied with pleasures for evermore.

{n} lwka Mtlka "comedetis comedendo", Pagninus, Montanus; "ceras", Vatablus, Piscator, Tarnovius.

Joel 2:27

Ver. 27. And ye shall know that I [am] in the midst of Israel,.... The presence of God among his people shall be so manifest, the tokens of it so clear, that it shall be easily known, by the impressions of his love upon them; the teachings of his Spirit in them; the usefulness of the word and ordinances to them; the spiritual and heavenly frame of soul they shall be favoured with, and the savouriness of their conversation; this is the blessing Christ has promised to Gospel ministers and churches, Mt 28:20;

and [that] I [am] the Lord your God, and none else; that he is their covenant God and Father, and acknowledge none else:

and my people shall never be ashamed; which is repeated for the certainty of it; see **Joe 2:26**.

Joel 2:28

Ver. 28. And it shall come to pass afterward,.... After the teacher of righteousness has been sent, and a plentiful rain of the Gospel has been let down in the land of Judea, in the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles, and such a comfortable enjoyment of the blessings of grace in it, and the knowledge of God by it; and after the wonderful work of redemption wrought by Christ. R. Jeshua in Aben Ezra and Jarchi both say this prophecy refers to time to come; and Kimchi observes, that the phrase is the same with "in the last days"; and so the Apostle Peter quotes it, **Ac 2:17**; a phrase, as the above writer observes, which always signifies the days of the Messiah, to which he applies these words; and so do other Jewish writers, both ancient and modern {o}; and there is no doubt with us Christians that they belong to the times of Christ and his apostles, since they are by an inspired writer said to be fulfilled in those times, **Ac 2:16**; here some begin a new chapter;

[that] I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; not on such whose hearts are made tender as flesh, according to Eze 36:26; as Jarchi; for the Spirit must be given first to make the heart such; nor only upon men in the land of Israel, a place fit to prophesy in, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; but upon all men, as this phrase frequently signifies; see Isa 40:5; that is, all sorts of men, Jews and Gentiles, men of all nations; and such there were on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured down upon the apostles, and the grace of the Spirit was given to many of all nations; though that was only the beginning of the fulfilment of this prophecy, which quickly had a further accomplishment in the Gentile world; and denotes the abundance of the gifts of the Spirit, both extraordinary and ordinary, and of his grace, and the blessings of it, bestowed on them;

and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; as Agabus, Barnabas, Simeon, &c. and the four daughters of Philip the evangelist, Ac 11:28;

your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; as Ananias, Peter, Paul, John, and others, some in their elder, some in their younger years, **Ac 9:10**; though prophecy, dreams, and visions, being the usual ways of conveying knowledge, here signify that the knowledge of men in Gospel times should be equal to, yea, exceed, whatever was communicated to men in the highest degree in former times: John the Baptist was greater than any of the prophets, and yet the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he, **Lu 7:28**.

{o} Zohar in Numb. fol. 99. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 219. 2. Debarim Rabba, sect. 6. fol. 242. 2. Abarbinel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 9. 3. R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 51.

Joel 2:29

Ver. 29. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour my Spirit. Men servants and maidservants should partake of the gifts and grace of the Spirit in great, abundance; and many of them were effectually called by grace, through the ministry of the word; and some servants became ministers of it; all which appears from **1Co 7:21**; for that is not true what the Jews {p} say, the Shechinah or divine Majesty does not rest but upon a wise man, and one mighty and rich; or prophecy, as Maimonides {q} has it.

{p} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 92. 1. {q} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 32.

Joel 2:30

Ver. 30. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth,.... This, and what follow, refer to the prodigies seen in the air, and done in the earth, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem {r}; when in the air were seen comets and blazing stars, particularly one in the form of a sword, hanging over Jerusalem, and appearances of armies engaged in battle; and, on the earth, a flame was seen in the temple, and a voice heard in it, saying, let us go hence; the doors of it opened of themselves; an idiot went about, crying woe to the people, woe to the city, &c.

blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke; "blood" may design the great slaughter of then by the Roman army in the land of Judea, and by murders committed among themselves in the city of Jerusalem, which were very horrible, and of great numbers; "fire", the burning of towns and cities; though Kimchi interprets it of lightnings in the heavens; and "pillars of smoke", rising up in straightness and height like palm trees, as the word {s} signifies, vast quantities of it arising from cities and towns burnt. Gussetius {t} interprets this of the burning of the martyrs in the first ages of Christianity, and of their spiritual affections, which ascended upwards to God, and were grateful to him; see **So 3:6**.

{r} Vid. Joseph. De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 3. {s} Nve twrmt "palmas fumi", Piscator, Cocceius. {t} Ebr. Comment. p. 947.

Joel 2:31

Ver. 31. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood,.... Not by eclipses, as Aben Ezra; but by the clouds of smoke arising from the burning of towns and cities, which would be so great as to obscure the sun, and through which the moon would look like blood: or all, this may be understood in a figurative sense of the change that should be made in the ecclesiastic and civil state of the Jewish nation, signified by the "heavens" and "earth"; and particularly that their king or kingdom should be in a low, mean, and distressed condition, designed by the sun; and the change of their priesthood is signified by the "moon": so Vitringa on Isa 24:23; interprets the "sun" here of King Agrippa, the last king of the Jews in obscurity; and the "moon" of Ananias junior, the high priest, slain by the zealots:

before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come; not the fall of Gog and Magog, as Kimchi; not the day of the last judgment, but of the destruction of Jerusalem; not by the Chaldeans, but by the Romans; their last destruction, which was very great and terrible indeed, and in which there was a manifest appearance of the hand and power of God; see **Mal 4:1**. Maimonides {u} interprets it of the destruction of Sennacherib near Jerusalem; but if that sense is not acceptable, he proposes that of the destruction of Gog and Magog, in the times of the Messiah.

{u} Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 19. p. 271.

Joel 2:32

Ver. 32. And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered,.... Or "saved", as in **Ac 2:21**; from those miseries and calamities before described, from the impending ruin and destruction of the city; and so it was, that those that believed in Christ, that were in the city, had an intimation of it beforehand, and removed from thence to a place called Pella {w}, and so escaped being involved in the common calamity: though this also may be understood of a spiritual deliverance and salvation by Christ, from sin, Satan, and the world, and from the second death, and wrath to come, and out of the hands of every enemy; which such share in who call on the name of the Lord, pray to him for grace and mercy, life and salvation, through Christ; that have a spiritual knowledge of God in Christ, real and sincere desires after him, and trust and confidence in him, which this phrase supposes; and which also includes the whole worship of God, internal and external, performed in a spiritual and evangelical manner; see Ro 10:13;

for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said; either by this prophet, or some others before him; see
Ps 14:7; this cannot be understood literally of Mount Zion and Jerusalem, unless it be of deliverance out of it; not in it, for Jerusalem was the seat of

blood, confusion, and distress; but mystically of the church of Christ, often called Zion and Jerusalem,
Heb 12:22; hither the deliverer came, here he is, and to be seen; from hence the word of the Lord came, the Gospel of salvation, which proclaims deliverance to the captives; here it is to be heard, met with, and found, **Isa 2:3**;

and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call; not merely externally, by the outward ministry of the word; but internally, according to his purpose, and by his grace, powerfully and effectually, to the special blessings of grace here, and eternal glory hereafter: these are the remnant according to the election of grace; the little flock to whom God gives the kingdom; the few that enter in at the strait gate; the little city, and few men in it, delivered by the poor wise man; these share in the deliverance of Zion, and shall be certainly and completely saved, with an everlasting salvation. This may respect not only the remnant, or a small number of the Jews that believed in Christ, upon his first coming, and the preaching of the Gospel by his apostles, but the call and conversion of them in the latter day; which sense connects the words better with the following chapter.

{w} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 5. p. 75.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Joel 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOEL 3

This chapter, which some make the fourth, contains a prophecy of God's judgments on all the antichristian nations at the time of the Jews' conversion, and the reasons of them, **Joe 3:1**; a threatening of Tyre and Zidon, by way of retaliation, for carrying the riches of the Jews into their temples, and selling their persons to the Greeks, **Joe 3:4**; an alarm to prepare for the battle of Armageddon, or the destruction that shall be made in the valley of Jehoshaphat, **Joe 3:9**; and after that an account of the happy state of the church of Christ, their safety and security, plenty, prosperity, and purity, to the end of the world, **Joe 3:16**.

Ver. 1. For, behold, in those days, and at that time,.... Which Kimchi refers to the times of the Messiah; and is true of the latter times of the Messiah, of his spiritual reign yet to come:

when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem: not from the Edomites, Tyrians, and Philistines, that had carried them captive in the times of Ahaz; nor from Babylon, where they had been carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar; for nothing of what is after foretold followed upon the return of these captivities: but this designs the present captivity of the Jews, and the restoration of them to their own land; of which see Isa 52:8.

Joel 3:2

Ver. 2. I will also gather all nations,.... Or cause or suffer them to be gathered together against his people; not the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, in the times of Jehoshaphat, as Aben Ezra; but either the Turks, prophesied of under the name of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel, Eze 38:1; and a multitude of other nations with them, who shall be gathered together against the Jews, to regain the land of Judea from them, they will upon their conversion inhabit; or else all the antichristian kings and nations, which shall be gathered to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, Re 16:14;

and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat: Kimchi thinks this was some valley near to Jerusalem, in which Jehoshaphat built or wrought some works, and so was called by his name: Joseph Ben Gorion {x} speaks of a valley, called the valley of Jehoshaphat, which was near Jerusalem, to the further end of which one Zachariah, a good man, in the times of the Jewish wars, was rolled and died, being cast down from the top of a tower upon the wall east of Jerusalem; and which is confirmed by R. Abraham, as quoted by Lively; and the true Josephus says {y}, that the valley into which this man was cast lay directly under Jerusalem; and Benjamin of Tudela {z} makes mention of a valley of this name, which he says lies between Jerusalem and the mount of Olives; where Jerom {a} places it by the name of Caelas; with whom Mr. Maundrell {b} agrees, who says that this valley lies between Mount Moriah and Mount Olivet, and has its name from the sepulchre of Jehoshaphat: and, according to Lyra on the place, who is followed by Adrichomius {c}, it is the same with the valley of Kidron, which was so situated; but, why that should be called the valley of Jehoshaphat, no reason is given. Aben Ezra and others are of opinion that this is the same with the valley of Berachah, where Jehoshaphat obtained a very great victory over many nations, 2Ch 20:1; but it does not appear to have been called by his name, and, besides, seems to be at a great distance from Jerusalem; though there may be an allusion to it, that as many nations were there collected together and destroyed, so shall it be in the latter day; and I am of opinion that no proper name of a place is here meant, as going by it in common, but is so called from the judgment of God here executed upon his and his people's enemies. So Jarchi calls it "the valley of judgments"; Jehoshaphat signifying "the judgment" of the Lord: Kimchi says it may be so called because of judgment, the Lord there pleading with the nations, and judging them: and in the Targum it is rendered,

"the valley of the division of judgment:"

and to me it designs no other than Armageddon, the seat of the battle of Almighty God, Re 16:16; and which may signify the destruction of their troops; See Gill on "Re 16:16";

and will plead with them there for my people, and [for] my heritage Israel; the people of the Jews, who will now be converted, who will have the "loammi", **Ho 1:9**, taken off of them, and will be called the people of the living God again, and be reckoned by him as his portion and inheritance; though not them only, but all the saints; all that have separated from antichrist, his doctrine and worship, and have suffered by him:

whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land; Kimchi refers this to the scattering of the Jews by Titus and his army, and the partition of Judea among them, which is not amiss; in consequence of which they are still a scattered people, and their land has been parted between Turks and Papists {d}; sometimes inhabited by the one, and sometimes by the other, and now by both, on whom God will take vengeance; he will plead the cause of his people, by the severe judgments he will inflict on his and their enemies. This may respect the persecuting of the Christians from place to place, and seizing on their lands and estates, and parting them, as well as the dispersion of the Jews, and the partition of the land of Canaan.

{x} Hist. Heb. l. 6. c. 27. {y} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 5. sect. 4. {z} Massaot, sive ltinera, p. 44. {a} De locis Hebr. fol. 92. C. {b} Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 103, 106. Ed. 7. {c} Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 172. {d} Written about 1750. Editor.

Joel 3:3

Ver. 3. And they have cast lots for my people,.... Not only parted their land, but cast lots for their persons, Or played at dice for them, how many captives each soldier should have, and which should be their share and property: ninety seven thousand Jews, Josephus {d} says, were carried captive by the Romans, who, very probably, cast lots for them, as was usual in such cases; see **Na 3:10**;

and have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink; either they gave a boy to be prostituted to natural lusts, in lieu of a whore; and a girl to be debauched for a bottle of wine: or they gave a boy for the price of a whore, as the Targum and Kimchi interpret it; that is, they gave a boy, instead of money, to a whore, to lie with her, as the eunuch was given to Thais; and they gave a girl to the wine merchant for as much wine as they could drink at one sitting. These phrases both express their uncleanness and intemperance, and also the low price and value they set upon their captives; and is applicable enough to the Papists, notorious for the same abominable lusts.

{d} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 3.

Joel 3:4

Ver. 4. Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine?.... The Tyrians, Zidonians, and Philistines, were near neighbours of the Jews, and implacable enemies to them; and are here put for the enemies of the true church of Christ, the Papists and Turks, and in whose possession those places now are: these are addressed by the Lord, inquiring or demanding the reason of their ill usage of him and his people: "what have ye to do with me?" to be called by my name, or accounted my people? I know you not, nor will I have any fellowship with you: or what have ye to do with my people, to disturb and distress them? what wrong have I or they done you, that you thus use them?

will ye render me a recompence? for turning you out of your land, and putting my people into it? do you think to retaliate this?

and if ye recompense me; by doing an injury to my people:

swiftly [and] speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head; bring swift and sudden destruction upon you.

Joel 3:5

Ver. 5. Because ye have taken my silver and my gold,.... Which is all the Lord's, **Hag 2:8**; or which he had bestowed upon his people, and they had taken from them:

and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things; either the rich furniture of the houses of his people, which they carried into their own houses, or "palaces" {e}, as it may be rendered; having either taken them away themselves, or bought them of others that had taken them: or else the rich vessels of the temple; as these were carried away by the Chaldeans, and put into their idol temples, **Da 1:2**; so afterward they were taken by the Romans, and put into the temples of their gods: whether any of these came into the hands of the Tyrians, &c. by any means, and were put into their idol temples, as the temple of Hercules, is not certain; however, it is notorious that the Papists, the Tyrians are an emblem of, not only build stately temples, and dedicate them to angels and saints, but most profusely adorn them with gold and silver, and all goodly and desirable things; which is putting them to an idolatrous use they were not designed for.

{e} Mkylkyhl "in palatia vestra", Montanus, Drusius, Burkius.

Joel 3:6

Ver. 6. The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem,.... Not children in age literally, as Kimchi, kidnapped or bought by the Tyrians; but the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem:

have ye sold unto the Grecians; or sons of Javan; it was one part of the merchandise of Tyre to trade in the persons of men; and Javan, or the Greeks, with others, were their merchants for them, Eze 27:13; and the souls of men are a part of the trade of the merchants of Rome, typified by the Tyrians, Re 18:13;

that ye might remove them far from their border; from their own land, or place of dwelling, that so they might not be easily redeemed, and return to it any more. Rome, the antichristian Tyre, trading with the souls of men, is to their eternal damnation, as much as in them lies. Cocceius interprets this of the children of the church being trained up in the doctrine of Aristotle, in the times of the schoolmen.

Joel 3:7

Ver. 7. Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them,.... That is, bring them back to their own land, from their places whither they have been carried captive, and where they have dwelt in obscurity, and as if theft had been buried in graves, but now should be raised up and restored; and this their restoration will be as life from the dead. So the Targum,

"behold, I will bring them publicly from the place whither ye have sold them;"

this is to be understood, not of the same persons, but of their posterity, they being the same natural body. Kimchi interprets it of them and their children; them at the resurrection of the dead, their children at the time of salvation. Some think this had its accomplishment in Alexander and his successors, by whom the Jews, who had been detained captives in other countries, were set free; particularly by Demetrius, as Josephus {f} relates: though it may be applied to the future restoration of the Jews, out of all countries, unto their own land; or rather to the gathering together the spiritual Israel, or people of God, who have been persecuted from place to place by their antichristian enemies;

and will return your recompence upon your own head; do to them as they have done to others; pay them in their own coin; retaliate the wrongs done to his people; see Re 13:10.

{f} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 5.

Joel 3:8

Ver. 8. And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah,.... That is, deliver them into their hands, to dispose of them; this is thought to have been literally fulfilled in the Tyrians, when thirty thousand {g} of them were sold for slaves, upon the taking of their city by Alexander, who put some of them into the hands of the Jews, they being in friendship with him: it mystically designs the power that the Jewish church, converted, and in union with Gentile Christians, will have over the antichristian states:

and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off; the inhabitants of Sheba, a country by the Jews reckoned the uttermost parts of the earth; see Mt 12:42. These are not the same with the Sabeans, the inhabitants of Arabia Deserts, that took away Job's oxen and asses; but rather those who were the inhabitants of Arabia Felix, which lay at a greater distance. So Strabo {h} says, the Sabeans inhabited Arabia Felix; and Diodorus Siculus {i} reckons the Sabeans as very populous, and one of the Arabian nations, who inhabited that Arabia which is called Felix, the metropolis of which is Saba; and he, as well as Strabo, observes, that this country produces many odoriferous plants, as cassia, cinnamon, frankincense, and calamus, or the sweet cane; hence incense is said to come "from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country", **Jer 6:20**; and since the Jews traded with these people for those spices, it is easy to conceive how they sold their captives to them: now these lived at a great distance, in the extreme parts of Arabia, both towards the Indian sea and the Arabian gulf. And Diodorus Siculus {k} observes, that dia ton ektopismov, because of the distance of their situation, they never came into the power or under the dominion of any, or were never subdued. These seem to be the descendants of Cush, the son, of Ham; and if they were the descendants of Joktan, the son of Shem, as some think, these are placed by Vitringa {l} in Carmania; and where Pliny {m} makes mention of a city called Sabe, and of the river Sabis; and it is worthy of notice that the ancient Greek fathers {n}, with one consent, interpret the Sabeans of the Saracens: and whether they may not design the Turks, in whose possession this country now is, and into whose hands the antichristian powers may be delivered by means of the Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, may be considered;

for the Lord hath spoken [it]; and therefore it shall be accomplished. The Targum is,

"for by the word of the Lord it is so decreed;"

whose counsels and decrees can never be frustrated. This, in an ancient book of the Jews called Mechilta, is referred to the prophecy of Noah concerning Canaan, whose sons inhabited Tyre, "a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren", **Ge 9:25**, as Jarchi observes.

{g} Arriam. de Exped. Alexand. l. 2. c. 24. {h} Geograph. l. 16. p. 536. {i} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 179, 180. {k} Ibid. p. 181. {l} Comment. in Jessiam, c. 43. 3. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 23. {n} In Catena Graec. Patr. apud Spanhem. Hist. Jobi, c. 3. p. 47.

Joel 3:9

Ver. 9. Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles,.... This decree of God, concerning the deliverance of his church; and the destruction of their enemies; which is to be proclaimed among them, to the terror of them, and the comfort of God's people, encouraging them to the battle, since they might be sure of victory; for the prophet here returns to give an account of the armies to be gathered together, and to be destroyed in the valley of Jehoshaphat, as appears from **Joe 3:12**; and to this end heralds are here ordered to make proclamation of war throughout the nations, and to gather them to the battle of Almighty God; whether seriously, or ironically, may be considered; what follows seems to be spoken in the latter way, to the enemies of the church; though they may be interpreted as spoken seriously to the people of God themselves:

prepare war; get all things ready for it, men and arms:

wake up the mighty men; generals, captains, and other officers, men of strength and courage; let them arouse from the sleep and lethargy in which they are, and get themselves in a readiness for war, and put themselves at the head of their troops:

let all the men of war draw near, let them come up; to the land of Judea, and to Jerusalem; that is, either the Christian powers with their armies, to defend Jerusalem against the Turks, and deliver it out of their hands; let them appear on the behalf of the Jews: or else let the enemies of Christ's church and people come up against them, even the most powerful of them; let them muster up all their forces, and do the most they can, they shall not prevail.

Joel 3:10

Ver. 10. Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears,.... Let not only soldiers, and such as have been trained up in military discipline, appear in the field on this occasion; but let husbandmen and vinedressers leave their fields and vineyards, and turn their instruments of husbandry and vinedressing into weapons of war; let them not plead want of armour, but convert these to such uses: on the contrary, when this battle will be over, swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks, **Isa 2:4**;

let the weak say, I [am] strong; such as are weak, through sickness, or old age, let them not plead their weakness to excuse them from engaging in this war; but let them make the best of themselves, and say they are strong and healthy, and fit for it, and enter in it with all courage and bravery: this is said either ironically to the enemies of God's people, suggesting that all hands would be wanted, and should be employed, weak and strong, and all little enough; when they had made the utmost effort they could, it would be in vain: or else they are seriously spoken to the people of God, that none of them should excuse themselves, or be discouraged because of their weakness from engaging in this last and more battle; but take heart, and be of good courage, and quit themselves like men, and be strong, since they might be sure of victory beforehand. The Apostle Paul refers to this text in
2Co 12:10; and applies it to spiritual weakness and strength; and indeed the weakest believer, that is so in faith and] knowledge, may say he is strong, in comparison of what he once was, and others are; strong, not in himself, but in Christ, and the power of his might, and in the grace that is in him; nor should he excuse himself from fighting the Lord's battles, against sin, Satan, and the world, and false teachers; or from doing the Lord's work, any service he calls him to; or from bearing the cross he lays on him on account of his weakness; nor should he: be discouraged by it from those things; but let him strengthen himself, as Aben Ezra interprets it, take heart, and be of good courage.

Joel 3:11

Ver. 11. Assemble yourselves,.... From divers parts into one place: "be ye gathered"; or "gather yourselves together", as the Targum and Kimchi; get together in a body, muster up all the forces you can collect together, Jarchi, from Menachem, by the change of a letter, renders it, "make ye haste"; lose time in preparing for this battle; get men, and arms for them, as fast as you can; be as expeditious as possible:

and come, all ye Heathen; antichristian nations, Mahometan or Papal; which latter, especially, are sometimes called Heathen and Gentiles, because of the

Heathenish rites introduced into their worship,
Ps 10:16;

and gather yourselves round about: from all parts, to the valley of Jehoshaphat or Armageddon, Re 16:14; this is spoken ironically to them, to use their utmost endeavours to get most powerful armies against the people of God, which would be of no avail, but issue in their own destruction; or it may signify what should be done by the providence of God, bringing such large numbers of them together to their own ruin:

thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord; which is a prayer of the prophet, or of the church, to God, that he would send down his mighty ones, the angels that excel in strength, and destroy this great army thus gathered together, as an angel in one night destroyed the army of Sennacherib. So Kimchi and Aben Ezra interpret if of angels, and many other interpreters; but perhaps it may be better to understand it of Christian princes and their forces, those armies clothed in white, and riding on white horses, in token of victory; with Christ at the head of them, Re 19:14; who may be said to be caused to "come down"; because, being assembled shall go down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, where their enemies are gathered together, and discomfit them, The Targum is,

"there the Lord shall, break the strength of their strong ones."

Joel 3:12

Ver. 12. Let the Heathen be awakened, and come to the valley of Jehoshaphat,.... That is, let the enemies of Christ and his church be aroused from that state of security in which they are, and prepare for their own defence; for in such a state the antichristian powers will be before their destruction; see Re 18:7; let them bestir themselves, and exert all the rigour and strength they have; let them come in high spirits against the people of God; let them invade the holy land, and come even to the valley of Jehoshaphat; and, when come thither, let them, descend into the place appointed for their ruin: the land of Judea being said to be higher than other countries, going to it is generally expressed by going up to it; otherwise it is more usual to say that men go down a valley than come up to it; and, mention being made again of this valley, shows that the same thing is referred to here as in **Joe 3:2**; these words are said in answer to the petition in **Joe 3:11**; for they are spoken by the Lord, as appears by what follows:

for there will I sit to judge all the Heathen round about; thither gathered together from all parts: the allusion is to a judge upon the bench, sitting to hear and try causes, and pass a definitive sentence; and here it signifies the execution of that sentence; such a pleading the cause of his people, as to take vengeance and inflict just punishment upon their enemies; see **Ps 9:4**.

Joel 3:13

Ver. 13. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe,.... This is said to the mighty ones sent, the Christian princes, the executioners of God's vengeance on antichrist; the angels that will pour out the vials of his wrath on the antichristian states, compared to reapers, with a sharp sickle in their hands, to cut them down, as grain is cut when reaped; as the same states are compared to a harvest ripe, the measure of their sins being filled up, and the time of their destruction appointed for them come; see Re 14:15;

come, get ye down; to the valley: or "go tread ye" {o}; for another simile is made use of: the reference here is to the treading of clusters of grapes in the winepress, as appears by what follows: and so the Targum renders it,

"descend, tread their mighty men;"

in like manner Jarchi interprets it; and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it: and Dr. Pocock observes, that the word
in the Arabic language signifies to tread, as men tread grapes in a press: the reasons follow,

for the press is full; of clusters of the vine; or the valley is full of wicked men, compared unto them, destined to destruction:

the fats overflow; with the juice of grapes squeezed out, denoting the great effusion of blood that will be made; see
Re 14:18;

for their wickedness [is] great; is come to its height, reaches even to heaven, and calls aloud for vengeance; an end is come to it, and to the authors of it, Re 18:5. The Targum of the whole is, "draw out the sword against them, for the time of their end is come; descend, tread their mighty men slain, as anything is trodden in a winepress; pour out their blood, for their wickedness is multiplied."

{o} wdr pateite, "calcate", Sept. so Syr. Ar.

Joel 3:14

Ver. 14. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision,.... The same with the valley of Jehoshaphat before mentioned; which shows that not any valley of that name is intended, but a certain place so called from the judgments of God in it; and here named "the valley of decision", because here their judgment will be determined, as Kimchi and Jarchi; and at this time the controversy between God, and his people's enemies, will be decided, and at an end: or "the valley of concision", as the Vulgate Latin version; because in this place, and at this time, the nations gathered together in it will be cut to pieces: or, as others, "the valley of threshing" {p}; because, as, in Jehoshaphat's time, the Moabites and Ammonites were threshed by the Jews in the valley of Berachah, to which the allusion is; so at this time the antichristian kings and their armies will be threshed and beaten, and destroyed by the men of Judah, God's professing people; see **Mic 4:13**; these seem to be the words of the prophet, breaking out into this pathetic exclamation, upon a sight of the vast multitudes gathered together in this valley, and slain in it; and the doubling of the word serves to express the prodigious number of them: and this shows that this prophecy refers either to the vast army of the Turks, under the name of Gog, and the great slaughter that will be made of them; and that this valley may be the same with the valley of Hamongog, that is, the valley of the multitude of Gog, where their multitude of slain shall be buried, Eze 39:11; or to that vast carnage of the antichristian kings and their armies at Armageddon,
Re 16:14; the Targum is,

"armies, armies, in the valley of the division of judgment:"

for the day of the Lord [is] near in the valley of decision; that is, the great and terrible day of the Lord, to take vengeance on all the antichristian powers, both eastern and western, is nigh at hand, which will be done in this valley.

{p} Uwrxh qmeb "in valle triturationis", Piscatsr.

Joel 3:15

Ver. 15. The sun and moon shall be darkened,.... Both the politic and ecclesiastic state of antichrist shall be ruined and destroyed; it shall "fare" with Rome Papal as it did with Rome Pagan, at the time of its dissolution; see **Re 6:12**;

and the stars shall withdraw their shining: antichristian princes and nobles in the civil state, and the clergy of all ranks in the church state, shall lose their glory.

Joel 3:16

Ver. 16. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem,.... Christ, the Lamb, shall now appear as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and utter his voice in his providence and judgments on the behalf of his church and people, signified by Zion and Jerusalem; and therefore said to roar, and utter his voice from thence; he will be heard far and near, and strike terror in the hearts of his enemies; see
Jer 25:30;

and the heavens and the earth shall shake; great revolutions will be made in the world, both in church and state, among the antichristian powers; and such as will also make them shake and tremble, as well as alter the form and frame of things among them; see Re 16:18; changes in government, civil and ecclesiastic, are sometimes signified by such phrases, **Hag 2:6**;

but the Lord [will be] the hope of his people; the object, author, ground, and foundation of their hope of salvation here and hereafter; in whom they may hope for and expect safety and security in the worst of times; since he will be their "refuge", or their "harbour" {q} as it may be rendered; to whom they may have recourse, to shelter and screen them from the rage and wrath of their enemies, and where they will be safe, till the indignation of God be over and past; and while calamities and judgments are upon the unchristian and ungodly world, they will have nothing to fear amidst these storms, being in a good harbour:

and the strength of the children of Israel; of the spiritual Israel; of all such who are Israelites indeed, the Lord's chosen, redeemed, and called people, both

Jews and Gentiles; the author and giver of their spiritual strength, the strength of their lives and of their hearts, of their graces and of their salvation; by whom they are furnished with strength to do the duties of religion; to exercise grace; to wrestle with God in prayer; to withstand spiritual enemies; to bear afflictions patiently, and to persevere to the end: or he is their "fortress" {r}; their strong hold and place of defence, where they are safe from every enemy, free from all distresses, enjoy solid peace and comfort, and have plenty of provisions, Isa 33:16.

{q} hoxm "refugium", Tigurine version, Burkius; "receptus", Tarnovius. {r} Nwem "prsesidium", Tarnovius; "arx", Cocceius.

Joel 3:17

Ver. 17. So shall ye know that I [am] the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain,.... The church of God, which is his dwelling place; and will appear more manifestly to be so at this time, when Christ the Lamb will stand on Mount Zion, with an 144,000, having his Father's name in their foreheads, Re 14:1; and which presence of the Lord will be clearly discerned by his people; by the destruction of their enemies, and by his protection of them; by his being their hope and strength, their refuge and their fortress; they will experimentally know his divine inhabitation among them:

then shall Jerusalem be holy; or "holiness" {s}; not Jerusalem, literally taken, as Kimchi; though, it being now rebuilt, will be inhabited by holy persons, the converted Jews, and so all manner of holiness practised in it; but rather the whole church of God everywhere, consisting of holy persons, made so through the holiness of Christ imputed to them, and the sanctifying grace of his Spirit wrought in them; not that they will be perfectly holy in themselves, as the saints will in the New Jerusalem state, Re 21:2; but they will be greatly so; holiness will be predominant and universal among men; there will be more real saints, and fewer hypocrites will be in the churches; see **Isa 4:3**;

and there shall no strangers pass through her any more; to hurt and annoy the church of God; for there shall be none in these times to molest, disturb, and hurt, in all the holy mountain of the Lord,
Isa 11:9; or to pollute her with false doctrine, superstitious worship, or morality; or her communion shall not be interrupted and made uncomfortable, or she be pestered with hypocrites and ungodly persons, strangers to God and

godliness, to Christ, his Spirit, and the power of religion; see Isa 52:1.

{s} vdq "sanctitas", Munster, Mercerus, Vatablus, Piscator, Tarnovius.

Joel 3:18

Ver. 18. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... When antichrist shall be destroyed; the Jews converted; the power of godliness revived, and the presence of God among his people enjoyed. Vitringa, in his Commentary on Isaiah, frequently applies this, and such like prophecies, to the times of the Maccabees; though, he owns, they were but an emblem of better times under the Gospel dispensation; nor does he deny the mystical and spiritual sense of them;

[that] the mountains shall drop down new wine; which, and the following expressions, are to be understood not in a strict literal sense, as Lactantius {t} seems to have understood them; who says, that, in the Millennium, God will cause a rain of blessing to descend morning and evening; the earth shall bring forth all kind of fruit without the labour of man; honey shall drop from the rocks, and the fountains of milk and wine shall overflow: but hyperbolically, just as the land of Canaan is said to flow with milk and honey; not that it really did, but the phrase is used to denote the fertility of it, and the abundance of temporal blessings in it. The literal sense is this, that the mountains shall be covered with vines, on which they are often planted; these vines shall be full of large clusters of grape; and these grapes, being pressed, shall yield a large quantity of new wine; and so, by a metonymy, the mountains are said to drop it down {u}, that is, abound with it, or produce an abundance of it: but the spiritual or mystical sense is, that the churches of Christ in those times, comparable to mountains, and so to hills in the next clause, for their exalted and visible glorious state in which they now will be; and for the rich gifts and graces of the Spirit within them; and for the pasture upon them, and the trees of righteousness that grow thereon; and also for their firmness and stability, their immovableness and perpetual duration; these shall abound with fresh and large discoveries of the love of God and Christ, which is better than wine, **So 1:2**; like wine, cheering and refreshing; like new wine, though old as to its original, yet new in the manifestations of it; and which are usually made in the church, and the ordinances of it, to the making glad the hearts of the Lord's people; also they shall abound with the blessings of grace, the fruits of love, such as pardon, peace, justification, &c. which, like wine, fill with joy, revive

and comfort; and though they are ancient blessings, provided long ago, they are exhibited under the Gospel dispensation in a new covenant way; and the application of them is made in the churches, in Zion, where the Lord commands the blessing, even life for evermore. This may also take in the Gospel, which brings the good news of these blessings, and so is very reviving and cheering; and, though ordained and preached of old, is newly revealed under the present dispensation; and will be more clearly in later times, when all the mountains or churches will abound with it, and even the whole earth be filled with the knowledge of it, Isa 11:9; likewise the ordinance of the Lord's supper, that feast of fat things, of wines on the lees well refined, made in the mountain of the Lord, for all his people may be included; and both in that, and in the ministry of the word, the Lord is sometimes pleased, as he may more abundantly hereafter, to give his saints some foretaste of that new wine, which Christ and they shall partake of in his Father's kingdom; see **So 7:9**
Mt 26:29;

and the hills shall flow with milk: that is, there shall be much pasturage upon them, and a great number of cattle feeding thereon, which shall yield large quantities of milk; and so, by the same figure as before, the hills may be said to flow with it {w}. The spiritual meaning is, that the churches of Christ, comparable to hills, for the reasons before given, shall abound with the means of grace, with the sincere milk of the word; to which the Gospel is compared for its whiteness and purity, for every word of God is pure and purifying; for assuaging the wrath the law produces; it being easy of digestion, even to newborn babes; and its salutary nourishing virtue and efficacy; and of this there will be great abundance in the latter day; see **So 4:11** **1Pe 2:2**;

and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters; that is, the channels in which the rivers run; these, in a time of drought, are sometimes empty, and the bottoms of them to be seen, but now full of water, and flow with it: grace is often in Scripture compared to "water" because of its refreshing, cleansing, and fructifying nature; and "rivers" denote, an abundance of it; and the "channels", through which it is conveyed to men, out of the fulness of Christ, are the ordinances; see **Zec 4:12**; and the prophecy suggests, that these should not be dry and empty, but that large measures of grace shall be communicated by means of them to the souls of men, to their great comfort and edification, and for the supply of their wants; see
Eze 36:25;

and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord; not meaning baptism, as some; nor Christ, the fountain of grace, life, and salvation; but the Gospel, the word of the Lord, that fountain full of excellent truths and doctrines; of the blessings of grace; of exceeding great and precious promises; and of much spiritual peace, joy, and comfort: this is the law or doctrine of the Lord, that should come out of Zion, or the church, **Isa 2:3**; the living waters that shall come out of Jerusalem, Zec 14:8; and the same with the waters in Ezekiel's vision, that came from under the threshold of the house, Eze 47:1; it seems to denote the small beginnings of the Gospel, and the great increase and overflow of it in the world, as it does in all the above passages: this is referred by the ancient Jews {x} to the times of the Messiah;

and shall water the valley of Shittim; a plain or valley near Jordan, upon the borders of Moab, at the farther end of Canaan that way,
Nu 33:49. Benjamin of Tudela {y} says, that from the mount of Olives may be seen the plain and brook of Shittim, unto or near Mount Nebo, which was in the land of Moab. This valley or plain, as the Targum, was so called, either from the "shittah" tree, Isa 41:19; of which was the wood "shittim", so much used for various things in the tabernacle and temple, that grew there; and which Jerom on this place says was a kind of tree that grew in the wilderness, like a white thorn in colour and leaves, though not in size, for otherwise it was a very large tree, out of which the broadest planks might be cut, and its wood very strong, and of incredible, smoothness and beauty; and which grew not in cultivated places, nor in the Roman soil, but in the desert of Arabia; and therefore one would think did not grow in this plain near Jordan, and so could not be denominated from hence: but Dr. Shaw {z} observes, that the Acacia is by much the largest and the most common tree of these deserts (that is, of Arabia), as it might likewise have been of the plains of Shittim, over against Jericho, from whence it took its name; and adds, we have some reason to conjecture that the shittim wood, whereof the various utensils, &c. of the tabernacle, &c.
Ex 25:10, &c. were made, was the wood of the acacia. Or it may be this place had its name from the rushes which grew on the banks of Jordan, near to which it was; for so, is the word interpreted by some {a}: and Saadiah Gaon says, this valley is Jordan; so called, because Jordan was near to a place called Shittim: however, be it as it will, this can never be understood in a literal sense, that any fountain should arise out of the temple, and flow as far as beyond Jordan, and water any tract of land there; but must be understood spiritually, of the same waters of the sanctuary as in Ezekiel's vision, Eze 47:1; at most, the literal sense could only be, that the whole land should be well watered from one end to the other, and, become very fertile and fruitful, by the order and direction of the Lord, that dwells in his temple. The mystical sense is best. Jarchi makes mention of a Midrash, that interprets it of the expiation of the

sins of the Israelites, in the affair of Baalpeor at Shittim, Nu 25:1; but the true spiritual sense is, that the Gospel shall be carried to the further parts of the earth; that the whole world shall be filled and watered with it, and become fruitful, which before was like a desert; these living waters shall flow, both toward the former and the hinder seas, the eastern and west: era, as in Zec 14:8; see Isa 11:9. Some render it, "shall water the valley of cedars" {b}; the shittim wood being a kind of cedar, of which many things belonging to the tabernacle, a type of the church, was made, being firm, sound, incorruptible, and durable; see
Ex 25:10; saints are compared to cedars for their height in Christ, their strength in him, and in his grace; their large and spreading leaves, branches, and roots, or growth in grace; and for their duration and incorruption; see Nu 24:5; a valley may signify the low estate of God's people; or be an emblem of lowly, meek, and humble souls, to whom the Gospel is preached, and who are watered and revived by it, and to whom more grace is given; see
Isa 40:4. It is by Symmachus rendered "the valley of thorns"; and so Quinquarboreus {c} says the word signifies and designs such who are barren in good works.

{t} Epitome Divin. Institut. c. 11. Vid. Institut. l. 7. c. 24. {u} "Incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva, Et durae quercus sudabunt roscida mella". Virgil. Eclog. 4. l. 29, 30. {w} "Flumina jam lactis, jam flumina nectaris ibant, Flavaque de viridi stillabant ibice mella". Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. {x} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 63. 2. {y} Itineranium, p. 44. {z} Travels, c. 3. p. 444, 459. Ed. 2. {a} Vid. Relaud. Palestina Illustrata, l. 1. c. 54, p. 351, 352. {b} Myjvh lxn ta "vallem cedrorum lectissimorum", Junius & Tremellius, Tarnovius. {c} Scholia in Targum in loc.

Joel 3:19

Ver. 19. Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness,.... These two nations having been the implacable enemies of Israel, are here put for the future adversaries of the church of Christ, Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan; who will all be destroyed as such, and be no more: Rome is called, spiritually or mystically, Egypt,
Re 11:8; and Edom is a name that well agrees with it, it signifying "red", as it is with the blood of the saints: and it is common, with the Jewish writers, by Edom to understand Rome; which though it may not be true of all places they so interpret, yet is of many, and so here. Kimchi, by Egypt understands the

Ishmaelites, or the Turks; and, by Edom, Rome;

for the violence [of] the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood is their land; either in the land of Judah; or rather in their own land, Egypt and Edom. This respects the violences and outrages committed by the antichristian states upon the true professors of the Christian religion, the Waldenses and Albigenses, and others, whose innocent blood, in great quantities, has been spilled by them. Antichrist is represented as, drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, and in whom will be found the blood of all the prophets and saints; and for this reason ruin and destruction will come upon him and his followers, and blood will be given them to drink, for they are worthy, Re 17:6.

Joel 3:20

Ver. 20. But Judah shall dwell for ever,.... The converted Jews shall dwell in their own land for ever, to the end of the, world and never more be carried captive, Eze 37:25; and the true professing people of God, as Judah signifies, shall continue in a church state, evermore, and never more be disturbed by any enemies, they shall dwell safely and peaceably to the end of time:

and Jerusalem from generation to generation; shall dwell so in like manner, age after age; that is, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, or the members of the true church of Christ, who shall see and enjoy peace and prosperity, both temporal and spiritual, as Jerusalem signifies.

Joel 3:21

Ver. 21. For I will cleanse their blood [which] I have not cleansed,.... Which some understand, as the Targum, of the Lord's, inflicting further punishments on the, enemies of his people, for shedding their innocent blood; and that he will not expiate their sins, nor hold them guiltless, or suffer them to go unpunished; but rather this is to be interpreted in a way of grace and mercy, as a benefit bestowed on Judah and Jerusalem, who are the immediate antecedents to the relative here; and in the words a reason is given why they should dwell safely and peaceably for ever, because the Lord will justify them from their sins; forgive their iniquities; cleanse them from all their pollution, signified by blood; of which grace they will have had no application made to them till this time; but now all their guilt and faith will be removed; and particularly God will forgive, and declare to be forgiven their sin of crucifying Christ; whose blood they had imprecated upon themselves and their children, and which has remained on them; but now will be removed, with all the sad effects of it. Though this may also refer to the conversion of the Gentiles, and the pardon of their sins, and the sanctification of their persons, in such places and parts of the world, where such blessings of grace have not been bestowed in times past for many ages, if ever;

for the Lord dwelleth in Zion; and therefore will diffuse his grace, and spread the blessings of it all around: or "even the Lord [that] dwelleth in Zion" {d}; he will do what is before promised; being the Lord, he can do it; and dwelling in Zion his church, it may be believed he will do it; and this will be for ever, when his Shechinah shall return thither in the days of the Messiah, as Kimchi observes.

{d} hwhyw "even I the Lord", margin of our Bibles.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Amos 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO AMOS

This book in the Hebrew Bibles is called "Sepher Amos", the Book of Amos; and, in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, the Prophecy of Amos. This is not the same person with the father of Isaiah, as some have ignorantly confounded them; for their names are wrote with different letters; besides, the father of Isaiah is thought to have been of the royal family, and a courtier; whereas this man was a country farmer and herdsman. His name signifies "burdened": the Jews {a} say he was so called, because burdened in his tongue, or had an impediment in his speech, and stammered; but rather because his prophecies were burdens to the people, such as they could not bear, being full of reproofs and threatenings; however, his prophecy in this respect agrees with his name. What time he lived may be learned from **Am 1:1**; by which it appears that he was, contemporary with Isaiah and Hosea; but whether he lived and prophesied so long as they did is not certain. The author of Seder Olam Zuta {b} makes him to prophesy in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. R. Abraham Zacut {c}, and R. David Ganz {d}, place him later than Hosea, and prior to Isaiah; they say that Amos received the law from Hosea, and Isaiah from Amos. Mr. Whiston {e} makes him to begin to prophesy in the year of the world 3231 A.M. or 773 B.C.; and Mr. Bedford {f} earlier, in 802 B.C.; and, from some passages in his prophecy, he appears to be of the land of Judah; see **Am 1:1**; though he prophesied in the land of Israel, and against the ten tribes chiefly; the occasion of which was, Jeroboam had been very successful and victorious, and the people under him enjoyed great plenty and prosperity, and upon this grew wanton, luxurious, and very sinful; wherefore this prophet was sent to reprove them for their sins, to exhort them to repentance, and threaten them with captivity, in case of impenitence; and to comfort the truly godly with promises of the Messiah's coming and kingdom. The authenticity of this book is not to be questioned, since many passages out of it were taken by following prophets, as the words in **Am 1:2**, by Joel, **Joe 3:16**, and by Jeremiah, Jer 25:30; **Am 4:9**, by Haggai, **Hag 2:17**; **Am 9:13**, by Joel, **Joe 3:18**; and others are quoted by the writers of the New Testament as divinely inspired, as **Am 5:25**, in **Ac 7:42**; nor is there any room to doubt of his being the writer of this book, as is manifest of his speaking of himself as the first person in it; though Hobbes {g} says it does not appear. Some have thought that his language is rustic, suitable to his former character and employment; but certain it is there are masterly strokes and great beauties of eloquence in it; and which shows that it is more than human. According to some writers, he was often beat and buffeted by Amaziah, the priest of Bethel; and at last the son of the priest drove a nail into his temples, upon which he was carried alive into his own country, and there died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors at Tekoa {h}.

{a} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 10. fol. 153. 3. Abarbinel Praefat. in Ezek. fol. 253. 3. {b} P. 104, 105. Ed. Meyer. {c} Juchasin, fol. 12. 1. {d} Tzemach David, fol. 13. 1. 2. {e} Chronological Table, cent. 8. {f} Scripture Chronology, B. 6. c. 2. p. 647. {g} Leviathan, c. 33. {h} Pseudo-Epiphan. de Prophet. Vit. c. 12. Isidor. de Vit. Sanct. c. 43. Jerom. de locis Hebr. in voce Elthei, fol. 91. B.

INTRODUCTION TO AMOS 1

This chapter begins with the general title of the book, in which the author is described by name, and by his condition of life, and by his country, and the time of his prophecy fixed, **Am 1:1**. He first foretells a drought in the land of Israel, in the most fruitful places, which would cause mourning among the shepherds, **Am 1:2**; then the captivity of the Syrians, whose metropolis was Damascus, **Am 1:3**. Next the destruction of the Philistines, whose principal cities were Gaza, Ashdod, Askelon, and Ekron, **Am 1:6**. After that the ruin of Tyre, with the reason of it, **Am 1:9**; then the calamities that should come upon

Edom, whose chief places were Teman and Bozrah, **Am 1:11**; and lastly the desolations of the Ammonites, whose metropolis, Rabbah, should be destroyed, and their king and princes go into captivity, **Am 1:13**; and all this for the sins of each of these nations.

Ver. 1. The words of Amos,.... Not which he spoke of or for himself, but from the Lord; all the prophecies, visions, and revelations made unto him, are intended:

who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa; which was not in the tribe of Asher, as Kimchi; nor of Zebulun, as Pseudo-Epiphanius {i}; but in the tribe of Judah, 2Ch 11:5. It lay to the south, and was six miles from Bethlehem. Mr. Maundrell {k} says it is nine miles distant, to the south of it; and, according to Jerom {l}, it was twelve miles from Jerusalem; though he elsewhere {m} says, Thecua, or Tekoa, is a village at this day, nine miles from Aelia or Jerusalem, of which place was Amos the prophet, and where his sepulchre is seen: either there is a mistake of the number, or of Aelia for Bethlehem; the former rather seems to be the case; according to Josephus {n}, it was not far from the castle of Herodium. The Misnic doctors {o} speak of it as famous for oil, where the best was to be had; near to it was a wilderness, called the wilderness of Tekoa; and Jerom {p} says, that beyond it there was no village, nor so much as huts and cottages, but a large wilderness, which reached to the Red sea, and to the borders of the Persians, Ethiopians, and Indians, and was full of shepherds, among whom Amos was; whether he was a master herdsman, or a servant of one, is not said. The word is used of the king of Moab, who is said to be a "sheepmaster", **2Ki 3:4**; he traded in cattle, and got riches thereby; and so the Targum here renders it,

"who was lord or master of cattle;"

and Kimchi interprets it, he was a great man among the herdsmen; and so it was a piece of self-denial to leave his business, and go to prophesying; but rather he was a servant, and kept cattle for others, which best agrees with **Am 7:14**; and so is expressive of the grace of God in calling so mean a person to such a high office. The word used signifies to mark; and shepherds were so called from marking their sheep to distinguish them, which seems to be the work of servants; and, in the Arabic language, a kind of sheep deformed, and of short feet, are so called:

which he saw concerning Israel; or, against Israel {q}, the ten tribes, to whom he was sent, and against whom he prophesied chiefly; for he says very little of

Judah. Words are more properly said to be spoken or heard; but here they are said to be seen; which shows that not bare words are meant, but things, which the prophet had revealed to him in a visionary way, and he delivered; see **Isa 2:1**;

in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; who was also called Azariah, 2Ki 15:1;

and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel; so he is called to distinguish him from Jeroboam the son of Nebat; this king was the grandson of Jehu; he was, as Jerom says, before Sardanapalus reigned over the Assyrians, and Procas Sylvius over the Latines:

two years before the earthquake; which was well known in those times, and fresh in memory. Zechariah speaks of it many years after, from whom we learn it was in the days of Uzziah, Zec 14:5. The Jewish writers generally say that it was when Uzziah was smote with leprosy for invading the priest's office; and was in the year in which he died, when Isaiah had a vision of the glory of the Lord, and the posts of the house moved, **Isa 6:1**; and with whom Josephus {r} agrees; who also relates, that the temple being rent by the earthquake, the bright light of the sun shone upon the king's face, and the leprosy immediately seized him; and, at a place before the city called Eroge, half part of a mountain towards the west was broken and rolled half a mile towards the eastern part, and there stood, and stopped up the ways, and the king's gardens; but this cannot be true, as Theodoret observes; since, according to this account, Amos must begin to prophesy in the fiftieth year of Uzziah; for he reigned fifty two years, and he began his reign in the twenty seventh year of Jeroboam, 2Ki 15:1; who reigned forty one years, 2Ki 14:23; so that Uzziah and he were contemporary fourteen years only, and Jeroboam must have been dead thirty six years when it was the fiftieth of Uzziah; whereas they are here represented as contemporary when Amos began to prophesy, which was but two years before the earthquake; so that this earthquake must be in the former and not the latter part of Uzziah's reign, and consequently not when he was stricken with the leprosy.

{i} De Vita Prophet. c. 12. {k} Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 88. {l} Proem. in Amos & Comment. in Jer. vi. 1. {m} De locis Hebr. in voce Elthei, fol. 91. B. {n} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 9. sect. 5. {o} Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 3. {p} Proem. in Amos. {q} larvy le "contra Israelem", so some in Drusius. {r} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 4.

Amos 1:2

Ver. 2. And he said,.... That is, the Prophet Amos, before described; he, being under divine inspiration, said as follows:

the Lord will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; not from Samaria, nor from Dan and Bethel, but from Zion and Jerusalem, where the temple of the Lord stood; and out of the holy of holies in it, where was the seat of the divine Majesty; and his voice being compared to the roaring of a lion, denotes his wrath and vengeance; and is expressive of some terrible threatening prophecy he would send from hence, by one or other of his prophets; perhaps Amos may mean himself; and who, having been a shepherd or herdsman in the wilderness, had often heard the terrible roaring of the lion, to which he compares his prophecy concerning the judgments of God on nations. Some think reference is had to the earthquake, as Aben Ezra; and which might be attended with thunder and lightning, the voice of God:

and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn; that is, the huts or cottages they dwell in, erected for the more convenient care of their flocks; these, by a figure, are said to mourn, because exposed to the violent heat of the sun in this time of drought; or because forsaken by the shepherds; or it may design the shepherds themselves that dwelled in them, that should mourn because there was no pasture for their flocks, the grass being dried up, and withered away: and indeed it may be rendered, "the pastures of the shepherds shall mourn" {s}; being destroyed by the drought, as the cattle upon them are said to mourn and groan, **Joe 1:18**;

and the top of Carmel shall wither; a fruitful mountain in the land of Israel; there were two of this name, one in the tribe of Judah, near which Nabal dwelt, 1Sa 25:2; another in the tribe of Asher, near to Ptolemais or Aco; some think the former is meant, as being nearer Tekoa, and more known to Amos; others the latter, because Israel or the ten tribes are prophesied against; though Carmel may be taken for any and all fruitful places in the land; and the top or chief of it withering may signify the destruction of everything pleasant and useful. Some think Amos speaks figuratively in the language of a herdsman or shepherd, as artificers and mechanics do in their own way {t}; and so by "shepherds" he means kings and princes; and, by their "habitations", their kingdoms, cities, towns, and palaces; and, by "Carmel", their wealth, riches, and precious things, which should all be destroyed; and to this agrees the Targum, "the habitations of kings shall become desolate, and the strength of their fortresses shall be made a desert."

{s} Myerh twan "pascua pastorum", Vatablus, Piscator, Grotius, Burkius. {t} "Navita de ventis, de tauris narrat arator, Enumerat miles vulnera, pastor oves". Propert. I. 2. Eleg. 1.

Amos 1:3

Ver. 3. Thus saith the Lord,.... Lest it should be thought that the words that Amos spoke were his own, and he spake them of himself, this and the following prophecies are prefaced in this manner; and he begins with the nations near to the people of Israel and Judah, who had greatly afflicted them, and for that reason would be punished; which is foretold, to let Israel see that those judgments on them did not come by chance; and lest they should promise themselves impunity from the prosperity of these sinful nations; and to awaken them to a sense of their sin and danger, who might expect the visitation of God for their transgressions; as also to take off all offence at the prophet, who began not with them, but with their enemies:

for three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof; Damascus was an ancient city; it was in the times of Abraham, Ge 15:2. It was the "metropolis" of Syria, **Isa 7:8**; and so Pliny calls it, "Damascus of Syria" {u}. Of the situation of this place, and the delightfulness of it,
See Gill on "Jer 49:25"; and of its founder, and the signification of its name, See Gill on "Ac 9:2"; to which may be added, that though Justin {w} says it had its name from Damascus, a king of it before Abraham and Israel, whom he also makes kings of it; and Josephus {x} would have Uz the son of Aram the founder of it, to which Bochart {y} agrees; yet the Arabic writers ascribe the building of it to others; for the Arabs have a tradition, as Schultens {z} says, that there were Canaanites anciently in Syria; for they talk of Dimashc the son of Canaan, who built the famous city of Damascus, and so it should seem to be called after his name; and Abulpharagius {a} says, that Murkus or Murphus, as others call him, king of Palestine, built the city of Damascus twenty years before the birth of Abraham: from this place many things have their names, which continue with us to this day, as the "damask" rose, and the "damascene" plum, transplanted from the gardens that were about it, for which it was famous; and very probably the invention of the silk and linen called "damasks"

owes its rise from hence. It is here put for the whole country of Syria, and the inhabitants of it, for whose numerous transgressions, signified by "three" and "four", the Lord would not turn away his fury from them, justly raised by their sins; or the decree which he had passed in his own mind, and now made a declaration of, he would not revoke; or not inflict the punishment they had deserved, and he had threatened. The sense is, that he would not spare them, or have mercy on them, or defer the execution of punishment any longer; he would not forgive their transgressions. So the Targum,

"I will not pardon them."

De Dieu refers it to the earthquake before mentioned, that God would not turn away that, but cause it to come, as he had foretold, for the transgressions of these, and other nations after spoken of; but rather it refers to Damascus; and so some render it, "I will not turn", or "convert it" {b}; to repentance, and so to my mercy; but leave it in its sins, and to my just judgments. Kimchi thinks that this respects four particular seasons, in which Damascus, or the Syrians, evilly treated and distressed the people of Israel; first in the times of Baasha; then in the times of Ahab; a third time in the days of Jehoahaz the son of Jehu; and the fourth in the times of Ahaz; and then they were punished for them all:

because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron; that is,

"the inhabitants of the land of Gilead,"

as the Targum; this country lay beyond Jordan, and was inhabited by the Reubenites and Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh; who were used in a very cruel manner, by Hazael king of Syria, as was foretold by Elisha, **2Ki 7:12**; not literally, as in 2Sa 12:31; but by him they were beat, oppressed, and crushed, as the grain of the threshingfloor; which used to be threshed out by means of a wooden instrument stuck with iron teeth, the top of which was filled with stones to press it down, and so drawn to and fro over the sheaves of corn, by which means it was beaten out, to which the allusion is here; See Gill on "1Co 9:9". This was done by Hazael king of Syria, who is said to destroy the people, and make them "like the dust by threshing", 2Ki 10:32.

{u} Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 8. {w} E Trogo, l. 36. c. 2. {x} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4. {y} Phaleg. l. 2. c. 8. {z} Apud Universal History, vol. 2. p. 280. {a} Hist. Dynast. p. 13. {b} wnbyva al "non convertam eam", Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius.

Amos 1:4

Ver. 4. But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael,.... For so doing; into his family, his sons' sons, one of whom perhaps was Rezin, that Tiglathpileser king of Assyria slew, as Aben Ezra observes. This denotes the judgments of God upon his posterity for his cruel usage of the Israelites; and designs an enemy that should come into his country, and war made in the midst of it, by which it should be depopulated; and this being by the permission and providence of God, and according to his will, is said to be sent by him:

which shall devour the palaces of Benhadad; a name frequently given to the kings of Syria; there was one of this name the immediate predecessor of Hazael, whose servant he was; and he left a son of the same name that succeeded him, **2Ki 7:7**; these may denote the royal palaces of the kings of Syria, which should not be spared in this time of desolation; though rather by them may be intended the temples, which he and Hazael are said by Josephus {c} to build in the city of Damascus, whereby they greatly adorned it; and for these and other acts of beneficence they were deified by the Syrians, and worshipped as gods; and even to the times of Josephus, he says, their statues were carried in pomp every day in honour of them; and so, the house of Hazael, in the preceding clause, may signify a temple that was either built by him, or for the worship of him, since he was deified as well as Benhadad; and it may be observed, that as Adad was a common name of the kings of Syria; for, according to Nicholas of Damascus {d}, ten kings that reigned in Damascus were all called Adad; so this is a name of the god they worshipped. Pliny speaks of a god worshipped by the Syrians, whose name must be Adad; since, according to him; the gem "adadunephros" had its name from him {e}; and Macrobius {f} is express for it, that the chief god of the Assyrians was called Adad, which signifies one; See Gill on "Isa 66:17".

{c} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 4. sect. 6. {d} Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5. sect. 8. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 27. c. 11. {f} Saturnal. l. 1. c. 23.

Amos 1:5

Ver. 5. I will break also the bar of Damascus,.... Or bars, the singular for the plural, by which the gates of the city were barred; and, being broken, the gates would be easily opened, and way made for the enemy to pass into the city and spoil it; or it may signify the whole strength and all the fortifications of it. So the Targum,

"I will break the strength of Damascus:"

and cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven; or, "of an idol", as the Vulgate Latin version. It is thought to be some place where idols were worshipped by the Syrians; their gods were the gods of the valleys, which they denied the God of Israel to be, 1Ki 20:23. Mr. Maundrell {g} says, that near Damascus there is a plain still called the valley of Bocat, and which he thinks is the same with this Bicataven, as it is in the Hebrew text; and which lies between Libanus and Antilibanus, near to the city, of Heliopolis and the Septuagint and Arabic versions here call this valley the plain of On, which Theodoret interprets of an idol called On. Father Calmet {h} takes it to be the same with Heliopolis, now called Balbec, or Baalbeck, the valley of Baal; where was a famous temple dedicated to the sun, the magnificent remains whereof are still at this day visible. Balbec is mentioned by the Arabians as the wonder of Syria; and one of their lexicographers says it is three days' journey from Damascus, where are wonderful foundations, and magnificent vestiges of antiquity, and palaces with marble columns, such as in the whole world are nowhere else to be seen; and such of our European travellers as have visited it are so charmed with what they beheld there, that they are at a loss how to express their admiration. On the southwest of the town, which stands in a "delightful plain" on the west foot of Antilibanus, is a Heathen temple, with the remains of some other edifices, and, among the rest, of a magnificent palace {i}: Some late travellers {k} into these parts tell us, that

"upon a rising ground near the northeast extremity of this "plain", and immediately under Antilibanus, is pleasantly situated the city of Balbec, between Tripoli of Syria, and Damascus, and about sixteen hours distant from each.----This plain of Bocat (they say) might by a little care be made one of the richest and most fertile spots in Syria; for it is more fertile than the celebrated vale of Damascus, and better watered than the rich plains of Esdraelon and Rama. In its present neglected state it produces grain, some good grapes, but very little wood.--It extends in length from Balbec almost to the sea; its direction is from northeast by north, to southwest by south; and its breadth from Libanus to Antilibanus is guessed to be in few places more than twelve miles, or less than six."

It seems to be the same with Bicatlebanon, or the valley of Lebanon, Jos

11:17; and with that which Strabo {l} calls the hollow plain; the breadth of which to the sea (he says) is twenty five miles, and the length from the sea to the midland is double that:

and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden; that is, the king from his pleasure house; or it may be understood of the name of some place in Syria, where the kings of it used sometimes to be, and had their palace there, called Betheden; and it seems there is still a place near Damascus, on Mount Libanus, called Eden, as the above traveller says; and Calmet {m} takes it to be the same that is here spoken of:

and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the Lord; which last clause is added for the certainty of it, and accordingly it was punctually fulfilled; for in the times of Rezin, which was about fifty years after this prophecy of Amos, though Kimchi says but twenty five, Tiglathpileser king of Assyria came up against Damascus, took it, and carried the people captive to Kir, 2Ki 16:9. The Targum and Vulgate Latin version call it Cyrene, which some understand of Cyrene in Egypt; see **Ac 2:10**; but this cannot be, since it was in the hands of the king of Assyria; but rather Kir in Media is meant; see Isa 22:6; which was under his dominion; and so Josephus says {n}, that he carried captive the inhabitants of Damascus into Upper Media.

{g} Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 119, 120. Ed. 7. {h} Dictionary, in the word "Heliopolis". {i} Universal History, vol. 2. p. 266. {k} Authors of "The Ruins of Balbec". {l} Geograph. l. 16. p. 519. {m} Dictionary, in the word "Eden". {n} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 12. sect. 3.

Amos 1:6

Ver. 6. Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Gaza,.... The chief city of the Philistines, and put for the whole country, and designs the inhabitants of it:

and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof;
See Gill on "Am 1:3";

because they carried away captive the whole captivity; which cannot be understood of the captivity of the whole nation, either of Israel or Judah, who were never carried captive by the Philistines; but of their carrying away all the substance of the house of Jehoram king of Judah, and of all his sons and his wives, and left him not one son but the youngest, 2Ch 21:17;

to deliver [them] up to Edom: or, "to shut them up in Edom" {o}; which country also revolted from Jehoram, when he and the captains of his chariots going out against them, were corn passed in by them, **Am 1:8**. Some think this refers to the time when Sennacherib invaded Judea, and many of the Jews fled to Palestine for help, but instead of being sheltered were delivered up to the Edomites; but this was in the times of Hezekiah, after Amos had prophesied, and therefore cannot be referred to; and for the same reason this cannot be applied to the Edomites and Philistines invading and smiting Judah, and carrying them captive, 2Ch 28:17.

{o} Mwdal rygohl tou sugkleisai eiv thn idoumaian, Sept. "ut concluderent eam in Idumea", V. L. "ad concludeadum in Edom", Montanus.

Amos 1:7

Ver. 7. But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza,.... An enemy that shall pull down and destroy the walls of it: this was fulfilled in the times of Uzziah, under whom Amos prophesied; and very likely in a very short time after this prophecy, who went out and warred against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gaza, 2Ch 26:6; or else in the times of Hezekiah, who smote the Philistines unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, 2Ki 18:8; or however in the times of Nebuchadnezzar, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, Jer 25:20; as also in the times of Alexander the great, who, after he had taken Tyre, besieged Gaza, and after two months' siege took it, as Diodorus Siculus relates {p}; the wall being undermined and thrown down, he entered in at the ruins of it, as Curtius {q} says; in the times of the Maccabees the suburbs of it were burnt by Jonathan, and the place taken:

"61 From whence he went to Gaza, but they of Gaza shut him out; wherefore he laid siege unto it, and burned the suburbs thereof with fire, and spoiled them. 62 Afterward, when they of Gaza made supplication unto Jonathan, he made peace with them, and took the sons of their chief men for hostages, and sent them to Jerusalem, and passed through the country unto Damascus." (1 Maccabees 11)

which shall devour the palaces thereof; the palaces of the governor, and of other great men in it; (the governor of it, when Alexander took it, was Batis;) and the stately towers of it, of which there were many. This city was about fifteen miles south of Askelon, and about four or five north of the river Bezor, and at a small distance from the Mediterranean. It was situated on an eminence, surrounded with the most beautiful and fertile valleys, watered by the above mentioned river, and a number of other springs; and at a further distance encompassed on the inland side with hills, all planted with variety of fine fruit trees. The city itself was strong, both by its situation, and by the stout "walls" and stately "bowers" that surrounded it, and built after the Philistine manner {r} Arrian also says {s}, it was a great city built on high ground, and encompassed with a strong wall, and was distant from the sea at least two and a half miles; See Gill on "Ac 8:26".

{p} Bibliothec. tom. 2. l. 17. p. 526. {q} Hist. l. 4. c. 5, 6. {r} Universal History, vol. 2. p. 490. {s} De Expeditione Alex. l. 2. p. 150.

Amos 1:8

Ver. 8. I will cut off the inhabitants from Ashdod,.... The same with Azotus, **Ac 8:40**; another principal city of the Philistines: this perhaps was fulfilled when Tartan was sent against it by Sargon king of Assyria, and took it, Isa 20:1; or however in the times of the Maccabees, when Jonathan took it, and burnt it, and the cities round about it; and took their spoils, and burnt the temple of Dagon, and those that fled to it; and what with those that were burnt, and those that fell by the sword, there perished about eight thousand,

"84 But Jonathan set fire on Azotus, and the cities round about it, and took their spoils; and the temple of Dagon, with them that were fled into it, he burned with fire. 85 Thus there were burned and slain with the sword well nigh eight thousand men." (1 Maccabees 10)

this was so strong a place, that, according to Herodotus {t}, it held out a siege of twenty nine years, under Psammitichus king of Egypt. It was, according to Diodorus Siculus {u}, thirty four miles, from Gaza before mentioned; and it was about eight or nine from Ashkelon, and fourteen or fifteen from Ekron after mentioned:

and him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon; another of the five lordships of the Philistines, whose king or governor should be cut off, with the inhabitants of it; this was done by Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 47:5. This place was about fifteen miles from Gaza, Mr. Sandys {w} says ten, but it was eight or nine miles from Ashdod; and, as Josephus {x} says, was sixty five miles from Jerusalem. It was the birth place of Herod the great, who from thence is called an Ashkelonite; but the king or governor of it was cut off before his time. It was governed by kings formerly. Justin {y} makes mention of a king of Ashkelon; according to the Samaritan interpreter, Ge 20:1; it is the same with Gerar, which had a king in the times of Abraham; hence a sceptre is here ascribed to it:

and I will turn mine hand against Ekron: to destroy that; another of the chief cities of the Philistines. It was about ten miles from Gath; four of the five lordships are here mentioned, but not Gath, which was the fifth; see **1Sa 6:17**; because, as Kimchi says, it was in the hands of Judah. All these places were inhabited by Heathens, and guilty of gross idolatry, which must be one of the transgressions for which they were punished. Gaza was a place much given to idolatry, as it was even in later times; when other neighbouring cities embraced the Christian religion, the inhabitants of it were violent persecutors; hence that saying of Gregory Nazianzen {z},

"who knows not the madness of the inhabitants of Gaza?"

here stood the temple of the god Marnas {a}, which with the Syrians signified the lord of men: at Ashdod or Azotus stood the temple of Dagon, where he was worshipped, **1Sa 5:2**;

"But Jonathan set fire on Azotus, and the cities round about it, and took their spoils; and the temple of Dagon, with them that were fled into it, he burned with fire." (1 Maccabees 10:84)

Near Ashkelon, as Diodorus Siculus {b} relates, was a large and deep lake, full of fishes; and by it was a temple of a famous goddess, called by the Syrians Derceto, who had a woman's face, but the rest of her body in the form of a fish; being, as the fable goes, changed into one upon her casting herself into the above lake on a certain occasion; hence the Syrians abstained from fishes, and worshipped them as gods. Herodotus {c} calls this city a city of Syria, and speaks of a temple dedicated to Urania Venus; and in the Talmud {d} mention is made of the temple of Zeripha, or of a molten image at Ashkelon; and, besides idolatry, this place seems to have been famous for witchcraft; for it is said {e} that Simeon ben Shetach hung on one day at Ashkelon fourscore women for being witches; and, at Ekron, Baalzebub or the god of the fly was worshipped:

and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord God; all the other towns and cities belonging to them, besides those mentioned; which very likely had its accomplishment in the times of the Maccabees, when they fell into the hands of the Jews.

{t} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 157. {u} Bibliothec. l. 19. p. 723. {w} Travels, p. 151. {x} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 2. sect. 1. {y} E Trogo, l. 19. c. 3. {z} Orat. 3. adv. Julian. p. 87. {a} Hieronymul in lsa. xvii. fol. 39. K. {b} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 92. {c} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 105. {d} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 11. 2. {e} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 23. 3.

Amos 1:9

Ver. 9. Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Tyrus,.... Or Tyre, a very ancient city in Palestine; of which
See Gill on "Isa 23:1";

and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof;
See Gill on "Am 1:3";

because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom: such of the Israelites that fell into their hands, or fled to them for shelter, they delivered up to the Edomites, their implacable adversaries, or sold them to them, as they did to the Grecians, **Joe 3:6**;

and remembered not the brotherly covenant; either the covenant and agreement that should be among brethren, as the Jews and Edomites were which the Tyrians should have remembered, and persuaded them to live peaceably; and not have delivered the one into the hands of the other, to be used in a cruel manner as slaves: or else the covenant made between Hiram king of Tyre, and David king of Israel, and which was renewed between Hiram and Solomon, on account of which they called each other brethren, **2Sa 5:11**. The Phoenicians, of whom, the Tyrians were the principal, are noted for being faithless and treacherous {f}. "Punica fides" {g} was the same as "French faith" now; the perfidy of Hannibal is well known {h}. Cicero {i} says the Carthaginians, which were a colony of the Tyrians, were a deceitful and lying people; and Virgil {k} calls the Tyrians themselves "Tyrios bilingues", "double tongued

Tyrians", which, Servius interprets deceitful, as referring more to the mind than to the tongue; and observes from Livy the perfidy of the Phoenicians in general, that they have nothing true nor sacred among them; no fear of God, no regard to an oath, nor any religion; and which are the three or four transgressions for which they are said here they should be punished; for, besides their ill usage of the Jews, their idolatry no doubt came into the account: the god that was worshipped at Tyre was Hercules, by whom was meant the sun, as Macrobius {l} observes; and as there were several Heathen gods of this name, he whom the Tyrians worshipped is the fourth of the name with Cicero {m}; the same is the Melicarthus of Sanchoniatho {n}, which signifies the king of the city, by which Bochart {o} thinks Tyre is intended. To be a priest of Hercules was the second honour to that of king, as Justin {p} observes; and so careful were the Tyrians of this deity, that they used to chain him, that he might not depart from them; see Jer 10:4; and a most magnificent temple they had in honour of him, and which, they pretended, was exceeding ancient, as old as the city itself, the antiquity of which they speak extravagantly of Herodotus {q} says he saw this temple, and which was greatly ornamented, and particularly had two pillars, one of gold, and another of emerald; and inquiring of the priests, they told; him it was built when their city was, ten thousand three hundred years before that time; but according to their own historians {r}, Hiram, who lived in the days of Solomon, built the temple of Hercules, as well as that of Astarte; for though she is called the goddess of the Sidonians, she was also worshipped by the Tyrians; as he also ornamented the temple of Jupiter Olympius, and annexed it to the city, which deity also it seems had worship paid it in this place.

{f} Alex. ab Alex. Genial Dier. l. 5. c. 10. {g} Vid. Reinesiura de Ling. Punic. c. 2. sect. 12. {h} Vid. Valer. Maxim. l. 9. c. 6. {i} Contra Rullum, Orat. 16. {k} Aeneid. l. 1. {l} Saturnal. l. 1. c. 20. {m} De Naturn Deorum, l. 3. {n} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 2. p. 38. {o} Canaan, l. 2. col. 709. {p} E Trogo, l. 18. c. 4. {q} Euterp, sive l. 2. c. 44. {r} Meander & Dius apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 8. c. 5. sect. 3.

Amos 1:10

Ver. 10. But I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus,.... An enemy to destroy the walls of it: this was done either by Shalmaneser king of the Assyrians, in the times of Eulaeus king of the Tyrians, of whose expedition against it Josephus {s} makes mention: or by Nebuchadnezzar, who took it after thirteen years' siege of it, in the time of Ithobalus {t}: or by Alexander, by whom it was taken, as Curtius {u} relates, after it had been besieged seven months:

which shall devour the palaces thereof; of the governor, the great men and merchants in it. Alexander ordered all to be slain but those that fled to the temples, and fire to be put to the houses; which made it a most desolate place, as the above historian has recorded.

{s} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 14. sect. 2. {t} Hist. Phoenic. apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 21. {u} Hist. l. 4. c. 4.

Amos 1:11

Ver. 11. Thus saith the Lord for three transgressions of Edom,.... Or the Edomites, the posterity of Esau, whose name was Edom, so called from the red pottage he sold his birthright for to his brother Jacob:

and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof;
See Gill on "Am 1:3". Among these three or four transgressions, not only what follows is included, but their idolatry; for that the Edomites had their idols is certain, though what they were cannot be said; see 2Ch 25:14;

because he did pursue his brother with the sword: not Esau his brother Jacob; for though he purposed in his heart to slay him, which obliged him to flee; and frightened him, upon his return, by meeting him with four hundred men; yet he never pursued him with the sword; but his posterity, the Edomites, not only would not suffer the Israelites their brethren to pass by their borders, but came out against them with a large army, Nu 20:18; and in the times of Ahaz they came against Judah with the sword, and smote them, and carried away captives, 2Ch 28:17; and were at the taking and destruction of Jerusalem, and assisted and encouraged in it, Ps 137:7; though to these latter instances the prophet could have no respect, because they were after his time:

and did cast off all pity; bowels of compassion, natural affection, such as ought to be between brethren, even all humanity: or "corrupted", or "destroyed all pity" {w}; showed none, but extinguished all sparks of it, as their behaviour to the Israelites showed, when upon their borders in the wilderness:

and his anger did tear perpetually; it was deeply rooted in them; it began in their first father Esau, on account of the blessing and birthright Jacob got from him; and it descended from father to son in all generations, and was vented in a most cruel manner, like the ravening of a lion, or any other beast of prey:

and kept his wrath for ever; reserved it in their breasts till they had an opportunity of showing it, as Esau their father proposed to do, Ge 27:41.

{w} wymxr txv "corrupert misericordias suas", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus; "corrumpens miserationes suas", Junius & Tremellius; "corrupit", Piscator, Cocceius.

Amos 1:12

Ver. 12. But I will send a fire upon Teman,.... A principal city of Edom or Idumea, so called from Teman a grandson of Esau, Ge 36:11. Jerom {x} says there was in his time a village called Theman, five miles distant from the city Petra, and had a Roman garrison; and so says Eusebius {y}; who places it in Arabia Petraea; it is put for the whole country; it signifies the south. So the Targum renders it,

"a fire in the south."

The "fire" signifies an enemy that should be sent into it, and destroy it: this was Nebuchadnezzar, who, as Josephus {z} says, five years after the destruction of Jerusalem led his army into Coelesyria, and took it; and fought against the Ammonites and Moabites, and very probably at the same time against the Edomites:

which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah; another famous city of the Edomites; there was one of this name in Moab; either there were two cities so called, one in Edom, and another in Moab; or rather this city lay, as Jarchi says, between Edom and Moab; and so sometimes is placed to one, and sometimes to another, its it might belong to the one and to the other, according to the event of war. It is the same with Bezer in the wilderness, appointed a Levitical city, and a city of refuge, by Joshua, Jos 20:8; and belonged to the tribe of Reuben; but being on the borders of that tribe, and of Moab and Edom, it is ascribed to each, as they at different times made themselves masters of it. It is the same with Bostra, which Ptolemy {a} places in Arabia Petraea; and being on the confines of Arabia Deserts, and surrounded on all sides with wild deserts, it is commonly spoken of as situated in a wilderness, Jerom {b} speaks of it as a city of Arabia in the desert, to the south, looking to Damascus; and, according to the Persian {c} geographer, it is four days' journey southward from Damascus; and Eusebius places it at the distance of twenty four miles from Adraa or Edrei. The destruction of this place is prophesied of by Jeremiah, Jer 48:24; and perhaps these prophecies were accomplished when Nebuchadnezzar made war with the Ammonites and Edomites, as before observed; or however in the times of the Maccabees, when Judas Maccabeus took this city, put all the males to the sword, plundered it, and then set fire to it, which literally fulfilled this prophecy,

"Hereupon Judas and his host turned suddenly by the way of the wilderness unto Bosora; and when he had won the city, he slew all the males with the edge of the sword, and took all their spoils, and burned the city with fire," (1 Maccabees 5:28)

It was afterwards rebuilt, and became a considerable city; in the time of the above Persian geographer {d}, it had a very strong castle belonging to it, a gate twenty cubits high, and one of the largest basins or pools of water in all the east. In the fourth century there were bishops of this place, which assisted in the councils of Nice, Antioch, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, as Reland {e} observes; though he thinks that Bostra is not to be confounded with the Bezer of Reuben, or with the Bozra of Moab and Edom; though they seem to be all one and the same place.

{x} De locis Hebr. fol. 95. B. {y} Onomast. ad vocem yaiman. {z} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 7. {a} Geograph. l. 5. c. 17. {b} De locis Hebr. in voce "Trachonitis", fol. 95. B. {c} Apud Calmet, Dictionary, on the word "Bosor". {d} Apud Calmet, ut supra. {e} Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. l. 3. p. 666.

Amos 1:13

Ver. 13. Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of the children of Ammon,.... These are the descendants of Benammi, a son of Lots, by one of his daughters, Ge 19:38; are distinguished from the Ammonites, 2Ch 20:1; were near neighbours of the Jews, but great enemies to them, though akin:

and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof;
See Gill on "Am 1:3". Among these transgressions, for which God would punish these people, are to be reckoned, not only their ill treatment of the Gileadites after mentioned, but other sins, which are all included in this

number, and particularly their idolatry; for idolaters they were, though the children of Lot; and originally might have had better instruction, from which they departed. Moloch or Milcom, which signifies a king, was the abomination or idol of the Ammonites, 1Ki 11:5. The image of this idol, according to the Jews, had seven chapels, and he was within them; and his face was the face of a calf or ox; and his hands were stretched out as a man stretches out his hands to receive anything of his friend; and they set it on fire within, for it was hollow; and everyone according to his offering went into these chapels; he that offered a fowl went into the first chapel; he that offered a sheep, into the second chapel; if a lamb, into the third; a calf, into the fourth; a bullock, into the fifth; an ox, into the sixth; but he that offered his son, they brought him into the seventh; and they put, the child before Moloch, and kindled a fire in the inside of him, until his hands were like fire; and then they took the child, and put him within its arms; and beat upon tabrets or drums, that the cry of the child might not be heard by the father {f}. Benjamin of Tudela {g} reports, that in his time, at Gibal, the border of the children of Ammon, a day's journey from Tripoli, was found the remains of a temple of the children of Ammon; and an idol of theirs sitting upon a throne; and it was made of stone, and covered with gold; and there were two women sitting, one on its right hand, and the other on its left; and before it an altar, on which they used to sacrifice and burn incense to it, as in the times of the children of Ammon. Chemosh also was worshipped by the Ammonites, Jud 11:24; which was also the god of the Moabites; of which See Gill on "Jer 48:7";

because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border; this Hazael king of Syria did, according to Elisha's prophecy; and very likely the children of Ammon might join with him, inasmuch as they bordered on the countries which he smote, **2Ki 8:12**. This was an instance of shocking cruelty and inhumanity, to destroy at once the innocent and the impotent, though frequently done by enemies, 2Ki 15:16. The reason of it was not only that they might possess their land, but keep it when they had got it; there being no heir to claim it, or molest them in the possession of it; see Jer 49:1; though some read the words, "because they divided, or cleaved the mountain of Gilead" {h}; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi, though they mention the other sense: this they did to get into the land of Gilead, as Hannibal cut through the Alps; or rather to remove the borders of it, and lay it even with their own, and so enlarge theirs; which, as Kimchi says, was a very great iniquity, being one of the curses written in the law, De 27:17; thus one sin leads on to another. Some by "mountains" understand towers or fortified cities as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; such as were built on mountains, which sense is approved by Gussetius {i}.

{f} Yelammedenu apud Yalkut Simeoni in Jer. vii. 31. fol. 61. 4. {g} Itinerarium, p. 33. {h} twrh Meqb "eo quod sciderint montes", Pagninus; so some in Drusius. {i} Ebr. Comment. p. 216.

Amos 1:14

Ver. 14. But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah,.... Which was the metropolis of the children of Ammon, and their royal city, 2Sa 12:26. This is to be understood of an enemy that should destroy it, perhaps Nebuchadnezzar; or of war being kindled and raised in their country; this place being put for the whole; See Gill on "Jer 49:2";

and it shall devour the palaces thereof; the palaces of the king, and his nobles:

with shouting in the day of battle; with the noise of soldiers when they make their onset, or have gained the victory; see Jer 49:2;

with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind; denoting that this judgment should come suddenly, and at an unawares, with great force, irresistibly; and a tempest added to fire, if literally taken, must spread the desolation more abundantly, and make it more terrible.

Amos 1:15

Ver. 15. And their king shall go into captivity,.... Not only the common people that are left of the sword shall be carried captive, but their king also. This was, Baalis their last king, who was accessary to the murder of Gedaliah, Jer 40:14; whom the king of Babylon had set over the remnant of the Jews left in Judea; which might provoke him to send Nebuzaradan his general against him, who put his country to fire and sword, destroyed his chief city Rabbah, and carried him and his nobles into captivity. Some understand this of Milchom, or Moloch, the god of the children of Ammon, who should be so far from saving them, that he himself should be taken and carried off; it being usual with the conquerors to carry away with them the gods of the nations they conquered; see Jer 48:7. So Ptolemy Euergetes king of Egypt, having conquered Callinicus king of Syria, carried captive into Egypt the gods he then took, Da 11:8; and it was usual with the Romans to carry the gods of the nations captive which they conquered, and to carry them in their triumphs as such; so

Marcellus was blamed for rendering the city of Rome envied and hated by other nations, because not men only, but the gods also, were carried in pomp as captives: and of Paulus Aemylius it is said, that the first day of his triumph was scarce sufficient for the passing along of the captive statues, pictures, and colosses, which were drawn on two hundred and fifty chariots {k}:

he and his princes together, saith the Lord: which is repeated, and especially the last words added, for the confirmation of it. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, "their priests and their princes", as in Jer 49:3. This was fulfilled five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, as Josephus {l} relates.

{k} Vid. Plutarch. in Vita Marcelli & Aemylii. {l} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 7. Vid. Judith i. 12.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Amos 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO AMOS 2

In this chapter the prophet foretells the calamities that should come upon the Moabites for their transgressions, **Am 2:1**; and the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem for their iniquities, **Am 2:4**; also the judgments of God that should come upon Israel the ten tribes for their sins, which sins are enumerated; their oppression of the poor, their lewdness and idolatry, **Am 2:6**; and which are aggravated by the blessings of goodness bestowed upon them, both temporal and spiritual, **Am 2:9**; wherefore they are threatened with ruin, which would be inevitable, notwithstanding their swiftness, strength, and courage, and their skill in shooting arrows, and riding horses, **Am 2:13**.

Ver. 1. Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Moab,.... Or the Moabites, who descended from the eldest son of Lot, by one of his daughters; and, though related, were great enemies to the Israelites; they sent for Balaam to curse them when on their borders, and greatly oppressed them in the times of the judges:

and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof;
See Gill on "Am 1:3". Idolatry, as well as the sin next charged, must be one of these four transgressions: the idols of Moab were Chemosh and Baalpeor; of the former See Gill on "Jer 48:7"; and of the latter

See Gill on "Ho 9:10";

because he burnt the bones of the king of Edom into lime; either like "to lime", or "for lime"; he burnt them thoroughly, till they came to powder as small and as white as lime, and used them instead of it to plaster the walls of his palace, by way of contempt, as the Targum; and so Jarchi and Kimchi: this is thought probable by Quinquarboreus {m}, for which he is blamed by Sanctius, who observes, there is no foundation for it in Scripture; and that the ashes of the bones of one man would not be sufficient to plaster a wall; and, besides, could never be brought to such a consistence as to be fit for such a purpose; yet, if it only means bare burning them, so as that they became like lime, as the colour of it, it could not be thought so very barbarous and inhuman, since it was the usage of some nations, especially the Romans, to burn their dead: no doubt something shocking is intended, and which usage to the dead is resented by the Lord. Sir Paul Rycaut {n} relates a piece of barbarity similar to this, that the city of Philadelphia was built with the bones of the besieged, by the prince that took it by storm. Kimchi thinks, as other interpreters also do, that it refers to the history in **2Ki 3:27**; where the king of Moab is said to offer his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead for a burnt offering; which he understands, not of the king of Moab's son, but of the king of Edom's son, here called a king, because he was to have succeeded his father in the kingdom; but it seems rather to be the king of Moab's own son that he offered; nor is it likely that the king of Edom's son was in his lands; for he would have broke through into the king of Edom, but could not; and then did this rash action; not in wrath and fury, but in a religious way. The prophet here refers to some fact, notorious in those times, the truth of which is not to be questioned, though we have no other account of it in Scripture; very probably it was the same king of Moab that did it, and the same king of Edom that was so used, mentioned in the above history; the king of Moab being enraged at him for joining with the kings of Israel and Judah against him, who afterwards falling into his hands, he used him in this barbarous manner; or very likely being possessed of his country after his death, or however of his grave, he took him out of it, and burnt his bones to lime, in revenge of what he had done to him. This was a very cruel action thus to use a human body, and this not the body of a private person, but of a king; and was an act of impiety, as well as of inhumanity, to take the bones of the dead out of his grave, and burn them; and which though done to a Heathen prince. God, who is the Creator of all, and Governor of the whole world, and whose vicegerents princes are, resented; and therefore threatened the Moabites with utter destruction for it.

{m} Scholia in Targum in loc. {n} The Present State of the Greek Church, c.

2.

Amos 2:2

Ver. 2. But I will send a fire upon Moab,.... Either on the whole country, or on some particular city so called, as in all the other prophecies; and there was a city called Moab, now Areopolis,
See Gill on "Jer 48:4"; though it may be put for the whole country, into which an enemy should be sent to destroy it, even Nebuchadnezzar:

and it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth; a principal city in the land of Moab; according to Kimchi, it was the royal city, and therefore mention is made of the palaces of it, here being the palace of the king and his princes; see Jer 48:24; though the word may be rendered cities, as it is by the Septuagint and Arabic versions; and so the Targum,

"and shall consume the palaces of the fortified place;"

and so may signify all the cities of Moab, and their palaces: or however may be put for them:

and Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting, [and] with the sound of the trumpet: that is, the Moabites shall die, not in their beds, and in peace, but in war, amidst the howlings of the wounded, the shouts of soldiers, the clashing of arms, and the sound of trumpets,

Amos 2:3

Ver. 3. And I will cut off the judge from the midst thereof,.... Either from the midst of Moab, the country in general; or from Kerioth in particular, so Kimchi; meaning their principal governor, their king, as Aben Ezra; for kings sometimes have acted as judges, took the bench, and sat and administered justice to their subjects:

and I will stay all the princes thereof with him, saith the Lord; the king, and the princes of the blood, and his nobles; so that there should be none to succeed him, or to protect and defend the people; the destruction should be an entire one, and inevitable, for the mouth of the Lord had spoken it. This was fulfilled at the same time as the prophecy against the children of Ammon by Nebuchadnezzar, five years after the destruction of Jerusalem {o}, which is next threatened.

{o} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 7. Vid. Judith i. 12.

Amos 2:4

Ver. 4. Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Judah,.... With whom Benjamin must be joined; for the two tribes are meant as distinct from the ten tribes, under the name of Israel, following. The prophet proceeds from the Heathens round about to the people of God themselves, for the ill usage of whom chiefly the above nations are threatened with ruin, lest they should promise themselves impunity in sin; though, if they rightly considered things, they could not expect it; since, if the Heathens, ignorant of the will of God, and his law, were punished for their sins, then much more those who knew it, and did it not, Lu 12:47; and he begins with Judah, partly because he was of that tribe, lest he should be charged with flattery and partiality, and partly because of the order of his prophecy, which being chiefly concerned with Israel, it was proper that what he had to say to Judah should be delivered first:

and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof; the prophet retains the same form as in his prophecies against the Heathen nations; his own people, and God's professing people, being guilty of numerous transgressions, as well as they, and more aggravated than theirs; See Gill on "Am 1:3";

because they have despised the law of the Lord; a law so holy, just, and good, and so righteous, as no other nation had; and yet was not only not observed, but contemned: other nations sinned against the light of nature, and are not charged with breaches of the law of God, which was not given them; but these people had it, yet lightly esteemed it; counted it as a strange thing; walked not according to it, but cast it away from them; which was a great affront to the sovereignty of God, and a trampling upon his legislative power and authority:

and have not kept his commandments; or "statutes" {p}; the ordinances of the ceremonial law, which he appointed them to observe for the honour of his name, as parts of his worship; and to lead them into the designs of his grace and salvation by the Messiah:

and their lies caused them to err; either, their idols, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; which are lying vanities, and deceive, and by which they were made to err from the pure worship of the living and true God to superstition and idolatry; or the words of the false prophets, as Kimchi; the false doctrines their taught, contrary to the word of God, directing them to seek for life by their own works; and promising them peace, when destruction was at hand; and daubing with untempered mortar; and as no lie is of the truth, but against it, so one untruth leads on to another:

after the which their fathers have walked; after which lies, idols, and errors, as in Ur of the Chaldees, in Egypt, in the wilderness, and even in later times: this was no excuse to them that they followed the way of their ancestors, but rather an aggravation of their guilt, that they imitated them, took no warning by them; but filled up the measure of their iniquities, and showed themselves to be a seed of evildoers, a generation of wicked men, the sons of rebellious parents.

{p} wyqx "statuta ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, &c.

Amos 2:5

Ver. 5. But I will send a fire upon Judah,.... An enemy, Nebuchadnezzar, who should burn, waste, and destroy, all that were in his way:

and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem; the chief city of Judah, the royal city, where stood the temple, the palace of the most High, and the palaces of the king and his nobles; these were burnt with fire when it was taken by the Chaldean army, about two hundred years after this prophecy, Jer 52:13.

Amos 2:6

Ver. 6. Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Israel,.... The ten tribes rent from the house of David in the times of Rehoboam, and who departed from the true worship of God, and set up calves at Dan and Bethel:

and for four, I will not turn away [the punishment] thereof; the following part of this prophecy is taken up in pointing at the sins and punishment of Israel; now the prophet is come to the main business he was sent to do:

because they sold the righteous for silver; meaning not any particular person, as Joseph sold by his brethren, for in that they were all concerned, Judah as well as the rest; nor Christ, as others {q}, sold for thirty pieces of silver; since the persons here charged with it, and the times in which it was done, will not agree with that case; but the sense is, that the judges of Israel were so corrupt, that for a piece of money they would give a cause against a righteous man, and in favour of an unjust man that bribed them:

and the poor for a pair of shoes; that is, for a mere trifle they would pervert justice; if two men came before them with a cause, and both poor; yet if one could but give a pair of shoes, or anything he could part with, though he could not give money; so mean and sordid were they, they would take it, and give the cause for him, however unjust it was.

{q} Vid. Galatin. Cathol. Ver. Arcan. l. 4. c. 24.

Amos 2:7

Ver. 7. That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor,.... Either were greedy after money, the dust of the earth, and even that small portion of it the poor were possessed of; they could not be easy that they should enjoy that little of it they did, but were desirous to get it out of their hands by oppression and injustice: or they were eagerly desirous of throwing the poor upon the earth, and trampling upon them, and dragging them through the dust of it, thereby filling their heads and covering their faces with it; and caused them to put their mouths in the dust, and be humble suppliants to them. Some think there is an allusion to an ancient custom, which Joseph ben Gorion {r} speaks of, that a guilty person should stand before the judges, clad in black, and his head covered with dust; and this these judges desired here might be done by the rich, that the poor might be accused by them from whom they expected gifts:

and turn aside the way of the meek; decline doing them justice, pervert it, and hinder the course of it, denying it to those who are humble, meek, and modest; or else by one means or another turned them from the good ways in which they were walking, and by degrees at length brought them to such impudence and immodesty as is next expressed, so Aben Ezra:

and a man and his father will go in unto the [same] maid, to profane my holy name; that is, will be guilty of such uncleanness, as not only to have and enjoy the same harlot, but of such incest, as that the son would lie with his father's wife, and the father lie with his son's wife; a sin which was not named among the Gentiles, **1Co 5:1**; and whereby the name of God was blasphemed among them, as if their religion taught them and encouraged them in such filthy actions; see **Ro 2:24**.

{r} Hist. Heb. c. 44. apud Drusium in loc.

Amos 2:8

Ver. 8. And they laid [themselves] down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar,.... That is, the clothes they took in pledge of poor people, which they should have restored before sun setting, Ex 22:26; these they spread by every altar, of which they had many erected to their idols, and on these as on carpets they slept by them, as was usual with the Gentiles; who not only in common used to lie and sleep on garments, or carpets, or skins spread on the floor {s}, but upon such in the temples of their idols, in order to obtain good dreams; so in the temple of Amphiaraus in Greece, after purgations and sacrifices to him, and to the gods whose names were engraven on the same altar, they slew a ram, and spread the skin, on which they laid themselves down, and had dreams, the signification and events of which they presently interpreted {t}; and Jerom says {u}, they used to spread the skins of the sacrifices, and lie upon them, that they might by dreams know things to come, which custom in the temple of Aesculapius continued to his times; and this custom might be imitated by the Jews; and so they are described by such, "who sleep in the temples of idols", in the Vulgate Latin version of Isa 65:4;
See Gill on "Isa 65:4"; but very false it is what Strabo {w} says, that the Jews were taught this custom by Moses; telling them that such as lived soberly and righteously ought to sleep in the temple, where they might expect good dreams for themselves and others, as good gifts and signs from God, which others might not expect: or else the sense is, they laid themselves down on these clothes, and feasted on them; it being their custom at meals not to sit upright, but to recline on couches; or as the manner of the Turks and other eastern nations to sit on carpets; and it was also the custom of the Heathens to feast in their temples, and by their altars, in honour of their gods. So Herodotus relates

{x}, that at a festival of June with the Argives, the mother of Cleobis and Biton prayed the goddess, whom they had drawn to the temple, oxen not being ready, that she would give to them what was best for men; after which prayer, it is said, they sacrificed and "feasted"; and the young men falling asleep in the temple, never rose more, but finished this life: the deity judging it better for a man to die than to live; and this custom of feasting in idols' temples obtained, in the times of the apostles, as appears from **1Co 8:10**; and which was now observed by the Israelites, with this aggravation of their sin, that they laid themselves on the garments of the poor they had taken for a pawn, when they were performing their idolatrous rites; which must be very provoking to God:

and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god: either wine which used to be given to condemned malefactors to cheer and refresh them; which custom among the Jews was founded on
Pr 31:6;
See Gill on "Pr 31:6";
See Gill on "Pr 31:7"; The manner was to put a grain of frankincense into a cup of wine, which they gave to the malefactor just as he was going to be executed, that his mind might be disturbed and become insensible; and which was usually the free gift of honourable women, out of compassion to the sufferer; and if they did it not, it was provided at the expense of the public {y}; but this seems to be done rather to intoxicate and stupefy them, that they might not feel their pain and misery, than to cheer; and is thought to be the potion which was offered to Christ, and he refused, Mr 15:23; but whether such a custom obtained in the times of the prophet is a question; nor does it seem very likely that these men would choose such sort of wine; wherefore rather wine bought with the money they received by the fines and amercements of those they unjustly condemned is intended. The Targum renders it the wine of rapine; and this they were not content to drink only in their own houses, but drank it at their festivals in the temples of their idols, such as were built for the calves of Dan and Bethel, and other idols.

{s} Vid. Gloss in Aristophan. Plutum, p. 55. & Nubes, p. 125. {t} Pausanias, Attica, sive l. 1. p. 65. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 2. {u} Comment. in Isa. lxv. 4. {w} Geograph. l. 16. p. 523. {x} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 31. {y} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 10. fol. 198. 4. Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 13. sect. 2, 3.

Amos 2:9

Ver. 9. Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them,.... Here the Lord by the prophet reckons up the many favours and blessings he had bestowed upon Israel, which was an aggravation of their sins, and showed them to be guilty of great ingratitude, and a justification of him in his punishment of them he drove out the seven nations of Canaanites from before them, to make way for them, and destroyed them, of which the Amorite was a principal, and is here put for all the rest:

whose height [was] like the height of the cedars; being both tall of stature, and in great honour and dignity with the other nations, and in very opulent and flourishing circumstances:

and he was strong as the oaks: not only like the tall cedars of Lebanon for their height and largeness of stature, but like the sturdy oaks for the strength of their bodies, being of the race of the giants, Nu 13:28;

yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath; that is, utterly destroyed him, root and branch, so that nothing of him remained; still persisting in the metaphor of a tree. Jarchi interprets it of their superior and inferior princes; but it seems best to understand it of children with their parents, the one being the fruit, the other the root; and, both being destroyed, there must be utter ruin.

Amos 2:10

Ver. 10. Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt,.... Where they were bond slaves, and in great affliction and distress, and unable to help themselves; but the Lord wrought deliverance for them, and brought them out of this house of bondage with a high hand and a mighty arm:

and led you forty years through the wilderness: going before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; providing them with all things necessary, with food and raiment, and protecting them from all their enemies:

to possess the land of the Amorite; the whole land of Canaan, so called from a principal nation of it.

Amos 2:11

Ver. 11. And I raised up of your sons for prophets,.... Such as Moses, Joshua, and the seventy elders, and others; not only to foretell things to come, but to teach and instruct the people in the doctrines and duties of religion, and to warn them of their sins, and the danger of them:

and of your young men for Nazarites: as Samson, Samuel, and others; whose vow not only obliged them from shaving their hair, but to abstain from drinking wine, and eating grapes, which the youthful age is inclined unto; but such grace was given them, as enabled them to deny themselves sensual gratifications, and to be examples of piety and constant attendance on the service of God, and instructing the people. The Targum is,

"of your young men for teachers;"

these were the spiritual mercies, as the former were the temporal ones, the Lord bestowed on these people, for the truth of which he appeals to them:

[is it] not even thus, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord? can ye deny it? the thing was too notorious to be contradicted.

Amos 2:12

Ver. 12. But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink,.... Contrary to their vow and calling, and in contempt of it, and to make them like themselves; they either persuaded them, or forced them to it:

and commanded the prophets, saying, prophesy not; hard and heavy things, judgments and denunciations of vengeance, only smooth things; by this authoritative language it appears that this is said of the rulers and governors of the people, as king, princes, and priests; see **Am 7:12**.

Amos 2:13

Ver. 13. Behold, I are pressed under you,.... With the weight of their sins, with which they had made him to serve, and had wearied him; his patience was quite wore out, he could bear them no longer:

as a cart is pressed [that is] full of sheaves; as a cart in harvest time, in which the sheaves of corn are carried home; when one sheaf is laid upon another, till they can lay no more, and the cart is loaded and overloaded with them, and ready to break, or be pressed into the earth with them: thus. Jehovah represents himself as loaded and burdened with the sins of these people, and therefore would visit for them, and inflict deserved punishment. Some render it actively, "behold, I press" {z}, or "am about to press your place, as a cart full of sheaves presseth" {a}; the horse or horses which draw it, especially the last; or the ground it goes upon; or as a cart stuck with iron spikes, and loaded with stones, being drawn over a corn floor, presses the full sheaves, and beats out the grain, which was their way of pressing it: so the Lord signifies he would afflict and distress this people, bring them into strait circumstances, by a close siege, and other judgments, which should ruin and destroy them; and which was first begun by Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and finished by Shalmaneser, who carried away the ten tribes captive. So the Targum,

"behold, I bring distress upon you, and it shall straiten you in your place, as a cart is straitened which is loaded with sheaves."

{z} qyem "angustabo", Vatablus; "coarctans", Montanus; "arcto", Mercerus; "premo, coarctabo, angustiis afficiam", Drusius; "pressurus sum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius; "arctaturus sum", Liveleus. {a} qyet "coarctares", Montanus; "premit", Junius & Tremellius; Piscator, Tarnovius.

Amos 2:14

Ver. 14. Therefore the flight shall perish from the swift,.... They should be so straitened and cooped up, and be so loaded with pressures, that those, as swift of foot as Asahel, should not be able to make their escape by fleeing:

and the strong shall not strengthen his force; should not increase it, or muster it up, and exert it to such a degree, as to be able to defend and secure himself from the enemy:

neither shall the mighty deliver himself; "his soul" or "life"; a soldier, a man of war, an expert and courageous officer at the head of his troop, or even the general of the army; see Ps 33:16.

Amos 2:15

Ver. 15. Neither shall he stand that handleth the bow,.... That is, at some distance, and can make use of his instruments of war afar off; yet will not think it safe to stand his ground, but will betake himself to his heels as fast as he can to save himself:

and [he that is] swift of foot shall not deliver [himself]; this is repeated, lest any should place confidence in their agility, and to show how complete and inevitable the affliction will be:

neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver himself; by fleeing on horseback, no more than he that is on foot; no ways that can be devised or thought on would preserve from this general calamity; see Ps 33:17.

Amos 2:16

Ver. 16. And [he that is] courageous among the mighty,.... Or "strong in his heart" {b}; one that is of a great heart, famous for courage and bravery, that excels in it among the mighty; the most valiant soldiers and officers:

shall flee away naked in that day: shall throw away his armour, nay, put off his clothes, as being both a hinderance to him in his flight; and that he may make the better speed:

saith the Lord: which is added to show the certainty of all this; it might be depended upon that so it would be, since the Lord God of truth had spoken it; and it was fulfilled about eighty years after this prophecy.

{b} wbl Uyma "fortis corde suo", Vatablus, Piscator; "fortis animo", Junius & Tremellius, Drusius; "validus corde suo", Mercerus; "qui corde firmo est", Cocceius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Amos 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO AMOS 3

In this chapter the prophet goes on with his prophecy against Israel, whom

God had highly favoured, and yet sinned against him, and therefore must expect to be punished by him; and the rather, since he and they were not agreed; and therefore there could be no communion between them, **Am 3:1**; and by various similes are set forth the cause of divine judgments, the certain design of them, and their continuance, till the end is answered; which should be attended to, since every thing of this kind is of God, who giving his prophets notice of it, they are under an absolute necessity of declaring it; nor should they be blamed for it, **Am 3:4**; and even the Heathen nations are appealed unto as witnesses of the sins of Israel, that caused such a denunciation of wrath; their tumults, oppression, injustice, violence, and robbery, **Am 3:9**; wherefore an adversary is threatened to be sent among them, that should utterly destroy them, so that few should escape, **Am 3:11**; particularly their idolatry and luxury seem to have been reigning sins, which had a great hand in bringing on their rum, and for which the Lord would punish them, **Am 3:13**.

Ver. 1. Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel,.... The prophecy against Israel begins in the preceding chapter, where notice is taken of their sins, at least some of them, and of their aggravated circumstances, and sure destruction; and here they are called upon to hearken and listen to what the Lord by his prophet had spoken, and was about to speak unto them; and to "receive" this word, as the Targum; to receive it as the word of God, and not men, and with all humility and reverence; and to take it, and apply it to themselves, to whom it justly belonged; and to make a proper use and improvement of it by humiliation and reformation. A word this was,

against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt; it was but a family that went down into Egypt, and, though it greatly increased there, it was no more when it was brought up from thence: a family under the peculiar care of Jehovah, as the bringing them out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, when greatly distressed there, abundantly shows; and which was a wonderful blessing and favour; and therefore often mentioned, and led on to many other blessings and mercies: a family which was the Lord's own, and therefore he had a right to chastise and correct them for their sins. It seems by this phrase, "the whole family", as if the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin were included: though the prophecy seems chiefly intended against the ten tribes, which went by the name of Israel, ever since the breach in Rehoboam's time, as distinct from Judah;

saying; as follows:

Amos 3:2

Ver. 2. You only have I known of all the families of the earth,.... All the families or nations of the earth, and all the inhabitants of it, are known by the Lord, as he is the omniscient God; but none had been known by him as a family, or a nation, with that love and affection as this family had been, or distinguished by his favours and blessings as they, not only temporal, but spiritual; besides the land of Canaan, and all the good things in it, they had the law of the Lord, his word, worship, and ordinances, among them; he chose them for himself above all people, and gave peculiar marks of his affection to them, and special instances of his goodness, and of his care over them, and concern for them; see **De 4:6**;

therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities; or "visit upon you" {c}; or "against you"; in a way of chastisement and correction; they were a family he had highly favoured, and yet departed from him; children he had brought up in a tender manner, and brought out of a most miserable condition, and yet rebelled against him; he had followed and loaded them with his benefits, and they had proved ungrateful to him; he had given them a revelation of his mind and will, and they had rejected it, and therefore knowing, and not doing it, were worthy of more stripes; their sins were more aggravated than others, being against goodness and mercy, light and knowledge; and therefore the Lord was determined to make an example of them; see **1Pe 4:17**.

{c} Mkyle dqpa "visitabo super vos", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "visito", i.e. "visitare soleo", Mercerus; "super vobis", Cocceius; "contra vos", Piscator.

Amos 3:3

Ver. 3. Can two walk together except they be agreed?] Unless they meet together, and appoint time and place, when and where they shall set out, what road they will take, and whither they will go; without such consultation and agreement, it cannot be thought they should walk together; and not amicably, unless united in friendship, and are of the same affection to each other, and of the same sentiments one with another; or it is much if they do not fall out by the way. The design of these words is to show, that without friendship there is no fellowship, and without concord no communion; as this is the case between man and man, so between God and man; and that Israel could not expect that God should walk with them, and show himself friendly to them, and continue his favours with them, when they walked contrary to him; when they were so disagreeable to him in their sentiments of religion, in their worship, and the rites of it, and in the whole of their conduct and behaviour. And to a spiritual walk with God, and communion with him, agreement is requisite. God and man were originally chief friends, but sin set them at variance; a reconciliation became necessary to their walking together again; which was set on foot, not by man, who had no inclination to it, nor knew how to go about it if he had, and much less able to effect it; but by the Lord, the offended party: it began in his thoughts, which were thoughts of peace; it was set on foot by him in the council of peace, and concluded in the covenant of peace; and his Son was sent to bring it about; and through his obedience, sufferings, and death, through his sacrifice and satisfaction, the agreement is made on the part of God, his justice is satisfied; but still it is necessary man should be agreed too; this is brought out by the Spirit of God, who shows the sinner the enmity of his mind, the sin and danger of it, slays this enmity, and puts in new principles of light, life, and love; when the soul is reconciled to God's way of salvation, and loves the Lord, and delights in him; and both being thus agreed, the one by the satisfaction of Christ, and the other by the Spirit of Christ, see **Ro 5:10**; they walk comfortably together: the saint walks with God, not only as in his sight and presence, but by faith, and in his fear, in the ways and ordinances of the Lord; and particularly is frequent in prayer and meditation, in which much of his walk with God lies: and God walks with him; he grants his gracious presence; manifests his love and favour to him; talks with him by the way; discloses the secrets of his heart; and indulges him with nearness and communion with him; but all is founded on mutual agreement. And so it must be between men and men, that walk in a religious way; regenerate and unregenerate persons cannot walk together, there being no concord, **2Co 6:14**; nor can all sorts of professors; they must agree in the way Christ, and in the fundamental principles of religion; and in worship, and the manner of it; and in all the ordinances of the Gospel, and the manner of administering them.

Amos 3:4

Ver. 4. Will a lion roar in the forest when he hath no prey?.... He will not, unless he has it in his sight, or in his paws; he roars when he first sees it, whereby he terrifies the creature, that it cannot move till he comes up to it; and when he has got it in his paws, he roars over it, to invite others to partake with him. Now prophecy from the Lord is compared to the roaring of a lion, **Am 1:2**; and this is never in a way of judgment without a cause; the sin of men, or of a nation, which makes them a prey to the wrath and fury of God;

will a young lion cry, or "give forth his voice";

out of his den, if he have taken nothing? that is, if the old lion has taken nothing, and brought nothing unto him; which signifies the same as before; unless by the young lion is meant the prophets of the Lord, who never prophesy but when they have a commission from him, and a people are pointed out to them as the just prey of his wrath and vengeance. All the images here used are very natural; the lion is for the most part in woods and forests, hence called the "lion out of the forest", **Jer 5:6**; as he is by Theocritus {d}; where his voice is heard, but not unless he is in sight of his prey, or has got it, even though ever so hungry; but when he has it in view, he roars so terribly, that, as Basil {e} observes, many animals that could escape him through their swiftness, yet are so frightened at his roaring, that they have no power to move; and they have their dens either in caves or in thickets, where are the she lioness and the young lions, to whom the prey is brought; see **Na 2:11**.

{d} ek drumoio lewn, Theocrit. Idyll. 1. {e} In Hexaemeron, Homil. 9.

Amos 3:5

Ver. 5. Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin [is] for him?.... No, there must be a snare set, or a bird can never be taken in it; and that is done, not by chance, but with the design of the fowler; yea, with the knowledge and will of God himself, Mt 10:29; the design of this is to show, that no judgment or affliction comes upon a people, or they into one, by chance, or without the appointment of God; they are his nets and snares, which he on purpose spreads and sets for persons, to take them in; and unless he did do so, they would not fall into any; see **Job 5:6**;

shall [one] take up a snare from the earth; the Targum adds, out of its time:

and have taken nothing at all? when men set a snare to catch anything, do they take it up before anything is caught? they do not; they let it stand till something is ensnared in it, and so their end answered, and then they take it up, and not before. And thus when God denounces or brings a judgment, or an affliction, upon a people, does he remove it before the end is answered by it? he does not; if the end is to bring men to a sense of sin, and humiliation for it; or to bring near to God who have been wandering from him; or to try their graces, or take away their sin; when such an end is answered, then, and not till then, is the snare taken up, or the affliction removed; tilt such an end is brought about, the distress is continued, or the threatening of it; and of this Israel is hereby assured.

Amos 3:6

Ver. 6. Shall a trumpet be blown in the city,.... Meaning not any trumpet blown, as the silver trumpet for the gathering of the people to worship, or the jubilee trumpet, which proclaimed liberty to them, or any other, expressive of joy and gladness; but the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war, or what is blown by the watchmen on the walls, descrying an enemy, or some danger, near:

and the people not be afraid? they must, they usually are, lest their lives, and their children's, should be taken away, and their substance become a prey to the enemy: or, "and the people not run together" {f}; into some one place for shelter, or to consult together how to provide for their safety, and secure themselves from danger. So when the prophets of the Lord, by his order, lift up their voice like a trumpet, to show his people their transgressions; or when, as watchmen, they blow the trumpet, to give notice of approaching danger; can they hear such denunciations of his wrath for their sins, and not tremble at them, or not take some ways and methods to escape it?

shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done [it]? which is not to be understood of the evil of sin, of which God is not the author, it being contrary to his nature and will; and though he permits it to be done by others, yet he never does it himself, nor so much as tempts men to it, **Jas 1:13**; unless the words should be rendered, as they may be, "shall there be evil in a city, and shall not the Lord do" or "work" {g}? shall sin be committed in a city, all sorts of sin, in the most bold and extravagant manner, and will not the Lord do something to show his resentment of it? is it not time for him to arise and work for his name's sake? will he not visit for these things, and be avenged on such a city, and the inhabitants of it? but this may be interpreted of the evil of affliction or judgment; which, wherever it comes, is by the order and appointment of God, and is inflicted by him; thus evil, as well as good, comes out of the mouth and hand of the most High; and he creates the evil of adversity, as well as makes peace and prosperity; see **Job 2:10**.

{f} wdrxy al "non accurrit", Drusius, Tarnovius. {g} hve al hwhyw "[and] shall not the Lord do [somewhat]?" margin of our Bibles.

Amos 3:7

Ver. 7. Surely the Lord God will do nothing,.... In the world, in a nation or city; no remarkable event has happened, or shall happen, to the sons of men:

but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets; what he willed and determined to do, which was a secret in his own breast, till revealed; and this generally, and for the most part, he makes known to those that fear and serve him; and especially to whom he employs in public service, as his prophets and ministers, previous to his accomplishment of it: thus he revealed to Noah the drowning of the old world by the flood; to Abraham the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah; and to the same servant and friend of his the affliction of his posterity four hundred years in a strange land, and then to be brought out with great substance; to Abijah the Shilonite the rending of ten tribes from the house of David; to Jeremiah the seventy years' captivity of the Jews in Babylon; to Isaiah their deliverance from thence, through Cyrus by name; to Daniel the four monarchies, the nature, rise, and fall of them; and to John, the disciple of Christ, all the material things that should come to pass, relating to the church and world, from the first times of the Gospel to the second coming of Christ; which that book is a revelation of that bears that name; see Ge 18:17; and so that grand affair, which God has brought about in the world, the salvation of his people by his Son, which was a secret hid in his heart before the world began, this he revealed to his servants before it was effected; not only the scheme of it, but the author of it, whom he very early gave notice of; and who was spoken of by the mouth of all the prophets, from the beginning of the world; declaring who and what he was, the Son of God; that he should be incarnate, and born of a virgin; when he should appear, and where, and in what part of the world; also in what way and manner he should obtain salvation, by his obedience and sufferings; and all the circumstances relating thereunto are most minutely and exactly declared by him. Yea, God reveals unto his saints in common the secret of his purposes, respecting their election, redemption, and regeneration, which is made known in the effectual calling; and of the blessings of his grace in the covenant, and also of his providences; and of his love, grace, and mercy; and of his Gospel, and the mysteries of it; thus he deals with them as his friends, rather than as his servants; see

Ps 25:14.

Amos 3:8

Ver. 8. The lion hath roared, who will not fear?.... Amos said this from his own experience, who, having been a herdsman in the wilderness of Tekoa, had often heard a lion roar, which had put him into a panic, both for himself, and the cattle he kept; the figure is explained in the next clause:

the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy? whether it be to foretell future events, which the Lord has made known shall come to pass; or to preach the word, which is to prophesy to edification, to exhortation, and comfort, 1Co 14:3; or to perform the more private exercises of religion, as singing of psalms, praying, &c. 1Ch 25:1; these things who can forbear doing, to whom the Lord has spoken either in a dream or vision, or in his word, and by his Spirit; and to whom he has given a call and commissions, and gifts and graces, qualifying them for such service? who that has the fear of God in his heart, and his glory in view, and the good of others, that can refrain from it? nay, it is of dangerous consequence to refuse it; for if the roaring of a lion is so terrible, and if the wrath of an earthly king is as the roaring of a lion, much more the wrath and displeasure of the King of kings. Jonah declined prophesying when the Lord spoke to him, but what was the consequence of it? the prophet by this seems to justify himself in prophesying, and that he ought not to be blamed for it, seeing the Lord had given him the word, and therefore he ought to publish it. This may be particularly applied to the ministers of the word, who have a call, a charge and gifts from Christ, and on whom there is a necessity laid to preach the Gospel; and who should not shut, to declare it on any account; nor can they, who have it in their hearts, and as fire in their bones; who have seen and heard, and handled of the word of life, let what will be the consequence of it; see Ps 68:11.

Amos 3:9

Ver. 9. Publish in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt,.... This is spoken to the prophets, to publish and declare in all the courts of the Philistines and Egyptians, and among all the princes and great men therein, the sins of the people of Israel, and the punishment God threatened them with; and let them, even these very Heathens, judge whether there was not a just proportion between them, and whether their sins did not deserve such calamities to be brought upon them, the Lord by his prophets had denounced;

and say, assemble yourselves on the mountains of Samaria; the metropolis of the ten tribes, **Isa 7:9**; and which was built upon a mountain, and several others were about it, and joined to it; where these princes of Ashdod or Azotus in Palestine, and of Egypt, are called to leave their courts, and meet together, to behold the iniquities committed by Israel, and to sit in judgment upon them, and declare their sense of what was just and fitting to be done to such a people:

and behold the great tumults in the midst thereof; the riots of its inhabitants, the noise of the mob committing all manner of outrages and wickedness:

and the oppressed in the midst thereof; the poor, the fatherless, and the widow, injured in their persons and properties, plundered of their substance, or defrauded of it.

Amos 3:10

Ver. 10. For they know not to do right, saith the Lord,.... What is just and fight between man and man, no, not in one single instance; they did not regard it, or advert to it; they were under no concern about it; and were so much under the power of their lusts, that they knew not how to do it; and had used themselves so long to such wicked and unjust ways, that they had lost at least the practical knowledge of doing justice; they knew what was right in the theory, but not in the practice; bribes blinded their eyes; for this seems to design judges, civil magistrates, such who had the administration of justice and the execution Of the laws in their hands. The Targum is,

"they know not to execute the law;"

see **Jer 4:22**;

who store up violence and robbery in their palaces; treasured up riches in their palaces, gotten in a violent way, by oppression and injustice; and which was no other, nor better, than robbery. This shows that persons in power and authority, that lived in palaces, in great splendour and grandeur, are here meant.

Amos 3:11

Ver. 11. Therefore thus saith the Lord God,.... Because of these tumults and riots, oppression and injustice, violence and robbery:

an adversary there [shall be] even round about the land: not Tyre, as Theodoret renders the word; but the king of Assyria, who invaded the land of Israel in the days of Hoshea, took Samaria, and carried Israel captive, and placed them in foreign countries, 2Ki 17:6;

and he shall bring down thy strength from thee; take away their riches, demolish their fortresses, and strip them of everything in which they put their confidence:

and thy palaces shall be spoiled; plundered of the treasures laid up in them, and pulled down to the ground; and a just retaliation this for their being the repositories of ill gotten substance and wealth.

Amos 3:12

Ver. 12. Thus saith the Lord, as the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion,.... Or what the lion has left, to show to his master that it had been seized and torn by a beast of prey; for otherwise it is a most daring thing, and not usual, for a shepherd to take anything out of a lion's mouth, though David did: and here it is said to be not a whole sheep, or a lamb, but

two legs, or a piece of an ear; the body of the creature being devoured by the lion, only some offal left he cared not for; two shanks of the legs that had no flesh upon them, and the gristle of the ear, as the Targum; having satisfied his hunger with the best of it: signifying hereby that only a few of the Israelites should escape the enemy, and those poor and insignificant, he made no account of; and this in a miraculous manner, it being like taking anything out of the mouth of a lion, to which a powerful enemy is compared, and particularly the king of Assyria, Jer 50:17;

so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria; only a few of them, and those the poorest; and their escape will be next to a miracle, when the city will be taken; even such as are weak and sickly, or faint hearted: being

in a corner of a bed; who either through sickness lie there, or slothfulness, danger being near; or through poverty, having only a corner or a piece of a bed to lie on; or through cowardice they hid themselves in one part of it:

and in Damascus [in] a couch; or "in a bed of Damascus" {h}; the chief city in Syria, taken much about the same time as Samaria was; and where some of the Israelites might betake themselves, and think themselves secure as persons laid on a couch: or at the bed's feet {i}, as some render it; or "in a corner of a couch" {k}, as before. The Targum paraphrases it,

"that dwell in Samaria, in the strength of power, trusting in Damascus."

{h} vre qvmdb "in sponda Damasci", Tigurine version; "in grabbato Damasci", so some in Drusius; "in lectis Damascenis", Castalio; so Abendana. {i} "In crure spondae", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius. {k} "Angulo grabati", Pagninus; "in angulo strati", Montanus. So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 75. 1.

Amos 3:13

Ver. 13. Hear ye, and testify in the house of Jacob,.... The prophets and priests, whose business it was to speak to the people from the Lord, and declare his will to them, and to admonish them of their sin and danger, are here called upon to hearken to what the Lord was about to say, and to testify and publish it to the people of Israel, the posterity of Jacob, though sadly degenerated:

saith the Lord God, the God of hosts; the eternal Jehovah, the Being of beings, the God of the whole earth, the God of the armies above and below; and, being so great, ought to be heard with the greatest attention and reverence in what follows.

Amos 3:14

Ver. 14. That in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him,.... The three or four mentioned in the preceding chapter, the great multitude of them, their profaneness, uncleanness, and luxury, their injustice and oppression of the poor; when he should visit and punish for these sins, as he would by the hand of the Assyrian, he would not forget their idolatry; though no notice is taken of this before, in the appeal to the Heathen princes, who were likewise guilty of it:

I will also visit the altars of Bethel; where one of the calves Jeroboam made was set up and worshipped; and where was an altar erected, and sacrifice offered on it, 1Ki 12:28; and here the plural number is put for the singular; though it may be, that in process of time more altars might be set up as they increased in idolatry, and as seems from **Ho 8:11**; and now the Lord would show his resentment at them, and punish those that worshipped and sacrificed there. So the Targum,

"that worship at the altars in Bethel;"

and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground; for it seems this altar was made after the form of that at Jerusalem, with four horns at the four corners of it; and which were reckoned the more principal parts of it, and the more sacred, where the blood of the sacrifices was poured, and to which persons in distress fled and laid hold of for refuge; but now these should be of no use unto them, since they would be entirely demolished by the enemy, and laid level with the ground.

Amos 3:15

Ver. 15. And I will smite the winter house with the summer house,.... Both the one and, the other shall fall to the ground, being beat down by the enemy, or shook and made to fall by the earthquake predicted, **Am 1:1**; as Kimchi thinks: kings and great personages had houses in the city in the winter season, in which they lived for warmth; and others in the country in the summertime, to which they retired for the benefit of the air; or they had, in one and the same house, a summer and a winter parlour; see **Jud 3:20**; it signifies that the destruction should reach city and country, and deprive them of what was for their comfort and pleasure:

and the houses of ivory shall perish; or "of the tooth" {1}; the elephant's tooth, of which ivory is made. Ahab made a house of ivory; and perhaps more were made by others afterwards, following his example, 1Ki 22:39; not that these houses were made wholly of ivory, only "covered" with it, as the Targum here paraphrases it; or they were cieled or wainscotted with it, or were inlaid and covered with it, and were reckoned very curious work; but should be demolished, and perish in the general ruin:

and the great houses shall have an end, saith the Lord; the houses of princes, nobles, and other persons of figure and distinction; houses great in building, or many in number, as Kimchi observes, and as the word {m} will bear to be rendered; these, which the builders and owners of them thought would have continued many ages, and have perpetuated their names to posterity, should now be thrown down, and be no more; of which they might assure themselves, since the Lord had said it.

{l} Nvh ytb "domus dentis", Montanus, Mercerus, Vatablus. {m} Mybr Mytb "aedes multi", V. L. "domus multae", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Burkius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Amos 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO AMOS 4

In this chapter, the great ones, or the people of Israel, are threatened with calamities for their oppression of the poor, **Am 4:1**; and in an ironic manner are reproved for their idolatry, **Am 4:4**; then follows an enumeration of several judgments that had been upon them, yet had had no effect on them, to bring them to repentance, nor even mercies, **Am 4:6**; and notwithstanding all this, in a wonderful gracious manner, they are called upon to prepare to meet their God, who is described by his power, greatness, and goodness, **Am 4:12**.

Ver. 1. Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan,.... Or "cows of Bashan" {n}; a country beyond Jordan, inhabited by the tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh, very fruitful of pasturage, and where abundance of fat cattle were brought up; to whom persons of distinction, and of the first rank, are here compared. Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret them of the wives of the king, princes, ministers of state, and great men; and so it may be thought that Amos, a herdsman, in his rustic manner, compliments the court ladies with this epithet, for their plumpness, wantonness, and petulancy. Though it may be the princes and great men themselves may be rather intended, and be so called for their effeminacy, and perhaps with some regard to the calves they worshipped; and chiefly because being fat and flourishing, and abounding with wealth and riches, they became wanton and mischievous; like fat cattle, broke down their fences, and would be under no restraint of the laws of God and man; entered into their neighbours' fields, seized on their property, and spoiled them of it. So the Targum paraphrases it,

"ye rich of substance."

In like manner the principal men among the Jews, in the times of Christ, are called bulls of Bashan, Ps 22:12;

that [are] in the mountains of Samaria; like cattle grazing on a mountain; the metaphor is still continued: Samaria was the principal city of Ephraim, the metropolis of the ten tribes, **Isa 7:9**; situated on a mountain; Mr. Maundrell {o} says, upon a long mount, of an oval figure, having first a fruitful valley, and then a ring of hills running about it. Here the kings of Israel had their palace, and kept their court, and where their princes and nobles resided. Ahab is said to be king of Samaria, 1Ki 21:1;

which oppress the poor, which crush the needy; by laying heavy taxes upon them; exacting more of them than they are able to pay; lessening their wages for work done, or withholding it from them; or by taking from them that little they have, and so reducing them to the utmost extremity, and refusing to do them justice in courts of judicature:

which say to their masters, bring, and let us drink; Kimchi, who interprets these words of the wives of great men, supposes their husbands are here addressed, who are, and acknowledged to be, their masters or lords; see **1Pe 3:6**; whom they call upon to bring them money taken from the poor, or for which they have sold them, that they may have wherewith to eat and drink, fare sumptuously, and live in a grand manner, feasting themselves and their visitors: or these are the words of inferior officers to superior ones, desiring they might have leave to pillage the poor, that so they might live in a more gay and splendid manner, and in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness. So the Targum,

"give us power, that we may spoil it."

Or rather these words are directed to the masters of the poor, who had power over them, had them in their clutches, in whose debt they were; or they had something against them, and therefore these corrupt judges, and wicked magistrates, desire they might be brought before them; who for a bribe would give the cause against them, right or wrong, so long as they got something to feast themselves with; or they are spoken by the rich, to the masters of the poor, to whom they had sold them, to bring them the purchase money, that they might indulge and gratify their sensual appetites; see **Am 2:6**.

{n} Nvbh twrp "vaccae Basan", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus, Drusius, Mercerus, Grotius, Cocceius. {o} Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 59. Ed. 7.

Amos 4:2

Ver. 2. The Lord God hath sworn by his holiness,.... That is, by himself, holiness being his nature, and an essential attribute of his; this is done to ascertain the truth of what is after said, and that men may be assured of the certain performance of it. Some render it, "by his holy place"; and interpret it of heaven; so Aben Ezra and Kimchi; which is not likely; see **Mt 5:34**. The Targum is,

"the Lord God hath sworn by his word in his holiness;"

that, lo, the days shall come upon you; speedily, swiftly, and at an unawares:

that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fish hooks; the enemy, the king of Assyria, or God by him, would take them out of their own land, as fish out of water, out of their own element, and carry them captive into a strange land, both them and their posterity; and which should be as easily done as fish are taken with the hook, even though they were as the kine of Bashan. The word for fish hooks signifies "thorns" {p}, and is by some so rendered; these perhaps being used in angling, before iron hooks were invented. The Targum is,

"that people shall take you away on their shields, and your daughters in fishermen's {q} boats;"

see Jer 16:16.

{p} twryob "spinis", Mercerus, Liveleus, Drusius, Grotius. {q} So it is interpreted by R. Sol Urbin Ohel Moed, fol. 65. 2. likewise Elias says the word signifies a small ship, or a boat that is in a large ship, Tishbi, p. 59. So Vatablus interprets it, "scaphas piscatorias, [sive] cymbas"; and some in Munster.

Amos 4:3

Ver. 3. And ye shall go out at the breaches,.... Not at the gates of the city, as they had used to do at pleasure; but at the breaches of the walls of it, made by the enemy, in order to make their escape, if possible; they who had broke down the fences of law and justice, and injured the poor and needy, shall now have the walls of their city broken down and they themselves exposed to the most imminent danger, and glad to get out of them to save their lives:

every [cow] at that [which is] before her; every woman, as Jarchi and Kimchi; or every great person, compared to the kine of Bashan, shall make up as fast as he can to the breach before him, to get out; shall follow one another as quick as they can, and clamber on one another's backs, as such cattle do, to get out first; which shows the hurry and confusion they should be in, upon the taking of their city Samaria:

and ye shall cast [them] into the palace, saith the Lord; either their children, or their substance, which they shall cast into the royal palace, or fort, or citadel, for safety. Some render it, "ye shall cast yourselves"; so Abarbinel; that is, such as could not get out at the breaches should betake themselves to the palace or fort for their security. The Targum of the whole is,

"and they shall break down the wall upon you, and bring you out, gathered everyone before him, and carry you beyond the mountains of Armenia."

And so some others, taking it to be the name of a place, render it, "ye shall be cast into Armon", or Mona; which Bochart {r} suspects to be the same with Minni, mentioned with Ararat, a mountain in Armenia, Jer 51:27.

{r} Geograph. Sacr. l. 1. c. 3. col. 20.

Amos 4:4

Ver. 4. Come to Bethel and transgress,.... and what follows, are ironic and sarcastic speeches, not giving liberty to sin, but in this way reproving for it: Bethel was one of the places where the calves were placed and worshipped: and here they are bid to go thither, and go on with and continue in their idolatrous worship, by which they transgressed the law of God, and mark what would be the issue of it. The sense is the same with Ec 11:9; see Eze 20:29;

at Gilgal multiply transgression; that is, multiply acts of idolatry: Gilgal was a place where high places and altars were erected, and idols worshipped; as it had formerly been a place of religious worship of the true God, the ten tribes made use of it in the times of their apostasy for idolatrous worship; see **Ho 4:15**;

and bring your sacrifices every morning; and offer them to your idols, as you were wont formerly to offer them unto the true God, according to the law of Moses, Ex 29:38;

[and] your tithes after three years; the third year after the sabbatical year was the year of tithing; and after the tithe of the increase of the fruits of the earth, there was "maaser sheni", the second tithe, the same with "maaser ani", the poor's tithe, which was given to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless; and the widow, to eat with them, De 14:22; and this they are sarcastically bid to observe in their idolatrous way. It is, in the Hebrew text, "after three days"; and so the Targum,

"your tithes in three days;"

days being put for years, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe. It may be rendered, "after three years of days" {s}; three complete years.

{s} Mymy tvlvl "post tres [annos] dierum", Piscator.

Amos 4:5

Ver. 5. And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven,.... Which some observe was contrary to the law, which forbids all leaven in a meat offering; or "burning" it in any offering, **Le 2:11**; which the word {t} here used suggests was done by these idolaters, as well as eaten by them, their priests not liking to eat unleavened bread; but; though it was forbidden in the meat offering, was allowed, yea, ordered, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving, **Le 7:13**. So Abarbinel understands it here, as what was according, to law, but ironically commanded to be offered to idols:

and proclaim [and] publish the free offerings; let all know of them when you make your freewill offerings, and invite them to partake of them:

for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God; or ye love to offer such sacrifices to your idols, rather than to the Lord God; preferring these to him, and delighting more in the worship of them than of him.

{t} rjq "incendendo", Munster, Tigurine version; "incendito incensum", Vatablus.

Amos 4:6

Ver. 6. And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities,.... Meaning a famine, having no food to foul them with, or to stick in them. This was not the famine in Samaria, **2Ki 6:25**; for that was only in that city, and for a short time, while besieged; whereas this was in all the cities in Israel; rather therefore it designs the famine predicted by Elisha, which should be upon the land for seven years, **2Ki 8:1**;

and want of bread in all your places: this is the same with the former clause, and explains it, and still makes the famine more general, not only in their cities, but in all their places of abode, their towns and villages:

yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord; this judgment had no influence upon them, to bring them to a sense of their evils, particularly their idolatry, and to repentance them, and to reclaim them from them, and return them to the Lord, and to his worship, as the Targum paraphrases it.

Amos 4:7

Ver. 7. And also I have withholden the rain from you,.... As he did for the space of three years successively in the days of Ahab, as predicted by Elijah, 1Ki 17:1; the consequences of which are very bad to men and beast, and bring on a scarcity of food for both, and a famine if long withheld:

when [there were] yet three months to the harvest; that is, three months before the harvest, as Jarchi; when, as Kimchi observes, there was need of rain: this was the latter rain which was usually given and expected about this time, and on which the goodness of the crop, and so of the harvest, greatly depended; these three months before barley harvest were December, January, and

February, that being in March; and before the wheat harvest, February, March, and April, that being in May usually:

and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city; so that it might appear to be not by the course of nature, or through the influence of the planets, or by chance; but was according to the direction of divine Providence, the hand of God was manifestly in it: yea,

one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered; one piece of ground or field had a plentiful shower on it, whereby it became fruitful; and another field or close on the other side of the hedge or partition had none, whereby what did spring up withered away and came to nothing: or "one inheritance" {u}, or farm, as some render it; one man's estate was well watered with rain from heaven, and brought forth much fruit; and another man's estate, for want of it, was barren, and brought forth nothing: thus God was pleased to do in his providence, to show his sovereignty, and to chastise men for their sins; and in such a manner as that they might, if not blind easily perceive his hand in it.

{u} hqlx "fundus", Mercerus, Vatablus; "hereditas", Targum.

Amos 4:8

Ver. 8. So two [or] three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water,.... Two or three cities, that is, the inhabitants of them, being without water, went up and down in quest of any city or place where they could find water for themselves and cattle to drink:

but they were not satisfied; could not get enough for their present use and much less to carry back with them to supply them for any length of time; such a scarcity there was of it in other parts; see 1Ki 18:5;

yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord; this had no more effect upon them than the other to relinquish their former courses, and return unto the Lord by humiliation and repentance.

Amos 4:9

Ver. 9. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew,.... "Blasting" is what we commonly call "blights", generally occasioned by an east wind; and so Kimchi interprets the word here used; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "a burning wind"; which causes the buds and leaves of trees to shrivel up as if they were burnt with fire. "Mildew" is a kind of clammy dew, which falling upon corn, &c. corrupts and destroys by its moisture; and is a kind of jaundice to the fruits of the earth; and has its name as that, from yellowness, in the Hebrew language: when the Lord is said to smite them with these the sense is, that he sent these upon the fruits of their gardens, fields and vineyards, which consumed them:

when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmer worm devoured [them]; just when they were budding and blossoming, and bringing forth fruit; and so what the blasting and mildew did not consume, that the palmer worm, a kind of locust, did; which has its name from its biting and cutting off the leaves and branches of trees, as of those mentioned vines, olives and fig trees, with which the land of Canaan abounded, the cutting off which was a great calamity. The Targum is,

"the multitude of your gardens, &c. the palmer worm hath eaten:"

yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord; this dispensation of Providence was also without its desired fruit and effect;
See Gill on "Am 4:6".

Amos 4:10

Ver. 10. I have sent among you the pestilence, after the manner of Egypt,.... Like that which was sent among the firstborn of Egypt, and cut them off in one night; or when in the way of Egypt, as the Targum; either as in the wilderness, when they came out of Egypt, so Jarchi interprets it; see Nu 16:46; or the Lord sent the pestilence as they went in the way to Egypt for help and assistence, or for shelter, for food in time of famine; for they went thither, as Kimchi says, because of the famine, to fetch food, from thence; and this was displeasing to the Lord, and he sent the plague among them, which cut them off in the way:

your young men have I slain with the sword; of the enemy in battle; or as they were in the way to Egypt, being sent there to fetch food, but were intercepted by the enemy:

and have taken away your horses; on which they rode to Egypt on the above errand; or rather which they brought up from thence, contrary to the command of God:

and have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils; such numbers of their armies being slain, and these lying unburied, the smell of them was very noisome:

yet have ye not returned unto me saith the Lord; still they continued obstinate and impenitent; See Gill on "Am 4:6".

Amos 4:11

Ver. 11. I have overthrown [some] of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,.... Either their houses were burnt, or their bodies consumed by fire from heaven, with lightning; not whole cities, but the habitations of some particular persons, or they themselves:

and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning; some escaped such an awful calamity, their houses were not consumed, while others were; and their persons were safe, while others, just by them, were struck dead at once:

yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord; neither the judgments of God on themselves and others had any effect upon them to humble and reclaim them: such dispensations, without the grace of God is exerted, rather harden than soften; and, instead of bringing men to repentance, cause them to blaspheme; see Re 16:8; nor will the mercy and goodness of God, which should lead persons to repentance, attain that end, unless accompanied with the Spirit and grace of God; who, notwithstanding such mercies and deliverances, will remain senseless, stupid obdurate, and impenitent; see **Re 9:20**.

Amos 4:12

Ver. 12. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel,.... What he would do is not expressly and particularly said; it is commonly understood to be something in a way of judgment, and worse than what he had done, since they had no effect upon them; or these things should be done over again, until an utter end was made of them; or the reference is to **Am 3:11**; and the following words are usually interpreted, either, ironically, since the Lord was coming forth as an enemy to issue the controversy with them; they are called upon to meet, him in a hostile way, and muster up all their forces, exert all their power and strength, and make use of their best weapons and military skill, and see what would be the consequence of all this; feeble worms set in opposition to the mighty God; thorns and briers he can easily go through, and burn up quickly: or else they are seriously addressed, and exhorted to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments, by humiliation, repentance, and reformation; not knowing but that after all he may be gracious and merciful to them, and turn away the fierceness of his anger from them; see **Am 5:15**; but I rather think the words are a promise or intimation of doing something to Israel in a way of special grace and kindness, notwithstanding their conduct and behaviour, and the ineffectualness both of judgments and providential mercies; for the words may be rendered, as the same particle should be in **Ho 2:14**; "notwithstanding", or "nevertheless, thus will I do unto thee" {w}; what I have from all eternity purposed and resolved to do, and what I have promised again and again, by the mouth of all the holy prophets, from the beginning of the world, I would do; namely, send my Son to be thy Saviour and Redeemer:

[and] because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel; the Messiah that was then to come was God, and so equal to the work of redemption and salvation he was to do; and the God of spiritual and mystical Israel, even all the elect, Jews and Gentiles, to be redeemed by him; was to be their Immanuel, God in their nature, and therefore to be met with the utmost joy and pleasure; see **Zec 9:9**; for this meeting him is not to be understood in a hostile way, and as spoken ironically to the enemies of Christ to oppose him, encounter with him, and mark the issue of it, who in time would cause them to be brought before him and slain, as some interpret the words; but in a friendly manner, as he was met by those that were waiting for his coming, such as Simeon and others; and by those John the Baptist called upon to prepare the way of the Lord; and as he was by his own disciples, who embraced him by faith, received him with joy, and left all and followed him; and as all such are prepared to meet him who are made truly sensible of sin, and of their own righteousness as insufficient to justify from it, and have seen the glory, fulness, and suitableness of his salvation. Christ is to be met with in his house and ordinances; and men are prepared for it when the desires of their hearts are towards him, and their graces are exercised on him; which preparation is from himself: he will be met at his second coming by his spiritual Israel; and they will be prepared for it who believe it, love it, and long for it; have their loins girt, and their lights burning, and they waiting for their Lord's coming; see Mt 25:1; and so at the hour of death, which is the day of the Lord; a preparation and readiness for which lies not in external humiliation, outward reformation,

a moral righteousness, or a bare profession of religion, and submission to ordinances; but in regeneration, in faith in Christ, and spiritual knowledge of him; in a being washed in his blood, and clothed with his righteousness; for which readiness all truly sensible sinners will be concerned, and which is all from the grace of God; see
Mt 24:43. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read it, "prepare to call upon thy God"; and the Targum paraphrases it,

"to receive the doctrine of the law of thy God;"

rather the doctrine of the Gospel; but the former sense is best; for the confirmation of which it may be observed, that when God is said to do a thing to any, it is usually in a way of grace; and that when preparation is made to meet a divine Person, it is always meant of the Son of God; and that it is a common thing in prophecy, that when the Lord is threatening men with his judgments, to throw in a promise or prophecy of the Messiah, for the comfort of his people.

{w} Nkl "nihilominus tamen". Vid. Noldium, p. 507.

Amos 4:13

Ver. 13. For, lo, he that formeth the mountains,.... These words are a description of the glorious Person, "thy God" and Saviour, to be met; he is the Creator of all things, that formed the mountains, and so was before them, as in **Pr 8:25**; and able to surmount and remove all mountains of difficulties that lay in his way of working out salvation for his people:

and createth the wind; or "spirit"; not the Holy Spirit, which is uncreated; but either angels, whom he makes spirits; or the spirit and soul of man he is the Creator of; or rather the natural wind is meant, which is his creature, he holds in his fists, restrains and commands, at his pleasure, **Mt 8:26**;

and declareth unto man what [is] his thought; not what is man's thought, though he knows what is in man without any information, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and can reveal them to men, and convince them that he knows them, **Mt 9:4**; but rather the thought of God, the meditation of his heart, concerning the salvation of men; his thoughts of peace, which are the deep things of God, and which Christ, lying in the bosom of his

Father, was privy to, and has declared, **Joh 1:18**. The Septuagint and Arabic versions, reading the words wrong, render them, "declaring to men his Christ"; which, though true of God, is not the sense of this clause. The Targum is,

"what are his works {x}?"

his works of creation, providence, redemption, and grace:

that maketh the morning darkness; or "darkness morning", or "the morning [out of] darkness" {y}; being the dayspring from on high, the morning star, the sun of righteousness, that, rising, made the Gospel day, after a long night of Jewish and Gentile darkness; and who made the same dispensation a morning to one, and darkness to another, **Joh 9:39**. The Septuagint version is, "making the morning and the cloud"; the Vulgate Latin version, "making the morning cloud"; his coming was as the morning, **Ho 6:3**;

and treadeth upon the high places of the earth; the land of Israel, which is Immanuel's land, is said by the Jews to be higher than other lands; Jerusalem higher than any part of Judea, and the mountain the temple was built on higher than Jerusalem: here Christ trod in the days of his flesh, and from the mount of Olives ascended to heaven, after he had trampled upon and spoiled principalities and powers, spiritual wickednesses in high places, and when he led captivity captive. Jarchi interprets it of humbling the mighty and proud, who are compared to the high places of the earth. The Targum is,

"to declared to men what are his works, to prepare light for the righteous as the morning light, who goes and prepares darkness for earth;"

the Lord, the God of hosts, [is] his name; he is the Jehovah, the Lord our righteousness, the God and Governor of the armies of heaven the hosts of angels, and to whom all creatures on earth are subject; all power in heaven and earth belongs unto him; this is Israel's God, his Redeemer and Saviour he is called upon to prepare to meet.

{x} So Kimchi and R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 4. 5. {y} hpye rxv hvwe "faciens obscuritatem auroram", Drusius.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Amos 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO AMOS 5

In this chapter the prophet exhorts Israel to hear his lamentation over them for their impending ruin, **Am 5:1**; nevertheless to seek the Lord, and all that is good; to forsake their idols, and repent of their sins, in hopes of finding mercy, and living comfortably; or otherwise they must expect the wrath of God for their iniquities, especially their oppression of the poor, **Am 5:4**; otherwise it would be a time of weeping and wailing, of darkness and distress, however they might harden or flatter themselves, or make a jest of it, **Am 5:16**; for all their sacrifices and ceremonial worship would signify nothing, so long as they continued their idolatry with them **Am 5:21**; and therefore should surely go into captivity, **Am 5:27**.

Ver. 1. Hear ye the word which I take up against you,.... And which was not his own word, but the word of the Lord; and which he took up, by his direction as a heavy burden as some prophecies are called, and this was; and which, though against them, a reproof for their sins, and denunciation of punishment for them, yet was to be heard; for every word of God is pure, and to be hearkened to, whether for us or against us; since the whole is profitable, either for doctrine and instruction in righteousness, or for reproof and correction. It may be rendered, "which I take up concerning you", or "over you" {z}:

[even] a lamentation, O house of Israel; a mournful ditty, an elegiac song over the house of Israel, now expiring, and as it were dead. This word was like Ezekiel's roll, in which were written "lamentation, and mourning, and woe", **Eze 2:10**; full of mournful matter, misery, and distress, as follows:

{z} Mkyle "de vobis", Tigurine version, Mercerus, Piscator, Cocceius; "super vos", Pagninus, Montanus; "pro vobis", Vatablus.

Amos 5:2

Ver. 2. The virgin of Israel is fallen,.... The kingdom of Israel, so called, because it had never been subdued, or become subject to a foreign power, since it was a kingdom; or because, considered in its ecclesiastic state, it had been espoused to the Lord as a chaste virgin; and perhaps this may be ironically spoken, and refers to its present adulterate and degenerated state worshipping the calves at Dan and Bethel; or else because of its wealth and riches and the splendour and gaiety in which it appeared; but now, as it had fallen into sin and iniquity, it should quickly fall by it, and on account of it, into ruin and misery; and because of the certainty of it it is represented as if it was already fallen:

she shall no more rise; and become a kingdom again, as it never has as yet, since the ten tribes were carried away captive by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, to which calamity this prophecy refers, The Targum is,

"shall not rise again this year;"

very impertinently; better Kimchi and Ben Melech, for a long time; since as they think, and many others, that the ten tribes shall return again, as may seem when all Israel shall be converted and saved, and repossess their own land; see **Ho 1:10**. Abendana produces a passage out of Zohar, in which these words are interpreted, that the virgin of Israel should not rise again of herself, she not having power to prevail over her enemies; but God will raise her up out of the dust, when he shall raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, who shall reign in future time over all the tribes together, as it is said in **Am 9:11**;

she is forsaken upon her land; by her people, her princes, and her God; or prostrate on the ground, as the Targum; she was cast upon the ground, and dashed to pieces by the enemy as an earthen vessel, and there left, her ruin being irrecoverable; so whatever is cast and scattered, or dashed to pieces on the ground, and left, is expressed by the word here used, as Jarchi observes:

[there is] none to raise her up: her princes and people are either slain by the sword, famine, and pestilence, or carried captive, and so can yield her no assistance; her idols whom she worshipped cannot, and her God she forsook will not.

Amos 5:3

Ver. 3. For thus saith the Lord God,.... This is a reason why there were none to raise her up: since

the city that went out [by] a thousand shall leave an hundred; that is, the city in which there were a thousand constantly going in and out; or which sent, caused to go out, or furnished, a thousand men upon occasion for war, had only a hundred persons left in it; or there remained but a hundred of the thousand they sent out, the rest being destroyed by one means or another:

and that which went forth [by] an hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel; where there were a hundred persons going out and coming in continually; or which sent out a hundred men to the army to fight their battles had now only ten remaining; to such a small number were they reduced all over the land, so that there were none, or not a number sufficient to raise up Israel to its former state and glory.

Amos 5:4

Ver. 4. For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel,.... Or "yet" {a}, notwithstanding all this, though such judgments were threatened and denounced, and such desolations should certainly come, in case of impenitence, and an obstinate continuance in a course of sin; yet hopes are given of finding mercy and kindness upon repentance and reformation, at least to the remnant of them; see **Am 5:15**;

seek ye me; seek my fear, as the Targum; fear and reverence, serve and worship, the Lord God; return unto him by repentance; seek to him by prayer and supplication; acknowledge your sins, and humble yourselves before him, and implore his pardoning grace and mercy:

and ye shall live; in your own land, and not be carried out of it; live comfortably, in great plenty of good things; and live spiritually, enjoying the favour of God, and his presence in his ordinances, and live eternally in the world to come.

{a} yk "attamen", Grotius.

Amos 5:5

Ver. 5. But seek not Bethel,.... Do not go to Bethel, the place where one of Jeroboam's calves was set up and worshipped, to consult the oracle, idols, and priests there; or to perform religious worship, which will be your ruin, if not prevented by another course of living:

nor enter into Gilgal; another place of idolatry, where idols were set up and worshipped See Gill on "Am 4:4";

and pass not to Beersheba; a place in the further part of the land of Israel; it formerly belonged to Judah, but was now in the hands of the ten tribes, and where idolatrous worship was practised; see **Am 8:14**; it having been a place where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had dwelt, and worshipped the true God:

for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity; that is, the inhabitants of it; they will not be able with their idols and idol worship to save themselves, and therefore go not thither. There is an elegant play on words here {b}, as there is also in the next words:

and Bethel shall come to nought; which also was called Bethaven, the house of vanity, or of an idol which is nothing in the world; and therefore, because of the idolatry in it, should come to nothing, be utterly destroyed, and the inhabitants of it. So the Targum,

"they, that are in Gilgal, and worship calves in Bethel."

{b} hlgy hlg lglgh.

Amos 5:6

Ver. 6. Seek the Lord, and ye shall live,.... This is, repeated to stir up unto it, because of their backwardness and slothfulness, and to show the importance and necessity of it. By the "Lord" may be meant the Messiah, Israel's God that was to come, and they were to prepare to meet, **Am 4:12**; and the rather, since life spiritual and eternal is only to be had from him, and he is to be sought unto for it, and all the blessings of it, peace, pardon, righteousness, rest, and salvation as well as temporal deliverance, and all outward mercies:

lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour [it]; that is, lest his wrath and fury break out like fire as the Targum, by sending an enemy to invade the land, destroy it, and carry the inhabitants of it captive; even all the ten tribes, who frequently go by the name of Ephraim the son of Joseph, that being the principal tribe, and the first king of them being of it:

and [there be] none to quench [it] in Bethel; the calf worshipped there, and the priests that officiated, would not be able to avert the stroke of divine vengeance, or turn back the enemy, and save the land from ruin. The Targum is,

"and there be none to quench it, because of your sins, who have been serving idols in Bethel."

Amos 5:7

Ver. 7. Ye who turn judgment to wormwood,.... This seems to be spoken to kings and judges, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe; in whose hands is the administration of justice, and who often pervert it, as these did here addressed and complained of; that which was the most useful and salubrious, and so the most desirable to the commonwealth, namely, just judgment, was changed into the reverse, what was as bitter and as disagreeable as wormwood; or "hemlock", as it might be rendered, and as it is in **Am 6:12**; even injustice:

and leave off righteousness in the earth; leave off doing it among men: or rather, "leave [it] on the earth" {c}; who cast it down to the ground, trampled upon it, and there left it; which is expressive not only of their neglect, but of their contempt of it; see **Da 8:12**.

{c} wxynh "in terram prosterunt", Piscator; "justitiam in terram reliquerunt, i.e. humi prosternitis et deseritis", Mercerus; "collocantes humi", Junius & Tremellius.

Amos 5:8

Ver. 8. [Seek him] that maketh the seven stars,.... Which some connect with the preceding words, without a supplement, "they leave righteousness on the ground, who maketh the seven stars"; understanding it of Christ, the Lord our righteousness, who is made unto us righteousness, whom the Jews rejected and despised, though the Maker of the heavens and the constellations in them. Some continue, and supply the words thus, and remember not him "that maketh the seven stars", as Kimchi; or forget him, as Japhet in Aben Ezra. The Targum is,

"they cease to fear him that maketh, &c."

they have no regard unto him, no awe and reverence of him, or they would not act so unjustly as they do. There is but one word for the "seven stars" in the original text, which signifies that constellation called the Pleiades, and so the same word is rendered, **Job 9:9**; and the Vergiliae, because they appear in the spring of the year, when they yield their sweet influences, which the Scripture ascribes to them, and are desirable; hence they have their name in Hebrew from a word which signifies desire:

and Orion; another constellation; for Aben Ezra says, it is not one star, but many; and as he, with the ancients he mentions, takes the former to be the tail of Aries, and the head of Taurus; so this to be the heart of Scorpio. This constellation appears in winter, and is a sign of bad weather. Virgil calls it Nimbosus Orion; and it has its name in Hebrew from unsettledness and inconstancy, the weather being then very variable. Amos, being a herdsman, had observed the appearances and effects of these constellations, and adored the Maker of them, whom others neglected:

and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: maketh the constant revolution of day and night, and the days longer in the summer, and shorter in winter, as Kimchi interprets it; and also the various changes of prosperity and adversity, turning the one into the other when he pleases:

that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; as in the time of the universal deluge, to which some Jewish writers apply this, as Jarchi observes; or rather draws up by the heat of the sun the waters of the sea into the air, and forms them into clouds, where they lose their saltness, and become sweet; and then lets them down in plentiful and gentle showers, to water, refresh, and fructify the earth; which is an instance of divine power, wisdom, and goodness. The Targum is,

"who commands many armies to be gathered like the waters of the sea, and scatters them upon the face of the earth."

Some, who understand these words of Christ our righteousness, interpret the whole mystically of his raising up the twelve apostles, comparable to stars; and of his turning the Gentiles, who were darkness itself, to the light of the Gospel; and of his giving up the Jews, who were formerly light, to judicial blindness and darkness; and of his watering the earth with large showers of the divine word;

the Lord [is] his name; he is the true Jehovah, that can and does do all this.

Amos 5:9

Ver. 9. That strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong,.... Such as have been taken by an enemy, who have been stripped of their armour, and spoiled of all their goods and substance, and have no friends nor allies, nor anything to help themselves with; the Lord can supply them with strength, furnish them with weapons, and send them helpers, so that they shall rise up against their conquerors and spoilers, and in their turn subdue them. The Targum is,

"that strengthens the weak against the strong;"

or causes the weak to prevail over the strong. A learned man, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, chooses to render it, "who intends", or "designs, destruction to the strong" {d}; that is, in his secret purposes, and which he brings about in providence; though he is doubtful whether it may not have the signification of recreation and refreshment, and whether the construction and circumstances will admit of it; and some do so translate it, "who refreshes himself with destruction against the strong" {e}; takes delight and pleasure in it; it is a recreation to him:

so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress: lay siege to it and take it, in which the spoiler thought himself secure with the spoil and substance he had taken from the spoiled; such sudden changes and vicissitudes can God bring upon men when he pleases. Some apply this to the Romans strengthened against the Jews, and besieging their fortified city Jerusalem; but not very aptly.

{d} ze le dv gylbmh "qui intendit destinat destructionem forti", Hottinger, Smegma Orientale, l. 1. c. 7. p. 129. {e} "Qui recreat se vastatione contra fortem [sive] robustum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius. So Stockius, p. 136.

Amos 5:10

Ver. 10. They hate him that rebuketh in the gate,.... Openly and publicly in the courts of judicature: wicked judges hated the prophets of the Lord, such as Amos, who faithfully reproved them for the perversion of justice, even when they were upon the bench: or the people were so corrupt and degenerate, that they hated those faithful judges who reproved them for their vices in the open courts of justice, when they came before them, The former sense seems best, and more agreeable to the context:

and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly; not only hate him, but abhor him, cannot bear the sight of him, or to hear his name mentioned that speaks out his mind freely and honestly, and tells them of their sins, and advises them to repent of them, and leave them.

Amos 5:11

Ver. 11. Forasmuch therefore as your treading [is] upon the poor,.... This seems to be spoken to the princes, judges, and civil magistrates, as Kimchi observes; who oppressed the poor and needy, and crushed them to the ground, trampled upon them, stripped them of the little substance they had, and left them destitute; exercising a cruel and tyrannical power over them, they having none to stand by them, and deliver them:

and ye take from him burdens of wheat; which perhaps he had been gleaning in the field, and was carrying home for the support of his family; or which he had gotten with great labour, and was all he had in the world: this they took away from him, for the payment of pretended debts, or lawsuits; or as not in right belonging to him, but taken out of fields where he should not have entered:

ye have built houses of hewn stones; in a very grand and pompous manner for themselves and their children, with money they had extorted from the poor, and got by oppression and injustice:

but ye shall not dwell in them; at least but a very short time; for quickly and suddenly the enemy will come and turn you out of them, and destroy them, which would be a just retaliation for their spoiling the houses of the poor:

ye have planted pleasant vineyards: well situated, and filled with the choicest vines, which promise a large produce of the best wine:

but ye shall not drink wine of them; for before the grapes are fully ripe they should be either taken away by death, or be carried captive, and others should dwell in their houses, and drink the wine of their vineyards.

Amos 5:12

Ver. 12. For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins,.... Their sins were numerous, and of the first magnitude, attended with very heavy aggravations; and these with all their circumstances were well known to the omniscient God, and therefore he determined to punish them as he had threatened. Some of their transgressions are pointed out, as follow:

they afflict the just; who are so both in a moral and evangelic sense; not comparatively only, but really; and particularly whose cause was just, and yet were vexed and distressed by unjust judges, who gave the cause against them, made them pay all costs and charges, and severely mulcted them: they take a bribe; of those that were against the just, and gave the cause for them. The word signifies "a ransom" {f}. The Targum it false mammon. Corrupt and unjust judges are here taxed:

and they turn aside the poor in the gate [from their right]; in the court of judicature, where they should have done them justice, such courts being usually held in the gates of cities; but instead of that they perverted their judgment, and did them wrong.

{f} rpwk "pretium redemptionis", Mercerus, Liveleus, Drusius, Lytron, Cocceius.

Amos 5:13

Ver. 13. Therefore the prudent shall keep silence at that time,.... Not the prophets of the Lord, whose business it was at all times to reprove, and not hold their peace, let the consequence be what it would; though the Targum calls them teachers; but private persons, whose wisdom it would be to say nothing; since reproof would do no good to these persons, and they would bring a great deal of hatred ill will, and trouble upon themselves as well as would hear the name of God blasphemed, which would be very afflictive to them: or the sense is, they would not speak to God on the behalf of these wicked men, knowing the decree was gone forth; nor say one murmuring word at it, believing it was in righteousness; and being struck also with the awfulness of God's righteous judgments:

for it [is] an evil time; in which sin abounded, and miseries and calamities on account of it.

Amos 5:14

Ver. 14. Seek good, and not evil,.... Seek not unto, or after, evil persons and evil things; not the company and conversation of evil men, which is infectious and dangerous; nor anything that is evil, or has the appearance of it, especially the evil of evils, sin; which is hateful to God, contrary to his nature and will; is evil in its own nature, and bad in its consequences, and therefore not to be sought, but shunned and avoided; but seek that which is good, persons and things: seek the "summum bonnum", "the chief good", God, who is essentially, perfectly, immutably, and communicatively good, the fountain of all goodness, and the portion of his people; seek Christ the good Saviour and sacrifice, the good Shepherd, and the good Samaritan, who is good in all his relations, as a father, husband, and friend, and in whom all good things are laid up; seek the good Spirit of God, who works good things in his people, and shows good things to them, and is the Comforter of them; seek to him for assistance in prayer, and to help in the exercise of every grace, and in the discharge of every duty, and as the guide into all truth, and to eternal glory; seek the good ways of God, the way of truth, the path of faith and holiness, and especially the good way to the Father, the way of life and salvation by Christ; seek the good word of God, the Scriptures of truth, the promises contained in them, and the Gospel of them; seek the company of good men, and that good part that shall not be taken away, the true grace of God, the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; seek the glories of another world, the goodness of God laid up, the best things which are reserved to last:

that ye may live; comfortably, spiritually, and eternally, which is the consequence of all this; See Gill on "Am 5:4";
See Gill on "Am 5:6";

and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken; as they used to say, and boasted of; though they had not the temple, the ark of the testimony, the symbols of the divine Presence, as Judah had; but this they would have in reality, both his gracious presence here, and his glorious presence hereafter, did they truly and rightly seek those things; than which nothing is more desirable to good men, or can make them more comfortable, or more happy. The Targum is,

"seek to do well, and not to do ill, that ye may live; and then the word of the Lord God of hosts shall be your help, as ye have said."

Amos 5:15

Ver. 15. Hate the evil, and love the good,.... Evil is not only not to be sought, but to be hated, especially the evil of sin, because of its evil nature, and pernicious effects and consequences; and, if it was for no other reason but because it is hateful and abominable unto God, therefore they that love him should hate evil, even with a perfect hatred; as all good men do, though it is present with them, and cleaves unto them, and they do it, Ps 97:10; and "good" is to be loved for its goodness' sake; and the good effects of it; a good God is to be loved, and all good men, and all good things; the good word of God, and his commands and ordinances; and highly to be esteemed, and affectionately regarded:

and establish judgment in the gate; openly, publicly, in every court of judicature, which used to be kept in the gates of cities; not only execute judgment and justice in all, cases brought into court, but let it have its constant course, and be always practised according to the settled laws of it:

it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph: who should escape the fire that should break out of his house, and devour it, even the ten tribes, **Am 5:6**; such of them as should seek the Lord, and that which is good; for in the worst of times God reserves a remnant for himself, as in the times of Elijah, Isaiah, Christ, and his apostles; a remnant according to the election of grace, to whom he has been gracious in the choice and reserve he has made of them; in the stores of grace he has hid up for them; in the provision and mission of his Son as a Saviour; and in waiting the time of their conversion, when he is gracious to them, in regenerating, quickening, pardoning, and justifying of them; and still will be in the visits of his love; in the supplies of his grace, in supporting them under afflictions, temptations, desertions, &c. and in giving them his word and ordinances for their comfort and relief: nor is this "may be" to be understood in a way of doubt or hesitation, but of good hope, yea, of a holy confidence; and so some render it, "without doubt the Lord God of hosts will be gracious" {g}, &c. see **Zep 2:3**.

{g} ylwa "sine dubio", Tarnovius; so Burkius.

Amos 5:16

Ver. 16. Therefore the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus,.... The connection of these words is not with those that immediately precede, but with the whole context; seeing neither promises nor threats, exhortations, good advice, and intimations of grace and mercy, had no effect, at least upon the generality of the people, therefore the Lord declared as follows:

wailing [shall be] in all streets; in all the streets of the towns and cities of Israel, because of the slain and wounded in them:

and they shall say in all the highways, alas! alas! in the several roads throughout the country, as travellers pass on, and persons flee from the enemy; they shall lament the state of the kingdom, and cry Woe, woe, unto it; in what a miserable condition and circumstances it is in:

and they shall call the husbandmen to mourning: who used to be better employed in tilling their land, ploughing, sowing, reaping, and gathering in the fruits of the earth; but now should have no work to do, all being destroyed, either by the hand of God, by blasting, and mildew, and vermin, or by the trampling and forage of the enemy; and so there would be just occasion for mourning:

and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing; that have got the art of mourning, and were expert in making moans, and using plaintive tones, and who assisted at funerals, and other doleful occasions; and who are made use of to this day in some countries, particularly in Ireland; and were the old Romans, by whom they were called "siticines", "praefici", and "praeficae" and these mourning men and women were also employed among the Jews at such times; see **Mt 9:23**; in **Jer 9:17**, the mourning women are called "cunning women"; and so Lucian {h} calls: them sofistav twn yrhnwn, "sophists at lamentations", artists: at them, well skilled therein, such as those are here directed to be called for. Mr. Lively, our countryman, puts both clauses together, and renders them thus, "the husbandmen shall call to mourning and wailing such as are skilful of lamentation"; to assist them therein, because of the loss of the fruits of the earth; and such a version is confirmed by Jarchi, though he paraphrases it to a different sense;

"companies of husbandmen shall meet those that plough in the fields with the voice of mourners that cry in the streets."

{h} Dialog. peri peny.

Amos 5:17

Ver. 17. And in all vineyards [shall be] wailing,.... The vines being destroyed, and no grapes to be gathered, and put into the press; when there used to be great shoutings, and large expressions of joy, at the gathering in of the vintage, and pressing the grapes; but now there shall be a different tone; see Jer 48:32;

for I will pass through thee, saith the Lord; through their cities, towns, and country, fields and vineyards, and destroy all in his way, as he passed through Egypt when he destroyed their firstborn.

Amos 5:18

Ver. 18. Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord,.... Either the day of Christ's coming in the flesh, as Cocceius interprets it; and which was desired by the people of Israel, not on account of spiritual and eternal salvation, but that they might be delivered by him from outward troubles and enemies, and enjoy temporal felicity; they had a notion of him as a temporal Saviour and Redeemer, in whose days they should possess much outward happiness, and therefore desired his coming; see **Mal 3:1**; or else the day of the Lord's judgments upon them, spoken of by the prophet, and which they were threatened with, but did not believe it would ever come; and therefore in a scoffing jeering manner, expressed their desire of it, to show their disbelief of it, and that they were in no pain or fear about it, like those in **Isa 5:19**;

to what end [is] it for you? why do you desire it? what benefit do you expect to get by it?

the day of the Lord [is] darkness, and not light; it will bring on affliction, calamities, miseries, and distress, which are often in Scripture expressed by "darkness", and not prosperity and happiness, which are sometimes signified by "light"; see **Isa 5:30**; and even the day of the coming of Christ were to the unbelieving Jews darkness, and not light; they were blinded in it, and given up to judicial blindness and darkness; they hating and rejecting the light of Christ, and his Gospel, and which issued in great calamities, in the utter ruin and destruction of that people, **Joh 3:19**.

Amos 5:19

Ver. 19. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him,.... That is, should the day of the Lord come as they desired, they would not be the better for it; it would be only going from one trouble to another, like escaping Scylla, and falling into Charybdis: or as if a man, upon the sight of a lion, and at his yell, should take to his heels, and flee "from the face" of him, as the phrase is {i}, and a bear, a less generous, and more cruel and voracious creature, especially when: bereaved of its whelps, should meet him, and seize him: or should: he get clear of them both,

or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him; should he get into a house, and so escape the lion and the bear, and lean upon the wall of the house to support and ease him, being out of breath in running from these creatures; yet a serpent lurking in the wall of an old house bites him, and the venom and poison of it issues in his death; so he gains nothing by fleeing from the lion, or escaping the bear. These proverbial expressions signify that the Israelites would be no gainers by the day of the Lord, but rather fall into greater evils, and more distressing calamities. Some Jewish writers interpret the lion and the bear of Laban and Esau; the lion (they say {k}) is Laban, who pursued after Jacob to take away his life; the bear is Esau, who stood in the way to kill all that came, the mother with the children; but are much better interpreted of the Chaldeans, Persians, and Grecians, by Jerom; whose words are,

"fleeing from the face of Nebuchadnezzar the lion, ye will be met by Ahasuerus, under whom, was the history of Esther; or the empire of the Assyrians and Chaldeans being destroyed, the Medes and Persians shall arise; and when upon the reign of Cyrus ye shall have returned, and at the command of, Darius shall have begun to build the house of the Lord, and have confidence in the temple, so as to rest in it, lean your weary hands on its walls; then shall come Alexander king of the Macedonians, or Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, who shall abide in the temple, and bite likes serpent, not without in Babylon, and in Susa, but within the borders of the holy land; by which it appears that the day ye desire is not a day of light and joy, but of darkness and sorrow."

The interpretation is pretty and ingenious enough, since the characters of the lion, bear, and serpent, agree with the respective persons and people mentioned; Nebuchadnezzar is often compared to a lion, **Jer 4:7**; and the Babylonian and Chaldean monarchy is represented by one in **Da 7:4**; and the Persian monarchy by a bear, **Da 7:5**; to which the Persians are compared, the Jews say {l}, because they eat and drink like a bear, are as fat as bears, and hairy like them, and as restless as they; and so the Persians were noted for their luxury and lust, as well as their cruelty; and, wearing long hair, are called hairy persons in the Delphic oracle, which Herodotus {m} interprets of them; See Gill on "Da 7:5"; and Antiochus may not unfitly be compared to a serpent; see
See Gill on "Da 8:23";
See Gill on "Da 8:24";
See Gill on "Da 8:25";
See Gill on "Da 11:23"; but what is to be objected to this sense is, that the words are spoken to the ten tribes, or Israel, who were carried captive by the Assyrians; and not the two tribes, or the Jews, who fell into the hands, first of the Chaldeans, then the Persians, and then the Grecians, particularly into the hands of Antiochus; see **Da 7:4**.

{i} ynpm "a facie", V. L. Pagninus; "a faciebus", Montanus; "a conspectu", Mercerus. {k} Pirke Eliezer, c. 37. fol. 41. 1. {l} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 72. 1. & Avoda Zara, fol. 2. 2. {m} Erato, sive l. 6. c. 19. Vid. Calliope, sive l. 9. c. 81.

Amos 5:20

Ver. 20. [Shall] not the day of the Lord [be] darkness, and not light?.... The design of such a question is strongly to affirm, that, in this day of the Lord spoken of, there should be nothing but misery and distress, and no prosperity and happiness, at least to the wicked Israelites, or the unbelieving Jews:

even very dark, and no brightness in it? signifying that there should be no deliverance, nor the least glimmering view or hope of it; that the calamity should be so very great, and the destruction so entire, that there should be no mixture of mercy, nor the least appearance of relief.

Amos 5:21

Ver. 21. I hate, I despise your feast days,.... Kimchi thinks this is said, and what follows, with respect to the kingdom of the house of Judah, which kept the feast the Lord commanded; but it is not necessary so to understand it; for doubtless the ten tribes imitated the worship at Jerusalem, and kept the feasts as the Jews did there, in the observance of which they trusted; but the Lord rejects their vain confidence, and lets them know that these were no ways acceptable to him; and were so far from atoning for their sins, that they were hated, abhorred, and despised by him, being observed in such a manner and with such a view as they were;

and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies; a sweet savour of rest, as in **Ge 8:21**; take no pleasure in their duties and services performed, in their solemn assemblies convened together for religious purposes, nor accept of them; but, on the contrary, dislike and abhor them; see **Isa 1:11**.

Amos 5:22

Ver. 22. Though ye offer me burnt offerings, and your meat offerings, I will not accept [them],.... The daily burnt offerings, morning and night, and others which were wholly the Lord's; and the "minchah", or bread offering, which went along with them; in which they thought to do God service, and to merit his favour; but instead of that they were unacceptable to him, being neither offered up in a proper place, if in a right manner according to the law of Moses; however, not in the faith of the great sacrifice, Christ; nor attended with repentance towards God:

neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts; even though their peace offerings were of the best of the herd. Aben Ezra says the creature here meant is the same which in the Ishmaelitish or Arabic language is called "giamus", a creature bigger than an ox, and like one, which is called a buffle or buffalo. And so Ben Melech says it means one of the kinds of the larger cattle; for not a lamb, a ram, or a sheep, is meant, as the word is sometimes rendered by the Septuagint, but a creature like an ox; not larger, or the wild ox, as the above Hebrew writers, but smaller; with which agrees the description Bellonius {n} gives of the Syrian "bubalus" or "buffalo", which he calls a small ox, full bodied, little, smooth, sleek, fat, and well made; and is no doubt the same the Arabs call "almari", from its smoothness.

{n} Apud Bochart. Hierozoic. p. 1. l. 2. c. 28. col. 283.

Amos 5:23

Ver. 23. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs,.... The ten tribes, very probably, imitated the, temple music at Jerusalem, both vocal and instrumental, and had their songs and hymns of praise, which they sung to certain tunes; but the music of these is called a noise, being very disagreeable to the Lord, as coming from such carnal and wicked persons; and therefore he desires it might cease, be took away, and he be no more troubled with it:

for I will not hear the melody of thy viols: which may be put for all instruments of music used by them, as violins, harps, psalteries, &c. the sound of which, how melodious soever, the, Lord would turn a deaf ear unto, and not regard.

Amos 5:24

Ver. 24. But let judgments run down as waters,.... Or "roll" {o}; in abundance, with great rapidity, bearing down all before them, which nothing can resist; signifying the plenty of justice done in the land, the full and free exercise of it, without any stoppage or intermission:

and righteousness as a mighty stream; the same thing expressed in different words; though some think that not the execution of judgment and justice by men is here exhorted to, but the vindictive justice of God is threatened; which like a mighty torrent of water should come down, overwhelm, bear away, and destroy all before it, even all the transgressors in Israel.

{o} lgyw "volvatur", Munster, Mercerus, Liveleus, Drusius; "volvat se", Montanus, Vatablus; "revolvet se", Piscator; "provolvatur", Cocceius.

Amos 5:25

Ver. 25. Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings,.... No; they were not offered to God, but to devils, to the golden calf, and to the host of heaven: so their fathers did

in the wilderness forty years; where sacrifices were omitted during that time, a round number for a broken one, it being about thirty eight years; and these their children were imitators of them, and offered sacrifice to idols too, and therefore deserved punishment as they: even ye,

O house of Israel? the ten tribes, who are here particularly charged and threatened; See Gill on "Ac 7:42".

Amos 5:26

Ver. 26. But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch,.... The god of the Ammonites; See Gill on "Am 1:13"; and
See Gill on "Jer 7:31"; called theirs, because they also worshipped it, and caused their seed to pass through the fire to it; and which was carried by them in a shrine, or portable tent or chapel. Or it may be rendered, "but ye have borne Siccuth your king" {p}; and so Siccuth may be taken for the name of an idol, as it is by Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, to whom they gave the title of king, as another idol went by the name of the queen of heaven; perhaps by one was meant the sun, and by the other the moon;

and Chiun, your images; Moloch or Siccuth was one, and Chiun another image, or rather the same; and this the same with Chevan, which in the Arabic and Persic languages is the name of Saturn, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi say; and is so rendered by Montanus here; and who in the Egyptian tongue was called Revan, or Rephan, or Remphan; as by the Septuagint here, and in **Ac 7:43**;

the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves; or the star "your god" {q}; meaning the same with Chiun or Saturn; perhaps the same with the star that fell from the air or sky, mentioned by Sanchoniatho {r}; which Astarte, the wife of Chronus or Saturn, is said to take and consecrate in Tyre; this they made for themselves, and worshipped as a deity. The Targum is,

"ye have borne the tabernacle of your priests, Chiun your image, the star your God, which ye have made to yourselves."

Various are the senses put upon the word Chiun. Some read it Cavan, and take it to signify a "cake"; in which sense the word is used in **Jer 7:18**; and render it, "the cake of your images" {s}; and supposing that it had the image of their gods impressed upon it. Calmet interprets it "the pedestal of your images" {t}; and indeed the word has the signification of a basis, and is so rendered by some {u}; and is applicable to Moloch their king, a king being the basis and foundation of the kingdom and people; and to the sun, intended by that deity, which is the basis of the celestial bodies, and of all things on earth. Some take Moloch and Chiun to be distinct deities, the one to be the sun, the other the moon; but they seem rather to be the same, and both to be the Egyptian ox, and the calf of the Israelites in the wilderness, the image of which was carried in portable tents or tabernacles, in chests or shrines; such as the Succothbenoth, or tabernacles of Venus, 2Ki 17:30; and those of Diana's, Ac 19:24; the first of these portable temples we read of, is one drawn by oxen in Phoenicia, mentioned by Sanchoniatho {w}; not that the Israelites carried such a tent or tabernacle during their travels through the wilderness, whatever they might do the few days they worshipped the calf; but this is to be understood of their posterity in later times, in the times of Amos; and also when Shalmaneser carried them captive beyond Damascus, as follows. It may be further observed, for the confirmation and illustration of what has been said concerning Chiun, that the Egyptian Anubis, which Plutarch {x} says is the same with Saturn, is called by him Kyon, which seems to be no other than this word Chiun: and whereas Stephen calls it Rephan, this is not a corruption of the word, reading Rephan or Revan for Chevan; nor has he respect to Rimmon, the god of the Syrians, but it is the Egyptian name for Saturn; which the Septuagint interpreters might choose to make use of, they interpreting for the king of Egypt: and Diodorus Siculus {y} makes mention of an Egyptian king called Remphis, whom Braunius {z} takes to be this very Chiun; see **Ac 7:43**; but Rephas, or Rephan, was the same with Chronus, or Saturn, from whence came the Rephaim {a}, who dwelt in Ashtaroth Karnaim, a town of Ham or Chronus; see Ge 14:5. Some {b}, who take Siccuth for an idol, render it in the future, "ye shall carry", &c. and take it to be a prediction of Amos, that the Israelites should, with great reproach and ignominy, be obliged by the Assyrians, as they were led captive, to carry on their shoulders the idols they had worshipped, and in vain had trusted in, as used to be done in triumphs; See Gill on "Am 1:15".

{p} Mkklm twko "Siccuth regem vestrum", Munster, Montanus, Vatablus, Calvin, Mercerus. {q} Mkyhla bkwk "sidus deum vestrum", Liveleus; "sidus, [vel] stellam deos vestros", Calvin. {r} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 38. {s} Mkymlu Nwyk "placentam imagiuum vestrarum", Pagninus, Tigurine version, Vatablus. {t} Dictionary, in the word "Chiun". {u} "Basim imaginum vestrarum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "statumen", Burkius. {w} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 35. {x} De Iside. {y} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 56. {z} Selecta Sacra. l. 4. c. 9. sect. 132. p. 435. {a} Vid. Cumberland's Sanchoniatho, p. 120. {b} Vid. Scholia Quinquarborei in loc. So Jarchi and Lyra.

Amos 5:27

Ver. 27. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus,.... The chief city of Syria; and which, as Aben Ezra says, lay to the east of the land of Israel, and was a very strong and fortified place: and Syria being in alliance with Israel, the Israelites might think of fleeing thither for refuge, in the time of their distress; but they are here told that they should be taken captive, and be carried to places far more remote than that: Stephen says, "beyond Babylon"; as they were, for they were carried into Media, to Halah and Habor by the river of Gozan, to the cities of the Medes; their way to which lay through Syria and Babylon;
See Gill on "Ac 7:43";

saith the Lord, whose name [is] the God of hosts; and therefore is able to do what he threatens; and it might be depended upon it would be certainly done, as it is clear, beyond all contradiction, it has been done; see 2Ki 17:6.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Amos 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO AMOS 6

This chapter seems to be directed both to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the ten tribes of Israel, under the names of Zion and Samaria, and to the principal men in both; who are reproved and threatened for their carnal security and self-confidence, being in no fear of the evil day, though they had no reason for it no more than other people, **Am 6:1**; are charged with wantonness, luxury, intemperance, and want of sympathy with those in distress, **Am 6:4**; therefore are threatened to be carried captive first, and their city to be delivered up; which, for the certainty of it, is not only said, but swore to, **Am 6:7**; and a great mortality in every house, and the destruction of all houses, both great and small, **Am 6:9**; and since a reformation of them seemed impracticable, and not to be expected, but they gloried in their wealth, and boasted of their strength, therefore they should be afflicted by a foreign nation raised against them, which affliction should be general, from one end of the country to the other, **Am 6:12**.

Ver. 1. Woe to them [that are] at ease in Zion,.... Or "secure" {c} there; which was a strong hold, the city of David, the seat of the kings of Judah; where their court was kept, and the princes and chief men resided and thought themselves safe, the place being well fortified with walls, towers, and bulwarks: or "at ease"; that is, in easy, prosperous, comfortable circumstances of life; as Job was before his troubles, and others he mentions, Job 16:12; though to be in such a state is not criminal, but a blessing of Providential goodness, for which men should be thankful, and make use of it aright: but "woe to the rich in Zion" {d}, as the Vulgate Latin Version renders it, when they have nothing else but temporal riches; this is all their portion, and the whole of their consolation, **Lu 6:24**; when they trust in these uncertain riches, and consume them on their lusts, as described in the following verses; are unconcerned at the troubles of others, and give them no relief, but despise them, Job 12:5; and even are thoughtless about their own future state, and put away the evil day far from them, Lu 12:19; and such are they who like Moab are at ease from their youth as to their spiritual state, Jer 48:11; never had any true sight of sin, or sense of danger; never complain of a body of sin, or are concerned about sins of omission or commission; nor troubled with the temptations of Satan, and have no fears and doubts about their happiness; and such there be who yet are in Zion, or in a church state, which Zion often signifies; and being there, trust in it, and in the privileges of it, and so are secure, and at ease; such are the foolish virgins and hypocrites, who place their confidence in a profession of religion, in being church members, and in their submission to external ordinances, and so cry Peace, peace, to themselves, when, destruction is at hand: and are moreover at ease, and wholly unconcerned about the affairs of Zion, both temporal and spiritual, and especially the latter; they do not trouble themselves about the doctrines they hear, whether truth or error; and about the success of them, whether they are made useful for conversion and edification; and about the continuance of a Gospel ministry, and a succession in it; and about the discipline of the church of God, and the walk of professors; or about what trials and afflictions are like to come upon the churches; or about the judgments of God in the earth; and therefore such carnal secure persons are either called upon to awake out of their sleep, and come off of their beds of ease, and shake off their vain confidence and carnal security; for the word may be rendered "ho" {e}, as a note of calling, as in Isa 55:1; or a threatening of calamity is denounced upon them, that the day of the Lord should come upon them as a thief in the night, or as a snare upon them that dwell on earth, and they be surprised with the midnight cry, and with the terrors of devouring flames, as the foolish virgins and hypocrite's in Zion will, Mt 25:6. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "who despise Zion", or "neglect" her; and the word is sometimes used of insolent persons, and to express their insolence; see Isa 37:29; and so may be understood, not of the Jews in Jerusalem, but of the ten tribes, as the following clause; who despised Zion, the city of solemnities, the temple; and, the worship of God there, and set up the calves at Dan and Bethel, and worshipped them; and therefore a woe is denounced upon them;

and trust in the mountain of Samaria; in the city of Samaria, built on a mountain, a strong fortified city, where they thought themselves safe; the royal city of the kings of Israel, the head of Ephraim, and the metropolis of the ten tribes, who here are intended: though the words may be rendered, and the sense given a little different from this, as woe to the "confident" ones that ate in Samaria {f}; not that put their trust in Samaria, but dwell there; but, however, are confident in their own strength, wealth, and might. The Targum is,

"that trust in the fortress of Samaria;"

see 1Ki 16:24;

[which are] named the chief of the nations; the persons at ease in Zion, and trusted in Samaria, were the principal men of both nations, Judah and Israel; or these cities of Zion and Samaria were the chief of the said nations: Zion, Which was near Jerusalem, and includes it, was the metropolis of Judea; as Samaria was the head city of Ephraim, or the ten tribes. The Targum is, that

"put the name of their children, as the name of the children of the nations;"

as the Jews did in later times, giving their children the names of Alexander, Antipater, &c.

to whom the house of Israel came; meaning not to the seven nations, of which the two named cities were chief, into which Israel entered, and took possession of, and dwelt in; for Samaria never belonged to them, but was built by Omri king of Israel, long after the entrance of the Israelites into the land of Canaan, 1Ki 16:24; but the cities of Zion and, Samaria, into which the whole house of Israel came, or had recourse unto, at certain times: the ten tribes came to Samaria, where their kings resided, the court was kept, and the seats of judgment were; and the two tribes came to Zion, to Jerusalem, to the temple there, to worship the Lord.

{c} Mynnavh "secure sedentibus", Munster; "securos", Mercerus, Castalio, Burkius. {d} "Opulentis", Tigurine version. {e} ywh "heus", Piscator, Tarnovius, Burkius. {f} Nwrmv rhb Myxjbh "confidentibus qui habitant in monte Samariae", Liveleus; "securis qui habitant in monte", Samariae, Drusius.

Amos 6:2

Ver. 2. Pass ye unto Calneh, and see,.... What is become of that city, which was in the land of Shinar, an ancient city, as early as the days of Nimrod, and built by him, and was with others the beginning of his kingdom, Ge 10:10; it belonged to Babylon, and is by Jarchi here interpreted by it, being put for Babel, as he supposes. According to Jerom {g}, it is the same city, sometimes called Seleucia, in his days Ctesiphon; very probably it had been lately taken by the king of Assyria, and therefore made mention of; see Isa 10:9; where it is called Calno;

and from thence go ye to Hamath the great; the same with Antiochia, as Jarchi and Jerom; called the great, to distinguish it from Hamath the less, sometimes called Epiphania; or from Hamathzobah, near Tadmor, or Palmyra, in the wilderness, **2Ch 8:3**; though it might be so called with respect to its own grandeur and magnificence; as Sidon is called "Sidon the great", though there was no other, Jos 11:8; for it was a royal city; we read of Toi, king of Hamath, in the times of David, **2Sa 8:9**. It is placed by Josephus {h} on the north of the land of Canaan; and so it appears to be, and to be between Damascus and the Mediterranean sea, from Eze 47:15. Abu'lfeda {i}, a learned prince, who reigned in Hamath, and should know its situation, places it on the Orontes, between Hems and Apamea, that river surrounding it on the east and north. The learned Vitringa {k} thinks that neither Antiochia nor Epiphania are meant, but the city Emissa; which Ammianus Marcellinus {l} makes mention of along with Damascus, as a famous city in Syria, equal to Tyre, Sidon, and Berytus: and of the same opinion was Theodoret {m} among the ancients, and so Calmet {n} of late. And so Hamath and Damascus are mentioned together as recovered by Jeroboam, 2Ki 14:28; very probably the kingdom of Hamath became subject to the kings of Damascus; see Jer 49:23; but, be it what place it will, it is very likely it had been lately spoiled by the king of Assyria; see Isa 37:13.

then go down to Gath of the Philistines; one of their five principalities, and a chief one, so called to distinguish it from other Gaths, as Gathhepher, Gathrimmon. It stood about five or six miles south of Jamnia, about fourteen south of Joppa, and thirty two west of Jerusalem. A village of this name as shown, as Jerom {o} says, five miles from Eleutheropolis, as you go to Diospolis or Lydda, and is taken to be the same place. It is famous for being the birthplace of Goliath; and is called in **2Sa 8:1**; compared with 1Ch 18:1, Methegammah, or the bridle of Ammah, or Metheg and her mother; that is, Gath and her daughters. Reland {p} thinks Gath is the city Cadytis of Herodotus {q}, who says it is a city of the Syrians, called Palestines or Philistines, and speaks of the mountains of it; and this city was not far from the mountainous country of Judea: now this city had been taken by Hazael, king of Syria, and its wall was broke down by Uzziah, king of Judah, 2Ki 12:17;

[be they] better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border? that is, do Calneh, Hamath, and Gath, excel in dignity and grandeur, in wealth and strength, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah? or are they of a larger circumference, and exceed them in length and breadth? no, they did not; and therefore the more ungrateful were Israel and Judah to sin against the Lord as they had done, who had given them such rich and large kingdoms, and therefore might expect to be taken and spoiled as well as they: though some think there is a change of number and persons in the text, and that the sense is, are you better than these kingdoms, or your border greater than theirs? and, if not, you may expect to fare as they; see a like expression in **Na 3:8**.

{g} Quaest. in Gen. fol. 66. M. {h} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 1. {i} See the Universal History, vol. 2. p. 316. {k} Comment. in Jessiam, c. 10. 9. {l} Lib. 23. {m} Comment. in Jer. ii. 15. and xlix. 23. {n} Dictionary, in the word "Hamath". {o} De locis Hebr. fol. 92. A. {p} Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. l. 3. p. 669. {q} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 159. & Thalia, sive l. 3. c. 5.

Amos 6:3

Ver. 3. Ye that put far away the evil day,.... The day of Israel's captivity, threatened by, the Lord, and prophesied of by the prophets; by this prophet, and by Hoshea and others: this they endeavoured to put out of their minds and thoughts, and supposed it to be at a great distance, yea, hoped it never would be; and like the Jews, with respect to their captivity, and the destruction of their city, said it was not near, but prolonged, yea, would never come to pass, Eze 11:3; so some men put far from them the day of death; which though to a good man is better than the day of his birth, yet to a wicked man is an evil and

terrible day; he do not care to hear or speak, or think of it, lest it should dampen his carnal joys and pleasures: as also the day of Christ's coming to judgment; which though a good man hastens to in his affections, desires, and prayers, wicked men set at the greatest distance, yea, scoff at it, as believing it never will be, and to show that they are in no pain or uneasiness about it; see Isa 56:12. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "who are separated to the evil day"; appointed to it; foreordained to this condemnation; destined to ruin and destruction for their sins; see
Pr 16:4;

and cause the seat of violence to come near; boldly venture upon the commission of acts of injustice, rapine, and violence, on a presumption the evil day threatened will never come; or place themselves on the bench in courts of judicature, and there, without any manner of concern, commit the greatest acts of unrighteousness, as believing they shall never be called to an account for them by God or man.

Amos 6:4

Ver. 4. That lie upon beds of ivory,.... That were made of it, or inlaid with it, or covered with it, as the Targum; nor was it improbable that these were made wholly of ivory, for such beds we read of: Timaeus says {r}, the Agrigentines had beds entirely made of ivory; and Horace {s} also speaks of such beds: and if any credit can be given to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem on Ge 50:1. Joseph made his father Jacob to lie on a bed of ivory. Indeed, the Latin interpreters of these Targums render it a cedar bed; but Buxtorf {t} conjectures that ivory is meant by the word used; and so Bochart {u} translates it; on these they lay either for sleep and rest, or to eat their meals;

and stretch themselves upon their couches; for the same purposes, living in great splendour, and indulging themselves in ease and sloth; as it was the custom of the eastern countries, and is of the Arabs now; that they make little or no use of chairs, but either sitting cross legged, or lying at length, have couches to lie on at their meals; and when they indulge to ease, they cover or spread their floors with carpets, which for the most part are of the richest materials. Along the sides of the wall or floor, a range of narrow beds or mattresses is often placed upon these carpets; and, for their further ease and convenience, several velvet or damask bolsters are placed upon these, or mattresses {w}, to lean upon, and take their ease; see

Eze 13:18; and thus, and in some such like manner, did the principal men of the people of Israel indulge themselves. Some render it, "abound with superfluities"; the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, "are lascivious"; and the Arabic version, "burn in lust"; and so some of the Jewish writers interpret it of their committing adulteries, and all uncleanness, on their beds and couches;

and eat the lambs out of the flock; pick the best and fattest of them for their use: so the Targum,

"eat the fat of the sheep:"

and the calves out of the midst of the stall; where they are put, and kept to be fattened; from thence they took what they liked best, and perhaps not out of theft own flocks and stalls, but out of others, and with which they pampered themselves to excess.

{r} Apud Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 29. {s} "----Rubro ubi cocco Tincta super lectos canderet vestis eburnos". Horat. Serm. l. 2. Satyr. 6. v. 102. {t} Lexic. Talmud. col. 2475. {u} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 24. col. 252. {w} See Shaw's Travels, p. 209. Ed. 2.

Amos 6:5

Ver. 5. That chant to the sound of the viol,.... Or psaltery; an instrument of twelve cords, and that gave twelve sounds, as Josephus {x} says, being stricken with the fingers; and to these sounds these men chanted or quivered, made like sounds with their voice, which they raised higher or lower, according to the sound of the instrument: they "particularized", as the word signifies {y}; or observed the divisions and distinctions of notes and sounds, by the modulation of their voice:

[and] invent to themselves instruments of music, like David: not content with old ones, such as were used in former times, they invented new instruments and new tunes, and new songs to sing to them; as David made songs and invented several instruments of music to sing them upon and to, in religious worship, and for the praise and glory of God; so these men invented new ones to indulge their carnal mirth and jollity, in which they thought themselves to be justified by the example of David.

{x} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 19. sect. 3. {y} Myjrwph "particularizantes", Montanus; "qui particularia habent cantica", Pagninus; "qui particulatim canunt", Vatablus, Mercerus; "variis modulationibus concinunt", Tigurine version.

Amos 6:6

Ver. 6. That drink wine in bowls,.... Not in small cups or glasses, but in large bowls, that they might drink freely, even to drunkenness; hence we read of the drunkards of Ephraim, or the ten tribes, Isa 28:1; or "drink in bowls of wine"; which is much to the: same sense. The Targum is,

"that drink wine in silver phials;"

and anoint themselves with the, chief ointments; which Jarchi says was balsam, and the best is that which grew about Jericho; this they did not for moderate refreshment, but for pleasure, and to indulge themselves in luxury:

but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph; or the "breach" of him {z}; that was made upon him by some enemy or another: either what had been already made; Kimchi thinks it respects the carrying captive of some before the reign of Jeroboam; or it may regard the distress Pul king of Assyria gave to Israel, in the times of Menahem; or the carrying captive the inhabitants of several places by Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria, in the times of Pekah, 2Ki 15:19; or else, as Jarchi thinks, this refers to some breach and affliction to come, which these men were unconcerned about; even what they heard from the mouth of the prophets should come to them; that the kingdom of the house of Israel should case, and be utterly took away, **Ho 1:4**; which was fulfilled by Shalmaneser, who carried Israel captive into the cities of the Medes, 2Ki 17:6; but the prophecy of this did not trouble them, or make them sick at heart, as the word {a} signifies, nor any present affliction that might attend them; they did not weep with them that weep, were men of hard hearts, that had no sympathy with their brethren and fellow creatures. It is thought that here is some allusion to the attitude of Joseph's brethren to him, when in the pit, and sold by them into Egypt; or to the chief butler's forgetfulness of him, when advanced, and amidst his cups.

{z} rbv le "super contritione", Pagninus, Montanus; "propter confractienem Josephi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ob fractionem Josephi", Cocceius. {a} wlxn al "neque afficiuntur argritudine", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Amos 6:7

Ver. 7. Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive,.... That is, these men, who were the first and chief in the nation, who would not believe the day of Israel's captivity would ever come; or, however, had very distant apprehensions of it; but indulged and gratified their several senses of tasting, hearing, smelling, in a carnal way, and had no sympathy with and compassion upon their afflicted brethren; these should be the first the enemy should lay hold upon, and carry captive; as we find the royal family, the princes and nobles, the courtiers and chief tradesmen, were the first that were carried captive of the Jews, in Jeconiah's captivity, 2Ki 24:12;

and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed; that stretched themselves upon couches, **Am 6:4**; they shall have no more banquets or feasting bouts to attend to, by stretching themselves out, and lying upon couches at their ease; these shall be taken from them; and be glad of bread and water in an enemy's country, without a couch to recline upon. Some understand this of a funeral banquet, as in Jer 16:5; and so the sense is, that when they die, they shall not have that honour done to their memory, as to have a funeral feast provided for those that attend their burial, as was customary. Kimchi interprets it, "the mourning [of such] shall draw nigh" {b}; and according to his father, Joseph Kimchi, the word in the Arabic language signifies to lift up the voice, either in mourning or joy; and so may signify, that as all feasts, and the joy that attends them, should be removed, which is the sense of the Targum, instead of that, mourning should take place; or they should be deprived of the common ceremony at death of mourning men and women.

{b} ro "ad veniet", Munster; "appropinquabit", Mercerus; "veniet", Calvin. So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 84. 2.

Amos 6:8

Ver. 8. The Lord God hath sworn by himself,.... Because he could swear by no greater, **Heb 6:13**; which shows the importance and certainty of the thing sworn to, and is as follows:

saith the Lord, the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob; or, "the pride of Jacob" {c}; of Israel, of the ten tribes, remarkable for their pride; hence called the crown of pride, Isa 28:3; it may include all that was glorious, valuable, and excellent among them, of which they were proud; their kingdom, riches, wealth, and strength, their fortified cities and towns: if Judah is comprehended in this, it may regard the temple, which was their excellency, and in which they gloried. So the Targum paraphrases it,

"the house of the sanctuary of the house of Jacob;"

and in like manner Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it;

and hate his palaces; the palaces of the king and nobles, and great men, which should fall into the enemy's hand, and be plundered and destroyed; which is meant by the Lord's abhorrence and hatred of them, this being an evidence of it;

therefore will I deliver up the city, with all that is therein; or, "with its fulness" {d}; with all its inhabitants and riches; according to Jarchi, the city of Jerusalem is meant; though rather the city of Samaria, unless both are intended, city for cities; since the chief men both of Israel and Judah seem to be addressed, **Am 6:1**.

{c} Nwag ta "superbiam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "fastium", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius. {d} halmw "et plenitudinem ejus", Mercerus, Piscator, Cocceius.

Amos 6:9

Ver. 9. And it shall come to pass,.... When the city is delivered up and taken:

if there remain; who are not carried captive, or destroyed by the sword:

ten men in one house; that is, many, a certain number for an uncertain:

that they shall die; either with famine, or by the pestilence, though they have escaped the other calamities; so general shall the destruction be, by one means or another.

Amos 6:10

Ver. 10. And a man's uncle shall take him up,.... That is, his father's brother, as Kimchi; or his near kinsman, as the Targum; to whom the right of inheritance belongs, and also the care of his funeral; he shall take up the dead man himself, in order to inter him, there being none to employ in such service; the mortality being so universal, either through the pestilence raging everywhere, or through the earthquake, men being killed by the fall of houses upon them; which Aben Ezra takes to be the case here; see **Am 6:11**;

and he that burneth him; which may be read disjunctively, "or he that burneth him" {e}; his mother's brother, according to Judah ben Karis in Aben Ezra; for which there seems to be no foundation. The Targum renders it in connection with the preceding clause,

"shall take him up from burning;"

and so Jarchi interprets of a man's being found, and taken up in a house, burnt by the enemy at the taking of the city: but it is best to understand it of one whose business it was to burn the dead; which, though not commonly used among the Jews, sometimes was, 1Sa 31:12; and so should be at this time, partly because of the infection, and to stop the contagion; and chiefly because a single man could not well carry whole bodies to the grave, to bury them; and therefore first burnt their flesh, and then buried their bones, as follows:

to bring out the bones out of the house; in order to bury them:

and shall say unto him that [is] by the sides of the house; or "in the corner of it" {f}, as the Targum; either the uncle shall say to the burner, that is searching the house for the dead; or the uncle and burner, being one and the same person, shall say to the only surviving one of the ten, that is got into some corner of the house through fear or melancholy, under such a sad calamity,

[is there] yet [any] with thee? any dead corpse to be brought out and burned and buried?

and he shall say, no; there are no more: or "[there is] an end" of them all {g}; the last has been brought out: or, as the Targum,

"they are perished;"

they are all dead, and carried out:

then shall he say, hold thy tongue; lest the neighbours should hear, and be discouraged at the number of the dead in one house; or say not one word against the providence of God, nor murmur and repine at his hand, since it is just and righteous:

for we may not make mention of the name of the Lord; being forbid by their superiors; or it is not right to do it by way of complaint, since our sins have deserved such judgments to come upon us; or it will be to no purpose to make mention of the name of the Lord, and pray unto him to turn away his hand, since destruction is determined, the decree is gone forth. The Targum is,

"he shall say, remove (that is, the dead), since while they lived they did not pray in the name of the Lord."

And so the Syriac and Arabic versions make this to be the reason of the mortality, "because they remembered not the name of the Lord"; or, "called not upon" it.

{e} wpromw "aut vespillo", Tigurine version; "aut ustor ejus", Junius & Tremellius. {f} ytkryb "in penitissimis domus", Cocceius. {g} opa "finis est", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Calvin, Drusius.

Amos 6:11

Ver. 11. For, behold, the Lord commandeth,.... Hath determined and ordered the judgment before, and what follows: Kimchi paraphrases it, hath decreed the earthquake, as in **Am 3:15**; of which he understands the following:

and he will smite the great house with breaches; or "droppings" {h}; so that the rain shall drop through:

and the little house with clefts; so that it shall fall to ruin; that is, he shall smite the houses both of great and small, of the princes, and of the common people, either with an earthquake, so that they shall part asunder and fall; or, being left without inhabitants, shall of course become desolate, there being none to repair their breaches. Some understand, by the "great house", the ten tribes of Israel; and, by the "little house", the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; to which sense the Targum seems to incline,

"he will smite the great kingdom with a mighty stroke, and the little kingdom with a weak stroke."

{h} Myoyor "guttis, [seu] stillis", Piscator; qekadev, "quae est minuta et rorans pluvia", Drusius.

Amos 6:12

Ver. 12. Shall horses run upon the rocks? or will [one] plough [there] with oxen?.... Will any man be so weak and foolish, to propose or attempt a race for horses upon rocks, where they and their riders would be in danger of breaking their necks? or would any man act so unwise a part, as to take a yoke of oxen to plough with them upon a rock, where no impression can be made? as vain and fruitless a thing it would be to attempt to bring such persons under a conviction of their sins, and to repentance for them, and reformation from them, who are given up to a judicial hardness of heart, like that of a rock, as are the persons described in the next clause; or as such methods with horses and oxen would be contrary to all the rules of reason and prudence, so as contrary a part do such persons act whose characters are next given, and there is no probability of bringing them to better sense and practice of things;

for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock; that which would be beneficial to a nation, than which nothing is more so, as the exercise of justice, and judgment, into that which is bitter and pernicious to it, as injustice and oppression; see **Am 5:7**.

Amos 6:13

Ver. 13. Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought,.... In their wealth and riches, which are things that are not, because of the uncertainty of them; and, in comparison of true riches, have no solidity and substance in them, Pr 23:5; or in any of the things of this world, the lusts of it, the honours of it, human wisdom or strength; all are things of nought, of no worth, give no satisfaction, and are of no continuance, and not to be gloried in, **Jer 9:23**; or in their idols, for an idol is nothing in the world, **1Co 8:4**; and yet they rejoiced in them, **Ac 7:41**; or in their own works of righteousness, as men of a pharisaical temper do, as these people were; these indeed are something, when done in obedience to the will of God, and according to that, and from right principles, and in the exercise of faith and love, and with a view to the glory of God, and as they are evidences of true grace, and profitable to men, and tend to glorify God, and serve the interest of religion; but they are things of nought, and not to be rejoiced and gloried in, in the business of justification before God, and in the affair of salvation: the same may be said of a mere outward profession of religion depended on, and all external rites and ceremonies, or submission to outward ordinances, whether legal or evangelical. The phrase may be rendered, "in that which is no word" {i}; is not the word of God, nor according to it; indeed everything short of Christ and his righteousness, and salvation by him, are things of nought, and not to be rejoiced in, **Php 3:3**;

which say, have we not taken to us horns by our own strength? by which we have pushed our enemies, got victory over them, and obtained power, dominion, and authority; all which horns are an emblem of. So Sanchoniatho {k} says, Astarte put upon her own head a bull's head, as an ensign of royalty, or a mark of sovereignty; by which, as Bishop Cumberland {l} thinks, is plainly meant the bull's horns, since it is certain that a horn, in the eastern languages, is an emblem or expression noting royal power, as in **1Sa 2:10**; and in other places; see **Da 7:24**; thus the kings of Egypt wore horns, as Diodorus relates; and perhaps for the same reason the Egyptians adorned Isis with horns {m}. And all this they ascribed not to God, but to themselves. The Targum interprets "horns" by riches; but it rather signifies victory {n}, and power and government, which they took to themselves, and imputed to their own strength, valour, and courage: very probably here is an allusion to their ensigns, banners, shields, or helmets, on which horns might be figured or engraven, being the arms of Ephraim, the son of Joseph, the chief of the ten tribes, who are here spoken of Ephraim is often put for the ten tribes, or the kingdom of Israel; and Joseph, whose son he was, "his glory [was] like the firstling of a bullock, [and] his horns" are said to be like "the horns of unicorns: with them", it is promised, "he shall push the people together, to the ends of the earth, and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh", De 33:17; and it may be, as the lion seems to be the ensign of the tribe of Judah, to which he is by Jacob compared; so the ox or the unicorn might be the ensign of the tribe of Ephraim: and so the ancient Jews, as Aben Ezra on **Nu 2:2**; observes, say, that the form of a man was on the standard of Reuben; and the form of a lion on the standard of Judah; and the form of an ox on the standard of Ephraim, &c. and others {o} of them say that the standard of Joseph was dyed very black, and was figured for the two princes of Ephraim and Manasseh; upon the standard of Ephraim was figured an ox, because "the firstling of a bullock"; and on the standard of Manasseh was figured an unicorn, because "his horns are like the horns of unicorns". Now the Israelites, or those of the ten tribes, at the head of which Ephraim was, set up their banners, not in the name of the Lord, but in their own strength; and attributed their conquests and dominions to their own conduct and courage, the horns of their own strength, and not to God {p}. And this also is the language of such persons, who ascribe regeneration and conversion, faith, repentance, the cleansing of a man's heart, and the reformation of his life, yea, his whole salvation, to the power and strength of his free will, when man has no strength at all to effect any of these things; these are all vain boasts, and very disagreeable and offensive to the Lord; and for such like things persons stand here reproved by him, and threatened with woes; for woe must be here supplied from **Am 6:1**.

{i} rbd all "in non verbo", Montanus. {k} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Prepar. l. 2. p. 38. {l} Sanchoniatho's History, p. 35. {m} Vid. Pignorii Mensa Isiaca, p. 30. {n} "Vieimus, et domitum pedibus calcamus amorem, Venerunt capiti cornua sera meo". Ovid. Amor. l. 3. Eleg. 10. {o} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 178. 3. {p} Vid. Lydium de Re Militari, l. 4. c. 4. p. 164.

Amos 6:14

Ver. 14. But, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the Lord, the God of hosts,.... The Assyrian nation, under its king, Shalmaneser; who invaded Israel, came up to Samaria, and after a three years' siege took it, and carried Israel captive into foreign lands, 2Ki 17:5;

and they shall afflict you; by battles, sieges, forages, plunders, and burning of cities and towns, and putting the inhabitants to the sword:

from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of the wilderness; from Hamath the less, said by Josephus {q} and Jerom {r} to be called Epiphania, in their times, from Antiochus Epiphanes; it was at the entrance on the land of Israel, and at the northern border of it; so that "the river of the wilderness", whatever is meant by it, lay to the south; by which it appears that this affliction and distress would be very general, from one end of it to the other. Some, by this river, understand the river of Egypt, at the entrance of Egypt in the wilderness of Ethan; Sihor or Nile; which, Jarchi says, lay southwest of Israel, as Hamath lay northwest of it. And a late traveller {s} observes, that the south and southwest border of the tribe of Judah, containing within it the whole or the greatest part of what was called the "way of the spies", Nu 21:1; and afterwards Idumea, extended itself from the Elenitic gulf of the Red sea, along by that of Hieropolis, quite to the Nile westward; the Nile consequently, in this view and situation, either with regard to the barrenness of the Philistines, or to the position of it with respect to the land of promise, or to the river Euphrates, may, with propriety enough, be called "the river of the wilderness", **Am 6:14**; as this district, which lies beyond the eastern or Asiatic banks of the Nile, from the parallel of Memphis, even to Pelusium, (the land of Goshen only excepted,) is all of it dry, barren, and inhospitable; or if the situation be more regarded, it may be called, as it is rendered by the Septuagint, the western torrent or river. Though some {t} take this to be the river Bosor or Bezor, that parts the tribes, of Judah and Simeon, and discharges itself into the Mediterranean between Gaza, or rather Majuma, and Anthedon. Though Kimchi takes this river to be the sea of the plain, the same with the Salt or Dead sea, **De 3:17**; which may seem likely, since Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, under whom Amos prophesied, had restored the coast of Israel, from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, 2Ki 14:25; with which they were elevated, and of which they boasted; but now they should have affliction and distress in the same places, and which should extend as far.

{q} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 2. {r} Comment in Isa. x. fol. 20. G. & in Zech. ix. fol. 116. L. De locis Heb. fol. 88. E. & Quaest. in Gen. fol. 67. B. {s} Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 287, 288. Ed. 2. {t} See the Universal History, vol. 2. p. 427, 428.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Amos 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO AMOS 7

In this and the two following chapters are the visions of Amos, in number five; three of which are contained in this chapter, and with which it begins. The first is of the grasshoppers or locusts eating up the later grass of the land, which are stopped at the intercession of the prophet, **Am 7:1**; the second is of fire the Lord called for to contend by, whose devouring flames are made to cease by the same interposition, **Am 7:4**; and the other is of the plumbline, signifying the utter destruction of the people of Israel, according to the righteous judgment of God, **Am 7:7**; upon the delivery of which prophecies and visions, the priest of Bethel forms a charge against the prophet to the king; and advises

Amos to flee into Judea, and prophesy there, and not at Bethel, being willing to be rid of him at any rate, **Am 7:10**; next follows the prophet's vindication of himself showing his divine call to the prophetic office, and his mission and express order he had from the Lord to prophesy unto Israel, **Am 7:14**; and concludes with a denunciation of divine judgments on the priest's family, and upon the whole land of Israel, **Am 7:16**.

Ver. 1. Thus hath the Lord showed unto me,.... What follows in this and the two chapters, before the prophet delivered what he heard from the Lord; now what he saw, the same thing, the ruin of the ten tribes, is here expressed as before, but in a different form; before in prophecy, here in vision, the more to affect and work upon the hearts of the people:

and, behold, he formed grasshoppers; or "locusts" {u}, as the word is rendered, Isa 33:4; and so the Septuagint here, and other versions. Kimchi interprets it, and, behold, a collection or swarm of locusts; and the Targum, a creation of them. Though Aben Ezra takes the word to be a verb, and not a noun, and the sense to be, agreeably to our version, he showed me the blessed God, who was forming locusts; it appeared to Amos, in the vision of prophecy, as if the Lord was making locusts, large and great ones, and many of them; not that this was really done, only visionally, and was an emblem of the Assyrian army, prepared and ready to devour the land of Israel; see **Joe 1:4**. And this was

in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and, lo, [it was] the latter growth after the king's mowings; when the first grass was mowed down, and the first crop gathered in, for the use of the king's cattle; as the later grass was just springing up, and promised a second crop, these grasshoppers or locusts were forming, which threatened the destruction of it. This must be towards the close of the summer, and when autumn was coming on, at which time naturalists tell us that locusts breed. So Aristotle {w} says, they bring forth at the going out of the summer; and of one sort of them he says, their eggs perish in the waters of autumn, or when it is a wet autumn; but in a dry autumn there is a large increase of them: and so Pliny says {x}, they breed in the autumn season and lie under the earth all the winter, and appear in the spring: and Columella observes {y}, that locusts are most suitably and commodiously fed with grass in autumn; which is called "cordum", or the latter grass, that comes or springs late in the year; such as this now was. The Mahometans speak {z} much of God being the Maker of locusts; they say he made them of the clay which was left at the formation of Adam; and represent him saying, I am God, nor is there any Lord of locusts besides me, who feed them, and send them for food to the people, or as a punishment to them, as I please: they call them the army of the most high God, and will not suffer any to kill them; See Gill on "Re 9:3"; whether all this is founded on this passage of Scripture, I cannot say; however, there is no reason from thence to make the locusts so peculiarly the workmanship of God as they do, since this was only in a visionary way; though it may be observed, that it is with great propriety, agreeable to the nature of these creatures, that God is represented as forming them at such a season of the year. Some, by "the king's mowings", understand the carrying captive the ten tribes by Shalmaneser king of Assyria; so Ribera; after which things were in a flourishing state, or at least began to be so, in the two tribes under Hezekiah, when they were threatened with ruin by the army of Sennacherib, from which there was a deliverance: but as this vision, and the rest, only respect the ten tribes of Israel, "the king's mowings" of the first crop may signify the distresses of the people of Israel, in the times of Jehoahaz king of Israel, by Hazael and Benhadad kings of Syria, 2Ki 13:3; when things revived again, like the shooting up of the later grass, in the reign of Joash, and especially of Jeroboam his son, who restored the coast of Israel, the Lord having compassion on them, 2Ki 13:25; but after his death things grew worse; his son reigned but six months, and he that slew him but one; and in the reign of Menahem, that succeeded him, an invasion of the land was made by Pul king of Assyria, 2Ki 15:19; which is generally thought to be intended here. Or else, as others, it may refer to the troubles in the interregnum, after the death of Jeroboam, to his son's mounting the throne, the space of eleven years, when, and afterwards, Israel was in a declining state.

{u} ybg "ecce fictor locustarum", Pagninus, Montanus; so Munster, Vatablus, Cocceius, Burkius. {w} Hist. Animal. l. 5. c. 28, 29. {x} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29. {y} Apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 6. col. 484. {z} Vid. Bochart, ib. col. 486.

Amos 7:2

Ver. 2. And it came to pass, [that] when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land,.... That is, the grasshoppers or locusts; when in the vision it seemed to the prophet that almost all the grass of the land was eaten up, and they were going to seize upon the corn, and other fruits of the earth: this signifies not Sennacherib's invasion of the land of Judea, but Pul's invasion of the land of Israel, whose army seemed like these locusts; and spreading themselves over the land, threatened it with desolation, as these locusts seemed to have wholly consumed all the grass of the land; then the prophet said what

follows:

then I said, O Lord God, forgive, I beseech thee; the sins of the people, as the Targum, which were the cause of these locusts coming, or of the Assyrian army invading the land; and the prophet prays that God would avert this judgment, signified in this vision, or remove it, which is often in Scripture meant by the forgiveness of sin, Ex 32:31; this is the business of the prophets and ministers of the Lord, to intercede for a people when ruin is near; and happy is that people, when they have such to stand up in the breach for them. The argument the prophet uses is,

by whom shall Jacob arise? for he [is] small; or "little" {a}; like the first shooting up of the grass, after it has been own: or, as Noldius {b} renders it, "how [otherwise] should Jacob stand?" and so Kimchi, how should there be a standing for him? that is, unless God forgives his sin, and turns away his wrath, how shall he stand up under the weight of his sins, which must lie upon him, unless forgiven? and how shall he bear the wrath and indignation of God for them? and so if any sinner is not forgiven, how shall he stand before God to serve and worship him now? or at his tribunal with confidence hereafter? or sustain his wrath and displeasure to all eternity? see Ps 130:3; or, "who of" or "in Jacob shall stand" {c}? not one will be left; all must be cut off, if God forgive not; for all are sinners, there are none without sin: or, "who shall stand for Jacob?" {d} or intercede for him? it will be to no purpose, if God is inexorable: so the Targum,

"who will stand and ask "pardon" for their sins?"

or, "who will raise up Jacob?" {e} from that low condition in which he is, or likely to be in, if God forgive not, and does not avert the judgment threatened, to a high and glorious state of prosperity and happiness; for, if all are cut off, there will be none left to be instruments of such a work: "for he [is] small"; few in number, and greatly weakened by one calamity or another; and, if this should take place, would be fewer and weaker still. So the church of Christ, which is often signified by Jacob, is sometimes in a very low estate; the number of converts few; has but a little strength to bear afflictions, perform duty, and withstand enemies; it is a day of small things with it, with respect to light and knowledge, and the exercise of grace, especially faith; when some like the prophet are concerned for it, by whom it shall arise; the God of Jacob can cause it to arise, and can raise up instruments for such service, and make his ministers, and the ministry of the word and ordinances, means of increasing the number, stature, spiritual light, knowledge, grace, and strength of his people.

{a} Njq "parvulus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; "parvus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {b} bqey Mwqy ym "quomodo (alias) surgeret Jacob?" Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 60. No. 1979. "quomodo consistet?" Liveleus; "quomodo surget Jacob?" Drusius. {c} "Quis staret, Jahacobo?" Junius & Tremellius; "quis remaneret Jacobo?" Piscator. {d} "Quis stabit pro Jacobo?" Mercerus. {e} "Quis suseitabit Jahacob?" V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

Amos 7:3

Ver. 3. The Lord repented for this,.... He heard the prayer of the prophet, and at his intercession averted, the threatened judgment; thus the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much, **Jas 5:16**; this is spoken after the manner of men; as men, when they repent of a thing, desist from it, so the Lord desisted from going on with this judgment; he did not change his mind, but changed the dispensations of his providence according to his mind and will:

it shall not be, saith the Lord; these grasshoppers or locusts, the Assyrian army, shall not at this time destroy the land of Israel: Pul king of Assyria took a sum of money of the king of Israel, and so turned back, and stayed not in the land, 2Ki 15:19.

Amos 7:4

Ver. 4. Thus hath the Lord showed unto me,.... Another vision after this manner:

and, behold, the Lord God called to contend by fire; gave out that he would have a controversy with his people Israel, and proclaimed the time when he would try the cause with them, and that by fire: or he called his family, as Jarchi; that is, his angels, as Kimchi, to cause fire to descend upon Israel, as upon Sodom and Gomorrah; so other Rabbins Kimchi mentions: or, as he interprets it, the scorching heat of the sun, like fire that restrained the rain, dried up the plants, and lessened the waters of the river, and so brought on a general drought, and in consequence famine: or rather a foreign army, involving them in war, burning their cities and towns; see **Am 1:4**;

and it devoured the great deep; it seemed, as if it did; as the fire from heaven, in Elijah's time, licked up the water in the trench, 1Ki 18:38; so this, coming at God's command, seemed to dry up the whole ocean; by which may be meant the multitude of people, nations, and kingdoms, subdued by the Assyrians; see Re 17:15;

and did eat up a part; a part of a field, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; of the king's field, **Am 7:1**; as Kimchi; showing, as he observes, that the reigning king was a bad king, and that this was for his sin: or rather a part of the land of Israel; and so refers, as is generally thought, to Tiglathpileser's invasion of the land, who carried captive a part of it, 2Ki 15:29.

Amos 7:5

Ver. 5. Then said I, O Lord God, cease, I beseech thee,.... From destroying the land; suffer not this calamity to proceed any further; using the same argument as before:

by whom shall Jacob arise? for he [is] small; See Gill on "Am 7:2".

Amos 7:6

Ver. 6. The Lord repented for this,.... He heard the prophet's prayer, and desisted from going on with the threatened destruction:

this also shall not be, saith the Lord God; the whole land shall not be destroyed, only a part of it carried captive.

Amos 7:7

Ver. 7. Thus he showed me,.... A third vision, which was in the following manner:

and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall [made] by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand: this "wall" was the people of Israel, who were built up as a wall, firm and strong; and so stood against their enemies, while supported by the Lord, and he stood by them. The Septuagint version is, "an adamantine wall". In their constitution, both civil and ecclesiastic, they were formed according to the good and righteous laws of God, which may be signified by the plumbline; and so the Targum renders it, "the wall of judgment". And now the Lord appears standing upon this wall, to trample it down, and not to support it; and with a plumbline in his hand, to examine and try whether this wall was as it was first erected; whether it did not bulge out, and vary from its former structure, and was not according to the line and rule of his divine word, which was a rule of righteousness.

Amos 7:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou?.... This question was put to him, the rather, since he was silent, and did not upon this vision, as the former, make any supplication to the Lord; as also, because this vision portended something of moment and importance, which he would have the prophet attend to:

and I said, a plumbline; the same word as before, and is differently rendered, as already observed. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "a plasterer's" or "mason's trowel"; with which they lay their plaster and mortar on in building: the Septuagint, an adamant: and which, by Pliny {f}, is called "anachites"; a word in sound near to this here used: the Targum renders it, "judgment": but Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe, that in the Arabic tongue it signifies lead or tin, as it does {g}; and so a line with lead at the end of it;

then said the Lord, behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel; take an exact account of their actions, and see how they agree or disagree with the rule of the word; and in the most strict and righteous manner deal with them for their sins and transgressions, "lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet", Isa 28:17;

I will not again pass by them any more; wink at their sins, and overlook their transgressions, by not correcting and punishing for them; or will not pardon them, but inflict punishment on them. So the Targum,

"behold, I will exercise judgment in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not add any more to pardon them."

Though some understand it of God's making such an utter end of them, that he should no more "pass through them" {h}, to destroy them, having done it at once, and thoroughly.

{f} Nat. Hist. l. 3. c. 4. {g} "plumbum, sive nigrum, sive album puriusque", Camusus; "plumbum et stannum", Ibn Maruph apud Golium, col. 176. Avicenna apud Castel. col. 161. Vid. Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 7. p. 122. {h} wl rwbe dwe Pyowa al "non adjiciam ultra pertransire eum", Montanus; "non ultra per eum transibit", some in Mercerus.

Amos 7:9

Ver. 9. And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate,.... Such as the ten tribes of Israel, who descended from Isaac, built at Beersheba, in imitation of Isaac, and pleading his example; who worshipped there, though not idols, as they, but the true God; and in commemoration of his being bound upon an altar on Mount Moriah: but these, as the Septuagint version renders it, were "high places of laughter", ridiculous in the eyes of the Lord, despised by him, and so should be made desolate:

and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; the temples built for the calves at Dan and Bethel, and other places:

and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword; or, as the Targum,

"I will raise up against the house of Jeroboam those that slay with the sword;"

this was fulfilled by Shallum, who conspired against Zachariah the son of Jeroboam, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, which put an end to the family of Jeroboam, 2Ki 15:10.

Amos 7:10

Ver. 10. Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel,.... The Targum calls him the prince or president of Bethel; and the word used signifies both a prince and a priest; and very probably this man had the care of the civil as well as religious matters in Bethel. Aben Ezra styles him the priest of Baal; he was one that succeeded the priests that Jeroboam the son of Nebat placed here, to offer sacrifices to the calf he set up in this place, 1Ki 12:32; who hearing the above three visions of Amos delivered, and fearing that he would alienate the people from the idolatrous worship he was at the head of, and frighten them from an attendance on it, which would lessen his esteem with the people, and also his worldly gain and profit; and observing that Amos did not make any intercession for the averting of the judgment threatened in the last vision, as in the other two, and which particularly concerned the king's family: he

sent to Jeroboam king of Israel; either letters or messengers, or both; who, it seems, was not at this time at Bethel, but at some other place; perhaps Samaria, which was not a great way from hence:

saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the land of Israel; he speaks of Amos as if he was well known to the king, and perhaps he might be, having long prophesied in the land of Israel, and near the court; and represents him as a seditious person, not as affecting the crown and kingdom himself, but as stirring up a spirit, of rebellion among the people; taking off their affections from their prince, and them from their allegiance to him, by representing him as a wicked person that would in a little time be cut off; and this he did not privately, and in a corner, but publicly, in the midst of the land, and before all the people of Israel; and this was no new and unusual thing to represent good man, and especially ministers of the word, as enemies to the civil government, when none are truer friends to it, or more quiet under it:

the land is not able to bear all his words; either to withstand the power of them; they will have such an influence upon the people, if timely care is not taken, as to cause them both to reject the established religion and worship at Dan and Bethel, and to rise up in arms against the civil government, and dethrone him the king; such terrible things he says to the people, as will frighten them, and put them upon taking such measures as these: or else the prophet's words were so intolerable, that his good subjects, the inhabitants of the land could not bear them; and if he did not give orders himself to take away his life, they would rise up against him, and dispatch him themselves.

Amos 7:11

Ver. 11. For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword,.... Which was not saying truth; for Amos said not that Jeroboam should die by the sword, but that God would raise up the sword against his house or family; nor did

Jeroboam die by the sword, but his son Zachariah did:

and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land; this was true; Amos did say this, and he afterwards confirms it. This is the amount of the charge brought against the prophet, which has some truth and some falsehood mixed together; and by which method the priest hoped to gain his point, and get the prophet either banished or put to death.

Amos 7:12

Ver. 12. Also Amaziah said unto Amos,.... Either at the same time; or, it may be, after he had waited for the king's answer, and received none; or what did not come up to his expectations and wishes. We have no account of any answer the king returned; who either gave no heed to the representations of the priest, or had a better opinion of, he prophet, and did not credit the things imputed to him; which the priest observing, took another way to get rid of the prophet, and that by flattery:

O thou seer; that seest visions, and foretells things to come. This title, which of right belonged to him, and is given to the true prophets of God sometimes, is here given to Amos, either seriously or ironically:

go, flee thee away into the land of Judah; to which he belonged, and where the temple stood, and the true worship of God was performed; and where the king, princes, and people, were on his side of the question; and where his prophecies would be received, and he caressed for them, being against the ten tribes, with whom they were at variance, and where also he would be safe; for he suggests, that, in giving this advice, he consulted his good and safety; for, if he stayed here long, King Jeroboam would certainly take away his life; and therefore he advised him to flee with all haste to his own country:

and there eat bread, and prophesy there: he took him for a mercenary man like himself, and that he prophesied for bread; which he intimates he would never be able to get in the land of Israel, but in all probability might in the land of Judea.

Amos 7:13

Ver. 13. But prophesy not again any more at Bethel,.... He might prophesy any where, if he did not there, for what the priest cared, that so his honour and interest were not hurt. The reasons he gave were,

for it [is] the king's chapel; or "sanctuary" {i}; where a temple was built for the idol calf, and where the king worshipped it, and attended all other religious service:

and it [is] the king's court; or "the house of the kingdom" {k}; the seat of it, where the king had a royal palace, and sometimes resided here, and kept his court, as well as at Samaria; often coming hither to worship, it being nearer to him than Dan, where the other calf was placed; intimating hereby that the king would never suffer such a troublesome man as he to be so near him; and by prophesying to interrupt him, either in his religious or civil affairs; and therefore advises him by all means to depart, if he had any regard to his life or peace.

{i} vdqm "sanctuarium", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius. Piscator, Drusius, Cocceius. {k} awh hklmm tybw "et domus regni est", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius; "domus regia", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Amos 7:14

Ver. 14. Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah,.... With much freedom, boldness, and intrepidity, and yet with modesty and humility; not at all moved by his frowns or his flattery:

I [was] no prophet, neither [was] I a prophet's son: he was not a prophet originally, or from his youth, as Kimchi; he was not born and bred one; neither his father was a prophet, by whom he could get any instructions in the mystery of prophesying; nor was he a disciple of any of the prophets, or brought up in any of their schools as some were; he was no prophet till the Lord called him immediately, at once, from his secular employment to this office; and therefore did not take it up to get a livelihood by Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it, that he was not one of the false prophets that prophesied for hire, and took a reward:

but I [was] an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit; that is, originally: this was the employment he was brought up in from his youth, and was in it when he was called to be a prophet; he looked after cattle, both great and small; and at a certain time of the year used, to gather sycamore fruit, which was a kind of figs; and by, its name had the resemblance both of figs and mulberries. Some take it to be what were called Egyptian figs; these he gathered, either for the use of his masters, or for food for himself, or for the cattle, or both: or he was an "opener" of them, as the Septuagint; he cut, them, and made incisions in them; for, as Pliny {l}, Dioscorides {m}, and Theophrastus {n} observe, this fruit must be cut or scratched, either with the nail, or with iron, or it will not ripen; but, four days after being scratched or cut, will become ripe. Mr. Norden {o}, a late traveller in Egypt, has given us a very particular account of this tree and its fruit.

"This sycamore (he says) is of the height of a beech, and bears its fruit in a manner quite different from other trees; it has them on the trunk itself, which shoots out little sprigs in form of grape stalks; at the end of which grow the fruit close to one another, almost like bunches of grapes. The tree is always green, and bears fruit several times in the year, without observing any certain seasons: for I have seen (says he) some sycamores that have given fruit two months after others. The fruit has the figure and smell of real figs, but is inferior to them in the taste, having a disgusting sweetness. Its colour is a yellow, inclining to an ochre, shadowed by a flesh colour. In the inside it resembles the common figs, excepting that it has a blackish colouring with yellow spots. This sort of tree is pretty common in Egypt; the people for the greater part live upon its fruit, and think themselves well regaled when they have a piece of bread, a couple of sycamore figs, and a pitcher filled with water from the Nile."

This account in several things agrees with what Pliny {p} and Solinus {q} relate of this tree and its fruit; very likely there might be many of these trees in Judea; there seem to have been great numbers of them in Solomon's time, 1Ki 10:27; and perhaps it was one of these that Zacchaeus climbed, in order to see Christ, Lu 19:4; for this sort of trees delight in vales and plains, such as were the plains of Jericho; and in the Talmud {r} we read of sycamore trees in Jericho; and of the men of Jericho allowing the branches of them to be cut down for sacred uses. These also grew in lower Galilee, but not in upper Galilee; and that they were frequent in the land of Israel appears from the rules the Misnic doctors {s} give about the planting, and cutting them down; and in the opening of these trees, and making incisions in them, and in gathering the fruit of them, Amos might be concerned. Kimchi and Ben Melech say the word signifies to "mix", and that his business was to mix these together with other fruit. Aben Ezra observes, that in the Arabic language it signifies to dry;

and then his work was, after he had gathered them, to lay them a drying. Some render the word a "searcher" {t} of them; as if his employment was to look out for them, and seek them where they were to be got: however, be this as it will, the prophet suggests that he had been used to a low life, and to mean fare, with which he was contented, and did not take up this business of prophesying for bread, and could return to his former employment without any regret, to get a maintenance, if so was the will of God. The Targum gives it a different sense,

"for I am a master of cattle, and have sycamores in the fields;"

and so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, represent him as suggesting that he was rich, and had no need of bread to be given him, or to prophesy for that.

{l} Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 7. {m} L. 1. c. 143. {n} Hist. l. 4. c. 2. {o} Travels in Egypt and Nubis, vol. 1. p. 79, 80. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 7. {q} Polyhistor. c. 45. {r} T. Bab Pesachim, fol. 56. 1. & 57. 1. & Menachot, fol. 71. 1. {s} Misn. Shevath, c. 9. sect. 2. & Bava Bathra, c. 2. sect. 7. {t} olzb "disquirens", Montanus, Vatablus; "perquirens", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Burkius. So R. Sol. Urbin Ohel Moed, fol. 31. 2.

Amos 7:15

Ver. 15. And the Lord took me as I followed the flock,.... Or "from behind" it {u}; a description of a shepherd, such an one Amos was, and in this employ when the Lord called him, and took him to be a prophet; he did not seek after it, nor did he take this honour to himself; by which it appears that his mission was divine, and that he did not enter on this work with lucrative views: thus God took David in a like state of life, and made him king of Israel; and Elisha from the plough, and made him a prophet: and Christ several of his disciples from being fishermen, and made them fishers of men, or ministers of the word; and so their call appeared more clear and manifest;

and the Lord said unto me; in a vision or dream by night; or by an articulate voice he heard; or by an impulse upon his spirit, which comes from the Spirit of God:

go, prophesy unto my people Israel; for so they were by profession, and notwithstanding their apostasy; as yet they were not tallied "Loammi", **Ho 1:9**; to these the prophet was bid to go out of the land of Judea, where he was a herdsman, and prophesy in the name of the Lord to them; wherefore what he did was in obedience to the command of God, and he did but his duty; and what he in this verse and **Am 7:14** declares, is a sufficient vindication of himself, his character, and conduct; and having done this, he has something to say to the priest, as follows.

{u} Nau yrtam "de post pecus", Montanus; "de post gregem", Vatablus; "a post gregem", Liveleus.

Amos 7:16

Ver. 16. Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord,.... Which I have from him concerning thee, and which he has pronounced upon thee and thy family:

thou sayest, prophesy not against Israel; when God has bid me prophesy:

and drop not [thy word] against the house of Isaac; say nothing against it, though in ever so soft and gentle a manner: it designs the same thing as before, only in different words; and is a prohibition of the prophet to prophesy against the ten tribes that descended from Isaac, in the line of Jacob. So the Targum paraphrases it,

"thou shalt not teach against the house of Isaac;"

or deliver out any prophecy or doctrine that is against them, or threatens them with any calamity. Jarchi says the phrase is expressive of prophecy; see De 32:2.

Amos 7:17

Ver. 17. Therefore thus saith the Lord,.... For withstanding the prophet of the Lord, and forbidding him to speak in his name against the idolatry of Israel, as well as for his own idolatry:

thy wife shall be an harlot in the city: either of Bethel or Samaria; either through force, being ravished by the soldiers upon taking and plundering the city; so Theodoret and others: or rather of choice; either, through poverty, to get bread, or through a vicious inclination, and that in a public manner: the meaning is, that she should be a common strumpet; which must be a great affliction to him, and a just punishment for his idolatry, or spiritual adultery; this must be before the siege and taking of Samaria, since by that time the priest's wife would be too old to be used as a harlot:

and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword; either of Shallum, who smote Zachariah the son of Jeroboam with the sword, before the people, and very probably many of his friends with him, among whom this family was; or of Menahem, who slew Shallum, and destroyed many places that opened not to him, with their inhabitants, and ripped up the women with child; or in the after invasions by Pul, Tiglathpileser, and Shalmaneser, 2Ki 15:10;

and thy land shall be divided by line; either the whole land of Israel be lived in, or the land that was in the possession of this priest, and was his own property; this should be measured with a line, and be parted among foreigners, that should invade the land, and subdue it; a just punishment of the sins he had been guilty of, in getting large possessions in an ill manner:

and thou shall die in a polluted land; not in his own land, reckoned holy, but in a Heathen land, which was accounted defiled, because the inhabitants of it were uncircumcised and idolaters, and he was no better; perhaps the land of Assyria, whither he might with others be carried captive; or some other land he was forced to flee into:

and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land; as he had before prophesied, and here confirms it; and which was fulfilled in the times of Hoshea king of Israel, by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, 2Ki 17:6.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Amos 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO AMOS 8

In this chapter a fourth vision is delivered, the vision of a "basket of summer fruit"; signifying the destruction of the ten tribes, for which they were ripe, and which would quickly come upon them, **Am 8:1**; the rich are reproved for their oppression of the poor, their covetousness and earthly mindedness, **Am 8:4**; for which they are threatened with entire ruin, sudden calamities, and very mournful times, instead of light, joy, and gladness, **Am 8:7**; and particularly with a famine of hearing the word of God, **Am 8:11**; the consequence of which would be, a fainting of the young men and virgins for thirst, and the utter and irrecoverable ruin of all idolaters, **Am 8:13**.

Ver. 1. Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me,.... Another vision, which is the fourth, and after the following manner:

and, behold, a basket of summer fruit; not of the first ripe fruit, but of such as were gathered at the close of the summer, when autumn began. So the Targum,

"the last of the summer fruit;"

such as were fully ripe, and would not keep till winter; or, if kept, would rot; but must be eaten directly, as some sort of apples, grapes, &c. denoting the people of Israel being ripe for destruction, and would be quickly devoured by their enemies; and that, as they had had a summer of prosperity, they would now have a sharp winter of adversity.

Amos 8:2

Ver. 2. And he said, Amos, what seest thou?.... To quicken his attention, who might disregard it as a common thing; and in order to lead him into the design of it, and show him what it was an emblem of:

and I said, a basket of summer fruit; some render it "a hook" {w}, such as they pull down branches with to gather the fruit; and the word so signifies in the Arabic language {x}; but the other is the more received sense of the word:

then said the Lord unto me; by way of explanation of the vision: the end is come upon my people Israel: the end of the kingdom of Israel; of their commonwealth and church state; of all their outward happiness and glory; their "summer [was] ended", and they "not saved", **Jer 8:20**; all their prosperity was over; and, as the Targum, their

"final punishment was come,"

the last destruction threatened them {y}:

I will not again pass by them any more; pass by their offences, and forgive

their sins; or pass by their persons, without taking notice of them, so as to afflict and punish them for their iniquities: or, "pass through them and more" {z} now making an utter end of them;
See Gill on "Am 7:8".

{w} bwlk "unicuus", V. L. {x} "ferramentum incurvum, seu uncus ex quo de sella commeatum suspendit viator", Giggeius apud Golium, col. 2055. {y} There is an elegant play on words in the words Uyq, "summer", and Uq, "the end". {z} So Mercerus, Grotius.

Amos 8:3

Ver. 3. And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God,.... Not the songs sung by the Levites in the temple of Jerusalem, this prophecy respects the ten tribes only; but those in imitation of them, sung in the temple at Bethel, and other idol temples; or profane songs in the palaces of princes and nobles; that is, instead of these, there should be howlings for the calamities come upon them. So the Targum,

"they shall howl, instead of a song, in their houses then;"

particularly because of the slain in them, as follows; see **Am 5:23**;

[there shall be] many dead bodies in every place; in all houses and palaces, in all towns and cities; and especially in Samaria, during the siege, and when taken, partly through the famine, and partly through the sword:

they shall cast [them] forth with silence; they that have the care of burying the dead bodies shall either cast them out of the houses upon the bier or cart in which they are carried to the grave, or into the pit or grave without any funeral lamentation: or, "they shall cast them forth", and say, "be silent"; that is, as Kimchi explains it,

"one of them that casts them forth shall say to his companion, be silent;"

say not one word against God and his providence, since this is righteously come upon us; or say nothing of the number of the dead, lest the hearts of those that hear should become tender, and be discouraged, as Aben Ezra; or the enemy should be encouraged to go on with the siege.

Amos 8:4

Ver. 4. Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy,.... Like a man that pants after a draught of water when thirsty; and, when he has got it, greedily swallows it down at one gulp; so these rich men swallowed up the poor, their labours, gains, and profits, and persons too; got all into their own hands, and made them bondsmen and slaves to them; see **Am 2:7**; these are called upon to hear this dreadful calamity threatened, and to consider what then would become of them and their ill gotten riches; and suggesting, that their oppression of the needy was one cause of this destruction of the land:

even to make the poor of the land to fail; or "cease" {a}; to die for want of the necessaries of life, being obliged to such hard labour; so unmercifully used, their faces ground, and pinched with necessity; and so sadly paid for their work, that they could not live by it.

{a} twbvl "ad cessare faciendum", Mercerus; "et facitis cessare", Munster, Drusius.

Amos 8:5

Ver. 5. Saying, when will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn?.... The first day of every month, on which it was forbid to sell any thing, or do any worldly business, being appointed and used for religious service; see **2Ki 4:23**; and which these carnal earthly minded men were weary of, and wanted to have over, that they might be selling their grain, and getting money, which they preferred to the worship of God. Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it of the month of harvest, when the poor found what to eat in the fields; when they gleaned there, and got a sufficiency of bread, and so had no need to buy corn; and hence these rich misers, that hoarded up the grain, are represented as wishing the harvest month over, that they might sell their grain to the poor, having had, during that month, no demand for it; and so the Targum renders it the month of grain: or the month of intercalation, as Jarchi understands it; every three years a month was intercalated, to bring their feasts right to the season of the year; and that year was a month longer than the rest, and made provision dearer; and then the sense is, when will the year of intercalation come, that we may have a better price for our grain? but the first sense seems best;

and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat; in the shops or markets, for sale: or "open wheat" {b}; the granaries and treasures of it, to be seen and sold. Now the sabbath, or seventh day of the week, as no servile work was to be done on it, so no trade or commerce was to be carried on on that day; which made it a long and wearisome one to worldly men, who wished it over, that they might be about their worldly business. Kimchi and Ben Melech, by "sabbath", understand a "week", which these men put off the poor unto, when the price of grain would rise; and so from week to week refused to sell, and longed till the week came when it would be dearer. The Targum and Jarchi interpret it of the seventh year Sabbath, when there was no ploughing, nor sowing, nor reaping, and so no selling of grain, but the people lived upon what the earth brought forth of itself. But the first sense here is also best;

making the ephah small; a dry measure, that held three scabs, or about a bushel of ours, with which they measured their grain and their wheat; so that, besides the exorbitant price they required, they did not give due measure:

and the shekel great; that is, the weight, or shekel stone, with which they weighed the money the poor gave for their grain and wheat; this was made heavier than it should be, and so of course the money weighed against it was too light, and the poor were obliged to make it up with more; and thus they cheated them, both in their measure, and in their money:

and falsifying the balances by deceit? contrary to the law in De 25:13.

{b} rb hxtpnw "et apericmus frumentam", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; "ut aperiamus frumenti [horrea]", Junius & Tremellius; "ut aperiamus frumentum", Piscator, Cocceius; "quo far aperiamus", Castalio.

Amos 8:6

Ver. 6. That we may buy the poor for silver,.... Thus making them pay dear for their provisions, and using them in this fraudulent manner, by which they would not be able to support themselves and their families; they might purchase them and theirs for slaves, at so small a price as a piece of silver, or a single shekel, worth about half a crown; and this was their end and design in using them after this manner; see

Le 25:39;

and the needy for a pair of shoes; See Gill on "Am 2:6";

[yea], and sell the refuse of the wheat; not only did they sell the poor grain and wheat at a dear rate, and in scanty measure, but the worst of it, and such as was not fit to make bread of, only to be given to the cattle; and, by reducing the poor to extreme poverty, they obliged them to take that of them at their own price. It may be rendered, "the fall of wheat" {c}; that which fell under the sieve, when the wheat was sifted, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, observe.

{c} rb lpm "labile frumenti", Montanus; "decidum frumenti", Cocceius; "deciduum triciti", Drusius, Mercerus, Stockius, p. 690.

Amos 8:7

Ver. 7. The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob,.... Not by the ark, as R. Japhet; nor by the temple, as Kimchi; but by himself; which sense Kimchi also mentions, and Aben Ezra; the God of Jacob and his glory, the most excellent of all Jacob's enjoyments, and of whom he had reason to boast and glory; see **Am 6:8**;

surely I will never forget any of their works; their wicked works, especially those now mentioned; God forgets when he forgives them, or suffers them to go unpunished; but though he had done so long, he would do so no more; on which they might depend, since he had not only said it, but swore to it.

Amos 8:8

Ver. 8. Shall not the land tremble for this,.... For this wickedness committed, in using the poor with so much inhumanity? may not an earthquake be expected? and which happened two years after Amos began to prophesy, **Am 1:1**; or that the earth should gape and swallow up these men alive, guilty of such enormities? or shall not the inhabitants of the land tremble at such judgments, which the Lord hath sworn he will bring upon it?

and everyone mourn that dwelleth therein? at the hearing of them, and especially when they shall come upon them: as the calamity would be general, the mourning should be universal:

and it shall rise up wholly as a flood; that is, the calamity threatened shall rise up at once like a flood of waters, like Noah's flood, and cover the whole land, and wash off and utterly destroy man and beast:

and it shall be cast out and drowned, as [by] the flood of Egypt; or the river of Egypt, the Nile, which overflows at certain times, and casts up its waters and its mud, and drowns all the country; so that the whole country, during its continuance, looks like a sea: it overflows both its banks, both towards Lybia or Africa, and towards Arabia, and on each side about two days' journey, as Herodotus {d} relates; and this it does regularly every year, in the summer solstice, in the higher and middle Egypt, where it seldom rains, and its flood is necessary; but is not so large in the lower Egypt, where it more frequently rains, and the country needs it not. Strabo {e} says this flood remains more than forty days, and then it decreases by little and little, as it increased; and within sixty days the fields are seen and dried up; and the sooner that is, the sooner they plough and sow, and have the better harvests. Herodotus {f} says it continues a hundred days, and is near the same in returning; and he says, unless it rises to sixteen, or at least fifteen cubits, it will not overflow the country {g}: and, according to Pliny {h}, the proper increase of the waters is sixteen cubits; if only they arise to twelve, it is a famine; if to thirteen, it is hunger; if to fourteen, it brings cheerfulness; if to fifteen, security; and if to sixteen, delights. But Strabo {i} relates, that the fertility by it is different at different times; before the times of Petronius, the greatest fertility was when the Nile arose to the fourteenth cubit; and when to the eighteenth, it was a famine: but when he was governor of that country, when it only reached the twelfth cubit, there was great fruitfulness; had when it came to the eighth (the eighteenth I suppose it should be) no famine was perceived. An Arabic writer {k} gives an account of the Nilometry, or measures of the Nile, from the year of Christ 622 to 1497; and he says, that, when the depth of the channel of the Nile is fourteen cubits, a harvest may be expected that will amount to one year's provision; but, if it increases to sixteen, the corn will be sufficient for two years; less than fourteen, a scarcity; and more than eighteen makes a famine. Upon the whole, it seems that sixteen cubits have been reckoned the standard that portends plenty, for many generations, to which no addition has appeared to have been made during the space of five hundred years.

"This we learn (says Dr. Shaw) {l}, not only from the sixteen children that attend the statue of the Nile, but from Pliny also; and likewise from a medal of

Hadrian in the great brass where we see the figure of the Nile, with a boy upon it, pointing to the number sixteen. Yet in the fourth century, which it will be difficult to account for, fifteen cubits only are recorded by the Emperor Julian {m} as the height of the Nile's inundation; whereas, in the middle of the sixth century, in the time of Justinian, Procopius {n} informs us that the rise of the Nile exceeded eighteen cubits; in the seventh century, after Egypt was subdued by the Saracens, the amount was sixteen or seventeen cubits; and at present, when the river rises to sixteen cubits, the Egyptians make great rejoicings, and call out, "wafaa Allah", that is, "God has given them all they wanted"."

The river begins to swell in May, yet no public notice is taken of it till the twenty eighth or twenty ninth of June; by which time it is usually risen to the height of six or eight pikes (or cubits, pheov, a Turkish measure of twenty six inches); and then public criers proclaim it through the capital, and other cities, and continue in the same manner till it rises to sixteen pikes; then they cut down the dam of the great canal. If the water increases to the height of twenty three or twenty four pikes, it is judged most favourable; but, if it exceed that, it does a great deal of mischief, not only by overflowing houses, and drowning cattle, but also by engendering a great number of insects, which destroy the fruits of the earth {o}. And a late learned traveller {p} tells us, that

"eighteen pikes is an indifferent Nile (for so high it is risen when they declare it but sixteen); twenty is middling; twenty two is a good Nile, beyond which it seldom rises; it is said, if it rises above twenty four pikes, it is looked on as an inundation, and is of bad consequence."

And to such a flood the allusion is here. Thus the land of Israel should be overwhelmed and plunged into the utmost distress, and sink into utter ruin, by this judgment coming upon them; even the Assyrian army, like a flood, spreading themselves over all the land, and destroying it. So the Targum,

"a king shall come up against it with his army, large as the waters of a river, and shall cover it wholly, and expel the inhabitants of it, and shall plunge as the river of Egypt;"

see **Isa 8:7**.

{d} Euterpe, sive l. 9. c. 19. {e} Geograph. l. 17. p. 542. {f} Ut supra. (Euterpe, sive l. 9. c. 19.) {g} Ibid. c. 13. {h} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 9. {i} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 17. p. 542.) {k} Apud Calmet. Dictionary, in the word "Nile". {l} Travels, p. 384. Ed. 2. {m} Ecdicio, Ep. 50. {n} De Rebus Gothicis, l. 3.

{o} Universal History, vol. 1. p. 413. {p} Pocock's Description of the East, p. 200.

Amos 8:9

Ver. 9. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God,.... When this deluge and desolation of the land shall be, now spoken of:

that I will cause the sun to go down at noon: or to he so dark as if it was set; as at the time of our Lord's crucifixion, to which many of the ancient fathers refer this prophecy, though it has respect to other times and things. Jarchi interprets it of the kingdom of the house of David. It doubtless designs the kingdom of Israel, their whole policy, civil and ecclesiastic, and the destruction of it; particularly their king, princes, and nobles, that should be in great adversity, and that suddenly and unexpectedly; it being a fine sunshine morning with them, and they in great prosperity, and yet by noon their sun would be set, and they in the utmost darkness and distress;

and I will darken the earth in a clear day; the land of Israel, the people of it, the common people, who should have their share, in this calamity and affliction; and though it had been a clear day with them, and they promised themselves much and long felicity, yet on a sudden their light would be turned into darkness, and their joy into sadness and sorrow.

Amos 8:10

Ver. 10. And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation,.... Either their religious feasts, the feasts of pentecost, tabernacles, and passover; at which three feasts there were eclipses of the sun, a few years after this prophecy of Amos, as Bishop Usher {q} observes: the first was an eclipse of the sun about ten digits, in the year 3213 A.M. or 791 B.C., June twenty fourth, at the feast of pentecost; the next was almost twelve digits, about eleven years after, on November eighth, 780 B.C., at the feast of the tabernacles; and the third was more than eleven digits in the following year, 779 B.C., on May fifth, at the feast of the passover; which the prophecy may literally refer to, and which might occasion great sorrow and concern, and especially at what they might be thought to forebode: but particularly this was fulfilled when these feasts could not be observed any longer, nor the songs used at them sung any more; or else their feasts, and songs at them, in their own houses, in which they indulged themselves in mirth and jollity; but now, instead thereof, there would be mourning and lamentation the loss of their friends, and being carried captive into a strange land;

and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins; of high and low, rich and poor; even those that used to be covered with silk and rich embroideries: sackcloth was a coarse cloth put on in times of mourning for the dead, or on account of public calamities:

and baldness upon every head: the hair being either shaved off or pulled off; both which were sometimes done, as a token of mourning:

and I will make it as the mourning of an only [son]; as when parents mourn for an only son, which is generally carried to the greatest height, and continued longest, as well as is most sincere and passionate; the case being exceeding cutting and afflictive, as this is hereby represented to be:

and the end thereof as a bitter day; a day of bitter calamity, and of bitter wailing and mourning, in the bitterness of their spirits; though the beginning of the day was bright and clear, a fine sunshine, yet the end of it dark and bitter, distressing and sorrowful, it being the end of the people of Israel, as in **Am 8:2**.

{q} Annales Vet. Test. ad A. M. 3213.

Amos 8:11

Ver. 11. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God,.... Which Kimchi interprets of all the days of the second house or temple after Malachi, when prophecy ceased; but it rather has respect to the time of Shalmaneser's carrying captive the ten tribes, when they had no more prophets nor prophecy among them, or any to tell how long their captivity should last, or when it would be better times with them, Ps 74:9;

that I will send a famine in the land; which, in a literal sense, is one of God's arrows he has in his quiver, and sends out when he pleases; or one of his sore judgments, which he sometimes orders to come upon a people for their sins: but here is meant, not a famine of bread; or through want of that, which is very dreadful; as was the famine of Samaria, when an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and a certain measure of dove's dung for five pieces of silver, **2Ki 6:25**; and as were the famines of Jerusalem, when taken both by the Chaldeans and Romans, when delicate women boiled and ate their own children, **La 4:8**;

nor a thirst for water; which is more distressing and tormenting than hunger; and to be slain with thirst is to be destroyed in the most afflictive manner, **Ho 2:3**. Lysimachus is said to part with his kingdom for a draught of water; and the torments of hell are set forth by a violent thirst for it, Lu 16:24; but something worse than either of these is here threatened:

but of hearing the words of the Lord; the word of prophecy, and the preaching of the word, or explaining the Scriptures. Of this blessing the ten tribes were deprived at their captivity, and have been ever since; and the Jews, upon their rejection of Christ, have had the kingdom of God, the Gospel of the kingdom, the word and ordinances of God, taken from them, and remain so to this day; the seven churches of Asia have had their candlestick removed out of its place, and this famine continues in those parts to this time; and, by the symptoms upon us, we may justly fear it, will be our case before long. "The words of the Lord" are the Scriptures, which cone from him, and are concerning him; the doctrines of grace contained in them, the wholesome words of Christ: hearing them signifies the preaching of them, Isa 53:1; by which hearing comes, and is a great blessing, and should be attended to, as being the means of conversion, regenerations, the knowledge of Christ, faith in him, and the joy of it. Now, to be deprived of hearing the Gospel is a spiritual famine, for that is food, bread, meat, milk, honey, yea, a feast; it is food that is savoury, wholesome, nourishing, satisfying, strengthening, and comforting; and when this is took away a famine ensues, as when a church state is dissolved, ministers are ordered to preach no more in such a place, or are scattered by persecution, or removed by death, and none raised up in their stead; or when error prevails, to the suppressing of truth: all which is done, or suffered to be done, for indifference to the word of God, unfruitfulness under it, and contempt of it, and, opposition to it; which is a dreadful case, when such a famine is; for the glory, riches, and light of a nation, are gone; bread for their souls is no more; and the means of conversion, knowledge, comfort, &c. cease; and people in course must die, for lack of these things; see **Isa 3:1**.

Amos 8:12

Ver. 12. And they shall wander from sea to sea,.... From the sea of Tiberias, or Galilee; or from the Dead sea, the lake Asphaltites; or from the Red sea, which was to the south of the land of Israel, to the great sea, which is to the west, as Aben Ezra: so the Targum,

"from the sea to the west;"

that is, to the Mediterranean sea:

and from the north even to the east; proceeding from the south to the west, they shall turn from thence to the north, and so to the east, which describes the borders of the land of Canaan, Nu 34:3; and the sense is, that

they shall go to and fro; throughout the whole land, and all over it,

to seek the word of the Lord; not the written word, but the interpretation of it; doctrine from before the Lord, as the Targum; the preaching of the word, or ministers to instruct them in it; or the word of prophecy, and prophets to tell them when it would be better times, and how long their present distress should last:

and shall not find [it]; there should be no ministry, no preaching, no prophesying; as never since among the ten tribes, so it has been the case of the Jews, the two tribes, upon the rejection of the Messiah; the Gospel was taken from them; no tidings could they hear of the Messiah, though they ran to and fro to find him, it being told them Lo, here, and Lo, there; see **Joh 7:34**.

Amos 8:13

Ver. 13. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst. After the word, for want of that grain and wine, which make young men and maids cheerful, **Zec 9:17**; but, being destitute of them, should be covered with sorrow, overwhelmed with grief, and ready to sink and die away. These, according to some, design the congregation of Israel; who are like to beautiful virgins, as the Targum paraphrases it; and the principal men of it, the masters of the assemblies: or, as others, such who were trusting to their own righteousness, and seeking after that which they could never attain justification by, and did not hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Christ, and so perished.

Amos 8:14

Ver. 14. They that swear by the sin of Samaria,.... The calf at Bethel, which was near Samaria, and which the Samaritans worshipped; and was set up by their kings, and the worship of it encouraged by their example, and which is called the calf of Samaria, **Ho 8:5**; the making of it was the effect of sin, and the occasion of leading into it, and ought to have been had in detestation and abhorrence, as sin should; and yet by this the Israelites swore, as they had used to do by the living God; so setting up this idol on an equality with him:

and say, thy God, O Dan, liveth; the other calf, which was set up in Dan; and to this they gave the epithet of the bring God, which only belonged to the God of Israel:

and the manner of Beersheba liveth; or, "the way of Beersheba" {r}; the long journey or pilgrimage of those at Beersheba; who chose to go to Dan, rather than Bethel, to worship; imagining they showed greater devotion and religion, by going from one extreme part of the land to the other, for the sake of it. Dan was on the northern border of the land of Judea, about four miles from Paneas, as you go to Tyre {s}; and Beersheba was on the southern border of the land, twenty miles from Hebron {t}; and the distance of these two places was about one hundred and sixty miles {u}. And by this religious peregrination men swore; or rather by the God of Beersheba, as the Septuagint render it; though the phrase may only intend the religion of Beersheba, the manner of worship there, it being a place where idolatry was practised; see **Am 5:5**. The Targum is,

"the fear (that is, the deity) which is in Dan liveth, and firm are the laws of Beersheba;"

even they shall fall, and never rise up again; that is, these idolatrous persons, that swear by the idols in the above places, shall fall into calamity, ruin, and destruction, by and for their sins, and never recover out of it; which was fulfilled in the captivity of the ten tribes, from whence they have never returned to this day.

{r} ebv-rab Krd "via Beersebah", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Mercerus, Tigurine version; "iter, peregrinatio", Drusius; "Bersabanum iter", Castalio. {s} Hieronymus de locis Heb. fol. 92. H. {t} Ibid. fol. 89. F. {u} Ib. Epist. ad Dardanura, fol. 22. I.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Amos 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO AMOS 9

This chapter contains the fifth and last vision the prophet saw; which represents the certain desolation of the land, city, and temple, and the slaughter of all sorts of persons, high and low, none should escape it, **Am 9:1**; be they where they would, they should be found out, whether in hell or heaven, on the tops of the highest mountains, or in the bottom of the sea, or in a foreign land, since the eyes of the Lord were upon them for evil, **Am 9:2**; nor could they hope to escape, when they considered his greatness and his power, and what he could do, and had done; and how they had behaved towards him, even though they were the people he had brought out of Egypt, **Am 9:5**; but though the sinful kingdom should be destroyed, yet not utterly, a remnant should be saved, **Am 9:8**; and the chapter is concluded with gracious promises of raising up the tabernacle of David fallen down, and of the return of the people of Israel to their own land; and of their settlement and continuance in it, never more to depart from it, **Am 9:11**.

Ver. 1. And I saw the Lord standing upon the altar,.... Either upon the altar of burnt offerings in the temple of Jerusalem, whither he had removed from the cherubim; signifying his being about to depart, and that he was displeased, and would not be appeased by sacrifice: so the Targum,

"said Amos the prophet, I saw the glory of the Lord removing from the cherub, and it dwelt upon the altar;"

and the vision may refer to the destruction of the Jews, their city and temple, either by the Chaldeans, or by the Romans: or rather, since the prophecy in general, and this vision in particular, seems to respect the ten tribes only, it was upon the altar at Bethel the Lord was seen standing, as offended at the sacrifices there offered, and to hinder them from sacrificing them, as well as to take vengeance on those that offered them, 1Ki 13:1;

and he said; the Lord said, either to the prophet in vision, or to one of the angels, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; or to the executioners of his vengeance, the enemies of the people of Israel:

smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake; the upper lintel, on which pomegranates and flowers were carved, and therefore called "caphtor", as Kimchi thinks; this was the lintel of the door, either of the temple at Jerusalem, as the Jewish writers generally suppose; or rather of the temple at Bethel, see 1Ki 12:31; which was to be smitten with such three, that the posts thereof should shake; signifying the destruction of the whole building in a short time, and that none should be able to go in and out thereat:

and cut them in the head, all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword; which shows that the lintel and doorposts are not to be taken literally, but figuratively; and that the smiting and cutting of them intend the destruction of men; by the "head", the king, and the princes, and nobles, or the priests; and, by "the last of them", the common people, the meanest sort, or those that were left of them, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi:

he that fleeth of them shall not flee away; he that attempts to make his escape, and shall flee for his life, shall not get clear, but either be stopped, or pursued and taken:

and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered; he that does get out of the hands of those that destroy with the sword shall not be delivered from death, but shall die by famine or pestilence. The Targum is,

"and he said, unless the people of the house of Israel return to the law, the candlestick shall be extinguished, King Josiah shall be killed, and the house destroyed, and the courts dissipated, and the vessels of the house of the sanctuary shall go into captivity; and the rest of them I will slay with the sword, &c."

referring the whole to the Jews, and to the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem.

Amos 9:2

Ver. 2. Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them,.... That is, they that endeavour to make their escape from their enemies, though they seek for places of the greatest secrecy and privacy; not hell, the place of the damned; nor the grave, the repository of the dead; neither of which they chose to he in, but rather sought to escape them; but the deepest and darkest caverns, the utmost recesses of the earth, the very centre of it; which, could they get into, would not secure them from the power and providence of God, and from their enemies in pursuit of them, by his permission:

though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down; the summit of the highest mountains, and get as near to heaven, and at as great a distance from men, as can be, and yet all in vain. The Targum is,

"if they think to be hid as it were in hell, from thence their enemies shall take them by my word; and if they ascend the high mountains, to the top of heaven, thence will I bring them;"

see Ps 139:8.

Amos 9:3

Ver. 3. And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel,.... One of the highest mountains in the land of Israel; in the woods upon it, and caves in it:

I will search and take them out from thence: by directing their enemies where to find them: so the Targum,

"if they think to be hid in the tops of the towers of castles, thither will I command the searchers, and they shall search them:"

and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea; get into ships, going by sea to distant parts; or make their escape to isles upon the sea afar off, where they may think themselves safe:

thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them; the dragon that is in the sea, Isa 27:1; the great whale in the sea, or the leviathan, so Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech; and is that kind of whale which is called the "Zygaena", as Bochart {w} thinks; and which he, from various writers, describes as very monstrous, horrible, and terrible, having five rows of teeth, and very numerous; and which not only devours other large fishes, but men swimming it meets with; and, having such teeth, with great propriety may be said to bite. It appears from hence that there are sea serpents, as well as land ones, to which the allusion is. Erich Pantoppidan, the present bishop of Bergen {x}, speaks of a "see ormen", or sea snake, in the northern seas, which he describes as very monstrous and very terrible to seafaring men, being of seven or eight folds, each fold a fathom distant; nay, of the length of a cable, a hundred fathom, or six hundred English feet; yea, of one as thick as a pipe of wine, with twenty five folds. Some such terrible creature is here respected, though figuratively understood, and designs some crafty, powerful, and cruel enemy. The Targum paraphrases it, though hid

"in the isles of the sea, thither will I command the people strong like serpents, and they shall kill them;"

see Ps 139:9.

{w} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 13. p. 747. {x} Natural History of Norway, par. 2. p. 198, 199, 207.

Amos 9:4

Ver. 4. And though they go into captivity before their enemies,.... Alluding to the manner in which captives are led, being put before their enemies, and so carried in triumph; see **La 1:5**; though some think this refers to their going voluntarily into a foreign country, in order to escape danger, as Johanan the son of Kareah with the Jews went into Egypt, Jer 43:5; in whom Kimchi instances:

thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them; or them that kill with the sword, as the Targum; so that though they thought by going into another country, or into an enemy's country of their own accord, to escape the sword of the enemy, or to curry favour with them, yet should not escape:

and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good: this is the true reason, why, let them be where they will, they cannot be safe, because the eyes of the omniscient God, which are everywhere, in heaven, earth, hell, and the sea, are set upon them, for their ruin and destruction; and there is no fleeing from his presence, or getting out of his sight, or escaping his hand. The Targum is,

"my Word shall be against them."

Amos 9:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord God of hosts [is] he that toucheth the land, and it shall melt,.... Which is another reason why it is impossible to escape the hands of a sin revenging God, because he is omnipotent as well as omniscient; he is the Lord of all the armies above and below; and if he but touch the land, any particular country, as the land of Israel, it shakes and trembles, and falls into a flow of water, or melts like wax; as when he toucheth the hills and mountains they smoke, being like fuel to fire; see Ps 104:32;

and all that dwell therein shall mourn; their houses destroyed, their substance consumed, and all that is near and dear to them swallowed up:

and it shall rise up wholly like a flood, and shall be drowned as [by] the flood of Egypt; See Gill on "Am 8:8".

Amos 9:6

Ver. 6. [It is] he that buildeth his stories in the heaven,.... The three elements, according to Aben Ezra, fire, air, and water; the orbs, as Kimchi, one above another; a word near akin to this is rendered "his chambers", which are the clouds, Ps 104:3; perhaps the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, which are three stories high, may be meant; we read of the third heaven, 2Co 12:2; and particularly the throne of God is in the highest heaven; and the "ascents" {y} to it, as it may be rendered. The Targum is,

"who causeth to dwell in a high fortress the Shechinah of his glory:"

and hath founded his troop in the earth; this Kimchi interprets of the three above elements. So the words are translated in the Bishops' Bible in Queen Elizabeth's time,

"he buildeth his spheres in the heaven, and hath laid the foundation of his globe of elements in the earth."

Aben Ezra interprets it of animals; it may take in the whole compass of created beings on earth; so Jarchi explains it of the collection of his creatures; though he takes notice of another sense given, a collection of the righteous, which are the foundation of the earth, and for whose sake all things stand. Abarbinel interprets it of the whole of the tribe of Israel; and so the Targum paraphrases it of his congregation or church on earth: he beautifies his elect, which are "his bundle" {z}, as it may be rendered; who are bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord their God, and are closely knit and united, as to God and Christ, so to one another; and perhaps is the best sense of the words {a}:

he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth, the Lord [is] his name; either to drown it, as at the general deluge; or to water and refresh it, as he does by exhaling water from the sea, and then letting it down in plentiful showers upon the earth; See Gill on "Am 5:8"; now all these things are observed to show the power of God, and that therefore there can be no hope of escaping out of his hands.

{y} wytwlem "ascensiones suus", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Tigurine version, "gradus suo", Vatablus, Drusius, Cocceius. {z} wtdga "fasciculum suum", Montanus, Munster, Mercerus, Vatablus, Drusius, Burkius. {a} Schultens in Observ. ad Genesin, p. 197, 198, observes, that
"agad", with the Arabs, signifies primarily to "bind", and is by them transferred to a building firmly bound, and compact together; and so may intend here in Amos the Lord's building, the church, which he hath founded in the earth; and so with Golius and Castellus is a building firmly compacted together.
tdga is used for a bunch of hyssop, Exod. xii. 27. and in the Misnic language for a handful or bundle of anything; see Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. rad. dga.

Amos 9:7

Ver. 7. [Are] ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord,.... And therefore had no reason to think they should be delivered because they were the children of Israel, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; since they were no more to God than the children of the Ethiopians, having behaved like them; and were become as black as they through sin, and were idolaters like them; and so accustomed to sin, and hardened in it, that they could no more change their course and custom of sinning than the Ethiopian could change his skin, Jer 13:23; The Ethiopians are represented by Diodorus Siculus {b} as very religious, that is, very idolatrous; and as the first that worshipped the gods, and offered sacrifice to them; hence they were very pleasing to them, and in high esteem with them; wherefore Homer {c} speaks of Jupiter, and the other gods, going to Ethiopia to an anniversary feast, and calls them the blameless Ethiopians; and so Lucian {d} speaks of the gods as gone abroad, perhaps to the other side of the ocean, to visit the honest Ethiopians; for they are often used to visit them, and, as he wittily observes, even sometimes without being invited. Jarchi suggests the sense to be, that they were as creatures upon the same foot, and of the same descent, with other nations; and paraphrases it thus,

"from the sons of Noah ye came as the rest of the nations."

Kimchi takes the meaning to be this,

"as the children of the Ethiopians are servants so should ye be unto me."

The Targum is very foreign from the sense,

"are ye not reckoned as beloved children before me, O house of Israel?"

the first sense is best:

have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? and therefore it was ungrateful in them to behave as they have done; nor can they have any dependence on this, or argue from hence that they shall be indulged with other favours, or be continued in their land, since the like has been done for other nations, as follows:

and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir? that is, have I not brought up the one from the one place, and the other from the other? the Philistines and Caphtorim are mentioned together as brethren, Ge 10:14; and the Avim which dwelt in the land of Palestine in Hazerim unto Azzah were destroyed by the Caphtorim, who dwelt in their stead, **De 2:23**; from whom, it seems by this, the Philistines were delivered, who are called the remnant of the country of Caphtor, Jer 47:4. Aben Ezra understands it as if the Israelites were not only brought out of Egypt, but also from the Philistines, and from Caphtor: others take these two places, Caphtor and Kir, to be the original of the Philistines and Syrians, and not where they had been captives, but now delivered: so Japhet,

"ye are the children of one father, God, who brought you out of Egypt, and not as the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir, who were mixed together;"

and R. Joseph Kimchi thus,

"from Caphtor came destroyers to the Philistines, who destroyed them; and from Kir came Tiglathpileser, the destroyer, to the Syrians, who carried them captive there."

Of the captivity of the Philistines, and their deliverance from the Caphtorim, we nowhere read; the captivity of the Syrians in Kir Amos prophesied of, **Am 1:5**; and if he speaks here of their deliverance from it, he must live at least to the times of Ahaz; for in his times it was they were carried captive thither, 2Ki 16:9. Caphtor some take to be Cyprus, because it seems to be an island, Jer 47:4; but by it the Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Arabic versions understand Cappadocia; and the Cappadocians used to be called by the Greeks and Persians Syrians, as Herodotus {e} and others, observe. Bochart {f} is of opinion that that part of Cappadocia is intended which is called Colchis; and the rather since he finds a city in that country called Side, which in the Greek tongue signifies a pomegranate, as Caphtor does in Hebrew; and supposes the richness of the country led the Caphtorim thither, who, having stayed awhile, returned to Palestine, and there settled; which expedition he thinks is wrapped up in the fable of the Greek poets, concerning that of Typhon out of Egypt to Colchis and from thence to Palestine; and indeed the Jewish Targumists {g} every where render Caphtorim by Cappadocians, and Caphtor by Cappadocia, or Caphutkia; but then by it they understand a place in Egypt, even Pelusium, now called Damiata; for the Jewish writers say {h} Caphutkia is Caphtor, in the Arabic language Damiata; so Benjamin of Tudela says {i}, in two days I came to Damiata, this is Caphtor; and no doubt the Caphtorim were in Egypt originally since they descended from Mizraim; but Calmet {k} will have it that the island of Crete is meant by Caphtor; and observes, theft, the Philistines were at first called strangers in Palestine, their proper name being Cherethites, or Cretians, as in Eze 25:16; as the Septuagint render that name of theirs; and that the language, manners, arms, religion and gods, of the Philistines and Cretians, are much the same; he finds a city in Crete called Aptera, which he thinks has a sensible relation to Caphtor; and that the city of Gaza in Palestine went by the name of Minoa, because of Minos king of Crete, who, coming into that country, called this ancient city by his own name. The Targum and Vulgate Latin version render Kir by Cyrene, by which must be meant, not Cyrene in Africa, but in Media; so Kir is mentioned along with Elam or Persia in Isa 22:6; whither the people of Syria were carried captive by Tiglathpileser, as predicted in **Am 1:5**; and, as the above writer observes {l}, not certainly into the country of Cyrene near Egypt, where that prince was possessed of nothing; but to Iberia or

Albania, where the river Kir or Cyrus runs, which discharges itself into the Caspian sea; and Josephus {m} says they were transported into Upper Media; and the above author thinks that the Prophet Amos, in this passage, probably intended to comprehend, under the word "Cyr" or "Kir", the people beyond the Euphrates, and those of Mesopotamia, from whence the Aramaeans in reality came, who were descended from Aram the son of Shem; and he adds, we have no certain knowledge of their coming in particular out of this country, where the river Cyrus flows; and, upon the whole, it is difficult to determine whether this is to be understood of the origin of these people, or of their deliverance from captivity; the latter may seem probable, since it is certain that the prophet speaks of the deliverance of Israel from the captivity of Egypt; and it is as certain that the Syrians were carried captive to Kir, and, no doubt, from thence delivered; though we have no account of the Philistines being captives to Caphtor, and of their deliverance from thence; however, doubtless these were things well known to Amos, and in his times, he here speaks of. In some of our English copies it is read Assyrians instead of Syrians, very wrongly; for "Aram", and not "Ashur", is the word here used.

{b} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 143, 144. {c} Ibid. 1. l. 423. {d} In Jupiter Tragaedus. {e} Clio, sive l. 1. 72. Terpsichore, sive l. 5. c. 40. & Polymnia, sive l. 7. c. 72. Vid. Strabo. Geograph. l. 22. p. 374. {f} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 32. col. 291, 292. {g} Targum Onkelos, Jon. & Jerus. in Gen. x. 4. & Ben Uzziel in Jer. xlvii. 4. & in loc. {h} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Cetubot, c. 13. sect. 11. {i} Itinerarium, p. 125. {k} Dictionary in tile word "Caphtor". {l} Dictionary, in the word "Cyrene". {m} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 12. sect. 3.

Amos 9:8

Ver. 8. Behold, the eyes of the Lord God [are] upon the sinful kingdom,.... God is omniscient, and his eyes are everywhere, and upon all persons, good and bad, and upon all kingdoms, especially upon a sinful nation: "the sinning kingdom" {n}, or "the kingdom of sin" {o}, as it may be rendered; that is addicted to sin, where it prevails and reigns; every such kingdom, particularly the kingdom of Israel, Ephraim, or the ten tribes, given to idolatry, and other sins complained of in this prophecy; and that not for good, but for evil, as in **Am 9:4**; in order to cut them off from being a people:

and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth: so that it shall be no more, at least as a kingdom; as the ten tribes have never been since their captivity by

Shalmaneser; though Japhet interprets this of all the kingdoms of the earth, being sinful, the eyes of God are upon them to destroy them, excepting the kingdom of Israel; so Abarbinel:

saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord; and so it is, that though they have been destroyed as a kingdom, yet not utterly as a people; there were some of the ten tribes that mixed with the Jews, and others that were scattered about in the world; and a remnant among them, according to the election of grace, that were met with in the ministry of the apostles, and in the latter day all Israel shall be saved; see Jer 30:10.

{n} hajxh hklmm "hoc regnum peccans", V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Drusius, Mercerus; "peccatrix", Piscator. {o} "Regnum peccati", Pagninus, Montanus.

Amos 9:9

Ver. 9. For, lo, I will command,.... What follows; which is expressive of afflictive and trying dispensations of Providence, which are according to the will of God, by his appointment and order, and overruled for his glory, and the good of his people:

and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, as [corn] is sifted in a sieve; this is to be understood of spiritual Israel, of those who are Israelites indeed, who are like to corns of wheat, first die before they live; die unto sin, and live unto righteousness; grow up gradually, and produce much fruit; or like to wheat for their choiceness and excellency, being the chosen of God and precious, and the excellent in the earth; and their whiteness and purity, as clothed with Christ's righteousness washed in his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit; and for their substance and fulness, being filled out of Christ's fulness, and with all the fulness of God, with the Spirit and his graces, and with all the fruits of righteousness; and for weight and solidity, not as chaff driven to and fro, but are firm and constant, settled and established, in divine things; and yet have the chaff of sin cleaving to them, and have need of the flail and fan of affliction; and this is the sieve the Lord takes into his hands, and sifts them with; whereby sometimes they are greatly unsettled, and tossed to and fro, have no rest and ease, but are greatly distressed on all sides, and are thoroughly searched and tried, and the chaff loosened and separated from them; and sometimes the Lord suffers them to be sifted by the temptations of Satan, whereby they are brought into doubts and fears, and are very wavering and uncomfortable, are sadly harassed and buffeted, and in great danger, were it not for the grace of God, and the intercession of the Mediator, Lu 22:31;

yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth; or, "the least stone" {p}; which is in the spiritual building, and laid on the rock and foundation Christ; or the least corn of wheat, so called because of its weight, solidity, and substance. The meaning is, that the least true Israelite, or child of God, who is the least in the kingdom of heaven, and has the least share of grace and spiritual knowledge, that is even less than the least of all saints, shall not be lost and perish; though they fall in Adam, yet they are preserved in Christ; though they fall into actual sins and transgressions, and sometimes into gross ones, and from a degree of steadfastness in the faith, yet not totally and finally, or so as to perish for ever; no, not a hair of their head shall fall to the ground, or they be hurt and ruined; see
1Sa 14:45; for they are beloved of God with an everlasting love, ordained, by him to eternal life, adopted into his family, justified by his grace, and are kept by his power, according to his promise, which never fails; they are Christ's property, given him of his Father, to whom he stands in the relation of Head and Husband; are the purchase of his blood, closely united to him, and for whom he intercedes, and makes preparations in heaven. The Spirit of God is their sanctifier and sealer; he dwells in them as their earnest of heaven; and the glory of all the divine Persons is concerned in their salvation; hence it is that not one of them shall ever perish.

{p} rwru "lapillus", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Munster, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Cocceius; so Ben Melech.

Amos 9:10

Ver. 10. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword,.... By the sword of the Assyrians, and of others, into whose countries they shall flee for shelter, **Am 9:1**; even all such who are notorious sinners, abandoned to their lusts, obstinate and incorrigible; live in sin, and continue therein; repent not of sin, disbelieve the prophets of the Lord, and defy his threatenings, and put away the evil day far from them:

which say, the evil shall not overtake nor prevent us; the evil threatened by the prophet, the sword of the enemy, the desolation of their land, and captivity in a foreign land; these evils, if they came at all, which they gave little credit to, yet would not in their days; they would never come so near them, or so close to their heels as to overtake them, and seize them, or to get before them, and stop them fleeing from them; they promised themselves impunity, and were in no pain about the judgments threatened them; so daring and impudent, so irreligious and atheistical, were they in their thoughts, words, and actions; and therefore should all and everyone of them be destroyed.

Amos 9:11

Ver. 11. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen,.... Not in the day of Israel's ruin, but in the famous Gospel day, so often spoken of by the prophets; and this prophecy is referred to the times of the Messiah by the ancient {q} Jews; and one of the names they give him is taken from hence, "Barnaphli" {r}, the Son of the fallen. R. Nachman said to R. Isaac, hast thou heard when Barnaphli comes? to whom he said, who is Barnaphli? he replied, the Messiah; you may call the Messiah Barnaphli; for is it not written, "in that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen down?" and they call him so, not because the son of Adam; but because he was the son of David, and was to spring from his family, when fallen into a low and mean condition; yea, they sometimes seem by the tabernacle of David to understand the dead body of the Messiah to be raised, whose human nature is by the New Testament writers called a tabernacle, **Heb 8:2**; see **Joh 1:14**; for, having mentioned {s} that passage in Jer 30:9; "they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up unto them", add, whom I will raise up out of the dust; as it is said, "I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen down"; but elsewhere {t} it is better interpreted of the Messiah's raising up Israel his people out of captivity; they say,

"her husband shall come, and raise her out of the dust; as it is said, "I will raise up the tabernacle of David", &c. in the day the King Messiah shall gather the captivity from the ends of the world to the ends of it, according to De 30:4;"

and which they understand of their present captivity, and deliverance from it, as in **Am 9:14**. Tobit {u} seems to have reference to this passage, when he thus exhorts Zion,

"praise the everlasting King, that his tabernacle may be built again in thee;"

and expresses {w} his faith in it, that so it would be,

"afterwards they (the Jews) shall return from all places of their captivity, and build up Jerusalem gloriously; and the house of God shall be built in it, as the prophets have spoken concerning it, for ever;"

agreeably to which Jarchi paraphrases it,

"in the day appointed for redemption;"

and so the Apostle James quotes it, and applies it to the first times of the Gospel, Ac 15:15. The Targum interprets this "tabernacle" of the kingdom of the house of David: this was in a low estate and condition when Jesus the Messiah came, he being the carpenter's son; but it is to be understood of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, the church; Christ is meant by David, whose son he is, and of whom David was an eminent type, and is often called by his name, Eze 34:23; and the church by his "tabernacle", which is of his building, where he dwells, and keeps his court; and which in the present state is movable from place to place: and this at the time of Christ's coming was much fallen, and greatly decayed, through sad corruption in doctrine by the Pharisees and Sadducees; through neglect of worship, and formality in it, and the introduction of things into it God never commanded; through the wicked lives of professors, and the small number of truly godly persons; but God, according to this promise and prophecy, raised it up again by the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles, and by the conversion of many of the Jews, and by bringing in great numbers of the Gentiles, who coalesced in one church state, which made it flourishing, grand, and magnificent; and thus the prophecy was in part fulfilled, as the apostle has applied it in the above mentioned place: but it will have a further and greater accomplishment still in the latter day, both in the spiritual and personal reign of Christ: and though this tabernacle or church of Christ is fallen to decay again, and is in a very ruinous condition; the doctrines of the Gospel being greatly departed from; the ordinances of it changed, or not attended to; great declensions as to the exercise of grace among the people of God; and many breaches and divisions among them; the outward conversation of many professors very bad, and few instances of conversion; yet the Lord will raise it up again, and make it very glorious: he will

close up the breaches thereof, and will raise up his ruins; the doctrines of the Gospel will be revived and received; the ordinances of it will be administered in their purity, as they were first delivered; great numbers will be converted, both of Jews and Gentiles; and there will be much holiness, spirituality, and brotherly love, among the saints:

and I will build it as in the days of old; religion shall flourish as in the days of David and Solomon; the Christian church will be restored to its pristine glory, as in the times of the apostles.

{q} Zohar in Exod. fol. 96. 2. {r} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 96. 2. {s} Zohar in Gen. fol. 53. 2. {t} Zohar in Exod. fol. 4. 2. {u} Ch. xiii. 10. {w} Ch. xiv. 7.

Amos 9:12

Ver. 12. That they may possess the remnant or Edom, and of all the Heathen, which are called by my name,.... Or that these may be possessed; that is, by David or Christ, who shall have the Heathen given him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, **Ps 2:8**; when the remnant, according to the election of grace, in those nations that have been the greatest enemies to Christ and his Gospel, signified by Edom, shall be converted, and call upon the name of the Lord, and worship him; and be called by his name, Christians, and so become his inheritance and possession. The Targum understands, by the Heathen or people, all the people of the house of Israel; and Kimchi, Aben Ezra, and Ben Melech, think the words are to be inverted, thus,

"that all the people on whom my name is called, nay possess the remnant of Edom;"

and the forager says, that all the Edomites shall be destroyed in the days of the Messiah, but Israel shall inherit their land; and Aben Ezra says, that if this prophecy is interpreted of the Messiah, the matter is clear; as it is in the sense we have given, and as the apostle explains it; See Gill on "Ac 15:17". Some render the words, "that the remnant of Edom, and of all the Heathen, that are" (that is, shall be) "called by my name, may possess me the Lord" {x}. The truth and certainty of its performance is expressed in the following clause,

saith the Lord, that doeth this: whose word is true, whose power is great, whose grace is efficacious, to accomplish all that is here promised and foretold.

{x} "Ut possideant reliquiae Edom", De Dieu. See Bishop Chandler's Defence of Christianity, p. 172.

Amos 9:13

Ver. 13. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,.... Or "are coming" {y}; and which will commence upon the accomplishment of the above things, when the church of Christ is raised up and established, the Jews converted, and the Gentiles brought in:

that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper; or "meet the reaper" {z}; or come up to him, or touch him, as it may be rendered; and so the Targum; that is, before the reaper has well cut down the grain, or it is scarce gathered in, the ploughman shall be ready to plough up the ground again, that it may be sown, and produce another crop:

and the treaders of grapes him that soweth seed; or "draweth seed" {a}; out of his basket, and scatters it in the land; signifying that there should he such an abundance of grapes in the vintage, that they would continue pressing till seedtime; and the whole denotes a great affluence of temporal good things, as an emblem of spiritual ones; see
Le 26:5; where something of the like nature is promised, and expressed in much the same manner:

and the mountains shall drop sweet wine; or "new wine" {b}; intimating that there shall be abundance of vines grow upon the mountains, which will produce large quantities of wine, so that they shall seem to drop or flow with it:

and all the hills shall melt; with liquors; either with wine or honey, or rather with milk, being covered with flocks and herds, which shall yield abundance of milk; by all which, plenty of spiritual things, as the word and ordinances, and rich supplies of grace, as well as of temporal things, is meant; see **Joe 3:18**.

{y} Myab Mymy "dies venientes", Montanus, Burkius. {z} ruwqb vrwh vgn "et [vel] cum occurret arator messori", Vatablus, Drusius; "attingent arator messorem", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "accedet arator ad messorem", Cocceius. {a} erzh Kvwm "trahentem semen", Montanus, Liveleus, Drusius, Mercerus. {b} oyoe "mustum", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Mercerus; "musto", Drusius, Cocceius.

Amos 9:14

Ver. 14. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel,.... Which is not to be understood of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and their return from thence, with whom some of the ten tribes of Israel were mixed; for they were not then so planted in their own land as no more to be pulled up again, as is here promised; for they afterwards were dispossessed of it by the Romans, and carried captive, and dispersed among the nations again; but the captivity both of Judah and Israel is meant, their present captivity, which will be brought back, and they will be delivered from it, and return to their own land, and possess it as long as it is a land; see Jer 30:3; as well as be freed from the bondage of sit, Satan, and the law, under which they have been detained some hundreds of years; but now shall be delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God, of Christians, with which Christ has made them free:

and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit [them]; literally the cities in Judea wasted by the Turks, and others; and mystically the churches of Christ, of which saints are fellow citizens, and will be in a desolate condition before the conversion of the Jews, and the gathering in the fulness of the Gentiles; but by these means will be rebuilt, and be in a flourishing condition, and fall of inhabitants:

and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them; which, as before, will be literally true; and in a spiritual sense may signify the churches of Christ, compared to vineyards and gardens, which will be planted everywhere, and be set with pleasant and fruitful plants, and will turn to the advantage of those who have been instruments in planting them; see **So 6:2**.

Amos 9:15

Ver. 15. And I will plant them upon their land,.... The land of Israel, as trees are planted; and they shall take root and flourish, and abound with all good things, temporal and spiritual:

and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God; by which it appears that this is a prophecy of things yet to come; since the Jews, upon their return to their own land after the Babylonish captivity, were pulled up again, and rooted out of it by the

Romans, and remain so to this day; but, when they shall return again, they will never more be removed from it; and of this they may he assured; because it is the land the Lord has, "given" them, and it shall not be taken away from them any more; and, because he will now appear to be the "Lord their God", the "loammi", **Ho 1:9**, will he taken off from them; they will be owned to be the Lords people, and he will be known by them to be their covenant God; which will ensure all the above blessings to them, of whatsoever kind; for this is either said to the prophet, "the Lord thy God", or to Israel; and either way it serves to confirm the same thing.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Obadiah 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO OBADIAH

The title of this Book, in the Hebrew copies, is usually "Sepher Obadiah", the Book of Obadiah: the Vulgate Latin version calls it the Prophecy of Obadiah; and so the Arabic version: and in the Syriac version it is, the Prophecy of the Prophet Obadiah. His name signifies a "servant" or "worshipper of the Lord". Who he was, what his parentage, and in what age he lived, are things uncertain. The Seder Olam Zuta {a} places him in the reign of Jehoshaphat: and he is thought by some to be that Obadiah that was one of the princes he sent to teach the people, 2Ch 17:7. The ancient Jewish Rabbins take him to be the same with him that lived in the times of Ahab, and in his court, who hid the prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them, 1Ki 18:3; to which Aben Ezra objects, because he is not called a prophet, only one that feared the Lord; whereas to be a prophet is something greater. They also say he was an Edomite by birth, but was proselyted to the Jewish religion, and so a fit person to be employed in prophesying against Edom; and it is a tradition with them that his widow is the woman whose cruse of oil Elisha multiplied, **2Ki 4:1**. Some have been of opinion that he was the captain of the third fifty, whose life Elijah spared in the times of Ahaziah; and who upon that left the king's service, and followed the prophet, and became a disciple of his; so Pseudo-Epiphanius {b}, and Isidorus Hispalensis {c}, who say that he was of Sychem, a city of Samaria, and of the field of Bethachamar, or Bethaccaron. Others would have him to be one of the overseers of the workmen in the house of the Lord, in the times of Josiah, 2Ch 34:12; to which Mr. Lively {d} inclines; though others, going according to the order of the books in the canon of Scripture, which is not to be depended on, place him earlier, and make him contemporary with Hosea, Joel, and Amos, as Grotius {e}, Huetius {f}, and Lightfoot {g}: but he seems rather to be contemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel, with whose prophecies this agrees, as may be observed by comparing it with Jer 49:1; and to have lived and prophesied after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; in which the Edomites, against whom he prophesies, had a concern; see **Ob 1:11**; though Dr. Lightfoot thinks these prophecies refer either to the sacking of Jerusalem by Shishak king of Egypt, 1Ki 14:25; or by the Philistines and Arabians, 2Ch 21:16; or by Joash king of Israel, 2Ch 25:21; so that, upon the whole, it is not certain; and, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi own, it is not known in what age this prophet lived: Bishop Usher {h} places his prophecy in the twelfth year of Jeconiah's captivity. However, there is no doubt to be made of the authenticity of the prophecy; as may be concluded, not only from the title of it, and the solemn manner in which it begins; but from the matter of it, and the accomplishment of what is contained in it; as well as from the testimony borne to it in the New Testament, in which not only the book of the minor prophets, in which this stands, is quoted, **Ac 7:42**; but a passage in it, **Ob 1:8**; is referred to in **1Co 1:19**; as is thought by some learned men. I have only to observe, that, according to Pseudo-Epiphanius {i}, he died in Bethachamar, where he is said to be born, and was buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors; but, according to Jerom {k} and Isidore {l}, his sepulchre is in Sebaste or Samaria; which remained to the times of Jerom, near those of the Prophet Elisha and John the Baptist. Monsieur Thevenot {m} says that John Baptist here lies buried between the Prophets Elisha and Abdias.

{a} P. 103. {b} De Prophet. Vid. c. 15. {c} De Vita & Mort. Sanct. c, 44. {d} In loc. {e} In loc. {f} Demonstrat. Evangel. Prop. 4. p. 290. {g} Works, vol. 1. p. 96. {h} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3417 or 587 B.C. {i} Ut supra. (De Prophet. Vid. c. 15.) {k} Comment. in loc. & in Epitaph. Paulae, fol. 59. M. {l} Ut supra. (De Vita & Mort. Sanct. c, 44.) {m} Travels, par. 1. B. 1. ch. 56. p. 216.

INTRODUCTION TO OBADIAH 1

This prophecy of Obadiah is the least of the minor prophets, consisting but of one chapter; the subject of it is Edom, whose destruction is foretold, and is to be considered as a type of the enemies of Christ and his kingdom, and especially of the Roman antichrist. After the preface, the rumour of war, and preparation for it, which would issue in the ruin of Edom, are observed, **Ob 1:1**; because of their pride, confidence, and security, **Ob 1:3**; which should be complete and entire, **Ob 1:5**; notwithstanding their allies, who would deceive them; and the wisdom of their wise men, which should be destroyed; and the strength of their mighty men, who would be dismayed, **Ob 1:7**; and this should come upon them, chiefly because of their ill usage of the Jews at the time of Jerusalem's destruction, which is enlarged upon, **Ob 1:10**; and this would be when all the nations round about them would be destroyed, **Ob 1:15**; and then deliverance is promised to the Jews, who should not only enjoy their own possessions, but the land of the Edomites, wasted by them, **Ob 1:17**; and the book is concluded with a glorious prophecy of the kingdom of the Messiah, **Ob 1:21**.

Ver. 1. The vision of Obadiah,.... Or the prophecy, as the Targum; which was delivered unto him by the Lord in a vision; it was not what he fancied or dreamed of, but what he saw, what he had a clear discovery and revelation of made unto his mind; hence prophets are sometimes called "seers". This was a single prophecy; though sometimes a book, consisting of various prophecies, is called a vision; as the prophecies of Isaiah are called the vision of Isaiah, **Isa 1:1**;

thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom; by the mouth of this prophet, who was divinely inspired by him; for Obadiah said not what follows of himself but in the name of the Lord; and is a proof of the divine authority of this book; the subject matter of which is Edom or Idumea, as in the Septuagint version; a neighbouring country to the Jews, and very troublesome to them, being their implacable enemies, though their brethren; and were a type of the enemies of the Christian church, those false brethren, the antichristian states; and particularly the head of them, the Romish antichrist, whose picture is here drawn and whose destruction is prophesied of, under the name of Edom; for what has been literally fulfilled in Idumea will; be mystically accomplished in antichrist. The Jews generally understand, by Edom, Rome, and the Christians in general; which, if applied only to the antichristians, is not amiss;

we have heard a rumour from the Lord; or "a report" {n}; a message from him, brought by the Spirit of God, as a spirit of prophecy; that is, I Obadiah, and Jeremiah, and other prophets, as Isaiah and Amos, who have had orders to prophesy against Edom; see Jer 49:14; so the angels, or Gospel ministers, will have a rumour or message concerning the fall of antichrist Re 14:6;

and an ambassador is sent among the Heathen: either by the Lord, as Jeremiah the prophet, according to some; or an angel, as others; or an impulse upon the minds of the Chaldeans stirring them up to war against the Edomites: or else by Nebuchadnezzar to the nations in alliance with him, to join him in his expedition against them; or a herald sent by him to his own people, to summon them together to this war, and to encourage them in it:

arise ye, and let us rise up in battle against her; come up from all parts, join together, and invade the land of Idumea, and give battle to the inhabitants of it, and destroy them; so the kings of the earth will stir up one another to hate the whore of Rome, and make her desolate,
Re 17:16.

{n} hewmv "auditum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Obadiah 1:2

Ver. 2. Behold, I have made thee small among the Heathen,.... Or "a little one", or "thing" {o}; their number few, and their country not large, as Aben Ezra, especially in comparison of other nations; and therefore had no reason to be so proud, insolent, and secure, as they are afterwards said to be; or rather, "I will make thee"; the past for the future, after the prophetic manner, as Kimchi; that is weak and feeble, as the Targum; reduce their numbers, destroy their towns and cities, and bring them into a low and miserable condition: or the sense is, that he would make them look little, mean, and abject, in the sight of their enemies who would conclude, upon a view of them, that they should have no trouble in subduing them, and therefore should attack them without fear, and as sure of success:

thou art greatly despised; in the eyes of the nations round about; by their enemies, who looked upon them with contempt, because of the smallness of their number, their defenceless state and want of strength to support and defend themselves; see Jer 49:15; had so the pope of Rome is little and despicable in the eyes of the monarchs of the earth; and the antichristian Edom will be more so at the time of its general ruin.

{o} Njq "parvium", V. L.

Obadiah 1:3

Ver. 3. The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee,.... The Edomites were proud of their wealth and riches, which they had by robberies amassed together; and of their military skill and courage, and of their friends and allies; and especially of their fortresses and fastnesses, both natural and artificial; and therefore thought themselves secure, and that no enemy could come at them to hurt them, and this deceived them:

thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock; their country was called Arabia Petraea, the rocky; and their metropolis Petra, the rock: Jerom says that they that inhabited the southern part of the country dwelt in caves cut out of the rock, to screen them from the heat of the sun: or, "thou that dwellest in the circumferences of the rock" {p}; round about it, on the top of it, in a tower built there, as Kimchi and Ben Melech. Aben Ezra thinks that "caph", the note of similitude, is wanting; and that the sense is, thou thoughtest that Mount Seir could secure thee, as they that dwell in the clefts of a rock:

whose habitation [is] high; upon high rocks and mountains, such as Mount Seir was, where Esau dwelt, and his posterity after, him. The Targum is,

"thou art like to an eagle that dwells in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is in a high place;"

this they were proud of, thinking themselves safe, which deceived them; hence it follows:

that saith in his heart, who shall bring me down to the ground? what enemy, ever so warlike and powerful, will venture to invade my land, or besiege me in my strong hold? or, if he should, he can never take it, or take me from hence, conquer and subdue me. Of the pride, confidence, and security of mystical Edom or antichrist, see Re 18:7.

{p} elo ywgxb "in gyris, sive circuitionibus petrae", so some in Vatablus.

Obadiah 1:4

Ver. 4. Though thou exaltest [thyself] as the eagle,.... That soars aloft, flies on high, even out of sight, higher than any other bird does: or, "exaltest thy habitation"; and makest it as high as the eagle's nest; see Jer 49:16;

and though thou set thy nest among the stars; even higher than the eagle's; an hyperbolical expression, supposing that which never was or can be done; yet, if it was possible, would not secure from danger: or should their castles and fortresses be built upon the top of the highest mountains, which seem to reach the heavens, and be among the stars:

thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord; this is said in answer to the question put, or bold challenge made, in **Ob 1:3**; if men cannot do it, God will; and, if he employs instruments to effect it, it shall be done by them; all seeming difficulties are easily surmounted by an omnipotent Being; what are the heights of mountains, or the strength of fortresses, to him? thus the whore of Rome sits upon seven mountains, and mystical Babylon reigns over the kings of the earth; yet shall be thrown down and found no more, for the Lord is strong that judgeth her, Re 17:9.

Obadiah 1:5

Ver. 5. If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night,.... Whether the one came by day, and the other by night, or both by night, the same being meant by different words, whose intent is to plunder and steal, and carry off what they can; thy condition would not be worse, nor so bad as now it is: for

how art thou cut off! from being a nation, wholly destroyed; thy people killed, or carried captive; thy fortresses demolished, towns and cities levelled with the ground, and all thy wealth and substance carried off, and nothing left: these are either the words of God, or of the prophet, setting forth their utter ruin, as if it was already; or of the nations round about, wondering at their sudden destruction. Some render it, "how silent art thou!" {q} that is, under all these calamities: or, "how art thou asleep!" or "stupefied!" as the Targum and Jarchi; not to be upon thy guard against the incursions of the enemy, but careless, secure, and stupid, and now stripped of everything: had common thieves and robbers broke in upon thee,

would they not have stolen till they had enough? as much as they came for, or could carry off; they seldom strip a house into which they enter of everything in it; they come for some particular things, and, meeting with them, they go off, and leave the rest:

if the grape gatherers come to thee, would they not leave [some] grapes? that is, if men should come into thy vineyards, and gather the grapes, and carry them off by force or stealth, would they take them all a way? doubtless they would leave some behind; some would be hid under the boughs, and be left unobserved by them: or the allusion is to gatherers of grapes, who gather them for the owners, and at their direction, who were wont to leave some clusters for the poor to glean after them; but in the case of Edom it is suggested that nothing should be left, all should be clean carried off; the destruction would he complete and entire. The Targum is,

"if spoilers as grape gatherers should come unto thee, &c."

see Jer 49:9.

{q} htymdn Kya "quomodo redactus es in silentium?" Calvin; "quomodo siles?" some in Tarnovius; so Syr.

Obadiah 1:6

Ver. 6. How are [the things] of Esau searched out!.... Or how are the Esauites, the posterity of Esau, sought out! though they dwelt in the clefts of the rocks, and hid themselves in caves and dens, yet their enemies searched them, and found there, and plucked them out from thence, so that none escaped:

[how] are his hid things sought up! his riches, wealth and treasure, hid in fortresses, in rocks and caves, where they were thought to be safe, and judged inaccessible; or that an enemy would not have ventured in search of them there; and yet these should be sought after and found by the greedy, and diligent, and venturous soldier, and carried off; which was the case of the Edomites by the Chaldeans, and will be of the antichristian states by the kings of the earth, Re 17:16; see
Jer 49:10.

Obadiah 1:7

Ver. 7. All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee [even] to the border,.... Or of "thy covenant" {r}; that are in league with thee; thine allies, even all of them, prove treacherous to thee, in whom thou trustedst; when they sent their ambassadors to them, they received them kindly, promised great things to them, dismissed them honourably, accompanied them to the borders of their country, but never stood to their engagements: or those allies came and joined their forces with the Edomites, and went out with them to meet the enemy, as if they would fight with them, and them; but when they came to the border of the land they left them, and departed into their own country; or went over to the enemy; or these confederates were the instruments of expelling them out of their own land, and sending them to the border of it, and carrying them captive; or they followed them to the border of the land, when they were carried captive, as if they lamented their case, when they were assisting to the enemy, as Kimchi; so deceitful were they. The Targum is to the same purpose,

"from the border all thy confederates carried thee captive {s}:"

the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, [and] prevailed against thee; outwitted them in their treaties of peace, and got the advantage of them; or they proved treacherous to them, and joined the enemy against them; or they persuaded them to declare themselves enemies to the Chaldeans, which proved their ruin; and so they prevailed against them:

[they that eat] thy bread: so the Targum and Kimchi supply it; or it may be supplied from the preceding clause, "the men of thy bread"; who received subsidies from them, were maintained by them, and quartered among them:

have laid a wound under thee; instead of supporting them, secretly did that which was wounding to them. The word signifies both a wound and a plaster; they pretended to lay a plaster to heal, but made a wound; or made the wound worse. The Targum is,

"they laid a stumbling block under thee;"

at which they stumbled and fell: or snares, as the Vulgate Latin version, whereby they brought them to ruin:

[there is] none understanding in him; in Esau, or the Edomites; they were so stupid, that they could not see into the designs of their pretended friends, and prevent the execution of them, and their ill effects.

{r} Ktyrb yvna "viri foederis tui", V. L. Montanus, Vatablus, Burkius. {s} So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 51. 2. and 52. 1.

Obadiah 1:8

Ver. 8. Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise [men] out of Edom,.... When they shall be invaded by the enemy, and treacherously dealt with by their allies; so that there shall be no wise counsellors at court to give advice what proper methods should be taken at such a season; they should either be taken off by death, or their wisdom should be turned into folly, and they be rendered incapable of giving right counsel:

and understanding out of the mount of Esau? that is, men of understanding, as the Targum, should be destroyed out of Edom or Idumea, which was a mountainous country; such as were well versed in politics, or understood military affairs, and how to conduct at such a critical time; to form schemes, and concert measures, and wisely put them in execution; and to be deprived of all such must be a great loss at such a time, and add to their distress and calamity; see Jer 49:7.

Obadiah 1:9

Ver. 9. And thy mighty [men], O Teman, shall be dismayed,.... Teman was one part of the country of Edom, so called from Teman, a son of Eliphaz, and grandson of Esau, Ge 36:11; and which it seems had been famous for men of might and courage: it abounded with brave officers, and courageous soldiers, who should now be quite dispirited, and have no heart to go out against the enemy; and, instead of defending their country, should throw away their arms, and run away in a fright. The Targum and Vulgate Latin version render it,

"thy mighty men that inhabit the south;"

or are on the south, the southern part of Edom, and so lay farthest off from the Chaldeans, who came from the north; yet these should be at once intimidated upon the rumour of their approach and invasion:

to the end that even one of the mount of Esau may be cut by slaughter; that so there might be none to resist and stop the enemy, or defend their country; but that all might fall by the sword of the enemy, and none be left, even every mighty man, as Jarchi interprets it, through the greatness of the slaughter that should be made.

Obadiah 1:10

Ver. 10. For [thy] violence against thy brother Jacob,.... Which is aggravated: by being against Jacob, an honest plain hearted man, and whom the Lord loved; his brother, his own brother, a twin brother, yea, his only brother; yet this is to be understood, not so much of the violence of Esau against Jacob personally, though there is an allusion to that; as of the violence of the posterity of the one against the posterity of the other; and not singly of the violence shown at the destruction of Jerusalem, but in general of the anger they bore, the wrath they showed, and the injuries they did to their brethren the Jews, on all occasions, whenever they had an opportunity, of which the following is a notorious instance; and for which more especially, as well as for the above things, they are threatened with ruin:

shame shall cover thee; as a garment; they shall be filled with blushing, and covered with confusion, when convicted of their sin, and punished for it:

and thou shalt be cut off for ever; from being a nation; either by Nebuchadnezzar; or in the times of the Maccabees by Hyrcanus, when they were subdued by the Jews, and were incorporated among them, and never since was a separate people or kingdom.

Obadiah 1:11

Ver. 11. In the day thou stoodest on the other side,.... Aloof off, as a spectator of the ruin of Jerusalem, and that with delight and pleasure; when they should, as brethren and neighbours, have assisted against the common enemy; but instead of this they stood at a distance; or they went over to the other side, and joined the enemy, and stood in opposition to their brethren the Jews:

in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces; that is, at the time that the Chaldeans took Jerusalem, and carried captive as many of the forces of the Jews as fell into their hands; or when

"the people spoiled his substance,"

as the Targum; plundered the city of all its wealth and riches:

and foreigners entered into his gates; the gates of their cities, particularly Jerusalem; even such who came from a far country, the Babylonians, who were aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel; whereas the

Edomites were their near neighbours, and allied to them by blood, though not of the same religion; and by whom they helped against a foreign enemy, instead of being used by them as they were:

and cast lots upon Jerusalem; either to know when they should make their attack upon it; or else, having taken it, the generals of the Chaldean army cast lots upon the captives, to divide them among them, so Kimchi; see **Joe 3:3**; or rather, the soldiers cast lots for the division of the plunder of the city, as was usual at such times:

even thou [wast] as one of them; the Edomites joined the Chaldeans, entered into the city with them, showed as much wrath, spite, and malice, as they did, and were as busy in dividing the spoil. So Aben Ezra interprets these and the following verses of the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; but Kimchi expounds them of the destruction of them by the Romans, at which he supposes many Edomites to be present, and rejoiced at it: could this be supported, the connection would be more clear and close between these words and those that follow, which respect the Gospel dispensation, beginning at **Ob 1:17**; but the Edomites were not in being then; and that there were many of them in the Roman army, and that Titus himself was one, is all fabulous.

Obadiah 1:12

Ver. 12. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother,.... The day of his calamity, distress, and destruction, as afterwards explained; that is, with delight and satisfaction, as pleased with it, and rejoicing at it; but rather should have grieved and mourned, and as fearing their turn would be next: or, "do not look" {t}; so some read it in the imperative, and in like manner all the following clauses:

in the day that he became a stranger; were carried into a strange country, and became strangers to their own: or, "in the day of his alienation" {u}; from their country, city, houses, and the house and worship of God; and when strange, surprising, and unheard of things were done unto them, and, among them:

neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; the destruction of the Jews, of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, by the Chaldeans: this explains what is meant by the Edomites looking upon the day of the calamity of the Jews, that it was with pleasure and complacency, having had a good will to have destroyed them themselves, but it was not in the power of their hands; and now being done by a foreign enemy, they could not forbear expressing their joy on that occasion, which was very cruel and brutal; and this also shows that Obadiah prophesied after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar:

neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress; or "magnified thy mouth" {w}; opened it wide in virulent scoffing, and insulting language; saying with the greatest fervour and vehemence, and as loud as it could be said, "rase it, rase it to the foundation thereof", Ps 137:7.

{t} art la "ne aspicias", Junius & Tremellius; "ne aspicito", Piscator; "ne spectes", Cocceius. {u} wrkn Mwyb "diem alienationis ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus; "in die alienationis ejus", Calvin, Cocceius, Burkius. {w} Kyp ldgt law "et non debebas magnificare os tuum", Pagninus; "ne magnifices", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; "ne magnificato", Piscator; "ne magno ore utaris", Cocceius.

Obadiah 1:13

Ver. 13. Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity,.... Or gates, as the Targum; the gates of any of their cities, and particularly those of Jerusalem; into which the Edomites entered along with the Chaldeans, exulting over the Jews, and insulting them, and joining with the enemy in distressing and plundering them:

yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity: which is repeated, as being exceeding cruel and inhuman, and what was highly resented by the Lord; that, instead of looking upon the affliction of his people and their brethren with an eye of pity and compassion, they looked upon it with the utmost pleasure and delight:

nor laid [hands] on their substance in the day of their calamity; or "on their forces" {x}; they laid violent hands on their armed men, and either killed or took them captive: and they laid hands on their goods, their wealth and riches, and made a spoil of them. The phrase, "in the day of their calamity", is three times used in this verse, to show the greatness of it; and as an aggravation of the sin of the Edomites, in behaving and doing as they did at such a time.

{x} wlyxb "is exercitum ejus", Drusius; "in copius eorum", Castalio; "in copiam ejus", Cocceius.

Obadiah 1:14

Ver. 14. Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossing,.... In a place where two or more roads met, to stop the Jews that fled, let them take which road they would: or, "in the breach" {y}; that is, of the walls of the city;

to cut off those of his that did escape; such of the Jews that escaped the sword of the Chaldeans in the city, and attempted, to get away through the breaches of the walls of it, or that took different roads to make their escape; these were intercepted and stopped by the Edomites, who posted themselves at these breaches, or at places where two or more ways met, and cut them off; so that those that escaped the sword of the enemy fell by theirs; which was exceeding barbarous and cruel:

neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of their distress; or "shut up" {z}; they shut them up in their houses, or stopped up all the avenues and ways by which they might escape, even such as remained of those that were killed or carried captive; these falling into the hands of the Edomites, some they cut off, and others they delivered up into the hands of the Chaldeans. Of the joy and rejoicing of the mystical Edomites, the Papists, those false brethren and antichristians, at the destruction of the faithful witnesses and true Christians, and of their cruelty and inhumanity to them, see Re 11:7.

{y} qrph le "in diruptione", Junius & Tremellius, Tarnovius. {z} rgot law "neque concludas", Montanus, Mercerus, Tigurine version, Tarnovius.

Obadiah 1:15

Ver. 15. For the day of the Lord [is] near upon all the Heathen,.... That is, the time was at hand, fixed and determined by the Lord, and he had spoken of by his prophets, when he would punish all the Heathens round about for their sins; as the Egyptians, Philistines, Tyrians, Ammonites, Moabites, and others; and so the Edomites among the rest; for this is mentioned for their sakes, and to show that their punishment was inevitable, and that they could not expect to escape in the general ruin; see Jer 25:17. This destruction of Edom here prophesied of, and of all the Heathen, was accomplished about five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, so that it might be truly said to be near; and some time within this space Obadiah seems to have prophesied; and the day of the Lord is not far off upon the Pagans, Mahometans, and all the "antichristian" states, When mystical Edom or Rome will be destroyed; see Re 16:19;

as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head; this is particularly directed to Edom, upon whom the day of the Lord's vengeance shall come; when he punished the Heathens, then the Edomites should be retaliated in their own way; and as they had rejoiced at the destruction of the Jews, and had insulted them in their calamities, and barbarously used them, they should be treated in like manner; see Eze 35:15; and thus will mystical Babylon, or the mystical Edomites, be dealt with, even after the same manner as they have dealt with the truly godly, the faithful professors of Christ, Re 18:6.

Obadiah 1:16

Ver. 16. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, [so] shall all the Heathen drink continually,.... Which is either spoken to the Edomites; and the sense be, according to the Targum,

"as ye have rejoiced at the blow (given unto or at the subversion and destruction) of the mountain of my holiness, all people shall drink the cup of their vengeance;"

or punishment; and to the same sense Jarchi and Japhet interpret it; and so Kimchi,

"as ye have made a feast, rejoicing at the destruction of my holy mountain, so thou and all nations shall drink of the cup of trembling;"

but Aben Ezra thinks the words are spoken to the Israelites,

"as ye have drank the cup, so shall all nations;"

the cup of vengeance began with them, and so went round the nations, according to the prophecy in Jer 25:17, &c. for, if judgment begins at the house and people of God, it may be expected it will reach to others; wherefore Edom had no reason to rejoice at the destruction of the Jews, since they might be assured by that the same would be their case before long; and with this difference, that whereas the Jews only drank this cup for a while, during the seventy years' captivity, these nations, and the Edomites among the rest, should be "continually" drinking it:

yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down; not only drink of the cup, but drink it up; not only take it into their mouths, but swallow it down their throats; not only sip at it, but "sup [it] up" {a}, as it may be rendered. The phrase denotes the fulness of their punishment, and their utter and entire ruin and destruction, which the next clause confirms:

and they shall be as though they had not been; as now are the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, and so the Edomites; their names are not heard of in the world, only as they are read in the Bible; and thus it shall be with mystical Babylon or Edom, it shall be thrown down, and found no more, Re 18:21.

{a} welw "absorbebunt", V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "deglutient", Montanus, Mercerus. Gussetius renders it "absorbebantur".

Obadiah 1:17

Ver. 17. But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance,.... Not only by Cyrus, at the end of the seventy years' captivity; and by the Maccabees from the Idumeans, and other enemies; but by the Messiah; for not merely temporal deliverance is here intended, unless as a shadow, type, and figure; but spiritual deliverance from the law, sin, Satan, the world, death, hell, and wrath to come, by Christ; who is the Deliverer that should both come to Zion and out of Zion, and who has wrought the above deliverance for Zion, his church and people; and where it is preached and proclaimed, and where those who are delivered come and dwell: or, "upon Mount Zion shall be an escape"; or, "they that escape" {b}; the pollutions of the world, the vengeance of divine justice, the curses of the law, and the damnation of hell, by fleeing to Christ for refuge:

and there shall be holiness: that is, on Mount Zion, on the church, which is the holy hill of God, and where only holy persons should dwell; and for whomsoever deliverance is wrought out, sooner or later there will be in them holiness, both of heart and life; and indeed, without this, complete deliverance and salvation, which will be in heaven, will not be enjoyed; hence those that are chosen to this salvation are chosen through sanctification of the Spirit; and such as are redeemed and delivered by Christ are purified to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and are, in consequence of such deliverance

and redemption, called with a holy calling, and have principles of holiness implanted in them, and live holy lives and conversations; and such kind of holiness, as it appeared in Zion, in the churches of Christ in the first times of the Gospel, so it will be more conspicuous among them in the latter day; see **Isa 4:3**
Zec 14:20; or, "there shall be an Holy One", or "thing" {c}; the holy Jesus, who is holy in both his natures, in all his offices, works, and words; the Lamb that should, and has been, seen on Mount Zion; and the Holy Spirit of God, who dwells and abides in his church, and among his people, to anoint and assist the ministers of the word; to accompany the word with power, and make it successful; and to sanctify and comfort the Lord's people in Zion; and there are the holy word of God, the doctrines of grace according to godliness preached, and the sacred ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper administered. The Targum is,

"and they shall be holy;"

the Lord's people: and so Kimchi interprets it of Israel being holy to the Lord;

and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions: that is, either the Israelites shall possess the possessions of the Heathens, particularly of the Edomites; so the Targum,

"and they of the house of Jacob shall possess the substance of the people that possessed them;"

see **Am 9:11**; which was fulfilled spiritually in the first times of the Gospel, when the apostles, who were of the house of Jacob, and were Israelites indeed, preached the Gospel to the Gentiles, and were the means of converting many of them, and of bringing them into the Gospel church; which may be called the house of Jacob, when they and theirs become their possession, and Christ, the master of this house, had the Heathen given him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, **Ps 2:8**; or else the sense is, that the people of God, true Christians, shall in Gospel times possess their own possessions; God himself, who is their portion and inheritance, and shall enjoy communion with him; Christ, and all that are his, all spiritual blessings in him; the Spirit and his graces, as the earnest of a future and eternal inheritance; exceeding great and precious promises they are heirs of, and a kingdom and glory hereafter; of which the possessions in the land of Canaan, restored to the right owners of them in the year of jubilee, were a type. R. Moses says this prophecy has respect to the times of Hezekiah; in which he is followed by

Grotius, very wrongly; R. Jeshuah, better, to the times of the second temple; but Japhet, best of all, to time to come, to the times of the Messiah, to which it no doubt belongs: here begin the prophecies concerning Christ, his church, and kingdom.

{b} hjylp hyht "erit evasio", Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus, Liveleus. {c} vdq hyhw "erit sanctus", V. L. Liveleus, Drusius.

Obadiah 1:18

Ver. 18. And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame,.... The former may denote the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, the latter the ten tribes, which after the separation in Rehoboam's time were called Ephraim, and sometimes Joseph; though they may here signify one and the same, since all the tribes will be united, and become one people, at the time the prophecy refers to: the meaning is, that the people of Judah and Israel shall have strength and power to conquer and destroy their enemies, with as much ease, as flames of fire consume chaff or stubble, or any such combustible matter they light upon, as it follows:

and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; that is, the Israelites shall fall upon the Edomites, who will be no more able to withstand them than stubble can stand before devouring flames of fire, and shall utterly waste and destroy them:

and there shall not be [any] remaining of the house or Esau; they shall all be cut off by, or swallowed up among, the Jews; not so much as a torch bearer left, one that carries the lights before an army, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; which versions, and the custom alluded to, serve very much to illustrate the passage. It was a custom with the Greeks, as we are told {d}, when armies were about to engage, that before the first ensigns stood a prophet or priest, bearing branches of laurels and garlands, who was called "pyrophorus", or the "torch bearer", because he held a lamp or torch; and it was accounted a most criminal thing to do him any hurt, seeing he performed the office of an ambassador; for those sort of men were priests of Mars, and sacred to him, so that those that were conquerors always spared them: hence, when a total destruction of an army, place, or people, was hyperbolically expressed, it used to be said, not so much as a torch bearer or fire carrier escaped {e}; hence this phrase was proverbially used of the most entire defeat of an army, or ruin of a people. So Philo {f} the Jew, speaking of the destruction of Pharaoh and his host at the Red sea, says, there was not so much as a torch bearer left, to declare the calamity to the Egyptians; and thus here, so general should be the destruction of the Edomites, that not one should be left, no, nor a person in such a post and office as described. The Targum of the whole is,

"and they of the house of Jacob shall be strong as fire, and they of the house of Joseph strong like a; flame, but they of the house of Esau shall be weak as stubble; and they shall have power over them, and kill them, and there shall be none left of the: house of Esau."

This was fulfilled literally, either by Judas Maccabeus, when he went against the children of Esau in Idumea, and smote them, and took their spoil, in the Apocrypha:

"34 Then the host of Timotheus, knowing that it was Maccabeus, fled from him: wherefore he smote them with a great slaughter; so that there were killed of them that day about eight thousand men. 35 This done, Judas turned aside to Maspha; and after he had assaulted it he took and slew all the males therein, and received the spoils thereof and burnt it with fire." (1 Maccabees 5)

or rather by Hyrcanus, who took the cities of Idumea, subdued all the Edomites, but permitted them to live in their own country, provided they would be circumcised, and conform to the Jewish laws; which they did, as Josephus says {g}, and coalesced and became the people with them, and were reckoned as Jews, and no more as Edomites. But this prophecy had its accomplishment spiritually, either in the first times of the Gospel, when the apostles, who were Jews and Israelites, went forth into the Gentile world, and among the enemies of Christ, preaching the word, which is like fire; and, when attended with the spirit of judgment and of burning, enlightens the consciences of men, melts their hearts, consumes their lusts, and is as a refiner's fire to them, for, their purification; or, if not, it irritates, provokes, torments, and distresses, as fire does; and is either the savour of life unto life, or the savour of death unto death; see **Isa 4:4**
Jer 23:29; or rather it will have its full and final accomplishment in the destruction of antichrist, here signified by Esau and Edom, which will be by burning mystical Babylon, the whore of Rome; the beast and false prophet will be burnt with fire; the day of the, Lord will burn like an oven, and all the wicked will be as stubble, which will be burnt by it, root and branch, so that none will remain; see Re 17:16; compare with Zec 12:6. Kimchi, on **Am 9:12**, says this shall be in the days of the Messiah, the Edomites shall be all

consumed, and the Israelites shall inherit their land:

for the Lord hath spoken [it]; and therefore it shall most certainly be accomplished; what God has said shall be done, he will not alter the thing that is gone out of his lips; heaven and earth shall sooner pass away than one word of his.

{d} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 5. {e} Herodot. Urania, sive l. 8. c. 6. {f} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 630. {g} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 9. sect. 1.

Obadiah 1:19

Ver. 19. And [they of] the south shall possess the land of Esau,.... That is, those Jews that shall dwell in the southern part of the land of Judea shall seize upon the country of Idumea, lying contiguous to them; they shall enlarge their border, and take that into their possession:

and [they of] the plain the Philistines; or of Sephela, they that shall inhabit the plain, or champaign country of Judea, as the parts of Lydda, Emmaus, and Sharon, were; these shall possess the country of the Philistines, lying near unto them, as Azotus, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron:

and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria; all the countries that the ten tribes inhabited, in the times of their idolatry, before their captivity, which the Jews shall now be restored unto:

and Benjamin [shall possess] Gilead; that tribe shall be so enlarged as to take in the country of Gilead, which lay beyond Jordan, formerly possessed by the, half tribe of Manasseh. Some think this was fulfilled in the times of the Maccabees, when several of these places were taken by Judas, in the Apocrypha:

"17. Then said Judas unto Simon his brother, Choose thee out men, and go and deliver thy brethren that are in Galilee, for I and Jonathan my brother will go into the country of Galaad. 36. From thence went he, and took Casphon, Maged, Bosor, and the other cities of the country of Galaad. 38. So Judas sent men to espy the host, who brought him word, saying, All the heathen that be round about us are assembled unto them, even a very great host." (1 Maccabees 5)

but since the land of Judea, and the countries adjacent to it, were never as yet inhabited by the Jews in the form and manner here mentioned, it rather respects their settlement in their own land, in the latter day, when their borders will be greatly enlarged; see
Eze 48:1; or it may regard the enlargement of the church of Christ, either in the first times of the Gospel, when that was spread in those parts, and met with success; see **Ac 8:6**; or rather in the latter day, when Christ's kingdom will be from sea to sea, and his dominion from the river to the ends of the earth, Ps 72:8; and to which also the following words belong.

Obadiah 1:20

Ver. 20. And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel [shall possess] that of the Canaanites, [even] unto Zarephath,.... That is, the host or army, the great number of the children of Israel, that have been carried captive, upon their return shall possess that part of the land of Israel which was inhabited formerly by the Canaanites, even as far as to Zarephath, said to belong to Zidon,
1Ki 17:10; and called Sarepta of Sidon; see **Lu 4:26**. It is mentioned by Pliny {h} along with Sidon, where glass was made; and perhaps this place might have its name from the melting of glass in it, from Pru, which signifies to melt metals, glass, &c. it is called by Josephus {i} Sarephtha; who says it was not far from Sidon and Tyre, and lay between them: according to an Arabic geographer {k}, it was twenty miles from Tyre, and ten from Sidon. Here the Prophet Elijah dwelt for a time; and in the times of Jerom {l} was shown a little tower, said to be his habitation, which travellers visited. Mr. Maundrell {m} speaks of this place as three hours' journey from Sidon, and is now called

"Sarphan, supposed (he says) to be the ancient Sarephath, or Sarepta, so famous for the residence and miracles of the Prophet Elijah; the place shown us for this city consisted of only a few houses on the tops of the mountains, within about half a mile of the sea; but it is more probable the principal part of, the city stood below, in the space between the hills and the sea, there being ruins still to be seen in that place, of a considerable extent?"

It was once a place very famous for wine; the wine of Sarepta is often made mention of by writers {n}; perhaps vines might grow upon the hills and mountains about it; and this being a city of Phoenicia, on the northern border of the land of Israel, is very fitly observed as the limit of the possession of the

Israelites this way;

and the captivity of Jerusalem, which [is] in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south; the Jews, who were carried captive into Babylon, to Sepharad; some place, though unknown, perhaps in the land of Babylon. Calmet {o} conjectures it may be Sippara or Sipparat, in Mesopotamia, a little above the division of the Euphrates: and the Septuagint version renders it Ephratha; which perhaps is a corruption, of the Euphrates in the present copies: the Vulgate Latin version translates it Bosphorus; and so Jerom, who says that the Hebrew that taught him assured him that Bosphorus was called Sepharad; whither Adrian is said to carry the Jews captive. Kimchi and Aben Ezra interpret it of the present captivity of theirs by Titus, who upon their return to their land shall possess the, southern part of it, which originally belonged to the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:20. If Sepharad, in the Assyrian language, signifies a border, as Jerom says it does, it denotes, as some think, that part of Arabia which borders on the south of Judea, that shall be inhabited by the Jews. Some render the words, "the captivity of Jerusalem shall possess that which is in Sepharad, and the cities of the south": but this is contrary to the accents, unless the words "shall possess" be repeated, and so two clauses made, "the captivity of Jerusalem [shall possess] that which is in Sepharad; they shall possess the cities of the south". The Targum and Syriac version, instead of Sepharad, have Spain; and so the Jewish writers generally interpret it. By the Canaanites they think are meant the Germans, and the country of Germany; by Zarephath, France; and by Sepharad, Spain; so Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, fancying that they who are now captives in these countries shall one day possess them: but the prophecy only respects their settlement in their own land, and some parts adjacent to it; or rather the enlargement of the church of Christ in the world. A late learned writer {p}, is of opinion that some respect may be had to this passage in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in which the former makes mention of "five brethren" that he had, Lu 16:28; and are by the said writer thus reckoned:

1. the house of Jacob; 2. the house of Joseph, which are said to possess the south, with the mountains of Esau, and the plain; 3. Benjamin, which shall possess Gilead; 4. the captives from the Assyrian captivity; 5. the captives from the Jerusalem captivity, namely, by Titus Vespasian, who shall possess the cities of the south.

{h} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19. {i} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 13. sect. 2. {k} Scherif Ibn Idris apud Reland. Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. l. 3. p. 935. {l} Epitaph. Paulae, fol. 51. M. {m} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 48. Ed. 7. {n} Vid. Roland. ut supra.

{o} Dictionary, in the word "Sepharad". {p} Teelmanni Specimen, & Explic. Parabol. p. 517.

Obadiah 1:21

Ver. 21. And saviours shall come upon Mount Zion,.... Which according to some, is to be understood literally, either of Zerubbabel and Joshua, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, who were the restorers of, their civil and church state; or rather of Judas Maccabeus and his brethren, who saved the people of the Jews from Antiochus and his generals, called "saviours", as the judges of old were, **Ne 9:27**; but it is best to interpret these saviours of the apostles of Christ, and ministers of the word; and especially of the preachers of the Gospel in the latter days; called "saviours", because they publish salvation, preach the Gospel of it, show unto men the way of salvation; and so they, and the word preached by them, are the means and instruments of the salvation of men; otherwise Christ is the only Saviour of God's appointing and sending; and who came to effect salvation, and is become the author of it, nor is it in any others; see **1Ti 4:16**; these in great numbers, in the latter day, wilt appear on Mount Zion, or in the church of Christ, and, shall openly and publicly, as on a mountain, declare the everlasting Gospel; these will be with Christ the Lamb, among the 144,000 upon Mount Zion, Re 14:1. Kimchi and Ben Melech say, these are the King Messiah and his companions, the seven shepherds and eight principal men, **Mic 5:5**. Aben Ezra says the words refer to time to come; according to Baalhatturim on Ge 32:4; they will be fulfilled about the end of the sixth Millennium, when they expect the Messiah; and they are applied to times of the Messiah both by ancient and more modern Jews. In their ancient book of Zohar {q} it is said,

"when the Messiah shall arise, Jacob shall take his portion above and below; and Esau shall be utterly destroyed, and shall have no portion and inheritance in the world, according to **Ob 1:18**; but Jacob shall inherit two worlds, this world and the world to come; and of that time is it written, "and saviours shall come upon Mount Zion", &c."

So, in the Jerusalem Talmud {r},

"says R. Hona, we do not find that Jacob our father went to Seir (see Ge 33:14;) R. Joden, the son of Rabbi, says, in future times (the world to come, the days of the Messiah), is it not said, "and saviours shall come upon Mount

Zion, to judge the mount of Esau?""

And to much the same purpose it is said in one of their ancient Midrasses {s} or expositions,

"we have turned over all the Scripture, and we do not find that Jacob stood with Esau on Seir; he (God) said, until now it is with me to make judges and saviours stand, to take vengeance on that man, as it is said, "and saviours shall come up", &c."

And the Cabalistic writers {t} thus paraphrase the words,

""and saviours shall come up"; who are the Lord of hosts, and the God of hosts: "on Mount Zion"; which is, the mystery of the living God: "to judge the mount of Esau"; which is Mount Seir."

So Maimonides {u}, quoting the passage in Nu 24:18, "Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies", adds, by way of explanation, this is the King Messiah, of whom it is said, "and saviours shall come upon Mount Zion". The work and business of these saviours will be,

to judge the mount of Esau; to take vengeance on the Edomites, for their ill usage of the children of Judah, as the Jewish commentators generally interpret it: or rather, as Gospel ministers are these saviours, it expresses their business; which as it is to declare that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved, so that whoever does not shall be damned; and to convince impenitent and believing sinners of their sin and danger, and their need of Christ, judging and condemning, those that remain so: and moreover, as Esau and Edom signify antichrist, the sense is, that they shall publish proclaim the judgment of God upon antichrist, declare it to be near, yea, to be done; and shall express their approbation of the justice: of God in it, and shall call upon the saints to rejoice at it, Re 14:6; yea, these saviours may include the Christian princes, that shall pour out the vials of God's wrath upon the antichristian states;

and the kingdom shall be the Lord's: the Lord Christ's, who is the one Jehovah with the Father and Spirit; meaning not the government of the world, to which he has a natural right as Creator, and which is generally ascribed to Jehovah the Father; nor the government of the church in this present state, which is Christ's already, and ever was: but the government of it in the latter day, when he will take to himself his great power, and reign; when his kingdom will be more visible, spiritual, glorious; and extensive; when the kingdoms of this world will become his, the Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan kingdoms, even all the kingdoms and nations of the earth; he will be King over all the earth; there will be but one Lord and King, and whose kingdom is an everlasting one; it shall never come into other hands; this will continue till the personal reign takes place, and that will issue in the ultimate glory; see Re 11:15.

{q} In Gen. fol. 85. 1. {r} T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 40. 3. {s} Debarim Rabba, fol. 234. 4. {t} Kabala Denudata, par. 1. p. 283. {u} Hilchot Melachim, c. 11. sect. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jonah 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO JONAH

This book, in the Hebrew copies, is called "Sepher Jonah", the Book of Jonah; by the Vulgate Latin version "the Prophecy of Jonah": and in the Syriac version "the Prophecy of the Prophet Jonah". His name signifies a dove, derived from a root which signifies to oppress; because it is a creature liable to oppression, and to become the prey of others. Hillerus {a} derives the word from a root which signifies to be "fair" and "beautiful", as this creature is This name is very suitable to a prophet and minister of the Lord, who ought to be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves; and who mourn over their own sins, and the sins of others. Jonah did not always in, his conduct answer to his name, particularly when he was so angry at the Lord's sparing the Ninevites, and so impatient for the loss of his gourd. His father's name was Amittai, as in **Jon 1:1** and in 2Ki 14:25; from whence it also appears that he was of Gathhepher, a town in the tribe of Zebulun,
Jos 19:13; and was a part of Galilee, **Isa 9:1**; and so R. Jochanan, in Abendana, affirms, that he was of the tribe of Zebulun, and of Gathhepher, which was in that tribe; which confutes that notion of the Pharisees in the times of Christ, that no prophet came out of Galilee, **Joh 7:52**. The Jews {b} have a tradition that his mother was the widow of Sarepta, whose son Elijah raised from the dead, which was this prophet; and who is said to be the son of Amittai, that is, "truth": because his mother thereby knew and believed that the word of the Lord in the mouth of Elijah was truth, 1Ki 17:23; but his being a Hebrew contradicts him, **Jon 1:9**; for Sarepta was a city of Sidon, and he must have been a Sidonian if born of her, and not a Hebrew: but, be this as it will, it is certain he was a prophet of the Lord; and this book, which bears his name,

and very probably was written by him, its divine authority is confirmed by the testimony Christ, of whom Jonah was a type; see Mt 12:39; and indeed the principal design of this book is to set forth in himself the type of the death and resurrection of Christ, by his being three days in the whale's belly, and then delivered from it; and to declare the grace and mercy of God to repenting sinners, and to signify the calling of the Gentiles after the death and resurrection of Christ; and is a very profitable book to instruct us about the power and goodness of God; the nature of repentance, and the effects of it; the imperfection and infirmities of the best of men in this life; and the call and mission of the ministers of the word, and the necessity of their conformity and attendance to it. Cyprian the martyr was converted from idolatry by hearing this prophecy read and explained by Caecilius. If this prophet was the son of the widow of Sarepta, or the person Elisha sent to anoint Jehu, according to the tradition of the Jews {c}, he was born in the times of Ahab, and lived in the reigns of Joram and Jehu; and, according to Bishop Lloyd {d}, he prophesied in the latter end, of Jehu's reign; where Mr. Whiston {e} also places him, about 860 B.C.; or in the beginning of the reign of Jehoahaz, when Israel was greatly oppressed by Hazael king of Syria, 2Ki 13:22; at which time he might prophesy of the victories and success of Jeroboam the second, and grandson of Jehoahaz, 2Ki 14:25; and, if so, he is more ancient than Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Joel, and Micah, whose contemporary he is generally thought to be Pseudo-Epiphanius {f}, as he gives a wrong account of the place of the birth of this prophet, so of the place of his burial; which he makes to be in the land of Saar, and in the cave of Kenan, the father of Caleb and Othniel; but it is more likely that he died and was buried at Geth, where he was born; and where Jerom {g} says his grave was, shown in his time, about two miles from Zippore, in the way to Tiberias; with which account Isidore {h} agrees; and so Benjamin Tudelensis {i} says, his sepulchre was on a hill near Zippore. Monsieur Thevenot {k} says, not far from Nazareth the tomb of Jonah is now to be seen, to which the Turks bear a great respect.

{a} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 429. {b} Hieron. Proem. i Jon. {c} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 18. p. 45, {d} Chronological Tables. {e} Chron. Tables, cent, 7. {f} De Prophet. Vit. c. 16. {g} Ut supra. {h} De Vita & Morte Sanct. c. 45. {i} Itinerar. p. 52. {k} Travels, par 1. B. 2. c. 55. p. 213.

INTRODUCTION TO JONAH 1

This chapter gives an account of the call and mission of Jonah to go to Nineveh, and prophesy there, and the reason of it, **Jon 1:1**; his disobedience to it, **Jon 1:3**. God's resentment of it, by sending a storm into the sea, where he was, which terrified the mariners, and put the ship in danger of being lost, **Jon 1:4**; The discovery of Jonah and his disobedience as the cause of the tempest, and how it was made, **Jon 1:6**; The casting of him into the sea at his own motion, and with his own consent, though with great reluctance in the mariners, **Jon 1:11**. The preparation of a fish for him, which swallowed him up, and in which he lived three days and three nights, **Jon 1:17**.

Ver. 1. Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai,.... Or, "and the word of the Lord was" {l}; not that this is to be considered as connected with something the prophet had on his mind and in his thoughts when he began to write this book; or as a part detached from a prophecy not now extant; for it is no unusual thing with the Hebrews to begin books after this manner, especially historical ones, of which kind this chiefly is, as the books of Ruth, First and Second Samuel, and Esther; besides, the w, "vau", is here not copulative, but conversive; doing its office by changing the future tense into the past; which otherwise must have been rendered, "the word of the Lord shall be", or "shall come"; which would not only give another, but a wrong sense. "The word of the Lord" often signifies a prophecy from the Lord; and so the Targum, renders it,

"the word of prophecy from the Lord;"

and it may be so interpreted, since Jonah, under a spirit of prophecy, foretold that Nineveh should be destroyed within forty days; though the phrase here rather signifies the order and command of the Lord to the prophet to do as is expressed in **Jon 1:2**; whose name was Jonah "the son of Amittai"; of whom see the introduction to this book. Who his father Amittai was is not known: if the rule of the Jews would hold good, that when a prophet mentions his own name, and the name of his father, he is a prophet, the son of a prophet, then Amittai was one; but this is not to be depended on. The Syriac version calls him the son of Mathai, or Matthew; though the Arabians have a notion that Mathai is his mother's name; and observe that none are called after their mothers but Jonas and Jesus Christ: but the right name is Amittai, and signifies "my truth"; and to be sons of truth is an agreeable character of the prophets and ministers of the word, who should be given to truth, possessed of it, and publish it:

saying; as follows:

{l} yhyw "et fuit", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "factum fuit", Piscator.

Jonah 1:2

Ver. 2. Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city,.... That is, arise from the place where he was, and leave the business he was about, and prepare for a long journey to the place mentioned, and be as expeditious in it as possible. Nineveh was the metropolis of the Assyrian empire at this time; it was an ancient city built by Ashur, not by Nimrod; though he by some is said to go into Ashur or Assyria, and build it, Ge 10:11; and called it after the name of his son Ninus; for it signifies the mansion or palace of Ninus; and by most profane writers is called Ninus; according to Diodorus Siculus {m}, and Strabo {n}, it was built by Ninus himself in Assyria, in that part of it called by him Adiabena. It is said to be a great city, as it must, to be three days' journey in compass, and to have in it six score thousand infants, besides men and women, **Jon 3:3**. It is allowed by Strabo {o} to be larger than Babylon. Diodorus {p} says that it was in compass of sixty miles; and had a wall a hundred feet high, and so broad that three chariots or carriages might go abreast upon it; and it had, fifteen hundred towers, two hundred feet high. Aben Ezra calls it the royal city of Assyria, which is at this day destroyed; and the wise men of Israel, in the country of Greece, say it is called Urtia; but, whether so or not, he knew not:

and cry against it; or prophesy against it, as the Targum; he was to lift up his voice, and cry aloud, as he passed along in it, that the inhabitants might hear him; and the more to affect them, and to show that he was in earnest, and what he delivered was interesting to them, and of the greatest moment and importance: what he was to cry, preach, or publish, see **Jon 3:2**;

for their wickedness is come up before me; it was come to a very great height; it reached to the heavens; it was not only seen and known by the Lord, as all things are; but the cry of it was come up to him; it called aloud for vengeance, for immediate vengeance; the measure of it being filled up, and the inhabitants ripe for destruction; it was committed openly and boldly, with much impudence, in the sight of the Lord, as well as against him; and was no more to be suffered and connived at: it intends and includes their idolatry, bloodshed, oppression, rapine, fraud, and lying; see **Jon 3:8**.

{m} Bibliothec. l 2. p. 92. {n} Geograph. l. 16. p. 507. {o} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 16. p. 507.) {p} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 92.

Jonah 1:3

Ver. 3. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord,.... He was not obedient to the heavenly vision; he rose up, but not to go to Nineveh, but to Tarshish, the reverse of it; to the sea, as the Targum, the Mediterranean sea, which lay west, as Nineveh was to the east. Tarshish sometimes is used for the sea; see Ps 48:7; he determined to go to sea; he did not care where, or to what place he might find a ship bound; or to Tarsus in Cilicia, the birthplace of the Apostle Paul, Ac 22:3; so Josephus {q} and Saadiah Gaon; or to Tunis in Africa, as R. Melasser in Aben Ezra; or to Carthage, as Theodoret, and others; or Tartessus in Spain, as others. Among this difference of interpreters, it is hard to say what place it was: it seems best to understand it of Tarsus. The prophet had better knowledge of God, and of the perfections of his nature, than to imagine he could flee from his general presence, which is everywhere, and from which there is no fleeing, Ps 139:7; but his view was to flee out of that land where he granted his special presence to his people; and from that place where were the symbols of his presence, the ark, the mercy seat, and cherubim, and in which he stood, and ministered before the Lord; but now upon this order left his post, and deserted his station. The reasons given of his conduct are various. The Jewish writers suppose that he concerned more for the glory of Israel than the glory of God; that he was fearful, should he do as he was bid, the word of the Lord would be carried from Judea into the Gentile world, and there remain; that he was of opinion that the Heathens would repent of their sins at his preaching, though Israel did not, which would turn to the reproach and condemnation of the latter; see Mt 12:41; and that he knew that the spirit of prophecy did not dwell upon any out of the land of Israel, and therefore got as fast as he could out of it, that he might not be further urged with such a message; which notion is confuted by the instances of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; to this, sense the Targum inclines, which adds,

"lest he should prophesy in the name of the Lord:"

but there is no need to seek for reasons, and which are given by others; such as going out of his own country into a foreign one; the length of the journey; the opposition and difficulties he might expect to meet with; and the risk he should run of his life, by prophesying in and against the metropolis of the Assyrian empire, where the king's court and palace were; and he not only a Heathen, but a sovereign and arbitrary prince; when the true reasons are suggested by the prophet himself; as that he supposed the people would repent; he knew that God was gracious and merciful, and upon their repentance would not inflict the punishment pronounced; and he should be reckoned a false prophet, **Jon 4:2**;

and went down to Joppa; a seaport town in the tribe of Dan, upon the Mediterranean sea, where was a haven of ships, formerly called Japho, Jos 19:16; at this time Joppa, as it was in the times of the apostles: here Peter raised Dorcas to life, and from hence he was sent for by Cornelius, **Ac 9:36**; it is now called Jaffa; of which Monsieur Thevenot {r} says,

"it is a town built upon the top of a rock, whereof there remains no more at present but some towers; and the port of it was at the foot of the said rock.--It is at present a place of few inhabitants; and all that is to be seen of it is a little castle with two towers, one round, and another square; and a great tower separate from it on one side. There are no houses by the seaside, but five grottos cut in the rock, of which the fourth is in a place of retreat for Christians.--There is a harbour still in the same place where it was formerly; but there is so little water in it, that none but small barks can enter."

It was a very ancient city, said {s} to be older than the flood; and built on a hill so high, that Strabo says {t} Jerusalem might be seen from thence, which was forty miles from it. It had its name from Jope the daughter of Aeolus, the wife of Cepheus, the founder of it {u}. Jonah went thither, either from Jerusalem, or from Gathhepher, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe: if from the former, it was forty miles to Joppa, as Jerom says; and if from the latter, it is supposed to be about fifty: a journey of this length must be some time in performing, which shows with what deliberation and resolution he sinned in disobeying the divine command:

and he found a ship going to Tarshish; just ready to put to sea, and bound for this place: Providence seemed to favour him, and answer to his wishes; from whence it may be observed, that the goodness of an action, and its acceptableness to God, are not to be concluded from its wished for success:

so he paid the fare thereof; the freight of the ship; the whole of it, according to Jarchi; that haste and a quicker dispatch might be made, and no stay for passengers or goods; but that it might be put under, sail directly, and he be the sooner out of the land; which, if true, would show him to be a man of substance; and agrees with a notion of the Jews, and serves to illustrate and confirm it, that the spirit of prophecy does not dwell upon any but a rich man; for which reason the above interpreter catches at it; but Aben Ezra more truly observes, that he paid his part, what came to his share, what was usual to be paid for a passage to such a place: and whereas it might be usual then, as now, not to pay till they were arrived at port, and went out of the ship; he paid his fare at entrance, to secure his passage, lest through any pretence he should not be took in upon sailing; so determined was he to fly from God, and disobey his orders:

and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord; having paid his fare, he entered the ship directly, lest he should be left behind; and went down into the cabin perhaps, to go along with the mariners and merchants, all Heathens to Tarshish, whither they were bound, in order to be clear of any fresh order from the Lord, to go and prophesy against Nineveh: here again the Targum adds,

"lest he should prophesy in the name of the Lord."

{q} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 2. {r} Travels, par. 1. B. 2. c. 52. p. 208. {s} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 13. {t} Geograph. l. 16. p. 522. {u} Stephanus apud Reland. Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. p. 865.

Jonah 1:4

Ver. 4. But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea,.... He took a wind out of his treasures, and hurled it, as the word {w} signifies, into the sea: "into that sea" {x}; that part of it where the ship was Jonah was in. Winds are at the command of God, which he raises at his pleasure, and fulfil his will, and are servants of his that obey his orders: this here was sent in pursuit of Jonah, to stop him in his voyage, when he thought he had got clear off, and was safe enough. The Jews say {y} this was done when he had been one day's voyage:

and there was a great tempest in the sea; which caused the waves to rise and roar, and become very tumultuous: this wind was an extraordinary one, like that "laelaps" or storm of wind which came down into the sea when the disciples of Christ were on it in a ship; or like the "Euroclydon", in which the Apostle Paul was, Ac 27:14;

so that the ship was like to be broken; it was in danger of it; it seemed as if it would, the waves of the sea were so strong, and beat so hard upon it. It is in the original text, "the ship thought [it should be] broken" {z}; that is, the men in it; they that had the management of it thought nothing less but that it would be dashed to pieces, and all their goods and lives lost; so great was the hurricane occasioned by the wind the Lord sent. It may be rendered, "that ship {a} was like", &c. The Jews {b} have a notion that other ships passed to and fro in great tranquillity, and this only was in distress.

{w} lyjh "projecit", Mercerus, Drusius; "conjecit", Cocceius. {x} Myb "in mare illud", Mercerus. {y} Pirke Eliezer, c. 10. fol. 10. 1. {z} hbvx "putabat", Montanus; "cogitavit", Vatablus, Burkius; "cogitabat", Drusius, Cocceius. {a} hynah "navem iliam", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {b} Pirke Eliezer, c. 10. fol. 10. 1. So Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abendana in loc.

Jonah 1:5

Ver. 5. Then the mariners were afraid,.... Perceiving that the storm was not an ordinary, but a supernatural one; and that the ship and all in it were in extreme danger, and no probability of being saved. This shows that the storm must be very violent, to frighten such men who were used to the sea, and to storms, and were naturally bold and intrepid. The word used signifies "salters", so called from the salt sea they used, as they are by us "mariners", from "mare", the "sea"; though R. Japhet in Aben Ezra thinks the commodity they carried in their vessel was salt:

and cried every man to his god: to help them, and save them out of their distress. In the ship it seems were men of different nations, and who worshipped different gods. It was a notion of the Jews, and which Jarchi mentions as his own, that there were men of the seventy nations of the earth in it; and as each of them had a different god, they separately called upon them. The polytheism of the Pagans is to be condemned, and shows the great uncertainty of their religion; yet this appears to be agreeable to the light of nature that there is a God, and that God is to be prayed unto, and called upon, especially in time of trouble:

and cast forth the wares that [were] in the ship into the sea, to lighten [it] of them; or, "the vessels" {c}, a word the Hebrews use for all sorts of goods, utensils, &c. it includes, with others, their military weapons they had to defend themselves, their provisions, the ship's stores or goods it was freighted with; finding their prayers to their gods were ineffectual, they betook themselves to this prudential method to lighten the ship, that they might be able to keep its head above water. So the Targum, "when they saw there was no profit in them;"

that is in the gods they called upon, then they did this; the other was a matter of religion this a point of prudence; such a step the mariners took that belonged to the ship in which the Apostle Paul was,
Ac 27:18;

but Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; into one of its sides, into a cabin there; the lowest side, as the Targum:

and he lay, and was fast asleep; even snored, as some versions have it: it may seem strange he should when the wind was so strong and boisterous; the sea roaring; the waves beating; the ship rolling about; the mariners hurrying from place to place, and calling to each other to do their duty; and the passengers crying; and, above all, that he should fall into so sound a sleep, and continue in it, when he had such a guilty conscience. This shows that he was asleep in a spiritual as well as in a corporeal sense.

{c} Mylkh ta "vasa", V. L. Vatablus, Grotius.

Jonah 1:6

Ver. 6. So the shipmaster came to him,.... The master of the vessel, who had the command of it; or the governor of it, as Jarchi; though Josephus {d} distinguishes between the governor and the shipmaster: "the master of the ropers" {e}, as it may be rendered; of the sailors, whose business it was to draw the ropes, to loose or gather the sails, at his command: missing him, very probably, he sought after him, and found him in the hold, in the bottom of the ship, on one side of it, fast asleep:

and said unto him, what meanest thou, O sleeper? this is not a time to sleep, when the ship is like to be broke to pieces, all lives lost, and thine own too: thus the prophet, who was sent to rebuke the greatest monarch in the world, is himself rebuked by a shipmaster, and a Heathen man. Such an expostulation as this is proper enough to be used with professors of religion that are gotten in a spiritual sense into a sleepy and drowsy frame of spirit; it being an aggravation of it, especially when the nation they are of, the church of Christ they belong to, and their own persons also, are in danger; see Ro 13:11 **Eph 5:14**;

arise, call upon thy God; the gods of this shipmaster and his men were insufficient to help them; they had ears, but they heard not; nor could they answer them, or relieve them; he is therefore desirous the prophet would pray to his God, though he was unknown to him; or at least it suggests that it would better come him to awake, and be up, and praying to his God, than to lie sleeping there; and the manner in which the words are expressed, without a copulative, show the hurry of his spirit, the ardour of his mind, and the haste he was in to have that done he advises to: every good man has a God to pray unto, a covenant God and Father, and who is a prayer hearing God; is able to help in time of need, and willing to do it; and it is the duty and interest of such to call upon him in a time of trouble; yea, they should arise and stir up themselves to this service; and it may be observed, that the best of men may sometimes be in such a condition and circumstances as to need to be stirred up to it by others; see Lu 22:46;

if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not; the supreme God; for the gods they had prayed to they looked upon as mediators with the true God they knew not. The shipmaster saw, that, to all human probability, they were all lost men, just ready to perish; that if they were saved, (as who knew but they might, upon Jonah's praying to his God?) it must be owing to the kind thoughts of God towards them; to the serenity of his countenance, and gracious acceptance of prayer, and his being propitious and merciful through that means; all which seems to be the import of the word used: so the saving of sinners in a lost and perishing condition, in which all men are, though all are not sensible of it, is owing to God's thoughts of peace, to his good will, free favour, and rich grace in Christ Jesus, and through him, as the propitiatory sacrifice. The Targum is,

"if so be mercy may be granted from the Lord, and we perish not."

{d} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 2.) {e} lbxh br "magister funalis", Munster; "magister funiculaiorum", so some in ;Mercer; "magister funis", Calvin.

Jonah 1:7

Ver. 7. And they said everyone to his fellow,.... That Jonah awoke and rose up, upon the shipmaster's calling to him, is certain; but whether or no he called upon his God is not; perhaps he did: and when his prayer was over, and the storm still continuing, the sailors said one to another,

come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil [is] upon us; for, Observing something very uncommon and extraordinary in the tempest, and all means, both natural and religious, failing to help them; and though they might know that they were each one of them sinners, yet they supposed there must be some one notorious sinner among them, that had committed some very enormous crime, which had drawn the divine resentment upon them to such a degree; and therefore they proposed to cast a lot, which was an appeal to the divine Being, in order to find out the guilty person. That the Heathens used the lot upon occasion is not only manifest from profane writers, but from the sacred Scriptures; as Haman, and other enemies of God's people; and the soldiers that attended the cross of Christ, **Es 9:24** **Na 3:10**. Drusius reports, from Xavierus, of some Heathens sailing to Japan, and other places in the East Indies, that they used to carry an idol with them, and by lots inquire of it whither they should go; and whether they should have prosperous winds, &c.

so they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah; through the overruling providence and disposing hand of God, which attended this affair; for, not to inquire whether the use of the lot was lawful or not, or whether performed in that serious and solemn manner as it should be, if used at all; it pleased God to interfere in this matter, to direct it to fall on Jonah, with whom he had a particular concern, being a prophet of his, and having disobeyed his will; see Pr 16:33. The Syriac version renders it, "the lot of Jonah came up"; that is, the piece of paper, or whatever it was, on which his name was written, was taken up first out of the vessel in which the lots were put.

Jonah 1:8

Ver. 8. Then they said unto him, tell us, we pray thee,.... They did not fall upon him at once in an outrageous manner, and throw him overboard; as it might be thought such men would have done, considering what they had suffered and lost by means of him; but they use him with great respect, tenderness, and lenity: and entreat him to tell them

for whose cause this evil [was] upon them: or rather, as the Targum,

"for what this evil is upon us;"

and so Noldius {f} renders the words; for their inquiry was not about the person for whose cause it was; that was determined by the lot; but on what account it was; what sin it was he had been guilty of, which was the cause of it; for they supposed some great sin must be committed, that had brought down the vengeance of God in such a manner:

what [is] thine occupation? trade or business? this question they put, to know whether he had any, or was an idle man; or rather, whether it was an honest and lawful employment; whether it was by fraud or violence, by thieving and stealing, he got his livelihood; or by conjuring, and using the magic art: or else the inquiry was about his present business, what he was going about; what he was to do at Tarshish when he came there; whether he was not upon some ill design, and sent on an unlawful errand, and going to do some ill thing, for which vengeance pursued him, and stopped him:

and whence comest thou? what [is] thy country? and of what people [art] thou? which questions seem to relate to the same thing, what nation he was of; and put by different persons, who were eager to learn what countryman he was, that they might know who was the God he worshipped, and guess at the crime he had been guilty of.

{f} Concordant. Part. Ebr. p. 182. No. 828.

Jonah 1:9

Ver. 9. And he said unto them, I [am] an Hebrew,.... He does not say a Jew, as the Targum wrongly renders it; for that would have been false, since he was of the tribe of Zebulun, which was in the kingdom of Israel, and not of Judah; nor does he say an Israelite, lest he should be thought to be in the idolatry of that people; but a Hebrew, which was common to both; and, besides, it not only declared what nation he was of, but what religion he professed, and who was his God:

and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry [land]; this answers to the other question, what was his occupation or business? he was one that feared the Lord, that served and worshipped him; a prophet of the great God, as Josephus {g} expresses and so Kimchi; the mighty Jehovah, that made the "heavens", and dwells in them; and from whence that storm of wind came, which had so much distressed the ship, and still continued: and who made the "sea", which was now so boisterous and raging, and threatened them with ruin; and "the dry land", where they would be glad to have been at that instant. By this description of God, as the prophet designed to set him forth in his nature and works, so to distinguish him from the gods of Heathens, who had only particular parts of the universe assigned to them, when his Jehovah was Lord of all; but where was the prophet's fear and reverence of God when he fled from him, and disobeyed him? it was not lost, though not in exercise.

{g} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 2.

Jonah 1:10

Ver. 10. Then were the men exceedingly afraid,.... When they found he was a Hebrew, and that it was the God of the Hebrews that was angry; of whom they had heard much, and what great and wonderful things had been done by him, and now had an experience of his power and providence, and that it was for fleeing from his presence that all this was; and therefore, since they had been guilty of greater sins than this, as they might imagine, what would be done to them? and particularly it might fill them with dread and terror, when they heard of the destruction of Nineveh, the prophet was sent to denounce; of which no doubt he had told them, and they might from hence conclude it would certainly be:

and said unto him, why hast thou done this? they wonder he should act such a foolish part as to flee from such a God he had described to them, who was Lord of heaven, earth, and sea; and therefore could meet with him, and seize him, be he where he would; and they reprove him for it, and the rather as it had involved them in so much distress and danger:

for the men knew that he had fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them; not when he first entered into the ship, but now, though not before mentioned; for no doubt Jonah told the whole story at length, though the whole is not recorded; how that he was sent by the Lord with a message to Nineveh, to denounce destruction to it; and that he refused to go, and fled from his face; and this was the true reason of the storm.

Jonah 1:11

Ver. 11. Then said they unto him, what shall we do unto thee,.... Though, both by the lot and his own confession, they knew he was the guilty person; for whose sake this storm was; yet were unwilling to do anything to him without his will and consent, his counsel and advice; perceiving that he was a prophet of the God of the Hebrews, whom he had offended, and knew the mind and will of his God, and the nature of his offence against him, and what only would appease him they desire him to tell what they ought to do; fearing that, though they had found out the man, they should make a mistake in their manner of dealing with him, and so continue the distress they were in, or increase it; their great concern being to be rid of the storm:

that the sea may be calm unto us? or "silent" {h}? for the waves thereof made a hideous roaring, and lifted up themselves so high, as was terrible to behold; and dashed with such vehemence against the ship, as threatened it every moment with destruction:

(for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous); or, "it went and swelled" {i}; it was agitated to and fro, and was in a great ferment, and grew more and more stormy and tempestuous. Jonah's confession of his sin, and true repentance for it, were not sufficient; more must be one to appease an angry God; and what that was the sailors desired to know. These words are inserted in a parenthesis with us, as if put by the writer of the book, pointing out the reason of the men's request; but, according to Kimchi: they are their own words, giving a reason why they were so pressing upon him to know what they should do with him, "seeing the sea was going and stormy" {k}; or more and more stormy; which seems right.

{h} qtvyw "ut sileat", Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Drusius; "et silebit", Montanus; "ut conticeseat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Burkius. {i} reow Klwh "ibat et intumescebat", Pagninus, Vatablus, Drusius. {k} "Vadeus et turbinans", Montanus; "magis ac magis procellosum erat", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "inhorrescebat", Cocceius.

Jonah 1:12

Ver. 12. And he said unto them, take me up, and cast me forth into the sea,.... This he said not as choosing rather to die than to go to Nineveh; or as having overheard the men say that they would cast him into the sea, as Aben Ezra suggests, greatly to the prejudice of the prophet's character; but as being truly sensible of his sin, and that he righteously deserved to die such a death; and in love to the lives of innocent men, that they might be saved, and not perish, through his default; and as a prophet, knowing this to be the mind and will of God, he cheerfully and in faith submits to it, with a presence of mind and courage suitable to his character. It was not fit he should leap into the sea and destroy himself; but that he should die by the hand of justice, of which the shipmaster and the ship's crew were the proper executioners:

so shall the sea be calm unto you; or "silent", as before; it will cease from its roaring, and do no further hurt and damage:

for I know that for my sake this great tempest [is] upon you; for the sin he had committed in fleeing from God, this storm was raised and continued; nor could it go off till they had done what he had directed them to; there was no other way of being clear of it. In this Jonah was a type of Christ, who willingly gave himself to suffer and die, that he might appease divine wrath, satisfy justice, and save men; only with this difference, Jonah suffered for his own sins, Christ for the sins of others; Jonah to endured a storm he himself had raised by his sins, Christ to endure a storm others had raised by their sins.

Jonah 1:13

Ver. 13. Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to bring [it] to the land,
but they could not,.... Or, "they digged" {l}; that is, the waters of the sea with their oars; not by casting anchor, as Abendana; they used all their skill and exerted all their strength; they laboured with all their might and main, as a man digs in a pit; they ploughed the ocean, and furrowed the sea, as the Latins speak, but all in vain; they rowed against wind and tide; God, his purposes and providence, were against them; and it was not possible for them to make land, and get the ship ashore, which they were desirous of, to save the life of Jonah, as well as their own; for, seeing him penitent, they had compassion on him; his character and profession as a prophet, the gravity of the man, the sedateness of his countenance, his openness of mind, and his willingness to die, wrought greatly upon the men, that they would fain have saved him if they could; and perhaps being Heathens, and not knowing thoroughly the nature of his offence, might think he did not deserve to die; but all their endeavours to save him were to no purpose:

for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them; it grew more and more so; the storm beat right against them, and drove them back faster than they came; so that it was impossible to stand against it.

{l} wrtxyw "et fodiebant", Montanus, Calvin, Piscator, Tarnovius; "foderunt", Vatablus, Liveleus.

Jonah 1:14

Ver. 14. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord,.... Not unto their gods, but unto the true Jehovah, the God of Jonah, and of the Hebrews; whom they now, by this providence, and Jonah's discourse, had some convictions and knowledge of as the true God; and therefore direct their prayer to him, before they cast the prophet into the sea:

and said, we beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee; which repetition shows the ardent, vehemence, and earnestness of their minds in prayer:

let us not perish for this man's life; they were in the utmost perplexity of mind, not knowing well what to do; they saw they must perish by the storm, if they saved his life; and they were afraid their should perish, if they took it away; and which yet they were obliged to do; and therefore had no other way left but to pray to the Lord they might not perish for it; or it be reckoned as their crime, and imputed to them, as follows:

and lay not upon us innocent blood; for so it was to them; he had done no hurt to them since he had been with them, except in being the cause of the storm, whereby they had suffered the loss of their goods; however, had not been guilty of anything worthy of death, as they could observe; and as for his offence against God, they were not sufficient judges of, and must leave it with him: the light of nature teaches men to be tender of the lives of fellow creatures, and to avoid shedding of innocent blood:

for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee; it appeared to them to be the wilt of God that he should be cast into the sea; from the storm that was raised on his account; from the determination of the lot; from the confession of Jonah, and his declaration of the will of God in this matter, as a prophet of his: they did not pretend to account for it; it was a secret to them why it should be; but it was no other than what he would have done; and therefore they hoped no blame would be laid on them.

Jonah 1:15

Ver. 15. So they took up, Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea,.... They took him out of the hold or cabin where he was, and brought him upon deck; they took him, not against his will, but with his full consent, and according to the direction and advice he gave them: "they", for there were more than one employed in this affair; one or more very probably took him by the legs, and others put their hands under his arm holes, and so threw him into the sea:

and the sea ceased from her raging; immediately, and became a calm; and the wind also ceased from blowing, which is supposed; the end being answered by the storm, and the person found and obtained, what was sought after by it, it was still and quiet. The story the Jews {m} tell of his being let down into the sea to his knees, upon which the sea was calm, but became raging again upon his being taken up; and so, at the second time, to his navel; and the third time to his neck; is all fabulous; but he being wholly thrown in, it raged no more.

{m} Pirke Eliezer, c. 10. fol. 10. 2.

Jonah 1:16

Ver. 16. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly,.... This was not a natural fear, as before, but a religious one; and not a servile fear, or a fear of punishment, but a reverential godly fear; for they feared him, not only because they saw his power in raising and stilling the tempest, but his goodness to them in saving them:

and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord; a spiritual sacrifice; the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for a safe deliverance from the storm; for other sort of sacrifice they seemed not to have materials for; since they had thrown overboard what they had in the ship to lighten it, unless there might be anything left fit for this purpose; but rather, if it is to be understood of a ceremonial sacrifice, it was offered when they went out of the ship, according to the gloss of Aben Ezra; or they solemnly declared they would, as soon as they came to land; to which sense is the Targum, "and they said, they would offer a sacrifice:"

and agreeably to this the words may be rendered, with what follows, thus, "and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord", that is,

and made vows; they vowed that they would offer a sacrifice {n} when arrived in their own country, or should return to Judea, and come to Jerusalem. So the Hebrew w, "vau", is often used {o}, as exegetical and explanative; though many interpreters understand the vows as distinct from the sacrifice; and that they vowed that the God of the Hebrews should be their God, and that they would for the future serve and worship him only; that they would become proselytes, as Jarchi; or give alms to the poor, as Kimchi; as an evidence of their sense of gratitude to God, the author of their mercies. If these men were truly converted, as it seems as if they were, they were great gainers by this providence; for though they lost their worldly goods, they found what was infinitely better, God to be their God and portion, and all spiritual good thing a with him; and it may be observed of the wise and wonderful providence of God, that though Jonah refused to go and preach to the Gentiles at Nineveh, for which he was corrected; yet God made this dispensation a means of converting other Gentiles.

{n} So Drusius. {o} Vid. Nold. Ebr. Part. Concord. p. 280.

Jonah 1:17

Ver. 17. Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah,.... Not from the creation of the world, as say the Jews {p}; for this is to be understood, not of the formation or making of it; but of the ordering and disposition of it by the providence of God to be near the ship, and its mouth open to receive Jonah, as soon as he was cast forth from thence: and a great one it must be, to take him at once into its mouth, and swallow him down its throat, and retain him whole in its belly; and such great fishes there are in the sea, particularly the "carcharias", or dog fish; the same with Triton's dog, said to swallow Hercules, in which he was three days; and which fable perhaps took its rise from hence. In Mt 12:40, it is said to be a "whale"; but then that must be understood, not as the proper name of a fish, but as common to all great fishes; otherwise the whale, properly so called, it is said, has not a swallow large enough to take down a man; though some deny this, and assert they are capable of it. Of the "balaena", which is one kind of whale, it is reported {q}, that when it apprehends its young ones in danger, will take them, and hide them within itself; and then afterwards throw them out again; and certain it is that the whale is a very great fish, if not the greatest. Pliny {r} speaks of whales six hundred feet long, and three hundred and sixty broad; and of the bones of a fish, which were brought to Rome from Joppa, and there shown as a miracle, which were forty feet long; and said to be the bones of the monstrous fish to which Andromede at Joppa was exposed {s}; which story seems to be hammered out of this history of Jonah; and the same is reported by Solinus {t}; however, it is out of doubt that there are fishes capable of swallowing a man. Nierembergius {u} speaks of a fish taken near Valencia in Spain, so large that a man on horseback could stand in its mouth; the cavity of the, brain held seven men; its jaw bones, which were kept in the Escurial, were seventeen feet long; and two carcasses were found in its stomach: he says it was called "piscis mularis"; but some learned men took it to be the dog fish before mentioned; and such a large devouring creature is the shark, of which the present bishop of Bergen {w}, and others, interpret this fish here; in which sometimes has been found the body of a man, and even of a man in armour, as many writers {x} have observed. Some {y} think it was a crocodile, which, though a river fish, yet, for the most part, is at the entrance of rivers, and sometimes goes into the sea many miles, and is capable of swallowing a man; some are above thirty feet long; and in the belly of one of them, in the Indies, was found a woman with all her clothes on {z}:

and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights: that is, one whole natural day, consisting of twenty four hours, and part of two others; the Jews having no other way of expressing a natural day but by day and night; and to this the antitype answers; namely, our Lord's being so long in the grave; of whose death, burial, and resurrection, this was a type, as appears from Mt 12:40; for which reason Jonah was so miraculously preserved; and a miracle it was that he should not in this time be digested in the stomach of the creature; that he was not suffocated in it, but breathed and lived; and that he was able to bear the stench of the creature's maw; and that he should have his senses, and be in such a frame of mind as both to pray and praise; but what is it that the power of God cannot do? Here some begin the second chapter, and not amiss.

{p} Pirke Eliezer, c. 10. fol. 10. 2. {q} Philostrat. Vit. Apollonii, l. 1. c. 7. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 32, c. 1. {s} Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 5. {t} Polyhistor. c. 47. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 26. apud Schotti Physics Curiosa, par. 2. l. 10. c. 10. sect. 9. {w} Pantoppidan's History of Norway, par. 2. p. 114, 116. {x} Vid, Lipen. Jonae Displus, c. 2. th. 6. in Dissert. Theolog. Philol. tom. 1. p. 987. {y} Vid. Texelii Phoenix, l. 3. c. 6. p. 242, 243. {z} Mandelsloe in Harris's Voyages and Travels, vol. 1. B. 1. c. 2. p. 759.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jonah 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO JONAH 2

This chapter contains the prayer of Jonah, when in the fish's belly; the time when he prayed, the person he prayed unto, and the place where, are suggested in **Jon 2:1**; and the latter described as a place of great straitness and distress, and even as hell itself, **Jon 2:2**; The condition he was in, when cast into the sea, and when in the belly of the fish, which is observed, the more to heighten the greatness of the deliverance, **Jon 2:3**. The different frame of mind he was in, sometimes almost in despair, and ready to faint; and presently exercising faith and hope, remembering the goodness of the Lord, and resolving to look again to him, **Jon 2:4**. The gracious regards of God to him, in receiving, hearing, and answering his prayer, and bringing up his life from corruption, **Jon 2:2**. His resolution, let others do what they would, to praise the Lord, and give him the glory of his salvation, **Jon 2:8**; and the chapter is concluded with the order for his deliverance, and the manner of it, **Jon 2:10**.

Ver. 1. Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly. Though Jonah had been a praying man, being a good man, and a prophet of the Lord, yet it seems he had not prayed for some time; being disobedient to the will of God, he restrained prayer before him; all the while he was going to Joppa he prayed not; and how indeed could he have the face to pray to him, from whose face he was fleeing? and as soon as he was in the ship he fell asleep, and there lay till he was waked by the shipmaster, who called upon him to arise, and pray to his God; but whether he did or no is not said; and though it is very probable he might, when convicted of his sin, and before he was cast into the sea, and as he was casting into it; his not recorded; but when he was in the fish's belly, "then [he] prayed"; where it is marvellous he should, or could; it was strange he should be able to breathe, and more strange to breathe spiritually; it was very wonderful he should have the exercise of his reason, and more that he should have the exercise of grace, as faith and hope, as it appears by the following prayer he had. Prayer may be performed any where, on a mountain, in a desert, in the caves and dens of the earth, and in a prison, as it has been; but this is the only time it ever was performed in such a place. Jonah is the only man that ever prayed in a fish's belly: and he prayed unto the Lord as "his God", not merely by creation, and as the God of nature and providence, the God of his life, and of his mercies; but as his covenant God and Father; for though he had sinned against the Lord, and had been sorely chastised by him, yet he did not take his lovingkindness from him, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail, or break his covenant with him; covenant interest and relation still continued; and Jonah had knowledge of it, and faith in it; and as this is an argument the Lord makes use of to engage backsliders to return unto him, it is a great encouragement to them so to do, **Jer 3:14**. In this Jonah was a type of Christ, who, amidst his agonies, sorrows, and sufferings, prayed to his Father, and claimed his interest in him as his God, **Heb 5:7**. What follows contains the sam and substance of the prophet's thoughts, and the ejaculations of his mind, when in the fish's belly; but were not put up in this form, but were reduced by him into it after he was delivered; as many of David's psalms were put into the form and order they are after his deliverance from troubles, suitable to his thoughts of things when he was in them; and indeed the following account is an historical narration of facts, which were before and after his prayer, as well as of that itself.

Jonah 2:2

Ver. 2. And said,.... Not unto the Lord in prayer, but to others, to whom he communicated what passed between God and him in this time of distress; how he prayed to him, and was heard by him; what a condition he had been in, and how he was delivered out of it; what was his frame of mind while in it, sometimes despairing, and sometimes hoping; and how thankful he was for this salvation, and was determined to praise the Lord for it:

I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; or, "out of my strait" {a}; being straitened in his body, and as it were in a prison in the fish's belly; and straitened in his soul, being between hope and despair, and under the apprehensions of the divine displeasure. A time of affliction is a time for prayer; it brings those to it that have disused it; it made Jonah cry to his God, if not with a loud voice, yet inwardly; and his cry was powerful and piercing, it reached the heavens, and entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts, though out of the depths, and out of the belly of a fish, in the midst of the sea:

out of the belly of hell cried I, [and] thou heardest my voice; or, "out of the belly of the grave" {b}; out of the midst of it; that is, out of the belly of the fish, which was as a grave to him, as Jarchi observes; where he lay as out of the land of the living, as one dead, and being given up for dead: and it may also respect the frame of his mind, the horror and terror lie was in, arising from a sense of his sins, and the apprehensions he had of the wrath of God, which were as a hell in his conscience; and amidst all this he cried to God, and he heard him; and not only delivered him from he fish's belly, but from those dreadful apprehensions he had of his state and condition; and spoke peace and pardon to him. This is a proof that this prayer or thanksgiving be it called which it will, was composed, as to the form and order of it, after his deliverance; and these words are an appeal to God for the truth of what he had said in the preceding clause, and not a repetition of it in prayer; or expressing the same thing in different words.

{a} hrum "ex angustia mea", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ex arcto mihi", Cocceius. {b} lwav Njbm "e ventre sepulchri", Calvin, Piscator, Liveleus; "e ventre sepulchrali", Junius & Tremellius.

Jonah 2:3

Ver. 3. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas,.... Though the mariners did this, yet Jonah ascribes it to the Lord; he knew it was he, whom he had sinned against and offended; that he was he that sent the storm after him into the sea; that determined the lot to fall upon him; that it was not only by his permission, but according to his will, that he should be east into it, and overcame the reluctance of the men to it, and so worked upon them that they did it; and therefore Jonah imputes it to him, and not to them; nor does he complain of it, or murmur at it; or censure it as an unrighteous action, or as hard, cruel, and severe; but rather mentions it to set off the greatness of his deliverance: and by this it appears, that it was far from shore when Jonah was cast into the sea, it was the great deep; and which also is confirmed by the large fish which swallowed him, which could, not swim but in deep waters; and because of the multitude of the waters, called "seas", and "in the heart" {c} of them, as it may be rendered; and agreeably Christ the antitype of Jonah lay in the heart of the earth, Mt 12:40;

and the floods compassed me about; all thy billows and thy waves passed over me; which was his case as soon as cast into the sea, before the fish had swallowed him, as well as after: this was literally true of Jonah, what David says figuratively concerning his afflictions, and from whom the prophet seems to borrow the expressions, Ps 42:7; and indeed he might use them also in a metaphorical sense, with a view to the afflictions of body, and sorrows of death, that compassed him; and to the billows and waves of divine wrath, which in his apprehension lay upon him, and rolled over him.

{c} bblk "in corde", V. L. Cocceius; "in cor", Montanus, Drusius.

Jonah 2:4

Ver. 4. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight,.... Or, "from before thine eyes" {d}; the Targum, from before thy Word; as David also said in his distress, Ps 31:22; not but that he knew he was in the reach and under the eye of his omniscience, which saw him in the fish's belly, in the depths of the sea, for nothing can hide from that; but he thought he was no longer under the eye of his providence; and that he would no more care for him, but leave him in this forlorn condition, and not deliver him; and especially he concluded that he would no more look upon him with an eye of love, grace, and mercy, pity and compassion: these are the words of one in despair, or near unto it; and yet a beam of light, a ray of hope, breaks in, and a holy resolution is formed, as follows:

yet I will look again toward thy holy temple; not the temple at Jerusalem, towards which men used to look when they prayed, being at a distance from it, **1Ki 8:29**; though there may be an allusion to such a practice; for it can hardly be thought that Jonah, in the fish's belly, could tell which way the temple stood; and look towards that; but he looked upwards and heavenwards; he looked up to God in his holy temple in heaven; and though he was afraid he would not look down upon him in a way of grace and mercy, he was resolved to look up to God in the way of prayer and supplication; and particularly, for the further encouragement of his faith and hope, he looked to the Messiah, the antitype of the temple, ark, and mercy seat, and for whose sake he might hope his prayers would be heard and answered.

{d} Kynye dgnm "e regione oculorum tuorum", Montanus, Piscator; "a coram oculis tuis", Drusius, Burkius.

Jonah 2:5

Ver. 5. The waters compassed me about, [even] to the soul,.... Either when he was first cast into the sea, which almost suffocated him, and just ready to take away his life, could not breathe for them, as is the case of a man drowning; or these were the waters the fish drew into its belly, in such large quantities, that they compassed him about, even to the endangering of his life there. So the Targum,

"the waters surrounded me unto death."

In this Jonah was a type of Christ in his afflictions and sorrows, which were so many and heavy, that he is said to be "exceeding sorrowful", or surrounded with sorrow, "even unto death", Mt 26:38; see also Ps 69:1;

the depth closed me round about; the great deep, the waters of the sea, both when he fell into it, and while in the belly of the fish: thus also Christ his antitype came into deep waters, where there was no standing, and where floods of sin, and of ungodly men, and of divine wrath, overflowed him; see Ps 18:4;

the weeds were wrapped about my head; the sea weeds, of which there are great quantities in it, which grow at the bottom of it, to which Jonah came, and from whence he rose up again, before swallowed by the fish; or these weeds were drawn into the belly of the fish, along with the water which it took in, and were wrapped about the head of the prophet as he lay there; or the fish went down with him into the bottom of the sea, and lay among those weeds; and so they may be said to be wrapped about him, he being there, as follows. The Targum is,

"the sea of Suph being over my head;"

the same with the Red sea, which is so called, Ps 106:9; and elsewhere, and that from the weeds that were in it; and R. Japhet, as Aben Ezra observes, says the sea of Suph is mixed with the sea of Joppa; that is, as a learned man {e} observes, by means of the river Rhinocorura, through which the lake of Sirbon mingles with the great sea; and which lake itself is so called from the weeds in it; yea, was anciently called Suph, and the sea of Suph, or "mare Scirpeum", hence Sirbon: and the same writer thinks that the father of Andromede, said to be devoured by a whale about Joppa, had his name of Cepheus from hence.

{e} Texelius, Phoenix, l. 3. c. 6. p. 242, 243, 244, 228, 229.

Jonah 2:6

Ver. 6. I went down to the bottom of the mountains,.... Which are in the midst of the sea, whither the fish carried him, and where the waters are deep; or the bottom of rocks and promontories on the shore of the sea; and such vast rocks hanging over the sea, whose bottoms were in it, it seems are on the shore of Joppa, near to which Jonah was cast into the sea, as Egesippus {f} relates:

the earth with her bars [was] about me for ever; that is, the earth with its cliffs and rocks on the seashore, which are as bars to the sea, that it cannot overflow it; these were such bars to Jonah, that could he have got clear of the fish's belly, and attempted to swim to shore, he could never get to it, or over these bars, the rocks and cliffs, which were so steep and high:

yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God; notwithstanding these difficulties, which were insuperable by human power, and these seeming impossibilities of, deliverance; yet the Lord brought him out of the fish's belly, as out of a grave, the pit of corruption, and where he must otherwise have lain and rotted, and freed his soul from those terrors which would have destroyed him; and by this also we learn, that this form of words was composed after he came to dry land: herein likewise he was a type of Christ, who, though laid in the grave, was not left there so long as to see corruption, Ps 16:10.

{f} "De excidio", Urb. Hieros. l. 3. c. 20.

Jonah 2:7

Ver. 7. When my soul fainted within me,.... Covered with grief; overwhelmed with sorrow; ready to faint and sink at the sight of his sins; and under a sense of the wrath and displeasure of God, and being forsaken by him:

I remembered the Lord; his covenant and promises, his former mercies and lovingkindness, the gracious experiences he had had of these in times past; he remembered he was a God gracious and merciful, and ready to forgive, healed the backslidings of his people, and still loved them freely, and tenderly received and embraced them, when they returned to him:

and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple; into heaven itself, the habitation of God's holiness, the temple where he dwells, and is worshipped by holy angels and glorified saints; the prayer the prophet put up in the fish's belly, encouraged to it by remembering the mercy and goodness of God, ascended from thence, and reached the ears of the Lord of hosts in the highest heavens, and met with a kind reception, and had a gracious answer; see **Ps 3:4**.

Jonah 2:8

Ver. 8. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. They that worship idols, who are nothing, mere vanity and lies, and deceive those that serve them, these forsake the God of their lives, and of their mercies; and so do all such who serve divers lusts and pleasures, and pursue the vanities of this life; and also those who follow the dictates of carnal sense and reason, to the neglect of the will of God, and obedience to his commands; which was Jonah's case, and is, I think, chiefly intended. The Targum, Syriac version, and so Jarchi, and most interpreters, understand it of worshippers of idols in general; and Kimchi of the mariners of the ship Jonah had been in; who promised to relinquish their idols, but did not; and vowed to serve the Lord, and sacrifice to him, but did not perform what they promised. But I rather think Jonah reflects upon himself in particular, as well as leaves this as a general instruction to others; that should they do as he had done, give way to an evil heart of unbelief, and attend to the suggestions of a vain mind, and consult with flesh and blood, and be directed thereby, to the disregard of God and his will; they will find, as he had done to his cost, that they forsake that God that has been gracious and merciful to them, and who is all goodness and mercy, Ps 144:3; which to do is very ungrateful to him, and injurious to themselves; and now he being sensible of his folly, and influenced by the grace and goodness of God to him, resolves to do as follows:

Jonah 2:9

Ver. 9. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving,.... Not only offer up a legal sacrifice in a ceremonial way, when he came to Jerusalem; but along with it the spiritual sacrifice of praise, which he knew was more acceptable unto God; and thus Christ, his antitype, upon his deliverance from his enemies, Ps 22:22;

I will pay [that] I vowed; when he was in distress; as that he would sacrifice after the above manner, or behave in a better manner for the future than he had done; and particularly would go to Nineveh, if the Lord thought fit to send him again:

salvation [is] of the Lord; this was the ground of the faith and hope of Jonah when at the worst, and the matter of his present praise find thanksgiving. There is one letter more in the word rendered "salvation" {g} than usual, which increases the sense; and denotes, that all kind of salvation is of the Lord, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; not only this salvation from the devouring waves of the sea, and from the grave of the fish's belly, was of the Lord; but his deliverance from the terrors of the Lord, and the sense he had of his wrath, and the peace and pardon he now partook of, were from the Lord, as well as eternal salvation in the world to come, and the hope of it. All temporal salvations and deliverances are from the Lord, and to him the glory of them belongs; and his name should be praised on account of them; which Jonah resolved to do for himself: and so is spiritual and eternal salvation; it is of Jehovah the Father, as to the original spring and motive of it, which is his grace, and not men's works, and is owing to his wisdom, and not men's, for the plan and form of it; it is of Jehovah the Son, as to the impetration of it, who only has wrought it out; and it is of Jehovah the Spirit, as to the application of it to particular persons; and therefore the glory of it belongs to all the three Persons, and should be given them. This is the epiphonema or conclusion of the prayer or thanksgiving; which shows that it was, as before observed, put into this form or order, after the salvation was wrought; though that is related afterwards, as it is proper it should, and as the order of the narration required.

{g} htewvy.

Jonah 2:10

Ver. 10. And the Lord spake unto the fish,.... Or gave orders to it; he that made it could command it; all creatures are the servants of God, and do his will; what he says is done; he so ordered it by his providence, that this fish should come near the shore, and be so wrought upon by his power, that it could not retain Jonah any longer in its belly. It may be rendered {h}, "then the Lord spake", &c. after Jonah had finished his prayer, or put up those ejaculations, the substance of which is contained in the above narrative:

and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry [land]; not upon the shore of the Red sea, as some; much less upon the shore of Nineveh, which was not built upon the seashore, but upon the river Tigris; and the fish must have carried him all round Africa, and part of Asia, to have brought him to the banks of the Tigris;

which could not have been done in three days' time, nor in much greater. Josephus {i} says it was upon the shore of the Euxine sea; but the nearest part of it to Nineveh was one thousand six hundred miles from Tarsus, which the whale, very slow in swimming, cannot be thought to go in three days; besides, no very large fish swim in the Euxine sea, because of the straits of the Propontis, through which they cannot pass, as Bochart {k} from various writers has proved. It is more likely, as others, that it was on the Syrian shore, or in the bay of Issus, now called the gulf of Lajazzo; or near Alexandria, or Alexandretta, now Scanderoon. But why not on the shore of Palestine? and, indeed, why not near the place from whence they sailed? Huetius {l} and others think it probable that this case of Jonah gave rise to the story of Arion, who was cast into the sea by the mariners, took up by a dolphin, and carried to Corinth. Jonah's deliverance was a type of our Lord's resurrection from the dead on the third day, Mt 12:40; and a pledge of ours; for, after this instance of divine power, why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?

{h} So w is sometimes used, and is so rendered, Psal. lxxviii. 34. Job x. 10. See Noldius, p. 308, 309. {i} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 2. {k} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 12. col. 744. {l} Demonstr. Evangel. prop. 4. p. 294.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jonah 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO JONAH 3

This chapter gives an account of the renewal of Jonah's message to Nineveh, and of his faithful execution of it, **Jon 3:1**; and of the fruit and effect of it, the conversion of the Ninevites, their faith in God, repentance of their sins, and reformation from them, **Jon 3:5**; and of God's approbation thereof, by revoking the sentence he had pronounced upon them, **Jon 3:10**.

Ver. 1. And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time,.... Jonah having been scourged by the Lord for his stubbornness and disobedience, and being humbled under the mighty hand of God, is tried a second time, whether he would go on the Lord's errand, and do his business; and his commission is renewed, as it was necessary it should; for it would have been unsafe and dangerous for him to have proceeded upon the former without a fresh warrant; as the Israelites, when they refused entering into the land of Canaan to possess it, upon the report of the spies, and afterwards reflecting upon their sin, would go up without the word of the Lord, and contrary to the advice of Moses, many of them perished in the attempt, being cut off by the Amalekites, Nu 14:1; and this renewal of Jonah's commission shows that he was still continued in his office as a prophet, notwithstanding his failings; as the apostles were in theirs, though they all forsook Christ, and Peter denied him, Mt 26:56; and that the Lord had heard his prayer, and graciously received him, and took away his iniquity from him, employing him again in his service, being more fitted for it:

saying; as follows:

Jonah 3:2

Ver. 2. Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city,.... So it is called; See Gill on "Jon 1:2". The order runs in the same words as before; and the same discouragements are presented to Jonah, taken from the greatness of the city, the number of its inhabitants, its being the metropolis of the Assyrian empire, and the seat of the greatest monarch on earth, to try his faith; but these had not the like effect as before; for he had now another spirit given him, not of fear, but of a sound mind; he considered he was sent by a greater King, and that more were they that were on his side than the inhabitants of this place, who might possibly be against him:

and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee; that he had bid him before, declaring and exposing their wickedness, and telling them that in a short time their city would be destroyed. Jonah must not be gratified with any alteration in the message; but he must go with it as it had before been given, or what he now bid, or should bid him; the word of the Lord must be spoken just as it is delivered; nothing must be added to it, or taken from it; the whole counsel of God must be declared; prophets and ministers must preach, not as men bid them, but as God bids them. The Targum is,

"prophesy against it the prophecy which I speak with thee."

Jonah 3:3

Ver. 3. So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the

Lord,.... He was no longer disobedient to the heavenly vision; being taught by the rod, he acts according to the word; he is now made willing to go on the Lord's errand, and do his business, under the influence of his power and grace; he stands not consulting with the flesh, but immediately arises and sets forward on his journey, as directed and commanded, being rid of that timorous spirit, and those fears, he was before possessed of; his afflictions had been greatly sanctified to him, to restore his straying soul, and cause him to keep and observe the word of the Lord; and his going to Nineveh, and preaching to a Heathen people, after his deliverance out of the fish's belly, was a type of the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles by the apostles, according to the commission of Christ renewed unto them, after his resurrection from the dead, Ac 26:23; and after many failings of theirs;

now Nineveh was an exceeding great city: or "a city great to God" {m}; not dear to him, for it was full of wickedness; not great in his esteem, with whom the whole earth is as nothing; but known by him to be what it was; and the name of God is often used of things, to express the superlative nature and greatness of them, as trees of God, mountains of God, the flame of God, &c. Ps 36:7; it was a greater city than Babylon, of which See Gill on "Jon 1:2";

of three days' journey; in compass, being sixty miles, as Diodorus Siculus {n} relates; and allowing twenty miles for a day's journey on foot, as this was, and which is as much as a man can ordinarily do to hold it, was just three days journey; and so Herodotus {o} reckons a day's journey at an hundred fifty furlongs, which make about nineteen miles; but, according to the Jewish writers, a middling day's journey is ten "parsas" {p}, and every "parsa" makes four miles, so that with them it is forty miles: or else it was three days' journey in the length of it, as Kimchi thinks, from end to end. This is observed to show the greatness of the city, which was the greatest in the whole world, as well as to lead on to the following account.

{m} Myhlal hlwdg "magna Deo", Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Drusius, Cocceius. {n} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 92. {o} Terpsichore, sive l. 5. c. 53. {p} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 94. 1.

Jonah 3:4

Ver. 4. And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey,.... As soon as he came to it, he did not go into an inn, to refresh himself after his wearisome journey; or spend his time in gazing upon the city, and to observe its structure, and the curiosities of it; but immediately sets about his work, and proclaims what he was bid to do; and before he could finish one day's journey, he had no need to proceed any further, the whole city was alarmed with his preaching, was terrified with it, and brought to repentance by it:

and he cried; as he went along; he lifted up his voice like a trumpet, that everyone might hear; he did not mutter it out, as if afraid to deliver his message, but cried aloud in the hearing of all; and very probably now and then made a stop in the streets, where there was a concourse of people, or where more streets met, and there, as a herald, proclaimed what he had to say:

and said, yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown; not by a foreign army besieging and taking it, which was not probable to be done in such a space of time, but by the immediate power of God; either by fire from heaven, as he overthrow Sodom and Gomorrah, their works being like theirs, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, or by an earthquake; that is, within forty days, or at the end of forty days, as the Targum; not exceeding such a space, which was granted for their repentance, which is implied, though not expressed; and must be understood with this proviso, except it repented, for otherwise why is any time fixed? and why have they warning given them, or the prophet sent to them? and why were they not destroyed at once, as Sodom and Gomorrah, without any notice? doubtless, so it would have been, had not this been the case. The Septuagint version very wrongly reads, "yet three days", &c. and as wrongly does Josephus {q} make Jonah to say, that in a short time they would lose the empire of Asia, when only the destruction of Nineveh is threatened; though, indeed, that loss followed upon it.

{q} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 2.

Jonah 3:5

Ver. 5. So the people of Nineveh believed God,.... Or "in God" {r}: in the word of the Lord, as the Targum; they believed there was a God, and that he, in whose name Jonah came, was the true God; they believed the word the prophet spake was not the word of man, but, the word of God; faith came by hearing the word, which is the spring of true repentance, and the root of all good works. Kimchi and R. Jeshuah, in Aben Ezra, suppose that the men of the ship, in which Jonah had been, were at Nineveh; and these testified that they had cast him into the sea, and declared the whole affair concerning him; and this served greatly to engage their attention to him, and believe what he said: but this is not certain; and, besides, their faith was the effect of the divine power that went along with the preaching of Jonah, and not owing to the persuasion of men;

and proclaimed a fast; not of themselves, but by the order of their king, as follows; though Kimchi thinks this was before that:

and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them; both, with respect to rank and age, so universal were their fasting and mourning; in token of which they stripped themselves of their common and rich apparel, and clothed themselves with sackcloth; as was usual in extraordinary cases of mourning, not only with the Jews, but other nations.

(Jonah would be a quite a sight to behold. The digestive juices of the fish would have turned his skin to a most unnatural colour and his hair was most like all gone. Indeed, anyone looking like that would attract your attention and give his message more credence, especially after he told you what had happened to him. A God who creates storms, prepares large fish to swallow a man and preserves him in the fish, would not likely have too much trouble destroying your city. Editor)

{r} Myhlab "in Deum", V. L.

Jonah 3:6

Ver. 6. For word came unto the king of Nineveh,.... Who was not Sardanapalus, a very dissolute prince, and abandoned to his lusts; but rather Pul, the same that came against Menahem king of Israel, 2Ki 15:19, as Bishop Usher {s} thinks; to him news were brought that there was such a prophet come into the city, and published such and such things, which met with credit among the people; and that these, of all ranks and degrees, age and sex, were afflicted with it, and thrown into the utmost concern about it; so very swiftly did the ministry of Jonah spread in the city; and what he delivered was so quickly carried from one to another, that in one day's time it reached the palace, and the royal ear:

and he arose from his throne; where he sat in great majesty and splendour, encircled by his nobles, receiving their caresses and compliments; or, it may be, giving audience to foreign ambassadors, sent to court his friendship and alliance; or hearing causes, and redressing the grievances of his subjects; for he appears to be one that did not indulge himself in hunting, and such like exercises, or in his lusts and pleasures:

and he laid his robe from him; his royal apparel, his imperial robe, and garments of his glory, as the Targum; or his glorious garments, with which he was richly and most magnificently arrayed; he put off these, and left his throne, in token of his concern at hearing such dismal tidings as the overthrow of his capital city, and of his humiliation and abasement:

and covered [him] with sackcloth; which was very rough and coarse, and must be very disagreeable to a person so tender and delicate, and was what the meanest of his subjects wore on this occasion:

and sat in ashes; or "in the" or "that ashes" {t}; used in such times of mourning, which were either strewed under him, or put upon his head; and this, with the other, were done to afflict the body, and affect the mind with a sense of sin, and the misery threatened for sin, and to shaw deep humiliation for it.

{s} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3233. Vid. Rollin's Ancient History, vol. 2. p. 30.
{t} rpah le "in cinere illo", Vatablus, Tarnovius.

Jonah 3:7

Ver. 7. And he caused [it] to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh,.... By a herald or heralds, sent into the several parts of the city:

by the decree of the king and his nobles; with whom he consulted, and whose advice he took; and who were equally concerned at this news, and very probably were present when word was brought to the king concerning it:

saying, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; a very strict and general fast this: abstinence from all food was enjoined; not only men of every rank and age, but the cattle likewise, horses and camels, they used either for their pleasure or business; their oxen, cows, and calves, of their herd; their sheep, goats, lambs, and kids, of their flocks:

let them not feed, nor drink water; no food were to be put into their mangers or folds: nor were they to be suffered to graze in their pastures, or to be allowed the least quantity of food or drink; this was ordered, to make the mourning the greater; thus Virgil {u} describes the mourning for the death of Caesar by the oxen not coming to the rivers to drink, nor touching the grass of the field; and to afflict their minds the more, and for their greater mortification, since these creatures were for their use and pleasure, Fasting was used by the Heathens; as well as the Jews, in some cases; particularly the Egyptians, as Herodotus {w} observes, from whom the Assyrians might take it.

{u} "Non ulli pastos, illis egere diebus Frigida Daphni boves, ad flumius, nulla neque amnem Libavit quadrupes, nec graminis attigit herbam". Bucolic. Eclog. 5. l. 24, &c. {w} L. 2. c. 4. & l. 4. c. 186.

Jonah 3:8

Ver. 8. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth,.... As the king was, and the people also were; and this order enjoined the same to the beasts, horses, and camels, whose rich trappings were to be taken off, and sackcloth put upon them, for the greater solemnity, of the mourning; as at this day, at the funerals of great persons, not only the horses which draw the hearse and mourning, coaches are covered with black velvet, to make the solemnity more awful: but others are led, clothed in like manner:

and cry mightily unto God; which clause stands so closely connected with the former, as if it respected beasts as well as men, who sometimes are said to cry for food in times of drought and distress, **Joe 1:20**; and who here might purposely be kept from food and drink, that they might cry, and so the more affect the minds of the Ninevites, in their humiliation and abasement; but men are principally meant, at least who were to cry unto God intensely and earnestly, with great ardour, fervency, and importunity; not only aloud, and with a strong voice, but with their whole heart, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; heartily, sincerely, and devoutly, for the averting divine wrath, and the pardon of their sins, and the sparing of their city:

yea, let them turn everyone from his evil way; as well knowing that fasting and prayer would be of no avail, without leaving everyone their sinful courses, and reforming their life and manners:

and from the violence that [is] in their hands: their rapine and oppression, their thefts and robberies, and preying upon the substance of others; which seem to be the reigning vices of this city, in doing which many murders were committed also; see **Na 3:1**; the Jewish writers interpret this of making restitution for rapine and violence, which is a genuine fruit of repentance; see Lu 19:8. The Septuagint version understands this, not as a direction from the king to the men of Nineveh what they should do, but as a narrative of what they did; and no doubt but they did these things, put on sackcloth, fast, pray, and turn from their evil ways; yet they are the instructions of the king unto them and the orders he gave them.

Jonah 3:9

Ver. 9. Who can tell,.... The Septuagint and Arabic versions prefix to this the word "saying", and take them to be, not the words of the king, but of the Ninevites; though very wrongly: or "who is he that knows"; which some connect with the next word, "he will return": that is, that knows the ways of repentance, he will return, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; or that knows that he has sinned, as Aben Ezra: or that knows the transgressions he is guilty of, will return, as Jarchi; and so the Targum,

"whosoever knows that sins are in his hands, he will return, or let him return, from them:"

but they are the words of the king, with respect to God, encouraging his subjects to the above things, from the consideration of the probability, or at least possibility, of God's being merciful to them:

[if] God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce wrath,
that we perish not? he speaks here not as nor as absolutely doubting, but as between hope and fear: for, by the light of nature, it is not certain that God will pardon men upon repentance; it is only probable or possible he may; neither the light of nature nor the law of Moses connect repentance and remission of sins, it is the Gospel does this; and it is only by the Gospel revelation that any can be assured that God will forgive, even penitent sinners; however, this Heathen prince encourages his subjects not to despair of, but to hope for, the mercy of God, though they could not be sure of it; and it may be observed, that he does not put their hope of not perishing, or of salvation, upon their fasting, praying, and reformation, but upon the will, mercy, and goodness of God.

Jonah 3:10

Ver. 10. And God saw their words, that they turned from their evil way,.... Not their outward works, in putting on sackcloth and ashes, and fasting; but their inward works, their faith in him, and repentance towards him; and which were attended with fruits and works meet for repentance, in that they forsook their former course of life, and refrained from it; and these he saw not barely with his eye of omniscience, as he sees all persons and things, good and bad, but so as to like them, approve of them, and accept them, in which sense the word is used, **Ge 1:4**; and so the repentance of these men is spoken of with commendation by Christ, and as what would rise up in judgment, and condemn the men of that generation, Mt 12:41;

and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them, and he did [it] not; this is spoken after the manner of men, as Aben Ezra observes; and is to be understood, not of any such affection in God as repentance; but of an effect done by him, which carries in it a show of repentance, or resembles what is done by men when they repent; then they change their course and conduct; so, the Lord, though he never changes his will, nor repents of or revokes his decrees, or alters his purposes; yet he sometimes wills a change, and makes an alteration in the dispensations of his providence, according to his unchangeable will. God, in this case, did not repent of his decrees concerning the Ninevites, but of what he had said or threatened respecting the overthrow of Nineveh, in case of their impenitence; it was his will that they should be told of their sin and danger, and by this means be brought to repentance, and the wrath threatened them be averted; so that here was a change, not of his mind and will concerning them, but of his outward dispensations towards them; see Jer 18:7.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Jonah 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO JONAH 4

This chapter gives us an account of Jonah's displeasure at the repentance of the Ninevites, and at the Lord's showing mercy unto them, **Jon 4:1**; the angry prayer of Jonah upon it, **Jon 4:2**; the Lord's gentle reproof of him for it, **Jon 4:4**; his conduct upon that, **Jon 4:5**; the gourd prepared for him; its rise, usefulness, and destruction, which raised different passions in Jonah, **Jon 4:6**;

the improvement the Lord made of this to rebuke Jonah, for his displicency at the mercy he showed to the Ninevites, and to convict him of his folly, **Jon 4:9**.

Ver. 1. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. Jonah was "mirabilis homo", as one calls him, an "amazing man"; the strangest, oddest, and most out of the way man, for a good man and a prophet, as one shall ever hear or read of. Displeased he was at that, which one would have thought he would have exceedingly rejoiced at, the success of his ministry, as all good men, prophets, and ministers of the word, do; nothing grieves them more than the hardness of men's hearts, and the failure of their labours; and nothing more rejoices them than the conversion of sinners by them; but Jonah is displeased at the repentance of the Ninevites through his preaching, and at the mercy of God showed unto them: displeased at that, on account of which there is joy in heaven among the divine Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, and among the holy angels, even over one repenting sinner; and much more over many thousands, as in this case: displeased at that which is the grudge, the envy, and spite of devils, and which they do all they can to hinder: and the more strange it is that Jonah should act such a part at this time, when he himself had just received mercy of the Lord in so extraordinary a manner as to be delivered out of the fish's belly, even out of the belly of hell; which one would think would have warmed his heart with love, not only to God, but to the souls of men, and caused him to have rejoiced that others were sharers with him in the same grace and mercy, reasons of this strange conduct, if they may be called reasons, are supposed to be these: one reason was, his own honour, which he thought lay at stake, and that he should be reckoned a false prophet if Nineveh was not destroyed at the time he had fixed; but the proviso implied, though not expressed,

"except ye repent,"

secured his character; which was the sense of the divine Being, and so the Ninevites understood it, or at least hoped this was the case, and therefore repented, and which the mercy shown them confirmed: nor had Jonah any reason to fear they would have reproached him with such an imputation to his character; but, on the contrary, would have caressed him as the most welcome person that ever came to their city, and had been the instrument of showing them their sin and danger, and of bringing them to repentance, and so of saving them from threatened ruin; and they did him honour by believing at once what he said, and by repenting at his preaching; and which is testified by Christ, and stands recorded to his honour, and will be transmitted to the latest posterity: another reason was his prejudice to the Gentiles, which was unreasonable for, though this was the foible of the Jewish nation, begrudging that any favours should be bestowed upon the Gentiles, or prophesied of them; see Ro 10:19; yet a prophet should have divested himself of such prejudices, as Isaiah and others did; and, especially when he found his ministry was so blessed among them, he should have been silent, and glorified God for his mercy, and said, as the converted Jews did in Peter's time, "then God hath granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life", Ac 11:18; to do otherwise, and as Jonah did, was to act like the unbelieving Jews, who "forbid" the apostles to "preach to the Gentiles, that they might be saved", **1Th 2:16**. A third reason supposed is the honour of his own countrymen, which he thought would be reflected on, and might issue in their ruin, they not returning from their evil ways, when the Heathens did: a poor weak reason this! with what advantage might he have returned to his own country? with what force of argument might he have accosted them, and upbraided them with their impenitence and unbelief; that Gentiles at one sermon should repent in sackcloth and ashes, when they had the prophets one after another sent them, and without effect? and who knows what might have been the issue of this? lastly, the glory of God might be pretended; that he would be reckoned a liar, and his word a falsehood, and be derided as such by atheists and unbelievers; but here was no danger of this from these penitent ones; and, besides, the proviso before mentioned secured the truth and veracity of God; and who was honoured by these persons, by their immediate faith in him, and repentance towards him; and his grace and mercy were as much glorified in the salvation of them as his justice would have been in their destruction.

Jonah 4:2

Ver. 2. And he prayed unto the Lord,.... But in a very different manner from his praying in the fish's belly: this was a very disorderly prayer, put up in the hurry of his spirit, and in the heat of passion: prayer should be fervent indeed, but not like that of a man in a fever; there should be a warmth and ardour of affection in it, but it should be without wrath, as well as without doubting: this is called a prayer, because Jonah thought it to be so, and put it up to the Lord as one. It begins in the form of a prayer; and it ends with a petition, though an unlawful one; and has nothing of true and right prayer in it; no celebration of the divine Being, and his perfections; no confession of sin, ore petition for any blessing of providence or grace; but mere wrangling, contending, and quarrelling with God:

and said, I pray thee, O Lord, [was] not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? in Judea, or in Galilee, at Gathhepher; was not this what I thought and said within myself, and to thee, that this would be the issue and consequence of going to the Ninevites; they would repent of their sins, and thou wouldst forgive them; and so thou wouldst be reckoned a liar, and I a false prophet? and now things are come to pass just as I thought and said they would: and thus he suggests that he had a greater or better foresight of things than God himself; and that it would have been better if his saying had been attended unto, and not the order of him to Nineveh; how audacious and insolent was this!

therefore I fled before unto Tarshish; before he could have a second order to Nineveh: here he justifies his flight to Tarshish, as if he had good reason for it; and that it would have been better if he had not been stopped in his flight, and had gone to Tarshish, and not have gone to Nineveh. This is amazing, after such severe corrections for his flight, and after such success at Nineveh:

for I know that thou [art] a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil; this he knew from his own experience, for which he had reason to be thankful, and from the proclamation of God, in Ex 34:6; which be seems to have respect unto; and a glorious one it is, though Jonah seems to twit and upbraid the Lord with his grace and mercy to men, as if it was a weakness and infirmity in him, whereas it is his highest glory,
Ex 33:18; he seems to speak of him, and represent him, as if he was all mercy, and nothing else; which is a wrong representation of him; for he is righteous as well as merciful; and in the same place where he proclaims himself to be so, he declares that he will "by no means clear the guilty", Ex 34:7: but here we see that good men, and prophets, and ministers of the word, are men of like passions with others, and some of greater passions; and here we have an instance of the prevailing corruptions of good men, and how they break out again, even after they have been scourged for them; for afflictions, though they are corrections for sin, and do restrain it, and humble for it, and both purge and prevent it, yet do not wholly remove it.

Jonah 4:3

Ver. 3. Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me,.... Or, "my soul" {x}. This, as Drusius remarks, may be observed against those that think the soul is not immortal; for by this it appears that it my be taken from the body, and that it exists separate from it, and does not die with it; and since the body dies upon its removal, for "the body without the spirit is dead", as James says; death is expressed by this phrase, Job 27:8; here Jonah allows that God is the God of life, the author and giver of it, and is the sole disposer of it; it is in his own power to take it away, and not man's: so far Jonah was right, that he did not in his passion attempt to take away his own life; only desires the Lord to do it, though in that he is not to be justified; for though it may be lawful for good men to desire to die, with submission to the will of God; that they might be free from sin, and serve him without it, and be with Christ, and in the enjoyment of the divine Presence, as the Apostle Paul and others did, **2Co 5:6**; but not through discontent, as Elijah, 1Ki 19:4; or merely to be rid of troubles, and to be free from pain and afflictions, as Job, **Job 6:1**; and much less in a pet and passion, as Jonah here, giving this reason for it,

for [it is] better for me to die than to live; not being able to bear the reproach of being a false prophet, which he imagined would be cast upon him; or, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi, that he might not see the evil come upon Israel, which he feared the repentance of the Ninevites would be the occasion of, Jonah was in a very poor frame of spirit to die in; this would not have been dying in faith and hope in God; which graces cannot be thought to be in lively exercise in him when he was quarrelling with God; neither in love to God, with whom he was angry; nor in love to men, at whose repentance, and finding mercy with the Lord, he was displeased.

{x} yvpn ta "animam meam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellins, Piscator, Drusius, Cocceius.

Jonah 4:4

Ver. 4. Then said the Lord, dost thou well to be angry?] A mild and gentle reproof this; which shows him to be a God gracious and merciful, and slow to anger; he might have answered Jonah's passionate wish, and struck him dead at once, as Ananias and Sapphira were; but he only puts this question, and leaves it with him to consider of. Some render it, "is doing good displeasing to thee?" {y} art thou angry at that, because I do good to whom I will? so R. Japhet, as Aben Ezra observes, though he disapproves of it: according to this the sense is, is doing good to the Ninevites, showing mercy to them upon their repentance, such an eyesore to thee? is thine eye evil, because mine is good? so the Scribes and Pharisees indeed were displeased with Christ for conversing with publicans and sinners, which was for the good of their souls; and the elder brother was angry with his father for receiving the prodigal; and of the same cast Jonah seems to be, at least at this time, being under the power of his corruptions. There seems to be an emphasis upon the word "thou"; dost "thou" well to be angry? what, "thou", a creature, be angry with his Creator; a worm, a potsherd of the earth, with the God of heaven and earth? what, "thou", that hast received mercy thyself in such an extraordinary manner, and so lately, and be angry at mercy shown to others? what, "thou", a prophet of the Lord, that should have at heart the good of immortal souls, and be displeased that thy ministry has been the means of the conversion and repentance of so many thousands? is there any just cause for all this anger? no, it is a causeless one; and this is put to the conscience of Jonah; he himself is made judge in his own cause; and it looks as if, upon self-reflection and reconsideration, when his passions cooled and subsided, that he was self-convicted and self-condemned, since no answer is returned. The Targum is,

"art thou exceeding angry?"

and so other interpreters, Jewish and Christian {z}, understand it of the vehemency of his anger.

{y} Kl hrx bjyhh "num benefacere ira est tibi?" Montanus. {z} "Nonne vehemens ira est tibi?" Pagninus; "numquid vehementer indignaris, multumne (valdene) iratus est?" Vatablus; so Kimchi and R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 47. 2.

Jonah 4:5

Ver. 5. So Jonah went out of the city,.... Had not the inhabitants of it repented, he had done right to go out of it, and shake the dust of his feet against it; or, in such a case, had he gone out of it, as Lot out of Sodom, when just going to be overthrown; but Jonah went out in a sullen fit, because it was to be spared; though some render the words, "now Jonah had gone out of the city" {a}; that is, before all this passed, recorded in the preceding verses; and so Aben Ezra observes, that the Scripture returns here to make mention of the affairs of Jonah, and what happened before the accomplishment of the forty days:

and sat on the east side of the city; where he might have very probably a good sight of it; and which lay the reverse of the road to his own country; that, if the inhabitants should pursue him, they would miss of him; which some suppose he might be in fear of, should their city be destroyed:

and there made him a booth; of the boughs of trees, which he erected, not to continue in, but for a short time, expecting in a few days the issue of his prediction:

and sat under it in the shadow; to shelter him from the heat of the sun:

till he might see what would become of the city; or, "what would be done in" it, or "with" it {b}; if this was after he knew that the Lord had repented of the evil he threatened, and was disposed to show mercy to the city; and which, as Kimchi thinks, was revealed to him by the spirit of prophecy; then he sat here, expecting the repentance of the Ninevites would be a short lived one; be like the goodness of Ephraim and Judah, as the morning cloud, and early dew that passes away; and that then God would change his dispensations towards them again, as he had done; or however he might expect, that though the city was not totally overthrown, yet that there would be something done; some lesser judgment fall upon them, as a token of the divine displeasure, and which might save his credit as a prophet

{a} auyw "exicrat autem", Mercerus; "exivit", Cocceius. {b} ryeb hyhy hm "quid esset futurum in civitate", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Tarnovius; "quid fieret in ea urbe", Vatablus.

Jonah 4:6

Ver. 6. And the Lord God prepared a gourd,.... So the Septuagint render the word; but some say that a worm will not touch that; Jerom renders it an ivy; but neither the gourd nor that rise upwards without some props to support them. The Hebrew word is "kikaion", the same with the "kiki", or "cici", of Herodotus {c}, Dioscorides {d}, Strabo {e}, and Pliny {f}; a plant frequent in Egypt, of which the Egyptians made an oil; hence the Talmudists {g} make mention of the oil of "kik", which Reshlakish says is the "kikaion" of Jonah; and which is the same that the Arabians call "alcheroa" or "alcherva", according to Samuel ben Hophni {h}, Maimonides {i}, Bartenora {k}, and Jerom {l}; and which is well known to be the "ricinus", or "palma Christi"; and which, by the description of it, according to all the above writers, bids fairest {m} to be here intended; it rising up to the height of a tree, an olive tree, having very large broad leaves, like those of vines, or of plantain; and springing up suddenly, as Pliny says it does in Spain; and Clusius affirms he saw at the straits of Gibraltar a ricinus of the thickness of a man, and of the height of three men; and Bellonius, who travelled through Syria and Palestine, saw one in Crete of the size of a tree; and Dietericus {n}, who relates the above, says he saw himself, in a garden at Leyden, well furnished and enriched with exotic plants, an American ricinus, the stalk of which was hollow, weak, and soft, and the leaves almost a foot and a half; and which Adolphus Vorstius, he adds, took to be the same which Jonah had for a shade; with which agrees what Dioscorides {o} says, that there is a sort of it which grows large like a tree, and as high as a fig tree; the leaves of it are like those of a palm tree, though broader, smoother, and blacker; the branches and trunk of it are hollow like a reed: and what may seem more to confirm this is, that a certain number of grains of the seed of the ricinus very much provoke vomiting; which, if true, as Marinus {p} observes, the word here used may be derived from awq, which signifies to vomit; from whence is the word ayq, vomiting; and the first radical being here doubled may increase the signification, and show it to be a great emetic; and the like virtue of the ricinus is observed by others {q}. Jerom allegorizes it of the ceremonial law, under the shadow of which Israel dwelt for a while; and then was abrogated by Christ, who says he was a worm, and no man: but it is better to apply it to outward mercies and earthly enjoyments, which like this plant spring out of the earth, and have their root in it, and are of the nature of it, and therefore minded by earthly and carnal men above all others; they are thin, slight, and slender things; there is no solidity and substance in them, like the kiki, whose stalk is hollow as a reed, as Dioscorides says; they are light and empty things, vanity and vexation of spirit; spring up suddenly sometimes, and are gone as soon; some men come to riches and honour at once, and rise up to a very great pitch of both, and quickly fall into poverty and disgrace again; for these are very uncertain perishing things, like this herb or plant, or even as grass, which soon withers away. They are indeed of God, who is the Father of mercies, and are the gifts of his providence, and not the merit of men; they are disposed of according to his will, and "prepared" by him in his purposes, and given forth according to them, and in his covenant to his own special people, and are to them blessings indeed:

and made [it] to come up over Jonah; over his head, as follows; and it may be over the booth he had built, which was become in a manner useless; the leaves of the boughs of which it was made being withered with the heat of the sun; it came over him so as to cover him all over; which may denote both the necessity of outward mercies, as food and raiment, which the Lord knows his people have need of; and the sufficiency of them he grants, with which they should be content:

that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief; either from the vexation of mind at the repentance of the Ninevites, and the mercy shown them; this being a refreshment unto him, and which he might take as a new token of the Lord's favourable regard to him, after the offence he had given him, and gentle reproof for it; or from the headache, with which he was thought to have been afflicted, through his vexation; or by the heat of the sun; or rather it was to shelter him from the heat of the sun, and the distress that gave him: so outward mercies, like a reviving and refreshing shadow, exhilarate the spirits, and are a defence against the injuries and insults of men, and a preservative from the grief and distress which poverty brings with it:

so Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd; or, "rejoiced with a great joy" {r}; he was excessively and above measure glad of it, because of its usefulness to him: outward mercies are what we should be thankful for; and it is good for men to rejoice in their labours, and enjoy the good of them; to eat their bread with a merry heart and cheerfulness; but should not be elevated with them beyond measure, lifted up with pride, and boast and glory of them, and rejoice in such boastings, which is evil; or rejoice in them as their portion, placing their happiness therein, which is to rejoice in a thing of naught; or to overrate mercies, and show more affection for them than for God himself, the giver of them, who only should be our "exceeding joy"; and, when this is the case, it is much if they are not quickly taken away, as Jonah's gourd was, as follows:

{c} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 94. {d} L. 4. c. 164. {e} Geograph. l. 17. p. 566. {f} Nat. Hist. l. 15. c. 7. {g} Misa. Sabbat, c. 2. sect. 1. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 21. 2. {h} In Kimchi in loc. {i} In Misna Sabbat, c. 2. sect. 1. {k} In ib. {l} In loc. {m} Vid. Weidlingt. Dissert. de Kikaion, apud Thesaur. Theolog. Phil. Dissert. vol. 1. p. 989. & Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 24. p. 293, 294. & l. 4. c. 27. p. 623. & Geograph. par. 1. col. 918, 919. & Liveleum in loc. {n} Antiqu. Bibl. par. 1. p. 82. {o} Apud Calmet's Dictionary, in the word "Kikaion". {p} Arca Noae, tom. 2. fol. 135. {q} Hillerus in Hierophytico, par. 1. p. 453. apud Burkium in loc. {r} hlwdg hxmv-xmvyw "et laetatus est----magna laetitia", Pagninus, Montanus; "et laetabaturque laetitia magna", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "gavisus est gaudio magno", Burkius,

Jonah 4:7

Ver. 7. But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day,.... That God that prepared this plant to rise so suddenly, almost as soon prepared a worm to destroy it; for it rose up one night, continued one whole day, to the great delight of Jonah; and by the morning of the following day this worm or grub was prepared in, it, or sent to it, to the root of it: this shows that God is the Creator of the least as well as the largest of creatures, of worms as well as whales, contrary to the notion of Valentinus, Marcion, and Apelles; who, as Jerom {s} says, introduce another creator of ants, worms, fleas, locusts, &c. and another of the heavens, earth, sea, and angels: but it is much that. Arnobius {t}, an orthodox ancient Christian father, should deny such creatures to be the work of God, and profess his ignorance of the Maker of them. His words are,

"should we deny flies, beetles, worms, mice, weasels, and moths, to be the work of the King Omnipotent, it does not follow that it should be required of us to say who made and formed them; for we may without blame be ignorant who gave them their original;"

whereas, in the miracle of the lice, the magicians of Egypt themselves owned that the finger of God was there, and were out of their power to effect; and to the Prophet Amos the great God was represented in a vision as making locusts or grasshoppers, **Am 7:1**; and indeed the smallest insect or reptile is a display of the wisdom and power of God, and not at all below his dignity and greatness to produce; and for which there are wise reasons in nature and providence, as here for the production of this worm: the same God that prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah, and a gourd to shadow him, and an east wind to blow upon him, prepared this worm to destroy his shade, and try his patience:

and it smote the gourd, that it withered; it bit its root, and its moisture dried up, and it withered away at once, and became useless: that same hand that gives mercies can take them away, and that very suddenly, in a trice, in a few hours, as in the case of Job; and sometimes very secretly and invisibly, that men are not aware of; their substance wastes, and they fall to decay, and they can scarcely tell the reason of it; there is a worm at the root of their enjoyments, which kills them; God is as a moth and rottenness unto them; and he does this sometimes by small means, by little instruments, as he plagued Pharaoh and the Egyptians with lice and flies.

{s} Prooem. in Philemon. ad Paulam & Eustochium. {t} Adv. Gentes, l. 2. p. 95.

Jonah 4:8

Ver. 8. And it came to pass when the sun did arise,.... After that the gourd was smitten and withered; when it was not only risen, but shone out with great force and heat:

that God prepared a vehement east wind; or, "a deafening east wind" {u}; which blew so strong, and so loud, as R. Marinus in Aben Ezra and Kimchi say, made people deaf that heard it: or, "a silencing east wind"; which when it blew, all other winds were silent, as Jarchi: or it made men silent, not being to be heard for it: or, "a silent" {w}, that is, a still quiet wind, as the Targum; which blew so gently and slowly, that it increased the heat, instead of lessening it: or rather "a ploughing east wind" {x}; such as are frequent {y} in the eastern countries, which plough up the dry land, cause the sand to arise and cover men and camels, and bury them in it. Of these winds Monsieur Thevenot {z} speaks more than once; in sandy deserts, between Cairo and Suez, he says,

"it blew so furiously, that I thought all the tents would have been carried away with the wind; which drove before it such clouds of sand, that we were almost buried under it; for seeing nobody could stay outside, without having mouth and eyes immediately filled with sand, we lay under the tents, where the wind drove in the sand above a foot deep round about us;"

and in another place he observes {a}

"from Suez to Cairo, for a day's time or more, we had so hot a wind, that we were forced to turn our backs to it, to take a little breath, and so soon as we opened our mouths they were full of sand;"

such an one was here raised, which blew the sand and dust into the face of Jonah, and almost suffocated him; which, with the heat of the sun, was very afflictive to him:

and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted; the boughs of trees, of which the booth was made, being withered, and his gourd, or whatever plant it was, also, he had nothing to shelter him from the heat of the sun; but the beams of it darted directly upon him, so that he was not able to sustain them; they quite overwhelmed him, and caused him to faint, and just ready to die away:

and wished in himself to die; or, "desired his soul might die" {b}; not his rational soul, which was immortal; by this animal or sensitive soul, which he had in common with animals; he wished his animal life might be taken from him, because the distress through the wind and sun was intolerable to him:

and said, [it is] better for me to die than to live; in so much pain and misery; see **Jon 4:3**.

{u} tyvyrx "surdefacientem", Munster; "ex surdentem", Montanus; "surdum", Drusius. {w} "Silentem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Grotius, Tarnovius; so Stockius, p. 397. and Burkius. {x} "Aratorium", Hyde. {y} Via. Petitsol. Itinera Mundi, p. 146. & Hyde, Not. in ib. {z} Travels, par. 1. B. 2. p. 162. {a} Travels, par. 1. B. 2. ch. 34. p. 177. {b} wvpn ta "animae suae", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; "animam suam", Burkius.

Jonah 4:9

Ver. 9. And God said to Jonah, dost thou well to be angry for the gourd?.... Or, "art thou very angry for it?" as the Targum: no mention is made of the blustering wind and scorching sun, because the gourd or plant raised up over him would have protected him from the injuries of both, had it continued; and it was for the loss of that that Jonah was so displeased, and in such a passion. This question is put in order to draw out the following answer, and so give an opportunity of improving this affair to the end for which it was designed:

and he said, I do well to be angry, [even] unto death; or, "I am very angry unto death", as the Targum; I am so very angry that I cannot live under it for fretting and vexing; and it is right for me to be so, though I die with the passion of it: how ungovernable are the passions of men, and to what insolence do they rise when under the power of them!

Jonah 4:10

Ver. 10. Then said the Lord, thou hast had pity on the gourd,.... Or, "hast spared it" {c}; that is, would have spared it, had it lain in his power, though but a weeds and worthless thing:

for the which thou hast not laboured; in digging the ground, and by sowing or planting it; it being raised up at once by the Lord himself, and not by any, human art and industry; nor by any of his:

neither madest it grow; by dunging the earth about it, or by watering and pruning it:

which came up in a night, and perished in a night; not in the same night; for it sprung up one night, continued a whole any, and then perished the next night. The Targum is more explicit,

"which was in this (or one) night, and perished in another night;"

by all which the Lord suggests to Jonah the vast difference between the gourd he would have spared, and for the loss of which he was so angry, and the city of Nineveh the Lord spared, which so highly displeased him; the one was but an herb, a plant, the other a great city; that a single plant, but the city consisted of thousands of persons; the plant was not the effect of his toil and labour, but the inhabitants of this city were the works of God's hands. In the building of this city, according to historians {d} a million and a half of men were employed eight years together; the plant was liken mushroom, it sprung up in a night, and perished in one; whereas this was a very ancient city, that had stood ever since the days of Nimrod.

{c} tox "pepercisiti", Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Burkius; "pepercisses", Piscator. {d} Eustathius in Dionys. Perieg. p. 125.

Jonah 4:11

Ver. 11. And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city?.... See **Jon 1:2**; what is such a gourd or plant to that?

wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons; or twelve myriads; that is, twelve times ten thousand, or a hundred and twenty thousand; meaning not all the inhabitants of Nineveh; for then it would not have appeared to be so great a city; but infants only, as next described:

that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; do not know one from another; cannot distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong; are not come to years of maturity and discretion; and therefore there were room and reason for pity and sparing mercy; especially since they had not been guilty of actual transgressions, at least not very manifest; and yet must have perished with their parents had Nineveh been overthrown. The number of infants in this city is a proof of the greatness of it, though not so as to render the account incredible; for, admitting these to be a fifth part of its inhabitants, as they usually are of any place, as Bochart {e} observes, it makes the number of its inhabitants to be but six or seven hundred thousand; and as many there were in Seleucia and Thebes, as Pliny {f} relates of the one, and Tacitus {g} of the other:

and [also] much cattle; and these more valuable than goods, as animals are preferable to, and more useful than, vegetables; and yet these must have perished in the common calamity. Jarchi understands by these grown up persons, whose knowledge is like the beasts that know not their Creator. No answer being returned, it may be reasonably supposed Jonah, was convinced of his sin and folly; and, to show his repentance for it, penned this, narrative, which records his infirmities and weaknesses, for the good of the church, and the instruction of saints in succeeding ages.

{e} Phaleg. l. 4. c. 20. p. 253. {f} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 26. {g} Annal. l. 2. c. 60.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Micah 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO MICAH

This book is called, in the Hebrew copies, "Sepher Micah", the Book of Micah; in the Vulgate Latin version "the Prophecy of Micah"; and in the Syriac version "the Prophecy of the Prophet Micah". This prophet is not the same with Micaiah the son of Imiah, who lived in the times of Ahab and Jehoshaphat, 1Ki 22:8; for, as Aben Ezra observes, there were many generations between them, at least many reigns of kings, as Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, and Uzziah, all which made up a hundred and thirty years; their names indeed seem to be the same, since he that is called Micaiah, 1Ki 22:8; is called Micah, 2Ch 18:14; and this our prophet is named Micaiah in Jer 26:18; which is with some of the same signification with Michael. So Abarbinel interprets, it, "who [is] as God"; see **Mic 7:18**; which Hillerus {a} confutes, and renders it, "the contrition, attrition, attenuation, and depauperation, of the Lord"; deriving it from Kwm, which signifies to be depressed, humbled, weakened, and impoverished, as others do; which name, some think, was given him by his parents, because of their low estate, their meanness and poverty; but of them we have no account: however, this is much more probable than the reason Cornelius a Lapide gives of his name, that he was so called because he prophesied of Christ, who was poor, and that he should be born in a poor country village. As for his country, and the place of his birth, and the time in which he lived, they may be gathered from **Mic 1:1**; by which it will appear that he was not of the tribe of Ephraim, as Pseudo-Epiphanius {b} says but of the tribe of Judah; whose kings' reigns in which he prophesies are only made mention of; though his prophecies concerned both Israel and Judah, and he reproves both for their sins, and foretells their various captivities; and, for the comfort of God's people, says many things concerning the Messiah, his incarnation the place of his birth, which no prophet so clearly points at as he, the execution of his offices, prophetic, priestly, and kingly; the blessings of grace that came by him, pardon of sin, atonement, &c. and the happiness and glory of his church in the latter day. The authority of this book is confirmed both by the elders of Judah in the times of Jeremiah, who quote a passage out of it; **Mic 3:12**; which they improve in favour of that prophet, Jer 26:17; and by the chief priests and Scribes in the time of Herod, who refer that prince to a prophecy in this book for the place of the Messiah's birth, **Mic 5:2**; see **Mt 2:4**. He is thought to have prophesied thirty or forty years, Bishop Usher {c} places him in the year of the world 3291 A.M., and 713 B.C.; but, according to Mr. Whiston {d}, he prophesied 750 B.C., and so Mr. Bedford {e}, and three after the building of the city of Rome; and he foretells the captivity of the ten tribes thirty years, and the coming of Sennacherib forty years, before they came to pass; but when and where he died, and was buried, no certain proof can be given. Pseudo-Epiphanius, confounding him with Micaiah in Ahab's time, says {f} he was killed by his son Joram, who cast him down from a precipice, and was buried at Morathi, his native place, near the burying ground of Enakeim, and his grave was well known to that day. And, according to Jerom {g}, the grave of this our prophet was at Morasthi, and in his time turned into a church or temple. Sozomen {h} reports, that, in the times of Theodosius the elder, the body of Micah was found by Zebennus bishop of Eleutheropolis at Berathsalia, a mile and a quarter from the city, near which was the grave of Micah, called by the common people the faithful monument, and in their country language Nephsameemana.

{a} Onomast. Sacr. p. 14, 466, 494, 542. {b} De Prophet. Vit. & Inter. c. 13. {c} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3291. {d} Chronological Tables, cent. 8.

{e} Scripture Chronology, p. 662. {f} De Prophet. Vit. & Inter. c. 13. {g} Epitaph. Paulae, tom. 1. operum, fol. 60. A. B. {h} Histor. Eccles. l. 7. c. 29.

INTRODUCTION TO MICAH 1

This chapter treats of the judgments of God on Israel and Judah for their idolatry. It begins with the title of the whole book in which is given an account of the prophet, the time of his prophesying, and of the persons against whom he prophesied, **Mic 1:1**; next a preface to this chapter, requiring attention to what was about to be delivered, urged from the consideration of the awful appearance of God, which is represented as very grand and terrible, **Mic 1:2**; the cause of all which wrath that appeared in him was the transgression of Jacob; particularly their idolatry, as appears by the special mention of their idols and graven images in the account of their destruction, **Mic 1:5**; which destruction is exaggerated by the prophet's lamentation for it, **Mic 1:8**; and by the mourning of the inhabitants of the several places that should be involved in it, which are particularly mentioned, **Mic 1:10**.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord that came to Micah the Morasthite,.... So called, either from Mareshah, mentioned **Mic 1:15**; and was a city in the tribe of Judah, Jos 15:44; as the Targum, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Zacutus {i}; or rather from Moresheth, from which Moreshethgath, **Mic 1:14**; is distinguished; which Jerom {k} says was in his time a small village in the land of Palestine, near Eleutheropolis. Some think these two cities to be one and the same; but they appear to be different from the account of Jerom {l} elsewhere. The Arabic version reads it, Micah the son of Morathi; so Cyril, in his commentary on this place, mentions it as the sense of some, that Morathi was the father of the prophet; which can by no means be assented to:

in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, [and] Hezekiah, kings of Judah; by which it appears that he was contemporary with Isaiah, Hoses, and Amos, though they began to prophesy somewhat sooner than he, even in the days of Uzziah; very probably he conversed with these prophets, especially Isaiah, with whom he agrees in many things; his style is like his, and sometimes uses the same phrases: he, being of the tribe of Judah, only mentions the kings of that nation most known to him; though he prophesied against Israel, and in the days of Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea:

which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem; in the vision of prophecy; Samaria was the metropolis of the ten tribes of Israel, and is put for them all; as Jerusalem was of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and is put for them Samaria is mentioned first, because it was the head of the greatest body of people; and as it was the first in transgression, it was the first in punishment.

{i} Juchashin, fol. 12. 1. {k} Prolog. in Mic. {l} Epitaph. Paulae, ut supra. (tom. 1. operum, fol. 60. A. B.)

Micah 1:2

Ver. 2. Hear, all ye people,.... Or, "the people, all of them" {m}; not all the nations of the world, but the nations of Israel, so called from their several tribes; though some {n} think the rest of the inhabitants of the earth are meant: thee are the same words which are used by Micaiah the prophet in the times of Ahab, long before this time, from whom they might be borrowed, 1Ki 22:28. The phrase in the Hebrew language, as Aben Ezra observes, is very wonderful, and serves to strike the minds and excite the attention of men; it is like the words of a crier, in a court of judicature, calling for silence:

hearken, O earth, and all that therein is; or, "its fulness" {o}; the land of Israel and Judah, the whole land of promise, and all the inhabitants of it; for to them are the following words directed:

and let the Lord God be witness against you; or, "in you" {p}; the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; let him who is the omniscient God, and knows all hearts, thoughts, words, and actions, let him bear witness in your consciences, that what I am about to say is truth, and comes from him; is not my own word, but his; and if you disregard it, and repent not, let him be a witness against you, and for me, that I have prophesied in his name; that I have faithfully delivered his message, and warned you of your danger, and reproved you for your sins, and have kept back nothing I have been charged and entrusted with: and now, you are summoned into open court, and at the tribunal of the great God of heaven and earth; let him be a witness against you of the many sins you have been guilty of, and attend while the indictment is read, the charge exhibited, and the proof given by

the Lord from his holy temple, from heaven, the habitation of his holiness; whose voice speaking from thence should be hearkened to; who from thence beholds all the actions of men, and from whence his wrath is revealed against their sins, and he gives visible tokens of his displeasure; and especially when he seems to come forth from thence in some remarkable instances of his power and providence, as follows:

{m} Mlk Myme "populi omnes ipsi", Montanus, Drusius, Piscator, Tarnovius. {n} So Burkius. {o} halmw "et plenitude ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Cocceius, Burkius. {p} Mkb "in vobis", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius.

Micah 1:3

Ver. 3. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place,.... Out of heaven, the place of the house of his Shechinah or Majesty, as the Targum; where his throne is prepared; where he keeps his court, and displays his glory; from whence he removes, not by local motion, since he is everywhere; but by some manifest exertion of his power, either on the behalf of his people, or in taking vengeance on his and their enemies; or on them sinning against him, in which sense it is probably to be understood. It signifies not change of place, but of his dispensations; going out of his former customary method into another; removing, as Jarchi has it, from the throne of mercies to the throne of judgment; doing not acts of mercy, in which he delights, but exercising judgment, his strange work. So the Cabalistic writers {q} observe on the passage, that

"it cannot be understood of place properly taken, according to Isa 40:12; for God is the place of the world, not the world his place; hence our wise men so expound the text, he cometh forth out of the measure of mercy, and goes into the measure of justice;"

or property of it. Some understand this of his leaving the temple at Jerusalem, and giving it up into the hands of the Chaldeans; but the former sense is best:

and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth; which are his footstool; Samaria and Jerusalem, built on mountains, and all other high towers and fortified places, together with men of high looks and haughty countenances, who exalt themselves like mountains, and swell with pride: these the Lord can easily subdue and humble, bring low and tread down like the mire of the street; perhaps there may be an allusion to the high places where idols were worshipped; and which were the cause of the Lord's wrath and vengeance, and of his coming forth, in this unusual way, in his providences.

{q} Kabala Denudata, par. 1. p. 408.

Micah 1:4

Ver. 4. And the mountains shall be molten under him,.... As Sinai was when he descended on it, and as all nations will be at the general conflagration; but here the words are to be taken, not literally, but figuratively, for the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and for the kings, and princes, and great men in them, that lifted up their heads as high, and thought themselves as secure, as mountains; yet when the judgments of God should fall upon them, their hearts would melt through fear under him; as well as all their glory and greatness depart from them, and they be no more what they were before, but levelled with the meanest subject:

and the valleys shall be cleft: have chasms made in them by the melting of the mountains, or by the flow of water from the hills: these may design the lower sort of people, who shall have their share in this calamity; the inhabitants of the valleys and country villages; who, though mean and low, shall be lower still, and lose that little substance, that liberty and those privileges, they had; as valleys may be cleft, and open, and sink into the lower parts of the earth; so it is signified that these people should be in a more depressed state and condition:

as wax before the fire; melts, and cannot stand the force of it; so the mountains should melt at the presence of the Lord; and kingdoms and states, and the greatest and mightiest of men in them, would not be able to stand before the fierceness of his wrath; see Ps 68:2;

[and] as the waters [that are] poured down a steep place; that run with great swiftness, force, and rapidity, and there is no stopping them; so should the judgments of God come down upon the lower sort of people, the inhabitants of the valleys; neither high nor low would escape the indignation of the Lord, or be able to stand against it, or stand up under it.

Micah 1:5

Ver. 5. For the transgression of Jacob [is] all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel,.... All this evil, all these calamities and judgments, signified by the above metaphorical phrases, these did not come by chance, nor without, reason; but were or would be inflicted, according to the righteous judgment of God, upon the people of Israel and Judah, for their manifold sins and transgressions, especially their idolatry: and should it be asked,

what [is] the transgression of Jacob? what notorious crime has he been guilty of? or what is the iniquity the two tribes are charged with, that is the cause of so much severity? the answer is,

[is it] not Samaria? the wickedness of Samaria, the calf of Samaria? as in **Ho 7:1**; that is, the worship of the calf of Samaria; is not that idolatry the transgression of Jacob, or which the ten tribes have given into? it is; and a just reason for all this wrath to come upon them: or, "who [is] the transgression of Jacob?" {r} who is the spring and source of it; the cause, author, and encourager of it? are they not the kings that have reigned in Samaria from the times of Omri, with their nobles, princes, and great men, who, by their edicts, influence, and example, have encouraged the worship of the golden calves? they are the original root and motive of it, and to them it must be ascribed; they caused the people to sin: or, as the Targum,

"where have they of the house of Jacob sinned? is it not in Samaria?"

verily it is, and from thence, the metropolis of the nation, the sin has spread itself all over it:

and what [are] the high places of Judah? or, "who [are] they?" {s} who have been the makers of them? who have set them up, and encouraged idolatrous worship at them?

[are] they not Jerusalem? are they not the king, the princes, and priests, that dwell at Jerusalem? certainly they are; such as Ahaz, and others, in whose times this prophet lived; see 2Ki 16:4; or, as the Targum,

"where did they of the house of Judah commit sin? was it not in Jerusalem?"

truly it was, and even in the temple; here Ahaz built an altar like that at Damascus, and sacrificed on it, and spoiled the temple, and several of the vessels in it, 2Ki 16:10.

{r} bqey evp ym "quis est praevaricatio Jacobi?" De Dieu; so Pagninus, Burkius; "quis defectio Jacobi?" Cocceius; "quis scelus Jacobi?" Drusius.
{s} hdwhy twmb ym "quis est excelsa Judae?" Montanus, Drusius, De Dieu; "quis cesla Judae?" Cocceius; "quis fuit causa excelsorum Jehudae?" Burkius; so Kimchi.

Micah 1:6

Ver. 6. Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, [and] as plantings of a vineyard,.... As a field ploughed, and laid in heaps; see **Mic 3:12**; or as stones gathered out of a field, and out of a vineyard planted, and laid in a heap; so should this city become a heap of stones and rubbish, being utterly demolished; and this being done according to the will of God, and through his instigation of Shalmaneser king of Assyria to it, and by his providence succeeding his army that besieged it, is said to be done by him. With this agrees the Vulgate Latin version,

"I will make Samaria as a heap of stones in a field, when a vineyard is planted;"

see **Isa 5:2**; for the city, being destroyed, cannot be compared to the plants of a vineyard set in good order, beautiful and thriving; but, as to heaps of stones in a field, so to such in a vineyard; or to hillocks raised up there for the plants of vines; and if the comparison is to plants themselves, it must be to withered ones, that are good for nothing. The note of similitude as is not in the text; and the words may be read without it, "I will make Samaria an heap of the field, plantings of a vineyard" {t}; that is, it shall be ploughed up, and made a heap of; turned into a field, and vines planted on it; for which its situation was very proper, being on a hill where vines used to be planted, and so should no more be inhabited as a city:

and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley; the stones of the buildings and walls of the city, which, being on a hill, when pulled down, rolled into the valley; and with as much swiftness and force as waters run down a steep place, as in **Mic 1:4**; where the same word is used as here:

and I will discover the foundations thereof; which should be fused up, and left bare; not one stone should be upon another; so that there should be no traces and footsteps of the city remaining, and it should be difficult to know the place where it stood. This is expressive of the total desolation and utter destruction of it: this was not accomplished by Shalmaneser when he took it; for though he carried captive the inhabitants thereof, he put others in their room; but this was entirely fulfilled, not by Jonathan Maccabeus, though he is said {u} to besiege it, and level it with the ground; but by John Hyrcanus; and the account of the destruction of it by him, as given by Josephus {w}, exactly answers to this prophecy, and, to Ho 13:16; where its desolation is also predicted; he says that Hyrcanus, having besieged it a year, took it; and, not content with this only, he utterly destroyed it, making brooks to run through it; and by digging it up, so that it fell into holes and caverns, insomuch that there were no signs nor traces of the city left. It was indeed afterwards rebuilt by Gabinius the Roman proconsul of Syria, and restored by Augustus Caesar to Herod, who adorned and fortified it, and called it by the name of Sebaste, in honour of Augustus {x}; though Benjamin of Tudela pretends that Ahab's palace might be discerned there in his time, or the place known where it was, which is not likely; excepting this, his account is probable.

"From Luz (he says {y}) is one day's journey to Sebaste, which is Samaria; and still there may be perceived there the palace of Ahab king of Israel; and it is a fortified city on a very high hill, and in it are fountains; and is a land of brooks of water, and gardens, orchards, vineyards, and olive yards;"

but, since his time, it is become more ruinous. Mr. Maundrell, who some years ago was upon the spot, gives a fuller account of it;

"this great city (he says {z}) is now wholly converted into gardens; and all the tokens that remain, to testify that there has ever been such a place, are only on the north side, a large square piazza, encompassed with pillars; and, on the east, some poor remains of a great church, said to be built by the Empress Helena, over the place where St. John Baptist was both imprisoned and beheaded."

So say others {a},

"the remains of Sebaste, or the ancient Samaria, though long ago laid in ruinous heaps, and a great part of it turned into ploughed land and garden ground, do still retain some monuments of its ancient grandeur, and of those noble edifices in it, with which King Herod caused it to be adorned;"

and then mention the large square piazza on the north, and the church on the east. It was twelve miles from Dothaim, and as many from Merran, and four from Atharoth, according to Eusebius {b}; and was, as Josephus {c} says, a day's journey from Jerusalem. Sichem, called by the Turks Naplus, is now the metropolis of the country of Samaria; Samaria, or Sebaste, being utterly destroyed, as says Petrus a Valle {d}, a traveller in those parts.

{t} Mrk yejml hdvh yel "in acervum agri, in plantationem, [vel] plantationes vinae", Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Cocceius; as Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Burkius. {u} Paschale Chronicon, p. 181. apud Reland. Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. l. 3. p. 980. {w} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 10. sect. 3. {x} Ibid. l. 14. c. 5. sect. 3. &. l. 15. c. 7. sect. 3. & c. 8. sect. 5. {y} Itinerarium, p. 38. {z} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 59. Ed. 7. {a} Universal History, vol. 2. p. 439. {b} In voc. Dothaim, &c. {c} Antiqu. l. 15. c. 8. sect. 5. {d} Epist. 14. Morino apud Antiqu. Eccles. Oriental. p. 166.

Micah 1:7

Ver. 7. And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces,.... By the Assyrian army, for the sake of the gold and silver of which they were, made, or with which they were adorned, as was usually done by conquerors to the gods of the nations they conquered; these were the calf of Samaria, and other idols; and not only those in the city of Samaria, but in all the other cities of Israel which fell into the hands of the Assyrian monarch; see Isa 10:11;

and all the hires thereof shall be burnt with fire; this the Targum also interprets of idols; such as escaped the plunder of the soldiers should be burnt with fire: Kimchi, by "hires", understands the beautiful garments, and other ornaments, with which they adorned their idols, which were gifts unto them; and they committing spiritual adultery with them, these are compared to the hire of a harlot: or it may design their fine houses, and the furniture of them, all their substance and riches, which they looked upon as obtained by entering into alliances with idolatrous nations, and as the hire and reward of their idolatry; all these should be consumed by fire when the city was taken:

and all the idols thereof will I lay desolate; such as were not broke to pieces, nor burnt, should be thrown down, and trampled upon, and made no account of, or carried away with other spoil. The Targum interprets it of the houses or temples of their idols, which should be demolished. By this and the preceding clause it appears, that, besides the golden calf, there were other idols worshipped in Samaria. In the times of Ahab was the image of Baal, with others, for which he built an altar and a temple in Samaria, and a grove, 1Ki 16:31; and at the time it was taken by Shalmaneser there were idols in it, as appears from Isa 10:10; and there were still more after a colony of the Babylonians and others were introduced into it; the names of which were Succothbenoth, Nergal, Ashima, Nibhaz, Tartak, Adrammelech, and Anammelech. The first of these is thought, by Selden {e} to be Venus; and the two last, both by him and Braunius {f}, to be the same with Moloch, having the signification of a king in them, as that word signifies, and children being burnt unto them: they are all difficult to be understood. The account the Jews {g} give of them is, that "Succothbenoth" were images of a hen and chickens; "Nergal", a cock; "Ashima", a goat without hair; "Nibhaz", or "Nibchan", as sometimes read, a dog; and "Tartak", an ass; "Adrammelech", a mule, or a peacock; and "Anammelech", a horse, or a pheasant. And it was not unusual for some of these creatures to be worshipped by the Heathens, as a cock by the Syrians, and others; a goat by the Mendesians; and the dog Anubis, perhaps the same with Nibhaz, by the Egyptians {h}. And though the inhabitants of Samaria might be better instructed, after Manasseh and other Jews came to reside among them in later times, still they retained idolatrous practices; and, even in the times of our Lord, they were ignorant of the true object of religious worship, **Joh 4:22**; and they are charged by the Jewish writers {i} with worshipping the image of a dove on Mount Gerizim, and also such strange gods, the teraphim, which Jacob hid under the oak at Sichem; however, let their idols be what they will they worshipped, they are now utterly destroyed, according to this prophecy;

for she gathered [it] of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot; as all the riches of Samaria and its inhabitants were gathered together as the reward of their idolatry, as they imagined, so they should return to idolaters, the Assyrians; to Nineveh, called the well favoured harlot, **Na 3:4**; the metropolis of the Assyrian empire; and to the house or temple of those that worshipped idols, as the Targum; with which they should adorn their idols, or use them in idolatrous worship: or the sense in general is, that as their riches were ill gotten, as the hire of a harlot, and which never prospers, so theirs should come to nothing; as it came, so it should go: according to our proverb, "lightly come, lightly go". The allusion seems to be to harlots prostituting themselves in the temples of idols, which was common among the Heathens, as at Comana and Corinth, as Strabo {k} relates; and particularly among the Babylonians and Assyrians, which may be here referred to: for Herodotus {l} says, it was a law with the Babylonians that every woman of that country should once in her life sit in the temple of Venus, and lie with a strange man: here women used to sit with a crown upon their heads: nor might they return home until some stranger threw money into their laps, and took them out of the temple, and lay with them; and he that cast it must say, I implore the goddess Mylitta for thee; the name by which the Assyrians call Venus; nor was it lawful to reject the price or the money, be it what it would, for it was converted to holy uses, and Strabo {m} affirms much the same. So the Phoenician women used to prostitute themselves in the temples of their idols, and dedicate there the hire of their bodies to their gods, thinking thereby to appease their deities, and obtain good things for themselves {n}.

{e} De Dis Syris Syntagm. 2. c. 7. p. 309. {f} Selecta Sacra, l. 4. c. 8. sect. 117. p. 465. {g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 63. 2. Vid. etiam T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 42. 3, 4. {h} Vid. Godwin's Moses and Aaron, l. 4. c. 7. {i} Maimon. in Misn. Beracot, c. 8. sect. 11. & Bartenora in ib. c. 7. sect. 1. & in Nidda, c. 4. sect. 1. Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 15. 2. {k} Geograph. l. 12. p. 385. {l} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 199. {m} Ibid. l. 16. p. 513. {n} Athanasius contra Gentes, p. 21.

Micah 1:8

Ver. 8. Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked,.... To his shut, putting off his upper garment; the rough one, such as the prophets used to wear; which he did as the greater sign of his mourning: sometimes, in such cases, they rent their garments; at other times they stripped themselves of them, and walked naked, as Isaiah did, Isa 20:3; he went about like a madman, one disturbed in his mind, bereft of his senses, because of the desolation coming upon Israel; and without his clothes, as such persons often do: so the word rendered "stripped" signifies, as the Jewish commentators observe. This lamentation, and with these circumstances, the prophet made in his own person, to show the reality and certainty of their ruin, and to represent to them the desolate condition they would be in, destitute of all good things, and to them with it; as well as to express the sympathy of his heart, and thereby to assure them that it was not out of ill will to them, or a spirit of revenge, that he delivered such a message: or this he did in the person of all the people, showing what they would do, and that this would be their case shortly. So the Targum,

"for this they shall wail and howl, and go naked among the spoilers;"

I will make a wailing like the dragons; as in their fight with elephants, at which time they make a hideous noise {n}; and whose hissings have been very terrible to large bodies of men. Aelianus {o} speaks of a dragon in India, which, when it perceived Alexander's army near at hand, gave such a prodigious hiss and blast, that it greatly frightened and disturbed the whole army: and he relates {p} of another, that was in a valley near Mount Pellenaeus, in the isle of Chios, whose hissing was very terrible to the inhabitants of that place; and Bochart {q} conjectures that this their hissing is here referred to; and who observes of the whale, that it has its name from a word in the Hebrew tongue, which signifies to lament; and which word is here used, and is frequently used of large fishes, as whales, sea calves, dolphins, &c. which make a great noise and bellowing, as the sea calf; particularly the balaena, which is one kind of a whale, and makes such a large and continued noise, as to be heard at the distance of two miles, as Rondeletius {r} says; and dolphins are said to make a moan and groaning like human creatures, as Pliny {s} and Solinus {t} report: and Peter Gillius relates, from his own experience, that lodging one night in a vessel, in which many dolphins were taken, there were such weeping and mourning, that he could not sleep for them; he thought they deplored their condition with mourning, lamentation, and a large flow of tears, as men do, and therefore could not help pitying their case; and, while the fisherman was asleep, took that which was next him, that seemed to mourn most, and cast it into the sea; but this was of no avail, for the rest increased their mourning more and more, and seemed plainly to desire the like deliverance; so that all the night he was in the midst of the most bitter moaning: wherefore Bochart, who quotes these instances, elsewhere {u} thinks that the prophet compares his mourning with the mourning of these creatures, rather than with the hissing of dragons. Some {w} think crocodiles are here meant; and of them it is reported {x}, that when they have eaten the body of a creature, which they do first, and come to the head, they weep over it with tears; hence the proverb of crocodiles tears, for hypocritical ones; but it cannot well be thought, surely, that the prophet would compare his mourning to that of such a creature. The learned Pocock thinks it more reasonable that the "jackals" are meant, called by the Arabians "ebn awi", rather than dragons; a creature of a size between a fox and a wolf, or a dog and a fox, which makes a dreadful howling in the night; by which travellers, unacquainted with it, would think a company of women or children were howling, and goes before the lion as his provider;

and mourning as the owls; or "daughters of the owl" {y}; which is a night bird, and makes a very frightful noise, especially the screech owl. The Targum interprets it of the ostrich {z}; and it may be meant either of the mourning it makes when its young are about to be taken away, and it exposes itself to danger on their account, and perishes in the attempt. Aelianus {a} reports that they are taken by sharp iron spikes fixed about their nest, when they are returning to their young, after having been in quest of food for them; and, though they see the shining iron, yet such is their vehement desire after their young, that they spread their wings like sails, and with great swiftness and noise rush into the nest, where they are transfixed with the spikes, and die: and not only Vatablus observes, that these creatures have a very mournful voice; but Bochart {b} has shown, from the Arabic writers, that they frequently cry and howl; and from John de Laet, who affirms that those in the parts about Brazil cry so loud as to be heard half a mile; and indeed they have their name from crying and howling. The Targum renders it by a word which signifies pleasant; and so Onkelos on Le 11:16, by an antiphrasis, because its voice is so very unpleasant. Or, since the words may be rendered, "the daughters of the ostrich" {c}, it may be understood of the mourning of its young, when left by her, when they make a hideous noise and miserable moan, as some observe {d}.

{n} Aelian. de Animal. l. 6. c. 22. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 11. {o} Ib. l. 15. c. 21. {p} Ib. l. 16. c. 39. {q} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 3. c. 14. col. 437. {r} Apud Bochart. ib. par. 1. l. 1. c. 7. col. 47. {s} Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 9. {t} Polyhistor. c. 22. {u} Ut supra, (Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 3. c. 14.) col. 48. {w} Ludolphus apud Burkium in loc. {x} Vid. Frantzii Hist. Animal. Sacr. par. 1. c. 26. sect. 2. {y} hney twnbk "ut filiae ululae", Piscator, Burkius; "instar filiarum. ululae", Cocceius. So Montanus. {z} So the Vulgate Latin, Munster, Pagninus, Drusius, Bochartus, and others. {a} De Animal. l. 14. c. 7. {b} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 14. col. c. 228. {c} "Filiarum struthionis", Pagninus; "juvenes struthiones", Tigurine version. {d} Vid. Frantz. Hist. Animal. Sacr. par. 2. c. 2. p. 339, 342.

Micah 1:9

Ver. 9. For her wound [is] incurable,.... Or her "stroke [is] desperate" {e}. The ruin of Samaria, and the ten tribes, was inevitable; the decree being gone forth, and they hardened in their sins, and continuing in their impenitence; and their destruction was irrevocable; they were not to be restored again, nor are they to this day; nor will be till the time comes that all Israel shall be saved: or "she is grievously sick of her wounds"; just ready to die, upon the brink of ruin, and no hope of saving her; this is the cause and reason of the above lamentation of the prophet: and what increased his grief and sorrow the more was,

for it is come unto Judah; the calamity has reached the land of Judah; it stopped not with Israel or the ten tribes, but spread itself into the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; for the Assyrian army, having taken Samaria, and carried Israel captive, in a short time, about seven or eight years, invaded Judea, and took the fenced cities of Judah in Hezekiah's time, in which Micah prophesied;

he is come unto the gate of my people, [even] to Jerusalem; Sennacherib, king of Assyria, having taken the fenced cities, came up to the very gates of Jerusalem, and besieged it, where the courts of judicature were kept, and the people resorted to, to have justice done them; and Micah, being of the tribe of Judah, calls them his people, and was the more affected with their distress.

{e} hytwkm hvwna "desperata est plaga ejus", V. L. "plagae ejus", Montanus, Drusius.

Micah 1:10

Ver. 10. Declare ye [it] not at Gath,.... A city of the Philistines, put for all the rest: the phrase is borrowed from **2Sa 1:20**; where the reason is given, and holds good here as there; and the sense is, not that the destruction of Israel, or the invasion of Judea, or the besieging of Jerusalem, could be hid from the Philistines; but that it was a thing desirable, was it possible, since it would be matter of rejoicing to them, and that would be an aggravation of the distress of Israel and Judah:

weep ye not at all; that is, before the Philistines, or such like enemies, lest they should laugh and scoff at you; though they had reason to weep, and did and ought to weep in secret; yet, as much as in them lay, it would be right to forbear it openly, because of the insults and reproach of the enemy. The learned Reland {f} suspects that it should be read, "weep not in Acco": which was another city in Palestine, to the north from the enemy, as Gath was to the south; and observes, that there is a like play on words {g} in the words, as in the places after mentioned. Acco is the same with Ptolemais, Ac 21:7;
See Gill on "Ac 21:7". It had this name from Ptolemy Lagus king of Egypt, who enlarged it, and called it after his own name; but Mr, Maundrell {h} observes,

"now, since it hath been in the possession of the Turks, it has, according to the example of many other cities in Turkey, cast off its Greek, and recovered some semblance of its old Hebrew name again, being called Acca, or Acra. As to its situation (he says) it enjoys all possible advantages, both of sea and land; on its north and east sides it is compassed with a spacious and fertile plain; on the west it is washed by the Mediterranean sea; and on the south by a large bay, extending from the city as far as Mount Carmel;"

in the house of Aphrah roll thyself in the dust; as mourners used to do, sit in the dust, or cover their heads with it, or wallow in it; this is allowed to be done privately, in houses or in towns distinct from the Philistines, as Aphrah or Ophrah was, which was in the tribe of Benjamin, Jos 18:23; called here "Aphrah", to make it better agree with "Aphar", dust, to which the allusion is: and it may be rendered, "in the house of dust roll thyself in the dust"; having respect to the condition houses would be in at this time, mere heaps of dust and rubbish, so that they would find enough easily to roll themselves in. Here is a double reading; the "Keri", or marginal reading, which the Masora directs to, and we follow, is, "roll thyself": but the "Cetib", or writing, is, "I have rolled myself" {i}; and so are the words of the prophet, who before says he wailed and howled, and went stripped and naked; here he says, as a further token of his sorrow, that he rolled himself in dust, and as an example for Israel to do the like. This place was a village in the times of Jerom {k} and was called Effrem; it was five miles from Bethel to the east.

{f} Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. p. 534, 535. {g} wkbt la wkb. {h} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 54. {i} yvlpth "volutavi me", De Dieu. {k} De locis Hebr. fol. 88. H.

Micah 1:11

Ver. 11. Pass ye away, thou inhabitant of Saphir,.... A village, according to Eusebius {l}, between Eleutheropolis and Ashkelon; perhaps the same with Sephoron; it is mentioned among the cities of Judah, in the Greek version of Jos 15:48. Calmet {m} conjectures the prophet intends the city of Sephoris or Sephora in Galilee. Hillerus {n}: takes it to be the same with Parah, mentioned with Ophrah, in Jos 18:23; so called from its ornament, neatness, beauty, and elegance, as both words signify, to which the prophet alludes: now everyone of the inhabitants of this place are called upon to prepare to go into captivity to Babylon; which would certainly be their case, though they dwelled in fine buildings, neat houses, and streets well paved. In the margin it is, "thou that dwellest fairly" {o}; which some understand of Samaria; others of Judea; and particularly Jerusalem, beautifully situated, yet should go into captivity:

having thy shame naked; their city dismantled, their houses plundered, and they stripped of their garments, and the shame of their nakedness discovered; which must be the more distressing to beautiful persons, that have dressed neatly, and lived in handsome well built houses, and elegantly furnished, and now all the reverse;

the inhabitant of Zaanan came not forth in the mourning of Bethezel; or house of Azel, where the posterity of Azel, of the tribe of Benjamin, dwelt. Hillerus {p} suspects it to be the same with Mozah, Jos 18:26; so called from Moza, the great grandfather of Azel, **1Ch 8:37**. Capellus takes it to be the same with Azal in Zec 14:5. This place being taken and plundered by the enemy occasioned great mourning among the inhabitants: and it seems to have been taken first, before Zaanan; perhaps the same with Zenan, Jos 15:37; and is here read "Sennan" by Aquila; the inhabitants of which did not "come forth", in which there is an allusion to its name {q}, either to help them in their distress, or to condole them; they being in fear of the enemy themselves, and in arms in their own defence, expecting it would be their turn next, and that they should share the same fate with them. Some think that under the name of Bethezel is meant Bethel; and of Zaanan, Zion; and that the sense is, that when Bethel, Samaria, and the ten tribes, were in distress, they of Zion and Judea did not come to give them any relief; and when they were carried captive did not mourn with them, were not affected with their case, nor troubled themselves about them;

he shall receive of him his standing: either the enemy, as R. Joseph Kimchi, shall receive of the inhabitants of Zaanan his standing; that is, he shall make them dearly pay for stopping him, for making him stand and stay so long before their city before he could take it; for all his loss of time, men, and money, in besieging it; by demolishing their city, plundering their houses, and carrying them captive; who remained he put to death by the sword. Aben Ezra interprets the word "receive" of doctrine or learning, as in **Pr 4:2**; and renders it, "he shall learn"; either Bethezel, or rather Zaanan, shall learn, by the case of Bethezel, and other neighbouring places, what would be his own case, whether he should stand or fall.

{l} Ad vocem safeir. {m} Dictionary, in the word "Saphir". {n} Onomast. Sacr. p. 925. {o} rypv tbvy "habitans pulchre", Montanus; "habiatrix elegantis loci", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {p} Ibid. p. 516, 951. {q} Nnau from auy. Vid. V. L. vers.

Ver. 12. For the inhabitant of Maroth waited carefully for good,.... Or, "though [they] waited for good" {r}; expected to have it, yet the reverse befell them: or "verily [they were] grieved for good" {s}; for the good things they had lost, or were likely to lose; and which they had no more hope of, when they saw Jerusalem in distress. Grotius thinks, by transposition of letters, Ramoth is intended by Maroth, or the many Ramahs which were in Judah and Benjamin; but Hillerus {t} is of opinion that Jarmuth is meant, a city of Judah, Jos 15:35; the word Maroth signifies "bitterness"; see **Ru 1:20**; and, according to others, "rough places"; and may design the inhabitants of such places that were in great bitterness and trouble because of the invasion of the enemy, who before that had promised themselves good things, and lived in the expectation of them:

but evil came down from the Lord unto the gate of Jerusalem; meaning the Assyrian army under Sennacherib, which came into the land of Judea by the order, direction, and providence of God, like an overflowing flood; which spread itself over the land, and reached to the very gates of Jerusalem, which was besieged by it, and threatened with destruction: or "because evil came down", &c. that is, "because" of that, the inhabitants of Maroth grieved, or were in pain, as a woman in travail.

{r} yk "quamvis". {s} bwjl hlx yk "certe doluit propter bonum", Vatablus; "siquidem doluit", Pagninus, Montanus; "quia doluit propter bonum", Burkius. {t} Onomast. p. 87, 951.

Micah 1:13

Ver. 13. O thou inhabitant of Lachish, bind the chariot to the swift beast,.... Horses, camels, dromedaries, or mules. Some {u} render the word swift horse or horses, post horses; others dromedaries {w}; and some mules {x} the two latter seem more especially to be meant, either dromedaries, as the word is translated in **1Ki 4:28**; which is a very swift creature: Isidore says {y} the dromedary is one sort of camels, of a lesser stature, yet swifter, from whence it has its name, and is used to go more than a hundred miles a day; this is thought to be what the Jews {z} call a flying camel; which the gloss says is a sort of camels that are as swift in running as a bird that flies; they are lighter made than a camel, and go at a much greater rate; whereas a camel goes at the rate of thirty miles a day, the dromedary will perform a journey of one hundred and twenty miles in a day; they make use of them in the Indies for going post, and expresses frequently perform a journey of eight hundred miles upon them in the space of a week {a}: this may serve the better to illustrate **Jer 2:23**; and improve the note there: but whether these were used in chariots I do not find; only Bochart {b} takes notice of a kind of camel, that has, like the dromedary, two humps on its back, which the Arabians call "bochet", and put to chariots: or else mules are meant, for by comparing the above text in **1Ki 4:28** with **2Ch 9:24**, it looks as if "mules" were there intended; and so the word here used is rendered in **Es 8:10**; and by their being there said to be used for posts to ride on expresses, it up pears to be a swift creature. Aelianus {c} makes mention of mules in India of a red colour, very famous for running; and mules were used in the Olympic games, and many riders of them got the victory; and that these were used in chariots, there is no doubt to be made of it: Homer {d} speaks of mules drawing a four wheeled chariot; so Pausanias {e} of mules yoked together, and drawing a chariot, instead of horses; and the Septuagint version of Isa 66:20; instead of "in litters and on mules", renders it, "in litters" or carriages "of mules": but, be they one or the other that are here meant, they were creatures well known, and being swift were used in chariots, to which they were bound and fastened in order to draw them, and which we call "putting to"; this the inhabitants of Lachish {f} are bid to do, in order to make their escape, and flee as fast as they could from the enemy, advancing to besiege them; as they were besieged by the army of Sennacherib, before he came to Jerusalem, 2Ch 32:1. Or these words may be spoken in an ironical and sarcastic way, that whereas they had abounded in horses and chariots, and frequently rode about their streets in them, now let them make use of them, and get away if they could; and may suggest, that, instead of riding in these, they should be obliged to walk on foot into captivity. Lachish was a city in the tribe of Judah, in the times of Jerom {g}; it was a village seven miles from Eleutheropolis, as you go to Daroma or the south;

she [is] the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion; lying upon the borders of the ten tribes, as Lachish did, it was the first of the cities of Judah that gave into the idolatry of Jeroboam, the worshipping of the calves; and from thence it spread itself to Zion and Jerusalem; and, being a ringleader in this sin, should be punished for it: though some think this refers to their conspiracy with the citizens of Jerusalem against King Amaziah, and the murder of him in this place, now punished for it, 2Ki 14:18;

for the transgressions of Israel were found in thee; not only their idolatry, but all other sins, with which it abounded; it was a very wicked place, and therefore no wonder it was given up to destruction. The Targum is,

"for the transgressors of Israel were found in thee."

{u} vkrl "ad equos velocissimos", Pagninus; "equo veloci", Montanus; "angariis sc. equis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {w} "Dromadibus", Vatablus. So Elias. {x} "Mulis", so some in Piscator; "ad mulum celerem", Burkius. {y} Origin. l. 12. c. 1. p. 102. {z} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 5. 1. {a} See Harris's Voyages and Travels, vol. 1. p. 469. {b} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 4. col. 87. {c} De Animal. l. 16. c. 9. {d} Iliad. 24. l. 324. {e} Eliac. prior, sive l. 5. p. 302. So Suetonius in Vit. Jul. Caesar. c. 31. "mulis ad vehiculum junctis". {f} There is a likeness in sound between vykl and vkr. {g} De locis Hebr. fol. 92. M.

Micah 1:14

Ver. 14. Therefore shalt thou give presents to Moreshethgath,.... Since Lachish was the cause of leading Judah into idolatry, and was a city so very wicked; therefore it should be reduced to such distress as to send messengers with presents to the Philistines at Moreshethgath, a place near to Gath of the Philistines, and may include that and other cities of theirs, to come and help them against the Assyrians:

the houses of Achzib [shall be] a lie to the kings of Israel; a city of Judah, Jos 15:44; or of Asher, Jos 19:29; the same with Chezib, Ge 38:5; and called Ecdippa by Josephus {h}, Pliny {i}, and Ptolemy {k}. The Jewish writers commonly call it Cezib, of which they {l} say many things about that, and the land unto it, being subject to tithes, the laws of the seventh year, and the like. Maimonides and Bartenora say {m} it is the name of a place which divided between the land of Israel, which they possessed who came out of Babylon, and that land which they enjoyed who came out of Egypt; but the Jews are not agreed about the situation of it. One of their writers {n} places it to the northeast of the land of Israel; but another {o} observes, and proves from one that resided in those parts some time, and diligently inquired into and made his observation on places, that Cezib, and also Aco and Amana, frequently mentioned with it, were all on the western sea of the land of Israel, that is, the Mediterranean sea; in which he was right, without all doubt: the place is now called Zib by contraction, of which Mr. Maundrell {p} gives this account;

"having travelled about one hour in the plain of Acra, we passed by an old town called Zib, situate on an ascent close by the seaside; this may probably be the old Achzib, mentioned Jos 19:29; called afterwards Ecdippa; for St. Jerom {q} places Achzib nine miles distant from Ptolemais (or Aco), towards Tyre, to which account we found the situation of Zib exactly agreeing."

Now the houses or families that dwelt in this place, or the idols' temples there, as some, and the idolatry exercised therein, should be a lie unto, or disappoint the expectations of, the kings of Israel; which, according to Kimchi, is put for Judah, who placed confidence in them, and had dependence on them: there is an elegant play on words between Achzib and a "lie" {r}. The Targum is,

"thou shall send gifts to the heirs of Gath; the houses of Achzib shall be delivered to the people, because of the sins of the kings of Israel, who worshipped idols in them."

{h} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22. De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 13. sect. 4. {i} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19. {k} Geograph, l. 5. c. 15. {l} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 36. 2. T. Bab. Gittin, foi. 7. 2. Misn. Demai, c. 1. sect. 3. {m} In Misn. Demai, c. 1. sect. 3. {n} Bartenora in Misn. Sheviith, c. 6. 1. & Challa, c. 4. sect. 8. {o} Yom Tob in Sheviith, c. 6. 1. e Caphtor Uperah, c. 11. {p} Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 33. Ed. 7. {q} De locis Hebr. fol. 88. I. {r} byzka & bzka.

Micah 1:15

Ver. 15. Yet will I bring an heir unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah,.... Another city in the tribe of Judah, mentioned with Achzib in Jos 15:44; and by many thought to be the birth place of this prophet; and, if so, his faithfulness may be observed in declaring the whole counsel of God, though against his own fire place; and this must be an aggravation of the sin of the inhabitants of it, that they had such a prophet that arose from them, and they regarded him not. There is a beautiful allusion in the word "heir" to Mareshah {s}, which signifies an "inheritance"; and here were an "heir" or heirs for it, as the Targum; not the Persians, as some in Aben Ezra, and in an Agadah mentioned by Jarchi, who descended from Elam the firstborn of Shem; and so had a right of inheritance, as those interpreters suppose; but the king of Assyria, who should invade the land, and seize upon this place among others, and possess it, as if it was his by right of inheritance, having obtained it by conquest: and this being by the permission and according to the will of God, he is said to be brought by him to it. Capellus thinks, on the contrary, that Hezekiah and his posterity are meant:

he shall come unto Adullam the glory of Israel; another city in the tribe of Judah, a royal one, Jos 15:35; said by Jerom to be in his time no small village, and to be about ten miles from Eleutheropolis; called the "glory of Israel", having been a royal city in Joshua's time, Jos 12:15; and a fenced city in the times of Rehoboam, 2Ch 11:7; and Eusebius says it was a large town; and Jerom says it was not a small one in his time; though some think Jerusalem is meant, the metropolis of the nation, Israel being put for Judah, as in **Mic 1:14**; and to be read, "he [that is the enemy and heir] shall come to Adullam, yea, to the glory of Israel" {t}; even to Jerusalem, the most glorious city in all the tribes; though others are of opinion that this is the character of the enemy or heir that should come thither, called so by way of contradiction, as coming to the reproach and disgrace of Israel; or, ironically, whom Israel before gloried in, when they had recourse to him for help. The margin of our Bible reads, "the glory of Israel shall come to Adullam"; that is, the great men, the princes and heads of the people, shall flee to the cave of Adullam {u}, to hide them from the enemy, where David was hid from Saul; see 1Sa 22:1. Burkius {w}, a very late commentator, takes Adullam for an appellative, and with Hillerus {x} renders it, "the perpetuity of the yoke"; and the whole thus, "at the perpetuity of the yoke, the glory of Israel shall come"; that is, when all things shall seem to tend to this, that the yoke once laid on Israel by the Gentiles shall become perpetual, without any hope of deliverance, then shall come the Deliverer, that is, Jesus, the Glory of Israel; and, adds he, God forbid we should think of any other subject here; and so he interprets the "heir" in the preceding clause of the Messiah; and which is a sense far from being despicable.

{s} vryh & hvrm. {t} So Piscator, Juuius, Drusius. {u} "Ad Adullam veniet gloria Israelis", Cocceius. {w} He published Annotations on the twelve minor Prophets at Heilbronn, 1753, which he calls a Gnomon, written in imitation of Bengelius's Gnomon of the New Testament, whose son-in-law it seems he is, and by whom his work is prefaced. {x} Onomast. Sacr. p. 739.

Micah 1:16

Ver. 16. Make thee bald, and poll thee for thy delicate children,.... Which is said, either with respect to Mareshah, or to Adullam, or to the whole land, as Kimchi observes; rather to the latter; and that either to Israel, or to Judah, or both; the prophecy in general being concerning them both, **Mic 1:1**; making baldness, whether by plucking off the hair, or by shaving it, was used in token of mourning, **Job 1:20**; and so it is designed to express it here: the inhabitants of the land are called to lamentation and weeping for their children taken from them, whom they dearly loved, and brought up in a delicate manner. The Targum is,

"pluck off thy hair, and cast it upon the children of thy delight;"

and Sanctius observes; that it was a custom with the Gentiles to cut off their hair, and cast it into the graves of their kindred and friends at their interment, to which be thinks the prophet alludes:

enlarge thy baldness as the eagle; when it moults, and cast off all its feathers, as it does in old age, and so renews its youth; to which the allusion seems to be in Ps 103:5; or every year, as birds of prey usually do at the beginning of the spring. The Jewish writers {y} say this happens to it every ten years; when, finding its feathers heavy and unfit for flying, it makes a tour to the sun with all its force it can, to get as near it as possible; and, having heated its plumage excessively, it casts itself into the sea for cooling, and then its feathers fall off, and new ones succeed; and this it does until it is a hundred years old; and to its then state of baldness, while it is moulting, is the allusion here; unless it can be thought any respect is had to that kind of eagle which is called the bald one. In Virginia {z} there are three sorts of eagles; one is the grey eagle, about the size of a kite; another the black eagle, resembling those in England; and a third the bald eagle, so called because the upper part of the neck and head are covered with a sort of white down: but the former sort of baldness seems to be intended, which is at certain stated times, and not what always is, and is only partial; for it denotes such an universal baldness to be made, as to take in all the parts of the body where any hair grows; as expressive of the general devastation that should be made, which would be the cause of this great mourning:

for they are gone into captivity from thee; that is, the delicate children of Israel and Judah, and so were as dead unto them, or worse: this was accomplished in Israel or the ten tribes, partly by Tiglathpileser, and more completely by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, 2Ki 15:29; and in Judah or the two tribes, when Sennacherib came and took their fenced cities; and doubtless some of the inhabitants and their children were carried captive by him, though not Jerusalem; and therefore cannot be addressed here, as some do interpret the words, unless the prophecy is to be extended to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

{y} Saadiah Gaon apud Kimchi & Ben Melech in Psal. ciii. 5. & lsa. xl. 31.
{z} See Harris's Voyages and Travels, vol. 2. p. 229. Lowthorp's Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 3. p. 589.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Micah 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO MICAH 2

In this chapter complaint is made of the sins of the people of Israel, and they are threatened with punishment for them. The sins they are charged with are covetousness, oppression, and injustice, which were premeditated, and done deliberately, **Mic 2:1**; therefore the Lord devised evil against them, they should not escape; and which would bring down their pride, and cause them to take up a lamentation, because they should not enjoy the portion of land that belonged to them, **Mic 2:3**; they are further charged with opposing the prophets of the Lord, the folly and wickedness of which is exposed, **Mic 2:6**; and with great inhumanity and barbarity, even to women and children, **Mic 2:8**; and therefore are ordered to expect and prepare for a removal out of their land, **Mic 2:10**; and the rather, since they gave encouragement and heed to false prophets, and delighted in them, **Mic 2:11**; and the chapter is concluded with words of comfort to the remnant among them, and with precious promises of the Messiah, and the blessings of grace by him, **Mic 2:12**.

Ver. 1. Woe to them that devise iniquity,.... Any kind of iniquity; idolatry, or worshipping of idols, for the word is used sometimes for an idol; or the sin of uncleanness, on which the thoughts too often dwell in the night season; or coveting of neighbours' goods, and oppressing the poor; sins which are instanced in **Mic 2:2**; and every thing that is vain, foolish, and wicked, and in the issue brings trouble and distress: now a woe is denounced against such that think on such things, and please themselves with them in their imaginations, and contrive ways and means to commit them:

and work evil upon their beds; when, the senses being less engaged, the thoughts are more free; but should not be employed about evil; but either in meditating on the divine goodness, and praising the Lord for his mercies; or in examining a man's heart, state, and case, and mourning over his sins, and applying to God for the remission of them; but, instead of this, the persons here threatened are said to "work evil on their beds", when they should be asleep and at rest, or engaged in the above things; that is, they plot and contrive how to accomplish the evil they meditate; they determine upon doing it, and are as sure of effecting it as if it was actually done; and do act it over in their own minds, as if it was real; see Ps 36:4;

when the morning is light, they practise it; they wish and wait for the morning light, and as soon as it appears they rise; and, instead of blessing God for the mercies of the night, and going about their lawful business, they endeavour to put in practice with all rigour and diligence, and as expeditiously as they can, what they have projected and schemed in the night season;

because it is in the power of their hand; to commit it; and they have no principle of goodness in them, nor fear of God before them, to restrain them from it: or, "because their hand is unto power" {b}; it is stretched out, and made use of in the commission of sin to the utmost of their power, without any regard to God or man. The Vulgate Latin version is, "because their hand is against God"; their hearts are enmity to God, and therefore they oppose him with both their hands, and care not what iniquity they commit; they are rebels against him, and will not be subject to him. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are, "because they lift not up their hands to God"; they do not pray to him, and therefore are bold and daring to perpetrate the grossest iniquity, which a praying man dared not do; but the Syriac version is the reverse, "they do lift up their hands to God"; make a show of religion and devotion, when their hearts and their hands are deeply engaged in, sinning; which shows their impudence and hypocrisy; but the passages in Ge 31:29 favour and confirm our version, and the sense of it; so the Targum.

{b} Mdy lal vy yk "quia est ad potentiam manus ipsorum", Calvin.

Micah 2:2

Ver. 2. And they covet fields, and take [them] by violence,.... The fields of their poor neighbours, which lie near them, and convenient for them; they wish they were theirs, and they contrive ways and means to get them into their possession; and if they cannot get them by fair means, if they cannot persuade them to sell them, or at their price, they will either use some crafty method to get them from them, or they will take them away by force and violence; as Ahab got Naboth's vineyard from him:

and houses, and take [them] away; they covet the houses of their neighbours also, and take the same course to get them out of their hands, and add them to their own estates:

so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage; not only dispossess him of his house to dwell in, but of his paternal inheritance, what he received from his ancestors, and should have transmitted to his posterity, being unalienable; and so distressed a man and his family for the present, and his posterity after him. The Vulgate Latin version is, "they calumniate a man and his house"; which seems to be designed to make it agree with the story of Ahab, 1Ki 21:13.

Micah 2:3

Ver. 3. Therefore thus saith the Lord, behold, against this family do I devise an evil,.... Because of those evils of covetousness, oppression, and injustice, secretly devised, and deliberately committed, the Lord, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, declares, and would have it observed, that he had devised an evil of punishment against the whole nation of Israel, the ten tribes particularly, among whom these sins greatly prevailed; even an invasion of their land by the Assyrians, and the carrying of them captive from it into foreign parts:

from which ye shall not remove your necks; that is, they should not be able to deliver themselves from it; they would not be able to stop the enemy in his progress, having entered their land; nor oblige him to break up the siege of their city, before which he would sit, and there continue till he had taken it; and being carried captive by him, they would never be able to free themselves from the yoke of bondage put upon them, and under which they remain unto this day. The allusion is to beasts slipping their necks out of the collar or yoke put upon them: these sons of Belial had broke off the yoke of God's commandments, and now he will, put another yoke upon them, they shall never be able to cast off until the time of the restitution of all things, when all Israel shall be saved:

neither shall ye go haughtily; as they now did, in an erect posture, with necks stretched out, and heads lifted up high, and looking upon others with scorn and contempt; but hereafter it should be otherwise, their heads would hang down, their countenances be dejected, and their backs bowed with the burdens upon them:

for this time [is] evil; very calamitous, afflictive, and distressing; and so not a time for pride and haughtiness, but for dejection and humiliation; see **Eph 5:16**.

Micah 2:4

Ver. 4. In that day shall [one] take up a parable against you,.... Making use of your name, as a byword, a proverb, a taunt, and a jeer; mocking at your calamities and miseries: or, "concerning you" {c}; take up and deliver out a narrative of your troubles, in figurative and parabolical expressions; which Kimchi thinks is to be understood of a false prophet, finding his prophecies and promises come to nothing; or rather a stranger, a bystander, a spectator of their miseries, an insulting enemy, mimicking and representing them; or one of themselves, in the name of the rest:

and lament with a doleful lamentation; or, "lament a lamentation of lamentation" {d}: a very grievous one; or, "a lamentation that is", or "shall be", or "is done" {e}; a real one, and which will continue:

[and] say, we be utterly spoiled; our persons, families, and friends; our estates, fields, and vineyards; our towns and cities, and even our whole land, all laid waste, spoiled, and plundered:

he hath changed the portion of my people; the land of Israel, which was the portion of the people of it, given unto them as their portion by the Lord; but now he, or the enemy the Assyrian, or God by him, had changed the possessors of it; had taken it away from Israel, and given it to others:

how hath he removed [it] from me! the land that was my portion, and the portion of my people; how comes it to pass that he hath taken away that which was my property, and given it to another! how strange is this! how suddenly was it done! and by what means!

turning away, he hath divided our fields; either God, turning away from his people, because of their sins, divided their fields among their enemies; "instead of restoring" {f}, as some read it, he did so; or the enemy the Assyrian, turning away after he had conquered the land, and about to return to his own country, divided it among his soldiers: or, "to the perverse", or "rebellious one {g}, he divideth our fields"; that is, the Lord divides them to the wicked, perverse, and blaspheming king of Assyria; so the word is used of one that goes on frowardly, and backslides, Isa 57:17.

{c} Mkyle "super vos", Pagninus, Montanus; "de vobis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "super vobis", Cocceius. {d} hyhn hyn hhnw "et lamentabitur lamentum lamenti", Montanus. {e} hyhn "factum est", De Dieu; "ejulatu vero", Cocceius; "actum est", Burkius. {f} bbwvl "pro reddendo", Castalio. {g} bbwv "aversus, refractarius", Drusius; "ingrato et rebelli", De Dieu.

Micah 2:5

Ver. 5. Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot,.... This confirms what was before delivered in a parabolical way, and as a lamentation; and is spoken either to the false prophet, as Kimchi; who should not be, nor have any posterity to inherit by lot the land of Israel; or to those oppressors that took away houses and fields from others, these should have no part nor lot in the land any more; or rather to the whole, people of Israel, who should no more inherit their land after their captivity, as they have not to this day. The allusion is to the distribution of the land by lot, and the dividing of it by a cord or line, as in Joshua's time; but now there should be no land in the possession of Israelites to be divided among them; nor any people to divide it to, being scattered up and down in the world, and so no need of any person to be employed in such service; nor any sanhedrim or court of judicature to apply unto for a just and equal division and distribution, who perhaps may be meant in the next clause:

in the congregation of the Lord; unless this is to be understood of the body of the people, who were formerly called the congregation of the Lord, De 23:1; though now they had forfeited this character, and are only called so ironically, as some think. Aben Ezra interprets it, when the Lord returns the captivity of his people; and so Kimchi, who applies it to the false prophet, as before observed, who at this time should have no part nor lot in the land.

Micah 2:6

Ver. 6. Prophesy ye not, [say they to them that] prophesy,.... Or "drop not" {h}; such terrible words, such menacing things; let them not flow from your lips with such profusion and abundance; cease from speaking in the name of the Lord, if we can hear nothing else but sharp reproofs, and severe judgments: or the first word respects the true prophets of the Lord, and forbids their prophesying; and, according to others, the next should be rendered, "let them prophesy", or "drop" {i}; that is, the false prophets, that prophesy smooth things; and so the sense is, let the one prophesy, but not the other:

they shall not prophesy to them; these are the words of the Lord, in answer to the other, that since they did not like his prophets, their should no more be sent to, them, nor should drop or distil the rain of doctrine upon them; but, as a judgment upon them, should be deprived of them: or, "they shall not prophesy according to these" {k}; as the false prophets do, not such things as they; or the whole may be rendered thus, "prophesy not", or, "if they prophesy, let them not prophesy as these" {l}; such things as these; namely,

[that] shame shall not overtake them; that is, as the false prophets, who said that shame and confusion should not come upon the people of Israel, or the wrath denounced against them, but they should enjoy great peace and prosperity: but the first sense seems best, and the meaning of this clause to be, that the true prophets of the Lord should not prophesy any more to this people, since they did not choose they should: "that shame might not come upon them"; that the prophets might not be treated by them in a shameful and ignominious manner: or, as others, "shame shall not depart from them" {m}; though they think to escape it by forbidding the prophets prophesying terrible things to come, yet confusion will be their portion at last.

{h} wpyjt la "ne stilletis", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Burkius, Junius & Tremellius; "ne stillatote", Piscator. {i} Nwpyjy "stallent isti", Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius; "stillanto", Piscator. {k} hlal "secundum istos", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {l} "Ne vaticinemini, aut si vaticinentur ne talia vaticinentur", Castalio. {m} twmlk goy al "non recedent ignominiae", De Dieu; "non retroageretur summa ignominia", Cocceius; "non recederet ignominia magna", Burkius.

Micah 2:7

Ver. 7. O [thou that art] named the house of Jacob,.... Called after that great and good man, and reckoned the people of God, and have the character of being religious persons; but, alas! have but a name, and not the thing, and are the degenerate offspring of that famous patriarch:

is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? or "shortened" {n}; the Spirit of the Lord in his prophets, is it to be limited and restrained according to the will of men? or, if these prophets are forbid to prophesy, and they are silenced, is not the residue of the Spirit with the Lord? cannot he raise up others to prophesy in his name? or is the Spirit of the Lord confined, as a spirit of prophesy, only to foretell good things, and not evil? may it not threaten with, punishment for sin, as well as promise peace and prosperity?, and is it to be reckoned narrow and strait, because it now does not? the fault is not in that, but in you, who make it necessary, by your conduct, that not good, but evil things, should be predicted of you:

[are] these his doings? either Jacob's doings, such things as Jacob did? did

he ever forbid the prophets of the Lord from prophesying? or did he do such things as required such menaces and threatenings as now delivered by the prophets? or are these becoming such persons as go by his name? or are such works as are done by you pleasing to God? were they, no such terrible messages would be sent by his prophets: or are these the Lord's doings? are judgments the works he is continually doing and taking delight in? are they not his acts, his strange acts? did you behave otherwise than you do, you would hear nothing of this kind:

do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? that walks in a right way, and according to the rule of the divine word, in the uprightness and integrity of his heart, aiming at the honour and glory of God in all his ways? to such a man the words of the Lord by his prophets speak good things, promise him good things here and hereafter, and do him good, exhilarate his spirits, cheer, refresh, and comfort his soul.

{n} ruqh "abbreviatus est", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Cocceius; "decurtatus esset", Piscator.

Micah 2:8

Ver. 8. Even of late my people is risen up as an enemy,.... Or "yesterday" {o}; meaning a very little while before this prophecy, the people of Israel, those of the ten tribes, who were the people of God by profession, rose up as an enemy, not only to God and true religion, worshipping idols; but rather to their brethren, those of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; as they did in the times of Pekah king of Israel, who slew a hundred and twenty thousand of them in one day, 2Ch 28:6; and which is here mentioned as a reason why the Spirit of the Lord in his prophets threatened them with evil, and did not promise them good things:

ye pull off the robe with the garment; the upper and nether garment, and so stripped them naked: or, "they stripped the robe from off the garment", as some {p}; they took the upper garment or cloak from them, and left them only the under garment:

for them that pass by securely, as men averse from war: who were travelling from place to place about their proper business, and thought themselves very safe; were peaceable men themselves, and suspected no harm from others: or, "returning from war" {q}; such who escaped in the battle, and fled for their lives; and when they imagined they, were safe, and out of danger, fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped them of their garments. Gussetius {r} interprets it of such who were returning to the battle, and yet so used.

{o} lwmta "heri", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Burkius. {p} hmlv lwmm "a veste togam spoliatis", Noldius; "a veste pallium exuitis", Burkius. {q} hmxlm ybwv "revertentibus a bello", Piscator; "redeunt a bello", Cocceius; "et revertuntur a bello", De Dieu; "uti essetis reversi ex bello", Burkius. {r} "Redeuntes in bellum", Comment. Ebr. p. 836.

Micah 2:9

Ver. 9. The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses,.... Not content to slay their husbands, they took their wives or widows captive, dispossessed them of their habitations, where they had lived delightfully with their husbands and children; so we find that, at the time before referred to, the people of Israel carried captive of their brethren two hundred thousand women, and brought them to Samaria, 2Ch 28:8. Some understand this of divorce, which those men were the cause of, either by committing adultery with them, which was a just reason for their husband's divorcing them; or by frequenting their houses, which caused suspicion and jealousy:

from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever; that which God would have had glory from, and they would have given it to him on account of; as their being brought up in a religious way; their liberties, both civil and religious; their paternal estates and inheritances, and the enjoyment of their own land; and especially the worship of God in the temple, of which they were deprived by being carried away from their own country: or it may be understood of the glory that accrues to God by honourable marriage, and the bed undefiled; and the dishonour cast upon him by the contrary, as well as upon children, who may be suspected to be illegitimate.

Ver. 10. Arise ye, and depart,.... That is, out the land; do not think of a continuance in it, but expect a removal from it; prepare for captivity and exile; look for it every moment, to hear it said to you, arise, and be gone from hence; for, since you have drove others out of their inheritances and possessions, this shall be your case:

for this [is] not [your] rest; the land in which the ten tribes then dwelt, and which was given to their fathers for an inheritance, and for a resting place, and had been so for ages past, now would be no more so, because of their sins and transgressions; they must not expect to abide here long, and enjoy rest and ease; but to be turned out, and deprived of all the blessings of it, and be carried into a foreign country, where, instead of rest and case, they should be in slavery and bondage:

because it is polluted, it shall destroy [you], even with a sore destruction; because the land that was given them to dwell in was defiled by their manifold iniquities, particularly adulteries, before hinted at: all sin is of a defiling nature; it defiled the bodies and souls of these men; defiled the estates they were possessed of, and the land on which they dwelt, and their fellow inhabitants of it; therefore utter destruction, even a sore and grievous one, should come upon them, by which their land should be laid waste, and they consumed off of it: or; "it shall corrupt [you], even with a grievous corruption" {s}; or you being corrupt upon it, it shall spew you out as a corrupt thing, as it did the Canaanites, the ancient inhabitants of it; when you will appear to be as you are, extremely corrupt: or, "it shall be in pain, [even] with sore pains" {t}; such as those of a woman in travail, not being able to bear them any longer, but ease itself of them, through the judgments of God upon them. This may be applied to the present state and condition of the people of God in this world, which is not their rest; there remains one for them in another world, but they are not yet come to it; for while here they are in trouble, through indwelling sin, the temptations of Satan, divine desertions, and various fears that attend them, so that they have little rest; besides, this is a warfare state, and they are engaged with many enemies; and at best are but travellers passing through this world to their Father's house: this is also their working time, and they are attended with a variety of afflictions within and without; and since there are so many corruptions and pollutions in the world, through lust, which make it that it can be no resting place for a good man; it becomes them not to take up their rest here, but seek after it elsewhere; and to live in an expectation of being called out of it, and to be in a readiness to depart when the Lord shall call for them.

{s} urmn lbxw lbxt "in corrumpet et corruptione acri", Moutanus; "et quidem corruptione vehementissima", Cocceius. {t} So Aben Ezra and Kimchi in Sepher Shorash. rad. lbx.

Micah 2:11

Ver. 11. If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie,.... Who pretends to be a prophet, and a spiritual man, and to be under the inspiration and influence of the Spirit of God, but utters nothing but lies and falsehoods; or who is actuated by a spirit of falsehood and lying; or, as in the margin, "walks with the wind, and lies falsely" {u}; is full of wind and vanity; "after the wind" {w}; and follows the dictates of his vain mind, and coins lies, and speaks false things:

[saying], I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; or "drop [a word] unto thee" {x}; that there will be good times, and nothing but good eating and drinking; and that men need not fear such dismal things befalling them as the prophets of the Lord spoke of; but may be cheerful and merry, and drink wine and strong drink, and not be afraid of their evil tidings: or, for wine and strong drink {y}, so Kimchi; and the meaning is, that if they would give him a cup of wine, or a draught of strong drink, he would prophesy good things to them; the reverse of what is before said, as that they should continue in their land, and not depart from it; that this should be their rest, and they should remain therein, and not be destroyed in it, or cast out of it:

he shall even be the prophet of this people; a "dropper" {z} to them; see **Mic 2:6**; such an one shall be acceptable to them; they will caress him, and prefer him to the true prophets of the Lord; which is mentioned to show the temper of the people, and how easily they were imposed upon, and their disrespect to the prophets of the Lord, as in **Mic 2:6**; to which subject the prophet here returns, as Kimchi observes.

{u} bzk rqvw xwr Klwh "qui ambulat cum vento et falsitate mentiatur", Piscator; "ambulantem cum vento et fasitate mendacem", Cocceius. {w} So Hillerus in Burkius. {x} Kl Pyja "stillabo tibi", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius

& Tremellius, Piscator, Burkius. {y} Nyyl "pro vino", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius. {z} Pyjm "stillator", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Cocceius.

Micah 2:12

Ver. 12. I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee,.... These words are either the words of the false prophet continued, that prophesied of wine and strong drink, as Aben Ezra; promising great plenty and prosperity, and that the remnant of the ten tribes carried captive by Tiglathpileser should be returned, and they should all live together in safety and plenty, and rejoice because of their numbers: or else they are a denunciation of threatenings and judgments, as Kimchi; that the Israelites should be gathered indeed together, but as sheep for the slaughter, even those that remained, not as yet carried captive; these should be shut up, and closely besieged in their cities, and make a noise, and cry for fear of their enemies, and because of the great number of them: or rather they are a comfortable promise of the gathering of the people of Israel in the times of the Messiah, in the last days the Gospel dispensation, even all of Jacob, all the then posterity of Israel; for then "all Israel shall be saved", Ro 11:26; and this is introduced, though abruptly, as often such promises are, for the comfort of the Lord's people, amidst sorrowful and sad tidings brought to the people in general: I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; the remnant according to the election of grace, whom the Lord will reserve for himself, those that are left of them in the latter day; these shall be gathered effectually by the grace of God unto Jesus, the true Messiah, they shall now seek after; and into his church, to join themselves to his people, embracing his Gospel, and submitting to his ordinances; when there shall be "one fold" for Jews and Gentiles, and "one Shepherd" over them, the Lord Jesus Christ, Joh 10:16;

I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah; a place famous for flocks and pastures; signifying that they should be took care of by the great and good Shepherd, have a good fold, and good pastures provided for them, where they should feed comfortably together, in great unity and affection:

as the flock in the midst of their fold; lying down safely, and resting quietly; see Eze 34:13;

they shall make great noise by reason [of the multitude] of men: a joyful noise, because of their own numbers being increased with men like a flock, and so numerous, that the place will be too strait for them; and because of the number of good and faithful shepherds under Christ, to feed and protect them, even pastors after God's own heart, given them to feed them with knowledge and understanding, **Jer 3:15**.

Micah 2:13

Ver. 13. The breaker up is come up before them,.... Not the enemy, either the Assyrian or Chaldean army, or any part thereof, going up before the rest, breaking down the walls of the city, either of Samaria or Jerusalem, so making way for entrance therein; nor Zedekiah, as Joseph Kimchi, who made his escape through the wall broken down; nor the Maccabees, who were instruments of great salvation and deliverance to the Jews after the captivity, and before the coming of Christ. Kimchi makes mention of an exposition, which interprets "the breaker" of Elijah, that was to come before the Messiah; "and their king", in the latter part of the text, of the branch the son of David; that is, the Messiah; which sense Mr. Pocock thinks may be admitted of, provided by Elijah we understand John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, who is the true Elijah that was to come; who broke, prepared, and cleared the way for Christ by his doctrine and baptism see **Lu 1:16**; but it is best to interpret "the breaker" of Christ himself; and so I find it explained {a} by the Jews also, to whom this and all the rest of the characters in the text agree; and who may be so called with respect to his incarnation, being the firstborn that opened the womb, and broke forth into the world in a very extraordinary manner; his birth being of a virgin, who was so both before and after the birth; thus Pharez had his name, which is from the same root, and is of a similar sound with Phorez here, from his breaking forth before his brother, unawares, and contrary to expectation, Ge 38:29; this agrees with Christ, with respect to his death, when he broke through and vanquished all enemies, sin, Satan, the world, and death; broke through all the troops of hell, and spoiled principalities and powers; and through all difficulties that lay in the way of the salvation of his people; he broke down the middle wall of partition, the ceremonial law which was between Jew and Gentile; and broke off the yoke of sin, Satan, and the law, under which they were, and set them at liberty; and at his resurrection he broke asunder the cords of death, as Samson did his withs as a thread of tow; and at his ascension he broke his way through the regions of the air, and legions of devils there, leading captivity captive, and entered into heaven; and was "pandens iter", as the Vulgate Latin version here renders it, "opening the way" for his people into it; by the ministry of the word, he broke his way into the Gentile world, conquering and to conquer, which was mighty, through God, for the pulling down of strong holds, and reducing multitudes to his obedience; at the conversion of every sinner he breaks open the everlasting doors of their hearts, and enters in; he breaks their rocky hearts in pieces, and then binds up what he has broken; and in the latter day he will break in pieces all his enemies as a potter's vessel; yea, he will break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms of the earth, which will become like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors: and now he is ascended, or "gone up" to heaven to his Father there, and "before them" his sheep, his people, said to be assembled, gathered and put together; he is ascended as the forerunner of them, to receive gifts for them, and bestow them on them, and to prepare heaven for them, and to make intercession on their behalf; and, as sure as he is gone up, so sure shall they also follow:

they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it; not either the Assyrians or Chaldeans; nor the people that fled with Zedekiah; but the sheep of Christ following him their Shepherd; who, in the strength of Christ, and the power of his grace, break out of their prison houses; and break off the yokes and fetters in which they have been detained, and all allegiance to former lords; and break through their enemies, and become more than conquerors through him that has loved them; and "pass through [him] the gate"; the strait gate, and narrow way, that leads to the Father, and to the enjoyment of all the blessings of grace; and into the sheepfold, the church, and the privileges of it; and even into heaven itself, eternal life and happiness: and by which also they "go out", for he is a door of escape unto them out of the hands of all their enemies, and from wrath to come; and he is a door of hope of all good things unto them, and which leads to green pastures, and by which they go in and out, and find pasture:

and their King shall pass before them, and the Lord on the head of them; not the king of Assyria or Babylon, before their respective armies, the Lord God himself being in a providential way at the head of them, and succeeding them; nor Hoshea or Zedekiah, going before their people into captivity, the Lord having forsaken them; but the King Messiah, who is

King of Zion, King of saints, that goes before his people as a king before his subjects, and as a shepherd before his flock; and who is the true Jehovah, the Lord our righteousness, who is at the head, and is the Head of his church; the Captain of their salvation, that is at the head of his armies, his chosen and faithful ones, they following and marching after him, Re 17:14.

{a} In Mattanot Cehunah in Bereshit Rabba, parash. 85. fol. 75. 2. Vid. Galatia. Arcan. Cathol. Ver. l. 3. c. 30.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Micah 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO MICAH 3

In this chapter the prophet reproves and threatens both princes and prophets, first separately, and then conjunctly; first the heads and princes of the people, civil magistrates, for their ignorance of justice, and hatred of good, and love of evil, and for their oppression and cruelty; and they are threatened with distress when they should cry unto the Lord, and should not be heard by him, **Mic 3:1**; next the prophets are taken to task, for their voraciousness, avarice, and false prophesying; and are threatened with darkness, with want of vision, and of an answer from the Lord, and with shame and confusion, **Mic 3:5**; and the prophet being full of the Spirit and power of God, to declare the sins and transgressions of Jacob and Israel, **Mic 3:8**, very freely declaims against princes, priests, and prophets, all together; who, though guilty of very notorious crimes, yet were in great security, and promised themselves impunity, **Mic 3:9**; wherefore the city and temple of Jerusalem are threatened with an utter desolation, **Mic 3:12**.

Ver. 1. And I said, hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel,.... This seems to be a new sermon or discourse, delivered at another time and to another people than the preceding for, as that chiefly concerns the ten tribes, this the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and was spoken to them in the times of Hezekiah, as appears from Jer 26:18; for though Jacob and Israel generally design the ten tribes, yet here the other two, as is manifest from the above cited place, and also from **Mic 3:9**; and not only heads of families, but such as were the highest posts under the government, the sanhedrim of the nation, judges, rulers, and nobles, are here addressed; and who had a great share in national guilt, being ringleaders in sin, who ought to have set good examples to others; and these are not to be spared because of their grandeur and dignity, but to faithfully reproved for their vices, and which they should diligently attend unto; though they are to be addressed in a respectful and honourable manner, and be entreated to hearken to the word of the Lord by his prophet; all which was carefully observed by Micah; and it was with pleasure he could reflect upon his plain, faithful, and affectionate reproof of those great men:

[is it] not for you to know judgment? what is just and right to be done by men, and what sentence is to be passed in courts of judicature, in cases brought before them and not only to know, in a speculative way, what is equitable, but to practise it themselves, and see that it is done by others; and when they duly considered this, they would be able to see and own that what the prophet from the Lord would now charge them with, or denounce upon them, was according to truth and justice.

Micah 3:2

Ver. 2. Who hate the good, and love the evil,.... Instead of knowing and doing what was just and right; or, directly contrary to their light and knowledge, and the duty of their office, they hated that which is good, which is agreeable to the law, nature, and will of God, and loved that which is evil, which is contrary thereunto; or they hated to do good, and loved to do evil, as the Targum; as men do who are averse to good, and prone to evil; or they hated a good man, as Aben Ezra, and loved the evil man; not only delighted in committing sin themselves, but took pleasure in those that did it; and could not endure the company and conversation of holy and good men:

who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones: like wild beasts that tear off skin and flesh from the bones, and then devour them; or like cruel shepherds, that, not content to fleece their flocks, skin them, and take their flesh also, and feed themselves, and not the flock; or like butchers, that first take off the skin off a beast, and then cut up its flesh. The design of the expressions is to show what rigour, cruelty, and oppressions, these rulers exercised on the people and by their heavy taxes and levies, and exorbitant penalties and fines, pillaged and plundered them of all they had in the world, and left them quite bare, as bones stripped of their skin and flesh. So the Targum,

"seizing on their substance by violence, and their precious mammon they take away."

Micah 3:3

Ver. 3. Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skins from off them,.... Like cannibals, flay them alive, and then eat their flesh: this signifies, as before, devouring their substance, only expressed in terms which still more set forth their savageness, inhumanity, barbarity, and cruelty. So the Targum,

"who spoil the substance of my people, and their precious mammon they take from them;"

and what aggravated their guilt was, that they were the Lord's people by profession and religion they so used; whom he had committed to their care to rule over, protect, and defend:

and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron: did with them as cooks do, who not only cut flesh off the bones, and into slices, but break the bones themselves, to get out the marrow, and chop them small, that they may have all the virtue that is in them, to make their soup and broth the richer; by which is signified, that these wicked and avaricious rulers took every method to squeeze the people, and get all their wealth and riches into their hands, that they might have in a more riotous and luxurious manner.

Micah 3:4

Ver. 4. Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them,.... When all the above evils threatened them in the preceding chapters shall come upon them; when the enemy shall invade their hind, besiege their cities, and take them, and they, their families and substance, just ready to fall into their hands, they shall cry unto the Lord; or pray unto him, as the

Targum, in the time of their distress; but he will not hear their prayer, so as to answer it according to their desire; that is, he will not save them from imminent danger, but deliver them up, them, and all that belong unto them, into the hands of such that shall use them as they have done others:

he will even hide his face from them at that time; turn his back upon them, and a deaf ear to them, and show them no favour, nor grant them any help and protection:

as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings; he will punish them according to the law of retaliation; as when the poor cried unto them, when they were stripping them of their substance, and they would not hearken to them, so now, when they cry unto the Lord in their distress, he will not hearken to them; and as they turned their backs, and hid their faces from those that were afflicted by them, and would show them no favour, so will the Lord deal with them; and as they exercised the utmost cruelty and barbarity that could be done, they will now be given up into the hands of cruel and merciless men, that will use them in like manner: or, "because they have done ill in their doings" {b} to the poor, whose cause God will defend and vindicate.

{b} rvak any' wn "eo quod", Sept. "quia", Drusius; "pro eo quod", Grotius.

Micah 3:5

Ver. 5. Thus saith the Lord, concerning the prophets that make my people err,.... The false prophets, as the Targum; and as the description given of them shows; who, instead of directing the people in the right way, as by their office and characters as prophets they should have done, they led them into mistakes about matters of religion and civil government, and out of the way of their duty to God and men, and exposed them to great danger and distress; and this was the more aggravating, as they were the Lord's people by name and profession, whom they caused to err from his ways and worship, which brought his displeasure upon them:

that bite with their teeth, and cry, peace; prophesy smooth things, promise all kind of prosperity and plenty, and bite their lips, and keep in those distresses and calamities which they could not but see coming upon the people; or, while they are prophesying good things, they gnash their teeth against the prophets of the Lord, and bitterly inveigh against them for threatening with war, destruction, and captivity; or, by flattering the people with their lips, they bite them, devour their substance, and are the cause of their hurt and ruin; or rather, so long as the people fed them well, and they had a sufficiency to bite and live upon, they foretold happy days unto them, So the Targum,

"he that feeds them with a feast of flesh, they prophesy peace to him;"

which sense is confirmed by what follows,

and he that putteth not into their mouth, they even declare war against him; who do not give them what they ask, or do not feed them according to their desire, do not keep a good table for them, and cram and pamper them, but neglect them, and do not provide well for them; these they threaten with one calamity or another that shall befall them; and endeavour to set their neighbours against them, and even the government itself, and do them all the mischief they can by defamation and slander.

Micah 3:6

Ver. 6. Therefore night [shall be] unto you, that ye shall not have a vision,.... Not that those outward gifts and illuminations, and that prophetic light they had, or seemed to have should be taken away from them, and it should be quite a night with them; because these men were never sent of God, or received any message from him, or had any prophetic talents at all, and therefore could not be taken away from them, and they be benighted in this sense; though, it is true, such might be the circumstances they would be brought into, that it should appear to the people that they are the dark persons they were, that they have no vision, nor never had any; but rather the sense is, that such dark providences and dreadful calamities should come upon the people in general, and upon those prophets in particular, often signified by "night" in Scripture, that they would not have the face to pretend any more that they had any vision from God of good times and things. It may be rendered, "therefore night [shall be] unto you because of vision" {c}; calamity should come upon them because of their false and pretended visions of peace and prosperity they deluded the people with:

and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; such darkness of affliction should be upon them, that they would not offer to deliver out any divination or prediction of good things coming upon them; or such darkness and distress would be their portion "because of divination" {d}, on account of their lying divinations they had imposed upon the people:

and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them; their time of prosperity will be over, and they shall be no more in favour with the people, or courted and feasted by them; but shall be had in the utmost contempt and abhorrence. The Targum of the whole is,

"therefore ye shall blush at prophesying, and be ashamed of teaching; and tribulation as darkness shall cover the false prophets, and the time shall be darkened upon them."

{c} Nwzxm "propter visionem", Munster, Piscator. {d} Mwoqm "propter divinationem", Munster; "propter divinare, i. e. divinationem", Vatablus; "prae visione----prae divinatione", Burkius.

Micah 3:7

Ver. 7. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded,.... When the events of things will make it most clearly appear to all that their visions, divinations, and prophecies, are false; they will not be able to lift up their heads, or show their faces, but shame and confusion will cover them:

yea, they shall all cover their lips; stop their mouths, hold their tongues, and be entirely and totally silenced; they will not pretend to utter any other vision or prophecy; nor be able to say one word in defence of themselves, and of what they have before prophesied; every thing in providence being contrary to what they had said, and agreeable to the words of the true prophets; or they shall cover their lips as mourners; as the Targum adds, by way of explanation; see Eze 24:17. It is said {e} there were two gates in Solomon's temple; one called the gate of the bridegrooms, the other the gate of mourners; to those that entered the latter, if their lip was covered, it was said, he that dwells in this house comfort thee; and so the lips of the false prophets being covered may signify that they were now sorry for what they had done, at least because of the calamities on them and the people; though the former sense seems best:

for [there is] no answer of God; not that they shall be ashamed and silenced because they shall now have no answer of God, for they never had any, which this would imply; but that it shall now be most plain and clear to all that the Lord never spoke by them, and they never had any answer from him; all their visions, divinations, and prophecies, were of, themselves, and not of him; what they delivered was not the word of the Lord, but their own; and this now being discovered and manifest to everyone, wilt put them to utter silence and shame. The Targum is,

"for there is not in them a spirit of prophecy from the Lord."

{e} R. Jacob, Sepher Musar, c. 9. apud Drusii Proverb. class. 2. l. 21. sect. 194.

Micah 3:8

Ver. 8. But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord,.... Or, "full of power, even, the Spirit of the Lord", as Gussetius {f}, by way of contrast, and as explaining what is meant by power; for so the Spirit is sometimes called from his gifts and graces, which are powerful in men; see Lu 24:47. These are the words of Micah concerning himself, in opposition to the false prophets, who are destitute of the Spirit of God; men of mean sordid dispositions, that had nothing but sinister and selfish ends in view, and not in the least qualified for the office and character they bore; whereas he could say of himself, with truth, that he was possessed of sufficient abilities for such an employment; and which he had, not of himself, but from the Spirit of God, who gives gifts to men, and divides them to each as he will; so that this was no vaunt and vain boast, or a piece of arrogance and ostentation in the prophet; since he only opposes himself to the false prophets, and ascribes his endowments and qualifications, not to himself, but to the Spirit of God; he had, though they had not, answers from the Lord, visions and prophecies from him, with a commission and abilities from him to execute the office of a prophet, being under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, and full of him and his gifts:

and of judgment, and of might; or of the judgment of truth, as the Targum; being able to discern truth and error, between what comes from the Spirit of God, and what from a lying spirit, or a spirit of divination and falsehood; what is proper to, be spoken, when the right time, and to whom; and having courage and greatness of mind, fearing no man's person or face, but bold

to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin; freely and openly to set it before them in a true light, with all aggravating circumstances, and reprove them for the same; and threaten them with the judgments of God in case they, repented not; see Isa 58:1; and as a proof of all this, says what follows:

{f} Ebr. Comment. p. 468.

Micah 3:9

Ver. 9. Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel,.... As an instance of his boldness, courage, and impartiality, he begins with the principal men of the land, and charges them with sins, and reproves for them, and denounces judgments on account of them; See Gill on "Mic 3:1";

that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity; a sad character of princes, rulers, and judges, who not only ought to know but to love judgment, justice, and equity, and do them; even take delight and pleasure in the distribution of them to everyone, and in every cause that came before them; but, instead of this, hated to do that which was right and just; and perverted all the rules and laws of justice and equity, clearing the guilty, and condemning the innocent.

Micah 3:10

Ver. 10. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. Or, "O thou that buildest up" {g}, &c. or "everyone of them that buildeth up" {h}, &c. for the word is in the singular number; but, be fire words rendered either of these ways, they respect the heads and princes of the people; who either repaired the temple on Zion, or ornamented the king's palace, or built themselves fine stately houses in Jerusalem, or large streets there, by money they took of murderers to save them, as Kimchi; or by money got by rapine and oppression, by spoiling the poor of their goods and their livelihood, for them and their families, which was all one as shedding innocent blood; and by money obtained by bribes, for the perversion of justice, and such like illegal proceedings, truly called iniquity. The Targum is,

"who build their houses in Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with deceits."

{g} hnwb "aedificans", Montanus, Munster, Burkius. {h} "Quisque eorum aedificat", Vatablus, Piscator, Drusius.

Micah 3:11

Ver. 11. The heads thereof judge for reward,.... That is, the heads or principal men of Zion and Jerusalem; the kings, or sanhedrim, according to Kimchi; but as this prophecy was delivered in the times of Hezekiah, Jer 26:18, be who was so good a king must be excepted from this charge; perhaps it was delivered in the beginning of his reign, before a reformation was made, and might be the occasion of it: the former reign was a very wicked one; and very likely the public officers, judges, and civil magistrates, were as yet continued, and who went on in the same course of injustice, giving the cause not on the right side, but to them that gave them most money, or bribed highest, contrary to the law of God, De 16:19;

and the priests thereof teach for hire; for though they had a sufficient and honourable maintenance provided by the law of God for them, yet, not content with this, they took a price of the people for teaching them; and that not such things as were agreeable to the will of God declared in his word, which they ought to have done freely; but such doctrines as were most pleasing to carnal men, and indulged them in their lusts, presumption, and vain confidence:

and the prophets thereof divine for money; tell men what should befall them; what good things they should be possessed of; what plenty and prosperity they should enjoy; and this they did according to the sum of money given them, more or less. This must be understood of the false prophets:

yet will they lean upon the Lord; on his are, providence, and protection, as if they were filled to these things, and might securely rely and depend upon them; though by their sins and transgressions they had forfeited all the bent fits and privileges thereof. To lean by faith upon the Lord; or in his Word, as the Targum; and to trust in his promises, in his power, and faithfulness, and goodness; when this springs from an honest and upright heart, and is attended with the fruits of righteousness and holiness, it is well pleasing to God, and highly regarded by him, and such may, depend upon his blessing and protection; but to talk of faith in him, and reliance upon him, when the whole course of the conversation is wicked, this is abominable in the sight of God, and displeasing to him:

and say, [is] not the Lord among us? trusting to this, that the temple of the Lord was among them, and that the temple of God were they; that the most holy place was there, where were the symbols of the divine Presence, the ark, cherubim, and mercy seat; and so concluding from hence their safety and security; putting their confidence in outward places and things, in external worship, sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies, when they neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice, truth, and mercy: and so

none evil can come upon us: as pestilence, famine, sword, and captivity, the prophets of the Lord had threatened them with.

Micah 3:12

Ver. 12. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed [as] a field,.... That is, for your sins, as the Targum; for the bloodshed, injustice, and avarice of the princes, priests, and prophets; not that the common people were free from crimes; but these are particularly mentioned, as being ringleaders into sin, and who ought to have set better examples; as also to take off their vain confidence in themselves, who thought that Zion and Jerusalem would be built up and established by them, and preserved for their sakes; as well as to show the prophet's boldness and intrepidity in his rebukes and menaces of them: now this was prophesied of in the days of Hezekiah, before the invasion of Judea and siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib; it was deferred upon the repentance and reformation of the people; and was fulfilled in part at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, when the city was reduced to a heap of rubbish; and more fully when it was destroyed by the Romans, and ploughed up by Terentius, or Turnus Rufus, as the Jews say; so that there was not a house or building left upon it, but it became utterly desolate and uninhabited, especially in the reign of Adrian:

and Jerusalem shall become heaps; not only the city of David, built on Mount Zion, should be demolished, but the other part of the city called Jerusalem should be thrown down, and its walls and houses lie in heaps, like heaps of stones in the midst of a ploughed field:

and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest; Mount Moriah, on which the temple was built; hence called here, by the Targum, the mountain of the house of the sanctuary; the temple upon it should be destroyed, and not one, tone left upon another; and the place on which it stood be covered with grass and trees, with briers and thorns, as a forest is, all which have been exactly fulfilled. The Jews say {i} of Turnus Rufus before mentioned, that he both ploughed up the city of Jerusalem, and the temple, the ground on which they stood; and Jerom {k} affirms the temple was ploughed up by Titus Annius Ruffus; which, as it literally fulfilled this prophecy, denotes the utter destruction of them; for, as it was usual with the ancients to mark out with a plough the ground on which a city was designed to be built; so they drew one over the spot where any had stood, which was become desolate, and to signify that the city was no more to be rebuilt and inhabited: thus Seneca {l}, Horace {m}, and other writers, express the utter destruction of a city by such phrases.

{i} T. Hieros. Taaniot. fol. 69. 2. Juchasin, fol. 36. 2. & Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 28. 1. {k} Comment. in Zech. viii. 19. {l} "Aratrum vetustis urbibus inducere", Seneca de Clementia, l. 1. c. 26. {m} "------ Imprimeretque muris Hostile aratrum exercitus insolens". Hor. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 36.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**
Micah 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO MICAH 4

This chapter contains some gracious promises concerning the glory and happiness of the church of Christ in the last days; as of its stability, exaltation, and increase, and of the spread of the Gospel from it, **Mic 4:1**; and of the peace and security of it, and constant profession and exercise of religion in it, **Mic 4:3**; and of the deliverance of it from affliction and distress, and the ample and everlasting kingdom of Christ in it, **Mic 4:6**; and then follow some prophecies more particularly respecting the Jews; as that, though they should be in distress, and be carried captive into Babylon, they should be delivered from thence, **Mic 4:9**; and, though many people should be gathered against them, yet should not be able to prevail over them, but their attempts would issue in their own destruction, **Mic 4:11**.

Ver. 1. But in the last days it shall come to pass, [that] the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains,.... It appears by the adversative but, with which these words are introduced, that they have a dependence upon and a connection with the last of the preceding chapter; signifying, that though "the mountain of the house", on which the temple stood, should become desolate, yet "the mountain of the house of the Lord", which is not literally the same, but what that was typical of, the church of Christ, should be greatly exalted and enlarged; and which, according to this prophecy, would be "in the last days": that is, as Kimchi rightly interprets it, the days of the Messiah; and it should be observed, that all this will be in the last of his days, or of the Gospel dispensation: the first of these days were the days of Christ in the flesh, the times of his ministry, and of John the Baptist his forerunner, and of his disciples; and were indeed the last days of the Jewish world, or of their civil and church state; and when also it must be allowed the mountain of the Lord's house, or the temple literally taken, became glorious by the presence of Christ in it, by his doctrine and miracles there, and by the effusion of the Spirit on his disciples in that place, and the ministration of the Gospel; but then all this was before the destruction of the second temple; whereas this prophecy follows that, and is opposed to it, and supposes it; besides, in those times there was not such an exaltation and stability of the church of Christ; nor such a flow of nations to it; nor such a settled and universal peace and security as here promised: this prophecy therefore respects times yet to come, as Aben Ezra observes; the last of the days of the Messiah, or the last times of the Gospel dispensation, when the reign of antichrist will be at an end; he will be destroyed, and the kingdom of Christ set up, established, and enlarged in the world. The Prophet Isaiah predicts the same things, and much in the same words, **Isa 2:2**; these two prophets were contemporary, and might converse together, and communicate to each other what they had received from the

Lord upon this subject; but it is needless to inquire which might have them from the other, since they were both holy men of God, and moved by his Spirit, and were inspired by the same Spirit, with the same things, and to speak the same language; yet there is a diversity in words, though an agreement in sentiment nor does it appear a clear case that they borrowed, much less that they stole, their words from one other, as the false prophets did; for they do not always use the same words to convey the same idea; and there are some words which Isaiah has that Micah has not and there are others that Micah uses that Isaiah has not; though in the whole there is a most beautiful harmony of sense in their diversity of expression. By "the mountain of the house of the Lord" is not meant the temple built on Mount Moriah, where the divine Majesty resided; where were the symbols of his presence, the ark and mercy seat, and where he was worshipped, which has been destroyed long ago, and will never be rebuilt more; for a third temple hereafter to be built at Jerusalem is a mere fiction of the Jews; nor indeed is any material building here intended, and still less any such building to be erected in such an absurd sense, literally taken, as if mountain was piled on mountain, and hill on hill, to raise it higher; but, mystically and spiritually, it designs the church of God, called so because it is built by him, and built for a habitation for him; where he will, at the time here referred to, more manifestly dwell in a spiritual manner; and by whom, and by which spiritual and gracious presence of his, it will be made very beautiful and glorious: and it is signified by a "mountain", to denote its visibility, immovableness, and perpetuity; and is said to be "established in the top of the mountains", with respect to the kingdoms of this world, and especially antichristian churches, which, because of their eminence, and largeness, and national establishment, may seem like mountains; but, in the latter day, the true church of Christ, which now may seem like a mole hill to them, will be above them, and will be in a settled state and condition, and not be fluctuating, and tossed to and fro, and removing here and there, as now; but be fixed and stable, and continue so until the second and personal coming of Christ:

and it shall be exalted above the hills: by "hills" may be meant petty kingdoms, inferior to greater monarchies; or religious states, not of Christ's constitution; and the "exaltation" of the church above them denotes her power over them, to enjoy the one, and crush the other: it may respect the glory of the church, both as to things temporal and spiritual; for now will the kingdoms under the whole heaven be given to the saints of the most High; civil government will come into their hands, the kings and princes of the earth being now members of Gospel churches; so that the church will be in a glorious and exalted state, having riches, power, and authority, a large extent everywhere, and a multitude of members, and those of the highest class and rank, as well as of the meaner and lower sort; and all of them possessed largely of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, and enjoying the Gospel and Gospel ordinances in their power and purity:

and the people shall flow unto it: in great abundance, in large numbers, in company like the flowing streams of a river; and may denote not only their numbers, but their swiftness and readiness to join themselves with the church of God, to hear the word, and partake of the ordinances, and of all the privileges of the house of the Lord. It may be rendered, "they shall look unto it", as the word is translated in Ps 34:6; and so the Targum here,

"and the kingdoms shall look (or turn their faces) to serve upon it;"

and this sense is preferred by many learned Jewish writers {n}; and the meaning may be, that multitudes, seeing the glory of the church, and the many desirable things in it, shall look to it with a look of love and affection, and with a wishful look, greatly desiring to be admitted into it. In **Isa 2:2**; it is said, "and all nations shall flow unto it": not the people of the Jews only, now converted; or a single and, on only, or some out of that; but all the nations of the world, at least great numbers out of all, by far the greatest in them; such an increase will there be of the churches in the latter day.

{n} R. Saadiah, Abu Walid, R. Tanchuma apud Pocock in loc.

Micah 4:2

Ver. 2. And many nations shall come, and say, come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob,.... In **Isa 2:3**; it is, "many people", &c. the sense is the same; See Gill on Isa 2:3;

and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; the teacher is the King Messiah, as Kimchi observes; the great Prophet of his people, the teacher sent from God; and will in the last days teach men by his Spirit and word, in a very plentiful manner, and with great success:

for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; these, according to Kimchi, are the words of the prophet, and not of the people, that encourage one another to go up to the house of the Lord; but the sense is much the same; for they contain a reason why the people of different nations would encourage one another to go to the house of the Lord, that they might learn his ways, and walk in his statutes, because here the word of the Lord is preached; the word which comes from God, and is concerning him, his love and grace to men; the word of peace and righteousness, of life and salvation, by Jesus Christ: and each of the doctrines of grace intended by the "law" or "doctrine" of the Lord; the doctrines of God's everlasting love, of election in Christ, and redemption by him; of justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, and satisfaction by his atonement; as well as of regeneration by the Spirit of God, and of perseverance in grace: in these, and others, now shall all the Lord's people be taught more clearly, distinctly, and comfortably; all shall know him, from the least to the greatest; and not only their light and knowledge, under such a teacher and such will be very great, but their practice will be answerable to it; as they will be instructed in all the ways of the Lord, and in the methods of his grace, so they will walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; See Gill on "Isa 2:3".

Micah 4:3

Ver. 3. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off,.... That are in the most distant parts of the world; not only the isles afar off, but the remotest parts of the continent, the American nations found out since. In **Isa 2:4**, it is, "and he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people"; that is, the King Messiah, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech. Some render it, "it shall judge", &c. and interpret it either of the Church, the mountain of the Lord's house; or of the word and doctrine of the Lord; or of the Lord in the church, by the ministry of the word, The phrase, "afar off", is not in **Isa 2:4**; which the Targum interprets "for ever", and the "strong nations" of strong kings; signifying that the kingdom of Christ should not only be to the ends or the earth, but should endure for ever, unto distant time, even till it shall be no more; as well as shall reach to distant lands, as to situation, and to the Gentiles afar off, as to state and condition; see **Eph 2:14**;

and they shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; which as yet has never been fulfilled; but will be the case when Christ's kingdom appears in its glory, and the kingdoms of this world become his, and all the enemies of the church are destroyed; See Gill on "Isa 2:4". These words are by the Jews {o} applied to the days of the Messiah.

{o} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 63. 1.

Micah 4:4

Ver. 4. But they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig tree,.... A proverbial phrase, expressive of the greatest tranquillity, security, and enjoyment of property; see **1Ki 4:25**; when persons need not keep within their walled towns and cities, and lack themselves up in their houses, but may sit down in their gardens, fields, and vineyards, and enjoy the fruit thereof; as the Targum interprets it,

"under the fruit of his vine, and under, the fruit of his fig tree."

It was usual for persons in the eastern countries to sit under vines and fig trees to read, meditate, pray, or converse together, where they grow very large, as were their vines; and even with us they are frequently raised and carried over supporters, so as to be sat under; and of fig trees, we frequently read in Jewish writings of their being very large, and of their going up to them, and praying on the top of them; and of sitting under them, and studying in the law there. So one of the Rabbins says {p}, he went up into his mustard tree, as one goes up to the top of a fig tree; and it is said {q}, he that prays on the top of an olive tree, or on the top of a fig tree must come down, and pray below; and again {r}, R. Jacob and his companions were fasting, studying in the law, under a certain fig tree; and sometimes they speak of all these together, of sitting under olives, and under vines, and under fig trees, and studying in the words of the law {s}; see **Joh 1:48**. This is to be understood, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi explain it, of all men; not of the Israelites only, but of all nations, since there will be no more war any where; hence it follows:

and none shall make [them] afraid; the enemies of God's people will be no more, neither Turk nor pope, eastern or western antichrist, beast or, false prophet; wherefore, in those days of the Messiah, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, even all the spiritual Israel of God, Jews and Gentiles; there shall be none to hurt in the holy mountain of the Lord, or any violence and oppression, wasting and destruction, anywhere; see Jer 23:5;

for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken [it]; who speaks nothing but truth, and who is able and faithful to perform what he has spoken; and therefore all this may be depended on.

{p} T. Hieros. Peah, c. 7. fol. 20. 2. {q} T. Hieros. Beracot, c. 2. fol. 5. 1. {r} Ib. col. 3. {s} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 16. 4.

Micah 4:5

Ver. 5. For all people will walk everyone in the name of his god,.... Till those times come before described; when many nations and people shall flock to the church, and there shall be such general peace and tranquillity as here promised; till then the nations of the earth shall retain their former religion, and the profession of it, with constancy, till they are otherwise instructed, as Aben Ezra; or till the Messiah shall turn them into the right way, as Kimchi; till that time comes, the Pagans will worship their idols, and continue in the idolatry of their ancestors; the Papists will retain their image worship, and hold to their lord god the pope, as they call him; the Mahometans will cleave to their prophet, and walk according to the rules he has left them to observe. Jarchi's note is,

"they shall go to destruction because of their idolatry;"

with which he says the Targum agrees, which is,

"all nations shall go according to the idols they have worshipped;"

or, as the king of Spain's Bible,

"they shall be guilty or condemned because they have worshipped idols:"

and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever; both in the mean while, and when those happy times shall come, and so through all generations as long as the world stands. This is the language of those that know the Lord, believe in him, and sincerely serve him; who determine in the strength of divine grace to continue in their profession of faith of him, in his worship and service, in his ways, truths, and ordinances, whatever others, do; and indeed are the more animated to it, when they observe how constant and steadfast idolaters, Pagans, Papists, and Mahometans, are in their false worship, both in the profession and practice of it. The Targum is,

"we will trust in the Word of the Lord our God for ever and ever;"

in Christ the essential Word; and so the phrase is expressive of faith, and a profession of faith in him; and of constant attendance upon his word and ordinances.

Micah 4:6

Ver. 6. In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth,.... The Jews or Israelites so described; not from the halting of Jacob their father, as Abarbinel thinks; nor because of their halting between two opinions, worshipping both the true God and idols, as in the times of Elijah; for this will not suit with the Jews in their present state; but because they were like lame and maimed sheep, to which the allusion is; or because they were guilty of sins, which are sometimes expressed by halting, Jer 20:10. The word signifies such that go sideways, and not uprightly; and fitly describes such who deviate from the ways of God, and walk not according to the divine word: now "in that day" or time before referred to, the last days of the Gospel dispensation, the Lord will convert the Jews; or "heal" these lame and maimed ones, so Jarchi interprets the word; or will gather them by his Spirit and grace to the Messiah, and assemble them into his church, and among his people, and bring them into the sheepfold, under the care of the one Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ:

and I will gather her that is driven out; out of the land of Israel, and scattered among the nations of the world; even driven out by the Lord himself, because of their transgressions against him; see Jer 16:15;

and her that I have afflicted; with various calamities, with famine and sword, with captivity and poverty; the Targum adds,

"for the sins of my people;"

the Israelites for their idolatry, and the Jews for the rejection of the Messiah, and other sins.

Micah 4:7

Ver. 7. And I will make her that halted a remnant,.... That is, make a reserve of her, and not utterly cut her off for her halting or sinning; that there may be a seed, a posterity descending from her, that shall serve the Lord, and appear to be a remnant according to the election of grace; which will be the persons called and gathered in the latter day:

and her that was cast afar off a strong nation; Kimchi thinks this refers to the ten tribes that were carried far off into Media and other parts, 2Ki 17:6; who shall now be a mighty and numerous people; and especially shall be strong in a spiritual sense in the Lord, and in the power of his might, in Christ and his grace, and in the faith of him; see Isa 60:22;

and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever; that is, Christ, who is Jehovah our righteousness, shall reign over the converted Jews and Israelites in the church of God, often signified by Mount Zion; where they shall be assembled, and shall acknowledge him as their King, and be subject to his word and ordinances, and never more depart from him; nor will his government over them ever cease more, **Lu 1:32**. This shows that this prophecy refers not to the that times of the Gospel; for then the Jews would not have him to reign over them; but to times yet to come, the last days of the Gospel dispensation.

Micah 4:8

Ver. 8. And thou, O tower of the flock,.... The words "Migdal Eder" are left by some untranslated, and think that place to be intended so called, which was near to Bethlehem, Ge 35:19; and perhaps is the same which Jerom {t} calls the tower of Ader, about a mile from Bethlehem: this is supposed to be the place where the shepherds were watching over their flocks at the time of Christ's birth, the tidings of which were first brought to them here; and the Jewish {u} doctors speak of it as near Jerusalem, and as a place of pasture; for they say, that cattle between Jerusalem and Migdal Eder, and in an equal space to every wind; the males were used for burnt offerings, and the females for peace offerings; and this place is thought to be referred to in the latter clause of this verse: others think that Bethlehem itself is meant, to which the dominion came; but rather, as in the next chapter, the ruler came out of that; others think that the gate in Jerusalem called the sheep gate is meant, **Ne 3:32**; and the tower at it, through which Christ is supposed to pass when he entered into Jerusalem as King, amidst the Hosannahs of the people; others take it to be the same with the tower of David, and put for Jerusalem itself, whither the tribes were gathered together three times a year, like sheep in a fold, so Kimchi and Ben Melech; here others interpret it spiritually of the church of Christ; but though that is sometimes spoken of as a strong city, and a fortified place, yet is never called a tower, or a strong hold; which phrases, when figuratively used, are always spoken of a divine person; see Ps 18:2; and here of the Messiah; and so the Targum interprets it,

"O Christ of Israel:"

the church indeed is the "flock": the people of God are often compared to sheep for their harmlessness and innocence, and the church to a flock of them, which is Christ's flock he feeds like a shepherd; the flock of slaughter, a little one, consisting of persons separated from the world, and under his peculiar care; and he is the tower of this flock, in allusion to a shepherd's cottage, called a tower, as a cottage in a vineyard is in **Isa 5:2**; where the shepherds watch, and into which they bring the sick and lame, and take care of them; Christ is a high tower, where his people are safe out of the reach of their enemies; and a strong one, being the mighty God and mighty Saviour, who has all power and strength to defend his church and people, and may be well called their tower: and

the strong hold of the daughter of Zion; "the daughter of Zion" is the church, particularly the church of the converted Jews; Christ is the strong hold of it, into which, as prisoners of hope, they will be directed to turn, **Zec 9:12**; a strong refuge he is to flee unto from the avenger of blood, the justice of God; from the curses of the law; from the storm of divine wrath; from the temptations of Satan, and from the persecutions of men; a strong hold is he to dwell in, and where the saints dwell safely, pleasantly, at ease and peace, and very comfortably, and in great plenty; a strong hold for shelter from every enemy:

unto thee shall it come; not the kingdom, as follows, which our version leads to, and is the sense of Aben Ezra; for there is a considerable accent on the word "come", which makes a large stop; and that it refers, as Jarchi observes, to "her that halteth", &c. "it" or "she" that halteth shall come, being assembled and gathered, or converted by the grace of God unto the Messiah; as to her, or their tower and strong hold, where all blessings of grace, and the supplies of it, and all salvation and safety, are to be had and enjoyed. The promise respects the Jews coming to Christ upon their conversion, even such who have been the halt, the maimed, the lame, and the blind:

even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem; or rather, "and the first dominion shall come, the kingdom to the daughter of Jerusalem": meaning, not the first notice of the Messiah's kingdom, given by John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, to the Jews, in the first times of the Gospel; or the preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom first to them; but rather he who has the first or principal dominion, and to whom the kingdom belongs, he shall come to the daughter of Zion, as in **Zec 9:9**; though it rather respects here his coming to them at the time of their conversion, when they shall come to him, Ro 11:26; and when the first, chief, and principal kingdom in the world, and which is preferable to all others, will come unto, and be placed among them, as in **Mic 4:7**; and when it shall be, as some interpret it, as at the beginning, in the days of David and Solomon, and much more abundantly.

{t} De locis Hebr. fol. 89. E. {u} T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 63. 1. T. Ban. Kiddushin, fol. 55. 1. Misn. Shekalim, c. 7. sect. 4.

Micah 4:9

Ver. 9. Now why dost thou cry out aloud?.... Or "cry a cry" {w}; a vehement one, or set up a most lamentable cry, as if no help or hope were to be had, but as in the most desperate condition: here the prophet represents the Jews as if they were already in captivity, and in the utmost distress, and as they certainly would be; and yet had no reason to despair of deliverance and salvation, since the Messiah would certainly come to them, and his kingdom would be set up among them, The word used has sometimes the notion of friendship and association; hence the Targum renders it,

"now why art thou joined to the people?"

and so Jarchi,

"thou hast no need to seek friends and lovers, the kings of Egypt and Assyria, for help."

And which sense of the word as approved by Gussetius {x}.

[Is there] no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? he it so that they were; as was the case when Zedekiah was taken and carried captive, and his princes, nobles, and counsellors killed; yet God, their King and Counsellor, was with them, to keep and preserve them, counsel, instruct, and comfort them, and at last to deliver and save them; and the King Messiah would be raised up, and sent unto them in due time, who is the Wonderful Counsellor Isaiah had prophesied of:

for pangs have taken thee as a worn an in travail; which is often expressive of great sufferings and sorrows; and yet, as the pangs of a woman in travail do not continue always, but have an end, so would theirs, and therefore there was no reason for despair; and as, when she brings forth her issue, her sorrow is turned into joy, this would be their case.

{w} er yeyrt hml "quid vociferabis vociferationem", Pagninus, Montanus. So Vatablus, Drusius. {x} Ebr. Comment. p. 789.

Micah 4:10

Ver. 10. Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail,.... Bear thy troubles and calamities, sufferings and sorrows, patiently, and expect deliverance from them, as a woman in such circumstances does: or, as some render it in the future, "thou shalt be in pain", &c. {y}; and so is a prediction of their distress and captivity, which is expressed in plainer terms in the following clauses:

for now shalt thou go forth out of the city; the city of Jerusalem; either by flight, in a private and secret manner, as Zedekiah and his princes, and part of his army did; or by force, being taken and led out by the enemy:

and thou shalt dwell in the field; being turned out of their houses, they were obliged to lodge in the fields, while they were collected together, and in a body marched as captives to Babylon; and while on the road lay in the open fields, and not in houses, who had been used to dwell in a city, and in their panelled houses; but now even their city itself was ploughed like a field, as before predicted:

and thou shalt go [even] to Babylon; to the city of Babylon, as their king did, and many of them also; and others of them into various parts of that kingdom: this is a clear prophecy of the Babylonish captivity, which came to pass upwards of a hundred years after this:

there shalt thou be delivered; after seventy years captivity, by the hand of Cyrus; who taking the city of Babylon, and making himself master of the whole empire, delivered the Jews from their bondage, and gave them liberty to return to their own land:

there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies; the Chaldeans: and this was typical of the deliverance and redemption of all the Lord's people from the hand of all their spiritual enemies; from Satan and the world, law, death, and hell; by the blood of the great Redeemer, and near kinsman of his people, the Lord Jesus Christ.

{y} ylwx "dolebis ac suspirabis", so some in Vatablus.

Micah 4:11

Ver. 11. Now also many nations are gathered against thee,.... Which is to be

understood, not of Sennacherib's army invading Judea, and besieging Jerusalem, in Hezekiah's time; for that was not threshed, as the phrase is afterwards used, or destroyed by the daughter of Zion, but by an angel from heaven: nor of the Babylonians or Chaldeans, since they succeeded in their attempt, and were the conquerors, and not conquered: rather this respects the times of the Maccabees, as the series of prophecy and history agreeing together shows; in which times many of the neighbouring nations of the Jews gave them a great deal of trouble, and especially Antiochus king of Syria; and many and mighty armies sent by him. The Jews, as Kimchi, Aben Ezra, and Abarbinel {z}, interpret this of the armies of Gog and Magog, in the times of their vainly expected Messiah. Some Christian interpreters, with much more probability, understand this passage of the first times of the Gospel, and the opposition made to that and the Christian church, which yet in the issue prevailed; and perhaps it may have reference to the last times, and receive its full accomplishment in the battle at Armageddon,
Re 16:14;

that say, let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion; either defiled with sin; so the Targum,

"that say, when will she sin, and our eye shall behold the fall of Zion?"

as the effect of her sin: or, as others, "let her play the hypocrite" {a}; and be condemned as such: or rather, be defiled with slaughter and bloodshed, that they might be delighted with so pleasing a sight, and their eyes might feed with pleasure on an object so agreeable to their wishes.

{z} Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 62. 1. {a} Pnxt "hypocrita fuit", Tigurine version; velut hypocrita damnatur", Tarnovius; "hypocrisi contaminabitur, Cocceius.

Micah 4:12

Ver. 12. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel,.... Which are very different from theirs: the thoughts and designs of the enemies of Zion, in the times of the Maccabees, were, to destroy utterly the people of God, and root them out of the earth, and abolish their religion and worship; but the intentions of God were to defeat them, and bring them to ruin: the views of the kings of the earth, being stirred up by unclean spirits to the battle of Almighty God, will be to extirpate the interest and kingdom of Christ; but the end of the Lord, in suffering them to be gathered together, will be utterly and totally to destroy them; and the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand, and the thoughts of his heart, to all generations. Men know their own designs, but they do not know the designs of the Lord; they intend the ruin of others, but God intends to bring about theirs; and his intentions are never frustrated, but theirs are;

for he shall gather them as sheaves into the floor; as, when the harvest is ripe, it is cut down, and bound up in sheaves, and brought home, and these are laid in order upon the floor to be threshed; so, when the nations of the earth are fully ripe for ruin, God will put, or order to be put; in the sickle, and cut them down, and bind them in bundles, and lay them on his threshingfloor of wrath and vengeance, and utterly destroy them contrary to their views and expectations.

Micah 4:13

Ver. 13. Arise, and thresh, O daughter of Zion,.... The nations gathered against her, and now laid together on the floor as sheaves to be threshed. Here the people of God are aroused, and called out of a low and weak estate, and are animated and encouraged to exert themselves, and fall upon their enemies, and destroy them; alluding to the threshing of grain on the floor, the metaphor being here carried on from **Mic 4:12**. The Targum is,

"arise, and kill, O congregation of Zion;"

for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; signifying that the Lord would give them strength sufficient to such work, and such power their enemies should not be able to resist and overcome; and that they should into their hands, and be crushed, trod, and trampled on by them, and utterly subdued. The allusion is to oxen that have horns and hoofs; and it suggests that they should be as strong as they; have horns like them, that is, power to push down their enemies and hoofs to trample upon them: or as these creatures have a horny substance on their feet, or hoofs, which are strong, and fit for the purposes of treading out corn, for which they were used in the eastern countries, drawing after them iron wheels, or planks stuck with flints; so horses and oxen that have strong feet, and hard hoofs, are said to have feet of brass {b}; thus the Lord's people should have such courage, force, and power, as not only to withstand their enemies, but to obtain a conquest over them The Targum is,

"I will make the people in them strong as iron, and their remnant firm as brass;"

which was true of, and accomplished in, Judas Maccabeus and his brethren; and will be more clearly fulfilled in the Christian kings and princes in the latter day, when engaged with the antichristian states;

and thou shalt beat in pieces many people; as the Maccabees did subdue many people and nations, as all Palestine, Moab, Idumea, Samaria, and Iturea, as Josephus {c} relates; and as the Christian princes will beat in pieces, and utterly destroy, all the antichristian kings of the earth, their states and kingdoms, and bring them into subjection to them:

and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth; that is, to Christ, who in the last day will appear to be King and Lord of the whole earth; and all the riches of the antichristian nations, Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan, will be devolved to, and employed in, his interest and service; see Re 21:24; these are the words of God the Father, with respect to his Son Jesus Christ; who will now have a dominion, glory, and kingdom given him, by the ancient of days, that so all people, nations, and languages, shall serve him, **Da 7:14**; of which there might be some type and shadow in the times of the Maccabees.

{b} calkopod' ippw "aeripedes equos", Homer. Iliad. 8. v. 41. {c} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 15. sect. 4.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Micah 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO MICAH 5

This chapter begins with a prophecy of the siege of Jerusalem, **Mic 5:1**; and then follows another concerning the place of the Messiah's birth, **Mic 5:2**; and of the case of the Jews, either before or after it, **Mic 5:3**; and of Christ's office as a shepherd, and of his grandeur in the world, **Mic 5:4**; and of his being a peacemaker, and protector of his people from their enemies, **Mic 5:5**; and of his people, the great increase of them, and their usefulness, and also of their courage, strength, and prowess, **Mic 5:7**; likewise that the Lord will remove from them their vain confidence, and all occasion of it, and whatsoever illicit arts and practices were found among them; and all idolatry, and the instruments of it, **Mic 5:10**; and the chapter is concluded with a threatening of vengeance to the Heathens, **Mic 5:15**.

Ver. 1. Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops,.... Not Jerusalem, full of people, called to draw out their forces, and fall upon the enemy besieging them, whether Chaldeans or Romans; but rather the Babylonians, whose armies were large, and their troops numerous; who are called upon by the people of God, encouraged by the foregoing prophecies, as well as by what follows, to come forth with all their forces, and muster up all their armies, and exert all the power and strength they had, thus suiting them; being assured, by the above promises, that in the issue they should prevail over all their enemies: unless the Romans should be intended, to whom this character of "daughter of troops" well agrees, of whose legions all have heard; and since the Babylonish attempt on Jerusalem, and the carrying the Jews captive into Babylon, are before predicted, with their deliverance from it, and what they should do in the times of the Maccabees; a prophecy of the Romans, or a representation of them, a gathering their troops and legions together to besiege Jerusalem, very naturally comes in here;

he hath laid siege against us; either Nebuchadnezzar, and the Chaldean army; or Vespasian with the Romans: this, according to the prophetic style, is spoken of as if actually done, because of the certainty of it;

they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek; that is, either they, the besiegers, the king of Babylon and his army, when they shall have taken Jerusalem, besieged by them, shall use Zedekiah the king of Judah, and judge of Israel, and his princes and nobles, very ill, signified by this phrase; yea, in a very cruel and barbarous manner; first slaying his sons and his princes before his eyes, then putting his eyes out, binding him in chains, and carrying him to Babylon, and there laying him in a prison, Jer 52:10; or else they, the besieged, would use the Messiah, the King, Judge, and Ruler in Israel, in such a spiteful and scandalous manner; and so the Messiah was to be used by them, who according to prophecy gave his cheek to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not his face from shame and spitting; and so Jesus, the true Messiah, was smitten, both with rods, and with the palms of men's hands, and buffeted and spit upon, Isa 50:6; and this is mentioned as a reason why Jerusalem would be encompassed with the Roman armies, and besieged by their troops and legions, and become desolate, even for their rejection and ill usage of the Messiah. Aben Ezra says, it is right in my eyes that the judge of Israel is the Messiah, or Zerubbabel; not the latter, who never was so used, but the former.

Micah 5:2

Ver. 2. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah,.... But though Jerusalem should be besieged and taken, and the land of Judea laid waste, yet, before all this should be, the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem, of which this is a prophecy, as is evident from **Mt 2:4**; the place is called by both the names it went by, to point it out the more distinctly, and with the greater certainty, Ge 35:19; the former signifies "the house of bread", and a proper place for Christ to be born in, who is the bread of life; and it has the name of the latter from its fruitfulness, being a place of pasture, and as we find it was at the time of our Lord's birth; for near it shepherds were then watching over their flocks; and it is here added, to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun, Jos 19:15; from which tribe the Messiah was not to come, but from the tribe of Judah; and in which this Bethlehem was, and therefore called, by Matthew, Bethlehem in the land of Judah; as it appears this was, from **Ru 1:1**; and from the Septuagint version of Jos 15:60, where, as Jerom observes, it was added by the Greek interpreters, or erased out of the Hebrew text by the wickedness of the Jews: the former seems most correct;

[though] thou be little among the thousands of Judah; this supplement of ours is according to Kimchi's reading and sense of the words; which, in some measure, accounts for the difference between the prophet and the Evangelist Matthew, by whom this place is said to be "not the least", **Mt 2:6**, as it might, and yet be little; besides, it might be little at one time, in

Micah's time, yet not little at another time; in Matthew's; it might be little with respect to some circumstances, as to pompous buildings, and number of inhabitants, and yet not little on account of its being the birth place of great men, as Jesse, David, and especially the Messiah: or the words may be rendered with an interrogation, "art thou little?" &c. {d}; thou art not: or thus, it is a "little [thing] to be among the thousands of Judah" {e}; a greater honour shall be put upon thee, by being the place of the Messiah's birth. Moreover, Mr, Pocock has shown out of R. Tanchum, both in his commentary on this place, and elsewhere {f}, that the word ryeu signifies both "little" and "great", or of great note and esteem. The tribes of Israel were divided into tens, hundreds, and thousands, over which there was a head or prince; hence, in Matthew, these are called "the princes of Judah", **Mt 2:6**;

[yet] out of thee shall he come forth unto me [that is] to be ruler in Israel; not Hezekiah, who very probably was now born at the time of this prophecy; nor was he born at Bethlehem, nor a ruler in Israel, only king of Judah: nor Zerubbabel, who was born in Babylon, as his name shows, was governor of Judah, but not of Israel; nor can it be said of him, or any mere man, what is said in the next clause: but the Messiah is intended, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi confess, and other Jewish writers. The Targum is,

"out of thee shall come forth before me the Messiah, that he may exercise dominion over Israel."

Jarchi's note is,

"out of thee shall come forth unto me Messiah, the son of David;"

and so he says, "the stone which the builders refused", &c. Ps 118:22; plainly suggesting that that passage also belongs to the Messiah, as it certainly does. Kimchi's paraphrase is,

"although thou art little among the thousands of Judah, of thee shall come forth unto me a Judge, to be ruler in Israel, and this is the King Messiah."

And Abarbinel {g}, mentioning those words in **Mic 4:13**; "arise, and thresh, O daughter of Zion", observes, "this speaks concerning the business of the King Messiah, who shall reign over them, and shall be the Prince of their army; and it is plain that he shall be of the house of David: and it is said, "O thou, Bethlehem Ephratah", which was a small city, in the midst of the cities of Judah; and "although thou art little in the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall come forth unto me" a man, a ruler in Israel, "whose goings forth are from the days of old"; the meaning is, the goings forth of the family of that ruler are from the days of old; that is, from the seed of David, and a rod from the stem of Jesse, who was of Bethlehem Judah."

So Abendana {h}, a more modern Jew, paraphrases the words thus,

"out of thee shall come forth unto me a Judge, that is to be ruler in Israel, and this is the King Messiah; for because he is to be of the seed of David, from Bethlehem he will be."

To which may be added R. Isaac {i}, who, having cited this passage, observes, and, he, the ruler in Israel, is the King Messiah, who shall come forth from the seed of David the king; who was of Bethlehem Judah, as in 1Sa 17:12. Wherefore Lyra, having quoted Jarchi, and given his sense of the passage, remarks, hence it is plain that some Catholics, explaining this Scripture of King Hezekiah, "judaize" more than the Hebrews. Though some of them object the application of it to Jesus, who they say ruled not over Israel, but Israel over him, and put him to death; which it is true they did; but God exalted him to be a Prince, as well as a Saviour, unto Israel, notwithstanding that, and declared him to be Lord and Christ; besides, previous to his death, and in the land of Israel, he gave abundant proof of his power and rule over universal nature, earth, air, and sea; over angels, good and bad; and over men and beasts: all creatures obeyed him; though indeed his kingdom is not of this world, but of a spiritual nature, and is over the spiritual Israel of God; and there is a time coming when he will be King over all the earth. Now out of Bethlehem was the King Messiah, the ruler in Israel, to come forth; that is, here he was to be born, as the phrase signifies; see Ge 10:14; and here our Jesus, the true Messiah, was born, as appears from **Mt 2:8**; and this is not only certain from the evangelic history, but the Jews themselves acknowledge it. One of their chronologers {k} affirms that Jesus the Nazarene was born at Bethlehem Judah, a parsa and a half from Jerusalem; that is, about six miles from it, which was the distance between them: and even the author of a blasphemous book {l}, pretending to give the life of Jesus, owns that Bethlehem Judah was the place of his nativity:

and it is clear not only that the Jews in the times of Jesus expected the Messiah to come from hence, even both the chief priests and scribes of the people, who, in answer to Herod's question about the place of the Messiah's birth, direct him to this, according to Micah's prophecy, **Mt 2:4**; and the common people, who thought to have confronted the Messiahship of Jesus with it, **Joh 7:41**; but others also, at other times. The tower of Edar being a place near to Bethlehem Ephratah, Ge 35:19; Jonathan ben Uzziel, in his Targum of Ge 35:19, says of the tower of Edar, this is the place from whence the King Messiah shall be revealed in the end of days; nay, some of them say he is born already, and was born at Bethlehem. An Arabian, they say {m}, told a Jew,

"the King Messiah is born; he replied to him, what is his name? he answered, Menachem (the Comforter) is his name; he asked him, what is his father's name? he replied, Hezekiah; he said to him, from whence is he? he answered, from the palace of the king of Bethlehem Judah."

This same story is told elsewhere {n}, with some little variation, thus, that the Arabian should say to the Jew,

"the Redeemer of the Jews is both; he said to him, what is his name? he replied, Menachem is his name; and what is his father's name? he answered, Hezekiah; and where do they dwell? (he and his father;) he replied, in Birath Arba, in Bethlehem Judah."

These things show their sense of this prophecy, and the convictions of their minds as to the births of the Messiah, and the place of it. The words "unto me" are thought by some to be redundant and superfluous; but contain in them the glory and Gospel of the text, whether considered as the words of God the Father; and then the sense is, that Christ was to come forth in this place in human nature, or become incarnate, agreeably to the purpose which God purposed in himself; to the covenant made with him, before the world was; to an order he had given him as Mediator, and to his promise concerning him; and he came forth to him, and answered to all these; as well as this was in order to do his will and work, by fulfilling the law; preaching the Gospel; doing miracles; performing the work of redemption and salvation; by becoming a sacrifice for sin, and suffering death; and likewise it was for the glorifying of all the divine perfections: or whether as the words of the prophet, in the name of the church and people of God, to and for whom he was born, or became incarnate; he came forth unto them, to be their Mediator in general; to be the Redeemer and Saviour of them in particular; to execute each of his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; and to answer and fill up all relations he stands in to them, of Father, Brother, Head, and Husband;

whose goings forth [have been] of old, from everlasting; which is said of him, not because his extraction was from David, who lived many ages before him; for admitting he was "in [him], in his loins", as to his human nature, so long ago, yet his "goings forth" were not from thence: nor because he was prophesied of and promised very early, as he was from the beginning of the world; but neither a prophecy nor promise of him can be called his "going forth"; which was only foretold and spoken of, but not in actual being; nor because it was decreed from eternity that he should come forth from Bethlehem, or be born there in time; for this is saying no more than what might be said of everyone that was to be born in Bethlehem, and was born there: nor is this to be understood of his manifestations or appearances in a human form to the patriarchs, in the several ages of time; since to these, as to other of the above things, the phrase "from everlasting" cannot be ascribed: but either of his going forth in a way of grace towards his people, in acts of love to them, delighting in those sons of men before the world was; in applying to his Father on their account, asking them of him, and betrothing them to himself; in becoming their surety, entering into a covenant with his Father for them, and being the head of election to them, receiving all blessings and promises of grace for them: or else of his eternal generation and sonship, as commonly interpreted; who the only begotten of the Father, of the same nature with him, and a distinct person from him; the eternal Word that went forth from him, and was with him from eternity, and is truly God. The phrases are expressive of the eternity of his divine nature and person; Jarchi compares them with Ps 72:17; "before the sun was, his name was Jinnon"; that is, the Son, the Son of God; so as the former part of the text sets forth his human birth, this his divine generation; which, cause of the excellency and ineffableness of it, is expressed in the plural number, "goings forth". So Eliezer {o}, along with the above mentioned passage in the Psalms, produces this to prove the name of the Messiah before the world was, whose "goings forth [were] from everlasting", when as yet the world was not created.

{d} hdwhy yplab twyhl ryeu "parvulane es?" Drusius; "parvane sis?" Grotius; "parva es?" Cocceius. {e} "Parum est ut sis inter chiliarchas Judae", Osiander, Grotius; "vile, ignominiosum est, esse inter millia Judae", De Dieu. {f} Not. Misn. in Port. Mosis, p. 17, 18. {g} Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 62. col. 2. {h} Not. in Miclol Yophi in loc. {i} Chizzuk Emuuah, par. 1. p. 279. {k} R. David Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 14. 2. {l} Toldos Jesu, p. 7. Ed. Wagenseil. {m} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 1. {n} Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 1. {o} Pirke Eliezer, c. 3. fol. 2. 2.

Micah 5:3

Ver. 3. Therefore will he give them up,.... Or "notwithstanding", as this particle signifies; see **Ho 2:14**; though all this shall be, yet, previous to the birth of this person, the Lord would give up the Jews to trouble and distress, and into the hands of their enemies; and the time from this prophet to the birth of Christ was a time for the most part of great trouble to, the Jews; not only was their country invaded and their city besieged by Sennacherib in Hezekiah's time, but, some years after that, they were wholly carried captive into Babylon: and when they returned it was troublesome times with them; they met with many enemies that disturbed them while they were rebuilding the city and temple; and after that they endured much tribulation, in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, or of the Maccabees; nor were they long in any quiet, nor in any settled state, unto the coming of the Messiah. Or else this is to be understood of what should be after his coming; for though Jesus was born at Bethlehem, according to this plain prophecy, and had all the characters of the Messiah in him, yet the Jews rejected him, and would not have him to reign over them: wherefore he, the Messiah, as Japhet interprets it, gave them up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart, and into the hands of their enemies the Romans; by whom they were destroyed or carried captive, and dispersed among the nations; in which condition they still remain, and will, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; so long will Jerusalem be trodden under foot, or the Jews be given up to their will, according to Lu 21:24; or, as here expressed,

until the time [that] she which travaileth hath brought forth: that is, according to the first sense until the Virgin Mary travailed in birth with the Messiah, and brought forth him her firstborn, **Mt 1:25**; or according to the latter, until Zion, or, the church of God, travailed in prayer, in the ministry of the word, and brought forth many children to Christ, both among Jews and Gentiles; and the sense is, that the Jews shall be given up to distress and trouble, till the time of their conversion, see Isa 66:7; The Jews have a tradition in their Talmud, that

"the son of David would not come until the kingdom spreads itself over the whole world for nine months; as it is said, "therefore will he give them up until the time that she that travaileth hath brought" forth; which is the time of a woman's going with child."

This both Jarchi and Kimchi take notice of. In one place {p} it is called the kingdom of Aram or Syria; and in another {q} a blank is left for Edom, that is, Rome; for by the kingdom is meant the Roman empire, and which did extend all over the world before the coming of the Messiah Jesus, as appears from **Lu 2:1**; as well as from all profane history;

then the remnant of his brethren shall return to the children of Israel; that is, the brethren of the Messiah, as Kimchi and Abendana interpret it; who should return with the children of Israel, as both they and Jarchi explain it; to which the Targum agrees. Kimchi's note is,

""the remnant of his brethren"; they are the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which remained when the ten tribes were carried captive; and the surnames, his brethren, relate to the Messiah."

So Abendana {r},

"and "the remnant his brethren"; they are the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, they shall return with the children of Israel, who are the ten tribes; as if he should say, these and these shall return to their land, and King Messiah shall reign over them; and the surnames, his brethren, respect the Messiah."

And to the same purpose R. Isaac {s},

"the remnant of the brethren of the Messiah, who are the children of Judah and Benjamin, that are left and remain of the calamities and persecutions of the captivities, shall return to their own land, together with the children of Israel, who are the ten tribes."

Meaning either the remnant, according to the election of grace, among the Gentiles; who with those among the Jews should be converted to Christ in the first times of the Gospel, those immediately following the birth of

Christ; the Gospel being preached both to the Jews and Gentiles, and some of both were called and converted, and whom Christ owned as his brethren, and were not ashamed of; see Mt 12:49 **Heb 2:11**; or the Lord's chosen people, and brethren of Christ, those of, he two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and those of the ten tribes of Israel; who shall join and coalesce together in seeking the Messiah, embracing and professing him, and appointing him the one Head over them, when they will turn to the Lord, and all Israel shall be saved; see Jer 50:4.

{p} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 10. 1. {q} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. {r} Not. in Miclol Yophi in loc. {s} Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 281.

Micah 5:4

Ver. 4. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord,.... The ruler in Israel, before described and prophesied of; the Messiah, as Kimchi himself interprets it, and other Jewish writers. Kimchi's note is,

"after the affliction, the King Messiah shall stand and feed Israel in the strength of the Lord;"

and so R. Isaac {t} paraphrases the words exactly in the same way: wherefore, as another learned Jew {u} observes, these expressions evince that the ruler here spoken of can be no other than the Messiah; not Zerubbabel, who never attained to this height and happiness. He is both King and Shepherd, and to each of these the act of feeding is ascribed. The same word, in the Greek language, signifies both to rule and to feed and is used by Matthew, **Mt 2:6**; and kings are often compared to shepherds. Christ feeds his people, his brethren, his flock, his sheep, and lambs all truly converted ones; and this takes in the whole office of a shepherd, and the care he has of his flock; he takes an exact account of them, goes before them, and leads them out into good pastures; sets under shepherds over them; protects them from, all their enemies; looks after what is lost or driven away; heals the sick, strengthens the weak, binds up the broken, and watches over his flock continually: he feeds them with, himself, the bread of life, with his flesh and blood, which are meat and drink indeed; with the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel; and which are found to be spiritual, savoury, strengthening, satisfying, and soul nourishing food: and he "stands" and does this, being raised from the dead, and possessed of all power in heaven and in earth; which designs not the position of his body, but the ministration of his office, and his alacrity and readiness to perform it, and his constancy in it: and all this "in the strength of the Lord"; in his own strength, as a divine Person, which is the same with the strength of Jehovah; and in the power and strength that is dispensed to him as Mediator; and with his Gospel, the rod of his strength, and in such manner as to defend his flock from all that would devour them:

in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; Jehovah the Father is the God of Christ, as is Mediator; and his name is in him, even the majesty of it; for, as a divine Person, he has the same nature and perfections with him; and as man, exalted at his right hand, has a name above every name in this world, or that to come; and it is by authority from him, in his office capacity, that he rules and feeds his people, having all judgment committed to him:

and they shall abide; that is, his people, his flock, his sheep fed and ruled by him; these shall continue and persevere under his care and keeping; in him, in whom they are chosen and preserved; in his love, from which they can never be separated; in his hands, out of which none can pluck them; in his church, where they shall ever remain; and so may be considered as a promise of the perseverance of the saints in faith and holiness to the end: or, "they shall sit" {w}; quietly and securely, being freed from persecution, with which the Christians were at, ended in the first three centuries: this began to be accomplished in the times of Constantius Chlorus, who helped the Christians in the times of Dioclesian, and with whom the persecutions ended, and peace and prosperity followed:

for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth; as, he was in the times of Constantine, and will be again. Christ is great in himself, in, his person and offices; and will appear to be so unto all men, even unto the ends of the earth, when his Gospel shall be preached and spread, everywhere; when his kingdom shall be enlarged, and be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; even then shall he appear to be a great King over all the earth, and, the great Shepherd of the sheep, the man, Jehovah's fellow; and to have such a flock, and so large, as never any had; when there will be one fold, and one shepherd; for this prophecy respects the latter day glory. Kimchi's gloss is, "the name of the Messiah shall be magnified, after the judgment of the wicked."

{t} Ibid. (Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 281.) {u} Tanchuma apud Pocock in loc. {w} wbvy "sedebunt", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Drusius; "considebunt", Cocceius; so R. Isaac, "they shall sit safely in his time", as is said above, ch. iv. 4. "they shall sit every man", &c. Chizzuk Emunah, ut supra. (par. 1. p. 281.)

Micah 5:5

Ver. 5. And this [man] shall be the peace,.... The word man is not in the text, only this; and refers to the person before spoken of, who was to be born in Bethlehem, to be the ruler in Israel, that should stand and feed his people, and should be great to the ends of the earth; and is no other than the Messiah, as Kimchi, and other Jewish writers, own, Kimchi's note is,

"this peace respects the Messiah; for he shall be the cause or author of peace; as it is said, "he shall speak peace unto the Heathen", **Zec 9:10**;"

and R. Isaac {x} expresses his sense of the words in much the same language; and it is an observation the Jews sometimes make, and which they give as a sign of the Messiah's coming,

"when you see a Persian horse bound in the land of Israel, look for the feet of the Messiah;"

which is the sense of **Mic 5:5**; "this shall be the peace, when the Assyrian comes into our land" {y}, &c. so Jesus the true Messiah is called "our peace", **Eph 2:14**; and is the cause and author of peace, not only between Jew and Gentile, but between God and men; which he has made by the blood of his cross, and speaks and gives peace to men; and he is the author of peace in his churches, whose kingdom is a kingdom of peace, of which there will be an abundance in the latter day; for all which he would not be sufficient was he a mere man; though it was proper he should be a man, that he might have blood to shed, a body to offer up, and in it die to procure peace; and yet be more than a man, God also, to put virtue and efficacy into what he did and suffered to obtain it, as well as to secure and continue the peace of his people, and preserve them from all their enemies:

when the Assyrian shall come into our land; not Sennacherib king of Assyria; though by the invasion of Judea, and siege of Jerusalem, he might have lately been concerned in, and by reason of the terror which that had raised in the people; the Assyrian may be here put for any powerful enemy of the people of God in later times; or Satan, and his principalities and powers, even all the powers of darkness Christ our peacemaker engaged with, at the time he made peace by his sufferings and death; and perhaps may chiefly design the Turk, the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel, as Mr. Mede {z} thinks, that will enter into the land of Judea, in order to take it out of the hands of the Jews, who will be possessed of it upon their conversion to Christ; but he by his instruments will secure to them the possession of it, and their peace and prosperity in it:

and when he shall tread in our palaces; the palaces of our princes, and nobles, and great men, at least attempt to do it:

then shall we raise against him; the Assyrian, or whatsoever enemy is meant by him: or, "with him", that is, the Messiah, as Kimchi and others {a} interpret it. The Targum is,

"then will we appoint over us;"

which sense the above writer wonders at, as being contrary to the Hebrew text:

seven shepherds, and eight principal men; that is, many, as the phrase is used in Ec 11:2; to which passage Aben Ezra and Kimchi refer us; these are, as the last mentioned writer and others say {b}, the princes of the Messiah; and, according to the ancient {c} Jewish Rabbins, the seven shepherds are particularly these, David in the midst, Adam, Seth, Methuselah, on his right hand (Kimchi has it, Seth, Enoch, and Methuselah), and Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, on his left hand; and the eight principal men are, Jesse, Saul, Samuel, Amos, Zephaniah, Zedekiah (in Kimchi and Rabbot it is Hezekiah), Elijah, and the Messiah; but, as Aben Ezra, not fifteen persons are designed, at most but eight, according to this form of speech in Pr 30:15; &c. Calmet {d} takes those seven or eight shepherds to he the seven princes confederate with Darius the son of Hystaspes, who killed Smerdis the Magian, who had possessed himself of the empire of the Persians, after the death of Cambyses; but Smerdis was not an Assyrian, nor is the kingdom of Persia here meant, but the land of Judea; and the prophecy respects the times of the Messiah, who should appear there, and where would be raised up men to support his interest: and if conjecture may be allowed, as this may be understood of the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel, the princes of the Messiah, who were raised up, at the prayer and request of the church, to oppose Satan and his emissaries, in the first times of the Gospel; by these may be meant the writers of the New Testament, the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the Apostles Peter, James, and Jude, which make the seven shepherds; and if you add to these the Apostle Paul, they will make eight principal men; or rather I should think the seven angels are pointed at, that shall pour out the last plagues on the antichristian states; to which, if another angel is added, that will proclaim the fall of Babylon, the same number will be made up; see Re 16:1; and who will assist the Jews against the Turks, when they shall attempt to dispossess them of their land, they shall again inherit.

{x} Ut supra. (Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 281.) {y} Echa Rabbati, fol. 48. 3. {z} Works, l. 4. Ep. 41. p. 796. {a} Vid. Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 282. {b} Ibid. {c} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 52. 2. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 26. 3. {d} Dictionary, in the word "Shepherds".

Micah 5:6

Ver. 6. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword,.... Or "feed {e} upon it" with the sword, destroy the inhabitants of it; either spiritually subdue the nations of the world to the obedience of Christ, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; the preaching of the Gospel, the ministry of the apostles, and others, in the Gentile world; see 2Co 10:3; or literally, meaning that the angels of the vials, the Christian princes, shall destroy the Ottoman empire with the sword:

and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof; the same with Babylon, the empire of which was first set up by Nimrod, the beginning of whose kingdom was Babel, Ge 10:11; the same with Nebrodas, a name of Bacchus, which is no other than Barchus the son of Chus, as Nimrod was the son of Cush, and Bacchus was a mighty hunter, as he was; all which Bochart {f} has observed: now his country was Babel, Erech, Accad, and

Calneh, in the land of Shinar, that is, the land of Babylon, as the Targum of Onkelos and Jerusalem in Ge 10:10, render it; though some think Nimrod extended his dominions into Assyria; and translate {g} **Mic 5:11** "out of that land, he" (that is, Nimrod) "went forth into Assyria, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah"; and the Targum of Jonathan is very express for it, which paraphrases the words thus,

"out of that land went forth Nimrod, and he reigned in Assyria, because he would not be in the counsel of the generation of the division, and he left these four cities; and the Lord gave him a place (or Assyria), and he built four other cities, Nineveh, &c."

hence some {h} have thought that the land of Assyria and the land of Nimrod here design one and the same country; but Ashur, in the text in Genesis, seems rather to be the name of a man than of a place, even of the son of Shem so called, from whom the country of Assyria had its name; whereas, if had been so soon in the hands of Nimrod, and so many cities had been built by him in it, it would rather have been called by his name than Ashur's; and it seems most reasonable to conclude that the cities of Nineveh, &c. were built by the latter, and not the former; and the two countries of Assyria and Nimrod, or Babylon, are very plainly in this text distinguished from one another; though they might at the time of this prophecy be united under Esarhaddon, who was both king of Assyria and Babylon; and at this present time they are both in the hands of the Turks, and in all probability will be until this prophecy is fulfilled in the destruction of them by the Christian princes: the same thing is meant as before; and the word rendered "in the entrances thereof" may as well be translated "with its sword" {i}; or, as the margin of our Bibles, "with her own naked swords"; so Kimchi and Aben Ezra interpret it:

thus shall he deliver [us] from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders; that is, the King Messiah shall work this deliverance, as Kimchi and others {k} explain it; Christ delivered his people from all their spiritual enemies when he made peace for them; and he will deliver them in the latter day from both Pope and Turk, when he will destroy the man of sin by the breath of his mouth, and dry up the river Euphrates, and cast both beast and false prophet into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; though all that is said in this verse and **Mic 5:5** may have had its accomplishment already, at least in part, in the Saracens and their empire, which begun in the year 623, and who prevailed very much in Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Persia, Egypt, and Africa, and even penetrated into Spain and France, in all which places were Christian churches; and so may be called "our land", as the churches therein "our palaces", which these people entered into, trod upon, profaned, or destroyed; and the seven or eight principal men raised against them may be the Christian princes that fought with them, and drove them back, and destroyed their land; such as Hugh the great, brother to Philip king of France; Robert earl of Flanders; Robert earl of Normandy, brother to William the Conqueror, king of England; Stephen earl of Blois; Raymund earl of Tholouse; Godfrey duke of Lorrain, and his brothers Baldwin and Eustachius, and others. These beginning at Nice, where once a famous Christian council was held, and driving the army of Solyman from thence, in the space off our years subdued many provinces of Asia, Lycaonia, Cilicia, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Comagena; and at length having put to flight the Turks, and ejected the Saracens, took Jerusalem, and made Godfrey of Bullein king of it {l}. Some {m} have interpreted it of the emperor of Germany, and the seven electors in the empire (for formerly they were no more), happily and with success carrying on a war against the Turks, Tartars, and Saracens, when they broke into Europe; but the former sense seems better; and it is best of all to understand the prophecy of the destruction of the Turk or Ottoman empire in the latter day by the Christian princes.

{e} werw "et depascent", Montanus, Drusius; "pascent", Piscator, Grotius, Cocceius. {f} Phaleg. l. 1. c. 2. col. 12. {g} Vatablus, Junius and Tremellius, Bochart, Cocceius, and others. {h} Bochart, Phaleg. l. 4. c. 12. c. 229. Bedford's Chronology, p. 773. {i} hyxtpb "gladiis suis", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Tigurine version; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 31. 2. {k} R. Isaac, ib. p. 283. Abarbinel, &c. {l} Vid. Witsii Exercitat. 8. de Assyriis in Miscel. Sacr. tom. 2. p. 218, 219, 220. {m} Vid. Gurtler. Voc. Typic. Prophetic. Explicat. p. 18.

Micah 5:7

Ver. 7. And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people,.... The Jews, who will be converted in the latter day, the remnant of them according to the election of grace, as well as all true Israelites, whether Jews or Gentiles, the Lord's chosen and peculiar people; who, though but a small number in comparison of others, and mean and contemptible in the eyes of men, are such as God has made a reserve of for himself; and these, though not of the world, yet are in the world, and will be in the several parts of it, but a distinct people from it, and of no account in it; nevertheless will be visible in it, and wonderfully preserved in the midst of it: and will be

as a dew from the Lord; both with respect to themselves, being like to dew for the generation of it, which is from above, from heaven, and of God, as their regeneration is; and which secretly and silently falls as the grace of God in regeneration does; and for the number of the drops of it, which are not to be reckoned; and so numerous are the people of God, at least they will be in the latter day, when Christ shall again have the dew of his youth; or such a number of converts, as will be like the drops of the morning dew; as also for the favour, grace, and blessings of God upon them, which are as the dew; and which he himself is as that unto them, so that they themselves are as dew from him, being indulged with his favour; which, as the dew is entirely free, very softening, cooling, and refreshing, as well as fructifying; and having the dews of his grace, or the blessings of it, falling upon them in plenty; see Ho 14:5; and with respect to others, among whom they are, and to whom they are as the dew, by their speech, their doctrine, the word ministered by then}, which distils like the dew, De 32:26; and by their good works, which are profitable unto men; and by their soft and gentle behaviour towards them; and by reason of the many outward blessings they enjoy through them, as Laban did for the sake of Jacob, and Potiphar on the account of Josiah:

as the showers upon the grass; which revive, refresh it, and cause it to grow and flourish; or they are like grass, on which the showers fall, and grow up as such in great numbers, and with great verdure and fruitfulness, Ps 72:16;

that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men; which seems to be connected with the dew, though it agrees with both dew and rain, which stay not for men's desires or deserts, but descend according to the will of God: and as this regards the people of God, either with respect to themselves; it shows that as they are, as the dew, or as showers and clouds full of rain, either of grace or doctrine compared thereunto; they are not of themselves so, or of men, but of God; and that their dependence is not upon the creature, but upon the Lord for support and supply:, and with respect to others, to whom they are beneficial by their doctrine and works; that it is all from the Lord, and owing to his goodness, which makes them a blessing round about unasked and undeserved; see Eze 34:26. It may have respect to plenty of Gospel ministers, whose doctrine is as the dew; and which, being attended with the power and Spirit of God, waits not for anything in man, but operates at once secretly and powerfully.

Micah 5:8

Ver. 8. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people,.... The same persons are meant here as before; who are compared to dew and showers of rain, because numerous; and full of blessings in themselves, and useful and beneficial to others: and here are said to be

as a lion among the beasts of the forest; strong, mighty, powerful, and courageous, and superior to their enemies, as the lion is strongest among beasts, and keeps all others in awe of him. Some refer this to the times of the Maccabees; when Judas and his brethren behaved with great fortitude and courage, and were victorious, and prevailed over the armies of Antiochus, and others; but it seems rather to belong to the latter day, when the Jews shall be superior to their enemies the Turks, who would disturb them in the possession of their land: and shall be a terror to them,

as a young lion among the flocks of sheep; signifying that their enemies shall be no more to them, and no more able to oppose them, than a flock of sheep are to a young lion, or they to resist him The design of the metaphor is; not to signify the harmlessness and innocence of their enemies, but their weakness, and the strength and courage of them;

who, if he go through; the flock: on whatsoever he seizes,

both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver; brings it to the ground at once, tramples upon it, and tears it in pieces as its prey; and none in the flock, or to whom it belongs, can deliver out of his hand. This will be the case when the Jews shall turn to the Lord, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah shall be at the head of them; though some interpret this of the first times of the Gospel, and take it to be fulfilled in the apostles and first ministers of the word, who were Jews; and who were valiant defenders of truth, and conquerors over the devil and the world, and were the instruments of bringing many into subjection to Christ; but it seems best to apply it to the last times, and not to the converted Jews only, though in the first place;

but to all the, spiritual Israel of God, the whole Christian church, which will then be in such happy circumstances.

Micah 5:9

Ver. 9. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries,.... O remnant of Jacob or Israel, as the Targum; the church of God; now will be the time that it shall prevail over all the antichristian states; now will the Christian princes pour out the vials of God's wrath upon them; and they shall feel the strength and weight of their hand; which will fall heavy upon them, even to their utter destruction: or thine hand, O Messiah, the ruler in Israel, the man the peace that shall deliver from the Assyrian; and who will be at the head of his church and people, the remnant of Jacob, and destroy their enemies with the sword that proceeds out of his mouth:

and all thine enemies shall be cut off; all the enemies of Christ and his church; all the kings of the earth that shall gather against them, the beast and false prophet, with all their followers; see Re 19:19.

Micah 5:10

Ver. 10. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord,.... When the above things shall be accomplished, even in the Gospel day, made so by the rising of the sun of righteousness; the Gospel dispensation, the latter part of it:

that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots; which some take to be an apostrophe to literal Babylon, and to be fulfilled when Cyrus took possession of it; but rather it respects mystical Babylon, and the destruction of that by Christ; but it is best of all to interpret it of the church of Christ, all whose carnal confidences and dependences shall be cut off, and shall trust alone in Christ for salvation; particularly the Jews now converted, who have been used to put their trust in the flesh, and in such things as are here mentioned; but now shall be made to see the folly and vanity of such things, and shall renounce and disclaim them; see Ho 14:3; or the sense is, there shall be no more war;

horses and chariots shall be no more used in a hostile way; but there shall be perfect peace, all enemies being destroyed, which agrees with **Mic 2:3 Zec 9:10**. The Targum is,

"I will cut off the horses of the people from the midst of thee, and destroy their chariots?"

Micah 5:11

Ver. 11. And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds. The meaning is, they should not dwell in fortified cities and walled towns; they should have none of these to trust to, nor should they stand in any need of them to defend them, their enemies being subdued; and besides, the Lord would be their strong hold and place of defence, a wall of fire round about them, but the glory in the midst of them, The phrases are expressive of the greatest tranquillity and safety, and of living in an open air, free and undisturbed; see **Zec 2:4**. The Targum is,

"I will cut off the cities of the people out of thy land, and destroy all their strong fortresses;"

these shall dwell no more there, and be no more offensive and troublesome.

Micah 5:12

Ver. 12. And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand,.... Such as were formerly practised among the Jews, though forbidden them, and in mystical Babylon, or the antichristian church, whose sorceries are mentioned, **Re 9:21**; but nothing of this kind will be found in the Christian church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, in the latter day; all unlawful arts, cheating and juggling in religious matters, will cease, and be no more:

and thou shalt have no [more] soothsayers; or diviners, that cast a mist over people's eyes, and deceived them with false appearances of things; that pretended to know times and seasons, when it was or was not a good day to go abroad, or to make merchandise; that judged by the clouds, and by the position of the heavens, what would come to pass hereafter; and though such sort of men were formerly indulged, connived at, and caressed among the Jews, they should be so no more; nor should they apply to such persons for advice and counsel; nor would they need it, nor should they use it; see De 18:10.

Micah 5:13

Ver. 13. Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee,.... The former were such as were made of wood or stone; the latter statues, such as were molten or cast, and made of gold, silver, or brass; Such as the Jews sometimes worshipped, and are now found in the apostate church of Rome; but will have no place in the Christian churches, or those so called, in the latter day. The Jews indeed have had no idols or idolatrous worship among them since the Babylonish captivity; and the prophet here speaks, not of what would be found among them, and removed at their conversion; but of what was in his time, or had been, or would be again, but should not be in future time, when they should turn to the Lord, and be like dew among the people; and so we are to understand some following passages. The Targum is,

"I will cut off the images of the people, and their statues:"

and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands; as not to fall down to idols and worship them, so neither to trust in carnal privileges, ceremonial rites, observances of the traditions of the elders, or any works of righteousness done by them, which they had been prone unto.

Micah 5:14

Ver. 14. And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee,.... Planted for idolatrous worship, and which the Jews in the reigns of some of their kings raised, and made use of for such purposes; see 1Ki 15:13; though contrary to the law of God, De 16:21; but now there should be nothing of this kind, all idolatry being rooted out of the world. The Targum is,

"I will root out the plantations of the people out of the midst of thee:"

so will I destroy thy cities; which some understand of cities given to idolatry; or rather it is to be understood in the same sense as in **Mic 5:11**; though by reason of that, and as something distinct from it, it is better to render the words with the Targum,

"I will destroy thine enemies {n}."

{n} So Jarchi, and Marinas in Aben Ezra, and R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 102. 1.

Micah 5:15

Ver. 15. And I will execute vengeance in anger, and fury upon the Heathen,.... Or "nations" {o}; not the Pagan nations only, but the Papal and Mahometan ones, even all that are enemies to Christ, and his church and people:

such as they have not heard; such terrible judgments, and dreadful expressions of divine wrath and fury, by earthquakes, hailstones, &c. as were never known or heard of in the world before; see Re 16:18; or, "which have not heard" {p}; the people that have not heard and hearkened to the word of God, to the voice of Christ in the Gospel, but have turned a deaf ear to it, and despised it. So the Targum,

"who have not received the doctrine of the law;"

but it is much more agreeable to understand it of the doctrine of the Gospel disobeyed by men, and therefore justly punished; see **2Th 1:8**.

{o} Mywgh ta "gentes", Junius & Tremellius. {p} wemv al rva "quae non audierunt", Pagninus, Montanus; "quae non auscultaverint", Junius & Tremellius; "quae non obediverunt", Burkius.

Micah 6:1

This chapter contains reproofs of the people of Israel for their sins, threatening them with punishment for them. The prophet is bid to tell them of the controversy the Lord had with them, which he did, **Mic 6:1**; and the Lord calls upon them to declare if they had any thing to object to his attitude towards them, **Mic 6:3**; and then puts them in mind of the favours they had received from him, in bringing them out of Egypt, and giving them such useful persons to go before them, lead and instruct them, as he had, **Mic 6:4**; and also reminds them of what passed between Balak, king of Moab, and Balaam the soothsayer; the questions of the one, and the answer of the other; whereby the designs of the former against them were frustrated, **Mic 6:5**; but since the voice of the Lord by his prophet was disregarded by them, they are called upon to hearken to the voice of his rod, **Mic 6:9**; which should be laid upon them for their fraudulent dealings, injustice, oppression, lies, and deceit, **Mic 6:10**; and therefore are threatened with sickness and desolation, and a deprivation of all good things, the fruit of their labours, **Mic 6:13**; and that because the statutes of Omri, the works of Ahab, and their counsels, were observed by them, **Mic 6:16**.

Ver. 1. Hear ye now what the Lord saith,.... Here begins a new discourse, and with an address of the prophet to the people of Israel, to hear what the Lord had to say to them by way of reproof for their sins now, as they had heard before many great and precious promises concerning the Messiah, and the happiness of the church in future time; to hear what the Lord now said to them by the prophet, and what he said to the prophet himself, as follows:

arise; O Prophet Micah, and do thine office; sit not still, nor indulge to sloth and ease; show readiness, diligence, activity, zeal, and courage in my service, and in carrying a message from me to my people:

contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice; open the cause depending between me and my people; state the case between us before the mountains and hills; and exert thyself, and lift up thy voice loudly, and with so much vehemence, that, if it was possible, the very mountains and hills might hear thee; the Lord hereby suggests that they would as soon hear as his people; thus upbraiding their stupidity, as he elsewhere does; see **Isa 1:2**. Kimchi and Ben Melech render it, to the mountains, which is much to the same sense with our version; call and summon them as witnesses in this cause; let the pleadings be made before them, and let them be judges in this matter; as they might be both for God, and against his people: the mountains and hills clothed with grass, and covered with flocks and herds; or set with all manner of fruit trees, vines, olives, and figs; or adorned with goodly cedars, oaks, and elms; were witnesses of the goodness of God unto them, and the same could testify against them; and, had they mouths to speak, could declare the abominations committed on them; how upon every high mountain and hill, and under every green tree, they had been guilty of idolatry. The Targum, and many versions {q}, render it, "with the mountains"; and the Vulgate Latin version, and others, "against the mountains" {r}; the inhabitants of Judea, that being a mountainous country, especially some parts of it. Some by "mountains" understand the great men of the land, king, princes, nobles; and, by "hills", lesser magistrates, with whom the Lord's controversy chiefly was; they not discharging their offices aright, nor setting good examples to the people. Some copies of the Targum, as the king of Spain's Bible, paraphrase it,

"judge or contend with the fathers, and let the mothers hear thy voice;"

which Kimchi thus explains, as if it was said, let the fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the mothers Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah, hear what their children hath rendered to the Lord; let them be, as it were, called out of their graves to hear the ill requital made to the Lord for all his goodness.

{q} Myrhh ta "cum istis montiibus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius; "cum montibus", Montanus, Munster, Cocceius, Burkius. {r} "Adversum montes", V. L. Grotius.

Micah 6:2

Ver. 2. Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth,.... These are the words of the prophet, obeying the divine command, calling upon the mountains, which are the strong parts of the earth, and the bottoms of them the foundations of it, to hear the Lord's controversy with his people, and judge between them; or, as some think, these are the persons with whom, and against whom, the controversy was;

the chief and principal men of the land, who were as pillars to the common people to support and uphold them:

for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel; his people Israel, who were so by choice, by covenant, by their own avouchment and profession: they had been guilty of many sins and transgressions against both tables of the law; and now the Lord had a controversy with them for them, and was determined to enter into judgment, and litigate the point with them; and dreadful it is when God brings in a charge, and pleads his own cause with sinful men; they are not able to contend with him, nor answer him for one of a thousand faults committed against him; see **Ho 4:1**.

Micah 6:3

Ver. 3. O my people,.... These are the words of the Lord himself by the prophet, expressing his strong affection to the people of Israel, of which his goodness to them was a full proof, and this was an aggravation of their ingratitude to him; they were his people, whom he had chosen for himself above all people of the earth; whom he had redeemed from the house of bondage, had distinguished them by his layouts, and loaded them with his benefits, and yet they sinned against him:

what have I done unto thee? what evil things, what injuries to provoke to such usage? "what iniquity have you", or "your fathers, found in me", to treat me after this manner? have I been "a wilderness", or "a land of darkness", to you? **Jer 2:5**; have I withheld or denied you anything that was for your good? The Targum is,

"O my people, what good have I said I would do unto thee, and I have not done it?"

all that the Lord had promised he had performed; not one good thing had failed he had spoken of; how much good, and how many good things, had he done for them? nay, what good things were there he had not done for them? and what more could be done for them than what had been done? and yet they sinned against him so grossly; see **Isa 5:4**;

and wherein have I wearied thee? what heavy yoke have I put upon thee?

what grievous commandments have I enjoined thee? is there anything in my service, any duty, too hard, severe, or unreasonable? are the sacrifices required burdensome? "have I caused thee to serve with an offering, and wearied thee with incense?" is there any just reason to say of these things, "what a weariness is it?" See Isa 43:23;

testify against me; declare it publicly, if any good thing has been wanting, or any evil thing done: thus the Lord condescends to have the case fairly debated, and everything said that could be said in their favour, or against him: astonishing condescension and goodness!

Micah 6:4

Ver. 4. For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt,.... Instead of doing them any wrong, he had done them much good; of which this is one instance, and he was able to produce more: this a notorious, plain, and full proof of his goodness to them, which could not be denied. It may be rendered, as it is by some, "surely I brought thee up" {s}, &c. this is a certain thing, well known, and cannot be disproved; it must be allowed to be a great favour and kindness to be brought up out of a superstitious, idolatrous, Heathenish people, enemies to God and true religion, and who had used them in a barbarous and cruel manner:

and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; or, "out of the house of bondage"; as the same words are rendered, Ex 20:2; that is, out of hard service, in which their lives were made bitter; out of cruel bondage and slavery; which made them cry to the Lord for help and deliverance, and he heard them, and sent them a deliverer; by whose hand he redeemed them from this base and low estate in which they were, and for which they ought ever to have been thankful, and to have shown their gratitude by their cheerful and constant obedience. Some take "the house of servants" to be descriptive, not of the state of the children of Israel in Egypt, but of the character of the Egyptians themselves; who, being the posterity of Ham, were inheritors of his curse, that he should be a servant of servants; and so it is an aggravation of the blessing, that Israel were redeemed from being servants to the servants of servants. This sense is mentioned by Kimchi and Abarbinel:

and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam; not to bring them the news of their deliverance out of Egypt, before they came out of it, as Kimchi; but to be their guides to conduct and direct them in all matters, civil and religious. Moses was their lawgiver, leader, and commander; Aaron was their priest to offer sacrifice for them, and to intercede on their behalf; and Miriam was a prophetess; and they were all very useful and beneficial to them; and a very great blessing it is to a people to have a good constitution, civil and ecclesiastic, and to have good magistrates, and good ministers of the word. The Targum is,

"I sent before thee three prophets, Moses to teach the tradition of the judgments, Aaron to make atonement for the people, and Miriam to instruct the women."

{s} yk "certe", Calvin, Piscator, Tarnovius; so some in Vatablus.

Micah 6:5

Ver. 5. O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted,.... What a scheme he had laid; what contrivances he had formed; what consultations he had with a soothsayer or diviner he sent for to curse Israel; how he sought to get the God of Israel on his side, and to set him against them, that he might be rid of them, and they be ruined and destroyed. The Moabites were the descendants of Moab, a son of Lot, by one of his daughters; when they first set up their kingdom is not certain; nor who their kings in succession were before Balak: it appears there was a former king, whom the king of the Amorites fought with, and took away his land from him, Nu 21:26; who probably was Zippor, the father of Balak, and whom he succeeded; the kingdom being recovered by him, or by this his son; however, he was on the throne when Israel was upon the borders of his kingdom, which threw him into a panic; upon which he sent messengers to a neighbouring magician next mentioned, to advise with him what to do in this his extremity; and the Jews have a tradition, that, because of the multitude of sacrifices he offered, he was worthy to have Ruth, the descendant from him; who, they say, was the daughter of Eglon, the grandson of Balak, king of Moab {s}:

and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him; this man is called a soothsayer, Jos 13:22; The Jews say he was first a prophet; and so the Apostle Peter calls him, **2Pe 2:16**; and afterwards became a diviner {t}:

they differ very much about him, who he was, and from whom he descended. Beor his father is sometimes said to be the son of Laban {u}; and, at other times, Balaam himself is said to be Laban the Syrian {w}, whose soul they suppose transmigrated into Balaam, as it afterwards did into Nabal, according to them. Some {x} take him to be the same with Elihu, who interposed in the dispute between Job and his friends; and others say that he was one of the eunuchs, counsellors, and magicians of Pharaoh, both when Moses was a child, and when he wrought his miracles in Egypt; and that Jannes and Jambres, of whom the Apostle Paul makes mention, **2Ti 3:8**; were his two sons {y}: he was an inhabitant of Pethor, which was situated on the river Euphrates, thought by Junius to be the Pacoria of Ptolemy: he seems to have been a Mesopotamian, though some say a Midianite; but, whether one or the other, he did not live at any great distance from the king of Moab: he was slain by the sword the children of Israel, in the times of Joshua, Jos 13:22; and, as the Jews say {z} he was, when he was but thirty three or thirty four years of age; they observing upon it, that bloody and deceitful men do not live out, half their days; but this does not seem so well to agree with other things they say of him; however, this soothsayer and sorcerer Balak sent for to curse Israel; whose heart and tongue, though a wicked man, and would fain have done according to Balak's wish and desire, were so overruled by the power of God, that instead of cursing Israel he was obliged to bless them, and to prophesy of their future happiness and prosperity, and of the Messiah, that should spring from them; see history of all this in Nu 22:1;

from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord; here something must be supplied to make sense of the words; either, "remember what good things I did for you {a}, from Shittim to Gilgal"; the former was the place where the children of Israel committed whoredom and idolatry, and was on the other side Jordan; and the latter was the place they came to when they had passed over Jordan, where the covenant of circumcision was renewed, and the first passover kept; now they are called upon to remember the goodness of God unto them from one place to another, and what were done between them; how that at Shittim, though they provoked the Lord to anger, yet he did not cut them all off, but spared a number of them, to enter and possess the land of Canaan; and though Moses died by the way, yet be raised up Joshua to go before them, and in a miraculous manner led them through the river Jordan, and brought them to

Gilgal--favours ever to he had in remembrance. So the Targum,

"were not great things done for you in the plain of Shittim unto the house of Gilgal, that the righteousness of the Lord might be known?"

both his justice in punishing offenders at Shittim, and his bounty and kindness, as well as his truth and faithfulness, in sparing others; bestowing his favours on them, and bringing them into the promised land: or it may be supplied thus, as by some, "remember what Balak consulted {b} from Shittim to Gilgal"; that is, with Balaam, and what answer and advice he gave him; which was to send beautiful women among the Israelites, and so tempt them to adultery, and by that means to idolatry; and which scheme and consultation took place at Shittim, by means of which several thousands were slain; and the device was to have continued the temptation even to Gilgal, which, had it not been prevented, in all likelihood would have issued in the destruction of that people; and therefore they had reason to know, own, and acknowledge the goodness and faithfulness of God unto them: or rather, taking the phrase "from Shittim to Gilgal" to be a proverbial one {c}, of going from place to place, it may have respect to Balak's having Balaam from place to place, to take a view of the people, and curse them; or how he might set the God of Israel against them, and gain him over to him; and then the sense is this,

"remember how Balak consulted Balaam from place to place, and what answers he returned him; all which was done, that "he (Balak) might know the righteousness of the Lord";"

and so the Syriac version renders it, and it will bear to be so rendered: the thing which Balak chiefly consulted was, how he should get the God of Israel on his side; as it was usual with Heathen princes, when at war, to attempt to get the gods of their enemies from them, and on their side; and inquires of Balaam how this was to be effected; what righteousness it was the Lord required; what duties of religion to be performed; what rites or sacrifices were acceptable to him; and the sum of his questions on this head, and Balaam's answer to them, are contained in the following verses.

{s} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 105. 2. {t} Ib. fol. 106. 1. {u} Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 7. 1. {w} Targum Jon. in Numb. xxii. 5. Targum in 1 Chron. i. 44. Vid. Burkium ib. {x} Hieron. Quaeat. Hebr. in Genesim, fol. 69. D. {y} Dibre Hayamim Shel Moseh, fol. 4. 2. & 6. 2. Targum Jon. in Exod. ix.

21. Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 90. 1. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. {z} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 2. Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2. {a} "Recordare qualia bona exhibuerim tibi", Munster; "memento eorum quae gesta sunt", Vatablus; "quae contigerint tibi", Calvin; "memento eorum quae fecerim", Grotius; "recordare quid evenerit tibi", Piscator. {b} "Memento quid cogifaverit contra te Balac, et quid responderit ei Balaam a Settim", &c. Ribera; so Menochius, Tirinus. {c} See Bishop Chandler's Defence of Christianity, p. 290.

Micah 6:6

Ver. 6. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord,.... These are not the words of the people of Israel God had a controversy with, and now made sensible of their sin, and humbled for it; and willing to appease the Lord, and make it up with him at any rate; for there are such things proposed by them as do by no means suit with persons of such a character, nay, even suppose them to be hypocritical; and much less are they what were put into their mouths by the prophet to say, as some suggest; but they are the words of Balak king of Moab, which, and what follow, are questions he put to Balaam, who had told him that he could do nothing without the Lord, nor anything contrary to his word: now he asks what he must do to get the good will of this Lord; in what manner, and with what he must appear before him, serve and worship him, as the Targum; that so he might have an interest in him, and get him to speak a word to Balaam in his favour, and against Israel; see Nu 22:8;

[and] bow myself before the high God? the most high God, the God of gods, whose Shechinah or Majesty is in the high heavens, as the Targum: his meaning is, with what he should come, or bring with him, when he paid his homage and obeisance to him, by bowing his body or his knee before him; being willing to do it in the most acceptable manner he could:

shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? such as he had been used to offer on the high places of Baal to that deity. Sacrifices of this kind prevailed among the Heathens, which they had received by tradition from the times of Adam and Noah; see Nu 22:41.

Micah **6:7**

Ver. 7. Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,.... If single burnt offerings of bullocks and heifers will not do, will rams, and thousands of them, be acceptable to him? if they will, they are at his service, even as many as he pleases; such creatures, as well as oxen, were offered by Balak, Nu 23:1;

[or] with ten thousands of rivers of oil? for meat offerings, as Jarchi, in which oil was used: this is a hyperbolical expression, as Kimchi rightly observes; suggesting that he was willing to be at any expenses, even the most extravagant, if he could but gain his point, and get the God of Israel on his side. Some render it, "ten thousands of fat valleys" {d}; abounding with corn, and wine, and oil; the produce of which, had he so many, he could freely part with, could he but obtain his end; see Job 20:17;

shall I give my firstborn [for] my transgression, the fruit of my body [for] the sin of my soul? his Son, his firstborn, his own flesh and blood, to make atonement for his sins and transgressions; this betrays the person speaking. The people of Israel, though they were sometimes guilty of this horrid, unnatural, and abominable sin, in the height of their degeneracy and apostasy, as to sacrifice their children to Moloch; yet when convinced of their sins, and humbling themselves before God for them, even though but in a hypocritical way, could never be so weak and foolish, so impious and audacious, as to propose that to God, which they knew was so contrary to his will, and so abominable in his sight, Le 18:21; but this comes well enough from a Heathen prince, with whom it was the, height of his devotion and religion, and the greatest sacrifice he thought he could offer up to God; for there is a climax, a gradation in the words from lesser things to greater; and this is the greatest of all, and what was done among the Heathens, 2Ki 17:31; and was afterwards done by a king of Moab, **2Ki 3:26**.

{d} Nmv ylxn twbbrb "in decem millibus vallium pinguium", Munster.

Micah **6:8**

Ver. 8. He hath showed me, O man, what [is] good,.... This is not the answer of the prophet to the body of the people, or to any and every one of the people of Israel; but of Balaam to Balak, a single man, that consulted with him, and put questions to him; particularly what he should do to please the Lord, and what righteousness he required of him, that would be acceptable to him; and though he was a king, he was but a man, and he would have him know it that he was no more, and as such addresses him; and especially when he is informing him of his duty to God; which lay not in such things as he had proposed, but in doing that which was good, and avoiding that which was evil, in a moral sense: and this the Lord had shown him by the light of nature; which is no other than the work of the law of God written in the hearts of the Heathens, by which they are directed to do the good commanded in the law, and to shun the evil forbidden by it; see **Ro 2:14**;

and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly; or "judgment" {e}; to exercise public judgment and justice, as a king, among his subjects; to do private and personal justice between man and man; to hurt no man's person, property, and character; to give to everyone their due, and do as he would desire to be done by; which as it is agreeable to the law of God, so to the light of nature, and what is shown, required, and taught by it:

and to love mercy; not only to show mercy to miserable objects, to persons in distress; to relieve the poor and indigent; to clothe the naked, and feed the hungry; but to delight in such exercises; and which a king especially should do, whose throne is established by mercy, and who is able, and should be munificent; and some Heathen princes, by their liberality, have gained the name of benefactors, "Euergetes", as one of the Ptolemies did; see Lu 22:25; such advice Daniel gave to Nebuchadnezzar, a Heathen prince, as agreeable to the light of nature; see **Da 4:27**;

and to walk humbly with thy God? his Creator and Benefactor, from whom he had his being, and all the blessings of life, and was dependent upon him; and therefore, as a creature, should behave with humility towards his Creator, acknowledging his distance from him, and the obligations he lay under to him; and even though a king, yet his God and Creator was above him, King of kings, and Lord of lords, to whom he owed his crown, sceptre, and kingdom, and was accountable to him for all his administrations: and this "walking humbly" is opposed to "walking in pride", which kings are apt to do; but God can humble them, and bring them low, as Heathen kings have been obliged to own; see **Da 2:21**.

{e} jpvm "judicium", V. L. Munster; "jus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Ver. 9. The Lord's voice crieth unto the city,.... The Lord having bid his prophet call to the mountains and hills to hear his voice, and the prophet having obeyed his will, and the Lord having by him addressed his people Israel, and expostulated with them about their ingratitude, observing to them many instances of his goodness; here informs them, that this voice of his, whether in his prophet, or in his judgments, was directed to the city, either Samaria or Jerusalem, or both, and even to all the cities of Israel and Judah, the singular being put for the plural; that is, to the inhabitants of them. Cities being populous, and where persons of the highest rank and figure, as well as of the best sense, dwell, and generally very wicked, though favoured with greater advantages; all which are reasons why the voice of the Lord, in his word and providences, particularly cries to them to repent of their sins, and reform from them, as might be expected from such persons; and so doing would set a good example to those who live in the country. Some render it, "the Lord's voice crieth to awake" {f}; or to "stir up"; it calls upon men asleep to awake out of sleep; to arouse from their carnal security; to attend to their sins, their danger, and their duty; to repent of their sins, and so avoid the danger they were in through them, and perform their duty they had such a voice as this, see in **Eph 5:14**; this reading of the words is mentioned by Kimchi;

and [the man of] wisdom shall see thy name; not the mere natural man, or who is possessed only of natural wisdom, though he may have ever so great a share of it; for as he sees not the things of the Spirit of God, the things of the Gospel, so neither the name and perfections of God in his judgments on the earth; much less the man that is wise to do evil, full of wicked subtlety, and makes a jest of everything religious and serious; nor such as are wise in their own opinion, or have only a superficial share of wisdom; but such who have a share of solid and substantial wisdom, a man of "substance", as the word {g} sometimes signifies; see **Pr 8:21**; such who have true wisdom in the hidden part, that which comes from above, and is pure and peaceable, and makes men wise to salvation; such men see and discern the power and providence of God in all the judgments that are in the earth; his attributes and perfections; his severity on some, and goodness to others; his sparing grace and mercy, and his special lovingkindness, and even all his perfections, for he is known to such by the judgments he executeth; see **Ps 9:16**; and such, "fear" his "name" also, as some render the words {h}; they not only fear the Lord and his goodness, but have an awful sense of his judgments, and tremble at them. Some read the words, "thy name sees that which is" {i}; so the margin of our Bibles; that is, the Lord seeth that which is done in the city, though ever so secret and private, and therefore his voice cries to it;

hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it; these are the words of the man of wisdom, as Kimchi observes; who, seeing the name and perfections of God in his judgments on the earth, upon others, and exhorts them to hear the voice rod, of the rod of correction and affliction, the rod of judgment and vengeance, as held in the hand of God, and shook over a city or nation; which has a voice in if to men, reproving them for their sins; commanding them to return from them; calling them to repentance and humiliation; teaching and instructing them in their duty; and giving cautions and warnings to others, lest the like should befall them; and this is the voice that is to be attended to: audit should be considered, that there is no affliction, calamity, or judgment, but is appointed by the Lord, the kind and nature, measure and duration, of it; what its end, issue, and use; and he that has appointed it is all wise and all knowing, unchangeable and invariable, all powerful, and able to put his purposes and decrees into execution; nor can they be frustrated. The Targum of the whole is,

"with the voice the prophets of the Lord Cry to the city; and teachers fear the name (of the Lord); hear, O king and rulers, and the rest of the people of the land."

{f} ryel "ad suscitandum", Vatablus; "ad expergefaciendum", Calvin; "ad excitandum", Drusius. So Joseph Kimchi. {g} hyvwt "vir constans", Pagninus; "vir essentilae", Gualtherus apud Tarnovium. {h} Kmv hary "timebit nomen tuum", Pagninus, Montanus. So the Targum. {i} "Nam quod res est, videt nomen tuum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius.

Micah 6:10

Ver. 10. Are there yet the treasures of wickedness the house of the wicked?.... There are; they continue there. This is the voice of the Lord by the prophet, and the language of the rod of correction to be heard, exposing the sins of the people, for which the Lord had a controversy with them; particularly their mammon of unrighteousness, the vast wealth, riches, and treasures, collected together by very wicked and unlawful ways and means; and which, instead of restoring them to the persons they had defrauded of them, they retained them in their houses, notwithstanding the reproofs of the prophets, and the corrections of the Almighty. Some render it, "is there not fire?" &c. {k}; that is, in the house of the wicked, because of the treasures of wickedness, that which consumes them; but Gussetius {l} interprets it of fornications and adulteries. Others render it, "is there yet a man?" &c. {m}; an honourable man, as Aben Ezra, who continues in his iniquity, after the Lord's voice cries to the city; but Abendana interprets it of the prophet himself, continuing to reprove the wicked for their treasures of wickedness, and their other sins;

and the scant measure [that is] abominable? or "the ephah of leanness provoking to wrath" {n}; that is, a deficient measure, less than it should be; the "ephah" was a dry measure, and it was made small, as in **Am 8:5**; and held less than it should; and this brought leanness and poverty upon those to whom they sold by it, as well as ruin upon themselves in the issue; for such practices as they were abominable and detestable to God; they stirred up his wrath, and brought destruction on those that used them. The Targum is,

"false measures that bring a curse."

{k} vah dwe mh pur, Sept. "adhuc ignis", V. L. So Joseph Kimchi. {l} Ebr. Comment. p. 352. {m} "Adhuc num vir domo", Montanus; "adhuc suntne viro domus improbi", some in Drusius. So R. Sol. Urbin, fol. 37. 2. {n} hmwez Nrzr tpyaw "et ephah macilentiae indignatio a Deo proventura", Tarnovius; "detestatus Domino", Pagninus; "et ephah maciei abominatione digna", Burkius.

Micah 6:11

Ver. 11. Shall I count [them] pure with the wicked balances,.... These are the words either of the prophet, or rather of God, signifying that he could not, and would not, allow, countenance, and approve of persons that used false scales or balances; or justify and reckon them just, as they would be thought to be, but condemn them, and pronounce them very wicked men, and deserving of punishment here and hereafter:

and with the bag of deceitful weights? or "stones" {o}; which were used in weighing goods, and which were deceitful, when a heavier was used in buying, and a lighter in selling. So the Targum,

"and with the bag, in which are weights greater and lesser;"

condemned in De 25:13.

{o} hmrm ynba "lapidum doli", Piscator; "lapidum fraudis", Montanus.

Micah 6:12

Ver. 12. For the rich men thereof are full of violence,.... That is, the rich men of the city, to whom the voice of the Lord cried, **Mic 6:9**. Jerusalem or Samaria, or any or all the cities of Israel and Judah; the rich men of these cities, who had enough of the world, and were under no temptation to do an ill thing, to get money; and yet their hands and their houses, and their treasuries, as the Targum, were full of goods gotten by violent measures, by the oppression of the poor and needy:

and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies; the rest of the inhabitants, who were not so rich as others, and who had it not in the power of their hands to oppress as others had; yet used deceitful and fraudulent methods to cheat their neighbours in buying and selling; and, to do this, did not stick to tell downright deliberate lies:

and their tongue [is] deceitful in their mouth; say one thing, and mean another; deceive their neighbours with their tongues in trade and commerce; averting things for truth they know to be false.

Micah 6:13

Ver. 13. Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee,.... With the rod to be heard, **Mic 6:9**; by sending among them some of his sore judgments, as famine, pestilence, the sword of the enemy, internal wars, and the like; which should cause their kingdom, and state, and families, to decline and waste away, as a sickly and diseased body. So the Targum,

"and I brought upon thee illness and a stroke."

The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "and I began to smite thee"; as by Hazael, king of Syria, and Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria, who had carried part of them captive;

in making [thee] desolate because of thy sins; went on, not only to make them sick, and bring them into a declining state, but into utter desolation; as by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, who carried Israel captive; and by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who led Judah captive, because of their sins of idolatry, injustice, and oppression, with others that abounded among them.

Micah 6:14

Ver. 14. Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied,.... Either not having enough to eat, for the refreshing and satisfying of nature; or else a blessing being withheld from food, though eaten, and so not nourishing; or a voracious and insatiable appetite being given as a curse; the first sense seems best:

and thy casting down [shall be] in the midst of thee; meaning they should be humbled and brought down, either by civil discords and wars among themselves, or through the enemy being suffered to come into the midst of their country, and make havoc there; which would be as a sickness and disease in their bowels. So the Targum,

"thou shalt have an illness in thy bowels."

The Syriac version is,

"a dysentery shall be in thine intestines;"

a secret judgment wasting and destroying them;

and thou shall take hold, but shall not deliver; and [that] which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword; the sense is, that they should take hold of their wives and children, and endeavour to save them from the sword of the enemy, and being carried captive: or should "remove" them {p}, as the word is sometimes used, in order to secure them from them; or should "overtake" {q}; the enemy, carrying them captive; but should not be able by either of these methods to save them from being destroyed, or carried away by them; and even such as they should preserve or rescue for a while, yet these should be given up to the sword of the enemy, the same or another. Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret this of their women conceiving, and not bringing forth; and, if they should, yet what they brought forth should be slain by the sword {r}. But the Targum and Jarchi incline to the former sense.

{p} gotw "et amovebis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius; "summovebis", Drusius, so Ben Melech; "et removebis", Burkius. {q} "Assequeris", Syr. {r} R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 35. 2.

Micah 6:15

Ver. 15. Thou shall sow, but thou shalt not reap,.... Either that which is sown shall not spring up, but rot in the earth; or if it does spring up, and come to maturity, yet, before that, they should be removed into captivity, or slain by the sword, and their enemies should reap the increase of their land, their wheat and their grain:

thou shall tread the olives; in the olive press, to get out the oil:

but thou shalt not anoint with oil; as at feasts for refreshment, and at baths for health, this becoming another's property; or, it being a time of distress and mourning, would not be used, it being chiefly at festivals, and occasions of joy, that oil was used:

and sweet wine; that is, shalt tread the grapes in the winepress, to get out the sweet or new wine:

but shalt not drink wine; for, before it is fit to drink, the enemy would have it in his possession; see Le 26:16; these are the punishments or corrections of the rod they are threatened with for their sins.

Ver. 16. For the statutes of Omri are kept,.... Who of a captain of the army was made king of Israel, and proved a wicked prince; he built Samaria, and set up idolatrous worship there, after the example of Jeroboam, in whose ways he walked, and, as it seems, established the same by laws and edicts; and which were everyone of them observed by the Israelites, in the times of the prophet, though at the distance of many years from the first making of them, which aggravated their sin; nor would it be any excuse of them that what they practised was enjoined by royal authority, since it was contrary to the command of God; for the breach of which, and their observance of the statutes of such a wicked prince, they are threatened with the judgments of God; see 1Ki 16:16;

and all the works of the house of Ahab; who was the son of Omri, and introduced the worship of Baal, and added to the idolatry of the calves, which he and his family practised; and the same works were now done by the people of Israel:

and ye walk in their counsels; as they advised and directed the people to do in their days:

that I should make thee a desolation; the city of Samaria, the metropolis of Israel, or the whole land, which was made a desolation by Shalmaneser, an instrument in the hand of God; and this was not the intention and design of their walking in the counsels and after the example of their idolatrous kings, but the consequence and event of so doing:

and the inhabitants thereof an hissing; either of Samaria, or of all the land, who should become the scorn and derision of men, when brought to ruin for their sins:

therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people; that which was threatened in the law to the people of God, when disobedient to him; or shameful punishment for profaning the name and character of the people of God they bore; or for reproaching and ill using the poor among the people of God; and so it is directed to the rich men before spoken of, and signifies the shame and ignominy they should bear, by being carried captive into a foreign land for their sins.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Micah 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO MICAH 7

This chapter begins with a lamentation of the prophet, in the name of the church and people of God, concerning the general depravity and corruption of the times in which he lived, **Mic 7:1**; then declares what he was determined to do for his relief in such circumstances, **Mic 7:7**; comforts himself and the church with a good hope and firm belief of its being otherwise and better with them, to the shame and confusion of their enemies that now rejoiced, though without just reason for it, **Mic 7:8**; with promises of deliverance, after a desolation of the land for some time, **Mic 7:11**; and with the answer returned to the prayers of the prophet, **Mic 7:14**; which would issue in the astonishment of the world, and their subjection to the church of God, **Mic 7:16**; and the chapter is concluded with admiration at the pardoning grace and mercy of God, and his faithfulness to his promises, **Mic 7:18**.

Ver. 1. Woe is me!.... Alas for me unhappy man that I am, to live in such an age, and among such a people, as I do! this the prophet says in his own name, or in the name of the church and people of God in his time; so Isaiah, who was contemporary with him, **Isa 6:5**; see also Ps 120:5;

for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage; when there are only an apple or a pear or two, or such sort of fruit, and such a quantity of it left on the top of the tree, or on the outermost branches of it, after the rest are gathered in; or a few single grapes here and there, after the vintage is over; signifying either that he was like Elijah left alone, or however that the number of good men were very few; or that there were very few gathered in by his ministry, converted, taught, and instructed by it; or those that had the name of good men were but very indifferent, and not like those who were in times past; but were as refuse fruit left on trees, and dropped from thence when rotten, and when gathered up were good for little, and like single grapes, small and withered, and of no value; see Isa 17:6;

[there is] no cluster to eat; no large number or society of good men to converse with, only here and there a single person; and none that have an abundance of grace and goodness in them, and a large experience of spiritual and divine things; few that attend the ministry of the word; they do not come in clusters, in crowds; and fewer still that receive any advantage by it;

my soul desired the first ripe fruit; the company and conversation of such good men as lived in former times; who had the firstfruits of the Spirit, and arrived to a maturity of grace, and a lively exercise of it; and who were, in the age of the prophet, as scarce and rare as first ripe fruits, and as desirable as such were to a thirsty traveller; see **Ho 9:10**. The Targum is,

"the prophet said, woe unto me, because I am as when good men fail, in a time in which merciful men perish from the earth; behold, as the summer fruits, as the gleanings after the vintage, there is no man in whom there are good works; my soul desires good men."

Micah 7:2

Ver. 2. The good [man] is perished out of the earth,.... Here the prophet expresses in plain words what he had before delivered in figurative terms. The "good" or "godly" man, as in Ps 12:1; is one that has received the grace of God, and blessings of grace from him, and lives a godly life and conversation; who has the good work of grace begun in him and is found in the performance of good works, and does his duty both to God and man from godly principles; and particularly is kind and merciful to the poor and needy, and those in distress. The complaint is, that there were few, or scarce any, of this character in the earth, in the land of Israel, where there used to be great numbers of them, but now they were all dead and gone; for this is to be understood, not of the perishing of their graces or comforts, much less of their perishing in their sins, or perishing eternally, but of their corporeal death:

and [there is] none upright among men; that are upright in heart and life; that have right spirits renewed in them, are Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile; and walk uprightly, according to the rule of the divine word, truly honest, faithful men; very few such were to be found, scarce any; see Ps 12:1;

they all lie in wait for blood; for the substance, wealth, and riches of men, which is as their blood and life; is their livelihood, that on which they live; this they wait for an opportunity to get from them, and, when it offers, greedily seize it; and stick not even to shed blood, and take away life, for the sake of gain:

they hunt every man his brother with a net; as men lay nets for fish, and fowl, and beasts, and hunt them till they have got them into them; so these men laid snares, not for strangers only, but for their own brethren, to entangle them in, and cheat and defraud them of their substance; and this they would do, even to the destruction of them, as some {s} render it; for the word also signifies "anathema", destruction, as well as a "net". So the Targum.

"betray or deliver his brother to destruction."

{s} Mrx "ad necem", Tigurine version; "anathema, caedes", Drusius; "ad occasuinem", ibid.

Micah 7:3

Ver. 3. That they may do evil with both hands earnestly,.... Or "well" {t}, strenuously, diligently, to the utmost of their power, labouring at it with all their might and main; as wicked men generally are more industrious, and exert themselves more to do evil than good men do to do good; and even weary themselves to commit iniquity: or, "instead of doing good", as Marinus in Aben Ezra, take a great deal of pains to do evil; work with both hands at it, instead of doing good. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "they prepare their hands for evil"; the Syriac version is, "their hands are read? to evil, and they do not do good"; with which agrees the Targum,

"they do evil with their hands, and do not do good."

Some make the sense to depend on what goes before and follows; "to do evil, both hands" are open and ready, and they hurt with them; "but to do, good the prince asketh, and the judge for a reward" {u}; forward enough to do evil, but very backward to do any good office;

the prince asketh, and the judge [asketh] for a reward; and, if they do it, must be bribed, and have a reward for it, even persons of such high character; but this sense is not favoured by, the accents; besides, by what follows, it seems as if the "prince", by whom may be meant the king upon the throne, and the "judge" he that sits upon the bench under him, sought for bribes to do an ill thing; to give a cause wrong against a poor man, and in favour of a rich man that will bribe high:

and the great [man] he uttereth his mischievous desire; the depravity, corruption, and perverseness of his soul; who is either some great man at court, that, being encouraged by the example of the prince and judge, openly and publicly requires a bribe also to do an ill thing; and without any shame or blushing promises to do it on that consideration; or a counsellor at the bar, who openly declares that he will speak in such a cause, though a bad one, and defend it, and not doubt of carrying it; or else this is some rich wicked man, that seeks to oppress his poor neighbour, and, being favoured by the prince and judge he has bribed, does without fear or shame speak out the wickedness of his heart, and what an ill design he has against his neighbour, whose mischief, hurt, and ruin, he seeks:

so they wrap it up together; or, "twist it together" {w}; as cords are, which thereby become strong; slid so these three work up this mischievous business, and strengthen and establish it; and such a threefold cord of wickedness is not easily broken or unravelled: or, "they perplex it" {x}; as thick branches of trees are implicated and wrapped together; so these agree to puzzle and perplex a cause, that they may have some show of carrying it with justice and truth. So the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "they trouble it"; confound the matter, and make it dark, dubious, and difficult. The Targum is, "they corrupt it"; or deprave it; put an ill sense on things, and make a wrong construction of them.

{t} byjyhl "bene", Drusius. {u} So Grotius. {w} hwtbey "contorquent", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius; "contorquere solent", Burkius; "contortuplicant", Junius, Grotius; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 38. 2. {x} "A radice tbe quae intricare significat, atque confusum reddere, atque perplexum", Sanctius,

Ver. 4. The best of them [is] as a brier,.... Good for nothing but for burning, very hurtful and mischievous, pricking and scratching those that have to do with them:

the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge; which, if a man lays hold on to get over, or attempts to pass through, his hands will be pricked, his face scratched, and his clothes tore off his back; so the best of these princes, judges, and great inch, who put on a show of goodness, and pretended to do justice, yet fetched blood, and got money out of everyone they were concerned with, and did them injury in one respect or another; or the best and most upright of the people of the land in general, that made the greatest pretensions to religion and virtue, yet in their dealings were sharp, and biting, and tricking; and took every fraudulent method to cheat, and overreach, and hurt men in their property:

the day of thy watchmen; either which the true prophets of the Lord, sometimes called watchmen, foretold should come, but were discredited and despised, will now most assuredly come; and it will be found to be true what they said should come to pass: or the day of the false prophets, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; either which they predicted as a good day, and now it should be seen whether it would be so or not; or the day of their punishment, for their false prophecies and deception of the people:

[and] thy visitation cometh; the time that God would punish the people in general for their iniquities, as! well as their false prophets, princes, judges, and great men; who also may be designed by watchmen:

now shall be their perplexity: the prince, the judge, and the great man, in just retaliation for their perplexing the cause of the poor; or of all the people, who would be surrounded and entangled with calamities and distresses, and not know which way to turn themselves, or how to get out of them.

Micah 7:5

Ver. 5. Trust ye not in a friend,.... This is not said to lessen the value of friendship; or to discourage the cultivation of it with agreeable persons; or to dissuade from a confidence in a real friend; or in the least to weaken it, and damp the pleasure of true friendship, which is one of the great blessings of life; but to set forth the sad degeneracy of the then present age, that men, who pretended to be friends, were so universally false and faithless, that there was no dependence to be had on them:

put ye not confidence in a guide; in political matters, in civil affairs, as civil magistrates, judges, counsellors; or in domestic matters. The Targum renders it, in one near akin. Kimchi interprets it of an elder brother; and Aben Ezra of a husband, who is to his wife the guide of her youth; and in religious matters as prophets, priests who were false and deceitful. It may design a very intimate friend, a familiar acquaintance, who might of all men be thought to be confided in; of whom the word is used, Ps 55:13;

keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom; from a wife, and much more from a concubine or harlot. The Targum is,

"from the wife of thy covenant keep the words of thy mouth;"

divulge not the thoughts of thine heart, or disclose the secrets of it, to one so near; take care of speaking treason against the prince, or ill of a neighbour; it may be got out of such an one, and who may be so base as to betray it: or utter not anything whatever that is secret, the divulging of which may be detrimental; for, in such an age as this was, one in so near a relation might be wicked enough to discover it; see Ec 10:20.

Micah 7:6

Ver. 6. For the son dishonoureth the father,.... Speaks contemptibly of him; behaves rudely towards him; shows him no respect and reverence; exposes his failings, and makes him the object of his banter and ridicule; who ought to have honoured, reverenced, and obeyed him, being the instrument of his being, by whom he was brought up, fed, clothed, and provided for; base ingratitude!

the daughter riseth up against her mother; by whom she has been used in the most tender and affectionate manner; this being still more unnatural, if possible, as being done by the female sex, usually more soft and pliable; but here, losing her natural affection, and forgetting both her relation and sex, replies to her mother, giving ill language; opposes and disobeys her, chides, wrangles, and scolds, and strives and litigates with her, as the Targum: or rises up as a witness against her, to her detriment, if not to the taking away of her life:

the daughter in law against her mother in law; this is not so much to be wondered at as, the former instances, which serve to encourage and embolden those that are in such a relation to speak pertly and saucily; to reproach and make, light of mothers in law, as the Targum; or slight and abuse them:

a man's enemies [are] the men of his own house; his sons and his servants, who should honour his person, defend his property, and promote his interest; but, instead of that, do everything that is injurious to him. These words are referred to by Christ, and used by him to describe the times in which he lived, Mt 10:35; and the prophet may be thought to have an eye to the same, while he is settling forth the badness of his own times; and the Jews seem to think be had a regard to them, since they say {y}, that, when the Messiah comes, "the son shall dishonour his father", &c. plainly having this passage in view; and the; whole agrees with the times of Christ, in which there were few good men; it was a wicked age, an adulterous generation of men, he lived among; great corruption there was in princes, priests, and people; in the civil and ecclesiastical rulers, and in all ranks and degrees of men; and he that ate bread with Christ, even Judas, lifted up his heel against him. The times in which Micah the prophet here speaks of seem to he the times of Ahaz, who was a wicked prince; and the former part of Hezekiah's reign, before a reformation was started, or at least brought about, in whose reigns he prophesied; though some have thought he here predicts the sad times in the reign of Manasseh, which is not so probable.

{y} Misn. Sotah, c. 9. sect. 15.

Micah 7:7

Ver. 7. Therefore I will look unto the Lord,.... Here the prophet, in the name of the church and people of God, declares what he would do in such circumstances, since there was no dependence on men of any rank, in any relation or connection with each other; he resolved to look alone to the Lord, and put his trust in him; look up to the Lord in prayer, use an humble freedom with him, place a holy confidence in him, expect all good things from him, and wait for them; look to Christ in the exercise of faith, which is, in New Testament language, a looking to Jesus; and the Targum interprets this clause of the Word of the Lord, the essential Word, who is to be looked unto, and believed in, as the Son of God, who is the true God, and eternal life; as the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world; as the Mediator between God and men: as in all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; as the Lord our righteousness, and as the only Saviour and Redeemer of men; and that for all things; when in darkness, for light; when weak, for strength; when sick, for healing; when hungry, for food; when disconsolate, for comfort; in short, for all supplies of grace here, and for eternal glory and happiness hereafter; and though he is in heaven, and not to be seen with our bodily eyes, yet he is held forth in the word of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; and is to be seen there with an eye of faith:

I will wait for the God of my salvation; who is the author both of temporal, and of spiritual, and eternal salvation; for the light of his countenance, when he hides himself; for the performance of promises he has made; for answers of prayer put up to him; for discoveries of pardoning grace, having sinned against him; for help and assistance in all times of need; for the salvation of the Lord, for an application of it, for the joys and comforts of it; and for Christ the Saviour, his coming in the flesh, which all the prophets and Old Testament saints were looking and waiting for: and who, doubtless, was upon the mind and in the view of the prophet when he uttered these words,

my God will hear me; this is the language of faith, both to say that God was his God, and that he would hear and answer him; the former is the ground of the latter; God has an ear to hear when his people cry; and sooner or later it appears that he does hear, by giving an answer of peace unto them, which issues in their salvation they have been praying, looking, and waiting for. The Targum is,

"my God will receive my prayer."

Ver. 8. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy,.... These are the words of the prophet in the name of the church, continued in an apostrophe or address to his and their enemy; by whom may be meant, literally, the Chaldeans or Edomites, or both, who rejoiced at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the calamities the people of the Jews were brought into at it; see Ps 137:7; spiritually, Satan the great enemy of mankind, and especially of the church and people of God, to whom it is a pleasure to draw them into any sin or snare, and to do them any hurt and mischief; and also the Inert of the world, who hate and persecute the saints; and watch for their haltings, and rejoice at their falls into sin, and at any calamity and affliction that may attend them, though there is no just reason for it; since this will not always be the case of the saints, they will be in a better situation, and in more comfortable circumstances; and it will be the turn of their enemies to be afflicted, punished, and tormented:

when I fall, I shall arise; or, "though I fall" {z}, or "have fallen"; into outward afflictions and distresses, which come not by chance, but by divine appointment; or into the temptations of Satan, and by them, which sometimes is suffered for wise and purposes; or into sin, which even a good man, a truly righteous man, is frequently left unto; but then he does not fall from real goodness, from true grace, nor from his justifying righteousness, which is everlasting, and connected with eternal life: he may fall from a lively exercise of grace, from steadfastness in the faith, and a profession of it; but not from the principle of grace, nor a state of grace; or from the love and favour of God: he may fall, but not totally or finally, or so as to perish everlastingly; nor is he utterly cast down, the Lord upholds him, and raises him up again; he rises, as the church here believes she should, out of his present state and condition, into a more comfortable one; not in his own strength, but in the strength of the Lord, under a sense of sin, by the exercise of true repentance for it, and by faith in Christ, and in a view of pardoning grace and mercy; see Ps 37:24;

when I sit in darkness; or "though" {a}. The Targum is,

"as it were in darkness;"

not in a state of unregeneracy, which is a state of total darkness, but in affliction and distress; for, as light often signifies prosperity, so darkness adversity, any afflictive dispensation of Providence; and especially when this attended with desertion, or the hidings of God's face; it is to be, not without any light of grace in the heart, or without the light of the word, or means of grace; but to be without the light of God's countenance; which is very uncomfortable, and makes dark providences darker still; see Isa 50:10; yet, notwithstanding all this,

the Lord [shall be] a light unto me; by delivering out of affliction; by lifting up the light of his countenance; by causing Christ the sun of righteousness to arise; by sending his Spirit to illuminate, refresh, and comfort; by his word, which is a lamp to the feet, a light to the path, a light shining in a dark place; see Ps 27:1. This passage is applied by the Jews {b} to the days of the Messiah.

{z} ytlpn yk "quamvis cecidi", Drusius, Burkius. {a} bva yk "quamvis sedero", Drusius; "quamvis sedeam", Burkius. {b} Debarim Rabba, parash. 11. fol. 245. 3.

Micah 7:9

Ver. 9. I will bear the indignation of the Lord,.... The Targum prefaces these words with

"Jerusalem saith;"

and they are the words of the prophet, in the name of Jerusalem or the church, resolving in the strength of divine grace to bear the present affliction, which had at least some appearance of divine indignation in it; not against the persons of God's people, who are always the objects of his love, and towards whom there is no fury in him; but against their sins, which are displeasing and abominable to him; and this is not in a vindictive way, for such indignation they could never bear; nor can any creature stand before it, or bear up under it; and, besides, Christ has bore the wrath and indignation of God in this sense for them but it here means the displicency and indignation of God in fatherly chastisements, consistent with the strongest love and affection for them; and to bear this is to be humble under the mighty hand of God, quietly to submit to it, and patiently to endure the affliction, without murmuring and repining, till the Lord pleases to remove it. The reason follows,

because I have sinned against him; the best of men sin; sin is the cause and reason of all affliction and distress, whether temporal or spiritual. The consideration of this tends to make and keep good men humble, and quietly submit to the chastising rod of their heavenly father, which they see it is right and proper should be used; and as knowing that they are chastised and afflicted less than their iniquities deserve; and that it is all for their good; a sense of sin stops their mouths, that they have nothing to say against God. The word ajx here used sometimes signifies the offering an expiatory sacrifice for sin to God; and Gussetius {c} thinks this is the meaning of it here; and observes, that with the oblation of a contrite heart, and works of charity, the satisfaction of Christ is to be pleaded, and in our way to be offered up to God the Judge, through faith flying to it; whereby the mind is disposed to bear correction patiently, in hope that favour will quickly shine forth in help and deliverance:

until he plead cause, and execute judgment for me; Christ the mighty Redeemer, and powerful and prevalent Mediator, not only pleads the cause of his people with God his Father, and obtains all blessings of grace for them; but he also pleads their cause against their enemies, an ungodly people that strive with them, persecute and distress them; and will in his own time do them justice, and execute vengeance, his righteous judgments, on those that hate them, and rise up against them, as he will on all the antichristian party:

he will bring me forth to the light; like a person taken out of prison, or out of a dungeon, to behold and enjoy the light of the sun and day. The sense is, that he will openly espouse the cause of his church, and give her honour and glory publicly before men; bring forth her righteousness as the light, and her judgment as the noon day; and make her innocence appear as clear as the day, and bring her at last to the light of glory; see Ps 37:6;

[and] I shall behold his righteousness: the equity of his proceedings with his people, in chastising and afflicting them, that they are all right and good; his justice in punishing their enemies, and executing judgment on them; his goodness and beneficence to the saints, all his ways being mercy and truth; his faithfulness in the fulfilment of his promises; and the righteousness of

Christ, which justifies them before God, renders them acceptable to him, will answer for them in a time to come, and introduce them into his everlasting kingdom and glory.

{c} Ebr. Comment. p. 923.

Micah 7:10

Ver. 10. Then [she that is] mine enemy shall see [it],.... The Chaldeans and Edomites shall see people of the Jews rising out of their calamities, brought out of the darkness of their captivity in Babylon, and enjoying the light of peace and prosperity in their own land. Some editions of the Targum, and Jarchi and Kimchi, have, in their glosses on this verse and **Mic 7:9**, Rome, of whom they interpret this enemy, as Mr. Pocock observes; and so R. Elias {d} says the Targum is, "then shall Rome see"; by which they mean the Christians, in opposition to the Jews; otherwise it would not be amiss to interpret it of Rome Papal, or antichrist, in opposition to the church of God; seeing the antichristian party will see witnesses of Christ, slain for his sake, rise again, and ascend to heaven, or be brought into a glorious and comfortable state; see Re 11:12; and may be applied to any age of the church, and to any particular saints raised out of a state of darkness and affliction into a prosperous one, in the sight of their enemies, and in spite of them, to their great mortification; see Ps 23:4;

and shame shall cover her which said unto me, where is the Lord thy God? as the Heathens; the Chaldeans, did to the Jews, Ps 115:2; and which must be very cutting to them, as it was to David, Ps 42:10; when they flouting and jeering said, where is thy God thou boastedst of, and didst put thy trust and confidence in, that he would deliver and save thee? what is become of him, and of thy confidence in him? The Targum is,

"where art thou that art redeemed by the Word of the Lord thy God?"

but when they shall see that the Lord God has returned unto them, and wrought salvation for them, they will be ashamed of their flouts and jeers; and by reason of their sad disappointment, add the change of things for the worse to them, who now will be brought into calamity and distress themselves:

mine eyes shall behold her; the enemy: their fall, as the Targum; being in a most despicable and ruinous condition, under the vengeance of the Almighty; and that with pleasure and satisfaction, not from a private spirit of revenge, but because of the glory of divine justice, which will be displayed in their righteous destruction; see Ps 58:10;

now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets; that is, entirely conquered, and utterly destroyed; reduced to, the utmost meanness, and had in the greatest contempt: this was fulfilled when Babylon was taken by the Medea and Persians; and when the Edomites were conquered and brought into subjection to the Jews by the Maccabees; and will be the case of all the enemies of Christ and his church, of all the antichristian states, one day.

{d} In Tishbi, p. 227.

Micah 7:11

Ver. 11. [In] the day that thy walls are to be built,.... These words are not spoken to the enemy, as some think; either the Chaldeans, the walls of whose city, Babylon, being demolished by the Persians, it would be a long day or time before they were rebuilt and when their power of sending their decrees abroad among the nations would be far off: or to the enemy that should think to build up their walls with the spoils of Israel, in the time of Gog and Magog, and when their decree determined over the nations and Israel would also be far off; but they are the words of the prophet to the church and people of God, comforting them with observing, that there would be a day when the walls of Jerusalem, and the temple, which would lie in ruins during their captivity, would be rebuilt; and which was fulfilled in the times of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah; and so the Targum,

"that time the congregation of Israel shall be built;"

and which had a further accomplishment, in a spiritual sense, in the first times of the Gospel, when the church of Christ was built up, and established in the world and will still have a greater completion in the latter day, when the tabernacle of David, or church of Christ, shall be raised that is fallen, and its breaches closed, and ruins repaired, **Am 9:11**;

[in] that day shall the decree be far removed; which, as it literally respects Jerusalem, and the rebuilding of that after seventy years captivity, may signify either the decree of God concerning that captivity, which would then cease, according to the time fixed by it; or the cruel laws and edicts of the Babylonians, which should no more bind and press the Jews, and be as a heavy yoke upon them; those statutes, which were not good, that were given them. So the Targum,

"at that time the decrees of the nations shall cease;"

or the decree of Artaxerxes, forbidding and hindering the rebuilding of the city: but if the phrase "far removed" signifies its being divulged and spread far abroad, as it is interpreted by some; then it may refer to the decree of Cyrus for rebuilding the city and temple; and which was revived and confirmed by Darius Hystaspis, and by Darius Longimanus, and which was published everywhere; and by means of which the Jews from all parts were encouraged to come up to their own land, and proselytes with them; and which sense suits well with what follows: and as this, in a spiritual sense, may have regard to the church of Christ in Gospel times, it may signify the removal of human laws, traditions, rites, and ceremonies, respecting religious things, among the Gentiles, and their giving way to those of God and Christ; or the promulgation of the Gospel in all parts, called a decree, **Ps 2:6**; because a revelation of the decrees of God, respecting the salvation of men, and to which it owes its efficacy; by means of which many would be brought to the church, and the kingdom of Christ be enlarged, and spread everywhere, as follows:

Micah 7:12

Ver. 12. [In] that day [also] he shall come even to thee,.... Which words also are not directed to the enemy, as some interpret them; as to Chaldea or Babylon; and the sense be, that Cyrus should come thither, and take it; or any more remote enemy of the Jews in the latter day, to whom the day of the Lord should come, or his decree of vengeance or judgment upon them, or any enemy to waste and destroy them; but they are a continued address to Jerusalem or the church, signifying that "he", the people of the Jews, the body of them, with the proselyted Gentiles, should come from all parts to Jerusalem to rebuild it upon the decree of Cyrus; and that multitudes of all, or at least many nations, should flock to the church of Christ, upon the publication of the Gospel:

from Assyria: where many of the Jews, and even of the ten tribes, were, whither they were carried captive:

and [from] the fortified cities; in Assyria, and other countries, where the Jews might be placed, either as prisoners, or to do servile work, as repairing the fortifications; or for the defence of the country, from which they were to be and were released upon Cyrus taking of Babylon; and was a type of the redemption by Christ from greater bondage. It may be rendered the cities of Egypt, as Kimchi observes, here and in 2Ki 19:24; and so Ben Melech: it is interpreted by some Matzor, being the same with Mitzraim, which is the name for Egypt; and the sense would be more easy, as well as the words run more smoothly, thus, "shall come from Assyria even to the cities of Egypt": and then it follows,

and from the fortress even to the river; or from Egypt, to the river Euphrates, which was one of the boundaries of the land of Israel:

and from sea to sea; from the Persian sea to the Mediterranean sea, or from the Red sea thither, and from the several maritime parts where they inhabited:

and [from] mountain to mountain; from Mount Taurus to Carmel, or Lebanon, or Hor; or from the several mountains to which they had fled to, safety, and where they had dwelt. It may respect the extent of the church and kingdom of Christ in the latter day, enlarged by the numerous conversions of Jews and Gentiles in all parts of the world. The Jews shall be gathered from all places where they are, and join themselves to the church of Christ; and these several places, particularly Assyria, Egypt and the islands of the sea from whence they shall be brought, are mentioned in other prophecies; see Isa 11:11; though this may respect, not barely the conversion and gathering of them to Christ and his church, but of the Gentiles also in those several countries, thus; they "shall come from Assyria, and the fortified cities"; that is, from the Turkish empire; the land of Assyria, and its fortified cities, being in the possession of the Turks, and in whose dominions many Jews at this day reside; and not only they, but multitudes in the Ottoman empire, shall be converted in the latter day, and become members of Christian churches; signified by the flocks of Kedar, and the rams of Nebaioth, that shall be gathered to the church, and minister there, Isa 60:7; and they shall come "from the fortress even to the river"; from everyone of the fortified cities before mentioned to the river Euphrates, which will be dried up to make way for the kings or kingdoms of the east, for their conversion to Christ, and embracing his Gospel; even the large kingdoms of Persia, Tartary, China, &c. Re 16:12; or "from Egypt to the river Euphrates"; and so signifies the same as before, Egypt being part of the Turkish dominions; or else the Roman jurisdiction, spiritually called Egypt, may be meant, Re 11:8; and in several Popish countries are many Jews, who will be called from thence; as well as many of the Papists themselves shall be called out of mystical Babylon, and embrace the true religion of Christ: "and from sea to sea"; this is a well known description of the amplitude of Christ's church and kingdom in Gospel times, especially in the latter day; see Ps 72:8; or, as it may be rendered, "the sea from the sea" {e}; that is, the inhabitants of the sea, or of the islands of it, shall come from thence to the church, see Isa 11:11; these are the same with the abundance of the sea, that shall be converted to Christ, and join his people in the latter day, as in our isle and others, Isa 40:5; "and [from] mountain to mountain"; or rather, "and mountain shall come to the mountain" {f}; that is, the inhabitants of the mountain, or of Rome, that is situated on seven mountains, of mystical Babylon, the great mountain; these shall be called from hence to Mount Zion, the church of the living God, where Christ with the 144,000 will be; and which shall then be established on the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it, Re 14:1. The Targum is,

"at that time the captives shall be gathered from Assyria, and the strong cities, and from Churmini (or Armenia), the great and the fortified cities, even unto Euphrates, and the western sea, and the mountains of the mountain."

{e} Mym Myw "et mare a mari", Montanus, Burkius. {f} rhh rhw "et mons [veniet] ad montem", Cocceius, Burkius.

Micah 7:13

Ver. 13. Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate,.... Not the land of Chaldea, as some; or the land of the nations, as Jarchi and Kimchi; but the land of Israel. That part of it, which was possessed by the ten tribes, was made desolate by Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and that which was inhabited by the two tribes, by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and this desolation was to be, "notwithstanding" the above prophecies, and prior to the fulfilment of them. So some render the words, as in the margin of our Bibles "after the land hath been desolate" {g}; and it is observed, partly to prevent wicked men promising themselves impunity from the above prophecies; and partly to prevent despair in good men, when such a desolation should be made. And then again it was made desolate by the Romans, previous to the spread and establishment of the church of Christ, by the success of the Gospel in the Gentile world, in the first times of it; and by the conversion of the Jews, and bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, in, he last times of it;

because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings: because of the sins of the inhabitants of the land of Israel: the desolation made by the kings of Assyria and Babylon was for the idolatry of Israel and Judah, and other sins; and the desolation made by the Romans for the Jews rejection of the Messiah.

{g} hmmvl Urah htyhw "postquam fuerit haec terra desolationi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius, Drusius.

Micah 7:14

Ver. 14. Feed thy people with thy rod,.... These are either the words of God the Father to Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, calling upon him to do his office as such; to feed the people he had given him, the sheep of his hand, the flock of his pasture, by his Spirit, and with his word and ordinances; see Zec 11:5; or of Christ to his ministers, his undershepherds, to feed his sheep and his lambs, the people committed to their care and charge, with wholesome words, with sound and good doctrine, by faithfully preaching the Gospel, and administering the ordinances to them: or rather the words of the prophet, a prayer of his to God or Christ, to take care of the people of God in their desolate state, in captivity; to guide and lead them, protect and defend them, by his power and providence, as a shepherd directs, leads, governs, and preserves his flock with his pastoral crook or rod; or, as before, to feed the church of God as a shepherd does his flock, lead them into good pastures, and secure them from all their enemies: and this, being a prayer of faith, may be considered as a prophecy or prediction of what would be; and so some render the words, "thou shalt feed thy people", &c. {h}. The Targum is,

"feed thy people with thy word, the people of thine inheritance, in the age which is to be renewed;"

in the new world, the world to come; plainly referring to the times of the Messiah;

the flock of thine heritage; who are like to sheep for their harmlessness and innocence, and to a flock of them, being associated together, and folded in the church; and though but a little flock, yet the lot, the portion, the inheritance of Christ; all which is a strong reason for his feeding, keeping, and preserving them, being committed to his care and charge for that purpose:

which dwell solitary [in] the wood; dwell alone in the world, which is like a wood and a wilderness; separated from the men of the world; distinguished by the grace of God, chosen and called out from among them, and different from them both in principle and practice: this may have respect to the Jews, in their dispersion, living separate from and unmixed with the nations of the world; or rather to their dwelling in safety and security under the protection of the great Shepherd, the Messiah, David their Prince, when they shall be returned to their own land in the latter day:

in the midst of Carmel; or of a fruitful field, as Carmel was; enjoying all happiness and prosperity, temporal and spiritual:

let them feed [in] Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old; places in the land of Israel famous for rich and fat pastures; and so express the great plenty of good things wished for, and which will be enjoyed by the Jews when converted to Christ, and replaced in their own land; and are an emblem of those spiritual good things, and of those rich and green pastures of the word and ordinances, which the great Shepherd is desired to lead, and does lead, his people into; see Ps 23:1; these places are now in the hand of the Turks, and so the words may be a petition for their conversion, as well as for the Jews, that this country may no more be inhabited by Heathens, but by the Israel of God, as Gulichius {i} very well observes.

{h} her "pasces", so some in Vatablus. {i} Apud Burkium in loc.

Micah 7:15

Ver. 15. According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt,.... This is an answer of the Lord to the prayer of the prophet, assuring him, and the church he represents, and on whose account he applies, that there would be as great a deliverance wrought for them, and as wonderful things done, as when Israel was brought out of the land of Egypt, which was effected with a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm, and was attended with amazing events; as the plagues in Egypt; the passage of the Israelites through the Red see, and the destruction of the Egyptians in it:

will I show unto him marvellous [things]; that is, unto the people of the Lord, the flock of his heritage, the solitary and peculiar people, fed and preserved by him: as the deliverance out of Egypt; was the Lord's work, so the deliverance from Babylon; as the one was the work of his power upon the heart of Pharaoh to let the people go, so the other as great an act of his power working upon the mind of Cyrus, stirring him up to let the captives go free, without price or reward; yea, to furnish them with necessaries by the way, and to rebuild their city and temple: and as Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the Red sea, so the kingdom of Babylon was swallowed up by the Medes and Persians; yea, in some respects the latter deliverance exceeded the former, and erased the remembrance of it; see Jer 16:14; and that redemption by Christ, which both these were typical of, was greater and more marvellous than either, being a deliverance from, and an abolition and destruction of sin, Satan, the law, hell, and death, and attended with things the most wonderful and surprising; as the birth of Christ of a virgin; the miracles done by him in life, and at death; the doctrines of the Gospel preached by him and his apostles, and the amazing success of them, especially in the Gentile world, being testified and confirmed by signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost. This passage, both by ancient and modern Jews {k}, is applied to the times of the Messiah. So in an ancient {l} book of theirs, speaking of the times of the Messiah, they say,

"from that day all the signs and wonders, and mighty works, which the Lord did in Egypt, he will do for Israel, as it is said, "according to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt", &c."

It is also said, by a modern writer {m} of theirs,

"because of the miracles and wonders which shall be in the days of the Messiah, such as the gathering of the captives, the resurrection of the dead, and the destruction of Gog and Magog, besides other miracles and wonders, the end of the redemption is called the end of wonders in Da 12:6; and this is that which God has promised by his prophets, particularly Micah, **Mic 7:15**; "according to the days", &c. and from what follows, with the rest of the verses to the end of the book, it is manifest that these promises are not yet fulfilled, but will be fulfilled in the days of the Messiah."

From whence it appears, that it was the sense of the ancient Jews, as well as some modern ones, that miracles would be wrought in the days of the Messiah; though some of them reject them, and look not for them; particularly Maimonides {n} says,

"let it not enter into thine heart that the King Messiah hath need to do signs and wonders; as that he shall renew things in the world, or raise the dead, and the like; these are things which fools speak of; the thing is not so."

But however, certain it is, the ancient Jews expected miracles to be done by the Messiah; hence some, in the times of Jesus, said, "when Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" **Joh 7:31**; and accordingly the miracles Jesus did were full proofs of his being the Messiah, and were wrought for that purpose, and owned as such; wherefore the above Jew, though he is right in the application of this passage to the times of the Messiah, yet is wrong in saying these promises are not yet fulfilled, since they have had a full accomplishment in the Messiah Jesus; nor is another to be looked for, or such miracles to be hereafter wrought.

{k} Zohar in Gen. fol. 16. 1. 2. & in Exod. fol. 4. 2. & in Deut. 99. 2. & 118. 3. Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. c. 32. p. 277. {l} Zohar in Exod. fol. 4. 2. Vid. ib. in Gen. fol. 16. 1. 2. & in Numb. fol. 99. 2. & in Deut. 118. 3. {m} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. c. 32. p. 277. {n} Hilchot Melachim, c. 11. sect. 3.

Micah 7:16

Ver. 16. The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might,.... The Chaldeans or Babylonians, when they shall see the wonderful things done by the Lord in the deliverance of his people out of their hands, shall be ashamed of their own power and might, in which they trusted, and of which they boasted; but now shall be baffled and defeated, and not able to stop the progress of the arms of Cyrus, or detain the Jews any longer their captives; or they shall be confounded at the power and strength the Jews will have to repossess their land, rebuild their city and temple, under the encouragement and protection of the king of Persia; and as this may refer to a further accomplishment in Gospel times, it may respect the confusion the Gentile world would be in at the mighty power and spread of the Gospel, in the conversion of such multitudes by it, and in the abolition of the Pagan religion. Kimchi interprets this of the nations that shall be gathered together with Gog and Magog against Jerusalem in the latter day; see Eze 38:15;

they shall lay [their] hand upon [their] mouth: be silent, and boast no more of themselves; nor blaspheme God and his word; nor insult his people; nor oppose his Gospel, or open their mouths any more against his truths and his ordinances:

their ears shall be deaf; hearing so much of the praises of God, of the success of his interest, and of the happiness of his peopled dinned in their ears, they will be stunned with it, and scarce know what they hear; become deaf with the continual noise of it, which will be disagreeable to them; and will choose to hear no more, and therefore through envy and grief will stop their ears at what is told them.

Micah 7:17

Ver. 17. They shall lick the dust like a serpent,.... Whose food is the dust of the earth, according to the curse pronounced on it, **Ge 3:14**; and which is either its, natural food it chooses to live on, as some serpents however are said {o} to do; or, going upon its belly, it cannot but take in a good deal of the dust of the earth along with its food; and hereby is signified the low, mean, abject, and cursed estate and condition of the seed of the serpent, wicked and ungodly men, the enemies of Christ and his people; who wilt be forced to yield subjection to him and his church, and will pretend the most profound respect for them, and the highest veneration of them. The allusion seems to be to the manner of the eastern nations, who, in complimenting their kings and great men, bowed so low to the ground with their faces, as to take up with their mouths the very dust of it. Particularly it is said of the Persians, that they first kiss the pavement on which the king treads, before they speak unto him, as Quistorpius on the place relates; and Valerius Maximus {p} says, that when Darius Hystaspis was declared king by the neighing of his horse, the rest of the six candidates alighted from their horses, and prostrated their bodies to the ground, as is the manner of the Persians, and saluted him king; and Herodotus {q} observes the same, custom among the Persians; and to this custom the poet Martial {r} refers; and Drusius says it is a custom in Asia to this day, that, when any go into the presence of a king, they kiss the ground, which is a token of the great veneration they have for him. The phrase is used of the enemies of the, Messiah, and of the converted Jews and Gentiles at the latter day, and is expressive of their great submission to them; see Ps 72:9;

they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth; who put out their heads and draw them in again upon the least notice or approach of danger; or like serpents, as Jarchi and Kimchi, which lurk in holes, and creep out of them oft their bellies, or any other creeping things. The word {s} here used signifies a tremulous and tumultuous motion, like the wriggling of a worm out of the earth; or the hurry of ants, when their nests are kicked or thrown up: this is expressive of the confusion and perturbation of the enemies of the Lord and his people; of the Babylonians, who were obliged in a hurry to leave their palaces, as the Targum and Aben Ezra interpret their holes, and their fortresses and towers, and deliver them to the Medes and Persians; and of Gog and Magog, and the antichristian states, who will be obliged to abandon their places of abode, and creep out of sight, and be reduced to the lowest and meanest condition;

they shall be afraid of the Lord our God: because of the glory of his majesty, the greatness of his power, and for fear of his judgments:

and shall fear because of thee; O God, or Israel, as Kimchi; the church of God, whom they despised and reproached before; but now shall be seized with a panic, and live in the utmost dread of, because of the power and glory of God in the midst of them, and lest they should fall a sacrifice to them.

{o} Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 1. c. 44. col. 27. {p} L. 7. c. 3. sect. 2. {q} Polymnia, sive l. 7. c. 12. {r} "Et turpes humilesque, supplicesque, Pictorum sola basiate regum". Epigram. l. 10. Ep. 71. {s} wzgry "contremiscent", Munster, Tigurine version, Cocceius; "frement, sive tumultuabuntur", Calvin; "trepide prorepent", Burkius.

Micah 7:18

Ver. 18. Who [is] a God like unto thee,.... There is no God besides him, none so great, so mighty, as he; none like him for the perfections of his nature; for the works of his hands; for the blessings of his goodness, both of providence and grace; and particularly for his pardoning grace and mercy, as follows:

that pardoneth iniquity: that "lifts" it up, and "takes" it away, as the word {t} signifies; thus the Lord has taken the sins of his people off of them, and laid them on Christ, and he has bore them, and carried them away, as the antitype of the scapegoat, never to be seen and remembered any more; and whereas the guilt of sin lies sometimes as a heavy burden upon their consciences, he lifts it up, and takes it away, by sprinkling the blood of Christ upon them, and by applying his pardoning grace and mercy to them: pardon of sin is peculiar to God; none can forgive it but he against whom it is committed; forgiveness of sin is with him, promised by him in covenant, proclaimed in Christ, by him obtained and published in the Gospel:

and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? the people of God are his portion, his lot, and his inheritance; they are a remnant according to the election of grace, chosen of God, taken into his covenant, redeemed by Christ, and called by grace, and brought to repent and believe; these God forgives, even all their transgressions, sins, and iniquities of every kind; which is here expressed by another word, "passing [them] by", or "passing over [them]": sin is a transgression or passing over the law, and pardon is a passing over sin; God taking no notice of it, as if he saw it not; not imputing it to his people, or calling them to an account for it; or condemning and punishing them according to the desert of it; but hiding his face from it, and covering it:

he retaineth not his anger for ever; that which he seemed to have against his people, and appeared in some of the dispensations of his providence, is not continued and lengthened out, and especially for ever, but it disappears; he changes the course of his providence, and his conduct and behaviour to his people, and, hews them his face and favour, and manifests his forgiving love; which is a turning himself from his anger; see Ps 85:2;

because he delighteth [in] mercy; which is natural to him, abundant with him, and exercised according to his sovereign will and pleasure, very delightful to him; he takes pleasure in showing mercy to miserable creatures, and in those that hope in it, Ps 147:11; this is the spring of pardon, which streams through the blood of Christ.

{t} avn "tollens", Montanus, Tigurine version, Calvin; "aufercus", Drusius; "qui aufers", Grotius.

Micah 7:19

Ver. 19. He will turn again,.... From his anger, and show his face and favour; which is not inconsistent with his everlasting and unchangeable love; for anger is not opposite to love, and is only a displicency at sin, and not at the persons of his people; and, properly speaking, is not in God; is rather in appearance than in reality; when his people sin against him, he shows himself as if he was angry; he turns away from them, and withdraws his gracious presence and sensible communion from them; but when they are brought to a sense of sin, and acknowledgment of it, he returns to them, manifests his love to them again, and applies his pardoning grace, which is the thing believed would be done; it is only another expression of that, as all the rest that follow are: the prophet, or the church, dwells on this article of grace, and heaps up words to express it by, as if they could never say too much or it, or sufficiently explain it. The Targum is,

"his word shall return;"

he will have compassion upon us; the Lord is naturally compassionate; he is full of compassion, he has a heart of compassion; these are tender mercies, and never fail, and which are exercised in a sovereign way; pardon of sin flows from hence; every manifestation or it is a display thereof: sin brings afflictions on the saints, and then the Lord pities them, and is afflicted with them; sin grieves them, and he is as it were grieved for them; it wounds them, and then, as the good and compassionate Samaritan, he pours in the oil and wine of pardoning grace, and heals them; they are, while in this state, in such circumstances often as need his compassion, and they may be assured of it, Ps 78:38;

he will subdue our iniquities; which maybe understood also as a further explanation of the grace of pardon: sin is an enemy to God and his people; it is too strong and mighty for them; it reigns over them in a state of nature; they are under the power of it, and cannot get rid of it, its influence, guilt, and punishment; Christ has conquered it, made an end of it, and took it away; God tramples upon it, as a conqueror does upon the necks of his enemies; it ii subdued by him, and is under his feet; which he treats with contempt, disdains to look upon, keeps it under, so that it shall never rise again to the condemnation of his people; he overcomes the provocation of it, removes the guilt by pardon, and secures from the punishment of it: or this may be considered as the effect of pardon; as what is done in consequence of it, by the Spirit and grace of God in sanctification; when not only the deeds of the body are mortified through the Spirit, or the outward conversation reformed, but the inward power of sin is weakened; it is laid under the restraints of efficacious grace, and is kept under by it; so that it shall not and cannot have the dominion over the saints again, of which they may be confident, **Ro 6:14**;

and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea; never to be seen any more; though they are seen with the eye of omniscience, and taken notice of by the eye of providence, yet not beheld with the eye of avenging justice, that being satisfied by Christ; besides, all the sins of God's people have been removed from them to Christ, and by him carried away into the land of oblivion; so that they are no more to be seen on them, who are through his blood and righteousness without fault, spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; and, being out of sight, they are out of mind, never remembered any more, and like things cast into the sea, destroyed and lost: perhaps there may be some allusion to the Egyptians drowned in the Red sea; and what is cast into the sea, especially into the depths of it, is irrecoverable, not to be fetched up again, nor does it rise more; and so it is with the sins of God's people, forgiven for Christ's sake, even "all" of them; for they have all been bore by Christ, and are covered, blotted out, and pardoned, not one remains unforgiven; see Isa 38:17. This is an apostrophe of the prophet unto God.

The Targum is,

"and he will cast into the depths of the sea all the sins of Israel;"

and it may denote their being loathsome and abominable to him, and therefore here cast by him. It is very common in Jewish writings to say of anything that is useless, abominable, accursed, and utterly rejected, that it is to be east into the salt sea. For instance

"Aquila the proselyte divided an inheritance with his brother (a Gentile), and he cast the profit of it into the salt sea: three doctors there were; one said, the price of the idol he cast into the salt sea; another said, he cast the price of his part of the idol into the salt sea; and the other said, he cast the idol itself into the salt sea {u}."

Again it is said {w},

"a sin offering, whose owner is dead, goes into the salt sea."

The Heathens used sea water for the purgation and expiation of sin; hence the poet {x}, to aggravate the wickedness of a very wicked man, observes, that the ocean itself could not wash away his sins. And Cicero {y}, speaking of the law of the Romans for the punishment of parricides, which ordered that they should be sewed up alive in sacks, and cast into the river, observes the wisdom and propriety of it; they would not, says he, have them cast naked into the river, lest, when they should be carried into the sea, they should pollute that by which other things that are defiled are thought to be expiated. So Iphigenia is made to say {z} that the sea washes away all the sins of men. These are the Jewish and Heathenish notions; whether there is any allusion to them may be considered; however, certain it is, that nothing short of the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, or the sea of Christ's blood, can wash away sin; that cleanses from all sin; and happy are they whose sins are cast in thither, or are expiated and purged away thereby!

{u} T. Hieros. Demai, fol. 25. 4. {w} Ibid. Sotah, fol. 19. 1. Vid. ibid. Avoda Zara, fol. 39. 2. & Nazir, fol. 53. 1. {x} "Suscipit, O Gelli, quantum non ultima Thetis, Nec genitor lympharum abluit Oceanus". Catullus. {y} Oratio 2. pro Sexto Roscio. {z} Euripides in Tauro.

Ver. 20. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob,.... That is, the promise made to Jacob, the Lord would faithfully perform and make good to his posterity, natural and spiritual, especially to those who are Israelites indeed;

[and] the mercy to Abraham; the gracious promises made to him, which sprung from mere grace and mercy; all respecting his natural and spiritual seed; and especially the promise of the coming of the Messiah, that seed of his in which all nations of the earth were to be blessed; and which is the eminent instance of the mercy and grace of God to Jews and Gentiles, that walk in the steps of Abraham; see **Lu 1:68**;

which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old; or the promises both of multiplying the seed of Abraham, and of giving them the land of Canaan, and of the Messiah springing from them, were confirmed by an oath, Ge 22:16. The Targum is,

"thou wilt give the truth of Jacob to his sons, as thou hast sworn to him in Bethel; the goodness of Abraham to his seed after him, as thou hast sworn to him between the pieces; thou wilt remember to us the binding of Isaac, who was bound upon the altar before thee; thou wilt do with us the good things which thou hast sworn to our fathers, from the days of old;"

which Kimchi interprets of the three fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Nahum **1:1**

INTRODUCTION TO NAHUM

This book is called, in the Vulgate Latin version, "the Prophecy of Nahum"; and in the Syriac and Arabic versions, "the Prophecy of the Prophet Nahum"; and in **Na 1:1**; it is called "the Book of the Vision of Nahum"; which is very singular; and from whence we learn of what place this prophet was; but of this more will be said on that verse. His name signifies "consolation": and though the subject of his prophecy chiefly relates to the destruction of the Assyrian empire, and of Nineveh, the chief city of it; yet this was a comfort to the people of the Jews, that an enemy so powerful, and who was so troublesome to them, and whom they dreaded, should one day be destroyed. In what age Nahum lived is not said; and writers very much disagree about it. Some make him to be the most ancient of all the prophets; who suppose him to prophesy of the destruction of Nineveh, before the reigns of Joash king of Judah, and Jehu king of Israel, as Huetius {a} observes; and others bring him down as low, placing him after Ezekiel, in the times of Zedekiah, Clemens of Alexandria {b}; neither of which is likely. The Jewish chronologers {c} generally make him to live in the times of Manasseh, and so Abarbinel; but Josephus {d}, with more probability, puts him in the times of Jotham; though perhaps what the greater number of interpreters give into may be most correct; as that he lived in the times of Hezekiah, and was contemporary with Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah; and that this prophecy was delivered out after the ten tribes were carried captive by the king of Assyria, which was in the sixth year of Hezekiah, and before Sennacherib's invasion of Judea, and siege of Jerusalem, which was in the fourteenth year of his reign; and which is thought to be referred to in the "first" chapter of this prophecy. Mr. Whiston {e} places him in the year of the world A. M. 3278, or 726 B.C.; and says that he foretold the destruction of Nineveh an hundred fifteen years before it came to pass, so says Josephus {f}. How long this prophet lived, and where he died, and was buried, is uncertain. Pseudo-Epiphanius {g} says he died and was buried in Begabar. Isidore {h} says it was in Bethafarim; both which are to be corrected by Dorotheus, who calls the place Bethabara, as Huetius {i} observes; the same where John was baptizing, **Joh 1:28**; but Benjamin of Tudela {k} says his grave was to be seen in a place called Einsiphla, in the land of Chaldea; and speaks of a synagogue of this prophet in the province of Assyria {l}; but on these things we cannot depend. Of the authority of this prophecy there need be no doubt, as appears from the inscription of the book, the sublimity and majesty of the style, and its agreement with other prophets; see **Na 1:15**; compared with Isa 52:7; and the accomplishment of the prophecies contained in it, which respect the ruin of the Assyrian empire, and particularly Nineveh, the metropolis of it; the cause of which were their sins and transgressions, the inhabitants thereof were guilty of, and are pointed at in it.

{a} Demonstr. Evangel. prop. 4. p. 298. {b} Strom. l. 1. p. 329. {c} Seder Olam Rabbi, c. 10. p. 55. &. Zuta, p. 105. Juchasin, fol. 12. 2. Tzemach David, fol. 15. 1. Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 12. 1. {d} Antiqu. l. 9. c, 11. sect. 3. {e} Chronological Tables, cent. 8. {f} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 11. sect. 3. {g}

De Proph. Vit. & Inter. c. 17. {h} De Vit. & Mort. Sanct. c. 46. {i} Ut supra. (Demonstr. Evangel. prop. 4. p. 298.) {k} Itinerarium, p. 30. {l} Ibid. p. 62.

INTRODUCTION TO NAHUM 1

This chapter begins with the title of the book, showing the subject matter of it; and describing the penman of it by his name and country, **Na 1:1**; which is followed with a preface to the whole book; setting forth the majesty of a jealous and revenging God; the power of his wrath and fury; of which instances are given in exciting tempests; drying up the sea and the rivers; making the most fruitful mountains barren, which tremble before him; yea, even the whole world, and the inhabitants thereof, his indignation being intolerable; and yet he is slow to anger, good to them that trust in him, whom he knows, and whose protection he is in a time of trouble, **Na 1:2**. Next the destruction of the Assyrian empire, and of the city of Nineveh, is prophesied of; and is represented as an utter and an entire destruction, and which would come upon them suddenly and unawares, while they were in their cups, **Na 1:8**. A particular person among them is spoken of, described as a designing wicked man, an enemy to the Lord and his people, thought to be Sennacherib king of Assyria, **Na 1:11**; from whose evil designs, yoke and bondage, the Jews should be delivered; and he and his posterity be cut off, because of his vileness, **Na 1:12**; and the chapter is concluded with tidings of joy to Judah, who are exhorted to keep their feasts and perform their vows on this occasion, **Na 1:15**.

Ver. 1. The burden of Nineveh,.... Of the city of Nineveh, and the greatness of it, See Gill on "Jon 1:2"; See Gill on "Jon 3:3"; Jonah was sent to this city to threaten it with ruin for its sins; at that time the king and all his people humbled themselves and repented, and the threatened destruction was averted; but they relapsing to their former iniquities, this prophet foretells what would be their certain fate; very rightly therefore the Targum, and some other Jewish writings {m}, observe, that Jonah prophesied against this city of old; and that Nahum prophesied after him a considerable time, perhaps at a hundred years distance. This prophecy is called a burden; it was taken up by the prophet at the command of the Lord, and was carried or sent by him to Nineveh; and was a hard, heavy, grievous, and burdensome prophecy to that city, predicting its utter ruin and desolation; and which, as Josephus {n} says, came to pass hundred fifteen years after this prophecy; and which event is placed by the learned Usher {o} in the year of the world 3378 A.M., and which was 626 B.C.; and by others {p} in the year of the world 3403 A.M., of the flood 1747, in 601 B.C.; but by Dean Prideaux {q} and Mr. Whiston {r}, in 612 B.C.;

the book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite; no other prophecy is called, a book but this, as Abarbinel observes; and gives this reason for it, because the other prophets immediately declared their prophecies, as Jonah; but Nahum never went to the Ninevites, but wrote his prophecy in a book, and sent it to them. It is called "the book of the vision"; what it contains being made known to him by the Lord in a vision, as was common; hence the prophets are called seers; and the prophet is described by the place of his birth, an Elkoshite; though some think he is so called from his father, whose name was Helkesi, and said to be a prophet too, as Jerom relates; and with this agrees the Targum, which calls him Nahum of the house or family of Koshi; but Jarchi says that Elkosh was the name of his city; Aben Ezra and Kimchi are in doubt which to refer it to, whether to his city, or to his ancestors; but there seems no reason to doubt but that he is so called from his native place; since Jerom {s} says, that there was a village in Galilee called Helkesi in his days, and which he had seen; though scarce any traces of the old buildings could be discerned, it was so fallen to ruin, yet known, to the Jews; and was shown him by one that went about with him; and which is, by Hesychius {t} the presbyter, placed in the tribe of Simeon. This is another instance, besides that of Jonah, disproving the assertion of the Jews, that no prophet rose out of Galilee, **Joh 7:52**.

{m} Tzemach David, fol. 15. 1. {n} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 11. sect. 3. {o} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3378. {p} Universal History, vol. 4. p. 331. {q} Connexion, &c. par. 1. B. 1. p. 47, 48. {r} Chronological Table, cent. 9. {s} Proem. in Nahum. {t} Apud Reland. Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. p. 748.

Nahum 1:2

Ver. 2. God [is] jealous, and the Lord revengeth,.... He is jealous of his own honour and glory, and for his own worship and ordinances; and will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images; and therefore will punish all idolaters, and particularly the idolatrous Assyrians: he is jealous for his people, and cannot bear to see them injured; and will avenge the affronts that are offered, and the indignities done unto them:

the Lord revengeth, and [is] furious; or, is "master of wrath" {u}; full of it, or has it at his command; can restrain it, and let it out as he pleases, which man cannot do; a furious and passionate man, who has no rule over his spirit. The Lord's revenging is repeated for the confirmation of it; yea, it is a third time observed, as follows; which some of the Jewish writers think has respect to the three times the king of Assyria carried the people of Israel captive, and for which the Lord would be revenged on him, and punish him:

the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries; on all his adversaries; particularly the Assyrians are here meant, who were both the enemies of him and of his people. The Targum explains it,

"that hate his people:"

vengeance belongs to the Lord, and he will repay it sooner or later; if not immediately, he will hereafter; for it follows:

and he reserveth [wrath] for his enemies: and them for that; if not in this world, yet in the world to come; he lays it up among his treasures, and brings it forth at his pleasure. The word "wrath" is not in the text; it is not said what he reserves for the enemies of himself and church; it is inconceivable and inexpressible.

{u} hmx leb "dominus irae", Calvin, Vatablus, Grotius; "dominus excandescentiae", Piscator, Tarnovius; "dominus irae aestuantis, [sive] fervoris", Burkius.

Nahum 1:3

Ver. 3. The Lord [is] slow to anger,.... He is not in haste to execute it; he takes time for it, and gives men space for repentance. Nineveh had had a proof of this when it repented at the preaching of Jonah, upon which the Lord deferred the execution of his wrath; but lest they should presume upon this, and conclude the Lord would always bear with them, though they had returned to their former impieties; they are let to know, that this his forbearance was not owing to want of power or will in him to punish: since he is

great in power, and will not at all acquit [the wicked]; he is able to execute the wrath he threatens, and will by no means clear the guilty, or let them go free and unpunished; though he moves slowly, as he may seem in the execution of his judgments, yet they shall surely be brought on his enemies, and be fully accomplished:

the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds [are] the dust of his feet; he spoke to Job out of the whirlwind; he descended on Mount Sinai in a storm and tempest; and the clouds are his chariots; in which he rides swiftly; and which, for their appearance and number, are like the dust raised by a multitude of horsemen riding full speed, The wrath of God may be compared to a whirlwind, and a storm, which is sometimes hastily and suddenly executed upon men: respect seems to be had to the armies of the Medes and Chaldeans against the Assyrians; who, as the Babylonians against the Jews, came up as clouds, and their chariots as the whirlwind, **Jer 4:13**; and the figures beautifully describe the numbers of them, the force with which they came; and in an elegant manner represent the vast quantity of dust raised by an army in full march; at the head of which was the Lord himself, ordering, directing, and succeeding, before whom none can stand.

Nahum 1:4

Ver. 4. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry,.... As he did the Red sea, when the children of Israel passed through it as on dry land; which shows his power and sovereignty over it; that it is at his command, as a servant at his master's; and since the wind and sea obey him, what is it he cannot do? see Isa 50:2;

and drieth up all the rivers; that is, he can do it if he will; he divided the waters of Jordan, through the midst of which the Israelites passed on dry ground; and will dry up the river Euphrates, to make way for the kings of the east; and as for Tigris, on the banks of which the city of Nineveh stood, of which the inhabitants boasted, and in which they trusted for their security, he could dry up, and make way for the enemy to enter in; or make that their enemy, and overflow them with it, as he did; see **Na 1:8**. By the "sea" and "rivers" may be meant the whole Assyrian empire, and many nations and people, as Jarchi and Abarbinel interpret it, of whom it consisted; see Jer 51:36;

Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth; when the Lord restrains the heavens from giving rain, then Bashan, famous for its fat pastures and fruitful meadows, and Carmel for its rich grain fields, and Lebanon for its tall shadowy cedars, these, and the glory of all, wither and fade away, being parched and dried up for want of moisture. These were places in the land of Israel, but may be put for like flourishing and fruitful hills and countries in the land of Assyria, which should become desolate; see Ps 107:33.

Nahum 1:5

Ver. 5. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt,.... As Sinai of old did, when the Lord descended on it, Ex 19:18. Mountains figuratively signify kings and princes; and hills large countries, as Jarchi and Abarbinel observe, and the inhabitants of them; particularly the kingdoms and nations belonging to the Assyrian empire, which would tremble and quake, and their hearts melt with fear, when they should hear of the destruction of Nineveh their chief city; and of the devastation made by the enemy there and in other parts, under the direction of the Lord of hosts; his power and providence succeeding him:

and the earth is burnt at his presence; either when he withholds rain from it, and so it be comes parched and burnt up with the heat of the sun; or when he rains fire and brimstone on it, as he did on Sodom and Gomorrah; or consumes any part of it with thunder and lightning, as he sometimes does; nay, if he but touch the mountains, they smoke; see Ps 104:32;

yea, the world, and all that dwell therein; as in the last day, at the general conflagration, when the world, and all the wicked inhabitants of it, will be burnt up; see **2Pe 3:10**.

Nahum 1:6

Ver. 6. Who can stand before his indignation?.... No creature whatever; no man nor body of men; not Nineveh, and the inhabitants of it; nor the whole Assyrian empire:

and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? not the great men of the earth; not kings or generals of armies; not kingdoms and nations, ever so numerous and powerful; but all must be consumed by him, who is a consuming fire; see Jer 10:10;

his fury is poured out like fire; or like metal that is melted by fire, and poured out by the force of it; or like fire of lightning poured out of the heavens, which is quick, powerful, and penetrating, and there is no resisting it:

and the rocks are thrown down by him; by the Lord, by his wrath and fury; kingdoms that seemed as strong and immovable as rocks and mountains are thrown down; as such have been by the force of fire bursting from the midst of them, as Etna, Vesuvius, and others.

Nahum 1:7

Ver. 7. The Lord [is] good,.... To Israel, as the Targum adds; to Hezekiah and his, people, that betook themselves to him, and put their trust in him; whom he defended and preserved from the king of Assyria, to whom he was dreadful and terrible, destroying his army in one night by an angel; and so delivered the king of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from that terror that had seized them, and that danger they were exposed unto; and so the Lord is good in himself, in the perfections of his nature, in the works of his hands, in all his persons to his people, that fear him, trust in him, and seek him, and wait for him, and on him:

a strong hold in the day of trouble; or, he is "good for a strong hold" {w}, &c. it was a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy, with Hezekiah and his people, when they were besieged by the army of Sennacherib king of Assyria, and had received from Rabshakeh by his orders a railing and reproaching letter; and then the Lord was a strong hold to them, to whom they betook themselves, and he protected and defended them. The whole time of this life is a time of trouble to the saints, though it is but a day, a short time; in which they meet with much from their own corrupt hearts, and the sin that dwells in them; from Satan and his temptations; from carnal professors, their principles and practices; and from a profane and persecuting world; and from the Lord himself, who sometimes lays his afflicting hand upon them, and hides his face from them; and yet he is their rock and their refuge, their strong tower and place of defence; where they find safety and plenty in all their times of distress and want:

and he knoweth them that trust in him; in his word, as the Targum; and they are such that know him, and are sensible of the vanity of all other objects of trust; who betake themselves to him for shelter and protection; lean and stay themselves upon him, and commit all unto him, and expect all from him: these he knows, loves, and has the strongest affection for; he approves of them, and commends their faith and confidence; he takes notice of them, visits them, and makes himself known unto them, even in their adversity; he owns and acknowledges them as his own, claims his right in them now, and will confess them hereafter; and he takes care of them that they perish not, whoever else do; see **Ps 1:6**; he knows the necessities of those that trust in him, as Jarchi; he knows them for their good, takes care of them, provides for, them, and watches over them, as Kimchi. The ancients formerly had their gnwsthrav and munhtav, "notores" {x}, such as knew them, and were their patrons and defenders; as when a Roman citizen was condemned to be whipped or crucified in a province where he was not known, and claimed the Roman privileges, such persons were his witnesses and advocates; and thus the Lord is represented as one that knows his people, and is their patron and advocate. The goodness of God expressed in this text is set off with a foil by the terribleness of his wrath and vengeance against his enemies.

{w} zweml hwhy bwj "bonus Dominus ad robur", Burkius; "bonus est Jehovah in arcem", Cocceius. {x} Dannhaver, apud Burkium in loc. Vid. Turnebi Adversar. l. 29. c. 36.

Nahum 1:8

Ver. 8. But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof,.... Of Nineveh, against whom this prophecy was, and upon whom it lay as a burden, **Na 1:1**; and now though the Lord was good to them that trust in him, and a strong hold to them in a time of trouble; yet he was determined to destroy their enemies the Assyrians, and Nineveh their chief city; and that by the means of a powerful army, which, like a flood or inundation of water breaking in, overruns and carries all before it; and very fitly may the Medes and Babylonians, who joined together in an expedition against Nineveh, be compared to such a flood for their number and force; since, as the historian tells {y} us, they were no less than four hundred thousand men: though this may be literally understood; for as the same writer {z} observes,

"there was an oracle received by the Ninevites from their ancestors, that Nineveh could never be taken by any, unless the river (on which it stood) first became an enemy to it; and so it was, that, in the third year of the siege, the river, being swelled with continual rains, overflowed part of the city, and broke down the wall for the space of two and half miles; hence the king concluded the oracle was fulfilled, and gave up all hopes of safety; and through the breach of the wall the enemy entered, and took the city;"

and an "utter end" was made of it, and of the place of it, insomuch that historians and geographers disagree about it; some say it was situated upon the river Euphrates, others upon the river Tigris, which is the most correct; some say on the east of that river, others on the west; some will have it to be above the river Lycus, and others below it; so true is that of Lucian {a}, that Nineveh is now entirely lost, and no traces of it remain; nor can one easily say where it once was; and travellers in general, both ancient and modern, agree that it lies wholly in ruins, and is a heap of rubbish. Benjamin Tudelensis {b}, who travelled into these parts in the twelfth century, relates, that between Almozal or Mosul, and Nineveh, is only a bridge, and it (Nineveh) is a waste; but there are villages, and many towers. Haitho, an Armenian {c}, who wrote more than a hundred years after the former, says,

"this city (Nineveh) at present is wholly destroyed; but, by what yet appears in it, it may be firmly believed that it was one of the greatest cities in the world."

Monsieur Thevenot {d}, who was upon the spot in the last century, observes,

"on the other side of the river (Tigris from that on which Mosul stands) at the end of the bridge begins the place, where, in ancient times, stood the famous city of Nineveh. --There is nothing of it, (adds he) now to be seen, but some hillocks, which (they say) are its foundations, the houses being underneath; and these reach a good way below the city of Mosul:"

and darkness shall pursue his enemies; the enemies of God and his people, who would make such a devastation of Nineveh; even he would cause all manner of calamities, often signified in Scripture by darkness, to follow and overtake them; so that they should be brought into the most uncomfortable and distressed condition imaginable.

{y} Diodor. Sicul. l. 2. p. 111. Ed. Rhodum. {z} Ibid. p. 113, 114. {a} episkop. sive, "contemplantes", in fine. {b} Itinerarium, p. 62. {c} Apud Bochart Phaleg. l. 4. c. 20. p. 255. {d} Travels, par. 1. B. 1. c. 11. p. 52.

Nahum 1:9

Ver. 9. What do ye imagine against the Lord?.... O ye Ninevites or Assyrians; do you think you can frustrate the designs of the Lord, resist his power, and hinder him from executing what he has threatened and has determined to do? or what mischief is it you devise against his people, which is the same as against himself? can you believe that you shall prosper and succeed, and your schemes be carried into execution, when he, the all wise and all powerful Being, opposes you?

he will make an utter end; of you, as before declared, and will save his people; which may be depended on will certainly be the case:

affliction shall not rise up the second time; either this should be the last effort the Assyrians would make upon the Jews, which they made under Sennacherib, and this the last time they would afflict them; or rather their own destruction should be so complete that there would be no need to repeat the stroke, or give another blow; the business would be done at once. This seems to contradict a notion of some historians and chronologers, who suppose that Nineveh was destroyed at two different times, and by different persons of the same nations; and so the whole Assyrian empire was twice ruined, which is not likely in itself, and seems contrary to this passage; for though some ascribe it to Arbaces the Mede, and Belesis the Babylonian as Diodorus Siculus {e}; and others to Cyaxares the Mede as Herodotus {f}, and to Nebuchadnezzar the first, or Nabopolassar the Babylonian in a later period; so Tobit {g} says it was taken by Nebuchadnezzar and Ahasuerus, the same with the Cyaxares of Herodotus; yet all seem to agree that it was taken by the conjunct forces of the Medes and Babylonians; and there are some things similar {h} in all these accounts, which show that there was but one destruction of Nineveh, and of the Assyrian empire.

{e} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 110, 111. {f} L. 1. sive Clio, c. 106. {g} Tobit 14:15. {h} See the Universal History, vol. 4. c. 8. sect. 5. & vol. 5. p. 22. Margin, & Nicolai Abrami Pharus Vet. Test. l. 6. c. 19. p. 165.

Nahum 1:10

Ver. 10. For while [they be] folden together [as] thorns,.... Like them, useless and unprofitable, harmful and pernicious, fit only for burning, and, being bundled together, are prepared for it; and which is not only expressive of the bad qualities of the Ninevites, and of the danger they were in, and what they deserved; but of the certainty of their ruin, no more being able to save themselves from it, than a bundle of thorns from the devouring fire:

and while they are drunken [as] drunkards; dead drunk, no more able to help themselves than a drunken man that is fallen; or who were as easily thrown down as a drunken man is with the least touch; though there is no need to have recourse to a figurative sense, since the Ninevites were actually drunk when they were attacked by their enemy, as the historian relates {i}; that the king of Assyria being elated with his fortune, and thinking himself secure, feasted his army, and gave them large quantities of wine; and while the whole army were indulging themselves, the enemy, having notice of their negligence and drunkenness by deserters, fell upon them unawares in the night, when disordered and unprepared, and made a great slaughter among them, and forced the rest into the city, and in a little time took it:

they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry; as easily, and as inevitably and irrecoverably.

{i} Diodor. Sicul. l. 2. p. 112.

Nahum 1:11

Ver. 11. There is [one] come out of thee,.... That is, out of Nineveh, as the Targum explains it; meaning Sennacherib, who had his royal seat and palace there; or Rabshakeh that was sent from hence by him with a railing and blaspheming letter to the king of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This is said to be at the present time of writing this prophecy, though it was after it, because of the certainty of it, as is usual in prophetic language; unless it can be thought that this prophecy was delivered out exactly at the time when Sennacherib had entered Judea, and was before the walls of Jerusalem; but not yet discomfited, as after predicted:

that imagineth evil against the Lord; against the people of the Lord, as the Targum; formed a scheme to invade the land of Judea, take the fenced cities thereof, and seize upon Jerusalem the metropolis of the nation, and carry the king, princes, and all the people captive as Shalmaneser his father had carried away the ten tribes:

a wicked counsellor; or "a counsellor of Belial" {k}; who, by Rabshakeh, advised Israel not to regard their king, nor trust in their God but surrender themselves up to him, 2Ki 18:29.

{k} leylb Uewy "consulens", Belijahai, Montanus; "consiliarius Belijaal", Burkius.

Nahum 1:12

Ver. 12. Thus saith the Lord, though [they be] quiet, and likewise many,.... The Assyrian army under Sennacherib before Jerusalem, though they were quiet and secure and thought themselves out of all danger; not at all fearing that the besieged would sally out against them they being so numerous, and therefore betook themselves to sleep and rest:

yet thus shall they be cut down; or "shorn" {l}; as the wool is shorn off the back of a sheep with sheers; or grass or corn is mowed with a scythe; or else as the hair of a man's head and beard are shaved with a razor; which sometimes was done, not only in a way of ignominy and contempt, as

David's servants were served by Hanun, 2Sa 10:4; but as a token of servitude; hence those words of the poet {m},

"after thou art a servant, dost thou let thy hair grow?"

upon which it is observed {n}, that it belongs to freemen to let the hair grow; and so the philosopher says {o}, to let the hair grow, or to nourish it, is commendable with a Lacedemonian, for it is a sign of liberty; for it is not for him who lets his hair grow to do any servile work; and it was usual with conquerors to shave the conquered, and such as were carried captives {p}, which some think is referred to in De 32:42; and render the latter clause of that verse,

"and there shall be captivity, by reason of the head of nakedness of the enemy;"

that is, there should be captives whose heads should be made bare, or shaved by the enemy the conqueror {q}; hence the king of Assyria, when a conqueror, is compared to a sharp razor, that should shave the head, and feet, and beard, even all sorts of people, **Isa 7:20**; but now he and his army should be shaved themselves; that is, conquered, slain, or taken captives, and become slaves, and treated with contempt; all which may be taken into the sense of this phrase, and serve to illustrate it:

when he shall pass through; when the angel should pass through the camp of the Assyrians, then were they cut down by him in great numbers, a hundred and fourscore and five thousand slain at once, 2Ki 19:35;

though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more: or "any longer" {r}; though the Lord had afflicted the people of the Jews by the Assyrian king, the rod of his anger, again and again, yet after this he would afflict them no more by him; for otherwise they were afflicted afterwards, yet not by the Assyrians, but by the Babylonians, Syrians, and Romans, Some understand this, as before, of the Ninevites and Assyrians, that should be utterly destroyed at once, and their affliction should not be a second time; see **Na 1:9**; so Abarbinel: or, "I will not hear thee any more" {s}; as he did formerly, when they repented at the preaching of Jonah.

{l} wzwgn "tonsi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {m} epeita dhta doulov wn komhn eceiv Aristophanes in Avibus, p. 584. {n} Scholia Graec. in ib.

{o} Aristotel. Rhetor. l. 1. c. 9. {p} "Tonsa comas imo Barathri claudere recessu", Claudian in Ruffin. l. 1. prope finem. Vid. Barthium in ib. {q} Lydius de Re Militari, l. 6. c. 6. p. 237. {r} dwe al "non ultra", Pagninus, Montanus; "non amplius", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {s} dwe Knea al "non exaudiam te amplius", Burkius.

Nahum 1:13

Ver. 13. For now will I break his yoke from off thee,.... The Assyrian yoke from off the Jews, who had been obliged to pay tribute, or send presents to the king of Assyria, from the times of Ahaz; and were in bondage, while shut up and besieged by his army, and the country all around laid under contribution; from all which they were delivered when his army was in that dreadful manner destroyed:

and will burst thy bonds in sunder; and set thee entirely free from the bondage of the enemy, and all fear of it; a type of that freedom from the yoke of sin, Satan, and the law, which the people of God have by Jesus Christ.

Nahum 1:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord hath given a commandment concerning thee,.... This is directed to Sennacherib king of Assyria, as the Targum expresses it; and so Jarchi and Kimchi; and signifies the decree of God concerning him, what he had determined to do with him, and how things would be ordered in Providence towards him, agreeably to his design and resolution:

[that] no more of thy name be sown; which is not to be understood that he should have no son and heir to succeed him; for Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead, 2Ki 19:37; and after him, according to Ptolemy's canon, Saosduchinus and Chyniladanus but the memory of his name should no be spread in the earth; or the fame of it, with any marks of honour and glory, but of shame and disgrace. So the Targum,

"neither shall be any memory of thy name any more:"

out of the house of thy gods will I cut of the graven image and the molten image; called "the house of Nisroch his god", 2Ki 19:37; where he was slain; and some say that after that it ceased to be a place of worship, being polluted with his blood. Josephus {t} calls it his own temple, where he usually worshipped, for which he had a peculiar regard, and for his god Nisroch; but who this deity was is not certain. Selden says {u}, he knew nothing, nor had read anything of him, but what is mentioned in the Scripture. Some of the Jewish writers {w} take it to be a plank of Noah's ark; and Mr. Basnage {x} is of opinion that it is Janus represented by Noah's ark, who had two faces, before and behind; a fit emblem of Noah, who saw two worlds, one before, and another after the flood. Some say Dagon the god of the Philistines is meant, which is not likely; See Gill on "Isa 37:38"; but, be he who he will, there were other idols besides him, both graven and molten, in this temple, as is here expressed; very probably here stood an image of Belus or Pul, the first Assyrian monarch, and who; was deified; and perhaps Adrammelech the god of the Sepharvites was another, since one of Sennacherib's sons bore this name; and it was usual with the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Babylonians, to give the names of their gods to their princes, or insert them in theirs: here also might be the Assyrian Venus, Derceto, Semiramis, and others: fishes also were worshipped by the Assyrians, in honour of Derceto; and doves in remembrance of Semiramis, said to be nourished by one in her infancy, and turned into one at her death; hence those creatures became sacred in Assyria, and were not suffered to be touched and killed, as Philo observed at Askelon; See Gill on "Ho 11:11"; and Lucian {y} at Hieropolis in Syria; where, he says, of all birds, they think the dove most holy; so that they count it very unlawful to touch them; and if by chance they do, they reckon themselves unclean that whole day; hence you may see them frequently in their houses conversing familiarly with them, generally feeding on the ground, without any fear; and he also says {z} the Assyrians sacrifice to a dove, and which he must have known, since he himself was an Assyrian, as he tells us; but, whatever these graven and molten images were, it is here predicted they should be utterly demolished. The sense is, that whereas Sennacherib's empire should be destroyed, and his capital taken, the temple where he worshipped would be defaced, and all his gods he gloried of, all his images, both graven and molten, would be cut to pieces, falling into the conqueror's hands, as was usual in such cases; these would not be able to defend him or his, or secure them from the vengeance of God, whom he had blasphemed:

I will make thy grave, for thou art vile: the Targum is,

"there will I put thy grave;"

that is, in the house of thy god, as Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it; where he was slain by two of his sons, as before observed; and this judgment came upon him by the will of God, because he was a loose vile creature; because he had vilified the true God, and reproached him, as unable to deliver Hezekiah and his people out of his hands. The Targum paraphrases it,

"because this is easy before me;"

what the Lord could easily do, make his idol temple his grave; or, however, take away his life, and lay his honour in the dust: or it may be rendered, "I will put [upon] thy grave that thou art vile" {a}; he, who thought to have a superb monument over his grave, and an epitaph inscribed on it to his immortal honour, as kings used to have; this shall be the sepulchral inscription,

"here lies a vile, wicked, and contemptible man;"

so Abarbinel. There was a statue of this king in an Egyptian temple, as Herodotus {b} relates, according, as many think, with this inscription on it,

"whosoever looks on me, let him be religious;"

though I rather think it was a statue of Sethon the priest of Vulcan, and last king of Egypt. Here ends the first chapter in some Hebrew copies, and in the Syriac and Arabic versions, and in Aben Ezra.

{t} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 1. sect. 5. {u} De Dis Syris, Syntagm. 2. c. 10. p. 329. {w} Vid. Jarchi in Isaiam, c. 37, 38. {x} In Calmet's Dictionary, in the word "Samaritans". {y} De Dea Syria. {z} In Jupiter Tragoedus. {a} twlq yk Krbq Myva. {b} est' eme tiv orewn, eusebhs estw. Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 141.

Nahum **1:15**

Ver. 15. Behold upon the mountains,.... Of the land of Israel, as the Targum; or those about Jerusalem:

the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; see how they come one after another with the news of the havoc and slaughter made in the army of Sennacherib by an angel in one night; of his flight, and of the dealt, of him by the hands of his two sons; and, after that, of the destruction of Nineveh, and of the whole Assyrian empire; all which were good tidings to the Jews, to whom the Assyrians were implacable enemies, and whose power the Jews dreaded; and therefore it must be good news to them to hear of their defeat and ruin, and the messengers that brought it must be welcome to them:

that publisheth peace; to the Jewish nation, who might from hence hope for peaceable and prosperous times: like expressions with these are used in Isa 52:7 on account of the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity; and are applied by the apostle to Gospel times and Gospel preachers, Ro 10:15 as these may also, and express the good tidings of victory obtained by Christ over sin, Satan, the world, hell and death; and of salvation wrought out, and peace made by him; it being usual for the prophets abruptly and at once to rise from temporal to spiritual and eternal things, particularly to what concern the Messiah, and the Gospel dispensation; See Gill on "Isa 52:7":

O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts; of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; which had been interrupted or omitted through the invasion of the land, and the siege of Jerusalem, by the enemy; but now, he being gone and slain, they had full liberty, and were at leisure to attend these solemnities:

perform thy vows; which they had made when in distress, when the enemy was in their land, and before their city; promising what they would do, if it pleased God to deliver them out of his hands, and now they were delivered; and therefore it was incumbent on them to make good their promises, and especially to offer up their thanksgivings to God for such a mercy; see Ps 50:14:

for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off; or Belial, the counsellor of Belial, as in **Na 1:11** the king of Assyria; who, though he had passed through their land, had invaded it, and made devastation in it, should do so no more; being dead, cut off in a judicial way, through the just judgment of God, suffering his sons to take away his life while in the midst of his idolatrous worship; and this may reach, not only to him, and his seed after him, being wholly cut off, but to the whole Assyrian empire, who should none of them ever give any further trouble to Judah.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**
Nahum 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO NAHUM 2

This chapter gives an account of the destruction of the city of Nineveh; describes the instruments of it as very terrible and powerful, and not to be resisted, **Na 2:1**. The manner of taking it, the flight of its inhabitants, and the spoil of its riches and treasures, **Na 2:5** and the king and the princes thereof, compared to a lion, and a lion's whelp, are insulted as being without a den or dwelling place, because of their cruelty and ravening, for which the Lord was against them, and threatened them with utter ruin, which he brought upon them, **Na 2:11**.

Ver. 1. He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face,.... O Nineveh, or land of Assyria; for this is not to be understood of Sennacherib's coming up against Jerusalem, as Kimchi; but of Nebuchadnezzar against Nineveh, as Aben Ezra; not Nebuchadnezzar the great, who, the Jewish chronologers say {c}, took Nineveh in the first year of his reign; but his father, Nebuchadnezzar the first, called Nabopolassar, who, with Cyaxares or Ahasuerus the Mede, joined their forces against Nineveh, and took it, see the Apocrypha:

"But before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineve, which was taken by Nabuchodonosor and Assuerus: and before his death he rejoiced over Nineve." (Tobit 14:15)

and these together, the Chaldeans and Medes, are the "dasher in pieces"; or, "the hammer" {d}, as the word may be rendered; and so Babylon, over which one of these kings reigned, is called the hammer of the whole earth, Jer 50:23 these came up openly, boldly, to the face of the king of Assyria, attacked him in his metropolis, not fearing his strength and numbers:

keep the munition; this and what follow are spoken ironically to the Assyrian king, and inhabitants of Nineveh, to take care of their towers and garrisons, and fortify them, and fill them with soldiers: and

watch the way; in which the enemy came; secure the passes and avenues that lead to their city; stop his march, and prevent his access:

make [thy] loins strong; put on armour, gird on the sword, prepare for war:

fortify [thy] power mightily; increase thine army, exert all thy strength and courage, and do all that is in thy power to do, to oppose the enemy, and defend thyself; and when all is done, it will be in vain.

{c} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 24. p. 69. {d} Uypm "malleus", Drusius, Tarnovius.

Nahum 2:2

Ver. 2. For the Lord hath turned away the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel,.... Or, "will render" a recompence for, or "revenge the pride of Jacob" {e}; all that insolence, and those injuries done in a proud and haughty manner by Sennacherib king of Assyria to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; invading their land, taking their fenced cities, and besieging their metropolis; and in an audacious manner threatening them with utter destruction, unless they surrendered; and also by Shalmaneser, another king of Assyria, who had besieged and took Samaria the capital city of Israel or the ten tribes, and had carried them captive; and now Assyria, though it had been the rod of God's anger, and the instrument of his chastisement and correction of his people, must in its turn suffer and smart for all this:

for the emptiers have emptied them out: the Assyrians, partly by their exactions and tributes they demanded, and partly by their spoil and plunder, had stripped Israel and Judah of all, or the greatest part, of their substance, wealth, and treasure:

and marred their vine branches; their children, their sons and daughters, slaying them, or carrying them captive. Israel and Judah are often compared to a vine, and so their posterity to branches: or "corrupted" {f} them, with superstition and idolatry. The Targum interprets it of their renowned cities; these, and towns and villages, being to the land as branches to the vine; and which had been ransacked and pillaged by the Assyrians, and now they should be paid in their own coin.

{e} bqey Nwag ta hwhy bv yk "ulciscitur enim Jehova adhibitam in Jacobaeos superbiam", Castalio; "reponit Deus Assyrio illam superbiam quam ipse in Jacobo et Israele exercuit", Grotius; "quia reddidit superbiam", &c. Tirinus. {f} wtxv "corruperunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus, Burkius.

Nahum 2:3

Ver. 3. The shield of his mighty men is made red,.... The shields of the soldiers in the armies of the Babylonians and Medes, those dashers in pieces that would come up against Nineveh, should be red; either with the blood of the slain, or thus coloured on purpose to inject terror to their enemies; or this may express the lustre of them, which being gilded, or made of gold or brass, in the rays of the sun glittered, and looked of a fiery red; see the Apocrypha:

"Now when the sun shone upon the shields of gold and brass, the mountains glistered therewith, and shined like lamps of fire." (1 Maccabees 6:39)

the valiant men [are] in scarlet; the generals and other officers of the army were clothed in scarlet; partly to show their greatness and nobleness, and partly to strike their enemies with terror, and to hide their blood should they be wounded, and so keep up their own spirits, and not encourage their enemies:

the chariots [shall be] with flaming torches in the day of his preparation; that is, when the Medes and Chaldeans, under their respective commander or commanders, shall prepare for the siege of the city, and to make their onset and attack upon it, the chariots used by them in war, which was common in those times, would have flaming torches in them; either to guide them in the night, or to set fire to houses or tents they should meet with, or to terrify the enemy: or "the chariots [shall be] as flaming torches" {g}; they should run with such swiftness, that the wheels, being of iron, or cased with it, should strike fire upon the stones in such quantities, that they should look like torches flaming:

and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken; with the motion of the chariots; or this may be interpreted of spears and lances, and such like instruments of war, made of fir; which should be in such great numbers, and with so much activity used against the Ninevites, that it would look like shaking a forest of fir trees. The Targum interprets these of the great men and generals of their armies glittering in dyed garments; and Kimchi's father, of the princes and great men of the city of Nineveh, who would be seized with terror, and reel about like drunken men; and so all that follows in the next verse **Na 2:4**.

{g} So b is sometimes used as k. See Nold. Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 162. No. 728. So Piscator, and the Tigurine version.

Nahum 2:4

Ver. 4. The chariots shall rage in the streets,.... In the streets of Nineveh when taken; where they shall be drove in a furious manner from place to place, the men in them breathing out slaughter and death wherever they came. Kimchi understands this of the chariots of the Ninevites; who shall drive about in them in the streets of the city like madmen; not daring to go out to fight the enemy, being mightier and more numerous than they.

They shall justle one against another in the broad ways; because of their numbers, and the haste they shall make to spoil and plunder the city; or the Ninevites shall justle one against another, in their hurry and confusion to make their escape.

They shall seem like torches; either the chariots of the Medes and Chaldeans, for the reasons given in the preceding verse **Na 2:3**; or they themselves, because of their fierceness and cruelty; or the faces of the Ninevites, being covered with shame, so Kimchi; see Isa 13:8.

They shall run like the lightnings; exceeding swiftly, with irresistible force and power; the above writer interprets this of the Ninevites also, running from one end of their city to the other in the utmost confusion, not knowing what to do; but the whole of these two verses **Na 2:3** seem to be a description of their enemies.

Nahum 2:5

Ver. 5. He shall recount his worthies,.... Either the dasher in pieces, **Na 2:1**, the kings of Babylon and Media, shall call together their general officers, and muster the forces under then, and put them in mind of their duty, and recount the actions of their ancestors in former times, in order to animate and encourage them to the siege and attack of the city of Nineveh; or the king of Assyria shall recount and muster up his nobles, and the troops under them, to sally out against the enemy, and meet him in the field, and give him battle:

they shall stumble in their walk: being many, and in haste to obey the orders of their commander, shall stumble and fall upon one another; or else the Ninevites in their march out against the enemy shall be discomfited and flee before him, or be dispirited and flee back again:

they shall make haste to the wall thereof; of Nineveh; that is, the Medes and Chaldeans shall make haste thither, to break it down or scale it; or the Ninevites, failing in their sally out, shall betake themselves in all haste to their city walls, and defend themselves under the protection of them:

and the defence shall be prepared; or the "covering": the word {h} used has the signification of a booth or tent, to cover and protect; here it signifies something that was prepared, either by the besiegers, to cover them from the darts and stones of the besieged, as they made their approaches to the walls; or which the besieged covered themselves with from the assaults of the besiegers; rather the former.

{h} Kkwoh "operimentum", Pagninus, Montanus; "integumentum", Calvin; "testudo", Vatablus, Grotius, Cocceius, Burkius.

Nahum 2:6

Ver. 6. The gates of the rivers shall be opened,.... Of Diava and Adiava, or Lycus and Caprus, between which, according to some writers {i}, Nineveh was situated; or the gates of the city, which lay nearest to the river Tigris, are meant; or that river itself, the plural for the singular, which overflowing, broke down the walls of the city for two and a half miles, and opened a way for the Medes and Chaldeans to enter in; of which see **Na 1:8**:

and the palace shall be dissolved; by the inundation, or destroyed by the enemy; meaning the palace of the king, which might be situated near the river; or the temple of Nisroch the Assyrian deity, or Jupiter Belus; for the same word {k} signifies a temple as well as palace.

{i} Vid. Fuller. Miscel. Sacr. l. 3. c. 6. {k} lkyhh "templum", V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Cocceius.

Nahum 2:7

Ver. 7. And Huzzab shall be led away captive,.... The Targum translates it the queen; and Jarchi and Aben Ezra, after R. Samuel, take it to be the name of the queen of Assyria; so called, as every queen might, from her standing at the king's right hand, Ps 45:9 who, when the royal palace was destroyed, was taken out, and carried captive with the rest, who before was in a well settled and tranquil state and condition: or perhaps the king himself is designed, who may be represented as a woman, as follows, for his effeminacy; conversing only with women; imitating their voice; wearing their apparel; and doing their work, spinning, &c. which is the character historians {l} give of the last king of the Assyrians: some {m} take it to be the idol Venus, worshipped by the Ninevites: though it may be meant either of the palace itself, as Kimchi's father, which was firm and well established; or rather Nineveh itself, thought to be stable and secure, the inhabitants of which should be carried into a strange land:

she shall be brought up; the queen, or the king, out of the palace or private retirement, where they were in peace and safety; or Nineveh, and the inhabitants of it, out of their secure state and condition:

and her maids shall lead [her]; her maids of honour, supporting her on the right hand and left, ready to sink and faint under her misfortunes: this may also be understood of towns and villages, and the inhabitants of them, that should go into captivity along with Nineveh:

as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts; mourning like doves, inwardly and secretly, not daring to express their sorrow more publicly, because of their enemies; but knocking and beating upon their breasts, as men do upon tabrets or drums, thereby expressing the inward grief of their minds; see **Eze 7:16**.

{l} Diodor. Sicul. l. 2. p. 109, 110. {m} Gebhardus apud Burkium in loc.

Nahum 2:8

Ver. 8. But Nineveh [is] of old like a pool of water,.... This was a very ancient city, built by Nimrod, as some say; or rather by Ashur, as appears from Ge 10:10 and it was like fish pool, full of people, as it was in the times of Jonah, who for their number may be compared both to water and to fish; and likewise full of wealth and riches, which for their instability may be signified by water also; and moreover, like a pool of standing water, had never been liable to any commotions and disturbances, but had remained from the beginning in a tranquil and prosperous state; besides, some regard may be had in a literal sense to its situation, being watered by the river Tigris, and which was for its profit and defence: so some copies of the Septuagint read the words,

"Nineveh is like a pool of water, the waters are her walls:"

and the Syriac version is,

"Nineveh is as a lake of water, and is among the waters;"

see **Na 1:6**:

yet they shall flee away; the waters out of the pool, the sluices being opened, or the banks broken down; or the people out of the city, breaches being made in its walls, or its gates opened, and the enemy entering; when everyone would flee for his life, and make his escape in the best manner he could:

stand, stand, [shall they cry]; either the generals and officers of the king of Assyria's army, to the soldiers running away; or the more courageous inhabitants of the city, to those that were timorous and seized with a panic, fleeing in the utmost consternation; or the enemy, as Kimchi, who shall call to them to stop, promising to spare their lives upon a surrender of them to them:

but none shall look back; and stand to hear what is said unto them, but make the best of their way, and flee with all their might and main.

Nahum 2:9

Ver. 9. Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold,.... Of which there was a great quantity in this rich and populous city: these are the words of the prophet, or of the Lord by the prophet, to the Medes and Chaldeans, to seize the spoil of the city, now fallen into their hands; suggesting that this was by the order and will of God, though they saw it not: or of the generals of the army of the Medes and Babylonians, giving leave to the common soldiers to take part of the plunder, there being enough for them all, officers and private men:

for [there is] none end of the store [and] glory out of all the pleasant furniture: no end of the wealth which had been hoarded up, and of their household goods and rich apparel, which their coffers, houses, and wardrobes, were full of, the value of which could not be told. The king of Assyria, perceiving that he, his family, and his wealth, were like to fall into the hands of the enemy, caused a pile of wood to be raised, and in it heaped his gold, silver, and royal apparel, and, enclosing himself, his eunuchs, and concubines in it, set fire to it, and destroyed himself and them. It is said {n} there were no less in this pile than a thousand myriads of talents of gold, which are about fourteen hundred millions sterling, and ten times as many talents of silver, together with apparel and furniture unspeakable; and yet, after all this, the princes of the Babylonians and Medes carried off vast quantities. The Babylonian prince loaded several ships with the ashes of the pile, and a large quantity of gold and silver, discovered to him by an eunuch, a deserter; and the Median prince, what of the gold and silver left out of the pile, which were many talents, that fell into his hands, he sent to Ecbatana, the royal city of Media {o}.

{n} Athenaeus apud Rollin's Ancient History, &c. vol. 2. p. 31, 32. See the Universal History, vol. 4. p. 306. {o} Diodor. Sicul. l. 2. p. 114, 115.

Nahum 2:10

Ver. 10. She is empty, and void, and waste,.... The city of Nineveh, empty of inhabitants, being killed, or having fled; and stripped of all its treasures and riches by the enemies; its walls and houses demolished and pulled down, and laid in ruins, and become a heap of rubbish; See Gill on "Na 1:8". Various words are here used to ascertain and confirm the thing; and there is an elegant play on words or likeness of sounds, which our language will not express:

and the heart melteth; the heart of every inhabitant of Nineveh melted with fear at the approach of their enemies, their entrance into the city, and plunder of it; flowed like water, or melted like wax; see Ps 22:14:

and the knees smite together; like people in a fright, and when a panic has seized them; and as it was with Belshazzar, **Da 5:6**:

and much pain [is] in all loins; like that of women in travail; or of persons in a sudden fright, which gives them a pain in their backs at once:

and the faces of them all gather blackness; like a pot, as the Targum adds; being in great distress and disconsolation, which make men appear in a dismal hue, and their countenances look very dark and gloomy; see **Joe 2:6**.

Nahum 2:11

Ver. 11. Where [is] the dwelling of the lions?.... Of the kings of Assyria, comparable to lions for their strength, courage, and cruelty, tyranny, and oppression; such as Pul, Tiglathpileser, Shalmaneser, and Sennacherib. So the Targum,

"where are the habitations of kings?"

these are the words, either of the prophet, or of the people that had seen this city in its glory, and now see it in its ruins; and so desolate and waste, as that it could scarcely be said where it once stood:

and the feedingplace of the young lions? the sons of the kings of Assyria, the princes of the blood, and who were of the same blood, temper, and disposition of their ancestors, and were born, brought up, and educated, in Nineveh the royal city. So the Targum,

"and the dwelling houses of the princes,"

or governors:

where the lion, [even] the old lion, walked: not Nebuchadnezzar, as Jerom, who entered into Nineveh the den of those lions, or seat of the Assyrians, and took it, and walked about in it, as the conqueror and possessor of it; but rather Nimrod, that old lion and tyrant, if he was the first founder of this city, as some say; though it does not seem so much to design any particular person, but the kings of Assyria in general, even the most cruel and savage, as the old lion is. So the Targum in the plural number,

"whither the kings went;"

and the lion's whelp, and none made [them] afraid: there were none to resist their power, curb their insolence, and put a stop to their cruelty and oppression; or make them afraid of pursuing such methods. The Targum is,

"there they leave their children, even as a lion that continues in hunting with confidence, and there is none that terrifies."

Nahum 2:12

Ver. 12. The lion did tear in pieces enough for his whelps,.... The metaphor is still continued; and the kings of Assyria are compared to lions that hunt for their prey, and, having found it, tear it in pieces, and carry home a sufficiency for their whelps. It is a notion that is advanced by some writers, as Herodotus {p}, that the lioness, the strongest and boldest creature, brings forth but once in its life, and then but one; which Gellius {q} confutes by the testimonies of Homer and Aristotle; and it appears from the prophet here to be a false one, as well as from Eze 19:2 thus the Assyrians made war on other nations, and pillaged and plundered them, to enlarge their dominions, provide for their posterity, and enrich their children:

and strangled for his lionesses; that is, strangled other beasts, as the lion first does, when it seizes a creature, and then tears it in pieces, and brings it to the she lion in the den with its whelps. These "lionesses" design the wives and concubines of the kings of Assyria, among whom they parted the spoils of their neighbours. So the Targum,

"kings bring rapine to their wives, and a prey to their children;"

that is, riches, which they have taken from others by force and rapine: thus Cicero {r} observes of the kings of Persia and Syria, that they had many wives, and gave cities to them after this manner; this city for their headdress, this for the neck, and the other for the hair; the expenses of them:

and filled his holes with prey, and his dens with ravine; as the lion fills his dens and lurking holes with the prey he has seized and ravened; so the kings of Assyria filled their palaces, treasures, magazines, towers, cities, and towns, with the wealth and riches they took by force from other nations; as the Targum,

"and they filled their treasuries with rapine, and their palaces with spoil."

{p} Thalia, sive l. 3. c. 108. {q} Noctes Atticae, l. 13. c. 7. {r} Orat. 8. in Verrem, l. 3. p. 509.

Nahum 2:13

Ver. 13. Behold, I [am] against thee, saith the Lord of hosts,.... Against Nineveh, and the whole Assyrian empire, for such rapine, violence, and oppression, their kings had been guilty of; and if he, who is the Lord of hosts, of all the armies of heaven and earth, was against them, nothing but ruin must inevitably ensue: or, "I come unto thee" {s}; or will shortly come unto thee, and reckon with thee for all this; will visit thee in a way of wrath and vengeance. The Targum is, "behold, I will send my fury upon thee:"

and I will burn her chariots in the smoke; either those in which the inhabitants of Nineveh rode in great splendour about the city; or those which were used in war with their enemies; and this he would do "in the smoke"; or, "unto smoke", as the Vulgate Latin version; or, "into smoke", as the Syriac {t}; easily, quickly, at once, suddenly, so that they should evaporate into smoke, and be no more; or, with fire, as the Targum; that is, as Kimchi interprets it, with a great fire, whose smoke is seen afar off; and may be figuratively understood of the smoke of divine wrath, as Aben Ezra explains it:

and the sword shall devour thy young lions; the swords of the Medes and Chaldeans shall destroy the princes, the sons of their king. The Targum interprets this of towns or villages destroyed thereby:

and I will cut thy prey from the earth; cut them off that they should no more prey upon their neighbours; and what they had got should be taken away from them, and be of no use to them:

and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard; in foreign courts, demanding homage and subjection; exacting and collecting tribute; blaspheming the God of heaven, and menacing his people, as Rabshakeh, a messenger of one of these kings, did; and which is mentioned by most of the Jewish commentators as being then a recent thing. Some render it, "the voice", or "noise of thy jaw teeth" {u}; alluding to the lion's breaking the bones of its prey, which is done with a great noise; signifying that such cruelty and oppression the Assyrians had been guilty of should be used no more; or rather, as R. Judah ben Balaam observes, as it signifies the noise of the teeth devouring the prey, it is as if it was said, I will cut off thy prey from the earth; and Ben Melech says that, in the Persian language, grinding stones are expressed by this word, and teeth are called grinders; see Ec 12:3.

{s} Kyla ynnh "ad te venturus sum", Vatablus; "ego ad te venio", Drusius. {t} Nveb "in fumum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {u} hkkalm lwq "vox dentium molarium", Calvin.

INTRODUCTION TO NAHUM 3

In this chapter is contained the prophecy of the destruction of Nineveh, and with it the whole Assyrian empire; the causes of which, besides those before mentioned, were the murders, lies, and robberies it was full of, **Na 3:1** for which it should be swiftly and cruelly destroyed, **Na 3:2** as also its whoredoms and witchcrafts, or idolatry, by which nations and families were seduced, **Na 3:4** and hence she should be treated as a harlot, her nakedness exposed, and she cast out with contempt, and mocked at by all, **Na 3:5** and all those things she placed her confidence in are shown to be of no avail; as her situation and fortresses, as she might learn from the case of No Amon, **Na 3:8** nor the number of her inhabitants, which were weak as women; nor even her merchants, captains, nobles, and king himself, **Na 3:13** nor the people she was in alliance with, who would now mock at her, her case being irrecoverable and incurable, **Na 3:19**.

Ver. 1. Woe to the bloody city,.... Nineveh, in which many murders were daily committed; innocent blood shed; the lives of men taken away, under the colour of justice, by false witnesses, and other unlawful methods; and which was continually making war with neighbouring nations, and shedding their blood, which it stuck not at, to enlarge its wealth and dominions; and therefore "woe" is denounced against it; and it is threatened with the righteous judgments of God, with all sorts of calamity and distress: or, "O bloody city", as the Septuagint; for the word used is vocative, and expressive of calling, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe:

it [is] all full of lies [and] robbery; the palace and court; the houses of noblemen and common persons were full of flattery and deceit; men of high degree were a lie, and men of low degree vanity; no man could trust another, or believe what he said; there were no truth, honesty, and faithfulness, in conversation or commerce; their warehouses were full of goods, got by rapine and violence; and their streets full of robbers and robberies:

the prey departeth not; they go on in making a prey of their neighbours, in pillaging and plundering their substance; they repent not of such evil practices, nor desist from them; or because of the above sins they shall fall a prey to the enemy, who will not cease plundering them till he has utterly stripped them of all they have; and who is represented in the next verse **Na 3:2** as just at hand.

Nahum 3:2

Ver. 2. The noise of a whip,.... Of a horseman or chariot driver whipping his horses to make speed to Nineveh, and enter into it, so near as to be heard by the inhabitants of it; and is thus represented in order to strike terror into them:

and the noise of the rattling of the wheels; that is, of the chariots upon the stones, whose drivers drove Jehu like, making the utmost haste they could to get in first, and seize the prey:

and of the pransing horses; or bounding steeds, upon a full gallop; either with horsemen on them riding full speed to partake of the booty; or in chariots, in which they caper and prance, and shake the ground as they go; hence it follows:

and of the jumping chariots; which, through the swiftness of the motion, seem to leap and dance as they run along.

Nahum 3:3

Ver. 3. The horseman lifteth up both the bright sword and the glittering spear,.... Or, "the flame of the sword and the glittering spear" {w}; he rides with a drawn sword, which, being brandished to and fro, looks like a flame of fire; or with a spear made of polished iron, or steel, which, when vibrated and moved to and fro, glitters like lightning; a large number of which entering the city must be terrible to the inhabitants of it:

and [there is] a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcasses; of dead men lying in the streets, pierced and slain with the bright sword and glittering spear of the Medes and Chaldeans:

and [there is] none end of [their] corpses; the number of them could not be told; they lay so thick in all parts of the city, that there was no telling them:

they stumble upon their corpses; the Ninevites in fleeing, and endeavouring to make their escape, and the Medes and Chaldeans pursuing them.

{w} tynx qrbw brx bhl "flammam gladii et fulgorem hastae", Piscator; "flammam gladii et fulgur hastae", Cocceius; "flamma gladii et fulgur lanceae", Burkius.

Nahum 3:4

Ver. 4. Because of the multitudes of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot,.... Meaning Nineveh; which, as it was an ancient city, was a well built one; full of stately and beautiful buildings, the seat of the kings of Assyria, and the metropolis of the nation, and abounded with wealth and riches; perhaps here may be an allusion to the name of the city, and to the signification of it; for Nineveh may have its name from the beauty of it, and be read, in Hebrew, hwn yan or ywn, and may signify a beautiful or pleasant habitation; so Hillerus {x} and Cocceius {y} give the etymology of it; which agrees with its delightful situation on the banks of the river Tigris, and the stately edifices in it, as the king's palace, and others; just as Zion is said to be "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth", Ps 48:2 and the epithet of "well favoured" well agrees with a harlot, whose beauty is engaging and ensnaring, as Lais, and others; particularly Semiramis, the wife of Ninus, from whom it is generally thought Nineveh had its name, was first a harlot, and one of exceeding beauty, who surpassed all others in it; on account of which she was beloved by the king of Assyria, and after a short time made his wife, and then he delivered the government of the kingdom to her {z}; yea, Sardanapalus the Last, and at this time the present king of the Assyrians, was very effeminate, used to dress himself in women's clothes, imitate a woman's voice, and paint his face, and even his whole body; and, by other tricks and enticements of harlots, made himself more lascivious, and behaved more lewdly, than any harlot {a}; in short, all the Assyrian women must be harlots, since they were obliged once in their lifetime to lie with a stranger in the temple of Venus, whom the Assyrians call Mylitta, as Herodotus {b} and Strabo {c} relate; to all which here may be an allusion: and particularly the inhabitants of this city had all the arts of address and insinuation to deceive others as harlots have; and both men and women very probably were given to whoredom and adultery in a literal sense as is generally the case where luxury and intemperance abound; and especially were grossly guilty of idolatry, which in Scripture is frequently expressed by whoredom and adultery; worshipping Bel, Nisroch and other deities and which was highly provoking to God; and therefore for these things, his judgements came upon them, before and after described:

the mistress of witchcrafts: thoroughly versed in such wicked and devilish practices, literally understood; see Isa 47:9 for the Assyrians, as well as the Babylonians and Chaldeans, were addicted to such diabolical arts, as appears from a passage in Theocritus {d}, which Grotius has also quoted; where one is represented saying that she kept in her box or chest very pernicious poisons, which she had learned from an Assyrian guest. The allusion seems to be to philtres, and other tricks used by harlots to besot young men, and bewitch and captivate them: likewise this city and its inhabitants were well versed in all the arts of flattery, deceit, and carnal policy; and in all the charms of wealth, riches, luxury, and sensuality, the pomp of superstition and idolatry, to draw in kingdoms and nations into subjection to them:

that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts; enslaved whole kingdoms, and brought them under her power and dominion, to be her vassals; and was the instrument, not only of corporeal servitude, but of their selling themselves to work wickedness, by committing spiritual fornication or idolatry; into which multitudes were led by her influence and example, and particularly the kingdoms and families of Israel and Judah; see 2Ki 16:10. In these whoredoms and witchcrafts, as well as in her bloodthirstiness, lies, and oppression, Nineveh was a type of the whore of Rome; see Re 17:1.

{x} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 304, 431, 898. {y} Comment. in Jonam, c. 1. 2. {z} Diodor. Sicul. l. 2. p. 93. 107. Ed. Rhodoman. {a} Ibid. p. 109, 110. {b} Clio, sive. l. 1. c. 199. {c} Geograph. l. 16. p. 513. {d} Pharmaceutria, sive Idyll. 2. prope finem.

Nahum 3:5

Ver. 5. Behold, I [am] against thee, saith the Lord of hosts,.... Because her doings were against him; See Gill on "Na 2:13":

and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face; turn up the skirts of her garments over her head, and thereby discover what should be concealed, than which nothing is more disagreeable and abominable to modest persons; it is here threatened she should be used in character as a harlot, or as women oftentimes are by rude soldiers, when a city is taken by them:

and I will show the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame; all her charms shall be taken away, and she become odious as a harlot to her former lovers; all her impostures, arts, and tricks, and shameful actions, will be discovered; and her aims and views at universal monarchy will be seen and her weakness to effect it made to appear; and, upon the whole, will become the object of the scorn and derision of kingdoms and nations.

Nahum 3:6

Ver. 6. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee,.... As dirt and dung, or any or everything that is abominable and filthy; and which is thrown at harlots publicly disgraced, and as used to be at persons when carted. The meaning is, that this city and its inhabitants should be stripped of everything that was great and glorious in them, and should be reduced to the utmost shame and ignominy:

and make thee vile: mean, abject, contemptible, the offscouring of all things; rejected and disesteemed of all; had in no manner of repute or account, but in the utmost abhorrence:

and I will set thee as a gazingstock; to be looked and laughed at: or, "for an example" {e}; to others, that they may shun the evils and abominations Nineveh had been guilty of, or expect the same disgrace and punishment. Kimchi interprets it "as dung" {f}; to be no more reckoned of than that, or to be made a dunghill of; and so many others interpret it; or, "for a looking glass" {g}; that others may look into, and take warning, and avoid the sins that have brought on such calamities.

{e} yawrk eiv paradeigma, Sept.; "in exemplum", Drusius, Tarnovius; "sicut spectacalum", Burkius. {f} "Tanquam stercus", Munster, Montanus, Vatablus, Calvin, Cocceius. {g} "Ut speculum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Quistorpius.

Nahum 3:7

Ver. 7. And it shall come to pass, [that] all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee,.... As something loathsome and abominable, not fit to be come near unto, or touched; and as astonished and amazed at an object so forlorn and miserable, and lest they should partake of the same punishment:

and say, Nineveh is laid waste; utterly destroyed; its walls broke down, its houses demolished, its substance plundered, and its inhabitants killed, or carried captive; who could have thought it, when it was once so stately, rich, and powerful? but so it is indeed!

who will bemoan her? there are none left in her to do it; and as for others, her neighbours, whom she has oppressed and cruelly used, these will laugh and rejoice, instead of lamenting her case:

whence shall I seek comforters for thee? none from among her inhabitants, being destroyed, or carried into a foreign land; and none from among the nations round about, who will rather deride and insult than pity and comfort; so wretched and miserable would her case be!

Nahum 3:8

Ver. 8. Art thou better than populous No,.... Or No Amon, a city in Egypt so called, not because the kings of Egypt were nursed and brought up there, as Jarchi and Abarbinel; see **Pr 8:30** but from Ham the son of Noah, whose land Egypt was; or from Jupiter Ammon, worshipped there. No Amon signifies the mansion or palace of Ham, or Hamon; the Egyptians, as Herodotus says {h}, call Jupiter by the name of Ammon. The Targum interprets it of Alexandria the great, a city so called long after this, when it was rebuilt by Alexander the great; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, understand it: others take Diospolis or Thebes to be meant, famous in Homer {i} for its hundred gates; though some think this was not the number of the gates of the city, but of the temples in it; and others are of opinion that these were so many palaces of princes {k}. The city was built by Osiris; or, according to others, by Busiris, and seems more likely to be the place here meant; since here was a temple dedicated to Jupiter, called by the Egyptians Ammon, as Diodorus Siculus {l} relates, and was a very large and populous city. Indeed, according to the above historian, it was in compass but a seventeen and a half miles {m}; which is to be understood of the city when first built, and before it was enlarged; for it must have been a great deal larger in later times, if we may judge of it by its ruins. Strabo {n}, who was an eyewitness of them quickly after its last destruction by Cornelius Gallus, says, the footsteps of its largeness were seen fourscore furlongs in length, or ten miles; and even this was but small, in comparison of what it was before it was destroyed by Cambyses, when it is said to reach four hundred and twenty furlongs, or fifty two miles and a half {o}. It was the metropolis of all Egypt; and formerly the whole country was called after its name, as Herodotus {p} observes. The accounts given of its inhabitants are incredible, and particularly of the soldiers it sent out; according to the epitaph of Rhampses, seven hundred thousand soldiers dwelt in it; which number Diodorus Siculus {q} gives to all the people in Egypt; but, though it may seem too large for Thebes, must be too little for all Egypt; especially if what Agrippa in Josephus {r} says is right, that Egypt, from Ethiopia and the borders of India to Alexandria, had no less than 7,500,000 inhabitants: however, if Pomponius Mela {s} may be credited, when it was necessary, the hundred palaces in Thebes could each of them send out ten thousand armed men, or, as some say, twenty thousand; and if what Diodorus Siculus {t} affirms is true, that twenty thousand chariots used to go out from thence to war, this shows it to have been a very populous city indeed, and might well be called "populous" No; but now it is utterly destroyed, first by the Assyrians and Babylonians, then by the Persians, and last of all by the Romans; the first destruction must be here referred to, if this city is designed. Strabo {u} says in his time it was only inhabited in villages; and Juvenal {w} speaks of it as wholly lying in ruins; and Pausanias {x}, making mention of it with other cities which abounded with riches, says they were reduced to the fortune of a middling private man, yea, were brought to nothing. It is now, or what is built on the spot, or near it, called Luxxor, or Lukorcen {y}. Some {z} think the city Memphis is meant, so Vitringa on Isa 19:5. See Gill on "Eze 30:14", See Gill on "Eze 30:15", this was for many ages the metropolis of all Egypt. Strabo {a} calls it a large and "populous" city, and full of men, and second to Alexandria in his time. The compass of it, when first built, was eighteen and three quarter miles {b}; but now there is no more remaining of it than if there had never been such a city; nay, it is not easy to say where it once stood: now Nineveh is asked, or its inhabitants, if it could be thought that their city was in a better and safer condition than this city; it might indeed, according to the account of it by historians, and as in the prophecy of Jonah, be larger, and its inhabitants more numerous; but not better fortified, which seems to be the thing chiefly respected, as follows:

that was situate among the rivers; the canals of the river Nile:

[that had] the waters round about it: a moat on every side, either naturally or artificially:

whose rampart [was] the sea, [and] her wall [was] from the sea? which agrees with Alexandria, according to the description of it by Strabo {c}, Solinus {d}, and Josephus {e}, which had two seas on each side of it; the Egyptian sea on the north, and the lake Mareotis on the south, as well as had the canals of the Nile running into it from various parts; and is represented as very difficult of access, through the sea, rivers, and marshy places about it; and, besides, might have a wall towards the sea, as by this account it should seem, as well as the sea itself was a wall and rampart to it: and this description may also agree with Diospolis or Thebes, which, though more inland, yet, as Bochart {f} observes, it had, as all Egypt had, the two seas, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, and the canals of the Nile, which might be said to be as a rampart to it. So Isocrates {g} says of all Egypt, that it is fortified with an immortal wall, the Nile, which not only affords a defence, but sufficient food, and is insuperable and inexpugnable; nor is it unusual, as to call rivers and lakes seas, so particularly the Nile, and its canals; see Isa 11:15, and in the Alcoran the Nile is often called a sea {h}. There is another Diospolis in Egypt, near Mendes, which, as Strabo {i} says, had lakes about it; but this, being a more obscure place, is not likely to be intended here; though Father Calmet {k} is of opinion that it is here meant; it being situated in the Delta, on one of the arms of the Nile, between Busiris to the south, and Mendes to the north. The description seems to agree better with Memphis, whose builder Uchoreus, as Diodorus Siculus {l} says, chose a very convenient place for it, where the Nile divided itself into many parts, and made the Delta, so called from its figure; and which he made wonderfully strong, after this manner: whereas the Nile flowed round the city, being built within the ancient bed of it, and at its increase would overflow it; he cast up a very great mound or rampart to the south, which was a defence against the swell of the river, and was of the use of a fortress against enemies by land; and on the other parts all about he dug a large and deep lake, which received a very great deal of the river, and filled every place about the city but where the mound (or rampart) was built, and so made it amazingly strong; whence the kings after him left Thebes, and had their palace and court here; and so Herodotus, who makes Menes to be the builder of it, says {m}, that without the city he caused lakes to be dug from the river to the north, and to the west, for to the east the Nile itself bounded it; and Josephus {n}, who also makes Minaeus, or Menes, the first Pharaoh, to be the builder of it, speaks of that and the sea together, as if not far off each other: now, if a city so populous, and so well fortified by art and nature, as each of these were, was taken, and its inhabitants carried captive, Nineveh could not depend on her numbers or situation for safety, which were not more or better than this.

{h} L. 2. sive Euterpe, c. 42. {i} Iliad. 9. ver. 381. {k} Vid. Mela de Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 9. Diodor. Sicul. l. 1. p. 43. {l} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 14, 42. Ed. Rhodoman. {m} Ibid. p. 42. {n} Geograph. l. 16. p. 561, Ed. Casaubon. {o} See the Universal History, vol. 1. p. 396. {p} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 15. {q} Ut supra, (Bibliothec. l. 1.) p. 27. {r} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 4. {s} De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 9. {t} Ut supra, (Bibliothec. l. 1.) p. 43. Vid. Homer, ut supra. (Iliad. 9. ver. 381.) {u} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 16. p. 561, Ed. Casaubon.) {w} "Vetus Theba centum jacet obruta portis", Satyr. 15. l. 6. {x} Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 509. Ed. Hanau. {y} Norden's Travels in Egypt and Nubia, vol. 2. p. 61, 62. {z} So Hillerus, Onomast. Sacr. p. 571, 572. & Burkius in loc. {a} Geograph. l. 17. p. 555. {b} Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 46. {c} Geograph. l. 17. p. 545. {d} Polyhistor. c. 45. {e} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 4. {f} Phaleg. l. 1. c. 1. col. 6, 7. {g} Busiris, p. 437. {h} Vid. Schultens in Job xiv. 11. {i} Geograph. l. 17. p. 551. {k} Dictionary, in the word "Diospolis". {l} Ut supra. (Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 46.) {m} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 99. {n} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 2. & l. 2. c. 10. sect. 1.

Nahum 3:9

Ver. 9. Ethiopia and Egypt [were] her strength,.... That is, the strength, support, protection, and defence of No, whether Alexandria, or Thebes, or Memphis: Egypt was, for these cities were in it, and subject to it; or, if this was a free city, as some think, yet in alliance with Egypt, and under its protection; and in like connection it was with Ethiopia, that is, Arabia, a country that lay near to it; and yet, though it was strengthened by such powerful neighbours and allies, it was not secure from the devastation of the enemy:

and it [was] infinite; or there was "no end" {o}; of its strength, or of the number of its allies, or the forces they were able to bring in its defence. The Ethiopians were very numerous, as may be learnt from 2Ch 14:9 and so were the Egyptians, to whom some interpreters strictly connect this sentence. In the times of Amasis, as Mela {p} relates, there were twenty thousand cities inhabited in it; and Josephus {q} says there were in it seven hundred and fifty myriads of men; as Sethon, king of Egypt, and Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, were about this time the allies of the Jews, in whom they trusted, no doubt they were confederate together, and so both the strength of this city; see Isa 36:6:

Put and Lubim, were thy helpers; Put, or the Putim, were the people of the Moors, that dwelt in Mauritania; and Lubim were the Lybians that bordered on Egypt, and whose country is sometimes reckoned a part of it. The Jews {r} say Lybia is Egypt; see **Ac 2:10** these several people were the confederates of No; and helped them, not only by their commerce with them, but in time of war assisted them against their enemies; and yet, though so strengthened by alliances, were not safe and secure; and therefore Nineveh could not depend upon such helps and helpers.

{o} huq Nyaw "non est finis", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Cocceius. {p} De Orbis Situ. l. 1. c. 9. {q} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 4. {r} T. Hieros. Celaim, c. 8. fol. 31. 3.

Nahum 3:10

Ver. 10. Yet [was] she carried away, she went into captivity,.... Not by Nebuchadnezzar; though this city was afterwards taken, and its inhabitants carried captive, by that monarch, as was foretold, Jer 46:25 but the prophet here does not predict an event to be accomplished, and instance in that, and argue from it, which could have no effect on Nineveh and its inhabitants, or be an example or terror to them; but refers to what had been done, a recent fact, and which they were well acquainted with. Aben Ezra says, this city No was a city of the land of Egypt, which the king of the Chaldeans took as he went to Nineveh; but when, and by whom it was taken, is nowhere said. According to Bishop Usher {s} and Dean Prideaux {t}, the destruction of the city of Thebes was by Sennacherib, in his expedition against Egypt, which he harassed for three years together, from one end to the other; at which time Sevechus, the son of Sabacon, or So, the Ethiopian, was king of Egypt; and Egypt and Ethiopia were as one country, and helped each other; but could not secure this city from falling into the hands of Sennacherib, about three years before he besieged Jerusalem; and so, according to Mr. Whiston {u}, it was destroyed three years before the army of Sennacherib was destroyed at Jerusalem:

her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: against the walls of the houses, or upon the stones and pavements of the streets; which cruelties were often used by conquerors upon innocent babes at the sacking of cities, Ps 137:9:

and they cast lots for her honourable men; the soldiers did, who should have them, and sell them for slaves; which was done without any regard to their birth and breeding, **Joe 3:3**:

and all her great men were bound in chains; as nobles may be meant by "honourable men", by "great men" may be designed the gentry, merchants, and others; these were taken, and bound in iron chains, handcuffed, and pinioned, and so led captive into a foreign land; and Nineveh might expect the same treatment.

{s} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3292. {t} Connexion, par. 1. B. 1. p. 22, 23. {u} Chronological Tables, cent. 8.

Nahum 3:11

Ver. 11. Thou also shalt be drunken,.... This is said to Nineveh, whose turn would be next to drink of the cup of the wrath of God, and be inebriated with it, so that they should not know where they were, or what they did; and be as unable to guide and help themselves as a drunken man. So the Targum, "thou also shalt be like to a drunken man;"

this was literally true of Nineveh when taken; see **Na 1:10**:

thou shalt be hid; or, "thou shall be", as if thou wast not; as Nineveh is at this day, "hid" from the sight of men, not to be seen any more. So the Targum,

"thou shall be swallowed up or destroyed."

The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it "despised"; or the meaning is, she should "hide herself" {w}; or be lurking about through shame, as drunken, or through fear of her enemies:

thou also shall seek strength because of the enemy; seek to others to help them against the enemy, not being able with their own strength to face them: or, seek strength "of the enemy" {x}; beg their lives of him, and their bread; pray for quarter, and desire to be taken under his protection; to so low and mean a state and condition should Nineveh and its inhabitants be reduced, who had given laws to all about them, and had been a terror to them.

{w} hmlen "latitans", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "abscondes te", Vatablus; "eris abscondita", Burkius. {x} bywam ex ecyrwn, Sept.; "ab hoste", Montanus, Calvin, Drusius, Grotius, Cocceius.

Nahum 3:12

Ver. 12. All thy strong holds [shall be like] fig trees with the first ripe figs,.... Upon them, or like them: "and the first ripe figs"; which are easily shook and gathered; and so easily should the fortresses and towers of Nineveh, in which they trusted for safety, be taken by the enemy, not only one, but all of them:

if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater; as such ripe fruit is very desirable, and the mouth of a man is open and ready for them; so if he gives the tree but the least shake, they will fall into his mouth, or about him in great plenty: in like manner, as the fortresses of Nineveh, being of importance, were desirable by the Chaldeans and Medes, and for which they were gaping; so upon the least assault they would fall into their hands; see **Re 6:13**.

Nahum 3:13

Ver. 13. Behold, thy people in the midst of thee [are] women,.... Or like women, weak and feeble, fearful and timorous; frightened at the first approach of the enemy; run away, and run up and down in the utmost consternation and distress, having neither skill nor courage to oppose them; some regard may be had to the effeminacy of their king; see **Na 2:7**. The sense is, they should be at once dispirited, and lose all strength of mind and body, and have neither heads nor hearts to form schemes, and execute them in their own defence; and thus should they be, even in the midst of the city, upon their own ground, where, any where, it might be thought they would exert themselves, and play the man, since their all lay at stake: this was another thing they trusted in, the multitude of their people, even of their soldiers; but these would be of no avail, since they would lose all their military skill and bravery:

the gates of thy land shall be set wide open to thine enemies: instead of guarding the passes and avenues, they would abandon them to the enemy; and, instead of securing the gates and passages, they would run away from them; and the enemy would find as easy access as if they were thrown open on purpose for them; perhaps this may respect the gates of the rivers being opened by the inundation, which threw down the wall, and made a way into the city; see **Na 2:6**:

the fire shall devour thy bars; with which their gates had been shut, but now opened, and in the enemies' hands; who would set fire to them, that the way to go in and out might be open and free.

Nahum 3:14

Ver. 14. Draw thee waters for the siege,.... Before the siege is begun, fetch water from the river, wells, or fountains without the city, and fill cisterns, and such like receptacles of water, with them; that there may be sufficiency of it to hold out, which is often wanting in long sieges; the want of which gives great distress to the besieged: this is put for all necessary provisions, which should be made when a city is in danger of being blocked up: this, and what follows, are said ironically; signifying, let them do what they would or could for their support and security, it would be all in vain:

fortify thy strong holds; repair the old fortifications, and add new ones to them; fill them with soldiers, arms, and ammunition:

go into clay, and tread the mortar; make strong the brick kiln; repair the brick kilns, keep them in good order; employ men in digging clay, and treading it, and making it into bricks, and burning them in the kiln, that there be no want of bricks to repair the fortifications, or such breaches as might be made by the enemy. Bricks were much used instead of stone in those countries; but when they had done their utmost, they would not be able to secure themselves, and keep out the enemy.

Nahum 3:15

Ver. 15. There shall the fire devour thee,.... In the strong holds, made ever so firm and secure; either the fire of divine wrath; or the fire of the enemy they should put into them; or the enemy himself, as Kimchi; and so the Targum,

"thither shall come upon thee people who are as strong as fire:"

the sword shall cut thee off; it shall eat thee up as the cankerworm: that is, the sword of the Medes and Chaldeans shall utterly destroy thee, as the cankerworm is destroyed by rain or fire; or rather, as that creature destroys all herbs, plants, and trees it falls upon, and makes clear riddance of them, so should it be with Nineveh:

make thyself many as the cankerworm; make thyself many as the locust; which go in swarms, innumerable, and make the air "heavy" in which they fly, and the earth on which they fall, as the word {y} signifies. The locust has one of its names, "arbah", in Hebrew, from the large numbers of them; so a multitude of men, and large armies, are often signified in Scripture to be like grasshoppers or locusts, for their numbers; see **Jud 6:5**. So Sithalces king of Thrace is represented {z} as swearing, while he was sacrificing, that he would assist the Athenians, having an army that would come like locusts, that is, in such numbers; for so the Greek scholiast on the place says the word used signifies a sort of locusts: the sense is, gather together as many soldiers, and as large an army, as can be obtained to meet the enemy, or cause him to break up the siege: and so we find {a} the king of Assyria did; for, perceiving his kingdom in great danger, he sent into all his provinces to raise soldiers, and prepare everything for the siege; but all to no purpose, which is here ironically suggested. The word in the Misnic language, as Kimchi observes, has the signification of sweeping; and some render it, "sweep as the locust" {b}; which sweeps away and consumes the fruits of the earth; so sweep with the besom of destruction, as Jarchi, either their enemies, sarcastically spoken, or be thou swept by them.

{y} dbkth "aggravate", Montanus; "onerate", Tigurine version; "gravem effice te", Burkius. {z} Aristophan. in Acharnens. Act. 1. Scen. 1. {a} Diodor. Sicul. l. 2. p. 113. {b} So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 39. 1.

Nahum 3:16

Ver. 16. Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven,.... A hyperbolical expression, setting forth the great number of merchants that were in Nineveh, and in the land of Assyria; who either were the natives of the place, or came thither for the sake of merchandise, which serve to enrich a nation, and therefore are encouraged to settle; and from whom, in a time of war, much benefit might be expected; being able to furnish with money, which is the sinews of war, as well as to give intelligence of the designs of foreign princes, they trading abroad:

the cankerworm spoileth, and flieth away; or "puts off" {c} its clothes, disrobes and changes its form; or breaks out with force, as the Septuagint, out of its former worm state, and appears a beautiful butterfly, and then flies away. The word is rendered a caterpillar, Ps 105:34 and what we translate "spoileth" is used of stripping, or putting off of clothes, 1Sa 19:24 and the sense may be, that though their merchants were multiplied above the stars of heaven, in which there may be an allusion to the increase of caterpillars, **Na 3:15** yet, as the caterpillar drops its clothes, and flies away, so their merchants, through fear of the enemy, would depart in haste, or be suddenly stripped of their riches, which make themselves wings, and fly away, Pr 23:5. These merchants, at their beginning, might be low and mean, but, increasing, adorning, and enriching themselves in a time of peace, fled away in a time of war: or, "spreads itself" {d}, and "flies away"; so these creatures spread themselves on the earth, and devour all they can, and then spread their wings, and are gone; suggesting that in like manner the merchants of Nineveh would serve them; get all they could by merchandise among them, and then betake themselves elsewhere and especially in a time of war, which is prejudicial to merchandise; and hence nothing was to be expected from them, or any dependence had upon them.

{c} jvp "exspoliavit", De Dieu; "proprie est, exuere, vestem detrahere et exspoliare", De Dieu. {d} "Diffundit se", Munster, so the Targum; "effunditur", Cocceius.

Nahum 3:17

Ver. 17. Thy crowned men [are] as the locusts,.... Tributary kings, and hired officers, as some think, who might be distinguished by what they wore on their heads; or their own princes and nobles, who wore coronets or diadems; unless their religious persons are meant, their Nazarites and devotees, their priests; these were like locusts for their number, fear, and flight in time of danger, and for their spoil of the poor; and some locusts have been seen with little crowns on their heads, as those in **Re 9:7** "which had on their heads as it were crowns like gold". In the year 1542 came locusts out of Turkish Satmatia into Austria, Silesia, Lusatia, and Misnia, which had on their heads little crowns {e}. In the year 1572 a vehement wind brought large troops of locusts out of Turkey into Poland, which did great mischief, and were of a golden colour {f}; and Aelianus {g} speaks of locusts in Arabia, marked with golden coloured figures; and mention is made in the Targum on Jer 51:27, of the shining locust, shining like gold:

and thy captains as the great grasshoppers; or "locusts of locusts" {h}; those of the largest size. The Vulgate Latin renders the word for captains "thy little ones", junior princes, or officers of less dignity and authority; these were, as the Targum paraphrases it, as the worms of locusts; but rather as the locusts themselves, many and harmful:

which camp in the hedges in the cold day; in the cold part of the day, the night; when they get into the hedges of fields, gardens, and vineyards, in great numbers, like an army, and therefore said to encamp like one:

[but] when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they [are]; whither they are fled, as the Targum; so these captains, or half pay officers, swarmed in great numbers about the city, and in the provinces, while it was a time of peace, and they were indulged in sloth, and enjoyed much ease and prosperity; but when war broke out, and the heat of it began to be felt, these disappeared, and went into their own countries, from whence they came, with the auxiliaries and hired troops; nor could they be found where they were, or be called upon to do their duty: this is true of locusts in a literal sense, who flee away when the sun rises; hence the Arabs, as Bochart says {i} elegantly express this by the word "ascaara"; signifying, that when the sun comes to the locust it goes away, According to Macrobius {k}, both Apollo and Hercules are names for the sun; and both these are surnamed from their power in driving away locusts: Hercules was called Cornopion by the Oeteans, because he delivered them from the locusts {l}: and Apollo was called Parnopius by the Grecians, because, when the country was hurt by locusts, he drove them out of it, at Pausanias {m} relates; who observes, that they were drove out they knew, but in what manner they say not; for his own part, he says, he knew them thrice destroyed at Mount Sipylus, but not in the same way; one time a violent wind drove them out; another time a prodigious heat killed them; and a third time they perished by sudden cold; and so, according to the text here, the cold sends them to the hedges, and the heat of the sun obliges them to abandon their station.

{e} Vid. Frantzii Hist. Animal. Sacr. par. 5. c. 4. p. 799. {f} Ibid. p. 798. {g} Hist. Animal. l. 10. c. 13. {h} ybwg bwgk "ut locustae locustarum", Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus; "sicut locusta locustarum", Burkius. {i} Hierozoic. par. 2. c. 2. col. 458. {k} Saturnal l. 1. c. 17. p. 335. & c. 20. p. 362. {l} Strabo. Geograph. l. 13. p. 422. {m} Attica, sive l. 1. p. 44.

Nahum 3:18

Ver. 18. Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria,.... Who this king of Assyria was is not easy to say; some think Esarhaddon, who is the last of the kings of Assyria the Scriptures speak of; according to Diodorus Siculus {n}, Sardanapalus was the last of these kings, and in him the Assyrian monarchy ended; though, according to Alexander Polyhistor {o}, Saracus, perhaps the Chyniladanus of Ptolemy, was king when Nineveh was destroyed: it is very likely that Sardanapalus and Saracus design the same person, though set at a great distance by historians; since the same things are said of the one as of the other; particularly that, when they saw their danger, they burnt themselves and theirs in the royal palace at Nineveh; nor is it probable that the same city with the empire should be destroyed and subverted twice by the same people, the Medes and Babylonians, uniting together; and it is remarkable that the double destruction of this city and empire is related by different historians; and those that speak of the one say nothing of the other: but this king, be he who he will, his case was very bad, his "shepherds slumbered"; his ministers of state, his counsellors, subordinate magistrates in provinces and cities, and particularly in Nineveh; his generals and officers in his army were careless and negligent of their duty, and gave themselves up to sloth and ease; and which also was his own character, as historians agree in; or they were dead, slumbering in their graves, and so could be of no service to him:

thy nobles shall dwell [in the dust]; be brought very low, into a very mean and abject condition; their honour shall be laid in the dust, and they be trampled upon by everyone: or, "they shall sleep" {p}; that is, die, and be buried, as the Vulgate Latin renders it: or, "shall dwell in silence", as others {q}; have their habitation in the silent grave, being cut off by the enemy; so that this prince would have none of his mighty men to trust in, but see himself stripped of all his vain confidences:

thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth [them]; like sheep without a shepherd, which being frightened by beasts of prey, run here and there, and there is none to get them together, and bring them back again; so the subjects of this king, being terrified at the approach of the Medes and Babylonians, forsook their cities, and fled to the mountains; where they were scattered about, having no leader and commander to gather them together, and put them in regular order to face and oppose the enemy. So the Targum interprets it

"the people of thine armies."

{n} Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 109, 115. {o} Apud Syncell. p. 210. {p} wbkvy "dormiunt", Piscator; so Ben Melech interprets it, "the rest of death." {q} "Habitarunt in silentio", Buxtorf, Drusius.

Nahum 3:19

Ver. 19. [There is] no healing of thy bruise,.... Made by the fatal blow given to the empire by the taking of Nineveh; the ruin of it was irreparable and irrecoverable; the city of Nineveh was no more, and the Assyrian empire sunk, and never rose again: or, "there is no contraction of thy bruise" {r}; as when a wound is healed, or near it, the skin round about is wrinkled and contracted. The Targum is,

"there is none that grieves at thy breach;"

so the Syriac version; so far from it, that they rejoiced at it, as in a following clause:

thy wound is grievous; to be borne; the pain of it intolerable; an old obstinate one, inveterate and incurable: or, is "weak", or "sickly" {s}; which had brought a sickness and weakness on the state, out of which it would never be recovered:

all that hear the bruit of thee; the fame, the report of the destruction of Nineveh, and of the ruin of the Assyrian empire, and the king of it:

shall clap the hands over thee; for joy; so far were they from lending a helping hand in the time of distress, that they clapped both hands together, to express the gladness of their hearts at hearing such news:

for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually? to which of thy neighbours hast thou not been troublesome and injurious? which of them hast thou not oppressed, and used with violence and cruelty? what province or city but have felt the weight of thine hand, have been harassed with wars, and distressed with tributes and exactions? and therefore it is no wonder they rejoice at thy fall. The destruction of this city, and so of the whole empire, is placed by Dr. Prideaux in the twenty ninth year of Josiah's reign, and in the year 612 B.C.; and by what Josephus says {t} it appears to have been but a little while before Josiah was slain by Pharaohnecho, who came out with an army to Euphrates, to make war upon the Medes and Babylonians; who, he says, had overturned the Assyrian empire; being jealous, as it seems, of their growing power. Learned men justly regret the loss of the Assyriaca of Abydenus, and of the history of the Assyrians by Herodotus, who promised {u} it; but whether he finished it or no is not certain; however, it is not extant; and in one place, speaking of the Medes attacking Nineveh, and taking it, he says {w}, but how they took it I shall show in another history; all which, had they come to light, and been continued, might have been of singular use in explaining this prophecy.

{r} hhk Nya "nulla est contractio", Junius & Tremellius, Burkius. {s} hlxn "infirmata", Pagninus, Montanus; "aegritudine plena", Vatablus; "aegra", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Burkius. {t} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 5. sect. 1. {u} L. 1. sive Clio, c. 184. {w} Ibid. c. 106.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Habakkuk 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO HABAKKUK

This book is called, in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, "the Prophecy of Habakkuk". Of this prophet, Aben Ezra and Kimchi say, we know neither his age nor his family; which shows they paid no regard to a tradition of their nation, mentioned by some of their ancient writers {a}, that he was the son of the Shunammite, whom Elisha raised from the dead; and find the etymology of his name in the words of the prophet to her, "about this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son", **2Ki 4:16** where the root of his name is used; and they account for the doubling of the last radical in his name, because of the two embraces of him, one by his mother, and the other by the prophet. His name indeed signifies "an embrace" {b}; or, as some, "an embracer" {c}; and the last letter being doubled, it is with others interpreted "the best embracer" {d}; to which name his character and conduct agree; who, in the most tender manner, embraced the people of God, as parents their children, and comforted them with the assurance of their preservation, notwithstanding their captivity, and with the promise of the Messiah's coming; suggesting to them they should live by faith, to which he led them the way by his own example, **Hab 1:12 Hab 2:3** but as this is placing him too early, to put him in the times of

Elisha; so it is fixing him too late, to make him to be in the times of Daniel, and to feed him in the den of the lions, as Joseph ben Gorion {e}, and the author of the apocryphal book of Bel and the Dragon, say he did, which was after the Babylonish captivity was ended; whereas it is certain this prophet prophesied of it, and must have lived some time before it; for he speaks of the Chaldeans by name coming against the Jews, and carrying them captive, **Hab 1:6**. The learned Huetius {f}, and others, think there were two prophets of this name; one of the tribe of Simeon, who lived before the captivity; and another of the tribe of Levi, who lived after it. The Jewish chronologers {g} generally place this our prophet in the times of Manasseh; with which well enough agrees the description of the times the prophet lived in, given in **Hab 1:2** though some think he lived in the latter times of Josiah {h}, or the beginning of Jehoiakim {i}; and it is probable he was a contemporary of the Prophet Jeremiah, with whom he agrees in many things, and prophesied of the same. However, there is no room to doubt of the authority of this book, being always received by the Jewish church, and agreeing with other parts of Scripture, and especially with the prophecies of Jeremiah; and may be further confirmed and established by the quotations out of it in the New Testament, as **Hab 1:5** in Ac 13:41 and **Hab 2:4** in **Ro 1:17**. The general design of the prophecy is to comfort the people of God under the afflictions that were coming upon them, and to encourage them to the exercise of faith and patience, in the hope and view of the coming of the Messiah. Pseudo Epiphanius {k} says that Habakkuk died two years before the people of the Jews returned from Babylon, and was honourably buried in his own native place, which he says was Bethsocher, in the tribe of Simeon. With whom Isidore {l} agrees, as to the time of his death; but the place of his birth, he says, was Bethacat; and of his death, Sabarta. Sozomen {m} reports, that, in the days of Theodosius, the grave of Habakkuk was found in Cele, formerly the city Ceila. So Eusebius says it was shown at Kela, eight miles from Eleutheropolis; though, in another place, he says it was to be seen at Gabbatha, twelve miles from the same place; which may be reconciled, by observing that it might be between them both, and be seen from each, since they were places near to each other {n}. But the Cippi Hebraici {o} say it was at a place called Jakuk in Galilee, not far from Sephetta, where was an academy of the Jews; and this seems to agree with what Sanderson, a countryman of ours, as quoted by Van Till {p}, observes; that in his journey from Damascus to Jerusalem, between Sephet and Chapherchittin, he found a village, in which, the Jews report, Habakkuk the prophet dwelt and died, the name of which is Jeakoke. But these things are not to be depended on.

{a} Zohar in Gen. fol. 6. 3. Vid. Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 12. 2. {b} qwqbx "amplexus", Hillerus; "amplexatio", Hieronymus. {c} "Amplexans", ibid. {d} "Optimus amplexator", Tarnovius. {e} Hist. Heb. l. 1. c. 11. p. 35, 36. {f} Demonstr. Evangel. Prop. 4. p. 284, 301. {g} Seder Olam Rabba, p. 55. Seder Olam Zuta, p. 105. Tzemach David, fol. 15. 1. Juchasin, fol. 12. 2. {h} Bedford's Scripture Chronology, p. 674. {i} Usher. Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3395. {k} De Prophet. Vit. & Interit. c. 18. {l} De Vit. & Mort. Sanct. c. 47. {m} Hist. Ecclesiast. l. 7. c. 29. {n} Vid. Reland. Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. p. 772. {o} P. 63. Ed. Hottinger. {p} Habakkuk Illustratus, p. 214.

INTRODUCTION TO HABAKKUK 1

In this chapter, after the inscription, in which are the title of the book, the name and character of the writer, **Hab 1:1**, there is a complaint made by the prophet of his cry not being heard, and of salvation being deferred, which was long expected, **Hab 1:2** and of the wickedness of the times he lived in; of iniquity and trouble, rapine and oppression, in general; and particularly of corruption in courts of judicature, in which there were nothing but strife and contention, a dilatoriness in proceedings at law, and justice was stopped and suppressed, **Hab 1:3** then follows an answer to this, showing that some sore judgment, amazing and incredible, would soon be executed for such sins, **Hab 1:5** that the Chaldeans would be raised up and sent against the Jews, and spoil them, and carry them captive; who are described by the cruelty of their temper and disposition; by the swiftness and fierceness of their cavalry; and by their derision of kings, princes, and strong holds; and by their victories and success, which they should impute to their idols, **Hab 1:6** and then the prophet, in the name of the church, expresses his faith that the people of God, and his interest, would be preserved, and not perish in this calamity; which is urged from the eternity, holiness, faithfulness, and power of God, and from his design in this affliction, which was correction, and not destruction, **Hab 1:12** and the chapter is closed with an expostulation of the prophet with God, in consideration of his purity and holiness; how he could bear with such a wicked nation as the Chaldeans, and suffer them to devour men as fishes, in an arbitrary way, that have no ruler; catch them in their net, and insult them, and ascribe all to their own power and prudence, and think to go on continually in this way, **Hab 1:13**.

Ver. 1. The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see. This prophecy is called a "burden", or something took up and carried, being what the prophet received from the Lord, and went with to the people of the Jews, and was a heavy burdensome prophecy to them; declaring the calamities that should come upon them by the Chaldeans, who would invade their land, and carry them captive; and Habakkuk, that brought this account, is called a "prophet", to give the greater sanction to it; and it was what he had in vision from the Lord represented unto him, and therefore should be credited. Abarbinel inquires why Habakkuk should be called a prophet, when none of the lesser prophets are, excepting Haggai and Zechariah; and thinks the reason of it is, to give weight to his prophecy, since it might be suspected by some whether he was one; there being none of those phrases to be met with in this prophecy as in others, as "the word of the Lord came", &c. or "thus saith the Lord".

Habakkuk 1:2

Ver. 2. O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear!.... The prophet having long observed the sins and iniquities of the people among whom he lived, and being greatly distressed in his mind on account of them, had frequently and importunately cried unto the Lord to put a stop to the abounding of them, that the people might be brought to a sense of their sins, and reform from them; but nothing of this kind appearing, he concludes his prayers were not heard, and therefore expostulates with the Lord upon this head:

[even] cry unto thee [of] violence, and thou wilt not save! either of violence done to himself in the discharge of his office, or of one man to another, of the rich to the poor; and yet, though he cried again and again to the Lord, to check this growing evil, and deliver the oppressed out of the hands of their oppressors, it was not done; which was matter of grief and trouble to him.

Habakkuk 1:3

Ver. 3. Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause [me] to behold grievance?.... That is, wicked men, and such as give a great deal of trouble vexation, and grief to others, by their rapine and oppression; suggesting that he could not turn his eyes any where, but such persons presented themselves to his view; and that their wicked actions were performed by them openly and publicly, in the sight of all, without any shame or fear. So the Targum,

"why do I see oppressors, and behold those that do the labour of falsehood?"

For spoiling and violence [are] before me; in my sight and presence, though a prophet, and notwithstanding all my remonstrances, exhortations, and reproofs; such were the hardness, obstinacy, and impudence of this people; to such a height and pitch of iniquity were they arrived, as to regard not the prophets of the Lord. The Targum is,

"spoilers and robbers are before me:"

or, "against me" {q}, as in the text; these sins were committed against him, he was injuriously used himself; or they were done to others, contrary to his advice and persuasion:

and there are [that] raise up strife and contention; in the kingdom, in cities, in families; in one man, brother, friend, and neighbour, against another; which occasion lawsuits, and in them justice is not done, as follows. It may be rendered, and "there shall be [and] is [a man] of strife"; so Japhet: "and he shall raise up contention"; one man given to strife will and does use great contention in communities, civil and religious.

{q} ydgnl "contra me", Pagninus, Montanus; "e regione mei", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius.

Habakkuk 1:4

Ver. 4. Therefore the law is slacked,.... Is not put into execution against offenders: the civil magistrates, whose office it is to do justice according to law, are dilatory, and do not proceed with vigour and spirit against the transgressors of it, and in favour of honest and good men oppressed: or "it intermits" {r}, or is "intermitted"; it is like a man whose pulse beats low, and is scarce perceived, which is a sign that he is not in good health as the body politic is not, when the law, which is the soul of it, is not suffered to take place, and do its office. So the Targum, "the law languishes;"

loses its force and vigour, and is ready to expire; which is a sad symptom of the bad estate of a commonwealth.

And judgment doth never go forth; at least not right, to the justifying of the righteous, acquitting the innocent, and giving the cause on the right side; condemning the wicked, and punishing offenders as their crime deserves: it never appears as it should do; it is either not done at all, or done badly and perversely:

for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; to hurt him or ensnare him, and by frauds and wicked artifices, and false witnesses, to carry a cause against him:

therefore wrong judgment proceedeth; the cause is given on the wrong side, against a good man, and for a wicked man; all these things the prophet saw with grief, and complained of to the Lord, from whom he has an answer in the following words:

{r} gwpt "intermittitur", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Burkius; gwp "est, animi deliquium pati", Tarnovius.

Habakkuk 1:5

Ver. 5. Behold ye among the heathen, and regard,.... This is the Lord's answer to the prophet's complaint, or what he directs him to say to the Jews, guilty of the crimes complained of, which should not go long unpunished; and who are called upon to look around them, and see what was doing among the nations; how the king of Babylon had overturned the Assyrian empire, and was going from place to place, subduing one nation after another, and their turn would be quickly: for these words are not addressed to the heathen, to stir them up to observe what was doing, or about to be done, to the Jews; but to the Jews themselves, to consider and regard the operations of the Lord, and the works of his providence among the nations of the earth. These words are differently rendered in the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and which better agree with the quotation of them by the apostle, See Gill on "Ac 13:41":

and wonder marvellously; or "wonder, wonder" {s}; the word is repeated, to express the great admiration there would be found just reason for, on consideration of what was now doing in the world, and would be done, especially in Judea:

for [I] will work a work in your days, [which] ye will not believe, though it be told [you]; which was the destruction of the Jewish nation, city, and temple, by the Chaldeans, as is evident from the following words; and, though they were the instruments of it, it was the work of divine Providence; it was done according to the will of God, and by his direction, he giving success; and, being thus declared, was a certain thing, and might be depended on, nothing should hinder it; and it should be done speedily, in that generation, some then living should see it; though the thing was so amazing and incredible, that they would not believe it ever would be; partly because the Chaldeans were their good friends and allies, as they thought, as appears by Josiah's going out against the king of Egypt, when he was marching his army against the king of Babylon; and partly because they were the covenant people of God, and would never be abandoned and given up by him into the hands of another people; and therefore, when they were told of it by the prophets of the Lord, especially by Jeremiah, time after time; who expressly said the king of Babylon would come against them, and they would be delivered into the hands of the Chaldeans; yet they would give no credit to it, till their ruin came upon them, as may be observed in various parts of his prophecy. The apostle quotes this passage in the place above mentioned, and applies it to the destruction of the Jews by the Romans, for their contemptuous rejection of the Messiah and his Gospel; which yet they would not believe to the last, though it was foretold by Christ and his apostles.

{s} whmt whmthw "et admiramini, admiramini", Vatablus, Drusius, Burkius.

Habakkuk 1:6

Ver. 6. For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans,.... A people still of late mean and low, famous only for their soothsaying, divination, and judicial astrology; but now become a powerful and warlike people, rising up under the permission of Providence to universal monarchy, and who would quickly add Judea to the rest of their dominions:

[that] bitter and hasty nation; a cruel and merciless people in their temper and disposition: "bitter" against the people of God and true religion, and causing bitterness, calamities, and distress, wherever they came: "hasty" and precipitate in their determinations; swift and nimble in their motions; active and vigorous in the prosecution of their designs:

which shall march through the breadth of the land; or "breadths of the land" {t}; through the whole world, as they were attempting to do, having subdued Syria, all Asia, and great part of Africa, through which they boldly marched, bearing down all opposition that was in their way; or through the breadth of the land of Judea, taking all the fenced cities as they went along, and Jerusalem the metropolis of it; see **Isa 8:7**:

to possess the dwellingplaces [that are] not theirs; the cities of Judea, and houses in them, as well as the palaces and dwellingplaces in Jerusalem, which they had no right unto, but what they got by the sword; what were the legal possessions and inheritances of others from father to son for ages past, these the Chaldeans would dispossess them of; and not only take them, and the spoil and plunder of them, for the present, but retain them in their possession, as an inheritance to be transmitted to their posterity. This may have some respect to the length of the captivity of the Jews, and their land being in the hands of their enemies for the space of seventy years.

{t} Ura ybxrml "latitudines terrae", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Habakkuk 1:7

Ver. 7. They [are] terrible and dreadful,.... For the fierceness of their countenances; the number and valour of their troops; the splendour of their armour; the victories they had obtained, and the cruelty they had exercised; the fame of all which spread terror wherever they came:

their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves; they will not be directed and governed by any laws of God and man, but by their own; they will do according to their will and pleasure, and none will be able to gainsay and resist them; they will hear no reason or argument; their decrees and determinations they make of themselves shall be put into execution, and there will be no opposing their tyrannical measures; they will usurp a power, and take upon them an authority over others of themselves, which all must submit unto; no mercy and pity: no goodness and humanity, are to be expected from such lawless and imperious enemies.

Habakkuk 1:8

Ver. 8. Their horses also are swifter than the leopards,.... Creatures remarkable for their swiftness: these are creatures born of the mating of a he panther and a lioness, and not of a lion and a she panther, as some have affirmed; and which adultery is highly resented by the lion; nor will he suffer it to go unrevenged, as Pliny {u} and Philostratus {w} observe: those thus begotten differ from common lions in this, that they have no manes: the panthers are the creatures here meant, which are very swift, as Bochart {x} from various authors has observed. Lucan {y} calls this creature "celerem pardum", t"he swift panther"; and Jerom says {z} nothing is swifter than the panther; and Aelianus {a} observes that the panther, by the swiftness of its running, will overtake most creatures, and particularly apes; and Eustathius {b} confirms the same, saying that it exceeds other creatures in swiftness, and as it were flies before the eyes of hunters; and Osorius {c} relates, that the king of Portugal once sent to the pope of Rome a panther tamed, which being had into the woods a hunting by a Persian hunter, with wonderful swiftness leaped upon the boars and deer, and killed them at once; and the Septuagint version here is, "their horses will leap above the panthers": or exceed them in leaping, for which these panthers are very famous too: an Arabic writer {d}, whom Bochart mentions, says it will leap above forty cubits at a leap. Pliny {e} reports, that the panthers in Africa will get up into thick trees, and hide themselves in the branches, and leap from thence on those that pass by; and because of the swiftness of this creature, with other qualities of it, the third beast or Grecian monarchy, especially in its first head Alexander the great, is represented by it, **Da 7:6** he making such a swift and rapid progress in his conquests; and yet the Chaldean horses would exceed them in swiftness, and be very speedy in their march into the land of Judea; and therefore it was in vain for the Jews to please themselves with the thoughts that these people were a great way off, and so they secure from them, when they could and would be upon them presently, ere they were aware:

and are more fierce than ravening wolves; which creatures are naturally fierce, and especially when they are hungry, and particularly at evening; when, having had no food all the day, their appetites are very keen, and they go in quest of their prey; and, when they meet with it, fall upon it with greater eagerness and fierceness. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, than the wolves of Arabia; that there are wolves very frequent in Arabia, is observed by Diodorus Siculus {f}, and Strabo {g}; but that these are remarkable for their fierceness does not appear; rather those in colder climates are more fierce; so Pliny {h} says, they are little and sluggish in Africa and Egypt, but rough and fierce in cold climates. It is, in the original text, "more sharp" {i}; which some interpret of the sharpness of their sight. Aelianus says {k}, it is a most quick and sharp sighted creature; and can see in the night season, even though the moon shines not: the reason of which Pliny {l} gives is, because the eyes of wolves are shining, and dart light; hence Aelianus {m} observes, that that time of the night in which the wolf only by nature enjoys the light is called wolf light; and that Homer {n} calls a night which has some glimmering of light, or a sort of twilight, such as the wolves can see themselves walk by, amfiluch nux, which is that light that precedes the rising sun; and he also observes that the wolf is sacred to the sun, and to Apollo, which are the same; and there was an image of one at Delphos; and so Macrobias {o} says, that the inhabitants of Lycopolis, a city of Thebais in Egypt, alike worship Apollo and a wolf, and in both the sun, because this animal takes and consumes all things like the sun; and, because perceiving much by the quick sight of its eyes, overcomes the darkness of the night; and observes, that some think they have their name from light, though they would have it be from the morning light; because those creatures especially observe that time for seizing on cattle, after a nights hunger, when before day light they are turned out of the stables into pasture; but it is for the most part at evening, and in the night, that wolves prowl about for their prey {p}; and from whence they have the name of evening wolves, to which the Chaldean horses are here compared: and yet there seems to be an antipathy between these, if what some naturalists {q} say is true; as that if a horse by chance treads in the footsteps of a wolf, a numbness will immediately seize it, yea, even its belly will burst; (This sounds like a fable. Ed.) and that, if the hip bone of a wolf is thrown under horses drawing a chariot full speed, and they tread upon it, they will stop and stand stone still, immovable: whether respect is here had to the quick sight or sharp hunger of these creatures is not easy to say; though rather, since the comparison of them is with horses, it seems to respect the fierceness of them, for which the war horse is famous, Job 39:24 and may be better understood of the sharpness of the appetite of evening wolves, when hunger bitten:

and their horsemen shall spread themselves; or be multiplied, as the Targum; they shall be many, and spread themselves all over the country, so that there will be no escaping; all will fall into their hands:

and their horsemen shall come from far; as Chaldea was reckoned from Judea, and especially in comparison of neighbouring nations, who used to be troublesome, as Moab, Edom, &c. see **Jer 5:15**:

they shall flee as the eagle [that] hasteth to eat; those horsemen shall be so speedy in their march, that they shall seem rather to fly than ride, and even to fly as swift as the eagle, the swiftest of birds, and which itself flies swiftest when hungry, and in sight of its prey; and the rather this bird is mentioned, because used by many nations, as the Persians, and others, for a military sign {r}.

{u} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16. {w} De Vita Apollonii, l. 2. c. 7. {x} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 7. col. 788. {y} Pharsalia, l. 6. {z} Comment. in Hos. v. 14. fol. 10. L. {a} Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 6. {b} In Hexaemeron. {c} De Rebus Portugall. l. 9. apud Frantz. Hist. Animal. Sacr. par. 1. 8. p. 90. {d} Damir apud Bochart, ut supra. (Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 7. col. 788.) {e} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 73. {f} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 177. {g} Geograph. l. 16. p. 534. {h} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 22. {i} wdxw "et acuti erunt", Montanus, Cocceius; "et acutiores", Pagninus, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Grotius; so Ben Melech; "et acuti sunt", Burkius. {k} De Animal. l. 10. c. 26. {l} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 37. {m} Ut supra. (De Animal. l. 10. c. 26.) {n} Iliad. 7. prope finem. {o} Saturnal. l. 1. c. 17. {p} "Vesper ubi e pastu vitulos ad tecta reducit, Auditisque lupos acuunt balatibus agni." Virgil. Georgic. l. 4. "Ac veluti pleno lupus insidiatus ovili Nocte super media-----", Ibid. Aeneid. l. 8. {q} Aelian. de Animal. l. 1. c. 36. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 28. c. 20. {r} Vid. Lydium de Re Militari, l. 3. c. 7. p. 87.

Habakkuk 1:9

Ver. 9. They shall come all for violence,.... Or, "the whole of it" {s}; the whole army of the Chaldeans, everyone of them; this would be their sole view, not to do themselves justice, as might be pretended, or avenge any injuries or affronts done to them by the Jews; but purely for the sake of spoil and plunder:

their faces shall sup up [as] the east wind: their countenances will appear so stern and fierce, that their very looks will so frighten, as to cause men to sink and die through terror; just as herbs and plants shrivel up and wither away, when blasted by a nipping east wind. So the Targum,

"the reception or look of their faces is like to a vehement east wind."

Some render it,

"the look or design of their faces is to the east {t};"

when the Chaldeans were on their march to Judea, their faces were to the west or south west; but then their desire and views were, that when they had got the spoil they came for, as in the preceding clause, to carry it to Babylon, which lay eastward or north east of Judea, and thither their faces looked:

and they shall gather the captivity as the sand; or gather up persons, both in Judea, and in other countries conquered by them, as innumerable as the sand of the sea, and carry them captive into their own land. Captivity is put for captives.

{s} hlk "illa teta", Junius & Tremellius; "sub. gens", Pagninus, Piscator; "totus exercitus", Vatablus; "populus", Calvin. {t} hmydq "ad orientem", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "orientem versus", Junius & Tremellius, De Dieu, Burkius; so Abarbinel.

Habakkuk 1:10

Ver. 10. And they shall scoff at the kings,.... Or, "he shall" {u}, Nebuchadnezzar king of the Chaldeans, and the army with him; who would make a jest of kings and their armies that should oppose them, as being not at all a match for them; as the kings of Judah, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, they carried captive, and all others confederate with them, in whom they trusted, as the king of Egypt particularly; and which is observed to show the vanity of trusting in princes for safety; though it may also include all other kings the Chaldeans fought against, and the kingdoms they invaded and subdued:

and the princes shall be a scorn unto them; the nobles, counsellors, and ministers of state; or leaders and commanders of armies, and general officers, in whom great confidence is often put; but these the king of Babylon and his forces would mock and laugh at, as being nothing in their hands, and who would fall an easy prey to them:

they shall deride every strong hold; in Jerusalem, in the whole land of Judea, and in every other country they invade, or pass through, none being able to stand out against them:

for they shall heap dust, and take it; easily, as it were in sport, only by raising a dust heap, or a heap of dirt; by which is meant a mount raised up to give them a little rise, to throw in their darts or stones, or use their engines and battering rams to more advantage, and to scale the walls, and get possession. There are two other senses mentioned by Kimchi; as that they shall gather a great number of people as dust, and take it; or they shall gather dust to till up the trenches and ditches about the wall, that so they may come at it, and take it.

{u} awhw "et ipse", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Tarnovius, Grotius, Cocceius.

Habakkuk 1:11

Ver. 11. Then shall [his] mind change,.... The mind of the king of Babylon; not that, when he had taken Jerusalem, he altered his purpose, and laid aside his designs of attacking other nations, and returned to his own country; where he became guilty of gross idolatry, in setting up the golden image in the plain of Dura, which he required all his subjects to worship, and to which he ascribed all his victories; for, five years after this, Josephus {w} says, he led his army into Coelesyria, and conquered the Moabites and Ammonites, and entered Egypt, and slew the reigning king of it: but rather the disposition of his mind changed for the worse upon his success in subduing kings and princes, and their kingdoms; for though his mind was never good, but always proud, haughty, and ambitious, insolent, cruel, and tyrannical; yet, being flushed with his conquests, he grew more and more so:

and he shall pass over {x}, or "transgress", all bounds of modesty and sobriety, of humanity and goodness:

and offend, [imputing] this his power unto his god {y}; this particularly will be the sin he will be guilty of, he will ascribe all his achievements to his idol Bel; or rather to himself, to his own prowess and valour, his wisdom and skill in military affairs; for so it will bear to be rendered, making "this his own power to be his god"; and perhaps the golden image Nebuchadnezzar set up to be worshipped was for himself; see **Da 4:30**. The Targum is,

"therefore, because of the lifting up of his spirit, his kingdom was removed from him; and he committed an offence, in that he multiplied glory to his idol;"

and some interpret the whole of this of the miserable condition Nebuchadnezzar was brought into, being a prophecy of it: "then shall his mind change"; his heart from man's to a beast's, **Da 4:16**: "and he shall pass over"; from all society and conversation with men, and have his dwelling with beasts, **Da 4:31**: "and offend", or rather "be punished", and become desolate and miserable, for his pride, and idolatry, and other sins: "this his power" is "his god" {z}; spoken ironically; see what his power is now, being changed into a beast, which he reckoned his god, or gloried in as what he had from his god: but I rather think the whole is a continuation of his success, particularly in the land of Judea; and to be rendered, "then shall he pass through, as the wind, and shall pass over; and he shall bear the punishment of his sin, whose power is his god"; that is, the king of Babylon and his army, the Chaldeans, should pass through all nations and kingdoms that were between them and Judea, like a strong wind or whirlwind, to which they are compared, **Jer 4:13** and carry all before them, none being able to resist and oppose them; and should pass over rivers that lay in their way, and the boundaries of Judea, and spread themselves over the whole country; and then that country, and the inhabitants of it, should be punished for their sins, particularly for their confidence in themselves; in their wealth and riches; in their fortresses and strong towers; in their own works of righteousness; all which they made idols of, and trusted not in their God, as they ought to have done.

{w} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 7. {x} rbey "transgredietur", Pagninus, Vatablus, Calvin, Drusius, Tarnovius. {y} whwlal wxwk wz "iste est, ejus robur fuit pro deo ejus", Gussetius. {z} "Tune immutatus est spiritu, et transiit et desolatus est, hoc robur ejus est dei ejus", De Dieu.

Habakkuk 1:12

Ver. 12. [Art] thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine holy One? .... The prophet, foreseeing these calamities coming upon his nation and people, observes some things for their comfort in this verse; and expostulates with God in the following verses **Hab 1:13** about his providential dealings, in order to obtain an answer from him, which might remove the objections of his own mind, and those of other good men he personates, raised against them; being stumbled at this, that wicked men should be suffered to succeed and prosper, and the righteous should be afflicted and distressed by them: but for his own present consolation, and that of others, in a view of the worst that should befall them, he strongly asserts,

we shall not die; meaning not a corporeal death, for that all men die, good and bad; and this the Jews did die, and no doubt good men among them too, at the siege and taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldean army, either by famine, or pestilence, or sword: nor a death of affliction, which the people of God are subject to, as well as others; is often their case, and is for their good, and in love, and not wrath: but a spiritual death, which none that are quickened by the Spirit and grace of God ever die; though grace may be low, it is never lost; though saints may be in dead and lifeless frames, and need quickening afresh, yet they are not without the principle of spiritual life; grace in them is a well of living water, springing up to everlasting life; their spiritual life can never fail them, since it is secured in Christ: and much less shall they die the second, or an eternal death; they are ordained to eternal life; Christ is come, and given his flesh for it, that they might have it; it is in his hands for them; they are united to him, and have both the promise and pledge of it: and this may be argued, as by the prophet here, from the eternity of God, art "thou not from everlasting?" he is from everlasting to everlasting, the Ancient of days, that inhabits eternity, is, was, and is to come: therefore "we shall not die"; none of his people shall perish, because he loves them with an everlasting love; has made an everlasting choice of them; has set up Christ from everlasting as their surety and Saviour; entered into an everlasting covenant with them in Christ; is their everlasting Father, and will be their everlasting portion; is the unchangeable Jehovah, and therefore they shall not be consumed: this may be concluded from their covenant interest in God, "O Lord my God"; they are his peculiar people, given to Christ to be preserved by him, and covenant interest always continues; he that is their God is their God and guide unto death: and also from the holiness of God, "mine holy One"; who has sworn by his holiness to them, and is faithful to his covenant and promise; and is the sanctifier of them, that has sanctified or set them apart for himself; made Christ sanctification to them, and makes them holy by his Spirit and grace, and enables them to persevere in grace and holiness: moreover, this may be understood of the people of the Jews, as a church and nation; who, though they would be carried captive into Babylon, yet would still continue as such, and be returned again as such, and not die, sink, and perish; since the Messiah was to spring from them; and they might be assured of their preservation for that purpose, from the perfections of God, his covenant with them, and their relation to him: nor shall the church of Christ in any age die and perish, though in ever so low a state; a particular church may, but the interest and church of Christ in general, or his spiritual seed, never shall. This is one of the eighteen passages, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech observe, called "Tikkun-Sopherim", the correction of the scribes, of Ezra, and his company; it having been written, in some copies, "thou shall not die" {a}; asserting the immortality of God, or his eternity to come; and that, as he was from everlasting, so he should continue to everlasting; and to this sense the Targum paraphrases the words,

"thy Word remaineth for ever;"

and so the Syriac version follows the same reading:

O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment: that is, the Chaldeans; either to be judged and punished themselves for their sins, as all wicked Christless sinners are, even righteously foreordained to condemnation for their sins; or rather to be the instruments of punishing the wicked among the Jews; for this purpose were these people ordained in the counsels of God, and raised up in his providence, and constituted a kingdom, and made a powerful nation:

O mighty God; or "rock" {b}; the rock and refuge of his people:

thou hast established them for correction; or "founded" {c} them, and settled them as a monarchy, strong and mighty for this end, that they might be a rod in the hand of the Lord, not for destruction, but for correction and chastisement; and from hence it might be also comfortably concluded that they should not die and utterly perish.

{a} twmt al "non morieris", Vatablus, Drusius, Grotius. {b} rwu "O rupes", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Van Till; "O petra", Drusius. {c} wtdoy "fundasti eum", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius, Van Till; "constituisti", Vatablus.

Habakkuk 1:13

Ver. 13. [Thou art] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity,.... The Lord with his eyes of omniscience beholds all things good and evil, and all men good and bad, with all their actions; but then he does not look upon the sins of men with pleasure and approbation; since they are contrary to his nature, repugnant to his will, and breaches of his righteous law: and though sin in general may be included here, yet there seems to be a particular respect had to the "evil" or injury done by the Chaldeans to the Jews, in invading their land, spoiling their substance, and slaying their persons; and to the "iniquity", labour, or grievance, by which may be meant the oppression and violence the same people exercised upon the inhabitants of Judea; which, though permitted by the Lord, could not be well pleasing in his sight. The Targum interprets it of persons, workers of evil, and workers of the labour of falsehood; see **Ps 5:4**:

wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously; the Chaldeans, who dealt treacherously with God, by worshipping idols; and with the Jews, pretending to be their good friends and allies, when they meditated their ruin and destruction; and yet the Lord in his providence seemed to look favourably on these perfidious persons, since they succeeded in all their enterprises: this was stumbling to the prophet, and all good men; and they knew not how, or at least found great difficulty, to reconcile this to the purity and holiness of God, and to his justice and faithfulness; see Jer 12:1:

and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth [the man that is] more righteous than he? the comparison does not lie so much personally between Nebuchadnezzar and Zedekiah the last king of the Jews, whose eyes the king of Babylon put out, and whom he used in a cruel manner; who was, no doubt, comparatively speaking, a more righteous person than the Chaldean monarch was; being not the worst of the kings of Judea, and whose name has the signification of righteousness in it: but rather between the Chaldeans and the Jews; who, though there were many wicked persons among them, yet there were some truly righteous, who fell in the common calamity; and, as to the bulk of them, were a more righteous people, at the worst, than their enemies were, who devoured them, destroyed many with the sword, plundered them of their substance, and carried them captive; and the Lord was silent all this while, said nothing in his providence against them, put no stop to their proceedings; and by his silence seemed to approve of, at least to connive at, what they did; and this the prophet in the name of good men reasons with the Lord about.

Habakkuk 1:14

Ver. 14. And makest men as the fishes of the sea,.... That is, sufferest them to be used as the fishes of the sea, which are easily taken in the net, and are common to everyone; whosoever will may take them up, and kill them, and use them for their food; and which also among themselves are often hardly used, the lesser being devoured by the greater; and in like manner the prophet suggests, that the people of the Jews, who were men made after the image of God, and made for society and usefulness, and moreover were God's covenant people; and it might have been expected, that a more special providence would have attended them, more than other men, and especially than what attended the fishes of the sea; yet it looked as if there were no more care taken of them than of these:

as the creeping things [that have] no ruler over them; not the creeping things of the earth, but of the water, the lesser sort of fishes that move in the water; or those that more properly creep, as crabs, prawns, and shrimps; see Ps 104:25 who have none to protect and defend them, and restrain others from taking and hurting them: this may seem contrary to what Aristotle {d} and Pliny {e} say of some fishes, that they go in company, and have a leader or governor; but, as Bochart {f} observes, it is one thing to be a leader of the way, a guide and director, which way to steer their course in swimming; and another thing to be as the general of an army, to protect and defend, or under whose directions they might defend themselves; such an one the prophet denies they had: and so, the prophet complains, this was the case of the Jews; they were exposed to the cruelty of their enemies, as if there was no God that governed in the world, and no providence to direct and order things for the preservation of men, and to keep good men from being hurt by evil men; or those that were weak and feeble from being oppressed by the powerful and mighty; this he reasons with the Lord about, and was desirous of an answer to it.

{d} Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 13. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 15. {f} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 1. c. 6. col. 39.

Habakkuk 1:15

Ver. 15. They take up all of them with the angle,.... The prophet continues the metaphor of fishing, and observes the different ways of taking fish; which is to be applied to the case he is speaking of: as fishermen take all they can with their angles, so "they" or "he", for it is in the singular number, Nebuchadnezzar and his army, take up all out of the sea of the world; are ambitious of getting all kingdoms and nations of the world under their power and dominion; particularly all Judea, and all the inhabitants of it, good and bad, without any distinction; for all were fish which came to their net: this may design the artful and alluring methods they first made use of to get the people into their hands, by making covenants with them, and drawing them into making of presents, and paying of tribute:

they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag; with the angle the fisherman catches fish one by one, but with the net great numbers; and what he misses by throwing the net, he gets by using the drag; all which may be expressive of the ways and methods used by the king of Babylon and his army, both in the times of Jeconiah, and of Zedekiah; under the former he used the net, and carried off large numbers, and with them the royal family and great substance, but left many behind; under the latter he came and swept away all, drained the land of its riches and its inhabitants:

therefore they rejoice and are glad; as fishermen do when they have good sport; so these people rejoiced in their own success, and in the calamities of their neighbours.

Habakkuk 1:16

Ver. 16. Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag,.... Either to their idols, to fortune and the stars, as Aben Ezra; imagining they gave them success, and prospered them in the arts and methods they used: or to their arms, as the Targum; nor was it unusual with the Heathens to worship their spears, sacrifice to them, and swear by them {g}. So Justin says {h}, originally the ancients worshipped spears for gods, in memory of whose religion spears are still added to the images of the gods. Lucian {i} asserts that the Scythians sacrificed to a scimitar; and Arnobius {k} says the same; and Ammianus Marcellinus {l} reports, that the Quadi worship their swords or daggers instead of gods; and that it was usual to swear by the spear is evident from others {m}. Or else the sense is, they sacrificed to their own valour and courage, skill and conduct.

Because by them their portion [is] fat, and their meat plenteous: that is, by their angle, net, and drag; or by those things signified by them, the arts and methods they used to subdue nations, conquer kingdoms, and bring them into subjection to them; they enlarged their dominions, increased their riches and revenues, and had plenty of everything that was desirable for food and raiment, for pleasure and profit; or to gratify the most unbounded ambition, having everything that heart could wish for and desire: the allusion is to making sumptuous feasts, and rich banquets, on occasion of victories obtained.

{g} Vid. Doughtaei Analect. Sacra, p. 494, 495. {h} E Trogo, l. 43. c. 3, 4. {i} In Jupiter Tragoedus. {k} Adv. Gentes, l. 6. p. 232. {l} Hist. l. 17. {m} omnusi d'ouicmhn, Aeschylus.

Habakkuk 1:17

Ver. 17. Shall they therefore empty their net,.... Or "thus", after this manner, so Noldius; as fishermen do, when they have had a good cast, and a large draught, spread the net, and take out the fishes, in order to throw it again, and catch more; and so it is asked, should these Chaldeans, when they have conquered one nation, and so filled their net or themselves with the spoil, carry it to Babylon, and there lay it up, and then proceed to fight against another kingdom and nation, and plunder it in like manner?

and not spare continually to slay the nations? the inhabitants of them one after another, and subdue them under them, and make themselves master of all their treasure, until they are arrived to universal monarchy by such cruel and unmerciful methods. The Targum is,

"shall he send his armies continually to consume nations, and that without mercy?"

This the prophet proposes in the name of the whole body of the Lord's people, and leaves it with him to have an answer to it, which is given in the following chapter **Hab 2:1**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Habakkuk 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO HABAKKUK 2

This chapter contains an answer from the Lord to the expostulations, pleadings, and reasonings of the prophet, in the name of the people. The preparation of the prophet to receive this answer is described, **Hab 2:1** then follows the answer itself, in which he is bid to write and make plain the vision he had, that it might be easily read, **Hab 2:2** and a promise is made, that vision should still be continued to the appointed time, at which time the Messiah would come; and this the righteous man, in opposition to the vain and proud man, is encouraged to live in the faith of, **Hab 2:3** and then the destruction of the enemies of the people of God is threatened for their pride, ambition, covetousness, oppression, and murder, **Hab 2:5** which would be unavoidable, **Hab 2:13** and issue in the spread of the knowledge of the glory of God in the world, **Hab 2:14** and also the ruin of other enemies is threatened, for drawing men into apostasy, and for their violence and idolatry, **Hab 2:15** upon which would follow an universal silence in the earth, **Hab 2:20**.

Ver. 1. I will stand upon my watch,.... These are the words of the prophet:

so the Targum introduces them,

"the prophet said;"

and this he said in character as a watchman, as all the prophets were: as a watchman takes the proper place he watches in and looks out, especially in time of danger and distress, if he can spy anyone bringing tidings, that he may receive it, and notify it to the people that have appointed him a watchman; so the prophet retired from the world, and gave himself up to meditation and prayer, and put himself in a waiting posture; looking up to the Lord, and expecting an answer to his expostulations with him, concerning the success of the enemies of God's people, and the calamities that were like to come upon them, that he might report it to them; see Isa 21:8:

and set me upon the tower; a place of eminence, from which he could behold an object at a distance: it signifies a strait place, in which he was as one besieged; and may be an emblem of the straits and difficulties he was in, which he wanted to be extricated out of: the thoughts of his heart troubled him; he had a great many objections that rose up in his mind against the providences that were like to attend his people; he was beset with the temptations of Satan, and surrounded with objectors to what he had delivered, concerning the Chaldeans being raised up by God to the destruction of the Jewish nation; and, amidst these difficulties, he sets himself to reading the word of God, and meditation on it, to pray to God for instruction and information in this matter; as Asaph, in a like case, went into the sanctuary of the Lord, where he got satisfaction, Ps 73:2 as well as it may be expressive of the confidence he had in God, in his covenant and promises, which were as a fortress and strong tower to him; in short, he kept his place, he was found in the way of his duty, in the performance of his office, and was humbly and patiently waiting on God, to know more of his mind and will, and acquaint the people with it.

And will watch to see what he will say unto me; or "in me" {n}; that is, what the Lord would say unto him, either outwardly by an audible voice; or inwardly by impressing things upon his mind; or in a vision by the Spirit of prophecy, as Kimchi; so David, "the Spirit of the Lord spoke by me", or "in me", 2Sa 23:2 he was determined to wait patiently for an answer, and to continue in the present posture, and constantly attend to every motion and dictate of the Spirit of God, and take particular notice of what should be suggested to him:

and what I shall answer when I am reproved; either by the Lord, for using so much freedom and boldness in expostulations and reasonings with him, who is under no obligation to give an account of his matters unto the children of men; or by others, how he should be able to satisfy his own mind, and remove the scruples, doubts, and objections, that arose there against the providence of God, in prospering the wicked, and afflicting the righteous, and repel the temptation he was under to quarrel with God, and arraign his proceedings; and how he should answer the objections that his people made, both against his prophecies, and the providence of God, for which they reproved him; or, however, he expected they would. The Targum is,

"and what will be returned to my request."

{n} yb "in me", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Tarnovius, Van Till, Burkius.

Habakkuk 2:2

Ver. 2. And the Lord answered me,.... As he does his ministers and people sooner or later, in one way or another, when they call upon him with humility and reverence, with faith and fervency:

and said, Write the vision; which the prophet now had from him, concerning the coming of the Messiah, and the destruction of the enemies of the church and people of God: and this he has orders to "write"; not only to tell it to the people then present, for their particular information and satisfaction; but to write it, that it may be read over and over, and that it may remain, and be of use in times to come:

and make [it] plain upon tables, engrave it in plain legible letters on tables of wood; on box tree, as the Septuagint version; on which they used to write before paper was found out and used. Writing tables are of ancient use; they were used in and before the times of Homer, for he speaks {o} of writing very pernicious things on a two leaved table; wherefore Josephus must be mistaken when he suggests {p} that letters were not found out in the times of Homer. These tables were made of wood, sometimes of one sort, and sometimes of another; sometimes they were made of the pine tree, as appears from Euripides {q} but, for the most part, of box {r}, according to the Greek version as above; and consisted sometimes of two leaves, for the most part of three or five, covered with wax {s}, on which impressions were easily made, and continued long, and were very legible; and these impressions or letters were formed with an iron style or pen; see Jer 17:1 this the Greeks and Tuscans first used, but was afterwards forbidden by the Romans, who, instead of it, ordered an instrument of bone to be used {t}: hence these tables were wont to be called "wax", because besmeared with it; and so, in wills and testaments written on them, the heirs are said to be written either in the first wax, or in the bottom of the wax {u}, that is, of the will, or in the lowest part of the table, or what we should call the bottom of the leaf or page: and it was a custom among the Romans, as Cicero {w} relates, that the public affairs of every year were committed to writing by the Pontifex Maximus, or high priest, and published on a table, and set to view within doors, that the people might have an opportunity and be able to know them; yea, it was usual to hang up laws, approved and recorded, in tables of brass, in their market places, and in their temples, that {x} they might be seen and read; the same we call annals. In like manner the Jewish prophets used to write and expose their prophecies publicly on tables, either in their own houses, or in the temple, that everyone that passed by might read them.

That he may run that readeth it; may run through the whole without any difficulty, without making any stop, being written in such large capital letters; and those cut so well, and made so plain, that a man might run it over at once with ease, or even read it as he was running; nor need he stop his pace, or stand to read. The Targum is,

"write the prophecy, and explain it in the book of the law, that he may hasten to obtain wisdom, whoever he is that reads in it."

{o} graqav en pinaki ptuktw, &c. Homer. Iliad. 6. {p} Contr. Apion, l. 1. c. 2. {q} In Hippolito. {r} "Ergo tam doctae nobis periere tabellae, Non illas fixum charas effeceret aurum, Vulgari buxo sordida cera fuit. Propertius. Buxa crepent cerata------" Prudentius. {s} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 30. {t} Isidor. Originum, l. 6. c. 8. {u} "In ima cera", Sueton. in Vit. Jul. Caesar. c. 83. "in extrema cera", Cicero in Verrem, l. 3. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. ib. l. 1. c. 1. {w} De Oratore, l. 2. sect. 34. {x} Taciti Annales, l. 11. c. 14.

Ver. 3. For the vision [is] yet for an appointed time,.... Not the present vision only, but vision or prophecy in general: it was a doubt that arose in the minds of the prophet and other good men, upon the notice given that the Chaldeans would be raised up to the destruction of the Jews; that then the law of God would cease, his worship would not continue; vision and prophecy would be no more; it would be all over with the doctrine of the law and the prophets: now in answer to this, and to remove this doubt, they are assured that vision or prophecy should "yet", or still, continue, and even "to the appointed time"; the time fixed for the continuance of it, notwithstanding the people of the Jews should be carried captive into another land: and accordingly so it was; there were prophets, as Daniel and Ezekiel, in the time of the captivity; and, after it, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; yea, the law and the prophets were until John; for vision and prophecy were to be sealed up by the Messiah, and not before; see Lu 16:16 it was true indeed with respect to the present vision or prophecy concerning the Messiah, that that was not to be fulfilled presently; there was some considerable time first to elapse; there was a time appointed for the accomplishment of it, and it would remain till that time, and then be most surely fulfilled; which would be before the sceptre departed from Judah, while the second temple was yet standing, and when Daniel's seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, were come; which were the limited, determined, and appointed time for the Messiah's coming, the time appointed of the Father, the fulness of time; so there was an appointed time for his coming to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, for their rejection of him, to which the apostle applies these words, Heb 10:37 and also for his spiritual coming, to visit his people in a gracious way; there is a set time to favour Zion and her children; as well as there is a day fixed for his second coming, or coming to judgment.

But at the end it shall speak, and not lie; or rather, "he shall speak" {y}; and so in the following clauses it should be rendered, not "it", but "he"; and so the apostle has taught us to interpret it of a person, and not a thing, Heb 10:37 that is, "at the end" of the time appointed, or at the end of the Jewish state, both civil and ecclesiastic, the Messiah should appear, as he did, which is called the end of the world, 1Co 10:11 when a new world began, the world to come, the Gospel dispensation, of which Christ is said to be the

Father, in the Greek version of **Isa 9:6** see **Heb 2:5** and being come, he shall "speak"; or, as it may be rendered, "at the end thereof" shall be "the speaker", or "preacher" {z}; that shall publish and proclaim the glad tidings of the Gospel; and this agrees with Christ, the Logos, or Word of God, the great Prophet that should be raised up in the church, the teacher sent of God, the Wonderful Counsellor, and faithful witness; who spoke out the whole mind and will of God; published the everlasting Gospel; delivered out the doctrines of grace and truth; and spoke such words of grace as never man did, and with such power and authority as the Scribes and Pharisees did not. Some render the words, "and he shall break forth as the morning" {a}; so the word is used in **So 2:17** and so the Septuagint version, "he shall arise at the end"; like the rising sun: this agrees with Christ, the day spring from on high, and whose coming is said to be as the morning, **Lu 1:78** and when he should thus appear, and exercise his prophetic office, he should "not lie"; this is the character of God himself, as opposed to a mere man, who is subject to lying and deceit; and suits well with Christ, who is truly God, and not a mere man; and answers to his character in prophecy and fact, that there was no guile in his mouth and lips, Isa 53:4 and fitly describes him as a preacher, who is truth itself; taught the way of God in truth; spoke the word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation; and no lie is of the truth; and who is infallible in all his doctrines, and does not and cannot deceive any; all his words are to be depended upon as faithful and true.

Though it tarry, wait for it; or "though he tarry, wait for him"; not that he really would or did tarry; but he might seem to do so, not coming so soon as the Old Testament saints expected, and as they wished for and desired; it was a long time from the first promise of him; and sometimes the saints were ready to give it up, and their hearts to sink and faint, because it was seemingly deferred. This shows that this prophecy does not respect the Babylonish captivity; for that had no seeming delay, but, as soon as ever the seventy years were up, there was a deliverance from it; but the Messiah's coming was long expected, and seemed to be deferred, and the patience of the saints was almost wore out; but they are here encouraged, when this was the case, still to wait for him, as good old Simeon and others did, about the time of his coming; and so his spiritual and second coming should be waited patiently for, though they may seem to be delayed.

Because it will surely come, it will not tarry; or "for he that is to come", or "is coming, will come {b}, and not tarry"; beyond the appointed time. This is a periphrasis of the Messiah; for, being so often spoken of as to come, it became a description of him, "he that is to come"; see Mt 11:3 and as it was foretold he would come, so assuredly he would come, and not stay a moment longer than the time appointed of the Father; in which fulness of time God sent him, and he came, **Ga 4:3**. The person here prophesied of is not Jeremiah, as Jarchi, but the Messiah; and this is acknowledged by some Jewish writers, ancient and modern; and removes the doubt and objection that might arise from the Chaldeans coming upon the Jews, and carrying them captive, as if the promise of the Messiah would fail, whereas it would not. In the Talmud {c}, they say,

"God does not renew his world till after seven thousand years; another says five thousand. R. Nathan says, this Scripture penetrates and descends into the abyss; i.e. fixes no particular time; "the vision is for an appointed time", &c.; not as our Rabbins, who inquire the meaning of a time, and times, and half a time; what then is meant, "but at the end it shall speak", and "not lie?" Let them burst that compute the times, who used to say when the time comes, and he cometh not, he will never come; but wait for him, as it is said, "if he tarry, wait for him": perhaps you will say, we wait, but he does not wait; this may be an instruction to you what he says, "therefore the Lord waiteth to be gracious", &c."

Maimonides says {d}, their twelfth fundamental article of faith is, the days of the Messiah; that is, to believe, and be firmly persuaded, that he will come, nor will he tarry; "if he tarry, wait for him": though, he observes, this Scripture does not fix the certain time; nor is it to be so expounded, so as to gather from thence the exact time of his coming. This they do not choose to own, though it does, because the time is long ago elapsed. Abarbinel {e} owns that this vision is different from that in the preceding verse **Hab 2:2**, which concerns the second temple, but this another redemption; and would have it that the words may be explained thus, he that shall come will come at the time appointed, which is mentioned; and, after his coming, the King Messiah shall not tarry from coming to redeem you; which, though a wrong sense, shows his conviction of the prophecy belonging to the Messiah. So Abendana {f} says, our Rabbins understand this, "at the end it shall speak", of the end of our redemption from this captivity in which we now are; and in this way it appears right to explain it, for the prophet was complaining of the prosperity of Nebuchadnezzar; and the Lord answers him, that he should write the vision of the destruction of Babylon, which should be at the end of seventy years; and said, do not wonder that I prolong to Babylon seventy years, for "yet the vision is for an appointed time": as if he should say, yet there is a vision for times afar off, "and at the end it shall speak": in all which there are plain traces of the sense the ancient synagogue put on this text, though now perverted, to favour their hypothesis of the Messiah being yet to come and save them.

{y} xpyw "idque ille loquetur", Castalio. {z} "Praeco erit in fine", Cocceius; "et praeco aderit in fine", Van Till. {a} kai anatelei, Sept. {b} aby ab yk "quia veniens veniet", V. L.; "veniendo veniet", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Van Till, Burkius. {c} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 2. {d} In Pocock. Porta Mosis, p. 176. {e} Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 64. 1. {f} Not. in Miclol Yophi in loc. Vid. Caphtor Uperah, fol. 6. 4. & 45. 1. 2.

Habakkuk 2:4

Ver. 4. Behold, his soul [which] is lifted up is not upright in him,.... This and the following clause describe two sorts of persons differently affected to the Messiah, and the promise of his coming. Here it points at such as were "incredulous", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; that disbelieved his coming, and mocked and scoffed at the promise of it; as well as those that did not believe in him when he came, though he had all the characteristics of the Messiah; and damnation was the certain consequence of their unbelief. The proud and haughty Scribes and Pharisees are here plainly described, whose minds were elated with themselves; whose hearts were like bubbles, blown up, full of wind; whose souls swelled with pride and vanity, and a high conceit of themselves; of their merit and worth; of their holiness and works of righteousness; and treated those they thought below them in these things with the utmost disdain and contempt; and trusted in themselves, and to their own righteousness, to the great neglect of the true Messiah and his righteousness {g}. The word for "lifted up" has in it the signification of a hill, mountain, fortress, or tower; see Isa 32:14 as Aben Ezra observes. So R. Moses Kimchi interprets the passage,

"he whose soul is not right in him places himself in a fortress or tower, to set himself on high there from the enemy, and does not return to God, nor seek deliverance of him; but the righteous has no need to place himself on high in a fortress, for he shall live by his faith."

Ophel was part of the hill of Zion, on which the temple was built; and Cocceius thinks there is a reference in the words to Mount Moriah, on which the temple stood: and in this sense the words aptly agree with the pharisaical Jews, who boasted of their temple, and gloried in it, and trusted in the service and sacrifices of it; and betook themselves to the observance of rites and ceremonies, and the traditions of their elders, and to their moral works of righteousness, for their justification and salvation, as their tower of safety, and place of defence; neglecting the Messiah, the Rock of salvation, the Rock of Israel, the munition of rocks, the strong hold and tower, where only safety and salvation are. The apostle, following the Greek version, renders the word in Heb 10:38, "if any man draw back", &c. and De Dieu {h} observes, that the word in the Arabic language signifies to neglect or withdraw the mind from a person or thing; and may be fitly applied to the same persons who neglected Christ, and the great salvation by him; hid their faces from him; would not look at him, nor converse with him, nor attend his ministry, nor suffer others to do it; they withdrew from his apostles and ministers, and the Christian churches, and persecuted them both in Judea and in the Gentile world; and many of the Jews that did make a profession, and joined themselves to Christian churches, after a time separated from them; being sensual, and not having the Spirit, went out from among them, not being truly of them, and forsook the assembling of themselves together with them; and to these the apostle applies the words in the aforementioned place. Now of every such person it may be said, "his soul is not upright in him"; either "in himself", as the Vulgate Latin version, and so Kimchi; he is not a just man, not truly upright and righteous, though he may think he is, and may be thought so by others; yet he is not in the sight of God; his heart is not sincere; he has not the truth of grace in him; a right spirit is not created and renewed in him; he never was convinced by the Spirit of God of sin and righteousness, or he would not be thus elated with himself: his soul is not upright towards God; he seeks himself, and his own applause, in all he does, and not the honour and glory of God, and the magnifying of his grace and goodness; he has no right notions of the righteousness of God, and of his holy law; nor of Christ, his person, and offices; nor indeed of himself. Or "his soul is not right in him" {i}; that is, in Christ, who was to come, nor when he was come; that is, he is not rightly, sincerely, and heartily affected to him; he has no true knowledge of him, real desire unto him, hearty affection for him, or faith in him, or regard unto him, his Gospel and his ordinances; all which was most clearly true of the carnal Jews, and is of all self-righteous persons. The apostle, in Heb 10:38 seems to understand it of the soul of God, that that, or he, was not affected to, and pleased with, persons of such a character and complexion; see Lu 14:11.

But the just shall live by faith; the "just" man is the reverse of the former; he is one that believed in the coming of Christ, and believed in him when come; who has no overweening opinion of himself, and of his own righteousness; nor does he trust in it for his justification before God, and acceptance with him; but in the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, from whence he is denominated a just man: and such an one "shall live", not merely a corporeal life, for righteous men die as well as others; nor an eternal life, though such shall live this life, and have it now in some sense, for this life is enjoyed not by faith, but by sight; but a spiritual life, begun in regeneration, and maintained by the Spirit and grace of God; such live a life of justification on Christ, of sanctification from him, and of communion with him; they live cheerfully, comfortably, and delightfully, a life of peace, joy, and comfort; which is greatly the sense of the word here, as in Ps 22:26 and this is "by his faith"; his own faith, and not another's; which though for its kind is the same in all, alike precious faith, yet as to its actings is peculiar to one, and is not another's: or by the faith of God; that is, by that faith which is the gift of God, and of his operation, and has him for its object; such live by faith upon a promising God, and so live comfortably: or by the faith of Christ, promised to come in the preceding verse **Hab 2:3**; by that faith, of which he is the object, author, and finisher: just men live not upon their faith, but by it on Christ, as crucified for them, as the bread of life, and as the Lord their righteousness; and so have joy and peace in believing. There is a different accentuation of this clause. Some put the stop after "just", and read the words, "the just, by his faith shall live"; that is, he who is a just man, in an evangelical sense, he shall live by his faith, in the sense before explained; not that he is a just man that lives righteously and unblamably before men; but who lives a life of faith on Christ, and whose hope of eternal life is not founded upon his holy life and conversation, but upon the righteousness of Christ, which he by faith lives upon; for neither eternal life, nor the hope of it, are to be ascribed to faith in itself, but to the object of it. But the most correct Hebrew copies unite, by the accent "merca", the words "by his faith", to the "just man"; and so they are to be read, "the just by his faith, he shall live"; that is, the man who is just, not by the works of the law, but by faith in the righteousness of Christ, or through the righteousness of Christ received by faith; for it is not faith itself, or the act of believing, that is a man's justifying righteousness, or is imputed to him for righteousness, or denominates him righteous, but the righteousness of Christ he lays hold on by faith; and such a man shall live both spiritually and eternally. And this manner of accenting the words is approved of by Wasmuth {k}, and by Reinbeck {l}. Burkius, a late annotator thinks, it might be safest to repeat the word that is controverted, and read it thus, "the just in" or "by his faith": "in" or "by his faith he shall live"; which takes in both senses, and either of which rightly explained may be admitted. Junius, with whom Van Till agrees, is of opinion that respect is had to the example of Abraham, of whom we read Ge 15:6 and "he believed in the Lord", and "he counted it to him for righteousness"; not his faith, but the object of it, or what he believed, the promised seed. And so the ancient Jews compare this faith with Abraham's; for, mentioning the text in Ge 15:6, say they {m},

"this is the faith by which the Israelites inherit, of which the Scripture says, "and the just by his faith shall live"."

And they have also a saying {n}, that the law, and all the precepts of it, delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, are reduced by Habakkuk to one, namely this, "the just by his faith shall live"; which is true, if rightly understood; for the righteousness of Christ, the just man becomes so by, and which by faith he lives upon, is answerable to the whole law. The apostle produces this passage three times to prove that the righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel is to faith; that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God; that the just man shall live, and not die; shall not draw back to perdition, but believe to the saving of the soul, **Ro 1:17** which shows that it belongs to Gospel times and things. The Targum of the whole is,

"behold, the wicked say all these things "shall [not] be", but the righteous shall remain in their truth."

Kimchi interprets the former part of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar his son; and the latter part of the Israelites carried into captivity with Zedekiah; but very wrongly.

{g} So Kimchi and Ben Melech observe the word has the signification of haughtiness of heart, and of pride; and Jarchi of impudence; and the Arabic word "muthaphilin", in Schindler, is rendered "despisers". {h} So according to Castel is "neglixit", Act. vi. 1. "substraxit se", Judg. xx. 36. and so it is used in the Alcoran, Surat. Joseph. ver. 13. and in the Arabic version of Psal. xxviii. 1. Matt. xxiii. 23. Heb. xii. 5. {i} wb wvpn hrvy al "non recta (est) anima ejus in eo", Montanus, Calvin, Drusius, Burkius. {k} Vindiciae

Hebr. par. 2. c. p. 322. {l} De Accent. Hebr. p. 488, 489. So Boston. Tract. Stigmologic. p. 33, 34. {m} Shemot Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 107. 3. {n} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 24. 1.

Habakkuk 2:5

Ver. 5. Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine,.... Or rather, "how much less" or "more {o}, wine dealing treacherously": or "a man of wine", as Aben Ezra supplies it; that is, a winebibber, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it: and the sense in connection with the preceding verse **Hab 2:4** is, if a Jew, elated with his works of righteousness, his soul is not right in him, "how much less" a drunken, treacherous, proud, and ambitious heathen? if the Scribes and Pharisees, who expected the coming of the Messiah, yet withdrew from him, and opposed themselves unto him when come, "how much more" will such persons set themselves against him and his interest, thus described? by whom are meant, not the Babylonian monarchs, Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar and the Chaldeans, as usually interpreted, though there are many things in the account applicable to them; but this is breaking the thread of the prophecy, which carries on the account of the enemies of Christ, and of his kingdom, from his first to his second coming; whereas to interpret this prophecy of the Chaldeans is to go back to times before the first coming of Christ; nor does it seem necessary to say anything more concerning them, since the people of God might be satisfied that these would be in their turn destroyed, and they delivered from them; and that they, the Jews, could not be cut off as a people, since the promise of the Messiah, as springing from them, is firmly established; and it is so strongly asserted, that he should come at the appointed time, and not tarry: after which the prophet goes on to observe two different sorts of people among the Jews; one sort proud and vain glorious, who opposed themselves to Christ when he came; the other sort true believers in him, who lived by faith upon him: so things would stand among the Jews when Christ came, and so they did; there was a separation among them on his account: next the prophet proceeds to observe another sort of enemies to Christ and his interest among the heathens, which was not to be wondered at, and therefore introduced by a comparative particle, "how much more" or "less"; and who must be removed to make way for his kingdom and glory in the latter day, manifestly pointed at in **Hab 2:14** now who can these be but the Romans, both Pagan and Papal in succession? and with these and their rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, do the characters given as well agree as with the Babylonian monarchy, and the Chaldeans, or better and therefore, after Cocceius and Van Till I shall choose to interpret the whole of them; and it is well known that several of the Roman emperors were greatly given to luxury and intemperance, the first character they stand described by in the text. Tiberius was greatly addicted to this vice; and, because of his greediness after wine {p}, used to be called Biberius Caldius Mero, instead of Tiberius Claudius Nero; his successor Caligula spent the immense riches Tiberius had gathered together in less than a year's time in luxury and intemperance {q}; and Claudius, that succeeded him, scarce ever went out of his doors but he was drunk {r}; and Nero, who came after him to the empire, was of unusual luxury and sumptuousness, as the historian says {s}; he used to keep on his banquets from the middle of the day to the middle of the night {t}; to say nothing of Domitian, Commodus, and other emperors that followed after them: and these men were deceitful and treacherous, both to their friends and enemies; and it is no wonder that such as these should oppose themselves to the kingdom and interest of Christ, as they did. Kimchi interprets this of Nebuchadnezzar; and Jarchi of Belshazzar; and most interpreters think it refers to his drinking in the vessels of the temple, **Da 5:2**:

[he is] a proud man; the Roman emperors were excessively proud, like the unjust judge, neither feared God, nor regarded man; nay, set up themselves for gods, and required divine worship to be given them. Caius Caligula claimed divine majesty to himself, and set himself up to be worshipped among his brother gods; he built a temple to his own deity, and appointed priests and sacrifices; and placed a golden image of himself in it, and clothed it every day with such a garment as he himself wore {u}; he also set up his own image in the temple at Jerusalem. Nero suffered himself to be called lord and god by Tiridates king of the Armenians, with bended knees, and hands lift up to heaven. Domitian and Aurelianus took the same titles as Nero did; and Dioclesian would be worshipped as a god, and called himself the brother of the sun and moon; and no marvel that such men as these should be enemies to Christ, and persecutors of his people:

neither keepeth at home; or "dwells not in the fold" {w}; in the sheepfold of Christ, in his church, being none of his sheep, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel; and so it denotes a infidel, an heathen; a fit character for the Pagan emperors, who had no habitation in the house of God. Kimchi interprets it of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom not being continued; or of his being driven from his habitation, his palace, from among men, to live with beasts; but it is the character, and not the punishment, of the person that is here pointed at:

who enlargeth his desire as hell, and [is] as death, and cannot be satisfied; death and the grave, though such vast numbers are continually slain by the one, and laid in the other, yet are never satisfied; see Pr 27:20. This describes the insatiable thirst of the Roman emperors after honour, riches, and universal monarchy; who were never satisfied with what they obtained:

but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people; that is, subdued them, and made them provinces of the Roman empire, and tributary to it, even almost all the then known world; hence the Roman empire is called the whole world, **Lu 2:1** so Agrippa, in his orations to the Jews, mentions all nations as subject to the Romans {x}.

{o} yk Paw "quanto magis", Calvin, Drusius, Tarnovius, Cocceius, Van Till, Burkius. {p} Suetonius in Vita Tiberii, c. 42. {q} Ib. Vita Caligulae, c. 37. {r} Ib. Vita Claudii, c. 33. {s} Eutrop. Hist. Rom. l. 7. {t} Suetonius in Vita Neronis, c. 27. {u} Suetonius in Vita Caligulae, c. 22. {w} hwny alw "qui non habitat; quod de mansionibus ovium imprimius dicitur", Cocceius; "qui non inhabitat grata", Van Till. {x} Apud Joseph de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 4.

Habakkuk 2:6

Ver. 6. Shall not all these take up a parable against him,.... A proverbial expression, a short sentence, a laconic speech, delivered in a few words, which contains much in them concerning the vices of these emperors, and imprecating judgments upon them for them; took up and expressed by the nations brought into subjection unto them, and especially by the Christians in those nations spoiled and persecuted by them:

and a taunting proverb against him; or, "whose explanation are riddles to him" {y}; the proverb, when explained, would be a riddle to him, which he could not understand, nor would give any credit to; taking it not to belong to him or them, and in which they had no concern; though afterwards would find they had, to their great mortification:

and say, Woe to him that increaseth [that which is] not his! substance or goods, not his own, as the Targum explains it; which they had no right unto, nor property in, but were another's; and therefore guilty of great injustice in taking it from them, and might justly expect vengeance would pursue them for it; such were the goods they spoiled the Christians of for not worshipping their idols, and for professing and abiding by the Christian religion:

how long? that is, how long shall they go on increasing their substance by such unjust and unlawful methods? how long shall they keep that which they have so unjustly got? this suggests as if it was a long time, which, as Cocceius observes, does not so well agree with the Babylonian as the Roman empire, which stood much longer:

and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay: such is gold and silver, no other than yellow and white dust and dirt; and may be called clay, because dug out of the earth, as that; and as clay is defiling, so are gold and silver, when ill gotten, or ill used, or the heart set too much upon them; and as that is very ponderous and troublesome to carry, so an abundance of riches bring much care with them, and often are very troublesome to the owners of them, and frequently hinder their sleep, rest, and ease; and as clay when it sticks to the heels hinders walking, so riches, when the affections are too much set on them, are great obstacles in the way of true religion and godliness; hence our Lord observes, "how hard it is them, that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God", Mr 10:24 they are even a weight, a clog to good men. The phrase seems to point at the meanness of them, as well as the hurt that sometimes comes by them, and the contempt they should be had in, in comparison of the true riches; hence, agreeable to this way of speaking, a good man Drusius makes mention of used to call gold "yellow earth": and a certain Greek writer {z} says gold is ashes, and so is silver. The word used is a compound; and, as Kimchi observes, signifies an abundance of riches; but our countryman Mr. Fuller {a} chooses rather to render it an "abundance of pledges"; and thinks it has respect to the many pledges which the person here spoken of, by whom he supposes is meant the Babylonian monarch, had in an unjust manner took of several nations, and heaped up like an usurer; and which should in due time be taken from him, by those whom he had plundered of them: but this expresses the greedy desire of the Romans after money, as well as the unlawful methods they took to acquire wealth, and the vast sums they became masters of, so that they were even loaded with it; but, getting it in an unrighteous manner, it brought the curses and imprecations of the people upon them, especially those they defrauded of it. Joseph Kimchi, as his son David observes, interprets it,

"he shall make thick clay lie heavy on his grave;"

and it was a custom with the Romans, as Drusius {b} relates, that when one imprecated evil upon another, he used to wish a heavy load of earth upon him, that is, when he was dead; as, on the contrary, when one was wished well after death, it was desired he might have a light earth upon him: so Julian the emperor, speaking of Constantius, says {c},

"when he is become happy, or departs out of this life, may the earth be light upon him;"

which is wishing all felicity, and freedom from punishment; whereas the contrary, to have a load of earth or thick clay, is an imprecation of the heaviest punishment.

{y} wl twdyx huylmw "et interpretationem aenigmata ei", Drusius, Burkius; "et interpretatio erit aenigmata ipsi", Cocceius; "cujus explicatio illi erit aenigmatum loco", Van Till. {z} crusov toi koniv esti, kai argurov, Naumachius apud Grotium in loc. {a} Miscel. Sacr. l. 5. c. 8. {b} Observat. l. 15. c. 18. {c} Epist. Hermogeni, Ep. 23. p. 141.

Habakkuk 2:7

Ver. 7. Shall not they rise up suddenly that shall bite thee,.... Or, "thy usurers", or "creditors" {d}, as some render it; the Christians, whose money, goods, and substance, they had spoiled them of, but now should be repaid with great usury and gain; these, that is, their princes and emperors, as Constantine and Theodosius, rose up suddenly, and conquered the heathen emperors, and took away their power and authority from them, and their wealth and riches, and gave them to the Christians, what they and those under them had plundered them of:

and awake that shall vex thee, or "move thee" {e}; the emperor, from the throne of the empire; and other subordinate magistrates from their places of dignity, trust, and profit; the priests out of their temples; and change the face of things everywhere; and which is expressed in language agreeable to this, in **Re 6:14**, and has respect to the same times and things, "and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their place"; which is to be understood of the fall of the Pagan Roman empire:

and thou shalt be for booties unto them? the wealth and riches found in the Roman empire, as it fell into the hands of Constantine, were converted to the use of the Christians for the building of their temples, and the maintenance of their ministers, the relief of their poor, and for the reparation of losses others had sustained under the persecutions: thus the Christian emperors rose up at once, and exerted themselves; and who before seemed to be asleep awoke, and seized upon the empire, and the riches of it, and divided the spoil among themselves and their people.

{d} Kykvn "foeneratores tui, [seu] creditores tui", Cocceius, Van Till. {e} Kyezezm "qui commoveant te", Pagninus, Vatablus; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 56. 1. "excutientes", Cocceius, Van Till; "commoventes te", Burkius.

Habakkuk 2:8

Ver. 8. Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee,.... Those that survived the persecutions of the Roman emperors; those that were left of the great numbers put to death by them; those under Constantine rose up, and by just retaliation spoiled them of all their power and wealth:

because of men's blood; the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, of those under the altar, whose blood cried for vengeance, **Re 6:9**, which was shed under the ten bloody persecutions: or, "because of the blood of a man": of Adam {f}, as it may be rendered; the blood of Christ the second Adam, which, though shed at the instance of the Jews, yet by the order of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor:

and [for] the violence of the land, and of the city, and of all that dwell therein: that is, for the violence and injuries done to the land of Israel and city of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants thereof, as the Targum, and so Jarchi; and which were done by the Romans to those places and people, under Titus Vespasian, when he invaded the country of Judea, and made it desolate; besieged and took Jerusalem, and burnt it with fire; destroyed great numbers of its inhabitants, and carried them captive, and sent great multitudes of them to the mines; as well as for what were done to the Christians in every country and city where they dwelt; and to the city of the living God, the church, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the citizens of it, who were used by them in a very cruel and inhuman manner, and for which vengeance would be, and was, taken upon them.

{f} Mda ymdm "propter sanguinem hominis", i. e. "Christi, qui est secundus Adam", Cocceius, Van Till.

Habakkuk 2:9

Ver. 9. Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house,.... The bishops of Rome, being enriched by the donations of Constantine, were not satisfied, but coveted more; these are the greedy dogs Isaiah speaks of, that could never have enough, Isa 56:11 but were still seeking and gaping after more for themselves and families, and for their own house or church; which, from the time of their apostasy, became their own house, in distinction from, and in opposition to, the house or true church of God; and of those covetous bishops, or Rome Papal, are these and the following words to **Hab 2:9** to be understood:

that he may set his nest on high: in allusion to birds, especially the eagle, which builds its nest in high places, that it may be secure from any that would otherwise disturb it, or take it away: so these covetous and ambitious bishops, getting great wealth and riches, and large dominions into their hands, secular power and authority, as well as ecclesiastical, set themselves up, and advanced their see and seat, not only above all other bishops, but even above the kings and princes of the earth, above all that are called gods, **2Th 2:4** and by such means endeavoured to gain their point, the main thing they had in view:

that he may be delivered from the power of evil; that they might be safe and secure against all worldly power, and be out of the jurisdiction of the princes of the earth, and in no danger of being dispossessed or crushed by them.

Habakkuk 2:10

Ver. 10. Thou hast consulted shame to thy house,.... Instead of bringing real honour and glory to their church, and that into the esteem of men, by such covetousness, ambition, and arrogance, they brought it into shame and disgrace, especially with all good men; and which they as effectually did as if they had studied it, and as if this was the thing they had in view in all their schemes and measures: this they procured

by cutting off many people; by making war with the saints, and killing great multitudes of them with the sword, as the Waldenses and Albigenses, and many of the Protestants by fire and faggot; and also by cutting off all such they called heretics and schismatics, with their anathemas and excommunications; neither of which were to their honour, but to their eternal infamy:

and hast sinned [against] thy soul; and exposed it to eternal damnation; that is, they sinned against the light and dictates of their own consciences, which is an aggravation of their sin, and might justly cause shame and confusion of mind.

Habakkuk 2:11

Ver. 11. For the stone shall cry out of the wall,.... Of their own house; some from among themselves, that truly feared God, seeing the evil practices done among them, and abhorring them, such as their covetousness, ambition, murders, excommunications, and anathemas, should cry out against them in their sermons and writings; such as were lively stones, eminent for religion and godliness, as Bernard, Wickliff, Huss, and others:

and the beam out of the timber shall answer it; such as were of eminent note in things civil, as beams and rafters in the house; emperors and governors of provinces, who observed the complaints of godly ministers and people, answered to them, and checked the evil bishops and clergy, and hindered them in the pursuit of their schemes, and so brought them to shame and confusion. Aben Ezra observes, that the word signifies the hard place in the wood; or the harder part of it, the knotty part, or the knot in it; and which is confirmed by the use of the word in the Arabic language, as Hottinger {g} observes; and so may have respect to such persons as were raised up at the beginning of the Reformation, who were of rough dispositions, and hardy spirits, fit to go through the work they were called to; such as Luther, and others, who answered and were correspondent to the doctrines of those before mentioned, who preceded them: for not a beetle, as the Septuagint version, which breeds, and lives not in wood, and so represents heretics, as Jerom; much better, as some other Greek versions, a "worm"; though rather the word may signify a brick, as it is used by the Talmudists {h} for one of a span and a half, which answers well enough to a stone in the former clause; nor is it unusual with heathen writers {i} to represent stones and timbers speaking, when any criminal silence is kept; see Lu 19:40.

{g} Smegma Orientale, l. 1. c. 7. p. 163. {h} T. Bava Metzia, fol. 117. 2. & Bathra, fol. 3. 1. {i} "----Secretum divitis ullum Esse putas? servi ut taceant, jumenta loquentur, Et canis, et postes, et marmora.----" Juvenal. Satyr. 9.

Habakkuk 2:12

Ver. 12. Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity!] This is what the stone and beam should say, if others were silent. The town and city are the church of Rome, mystical Babylon, the great city, called spiritually Egypt and Sodom; the builder of this is the pope of Rome, the bishops of it in succession, who built it with blood: the pope of Rome received his title as head of the church from Phocas, that murdered the emperor Mauritius; the foundation of the church of Rome is the blood of the saints, shed in persecutions and wars; hence she is said to be drunk with the blood of them, and to have the blood of prophets and saints found in her, Re 17:5 and it is established by unjust exactions of tribute from all countries subject to it, and by indulgences, processions, and various methods taken to extort money from the people, to support its pageantry, pomp, and grandeur; but there is a "woe" denounced against such that are concerned herein, and which will take place in due time, nor can it be awarded, as follows:

Ver. 13. Behold, [is it] not of the Lord of hosts?.... That which follows; the judgments of God upon the bloody city, which they that labour to prevent labour in vain. So the Targum,

"lo, strong and mighty blows or judgments come from the Lord of hosts;"

the mighty God, the Lord of armies, whose hand when stretched out none can turn back; he does what he pleases, and none can hinder him; when the decree is gone forth from him, it is in vain to attempt to stop it:

that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? words of the same import, and expressed in much the same language, were used of the destruction of literal Babylon by fire, and of the vain attempts of the Chaldeans in labouring and wearying themselves to quench it, Jer 51:58 and here of mystical Babylon, and the vanity of the people of it, in labouring to support it by their wars, for recovering the holy land from the Turks, and against the Waldenses, Hussites, and Bohemians; for, notwithstanding all their successes, and the vast number of persons slain by them, yet they could never prevail so as to root out the kingdom and interest of Christ: and their city and state shall fall, and they will not be able to uphold it; and a considerable blow and shock it received at the time of the Reformation; and this great city Babylon will be destroyed by fire, which its best friends cannot prevent; even the ten kings that have given their kingdom to the beast will hate the whore, and burn her with fire; and those antichristian kings that will continue friends to her, when they see her burning, will find it in vain to attempt to help her, and will stand afar off lamenting her case, Re 17:16. Kimchi begins here to see that this section and paragraph does not belong to Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans, but to the times of the Messiah; and interprets it of the vengeance of God that shall come upon all the nations that come along with Gog against Jerusalem in the latter day; but he is mistaken: it designs what will come on mystical Babylon; so Abarbinel owns, that, from **Hab 2:12**, what is said belongs to the Roman empire, which he calls the kingdom of Edom.

Ver. 14. For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,.... Of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; of the glory of his person, as the Son of God, and truly God; which is essential to him, and underived; the same with his Father's, and what transcends the glory of all created beings; and of the glory of his office as Mediator, which itself is glorious and honourable: and this his glory lies in his fitness for it; in his faithful performance of it, and the honour given him by his Father upon it; as well as in the fulness of grace in him, which makes him appear glorious to his people; and who are continually giving glory to him as the Lord their righteousness, by exercising faith on his righteousness, and glorying in it; and as their only Saviour and Redeemer, by looking to him, and believing in him as such; and as the only Head of the church, by owning and holding to him; and as the only Mediator between God and man, by making use of him for that purpose, and not angels and saints; and as their Prophet, by hearkening to his voice, yielding a subjection to his Gospel, and submission to his ordinances; and as their Priest, by dealing with his blood and sacrifice for the atonement and pardon of their sins; and as their King, by obedience to his commands; and who will now take to himself his great power, and reign gloriously before his saints; the glory of his kingly office will be now seen and known, when this prophecy shall have its full accomplishment, and which seems greatly intended. The "knowledge" of all this glory will not be a mere notional and speculative one, but special and spiritual; an experimental knowledge, accompanied with affection, approbation, confidence, and appropriation: and "the earth will be filled with" this; that is, the inhabitants of it: this had an accomplishment in part in the times of the apostles, when they were sent into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature, and diffused the savour of the knowledge of Christ everywhere; and had a further accomplishment in the times of Constantine, when the whole Roman empire, or all the world, became Christians; and again at the time of the Reformation, when many nations, especially in Europe, were freed from Popish darkness by the pure light of the Gospel; but will have its final accomplishment in the latter day; and which will bring on the destruction of antichrist, and seems here intended; since this is given as a reason why it will be all labour in vain to attempt the prevention of it. It will be by means of the Gospel spreading the knowledge of Christ everywhere that antichrist will fall; this is the brightness of Christ's coming, with which he will be destroyed; hence the angel, with the everlasting Gospel to preach to all nations, and with whose glory the whole earth will be lightened, is represented as preceding the fall of Babylon, and as the means of it; see **2Th 2:8** and the great spread and large abundance of this knowledge communicated by the preaching of the Gospel is thus illustrated and exemplified,

as the waters cover the sea; expressing the nature of Gospel doctrines, revealing the glory of Christ and his grace, which, like waters, refresh and make fruitful; and the force and power of them, bearing down all before them, like an inundation of water when it breaks its banks; and likewise the depths of them, these being the deep things of God; and more especially the general spread and large abundance of them, and of the knowledge conveyed by them; which will fill the earth, as the waters of the sea fill up and cover the vast chasm prepared for them; see Isa 11:9.

Habakkuk 2:15

Ver. 15. Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink,.... Before the full accomplishment of the above prophecy concerning the abundance of the knowledge of the Lord in the earth, and before the utter destruction of antichrist; between that and the Reformation, when it had its fulfilment in part; the following practices inveighed against would be used, as we find they are, and for which the man of sin and his followers will be punished: one of which is expressed by a man's "giving his neighbour drink"; which is a commendable action, when drink is given to a person in want to quench his thirst, or in sorrowful and distressed circumstances to refresh and cheer him; but when this is done to intoxicate him, and draw him into uncleanness, it is an evil one; and which is the sense of the phrase here, as appears by the "woe" denounced, and by what follows; and is to be understood, not in a literal sense, but in a figurative one; and is expressive of the various artful methods and alluring ways used by the Papists, especially the Jesuits, after the Reformation, with the Protestants, to forsake their religion, and to draw them into the superstition and idolatry of the church of Rome; and which are in the New Testament signified by "the wine of her fornication", with which the kings, nations, and inhabitants of the earth, are made drunk, Re 17:2 crying up the devotion and religion of their church, its antiquity, purity, holiness, and unity; pretending great love to the souls of men, that they seek nothing but their spiritual good;

promising them great advantages, temporal and spiritual, worldly riches and honour, and sure and certain salvation within the pale of their church, without which they say there is none; and by such means they have intoxicated many princes, kingdoms, and multitudes of people, since the Reformation; and have drawn them off from the profession of the Protestant religion, and brought them back to Popery again, as in Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, Germany, France, and other places; and these methods they are now taking in all Protestant countries, and in ours, and that with great success, as is notorious, and time will more abundantly show; but there is a "woe" lies against them for it:

that puttest thy bottle to [him]; giving him not only a glass or cup at a time, but a whole bottle to drink off at once, in order to inebriate him. The word is by some translated "thy gall", or "thy poison" {k}; which fitly enough expresses the poisonous doctrines of the church of Rome, which men insensibly imbibe, infused in her wine of fornication, or drink in through the alluring and ensnaring methods taken. It properly signifies "heat" or "wrath". The Targum is,

"that pours it with heat, that he may drink, and be inebriated."

The Syriac version is,

"woe to him that gives his neighbour to drink the dregs of fury."

The words may be truly rendered, "adding thy wrath" {l}; that is, to the alluring and enticing methods before mentioned, adding menaces, wrathful words, and furious persecutions: and this the Papists do where they can; when good words and fair speeches will not prevail, and they can not gain over proselytes with flattery, deceit, and lying, they threaten them with racks and tortures, with prisons and galleys, and death itself in various shapes, to force men into their communion; and which they have put in execution in many places, in Bohemia, Hungary, and in France even to this day; and this is what in the New Testament is called "the wine of the wrath of her fornication", Re 14:8:

and makest [him] drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! as Ham did on his father's nakedness when in such circumstances: all the above methods are taken in order to intoxicate them, deprive them of the use of their reason, as is the case of a drunken man; and so bring them to believe, with an implicit faith, as the church believes; to believe things contrary to reason; to give into the spiritual whoredom and idolatry of that church, as men when drunk are easily drawn into uncleanness; to cast off their profession of the true religion, as a garment is cast off, as men when drunk are apt to do; and particularly to reject the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, which is the only robe to cover the nakedness of men, and receive the doctrine of merit and justification by works; in short, to apostatize wholly from the religion they have professed, and join in communion with the whore of Rome, that so they may look upon their apostasy, which is their nakedness, with the utmost pleasure and delight.

{k} Ktmx "venenum tuum", Montanus; so some in Drusius, and R. Jonah in Ben Melech. {l} Ktmx xpom "adjugenti, [sive] adhibenti furorem tuum", Tigurine version.

Habakkuk 2:16

Ver. 16. Thou art filled with shame for glory,.... This is said by the Lord to the man that gives his neighbour drink to intoxicate him, that he may draw him into uncleanness, and please himself with it; who, instead of being filled with the glory of the Lord, and the knowledge of it, as the earth is before said to be, such are filled with shameful doctrines and abominable practices, as those of the church of Rome are; and instead of seeking the glory of God, and the honour of their neighbours, they are satiated with the shameful spectacle of their apostasy, they have been the instruments of; and yet, instead of taking shame to themselves, as they ought to do, they glory in their shame; count it an honour they have been the instruments of bringing them into such uncleanness and idolatry; and glut themselves with the delightful sight; which in the esteem of God, was filling themselves with shame, instead of bringing any glory to him, to themselves, or their neighbours; and therefore should severely smart for it:

drink thou also: of another cup, the cup "of the wine of the wrath of God"; as a just retaliation for giving to others "the wine of wrath of fornication" to drink, and to intoxicate men with; which will be given to mystical Babylon at the time she comes into remembrance before God, or when the time to punish her is come, and to all the followers and worshippers of the beast; see Re 14:10:

and let thy foreskin be uncovered; in retaliation for uncovering the nakedness of others, and looking with pleasure on it; by which it will appear that the men here spoken of, that take all the above methods to draw or force others into the communion of their church, are no other than heathens; their religion consisting greatly of Gentilism; or what has a very great likeness to it; hence the Papists are sometimes called Heathens and Gentiles; see Ps 10:16:

the cup of the Lord's right hand shall be turned unto thee; who, in their turn, shall drink of it, when his right hand, in which it is, shall reach it out; for there is no resisting the power of that; when he gives the orders to drink it, they must; and this cup in his right hand is a cup of red wine, of the wrath, fury, and indignation of God, the dregs of which these wicked men must wring out, and drink up; see Ps 75:8. It is no unusual thing in Scripture for the wrath, vengeance, and judgments of God to be represented by a cup, as in Isa 51:17:

and shameful spewing [shall be] on thy glory: signifying that they should be like a man intoxicated with wine, that vomits it up again; and which, falling on his fine clothes, spoils the glory of them: so when this cup of wrath and vengeance should be given unto them, and they be made to drink of it, they should be so full of it, that all their glory should be covered with shame; or all their glorious things should be spoiled, and they deprived of all their riches and honours, their titles and grandeur; the magnificence of their temples, altars, idols, and vestments, &c.

Habakkuk 2:17

Ver. 17. For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee,.... Lebanon was a mountain on the borders of the land of Israel, from whence cedar wood was brought, of which the temple was built, and for that reason is sometimes so called, as in Zec 11:1 and so the Targum and Jarchi interpret it,

"the violence of the house of the sanctuary shall cover thee;"

and this was a type of the church of Christ, the violence of which is that which is offered to it, and which it suffers; and designs all the injuries, oppressions, and persecutions of it by the Papists; who shall be surrounded with the judgments of God, and covered with his wrath and vengeance for the violence done to his people, as a man is covered with a garment: or else the sense is, that the same, or a like judgment, should come upon them, as did on Lebanon, or the material temple of Jerusalem, which with great force and violence destroyed it; as that was consumed by fire for the sins of the Jews in rejecting Christ and persecuting his people, so shall Rome be burnt with fire for the opposition of the inhabitants of it to Christ, and the injuries they have done to his church and people:

and the spoil of beasts, [which] made them afraid; or, "the spoil of the beasts" shall cover thee, which "made them afraid"; we read of two beasts, one rising out of the sea, and the other out of the earth; and both design the pope of Rome in different capacities, as considered in his secular and ecclesiastical power; and the spoil he has made of those that oppose him, the calamities of fire and sword he has brought upon them, are what have greatly terrified the sheep of Christ; but for all the spoil and havoc he has made, the judgments of God shall come upon him on all sides, and utterly destroy him; the beast and false prophet shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone; see Re 13:1:

because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein; the same that is said in **Hab 2:8** and here repeated, as respecting another body of men, guilty of the same or like crimes: there Rome Pagan, concerned in the crucifixion of Christ, the desolation of the land of Judea, and city of Jerusalem, and their inhabitants, as well as in persecuting the saints, the citizens of the church of God; here Rome Papal, where our Lord has been crucified again, and his blood, and the efficacy of it, set at nought; the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus shed in great abundance, and violent persecutions of the churches of Christ, and the members of them; for all which the above judgments shall come upon them; see Re 11:8.

Habakkuk 2:18

Ver. 18. What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it,.... The graven images the church of Rome enjoins the worship of; the images of the Trinity, of Christ, of the Virgin Mary, of angels and saints departed, and which are still continued since the Reformation; but of what profit and advantage are they? they may be profitable to the graver, who is paid for graving them; and the metal or matters of which they are made, if sold, and converted to another use, may turn to account; but as deities, and worshipped as such, they are of no profit to them that worship them; they can not hear their prayers, nor answer them; can not bestow any favours on them, and deliver them out of any distress; and particularly can not save them from the judgments before denounced:

the molten image, and a teacher of lies: nor is a molten image any ways profitable, which is made of liquid matter, gold or silver melted and poured into a mould, from whence it receives its form: it may be profitable to the founder, and the metal to the owner, if put to another use; but, as a god, is of no service; and both the graven and molten image, the one and the other, each of then is "a teacher of lies", and so unprofitable; if they are laymen's books, as they are said to be, they do not teach them truth; they do not teach them what God is in his nature and perfections; what Christ is in his person and offices; what angels are, who are incorporeal; nor the saints, they neither describe the shape and features of their body, nor express their characters, minds, or manners; they teach men to believe lies, and to worship false deities, as they are. So the Targum renders it, a false deity; which imposes on men, and therefore cannot profit them: or this may be understood of an idolatrous priest, as Aben Ezra; as the idol itself cannot profit, so neither can the priest that teaches men such lies as to worship the idol, and put trust in it:

that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? or, "whilst making dumb idols" {m}; which is great stupidity indeed! that while a man is graving an image, or casting an idol, which are lifeless senseless things, that can neither move nor speak, yea, are his workmanship, yet puts his trust and confidence in them, that they can do him service he needs, help him in distress, and save him out of his troubles; what profit can be expected from these, though ever so nicely framed, when he considers they are of his own framing, and that they are idols, which are nothing in the world, as the word {n} here used signifies; and dumb ones, which can give no answer to the requests of their votaries? The Targum is,

"idols in whom there is no profit."

{m} Mymla Mylyla twvel "faciendo idola muta", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus. {n} Mylyla "dii nihili", Drusius.

Habakkuk 2:19

Ver. 19. Woe to him that saith to the wood, Awake,.... That saith to a wooden image, let him go by what name he will; saint such an one, or such an one; awake, arise, exert thyself on our behalf; deliver us from present danger; save us from our enemies; or pray and intercede for us, that we may be delivered and saved, as the Papists do; addressing a block of wood as they would God himself, or as his people do, Ps 44:23. This must be very displeasing and detestable to God, and therefore a woe is threatened to such idol worshippers: who also say

to the dumb stone, Arise; to the idol of stone, as the Targum; the stone statue, an image made of stone, such as the Papists have even of wood, and of stone, as well as of gold, and silver, and brass, **Re 9:20** and so stupid as to say to such stocks and stones, arise, stand up, and help us:

it shall teach; the stone itself would teach them better, would they but consider what it is, look upon it, and handle it, when they would find it to be a mere stone, and no deity: or, "shall it teach?" so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech; no, it cannot teach any true doctrine, or direct to right worship; it cannot teach men their duty, or where they may have help; it is a dumb idol; it cannot teach men the nature of God, and the knowledge of him; or instruct in his mind and will; or inform of things secret or future:

it [is] laid over with gold and silver; it is made of stone, and covered with gold and silver; how should it teach?

and [there is] no breath at all in the midst of it; or, "no spirit" {o}; so far from having the spirit of divinity in it, or the Spirit of God, that it has not the spirit of a man in it, nor even the spirit of a brute creature; it has not so much as animal breath, and so no life, motion, or activity in it; and therefore must be quite unprofitable to the worshipper of it; incapable of teaching those who apply to it; and they must be stupid that do it, and most righteously bring themselves under the displeasure and wrath of God, and expose themselves to the woe here denounced against such persons.

{o} xwr "spiritus", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Burkius.

Habakkuk 2:20

Ver. 20. But the Lord [is] in his holy temple,.... Not in graven and molten images; not in idols of wood and stone, covered with gold and silver; but in heaven, the habitation of his holiness, the place of his residence, where he is seen and worshipped by the holy angels and glorified saints; and from whence he surveys all the children of men, and their actions; observes the folly and stupidity of idol worshippers; and hears and answers the prayers of his own people: or this intends his church, which is his temple, sanctified by him, and set apart for his service, worship, and glory: here he grants his gracious presence to those who worship him in spirit and in truth; and here he will appear as King of saints, in a most glorious manner, when these several woes before mentioned have taken place; as on Rome Pagan already, and in part on Rome Papal at the Reformation, so completely on it, and all worshippers of images hereafter. The word lkyh, here used, signifies that part of the temple, called the holy place, as distinct from the holy of holies; which was the proper seat of the divine Majesty, and a figure of heaven, as the holy place was of the church; and so he was, as it were, removed from the one to the other; hence the more observable and remarkable, and the greater reason for what follows; and this serves to illustrate and confirm the sense given:

let all the earth keep silence before him; stand in awe of him, and reverence him; be subject to him, and silently adore him; as all the inhabitants of the earth will when the above enemies of his are entirely removed out of it; there will be no more clamours and objections against the Christian religion by Jews and Mahometans, on account of image worship, which will be no more; no more wars, or rumours of wars, but a profound peace everywhere; no more persecutions of the saints; no more will be heard the cry of violence and oppression, all their enemies being destroyed; no more repining and murmurings among the people of God, through impatience and unbelief, all afflictions being at an end; there will be an entire silence of this kind everywhere; only the voice of the Gospel, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, will be heard. This is not the case now, nor was there ever as yet such a time on earth; this shows that the prophecy regards time to come.

INTRODUCTION TO HABAKKUK 3

The title of this chapter is a prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, composed after the manner of a psalm of David, and directed to the chief singer, **Hab 3:1**. The occasion of it is expressed, **Hab 3:2** in which the prophet declares his concern for the work of the Lord, and the promotion of the kingdom and interest of Christ; and observes the various steps that were, or would be, taken for the advancement of it; for which he prays, and suggests that these would be after the manner of the Lord's dealing with the people of Israel, and settling them in the land of Canaan, **Hab 3:3** and there being several things awful in this account, both with respect to the judgments of God on his enemies, and the conflicts and trials of his own people, it greatly affected the mind of the prophet, **Hab 3:16** and yet, in the view of the worst, he expresses his strong faith in the Lord, as to better times and things, that would most assuredly come, **Hab 3:17**.

Ver. 1. A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth. Of the name, character, and office of the prophet, See Gill on "Hab 1:1". This chapter is entitled a "prayer" of his, a supplicatory one, put up in an humble and earnest manner, and in the exercise of faith, and under the influence of a spirit of prophecy. He before had a vision of the coming of Christ, and of what enemies would rise up, and obstruct his kingdom and interest in the world; and here lie prays that these obstructions might be removed, and that the kingdom of Christ, in its full extent and glory, might take place in the world; and is a prayer of faith, as he prayed it might be, he believed it would be; and left this prayer behind him, for the use and instruction of the church in all ages, until the whole should be accomplished. It seems to be composed after the manner of the psalms of David, to make it the more pleasant and agreeable; and that it might be the more regarded, and be more fitted for the public use and service of the sanctuary: this appears from the style of it, which is poetical, lofty, and sublime; from the frequent use of the word "Selah", peculiar to the psalms of David, **Hab 3:3** and from the direction of it to the chief singer on the stringed instruments, **Hab 3:19** and from the phrase "upon", or "according to Shigionoth" here, which the Septuagint version renders "with a song"; and so the Arabic version, "after [the manner] of a song"; for this word seems to be the plural of Shiggaion, the title of the seventh psalm **Ps 7:1**; which was either the name, title, or first word of some song or songs, according to which this was to be sung; or the name of the tune with which it was to be sung; or of the instrument on which was to be sung: it very probably designs, and may called, an "erratic" or "wandering" song, because of the variableness of its metre, and of its tune. The Vulgate Latin version wrongly interprets it, "for ignorances"; as if this was a prayer of the prophet's for the pardon sins of error and ignorance committed by himself, or by others, or both; which sense is favoured by the Targum,

"a prayer which Habakkuk the prophet prayed, when it was revealed unto him concerning the length (of time) which (God) gave to the wicked; that, if they would return to the law with a perfect heart, they should be forgiven all the sins which they had committed before him as ignorance:"

but there does not appear throughout the whole prayer one single petition for the pardon of any sin at all.

Habakkuk 3:2

Ver. 2. O Lord, I have heard thy speech, [and] was afraid,.... Or, "thy hearing" {p}; which the Lord had caused to be heard from and of himself; the report that had been made to him, and other prophets before him, particularly Isaiah, who says, "who hath believed our report?" Isa 53:1 where the same phrase is used as here: though it seems here not so much to regard the evangelical part of that report, concerning the coming of Christ, his sufferings and death, in order obtain redemption and salvation for his people; for this would have been, and was, matter of joy, and not of fear and consternation: but the truth is this, the Lord in the preceding speech, being a report he made to the prophet concerning the Messiah, had signified that Christ would have many enemies from the Jews and from the Gentiles, from Rome Pagan and Rome Papal; that the church of Christ would meet with great afflictions and persecutions, and be attended with many conflicts, temptations, and difficulties; that the interest of the Redeemer would be sometimes very low, and the work of the Lord at a stand in the world, yea, seemingly dead, quite lost and gone; this is what caused the fear and distress in the prophet's mind, and gave him that pain and uneasiness: and hence the following petition,

O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years; which refers not to the deliverance from the Babylonish captivity, which was fixed to a term of years, when, and not before, not in the midst of them it would be wrought; but to the great work of the Lord in the times of the Gospel. There is a double reading of these words in the Septuagint version of them, and both very different from the Hebrew text. The one is, "in the midst of two lives thou shalt be known"; the life that now is, and that which is to come. The other, by a change of the accent, is, "in the midst of two animals thou shall be known"; so the Arabic version. Theodoret makes mention of both, and inclines to the former;

"some (he says) by two animals understand angels and men; some the incorporeal powers near the divine Glory, the cherubim and seraphim; others the Jews and Babylonians; but to me it seems that the prophet does not say animals, but lives, the present and future, in the midst of which he was a just Judge:"

but the latter reading is followed by many of the ancients, whose different senses are given by Jerom on the place; some interpreting them of the Son and Spirit, by whom the Father is made known; others of the two cherubim in Exodus, and of the two seraphim in Isaiah; and there were some who understood them of the two Testaments, the Old and New, in the midst of which the Lord may be known; and others of Christ's being crucified between two thieves, by which be might be known: but, besides these different sentiments, many of the ancients concluded from hence that Christ lay in the manger between two animals, the ox and the ass, and to which they refer in their ancient hymns {q}; but though this is a wrong version of the text, and a wrong sense which is put upon it, together with **Isa 1:3**; yet, as Burkius observes, there is in this mistake a certain and ancient truth, that the text of Habakkuk belongs to the work of God in Christ, and especially to the nativity of our Lord Jesus; and so some later writers apply this to the wonderful work of the incarnation of Christ, that new, unheard of, and amazing thing the Lord would work in the earth; the promise of which, being delayed, might seem to be dead; and therefore it is entreated it might be revived, and the performance of it hastened; and others to the work of redemption by Christ, which the Father gave him to do, and he promised to come and perform; but, being deferred, the Old Testament saints were impatient of it. Cocceius and Van Till restrain it to the resurrection of Christ from the dead, his coming being prophesied of before; and render the words, "O Lord, thy work is his life {r}, in the midst of the years"; the resurrection of Christ from the dead, or the quickening of him, is prophesied of in many places as a work that would be done, and in which the hope and expectation of the saints were placed; this being a work of great importance both to Christ, his exaltation and glory, and to his people; their quickening together with him; their regeneration, or passing from death to life; their justification of life, and resurrection from the dead, depending upon it; and this is the Lord's work, and owing to the exceeding greatness of his power, and is frequently ascribed to God the Father, who raised Christ from the dead, and gave him glory: and this was "in the midst of the years", or between the years of the Old and of the New Testament; the former was the year of God's longsuffering and forbearance, the time when the Jewish church, like children, were under governors and tutors, until the time appointed of the Father; the latter is the acceptable year of the Lord, and the year of the redeemed; and between these two years, at the end of the one, and the beginning of the other, the Messiah came, was cut off or died, and was quickened and raised again: but I should choose rather to understand this more generally of the work of the Lord in the Christian churches throughout the whole Gospel dispensation, or at least in some certain periods of it. The church itself is the work of the hands of the Lord, Isa 45:11 which sometimes has seemed to have been in a very dead and lifeless state and condition, as in the dark times of Popery; and though there was a reviving of it upon the Reformation, yet there has been a decline since; and the Sardian church state, in which we now are, is described as having a "name", that it "lives", and yet is "dead"; and the interest of religion, and the church of Christ, will be lower still when the witnesses are slain, and their dead bodies lie unburied, before the Spirit of the Lord enters into them, and revives them: now the prophet having in view these various intervals, and especially the last, prays for a reviving of the interest and church of Christ, and the work of the Lord in it; and which will be done when Christ will come in a spiritual manner, and destroy antichrist; when the Spirit will be poured down plentifully from on high; when the Gospel will be purely and powerfully preached all over the world; when the ordinances of it will be administered as at the beginning; when multitudes of churches will be raised and formed, the Jews will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in: this will be a reviving time indeed! and there never will be a thorough one till this time comes; and this will be in "the midst of the years"; between the years of the reign of antichrist, the 1260 days or years of it, which will now expire, and the thousand years of Christ's personal reign on earth; between these two will be this reviving time or spiritual reign of Christ {s}. The words may to good purpose be applied to the work of grace in the hearts of true believers in Christ, which is the Lord's work, and his only; not men, not ministers, not angels, but Jehovah only is the author and finisher of it. This sometimes seems as it were to be dead, when the graces of the Spirit are not in exercise; when saints are in dead and lifeless frames of soul; when they are backward to spiritual and religious exercises; when the world, and the things of it, have got power over them, and they are unconcerned for the things of Christ, the honour of his name, and the good of their own souls; when they are under the power of some sin, and are carried captive by it, as was the case of David, Peter, and others: now this work is revived, when the graces of the Spirit are called forth again into lively exercise; when the affections go out strongly after divine objects and things; when the thoughts of the mind, and the meditations of the heart, are on spiritual subjects; when the talk and conversation turns chiefly on things of a religious and heavenly nature; when there is a forwardness to spiritual exercises, a stirring up of themselves and others to them, and a continuance in them; when there is a visible growing in grace, and a fruitfulness in every good work: this is to be prayed for, and is from the Lord; and is owing to his setting his hand a second time to the work; to his being as the dew to his people; to Christ the sun of righteousness arising on them, with healing in his wings; and to the south wind of the Spirit blowing upon them, and causing their spices to flow out; and this is desirable in the midst of their years, before the years come on in which they have no pleasure, or before they go hence, and be no more:

in the midst of the years make known; which Cocceius and Van Till restrain to the notification of Christ's resurrection from the dead by the ministry of the Gospel, for the benefit of the Lord's people, both Jews and Gentiles; as being a matter of great consequence to them, and for the confirmation of the Christian religion, as it undoubtedly was: but it seems better to understand it in a more general sense, that God would make known more of himself, as the covenant God and Father of his people, of his mind and will, of his love, grace, and mercy in Christ; that he would make known more of Christ, of his person, offices, and grace; that he would make known more clearly the work of his Spirit and grace upon their hearts, and display his power, and the efficacy of his grace, in reviving it, and carrying it on; that he would make known more largely his covenant and promises, his truth and faithfulness in the performance of them; that he would grant a larger measure of knowledge of all divine things of the Gospel, and the truths of it; such as is promised, and is expected will be in the latter day, when the earth shall be everywhere filled with the knowledge of the Lord, **Hab 2:14**:

in wrath remember mercy; the above interpreters refer this to the time of God's wrath and vengeance upon the Jewish nation for their rejection of the Messiah; and which the prophet does not pray might be averted, but that mercy might be remembered to his own people among them, as was; who had the Gospel first preached to them, and were called by grace and saved; and who had an opportunity given them of escaping from Jerusalem, before the destruction of that city: but it may be more agreeable to interpret this of the state of the churches of Christ and true believers; who, when under affliction and distress, or in temptation and desertion, are ready to conclude that God is dealing with them in wrath; and whom the prophet personates, and by him they are taught to pray, that at such seasons God would remember his covenant, his promises, his lovingkindness and tender mercies, the favour he bears to his own people, and smile on them again, and comfort their souls.

{p} Kemv "tuam auditionem", V. L. Burkius; "tuum auditum", Pagninus, Montanus; "rumorem", Tarnovius. {q} "Agnoscat bos et asinus Jacentem in praesepio." And again, "Cognovit bos et asinus, Quod paer erat Dominus." {r} Taking whyyx for wyyx, as whydy for wydy in ver. 10. So Ben Melech observes it may be taken. {s} The Targum interprets these years of the time in which God will renew the world.

Habakkuk 3:3

Ver. 3. God came from Teman,.... Or, "may God come from Teman" {t}; since it is part of the prayer of Habakkuk: or, as "from Teman" {u}; as he of old came from thence, a city in the land of Edom, Jer 49:7 it was five miles from Petra, in Idumea, where was Mount Seir, from whence the Lord arose, and shone forth from Mount Paran, at the giving of the law, De 33:2 to which the allusion is here. So the Targum,

"at the giving of the law to his people, God was revealed from the south;"

for so Teman signifies. The prophet, to encourage his own faith, and the faith of others, takes notice, in this and the following verses, of the instances of the grace, goodness, and power of God to his people Israel, in appearing to them at Mount Sinai, going before them in the wilderness, destroying their enemies, casting them out before them, and introducing them into the land of Canaan, and settling them there; suggesting, that he that had done these great and wonderful things would support and maintain, carry on and promote, his own kingdom and interest in the world; in order to which the prophet prays to God the Father for the coming of his Son, either in the flesh, that the incarnate God would appear in the world, and set up his kingdom in it; or, in prayer, he prophesies of it, and expresses his faith in it: "God cometh from the south"; or, "he shall come" {w}, as it may be rendered: he knew, from the prophecy of Micah, that he that was to be ruler in Israel was to come from Bethlehem, **Mic 5:2** which lay to the south of Jerusalem; and from hence he expected him, and believed he would come, and prayed for it as being most desirable and welcome: or else this respects the coming of the Messiah, in the ministration of the word to Jews and Gentiles, after his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, and the pouring forth of his Spirit on the day of Pentecost; that as the Lord came from the places here mentioned, when he gave the law on Mount Sinai, so he would send forth his Gospel out of Zion and Jerusalem, and go forth himself along with it, riding in his glory, and in his majesty, conquering and to conquer; causing his ministers to triumph in him, and by them subdue multitudes of souls to him, both in Judea, and in the Gentile world, whereby his kingdom might appear in it:

and the Holy One from Mount Paran; or, "even the Holy One" {x}; that came or shined forth "from Mount Paran" formerly; for it was Christ then that appeared on Mount Sinai, and gave to Moses the lively oracles of God; see Ps 68:17 he, as he is truly God, God manifest in the flesh, "Immanuel", God with us; so he is the holy One of God, infinitely and essentially holy, as a divine Person; and holy, and harmless, and without sin in his human nature and life; and is the sanctifier and sanctification of his people. Mount Paran was situated to the south of the land of Canaan, as well as Teman, which so signifies, as before observed. It is called by Ptolemy, Pomponius Mela, and others, Strobilus, from its likeness to a pineapple. It had its name from the city Paran, which lay between Egypt and Arabia {y}; see 1Ki 11:18 which Jerom says {z} was three days' journey from Aila to the east; mention is made of Ail, or Elparan in Ge 14:6 near to which was the wilderness of Paran, frequently spoken of in Scripture, Ge 21:21 the same which Josephus {a} calls the valley or plain of Pharan, where Simon of Gerasa made caves and dens, and hid the treasure he plundered from the people: according to Adrichomius {b}, it was a most dreadful barren desert, where nothing grew, or was to be had, through which the children of Israel journeyed; and was sometimes taken for the first part of the desert of Arabia, near Mount Sinai, and sometimes for the last part of it, towards the land of promise; sometimes it was called the desert of Sin, and sometimes the desert of Sinai, from that mountain; but its most general name was that of Paran, and contained eleven days' journey from Mount Sinai to Kadeshbarnea. Mount Paran (he says {c}) is thick and shady, near to Mount Sinai, and even "contiguous", as it should seem to be from De 33:2 to which the reference is here. So Hillerus {d} interprets it, "full of boughs", or "branches"; or else he would have it to signify "the corner of Aran", the son of Dishan, a son of Seir the Horite, who inhabited this country; see Ge 36:20 and both Teman and Paran being to the south, may point to the place of the Redeemer, by whom the great work was to be done, referred unto. Jerom says he heard a Hebrew man discourse on this passage, thus,

"that Bethlehem lies to the south, where the Lord and Saviour was born: and that he it is of whom it is here said, "the Lord shall come from the south"; that is, shall be born in Bethlehem, and thence arise; and because he who is born in Bethlehem formerly gave the law on Mount Sinai, he is "the Holy One" that came from "Mount Paran"; seeing Paran is a place near to Mount Sinai; and the word "Selah" signifies "always"; and the sense is, he who is born in Bethlehem, and who on Mount Sinai, that is, on Mount Paran, gave the law, always is the author and giver of all blessings, past, present, and to come."

The word

Selah stands here in the middle of the verse. It is interpreted, by several of the Jewish writers, "for ever", as by the aforementioned Hebrew; and by others as an affirmation, and render it, "verily, truly", as answering to "Amen". Some understand it as a pause or full stop, denoting attention to something said that is remarkable; and others take it to be a note, directing the singer to the elevation of his voice, where it stands; and so it is no other than a musical note; hence the Septuagint render it diaqalma. A very learned man {e} has wrote a dissertation upon it, showing that it is one of the names of God; and used differently, as the sense requires, either in the vocative case, as "Selah", that is, O God; or in the other cases, of God, to God, &c.:

his glory covered the heavens; that is, the glory of God, the Holy One, when he came, or should come: this was true of him when he descended on Mount Sinai, and his glory abode upon it; and the sight of his glory was like devouring fire; and the elders saw the God of Israel, under whose feet was as a paved work of sapphire, and as the body of heaven in its clearness; yea, so great as to make the light and glory of the celestial bodies useless, even to cover and hide the shining of them; see Ex 24:10 and may respect the glorious appearances at the birth of Christ, when the heavenly host descended, and sung Glory to God in the highest, and when the glory of the Lord shone round about the shepherds, **Lu 2:9** and at his baptism, when the heavens were opened, the Father's voice was heard, and the Spirit descended on Christ, as a dove; and at his transfiguration, when his face shone as the sun; and Moses and Elias appeared in glorious forms, and a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice was heard from the excellent Glory, **Mt 3:16** or rather it may be, this may respect Christ as the brightness of his Father's glory, and the glory of God in the face of Christ, as set forth in the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, when carried throughout the world by his apostles; whereby his glory was so spread in it, that the heavens were covered with it, and declared it; yea, it was set above the heavens, and the name of the Lord became excellent in all the earth, as follows; see Ps 19:1:

and the earth was full of his praise; with the words of his praise, as the Targum; so the fame of the mighty things done by the Lord in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, for his people, reached the nations of the world, and especially those of the land of Canaan, and struck them with awe and dread, **Jos 2:9** and the fame of Christ, his miracles and doctrines, went through the land of Israel, and all Syria; and multitudes glorified God, and praised him for what was done by him, **Mt 4:23** and more especially the earth was filled with his glory and praise when his Gospel was carried into all the parts of it by his apostles; which occasioned universal joy to all sensible sinners, and filled their hearts and mouths with praise to God for such a Saviour, and for such blessings of grace and good things that came by him: or, "the earth was full of his light" {f}; of the light of his Gospel, and of the knowledge of himself by it.

{t} awby "veniet", so some in Calvin, Van Till. {u} Nmytm "sicuti olim ex Theman", Van Till. {w} Venit, Grotius; "veniet", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Gussetius. {x} vwdqw. {y} Hiller. Onomastic. p. 585, 908. {z} De locis Hebr. fol. 91. F. G. {a} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 9. sect. 4. {b} Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 116. {c} Ibid. p. 123. {d} Ut supra, (Hiller. Onomastic.) p. 431, 477, 908. {e} Paschii Dissertatio de Selah, p. 670. in Thesaur. Theolog. Philolog. par. 1. {f} Urah halm wtlht "et lux ejus implevit terram", Junius & Tremellius; "et splendoris, [vel] fulgoris ejus plena terra", Vatablus, Drusius; so Kimchi, Ben Melech, and R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 3. 1.

Habakkuk 3:4

Ver. 4. And [his] brightness was as the light,.... Of fire, of devouring fire on the top of the mount, to which the sight of his glory was like, Ex 24:16 to which Kimchi refers it. Aben Ezra thinks the pillar of fire is intended, in which the Lord went before his people in the wilderness, Ex 13:21 or as the light and splendour of Bereshith, as the Targum, of that primogenital light which was produced on the first day of the creation; or as the light of the seven days of the creation, as Jarchi; see Isa 30:26 or rather as the light of the sun shining in its full strength, Christ being the light of the world, and the sun of righteousness; and so may describe him as the brightness of his Father's glory; or his glory, as the only begotten of the Father, seen by his own disciples in the days of his flesh, shining through his works and miracles; or as exhibited in the light of his glorious Gospel, which is the great light that shined on men; and in and by which they that sat in darkness saw light, and who were darkness itself were made light in the Lord: what a glory, lustre, brightness, and light, did the Gospel spread in the world at the first publication of it!

he had horns coming out of his hand; which the Jewish interpreters understand of Moses having horns or beams of light and glory from the hand and power of God, when he conversed with him on the mount, and the skin of his face shone, where the same word is used as here, Ex 34:29 though some of them interpret it of the two tables of the law, which came from the hand of the Lord, edged with glory and brightness, and looked like fire; hence called a "fiery law", De 33:2. The words may be rendered, as in the margin, "he had beams" coming "out of his side" {g}; and be understood of Christ, who has beams and rays of glory on all sides of him, all around him; he is all glory {h}; he is crowned with glory and honour, and highly exalted at his Father's right hand, above all principalities and powers: and "horns" being an emblem of power and might, authority and dominion, the phrase may denote that power and authority in heaven and in earth are given to him as Mediator, and exercised by him. Van Till observes, that the word "horn" is a military term, and is used for the wings of armies, the right and left; and as Christ is here described as a General of an army, marching forth in a warlike manner; these may denote the armies or companies under him, at his hand, and under his command, accoutred, and ready to obey his orders; and particularly may have respect to the division made among the apostles, whom he sent forth to subdue men to him; committing the Gospel of the circumcision to Peter, and of the uncircumcision to Paul, **Ga 2:7** whose ministrations were made successful to the pulling down of the strong holds of sin and Satan, and reducing many to the obedience of Christ:

and there [was] the hiding of his power; that is, in his hand; there his power, which before was hidden, was made manifest; and yet so little displayed, in comparison of what it is in itself, that it may be rather said to be hid than revealed; or there, in his hand, lies his power, with which he hides and covers his people in the day of battle; especially his ministering servants, whom he holds in his right hand, and preserves them amidst a thousand dangers and difficulties, and keeps them for further usefulness; see Ac 18:10. The Targum is,

"sparks went out from the chariot of his glory; there he revealed his majesty, which was hid from the children of men, with sublime power."

Aben Ezra thinks the ark is meant by "the hiding of his power", called "the ark [of his] strength", Ps 132:8.

{g} wl wdym Mynrq "e lateribus utrinque emicabant cornua", i. e. "radii", Drusius. {h} So R. Joseph Albo interprets them of sparks of spiritual light, which come from God himself, and not another. Vid. Sepher Ikkarim, l. 2. c. 29.

Habakkuk 3:5

Ver. 5. Before him went the pestilence,.... Either in the land of Egypt, when he marched through that, and slew all their firstborn, Ps 78:50 or rather which he sent before him, and Israel his people among the nations of the land of Canaan, with other diseases and judgments, and destroyed them to make way for his people, which may be here alluded to, Ex 23:27 and may point at the judgments of God, and those pestilential diseases which seized upon the persecutors of the Christians, both among the Jews, as Herod, Ac 12:23 and among the Gentiles, as many of the Roman emperors, who died violent and grievous deaths; and particularly it may regard the pestilence, famine, and other sore judgments preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it, for their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah:

and burning coals went forth at his feet; which some understand of hailstones mingled with fire, to which the allusion may be, being one of the plagues of Egypt, **Ex 9:23**. Some interpret it of hot diseases, burning fevers, so Kimchi; which are at the command of God, and sent forth by him when he pleases, to do his will. The ancient fathers expound all this of the destruction of death, and the devil, and his principalities, by Christ upon the cross; and the Targum is,

"from before him was sent forth the angel of death, and his word went forth in a flame of fire;"

but this seems to have respect to the burning of the city and temple of Jerusalem, which was done by the Romans as instruments, but according to the direction, order, and will of Christ, Mt 22:7 see Ps 18:12.

Habakkuk 3:6

Ver. 6. He stood and measured the earth,.... This alludes to the ark of the Lord, the symbol of his presence, standing and abiding at Gilgal for the space of fourteen years, while the land of Canaan was subdued by Joshua; and then measured out by him, and divided by lot, as an inheritance to the children of Israel, according to the direction and appointment of the Lord, Jos 13:1 &c.: here it may have respect to the mission of the apostles into the various parts of the world, and the distribution of it among them; some being sent into one part, and some into another, called their particular line and measure, 2Co 10:14 some into India, others into Ethiopia; some into Asia, and others into Europe; by which means the Gospel was preached everywhere, and great part of the world became Christians:

he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; with a look of his he made them give way; he drove the Canaanites out of the land, and separated them from one another, and scattered them about, to make room for his people Israel, Ps 78:55:

and the everlasting mountains were scattered; or, "were broken" {i}:

the perpetual hills did bow; the mountains and hills that were from the beginning of the creation, that were settled upon their bases, and never moved, now trembled, shook, and bowed, as Sinai and others did, at the presence of the God of Israel; see **Jud 5:5** or rather, figuratively, these may design the kingdoms and states, kings and princes, greater and lesser, belonging to the land of Canaan, which were shaken, moved, and taken by the Israelites, and brought into subjection to them; and in like manner kings and kingdoms, comparable to mountains and hills, through the preaching of the Gospel, and the power of Christ attending it, were brought to yield unto him, at the downfall of Paganism in the Roman empire: this is signified by every mountain and island being moved out of their places, and kings and great men calling to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb, **Re 6:14**:

his ways [are] everlasting; and what he has done in ages past he can do again; his power, his wisdom, and his grace, are unchangeably the same; and all he does in time, every step he takes, is according to his counsels, purposes, and decrees in eternity, which infallibly come to pass; nor can he be hindered and frustrated in the execution of them; as he has begun, he will go on; as he has set up his kingdom in the world, he will support and maintain it; and though there are many obstructions and remoras in the way of it, he will go on, and remove them, until he has thoroughly established it, and brought it to its highest glory, which he has designed; all mountains and hills are nothing before him; he can soon make them a plain; see Re 11:15: or, "the ways of the world {k} are his"; the world is under his government, and all things in it subject to his providence; he can rule and overrule all things for his own glory, and the good of his interest, and he will do it; everything is subject to his control, and under his direction; not a step can be taken without his will. This the prophet observes along with the above things, to encourage the faith and expectation of the saints, that the work of the Lord will be revived, and his kingdom and interest promoted and established in the world; though there may, and will, be many difficulties and distresses previous to it.

{i} wuupty "contriti sunt", Pagninus, Montanus; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 95. 1. {k} Mlwe twkylh "itinera mundi", Vatablus, Tigurine version.

Habakkuk 3:7

Ver. 7. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction,.... The same with Cush or Ethiopia; hence the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, "the tents of the Ethiopians"; and these are the same with "the curtains of Midian" in the next clause, tents being made of curtains, and the Ethiopians and Midianites the same people; so the daughter of the priest of Midian, whom Moses married, is called an Ethiopian woman, **Ex 2:21**. This seems to have respect to that panic which seized the neighbouring nations by whom the Israelites passed, as well as the Canaanites, into whose land they were marching, when they heard what wonderful things were done for them in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, which was predicted by Moses in
Ex 15:14 and not only fulfilled in the Canaanites, as appears from what Rahab says, **Jos 2:9** but particularly in the Moabites and Midianites, who sent to each other, and consulted together against Israel; and, by the advice of Balaam, found ways and means to draw them into fornication, and so to idolatry; for which the Israelites having suffered, were stirred up to avenge themselves on them, and slew five of their kings, and a great multitude of their people; and so the words may be rendered, "for iniquity" {l}; and the word is often used for idolatry; that is, for the sin they drew the Israelites into, they were brought into trembling and great distress, which the prophet saw, perceived, and understood by reading the history of those times; see Nu 22:3 though the Jewish commentators, and others, generally refer this to the case of Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia, who carried Israel into captivity, from whence they were delivered by Othniel, who prevailed against Cushan, and into whose hands he fell; and so then he and his people were seen in affliction, **Jud 3:7** but Cushan here is not the name of a man, but of a country: and whereas it follows,

the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble; this is thought to refer to the times of Gideon, when the Midianites were overcome by him with three hundred men, and in their fright fell upon and destroyed each other; signified by a barley cake tumbling into the host of Midian, and overturning a tent, as represented in a dream to one of Gideon's men, **Jud 7:13** but the former reference seems best; and it should be observed, that Cush or Ethiopia, and Midian, were parts of Arabia; for not only the Arabians are said to be near the Ethiopians, or at the hand of the Cushites, 2Ch 21:16 but Sinai, a part of Horeb, where Moses fed the flock of his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, is expressly said to be in Arabia; compare **Ex 3:1** and with those Arabians called Scenitae, from their dwelling in tents, agree the characters in the text: now the people inhabiting those places, the prophet foresaw by a spirit of prophecy "under vanity" {m}, as it may be rendered; that is, "subject" to it, as the whole Gentile world was, **Ro 8:20** or under the power of idolatry; but it was foretold that these should be converted in Gospel times, Ps 68:31 which was brought about, partly by the Apostles Matthew and Matthias, said to be sent into Ethiopia; and partly by the Ethiopian eunuch, converted and baptized by Philip, who doubtless was the means of spreading the Gospel in his own country, when returned to it, **Ac 8:27** and chiefly by the Apostle Paul, who went into Arabia, and preached there, quickly after his conversion; and here were churches in the first times of Christianity; See Gill on "Ga 1:17" and at this time Cushan or Ethiopia was in affliction; and the Midianites trembled, such of them to whom the word came in power, and they were made sensible of their danger and misery, as the apostle did, the instrument of their conversion, **Ac 9:6** once more, as an Ethiopian is an emblem of a man in a state of nature, and describes very aptly wicked and profligate persons, apostates from religion, and such as are persecutors of good men, Jer 13:23 it may design such here; and be expressive of their distress and trouble, the fear and dread they would be seized with on seeing Christianity prevail, and Paganism falling in the Roman empire; which distress and trembling are in a very lively manner set forth in **Re 6:15**.

{l} Nwa txt "propter iniquitatem", V. L. Calvin, Tigurine version. {m} "Subjecta vanitati", Heb.; "sub vanitate", Piscator, Cocceius, Van Till.

Habakkuk 3:8

Ver. 8. Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? [was] thine anger against the rivers?.... Referring, as is commonly thought, either to the rivers in Egypt turned into blood, which was one of the plagues of that land, **Ex 7:20** when the resentment of the Lord was not so much against them as against the Egyptians; and as a punishment of them for drowning the infants of the Israelites in them, and in order to obtain the dismissal of his people from that land: or else to the river Jordan, called "rivers", because of the largeness of it, and the abundance of water in it; against which the Lord was not angry, when he divided the waters of it, which was done only to make a passage through it for his people into the land of Canaan, **Jos 3:16**:

[was] thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses [and] thy chariots of salvation? the Red sea, when a strong east wind was sent, and divided the waters of it, which was no mark of displeasure against that; but for the benefit of the people of Israel, that they might pass through it as on dry land; and for the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts, who, entering into it with his horses and chariots, were drowned; the Lord coming forth against him, riding on his horses and chariots, the pillar of fire and cloud, by which he defended Israel, and through which he looked, and discomfited the host of the Egyptians, and wrought salvation for his people; see Ex 14:19 with which compare Ps 114:3. The clouds are the chariots of the Lord, Ps 104:3 so angels, who are sometimes signified by horses and chariots, Ps 18:10 **Zec 1:8** and here they may design the angels of Michael, or Christ, Re 12:7 the Christian emperors, Constantine and Theodosius, whom the Lord raised up, and made use of as instruments to demolish Paganism, establish Christianity, and deliver and save his people from their persecutors, who came in like a flood upon them; and who, for their number and force, were comparable to rivers, yea, to the sea; and upon whom the Lord showed some manifest tokens of his wrath and displeasure; so people, tongues, and nations, are compared to many waters, Re 17:15 and monarchs and their armies, **Isa 8:7** and the Targum here interprets the rivers of kings and their armies: and it may be observed that some parts of the Roman empire are signified by the sea, and rivers and fountains of waters, on which the blowing of the second and third trumpets brought desolation; as the antichristian states are described by the same, on which the second and third vials of God's wrath will be poured, when he will indeed be displeased and angry with the rivers and the sea, figuratively understood, **Re 8:8**.

Ver. 9. Thy bow was made quite naked,.... It was took out of its case, and arrows out of their quiver, and these made use of against the enemies of his people: this is put for all weapons of war; the sword was unsheathed, and all military weapons employed, and the power of the Lord was exerted; or, as the Targum,

"the Lord was revealed in his power;"

fighting the battles of his people, as in the times of Joshua:

[according] to the oaths of the tribes, [even thy] word. Selah. That is, to fulfil his word of promise, to which he had annexed his oaths, he at several times swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to the fathers of the Israelites, that he would put them in possession of the land of Canaan; and which being worthy of notice, and to be remarked, the word "Selah" is added. So the Targum,

"in revealing thou art revealed in thy power, because of thy covenant which thy word made with the tribes for ever."

The "bow" here is an emblem of the Gospel, with which Christ the Captain of our salvation, the antitype of Joshua, went forth, more especially in the first ages of Christianity, conquering and to conquer, **Re 6:2**. The arrows of this bow are the doctrines of the Gospel, which are sharp in the heart of Christ's enemies, his elect; who are so in a state of nature, whereby they are brought into subjection to him, Ps 45:5 and hereby the promises of God confirmed by his oaths are accomplished, that the spiritual seed of Christ shall endure for ever; or he shall never want a seed to serve him, Ps 89:35:

Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers; which is generally supposed to allude to the smiting of the rock, from whence waters gushed out, and ran in dry places like a river; for which channels or canals were made in the earth, in which they flowed and followed the Israelites wherever they went, and supplied man and beast with water. So the Targum,

"for thou didst break strong rocks, rivers came forth overflowing the earth;"

see Ps 105:41 but this seems to be going back in the history; rather therefore this refers to the rivers formed in the land of Canaan, whereby it became fertile; hence it is called a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, that spring out of valleys and hills, **De 8:7**. This may respect, in futurity, either the provisions of grace, and the large abundance of the blessings of it, made for the supply and satisfaction of the children of God in times of distress and difficulty, Isa 41:17 or that help and assistance against, protection and deliverance from, the flood of persecution, cast out after the church by Satan, in order to overwhelm her, by the earth opening its mouth, and swallowing up the flood, Re 12:15.

Habakkuk 3:10

Ver. 10. The mountains saw thee, [and] they trembled,.... At the power and presence of God, as Sinai of old; See Gill on "Hab 3:6" by which are signified mighty people and nations, kings and great men, struck with terror at the amazing providence of God in the world, on the behalf of his own people, and against their enemies; see **Re 6:14**:

the overflowing of the water passed by; which is usually referred to the overflowing of the river Jordan at the time of the passage of the Israelites through it, when the waters above stood and rose up as a heap, and those below failed, and were cut off, and passed away into the salt sea, **Jos 3:15** but perhaps it may refer to the times of David, when he conquered all his enemies round about, who were like an overflowing flood; but now passed away, particularly the Philistines, who had always been very troublesome to Israel, but now were overcome by David at Baalperazim; where the Lord, on the contrary, broke forth upon his enemies as the breach of waters, from whence the place had its name, **2Sa 5:20** and as this respects time that was then to come, when this prayer was made, it may regard the flood of persecution, which ceased in Constantine's time, when Paganism was abolished, and Christianity established; concerning which it might be said, "the winter is past, the rain is over and gone", **So 2:11** and the word {n} here used signifies a large shower of rain, causing an inundation, a storm, a tempest; and so fitly expresses the violence of persecution, now at an end:

the deep uttered his voice, [and] lifted up hands on high; language very poetical, exceeding striking, very beautiful and elegant. It is generally understood of the deep waters of the Red sea, or of Jordan, or both, when divided for the Israelites to pass through; at which time, when they rose up, they made a great noise, and stood on a heap; and so the phrases are expressive of the roaring and raging of them as they rose up, which was as if they had spoken; and of the position in which they were, standing up on high, as if they had hands, and these lifted up: but rather they figuratively refer to the mighty nations conquered by David, who asked favour and mercy of him, and signified their subjection to him; and, having respect to times to come, may denote the subjection of the multitude of people and nations in the Roman empire to Christ, when heathenism was abolished in it; and the joy and rejoicing of Christians upon it, and the ceasing of persecution in it, even high and low, rich and poor, all ranks and degrees of men; height and depth, men in high or low circumstances, signified by the depth uttering his voice, and the height lifting up its hands, in token of praise and thankfulness; for so the latter clause may be rendered, "the height lifted up his hands" {o}; and answers to the deep in the preceding clause; agreeable to this sense is Jarchi's note,

""the deep uttered his voice": the inhabitants of the earth praised him; "the height lifted up his hands"; the host of heaven confessed unto him;"

every creature in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, ascribed blessing, honour, glory, and power, to the Lord on this occasion, **Re 5:13**. The Targum is,

"the powers on high stood wondering;"

amazed at what was done, and lifted up their hands with astonishment.

{n} Mrz "nimbus", Tigurine version; "impetus", Munster; "imber aquosus", Cocceius, Van Till; "inundatio aquarum", Burkius. {o} avn whydy Mwr "altitudo manum suam sublevavit", Munster; "tudo manus suas tulit", Burkius.

Habakkuk 3:11

Ver. 11. The sun [and] moon stood still in their habitation,.... This is generally thought to refer to the miracle in the times of Joshua, Jos 10:12 but a different word is there used, especially of the standing still of the sun; nor are the sun and moon said there to stand in their habitation; nor will the series of the history of times past, or the thread of prophecy of things to come, admit of this reference; nor do the words express the clear shining of the sun and moon at their standing still, but the reverse; for the phrase, "in their habitation", may be rendered, "within their tent" {p}, or pavilion; See Gill on "Ps 19:4"; which is no other than their being encompassed and covered with clouds; which is just such a pavilion as God is said to be in, when "darkness was his secret place; his pavilion round about him dark waters and thick clouds of the skies", Ps 18:11 and so is expressive of the dark times of antichrist, which followed, when the Pagan persecutions were over, Christianity supported by secular powers, and the Christian churches raised to the height of riches and honour; and then the man of sin showed himself, the pope of Rome took upon him the title of universal bishop, and introduced false doctrines, strange worship, and bad discipline, into the church, and obscured the glorious light of it; and Mahomet also arose with his locusts, the Saracens, out of the bottomless pit opened, from whence came a smoke which darkened the sun and air, **Re 9:1**:

at the light of thine arrows they went, [and] at the shining of thy glittering spear; the commonly received sense of the words is, either at the light and shining of the sun and moon, when they stood still in Joshua's time; the arrows of the Almighty, and the lightning of his spear, that is, hailstones mingled with fire, and thunder, and lightning, which the heathens call Jupiter's arrows; these steered their course, being directed against the enemies of the Lord's people, and fought for them, Jos 10:10 or at the light of these, which looked very bright and dazzling through the rays of the sun upon them, the Israelites marched against their enemies, and avenged themselves on them: but these bright arrows and glittering spear, and the light and shining of them, seem to design no other than the weapons of the Christian ministry or warfare; the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; the light of which broke forth at the Reformation, the same that is meant by the "morning star", **Re 2:28** irradiated by which, the ministers of it especially went forth with courage against their antichristian enemies, and prevailed, and spread the Gospel in many countries. It may be rendered as a petition, "let them walk at the light" {q}, &c.; a prayer of faith that it might be, and which is a prophecy that it would be.

{p} hlbz "intra habitaculum", Cocceius, Van Till, "[vel] in tugurio", ib. {q} wklhy "ambulent ad lucem", &c. Van Till.

Ver. 12. Thou didst march through the land with indignation,.... Not the land of Canaan, fighting against the inhabitants of it, dispossessing them to make room for the Israelites, whatever allusion may be to it; but the antichristian land, the whole Romish jurisdiction, and all the states of it, through which the Lord will march in wrath and fury, when he pours out the vials of it upon them; or this is desired, and prayed for; for it may be rendered, "do thou march through the land" {r}, &c.; foreseeing and believing that he would:

thou didst thresh the heathen in anger; or, "do thou thresh" {s}, &c.; these are the Papists, called heathens and Gentiles in Scripture, because of the heathenish customs and practices they have introduced into the Christian religion, Ps 10:16 these are the nations that will be gathered together like sheaves of grain on a floor to be threshed; and when Zion the church of Christ, and Christian princes, will be called upon to arise, and thresh them; and the Lord by them will do it, namely, separate his own people from them, which are like wheat, and utterly destroy them, as chaff and stubble, **Mic 4:12**.

{r} deut "progredlaris", Van Till. {s} vwdt "tritures", Van Till.

Ver. 13. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of that people, [even] for salvation with thine anointed,.... Or, "thy Messiah"; which Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret of Messiah the son of David; and read and give the sense of the words thus,

"as thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, by bringing them into the land of Canaan, so do thou go forth for salvation with thy Messiah."

God of old went forth in his power and providence for the salvation of his people, whom he chose above all people to be his special and peculiar people; making use of Moses and Aaron in bringing them out of Egypt, and leading them through the wilderness, and of Joshua to introduce them, and settle them in the land of Canaan; who were all types of Christ in the salvation of the chosen people. Joshua particularly was a type of Jesus; they agree in their name, which signifies a Saviour the salvation of God, or God the salvation; and in their character, office, and usefulness to the people of God, Jesus is the Lord's "anointed"; anointed with the Holy Ghost, the oil of gladness, above his fellows, which he received without measure; anointed to the office of Prophet, Priest, and King; and from whom his people receive the unction, and are denominated Christians, or anointed ones: and the "people" of God, for whose salvation he went forth with him, are not all mankind, who are not all saved; nor the people of the Jews only, or all of them; but a peculiar people, out of Jews and Gentiles, loved with a special love; chosen to salvation, secured in the covenant of grace, and given to Christ as his portion and people, and so saved by him, **Mt 1:21**. The "salvation" of them is a spiritual one, a salvation from all their sins; from the power and dominion, pollution and guilt, the damning power of them, and at last from the very being of them; as well as from Satan, the law, death, hell, and wrath to come: it is perfect and complete, and endures for ever. Jehovah the Father "went forth" with Christ his Son for this salvation, in his purposes and decrees concerning it; in his council and covenant relating to it; in the mission of him into this world to effect it; and by helping and assisting him in it, as man and Mediator. The words may be rendered, "thou wentest forth"; or, "thou goest forth"; thou wilt do so; and mayest thou do so, "to save thy people, to save thy anointed" {t}; and so respect not the salvation of Israel by Moses or Joshua; nor the spiritual and eternal salvation of God's elect by the Messiah; but the salvation of the Lord's people from mystical Babylon, from the oppression and tyranny of antichrist, and from all his false doctrines, superstition, and idolatry, and ruin by them; and particularly the salvation of the two witnesses, the two olive trees, the two anointed ones that stand before the Lord of the whole earth; the singular being put for the plural, "anointed" for "anointed ones"; and so the Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint version, and the Arabic version, render it, "thy Christs", or "thy anointed ones"; now this will be done when the Lord shall go forth in his power and providence, and quicken and raise their dead bodies, when they have lain three days and a half, and shall cause them to ascend to heaven in the sight of their enemies; see **Zec 4:14**:

thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked; not the princes of the families of the land of Canaan, as some; nor the first born of Pharaoh's family in Egypt, or him and his host at the Red sea, as, others; nor Goliath of Gath, smitten by David, as Burkius; nor Satan and his principalities and powers by Christ on the cross; but antichrist the man of sin, that wicked and lawless one, who is at the bead of a wicked house or family, the antichristian party; who received a wound at the Reformation; and ere long the kings of the earth will hate the whore, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; and Christ, will utterly consume and destroy this wicked one with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming, Re 13:3 see Ps 110:6. Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret this of the head of the army of wicked Gog, the king of Magog, taking it to belong to future time; and so some render all those phrases, "thou wilt go forth, thou wilt wound" {u}, &c.:

by discovering the foundation unto the neck; or "razing the foundation", as in Ps 137:7. There seems to be a double metaphor in the words, expressing the utter ruin and destruction of antichrist and his party; who, being compared to a building, will be demolished, and razed to the very foundation; that will be dug up, and laid bare, and no trace of an edifice to be seen any more; and, being compared to a human body, will be plunged into such distresses and calamities, as to be as it were up to the neck in them, from whence there is no escape and deliverance. Some understand this of the princes of this head, or of his friends, and those of his family that are nearest to him, as the neck is to the head; or of the whole body of the people under him, of which he will be deprived; and so be as a head without a body, and who cannot long survive them.

Selah is added as a mark of attention, something of moment and importance being observed.

{t} Kxyvm ta evyl Kme evyl "ad salutem populi tui, ad servandum unctum tuum", De Dieu. {u} tauy "egredieris"; so some in Vatablus. tuxm "transfiges"; so some in Drusius.

Habakkuk 3:14

Ver. 14. Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages,.... Of his warriors, mighty men, princes; so the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; or of his armies, as Jarchi and Kimchi; which some interpret of Pharaoh and his host, who were destroyed by the steps and methods which they themselves took, going into the sea of themselves, and so were struck through with their own staves: others of the princes and armies of the Canaanites, who destroyed one another with their own weapons of war, as the Midianites did; though we have no instance of it on record: others of Goliath, as Burkius, called before "the head out of the house of the wicked", with respect to his rise from Gath; here, "the head of his Pagans", as he renders it, or Gentiles, with respect to his preeminence over the common soldiers, and all the Philistines: others of Sennacherib and his army, as Jarchi; but Kimchi's sense is much better, who interprets it of Gog and his army; and which, if understood of the Turk, the eastern antichrist, is not amiss; and so, as the western antichrist and his destruction are pointed at in the preceding verse **Hab 3:13**, the ruin of the other is intimated here; whose armies are expressed by a word which sometimes has the signification of villages; because he said, "I will go up to the land of unwalled villages", Eze 38:11 in the land of Judea about Jerusalem, where he will distribute and quarter his soldiers; and where he and they at the head of them in these villages will be cut to pieces with their own weapons; as it is said, "every man's sword shall be against his brother", Eze 38:21, Cocceius and Van Till render the words, "thou hast designed", marked out, or expressed by name, "in his tribes, the head of his villages"; and understand them, not of the enemy, but of Christ the anointed One, and his people; the Protestants, or reformed churches, who, being separated from antichrist, are represented as divided into tribes, and as dwelling in villages alone, and in separate states and kingdoms; and suppose that God has designed in his purposes and decrees some particular place, called the head or beginning of these villages, where his great and glorious work in the latter day will first appear; but what and where that place is is not said:

they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me; the prophet representing the true Israel, or the whole church of Christ: it is not unusual for mighty armies to be compared to a whirlwind coming forth with great force, suddenly and swiftly; see **Jer 4:13** and particularly it is said of the army of Gog or the Turk, which shall invade Judea, in order to dispossess the Jews of their land, when converted and returned to it; "thou shall ascend and come like a storm, thou shall be like a cloud, to cover the land, thou and all thy bands, and many people with thee", Eze 38:9 who will think to scatter the people of the Jews again among the nations, as they have been:

their rejoicing [was] as to devour the poor secretly; the poor people of the Jews, to strip them of their substance, to carry off their gold and silver, their cattle and their goods; and which they thought they should as easily accomplish as a rich man gets the mastery over a poor man, and ruins him, that has none to help him; and that they should do this in a still, private, secret manner, so as that the Christian princes should have no knowledge of it, and come in to their assistance; and this they rejoiced at in themselves, and pleased themselves with it; see Eze 38:10. The above interpreters render this clause as a prayer, "let them tremble for fear": or be filled with horror, who come "to scatter me, whose rejoicing is as to devour the poor in secret"; which is interpreted of the Papists being terrified by some Christian princes, since the Reformation, from carrying some of their designs into execution; and of the clandestine arts and secret methods the Jesuits particularly use to do injury to the interest of Christ and true religion.

Habakkuk 3:15

Ver. 15. Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses,.... And as thou didst of old, so do again; as Jehovah walked through the Red sea in a pillar of cloud and fire, which were his horses and chariots, and destroyed the Egyptians; so may he walk through another sea by his instruments, and destroy the enemies of his church and people; See Gill on "Hab 3:8". The "sea" here signifies the world, compared to it for the multitude of its people; the noise, fluctuation, and uncertainty of all things in it; and particularly the Roman empire, the sea out of which the antichristian beast arose, Re 13:1. The "horses" are the angels or Christian princes, with whom the Lord will walk in majesty, and in the greatness of his strength, pouring out the vials of his wrath on the antichristian states:

through the heap of many waters; or "the clay", or "mud of many waters" {w}; that lies at the bottom of them; which being walked through and trampled on by horses, is raised up, and "troubles" them, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it: these "many waters" are those on which the whore of Rome is said to sit; and which are interpreted of people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, Re 17:1 and the "mud" of them is expressive of their pollution and corruption, with her false doctrines, idolatry, superstition, and immoralities; and of their disturbed state and condition, through the judgments of God upon them, signified by his horses walking through them; trampling upon them in fury; treating them with the utmost contempt; treading them like mire and clay, and bringing upon them utter ruin and destruction.

{w} Mybr Mym rmx "in luto aquarum multarum", Tigurine version;

"calcasti lutum aquarum multarum", Cocceius, Van Till; "lutum, aquae multae", Burkius.

Habakkuk 3:16

Ver. 16. When I heard, my belly trembled,.... His bowels, his heart within him, at the report made of what would come to pass in future time; and not so much at hearing of the judgments of God that should come upon the enemies of his Church, antichrist and his followers; though even these are awful and tremendous to good men; see Ps 119:120 but upon hearing what troubles and distresses would come upon the churches of Christ, previous to these, afterwards called a day of trouble in this verse, and more particularly described in the next **Hab 3:17**:

my lips quivered at the voice; at the voice of these words, as the Targum; at the voice of the Lord, expressing and foretelling these calamities, through fear and dread, consternation and amazement; under which circumstances the natural heat of the outward parts of the body retires to defend the heart, and leaves them trembling and quivering, particularly the lips, so that they lose their use for a time; and a person in such a case can hardly speak:

rottenness entered into my bones; he became weak and without strength, as if he had long been in a wasting consumption; or was at once deprived of all his strength, and it was turned into corruption; see Da 10:8:

and I trembled in myself; within himself, in all his inward parts, as well as in his outward parts: or, "under myself" {x}; was not able to keep his place, could not stand upon the ground that was under him; his knees trembled, as the Syriac version:

that I might rest in the day of trouble; rather, as Noldius {y} renders the particle, "yet", or "notwithstanding, I shall rest in the day of trouble"; which had been represented to him in vision; and which he had a sight of by a spirit of prophecy, as coming upon the church of Christ, and had given him that concern before expressed. The Syriac version of this and the next clause, which it joins, is, "he showed me the day of calamity, which is about to come upon the people". Here begins the prophet's expression of his strong faith and joy in the midst of all the distresses he saw were at hand; herein representing the church, and all true believers helped to exercise faith in those worst of times. This "day of trouble" is the same with the hour of temptation that shall come upon all the earth to try the inhabitants of it; the time of the slaying of the witnesses, which will be such a time of trouble as never was in the world; see **Re 3:10**. The "rest" the people of God will have then, which the prophet had faith in for them, will lie in the Lord's protection and keeping of his people; his perfections, power, and providence, are the chambers of rest and safety he will call them unto, and the shadow of his wings, which they will make their refuge till these calamities and indignation be overpast, Isa 26:20

when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops; or rather "him"; not "the people"; the people of God, "he" the Lord or Christ comes unto; but the enemy of them: this is the ground of the prophet's faith and confidence before expressed, or of the church's he personated; namely, that when Christ, Michael the great Prince, should come up to his people, appear for them, and stand on their side, he would lead his troops and march his army against their grand enemy antichrist; and "cut him to pieces" {z}, as some render the word: so Christ is represented as a mighty warrior, marching at the head of his troops, the armies of heaven following him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, who are the called, chosen, and faithful; and with these he will fall upon the beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the earth, gathered together at Armageddon, and utterly destroy them, Re 16:14.

{x} ytxt "subtus me", Drusius, De Dieu; "subter me", Cocceius, Van Till. {y} Ebr. Concord. Part p. 108. No. 550. {z} wndwgy "ut excidat eum", Calvin; "succidet eum", Vatablus.

Habakkuk 3:17

Ver. 17. Although the fig tree shall not blossom,.... Or rather, as the Septuagint version, "shall not bring forth fruit"; since the fig tree does not bear blossoms and flowers, but puts forth green figs at once. This was a tree common in the land of Canaan, and its fruit much in use, and for food; hence we read of cakes of figs among the provisions Abigail brought to David, 1Sa 25:18 so that, when there was a scarcity of these, it was a bad time:

neither [shall] fruit [be] in the vines; no grapes, or clusters of them, out of which wine was pressed; a liquor very refreshing and reviving to nature; and is said to cheer God and man, being used in sacrifices and libations to God, and the common drink of men, **Jud 9:13** so that, when it failed, it was a public calamity:

the labour of the olive shall fail; or "lie" {a}; disappoint the expectation of those who planted and cultivated it with much toil and labour, it not producing fruit as looked for. This tree yielded berries of an agreeable taste, and out of which oil was extracted, the Jews used instead of butter, and for various purposes; so that, when it failed of fruit, it was a great loss on many accounts:

and the fields shall yield no meat; the grass fields no herbage for beasts; the grain fields no grain for man; the consequence of which must be a famine to both; and this must be very dismal and distressing:

the flock shall be cut off from the fold; flocks of sheep; either by the hand of God, some disease being sent among them; or by the hand of man, drove off by the enemy, or killed for their use; so that the folds were empty of them, and none to gather into them:

and there [shall be] no herd in the stalls; or oxen in the stables, where they are kept, and have their food; or stalls in which they are fattened for use; and by all these are signified the necessaries of life, which, when they fail, make a famine, which is a very distressing case; and yet, in the midst of all this, the prophet, representing the church, expresses his faith and joy in the Lord, as in the following verse **Hab 3:18**; though all this is to be understood, not so much in a literal as in a figurative sense. "Fig trees, vines", and "olives", are often used as emblems of truly gracious persons, **So 2:13** partly because of their fruitfulness in grace and good works, and partly because of their perseverance therein; all these trees being fruitful ones; and some, as the olive, ever green: of such persons there is sometimes a scarcity, as is complained of in the times of David and Micah, Ps 12:1 and especially there will be in the latter day; for righteous and merciful men will be taken away from the evil to come, Isa 57:1 and, however, there will be very few lively, spiritual, and fruitful Christians, such as abound in the exercise of grace, and are diligent in the discharge of duty; for, when the Son of Man cometh, he will not find faith on the earth; and he will find the virgins sleeping, Lu 18:8. The "fields not" yielding "meat" may signify that the provisions of the house of God will be cut off; there will be no ministration of the word, or administration of ordinances; the word of the Lord will be scarce, rare, and precious; there will be a famine, not of bread and of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord; one of the days of the Son of Man will be desired, but not enjoyed; so no spiritual food in the use of means to be had; a very uncomfortable time this will be, **Am 8:11** Lu 17:22. The "flock" being "cut off from the fold" may denote that the sheep of Christ will be given up to the slaughter of the enemy, or be scattered abroad in this dark and cloudy day of persecution; so that there will be no fold, no flock, no sheep gathered together; and perhaps such will be the case, that there will not be one visible congregated church in due order throughout the whole world; all will be broke up, and dispersed here and there: no "herd" or "oxen in the stall" may signify that the ministers of the Gospel, compared to oxen for their strength, industry, and laboriousness in the work of the Lord, will be removed, or not suffered to exercise their ministry, nor be encouraged by any in it: this will be the case at the slaying of the witnesses, and a most distressing time it will be; and yet the prophet, or the church represented by him, expresses an uncommon frame of spirit in the following verse **Hab 3:18**. The Targum interprets all this figuratively of each of the monarchies of the world, which should be no more;

"the kingdom of Babylon shall not continue, nor shall it exercise dominion over Israel; the kings of the Medes shall be killed; and the mighty men of Greece shall not prosper; and the Romans shall be destroyed, and shall not collect tribute from Jerusalem; therefore for the wonder, and for the redemption, thou shalt work for thy Messiah; and for the rest of thy people who shall remain, they shall praise, saying: the prophet said;"

as follows:

{a} vxk qeusetai, Sept.; "mentietur", V. L. Piscator; "mentiebatur", Pagninus.

Habakkuk 3:18

Ver. 18. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,.... In the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; the essential Word of the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ; in his person, the greatness and glory of it; in his offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King, the only Mediator and Saviour; in his relations, as head and husband, father, brother, friend; in his fulness, grace, and righteousness; in his spiritual presence, and comfortable communion with him, which may be expected in a remarkable manner after the above day of trouble is over; and in his personal appearance, which will shortly be, and when his tabernacle will be with men on earth:

I will joy in the God of my salvation; in Christ, who is God, and so able to save his people; to make everything he did and suffered in human nature effectual and available to them; to supply all their wants, and to keep what they commit unto him, and to preserve them safe to his kingdom and glory: and who also joy in the salvation of their God, or which he is the author of, both temporal and spiritual, especially the latter; which is so great and glorious in itself, so suitable to their case, so complete and perfect, and makes so much for the glory of all the divine perfections, and is all of free grace, and lasts for ever: this salvation is peculiar to the people of God; it is theirs, and theirs only; it is what they choose and prefer to all other ways of salvation; it is brought and applied to them by the Spirit, and which they appropriate to themselves under his witnessings; and then it is they can and do rejoice: particularly salvation and deliverance from antichristianism, in all the branches of it, may be chiefly pointed at as the matter and ground of joy; and the enjoyment of Gospel privileges in the full extent of them; the word and ordinances in their power and purity; and the presence of Christ in them.

Habakkuk 3:19

Ver. 19. The Lord God [is] my strength,.... The author and giver of natural and spiritual strength, as he is to all his people; he is the strength of their hearts when ready to faint and sink, and of their graces, faith, hope, love, patience, &c. and continues and increases them, and draws them forth into lively acts and exercise; and of their lives, natural and spiritual, which he supports and maintains, secures and defends; from him they have their strength to perform the duties of religion; to oppose their spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world; and to bear them up under all trials and afflictions, and carry them through them, and deliver out of them, and which is principally intended here: the church, though in distress, and pressed with sorrows, yet believed the strength of Christ would be made perfect in her weakness, and she should be upheld by him under all, and brought out of it:

and he will make my feet like hinds' [feet]; swift as they, as the Targum, which are very swift; and on account of the swiftness of them is the comparison used: and which is to be understood, not barely of the Jews being swift of foot to return to their own country, when the time of their conversion is come; or to pursue their enemies, as Kimchi; that is, Gog or the Turks, having got the victory over them: but of all Christians, whose feet will be swift to run, in a lively cheerful manner, the way of Christ's commandments; their souls being strengthened, and their hearts enlarged with the love and grace of God; and to surmount with ease all difficulties and obstructions that lie in their way: and chiefly this regards the ministers of the Gospel, and the swift progress they will make in spreading it in the world; as the apostles and first ministers of the word, having their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, went swiftly through all parts of the world, even to the ends of the earth, with it; so in the latter day many will run to and fro, everywhere preaching the everlasting Gospel to all nations; the knowledge of it shall greatly increase; see Da 12:4 this passage seems to be taken out of Ps 18:33 and there may be not only an allusion to the swiftness of those creatures, but to the strength and firmness of their feet; so that they can go upon rocks and mountains securely, and tread and walk, and even run upon them with safety; and this sense is directed to, not only by what follows, concerning "walking" on "high places"; but by the word here used, which signifies to "make", or "set", fix, place, order, and settle {b}; and this agrees with the nature of those creatures, whose feet are not only swift, but firm; they tread sure and stable; hence hinds and harts are by the poets {c} called the "brasen footed hinds", or "harts"; because of the firmness and stability of their going; and it is an observation of Jarchi's {d}, that the feet of the females stand firmer and more upright than the feet of the males; wherefore, both here, and in Ps 18:33, not harts, but hinds, are made mention of; and so this may also denote the stability of the saints in those times, both ministers and common Christians, in the exercise of grace, and in the performance of duty; their hearts will be established in the faith of Christ, and in love to him, and in the hope of eternal life by him; all which they will be settled in, and will hold fast, and not let go; and will be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord their God; and so in the Gospel of Christ, and in the ordinances of it, their souls will be established in and with the doctrines of grace, and will continue steadfastly in them, and abide by and keep the ordinances as they have been delivered to them; nor will any difficulties, which may seem like hills and mountains, and cragged rocks, deter or discourage them, or move them from the hope of the Gospel, or from their duty; but they shall walk on securely and firmly:

and he will make me to walk upon mine high places: meaning not so much the high places of the land of Judea, some part of it being mountainous, though there may be some reference to them; but it signifies the exalted state of the church after the troublesome times, when it shall be exalted above the hills, and established on the top of the mountains; when Christ the Lamb, with his 144,000 sealed ones, shall stand upon Mount Zion with harps in their hands, having gotten the victory over the antichristian beast and his image; and when the saints shall have the dominion of the world; and the kingdom and the greatness of it, under the whole heaven, shall be given to them, **Isa 2:2** as well as they shall be in lively, spiritual, and heavenly frames of soul; mount up with wings, as eagles; soar aloft in the exercise of faith; dwell on high in the contemplation of divine things; have their affections set on things above; and their conversation in heaven while they are on earth: especially this may be said of them when they shall have the glory of God upon them in the New Jerusalem state, and shall dwell in the new heavens and the new earth, with Christ at the head of them; and when they shall possess the ultimate glory in the highest heavens to all eternity; see De 33:29 and thus ends this prayer of Habakkuk; which serves to draw out the desires of good men after the flourishing estate of the kingdom and interest of Christ; to assist their faith in the belief, hope, and expectation of it; and to lead their views to its summit and perfection, notwithstanding all the difficulties and discouragements that may lie in its way: and being of so much moment and importance, that it might remain and continue, and be of use to the church in succeeding ages, the prophet delivered or directed it

to the chief singer, to be set to tune, and sung by him, as David's prayers, and others, sometimes were, and to be preserved for future usefulness; and this he would have sung (he says)

on my stringed instruments; which were either invented by him, or used by him in the temple, or were his own property: or he sent this prayer or ode to him who was over these instruments, had the care and use of them; and which were such as were to be stricken with the hand, bone, or quill; and are the same that are called "Neginoth" in the title of the fourth Psalm **Ps 4:1**, and others.

{b} Mvw k' taxei, Sept.; "et ponet", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Burkius; "qui disponit", Junius & Tremellius; "et possuit", {c} "Fixerit aeripedem cervam licet----" Virgil. Aeneid. 6. prope finem. "Vincunt aeripedes ter terno Nestore cervi." Ausonii Idyll. 11. {d} Comment. in Psal. xviii. 34.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Zephaniah 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO ZEPHANIAH

This book in some Hebrew copies is called "Sepher Zephaniah", the Book of Zephaniah. Its title, in the Vulgate Latin version, is, the Prophecy of Zephaniah; and, in the Syriac version, the Prophecy of the Prophet Zephaniah; and so the Arabic version calls him a prophet; and he is the last of the minor prophets that prophesied before the Babylonish captivity. The time of his prophesying, as well as his, parentage, are expressed **Zep 1:1**, and therefore need not be inquired into; only the sad mistake of Hobbes {a} may be observed, who makes him to be the most ancient of the prophets, and to be contemporary with Amaziah and Uzziah, kings of Judah, when he is expressly said to prophesy in the days of Josiah. Pseudo-Epiphanius {b} calls him a prophet of Sarabatha, of a mountain of that name, and says he was of the tribe of Simeon; and in this Isidore {c} agrees with him; and both affirm that he died and was buried in his own native place; but the author of the Cippi Hebraici {d} says he was buried at Geba, in Mount Lebanon, in the midst of a cave shut up, where his school continues; and from which place the clouds never depart, and where also are flowing fountains. His name, according to Jerom, signifies either "the Lord's watch tower", or "watchman"; or else "the secret of the Lord"; or, "his hidden one"; deriving his name, either from hpu, which signifies to "look out", as a watchman from his tower; or from Npu, "to hide"; which latter derivation is best; and some interpret it "a revealer of the secrets", or "hidden things, of the Lord"; and take it to be much the same with Zaphnathpaaneah, the name given to Joseph by Pharaoh, Ge 41:45, and is of the same signification: but Hillerus {e} interprets the name of Zephaniah, "the Lord hid himself"; which agrees with the times in which he lived. That this prophecy was wrote by himself, there need be no doubt of; nor of the authenticity of it, being always received by the Jewish synagogue as authentic; and as it appears to be from its style and manner of composition; from the subject matter of it agreeing with other parts of Scripture, especially with Jeremiah and Ezekiel; and from the accomplishment of various prophecies in it. There are indeed some spurious things which have been ascribed to him, as the "analepsis" or assumption of Zephaniah the prophet, and the prophecy of Zephaniah, consisting of six hundred verses; but these are apocryphal, and have no likeness to this prophecy; in which he foretells the destruction of the Jews by the Chaldeans for their sins, which he inveighs against, and calls them to repentance for them, as also the ruin of many other nations, all which came to pass; as well as he prophesies of the calling of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Jews, and of the comfortable state of the church in Gospel times, and especially in the latter day.

{a} Leviathan, c. 33. {b} De Prophet. Vita & Interitu, c. 19. {c} De Vita & Morte Sanct. c. 48. {d} P. 50. Ed. Hottinger. {e} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 471, 952.

INTRODUCTION TO ZEPHANIAH 1

After the title of the book, **Zep 1:1**, follows the Lord's threatening of the land of Judea with an utter consumption of it, and of all creatures in it, for the sins of its inhabitants, especially their idolatry and apostasy, **Zep 1:2**, and this is represented under the notion of a sacrifice, to which guests are bid; and which even princes, and those of the blood royal, should not escape, nor ministers of state, or such who filled their masters' houses with violence, **Zep 1:7**. Some particular places are mentioned, where there should be a great noise of crying and howling, and especially Jerusalem, which should be diligently searched, and its goods become a booty, and its houses desolate, **Zep 1:10**. This destruction is spoken of as near at hand, and is described as very terrible and distressing, **Zep 1:14** and as inevitable; nothing would be able to deliver from it, **Zep 1:18**.

Ver. 1. The word of the Lord which came unto Zephaniah the son of Cushi,.... This is the title of the book, which expresses the subject matter of it, the word of the Lord; the word of prophecy from the Lord, as the Targum; and shows the divine authority of it; that it was not of himself, nor from any man, but was of God; as well as describes the penman of it by his descent: who or what this his father was; whether a prophet, according to the rule the Jews give, that, when the name of a prophet and his father's name are mentioned, he is a prophet, the son of a prophet; or, whether a prince, a person of some great family, and even of the blood royal, as some have thought, is not certain; or who those after mentioned:

the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah; which last name, consisting of the same letters with Hezekiah, king of Judah, some have thought, as Aben Ezra, that he is intended; and that Zephaniah was a great-grandson of his; and which some think is confirmed by his style and diction, and by the freedom he used with the king's family, **Zep 1:8** but it is objected, that, if so it was, Hizkiah, or Hezekiah, would have been called king of Judah; that it does not appear that Hezekiah had any other son besides Manasseh; and that there was not a sufficient distance of time from Hezekiah for four descents; and that, in fact, there were but three generations from him to Josiah, in whose days Zephaniah prophesied, as follows; though it is very probable that these progenitors of the prophet were men of note and character, and therefore mentioned, as well as to distinguish him from others of the same name, who lived

in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah: not Amos, as the Arabic version: Amon and Manasseh, who reigned between Hezekiah and Josiah, were both wicked princes, and introduced idolatrous worship among the Jews; which Josiah in the twelfth year of his reign began to purge the people from, and endeavoured a reformation; but whether it was before or after that Zephaniah delivered out this prophecy is not certain; it may seem to be before, by the corruption of the times described in it; and so it may be thought to have some influence upon the after reformation; though it is thought by many it was after; since, had he been in this office before the finding of the book of the law, he, and not Huldah the prophetess, would have been consulted, 2Ki 22:14 nor could the people so well have been taxed with a perversion of the law, had it not been as yet found, **Zep 3:4** and, besides, the reformation seems to be hinted at in this prophecy, since mention is made of the remnant of Baal, which supposes a removal of many of his images; and also notice is taken of some that apostatized after the renewal of the covenant, **Zep 1:4** moreover, the time of the Jews' destruction and captivity is represented as very near, **Zep 1:7** which began a little after the death of Josiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim; to which Dr. Lightfoot {f} adds, that the prophet prophesies against the king's children, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, for their new fashions, and newfangled apparel, **Zep 1:8** and therefore it must be in the latter part of his reign; and, if so, it shows how a people may relapse into sin after the greatest endeavours for their good, and the best of examples set them. Mr. Whiston {g} and Mr. Bedford {h} place him in the latter part of his reign, about 611 or 612 B.C.: there were three that prophesied about this time, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and Huldah the prophetess; of whom the Jewish Rabbins say, as Kimchi quotes them, Jeremiah prophesied in the streets, Zephaniah in the synagogues, and Huldah among the women.

{f} Works, vol. 1. p. 117. {g} Chronological Tables, cent. 9. {h} Scripture Chronology, p. 674.

Zephaniah 1:2

Ver. 2. I will utterly consume all [things] from off the land, saith the Lord. That is, from the land of Judah, by means of the Chaldeans or Babylonians: this is a general denunciation of the judgments of God, the particulars follow: or, "in gathering I will gather"; all good things out of the land; all the necessaries of life, and blessings of Providence; all that is for the sustenance and pleasure of man, as well as all creatures, by death or captivity; and so the land should be entirely stripped, and left naked and bare. The phrase denotes the certainty of the thing, as well as the utter, entire, and total consumption that should be made, and the vehemence and earnestness in which it is expressed.

Zephaniah 1:3

Ver. 3. I will consume man and beast,.... Wicked men for their sins, and beasts for the sins of men; and, as a punishment for them, the creatures whom they have abused to the gratifying of their lusts:

I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea; so that there shall be none for the use of man, which are both delicate food; the latter were not consumed at the general deluge. Kimchi thinks this is said by way of hyperbole; but it is possible for these to be consumed, as men by famine, pestilence, and captivity, and beasts by murrain; so the fowls of the air by the noisomeness of it; and the fishes of the sea, that is, such as were in the sea of Tiberias, and other lakes in Judea, by the stagnation of the waters, or by some disease sent among them; unless wicked men, comparable to them, are intended; though they are expressly mentioned, both before and after:

and the stumblingblocks with the wicked: that is, idols, which are stumblingblocks to men, and cause them to offend and fall; these, together with those that made them, and the priests that sacrificed unto them, and the people that worshipped them, should be consumed from off the land: or, "the stumblingblocks of the wicked"; for ta is sometimes used as a sign of the genitive case, as Noldius {i} observes; and so the Vulgate Latin version and the Targum render it:

and I will cut off men from off the land, saith the Lord: this is repeated for the certainty of it; or else this designs another sort of men from the former; and that, as before wicked men are designed, here such as are not perfectly wicked, as Kimchi observes; yea, the righteous should be carried captive, so that the land should be left desolate, without men, good or bad; for even good men may fall in a general calamity, and be cut off from the land, though not from the Lord. The Septuagint indeed here render it wicked men. The phrase, "saith the Lord", is twice expressed, for the certain confirmation of it; for it may be concluded it will be, since God has said it again and again that it shall be.

{i} Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 122.

Zephaniah 1:4

Ver. 4. I will also stretch out mine hand upon Judah,.... Under whom the tribe of Benjamin is comprehended, which are only designed; the ten tribes having been carried captive in Hezekiah's time many years before this: not "to Judah", as beckoning to come and hearken to him, as calling to repentance and reformation; this he had done, but was rejected, and therefore determines to stretch out his hand "upon" them; nor "over Judah", to protect and defend them; but "upon Judah", exerting his power, stirring up his wrath, and executing his vengeance; and this is dreadful and intolerable to bear! and when his hand is stretched out, it cannot be turned back; and when laid on, can never be removed, till he pleases:

and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the metropolis of Judea, the royal seat of the kings of the house of David; where were the temple of the Lord; the ark, the symbol of his presence; the altar, where his priests sacrificed, and the place where his people worshipped; and yet these inhabitants should not escape the hand of the Lord, having sinned against him; nor should these things be any security to them:

and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place; either what of the idolatry of Baal, or belonging to it, remained among the Jews after the ten tribes were carried captive; which must be the sense, if this prophecy was before the reformation was begun by Josiah; or, if after, the meaning is, what was left unremoved by him, as any of the images of Baal, or altars erected for his worship, or vessels consecrated to his service, or groves that were for his use; all which would be cut off and destroyed by the Chaldeans, as well as the worshippers of him that remained:

[and] the name of the Chemarims with the priests; that is, the priests of Baal, with the priests of the tribe of Levi, who sometimes tampered and officiated with them in idolatrous service; for the word "Chemarim" is translated "idolatrous priests", 2Ki 23:5 said to be put down by Josiah, in whose days Zephaniah prophesied; and must be the same with these, and it is used for such in Ho 10:5 so called, either from the black garments they wore, as some think; or from the colour of their faces, smutted with the smoke of the incense they frequently offered; or of the fires in which they sacrificed, or made the children to pass through to Molech. Hillerus {k} thinks they are the same with those heathen priests called "Phallophori"; deriving the word from one in the Arabic language, which has the signification of the "Phalli"; which were obscene images, carried about in an impudent manner by the priests of Bacchus, in the performance of his sacred rites: the carrying of them was first instituted by Isis, as Plutarch {l} says; and if this was the case here, it is no wonder they should be so severely threatened. Some take them to be a sort of servants or ministers to the priests of Baal, who waited on them at the time of service; and so are distinguished from them in this clause, taking the word "priests" in it to design the priests of Baal; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "the name of sextons with the priests". The word is used now by the Jews for Popish monks that live in cloisters; and Elias Levita {m} thinks these here are so called from their living in such like recluse places. The Targum is,

"and the name of their worshippers with their priests;"

one and the other; priests of Baal, and apostate priests of the Lord; the worshippers of Baal, and those that attend upon his priests, shall all feel the weight of Jehovah's hand, and the lighting down of his arm with indignation.

{k} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 113. {l} De Iside & Osiride. {m} Tishbi, p. 163. Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. in voce rmk.

Zephaniah 1:5

Ver. 5. And upon them that worship the host of heaven upon the house tops,.... The sun, moon, and stars, which some worshipped upon their house tops; the roofs of their houses being flat, as the roofs of the houses of the Jews generally were; from hence they had a full view of the host of heaven, and worshipped them openly; and fancied, the nearer they were to them, the more acceptable was their service; see Jer 19:13:

and them that worship, [and] that swear the Lord, and that swear by Malcham; that is, that worship the true God, or at least pretend to do so, and swear by him when they take an oath: or, "that swear to the Lord"; as the words {n} may be rendered; that swear allegiance to him, to be true and faithful to him, to serve and obey him, and to keep his statutes and ordinances; and yet they swear by Malcham also, or Milchom, or Melchom, the same with Molech, or Moloch, the god of the Ammonites. These were such as partly worshipped God, and partly idols; they divided their religion and devotion between them, sometimes served the one, and sometimes the other; they halted between two opinions, and were a sort of occasional conformists; and such were as detestable to God as those that worshipped idols; as the Papists are, who pretend to worship God and their images, or God in them, and with them; and so all such persons that seek for justification and salvation, partly by their own works, and partly by Christ, are displeasing to the Lord, and miss of the thing; stumbling at the stumbling stone, and so fall and perish.

{n} hwhyl Myebvnh "qui jurant Domino", Drusius; "qui jurant Jehovae", Cocceius; "jurantes Domino Jehovae", Burkius.

Zephaniah 1:6

Ver. 6. And them that are turned back from the Lord,.... Who once were worshippers of him, but now become apostates, and had turned their backs on him and his worship. Some think this describes those who renewed their covenant with God in Josiah's time, and after that revolted from him, who must be very abominable to him; and therefore he threatens to stretch out his hand, and pour out his wrath upon them:

and [those] that have not sought the Lord, nor inquired for him; profane abandoned sinners, that lived without God in the world, and as if there was no God; never concerned themselves about the worship of him, having no faith in him, love to him, or fear and reverence of him; so far were they from seeking him in the first place diligently, zealously, and with their whole heart, that they never sought him at all; nor took any pains to get any knowledge of him, or of his mind and will, and manner of worship; but were altogether careless about these things, and unconcerned for them.

Zephaniah 1:7

Ver. 7. Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God,.... When he comes forth, and appears in the way of his judgments, do not dispute the point with him, or pretend to offer reasons against his proceedings, or in order to disprove the justice of them; stand in awe and reverence of him, who is the Lord God omniscient and omnipotent, holy, just, and true; humble yourselves under his mighty hand; be still, and know that he is God; and let not one murmuring and repining word come out of your mouth. The Targum is,

"let all the wicked of the earth perish from before the Lord God:"

for the day of the Lord [is] at hand; the time of his vengeance on the Jewish nation for their sins, which he had fixed in his mind, and had given notice of by his prophets: this began to take place at Josiah's death, after which the Jews enjoyed little peace and prosperity; and his successor reigned but three months, was deposed by the king of Egypt, and carried thither captive, and there died; and Jehoiakim, that succeeded him, in the fourth year of his reign was carried captive into Babylon, or died by the way thither; so that this day might well be said to be at hand:

for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice: his people the Jews, who were to fall a victim to his vengeance, and a sacrifice to his justice, to atone in some measure for the injury done to it by their sins; thus they that had offered sacrifice to idols, and neglected the sacrifices of the Lord, and especially the great sacrifice of Christ typified by them, the only proper atoning one, should themselves become a sacrifice to the just resentment of God; this he had prepared in his mind, determined should be done, and would bring about in his providence; see Isa 34:6:

he hath bid his guests: or "called ones" {o}; the Chaldeans, whom he invited and called to this sacrifice and feast: or whom he "prepared", or "sanctified" {p}; he prepared them in his purpose and providence; he set them apart for this service, and called them to it; to be the sacrificers of this people, and to feast upon them; to spoil them of their goods and riches, and enjoy them. These guests may also design, as Kimchi observes, the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, invited to feast upon the slain; see Eze 39:17.

{o} wyarq "vocatos suos", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Burkius; "invitatos suos", Vatablus, Tigurine verson, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius. {p} vydqh "praeparavit", Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ben Melech; "sanctificavit", V. L. Montanus, Cocceius, Burkius.

Zephaniah 1:8

Ver. 8. And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice,.... When the above sacrifice prepared shall be offered, and the slaughter of his people made, when his wrath shall be poured out upon them, within the time of its beginning and ending:

that I will punish the princes, and the king's children; either the children of Josiah, who, though a good prince, his children did evil in the sight of the Lord, and were punished by him: Jehoahaz, after a three months' reign was carried down to Egypt, and died there; Jehoiakim, his elder brother, that succeeded him, rebelling against the king of Babylon, in the fourth year of his reign, fell into his hands, and died, and was buried with the burial of an ass; and Jeconiah his son was carried captive into Babylon, and there remained to the day of his death; and with him were carried the whole royal family, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, 2Ki 24:14 or else the children of Zedekiah, another son of Josiah, and the last of the kings of Judah, who was carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who before his eyes slew his sons, and all the princes of Judah, and then put out his eyes, and bound him in chains, Jer 52:10 and thus this prophecy had its accomplishment:

and all such as are clothed with strange apparel; either which they put on in honour of the idols they worshipped, as Jarchi; so the heathens wore one sort of garments for one idol, and another sort for another; or these were men of a pharisaical cast, who wore garments different from others, that they might be thought to be very holy and religious, which sense is mentioned by Kimchi; or they were such, which he also observes, who, seeing some to have plenty of good clothes, stole them from them, and put them on; or such who arrayed themselves in garments that did not belong to their sex, men put on women's garments, and women clothed themselves with men's, and both strange apparel; or rather this points at such persons, who, in their apparel, imitated the fashions and customs of foreign nations; which probably began with the king's children and courtiers, and were followed by others. The Targum is,

"and upon all those that make a noise at the worship of idols."

Zephaniah 1:9

Ver. 9. In the same day also will I punish all those that leap on the threshold,.... Not in a ludicrous way, who, by dancing and leaping, made sport for persons, and brought their masters much gain, as the damsel possessed with a spirit of divination did, Ac 16:16 rather, that entered rashly and irreverently into the house of God; or else in an idolatrous way, who, when they went into an idol's temple, did not tread upon the threshold, but leaped over it, as the priests of Dagon, after the fall of that idol on the threshold, **1Sa 5:4**. So the Targum,

"and I will visit all those that walk in the laws (or according to the customs) of the Philistines;"

whose idol Dagon was: but it seems better to interpret it of such, who, seeing houses full of good things, in a rude, bold, insolent manner, thrust themselves, or jumped into them, and took away what they pleased; or when they returned to their masters' houses with their spoil, who set them on, and encouraged them in these practices, leaped over the threshold for joy of what they had got, as Aben Ezra observes; which agrees with what follows:

which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit; that is, with goods got by rapine and force, and by fraudulent ways and methods: this is to be understood of the servants of great men, who, to feed the ambition and avarice of their masters, used very oppressive methods with inferior persons to get their substance from them, and gratify their masters. Cocceius interprets these "three" verses of the day of Christ's coming in the flesh being at hand, when the true sacrifice should be offered up, and God would call his people to feed by faith upon it; when all civil power and authority in the sanhedrim and family of David should be removed from the Jews; and all friendship with the nations of the world, signified by likeness of garments; and the priestly dignity, the priests, according to him, being those that leaped over the threshold; that is, of the house of the Lord, the temple, and filled it with the spoil of widows' houses, unsupportable precepts, and false doctrines.

Zephaniah 1:10

Ver. 10. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord,.... In the day of the Lord's sacrifice, when he shall punish the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; which, as well as what follows, shall surely come to pass, because the Lord has said it; for not one word of his shall pass away, but all be fulfilled:

[that there shall be] the noise of a cry from the fish gate; a gate of the city of Jerusalem so called, which suffered as the rest in the destruction of the city by the Babylonians, and, after the captivity, was rebuilt by the sons of Hassenaah, **Ne 3:3** according to Jerom, it was on the west side of the city, and led to Diospolis and Joppa; and was the nearest road to the Mediterranean sea, or any of the roads to Jerusalem, from whence fish were brought, and brought in by this gate; and very probably the fish market was near it, from whence it had its name; though Cocceius places it in the north corner of the east side of the city, and so was nearer Jordan, the sea of

Tiberias, and the city of Tyre, from whence fish might be brought hither, and sold,
Ne 13:16 however, be it where it will, the enemy it seems would attack it, and enter in by it; upon which a hideous cry would be made, either by the assailants, the Chaldeans, at their attack upon it, and entrance through it; or by the inhabitants of it, or that were nearest to it, upon their approach, or both:

and an howling from the second; either from the second gate; and if the fish gate is the same with the first gate, Zec 14:10 then this may be pertinently called the second. Jarchi calls it the bird gate, which was the second to the fish gate. So the Targum,

"from the bird, or the bird gate;"

though some copies of it read, from the tower or high fortress: or else this designs the second wall, and the gate in that which answered to the fish gate; for Jerusalem was encompassed with three walls; the fish gate was in the outermost, and this was in the second, to which the Chaldeans came next, and occasioned a dreadful howling and lamentation in the people that dwelt near it. Kimchi interprets it of the school or university that was in Jerusalem; the same word is rendered the cottage in which Huldah the prophetess lived, 2Ki 22:14 and there, by the Targum,

"the house of doctrine or instruction;"

so then the sense is, a grievous outcry would be heard from the university or school of the prophets; the enemy having entered it, and were slaying the students, or seizing them in order to carry them captive:

and a great crashing from the hills; either that were in Jerusalem, as Mount Zion and Moriah, on which the temple stood; or those that were round about it, as Gareb, and Goath, and others; though some interpret this of the houses of nobles that stood in the higher parts of the city, where there would be a shivering, a breaking to pieces, as the word signifies, of doors and windows without, and of furniture within.

Zephaniah 1:11

Ver. 11. Howl, ye inhabitants of Maktesh,.... The name of a street in Jerusalem, as Aben Ezra; perhaps it lay low in the hollow of the city, and in the form of a mortar, from whence it might have its name, as the word {q} signifies; which is used both for a hollow place and for a mortar, Jud 15:19 unless it might be so called from such persons dwelling in it, that used mortars for spice, and other things. The Targum is,

"howl, all ye that dwell in the valley of Kidron;"

and Jerom thinks the valley of Siloah is intended, which is the same; which, Adrichomius {r} says, was broad, deep, and dark, and surrounded the temple in manner of a foss, or ditch; and was disposed in the form of a mortar, called in Hebrew "machtes"; in Latin, "pila"; in which merchants and tradesmen of all kinds dwelt. It is thought by others to be the same which Josephus {s} calls "the valley of the cheese mongers", which lay between the two hills Zion and Acra. The reason of their howling is,

for all the merchant people are cut down; either cut to pieces by the sword of the enemy, and become silent, as the word {t} sometimes signifies, and the Vulgate Latin version here renders it; become so by death, and laid in the silent grave, and no more concerned in merchandise; or else stripped of all their wealth and goods by the enemy, and so cut down, broke, and become bankrupt, and could trade no more. The word for merchant signifies a Canaanite; and the Targum paraphrases it thus,

"for all the people are broken, whose works are like the works of the people of the land of Canaan:"

all they that bear silver are cut off; that have large quantities of it, and carry it to market to buy goods with it as merchants; these shall be cut off, and so a great loss to trade, and a cause of howling and lamentation; or such that wear it in their garments, embroidered with it; or rather in their purses, who are loaded with this thick clay, abound with it. The Targum is,

"all that are rich in substance shall be destroyed."

{q} vtkmh "mortarii", Vatablus, Tigurine version; "cavi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "loci concavi", Calvin. {r} Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 163. {s} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 1. {t} hmdn "conticuit", V. L. "in silentium redactus est", Drusius.

Ver. 12. And it shall come to pass at that time, [that] I will search Jerusalem with candles,.... To find out the sins of the inhabitants of it, and the authors of them, and punish them for them, however hid and concealed from the eyes of others, or thought to be: this must be understood consistent with the omniscience of God, who knows all persons and things; nothing is hid from him; men may fancy their sins are hid, being privately and secretly committed; but all will be manifest, sooner or later; if not now, yet at the day of judgment; and sometimes they are made manifest by God in this life, as here; for what the Lord here says he would do, he did it by instruments, by the Chaldeans, whom he sent to Jerusalem; and to whom the gates of the city, the doors of houses, and the innermost recesses of them, were opened and plundered by them; and all for the sins of the people, which were hereby exposed. So the Targum,

"and it shall be at that time that I will appoint searchers, and they shall search Jerusalem, as they that search with candles;"

and no doubt but this was literally true of the Chaldeans, who with candles might search vaults and cellars, and such like dark places, where they supposed goods and riches were concealed. The allusion may be to the searching with lamps for leaven on the fourteenth of Nisan, when the passover began, in every corner of a house, and, when they found it, burnt it {u}; or in general to searching for anything which lies concealed in dark places, where the light of the sun comes not, and can only be discovered by the light of candles; and denotes that nothing should escape the sight and knowledge of God, by whom a full discovery would be made of their persons and sins, and cognizance taken of them in a vindictive way, as follows:

and punish the men that are settled on their lees; like wine on the lees, quiet and undisturbed; in a good outward estate and condition, abounding in wealth and riches, and trusting therein; and which, as the Targum paraphrases it, they enjoy in great tranquillity; Moab like, having never been emptied from vessel to vessel, Jer 48:11 and so concluded they should ever remain in the same state, and became hardened in sin, or "curdled", and thickened, as the word {w} signifies; and were unconcerned about the state of religion, or the state of their own souls; and fearless and thoughtless of the judgments of God; but should now be visited, disturbed in their tranquil state, and be troubled and punished:

that say in their heart; not daring to express with their lips the following atheism and blasphemy; but God, who searched and tried their hearts, knew it:

The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil; which is a flat denial of his providence; saying that he takes no notice of what is done by men on earth, whether good or bad; and neither rewards the one, nor punishes the other. So the Targum, as Kimchi quotes it,

"it is not the good pleasure of God to do good to the righteous, or to do evil to the wicked;"

than which nothing is more false! the Lord does good to all in a providential way, and to many in a way of special grace; and rewards with a reward of grace all good men, both here and hereafter; and though he does not do any moral evil, yet he executes the evil of punishment in this world, and in that to come, on evildoers.

{u} Vid. Misn. Pesachim, c. 1. sect. 1, 4. {w} Myapqh "concreti sunt", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "congelati", Calvin; "coagulatos", Montanus, Cocceius; "qui concreverunt glaciei, [vel] casei ad instar", Burkius.

Zephaniah 1:13

Ver. 13. Therefore their goods shall become a booty,.... To the enemy; the riches they trusted in, and thought themselves so secure of; and therefore denied divine Providence, which ought to be depended upon amidst the greatest affluence; or otherwise the Lord has various ways by which he can soon strip men of all their enjoyments, and dispose of them to others:

and their houses a desolation; be pulled down by the enemy; or left uninhabited, they being killed or carried captive, even their whole families:

they shall also build houses, but not inhabit [them]; not long, at least; not always, as they expected, and promised themselves when they built them:

and they shall plant vineyards, and not drink the wine thereof: but before the vines planted by them bring forth grapes, and these are pressed, and wine made of them, they should fall into the hands of the enemy, who would drink it, and not they; and all this agreeably to what was threatened them in the law of Moses, which they ought to have regarded, De 28:30.

Zephaniah 1:14

Ver. 14. The great day of the Lord [is] near, [it is] near, and hasteth greatly,.... Not the day of judgment, but the day of God's vengeance upon the Jews, which yet bore some resemblance to that day of the Lord, and it may be therefore so called; as the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans had some likeness to it, and therefore the signs of the one and of the other are given together by our Lord in Mt 24:1 and this was a day in which he would do great things, by the Chaldeans, and against the Jews; and this is represented as very "near"; and repeated again for the confirmation of it, and to arouse the thoughtless and careless about it, and who put away this evil day far from them; yea, it is said to make great haste, and to fly away swiftly, even faster than time usually does; though in common it has wings ascribed unto it:

[even] the voice of the day of the Lord; in which the Lord's voice will be heard; not his voice of grace and mercy, as in the day of salvation; but of wrath and vengeance, which will be terrible; hence it follows:

the mighty men shall cry there bitterly; not the voice of the mighty men besieging the city, making a hideous noise to animate the soldiers in making the assault, as some; but the mighty men within the city of Jerusalem besieged, who, when they see the city broken up, would be in the utmost terror, and cry bitterly, like women and children, being quite dismayed and dispirited; even the men of war upon the walls, and in the garrisons, with their officers and generals; and if this would be the case with them, how must it be thought to be with others, the weak and timorous?

Zephaniah 1:15

Ver. 15. That day [is] a day of wrath,.... Both of the wrath of God against his people for their sins; these judgments being the effects of his wrath, provoked by their iniquities; and of the wrath and cruelty of the Chaldeans, exercised in a furious manner:

a day of trouble and distress; to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, they being taken and led captive, their houses plundered and demolished, and the whole city and temple laid in ruins:

a day of wasteness and desolation; of the whole country of Judea, and the metropolis of it; of their houses, fields, and vineyards:

a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness: as it might be in a natural sense; the displeasure of God being shown in the very heavens, by the darkness and gloominess of them, and the thick clouds with which they were covered; and made still more dark and gloomy by the burning of the city, and the smoke of it; and, in such circumstances, gloominess and melancholy must sit upon the minds of men: and thick clouds and darkness portend greater troubles and calamities coming on; and the whole is expressive of great adversity; for, as light frequently designs prosperity, so darkness adversity.

Zephaniah 1:16

Ver. 16. A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities,.... The trumpet of the enemy, sounding the alarm of war against the fenced cities of Judea, which were taken before Jerusalem; calling and gathering the soldiers together, and animating them to the assault of them; and blowing them in a way of triumph; and as expressive of victory, having got possession of them:

and against the high towers; or "corners" {x}; towers being usually built corner-wise, and full of corners, and on the corners of walls of cities; sometimes these signify princes, magistrates, and great men, Zec 10:4.

{x} twnp "pinnas", Montanus, Castalio; "angulos", Junius & Tremellius, Burkius.

Zephaniah 1:17

Ver. 17. And I will bring distress upon men,.... Not upon men in general, but particularly on the men of Judea, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; and especially those that were in the fenced cities and high towers; and who might think themselves safe and secure; but, being besieged, should be distressed with famine and pestilence, and with the enemy; and more especially when stormed, and a breach made, and the enemy just entering:

that they shall walk like blind men; not knowing which way to go, where to turn themselves, what methods to take, or course to steer, no more than a blind man. The phrase is expressive of their being at their wits' ends, void of all thought and consultation:

because they have sinned against the Lord; and therefore he gives them up, not only into the hand of the enemy, but unto an infatuation of spirit, and a judicial blindness of mind:

and their blood shall be poured out as dust; in great quantities, like that, without any regard to it, without showing any mercy, and as if it was of no more value than the dust of the earth. The Targum is,

"their blood shall be poured out into the dust;"

or on it, and be drunk up by it:

and their flesh as the dung; or their carcasses, as the same paraphrase; that is, their dead bodies shall lie unburied, and rot, and putrefy, and shall be cast upon fields like dung, to fatten them. The word for "flesh", in the Hebrew language, signifies bread or food; because dead bodies are food for worms; but in the Arabic language, as Aben Ezra and Jarchi observe, it signifies "flesh".

Zephaniah 1:18

Ver. 18. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath,.... Which they have gotten in an unjust way, and have hoarded up, and put their confidence in; these were the lees on which they were settled; but now, as they would be disregarded by the Lord, as insufficient to atone for their sins, and appease his wrath, and procure his favour; see Job 36:18 so they would be of no avail to them, to deliver from their enemies, who would not be bribed therewith to save their lives; the same is said of the Medes at the taking of Babylon, Isa 13:17:

but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy; his zeal against sin, and for his own glory, shall burn like fire; which shall consume the whole land, and all the inhabitants of it, and was not to be stopped by anything that could be done by them; so furious and raging would it be:

for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land; burn up at once all the briers and thorns, even all that offend, and do iniquity, and spare neither root nor branch; or, as when a field is cleared of the stubble on it, after the wheat is gathered in; or a grain floor of its chaff, after the wheat is separated from it; thus with the besom of destruction would the Lord sweep away the sinful inhabitants of Judea, and clear it of them, as he did by the sword, by famine, by pestilence, and by captivity.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Zephaniah 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO ZEPHANIAH 2

In this chapter the prophet exhorts the Jews to repentance; and foretells the destruction of several neighbouring nations. The body of the people of the Jews in general are first called upon to gather together and humble themselves, who were a people neither desirable, nor deserving of the favours of God, nor desirous of them, **Zep 2:1** and to this they are pressed, from the consideration of God's decree of vengeance being ready to bring forth and break forth upon them, **Zep 2:2** and then the few godly among them are exhorted to seek the Lord, and what is agreeable to him; since there was at least a probability of their being protected by him in a time of general calamity, **Zep 2:3** and that the destruction of this people might appear the more certain, and that they might have no dependence on their neighbours, the prophet proceeds to predict the ruin of several of them, particularly the Philistines; several places belonging to them are by name mentioned, and the whole land threatened with desolation; the maritime part of it to be only inhabited by shepherds and their flocks; and afterwards the coast possessed by the Jews, on their return from their captivity, **Zep 2:4**. Next the Moabites and Ammonites are prophesied of; whose destruction should come upon them for their pride, and for their contempt and reviling of the people of God; and which should be like that of Sodom and Gomorrah; and would issue in the abolition of idolatry, and the setting up of the worship of God in their country, and elsewhere, **Zep 2:8**. As for the Ethiopians, they should be slain with the sword, **Zep 2:12** and the whole monarchy of Assyria, with Nineveh the metropolis of it, should be utterly laid waste, and become a desolation, and a wilderness; and the habitation, not only of flocks, but of beasts and birds of prey, **Zep 2:13**.

Ver. 1. Gather yourselves together,.... This is said to the people of the Jews in general; that whereas the judgments of God were coming upon them, as predicted in the preceding chapter **Zep 1:1**, it was high time for them to get together, and consider what was to be done at such a juncture; it was right to call a solemn assembly, to gather the people, priests, and elders, together, to some one place, as Joel directs, **Joe 1:14** the inhabitants of Jerusalem to the temple, and the people of the land to their respective synagogues, and there humble themselves before the Lord; confess their sins, and declare their repentance for them; and pray that God would show favour to them, and avert his wrath and judgments from them: or, "gather the straw" {y}; from yourselves, and then gather it from others, as follows: or, "first adorn yourselves", and "then others", as in the Talmud {z}; and the sense is the same with the words of Christ, "first cast out the beam out of thine own eye", &c. **Mt 7:3** and the meaning of both is, first correct and amend yourselves, and then reprove others: this sense is given by the Jewish commentators, and is approved by Gussetius {a}: or "search yourselves" {b}; as some render the word; and that very diligently, as stubble is searched into, or any thing searched for in it; let the body of the people inquire among themselves what should be the cause of these things; what public sins prevailed among them, for which they were threatened with an utter destruction; and let everyone search into his own heart and ways, and consider how much he has contributed to the bringing down such sad calamities upon the nation: thus it became them to search and inquire into their state and circumstances of affairs, in a way of self-examination; or otherwise the Lord would search them in a way of judgment, as threatened **Zep 1:12** or "shake out" {c}, or "fan yourselves", as others; remove your chaff by repentance and reformation, that you be not blown away like chaff in the day of God's wrath, as afterwards suggested:

yea, gather together; or "search", or "shake out", or "fan", as before: this is repeated, to show the necessity and importance of it, and the vehemency of the prophet in urging it:

O nation not desired; by other nations, but hated by them, as Abarbinel observes; not desirable to God or good men; not amiable or lovely for any excellencies and goodness in them, but the reverse; being a disobedient and rebellious people; a seed of evildoers, laden with iniquity, who, from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet, were full of wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores; or of disorders and irregularities, sins and transgressions, comparable to them; and therefore, instead of being desirable, were loathsome and abominable: or, as some render the word, "O nation void of desire" {d}; or "not affected" with it; who had no desire after God, and the knowledge of his will; after his word and worship; after a return unto him, and reconciliation with him; after his favour, grace, and mercy; not desirous of good things, nor of doing any. So the Targum,

"gather together, and come, and draw near, this people who desire not to return to the law."

Joseph Kimchi, from the use of the word in the Misnic language, renders it, "O nation not ashamed": of their evil works, being bold and impudent; and yet, such was the goodness and grace of God to them, that he calls them to repentance, and gives them warning before he strikes the blow.

{y} wvvqth "legite paleas vestras", Gussetius. vvq "proprie est stipulas colligere", Drusius, Piscator, Tarnovius. {z} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 107. 2. & Bava Bathra, fol. 60. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 1. {a} Ebr. Comment. p. 763. {b} "Scrutamini", Pagninus; "disquirite", Munster; "examinate", Vatablus; "perscrutamini", Cocceius. {c} "Excutite vos", Junius & Tremellius, Tarnovius; so Stockius, p. 975. {d} Pokn al "vacua desiderio", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "quae nullo desiderio afficeris", Burkius; "quae nullo tenteris affectu", Munster.

Zephaniah 2:2

Ver. 2. Before the decree bring forth, [before] the day pass as the chaff,.... Which was like a woman big with child, ready to be delivered. The decree of God concerning the people of the Jews was pregnant with wrath and ruin for their sins, and just ripe for execution; and therefore, before it was actually executed, they are exhorted as above; not that the decree of God which was gone forth could be frustrated and made void by anything done by them; only that, when it was put into execution, such as repented of their sins might be saved from the general calamity; which they are called upon to do before the day come appointed by the Lord for the execution of this decree; which lingered not, and was not delayed, but slid on as swiftly as chaff before the driving wind. There is some difficulty in the rendering and sense of these words; some thus, "before the day, which passes as chaff, brings forth the decree" {e}; that is, before the time, which moves swiftly, brings on the execution of the decree, or of the thing decreed in it, it is big with: others, "before the decree brings forth the day that passeth as chaff" {f}; or in which the chaff shall be separated from the wheat, pass away, be dispersed here and there; that is, before they were scattered about by it as chaff: and to this sense the Septuagint and Arabic versions, "before ye are as a flower"; or, as the Syriac, "as chaff that passeth away"; and so the Targum more fully,

"before the decree of the house of judgment come out upon you, and ye be like chaff which the wind blows away, and like a shadow which passes from before the day." See **Ps 1:4**.

Before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you; these phrases explain the former, and show what the decree was big with, and ready to bring forth, even the judgments of God, in wrath and fierce anger; and what the day is, said to pass as the chaff; the day of God's vengeance fixed by him, which should come upon them, and scatter them like chaff among the nations of the world: or rather the words may be rendered thus, as by Gussetius {g}, "whilst as yet the decree hath not brought forth, the day passeth away like chaff"; being neglected and spent in an useless and unprofitable manner; for which they are reproved; and therefore are exhorted to be wiser for the future, and redeem precious time; and, before the Lord's anger comes upon them, do what is before exhorted to, and particularly what follows:

{e} tdl Mrjb "antequam dies, quae transit ut palea, pariat decretum", Drusius; so Ben Melech. {f} "Priusquam decretum Dei pariat deim veluti glumae transeuntis", Grotius. {g} Ebr. Comment. p. 305.

Ver. 3. Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth,.... Or "of the land", of the land of Judea. In this time of great apostasy, there was a remnant according to the election of grace, whom the Lord reserved for himself, and bestowed his grace upon; and it is for the sake of these that the general exhortations to repentance and reformation are given out, to whom alone they were to be useful, that they might be protected and preserved from the general ruin; for such as are here described are persons the Lord takes great notice of; he gives them more grace; he lifts them up when bowed down; he beautifies them with salvation; he feeds them to full satisfaction; he teaches them his ways, his mind and will; he dwells with them here, and will cause them to inherit the new heaven and new earth hereafter: they are such who have a true sense of sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of it, which humbles them; and, conscious of the imperfection of their own righteousness, submit to the righteousness of Christ; acknowledge they are saved alone by the grace of God; and that all they have and expect to enjoy is owing to that; they are humble under the mighty hand of God, in every afflictive providence; patiently take all wrongs, abuses, and injuries done them by men; and not envious at the superior gifts, grace, and usefulness of others, but rejoice therein; have mean sentiments of themselves, and very high ones of others that excel in grace and holiness; these are truly gracious persons; and are like unto, and are followers of, the meek and lowly Jesus: and are here exhorted "to seek the Lord": that is, by prayer and supplication, to know more of his mind and will, and especially their duty in their present circumstances; implore his grace and mercy, protection and safety, in a day of common danger; and attend the public ordinances of his house, in order to enjoy his presence and communion with him: for to seek the Lord is to seek his face and favour, to have the light of his countenance, and the discoveries of his love; and to seek his honour and glory in all things: particularly the Lord Christ may be meant, who was to come in the flesh, and good men sought for before he came, and now he is come; and to him should men seek for righteousness and life; for peace and pardon; for grace, and all supplies of it: and for everlasting salvation; and all this before as well as since his coming: and such seek him aright, who seek him early, in the first place, and above all things; who seek him with their whole hearts, sincerely, diligently, and constantly; and where he is to be found, in the ministry of his word and ordinances:

which have wrought his judgment: the judgment of the Lord; acted according to his mind and will, revealed in his word, which is the rule of judgment, both as to faith and practice; observed his laws and statutes; kept his ordinances, as they were delivered; and did works of righteousness from right principles, and with right views, as fruits of faith, and as meet for repentance:

seek righteousness; not their own, and justification by that; for this would be doing what the carnal Jews did, and in vain, and is inconsistent with seeking the Lord, as before; but the righteousness of God, the kingdom of God and his righteousness, even the righteousness of Christ, who is God, and which only gives a right unto the kingdom of God or heaven: seeking this supposes a want of righteousness, which is in every man; a sense of that want, which only some have; a view of a righteousness without a man, in another, even in Christ; and of the glory, fulness, and excellency of his righteousness, which make it desirable, and worth seeking for; though this exhortation may also include in it a living to him soberly and righteously, as a fruit of divine grace, and to the glory of God, and according to his will, without trusting in it, and depending upon it, for life and salvation:

seek meekness; even though they were meek ones already, yet it became them to seek after more of this grace of meekness, that they might increase therein, and abound in the exercise of it, and be careful that they failed not in it; since the enemy of souls often attacks the saints in that in which they most excel, and succeeds: so Moses, the meekest man on earth, being off of his guard, and provoked, spoke unadvisedly with his lips; and it went ill with him on that account, Nu 12:3 besides, this exhortation, as well as the preceding, may have a respect to their concern with others; that they should study, as much as in them lay, not only to do righteousness and exercise meekness themselves, but to cultivate these among others; with which agrees Kimchi's note,

"seek righteousness and meekness with others; as if it was said, study with all your might and main to return them to the right way:"

it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger; in the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, when some were put to the sword, and others carried captive: now there was a possibility, yea, a probability, that such persons before described would be saved at this time from the general calamity; be hid, protected, and preserved, by the power and, providence of God, Jeremiah, Baruch, and others, were: this, though it is not said as a certain thing, because a corporeal blessing, which the people of God cannot always be assured of in a time of public distress; yet not expressed in a doubting manner, much less despairing; but rather as presuming, at least hoping it would be, being possible and probable; and so encouraging to the above exercises of religion; and such that have the grace of God, and seek him, and seek to Christ alone for righteousness and life, may depend upon it that they shall be hid, and be safe and secure, when the wrath of God at the last day comes upon an ungodly world, Isa 32:2. The Targum of the whole is,

"seek the fear of the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, who do the judgments of his will; seek truth, seek meekness; it may be there will be a protection for you in the day of the Lord's anger."

The Vulgate Latin version is, "seek the Lord--seek the just, seek the meek One"; as expressive of a person, even the Lord Christ, the just and Holy One, the meek and lowly Jesus.

Zephaniah 2:4

Ver. 4. For Gaza shall be forsaken,.... Therefore seek the Lord; and not to the Philistines, since they would be destroyed, to whom Gaza, and the other cities later mentioned, belonged; so Aben Ezra connects the words, suggesting that it would be in vain to flee thither for shelter, or seek for refuge there; though others think that this and what follows is subjoined, either to assure the Jews of their certain ruin, since this would be the case of the nations about them; or to alleviate their calamity, seeing their enemies would have no occasion to insult them, and triumph over them, they being, or quickly would be, in the like circumstances. Gaza was one of the five lordships of the Philistines; a strong and fortified place, as its name signifies; but should be demolished, stripped of its fortifications, and forsaken by its inhabitants. It was smitten by Pharaoh king of Egypt; and was laid waste by Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 47:1 and afterwards taken by Alexander the great; and, having gone through various changes, was in the times of the apostles called Gaza the desert, **Ac 8:26**. There is a beautiful play on words in the words, not to be expressed in an English translation {h}. According to Strabo's account {i}, the ancient city was about a mile from the haven, for which (he says) it was formerly very illustrious; but was demolished by Alexander, and remained a desert. And so Jerom {k} says, in his time, the place where the ancient city stood scarce afforded any traces of the foundations of it; for that which now is seen (adds he) was built in another place, instead of that which was destroyed: and which, he observes, accounts for the fulfilment of this prophecy: and so Monsieur Thevenot {l} says, the city of Gaza is about two miles from the sea; and was anciently very illustrious, as may be seen by its ruins; and yet, even this must be understood of new Gaza; so a Greek writer {m}, of an uncertain age, observes this distinction; and speaks of this and the following places exactly in the order in which they are here,

"after Rhinocorura lies new Gaza, which is the city itself; then "Gaza the desert" (the place here prophesied of); then the city Askelon; after that Azotus (or Ashdod); then the city Accaron" (or Ekron):

and Ashkelon a desolation; this was another lordship belonging to the Philistines, that suffered at the same time as Gaza did by Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 47:5. This place was ten miles from Gaza, as Mr. Sandys {n} says, and who adds, and now of no note; and Strabo {o} speaks of it in his time as a small city; indeed new Ashkelon is said by Benjamin of Tudela {p} to be a very large and beautiful city; but then he distinguishes it from old Ashkelon, here prophesied of; and which (he says) is four "parsoe", or sixteen miles, from the former, and now lies waste and desolate:

they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, that is, the Chaldeans shall drive out the inhabitants of Ashdod, another of the principalities of the Philistines; the same with Azotus, **Ac 8:40** "at noon day", openly and publicly, and with great ease; they shall have no occasion to use any secret stratagems, or to make night work of it; and which would be very incommodious and distressing to the inhabitants, to be turned out at noon day, and be obliged to travel in the heat of the sun, which in those eastern countries at noon day beats very strong. This place was distant from old Ashkelon four "parsae", or twenty four miles, as Benjamin Tudelensis {q} affirms; and with which agrees Diodorus Siculus {r}, who says, that from Gaza to Azotus are two hundred and seventy furlongs, which make thirty four miles, ten from Gaza to Ashkelon, and twenty four from thence to Azotus or Ashdod. This place, according to the above Jewish traveller {s}, is now called Palmis, which he says is the Ashdod that belonged to the Philistines, now waste and desolate; by which this prophecy is fulfilled. It was once a very large and famous city, strong and well fortified; and held out a siege of twenty nine years against Psamittichus king of Egypt, as Herodotus {t} relates, but now destroyed; see Isa 20:1:

and Ekron shall be rooted up; as a tree is rooted up, and withers away, and perishes, and there is no more hope of it: this denotes the utter destruction of this place. There is here also an elegant allusion to the name of the place {u}, not to be imitated in a version of it: this was another of the lordships of the Philistines, famous for the idol Beelzebub, the god of this place. Jerom {w} observes, that some think that Accaron (or Ekron) is the same with Strato's tower, afterwards called Caesarea; and so the Talmudists say {x}, Ekron is Caesarea; which is not at all probable: he further observes, that there is a large village of the Jews, which in his days was called Accaron, and lay between Azotus and Jamnia to the east; but Breidenbachius {y} relates, that, in his time, Accaron was only a small cottage or hut, yet retaining its ancient name; so utterly rooted up is this place, which once was a considerable principality. Gath is not mentioned, which is the other of the five principalities, because it was now, as Kimchi says, in the hands of the kings of Judah.

{h} hbwze hze. {i} Geograph. l. 16. p. 502. {k} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 91. K. {l} Travels, par. 1. B. 2. c. 36. p. 180. {m} Apud Reland. Palestina Illustrata, l. 2. p. 509. {n} Travels, p. 151. {o} Geograph. l. 16. p. 502. {p} Itinorarium, p. 51. {q} Ibid. {r} Bibliothec. l. 19. p. 723. {s} Itinerarium, p. 51. {t} Euterpe, sive l. 2. c. 157. {u} rqet Nwrqe. {w} De locis Heb. fol. 88. D. {x} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 6. 1. {y} Apud Adrichom. Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 20.

Zephaniah 2:5

Ver. 5. Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coasts, the nation of the Cherethites,.... Which is a name of the Philistines in general, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; or these were a particular tribe belonging to them, that inhabited the southern part of their country; see 1Sa 30:14 those on the sea coast, the coast of the Mediterranean sea, and so lay between that and Judea: out of this nation, in the times of David and Solomon, were some choice soldiers selected, called the Cherethites and Pelethites, who were their bodyguards, as Josephus {a} calls them; a royal band, which never departed from the king's person; see 2Sa 15:18. The Septuagint version calls them "strangers of the Cretians"; and are thought by some to be a colony of the Cretians; a people that came originally from the island of Crete, and settled here; but, on the contrary, rather Crete was a colony of the Philistines, and had its name from them; for by the Arabians {b}, the country of Palestine, or the Philistines, is called Keritha; and by the Syrians Creth; and, by the Hebrews the inhabitants thereof are called Cherethites, as here, and in Eze 25:16 and so the south of the Cherethites, in 1Sa 30:14, is, in Eze 25:16, called the land of the Philistines. In all the above places, where they are spoken of as the attendants of Solomon and David, they are in the Targum called "archers"; and it is a clear case the Philistines were famous for archery, whereby they had sometimes the advantage of their enemies; see 1Sa 31:3 and bows and arrows were the arms the Cretians made use of, and were famous for, as Bochart {c} from various writers has shown; the use of which they learned very probably from the Philistines, from whom they sprung; though Solinus {d} says they were the first that used arrows; and, according to Diodorus Siculus, Saturn introduced the art of using bows and arrows into the island of Crete; though others ascribe it to Apollo {e}; and it is said that Hercules learnt this art from Rhadamanthus of Crete; which last instance seems to favour the notion of those, that these Cherethites were Cretians, or sprung from them; to which the Septuagint version inclines; and Calmet {f} is of opinion that Caphtor, from whence the Philistines are said to come, **Am 9:7** and who are called the remnant of the country of Caphtor, Jer 47:4 is the island of Crete; and that the Philistines came from thence into Palestine; and that the Cherethites are the ancient Cretians; the language, manners, arms, religion and gods, of the Cretians and Philistines, being much the same; though so they might be, as being a colony of the Philistines; See Gill on "Am 9:7" though a learned man {1}, who gives into the opinion that these were royal guards, yet thinks they were not strangers and idolaters, but proselytes to the Jewish religion at least; and rather Israelites, choice selected men, men of strength and valour, of military courage and skill, picked out of the nation, to guard the king's person; and who were called Cherethites and Pelethites, from the kind of shields and targets they wore, called "cetra" and "pelta": and it is a notion several of the Jewish writers {2} have, that they were two families in Israel; but it seems plain and evident that a foreign nation is here meant, which lay on the sea coast, and belonged to the Philistines. Another learned man {g} thinks they are the Midianites, the same with the Cretians that Luke joins with the Arabians, **Ac 2:11** as the Midianites are with the Arabians and Amalekites by Josephus {h}; however, a woe is denounced against them, and they are threatened with desolation. The Vulgate Latin version is, "a nation of destroyed ones": and the Targum,

"a people who have sinned, that they might be destroyed:"

the word of the Lord is against you; inhabitants of the sea coast, the Cherethites; the word of the Lord conceived in his own mind, his purpose to destroy them, which cannot be frustrated. So the Targum,

"the decree of the word of the Lord is against you;"

and the word pronounced by his lips, the word of prophecy concerning them, by the mouth of former prophets, as Isaiah, Isa 14:29 and by the mouth of the present prophet:

O Canaan, the land of the Philistines; Palestine was a part of Canaan; the five lordships of the Philistines before mentioned belonged originally to the Canaanite, Jos 13:3 and these belonged to the land of Israel, though possessed by them, out of which now they should be turned, and the country wasted, as follows:

I will even destroy thee, that there shall be no inhabitant; so great should be the desolation; all should be removed from it, either by death or by captivity; at least there should be no settled inhabitant.

{a} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5. sect. 4. and c. 11. sect. 8. Vid. Opitii Exercitat. de Crethi & Plethi. {b} Giggeius apud Bochart. Canaan, l. 1. c. 15. col. 422. {c} Ibid. col. 423. {d} Polyhistor. c. 16. {e} Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 5. p. 334, 341. {f} Dictionary, in the word "Caphtor". {1} Fortunati Scacchi Elaeochrism, Myrothec. l. 3. c. 18, 19. {2} Kimchi & Ben Gersom in 2 Sam. viii. 18. and xv. 18. {g} Texelii Phoenix. l. 3. c. 21. sect. 4. p. 389, 390. {h} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 1.

Zephaniah 2:6

Ver. 6. And the sea coast shall be dwellings [and] cottages for shepherds,.... That tract of land which lay on the coast of the Mediterranean sea, inhabited by the Philistines, should now become so desolate, that instead of towns and cities full of merchants and sea faring persons, and houses full of inhabitants, and warehouses full of goods, there should now only be seen a few huts and cottages for shepherds to dwell in, to shelter them from the heat by day, and where they watched their flocks by night, and took their proper repose and rest. The last word is by some rendered "ditches" {i}, which were dug by them to receive rainwater for their use: or rather may signify "cottages dug by shepherds" {k}; in subterraneous places, whither they retired in the heat of the day, to shelter themselves from the scorching sun; and some of them were so large as to receive their flocks also; such was the cave of Polyphemus, as Bochart {l} observes, in which the cattle, namely, the sheep and goats, lay down and slept; and in Iceland such are used to secure them from the cold; where we are told {m} there are caverns in the mountains capable of sheltering a hundred sheep or more: and whither they very cordially retreat in bad weather. These holes are in such mountains as have formerly burned, and are of infinite service to them, both winter and summer; in the winter for shelter, and in the summer for very good pastures, which they find in plenty all around. Such sort of huts and cottages as these, in hot countries, Jerom seems to have respect unto, when, speaking of Tekoa, he says {n}, there is not beyond it any little village, nor indeed any field cottages like to ovens (subterraneous ones, Calmet {o} calls them), which the Africans call "mapalia": these Sallust {p} describes as of an oblong figure, covered with tiles, and like the keels of ships, or ships turned bottom upwards; and, according to Pliny {q}, they were movable, and carried from place to place in carts and waggons; and therefore cannot be such as before described; and so Dr. Shaw {r} says, the Bedouin Arabs now, as their great ancestors the Arabians, live in tents called "hhymas", from the shelter which they afford the inhabitants; and adds, they are the very same which the ancients call "mapalia":

and folds for flocks; in which they put them to lie down in at evening. The phrases express the great desolation of the land; that towns should be depopulated, and the land lie untilled, and only be occupied by shepherds, and their flocks, who lead them from place to place, the most convenient for them.

{i} twrk "fossas", Tigurine version; "fossuris", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ben Melech; but disapproved of by Gussetius. p. 402. {k} "Mansiones effossionum pastorum, Drusius; caulae effossionum pastorum", i. e. "effossae a pastoribus", Bochart. {l} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 45. col. 467, 468. {m} Horrebow's Natural History of Iceland, c. 29. p. 46. {n}

Prooem, in Amos. {o} Dictionary, in the word "Shepherds". {p} Bell. Jugurth. p. 51. {q} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 3. {r} Travels, p. 220. Ed. 2.

Zephaniah 2:7

Ver. 7. And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah,.... The same tract of land become so desolate through the Chaldeans, should in future time, when those that remained of the Jews were returned from their captivity in Babylon, be inhabited by them. This was fulfilled in the times of the Maccabees, when the cities of Palestine, being rebuilt, were subdued by the Jews, and fell into their hands; and it is plain that in the times of the apostles those places were inhabited by the Jews, as Gaza, Ashdod, and others, **Ac 8:26** and perhaps will, have a further accomplishment in the latter day, when they shall be converted and return to their own land:

they shall feed thereupon: in the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening; either the shepherds shall feed their flocks here, and cause them to lie down in the evening on the very spot of ground where the houses of Ashkelon stood. This place is very properly represented as on the sea coast; for so it was; Philo {s} says, who some time dwelt there, that it was a city of Syria by the sea: or rather the remnant of Israel shall feed and dwell here, and lie down in safety; and this was made good in a spiritual sense, when the apostles of Christ preached the Gospel in those parts, and were the instruments of converting many; and there they fed them with the word and ordinances, and caused them to lie down in green pastures, in great ease and security:

for the Lord their God shall visit them: in a way of grace and mercy, bringing them out of Babylon into their own land, and enlarging their borders there; and especially by raising up Christ, the horn of salvation, for them; and by sending his Gospel to them, and making it effectual to their conversion and salvation:

and turn away their captivity; in a literal sense from Babylon; and in a spiritual sense from sin, Satan, and the law; and may have a further respect to their present captivity in both senses.

{s} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 8. p. 398.

Zephaniah 2:8

Ver. 8. I have heard the reproach of Moab, and the revilings of the children of Ammon,.... Two people that descended from Lot, through incest with his daughters; and are therefore mentioned together, as being of the same cast and complexion, and bitter enemies to the people of the Jews; whom they reproached and reviled, for the sake of their religion, because they adhered to the word and worship of God: this they did when the Jews were most firmly attached to the service of the true God; and the Lord heard it, and took notice of it; and put it down in the book of his remembrance, to punish them for it in due time; even he who hears, and sees, and knows all things:

whereby they have reproached my people; whom he had chosen, and avouched to be his people; and who were called by his name, and called on his name, and worshipped him, and professed to be his people, and to serve and obey him; and as such, and because they were the people of God, they were reproached by them; and hence it was so resented by the Lord; and there being such a near relation between God and them, he looked upon the reproaches of them as reproaches of himself:

and magnified [themselves] against their border; either they spoke reproachfully of the land of Israel, and the borders of it, and especially of the inhabitants of the land, and particularly those that bordered upon them; or they invaded the borders of their land, and endeavoured to add it to theirs; or as the Jews were carried captive by the Chaldeans, as they passed by the borders of Moab and Ammon, they insulted them, and jeered them, and expressed great pleasure and joy in seeing them in such circumstances; see Eze 25:3. Jarchi represents the case thus; when the children of Israel went into captivity to the land of the Chaldeans, as they passed by the way of Ammon and Moab, they wept, and sighed, and cried; and they distressed them, and said, what do you afflict yourselves for? why do ye weep? are not you going to the house of your father, beyond the river where your fathers dwelt of old? thus jeering them on account of Abraham's being of Ur of the Chaldees.

Zephaniah 2:9

Ver. 9. Therefore [as] I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,.... The Lord here swears by himself, by his life; partly to show how provoked he was at, and how grievously he resented, the injuries done to his people; and partly to observe the certain fulfilment of what is after declared; and it might be depended upon it would surely be done, not only because of his word and oath, which are immutable; but because of his ability to do it, as "the Lord of hosts", of armies above and below; and because of the covenant relation that subsisted between him and Israel, being their God; and therefore would avenge the insults and injuries done them:

surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah; that is, should be utterly destroyed, as these cities were; whose destruction is often made use of to express the utter ruin and destruction of any other people; otherwise it is not to be supposed that these countries were to be destroyed, or were destroyed, in like manner, by fire from heaven; the similitude lies in other things after expressed:

[even] the breeding of nettles; or "left to nettles" {q}; or rather to "thorns", as the Targum: and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it "the dryness of thorns", though to a very poor sense. In general the meaning of the phrase is, that those countries should be very barren and desolate, like such places as are overrun with nettles, thorns, briers, and brambles; and these so thick, that there is no passing through them without a man's tearing his garments and his flesh: for Schultens {r}, from the use of the word {s} in the Arabic language, shows that the words are to be rendered a "thicket of thorns which tear"; and cut the feet of those that pass through them; and even their whole body, as well as their clothes; and, wherever these grow in such plenty, it is a plain sign of a barren land, as well as what follow:

and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation; signifying that the countries of Moab and Ammon should be waste, barren, and uncultivated, as the above places were, where nothing but nettles grew, as do in great abundance in desolate places; and where saltpits should be, or heaps of salt, as Kimchi interprets it; and wherever salt is found, as Pliny {t} says, it is a barren place, and produces nothing; though Herodotus {u} speaks of places where were hillocks of salt, and very fruitful; and where the people used salt in manuring and improving their ground; which must be accounted for by the difference of climate and soil: this passage is produced by Reland {w} to prove that the lake Asphaltites is not the place, as is commonly believed, where Sodom and Gomorrah stood; since those cities were not overflown, or immersed in and covered with water, but were destroyed by fire and brimstone, and so became desolate; and had no herbs and plants, but nettles, and such like things; and such these countries of Moab and Ammon should be, and ever remain so, at least for a long time; and especially should be desolate and uninhabited by the former possessors of it; see De 29:23 this was fulfilled about five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, when Nebuchadnezzar, as Josephus {x} relates, led his army into Coelesyria, and made war upon the Ammonites and Moabites, and subjected them to him, who were the inhabitant of it, as the same writer says {y}:

the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them; that is, the Jews, the remnant of them that returned from Babylon: now these, in the times of the Maccabees, and those that descended from them, seized on several places in these countries, and possessed them; for, after these countries had been subdued and made desolate by Nebuchadnezzar, they became considerable nations again. Josephus {z} says the Moabites in his time were a great nation; though in the third century, as Origen {a} relates, they went under the common name of Arabians; and, even long before the times of Josephus, they were called Arabian Moabites, as he himself observes; when he tells us that Alexander Jannaeus subdued them, and imposed a tribute on them; and who also gives us an account of the cities of the Moabites, which were taken and demolished by them, as Essebon, Medaba, Lemba, Oronas, Telithon, Zara, the valley of the Cilicians, and Pella; these he destroyed, because the inhabitants would not promise to conform to the rites and customs of the Jews {b}; though Josephus ben Gorion, who also makes mention of these cities as taken by the same prince, says {c} he did not demolish them, because they entered into a covenant and were circumcised; and he speaks of ten fortified cities of the king of Syria, added at the same time to the kingdom of Israel, not destroyed: likewise the children of Ammon, after their captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, became a powerful people: we read of the country of the Ammonites in

"Then Jason, who had undermined his own brother, being undermined by another, was compelled to flee into the country of the Ammonites." (2 Maccabees 4:26)

and, in the times of Judas Maccabeus, Timotheus, their general, got together a strong and numerous army, which being worsted by Judas, he took their city Jasoron, or Jaser, "Afterward he passed over to the children of Ammon, where he found a mighty power, and much people, with Timotheus their captain." (1 Maccabees 5:6)

carried their wives and children captive, and burnt their city {d}; and this people, as well as the Moabites in the third century, as before observed, were swallowed up under the general name of Arabians; and neither of them are any more; all which has fulfilled this prophecy, and those of Jeremiah and Amos concerning them: this, likewise, in a spiritual sense, might have a further accomplishment in the first times of the Gospel, when it was preached in these countries by the apostles, and churches were formed in them; and may be still further accomplished in the latter day, when those parts of the world shall be possessed by converted Jews and by Gentile Christians. Kimchi owns it may be interpreted as future, of what shall be in the times of the Messiah.

{q} lwrx qvmm "locus urticae derelictus", Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. col. 872. Stockius, p. 629.; "derelictio urticae", Burkius. So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 68. 2. {r} De Defect. Hodiern. Ling. Heb. p. 32. {s} "laceravit, laceratus est", Golius, col. 2231. Castel. col. 2165. {t} Nat. Hist. l. 31. c. 7. "Salsa autem tellus----frugibus infelix." Virgil. Georgic. l. 2. {u} Melpomene, sive l. 4. c. 182, 183. {w} Palestina Illustrata, l. 1. c. 38. p. 254, 255. {x} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 7. {y} Ibid. l. 1. c. 11. sect. 5. {z} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 11. sect. 5. {a} Comment. in Job, fol. 2. 1. A. {b} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 13. sect. 5. c. 15. sect. 4. De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 4. sect. 2. {c} Hist. Heb. l. 4. c. 12. p. 297. {d} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 12. c. 8. sect. 1. 1 Maccab. v. 6.

Zephaniah 2:10

Ver. 10. This shall they have for their pride,.... This calamity shall come upon their land, the land of the Moabites and Ammonites, for their pride, which often goes before a fall; and has frequently been the cause of the ruin of kingdoms and states, and of particular persons; and indeed seems to have been the first sin of the apostate angels, and of fallen man. Of the pride of Moab see Isa 16:6:

because they have reproached and magnified [themselves] against the people of the Lord of hosts; they looked with disdain upon them, as greatly below them; and spoke contemptibly of them, of their nation, and religion; and "made" themselves "great", and set up themselves "above" them, opened their mouths wide, and gave their tongues great liberties in blaspheming and reviling them: what was done to them is taken by the Lord as done to himself; see Jer 48:42.

Zephaniah 2:11

Ver. 11. The Lord [will be] terrible unto them,.... To the Moabites and Ammonites in the execution of his judgments upon them, and make their proud hearts tremble; for with him is terrible majesty; he is terrible to the kings of the earth, and cuts off the spirit of princes, Job 37:22 or, as Kimchi observes, this may be understood of the people of God reproached by the Moabites and Ammonites, by whom the Lord is to be feared and reverenced with a godly and filial fear: so it may be rendered, "the Lord is to be feared by them" {e}; and to this inclines the Targum,

"the fear of the Lord is to redeem them;"

for he will famish all the gods of the earth; particularly of those countries mentioned in the context, the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Ethiopians, and Assyrians; as Dagon, Chemosh, Molech, Bel, and others; called "gods of the earth", in distinction from the God of heaven, to whom they are opposed; and because made of earthly matter, and worshipped by earthly and carnal men; these the Lord, who is above them, and can destroy them at pleasure, threatens to "famish"; or to bring "leanness" {f} upon them, as the word signifies; to bring them into a consumption, and cause them to pine away gradually, by little and little, till they are no more; and that by reducing the number of their worshippers, so that they shall not have the worship and honour paid them, nor the sacrifices offered to them, supposed by the heathens to be the food of their gods; and, this being the case, their priests would be starved and become lean, who used to be fat and plump. The Septuagint version renders it, "he will destroy all the gods of the nations of the earth"; which is approved of by Noldius, and preferred by him to other versions. This had its accomplishment in part, when these nations were subdued by Nebuchadnezzar; for idols were usually demolished when a kingdom was taken; and more fully when the Gospel was spread in the Gentile world by the apostles of Christ, and first ministers of the word; whereby the oracles of the heathens were struck dumb, and men were turned everywhere from the worship of idols; the idols themselves were destroyed, and their temples demolished, or converted to better uses; and will have a still greater accomplishment in the latter day, at the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, when the worship of idols will cease everywhere. The Syriac version renders it, "all the kings of the earth"; very wrongly:

and [men] shall worship him, everyone from his place; or, "in his place" {g}; that is, every man shall worship the true God in the place where he is; he shall not go up to Jerusalem to worship, but in every place lift up holy bands to God, pray unto him, praise and serve him; the worship of God will be universal; he will be King over all the earth, and his name and service one, and shall not be limited and confined to any particular place, **Mal 1:11**:

[even] all the isles of the heathen; or "Gentiles"; not only those places which are properly isles, as ours of Great Britain and Ireland; though there may be a particular respect had to such, and especially to ours, who have been very early and long favoured with the Gospel, and yet will be; but all places beyond the seas, or which the Jews went to by sea, they called isles.

{e} Mhyle hwhy arwn "timendus Jehovah super ipsis", Cocceius, Burkius. {f} hzr "emaciabit", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "quasi macie consumit", Vatablus; "quum emaciaverit", Cocceius; "quia emaciavit", Burkius. {g} wmwqmm.

Zephaniah **2:12**

Ver. 12. Ye Ethiopians also,.... Or, "as for ye Ethiopians also" {h}; not the Ethiopians in Africa beyond Egypt, at a distance from the land of Israel, and the countries before mentioned; but the inhabitants of Arabia Chusea, or Ethiopia, which lay near to Moab and Ammon; these should not escape, but suffer with their neighbours, who sometimes distressed the people of the Jews, and made war with them, being nigh them; see 2Ch 14:9:

ye [shall be] slain by my sword; or, "the slain of my sword are they" {i}; R. Japhet thinks here is a defect of the note of similitude "as", which should be supplied thus, "ye" are, or shall be, "the slain of my sword", as they; as the Moabites and Ammonites; that is, these Ethiopians should be slain as well as they by the sword of Nebuchadnezzar; which is called the sword of God, because he was an instrument in the hand of God for punishing the nations of the earth. This was fulfilled very probably when Egypt was subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, with whom Ethiopia was confederate, as well as near unto it, Jer 46:1. The destruction of these by the Assyrians is predicted, Isa 20:4.

{h} Myvwk Mta Mg "etiam ad vos Aethiopes quod attinet", Piscator. {i} hmh ybrx yllx "interfecti gladio meo ipsi", Montanus.

Zephaniah 2:13

Ver. 13. And he will stretch out his hand against the north,.... Either the Lord, or Nebuchadnezzar his sword; who, as he would subdue the nations that lay southward, he would lead his army northward against the land of Assyria, which lay to the north of Judea, as next explained:

and destroy Assyria; that famous monarchy, which had ruled over the kingdoms of the earth, now should come to an end, and be reduced to subjection to the king of Babylon:

and will make Nineveh a desolation; which was the capital city, the metropolis of the Assyrian monarchy: Nahum prophesies at large of the destruction of this city:

[and] dry like a wilderness; which before was a very watery place, situated by rivers, particularly the river Tigris; so that it was formerly like a pool of water, **Na 2:6** but now should be dry like a heath or desert, Dr. Prideaux places the destruction of Nineveh in the twenty ninth year of Josiah's reign; but Bishop Usher earlier, in the sixteenth year of his reign; and, if so, then Zephaniah, who here prophesies of it, must begin to prophesy in the former part of Josiah's reign.

Zephaniah 2:14

Ver. 14. And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her,.... In the midst of the city of Nineveh; in the streets of it, where houses stood, and people in great numbers walked; but now only should be seen the cottages of shepherds, and flocks of sheep feeding or lying down, as is before observed of the sea coast of the Philistines, **Zep 2:6**:

all the beasts of the nations; that is, all sorts of beasts, especially wild beasts, in the several parts of the world, should come and dwell here; instead of kings and princes, nobles, merchants, and the great men thereof, who once here inhabited, now there should be beasts of prey, terrible to come nigh unto; for these are to be understood properly and literally, and not figuratively, of men, for their savageness and cruelty, comparable to beasts:

both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; of the doors of the houses in Nineveh: or, "on its pomegranates" {k}; the figures of these being often put on chapiters, turrets, pinnacles, pillars, and posts in buildings, and over porches of doors; and on these those melancholy and doleful creatures here mentioned, which delight in solitary places, should take up their abode. The "cormorant" is the same with the "corvus aquaticus", or "sea raven", about the size of a goose; it builds not only among rocks, but often on trees: what is called the "shagge" is a species of it, or the lesser cormorant, a water fowl common on our northern coasts; is somewhat larger than a common duck, and builds on trees as the common cormorant {l}. Bochart {m} takes it to be the "pelican" which is here meant; and indeed, whatever bird it is, it seems to have its name from vomiting; and this is what naturalists {n} observe of the pelican, that it swallows down shell fish, which, being kept awhile in its stomach, are heated, and then it casts them up, which then open easily, and it picks out the flesh of them: and it seems to delight in desolate places, since it is called the pelican of the wilderness, Ps 102:6. Isidore says {o} it is an Egyptian bird, dwelling in the desert by the river Nile, from whence it has its name; for it is called "canopus Aegyptus"; and the Vulgate Latin version renders the word here "onocrotalus", the same with the pelican; and Montanus translates it the "pelican"; and so do others. The "bittern" is a bird of the heron kind; it is much the size of a common heron; it is usually found in sedgy and reedy places near water, and sometimes in hedges; it makes a very remarkable noise, and, from the singularity of it, the common people imagine it sticks its beak in a reed or in the mud, in order to make it; hence it is sometimes called the "mire drum" {p}. It is said it will sometimes make a noise like a bull, or the blowing of a horn, so as to be heard half a German mile, or one hour's journey; hence it is by some called "botaurus", as if "bootaurus", because it imitates the bellowing of a bull {q}. The Tigurine version renders it the "castor" or "beaver" {r}; but Bochart {s} takes it to be the "hedgehog"; and so the word is rendered in the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and by others: which is a solitary creature, and drives away all other animals from society with it by its prickles:

[their] voice shall sing in the windows: of desolate houses, the inhabitants being gone who used to be seen looking out of them; but now these creatures before named should dwell here, and utter their doleful sounds, who otherwise would not have come near them:

desolation [shall be] in the thresholds; there being none to go in and out over them. The Septuagint version, and which is followed by the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, render it, "the ravens shall be in its gates": mistaking bdh, "desolation", for bre, "a raven":

for he shall uncover the cedar work; the enemy Nebuchadnezzar, or Nabopolassar, when he should take the city, would unroof the houses panelled with cedar, and expose all the fine cedar work within to the inclemencies of the air, which would soon come to ruin. All these expressions are designed to set forth the utter ruin and destruction of this vast and populous city; and which was so utterly destroyed, as Lucian says, that there is no trace of it to be found; and, according to modern travellers, there are only heaps of rubbish to be seen, which are conjectured to be the ruins of this city; See Gill on "Na 1:8".

{k} hyrwtpkb "in malogranatis ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius. {l} Vid Supplement to Chambers's Dictionary, in the words "Cormorant, Cornus Aquaticus", and "Shagge". {m} Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 24. col. 294. {n} Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 10. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 40. Aelian de Animal. l. 3. c. 20. {o} Originum, l. 12. c. 7. {p} Supplement, ut supra (Chambers's Dictionary), in the word "Bittern". {q} Schotti Physica Curiosa, par. 2. l. 9. c. 24. p. 1160. {r} Vid. Fuller. Miscel. Saer. l. 1. c. 18. {s} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 36. col. 1036.

Ver. 15. This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly,.... Once exceeding populous, and the inhabitants full of mirth and gaiety, abounding with wealth and riches, and indulging themselves in all carnal delights and pleasures; and, being well fortified, thought themselves out of all danger, and were careless and unconcerned, not fearing any enemy that should attack them; imagining their city was impregnable and invincible: these are the words of the prophet, concluding his prophecy concerning the destruction of this city, and having, by a spirit of prophecy, a foresight of its ruin and desolation; or of passengers, and what they should say when they saw it lie in its ruins:

that said in her heart, I [am], and [there is] none besides me; or, "is there any besides me?" {t} there is none, no city in the world to be compared to it for the largeness of the place, the strength of its walls, the number of its inhabitants, its wealth and riches: at least so she thought within herself, and was elated with these things; and concluded it would never be otherwise with her; "I am", and shall always continue so:

how is she become a desolation! what a desolate place is this! its walls broken down, its houses demolished, its wealth and riches plundered, its inhabitants destroyed; and now the hold and habitation of beasts of prey, and hateful birds:

a place for beasts to lie down in! and not for men to dwell in: this is said, either as wondering, or as rejoicing at it, as follows:

everyone that passeth by her; and sees her in this ruinous condition:

shall hiss, [and] wag his hand; in scorn and derision, as pleased with the sight, and having no pity and compassion for her, remembering her cruelty to and oppression of others, when in her prosperity; see **Na 3:19**.

{t} rze yopaw yna "et praeter me adhuc quiequam est?" Cocceius.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Zephaniah 3:1

In this chapter the character of the city of Jerusalem, and its inhabitants in general, is drawn, as it would be, and as it was, in the times of Christ and his apostles, **Zep 3:1** and of the principal persons of it in particular, its princes, judges, prophets, and priests, **Zep 3:3**. The hardness, impenitence, and shamelessness of this people, are exposed and aggravated by the just Lord being among them; who, by his example and doctrine, taught them otherwise; yet they were not amended or made ashamed, **Zep 3:5** nor received instruction, nor took warning by the judgments of God on other nations, **Zep 3:6** wherefore the followers of God are called upon to wait his time, who would gather many people together, and destroy the whole land of Judea, **Zep 3:8** at which time he would send his Gospel among the Gentiles, who should thereby be brought to the true worship and service of God, **Zep 3:9** though there should be a remnant among the Jews, according to the election of grace, that should be saved from that general calamity, **Zep 3:11** and the spiritual Israel are encouraged with promises of better times, when the Jews in general should be converted and gathered into the church of God, have the presence and protection of God with them, and deliverance from all their enemies, and be a praise among all people of the earth, **Zep 3:14**.

Ver. 1. Woe to her that is filthy, and polluted,.... Meaning the city of Jerusalem, and its inhabitants; not as before the Babylonish captivity, but after their return from it, under the second temple, as Abarbinel owns; and even as in the times before and at the coming of Christ, and the preaching of his apostles among them; as the whole series of the prophecy, and the connection of the several parts of it, show; and there are such plain intimations of the conversion of the Gentiles, and of such a happy state of the Jews, in which they shall see evil no more, as can agree with no other times than the times of the Gospel, both the beginning and latter part of them. The character of this city, and its inhabitants, is, that it was "filthy", and polluted with murders, adulteries, oppression, rapine, and other sins: our Lord often calls them a wicked and an adulterous generation; and yet they pretended to great purity of life and manners; and they were pure in their own eyes, though not washed from their filthiness; they took much pains to make clean the outside of the cup, but within were full of impurity, Mt 23:25. In the margin it is, "woe to her that is gluttonous". The word is used for the craw or crop of a fowl, **Le 1:16** hence some render it {t} "woe to the craw"; to the city that is all craw, to which Jerusalem is compared for its devouring the wealth and substance of others. The Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time are said to devour widows' houses, Mt 23:14 and this seems to be the sin with which they were defiled, and here charged with. Some think the word signifies one that is publicly, infamous; either made a public example of, or openly exposed, as sometimes filthy harlots are; or rather one "that has made herself infamous" {u}; by her sins and vices:

to the oppressing city! that oppressed the poor, the widow, and the fatherless. This may have respect to the inhabitants of Jerusalem stoning the prophets of the Lord sent unto them; to the discouragements they laid the followers of Christ under, by not suffering such to come to hear him that were inclined; threatening to cast them out of their synagogues if they professed him, which passed into a law; and to their killing the Lord of life and glory; and the persecution of his apostles, ministers, and people: see Mt 23:13. Some render it, "to the city a dove" {w}; being like a silly dove without heart, as in **Ho 7:11**. R. Azariah {x} thinks Jerusalem is so called because in its works it was like Babylon, which had for its military sign on its standard a dove; See Gill on "Jer 25:38" see Gill on "Jer 46:16" see Gill on "Ho 11:11" but the former sense is best.

{t} harwm ywh "vae ingluviei", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {u} ouav th paradeigmatizomhnh "vae huic quae infamatur", L'Empereur Not. in Mosis Kimchii oidopozia "ad scientiam", p. 174. so Drusius and Tarnovius. {w} hnwyh ryex poliv h peristera, Sept.; "civitas columba", V. L.; so Syr. Ar. Jarchi, and other Jewish interpreters. {x} Meor Enayin, c. 21. fol. 90. 1.

Zephaniah 3:2

Ver. 2. She obeyed not the voice,.... Of his servants the prophets, as the Targum, by way of explanation, adds, who warned her of her sins and of her ruin. The inhabitants of Jerusalem hearkened not to the voice of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, who gave notice of his coming; nor to the voice of Christ himself, who stretched out his hand all the day to a disobedient and gainsaying people; nor to the voice of his apostles, whose doctrines they contradicted and blasphemed; and put away the word of God from them, thereby judging themselves unworthy of eternal life:

she received not correction; by the rod, by the judgments of God upon her: or "instruction" {y}; by the Gospel preached to her inhabitants. So the

Targum interprets it,

"she received not doctrine;"

the doctrine of baptism, repentance, and remission of sins, preached by John; but rejected the counsel of God by him against themselves, **Lu 7:31** nor the doctrine and instruction of Christ and his apostles, though of more worth than gold and silver; but, on the contrary, slighted and despised it, and rejected it with the utmost contempt:

she trusted not in the Lord; not in the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; the essential Word, Christ Jesus; the Word made flesh, and dwelling among them; they trusted in the law of Moses, and in their obedience to it; in their rites and ceremonies, and in the observance of them, and the traditions of their elders; they trusted in the flesh, in their carnal privileges; in their own legal righteousness, and in themselves, that they were righteous, and despised others; and particularly the righteousness of Christ they submitted not unto; they trusted not in him, nor in that; though they were told, that, if they believed not that he was the Messiah, they should die in their sins:

she drew not near to her God; Immanuel, God manifest in the flesh, who was promised to the Jews, and sent unto them, whom their fathers expected, and whose God he was, and theirs also; being in his human nature of them, and God over all blessed for ever; so far were they from drawing near to him, and embracing, him, that they hid, as it were, their faces from him; they would not come to him for life and light, for grace, righteousness, and salvation; nor even to hear him preach, nor suffer others to do the same; but, as much as in them lay, hindered them from attending his ministry, word, and ordinances. The Targum is,

"she drew not nigh to the worship of her God."

{y} rowm "institutionem", Drusius, Tarnovius.

Zephaniah 3:3

Ver. 3. Her princes within her [are] roaring lions,.... Or, "as roaring lions"; there being a defect of the note of similitude; which is supplied by the

Targum, Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions. This is to be understood, not of the princes of the blood; but of civil magistrates in common; the members of the grand sanhedrim; the princes of the Jewish world, that crucified the Lord of glory; and who gaped upon him with their mouths like ravening and roaring lions, as is foretold they should, Ps 22:12 and who breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ; and by their menaces endeavoured to frighten and deter them from preaching in his name, and from a profession of him; see **1Co 2:8**:

her judges [are] evening wolves; or, like them, cruel, voracious, never satisfied; especially are very ravenous in the evening, having had no food all day; not daring to go abroad in the daytime to seek their prey; see **Jer 5:6**. The Septuagint and Arabic versions read "wolves of Arabia"; but wrongly; See Gill on "Hab 1:8" such rapacious covetous judges were there in Christ's time; who gives us an instance in one, by which we may judge of the rest, who feared not God, nor regarded men, Lu 18:2 such as these were hungry and greedy after gifts and bribes to pervert judgment, and to devour the poor, the widow, and the fatherless, on whom they had no mercy:

they gnaw not the bones till the morrow; or rather, "in the morning" {z}; that is, either they leave not the bones till the morning, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; they are so hungry, that they eat up bones and all at once, and reserve nothing for the next day; which expresses both the greediness of these judges, and the total consumption of the estates of men made by them: or else the sense is, that not having gnawn any bones in the morning, or eaten anything that day, hence they are so greedy in the evening; and so this last clause gives a reason why evening wolves are so voracious; for which such cruel judges are compared to them.

{z} rqbl "in mane", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "matutino", Cocceius.

Zephaniah 3:4

Ver. 4. Her prophets [are] light [and treacherous persons,.... The false prophets, as the Targum and Kimchi explain it: these seem to design the lawyers spoken of in the New Testament, whose business it was to interpret the law to the people; these were "light" men, good for nothing, of no worth and value; light in knowledge, as Kimchi gives the sense of the word; men of no brains; empty headed men, that had no substantial knowledge; giddy, unstable, and inconstant, and compliant with the humours and vices of the people; men of no gravity in their countenance, speech, and conversation. Schultens {a}, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, renders it "proud", as these men were, proud boasters; for, though they had but a superficial knowledge of things, they boasted of much, and carried it with a haughty and insolent air to the common people: and they were "treacherous" to God, and to his truths, and to the souls of men, and took away the key of knowledge from them; and particularly were so to Christ, of whom they were the betrayers and murderers, delivering him up into the hands of the Gentiles to be scourged and crucified, Mt 20:18:

her priests have polluted the sanctuary; the temple; by selling, or suffering to be sold in it, various things, whereby it became a den of thieves, which once was called a house of prayer, Mt 21:12 and also our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the sanctuary or temple was a type, by denying, blaspheming, and reproaching him, and by shedding his blood:

they have done violence to the law; by not teaching it as they should; and by their false glosses, senses, and interpretations of it; and by the traditions of the elders they preferred unto it, and whereby they made it void; see **Mt 5:1** and Mt 15:1.

{a} Animadv. Philol. in Job, p. 144.

Zephaniah 3:5

Ver. 5. The just Lord [is] in the midst thereof,.... In the midst of the city of Jerusalem, where those princes, judges, prophets and priests, were, that behaved so ill, and saw and observed all their evil actions; and yet they were not deterred from them by his presence, even though he is the "just" and Holy One, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity, and will punish for it; nor were they directed and allured to do what is righteous and good by his example. This character of the just Lord well agrees with Christ, who is perfectly righteous in both his natures, and in the execution of his offices; and is the author of righteousness to his people; and this is to be understood of his incarnation and personal presence in human nature in Jerusalem, and in the temple, where he taught his doctrine, and wrought his miracles:

he will not do iniquity; Christ was holy in his nature, harmless in his life; he knew no sin; he did not commit any; no violence was done by him, or guile found in him; he was not guilty of sin against God, nor of doing any injury to men; and should have been imitated by the men of the age in which he lived, as well as by others; and should have been valued and esteemed, and not traduced and vilified as he was, as if he had been the worst of men:

every morning doth he bring his judgment to light; the doctrine of the Gospel, which he set in the clearest light, and preached with the greatest constancy, day after day, morning by morning, and very early in the morning, when the people came to hear him in the temple; and he continued in it all the day; he waking morning by morning to this service, as was predicted of him, **Isa 1:4** see Lu 21:37:

he faileth not; in this work of preaching the word, with the greatest evidence and assiduity:

but the unjust knoweth no shame: those unjust persons, who aspersed the character of Christ, and traduced his doctrine and miracles; though there was nothing in his life, nor in his ministry, that could be justly blamed, yet they blushed not at their sin and wickedness; and though they were sharply reproved by him, and their errors in principle, and sins in practice, were exposed by him, yet they were not ashamed; such were the hardness and obduracy of their hearts.

Zephaniah 3:6

Ver. 6. I have cut off the nations,.... Utterly destroyed them, as the Philistines, Moabites, Ethiopians, and Assyrians, as in the preceding chapters; all which were done before the coming of Christ in the flesh; and by which instances the Jews should have took warning, lest by their sins they should provoke the Lord to destroy their nation, city, and temple:

their towers are desolate; built on their frontiers, or on the walls of their cities, to defend them; these were demolished, and laid waste, and of no use: or, "their corners" {b}; towers being usually built on the angles or corners of walls. Some interpret this of their princes, nobles, and great men, who were destroyed; see Zec 10:4:

I made their streets waste, that none passeth by; the streets of their cities, the houses being pulled down by the enemy, the rubbish of them lay in the streets, so that there was no passing for any; and indeed, the houses being demolished, the streets were no more in form:

their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant; the houses being burnt with fire, or pulled down, and plundered of the goods and substance in them, and the people cut off by famine, pestilence, or sword; and the rest carried captive, there was scarce a man or inhabitant left; so general was the destruction.

{b} Mtwnp "anguli earum", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Cocceius, Burkius.

Zephaniah 3:7

Ver. 7. I said, Surely thou wilt fear me,.... This is spoken after the manner of men; as if God should say within himself, and reason in his own mind, upon a view of things, surely the people of the Jews will take notice of my judgments executed on other nations, and will stand in awe of me on account of them; and fear to offend me, lest the same calamities should come upon them; this, humanly speaking, might be reasonably thought would be the case:

thou wilt receive instruction; by these judgments, taking warning by them; repent, reform, and amend, and thereby escape the like:

so their dwelling should not be cut off; or, "its dwelling"; the dwelling of the city of Jerusalem, the houses in it; the dwelling places of the inhabitants of it; the singular being put for the plural; unless the temple should be meant, as Abendana interprets it; and so it may be rendered "his dwelling" {c}; their house, which was left desolate to them, because they feared not the Lord; nor received instruction by the example of others; nor repented of their sins, and altered their course of life; which, if done, their dwelling would have been preserved, Mt 23:38:

howsoever I punished them; or "visited" {d} them; chastised them in a gentle manner, in order to reform them, but in vain. Some render it, "all which I committed to them" {e}; the oracles of God, his word and ordinances, his promises, and the blessings of his goodness, which he deposited with them, in order to do them good, and bring them to repentance. The Targum is,

"all the good things which I have said unto them (or promised them), I will bring unto them;"

and to the same sense Jarchi. The goodness of God should have brought them to repentance, yet it did not:

but they rose early, [and] corrupted all their doings; they were diligent and industrious eager and early, in the commission of sins, in doing corrupt and abominable works; receiving and tenaciously adhering to the traditions of the elders; seeking to establish their own righteousness, not submitting to Christ's; rejecting him the true Messiah; blaspheming his doctrines, despising his ordinances, and persecuting his people; besides other vices, which abounded among them; for which the wrath of God came upon them to the uttermost, as expressed in the following verse, **Zep 3:8**.

{c} hnwem "habitaculum; [vel] habitatio ejus", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Burkius; "mansio ejus", Cocceius. {d} ytdqp "visitavi", Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus. {e} "Omne id quod commendavi illi", Cocceius.

Zephaniah 3:8

Ver. 8. Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord,.... Or "nevertheless" {f}: this is said to the disciples and followers of Christ among the Jews; for there were some few that did fear the Lord, and received his doctrine, and submitted to his ordinances, and walked in his ways; and these are encouraged to wait upon the Lord; upon the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; or for him, and to expect that he would appear, and work salvation and deliverance for them, when distress should come upon the unbelieving Jews:

until the day that I rise up to the prey: until the day that he rose from the dead, quickly after which he ascended to heaven, leading captivity captive; Satan, and his principalities and powers, which he made a prey and spoil of upon the cross: or, till I rise "up for a testimony", or witness {g}; of his being the true Messiah; for his resurrection from the dead was the signal he gave as a testimony of it, Mt 12:39. Some render it, "till I rise up to perpetuity": or, "for ever" {h}; for, when Christ rose from the dead, he rose to an immortal life, never to die more; and ever live he does to make intercession for his people, to secure their happiness for them, and to preserve them unto it; and therefore they have great encouragement to wait upon him, and for him:

for my determination [is] to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms; not the Chaldeans or Babylonians, as some; nor the armies of Gog and Magog, as Kimchi; but the Romans under Titus Vespasian, with whom were people of many nations, who came against Jerusalem, according to the decree, will, and appointment of God:

to pour upon them mine indignation, [even] all my fierce anger; not upon the nations and kingdoms assembled; but by them upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, against whom they would be gathered; who had corrupted their doings, and provoked the Lord to stir up and pour out all his wrath upon them, in utterly destroying their nation, city, and temple: and the apostle, speaking of the same thing, at least of the beginning of it, calls it "wrath upon them to the uttermost": and which answers to the expressions of the Lord's indignation, and all his fierce anger, here used, **1Th 2:16**:

for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy; not the whole world, and the several nations of it; but the whole land of Judea, and its inhabitants. The same phrase is used of the destruction of it by the Babylonians, **Zep 1:18** and which shows, that not that destruction, but the destruction by the Romans, is here meant; or otherwise a tautology is here committed; but the following words show clearly that this respects, not the former, but the latter destruction of Jerusalem; since a pure language was not given to the nations or Gentiles after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians; but has been since it was destroyed by the Romans; and which was in a few years after Christ's resurrection from the dead, predicted in the beginning of this verse; by which may be observed the connection of things in this prophecy.

{f} Nkl, as in Hos. ii. 14. See Noldius. {g} del eiv marturion, Sept. {h} "In futurum", V. L. "in perpetuum", some in Calvin; so Abendana; "in perpetuitatem", Cocceius.

Zephaniah 3:9

Ver. 9. For then will I turn to the people a pure language,.... That is, at or about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; when the Jews, both in their own land, and in the Gentile world, would have the Gospel first preached to them, but would reject it; upon which the apostles and first ministers of the word would turn to the Gentiles, as the Lord commanded them; when he would turn or change his speech and language towards them, and their speech and language towards him would be turned and changed also: for the words may be taken either way; either of God's speech to the Gentiles, which is his Gospel sent unto them; as it was quickly after Christ's resurrection from the dead, and the rejection of it by the Jews; for many hundred years the Lord took no notice of them; winked at the times of their ignorance; sent no prophet to them, nor any message by anyone to instruct them; yea, he spake roughly to them, in a providential way; in the way of his judgments; particularly they raging and imagining vain things against his Messiah, he spake to them in his wrath, and vexed them in his sore displeasure; see Ac 17:30 but now he alters the tone of his voice, changes his language, and sends his Gospel to them; which is a "language" of love, grace, and mercy; of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation; encouraging souls to believe in Christ for those things: and this is a "pure" speech or language; a pure doctrine, fetched out of the sacred Scriptures; free from the dross of error; unmixed, consistent, and all of a piece; and which has a tendency to promote purity of heart, life, and conversation: or, is a "choice speech" {h}; as some render it; it speaks of choice things, more valuable than gold and silver, pearls, and precious stones; the doctrines of it being an inestimable treasure, the unsearchable riches of Christ; and this, by the commission of Christ, upon his resurrection from the dead, was ordered to be spoke unto all nations, Mt 28:19 or this may respect the different language spoken by the converted Gentiles, when the Gospel should come with power to them; who should speak, as all converted persons do, a different language than they spake before; instead of swearing and cursing, lying, filthy, and frothy speaking, now they speak the language of repentance towards God, confessing their sins, and praying for the pardon of them; the language of faith in Christ, first in a more weak and feeble manner, then with more strength and assurance, believing their interest in him, and in the everlasting love of God, and the covenant of grace; the language of love to Christ, his people, truths, and ordinances; a soul abasing, Christ exalting, and free grace magnifying language; the language of praise and gratitude for mercies received, temporal and spiritual; and especially for Christ, and grace and glory by him: they then speak the language of gracious experience to one another; and in the language of the Scriptures, in the taught words of the Holy Ghost; and, in common conversation, their language is pure, and free from that corruption and vitiosity it was before tainted with: this arises from pureness of heart; from a rich experience of the grace of God; from the teachings of the Spirit of God; and which betrays a man, and shows that he has been with Jesus; this is the language of Canaan, Isa 19:18:

that they may all call upon the name of the Lord; which sometimes takes in the whole worship and service of God; but, since that is later expressed, it rather intends, in particular, prayer to God; for which men are fitted and qualified, by having a pure language turned to them; or through the Gospel coming with power on them; and by virtue of efficacious grace converting them, and causing them to speak differently from what they did before; and then it is their voice is heard in prayer to God; and which is delightful and pleasant to him, **Ac 9:11** and this is the case of "all" such that have this pure language; there is not a prayerless soul among them: it follows,

to serve him with one consent; or, "with one shoulder" {i}; the allusion is, either to bearers of burdens, that join together in carrying any burden, who put shoulder to shoulder as they carry it; or else to oxen drawing in a yoke, who are yoked together shoulder by shoulder; hence the Septuagint version renders it "under one yoke": in which it is followed by the Syriac and Arabic versions. The phrase signifies, that the Gentiles having the Gospel brought to them, and they called by it, and all speaking the same language, should join in fellowship with one another, and sing the praises of God together; agree in prayer to ask of God the same things; stand fast in the faith of the Gospel, and strive for it, being of the same mind; meet constantly together to carry on the several branches of religious worship, and promote the Redeemer's interest; all drawing the same way, like a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots; having one heart, and one way given them to fear the Lord; and so, with one mind and one mouth, glorify God; so Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it with one heart and one mind. This passage is applied to the times of the Messiah by the Jews, ancient and modern {k}.

{h} hrwrb hpv "labium electum", Pagninus, Drusius. {i} dxa Mkv "humero uno", V. L. Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {k} Zohar in Gen. fol. 74. 1. Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 11. sect. 5. Aben Ezra in Psal. cxlix. 7.

Zephaniah 3:10

Ver. 10. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,.... Either the African Ethiopia, or Arabia Chusea, which lay between Judea and Egypt: here some particular places and people are mentioned, in whom the preceding prophecy would be fulfilled. If these rivers of Ethiopia are such as ran in the midst of the country, and so point at some parts of it, though on the other side of them, then this prophecy might have its accomplishment, at least when the Evangelist Matthew went thither, and preached the Gospel, and very likely the Apostle Paul; as also when the Ethiopian eunuch was converted, who doubtless did what in him lay to promote the interest of Christ in those parts. Ben Melech makes this parallel with and illustrates it by Isa 18:1, See Gill on "Isa 18:1", See Gill on "Isa 18:7"; but if these design rivers on the furthermost borders of the country, which divided it from others, then Egypt, which lay beyond it, seems to be intended; and so the prophecy, in connection with the foregoing verse **Zep 3:9**, is the same with Isa 19:18 "in that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan"; of these rivers of Ethiopia, whether in Africa or Arabia Chusea, See Gill on "Isa 18:1". The Targum renders it

"beyond the rivers of India:"

my suppliants, [even] the daughter of my dispersed: Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Abarbinel, and Ben Melech, take the words "Atharai Bathpusai" to be the proper name of a nation or family beyond the rivers of Ethiopia {l}; whereas they are characters which describe persons there, who should have the pure language turned to them, and call on the name of the Lord; even such, who, being made sensible of sin, and of their danger, would be humble supplicants at the throne of grace, and pray to the Lord for the discovery and application of pardoning grace and mercy to them, agreeably to the prophecy in Ps 68:31 "princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God"; that is, in prayer: and these are the sons and daughters of the Almighty, who are scattered abroad in the several parts of the world, and among the rest here; but as they are gathered together by Christ in redemption, so they are found out and reached by efficacious grace in calling, whether Jews or Gentiles. Some think the Jews are here meant, even the elect of God among them, who were dispersed in several nations, and particularly in Egypt and Ethiopia; who were met with by the Gospel, and converted in the first times of it; to these Peter and James direct their epistles: and of whom, being called by grace, it is said, they

shall bring mine offering; themselves as an offering to the Lord, souls and bodies, with all other spiritual sacrifices of prayer, praise, and well doing; and likewise such persons they may be the instruments of the conversion of, called the offering of the Gentiles, Ro 15:16.

{1} So Menasseh ben Israel. Spes Israelis, p. 57.

Zephaniah 3:11

Ver. 11. In that day shall thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me,.... Because these shall not be continued in, but repented of, and forsaken; and, besides, shall be forgiven, blotted out, covered, and remembered no more; so that they shall not be charged with them, condemned for them, or be confounded before God, angels, and men, on account of them; not but that shame always arises from a true sense of sin; and the more, as it is beheld in the glass of pardoning love, which is a branch of true evangelical repentance, at least a fruit and evidence of it, Eze 16:63 but then such are not ashamed to appear before God; but can with a holy confidence stand in his sight, their sins being pardoned, and their persons justified. This respects the Christian church or churches in Judea, the few that believed in Christ, called in a following verse the remnant of Israel **Zep 3:13**, at the time when the generality of the people of the Jews rejected the Messiah, and their city and temple were destroyed, and the Lord turned the pure language of the Gospel to the Gentiles:

for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride; the Scribes and Pharisees, and those that adhered to them of the Jewish nation, who rejoiced in those things which that people generally prided themselves in and boasted of; their descent from Abraham; their observance of the rites and ceremonies of the law, and the traditions of their elders, and their external legal righteousness; and they rejoiced in their boastings of these things, which rejoicing was evil; and they, in the pride of their hearts, despised Christ and his righteousness, his Gospel, ordinances, and people, which were the things in which they transgressed against the Lord, and for which they were taken away by the sword, famine, and pestilence, at the destruction of Jerusalem: this is further explained by the next clause:

and thou shall no more be haughty because of mine holy mountain: the temple; or, "in" {m} it; since it should now be destroyed: the Jews gloried in the temple, and behaved proudly and haughtily on the account of it; reckoned themselves secure, because of that; and trusted and gloried in the sacrifices there offered up, and the services there performed; see **Jer 7:4**.

{m} yvdq rhb "in monte sancto meo", V. L. Vatablus, Cocceius; "in monte sanctitatis meae", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Calvin, Burkius.

Zephaniah 3:12

Ver. 12. I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people,.... Of a character just the reverse of the proud and haughty, that should be removed from Jerusalem and Judea by death or captivity; these are they that should be preserved from the general calamity, as the Christians were, and were left in the church of God: these were an "afflicted" people, as the Lord's people in all ages are afflicted with a body of sin; with the temptations of Satan; with the hidings of God's face; with bodily infirmities, and with the reproaches and persecutions of men; the first Christians, both among Jews and Gentiles, justly bore this character, especially with respect to the last article: and they were also "poor", for the most part the poor of this world, being stripped of their worldly enjoyments for the sake of Christ; but especially poor in spirit, broken hearted, contrite, lowly ones; that had a mean opinion of themselves, modest, meek, and humble; sensible of their spiritual poverty, and seeking after the true riches of grace and glory. The

Targum renders it,

"a meek people, and receiving injuries;"

quietly and patiently:

and they shall trust in the name of the Lord; not in men, but in the Lord; not in descent from men, from the patriarchs, as the Jews were wont to do; not in Moses, as they, in his law, and obedience to it; not in any creature or creature enjoyment; not in wealth and riches: nor in their own hearts, or in their own righteousness; but in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; in his person for acceptance with God; in his righteousness for justification; in his blood for pardon and cleansing; in his sacrifice for atonement; in his fulness for supplies of grace; in his power and strength for protection and preservation; and in his obedience, sufferings, and death, for salvation and eternal life. This trust signifies, according to the sense of the word {n}, a betaking of themselves to Christ as a refuge; a hiding themselves under the shadow of his wings; under his person, blood, and righteousness, where they are covered and sheltered from the avenging justice of God; from the curses of the law, and wrath to come: it is a committing themselves into the hands of Christ; a leaning and staying upon him, expecting grace and glory from him; trusting him with all they have, and for all they want in time and eternity: and this the chosen, redeemed, and called ones, "shall do"; for, through the efficacious grace of God, faith is given to them, and wrought in them; and this is drawn forth into act and exercise by the same grace, and is continued in them, and shall never fail, through the powerful intercession of Christ for them; they shall believe, and go on believing, to the saving of their souls.

{n} wox "se recipient", Junius & Tremellius, Drusius, Burkius; "confugient", Cocceius.

Zephaniah 3:13

Ver. 13. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity,.... This is the remnant, according to the election of grace, the few the Lord reserved for himself, left in the land, and in his church, for his own glory; who, being truly convinced of sin, and brought to believe in Christ, should leave and forsake their former course of sinning; not that they should be without sin, or none be committed by them; but should not live in it, and be workers of it; make a trade of sinning, and continue therein; or should not commit the sin against the Holy Ghost, as great numbers of the Jews did, in rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, against clear evidence, and the light of their own consciences:

nor speak lies; in common talk and conversation; which a child of God, a true believer in Christ, a real Christian, should not and dare not do, Isa 63:8 or doctrinal lies, lies in hypocrisy; such doctrines as are not of the truth of the Gospel, but contrary to it; such as the doctrine of justification by works; atonement by ceremonial sacrifices; acceptance with God, through the merits of their fathers; and keeping the traditions of the elders; and other Jewish lies and fables of the same stamp; but rejected by those who have embraced the truth, as it is in Jesus:

neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth; having clean hearts created and right spirits renewed in them; being Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile, and true followers of Jesus, in whom nothing of this kind could be found:

for they shall feed, like a flock of sheep, to which they may be compared for their innocence and harmlessness, meekness and patience; feed in the fat pastures of the word and ordinances of Christ, under the care and guidance of him the good Shepherd; and so go in and out, and find pasture, food, and fulness of it, in him, his flesh, and blood; in his precious truths, and Gospel provisions made in his house:

and lie down; in green pastures of ordinances, beside the still waters of everlasting love and divine grace, and in the good fold of the church; all which is a reason why they do not and cannot sin as others do; nor tell lies, and be guilty of deceit and falsehood; for they are better taught; and the grace of God, in giving them spiritual food and rest, influences and engages them to such a conduct and behaviour: or, "therefore they shall feed" {o}, &c. being truly gracious and sincere souls, who cannot indulge themselves in sin, nor act a false and deceitful part:

and none shall make [them] afraid; of feeding in those pastures, and lying down in those folds; or shall deter them from an attendance on the word and ordinances; or joining in fellowship with the churches of Christ therein; neither Satan, the roaring lion, nor false teachers, and persecuting tyrants, those grievous wolves, and cruel bears; or so frighten them, that in their fright they shall tell lies, and use deceit.

{o} yk "ideo", Grotius.

Zephaniah 3:14

Ver. 14. Sing, O daughter of Zion,.... The congregation of Zion, as the Targum; the church of Christ in Gospel times, which has great reason to sing and rejoice, because of the coming of Christ, redemption by him, and all other benefits and blessings of grace; because of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, and the numbers of souls converted, both among Jews and Gentiles; especially the church in the latter day is here called upon to sing for joy, when the Jews will be converted; to which these words and what follow relate:

shout, O Israel; the ten tribes, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; which shall now return, and all Israel shall be saved, Ro 11:26 and therefore just cause of shouting, and of keeping a jubilee on that account:

be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem; the metropolis of the two tribes; for now the children of Israel and of Judah shall be together, and seek the Lord their God, and the true Messiah, and find him; and shall embrace him, profess and serve him; which will be matter of great joy; and this will be sincere and hearty, and devoid of all hypocrisy. Several terms are used, describing the people of the Jews, to comprehend them all; and several words to express their joy, in order to set forth the greatness of it, as their happy case would require; as follows:

Zephaniah 3:15

Ver. 15. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments,.... Both outward and inward; not only exile, poverty, contempt and reproach among the nations of the earth; but hardness of heart, blindness of mind, impenitence and unbelief, to which the Jews are now given up, in a judicial way; but at this time these shall be removed, through the goodness of God unto them, and the power of divine grace upon them: they will be brought to a sense of sin, and an acknowledgment of it; their iniquities will be pardoned; and, the cause being removed, the effects will cease; and all calamities, corrections and punishment, will end; and they will be put into the possession of their own land, and enjoy all the privileges of the church of God; and so will have just reason to sing, shout, and rejoice:

he hath cast out thine enemy; that is, the Lord has removed the enemy that was in possession of their land, and so made way, and prepared it for them; he has swept him away, as the word {p} signifies, with great force, with much ease, and like so much dirt and filth; he stood in their way, nor could they have easily removed him; but the Lord did it, or will do it; though it may be by instruments, by means of the Christian princes. This is to be understood of the eastern antichrist, the Turk, now in possession of the land of Israel {o}; but shall be obliged to depart from it, when this prophecy shall take place, for a reason following:

the King of Israel, [even] the Lord, [is] in the midst of thee; that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Messiah; one of whose titles is the King of Israel, of the spiritual Israel, King of saints, both Jews and Gentiles; in whose hearts he rules by his Spirit and grace; and to this passage the Jews in Christ's time seem to have respect, allowing this to be the character of the Messiah, Mt 27:42 and also Nathanael, **Joh 1:49** now at this time Christ will be in the midst of the converted Jews, by his spiritual and gracious presence, as their King, to reign over them, to whom they will be subject; and to protect and defend them, and deliver them out of the hands of all their enemies; and so he is in all his churches, and will be to the end of the world:

thou shalt not see evil any more; the evil of affliction or punishment; the evil of captivity, disgrace, and contempt. This shows that this prophecy does not respect the Babylonish captivity, and deliverance from that; for, since that time, they have seen evil by Antiochus Epiphanes, in the times of the Maccabees; and by the Romans; and have had a large and long experience of it; but when they are converted, and returned to their own land in the latter day, all their afflictions and troubles will be at an end, they will know them no more. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "thou shalt not fear evil any more". So the Targum,

"thou shalt not be afraid from before evil any more."

In the same sense Aben Ezra understands it, "thou shalt not be afraid of the enemy any more;"

taking the word to come from another root {q}.

{o} Written about 1750. Editor. {p} hnp "everrit", Drusius; so Ben Melech; see Gen. xxiv. 31. "evacuerit", Cocceius. {q} A ary "timuit", so V. L. "non timebis", Pagninus, Piscator; "fore ut non timeas", Junius & Tremellius; "hinc non erit quod timeas amplius quicquam mali", Burkius.

Zephaniah 3:16

Ver. 16. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, fear thou not,.... Do not be afraid of any enemies; neither outward ones, the armies of Gog and Magog, the Turk, who will threaten, and will attempt to dispossess them of their land, now returned to it; nor inward and spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, death, and hell, being all vanquished and subdued by Christ: this will be said, not by the enemies themselves, who will confess they have no power to stand before the mighty God, as Aben Ezra; but either by the prophets of the Lord, or by the people themselves, encouraging one another, every man his neighbour, as Kimchi; or rather by the Lord himself, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions supply it,

"the Lord shall say to Jerusalem;"

this will be said at the time of the Jews' conversion, when reinstated in their own land, and shall be threatened with another remove from it, which they will have no reason to fear:

[and to] Zion, Let not thine hands be slack; weak, remiss, hang down through fear of mind, and fainting of spirit; and so unfit to meet the enemy, or perform duty; but, on the contrary, pluck up a good heart, be of good courage, fear not the enemy, be vigorous, active, and diligent, in the performance of the service of the Lord, animated by the following considerations:

Zephaniah 3:17

Ver. 17. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee [is] mighty,.... Every word carries in it something very encouraging to the church and people of God; and is an antidote against those fears and faintings they are subject to; Christ "is in the midst of" them; near at hand to support and supply them, to assist and strengthen them, to protect and defend them; he is not only near by his essential presence, which is everywhere; and by his providential presence, which is concerned with all his creatures; but by his gracious presence, peculiar to his church and people; and which gives them unspeakable joy, and is a sufficient security from all fears and dismayings; see Isa 41:10 and he, who is in the midst of them, is the Lord, Jehovah, the Being of beings, eternal, immutable, and all sufficient, possessed of all divine perfections; and their "God", God in their nature, "Immanuel", God with us; and who is "mighty", the Almighty God, the mighty Mediator, who has all power in heaven and earth; and, as man, the man of God's right hand, made strong for himself, and so able to save his people to the uttermost; to deliver them out of the hands of every enemy; to raise up his interest when ever so low, and to maintain and support it; to help and assist his people in every duty and service he calls them to:

he will save; he is as willing to save as he is able; he readily undertook in counsel and covenant to save the chosen ones; he came in the fulness of time to seek and to save that which was lost; he has wrought out salvation for them, and sees that it is applied unto them, and will come again to put them into the full possession of it: he saves them freely, fully, and everlastingly; he saves them from sin, Satan, the law, hell and wrath, and every spiritual enemy; nor has the church of Christ anything to fear from any temporal enemy; the converted Jews will have no reason to fear the Turk that will come against them with a vast army; for Christ, who will be in the midst of them, and at the head of them, will save them from him; to which salvation this passage has chiefly a respect;

he will rejoice over thee with joy; with exceeding great joy, not to be conceived of, or expressed; as a bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride: this will be the time of the open marriage of the Lamb with the Jewish church; and there will be strong expressions of joy on this occasion; Christ will rejoice over them to do them good; and there will be such singular instances of his goodness to them as will abundantly show the joy he will have in them:

he will rest in his love; continue in his love, without any variation or change; nothing shall separate from it; it shall always remain the same; he will take up his contentment and satisfaction in it; he will solace himself with it; it will be a pleasing thing to him to love his people, and to show it to them; he will take the utmost complacency and delight in expressing his love by words and deeds unto them: or, as some render it, "he will be silent because of his love" {r}; and not upbraid them with their sins; or reprove, correct, and chastise them in his hot displeasure; or say one word in a way of vindictive wrath: and he "will make" all others "silent"; every enemy, or whatever is contrary to them; such is his great love to them {s}; he will forgive their iniquities, and cover their sins, and in love to them cast them behind his back: or, "will be dumb" {t}; and not speak; as sometimes persons, when their affections are strong, and their hearts are filled with love at the sight of one they bear a great regard unto, are not able to speak a word. The phrase expresses the greatness of Christ's love to his people; the strength, fulness, and continuance of it: words seem to be wanted, and more are added:

he will joy over thee with singing; there is a pleonasm of joy in Christ's heart towards his people, and so a redundancy in his expression of it; he rejoices with joy, and joys with singing; which shows how delighted he is with his people, as they are his chosen, redeemed, and called ones; as they have his own righteousness upon them, and his own grace in them; they are his "Hephzibah", in whom he delights; his "Beulah", to whom he is married; and it is his love of complacency and delight, which is the source of all the grace and glory he bestows upon them; see Isa 62:3.

{r} wtbhab vyrxy "silebit", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Calvin; so Ben Melech; "tacebit", Munster, Cocceius. {s} So Burkius. {t} "Obmutescet", so some in Drusius.

Zephaniah 3:18

Ver. 18. I will gather [them that are] sorrowful for the solemn assembly,.... Who are grieved and troubled, because they cannot meet at the time and place of religious worship, or attend the word and ordinances of the Lord; either through distance of place, or infirmity of body; or through the menaces and persecutions of men: and to be prevented the use of the means of grace, upon any account, is a great concern of mind to truly gracious souls: or who are filled with grief and sorrow "for the appointed time" {u}; for the time of the Jews' deliverance from their present exile, and return to their own land, which seems to be delayed, and thought long; and so it may seem to some of them in distant parts, after they are converted; and for whose encouragement this is said, that the Lord will in his own due time and way gather such out of all places where they are, into his church, and among his people, to join with them in religious worship, and partake of all the ordinances and privileges of his house; and also gather them into their own land, and comfortably settle them there:

[who] are of thee; belong to the church of Christ; or however have a right to, and meetness for, a place in it; are her true and genuine children, being born again; and which appears by the taste they have for, and their desire after, the word and ordinances:

[to whom] the reproach of it [was] a burden; it being grievous and burdensome to them to hear the enemy reproach them with their exile and dispersion; with their distance from the place of worship, and their want of opportunity of attending to it: this was intolerable, a burden too heavy for them; it was like a sword in their bones, when they were asked, where is your God? and where are the ordinances of divine worship? and when will it ever be that you will attend them? see Ps 42:1.

{u} dewmm "propter tempus, [sub.] diuturnum exsilii", Vatablus; "ex tempore statuto [judiciorum poenarumque]", Burkius.

Zephaniah 3:19

Ver. 19. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee,.... Or, "I will do" {w}; their business for them; "slay" them, as the Vulgate Latin version; and make an entire destruction of them, as the Targum; bring them to utter ruin. This must be understood of antichrist, both eastern and western, the Turk and Pope, and all the antichristian states that have afflicted the Jews, or shall attempt to distress them at the time of their conversion; and will be fulfilled at the time of the pouring out of the seven vials of God's wrath upon them, which will issue in the entire undoing and ruin of them, especially the seventh and last of them; which, when poured out, will clear the world of all the enemies of Christ, his church and people; and because this will be a wonderful event, and of great moment and importance, hence the word "behold" is prefixed to it, as exciting attention, as well as a note of admiration and asseveration: "and I will save her that halteth", that has sinned, and is weak in faith, and cannot walk, at least but haltingly; which is like a lame and maimed sheep, of which there is danger of its being left behind and lost; but the Lord here promises he will take care of such, and save them from all their sins, and out of the hands of all their enemies; and bring them through all difficulties and discouragements into his church, and to their own land; they shall none of them be lost, even the meanest and weakest of them, any more than the healthful and strong:

and gather her that was driven out; even everyone that was scattered abroad in each of the nations of the world; See Gill on "Mic 4:6" see Gill on "Mic 4:7":

and I will get them praise and fame in every land, where they have been put to shame; being converted, they shall be spoke well of everywhere; they shall be praised for their ingenuous acknowledgment of their sins; for their sincere repentance of them; and for their faith in Christ, and for their ready submission to his Gospel and ordinances; and the fame of their conversion shall be spread everywhere; and they shall be in great credit and esteem in all Christian countries, where their name has been used for a taunt and a proverb; and so, "instead of their shame", as R. Moses interprets it, they shall have glory and honour in all places.

{w} hvwe "agam", Tigurine version; "conficiam", Castalio; "ego conficiens", Calvin; "ego faciens, [vel] facio", Burkius.

Zephaniah 3:20

Ver. 20. At that time I will bring you [again], even in the time that I gather you,.... That is, at the time that the Lord will gather them in the effectual calling to himself and to his church, he will return them to their own land; and, as soon as the Jews are converted, they will not only be gathered into Christian churches, but will be gathered together in one body, and appoint themselves one head; and will go up out of each of the lands wherein they have been dispersed, and enter into their own land, and possess it; at the same time they are made partakers of the grace of God, they will enjoy all their civil privileges and liberties; see **Ho 1:11**:

for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth; this is repeated from the preceding verse **Zep 3:19**, for the confirmation of it; and in connection with the following clause, to show when it will be:

when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord; or "captivities" {x}; meaning not the several captivities of the kings of Judah in Babylon, as of Manasseh, Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah; but the two fold captivity of this people, literal and spiritual; their present outward exile from their own land, captivity and dispersion among the nations; and their spiritual captivity or bondage, to sin, Satan, the law, and the traditions of their elders; from both which they will be delivered at one and the same time; and which will be notorious and manifest; what their eyes will see with pleasure and admiration; and which may he depended upon will be done, since the Lord has said it, whose purposes, promises, and prophecies, never fail of their accomplishment: he is God omniscient and knows with certainty what will be done; he is God omnipotent, and can and will do whatever he has determined, promised, or said should be done.

{x} Mkytwbv ta "captivitates vestras", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Drusius.

Haggai 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO HAGGAI

This part of sacred Scripture is in some Hebrew copies called "Sepher Haggai", the Book, of Haggai; in the Vulgate Latin version, the Prophecy of Haggai; and, in the Syriac and Arabic versions, the Prophecy of the Prophet Haggai. His name comes from a word {a} which signifies to keep a feast; and, according to Jerom {b}, signifies festival or merry; according to Hillerus {c}, the feasts of the Lord; and, according to Cocceius {d}, my feasts: and the issue of his prophecy answered to his name; by which the people were encouraged to build the temple, whereby the feasts of the Lord were restored and observed; and a particular feast appointed for the dedication of the temple. The notion entertained by some, that he was not a man, but an angel, founded on **Hag 1:13**, deserves no regard; since the character there given of him respects not his nature, but his office. Indeed no account is given of his parentage; very probably he was born in Babylon; and, according to Pseudo-Epiphanius {e} and Isidore {f}, he came from thence a youth to Jerusalem, at the return of the Jews from their captivity. The time of his prophecy is fixed in **Hag 1:1** to the second year of Darius, that is, Hystaspis; which, according to Bishop Usher, was in A. M. 3485 or 519 B.C.; and in the sixty fifth Olympiad; about 520 B.C.; and about seventeen or eighteen years after the proclamation of Cyrus for the Jews to return to their own land. Jerom says this was in the twenty seventh year of Tarquinius Superbus, the last of the Roman kings. Haggai was the first of the three prophets, that prophesied after their return; and all his prophecies were within the space of four months, and have their dates variously put to them. Of the authority of this prophecy of Haggai there is no room to question; not only because of the internal evidence of it, but from the testimony of Ezra, **Ezr 4:24** and from a quotation out of **Hag 2:7**, by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, Heb 12:26. The general design of this book is to reprove the Jews for their negligence in building the temple, after they had liberty granted them by Cyrus to do it, and to encourage them in this work; which he does by the promise of the Messiah, who should come into it, and give it a greater glory than the first temple had. The name of this prophet is wrongly prefixed, with others, to several of the psalms, especially those, called the Hallelujah psalms, in the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, as Ps 112:1. Where he died is not certain; very probably in Jerusalem; where, according to Pseudo-Epiphanius and Isidore {g}, he was buried, by the monuments of the priests; but, according to the Cippi Hebraici {h}, he was buried in a large cave, in the declivity of the mount of Olives.

{a} ggx "festum celebravit", Buxtorf. {b} Comment. in c. i. 1. So Stockius, p. 306. {c} Onomast. Sacr. p. 262, 779. {d} Comment. in c. i. 1. {e} De Prophet. Vita & Interitu, c. 20. {f} De Vita & Morte Sanct. c. 49. {g} Ut supra. (De Vita & Morte Sanct. c. 49.) {h} Ed. Hottinger, p. 27.

INTRODUCTION TO HAGGAI 1

This chapter contains the first sermon of the Prophet Haggai to the people of the Jews, directed to Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest;

the date of which is fixed, **Hag 1:1**. It begins with a charge against that people; saying the time to build the house of the Lord was not come, **Hag 1:2** which is refuted by the prophet; arguing, that, if the time to panel their dwelling houses was come, then much more the time to build the Lord's house, **Hag 1:3**. They are urged to consider how unsuccessful they had been in their civil employments and labours, which was owing to their neglect of building the temple; wherefore, if they consulted their own good, and the glory of God, the best way was to set about it in all haste, and with diligence, **Hag 1:5** yea, even the famine, which they had been afflicted with for some time, and which affected both man and beast, sprung from the same cause, **Hag 1:10**. This discourse had such an effect upon the governor, high priest, and people, that they immediately rose up, and went about the work they were exhorted to; upon which the prophet, by a special message from the Lord, promises his presence with them, **Hag 1:12**.

Ver. 1. In the second year of Darius the King,.... That is, of Persia; he is spoken of as if he was the only king in the world; and indeed he was the then greatest king in it; and therefore is emphatically called "the king". This was not Darius the Mede, as Genebrard; who was contemporary with Cyrus, and partner in the kingdom; nor Darius Nothus, as Scaliger, and those that follow him; since the second year of this Darius was, according to Cocceius, who follows this opinion, one hundred and thirty eight years after the first edict of Cyrus; and so Zerubbabel and Joshua must exercise their office, the one of governor, the other of high priest, such a term of years, and more, which is not credible; and some of the Jews in captivity must have lived upwards of two hundred years; even those who saw the temple in its first glory, before the captivity, and now behold it in Haggai's time, in a very different condition, **Hag 2:3**. It seems therefore more probable, according to Josephus {i}, and others, that this was Darius Hystaspis, who was chosen king by the nobles of Persia, upon his horse's neighing first as Herodotus {k} relates: the second year of his reign was about seventeen or eighteen years after the proclamation of Cyrus; during whose reign, he being much engaged in affairs abroad, and the reign of his successor Cambyses, the enemies of the Jews, encouraged by the latter, greatly obstructed the building of the temple, and discouraged them from going on with it; but when this king came to the throne, things took another turn, being favoured by him; for Josephus {l} relates, that, when a private person, he vowed, if ever he became king, whatever of the holy vessels were in Babylon, he would send to the temple at Jerusalem; and upon solicitations made to him, the Jews were encouraged to go on with the building of it:

in the sixth month; the month Elul, answering, to part of August, and part of September; which was the sixth, reckoning from the month Nisan:

in the first day of the month; which was the feast of the new moon:

came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet; or, "by the hand of Haggai" {m}; by his means; he was the instrument by whom the Lord delivered his word; the word was not the prophet's, but the Lord's; and this is observed, to give weight and authority to it:

unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel: the same who is called Salathiel, **Mt 1:12** according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, he was the grandson of Salathiel; though rather Salathiel seems to be his uncle, he being the son of Pedaiah his brother, **1Ch 3:17** however, he was his heir and successor in the government, and so called his son; See Gill on "Mt 1:12":

governor of Judah; not king; for the country was under the dominion of the king of Persia, and Zerubbabel was a deputy governor under him; so the apocryphal Ezra calls him governor of Judea,

"And also he commanded that Sisinnes the governor of Syria and Phenice, and Sathrabuzanes, and their companions, and those which were appointed rulers in Syria and Phenice, should be careful not to meddle with the place, but suffer Zorobabel, the servant of the Lord, and governor of Judea, and the elders of the Jews, to build the house of the Lord in that place." (1 Esdras 6:27)

and, according to Josephus {n}, he was made governor of the captive Jews, when in Babylon, being in great favour with the king of Babylon; and, with two more, were his body guards; and he was continued governor by the Persians, when the Jews returned to their land:

and to Joshua the son of Josedech the high priest; who is called Jeshua, and his father Jozadak, **Ezr 3:2** his father was carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar, **1Ch 6:15** now, to these two principal persons in the commonwealth of Judea was the word of the Lord sent by the prophet; the one having the chief power in civil things, and the other in things ecclesiastical; and both had an influence upon the people; but very probably were dilatory in the work of building the temple; and therefore have a message sent to them, to stir them up to this service:

saying: as follows:

{i} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 3. sect. 1. and c. 4. sect. 5, 7. {k} Thalia, sive l. 3. c. 84, 85, 86. {l} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 11. c. 3. sect. 1. and c. 4. sect. 5, 7.) {m} ygx dyb "in manu Aggaei", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius. {n} Ut supra. (Antiqu. l. 11. c. 3. sect. 1. and c. 4. sect. 5, 7.)

Haggai 1:2

Ver. 2. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts,.... Of armies above and below; whom all ought to reverence, honour, and obey; who was able to support his people in building his house, and protect them from their enemies, which should have been an encouragement to them; and to punish them for their neglect of it, which might have deterred them from it. This preface is made, to show that what follow were not the words of the prophet, but of the Lord; and therefore to be the more regarded, and the truth of them not to be doubted of:

saying, This people say; repeating the words of the people of the Jews to Zerubbabel and Joshua, that they might observe them, and the wickedness and ingratitude in them. "This people", lately brought out of the captivity of Babylon, and loaded with various blessings and benefits; and not a few of them, but the generality of them, the body of them, expressed themselves after this manner, when pressed to build the temple:

The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built; suggesting that the seventy years of Jerusalem and the temple lying in ruins, reckoning from the destruction of them in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, were not yet fulfilled; or rather intimating that it was not the time in Providence, since they had been forbid and hindered in former reigns from going on with the work; or, since it had been a time of famine and distress with them, it was not a time fit and convenient to carry on such a service; and though they did not lay aside all thoughts of it, yet they judged it right and proper to defer it to a more convenient time, when they were better settled, and in a better capacity to engage in it.

Haggai 1:3

Ver. 3. Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet,.... This is a second prophecy, distinct from the former; that was delivered to the two governors, setting forth the sentiments and language of the people concerning the building of the temple, which was left with them to consider how just it was; but this is sent to the people themselves, expostulating with them about the folly and ingratitude of it:

saying; as follows:

Haggai 1:4

Ver. 4. [Is it] time for you, O ye, to dwell in your panelled houses,.... They could not only find time, leisure, and convenience to build houses to dwell in; but to wainscot them, and line them with boards of cedar, as the Targum; as bad as the times were complained of; and could sit in them, indulging themselves in luxury, ease, and sloth; and why then was it not a fit and convenient time as well to build the house of the Lord in?

and this house [lie] waste? or, "and shall this house lie waste?" or, "when this house lies waste?" {o} not indeed in its rubbish and ruins, as it was demolished by the Chaldeans, and left; but with a bare foundation, laid some years ago; and ever since neglected; the superstructure not carried on, and much less built up to be fit for service; and therefore might be said with propriety to lie waste and desolate, being unfinished, unfit for use, and no regard had unto it. David was of another mind, **2Sa 7:2** and truly religious persons will be more concerned for the house of God than for their own houses.

{o} brx hzh tybhw "et domus ista deserta manebit?" Drusius; "quum domus haec vasta est?" Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "dum domus haec desolata est?" Cocceius.

Haggai 1:5

Ver. 5. Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... The Lord God omniscient and omnipotent, that saw all their actions, and could punish for them; since they were so careful of their own houses, and adorning them, and so careless of his house; he would have them now sit down, and seriously think of these things, and of what he should further observe unto them:

Consider your ways; their sinful ways, and repent of them, and forsake them, particularly their ingratitude before observed; and their civil ways, their common ways of life; their labour, work, and business, they were continually employed in; and observe the event of them; what success they had, what these issued in; whether there were not some visible tokens of the divine displeasure on them, which rendered all their attempts to support and enrich themselves and families vain, and of no effect: and they would do well to consider to what all this was to be imputed; whether it was not chiefly owing to this, their neglect of the house of God; and this he would have considered, not in a slight cursory way; but with great earnestness, diligence, and application of mind: "put", or "set your hearts upon your ways" {p}; so it may be literally rendered.

{p} Mkbbl wmyv "ponite corda vestra", V. L.; "ponite cor vestrum", Burkius.

Haggai 1:6

Ver. 6. Ye have sown much, and bring in little,.... Contrary to what is usually done; the seed that is sown is but little, in, comparison of what springs up, is reaped, and gathered into the barn; which commonly affords seed again to the sower, and bread to the eater; but here much land was tilled, and a great deal of seed was sown in it; but a thin crop was produced, little was gathered into the barn; a blessing being withheld from the earth, and from their labours, because of their sins, which they would do well to think of, and the cause of it:

ye eat, but ye have not enough; what the earth did yield, and which they gathered in, they made food of, and ate of it; yet it was not sufficient to satisfy their hunger; or it was not blessed for their nourishment; or they had a canine appetite in judgment given them, so that they were never satisfied: or, it was "not for fulness" {q}; they were not filled with it to satisfaction, but still craved more; and yet, it may be, durst not eat more, if they had it, lest they should want the next day:

ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; or, "not to inebriation" {r}; it was not sufficient to quench their thirst, much less to make them merry and; cheerful: the vines produced such a small quantity of grapes, and those so little wine, that they had not enough to drink, at least could not drink freely, but sparingly, lest it should be all spent before another vintage came:

ye clothe you, but there is none warm; or, "but" it is "not for heat to him" {s}; to anyone; so rigorous the season, so extreme the cold, that his clothes will not keep him warm, even though the climate was, naturally and usually hot:

and he that earneth wages earneth wages [to put it] into a bag with holes; or, "pierced through" {t}; if a man is hired as a labourer, and gets much wages, and brings it home, and lays it up; or if he trades and merchandises, and has great gains by it, and thinks to amass great riches; yet, what through losses, and the dreariness of provisions, and the many ways he has for the spending of his money, it is as if he put it into a bag full of holes, and it ran through as fast as put into it; signifying hereby that all his pains and labour were in vain.

{q} hebvl "ad satietatem", Calvin, De Dieu; "ad saturitatem", Munster. {r} hrkvl "ad ebrietatem", Tigurine version, Vatablus, Calvin, De Dieu. {s} wl Mxl Nyaw "et non est ad calorem ei", De Dieu; "sed nemo ita ut sit calor ipsi", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ut calefiat ei", Burkius. {t} bwqn "pertusum", V. L. Munster, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "perforatum", Munster, Varenius.

Haggai 1:7

Ver. 7. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways. What they have been; what has been the consequence of them; and to what the above things are to be ascribed. This exhortation is repeated, to impress it the more upon their minds; and to denote the importance of it, and the necessity of such a conduct; See Gill on "Hag 1:5".

Ver. 8. Go up to the mountain,.... Or, "that mountain" {u}; pointing either to Lebanon, to cut down cedars, and bring them from thence for the building of the temple; or Mount Moriah, on which the temple was to be built; and thither carry the wood they fetched from Lebanon, or were brought from thence by the Tyrians:

and bring wood; or, "that ye may bring wood"; from Lebanon, or any other mountain on which wood grew, to Mount Moriah:

and build the house; the temple, whose foundation was already laid, but the superstructure was neglected: now the Lord would have them go on with it immediately, out of hand, with the utmost diligence, alacrity, and vigour; and not desist till the whole building was completed:

and I will take pleasure in it; as a type of Christ, for whose sake he was so desirous of having it built; into which he was to come, and there appear as the promised Saviour. It signifies, moreover, that the Lord would not only take pleasure in the temple built, but in their work in building it; which would be acceptable to him, being according to his mind and will; and that he would take pleasure in, and accept of them, being worshippers therein, when they worshipped him in spirit and in truth in it; and in their services, sacrifices, prayers, and praises, being rightly offered; and that he would forgive their sins, and be propitious to them for his Son's sake, the antitype of the temple:

and I will be glorified, saith the Lord; by his people here, and by the worship and service they should perform: or, "I will show myself glorious" {w}; that is, show his glory, causing his Shechinah to dwell here in glory, as the Targum is. The Jews observe, that the letter h is wanting in the word here used, which numerically signifies "five"; hence they gather that five things were wanting in the second temple, the ark, the Urim and Thummim, the fire from heaven, the Shechinah, or the divine Majesty, and the Holy Ghost.

{u} rhh "in istum montem", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator. {w} dbka "gloriosum me ostendam", Vatablus.

Ver. 9. Ye looked for much, and, lo, [it came] to little,.... They looked for a large harvest, and very promising it was for a while; but in the end it came to little; it was a very small crop, very little was reaped and gathered in: or, "in looking", ye looked "to increase" {x}; your substance; had raised expectations of making themselves and families by their agriculture, and by their plantations of vines and olives, and by their trade and merchandise; and it dwindled away, and came to little or nothing; their riches, instead of being increased, were diminished:

and when ye brought [it] home, I did blow upon it; when they brought into their barns or houses the produce of their land, labour, and merchandise, which was but little, the Lord blew a blast upon that little, and brought rottenness and worms into it, as Jarchi; so that it was not a blessing to them, but a curse. So the Targum interprets it,

"behold, I sent a curse upon it:"

or, "I blew it away" {y}; as any light thing, straw or stubble, or thistle down, are blown away with a wind; so easily can the Lord, and sometimes he does, strip men of that little substance they have; riches by his orders make themselves wings, and flee away; or he, by one providence or another, blows them away like chaff before the wind:

Why? saith the Lord of hosts; what was the cause and reason of this? which question is put, not on his own account, who full well knew it; but for their sakes, to whom he speaks, that they might be made sensible of it; and in order to that to introduce what follows, which is an answer to the question:

because of mine house that [is] waste; which they suffered to lie waste, and did not concern themselves about the rebuilding of it: this the Lord resented, and for this reason blasted all their labours:

and ye run every man unto his own house; were very eager, earnest, and diligent, in building, beautifying, and adorning their own houses; taking care of their own domestic affairs; sparing no cost nor pains to promote their own secular interest; running in all haste to do any thing and everything to increase their worldly substance; but sat still, were idle and slothful, careless and negligent, about the house of God and the affairs of it.

{x} hbrh la "ad rem augendam", Grotius. {y} wb ytxpn "exsufflo illud", Vatablus; "efflo illud", Junius & Tremellius; "difflo", Piscator; "difflavi", Drusius, Cocceius.

Haggai 1:10

Ver. 10. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew,.... Or, "therefore over", or "upon you" {a}; where should be a stop; that is, because, of your neglect of the house of God; therefore upon you, and upon you only, and not upon other nations, the heaven is restrained from letting down the dew: or, "therefore I am against you" {b}; for the above reason, and which the following things show; and sad it is to have God to be an enemy, and against a people! or, "for your sake"; so the Syriac version, to which sense is the Targum,

"therefore for your sins;"

and so Jarchi, "the heaven is stayed from dew"; none descends from it; the Lord, who has the ordering of it, will not suffer it: to have the dew fall upon the earth in the night season is a great blessing; it makes the earth fruitful, revives the corn, plants, and herbs, and causes them to flourish and increase; and to have it restrained is a judgment:

and the earth is stayed [from] her fruit; from bringing forth its increase, which is the consequence of the dew being withheld.

{a} Mkyle Nk-le "propterea super vos", Varenius, Reinbeck, Burkius. {b} "Idcirco contra vos", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Haggai 1:11

Ver. 11. And I called for a drought upon the land,.... Upon the whole land of Judea; as he withheld the dew and rain from falling on it to moisten it, refresh it, and make it fruitful; so he ordered a vehement heat to dry and parch it; and directed the rays of the sun to strike with great force upon it, and cause the fruits of it to wither; and which is done by a word of his; when he calls, every creature obeys. There is an elegant play on words, which shows the justness of such a proceeding, that it was according to the law of retaliation; they suffered the house of God to lie brx, "waste", and therefore he calls for brx, a "wasting" drought, to come upon their land:

and upon the mountains; where herbage grew, and herds of cattle and flocks of sheep were fed; but now the grass through the drought was withered away, and so no pasturage for them, and in course must perish:

and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil; that is, upon the grain fields, and upon the vines and olive trees; so that they produced but very little grain, wine, and oil, and that not very good, and which was not satisfying and refreshing; at least there were not enough for their support and comfort: now these three things were the principal necessaries of life in the country of Judea, and therefore a scarcity of them was very distressing:

and upon [that] which the ground bringeth forth; whatever else not mentioned the earth produced, as figs, pomegranates, and other fruit:

and upon men, and upon cattle; who not only suffered in this drought, by the above said things it came upon; but by diseases it produced upon them, as the pestilence and fever among men, and murrain upon the cattle:

and upon all the labour of the hands: of men; whatsoever fields and gardens, trees and plants of every kind, that were set and cultivated by them. Of this drought, and the famine that came upon it, we nowhere else read; but there is no doubt to be made of it.

Haggai 1:12

Ver. 12. Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech the high priest,.... Here follows an account of the success of Haggai's prophecy; with what power and efficacy the word of the Lord by him was attended; how it at once reached and affected the hearts of princes and people, and brought them to obedience to the will of God. The governor and high priest are mentioned first, as being the principal persons, and who very probably first declared their sense of their former neglect, and their readiness to do as they were directed; which was setting a good example to the people, and doubtless had some influence upon them:

with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God; not the two leading men in church and state only; but all the people that came out of the Babylonish captivity, who were but a remnant; a few that were left through various calamities they had been exposed unto; these, one and all, signified how willing and ready they were to do the work of the Lord enjoined them: or, "they heard the voice of the Lord" {c}; by the prophet, very attentively and seriously; and received and regarded it, not as the word of men, but as the word of God; and determined to act according to it:

and the words of Haggai the prophet; or, "and for the words of Haggai the prophet" {d}; because of them, considering them as coming from the Lord himself:

as the Lord their God had sent him; regarding him as having a mission and commission from the Lord to deliver them to them:

and the people did fear before the Lord; perceiving that he was displeased with them for the neglect of his house; and that this drought upon them was a chastisement and correction for this sin; and fearing lest his wrath should continue, and they should be more severely dealt with, on account of their transgressions.

{c} emvyw "et audivit", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Burkius. {d} ygx yrbd lew "idque propter verba Chaggai", Varenius, Reinbeck.

Haggai 1:13

Ver. 13. Then spoke Haggai the Lord's messenger,.... Which some render "angel"; hence sprung that notion, imbibed by some, that he was not a man, but an angel; whereas this only respects his office, being sent of God as an ambassador in his name with a message to his people: he now observing what effect his prophecy had upon the people; they being convinced of their sin, and terrified with the judgments of God upon them, and fearing that worse still would attend them; in order to revive their spirits and comfort them, spake the words unto them which follow: and this he did

in the Lord's message unto the people; not of his own head, nor out of the pity of his own heart merely; but as a prophet of the Lord, having a fresh message from him to carry a promise to them for their comfort and encouragement:

saying, I [am] with you, saith the Lord; to pardon their sins; to accept their persons; to remove his rod from them; to assist them in the work of building the temple, they were now willing to engage in; to protect them from their enemies, and to strengthen them to go on with the work till they had finished it; a short promise, but a very full one: it was saying much in a little, and enough to remove all their fears, to scatter all their doubts, and to bear them up, and through all discouragements.

Haggai 1:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people,.... He roused them up from that sleep and sloth in which they were before, both the governors and common people; he wrought in them both to will and do; or a willing mind to do his work in building his house; he gave them a spirit both of industry and courage; he enabled them to shake off that sluggish disposition they were attended with, and that fear of men which possessed them; he inspired them with zeal and resolution to enter upon the work at once, and pursue it with close application; the Lord only could do this:

and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God; the governor and high priest came to direct and oversee, encourage and animate the people by their presence and example; and the people to do the several parts of service that belonged to them, according to their genius and employment.

Haggai 1:15

Ver. 15. In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month,.... Or, "in the four and twentieth of the month, in the sixth"; in that sixth month before mentioned, **Hag 1:1**. On this day they came and worked; not the sixth from Tisri, for the Jews had two ways of beginning their years, which would have answered to part of February; and, therefore, chose by some interpreters as being a proper time to begin building; but no regard is had to the fitness of the season, but to the order of the Lord; but the sixth month from Nisan, and answers to part of August; for so the months are reckoned in the prophecy of Zechariah, who began to prophecy the same year as Haggai did; see **Zec 1:1 Zec 7:1** this was three and twenty days after the prophecy was delivered out; during which time they might be employed in cutting of stones, and sawing and hewing of wood, as Jarchi suggests, and preparing for work in the temple:

in the second year of Darius the king; See Gill on "Hag 1:1". Here some begin a new chapter, but wrongly; since, if these words do not belong to the preceding, there would be a contradiction in joining them with the beginning of the next.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Haggai 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO HAGGAI 2

This chapter contains three sermons or prophecies, delivered by the prophet to the people of the Jews. The design of the first is to encourage them to go on with the building of the temple, though it might seem to come greatly short of the former temple, as to its outward form and splendour. The time of the prophecy, **Hag 2:1** an order to deliver it to the governor, high priest, and all the people, **Hag 2:2**. A question is put concerning the difference between this temple and the former; between which it is suggested there was no comparison; which is assented to by silence, **Hag 2:3** nevertheless, the prince, priest, and people, are exhorted to go on strenuously in the work of building; encouraged with a promise of the presence of the Lord of hosts, and of his Word, in whom he covenanted with them at their coming out of Egypt, and of the blessed Spirit, and his continuance with them, **Hag 2:4** and, the more to remove their fears and faintings, it is declared that in a very short time a most wonderful thing should be done in the world, which would affect all the nations of the earth; for that illustrious Person would come, whom all nations do or should desire; and, not only come into the world, but into that temple they were building, and give it a greater glory than the former; yea, a greater glory than if all the gold and silver in the world were laid out upon it, or brought into it; which being all the Lord's, could have been easily done by him; but he would give in it something infinitely greater than that, even the Prince of peace, with all the blessings of it, **Hag 2:6** then follows the second sermon or prophecy, the time of which is observed, **Hag 2:10** and it is introduced with some questions concerning ceremonial uncleanness, by an unclean person's touching holy flesh with the skirt of his garment; and other things, which is confirmed by the answer of the priests, **Hag 2:11** the application of which is made to the people of the Jews, who were alike unclean; they, their works, and their sacrifices, **Hag 2:14** and these are directed to consider, that, during the time they had neglected to build the temple, they were attended with scarcity of provisions; their fields and vineyards being blasted with mildew or destroyed by hail, and their labours proved unsuccessful, **Hag 2:15** but now, since they had begun the work of building, it is promised they should be blessed with everything, though they had nothing in store, and everything was unpromising to them; which is designed to encourage them to go on cheerfully in their begun work, **Hag 2:18** and the chapter is concluded with the last discourse or prophecy, the date of which is given, **Hag 2:20** an instruction to deliver it to Zerubbabel, **Hag 2:21** foretelling the destruction of the kingdoms of the heathen; and the setting up of the kingdom of the Messiah, of whom Zerubbabel was a type, precious and honourable in the sight of God, **Hag 2:22**.

Ver. 1. In the seventh [month],.... The month Tisri, which answers to part of September and part of October:

in the one and twentieth [day] of the month; being a month, wanting three days, from the time the Jews came and worked in the house of the Lord, **Hag 1:14** it was toward the close of the feast of tabernacles: see Le 23:34:

came the word of the Lord by the Prophet Haggai; the word of prophecy, as the Targum: this was from the Lord, not from the prophet himself; he was only the messenger sent with it to deliver it:

saying; to him the prophet, giving him orders as follow:

Ver. 2. Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah,.... Of whom, his descent and dignity, See Gill on "Hag 1:1". The Septuagint version wrongly renders it "of the tribe of Judah"; in which it is followed by the Arabic version; for, though he was of the tribe of Judah, this does not sufficiently distinguish him; nor does it answer to the word here used, which is expressive of his office and dignity. The Vulgate Latin version, Luther, and Castalio, omit the particle an, rendered "now", which is very emphatic. The prophet is ordered to go and say what he is bid, directly, immediately, at once, without any delay; the very day before mentioned, yea, at that very instant or moment, the people being now at work, under the eye of their governor; in order to remove an offence, which might discourage them in their work, taken from the meanness of the building, in comparison of the former temple:

and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people; these, besides the two former, even the whole body of the people, the remnant that were come out of the captivity of Babylon:

saying; to the above persons, as follows:

Ver. 3. Who [is] left among you that saw this house in her first glory?.... Not taken away by death, yet alive, and dwelling among them; and who lived before the destruction of the first temple, built by Solomon; and has seen it in all its magnificence; its grand and noble structure; its stately pillars; its carved work, and decorations of gold. This shows that it was not in the times of Darius Nothus, but of Darius Hystaspis, that Haggai prophesied: those who go the former way make these men to have lived near two hundred years at least, which was greatly beyond the common time of man's life in that age; or consider these words as a mere supposition, that, if there were or had been such persons then living, this building, in comparison of the former, must have appeared mean and contemptible unto them: but the words manifestly imply that there were persons among them then living, who had seen Solomon's temple in all its glory; and who are particularly and personally addressed in the following clauses; and of whom there might be several at this time, going the latter way; for the seventy years' captivity are to be reckoned from the fourth year of Jehoiakim, in which the captivity began, and which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 25:1 but it was not until the nineteenth year of his reign that the temple, was burnt by him, Jer 52:12 and the time of Haggai's prophesying being about seventeen or eighteen years after the proclamation of Cyrus, when the seventy years' captivity ended; this shows that it was scarcely seventy years from the time the temple was destroyed; and therefore it may be reasonably supposed there were several ancient persons living that could remember to have seen it; and it is certain that there were a great number of such living that returned from Babylon, who wept when they saw the foundation of the second temple laid, which was but fifteen years before this, **Ezr 3:12** some of whom, in all probability, were now alive, yea, it is certain there were, to whom the following questions were put:

and how do ye see it now? is not this that is building very different from that? does it promise anything like it? what ideas have you of it? can you conceive in your minds that it will ever rise up to such grandeur and stateliness as the former? what is your judgment, and what your sentiments concerning it? can you think of it with equal delight and pleasure as of the former?

[is it] not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? do not you think that it is not to be mentioned, or once named, in comparison of the former temple? or that a man had as good say nothing at all, as to attempt a comparison of them? or that this building and nothing are alike? and that the one is a nonentity, as well as the other, comparatively speaking, when set in competition with the first temple? and are not you of opinion that the people had as good do nothing, and that in effect they are doing nothing, and all their labour lost, who are working in this house? no answer is returned, nor any waited for: but it is as if the Lord had said, I, who am the omniscient God, the discerner of the thoughts of men, know that these are your sentiments, and these the reasonings of your minds; and but now lest discovering these thoughts of theirs, and speaking out their minds freely as they might, which would tend to discourage the governors and the people in carrying on the work they had engaged in; the Lord by the prophet says to them, as follows:

Ver. 4. Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord,.... Take heart, be of good courage, do not be dismayed at these things; though, the building may be contemptible in the eyes of some, nevertheless go on with it manfully and vigorously; let, none despise the day of small things; for from these low beginnings great things will arise, and glorious things will follow, as hereafter predicted; see **Zec 4:9** attend this, work diligently, desist not from it, continue to preside over it, and encourage the people in it; let not thine heart faint, or thine hands be slack; act the part of man, of a good man, and of a governor:

and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech the high priest; do not be disheartened at what the ancients think and say concerning this temple, in which thou art to officiate as a high priest; and as a type of him who shall come into this house, and so give it a glory the former never had; continue to give the necessary instructions to the builders, that everything may be done in proper order, and to answer their end and use in the service of the priesthood; faint not, nor be discouraged, but act according to thy character, and show thyself worthy of the office with which thou art invested; consider in whose name thou actest?, whose priest thou art, and in whose service thou art employed:

and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord; let not your hearts sink, or spirits fail, at hearing what the more ancient among you say of the difference between this and the former building, which your eyes never saw; do not desist from your work on this account, but go on with it; consider what God has done for you, in bringing you out of captivity, and into your own land, and to the enjoyment of your civil privileges; consider the obligations you lie under to build a house for God; that this is not only a piece of gratitude, and shows a sense of mercies received; but that it is for the glory of God, for your spiritual profit and advantage, and for the use and good of future posterity; quit yourselves therefore like men, and be strong; see **Jos 1:6**:

and work; that is, continue working, for they were at work; but there was danger of their leaving off working, being discouraged at what the ancient people said; and therefore they are exhorted to go on in their work, and go through it, and finish it; for so the word here used signifies, "and do" {e}; that is, the work thoroughly and effectually; or, as others render it, "and perfect" {f} the work begun, and leave it not unfinished. Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, connect this word with the beginning of the following verse, thus, "and do the word, or thing, which I covenanted with you", &c. **Hag 2:5**; that is, observe the law, and do the commandment then given; but very wrongly: nor is it only to be considered as directed to the people, but to the prince and priest also; for they had all work to do in the house of the Lord, as all ranks and degrees of men now have in the church of Christ; of which that house was typical: the prince or civil magistrate, not to prescribe laws and rules to be observed in it, which only belongs to Christ, who is the sole Head, King, and Lawgiver; but to attend the service of it, to protect and defend it, to promote the interest of it, and distribute cheerfully to the maintenance of its ministers, and to the necessities of the poor saints. Priests or ministers of the word are to work; they are to labour in the word and doctrine; in preaching the Gospel; administering ordinances; governing the church; comforting saints; reproving vice, and refuting error: deacons are to do their work, in taking care of the poor, and minding the secular affairs of the church: and all private Christians are to work, to labour in prayer for the good of it; to hear the word, attend on all ordinances, and hold fast the profession of their faith; all which is to be done in the strength and grace of Christ, without dependence on it, or seeking justification and salvation by it; encouraged, as the Jews are here, with the promise of the divine Presence:

for I [am] with you, saith the Lord of hosts; to help in every service, and to protect from all enemies; and this makes the work and service of the Lord's house pleasant and delightful, and secures from all doubts and fears, faintings and misgivings of heart. This is to be understood of God the Father, the Lord of armies above and below; and if he is for and with his people, they have nothing to fear from those that are against them; or to be discouraged in his service. The Targum wrongly interprets this of the Word of the Lord, since he is meant in the next verse **Hag 2:5**.

{e} wvew "et facite", V. L. Munster, Pagninus, Montanus, Burkius. {f} "Perficite", Piscator, Tarnovius, Varenius, Reinbeck.

Haggai **2:5**

Ver. 5. [According to] the Word that I covenanted with you, when ye came out of Egypt,.... Or rather, "with the Word, in or with whom I covenanted" {g}, &c. as some render it; that is, Christ, the essential Word, who was promised to the people of Israel at that time, De 18:15 and in whom all the promises are, and the covenant of grace itself; and which covenant was indeed made with him from eternity, but was made manifest, or more clearly manifest, to the Jewish ancestors, when they came out of Egypt: now it is here promised, for the encouragement of the Jews to go in the work of the Lord in building the temple, that this divine Word should be with them also, to counsel, assist, strengthen, and protect them; even he who went before their fathers in the wilderness in a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night; the Angel of God's presence, that redeemed, saved, and carried them all the days of old; the Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God; and by whom all things were created at first; and who would, as since he has, become flesh, and dwell among them, and appear in this very temple they were now building; and who will be with all his churches, ministers, and people, unto the end of the world:

so my Spirit remaineth among you: or rather, "and", or "also, my Spirit standeth", continueth "in the midst of you" {h}; not only Jehovah the Father, and his divine Logos or Word, were with them; but his Spirit also, his Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Trinity, of which these words are a proof; the same Spirit which was in Moses and others in his time, for the building of the tabernacle, is now promised unto, and should continue with, the builders of this temple; as a Spirit of wisdom and counsel to direct them, and as a Spirit of might and power to strengthen and assist them: and so he is, and will be, in the churches of Christ, and in the midst of his people, to assist the ministers of the word in preaching, the people in hearing, praying, and praising; to carry on his own work in them; to be the Comforter of them, and the seal, earnest, and pledge of their future glory; nor does he, nor ever will he, depart from them; see Isa 59:21:

fear ye not: succeeding in the work, and finishing it; nor be dismayed at what the ancient people had said; nor be afraid of enemies, who did all they could to hinder and discourage them from going on with their work; and indeed there is no reason to fear, let the service be what it will the Lord employs his people in; if he, Father, Son, and Spirit, are with them; see Isa 41:10.

{g} ytrk rva rbdh ta "cum verbo quo pepigeram", Junius & Tremellius; "cum verbo illo quo pepigi", Varenius; approved of by Reinbeck, Append.

Doctrin. de Accent. p. 76, 77. {h} Mkkwtb tdme yxwrw "et Spiritus meus stat in medio vestri", Pagninus, Cocceius; "stana", Montanus; "Spiritus quoque meus stabit in medio vestrum", Vatablus.

Haggai 2:6

Ver. 6. For thus saith the Lord of hosts;.... For the further encouragement of the builders of the temple, they are told, from the Lord of hosts, that in a little time, when such circumstances should meet as are here pointed at, the Messiah should come, and appear in this house, and give it a greater glory than ever Solomon's temple had; for that this passage is to be understood of the Messiah and his times is clear from the apostle's application of it, Heb 12:25 and even the ancient Jews themselves understood it of the Messiah, particularly R. Aquiba {i}, who lived in the times of Bar Cozbi, the false Messiah; though the more modern ones, perceiving how they are embarrassed with it; to support their hypothesis, shift it off from him:

Yet once, it [is] a little while: or, "once more", as the apostle in the above place quotes it; which suggests that the Lord had before done something of the kind, that follows, shaking the heavens, &c. as at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; and would do the same again, and more abundantly in the times of the Gospel, or of the Messiah. Jarchi interprets this of one trouble by the Grecian monarchy after the Persian, which would not last long: his note is,

"yet once, &c. after that this kingdom of Persia that rules over you is ended, yet one shall rise up to rule over you, to distress you, the kingdom of Greece; but its government shall be but a little time;"

and not very foreign from this sense does Bishop Chandler {k} render the words, "after one [kingdom] (the Grecian) it is a little while; (or after that) I will shake all the heavens", &c.; and though it was five hundred years from this prophecy to the incarnation of Christ: yet this was but a little while with God, with whom a thousand years are as one day; and indeed with men it was but a short time, when compared with the first promise of his coming at the beginning of the world; or with the shaking of the earth at the giving of the law, soon after Israel came out of Egypt:

and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry [land];

which either intends the changes and revolutions made in the several kingdoms and nations of the world, between this prophecy and the coming of Christ, and which soon began to take place; for the Persian monarchy, now flourishing, was quickly shook and subdued by the Grecians; and in a little time the Grecian monarchy was destroyed by the Romans; and what changes they made in each of the nations of the world is well known: or else this designs the wonderful things that were done in the heavens, earth, and sea, at the birth of Christ, during his life, and at his death: at his birth a new star appeared in the heavens, which brought the wise men from the east to visit him; the angels of heaven descended, and sung Glory to God in the highest; Herod and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were shaken, moved, and troubled at the tidings of his birth; yea, people in all parts of Judea were in motion to be taxed in their respective cities at this time: stormy winds were raised, which agitated the waters of the sea in his lifetime; on which he walked, and which he rebuked; and this showed him to be the mighty God: at his death the heavens were darkened, the earth quaked, and rocks were rent asunder: if any particular earthquake about this time should be thought to be intended, the most terrible one was that which happened A. D. 17, when Coelius Rufus and Pomponius Flaccus were consuls, which destroyed twelve cities of Asia {l}; and these being near the sea, caused a motion there also. The apostle applies these words to the change made in the worship of God by the coming of Christ, when the carnal ordinances of the law were removed, and evangelical ordinances instituted, which shall remain until his second coming, Heb 12:26.

{i} T. Bab Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {k} Defence of Christianity, p. 88. "adhue unum modicum est, [sc.] regni venturi." Akiba apud Lyram in loc. {l} Taciti Annales, l. 2. c. 47.

Haggai 2:7

Ver. 7. And I will shake all nations,.... By changing their governors, and forms of government; which was done by the Romans, when subdued by them; and by bringing in wars among them, which produced those changes; and by civil wars among the Romans themselves, in the several nations that belonged to them, which were notorious a little before the coming of Christ: or else this was to be done, and was done, by the preaching of the Gospel, both in Judea, and in the Gentile world, when all the inhabitants thereof were shaken by it, in one sense or another; some had their hearts and consciences shaken by the Spirit and grace of God through it, and were brought to embrace it, and profess it; yea, were brought to Christ, to yield obedience to him, his truths and ordinances; and others were moved with envy, wrath, and indignation at it, and rose up to oppose it, and stop the progress of it:

and the desire of all nations shall come; not the desirable things of all nations, or them with them, as their gold and silver; and which is the sense of Jarchi, Kimchi, and Aben Ezra; but this is contrary to the syntax of the words, to the context, **Hag 2:8**, and to facts; and, if true, would not have given this temple a greater glory than Solomon's: nor the elect of God, as others, brought in through the preaching of the Gospel; who are indeed the desire of God, he takes pleasure in them; and of Christ, whose delights have been always in them; and of the blessed Spirit, whose love to them, and esteem of them, are very manifest; and with the saints they are the excellent in the earth, in whom is all their delight: yet not they, but one far more glorious and excellent, is intended, even the Messiah, in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed; and who, so far as he was known by good men or proselytes among the Gentiles, was desired by them, as by Job, and others; and who, when he came, brought all good things with him; and has all blessings in him, that may make him desirable to men, being what they want; and though he is not in fact desired by all, yet of right he should be, and to all sensible sinners he is; even above all persons and things in the whole world; on account of his excellencies and glories; his mediatorial qualifications; his names, offices, and relations; the blessings of grace in him; the works done by him; his truths and ordinances, people, ways, and worship: and when it is said, he "shall come", the meaning is, not only into the world by assumption of nature, to obtain redemption for his people; but into this temple now building, in that nature assumed; where he appeared at the presentation of him by his parents; and at the passover, when twelve years of age; and when he drove out the buyers and sellers from it; and when he often taught in it. The word "come" is in the plural number; and may denote his frequent coming thither, as well as in different respects; his personal coming; his spiritual coming; his coming to take vengeance on the Jews; and his last coming, of which some understand the words particularly:

and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts; alluding to the glory which filled the tabernacle of Moses, and the temple of Solomon, Ex 40:35 but that was but a shadowy glory, this a real one; here Christ appeared in person, who is the brightness of his Father's glory; here his glorious doctrines were taught, and glorious miracles wrought; and the Spirit of glory rested on the disciples, in his gifts and grace bestowed upon them in an extraordinary manner, on the day of Pentecost.

Haggai 2:8

Ver. 8. The silver [is] mine, and the gold [is] mine, saith the Lord of hosts. This seems designed to anticipate an objection taken from the gold and silver, with which the first temple was either decorated, or were in gifts dedicated to it; and which, it might easily be foreseen, would be wanting in the second temple; and in answer to which the Lord observes, that all the gold and silver in the world were his, were made by him, and were at his dispose; and therefore whatever were bestowed upon the former temple was only giving him his own; what he had a prior right to, and was no accession of riches or honour to him; and so it would be the same, let what would be expended on this; and therefore it was an article very inconsiderable, and of little significance; nor did he regard, or was he delighted with anything of this kind; and, was he so disposed, he could easily command all the gold and silver in the world together, and bring it into this house, to enrich and adorn it, without doing any injury to any person; but these were things he delighted not in; and, besides, he had a far greater glory in view to put upon this house, as follows:

Haggai 2:9

Ver. 9. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts,.... The "former", or first house, was the temple built by Solomon, which was a very glorious one, if we consider the vast treasure of riches laid up by David, and given to Solomon for the building of it; the great number of workmen employed in it; the stateliness of the fabric, the like to which was never seen, the model being drawn by the Lord himself; the decoration of it; the vessels in it; and, above all, the glory of the Lord that filled it, and continued in it; and yet this "latter" or second house exceeded it. It must be a glory very great indeed to exceed this! The Jews {m} themselves own there were several things wanting in the latter which were in the former, as the "ark", the "Urim" and "Thummim", the "fire" from heaven, the "Shechinah" (or, as in some books, the anointing oil, and, in others, the cherubim), and the "Holy Ghost": by one of their writers {n}, they are reckoned in this order, the ark, the mercy seat, and cherubim, one; the Shechinah or divine Majesty, the second; the Holy Ghost, which is prophecy, the third; Urim and Thummim the fourth: and the fire from heaven the fifth: what could there be in it to compensate the want of these, and put it upon a level, and even to cause it to excel the temple of Solomon? the excelling glory did not lie in the fabric; when the foundation of it was laid, the old men wept, because it came so short of the other; and, as the building rose, it was in their eyes as nothing; who were better judges than later Jews, who magnify the building of the second temple; depending upon the authority of Josephus ben Gorion, who is not to be trusted: nor did it lie in the duration of it, it continuing ten years longer, they say {o}, than the former; which, if true, could not answer to the deficiencies before mentioned; or be an encouragement to the builders to go on in their work: nor in the riches brought into it by the Gentiles in the times of the Maccabees, which was very inconsiderable; and could never make it equal to Solomon's temple, and much less preferable to it; nor by Alexander the great honouring it with his presence {p}; for surely Solomon was greater than he. It remains, that what gave it the greater glory was the personal presence of the Messiah in it, his doctrines, and his miracles:

and, or "for",

in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts; not temporal peace, for there was little of that during the second temple; witness the times of the Maccabees, and the wars with the Romans; but spiritual peace, through the blood and righteousness of Christ; peace with God; reconciliation for sin, through the sacrifice of the Son of God, in whom he is well pleased; yea, Christ himself may be meant, the Prince of peace, the Man the peace, who is our peace, **Isa 9:6** the author of peace between God and men, between Jew and Gentile; the giver of spiritual and eternal peace: him the Lord gave, "put", and set in this place, the temple, as before observed; and where the Gospel of peace was preached, and from whence it went forth into all the world. The Arabic version adds,

"peace of soul, I say, to be possessed by everyone that labours to raise up this temple."

{m} T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 65. 1. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21. 2. Jarchi & Kimchi in Hagg. i. 8. {n} Baal Aruch in rad. dbk, fol. 75. 3. {o} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 3. 1. {p} Azariah, Meor Enayim, c. 51. fol. 160. 1. Vid. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 23. 2. & 24. 1.

Haggai 2:10

Ver. 10. In the four and twentieth [day] of the ninth [month],.... The month Chisleu, which answers to part of November, and part of December: this was two months and three days after the former discourse or prophecy, and just three months from the time the Jews began to work in the house of the Lord, **Hag 1:14**

in the second year of Darius; the same year that all the former discourses and prophecies were delivered in:

came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet; for what he delivered was not his own, but from the Lord; he was only his minister and messenger. The Vulgate Latin version, and so Munster, render it, "unto Haggai the prophet"; and indeed what is said following seems to be directed to him, and he is the only person that put the questions directed to:

saying; as follows:

Haggai 2:11

Ver. 11. Thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... To Haggai the prophet:

ask now the priests [concerning] the law; whose business it was to understand it, and teach it, and to answer questions, and resolve doubts concerning it; not of their own heads, and according to their fancies, will, and pleasure; but according to the rules and instructions given in the word of God: and as this was their office, they were the proper persons to apply to; and Haggai, though a prophet, is sent to the priests to propose questions to them; though it may be not so much for his own information, as for the conviction of the priests of their impurity, out of their own mouths, and of the people by them:

saying; putting the following questions to them.

Haggai 2:12

Ver. 12. If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment,.... Or, "carry" it {q}; from one place to another in his pockets or bags, which were in the skirts of his garments. This is to be understood of the flesh of creatures offered in sacrifice, which were sanctified or separated for holy use; part of which belonged to the priests, who might carry it in their pockets to the proper place of eating it:

and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat: which were not holy, and not separated for holy use, but were common meats and drinks: now the question upon this is,

shall it be holy? that is, if either of those common things were touched by the skirt, in the pockets of which the holy flesh were carried, whether they were made holy by such a touch, and no more remained common or profane?

and the priests answered and said, No; they were not sanctified; for though the garment itself was sanctified thereby, and might not be employed in common use till washed, **Le 6:27** yet a garment so touched could not convey holiness to whatsoever that touched, or that touched it.

{q} avy "portaverit", Munster; "portet", Varenius, Reinbeck.

Haggai 2:13

Ver. 13. Then said Haggai,.... To the priests; having nothing to object to their answer; but being satisfied with it, he puts another question:

if [one that is] unclean by a dead body; by the touch of it, Nu 19:11:

touch any of these, shall it be unclean? that is, if such an impure person, who was so in a ceremonial sense, should touch any of the above things, bread, pottage, wine, or oil, or any meat, would not they become unclean thereby, and so not fit for use?

and the priests answered and said, it shall be unclean; which was rightly answered; for whatsoever such an unclean person touched was unclean, according to the law, Le 19:22. Pollution is more easily and more extensively conveyed than holiness.

Haggai 2:14

Ver. 14. Then answered Haggai, and said,.... To the priests, and before the people; and made an application of these things to them, which was the thing in view in putting the questions:

So [is] this people, and so [is] this nation before me, saith the Lord; not only those people that were present and at work at the temple, but those that were absent, even the whole body of the people; who, though they were pure in their own eyes, yet were not so before the Lord; who knew their hearts, and the spring of all their actions; what were their ends and views in all they did: as a garment carrying in it holy flesh could not sanctify other things touched by it that were common and profane, but left them as they were; so their ritual devotions, and externally holy actions, did not and could not sanctify their impure hearts, but left them as unclean as before; nor did they sanctify their common mercies, their bread, pottage, wine, and oil: and, on the other hand, as an impure person made everything impure he touched; so they, being impure in heart, all their actions, even their religious ones, were impure also, as follows:

and so [is] every work of their hands; and that which they offer there [is] unclean; pointing at the altar, which they had built, and offered sacrifice on ever since they came out of Babylon, though the temple was not yet built, **Ezr 3:3** but all their outward religious services, and all the sacrifices they offered up, were in the Lord's account impure and abominable, as well as themselves; coming from an unsanctified heart, and offered up with unclean hands, and without repentance towards God, and faith in Christ; and living in other respects in disobedience to God, and especially while they neglected the building of the temple; satisfying themselves with offering sacrifices on the altar, when the house of God lay desolate; which is the principal thing respected, as appears by what follows.

Haggai 2:15

Ver. 15. And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward,.... This being their case, and they so polluted with sin, particularly through their neglect of building the temple; they are most earnestly and importunately entreated to "lay" it "to their hearts", to ponder it in their minds, and thoroughly consider how it had fared with them from this twenty fourth day of the ninth month, in which the prophet was sent unto them to encourage them in their work, and upwards or backwards, for some years past: even

from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord: the foundation of the temple was laid quickly after the Jews returned from Babylon, upon the proclamation of Cyrus, **Ezr 3:10** but, through difficulties and discouragements they met with, they desisted from the work, and went no further; a stone was not laid upon it; or, as the Targum, a row, or course upon course, until this time: and now all the intermediate space of time between the first laying the foundation of the temple, and their present going to work upon it, the prophet would have them take particular notice of; how it had been with them, as to their outward circumstances; whereby it would appear, they had sinned, and the Lord had been offended with them.

Haggai 2:16

Ver. 16. Since those [days] were,.... From the time the foundation of the temple was laid, unto the time they began to work again, which was a space of about fifteen or sixteen years:

when [one] came to an heap of twenty [measures], there were [but] ten; when the husbandman having gathered in his corn, and who was generally a good judge of what it would yield, came to a heap of it on his corn floor, either of sheaves not threshed, or grain not winnowed, and expected it would have produced at least twenty measures, seahs, or bushels; afterward it was threshed and winnowed, to his great disappointment he had but ten out of it; there were so much straw and chaff, and so little grain; or when he came to a heap of grain, wheat, or barley, in his granary, where he thought he should have twenty bushels of it; but when he had measured it, proved but ten; being either stolen by thieves, or eaten by vermin; rather the latter:

when [one] came to the wine vat for to draw out fifty [vessels] out of the press, there were [but] twenty; by the quantity of grapes which he put into the press to tread and squeeze, he expected to have had fifty measures, or baths, or hogsheads of wine; but, instead of that, had but twenty; the bunches were so thin, or the berries so bad: there was a greater decrease and deficiency in the wine than in the grain.

Haggai 2:17

Ver. 17. I smote you with blasting,.... That is, their fields and vineyards, with burning winds, which consumed them; with blights by east winds: this shows the reason of their disappointment, and that it was from the Lord, and for their sins, by way of chastisement and correction:

and with mildew; a kind of clammy dew, which corrupts and destroys the fruits of the earth; and is a kind of jaundice to them, as the word signifies; see **Am 4:9**:

and with hail; which battered down the corn and the vines, and broke them to pieces; see **Ex 9:25**:

in all the labours of your hands; in the corn they sowed, and in the vines they planted:

yet ye [turned] not to me, saith the Lord; did not consider their evil ways as the cause of all this; nor repent of them, and turn from them to the Lord; to his worship, as the Targum; or to the building of his house, the thing chiefly complained of. Afflictions, unless sanctified, have no effect upon men to turn them from their sins to the Lord.

Haggai 2:18

Ver. 18. Consider now from this day and upward,.... Or forward; for time to come, as the Vulgate Latin version:

from the four and twentieth day of the ninth [month]; before observed, **Hag 2:10**:

even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider [it]; not from the time it was first laid after their return upon the proclamation of Cyrus, but from the time they began to clear that foundation, and to build upon it; and which having lain so long neglected, the renewal of it is represented as a fresh laying of it: now the prophet, as he had directed them to consider what adversity and calamities had attended them from the time of their neglect unto this time; so he would have them particularly observe what blessings they would enjoy from henceforward; by which it would appear how pleasing it was to the Lord that they had begun and were going on with the building.

Haggai 2:19

Ver. 19. Is the seed yet in the barn?.... The seed for sowing the land, in order for the next harvest: this is by some answered in the affirmative, it was in the barn, it was not yet sown; this being the ninth month, the month Chisleu, which answers to part of our November; rather it should be in the negative, no, it was just sown; and therefore no conjecture could be made, whether it would be a good harvest, or not; yet the prophet, in the name of the Lord, promises them a good one so long before hand: for the month Chisleu, which was the ninth month, was the last for sowing, and even the first half of that; for so say {r} the Jews,

"half Tisri, all Marchesvan, and half Chisleu, is seed time;"

so that this being that month, seed time must have been just over; and the sense, is there any seed in the barn? no, it is sown; and so, is there any remaining in the granary for the support of families until the next harvest? they knew there were none, or very little: and yet the Lord promises to bless them, so that they should have enough:

yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth; their various fruits; this not being the time of their bearing fruit, for it was winter time; and it could not be said what they would bring forth in their season so long before hand; yet it is suggested by the prophet that they would be very fruitful; which were the principal fruit trees the land of Israel abounded with, **De 8:8** and on which their comfortable subsistence depended. Kimchi observes, that it may be wondered at that the olive tree should be mentioned, because the time of its bearing fruit were the months of Marchesvan and Chisleu; but perhaps the time of its bearing fruit was delayed (as he says) because of the curse upon it:

from this day will I bless you; with plenty of all good things, in their fields and gardens, in their vineyards and olive yards; so that a difference between former and present times, and those to come, would easily be discerned, and the reasons of it.

{r} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 106. 2.

Haggai 2:20

Ver. 20. And again the word of the Lord came unto Haggai,.... Or a "second" {s} time, even on the same day as the former:

in the four and twentieth day of the month; of the ninth month Chisleu, **Hag 2:10**:

saying; as follows:

{s} tynv "secundo", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; "secunda vice", Burkius.

Haggai 2:21

Ver. 21. Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah,.... The former discourse or prophecy chiefly related to the people, for their encouragement in building; this is directed to the prince over them, to support him under all the changes and revolutions made in the world; that he should be regarded by the Lord in a very tender manner, and his government continued, as a type of Christ and his kingdom:

saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; make great commotions, changes, and revolutions in the world, by wars, and otherwise: the Persian kingdom being subdued by the Grecian; the Grecian by the Romans; the Roman empire by the Goths and Vandals; and the antichristian states, both Papal and Mahometan, by the vials of God's wrath poured out upon them, by means of Christian princes: such revolutions are often designed by the shaking of the heavens, especially by earthquakes in the book of the Revelation; see **Re 6:14**.

Haggai 2:22

Ver. 22. And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms,.... The Persian monarchy, which consisted of various kingdoms and nations, and was destroyed under Darius Codomannus by Alexander the great, who fought with him three pitched battles, and overcame him; but the thing was of the Lord, according to his purpose and will, and by his power and providence; and therefore the overthrow is ascribed to him. The Jews {t} say that the Persian monarchy fell by the Grecians thirty four years after the building of the temple; but very wrongly, it lasted longer:

and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; the empire of Alexander, which was a very strong one, and contained in it many kingdoms and nations, even the whole world, at least as he thought; and which was divided after his death into several kingdoms; the strength of which was greatly weakened by one another, and at last entirely destroyed by the Romans as instruments:

and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down; which may refer either to the chariots and horses, and their riders, belonging to the Grecians, and used in their wars; or else this may describe the empire of the Romans, which in its turn should be destroyed, famous for their triumphal chariots:

everyone by the sword of his brother; by civil wars, which was remarkably true of the successors of Alexander, as appears from Josephus {u} and

Justin {w}: this may be applied to all the kingdoms of this world, which will all be demolished, and be brought into subjection to Christ, and his kingdom shall be set up in the world, the son and antitype of Zerubbabel, of whom the following words are to be understood; see **Da 2:44**. Abendana interprets it of the army of Gog and Magog, who shall fall everyone by the sword of his brother.

{t} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 30. p. 91. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 18. 1. {u} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 1. sect. 1. {w} E. Trogo, l. 13. c. 6.

Haggai 2:23

Ver. 23. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts,.... When all these kingdoms, and their thrones and strength, are destroyed; which shows that what follows cannot be understood literally of Zerubbabel, who lived not to see these things done:

will I take thee, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord; that is, the Messiah, as is owned by Abarbinel; who says {x},

"the King Messiah shall come, who is of the seed of Zerubbabel; and he shall be the seal of the structure, and the end of the kingdoms; as it is said, "I will make thee as a signet, for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts"; for this no doubt is said concerning the days of the Messiah:"

and another Jewish writer {y}, quoting the above author for the sense of this passage, and Eze 37:25, adds,

"for the King Messiah he will be David, and he will be Zerubbabel, that he may be a rod going out of their stem;"

and another {z} on these words observes,

"without doubt this is said concerning the expected Messiah, who will be of the seed of Zerubbabel; and therefore this promise was not at all fulfilled in him; for in the time of this prophecy he was but governor of Judah, and he never rose to greater dignity than what he then had:"

indeed these writers wrongly suppose the Messiah yet to come, and whom they in vain expect; and apply this, as they do many other prophecies, to the coming of Christ in the flesh, which belong to his spiritual appearance in his churches, or to his personal coming at the last day: however, this shows the conviction on their minds of the application of this and such like prophecies to the Messiah, who may be called Zerubbabel, as he is sometimes David, because he sprung from him, was of his lineage, and because he was a type of him, in bringing the people of the Jews out of the Babylonish captivity, in rebuilding the temple, in the government of the people, and in being chosen of God, and precious; as well as a servant of the Lord, as here expressed, and which is often mentioned as a character of the Messiah, Isa 49:3:

and will make thee as a signet; preserve, protect and defend, love, value, and esteem, and advance to great honour and dignity, power and authority: the signet or seal on a man's right hand, being what he always wears, is ever in sight, and he is careful of; as well as is what he greatly esteems, and is dear unto him, and he highly values; and by which a prince signs his decrees and edicts; see Isa 49:2 **So 8:6**:

for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts; to be the Redeemer and Saviour of his people; to be their King and Governor, and the Judge of the world. Christ is peculiarly God's elect, and in whom all his people are chosen; be is the chosen of God, and precious, Ps 89:19. The Targum is,

"for in thee I am well pleased;"

which is said by God the Father concerning Christ more than once, **Mt 3:17**. It is a prophecy of the exaltation of Christ after he had done his work, as the Lord's servant, and especially in the latter day, when he shall be King over all the earth; all which cannot be so well applied to Zerubbabel; unless with Reinbeck we understand it of the time of his resurrection from the dead at the last day; when great honour shall be put upon him as a faithful servant, and great love and affection expressed to him; but that will be no other than what will be common to all the saints and chosen of God; Christ, in whom all prophecies terminate, and so this, is doubtless intended.

{x} Mayene Jeshuah, fol. 13. 4. Vid. & Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 67. 2. {y} Abendana in Miclol Yophi in loc. {z} R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. c. 34. p. 289, 290.

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH

This book is in the Hebrew copies called "the Book of Zechariah"; in the Vulgate Latin version, "the Prophecy of Zechariah"; and, in the Syriac and Arabic versions, the Prophecy of the Prophet Zechariah. His name, according to Jerom, signifies "the memory of the Lord": but, according to Hillerus {a}, "the Lord remembers": either us, or his covenant; his promises of grace, and concerning the Messiah, of which there are many in this book. The writer of this prophecy could not be, as some have imagined, Zacharias the father of John the Baptist; since there must be some hundreds of years difference between them; nor the Zacharias, the son of Barachias, slain between the temple and the altar, our Lord speaks of in Mt 23:35 for though their names agree, yet it does not appear that this prophet was slain by the Jews; indeed the Jewish Targumist, on **La 2:20**, speaks of a Zechariah, the son of Iddo, a high priest, slain in the temple; but it could not be this Zechariah, since he was no high priest; Joshua was high priest in his time; nor could he be slain in such a place, seeing the temple and altar were not yet built; nor was this prophet Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, slain in the court of the Lord's house, 2Ch 24:20 for, as their names do not agree, so neither their office, he being a high priest, this a prophet; nor the times in which they lived, Zechariah the son of Jehoiada lived in the times of Joash king of Judah, two or three hundred years before this; but this was one of the captivity of Babylon, and who came up from thence with Zerubbabel, Ne 12:16 and was contemporary with the Prophet Haggai; so that the time of his prophecy was after the Babylonish captivity, and was delivered to the Jews that were returned from thence; and the design of it is to stir them up to build the temple, and restore the pure worship of God; and to encourage their faith and hope in the expectation of the Messiah; for the book consists of various visions and prophecies relating to him, and to the times of the Gospel; and the visions are, as some Jewish writers {b} observe, very obscure, and like the visions of Daniel, and difficult of interpretation. There are several passages cited out of this book in the New Testament, as

Zec 8:16 in **Eph 4:25** **Zec 9:9** in Mt 21:5 in Mt 27:9 in Joh 19:37 in Mt which abundantly confirm the authenticity of it. This prophet seems to have lived and died in Jerusalem; and, according to Pseudo-Epiphanius {c}, was buried near Haggai the prophet; and with which agree the Cippi Hebraici {d}, which inform us that Haggai was buried in a cave in the downward slope of the mount of Olives; and at the bottom of that mount was a large statue called the hand of Absalom, near to which was the grave of Zechariah the prophet, in a cave shut up, and over it a beautiful monument of one stone: and Monsieur Thevenot {e} tells us, that now is shown, near the sepulchres of Absalom and Jehoshaphat, on the descent of the mount of Olives, the sepulchre of the Prophet Zacharias.---It is cut in a diamond point upon the rock, with many pillars about it. Sozomen {f} the historian, indeed, makes mention of Caphar Zechariah, a village on the borders of Eleutheropolis, a city in Palestine, where it is pretended the body of this prophet was found in the times of Theodosius, to which no credit is to be given; nor is there any dependence to be had on the former accounts.

{a} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 508, 957, 958. {b} Aben Ezra & Jarchi in loc. & R. Abendana in Miclol Yophi in loc. & Kimchi in ver. 8. {c} De Prophet. Vita & Interitu, c. 21. {d} P. 29. Ed. Hottinger. {e} Travels, par. 1. B. 2. ch. 37. p. 184. {f} Hist. Eccles. l. 9. c. 17.

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 1

In this chapter, after the account of the prophet, and the time of the prophecy by him, are an exhortation of the people of the Jews to repentance; the vision of a rider upon a red horse, and the intercession of the angel of the Lord for Jerusalem; and another vision of the enemies of the Jews, and of their deliverers. In **Zec 1:1** is the general inscription of the book; in which an account is given of the time of its writing, and of the writer of it: then follows the exhortation to repentance, enforced from the wrath of God, which came upon their fathers for not hearkening to the Lord, and turning from their evil ways; and from the advantage that would be received thereby, the Lord would return to them; and from the certain accomplishment of the divine word; for, though both their fathers and prophets died, the word of the Lord had its sure effect, **Zec 1:2** and next the vision of the rider on the red horse is presented; the year, month, day, and night, in which it was seen, are mentioned, **Zec 1:7** and the rider is described by his form, a man; by the horse he rode upon, a red one; by the place he stood in among the myrtle trees in the bottom; and by his attendants behind, red horses, speckled and white, **Zec 1:8**. The interpretation of which last is given to the prophet by the angel, by the man among the myrtle trees, and by the answer of them to the angel of the Lord themselves, **Zec 1:9**. After which the angel is represented as making intercession for Jerusalem, who is answered by good and comfortable words, **Zec 1:12** upon which the prophet is bid to publish the jealousy of the Lord for Jerusalem; his displeasure at the heathens for afflicting them; his promise to return to the Jews, that the temple and city of Jerusalem should be rebuilt, and other cities of Judea, which should enjoy great prosperity, **Zec 1:14** and the chapter is concluded with a vision of four horns, signifying the enemies of Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem; and of four carpenters that should destroy them, **Zec 1:18**.

Ver. 1. In the eighth month,.... The month Marchesvan, called the month Bul, in **1Ki 6:38** which answers to part of our October, and part of November: this was but two months from the first prophecy of Haggai, **Hag 1:1** and but a few days after his second, **Hag 2:1** so near were the prophecies of these two prophets together:

in the second year of Darius: king of Persia; not Darius the Mede, but Darius the son of Hystaspes:

came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah; that is, "the word of prophecy from before the Lord", as the Targum paraphrases it; which came to him, either in a dream, or in a vision, or by an impulse on his mind; who is described by his descent, the son of Barachias; mention is made of this name in Mt 23:35. It signifies "the blessed of the Lord", and is the same with Eulogius or Benedictus:

the son of Iddo the prophet: the word "prophet", as Kimchi observes, belongs to Zechariah; not but that his grandfather Iddo might be a prophet too; and the same writer takes notice, that in the Midrash mention is made of Iddo the prophet; and so there is an Iddo that is called the seer and the prophet in **2Ch 9:29** but whether the same with this is not certain. The name is by some thought to be the same with Firmicus, Statius, Robertus:

saying; as follows:

Zechariah 1:2

Ver. 2. The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers. Who lived before and at the time of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and which was manifest by their captivity; all which were occasioned by their sins, with which they provoked the Lord to sore displeasure against them; and this is mentioned as a caution to their children, that they might not follow their example, and incur the like displeasure.

Zechariah 1:3

Ver. 3. Therefore say thou unto them,.... This is an order from the Lord to Zechariah, to say unto them, in the name of the Lord:

thus saith the Lord of hosts; of the hosts above and below, of angels and of men, of heaven and earth, and all that is therein: this is said, that the greater regard might be had to his words:

turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts; by repentance, and acknowledgment of former sins; by reformation for the future; by attending to the worship and service of God, and seeking to glorify him. So the Targum, "return to my worship": this is not the condition of what follows, but what follows is the motive and encouragement to this:

and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts; to dwell among them, manifest himself unto and protect them. Three times the phrase, "the Lord of hosts", is used in this verse: it may be with respect to the three Persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit; who manifest themselves unto, and take up their abode with, such as love the Lord, and keep his commandments; see Joh 14:21.

Zechariah 1:4

Ver. 4. Be ye not as your fathers,.... Who lived before the captivity, and misused the prophets and messengers of the Lord, and despised his word, and fell into gross idolatry; the evil examples of parents and ancestors are not to be followed:

unto whom the former prophets have cried: such as Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others:

saying, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Turn now from your evil ways, and [from] your evil doings; by their "evil ways" may be meant their idolatrous worship; and by their "evil doings" their immoralities; or, by both, their wicked lives and conversations, both before God and men; from whence they were exhorted by the former prophets to turn, and to reform; even "now", at that present time they prophesied to them, immediately, lest destruction come upon them:

but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the Lord; speaking by his prophets, who were sent by him, and came and spoke in his name; so that not hearing them was not hearing him who sent them, and whom they represented.

Zechariah 1:5

Ver. 5. Your fathers, where [are] they?.... They are not in the land of the living; they perished by the sword of the Chaldeans, or died in captivity:

and the prophets, do they live for ever? meaning either the false prophets, as Hananiah and Shemaiah, Jer 28:17 or the true prophets of the Lord; and the words may be considered as a prevention of an objection the people might make, taken from their prophets dying in common with their fathers; and so the Targum paraphrases them, "and if you should say, the prophets, do they live for ever?" which is followed by Jarchi, and embraced by many interpreters: the answer is, it is true they died; but then their words live, and have had their full accomplishment.

Zechariah 1:6

Ver. 6. But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets,.... That is, the predictions which he ordered his prophets to declare in his name, that their fathers should die by the sword, or famine, or pestilence, or be carried captive, which he purposed in himself, and threatened them with:

did they not take hold of your fathers? overtake them, seize upon them, and have their accomplishment in them? not one thing has failed, or come short of being fulfilled, of all that was determined, or said should be done:

and they returned and said; that is, as many of them as perished not, but were carried captive; at least many of them, who either were thoroughly converted, and turned from their evil, or however in appearance: and who were obliged to own,

Like as the Lord of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doing, so hath he dealt with us: as he purposed, so he performed, and that with great justice and equity, being what their evil ways and doings righteously deserved; see Isa 14:24.

Zechariah 1:7

Ver. 7. Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Sebat,.... Called Sabat in the Septuagint version, and in the Apocrypha:

"Now Simon was visiting the cities that were in the country, and taking care for the good ordering of them; at which time he came down himself to Jericho with his sons, Mattathias and Judas, in the hundred threescore and seventeenth year, in the eleventh month, called Sabat:" (1 Maccabees 16:14)

It is said by the Jews {g} to be the beginning of the months of the year for trees, of which they bring the first fruits. It answers to part of our January, and part of February. This is the first time that the name of a month is mentioned by any of the prophets; this prophet prophesying after the captivity in Babylon; from whence the Jews {h} say the names of months came along with the returning captives, as well as the names of angels; and we nowhere meet with them but in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, all wrote after that time; for before they used only to say, the first, second, or third month, &c.; for, as for Abib, Zif, Bul, and Ethanira, mentioned in Ex 13:4, they are thought to be appellatives, and not proper names; though it may be observed that the books of Kings are said by the Jews {i} to be written by Jeremiah; more likely by several prophets, and at last brought into the order in which they now stand by Ezra, according to Huetius {k}; and which may be thought probable enough; and, if so, the above names may be reckoned proper names of months; and the original of them may be accounted for as before. There were two fasts appointed by the Jews in this month; one on the tenth day of it, for the death of the elders which succeeded Joshua, **Jud 2:7** and another on the twenty third, on account of the Israelites making war with the Benjaminites, in revenge of what was done to the wife of the Levite, Jud 19:1 {l}. This prophecy, and the visions following to the end of the sixth chapter, were three months after the former prophecy, or more, if that was on the first day of the eighth month; and just two months after the foundation of the temple was laid, **Hag 2:18**: "in the second year of Darius", &c. See Gill on "Zec 1:1".

{g} Targum Sheni in Esth. iii. 7. {h} T. Hieros. Roshhashanah, fol. 56. 4. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 48. fol. 48. 4. {i} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. {k} Demonstr. Evangel. prop. 4. p. 203. {l} Vid. Reland. Jud. Antiqu. par. 4. c. 13. p. 261.

Zechariah 1:8

Ver. 8. I saw by night,.... Or, "that night" {m}; the night of the twenty fourth of Sebat; a proper and usual time for visions; and it may denote the obscurity of the vision, as it was in some respects to the prophet; and the state of the church at this time, it being a night season with it, and in a low estate; and the care that the Lord, who is Israel's Keeper, has of them in such seasons, being in the midst of them:

and behold! this is prefixed to the vision, to denote the wonderfulness of it, and to excite attention to it; there being something in it not only amazing, but of moment and importance:

a man riding upon a red horse; not any mere "man", as Alexander on his Bucephalus, as Abarbinel interprets it; and so Arias Montanus, as Sanctius on the place observes; though the time this vision refers to, and the state of the Jews then, will not admit of such an interpretation; for at this time all the earth was still and at rest, there were no wars in it, **Zec 1:11** which agrees not with the times of Alexander, and of his reign, which was wholly spent in war; and the whole world in a manner was involved in it by him; but best agrees with the times of Cyrus and Darius, after they had subdued the Babylonian monarchy: besides, the Jews were now in a very low estate, like a grove of myrtle trees in a bottom, plain, or valley; and not only surrounded and overtopped by other states and kingdoms, which were greatly superior to them; but oppressed by their enemies, who hindered them in the rebuilding of their city and temple; whereas this was not their case in the times of Alexander, when they were in better circumstances, and which were two hundred years after this; nor was he so very beneficial and serviceable to the Jews, as to be represented, in such a vision, as in the midst of them, for their relief and protection; but an angel of the Lord is here meant, as this man is expressly called, **Zec 1:11** and not a created angel; for he is distinguished from the angel that talked with the prophet, **Zec 1:9**. The Jews, as Jerom relates, think that the Angel Michael is meant, by whom they understand a created angel; for otherwise, if they took him to be, as he is, the Son of God, the Archangel, the Head of principalities, who is, as his name signifies, like unto God, and equal to him, it would not be amiss: and it is usual for a divine Person to be called the Angel of the Lord, as was he that called to Abraham when sacrificing his son, and to Moses out of the bush; and who went before the Israelites in the wilderness, and who is called the Angel of God's presence, and the messenger and Angel of the covenant; and the ancient Jews themselves own that a divine Person is here meant; for, on quoting these words, "I saw a man", &c. they say {n}, there is no man but the holy blessed God; as it is said, "the Lord is a man of war, the Lord is his name"; and though he is distinguished from the Lord of hosts, **Zec 1:12**, the reason of this (or otherwise it is the title of this angel also, see Ho 12:4,) is because he here appears in the form of a man; and because of his office as an intercessor and advocate for his people, **Zec 1:12** a character which well agrees with Christ, who is the advocate with the Father for his saints, and whoever lives to make intercession for them, and is always heard and answered with good and comfortable words: and he is called a "man"; not that he is a mere man, or was really man when this vision was seen; but he then appeared in a human form, because he should become man, and quickly would be, as it was purposed, prophesied, and agreed he should be: and he is represented as "riding", to denote his majesty and glory as a king, or as a general of an army, in which he rode prosperously; see Ps 45:4 as also his readiness, swiftness, and haste he made to help and save his people; as the people of the Jews, in this their present time of distress, being opposed and hindered in building their city, in particular; so, in general, all his people, in whatsoever case or circumstances they may be: thus riding, when ascribed to a divine Person, is an emblem of haste and quick dispatch, to assist and relieve the distressed; see De 33:26 so Christ, who here appears as a man, was ready and forward, in the council and covenant of grace, to agree to become man, and be the surety of his people, and die in their place and stead, in order to save them: his frequent appearances in a human form, before his incarnation, show how willing and ready he was really to assume the human nature; and as soon as the time appointed for it was up, he tarried not; when the fulness of time was come, God sent him, and he came at once, and immediately; and as soon as possible he went about the business he came upon, took delight and pleasure in it, was constant at it till he had finished it; and even his sufferings and death, which were disagreeable to nature, considered in themselves, were wished and longed for, and cheerfully submitted to by him: and he is quick in all his motions to help his people in all their times of need; nor can any difficulties prevent him giving an early and speedy relief; he comes to them leaping on the mountains, and skipping on the hills; and at the last day he will come quickly to put them into the possession of salvation he has wrought out for them; and will be a swift witness for them, and against wicked men that hate them, and oppose them: and he is upon a "red horse", signifying either his incarnation, and his bloody sufferings and death; and his taking peace from the earth when on it, not intentionally, but eventually, through the wickedness of men; see **Re 6:4** or his indignation against his enemies, and his wrath and vengeance upon them, and the destruction of them; and may have a particular reference to those who opposed the building of the temple; see Isa 63:1:

and he stood among the myrtle trees which [were] in the bottom: by the "myrtle trees" may be meant the Israelites, as Kimchi interprets it; and that either as in Babylon, which he supposes is designed by "the bottom"; agreeably to the Targum, which paraphrases the words, "and he stood among the myrtle trees which are in Babylon"; or rather, as now returned to their own land; and so may denote the low estate and condition in which they were when they began to rebuild the temple, being feeble, and opposed by their enemies, mightier than they; but yet, inasmuch as the Lord was in the midst of them, they had encouragement to go on in the work, as is suggested in **Hag 2:3**, though the saints and people of God in general may be here meant by the "myrtle trees"; and the ancient Jews {o} interpret them of the righteous, saying, there are no myrtle trees but the righteous; and give this as a reason why Esther was called Hadassah, **Es 2:7** which signifies a myrtle tree, because this is the name of the righteous {p}; and these may fitly be compared to such trees for their goodliness and beauty to look at, for their sweet and fragrant smell, for their verdure and greenness, and for their flourishing in valleys and watery places {q}, signified here by "the bottom"; all which is true of the saints, who are pleasant plants, comely through Christ's comeliness; whose graces, when in exercise, send forth a sweet smell; whose prayers are odours, and whose good works are acceptable, being done in faith; whose leaves never wither, and who flourish much, being planted by the river of divine love; and in whom the grace of God ever remains, and they persevere in grace to the end: these may be said to be "in the bottom"; or in a low estate; not only before conversion, but after; when corruptions prevail, temptations are strong, grace is weak; God hides his face, Christ is absent, and the Spirit withdraws his influences; and so it is true of the church in general, when under persecution, or pestered with false teachers, and when the life and power of religion are almost gone; and yet even then Christ stands in the midst of them, to sympathize with them, and as ready to help and assist them, to deliver them out of their troubles, to protect them from their enemies, and to restore them to their former state and condition. A grove of myrtle trees in a plain, in which they delight, being dark and shady, is thought by some to be an emblem of this world, in which there is a mixture of good and bad men; and of the care of Providence over human affairs, consulting the good of man, especially the raising up of the church of God out of a low estate by Christ, and his apostles, and other ministers of the word, performing their offices, according to the different abilities and gifts God has bestowed upon them {r}:

and behind him [were there] red horses, speckled and white; that is, with riders on them. Some {s} Jewish writers interpret this vision of the four kingdoms; and understand by the red horse with the man upon it, in the former clause, the Babylonian monarchy, of which Nebuchadnezzar was the head; and, by these three sorts here, the Medes, Greeks, and Romans, by inverting the order of them; they interpreting the white horses with the riders on them of the Medes and Persians; who were kind to the Jews, and under whom they were dismissed from their captivity, and their temple rebuilt: the speckled, or those of different colours, the Macedonians or Grecians; some of which were friends, and kind and benevolent to the Jews; and others cruel persecutors of them; and the red, the Romans, who were bloody, and slew multitudes of them, and destroyed their city and temple: but others, as Jerom observes, who relates the above sense, keep the order of the text, and explain the particulars of it thus; the red horse on which the man rode, and the red horses behind him, of the Assyrians and Chaldeans, who were sanguine; the one carried away the ten tribes under Shalmaneser; and the other the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, burning the city of Jerusalem, and laying waste the temple; the speckled, or those of various colours, the Medes and Persians; some of whom were mild and gentle, as Cyrus, and Darius the son of Hystaspes, and Ahasuerus, whom the Greeks call Artaxerxes, under whom was the history of Esther; and others were cruel, as Cambyses, &c.: those who think that Alexander the great is meant on the red horse suppose that those that succeeded him are meant by the other horses of various colours; namely, the Lagidae and the Seleucidae, or the kings of Egypt and Syria, who were sometimes very fierce and furious, and sometimes very friendly to the Jews; at least different kings, and at different times: but it seems better to interpret them of saints, the godly and faithful followers of Christ; not only the godly among the Jews, who were made as his goodly horse in the battle, Zec 10:3 but the church and people of God in general, who are compared to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot, **So 1:9**, for their strength, courage, serviceableness, and the value Christ has them: thus, as he is elsewhere represented as riding on a white horse, under the Gospel dispensation, as the general of an army, and mighty conqueror; so the armies of heaven that follow him on white horses, and clothed in white, are the called, and faithful, and chosen, Re 17:14 and some of these being described by red horses, with riders on them, may signify, such who have been called to shed their blood, and lay down their lives, for Christ and his Gospel, and their profession of it, even the martyrs of Jesus; and others by speckled horses, or of various colours, may intend such professors of religion, who, though not called to die for Christ, yet suffer persecution in various ways, both by reproach and affliction; and whose lives may be a chequered work of comforts and troubles, of prosperity and adversity: and others by white horses may point at such who are not only clothed with fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints; and who are more than conquerors through Christ, who has loved them, which are characters common to all saints; but who enjoy a great deal of liberty, peace, and prosperity, all their days. Some {t} restrain this to the apostles of Christ, and succeeding ministers of the word; and observe, that as horses carry men and other things into the various parts of the world, so the ministers of the Gospel bear the name of Christ, and carry his Gospel into the whole world;

and as horses do not go into any part of it of themselves, but as they are directed by their masters, so the Gospel ministers are sent under the direction of Christ, some here, and some there; and as horses going through towns and villages are mostly annoyed by the barking of dogs, which yet they regard not, so as to stop their speed; thus likewise faithful preachers are followed with the calumnies of wicked men, with their scoffs and jeers, reproaches and persecutions; but none of these things move them, or cause them to desist from their work; and as Christ the Son of God stood among these horses, so he is, and has promised to be, with his ministering servants unto the end of the world; and as they are like horses, docile and laborious, so the various colours of these may have respect to them; some of whom are called to resist even unto blood; and others to various trials; as well as they have different gifts, and are of different usefulness, and all of them at last victorious over their enemies; and are under Christ their Head, and are ready to do his will in whatsoever he directs them; though the more commonly received opinion is, that angels are designed, and as it seems from **Zec 1:10** compared with **Zec 6:1** see also **2Ki 2:11** signified by horses, for their strength, courage, swiftness, serviceableness, and disposition for war; and these different colours may represent the different state and condition of the nations with whom they were concerned, and to whom they were sent, as cruel or kind, to the people of God; and their different employments and services, both to help the saints, and render vengeance to their enemies; and the various offices they perform, with respect to Christ and his people, in things temporal and spiritual; and the place and situation of these horses being "behind" Christ may denote his superiority over them: he is superior to all monarchs and monarchies, kingdoms and states; he is King of kings, and Lord of lords; the kingdoms of this world are his, and he is the Governor among the nations; they are all behind and under him, and disposed of by him at his pleasure; and he can restrain them, when he thinks fit, from doing any harm to his people: he is superior to all men, even the best and greatest; he is the Head of the church, and King of saints; and it is their business, and even their honour and privilege, to follow him whithersoever he goes: and he is superior to angels, has a more excellent name and nature than they, is the Creator and Maker of them, and is worshipped by them; and even, as Mediator, is in a greater office, and in a higher place, at the right hand of God, than they are; they are at his beck and command, and at hand to be sent forth on all occasions to do his business, to minister for him, and to his people; they are his servants, and devoted to his service, and are ready to do his pleasure.

{m} hlylh "hac nocte", Drusius. {n} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1. Pesikta Rabbati apud Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 85. 4. {o} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1. {p} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 13. 1. {q} "----Et amantes littora myrtos." Virgil. Georgic. l. 4. {r} Vid. Levin. Lemnii Herb. Bibl. Explicat. c. 39. p. 108. {s} In Abendana, Not. in Miclol Yophi in loc. {t} Vid. Frantzii Hist. Animal. Sacr. par. 1. c. 12. p. 130, 131.

Zechariah 1:9

Ver. 9. Then said I, O my Lord,.... These are the words of the Prophet Zechariah to the angel that showed him this vision:

what are these? what is the meaning of this vision? particularly who are meant by the horses, red, speckled, and white, and those upon them?

And the angel that talked with me; who seems to be different from the Angel of the Lord, the man among the myrtle trees, **Zec 1:8** he was one of the ministering spirits; see Re 17:1:

said unto me, I will show thee what these [be]; that is, give an interpretation of the vision, and point out the persons intended by the horses.

Zechariah 1:10

Ver. 10. And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said,.... And so prevented the angel from giving the account he was about to give; and who was more capable of it, and which to do was great condescension in him, and was doing the prophet a singular honour:

these [are they] whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth; which is a description of the angels, the ministering spirits sent forth by God to take their tour throughout the earth; not to do mischief, as Satan does; but to do good to kingdoms, nations, and men in general, and to the heirs of salvation in particular; for which they are commissioned and empowered of God; see **Heb 1:14**.

Zechariah 1:11

Ver. 11. And they answered the Angel of the Lord, that stood among the myrtle trees, and said,.... That is, the ministering angels, signified by the red horses, speckled, and white, replied to what the Angel of the Lord had said concerning them; or rather agreed to and confirmed his account of them; or else gave up the account of their tour through the earth, with their observations upon the state of it:

We have walked to and fro through the earth; according to their mission and commission:

and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest; was free from wars, as it was in the reign of Darius; though the people of the Jews were infested with enemies, who gave them trouble, and hindered all they could the rebuilding of the temple; wherefore it follows:

Zechariah 1:12

Ver. 12. Then the Angel of the Lord answered and said,.... The same that was among the myrtle trees in the bottom, **Zec 1:8**:

O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah; which were fallen to ruin, and had lain waste for many years. These words are expressive of the intercession of Christ on the behalf of the people of the Jews, his professing people, both with respect to their temporal and spiritual good:

against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? the time of the Babylonish captivity, which lasted such a term of time, and which was a token of the divine displeasure with them; but to be reckoned, not from Jeconiah's captivity, to the deliverance from it by Cyrus, as it is reckoned, Jer 25:1 **Da 9:2** but from the taking of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the temple under Zedekiah, to the rebuilding of the temple under Darius Hystaspis, in whose second year Zechariah now prophesied, **Zec 1:7**, which was a space of seventy years.

Zechariah 1:13

Ver. 13. And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me,.... See **Zec 1:9** what was the effect of Christ's intercession for the people of the Jews, was communicated to a ministering angel, and by him to the Prophet Zechariah:

[with] good words, and comfortable words; such as would be for the good and comfort of God's people, as follows; see Isa 40:1.

Zechariah 1:14

Ver. 14. So the angel that communed with me,.... Having an order from the other Angel, or the Lord of hosts:

said unto me, Cry thou; proclaim, publish, declare in the hearing of the people, for their comfort and encouragement. The Targum renders it, "prophesy":

saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion, with a great jealousy; which is expressive of his conjugal affection for his church and people, his zeal for their good, and his indignation at their enemies, and of the vengeance he would execute on them.

Zechariah 1:15

Ver. 15. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen [that are] at ease,.... The Chaldeans and Persians, and other nations, enemies of the Jews, who were now free from war, and enjoyed great prosperity, when the state and condition of the Jews was very low and discouraging:

for I was but a little displeased: that is, with his people the Jews, for their ingratitude, idolatry, and immorality; and which displeasure he showed by suffering them to be carried into captivity; see Isa 54:8:

and they helped forward the affliction; that is, the heathens, among whom the Jews were carried captive; they added to their affliction; they oppressed them more than they ought to have done, and more than was agreeable to the will of God and right in his sight; and they insulted them in their misery, and rejoiced over them. The word rze, in the Arabic language, signifies to "abound" {u}; and the meaning is, that they abounded in bringing evil upon the people of the Jews; they multiplied their afflictions and distresses.

{u} "abundavit, multiplicavit", Golius, col. 1705. Castel. col. 2721. rze "Jazar, cum e punctato, exuberavit, abundavit, multus fuit", Schindler. Lex. Pentaglot. col. 1307.

Zechariah 1:16

Ver. 16. Therefore thus saith the Lord, I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies,.... Having returned the people of the Jews from their captivity to Jerusalem, in which he had shown abundant mercy to them:

my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts; meaning the temple where he dwelt and was worshipped; the foundation of which had been laid two months before this prophecy was delivered, **Hag 2:18** and which should be raised up and finished, notwithstanding all the opposition of the enemy, and the discouragements of the people:

and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem; to measure with it, and build by it, the wall, streets, and houses of Jerusalem. The meaning is, that not only the temple should be built, but the city likewise, and that in great order, and with great exactness and symmetry; see **Zec 2:1**. The Targum paraphrases it, "upon the building of the walls of Jerusalem".

Zechariah 1:17

Ver. 17. Cry yet, saying,.... That is, "prophesy again", as the Targum paraphrases it; publish and declare openly before all:

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; or, according to the Targum, "the cities of my people shall be yet filled with good"; and so the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, "my cities shall yet flow with good things"; with all temporal prosperity and happiness; which was fulfilled in the times of Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, and the Maccabees; and especially in the times of the Messiah, when, in a spiritual sense, they were filled with good; with him who is goodness itself, and with all blessings of grace in him; and with the good news and glad tidings of the everlasting Gospel preached by him and his apostles; or, the meaning is, through the increase of men, and the affluence of all temporal mercies, not only the city of Jerusalem, but other cities of Judea, called the Lord's, because of his peculiar regard unto them, should be enlarged, and be spread here and there; or rather, abound with plenty of all good things, as the word in the Arabic {w} language signifies:

and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem; for his habitation, building again the city and temple in it: according to Capellus, though the temple was finished in the sixth year of Darius, **Ezr 6:15** yet the rebuilding of Jerusalem was not till seventy years after; namely, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, in which Nehemiah was sent to rebuild it, **Ne 2:1** for Darius reigned thirty six years; Xerxes, who succeeded him, reigned twenty years; and in the twentieth of Artaxerxes the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt by Nehemiah; so that from the finishing of the temple are to be reckoned thirty years of the remainder of the reign of Darius, twenty years of Xerxes, and as many of Artaxerxes; and he observes that the seventieth number thrice occurs in the restoration of the Jews, not without mystery, as it should seem: from the Babylonish captivity under Jeconiah, to the putting an end to it by Cyrus, were seventy years; from the taking of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple under Zedekiah, to the rebuilding of it under Darius Hystaspis, were also seventy years; then from the rebuilding of the temple to the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Artaxerxes Longimanus were likewise seventy years; so that the walls of Jerusalem lay in ruins twice seventy years, that is, one hundred and forty years; and it may be further observed, that from the decree granted to Nehemiah in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, seven weeks, or forty nine years, are allowed in Daniel's prophecy for the finishing that event; namely, the building again the walls and streets of Jerusalem in troublesome times, **Da 9:25** which carries the completion of this affair so many years further; which, when effected, would be a comfort to Zion, the inhabitants of it, and all that wished well unto it; and be a proof and evidence of God's choice of it for his worship and service; and, especially, this was fulfilled by bringing into Jerusalem, and the temple there, the messenger of the covenant, the Messiah, the Consolation of Israel; and this may have a further reference to the latter day, when the people of the Jews shall be converted, and all Israel shall be saved; which will be the consolation of them, and show that God has chosen them, and not cast them off.

{w} Vid. Schultens, Origines Hebr. l. 1. c. 4. sect. 4. p. 116.

Zechariah 1:18

Ver. 18. Then I lifted up mine eyes,.... To behold another vision which follows:

and saw, and behold four horns; either iron ones, such as Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made to push the Syrians with, 1Ki 22:11 or horns of beasts, as the horns of unicorns, to which the horns of Joseph are compared, De 33:17 and signify kingdoms or kings, and these very powerful and mighty; and so the Targum interprets them of "four kingdoms"; and which Kimchi and Abarbinel understand of the four monarchies, Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman; so ten horns, in **Da 7:24** design ten kings or kingdoms; unless rather, seeing these horns were such who had already distressed and scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem; and two of the above monarchies were not yet in being, the Grecian and Roman, when this vision was seen; and one of those that were, were friends to the Jews, as the Persians; they may in general signify all the enemies of the Jews that were round about them, on the four corners of them; as the Syrians, Assyrians, and Babylonians, on the north; the Ammonites and Moabites on the east; the Edomites and Egyptians on the south; and the Philistines on the west; as Junius thinks. Cocceius interprets them of four kings, Shalmaneser, Nebuchadnezzar, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes the first, called Longimanus; and may be applied to the antichristian states, Pagan and Papal, in the various parts of the world, called horns, **Da 7:24**.

Zechariah 1:19

Ver. 19. And I said unto the angel that talked with me,.... **Zec 1:9**:

What [be] these? that is, who do these horns signify? and what or whom do they represent?

and he answered me, These [are] the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem; which may design the distresses, vexations, and captivities of the people of Israel by their enemies, as by the Moabites, Ammonites, &c. in the times of the judges; and the captivity of the ten tribes of Israel by Shalmaneser; and of the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah, and of the destruction of Jerusalem, by Nebuchadnezzar; when they were ventilated or fanned, as the word {x} signifies, and so scattered abroad; see **Jer 6:11** and also their troubles in the times of the Medes and Persians, under Cambyses, until this second year of Darius; and may likewise have reference prophetically to their after troubles and captivity by the Romans; and to Rome Pagan, which persecuted and scattered the churches of Christ and people of God in the several parts of the world; and the antichristian states, the persecutors of the same.

{x} wrz rva "quae ventilaverunt", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Cocceius.

Zechariah 1:20

Ver. 20. And the Lord showed me four carpenters. To saw and cut in pieces the four horns; or rather "four blacksmiths" {y}; these horns were horns of iron; so the word is rendered a "smith" in 1Sa 13:19 and indeed it signifies both a worker in wood and a worker in iron; and who are sometimes distinguished by what they work in, whether wood or iron; see Isa 44:12. The Jews say {z} these four carpenters are Messiah ben David, Messiah ben Ephraim, Elijah, and the priest of righteousness; or, as elsewhere {a}, Elijah, the King Messiah, Melchizedek, and he that was anointed for war; though Kimchi much better interprets them of the kings, the princes above, who preside over kingdoms, that is, the angels; and so Jerom and Theodoret; who have been sometimes employed in the destruction of the enemies of God's people, or in preventing them doing the mischief they otherwise would; and even the several monarchies themselves have been the means of destroying each other; so the Babylonians were destroyed by the Medes and Persians; the Persians by the Grecians; the Grecians by the Romans; and the Romans by the Goths, Hunns, Vandals, &c. in the western part of the empire; and by the Saracens and Turks in the eastern part of it: and they may be applied to the apostles of Christ, who were chiefly mechanics, mean and illiterate persons, yet workmen in the Gospel, that need not to be ashamed; and who were sent by Christ into the four parts of the world, to spread his Gospel, set up his interest, and pull down the kingdom of Satan: and since the Jews make the Messiah himself one of these carpenters, they have no reason to upbraid or be offended at Jesus our Messiah being a carpenter, and a carpenter's son, as in Mt 13:55 and Kimchi owns that their ancient Rabbins explain this verse of the days of the Messiah.

{y} Myvrx "fabros ferrarios", Pembellus, Sanctius, Burkius. {z} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 52. 2. {a} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4. Vid. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 111. 4.

Zechariah 1:21

Ver. 21. Then said I, What come these to do?.... That is, these four carpenters; for, being artificers or workmen, as the Targum renders the word, the prophet concluded there was some work for them to do:

And he spake, saying; meaning the angel that talked with him, and interpreted the visions to him:

These [are] the horns which have scattered Judah; not that the carpenters were the horns, for these two are distinct from, and opposite to, one another. The words should rather be rendered, "these horns which have scattered Judah", as before said, **Zec 1:19**:

so that no man did lift up his head; or, as the Targum paraphrases it, "did not suffer" (a man) "to go with an erect stature"; but, through oppression, sorrow, and misery, was obliged to stoop, and bow, and hang down his head:

but these are come to fray them; these carpenters are come to frighten the horns, to put terror into those kings and kingdoms;

to cast out the horns of the Gentiles; to destroy their kingdoms, and take away their power from them:

which lifted up [their] horns over the land of Judah to scatter it: who make use of their power, and do harm to the people of Israel, and triumph and insult over them; see Ps 75:4 all which may be applied to the ministers of the Gospel, who are workmen; and whose business it is to fight or terrify the horns, wicked men, even men in power, the enemies of Christ's church and people; by their preaching, which has made a Felix to tremble; by their prayers, which they have been more afraid of than an army of men, as Mary queen of Scots said of the prayers of John Knox; and by their good lives and conversations, which made Herod stand in fear of John the Baptist; nay, even they have been a terror to the devil himself, and have been the means of casting him, and his principalities and powers, out of the Gentile world, and out of both the bodies and souls of men; and of casting down the strong holds of sin, and of breaking in pieces the kingdom and interest of Satan, and of building up the churches of Christ; the work of these spiritual carpenters is to cut down men, comparable to strong, sturdy, and lofty trees, for the pride and haughtiness of their hearts, the stiffness and stubbornness of their wills, and for their show of goodliness and beauty: this is done by the ministry of the word, the cutting doctrines of it, accompanied with the Spirit and power of God; as it is said, "I have hewed them by the prophets, I have slain them by, the words of my mouth", **Ho 6:5** whereas, when before, they grew up and stood on their own bottom, their morality, civility, and works of righteousness; now they are cut down, and die to all these things, as to any hope of salvation by them; and then, as the carpenter smooths and planes a timber he has hewed, and fitly frames it together, and joints it in, and lays it on a good foundation; so do Gospel ministers, as instruments in the hands of God, after hewing and cutting work through the ministration of the law, the killing letter, and which works wrath; speak comfortably to such souls, by directing them to the blood and righteousness of Christ for pardon of sin and justification of life; and ministerially lay them in the spiritual building, the church; or advise and exhort them to submit to the ordinances of Christ, and join themselves to Gospel churches; and, above all things, instruct them to build on Christ, the sure foundation in Zion; and ministerially lay him as the alone foundation to build upon for life and salvation, and not upon any works of righteousness done by them; and put them upon walking according to the line and rule of the divine word, in matters of worship, discipline, and conversation: and as there were in the first times of the Gospel many such builders, and have been more or less since; so there will be many more in the latter day, who will be very successfully employed in building, repairing, and beautifying the church of God; see Isa 58:12. Some by the four carpenters understand Zerubbabel, Joshua, Ezra, and Nehemiah; and so, by the four horns, those that opposed them in building the city and temple, as Rehum, Shimshai, Sanballat, and Tobiah; but these seem too inferior governors to be signified by horns; nor did they do what is here ascribed to them; rather their nations, Samaritans, Arabians, Ammonites, and Philistines, are meant.

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 2

This chapter contains a prophecy of the church under the Gospel dispensation; of the largeness and numbers of it; and of its protection and glory, through the presence of God in it. In this vision a man is seen with a measuring line in his hand, to measure Jerusalem with, **Zec 2:1** upon which an angel bids the angel that talked with the prophet to declare to him the largeness, populousness, and safety of Jerusalem, **Zec 2:3** then follows an exhortation to the people of God to come out of Babylon, **Zec 2:6** and then a promise of the calling of the Gentiles, and of God's gracious inhabitation in his church, which would be matter of joy to Zion; and of his inheriting Judah, and choosing Jerusalem **Zec 2:8** and the chapter is concluded with an address to all mankind, to be silent before the Lord, since he was raised up out of his habitation, **Zec 2:13**.

Ver. 1. I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked,.... And saw a third vision; which, as Kimchi owns, refers to the times of the Messiah; though it might be of use to the Jews then present, to encourage them to expect the rebuilding of Jerusalem, in a literal sense:

and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand: by whom is meant, not Nehemiah, nor Zerubbabel; see **Zec 4:10** who were concerned in the building of Jerusalem; nor any mere man, nor even a created angel; for, though he may be the same with the other angel, that did not talk with the prophet, **Zec 2:3** as Kimchi observes; seeing he seems to be superior to him that did; yet not a ministering spirit, but the Messiah, who in this book is often spoken of as a man;
See Gill on "Zec 1:8" and by "the measuring line in his hand" may be meant eternal predestination, the Lamb's book of life, which is in his keeping; and is the measure and rule by which he proceeds in the calling, justification, and glorification of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; or the Scriptures of truth, the measure and rule of doctrine, discipline, worship, and conversation; and according to which Christ forms, constitutes, and

regulates Gospel churches; see Eze 40:3.

Zechariah 2:2

Ver. 2. Then said I, Whither goest thou?.... As it showed great freedom and boldness in the prophet to put such a question to the man with the measuring reed, it was great condescension in him to return him an answer, as follows:

and he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem; not literally understood, which was not yet thoroughly built; but the Gospel church, often so called; see Heb 12:22 and this measuring of it denotes the conformity of it to the rule of God's word; a profession of the true doctrines of it, and an observance of the ordinances of it, as delivered in it; and an agreement of the walk, life, and conversation of its members with it:

to see what [is] the breadth thereof, and what [is] the length thereof; the length of the New Jerusalem is as large as the breadth; its length, breadth, and height, are equal, Re 21:16.

Zechariah 2:3

Ver. 3. And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth,.... See **Zec 1:9** and he "went forth" from the place where the prophet was, with whom he had been conversing:

and another angel went out to meet him: the same that was seen among the myrtle trees, **Zec 1:8** and here, with a measuring line in his hand, **Zec 2:1**.

Zechariah 2:4

Ver. 4. And said unto him,.... That is, the other angel said to the angel that had been talking with the prophet,

Run, speak to this young man: meaning Zechariah, who was either young in years, as Samuel and Jeremiah were when they prophesied; or he was a servant of a prophet older than he, and therefore so called, as Joshua, Moses's minister, was, Nu 11:28 as Kimchi observes:

saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited [as] towns without walls; this shows that this is not to be understood of Jerusalem in a literal sense, for that was not inhabited as a town without a wall; its wall was built in Nehemiah's time, and remained until the city was destroyed by Vespasian; yea, it had a treble wall, as Josephus says {b}; but of the church of Christ in Gospel times; and denotes both the safety and security of it; see Eze 38:11 and the populousness of it; and especially as it will be in the latter day, when both Jews and Gentiles are called, and brought into it; which sense is confirmed by what follows:

for the multitude of men and cattle therein; the Jews being meant by "men"; see Eze 34:31 and the Gentiles by "cattle", to which they used to be compared by the former: this will be fulfilled when the nation of the Jews will be born at once, and all Israel will be saved, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in; for the number of the spiritual Israel, the sons of the living God, both Jews and Gentiles, shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured, **Ho 1:10** and when there will be such a large increase of converts; and such flockings to Zion, to the spiritual Jerusalem, the church of God, that the place will be too small for them, Isa 49:19 whereas, when Jerusalem in a literal sense was rebuilt, after the Babylonian captivity, there was a want of persons to inhabit it, and lots were cast for one out of ten to dwell in it; and they were glad of others that offered themselves willingly to be inhabitants of it, Ne 11:1 for there was but a small number that returned from Babylon to repeople the city of Jerusalem, and the whole country of Judea; no more came from thence but forty two thousand, three hundred, and threescore, besides men and maid servants, which amounted to seven or eight thousand more, **Ezr 2:64 Ne 7:66** which were but a few to fill such a country, and so many cities and towns that were in it, besides Jerusalem; and yet Josephus {c} affirms, that the number of those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, that came up from thence, and were above twelve years of age, were four millions, six hundred, and twenty eight thousand; in which he is followed by Zonaras {d}, and it is admitted and approved of by Sanctius on the place; which is not only contrary to the accounts of Ezra and Nehemiah, but is incredible; that such a number that went into captivity, which was not very large, should, under all the distresses and oppressions they laboured, in seventy years time so multiply, and that two tribes only, as to be almost eight times more than all the twelve tribes were at their coming out of Egypt; a number large enough to have overrun the Babylonian monarchy; and too many to be supported in so small a country as the land of Canaan: wherefore, upon the whole, it must be best to interpret this of spiritual and mystical Jerusalem, and of the populousness of the church of Christ in the latter day.

{b} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2. {c} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 3. sect. 10. {d} Apud Hudson in ib.

Zechariah 2:5

Ver. 5. For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about,..... So that she needs no other wall to secure her, the power of God encompassing her about as the mountains did Jerusalem, Ps 125:2 and he being as a wall of fire to terrify and destroy her enemies; for our God is a consuming fire, Heb 12:29. Drusius thinks it is a metaphor taken from travellers in some countries, who kindle fires about their tents, to keep off lions, and other beasts of prey; and observes of lions particularly, that they are exceedingly terrified by fire; for which he refers to John Leo in his description of Africa; and Pliny makes {e} mention of several things that are terrifying to them, but especially fires, he says; and so Dr. Shaw {f}, of late, speaking of the lions in Barbary, remarks, fire is what they are the most afraid of; yet, notwithstanding all the precautions of the Arabs in this respect, with others he takes notice of, it frequently happens that these ravenous beasts, outbraving all those terrors, will leap into the midst of an enclosure or fold, and drag from thence a sheep, or a goat; and Tavernier {g} tells a story, by which he thinks it appears to be a vulgar error that lions will not come near the fire; though the relation itself shows it to be not only a received opinion, but a common custom to light fires in the night, to preserve from lions: his story is,

"a party of Dutch soldiers, under the command of a serjeant, far advanced in the country (about the Cape of Good Hope), and night coming on, they made a great fire, as well to keep themselves from the lions, as to warm themselves, and so lay down to sleep round about it; being asleep, a lion seized one of the soldier's arms, which with difficulty was got out, after the lion was shot;"

but this seems to be the case, when these creatures are dreadfully hunger bitten; however, be it as it will, God is the sure and safe protection of his people; who went before the people of Israel in a pillar of a cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night, when they passed through a terrible wilderness, in which were beasts of prey; and surrounded Elisha with horses and chariots of fire, when the king of Syria sent a large host to take him; so that he could say, to encourage his servant, "they that be for us are more than they that be with them", **2Ki 6:15** who seem to be angels; and the Jews {h} here interpret it of the family of God, his angels, made a wall to Jerusalem to preserve it; the cherubim and a flaming sword, set to keep the garden of Eden, were, according to Lactantius {i}, a wall of fire about it; for (he says), when God cast man out of paradise, he walled it about with fire: but that was that man might not enter in; but here he himself is a wall of fire, that his people may be safe; hence they have no reason to fear the wrath of their enemies, the most fierce and furious, savage and cruel, comparable to lions, bears, &c.; for, if God is for them, on their side, and on all sides of them, who can be against them to any purpose? The Targum paraphrases it,

"my Word shall be unto her, saith the Lord, as a wall of fire encompassing her round about:"

and will be the glory in the midst of her: appear glorious in her, be glorified in her, and by her, and be her glory, and make her glorious; as the Lord does by granting his gracious presence with his church and people, in his word and ordinances; see **Isa 4:1** Isa 60:13.

{e} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16. {f} Travels, tom. 1. par. 3. c. 2. p. 172. {g} Travels through India, in Harris's Voyages and Travels, vol. 1. p. 848. {h} Pesikta Rabbati apud Yalkut in loc. {i} Institut. Divin. l. 2. c. 13.

Zechariah 2:6

Ver. 6. Ho, ho,.... This word expresses a call and proclamation; and is doubled, as Kimchi observes, to confirm it; and so the Targum paraphrases it, "proclaim to the dispersed:"

[come forth], and flee from the land of the north, saith the Lord; that is, from Babylon, which lay north of Judea; see **Jer 1:13 Jer 3:12** where many of the Jews continued, and did not return with the rest when they came up out of the captivity; and are therefore called to come forth from thence in haste; and figuratively designs, either the people of God that are among the men of the world, and are called to separate from them, and have no fellowship with there; or such as will be in mystical Babylon, a little before its destruction; and will be called out of it, lest they partake of her plagues; see Re 18:4:

for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the Lord; meaning either the dispersion of the Jews in Babylon, and other countries; or of the people of God, being scattered up and down in the jurisdiction of Rome Papal; or the sense is, that it was his will and purpose, when they were come out of Babylon, that they should be spread in the several parts of the world, to support the cause of Christ, and strengthen his interest.

Zechariah 2:7

Ver. 7. Deliver thyself, O Zion,.... Or make thy escape, you that belong to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, and ought to have your abode there, and not in Babylon: flee from thence,

that dwelleth [with] the daughter of Babylon; in any of the antichristian states, who are the daughters of Babylon, the mother of harlots, Re 17:5 so it may be rendered, "that inhabits the daughter of Babylon" {k}; dwells in any of the cities, towns, and villages, belonging to it.

{k} lbb tb tbvwy, oi katoikountev yugatera babulwnov, Sept.; "habitatrix filiae Babel", Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "[vel] inhabitans filiam Babel", De Dieu.

Zechariah 2:8

Ver. 8. For thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... Christ, who is the true Jehovah, and Lord of armies, as appears from his being sent in the next clause:

After the glory; which is promised, **Zec 2:5** so the Targum and Kimchi; or, "afterwards" shall be "the glory" {l}; or a glorious time and state; that is, after God's people are brought out of mystical Babylon, when the Jews shall be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, then will be the latter day glory; and at the same time will be the fall and destruction of antichrist, and of the antichristian states, as follows:

hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you; the Chaldeans and Babylonians, who spoiled and carried captive the Jews; or the antichristian nations, which persecuted and wasted the people of God, the followers of the Lamb; but now Christ will be sent, and will come in a spiritual manner, and take vengeance on them; he will destroy antichrist with the breath of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming; with the sharp sword going out of his mouth, Re 19:15:

for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye; either his own eye, he hurts himself; or the eye of the Lord of hosts; "of mine eye", as some read it {m}, as the Vulgate Latin version; which shows how near and dear the Lord's people are to him. The pupil or apple of the eye is a little aperture or perforation in the middle of the tunic or coat of the eye, called the uvea and iris, about which the iris forms a ring; and through this little opening the rays of light pass to the crystalline humour, to be formed on the retina or net, at the bottom of the eye. It is a very weak and tender part, and easily hurt with the least thing; and fitly describes the feeble state of Christ's people; and how soon and easily they may be disturbed, distressed, and hurt by their enemies: and as this is a principal part of the eye, and a part of a man's self, dear and valuable to him; so are the Lord's people parts, as it were, of himself; they are members of his body, closely united to him; and whatever injury is done to them he reckons as done to himself: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" **Ac 9:5** and being highly esteemed by him, and having the strongest affection for them, he resents every affront given them, and will punish all that hurt them; and exceeding careful is he of them, to keep and preserve them from being hurt: "he kept him as the apple of his eye",
De 32:10, which, being such an useful and tender part as it is, it is wonderfully provided for by nature against all events; besides the orbit in which it is placed; and the eyebrows, which prevent many nuisances; and

the eyelids, which cover and defend it in sleep; and the fringes of hair on them, which break the too violent impressions of light, and keep off motes and flies; there are no less, than six tunics or coats about it {n}, as so many preservatives of it: now, as the God of nature has taken so much care of this useful member of the human body, how much more careful and tender must we suppose the God of grace, and our merciful Redeemer and High Priest, to be over his dear people, parts of himself, redeemed by his blood, and designed and prepared for eternal glory and happiness; and how daring must such be who offer the least violence unto them; nor must they expect to escape his wrath and vengeance, that seek their hurt, and give them disturbance; see Ps 17:8 and as this may respect the Jews called out of Babylon in the two preceding verses **Zec 2:6**, it may be concluded that they were obedient to the divine call, though it is not recorded; it being not likely that God, who had so great a regard for them, would suffer them to continue there to their destruction; for it was about two years after this prophecy, in the fourth year of Darius, or the beginning of the fifth, that Babylon revolted from him, and was besieged twenty months by him, before he took it; and which he did at last by the stratagem of Zopyrus, one of his generals, when he beat down its walls and gates, and put to death three thousand of the inhabitants that were most guilty {o}; but, before this, it is reasonable to suppose that the people of God, so dear unto him as is expressed, were called out from hence; as those of his people, equally dear to him, will be called out of mystical Babylon before its destruction; see Re 18:4.

{l} dwbk rxa "tandem [erit] gloria, aut postea erit gloria", De Dieu. {m} So in Siphre apud Galatin. de Arean. Cathol. Ver. l. 1. c. 8. {n} Vid. Chamber's Dictionary, in the word "Eye". {o} Vid. Prideaux's Connexion, par. 1. B. 3. p. 188, 189.

Zechariah 2:9

Ver. 9. For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them,.... The nations; either the Babylonian, or the antichristian states; meaning, that he would exert his power, and inflict punishment on them, and utterly destroy them; which would be done by the bare shaking of his hand:

and they shall be a spoil to their servants; as the Babylonians were to the Persians; not through Cyrus, which had been done; but through Darius, who took Babylon, after a siege of twenty months, and put great numbers to death; and all became a spoil to the Persians, who had been their servants: or the ten kings, that gave their kingdoms to the beast, and were subject to him; but now shall hate the whore, and eat her flesh; and all her riches and revenues shall be a spoil unto them, and be divided among them, Re 17:12:

and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me; either the Prophet Zechariah, that he was a true prophet, and had his mission from the Lord of hosts, as will appear by the accomplishment of these prophecies; or rather Christ, sent by God the Father; and who will be known and owned by the Jews, as well as by the Gentiles, to be the sent of God, when they shall be converted, and antichrist shall be destroyed. Kimchi refers this, and the following verse **Zec 2:10**, to the times of the Messiah.

Zechariah 2:10

Ver. 10. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion,.... Or, "congregation of Zion", as the Targum paraphrases it; the Jewish church, great numbers of that people being converted, and in a church state; or the whole Christian church at this time, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, who are called upon to rejoice and sing at the destruction of antichrist; see Re 18:20 and because of the presence of God in the midst of them, as follows:

for, lo, I come; not in the flesh: this is not to be understood of the incarnation of Christ; or of his coming in human nature to dwell in the land of Judea; but of his spiritual coming in the latter day, to set up his kingdom in the world, in a more visible and glorious manner:

and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord; the presence of Christ in his churches, and with his people, in attendance on his word and ordinances, will be very manifest and constant in the latter day.

Zechariah 2:11

Ver. 11. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day,.... The Gospel will be preached in all nations, and multitudes will be converted, and embrace and profess the Christian religion, and join themselves to the churches of Christ, which, in the New Testament, is expressed by being joined to the Lord, **Ac 5:13** see Jer 50:5:

and shall be my people; shall appear to be so, who before were not the people of God; did not profess themselves, and were not known to be, the people of God, though they secretly were in the counsel and covenant of God; but now, being called by grace, they become openly and manifestly his people, **1Pe 2:10**:

and I will dwell in the midst of thee; in the church, consisting of people of many nations, as well as of Jews:

and thou shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee; to the Jews, as well as to the Gentiles; See Gill on "Zec 2:9".

Zechariah 2:12

Ver. 12. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land,.... The Lord's people is his portion, and the lot of his inheritance; whom he has chosen, and calls as such, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; but here it seems to mean the believing Jews; who, it is very likely, upon their conversion, will be returned to their own land, here called "the holy land"; because formerly here the Lord's holy people dwelt, his holy sanctuary was, and his holy worship and ordinances were attended on; and where now he will possess and enjoy his people, and favour them with communion with himself:

and shall choose Jerusalem again; after long trodden down of the Gentiles; as it formerly was a place of divine worship, so it shall be again; and which will be performed in it in a more spiritual and evangelical manner than ever; or it may respect the people of the Jews, who, being called by grace, this will be a kind of a renovation of their election, and an evidence of it; see Ro 11:26.

Zechariah 2:13

Ver. 13. Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord,.... Be filled with fear, awe, and astonishment, at the wonderful work of God; the destruction of antichrist; the conversion of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles: let them not open their mouths, or dare to say one word against it. The Targum interprets the words of the wicked, and paraphrases them thus,

"let all the wicked be consumed before the Lord;"

see Ps 104:35 and it seems to design the rest of the people, who will not be converted; called flesh, being not only frail and mortal, but corrupt and sinful; and so not able to contend with God, who is mighty in strength, and glorious in holiness, and a God doing wonders. A like phrase is in **Hab 2:20**:

for he is raised up out of his holy habitation: which is heaven, Isa 63:15 where he seemed to have been as it were asleep for many hundreds of years, even during the reign of antichrist; but now he will be as a man awaked out of his sleep, and will arise to take vengeance on his and his church's enemies, and to help them, and make them happy and glorious.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Zechariah 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 3

In this chapter, under the type of Joshua the high priest, is showed the state and condition of the priesthood, and of the church of God, in his times; and in it are various promises concerning the true High Priest, Christ, and of the efficacy and permanency of his priesthood. The vision of Joshua is in the form of a judicial process: Joshua is the person accused, and is described by his situation, standing before the Angel of the Lord; and by the filthy garments he had on, which were the ground of the charge against him, **Zec 3:1** The accuser of him is Satan, who stood at his right hand; and his Judge is the Angel of the Lord, before whom he was, **Zec 3:1**. The sentence given against his accuser is by way of rebuke, enforced by the Lord's choice of Jerusalem, and merciful deliverance of this person; and, as given in his favour, is an order to take his filthy garments from him, and clothe him with change of raiment, and to put a fair mitre on his head; which were accordingly done, **Zec 3:2** and a promise is made him, by way of protestation, that if he would walk in his ways, and keep his charge, he should judge his house, and keep his courts, and should have a walking place among those that stood by, **Zec 3:6** and next Joshua, and those that were with him, are addressed as men wondered at; and are called upon to hearken to a promise of the Messiah, under the character of the Branch, **Zec 3:8** and under that of a stone with seven eyes on it, and engravings in it, by whom the iniquity of God's people is removed, **Zec 3:9** and the chapter is closed with an account of the prosperity, peace, and safety of the saints under the Gospel dispensation, **Zec 3:10**.

Ver. 1. And he showed me Joshua the high priest,.... Who was one that came up out of the captivity, and was principally concerned in building the temple, and had many enemies to obstruct him in it; and who falling into sin, or his sons, in marrying strange wives, Ezr 10:18, which he might connive at, Satan was ready to catch it up, and accuse him before God; though rather Joshua is to be considered, not personally, but typically, representing the state and condition of the priesthood, in which office he was; and which was very low, mean, and abject, under the second temple; or the church of God, which the priests, especially the high priest, were representatives of: and indeed this vision may be accommodated to the case of any single believer, fallen into sin, and accused by Satan, and whose advocate Christ is:

standing before the Angel of the Lord; not any created angel, but Christ the Angel of God's presence, who is called Jehovah, **Zec 3:2** is the rebuker of Satan, and the advocate of his people; and who takes away their sins, and clothes them with his righteousness: and "standing before" him does not mean barely being in his sight and presence, but as ministering to him; this being the posture both of angels and men, the servants of the Lord, **Da 7:10**, either he was offering sacrifice for the people, or asking counsel of God for them; or rather giving thanks for his and their deliverance from captivity, being as brands taken out of the fire; and praying to be stripped of his filthy garments, and to be clothed with others more decent, and becoming his office; and for help and assistance in the building of the temple, and against those that obstructed him: also he was brought and placed here as a guilty person, charged with sin, and to be tried before him,

Satan standing at his right hand to resist him; either to hinder him in his work of building the temple, by stirring up Sanballat, and other enemies; or rather to accuse him of sin, and bring a charge against him, and get sentence passed upon him; so the accuser used to stand at the right hand of the accused. The Targum paraphrases it,

"and sin standing at his right hand to resist him:"

when the people of God fall into sin, Satan the accuser of the brethren, their avowed enemy, observes it, and accuses them before the Lord, and seeks their condemnation. Maimonides {p} understands this of his standing at the right hand of the angel; but it was not usual for the prosecutor, accuser, or pleader, whether for or against a person arraigned, to stand the right hand of the judge: indeed, in the Jewish sanhedrim, or grand court of judicature, there were two scribes stood before the judges; the one on the right hand, the other on the left; who took down in writing the pleadings in court, and the sentences of those that were acquitted, and of those that were condemned; he on the right hand the former, and the other on the left hand the latter {q}. The prince or chief judge of the court sat in the middle; and his deputy, called "Ab Beth Din", or father of the court, sat at his right hand; and a wise man, a principal one, at his left {r}; but it was usual for the pleader, who was called byr leb, "Baal Rib", to stand on the right hand of the party cited into the court, whether he pleaded for or against him {s}: and to this custom is the allusion here, and in Ps 106:6 where Satan, who is the accuser of men, and pleads against them, is placed at the right hand, as here; and God, who pleads the cause of his poor people, is also represented as standing on their right hand. The business of Satan here was to accuse, to bring charges, to plead for condemnation, and endeavour to get the sentence of it passed against Joshua; for he was at his right hand, to be an "adversary" to him, as his name (Satan) signifies, which he has from

the word here used; being an enemy to mankind in general, and especially to the people of God, and more especially to persons in sacred public offices; to whom he is antidikov, "a court adversary", as the Apostle Peter calls him, **1Pe 5:8** who appears in open court against them, and charges them in a most spiteful and malicious manner; and is a most, implacable, obstinate, and impudent one, as his name signifies, and the word from whence it is derived {t}; though Maimonides {u} thinks the name is derived from hjv, which signifies to decline, or go back from anything; since he, without doubt, makes men to decline from the way of truth to the way of falsehood and error.

{p} Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 22. p. 398. {q} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 3. Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 9. Mosis Kotsensis Mitzvot Torah, Pr. Affirm. 97. {r} Maimon. ib. sect. 3. Vid. Cocceium in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 3. {s} Godwin's Moses and Aaron, l. 5. c. 3. {t} Vid. Schultens in Job i. 6. {u} Moreh Nevochim, ut supra. (par. 3. c. 22. p. 398.)

Zechariah 3:2

Ver. 2. And the Lord said unto Satan,.... The same with the Angel of the Lord, **Zec 3:1** having heard the charge brought by him against Joshua, here called Jehovah, being the Son of God, and properly God:

The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; these words may be considered, either as the intercession of Jehovah the Son with Jehovah the Father, for Joshua and his church, and against Satan; that he would reprove him for his malice and wickedness; stop his mouth, and silence him, that he might not go on to accuse; that he would confound his schemes, and restrain him from doing mischief; tread him down, and bruise him under the feet of his people, and pour out his wrath upon him: or as a declaration of what should be done to him, or what he himself would do; for it may be rendered, "the Lord will rebuke thee" {w}; as the following clause is by some, who take this to be a wish, and the following a positive declaration, that Jehovah the Father would certainly rebuke Satan; as might be concluded from the reasons and arguments used by the angel, taken from God's choice of Jerusalem; the building of which Satan endeavoured to hinder, though God had chosen it for his habitation and worship; and from the deliverance of Joshua out of the fire for that purpose: and this reproof of him on the behalf of his people is founded on their election of God:

even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee; which act is eternal; springs from the love and grace of God towards them; antecedes all works, good or bad, done by them; stands firm, sure, and unalterable; such who are interested in it are called, justified, and shall be glorified; nor has Satan anything to do with them; nor will any charge of his be of any avail against them, **Ro 8:33**:

[is] not this a brand plucked out of the fire? which is to be understood of Joshua; not of his being delivered out of that fire, into which the Jews {x}

say he was cast, along with Ahab and Zedekiah, whom the king of Babylon roasted in it, Jer 29:22 when he marvellously escaped; others say {y} 8000 young priests fled to the temple, and were burnt in it, and only Joshua was preserved; but of his deliverance out of the Babylonish captivity, and also of the priesthood, which, during the captivity, when the temple was destroyed, and temple service ceased, was like a brand in the fire; and though Joshua the high priest was returned, and the priesthood in some measure restored, yet not to its former glory, the temple not being yet built; and therefore was but like a smoking firebrand; likewise the people of God may be meant; see **Am 4:11**, who are by nature like a branch cut off, a dry stick cast into the fire, and half burnt; they are in a state of separation from God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and they are unprofitable and unfruitful, and in danger in themselves of being consumed in the fire of divine wrath, of which they are as deserving as others, and are under the sentence of it; and, when convinced, have dreadful apprehensions of being consumed by it; but, through the grace, mercy, love, and power of God, they are plucked out of this state in the effectual calling, and are secured from everlasting destruction; wherefore Satan is rebuked for attempting to bring any who are instances of such grace and goodness into condemnation; it being wicked and malicious, bold and daring, vain and fruitless; since such are secured by the grace and power of God, and are preserved for everlasting glory and happiness.

{w} regy "increpabit", Burkius. {x} Jarchi & Kimchi in loc. {y} T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 69. 2.

Zechariah 3:3

Ver. 3. Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments,.... Having fallen into sin. The Jewish writers {z} interpret this of the sin of his children in marrying strange wives, Ezr 10:18 or he had married one himself, as Jerom from the Jews, on the place; or a whore, as Justin Martyr {a} suggests; or had been slothful and sluggish in rebuilding the temple; and, be it what it will, Satan had aggravated it, and represented him as a most filthy creature, covered with sin, and as it were clothed with it: sins may well be called filthy garments, since righteousnesses are as filthy rags, Isa 64:6. It may also denote the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood, and the pollutions in it, at least in those who officiated therein, and especially under the second temple; as well as may represent the defilements of the Lord's people by sins they fall into:

and stood before the angel: as an accused person, charged with sin, and waiting the issue of the process against him: he stood under an humble sense of his iniquities, looking to the blood and righteousness of Christ for pardon and justification; praying and entreating that these filthy garments might be took away from him, and he be clothed with fine linen, suitable to his character as a priest. Such a sordid dress was the habit of persons arraigned for crimes. It was usual, especially among the Romans, when a man was accused of, and charged with, capital crimes, and during his arraignment, to let down his hair, suffer his beard to grow long, to wear filthy ragged garments, and appear in a very dirty and sordid habit; hence such were called "sordidati" {b}: nay, it was not only customary for the accused person, when he was brought into court before the people to be tried, to be in such a filthy dress; but even his near relations, friends, and acquaintance, before the court went to voting, used to appear in like manner, with their hair dishevelled, and clothed with garments foul and out of fashion, weeping and crying, and deprecating punishment; thinking, by such a filthy and deformed habit, to move the pity of the people {c}. It is said of the ambassadors of the Rhodians at Rome, upon a certain victory obtained, that they appeared at first in white garments, suitable to a congratulation; but when they were told that the Rhodians had not so well deserved to be reckoned among the friends and allies of the Romans, they immediately put on sordid garments, and went about to the houses of the principal men, with prayers and tears entreating that cognizance might first be taken of their cause, before they were condemned {d}: though, on the contrary, some, when arraigned, as defying their accusers, and as a token of their innocence, and to show the fortitude of their minds, and even, if they could, to terrify the court itself, would dress out in the most splendid manner; or, however, would not follow the above custom. It is reported of Scipio Africanus, that when he was arraigned in court, he would not omit shaving his beard, nor put off his white garments, nor appear in the common dress of arraigned persons {e}: and when Manlius Capitolinus was arraigned in court, none of his relations would change their clothes; and Appius Claudius, when he was tried by the tribunes of the common people, behaved with such spirit, and put on such a bold countenance, as thinking that by his ferocity he might strike terror into the tribunes; and so Herod, when he was accused before Hyrcanus, went into the court clothed in purple, and attended with a guard of armed men {f}: whether the above custom obtained in Judea, and so early as the times of this prophet, is not so evident; though Josephus ben Gorion says it was a custom for a guilty person to stand before the judges clothed in black, and his head covered with dust {g}; however, it is certain that with the Jews a distinction was made in the dress of priests, who, by the sanhedrim, were found guilty or not; such as were, were clothed and veiled in "black"; and such as were not, but were found right and perfect, were clothed in white; and went in, and ministered with their brethren the priests {h}.

{z} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1. {a} Dialog. cum Trypho, p. 344. {b} Salmuth. in Paneirol. Memorab. par. 1. tit. 44. p. 187. {c} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 5. {d} Liv. Hist. l. 45. c. 20. {e} A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 3. c. 4. {f} Alex. ab Alex. ut supra. (Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 5) {g} Hist. Heb. c. 44. apud Drusium in Amos ii. 7. {h} Misn. Middot, c. 5. sect. 3. T. Bab. Yoma fol. 19. 1. Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 6. sect. 11.

Zechariah 3:4

Ver. 4. And he answered, and spake,.... That is, the Angel of the Lord, before whom Joshua stood, answered to the accusations of Satan, and the entreaties of Joshua: and spake

unto those that stood before him; not the fellows that sat before Joshua, **Zec 3:8** for the priests, who were Joshua's fellows, could not take away sin; nor indeed can ministers of the Gospel, only ministerially or declaratively, as instruments, in bringing the good news of pardon to the comfort of distressed minds; whom the ministering angels may here represent, that stood before Christ the Archangel, the Head of all principalities and powers, and who are ministering spirits to him; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"and he said to them who ministered before him;"

who, though they can not expiate sin, or make atonement for it, may bring the tidings of pardon to a poor fallen believer:

saying, Take away the filthy garments from him; it may be observed, that the garments of the priests were to be new and fair, according to the Jewish canons {i}; and if they became filthy, they did not whiten them, nor wash them, but left them for threads (or wicks of candles), and put on new; and so orders are here given not to wash the filthy garments of Joshua, but to take them away: it is not, take him, Satan, the address is not to him; nor angels, who are spoken to, take away this filthy creature from me, I can not bear the sight of him; but take away his sins, not the being, power, or sense of them; nor does it signify making atonement for them, or removing them out of the sight of justice; but a taking them away out of Joshua's sight, and giving him a sense of pardon, a comfortable view of it, in which angels and ministers of the word may be assisting; see **Isa 6:6** and is effectually done, when Christ, who has power to forgive sin, makes an application of forgiving grace himself, as follows:

and unto him he said; that is, the Angel of the Lord said to Joshua:

Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee; which shows that he had sinned, and interprets the filthy garments he was clothed with: Christ took his iniquity upon himself, bore and made satisfaction for it, and removed it as far from him as the east from the west; and now caused the guilt of it to pass from his conscience, and gave him a comfortable view of the free and full pardon of it. The word "behold" is prefixed to this declaration of pardon, to ascertain the truth of it, to fix his attention to it, and raise his admiration at it:

and I will clothe thee with change of raiment; garments to put on and off; for, in those hot countries, they used to shift their garments often; and these do not design priestly garments, such as the high priest put on, on the day of atonement, when he put off his common garments, and, having done his work, shifted again, Le 16:23 such change of garments the high priest, indeed, had; and so had the common priests; for they did not wear the same garments, when out of service, as when in it; See Gill on "Eze 42:14" see Gill on "Eze 44:19"; but priestly garments seem rather to be intended in the following verses, which were put on along with the mitre: change of raiment here rather signify such as used to be wore on festivals and holy days, rich, valuable, precious garments; such as men wore when they went abroad, and appeared in company, and upon return home put off again; and especially clean neat garments, as some render the word {k}, in opposition to filthy ones Joshua was clothed with: when arraigned persons put on sordid garments, they were said, "moutare vestem", to change their apparel; but here clean, instead of filthy garments, are called change of raiment with great propriety; and a happy exchange is this indeed! The word is in the plural number, and may point at more garments than one, different suits of apparel, with which changes might be frequently made, both for delight and refreshment; and may have regard to the several garments of believers in Christ, of all good men, partakers of the grace of God: they have the garment of an outward holy conversation, which they are to watch and keep, lest they walk naked; and which, as it is often spotted with sin, they wash and make white in the blood of the Lamb: and there is the integrity and faithfulness of the saints in the performance of their duty, in their several stations of life; and especially of those in public office, in the discharge of that; who, as Job, put on righteousness, and it clothes them, and judgment is as a robe and diadem to them, Job 29:14 and there is the garment of internal holiness, the new man, consisting of the various graces of the spirit, which is put on as a garment, and makes believers all glorious within; as well as their clothing is of wrought gold, the righteousness of Christ; the principal garment, called the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation; the best robe, and wedding garment, fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness or righteousnesses of the saints, Re 19:8 and so the Targum renders the word here, "with righteousnesses": though, as one change of raiment, or suit of apparel, may be meant, so one sort of righteousness only may be pointed at, even the one obedience of Christ, or his justifying righteousness; which may be so called, to denote the excellency and fulness of it, being sufficient to clothe and justify all the elect of God; like raiment, this is not in the saints, but put upon them, and covers them, and keeps them warm; protects from injuries, and beautifies and adorns: this robe of righteousness Christ has wrought out for his people, and he clothes them with it; it is his gift unto them, and they receive it from him; by which they are freed from all sin and condemnation, and their persons and services are accepted with God.

{i} Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 4, 5. {k} twulxm "vestibus aliis", i. e. "puris", Munster; "mundas et pretiosas", Vatablus; "vestes elegantiores et cultiores", Drusius; "vestibus mundioribus", Grotius; "vestibus mundis", Burkius; "significat in genere vestes decoras et pretiosas", ib.

Zechariah 3:5

Ver. 5. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head,.... These are either the words of Jehovah the Father, who has all the angels at his command, and can order them to do what he pleases; always regards the intercession of Christ; is ever well pleased with his righteousness, and with his people, as clothed with it; and, where he gives grace, he gives more grace: a man clothed with Christ's righteousness is upon rising ground; he is in the way to great honour and glory: or, as some think, they are the words of the Angel of the Lord, the Messiah, continued, who willed, ordered, and commanded his ministering servants to do this, that Joshua might appear agreeably to the dignity of his office, and look great, as well as clean and neat: or rather they are the words of Zechariah the prophet; and design either the inward thoughts and secret wishes of his mind; or were an humble request of his, and was regarded; who, seeing something wanting to make Joshua a complete high priest, intercedes for it: so one saint rejoices in the restoration of another; and is so far from envying the gifts and graces of the greatest, that he wishes him more:

so they set a fair mitre upon his head; such as the high priest wore; on which was a plate of gold, and on it written "Holiness to the Lord"; and was an emblem of Christ being made sanctification to his people; see Ex 28:4. The mitre was a garment of the high priest, a sort of covering for the head, a cap or turban: it was made of linen, and is called the linen mitre, Le 16:4 and that which Joshua might have wore before, being stained and foul, it is requested that a "fair" or "clean" {l} one might be set upon his head. It consisted, as the Jewish writers say {m}, of sixteen cubits or ells, which were rolled up in the form of a Turkish turban; and has its name in Hebrew from its being thus rolled up. The account Josephus {n} gives of it is, that it was

"a cap or bonnet wore on the head, not rising up in a point, nor encompassing the whole head, but put on little more than the middle of it; and is called "masnaempthes" (it should be "mitznephet"); and is formed in such a manner, as to look like a crown, made of a linen web, like a swath or roller; for it is many times rolled about and sewed;"

and with which Jerom's account of it agrees; who says {o},

"the fourth sort of garment is a round cap or bonnet, such as we see painted on Ulysses, like a globe, circle, or sphere, divided in the middle, and one part set on the head: this we and the Greeks call a "tiara"; the Hebrews, "mitznephet": it has no point at top, nor does it cover the whole head to the hair, but leaves a third part of the forehead uncovered; and so bound with a lace at the back of the head, that it cannot easily fall from it: it is made of fine linen; and is so well covered with a linen cloth, (and which also Josephus takes notice of in the above place), that no traces of the needle appear without."

It hid the seams, and the deformity of them: both the high priest and the common priests wore mitres, as appears from Ex 28:4 and the difference between them, according to the Jewish writers {p}, seems chiefly to lie in the manner of rolling and wrapping them: the mitre of the high priest was wrapped about his head, as you roll a broken limb, roll upon roll, and did not rise up to a point, but was flat on his head; but that of the common priests consisted of various folds and rolls; which gradually rose up to a point, as a nightcap, or high crowned hat. Josephus {q} contrary to all other writers, makes the high priest to have two mitres; for he says, he had a cap like to the former, such as all the rest of the priests had, upon which another was sewed, variegated with blue, or a violet colour; which Braunius {r} thinks is a mistake of his, arising from the blue lace, with which the plate of gold, that had engraven on it Holiness to the Lord, was fastened to the mitre; or else that the place is corrupted, or has been interpolated by some other hand; since this would make the high priest to have nine garments, and not eight only; but Fortunatus Scacchus {s} takes the passage to be genuine, and argues from it for another mitre or cap, more worthy of the high priest; and which was peculiar to him, and was very curiously wrought, and on which the celestial globe was figured; and so Josephus says {t}, that the cap being made of blue or hyacinth, seemed to signify heaven; for otherwise the name of God would not have been put upon it. The son of Sirach, Ecclesiasticus 45:12 speaks very highly of this covering of the high priest's head, calling it

"a crown of gold upon the mitre, wherein was engraved Holiness, an ornament of honour, a costly work, the desires of the eyes, goodly and beautiful;"

as here a fair mitre:

and clothed him with garments; priestly ones, suitable to his office, which were in all eight; which were the linen breeches; the coat of linen; an embroidered girdle; a robe of blue; an ephod of gold; a breastplate curiously wrought, in which were the Urim and Thummim; a mitre of fine linen, and a plate of pure gold on it, **Le 8:7** and on the day of atonement he wore the four following extraordinary garments, breeches, coat, girdle, and mitre all of linen, Le 16:4 {u}; all which were typical of the clothing of believers by Christ, by whom they are made priests unto God: "and clothed him with garments"; priestly robes, suitable to his office:

and the Angel of the Lord stood by; to see all done according to his order; and not as a mere spectator, for he was concerned in clothing him himself; and he still stood to denote his constant care of Joshua, and his regard to him, and as having something more to say to him, as follows:

{l} rwhj Pynu kidarin kayaran, Sept.; "cidarim mundam", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c. aykd, Targum. {m} Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 19. {n} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 3. {o} De Vestitu Sacerdotum ad Fabiolam, fol. 19. I. {p} Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 2. Aben Ezra in Exod. xxviii. 36. {q} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7.) sect. 6. {r} De Vestitu Sacerdot. Hebr. l. 2. c. 21. p. 795. {s} Sacr. Elaeochrism. Myroth. l. 3. c. 39. p. 995. Vid. Solerium de Pileo, sect. 12. p. 257. {t} Ut supra, (Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7.) sect 7. {u} Maimon Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 1, 2, 3.

Zechariah 3:6

Ver. 6. And the Angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, saying. He not only gave his word, but annexed his oath; he called as it were heaven and earth to witness; and this he did to confirm the faith of Joshua in the promises he was about to make, as well as in the blessings of grace bestowed upon him; as the pardon of his sins, the justification of his person, and acceptance with God.

Zechariah 3:7

Ver. 7. Thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... For this Angel was no other than the Lord of armies in heaven and in earth:

If thou wilt walk in my ways; prescribed in the word of God, moral, ceremonial, and evangelical; in Christ the grand way, and indeed the only way of salvation; and in the paths of faith, truth, righteousness, and holiness; in the ways of God's commandments, which are pleasant, and attended with peace; such a walk and conversation, and such obedience, the grace of God teaches, and obliges to:

and if thou wilt keep my charge; the things he gave in charge, all his commands and ordinances, particularly such as belonged to the priestly office and Levitical service; see **Nu 3:7** all which might be expected after so many favours granted:

then thou shall also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts: preside in the temple, be governor in it, and have the care of all the courts belonging to the people and the priests, and the advantages arising from thence. The meaning is, that whereas the office of the priesthood was in disuse through the captivity, and was become contemptible through the sins of the priests, it should now be restored to its former honour and glory: to have a place in the house of God, the church, is a great honour, and still more to be a governor and ruler in it:

and I will give thee places to walk among those that stand by; either among fellow priests, or fellow saints; or rather among the angels that stood before the Angel of the Lord, and ministered to him; signifying that he should enjoy their company, be like unto then, and join in service with them in heaven, in a future state: and "walking places" among them denote the pleasures of the heavenly state, as well, as the safety and glory of it; see Isa 57:2. The Targum very agreeably paraphrases the words thus,

"and in the resurrection or quickening of the dead, I will raise or quicken thee; and I will give thee feet walking among these seraphim."

The allusion is to those walks that were in the temple, such as Christ walked in, Joh 10:23 and the pavement in Ezekiel's temple, Eze 40:17.

Zechariah 3:8

Ver. 8. Hear now, O Joshua the high priest,.... What he was about to say further concerning the bringing forth of the Messiah, the antitype of him, and of all the priests:

thou and thy fellows, that sit before thee; the Jews interpret {w} these of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, for whom wonders were wrought in delivering them from the fiery furnace; but rather they design the priests and the prophets, and chief men, that came up with Joshua out of the captivity; and especially the young priests that sat before him as his disciples, to be instructed by him in things belonging to the priestly office:

for they [are] men wondered at; or, "men of a sign" {x}, or "wonder"; typical of Christ, the great High Priest; they were "men wondered at", as all the people of God are: they are wondered at by themselves, that God should have any love to them, any thoughts concerning them; make a covenant with them in his Son; send him to die for them; call them by his grace; make them sons and heirs of his, and at last bring them to glory: and they are wondered at by the men of the world; that they should make such a choice as they have; that they should bear afflictions with so much cheerfulness and patience; that they should be so supported under them, and even thrive and flourish amidst them. The life of a believer is all a mystery, and wonderful: and they are wondered at by the angels, as they are the chosen of God, the redeemed of the Lamb, and called from among men; and they shall be the spectators of wonderful things themselves, which they will be swallowed up in the admiration of to all eternity. The Targum paraphrases the words thus,

"for they are men worthy to have miracles wrought for them;"

and indeed, though they are not worthy, yet miracles of grace are wrought for them, and one follows:

for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH; not Zerubbabel, as some interpret it; but the Messiah, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it; and which is the sense of some other Jewish writers. Kimchi, though he interprets the Branch of Zerubbabel, yet observes there are some of their interpreters who explain it of the Messiah; and it is as if it was said, though I bring you this salvation, yet I will bring you a greater salvation than this, at the time I shall bring forth my servant the Branch: and again they interpret it of him, because the name of the Messiah is Menachem, i.e. the Comforter; and which is numerically the same with "Tzemach", the Branch; and Aben Ezra, who first explains it the same way as Kimchi, yet adds, but many interpreters say this Branch is the Messiah: and he is called Zerubbabel, because he is of his seed, even as he is called David; and David my servant shall be their Prince for ever, Eze 37:25 likewise another Jewish writer, R. Abraham Seba {y}, understands it of the Messiah. The heathens used to call their heroes the branches of the gods; the branch of Jupiter, and the branch of Mars, &c. are frequently met with in the poets {z}, and perhaps taken from this name of the Messiah; who is the servant of God as Mediator, and became so by being made of a woman, and made under the law; and is a servant of God's choosing, sending, and rewarding; the chief of whose service lay in the redemption of his people; and who was an obedient, diligent, prudent, and faithful servant. The name of "the Branch" is given him elsewhere, **Isa 4:2** and designs his descent as man, and the meanness of it; and yet his fruitfulness in himself, and to his people: the "bringing" him "forth" intends his incarnation; and shows that he existed before, and was with God, and is brought forth by him as an instance of his grace and love to men; and because this was a matter of great moment, and very wonderful, and would certainly be done, and deserved attention, the word "behold" is prefixed to it. The Septuagint render this word by anatolh, "the rising sun", or that part of the heavens where the sun rises, the east; and the Vulgate Latin version has "orientem", "the east": hence another Zechariah calls the Messiah "the Day spring from on high", **Lu 1:78** and one of his titles is "the Sun of righteousness", **Mal 4:2**. The eastern part of the heavens was attributed by the heathens to their gods, and reckoned their seat and abode {a}; and from hence the Messiah came, that man from heaven; he was born in the eastern part of the world. Some render the words, in **Mic 5:2**, "his goings forth are out of the east" {b}; and it was from the mount of Olives, which was to the east of Jerusalem, that he went up to heaven; and from the same point of the heavens will he come again, since his feet will stand on that mountain, **Ac 1:11** he is the Angel said to ascend from the east, **Re 7:2** and perhaps it is owing to this version of the word here, and elsewhere, when used of the Messiah, that he came to be known among the Gentiles by this name; to which it is thought Tacitus {c} has respect, when he says,

"many were persuaded that in the ancient books of the priests were contained a "prophecy", that at that time "Oriens", or the east, should prevail;"

that is, such an one should exist, or rule in the world, whose name is "Oriens", or the rising sun.

{w} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1. & Jarchi in loc. {x} tpwm yvna "viri portenti", Montanus, Calvin, Drusius, Cocceius; "viri prodigiorum", Vatablus; "viri prodigii", Burkius. {y} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 114. 2. 3. {z}

Vid. Huet. Demonstr. Evangel. prop. 9. c. 59. p. 520. {a} Porphyry & Varro in Festus, apud Gregory's Notes and Observations, c. 18. p. 72. {b} Gregory, ib. p. 82. {c} Hist. l. 5. c. 13.

Zechariah 3:9

Ver. 9. For, behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua,.... Not the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel; nor the first and foundation stone of the temple laid by him in the presence of Joshua; but Christ the Stone of Israel, whom the builders refused, the foundation and corner stone of the spiritual building the church: and this was laid before Joshua to build his faith upon, to view his safety and security on it, and to take comfort from it for himself; and to lay it before others, and instruct them in the nature and use of it, for their comfort also. It was prophetically laid before him in the prophecies of Christ, that went before; and typically, when the foundation of the temple was laid, **Ezr 3:9** the temple being a type of the church, and the foundation of it a type of Christ: and this being done by Jehovah, shows that he is the chief builder; that this stone must be an excellent one, that is of his laying; that that building must stand, which this is the foundation of; and that under builders have great encouragement to work; see Isa 28:16. Vitringa, on the place referred to, interprets Joshua of Isaiah, who prophesied of this stone in the said place, and before whom it was laid by a spirit of prophecy; Isaiah and Joshua being words of the same signification and formation: but Isaiah was no high priest; for there is no room to think that Joshua, in this verse, is another and distinct from Joshua the high priest, in the former:

upon one stone [shall be] seven eyes; meaning either the eyes of Christ himself, which he has, and are in him; for Christ is not only a Living Stone, but a seeing one, even all seeing; he is all eye. This may be an allusion to such stones that have the resemblance of eyes upon them: such a stone is that which Scheuchzer {d} speaks of, and calls "siliculus ommatias", being found in the river Sila; which represents the fore part of the bulb of the eye, and the black pupil of the eye in a snowy white; and, after a small interstice, as surrounded with another black circle; with which may be compared the "achates", in the middle of which is an onyx, resembling an eye, and is therefore named by Velschius {e}, "achates ommatias", and "onych ophthalmos". Some stones have on them the figures of the eyes of animals, and have their names from them; as the "oegophthalmos", which is very much like the eye of a goat; and "lycophthalmos", in the middle of which the black is surrounded with white, as the eyes of wolves, and in all respects like unto them; and "hyophthalmos", which bears the likeness of the eyes of swine: and some resemble human eyes; there is one called "triophthalmos", which is bred with the onyx, and represents three eyes of a man together; all which are made mention of by Pliny {f}: but here is a stone with seven eyes in it, denoting perfection of sight in him as a divine Person, special oversight of his people, and fulness of grace in him as Mediator; for the fulness of the gifts and graces of the Spirit in him, for the use of his people, is signified by seven eyes, **Re 5:6** they may design the omniscience of Christ in general, which reaches to all persons and things, and greatly qualifies him to be the Head of the church, and Judge of the world; and likewise his special knowledge, care, and watchfulness of his own people, from everlasting, in time, at, and before, and after conversion, under all their trials and exercises: or they design the eyes which are looking to him, and are intent on him; and the sense is, that all eyes are upon him: the eyes of God the Father were upon him in the council and covenant of peace, and under the Old Testament, as the surety of his people, to make satisfaction for them; and, when the fulness of time was come, to send him forth; and during his infancy, and throughout his life, to preserve him; and in the whole of his humiliation, sufferings, and death, his eye was on him with pleasure and satisfaction; and when in the grave to raise him up; and now in heaven, for the acceptance of his people: the eyes of the Holy Spirit are on him, to take of his things, and show them to his people: the eyes of angels are upon him, in point of dependence, service, and worship; their eyes were upon him when here on earth, as he ascended to heaven, and now he is there; the eyes of all the saints, under the Old Testament, were upon him, expecting him, and looking to his person, and to his blood and sacrifice, that were to be offered; the eyes of all believers, under the New Testament, in all times and places, are to him for pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation; and the eyes of all, good and bad, will be fastened on him, when he comes a second time, in the clouds of heaven; and the eyes of all the glorified ones will be upon him to all eternity, beholding his glory; to this sense agrees the Targum, which renders the words, "upon one stone, seven eyes look to it". R. Joseph Kimchi interprets these eyes of seven men, Joshua, Ezra, Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, and the three prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi:

behold, I will engrave the engraving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts: either with the names of his elect, which are not only written in the book of the

Lamb; but their persons are put into his hands, and engraven there; and are bore upon his shoulders, he having the care and government of them; and are upon his breastplate, and on his heart, he being their representative, and presenting them for a memorial before the Lord; as the names of the tribes of Israel were on the stones, on the shoulders, and on the breastplate of the high priest; in all which Jehovah is concerned: or else with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, like a carved or polished stone; his human body was prepared and formed by him, and his human soul was filled with him; and he, as Mediator, was full of grace and truth; which is one branch of his glory, and draws the eyes of believers to him: or these engravings may intend the sufferings of Christ; the wounds and marks in his flesh; or, the "openings" {g}, in his feet, hands, and side, as it may be rendered; the incisions and cuts made there by the nails and spear; which were according to the determination, will, and pleasure of God; according to his purposing and commanding will, which Christ was obedient to; and are pleasing to God, as being the accomplishment of his counsel and covenant; satisfactory to his law and justice; what procured the salvation of his people, and brought glory to him: unless this is rather to be understood of the exaltation and glorification of his human nature in heaven; of his being beautified, adorned, and crowned with glory and honour there, and made the head stone of the corner; and indeed all these things may be included. The allusion seems to be to engraving of stones, either by nature, or by art; some have forms and figures on them, which are not engraven by art, or man's device, but are of God, and by nature; such as those stones before mentioned, that have the resemblance of eyes upon them; and the "achates", which was wore in the ring of Pyrrhus king of Epirus, in which were seen the nine Muses, and Apollo holding a harp; and which were not engraven by art, as Pliny {h} observes; but the spots of nature's own accord were so placed, as that to each Muse its proper ensign was given: others are engraven by the art of men, as the onyx stones, which had the names of the children of Israel on them, wore on the shoulders of the high priest; by which instance it appears, that the art of engraving on precious stones is very ancient, and in which the ancients are said to excel; their engravings on agates, cornelians, and onyx, surpass anything of that kind produced by the moderns. Pyrgoteles, in the times of Alexander, and Dioscorides, under the first Roman emperors, were the most eminent engravers we read of. This art, with other polite arts, was buried under the ruins of the Roman empire, until it was retrieved in Italy at the beginning of the fifteenth century, by two Italians; and from that time has been common enough in Europe {i}: but since this stone here was for building, rather the allusion is to the engraving and polishing of corner stones and frontispieces in edifices; and particularly to those costly, curious, and carved stones used and laid in the temple; see Mr 13:1 or to the first stone laid in the foundation, in which little orbs were engraven, and medals of gold or silver put in them, bearing the name, country, and descent of the builder, and the day, year, and reign in which the structure was begun; which little orbs are thought to be called eyes, because of the orbicular form of the eye {k}: so Grotius thinks the engraving of the seven eyes on the stone is here referred to; which stone he takes to be the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, when the foundation of the temple was laid, **Zec 4:10** at which time these seven eyes were caused suddenly to appear on it, and is the wonder spoken of, **Zec 3:8**:

and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day; not Judea, nor Chaldea, but Immanuel's land, the church and people of God, **Isa 8:8** even all the elect and covenant ones, for whom Christ suffered and died, and who are laid upon this stone; their sins Jehovah removed from them to Christ their surety; and Christ, by bearing them, and the punishment of them, took them away; and God removed them, both from him and them, upon his becoming a sacrifice for them; and that wholly out of sight, so as that he never will impute them to them, nor condemn them for them; and this was all done "in one day". Jarchi, upon the text, says,

"I know not what day this is;"

but we Christians know it was the day on which Christ suffered and died, and offered himself a sacrifice for sin; by which one offering of himself, once for all, he put away sin for ever; it was all done in one day, **Heb 7:27** on the day he suffered, when he, expiring on the cross, said, "it is finished"; namely, sin, and complete salvation from it.

{d} Specimen. Lithograph. Helvet. Curois. fig. 37. p. 27. {e} Hecatost. I. Obs. 22. apud ib. {f} Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 11. {g} hxtp xtpm "aperiens apertionem ejus", Montanus; "aperio", Munster. {h} Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 1. {i} Chamber's Dictionary, in the word "Engraving". {k} Capellus in loc.

Zechariah 3:10

Ver. 10. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts,.... The Gospel dispensation, which began with the incarnation, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, and still continues; called sometimes the day of salvation, the acceptable time, and year of the redeemed:

shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine, and under the fig tree; which may be expressive of the desire of gracious souls after the conversion of others; they would have them come under the means of grace; and are desirous that the means might be blessed to them; that they might know Christ, and be partakers of the same grace with them; which arises from a sense they have of the blessings they share in; from a love to immortal souls, and a desire to promote the glory of God; also of the fruitfulness and plenty of the Gospel dispensation; Christ is the true vine, laden with precious fruits; from him saints have all their fruitfulness; they sit under his shadow with delight, and his fruit is sweet unto them; the provisions of his house are very excellent and precious, to which others are invited to partake of: likewise of the fellowship and communion which saints have with each other; they converse in private, join in public worship, and feast together at the Lord's table; and encourage one another so to do; all which is crowned with the presence of God, and fellowship with him: moreover, the words may suggest that peace and tranquillity enjoyed by believers under the Gospel dispensation, and that safety and security which they have in and through Christ; See Gill on "Mic 4:4".

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 4

In this chapter are contained the vision of a golden candlestick, and of two olive trees by it, and the explanation thereof. The preparation to this vision, which is the awaking of the prophet, as of a man out of sleep, is in **Zec 4:1**. The vision of the candlestick, and olive trees, is in **Zec 4:2**. The candlestick is described by the matter of it, gold; and by the parts of it, its bowl, lamps, and pipes; and the olive trees by their situation; the explanation of which is at the request of the prophet, he not knowing what they meant, **Zec 4:4** when it is observed to him, that this represents, under the type of Zerubbabel building the temple, the building of the Gospel church by Christ; and which is done and finished, not by might or power of man, but by the Spirit, notwithstanding all opposition, and contempt of it, to the great joy of many, who observe the grace of God, and his providential care and goodness, in it, **Zec 4:6** and upon the prophet's inquiring the meaning of the two olive trees, which he was ignorant of, he is told that these are the two anointed ones that stood by the Lord of the whole earth, **Zec 4:11**.

Ver. 1. And the angel that talked with me,.... See **Zec 1:9**:

came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep; into which he fell, after he had had the former vision; see **Da 8:18**.

Zechariah 4:2

Ver. 2. And said unto me, What seest thou?.... That is, after he was awake, and had looked about him:

And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all [of] gold; such an one as was in the tabernacle of Moses, only with this difference; that had no bowl on the top, nor seven pipes to it, nor two olive trees on each side of it, with two pipes to them, Ex 25:31 such a candlestick was never in being, only in vision; and is an emblem of the church of Christ, into which the light of the Gospel is put by Christ, and held forth by it, and especially by its ministers; see **Re 1:12** for the light put into this candlestick, the church, is not the light of nature or reason, which is "the candle of the Lord searching into the inward parts" of man; by which he may discern somewhat the being and perfections of God in his works, and of moral good and evil; but it is too dim to direct and guide him in the affair of salvation: nor the law of Moses, said to be a light, and a lamp; by which men might come to the knowledge of sin, but not of a Saviour from it: but the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, which was like a candle lighted up in the evening of the Jewish dispensation, and placed in the Christian church; and gave light, not only to the saints in Judea, but in all parts of the world, whither it has been carried; for this candlestick is portable, and has been removed from place to place; and wherever it is set, it gives light, and removes the darkness of error, infidelity, and immorality; and is useful to direct the saints in their walk and conversation, and render them more capable of working with delight and pleasure; and will blaze out more brightly in the end of the world, when it is about to be no more; and by the light of it lost sinners, like the lost piece of silver, are looked up, strayed ones are brought back, and backsliders restored; hypocrites and formalists, heretics and false teachers, and their doctrines, are discovered and detected; and saints are enlightened, comforted, and directed: and this candlestick being "all of gold" may denote the value of it; the true church of Christ, and the real members of it, are highly esteemed by Christ; the precious sons of Zion are comparable to fine gold, jewels, and precious stones; they are the excellent in the earth, in whom is his delight: and likewise its brightness and purity, splendour and glory; its members being possessed of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, of the pure and glorious doctrines of the Gospel, and exercising holy discipline, and living holy lives and conversations: and also the duration of it, which will be to the end of the world, the gates of hell not being able to prevail against it; and which is continued, not by might or power of man, but by the Spirit of the Lord, and his grace, which is sufficient for it, and with which it is supplied; not by any natural or artificial means, but by a wonderful and uncommon manner; signified by oil not pressed from the olive by the help of man, but flowing from two olive trees, on both sides the candlestick, of itself, freely, and constantly. This candlestick may primarily respect, and may be an emblem of, the then present state of the Jewish church, when this vision was seen; and point at how it was raised up, restored, and preserved; but has a further view to the church of God, under the Gospel dispensation, unto the end of the world:

with a bowl upon the top of it; an oil vessel, or cruet, round, and large enough to hold the oil, which supplied it, and each of its lamps, whereby its light was maintained and continued; and this may intend, either the fulness of grace in Christ, which is as "a fountain", as the word {l} here used signifies, Jos 15:19 to supply his church and people; and from whence they have the oil of grace in measure, which is in him without measure, whereby their lamps are filled, and their lights are kept burning; and who is fitly placed as the Head of the church for this purpose, as this bowl was upon the top of the candlestick: or rather, since this "bowl" is but a measure, though it may be a large one it may signify that large portion of gifts and grace which is communicated to the church in all ages, and abides in it, and is severally divided to the ministers and members of it, for its profit and edification; to one one gift, to another another; to some greater, and others less; and all for mutual good; and which are given forth from Christ and his Spirit; who, as Capellus thinks, may be meant by the two olive trees, who of themselves, without pressing, having all fulness of grace in them without measure, freely and liberally impart it; and keep filling the bowl, so that there is constantly a supply of the Spirit, and grace for the church and people of Christ in all ages; according to Isa 59:21 "my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed saith the Lord, from henceforth, and for ever". Cocceius thinks the merit of Christ is meant by this bowl or cup, by which he obtained the promise of the Spirit:

and his seven lamps thereon; on the candlestick; such a number of lamps were on the candlestick in the tabernacle, Ex 25:37 and may design the many members of the church bearing the lamps of profession; or rather the ministers of the Gospel, who are the lights of the world, and bright and burning ones, that hold forth the word of life both in doctrine and conversation; unless the gifts and graces of the Spirit, qualifying them for such work, should be meant; see **Re 4:5** but rather ministers themselves are designed, who are called lights and lamps, **Mt 5:14** and the number seven, being a number of perfection, may denote a fulness and sufficiency of Gospel ministers, which Christ furnishes his church with, and will do unto the end of the world; he having a perfection of gifts in his hands for them, to fit them for his service; just as these are called the "seven pillars" of Wisdom's house, **Pr 9:1**. Cocceius thinks by these seven lamps are intended the seven churches, or the seven states of the church under several periods in the Gospel dispensation; the same with the seven churches of Asia, and the seven golden candlesticks, in the midst of which Christ was seen by John, **Re 1:4**:

and seven pipes to the seven lamps which were upon the top thereof; these pipes, infusers or funnels, were at the bottom of the bowl, in which were so many holes, that let out the oil into them, by which it was carried to the lamps; a pipe to every lamp. In the Hebrew text it is, "seven and seven pipes" {m}; that is, fourteen, two to every lamp; which Fortunatus Scacchus {n} thinks, they being joined to one another, the one put in the neck of the other, were for the better cleansing and purifying of the oil from any dregs that might be in it. Jarchi is of opinion there were seven to every lamp, in all forty nine, but without any foundation: by these are meant, not the seven sacraments, as say the Papists; but either the various gifts of the Spirit, fitting ministers for their service; or the various means they make use of to learn the mind of Christ in the Scriptures, to know the Gospel, and more of it, that they may hold it forth to others; such as reading, meditation, and prayer.

{l} hlg "fons", Pembellus; "scaturigo", Sanctius. {m} hebvw hebv "septem et septem", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Piscator. {n} Sacrer. Elaeochrism. Myrothec. l. 1. c. 10. p. 53.

Zechariah 4:3

Ver. 3. And the two olive trees by it,.... Which are explained in, See Gill on "Zec 4:14":

one upon the right [side] of the bowl, and the other upon the left [side] thereof; in **Zec 4:11** they are said to be on the right and left sides of the bowl or candlestick, which is the same; for the situation of them was alike, with respect to the one and the other: according to Fortunatus Scacchus, these two olive trees did not arise out of the earth, and the top of the candlestick; but out of the base of the candlestick, one on the right hand of the bowl, which hung in the middle of the candlestick; and the other on the left {o}, of which he has given the figure.

{o} Ibid. (Sacer. Elaeochrism, Myrothec. l. 1.) c. 12. p. 62.

Zechariah 4:4

Ver. 4. So I answered, and spake to the angel that talked with me,.... The same that awoke him out of sleep, and asked him what he saw:

saying, What [are] these, my lord? that is, what do they signify? what do they represent? or what are they emblems of? for he knew what they were; that they were a candlestick, and two olive trees; but he was desirous of knowing what the meaning of them were.

Zechariah 4:5

Ver. 5. Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me,.... Either to upbraid him with his ignorance and stupidity; or rather to quicken his attention, and that of others, to the interpretation of it he was about to give him:

Knowest thou not what these be? art thou ignorant of the design of them? or knowest thou not what is meant by them?

and I said, No, my lord; he made an ingenuous confession of his ignorance, joined with great respect unto, and veneration of, the angel that conversed with him.

Zechariah 4:6

Ver. 6. Then he answered, and spake unto me, saying,.... In great condescension, in order to instruct him into the true meaning of the vision:

This [is] the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel; this signifies what was said by the Lord to Zerubbabel, by some one of the prophets sent unto him:

saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts: that is, that as the candlestick was supplied with oil, from the two olive trees by the side of it, without the help of any man, to pour in the oil, and trim the lamps; so the temple should be built by Zerubbabel, not through the multitude and strength of men, but through the Spirit of God, animating, exciting, encouraging, and strengthening them to go through the work. The temple was a type of the church, and Zerubbabel a type of Christ; he was so in the high esteem he was had in by the Lord; he was chosen by him; made as a signet, and was precious to him, **Hag 2:23** in his titles and characters, a servant of the Lord, and governor of Judah, **Hag 1:1** and in his work, in bringing the Jews out of captivity, and in rebuilding the temple: so Christ is the chosen of God, and exceeding dear and precious to him; is his righteous servant, and Governor of the church, or King of saints; and who has redeemed and delivered his people from the captivity of sin, and Satan, and the law; and is the builder of his church; who has laid the foundation of it, and will bring in the headstone; and which church is built up in all generations through the conversion of sinners; and that is done, not by external force, by carnal weapons, or moral persuasion; but by the sword of the Spirit, the word of God; and not by the power of man's free will, but by the efficacious grace of the divine Spirit: it is indeed done by power and might, but not of the creature: man, whatever power he has to do things natural, civil, outwardly religions, and materially moral, or however in appearance, has no power to do anything spiritually good; not to think a good thought, nor do a good action, in a spiritual manner; much less to work such a work as the work of regeneration, conversion, and sanctification; since he is dead in sin, and can not quicken himself; his understanding is darkened, yea, darkness itself, and he can not command light into it; his will is stubborn and obstinate, and he can not bend it, and subdue it; his heart is hard as a nether millstone, and he cannot soften it, and repent of his sins, in a truly spiritual, gracious, anti-evangelic manner; his affections are inordinate; and he is a lover of sinful pleasures, and not of God, nor of anything divine, to which his carnal mind is enmity; he cannot believe in Christ of himself; faith is not of himself, it is the gift of God, and so is repentance, and every other grace. The work of grace on the soul is expressed by a regeneration, a resurrection from the dead, a creation, and the new man, or a transformation of a man into another man; all which require almighty power to effect: regeneration is not of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God, of Jehovah the Spirit: sanctification is called the sanctification of the Spirit, and every grace of it is a fruit of his; it is he who is the Spirit of life from Christ, that quickens men when dead in trespasses and sins, and enlightens their dark minds with spiritual light, in divine things; it is he that produces evangelical repentance in them, and faith in Christ is of his operation; it is he that begins the work of grace on the heart, and carries it on, and causes to abound in the exercise of every grace, and performs the work of faith with power. The Targum, instead of "by my Spirit", renders it "by my Word".

Zechariah 4:7

Ver. 7. Who art thou, O great mountain?.... This is said in reference to those who opposed the building of the temple, as Sanballat, and others; or the Persian monarchy, and Babylon the capital of it; a mountain being a symbol of a kingdom, or capital city; so Babylon is called, Jer 51:25 hence the Targum paraphrases the words thus,

"how art thou accounted a foolish kingdom before Zerubbabel!"

and may denote the opposition made to Christ, and to the building of his church, both by Rome Pagan and Rome Papal; Rome is signified by a burning mountain cast into the sea, **Re 8:8** and may include all the enemies of the church and people of God, as sin, Satan, and the world; who, though they may look like high and great mountains, and make much opposition, and throw many difficulties in their way, yet in the issue will he of no avail; See Gill on "Isa 49:11". Some Jewish writers {p}, by "the great mountain", understand the Messiah, but very wrongly; for he is designed by Zerubbabel in the next clause; but not by the "headstone", as the Targum interprets it:

before Zerubbabel [thou shall become] a plain; as all opposition and difficulties were surmounted by Zerubbabel in building the temple; so all vanish and disappear before Christ, the antitype of Zerubbabel, in the building up of his church, through the conversion of sinners, and in the protection and preservation of it:

and he shall bring forth the headstone [thereof]; that is, he, Zerubbabel, shall finish the building of the temple, as in **Zec 4:9** the headstone being the last and uppermost stone in the building, which is last laid, and completes the whole; and in the spiritual sense designs, not Christ the headstone of the corner, for it is he that is Zerubbabel's antitype, who brings it in; but the last man that will be converted, when the number of God's elect will be completed in regeneration: they are all in Christ's hands, and under his care; before conversion they are secretly his, his hidden ones; in conversion he brings them forth, and makes them to appear what they are; and, when the last of this number is born again, the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, will be wholly built, and nothing wanting in it; and the work of grace will have the last hand put to it, and be perfect in all. Christ is indeed sometimes called the headstone of the corner, and the chief cornerstone, Ps 118:22 and he is the principal one in the spiritual building the church; he is the foundation stone, on which the whole is laid; and he is the cornerstone, that joins, knits, and keeps all together; he is both the stability, safety, and ornament of the building; Christ is the first, but not the last stone laid, which this must be: rather the perfection of grace is designed, or the bringing of the work of God to perfection; which may be signified hereby, in allusion to an edifice, which, when the last or top stone is laid, is then completed; and, if taken in this sense, must be understood, not of justifying grace, which is complete at once; Christ's righteousness being a perfect justifying righteousness, and every believer complete in it; but of sanctifying grace, which, though, as to the principle of it, is all wrought together, yet is not at once perfected; it is gradually brought to perfection; there is a perfection of parts, but not of degrees; no man is perfectly holy in himself, only as he is in Christ; but holiness in the saint will be perfected, for without it no man can see the Lord; and this is done at death in every individual believer; and then follows a state of sinless perfection; and the last measure of grace given, which perfects the work, may be called the headstone, the crowning, finishing part: and this wilt be brought in by Christ, the author and finisher of faith; who is a rock, and his work is perfect; he is able to do it; and who so fit, as he who is full of grace? and who so proper, as the master builder, and Head of the church? this grace, which perfects all, is in Christ; he brings it out from himself, in whom it has pleased the Father all fulness should dwell: but it is best of all to interpret the headstone of the last of the elect of God, and redeemed of the Lamb, that will be called by grace; who has this name, not from any superior excellency in him to any of the other lively stones, laid in the spiritual building; but because he is the last that is put there; and which shows, that not one of those God has chosen, and Christ has redeemed, shall be lost; it is the will of God, and it is the care of Christ, that none should perish, but all should come to repentance, to the glory of his rich grace; or otherwise the building would not be complete, nor the church the fulness of him that filleth all in all. The Targum indeed paraphrases the words of Christ,

"and he shall reveal his Christ, whose name is said from eternity, and he shall rule over all kingdoms:"

and mention being made of a capital and principal stone, in this vision of the candlestick, may put one in mind of the stone the Jews {q} speak of, which was before the candlestick in the temple, which had three steps, and on which the priest stood, and trimmed the lamps: and this will be attended

[with] shoutings, [crying], Grace, grace unto it; as the people of the Jews shouted, when the first stone was laid in the foundation of the temple, **Ezr 3:11** so it is here intimated that their acclamations would be very great when the last stone would be brought in, and the building finished; which they would ascribe to the grace, favour, and good will of God to them: so likewise, as the work of conversion is wholly owing to the grace of God, an abundance of which is displayed in it; when it is finished in the hearts of all the Lord's people, and the last man designed to be called by it is converted, and so the spiritual building of the church finished; this will be attended with the shouts of angels, who rejoice at the conversion of every sinner, and much more when all the elect are gathered in; and the acclamations of all the saints, for the marriage of the Lamb, will now be come, and the church be ready, as a bride prepared for her husband; see Re 19:6. The repetition of

the phrase, "grace, grace", denotes that the work of conversion in all the saints, from the first to the last, is only owing to the grace of God, and not to any merit, motive, and condition in man; that they are saved and called, not according to their works, but according to the purpose and grace of God, his abundant mercy, free favour, and great love; and that this grace is exceeding abundant, which is displayed in the conversion of a single individual; and how large and copious must it be, which is given forth to them all. It is also expressive of the vehemency of those that use the phrase; and shows that they have a deep sense of it on their hearts; and are warmed, and glow with it; and cannot sufficiently express their admiration of it; and strive to magnify it to the uttermost of their power, being sensible of their obligations to God for it, and what gratitude is due to him on account of it: and this will be the cry of every saint in glory, throughout the endless ages of eternity; nor will the least sound be heard that is jarring, or contrary to it; all will be of one mind, and in one tone, and strive to outdo each other in exalting the free grace of God in the highest strains, with the greatest fervency of soul, and with the loudest acclamations, and those continually repeated.

{p} Tanchuma in Yalkut Simeoni in loc. {q} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 92. 1. & Tamid, fol. 30. 2. Maimon. Beth Habechira, c. 3. sect. 11.

Zechariah 4:8

Ver. 8. Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying. As follows; which is a confirmation of the angel's interpretation of the vision.

Zechariah 4:9

Ver. 9. The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house,.... The temple at Jerusalem, which was laid, or however renewed, after it had been long neglected, even the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, two months before this vision and prophecy, **Hag 2:18** compared with **Zec 1:7**:

his hands shall also finish it: signified by bringing in the head or top stone, **Zec 4:7** and so Christ our great Zerubbabel has laid the foundation of his church, which is no other than himself; and is a foundation firm and strong, sure and certain, immovable and everlasting; and his hands will finish the building of it, by bringing and laying every elect soul upon this foundation; which may be concluded from his hands being those which have laid the foundations of the heavens and the earth; uphold all things in being, and hold the reins of government; and who, as Mediator, has all the persons of his people in his hands, and all grace and glory for them: his hands also have laid the foundation of grace in the hearts of his people, and he will finish it; he, who is the author, will be the finisher of faith:

and thou shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you; this clause is not an address to Zerubbabel, as Aben Ezra and others think; but to the people of the Jews, as appears from the plural word used, at the end of it; nor are the words spoken by the prophet of himself; though the Targum paraphrases them to this sense,

"and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me to prophesy unto you;"

that is, when they should see his prophecies accomplished, and the temple built, then they would know and acknowledge that he was a true prophet, sent of God unto them; nor is the angel designed, so often mentioned, that talked with the prophet; for he was sent, not to the Jews, but to him; but they are spoken by the Messiah, called "the Word of the Lord"; **Zec 4:8** who, when he shall have finished the work of grace on every man's heart by his Spirit, and shall have completed the whole Gospel building, the church, by gathering in everyone of the elect; then it shall be known and owned by all, both the converted Jews and Gentiles, that he is the true Messiah, the sent of God to the forefathers of the Jews, who came to preach the Gospel to them, work miracles among them, and obtain eternal redemption for men.

Zechariah 4:10

Ver. 10. For who hath despised the day of small things?.... This literally refers to the building of the second temple, which was contemptible to the enemies of Judah, Sanballat, and others; and little in the eyes of many of the Jews themselves, who had seen the former temple; yet not in the eyes of the Lord of hosts, **Ezr 3:12** and so the Targum paraphrases the words,

"for who is he that despiseth this day, because the building is small?"

but in the spiritual sense, to the building up of the church by conversion: the first work of conversion may be called day "of small things" to men; it may be called a "day", because a time of light into themselves, their sin and danger, and the way from it; the day of Christ's power upon the soul, in making it willing to quit all, and be saved by him; a season in which there is a display of the love, grace, and mercy of God unto it; and is the day of its espousals to Christ; and the day of salvation, of the knowledge and application of it; and of good tidings, of peace, pardons, and life, by Christ; and yet a day of "small things": not that what is done or made known are small things in themselves; but the light and knowledge which young converts have of themselves, of Christ, and of the doctrines of the Gospel, is but small; and so is their faith in Christ, but a mere venture on him, or a peradventure there may be salvation in him for them also; and their spiritual strength to exercise grace, do their duty, comfort from Christ, and in the promises and experience of the everlasting love of God, are but small at first; yet this day of small things is not to be "despised": it is not by Jehovah the Father, who regards their prayers, and does not despise them, though like the chatterings of a crane or swallow; he takes them by the hand, leads them, and teaches them to walk by faith, and proportions their duty to their strength, and their strength to their day: nor by Jesus Christ, who delights in their applications to him, and never rejects them; regards his buds in his vineyards, the beginnings of grace; the lambs in his flock, the weak and feeble; and the bruised reed, and smoking flax, who have but little light and grace: nor by the Holy Spirit, who helps their infirmities, makes intercession for them with groans unutterable; carries on the good work in them, and performs it till the day of Christ: nor should it be despised by men of greater light, faith, and experience; though it is no wonder they should be despised by carnal men; but even for them to despise one of the little ones that believe in him is resented by him. The interest of Christ in general is sometimes "a day of small things": it was so among the Jews at the time of Christ's ascension; and among the Gentiles, at the first preaching of the Gospel to them; and so it was at the time of the Reformation, and is so now: Jacob is small, but there is a day coming, called the great day of Jezreel, **Ho 1:11**.

For they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel [with] those seven: which may literally respect the building of the second temple; and that was expressed not only at the laying of the foundation, **Ezr 3:11** but at the carrying of it on, and especially at the finishing of it, **Ezr**

6:14 when they saw the building rise under, the direction and encouragement of Zerubbabel, who is represented here as a master builder, with a "plummet" in his hand; which is an instrument used by masons and carpenters, to draw perpendicular lines with, in order to judge whether the building is upright; and is so called from a piece of lead fastened at the end of a cord or thread. In the Hebrew text it is called a "stone of tin" {r}; it may be, in those times, they used a stone for this purpose, cased with tin or lead. And, "those seven" with him may mean seven principal persons that joined with him, and assisted him in this work: though some interpret them of the seven lamps, and the seven pipes to them, in the candlestick; and the Targum explains them of "seven rows of stone", measured by the plummet: but rather they are to be understood of the eyes of the Lord, after mentioned, which were upon the Jews, in favour of the building, that it might not be caused to cease by their enemies, **Ezr 5:5** though Cocceius chooses to render the words thus, "and those seven shall rejoice, and see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel"; and applies them to the seven churches of Asia, representatives of the whole church of Christ, in successive periods, rejoicing at the growing interest of Christ; and doubtless the mystical and spiritual sense of the words is, that it is matter of rejoicing to gracious souls when the spiritual building goes forward, under the direction and encouragement of Christ. The carrying on of the work of grace in particular believers affords joy and pleasure. This work is in the hands and under the care of Christ; it is curiously wrought and framed by line and rule, and goes on to perfection; which being observed by others, though it is the nature of grace to desire more, yet it does not envy the gifts and graces of others, but rejoices at them. The carrying on of the work of God in the church in general is an occasion of great joy to the saints; they rejoice that it is in such hands; not in the hands of ministers or magistrates, or even angels, but in the hands of Christ; who is so great, and has condescended to engage in it; has so much wisdom to manage and conduct it; is so faithful in everything he is concerned, and is so able to go through with it: they rejoice that it is carried on with so much exactness; that the whole building is so fitly framed and compacted together; everything in the church being done according to the plummet of God's everlasting love and eternal purposes, which plummet is with Christ, **Ro 8:39** according to which persons are called by grace; the blessings of grace are bestowed on them; and they are put in such an office or place in the church: and as this building goes on by an increase of persons, or an addition of such as shall be saved; and by an increase of grace, gifts, and spiritual knowledge in them; it is matter of joy to angels and men, and especially to the ministers of the Gospel.

They [are] the eyes of the Lord, or "the eyes of the Lord are they" {s},

which run to and fro through the whole earth; these design not the angels, who walk to and fro through the earth, **Zec 6:7** nor the various gifts and graces of the Spirit, **Re 5:6** but rather the infinite providence of God, signified by an "eye"; it being intuitive, omniscient, approbative of that which is good, and vindictive of that which is evil; loving to, and careful of, the saints, making them prosperous and successful: and by "seven eyes", to denote the perfection and fulness of it; and these being said to run to and fro throughout the earth, expresses the large compass of persons and things it reaches to: and it may he observed, that the carrying on of the work of God, both in particular persons, and in the church of God in general, is attended with and owing to his special providence, as well as grace.

{r} lydbh Nbah "lapidem stanni", Montanus, Drusius, Cocceius; "lapidem stanneum", V. L. Vatablus, Calvin; "lapidem stannum", i. e. "cum stanno", so Burkius. {s} hmh hwhy ynye "oculi Jehovae sunt illi".

Zechariah 4:11

Ver. 11. Then answered I, and said unto him,.... To the angel that talked with him, **Zec 4:1**:

What [are] these two olive trees upon the right [side] of the candlestick, and upon the [left] side thereof? in **Zec 4:2** they are said to be on each side of the bowl. The mystery of the candlestick being explained to Zechariah by the angel, the prophet desires to know the meaning of the two olive trees that were on the right and left of it, one on one side, and the other on the other side.

Zechariah 4:12

Ver. 12. And I answered again, and said unto him,.... Before he could have an answer to the former question, he puts the following, as being of the same import:

What [be these] two olive branches; which grew upon the olive trees, and were nearest to the candlestick, and the pipes that were to the lamps: these, in **Zec 4:14**, are interpreted of the two anointed ones, or sons of oil, and may design the ministers of the word, if, by the "golden oil" after mentioned, is meant the Gospel; even a set of evangelical preachers in Gospel times, in the various periods of the church; Christ's faithful witnesses, who stand on each side of the bowl, and receive out of Christ's fulness gifts and grace to fit them for their work; and on each side of the candlestick, the church, to impart the oil of the Gospel to it. These may be compared to "olive trees" for their beauty and comeliness in the eyes of saints, to whom they bring the good news of salvation by Christ, Ho 14:6 and for their greenness and flourishing condition, being filled with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, Ps 52:8 and for their fruitfulness; for, as the olive tree produces an oil used both for light and food, so they bring the Gospel with them, which is the means of spiritual light, and contains in it refreshing and delightful food, **De 8:8** and for their fatness, with which they honour God and men, **Jud 9:9** so ministers of the Gospel honour Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, by ascribing the contrivance, obtaining, and application of salvation to each of them; and they honour men, by acquainting them what honour all the saints have through Christ, being made kings and priests by him; and by showing them what honour they shall have hereafter. And they may be compared to "olive branches", with respect to Christ the good olive tree, in whom they are as branches; are bore by him, and subsist in him; receive all they have from him, and do all they do in his strength: and also for their tenderness and weakness in themselves, and for their fruitfulness from him.

Which through the two golden pipes empty the golden [oil] out of themselves? if by the "two" olive trees and branches, or anointed ones, ministers of the Gospel are intended; then, by the "golden oil", is meant, not the Spirit and his grace, which is sometimes compared to oil; nor inward spiritual joy and peace, the oil of gladness, for ministers cannot communicate either of these to others; but the Gospel, and the precious truths of it, compared to "oil", because of a healing, cheering, and refreshing nature; and because beautifying, feeding, and fattening; and because of a searching and penetrating nature, and being pure, unmixed, and good for light: and to "golden" oil, or oil, that, being poured out, is like liquid gold, for colour, value, splendour, purity, and duration: and this they "empty out"; which phrase denotes the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel they come with; their free and ready delivery of it; their faithfulness in giving out all, and keeping back nothing that may be profitable; and their ease and satisfaction of mind in so doing and this they do, not out of the corrupt fountains of moral philosophy; nor from the writings of others; nor out of their own heads, or from mere notional knowledge; but out of their hearts, and from their inward experience of Gospel truths; and which is not to be understood exclusive of Christ, or of the Scriptures of truth, from whence they fetch all truth; nor have they this knowledge and experience of or from themselves. The means by which they communicate the golden oil of the Gospel are "the two golden pipes", the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances; which are like "pipes" or canals, through which Gospel grace is conveyed; and are "golden", are valuable, to be kept pure, and are durable; they are but "pipes", or means, and not to be depended on, yet they are "golden", and not to be despised. But if by the two olive trees, or anointed ones, are meant two divine Persons, of which see **Zec 4:14** then by the "golden oil" may be intended the grace of God, often compared to "oil" in Scripture, in allusion to oil in common, or to the anointing oil, which was made of precious spices; or rather, as here, to the lamp oil for the candlestick in the tabernacle, which was pure oil olive: grace, like oil, is of a cheering and refreshing nature, hence called "oil of gladness"; very beautifying and adorning; like oil, it makes the face to shine; and by it the church, and all believers, become "all glorious within": it is of a searching nature; like oil, it penetrates into the heart, and has its seat there; and as oil will not mix with other liquid, so neither will grace with sin and corruption: but chiefly, as here, may it be compared to oil olive, because it burns and gives light, as that does in the lamp. The lamp of a profession, without the oil of grace, is a dark and useless thing. Grace is a light in the inward parts, and causes the light of an outward conversation to shine in good works before men; and this may be truly called "golden", being exceeding valuable, yea, much more precious than gold that perisheth; it being as durable, nay, much more durable than that, for it will last for ever, and can never be lost; see **1Pe 1:7** and of this the word and ordinances are the means; and so may be designed by the pipes, through which it is conveyed to the souls of men; for "faith", and other graces of the Spirit, "come by hearing, and hearing by the word of God", Ro 10:17 hence says the apostle to the Galatians, **Ga 3:2**, "received ye the Spirit"; that is, the special gifts and graces of the Spirit, comparable to the best oil and purest gold; "by the works of the law", or through the preaching of that, through the doctrine of justification by the works of it, "or by the hearing of faith?" by the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ, or by the Gospel preached and heard: this is the usual way in which the Spirit and his grace are communicated to men; hence the Gospel is called the "Spirit", and "the ministration of the Spirit", **2Co 3:6** and this seems to be a further confirmation of this sense of the words, since this golden oil is distinct from the pipes through which it flows; as grace is from the Gospel, through which it is received; whereas, in the other sense, they seem to coincide.

Zechariah 4:13

Ver. 13. And he answered me, and said,.... That is, the angel answered to the prophet's questions:

Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord; See Gill on "Zec 4:5".

Zechariah 4:14

Ver. 14. Then said he, These [are] the two anointed ones,.... Or "sons of oil" {t}. Some think the gifts and graces of the Spirit are meant, which come from the God of all grace, remain with Christ, are given freely by him to the sons of God, and are always for the service of the church, and sufficient for it; others, Christ the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit. Christ is the anointed One, or son of oil, being anointed with the Holy Ghost to the office of Prophet, Priest, and King; and with which oil he has supplied his candlestick, the church, in all ages. The Holy Spirit is the oil of gladness, and that anointing which teacheth all things. And this is the sense of Capellus, as has been observed on **Zec 4:2**. And the learned and judicious Pemble makes a "query" of it, whether Christ and the Comforter; or Christ in his two natures; or Christ in his two offices of King and Priest of his church; or how else the words are to be understood: and this was the sense of Origen long ago, though censured by Jerom; it may be the rather, because he interprets the candlestick of the Father. But these epithets, "anointed ones", and "sons of oil", are very suitable to them; the one being called the Messiah, or anointed; and the other the unction, and the oil of gladness: and indeed, if by the golden oil emptied out of them is meant the grace of God, as it frequently signifies in Scripture, no other can be meant; since they are the inexhaustible fountain of all grace and gifts to the church in all ages, whereby it is supplied and supported; and may be said to "stand before the Lord of the whole earth", God the Father; who does not immediately by himself administer to the church, but by Christ the Head of it; and Christ communicates by his Spirit, whom he sends from himself, and from the Father: and the rather they may be thought to be meant, since the ministers of the word seem to be designed by the seven lamps which receive the oil, or gifts and graces of the Spirit, fitting them for their work, from the bowl on the top of the candlestick, which is supplied with it from these two olive trees; and therefore must be distinct from them, or otherwise they will be said to be supplied from themselves: though, whereas both Christ and the Spirit communicate by the word and the ordinances, administered by the faithful dispensers of the word; hence those witnesses of Christ, in all ages, may with propriety enough be called two anointed ones, and "the two olive trees", as they are in Re 11:4 where there is a plain allusion to this passage. The Targum renders the words, "these are the two sons of princes", or "great men". Some Jewish writers interpret them of their two Messiahs, Messiah ben Joseph, and Messiah ben David {u}. Some interpreters understand by them Enoch and Elias; others Peter and Paul; others, better, with Kimchi and Ben Melech, Joshua and Zerubbabel, the one anointed for the priesthood, and the other for the kingdom; of which two offices Jarchi interprets them; and others the two churches, Jewish and Christian.

That stand by the Lord of the whole earth; the Creator and Governor of the universe: ministers of the word are on his side, abide by his truths and ordinances, and are faithful to his cause and interest: or, "before the Lord of the whole earth" {w}; they are his ministers, and serve him; they "stand", as it becomes them, which shows their work is not done; and that it is the Lord's work they are engaged in; and that they continue and persevere in it: likewise it shows that they are under his eye, notice, dispose, care, and protection; that they are in his favour, and enjoy his presence. How this may be applied to the two divine Persons standing by or before God the Father has been before observed, and to be understood of them as in their office capacity.

{t} rhuyh ynb "filii olei", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Cocceius, Burkius. {u} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 114. 3. {w} Nwda le "super Dominum", Montanus.

Zechariah 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 5

This chapter treats of the judgments of God upon the wicked Jews for their sins and impieties, the measure of which was filled up, and of the execution of them, which are represented in two visions: the first is of a flying roll, which signifies the curse of God, and is described by its measure, the length being twenty cubits, and the breadth ten; and by the extent of it, it reaching to the whole earth, and particularly to thieves and false swearers, who shall be cut off by it; and by the certainty of its coming into the houses of such, and the utter desolation it should there make, **Zec 5:1** and the other is the vision of an ephah, and a woman sitting in it, and a talent of lead cast upon the mouth of it, which signified wickedness, **Zec 5:5** this "ephah" is seen to be lifted up between earth and heaven by two women, who are said to have wings like the wings of storks, and the wind to be in them; and who are said by the angel to carry the "ephah" into the land of Shinar, to build it a house, that it might be established and settled upon its own base, **Zec 5:9**.

Ver. 1. Then I turned, and lift up mine eyes, and looked,.... The prophet turned himself from looking upon the candlestick and olive branches, having had a full and clear understanding of them, and looked another way, and saw another vision:

and behold a flying roll, a volume or book flying in the air; it being usual for books, which were written on parchment, to be rolled up in the form of a cylinder; whence they were called rolls or volumes.

Zechariah 5:2

Ver. 2. And he said unto me,.... That is, the angel:

What seest thou? and I answered, I see a flying roll, the length whereof [is] twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits; so that it was a very large one, a volume of a very uncommon size, especially it may so seem to us;

but in other nations they have very long rolls or volumes, even longer than this: the Russians write their acts, protests, and other court matters, on long rolls of paper, some twenty ells, some thirty, and some sixty, and more {x}: and this being the length and breadth of the porch before the temple, **1Ki 6:3** hence the Jewish writers conclude that this flying roll came from thence: it may design either the roll or book in which the sins of men are written; which is very large, and will quickly be brought into judgment, when it will be opened, and men will be judged according to it; which shows the notice God takes of the sins of men; the exact knowledge he has of them; his strict remembrance of them; and the certain account men must give of them another day: or, the book of God's judgments upon sinners, such as was Ezekiel's roll, **Eze 2:9** which are many and great; are rolled up, and not at present to be searched into; but are flying, coming on, and will be speedily executed: or rather the book of the law, called a roll or volume, Ps 40:7 and which will be a swift witness against the breakers of it, as more fully appears from the explanation of it in the next verse **Zec 5:3**. It is a mere fancy and conceit of some that the Talmud is meant by this roll, the body of the Jewish traditions, which make void the commands of God, take away the blessing, and leave a curse in the land, as they did in the land of Judea.

{x} Eskuche apud Burkium in loc.

Zechariah 5:3

Ver. 3. Then said he unto me, This [is] the curse,.... So the law of Moses is called, because it has curses written in it, De 27:15 which curse is not causeless, but is according to law and justice; it is from the Lord, and is no other than the wrath of the Almighty; and, wherever it lights, it will remain and continue for ever. Vitringa, on Isa 24:6 says, this is the curse which Isaiah there prophesies of, which had its accomplishment in the times of Antiochus; but there the prophet is speaking, not of the land of Judea, but of the antichristian states.

That goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: over the whole land of Judea, and the inhabitants of it, for their breach of the law, contempt of the Gospel, and the rejection of the Messiah; and which had its accomplishment when wrath came upon them to the uttermost, in the destruction of their nation, city, and temple; and is the curse God threatened to smite their land with, **Mal 4:6** and this curse also reaches to the whole world, and the inhabitants of it, who lie in wickedness; and to all sorts of sinners, particularly those next mentioned:

for everyone that stealeth shall be cut off [as] on this side, according to it; as it is written and declared on one side of the roll:

and everyone that sweareth shall be cut off [as] on that side according to it; as is written and declared on the other side of the roll; which two sins of theft and false swearing, the one being against the second, and the other the first table of the law, show that the curse of the law reaches to all sorts of sins and sinners; to all who do not keep it in every respect: and, indeed, to all but those who are redeemed from it by the blood of Christ; and that it is proportioned according to a man's sins: and those two are particularly mentioned, because they are sins which prevailed among the Jews at the time Christ was on earth. Theft did, both in a literal and figurative sense, Mt 23:14 and so did vain swearing, **Mt 5:33**.

Zechariah 5:4

Ver. 4. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts,.... The roll was come forth, and was flying abroad; but the curse and wrath of God, signified by it, is what God would bring forth out of his treasures, according to his purposes and declarations, and execute upon sinners; which shows the certainty of it, and that there is no escaping it:

and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name; and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof; when wrath is gone forth from the Lord, there is no stopping it; and where it takes place it will remain, there is no getting rid of it; it makes an utter desolation of goods and estates, and entirely destroys both body and soul in hell: there seems to be an allusion to the plague of the leprosy, Le 14:45. So the son of Sirach says,

"a man that swears much shall be full of iniquity, and the plague shall not depart from his house:"

and again,

"if a man swears in vain, he shall not be innocent or justified, for his house shall be full of calamities {y}."

So the oracle in Herodotus {z}, which Grotius has observed, makes an utter destruction of a man's house and family, to be the punishment of the sin of perjury. Moreover, by the house of the thief and swearer may be meant the temple, as in the times of Christ, which was become a den of thieves and perjurers, and for their sins, became desolate, Mt 21:13.

{y} Ecclesiasticus xxiii. 11. {z} Erato, sive l. 6. c. 86.

Zechariah 5:5

Ver. 5. Then the angel that talked with me went forth,.... From the place where he was, and had been interpreting the vision of the flying roll, unto another more convenient for showing and explaining the following one; and, as it should seem, took the prophet along with him:

and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what [is] this that goeth forth; either out of the temple or out of heaven, into some open place, where it might be seen.

Zechariah 5:6

Ver. 6. And I said, What [is] it?.... After he had lifted up his eyes and seen it, he desires to know both what it was, and what was the meaning of it:

and he said, This [is] an ephah that goeth forth; which was a measure much in use with the Jews, Ex 16:36 it is the same with the "bath", and held above seven wine gallons. The Targum interprets this of such who dealt in false measures, whose sin is exposed, and their punishment set forth; but rather it designs the measure of iniquity filling up, either in Judea, particularly in the times of Christ, Mt 23:32 or in the whole world, and especially in the antichristian states, Re 18:5: and

He said moreover, this [is] their resemblance through all the earth; or "this is their eye" {z}; what they are looking at, and intent upon, namely, this ephah; that is, to fill up the measure of their iniquity: or, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, this ephah, which thou seest, shows that there is an eye upon them which sees their works; and this is the eye of the Lord, which sees and takes notice of all the evil actions of men, not as approving them, but as observing them, and avenging them. Cocceius, by the "ephah", understands an abundance of temporal good things bestowed upon the Christian church in Constantine's time and following, on which the eyes of carnal men were looking.

{z} Mnye taz "haec est oculus eorum", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius, Cocceius.

Zechariah 5:7

Ver. 7. And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead,.... By the angel; since he is afterwards said to cast it upon the mouth of the "ephah". A cicar, or talent of silver, with the Jews, was equal to three thousand shekels, as may be gathered from Ex 38:24 and weighed a hundred and twenty five pounds {a}; or, as others, a hundred and twenty {b}, and, according to the more exact account of Dr. Arbuthnot, a hundred and thirteen pounds, ten ounces, one pennyweight, and ten and two seventh grains of our Troy weight. A Babylonish talent, according to Aelianus {c}, weighed seventy two Attic pounds; and an Attic mina, or pound, weighed a hundred drachmas; so that it was of the weight of seven thousand two hundred such drachmas. An Alexandrian talent was equal to twelve thousand Attic drachmas; and these the same with a hundred and twenty five Roman libras or pounds; which talent is supposed to be the same with that of Moses. The Roman talent contained seventy two Italic minas, which were the same with the Roman libras {d}. But since the Hebrew word "cicar" signifies anything plain, and what is extended like a cake, as Arias Montanus observes {e}, it may here intend a plate of lead, which was laid over the mouth of the "ephah", as a lid unto it; though indeed it is afterwards called trpwe Nba, "a stone of lead", and so seems to design a weight.

And this [is] a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah; who, in **Zec 5:8**, is called "wickedness"; and here represented by a "woman", because, say some, the woman was first in the transgression; or rather because sin is flattering and deceitful, and draws into the commission of it, and so to ruin: and this woman, wickedness, intends wicked men; all the wicked among the Jews, and even all the wicked of the world; who sit in the "ephah", very active and busy in filling up the measure of their sins, and where they sit with great pleasure and delight; very openly and visibly declare their sin, as Sodom, and hide it not; in a very proud and haughty manner, with great boldness and impudence, and in great security, without any concern about a future state, promising themselves impunity here and hereafter. This woman is a very lively emblem of the whore of Rome, sitting as a queen upon many waters; ruling over kings and princes; living deliciously, and in great ease and pleasure filling up the measure of her sins. Kimchi interprets this woman of the ten tribes, who wickedly departed from God, and were as one kingdom.

{a} Epiphanius de Mensuris & Ponderibus. {b} Hebraei apud Buxtorf. Lex. Heb. in rad. rkk. {c} Var. Hist. l. 1. c. 22. {d} See Prideaux's Preface to Connexion, &c. vol. 1. p. 18, 19, &c. {e} Ephron, sive de Siclo, prope finem.

Zechariah 5:8

Ver. 8. And he said, This [is] wickedness,.... A representation of wicked men, who are wickedness itself, as their inward part is, **Ps 5:9** and particularly of the wicked one, the man of sin and son of perdition, the Roman antichrist and apocalyptic beast; who, though he is called by this title, "his Holiness", his true and proper name is "wickedness"; o anomov, that wicked lawless one, **2Th 2:8** yea, wickedness itself, being extremely wicked, a sink of sin and of all abominations, Re 17:5.

And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; that is, wickedness; that it might be kept within bounds, and not exceed its measure to be filled up: this seems to denote some restraint on sinners, that they may not be able to go all the lengths they would; and some rebuke upon them, that they might not lift up their heads with impunity; and some check upon them, and their furious rage towards the people of God; and also the putting of an utter end to sin and sinners, and particularly the followers of antichrist; see Ps 104:35.

And he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof; either upon the mouth of the woman, or of the ephah; and, be it which it will, it was done to keep the woman within the ephah, and press her down there; and intends the judgments of God upon sinners; and shows that there is no escaping divine vengeance; that it falls heavy where it lights, and sinks to the lowest hell; and that it will continue, being laid on by the firm, unchangeable, and irrevocable decree of God. Cocceius understands this of the Saracens and Turks, and the barbarous nations, being cast into the Roman empire, to restrain the antichristian tyranny; but it seems better to apply it to the utter destruction of antichrist, signified by a millstone cast into the sea and sunk there, never to rise more; see Re 18:21 and with it compare Ex 15:10.

Zechariah 5:9

Ver. 9. Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked,.... This is not a new vision, but a continuation of the former, as appears from the "ephah" seen in it:

and, behold, there came out two women; out of the same place the "ephah" did. The Targum explains these "two women" by two provinces; and Kimchi interprets them of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who had been carried captive into Babylon; and others of the two kings, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, who were the cause of the captivity; but Jarchi understands by them the Babylonians and Chaldeans, two nations as one, joined in Nebuchadnezzar's armies, which carried them captive: others think the two reformers, Ezra and Nehemiah, are meant, who were instruments of purging the Jews, returned from captivity, though but weak ones, and therefore are compared to "women"; yet what they did they did swiftly, and therefore are said to have "wings", and under the influence of the Spirit of God; hence the "wind", or "spirit" {f}, is said to be in their wings; and they acted from a tender regard to the glory of God and the good of their country; and therefore their wings were like the "wings of a stork"; a bird of passage, as appears from **Jer 8:7** and so a fit emblem to be used in the transportation of the "ephah"; of whom Pliny {g} says, from whence they come, and whither they betake themselves, is yet unknown; and adds, there is no doubt that they come from afar; as it is plain they must, if that relation be true, which seems to have good authority, that one of these creatures, upon its return to Germany, brought a green root of ginger with it; which must come from the eastern part of the world; from Arabia, or Ethiopia, or the East Indies, where it grows {h}: and as it is a bird that takes such long flights, it must have wings fitted for such a purpose; and which are taken notice of in Job 39:13 to which the wings and feather of the ostrich are compared; for so Bochart {i} there renders the word, "the wing of the ostriches rejoices, truly the wing" as of "a stork, and the feather"; or, as others, "who gave wings to the stork and ostrich?" both remarkable for their wings: and Vatablus renders the word here an "ostrich"; which, according to Pliny {k}, is the largest of birds, and almost as big as a beast. In Ethiopia and Africa they are taller than a horse and his rider, and exceed the horse in swiftness; and their wings seem to be given them to help them in running; but which are not sufficient to lift them much above the earth, and so can not be meant here; but rather the stork, whose wings are black and white; and when they fly, they stretch out their necks forwards, and their feet backwards, and with these direct their course; when a tempest rises, standing on both feet, they spread their wings, lay their bill upon their breast, and turn their face that way the storm comes {l}. The Targum renders it an eagle, which is the swiftest of birds, and whose wings are very strong to bear anything upon them, as they do their young, to which the allusion is, De 32:11 and so, if meant here, to lift up and bear away the ephah between the earth and the heaven; but the word is never used of that bird. The Harpies or Furies, with the Heathens, are represented, as women having wings {m} as these women are said to have; but these are very different women from them. Though some think the Romans, under Vespasian and Titus, are intended; but it may be that the two, perfections of God, his power and justice, in punishing men for their sins, are meant, particularly in the last times, and at the day of judgment. The power of God will be seen in raising the dead; in bringing all to judgment; in separating the wicked from the righteous, and in the execution of the sentence denounced on them: and the justice of God will be very conspicuous in the judgment and destruction of them.

And the wind [was] in their wings; they had wings, as denoting swiftness, as angels are said to have; hence Maimonides, as Kimchi observes, thought that angels are here meant; but this denotes, that though God is longsuffering, and may seem to defer judgment, which is sometimes a stumbling to the righteous, and a hardening to the wicked; yet, as this is only for the salvation of his elect, so when once the time is up, and the commission given forth, power and justice will speedily execute the sentence: and the "wind" being in their wings shows the greater swiftness and speed in the dispatch of business, and the great strength and force with which they performed it:

for they had wings like the wings of a stork; which, being a creature kind and tender, show that there is no cruelty in the displays of the power and justice of God in punishing sinners:

and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven; which denotes the visibility of the whole measure of the sins of wicked men; they will all be made manifest, and brought into judgment: and also the visibility of their punishment; they will go into everlasting punishment, in the sight of angels and men; and which will be the case of the antichristian beast, Re 17:8.

{f} xwr "spiritus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Burkius. {g} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 23. {h} Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 29. col. 328, 332. {i} Ibid. c. 16. col. 247, 248. {k} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 1. {l} Schotti Physica Curiosa, par. 2. l. 9. c. 26. p. 1162. {m} "Harpyiae et magnis quatiunt clangoribus alas." Virgil. Aeneid. l. 3. ver. 223.

Zechariah 5:10

Ver. 10. Then said I to the angel that talked with me;.... This the prophet said after he had seen the "ephah" come forth; the woman, wickedness, cast into it, and the talent of lead upon her; and the two women lifting up the ephah between heaven and earth:

Whither do these bear the ephah? he neither asks what the ephah signified, nor who were the women that bore it, but only whither they bore it.

Zechariah 5:11

Ver. 11. And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar,.... That is, in the province of Babylon, as the Targum paraphrases it; for Babel, or Babylon, was in the land of Shinar, Ge 10:10 whither the Jews were carried captive, **Da 1:2** Isa 11:11, and the bearing of the "ephah" thither may denote the cause of their captivity, the measure of sins filled up by them: though this some understand of the like injuries, oppressions, and vexations, brought upon the Chaldeans in the land of Shinar, which they before exercised towards and upon the Jews; and others of the rejection of wicked men from among the Jews, by Ezra and Nehemiah, transporting them as it were back to Babylon again: others of the dispersion of the Jews by the Romans, who chiefly settled after that in the eastern parts of the world; though indeed the whole world was a land of Shinar, or "shaking out" {n} unto them; they being shook out of their own land, and scattered about everywhere; which dispersion has been long and lasting, notorious and conspicuous; and they are now settled upon their own base, established upon their former principles of legality and self-righteousness, and rejection of the true Messiah; or rather this may be understood of the transfer of the ephah, or whole measure of iniquity, into mystical Babylon. The antichristian church of Rome is called Babylon; she is represented as a sink of sin, a mystery of iniquity, Re 17:5 and a house being built for this man of sin, antichrist, denotes the continuance of him; and being established on its own base, shows the false foundation on which the church of Rome is built, and her carnal security. So Cocceius, by the "two women", understands the two kingdoms or powers of antichrist, the civil and ecclesiastical powers; which support the man of sin, lift him up, and give him the highest place in the church, and fix his seat where idolatry and persecution reign, as formerly did in Babylon, in the land of Shinar. Though the whole may very well be applied to the last and everlasting punishment of sin and sinners, when the whole measure is filled up. The end of sin and sinners is death and everlasting destruction. The ephah, and the woman in it, are carried, not upwards to heaven, nor to the New Jerusalem, but to the land of Shinar, the land of shaking; to hell, where are utter darkness, weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; where a house is built for them, which denotes their continuance there; and which, being established on its own base, shows their punishment shall forever remain; their worm never dies; their fire is not quenched; the smoke of it ascends for ever and ever; their destruction is an everlasting destruction.

{n} renv Ura "terra excussionis", Menoch ins.

Zechariah 6:1

This chapter contains a vision of four chariots, and the explanation of it; and an order to make crowns of gold and silver for certain uses mentioned; and a famous prophecy concerning the Messiah as the builder of the temple, the church. The chariots are described by their number, four; by the place, the mountains, from whence they came out; and by the different colour of the horses in each of them, **Zec 6:1** upon the prophets inquiry what these were, an explanation is given of them; and they are said to be the four spirits of the heavens; and are described by their situation, standing before the Lord of the whole earth; by their mission from him; by each of the places to which they were sent; and by their success, or by the good effects produced, at least by some of them, **Zec 6:4** then follows the order to make the crowns; and it is declared what they should be made of, gold and silver; from whom they were to be had, and who were to be concerned herein; and what was to be done with them; they were to be put upon the head of Joshua the high priest, **Zec 6:9** who, being an eminent type of Christ, a prophecy concerning him is ordered to be delivered to him; who is described by his name, the man, the Branch; by the place he should grow up from; by the work he should do, building the temple of the Lord; by the glory he should have on account of it; and by the offices of King, Priest, and Prophet, he should execute, **Zec 6:12** and after this was done, then the crowns were to be laid up in the temple of the Lord for a memorial, by the four men above mentioned, **Zec 6:14** and though the Messiah is the chief builder of the temple, the church, yet it is suggested that others, and even Gentiles, should come and build in it; and which when done, it would be evident that the prophet had his mission to the Jews of the Lord; and the chapter is closed with a promise of the accomplishment of all this, should they diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord, **Zec 6:15**.

Ver. 1. And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked,.... When he saw another vision, as follows:

and, behold, there came four chariots; by which are meant, not the four Gospels; rather the apostles of Christ, who had their commission from Christ; were sent into all the world by him, and carried his name and Gospel thither; were the instruments Christ made use of in bringing many souls to him, and into his church, and for the defence of his Gospel, and of his interest; and were military chariots, who fought the good fight of faith; and triumphal ones, who were made to triumph in Christ, being more than conquerors through him; though others think angels are here meant, the chariots of the Lord, Ps 68:17 since they are called the four spirits of the heavens; and are said to go forth from standing before the Lord of the earth, and are sent by him into each of the parts of it, **Zec 6:5** and are represented by horses of various colours, as in **Zec 1:8** these may be signified by chariots, for their glory, strength, and swiftness, in which Jehovah rides about the world, and executes his will; and are made use of for the destruction of the church's enemies, and for its protection and defence. The Jewish writers, after the Targum, generally interpret them of the four monarchies, the Persian, Grecian, and Roman, by whom were done the will of God in the world; and seem to be greatly the design of the vision:

these came out from between two mountains: and the mountains were mountains of brass; such in which this metal is found, as in Chalcis, where it is said to be first found {o}; and from thence it has its name in the Greek tongue; or in the island of Cyprus, from whence it may be is the name of copper; and such mountains were in Judea, Idumea, and Arabia, formerly; as Carmel, according to Hesychius {p}; and Phinon in Idumea; and some mountains in Arabia, about eleven miles from Horeb, which, Jerom says {q}, formerly abounded with veins of gold and brass: these may intend the decrees and purposes of God, which, like "mountains", are very ancient, earlier than the everlasting hills, high and deep, not to be reached and searched into; are dark, obscure, and hidden to men, till made known; and are firm, solid, and immovable, and are lasting and durable; and, like mountains of "brass", are never to be broken in pieces, revoked, made null and void; for they stand upon the unalterable will of God, upon the basis of infallible wisdom; are supported by uncontrollable power, and can not be disannulled by all the men on earth, and devils in hell: and, according to these fixed and immutable decrees, the said monarchies in succession have took place in the world; unless rather it should be thought, that by these mountains of brass are designed the power and providence of God, by which the several people that first founded those empires were restrained for a while from going forth to make war upon others, and subdue their kingdoms; until the time was come, it was the will of God they should. The allusion may be to race horses in chariots, formerly used for such exercises, which were held within the circus or bars, till the sign was given when they should start: in like manner these nations were kept within bounds for a while, just as the four angels were bound by the providence of God at the river Euphrates, until they were loosed; which signify the Saracens, and their numerous army of horsemen under their four leaders, who were restrained from overrunning the "eastern" empire of the Romans, until it was the pleasure of God to loose them, and give them liberty, **Re 9:14**. Grotius understands this literally of the straits of Cilicia, and the vastness of the mountains there, through which the Babylonians and Persians, Alexander and his generals, used to pass into Syria, Judea, and Egypt; but rather these visionary chariots seemed to steer their course through a valley, which lay between two mountains, whereby they escaped the difficulties that lay in their way by the mountains; and may denote the low estate of these monarchies in their original, and the difficulties they grappled with, and got over, before they rose to the grandeur they did. Some interpret the two mountains of brass of the kingdom of Israel, after the Babylonish captivity, and the kingdom of the Messiah; and the four chariots, of the four kingdoms, in this order; the Persian, the Grecian, that of the Lagidae and Seleucidae, and the Roman, which is in course last; but was seen first by the prophet, because utter destruction was brought upon Israel by it {r}: according to this interpretation, the red horses are the Romans; and the other, the above mentioned. So Cocceius is of opinion that the two mountains are two powerful and unshaken kingdoms, set up by God; or rather two manifestations of the same kingdom; the one the kingdom of the house of David; the other the kingdom of Christ, which is spiritual, but as to the effect earthly, in the subjection of all nations to it, **Da 7:22** the kingdom of the house of David, as to the external form, is abolished, but notwithstanding remains in the root, until it appears in another mountain; and between these two, or in the middle space of time, four kingdoms with their armies would possess the promised land; and he observes, that in **Da 2:35**, mention is made of two mountains, and, that these chariots in part agree with the several parts of the image there.

{o} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 12. Vid. l. 7. c. 56. & l. 34. c. 2. {p} Apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 6. col. 886. {q} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 90. A. {r} Vid. Gurtler. Voc. Typ. Prophet. Explic. p. 58, 177.

Zechariah 6:2

Ver. 2. In the first chariot [were] red horses,.... If these are to be understood of the apostles of Christ, and ministers of the Gospel, they may be compared to "horses", for bearing the name of Christ, and drawing the chariot of the Gospel; for their strength to labour in the word and doctrine;

for their courage in the cause of Christ; and for their swiftness in doing his work; and to "red" ones, for their flaming zeal for the honour of the Redeemer, and their bloody sufferings for his sake: and if of angels, they may be compared to "horses", because strong and swift to do the will of God; and to "red" ones, because they are the executioners of his wrath and vengeance on wicked men: but if by "the chariots" are meant the monarchies, then by these "red horses" must be designed the Babylonians and Chaldeans, so called because their soldiers were clothed in red, and their chariots were like flaming torches; and they were sanguinary, cruel, and bloody in their tempers, and in their actions to the Jews; and were signified by Nebuchadnezzar's head of gold in his image; see **Na 2:3**:

and in the second chariot black horses; which, applied to the apostles and ministers of the Gospel, may denote their mean and abject appearance outwardly, and their knowledge in the mysteries of grace, which are dark and obscure to others; and, if understood of angels, is applicable to them, when messengers of ill tidings, or executioners of judgment: but if the monarchies are meant, which seems best, the Medes and Persians are intended; and their "black" colour is expressive of the sorrowful estate of the Jews under them, especially in the time of Haman, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe: black horses were reckoned strong, well made, and fit for labour; and the Ethiopians and Moors chose to have their horses they used in war all of this colour, to strike the greater horror and terror into their enemies; and to see black horses in a dream was accounted a bad omen {s}. The Medes and Persians were a strong and warlike people, and were very terrible to their enemies, under Cyrus; and very troublesome and distressing to the Jews, under Cambyses and Ahasuerus.

{s} Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 7. col. 106, 107.

Zechariah 6:3

Ver. 3. And in the third chariot white horses,.... Which, as referring to Gospel preachers, may denote the purity of their lives and doctrines, and their conquests and victories over the souls of men by the ministry of the word; and, as applicable to angels, may express the purity of their nature and actions, the joyful messages they bring to the heirs of salvation, and their victories over the evil angels; but, as respecting the monarchies, point at the Grecians, and the conquests of Alexander, and his mildness and gentleness to the Jews: white horses were used in triumphs, in token of victory {t}; see **Re 6:2** and they have been reckoned the swiftest in running; and by the "oneirocritics", to see them in a dream or vision is a good omen {u}; and so it was accounted with the Jews {w}; all which suits very well with Alexander, who was famous for his victories over many nations: and who, with great velocity, overran them, and as soon conquered them, and was kind and beneficent to the Jewish nation:

and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses: signifying either the diversity of gifts in the ministers of the Gospel; or the different employment and services of angels; or rather the Romans are meant, who were collected out of various nations, and consisted of different people, and had dvarious forms of government, and emperors of different dispositions to the Jews; and particularly as two colours are assigned to these, it may respect the division of their kingdom into Pagan and Papal, as is predicted in **Da 2:41**. Kimchi thinks the "bay horses" design the kingdom of the Ishmaelites, or Turks, a strong and powerful people; as some think the word used signifies {x}; rather the Goths and Vandals; see **Zec 6:7**. The word for "grisled" is by the Targum rendered "spotted" or "speckled"; and comes from one which signifies "hail"; and so denotes such coloured horses as are spotted with white spots, like hailstones {y}, upon another colour, as black or red; and is by the Septuagint, and others, rendered "various" {z}, of divers colours: and the other word for "bay" is rendered by them "starling coloured"; the colour of the starling, which is a black bird, with white spots; and so were a fit emblem of the Goths, Huns, &c. who were of various nations, and had various laws, customs, and usages; though some think by these two are meant the successors of Alexander, the Lagidae and the Seleucidae, put together, because of their intermarriages with one another, as well as succeeding Alexander: the former by the "grisled", who went and settled in the south country in Egypt, **Zec 6:6** whose first king was Ptolemy Lagus, from whence is the name, and who is the king of the south in Da 11:5 and the latter by the "bay" or "ash coloured", as the Targum; the kings of Syria hiding deep their counsels, as under ashes, particularly Antiochus, as Grotius observes; and sometimes making war on one nation, and sometimes on another; and both of them in their turns falling upon the Jews suddenly, and with great violence, like hailstones, and making sad devastations among them, reducing them to ashes; but then this sense shuts out the Romans, the fourth monarchy, from having any place in this vision, which cannot be admitted; since these four chariots answer to the four sorts of metal in

Nebuchadnezzar's image, and to the four beasts in Daniel's vision. So the Jewish writers {a} say, the red horses are the kingdom of Babylon, which shed much blood in Israel; this is the head of gold: the black horses, the kingdom of the Persians and Medes, like to a bear, who made black the faces of Israel, by the decrees of Haman: the white horses, the kingdom of Grecia, who made white the faces of Israel by reproaches: the horses grisled and bay the fourth kingdom, which decreed various decrees, different from one another: and these four chariots went out from between two mountains, from between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, which dwell between two countries, that beyond Jordan, and the land of Israel; and they went out between them, and carried them captive; and these kingdoms are called mountains of brass, because strong as brass, and hearkened not to the words of the prophets.

{t} Aurel. Victor de Viris Ilustrib. c. 26. in Furio Camillo, & Plutarchus in Camillo. {u} Bochart, ut supra, (Hierozoic par. 1. l. 2. c. 7.) col. 105, 106. {w} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1. {x} Myuwma "fortes", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "robusti", Piscator, Tarnovius, Gussetius, Stockius, p. 74. "validi", Burkius; so Kimchi; and the Jews in Pesikta apud Yalkut in loc. {y} Myddb "grandinate", Montanus, Cocceius, Burkius; "grandiue gut. tati", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius, De Dieu, Pembellus. {z} poikiloi, Sept.; "varii", Pagninus. {a} In Pesikta Rabbati apud Yalkut in loc.

Zechariah 6:4

Ver. 4. Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me,.... After he had seen the chariots come out, and had observed the different colours of the horses in them:

what [are] these, my lord? that is, what do they signify? what is the meaning of this vision?

Zechariah 6:5

Ver. 5. And the angel answered and said unto me,.... In order to grant him his request, and explain the vision of the chariots:

these [are] the four spirits of the heavens; or, "the four winds of the heavens"; the apostles and ministers of the Gospel may be compared to "the winds", because their ministry is the ministration of the Spirit, which is like wind that blows invisibly, powerfully, and where it listeth; and because in and by it the Spirit breathes life and comfort into the souls of men; and because of the powerful efficacy and penetrating nature of the word preached by them, and their swiftness and readiness to do the will of God: angels are called "spirits" or "winds", Ps 104:3 they are created spirits, and so differ from God; are incorporeal ones, and so differ from men; and are immaterial and immortal, and so die not: they are spiritual subsistences, and spirits of the heavens, or heavenly spirits; heaven being the place of their abode and residence; and they may be compared to "winds", for their invisibility, wonderful penetration into places and things, their very great swiftness, and prodigious power and strength. The Targum paraphrases the words thus,

"these are the four kingdoms, which are as the winds of heaven;"

and so the same are signified by the four winds in **Da 7:2** to which they may be compared for their swift and forcible carrying all before them, and for their fickleness and changeableness; and to which, the several parts of the world, into which they went, agree:

which go forth, from standing before the Lord of all the earth: so the apostles of Christ, and ministers of the Gospel, stood before him in his eternal purposes and decrees from everlasting; and went forth, having their commission from him in time; and were sent by him into the several parts of the world he is the Lord of; and by whom they were filled with gifts, grace, and courage, fitting them for their work. Angels also stand before him, ministering unto him; always behold him; are in his presence, and enjoy his favour; and go forth from him, being sent forth by him on various accounts into all the parts of the world; which Jehovah is the Creator, Upholder, and Governor of: moreover, this is applicable to the four monarchies; these stood before the Lord in his vast and infinite mind; in the secret decrees of it, before the world was; and the sending and going forth of them from him show that they were powers ordained of God, who has the government of the whole world in his hands.

Zechariah 6:6

Ver. 6. The black horses which [are] therein,.... Which were in the second chariot: no further mention is made of the red horses in the first chariot, because the kingdom of the Chaldeans was now extinct: these design the Medes and Persians:

go forth into the north country: into the country of Babylon or Chaldea, which lay north of Judea; see **Jer 1:13** and other places; these went to Babylon, took that, and seized on the empire, and delivered the Jews, who were captives there:

and the white go forth after them; the Grecians under Alexander, who went after the Medes and Persians into the same country, and fought Darius the Persian, and conquered him:

and the grisled go forth toward the south country; the Romans under Julius Caesar, Augustus, and others before them, who went into Egypt, which lay south of Judea, Da 11:5 and conquered that, and other nations, and set up the fourth kingdom or monarchy.

Zechariah 6:7

Ver. 7. And the bay went forth, and sought to go,.... Without leave: these design either the Romans; or, since distinct from the grisled, the Huns, Goths, and Vandals; who sought to go out of their own places into other countries: and were desirous

that they might walk to and fro through the earth: without control; overrunning as they, did the Roman empire, and set up ten kingdoms in it; unless this is to be understood of the land of Judea only, through which the Romans walked to and fro at pleasure, and subdued it:

and he said; that is, the Lord of the whole earth, before whom they stood:

Get ye hence, walk to and fro through the earth; as being filled with indignation at them, and yet suffered them to have their will; and so Kimchi interprets the phrase, "he gave them power to go and subdue lands;"

and to the same purpose Jarchi,

"he gave them power to rule with great authority; and this is the kingdom of Edom or Rome:"

So they walked to and fro through the earth; either the land of Judea, as the Romans did, and made it a Roman province; and these may represent Rome Papal, set up and supported by the above people, even the beast of Rome, which has reigned over the kings of the earth, to whom the ten kings gave their kingdom and power.

Zechariah 6:8

Ver. 8. Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying,.... That is, the Lord of the whole earth spoke to the prophet with a loud voice, and uttered the following words:

Behold, these that go toward the north country; meaning the Medes and Persians, which went towards Babylon:

have quieted my spirit in the north country; by executing the judgments of God upon the Chaldeans, and by helping, favouring, and delivering the people of the Jews; which were very agreeable to the will of God, and well pleasing in his sight, signified by the quieting or refreshing his Spirit.

Zechariah 6:9

Ver. 9. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying.] Either "the word of prophecy from the Lord", as the Targum paraphrases it; the visions being ended, the prophetic part of the book begins; and many excellent prophecies concerning the Messiah, and his kingdom, are contained in this and the following chapters: or an order from the Lord, which is expressed in the next verses **Zec 6:10**.

Zechariah 6:10

Ver. 10. Take of "them of" the captivity,.... That is, some of them that were returned from the captivity of Babylon, and who are mentioned by name:

even of Heldai, of Tobijah, and Jedaiah, which are come from Babylon; either with Zerubbabel and Joshua, when they came from thence; or who were now just come from those that remained there:

and come thou the same day; this very day in which they were come from thence:

and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah; where the above persons were; or where they were to go along with him: this Josiah might be either a goldsmith, and therefore the prophet is sent to him to make the crowns later mentioned; or else he might be a treasurer belonging to the temple, who had gold and silver in his hands, which had been put there for the use of it.

Zechariah 6:11

Ver. 11. Then take silver and gold, &c. Which the Jewish writers suppose were brought by the above men from their brethren in Babylon, as a free will offering towards the building of the temple:

and make crowns; two at least, one of silver, and another of gold; the one to be put upon the head of Joshua the high priest; the other upon the head of Zerubbabel, as Kimchi conjectures; though, according to the text, they seem to be both, or all of them, be they as many as they will, to be put upon the head of Joshua; and may signify the different states of the priesthood in the present time, and when in its pristine glory; or that both the crown of the priesthood and the crown of the kingdom should meet in his antitype Christ, who is said to have on his head many crowns, Re 19:12. The Targum renders it, "thou shalt make a great crown"; as if only one crown was to be made of gold and silver mixed together; and so the Arabic version renders it; but more are certainly meant, for it follows:

and set [them] upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech the high priest; on whose head a fair mitre was set; see **Zec 3:5** and with the mitre was wore by the high priest the holy crown, made of pure gold; and which was no other than the plate or "flower" of gold, on which was engraved "Holiness to the Lord", Ex 28:36 and this, according to the Jewish writers {b}, was a plate of gold two fingers broad, and reached from ear to ear; though Josephus {c} seems to give a different account of it; he says,

"the golden crown surrounds (either the mitre, or perhaps rather the forehead or temples); and on it were three rows of cups or flowers, like those of the herb we call "saccharus"; and the Grecian botanists "hyosciamus";"

or henbane; and after describing the herb, and the figure of the buds, cups, or flowers of it, he adds,

"like to these is made a crown reaching from the hinder part of the head unto both temples; for the flowers do not encompass the forehead; but there is a golden plate, which has the name of God engraved in sacred letters;"

which seems to disagree with the accounts of other Jewish writers; unless, as Braunius {d} observes, they may be thus reconciled, that the crown was nothing else but the plate that was two fingers broad, and was in length from ear to ear; so that about the temples it was ornamented with three rows of henbane flowers on each side: and these three rows may give occasion for the use of the word in the plural number; and some have called it a triple crown {e}; and Popish writers fail not to improve it in favour of the crown their pontiff wears; and Lyra {f} speaks of little crowns or coronets, even in the mitres of the common priests; which (he says) were circles in the lower part of them so called; wherefore the rows of flowers in the high priest's crown, from whence it might be called Uyu, a flower, might with more propriety bear that name. Philo the Jew {g}, speaking of the golden plate, says it was like a crown engraven with four letters of the name (Jehovah); and further observes, that

"the mitre under it kept the plate from touching the head, on which the "cidaris" or diadem was put; for it was like the cidaris which the eastern kings used for a diadem:"

and indeed this crown, and the three rows of flowers in it, were a hieroglyphic or emblem of the threefold office of Christ, whom the high priest represented, kingly, priestly, and prophetic; and so may be fitly signified here by crowns in the plural number; and it is usual with the Jewish writers to speak of three crowns, the crown of the law, the crown of the kingdom, and the crown of the priesthood {h}; and very probably from the high priest among the Jews wearing crowns it was that the priests among the Heathens had the same ornaments on their heads; and to be crowned was with them the same as to exercise the office of priesthood {i}, and who was an eminent type of the Messiah, and in this of having crowns put upon his head, as the following words show.

{b} Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 9. sect. 1. Jarchi in Exod. xxviii. 36. {c} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 7. {d} De Vestitu Sacerdot. Hebr. l. 2. c. 28. sect. 18. p. 807. {e} Fortunatus Scacchus in Myrothec. l. 3. c. 40. p. 1000. Solerius de Pileo, sect. 13. p. 266. {f} In Exod. xxxix. 27. {g} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 670, 671. {h} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 13. {i} Paschalius de Coronis, l. 4. c. 13.

Zechariah 6:12

Ver. 12. And speak unto him, saying,.... That is, to Joshua the high priest, having the crowns on his head:

thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, behold the man whose name [is] The BRANCH; which is not to be understood of Zerubbabel, as some Jewish writers interpret it; for he was not "the Branch", by way of eminency, much less that righteous Branch of David, called the Lord our righteousness, Jer 23:5 the same that is here meant; besides, he was already grown up out of his place; nor did he build a temple, from which he had great glory; nor was he either king or priest, only governor of Judah; and, however, not both, as this person is represented to be; and who is no other than the Messiah; and so the Targum paraphrases the words,

"behold the man Messiah is his name;"

and Jarchi owns that some of their Rabbins interpret the words of the King Messiah. The "Branch" is a name by which the Messiah goes in the Talmud {k}, and in other Jewish writings. It is asked {l}, what is the name of the King Messiah? it is answered, among others, his name is the "Branch"; as it is said, "behold the man whose name is the Branch; he shall grow up out of his place": elsewhere {m} they speak of five letters doubled, which are the foundation of deliverance to certain persons, or point thereat. The first four, they observe, were accomplished in the deliverance of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, of Isaac from the Philistines, of Jacob from Esau, and of the Israelites from Egypt; and the fifth, which is the letter u, the first letter of "Tzemach", the Branch, by it they say the holy blessed God will redeem Israel at the end of the four monarchies; as it is said, "behold the man whose name is the Branch", &c.; Philo the Jew {n} interprets this passage of a divine Person, the Son of God, by whom no other than the Messiah is meant,

"we have heard (says he) one of the friends of Moses, i. e. Zechariah, saying thus, behold the man "whose name is the east", or rising sun (so the Greek version renders the words); a new appellation, if you can think it said of one consisting of soul and body; but if of that incorporeal one, bearing the divine image, you will own that the name is fitly given him, the ancient Sun, the Father of beings will cause to arise; whom otherwise he names the first begotten, and who, being begotten, imitates the ways of his Father; and looking at his archetypal exemplars, forms the same."

Abendana {o}, a modern Jew, observes, that

"it is right that the Targum interprets it of the Messiah, for of him it is spoken; therefore it is written, "and he shall grow up out of his place"; for he shall go forth from him, and shall be of the seed of Zerubbabel,--and the King Messiah shall bear the glory of the kingdom, and he shall rule upon the throne of his kingdom;"

and when he is called a man, the meaning is not that he is a mere man, nor was he really man before his incarnation; but as he was to be man, and his incarnation was drawing near, he is so called: of his name the "Branch", see **Isa 4:2**, and Joshua, he is directed to look upon himself, with the crowns on his head, as a type of him; and so were the prophet, and those that were with him; and he is to be beheld, as before in type, so now in truth, by faith, with love and affection, with diligent attention, and great admiration:

and he shall grow up out of his place: or, "from under him" {p}; which may regard his natural descent as man, and the persons or person from whom he sprung; as from Abraham, Jacob, Judah, Jesse, and particularly from David, from the royal seed, as Jarchi interprets it: or else the place from whence this Branch arose, the land of Judea, the tribe of Judah, the city of Bethlehem, where he was born; or Galilee, and particularly Nazareth, where he was brought up, and grew, and increased in the stature of his body, and in the wisdom of his mind: or it may be rendered, "from his inferior place" {q}; his superior, place, as the Son of God, is heaven; his inferior place, as the Son of man, is the earth; from whence he may be said to be, being born of a woman; and so this Branch is called "the fruit of the earth", and said to spring out of it, **Isa 4:2** or it is same as wylam, from himself, as Aben Ezra observes; and so Calvin; for this Branch did not grow up through any sowing and planting of man, but without any hand or concern of his in it; Christ was born of a virgin, through the power of the Highest, and through his own power, as God:

and he shall build the temple of the Lord; not a material temple, but the spiritual temple, the Church; called so in allusion to the temple of Jerusalem, built by Solomon; which was typical of the church, in the builder of it, Solomon, the church being built by Christ the antitypical Solomon, the true Peace, and Peacemaker; in the situation of it on a mount, which denotes the safety, visibility, and exalted state of the church; in the matter of it, being made of choice stones, and excellent timber, to which believers in Christ, who as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, are fitly compared; in the magnificence and stateliness of it, especially as the church will be in the latter day, when the glorious things spoken of it will be fulfilled; and in its strength and firmness, as well as in its holiness: and it is called "the temple of the Lord", because it is of his building, where he dwells, and where he is worshipped; and in the building of it Christ has a great concern; he is not only the foundation and cornerstone of it, but he is the chief, the master builder of it; he builds it on himself, and builds it up by his Spirit, his ministers, his word and ordinances, making thereby continually an increase of it, and additions to it; see Mt 16:18.

{k} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 1. {l} Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 1. {m} Pirke Eliezer, c. 48. fol. 58. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 18. fol. 223. 2. {n} De Confus. Ling. p. 329. {o} Not. in Miclol Yophi in loc. {p} wytxtm "subter eum", V. L. Pagninus; "[ad verbum], de sub se", Calvin, Drusius; "de subter se", Cocceius; "ex sub eo", Burkius. {q} "Ex inferiore loco", Vitringa in Jesaiam, c. iv. 2. "E leco suo humili", Hiller. Onomastic. Sacr. p. 47.

Ver. 13. Even he shall build the temple of the Lord,.... Which is repeated, as Kimchi observes, for confirmation sake:

and he shall bear the glory; that is, of building the temple; and the phrase denotes that the glory of it shall be upon him, shall be hung upon him, as in Isa 22:24 and so shall be visible; that it would be weighty and heavy, he having many crowns on his head, put there by all the saints, who everyone of them ascribe glory to him; that it would continue, and not pass away like the glory of this world; and that he, and he alone, should bear it; not Joshua, nor Zerubbabel, nor the ministers of the word, nor members of churches, nor any other, but himself; he, and he alone, shall be exalted:

and shall sit and rule upon his throne; in heaven, having done his work on earth, where he is at ease and rest, and exercises power and authority; he rules over the whole world, and the kings of it in general, and in particular over his saints, by his Spirit, word, and ordinates, feeding, protecting, and defending them:

and he shall be a Prince upon his throne; he is both Priest and King, and exercises both offices at one and the same time, and even now in heaven; having offered himself as a sacrifice on earth, by which he has put away sin for ever, and perfected his people; he is set down upon his throne, as a King crowned with glory and honour; and ever lives as a Priest the throne, to make intercession for them; by appearing in the presence of God for them; by presenting his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness, to his divine Father; by offering up the prayers and praises of his people; by declaring it as his will that such and such blessings be bestowed upon them; and by applying the benefits of his death unto them:

and the counsel of peace shall be between them both; not between Joshua and Zerubbabel, who should agree together, as they did, in the administration of government belonging to their distinct offices; rather between the priestly and kingly offices of Christ; nor the council of peace between the Father and the Son, concerning the salvation of the elect; for that was past in eternity; but better the Gospel of peace, called the whole counsel of God, which, in consequence of Christ being a Priest on his throne, was preached to both Jews and Gentiles; which brought the glad tidings of peace and salvation by Christ to both, and was the means of making peace between them both.

Zechariah 6:14

Ver. 14. And the crowns shall be to Helem,.... The same with Heldai, **Zec 6:10**:

and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah; the same with Josiah, **Zec 6:10**:

for a memorial in the temple of the Lord; the crowns, after they had been put upon the head of Joshua, were taken off, and laid up in some part of the temple, of which the Jews make mention in their Misna {r}; and say there were golden chains fixed to the beams of the porch (of the temple), by which the young priests went up, and saw the crowns; as it is said, **Zec 6:14** "and the crowns shall be to Helem", &c.; these were laid up for a memorial of the liberality and generosity of those men, as Jarchi interprets it; who had so freely and largely offered towards the building of the temple; or rather, as Alshec {s}, another Jewish commentator, observes, they were for a memorial of something future, even of the Messiah, who was typified by Joshua; when he had those crowns upon him; for those crowns respected the glory of Christ's government in future times; and being made both of silver and gold, and put upon the head of the high priest Joshua, denoted the union of the kingly and priestly offices in the Messiah.

{r} Massech. Middot, c. 3. sect. 8. {s} Apud L'Empereur. Not. in ib.

Zechariah 6:15

Ver. 15. And they [that are] afar off shall come,..... Into the temple; not the material temple; nor is this a prophecy which was fulfilled in Herod, a stranger, repairing that, as Kimchi suggests; but into the spiritual temple, the church; and is a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles, who are said to be "afar off", **Eph 2:12**, from God; from having his image on them; from subjection to his law; from the knowledge and fear of him; and from communion with him: from Christ; from the knowledge of his person, righteousness, and salvation by him; from love to him, faith in him, and fellowship with him; from the Spirit of God, and from the people of God, and from any solid hope of eternal life: now these being called by grace, and brought to Christ under the drawings of the Father's love, shall come to his church, and join themselves to his people:

and build in the temple of the Lord; upon the foundation Christ; and be useful in building up others, either by private conversation, or by public preaching the word; it is not said, they shall "build the temple of the Lord"; that is Christ's work; but "build in" it:

and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you; that is, the Prophet Zechariah, who was sent to the Jews to declare these things to them; or, as the Targum adds, "to prophesy unto you": which they would fully know, and be assured of, when these things should have their accomplishment:

and [this] shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God; not that the fulfilment of the above predictions depended upon their obedience; but when they should in the latter day obey the Gospel of Christ, or "the word of the Lord" their "God", as the Targum paraphrases it; then this would come to pass, that they should know that the prophet had his mission from the Lord.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Zechariah 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 7

This chapter treats concerning the nature and use of certain fasts kept by the Jews, on account of the destruction of the temple, and other things; and concerning the message of the former prophets to them, and the effects of it. The occasion of the former was an embassy sent by the Jews to the priests and prophets, to know whether they should continue the fast of the fifth month; upon which the prophet was sent by the Lord unto them. The time of the prophecy is noted, **Zec 7:1**. An account of the embassy is given, of the persons that were sent, and to whom, and upon what account, **Zec 7:2**. The answer of the Lord to it by the prophet, showing the usefulness of fasts to him, and putting them upon hearkening to his voice by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was in great prosperity, **Zec 7:4** and then they are exhorted by him, in the ministry of the present prophet, to acts of righteousness, several species of which are mentioned; and which were the same they had been exhorted to by the former prophets, but had neglected, and hardened their hearts against all exhortations and instructions, **Zec 7:8** and were the reason of their captivity and desolation, **Zec 7:13**.

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, in the fourth year of King Darius,.... Near two years after the foundation of the temple was laid, **Hag 2:10** and near two years before it was finished, **Ezr 6:15** when the work was going forward, and there was a great deal of reason to believe it would be completed:

[that] the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, in the fourth [day] of the ninth month, [even] in Chisleu: which answers to part of our October, and part of November.

Zechariah 7:2

Ver. 2. When they had sent unto the house of God,.... It is, in the Hebrew text, "when he sent Bethel"; which some, as Kimchi observes, take to be the name of a man that was sent along with those after mentioned; but the Targum and the Septuagint render it, "when", or "after he had sent unto Bethel": not the place so called in Jacob's time; but Jerusalem, where the temple or house of God was now building; and it may be observed, that the words are expressed in the singular number, "when he had sent" {t}; and not, as we render them, "when they had sent"; and agreeably, in **Zec 7:3**, it is said, "should I weep", &c. as if these messengers were sent by a single person, and yet a body of people is meant; and not the captives that remained in Babylon, as most interpreters understand it; but the Jews that were returned from thence, and were in Judea, as Junius and Tremellius observe; for to them the answer is returned, and to them does the Lord by the prophet direct his speech throughout the whole chapter. The persons sent were

Sherezer and Regemmelech, and their men; who these persons were is not known; they were, no doubt, principal men of the people, by whom they were sent, and the chief of the embassy, and had others with them inferior to them: part of their business at Bethel, or the house of God, was, to pray before the Lord; that they might be directed aright, and have a proper answer returned to the question they came with. The temple at Jerusalem was the place where men used to go up to pray; see Lu 18:10.

{t} xlvyw "cum misisset, [sub.] populus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Tarnovius; "et misit", Pagninus, Montanus; "miserat autem sub". Israel, Vatablus; "et miserat", Cocceius; "et misit Bethelum", i. e. "urbem", Burkius.

Zechariah 7:3

Ver. 3. And to speak unto the priests which were in the house of the Lord of hosts,.... That ministered in the sanctuary, as the Targum explains it, who offered sacrifices, &c. and who were to be consulted in matters of religion, **Mal 2:7**:

and to the prophets; who were then in being, as Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi:

saying, Should I weep in the fifth month; which is the month Ab, and answers to July: now on the seventh day of this month, according to 2Ki 25:8, the temple was burnt by the Chaldeans; and, according to **Jer 3:12**, it was on the tenth of this month, which day was kept by the Jews as a day of fasting and humiliation, in commemoration of it; and by the Misnic doctors {u} afterwards was removed, and kept on the ninth day of the said month; but, seeing the temple was in great forwardness of being rebuilt, the question with those Jews was, whether they should continue any longer mourning and fasting on that account:

separating myself: that is, from eating and drinking, and not taking the lawful pleasures and recreations of life:

as I have done these so many years? for the space of seventy years, as in **Zec 7:5**.

{u} Misn. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 7, 8. T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 29. 1.

Zechariah 7:4

Ver. 4. Then came the word of the Lord of hosts unto me, saying. Upon the sending of this embassy, and upon putting this question.

Zechariah 7:5

Ver. 5. Speak unto all the people of the land,.... Of Judea, who had sent these men on this errand, and whom they represented, and in whose name they spake:

and to the priests; who were consulted on this occasion:

saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth; on the seventh or tenth day of the fifth month Ab, on account of the temple being burnt by Nebuchadnezzar:

and seventh [month]; the month Tisri, which answers to September; on the third day of this month a fast was kept on account of the murder of Gedaliah, Jer 41:1 though Kimchi says he was slain on the first day of the month; but, because that was a feast day, keeping a day for a fast on this occasion was fixed on the day following:

even those seventy years; of their captivity, during which they kept the above fasts. The Jews say {w} there was no fast of the congregation, or public fast, kept in Babylon, but on the ninth of Ab, or the fifth month only; and if so, other fasts here, and in **Zec 8:19**, must be private ones. These seventy years are to be reckoned from the nineteenth of Nebuchadnezzar, when the city was destroyed, to the second or fourth of Darius:

did ye at all fast unto me, [even] to me? the fast they kept was not according to the command of God, but an appointment of theirs; nor was it directed to his glory; nor was it any profit or advantage to him; and therefore it was nothing to him whether they fasted or not; see Isa 58:3.

{w} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 54. 2.

Zechariah 7:6

Ver. 6. And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink,.... Either at common meals, or at their festivals:

did not ye eat [for yourselves], and drink [for yourselves]? merely and only for their own refreshment and pleasure, and not for the glory of God; though that ought to be the principal end in eating and drinking, 1Co 10:31.

Zechariah 7:7

Ver. 7. [Should ye] not [hear] the words which the Lord hath cried by the former prophets,.... As Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others; suggesting that it would have been much better for them to have regarded the exhortations and instructions which the Lord sent them by his servants, which would have prevented their captivity; and so would have had no occasion of fasting and mourning: for those prophecies were delivered out

when Jerusalem was inhabited, and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her; when Jerusalem, and the cities about it, were full of people, and enjoyed all the blessings of life in great plenty; and which would have continued, had they attended to the exhortations, cautions, and warnings given them:

when [men] inhabited the south and the plain? the land of Judea, as the Misnic {x} doctors say, was divided into three parts; the mountainous part, the plain, and the valley. Jerusalem was in the mountainous part, and these are the other two; and not only those parts of the land which were hilly, and those cities that were encompassed with mountains, were in safety and prosperity; but those also that were in the champaign country, and in the low valleys. The "south" was that part of the land of Canaan formerly inhabited by the Amalekites, and which they invaded when David was at Ziklag, Nu 13:29. Sometimes it was called Negeb, as here; and sometimes Daroma, as frequently in the Jewish writings; in which Judea is often called the south, with respect to Galilee; for they distinguish between the inhabitants of Galilee and the inhabitants of the south country: and say, a disciple might intercalate the year for Galilee, but not for the south, i.e. Judea. It reached from Eleutheropolis to the south of the land, eighteen or twenty miles: it was distinguished by the Jews {y} into upper and nether Daroma, or south country: the upper consisted of the hilly part of it; the nether of the plain; and by Jerom {z} mention is made of interior Daroma, by which there should be an exterior one. The "plain", or "Sephela", was all the champaign country, near to Eleutherepolis, to the north and west; and so the above writer {a} says it was called in his times: now each of these were well inhabited; Daroma, or the southern part; hence it is frequent, in Jewish writings {b}, to read of such a Rabbi of Daroma, or the south, as R. Jacob, R. Simlai, and others; and of the elders of the south {c}; and so Jerom speaks of Eremmon, and Duma, large villages, in his days, in Daroma or the south; the one sixteen, the other seventeen miles from Eleutheropolis; and of Ether, Jether, and Jethan, one of which was eighteen, and another twenty miles from it {d}; and in the Apocrypha:

"Simon also set up Adida in Sephela, and made it strong with gates and bars." (1 Maccabees 12:38)

mention is made of Adida in Sephela, fortified, by Simon; and in which also were various other places well stored with inhabitants. This expresses the happy and safe state the Jews were in before their captivity, and in which they would have remained, had they hearkened to the words of the Lord.

{x} Misn. Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 2. {y} T. Hieros. Maaaser Sheni, fol. 56. 3. & Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 4. {z} De locis Hebr. fol. 91. C. & 92. I. {a} Ibid. fol. 94. M. {b} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 2. 2. & 11. 4. & Succah, fol. 53. 4. {c} T. Hieros. Erubin, fol. 23. 3. {d} Ut supra, fol. 90. K. & 91. C. & 92. I.

Zechariah 7:8

Ver. 8. And the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, saying. Giving him orders to repeat what the former prophets had said, and to urge the same things on the people which they had before rejected, the rejection of which had issued in their ruin.

Zechariah 7:9

Ver. 9. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying,.... The same things as he had before; for the things following are ever in force, and always to be attended to, and to be regarded and preferred before anything merely ritual and ceremonial; and especially before the traditions and commandments of men, of which nature the above fasts were:

Execute true judgment; or, "judge judgment {e} of truth"; this is addressed to the judges of the people, that when any cause came before them between man and man, that they would judge righteously, according to the law of God; and, without respect to persons, pass sentence as the truth of the case required:

and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother; whether in want of food, raiment, or in whatsoever distress, whether of body or mind; which is much more acceptable to God than any legal sacrifices, or outward abstinences and humiliations, **Ho 6:6**.

{e} tma jpvm "judicium veritatis", Montanus, Calvin, Cocceius, Burkius; "jus veritatis", Junius & Tremellius, Tarnovius.

Zechariah 7:10

Ver. 10. And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor,.... Such as have no husband to provide for them, nor father and mother to care for them, and are in a strange land, where they have no friends or acquaintance, and are poor, and can not help themselves. Laws of this kind were frequently inculcated among the Jews; see De 24:14:

and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart; thoughts of evil are sinful, and forbidden by the law of God, as well as actions, which agrees with our Lord's sense of the law, **Mt 5:22**, see Le 19:17.

Zechariah 7:11

Ver. 11. But they refused to hearken,..... That is, the Jews, before the captivity, refusal to give heed to the above exhortations, and obey the voice of God in them:

and pulled away the shoulder; from serving the Lord, and supporting his interest: or "they gave", or presented, "a rebellious shoulder" {f}; a refractory one, that slides back, like a backsliding or refractory heifer, that will not admit of the yoke, **Ho 4:16** so these could not bear the yoke of the law, nor the burden of duty; nor suffer the words of exhortation, or receive the admonitions given them:

and stopped their ears, that they should not hear; like the deaf adder, Ps 58:4 they would not hear, and pretended they could not; which was an instance of contempt to the speakers.

{f} trro Ptk "scapulam aversam", Pagninus; "deflectentem", Montanus; "rebellem", Munster, Tigurine version; "refractarium", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ben Melech.

Zechariah 7:12

Ver. 12. Yea, they made their hearts [as] an adamant stone,.... The word here used is translated a "diamond" in Jer 17:1 and it is said to be harder than a flint, **Eze 3:9**. The Jewish writers say {g} it is a worm like a barley corn, so strong as to cut the hardest stones in pieces; Moses (they say) used it in hewing the stones for the two tables of the law, and in fitting the precious stones in the ephod; and Solomon in cutting the stones for the building of the temple; and is so hard that it cannot be broken by iron: and as hard is naturally the heart of man, and which becomes more so by sinning, and obstinate persisting in it, that nothing can remove the hardness of it but the powerful and efficacious grace of God: as hard as the adamant is, it is to be softened by the blood of a goat, as naturalists says {h}; so the blood of Christ sprinkled on the heart, and a sense of forgiveness of sin by it, will soften the hardest heart:

lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath seat in his Spirit by the former prophets; the words of reproof, admonition, caution, and exhortation, which Jeremiah and others were sent to deliver to them, under the influence of the Spirit of God:

therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts; which brought the Chaldeans upon them, who carried them captive into Babylon.

{g} Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 12. Pirke Abot. c. 5. sect. 5. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. Kimchi in 1 Reg. vi. 7. Jarchi in Isa. v. 6. {h} Pausan. Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 485. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 4.

Zechariah 7:13

Ver. 13. Therefore it is come to pass, [that] as he cried,.... The Lord by the former prophets called them to repentance and obedience:

and they would not hear; his words, nor obey his voice:

so they cried: when they were besieged in Jerusalem, and were carried captive into Babylon:

and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts; so as to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies; see **Pr 1:24**.

Zechariah 7:14

Ver. 14. But I scattered them with a whirlwind,.... Denoting the fierceness of his wrath, and the strength of his fury, seen in their dispersion:

among all the nations whom they knew not; such as the Babylonians, Medes, and Persians, people before unknown to the Jews:

thus the land was desolate after them; that is, the land of Judea was destitute of inhabitants, or had but few remaining in it, after the Jews were carried captive into Babylon; for the rest, after the death of Gedaliah, fled into Egypt:

that no man passed through, nor returned; neither from Egypt, nor from Babylon, until the seventy years of captivity were ended; nor indeed did any from other nations pass through and fro, or settle in it, during this time, that we have any account of:

for they laid the pleasant land desolate; either the Israelites by their iniquities, which were the cause of it; or the Babylonians, as the instruments of God's vengeance. This pleasant land is the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey; the glory of all lands, for its great fruitfulness, and delightful situation; and especially for being the seat of the divine Majesty, and where his people dwelt, and where his temple was, and he was worshipped; see Eze 20:6 **De 8:7**.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Zechariah 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 8

This chapter contains promises of various blessings to the people of the Jews; and exhortations to each of the duties incumbent on them; and is concluded with a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles. The cause of all the blessings promised is the love of God to them, signified by zeal, or jealousy for them, **Zec 8:1**. The blessings promised are the Lord's return to dwell in Jerusalem, and the integrity and holiness of that city, **Zec 8:3**. The long life of the inhabitants of it, and the plenty of children that should be born in it, **Zec 8:4** and, however wonderful and incredible this might seem to some, it was not to the Lord, who was determined to bring his people that were in various distant countries to Jerusalem, and settle them there; and renew and reestablish his covenant with them, **Zec 8:6** wherefore the Lord encourages them to go on in rebuilding the temple, **Zec 8:9** and promises them that things would be better with them than in times past; that whereas there had been nothing but penury, affliction, and distress, now there should be great affluence and prosperity, **Zec 8:10** and though before they were a curse among the nations, now they should be a blessing; and though their fathers were punished, they should be dealt well with, **Zec 8:13** and then they are exhorted to the discharge of several duties mentioned, to which they are induced by the Lord's hatred of that which is evil, and by his turning their fasts into cheerful feasts. **Zec 8:16** to which is added a prophecy of the calling and conversion of the Gentiles, which would make for the glory of the Jewish church; who are described by their numbers, being many people, and the inhabitants of many cities; by their association together, to pray to the Lord, and worship him; by their coming up to Jerusalem for that purpose; and by their junction with the Jews, to which they will be encouraged by having heard that God is with them, **Zec 8:20**.

Ver. 1. Again the word of the Lord of hosts came [to me] saying. The phrase, "to me", is wanting in the Hebrew text; and is the only place it is wanting in, as the Masora observes; though undoubtedly it is to be understood; and therefore is rightly supplied, as it is by the Targum, "with me". Mention being made in the latter part of the preceding chapter **Zec 7:8** of the desolations of the earth, comfort is here administered, as Aben Ezra notes.

Zechariah 8:2

Ver. 2. Thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... This prophecy, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, respects time to come; the days of the Messiah, in the war of Gog and Magog, when they shall come up against Jerusalem, and the Lord shall pour out his great wrath upon them; and it seems right to interpret it, not only literally of Jerusalem, but spiritually of the church in Gospel times:

I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy; the Arabic version reads, "for Jerusalem, and for Zion"; as in **Zec 1:14**, See Gill on "Zec 1:14":

and I was jealous for her with great fury: that is, against her enemies; the Babylonians and Chaldeans now, and the antichristian powers in Gospel times. The Targum paraphrases it, "against the people that provoked her to jealousy"; the past tense is put for the future, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe.

Zechariah 8:3

Ver. 3. Thus saith the Lord, I am returned to Zion,.... The temple being now building, and almost finished, and the worship of God restored in it. The Targum renders it, "I will return to Zion"; and it may refer to the time of Christ's incarnation, when the Redeemer came to Zion, Isa 59:20 or to the time of the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, of both which it is true; see Ro 11:26:

and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: or "cause my Shechinah to dwell there", as the Targum paraphrases it; which was fulfilled when the Word was made flesh, kai eskhnwsen, "and dwelt" or "tabernacled" among the inhabitants of Judea and of Jerusalem, and taught his doctrines, and wrought his miracles, in the midst of them; and will be also when he shall dwell among them by his Spirit and grace in the latter day:

and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; when Christ, who is "truth" itself, was in it, and the truths of the Gospel were preached there by him and his apostles, and they were received and professed by many, though despised by others; and especially in the latter day, when the Jews shall generally and cordially embrace Christ and his Gospel, and shall worship God in spirit and in truth, and not in that shadowy, formal, and hypocritical way they do now; see **Isa 1:26** and especially this will be true of the New Jerusalem, into which nothing shall enter that makes a lie, Re 21:27:

the mountain of the Lord of hosts; which will be established upon the top of the mountains, and where the Lord will be seen and exalted in his glory, even the Lamb, with the hundred and forty four thousand with him, **Isa 2:2**:

the holy mountain; where the holy word of God will be preached, the holy ordinances administered, and holiness of life and conversation will be strictly attended to; yea, Holiness will be upon the bells of the horses, Zec 14:20.

Zechariah 8:4

Ver. 4. Thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... These words are used at every consolatory promise given, as Kimchi observes, for the confirmation of it:

there shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem; signifying that the inhabitants should be very healthful; no sweeping disease or calamity should be among them, but they should live to a good old age, as follows:

and every man with his staff in his hand for very age; or "because of multitude of days" {i}; the length of time they should have lived in the world, being worn out, not with diseases, but with old age, and therefore obliged to use a staff when they walk the streets for their support; all which is an emblem of the healthfulness of the inhabitants of Zion, who have no reason to complain of sickness, because their sins are forgiven them; and of that spiritual and eternal life, which they that are written among the living in

Jerusalem do enjoy; who are in understanding men, fathers in Christ, and are growing up to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; see Isa 65:20.

{i} Mymy brm "prae multitudine dierum", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Burkius.

Zechariah 8:5

Ver. 5. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls,.... Denoting a large increase of inhabitants, in a literal sense; and may spiritually signify the large numbers of converts, of new born babes, who are regenerated by the grace and Spirit of God, and are accounted of by the Lord for a generation:

playing the streets thereof; being in health and rigour, and in great security. The Targum renders it, "singing" or "praising in the spacious places thereof"; singing the praises of God in Gospel strains; saying their Hosannas to the Son of David; rejoicing in the great salvation by Christ, and magnifying the grace of God, and setting forth the glories of it in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; see Mt 11:16. In Jerusalem, literally taken, there were various streets, besides the street of the temple, which led to it, Ezr 10:9 mention is made of others in Jewish writings, as of the upper street {k}, and of the street of the butchers, and of the street of those that dealt in wool {l}.

{k} Misn. Shekalim, c. 8. sect. 1. {l} Misn. Erubin, c. 10. sect. 9.

Zechariah 8:6

Ver. 6. Thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... This is repeated for the same end as before; See Gill on "Zec 8:4":

If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days; either in the then present days and time; and the sense is, if it should seem wonderful, incredible, and scarcely possible to the small number of the Jews in Judea, that all the great and good things before promised should be fulfilled; or in the times of the Gospel, when the remnant, according to the election of grace, would wonder at the marvellous loving kindness of the Lord, in doing each great things for his church and people:

should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of hosts; no, not as if it was impossible to be done; it shall be done, as marvellous as it may seem to be. Aben Ezra understands these words, not as spoken by way of interrogation and admiration, but as an affirmation; that God would do that which was marvellous, and such as he had never done the like, even as follows:

Zechariah 8:7

Ver. 7. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold,.... As being something wonderful, of great importance, and deserving attention:

I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; this can not be understood of bringing those Jews that remained in Babylon, and other places, to their own land, for Babylon lay north of Judea; see **Zec 6:6**, and as yet there were no Jews in the western part of the world; but now they are chiefly in the east and west, from whence they will be gathered at the time of their general conversion; though this may refer to the times of the apostles of Christ, and to their ministry in the several parts of the world, who went forth, east, west, north, and south, and were the means and instruments of saving the Lord's people, both Jews and Gentiles, wherever they came, from the rising of the sun, to the setting of the same; see **Mal 1:11**.

Zechariah 8:8

Ver. 8. And I will bring them,.... To Zion, into the church of God, the Gospel fold, where Christ has engaged to bring his other sheep, that there may be one fold for Jew and Gentile, **Jer 3:14** Joh 10:16:

and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: the Gospel church; and be no more foreigners and strangers, but of the household of God, enjoying all the immunities and privileges of the Jerusalem that is above, the mother of us all:

and they shall be my people; appear to be so by effectual calling; which makes those manifest to be the people of God, to be in the covenant of his grace, who before were not known to be so, either by themselves or others, **1Pe 2:10**:

and I will be their God, in truth, and in righteousness; according to the covenant of his grace, which will now in a very open manner be truly and faithfully fulfilled; and they, in consequence of the grace bestowed on them, will worship God in sincerity and truth, being justified by the righteousness of Christ, and so will have no dependence on their own for their acceptance with God; see **Ho 2:19**.

Zechariah 8:9

Ver. 9. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Let your hands be strong,.... In going on with the building of the temple, which was typical of the church of God, since so many great and good things were promised by the Lord, **Hag 2:4**:

ye that hear in these days; such as Zerubbabel the ruler, Joshua the high priest, and the rest of the people of the land:

these words by the mouth of the prophets; that is, these prophecies of future good things, which were delivered by Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; who were the prophets,

which [were] in the day [that] the foundation of the house of the Lord of hosts was laid; which was in the second year of Darius, on the twenty fourth day of the ninth month, **Hag 2:10**:

that the temple might be built; in order to the rebuilding of it, the foundation was laid; and from that time it was to continue building, till it was finished {m}.

{m} The true reading of these words, according to the accents, is, "Thus saith the Lord [of hosts:] let your hands be strong, that hear in those days these words: [out of] the prophets, [I say, ye have heard], that, from the day the house of the Lord of hosts shall be founded, the temple [should be continued] to be built." So Reinbeck. De Accent. Heb. p. 453.

Zechariah 8:10

Ver. 10. For before these days,.... That the temple began to be built:

there was no hire for men, nor any hire for beasts; that turned to any account; the wages earned by the one, and with the other, were as if they were put into a bag with holes, did not prosper with them, or do them any service, **Hag 1:6**:

neither [was there any] peace to him that went out or came in, because of the affliction; there was no safety in passing to and fro, nor any peaceable enjoyment of what a man had, because of affliction and oppression by the enemy on every side, and from every quarter:

for I set all men everyone against his neighbour; expressive of the internal divisions and contentions among themselves, which are said to be of the Lord, because he permitted them as a chastisement upon them for their sins.

Zechariah 8:11

Ver. 11. But now I [will] not [be] unto the residue of this people,.... The remnant brought out of captivity, settled in the land, and now rebuilding the temple:

as in the former days, saith the Lord of hosts; when they neglected the house of the Lord, caring only for their own cieled houses, **Hag 1:2**.

Zechariah 8:12

Ver. 12. For the seed [shall be] prosperous,.... Being cast into the earth, it shall spring up again, and produce a large increase; whereas before, though they sowed much, it came to little, **Hag 1:6**:

the vine shall give her fruit; be loaded with clusters, and produce large quantities of wine; whereas before there was a drought upon the new wine; and where there were wont to be had fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty, **Hag 1:11**:

and the ground shall give her increase; as usual, meaning of wheat and barley; whereas before there was a drought upon the corn, and where there used to be a heap of twenty measures, there were but ten, **Hag 1:11**:

and the heavens shall give their dew; which makes the earth fruitful; whereas before the heaven over them was stayed from dew, and instead of it were blasting, mildew, and hail, **Hag 1:10**:

and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these [things]; as a symbol of better things inherited by the remnant according to the election of grace; and who have the promise both of this life and that to come; and who, seeking in the first place spiritual things, have all others added to them, convenient for them.

Zechariah 8:13

Ver. 13. And it shall come to pass, [that] as ye were a curse among the heathen,.... Reproached, vilified, and called accursed by them; see Jer 24:9 as true Christians, and real believers in Christ, are by the men of this world, **1Co 4:12**:

O house of Judah, and house of Israel; both being carried captive at different times, and were typical of the true and Spiritual Israel of God:

so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing; be blessed in themselves with the above blessings of plenty and prosperity in outward things; see **Hag 2:19** and a blessing to others, and blessed by them; and all those who are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation are blessed with all spiritual blessings in him:

fear not; neither their enemies, nor the accomplishment of these promises:

[but] let your hands be strong; as in **Zec 8:9**.

Zechariah 8:14

Ver. 14. For thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... In order to assure them of the truth of what he promised, he observes the fulfilment of what he had threatened, he being as true and faithful in the one as in the other:

As I thought to punish you: determined to do it, by suffering them to be carried captive:

when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the Lord of hosts; by their immorality, idolatry, and contempt of his prophets:

and I repented not; the Targum adds, "of my word"; of the resolution he had taken up in his heart, and of the declaration of it by his prophets, that he would punish them; this he did not repent of, revoke, change, and alter, but steadily abode by it, and executed it.

Zechariah 8:15

Ver. 15. So again,.... Or "so I am returned" {n}, as in **Zec 8:3**:

have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah; by bestowing the above mentioned blessings on them; and as Jehovah has thought, so it comes to pass, and as he has purposed, so it stands; whatever he determines shall be, as for evil, so for good, Isa 14:24:

fear ye not; as in **Zec 8:13**.

{n} ytbv Nk "sic conversus sum", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin; "ita conversus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "reversus sum", Burkius.

Zechariah 8:16

Ver. 16. These [are] the things that ye shall do,.... Which were duties incumbent on them, and which it became them to perform, under a sense of the favours bestowed on them, to show their gratitude to God, and that they might glorify him:

Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; not using deceit, prevarication, and lying, **Eph 4:25** and it becomes every man under the Gospel dispensation, according to the gift he has received, to speak, publish, and declare the truth of the Gospel, to the edification of others:

execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; that is, execute true judgment, as in **Zec 7:9** do justice between man and man, without respect of persons; the issue of which will be peace between the contending parties: and this was to be done in their "gates", because there their courts of judicature were kept.

Zechariah 8:17

Ver. 17. And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour,.... See Gill on "Zec 7:10" hatred without a cause was a governing vice under the second temple, and Jarchi says was the cause of the destruction of it; see Joh 15:25:

and love no false oath; whereby the character and property of a fellow creature are hurt; nor any vain one, which the Jews were addicted to, **Mt 5:34**:

for all these [are things] that I hate, saith the Lord; as being contrary to his nature, and to his law; and is a reason why they should be hated and avoided by men.

Zechariah 8:18

Ver. 18. And the word of the Lord of hosts came unto me, saying. The word of prophecy, as the Targum paraphrases it: here begins a new prophecy, respecting the abrogation of Jewish fasts, and the calling of the Gentiles.

Ver. 19. Thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... What follows is a full answer to the question in **Zec 7:3**:

The fast of the fourth [month]; the month Tammuz, which answers to June: this fast was kept on the ninth day of the month, on account of the city of Jerusalem being broken up on that day {o}, as it is said, 2Ki 25:3 though Kimchi says this was on the seventeenth day of that month, as also says the Misna {p}; on which day a fast was kept likewise, for the breaking of the two tables of the law on that day: the reconciliation of this with the above Scriptures is attempted in the Talmud {q} by observing, that the Scripture speaks of the first temple, the Misna of the second temple:

and the fast of the fifth; the month Ab, which answers to July, on the tenth of which the city was burnt, Jer 52:12 but the fast on account of it was kept on the ninth day; See Gill on "Zec 7:3" on which day the Jews say that both the first and second temple were destroyed, Bither was taken, and the city ploughed {r}:

and the fast of the seventh; the month Tisri, which answers to September; on the third of this month a fast was kept on account of the murder of Gedaliah; see **Zec 7:5** and on the tenth day of the same was the day of atonement, which was the grand fast; see Ac 27:9:

and the fast of the tenth; the month Tebet; which answers to December, on the tenth day of which the city of Jerusalem was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar; and this fast was kept on that account, Jer 52:4 now of all these fasts the Lord by the prophet says, they

shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; that is, there shall be no occasion for them; but, on the contrary, such plenty of good things, both temporal and spiritual, shall be had, that, instead of them, rather festivals should be kept with the greatest cheerfulness, joy, and gladness. So Maimonides {s} says, that all these fasts shall cease in the times of the Messiah, with all others, which will be times of joy and gladness.

Therefore love the truth and peace; love to speak truth, and execute the judgment of peace, **Zec 8:16** or express by words and deeds love to Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life; and also is our Peace, the Peacemaker, and Peace giver; and on these accounts, as well as on others, is greatly to be loved: likewise the Gospel, which is the word of truth, and the Gospel of peace; which contains nothing but truth, and is the ministry of reconciliation, and is to be loved on that account; and even peace with men is no further to be loved and sought after than as it is consistent with truth; and these being the principal things under the Gospel dispensation, these, and not fasts, or any other ceremonial observances, are to be attended to.

{o} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 18. 2. {p} Taanith, c. 4. sect. 7. {q} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 28. 2. {r} Roshhashanah, ut supra. (fol. 18. 2.) {s} Hilchot Taanioth, c. 5. sect. 19.

Zechariah 8:20

Ver. 20. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, [It shall] yet [come to pass],.... This is another thing that shall certainly be accomplished:

that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities; in the Gentile world; they shall come and hear the word, believe in Christ, and join together in a Gospel church state; as they did at Antioch, Thessalonica, Corinth, and many other places: Ben Melech says this shall be in the days of the Messiah; and so it has been in the days of the true Messiah Jesus, and will be again in the latter day.

Zechariah 8:21

Ver. 21. And the inhabitants of one [city] shall go to another,.... Which shows their concern for the spiritual welfare of each other, their zeal for the honour and glory of God, and their readiness to attend divine worship:

saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord; for pardoning, justifying, and sanctifying grace which shows their sense of need of these things, and that they are only to be had of the Lord; and that their case required haste, and would admit of no delay:

and to seek the Lord of hosts: by prayer and supplication, as before: the Chaldee paraphrase is, "to seek doctrine from the Lord of hosts"; to learn the truths of his Gospel; to know his will, and be informed of the right way of worshipping him, as well as to seek to Christ for life and salvation:

I will go also; that is, "this shall say to that", as the Targum supplies it; one shall say to another, and express himself in such language, by way of example and encouragement.

Zechariah 8:22

Ver. 22. Yea, many people, and strong nations,.... Or, "mighty kingdoms", as the Targum renders it; even such have embraced the Gospel, and professed the Christian religion; of which there has been abundant proof since the downfall of Paganism under Constantine:

shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem; that is, shall attend the public worship of God in the church:

and to pray before the Lord; join in public prayer, and other ordinances of the Gospel. This phrase, which is used also in the preceding verse **Zec 8:21**, signifies that the Lord, and he only, is the object of prayer: it is not to be made to a creature, or to an idol made with hands, they had been used to pray to before, but to the one only living and true God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and that this is to be done as in the presence of God, who is omniscient, who knows all persons and their cases, and what are their ends and views in their petitions to him, and whether these come from a true heart and unfeigned lips; for all things are naked and open unto him, with whom we have to do; that, under the Gospel dispensation especially, men may come into the presence of God with great freedom and liberty, and pour out their souls before him, and with great boldness and confidence, through the blood of Christ being shed, and a new and living way opened by it, in which they may come and ask in faith whatever they want; though this should always be performed with reverence and godly fear, and with all humility and submission to the will of God: and though it may take in all sorts of prayer, and wherever and by whomsoever performed, either mental or vocal, in the closet or in the family, which is always to be done in like manner before God; yet it seems chiefly to design social and public prayer: which being put up to God in the church, may be said to be before the Lord, it being in the assembly of his saints, where he more especially grants his presence, and shows himself to be a God hearing and answering prayer; see Ps 65:1.

Zechariah 8:23

Ver. 23. Thus saith the Lord of hosts,.... For the further confirmation and illustration of this prophecy:

in those days [it shall come to pass]; this shall be done in the times of the preaching of the Gospel by Christ and his apostles:

that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take bold of the skirt of him that is a Jew: which may be understood either of our Lord Jesus Christ; who was a Jew by nation, the Jews were his own people, and Judea his nation; by descent, he springing from the tribe of Judah, and the family of David; by religion, being made under the Jewish law; by his habit and dress, by which, as well as by his language, the woman of Samaria knew he was a Jew, **Joh 4:9** and very probably he wore the fringe the Jews did on the border of his garment, **Mt 9:20** and which the Jewish doctors think is here meant {t} by the skirt; but this may intend, in a spiritual sense, the skirt being put for the whole garment, Eze 16:8, the robe of Christ's righteousness, which sensible sinners take hold of by faith, and put it on as their justifying righteousness: and "ten men" out of "all nations" being said to do it, and this number signifying many, Le 26:26 may denote that the number of them that believe in Christ for righteousness, and are justified by it, are many, Isa 53:11 though they are but few when compared with others; and that as God has chosen, Christ has redeemed, so the Spirit calls some out of all nations; and God is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, since the one are justified by him as well as the other, **Ro 3:29** or this may be understood of any of the apostles of Christ, who were all Jews; and especially the Apostle Paul, who was the apostle of the Gentiles; who were sent into all the world to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, by which means they came to hear it; and many of them out of every nation laid hold on the skirts of these men; believed and embraced the doctrines they preached; were greatly affected towards them; gave up themselves to them; consorted with them; accompanied them, and cleaved unto them; did not care to part with them, as children, that lay hold on their parents' skirts, will not leave them, but go with them where they go, as follows:

saying, We will go with you; either with Christ, resolving to follow him whithersoever he goes; to hold to him the Head; to abide by his truths and ordinances; to walk on in his ways, whatever they suffer for his name's sake: or with his ministers and people, determining to go along and join with them in all religious exercises; see **Ru 1:16**:

for we have heard [that] God is with you: with Christ, as he always was; in the council and covenant of grace before time, and at the beginning of time to his incarnation; and during his state of humiliation, and in his sufferings and death; and now in his state of exaltation; hence his name "Ithiel", God with me, Pr 30:1 or with his ministers and people, which he has promised to be unto the end of the world; and this the Gentiles heard and understood, by the power that went along with their ministry, to the conversion of multitudes of sinners; and by the miracles which they wrought, for the confirmation of the doctrines they delivered.

{t} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 32. 2.

Zechariah 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 9

This chapter treats of the conversion of the Gentiles, before spoken of in general, now particularly named; of the coming of Christ into the world, and the advantages of it to his church; of the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles, and of their protection, encouragement, and success. The Gentiles converted are first the Syrians that dwelt in Hadrach, Damascus, and Hamath, the Lord's eye being upon them, **Zec 9:1** next the Phoenicians, the inhabitants of Tyre and Zidon, who had a vain opinion of their wisdom, and trusted in their riches, **Zec 9:2** and then the Philistines, the inhabitants of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and Ashdod, guilty of pride, murder, idolatry, and other abominations, **Zec 9:5** when the church and people of God should be safely protected, **Zec 9:8** to whom, for their joy and comfort, is given forth a prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah; who is described by his character as a King, just, having salvation, lowly, and riding on an ass; by the peaceableness of his kingdom; by the various offices he executes; the prophetic office, speaking peace to the Heathen; the kingly office, his dominion being very large; and his priestly office, in the effusion of his blood, by which the covenant is confirmed, his people delivered out of distress, and encouraged to flee to him as their stronghold, where they find plenty and protection, **Zec 9:9** next the apostles are represented as military men, accoutered with the bow and the sword of the mighty, **Zec 9:13** whose success is owing to the Lord's appearance over them, and the efficacy of his grace and Spirit attending the word, **Zec 9:14** who are protected and encouraged in it by the Lord, and honoured on account of it, **Zec 9:15** and the chapter is concluded with an exclamation, wondering at the grace and glory of Christ, and expressing the satisfying provisions of his house, **Zec 9:17**.

Ver. 1. The burden of the word of the Lord,.... A prophecy, as in Pr 31:1 which is sometimes of things sorrowful and distressing, as the destruction of people, as in Isa 31:1 and sometimes of things joyful, as in Zec 13:1 and here it contains good news to the church of Christ, **Zec 9:9**, &c.; and is called a "burden", because the word of the Lord is often so to carnal men; see Jer 23:33 the words may be rendered, a "declaration", or "a publication", of "the word of the Lord" {u}; it signifies a publishing of it or bringing it forth; and so the Arabic version renders it "a revelation of the word of the Lord"; a carrying of it about: which was made

in the land of Hadrach; this is either the name of a man; of some king, as Aben Ezra observes; and some Jewish writers {w} say the King Messiah, who is dx "sharp" to the nations of the world, and Kr "tender" to the Israelites: or rather the name of a place, and may design Syria, to which Damascus belonged; see **Isa 7:8** or some place near it: says R. Jose {x},

"I am of Damascus, and I call heaven and earth to witness that there is a place there, the name of which is Hadrach."

Hillerus {y} takes it to be the same with Coelesyria, or hollow Syria, a vale which lay between Libanus and Antilibanus, and goes by many names; the same that is called Hoba, Ge 14:15 the plain of Aren, and the house of Eden, **Am 1:5** and here Hadrach; and thinks it had its name from Hadar, a son of Ishmael, Ge 25:15 and observes what is said, Ge 25:18, that the

"Ishmaelites dwelt from Havilah", which is to the south of Palestine, "unto Shur", a town situated over against Egypt, "as you go to Assyria"; that is, to the Agra of Ptolemy in Susiana. The Targum renders it

"in the land of the south."

There was a city in Coelesyria, called Adra by Ptolemy {z}; which, as Jerom says {a}, was distant from Bostra twenty five miles; since called the city of Bernard de Stampis; where were Christian churches in the fourth and fifth centuries, whose bishops were present at councils held in those times {b}; and, according to this prophecy, here the word of the Lord was to be published; and it may have respect to the conversion of the inhabitants of it in future times: though some take it to be not the proper name of a place, but an appellative, and render it, "the land about", or "the land about thee" {c}; that is, about Judea; the nations round about it, particularly Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine.

And Damascus [shall be] the rest thereof; either of the Lord himself; his glorious Shechinah shall rest there, as Kimchi interprets it; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"and Damascus shall be converted, that it may be of the house of his Shechinah;"

see Isa 11:10 or of the word of the Lord, which should be declared and published there, as it was by the Apostle Paul, who was converted near it, and preached in it, **Ac 9:3** or of Hadrach, or the adjacent country: unless it is to be understood of the burden of the Lord resting on it, or of the taking of this city in the times of Alexander the great; which, with the destruction of the cities after mentioned, some make a type or symbol of the abolition of Paganism in the Roman empire; but the former sense seems best.

When the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, [shall] be towards the Lord; or, "when the eyes of men shall be to the Lord, and to all the tribes of Israel"; so Kimchi and Ben Melech; that is, as they interpret it, when the eyes of all men shall be to the Lord, and not to their idols; and also to all the tribes of Israel, to go along with them in their ways; as it is said above **Zec 8:23**, "we will go with you": or they shall look to the Lord, even as the tribes of Israel themselves do; and which is true of sinners when converted, whether Jews or Gentiles; and particularly was true of that great man, the

Apostle Paul, who was converted near Damascus, when the eyes of his understanding being enlightened, and he seeing the insufficiency of all other objects, looked to the Lord alone for pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation; even as all true Israelites do, who are after the Spirit, and not after the flesh. Though some understand these words of the eyes of the Lord being upon every man, as well as upon the tribes of Israel; upon wicked men to punish them, as upon his people to protect and defend them: and to this sense the Targum inclines, paraphrasing the words thus,

"for before the Lord are manifest the works of the children of men, and he is well pleased with all the tribes of Israel."

{u} rbd avm "prolatio verbi Jehovae", Cocceius. {w} R. Judah in Jarchi, & R. Benaiah in Kimchi in loc. & R. Nehemiah in Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 24. 1. {x} Shirhashirim ib. Siphre in Yalkut Simeoni in loc. {y} Onomast. sacr. p. 578. {z} Geograph. l. 5. c. 15. {a} De locis Hebr. fol. 97. I. {b} Reland. Palestina Illustrata, l. 3. p. 548. {c} Krdx Urab "in terram circumstantem te", Junius & Tremellius, Tarnovius; "super terram quae te circuit", Grotius; "in terra circa te", Cocceius; "ad verbum, in terram circuitus tui", De Dieu.

Zechariah 9:2

Ver. 2. And Hamath also shall border thereby,.... By the land of Hadrach, or by Damascus; and that it was near Damascus is clear from Isa 10:9 it is called Hamath the great in **Am 6:2** and according to Jerom {d}, is the same with Antioch, which he says was so called by some; and the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel on Nu 13:21, renders Hamath by Antioch: and, if so, here was the Lord's rest likewise; here the Gospel was preached, and many converted, and a church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, was formed; and here the disciples were first called Christians, Ac 11:26.

Tyrus and Zidon; these were famous cities of Phoenicia; upon the borders of these our Lord himself was, Mt 15:21 of the conversion of the inhabitants of these places the psalmist prophecies, Ps 45:12 here likewise the Lord had his resting place; we read of the disciples here, Ac 21:3:

though it be very wise; particularly Tyre, which was famous for wisdom, Eze 28:3 which the Lord confounded by the preaching of the Gospel, and by the foolishness of that saved them that believe. Kimchi refers this to the times of the Messiah; his note is, she shall not trust in her wisdom in the time of the Messiah: so Ben Melech.

{d} Comment. in Amos, fol. 44. C. & Quaest. Hebr. in Genesim, fol. 67. B. So Cyril. in Amos, p. 312.

Zechariah 9:3

Ver. 3. And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold,.... Tyre was built upon a rock, and was a strong fortress itself, from whence it had its name; and, besides its natural defence, it had a wall one hundred and fifty feet high, and its breadth was answerable to its height {e}; but yet, as it could not defend itself against Alexander the great, who took it; so neither against the Gospel of Christ, which found its way into it, and was mighty to pull down strong holds in a spiritual sense:

and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets; the riches of these cities, especially Tyre, are often made mention of; they were famous for their wealth, being places of great trade and merchandise; see Isa 23:2 all which were to be holiness to the Lord, and for the sufficient feeding and durable clothing of them that dwell before him, Isa 23:18 his ministers.

{e} Arrian. de Exped. Alex. l. 2. c. 21.

Zechariah 9:4

Ver. 4. Behold, the Lord will cast her out,.... Or "inherit her" {f}, or "them", as the Septuagint render the words; when, being converted, she would become the Lord's inheritance and possession, and her riches should be devoted to his service:

and he will smite her power in the sea; for Tyre was situated in the sea, at the entry of it, and was strong in it, Eze 26:17. Kimchi interprets this of her humiliation and subjection in the days of the Messiah; and in a spiritual sense it has been verified in such who have been spoiled of their carnal strength, in which they trusted, and have laid down their weapons, and have submitted to the sceptre of Christ:

and she shall be devoured with fire; with the spirit of judgment, and of burning, which purges and removes the filth of sin; and with the fire of the word, which burns up and consumes its lusts; and with the flames of divine love, which make souls as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. This was literally accomplished in the burning of Tyre by Alexander {g}, which injected fear and dread in cities near it, as follow:

{f} hnvrwy klhronomhsei autouv, Setp.; "possidebit eam", V. L. Munster, Castalio. So some in Vatablus. {g} Curtius, l. 4. c. 4.

Zechariah 9:5

Ver. 5. Ashkelon shall see [it], and fear,.... That is, as Kimchi explains it, when Ashkelon shall see that Tyre humbles herself and submits, she shall humble herself and submit also: and the sense may be, that the inhabitants of Ashkelon, seeing that Tyre, with all her wisdom and strong reasoning, could not stand before the power of the Gospel, but submitted and embraced the Christian religion, were induced, through the efficacy of divine grace, to do the same; and certain it is that this place became Christian; we read {h} of a bishop of Ashkelon, in the synod of Nice, and of other bishops of this place in later councils: it belonged to Palestine, and was one of the five lordships of the Philistines, Jos 13:3.

Gaza also [shall see it], and be very sorrowful; this was a city of Palestine, near to Ashkelon; they are mentioned together, **Jud 1:18** the Gentile inhabitants of this place, when they saw the progress the Gospel made in Tyre, Zidon, and Ashkelon, were grieved at it, but many among them submitted to it: very likely Philip the evangelist first preached the Gospel here; see **Ac 8:26** there was a Christian bishop of this place in the Nicene council, and others in after ones {i}.

And Ekron; for her expectation shall be ashamed; this was also one of the five lordships of the Philistines, Jos 13:3 which, being near to Tyre, had its dependence on that, expecting it could never be taken; but when they saw that it was taken by Alexander, it was ashamed of its vain expectation, hope, and confidence: and so the inhabitants of this place, when the Gospel came to it, were "ashamed of the house of [their] confidence", as the Targum paraphrases the words; the confidence they had in their idols, and in the works of their own hands; and were also "ashamed because of their iniquities", as the Arabic version renders them; being convinced of them, and humbled for them, and betaking themselves to Christ for salvation from them. It is probable, that Philip preached the Gospel here, seeing it was not far from Azotus or Ashdod, next mentioned, where Philip is heard of after the baptism of the eunuch: and if Ekron is the same with Caesarea, that was called Strato's tower, as say the Jews {k}; and which also Jerom {l} observes, some say are the same it is certain that Philip was there, **Ac 8:40** there were several Christian bishops of this place in later times {m}.

And the king shall perish from Gaza; some understand this of Batis, who was governor of Gaza, when it was taken by Alexander; who was fastened to a chariot, and dragged about the city, as Curtius {n} relates; but this man was not a king, but governor of the city under one: I rather think the idol Marnes, which signifies "the lord of man", and was worshipped in this place, is here meant; which when it became Christian was destroyed, and a Christian church built in the room of it, as is reported by Jerom {o}.

And Ashkelon shall not be inhabited; by Heathens, but by Christians.

{h} Reland. Palestina Illustrata, l. 3. p. 594. {i} Ib. p. 795. {k} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 6. 1. {l} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 88. D. {m} Reland. ib. p. 676, &c. {n} Hist. l. 4. c. 6. {o} Comment in Isa. xvii. tom. 5. fol. 39. H. Epist. ad Laetam, tom. 1. fol. 19. E.

Zechariah 9:6

Ver. 6. And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod,.... Some {p} take "mamzer", the word for "bastard", to be the name of a people that should dwell in Ashdod; this is the same place with Azotus, **Ac 8:40** and was also one of the five lordships of the Philistines, Jos 13:3 some, by the "bastard" here, understand Alexander the great, who gave out that he was not the son of Philip, but of Jupiter Ammon: others think Jonathan the Maccabee is intended, who took this place and burnt it with fire, and the temple of Dagon in it,

"83 The horsemen also, being scattered in the field, fled to Azotus, and went into Bethdagon, their idol's temple, for safety. 84 But Jonathan set fire on Azotus, and the cities round about it, and took their spoils; and the temple of Dagon, with them that were fled into it, he burned with fire." (1 Maccabees 10)

and though he was not a bastard, yet was a stranger to the Philistines; in which sense the Jewish commentators, Jarchi and Kimchi, interpret the word, and understand it of the Israelites who should dwell in this place; even those, as Aben Ezra says, who were abject, mean, and despised among the Israelites; which would be a great mortification to the proud Philistines, as is suggested in the next clause: and to this sense the Targum paraphrases the words,

"and the house of Israel shall dwell in Ashdod, who shall be in it as strangers:"

but it is best to understand this of Israelites indeed, of true Christians, who are accounted spurious, not the children of God, but aliens and strangers, the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things; who should dwell here when the Gospel was preached in it, as doubtless it was by Philip, **Ac 8:40** and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render the words, "and strangers shall dwell in Ashdod"; men of another religion, and despised and not owned even by their relations, as if they were bastards.

And I will cut off the pride of the Philistines; by Alexander, and by the Jews in the times of the Maccabees, bringing them into subjection, which their haughty spirits could not well bear; or through the abolition of their old Heathenish religion, in which they prided themselves. It may be observed, that all along the conversion of these various people to Christianity is expressed in terms which seem to signify the destruction of them; and that partly because, in the literal sense, reference is had to the conquest of them by Alexander, by which means the Greek language obtained in Syria and Phoenicia, into which, a little after, the Bible was translated, which paved the way for the bringing of these people to the knowledge of Christ, through the preaching of the Gospel; and partly because Paganism was abolished in these places when Christianity prevailed.

{p} R. Judah ben Bileam apud Aben Ezram in loc.

Zechariah 9:7

Ver. 7. And I will take away his blood out of his mouth,.... The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read "their blood"; not the blood of the bastard, but of the Philistines. The Targum is, "I will destroy them that eat blood"; the meaning may be, that they shall no more thirst after blood, nor drink it; nor breathe out threatenings and slaughter against the saints, or persecute the people of God: or that they should no more offer the blood of their sacrifices upon the altars to their deities, or eat things sacrificed to them:

and his abominations from between his teeth; their idols and idolatries they were tenacious of, as a man is of his food, or of any thing that is grateful to him; it may design things sacrificed to idols, eaten by them:

but he that remaineth, even he [shall be] for our God: the Targum paraphrases it,

"and the proselytes that remain among them, they also shall be added to the people of our God:"

Jarchi interprets it of the synagogues and schools in the captivity of Edom or Rome; but Aben Ezra's note is much better, that there shall be none remaining of the Philistines, but only such who serve the blessed God openly: but the true sense is, that here should be a remnant, according to the election of grace, who should evidently appear to be the Lord's people, by their conversion and effectual calling:

and he shall be as a governor in Judah; the Targum is,

"they shall be as the princes of the house of Judah;"

that is, as the heads of the families in that tribe; see **Mic 5:2** compared with **Mt 2:6** all true Christians are as princes, yea, they are kings and priests unto God; and some of them are Plak, as a guide, teacher; and instructor of others; who go before them, and instruct them in the doctrines of the Gospel, as pastors and ministers of the word:

and Ekron as a Jebusite; that is, the inhabitant of Ekron, that shall be converted to Christ, shall be as an inhabitant of Jerusalem, which was called Jebus, 1Ch 11:4 shall have a dwelling in the church, the city of God, and enjoy all the privileges and immunities of it. Kimchi says this refers to the times of the Messiah, when, he supposes, the Ekronites will be tributary to the Israelites, as the Jebusites were in the days of David. The Targum is,

"and Ekron shall be filled with the house of Israel, as Jerusalem."

The Syriac version is, "and Ekron shall be as Hebron".

Zechariah 9:8

Ver. 8. And I will encamp about my house, because of the army,.... Of profane and wicked men, persecutors and heretics, who rose up in great numbers in the first ages of Christianity against the church, the house of God, where he dwells, which consisted of persons called from among the Gentiles as before; in order to protect and defend them from that great company which opposed them, the Lord encamped about them, partly by his angels, Ps 34:7 and partly by his ministers, set for the defence of the Gospel; but chiefly by his own power and presence, who is as a fire round about them. The Targum is,

"and I will cause my glorious Shechinah to dwell in the house of my sanctuary, and the strength of the arm of my power shall be as a wall of fire round about it."

Because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth; either that his people might pass and repass with safety, who attended the worship and service of his house; or because of Satan and wicked men, who go to and fro, seeking to do all the mischief they can to the saints of the most High. This may, in a literal sense, respect the care of God over the Jewish nation, his church and people, in the times of Alexander, who passed to and fro without distressing them; or in the times of the Lagidae and Seleucidae, the kings of Egypt and Syria, during whose commotions, and their passing to and fro against each other, and against them, were still continued a kingdom.

And no oppressor shall pass through them any more; or "exactor" {q}; satisfaction for the sins of God's people being exacted, required, and demanded of Christ their surety, it has been given; wherefore no exactor shall pass through them, or over them, to require it of them; not the law, for they are freed by Christ from the exaction, curse, and condemnation of it; not justice, for that is fully satisfied, and infinitely well pleased with the righteousness of Christ; nor Satan, the accuser of the brethren, requiring punishment to be inflicted, which, though he may do it, will be of no avail against them; nor the Jewish tutors and governors, who exacted of the people obedience, not only to the law of Moses, but to the traditions of the elders; since Christ has redeemed his from this vain conversation, Christians are entirely free from that yoke of bondage. This shows that this prophecy is not to be literally understood, since it is certain, that, after the delivery, of it, there were oppressors or exactors among the Jews in a literal sense: Antiochus and others oppressed them before the birth of Christ; they paid tribute to the Romans in his time; he was born at the time of a Roman tax; and, after his death, Titus Vespasian destroyed their nation, and city and temple: or, if it is, "any more" must be understood of a long time, as it were, before they were utterly oppressed.

For now I have seen with mine eyes; these are either the words of God the Father, looking with pleasure upon his church and people, about whom he encamps; and upon the satisfaction his Son has given to the divine justice for their sins, whereby they are free from all exactions and oppressions: or of the Prophet Zechariah, as Aben Ezra thinks, who saw with his eyes, in the visions of the night, all that is contained in this prophecy: and now, inasmuch as all this predicted was to be fulfilled in, or near, or about the times of Christ, therefore next follows a glorious prophecy of his coming.

{q} vgwn "exactor", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Zechariah 9:9

Ver. 9. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem,.... By whom are meant, not the inhabitants of Jerusalem in common; nor the children in it, that said Hosannas to the son of David; but the church of God, and true believers in Christ, who are called upon to "rejoice" and "shout": not merely in an external way, by showing marks of outward joy, but in a spiritual manner, for which there was good reason, as follows:

behold, thy King cometh unto thee; Aben Ezra says that interpreters are divided about the sense of this prophecy; some say it is Messiah the son of David; and others, Messiah the son of Joseph. R. Moses, the priest, he observes, thinks that Nehemiah the Tirshathite is meant; and he himself is of opinion that Judas Maccabeus is intended; but Jarchi affirms that it is impossible to interpret it of any other than the King Messiah; and this is the sense of many of their writers, both ancient and modern. It is applied to him in the Talmud; they say {r}, he that sees an ass in his dream, let him look for salvation, as it is said, behold, thy king cometh unto thee, "riding on an ass". R. Alexander relates that R. Joshua ben Levi opposed these two phrases to each other, "in its time", and "I will hasten it", Isa 60:22 and gave this as the sense to reconcile them: if they (the Israelites) are worthy, i.e. of the coming of the Messiah, "I will hasten it"; if they are not worthy, it shall be "in its time"; and that he also put these Scriptures together, and compared them to that Scripture, "behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven", **Da 7:13** and also what is written, "poor, and riding on an ass"; if they are worthy, he will come with the clouds of heaven; if they are not worthy, he will come poor and riding on an ass {s}. In an ancient book {t} of theirs, at least so reckoned, it is said the King Messiah shall prevail over them all (the nations of the world, and the Israelites); as it is said, "poor, and riding on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass": and in several other places of that work, and other treatises in it {u}, the text is applied to the Messiah; as it likewise is in their ancient Midrashes or expositions. In one {w} it is observed,

"the Rabbins say an ox; this is the anointed for war, as it is said, "his glory is like the firstling of his bullock", De 33:17 an ass; this is the King Messiah, as it is said, "poor, and riding on an ass";"

and again {x}, on these words, "binding his foal to the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine", Ge 49:11, this remark is made; this shall be when that shall come to pass which is written of him, "poor, and riding on an ass". And in another {y} of their expositions, the two Redeemers, Moses and the Messiah, are compared together; and, among the several things in which they agree, this is one; as it is said of the former redeemer, "and Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them on an ass", **Ex 4:20** so it is said of the latter Redeemer (the Messiah), "poor, and riding on an ass". And thus it is interpreted by many of their more modern writers {z}. This is to be understood of Christ's coming, not merely to Jerusalem, when he rode on an ass, after mentioned; but of his coming in the flesh, when he came to Zion, and for her good; and which was wonderful, and therefore a "behold" is prefixed to it; and is matter of great joy, which she is called to show, because of the birth of him who is her Saviour; and because of the good things that come by him; and because of his appearing as a King, and her King; for, as he was prophesied of as such, as such he came, though his kingdom was not of this world; and as Zion's King, being placed there by his Father, and to which he has a right by virtue of redemption, and is owned as such by his people in the effectual calling, and to whom all the following characters belong.

He [is] just: not only essentially righteous as God, but just and upright in the whole course of, his life as man; and faithful in the administration of his office as Mediator; and the author and bringer in of righteousness to his people:

and having salvation; the salvation of his church and people; which he not only had at heart, but had it to execute, being appointed to that service by his Father, and having agreed unto it as the surety of his people, and was the business he was coming into the world to do, here prophesied of; yea, he is called salvation itself, as in a parallel text, Isa 62:11 the purpose of it was purposed in him; God resolved to save his people by him, and by him only; he never intended to save any but in and through him; and the thing was not only consulted with him, but the scheme of it was drawn in him; God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. The covenant of grace, in which salvation is a principal article, was made with him; and he, as the surety of that covenant, undertook it; and in the fulness of time being sent, came to effect it; for which he was abundantly qualified, being God and man in one person, and so had something to offer as a sacrifice for satisfaction to law and justice, in order to obtain it; and could put a sufficient virtue therein to answer the end, being the mighty God; and having as Mediator a commission from his divine Father, he is become, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, the author of eternal salvation to his people; and in him salvation is, and in no other; and in vain it is to expect it from any other, or in any other way, than by him, **Ac 4:12**. Some render the word "saved" {a}; as he was by his divine Father, when he was raised from the dead, and not suffered to see corruption; see **Heb 5:7** others, "saving himself" {b}; when he raised himself from the dead, and thereby declared himself to be the Son of God; and when he brought salvation to his body, the church, which is himself, Isa 63:5

lowly; meek, and humble, as he appeared to be in the assumption of human nature; in his carriage to sinners, conversation with them, and reception of them; in his ministrations to his disciples; and in not seeking his own, but his Father's glory. Or "poor" {c}; as Jesus the Messiah was; born of poor parents, had not where to lay his head, and was ministered unto by others; See **2Co 8:9**

and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass; which was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, Mt 21:4 not that he rode upon them both, but on the foal only; for so it should be rendered, "upon an ass, that is, upon a colt, the foal of an ass" {d}. The Jews have a fable, that the ass Abraham saddled, when he went to sacrifice his son Isaac, was the foal of the ass that was created on the evening of the sabbath, that is, at the creation; and that the same Moses set his wife and sons upon, when he came out of Midian; and the same ass, they say, Messiah the son of David was to ride upon at his coming {e}; but one of such a prodigious age surely could not be called a colt, or a foal; however, this fable shows the conviction of their minds that this is a prophecy of the Messiah, and that they expected the Messiah to ride upon an ass, according to it, as our Messiah Jesus did. And the Greeks have another fable, which perhaps took its rise from this prophecy, that when Antiochus entered the temple at Jerusalem, he found in it an image of a man in wood, with a long beard, riding on an ass {f}. And a like falsehood is told by Tacitus {g}, that the Jews consecrated the effigies of an ass in the inmost part of the temple; because a flock of wild asses, as he pretends, directed them to fountains of water, when in the wilderness, and ready to die with thirst; and yet he himself afterwards says, the Jews have no images, neither in their cities, nor in their temple: and from hence it may be arose the calumny cast upon the primitive Christians, who were sometimes confounded with the Jews, that they worshipped an ass's head; and which is refuted by Tertullian {h}.

{r} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 56. 2. {s} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. Vid. etiam ib. fol. 99. 10. {t} Zohar in Gen. fol. 127. 3. {u} Zohar in Numb. fol. 83. 4. & in Deut. fol. 117. 1. & 118. 3. Raya Mehimna apud ib. in Lev. fol. 38. 3. & in Numb. fol. 97. 2. {w} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 75. fol. 66. 2. {x} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 85. 3. {y} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 63. 2. {z} Jarchi in Isa.

xxvi. 6. Baal hatturim on Exod. fol. 88. 2. Abarbinel, Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 15. 4. R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 46. 2. Caphtor Uperah, fol. 81. 2. {a} awh evwnw "et salvatus ipse", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; "servatus", Calvin, De Dieu. Schultens {i} observes, that evy, in the Arabic language, signifies large, ample, spacious, and denotes amplitude of riches, power, knowledge, happiness, and glory; and in this place the word describes a king endued with most ample salvation, and brought into this amplitude out of poverty and straits, darkness and misery. {b} "Servabit seipsum", Vatablus. {c} yne pauper, V. L. Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "inops", Cocceius {d} rye lew "id est, super pullum", Noldius. {e} Pirke Eliezer, c. 31. fol. 32. 1. Caphtor Uperah, fol. 81. 2. {f} Diodor. Sicul. Excerpta, l. 34. p. 901, 902. {g} Hist. l. 5. c. 3, 4, 5. {h} Apologet. c. 16. ad nationes, l. 1. c. 11. {i} Origines Hebr. l. 1. p. 18, 19, 20. & indicul. voc. Hebr. in calce ejus.

Zechariah 9:10

Ver. 10. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim,.... That is, the military one; signifying that wars shall cease, Ps 46:9:

and the horse from Jerusalem; the warlike one; see **Mic 5:10**. Ephraim designs the ten tribes, and Jerusalem stands for the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; and the sense is, that these shall be one in the days of the Messiah, as Kimchi observes; and that all instruments of war shall be removed from them, and there shall be an entire peace between them; see Isa 11:13:

and the battle bow shall be cut off; another instrument of war. The Targum paraphrases it,

"I will break the strength of those that make war, the armies of the people;"

all this does not design so much the outward peace that should be in the world at the birth of Christ, as the spiritual peace of his kingdom; and that, as it is not of this world, so neither is it spread, supported, and defended by carnal weapons; and also the peaceableness and safety of his subjects, and the destruction of their enemies:

and he shall speak peace unto the heathen; not only the church of Christ, gathered out of the Jews, should enjoy great spiritual peace, prosperity, and safety; but the Gentiles also should share in it, to whom Christ went, and preached peace; not in his own person, being the minister of the circumcision: but by his apostles, who had the ministration of reconciliation committed to them; and being sent forth by Christ, went everywhere preaching peace by him, who is Lord of all, unto all nations; see **Eph 2:17**:

and his dominion [shall be] from sea [even] to sea, and from the river [even] to the ends of the earth; according to Aben Ezra, from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the river Euphrates to the ends of the earth: or, as Kimchi cites him, from the south sea, called the sea of Edom, to the north sea, which is the sea of the ocean; from the river that goes out from Eden, which is at the beginning of the east, unto the ends of the earth, which is the end of the west: or, as the Targum paraphrases it,

"from the sea to the west, and from Euphrates to the ends of the earth."

The phrases are expressive of the extensiveness of Christ's dominion, through the preaching of the Gospel, both in Judea and in the Gentile world, before the destruction of Jerusalem; and especially in the latter day; see Ps 72:8. This and the preceding clause are allowed to belong to the Messiah, by a modern Jewish writer {i}.

{i} R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emuna, par. 1. c. 1. p. 43, 44. So Kimchi in Isa. lxv. 19.

Zechariah 9:11

Ver. 11. As for thee also,.... These words are not spoken to Christ, for ta, "thee", is of the feminine gender; but the congregation of Israel, as Kimchi observes; or the church of God: nor are they the words of Christ to her; he is the person before spoken of; but of God the Father, who, having given out prophecies concerning the coming of Christ, and the peaceableness and extensiveness of his kingdom, declares to the church the benefits that she and those that belonged to her should receive by the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ:

by the blood of thy covenant; not of the covenant of works, nor of circumcision, nor of that that was made at Sinai, as the Jewish writers interpret it; all which were a yoke of bondage; but of the covenant of grace, namely, the blood of Jesus, which is a considerable article in that covenant; that by which it is ratified and confirmed, and through which all the blessings of it come, as redemption, peace, pardon, justification, and admission into heaven: and this covenant is called the church's covenant, because it is made with her in Christ, her covenant Head, in whom she was considered; and it was made on her account, and she has an interest in it, and in all things contained therein. God is her covenant God and Father; Christ her surety, Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour, and the covenant itself unto her; and all things in it, the blessings of grace and promises of good things, are hers: and though the covenant at Sinai is not the covenant here intended, that being a covenant which gendered to bondage, and under which men were held as convicted and condemned malefactors; and so cannot be that, the blood of which is the cause of a release from prison, and of bringing into a state of liberty; yet the allusion is unto it, which was a typical covenant; and the blood of the sacrifices then sprinkled on the people is called "the blood of the covenant", Ex 24:8. It was not unusual with the Heathens, at making covenants, to use blood, even human blood: it was a custom with them to draw it from each other, and drink it, at least lick and taste of it, as particularly with the Medes and Lydians {k}; and was reckoned by them the most sacred bond of covenants; and such covenants with the Carmeni and Scythians were accounted the chief covenants of friendship, and their mutual blood they used the greatest bond of concord {l}; and the surest pledge of keeping faith, and that it would abide {m}: but the blood of Christ shed is a far greater proof, as well as cement, of love, concord, and friendship; and a much firmer bond of the covenant of grace; and a surer pledge of the continuance of it, and of its being faithfully performed; and which, having the nature of a will or testament, becomes of force through the death of him the testator; see **Da 9:27**:

I have sent forth thy prisoners: that is, the church's prisoners; not prisoners to her, or in her; for the church of Christ is no prison; nor are those that have a name and a place in her prisoners; they walk at large, and walk at liberty; are fellow citizens with the saints; are Christ's freemen, and are possessed of many privileges and immunities: but these design such persons as are in a secret relation to her, and yet, being in a state of nature, are prisoners; and so are such as are not members of any visible church; nor as yet converted persons and believers in Christ, who have an open relation to the invisible church; but they are such who secretly belong to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, written in heaven, whose names are in the Lamb's book of life; or are chosen in Christ, and also redeemed by his blood: but, being as yet in a state of unregeneracy, are prisoners to sin; are under the power, dominion, and guilt of it; and, being transgressors of the law, are arraigned by it as guilty persons; are convicted and condemned, and shut up in it, and held under it; and are also the captives of Satan, being led as such by him, at his will; and thus they are prisoners, though there is a secret connection between the church and them: and sooner or later, by virtue of the blood of that covenant, which she and they have an interest in, they are brought

out of the pit wherein [is] no water; which is expressive of the state and condition men are in by sin, and while in unregeneracy; they are in mire and clay, in a most filthy and famishing condition, in a very wretched and uncomfortable one; as in a dark and lonesome dungeon, and where no refreshment can be had; where there are no true peace, joy, and comfort. The allusion is to the custom of the eastern countries, and still continues, who, in the nighttime, put their slaves into a well or pit, and there shut them up till the morning, when they are let out for business: now, from this state of captivity and bondage to sin, Satan, and the law, and from all the miseries of such a state, are the Lord's people, and who belong to Zion, the general assembly and church of the first born, delivered by virtue of the blood of Christ, shed for the redemption of them; in consequence of which it is said to these prisoners of sin, Satan, and the law, go forth; these are made sensible of their wretched condition, and are called and drawn out of it, and delivered from it, and brought into a state of liberty. Ben Melech interprets this pit of the captivity of the Jews.

{k} Herodot. Clio, sive l. 1. c. 74. {l} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 3. {m} Mela de situ Orbis, l. 2. c. 1.

Zechariah 9:12

Ver. 12. Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope,.... "That hope for redemption", as the Targum paraphrases it; not for redemption from the Babylonish captivity, at the end of seventy years, which was now over; but for redemption and salvation by Christ; for not the people of the Jews, who stayed in Babylon, can be meant; for, as they were at liberty to go from thence by the edict of Cyrus, they can not be said to be prisoners, much less prisoners hoping for deliverance, when they had, or might have it; but rather the Jews, who were come out of Babylon, as out of a pit, wherein was no water; out of an uncomfortable state and condition, and yet in their own land were encompassed with many straits and difficulties, through the opposition they met with from many, who discouraged and hindered them in their work; but were hoping they should surmount all their difficulties, and get out of their troubles: though it seems better to understand it of such, who, about the time of the Messiah's coming, were looking for the consolation and redemption of Israel, and hoping and waiting for it; as good old Simeon, and others, who were prisoners under the former dispensation; but expecting deliverance and salvation by the Messiah. It may be applied to all sensible sinners, in every age and period of time; all men are concluded in sin, shut up under the law, and led captive by Satan; but some are not sensible of their imprisoned state, nor desirous of being out of it, nor have any hope concerning it; others groan under their bondage, long for deliverance, and are hoping for it: they hope that Christ will receive them, and save them; that he will pardon their sins; that the Spirit of God has begun a good work in them, and will perform it; and that they shall enjoy eternal glory and happiness; for all which there is good ground to hope: as that Christ will receive sinners sensible of their lost perishing condition into his arms of mercy; since he is the good Samaritan, the merciful High Priest, the compassionate Saviour; who, in his love and pity, has redeemed the sons of men; and seeing he died for sinners, even the chief of them; and therefore it need not be doubted that he will receive them; and, besides, he has made kind invitations to them to come to him, and has promised he will in no wise reject them; and has actually received sinners, and most kindly and tenderly embraced them: as also that they shall be saved by him; since complete salvation is wrought out by him, and that for such as are lost, and even the most abandoned of sinners; and which is freely to be had, not according to the works of men, or as they shall deserve; but purely through the free grace of God, and his abundant mercy in Christ: as well as that their sins shall be pardoned of God for his sake, seeing there is forgiveness with God; he has promised, proclaimed, and published it; the blood of Christ has been shed for it; and he is exalted as a Saviour to give it, and has ordered it to be preached in his name; and some of the greatest of sinners have had their sins forgiven them: likewise such have good ground to hope that the work of God is begun in them; though it may be at present but a day of small things with them; there being some light let into them, as to their state, and the way of salvation by Christ; some fear of God, and love to him, to Christ, his people, truths, ordinances, ways, and worship; sin is become odious, and Christ precious: and good reason they have to hope, and even to be confident, that this good work will be performed in them, though at times they have many fears about it; since it is in such good hands, and the glory of all the divine Persons is concerned in it; wherefore they may most safely go on to hope for eternal life, which God has promised, before the world began, is in Christ, and in his hands to give; and is the free gift of God through him, whose righteousness entitles to it, and whose grace makes meet for it; wherefore, having the one, they may truly hope for the other; for grace is a well of living water, springing up unto eternal life: such as these may well be called prisoners of hope; partakers of that grace, and as it were shut up in it, and under the influence and in the exercise of it; which is a gift of grace; is of the operation of the Spirit of God, through whose power it is exercised; is founded on the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; is encouraged by the promises of the Gospel; and is increased through the discoveries of the love of God; and deals with things unseen and future: and those who have the least share of it, as these described are supposed to have, are here encouraged "to turn to the strong hold"; by which is meant, not Judea, nor Jerusalem, nor the temple in it, nor the church of God; but rather the blessed God, as Kimchi interprets it; and indeed a divine Person is intended, even the Messiah, who is a "strong hold" for refuge, and was typified by the cities of refuge, whither the manslayer fled, and was safe; to which the allusion may well be thought to be, since one of the names of the cities of refuge was Bezer, which signifies a fortress, or strong hold; and comes from the same root as the word here used: and such who are enabled and encouraged to flee to Christ for refuge, are safe from vindictive justice, which is fully satisfied by the blood, righteousness, and atoning sacrifice of Christ; and from the law, its curses, and condemnation; Christ being made a curse for them, and having had its sentence of condemnation executed on him; and from all their sins, and the sad effects of them; from the guilt of them, and obligation to punishment by them; from Satan, and all enemies, in whose power it is not to destroy them, being out of their reach; and from the wrath of God, everlasting destruction, and the second death: and such find Christ to be a strong habitation, or a dwellingplace; where they may and do dwell safely, pleasantly, and comfortably, enjoying plenty of all good things; their bread in this munition of rocks being given to them, and their water sure unto them; and to "turn" to it is to quit all other dependencies, and to believe in Christ, and trust all with him:

even today do I declare [that] I will render double unto thee; which is said, either to the church, or rather to her prisoners, to each of them, to encourage them to flee to Christ, and trust in him; seeing, by the present declaration of grace made, they may expect to enjoy all fulness of grace, plenty of blessings, temporal and spiritual; the promise of this life, and that which is to come; all spiritual blessings in Christ, grace here, and glory hereafter. So "double" signifies anything large, sufficient, plentiful, Isa 40:2 particularly the Spirit and his grace; and double comfort from him, instead of distress and trouble before experienced: according to the accents, the word for "double" is to be connected with the word "declare", and be read "this day", at this present time, however distressing it may be, or you in it be attended with uncomfortable and distressed circumstances, "I declare double" {n}; double grace, as some supply it, an abundance of it; which "I will render unto thee"; to everyone of the prisoners of hope, who turn to the strong hold Christ, in whom they will find a fulness of all grace, and shall receive out of it grace for grace; double grace, a large measure of it; double to what was received under the former dispensation. Cocceius renders it "another declarer", discoverer, or shewer forth, "do I render unto thee" {o}; meaning the Spirit of God, the other Comforter from the Father: Christ was the first declarer, who declared his Father, his nature, perfections, purposes, mind, and will, **Joh 1:18** the Holy Spirit is the second, or the other declarer, who was to bring all things to remembrance spoken by Christ, and to lead into all truth, and show things to come, and to take of the things of Christ, and show them to his people, Joh 14:16 and who was sent after Christ, was received up into heaven, as his second, his deputy, to officiate in his room and stead; as this word is used sometimes of the second priest, or sagan, or deputy of the high priest, Jer 52:24.

{n} hnvm dygm "annuncians duplicem [gratiam, quam] reddam tibi", Vatablus. {o} "Indicem alterum reddo tibi", Cocceius.

Zechariah 9:13

Ver. 13. When I have bent Judah for me,.... By whom are meant the apostles, who were Jews, and whose ministrations were made use of as a bow with arrows, to strike the hearts of men, and bring them into subjection to Christ: they were a bow of the Lord's bending and preparing, and which abode in strength, being made strong and effectual through the hands of the mighty God of Jacob:

filled the bow with Ephraim: or rather, "filled Ephraim with the bow" {p}; filled his hand with it; meaning, that some out of the ten tribes, as were the apostles, should be employed in drawing the bow of the Gospel, and shooting its arrows, the doctrines of it; which are comparable to them for swiftness, suddenness, and secrecy, and for their piercing and penetrating nature:

and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece; that is, persons of the land of Judea, as such the apostles were, and who belonged to Zion the church of Christ; who were raised up, qualified, and sent forth by him into the Gentile world, with weapons of warfare, not carnal, but spiritual; against the Gentiles in general, and the wise men of Greece, as at Athens, in particular, to confound some, and to conquer others, and bring them to the obedience of Christ. Some understand this of the Maccabees raised up against Antiochus, and the Greeks that possessed the kingdom of Syria:

and made thee as the sword of a mighty man; that is, made the Gospel in the hands of the church, and of her sons, as a sword in the hand of a mighty man, by whom execution is done with it; this is the sword of the Spirit, even the word of God; and is sharp and cutting, and is the power of God unto salvation; as it is girt upon the thigh, and is in the hands of Christ the most Mighty; and as it is accompanied with the Spirit of God, and of power.

{p} Myrpa ytalm tvq "arcu implebo [manum] Ephraim", Vatablus; so Ben Melech.

Zechariah 9:14

Ver. 14. And the Lord shall be seen over them,.... His apostles and ministers: or, "shall appear to them" {q}; and be seen by them, as he was in the days of his flesh; they saw his person, his miracles, his sorrows, and sufferings; they saw him after his resurrection, and some have seen him since his ascension, with the eyes of their bodies, as well as with the eyes of their understandings; and so were fit to be witnesses of him: or, "the Lord shall appear over them", or "upon them" {r}; he was seen over, and above them, when he ascended up to heaven; and upon them, by the descent of his

Spirit on them at the day of Pentecost, and in other miraculous gifts bestowed upon them: or, "the Lord shall appear unto", or "for them" {s}; by giving strength of body, and fortitude of mind; by protecting and preserving them, and by succeeding their labours:

and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: meaning the Gospel, and the swift progress of it, as well as the light it communicates, and the glory that goes along with it, and the efficacy of it:

and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet; of the Gospel, so called, in allusion to the jubilee trumpet, which proclaimed liberty to servants, and restoration of inheritances: or to the trumpets made for the congregation of Israel to gather them together, and to express their joy at feasts: or to the trumpet used to proclaim war, and as an alarm for it; and this was blown by the Lord himself in person when here on earth, and by his ministers in his name:

and shall go with whirlwinds of the south; that is, the Lord in the ministration of the Gospel shall go forth with the efficacy and energy of the Spirit: the Spirit is compared to "wind", because he works in a sovereign way where he listeth, and oftentimes imperceptibly, and ever powerfully; and to the "south" wind, because that brings warmth, serenity, and calmness, produces rain, and makes fruitful; and he it is which makes the Gospel efficacious; see **So 4:16**.

{q} hary Mhyle "aderit illis", Vatablus, Drusius. {r} "Super cos", V. L. Calvin; "super eis", Montanus, Piscator; "super illis", Cocceius. {s} So the particle is sometimes used; see Noldius, p. 690, 703.

Zechariah 9:15

Ver. 15. The Lord of hosts shall defend them,.... Against all their enemies; against Satan, and his temptations, and all the opposition made by him; against the world, and all the rage and reproach of men; this was remarkably verified in the apostles, who were preserved by the Lord amidst a thousand snares and dangers; and who was able to do it, being Jehovah, and the Lord of armies in heaven and in earth; he was as a shield unto them, as the word {t} used signifies; and to which he is often compared in Scripture. The Targum renders it, "the Lord of hosts shall have mercy on them;"

he encompassed them about with his favour as with a shield:

and they shall devour; or "eat" {u}; spiritual food; Christ the bread of life; whose flesh is meat indeed, and who is lived upon by faith; the blessings and promises of the everlasting covenant, of which the meek eat, and are satisfied; the Gospel and the truths of it, the words of faith and good doctrine, with which faithful ministers are nourished; all which is necessary, that they may be strengthened, and qualified to feed others with knowledge and understanding:

and subdue with sling stones; such who are stouthearted, and far from righteousness; who become by their ministry penitent and humble, and subject to Christ, his Gospel and ordinances, even by the means of preaching of the word, which seem very unpromising and unlikely; being to men foolishness, and like the scrip and sling David took with him, and by which he brought Goliath down to the ground:

and they shall drink; of the love of God, which, for its antiquity, purity, and refreshing nature, is like the best wine; and of the blood of Christ, which is drink indeed; and of the grace of the Spirit, which revives, strengthens, and extinguishes thirst:

[and] make a noise as through wine; being full of joy and thankfulness for their spiritual food and drink; and so warm, zealous, and fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; free and open in their ministrations, loudly proclaiming the grace of God; bold, and fearless of danger:

and they shall be filled like bowls; that were full of the blood of the offerings, as Jarchi and Kimchi explain it; or rather, as the Targum, that were full of fine flour and oil; they having their souls filled with good things, as the first of the above writers observes; a comfortable view of interest in the love of God; a large measure of spiritual joy, and a fulness of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, qualifying them for their work:

[and], as the corners of the altar; the Targum is,

"they shall shine as the blood that shines upon the wall of the altar;"

at the corners of which it was poured out; signifying that they should be as full of the Spirit, and spiritual things, as the altar was of blood: so the Jewish writers say, when the priest took the blood in the bowl, he sprinkled of it two sprinklings upon the two corners of the altar, on the diameter of it, and below upon the northeast horn, and upon the southwest horn; and he ordered it so, as to sprinkle the blood on the horn, that it might surround the corners, and that the blood might be on the four sides of the altar round about {w}.

{t} Ngy "obteget", Burkius. {u} wlkaw "ut comedant", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius, "et edent", Burkius. {w} Maimon. Maase Hakorbanot, c. 5. sect. 6.

Zechariah 9:16

Ver. 16. And the Lord their God shall save them in that day,.... In the times of the Gospel, and the dispensation of it; meaning either the apostles, before said to be protected and defended, **Zec 9:15** or rather the persons converted, conquered, and subdued by them, who are not killed, but saved by the Lord their God, their glorious Redeemer, from sin, Satan, the law, wrath to come, and out of the hands of all their enemies:

as the flock of his people; they being his special people, by choice, by covenant grace, and by redemption, and like to a flock of sheep; to sheep, for harmlessness, meekness, weakness, and timorousness, for being prone to go astray, and for their being clean, profitable, and sociable; and to a flock, being a distinct society of men, and but one, and a small one too, though a flock beautiful and holy:

for they [shall be as] the stones of a crown; like the gems and precious stones which are on a king's crown; they being Christ's jewels, highly valued and esteemed of by him; and comparable to them, for their richness through the grace of God, and for their purity, brightness, and glory in themselves, as owing to that; and for the glory they give to Christ, and for the durableness of them. The Targum renders it, "the stones of the ephod"; they may be translated, "the stones of separation" {x}; set for boundaries to distinguish places; those being separated by the grace of God, in effectual calling, from the rest of mankind, and laid as lively stones upon the foundation Christ:

lifted up as an ensign upon his land; the land of Judea, as trophies of victorious grace; as monuments of praise and thankfulness; and as means of encouraging others to seek to Christ, and believe in him. The allusion seems to be to trophies erected on account of victories obtained by valiant men, to perpetuate their memories; which were sometimes of brass, and sometimes of marble, with inscriptions and titles on them, that they might endure forever; and where sufficiency of such materials could not be got, a vast heap of stones used to be laid together; or large trees, and their branches cut down, and the spoils of the enemy laid upon them; and these were raised up as trophies to perpetuate the memory of mighty men to posterity. So Germanicus, having conquered the nations between the Rhine and the Elbe, piled up a vast heap of marble stones, and dedicated them to Tiberius {y}; and Fabius Aemilianus, having, with an army not amounting to 30,000 men, defeated an army of the Gauls near the river Rhosne, consisting of 200,000 men, set up a trophy of white stone, as well as built two temples, one to Mars, and another to Hercules {z}; and Domitius Aenobarbus, and Fabius Maximus, having got the victory over the Allobroges, the people of Savoy and Piedmont, erected stone towers on the spot, and fixed trophies adorned with hostile arms, which before had been unusual {a}; and it was an ancient custom with the Goths and Swedes, in the camps and fields where battles were fought, to fix stones like the Egyptian pyramids, on which they engraved, in a brief manner, the famous exploits performed, thereby to perpetuate the memory of the names and actions of great men {b}; and these pillars of stone set up for trophies, the chapiters of them might be made in the form of crowns, and may be here referred to; and so some render the words to this sense {c}.

{x} rzn ynba "lapides separationis", Sanctius; so Aquila in Drusius. {y} Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 22. {z} Strabo. Geograph. l. 4. p. 128. {a} Flori Roman. Gest. l. 3. c. 2. {b} Olai Magni de Ritu Gent. Septentrional. Epitome, l. 1. c. 16. {c} "Lapides coronarii", Junius & Tremellius; "lapides coronati", i. e. "epistyliis ornati trophaeis", Piscator.

Ver. 17. For how great [is] his goodness?.... Not of the land of Judea, as Kimchi; nor of the doctrine of the law, as the Targum; nor of the people of the Jews; but of the Messiah: and designs not his essential nor his providential goodness; but his goodness as Mediator, which he has in his heart, and has shown unto his people, in being their surety, and becoming their Saviour; in assuming their nature; bearing their sins, and obeying and suffering in their room and stead: and also that which he has in his hands for them, and communicates to them; his fulness of grace; all those spiritual blessings that are in him; the large measures of grace given at conversion; and the numerous instances of his goodness afterwards; yea, it includes glory, as well as grace:

and how great [is] his beauty? not as God, nor as man, but as Mediator; as beheld in the covenant and promises; in the Gospel and in the truths and in the ordinances of it:

corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids; by "young men" are meant the same as in **1Jo 2:14** believers in Christ, who are lively, warm, and zealous for Christ, his cause and interest; who are active, diligent, and industrious in the discharge of duty; and are strong in Christ, and in his grace; and particularly in the grace of faith, and quit themselves like men: and by "maids" or "virgins" are meant the same; so called because of their chaste adherence to Christ; for their beauty, comeliness, and attire; and for their purity of divine worship and conversation: and the Gospel is intended by "corn" and "new wine"; which is compared to "corn", in opposition to the chaff of human doctrines; and because it contains Christ the bread of life, and is nourishing and comfortable: and to "new wine", not because it is a novel doctrine, for it is the everlasting Gospel ordained before the world was; but because, under the Gospel dispensation, to which this prophecy refers, it is newly and more clearly revealed; See Gill on "Zec 9:15". The effect of which is, that it makes saints "cheerful", fills them with joy and spiritual mirth; for it is a joyful sound: or, "shall make fruitful" {d}; it causes them to grow and increase, and makes them fruitful in every good word and work: or, "shall make them speak" eloquently {e}; or cause them to put forth the fruit of their lips, in giving thanks to God for the abundance of grace bestowed upon them: or, "shall" make "them sing" {f}, as others; in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. This new wine may be interpreted of the gifts and graces bestowed in great plenty on the day of Pentecost, both on sons and daughters, on servants and handmaids, whereby they prophesied, and saw visions, **Ac 2:16** see **Eph 5:18**.

{d} bbwny "germinare faciet", Montanus; "progerminare faciet", Burkius; "foecundabit", Castalio; "dicitur de virginibus spiritualibus, quae sunt fructus multi evangelii", Zech. ix. 17. Stockius, p. 654. {e} "Facundas faciet", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius. {f} "Cantare faciet", Pagninus, Drusius; so Ben Melech.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Zechariah 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 10

This chapter is a prophecy of the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, when the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in, spoken of in the preceding chapter **Zec 9:1**. It begins with an exhortation to ask rain of the Lord; denounces wrath upon his enemies; and consists of various promises to his people. The exhortation to ask rain is in Zec 10:1 to which encouragement is given from its being of the Lord, from his willingness to grant it, and from the fruitfulness occasioned by it. The vanity of idols, and idolaters, who can not give it, is exposed; and the distress and confusion they were thrown into is observed, Zec 10:2. The anger of the Lord against the principal of them is declared; and his gracious visitation of the people of the Jews, whom he will honour and glorify, is taken notice of, Zec 10:3 from whom the Messiah sprung, than which a greater glory can not be enjoyed, Zec 10:4 and then follow various promises, relating to them; as of victory over their enemies, through the presence of the Lord with them, Zec 10:5 of strength and salvation to them, as owing to his free grace and mercy, Zec 10:6 of inward spiritual joy in them and theirs, Zec 10:7 of their effectual calling and spiritual increase, in consequence of redeeming grace, Zec 10:8 of their having a name and a place in Gospel churches, where they will remember the Lord, and live with their children, being converted, Zec 10:9 which conversion of theirs is represented in terms alluding to their deliverance from Egypt and Babylon, Zec 10:10 and the chapter is concluded with a promise of spiritual strength, so that they shall continue in their profession of faith in Christ, and persevere therein to the end, Zec 10:12.

Ver. 1. Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain,.... There was the former and the latter rain, of which see **Ho 6:3**. The former rain was in autumn, a little before or about seed time; the latter was in the spring, and a little before harvest, which is here referred to. So Hesiod {g} calls those rains the autumnal and vernal rains; and between these two rains there was seldom any more. Jerom says {h} that he never saw in the eastern countries, especially in Judea, any rain at the end of the month of June, or in July; and now, at Aleppo, a little more northerly, for three or four months after May, they have scarce so much as any dew upon the ground, as Pemble on the place observes. So Dr. Shaw says {i}, little or no rain falls in this climate (of Algiers and Tunis), during the summer season; and in most parts of the Sahara, particularly in the Jereede, they have seldom any rain at all. It was likewise the same in the holy land, Pr 26:1 where rain is accounted an unusual thing in "harvest", 2Sa 21:10 where it is also mentioned, "from harvest till rain dropped on them"; i.e. their rainy season fell out, as in Barbary, in the autumnal and winter months.

"The first rains (he observes) fall here some years in September, in others a month later; after which the Arabs break up their ground, in order to sow wheat, and plant beans: this commonly falls out about the middle of October."

If the latter rains fall as usual in the middle of April, (in the holy land we find they were a month sooner, **Joe 2:23**.) the crop is reckoned secure; the harvest coming on in the latter end of May, or in the beginning of June, according to the heat and quality of the preceding seasons: wherefore, since there was so little rain fell in these countries, and particularly in Judea; if these former and latter rains failed, a scarcity followed; for, for want of the former rain, the earth was hard, and not easily ploughed up; and for want of the latter the grain withered away in the blade, and did not ear, at least did not produce ears plump and good; so that these rains were great temporal blessings, and to be asked for, as they were by the Jews, when they were wanted; and for which they appointed fasts {k}, and were emblems of spiritual blessings here designed; for rain here is not to be literally understood, but mystically and spiritually; and designs either the love and favour of God, and the comfortable discoveries of it; see Pr 16:15 which may be compared to rain in its original; it is from above, from on high, it comes from heaven; it is not owing to anything in man, but to the will of God; and is distinguishing, as rain falls on one city, and not on another; in its objects, undeserving persons, as rain is sent on the just and unjust; in its manner of communication, it tarries not for the will and works of men; it comes at times in great abundance, and the discoveries of it are to be asked for; in its effects, it softens and melts the heart into evangelical repentance; it cools and extinguishes the flaming wrath of a fiery law in the conscience; it refreshes and revives the drooping spirit, and makes the barren soul fruitful: or the blessings of grace in general may be meant; these are from above, depend on the will of God; are to be sought after, and asked for; are free grace gifts; are given largely and plentifully, and make fruitful: or the coming of Christ in the flesh in particular is intended; see **Ho 6:3** who came down from heaven; is a free gift of God to men, was sought after, and greatly desired, and to be desired, by the Old Testament saints, and very grateful to such when he came. This may also be applied to his spiritual coming in his power and kingdom in the latter day, which is to be earnestly wished and prayed for, Ps 72:7 or else the Gospel may be designed; see De 32:2 this is of God, and from above; comes and falls upon the sons of men, according to divine direction; softens hard hearts, when it becomes effectual; comforts the souls of God's people; is a blessing to be desired, and asked for; and will be enjoyed in great plenty in the latter day:

[so] the Lord shall make bright clouds; by which may be meant the ministers of the Gospel, who are of God's making, and not man's: these may be compared to "clouds" for their number, especially as they will be in the latter day; and for their moving to and fro, to communicate spiritual knowledge: and to "bright" ones, such as from whence lightning springs, thunderclouds, full of water; (the same word is used for lightning, Job 38:25;) because full of Gospel truths, and because of that clear light they diffuse to others:

and give them showers of rain: productive, under a divine influence, of large conversions among Jews and Gentiles:

to everyone grass in the field: on whom these showers fall with efficacy, and a divine blessing; everyone of these have a spiritual knowledge of Christ, faith in him, repentance towards God, food and fulness of it; and are filled with the fruits of righteousness, or good works, to the glory of God; see Isa 55:10. The Targum is,

"that he may give to them (the children of men) corn to eat, and grass to the beasts in the field;"

taking the words literally.

{g} Opera & Dies, l. 2. {h} Comment. in Amos iv. 7. fol. 39. F. {i} Travels, p. 136, 137. Ed. 2. {k} Misn. Taanith, c. 1. sect. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

Zechariah 10:2

Ver. 2. For the idols have spoken vanity,.... The vanities of the Gentiles cannot give rain; if they promise it, they speak vain things; God only can give it, and therefore it must, be asked of him, Jer 14:22. The word for idols is "teraphim", the same as in Ge 31:19 and here signifies worshippers of idols, as the Targum interprets it; and may be understood of the idolatrous Papists who worship idols of gold, silver, brass, and wood, **Re 9:20** and who speak lies in hypocrisy, great swelling words of vanity, and even blasphemy against God, his name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven, **1Ti 4:1**. Jarchi on 2Ki 23:24, says, the teraphim are images that speak by sorcerers or sorceries; and to such evils the followers of the man of sin are addicted, **Re 9:21** and the Jews {l} have a notion that those images were so formed, that they were capable of speaking and talking with men; see **Ho 3:4** they seem to confound them with the "talisman":

and the diviners have seen a lie; delivered it out, and others believed it, being given up to judicial blindness, because they received not the love of the truth, **2Th 2:10**. The Targum is,

"the diviners prophesy falsehood;"

or preach false doctrine, as the Romish clergy do, who are meant by the diviners:

and have told false dreams; about transubstantiation, purgatory, &c. which are visionary things; false doctrines are compared to dreams, Jer 23:25:

they comfort in vain; by works of supererogation, by selling pardons, and praying souls out of purgatory:

therefore they went their way as a flock; as a flock of sheep straying from the fold. The Targum is,

"they are scattered as sheep are scattered;"

that is, the Jews, being hardened against the Christian religion, by the idolatry, lies, and dreams of the Papists, wander about in their mistakes and errors concerning the Messiah; which is their case to this day, and will be until the man of sin is destroyed:

they were troubled, because [there was] no shepherd; or, "no king", as the Targum paraphrases it; that is, the King Messiah, according to them, is not yet come; which is their affliction and trouble, that they are as sheep without a shepherd: or, "they answered", that there "is no shepherd" {m}; they replied to the diviners, the tellers of false dreams and idolaters, and affirmed that the Messiah is not come, and that the pope of Rome is not the shepherd and bishop of souls.

{l} Targum Jon. in Gen. xxxi. 19. R. Eliezer Pirke, c. 36. fol. 40. 1. {m} her Nya yk wney "testificati sunt nullum fuisse pastorem", Junius & Tremellius, Heb.; "responderunt", Piscator; "respondebunt quod non sit pastor", Burkius.

Zechariah 10:3

Ver. 3. Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds,.... The Targum interprets it of "kings"; as the "goats" of "princes", in the next clause; by whom, according to Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, are meant the kings of Greece; but rather the antichristian kings are designed, the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication with the whore of Rome, which is the cause of the anger of the Lord being kindled: or else ecclesiastical rulers are meant, the Romish clergy, the chief of them, as cardinals, archbishops, bishops, &c. who may fitly be represented by the shepherds of Israel in the times of the prophets for their name, professing to be of Israel, or to be Christians; and by them for their ignorance, covetousness, luxury, disregard to the flock, tyranny and cruelty over it, and murder of it; see Isa 56:10, against these the fire of God's wrath will be kindled, and with it will they be destroyed:

and I punished the goats; not the Seleucidae, as the above Jewish writers;

though they may with propriety be so called, since they were the successors of Alexander, signified by the he goat in **Da 8:5** rather the monks and friars, comparable to these for their filthiness and uncleanness; and because they pretend to be guides of the people, and to go before them, and yet use them ill, and push them with their horns of power; wherefore God will punish them, and kill those children of Jezebel with death, **Re 2:22**:

for the Lord of hosts hath visited his flock, the house of Judah; by sending the Gospel to them, and his Spirit with it, to make it effectual to their conversion; which will be at the time that the antichristian hierarchy will be destroyed; then the Lord's flock, who have gone astray, shall be returned to the true Shepherd and Bishop of souls, and shall seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and shall be saved by him: a gracious visitation this will be!

and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle; this denotes that the Jews, when converted, will be bold in their God; valiant for the truth on earth; courageously fight the good fight of faith, and be victorious over their enemies; and that they will be in great honour and esteem among the saints, though so mean and justly despicable now: the sense is, that as the horse shows its strength and courage in battle, so should they; see Job 39:19.

Zechariah 10:4

Ver. 4. Out of him came forth the corner,.... Or "cornerstone"; by which is meant a king or ruler, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi; and is no other than the King Messiah, who was to come out of Judah, and did spring from that tribe, **1Ch 5:2** and this is a reason why God will visit the house of Judah, or the Jews, in the latter day, because the Messiah was promised and sent unto them, salvation was of them, though they rejected him; but the Lord will have mercy on them; the Redeemer shall come to Zion in a spiritual manner, and turn away iniquity from them, and then all Israel shall be saved by him. The epithet of a "corner" stone well agrees with him, that being not only the ornament, but the strength and support of the building, which knits, cements, and keeps the whole together: Christ is a beautiful and precious cornerstone, which gives glory and lustre to the church, and is the support, yea, the foundation of it; and who joins and unites together men and angels; Jews and Gentiles; Old and New Testament saints; saints above and below; saints in all ages and places, and of all nations and denominations; and is the Head of the corner, being superior to men and angels, to the kings of the earth, and to the church of God; see **Eph 2:20**.

Out of him the nail; the Targum is, "out of him his Messiah"; which shows that this text was formerly understood of Christ by the Jews; Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of a prince and governor; so Eliakim the governor is said to be "as a nail in a sure place", Isa 22:23 who was a type of Christ; and this agrees with Christ himself. The allusion is either to a nail, by which the timber in the building is compacted together, and the whole is strengthened, as the church is by Christ: or to a nail to which the cords of tents are fastened, as those of shepherds, travellers, or soldiers; the church is as such a tent; Christ is the nail to which its cords are fastened, which denotes the stability and security of it: or to a nail fixed in a wall, on which things are hung; on Christ are hung all the vessels of mercy; the covenant of grace, and all its promises and blessings; and all the glory of his Father's house, of his building, the temple, and of the salvation of his people, is to be hung on him.

Out of him the battle bow; or "warrior", as Jarchi interprets it; the Lord is a man of war; Christ makes war in righteousness; the armies of heaven follow him; he is at the head of them, and fights the battles of his people, and is victorious, and makes them more than conquerors; their spiritual armour is from him, and they are armed by him, Re 19:11

out of him every oppressor together: or "exactor" {n}; which is used in a good sense, Isa 60:17 as it must be here, since all the rest of the epithets are; and may design the apostles of Christ, who preached the doctrines of grace and righteousness, and required of men the obedience of faith; and these came out of Judah and Jerusalem, and went into all the world, demanding faith in and obedience to the Son of God.

{n} vgzn "exactor", Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Calvin, Drusius, De Dieu, Cocceius, Burkius.

Zechariah 10:5

Ver. 5. And they shall be as mighty [men],.... That is, the converted Jews shall be such; they shall be strong in faith, giving glory to the Messiah; they shall be strong in the grace that is in him; they shall be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; his strength shall be made perfect in their weakness:

which tread down [their enemies] in the mire of the streets in the battle; being victorious over sin, Satan, and the world, through Christ, in whom they will believe:

and they shall fight; against all their inward and outward enemies, the good fight of faith, with great valour and courage:

because the Lord [is] with them; who is the Lord of hosts or armies; his presence gives boldness and intrepidity; for, if he is for them, who can be against them? the battle is theirs, success is certain:

and the riders on horses shall be confounded; such that come up against them on them, and trust in them, shall be beaten by them, and so made ashamed; and the flesh, both of the horses and their riders, shall be the food of the fowls of the air, Re 19:18 perhaps the Turkish cavalry is meant, who may attempt to hinder the settlement of the Jews in their own land; the armies of the Turks consisting greatly of horsemen, **Re 9:16**.

Zechariah 10:6

Ver. 6. And I wilt strengthen the house of Judah,.... Both with internal and external strength, so that they shall be able to stand their ground against enemies of every sort:

and I will save the house of Joseph: the ten tribes, such of them that shall be found, for all Israel shall be saved, Ro 11:26 not only temporally, but spiritually, with an everlasting salvation:

and I will bring them again to place them; there is but one word in the original text; it is composed of two words, as Kimchi observes, of bwv, "to return", and bvy, "to sit" or "dwell" {o}, quietly, constantly, and at ease; and our version takes in both senses: the meaning is, that these people should be returned from the state and condition and from each of the places they are in, and be settled either in their own land, or in Gospel churches, under a Gospel ministry, enjoying Gospel ordinances, or in both:

for I have mercy upon them; which is the spring and source of all the above benefits promised, or that are after mentioned; even of the covenant and its blessings; the mission of Christ, and salvation by him; regeneration, pardon, and eternal life; hence they that had a "loammi" upon them, and were not the people of God, now will be his people; and those who had not obtained mercy shall obtain it, even those that were concluded in unbelief:

and they shall be as though I had not cast them off; or rejected them from being his people; which was done when the natural branches, the Jews, were broken off, and the Gentiles of the wild olive tree were grafted in; when their civil and church state were dissolved, and their city and temple destroyed:

for I [am] the Lord their God; covenant interest always remains, and is the source of all the blessings of grace, and will be of the conversion of the Jews, Ro 11:26:

and will hear them; when, the Spirit of grace and supplication being poured upon them, they shall cry unto the Lord, and look to him for salvation. The Targum is,

"and I will receive their prayer."

{o} Mytwbvwhw "et reverti et habitare faciam", Burkius.

Zechariah 10:7

Ver. 7. And [they] of Ephraim shall be like a mighty [man],.... What remain, and shall be found of the ten tribes, shall be as is said of Judah, or the Jews of the two tribes, Zec 10:5:

and their heart shall rejoice as through wine: they shall be filled with inward and spiritual joy, through the love of God shed abroad in their heart; and through the Gospel of Christ having a place there; and through the blessings of divine grace, those streams of love, and which flow in the Gospel, and make glad the hearts of God's people; all which are comparable to wine:

yea, their children shall see [it], and be glad; they shall see the strength, victory, and salvation of their fathers, and the joy they shall be possessed of, and join with them in it, having a share in the same blessings they are partakers of:

their heart shall rejoice in the Lord; in the person and offices of Christ, who will now be known by the spiritual seed and offspring of the church, and in the great salvation wrought out by him, and in all the blessings of grace that accompany it. The Targum is,

"their heart shall rejoice in the word of the Lord;"

the essential Word, the Son of God.

Zechariah 10:8

Ver. 8. I will hiss for them,.... Or "whistle for them" {p}; the word signifies, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, the motion of the lips with the voice, and is a sign of calling; and so the Targum renders it, I will cry or call for them; and it denotes the call of them by the Gospel, which is the voice of Christ, which is soft, sweet, and melodious; is a sound of love, grace, and mercy; of peace, pardon, life, and salvation: the allusion seems to be to the shepherd gathering his sheep together with his pipe or whistle, and which was a reed; and so may denote the weakness of the instrument, the ministry of the word in itself, which is made the power of God unto salvation:

and gather them; from the places where they are scattered, into their land; or, by effectual calling, out from the state and condition in which they are, and from among the men of the world, to the Lord himself, as their Redeemer and Saviour; and to him for pardon and righteousness; and into his churches, and communion with him there: Kimchi observes, that some interpret this verse of future time; and Jarchi says it relates to it; and in the Talmud {q} it is applied to the times of the Messiah; where they speak of a bird called "racham", which we translate the gier eagle, De 14:17 and they say it is so called, because, when that comes, mercies come into the world, which this word signifies. R. Bibi bar Abi says, when it sits, it makes a whistling or hissing, from whence it is called "sarakrak", a word derived from what is here used; and when it sits on the ground, and hisses or whistles, the Messiah will come, as it is said, "I will hiss for them", &c.; the gloss is, when it stands not, but sits and chirps, it is a sign of good news. The design, seems to be to show, that the Messiah's coming is owing mercy, and would be good news, which the Gospel publishes.

For I have redeemed them; from sin, Satan, the law, death, and hell, and every enemy, by his precious blood, and the sacrifice of himself when here on earth; and this is the foundation of the effectual calling of any and every sinner; and will be the reason of the conversion and ingathering of the Jews in the latter day; they being a people redeemed and purchased by the blood of Christ, Isa 43:1:

and they shall increase as they have increased; either when in Egypt, or in the days of Solomon; their number shall be as the sand of the sea, **Ho 1:10** a nation shall be born at once; they shall be multiplied, and not be few, and glorified, and not be small; yea, the place shall be too strait for them to dwell in, Jer 31:18.

{p} hqrva "sibilabo", i. e. "fistula pastorali", Grotius, Burkius. {q} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 63. 1.

Zechariah 10:9

Ver. 9. And I will sow them among the people, The people of God in the Gentile world: this is to be understood of the conversion of the Jews, when they will become the good seed that hear the word, and understand it, and bring forth fruit; and of their being known, acknowledged, and reckoned among the people of God, who now are not; and of their being planted in Gospel churches, where the word is truly preached; the ordinances are faithfully administered; the Lord grants his presence, and saints have communion one with another; to be in such a fruitful soil, and in such sacred enclosures, fenced by the power and grace of God, is a great happiness:

and they shall remember me in far countries; they shall call to mind what their ancestors did to Christ, and mourn on account of a pierced Saviour; they shall remember him in the ordinance of the supper, being in a Gospel church state; they shall remember what he did and suffered for them, and his love to them in all, and that with faith, affection, and thankfulness:

and they shall live with their children; a very happy, comfortable, temporal life; and they shall live a spiritual life; a life of faith on Christ; of communion with him, and of holiness from him, and to his glory: and their children also shall live the same life, being regenerated and quickened by the same grace; these are the church's children:

and turn again; that is, when they shall turn again, either to the Lord, shall be converted unto him; or return to their own land.

Zechariah 10:10

Ver. 10. I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt,.... The Targum paraphrases it,

"and as I brought them out of the land of Egypt, so will gather their captivity out of Assyria;"

suggesting there would be a likeness between the one and the other. Egypt may denote the state of distance and bondage in which all men are by nature; and the Jews, at their conversion, will be brought out of it, into the glorious liberty of the children of God, by the mighty arm of the Lord, according to his purposes and promises. Moreover, as Cocceius observes, Egypt may signify Rome, or the Romish jurisdiction, which is spiritually called Egypt and Sodom, Re 11:8 for darkness, idolatry, tyranny, and cruelty; and out of which the Jews, as many of them as are there, will be brought at the time of their conversion:

and gather them out of Assyria; which may design the Turkish or Persian dominions, or both, as the above commentator suggests; from whence the Jews, as many as are in those parts, will be brought into their own land, as follows; see Isa 11:11:

and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; Gilead was a land of pasture, and signifies "a heap of testimonies"; and may mystically intend the Scriptures, which testify of Christ, and direct to green pastures, beside the still waters: and Lebanon, that goodly mountain, and hill of frankincense, and where cedars grew, may design the church, whither the converted Jews will be brought, and worship before it, **Re 3:9** or both may literally be understood, which they shall return unto; Gilead being, as Kimchi observes, beyond Jordan eastward; and Lebanon, comprehending the whole land of Israel, on this side of it:

and [place] shall not be found for them; they will be so numerous; see Isa 49:20 the Targum is,

"and I will bring them to the land of Gilead and the sanctuary, and it shall not be sufficient for them;"

that is, to hold them. The Septuagint render it, "and not one of them shall be left": all Israel shall now be converted and saved, though their number will be as the sand of the sea, **Ho 1:10**.

Zechariah 10:11

Ver. 11. And he shall pass through the sea with affliction,.... Either the people of the Jews, as Israel of old did, when they came out of Egypt, to which the allusion is; or the wind shall pass through the sea, as Aben Ezra supplies it, and it shall become dry; that is, the river of Egypt: or "affliction" {r}, as many supply it, shall pass through the sea; the nations, which are many as the sea, as Kimchi interprets it; and so may design that hour of temptation that shall come upon all the earth, **Re 3:10** or with which the kingdom of the beast, who rose up out of the sea, and consists of many waters, people, tongues, and nations, will be afflicted, Re 13:1 which the Lord shall pass through and smite; or it may in general denote the sea of this world, and the afflictions of it, which the Lord causes his people to pass through, and brings them out of them:

and shall smite the waves in the sea: that is, the Lord shall smite them; repress afflictions, which are like the proud waves, not suffering them to proceed further than is for his glory and his people's good, and remove all obstacles in their way; see Isa 11:15 or destroy their enemies, which are like the proud waters, that otherwise would go over their souls, and overwhelm them; and particularly the antichristian states, at the pouring out of the vials, signified by the sea, and by fountains and rivers, Re 16:3. Kimchi explains it of the multitude of the people:

and all the deeps of the river shall dry up; not Nile, the river of Egypt, as

Jarchi and Aben Ezra {s}, but the river Euphrates; see Re 16:12 the drying up of which signifies the destruction of the Turkish empire; and the Targum paraphrases it,

"all the kings of the people shall be confounded:"

and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down; the pride of the Ottoman empire, of which the old Assyria is a part, and which has been large and powerful, that shall be destroyed; this will be at the passing away of the second woe; and then quickly comes the third, which is as follows, Re 11:14:

and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away; all rule and government shall cease; see Ge 49:10 meaning that the kingdom of the antichristian beast of Rome, called Egypt, Re 11:8 shall be at an end; which will be at the blowing of the seventh trumpet, and upon and through the pouring out of the seven vials. So the Targum, the dominion of the Egyptians shall be taken away; or its rod, with which it has smote, hurt, and greatly oppressed and afflicted the saints; persecution shall now cease; it will not be in the power of the Romish antichrist to persecute any more.

{r} Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Calvin, Drusius, Cocceius. {s} So Stockius, p. 891.

Zechariah 10:12

Ver. 12. And I will strengthen them in the Lord,.... Not the Egyptians and Assyrians, but the Jews, as in Zec 10:5, the Targum is,

"I will strengthen them in the word of the Lord;"

in the Messiah, by his power, and in the grace that is in him; and their faith and hope in him, and love to him: or "by" {t} him; so that, through him strengthening them, they will be able to do all things; to exercise grace; perform duty; withstand temptation; oppose indwelling sin; bear the cross of Christ; endure afflictions; engage with all their spiritual enemies, and conquer them: for the words may be rendered, "I will cause them to prevail", or "overcome in the Lord" {u}; all their enemies, temporal and spiritual; and even to be more than conquerors through him that has loved them:

and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord; walk in him, the way to the Father, to heaven and happiness; walk by faith on him, in his strength, and in imitation of him; walk according to his Gospel, calling on his name, professing and worshipping him; and walk in his church and ordinances, agreeably to his will; see **Mic 4:5**. Kimchi owns that this whole chapter belongs to the times of the Messiah, as well as the former. The words may be considered as a testimony to the doctrine of the Trinity; that I, Jehovah the Father, will strengthen them in Jehovah the Son; and they shall walk up and down in the name of the Son of God, saith Jehovah the Spirit. Moreover, as a promise of the saints' final perseverance, very peremptorily expressed; I "will" strengthen them, and they "shall" walk, &c.

{t} hwhyb "per Jehovam", Piscator. {u} Mytrbgw "et faciam illos ut vincant", Cocceius.

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 11

This chapter contains a prophecy of the destruction of the Jews, and shows the causes and reasons of it; and is concluded with a prediction concerning antichrist. The destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it, is signified by figurative expressions, Zec 11:1 which occasions an howling among the shepherds or rulers of Israel, on account of whose cruelty and covetousness the wrath of God came upon them without mercy, Zec 11:3 but inasmuch as there were a remnant according to the election of grace among them, named the flock of the slaughter, Christ is called upon to feed them; who undertakes it, and prepares for it, Zec 11:4 but being abhorred by the shepherds, whom he therefore loathed and cut off, he determines to leave the people to utter ruin and destruction, Zec 11:8 and, as a token of it, breaks the two staves asunder he had took to feed them with,
Zec 11:10 and, as an instance of their ingratitude to him, and which is a justification of his conduct towards them, notice is taken of his being valued at and sold for thirty pieces of silver, Zec 11:12 but, in the place of these

shepherds cut off, it is suggested that another should arise, who is described by his folly, negligence, and cruelty, Zec 11:15 to whom a woe is denounced, Zec 11:17.

Ver. 1. Open thy doors, O Lebanon,.... By which may be meant, either the temple of Jerusalem, which was built of the cedars of Lebanon;

"the gates of which are said {w} to open of themselves forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, when Jochanan ben Zaccai, who lived at the same time, rebuked them, saying, O temple, temple, wherefore dost thou frighten thyself? I know thine end is to be destroyed; for so prophesied Zechariah, the son of Iddo, concerning thee, "open thy doors, O Lebanon"."

So Lebanon, in Zec 10:10, is interpreted of the sanctuary, both by the Targum and by Jarchi; or else it may be understood of Jerusalem, and of the whole land of Judea, because it was situated by it; it was the border of it on the north side.

That the fire may devour thy cedars; of which the temple was built, and the houses of Jerusalem, which were consumed by fire; unless the fortresses of the land are meant. So the Targum paraphrases it,

"and the fire shall consume your fortresses."

{w} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39. 2.

Zechariah 11:2

Ver. 2. Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen,.... By which are designed the princes, nobles, and magistrates of the land: so the Targum interprets them of kings and princes; see **Na 2:3**:

because all the mighty are spoiled; which is an explanation of the figurative expressions in the former clause, and in the following; and designs rich men, as the Targum paraphrases it, who at this time would be spoiled of their wealth and substance.

Howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; which the Targum interprets of governors of provinces; and men of power and authority are doubtless intended; see **Isa 2:13**:

for the forest of the vintage is come down; or rather, "the fortified forest"; meaning the city of Jerusalem, which was a fortified place, and like a forest full of trees, for number of inhabitants, but now cut down and destroyed; see Isa 10:16.

Zechariah 11:3

Ver. 3. [There is] a voice of the howling of the shepherds,.... Which may be understood either of the civil rulers among the Jews, who now lose their honour and their riches; and so the Targum, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra, interpret it of kings; or of the ecclesiastical rulers, the elders of the people, the Scribes and Pharisees:

for their glory is spoiled; their power and authority; their riches and wealth; their places of honour and profit; their offices, posts, and employments, whether in civil or religious matters, are taken from them, and they are deprived of them:

a voice of the roaring of young lions; of princes, comparable to them for their power, tyranny, and cruelty: the Targum is,

"their roaring is as the roaring of young lions:"

for the pride of Jordan is spoiled; a place where lions and their young ones resorted, as Jarchi observes; See Gill on "Jer 49:19". Jordan is here put for the whole land of Judea now wasted, and so its pride and glory gone; as if the waters of Jordan were dried up, the pride and glory of that, and which it showed when its waters swelled and overflowed; hence called by Pliny {x} "ambitiosus amnis", a haughty and ambitious swelling river.

{x} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 15.

Zechariah 11:4

Ver. 4. Thus saith the Lord my God,.... The Syriac version adds, "to me";

not the Prophet Zechariah, but the Messiah, who calls the Lord his God, as he was man and Mediator, Joh 20:17 for what follow are the words of God the Father to him, calling upon him, and giving him a commission to

Feed the flock of the slaughter; meaning the people of the Jews in general, to whom Christ was sent as a prophet, to teach and instruct them by the ministry of the word; so "feeding" is interpreted of prophesying, by the Targum and Jarchi: and these are called "the flock of slaughter", because of the cruel usage they met with from their shepherds and owners, mentioned in the next verse Zec 11:5; and because they were appointed and given up to ruin and destruction of God, on account of their sins and transgressions; though there was a remnant among them, a little flock, afterwards in this chapter called the poor of the flock Zec 11:7, who were the special care of Christ, and were fed by him in a spiritual manner; and may go by this name, because exposed to the cruelties of men, and are accounted as sheep for the slaughter, **Ro 8:36** these Christ was called upon by his Father in the council of peace to take care of, which he did; and in the everlasting covenant of grace he agreed to feed them; and in the fulness of time he was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, who were as sheep without a shepherd; and he fed them with knowledge and with understanding.

Zechariah 11:5

Ver. 5. Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty,.... Not the Romans after Christ came, into whose hands they were delivered, and by whom they were slain in great numbers, not accounting it any sin to put them to death; but the priests, Scribes, Pharisees, and doctors, among the Jews, who ruined and destroyed their souls, by feeding them with poisonous doctrines; teaching them the commandments of men, and to observe the traditions of the elders; and to seek for life and salvation by the works of the law, which was a ministration of condemnation and death to them; and yet thought they did God and the souls of men good service:

and they that sell them; as false teachers make merchandise of the souls of men:

say, Blessed [be] the Lord, for I am rich; having devoured widows' houses and substances, under a pretence of long prayers; and enriched themselves through tithes of everything, and by other methods; as the Scribes and

Pharisees did:

and their own shepherds pity them not; those who should have been concerned for the welfare of their souls had no compassion on them. Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret this of God, the Shepherd of Israel; the verb being singular, though the noun is plural: so God is called Makers, Creators, Ps 149:2 and this sense agrees with the following words.

Zechariah 11:6

Ver. 6. For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord,.... Or spare them; but cause his wrath to come upon them to the uttermost, as it did at the time of Jerusalem's destruction by the Romans;

but, lo, I will deliver the men everyone into his neighbour's hand; this seems to refer to the factions and divisions among themselves during the siege of Jerusalem, when multitudes fell into the hands of the zealots, and heads of parties, and perished by them:

and into the hand of his king; Vespasian the Roman emperor; the Jews having declared, long before this time, that they had no king but Caesar, Joh 19:15 and now into his hands they were delivered up:

and they shall smite the land; that is, the Romans shall lay waste the land of Judea:

and out of their hand I will not deliver [them]; as formerly out of the hands of their neighbours, the Philistines, Ammonites, &c. and out of the captivity of Babylon. It denotes that their destruction would be an utter one; nor have they been delivered yet, though it has been over 1900 years ago.

Zechariah 11:7

Ver. 7. And I will feed the flock of slaughter,.... According to the call and commission he had from his divine Father, Zec 11:4 he determines to do as it was enjoined him, and as he had undertook:

[even] you, O poor of the flock; besides the people of the Jews in general, to whom Christ was sent, and he came to feed, there were a small remnant, according to the election of grace, he had a special regard for; and whom he fed by the word and ordinances with himself, the bread of life; and with the discoveries of his love, and with the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises, the sure mercies of David. These are called "the poor of the flock", because they were the poor of this world, as were the disciples and followers of Christ; "the poor have the Gospel preached unto them"; Mt 11:5 and because they were spiritually poor, or poor in spirit, **Mt 5:3** who saw their spiritual poverty, and owned it; who bewailed it, and were humbled under a sense of it; and sought after the true riches; and acknowledged that all they had were owing to the grace of God: and who, as to the frame of their mind, are the meek and humble ones; or, as to their outward state and condition, afflicted ones, as the word {y} may be rendered; who were persecuted, reviled, reproached, and accursed by others, **Joh 7:49** and, as to their gifts and graces, the meanest of God's people:

And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; Jarchi, agreeably to the Targum, interprets this of the division of the kingdom of Israel into two parts, in the times of Rehoboam and Jeroboam. Some think persons are meant. In the Talmud {z} it is explained of the disciples of the wise men in the land of Israel, who make each other pleasant by their doctrines; and of the disciples of the wise men in Babylon that corrupt one another, or object to one another: according to Aben Ezra, Zerubbabel and Nehemiah are intended: others, the good king Josiah, and the bad king Zedekiah: others the priest, and the king, as Abendana observes; and Kimchi explains it of the different manner in which the Lord led the people, according to their behaviour to him; when they behaved well, they had good kings and governors, which led them in a right way, and they were filled with good things; but when they behaved otherwise they had evil kings, and evil befell them. The first of these staves some render "clemency" {a} lenity, kindness, gentleness; and suppose it has respect to the kind and gentle manner in which God dealt with the Jews before the times of Christ, both as to civil and religious things; as to civil things, by bringing them into and settling them in a pleasant land, a land flowing with milk and honey; by giving them wholesome laws, by which they were governed, such as no other nation had; and by setting over them judges, to protect, defend, and deliver them; and kings to rule over them, very wise and good, especially some of them, David, Solomon, &c.: and as to religious things, by giving them a revelation of his mind and will, his word, statutes, and judgments, he did not give to other nations; and by sending prophets to instruct them in them, and stir them up to the observance of them; and by appointing a place of worship, and settling the form of it; setting apart men to the office of priests, and ordering sacrifices to be offered, with the whole of temple service; which were the beauty of the Lord, to be beheld in his sanctuary: and then the latter, called "Bands", which some render destroyers {b}, may denote either the destruction of this people, when they sinned against God, either by the Chaldeans or by the Romans; when severity was exercised on them, and wrath came upon them to the uttermost, in the ruin of their nation, city, and temple: and others think these may refer to the different usage of the Roman emperors, with respect to the Jews, who, for the most part, used them kindly, until the times of Nero; but afterwards, by him and other emperors, they were treated very roughly, until they were utterly destroyed by them; but as it plainly appears from the context that this is spoken of no other shepherd but Christ, and of no other feeding but his, they must design the instruments he makes use of, and still continues to make use of, in feeding his people. Shepherds commonly have but one staff, rod, or crook; but Christ has two: so the psalmist makes mention of a "rod" and "staff", when speaking of Christ as a Shepherd, Ps 23:4 and these two staves some interpret of his twofold way of government, lenity to his people, and severity to his enemies; but rather it denotes the very great diligence and care Christ takes of his flock, both in guiding and directing them, and in protecting and defending them from their enemies: he fed his people in his own person when here on earth, with his staff "Beauty", or "clemency"; he was sent, and came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and had great compassion on them, as being like sheep without a shepherd; their present shepherds, or who bore that name, being such as are before described: and his tenderness and gentleness towards them appeared in his calling sinners to repentance; in his gracious invitations to come unto him; by his kind reception of them; his affable and courteous deportment towards them; the gentle reproofs and suitable instructions he gave them, and the comfortable truths of the Gospel he delivered to them; and, during his personal ministry, he suffered his disciples to go nowhere else with his Gospel; and, at his resurrection from the dead, ordered them to begin preaching at Jerusalem, and to continue preaching to the Jews first everywhere, as they did, until they rejected the Gospel; and then Christ broke both his staves, or removed the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, which I think are meant by these staves: for these staves are not only ensigns of the shepherd, as instruments of guiding, directing, and protecting the flock; but emblematical, as their names show;

and emblems they might be of the stay and staff of food, of the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water, **Isa 3:1** and we find that Christ's rod and staff, in a mystical sense, are of use to feed, refresh, and comfort, as well as to guide and direct, Ps 23:4 by the staff "Beauty" we are to understand the Gospel, which was preached to the Jews before the destruction of Jerusalem, which is beautiful and pleasant in itself; the doctrines of it are so, such as those of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; and such are the promises of it, being absolute and unconditional, sure and suitable to the cases of God's people, and likewise its ministers, Isa 52:7 and the ordinances of it comely and lovely; and besides, it sets forth the beauty of Christ, and represents the saints' beautifulness in him; and it is like the shepherd's staff; of great use in feeding the flock, not only by supplying with food, being food itself, milk for babes, and meat for strong men; and by directing to Christ, his covenant and church, where it is to be had; but by setting right such who are going in wrong pastures; pushing forward such as are backward to duty; fetching back such as are driven away, or backslidden, and preserving the whole from wolves and bears: and by the other staff, "Bands", the ordinances of the Gospel are designed, which are of use to keep the saints together, and to direct them to proper food; particularly the ordinance of the Lord's supper, which, as it is a feeding ordinance, and sets forth Christ, as food for faith, his flesh which is meat indeed, and his blood which is drink indeed; so it is a knitting and uniting ordinance, and is fitly expressed by "bands"; is not only a means of knitting the affections to Christ, whose love is so fully expressed in it; but of uniting the hearts of believers to one another, who herein become one bread, and one body, and feed together; and have communion with each other, and maintain their church state in a comfortable manner; and keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; and the ordinances of the Gospel, though they are such bonds as are disagreeable to graceless persons, who are for breaking them asunder; yet they are a yoke that is easy, and a burden light to the people of God, **Ps 2:3**. It may be observed, that the word for "bands" is rendered "pilots", Eze 27:8 and masters or governors of ships, **Jon 1:6** and is so rendered here {c}; and as churches may be compared to ships, **Re 8:9** so may ministers of the word to those who have the government and direction of them; and whose business lies in the ministration of the word, and the administration of ordinances, and taking care of the discipline of the Gospel: this seems to be the evangelic sense of these words; and they express the manner in which Christ fed his own dear people in Judea, partly by his own ministry, and partly by the ministry of his apostles, while he had an interest there, until the sins of that nation brought utter ruin upon them. It is a most ridiculous application made of these two staves by Antoninus, archbishop of Florence {d}, that Zechariah, being of the Dominican order, took to him in the person of God two staves; the one he called "Beauty", which is the order of the preaching Friars; and the other "Bands", which is the order of the Minors:

and I fed the flock; with the said staves, as he had determined; which includes the doing of the whole office of a shepherd; taking an exact account of his sheep, that none be lost; going before them, and setting them an example in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; leading them to the still waters of his Father's love; to the fountains and fulness of his own grace; to the rich provisions of his house, and the green pastures of Gospel ordinances; feeding them himself, and with himself, the bread of life, the hidden and heavenly manna; appointing shepherds under him, whom he qualifies to be pastors, gives them to his churches as such, and who receive from him the doctrines of the Gospel to feed them with; and protecting them from all their enemies, the roaring lion, Satan, wolves in sheep's clothing, false teachers, and the world's goats, who thrust with side and shoulder, and push with their horns of power; as well as by seeking that which is lost; bringing back that which is driven, or drawn away; binding up that which is broken; strengthening the weak; healing the sick; and watching over the whole flock night and day, lest any hurt them.

{y} yyne "mites de grege", Grotius; "afflictos pecoris", Montanus; "afflictos gregis", Burkius. {z} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 24. 1. {a} men "clementia", Cocceius. {b} Mylbx "perditores", Munster; "destructores", Vatablus; "perdentes", Burkius. {c} "Nautae, [vel] gubernatores", Cocceius. {d} Apud Quistorpium in loc.

Zechariah 11:8

Ver. 8. Three shepherds also I cut off in one month,.... Not Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, as is suggested in the Talmud {e}; nor David, Adonijah, and Joab, who died in the space of a month; nor the three kings, Jehoash, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, who died by the hand of their enemies in a very little time; which is the sense of some, as Abendana observes; nor the three last prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, according to Aben Ezra; nor the three Maccabees, Judas, Jonathan, and Simon, as Abarbinel; rather the three sects among the Jews, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, instead of which last some put the Herodians; and others the Scribes; though some are of opinion that the three sanhedrim or courts of judicature among the Jews are designed; but it seems best of all to interpret them of the three orders of magistrates among them, princes, prophets, and priests; and the "cutting" them "off" may denote the cessation of civil government, the sealing up of vision and prophecy, and the putting an end to sacrifice; which is much better than to interpret them of the three Roman emperors who succeeded Nero; that is, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, who were put to death by their own subjects, within the space of a year and some days {f}; and which is a term of time that can not well be thought to be expressed by a month; which either signifies in general a small space of time; or, if a certain month is meant, either it designs the month Nisan, in which Christ suffered, when of right sacrifice should have ceased, as well as then prophecy was sealed up, and there was no more of it among the Jews, nor any civil government in their hands: or else the month Ab, in which the city of Jerusalem was burnt; and so an end was put in fact to all the above offices there. It may be that a month of years is intended, as in Re 11:2 and so Abarbinel here interprets it; though he applies it to the times of the Maccabees; but it may respect the thirty years, or thereabout, which were between the death of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem, within which compass of time the above events were actually and manifestly fulfilled:

and my soul loathed them; because they did not perform the duties of their office; the civil magistrate did not govern according to the laws of God; the prophets did not teach sound doctrine; and the priests did not do their service aright, nor teach the people the use and end of sacrifices, and in them direct to the Messiah, as they should have done: wherefore Christ expressed his dislike of them by words in his ministry, particularly in Matthew chapter twenty three, Mt 23:1 and by deeds, causing vengeance to come upon them to the entire removal of them: or, "my soul was shortened", or "contracted in them", or "towards them" {g}; his affections were lessened towards them; he loathed their ways and works, which were not good; and he rejected and cast them off as his people, and wrote a "loammi" on them; took away his Gospel from them, and abolished their civil and church state:

and their soul also abhorred me; which is the reason of the former; and so the Targum paraphrases it, "and my Word cast them away, because their soul abhorred my worship;"

all ranks and orders of men among the Jews had Christ in abhorrence; they abhorred his person, his name, his miracles, his doctrines, his ordinances, and his people; this they did because of his mean appearance; and because of his inveighing against their traditions, superstitions, and immoralities; and this appeared by their contemptuous rejection of him as the Messiah; by their crucifixion of him; and by persecuting his disciples and followers.

{e} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 9. 1. {f} Calmet's Dictionary, in the word "Shepherds". {g} Mhb yvpn ruqtw "et abbreviata est anima mea in eis", Montanus, Cocceius, Burkius; "coarctata est", Calvin; "contractabatur, [vel] contrahetsese", Vatablus; "contracta est", Drusius, Grotius.

Zechariah 11:9

Ver. 9. Then said I, I will not feed you,.... That is, any longer; either personally, or by his apostles; he fed them himself, during his public ministry; and afterwards by his apostles, whom he ordered to preach the Gospel to the Jews first; but that being contradicted, blasphemed, and despised by them, they were ordered to turn away from them, and go to the Gentiles: this shows that not the shepherds only, but the body of the people, abhorred Christ and his Gospel: and therefore it was taken away from them:

that that dieth, let it die; literally, by the pestilence, that going by the name of death in Scripture; and spiritually, they that are dead in sin, let them continue so; let them die through famine of the word they have despised; let them die in their sins, and die the second death, they justly deserve:

and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; literally, by the sword; spiritually, the meaning is, that whereas some were in righteous judgment appointed to ruin, vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; let them be left to themselves, to a judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, and be cut off as unfruitful branches, and be no more in a church state here, and hereafter cast into everlasting burnings:

and let the rest eat everyone the flesh of another; through famine; or destroy each other in their internal divisions, which was the case of the Jews, when

Jerusalem was besieged; see **Ga 5:15**.

Zechariah 11:10

Ver. 10. And I took my staff, [even] Beauty, and cut it asunder,.... Signifying that he dropped his pastoral care of them: the Gospel indeed, which is meant by the staff "Beauty", cannot be made void; it will have its designed effect; it is the everlasting Gospel, and will endure; its blessings, promises, doctrines, ordinances, and ministers, shall continue, till all the elect are gathered in, even unto the second coming of Christ: but then it may be removed from one place to another; it may be taken from one people, and given to another; and which is generally owing to contempt of it, unfruitfulness under it, and indifference to it; and this is the case here, it designs the taking away of the Gospel from the Jews, who despised it, and the carrying of it into the Gentile world; see Mt 21:43:

that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people; not the covenant of works, that was made with all mankind in Adam; that was broke, not by the Lord, but by man; and was broke before the Gospel was published; nor the covenant of grace, for this was not made with all the people, nor can it be broken; but the Mosaic economy, the Sinai covenant, called the old covenant, which gradually vanished away: it was of right abolished at the death of Christ; when the Gospel was entirely removed, it more appeared to be so; and this was thoroughly done at the destruction of the city and temple. The last clause may be rendered, "which" covenant "I have made with all the people"; the Gentiles, having promised and given orders to send the Gospel unto them, which was accordingly done.

Zechariah 11:11

Ver. 11. And it was broken in that day,.... In right, the day Christ died; apparently, when the Gospel, the substance of it, was removed; and, in fact, at the time of Jerusalem's destruction:

and so the poor of the flock; See Gill on "Zec 11:7":

that waited upon me; as servants on their masters; as clients on their patron;

as beggars at the door for alms; as attendants on the worship of God, for the manifestations of himself, for the performance of promises, and for answers of prayer: or "observed me" {h}; what he said and did, his word, and his ordinances; what he abolished, and what he instituted:

knew that it [was] the word of the Lord; either that Christ the Shepherd was the essential Word of the Lord; or that the prophecies concerning the destruction of the Jews, their civil and ecclesiastical state, were the word and decree of God now fulfilled; or that the Gospel taken from them is the word of the Lord, which he is the author of; his grace is the matter and substance of; and which he speaks by his ministers; and may be known by the matter and efficacy of it; by the refreshment and comfort it gives; by its leading souls to Christ; and by the harmony, agreement, and uniformity of its doctrines.

{h} yta Myrmvh "qui observabant me", Burkius.

Zechariah 11:12

Ver. 12. And I said unto them, If ye think good,.... Not to the poor of the flock that waited on him, and knew the word of the Lord, and valued it; but to the other Jews that despised Christ and his Gospel:

give me my price; or, "give my price" {i}; what I am valued at by you, to Judas the betrayer: or the price due unto him for feeding the flock, such as faith in him, love to him, reverence and worship of him. So the Targum paraphrases it, "do my will". Kimchi says the price is repentance, and good works:

and if not, forbear; unless all is done freely, willingly, and cheerfully; see **Eze 2:5** or, if worth nothing, give nothing:

So they weighed for my price thirty [pieces] of silver; the price a servant was valued at, Ex 21:32 see the fulfilment of this prophecy in Mt 26:15. The Jews own {k} that this prophecy belongs to the Messiah; but wrongly interpret it of thirty precepts given by him: in just retaliation and righteous judgment, thirty Jews were sold by the Romans for a penny, by way of contempt of them {l}.

{i} yrbv wbh "date mercedem meam", Vatablus, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius. {k} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 85. 3. {l} Egesippus de Urb. excidio Anacep. p. 680.

Zechariah 11:13

Ver. 13. And the Lord said unto me,.... The Prophet Zechariah, in a visionary way representing the sanhedrim of the Jews, the chief priests, scribes, and elders:

Cast it unto the potter; for the purchase of his field, in order to make a burying ground of it for strangers:

a goodly price that I was prised at of them; this is sarcastically said; meaning that it was a very poor price; and showed that they had no notion of the worth and value of Christ, the Pearl of great price:

and I took the thirty [pieces] of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord; it is a question with some what these pieces of silver were; they are commonly understood of silver shekels. So the Targum, in Ge 20:16 renders pieces of silver by shekels of silver; and Eusebius {m} calls these here thirty staters, the same with shekels; which, if common shekels, reckoned at one shilling and three pence, made but thirty seven shillings and sixpence; and if shekels of the sanctuary, which at most were but two shillings and sixpence, thirty of these would make but three pounds fifteen shillings; and therefore may be truly called, ironically speaking, "a goodly price"; being no more than the price of a servant, as before observed: but Drusius objects to this, seeing a potter's field was bought with this money; and asks, who can believe that a field near so populous a city as Jerusalem could be bought for thirty shekels? and observes, from R. Elias Levita {n}, that it is a rule with their doctors, that all silver mentioned in the law signifies shekels; in the prophets, pounds; and in the Hagiographa, talents: this is said, but not proved: to understand these of pounds, indeed, would make the price considerable, and sufficient for the purchase of a large field; for a silver maneh or pound with the Jews was of the value of sixty shekels,
Eze 45:12 and thirty of these make two hundred and seventy pounds; but then this would not in an ironical way be called "a goodly price": and as to

the objection about the purchase of a field with such a sum of money as thirty shekels amount to, it may be observed, what Grotius seems rightly to conjecture, that this was a field the potter had dug up, and had made the most of it, and so was good for nothing but for such an use, for which it was bought, to bury strangers in. It is also a difficulty to fix it certainly to whom this money was ordered to be given, and was given. It is here said "to the potter"; but Jarchi and Kimchi observe, that some of their interpreters render it the "treasurer"; a and y being sometimes changed for one another; thus, the Targum paraphrases it,

"under the hand of the treasurer;"

and so others {o}; and indeed the money was given to the chief priests and elders, some of whom might be in that office, Mt 27:3 though there is no need of such an alteration of the word, since the money Judas took for betraying Christ, and cast into the temple to the priests, they took up, and gave it to the potter for the field they bought of him with it; and, in the evangelist, the phrase by way of explanation is rendered, "for the potter's field", and may be here properly enough translated, "for the potter"; as the particle la is sometimes used {p}; that is, to be given to him for purchase money {q}: and whereas the money is said to be cast, or given to him, "in the house of the Lord", i.e. in the temple, it appears a fact, in the accomplishment of this prophecy, that it was cast into the temple, Mt 27:5 and was took up by the priests; who, in all probability, sent for the potter thither, and agreed with him for his field, and paid him his money there; for there is no reason to believe that he had a workhouse for his business in the temple; though it may be he had one near it; see Jer 18:1 and worked for the service of it, since earthen vessels were used in temple service {r}. The accomplishment of all this is in Mt 27:7.

{m} Demonstr. Evangel. l. 10. p. 479. {n} In Tishbi, p. 130. {o} "Ad thesaurarium", Pagninus, Vatablus. {p} Vid. Nold. Ebr. Part. Concord. p. 63. {q} ruwyh la "pro figulo", Cocceius; "conferendos in figulum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "ut detur ad figulum", Burkius. {r} Vid. Misn. Parah, c. 5. sect. 1.

Ver. 14. Then I cut asunder mine other staff, [even] Bands,.... By which is meant, either the removal of the form of civil government from the Jews; or the abrogation of the Mosaic law, and the carnal ordinances of the Jews, in which judaizing Christians joined them, until the destruction of Jerusalem; or rather the ordinances of the Gospel, which, upon taking that away, ceased:

that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel; the Gospel and Gospel ordinances being removed from the Jews, there was no more work of conversion among them; their church state came to nothing, and an entire disagreement between them and the Gentiles ensued: and so it is when God takes away his word and ordinances from a people, they are unchurched and their brotherhood is broken, those being the bands which keep them together; and therefore, when loosed, their unity and society cease. There seems to be an allusion to the case of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and of the ten tribes; the former are often signified by Judah only; and the latter by Israel or Ephraim: the division between them was made in the times of Rehoboam, which continued unto their respective captivities; after the Jews' return from the Babylonish captivity, there was some show of an union between them; some of the ten tribes returning with the Jews, and coalescing in one state; and moreover, at their certain stated feasts, they came from different parts of the world, and joined together in religious service; see **Ac 2:1** but, upon the dissolution of their civil and church state, this friendly correspondence was broken off, and their communion with each other ceased: and as for the Jews, after the Christians were called out from among them at Jerusalem, and removed to Pella, they fell into internal divisions and quarrels among themselves, which lasted during the siege of that city; and when it was taken and destroyed, their brotherhood and union among themselves were broken to such a degree, that they were scattered one from another; and now know not of what kingdom and tribe they are, whether of Judah or Israel, or of what tribe in either.

Zechariah 11:15

Ver. 15. And the Lord said unto me,.... The Prophet Zechariah:

Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd; the meaning is, that the prophet should put on the habit of a shepherd, and take a scrip and staff in his hands, and represent a foolish shepherd, hereafter described.

Zechariah 11:16

Ver. 16. For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land,.... Not in the land of Judea, but in the Roman empire; and so not Herod, nor King Agrippa, as Kimchi; nor Antiochus Epiphanes, as others; nor those wicked priests and princes, who governed after the times of Zechariah; nor the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's times, though they are often called fools by him, and were truly foolish shepherds; nor even Titus Vespasian, who destroyed the city and temple; nor Bar Cozba, who set up for the Messiah, and was a false one; or any other of that sort. Calmet {s} thinks this designs the Roman emperors, successors of Tiberius, under whom Jesus Christ was crucified. Caligula succeeded Tiberius. Claudius Caligula, and Nero succeeded Claudius: everyone knows (adds he) the characters of those princes, that they were truly foolish shepherds, mad, wicked, and cruel: but rather it intends shepherd, or shepherds, not in a civil, but in an ecclesiastic sense; all such after Christ, who took upon them this office, but did not perform it aright, as heretics, false teachers, with which the first ages abounded; and especially it points at the bishop of Rome, and all under him, when he fell off from the true doctrine and discipline of the Gospel, the man of sin, or antichrist, as Jerom rightly observes; who, though his coming is according to the working of Satan, yet may be said to be raised up by the Lord, because he suffered him to rise; and by his secret providence, and wise ordination in righteous judgment, he came to the height of his power: with him agrees the name of a "shepherd"; he calls himself the vicar of Christ, the chief shepherd and bishop of souls; Peter's successor, who was ordered to feed the sheep and lambs of Christ; and universal pastor, and a single one, that will not admit of any associate. The character of a "foolish" one belongs to him, though he would be thought to be wise; nor is he wanting in wicked craft and cunning, but ignorant of the pastoral office, and how to feed the church of God; and is a wicked or evil shepherd, as the word {t} used is pretty much the same in sound with our English word "evil": he governing the flock, not with and according to the word of God, but according to his own will and laws; for his "instruments" are laws of his own making, an exercise of tyrannical power over kings and princes, unwritten traditions, pardons, indulgences, &c.:

[which] shall not visit those that be cut off; not that cut off themselves, or

are cut off by the church; but such that go astray, wander from the fold, and are in danger of being lost; twdbwa, that are perishing, as Jarchi explains the word; these he looks not after, nor has he any regard to their spiritual and eternal welfare:

neither shall seek the young one; the lamb, the tender of the flock; he will not do as the good shepherd does, carry the lambs in his arms, Isa 40:11 or, "that which wanders" {u}; that strays from the fold, and out of the pastures, or the right way:

nor heal that that is broken; that is of a broken and of a contrite spirit; or whose bones are broken, and consciences wounded, through falls into sin:

nor feed that that standeth still; that can not move from its place to get fresh pasture, but is obliged to stay where it is, and needs supply and support there:

but he shall eat the flesh of the fat; that is, as the Targum well explains it,

"shall spoil the substance of the rich;"

see Re 18:3:

and tear their claws in pieces; take all their power and privileges from them; all which well agrees with the pope of Rome.

{s} Dictionary, in the word "Shepherds." {t} ylwa. {u} renh "errantem", Noldius; "quod prae ruditate evagatur", Cocceius.

Zechariah 11:17

Ver. 17. Woe to the idol shepherd,.... Or, "the shepherd of nothing" {w}; that is, no true shepherd, that is good for nothing, for an idol is nothing in the world, **1Co 8:4** and who is an idol himself, sits in the temple of God, and is worshipped as if he was God. **2Th 2:4** and is an encourager and defender of idolatry:

that leaveth the flock; has no regard to its spiritual concerns; does not feed it, but fleece it, and leaves it to the cruelty and avarice of his creatures under him:

the sword [shall be] upon his arm; with which he should feed the flock:

and upon his right eye; with which he should watch over it:

his arm shall be clean dried up; his power shall be taken away from him; the antichristian states, which supported him, shall withdraw from him; the ten kings shall hate the whore, strip her naked, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, Re 17:16:

and his right eye shall be utterly darkened; not only given up to judicial blindness, which has been always his case; but his kingdom shall be full of darkness, Re 16:10 his hidden things of darkness shall be exposed; all his crafty schemes will be confounded; and all his wit, cunning, and subtlety, will cease; and everything desirable to him will be taken away from him. His "arm" may denote his secular power, which shall be taken away from him: and his "right eye" his knowledge of the Scriptures, judgment in controversies, and infallibility pretended to by him, which wilt cease, even in the opinion of men. Ben Melech interprets it the eye of his heart or mind; and so Aben Ezra.

{w} lylah yer "pastori nihili", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, So R. So. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 4. 2.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**
Zechariah 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 12

This chapter contains a prophecy of the defence, protection, and salvation of the church of God; and of the effusion of the Spirit; and of the conversion of the Jews in the latter day. It begins with a title and preface, describing the power of God, from the creation of the heavens and earth, and soul of man, Zec 12:1 then follows the subject matter of the prophecy, in a way of judgment upon the enemies of the people of God, and in a way of salvation to them. The judgments on their enemies are signified by various metaphors; by Jerusalem's being a cup of trembling, a burdensome stone, and a hearth, and torch of fire to them, Zec 12:2. The effects of which are to them astonishment, madness, blindness, and utter destruction; and to the people of God confidence in him, salvation from him, and strength and protection by him, Zec 12:4 and, at the same time that God will destroy all the enemies of his people, he will pour out his Spirit upon his chosen ones among the Jews. The consequence of which will be, their faith in Christ, signified by looking to him whom they have pierced; and their repentance towards God, expressed by mourning; and this illustrated by mourning for an only and firstborn son, Zec 12:9 and which is further illustrated by the mourning for Josiah in the valley of Megiddon; and by an enumeration of the several families in Jerusalem, that should separately mourn on this account, Zec 12:11.

Ver. 1. The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel,.... And against their enemies; for the good of the church of God, for its joy, comfort, and salvation; or, "concerning Israel" {x}; what shall befall them in the latter day, as the destruction of antichrist, prophesied of in the preceding chapter Zec 11:1; and what is hereafter said may be believed that it shall be accomplished. The Lord is described in the greatness of his power, speaking as follows:

saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens: as a curtain, Ps 104:2 the expanse or firmament of heaven, which is stretched out as a canopy over all the earth around:

and layeth the foundation of the earth; firm and sure, though upon the seas and floods, yea, upon nothing, Ps 24:2:

and formeth the spirit of man within him; the soul of man, with all its powers and faculties, gifts and endowments; which is of his immediate creation, and which he continues daily to form, and infuse into the bodies of men, and holds in life there; hence he is called the Father of spirits, Heb 12:9.

{x} le "de", Piscator, Drusius; "super Israele", Cocceius, Burkius.

Zechariah 12:2

Ver. 2. Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about,.... The Targum renders it,

"a vessel full of inebriating liquor;"

which intoxicates and makes giddy, and causes to tremble, stagger, and fall like a drunken man. The phrase denotes the punishment inflicted by the Lord upon the enemies of his church and people; see Isa 51:22:

when they shall be in the siege both against Judah [and] against Jerusalem; not by Antiochus Epiphanes; nor by Titus Vespasian; nor by Gog and Magog, as Kimchi; but by the antichristian powers, especially the Mahometan nations, the Turks, which shall come against Jerusalem, when the Jews are returned thither, and resettled in their own land; see Eze 38:5. The words should be rendered, "and upon Judah shall it be" {y}, i.e. the cup of trembling, "in the siege against Jerusalem"; according to the Targum, and the Jewish commentators, the nations of the earth shall bring the men of Judah by force to join with them in the siege of Jerusalem; as, in the times of Antiochus, many of the Jews were drawn in to fight against their brethren; but the meaning is, that not only the wrath of God will come upon the Mahometan nations that shall besiege Jerusalem; but also on those who bear the Christian name, who are Jews outwardly, but not inwardly; and shall join with the Turks in distressing the people of the Jews upon their return to their own land: to besiege Judah, or a country, is not proper and pertinent: Jerusalem, when again in the hands of the Jews, according to this prophecy, only is to be besieged, as it will, by the Turks; and it should be observed, that it never was besieged by Antiochus, and therefore the prophecy can not be applied to his times, as it is by many.

{y} hyhy hdwhy le Mgw "et etiam super Jehudah erit", Pagninus, Montanus, Burkius.

Zechariah 12:3

Ver. 3. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people,.... The Targum renders it "a stone of offence"; at which they shall stumble and fall; but it seems to design the immovableness of the state and condition of Jerusalem, that those who attempt to remove her out of her place, or to make any alteration in her happy circumstances, will not be able to do it, Ps 125:1. Jerom makes mention of a custom in the cities of Palestine, and which continued to his times throughout all Judea, that large, huge, round stones, used to be placed in the towns and villages, which the youths exercised themselves with, by trying to lift them up as high as they could, by which they showed their strength; and the same ancient writer observes that a like custom obtained in Greece; for he says he himself saw in the tower at Athens, by the image of Minerva, a globe of brass, of at very great weight, which he, through the weakness of his body, could not move; and asking the meaning of it, he was told that the strength of wrestlers was tried by it; and no man might be admitted a combatant, until it was known, by the lifting up of that weight, with whom he should be matched; and the throwing of the "discus" was an ancient military exercise, as old as the times of Homer, who speaks {z} of it; and is mentioned by Latin writers, as appears from some lines of Martial {a}; see the Apocrypha:

"In like manner also Judas gathered together all those things that were lost by reason of the war we had, and they remain with us," (2 Maccabees 2:14)

and this, as it tried the strength of men, so it was sometimes dangerous to themselves, or to bystanders, lest it should fall upon their heads: and as it was usual to defend themselves and oppress enemies by casting stones at them, so young men used to exercise themselves by lifting up and casting large stones; to which Virgil {b} sometimes refers; and it is well known that Abimelech was killed even by a woman casting a piece of a millstone upon his head, **Jud 9:53** and such heavy stones, and the lifting of them up, in order to cast them, may he alluded to here:

all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces; all that attempt to unsettle and remove it shall be pressed down with the weight of it, and be utterly destroyed: or, "shall be torn to pieces" {c}; as men's hands are cut and torn with rough and heavy stones, The Targum is,

"all that injure her shall be consumed;"

which gives the sense of the passage:

though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it; so safe and secure will the people of God be; he being a wall of fire round about them, and the glory in the midst of them.

{z} Iliad. 2. & 23. {a} "Splendida cum volitent Spartani pondera disci Este procul pueri; sit se nel ille nocens." ---Epigr. l. 14. Ep. 157. {b} "Certabant Troes contra defendere saxis." ---Aeneid. l. 9. "Mijaculis, illi certent defendere saxis." --Aeneid. l. 10. --Vid. Lydium de Re Militari, l. 5. c. 2. p. 178, 179. & Menochium de Republica Hebr. l. 6. col. 555, 556. {c} wjrvy jwrv "incidendo incidentur", Montanus, Burkius; "lacerando lacerabuntur", Pagninus, Cocceius.

Zechariah 12:4

Ver. 4. In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness,.... The meaning is, the enemies of God's people shall be astonished at the failure of their attempts, and be filled with fury and madness because they cannot accomplish their designs; and shall be at their wits' end, not knowing what course to take: perhaps reference is had to the Turkish armies, that shall be brought against Jerusalem to recover it into their possession, which generally consist of a large cavalry; see **Re 9:16**:

and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah; which phrase is sometimes used, as expressive of the wrath of God against his enemies, **Am 9:4** and, if the house of Judah signifies the same as Judah, joined with the nations of the earth in the siege, Zec 12:2, it must be so understood here; but rather it seems to be different, and to intend those who will inhabit other parts of Judea, and who will be truly the people of God, Jews not only literally, but spiritually; and so is to be interpreted in a good sense, of the divine love to them, care of them, and protection over them; see Job 14:13 and so the Targum paraphrases it,

"and upon those of the house of Judah, I will reveal my power to do them good:"

and will smite every horse of the people with blindness: that is, every rider of them, either with blindness of mind or body, or both. It may be, as the former smiting, mentioned in the beginning of the verse, respects the mind, this may regard the body; so that they shall not see their way, and their hands shall not perform their enterprise.

Zechariah 12:5

Ver. 5. And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart,.... The governors of the rest of the cities in Judea, besides Jerusalem, when they shall observe the armies of the people, their horses and their riders, smitten by the Lord, as above, shall take heart, and be of good courage: and secretly say within themselves,

The inhabitants of Jerusalem [shall be] my strength in the Lord of hosts their God; that is, they, in the strength of the Lord, shall overcome their enemies, and so be the means of preserving and securing the other cities of Judah from destruction: the governors do not place their strength and confidence in the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but as they are strengthened in and by the Lord their God, from whom all strength, safety, and salvation come. In this and the following verse Zec 12:6, by "the governors of Judah" are not meant Judas Maccabeus, and his brethren, as some think; for though there are some things in the context that seem to agree with them, and they may be an emblem of the governors in the times referred to, for their courage, bravery, and success; yet the thread of history, and series of prophecy, will not admit such a sense.

Zechariah 12:6

Ver. 6. In that day will I make the governors of Judah like a hearth of fire among the wood,.... As a large hearth of fire, with wood all about it, devours and consumes it; so shall the governors of Judah be to the nations that shall come up against Jerusalem. The Targum renders it,

"as a garment of fire among wood:"

and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; of wheat, which presently destroys it; see **Ob 1:18**:

and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left; on the south and on the north, as the Targum interprets it. The phrase denotes the utter destruction of the people on all sides:

and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, [even] in Jerusalem; upon that very spot of ground which was formerly called Jerusalem shall the city be built again, and inhabited; and shall continue, notwithstanding the attempts of all the nations of the earth to destroy it; see Jer 30:18.

Zechariah 12:7

Ver. 7. The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first,.... That is, the Jews, who will be in other parts of the land encamped in tents, to defend themselves against their enemies; these will be saved out of the hands of them, before the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be saved; and in such a manner, that it will evidently appear that their salvation is of the Lord: and his end in so doing will be,

that the glory of the house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, do not magnify [themselves] against Judah; lest the chief of the family of David, and the principal inhabitants of Jerusalem, should glory over their brethren in other parts of Judea; and say it was owing to them that they were saved and delivered out of the hands of their enemies.

Zechariah 12:8

Ver. 8. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem,.... As with a shield against their enemies; and such is the Lord to all his people; he is their shield to protect them; he keeps and guards them by his power; he encompasses them about with his favour, as with a shield; and gives unto them the shield of salvation; all which will eminently appear to be the case of the Jews at this time:

and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; they that have the most fearful hearts, and feeble minds, shall be as courageous, as valiant, and as victorious as David; and they that are the weakest, in a spiritual sense, in the grace and in the doctrine of faith, and in that part of it, respecting the use of things indifferent, who are ready to be "offended, stumble, and fall" {d}; for the spiritual reign, which will at this time take place, will not be a state of perfection; even those will be like David, beloved of the Lord, kings as well as priests unto God, and as strong in faith as he:

and the house of David [shall be] as God; the stronger sort of believers among them, such as are strong in the Lord, in the grace of faith, and in the doctrines of the Gospel; they shall have much of God with them, great grace upon them, and be like unto him in goodness, truth, and holiness: or they shall be like "Elohim", the angels, as this word is rendered, **Ps 8:5** for knowledge, purity, and readiness to do the will of God; and it follows:

as the Angel of the Lord before them; that is, as Christ, who is the Angel of the covenant, and of the divine Presence; and in whom the name of the Lord is; who is at the head of his people, and goes before them, as their Leader and Commander, and the Captain of salvation, **Mic 2:13** whose image they bear, and into which they are changed from glory to glory by the spirit of God; and which will now be very clearly discerned upon the saints in the latter day glory. Kimchi and Ben Melech, by "the house of David", understand the King Messiah {e}, who was to be of the seed of David; and so does Cocceius, who takes the "as" to be a note, not of similitude, but of truth, he being truly God, and the Angel of Jehovah. The Targum is,

"the house of David shall be like great men or princes that shall prosper, as the Angel of God before them."

{d} lvkn "lapsabundus, ad lapsum propensus, proprie qui facile offendit", Drusius; "corruens", Montanus; "collapsus", Burkius. {e} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. c. 36. p. 307.

Zechariah 12:9

Ver. 9. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... So often mentioned in this chapter; by which is meant the latter part of the Gospel dispensation, the spiritual reign of Christ:

[that] I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem; and shall destroy them. The whole of this paragraph seems to refer to the same as in Eze 38:1.

Ver. 10. And I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,.... The Jews that belong to the family of Christ, and to the heavenly Jerusalem, the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven:

the Spirit of grace and of supplications; by which is meant the Holy Spirit of God, who is called the "Spirit of grace"; not merely because he is good and gracious, and loving to his people, and is of grace given unto them; but because he is the author of all grace in them; of gracious convictions, and spiritual illuminations; of quickening, regenerating, converting, and sanctifying grace; and of all particular graces, as faith, hope, love, fear, repentance, humility, joy, peace, meekness, patience, longsuffering, self-denial, &c.; as well as because he is the revealer, applier, and witnesser of all the blessings of grace unto them: and he is called the "Spirit of supplications"; because he indites the prayers of his people, shows them their wants, and stirs them up to pray; enlarges their hearts, supplies them with arguments, and puts words into their mouths; gives faith, fervency, and freedom, and encourages to come to God as their Father, and makes intercession for them, according to the will of God: pouring it upon them denotes the abundance and freeness of his grace; see Isa 44:3:

and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced; by nailing him to the tree at his crucifixion; and especially by piercing his side with a spear; which, though not personally done by them, yet by their ancestors, at least through their instigation and request; and besides, as he was pierced and wounded for their sins, so by them: and now, being enlightened and convicted by the Spirit of God, they shall look to him by faith for the pardon of their sins, through his blood; for the justification of their persons by his righteousness; and for eternal life and salvation through him. We Christians can have no doubt upon us that this passage belongs to Christ, when it is observed, upon one of the soldiers piercing the side of Jesus with a spear, it is said, "these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled; they shall look on him whom they have pierced"; and it seems also to be referred to in **Re 1:7** yea, the Jews themselves, some of them, acknowledge it is to be understood of the Messiah. In the Talmud {f}, mention being made of the mourning after spoken of, it is asked, what this mourning was made for? and it is replied, R. Dusa and the Rabbins are divided about it: one says, for Messiah ben Joseph, who shall be slain; and another says, for the evil imagination, that shall be slain; it must be granted to him that says, for Messiah the son of Joseph that shall be slain; as it is written, "and they shall look upon whom they have pierced, and mourn", &c. for, for the other, why should they mourn? hence Jarchi and Kimchi on the place say, our Rabbins interpret this of Messiah the son of Joseph, who shall be slain; and the note of Aben Ezra is, all the nations shall look unto me, to see what I will do to those who have pierced Messiah the son of Joseph. Grotius observes, that Hadarsan on Ge 28:10 understands it of Messiah the son of David. The Jews observing some prophecies speaking of the Messiah in a state of humiliation, and others of him in an exalted state, have coined this notion of two Messiahs, which are easily reconciled without it. The Messiah here prophesied of appears to be both God and man; a divine Person called Jehovah, who is all along speaking in the context, and in the text itself; for none else could pour out the spirit of grace and supplication; and yet he must be man, to be pierced; and the same is spoken of, that would do the one, and suffer the other; and therefore must be the yeanyrwpov, or God-man in one person. As to what a Jewish writer {g} objects, that this was spoken of one that was pierced in war, as appears from the context; and that if the same person that is pierced is to be looked to, then it would have been said, "and mourn for me, and be in bitterness for me"; it may be replied, that this prophecy does not speak of the piercing this person at the time when the above wars shall be; but of the Jews mourning for him at the time of their conversion, who had been pierced by them, that is, by their ancestors, hundreds of years ago; which now they will with contrition remember, they having assented to it, and commended it as a right action; and as for the change from the first person to the third, this is not at all unusual in Scripture:

and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for [his] only [son]; or, "for this" {h}; that is, piercing him; for sin committed against him; because of their rejection of him, their hardness of heart, and unbelief with respect to him; and on account of their many sins, which were the occasion of his being pierced; which mourning will arise from, and be increased by, a spiritual sight of him, a sense of his love to them, and a view of benefits by him. Evangelical repentance springs from faith, and is accompanied with it; and this godly sorrow is like that which is expressed for an only son; see **Am 8:10** and indeed Christ is the only begotten of the Father, as well as the firstborn among many brethren, as follows:

and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for [his] firstborn; sin is a bitter thing, and makes work for bitter repentance.

{f} T. Bab. Succah, fol. 52. 1. {g} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. c. 36. p. 309. {h} wyle "super hoc", Junius & Tremellius; "propter hoc", Gussetius; "super illo", Piscator, Cocceius.

Zechariah 12:11

Ver. 11. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem,.... Great numbers being awakened, convinced, and converted, and brought to true repentance:

as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. Lightfoot {i} thinks the prophet alludes to the two great and general lamentations of Israel; the one about the rock Rimmon, where a whole tribe was come to four hundred (it should be six hundred) men, Jud 20:47 and may be rendered, "the sad shout of Rimmon"; and the other in the valley of Megiddo, for the death of Josiah. Some take Hadadrimmon to be the name of a man, as Aben Ezra; and the Targum and Jarchi say who he was, and also make two mournings to be alluded to {k}; paraphrasing the words thus,

"at that time mourning shall be multiplied in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Ahab the son of Omri, whom Hadadrimmon the son of Tabrimmon slew in Ramothgilead; and as the mourning of Josiah, the son of Amon, whom Pharaohnecho, or the lame, slew in the valley of Megiddo:"

and so the Syriac version renders it,

"as the mourning of the son of Amon in the valley of Megiddo."

Of the first of these, see 1Ki 22:31 and of the latter, 2Ki 23:29 according to Jerom, it was the name of a place in the valley of Megiddo, near to Jezreel; and which, in his time, went by the name of Maximianopolis, called so in honour of the Emperor Maximian; it was seventeen miles from Caesarea in Palestine, and ten miles from Jezreel {l}; and mention is made by Jewish {m} writers of the valley of Rimmon, in which place the elders intercalated the year; though Jerom elsewhere {n} says, that Adadrimon was a king, the son of Tabrimmon, who reigned at

Carchemish, whom Pharaohnecho slew at the same time he slew Josiah. Both words, Hadad, or Adad, and Rimmon, are names of idols with the Syrians.

{i} Works, vol. 1. p. 46. {k} Vid. T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 3. 1. & Gloss. in ib. & Moed Katon, fol. 28. 2. {l} Vid. Reland. Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. p. 892. {m} T. Hieros. Chagigah, fol. 78. 4. {n} Trad. Heb. fol. 86. I.

Zechariah 12:12

Ver. 12. And the land shall mourn,.... That is, the inhabitants of it; not only Jerusalem, but the land of Judea, and the people in it everywhere: in the Talmud {o} it is said, this is the mourning of the Messiah, that is, on his account:

every family apart; though the mourning will be general and public, yet it will be not in a body of the whole people together, but separate and distinct:

the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the men by themselves, and the women by themselves, which is according to the custom of the Jews in public worship; those that belong to the family of David shall mourn because of the Jews' long rejection of the King Messiah, Jesus the son of David, the Saviour, whom God raised up of his seed:

the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; not of Nathan the son of David, the brother of Solomon, as some think; for, as Aben Ezra observes, he and his family are comprehended in the family of David; but of Nathan the prophet, who will mourn because the Jews have so much slighted Jesus the great Prophet, the Lord raised up in Israel, his doctrines and ordinances.

{o} T. Hieros. Succah, fol. 55. 2.

Zechariah 12:13

Ver. 13. The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart,.... Because of the contempt of the priestly office of Christ, which theirs prefigured, and was abolished by him; because of their trampling upon his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice:

the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; not of Shimea the son of David, **1Ch 3:5** as Jarchi thinks, for his family is comprehended in the family of David; nor of Shimei the son of Merari, and grandson of Levi, **1Ch 6:16**, for the same reason: some think that, by way of prophecy, the family of Semei, mentioned among the progenitors of Christ, **Lu 3:26**, is intended; and others have thought of Shammai, a famous Misnic doctor in the times of Christ, whose disciples were called the house or family of Shammai, of which frequent mention is made in the Misna and Talmud: but the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read "the family of Simeon"; mentioned together with Levi, as brethren in iniquity, and now mourn for the common concern they had in the crucifixion of Christ, and their refusal of him.

Zechariah 12:14

Ver. 14. All the families that remain,.... That will be in being in those times;

every family apart, and their wives apart; for the whole nation shall be born at once, and converted, and all Israel shall be saved, Isa 66:8.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**
Zechariah 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 13

In this chapter are prophecies concerning the purification of the penitent Jews before spoken of; the removal of idols, and false prophets, out of the earth; the death of Christ; the destruction of the greater part of men, and the salvation of a few of them. The cleansing of such that mourn for sin, in a fountain opened for that purpose, is spoken of, Zec 13:1 the utter abolition of idols, and false prophets, and unclean spirits, is affirmed, Zec 13:2 the parents of false prophets will forbid them to prophesy; they themselves will be ashamed of their visions; they will throw off the rough garment, which was a token of their being prophets, and by which they deceived: they will confess they are no prophets, and what they are, and own the wounds they have received from their friends on that account, Zec 13:3 and whereas the Messiah, as pierced and crucified, is spoken of in the preceding chapter Zec 12:10, whose blood is the cleansing fountain mentioned in this, an account is given of his death; who is described by his office, the Shepherd of the Lord; and by his natures, human and divine, the Man his fellow; his death is signified by smiting with the sword, which was done by the order of the Lord; the consequences of which were the scattering of the sheep, and the turning of the hand of the Lord upon them in a way of mercy, Zec 13:7 and then it is declared that two parts in three of the land should be cut off, and a third part saved, but yet so as by fire, whom the Lord would own as his people, and they should acknowledge him to be their God, Zec 13:8.

Ver. 1. In that day there shall be a fountain opened,.... Which Aben Ezra and Kimchi understand literally; but R. Moses the priest figuratively; and so the Targum, which interprets it of the doctrine of the law being open as a fountain of water; and so Abendana, who compares it with **Isa 2:3** but rather it should be understood of the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of Gospel ordinances; though better of Christ himself, the fountain of gardens, and of living waters, from whose pierced side, of whom mention is made as pierced in the preceding chapter Zec 12:10, sprung blood and water; blood for justification, remission, and cleansing, and water for sanctification: and best of all of his blood particularly, called a "fountain", not so much for the quantity of blood shed, as for its full virtue and efficacy to answer the purposes for which it was shed; it being the blood not only of man, and of an innocent man, but of the Son of God; and may be said to be "opened", because of its continued virtue to cleanse from sin; it is not sealed, but opened, and always stands open; there is no hinderance or obstruction in coming to it; not the meanness or poverty of persons, they that have no money may come to these waters; nor their sinfulness, even though they are the chief of sinners; nor their being of this and the other nation, it is exposed to all; to all that the Father has given to Christ; to all sensible sinners: though it follows,

to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; for this, as it may be literally understood of the Jews in the latter day, including their great men and common people, high and low, rich and poor; so mystically of all the family of Christ the son of David, and of all that belong to the heavenly Jerusalem, even the whole church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven:

for sin, and for uncleanness; that is, for sin, which is uncleanness; sin is an unclean thing, and has defiled all human nature, and nothing can remove the pollution of it; but the blood of Christ can remove it, and that being shed makes atonement for it, procures the pardon of it, and justifies from it in the sight of God; and being sprinkled on the conscience, removes it from that. The Targum interprets it mystically of the forgiveness of sins, paraphrasing it thus,

"I will forgive their iniquities, as they are cleansed with the water of sprinkling, and the ashes of the heifer, which is for sin."

Zechariah 13:2

Ver. 2. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts,.... In the latter day, at the time of the conversion of the Jews, when they shall turn to the Lord, and their sins shall be forgiven, and washed away in the fountain of his blood; for this refers not to the times of the Babylonish captivity, and their deliverance from that, which was now over, when idolatry ceased among that people; nor to the times of Christ, when soon after the false prophets among the Heathens, and their lying oracles, ceased, and Paganism in the Roman empire was destroyed; but to the times before mentioned, of which it is predicted by the Lord, saying,

[that] I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered; meaning the idols of gold, silver, brass, and wood; images of the Virgin Mary, and saints departed, worshipped by the Papists, **Re 9:20** for at this time mystical Babylon will fall, the idolatry of the church of Rome will be at an end, and will never be revived more:

and also I will cause the prophets, and the unclean spirit, to pass out of the land; by "the prophets" are meant false prophets, as the Targum explains it, even all the Popish hierarchy, pope, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, &c. all that wretched body, which goes by the name of the false prophet, who at the battle of Armageddon will be taken, and with the beast cast alive into the lake of fire, Re 19:20 and by "the unclean spirit", or "spirits", the singular for the plural, are meant the three unclean spirits like frogs, and which are the spirits of devils, that come out of the mouth of the dragon beast, and false prophet, the Jesuits, monks, and friars; these shall be no more then on the earth, after these times, Re 16:13. Jarchi and Kimchi interpret "the unclean spirit" of the corruption of nature; but that will not cease as long as men are in a mortal state. This prophecy is, by the ancient Jews, {p} applied to the times of the Messiah.

{p} Zohar in Gen, fol. 53. 4. & 73. 1.

Zechariah 13:3

Ver. 3. And it shall come to pass, [that] when any shall yet prophesy,.... Or attempt to prophesy, or propagate their idolatrous religion and principles after this time, when they shall be abundantly detected and exposed:

then his father and his mother that begat him; of whom he is born, and who, as his parents, must be supposed to have the most tender regard unto him, even to these the imposture will be so flagrant, that they will not encourage him, but, on the contrary,

shall say unto him, Thou shall not live; but die, according to the law against the false prophet in De 18:20:

for thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord; which is the very character of the followers of the man of sin, who speak lies in hypocrisy, pretending that they are of God, and carrying a show of truth; religion, and holiness, **1Ti 4:1**:

and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth; so great will be their love to God, and to his truth, that, notwithstanding the nearness of blood, their hands will be upon him first, and either beat him, or put him to death; a son, according to the law, not being to be spared in such a case, De 13:6.

Zechariah 13:4

Ver. 4. And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the prophets shall be ashamed, everyone of his vision, when he hath prophesied,.... He shall be ashamed of the doctrines he has delivered, they will appear to all men so ridiculous and absurd; as the doctrines of merit, and the works of supererogation; of transubstantiation and purgatory; of pardons, penance, &c:

neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive; or, "a hairy garment" {q}; such as the first and ancient inhabitants of the earth wore, who used the skins of beasts for covering, as Diodorus Siculus {r} observes: and Pausanias {s} says of the first natives of Locris, not knowing how to weave and make garments, used to cover their bodies, to preserve them from the cold, with the undressed skins of beasts, turning the hair outward, as more becoming: and such a hairy garment, or much like it, Elijah wore; hence he is called a hairy man, **2Ki 1:8** and John the Baptist, who came in the power and spirit of that prophet, appeared in a like habit, clothed with camel's hair, **Mt 3:4** and in like manner good men, especially in times of distress and trouble, used to wander about in sheepskins and goatskins, Heb 11:37 which seem to be the same sort of raiment: and now, in imitation of such like good men, and true prophets of the Lord, particularly Elijah, the false prophets, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe, in order to deceive the people, and pass for true prophets, put on such rough and hairy garments, as if they were very humble and self denying men. Braunius {t} thinks the prophet may have respect to a custom among the idolatrous prophets, who used to clothe themselves with the skins of the sacrifices, and lie on them in their temples, in order to obtain dreams, and be able to foretell future things; of which See Gill on "Am 2:8" but it seems to have respect to the habits of the monks and friars, and of the different orders by which they are distinguished as religious persons, and gain respect and veneration among men; and under the guise of sanctity and devotion, and of an austere and mortified life, impose their lies and deceptions upon them; but now will lay their habits aside, as being ashamed of their profession and principles.

{q} rev trda "pallio pili", Montanus; "piloso", Pagninus; "chlamyde pilosa", Munster; "pallium ex pilis", Cocceius; "pallium pili", Burkius. {r} Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 21. {s} Phocica, sive. l. 10. p. 685. {t} De Vestitu Sacerdot. Heb. l. 1. c. 4. sect. 9. p. 97.

Ver. 5. But he shall say, I [am] no prophet,.... That he is not of the Romish clergy, or of any of their religious orders, having laid aside his habit:

I [am] an husbandman; he shall put on the habit of a husbandman, and work for his bread; for he will not be able to support himself, as before, with the sale of pardons and indulgences, and by praying souls out of purgatory; for no man hereafter will buy of his merchandise, Re 18:11 and he will be ashamed of his former calling and traffic, and will not own that he was ever concerned therein; but will affirm that he was never of the Romish clergy, but always a layman, and employed in husbandry:

for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth; he will say he was brought up to husbandry, or in some mechanic business, from his youth, and never was in any convent or monastery, or of any religious order: it may be rendered, "for man made me to work from my youth" {u}; and is not to be restrained to keeping cattle, or any particular employment.

{u} ynnqh "fecerunt me operari", Noldius; "homo operari fecit me", De Dieu, Burkius.

Zechariah 13:6

Ver. 6. And [one] shall say unto him, What [are] these wounds in thine hands?.... That is, if thou art not a prophet, what is the meaning of these wounds in thine hands? which design either those his father and mother had given him, when they thrust him through for being a false prophet, Zec 13:3 or the mark of the beast he received in his right hand, which he was obliged to take when he entered into holy orders, Re 13:9, or the wounds and stripes he gave himself, in the exercise of his superstition and will worship:

then he shall answer, [Those] with which I was wounded [in] the house of my friends; he will pretend that these were wounds he had privately in his father's family, by way of correction, for not doing his civil and secular business as he ought to have done; or he shall be obliged to confess the mark of the beast on him; or that these were wounds he had given himself in the temples and churches, dedicated to angels and saints, his patrons, friends, and lovers; with whom he committed spiritual adultery or idolatry, and before whose images and shrines he had cut and given himself these wounds and gashes, to the great dishonour of Christ, as if his crucifixion and wounds were of no avail; wherefore his sufferings and death are next spoken of: and some understand these words of Christ, introduced after this manner; the prophet having spoken of the false prophet, thrust through by his parents, because that Christ would be reckoned a false prophet and impostor by his countrymen the Jews, and be crucified by them as such, represents the Jews as upbraiding him with his crucifixion, which they suggest he righteously suffered, for seducing their nation: to which he replies, that indeed he was crucified, and thereby wounded with the nails drove into his hands and feet; and this usage he met with from those of his own nation, and who pretended to be the friends of the Messiah, and to expect his coming, and this at or near Jerusalem, where was the temple or house of God; but all this he endured, not for any crime he had been guilty of, but according to the counsel and will, purpose and decree, of God; whereby he was appointed the Shepherd of the flock; the Mediator between God and man; the Saviour of his people; and to die such a death, in order to obtain salvation for them; which counsel and will of God are clearly and strongly expressed in the following verse Zec 13:7: and to this sense Capellus interprets the words.

Zechariah 13:7

Ver. 7. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,.... Not Judas Maccabeus, slain in battle by Bacchis {w}, as Grotius fancies; but Christ, Jehovah's Shepherd; for these are the words of Jehovah the Father, concerning his Son, whom he calls "my Shepherd"; because he has a property in him, as well as in the flock; and he was chosen, called, set up, and sent as such by him; on whom he laid the straying of all the sheep; and who as such died and rose again, and is accountable to his divine Father for the flock committed to him: by "the sword" awoke against him are meant either the sorrows and afflictions of Christ, which, like a sword, pierced through his soul; or the violent death he was put to, being stricken and cut off for the transgressions of his people; or the Jews, who were the instruments of it; so wicked men are called, Ps 17:13 or rather the glittering sword of justice, which was drawn against him, and sheathed in him; which is called upon to "awake", it seeming as though it was asleep; it having been a long time since the first sin of Adam was committed, in which all his posterity was concerned, and for which satisfaction to divine justice must be made; and longer still since Christ became a surety, and engaged to do it; moreover, it was a great while since it was promised that he should come, and be smitten and wounded for sin; and, after he was come into the world, it was some time before the orders were given to this sword to awake against him:

even against the man [that is] my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; the human nature of Christ is signified by "the man"; not that he was really man before his incarnation, only in the purpose and covenant of God; and he often appearing in a human form; and the Scripture speaking of things future as present; though here it regards him in the days of his flesh, and as suffering: his divine nature is expressed by being "the fellow" of the Lord of hosts; not only being near to him in place and affection, but his equal, being truly a divine Person; of the same nature, glory, and majesty, with him {x}, though distinct from him; and so fit to be the Shepherd of the flock:

smite the Shepherd; the order is given to the sword of justice, by the Lord of hosts, to smite the Messiah, the Shepherd, even unto death: this was according to his purpose; was his will of command; agreeable to his mind; what he took a kind of pleasure in, and in which he had a hand himself; for it is rendered "I will smite", Mt 26:31:

and the sheep shall be scattered; particularly the apostles, who, upon the seizure of Christ, were scattered from him, and one another, whereby this prophecy was fulfilled, Mt 26:31:

and I will turn my hand upon the little ones; the same with the sheep, the disciples of Christ {y}; yea, all that Christ died for, and to whom God is gracious for his sake; even all the little ones that believe in him; who are few in number, little in their own sight, and contemptible in the eyes of the world; pusillanimous, fearful, and of little faith, as the apostles of Christ were at the time he died: on these the Lord turned his hand; not his chastising hand, though that is sometimes on the saints; much less his hand of justice, which was laid on Christ, and it would have been unjust to have laid it on sinner and surety both; but his hand of grace and mercy, power and protection; which was upon the apostles in their ministrations, succeeding them to the conversion of sinners, and preserving them from their enemies; and all the elect are saved in consequence of the death of Christ, and redemption by him. Aben Ezra says this prophecy refers to the great wars which shall be in all the earth in the times of Messiah ben

Joseph; but they regard the times of Christ the son of David, who is already come. The Targum is,

"be revealed, O sword, against the king, and against the ruler his companion, who is like unto him;"

and Jarchi interprets it of the king of Moab; and Aben Ezra of every king of the nations that shall in the above times reign over the earth, who thinks himself to be as God; which sense Kimchi approves of, and observes, that the "little ones" are governors and princes, who are less than kings: and another Jewish writer {z} says the sense is, awake, O sword, against the king of Ishmael, who is called the king of the Turks (the grand seignior), that rules over Asia and Africa; which are more than three fourths of the world, and the greater part of the Jewish nation are in captivity under his hand; him God calls his Shepherd, because he hath given into his hand to feed his flock in their captivity, and this flock is the nation of Israel; and he is called the man his fellow, because he thinks himself, through the pride and haughtiness of his heart, to be as God; and upon the ruin of this prince, he supposes, will be the deliverance of the Jews, who, being scattered into several parts, will, in separate bodies, return to their own land: and by the "little ones" he thinks are meant the kings of the nations of Edom, or of the Roman nations, which are the lesser pastors of the sheep. Manasseh ben Israel {a} makes mention of the same exposition of the passage, but is of opinion that the words are rather to be understood of the pope of Rome, who calls himself a pastor, and next to God, and his vicar on earth; and against him and those like to him, inferior in power, God will make war. But much more agreeable, and very remarkable, are the words of R. Samuel Marochianus {b}, who, writing of the coming of the Messiah, says,

"I fear, O my Lord, that that which Zechariah the prophet said, "I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered", was fulfilled when we smote the Shepherd of those little ones and holy apostles."

Moreover, it may be observed, that the word for "little ones" sometimes signifies great ones, as Mr. Pocock {c} has observed, and particularly in this text; which, according to the sense some give of it, mentioned by R. Tanchum, is, "I will turn mine hand upon the illustrious and the princes", and not "upon the little ones", as commonly understood; and which he takes to be the best of the expositions adduced: and with this agree the several oriental versions; some copies of the Septuagint read, "upon the shepherds";

and so the Arabic version; and the Syriac version renders it, "the superiors"; and so may very well be applied to the apostles of Christ, who were in the highest office in the church, and shepherds of the flock; on whom, after the death of Christ, God turned his hand of power, which was upon them, and was with them in their ministrations, making them successful wherever they went; and also his hand of providence was upon them, protecting and preserving them, until they had done the work they were sent about. After this prophecy concerning the Messiah, occasionally inserted here, the prophet returns to his prediction of the state of the church, and what shall befall it in the latter day.

{w} Vid. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 12. c. 11. sect. 2. {x} tyme "socius, proximus; speciatim tribuitur Messiae, qui patri caelesti est conjunctissimus et intimus, cum sit ejusdem numero essentiae, gloriae, ac majestatis cum eo". Stockius, p. 794. {y} So Stockius, p. 912. {z} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. c. 37. p. 310. 311. {a} De Resurrect. Mort. l. 3. c. 5. sect. 5. p. 290. {b} Apud Burkium in loc. e Mullero. {c} Not. Miscell. in Port. Mosis, c. 2. p. 18.

Zechariah 13:8

Ver. 8. And it shall come to pass, [that] in all the land, saith the Lord,.... Either in all the land of Israel, as Kimchi interprets it; or rather in all the world, as Aben Ezra and others; for this prophecy seems to have respect, not to the calamities of the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem, after the death of Christ, when a few were saved, a remnant according to the election of grace, yet so as by fire, for whose sake the days of tribulation were shortened; but to the external state of the church, and the trouble of it throughout Christendom, about the time of the destruction of antichrist:

two parts therein shall be cut off [and] die; all hypocrites, formalists, and outward court worshippers; who seem as if they would be at this time two thirds of the professors of true religion; who will not be able to stand the hour of temptation that will come upon all the earth, to try the inhabitants of it; which will be the last struggle of the beast of Rome, **Re 3:10** but will be twice dead, plucked up by the roots; will die to the profession of religion, and be cut off from the people of God, and have no more a name with them:

but the third shall be left therein; the few names in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; the hundred forty and four thousand that will stand with Christ, and by him, on Mount Zion, being redeemed from among men, **Re 3:4** compare with this Re 16:19.

Zechariah 13:9

Ver. 9. And I will bring the third part through the fire,.... Into tribulation, as the Targum explains it; or into great distresses, comparable to fire, as Kimchi observes; this is the hour of temptation that will be in the Philadelphian church state, **Re 3:10**. Daniel's time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation, Da 12:1 and the time of the slaying of the witnesses, Re 11:7:

and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; their graces, principles, and profession, will be tried; their dross and tin will be removed, and they will be purged and purified; a more pure and glorious state of the church will take place, in which there will be great purity of Gospel worship, discipline, and conversation; when the word will be more purely preached, the ordinances more purely administered, and the saints will live more holy lives and conversations, signified by the witnesses ascending up into heaven, Re 11:12:

they shall call on my name; which includes the whole of divine worship, and particularly designs prayer, that pure offering and incense, which shall now be offered to the name of the Lord in every place, **Mal 1:11** hence it follows,

and I will hear them; accept their prayers, and give an answer to them: so the Targum paraphrases the words,

"he shall pray in my name, and I will receive his prayer:"

I will say, It [is] my people; the Lord will make it appear to themselves and others that they are his special, peculiar, and covenant people, by calling them out of Babylon; by bestowing his favours upon them; and by granting his presence with them, as well as by the witnessing of his Spirit to them; see Re 18:4:

and they shall say, The Lord [is] my God: they shall know him to be their covenant God and Father, and claim their interest in him, and acknowledge him as such; which is the greatest happiness that can be enjoyed, Ps 144:15.

INTRODUCTION TO ZECHARIAH 14

This chapter treats of the coming of Christ with all his saints, and his personal appearance among them; and of the signs of the times before that; and of what shall befall the enemies of the church, both open and secret; and of the happy state and condition of the church itself. First there will be a time of great affliction to the people of God, Zec 14:1, when the Lord will appear and fight for them, and will appear to them, and with them, Zec 14:3 but before this time it will be an uncommon season, neither day nor night; at the close of which, light will break forth, Zec 14:6 the Gospel will be spread far and near, attended with the Spirit and grace of God in great plenty, Zec 14:8 which will bring on the spiritual reign of Christ over all the earth, Zec 14:9 particularly the land of Judea, and the city of Jerusalem, shall be inhabited by men with safety, Zec 14:10 and all those that oppose and fight against the Lord's people shall be destroyed, partly by an immediate plague from the Lord upon them, and partly by the hands of one another, and also by the saints of the most High; and the plague shall not only be upon their persons, but upon their cattle likewise, Zec 14:12 and as for those that profess the Christian name, and yet neglect or refuse to worship the Lord in a spiritual and evangelical manner, there shall be no rain upon them, Zec 14:17 and as for the church and people of God, there shall be universal holiness among them, and not a single Canaanite to be found in the midst of them, Zec 14:20.

Ver. 1. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh,.... Or the day when the Lord will come, both in his spiritual and personal reign; for this is not to be understood of his first coming in the flesh, at which time none of the things after mentioned happened; nor of his coming to take vengeance on the Jews; but rather of his coming to convert them:

and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee; not the substance of the nations, divided by the Israelites in the midst of Jerusalem, as the Targum and Jarchi interpret it; but the spoil of Jerusalem, when taken by the enemy, as is after said, which should be divided by them with great joy and triumph, in the midst of it: this refers not to the spoil of Jerusalem by Antiochus or the Romans, but to the slaying of the witnesses, and the triumph of their enemies over them, Re 11:7 or else to the spoil and prey the Turks will come to Jerusalem for, when it shall begin the possession of the Jews; and who perhaps at first will have some success; see Eze 38:12.

Zechariah **14:2**

Ver. 2. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle,.... Meaning not the Romans, in the time of Vespasian, for they were not all nations; nor did a part of the city only go into captivity then, but the whole; nor did any remain in it: it seems right to refer it to the gathering of the kings of the earth to the battle of the Lord God Almighty at Armageddon, Re 16:14 unless it may be thought better to interpret it of the vast numbers, out of several nations, the Turk will bring against Jerusalem, to dispossess the Jews of it, by whom it will be again inhabited in the latter day; see Eze 38:4 and Kimchi interprets it of the Gog and Magog army. The Jews, in their ancient Midrashes {d}, apply it to the times of the Messiah; which is true, if understood not of the first times of the Messiah, whose coming they vainly expect, but of the last times of the Messiah.

And the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go into captivity: this will be the time when the outward court shall be given, to the Gentiles, the Papists; the two witnesses shall be slain, and their enemies shall rejoice and send gifts to one another, Re 11:2 this will be a trying season, and such a time of trouble as has not been known:

and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city; there will be a remnant according to the election of grace; the city, the church, shall not be wholly extinct; Christ will reserve a seed for himself in those very worst of times, as he has always done: this cannot refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, for then all the inhabitants of the city were cut off, or carried captive, and none left; but, if literally to be understood, must refer to what will be, when the army of Gog shall come against it in the latter day; though these circumstances are not mentioned in Ezekiel.

{d} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 22. 3. & Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2.

Zechariah 14:3

Ver. 3. Then shall the Lord go forth,.... Out of his place in heaven, either in person, or by the display of his power; that is, the Lord Jesus Christ; whose name is called the Word of God, and is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, described as a mighty warrior, Re 19:11, &c.:

and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle: the Targum adds, "at the Red Sea"; when the Lord fought for, Israel against the Egyptians, Ex 14:25 and afterwards against the Canaanites, when they entered the land of Canaan under Joshua: thus Christ shall judge, and make war in righteousness, and overcome those that shall make war with him; and with the sharp sword that goeth out of his mouth shall smite nations, and with a rod of iron rule them, and break them to shivers, Re 14:14 see also Eze 38:21.

Zechariah 14:4

Ver. 4. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives,.... Where he often was in the days of his flesh, and from whence he ascended to heaven, Lu 21:37 but here he did not appear at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem; wherefore this must refer to a time to come; and seeing it is certain that he will stand in the latter day on the earth, at the time of the resurrection, and will come down from heaven in like manner as he went up; it seems very probable that he will descend upon that very spot of ground from whence he ascended, Job 19:25. The Jews, {e} have a notion, that, at the general resurrection of the dead, the mount of Olives will cleave asunder, and those of their nation, who have been buried in other countries, will be rolled through the caverns of the earth, and come out from under that mountain. This is what they call "gilgul hammetim", the rolling of the dead; and "gilgul hammechiloth", the rolling through the caverns. So they say in the Targum of **So 8:5**.

"when the dead shall live, the mount of Olives shall be cleaved asunder, and all the dead of Israel shall come out from under it; yea, even the righteous, which die in captivity, shall pass through subterraneous caverns, and come from under the mount of Olives."

This is sometimes {f} represented as very painful to the righteous; but another writer {g} removes this objection by observing, that at the time of the rolling through the caverns of the earth, we may say that this rolling will be of no other than of the bone "luz", out of which the whole body will spring; so that this business of rolling will be easy and without pain; but they are not all agreed about the thing itself: Kimchi says {h},

"there is a division in the words of our Rabbins, concerning the dead without the land (i.e. of Israel); some of them say that those without the land shall come up out of their graves; and others say they shall come out of their graves to the land of Israel by rolling, and by the way of the caverns; but this verse Eze 37:12 proves that those without the land shall live, as the dead of the land of Israel; for it says, "I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves"; and after that, "and I will bring you into the land of Israel"."

Which is before Jerusalem on the east; a sabbath day's journey from it, about a mile, **Ac 1:12**:

and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west; [and there shall be] a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south; and this valley will be made by cleaving and removing the mountain in this manner, to hold the dead together when raised; and this is thought by some to be the same with the valley of Jehoshaphat, called the valley of decision, into which the Heathen, being awakened and raised, will be brought and judged, **Joe 3:2**.

{e} Targum in Cant. viii. 5. {f} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 111. 1. {g} Judah Zabarah apud Pocock. Not. Miscell. p. 119. {h} Pirush in Ezek. xxxvii. 12.

Ver. 5. And ye shall flee [to] the valley of the mountains,.... To seek for shelter and safety in them, for fear of the Lord, and the glory of his majesty, whom every eye shall see, **Isa 2:19**:

for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal; a name of a place not known; it may be thought to be at some considerable distance:

yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; two years before which Amos prophesied, **Am 1:1** and which, according to Josephus {i}, was at the time when King Uzziah was stricken with a leprosy for invading the priest's office; when, as he says, at a place before the city called Eroge, half part of the mountain towards the west was broken, and rolled half a mile towards the eastern part, and there stood; so that the ways were stopped up to the king's gardens:

and the Lord my God shall come; the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly God, and the God of his people; and who will appear to be so at his second coming, which is here meant, by raising the dead, gathering all nations before him, and separating them; by bringing to light all secret and hidden things; judging the whole world, and executing the sentence on them; and particularly by taking his own people to himself:

[and] all the saints with thee: the Targum, and the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, "with him"; meaning either the holy angels; so Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech; who will attend him partly for the glory of his majesty, and partly for terror to the wicked, and also for service; or rather glorified saints, the spirits of just men made perfect, whom Christ will bring with him to be united to their bodies, which will now be raised, and to be with him in the new heavens and new earth, which will now be formed, and to be presented to him, and dwell with him, during the thousand years.

{i} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 4.

Zechariah 14:6

Ver. 6. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... Which shall precede the coming of Christ, both his spiritual and personal reign; for what follows will not agree with either state:

[that] the light shall not be clear [nor] dark; before the latter day glory it will be a darkish dispensation; not "clear", as in the first times of the Gospel, when the sun of righteousness appeared, and the shadows of the ceremonial law were removed, and the Gospel shone out in the ministry of Christ and his apostles; nor as at the reformation from Popery, when the morning star was given, **Re 2:28** nor as it will be in the spiritual reign of Christ, when Zion's light will be come, and her watchmen will see eye to eye; when the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun seven fold as the light of seven days; and much less as will be in the kingdom state, when there will be no need of the sun or moon; or in the ultimate glory, when we shall see no more darkly through a glass, but face to face: and yet it will not be "dark", as it was with the Jews under the legal dispensation; and much less as with the Gentiles before the coming of Christ; or as in the dark times of Popery; it will be a sort of a twilight, both with respect to the light of doctrine, and of spiritual joy, comfort, and experience; which is much our case now. Some read the words, "there shall be no light, but cold and frost" {k}; it will be a time of great coldness and lukewarmness, with regard to divine and spiritual things; iniquity will abound, and the love of many wax cold, Mt 24:12.

{k} Nwapqz twrqy rwa hyhy al ouk estai fwv kai quch, kai pagov, Sept.; "non erit lux, sed frigus et gelu", V. L; so Syr. Ar.; "congelatio", Tigurine version; so Ben Melech; "non erit lux; frigora potius et congelatio; [vel] non erit lux; frigoribus congelascent, scilicet peccatores", Hiller. de Arcano Kethib & Keri, p. 370.

Zechariah 14:7

Ver. 7. But it shall be one day,.... A very singular, remarkable, and uncommon one; and it will be but one day; things will not continue long in such a position:

which shall be known to the Lord; all times and seasons are known unto the Lord, but this will come under his special notice and observation, and be under the direction of his special providence; it will only be taken notice of by him, and not by others; scarce any will observe it, or know what God is doing in it, or about to do:

not day, nor night; not clear and full day, as at noon; nor yet quite night or dark, as at midnight; See Gill on "Zec 14:6":

but it shall come to pass, [that] at evening time it shall be light; after this day is over, which is neither clear nor dark, there will be an evening time; things will be worse with us than they are; the sun will be set; Christ will be withdrawn in the ministry of the word; his witnesses will be slain and silenced; great coldness and lukewarmness will seize upon professors; great darkness of error will spread itself everywhere; great sleepiness and security will fall upon all the virgins, and there will be great distress of nations; and, when it will be feared and expected that greater darkness and distress still are coming on, "light" will break forth; deliverance and salvation from Popish darkness and tyranny will be wrought; the light of the Gospel will break forth, and spread itself everywhere; the light of joy and gladness will arise to all the saints, and it will be a time of great spiritual peace, prosperity, and happiness. Vitringa on Isa 60:20, interprets it there shall be no vicissitude, or succession of day and night, but all day; at evening it shall be light; no calamity nor sorrow; Christ the light, and sun of righteousness, will break out in a glorious and spiritual manner.

Zechariah 14:8

Ver. 8. And it shall be in that day, [that] living waters shall go out from Jerusalem,.... When it shall be light; and this is one of the things which will make it so; for by "living waters" are meant the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; compared to running "waters" for the sound of them, which will then go into all the earth; for the swiftness in which they shall proceed; for their rapidity and force in bearing all before them; for the great spread of them; and for their virtue and efficacy in cooling those who are inflamed with the fiery law; refreshing thirsty souls; purifying the hearts and lives of sinners, and making those that are barren fruitful: and to "living" waters, because they are the means of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving drooping saints; and because they serve to support and maintain a spiritual life, and nourish up unto eternal life, and direct the way to it, as well as give the best account of it: and these will come out of Jerusalem; which may design

Jerusalem literally, which will be rebuilt at the time of the Jews' conversion; or mystically the church, the spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem; see Heb 12:22 reference seems to be had to the first ministration of the Gospel, which, according to prophecy, came out of Jerusalem, **Isa 2:3**.

Half of them towards the former sea; or the eastern sea, as the Targum, the Persian sea; and may signify that the Gospel shall be carried into the eastern parts of the world, into Persia, Tartary, and China, and other nations; and those great kingdoms shall become the kingdoms of Christ:

and half of them toward the hinder sea; or the western sea, as the Targum, the Mediterranean Sea; and may denote the progress and success of the Gospel in the European parts of the world: and the meaning of the whole is, that the Gospel shall be carried from east to west, and preached all the world over, to the conversion of Jews and Gentiles, who, some think, are designed by the two seas; when the abundance of the sea shall be converted by it, and the forces and fulness of the Gentiles brought in, and all Israel saved:

in summer and in winter shall it be; there will be no summer of persecution, nor winter of coldness and indifference to hinder the ministry of the word: the phrase denotes the constant ministry of the word, and the duration of it; it shall be constantly preached all the year long, and as long as summer and winter last.

Zechariah 14:9

Ver. 9. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth,.... This refers to the spiritual reign of Christ in the latter day; upon the success of the Gospel everywhere, there will be great conversions in all places; Gospel churches will be set up and ordinances administered everywhere; the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord; his kingdom will be from sea to sea, from the eastern to the western one, and his dominion will reach to the ends of the earth; Popish nations, Mahometan kingdoms, Pagan ones, and all the kings of the earth, will become Christian, and submit to the sceptre of Christ's kingdom:

in that day shall there be one Lord; there is but one Lord in right now, and there is but one in fact that is owned by real Christians; and there will be but one in the spiritual reign, among all that are called Christians; there will be but one Lord and Head to Jews and Gentiles, **Ho 1:11** the pope of Rome will be no more owned as head of the church, nor any other:

and his name, one; this refers not to any particular name by which Christ shall be called; but rather to that by which his people shall be called; all names of distinction being now laid aside, and only that of Christians retained; though it chiefly designs unity of doctrine, uniformity of worship, one and the same way of administering ordinances: it signifies that there will be one true, spiritual, uniform worship and religion; there will be no different sentiments and principles in religion; nor different practices and modes of worship; nor different sects; but all agreeing in the same faith and practice, under one Lord and King, Christ Jesus. So the Targum,

"they shall serve before the Lord with one shoulder; for his name is firm in the world, and there is none besides it."

This passage is referred by the ancient Jews {l} to the times of the Messiah.

{l} Zohar in Deut. fol. 110. 2.

Zechariah 14:10

Ver. 10. All the land shall be turned as a plain,.... That is, all the land of Israel round about Jerusalem, which was encompassed with mountains, Ps 125:2 but now these mountains shall become a plain, that that may be seen; since it follows,

from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; Geba was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, on the northern border of the land, Jos 21:17 and Rimmon was in the tribe of Judah, given to Simeon on the southern part, Jos 15:32 so that from Geba to Rimmon was the same as from Geba to Beersheba, which was in the same tribe, 2Ki 23:8 and, according to the Jewish writers, the south of Jerusalem was a plain; wherefore the meaning seems to be, that the whole land, from Geba to Rimmon, should be like that. Jerom makes mention of a village called Remmon in his time, fifteen miles to the north of Jerusalem, which cannot be the place here meant, and yet speaks of it as in the tribe of Simeon or Judah; and afterwards takes notice of another village called Remmus in Daroma, or the south {m}; to me it seems that Geba and

Rimmon were places near one to another, and both in the tribe of Benjamin; see 1Sa 14:2 where the word rendered "pomegranate" is Rimmon, and is the proper name of a place, according to some; the same with that in Jud 20:47 where was a rock called the rock Rimmon; and Jonathan ben Uzziel, on 1Sa 14:2 renders it, "the plain of the pomegranate"; or rather the plain of Rimmon: and the Jews make mention in their Talmud {n} of the valley of Rimmon, where seven elders met to intercalate the year; and here, they say, was a marble rock, in which everyone fastened a nail, and therefore it is called the rock of nails. Now the sense seems to be, that all the land of Israel should become a plain, like the valley that was between Geba and Rimmon. Jarchi interprets it of the whole world. And this will be literally true of the new earth, in the thousand years' reign, which will be without hills mountains, and seas, Re 21:1. It may be mystically understood of the spiritual reign of Christ, when the whole world will become Christian; when Jews and Gentiles, and even the kings of the earth, shall bow the knee to Christ, and be subject to him.

And it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place; that is, Jerusalem, which shall appear very high, all the land round about being a plain; and, being rebuilt, shall be inhabited on the same spot of ground it formerly was: or the church may be meant, which in the latter day will be greatly exalted, and will be filled with, and inhabited by, some of all the nations of the world, **Isa 2:2**:

from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate; not that called the high gate of Benjamin, and which was near the temple, Jer 20:2 and seems to be one of its gates; and such an one there was, which in Arabic was called "Bab Alasbat", the gate of the tribes, where was the pool of the blood of the sacrifices; and is said to be not far from another gate, called the gate of mercy {o}; but this is that which led out of the city, and was one of its gates towards the land of Benjamin, from whence it had its name, and through which Jeremiah attempted to go when he was stopped by the captain of the ward, Jer 37:13 this, according to Grotius, was on the north of Jerusalem: Mr. Fuller {p} places it more rightly in the northeast part of it, as does Adrichomius {q}, who wrongly confounds it with the corner gate later mentioned, which is here manifestly distinguished from it; and which mistake also Schindler {r} gives into, and likewise Arias Montanus {s} and others. "The first gate" is the same with "the old gate" in **Ne 3:6**.

Unto the corner gate; the gate of Benjamin, and the gate of Ephraim, are the same, as is thought by Grotius; the distance between that gate and the corner gate was four hundred cubits, 2Ki 14:13:

and [from] the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses; mention is made of the tower of Hananeel in **Ne 3:1** it was to the south of Jerusalem; and is called in the Targum the tower of Pikkus: "the king's winepresses" doubtless were where his vineyards were; King Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon, **So 8:11**. Grotius says the place where these winepresses were was at Sion, in the inmost part of the city; and so Adrichomius {t} places them in Mount Sion; though Kimchi speaks of them as without the city; and Jarchi makes mention of an Agadah, or exposition, which interprets them of the great ocean, which reaches from Jerusalem to the end of the world, the lakes which the King of kings has made. Very probably these places lay east, west, north, and south; and so denote the amplitude of the city, and the largeness and extensiveness of the church of Christ, signified thereby; see Eze 48:1.

{m} De locis Heb. fol. 94. A. C. {n} T. Hieros. Chagiga, fol. 78. 4. {o} Cippi Hebr. p. 22. Geograph. Nub. p. 114. {p} Pisgah-Sight of Palestine, B. 3. c. 3. sect. 15. p. 322. {q} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. p. 167. {r} Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 1912. {s} Nehemias, sive de Antiqu. Jerus. situ. {t} Theatrum Terrae Sanct. Jerusalem, No. 25. p. 152.

Zechariah 14:11

Ver. 11. And [men] shall dwell in it,.... In great numbers, in much peace and safety, and from generation to generation: Aben Ezra says, Messiah the son of David will now come:

and there shall be no more utter destruction; no wars, nor desolations by them, in a civil sense; there shall be no more killing, as the Targum, **Isa 2:4** no "cherem", no anathema, in a religious sense; in the old translation it is, "and there shall be no more cursing"; there will be no curse in the Jerusalem state,
Re 22:3 which words seem to be taken from hence; no cursed thing, nor cursed person, or any curse or anathema denounced against any; no Popish bulls and anathemas, nor any other:

but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited; the inhabitants of it shall dwell securely, without any apprehension of danger, and having no enemies to fear; though, before this safe and happy state, there will be many enemies; and what will become of them is shown in the following verses.

Zechariah 14:12

Ver. 12. And this shall be the plagues,.... This respects one or more, or all, of the seven plagues, which will be inflicted on the antichristian states, mentioned in Re 15:1:

wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; who have been the enemies and persecutors of his church; and with which plague or plagues they shall be utterly consumed and destroyed:

their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet; antichrist will be consumed with the breath of Christ's mouth; the flesh of the whore of Rome, which is her substance, shall be eaten and devoured by the kings of the earth; and her destruction will be in a moment, suddenly, and at unawares, as is here suggested; see **2Th 2:8**:

and their eyes shall consume away in their holes; the right eye of the idol shepherd shall be utterly dried up, and the kingdom of the beast will be full of darkness, Zec 11:17:

and their tongues shall consume away in their mouth; with which antichrist and his followers have blasphemed the name of God, his tabernacle, and his saints; and which they will gnaw for pain, when the plagues of God are inflicted on them, Re 13:5.

Zechariah 14:13

Ver. 13. And it shall come to pass in that day,.... When the vials are pouring out:

[that] a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; the Targum renders it, a great tumult, or noise of killing; and the Septuagint, an ecstasy:

it refers to the earthquake, and the slaughter of seven thousand men of name, and the fright upon that, Re 11:13

and they shall lay hold everyone on the hand of his neighbour, and shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour; there will be a revolution, upon this tumult, in several of the antichristian states; and the kings of them shall hate the whore, make her desolate, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, Re 17:16 or, "his hand shall be cut off by the hand of his neighbour" {u}; see Zec 11:17, the power of antichrist shall be destroyed by neighbouring Christian princes.

{u} wher dy le wdy htlew "et succidetur manus ejus super manum amici sui", Pagninus. So Aben Ezra, and R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 43. 1.

Zechariah 14:14

Ver. 14. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem,.... These are the professing people of Christ, the armies in heaven, the chosen, called, and faithful, who will follow the Lamb, and attend him when he goes forth to make war with the antichristian princes, and shall overcome them, Re 17:14:

and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold and silver, and apparel, in great abundance; by which are meant the riches of the Papists, called Gentiles or Heathens, Re 11:2 which will fall into the hands of the followers of Christ at the time of Rome's destruction; and which are signified by the flesh of the whore, and by the flesh of kings, captains, and mighty men, which will then be eaten; they will be stripped and spoiled of all their substance, Re 17:16.

Zechariah 14:15

Ver. 15. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass,.... The flesh of the horse is said to be eaten, Re 19:18:

and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague, their beasts shall perish in like manner as themselves.

Ver. 16. And it shall come to pass,.... After the plague on man and beast is over:

[that] everyone that is left of all the nations which come against Jerusalem; these are the remnant, according to the election of grace, who will have been among the enemies of Christ and his people, but preserved when others will be destroyed; and they will not only be frightened at the general destruction, but will be truly converted, and give glory to the God of heaven, Re 11:13: these

shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts; the King Messiah, as Aben Ezra and Abendana on the place observe; the same with the King overall the earth, Zec 14:9 who is Lord of hosts, of all the armies in heaven, that will have followed him, at this time, and is to be worshipped by angels and men; he is equal with God, the Creator of both, the Redeemer of men, and King of saints; and to worship him shall the above persons preserved and called go up to Jerusalem, the church of God, year by year, that is, constantly:

and to keep the feast of tabernacles; not literally, but spiritually; for, as all the Jewish feasts have been long since abolished, having had their accomplishment in Christ, not one of them will ever be revived in the latter day. This feast was originally kept in commemoration of the Israelites dwelling in tents in the wilderness, and was typical of Christ's incarnation, who was made flesh, and tabernacled among us; so that to keep this feast is no other than to believe in Christ as come in the flesh, and in the faith of this to attend to the Gospel feast of the word and ordinances; and whereas this feast was observed by drawing water with expressions of joy, this may respect the pouring forth of the Spirit in the last day, and that spiritual joy saints will then be filled with; to which may be added, that palm tree branches used to be carried in their hands at the time of that feast; and so the keeping of it now may denote the victory that will be obtained over the beast and his image, which palm tree branches are a token of; and this will issue in the personal reign of Christ, when the tabernacle of God shall be with men.

Zechariah 14:17

Ver. 17. And it shall be, [that] whosoever will not come up,.... This, though it follows upon the former account, must be understood of times preceding the spiritual reign of Christ; for the rain of the Gospel will be upon all the earth in the latter day glory; and all nations will then serve and worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even those that remain after the general destruction of the antichristian states; besides, express mention is hereafter made of Egypt, which designs Rome, Re 11:8 and the whole manifestly refers to the time of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, who had power to shut the heaven, that it rain not, Re 11:6:

of [all] the families of the earth unto Jerusalem, to worship the King, the Lord of hosts: all of the antichristian party, that refuse to worship the Lord with his true church, according to his revealed will:

even upon them shall be no rain; not literally, but spiritually; and is to be understood either of the love and favour of God, comparable to rain in its original, it being owing to the will of God, and not to the merits of men, and therefore is distinguishing and sovereign; in its objects, persons very undeserving; in the manner of its communication, it tarries not for the will and works of men, and comes in great abundance; and in its effects, it softens, cools, refreshes, and makes fruitful; and not to have this is to be hated of God: or of the blessings of divine grace; these are from above like rain, depend on the will of God, are free gifts, and given in abundance, and make fruitful; the contrary to these is cursing: or of the Gospel, which is of God and from heaven, falls according to divine direction, and softens, refreshes, and revives; and not to have this is the sorest of judgments, **Am 8:11**.

Zechariah 14:18

Ver. 18. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not,.... To Jerusalem, the church of God; do not go thither to worship the Lord, attend his ordinances, and keep them in their purity; nor walk as becomes the people of God: by "the family of Egypt" are meant the Papists, so called for their tyranny, cruelty, and idolatry, Re 11:8:

that [have] no [rain]; have not the pure word of God, and the ordinances thereof, only the traditions of men; yea, the doctrines of devils, and lies in hypocrisy: the allusion is to the land of Egypt, which was watered, not so much by rain as by the overflowing of the river Nile: or it may be rendered, "and upon them there shall be no rain" {w}; or that which is equivalent to it. So the Targum paraphrases it,

"the Nile shall not ascend unto them."

The sense is, as they are without the pure Gospel of Christ, they shall continue so, and be punished with, that sore judgment of a famine of hearing the word of the Lord.

There shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles; they shall have the same plague of want of water, a famine; for it is a vulgar mistake that there is no rain in Egypt; it rains indeed but seldom, and only in some places, but it does rain. Monsieur Thevenot {x} says,

"it rains much at Alexandria, and Rosetta also; but at Cairo, which stands higher, it rains less; and yet (says he) I have seen it rain very hard every year, for two days together in the month of December."

And Mr. Fuller {y} says that Sir William Paston, a patron of his, and a well accomplished traveller, was

"an eye witness of much and violent rain at Grand Cairo, but such as presaged a great mortality, which ensued, not long after."

But it should be observed that this is only true of the lower part of Egypt, for in the upper parts it rains not, at least not very commonly: for Herodotus {z} reports that

"in the times of Psammenitus, the son of Amasis, king of Egypt, a very wonderful thing happened to the Egyptians; it rained at Thebes in Egypt, which it never had before, nor has ever since, as the Thebans say; for it never rains in the upper part of Egypt; but then it rained at Thebes in drops."

Yet Mr. Norden {a}, a late traveller in those parts, says he

"experienced at Meschie (a city in his travels to upper Egypt) a very violent rain, accompanied with thunder, for the space of a whole hour;"

though in the same place he says, at Feschna, and beyond, in the upper Egypt, the sky is always serene and clear. And in his travels from Cairo to Girge, capital of the upper Egypt, he relates, that at a certain place, as he went thither, they had little wind, and a great deal of rain {b}. And in another place {c} he observes, at Menie (a place in upper Egypt) there was so thick a fog that we could perceive nothing at thirty paces distant: wherefore, since it does rain at times in some places, the same plague as before may be here meant; or want of provisions, as others, through a defect of rain; or the Nile not overflowing and watering the land, as Jarchi interprets it: but Kimchi gives another sense, and so Aben Ezra, which is, that instead of having no rain, which they need not and do not desire, they shall be smitten with the plague that the Lord will smite all the nations with that fight against Jerusalem, namely, their flesh shall consume away, &c. Zec 14:12.

{w} Mhyle alw "super quos non [est imber]", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius; "et non super illos, scil. erit imber", Burkius. {x} Travels, part 1. c. 72. p. 247. {y} Pisgah-Sight, B. 4. c. 5. p. 80. {z} Thalia, sive l. 3. c. 10. {a} Travels in Egypt and Nubia, vol. 1. p. 140. {b} Ib. vol. 2. p. 20. {c} Ib. p. 209.

Zechariah 14:19

Ver. 19. This shall be the punishment of Egypt,.... Or "sin" {d}, as in the original text: rightly is the word rendered "punishment", as it is by the Targum:

and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles; which will be one and the same; they shall have no rain, or what answers to it; they shall all have a famine; or it will be different, Egypt shall be punished with a consumption of their flesh, and the other nations with want of rain: the former sense seems best.

{d} tajx "peccatum", V. L.

Ver. 20. In that day,.... After the destruction of antichrist and all the antichristian party, and a new state of things will take place, either the spiritual or personal reign of Christ:

shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS TO THE LORD; as was upon the mitre of the high priest, Ex 28:36 to which there seems to be an allusion here: or, "upon the trappings of the horses" {e}, as the Targum renders it; and this intends either the horses slain in war, whose bells or trappings should be devoted and applied to holy uses; or the horses that carried the people up to Jerusalem to worship there, or horses in common. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, "on the bridle of the horse shall be Holiness to the Lord"; that is, they should be devoted to his service, which sometimes were very richly adorned; yea, were of gold; as those described by Virgil {f}; nay, they were adorned with precious stones, with pearls, emeralds, and jacinths, insomuch that the Romans were obliged to restrain this luxury by a law {g}. The conceit of some of the fathers, that this refers to one of the nails in the cross of Christ, which Constantine put into his horse's bridle, is justly ridiculed and exploded by most commentators. It seems best to render the word as we do, "bells", as Kimchi and Jarchi interpret it; since it is used of cymbals made of brass, which were to make a sound to be heard, 1Ch 15:19 and of the same metal were the horses' bells made; though those which the mules at the funeral of Alexander had at each jaw were made of gold {h}; as were those Aaron had at the hem of his robe. The use of these bells on horses, according to Gussetius {i}, in the eastern countries, where they travelled through deserts, and had no beaten track, was to keep them together, and that they might be known where they were when parted; and of like use are they now to horses of burden or packhorses with us; though in common use they seem to serve to give horses a pleasure, and quicken them in their work: but the original of them seems to be for the training of horses for war, and therefore they hung bells to their bridles, to use them to a noise, and to try if they could bear a noise, and the tumult of war, so as not to throw their riders, or expose them to danger {k}; hence one that has not been tried or trained up to anything is called by the Greeks akwdwnistov, one not used to the noise of a bell, by a metaphor taken from horses, that have never been tried by the sound of bells, whether they can bear the noise of war without fear {l}: and so it may signify, that these, and all the apparatus of war, all kind of armour, should no more be made use of for such purposes, there being now universal peace in the kingdom of Christ; wherefore these, and the like, should be converted to sacred uses, just as swords, at the same time, shall be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks, for civil uses, **Isa 2:4** or, since Holiness to the Lord is said to be upon them, the sense may be, that holiness will be very general among all men; all professing people will be righteous; it will appear in all their actions, civil as well as religious; it will be as visible as the bells upon the horses, by their frequent going to the house of God; their constant attendance on public worship; their walking in the ways of the Lord, and their love to one another.

And the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar; the "pots" in which they boiled the sacrifices shall be like "the bowls before the altar", which held the blood of the sacrifices to be sprinkled; either like them for number; they shall be many, like them, as the Targum paraphrases it; or for goodness, being made of the same metal: and the whole denotes the number, holiness, and excellency of the saints in the latter day, who will direct all their actions to the glory of God, whether in eating or drinking, or in whatever they do.

{e} twlum le "in phaleris", Tigurine version. {f} "Aurea pectoribus demissa monilia pendent, Tecti auro, fulvum mandunt sub dentibus aurum." Virgil. Aeneid. l. 7. "Fraenaque bina meus, quae nunc habet aurea Pallas." Aeneid. l. 3. {g} Vid. Salmuth in Pancirol. Rer. Memorab. par. 1. tit. 48. p. 231. {h} See Calmet's Dictionary, in the word "Bella". {i} Ebr. Comment. p. 715. {k} Scholiast. Aristophan. in Ranis, Act. 1. Sc. 2. p. 214. Salmuth in Pancirol. par. 2. tit. 9. De Campanis, p. 161. Hospinian. de Templis, l. 2. c. 26. p. 333. {l} Vid. Scapulae Lexic. in voce kwdwn, "et alios lexicograph".

Zechariah 14:21

Ver. 21. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts,.... Such will be the number of sacrifices and sacrificers, that the pots in the Lord's house will not be sufficient; wherefore every pot, in city or country, shall be sanctified and devoted to holy uses:

and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein; this denotes, as before, the general holiness of the professors of religion in those times; and that there will be no difference in the vessels of the Lord's house, or any distinction of Jew and Gentile; but they will be all spiritual worshippers, and offer up the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise to the Lord:

and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts; the Targum paraphrases it,

"there shall be no more a merchant in the house of the sanctuary of the Lord;"

in the temple, where were buyers and sellers of sheep, oxen, and doves, for sacrifice, such as our Lord drove out; but now there shall be no more of them, all legal sacrifices being at an end. The word here used does signify a merchant, and is so rendered in Ho 12:7 and by some here {m}; and the Jews {n} have a saying, that

"there are no Canaanites but merchants;"

or the word always so signifies, referring to the above places, and having quoted Job 41:6 but it is to be applied to another sort of merchants; to false teachers, that make merchandise of the souls of men; to all merit mongers and Papists; and particularly to the great merchant of all, the pope of Rome, and to all inferior merchants under him, who sell pardons, indulgences, &c. and are called the merchants of the earth, Re 18:3 these are the Heathen that shall perish out of the land, and the sinners that shall be no more; antichrist shall no longer sit in the temple of God, showing himself to be God; nor will there be any, in the spiritual reign of Christ, that will buy Rome's merchandise any more. Moreover, a Canaanite may design an impure person, a hypocrite; and though there have been many such in the church of God in all ages, yet at this time there will be few or none, comparatively speaking; and in the personal reign of Christ there will be no wicked men at all: in the new heavens and new earth will dwell righteousness, or only righteous persons; all the wicked of the earth will be destroyed before this state takes place; only raised ones, the saints that partake of the first resurrection, will be there; they will be all holy and righteous persons; nothing shall enter into it that defiles or makes an abomination or a lie, only those that do the commandments of God; nor will there be any manner of sin or wickedness there: sin, like the Canaanites of old, continues in the saints as long as they are in the present state; and though it has not the dominion over them, yet is as grievous pricks and thorns unto them, and is left in them to prove them; but in this happy state there will be no more sin, no more this pricking brier and grieving thorn. That the word Canaanite is here to be taken in a figurative sense is certain; for, literally understood, there is no such person in the world now, nor has been for many hundreds of years, even an inhabitant of Canaan, or one so called.

{m} ynenk "mercator", V. L. Montanus, Vatablus, Grotius, Burkius. {n} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 1.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Malachi 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO MALACHI

This book, in the Hebrew copies, is called "Sepher Malachi", the Book of Malachi; in the Vulgate Latin version, "the Prophecy of Malachi"; in the Syriac and Arabic versions, "the Prophecy of the Prophet Malachi"; According to Lactantius {a}, Zechariah was the last of the prophets; but the more commonly received opinion, and the truest, is, that Malachi was the last; hence Aben Ezra calls him Myaybnh Pwo, "the end of the prophets"; and by Kimchi he is said to be, Mbv Nwrxa "the last of them"; and sometimes, by the Rabbins, Myaybnh Mtwx, "the seal of the prophets" {b}; by whom they are all sealed up, concluded, and finished. His name signifies "my angel", as is commonly said; though Hillerus {c} makes it to signify "the angel of the Lord"; hence some have thought that he was not a man, but an angel; and so the Septuagint render ykalm dyb, in the first verse **Mal 1:1**, "by the hand of his angel"; and others have thought that the book takes its name, not from the author of it, but from the mention that is made of the messenger or angel of the Lord, John the Baptist, in **Mal 3:1** but the more prevailing opinion is, that Malachi is the name of a man, the writer of the book, about whom the Jews have been divided. Rab Nachman says Malachi was Mordecai; and that he was so called because he was second to the king. R. Joshua ben Korcha contradicts him, and affirms Malachi is Ezra; and to him agrees the Chaldee paraphrase on **Mal 1:1** which says, that Malachi, his name is called Ezra the scribe; but, as Kimchi observes, Ezra is never called a prophet, as Malachi is, only a scribe; wherefore in the Talmud {d}, where this matter is debated, it is concluded thus; but the wise men say, Malachi is his name; that is, it is the proper name of a man; there was a man of this name, that wrote this prophecy; not Mordecai, nor Ezra, nor Zerubbabel, nor Nehemiah, as some have thought; but Malachi: and if the accounts of Epiphanius {e} and Isidore {f} are to be credited, this prophet was born at Sapho, in the tribe of Zebulun; and had his name from his beautiful form, and unblemished life; and that he died very young, and was buried in his own field. The time of his prophesying is not agreed on: the Jews commonly make him contemporary with Haggai and Zechariah; they say {g} that Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, all of them prophesied in the second year of Darius; and Ganz, their chronologer {h}, places the death of these prophets together in one year; but he seems to be later than they: Haggai prophesied before the building of the temple; Zechariah about the time of it; and Malachi after it, when the temple was rebuilt, and the worship of God restored and settled; and when both priests and people were become very corrupt and degenerate, of which he complains; so that it is possible that he might live a century after the other prophets, and about four centuries before the coming of Christ, during which time prophecy ceased; though some think he lived not long before the times of Christ, which is not probable. Bishop Usher {i} makes him contemporary with Nehemiah, and places him in the year 416 B.C.; and Mr. Whiston {k} in the year 400 B.C.; Mr. Bedford {l} in the year 424 B.C.: however, this book has been always accounted authentic, and a part of the canon of the Scripture; and is confirmed by the passages cited out of it, and the references made unto it, in the New Testament, Mt 11:10. The general design of it is to reprove the Jews for their ingratitude to the Lord, their neglect and contempt of his worship, and breach of his laws; and to raise in the minds of the truly godly an expectation of the Messiah, and his forerunner, John the Baptist.

{a} De vera Sapientia, l. 4. c. 5. p. 279. {b} Nizzachon, p. 200. apud Hottinger. Thes. Phil. p. 489. {c} Onomastic. Sacr. p. 147, 359, 541. {d} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 15. 1. {e} De Prophet. Vita & Interitu, c. 22. {f} De Vita & Morte Sanct. c. 51. {g} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 15. 1. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 55. {h} Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 18. 1. {i} Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3589. {k} Chronological Tables, cent. 12. {l} Scripture Chronology, p. 725.

INTRODUCTION TO MALACHI 1

In this chapter the Lord declares his love to the people of Israel, and proves it; and complains that the honour due unto him was not given him; which he demonstrates by various instances. The inscription is in **Mal 1:1** showing the name and nature of the prophecy; the author of it; the people to whom it was sent; and the name of the person by whom. In **Mal 1:2** the Lord affirms his love to the people of Israel, which they called in question; and proves it to be real, special, and distinguishing, by the instance of Jacob and Esau, two brothers; yet one, their ancestor, was loved, and the other hated; which latter is proved by the desolations made in his country, and by the fruitless attempts made to repair and rebuild; which was so clear a proof of the Lord's indignation against him, that the Israelites could not but see it, and would be obliged to confess it, to the glory of God, **Mal 1:3** hence he passes on to observe the honour and fear that were due to him as a Father and master, which were not shown him; but, instead thereof, he was despised, and even by the priests themselves, with which they are charged, **Mal 1:6** and which being objected to by them, is proved by offering polluted bread on his altar; and by polluting him, in saying his table was contemptible; and by sacrificing the blind, the lame, and the sick, unto him; things which would be justly resented, if offered to a temporal prince and governor, **Mal 1:7** wherefore they are called upon by the prophet to pray to the Lord for grace and mercy for the people, seeing it was by their means (the priests) that these things were done; though it was questionable whether the Lord would have any regard to them, **Mal 1:9** their sins being so dreadfully aggravated; and particularly, inasmuch as they did not serve in the temple, not so much as shut a door, or kindle a fire on the altar, for nothing, without being paid for it; hence the Lord declares he had no pleasure in them, nor would he accept their offerings; but would call the Gentiles by his grace, among whom his name would be great from one end of the earth to the other; and incense and pure offerings would be offered by them to him, **Mal 1:10** and then he renews the charge against them, that they had profaned his name, by saying that his table, and the fruit thereof, were polluted, and his meat contemptible; by expressing a weariness in his worship, and a contempt of it; and by bringing the torn, the lame, and sick, as an offering to him, **Mal 1:12** upon which such sacrificers are declared deceivers, and pronounced accursed, which they might assure themselves was and would be their case; since he was a great King, and his name dreadful among the Heathen, **Mal 1:14**.

Ver. 1. The burden of the word of the Lord,.... By which is meant the prophecy of this book, so called, not because heavy, burdensome, and distressing, either for the prophet to carry, or the people to bear; for some part of it, which respects Christ, and his forerunner, was matter of joy to the people of God; but because it was a message sent by the Lord, and carried by the prophet to the people; See Gill on "Zec 9:1" See Gill on "Zec 12:1" and this was not the word of man, but of God, a part of Scripture, by divine inspiration. The Syriac version is, "the vision of the words of the Lord": and the Arabic version, "the revelation of the word of the Lord"; and the Septuagint version, "the assumption of the word of the Lord"; it was what was revealed, made known, and delivered by the Lord to the prophet, and taken up by him, and carried to Israel, which was the general name of all the twelve tribes, when under one prince; but when the kingdom was divided, in Rehoboam's time, it was peculiar to the ten tribes, as Judah was to the two tribes of Benjamin and Judah; but after the return of these two from the Babylonish captivity, in which they were joined by some of the other tribes, it was given unto them as here:

by Malachi; or, "by the hand of Malachi" {m}; he was the instrument the Lord made use of; the person whom he sent, and by whom he delivered the following prophecy.

{m} dyb "in manu", V. L. Cocceius; "per manum", Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.

Malachi 1:2

Ver. 2. I have loved you, saith the Lord,.... Which appeared of old, by choosing them, above all people upon the face of the earth, to be his special and peculiar people; by bestowing peculiar favours and blessings upon them, both temporal and spiritual; by continuing them a people, through a variety of changes and revolutions; and by lately bringing them out of the Babylonish captivity, restoring their land unto them, and the pure worship of God among them:

Yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us? the Targum renders it, "and if ye should say"; and so Kimchi and Ben Melech; which intimates, that though they might not have expressed themselves in so many words, yet they seemed disposed to say so; they thought it, if they said it not; and therefore, to prevent such an objection, as well as to show their ingratitude, it is put in this form; and an instance of his love is demanded, which is very surprising, when they had so many; and shows great stupidity and unthankfulness.

Abarbinel renders the words, "wherefore hast thou loved us?" that is, is there not a reason to be given for loving us? which he supposes was the love of Abraham to God; and therefore his love to them was not free, but by way of reward to Abraham's love; and consequently they were not so much obliged to him for it: to which is replied,

[was] not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; Jacob and Esau were brethren; they had one and the same father and mother, Isaac and Rebekah, and equally descended from Abraham; so that if one was loved for the sake of Abraham, as suggested, according to Abarbinel's sense, the other had an equal claim to it; they lay in the same womb together; they were twins; and if any could be thought to have the advantage by birth, Esau had it, being born first: but before they were born, and before they had done good or evil, what is afterwards said of them was in the heart of God towards them; which shows that the love of God to his people is free, sovereign, and distinguishing, Ge 25:23:

yet I loved Jacob; personally considered; not only by giving him the temporal birthright and blessing, and the advantages arising from thence; but by choosing him to everlasting life, bestowing his grace upon him, revealing Christ unto him, and making him a partaker of eternal happiness; and also his posterity, as appears by the above instances mentioned; and likewise mystically considered, for all the elect, redeemed, and called, go by the name of Jacob and Israel in Scripture frequently; for what is here said of Jacob is true of all the individuals of God's people; for which purpose the apostle refers to this passage in **Ro 9:13**, to prove the sovereignty and distinction of the love of God in their election and salvation: and this is indeed a clear proof that the love of God to his people is entirely free from all motives and conditions in them, being before they had done either good or evil; and therefore did not arise from any goodness in them, nor from their love to him nor from any good works done by them: the choice of persons to everlasting life, the fruit of this love, is denied to be of works, and is ascribed to grace; it passed before any were wrought; and what are done by the best of men are the effects of it; and the persons chosen or passed by were in an equal state when both were done; which appears by this instance: and by which also it is manifest that the love of God to men is distinguishing; it is not alike to all men; there is a peculiar favour he bears to own people; which is evident by the choice of some, and not others; by the redemption of them out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; by the effectual calling of them out of the world; by the application of the blessings of grace unto them; and by bestowing eternal life on them: and it may be further observed, that the objects of God's love have not always the knowledge of it; indeed they have no knowledge of it before conversion, which is the open time of love; and after conversion they have not always distinct and appropriating views of it; only when God is pleased to come and manifest it unto them.

Malachi 1:3

Ver. 3. And I hated Esau,.... Or, "rejected" him, as the Targum; did not love him as Jacob: this was a negative, not positive hatred; it is true of him, personally considered; not only by taking away the birthright and blessing from him, which he despised; but by denying him his special grace, leaving him in his sins, and to his lusts, so that he became a profane person; shared not in the grace of God here, and had no part in the eternal inheritance with the saints in light; and likewise it is true of his posterity, as the following instances show:

and laid his mountains and his heritage waste; which, according to Grotius, was done by Nebuchadnezzar, five years after the captivity of the Jews, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Jeremiah, Jer 49:7 but this was done by the Nabatheans {n}: Mount Seir was the famous mountain that Esau dwelt in, Ge 36:8 there might be more in his country; or this might have many tops, and therefore called "mountains"; and to this account of the waste and desolate state of this country agrees what is at present related of it, by a late traveller {o} in those parts:

"if (says he) we leave Palestine and Egypt behind us, and pursue our physical observations into the land of Edom, we shall be presented with a variety of prospects, quite different from those we have lately met with in the land of Canaan, or in the field of Zoan; for we cannot here be entertained with pastures clothed with flocks, or with valleys standing thick with corn, or with brooks of water, or fountains, or depths that spring out of valleys and hills, **De 8:7** here is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or pomegranates, Nu 20:5 but the whole is an "evil place", a lonesome desolate wilderness; no otherwise diversified than by plains covered with sand, and by mountains made up of naked rocks and precipices, **Mal 1:3** neither is this country ever (unless sometimes at the equinoxes) refreshed with rain;

but the few hardy vegetables it produces are stunted by a perpetual drought; and the nourishment which the dews contribute to them in the night, is sufficiently impaired by the powerful heat of the sun in the day:"

Though this country seems to have been originally more fruitful, and better cultivated, as may be concluded from Ge 27:39 but is become so through the judgments of God upon it:

for the dragons of the wilderness; so called to distinguish them from sea dragons, or the dragon fish; such as whales and crocodiles, which are sometimes expressed by the same word here used, **Ge 1:21** and these land dragons are no other than serpents of an enormous size. In the Indies they used to be distinguished into three sorts; such as were found in the mountains; such as were bred in caves, or in the flat country; and such as were found in fens and marshes. The first is the largest of all, and are covered with scales as resplendent as polished gold; these have a kind of beard hanging from their lower jaw; their eyebrows large, and very exactly arched; their aspect the most frightful that can be imagined; and their cry loud and shrill; their crest of a bright yellow; and a protuberance on their heads of the colour of a burning coal. Those of the flat country differ from the former in nothing but having their scales of a silver colour, and in their frequenting rivers, to which the former never come. Those that live in marshes and fens are of a dark colour, approaching to a black, move slowly, have no crest, or any rising on their heads {p}; these creatures commonly inhabit desert places. So Diodorus Siculus {q}, speaking of Ethiopia, says, it is reported that various kinds of serpents, and of an incredible size, are seen near the desert, had in places inhabited by wild beasts; and Aelianus {r} describes the dragon as dwelling in woods, and living on poisonous herbs; and preferring a desolate place to cities, and the habitations of men; and when in Scripture it is predicted of countries and cities that they shall become desolate, it is usually observed, that they shall be the dwelling places of dragons, as in Isa 13:22 so here it is foretold that it should be the case of Edom, as it has been, and still continues to be, as appears from the above traveller {s}; who, passing through some part of this country, says of it,

"vipers, especially in the wilderness of Sin, which might be very properly called "the inheritance of dragons", were very dangerous and troublesome; not only our camels, but the Arabs who attended them, running every moment the risk of being bitten;"

so that, according to the prediction, it is now a place for such creatures. A learned Jew {t} is of opinion, that not serpents, but jackals, are here meant, which are a sort of wild howling beasts, that live abroad in desolate places; See Gill on "Mic 1:8" but whether they be the one, or the other, it makes for the same purpose, to denote what a desert place Edom would become; since it should be inhabited by such creatures to dwell in, which denotes the utter desolation made. So the Targum renders it, "into the wasteness of the desert"; or into a waste desert, where none but such sort of animals inhabit. The Septuagint and Syriac versions render it, "into the houses", or "cottages, of the desert": and now, though this was the case of Judea, that it was left desolate, yet it was but for a while; at the end of seventy years the Jews returned to their own land, and dwelt in it; but so did not the Edomites, as appears by the following words; which shows the regard God had to the posterity of Jacob, and not to the posterity of Esau.

{n} See Prideanx's Connexion, par. 2. B. 3. p. 199. {o} Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 438. Ed. 2. {p} Harris's Voyages and Travels, vol. 1. p. 474. {q} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 169. {r} De Animal. l. 6. c. 63. {s} Dr. Shaw Travels, p. 448. Ed. 2. {t} Tanchum apud Pocock in loc.

Malachi 1:4

Ver. 4. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished,.... Or the Idumeans, as the Targum; the posterity of Esau, who acknowledge themselves greatly reduced by the desolations made in their country, cities, towns, and houses, being plundered of all their valuable things. Kimchi interprets it, if the congregation of Edom should say, though we are become poor and low, and our land is laid waste:

but we will return; being now become rich, as the Targum adds; that is, as Jarchi explains it, with the spoils of Jerusalem:

and build the desolate places: as Israel did, as Kimchi observes, when they returned from their captivity; and so the Edomites hoped to do the same:

thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; they attempted to build again their cities and towns, but could not succeed, God was against them:

and they shall call them; or, "they shall be called" {u}; this shall be the name they, shall go by among men, by way of proverb and reproach:

The border of wickedness; a wicked kingdom and nation, from one end to the other; this shall be said of them, as the reason of their utter and perpetual desolation:

and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever; not for seventy years only, as against the Jews, **Zec 1:12**, but forever; and these are now no more a people; they are utterly extinct; their name and nation are lost; there is not the least appearance of them; when the Jews, though they are scattered about in the world, yet they are still a people, and distinct from all others.

{u} Mhl warqw "et vocabuntur", V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Grotius.

Malachi 1:5

Ver. 5. And your eyes shall see,.... The destruction of the Edomites, and their fruitless attempts to rebuild their desolate places; and the difference between them and the Israelites, who were returned to their own land, and inherited it, when they could not; and the love of God to the one, and his hatred of the other:

and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel; Aben Ezra interprets it, ye that dwelt in the border of Israel shall say, the Lord shall be magnified, or let him be magnified; let greatness and glory be ascribed to him for what he has done: or, as Kimchi, give him praise and greatness because you are dwelling in your border, and their border is desolate; and your border is called the border of Israel, but theirs the border of wickedness; and so the Targum,

"let the glory of the Lord be multiplied, because he hath enlarged the border of Israel;"

and, according to Jarchi, the sense is, he shall show his greatness from our border, to make it known that we are his people: all show and own that God had loved them more than others, and therefore they ought to have honoured and obeyed him, in which they were deficient, and so ungrateful.

Malachi **1:6**

Ver. 6. A son honoureth [his] father, and a servant his master,.... Or, "will honour", or "should honour"; it is their duty to do so, both according to the laws of God and man; and so the Targum,

"lo concerning a son it is said (or commanded) that be should honour his father; and of a servant, that he should fear (or show reverence) before his master;"

see Ex 20:12:

if then I [be] a Father; as he was the Father of his divine and eternal Son; the Father of spirits, angels, and the souls of men; the Father of all men by creation; and the Father of all mercies to them in providence, as he was to Israel; and, besides, was their Father by national adoption, as he was not to other people; and to many of them stood in this relation by special adopting grace:

where [is] mine honour? there is an honour due to God on account of this relation; which should be shown by loving him, trusting in him, calling upon him, imitating and obeying him, and by making use of what he has given for his glory; he is to be honoured in heart and life, by words and actions, and with our substance. This question suggests, that he had not the honour given him, which belonged unto him:

and if I [be] a master; the word is in the plural number, and may be understood of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; though the first Person seems rather designed, who stands in this relation to Christ, as Mediator; to the angels, his ministering spirits; to the ministers of the Gospel, and to all the saints; and indeed to all men, and particularly to the Israelites; as appeared by the special laws and commands he enjoined them, and by his special government, protection, and care of them:

where [is] my fear? fear and reverence are due to the Lord from his people, considered in such a relation to them; not a slavish fear of wrath and punishment; but a godly filial fear, which is influenced by the goodness of God, and appears in a carefulness not to offend him, and by the performance of all religious worship, both private and public; and in this not only natural men, but professors of religion, and even God's own people, are wanting; yea, those that should set examples to others, as men in public office, and of a public character, as follows:

saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name; for what is before said is not only said to the people in general; but to the priests in particular, who ought to have honoured and feared the Lord; and yet they despised his name, or made it contemptible; by not paying that regard to his authority, as a Father and master, they ought; by neglecting his worship, and not taking that care of offerings and sacrifices as became them:

and ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? as if they were entirely innocent and guiltless.

Malachi 1:7

Ver. 7. Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar,.... Which some understand of the shewbread, mention being afterwards made of a "table", as Jerom; who observes that it was made of wheat, which the priests themselves sowed, reaped, ground, and baked, and so could take what they would out of it: as for their sowing it, it does not seem likely that they should be employed in such service, whatever may be said for their reaping; since the sheaf of the first fruits was reaped by persons deputed from the sanhedrim {w}; though of the reaping of that for the shewbread, I find no mention made; but as for grinding, sifting, kneading, and making it into loaves, and baking it, and taking it out of the oven, and putting it upon the table of shewbread, all this was the work of the priests {x}; and those of the house of Garmu {y} were appointed over that work: now, this bread might be said to be polluted, when they set upon the table such as was not made of fine wheat flour, and had not pure frankincense put upon or by each row, as the law required, Le 24:5 nor is it any material objection to this sense, that it is an altar, and not a table, on which this bread was offered; since, as the altar is called a table, Eze 41:22, as this is in a following clause, the table may be called an altar; though it may be observed, that the shewbread is never said to be offered, but to be set, or put upon the table: indeed the burning of the frankincense set by it is called an offering made by fire unto the Lord, Le 24:7 wherefore others interpret this of the daily meat offering, which went along with the daily sacrifice of the lambs, and part of which was burnt on the altar, Ex 29:40 or rather this designs sacrifice in general, sometimes called "bread", **Le 3:11** and so the Targum here,

"ye offer upon my altar an abominable offering;"

such as had blemishes in them, were blind or lame, as after mentioned; and had not the requisites of a sacrifice in them; or were offered not in a right manner, or by bad men, and with a wicked mind:

and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? thy bread offering or altar; as if their offerings were pure, and they themselves, and their consciences pure from sin. The answer is,

In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible; either the shewbread table, which yet was covered with gold, and all the vessels of it made of gold; or the altar, as in Eze 41:22 their actions spoke so loud, and declared that the table or altar of the Lord was a contemptible thing, since they cared not what was offered upon it: or the reason why it was had in contempt, as some think, was because there was not that holiness in the second temple as in the first: or, as Abarbinel and Kimchi say, because of the fat and the blood which were offered on the altar, which they esteemed contemptible things; not observing the end for which the Lord commanded them to be offered.

{w} Misn. Menachot, c. 10. sect. 3. {x} Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin, c. 5. sect. 6. {y} Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1.

Malachi 1:8

Ver. 8. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, [is it] not evil?.... Certainly it is, according to the law in Le 22:22 or, as Kimchi interprets it, when they bring to you a lamb that is blind for sacrifice to offer it up, ye say, this is not evil; but it is good to offer it up, because the table is contemptible. The sense is, that, however evil this may be in itself, according to them it was good enough to be offered up upon the altar; which proves that they despised the name of the Lord, offered polluted bread or sacrifice on his altar, and had his table in contempt:

and if ye offer the lame and sick, [is it] not evil? verily it is, by the law of God, which forbids the offering of such things, Le 22:21 this was always observed, in all sacrifices under the law, that they were perfect, and without any blemish, whether of the flock, or of the herd; and this was strictly observed, even by the Heathens themselves: so Achilles, in Homer {a}, speaks of the perfect lambs and goats they offered in sacrifice; and particularly they were not to be lame, or to halt; such were reckoned choice and excellent sacrifices, which were larger and better fed than others; and which were not lame, nor diseased, nor sickly; for things future could not be known, they say, but from a sound victim {b}; for they pretended to have knowledge of them, by the entrails of the sacrifices. So Pliny {c} observes, that this is to be remarked, that calves brought to the altar on men's shoulders are not to be sacrificed; nor are the gods appeased by one that halts; in short, it is said {d}, whatever is not perfect and sound is not to be offered to them; and, besides these here mentioned in the text, there were many others, which the Jews especially observed, which rendered creatures unfit for sacrifice. Maimonides {e} reckons up no less than fifty blemishes, by reason of which the priests under the law might not offer a creature for sacrifice: no doubt but the laws of Moses concerning this matter had a respect to the pure, perfect, and spotless sacrifice of Christ, which the legal ones were typical of; and teach us this lesson, that, without a complete sacrifice, no atonement or satisfaction for sin could be made: or, it is not evil in your eyes, as Aben Ezra glosses it; which is the same as before:

offer it now unto thy governor; to Zerubbabel, who was governor of Judea at this time, **Hag 1:1** for they had no king. The meaning is, offer a lamb or any other creature that is blind, sick, and lame; make a present of it to him that had the government of them; make trial this way, and see how acceptable it would be to him:

will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts; will he thank thee for it, or have any respect to thee on account of it? but, on the contrary, will he not resent it as an affront to him? and if so it would be with an earthly prince, how can it be thought that to offer the blind, lame, and sick, should be acceptable to the King of kings, and Lord of lords?

{a} Iliad. I. 1. 66. {b} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 12. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 45. {d} Scholia in Aristoph. Acharn. Act 3. Scen. 3. p. 409. {e} Hilchot Biath Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 1. &c.

Malachi 1:9

Ver. 9. And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us,.... These are the words of the prophet to the priests; and are spoken either seriously, exhorting them to that part of their office which lay in interceding for the people that God would be gracious to them, and forgive their sins; and the rather, inasmuch as they had been the means of their sin, and accessary to it, who ought to have reproved them for bringing such offerings, and should have refused to offer them for them; or otherwise, if they did not do this, they could not expect that God would accept their persons, and their offerings: or else ironically, now you have offered such sacrifices to the Lord, as the blind, the lame, and sick, go and intercede for the people; pray that their sins may be forgiven them, and that the curse may be removed from them, and see how you will succeed:

this hath been by your means; that such sacrifices were offered up; they indulged the people in such practices, and encouraged them; the fault was theirs; or this curse, as Kimchi explains it, from **Mal 1:14**:

will he regard your persons? saith the Lord of hosts; can you ever imagine that God will have any respect to your persons or prayers, when you have acted so vile a part, and been the cause of so much sin and evil? no, he will not, as is asserted in the following verse **Mal 1:10**.

Malachi 1:10

Ver. 10. Who [is there] even among you that would shut the doors [for nought]?.... Either of the temple, as the Targum and Jarchi; for at each of the gates of the temple there were porters appointed in David's time, 1Ch 26:1 and who were paid for their service: or of the court, as Kimchi; the court of the priests where the offerings were brought. The words "for nought" are not, in the original text, at the end of this clause, but at the end of the next; and are by some referred to both; and by others restrained to the latter; and who give this as the sense of the words, "who is there", or "would there were any among you?" {f} any good man that would shut the doors of the temple, that so a man might not bring an abominable offering; intimating, that the priests or Levites however, who were porters, ought to shut the doors against such persons; and this way go Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel; to which the Chaldee paraphrase inclines; which is,

"who is there among you that will shut the door of the house of my sanctuary, that ye may not offer on mine altar an abominable sacrifice?"

but the same writers, out of an ancient book called Torath Cohanim, observe a sense that agrees with ours,

"a man says to his friend, shut this door for me, he desires nothing for it; light me this candle, he asks no reward for it; but as for you, who is there among you that will shut my doors for nought? or kindle a fire on mine altar for nought? and how much less will ye do freely those things which used to be done for reward? therefore I have no pleasure in you."

There were four and twenty porters to open and shut the doors of the mountain of the house, or the temple, and the court of women in the daytime; six on the east side; four on the north; four on the south; at Asuppim two and two, four in all; four on the west, and two at Parbar {g}: here they attended in the daytime, to keep the place pure and peaceable; and there seems to have been one over all the rest, whose business was to see that the doors at evening were shut by them: in the Misnah {h} we are told that Ben Geber was appointed over the shutting of the gates, i.e. of the temple; and at night there were four and twenty guards also that kept watch; the priests kept guard in three places; in the room "abtines", in the room "nitsots", and in the fire room; and one and twenty Levites; five at the five gates of the mountain of the house, or the compass of the temple; four at the four corners within; five at the five gates of the court; and four at its four corners without; one at the chamber "Corban"; one at the chamber over against the vail; and another behind the most holy place; and there was one that was called the man of the mountain of the house, who every night went through every ward with torches burning before him; and he had power to beat those he found asleep in their watch, and to burn their garments {i}, to which the allusion is, Re 16:15, and these guards, as Bartenora {k} observes, were not on account of thieves and robbers, but for the honour of the house; and these, neither the one by day, nor the other by night, did their work for nought, but had a maintenance allowed them for it:

neither do ye kindle fire upon mine altar for nought: and this was done every morning, for though, as one of the Jewish writers says {l}, fire came down, from heaven, it was ordered that they should bring of common fire; and there were three piles or rows of fire made every day upon the altar; the first was a large one, on which they offered the daily sacrifice, with the rest of the offerings; the second was on the side of it, a little one, from whence they took fire in the censer to burn incense every day; the third had no other use for it but to confirm the command concerning fire; as it is said, "the fire shall ever be burning", **Le 6:13** {m} and this fire was kindled to burn the sacrifices, the daily sacrifice, and other burnt offerings, for which they were paid out of the tithes, and other oblations; see **1Co 9:13** this was an aggravation of their negligence and carelessness about what offerings were brought and sacrificed; seeing they were so well taken care of, and such a sufficient maintenance provided for them; so that they did not the least piece of service in the temple but they were fully rewarded for it; even not so much as to shut a door, or kindle a fire; and therefore it is no wonder their conduct should be resented, as follows:

I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts; neither in your persons, nor in your offerings:

neither will I accept an offering at your hand: the "minchah" or meat offering, any meat offering, particularly that which was offered morning and evening with the daily sacrifice, Ex 29:40 and it is sometimes used particularly for the evening meat offering, 2Ki 16:15 or rather, "a wheat" or "bread offering"; since this offering was made of fine flour, with oil poured upon it, and frankincense put upon that, **Le 2:1** hence mention is made of "incense" in the next verse **Mal 1:11**; and it was either baked in an oven, or fried in a pan; and either way, when it was brought to the priest, it was burnt on the altar, and was an offering by fire to the Lord, and of a sweet savour to him, when rightly performed; and was a figure of the sacrifice of Christ, which is of a sweet smelling savour to God; and this passage respects Gospel times, as appears from the following verse **Mal 1:11**, when Christ's sacrifice would be offered up, and so the oblation or meat offering made to cease, **Da 9:27** hence God would not accept of it any more; or else because not rightly offered, as it was not when any leaven was mixed with it, or that and honey were burnt with it; signifying it should be offered with sincerity, and without hypocrisy, and other carnal lusts; and indeed no legal sacrifices were acceptable to God but such as were offered up in the faith of Christ, and with a view to his sacrifice, without trusting to, and depending upon, the outward offering, as hypocrites and carnal persons did: wherefore to this is opposed a pure "minchah" or meat offering in the next verse **Mal 1:11**; which designs spiritual sacrifices, such as are now offered up under the Gospel dispensation; when offering and sacrifice of a ceremonial kind God desires not; he will have no more offered up; he takes no pleasure in them; they are not acceptable to him, being superseded by the sacrifice of his Son, they were types of; see Ps 40:6 and agreeably to which passages the words may be understood, as expressing the Lord's rejection of legal sacrifices in general among the Jews, which he would have no longer continued than till the Messiah came; by whose sufferings and death the daily sacrifice was caused to cease, **Da 9:27** when sacrifices of another kind should be offered up in the Gentile world, through every part of it, as in the following verse **Mal 1:11**.

{f} Mkb Mg ym "utinam vestrum aliquis", Gataker, Drusius. {g} Kimchi in 1 Chron. xxvi. 1. {h} Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1. {i} Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2. {k} In Misn. ib. {l} Baal Hatturim in Lev. vi. 13. {m} Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin, c. 2. sect. 4.

Malachi 1:11

Ver. 11. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same,.... From east to west, which is all habitable; not so north and south, as Kimchi observes, the extremes of which are not habitable. Abarbinel thinks that m in xrzmm is causal; and that the sense is, because of the motion of the sun in rising and setting, the Gentiles acknowledge God to be the first mover and cause of all things; and who, though they worship the host of heaven, yet ultimately direct their worship to the supreme Being, the Cause of causes; and supposes this to be a reproof of the priests, who might have learnt better even of the very Heathens; but the former is to the true sense, which declares the large extent of true spiritual worship in the Gentile world:

my name [shall be] great among the Gentiles; through the preaching of the Gospel, attended with the spirit and power of God to the conversion of many; whereby he himself is made known, and the perfections of his nature, and his several names, and particularly that of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus; who, as such, is called upon, and greatness and glory are ascribed unto him for the gift of his Son, and the mission of him into the world, to be the Saviour of Gentiles as well as of Jews:

and in every place incense [shall be] offered unto my name; some Jewish writers understand this of Israelites, the disciples of the wise men, studying in the law, and putting up their evening prayers to God, in every place where they live among the Gentiles; which are as acceptable to God as if they offered incense, and a pure offering; this way goes Jarchi, to which agrees the Targum; and this sense is given in the Talmud {n}, and other writings of theirs; but Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, interpret it of the Gentiles, though in different ways, and foreign from the sense of the text; which is, that not in Jerusalem the worship of God should be as formerly, but in all places in the Gentile world, and where particularly prayer should be made to God; see **Joh 4:20** comparable to incense for its fervency, fragrancy, and gratefulness, Ps 141:2:

and a pure offering; meaning either the Gentiles themselves, their souls and bodies, Isa 66:20 or their sacrifices of praise, good works, and alms deeds Heb 13:15 which, though imperfect, and not free from sin, may be said to be "pure", proceeding from a pure heart, sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and offered in a pure and spiritual manner, and through the pure incense of Christ's mediation:

for my name [shall be] great among; the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts; which is repeated for the certainty of it.

{n} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 110. 1. Tanchuma apud Abarbinel in loc.

Malachi 1:12

Ver. 12. But ye have profaned it,.... That is, the name of the Lord, which they are said to despise, **Mal 1:6** and pollute, **Mal 1:7** and is a reason why they and their offerings were rejected: and that they profaned the name of the Lord appears by this,

in that ye say, The table of the Lord [is] polluted: the same with "contemptible", **Mal 1:7** as Kimchi observes;

See Gill on "Mal 1:7":

and the fruit thereof, [even] his meat is contemptible; the word for fruit {o} sometimes is used for speech, the fruit of the lips, Isa 57:19 and taken in this sense here, as it is by some, may be understood either of the word of God, which commanded such and such sacrifices to be offered up upon the altar, and was despised, so Abarbinel: or the word of the priests, who were continually saying that what was offered up on the altar was contemptible, even the food which they ate of; so Jarchi and Kimchi. "Fruit" and "meat" seem to signify one and the same thing, and design the fruit and meat of the altar; either that which belonged to the Lord, the fat and the blood, which were offered to him, and were reckoned contemptible; or that which fell to the share of the priests, which they thought mean and worthless. Cocceius interprets this of Christ the Branch of the Lord, and fruit of the earth, **Isa 4:2** whose meat it was to do the will of him that sent him, and was despised and rejected by the Jews; and which was the reason of God's casting them off, and taking in the Gentiles.

{o} wbyn "et verbum ejus", Pagninus, Munster; "sermo ejus, [vel] eorum", Vatablus; so Ben Melech.

Malachi 1:13

Ver. 13. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness [is it]?.... These are either the words of the priests, saying what a wearisome and fatiguing business the temple service was to them, for which they thought they were poorly paid; such as slaying the sacrifices; removing the ashes from the altar; putting the wood in order; kindling the fire, and laying the sacrifice on it: or of the people that brought the sacrifice, who, when they brought a lamb upon their shoulders, and laid it down, said, how weary are we with bringing it, suggesting it was so fat and fleshy; so Kimchi and Abarbinel, to which sense the Targum seems to agree; which paraphrases it,

"but if ye say, lo, what we have brought is from our labour;"

and so the Syriac version, "and ye say, this is from our labour"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "and ye say, lo, from labour"; and the Septuagint version, "and ye say, these are from affliction"; meaning that what they brought was with great toil and labour, out of great poverty, misery, and affliction:

and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; or, "blown it" {p}; filled it with wind, that it might seem fat and fleshy, when it was poor and lean; so Abarbinel and Abendana: or ye have puffed, and panted, and blown, as persons weary with bringing such a heavy lamb, when it was so poor and light, that, if it was blown at, it would fall to the ground; so R. Joseph Kimchi: or ye have puffed at it, thrown it upon the ground by way of contempt; so David Kimchi: or, "ye have grieved him" {q}; the owner of the lamb, from whom they stole it; which sense is mentioned by Kimchi and Ben Melech; taking the word rendered "torn", in the next clause, for that which was "stolen". Jarchi says this is one of the eighteen words corrected by the scribes; and that instead of wtwa, "it", it should be read ytwa, "me": and the whole rendered, "and ye have grieved me"; the Lord, by bringing such sacrifices, and complaining of weariness, and by their hypocrisy and deceitfulness. Cocceius renders the words, "ye have made him to expire"; meaning the Messiah, whom the Jews put to death:

and ye have brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; See Gill on "Mal 1:8" and if the first word is rendered "stolen", as it may, this offering was an abomination to the Lord, Isa 61:8:

thus ye brought an offering; such an one as it was: or a "minchah", a meat offering, along with these abominable ones:

should I accept this of your hands? saith the Lord; which, when offered to a civil governor, would not be acceptable, **Mal 1:8** and when contrary to the express law of God.

{p} wtwa Mtxphw "et efflastis illam", Montanus; "anheli isto estis", Tigurine version; "exsufflare possetis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, "difflatis", Drusius; "sufflavistis illud", Burkius. {q} "Et contristastis illum"; so some in Vatablus.

Ver. 14. But cursed be the deceiver,.... A cunning, crafty, subtle man, who thinks and contrives, speaks and acts, in a very artful and deceiving manner; though some derive the word from lky, "to be able"; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "who is able"; to bring a proper offering, a perfect lamb, as it follows:

which hath in his flock a male; without spot and blemish, as the law requires:

and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing; that was a female, or had blemishes in it; for the law required what was perfect and without a blemish for a vow; what was superfluous or deficient in its parts might do for a freewill offering, but not for a vow, Le 22:18 wherefore such a man must be accursed, and such conduct must be highly resented by the Lord; had he it not in his power to do better, it might be excusable; but then it would be better not to have vowed at all; but to vow a sacrifice to the Lord, and deal deceitfully with him, when he could have brought an offering agreeable to his vow, and to the law, this is aggravated wickedness:

for I [am] a great King, saith the Lord of hosts; the King of the whole world, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and therefore to be honoured and reverenced suitable to his dignity and greatness:

and my name [is] dreadful among the heathen; because of his judgments executed among them; or rather because of his Gospel preached unto them; for this may be considered as a prophecy of what would be when the Gospel should be spread in the Gentile world; and therefore if they, when he was made known to them, would fear and reverence him; then the Israelites, to whom he had given such instances and proofs of his love, ought to have shown a greater regard unto him.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**
Malachi 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO MALACHI 2

This chapter contains a reproof both of priests and people for their sins. It begins with the priests, **Mal 2:1** and threatens, in case they attend not to glorify the name of the Lord, they and their blessings should be cursed, their seed corrupted, dung spread upon them, and they took away with it, **Mal 2:2** and the end of this commandment being sent them, of giving glory to the name of God, was that the covenant might appear to be with Levi, or him that was typified by him, **Mal 2:4** of which covenant some account is given, with the reason why the blessings of it were given to him, with whom it was, **Mal 2:5** who is described by the true doctrine he preached; by the purity of his lips; by the peaceableness and righteousness of his walk and conversation; and by his usefulness and success in turning many from sin, **Mal 2:6** and it being part of the priest's office to preserve true knowledge, and communicate it, it is the duty of the people to seek to him for it; since he is the messenger of the Lord, **Mal 2:7** but as for the priests of those times the prophet respects, they were apostates from the way of the Lord; made others to stumble at the law, and corrupted the covenant; and therefore became contemptible, base, and mean, in the sight of the people, **Mal 2:8** who are next reproved for their marrying with those of other nations, idolatrous persons; and using polygamy and divorces, which were a profanation of the covenant of their fathers; a piece of perfidy and treachery among themselves; an abomination to the Lord; a profanation of his holiness; and led to idolatry, **Mal 2:10** wherefore they are threatened to be cut off from the tabernacles of Jacob, and their sacrifices to be rejected; insomuch that the altar is represented as covered with weeping and tears, because disregarded, **Mal 2:12**. The reason of which was, because marrying more wives than one, and these strange women, was dealing treacherously with their lawful wives; was contrary to the first creation of man, and the end of it; and therefore such practices ought to be avoided; and the rather, since putting away was hateful to the Lord, **Mal 2:14** and the chapter is concluded with a charge against them, that they wearied the Lord with their wicked words; affirming that the Lord took delight in the men that did evil; and that there were no judgment, truth, nor righteousness, in him, **Mal 2:17**.

Ver. 1. And now, O ye priests,.... That despised and profaned the name of the Lord; that suffered such corrupt and illegal sacrifices to be brought and offered up:

this commandment [is] for you: of giving glory to the name of God; of taking care of his worship; of teaching the people knowledge, and directing them in the way in which they should walk; as follows:

Malachi 2:2

Ver. 2. If ye will not hear,.... The commandment enjoined them; or the Gospel preached to them by Christ, and his apostles:

and if ye will not lay [it] to heart to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of hosts; which they had despised and profaned before; if they did not take care of his worship and service, and honour the Messiah sent unto them, in whom the name of the Lord was:

I will even send a curse upon you; both upon priests and people; those that bring the bad offerings, and those that receive them, as Kimchi; though Abarbinel restrains it to the priests:

and I will curse your blessings, either with which the priests blessed the people; or with which both they and the people were blessed; namely, their temporal blessings, such as their corn, and wine, and oil: and what wicked men have of this world, they have it with a curse, and not a blessing, as the righteous have; and therefore a little which they have, is better than much enjoyed by the wicked, Ps 37:16:

yea, I have cursed them already; that is, from the time they began to despise his name, and not give him the glory due unto him, as Kimchi and Abarbinel explain it:

because ye do not lay [it] to heart; to glorify God.

Malachi 2:3

Ver. 3. Behold, I will corrupt your seed,.... Or, "the seed for you" {r}; that is, for your sake, as Kimchi and Ben Melech explain it; meaning the seed they cast into the earth, which the Lord threatens to corrupt and destroy; so that it should not spring up again, and bring forth any increase: or, "rebuke" {s} it, as the word sometimes signifies; and so the Targum,

"behold, I will rebuke you in the increase, the fruit (son) of the seed."

The sense is the same; corrupting the seed being a rebuke to them; and rebuking the seed being a corruption of that, or hindering it from growing up. It is a threatening of a sore famine that should be in the Jewish nation; and which Cocceius thinks was that which happened in the days of Claudius Caesar, Ac 11:28. The Septuagint version renders it, "behold, I separate to you the shoulder"; the Arabic version, "the right hand", or arm; and the Vulgate Latin is, "behold, I will cast forth to you the arm"; the right shoulder of the sacrifice, which was given to the priests, and here threatened to be cast to them with indignation, **Le 7:32** but the former sense is best:

and spread dung upon your faces, [even] the dung of your solemn feasts; that is, the dung of their beasts which were slain for sacrifice at their solemn feasts: so this word gx is used for a beast offered for sacrifice at a festival, Ps 118:27. The sense is, that their sacrifices and solemn feasts were so far from being acceptable to God, that he would reject both them and their persons, and would cast the very dung of the creatures brought for sacrifice into their faces, and spread it over them: a phrase expressive of the utmost contempt of them, and of exposing them to the greatest shame and confusion for their sins. So the Targum,

"I will make manifest the shame of your sins upon your faces; and will cause to cease the magnificence of your feasts."

The Septuagint render it, the ventricle, or "maw"; which was given to the priests, De 18:3 and in which the dung was contained:

and [one] shall take you away with it; with the dung spread upon them; they looking like a heap of dung, being covered with it, and had in no more account than that: or "to it" {t}; that is, as Jarchi explains it, to the dung of the beasts of your sacrifices they shall carry you; or you shall be carried to it, that ye may be rejected and despised as that. Kimchi's note is

"the iniquity (you are guilty of) shall carry you to this contempt; measure for measure; you have despised me, and ye shall be despised:"

or "with him", or "to himself" {u}; meaning he, or it that shall take them away; either the wind or dung; or the enemy, as Aben Ezra interprets it; by whom the Romans may be designed, who took them away out of their own land, and carried them captive. According to the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, this is to be understood of God, who render the words, "I will take you together", or "with it".

{r} Mkl "propter vos", Munster, Drusius. {s} reg "increpabo", Tigurine version; "increpo", Drusius, Cocceius; "increpans", Burkius. {t} wyla, eiv to auto, Sept.; "ad istud", so some in Vatablus, De Dieu. {u} "Ad se", Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Tigurine version: Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Calvin, Burkius.

Malachi 2:4

Ver. 4. And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you,.... See Gill on "Mal 2:1":

that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts; not that the ceremonial law might be confirmed and established, on which the Levitical priesthood was founded; for it was the will of God that that should be abolished, because of the weakness and unprofitableness of it; but that the covenant of grace made with Christ, the antitype of Levi, with whom the true Urim and Thummim are, De 33:8, who has a more excellent ministry and priesthood than his, might take place, be made manifest, and be exhibited under the Gospel dispensation; of which, and of the person with whom it is, an account is given in the following verses.

Malachi 2:5

Ver. 5. My covenant was with him of life and peace,.... Not with Aaron, nor with Phinehas; nor is it to be understood of a covenant, promising temporal life and outward prosperity to either of them; Aaron living a hundred and twenty three years, Nu 33:39 and Phinehas, according to some Jewish writers, above three hundred years, which they gather from Jud 20:28 but of the covenant made with Christ from everlasting, called "a covenant of life", because it was made with Christ the Word of life, who was with the Father from all eternity, and in time was made manifest in the flesh; and was made in behalf of persons ordained to eternal life, and in which that was promised and given to them in him; and in which it was agreed that he should become man, and lay down his life as such, that they might enjoy it: and it is called a "covenant of peace", because the scheme of peace and reconciliation was drawn in it, and agreed unto; Christ was appointed in it to be the Peacemaker; and in consequence of which he was sent to procure peace, and he has made it by the blood of his cross: and this covenant may be said to have been and to be "with him"; because it was made with him from all eternity, as the head and representative of his people, and he had all the blessings and promises of it put into his hands; and it stands fast with him, and will do so for evermore.

And I gave them to him; namely, the blessings of life and peace; eternal life is the gift of God; and not only the promise of it, but that itself, was given to Christ in covenant for his people, and a power to give it to as many as the Father gave to him, Ps 21:4 **2Ti 1:1** he gave him also peace to make, put this work of peacemaking into his hand; and he allows it to be made by him, and that it is rightly effected; and from his blood and righteousness peace springs to his people; and they enjoy peace in him and through him, yea, all prosperity and happiness:

[for] the fear wherewith he feared me; because of his obedience to the precept and penalty of the law; because of his righteousness, and sufferings, and death, by means of which life and peace came to his people, and in which he showed great fear and reverence of God, **Heb 5:7** the word "for" is not in the original text, and may be left out in a version, or supplied with "and"; and the sense be, besides the blessings of life and peace, I also gave him the fear with which he feared me; which must be understood of the grace of fear bestowed on him as man: so the Septuagint version, "I gave unto him in fear to fear me"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "and I gave him fear, and he feared me": and the Arabic version, "I gave him fear, that he might fear me": the Targum is,

"I gave him the perfect doctrine of the law, or the doctrine of the perfect law (see **Jas 1:25**) that he might fear before me."

And was afraid before my name; frightened, and put into consternation, as he was when in the garden, and he began to be heavy and sore amazed, Mr 14:33 or he was broken and bruised, as Kimchi interprets the word here used, because of the name of the Lord, to satisfy his justice, fulfil his law, and glorify all his perfections.

Malachi 2:6

Ver. 6. The law of truth was in his mouth,.... The Gospel, the word and doctrine of truth; which comes from the God of truth; is concerning Christ the truth and men are guided into it by the Spirit of truth; it contains most glorious truths, and nothing but truth: and this was in the mouth of Christ, being put there by his Father, who gave him what he should say, and what he should speak; and which was preached by him in the most faithful manner, and so as it never was by any other, for which he was abundantly qualified:

and iniquity was not found in his lips; there was none in his nature; nor in his heart; nor in his life; nor in his lips; none could be found there by men nor devils: there was no falsehood in his doctrines; no deceit in his promises; no dissimulation in his expressions of love to men; nothing vain, light, frothy, and unprofitable, dropped from him in common conversation; no reviling in return to his enemies; nor any impatient expressions or murmurings at the time of his sufferings and death, **1Pe 2:22**:

he walked with me in peace and equity: he walked with God, he had communion with him; though he was sometimes left alone, he was not alone, God was with him; he was conformable to his will, and walked according to it, in obedience to his law, moral and ceremonial, and in the discharge of all religious duties: he walked with God "in peace", without quarrelling with any of his dispensations towards him; he did nothing to break the peace that subsisted between them, but always did the things which pleased his father, and had peace in what he did; and he walked with him in "equity", or righteousness, fulfilling his righteous law, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness:

and did turn many away from iniquity; doctrinal and practical; which is to be understood, not of a bare reformation only in principle and practice, but of true real conversion; of which there were many instances under the ministry of his forerunner John the Baptist, and under his own ministry when in person on earth; and under the ministry of his apostles, attended with his Spirit and power, both in Judea, and in the Gentile world.

Malachi 2:7

Ver. 7. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge,.... Or "shall keep knowledge", as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; or "do keep knowledge", as the Arabic version; and so the Syriac version, "for the lips of the priest drop knowledge"; all this is true of Christ our great High Priest; for as it was predicted of him, that his lips should keep knowledge, so they have kept it, and do keep it; not concealing it, but preserving it, and communicating it freely and openly; as he did to his disciples and followers when here on earth, and by them to others; and still does by his Spirit, giving to men the knowledge of themselves and state; the knowledge of himself, and the way of salvation by him, and of the truths of the Gospel:

and they should seek the law at his mouth; not the law of Moses, but the doctrine of grace, and any wholesome instruction and advice; which he is greatly qualified to give, being the wonderful Counsellor: it may be rendered, "they shall seek", or "do seek"; and which has been fulfilled, especially in the Gentiles, and in the isles that waited for his law or doctrine, Isa 11:10:

for he [is] the messenger of the Lord of hosts; or "angel" {w}; he is the Angel of God's presence, and of the covenant, Isa 63:9 **Mal 3:1** which name he has from being sent, for he came not of himself, but his Father sent him; he was sent as a priest to atone for the sins of his people, and to be their Saviour; and as a prophet, to instruct and teach them; and therefore they should seek to him for knowledge, and attend his word and ordinances, and implore his spirit and grace.

{w} Kalm aggelov, Sept; "angelus", V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Burkius.

Malachi 2:8

Ver. 8. But ye are departed out of the way,.... Of truth and righteousness, of life and peace, of eternal salvation and happiness, pointed to by Christ and his forerunner, and by his apostles and ministers that followed him, and which was clearly showed in the preaching of the Gospel: this was the character of the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, in Christ's time, to which the prophet seems to have respect; who not only failed in their observance of legal sacrifices, complained of in the former chapter **Mal 1:1**, but left that way of atonement and salvation they directed to, and led others out of the way with them:

ye have caused many to stumble at the law; at the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ; which was the stumbling stone they fell at, seeking for righteousness, and directing others to seek for it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, **Ro 9:32**:

ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts: that which was foreshadowed by the Levitical priesthood and covenant, namely, the covenant of grace, dispensed under the Gospel dispensation by the ministry of the word and ordinances; which they rejected, despised, and set at nought, and as much as in them lay endeavoured to make void, by not attending to these things, nor suffering others, but doing all they could to bring them into disuse, contempt, and disgrace.

Malachi 2:9

Ver. 9. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base,.... When their city and temple were destroyed by the Romans, and they were carried captive by them, and became a taunt and a proverb in all places where they came:

before all the people; the nations of the world, among whom they were scattered:

according as ye have not kept my ways; neither those which the law directed to, either moral or ceremonial; nor what the Gospel directed to, the ordinances and institutions of Christ, particularly baptism, which the Jews rejected against themselves, **Lu 7:30**:

but have been partial in the law; in the observance of it, attending to the lesser, and taking no notice of the weightier matters of it, as the Jews are charged by Christ, Mt 23:23 and in the interpretation of it, restraining its sense only to outward actions, for which they are reproved, **Mt 5:1** or "received faces", or "accepted persons in the law" {x}; in matters of the law they were concerned in, they had respect to the persons of men, by giving the sense of it, and pronouncing judgment, in favour of some, to the prejudice of others, wrongly.

{x} hrwtb Mynp Myavwnw "et accepistis faciem in lege", Pagninus; "assumentes facies", Montanus; "suscipitis faciem", Piscator; "accipitis faciem", Cocceius; "et ferentes faciem in lege", Burkius.

Malachi 2:10

Ver. 10. Have we not all one father?.... Whether this is understood of Adam the first man, of whose blood all nations of the earth are made, and who in the same sense is the father of all living, as Eve was the mother of all living; or of Abraham the father of the Jewish people, of whom, as their father, they used to glory; or of Jacob, as Kimchi and Aben Ezra interpret it, whom the Jews used to call our father Jacob; or of God, who is the Father of all men by creation, and of the Jews by national adoption of them; and who may the rather be thought to be meant, since it follows,

hath not one God created us? either as men, or formed us as a body politic; which may serve to explain what is meant by their having one father: whichever is the sense of these words, the argument from hence is strong; that there ought to be no partiality used in the law, or any respect had to persons, in that the rich and the poor have all one Father and one Creator; see **Jas 2:1**:

why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother; by perverting justice, having respect to persons, favouring one to the prejudice of another, as it follows:

by profaning the covenant of your fathers? the covenant made with them at Sinai, as Jarchi explains it; the law that was then enjoined them, particularly such as forbid respect of persons, Le 19:15 some think, as Aben Ezra, that a new section here begins, and that the prophet proceeds to a new reproof, and for another sin these people were guilty of, in marrying wives of another nation, contrary to the law in Ex 34:15 which was dealing treacherously with one another, and profaning the covenant of their fathers.

Ver. 11. Judah hath dealt treacherously,.... Not only every man against his brother, by being partial in the law; or against the women of their nation, by marrying others; or against their wives, by putting them away; but against Christ the Son of God by betraying and delivering him up into the hands of the Gentiles, to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified:

and an abomination is committed in Israel, and in Jerusalem; which was the taking of the true Messiah with wicked hands, condemning him and putting him to death, even the shameful and accursed death of the cross; which was done in the land of Israel, and in and near the city of Jerusalem:

for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord, which he loved; Christ, who is the Lord's Holy One, holiness itself, the most holy, and holiness to the Lord for his people; and who is his dear Son, the Son of his love, whom he loved from everlasting, continued to love in time amidst all his meanness, sorrows, and sufferings, and will love for evermore; him the Jews profaned by blaspheming him, falsely accusing him, and condemning him; by spitting upon him, buffeting, scourging, and crucifying him: some interpret this "holiness" of the soul of Judah, which was holy before the Lord, and loved, as the Targum; so Jarchi of Judah himself, or Israel, who was holiness to the Lord; and others of the holy place, the sanctuary, and all holy things belonging thereto; and others of the holy state of marriage, since it follows:

and hath married the daughter of a strange god; which the Targum paraphrases thus,

"and they were pleased to take to them wives, the daughters of the people;"

the Gentiles, such as Moabites, Ammonites, and the like: and this sense is followed by most interpreters, though the phrase seems rather to be expressive of idolatry; and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions interpret it of their being intent upon, and serving, strange gods; and as the Jews rejected the Son of God, and his word, ordinances, and worship, they had not the true God, nor did they worship him, but became guilty of idolatry; and besides, as they rejected the King Messiah from being their King, so they declared they had no king but Caesar, an idolatrous emperor, and joined with the idolatrous Gentiles in putting Christ to death, Joh 19:12.

Ver. 12. The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this,.... That is guilty of such treachery, wickedness, and idolatry: or "to the man that doeth this" {y}; all that belong to him, his children and substance: it denotes the utter destruction, not of a single man and his family only, but of the whole Jewish nation and its polity, civil and ecclesiastical, as follows:

the master and the scholar out of the tabernacles of Jacob; the Targum paraphrases it,

"the son, and son's son, out of the cities of Jacob;"

agreeable to which is Kimchi's note,

"it is as if it was said, there shall not be left in his house one alive; that there shall not be in his house one that answers him, that calls by name."

In the Hebrew text it is, "him that is awake, and him that answers" {z}; which the Talmudists {a} explain, the former of the wise men or masters, and the latter of the disciples of the wise men; to which sense our version agrees: but by "him that waketh or watcheth", according to Cocceius, is meant the civil magistrate, who watches for the good of the commonwealth, and so may design the elders and rulers of the people; and by him that "answereth", the prophet, who returns answers when he is consulted in things belonging to the law of God, and such were the scribes and lawyers.

And him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts; the priests, that offered sacrifice for the people; so that hereby is threatened an entire destruction, both of the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jews, that there should be no prince, prophet, and priest among them; all should be removed out of the tents of Jacob, or cities of Israel; see **Ho 3:4**.

{y} vyal "viro", Drusius, Cocceius, Burkius, De Dieu; "filius et qui fecerit istud", Piscator. {z} hnew re "vigilantem et respondentem", Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius, Grotius; "vigilantem et responsantem", Junius &

Tremellius; "vigilem et respondentem", Burkius. {a} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 82. 1.

Malachi 2:13

Ver. 13. And this have ye done again,.... Or "in the second" {b} place; to their rejection and ill treatment of Christ they added their hypocritical prayers and tears, as follows:

covering the altar of the Lord with tears and weeping, and with crying out; for the Messiah they vainly expect, pretending great humiliation for their sins: though some, as Kimchi and Aben Ezra, make the first evil to be their offering illegal sacrifices on the altar, complained of in the former chapter **Mal 1:1**; and this second, their marrying strange wives, on account of which their lawful wives came into the house of God, and wept over the altar before the Lord, complaining of the injury that was done them:

insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand; which expresses an utter rejection and abrogation of legal sacrifices; and which some make to be the reason of their covering the altar with tears and weeping: or the altar is represented as weeping, because sacrifice is no more offered upon it; see **Da 9:27**.

{b} tynv "secundo", Pagninus, Vatablus, Calvin, Cocceius, Burkius.

Malachi 2:14

Ver. 14. Yet ye say, Wherefore?.... What is the meaning of the women covering the altar with tears? as if they knew not what was the reason of it, when they were so notoriously guilty of breach of covenant with them; which is an instance of their impudence, as Abarbinel observes: or, "if ye say, wherefore?" as the Targum and Kimchi interpret the words; should you say, what is the reason why the Lord will not regard nor receive our offerings? the answer is ready,

Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth:

when espoused together in their youthful days, the Lord was present at that solemn contract, and saw the obligations they were laid under to each other, and he was called upon by both parties to be a witness of the same; and at the present time he was a witness how agreeably the wives of the Israelites had behaved towards their husbands, and how treacherously they had acted towards them; he saw and knew, that, whatever pretensions they made, they did not love them, nor behave as they should towards them; and therefore had just cause of complaint against them, and must be a witness for the one, and against the other: this sin of hating and divorcing their wives, or of marrying others besides them, which prevailed much in our Lord's time, is particularly mentioned, though they were guilty of many other sins, as a reason of the Lord's not accepting their offerings: the aggravations of it are, that they had broken a contract God was witness to, and dealt injuriously with wives they had espoused in the days of their youth; see **Pr 2:17**:

against whom thou hast dealt treacherously; by divorce or polygamy: the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "whom thou hast despised": and the Septuagint and Arabic versions, "whom thou hast left"; divorced and took others, which arose from hatred and contempt of their former: other aggravations follow:

yet [is] she thy companion; or, "and she is", or "though she is thy companion" {c}: has been so in time past, and ought to be so still, and so accounted: the wife is a part of a man's self, is one flesh with him; a partaker of what he has; a partner with him in prosperity and adversity; a companion in life, civil and religious, and ought to remain so till death part them; for, whom God has put together, let no man put asunder:

and the wife of thy covenant; wherefore either to divorce her, or marry another, was a breach of covenant; for by "covenant" is not meant the covenant of God made with the people of Israel, in which they both were; but the covenant of marriage made between them, and which was broken by such practices.

{c} Ktrbx ayhw "et ipsa est socia tua", Montanus, Drusius, Burkius; "quum sit socia tua", Pagninus, Munster, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

Ver. 15. And did not he make one?.... That is, did not God make one man, and out of his rib one woman? did he not make man, male and female? did he not make one pair, one couple, only Adam and Eve, whom he joined together in marriage? or rather, did he not make one woman only, and brought her to Adam to be his wife? which shows that his intention and will were, that one man should have but one wife at a time; the contrary to which was the then present practice of the Jews:

Yet had he the residue of the spirit; it was not for want of power that he made but one woman of Adam's rib, and breathed into her the breath of life, or infused into her a human soul or spirit; he could have made many women at the same time; and as the Father of spirits, having the residue of them with him, or a power left to make as many as he pleased, he could have imparted spirits unto them, and given Adam more wives than one:

And wherefore one? what is the reason why he made but one woman, when he could have made ten thousand, or as many as he pleased? the answer is,

That he might seek a godly seed; or "a seed of God" {d}; a noble excellent seed; a legitimate offspring, born in true and lawful wedlock; see **1Co 7:14** a seed suitable to the dignity of human nature, made after the image of God, and not like that of brute beasts, promiscuous and uncertain:

Therefore take heed to your spirit; to your affections, that they do not go after other women, and be led thereby to take them in marriage, and to despise and divorce the lawful wife, as it follows:

and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth; by marrying another, or divorcing her: these words are differently rendered and interpreted by some; but the sense given seems to be the true one, and most agreeable to the scope of the place. Some render the first clause, "hath not one made?" {e} that is, did not the one God, who is the only living and true God, make one man or one woman? and then the sense is the same as before; or did not that one God make, constitute, and appoint, that the woman should be the man's companion, and the wife of his covenant, as in the latter part of the preceding verse **Mal 2:13**? or, "did not one do?" {f} that is, so as we have done, take another wife besides the wife of his youth? and so they are the words of the people to the prophets, justifying their practice by example; by the example of Abraham, whom some of the

Jewish writers think is intended by the "one", as in Isa 51:2. The Targum is,

"was not one Abraham alone, from whom the world was created?"

or propagated. Kimchi gives it as his own sense, in these words;

"Abraham, who was one, and the father of all that follow him in his faith, did not do as ye have done; for he did not follow his lust, nor even marry Sarah, but so that he might cause the seed of God to remain;"

yet he mentions it as his father's sense, that they are the words of the people to the prophet, expressed in a way of interrogation, saying, did not our father Abraham, who was one, do as we have done? who left his wife, and married Hagar his maid, though he had the residue or excellency of the spirit, and was a prophet; to whom the prophet replies, and what did that one seek? a godly seed; which is, as if it was said, when he married Hagar, it was to seek a seed, because he had no seed of Sarah his wife. A seed was promised him, in which all nations of the earth were to be blessed; he sought not to gratify his lust, but to obtain this seed, the Messiah, to whom the promises were made, as the apostle argues, **Ga 3:16** "he saith not, and to seeds as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ"; called here the "godly seed", or the "seed God" {g}, as some choose to render the words; that is, that seed which is God, who is a divine Person, God and man in one person; or which is of God, of his immediate production, without the help of a man; which the Jews call the seed that comes from another place, and which they use as a periphrasis of the Messiah. So on those words in **Ge 4:25**, "she called his name Seth, for God hath appointed me another seed",

"says R. Tanchuma, in the name of R. Samuel, she has respect to that seed which comes from another place; and what is this? this is the King Messiah {h}."

And the same Rabbi elsewhere {i} observes, on those words in Ge 19:32, "that we may preserve seed of our father",

"it is not written, that we may preserve a son of our father, but that we may preserve seed of our father; that seed which is he that comes from another place; and what is this? this is the King Messiah."

Now as Abraham had the promise of a son, and his wife was barren, he took the method he did that he might have one, the son of the promise, a type of the Messiah, and from whom he should spring; and this is sufficient to justify him in it: besides, he did not deal treacherously with Sarah his wife, for it was with her good will and by her authority he did this thing; but do you take heed to your spirit, that no one of you deal treacherously with the wife of his youth, to leave her, and marry the daughter of a strange God: and much the same sense Jarchi takes notice of as the Agadah, or the interpretation of their ancient Rabbins. Some render the words, "and not one does this"; that is, deals treacherously with the wife of his youth, that has the residue of the spirit, or the least spark of the Spirit of God in him; and how should anyone do it, seeking a godly seed? therefore take heed to your spirit, &c.; so De Dieu. But according to others the sense is,

"there is not one of you that does according to the law, whose spirit remains with him that is not mixed with the daughter of a strange god;"

which is Aben Ezra's note. But according to Abarbinel the sense is, not one only has done this, committed this evil, in marrying more and strange women; not some only, and the rest have the spirit with them, and keep it pure from this sin; so that a godly seed cannot be procreated from you; therefore take heed to your spirit.

{d} Myhla erz "semen Dei", Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Burkius. {e} hve dxa alw "nonue unus fecit?" V. L. Menochius, Tirinus. {f} "Et ne unus fecit?" Pagninus, Montanus; "et unus ille (Abramus) ita egit?" Grotius; "annon unus hoc fecit?" Tigurine version; so Joseph Kimchi. {g} Myhla erz "semen Deus", Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. Ver. l. 8. c. 2. p. 550. {h} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 20. 4. Midrash Ruth, fol. 36. 1. {i} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 51. fol. 46. 1. Midrash Ruth, fol. 35. 4.

Malachi 2:16

Ver. 16. For the Lord the God of Israel saith, that he hateth putting away,.... The divorcing of wives; for though this was suffered because of the hardness of their hearts, it was not approved of by the Lord; nor was it from the beginning; and it was disagreeable, and even hateful to him, Mt 19:8 in the margin of some Bibles the words are rendered, "if he hate her, put her away"; and so the Targum,

"but if thou hatest her, put her away;"

to which agree the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, and Arabic versions; and this sense made mention of in both Talmuds, and is thought to be agreeable to the law in De 24:3 though the law there speaks of a fact that might be, and not of what ought to be; wherefore the former sense is best; and this other seems to have been at first calculated to favour the practice of the Jews, who put away their wives through hatred to them. The Jews were very much inclined to divorce their wives upon very trivial occasions; if they did not dress their food well, were not of good behaviour, or not so modest as became the daughters of Israel; if they did not find favour with their husbands; and, especially, if they had entertained a hatred of them: so says R. Judah {k},

"if he hate her, let him put her away:"

but this is by some of them restrained to a second wife; for of the first they say,

"it is not proper to be hasty to put away a first wife; but a second, if he hates her, let him put her away {l}"

and R. Eleazer says {m}, whoever divorces his first wife, even the altar sheds tears for him, referring to the words in **Mal 2:13** and divorces of this kind they only reckon lawful among the Israelites, and found it upon this passage; for so they make God to speak after this manner {n},

"in Israel I have granted divorces; among the nations of the world I have not granted divorces. R. Chananiah, in the name of R. Phinehas, observes, that in every other section it is written, "the Lord of hosts"; but here it is written, "the God of Israel", to teach thee that the holy blessed God does not put his name to divorces (or allow them) but in Israel only. R. Chayah Rabba says, the Gentiles have no divorces."

But some of them have better understanding of these words, and more truly give the sense of them thus, as R. Jochanan does, who interprets them, "the putting away of the wife is hateful {o};"

it is so to God, and ought not to be done by men but in case of adultery, as our Lord has taught, **Mt 5:32** and which was the doctrine of the school of Shammai in Christ's time, who taught,

"that no man should divorce his wife, unless he found in her filthiness;"

i.e. that she was guilty of adultery; though this Maimonides restrains to the first wife, as before: but the house of Hillell, who lived in the same time, was of a different mind, and taught that

"if she burnt his food;"

either over dressed or over salted it, according to De 24:1. R. Akiba says, if he found another more beautiful than her, according to De 24:1, he might divorce her {p}; of the form of a divorce, See Gill on "Mt 5:31". Those interpreters among Christians that go this way do not look upon this as an approbation of divorce, on account of hatred; but that so to do is better than to retain them with hatred of them, seeing it was connived at, or than to take other wives with them.

For [one] covereth violence with his garment, or "on his garment",

saith the Lord of hosts; as he that puts away his wife does her an open injury, which though he may cover, pretending the law, which connives at divorces; yet the violence done to his wife is as manifest as the garment upon his back: though those who think the former words are an instruction to put away wives, when hated, consider this as a reason why they should do so; because, by retaining them, and yet hating them, and taking other wives to them, is doing them a real injury, whatever cover or pretence may be used; because, if dismissed, they might be loved by, and married to, other men. Aben Ezra seems to have hit the sense of these words, when he makes this to be the object of God's hatred, as well as the former; his note is,

"the Lord hateth him that putteth away his wife that is pure, and he hates him that covereth; or God sees his violence which is done in secret."

Mr. Pocock proposes a conjecture, which is very ingenious and probable, that as the words will bear the construction Aben Ezra gives, that God hates putting away, and hates that one should put violence upon or over his garment; by "garment" he thinks may be meant a man's lawful wife, which is as a garment to him; and by "violence" a second wife, or other wives, taken to the injury, hurt, and vexation of the former; and the covering, or superinducing violence over the garment, is marrying an unlawful wife, over or with, or above his lawful one: and the sense is, that as God hates divorce, so he hates polygamy:

therefore take heed to your spirit, that you deal not treacherously; See Gill on "Mal 2:15".

{k} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 90. 2. {l} Maimon. Hilchot Gerushin, c. 10, 21, 22. {m} T. Bab. Gittin, ib. {n} T. Hieros. Kiddushin, c. 1. fol. 58. 3. {o} T. Bab. Gittin, ut supra. {p} Misn. Gittin, c. 9. sect. 10.

Malachi 2:17

Ver. 17. Ye have wearied the Lord with your words,.... As well as with their actions; see Isa 43:24 this is said after the manner of men, they saying those things which were displeasing and provoking to him, and which he could not bear to hear; or otherwise weariness properly cannot be attributed to God:

Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? as if they were clear and innocent; or, as the Targum, "if ye should say"; though they might not express themselves in words in such an impudent manner; yet should they say so in their hearts, or supposing they should utter such words with their lips, out of the abundance of their evil hearts, the answer is ready:

When ye say, Every one that doeth evil [is] good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; which they concluded from the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the righteous; so murmuring at, and complaining of, the providence of God; he acting as if he delighted in wicked men, and as if they that did evil were the most grateful and acceptable to him:

or, if this was not the case,

Where [is] the God of judgment? why does he not arise and show himself to be a God that judgeth the earth, by taking vengeance on the wicked, and granting prosperity to his people? De Dieu takes these last words to be the words of the prophet, and thinks that wa is a particle of exclamation, and should be rendered "O"; and that the prophet expresses his wonder at the patience and longsuffering of God in bearing such impiety and blasphemy as before delivered. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are, "where is the God of righteousness?" either God the Father, who is righteous in all his ways, and faithful in the fulfilment of all his promises; or, Christ the Lord our righteousness, who was to come, and is come into this world for judgment, as well as to bring in an everlasting righteousness. This may be considered as a scoff of wicked men at the long delay of the Messiah's coming, when they expected outward prosperity and happiness; just as the scoffers in the last day will mock at the promise of his second coming, **2Pe 3:3** and so the words, with which the next chapter begins **Mal 3:1**, are an answer to these.

Malachi 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO MALACHI 3

This chapter begins with a prophecy of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ; and of the coming of Christ, and the effects and consequences of it, with respect both to the righteous and the wicked; and it contains accusations and charges of sin against the Jews, intermixed with exhortations to repentance. John the Baptist is promised to be sent, and is described by his office as a messenger, and by his work, to prepare the way of the Lord; and the Messiah is prophesied of, who is described by his characters; with respect to himself, the Lord and Messenger of the covenant; with respect to the truly godly among the Jews, as the object of their desire and delight; whose coming is spoken of as a certain thing, and which would be sudden; and the place is mentioned he should come into, **Mal 3:1** and this his coming is represented as terrible to the wicked, and as trying and purifying to the righteous, expressed by the various similes of a refiner's fire, and fuller's soap; and the end answered by it, their offering a righteous offering to the Lord, **Mal 3:2** but with respect to the wicked, he declares he should be a swift witness against them, whose characters are particularly given, and this assured from his immutability; the consequence of which to the saints is good, being their security from destruction, **Mal 3:5** and next a charge is commenced against the wicked Jews, as that in general they had for a long time revolted from the Lord, and were guilty of sins of omission and commission, and are therefore exhorted to return to the Lord, with a promise that he will return to them, and yet they refuse, **Mal 3:7** and, in particular, that they were guilty of sacrilege, and so accounted, even the whole nation, in withholding tithes and sacrifices, which they are exhorted to bring in; to which they are encouraged with promises of blessings of prosperity and protection, **Mal 3:8** and that they had spoken impudent and blasphemous words against the Lord; which, though excepted to, is proved by producing their own words, **Mal 3:13** and by the contrary behaviour of those that feared the Lord, who were taken notice of by him, and were dear unto him, **Mal 3:16** wherefore it is suggested, that the time would come when there would be a manifest difference made between the one and the other, **Mal 3:18**.

Ver. 1. Behold, I will send my messenger,.... These are the words of Christ, in answer to the question put in the last verse of the preceding chapter **Mal 2:17**, "Where [is] the God of judgment?" intimating that he would quickly appear, and previous to his coming send his messenger or angel; not the angel of death to destroy the wicked, as Jarchi thinks; nor an angel from heaven, as Kimchi; nor Messiah the son of Joseph; as Aben Ezra; nor the Prophet Malachi himself, as Abarbinel; but the same that is called Elijah the prophet, **Mal 4:5** and is no other than John the Baptist, as is clear from Mt 11:10 called a "messenger" or "angel", not by nature, but by office; and Christ's messenger, because sent by him and on his errand; and which shows the power and authority of Christ in sending forth ministers; his superior excellency to John, and his existence before him, or he could not be sent by him, and so before his incarnation; for John was sent by him before he was in the flesh, and consequently this is a proof of the proper deity of Christ: and the word "behold" is prefixed to this, in order to raise the attention of those that put the above question, and all others; as well as to show that the message John was sent upon was of the greatest moment and importance; as that the Messiah was just ready to appear, his kingdom was at hand, and the Jews ought to believe in him; though it also respects the coming of the Messiah, spoken of in the latter part of the text:

and he shall prepare the way before me; by declaring to the Jews that he was born, and was in the midst of them; by pointing him out unto them; by preaching the doctrine of repentance, and exhorting them to believe in him; and by administering the ordinance of baptism in general to all proper subjects, and in particular to Christ, by which he was made manifest to Israel; See Gill on "Mr 1:2" the allusion is to kings and great men sending persons before them when on a journey, to give notice of their coming, and provide for them:

and the Lord, whom ye seek; this is the person himself speaking, the Son of God, and promised Messiah, the Lord of all men, and particularly of his church and people, in right of marriage, by virtue of redemption, and by being their Head and King; so Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it of him, and even Abarbinel {q} himself; the Messiah that had been so long spoken of and so much expected, and whom the Jews sought after, either in a scoffing manner, expressed in the above question, or rather seriously; some as a temporal deliverer, to free them from the Roman yoke, and bring them into a state of liberty, prosperity, and grandeur; and others as a spiritual Saviour, to deliver from sin, law, hell, and death, and save them with an everlasting salvation:

shall suddenly come to his temple; meaning not his human nature, nor his church, sometimes so called; but the material temple at Jerusalem, the second temple, called "his", because devoted to his service and worship, which proves him to be God, and because of his frequency in it; here he was brought and presented by his parents at the proper time, for the purification of his mother; here he was at twelve years of age disputing with the doctors; and here Simeon, Anna, and others, were waiting for him, **Lu 2:22** and we often read of his being here, and of his using his authority in it as the Lord and proprietor of it; and of the Hosannas given him here, Mt 21:12 the manner in which he should come, "suddenly", may refer to the manifestation of it, quickly after John the Baptist had prepared his way by his doctrine and baptism:

even the messenger of the covenant; not of the covenant of works with Adam, of which there was no mediator and messenger; nor of the covenant of circumcision, at which, according to the Jews, Elias presides; nor of the covenant at Sinai, of which Moses was the mediator; but of the covenant of grace, of which Christ is not only the Surety and Mediator; but, as here, "the Messenger"; because it is revealed, made known, and exhibited in a more glorious manner by him under the Gospel dispensation, through the ministration of the word and ordinances. De Dieu observes, that the word in the Ethiopic language signifies a prince as well as a messenger, and so may be rendered, "the Prince of the covenant", which is a way of speaking used in Da 11:22:

whom ye delight in; either carnally, as they pleased themselves with the thoughts of a temporal prince, and of great honour and grandeur under him; and as they would have done, had he submitted to have been made a king by them in this sense; or rather spiritually, and so is to be understood of such who had a spiritual knowledge of him, and joy in him; who rejoiced and delighted in the contemplation of his person, offices, righteousness, and salvation:

he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts; this expresses the certainty of his coming, being said by himself, who is the Lord of hosts, the Lord of armies in heaven and in earth, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. This passage is, in some Jewish writers {r}, interpreted of the world to come, or times of the Messiah.

{q} Mashmiah Jeshuah, fol. 76. 4. {r} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 16. fol. 219. 4.

Malachi 3:2

Ver. 2. But who may abide the day of his coming?.... When he should be manifest in Israel, and come preaching the Gospel of the kingdom; who could bear the doctrines delivered by him, concerning his deity and equality with God the Father; concerning his character and mission as the Messiah, and his kingdom not being a temporal, but a spiritual one; concerning his giving his flesh for the life of the world, and eating that by faith; concerning distinguishing and efficacious grace; and all such that so severely struck at the wickedness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and their self-righteous principles; and especially since for judgment he came, that they might not see? nor could they bear the light of this glorious Sun of righteousness; and he came not to send peace and outward prosperity to the Jews, but a sword and division, **Joh 9:39** very few indeed could bear his ministry, or the light of that day, it being so directly contrary to their principles and practices:

and who shall stand when he appeareth? in his kingdom and glory, to take vengeance on the Jews for their rejection of him and his Gospel; for this coming and appearance of his include all the time between his manifestation in the flesh and the destruction of Jerusalem; and so all those sorrows and distresses which went before it, or attended it, and were such as had never been from the creation of the world; and unless those times had been shortened, no flesh could have been saved; see Mt 24:3:

for he [is] like a refiner's fire; partly by the ministry of the word, compared to fire, Jer 23:29 separating pure doctrines from ones of dross; and partly by his fiery dispensations and judgments on the wicked Jews, when he distinguished and saved his own people from that untoward generation, and destroyed them:

and like fuller's soap; or "fuller's herb", as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, and Jarchi interprets it: and so R. Jonah {s} interprets it of an herb which fullers use: and in the Misna {t} this is one of the seven things used to take out spots, namely, "borith", the word here used; and which Maimonides {u} says is a plant known by the name of "algasul" and "gazul" in the Arabic language: it signifies something by which filth is washed away; and so Bartenora {w} says it is a plant which purifies and cleanses; and Jerom {x} relates that this herb grows in Palestine, in moist and green places, and has the same virtue as nitre to take away filth; agreeably to which some other versions render it "fuller's weed", or "soap weed" {y}. The Syriac version is,

"as sulphur that makes white;"

and fullers, with the Romans, were wont to make use of that along with chalk to take out spots; and so Pliny {z} speaks of a kind of sulphur which fullers make use of. A metaphor signifying the same thing as before, the removing of spotted doctrines or spotted persons, the one by the preaching of the Gospel, the other by awful judgments, as spots in garments are removed by the fuller's herb or soap.

{s} Apud Kimchi in Sepher Shorash. rad. rrb. {t} Niddah. c. 9. sect. 6. {u} In Misn. ib. {w} In ib. {x} Comment. in Jer. ii. 22. {y} Myobkm tyrbk "ut lanaria fullonum", Drusius; "radicula, [vel] saponaria", Vatablus. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 35. c. 15.

Ver. 3. And he shall sit [as] a refiner, and purifier of silver,.... Kimchi interprets this, as he does the latter part of the preceding verse **Mal 3:2**, of the day, and not of the Lord, which he compares to a judge that sits and separates the guilty from the innocent; see **1Co 3:13** but it is to be understood of the Lord himself, and expresses his diligence in sitting and separating good men and principles from bad ones, just as silver is purified and refined from dross. Maimonides {a} understands the passage of the Messiah; for he says,

"in the days of the King Messiah, when his kingdom is restored, and all Israel shall be gathered to him, all will have their genealogies set right by his mouth, through the Holy Spirit that rests upon him, as it is said, "he shall sit a refiner and purifier":"

as a refiner sits and observes his metal while it is melting, and waits the proper time to pour it out and separate the dross from it; so Christ is here represented as sitting, while his people are purifying and refining by the various ways and means he makes use of: it denotes the continued care of Christ over them; his eye is upon them, that nothing be lost but their dross and corruption; and his patience in waiting to be gracious to them, and do them good; and his diligent attention to the proper season of doing it; designing by all that he does, not their hurt and damage, but their real good, for he saves them, though it be by fire; and indeed every trial and affliction is for the purifying of their souls, and the brightening of their graces, and increasing their spiritual experience, light, and knowledge.

And he shall purify the sons of Levi; the priests, either literally understood, some of these were converted from their evil principles and practices, and became obedient to the doctrines of the Gospel, **Ac 6:7** or figuratively, the apostles of Christ and ministers of the Gospel, who were made clean by him; or rather all the people of God, who are made priests as well as kings, and are a royal priesthood, and are purified by Christ, both by his blood, and the imputation of his righteousness, by which they become without spot and blemish, and as white as snow; and by the Spirit in sanctification, he sprinkling clean water upon them, and purifying their hearts by faith in the blood of Jesus; and also by afflictive dispensations of Providence sanctified unto them. Mention is made of the priests and Levites, because these were so very corrupt in the times of Christ, and as appears from the preceding chapters.

And purge them as gold and silver; are purged in the fire from their dross: this shows of what worth and value, and in what esteem the Lord's people are to him; he reckons of them as gold and silver, and as his peculiar treasure: and it suggests, that before conversion they are joined unto and mixed with wicked men, comparable to dross; and that they have in them the dross, corruption, and impurity of sin; which is original and natural to them, and inherent in them, and which can only be removed by the grace of God and blood of Christ.

That they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; themselves, their bodies and souls; the sacrifices of prayer, praise, and alms deeds; to the offering up of which in righteousness, in sincerity and truth, in an upright way, it is necessary that a person should be purified by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the grace of his Spirit.

{a} Hilchot Melachim, c. 12. sect. 3.

Malachi 3:4

Ver. 4. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord,.... Or "sweet" {b}; grateful and well pleasing to him, as all spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God through Christ, being offered up in the faith of his atoning sacrifice and righteousness, without which it is impossible to please God:

as in the days of old, and as in former years: under the first temple, and when the tabernacle was set up by Moses, and in the times of the patriarchs; and even before the flood, and as early as Abel, who offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, Heb 11:4.

{b} hbre "dulcescet", Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; "dulce", Piscator.

Ver. 5. And I will come near to you to judgment,.... And so will manifestly appear to be the God of judgment they asked after, **Mal 2:17** this is not to be understood of Christ's coming to judgment at the last day, but of his coming to judge and punish the wicked Jews at the time of Jerusalem's destruction; for the same is here meant, who is spoken of in the third person before, and who will not be afar off; there will be no need to inquire after him, when he will come he will be near enough, and too near for them:

and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers; not only a judge, but a witness; so that there will be no delay of judgment, or protracting or evading it, for want of witnesses of facts alleged; for the Judge himself, who is Christ, will be witness of them, he being the omniscient God, before whom all things are manifest. The Targum is,

"my Word shall be among you for a swift witness."

Mention is made of "sorcerers", because there were many that used the magic art, enchantments, and sorceries, in the age of Christ and his apostles, and before the destruction of Jerusalem, even many of their doctors and members of the sanhedrim; See Gill on "Isa 8:19":

and against the adulterers; with whom that age also abounded; hence our Lord calls it an adulterous generation, Mt 12:39:

and against false swearers; who were guilty of perjury, and of vain oaths; who swore by the creatures, and not by the Lord, and to things not true; see **Mt 5:33**:

and against those that oppress the hireling in [his] wages, the widow, and the fatherless; defrauding of servants of their wages, devouring widows' houses, and distressing the fatherless, were sins the Jews were addicted to in those times, as appears from **Jas 1:27** who wrote to the twelve tribes; and from what our Lord charges them with, Mt 23:14:

and that turn aside the stranger [from his right]; and so Kimchi supplies it,

"that turn aside the judgment of the stranger;"

that do not do him justice in civil things; yea, persecuted those that became proselytes to the Christian religion:

and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts; which was the root and cause of all their sins; irreverence of Christ, disbelief of him, and contempt of his Gospel.

Malachi 3:6

Ver. 6. For I [am] the Lord,.... Or Jehovah; a name peculiar to the most High, and so a proof of the deity of Christ, who here speaks; and is expressive of his being; of his self-existence; of his purity and simplicity; of his immensity and infinity; and of his eternity and sovereignty:

I change not; being the same today, yesterday, and forever; he changed not in his divine nature and personality by becoming man; he took that into union with him he had not before, but remained the same he ever was; nor did he change in his threatenings of destruction to the Jews, which came upon them according to his word; nor in his promises of his Spirit, and presence, and protection to his people; nor will he ever change in his love and affections to them; nor in the efficacy of his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness; wherefore, as this is introduced to assure the truth and certainty of what is said before, concerning his being a swift witness against the wicked, so also for the comfort of the saints, as follows. The Targum is,

"for I the Lord have not changed my covenant."

Therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed; such who were Israelites indeed, true believers in Christ; these were not consumed when the wicked Jews were, but were directed to leave the city before its destruction, and go to another place, as they did, whereby they were preserved; and so it was, that not one Christian perished in it;
See Gill on "Mt 24:13" and so it is owing to the unchangeable love, grace, and power of Christ, that none of his perish internally or eternally, but have everlasting life.

Ver. 7. Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances,.... Here begins an enumeration of the sins of the Jews, which were the cause of their ruin; and here is first a general charge of apostasy from the statutes and ordinances of the law, which they made void by the traditions of the fathers; and therefore this word is used as referring to this evil, as well as to express their early, long, and continued departure from the ways of God; which as it was an aggravation of their sin, that they should have so long ago forsook the ordinances of God,

and have not kept [them], but transgressed them by observing the traditions of men, Mt 15:3 so it is an instance of the patience and forbearance of God, that they were not as yet consumed; and of his grace and goodness, that he should address them as follows:

Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts; this message was carried to them by John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and by Christ himself, who both preached the doctrine of repentance to this people, **Mt 3:2**. The Targum is,

"return to my worship, and I will look in my word to do well unto you, saith the Lord of hosts;"

and such who returned, and believed in Christ, and submitted to his ordinances, it was well with them.

But ye said, Wherein shall we return? what have we to turn from, or repent of? what evils have we done, or can be charged on us? what need have we of repentance or conversion, or of such an exhortation to it? do not we keep the law, and all the rituals of it? this is the true language of the Pharisees in Christ's time, who, touching the righteousness of the law, were blameless in their own esteem, and were the ninety and nine just persons that needed not repentance, Lu 15:7.

Malachi **3:8**

Ver. 8. Will a man rob God?.... Or "the gods"; the false gods, the idols of the Gentiles; the Heathens will not do that, accounting sacrilege a great sin, and yet this the Jews were guilty of: or "the judges" {c}, as the Targum; civil magistrates; will any dare to defraud them of their due? see **Mal 1:8**.

Yet ye have robbed me; keeping back from the priests and Levites, his ministers, what was due to them; and which, being no other than a spoiling or robbing of them, might be interpreted a robbing of God:

But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? as not being conscious of any such evil; or, however, impudently standing in it, that they were not guilty: to which is returned the answer,

In tithes and offerings; that is, they robbed God in not giving the tithes, and not offering sacrifices, according as the law required: but it may be objected, that the Jews in Christ's time did pay tithes, even of all things; yea, of more than the law required, Mt 23:23 to which it may be replied, that though they gave tithes, yet it was her Nyeb, "with an evil eye", as Aben Ezra says; grudgingly, and not cheerfully, and with an evil intention; not to show their gratitude to God, and their acknowledgment of him as their Lord, from whom they had their all, but in order to merit at his hands; besides, our Lord suggests that they did not give to God the things that were God's, Mt 22:21 and the apostle charges them with being guilty of sacrilege, **Ro 2:22** and, moreover, the priests might not give it to the Levites, as they ought; and which is what they are charged with in Ne 13:10 and Grotius says that they were guilty of this before the destruction by Vespasian, as appears by Josephus.

{c} Myhla "deos, vel judices", Calvin, Drusius, Grotius.

Malachi 3:9

Ver. 9. Ye [are] cursed with a curse,.... Or "with penury", as the Vulgate Latin version; which, though not a proper rendering of the word, is the meaning of the curse they were cursed with; rain was withheld from them for their sins, and the earth did not bring forth its usual increase; wherefore there was want of food in all their land; their blessings were cursed, as in **Mal 2:2** for the following reason, for ye have robbed me; because of this their iniquity, in not bringing their offerings to the Lord, and the tithes to the priests and Levites, their land was stricken with barrenness, and God gave them cleanness of teeth, and want of bread in all places: or, "but ye have robbed me" {d}; notwithstanding they were thus chastised of the Lord, yet were not reformed, but went on in withholding from God and the priests, what belonged to them:

[even] this whole nation; the sin was become general, and therefore a general judgment was inflicted on them: Grotius thinks, that the people seeing the priests withhold the tithes from the Levites, they refused to pay them to them, and so the sin became universal. Kimchi observes, that in other sins charged upon the nation, the people were not all alike guilty, but in this which respected the tithes and offerings they were.

{d} Myebq Mta ytaw "et tamen diripitis me", De Dieu.

Malachi 3:10

Ver. 10. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse,.... Or "treasury" {e}; for there were places in the temple where the tithe was put, and from thence distributed to the priests and Levites, for the support of their families, as they wanted. There were the tithe or tenth part of all eatable things paid to the Levites, and out of this another tithe was paid by the Levites to the priests; and there was another tithe, which some years the owners ate themselves at Jerusalem, and in others gave them to the poor; and these were called the first tithe, the tithe out of the tithe, the second tithe, and the poor's tithe; though they are commonly reduced to three, and are called first, and second, and third, as they are by Maimonides; who says {f},

"after they have separated the first tithe every year, they separate the second tithe, as it is said "thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed", &c. De 14:22 and in the third year, and in the sixth, they separate the poor's tithe, instead of the second tithe."

So Tobit says; Tobit 1:7

"the first tithe I gave to the Levites, who stand before the Lord to minister to him, and to bless in his name the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the second tithe I sold (as he might, according to the law in De 14:24), and took the money, and went up to Jerusalem, and bought with it what I pleased; and the third tithe I gave to the repair of the temple;"

so Fagius reads: but according to Munster's edition it is, the second and third tithes I gave to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow; see De 26:12. It appears from hence that the sin of the people was, that they did not bring in "all" their tithes; they kept back a part of them: wherefore they are called upon to bring in the whole, and which they did in Nehemiah's time; see Ne 10:38 where mention is made of the treasuries for the tithe, which were certain chambers adjoining to the temple; and besides those that were built by Solomon, there were other chambers prepared by Hezekiah in his times, when the tithes were brought in, in such plenty, that there was not room enough for them, 2Ch 31:11 and besides those in the second temple, that were in the court of the priests, there were others in the court of the people, as L'Empereur thinks {g}, where what the others could not contain might be put; and into which court the priests might come; and there were also receptacles underground, as well as upper rooms, where much might be laid up; add to all this, that Dr. Lightfoot {h} suggests, that these tithes were treasured up in the chambers by the gates of the temple, and were at least a part of the treasuries of the house of God, which the porters at the gates had the care of, **1Ch 9:26** and particularly that the house of Asuppim, at which were four porters, was a large piece of building, containing divers rooms for the treasuring up things for the use of the temple; in the Apocrypha:

" And are resolved to spend the firstfruits of the the tenths of wine and oil, which they had sanctified, and reserved for the priests that serve in Jerusalem before the face of our God; the which things it is not lawful for any of the people so much as to touch with their hands." Judith 11:13

that there may be food in mine house; in the temple, for the sustenance of the priests and Levites: so the Targum,

"the prophet said, bring all the tithes into the treasury, that there may be food for them that minister in the house of my sanctuary:"

and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts; by bringing in all their tithes; when they would find, by making this experiment or trial, that the curse would be removed from them, and blessings be largely and liberally bestowed upon them by him, who is the Lord of hosts, and so able to perform any promise he makes; and here one is implied, and is as follows:

if I will not open you the windows of heaven; which had been shut and stopped up, and let down no rain upon their land, which brought a scarcity of provisions among them; but now, upon a change in their conduct it is suggested that these windows or floodgates should be opened, and rain let down plentifully upon them, which only could be done by the Lord himself; for the key of rain is one of the three keys, the Jews say {i}, which God has reserved for himself, and never puts into the hands of a minister:

and pour you out a blessing: give abundance of rain to make the earth fruitful, and bring forth its increase in great plenty, which is a blessing; and not destroy the earth, and the fruits of it, as in the times of Noah, when the windows of heaven were opened, and a curse was poured out upon the earth:

that [there shall] not [be room] enough [to receive it]; and so Kimchi says his father interpreted this clause, that there would not be a sufficiency of vessels {k} and storehouses. Some render the words, as Junius, "so that ye shall not be sufficient"; either to gather in the increase, or to consume it. The Targum is,

"until ye say it is enough;"

and so the Syriac version. The phrase, which is very concise in the original text, and may be literally rendered, "unto not enough" {l}, denotes great abundance and fulness of good things, so that there should be enough and to spare; and yet, as Gussetius observes, not enough to answer and express the abundance of mercy and goodness in the heart of God.

{e} ruwah tyb la "thesaurum", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; "[vel] in domum thesauri", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Burkius. {f} Hilchot Maaser Sheni, c. 1. sect. 1. {g} Not. in Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 6. No. 14. {h} Prospect of the Temple, c. 5. p. 1058. c. 19. p. 1097. {i} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 2. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 113. 1. {k} yd ylb de "adeo ut non sint vobis sufficientia vasa", Pagninus, Vatablus. So Burkius. {l} Eousque ut nunquam sit satis, nempe a parte datoris, Gussetius. So De Dieu.

Malachi 3:11

Ver. 11. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,.... Or "eater" {m}; the locust or caterpillar, or any such devouring creature, that eats up the herbage, corn, and fruits of trees; every such creature is under the restraint of Providence; and by a nod, a rebuke, they are easily prevented doing the mischief they otherwise would; these are the Lord's great army, which he can send and call off as he pleases, **Joe 1:4**:

and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; as he has done, by eating all green things, as the locust, caterpillar, and canker worm do, grass, corn, and trees:

neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field; which some understand of the devourer or locust, that that should not cause the vine to be abortive, or cast its fruit before its time, or bereave it of it; but it seems best to interpret it of the vine itself not casting its fruit, as an untimely birth, by blighting and blasting winds:

saith the Lord of hosts; who holds the winds in his fists, and will not suffer them when he pleases, any more than the locusts, to hurt the trees of the earth, **Re 7:1**.

{m} lkab "comedentem", Drusius, Cocceius; "eum qui comedit", Burkius.

Malachi 3:12

Ver. 12. And all nations shall call you blessed,.... When they shall see the land freed from the devouring locust, and other hurtful creatures; the former and the latter rains given in their season, and the earth yielding a large increase:

for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts; or a desirable {n} one; not only pleasant to themselves, being fruitful, but wished for by others, by their neighbouring nations, who, seeing their prosperity, could not but desire to dwell with them; or delightsome to the Lord of hosts: thus Jarchi interprets it, the land that I delight in; and so Aben Ezra; to which agrees the Targum, "and all nations shall praise you, because you dwell in the land of the house of my Shechinah or majesty, and do my will in it;"

and the Syriac version renders it, "the land of my delight": see Isa 62:4.

{n} Upx Ura "terra desiderabilis", V. L. Pagninus, Drusius; "terra beneplaciti", Montanus, Vatablus, Burkius; "oblectationis", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Malachi 3:13

Ver. 13. Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord,.... Hard and strong; they bore very hardly upon him, were exceeding impudent and insolent; murmuring at his providence; arraigning his justice and goodness; and despising his word, worship, and ordinances. Aben Ezra says, this is a prophecy concerning the time to come, that is, the times of the Messiah; and so it describes the Jews in his times.

Yet ye say, what have we spoken [so much] against thee? or "what have we spoken against thee?" as if they were not guilty in any respect, and as if nothing could be proved against them; and as though the Lord did not know what they had said in their hearts, seeing they had not spoken it with their mouths: though the supplement of our translators, "so much", is confirmed by the Targum, which is,

"and if ye say, how (or in what) have we multiplied speech before thee?"

and so Kimchi observes, that the form in which the Hebrew word is denotes much and frequent speaking: and Abarbinel agrees with him, though he rather thinks it has this sense, "what are we spoken of to thee?" what calumny is this? what accusation do they bring against us to thee? what is it that is reported we say against thee? thus wiping their mouths, as if they were innocent and harmless.

Malachi 3:14

Ver. 14. Ye have said, it [is] vain to serve God,.... This they said in their hearts, if not with their lips, that it was a vain thing for a man to serve God; he got nothing by it; he had no reward for it; it fared no better with him than the wicked; nay, the wicked fared better than he; and therefore who would be a worshipper of God? see Job 21:15. Abarbinel understands this also with respect to God, who is worshipped; to whom worship, say these men, is no ways profitable, nor does he regard it; see Job 35:7 and therefore it is in vain to serve him, since neither he, nor we, are the better for it:

and what profit [is it] that we have kept his ordinance; or "his observation" {n}; that is, have observed that which he commanded to be observed; this respects not any single and particular ordinance, but every ordinance of God: the Sadducees of those times seem designed, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and a future state of rewards and punishments, and so might well conclude it in vain to serve God:

and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? or "in black" {o}; which is the habit of mourners; see Ps 38:6 with an humble spirit, as Jarchi interprets it; or with humiliation (or contrition) of spirit, as the Targum, which paraphrases the whole verse thus,

"ye have said, he gains nothing who worships before the Lord; and what mammon (or riches) do we gain because we have kept the observation of his word, and because we have walked in contrition of spirit before the Lord of hosts?"

Aben Ezra and Abarbinel seem to understand this last clause of their being afflicted and suffering for the sake of religion, and which they endured in vain, seeing they were not respected and rewarded for it; but the other sense is best, which represents them as sincere penitents, and humble worshippers of God in their own account, and yet were not taken notice of by him: it seems to describe the Pharisees, who disfigured their faces, and affected down looks and sorrowful countenances {p}.

{n} wtrmvm "observationem ejus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius; "observantiam ejus", Cocceius. {o} tynrdq "atrate", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Stockius, p. 926; "pullati", Tigurine version; "atrati", Cocceius. {p} The word is used by Josephus ben Gorion for sincere walking, l. 6. c. 20. p. 612. Vid. Not. Breithaupt. in ib.; it is interpreted "humbly" by R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 102. 2.

Ver. 15. And now we call the proud happy,.... Or "therefore now" {q}; since this is the case, that the worshippers of God are not regarded, and there is nothing got by serving him; they that are proud and haughty, that neither fear God nor regard men, are the happy persons; even presumptuous sinners, as the word {r} signifies, that stretch out their hands against God, and strengthen themselves against the Almighty; these enjoy all worldly happiness, while they that serve the Lord are mourning in sackcloth, and are in the utmost distress. The Targum explains it of the ungodly, and as it is explained in the following clause:

yea, they that work wickedness are set up: or "built up" {s}; or "seeing, because", or "for they that work" {t}, &c.; they are increased with children, by which their houses or families are built up; they are in a well settled and established condition; they abound in riches and honours; they are set in high places, and are in great esteem among men, even such who make it their constant business to commit sin:

yea, [they that] tempt God; or "yea, they tempt God" {u}; by their wicked words and actions, and try whether he will cause his judgments to fall upon them, which he has threatened to such sinners; see **Isa 5:18**:

are even delivered; or, "and are delivered" {w}; from the punishment threatened; they escape it, and go on with impunity; from which observations these persons reasoned that there was no God of judgment, or that judged in the earth; that there was no providence concerned about human affairs; and that there was nothing in religion; and these were the hard and stout words which they spoke against the Lord.

{q} htew "ergo nunc", V. L.; "igitur", Cocceius; "adeoque", Burkius. {r} Mydz "arrogantes", V. L.; "feroces", Cocceius. {s} wnbn "aedificati sunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Burkius; "aedificantur", Vatablus, Tigurine version, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius. {t} Mg "siquidem", V. L.; "nam", Piscator, Noldius. {u} wnxb Mg "etiam probaverunt", Pagninus, Montanus, Burkius. {w} wjlmyw "et evaserunt", Pagninus, Montanus; "et effugerunt", Cocceius.

Ver. 16. Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another,.... Abarbinel thinks this is a continuation of the speech of the wicked; observing, that while they that work wickedness were set up, and they that tempted God escaped punishment, they that were religious, and feared God, "were destroyed one with another", particularly by the plague; so he would have the word wrbdn rendered, which we translate, "spake often one to another"; in which sense he observes that root is used in Ho 13:14 but rather this is opposed unto what they said, by such, who, at the time referred to (which seems to be between the time of Christ's coming, spoken of in the beginning of the chapter **Mal 3:1**, and the destruction of Jerusalem after mentioned), feared the Lord, and served him; embraced the Messiah, and professed his name; for the fear of God takes in the whole of religious worship, both internal and external; and describes such, not that have a dread of the majesty of God, and of his judgments and wrath, or distrust his power, providence, grace, and goodness; but who have a filial and holy fear of God, a fiducial and fearless one, a reverential affection for him, and are true and sincere worshippers of him: these "spake often one to another"; of the unbelief, impiety, and profaneness of men, with great concern and lamentation; and of the great and good things they were led into the knowledge of; the everlasting love of the Father in the choice of them, and covenant with them in Christ; of redemption by the Son; of the glories of his person, and the fulness of his grace; of the work of the Spirit of God upon their souls; and of the various truths of the everlasting Gospel; and of the gracious experiences they were indulged with; and all this they said for the glory of God's grace, and for the comforting and strengthening, and edifying, of each other's souls: it follows,

and the Lord hearkened, and heard [it]; what they said one to another: this is spoken after the manner of men, and does not so much regard the omniscience of God, who hearkens and hears everything that is said by wicked men, as by good men; as his special regard unto, peculiar notice he takes of, and the approbation he has of his people, and of their words and actions, and even of their thoughts, as is afterwards intimated:

and a book of remembrance was written before him; in allusion to kings that keep registers, records, annals, and chronicles, as memorials of matters of moment and importance: see **Ezr 4:15 Es 2:23**: otherwise there is no forgetfulness in God; he bears in his own eternal mind a remembrance of the persons, thoughts, words, and actions of his people, and which he will disclose and make mention of another day; even our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God over all, and who will let the churches and world know that he is the searcher of hearts, and trier of the reins of the children of men:

for them that feared the Lord, as before,

and that thought upon his name; either the name of the Father; not any particular name of his, by which he is known, but him himself; for, as Kimchi observes, his name is himself, and he himself is his name; and especially as he is in Christ, and proclaimed in him; and this is expressive of faith in him, love to him, and reverence of him: or the name of Christ; and not any particular name of his, unless it be Jesus the Saviour: but rather his person as the Son of God; his office as Mediator; and his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice: and it is not a bare thinking of him that is here intended, but such a thought of him as is accompanied with esteem and value for him, because of the dignity of his person, and the riches of his grace. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "and that reverence his name"; and the Syriac version, "that praise his name"; and the Targum is, that think of the glory of his name.

Malachi 3:17

Ver. 17. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts,.... That is, such as fear the Lord, and think of him, hereby they are known to be his; and hereafter, in the time referred to, it will be manifest that they are his: they are Christ's already by his Father's gift of them to him; by his own purchase; by the conquests of his grace; and by the voluntary surrender of themselves: but, in the last day, they will be claimed and owned by Christ before his Father and his holy angels; and they will be known to be his, by themselves and others; and there will be no doubt about it, or questioning of it:

in that day when I make up my jewels; Christ has some, who are his jewels, or peculiar treasure, as the word {x} here used signifies; who are loved with an everlasting love; chosen in him; redeemed by him; justified by his righteousness; have the graces of his Spirit in them: and will be glorified: they are a peculiar people, separate from all others, and preferred unto them;

for whom Christ has the strongest affection, and takes special care of: and there is a time when he will make them up; the number of them is already complete in eternal election; and there was a gathering of them together in Christ at his death; at every conversion there is an addition to them, as his regenerated and sanctified ones; and at death they are received into heaven, into his presence and bosom; and at the last day there will be a collection of them all together. The words may be rendered, even "my jewels in the day that I shall make" {y}; or "the day I shall make peculiar": distinct from all others; meaning either the famous Gospel day, made by him the sun of righteousness, in which so many of his jewels are picked up, and brought in; or the day of Jerusalem's destruction, when Christ took care of his jewels, and by the preservation of them showed that they were his, even all that believed in him; so that not one perished that believed in him, when he took vengeance on his enemies, that disbelieved and rejected him. Kimchi refers this to the day of judgment.

And I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him; this is a favour not granted to the apostate angels; nor to the old world; nor to the Jewish nation; nor even to the Son of God; but is vouchsafed to his special people: the lives of these are spared, until they are called by grace; and though they are sometimes afflicted and chastised, it is very gently, and in love; their services are accepted, and the imperfections in them overlooked; their sins are pardoned, and they will find mercy at the great day of account; they are used in the most tender manner, not only as a son, an own son, but as an obedient one, for whom the greatest regard is had, and affection shown.

{x} hlgo "peculium", Munster, Pagninus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Calvin, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius. {y} hve yna rva Mwyl "illa die quam facio", so some in Vatablus; "in diem quem ego facio peculium", Cocceius, Burkius.

Malachi 3:18

Ver. 18. Then shall ye return,.... Either the wicked, who will be "converted" {z}, as some render the word, and will have a different view of things, and change their minds and language; or they that feared the Lord, who at the time before spoken of will have a new turn of thought, and another and clear discerning of persons and things, and better judge of the dispensations of Providence: some that refer this to the resurrection of the dead, and the last judgment, understand it, as Abarbinel does, of the returning of souls to their bodies, when indeed the difference between persons after described will be very discernible; but it seems to refer to the time of Christ's first coming, and Jerusalem's destruction:

and discern between the righteous and the wicked; the difference between such who are really and truly righteous, who are here meant, even such who believe in Christ, and are justified by his righteousness; and those that are wicked, as all by nature are: though sometimes this character designs the more profane and abandoned, and even professors of religion; the difference between these is not always easily discerned; as for the righteous, they are not known and discerned by the world; and by reason of afflictions, temptations, and sins, they are apt to judge wrong of themselves; and sometimes are so left to fall into sin, that they look like others: and there are wicked men under the appearance of righteous men, as were the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time; but by the destruction that came upon them, and the preservation of such as believed in Christ, it was discernible who were wicked, and who were righteous; indeed, at the last day, this difference will be more visible; in the bodies of the righteous, which will be raised glorious, when those of the wicked will not; in their souls, having on the wedding garment, the robe of Christ's righteousness, and perfectly holy; and in their situation, being set at Christ's right hand, and the wicked at his left; and by the characters that will be given of them by the Judge, and the different sentences passed and executed on them:

between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not; that is, between such persons that serve the Lord, and him only, privately and publicly, in righteousness and true holiness, in spirit and in truth, with faith and fervency, with reverence and fear, heartily and willingly, seeking his glory, without any dependence on their services; and those that are ungodly, or only outwardly serve the Lord, for sinister ends, and with selfish views, and according to their own inventions, and the traditions of men, and not the will of God, as the Scribes and Pharisees; between whom, and Christ's sincere disciples and followers, the awful day, described in the next chapter **Mal 4:1**, will make a manifest difference.

{z} Mtbvw "et convertemini", Cocceius, Gussetius, so Pagninus, Montanus; "conversi", Drusius, Junius & Tremellius.

INTRODUCTION TO MALACHI 4

This chapter contains an account of the destruction of the wicked Jews, and the happiness of the righteous by the coming of the Messiah; an exhortation to regard the law of Moses; and a description of John the Baptist and his work. The day of Christ's coming, reaching to Jerusalem's destruction, is compared to a burning oven; the wicked Jews to stubble, whose ruin would be utter and complete, **Mal 4:1** the appearance of Christ is signified by the arising of him, the sun of righteousness; the manner, with healing in his wings; the effects of which are, going forth in the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty, and spiritual growth and triumph over their enemies, in which will lie the happiness of them that fear God, **Mal 4:2** who are put in mind of the law of Moses on Horeb, **Mal 4:4** the sending of John the Baptist under the name of Elijah, before the coming of Christ is prophesied of, **Mal 4:5** and his work pointed out, with the end of it, **Mal 4:6**.

Ver. 1. For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven,.... Not the day of judgment, as Kimchi and other interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, think; but the day of Christ's coming in his kingdom and power, to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, which burned like an oven, both figuratively and literally; when the wrath of God, which is compared to fire, came upon that people to the uttermost; and when their city and temple were burnt about their ears, and they were surrounded with fire, as if they had been in a burning oven: and this being so terrible, as can hardly be conceived and expressed, the word "behold" is prefixed to it, not only to excite attention, but horror and terror at so dreadful a calamity; which though future, when the prophet wrote, was certain:

and all the proud; yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; the proud Pharisees, that boasted of their own righteousness, trusted in themselves, and despised others; all workers of iniquity, in private or in public; all rejecters of Christ, contemners of his Gospel and ordinances, and persecutors of his people; as well as such who were guilty of the most flagitious crimes, as sedition, robbery, murder, &c. of which there were notorious instances during the siege of Jerusalem; these were all like stubble before devouring fire, weak and easily destroyed:

and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts: which is repeated, to show the certainty of it, and to apply it to the persons before described:

that it shall leave them neither root nor branch: which signifies an entire and complete destruction; the city and temple so utterly destroyed, that not one stone shall be left on another; both magistrates and subjects shall perish, priests and people, so that there shall be no form of government, civil nor ecclesiastical; tribes and families lost, they and their posterity: and so the Targum,

"which shall not leave them son and nephew:"

and, indeed, the numbers cut off were so many, and the destruction so general, that it may be wondered at that any remained: it is a proverbial expression, setting forth the greatness of the calamity; see **Mt 3:10**.

Malachi 4:2

Ver. 2. But unto you that fear my name,.... The few that were of this character among that wicked nation; See Gill on "Mal 3:16":

shall the Sun of righteousness arise; not the Holy Ghost, who enlightens sinners, convinces of righteousness, and gives joy, peace, and comfort to the saints, but Christ: and thus it is interpreted of him by the ancient Jews, in one of their Midrashes or expositions {a}; they say, Moses says not they shall be for ever pledged, that is, the clothes of a neighbour, but until the sun comes, until the Messiah comes, as it is said, "unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise", &c.; and Philo the Jew {b} not only observes, that God, figuratively speaking, is the sun; but the divine "Logos" or Word of God, the image of the heavenly Being, is called the sun; who, coming to our earthly system, helps the kindred and followers of virtue, and affords ample refuge and salvation to them; referring, as it seems; to this passage: indeed, they generally interpret it of the sun, literally taken, which they suppose, at the end of the world, will have different effects on good and bad men; they say {c},

"in the world to come, God will bring the sun out of its sheath, and burn the wicked; they will be judged by it, and the righteous will be healed by it:"

for the proof of the former, they produce the words in the first verse of this chapter, "behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven"; and of the latter these words, "but unto you that fear my name &c."; and a very ridiculous notion they have, that Abraham their father had a precious stone or pearl hanging about his neck, and every sick person that saw it was healed by it immediately; and, when he departed out of the world, God took it, and fixed it to the orb of the sun; hence the proverb, the sun rises, and sickness decreases {d}; and as it is elsewhere quoted {e}, this passage is added to confirm it, as it is said, "to you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings": unless this fable should be intended to mean, as Abarbinel {f} interprets it, that Abraham, while he lived, clearly proved the unity of God and his perfections; and that, after his death, the same truth was taught by the wonderful motion of the sun: but, be this as it will, those are undoubtedly in the right who understand these words figuratively of the Messiah; who is compared to the "sun", because, as the sun is a luminous body, the light of the whole world, so is Christ of the world of men, and of the world of saints; particularly of the Gentiles, often called the world; and of the New Jerusalem church state, and of the world to come: and as the sun is the fountain of light, so is Christ the fountain of natural and moral light, as well as of the light of grace, and of the light of glory: as the sun communicates light to all the celestial bodies, so Christ to the moon, the church; to the stars, the ministers of the word; to the morning stars, the angels: as the sun dispels the darkness of the night, and makes the day, so Christ dispelled the darkness of the ceremonial law, and made the Gospel day; and he dispels the darkness of ignorance and unbelief, and makes the day of grace; and will dispel the darkness of imperfection, and will make the day of glory; as the sun is a pure, clear, and lucid body, so is Christ, without the least spot of sin; and so are his people, as they are clothed with his righteousness: as the sun is a glorious body, so is Christ both his natures, divine and human; in his office as Mediator; and will be in his second coming: as the sun is superior to all the celestial bodies, so is Christ to angels and saints: as the sun is but one, so there is but one Son of God; one Mediator between God and man; one Saviour and

Redeemer; one Lord and Head of the church: its properties and effects are many; it lays things open and manifest, which before were hid; communicates heat as well as light; make the earth fruitful; is very exhilarating; has its risings and settings, and of great duration: so Christ declares the mind and will of his Father, the hidden mysteries of grace; lays open the thoughts of men's hearts in conversion; and will at the last day bring to light the hidden things of darkness: he warms the hearts of his people with his love, and causes them to burn within them, while they hear his Gospel, and he makes them fervent in spirit while they serve the Lord; he fills them with the fruits of righteousness, and with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; but he is not always seen, is sometimes under a cloud, and withdraws himself; yet his name is as the sun before the Lord, and wilt abide for ever. He is called "the sun of righteousness", because of the glory of his essential righteousness as God; and because of the purity and perfection of his righteousness as man, which appeared in all his actions, and in the administration of all his offices; and because of the display of the righteousness of God in him, in his sufferings and death, in atonement, pardon, and justification by him; and because he is the author and bringer in of righteousness to his people, the glory of which outshines all others, is pure and spotless like the sun, and is everlasting; those who have it are said to be clothed with the sun, and on such he shines in his beams of divine love, grace, and mercy, which righteousness sometimes signifies; and his rays of grace transform men into righteousness and true holiness. The "arising" of this sun may denote the appearance of Christ in our nature; under the former dispensation this sun was not risen, it was then night with the world; John the Baptist was the morning star, the forerunner of it: Christ the sun is now risen; the dayspring from on high hath visited mankind, and has spread its light and heat, its benign influences, by the ministration of the Gospel, the grace of God, which has appeared and shone out, both in Judea, and in the Gentile world: it may be accommodated to his spiritual appearance: this sun is sometimes under a cloud, or seems to be set, which occasions trouble, and is for wise ends, but will and does arise again to them that fear the Lord. The manner is,

with healing in his wings; by which are meant its rays and beams, which are to the sun as wings to a bird, by which it swiftly spreads its light and heat; so we read of the wings of the morning, Ps 139:9. Christ came as a physician, to heal the diseases of men; he healed the bodily diseases of the Jews, and he heals the soul diseases of his people, their sins; which healing he has procured by his blood and stripes: pardon of sin by the blood of

Christ is meant by healing, which is universal, infallible, and free, Ps 103:3 it may denote all that preservation, protection, prosperity, and happiness, inward and outward, which they that feared the Lord enjoyed through Christ, when the unbelieving Jews were destroyed; and which is further expressed by what follows:

and ye shall go forth; not out of the world, or out of their graves, as some think; but either out of Jerusalem, as the Christians did a little before its destruction, being warned so to do {g}, whereby they were preserved from that calamity; or it intends a going forth with liberty in the exercise of grace and duty, in the exercise of faith on Christ, love to him, hope in him, repentance, humility, self-denial, &c.; and in a cheerful obedience to his will; or else walking on in his ways; having health and strength, with great pleasure and comfort; and, as Aben Ezra says, by the light of this sun.

And grow up as calves of the stall; such as are fat, being put up there for that purpose; see **Am 6:4**. Bochart {h} has proved, from many passages out of the Talmud {i}, that the word which the Targum here makes use of, and answers to that in the Hebrew text, which is rendered "stall", signifies a yoke or collar, with which oxen or heifers were bound together, while they were threshing or treading out of corn; so that the calves or heifers here referred to were such as were not put up in a stall, but were yoked together, and employed in treading out the corn; now as there was a law that such should not be muzzled while they were thus employed, but might eat of the corn on the floor freely and plentifully, De 25:4 these usually grew fat, and so were the choicest and most desirable, to which the allusion may be here, and in Jer 46:21 **Am 6:4** and are a fit emblem of saints joined together in holy fellowship, walking together in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; where they get spiritual food for their souls, and are in thriving circumstances; where they meet with the corn of heaven, with that corn which makes the young men cheerful, and that bread which nourishes up to everlasting life. The apostle alludes to the custom of oxen yoked together, either in ploughing, or in treading out the corn, when he says, speaking of church fellowship and communion in the ordinances of the Gospel, "be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers", **2Co 6:14** for this hinders spiritual edification, as well as the promotion of the glory of God; but where they are equally yoked, and go hand in hand together in the work and ways of the Lord, they grow and flourish; they are comfortable in their souls, and lively in the exercise of grace; and they are the most thriving Christians, generally speaking, who are in church communion, and most constantly attend the means of grace, and keep closest to the word and ordinances: for the metaphor here used is designed to express a spiritual increase in all grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, and a growing up into him in all things, through the use of means, the word and ordinances; whereby saints become fat and flourishing, being fed with the milk of the word, and the breasts of ordinances, and having fellowship with one another; and, above all, this spiritual growth is owing to the dews of the grace of God, the shining of the Sun of righteousness, and the comfortable gales of the south wind of the Spirit of God, which cause the spices to flow out. The Septuagint version, and those that follow it, render it, "ye shall leap" or "skip as calves loosed from bonds"; as such creatures well fed do when at liberty; and may denote the spiritual joy of the saints upon their being healed, or because of their secure, safe, and prosperous estate: and so the word is explained in the Talmud {k}, they shall delight themselves in it; and where the Rabbins interpret this and the preceding verse **Mal 4:1** of the natural sun in the firmament, which will be the hell {l} in the world to come, and which will burn the wicked, and heal the righteous.

{a} Shemot Rabba, sect. 31. fol. 134. 2. {b} De Somniis, p. 578. {c} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 8. 2. & Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. {d} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 16. 2. {e} Apud Yalkut in loc. {f} Comment. in Mal. i. 11. {g} Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 5. {h} Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 31. col. 303. {i} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 53. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 30. 1. Pesachim, fol. 26. 1. Eruvin, fol. 17. 2. {k} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 4. 1. Nedarim, fol. 8. 2. {l} A notion they elsewhere frequently inculcate, and is not improbable; and which has been of late advanced and defended by a very learned man of our own country, Mr. Tobias Swinden, in a Treatise called "An Inquirer into the Nature and Place of Hell."

Malachi 4:3

Ver. 3. And ye shall tread down the wicked,.... As grapes in the winepress, as Christ did before them, Isa 63:2 and they by virtue of him; who makes them more than conquerors through himself, over all their enemies, spiritual and temporal:

for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet; this refers to the burning of them, **Mal 4:1** and may be literally understood of their being burnt with the city and temple; when afterwards, as Grotius observes, the city of Jerusalem being in some measure rebuilt, and called Aelia, there was a Christian church in it, governed by bishops, who were converted Jews; and so might be literally said to trample upon the ashes of the wicked, who had persecuted them in times past, they being upon the very spot where these men were destroyed by fire:

in the day that I shall do [this], saith the Lord of hosts: or "in the day which I make" {m}; that is, by the rising of the sun of righteousness, the Gospel day. The Talmud {n} interprets this verse of the bodies of the wicked in hell, which after twelve months will be consumed, and the wind will scatter them under the soles of the feet of the righteous.

{m} hve yna rva Mwyb "eo die, quem ego facio", Cocceius. {n} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 17. 1.

Malachi 4:4

Ver. 4. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant,.... Who was faithful as such in the house of God, in delivering the law to the children of Israel, which was given him; and who are called upon to remember it, its precepts and its penalties, which they were apt to forget: and particularly this exhortation is given now, because no other prophet after Malachi would be sent unto them, this is what they should have and use as their rule and directory; and because that Christ, now prophesied of, would be the end of this law; and this, and the prophets, were to be until the days of John the Baptist, spoken of in the next verse **Mal 4:5**; and the rather, because in this period of time, between Malachi and the coming of Christ, the traditions of the elders were invented and obtained, which greatly set aside the law, and made it of no effect:

which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel; for though the law came by Moses, and is therefore called his, yet God was the author and efficient cause of it; Moses was only a servant and minister; and this was given in Horeb, the same with Sinai: these are names of one and the same mountain, at least of the parts of it; one part of it was called Horeb, from its being a dry desert and desolate place; and the other Sinai, from its bushes and brambles. So Jerom {o} says, "Horeb, the mountain of God, is in the land of Midian, by Mount Sinai, above Arabia in the wilderness, to which are joined the mountain and wilderness of the Saracens, called Pharan; but to me it seems the same mountain is called by two names, sometimes Sinai, and sometimes Horeb;"

see Ex 31:18. Agreeably to which Josephus {p} calls Horeb, where Moses fed his flock, and saw the vision of the burning bush, Mount Sinai; and says, it was the highest of the mountains in those parts, very convenient for pasture, and abounded with excellent herbage. Some say {q} the eastern part of it was called Sinai, and the western part Horeb; it is very likely they joined together at the bottom of the mountain, and were the two tops of it. This being mentioned shows, that the law, strictly taken, and not the prophets, is here designed, for no other was commanded, ordered, or delivered in Horeb; and that was for all the children of Israel in successive ages, until the coming of the Messiah, and for them only, as to the ministration of it by Moses.

[With] the statutes and judgments; the laws ceremonial and judicial, which were given to Moses, at the same time the law of the decalogue was, to be observed by the children of Israel, and which were shadows of things to come; namely, those of them that were of a ceremonial nature, and therefore to be remembered and attended to as leading to Christ, and the things of the Gospel.

{o} De locis Hebr. fol. 92. E. {p} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 12. {q} Vid. Adrichomii Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 122. Well's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 2. p. 118.

Malachi 4:5

Ver. 5. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet,.... Not the Tishbite, as the Septuagint version wrongly inserts instead of prophet; not Elijah in person, who lived in the times of Ahab; but John the Baptist, who was to come in the power and spirit of Elijah, **Lu 1:17** between whom there was a great likeness in their temper and disposition; in their manner of clothing, and austere way of living; in their courage and integrity in reproving vice; and in their zeal and usefulness in the cause of God and true religion; and in their famous piety and holiness of life; and in being both prophets; see Mt

11:11 and that he is intended is clear from Mt 17:10. It is a notion of the Jews, as Kimchi and others, that the very Elijah, the same that lived in the days of Ahab, shall come in person before the coming of their Messiah they vainly expect, and often speak of difficult things to be left till Elijah comes and solves them; but for such a notion there is no foundation, either in this text or elsewhere. And as groundless is that of some of the ancient Christian fathers, and of the Papists, as Lyra and others, that Elijah with Enoch will come before the day of judgment, and restore the church of God ruined by antichrist, which they suppose is meant in the next clause.

Before the coming of the great and, dreadful day of the Lord; that is, before the coming of Christ the son of David, as the Jews {r} themselves own; and which is to be understood, not of the second coming of Christ to judgment, though that is sometimes called the great day, and will be dreadful to Christless sinners; but of the first coming of Christ, reaching to the destruction of Jerusalem: John the Baptist, his forerunner, the Elijah here spoken of, came proclaiming wrath and terror to impenitent sinners; Christ foretold and denounced ruin and destruction to the Jewish nation, city, and temple; and the time of Jerusalem's destruction was a dreadful day indeed, such a time of affliction as had not been from the creation, Mt 24:21 and the Talmud interprets {s} this of the sorrows of the Messiah, or which shall be in the days of the Messiah.

{r} T. Bab. Eruvin, fol. 43. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {s} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol 118. 1.

Malachi 4:6

Ver. 6. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children,.... Or "with" the children, as Kimchi; and Ben Melech observes, that le is put for Me, and so in the next clause:

and the heart of the children to their fathers; or "with" their fathers; that is, both fathers and children: the meaning is, that John the Baptist should be an instrument of converting many of the Jews, both fathers and children, and bringing them to the knowledge and faith of the true Messiah; and reconcile them together who were divided by the schools of Hillell and Shammai, and by the sects of the Sadducees and Pharisees, and bring them to be of one mind, judgment, and faith, and to have a hearty love to one another, and the

Lord Christ; see **Mt 3:5** See Gill on "Lu 1:17". The Talmudists {t} interpret this of composing differences, and making peace.

Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse; the land of Judea; which, because the greater part of the inhabitants of it were not converted to the Lord, did not believe in the Messiah, but rejected him, notwithstanding the preaching and testimony of John the Baptist, and the ministry and miracles of Christ, it was smitten with a curse, was made desolate, and destroyed by the Roman emperors, Vespasian and Adrian, as instruments doing what God here threatened he would do; for not the whole earth is intended, as the Targum and Abarbinel suggest; but only that land, and the people of it, are intended, to whom the law of Moses was given; and to whom Elias, or John the Baptist, was to be sent; and to whom he was sent, and did come; and by whom he was rejected, and also the Messiah he pointed at; for which that country was smitten with a curse, and remains under it to this day.

{t} Massachet Ediot, c. 8. sect. 7.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**
Matthew 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW

The subject of this book, and indeed of all the writings of the New Testament, is the Gospel. The Greek word euaggelion signifies a joyful message, good news, glad tidings of good things; such as Christ was anointed to preach, the Angels brought to the shepherds, and the Evangelists, Apostles, and Ministers of Christ published to the world. *Isa 61:1*. And such is the account given by this inspired writer, of the incarnation, life, actions, ministry, miracles, sufferings, and death of Jesus Christ; whereby peace and reconciliation, pardon and righteousness, atonement and redemption, life and salvation, are obtained for lost, perishing sinners. The Jews, to whom the message of grace was first sent, and among whom the Gospel was first preached, having despised and rejected it; they and their posterity, in allusion to the word "Evangelion", most wickedly and blasphemously call the whole New Testament, Nwylg Nwa or

Nwylg Nwe "Aven Gilion" {a}, a "revelation", or "volume of iniquity and vanity"; but "blessed are the people that know the joyful sound", see *Ps 89:15*. The writer of this Gospel, Matthew, who also was called Levi in ***Lu 5:27*** was by occupation a publican, or tax-gatherer, and was in his employ when Christ called him by his grace. He was one of the twelve Apostles sent forth by Christ to preach the Gospel of the kingdom, *Mt 10:3* and was honoured to be the first of the writers of the New Testament, and to be the first publisher therein of the good news of the incarnate Saviour; and was a wonderful instance of the rich and sovereign grace of God. Though he was employed in collecting the Roman tax, yet he was of Jewish extract; as appears from his being called the son of Alphaeus, ***Mr 2:14*** and from his name Matthew Levi; for as the latter, so the former is an Hebrew name. The Jews say {b} one of the disciples of Jesus was called yatm, Matthai or Matthew: his name signifies a "gift" or "given"; he was one of those the Father had given to Christ, and was kept by him, when the son of perdition was lost, *Joh 17:6*. It may not be improper to inquire in what language this Gospel was written. The ancient Christian writers were generally of opinion, that Matthew wrote it in Hebrew; Papias and {c} Pantaenus were of this mind, as also Irenaeus {d}, Origen {e} Eusebius {f}, Athanasius {g}, Epiphanius {h}, and Jerom {i}; and it is asserted in the titles of the Arabic and Persic versions, and at the end of the Syriac version of this Gospel, that it was written in that language; and this opinion is espoused by Grotius and Hammond, though justly exploded by others; for what has been published by Munster, Mercer, Hutter, and Robertson, are translations, made by themselves or others, and of no antiquity: and since Hebrew and Syriac words are interpreted in this Gospel, see ***Mt 1:23*** which would not have been done, had it been written in either language; and since Matthew generally follows the Septuagint version in the passages cited by him out of the Old Testament; and since the Hebrew language was not generally known at that time to the common people, only to the learned; for the law and the prophets, when read in the synagogues in that language, required an interpreter; and since the Greek tongue was the language more commonly spoken, and the rest of the Evangelists wrote in Greek, and the Gospel was designed for the Gentiles as well as the Jews; it is most reasonable to conclude that this Gospel also was wrote in Greek; whereby that ancient prophecy was fulfilled, at least in part, "God shall enlarge" or "persuade Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem", ***Ge 9:27*** the Gospel being published in the language of Japheth, the Greek language, which the Jews, the posterity of Shem, now understood; agreeably to which the Palmudic writers interpret the prophecy; says {k} Bar Kaphra, mentioning the above words,

"They shall speak tpy lv wnwvlb in the language of Japheth, in the tents of Shem;"

or,

"the words of the law shall be spoken in the language of Japheth, in the midst of the tents of Shem {l}."

R. Jochanan {m} explains them thus:

"tpy lv wyrbr "the words of Japheth" shall be in the tents of Shem; and says R. Chiya ben Aba, the sense of it is, The beauty of Japheth shall be in the tents of Shem."

Which the gloss interprets thus:

"The beauty of Japheth is the language of Javan, or the Greek language, which language is more beautiful than that of any other of the sons of Japheth."

The time when this Gospel was written is said {n} by some to be in the eighth or ninth, by others, in the fifteenth year after the ascension of Christ, when the Evangelist had received the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, among which was the gift of tongues; and when the promise of Christ had been made good to him, *Joh 14:26.*

{a} T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 116. 1. Vet. Nizzachou. p. 15, 39, 87, 94, 137, 186. Ed. Wagenseil. {b} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 43. 1. {c} Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 39. p. 113. Vid. ib. l. 5. c. 8. p. 172. c 10. p. 175. & l. 6. c. 25. p. 226. {d} Adv. Haeres. l. 3. c 1. {e} In Matt. Tom. l. p. 203. Ed. Huet. {f} Eccl. Hist. l. 3. cap. 24. p. 95. {g} Synops. sacr. Script. p. 134. Vol. 2. {h} Contra Haeres. l. 1. Haer. 29. & 30. {i} Catalog. Script. Eccles fol. 90. Tom. 1. ad Hedib. fol. 46. Tom. 3. {k} T. Hieros. Megilla, fol. 71. 2. {l} Bereshit. Rabba, sect. 36. fol. 32. 1. {m} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 9. 2. {n} Vid. Fabricii Biblioth. Graec. l. 4. c. 5. sect. 2. p. 197. & Vales. not. in Euseb. Eccl. Hist. p. 52.

Ver. 1. The book of the generation of Jesus Christ,.... This is the genuine title of the book, which was put to it by the Evangelist himself; for the former seems to be done by another hand. This book is an account, not of the divine, but human generation of Christ; and not merely of his birth, which lies in a very little compass; nor of his genealogy, which is contained in this chapter; but also of his whole life and actions, of what was said, done, and suffered by him. It is an Hebrew way of speaking, much like that in ***Ge 5:1*** and which the Septuagint render by the same phrase as here; and as that was the book of the generation of the first Adam; this is the book of the generation of the second Adam. The Jews call their blasphemous history of the life of Jesus, wvy twdlwt rpo "The book of the generations of Jesus" {o}. This account of Christ begins with the name of the Messiah, well known to the Jews,

the son of David; not only to the Scribes and Pharisees, the more learned part of the nation, but to the common people, even to persons of the meanest rank and figure among them. See ***Mt 9:27***. Nothing is more common in the Jewish writings, than for dwd Nb "the son of David" to stand alone for the Messiah; it would be endless to cite or refer to all the testimonies of this kind; only take the following {p},

"R. Jochanan says, in the generation in which dwd Nb "the son of David" comes, the disciples of the wise men shall be lessened, and the rest, their eyes shall fail with grief and sorrow, and many calamities and severe decrees shall be renewed; when the first visitation is gone, a second will hasten to come. It is a tradition of the Rabbins (about) the week (of years) in which dwd Nb "the son of David" comes, that in the first year this scripture will be fulfilled, ***Am 4:7***. "I will rain upon one city", &c. in the second, arrows of famine will be sent forth; in the third there will be a great famine, and men, women and children, holy men and men of business will die, and the law will be forgotten by those who learn it; in the fourth there will be plenty and not plenty; in the fifth there will be great plenty, and they shall eat and drink and rejoice, and the law shall return to them that learn it; in the sixth there will be voices (or thunders;) in the seventh there will be wars; and in the going out of the seventh dwd Nb the "son of David" comes. The tradition of R. Judah says, In the generation in which dwd Nb "the son of David" comes, the house of the congregation (the school or synagogue) shall become a brothel house, Galilee shall be destroyed, and Gabalene shall become desolate; and the men of Gabul (or the border) shall go about from city to city, and shall find no mercy; and the wisdom of the scribes shall stink; and they that are afraid to sin shall be despised; and the face of that generation shall be as the face of a dog, and truth shall fail, as it is said, *Isa 59:15* --The tradition of R. Nehorai says, In the generation in which dwd Nb "the son of David" comes, young men shall make ashamed the faces of old men, and old men shall stand before young men, the daughter shall rise up against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; nor will a son reverence his father. The tradition of R. Nehemiah says, In the generation in which dwd Nb "the son of David" comes, impudence will increase, and the honourable will deal wickedly, and the whole kingdom will return to the opinion of the Sadducees, and there will be no reproof. --It is a tradition of the Rabbins, that dwd Nb "the son of David" will not come, until traitorous practices are increased, or the disciples are lessened or until the smallest piece of money fails from the purse, or until redemption is despaired of."

In which passage, besides the proof for which it is cited, may be observed, how exactly the description of the age of the Messiah, as given by the Jews themselves, agrees with the generation in which Jesus the true Messiah came; who as he was promised to David, and it was expected he should descend from him, so he did according to the flesh; God raised him up of his seed, ***Ro 1:3*** it follows,

The son of Abraham. Abraham was the first to whom a particular promise was made, that the Messiah should spring from, *Ge 22:18*. The first promise in ***Ge 3:15*** only signified that he should be the seed of the woman; and it would have been sufficient for the fulfilment of it, if he had been born of any woman, in whatsoever nation, tribe, or family; but by the promise made to Abraham he was to descend from him, as Jesus did; who took upon him the seed of Abraham, ***Heb 2:16*** or assumed an human nature which sprung from him, and is therefore truly the son of Abraham. The reason why Christ is first called the son of David, and then the son of Abraham, is partly because the former was a more known name of the Messiah; and partly that the transition to the genealogy of Christ might be more easy and natural, beginning with Abraham, whom the Jews call {q} oxyh var the "head of the genealogy", and the root and foundation of it, as Matthew here makes him to be; wherefore a Jew cannot be displeased with the Evangelist for beginning the genealogy of our Lord at, Abraham.

{o} Apud Wagenseil. Tela Ignea. {p} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 97. 1. Shir

Hashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4. {q} Juchasin, fol. 8. 1. Tzeror Hammor. fol. 29. 3. & 154. 4.

Matthew 1:2

Ver. 2. Abraham begat Isaac,.... The descent of Christ from Abraham is in the line of Isaac; Abraham begat Ishmael before Isaac, and others after him, but they are not mentioned; because the Messiah was not to spring from any of them, but from Isaac, of whom it is said, "in Isaac shall thy seed be called", *Ge 21:12* and who, as he was a progenitor, so an eminent type of Christ; being Abraham's only beloved son; and particularly in the binding, sacrifice and deliverance of him.

Isaac begat Jacob. The genealogy of Christ proceeds from Isaac, in the line of Jacob. Isaac begat Esau, as well as Jacob, and they two were twins, but one was loved, and the other hated; wherefore no mention is made of Esau, he had no concern in the Messiah, nor was he to spring from him, but from Jacob, or Israel, by whose name he is sometimes called, *Isa 49:3*

Jacob begat Judas and his brethren. The lineage of Christ is carried on from Jacob in the line of Judah; the reason of which is, because it was particularly prophesied that the Messiah, Shiloh, the prince and chief ruler, should be of him, *Ge 49:10* ***1Ch 5:2***. And it is evident beyond all contradiction, that our Lord sprung from his tribe, ***Heb 7:14***. The reason why the brethren of Judah, who were eleven in number, are mentioned, when the brethren of Isaac and Jacob are not, is, because though the Messiah did not spring from them, yet the promise of him was made to the twelve tribes, who all expected him, and to whom he was sent, and came. These made but one body of men, and therefore, though the Messiah came from the tribe of Judah, yet he is said to be of them all, ***Ro 9:4***.

Matthew 1:3

Ver. 3. And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar,.... The genealogical account of Christ goes on from Judah in the line of Phares, with whom Zara is mentioned; not because they were twins, for so were Jacob and Esau, and yet the latter is taken no notice of; but it may be because of what happened at their birth, see

Ge 38:28. But the line of the Messiah was in Phares, and very rightly is he put in the genealogy of Christ, the Jews themselves being witnesses; who expressly say, that "the Messiah comes from him." These two are said to be begotten of Thamar, daughter-in-law to Judah; who, though she was a Canaanitish woman, has the honour to be named in the genealogy of Christ, who came to save Gentiles as well as Jews: nor can the Jews reproach our Evangelist for putting her into the account; since they themselves frequently acknowledge that the Messiah was to spring from her: they say, {r}

"there are two women from whom come David the king, and Solomon, and the king Messiah; and these two are Thamar and Ruth."

Jonathan Ben Uzziel on *Ge 38:6* says, that Thamar was the daughter of Shem the great.

And Phares begat Esrom; called Hezron, ***Ru 4:18*** where the same phrase is used as here. He had another son called Hamul, ***1Ch 2:5*** but the account proceeds from Phares, in the line of Esrom.

And Esrom begat Aram; called Ram in ***Ru 4:18*** where the same way of speaking is used as here. Esrom also besides him begat Jerahmeel, Chelubai, or Caleb, and Segub, ***1Ch 2:9*** but these are not in the line. Elihu, who conversed with Job, is said to be of the kindred of Ram, *Job 32:2* whether the same with Ram or Aram, may be inquired.

{r} Shemot Rabba, sect. 30. fol. 131. 4. Caphtor, fol. 122. 1.

Matthew 1:4

Ver. 4. And Aram begat Aminadab,.... Which, with what follows in this verse, exactly agrees with the genealogical account in ***Ru 4:19***.

Matthew 1:5

Ver. 5. And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab,.... That Salmon begat Boaz, is affirmed in ***Ru 4:21*** but it is not there said, nor any where else in the Old Testament, as here, that he begat him of Rahab, that is, of Rahab the harlot. This the Evangelist had from tradition, or from the Jewish records. That the

Messiah was to spring from Boaz is asserted by the Jewish writers {s}; and they also own that Rahab was married to a prince in Israel, which some say {t} was Joshua: they pretend that she was ten years of age when the Israelites came out of Egypt; that she played the harlot all the forty years they were in the wilderness, and was married to Joshua upon the destruction of Jericho. To excuse this marriage with a Canaanitish woman, they tell us, she was not of the seven nations with whom marriage was forbid; and moreover, that she became a proselyte when the spies were received by her: they own that some very great persons of their nation sprung from her, as Jeremiah, Maaseiah, Hanameel, Shallum, Baruch, Ezekiel, Neriah, Seraiah, and Huldah the prophetess. The truth of the matter is, she became the wife of Salmon, or Salma, as he is called, ***1Ch 2:11***. And in the Targum on ***Ru 4:20*** is said to be of Bethlehem; he was the son of Nahshon or Naasson, a famous prince in Judah, and the head and captain of the tribe, ***Nu 1:7 Nu 7:12***. And from Rahab sprung the Messiah, another instance of a Gentile in the genealogy of Christ; and a third follows.

And Booz begat Obed of Ruth; who was a Moabitess. It is a notion that generally obtains among the Jews {u}, that she was the daughter of Eglon, grandson of Balak, king of Moab; and it is often taken notice of by them {w}, that the king Messiah should descend from her; and also other persons of note, as David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, and Daniel; wherefore the mentioning of her in this genealogy, cannot be said by them to be impertinent.

And Obed begat Jesse. Jesse is thought to be, not the immediate son of Obed, but to be of the fourth generation from him; though no others are mentioned between them in Ruth, any more than here. A Jewish writer observes {x}, that

"the wise men of the Gentiles say, that there were other generations between them; perhaps, says he, they have taken this from the wise men of Israel, and so it is thought."

Now notwithstanding this, Jesse may be said to be begotten by Obed, as Hezekiah's posterity, who were carried captive into Babylon, are said to be begotten by him, *Isa 39:7* though they were a remove of several generations from him. However, Jesse is rightly put among the progenitors of Christ, since the Messiah was to be a rod of his stem, and the branch of his roots, and is called the root of Jesse, *Isa 11:1* which words are interpreted of the

Messiah, by many of the Jewish writers {y}; and to this day the Jews pray for him in their synagogues under the name of yvy Nb, "the son of Jesse" {z}.

{s} Zohar in Gen. fol. 105. 4. Gloss in T. Bab. Maccot. fol. 23. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 49. 2. Zoher in Gen. fol. 63. 3. {t} T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 14. 2. Juchasin, fol. 10. 1. Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2. Abarb. Kimchi & Laniado in Josh. 6. 25. & Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Torah, pr. neg. 112. {u} Targ. in Ruth. i. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 105. 2. Horayot, fol. 10. 2. Nazir. fol 23. 2. Sota, fol. 47. 1. Zohar in Deut. fol. 109. 2. Shalshelet Hakabala fol. 8. 1. {w} Targ. in Ruth iii. 15. T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 93. 7. Midrash Ruth, fol. 34. 4. Zohar in Gen, fol. 72. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 20. 4. & 123. 4. & 132. 4. {x} Juchasin, fol. 10. 2. {y} Targum, Aben Ezra & Kimchi in loc. & Zohar in Exod. fol. 71. 1. {z} Seder Tephillot, fol. 278. 1. & 285. 2. Ed. Basil, T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 29. 1.

Matthew **_1:6_**

Ver. 6. And Jesse begat David the king,.... The descent of the Messiah runs in the line of David, the youngest of Jesse's sons, who was despised by his brethren, and overlooked and neglected by his father; but God chose him, and anointed him to be king, and set him on the throne of Israel; hence he is called "David the king"; as also because he was the first king that was of the tribe of Judah, and in the genealogy of Christ, and was an eminent type of the king Messiah, who is sometimes called by the same name, *Eze 34:24* and who was to be his son, as Jesus is, and also right heir to his throne and kingdom.

And David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; which was Bathsheba, though not named; either because she was well known, or because of the sin she had been guilty of, which would easily be revived by mentioning her name: our translators have rightly supplied, "that had been", and not as the Vulgate Latin, which supplies it, "that was the wife of Urias", for Solomon was begotten of her, not while she was the wife of Uriah, but when she was the wife of David.

Matthew **_1:7_**

Ver. 7. And Solomon begat Roboam,.... Called Rehoboam, *1Ki 11:43* of Naamah an Ammonitess, *1Ki 14:21*.

And Roboam begat Abia, sometimes called Abijam, as in *1Ki 14:31*, sometimes Abijah, *2Ch 12:16* and sometimes, as here, Abia, ***1Ch 3:10***. Him Rehoboam begat of Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom, *1Ki 15:2* called Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel, *2Ch 13:2*. Maachah and Michaiah being the same name; or else she went by two names, as her father did.

And Abia begat Asa, who was a good king; his mother's name is the same with the name of his father's mother; and perhaps it is not his proper mother, but his grandmother who is meant in *1Ki 15:10*. He is wrongly called Asaph in the Persic and Ethiopic versions, and in one copy.

Matthew 1:8

Ver. 8. And Asa begat Josaphat,.... Called Jehoshaphat, *1Ki 15:24* whom Asa begat of Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi, *1Ki 22:42*. He also was a very good prince.

And Josaphat begat Joram; called Jehoram, *1Ki 22:50* to whom his father gave the kingdom, because he was the firstborn, *2Ch 21:3*.

And Joram begat Ozias; called Uzziah, *2Ch 26:1* and Azariah, *2Ki 15:1*. He was not the immediate son of Joram; there were three kings between them, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, which are here omitted; either because of the curse denounced on Ahab's family, into which Joram married, whose idolatry was punished to the third or fourth generation; or because these were princes of no good character; or because their names were not in the Jewish registers. Nor does this omission at all affect the design of the Evangelist, which is to show that Jesus, the true Messiah, is of the house of David; nor ought the Jews to complain of it, as they do {a} since such omissions are to be met with in the Old Testament, particularly in ***Ezr 7:2*** where six generations are omitted at once; and which is taken notice of by one of their own genealogical writers, whose words are these {b};

"we see in the genealogy of Ezra that he hath skipped over seven generations (perhaps it should be w "six" and not z "seven", since six are only omitted) from Ahitub to Ahitub."

Nor is it any objection that Joram is said to beget Ozias, which he may be said to do in the like sense, as has been before observed of Hezekiah, *Isa 39:7*.

{a} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emunab, par. 2. p. 390. {b} Juchasin, fol. 10. 2.

Matthew ***1:9***

Ver. 9. And Ozias begat Joatham,.... Called Jotham, *2Ki 15:7* him Ozias begat of Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok, *2Ki 15:33*.

And Joatham begat Achaz, or Ahaz, *2Ki 15:38* to him the sign was given, and the famous prophecy of the Messiah, ***Isa 7:14***.

And Achaz begat Ezekias, or Hezekiah, *2Ki 16:20* him Ahaz begat of Abi, the daughter of Zachariah, *2Ki 18:2*. He was a very religious king, and had that singular favour from God to have fifteen years added to his days, *Isa 38:5*.

Matthew ***1:10***

Ver. 10. And Ezekias begat Manasses,.... Or Manasseh, *2Ki 20:21*. Him Hezekiah begat of Hephzibah, *2Ki 21:1*. He was very remarkable both for his sins, and for his humiliation on account of them.

And Manasses begat Amon, of Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah, *2Ki 21:19*. He was a very wicked prince.

And Amon begat Josias, or Josiah of Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath, *2Ki 22:1*. He was a very pious king, and was prophesied of by name some hundreds of years before he was born, *1Ki 13:2*.

Matthew ***1:11***

Ver. 11. And Josias begat Jechonias,.... This Jechonias is the same with Jehoiakim, the son of Josias, called so by Pharaohnecho, when he made him king, whose name before was Eliakim, *2Ki 23:34* begat of Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah, *2Ki 23:36*.

and his brethren. These were Johanan, Zedekiah, and Shallum. Two of them were kings, one reigned before him, viz. Shallum, who is called Jehoahaz, *2Ki 23:30* compared with *Jer 22:11*, the other, viz. Zedekiah, called before Mattaniah, reigned after his son Jehoiakim: these being both kings, is the reason why his brethren are mentioned; as well as to distinguish him from Jechonias in the next verse; who does not appear to have had any brethren: these were

about the time they were carried away to Babylon, which is not to be connected with the word "begat": for Josiah did not beget Jeconiah and his brethren at that time, for he had been dead some years before; nor with Jechonias, for he never was carried away into Babylon, but died in Judea, and slept with his fathers, *2Ki 24:6* but with the phrase "his brethren": and may be rendered thus, supposing touv understood, "which were at", or "about the carrying away to Babylon", or the Babylonish captivity.

Matthew 1:12

Ver. 12. And after they were brought to Babylon,.... Not Jechonias, but the father of Jechonias, and the Jews.

Jechonias begat Salathiel. Not Jechonias mentioned in the former verse, but his son, called Jehoiachin, *2Ki 24:6* and Coniah, *Jer 22:24* both which are rendered Jechonias by the Septuagint in *2Ch 36:8* and he is so called, ***1Ch 3:16***. Abulpharagius {c} calls him Junachir, and says he is the same who in Matthew is called Juchonia; and he asserts him to be the father of Daniel the Prophet. But here a considerable difficulty arises, how he can be said to beget Salathiel, called Shealtiel, ***Hag 1:1*** when he was pronounced "childless", *Jer 22:30*. To remove which, it may be observed, that the sentence pronounced may be considered with this tacit condition or proviso, if he repented not. Now the Jews have a tradition {d} that he did repent in prison, upon which the sentence was revoked; but there is no need to suppose this, though it is not an unreasonable supposition; for the sentence does not imply that he should have no children, but rather that he should, as will appear upon reading the whole; "thus saith the Lord, write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah". Besides, the Hebrew word yryre, rendered "childless", comes from hre, which signifies "to make naked" or "bare" and so denotes not only such as have no children, or are bereft of them, but such as are by any providence stripped of the blessings of life, and are left bare, destitute, and unhappy, as Jechonias and his posterity were: however, the Jews have no reason to find fault with our Evangelist, since Salathiel is expressly called Jechonias's son, ***1Ch 3:17*** either he was his proper natural son, or, to use their way of speaking, twklm Nb "the son of the kingdom" {e}, that is, his heir and successor in the kingdom, as some have thought; since it looks as if he was the son of Neri, ***Lu 3:27*** though the chronicle of Jedidaeus of Alexandria {f}, or Philo the Jew, says, that Jechonias was called Neri, because Ner, or the lamp of David, shined in him, which had been almost extinguished.

And Salathiel begat Zorobabel. This account perfectly agrees with many passages in the Old Testament, where Zorobabel is called the son of Shealtiel or Salathiel, ***Ezr 3:2 Hag 1:1*** which is sufficient to justify the Evangelist in this assertion. There is indeed a difficulty which as much presses the Jews as the Christians, and that is, that Zorobabel is reckoned as the son of Pedaiah, ***1Ch 3:19*** for the solution of which a noted Jewish commentator {g} observes, that

"in Haggai, Zachariah and Ezra, Zorobabel is called the son of Shealtiel, because he was his son's son; for Pedaiah was the son of Shealtiel, and Zorobabel the son of Pedaiah; and do not you observe (adds he) that in many places children's children are mentioned as children?"

No doubt there are many instances of this; but to me it seems that Pedaiah was not the son of Shealtiel, but his brother, ***1Ch 3:17***. And I greatly suspect that Shealtiel had no children of his own, since none are mentioned; and that he adopted his brother Pedaiah's son Zorobabel, and made him his heir and successor in the government of Judah. However, it is certain, as a genealogical writer {h} among the Jews observes, that he was of the son's sons of Jechonias, king of Judah, from whom our Evangelist makes him to descend.

{c} Hist. Dynast. p. 45. Vid. Hieron. Comment. in Dan. i. fol. 264. B. {d} Kimchi in 1 Chron. iii. 17. & in Jer. xxii. 30. {e} Ib. in 1 Chron. iii. 15. {f} Apud Vorst. Observ. in Ganz. Chronolog. p. 310. {g} Kimchi in 1 Chron. iii. 19. & in Hagg. i. 1. {h} Juchasin, fol. 13. i.

Matthew 1:13

Ver. 13. And Zorobabel begat Abiud,.... The children of Zorobabel are said in ***1Ch 3:19***, to be Meshullam, and Hananiah, and Shelomith their sister, but no mention is made of Abiud: he seems to be the same with Meshullam the eldest son, who might have two names; nor is this unlikely, since it was usual, especially about the time of the Babylonish captivity, for men to have more names than one, as may be observed in Daniel and others, ***Da 1:7*** where they went by one, and in Judea by another.

And Abiud begat Eliakim, &c. From hence to the 16th verse the genealogy is carried down to Joseph, the husband of Mary; which account must be taken from the genealogical tables of the Jews, to which recourse might be had, and with which it agrees; or otherwise the Jews would have cavilled at it; but I do not find any objections made by them to it. That there were genealogical books or tables kept by the Jews is certain, from the following instances {i};

"Simeon ben Azzai says, I found in Jerusalem, Nyoxwy tlgm, "a volume of genealogies", and there was written in it, &c."

Again {k}, says R. Levi,

"they found a "volume of genealogies" in Jerusalem, and there was written in it that Hillell came from David; Ben Jarzaph from Asaph; Ben Tzitzith Hacceseth from Abner; Ben Cobesin from Ahab; Ben Calba Shebuah from Caleb; R. Jannai from Eli; R. Chayah Rabba from the children of Shephatiah, the son of Abital; R. Jose be Rabbi Chelphetha from the children of Jonadab, the son of Rechab; and R. Nehemiah from Nehemiah the Tirshathite."

Once more {l}, says R. Chana bar Chanma, when the holy blessed God causes his

"Shechinah to dwell, he does not cause it to dwell but upon families, twoxwym, "which are genealogized" in Israel."

Now if Matthew's account had not been true, it might easily have been refuted by these records. The author of the old {m} Nizzachon takes notice of the close of this genealogy, but finds no fault with it; only that it is carried down to Joseph, and not to Mary; which may be accounted for by a rule of their own {n}, txpvm hywrq hnya Ma txpvm "the mother's family is not called a family", whereas the father's is. It is very remarkable that the Jewish Targum {o} traces the descent of the Messiah from the family of David in the line of Zorobabel, as Matthew does; and reckons the same number of generations, wanting one, from Zorobabel to the Messiah, as the Evangelist does, from Zorobabel to Jesus; according to Matthew, the genealogy stands thus, Zorobabel, Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Sadoc, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, Jacob, Joseph, Jesus; and according to the Targum the order is this,

"Zorobabel, Hananiah, Jesaiah, Rephaiah, Arnon, Obadiah, Shecaniah, Shemnigh, Neariah, Elioenai, Anani; this is the king Messiah, who is to be revealed."

The difference of names may be accounted for by their having two names, as before observed. This is a full proof, that, according to the Jews own account, and expectation, the Messiah must be come many years and ages ago.

{i} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 49. 2. {k} T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 68. 1. B. Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 85. 3. {l} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 70. 9. {m} P. 186. {n} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 54. 2. Bava Bathra, fol. 109. 2. & 110. 2. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 6. 1. Jucbasin, fol. 55. 2. {o} In 1 Chron. iii. 24. Vid. Beckii Not. in ib. p. 56, 57.

Matthew 1:14

See Gill on "Mt 1:13".

Matthew 1:15

See Gill on "Mt 1:13".

Matthew 1:16

Ver. 16. And Jacob begat Joseph,.... According to an old tradition mentioned by {p} Epiphanins, this Jacob, the father of Joseph, was named Panther, and which name perhaps is originally Jewish; and it may be observed, that Joseph is sometimes called by the Jewish writers Pandera {q}, and Jesus arydnp Nb, the son of Pandira {r}. It has created some difficulty with interpreters that Jacob should be here said to beget Joseph, when Joseph in Luke is said to be the son of Eli. Some have thought Joseph's father had two names, one was Jacob, and the other Eli; others take them to be two different persons, and suppose that Joseph was the natural son of the one, and the legal son of the other, either by marriage, or by adoption, or by the law of the brother's wife, *De 25:5*. But the truth of the matter is, that not Joseph, but Jesus, is by Luke called the son of Eli, as will be made to appear in its proper place. Joseph, who is here called the husband of Mary, because he not only espoused her, but, upon the advice and encouragement of the Angel, took her to be his wife, was, as is evident by this genealogy, of the house and lineage of David; though a mean and obscure person, and by trade a carpenter. Mary, which is the same name with Miriam in Hebrew, was a poor virgin that dwelt at Nazareth, a city of Galilee; yet also of the family of David, and belonged to the city of Bethlehem;

of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ, or Messiah; being that illustrious person, who was spoken of by the Prophets of the Old Testament under that name, and whom the Jews expected. We may learn from hence, what a low condition the family of David was in, when the true Messiah came; according to ancient prophecy, it was like a stump of a tree, or like to a tree cut down to the root, *Isa 11:1* and Christ who sprung from it was like a root out of a dry ground, *Isa 53:2*. From the whole of this genealogy it appears, that Jesus was of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David; whereby several ancient prophecies have their accomplishment, and therefore he ought to be acknowledged as the true Messiah: and also that he was of the blood royal, and had his descent from the kings of Judah, and was heir apparent to the throne and kingdom of his father David. The Talmudic Jews own that Jesus, or Jesu, as they call him, was put to death because he {s}, hyh twklml bwrq "was nigh to the kingdom", or nearly related to it. Yea, even in that malicious book {t} they have written of his life, they represent him as akin to queen Helena, who they say, on that account, would have saved his life. And this was so clear a point, and their forefathers were so thoroughly convinced of this matter, that they would have took him by force and made him a king, ***Joh 6:15*** but his kingdom was to be of another kind, a spiritual, and not a temporal one.

{p} Contra Haeres. l. 3. Haeres. 78. {q} Toldos Jesu, p. 3. {r} T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 40. 4. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 14. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 81. 1. {s} T. Bab. Sanhed. fol. 43. 1. {t} Toldos Jesu, p. 10.

Matthew 1:17

Ver. 17. So all the generations from Abraham,.... The Evangelist having traced the genealogy of Christ from Abraham, which he divides into "three" parts, because of the threefold state of the Jews, "first" under Patriarchs, Prophets, and Judges, "next" under Kings, and "then" under Princes and Priests, gives the sum of each part under its distinct head; "so all the generations", that is, the degrees of generation, or the persons generated from Abraham to David, both being included, "are fourteen generations"; as there were, and no more, and are as follow, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Phares, Esrom, Aram, Amminadab, Naasson, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David.

And from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations. Here David who closed the first division must be excluded this, and it must be observed, that the Evangelist does not say as before, that "all" the generations from David to the captivity were fourteen, for there were seventeen, three kings being omitted by him at once; but, the generations he thought fit to mention, in order to reduce them to a like number as before, and which were sufficient for his purpose, were fourteen; and may be reckoned in this order, Solomon, Roboam, Abia, Asa, Josaphat, Joram, Ozias, Joatham, Achaz, Ezekias, Manasses, Amon, Josias, Jechonias, or Jehoiachin.

And from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations. This must be understood as before; for there might be more generations in this interval, but these were enough to answer the design of the Evangelist; and which he thought proper to mention, and may be numbered in this manner; Jechonias, or Jehoiachin, Salathiel, Zorobabel, Abiud, Ehakim, Azor, Sadoc, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, Jacob, Joseph, Christ. This way of reckoning by generations was used by other nations as well as the Jews {u}, particularly the Grecians; so {w} Pausanias says,

"From Tharypus to Pyrrhus the son of Achilles, pente andrwn kai deka eisi geneai, were fifteen generations of men."

And Herodotus {x} speaking of those who had reigned in Babylon, says, among them were two women, one whose name was Semiramis, who reigned before the other genehsi pente, five generations; many other instances of the like kind might be given.

{u} Vid. Pirke Abot. c. 5. sect. 2. {w} Attica sive l. 1. c. 10. p. 19. {x} Clio. l. 1. c. 184. p. 74.

Matthew ***1:18***

Ver. 18. Now the birth of Jesus Christ,.... The Evangelist having finished the genealogy of Christ, proceeds to give an account of his birth, which includes both his conception and bringing forth; and which he says

was on this wise, outwv so, "after this manner", and which was very wonderful and astonishing;

when as, gar, for his mother Mary was found with child, not of man, no, not of Joseph her husband; Christ had no real father as man, Joseph was only, as was supposed, his father; but

of the Holy Ghost, according to ***Lu 1:35***. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee", &c. and this was done that the human nature of Christ might be clear of original pollution; that so being the immediate produce of the Holy Ghost and without sin, it might be fit for union with the Son of God, and for the office of Mediator he had undertook. When Mary is said to be

found with child, the meaning is, it appeared by evident signs, it was observed by Joseph particularly, who might know not only that she was with child, but with child of the Holy Ghost; by conversation with her, who might relate to him what passed between the Angel and her, ***Lu 1:28*** though it looks as if as yet he did not know this, or at least was not fully satisfied about it; since he had a mind to have put her away, before he was assured of the truth of it, by the appearance of an angel to him. Now Mary's being with child, and its being known, were facts, at the time when she was

espoused to Joseph, and thereby the outward credit both of Mary and Jesus were secured; for had this appeared before the espousals, the Jews would have fixed a brand of infamy on them both; and both the espousals and her being found with child, were

before they came together; that is, before they cohabited together as man and wife, before he brought her home to his own house and bed. The espousals were before they thus came together. It was usual with the Jews first to espouse or betroth, and then to marry, or rather consummate the marriage, by bringing the woman home to her husband's house, between which there was some space of time. The account and manner of betrothing is given by Maimonides {y} in the following words.

"Before the giving of the law, if a man met a woman in the street, if he would, he might take her, and bring her into his house and marry her between him and herself, and she became his wife; but when the law was given, the Israelites were commanded, that if a man would take a woman he should obtain her before witnesses, and after that she should be his wife, according to *De 22:13* and these takings are an affirmative command of the law, and are called Nyowrya wa Nyvwdyq "espousals" or "betrothings" in every place; and a woman who is obtained in such a way is called torwam wa tvdwqm "espoused" or "betrothed"; and when a woman is obtained, and becomes tvdwqm "espoused", although she is not yet hlebn "married, nor has entered into her husband's house", yet she is a man's wife."

And such a distinction between a married woman and a betrothed virgin, which was Mary's case, may be observed in *De 22:22* moreover, her being found or appearing to be with child, was "before they came together"; which it is likely, as Dr. Lightfoot {z} observes, was about three months from her conception, when she was returned from her cousin Elizabeth. It is probable that as soon as she was espoused to Joseph, or quickly after, she went and paid her visit to Elizabeth, with whom she stayed about three months, and then returned home, ***Lu 1:56***. Upon her return home, she appears to be with child, with which she had gone three months, a proper time for the discovery of such a matter, *Ge 38:24* and which is assigned by the Jewish doctors for this purpose. In the Misna {a} such a case as this is put,

"If two men should espouse two women, and at the time of their entrance into the bride chamber, the one should be taken for the other--they separate them for three months, because they may prove with child;"

that is, as Bartenora observes upon it,

"they separate them that they may not return to their husbands; and that if they should be with child, they may distinguish between a legitimate and an illegitimate offspring; and that the children which they may bring forth may not be ascribed to the wrong persons."

Now Mary being gone three months from the time of her espousals to Joseph, and he and she not being yet come together, it was a clear case, that the child she was gone three months with, was none of his; hence it follows,

{y} Hilchot. Ishot. c. 1. sect. 1, 2, 3. {z} In loc. {a} Yebamot, c. 3. sect. 10.

Matthew 1:19

Ver. 19. Then Joseph her husband,.... To whom she had been betrothed, and who was her husband, and she his wife according to the Jewish law, *De 22:23* though not yet come together,

being a just man, observant of the law of God, particularly that which respected adultery, being wholly good and chaste, like the Patriarch of the same name; a character just the reverse of that which the Jews give him, in their scandalous {b} book of the life of Jesus; where, in the most malicious manner, they represent him as an unchaste and an unrighteous person:

and not willing to make her a public example, or to deliver her, i.e. to the civil magistrate, according to Munster's Hebrew edition. The Greek word signifies to punish by way of example to others, to deter them from sinning; and with the ancients it {c} denoted the greatest and severest punishment.

Here it means either bringing her before the civil magistrate, in order to her being punished according to the law in *De 22:23* which requires the person to be brought out to the gate of the city and stoned with stones, which was making a public example indeed; or divorcing her in a very public manner, and thereby expose her to open shame and disgrace. To prevent which, he being tender and compassionate, though strictly just and good,

was minded to put her away privily: he deliberately consulted and determined within himself to dismiss her, or put her away by giving her a bill of divorce, in a very private manner; which was sometimes done by putting it into the woman's hand or bosom, see *De 24:1*. In Munster's Hebrew Gospel it is rendered, "it was in his heart to forsake her privately."

{b} Teldos Jesu, p. 3. {c} A. Gellii Noct. Attic. l. 6. c. 14.

Matthew ***1:20***

Ver. 20. But while he thought on these things,.... While he was revolving them in his mind, considering what was most fit and proper to be done, whether to dismiss her publicly or privately; while he was consulting within himself the glory of God, the peace of his own conscience, and the credit of Mary,

behold the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream; probably the same Angel which appeared to Zacharias, and brought him tidings that his wife should have a son, and who also appeared to Mary, and acquainted her that she should conceive, and bring forth the Messiah, Whose name was Gabriel, ***Lu 1:11***. If we will believe the Jews, this Angel must be Gabriel, since he is the Angel who they say {d} amlx le anmmd "is appointed over dreams"; for he appeared to

Joseph in a dream, which is one of the ways and methods in which the Lord, or an Angel of his, has appeared to the saints formerly, and has answered them, see *Ge 31:11* and is reckoned by the Jews {e} one of the degrees or kinds of prophecy: and so the Angel here not only encourages Joseph to take to him his wife,

saying Joseph, thou son of David; which is said partly to attest his being of the house and lineage of David, and partly to raise his expectations and confirm his faith, that his wife should bring forth the promised son of David; and chiefly to engage his attention to what he was about to say,

fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; do not be afraid either that thou shalt offend the Lord, or bring any reproach or scandal upon thyself as if thou didst connive at an adulteress; but as she is thine espoused wife, solemnly betrothed to thee, take her home to thyself, live with her as thy wife, and openly avow her as such. To which he is encouraged by the following reason or argument,

for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost; she has not been guilty of any criminal conversation with men; this conception of her's is of the Holy Ghost, and entirely owing to his coming upon her, and overshadowing her in a wonderful and miraculous manner. I say, the Angel not only encourages Joseph after this manner, but delivers something to him by way of prophecy, in the following verse.

{d} Zohar in Gen. fol. 103. 3. {e} Zohar in Gen. fol. 103. 3. & Maimon. Yesode Hattorah. c. 7. l. 13.

Matthew 1:21

Ver. 21. And she shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Jesus.] For though she was with child, it could not be known any otherwise than by prediction or divine revelation, that she should have a son, whose name should be called Jesus; a name of the same signification with Joshua and Hosea, and may be interpreted a "Saviour", *Ac 13:23* for the word ewvy Jesus, comes from evy which signifies "to save." And to this agrees the reason of the name given by the Angel,

for he shall save his people from their sins. The salvation here ascribed to him, and for which he is every way fit, being God as well as man, and which he is the sole author of, is to be understood, not of a temporal, but of a spiritual and everlasting salvation; such as was prophesied of, *Is 45:17* and which old Jacob had in his view, when he said, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord", *Ge 49:18* which by the Jewish {f} Targumist is paraphrased thus:

"Jacob said when he saw Gideon the son of Joash, and Samson the son of

Manoah, that they would rise up to be saviours, not for the salvation of Gideon do I wait, nor for the salvation of Samson do I look, for their salvation is atevd Nqrwp "a temporary salvation"; but for thy salvation, O Lord, do I wait and look, for thy salvation is Nymle Nqrwp "an everlasting salvation", or (according to another copy) but for the salvation of Messiah the son of David, who shall save the children of Israel, and bring them out of captivity, for thy salvation my soul waiteth."

By "his people" whom he is said to save are meant, not all mankind, though they are his by creation and preservation, yet they are not, nor will they be all saved by him spiritually and eternally; nor also the people of the Jews, for though they were his nation, his kinsmen, and so his own people according to the flesh, yet they were not all saved by him; many of them died in their sins, and in the disbelief of him as the Messiah: but by them are meant all the elect of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, who were given to him by his Father, as a peculiar people, and who are made willing in the day of his power upon them, to be saved by him in his own way. And these he saves from "their sins", from all their sins, original and actual; from secret and open sins; from sins of heart, lip and life; from sins of omission and commission; from all that is in sin, and omission upon it; from the guilt, punishment, and damning power of it, by his sufferings and death; and from the tyrannical government of it by his Spirit and grace; and will at last save them from the being of it, though not in this life, yet hereafter, in the other world, when they shall be without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

{f} Targum Jon. Ben Uzziel in loc.

Matthew 1:22

Ver. 22. Now all this was done,.... These are not the words of the Angel, but of the Evangelist; observing that Mary's being with child of the Holy Ghost, and her conception in such an extraordinary manner, whilst a pure virgin, before she and Joseph came together, who though espoused to him, was untouched by him, were all brought about in this way, and with such circumstances,

that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet; that is, the Prophet Isaiah, and so some copies read. The passage referred to is in

Is 7:14 what is there spoken was by divine inspiration; it was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet; the Spirit of the Lord spake by him. Prophets and holy men formerly, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; so that what they said is to be looked upon as the word of God. Now between the prophecy of Isaiah referred to, and the fact here recorded by the Evangelist, is an entire agreement: the prophecy shows the will, counsel, and determination of God about this matter; the accomplishment of it, the faithfulness and veracity of God in his word; the prediction declares that the thing would be, and the thing itself was done, that what was spoken might be fulfilled; not merely by way of accommodation, or in a typical and mystical, but in a strict, proper and literal sense.

Matthew 1:23

Ver. 23. Behold, a virgin shall be with child,.... These words are rightly applied to the virgin Mary and her son Jesus, for of no other can they be understood; not of Ahaz's wife and his son Hezekiah, who was already born, and must be eleven or twelve years of age when these words were spoken; nor of any other son of Ahaz by her or any other person since no other was Lord of Judea; nor of the wife of Isaiah, and any son of his, who never had any that was king of Judah. The prophecy is introduced here as in Isaiah with a "behold!" not only to raise and fix the attention, but to denote that it was something wonderful and extraordinary which was about to be related; and is therefore called
twa a "sign", wonder, or miracle; which lay not, as some Jewish writers {g} affirm, in this, that the person spoken of was unfit for conception at the time of the prophecy, since no such thing is intimated; or in this, that it should be a son and not a daughter {h}, which is foretold; for the wonder lies not in the truth of the prediction, but in the extraordinariness of the thing predicted; much less in this {i}, that the child should eat butter and honey as soon as born; since nothing is more natural and common with new born infants, than to take in any sort of liquids which are sweet and pleasant. But the sign or wonder lay in this, that a "virgin" should "conceive" or "be with child"; for the Evangelist is to be justified in rendering,
hmle by paryenov "a virgin"; by the Septuagint having so rendered it some hundreds of years before him, by the sense of the word, which comes from Mle and which signifies to "hide" or "cover"; virgins being such who are unknown to, and not uncovered by men, and in the Eastern countries were kept recluse from the company and conversation of men; and by the use of

the word in all other places, *Ge 24:43*. The last of these texts the Jews triumph in, as making for them, and against us, but without any reason; since it does not appear that the "maid" and the "adulterous woman" are one and the same person; and if they were, the vitiated woman might be called a maid or virgin, according to her own account of herself, or in the esteem of others who knew her not, or as antecedent to her defilement; see *De 22:28*. Besides, could this be understood of any young woman married or unmarried, that had known a man, it would be no wonder, no surprising thing that she should "conceive" or "be with child", and "bring forth a son". It is added,

and they shall call his name Emmanuel. The difference between Isaiah and Matthew is very inconsiderable, it being in the one "thou shalt call", that is, thou virgin shalt call him by this name; and in the other "they shall call", that is, Joseph, Mary, and others; for, besides that some copies read the text in Matthew caleseiv "thou shalt call", the words both in the one and the other may be rendered impersonally, "and shall be called"; and the meaning is, not that he should be commonly known and called by such a name, any more than by any, or all of those mentioned in ***Isa 9:6***, but only that he should be so, which is a frequent use of the word; or he should be that, and so accounted by others, which answers to the signification of this name, which the Evangelist says,

being interpreted is God with us: for it is a compound word of la "God" and wnme "with us", and well agrees with Jesus, who is God in our nature, the word that was made flesh and dwelt among us. ***Joh 1:14***, and is the one and only Mediator between God and us, ***1Ti 2:5*** {k}. So the Septuagint interpret the word in ***Isa 8:8***.

{g} Jarchi. in Isa. vii. 14. {h} Gaon. in Aben Ezra, in ib. {i} Kimchi & Aben Ezra in ib. R. Isaac Chizuk. Emun. p. 1. c. 21. {k} See more of this in a book of mine, called "The Prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, literally fulfilled in Jesus", ch. 5. p. 92, 93, &c.

Matthew 1:24

Ver. 24. Then Joseph being raised from sleep,.... That is, being awaked out of sleep, tou upnou "that sleep", into which he either naturally fell, whilst he was meditating on the affair of Mary's being with child; or rather into which he was cast by the Lord, on purpose that he might have a revelation of the will of God to him in a dream; and rising up from his bed or place where he was, immediately and without any delay,

did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him; firmly believing that it was a messenger of God that was sent to him, and that this matter was of the Lord. Wherefore he

took unto him his wife, that is, he publicly married her, whom he had before espoused, took her to his house, or continued her there, lived with her as his wife, and owned her to be such, and henceforwards had no more thoughts of putting her away.

***Matthew* 1:25**

Ver. 25. "And knew her not",.... Or "but he knew her not", kai answering to the Hebrew w that is, had carnal knowledge of her, or copulation with her, though his wife. The words are an euphemism, or a modest way of expressing the conjugal act, and is a very ancient one, see ***Ge 4:1*** and what has been used in nations and languages. And this conduct of his was necessary,

till she had brought forth her firstborn; that it might be manifest not only that she conceived, being a virgin, but also that she brought forth, being a virgin: for both are signified in the prophecy before related, "a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son"; which is all one as if it had been said, a virgin shall conceive, and "a virgin" shall bring forth a son. The "firstborn" is that which first opens the womb of its mother, whether any follows after or not, *Ex 13:12*. Christ is called Mary's firstborn, because she had none before him, whether she had any after him or not; for her perpetual virginity seems to be no necessary article of faith: for when it is said,

Joseph knew her not till she had brought forth, the meaning is certain that he knew her not before. But whether he afterwards did or not, is not so manifest, nor is it a matter of any great importance; the word "until" may be so understood as referring to the time preceding, that the contrary cannot be affirmed of the time following, ***2Sa 6:23*** and which may be the case here, and is indeed generally understood so; and it also may be considered as only expressive of the intermediate time, as in ***Mt 5:26*** as Beza observes. Christ was "her firstborn" as he was man, and the firstborn of God, or his first and only begotten, as the Son of God. It is further observed, that she "called his name Jesus", as was foretold to her, or ordered her by the Angel, ***Lu 1:31*** and to Joseph, ***Mt 1:21***.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**
Matthew 2:1

Ver. 1. Now when Jesus was born,.... Several things are here related respecting the birth of Christ, as the place where he was born,

in Bethlehem of Judea; so called to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zabulon, *Jos 19:15*. Here Christ was to be born according to a prophecy hereafter mentioned, and accordingly the Jews expected he would be born here, ***Mt 2:4*** and so Jesus was born here, ***Lk 2:4*** and this the Jews themselves acknowledge;

"Such a year, says a noted {l} chronologer of theirs, Jesus of Nazareth was born in Bethlehem Juda, which is a "parsa" and a half, i.e. six miles, from Jerusalem."

Benjamin {m} Tudelensis says it is two parsas, i.e. eight miles, from it; and according to Justin Martyr {n} it was thirty five furlongs distant from it. Yea even they own this, that Jesus was born there, in that vile and blasphemous book {o} of theirs, written on purpose to defame him; nay, even the ancient Jews have owned that the Messiah is already born, and that he was born at Bethlehem; as appears from their Talmud {p}, where we meet with such a passage.

"It happened to a certain Jew, that as he was ploughing, one of his oxen bellowed; a certain Arabian passed by and heard it, who said, O Jew, Jew, loose thy oxen, and loose thy ploughshare, for lo, the house of the sanctuary is destroyed: it bellowed a second time; he said unto him, O Jew, Jew, bind thy oxen, and bind thy ploughshare, for lo axyvm aklm dyly "the king Messiah is born". He said to him, what is his name? Menachem (the comforter); he asked again, what is his father's name? Hezekiah; once more he says, from whence is he? He replies hdwhy Mxltyb aklm tryb Nm "from the palace of the king of Bethlehem Judah"; he went and sold his oxen and his ploughshares, and became a seller of swaddling clothes for infants; and he went from city to city till he came to that city, (Bethlehem,) and all the women bought of him, but the mother of Menachem bought nothing."

Afterwards they tell you, he was snatched away by winds and tempests. This story is told in much the same manner in another {q} of their writings. Bethlehem signifies "the house of bread", and in it was born, as an ancient writer {r} observes, the bread which comes down from heaven: and it may also signify "the house of flesh", and to it the allusion may be in ***1Ti 3:16*** "God manifest in the flesh". The time of Christ's birth is here expressed,

in the days of Herod the king. This was Herod the great, the first of that name: the Jewish chronologer {s} gives an account of him in the following manner.

"Herod the first, called Herod the Ascalonite, was the son of Antipater, a friend of king Hyrcanus and his deputy; him the senate of Rome made king in the room of Hyrcanus his master. This Herod whilst he was a servant of king Hyrcanus (so in the {t} Talmud Herod is said to be anwmvx tybd adbe a servant of the family of the Asmonaeans) king Hyrcanus saved from death, to which he was sentenced by the sanhedrim of Shammai; that they might not slay him for the murder of one Hezekiah, as is related by Josephus, l. 6. c. 44. and Herod took to him for wife Miriam, the daughter of Alexander the son of Aristobulus, who was the daughter's daughter of king Hyrcanus."

This writer tacitly owns afterwards {u} that Jesus was born in the days of this king; for he says, that in the days of Hillell and Shammai (who lived in those times) there was one of their disciples, who was called R. Joshua ben Perachiah, and he was, adds he, yruwnh wbr "the master of the Nazarene", or of Jesus of Nazareth. Herod reigned, as this same author observes, thirty seven years; and according to Dr. Lightfoot's calculation, Christ was born in the thirty fifth year of his reign, and in the thirty first of Augustus Caesar, and in the year of the world three thousand nine hundred and twenty eight, and the month Tisri, which answers to part of our September, about the feast of tabernacles; which indeed was typical of Christ's incarnation, and then it may reasonably be thought that "the word was made flesh", and eskhnwsen "tabernacled among us", ***Joh 1:14***. Another circumstance relating to the birth of Christ is, that when Jesus was born--behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem; these wise men in the Greek text are called magoi, "Magi", a word which is always used in a bad sense in the sacred writings; hence they are thought by some to be magicians, sorcerers, wizards, such as Simon Magus, ***Ac 8:9*** and Elymas, *Ac 13:8* and so the Jewish writers {w} interpret the word vwgm a wizard, an enchanter, a blasphemer of God, and one that entices others to idolatry; and in the Hebrew Gospel of Munster these men are called Mypvkm "wizards". Some have thought this to be their national name. Epiphanius {x} supposes that these men were of the posterity of Abraham by Keturah, who inhabited a country in some part of Arabia, called Magodia: but could this be thought to be the name of their country, one might rather be induced to suppose that they were of the magoi, "Magi", a nation of the Medes mentioned by Herodotus {y}; since both the name and country better agree with these persons; but the word seems to be rather a name of character and office, and to design the wise men, and priests of the Persians. An Eastern {z} writer says the word is of Persic original, and is compounded of two words, "Mije Gush", which signifies "a man with short ears"; for such was the first founder of the sect, and from whom they were so called. But in the Arabic Persic Nomenclator {a} it is rendered "a worshipper of fire", and such the Persian priests were; and to this agrees what Apuleius {b} says, that "Magus", in the Persian language, is the same as "priest" with us: and Xenophon {c} says, that the Magi were first appointed by Cyrus, to sing hymns to the gods, as soon as it was day, and to sacrifice to them. The account given of them by Porphyry {d} is, that

"among the Persians they that were wise concerning God, and worshipped him, were called magoi, "Magi", for so "Magus" signifies in their country dialect; and so august and venerable were this sort of men accounted with the Persians, that Darius, the son of Hystaspis, ordered this, among other things, to be inscribed on his monument, that he was the master of the Magi."

From whence we may learn in some measure who these men were, and why the word is by our translators rendered "wise men"; since the Magi, as Cicero {e} says, were reckoned a sort of wise men, and doctors among the Persians: who further observes, that no man could be a king of the Persians before he understood the discipline and knowledge of the Magi: and the wisdom of the Persian Magi, as Aelianus {f} writes, among other things, lay in foretelling things to come. These came from the east, not from Chaldea, as some have thought, led hereunto by the multitude of astrologers, magicians, and soothsayers, which were among that people; see ***Da 2:2*** for Chaldea was not east, but north of Judea, as appears from ***Jer 1:14 Jer 6:22***. Others have thought they came from Arabia, and particularly Sheba, induced hereunto by *Ps 72:10*. But though some part of Arabia lay east, yet Sheba was south of the land of Israel, as is evident from the queen of that place being called the "queen of the south", *Mt 12:42*. The more generally received opinion seems to be most right, that they came from Persia, which as it lies east of Judea, so was famous for this sort of men, and besides the name, as has been seen, is of Persic original. The place whither they came was Jerusalem, the "metropolis" of Judea, where they might suppose the king of the Jews was born, or where, at least, they might persuade themselves they should hear of him; since here Herod the king lived, to whom it seems they applied themselves in the first place. The time of their coming was, "when Jesus was born"; not as soon as he was born, or on the "thirteenth" day after his birth, the sixth of January, as it stands in our Calendar; or within the forty days before Mary's Purification; since this space of time does not seem to be sufficient for so long a journey, and which must require a considerable preparation for it; nor is it probable if they came so soon as this, that after such a stir at Jerusalem, after Herod's diligent search and inquiry concerning this matter, and his wrath and anger at being disappointed and deluded by the wise men, that Joseph and Mary should so soon bring the child into the temple, where, it was declared to be the Messiah by Simeon and Anna. Besides, immediately after the departure of the wise men, Joseph with his wife and child were ordered into Egypt, which could not be done before Mary's Purification. But rather this their coming was near upon two years after the birth of Christ; since it is afterwards observed, that "Herod sent and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men", ***Mt 2:16***. This was the opinion of Epiphanius {g} formerly, and is embraced by Dr. Lightfoot {h}, to whom I refer the reader for further proof of this matter.

{l} R. David Ganz. Zemach David, pars 2. fol. 14. 2. {m} Itinerarium, p. 48. {n} Apolog. 2. p. 75. {o} Toldos, p. 7. {p} Hieros. Beracot. fol. 5. 1. {q} Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 1. {r} Hieron. Epitaph. Paulae. fol. 59. E. Tom. 1. {s} R. David Ganz. Zemach David, pars 1. fol. 24. 1. {t} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 3. 2. Juchasin. fol. 17. 1. & 18. 1. & Seder Olam Zuta, p. 111.

{u} Ib. col. 2. {w} T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 75. 1. Gloss. in ib. & Sota, fol. 22. 1. & Sanhedrim, fol. 39. 1. {x} Contr. Haeres. l. 3. Haeres. 30. {y} Clio sive l. 1. c. 101. {z} Alfiranzabadius in Pocock. Specim. Hist. Arab. p. 146. {a} In Ibid. {b} Apolog. p. 204. {c} Cyropaedia, l. 8. sect. 6. {d} De Abstinentia, l. 4. sect. 16. {e} De Divinatione, l. i. {f} Hist. Var. l. 2. c. 17. {g} Contr. Haeres. l. 1. Haeres. 30. and l. 2. Haeres. 51. {h} Harmony, Vol. I. p. 205, 432, &c.

Matthew 2:2

Ver. 2. Saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews?.... These words were spoken to the Jews, or rather to Herod the king, or his ministers and courtiers, or to each of them, as the wise men had the opportunity of speaking to them; who make no scruple of his being born, of this they were fully assured; nor did they in the least hesitate about his being king of the Jews, who was born; but only inquire where he was, in what city, town, village, house, or family. The reason of their asking this question is,

for we have seen his star in the east. By the star they saw, some understand an angel, which is not likely. The learned Lightfoot {i} is of opinion that it was the light or glory of the Lord, which shone about the shepherds, when the angel brought them the news of Christ's birth, and which at so great a distance appeared as a star to these wise men; others, that it was a comet, such as has been thought to portend the birth or death of some illustrious person: but it seems to be properly a star, a new and an unusual one, such as had never been seen, nor observed before; and is called his star, the star of the king born, because it appeared on his account, and was the sign of his birth, who is "the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star", *Re 22:16*. This they saw "in the east"; not in the eastern part of the heavens, but they saw it when they were in the east, that is, in their own country; and according to the best observations they were able to make, it was in that part of the heavens right over the land of Judea; from whence they concluded that the king of the Jews was born; but the question is how they should hereby know and be assured that such a person was born? To this it maybe replied, that there is a prophecy of Balaam's which is thus expressed, "there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel", *Nu 24:17* which is owned by some Jewish writers {k} to be a prophecy of the Messiah; though the star there mentioned is considered by them as one of the Messiah's titles; hence one who set up himself, and for a while was by some received as the Messiah, was called by them abkwk rb "the son of a star"; but when he was discovered to be an impostor, they called him abyzwk rb "the son of a lie": but I rather take it to be a sign of the Messiah's coming, and the meaning is, when a star shall Krd "walk" or steer its course from Jacob, or above, or over the land of Israel, then a sceptre, or sceptre bearer, that is, a king, shall rise out of Israel. Now this prophecy of Balaam, who lived in the east, might be traditionally handed down to this time, and be well known by these men; and who, observing such a star appear over the land of Judea, might conclude that now the sceptre bearer or king was born {l}. Besides, Zerdusht or Zoroastres, the author of the sect of the Magi or wise men, and who appears to be a Jew by birth, and to be acquainted with the writings of the Old Testament, and with this prophecy, spoke of the birth of Christ to his followers; and told them when he should be born, a star would appear, and shine in the day, and ordered them to go where that directed, and offer gifts, and worship him. An Eastern writer, who affirms {m} what I have now mentioned, relates {n} the following speech as spoke by the wise men to Herod, when in conversation with him, about this matter:

"A certain person, say they, of great note with us, in a book which he composed, warned us in it, mentioning these things; a child that shall descend from heaven, will be born in Palestine, whom the greatest part of the world shall serve, and the sign of his appearance shall be this; ye shall see a strange star, which shall direct you where he is; when ye shall see this, take gold, myrrh and frankincense, and go and offer them to him, and worship him, and then return, lest a great calamity befall you. Now the star has appeared unto us, and we are come to perform what was commanded us."

If this be true, we are not at a loss how they come by their knowledge, nor for a reason of their conduct. That the Jews have expected that a star should appear at the time of the Messiah's coming, is certain, from some passages in a book of theirs of great value and esteem among them, in which are the following things: in one place it is said {o}

"The king Messiah shall be revealed in the land of Galilee, and lo a star in the east shall swallow up seven stars in the north, and a flame of red fire shall be in the firmament six days;"

and in another place, {p}

"When the Messiah shall be revealed, there shall rise up in the east a certain Star, flaming with all sorts of colours--and all men shall see it:"

once more it is affirmed as a tradition {q} that

"The holy blessed God hath determined to build Jerusalem, and to make a certain (fixed) star appear sparkling with seven blazing tails shining from it in the midst of the firmament--and then shall the king Messiah be revealed in all the world."

Now this expectation of the appearing of such a star at the coming of the Messiah takes its rise from and is founded upon the above mentioned prophecy. It is said {r} that Seth the son of Adam gave out a prophecy, that a star should appear at the birth of the Messiah; and that a star did appear at the birth of Christ is certain from the testimony of the Evangelist, and seems to have some confirmation from the writings of the Heathens themselves. Some have thought that the star which Virgil speaks of, and calls {s} "Caesaris Astrum", "Caesar's star", is this very star, which he in complaisance to that monarch ascribes to him. Pliny {t} makes mention

"of a bright comet with a silver beard, which was so refulgent that it could scarce be looked upon, showing in itself the effigies of God in human form."

If the testimony of Chalcidius, a Platonic philosopher, taken notice of by many learned men, is genuine, and he not a Christian, {u} it is much to the purpose, and is as follows:

"There is also a more venerable and sacred history, which speaks of the rising of a certain unusual star; not foretelling diseases and deaths, but the descent of a venerable God, born for the sake of human conversation, and the affairs of mortals; which star truly, when the wise men of the Chaldeans saw in their journey by night, and being very expert in the consideration of celestial things, are said to inquire after the birth of the new Deity, and having found the infant majesty, to worship him, and pay their vows worthy of such a God."

The end proposed by them in taking such a journey is expressed, and are come to worship him; that is, either to pay adoration to him as God, of which they might be convinced by the extraordinary appearance of the star, or be assured of by divine revelation or rather to give him civil homage and respect, as an illustrious person, as being king of the Jews.

{i} Harmony, p. 205, 437, 438, Vol. I. Hor. Heb. p. 109. Vol. II. {k} Targum Onk. Jon. & Aben Ezra in loc. Zohar. in Exod. fol. 4. 1. Abarbinel Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 4. 3. Tzeror Hamor, fol. 126. 3. {l} See my book of the "Prophecies of the Messiah", c. 7. p. 119, &c. {m} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 54. {n} lb. p. 70. {o} Zohar. in Gen. fol. 74. 3. {p} Zohar. in Exod. fol. 3. 3, 4. {q} lb. in Numb. fol 85. 4. and 86. 1. {r} Vid. Wolf. Bibl. Heb. p. 1156. {s} Eclog. 9. v. 47. {t} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 25. {u} Vid. Fabricii Bibliothec. Latin. p. 142-146.

Matthew 2:3

Ver. 3. When Herod the king had heard these things,.... That is, the report made by the wise men of the appearance of an unusual star, and of the birth of the king of the Jews, which they affirmed with all certainty, without any hesitation,

he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Herod was troubled, his mind was disturbed and made uneasy, fearing he should be deposed, and lose his kingdom, to which he knew he had no just right and claim, being a foreigner; and "all Jerusalem", i.e. all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who heard of this, were also troubled, and showed a concern at it with him; either feignedly, as knowing his jealousy, suspicion and cruelty; or in reality, because of tumults, commotions and wars, they might fear would arise upon this, having lost the true notion of the Messiah, as a spiritual king, saviour and redeemer. And hereby was fulfilled, in part, the famous prophecy in *Ge 49:10* according to the sense of one {w} of the Targumists on it, who paraphrases it after this manner;

"Kings and governors shall not cease from the house of Judah, nor scribes, who teach the law, from his seed, until the time that the king Messiah, the least of his sons, comes, "and because of him", aymme Nwomyty, "the people shall melt.""

that is, they shall be distressed and troubled, their hearts shall melt like wax within them; which was their present case, though perhaps the paraphrast may design the Gentiles.

{w} Jonathan ben Uzziel in loc.

Matthew 2:4

Ver. 4. And when he had gathered all the chief priests,.... Here we have an account of Herod's conduct at this juncture; he calls a council, assembles the sanhedrim, gathers together the more learned persons in the city to consult with them upon this matter,

the chief priests, all of which he gathered together, and which seem to be many; and were not only the then present high priest and his substitutes, but all the principal persons of the priesthood, who were chosen from the rest, into the great sanhedrim, or council: and by

the scribes of the people are meant a sort of letter learned men, whose business it was to keep and write out copies of the law, and other things, for "the people"; they were the fathers of the traditions, and interpreters of the law to them; and therefore are called "the scribes of the people": as well also, because they were chosen from among the people, from any other tribe, and not from the tribe of Levi, from whom the priests were; so that one seems to design the "clergy", and the other the laity, in this assembly. The Septuagint render Myrjwv "the officers of the people", by this same word the scribes, and scribes of the people, in *Nu 11:16* ***Jos 1:10***. The learned Dr. Lightfoot {x} conjectures, that the persons of note, who were present at this time, were Hillell the president of the council, Shammai the vice president, the sons of Betira, Judah and Joshua, Bava ben Buta, Jonathan ben Uzziel, the Chaldee paraphrast, and Simeon the son of Hillell.

He demanded of them, or asked them with authority, as the chief captain did, *Ac 21:33* "where Christ", o cristov, the Christ, the Messiah

should be born? that is, where was the place of his birth as fixed in their prophecies, where, accordingly, they believed and expected he would be born. Herod's pretence, no doubt, in putting this question was, that he might be able to satisfy the wise men of the East about this matter; though the true reason within himself was, that he might know where this new born king was, in order to destroy him.

{x} Vol. II. p. 111.

Matthew 2:5

Ver. 5. And they said unto him,.... They answer without any hesitation, it being a generally received notion, and a thing well known among them,

in Bethlehem of Judea; and give their reason for it; for

thus it is written by the prophet, that is, the prophet Micah, in whose prophecy, ***Mic 5:2*** it stands, and is as follows:

Matthew 2:6

Ver. 6. And thou Bethlehem in the land of Juda,.... This prophecy, which the chief priests and scribes produced, as pointing at the place of Christ's birth, is owned by both ancient and later Jews {y} to be a prophecy of the Messiah. The difference between Micah and Matthew is easily reconciled. Bethlehem is called by Micah, Bethlehem Ephratah, and by Matthew, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, and both were one and the same place. Bethlehem Ephratah was in the land of Juda, as appears from the prophecy of Micah itself, from ***Ru 1:2*** and the Septuagint version of *Jos 15:60* and is described in this manner by Matthew, partly to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in the land of Zebulun, *Jos 19:15* and partly because its other name Ephratah was now disused, and so unknown to Herod, who was unacquainted with the books and prophecies of the Old Testament. Micah says this place was

little among the thousands of Judah. Matthew says, "not the least". But in this is no apparent contradiction, it might be "little" and yet "not the least"; besides, it might be "little" and "not little", or "not the least" in different respects, and at different times; it might be little, mean, and contemptible as to worldly splendour, riches, number of inhabitants, pompous buildings, &c. and yet not be little or mean, when considered as the place of the birth of many great persons, such as Booz, Jesse, David, &c. and especially Christ. It might be little in Micah's time, and yet not in Matthew's;

especially since it had received a considerable additional honour by Christ's being born there. Moreover, the words in Micah may be rendered, by way of interrogation, "art thou little, or the least?" To which the answer in Matthew is, "no, thou art not the least", &c. or else the word rbd may be understood, and the text be translated thus; "it is a small thing that thou art among the thousands of Judah, for out of thee", &c. a great honour shall be conferred on thee, the Messiah shall spring from thee. Again, what Micah calls "thousands", are in Matthew called "princes"; the reason of this is, because the tribes of Israel were divided into thousands, and every thousand had its prince; so that though here is a difference in words, yet none in sense. What Micah styles "a ruler in Israel", Matthew expresses by "a governor that shall rule or feed my people Israel"; but in this there is no contradiction. Add to all this, that it should be observed, that the Evangelist is not giving a version of his own, but of the chief priests and scribes; and therefore was it ever so faulty, they, and not he, must be chargeable with it; for he has acted the part of a faithful historian in giving it in the words in which they cited it {z}.

{y} Targum Jon. Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi & Abendana in loc. Abarbinel Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 62. 2. R. Isaac Chizuk Emuna, p. 279. {z} See my book of the "Prophecies of the Messiah", &c. ch. 6. p. 104-116.

Matthew 2:7

Ver. 7. Then Herod, when he had privately called the wise men,.... As soon as he had got the intelligence of the place of the Messiah's birth, he called, or ordered the wise men to be brought into his presence, and that in a very private manner; lest the Jews, who knew his hypocrisy and deceit, should perceive his views, and enter into his designs, and so give the wise men some instructions, which would be prejudicial to the scheme he was forming in his own mind to destroy the young king; and having called them to him, he

inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. He took a good deal of pains in examining them, he sifted them, and inquired of them with much accuracy, and exactness, the precise time of the star's appearing to them, how long ago it was when it was first observed by them; that hereby he might exactly know the age of Christ, and the better execute the bloody design he had formed, should the wise men disappoint him; and the better detect an impostor, should another afterwards arise, and set up himself for the king of the Jews.

Matthew 2:8

Ver. 8. And he sent them to Bethlehem,.... Having got out of them all that he could, and was for his purpose, he informs them of the place where they might find the person they came to inquire after, according to the account of it which the chief priests and scribes had given him; and then sends them away to Bethlehem, where Christ, according to prophecy, was to be born, and now was born. It may seem strange that neither any of the Jews, nor Herod, or any of his ministers and courtiers, should go along with these men to Bethlehem; since it was but a little way off, not above five or six miles from Jerusalem; and since the birth of such a person was no trivial thing, but an affair of great concern and importance. The Jews might not care to go, lest Herod should suspect that they were going to revolt from him, and set up this new born king against him; and it might be a piece of policy in Herod and his courtiers not to accompany them, for they might imagine that the parents of the child would be jealous and afraid of them, and would therefore conceal it, when they would be in no fear of strangers: and no doubt but the wise providence of God overruled and directed this matter, that so the young child Jesus might be preserved from the bloody designs of this tyrant; who often takes the wise in their own craftiness, and carries the counsel of the froward headlong. When he dismissed them he gave them this charge and these orders,

go and search diligently for the young child; go to Bethlehem, the place of his birth I have told you of, and there inquire and search in every house and family, omit none till you have found him;

and when you have found him bring me word again; give me a particular account of him, who are his parents, and where he dwells,

that I may come and worship him also: for they had declared, that the reason of their coming was to worship him; this he said hypocritically, in order to hide and cover his bloody intentions.

Matthew 2:9

Ver. 9. When they had heard the king,.... With great care and attention, what he had told them of the birth place of the young child; the strict charge he had given them to search diligently for him, and then return to him with an account of the whole affair; and his expressions of respect to the new born prince, which they took to be said in great sincerity,

they departed; took their leave of Herod and his court, and set forward on their journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem:

and lo, to their great surprise and joy,

the star, which they saw in the east, then appeared; for, it seems, it had for some time disappeared: it looks as if it had been only seen at the time of Christ's birth, and when they were in their own country; for both here, and in ***Mt 2:2*** they are only said to have seen it "in the east", that is, when they were in the east country; so that it seems from that time they had had no sight of it, not while they were on their journey, nor at Jerusalem; nor was it necessary they should. When they saw it in their own country, according to their best observation, it was over the land of Judea, and they were persuaded of it, that it was a certain sign that the king of the Jews was born: they therefore determine upon and prepare for a journey to Jerusalem, the metropolis of the nation, and where the king kept his court, to inquire for him; nor needed they the guidance of the star to direct them to a place so well known; but being in quest of him in an obscure place, and without any guide, this star appears to them; and, which is something very extraordinary,

went before them, till it came, and stood over, where the young child was. This star had a motion, kept pace with them, and was a guide unto them, till it and they came to the place where Christ was; and then it stood directly over the house, so that they had no need to inquire of any person for him. It is certain from hence, that this star was indeed a very unusual one; its being seen in the daytime, its motion and standing still, its situation, which must be very low, and its use to point out the very house where Christ was, show it to be so; but though it was an unusual appearance, it should not be thought incredible. {a} Varro relates, that

"from the time Aeneas went from Troy, he saw the star Venus in the daytime, day after day, till he came to the field of Laurentum, where he saw it no more, by which he knew that those lands were fatal."

The appearing of this star, and then its disappearing for a time, agree, in some measure, with the account the Jews give of the star which they expect will be seen at the coming of the Messiah; for they {b} say,

"after seven days that star shall be hid, and the Messiah shall be hid for twelve months--when he shall descend, the pillar of fire shall be seen as before, in sight, and afterwards the Messiah shall be revealed, and many people shall be gathered to him."

{a} Apud Servium in Virgil Aeneid. l. 1. p. 471. Ed. Basil. 1586. {b} Zohar in Exod. fol. 3, 4. & 71. 1.

Matthew* *2:10

Ver. 10. When they saw the star,.... Which by its appearance, size, brightness, &c. they knew to be the same with that which they had seen, when in their own country;

they rejoiced with exceeding great joy; a "pleonasm" or a redundancy of expression frequently used by the Hebrews, see ***Joh 4:6*** and the Septuagint there; setting forth the rapture, the excess of joy they were in upon the sight of the star. Very probably before this, their hearts were sad, their countenances dejected, and they greatly discouraged, having taken so great a journey, and as yet to so little purpose. They had been at Jerusalem, where they expected to have found him that was born king of the Jews; they had been at court, and conversed with men of the greatest figure and intelligence, and could get no tidings of him; people of all ranks and degrees seemed to be troubled at the account they brought; no body cared to go along with them to Bethlehem: all these circumstances no doubt were discouraging to them; but as soon as they saw the star their spirits revived, joy filled their hearts, cheerfulness appeared in their countenances; and they pursued their journey with inexpressible delight, till they came to the place where the illustrious person was they were seeking after.

Matthew* *2:11

Ver. 11. And when they were come into the house,.... Which they entered without making any inquiry, being fully assured by the star's standing right over it, that this was the house, and here was the king of the Jews, whom they were come to worship; and having entered in "they saw" some copies read euron,

they found the young child, with Mary his mother; in her lap, or arms, or in the house with her, for by this time he might go alone. Joseph perhaps was not at home, but about his business; and which might be so ordered by the providence of God, that so these men might only see the mother of Christ, who had no real father as man; who had they seen Joseph, might have took him to be his proper father. Upon the sight of the young child,

they fell down on their knees or faces to the ground, agreeably to the custom of their country,

and worshipped him as a king; giving him the same civil honour and respect, as they were wont to do to their own kings and princes; which custom began with Cyrus: for so Xenophon {c} says, that

"when the people saw him, pantev prosekunhsan, they all worshipped him; either because some were ordered to begin this custom; or else being amazed at the apparatus; or because he seemed to appear so great and beautiful; for before that time none of the Persians worshipped Cyrus."

And when they had opened their treasures, that is, their purses, bags or boxes, in which they put those things they brought with them necessary for their journey;

they presented, or offered to him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh: such things as they had; it being usual, not only with the Persians, but other eastern nations, to make presents to kings and great persons, when they made any addresses to them; which generally, among other things, consisted of gold, spices, myrrh, and the like, see *Ge 43:11*. Which last passage referred to, being a prophecy of the Messiah, has been thought by some now to have had its accomplishment, together with *Isa 60:6* where frankincense as well as gold is mentioned, "they shall bring gold and incense" or frankincense; upon which a noted Jewish writer {d} observes, that gold and frankincense shall be brought privately as a present to the king Messiah. According to the Ethiopians, these wise men were three, whose names they give us; the name of him that offered the gold, was Annoson; he that offered the frankincense, was Allytar; and he that offered the myrrh, Kyssad {e}. The Papists call them the three kings of Colen, and say they lie buried in that place.

{c} Cyropaedia, l. 8. sect. 23. {d} R. David Kimchi. {e} Ludolph. Lex. Ethiop. p. 539, 542, 543.

Matthew 2:12

Ver. 12. Being warned of God in a dream,.... It is likely they made a short stay at Bethlehem, might lodge there a night; at least laid themselves down a while to take some refreshment in sleep, after they had paid their respects to him that was born king of the Jews, and performed the whole business they came about; when in a dream they received a divine oracle, were admonished and counselled by God,

that they should not return to Herod: which would have been going back again, and out of their way; there being a nearer one from Bethlehem to their own country, than to go by Jerusalem, though Herod had charged them to return to him. Whether they had promised him they would, is not certain; it is probable they might; however, they thought it most advisable to hearken to the divine oracle; wherefore,

they departed into their own country another way. What became of these persons afterwards, and whether they were spiritually and savingly enlightened into the knowledge of Christ; what a report they made of him when they came into their own country, and the success thereof, we have no account of, either in sacred or profane history.

Matthew 2:13

Ver. 13. And when they were departed,.... That is immediately, or as soon as they were gone, or in a very little time after, probably the same night,

behold, the Angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream; it is very likely the same angel who appeared to him in such sort, ***Mt 1:20*** "saying arise", awake out of sleep, and rise from thy bed directly, and take the young child and his mother. The angel does not say take thy wife and son; for though Mary was properly his wife, yet Christ was not properly his son. The child is also mentioned before the mother, not only because of his divine nature and office, in respect to which he was her God and Saviour; but because it was the preservation of the child that was chiefly regarded, and for which the providence of God was particularly concerned; wherefore Joseph is ordered to take them in proper carriages, and

flee into Egypt, which was near to Judea, and so a fit place to flee to; for a long and tedious journey would not have been suitable to the mother and her young child. Moreover, Egypt was out of Herod's jurisdiction; here he could not come at them, or have any power over them; besides, hereby a prophecy after mentioned was to have its accomplishment. Hence it appears to be lawful to flee from danger, from tyrants and persecutors, when the providence of God opens a way for escape. The angel goes on with his charge,

and be thou there until I bring thee word: continue there, do not remove elsewhere, or return back, till I speak with thee, or order and command thee otherwise; and gives the reason for his appearing to him in such a manner, and giving such a charge;

for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him: no less a person than Herod the king, a bloody minded man, revengeful, desperate, and resolute in whatsoever he undertakes, "will seek", diligently search and inquire for, not his parents, Joseph and Mary, who might have been safe, but "the young child", who was born king of the Jews, and which gave him a great deal of uneasiness; and that not to worship him, as he told the wise men, but

to destroy him, to take away his life; to prevent which the angel was sent with this charge to Joseph: for though he was born to die for the sins of his people, his time was not yet come; he was to grow up to years of maturity, he was to be a preacher of the Gospel, to do many miracles and at last to lay down his life of himself, voluntarily, and not to be taken away from him without his knowledge and will.

Matthew 2:14

Ver. 14. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother,.... That is, as soon as he awoke out of sleep, and rose from his bed, he did as he was commanded, he prepared for his journey; and very opportunely had the wise men presented their gifts; the gold they brought served to defray the expense of this journey, and which no doubt was so ordered by divine providence for this purpose. Joseph was very punctual and expeditious in obeying the command of God; he took the young child and his mother,

by night, the very selfsame night in which he had this notice; and which season was the most fitting to depart in for secrecy, and most commodious and agreeable to travel in, in those hot countries: hence it appears very manifest, that the coming of the wise men, and the departure of Joseph with Mary and Jesus into Egypt, could not be within a fortnight after the birth of Christ, nor any time before Mary's Purification; since such a journey must have been very improper and unsuitable, at any time within that period; but rather Jesus must be about two years of age, whether something under, or over, it matters not, when Joseph with him

departed into Egypt: what part of Egypt he went into is not certain. The Jews say that Jesus went to Alexandria in Egypt, and which is probable enough; since this was a place greatly resorted to at this time by Jews, and where provision was made for their sustenance; though they greatly mistake the person with whom he went; for they say {f} that R. Joshua ben Perachiah, whom they pretend was his master, went to Alexandria in Egypt, and Jesus with him. However, this is an acknowledgment of the truth of this part of Christ's history, that he was in Egypt; as also when they blasphemously and maliciously say {g}, did not Ben Stada, by whom they mean Jesus, bring enchantments or magic, Myrumm Mypvk, "out of Egypt", in a cutting in the flesh? To which wicked accusation Arnobius seems to refer {h}, when he says,

"perhaps we may meet with many other of these reproachful and childish sayings; as that he was a magician, that he performed all these things by secret arts, and that he stole strange sciences, and the names of mighty angels, out of the temples of the Egyptians."

{f} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 107. 2. Cabala R. Abraham. Juchasin, fol. 16. 2. {g} T. Hieros. Sabbat. fol. 13. 1. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 104. 2. {h} Adv. Gentes, l. 1. p. 36.

Ver. 15. And was there until the death of Herod,.... Which was in a very short time; for Eusebius {i} says, that immediately, in a very little time after the slaughter of the children at Bethlehem, the divine vengeance inflicted diseases on him, which quickly brought him to his end; so that, according to the learned Dr. Lightfoot {k}, Jesus was not above three or four months in Egypt. Now all this was brought about,

that it might be fulfilled; not by way of accommodation of phrases to a like event; or by way of type, which has a fresh completion in the antitype; or as a proverbial sentence which might be adapted to any remarkable deliverance out of hardship, misery and destruction; but literally, properly, and in the obvious sense thereof;

which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, not Balaam, in *Nu 23:22* or *Nu 24:8* but in *Ho 11:1* "when Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt": the meaning of which passage is, either in connection with the last clause of the foregoing chapter thus; "in a morning shall the king of Israel be cut off", ren yk, "because Israel is a child", a rebellious and disobedient one, acting a very weak and wicked part; "yet I have loved him, or do love him", and "have called", or "will call", (the past tense for the future, frequent in the Hebrew language, especially in the prophetic writings,) "my son out of Egypt"; who will be obliged to retire there for some time; I will make him king, set him upon the throne, who shall execute justice, and reign for ever and ever; or thus, "because Israel is a child", helpless and imprudent, and "I love him", though he is so, "therefore I will call", or I have determined to call

my son out of Egypt: who through a tyrant's rage and malice will be obliged to abide there a while; yet I will bring him from thence into the land of Judea, where he shall live and "help" my "servant", paidov {l}, "child Israel"; shall instruct him in his duty, teach him the doctrines of the Gospel, and at last, by his sufferings and death, procure for him the pardon of all his transgressions; of which there is a particular enumeration in ***Mt 2:3***. This is the natural and unconstrained sense of these words, which justifies the Evangelist in his citation and application of them to Christ's going to Egypt, and his return from thence, as I have elsewhere {m} shown.

{i} Hist. Eccl. l. 1. c. 8. p. 25, 26. {k} Harmony of the New Testament, p. 6. {l} Luke i. 54. {m} Prophecies of the Messiah, &c. p. 123, &c.

Matthew ***2:16***

Ver. 16. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked,.... Herod, having waited a proper time for the return of the wise men, and they not coming, concluded he was tricked by them; though, no doubt, when they promised to return, and bring him word how things were, they seriously meant and designed a performance; but having met with a divine oracle, which ordered them another way, they thought it most advisable to obey God rather than man. Upon this,

Herod was exceeding wroth; partly at the usage he met with from the wise men, who according to his apprehension had put a trick upon him; and chiefly because his scheme was broke, which was by them to come at the knowledge and sight of the young child, and privately dispatch him: and now he might fear, which increased his wrath, that the child would escape his hands, and in time be set up for king, to the prejudice of him and his family; wherefore, to prevent this, if possible, he

sent forth his officers and soldiers, of his own will, without any show of law or justice, acting herein as an absolute and tyrannical prince,

and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under. A most cruel and barbarous action, and agrees with the character given of him, that he was in the beginning of his reign, and it seems too in the latter end of it, hmrmw Mymd vya, "a bloody and deceitful man" {n}: he slew, or ordered to be slain, "children", infants who had done him no injury, nor were capable of doing any, and whose parents also had not disobliged him; he slew the infants at Bethlehem, because this was the place of the Messiah's birth, the knowledge of which he had got from the chief priests and scribes; he slew all of them, that there might be no possibility of the young child's escaping: and lest it should by any means escape to a neighbouring town or village, he slew all the children in all the coasts thereof, in all the territories of Bethlehem, in all the towns and villages around it, as many as were

from two years old and under: for of such an age he supposed the newborn king to be; he knew he must be near that age, but could not exceed it,

according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men; of the appearing of the star to them, and when they concluded this great and famous prince was born. This cruel murder of the infants seems to be hinted at by Josephus {o}, where he says, that "many slaughters followed the prediction of a new king"; and is more manifestly referred to by Macrobins, a Heathen author, though the story is mixed and confounded with other things; who reports {p}, that

"when Augustus heard, that among the children under two years of age, whom Herod king of the Jews ordered to be slain in Syria, that his son was also killed, said, it was better to be Herod's hog than his son."

Killing of infants as soon as born, or while in their cradles, is by the Jews ascribed to one Lilith, which, R. Elias {q} says, is the name of a devil, which kills children; and indeed such an action is truly a diabolical one.

{n} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 1. {o} Antiq. l. 17. c. 3. {p} Saturnal. l. 2. c. 4. {q} Methurgemau in voce tylyl. Vid. Buxtorf. Lexicon Rab. in cadem voce & Synagog. Jud. c. 4. p. 80.

Matthew 2:17

Ver. 17, 18. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken,.... By the slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem was literally accomplished what had been predicted by

Jeremy the prophet, in *Jer 31:15.*

in Rama was there a voice heard, &c. That this prophecy belongs not to the Babylonish captivity, but the times of the Messiah, appears from the whole context; which manifestly speaks of the miraculous conception of Christ, of the blessings of his kingdom to be enjoyed by his people, and of the new covenant to be made with them, as I have shown in another place {r}. Rama was not in Arabia, as Justin Martyr says {s}, but a town in the tribe of Benjamin, *Jos 18:25* and very near to Bethlehem in the tribe of Juda: between these two places, and near to both of them, was the grave of Rachel, *Ge 35:19* for which reason, and also because Rama belonged to Benjamin, a son of hers, and where, no doubt, many children were destroyed in this massacre, as well as at Bethlehem, Rachel is introduced in the prophecy representing the sorrowful mothers of those parts,

weeping for their children; whose distress and grief are signified by several words, "lamentation, weeping and great mourning", to express the excessiveness thereof, for they

would not be comforted; they refused to hear anything that might be suggested to them for their relief, because their children

were not, i.e. were dead, were not in the land of the living, and no more to be enjoyed by them in this world. I cannot forbear transcribing a remark made by a noted Jew {t} upon that passage in *Ge 35:20*. "And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave"; to show, says he, that Jacob saw that this thing was of the Lord, and that it would be an help to her children, as it is written, "a voice was heard in Rama", &c. wherefore he set a pillar upon her; and to show that the affair of her grave, that this dytel htyh "belonged to the time to come", he says, "that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day": he means, hlwagh Mwy, "the day of redemption". And Rachel, in the passage of Jeremy, the Jews {u} themselves own, means the congregation of Israel.

{r} Prophecies of the Messiah, &c. p. 126, &c. {s} Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 304. {t} R. Abraham Seba Tzeror Hammor, fol. 47. 1. {u} Zohar in Exod. fol. 13. 1. & in Lev. fol. 8. 4.

Matthew 2:18

See Gill on "Mt 2:17"

Matthew 2:19

Ver. 19. But when Herod was dead,.... Who died, as before observed, a few months after this tragedy was acted; and, according to the {w} Jewish writers, on the seventh day of the month Cisleu, and which answers to the twenty fifth of our November: and was afterwards observed as a day of rejoicing by the Jews. The account which Josephus {x}, and from him Eusebius {y}, gives of his miserable death, is as follows; a burning fever seized him, with an intolerable itching all over his body, and continual pains of the colic; his feet swelled with a dropsy; he had an inflammation in the lower part of his belly: a putrefaction in his privy parts, which bred worms; a frequency and difficulty of breathing, and convulsions in all his members; he had a voracious appetite, a stinking breath, and his intestines abounded with ulcers; when he found that all means made use of were ineffectual, and that he must die, he attempted to lay violent hands upon himself, but was prevented, and soon after expired in a very miserable manner. Now some time after his death,

behold an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. It may be the same angel who appeared in the same manner, and ordered him to go into Egypt, with the young child and his mother; and who now brings him news of the death of Herod, and bids him return to the land of Israel; which shows the watchful providence of God, and the useful ministry of angels, concerned in the preservation of the infant Jesus.

{w} Megillah Taanith apud Van Till. de anno, &c. Christ. Nat. p. 122. {x} De Bello Judaic. l. 1. c. 33. sect. 5. 7. & Antiq. l. 17. c. 9. {y} Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 8. p. 25, 26.

Matthew 2:20

Ver. 20. Saying, arise, and take the young child and his mother,.... Joseph strictly observed and obeyed the divine command of the angel, who had ordered him to continue in Egypt, till he brought him word what he should do, and where he should go: here he was with Mary and Jesus, when the angel bid him arise, and take them with him,

and go into the land of Israel. He does not bid him go to Bethlehem or Nazareth, or any particular place, but the land of Israel, where he might go even into any part of it, without fear; and gives this reason for it, for they are dead which sought the young child's life; meaning either Herod only, the plural number being put for the singular; or including Antipater his son with him, who might be equally concerned in seeking the life of Christ; since he was next heir, and whom Herod {z} ordered to be slain about five days before his death; or else designing with him many of the executioners of the infants at Bethlehem, and thereabout; who might have been, as well as he, miserable instances of divine vengeance, for their concern in that barbarous tragedy.

{z} Joseph. de Bello Judaico, l. 1. c. 33. sect. 8, 9.

Matthew 2:21

Ver. 21. And he arose and took the young child and his mother,.... He exactly conformed in every circumstance to the orders given him, with respect to the persons he took, the place he went to, and the expeditiousness of doing it; and is an example of ready and cheerful obedience to the commands of God, worthy of imitation. We may learn from hence, as well as from some other instances already met with, a reason among others, why, though Mary was a virgin, and even if she was to continue so, yet she must be espoused to Joseph as her husband; that she might have one to take care of her and her young child, and be a means, under God, of preserving, protecting, and providing for them.

Matthew 2:22

Ver. 22. But when he heard that Archelaus,.... This Archelaus was a son of Herod the great by Malthace Samaritan, and was appointed by him for his successor a little before his death, and was upon it declared king by the populace, the soldiers, and those that were in power; all which is affirmed by Josephus {a}, and confirms the account given by the Evangelist; with whose account agrees what the Jewish chronologer says {b}, that

"Archelaus, the second king of the family of Herod, reigned after his father's death: and a little after he says, Caesar Augustus caused Archelaus to reign owdrwh wyba txt "in the room of Herod his father"";

which is the very phrase used by Matthew. Now this man was like his father, a very cruel wicked man; and, as the above chronologer says {c}, he ordered his troops, and slew at the feast of the passover, in the temple of the Lord, "nine thousand persons": though perhaps Josephus's account is truest, who says {d}, that he sent in his whole army upon the people, who had raised a sedition, and slew, whilst they were sacrificing, about "three thousand"; and this happened at the beginning of his reign, and indeed before he had scarce mounted the throne. And now the news of this might have reached the ears of Joseph, and be the reason why he

was afraid to go thither, into Judea, where Archelaus reigned.

Notwithstanding being warned of God in a dream, who never failed to advise him when in difficulty and distress, he did not go back again to Egypt, but

turned aside into the parts of Galilee; where Herod Antipas, another of Herod's sons, was tetrarch or governor; who was a milder person, and not so cruel and tyrannical as Archelaus: besides, Galilee was an obscure place, where, Joseph might reasonably think, he should live with Mary and Jesus unobserved, and free from danger.

{a} Ib. c. 28. sect. 7. &c. 33. sect. 1. & l. 2. c. 1. sect. 1. {b} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol 25. 1. {c} Ib. {d} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 1. sect. 5.

Matthew 2:23

Ver. 23. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth,.... Which was a city of Galilee, and where Joseph and Mary had both dwelt before, ***Lu 1:26*** here they came and fixed their habitation,

that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet. This affair of going into Galilee, and settling at Nazareth, was brought about with this view, to accomplish what had been foretold by the prophets, or prophet, the plural number being used for the singular, as in ***Joh 6:45***. And indeed it is so rendered here in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; and designs the prophet Isaiah, and respects that prophecy of his in *Isa 11:1* "and there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and run, "a branch shall grow out of his roots"; a prophecy owned by the Jews {e} themselves to belong to the Messiah, and which was now fulfilled in Jesus; who as he was descended from Jesse's family, so by dwelling at Nazareth, he would appear to be, and would be "called a Nazarene, or Netzer, the branch"; being an inhabitant of Natzareth, or Netzer, so called from the multitude of plants and trees that grew there.

A Nazarene, as David de Pomis says {f},

"is one that is born in the city Netzer, which is said to be in the land of Galilee, three days journey distant from Jerusalem."

Now though Christ was not born, yet because he dwelt at Nazareth, and was educated there; hence the Jews frequently call him yruwnh ewvy, "Jesus, the Nazarene {g}"; and sometimes only yruwnh, "the Nazarene" {h}. They also design him by run Nb, "Ben Netzer" {i}, of whom they say a great many evil things: and that Christ is often called Jesus of Nazareth, or the Nazarene, and his followers Nazarenes, from the place of his habitation, is known to everyone. One of Christ's disciples is called Netzer in the Talmud {k}, and made to plead for his life, because his name signified a branch, according to *Isa 11:1*. Surenhusius observes {l}, that the form rmanv hm Mwyql "to fulfil what is said", used by the Talmudists, and which he takes to be the same with this here, is used by them, when they allege not the very words of Moses, or the prophets, but their sense, which is deduced as a certain axiom from them; and thinks it is applicable to the present case.

{e} Targum, Jarchi, Aben Ezra & Kimchi in loc. {f} Lexic Heb. fol. 141. 2. {g} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 17. 1. Ganz. par. 2. fol. 14. 2. Abarbinel in Dan. fol. 44. 1. {h} Ganz. par. 1. fol. 24. 2. {i} T. Bab. Cetuboth, fol. 51. 2. & Gloss. in ib. Bereshith Rabba, fol. 67. 2. Abarbinel in Dau. fol. 44. 1. {k} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 43. 1. {l} Biblos Katallages, p, 2, 3, 4, 197, &c.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Matthew 3:1

Ver. 1. In those days came John the Baptist,.... The Evangelist having given an account of the genealogy and birth of Christ; of the coming of the wise men from the east to him; of his preservation from Herod's bloody design against him, when all the infants at Bethlehem were slain; of the flight of Joseph with Mary and Jesus into Egypt, and of their return from thence, and settlement in Nazareth, where Christ continued till near the time of his baptism, and entrance on his public ministry; proceeds to give a brief relation of John, the harbinger and forerunner of Christ, and the administrator of baptism to him: and he describes him by his name John, in Hebrew Nnxwy, "Jochanan", which signifies "gracious", or "the grace of the Lord", or "the Lord has given grace"; which agrees with him, both as a good man, on whom the Lord had bestowed much grace, and as a preacher, whose business it was to publish the grace of God in Christ, *Lu 16:16*. This name was given him by an angel before his conception, and by his parents at his birth, contrary to the mind of their relations and neighbours, ***Lu 1:13***. He is called by some of the Jewish writers {m}, John the "high priest"; his father Zacharias was a priest of the course of Abia, and he might succeed him therein, and be the head of that course, and for that reason be called a "high" or "chief priest"; as we find such were called, who were the principal among the priests, as were those who were chosen into the sanhedrim, or were the heads of these courses; and therefore we read of many chief priests, ***Mt 2:4***. From his being the first administrator of the ordinance of baptism, he is called John the Baptist; and this was a well known title and character of him. Josephus {n} calls him "John", who is surnamed o baptisthv, "the Baptist"; and Ben Gorion having spoken of him, says {o}, this is that John who hlybj hve, "made", instituted, or practised "baptism"; and which, by the way, shows that this was not in use among the Jews before, but that John was the first practiser this way. He is described by his work and office as a preacher, he "came" or "was preaching" the doctrines of repentance and baptism; he published and declared that the kingdom of the Messiah was at hand, that he would quickly be revealed; and exhorted the people to believe on him, which should come after him. The place where he preached is mentioned,

in the wilderness of Judea; not that he preached to trees and to the wild beasts of the desert; for the wilderness of Judea was an habitable place, and had in it many cities, towns, and villages, in which we must suppose John came preaching, at least to persons which came out from thence. There were in Joshua's time six cities in this wilderness, namely Betharabah, Middin, and Secacah, and Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and Engedi, *Jos 15:61*. Mention is made in the Talmud {p} of this wilderness of Judea, as distinct from the land of Israel, when the doctors say, that

"they do not bring up small cattle in the land of Israel, but they bring them up hdwhybv rbdmb, "in the wilderness which is in Judea"."

The Jews have an observation {q} of many things coming from the wilderness;

"the law, they say, came from the wilderness; the tabernacle from the wilderness; the sanhedrim from the wilderness; the priesthood from the wilderness; the office of the Levites from the wilderness; the kingdom from the wilderness; and all the good gifts which God gave to Israel were from the wilderness."

So John came preaching here, and Christ was tempted here. The time of his appearance and preaching was in those days: not when Christ was newly born; or when the wise men paid their adoration to him; or when Herod slew the infants; or when he was just dead, and Archelaus reigned in his room; or when Christ first went to Nazareth; though it was whilst he dwelt there as a private person; but when John was about thirty years of age, and Christ was near unto it, ***Lu 3:23*** an age in which ecclesiastical persons entered into service, ***Nu 4:3***. It was indeed, as Luke says, ***Lu 3:1*** in the "fifteenth" year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar; Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea; and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee; and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea; and of the region of Trachonitis; and Lysanias, the tetrarch of Abilene; Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests.

{m} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2. Chronicon Regum, fol. 54. 4. {n} Antiq. l. 18. c. 7. {o} L. 5. c. 45. {p} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol, 79. 9. 2. {q} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 13. 3.

Matthew 3:2

Ver. 2. And saying, repent ye,.... The doctrine which John preached was the doctrine of repentance; which may be understood either of amendment of life and manners; for the state of the Jews was then very corrupt, all sorts of men were grown very wicked; and though there was a generation among them, who were righteous in their own eyes, and needed no repentance; yet John calls upon them all, without any distinction, to repent; and hereby tacitly strikes at the doctrine of justification by works, which they had embraced, to which the doctrine of repentance is directly opposite: or rather, this is meant, as the word here used signifies, of a change of mind, and principles. The Jews had imbibed many bad notions. The Pharisees held the traditions of the elders, and the doctrine of justification by the works of the law; and the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead; and it was a prevailing opinion among them all, and seems to be what is particularly struck at by John, that the Messiah would be a temporal king, and set up an earthly kingdom in this world. Wherefore he exhorts them to change their minds, to relinquish this notion; assuring them, that though he would be a king, and would have a kingdom, which was near at hand, yet it would be a heavenly, and not an earthly one. Hence the manner in which John enforces his doctrine, or the reason and argument he uses to prevail upon them to regard it, is by saying,

for the kingdom of heaven is at hand: by which is meant not the kingdom of glory to be expected in another world; or the kingdom of grace, that is internal grace, which only believers are partakers of in this; but the kingdom of the Messiah, which was "at hand", just ready to appear, when he would be made manifest in Israel and enter upon his work and office: it is the Gospel dispensation which was about to take place, and is so called; because of the wise and orderly management of it under Christ, the king and head of his church by the ministration of the word, and administration of ordinances; whereby, as means, spiritual and internal grace would be communicated to many, in whose hearts it would reign and make them meet for the kingdom of glory; and because the whole economy of the Gospel, the doctrines and ordinances of it are from heaven. This phrase, "the kingdom of heaven" is often to be met with in Jewish writings; and sometimes it stands opposed to the "kingdom of the earth" {r}; by it is often meant the worship, service, fear, and love of God, and faith in him: thus in one of their books {s} having mentioned those words, "serve the Lord with fear": it is asked, what means this phrase, "with fear?" It is answered, the same as it is written, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"; and this is
Mymv twklm "the kingdom of heaven". And elsewhere they {t} ask, "what is the kingdom of heaven?" To which is answered, "the Lord our God is one Lord". Yea, the Lord God himself is so called {u}, and sometimes the sanctuary; and sometimes they intend by it the times of the Messiah, as the Baptist here does; for so they paraphrase {w} those words,

"the time of the singing of birds, or of pruning, is come; the time for Israel to be redeemed is come; the time for the uncircumcision to be cut off is come; the time that the kingdom of the Cuthites (Samaritans or Heathens) shall be consumed is come; and the time hlgtv Mymv twklm lv that "the kingdom of heaven shall be revealed" is come, as it is written, "and the Lord shall be king over all, the earth.""

Very pertinently does John make use of this argument to engage to repentance; since there cannot be a greater motive to it, whether it regard sorrow for sin, and confession of it, or a change of principles and practice, than the grace of God through Christ, which is exhibited in the Gospel dispensation: and very appropriately does he urge repentance previous to the kingdom of heaven; because without that there can be no true and cordial embracing or entering into the Gospel dispensation, or kingdom of heaven; that is, no real and hearty receiving the doctrines, and submitting to the ordinances of it. Nor ought the Jews above all people to object to John's method of preaching; since they make repentance absolutely necessary to the revelation of the Messiah and his kingdom, and redemption by him; for they say {x} in so many words, that

"if Israel do not repent, they will never be redeemed; but as soon as they repent, they will be redeemed; yea, if they repent but one day, immediately the son of David will come."

{r} Bereshit Rabba, fol. 7. 4. {s} Zohar in Exod. fol 39. 2. {t} Debarim Rabba, fol. 237. 2. {u} Zohar in Gen. fol. 112. 3. {w} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4. {x} T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 63. 4. & 64. 1. & Bab. Sanhed. fol. 97. 2.

Matthew 3:3

Ver. 3. For this is he that was spoken of,.... These are not the words of the Baptist himself, as in ***Joh 1:23*** but of the Evangelist, who cites and applies to John a passage in the Prophet Isaiah, *Isa 40:3* and that very pertinently, since that "chapter" is a prophecy of the Messiah. The consolations spoken of in *Isa 40:3*, were to be in the days of the king Messiah, as a writer of note {y} among the Jews observes. The Messiah is more expressly prophesied of in *Isa 40:9* as one that should appear to the joy of his people, and "come with a strong hand", vigorously prosecute his designs, faithfully perform his work, and then receive his reward; he is spoken of under the "character" of a "shepherd", who would tenderly discharge the several parts of his office as such, which character is frequently given to the Messiah in the Old Testament: now the person spoken of in *Isa 40:3* was to be his harbinger to go before him, proclaim and make ready for his coming; and what is said of him agrees entirely with John the Baptist, as the character given of him,

the voice of one crying, Bowntov, lowing like an ox; which expresses the austerity of the man, the roughness of his voice, the severity of his language; that he called aloud and spoke out, openly, publicly, and freely; and that he delivered himself in preaching with a great deal of zeal and fervency. The place where he preached was "in the wilderness", that is, of Judea, where he is said before, in ***Mt 3:1*** to come preaching. The doctrine he preached was,

prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight, which is best explained by what is said before, in ***Mt 3:2***

repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The Lord whom ye have sought, the Messiah whom you have expected, is just coming, he will quickly appear; prepare to meet him by repentance, and receive him by faith, relinquish your former notions and principles, correct your errors, and amend your lives, remove all out of the way which may be offensive to him. The allusion is to a great personage being about to make his public appearance or entrance; when a harbinger goes before him, orders the way to be cleared, all impediments to be removed, and everything got ready for the reception of him.

{y} R. David Kimchi in Isa. xl. 1.

Matthew 3:4

Ver. 4. The same John had his raiment,.... The Evangelist goes on to describe this excellent person, the forerunner of our Lord, by his raiment;

the same John of whom Isaiah prophesied, and who came preaching the doctrine in the place and manner before expressed,

had his raiment of camel's hair; not of camel's hair softened and dressed, which the Talmudists {z} call Mylmg rmu "camel's wool"; of which wool of camels and of hares, the Jews say {a} the coats were made, with which God clothed Adam and Eve; and which being spun to a thread, and wove, and made a garment of, they call {b} hlymx, and we "camlet"; for this would have been too fine and soft for John to wear, which is denied of him, *Mt 11:8* but either of a camel's skin with the hair on it, such was the "rough garment", or "garment of hair", the prophets used to wear, *Zec 13:4* or of camels hair not softened but undressed; and so was very coarse and rough, and which was suitable to the austerity of his life, and the roughness of his ministry. And it is to be observed he appeared in the same dress as Elijah or Elias did, ***2Ki 1:8*** in whose spirit and power he came, and whose name he bore, ***Lu 1:17***.

And a leathern girdle about his loins; and such an one also Elijah was girt with, ***2Ki 1:8*** and which added to the roughness of his garment, though it shows he was prepared and in a readiness to do the work he was sent about.

And his meat was locusts and wild honey; by the "locusts" some have thought are meant a sort of fish called "crabs", which John found upon the banks of Jordan, and lived upon; others, that a sort of wild fruit, or the tops of trees and plants he found in the wilderness and fed on, are designed; but the truth is, these were a sort of creatures "called locusts", and which by the ceremonial law were lawful to be eaten, see *Le 11:22*. The Misnic doctors {c} describe such as are fit to be eaten after this manner;

"all that have four feet and four wings, and whose thighs and wings cover the greatest part of their body, and whose name is bgx "a locust.""

For it seems they must not only have these marks and signs, but must be so called, or by a word in any other language which answers to it, as the commentators {d} on this passage observe; and very frequently do these writers speak {e} of locusts that are clean, and may be eaten. Maimonides {f} reckons up "eight" sorts of them, which might be eaten according to the law. Besides, these were eaten by people of other nations, particularly the Ethiopians {g}, Parthians {h}, and Lybians {i}.

And wild honey: this was honey of bees, which were not kept at home, but such as were in the woods and fields; of this sort was that which Jonathan found, and eat of, *1Sa 14:25* now the honey of bees might be eaten, according to the Jewish laws {k}, though bees themselves might not.

{z} Misn. Negaim. c. 11. sect. 2. & Kilaim, c. 9. sect. 1. Talmud, Bab. Menachot, fol. 39. 2. {a} Bereshit Rabba, fol. 18. 2. {b} T. Hieros. Nedarim, fol. 40. 3. {c} Misn. Cholin. c. 3. sect. 7. {d} Maimon. &

Bartenora in ib. {e} Misn. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 3. Terumot. c. 10. sect. 9. & Ediot. c. 7. sect. 2. & 8. 4. {f} Maacolot Asurot, c. 1. sect. 21. {g} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 30. Alex. ab Alex. l. 3. c. 11. Ludolph. Hist. Ethiop. l. 1. c. 13. {h} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29. {i} Hieron. adv. Jovinian. fol. 26. Tom. 2. {k} Moses Kotzensis Mitzvot Tora precept. neg. 132.

Matthew 3:5

Ver. 5. Then went out to him Jerusalem,.... The uncommon appearance of this person, the oddness of his dress, the austerity of his life, together with the awfulness and importance of his doctrine, and the novelty of the ordinance of baptism he administered, and the Jews having had no prophet for some hundreds of years, and imagining he might be the Messiah, quickly drew large numbers of people to him. Some copies read "all Jerusalem": that is, the inhabitants of that city, a very large number of them; and "all Judea", a great number of people from all parts of that country. "All" is here put for "many". And

all the region round about Jordan; multitudes from thence, which seems to be the same country with that which is called "beyond Jordan", ***Mt 4:25*** and is distinguished from Judea as here. The Septuagint in ***2Ch 4:17*** use the same phrase the Evangelist does here, and likewise in *Ge 13:10*.

Matthew 3:6

Ver. 6. And were baptized of him,.... The place where they were baptized of him was, "in Jordan"; some copies read, "in the river Jordan", as in ***Mr 1:5***. As to the name of this river, and the etymology of it, the Jews say {l} it was so called, Ndm drwyv "because it descended" from Dan, i.e. Leshem Dan, or Pamias, which they say is a cave at the head of it. It was in John's time and long after a considerable river, a river to swim in; we {m} read that "Resh Lakish andryb yxo hwh was swimming in Jordan." And elsewhere {n}, that one day "R. Jochanan was swimming in Jordan." Also it was a river for boats and ships to pass in, so that it was a navigable river; hence we read {o} of Ndryh tbyre "the boat of Jordan", and of ships in it, and of such and such things being forbidden to be carried over Jordan in a ship {p}; particularly, "a man might not take the water of the sin offering, and the ashes of the sin offering, and carry them over Jordan in a ship."

Pliny {q}, Pausanias {r}, Solinus {s}, and others, speak of it as a very considerable and delightful river; see ***Jos 3:15***. The Christians of Christ's time are called by the Jews, in a way of contempt, apostates, that received the doctrine of baptism, and were Ndryb Mylwbj "dipped in Jordan" {t}. The manner in which they were baptized by him was by immersion or plunging them in the water: this may be concluded from the signification of the word baptizw where used, which in the primary sense of it signifies to dip or plunge; from the place in which they were baptized, "the river Jordan"; and from John's constant manner of baptizing elsewhere, who chose places for this purpose, where and because there was there much water; see ***Joh 1:28***. The character of the persons baptized by him is this, they were

confessing their sins. They were called to repentance by John's ministry, and had the grace of it bestowed upon them; being thoroughly convinced of sin, and truly sorry for it, they were ready to acknowledge and confess it to God and men; and such an abiding sense they had of it upon their minds, that they continued doing it: they were not only confessing their sins before baptism, which engaged John to administer it to them; since we find afterwards he refused to admit others, because of their want of repentance and fruits meet for it; but also whilst they were going into the water, and when they came up out of it, so full were they of a sense of sin, and so ready to own it. Even in baptism itself there is a tacit confession and acknowledgment of sin, for it represents the sufferings and death of Christ which were for sin, into which persons are baptized, and profess to be dead to sin thereby; and also the resurrection of Christ for justification from sin, which obliges the baptized person to walk in newness of life, see ***Ro 6:3*** besides, in this ordinance believers are led to the blood of Christ, both for the cleansing and remission of their sins, which suppose filth and guilt, *Ac 22:16* and ***Ac 2:38***. Now this is the character given of the very first persons that were baptized by John, and ought surely to be attended to, by us; and as much care as possible should be taken, that none but such as have a true sense of sin, and are brought to an humble and hearty acknowledgment of it, be admitted to this ordinance.

{l} T. Bab. Becorot. fol. 55. 1. Kimchi in Josh. xix. 47. {m} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 9. 2. {n} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 84. 1. {o} T. Hieros. Sabbat. fol. 7.

1. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 64. 2. {p} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 116. 2. Chagiga, fol. 23. 1. Sabbat. fol. 60. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Parah Adumah, c. 10. sect. 2. & Bartenora in Misn. Parah, c. 9. sect. 6. {q} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 15. {r} L. 5. p. 29. {s} Polyhist. c. 48. {t} Cosri, p. 3. sect. 65. p. 241. Ed. Buxtorf.

Matthew ***3:7***

Ver. 7. But when he saw many of the Pharisees,.... This being the first place in which mention is made of the Pharisees and Sadducees, it may not be amiss to give some account of them once for all, and to begin with the Pharisees, and first with their name. Some derive this word from Urp pharatz to "divide", to "make a breach", from whence Phares had his name *Ge 38:29* so Jerom {u}, who observes, that

"the Pharisees, who separated themselves from the people as righteous persons, were called "divisi, the divided.""

And in {w} another place,

"because the Pharisees were "divided" from the Jews on account of some superfluous observations, they also took their name from their disagreement."

Origen {x} seems to refer to this etymology of the word, when he says,

"the Pharisees, according to their name, were dihrhmenoi tinev kai stasiwdeiv, certain divided and seditious persons."

And true it is, that this sect often meddled with the affairs of the government, and were very ambitious of being concerned therein. Josephus {y} observes of queen Alexandra, that she governed others, and the Pharisees governed her; hence, though they were in great esteem with the people, they were rather dreaded than loved by the government. Others derive this name from vrp "Pharas" to "expand", or "stretch out"; either because they made broad their phylacteries, and enlarged the borders of their garments; or because they exposed themselves to public notice, did all they could to be seen of men, prayed in the corners of the streets, had a trumpet blown before them when they gave alms, chose the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, greetings in the markets, and to be called of men "Rabbi": all which to be sure are their just characters. Others derive it from the same word, as signifying to "explain" or "expound"; because it was one part of their work, and in which they excelled, to expound the law; but this cannot be the reason of their general name, because there were women Pharisees as well as men, who cannot be thought to be employed in that work. The more generally received opinion is, that this name is taken from the above word, as signifying to "separate"; because they separated themselves from the men and manners of the world, to the study of the law, and to a greater degree of holiness, at least in pretence, than other persons. They were strict observers of the traditions of the elders; are said, to hold both fate and free will; they owned the resurrection of the dead, and that there were angels and spirits, in which they differed from the Sadducees. Or rather they have their name from orp, which signifies "a reward"; they being stiff defenders of the doctrine of rewards and punishments in a future state, which the Sadducees denied. The Talmudic writers {z} say, there were "seven" sorts of them, and if it would not be too tedious to the reader, I would give the names of them; and the rather, because some of them seem to tally with the complexion and conduct of the Pharisees mentioned in the scriptures. There were then,

1. ymkyv vwrp the "Shechemite Pharisee", who does as Shechem did; is circumcised, not on God's account, or for his glory, or because circumcision is a command of his, but for his own profit and advantage, and that he may get honour from men.

2. ypqyn vwrp "the dashing Pharisee"; who walks gently, the heel of one foot touching the great toe of the other; and scarce lifts up his feet from the earth, so that he dashes them against the stones, and would be thought hereby to be in deep meditation.

3. yazyq vwrp the "Pharisee letting blood"; who makes as if he shut his eyes, that he may not look upon women, and so runs and dashes his head against the wall, till the blood gushes out, as though a vein was opened.

4. aykwdm vwrp the "depressed Pharisee"; who went double, or bowed down, or as others render the phrase, "the mortar Pharisee"; either because he wore a garment like a mortar, with the mouth turned downwards; or a hat resembling such a vessel; so that he could not look upward, nor on either side, only downward, or right forward.

5. hnveaw ytbwx hm vwrp the Pharisee, that said, what is my duty and I will do it? the gloss upon it is, teach me what is my duty, and I will do it: Lo! this is his excellency, if he is not expert in the prohibitions and niceties of the commands, and comes to learn; or thus, what is more to be done and I have not done it? so that he shows himself, or would appear as if he had performed all.

6. hary vwrp "the Pharisee of fear"; who does what he does from fear of punishment.

7. hbha vwrp "the Pharisee of love"; who does what he does from love; which the gloss explains thus: for the love of the reward of the commandment, and not for the love of the commandment of his Creator; though they say of all these there is none to be beloved, but the Pharisee of love.

When this sect first began, and who was the first author of it, is not easy to say; it is certain there were great numbers of them in the times of John the Baptist, and of Christ, and for some time after. The Jews say {a}, that when the temple was destroyed the second time, the Pharisees increased in Israel.

Next let us consider the Sadducees, who they were, and from whence they sprung. These have their name not from qydu "Saddik righteous" {b}, or qdu "Sedek righteousness", being self justitiaries; for though they were, yet this would not have distinguished them from the Pharisees, who were likewise such; but from qwdu Sadok or Saduk, a disciple of Antigonus, a man of Socho {c}. The occasion of this new sect was this; Antigonus, among the instructions he gave to his scholars, had this saying;

"be not as servants who serve their master for the sake of reward; but be ye as servants that serve their master not for the sake of reward, and let the fear of God be upon you."

Which, when Sadok and a fellow scholar, whose name was Baithos, or Baithus, heard, not rightly understanding him, concluded that there was no future state of rewards and punishments; which notion they broached and had their followers, who from the one were called Sadducees, and sometimes from the other Baithuseans: these men held the Scriptures only, rejecting the traditions of the elders; they denied fate, and ascribed all to free will; they affirmed that there is no resurrection of the dead; that the soul dies with the body; that there is no future state after this life, and that there are neither angels nor spirits. Now when "John saw" or observed "many" of both these sects "come to his baptism"; not merely to see it administered, led thither by the novelty of the thing; but to submit to it, to which they might be induced by that very great character of a very holy good man, which John had got among the people; and they were desirous of being thought so too, and therefore desired to be baptized by him; but he knowing the men and their manners,

said unto them; addressed them in a very severe style, quite contrary to their expectation, and the opinion the people had of them,

O generation of vipers! It seems their parents before them were vipers, and they their offspring were like them, in hypocrisy and malice. The viper appears very beautiful outwardly, but is full of poison; it looks harmless and innocent, as if it neither could nor would do any hurt, its teeth being hid, but is a most deadly and hurtful creature: so these men, though they made specious pretences to religion and holiness, yet were full of the deadly poison of hypocrisy, malice, and error. A very disagreeable salutation this must be to men, who were desirous of being reckoned very religious, and who boasted of, and trusted in, their being the seed of Abraham; when they were the children of the devil, the seed of the old serpent, and the offspring of the worst of men, and in whom was verified the proverb, like father like son. John proceeds and asks, saying, "who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" who has suggested this to you? from whom have ye received this hint? who has pointed out the way to you to escape divine vengeance, or the ruin which will quickly come upon you? for by

wrath to come is not meant hell fire, everlasting destruction, from which baptism could not save them; but temporal calamity and destruction, the wrath which in a little time came upon that nation to the uttermost, for rejecting the Messiah, and the Gospel dispensation; from which they might have been saved, had they given credit to Jesus as the Messiah, though only with a bare assent; and had they entered into the kingdom of heaven, or Messiah, the Gospel dispensation, by receiving its doctrines, and submitting to its ordinances, though only externally.

{u} Trad. Heb. in Gen. fol. 72. D. Tom. 3. {w} Adv. Luciferian. fol. 49. K. Tom. 2. so Tertullian. praescript. Haeret. c. 45. {x} Comment. in Joan. p. 115. Ed. Huet. {y} De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 5. sect. 2. {z} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 14. 2. & Sota fol. 20. 3. Bab. Sota, fol. 22. 2. eight sorts are reckoned in Abot R. Nathan, c. 37. fol. 8. 4. {a} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 60. 2. {b} So Epiphanius contr. Haeres. l. 1. Haeres. 14. Hieron. Comment. in Matt. c. 22. l. 3. fol. 30. M. Tom. 9. {c} Abot R. Nathan c. 5. fol. 3. 1. Sepher Cosri orat. 3. fol. 187. 2. & R. Juda Muscatus in ib. Maimon. in Pirk. Abot. c. 1. sect. 3. Juchasin. fol. 15. 2. Ganz. Tzemach David. par. 1. fol. 20. 2. & Bartenora in Misn. Judaim, c. 4. sect. 6.

Matthew ***3:8***

Ver. 8. Bring forth therefore fruits,.... That is, if you are truly penitent, if you have a proper sense of sin, and true repentance for it, do such works as are suitable to it, and will show the genuineness of it; for

fruits meet for repentance are the same as "works meet for repentance", *Ac 26:20* and as a tree is known by its fruit, so repentance is known by good works; these are the fruits and effects of repentance, and which are proofs with men of the sincerity of it. Those which follow upon evangelical repentance are such as are mentioned in ***2Co 7:11***. Now let it be observed, that John insisted upon repentance, and a good conversation, attesting the truth of it as necessary prerequisites to the ordinance of baptism; and so Peter first urged repentance; and then proposed baptism, ***Ac 2:38*** from whence one should think it may be rationally and strongly concluded, that none but truly repenting sinners, and such who have given proofs that they are so, are to be admitted to this ordinance.

Matthew ***3:9***

Ver. 9. And think not to say within yourselves,.... John knew the sentiments of their minds, and the prevailing opinion they had given into, against which he cautions them; as, that because they were Abraham's seed, they were in a state of salvation, in the favour of God, and had a right to all privileges and ordinances: this they trusted in, and boasted of, and would often think of it within themselves, pleasing themselves with the thoughts of it, and speak of it to others;

we have Abraham for our father. The Baptist was aware how ready they would be to object this to him; and therefore prevents their plea from hence in favour of their admission to baptism, by assuring them, that this would have no weight with him, nor give them any right to the ordinance he administered: hence it appears that it is not a person's being born of believing parents that can entitle him to water baptism; or be a reason why it ought to be administered to him: if nothing more than this can be said in his favour, it is a plain case from hence, he ought to be debarred from it. The reason John gives why such a plea as this would be insufficient is,

for I say unto you; I assure you of it; you may depend on it as a certain truth,

that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. To "raise up children" is an Hebrew way of speaking, and the same with Mv or erz Myqhl to "raise up seed", or a "name" to another, *Ge 38:8* and signifies to beget children for another, who are to be called by his name. Some by "the stones" understand the Gentiles, comparable to stones, both for the hardness of their hearts, and their idolatry in worshipping stocks and stones; of and among whom God was able to raise, and has raised up, a spiritual seed to Abraham; who are of the same faith with him, who walk in his steps, and whose father he is: but then it must be supposed, according to this sense, that there were some Gentiles present, since John calls them "these" stones, pointing to some persons or things, that were before him; wherefore I rather think that this phrase is to be taken literally, and that John pointed to some certain stones that were near him, within sight, and which lay upon the banks of Jordan, where he was baptizing; for what is it that the omnipotent God cannot do? He could as easily of stones make men, as make Adam out of the dust of the earth, and then make these men, in a spiritual sense, children of Abraham; that is, believers in Christ, and partakers of his "grace; for if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise", ***Ga 3:29***. So that God stood in no need of these persons, nor had they any reason to boast of their natural descent from Abraham; since this in spiritual matters, and in things relating to the Gospel dispensation, would stand them in no stead, or be of any advantage to them.

Matthew 3:10

Ver. 10. And now also the axe is laid,.... These words may be rendered, "for now also", and contain in them a reason why they might expect future wrath; why they should bring forth good fruit; and why they should not trust to nor plead their descent from Abraham, because "the axe is now laid": by which is meant, not the Gospel which now began to be preached by John; though this was like an axe laid to the root of, and which cut down, their pride and vanity, their self-confidence and glorying in their righteousness, holiness, carnal wisdom, and fleshly privileges: but rather; the axe of God's judgment and vengeance is here designed, which, because of the certainty and near approach of it, is said to be "now laid"; and that not to some of the branches only, to lop them off, to take away from the Jews some particular privileges, but "to the root" of all their privileges, civil and ecclesiastical; even the covenant which God had made with that people as a nation, who was now about to write "Lo Ammi" upon them; so that henceforward they would have nothing to expect from their being the seed of Abraham, Israelites, or circumcised persons. The time was just at hand, when the Lord would take his "staff Beauty and cut it asunder, that he might break the covenant he had made with all the people", *Zec 11:10* in a short time their civil polity and church state would be both at an end. The Romans, who were already among them and over them, would very quickly come upon them, and cut them off root and branch; and utterly destroy their temple, city, and nation: and this ruin and destruction was levelled not at a single tree, a single person, or family only, as Jesse's, or any others, but at the root

of the trees: of all the trees of the whole body of the people; for the covenant which was made with them all being broke, and which was their hedge and fence, they were all exposed to the wild boar of the forest.

Therefore every tree, every individual person, though one of Abraham's children, and made never such a fair show in the

flesh, which bringeth not forth good fruit; does not perform good works from a right principle, to a right end, such as are meet for repentance; particularly, does not believe in the Messiah now ready to be revealed, which is the main and principal work; and does not continue so doing, and thus believing,

is hewn down and cast into the fire. Temporal ruin and destruction shall come upon him; he shall not escape divine vengeance here, and shall be cast into everlasting burnings hereafter; which is quite contrary to a notion of theirs, that Mhrbad ytwkzb "by the merits of Abraham", the Israelites shall be delivered from the fire of hell {d}.

{d} Zohar in Exod. fol. 34. 4.

Matthew 3:11

Ver. 11. I indeed baptize you with water,.... These words, at first view, look as if they were a continuation of John's discourse with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and as though he had baptized them; whereas by comparing them with what the other Evangelists relate, see ***Mr 1:5*** they are spoken to the people, who, confessing their sins, had been baptized by him; to whom he gives an account of the ordinance of water baptism, of which he was the administrator, in what manner, and on what account he performed it:

I indeed baptize you; or, as Mark says, "I have baptized you"; I have authority from God so to do; my commission reaches thus far, and no farther; I can administer, and have administered the outward ordinance to you; but the inward grace and increase of it, together with the ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, I cannot confer. I can, and do baptize, upon a profession of repentance, and I can threaten impenitent sinners with divine vengeance; but I cannot bestow the grace of repentance on any, nor punish for impenitence, either here or hereafter; these things are out of my power, and belong to another person hereafter named: all that I do, and pretend to do, is to baptize

with water, or rather in water, as en udati should be rendered. Our version seems to be calculated in favour of pouring, or sprinkling water upon, or application of it to the person baptized, in opposition to immersion in it; whereas the "preposition" is not instrumental, but local, and denotes the place, the river Jordan, and the element of water there, in which John was baptizing: and this he did

unto repentance, or "at", or upon "repentance": for so eiv may be rendered, as it is in *Mt 12:41* for the meaning is not that John baptized them, in order to bring them to repentance; since he required repentance and fruits meet for it, previous to baptism; but that he had baptized them upon the foot of their repentance; and so the learned Grotius observes, that the phrase may be very aptly explained thus: "I baptize you upon the `profession' of repentance which ye make." John gives a hint of the person whose forerunner he was, and of his superior excellency to him: he indeed first speaks of him as one behind him, not in nature or dignity, but in order of time as man;

but he that comes after me. John was born before Jesus, and began his ministry before he did; he was his harbinger; Jesus was now coming after him to Jordan from Galilee, to be baptized by him, and then enter on his public ministry: but though he came after him in this sense, he was not beneath, but above him in character; which he freely declares, saying,

is mightier than I; not only as he is the mighty God, and so infinitely mightier than he; but in his office and ministry, which was exercised with greater power and authority, and attended with mighty works and miracles, and was followed with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. Not to mention the mighty work of redemption performed by him; the resurrection of his own body from the dead; and his exaltation in human nature, above all power, might, and dominion. The Baptist was so sensible of the inequality between them, and of his unworthiness to be mentioned with him, that he seems at a loss almost to express his distance from him; and therefore signifies it by his being unfit to perform one of the most servile offices to him,

whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; or as the other Evangelists relate it, "whose shoelatchet I am not worthy to unloose"; which amounts to the same sense, since shoes are unloosed in order to be taken from, or carried before, or after a person; which to do was the work of servants among the Jews. In the Talmud {e} it is asked,

"What is the manner of possessing of servants? or what is their service? He buckles his (master's) shoes; he "unlooses his shoes", and "carries them before him to the bath.""

Or, as is elsewhere {f} said,

"he unlooses his shoes, or carries after him his vessels (whatever he wants) to the bath; he unclothes him, he washes him, he anoints him, he rubs him, he clothes him, he buckles his shoes, and lifts him up."

This was such a servile work, that it was thought too mean for a scholar or a disciple to do; for it is {g} said,

"all services which a servant does for his master, a disciple does for his master, lenm wl trthm Uwx, "except unloosing his shoes"."

The gloss on it says, "he that sees it, will say, he is a "Canaanitish servant":"

for only a Canaanitish, not an Hebrew servant {h}, might be employed in, or obliged to such work; for it was reckoned not only, mean and servile, but even base and reproachful. It is one of their {i} canons;

"if thy brother is become poor, and is sold unto thee, thou shalt not make him do the work of a servant; that is, yagn lv trwbe, any reproachful work; such as to buckle his shoes, or unloose them, or carry his instruments (or necessaries) after him to the bath."

Now John thought himself unworthy; it was too great an honour for him to do that for Christ, which was thought too mean for a disciple to do for a wise man, and too scandalous for an Hebrew servant to do for his master, to whom he was sold; which shows the great humility of John, and the high opinion he had of Christ. It has been controverted whether Christ wore shoes or not; Jerom affirmed that he did not: but it seems from hence that he did; nor were the Jews used to walk barefoot, but on certain occasions. The Baptist points at the peculiar work of this great person, in which he greatly exceeds anything done by him;

he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; referring, either to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, to be bestowed on the disciples on the day of Pentecost, of which the cloven tongues, like as of fire, which appeared unto them, and sat upon them, were the symbols; which was an instance of the great power and grace of Christ, and of his exaltation at the Father's right hand. Or rather, this phrase is expressive of the awful judgments which should be inflicted by him on the Jewish nation; when he by his Spirit should "reprove" them for the sin of rejecting him; and when he should appear as a "refiner's fire", and as "fuller's soap"; when "the day of the Lord" should "burn as an oven"; when he should "purge the blood of Jerusalem", his own blood, and the blood of the Apostles and Prophets shed in it, "from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning"; the same with "the Holy Ghost and fire" here, or the fire of the Holy Ghost, or the holy Spirit of fire; and is the same with "the wrath to come", and with what is threatened in the context: the unfruitful trees shall be cut down, and cast into the fire", and the "chaff" shall be burnt with unquenchable fire". And as this sense best agrees with the context, it may the rather be thought to be genuine; since John is speaking not to the disciples of Christ, who were not yet called, and who only on the day of Pentecost were baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire, in the other sense of this phrase; but to the people of the Jews, some of whom had been baptized by him; and others were asking him questions, others gazing upon him, and wondering what manner of person he was; and multitudes of them continued obdurate and impenitent under his ministry, whom he threatens severely in the context. Add to all this, that the phrase of dipping or baptizing in fire seems to be used in this sense by the Jewish writers. In the Talmud {k} one puts the question, In what does he (God,) dip? You will say in water, as it is written, "who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?" Another replies, lybj arwnb, "he dips in fire"; as it is written, "for behold the Lord will come with fire". What is the meaning of arwnb atwlybj, "baptism in fire?" He answers, according to the mind of Rabbah, the root of "dipping in the fire", is what is written; "all that abideth not the fire, ye shall make go" through the water. Dipping in the fire of the law, is a phrase used by the Jews {l}. The phrases of "dipping, and washing in fire", are also used by Greek {m} authors.

{e} T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 59. 4. Maimon. & T. Bartenora in Misu. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 3. {f} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 22. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Mechirah, c. 2. sect. 2. {g} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 96. 1. Maimon. Talmud Torn, c. 5. sect. 8. {h} Maimon. Hilch. Abadim, c. 1. sect. 7. {i} Moses Kotzensis Mitzvot Torah, precept. neg. 176. {k} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 39. 1. {l} Tzeror Hammor. fol. 104. 4. & 142. 3. & 170. 1. {m} Moschi Idyll. 1. Philostrat, Vit. Apollon, l. 3. c. 5.

Matthew 3:12

Ver. 12. Whose fan is in his hand,.... The Jews had their hand fans, and which were like a man's hand; their names were bwgm hrwm rbem; which, as Maimonides says {n}, were three sorts of instruments used in the floor, in form of a man's hand; with which they cleansed the wheat and barley from the straw; and their names differ according to their form: some have many teeth, and with them they cleanse the wheat at the end of the work; and there are others that have few teeth, no more than three, and with these they purge the wheat at first, from the thick straw. By the "fan", here is meant, either the Gospel which Christ was just ready to publish; by which he would effectually call his chosen people among the Jews, and so distinguish and separate them from others, as well as purify and cleanse them, or rather the awful judgment of God, which Christ was ready to execute, and in a short time would execute on the unbelieving and impenitent Jews: hence it is said to be "in his hand"; being put there by his Father, who "hath committed all judgment to the Son". That this is the meaning of the "Baptist", seems evident, since "fanning" is always, when figuratively taken, used for judgments, *Isa 41:16*. By "his floor", is meant the land of Israel, where he was born, brought up, and lived; of which the Lord says, "O my threshing, and the corn of my floor!" *Isa 21:10*. This, he says, "he will thoroughly purge" of all his refuse and chaff, that is, by fanning: so fanning and cleansing, or purging, are joined together, ***Jer 4:11*** so rrb is used for purging by fanning, in the Misnic writings {o}. By "his wheat", are meant his elect among the Jews, the chosen of God and precious; so called because of their excellency, purity, usefulness, solidity, and constancy: these he "will gather into his garner"; meaning either some place of protection, where he would direct his people to for safety from that wrath, ruin, and destruction; which should fall upon the Jewish nation; or else the kingdom of heaven, into which he would bring them, by taking them out of the world from the evil to come. By "the chaff", are meant wicked and ungodly persons, such as are destitute of the grace of God, whether professors, or profane; being empty, barren, and unfruitful; and so good for nothing but the fire, which therefore "he will burn with unquenchable fire", of divine wrath and vengeance: an allusion to a custom among the Jews, who, when they purified the increase of their unclean fields, gathered it together in an "area" or floor, in the midst of them, and then sifted it with sieves; one sort with two sieves, another with three, that they might thoroughly purge it, and burnt the chaff and stalks {p}; see ***Isa 5:24***.

{n} In Misn. Celim. c. 13. sect. 7. Vid. Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. & in Misn. Tibbul. Yom. c. 4. sect. 6. {o} Misn. Sabbat. c. 7. sect. 2. & Gittin, c. 5. sect. 9. {p} Misn. Oholot. c. 18. sect. 2.

Matthew 3:13

Ver. 13. Then cometh Jesus,.... That is, when John had been some time preaching the doctrine of repentance, and administering the ordinance of baptism; for which, time must be allowed, since he went into all the country about Jordan, and preached unto them, and baptized such large numbers:

very probably it might be six months from his first entrance on his ministry; since there was this difference in their age, and so might be in their baptism and preaching. Now when John had given notice of the Messiah's coming, and so had prepared his way; had declared the excellency of his person, the nature of his work, and office, and had raised in the people an expectation of him,

then cometh Jesus from Galilee; from Nazareth of Galilee, ***Mr 1:9*** where he had lived for many years, as the Jews {q} themselves own; in great obscurity, in all obedience to God, in subjection to his parents, exercising a conscience void of offence towards God and man, and employing his time in devotion and business: from hence he came to Jordan to John, who was baptizing there; which shows the great humility of Christ, who comes to John, and does not send for him, though John was his servant, and he was his Lord and Master; and also his cheerful and voluntary subjection to the ordinance of baptism, since of himself, of his own accord, he took this long and fatiguing journey; for Nazareth, according to David de Pomis {r}, was three days journey from Jerusalem, though somewhat nearer Jordan; the end and design of his coming was

to be baptized of him. It may reasonably be inquired what should be Christ's view in desiring to be baptized; it could not be to take away original or actual sin, since he had neither; nor has baptism any such efficacy to do this, in those who have either or both: but, it was to show his approbation of John's baptism, and to bear a testimony of it, that it was from heaven; and also that he himself might receive a testimony both from heaven, and from John, that he was the Son of God and true Messiah, before he entered upon his public ministry, into which he was in some measure initiated and installed hereby; and moreover, to set an example to his followers, and thereby engage their attention and subjection to this ordinance; and, in a word, as he himself says, to fulfil all righteousness.

{q} Toldos Jesu, p. 6. {r} Tzemach David, fol. 141. 2.

Matthew 3:14

Ver. 14. But John forbad him, saying,.... It appears from hence, that John knew Christ before he baptized him, and before he saw the Spirit descending and abiding on him, ***Joh 1:33*** wherefore that was not a signal, whereby he should first know him but whereby his knowledge of him should be confirmed; which knowledge of him he had, not through his kindred to him, or by any conversation he had with him before, but by immediate, divine revelation: upon which account he "forbad him"; refused to administer the ordinance to him; earnestly entreated that he would not insist upon it; desired to be excused being concerned herein: and this he did, partly lest the people should think Christ was not so great a person as he had represented him to be; yea, that he was one of the penitent sinners John had admitted to his baptism; and chiefly because of the majesty and dignity of Christ's person, who he knew stood in no need of such an outward ordinance; and because of his own unworthiness to administer it to him, as is evident from what follows,

I have need to be baptized of thee; not with water baptism, which Christ never administered, but with the baptism of the Spirit, which was his peculiar office. Hence we learn, that though John was so holy a man, was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, had such large measures of grace, and lived such an exemplary life and conversation; yet was far from thinking, that he was perfect and righteous in himself, but stood in need of Christ, and of more grace from him. He seems surprised that Christ should come to him, and make such a motion to him; when it was his duty and privilege to come to him daily for fresh supplies of grace, and always to trust in him for life and salvation;

and comest thou to me? who am of the earth, earthly, when thou art the Lord from heaven; "to me", a poor sinful creature, when thou art the Holy One of God; "to me", who am thy servant, when thou art Lord of all; "to me", who always stand in need of thy grace, when thou art God all sufficient.

Matthew 3:15

Ver. 15. And Jesus answering, said unto him,.... This is an Hebrew way of speaking, often used in the Old Testament, and answers to rmayw Ney; see ***Job 3:1***. He replied to John, who had made use of very forbidding words, after this manner,

suffer it to be so now; let me have my request; do not go on to object, but comply with my desire; let it be done now, immediately, directly, at this present time; do not put me off with any excuse; it is a proper season for it, even "now", since the time is not yet come that I am to baptize with the Holy Ghost; and besides, thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. It became John to administer the ordinance of baptism to Christ, as he was his forerunner, and the only administrator of it, and that he might fulfil the ministry which he had received; and as it became Christ to fulfil all righteousness, moral and ceremonial, and baptism being a part of his Father's will, which he came to do, it became him to fulfil this also. And since it became Christ, it cannot be unbecoming us to submit to this ordinance; and since he looked upon it as a part of righteousness to be fulfilled by him, it ought to be attended to by all those who would be accounted followers of him. Christ having strongly urged the conveniency and equity of the administration of baptism to him, which showed his eager desire after it, and the lowliness of his mind; and John being convinced, and overcome by the force of his reasoning, agrees to his baptism;

then he suffered him, i.e. to be baptized in water by him, as he had requested, and accordingly did administer it to him.

Matthew 3:16

Ver. 16. And Jesus, when he was baptized,.... Christ, when he was baptized by John in the river Jordan, the place where he was baptizing,

went up straightway out of the water. One would be at a loss at first sight for a reason why the Evangelist should relate this circumstance; for after the ordinance was administered, why should he stay in the water? what should he do there? Everyone would naturally and reasonably conclude, without the mention of such a circumstance, that as soon as his baptism was over, he would immediately come up out of the water. However, we learn this from it, that since it is said, that he came up out of the water, he must first have gone down into it; must have been in it, and was baptized in it; a circumstance strongly in favour of baptism by immersion: for that Christ should go down into the river, more or less deep, to the ankles, or up to the knees, in order that John should sprinkle water on his face, or pour it on his head, as is ridiculously represented in the prints, can hardly obtain any credit with persons of thought and sense. But the chief view of the Evangelist in relating this circumstance, is with respect to what follows; and to show, that as soon as Christ was baptized, and before he had well got out of the water,

lo the heavens were opened: and some indeed read the word "straightway", in connection with this phrase, and not with the words "went up": but there is no need of supposing such a trajection, for the whole may be rendered thus;

and Jesus, when he was baptized, was scarcely come up out of the water, but lo, immediately, directly, as soon as he was out, or rather before,

the heavens were opened to him; the airy heaven was materially and really opened, parted, rent, or cloven asunder, as in ***Mr 1:10*** which made way for the visible descent of the Holy Ghost in a bodily shape. A difficulty arises here, whether the words, "to him", are to be referred to Christ, or to John; no doubt but the opening of the heavens was seen by them both: but to me it seems that John is particularly designed, since this vision was upon his account, and for his sake, and to him the following words belong; "and he", that is,

John, saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: for this is what was promised to John, as a sign, which should confirm his faith in Jesus, as the true Messiah, and which he himself says he saw, and upon which he based the record and testimony he bore to Christ, as the Son of God; see ***Joh 1:32*** not but that the descent of the Holy Ghost in this manner might be seen by Christ, as well as John, according to ***Mr 1:10***. The Spirit of God, here said to descend and light on Christ, is the same, which in the first creation moved upon the face of the waters; and now comes down on Christ, just as he was coming up out of the waters of Jordan, where he had been baptized; and which the Jews {r} so often call xwr xyvmh dlm lv, "the Spirit of the king Messiah, and the spirit of the Messiah". The descent of him was in a "bodily shape", as Luke says in ***Lu 3:22*** either in the shape of a dove, which is a very fit emblem of the Spirit of God who descended, and the fruits thereof, such as simplicity, meekness, love, &c. and also of the dove-like innocence, humility, and affection of Christ, on whom he lighted; or it was in some other visible form, not expressed, which pretty much resembled the hovering and lighting of a dove upon anything: for it does not necessarily follow from any of the accounts the Evangelists give of this matter, that the holy Spirit assumed, or appeared in, the form of a dove; only that his visible descent and lighting on Christ was wsei peristera, as a dove descends, hovers and lights; which does not necessarily design the form of the creature, but the manner of its motion. However, who can read this account without thinking of Noah's dove, which brought in its mouth the olive leaf, a token of peace and reconciliation, when the waters were abated from off the earth? Give me leave to transcribe a passage I have met with in the book of Zohar {s};

"a door shall be opened, and out of it shall come forth the dove which Noah sent out in the days of the flood, as it is written, "and he sent forth the dove", that famous dove; but the ancients speak not of it, for they knew not what it was, only from whence it came, and did its message; as it is written, "it returned not again unto him any more": no man knows whither it went, but it returned to its place, and was hid within this door; and it shall take a crown in its mouth, and put it upon the head of the king Messiah."

And a little after, the dove is said to abide upon his head, and he to receive glory from it. Whether this is the remains of some ancient tradition, these men studiously conceal, concerning the opening of the heavens, and the descent of the Spirit of God, as a dove, upon the Messiah; or whether it is hammered out of the evangelic history, let the reader judge.

{r} Bereshit Rabba, fol. 2. 4. & 6. 3. Vajikra Rabba, fol. 156. 4. Zohar in Gen. fol. 107. 3. & 128. 3. Baal Hatturim in Gen. i. 2. Caphtor Uperah, fol. 113. 2. {s} In Num. fol. 68. 3, 4.

Matthew 3:17

Ver. 17. And lo, a voice from heaven, saying,.... At the same time the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God descended as a dove, and lighted on Christ, and whilst it abode upon him, an extraordinary voice was heard; hence the note of attention and admiration, "lo", is prefixed unto it, as before, to the opening of the heavens; being what was unusual and surprising; and as denoting something to be expressed of great moment and importance. The Jews, in order to render this circumstance less considerable, and to have it believed, that these voices from heaven heard in the time of Jesus, and in relation to him were common things, have invented a great many stories concerning Mymvm lwq tb, "the voice", or "the daughter of the voice from heaven"; which they pretend came in the room of prophecy: their {t} words are, "after the death of the latter prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, the holy Spirit departed from Israel, and thenceforwards they used "Bath Kol", the "voice". One time they were sitting in the chamber of the house of Guria in Jericho, and there came to them Mymvm lyq tb, "the voice from heaven", (saying;) there is one here, who is fit to have the Shekinah (or divine majesty) abide on him, as Moses our master; but because his generation was not worthy, therefore the wise men set their eyes on Hillell, the elder; and when he died, they said concerning him, this was a holy man, a meek man, a disciple of Ezra. Again, another time they were sitting in a chamber in Jabneh, and there came to them "the voice from heaven", (saying;) there is one here, who is fit to have the Shekinah dwell on him; but because his generation was not worthy, therefore the wise men set their eyes on Samuel the little."

I have cited this passage at large, partly because, according to them, it fixes the date and use of "the voice"; and partly, because it affords instances of it, wherefore more need not be mentioned; for, it would be endless to repeat the several things spoken by it; such as encouraging Herod to rebel, and seize his master's kingdom {u}; forbidding Ben Uzziel to go on with his paraphrase on the Hagiographa, or holy books, when he had finished his Targum on the prophets {w}; declaring the words of Hillell and Shammai to be the words of the living God {x}; signifying the conception, birth, and death of {y} persons, and the like; all which seem to be mere fiction and imagination, diabolical delusions, or satanical imitations of this voice, that was now heard, in order to lessen the credit of it. But, to proceed; this extraordinary voice from heaven, which was formed in articulate sounds for the sake of John; and, according to the other Evangelists, was directed to Christ, ***Mr 1:11*** expressed the following words, "this is my beloved Son". "This" person, who had been baptized in water, on whom the holy Spirit now rested, is no other than the Son of God in human nature; which he assumed, in order to be obedient to this, and the whole of his Father's will: he is his own proper "son", not by creation, as angels, and men; nor by adoption, as saints; nor by office, as magistrates; but in such a way of filiation as no other is: he is the natural, essential, and only begotten Son of God; his beloved Son, whom the Father loved from everlasting, as his own Son; the image of himself, of the same nature with him, and possessed of the same perfections; whom he loved, and continued to love in time, though clothed with human nature, and the infirmities of it; appearing in the likeness of sinful flesh; being in his state of humiliation, he loved him through it, and all sorrows and sufferings that attended it. Christ always was, and ever will be considered, both in his person as the Son of God, and in his office as mediator, the object of his love and delight; wherefore he adds,

in whom I am well pleased. Jehovah the Father took infinite delight and pleasure in him as his own Son, who lay in his bosom before all worlds; and was well pleased with him in his office relation, and capacity: he was both well pleased in him as his Son, and delighted in him as his servant, *Isa 42:1* he was pleased with his assumption of human nature; with his whole obedience to the law; and with his bearing the penalty and curse of it, in the room and stead of his people: he was well pleased with and for his righteousness, sacrifice and atonement; whereby his law was fulfilled, and his justice satisfied. God is not only well pleased in, and with his Son, but with all his people, as considered in him; in him he loves them, takes delight in them, is pacified towards them, and graciously accepts of them. It would be almost unpardonable, not to take notice of the testimony here given to the doctrine of the Trinity; since a voice was heard from the "father" in heaven, bearing witness to "the Son" in human nature on earth, on whom "the Spirit" had descended and now abode. The ancients looked upon this as so clear and full a proof of this truth, that they were wont to say; Go to Jordan, and there learn the doctrine of the Trinity. Add to all this, that since this declaration was immediately upon the baptism of Christ, it shows that his Father highly approved of, and was well pleased with his submission to that ordinance; and which should be an encouraging motive to all believers to follow him in it.

{t} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 11. 1. Sota, fol. 48. 2. Yoma. fol. 9. 2. {u} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 3. 2. {w} Megilla, fol. 3. 1. {x} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 2. {y} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 22. 1. T. Hieros. Sabbat. fol. 8. 3.

Matthew 4:1

Ver. 1. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit,.... The Evangelist having finished his account of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ; of his ministry and baptism; and particularly of the baptism of Christ; when the Holy Ghost came down upon him in a visible and eminent manner; whereby he was anointed for his public work, according to *Isa 61:1* proceeds to give a narration of his temptations by Satan, which immediately followed his baptism; and of those conflicts he had with the enemy of mankind before he entered on his public ministry. The occasion, nature, and success of these temptations are here related. The occasion of them, or the opportunity given to the tempter, is spoken of in this and the following verse. In this may be observed the action of the Spirit in and upon Christ; he

was led of the Spirit: by "the Spirit" is meant the same spirit of God, which had descended and lighted on him in a bodily shape, with the gifts and graces of which he was anointed, in an extraordinary manner, for public service; of which he was "full", ***Lu 4:1*** not but that he was endowed with the Holy Ghost before which he received without measure from his Father; but now this more eminently and manifestly appeared and by this Spirit was he led; both the Syriac and the Persic versions read, "by the holy Spirit". Being "led" by him, denotes an internal impulse of the Spirit in him, stirring him up, and putting him upon going into the wilderness: and this impulse being very strong and vehement, another Evangelist thus expresses it; "the Spirit driveth him, ekballei thrusts him forth into the wilderness", ***Mr 1:12*** though not against his will; to which was added an external impulse, or outward rapture, somewhat like that action of the Spirit on Philip. ***Ac 8:39***. When he is said to be led up, the meaning is, that he was led up from the low parts of the wilderness, where he was, to the higher and mountainous parts thereof, which were desolate and uninhabited. The place where he was led was "into the wilderness", i.e. of Judea, into the more remote parts of it; for he was before in this wilderness, where John was preaching and baptizing; but in that part of it which was inhabited. There was another part which was uninhabited, but by "wild beasts" and here Christ was led, and with these he was, ***Mr 1:13*** all alone, retired from the company of men; could have no assistance from any, and wholly destitute of any supply: so that Satan had a fair opportunity of trying his whole strength upon him; having all advantages on his side he could wish for. The end of his being led there, was

to be tempted of the devil: by "the devil" is meant "Satan" the prince of devils, the enemy of mankind, the old serpent, who has his name here from accusing and calumniating; so the Syriac calls him aurq lka, the accuser, or publisher of accusations. He was the accuser of God to men, and is the accuser of men to God; his principal business is to tempt, and Christ was brought here to be tempted by him, that he might be tried before he entered on his public work; that he might be in all things like unto his brethren; that he might have a heart as man, as well as power, as God, to succour them that are tempted; and that Satan, whose works he came to destroy, might have a specimen of his power, and expect, in a short time, the ruin of his kingdom by him. The time when this was done was "then"; when Jesus had been baptized by John; when the Holy Ghost descended on him, and he was full of it; when he had such a testimony from his Father of his relation to him, affection for him, and delight in him; "then" was he led, "immediately", as Mark says, ***Mr 1:12***. As soon as all this was done, directly upon this, he was had into the wilderness to be tempted by and to combat with Satan; and so it often is, that after sweet communion with God in his ordinances, after large discoveries of his love and interest in him follow sore temptations, trials, and exercises. There is a very great resemblance and conformity between Christ and his people in these things.

Matthew ***4:2***

Ver. 2. And when he had fasted forty days..... As Moses did, when he was about to deliver the law to the Israelites, *Ex 34:28* and as Elijah did, when he bore his testimony for the Lord of hosts, *1Ki 19:8* so did Christ, when he was about to publish the Gospel of his grace, and bear witness to the truth. "Forty nights" as well as days, are mentioned; partly to show that these were whole entire days, consisting of twenty four hours; and partly to distinguish this fast of Christ from the common fastings of the Jews, who used to eat in the night, though they fasted in the day: for according to their canons {z}, they might eat and drink as soon as it was dark, and that till cock crowing; and others say, till break of day. Maimonides {a} says, they might eat and drink at night, in all fasts, except the ninth of Ab. What is very surprising in this fasting of our Lord, which was made and recorded, not for our imitation, is, that during the whole time he should not be attended with hunger; for it is added,

he was afterwards an hungered; that is, as Luke says, "when" the "forty" days "were ended", ***Lu 4:2*** which seized upon him, and is related, both to express the reality of his human nature, which though miraculously supported for so long a time without food, and insensible of hunger, yet at length had appetite for food; and also that very advantageous opportunity Satan had to attack him in the manner he did, with his first temptation.

{z} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 12. 1, 2. Misn. Taanith, c. 1. sect. 5. {a} Hilch.

Taanith, c. 5. sect. 5.

Matthew 4:3

Ver. 3. And when the tempter came to him..... By "the tempter", is meant the devil, see ***1Th 3:5*** so called, because it is his principal work and business, in which he employs himself, to solicit men to sin; and tempt them either to deny, or call in question the being of God, arraign his perfections, murmur at his providences, and disbelieve his promises. When he is here said to come to Christ at the end of forty days and nights, we are not to suppose, that he now first began to tempt him; for the other Evangelists expressly say, that he was tempted of him forty days, ***Mr 1:13*** but he now appeared openly, and in a visible shape: all the forty days and nights before, he had been tempting him secretly and inwardly; suggesting things suitable to, and taking the advantage of the solitary and desolate condition he was in. But finding these suggestions and temptations unsuccessful, and observing him to be an hungered, he puts on a visible form, and with an articulate, audible voice, he said,

if thou be the Son of God; either doubting of his divine sonship, calling it in question, and putting him upon doing so too; wherefore it is no wonder that the children of God should be assaulted with the like temptation: or else arguing from it, "if", or "seeing thou art the Son of God"; for he must know that he was, by the voice which came from heaven, and declared it: and certain it is, that the devils both knew, and were obliged to confess that Jesus was the Son of God, ***Lu 4:41*** by which is meant, not a good, or righteous man, or one dear to God, and in an office; but a divine person, one possessed of almighty power; and therefore, as a proof and demonstration of it, be urges him to

command that these stones be made bread, pointing to some which lay hard by; eipe, "say" but the word, and it will be done. He did not doubt but he was able to do it, by a word speaking; but he would have had him to have done it at his motion, which would have been enough for his purpose; who wanted to have him obedient to him: and he might hope the rather to succeed in this temptation, because Christ was now an hungry; and because he had carried his point with our first parents, by tempting them to eat of the forbidden fruit.

Matthew ***4:4***

Ver. 4. But he answered and said, it is written,.... The passage referred to, and cited, is in ***De 8:3*** the manner of citing it is what was common and usual with the Jews; and is often to be met with in the Talmudic writings; who, when they produce any passage of scripture, say bytkd, "as it is written". The meaning of this scripture is; not that as the body lives by bread, so the soul lives by the word of God, and doctrines of the Gospel; though this is a certain truth: or that man lives by obedience to the commands of God, as was promised to the Israelites in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan; but that God, in satisfying man's hunger, and in supporting and preserving his life, is not tied to bread only, but can make use of other means, and order whatever he pleases to answer these ends; as, by raining manna from heaven, which is mentioned in the passage cited; and therefore there was no occasion to change the nature of things, to turn stones into bread; since that was not so absolutely necessary to the sustenance of life, as that it could not be maintained without it. Our Lord hereby expresses his strong faith and confidence in God, that he was able to support him, and would do it, though in a wilderness, and destitute of supply; whereby he overcame this temptation of Satan. Christ, in this, and some following citations, bears a testimony to, and establishes the authority of the sacred writings; and though he was full of the Holy Ghost, makes them the rule of his conduct; which ought to be observed against those, who, under a pretence of the Spirit, deny the scriptures to be the only rule of faith and practice and at the same time points out to us the safest and best method of opposing Satan's temptations; namely, by applying to, and making use of the word of God.

Matthew ***4:5***

Ver. 5. Then the devil taketh him up,.... This was done, not in a visionary way, but really and truly: Satan, by divine permission, and with the consent of Christ, which shows his great humiliation and condescension, had power over his body, to move it from place to place; in some such like manner as the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, ***Ac 8:39*** he took him up, raised him above ground, and carried him through the air, "into, the holy city": this was Jerusalem; for Luke expressly says, he brought him to Jerusalem, ***Lu 4:9*** called so, because of the presence, worship, and service of God, which had been in it, though then in a great measure gone; and according to the common notions of the Jews, who say {b} Jerusalem was more holy than any other cities in the land, and that because of the Shekinah. The inscription on one side of their shekels was vdqh rye Mlvwry, "Jerusalem, the holy city" {c}. Satan frequents all sorts of places; men are no where free from his temptations; Christ himself was not in the holy city, no nor in the holy temple; hither also he had him,

and setteth him upon a pinnacle, or "wing of the temple". In this place {d} the Jews set James, the brother of Christ, and from it cast him down headlong: this was the akron "the summit", or "top" of it; and intends either the roof encompassed with battlements, to keep persons from falling off; or the top of the porch before the temple, which was 120 cubits high; or the top of the royal gallery, built by Herod, which was of such an height, that if a man looked down from it, he soon became dizzy {e}. The view Satan had in setting him here appears in the next verse.

{b} Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 183. 4. & Maimon. Hilch. Beth. Habechirah, c. 7. sect. 14. & 6. 16. {c} Waserus de Antiq. Numm. Heb. l. 2. c. 5. {d} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 23. {e} Joseph. Antiq. Jud. l. 15. c. 14.

Matthew ***4:6***

Ver. 6. And saith unto him, if thou be the Son of God,.... He addresses him after the same manner as before; if, or seeing,

thou art the Son of God, show thyself to be so; give proof of thy sonship before all the priests which are in and about the temple, and before all the inhabitants of Jerusalem;

cast thyself down that is, from the pinnacle of the temple: for since thou art the Son of God, no hurt will come to thee; thou wilt be in the utmost safety; and this will at once be a full demonstration to all the people, that thou art the Son of God: for hither Satan brought him, hoping to have got an advantage of him publicly; otherwise, had his view only been to have got him to cast himself down from any place of eminence, and so to have destroyed himself, he might have set him upon any other precipice; but he chose to have it done in the sight of the people, and in the holy city, and holy place. Let it be observed, that Satan did not offer to cast him down himself; for this was not in his power, nor within his permission, which reached only to tempt; and besides, would not have answered his end; for that would have been his own sin, and not Christ's: accordingly, we may observe, that when he seeks the lives of men, he does not attempt to destroy them himself, but always puts them upon doing it. To proceed, Satan not only argues from his divine power, as the Son of God, that he would be safe in casting himself down; but observing the advantageous use Christ made of the scriptures, transforms himself into an angel of light, and cites scripture too, to encourage him to this action; assuring him of the protection of angels. The passage cited is *Ps 91:11* which expresses God's tender care and concern for his people, in charging the angels with the guardianship and preservation of them, in all their ways, that they might be secured from sin and danger. It does not appear that Satan was wrong in the application of this passage to Christ; for since it respects all the righteous in general, why not Christ as man? the head, as well as the members? And certain it is, that angels had the charge of him, did watch over him, and were a guard about him; the angels of God ascended, and descended on him; they were employed in preserving him from Herod's malice in his infancy; they ministered to him here in the wilderness, and attended him in his agony in the garden: but what Satan failed in, and that wilfully, and wickedly, was, in omitting that part of it,

to keep thee in all thy ways; which he saw was contrary to his purpose, and would have spoiled his design at once; and also in urging this passage, which only regards godly persons, in the way of their duty, to countenance actions which are out of the way of a man's calling, or which he is not called unto; and which are contrary to religion, and a tempting God. Satan before tempted Christ to distrust the providence of God, and now he tempts him to presume upon it: in like manner he deals with men, when he argues from the doctrines of predestination and providence to the disuse of means, for their good, either for this life, or that which is to come; and if he tempted the Son of God to destroy himself, it is no wonder that the saints should be sometimes harassed with this temptation.

Matthew 4:7

Ver. 7. Jesus saith unto him, it is written again,.... Christ takes no notice of the false and wrong citation of scripture made by the devil, nor of any misapplication of it; but mildly replies, by opposing another passage of scripture to him, ***De 6:16***

ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, thereby tacitly showing, that he had produced scripture to a very wrong purpose, since that could never contradict itself; and also, that for a person to neglect the ordinary means of safety, and to expect, that as God can, so he will, preserve without the use of such means, is a tempting him. The Hebrew word wont "tempt", as Manasseh ben {f} Israel observes, is always taken in an ill part, and is to be understood of such who would try the power, goodness, or will of God. And which, as it is not fitting it should be done by any man, so not by himself; and perhaps he hereby intimates too, that he himself was God; and therefore as it was not right in him to tempt God the Father, by taking such a step as Satan solicited him to; nor would it be right in any other; so it was iniquitous in the devil to tempt him who was God over all, blessed for ever.

{f} Conciliat. in Deut. Quaest. 3. p. 223.

Matthew 4:8

Ver. 8. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain,.... That is, he took him off from the pinnacle of the temple, and carried him through the air, to one of the mountains which were round about Jerusalem; or to some very high mountain at a greater distance; but what mountain is not certain; nor can it be known; nor is it of any moment; it has been said {g} to be Mount Lebanon: here he

sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and glory of them. By "all the kingdoms of the world" are meant, not only the Roman empire, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, though that was, to he sure, the greatest in the world at that time; but all the kingdoms in the whole world, which subsisted in any form, whether within, or independent of the Roman empire; or whether greater or lesser: and by "the glory of them", is meant, the riches, pomp, power, and grandeur of them. Now the view which Satan gave Christ of all this, was not by a representation of them in a picture, or in a map, or in any geographical tables, as {h} some have thought; since to do this there was no need to take him up into a mountain, and that an exceeding high one; for this might have been done in a valley, as well as in a mountain: and yet it could not be a true and real sight of these things he gave him; for there is no mountain in the world, from whence can be beheld anyone kingdom, much less all the kingdoms of the world; and still less the riches, glory, pomp, and power of them: but this was a fictitious, delusive representation, which Satan was permitted to make; to cover which, and that it might be thought to be real, he took Christ into an high mountain; where he proposed an object externally to his sight, and internally to his imagination, which represented, in appearance, the whole world, and all its glory. Xiphilinus {i} reports of Severus, that he dreamed, he was had by a certain person, to a place where he could look all around him, and from thence he beheld pasan men thn ghn, pasan de thn yalassan "all the earth, and also all the sea"; which was all in imagination. Satan thought to have imposed on Christ this way, but failed in his attempt. Luke says, this was done

in a moment of time, in the twinkling of an eye; as these two phrases are joined together, *1Co 15:52* or "in a point of time". The word stigmh, used by ***Lu 4:5*** sometimes signifies a mathematical point, which Zeno says {k} is the end of the line, and the least mark; to which the allusion may be here, and designs the smallest part of time that can be conceived of. Antoninus the emperor uses the word, as here, for a point of time; and says {l}, that the time of human life, and the whole present time, is but stigmh a point. Would you know what a moment, or point of time is, according to the calculation of the Jewish doctors, take the account as follows; though in it they differ: a moment, say they {m}, is the fifty six thousandth, elsewhere {n}, the fifty eight thousandth, and in another place {o}, the fifty three thousandth and eight hundredth and forty eighth, or, according to another account {p}, eighty eighth part of an hour. If this could be thought to be a true and exact account of a moment, or point of time, it was a very short space of time indeed, in which the devil showed to Christ the kingdoms of this world, and their glory; but this is not more surprising than his vanity, pride, and impudence, in the following verse.

{g} Vid. Fabricii Bibliograph. Antiq. c. 5. p. 137. {h} Vid. Fabricium, ibid. & Grotium in loc. {i} Apud Fabricium, ib. {k} Vid. Laertium in Vit. Zenou. {l} De seipso, l. 2. c. 17. & l. 6. c. 36. {m} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 2. 4. {n} T. Bab Beracot. fol. 7. 1. {o} Avoda Zara, fol. 4. 1. {p} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 7. 1.

Matthew 4:9

Ver. 9. And saith unto him, all these things will I give thee.... This is more fully and strongly expressed by the Evangelist Luke. ***Lu 4:6***.

And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it--all shall be thine. In which words he sets up himself to be the God of this world, and the sovereign disposer of it: he pretends it was delivered to him by the true God, who had left it to his arbitrary disposal; and that he could invest Christ with the power and government of it, and put him in possession of all its glory, and make good and support his title to it, and interest in it. Never was such monstrous arrogance expressed as this; when this poor, proud, wretched creature, has not the disposal, at his pleasure, of anyone single thing; no not the least in the whole universe. He could not touch, neither Job's person, nor any of his substance, without divine permission; nor enter into an herd of swine without Christ's leave; and yet had the front to make an offer of the whole world, as if he had a despotic power over it; and that upon this horrid and blasphemous condition,

if thou wilt fall down and worship me. This was the highest degree of effrontery and impudence. The devil is not content to be worshipped by men, but seeks for adoration from the Son of God: this opens at once his proud, ambitious, and aspiring views, to be as God himself; for with nothing less can he be satisfied.

Matthew 4:10

Ver. 10. Then saith Jesus to him, get thee hence, Satan..... In ***Lu 4:8*** it is "get thee behind me": and so some copies read here, and is expressive of indignation and abhorrence; see *Mt 16:23* rebuking his impudence, and detesting his impiety: he had borne his insults and temptations with great patience; he had answered him with mildness and gentleness; but now his behaviour to him was intolerable, which obliged him to show his resentment, exert his power and authority, and rid himself at once of so vile a creature; giving this reason for it;

for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. The place referred to is in ***De 6:13*** thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him: to fear the Lord, and to worship him, is the same thing. Worship includes both an internal and external reverence of God: the word "only" is not in the original text, but is added by our Lord; and that very justly; partly to express the emphasis which is on the word "him"; and in perfect agreement with the context, which requires it; since it follows,

ye shall not go after other Gods. Moreover, not to take notice of the Septuagint version, in which the word "only" is also added, Josephus {q}, the Jewish historian, referring to this law, says, because God is one, kai dei touton sebesyai monon, "therefore he only is to be worshipped". And Aben Ezra {r}, a Jewish writer, explaining the last clause in the verse,

and thou shalt swear by his name, uses the word "only"; and which indeed, of right, belongs to every clause in it. The meaning of our Lord in citing it is; that since the Lord God is the alone object of worship, it was horrid blasphemy in Satan to desire it might be given to him, and which could not be done without the greatest impiety.

{q} Antiq. Jud. l. 3. c. 5. sect. 5. {r} In Deut. vi. 13.

Matthew 4:11

Ver. 11. Then the devil leaveth him,.... In ***Lu 4:13*** it says,

when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season, or until a season. That is, having tempted him with all sorts of temptations, and tried him every way to no purpose; having gone through, and finished the whole scheme and course of temptations he had devised, without success; and having orders from Christ to depart, which he was obliged to obey, leaves him for a while, till another opportunity of tempting him in some other way should offer; or till the time came, when he should be so far able to get the advantage of him, as to bruise his heel, or bring him to the dust of death; see *Joh 14:30* and when he was gone, better company came in his room;

behold, angels came and ministered to him. They came to him in a visible, human form, as they were used to do under the Old Testament dispensation, and that after the temptation was over; after Satan was foiled, and was gone;

that it might appear that Christ alone had got the victory over him, without any help or assistance from them. When they were come, they "ministered to him"; that is, they brought him food of their own preparing and dressing, as they formerly did to Elijah, *1Ki 19:5* to satisfy his hunger, and refresh his animal spirits; which had underwent a very great fatigue during this length of time, in which he fasted, and was tempted by Satan. Thus, as the angels are ministring spirits to the heirs of salvation, both in a temporal and in a spiritual sense, ***Heb 1:14*** so they were to Christ. Nothing is more frequent with the Jews than to call the angels trvh ykalm "ministring angels": it would be needless and endless to refer to particular places.

Matthew 4:12

Ver. 12. Now, when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison,.... John was cast into prison by Herod; the reason of it may be seen in *Mt 14:3*. The prison into which he was cast, according to Josephus {s}, was the castle of Machaeras: here he continued some time before he was put to death; for from hence he sent two disciples to Jesus, to know if he was the Messiah, *Mt 11:2*. Now when Jesus heard of this his imprisonment,

he departed into Galilee; not so much on account of safety, or for fear of Herod, but to call his disciples, who lived in that country.

{s} Antiq. l. 18. c. 7.

Matthew 4:13

Ver. 13. And leaving Nazareth,.... Where he was educated, and had lived many years together; and where he preached first to the good liking of the people, who

wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth: though afterwards they were so much displeased with him, that they thrust him out of their city; and intended to have destroyed him, by casting him down headlong from the brow of an hill; and which seems to be the reason of his leaving this city; see ***Lu 4:16***

he came and dwelt in Capernaum a city of Galilee. ***Lu 4:31*** which is upon the sea-coast by the sea of Tiberias, or Genesareth

in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: it bordered on both these tribes; it signifies "the village of consolation" {t}; and so it was, whilst the consolation of Israel dwelt there. The Jews speak very evilly of it: no doubt because it was the dwelling place of Christ; and because there might be some in it who believed in him: they represent the inhabitants of it as very great sinners, heretics, and dealers in magic art. Chanina, the brother's son of R. Joshua, they say {u}, went to Capernaum, and the heretics did something to him; according to the gloss, they bewitched him: and elsewhere {w} explaining the words in ***Ec 7:26***

Who so pleaseth God,....; this, they say, is Chananiah, the brother's son of R. Joshua; and "the sinner"; these are the "children", or inhabitants of Capernaum. Thus they show their spite against the very place in which Christ dwelt.

{t} Vid. Benjamin Tudelens. Itinerar. p. 37. & L'Empereur, not. in ib. & Hieron. in Mar. i. 21. & Origen. Comment. in Matt. p. 317. vol. 1. Ed. Huet. {u} Midrash Koheleth. fol. 63. 1. {w} Ib. fol. 77. 1.

Matthew 4:14

Ver. 14, 15. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken,.... Christ's dwelling in Capernaum accomplished a prophecy of the prophet ***Isa 9:1*** and he went and dwelt there, that it might be fulfilled which he had spoken: the meaning of which prophecy is {x}, that as those parts of the land of Israel, there mentioned, had suffered much by Tiglathpileser, who had carried them captive,
2Ki 15:29 and is "the vexation" referred to; so they should be honoured, and made very glorious, by the presence and conversation of the Messiah among them, and which now had its literal fulfilment: for Christ now came and dwelt in Capernaum, which lay between the lands and upon the borders both of Zabulon and Nephthalim; was situated by the sea of Tiberias, beyond Jordan, and in, "Galilee of the nations"; the upper Galilee, which had in it people of other nations besides Jews. The ancient Jews expected the Messiah to make his first appearance in Galilee; which expectation must be grounded on this prophecy; for so they say {y} expressly,

"the king Messiah shall be revealed lylgd aerab, "in the land of Galilee.""

And in another place {z} explaining ***Isa 2:19*** they paraphrase it thus,

""for fear of the Lord"; this is the indignation of the whole world: and for the "glory of his majesty"; this is the Messiah; when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth, when he shall arise and be revealed lylgd aerab, "in the land of Galilee": because that this is the first place to be destroyed in the holy land; therefore he shall be revealed there the first of all places."

Here Jesus, the true Messiah, made his first appearance publicly; here he called his disciples, and began his ministry.

{x} See my treatise upon the "Prophecies of the Messiah", &c. p. 147, &c. {y} Zohar in Gen. fol. 74. 3. {z} Ib. in Exod. fol. 3. 3. & 88. 3.

Matthew 4:15

See Gill on "Mt 4:14"

Matthew 4:16

Ver. 16. The people which sat in darkness,.... The inhabitants of Galilee, who sat or "walked", as in Isaiah; that is, continued in spiritual darkness, in ignorance, blindness, error, and infidelity, "saw great light"; Christ himself, who came a light into the world; he conversed with them, preached unto them, and opened the eyes of their understandings to behold his glory, and to know him, and salvation by him.

And to them which sat in the region and shadow of death: the same persons who sit in darkness, sit also in the region of death; for such are dead in trespasses and sins: where there is no spiritual light, there is no spiritual life, and such are in danger of the second death; but the happiness of these people was, that to them "light is sprung up", like the rising sun, and this without their asking or seeking for: Christ, the sun of righteousness, arose upon them, without any desert, desire, or expectation of theirs, with healing in his wings; and cured them of their darkness and deadness, turned them from darkness to light, and caused them to pass from death to life. "Light" is not only a character under which Christ frequently goes in the New Testament, see ***Joh 1:4*** but is one of the names by which the Messiah was known under the Old Testament; see ***Da 2:22*** and which the Jews give unto him: says R, Aba {a} Serungia, "and the light dwelleth with him"; this is the king Messiah. The note of R. Sol. Jarchi on these words, "send forth thy light", is, the king Messiah; who is compared to light, according to *Ps 132:17* the days of the Messiah are by them said to {b} be hrwa ymy "days of light"; and so these Galilaeans found them to be; as all do, to whom the Gospel of Christ comes with power and demonstration of the Spirit. And these days of light first begun in the land of Zabulon which, according to Philo the Jew {c}, was

"sumbolon fwtov, "a symbol of light"; since (adds he) its name signifies the nature of night; but, the night removing, and departing, light necessarily arises."

As did, in a spiritual sense, here, when Christ the light arose.

{a} Bereshith Rabba, fol. 1. 3. & Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. {b} Baal Hatturim in Gen. fol. 2. 2. {c} De Somniis, p. 1113.

Matthew 4:17

Ver. 17. From that time Jesus began to preach and to say,.... Not from the time he dwelt in Capernaum; for he had preached in Nazareth before he came there, ***Lu 4:16*** nor from the time of John's being cast into prison; for he had preached, and made disciples, who were baptized by his orders, before John's imprisonment, ***Joh 3:22 Joh 4:1*** but from the time that Satan left tempting him; as soon as that combat was over, immediately he went into Galilee, began to preach, and called his disciples. The words with which he began his ministry are the same with which John begun his; which shows the entire agreement between them, in that they not only preached the same doctrine, but in the same words; See Gill on "Mt 3:2"

Matthew 4:18

Ver. 18. And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee,.... Not for his recreation

and diversion, or by accident: but on purpose to look out for, and call some, whom he had chosen to be his disciples. And as he was walking about, to and fro, he "saw two" persons; and as soon as he saw them, he knew them to be those he had determined to make his apostles: and these are described by their relation to each other, "brethren"; not merely because they were of the same nation, or of the same religion, or of the same employ and business of life, but because they were of the same blood; and by their names, "Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother". Simon is the same name with
Nwemv, "Simeon"; and so he is called, *Ac 15:14* and which, in the Jerusalem dialect, is read Nwmyo, "Simon". His surname "Peter", which was afterwards given him by Christ, *Mt 16:18* is Greek, and answers to "Cephas", signifying a "rock": though this name is to be met with in the Talmudic {d} writings, where we read of R. Jose, orjyp rb, "bar Petros". This his surname is added here, to distinguish him from Simon, the Canaanite. The name of his brother Andrew is generally thought to be Greek; though some have derived it from rdn, "to vow", and is also to be observed in the writings of the Jews {e}; where mention is made of R. Chanina,
yyrdna rb bar Andrei. They are further described by the work they were at, or business they were employed in,

casting a net into the sea; either in order to catch fish in it, or to wash it, ***Lu 5:2*** and the reason of their so doing is added; "for they were fishers". Of this mean employment were the very first persons Christ was pleased to call to the work of the ministry; men of no education, who made no figure in life, but were despicable and contemptible: this he did, to make it appear, that they were not qualified for such service of themselves; that all their gifts and qualifications were from him; to show his own power; to confound the wisdom of the wise; and to let men see, that none ought to glory in themselves, but in him. The Jews have a notion of the word of God and prophecy being received and embraced only by such sort of persons: says R. Isaac Arama {f},

"his word came to heal all, but some particular persons only receive it; and who of all men are of a dull under standing, Myh ydbe Mygyyd, "fishermen, who do business in the sea": this is what is written; "they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord": these seem not indeed fit to receive anything that belongs to the understanding, because of their dulness; and yet these receive the truth of prophecy and vision, because they believe his word."

I cannot but think, that some respect is had to these fishers, in *Eze 47:10* "it shall come to pass that fishers shall stand upon it": that is, upon, or by the river of waters, said in *Eze 47:8* to "issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert": which both R. Jarchi and Kimchi understand of the sea of Tiberias; the same with the sea of Galilee, by which Christ walked; and where he found these fishers at work, and called them. See also *Jer 16:16*

{d} T. Hieros. Moed Katon, fol 82. 4. Avoda Zara, fol 42. 3. {e} T. Hieros. Megilla, fol. 75. 2. & Geracot, fol. 2. 3. {f} Apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 3. c. 5. p. 119. & Crocium de Messia Thes. 213. p. 62, 63.

Matthew 4:19

Ver. 19. And he saith unto them, follow me,.... These two brethren had been the disciples of John, as Theophylact thinks, and which seems agreeable to ***Joh 1:35*** and though through John's pointing out Christ unto them, they had some knowledge of him, and conversation with him, yet they abode with him but for that day, ***Joh 1:37*** and afterwards returned to their master; and upon his imprisonment, betook themselves to their former employment: from whence Christ now calls them to be his disciples, saying "follow me", or "come after me": that is, be a disciple of mine; see *Lu 14:27*. And to encourage them to it, makes use of this argument; "and", or "for", I "will make you fishers of men": you shall be fishers still, but in a higher sense; and in a far more noble employment, and to much better purpose. The net they were to spread and cast was the Gospel, see *Mt 13:47* for Christ made them not hrwt ygyyd, "fishers of the law", to use the words of Maimonides {g}, but fishers of the Gospel. The sea into which they were to cast the net was first Judea, and then the whole world; the fish they were to catch were the souls of men, both among Jews and Gentiles; of whose conversion and faith they were to be the happy instruments: now none could make them fishers in this sense, or fit them for such service, and succeed them in it, but Christ; and who here promises it unto them.

{g} Hilcot. Talmud. Torah, c. 1. sect. 12. so Dr. Lightfoot cites the phrase, but in Ed. Amsterd. it is hrwt ynyd, "the judgments of the law".

Matthew **_4:20_**

Ver. 20. And they straightway left their nets,.... That is, as soon as he had called them, they left their worldly employment, and followed him; they gave up themselves to his service, and became his disciples; they not only left their "nets", but their fishing boats, and fishing trade, and all that belonged to it, even all their substance; and also their relations, friends, and acquaintance, see *Mt 19:27* which shows what a mighty power went along with the words and call of Christ; and what a ready, cheerful, and voluntary subjection this produces, wherever it takes place.

Matthew **_4:21_**

Ver. 21. And going on from thence, he saw other two,.... When he had gone but a little way further, ***Mr 1:19*** he spied two other persons he was looking for, and had designed to call to the office of apostleship; and these are also described as "brethren", and by name,

James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother. The Jews make mention in their writings {h}, of one ydbz rb bqey r, "R. James, the son of Zebedee": which Capellus {i} conjectures is the very same person here mentioned: but the James they speak of as a disciple of Jesus, they call hanym bqey, "James the heretic" {k}; who, they say, was of the village of Secaniah, and sometimes of the village of Sama. His brother's name was John, who was the Evangelist, as well as Apostle: these were

in a ship with Zebedee their father. Men of this name, and sons of men of this name, were very common among the Jewish Rabbins; but neither this man, nor his sons, were masters or doctors in Israel; for such Christ chose not for his apostles. It seems to be the same name with Zebadiah, *1Ch 27:7* these, with him, were "mending their nets", which were broken, and needed repairing; and perhaps being poor, could not afford to buy new ones: this shows their industry and diligence, and may be a pattern and example to persons, closely to attend the business of their calling, whilst the providence of God continues them in it.

And he called them: from their employment, to follow him, and become his disciples; and no doubt gave them the same promise and encouragement he had given the two former.

{h} T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 9. 4. & Maaser Sheni, fol. 55. 2. Trumot. fol. 45. 2. Sheviith. fol. 35. 1. Bereshith Rab. fol. 31. 4. & 36. 2. {i} Spicilegium in loc. {k} T. Bab. Megilla, 23. 1. Avoda Zara, fol 17. 1. & 27. 2. & 28. 1. Cholin. fol. 84. 1. T. Hieros. Sabbat. fol. 14. 4. & Abvoda Zara, fol. 40. 4. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 62. 4. & 77. 1. Juchasin, fol. 41. 1.

Matthew 4:22

Ver. 22. And they immediately left the ship,.... More is expressed here than before, for they not only left their nets, but their ship too; which was of much more value; nay, even "their father" also, "with the hired servants", ***Mr 1:20*** and so complied with the call of Christ to his people, *Ps 45:10* and thereby proved, that they were sincerely his followers, *Lu 14:26* and might expect the gracious promise of Christ to be made good unto them, *Mt 19:28*.

Matthew 4:23

Ver. 23. And Jesus went about all Galilee,.... Having called four of his disciples, he took a tour throughout Galilee; a country mean and despicable, inhabited by persons poor, illiterate, vile, and wicked: such had the first fruits of Christ's ministry, and messages of his grace; which shows the freeness, sovereignty, and riches, of his abounding goodness. He went about "all" this country, both upper and nether Galilee, which was very populous: Josephus says {l}, there were two hundred and four cities and towns in it; he means, which were places of note, besides villages. He went about, not like Satan, seeking the destruction of men; but as one that went along with him says, "doing good", *Ac 10:38*, both to the bodies and souls of men; for he was

teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. The places where he taught were "their synagogues": he did not creep into private houses, as the Pharisees then, and false apostles afterwards did; but he appeared openly, and declared his doctrine in places of public worship;

where the Jews met together for divine service, to pray, read the Scriptures, and give a word of exhortation to the people; for though they had but one temple, which was at Jerusalem, they had many synagogues, or meeting places, all over the land: here Christ not only prayed and read, but "preached"; and the subject matter of his ministry was, "the Gospel of the kingdom": that is, the good news of the kingdom of the Messiah being come, and which now took place; wherefore he exhorted them to repent of, and relinquish their former principles; to receive the doctrines, and submit to the ordinances of the Gospel dispensation: he also preached to them the things concerning the kingdom of heaven; as that except a man be born again, he cannot see it; and unless he has a better righteousness than his own, he cannot enter into it: he was also

healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people. It is in the Greek text, "every sickness and every disease"; that is, all sorts of maladies, disorders and distempers, which attend the bodies of men; and is another instance, besides ***Mt 3:5*** in which the word "all", or "every", is to be taken in a limited and restrained sense, for "some", or "some of all sorts"; which teaches us how to understand those phrases, when used in the doctrine of redemption by Christ.

{l} In vita ejus.

Matthew 4:24

Ver. 24. And his fame went throughout all Syria,.... For his ministry and miracles, especially the latter; wherefore

they brought to him, that is, out of Syria, the sick. Syria was in some respects reckoned as the land of Israel, though in others not.

"The {m} Rabbins teach, that in three respects Syria was like to the land of Israel, and in three to the countries with out the land: the dust defiled, as without the land; he that sold his servant to (one in) Syria, was as if he sold him to one without the land; and he that brought a bill of divorce from Syria, as if he brought it from without the land: and in three things it was like to the land of Israel; it was bound to tithes, and to the observance of the seventh year; and he that would go into it, might go into it with purity and he that purchased a field in Syria, was as if he had purchased one in the suburbs of Jerusalem."

All sick people, that were taken with divers diseases and torments. This expresses in general, the grievous and tormenting diseases with which the persons were afflicted, who were brought to Christ for healing: some particular ones follow;

and those which were possessed with devils; in body as well as in mind; of which there were many instances, permitted by God on purpose, that Christ might have an opportunity of showing his power over those evil spirits.

And those which were lunatic; either melancholy persons, or mad and distracted men; that retired from the conversation of men, into fields or desert places: or such, whose disorders were influenced by the change of the moon; such as those who are troubled with the falling sickness; so the Greeks {n} call such persons selhniazomenouv the word here used by the Evangelist.

And those that had the palsy. These were each of them such disorders, as were incurable by the art of medicine; or for which rarely, and with great difficulty, any manner of relief could be obtained; and

he healed them; without any means, by a word speaking; which showed him more than a man, and truly and properly God.

{m} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 8. 1. 2. vid. Maimon. Hileb. Tumath Meth. c. 11. sect. 6. {n} Vid. Fabricii Bibl. Graec. vol. 2. l. 3. c. 26. p. 656-658.

Matthew 4:25

Ver. 25. And there followed him great multitudes of people,.... Some on one account, and some on another; some out of good will, others out of ill will; some for the healing of their bodies, others for the good of their souls; some to see his miracles, others to hear his doctrine; and what with one and another, the concourse of people that followed him was greater than that which followed John. The Greek word for "multitude" is adopted into the Talmudic language, and is often used by the doctors; who have a tradition to this purpose, that awbr Myvvm htwxp aowlkwa Nya, "there is no multitude less than sixty myriads" {o}; but we are not to imagine, that when here, and elsewhere, a multitude is said to follow, or attend on Christ, that he had such a number of people after him as this; only that the number was very large. The places from whence they came are particularly mentioned, as "from Galilee"; where he had called his disciples, had been preaching the Gospel, and healing all manner of diseases; and therefore it is not to be wondered at that he should have a large number of followers from hence. This country was divided into {p} three parts:

"There was upper Galilee, and nether Galilee, and the valley from Capharhananiah and upwards: all that part which did not bring forth sycamine trees was upper Galilee, and from Capharhananiah downwards: all that part which did bring forth sycamine trees was nether Galilee; and the coast of Tiberias was the valley."

Frequent mention is made in the Talmudic {q} writings of upper Galilee, as distinct from the other.

And from Decapolis; a tract of land so called, from the "ten cities" that were in it; and which, according to Pliny {r} were these following; Damascus, Opoton, Philadelphia, Raphana, Scythopolis, Gadara, Hippondion, Pella, Galasa, and Canatha; see ***Mr 5:20*** "And from Jerusalem"; the metropolis of the whole land; for his fame had reached that great city, and there were some there, curious and desirous to see him, and hear him; though he was got into those distant and obscure parts.

And from Judea; from the other parts of it:

and from beyond Jordan; which was a distinct country of itself, known by the name of Peraea; so called, perhaps, from peran, the word here translated, "from beyond". It is to be observed, that here are three countries distinctly mentioned, Galilee, Judea, and "beyond Jordan"; which was the division of the land of Israel; of these three lands the Talmudists often speak.

"It is a tradition of the Rabbins {s}, that in three countries they intercalate the year; Judea, and beyond Jordan, and Galilee."

Again {t},

"There are three lands, that are obliged to the removing of fruits; Judea, and beyond Jordan, and Galilee."

Once more {u},

"There are three countries for celebration of marriages, Judea, and "beyond Jordan", and Galilee."

The account which {w} Maimonides gives of these three countries is this;

"The land of Judea, all of it, the mountain, the plain, and the valley, are one country beyond Jordan, all of it, the plain of Lydda, and the mountain of the plain of Lydda, and from Betheron to the sea, are one country: Galilee, all of it, the upper and nether, and the coast of Tiberias, are one country."

The country beyond Jordan was not so much esteemed as what was properly the land of Canaan, or Israel; for the Jews {x} say,

"the land of Israel is holier than all lands; because they bring out of it the sheaf, the first fruits, and the showbread, which they do not bring from other lands: the land of Canaan is holier than beyond Jordan; the land of Canaan is fit to be the habitation of the Shekinah; beyond Jordan is not."

This, they say {y}, was not the land flowing with milk and honey.

{o} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 58. 1. {p} Misn, Sheviith. c. 9. sect. 2. {q} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 80. 1. Cetubot, fol. 67. 2. & Succa, fol. 27. 2. & 28. 1. Zohar in Gen. fol. 129. 3. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 18. {s} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 11. 2. {t} Misn. Sheviith. c. 9. sect. 2. {u} Misn. Cetubot, c. 13. sect. 10. {w} Hilch. Shemittah, c. 7. sect. 9. {x} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 188. 3. Maimon. Beth Habechira, c. 7. sect. 12. {y} Misn. Biccurim, c. 1. sect. 10.

Ver. 1. And seeing the multitudes,.... The great concourse of people that followed him from the places before mentioned,

he went up into a mountain; either to pray alone, which was sometimes his custom to do, or to shun the multitude; or rather, because it was a commodious place for teaching the people:

and when he was set: not for rest, but in order to teach; for sitting was the posture of masters, or teachers, see *Mt 13:2* ***Lu 4:20***. The form in which the master and his disciples sat is thus described by Maimonides {z}.

"The master sits at the head, or in the chief place, and the disciples before him in a circuit, like a crown; so that they all see the master, and hear his words; and the master may not sit upon a seat, and the scholars upon the ground; but either all upon the earth, or upon seats: indeed from the beginning, or formerly, bvwy brh hyh "the master used to sit", and the disciples stand; but before the destruction of the second temple, all used to teach their disciples as they were sitting."

With respect to this latter custom, the Talmudists say {a}, that

"from the days of Moses, to Rabban Gamaliel (the master of the Apostle Paul), they did not learn the law, unless standing; after Rabban Gamaliel died, sickness came into the world, and they learnt the law sitting: hence it is a tradition, that after Rabban Gamaliel died, the glory of the law ceased."

His disciples came unto him; not only the twelve, but the company, or multitude, of his disciples, ***Lu 6:17*** which he made in the several places, where he had been preaching; for the number of his disciples was larger than John's.

{z} Hilch. Talmud Torah, c. 4. sect. 2. {a} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 21. 1. Vid. Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. & Jarchi, Maimon, & Bartenora in ib.

Matthew 5:2

Ver. 2. And he opened his mouth,.... He spoke with a clear and strong voice, that all the people might hear him; and with great freedom, utterance, and cheerfulness, and things of the greatest moment and importance;

and taught them; not his disciples only, but the whole multitude, who heard him with astonishment; see ***Mt 7:28***. Some things in the following discourse are directed to the disciples in particular, and others regard the multitude in general.

Matthew 5:3

Ver. 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit,.... Not the poor in purse, or who are so with respect to things temporal: for though God has chosen and called many, who are in such a condition of life, yet not all; the kingdom of heaven cannot be said to belong to them all, or only; but such as are poor in a spiritual sense. All mankind are spiritually poor; they have nothing to eat that is fit and proper; nor any clothes to wear, but rags; nor are they able to purchase either; they have no money to buy with; they are in debt, owe ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay; and in such a condition, that they are not able to help themselves. The greater part of mankind are insensible of this their condition; but think themselves rich, and increased with goods: there are some who are sensible of it, who see their poverty and want, freely acknowledge it, bewail it, and mourn over it; are humbled for it, and are broken under a sense of it; entertain low and mean thoughts of themselves; seek after the true riches, both of grace and glory; and frankly acknowledge, that all they have, or hope to have, is owing to the free grace of God. Now these are the persons intended in this place; who are not only "poor", but are poor "in spirit"; in their own spirits, in their own sense, apprehension, and judgment: and may even be called "beggars", as the word may be rendered; for being sensible of their poverty, they place themselves at the door of mercy, and knock there; their language is, "God be merciful"; their posture is standing, watching, and waiting, at wisdom's gates, and at the posts of her door; they are importunate, will have no denial, yet receive the least favour with thankfulness. Now these are pronounced "blessed", for this reason,

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; not only the Gospel, and the ministration of it, which belongs to them. "The poor have the Gospel preached": it not only reaches their ears, but their hearts; it enters into them, is applied unto them, they receive and embrace it with the utmost joy and gladness; but eternal glory, this is prepared for them, and given to them; they are born heirs of it, have a right unto it, are making meet for it, and shall enjoy it.

Matthew 5:4

Ver. 4. Blessed are they that mourn,.... For sin, for their own sins; the sin of their nature, indwelling sin, which is always working in them, and is a continual grief of mind to them; the unbelief of their hearts, notwithstanding the many instances, declarations, promises, and discoveries of grace made unto them; their daily infirmities, and many sins of life, because they are committed against a God of love, grace, and mercy, grieve the Spirit, and dishonour the Gospel of Christ: who mourn also for the sins of others, for the sins of the world, the profaneness and wickedness that abound in it; and more especially for the sins of professors, by reason of which, the name of God, and ways of Christ, are evil spoken of: who likewise mourn under afflictions, spiritual ones, temptations, desertions, and declensions; temporal ones, their own, which they receive, either more immediately from the hand of God, or from men; such as they endure for the sake of Christ, and the profession of his Gospel; and who sympathize with others in their afflictions. These, how sorrowful and distressed soever they may appear, are blessed

for they shall be comforted: here in this life, by the God of all comfort, by Christ the comforter; by the Spirit of God, whose work and office it is to comfort; by the Scriptures of truth, which are written for their consolation; by the promises of the Gospel, through which the heirs of promise have strong consolation; by the ordinances of it, which are breasts of consolation; and by the ministers of the word, who have a commission from the Lord to speak comfortably to them; and then are they comforted, when they have the discoveries of the love of God, manifestations of pardoning grace, through the blood of Christ, and enjoy the divine presence: and they shall be comforted hereafter; when freed from all the troubles of this life, they shall be blessed with uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, and with the happy society of angels and glorified saints. *Isa 61:1* seems to be referred to, both in this, and in the preceding verse.

Matthew 5:5

Ver. 5. Blessed are the meek,.... Who are not easily provoked to anger; who patiently bear, and put up with injuries and affronts; carry themselves courteously, and affably to all; have the meanest thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; do not envy the gifts and graces of other men; are willing to be instructed and admonished, by the meanest of the saints; quietly submit to the will of God, in adverse dispensations of providence; and ascribe all they have, and are, to the grace of God. Meekness, or humility, is very valuable and commendable. The Jews, though a proud, haughty, and wrathful people, cannot but speak in its praise:

"Wisdom, fear, and meekness, say {b} they, are of high esteem; but hwne, "meekness", is greater than them all."

They had two very considerable doctors in the time of Christ, Hillell and Shammai; the one was of a meek, the other of an angry disposition: hence, say they {c},

"Let a man be always meek as Hillell, and let him not be angry as Shammai."

Here meekness is to be considered, not as a moral virtue, but as a Christian grace, a fruit of the Spirit of God; which was eminently in Christ, and is very ornamental to believers; and of great advantage and use to them, in hearing and receiving the word; in giving an account of the reason of the hope that is in them; in instructing and restoring such, who have backslidden, either in principle or practice; and in the whole of their lives and conversations; and serves greatly to recommend religion to others: such who are possessed of it, and exercise it, are well pleasing to God; when disconsolate, he comforts them; when hungry, he satisfies them; when they want direction, he gives it to them; when wronged, he will do them right; he gives them more grace here, and glory hereafter. The blessing instanced, in which they shall partake of, is,

they shall inherit the earth; not the land of Canaan, though that may be alluded to; nor this world, at least in its present situation; for this is not the saints' rest and inheritance: but rather, the "new earth", which will be after this is burnt up; in which only such persons as are here described shall dwell; and who shall inherit it, by virtue of their being heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof. Though some think heaven is here designed, and is so called, partly for the sake of variety of expression, from ***Mt 5:3*** and partly in allusion to the land of Canaan, a type of it; and may be called an earth, or country, that is an heavenly one, in opposition to this earthly one; as the heavenly Jerusalem is opposed to the earthly one, and which will be a glorious inheritance. The passage, referred to is *Ps 37:11*.

{b} Piske Tosaphot Yebamot, art. 196. {c} T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 30. 2.

Matthew 5:6

Ver. 6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst,.... Not after the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world, but

after righteousness; by which is meant, not justice and equity, as persons oppressed and injured; nor a moral, legal righteousness, which the generality of the Jewish nation were eagerly pursuing; but the justifying righteousness of Christ, which is imputed by God the Father, and received by faith. To "hunger and thirst" after this, supposes a want of righteousness, which is the case of all men; a sense of want of it, which is only perceived by persons spiritually enlightened; a discovery of the righteousness of Christ to them, which is made in the Gospel, and by the Spirit of God; a value for it, and a preference of it to all other righteousness; and an earnest desire after it, to be possessed of it, and found in it; and that nothing can be more grateful than that, because of its perfection, purity, suitableness, and use: happy souls are these,

for they shall be filled: with that righteousness, and with all other good things, in consequence of it; and particularly with joy and peace, which are the certain effects of it: or, "they shall be satisfied", that they have an interest in it; and so satisfied with it, that they shall never seek for any other righteousness, as a justifying one, in the sight of God; this being full, perfect, sufficient, and entirely complete.

Matthew 5:7

Ver. 7. Blessed are the merciful,.... Who show mercy to the bodies of men, to those that are poor, indigent, and miserable, in their outward circumstances; by both sympathizing with them, and distributing unto them; not only making use of expressions of pity and concern; but communicating with readiness and cheerfulness, with affection and tenderness, and with a view to the glory of God: who also show mercy to the souls of men, by instructing such as are ignorant, giving them good counsel and advice: reproving them for sin, praying for them, forgiving injuries done by them, and by comforting those that are cast down. To show mercy is very delightful to, and desirable by God; it is what he requires, and is one of the weightier matters of the law; it is very ornamental to a child of God, and what makes him more like to his heavenly Father. The happiness of such persons is this, that

they shall obtain mercy; from man, whenever they are attended with any uncomfortable circumstances of life; wyle Nymxrm Mxrm lk, "whoever is merciful", men show mercy to him {d}: and from God, through Christ; which is free, sovereign, abundant, and eternal. Men are said to obtain this, when they are regenerated, and called by grace; and when they have a discovery, and an application, of the forgiveness of their sins: but here, it seems to design those supplies of grace and mercy, which merciful persons may expect to find and obtain, at the throne of grace, to help them in time of need; and who shall not only obtain mercy of God in this life, but in the world to come, in the great day of the Lord; for which the Apostle prayed for Onesiphorus, ***2Ti 1:18***.

{d} Maimon. Hilch. Mattanot Anayim. c. 10. sect. 2.

Matthew 5:8

Ver. 8. Blessed are the pure in heart,.... Not in the head; for men may have pure notions and impure hearts; not in the hand, or action, or in outward conversation only; so the Pharisees were outwardly righteous before men, but inwardly full of impurity; but "in heart". The heart of man is naturally unclean; nor is it in the power of man to make it clean, or to be pure from his sin; nor is any man in this life, in such sense, so pure in heart, as to be entirely free from sin. This is only true of Christ, angels, and glorified saints: but such may be said to be so, who, though they have sin dwelling in them, are justified from all sin, by the righteousness of Christ, and are "clean through the word", or sentence of justification pronounced upon them, on the account of that righteousness; whose iniquities are all of them forgiven, and whose hearts are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, which cleanses from all sin; and who have the grace of God wrought in their hearts, which, though as yet imperfect, it is entirely pure; there is not the least spot or stain of sin in it: and such souls as they are in love with, so they most earnestly desire after more purity of heart, lip, life, and conversation. And happy they are,

for they shall see God; in this life, enjoying communion with him, both in private and public, in the several duties of religion, in the house and ordinances of God; where they often behold his beauty, see his power and his glory, and taste, and know, that he is good and gracious: and in the other world, where they shall see God in Christ, with the eyes of their understanding; and God incarnate, with the eyes of their bodies, after the resurrection; which sight of Christ, and God in Christ, will be unspeakably glorious, desirable, delightful, and satisfying; it will be free from all darkness and error, and from all interruption; it will be an appropriating and transforming one, and will last for ever.

Matthew 5:9

Ver. 9. Blessed are the peace makers,.... Not between God and man, for no man can make his own peace with God; nor can any mere creature, angels, or men, make it for him; Christ, in this sense, is the only peace maker: but between men and men; and such are they, who are of peaceable dispositions themselves; live peaceably with all men, and with one another, as their relation obliges to, and their mutual comfort requires; and with the men of the world; and who are ready, willing, and very serviceable, in composing differences, and making peace between their fellow creatures and fellow Christians. The Jews speak very highly, and much, in the commendation of peace making; they reckon this among the things which shall be of use to a man, both in this, and the other world.

"These are the things, (say they {e},) the fruit of which a man enjoys in this world, and his lot or portion remains for him in the world to come; honouring father and mother, liberality, wrybxl Mda Nyb Mwlv tabhw, "and making peace between a man and his neighhour.""

This, they say {f}, Aaron was much disposed to.

"Moses used to say, let justice break through the mountain; but Aaron loved peace, and pursued it, and made peace between a man and his neighhour, as is said, ***Mal 2:6***"

Hence that saying of Hillell {g},

"be thou one of the disciples of Aaron, who loved peace, and followed after it; he loved men, and brought them to the law."

Now of such persons it is said, that

they shall be called the children of God; that is, they are the children of God by adopting grace, which is made manifest in their regeneration; and that is evidenced by the fruits of it, of which this is one; they not only shall be, and more manifestly appear to be, the sons of God hereafter; but they are, and are known to be so now, by their peaceable disposition, which is wrought in them by the Spirit of God; whereby they become like to the God of peace, and to Christ, the great and only peacemaker, and so are truly sons of peace.

{e} Misn. Peah. c. 1. sect. 1. T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 127. 1. & Kiddushin. fol. 40. 1. {f} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 6. 2. Vid. Abot. R. Nathan, c. 12. fol. 4. 2. {g} Pirke Abot. c. 1. sect. 12.

Matthew 5:10

Ver. 10. Blessed are they which are persecuted,.... Not for any crimes they have done, for unrighteousness and iniquity, as murderers, thieves, and evildoers, but

for righteousness sake: on account of their righteous and godly conversation, which brings upon them the hatred and enmity of the men of the world: for saints, by living righteously, separate themselves from them, and profess themselves not to belong to them; their religious life sets a brand upon, and distinguishes other persons; yea, it reproves and condemns their wicked lives and practices; and this fills them with wrath against them, and puts them on persecuting them: or by "righteousness" may be meant, a righteous cause, the cause of Christ and his Gospel; for by making a profession of Christ, showing a concern for his interest, and by engaging in a vindication of his person and truths, saints expose themselves to the rage and persecution of men: and particularly, they are persecuted for preaching, maintaining, or embracing, the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ; because it is not of man, nor agreeable to the carnal reason of man; it is opposite to the way of justification, which men naturally receive; it excludes boasting, and is contrary to their carnal and selfish principles: persecution is either verbal with the tongue, by cruel mockings and reproachful language; or real, by deeds, such as confiscation of goods, banishment, imprisonment of body, and innumerable sorts of death: the latter seems here more especially designed, and both are expressed in the following verse; and yet the saints, though thus used, or rather abused, are happy;

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven: the same blessedness is predicated of these as of the poor in spirit, ver. 3.

Matthew 5:11

Ver. 11. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you,.... These words are particularly directed to the disciples of Christ, and are designed to inform them, that they should not be exempted from reproach and persecution, and to animate and fortify them against it; and are prophetical of what they, and the first Christians particularly, were to endure for Christ's sake. Men should "revile" them, speak very reproachfully of them, brand them with infamy, and load them with disgrace; and

persecute you from place to place, by ill usage of all sorts;

and shall say all manner of evil against you: the worst things they could think of and invent, and all of them; such as that they were seditious persons, enemies to the commonwealth, and the public good, guilty of sacrilege, incest, and murder but what would serve to relieve them under these heavy charges is, that they were "falsely" laid; there was not a word of truth in them; wherefore their own hearts would not reproach them; but all were the malicious lies of men, invented on purpose to bring them and Christianity into disgrace: and that they were brought against "them for Christ's sake", for his name's sake, for the sake of his Gospel and interest: the treatment they meet with is on his account, and the same that he himself met with; the like reproaches fell on him, which will be all wiped off from him and them another day; when they will appear to be the blessed persons, and their revilers and persecutors the unhappy ones. The Jews have some sayings not unlike these, and which may serve to illustrate them:

"ajal aht alw ajwl aht, "be thou cursed", or bearing curses, but do not curse {g}. The gloss upon it is, it is better to be one of them that are cursed, than to be of them that curse; for, at the end, the curse causeless returns to him that curseth."

Again {h},

"for ever let a man be of them that are persecuted, and not of them that persecute; of them that suffer injury, and not of them that do it."

Once more {i},

"they that suffer injury, and do it not; who hear reproach, and do not return it; who act from love, and rejoice in chastisements, of them the Scripture says, "let them that love him", &c. ***Jud 5:31***."

{g} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 49. 1. {h} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 93. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Deyot. c. 5. sect. 13. {i} T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 88. 2. Yoma, fol. 23. 1. & Gittin, fol. 36. 2.

Matthew 5:12

Ver. 12. Rejoice and be exceeding glad,.... Because of the honour put upon them, the glory they bring to Christ and his cause, by cheerfully suffering for it; and because of the glory and happiness that shall follow upon their sufferings:

for great is your reward in heaven; not of debt, but of grace; for there is no proportion or comparison between what the saints suffer for Christ, and the glory that shall be revealed in them by him; not in earth, but in heaven. Saints must not expect their reward here, but hereafter, when God himself will be their reward; he will be all in all; Christ and all his glory, glory and all the riches of it will be the reward of the inheritance, and which must needs be a "great" one. And the more to animate them to suffer with joyfulness, and to support them under all their reproaches and persecutions, it is added;

for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you; as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and others; which shows, that what should befall them was no new and strange thing, but what had been the lot of the most eminent servants of God in former ages.

Matthew 5:13

Ver. 13. Ye are the salt of the earth,.... This is to be understood of the disciples and apostles of Christ; who might be compared to "salt", because of the savoury doctrines they preached; as all such are, which are agreeable to the Scriptures, and are of the evangelic kind, which are full of Christ, serve to exalt him, and to magnify the grace of God; and are suitable to the experiences of the saints, and are according to godliness, and tend to promote it: also because of their savoury lives and conversations; whereby they recommended, and gave sanction to the doctrines they preached, were examples to the saints, and checks upon wicked men. These were the salt "of the earth"; that is, of the inhabitants of the earth, not of the land of Judea only, where they first lived and preached, but of the whole world, into which they were afterwards sent to preach the Gospel.

But if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? The "savour" here supposed that it may be lost, cannot mean the savour of grace, or true grace itself, which cannot be lost, being an incorruptible seed; but either gifts qualifying men for the ministry, which may cease; or the savoury doctrines of the Gospel, which may be departed from; or a seeming savoury conversation, which may be neglected; or that seeming savour, zeal, and affection, with which the Gospel is preached, which may be dropped: and particular respect seems to be had to Judas, whom Christ had chosen to the apostleship, and was a devil; and who he knew would lose his usefulness and place, and become an unprofitable wretch, and at last be rejected of God and men; and this case is proposed to them all, in order to engage them to take heed to themselves, their doctrine and ministry. Moreover, this is but a supposition;

if the salt, &c. and proves no matter of fact; and the Jews have a saying {k}, that all that season lose their savour "hmej hgypm hnya xlmw, but salt does not lose its savour". Should it do so,

it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot. Salt is good for nothing, but to make things savoury, and preserve from putrefacation; and when it has lost its savour, it is of no use, neither to men nor beasts, as some things are when corrupted; nor is it of any use to the land, or dunghill, for it makes barren, and not fruitful: so ministers of the word, when they have dropped the savoury doctrines of the Gospel, or have quitted their former seeming savoury and exemplary conversations; as their usefulness is gone, so, generally speaking, it is never retrieved; they are cast out of the churches of Christ, and are treated with contempt by everyone.

{k} T. Bab. Betzah, fol. 14. 1.

Matthew 5:14

Ver. 14. Ye are the light of the world,.... What the luminaries, the sun and moon, are in the heavens, with respect to corporal light, that the apostles were in the world with regard to spiritual light; carrying and spreading the light of the Gospel not only in Judea, but all over the world, which was in great darkness of ignorance and error; and through a divine blessing attending their ministry, many were turned from the darkness of Judaism and Gentilism, of sin and infidelity, to the marvellous light of divine grace. The Jews were wont to say, that of the Israelites in general, and particularly of their sanhedrim, and of their learned doctors, what Christ more truly applies here to his apostles; they observe {l}, that

"on the fourth day it was said, "let there be light": which was done with respect to the Israelites, because they are they Mlwel Myryam, "which give light to the world", as it is written, *Da 12:3*'

And in another place {m}, say they,

"how beautiful are the great ones of the congregation, and the wise men, who sit in the sanhedrim! for they are they amlel Nyrhnm, "that enlighten the world", the people of the house of Israel."

So. R. Meir, R. Akiba his disciple, and R. Judah the prince, are each of them called {n} Mlweh rwa, "the light of the world"; as R. Jochanan ben Zaccai is by his disciples, Mlwe rn, "the lamp of the world" {o}: and it was usual for the head of a school, or of an university to be styled {p} amled arwhn, "the light of the world"; but this title much better agrees and suits with the persons Christ gives it to, who, no question, had a view to those exalted characters the Jews gave to their celebrated Rabbins. A city that

is set on an hill cannot be hid; alluding either to Nazareth, where he was educated, and had lately preached, which was built on an hill, from the brow of which the inhabitants sought to have cast him headlong, ***Lu 4:29*** or to Capernaum, which, on account of its height, is said to be

exalted unto heaven, *Mt 11:23* or to the city of Jerusalem, which was situated on a very considerable eminence. The land of Israel, the Jews say {q}, was higher than all other lands; and the temple at Jerusalem was higher than any other part of the land of Israel. And as a city cannot be hid which is built on a high place, so neither could, nor ought the doctrines which the apostles were commissioned to preach, be hid, or concealed from men: they were not to shun to declare the whole counsel of God, nor study to avoid the reproaches and persecutions of men; for they were to be "made a spectacle"; to be set as in a public theatre, to be seen by "the world, angels, and men".

{l} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 3. {m} Targum in Cant. iv. 1. {n} Juchasin, fol. 63. 2. {o} Abot R. Nathan, c. 25. fol. 6. 3. {p} Juchasin. fol. 121. 1. {q} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 69. 1. Sanhedrim, fol. 87. 1. Zebachim, fol. 54. 2.

Matthew 5:15

Ver. 15. Neither do men light a candle,.... Which may be read impersonally, "a candle is not lighted": and by it may be meant the Gospel, and gifts qualifying men to preach it; which, like a candle, was lighted in the evening of the Jewish dispensation, though not confined to the land of Judea; but has shone throughout the world, being as a candle to be removed, and has been removed from place to place: wherever it is set, it gives light, more or less, and dispels darkness; it is useful both to work by and walk with; it does not always burn alike clearly, it needs looking after; it has its thieves, as candles sometimes have; and will give the greatest light towards the close of the world, as they usually do, when ready to go out. Now when a candle is lighted by men, they do not

put it under a bushel, or anything which may hide and cover it, and so hinder its light and usefulness. The Greek word modiov, rendered a "bushel", answers to the Hebrew hao, "seah", which is the very word used in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and this was a dry measure that held about a gallon and a half; and accordingly is rendered here by the Syriac atao. The design of the expression is, that Christ has lighted the candle of the everlasting Gospel, and given gifts to men for the ministration of it, not to be concealed and neglected, or to be used as the servant did his lord's money, wrap it up in a napkin, and hide it in the earth. Ministers are not, through slothfulness, to neglect the gift that is in them; nor, through fear, to hide their talents, or keep back any part of the Gospel, or cover anything out of sight, which may be profitable to souls: "but" men, when they light a candle, put it

on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house; as on the candlestick in the temple, a type of the church; where Christ has set the light of the Gospel, where it is held forth particularly by the ministers of the word, to illuminate the whole house and family of God; by the light of which poor sinners, the lost pieces of silver, are looked up; straggling souls are brought home; hypocrites and formalists are detected; and saints are enlightened, directed, and comforted. Much such a proverbial saying is used by the Jews {r}:

"do not leave a vessel of balsam in a dunghill, but move it from its place, that its smell may spread, and men may receive profit from it."

{r} Vid. Joh. Isaac. Praefat. ad Eliae Levit. Methurgeman.

Matthew 5:16

Ver. 16. Let your light so shine before men,.... Here Christ applies the foregoing simile to his disciples, and more fully opens the meaning and design of it. His sense is this; that the light of the Gospel, which he had communicated to them, the spiritual knowledge of the mysteries of grace, which he had favoured them with, were to be openly declared, and made manifest before men. Light was not given merely for their own private use, but for the public good of mankind; and therefore, as they were placed as lights in the world, they were to hold forth, in the most open and conspicuous manner, the word of light and life:

that they may see your good works: meaning their zeal and fervency; their plainness and openness; their sincerity, faithfulness, and integrity; their courage and intrepidity; their diligence, industry, and indefatigableness in preaching the Gospel; their strict regard to truth, the honour of Christ, and the good of souls; as also their very great care and concern to recommend the doctrines of grace, by their example in their lives and conversations:

and glorify your Father which is in heaven; that is, that when the ministration of the Gospel has been blessed, for the illumination of the minds of men, to a thorough conviction of their state; and for their regeneration, conversion, sanctification, and comfort; they may give praise to God, and bless his name for qualifying and sending such Gospel ministers to show unto them the way of salvation; and that the word has been made useful to them for communicating spiritual light, life, joy, and comfort, Mymvbv wnyba, "Our and your Father which is in heaven", is a name, appellation, or periphrasis of God, frequently used by Jewish writers {s}; and is often expressed by Christ in these his sermons on the mount.

{s} Vid. Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. & Yoma, c. 8. sect. 9.

Matthew 5:17

Ver. 17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets,.... From verse 3 to the 10th inclusive, our Lord seems chiefly to respect the whole body of his true disciples and followers; from thence, to the 16th inclusive, he addresses the disciples, whom he had called to be ministers of the word; and in this "verse", to the end of his discourse, he applies himself to the whole multitude in general; many of whom might be ready to imagine, that by the light of the Gospel, he was giving his disciples instructions to spread in the world, he was going to set aside, as useless, the law of Moses, or the prophets, the interpreters of it, and commentators upon it. Christ knew the thoughts of their hearts, that they had taken up such prejudices in their minds against him; wherefore he says, "think not"; he was sensible what objections they were forming, and what an improvement they would make of them against his being the Messiah, and therefore prevents them, saying,

I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. By "the law" is meant the moral law, as appears from the whole discourse following: this he came not to "destroy", or loose men's obligations to, as a rule of walk and conversation, but "to fulfil" it; which he did doctrinally, by setting it forth fully, and giving the true sense and meaning of it; and practically, by yielding perfect obedience to all its commands, whereby he became "the end", the fulfilling end of it. By "the prophets" are meant the writings of the prophets, in which they illustrated and explained the law of Moses; urged the duties of it; encouraged men thereunto by promises; and directed the people to the Messiah, and to an expectation of the blessings of grace by him: all which explanations, promises, and prophecies, were so far from being made void by Christ, that they receive their full accomplishment in him. The Jews {t} pretend that these words of Christ are contrary to the religion and faith of his followers, who assert, that the law of Moses is abolished; which is easily refuted, by observing the exact agreement between Christ and the Apostle Paul, ***Ro 3:31*** and whenever he, or any other of the apostles, speaks of the abrogation of the law, it is to be understood of the ceremonial law, which in course ceased by being fulfilled; or if of the moral law, not of the matter, but of the ministry of it. This passage of Christ is cited in the Talmud {u}, after this manner:

"it is written in it, i.e. in the Gospel, "I Aven", neither to diminish from the law of Moses am I come, "but", or "nor" (for in the Amsterdam edition they have inserted alw between two hooks), to add to the law of Moses am I come."

Which, with their last correction, though not a just citation, yet tolerably well expresses the sense; but a most blasphemous character is affixed to Christ, when they call him "Aven"; which signifies "iniquity" itself, and seems to be a wilful corruption of the word "Amen", which begins the next "verse".

{t} R. Isaac Chizuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 10. p. 401. {u} T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 116. 2.

Matthew 5:18

Ver. 18. For verily I say unto you,.... Or "I Amen say unto you", which is one of the names of Christ; see ***Re 3:14*** or the word "Amen" is only used by Christ as an asseveration of what he was about to say; and which, for greater confirmation, is usually doubled in the Evangelist John, "Amen, Amen", or "verily, verily". The word is used by the Jews {w} for an oath; they swore by it; and it is a rule with them, that whoever answers "Amen" after an oath, it is all one as if he had pronounced the oath itself. The thing so strongly affirmed in this solemn manner is,

till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. The iwta "or jot", in the Greek language, answers to "jod" in the Hebrew, the least of all the letters in the alphabet; hence a little city is called by this name, and this reason is given for it, {x} twytwab hnjq dwyv, "because that jod is the least among letters". We read also of Rabbi Jod {y}, perhaps so called because Njq hyh, he was little, as the author of Juchasin observes {z}. This shows in what language the law was written; not in the Samaritan language, for the jod in that is a large letter, but in the Hebrew, in which it is very small; and particularly is written in a very diminutive character, in *De 32:18* "by one tittle" some think is meant one of those ducts, dashes, or corners of letters, which distinguish one letter from another, that are much alike; others have thought that one of the pricks or vowel points is intended; others, one of those little strokes in the tops of letters, which the Jews call {a} "crowns" and "spikes", is here meant, in which they imagined great mysteries were contained; and there were some persons among them, who made it their business to search into the meaning of every letter, and of everyone of these little horns, or pricks, that were upon the top of them. So says R. Meir {b},

"in the time of the prophets there were such who very diligently searched every letter in the law, and explained every letter by itself; and do not wonder at this that they should expound every letter by itself, for they commented
twaw twa lk lv Uwqw Uwq lk le, upon everyone of the tops of each letter."

Such an expounder was Akiba ben Joseph {c}. To which custom Christ is here supposed to have respect: however, certain it is that he speaks very much in the language, and agreeably to the mind of the Jewish doctors; and some things in their writings will serve to illustrate this passage,

"If, (say they {d},) all the nations of the world were gathered together, "to root one word out of the law", they could not do it; which you may learn from Solomon, who sought to root "one letter out of the law", the letter "jod", in *De 17:16* but the holy blessed God said, Solomon shall cease, and an hundred such as he (in the Talmud {e} it is a thousand such as he) Mlwel hlyjb hnya Kmm dwyw, "but, jod shall not cease from thee (the law) for ever"."

And elsewhere the same expression is used {f}, and it is added,

"ljbm ynya Kmm huwqw, "but a tittle from thee shall not perish.""

The design of Christ, in conformity to the language of the Jews, is to declare, that no part of the law, not one of the least commandments in it, as he explains himself in the next verse, should be unaccomplished; but all should be fulfilled before "heaven and earth pass" away, as they will, with a great noise and fervent heat, as to their present form and condition; or sooner shall they pass away, than the least part of the law shall: which expresses the perpetuity of the law, and the impossibility of its passing away, and the superior excellency of it to the heavens and the earth. It is a saying of one of the Jewish doctors {g}, that

"the whole world is not equal even to one word out of the law,"

in which it is said, there is not one letter deficient or superfluous.

{w} T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 60. 4. Misn. Bava Kama, c. 9. sect. 7, 8. T. Bab. Shebuot, fol. 36. 1. Debarim Rabba, fol. 242. 2. Maimon Hilch. Shebuot, c. 2. sect. 1. {x} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 21. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {y} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 22. 2. {z} Fol. 93. 2. {a} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29. 2. {b} In Semitis fidei, fol. 104. 4. & 105. 1. apud Capell. in loc. {c} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29. 2. {d} Vajikra Rabba, fol. 160. 3. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol 20. 2. {e} T. Hieros. Sanhedrim, fol. 20. 3. {f} Shemot Rabba, fol. 96. 1. {g} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 4.

Matthew 5:19

Ver. 19. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments,.... Which are to be understood not of the beatitudes in the preceding verses, for these were not delivered by Christ under the form of commandments; nor of any of the peculiar commands of Christ under the Gospel dispensation; but of the precepts of the law, of which some were comparatively lesser than others; and might be said to be broke, loosed, or dissolved, as the word here used signifies, when men acted contrary to them.

And shall teach men so; not only teach them by their example to break the commandments, but by express orders: for however gross and absurd this may seem to be, that there should be any such teachers, and they should have any hearers, yet such there were among the Jews; and our Lord here manifestly strikes at them: for notwithstanding the great and excellent things they say of the law, yet they tell us, that the doctors of the sanhedrim had power to root anything out of the law; to loose or make void any of its commands, for a time, excepting in the case of idolatry; and so might any true prophet, or wise man; which they pretend is sometimes necessary for the glory of God, and the good of men; and they are to be heard and obeyed, when they say, transgress anyone of all the commands which are in the law {h}. Maimonides says {i}, that the sanhedrim had power, when it was convenient, for the time present, to make void an affirmative command, and to transgress a negative one, in order to return many to their religion; or to deliver many of the Israelites from stumbling at other things, they may do whatsoever the present time makes necessary: for so, adds he, the former wise men say, a man may profane one sabbath, in order to keep many sabbaths. And elsewhere {k} he affirms,

"if a prophet, whom we know to be a prophet, should order us twum lkm txa le rwbel, "to transgress anyone of the commands", which are mentioned in the law, or many commands, whether light or heavy, for a time, we are ordered to hearken to him; and so we learn from the former wise men, by tradition, that in everything a prophet shall say to thee hrwt yrbd le rwbe, "transgress the words of the law", as Elias on Mount Carmel, hear him, except in the case of idolatry."

And another of their writers says {l},

"it is lawful sometimes to make void the law, and to do that which appears to be forbidden."

Nay, they even {m} say, that if a Gentile should bid an Israelite transgress anyone of the commands mentioned in the law, excepting idolatry, adultery, and murder, he may transgress with impunity, provided it is done privately. You see what reason Christ had to express himself in the manner he does, and that with resentment, saying,

he shall be called, or be the least in the kingdom of heaven; meaning either the church of God, where he shall have neither a name, nor place; he shall not be in the least esteemed, but shall be cast out as a worthless man; or the ultimate state of happiness and glory, in the other world, where he shall not enter, as is said in the next verse; but, on the other hand,

whosoever shall do and teach; whose doctrine and conversation, principles and practices agree together; who both teach obedience to the law, and perform it themselves: where again he glances at the masters in Israel, and tacitly reproves them who said, but did not; taught the people what they themselves did not practise; and so were unworthy of the honour, which he that both teaches and does shall have: for

the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven; he shall be highly esteemed of in the church here, and be honoured hereafter in the world to come. The Jews have a saying somewhat like this;

"he that lessens himself for the words of the law in this world, lwdg hven, "he shall become great" in the world to come {n},"

or days of the Messiah.

{h} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 79. 1. & 89. 2. & 90. 2. {i} Hilch. Memarim, c. 2. sect. 4. {k} Hilch. Yesode Hattorah, c. 9. sect. 3. {l} Bartenora in, Misn. Beracot, c. 9. sect. 5. {m} T. Hicros. Sheviith, fol. 35. 1. {n} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 85. 2.

Matthew 5:20

Ver. 20. For I say unto you,.... These words are directed, not to the true disciples of Christ in general, or to his apostles in particular, but to the whole multitude of the people; who had in great esteem and admiration the Scribes and Pharisees, for their seeming righteousness and holiness; concerning which Christ says,

that except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. He mentions the Scribes, because they were the more learned part of the people, who were employed in writing out, and expounding the law; and the Pharisees, because they were the strictest sect among the Jews for outward religion and righteousness; and yet, it seems, their righteousness was very defective; it lay only in an external observance of the law; did not arise from a purified heart, or the principles of grace; nor was it performed sincerely, and with a view to the glory of God; but for their own applause, and in order to obtain eternal life: besides, they neglected the weightier matters of the law, and contented themselves with the lesser ones; and as they were deficient in their practice, so they were very lax in their doctrines, as appears from the foregoing verse. Wherefore Christ informs his hearers, that they must have a better righteousness than these men had, if ever they expected to enter into the kingdom of heaven. There will be no admission into heaven without a righteousness: it was the loss of righteousness which removed Adam out of his earthly paradise; and it is not agreeable to the justice of God, to admit man into his heavenly paradise without one; yea, it is contrary to his nature, and would be destructive to the comfort of saints, to receive an unrighteous person into his kingdom and glory. A "pharisaical" righteousness will never bring a person thither; nor will any righteousness of man's, be it what it will, because the best is imperfect; it must be a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees; and such is the righteousness of the saints: indeed their inherent righteousness, or the sanctification of the Spirit, is preferable to any righteousness of a natural man; it exceeds it in its author, nature, effects, and usefulness; yea, even works of righteousness done by believers are greatly preferable to any done by such men as are here mentioned: but, above all, the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to them, and received by faith, is infinitely more excellent in its author, perfection, purity, and use; and which is their only right and title to eternal glory; and without which no man will be admitted into that glorious state.

Matthew 5:21

Ver. 21. Ye have heard,.... That is, from the Scriptures being read to them, and the explanations of the ancients, which were called atemv, "hearing", being read in the schools, and heard by the scholars {o}; so that to "hear", was along with the recital of the text, to receive by tradition, the sense the elders had given of it: of this kind is the instance produced by Christ. Thus Onkelos, and Jonathan ben Uzziel, render the phrase, "him shall ye hear", in *De 18:15* by Nylbqt hynm, "from him shall ye receive"; so those phrases {p}, hewmvh ypm wdml, "they learn from hearing", or by report from others; and hewmvh ypm wrma "they speak from hearing", or from what they have heard, are often used for receiving and reporting things as they have them by tradition. That "it was said", or "it hath been said"; this is also a Talmudic form of expression; often is this phrase to be met with in the Talmud, rmatya, "it has been said" {q}; that is, by the ancient doctors, as here, "by them of old time", or "to the ancients", Mynwmdql so in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; not to the Israelites in the time of Moses, but to the ancestors of the Jews, since the times of Ezra; by the elders, who were contemporary with them; and who by their false glosses corrupted the law, when they recited any part of it to the people; or "by the ancients", the ancient doctors and commentators, which preceded the times of Christ, whom the Jews often call wnynwmdq, "our ancients" {r}. Now, upon that law, "thou shalt not kill", they put this gloss, or added this by way of interpretation,

and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment; which they understood only of actual murder, either committed in their own persons, or by the means of others. Their rules for the judgment of such persons were these;

"everyone that kills his neighbour with his hand; as if he strikes him with a sword, or with a stone that kills him; or strangles him till he die; or burns him in fire; seeing he kills him in any manner, in his own person, lo! such an one must be put to death Nyd tybb, "by the house of judgment", or the sanhedrim {s}."

Not that which consisted of three persons only, but either that which consisted of twenty three, or the supreme one, which was made up of seventy one; which two last had only power of judging capital offences. Again,

"if a man hires a murderer to kill his neighbour, or sends his servants, and they kill him, or binds him, and leaves him before a lion, or the like, and the beast kills him, everyone of these is a shedder of blood; and the sin of slaughter is in his hand; and he is guilty of death by the hand of heaven, i.e. God; but he is not to be put to death by the house of judgment, or the sanhedrim {t}."

A little after, it is said, "their judgment" is delivered to heaven, i.e. to God; and this seems to be the sense of the word "judgment" here, namely, the judgment of God, or death by the hand of God; since it is manifestly distinguished from the council, or sanhedrim, in the next "verse". The phrase,

in danger of judgment, is the same with {u} Nyd byyx, "guilty of judgment", or deserves condemnation.

{o} Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Rabbin, fol. 2453. {p} Maimon. Hilch. Issure Mizbeach, c. 1. sect. 2, 4, 5, 7, 10. & passim, & T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 88. 1. {q} Vid. Edzardi Not. in Avoda Zara, c. 2. p. 284. {r} Vid. R. Aben Ezra in Exod. xxi. 17. & in Isa. lii. 13. & lxvi. 24. {s} Maimon. Hilch. Rotseach, c. 2. sect. 1. {t} Maimon. Hilch. Rotseach, c. 2. sect. 2. {u} In Targ. in 2 Chron. xix. 10.

Matthew 5:22

Ver. 22. But I say unto you,.... This is a Rabbinical way of speaking, used when a question is determined, and a false notion is refuted; it is a magisterial form of expression, and well suits with Christ, the great teacher and master in Israel; who spake as one having authority, opposing himself, not to the law of "Moses, thou shalt not kill"; but to the false gloss the ancient doctors had put upon it, with which their later ones agreed. You say, that if one man kills another himself, he is to be put to death by the sanhedrim; and if he does it by proxy, he is to be left to the judgment of God, so wholly restraining the law to actual murder; but I affirm, that

whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of judgment. By "brother" is meant, not in a religious sense, one that is of the same faith, or in the same church state; nor, in a strict natural sense, one that is so in the bonds of consanguinity; but in a large sense, any man, of whatsoever country or nation: for we are to be angry with no man; that is, as is rightly added,

without a cause: for otherwise there is an anger which is not sinful, is in God, in Christ, in the holy angels; and is commendable in the people of God, when it arises from a true zeal for religion, the glory of God, and the interest of Christ; and is kindled against sin, their own, or others, all manner of vice, false doctrine, and false worship: but it is causeless anger which is here condemned by Christ, as a breach of the law, "thou shalt not kill"; and such persons are

in danger of judgment; not of any of the courts of judicature among the Jews, as the sanhedrim of three, or of twenty three, or of seventy one, which took no notice of anger, as a passion in the mind, only of facts committed; but of the judgment of God, as in the preceding "verse", it being distinguished from the sanhedrim, or council, in the next clause.

And whosoever shall say to his brother Raca, shall be in danger of the council, or "sanhedrim". The word Raca is expressive of indignation and contempt; it was used as a term of reproach. Some derive it from qqr to "spit upon"; as if the person that used it thought the man he spoke to deserved to be spit upon, and treated in the most contemptuous manner: but rather the word signifies "empty" and "vain", and denotes a worthless, empty headed man; a man of no brains; a foolish, witless, fellow: so it is often used in Jewish writings. Take a few instances, as follow:

"a certain person said to R. Jochanan {w}, Rabbi, expound, for it becomes thee to expound; for as thou hast said, so have I seen: he replied to him, aqyr Reka, if thou hadst not seen, thou wouldst not have believed."

Again {x}, it happened to R. Simeon ben Eliezer of Migdal Edar, who went from the house of Rabbi; and he met with a certain man very much deformed; he says unto him, hqyr Reka, how many are the deformed sons of "Abraham our father?" Many more instances might be given {y}. Now I do not find that the use of this reproachful word was cognizable by the Jewish sanhedrim, or great council; nor is it our Lord's meaning that it was, only that it ought to have been taken notice of in a proper manner, as well as actual murder. He adds,

but whosoever shall say thou fool, shall be danger of hell fire. The word "fool" does not signify a man of weak parts, one that is very ignorant in things natural; this the word Raca imports; but a wicked reprobate man; in which sense Solomon often uses the word. The Persic version renders it here "wicked". There is a manifest gradation in the text from causeless anger in the breast, or reproachful words; and from thence to a censorious judging of a man's spiritual and eternal estate, which is what is here condemned. "Thou fool", is, thou wicked man, thou ungodly wretch, thou graceless creature, whose portion will be eternal damnation. Calling a man by such names was not allowed of by the Jews themselves, whose rules are:

"he that calls his neighbour a servant, let him be excommunicated; a bastard, let him be beaten with forty stripes; evr, "a wicked man", let him descend with him into his life or livelihood {z}."

The gloss upon it is,

"as if he should say, to this the sanhedrim is not obliged, but it is lawful to hate him, yea to lessen his sustenance, and exercise his trade,"

which was done to bring him to poverty and distress. So, it seems, the sanhedrim were not obliged to take notice of him. Again, they say,

"it is forbidden a man to call his neighbour by a name of reproach {a} everyone that calls his neighbour evr, "a wicked man", shall be brought down to hell;"

which is pretty much what Christ here says,

shall be in danger of hell fire; or deserving of hell fire; or liable to, and in danger of punishment, even "unto hell fire". An expression much like this may be observed in Jarchi, on *Isa 24:23* where he speaks of some persons Mnhgl Mnhg ybyywxm, "who are guilty", deserving, or in danger of "hell unto hell". The word geenna, here used, and which is often used in the New Testament for "hell", is but the Hebrew Mnh ayg, "Ge-Hinnom", the valley of Hinnom, where the children were caused to pass through the fire to Moloch. This place, the Jewish writers {b} say,

"Was a place well known, near to Jerusalem, a valley, whose fire was never quenched; and in which they burned the bones of anything that was unclean, and dead carcasses, and other pollutions."

Hence the word came to be used among them, as might be shown in innumerable instances, to express the place and state of the damned; and very fitly describes it.

{w} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 100. 1. T. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 1. {x} Massechet Derach Eretz, c. 4. fol. 18. 1. {y} Vid. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 32. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 50. 2. {z} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 28. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 71. 1. {a} Zohar in Exod. fol. 50. 3. {b} Sepher Cosri, fol. 57. 2. Vid. Kimchi in Psal. xxvii. 13.

Matthew 5:23

Ver. 23. Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar,.... The Jews obliged such who had done any damage to their neighbours, by stealing from them, to make satisfaction before they brought their offering; concerning which they say {c},

"he that brings what he has stolen, before he brings his trespass offering, is right; he that brings his trespass offering, before he brings that which he has stolen, is not right."

Again {d},

"they do not bring the trespass offering before the sum of what is stolen is returned, either to the owners, or to the priests."

Some have thought Christ refers to this; only what they restrained to pecuniary damages, he extends to all sorts of offences. But not a trespass offering, but a freewill offering, seems to be designed by "the gift": which, when a man either intended to bring, or was going to bring, or had already brought, as a voluntary sacrifice to be offered unto God; and it came into his mind, that he had offended any man by showing any undue passion, or by any reproachful words, then he was to do what is advised in the following verse: "and there", whilst going, or when at the altar,

rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee: hath anything to charge thee with; any just ground of complaint against thee; if thou hast done him any injury, or given him any offence: particularly, if he had at any time said Raca to him, or called him "fool" for those words have reference to what goes before, and are a corollary, or conclusion from them, as appears from the causal particle "therefore".

{c} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 9. sect. 12. {d} Maimon. Hilch. Gezela, c. 8. sect. 13.

Matthew 5:24

Ver. 24. Leave there thy gift before the altar,.... This might easily be done, and the business soon dispatched, at some seasons; particularly, at their public feasts, as the passover, pentecost, and feast of tabernacles, when all the Israelites were together:

and go thy way; make what haste thou canst,

first be reconciled to thy brother: use all means to reconcile him; acknowledge the offence; ask his pardon; assure him that thou wishest well to him, and not ill;

and then come and offer thy gift, by putting it on the altar, before which it was left. This shows, that acts of love and friendship are preferable to sacrifices; and that sacrifices offered up in wrath, and whilst unreconciled to others, are unacceptable to God, and of no avail: and so much the Jews themselves seem to acknowledge; when they say {e}:

"that transgressions, which are between a man and God, the day of atonement expiates; the transgressions which are between a man and his neighbour, the day of atonement does not expiate, wrybx ta huryv de, "until he hath reconciled his neighbour.""

Which is enlarged upon, and explained by Maimonides {f}, after this manner:

"the day of atonement does not expiate any transgressions, but those that are between a man and God, as when one eats anything that is forbidden, and lies with anything that is forbidden, or the like; but transgressions which are between a man and his neighbour, as he that hurts his neighbour, or curses his neighbour, or steals from him, and the like, are never forgiven, until he has given his neighbour what he owed him, and has "reconciled" him; yea, though he has returned to him the money he owed him, he ought to "reconcile" him, and desire him to forgive him; yea, even though "he has only provoked him by words", (which is the very case in the text before us,) woyypl
Kyru, "he ought to reconcile him", and to meet him until he forgives him: if his neighbour will not forgive, he must bring with him three of his friends, and meet him, and entreat him; and if he will not be reconciled by them, he must bring them a second, and a third time."

So that he was to use all means to obtain a reconciliation.

{e} Misn. Yoma, c. 8. sect. 9. {f} Hilchot Teshuba, c. 2. sect. 9. Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 87. 1.

Ver. 25. Agree with thine adversary quickly,.... These words are not to be understood in an allegorical sense, as if "the adversary" was the justice of God, demanding payment of debts; "the way", this present life; "the judge", God himself; "the officer", the devil; "the prison", the pit of hell; and "the uttermost farthing", the least sin, which will never be remitted without satisfaction: but the design of them is to prevent lawsuits about debts, which may be in dispute; it being much better for debtor and creditor, especially the former, to compose such differences among themselves, than to litigate the matter in a court of judicature. By "the adversary" is meant not an enemy, one that bears hatred and ill will, but a brother that has ought against a man; a creditor, who demands and insists upon payment of what is owing to him; and for this purpose has taken methods towards bringing the debtor before a proper magistrate, in order to oblige him to payment: wherefore it is better for him to make up and agree the matter directly, as soon as possible,

whilst thou art in the way with him; that is, whilst the creditor and debtor are going together to some inferior magistrate, or lesser court, as the sanhedrim, which consisted of three persons only, before whom such causes might be tried: for hvwlvb twnwmm ynyd, pecuniary causes, or causes relating to money matters, were tried "by the bench of three" {g}: and the selfsame advice is given in the Talmud {h}, as here, where it seems to be a common proverb; for it is said,

"there are men that say, or men usually say, emtvya Kbbd lebl Kxrwa bga, "whilst thou art in the way with thine adversary, be obedient"."

Lest at any time the adversary should deliver thee to the judge, a superior magistrate in a higher court; for if the creditor would, he could oblige the debtor to go with him to the supreme court of judicature, and try the cause there; for so say the Jewish {i}; canons:

"if the creditor says we will go to the great sanhedrim, they compel the debtor, and he goes up with them, as it is said, "the borrower is servant to the lender"," where it might go harder with the poor debtor; and therefore it was advisable to prevent it by an agreement, lest

the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

"It was an affirmative command in the law, says Maimonides, to appoint "judges" and "officers" in every country and province, as it is said, *De 16:18*. Myjpwv, "judges" they are the judges that are fixed in the sanhedrim, and such that engage in law suits come before them: Myrjwv, "officers"; these are the masters of the rod and scourge, i.e. who beat and scourge delinquents; and these stand before the judges--and all they do, is by the order of the judges."

Now it is one of these that is meant by "the officer"; in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, he is called rjwv; who, when he had authority from the judge, could cast into prison, and that for debt; of which we have no account in the law of Moses.

{g} Misn. Sanhedrim, c. 1. sect. 1. {h} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 95. 2. {i} Maimof. Hilch. Sanhedrim, c. 6. sect. 7.

Matthew 5:26

Ver. 26. Verily, I say unto thee,.... This may be depended upon, you may assure yourself of it, that

thou shalt by no means come out thence, from prison,

till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing, or "last farthing"; or as the Ethiopic version reads it, "till thou hast exactly paid all"; which seems to express the inexorableness of the creditor, and the impossibility of the debtor's release.

Matthew 5:27

Ver. 27. Ye have heard that it was said,.... These forms of speech, as well as what follows, by them of old time, have been explained, in ver. 21. The law here mentioned,

thou shalt not commit adultery, is recorded in *Ex 20:14* and the meaning of our Lord is, not that the then present Jews had heard that such a law had been delivered "to the ancients", their fathers, at Mount Sinai; for that they could read in their Bibles: but they had received it by tradition, that the sense of it, which had been given to their ancestors, by the ancient doctors of the church, was, that this law is to be taken strictly, as it lies, and only regards the sin of uncleanness in married persons; or, what was strictly adultery, and that actual; so that it had no respect to fornication, or unchaste thoughts, words, or actions, but that single act only.

Matthew 5:28

Ver. 28. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman,.... Many and severe are the prohibitions of the Jews, concerning looking upon a woman, which they aggravate as a very great sin: they say {k}, it is not lawful to look upon a beautiful woman, though unmarried; nor upon another man's wife, though deformed; nor upon a woman's coloured garments: they forbid {l} looking on a woman's little finger, and say {m}, that he that tells money to a woman, out of his hand into her's, that he may look upon her, though he is possessed of the law and good works, even as Moses, he shall not escape the damnation of hell: they affirm {n}, that he that looks upon a woman's heel, his children shall not be virtuous; and that a man may not go after a woman in the way, no, not after his wife: should he meet her on a bridge, he must take her to the side of him; and whoever goes through a river after a woman, shall have no part in the world to {o} come: nay, they forbid {p} a man looking on the beauty of his own wife. Now these things were said by them, chiefly to cover themselves, and because they would be thought to be very chaste; when they were, as Christ calls them, an "adulterous generation" in a literal sense: they usually did what our Lord observes, "strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel". We read in the Talmud {q}, of hjwv dyox, a "foolish saint" and it is asked, who is he? and it is answered, one that sees a woman drowning in a river, and says it is not lawful for me hb ylwktoyal, "to look" upon her, and deliver her. It was not any looking upon a woman, that is forbid by Christ as criminal; but so to look, as "to lust after her"; for such an one hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. But these men, who forbad external looking upon a woman, generally speaking, had no notion of heart sins; and which was the prevailing opinion of the Pharisees, in Christ's time.

"A good thought, they {r} allow, is reckoned as if done; as it is said, ***Mal 3:16***. Upon which it is asked, what is the meaning of that, and "that thought" upon "his name?" Says R. Ase, if a man thinks to do a good work, and is hindered, and does it not, the Scripture reckons it to him, as if he did it; but an evil thought, the holy blessed God does not account of it as if done, as is said, *Ps 66:18*."

Upon which words, a noted commentator {s} of their's has this remark:

"Though I regard iniquity in my heart to do it, even in thought, yea, against God himself, as if I had expressed it with my lips, he does not hear it; that is, Nwe yl bvx al, "he does not reckon it to me for sin"; because the holy blessed God does not account an evil thought for an action, to them that are in the faith of God, or of the true religion."

For it seems, this is only true of the Israelites; it is just the reverse with the Gentiles, in whom God does not reckon of a good thought, as if it was done, but does of an evil one, as if it was in act {t}. It must be owned, that this is not the sense of them all; for some of them have gone so far as to say {u}, that

"the thoughts of sin are greater, or harder, than sin itself:"

by which they mean, that it is more difficult to subdue sinful lusts, than to refrain from the act of sin itself; and particularly, some of them say things which agree with, and come very near to what our Lord here says; as when they affirm {w}, that

"everyone that looks upon a woman hnwwkb, with intention, it is all one as if he lay with her."

And that Pawn arqn wynyeb Pawn, "he that committeth adultery with his eyes, is called an adulterer" {x}. Yea, they also observe {y}, that a woman may commit adultery in her heart, as well as a man; but the Pharisees of Christ's time were of another mind.

{k} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 1, 2. {l} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 24. 1. Sabbat. fol. 64. 2. {m} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 61. 1. Eruvin, fol. 18. 2. {n} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 20. 1. T. Hieros. Challa, fol. 58. 3. Derech Eretz. c. 1. fol. 17. 3. {o} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 61. 1. Eruvin, fol. 18. 2. {p} Zohar in Lev. fol. 34. 4. {q} T. Bab Sota, fol. 21. 2. {r} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 40. 1. {s} R. David Kimchi, in Psal. lxvi. 18. {t} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 16. 2. {u} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 29. 1. {w} T. Hieros. Challa, fol. 58. 3. Massechet Calah, fol. 16. 4. Vid. Maimon. Issure Bia, c. 21. sect. 2. & Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora precept. neg. 126. {x} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 265. 1. {y} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 196. 1.

Matthew *5:29*

Ver. 29. And if thy right eye offend thee,.... Or "cause thee to offend", to stumble, and fall into sin. Our Lord has no regard here to near and dear relations seeking to alienate us from God and Christ, and hinder us in the pursuit of divine things; whose solicitations are to be rejected with the utmost indignation, and they themselves to be parted with, and forsaken, rather than complied with; which is the sense some give of the words: for both in this, and the following verse, respect is had only to the law of adultery; and to such members of the body, which often are the means of leading persons on to the breach of it; particularly the eye and hand. The eye is often the instrument of ensnaring the heart this way: hence the Jews have a {z} saying,

"whoever looks upon women, at the end comes into the hands of transgression."

Mention is only made of the right eye; not but that the left may be an occasion of sinning, as well as the right; but that being most dear and valuable, is instanced in, and ordered to be parted with:

pluck it out, and cast it from thee: which is not to be understood literally; for no man is obliged to mutilate any part of his body, to prevent sin, or on account of the commission of it; this is no where required, and if done, would be sinful, as in the case of Origen: but figuratively; and the sense is, that persons should make a covenant with their eyes, as Job did; and turn them away from beholding such objects, which may tend to excite impure thoughts and desires; deny themselves the gratification of the sense of seeing, or feeding the eyes with such sights, as are graceful to the flesh; and with indignation and contempt, reject, and avoid all opportunities and occasions of sinning; which the eye may be the instrument of, and lead unto:

for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. This is still a continuation of the figure here used; and the meaning is, that it will turn to better account, to lose all the carnal pleasures of the eye, or all those pleasing sights, which are grateful to a carnal heart, than, by enjoying them, to expose the whole man, body and soul, to everlasting destruction, in the fire of hell.

{z} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 20. 1.

Matthew 5:30

Ver. 30. And if thy right hand offend thee,.... Or "cause thee to offend"; that is, is the means of ensnaring thine heart; and of drawing thee into either mental, or actual adultery; for, as before, all unchaste looks, so here, all unchaste touches, embraces, &c. are condemned. As adultery may be committed in the heart, and by the eye, so with the hand:

"says R. Eliezer {a} what is the meaning of that Scripture, "your hands are full of blood", ***Isa 1:15***? It is replied, dyb Mypanmh wla, "these are they, that commit adultery with the hand". It is a tradition of the house of R. Ishmael, that the sense of that command, "thou shalt not commit adultery", is, there shall be none that commits adultery in thee, whether "with the hand", or "with the foot"."

Like orders are given as before,

cut it off, and cast it from thee; as a man would choose to do, or have it done for him, when such a part of the body is mortified, and endangers all the rest. The Jews enjoined cutting off of the hand, on several accounts; if in a morning, before a man had washed his hands, he put his hand to his eye, nose, mouth, ear, &c. Uuqyt, it was to be "cut off" {b}; particularly, the handling of the "membrum virile", was punishable with cutting off of the hand.

"Says R. {c} Tarphon, if the hand is moved to the privy parts, wdy Uuqt, "let his hand be cut off to his navel"."

That is, that it may reach no further; for below that part of the body the hand might not be put {d}; lest unclean thoughts, and desires, should be excited. In the above {e} place it is added,

"what if a thorn should be in his belly, must he not take it away? It is replied, no: it is further asked, must not his belly be ripped up then? It is answered, it is better that his belly be ripped up, txv rabl dry law, "than that he should go down to the pit of corruption.""

A way of speaking, much like what our Lord here uses; and to the above orders and canons, he may be very well thought to allude: but he is not to be understood literally, as enjoining the cutting off of the right hand, as they did; but of men's refraining from all such impure practices, either with themselves, or women, which are of a defiling nature; and endanger the salvation of them, body and soul; the same reason is given as before.

{a} T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 13. 2. Vid. Maimon. Issure Bia, c. 21. sect. 18. {b} T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 108. 2. Massechet Callah, fol. 17. 1. {c} T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 13. 2. {d} Maimon. lssure Bia, c. 21. sect. 23. {e} T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 13. 2.

Matthew 5:31

Ver. 31. It hath been said,.... It is not added here, as in the former instances, "by them of old time"; nor prefaced with these words, "ye have heard"; because the case of divorce was not any law of Moses, or of God by him; but only a permission, because of the hardness of the hearts of the Jews: and as to the controversy, about the causes of divorce, this was not debated by them of old time, but was a new thing, just started in the time of Christ; and was a controversy then agitating, between the schools of Hillell and Shammai: the one allowing it upon any frivolous cause; the other, only on account of adultery.

Whosoever shall put away his wife, dissolve the marriage bond, dismiss her from his bed, and send her from his house, see *De 24:1* "let him give her a writing of divorcement", ttyrk rpo, "a bill of divorcement", or "a book of cutting off". For though a wife was obtained by several ways, there was but one way of dismissing her, as the Jews observe {f}, and that was, by giving her a bill. The form of a writing of divorcement, as given by Maimonides {g}, is as follows:

"On such a day of the week, in such a month, of such a year, either from the creation, or the epocha of contracts, according to the usual way of computation, which we observe in such a place; I such an one, the son of such an one, of such a place; or if I have any other name, or surname, or my parents, or my place, or the place of my parents; by my own will, without any force, I put away, dismiss, and divorce thee. Thee, I say, who art such an one, the daughter of such an one, of such a place; or if thou hast any other name, or surname, or thy parents, or thy place, or the place of thy parents; who wast my wife heretofore, but now I put thee away, dismiss and divorce thee; so that thou art in thine own hand, and hast power over thyself, to go, and marry any other man, whom thou pleasest; and let no man hinder thee in my name, from this day forward and for ever; and lo! thou art free to any man: and let this be unto thee, from me, a bill of divorce, an instrument of dismission, and a letter of forsaking, according to the law of Moses and Israel."

"Such an one, the son of such an one, witness. Such an one, the son of such an one, witness."

Would you choose to have one of these bills, filled up in proper form, take it in manner {h} following.

"On the fourth day of the week, on the eleventh day of the month Cisleu, in the year five thousand four hundred and fifty four, from the creation of the world; according to the computation which we follow here, in the city of Amsterdam, which is called Amstelredam; situated by the sea side, called Taya, and by the river Amstel; I Abraham, the son of Benjamin, surnamed Wolphius, the priest; and at this time dwelling in the city of Amsterdam, which is called Amstelredam, which is situated by the sea side, called Taya, and by the river Amstel; or if I have any other name, or surname, or my parents, or my place, or the place of my parents; by my own free will, without any compulsion, I put away, dismiss, and divorce thee, my wife

Rebecca, the daughter of Jonas the Levite; who at this time abides in the city of Amsterdam, called Amstelredam, situated by the sea side, called Taya, and by the river Amstel; or if thou hast any other name, or surname, or thy parents, or thy place, or the place of thy parents, who wast heretofore my wife; but now I put thee away, dismiss, and divorce thee; so that thou art in thine own hands, and hast power over thyself, to go and marry any other man, whom thou pleasest: and let no man hinder thee in my name, from this day forward, and for ever; and lo! thou art free to any man. Let this be to thee, from me, a bill of divorce, an instrument of dismission, and a letter of forsaking, according to the law of Moses and Israel."

"Sealtiel, the son of Paltiel, witness. Calonymus, the son of Gabriel, witness."

This bill being written in twelve lines, neither more nor less, and being sealed by the husband, and signed by the witnesses, was delivered, either by him, or by a messenger, or deputy of his or hers, into her hand, lap, or bosom, in the presence of two persons; after which, she might, if she would, enrol it in the public records, and marry whom she pleased.

{f} Baal Hatturim in Deut. xxiv. 1. Maimon. Hilchot Ishot, c. 1. sect. 2, 3. {g} Hilchot Gerushin, c. 4. sect. 12. {h} In Surenhusii Misna, Vol. III. p. 324. Vid. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. affirm. 50.

Matthew *5:32*

Ver. 32. But I say unto you; that whosoever shall put away his wife,.... Christ does not infringe, or revoke the original grant, or permission of divorce; only frees it from the false interpretations, and ill use, the Pharisees made of it; and restores the ancient sense of it, in which only it was to be understood: for a divorce was allowable in no case,

saving for the cause of fornication; which must not be taken strictly for what is called fornication, but as including adultery, incest, or any unlawful copulation; and is opposed to the sense and practices of the Pharisees, who were on the side of Hillell: who admitted of divorce, upon the most foolish and frivolous pretences whatever; when Shammai and his followers insisted on it, that a man ought only to put away his wife for uncleanness; in which they agreed with Christ. For so it is written {i}, "The house of Shammai say, a man may not put away his wife, unless he finds some uncleanness in her, according to *De 24:1* The house of Hillell say, if she should spoil his food, (that is, as Jarchi and Bartenora explain it, burns it either at the fire, or with salt, i.e. over roasts or over salts it,) who appeal also to *De 24:1*. R. Akiba says, if he finds another more beautiful than her, as it is said, *De 24:1* "and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes.""

The commentators {k} on this passage say that the determination of the matter is, according to the school of Millell; so that, according to them, a woman might be put away for a very trivial thing: some difference is made by some of the Jewish doctors, between a first and second wife; the first wife, they say {l}, might not be put away, but for adultery; but the second might be put away, if her husband hated her; or she was of ill behaviour, and impudent, and not modest, as the daughters of Israel. Now our Lord says, without any exception, that a man ought not to put away his wife, whether first or second, for any other reason than uncleanness; and that whoever does, upon any other account,

causeth her to commit adultery; that is, as much as in him lies: should she commit it, he is the cause of it, by exposing her, through a rejection of her, to the sinful embraces of others; and, indeed, should she marry another man, whilst he is alive, which her divorce allows her to do, she must be guilty of adultery; since she is his proper wife, the bond of marriage not being dissolved by such a divorce: and

whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery; because the divorced woman he marries, and takes to his bed; is legally the wife of another man; and it may be added, from *Mt 19:9* that her husband, who has put her away, upon any other account than fornication, should he marry another woman, would be guilty of the same crime.

{i} Misn. Gittin, c. 9. sect. 10. Vid. T. Hieros. Gittin, fol. 49. 4. & Sota, fol. 16. 2. & Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 195. 2. {k} Maimon. & Bartenora in Gittin, c. 9. sect. 10. {l} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 90. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Gerushin, c. 10. sect. 21, 22.

Ver. 33. Again, ye have heard that it hath been said,.... Besides what has been observed, in ver. 21 and 27 you know it has also been said,

by, or to them of old time, what is written in *Le 19:12*. "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely"; which seems to be referred to, when it is said, "thou shalt not forswear thyself": and is the law forbidding perjury, or false swearing; and was what the Jews were chiefly, if not only concerned about; little regarding the vanity, only the truth of an oath: for they took swearing vainly, to be the same as swearing falsely; wherefore so long as what they swore was truth, they were not careful whether it was of any importance or not: moreover, these men sinned, in that they swore by the creatures, which they thought they might do, and not sin; and when they had so done, were not under obligation to perform; because they made no use of the name of God, to whom only vows and oaths were to be performed, "but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths", *Nu 30:2* which they understood of vows only made to the Lord, and not to others; and of oaths, when in his name, and not by others; which they did do, and yet thought themselves not obliged by them.

Matthew 5:34

Ver. 34. But I say unto you, swear not at all,.... Which must not be understood in the strictest sense, as though it was not lawful to take an oath upon any occasion, in an affair of moment, in a solemn serious manner, and in the name of God; which may be safely done: but of rash swearing, about trivial matters, and by the creatures; as appears by what follows,

neither by heaven; which is directly contrary to the Jewish canons {m}, which say,

"they that swear Mymvb, "by heaven", and by earth, are free."

Upon the words in ***So** 2:7*, "I adjure you", &c. it is asked {n},

"by what does she adjure them? R. Eliezer says, by the heavens, and by the earth; by the hosts, the host above, and the host below."

So Philo the Jew says {o} that the most high and ancient cause need not to be immediately mentioned in swearing; but the "earth", the sun, the stars, ouranon, "heaven", and the whole world. So R. Aben Ezra, and R. David Kimchi, explain ***Am 4:2***. "The Lord God hath sworn by his holiness"; that is, say they, Mymvb, "by heaven": which may be thought to justify them, in this form of swearing; though they did not look upon it as a binding oath, and therefore if broken they were not criminal {p}.

"He that swears Mymvb by heaven, and by the earth, and by the sun, and the like; though his intention is nothing less than to him that created them, this is no oath."

The reason why it is forbidden by Christ to swear by heaven, is,

for it is God's throne; referring to *Isa 66:1* where he sits, the glory of his majesty shines forth, and is itself glorious and excellent, and not to be mentioned in a vain way; and especially, for the reason Christ elsewhere gives, *Mt 23:22* that "he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon"; so that they doubly sinned, first, by openly swearing by that which is God's creature; and then, by tacitly bringing God into their rash and vain oaths.

{m} Misn. Shebuot, c. 4. sect. 13. {n} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 10. 4. {o} De Special. leg. p 770. {p} Maimon. Hilch. Shebuot, c. 12. sect. 3.

Matthew 5:35

Ver. 35. Nor by the earth, for it is his footstool,.... That the Jews were wont to swear by the earth, is clear from the above mentioned instances; and is condemned by Christ for this reason, because the earth is God's "footstool", referring, as before, to *Isa 66:1* on which he treads; and where he also manifests forth his glory, and is a considerable part of the work of his hands.

Neither by Jerusalem, which the Jews used to swear by: such forms of vows as these are to be met with in their writings {q};

"as the altar, as the temple, Mlvwryk, "as Jerusalem";"

that is, by Jerusalem, I vow I will do this, or the other thing.

"R. Judah says, he that says Jerusalem (i.e. as Bartenora observes {r}, without the note of comparison, as) says nothing."

In the Gemara {s} it is,

"he that says as Jerusalem, does not say anything, till he has made his vow concerning a thing, which is offered up in Jerusalem."

Dr. Lightfoot {t} has produced forms of vowing and swearing, which have not occurred to me.

"Jerusalem; Mlvwryl, "for", or "unto Jerusalem", which exactly answers to eiv Ierosoluma, here; and "by Jerusalem";"

The reason given for prohibiting this kind of oath, is;

for it is the city of the great king: not of David, but of the King of kings, the Lord of hosts; who had his residence, and his worship, here; see *Ps 48:2*.

{q} Misn. Nedarim, c. 1. sect. 3. {r} In. ib. {s} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 11. 1. {t} In loc. ex Tosapht. in Nedarim, c. 1.

Matthew 5:36

Ver. 36. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head,.... This also was a common form of swearing among the Jews: take a few instances.

"If anyone is bound to his friend by an oath, and says to him, vow unto me Kvar yyxb, "by the life of thy head"; R. Meir says {u}, he may retract it; but the wise men say, he cannot."

Again {w}, a certain Rabbi said to Elijah,

"I heard "Bath Kol" (or the voice from heaven) mourning like a dove, and saying, woe to my children; for, because of their sins, I have destroyed my house, and have burnt my temple, and have carried them captive among the nations: and he (Elijah) said unto him Kvar yyxw Kyyx, "by thy life, and by the life of thy head", not this time only it says so, but it says so three times every day."

Once more {x}, says R. Simeon ben Antipatras, to R. Joshua,

"I have heard from the mouth of the wise men, that he that vows in the law, and transgresses, is to be beaten with forty stripes: he replies, blessed art thou of God, that thou hast so done, Kvar yyxw Kyyx, "by thy life, and by the life of thy head", he that is used to do so is to be beaten."

This form of swearing is condemned, for this reason,

because thou canst not make one hair white or black: which shows, that a man's head, nor, indeed, one hair of his head, is in his own power, and therefore he ought not to swear by it; as he ought not to swear by heaven, or earth, or Jerusalem, because these were in the possession of God. Some copies read, "canst not make one white hair black".

{u} Misn. Sanhedrim, c. 3. sect 2. {w} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 3. 1. {x} Derech. Eretz, c. 6. fol. 18. 2.

Matthew 5:37

Ver. 37. But let your communication be yea, yea,.... That is, let your speech, in your common conversation, and daily business of life, when ye answer to anything in the affirmative, be "yea"; and when ye answer to anything in the negative, "nay": and for the stronger asseveration of the matter, when it is necessary, double these words; but let no oaths be joined unto them: this is enough; a righteous man's yea, is yea, and his no, is no; his word is sufficient. Hence it appears, that our Lord is here speaking of rash swearing, and such as was used in common conversation, and is justly condemned by him. The Jews have no reason to reject this advice of Christ, who often use and recommend the same modes of expression. They endeavour to raise the esteem of their doctors and wise men, by saying, that their words, both in doctrines and dealings with men, are "yea, yea" {y}. One of their {z} commentators on the word "saying", in, *Ex 20:1* makes this observation;

"hence we learn, that they used to answer, wal wal lew Nh Nh le "concerning yea, yea, and concerning nay, nay"."

This way of speaking, they looked upon equivalent to an oath; yea, they affirm it was one.

"Says R. Eliezer {a}, hewbv Nh hewbv wal, "nay is an oath; yea is an oath", absolutely; "nay" is an oath, as it is written, ***Ge 9:11*** and *Isa 54:9*. But that "yea" is an oath, how does it appear? It is concluded from hence, that "nay" is an oath; saith Rabba, there are that say "nay, nay", twice; and there are that say "yea, yea", twice; as it is written, ***Ge 9:11*** and from hence, that "nay" is twice, "yea" is also twice said."

The gloss upon it is,

"he that says either "nay, nay", twice, or "yea, yea", twice; lo! it is rxam hewbvk "as an after oath", which confirms his words."

For whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil: that is, whatever exceeds this way of speaking and conversation, in the common affairs of life, is either from the devil, who is the evil one, by way of eminency; or from the evil heart of man, from the pride, malice, envy, &c. that are in it.

{y} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 20. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Dayot. c. 5. sect. 13. {z} R. Sol. Jarchi, in Exod. xx. 1. {a} T. Bab. Shebuot, fol. 36. 1. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Shebuot, c. 2. sect. 1.

Matthew 5:38

Ver. 38. Ye have heard that it hath been said,.... That is, to, or by them of old time, as is expressed in some of the foregoing instances,

an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, *Ex 21:24*. This is "lex talionis", the "law of retaliation"; which, whether it is to be understood literally, or not, is a matter of question. The Baithuseans, or Sadducees, among the Jews, took it in a literal sense, and so does Josephus, who says {b}, he that shall blind, i.e. put out a man's eyes, shall suffer the like. But the Jewish doctors generally understood it of paying a price equivalent to the damage done, except in case of life. R. Sol. Jarchi {c} explains the law thus:

"He that puts out his neighbour's eye, must give him wnye ymd, "the price of his eye", according to the price of a servant sold in the market; and so the same of them all; for, not taking away of the member is strictly meant."

And, says Maimonides {d},

"if a man cuts off his neighbour's hand, or foot, he is to be considered as if he was a servant sold in a market; what he was worth then, and what he is worth now; and he must pay the diminution which is made of his price; as it is said, "eye for eye". From tradition it is learned, that this for, spoken of, is to be understood of paying money; this is what is said in the law, "as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again". Not that he is to be hurt, as he has hurt his neighbour; but inasmuch as he deserves to want a member, or to be hurt as he has done; therefore he ought to pay the damage."

And Josephus himself {e} says, that he must be deprived of that, which he has deprived another of, except he that has his eye put out is willing to receive money; and which, he observes, the law allows of. The controversy about the sense of this law may be seen in a few words, as managed between R. Sandish Hagson, and Ben Zeta {f}.

"Says R. Sandish, we cannot explain this verse according to its literal sense; for if a man should smite the eye of his neighbour, and the third part of the light of his eye should depart, how will he order it, to strike such a stroke, as that, without adding or lessening? perhaps he will put out the whole light of his eye. And it is yet more difficult with respect to burning, wound, and stripe; for should they be in a dangerous place the man might die but that is intolerable. Ben Zeta answers him, is it not written, in another place, "as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again?" To which Hagson replies, b, "in", is instead of le, "upon", or against; and lo! the sense is, so shall the punishment be upon him. Ben Zeta answers him again, as he does, so shall it be done to him. Hagson replies, behold Samson said, "as they have done to me, so will I do to them"; but Samson did not take their wives, and give them to others, he only rendered to them their reward: but Ben Zeta replies, if a poor man should smite, what must be his punishment? Hagson answers him, if a blind man should put out the eye of one that sees, what shall be done to him? as for the poor man, he may become rich, and pay, but the blind man can never pay."

Now our Lord here, does not find fault with the law of retaliation, as delivered by Moses, but with the false gloss of the Scribes and Pharisees; who, as they interpreted it of pecuniary mulcts, as a compensation for the loss of a member, which sometimes exceeded all just and due bounds; so they applied it to private revenge, and in favour of it: whereas this law did not allow of a retaliation to be made, by private persons, at their pleasure, but by the civil magistrate only.

{b} Antiq. Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 35. {c} In Exod. xxi. 24. {d} Hilchot Chebel. c. 1. sect. 2, 3. {e} In loc. supra citat. {f} In Aben Ezra in Exod. xxi. 24.

Matthew 5:39

Ver. 39. But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil,.... This is not to be understood of any sort of evil, not of the evil of sin, of bad actions, and false doctrines, which are to be opposed; nor of the evil one, Satan, who is to be resisted; but of an evil man, an injurious one, who has done us an injury. We must not render evil for evil, or repay him in the same way; see ***Jas 5:6***. Not but that a man may lawfully defend himself, and endeavour to secure himself from injuries; and may appear to the civil magistrate for redress of grievances; but he is not to make use of private revenge. As if a man should pluck out one of his eyes, he must not in revenge pluck out one of his; or should he strike out one of his teeth, he must not use him in the same manner; but patiently bear the affront, or seek for satisfaction in another way.

But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also: which is to be understood comparatively, rather than seek revenge, and is directly contrary to the Jewish canons, which require, in such a case, a pecuniary fine {g}.

"He that strikes his neighbour (which Maimonides explains, he that strikes his neighbour with his hand shut, about the neck) he shall give him a "sela", or "shekel": R. Judah says, in the name of R. Jose the Galilean, one pound: if he smite him (i.e. as Maimonides says, if he smite him with his double fist upon the face; or, as Bartenora, with the palm of his hand, yyxl, "on the cheek", which is a greater reproach) he shall give him two hundred "zuzim"; and if he does it with the back of his hand, four hundred "zuzim"."

R. Isaac Sangari {h} manifestly refers to this passage of Christ's, when he says to the king he is conversing with,

"I perceive that thou up braidest us with poverty and want; but in them the great men of other nations glory: for they do not glory but in him, who said, "Whosoever smiteth thee thy right cheek, turn to him the left; and whosoever taketh away thy coat, give him thy cloak"."

{g} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {h} Sepher Cosri, Orat. 1. Sign. 113. fol. 56. 1.

Matthew ***5:40***

Ver. 40. And if any man will sue thee at the law,.... Or "will contend with thee", or as the Syriac renders it, Kme Nwdnd, "will strive", or "litigate with thee"; not contest the matter, or try the cause in an open court of judicature, a sense our version inclines to; but will wrangle and quarrel in a private way, in order to

take away thy coat, by force and violence,

let him have thy cloak also; do not forbid, or hinder him from taking it; see ***Lu 6:29***. The "coat", is the same with tylj, "the upper garment": and what we render a "cloak", answers to qwlx, "the inward garment"; by which words Sangari expresses the passage in the place before cited: and the sense is, if a wrangling, quarrelsome man, insists upon having thy coat, or upper garment, let him take the next; and rather suffer thyself to be stripped naked than engage in a litigious broil with him. This also is contrary to the above canon of the Jews {i}, which says;

"If a man should pull another by his ear, or pluck off his hair, or spit, and his spittle should come to him, wnmm wtylj rybeh or "should take his coat from him", or uncover a woman's head in the street, he shall pay four hundred "zuzim", and all this is according to his dignity; says R. Akiba; even the poor in Israel, they consider them as if they were noblemen, who are fallen from their estates, for they are the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

{i} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6.

Ver. 41. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile,.... The word aggareusei, rendered "compel", is generally said to be of Persic original; the "Angari", among the Persians, were the king's messengers, or those who rode post, and were maintained at the king's expenses; and had power to take horses, and other carriages, and even men, into their service, by force, when they had occasion for them: hence the word is used to force, or compel persons to do this or the other thing; the word ayrgna is often to be met with in the Jewish writings, and is in them expounded to be {k}, the taking of anything for the service of the king. David de Pomis renders it by lwe, "a yoke" {l}; meaning, any servile work, which such, who were pressed into the king's service, were obliged unto. And {m} ayrgna hve is used to compel persons to go along with others, to do any service; in which sense it is here used: and Christ advises, rather than to contend and quarrel with such a person, that obliges to go with him a mile, to

go with him twain: his meaning is, not to dispute such a matter, though it may be somewhat laborious and disagreeable, but comply, for the sake of peace. The Jews {n}, in their blasphemous book of the birth of Christ, own that he gave advice in such words as these, when they introduce Peter thus speaking of him.

"He, that is, Jesus, hath warned and commanded you to do no more evil to a Jew; but if a Jew should say to a Nazarene, go with me one mile, he shall go with him two miles; and if a Jew shall smite him on the left cheek, he shall turn to him also the right."

Can a Jew find fault with this advice?

{k} Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 6. sect. 3. {l} Tzemach David, fol. 8. 4. {m} Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Rabb. p. 131, 132. {n} Toldos Jesu, p 22.

Ver. 42. Give to him that asketh thee,.... To every man, ***Lu 6:30*** whether

Jew or Gentile; friend or foe; believer or unbeliever; a good, or a bad man; worthy or unworthy; deserving or not, that asketh alms, whether food or money; give it freely, readily, cheerfully, according to your abilities, and as the necessity of the object requires: for such rules are always supposed, and to be observed; and though all are to be relieved, yet the circumstances of persons, and their relation to men, are to be considered, and special regard is to be had to the household of faith.

And from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away; refuse him not, turn not away from him with a frown, or without speaking to him, or with a denial; look upon him with a pleasant countenance, cheerfully lend him what he wants, whether he be a Jew, from whom it was not lawful to take usury, or a stranger, from whom it, was lawful to take it, yet take it not; lend him freely, "hoping for nothing again", ***Lu 6:35*** which must not be understood of not hoping for the money lent, for then it would be giving, and not lending; but of not hoping for any reward for lending it: and indeed the money itself is not to be hoped for again, when the circumstances of the borrower are such, that he is not able to make a return.

Matthew 5:43

Ver. 43. Ye have heard that it hath been said,.... By, or to them of old time. This law has been delivered to them,

thou shalt love thy neighbour, with this appendage to it, or false gloss upon it,

and hate thine enemy; for the first of these only is the law of Moses, *Le 19:18*, the other is the addition, or wrong interpretation of the Scribes and Pharisees: wherefore the Jew {o} has no reason to charge Christ, or the Evangelist, with a false testimony, as he does, because the latter is no where written in the law, nor in the prophets: nor does Christ say it is; he only observes, that it had been traditionally handed down to them from the ancients, by the masters of the traditions of the elders, that the law of loving the neighbour was so to be understood as to allow, and even enjoin, hatred of enemies: in proof of which, take the following instances {p}.

"When one man sins against another, he may not hate him in his heart, and be silent, as is said of the wicked; Absalom spoke not with Amnon: but it is commanded to make it known to him, and to say to him, why hast thou done to me so and so? As it is said, "rebuking, thou shalt rebuke thy neighbour"; and if he returns, and desires him to pardon him, he shall not be implacable and cruel; but if he reproves him many times, and he does not receive his reproof, nor turn from his sin, then wtwanvl rtwm, "it is lawful to hate him"."

Again, they say {q},

"Every disciple of a wise man, vxnk rjwnw Mqwn wnyav, "who does not revenge, and keep as a serpent"; that is, as the gloss explains it, "enmity in his heart", as a serpent, is no disciple of a wise man."

And so Maimonides {r}, one of their better sort of writers, says;

"A disciple of a wise man, or a scholar, whom a man despises and reproaches publicly, it is forbidden him to forgive him, because of his honour; and if he forgives him, he is to be punished, for this is a contempt of the law; but "he must revenge, and keep the thing as a serpent", until the other asks pardon of him, and then he may forgive him."

Thus they bred their scholars in hatred and malice against their enemies. This arises from a mistaken sense of the word "neighbour", which they understood only of a friend; and concluded, that if a friend was to be loved, an enemy was to be hated; not the Gentiles only, but anyone, among themselves, which could come under that name.

{o} R. Isaac Chizuk Emunah, par. 2. c. 11. p. 402. {p} Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora precept. neg. 5. Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Rotseach, c. 13. sect. 14. {q} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 22. 2. & 23. 1. {r} Maimon. Hilch. Talmud Tora, c. 7. sect. 13.

Matthew 5:44

Ver. 44. But I say unto you, love your enemies,.... That is, as the Apostle Paul may be thought to interpret the words of Christ, *Ro 12:20*. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst, give him drink": unless our Lord should be supposed rather to regard the internal affection of the mind; since outward expressions of love, by words and works, are urged in the following exhortations: the actions of a man may be hated, and just indignation be expressed against them, and yet his person be loved, tenderness be used to him, and pity shown him: all men, even enemies, are to be loved with a natural love, as men; though they cannot be loved with a spiritual affection, as brethren in Christ: and in natural affection there are degrees, according to the relation and circumstances that persons stand in to one another.

Bless them that curse you: when wicked men curse you, as Shimei cursed David, do not "render evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing"; give good words, use kind language, mild and soft expressions; such as may either win upon them, or put them to shame and silence: "bless, and curse not"; the latter belongs to them, the former to you; "let them curse, but bless thou": curses better fit their mouths, and blessings thine. Blessing here, does not signify praising them, for that would be sinful, which is sometimes the sense of the word; nor wishing, or praying for a blessing on them, which is right and good; but this is mentioned afterwards, as distinct from blessing; wherefore, it is better to understand it of a sweet and engaging address unto, and behaviour and conduct towards such, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.

Do good to them that hate you; such as hate you in their hearts, and discover their hatred by their actions; do not make returns in the same way, but on the contrary, do them all the good you can; perform all the kind offices that lie in your power; let them partake of your bounty and liberality; if poor, feed, clothe, and supply them, as you are able, with the necessaries of life; and give them wholesome advice for the good of their souls: by "so doing", you will "heap coals of fire on their heads"; of enemies, make them friends; engage their affections to you, and you may be happy instruments in doing them good, both in soul and body:

and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. What Christ here commands and advises to, he himself did; for as he hung upon the cross, he prayed for his crucifiers, who were then using him in the most despiteful, as well as cruel manner; saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do": and in this he has left us an example, that we should tread in his steps; and here in he was quickly followed by his holy martyr Stephen; who, whilst he was being stoned, prayed for his persecutors and murderers, saying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge". This breathes out the true spirit of Christianity, and is peculiar to it. The whole of this is directly opposite to the tenets of the Jews, particularly the Scribes and Pharisees; who allowed of revenge, and keeping anger against any person that had done them an injury, as has been observed: and which were also the sentiments of the Karaites, or Scripturarians, another sect among them who kept to the letter of the Scriptures, and rejected the traditions of the elders, which the Pharisees held: but in this they agreed with them,

"that it was right to do good to their friends, and to forgive them that asked pardon of them; but to such men who rendered evil, and did not return to do well, that they might receive forgiveness, Mhm rwjnlw Mwqnl rwoa wnya, "it is not forbidden to revenge, and to keep anger against them" {s}."

It is indeed said {t} of their former holy men, Mydyox, "Hasideans", which some have thought to be the same with the "Essenes", and a sort of Christians; however, were a better sort of Jews; that these

"heard their reproach, but did not return it; and not only so, but they pardoned him that reproached them, and forgave him."

And it is reported of these men, that they used to pray to God to pardon and forgive all that disturbed them. But the Pharisees, whom Christ had to do with, and against whom he inveighs, were men of another complexion.

{s} R. Eliahu in Adderet, c. 3. apud Trigland. de Sect. Karaeorum, c. 10. p. 166, 167. {t} Maimon. Hilch. Talmud Tora. c. 7. sect. 13.

Matthew *5:45*

Ver. 45. That ye may be the children of your father,.... Not that any became the children of God, by doing things in imitation of him: for as in nature no man becomes the son of another by imitating him, or by doing the things he does but either by birth, or by adoption; so in grace no man becomes a child of God by the works he does, as a follower of God, but by adopting grace; and which is discovered in regeneration. Christ's meaning is, that they might appear, and be known to be the children of God, by doing those things in which they resemble their heavenly Father; and which are agreeable to his nature and conduct; as the tree is known by its fruit, and the cause by its effect: for where adoption and regenerating grace take place, the fruit of good works is brought forth to the glory of God. Some copies, instead of uioi, "children", read omoioi "like": and accordingly, the Persic version renders it thus, "that ye may be like your Father, which is heaven". Our Lord seems to have respect to the Jews, often having in their mouths this expression, Mymvb wnyba, "our Father which is in heaven"; and to their frequent boasting that they were the children of God; and therefore he would have them make this manifest by their being like him, or acting in imitation of him;

for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good. Christ instances in one of the greatest blessings in nature, the sun, so useful to the earth, and so beneficial to mankind for light and heat; which he calls "his sun": his own, and not another's; which he has made, and maintains, orders to run its race, and commands it to rise morning by morning, and that upon good and bad men; one, as well as another; all equally share in, and partake of its benign influences, and enjoy the comfortable effects and blessings of it:

and sendeth rain on the just and unjust; that is, on the fields of persons of such different characters, even both the early and the latter rain; which makes the earth fruitful, crowns it with goodness, and causes it to bring forth bread to the eater, and seed to the sower. This is one of the most considerable blessings of life; the gift of it is God's sole prerogative; it is peculiar to him; it is what none of the vanities of the Gentiles can give; and yet is bestowed by him on the most worthless and undeserving. This flows from that perfection of God, which the Cabbalists {u} call

""chesed, mercy", or benignity, to which it is essential to give largely to all, both "to the just and unjust"."

The Jews have a saying {x}, that

"greater is the day of rain, than the resurrection of the dead; for the resurrection of the dead is for the just; but rain is Myevrl Nyb Myqdul Nyb, "both for the just, and for the wicked":"

a way of speaking much like this here. They also used to praise God for rain, on this consideration, because it was given to unworthy persons.

"{y} R. Jose Bar Jacob went to visit R. Joden of Magdala; whilst he was there, rain descended, and he heard his voice, saying, thousands of thousands, and millions of millions are bound to praise thy name, O our king, for every drop thou causest to descend upon us, Mybyyxl hbwj lmwg tav, "because thou renderest good to the wicked"."

Now our Lord instances in things which could not be denied, and they themselves allowed; and makes use of their own words, to engage them to imitate God, whom they call their Father, by doing good to their enemies, and them that hated them, as well as to their friends and neighbours: yet sometimes they could scarcely allow, that the Gentiles had the same share in this divine favour with themselves; for they say {z}, that

"God works by way of miracle, that rain should not be wanting in his land, although it is wanting in the countries of the Heathen; as he says, ***Job 5:10*** "who giveth rain on the earth", which is the land of Israel; for on that rjm br, "a great rain" descends, and "sendeth waters", Myjem, "few (which is added to the text) upon the fields"; which relates to what is without the land, whereupon it does not descend, but the substance of the land of Israel; therefore he saith, the Lord will open to thee his good treasure, and not to others."

{u} Sepher Shaar Hassamaim, Tract. 7. c. 12. p. 155. {x} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 7. 1. {y} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 14. 1. & Taanith, fol. 64. 2. {z} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 152. 4.

Matthew 5:46

Ver. 46. For if ye love them which love you,.... That is, if ye only love such that love you; for that such who love should be loved again, is both natural and just: our Lord's meaning is not, that ye ought not to love them that love you, but that these should not be the only objects of your love; for should this be the case,

what reward have ye? or "shall ye have?" Do you deserve any thanks for your love now? none at all, it is what you are obliged to by your friend's love to you. Do you expect any hereafter with God? if you do, you will be mistaken; you have your reward with men, who have loved you as much as you have done them, and therefore none can be due to you, either from God or men: besides,

do not even the publicans the same? men of the worst characters, and who were most hateful to the Jews, upon many accounts; partly because of their business, which was to collect the Roman tax, and carry it to the proper officers appointed to receive it, and of whom they sometimes farmed it. Now the Roman yoke was very grievous to the Jews, who boasted of their being a free people; nor did they willingly pay their tribute money; and some of them would refuse to do it, under a pretence of religion; wherefore those publicans, or tax gatherers, which were oftentimes men of their own nation, as appears from the instances of Levi and Zacchaeus, were very odious to them; because they looked upon them as joining with the Romans, in oppressing them, and abridging them in their liberty: and partly because of their character and conduct, being men of great improbity, rapine, and covetousness: hence, as in the New Testament, they are frequently joined with "sinners", as being notorious ones themselves; so in the Talmudic writings, with thieves {a}, and are reckoned as thieves, with murderers, and robbers {b}; they were not allowed as witnesses {c} in any of their courts of judicature; nor were they to be kept company {d} with in private houses. Now our Lord instances in these men who were the most profligate part of the nation, and had in greatest contempt by the rest; and yet these, by the very dictates of nature, loved such as loved them: wherefore it must be shameful and scandalous in the Pharisees, and others, who pretended to great sanctity and religion, to do no more than these persons did.

{a} Maimon. Hilch. Gezela, c. 5. sect. 9. 11. {b} Misn. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 4. {c} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 25. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Eduth, c. 10. sect. 4. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. neg. 214. {d} Maimon. Hilch. Mishcab, c. 10. sect. 8.

Matthew 5:47

Ver. 47. And if you salute your brethren only,.... This does not mean salutation by embraces or kisses, but by words, asking of each other's welfare, and wishing prosperity and happiness to one another.

"The manner of salutation among the wise men was this {e}; he that salutes says, a good day to my lord; and he replies, saying, a good, and long day to my lord: always he that replies doubles the salutation."

The persons they usually gave their salutations to were those of their own nation, their countrymen, relations, and friends; and who are here designed by "brethren"; meaning, not brethren in the strict sense, but any kindred, acquaintance, or any of their own nation. Some copies read it "friends", who, generally speaking, only partook of such favours.

"A man, (says Maimonides {f},) might not salute his master, nor return a salutation to him in the manner they gave a salutation Myerl, to "friends": and they return it to one another."

They were not very free in saluting any persons, as strangers and Gentiles: such advice as this is indeed given Mda lk Mwlvb Mydqm ywh {g}, "prevent every man with a salutation", or be first in saluting every man; upon which passage their commentators {h} say, even a Gentile in the streets. Accordingly, it is elsewhere {i} observed, that

"R. Abai used to say, let a man be always cunning with fear, for "a soft answer turns away wrath"; and multiply salutation with his brethren, and with his relations, and with every man, even with a stranger in the streets."

But this proceeded not from any cordial hearty respect, but out of policy, and from fear; and in order to maintain peace; and for selfish ends, and with sinister views: otherwise their salutations were confined to their brethren and kinsfolk after the flesh. Now, this being the case, says Christ,

what do ye more than others? do not even publicans so? Or, as some copies read it, Gentiles or Heathens; and accordingly the Ethiopic version, and the Vulgate Latin so render it: the Arabic renders it "idolaters". Now, what great matter was this to salute their brethren and their friends, when even the very Heathens, who had nothing but the light of nature to guide them, did the same?

{e} Sepher Chasidim, fol. 5. col. 2. apud Buxtorf. Florileg. Heb. p. 300, 301. {f} Hilch. Talmud Tora, c. 5. sect. 5. {g} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 15. {h} Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. {i} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1.

Matthew 5:48

Ver. 48. Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father,.... This perfection is to be restrained to the subject Christ is upon, love to men, and not to be referred to any, or every other thing; wherefore, in ***Lu 6:36*** it is, "be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful"; and regards not a perfection of degree in that, but objects and quality: that is to say, not that men may, or can, or ought to be as perfect in love, as to the degree of it, as God is; that is impossible: the "as" here, is not a note of equality, but of likeness: such, who profess God to be their Father, ought to imitate him, particularly in their love to men, which ought to be extended to the same objects, as the divine goodness is; that, as he shows regard in a providential way to all men, good and bad, just and unjust, and his tender mercies are over all his works; so ought they to love all men with a natural affection, and hate no man, no, not their enemies: for he that loves only his friends, and not his enemies, loves imperfectly; he does not take in the whole compass of objects his love is to extend unto; and as God loves sincerely, and without dissimulation, so should they. To be "perfect", is to be sincere and upright: in this sense is the word often used, and answers to the Hebrew word Mymt, which signifies the same: see *De 18:13* which is the passage Christ seems to refer to here; and the sense is, be ye sincere and upright in your love to all men, as your heavenly Father is hearty and sincere in his affections to them.

Matthew 6:1

Ver. 1. Take heed that ye do not your alms before men,.... Some copies read, "take heed that ye do not your righteousness", &c. which is a very good reading: but then, by "righteousness", is not meant righteousness, as comprehending all other righteous acts, as particularly alms, prayer, and fasting, hereafter mentioned; but alms only; nothing being more common with the Jews than to call alms hqdu, "righteousness": and whatever word Matthew made use of, there is no doubt to be made of it, but this was the word Christ used. Now alms was so called, because it is a righteous action, which ought to be performed; and to withhold from the poor what is meet, is to deal unrighteously: hence we read of the "mammon of unrighteousness"; by which is meant, not money unrighteously got, but that which is unrighteously kept from the poor: also it might be so called, because the Jews very much placed their justifying righteousness before God in the performance of it: let us first see how, according to them, it was to be done, and then what confidence they placed in it, and how much they made use of it. The account Maimonides {f} gives is as follows, who observes: that "we are bound to take heed to the commandment of alms more than all the affirmative commands; because alms is a sign of a "righteous" man, the seed of Abraham our father; as it is said, in *Ge 18:19*. Nor is the throne of Israel established, nor can the law of truth stand, but by alms; as it is said, *Pr 16:19*. Nor shall Israel be redeemed, but by alms, according to ***Isa 1:27***. There are (says he) eight degrees in giving alms, the one above another; the highest, than which there is none higher, is this; when one relieves an Israelite, and gives him a gift, or lends to him, or takes him into partnership, or finds him work, so that he strengthens his hands before he stands in need of asking; and of this it is said, and "thou shalt relieve him, a stranger and a sojourner, that he may live with thee": which is as much as to say, relieve him before he falls, and is brought to necessity. The next to this is, when a man gives alms to the poor, and he knows not to whom he gives; nor does the poor man know of whom he receives; for, behold, this is doing it for the sake of it; as the chamber of secrets, which was in the sanctuary, into which righteous men privately put, and the poor children of good men were privately supported: and the next to this is, when a man puts into the alms chest: and a man does not put into the alms chest except he knows that the governor is faithful and wise, and knows how to manage as should be; such an one as R. Chananiah ben Tradion. The next to this is, when the giver knows to whom he gives, but the poor man does not know from whom he receives; as the great ones of the wise men, who used to go secretly, and cast their money at the doors of the poor; and this is right to do, and a good method it is when the governors of alms do not dispose aright. The next to this is, when the poor man knows of whom he takes, but does not know the giver; as the great men among the wise men, who used to bind up their money in linen cloths, and put them behind them, and the poor came and took them, that they might not be ashamed. The next to this is, when a man puts it into his hands before he asks. The next to this is, when he gives to him after he has asked. The next to this is, when he gives to him less than is proper, with a pleasant countenance. The next to this is, when he gives with grief."

Now this work, or duty, they magnify at a very great rate: not content to say {g}, that

"he that does alms, does that which is more excellent than all offerings;"

they further affirm {h}, that

"giving of alms and beneficence hlwk hrwth dgnk, "are equal to the whole law";"

or, it is all one as if a man performed the whole law. Moreover, they give {i} out,

"that whoever takes of his goods, and does alms with them, he shall be delivered from the "damnation of hell"."

Yea, they reckon that this gives a right and title to eternal life {k}.

"He that says, let this "sela", or "shekel", be for alms, that his children may live, and that he may be worthy of the life of the world to come, lo! this is rwmg qydu, "a perfect righteous man"."

Or, as elsewhere {l} expressed,

"let this sela be for alms, that my son may live, and that he may be a son of the world to come; lo! this is a perfect righteous man."

Thus, you see, they looked upon it as their righteousness; and what made them heirs of heaven, and gave them a title to eternal glory. Now our Lord advises them to take heed, as what would be of bad consequence, and very detrimental to them, that they did not their alms before men,

to be seen of them; not but alms may be lawfully done before, or in the sight of men, and a good end may be answered by it; namely, to stir up others to acts of liberality; but then this must not be done with this view, to be seen of men, in order to gain their applause, and a good name among them,

otherwise, ye have no reward of your Father, which is in heaven. You expect a reward, and a very great one, for your alms; but if you do them only to raise your credit, and gain esteem among men, you have your reward already with men: nor must you expect any from God, since you seek not his glory, but your own. When a man's self, and not the glory of God, is the chief end of any action, that cannot be called a good work, nor will it have any reward; whereas a good work, which springs from a principle of grace, and is directed to the glory of God, will have a reward, not of debt, but of grace, from whence it arises.

{f} Hilch. Mattanot Anayim, c. 10. sect. 1. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. {g} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 49. 2. {h} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 2, 3. {i} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 7. 1, 2. {k} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 4. 1. Bava Bathra, fol. 10. 2. {l} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 8. 1, 2.

Matthew 6:2

Ver. 2. Wherefore, when thou dost thine alms,.... Christ proceeds to give some directions and cautions about giving of alms, that they might be done aright, and answer some valuable purposes for the glory of God, the good of others, and their own:

do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. The persons Christ has reference to were the Scribes and Pharisees, who did all they did to be seen of men; whom he calls "hypocrites"; as he often does, because they put on an appearance of religion and holiness, but inwardly, and otherwise, were very wicked men. It does not appear that any such practice was literally performed, as blowing a trumpet before them, when they gave their alms; though the collectors of alms did, by some means, publicly notify to the people when they were about that service: for one of their rules is {m},

"the collectors of alms do not proclaim on a feast, as they proclaim on a common day; but they collected henyub, "privately", and put it into their bosom, and distributed it to everyone by himself."

Wherefore this must be understood proverbially; and the sense is, that when they did their alms, they chose public places for it, such as the "synagogues", where was a large concourse of people met together for religious worship; or the open "streets" of the city, where people were continually walking to and fro, so that nothing could be done in this way, but what must be seen and observed: and moreover, they took care, either by themselves, or others, to proclaim their good actions, that they might "have glory of men"; not only of the poor, or the collectors for them, but of the spectators. R. Aben Ezra {n} says, that

"a man that gives alms to the poor, must not give it because of the glory of the collector, i.e. that he may have glory of him; nor that the children of men may praise him."

But his ancestors were of another mind: but what did they get by it?

verily I say unto you, they have their reward; and a poor one it is, the applause of men: however, it is what they seek after, and is all their empty performances deserve, and all they will have.

"He that glories in anything done by himself, wrkv ta ljwn awh, "he takes", or receives "his reward" {o}; for as for any reward from God, they will have none;"

in this sense, as the Ethiopic version reads it, "they have lost their reward": and, as a learned critic has thought, is the sense of the Greek word, "they forbid", or "hinder their reward". By seeking the glory of men, they lay impediments in the way of receiving honour from God.

{m} T. Hieros. Demai, fol. 23. 2. {n} In Exod. xx. 3. {o} R. Jona apud Capell. Spicileg. in loc.

Matthew *6:3*

Ver. 3. But when thou dost alms,.... Do it so privately, and with so much secrecy, that, if it was possible, thou mightest not know it thyself, much less make it known to others:

let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth; acquaint not thy nearest and dearest friend with it; let not one that sits at thy left hand know what thou art doing with thy right hand; it is a proverbial and hyperbolical phrase, expressing the secrecy of the action. It is a Jewish canon {p}, that

"he that gives a gift to his friend out of love, may make it known, hqdub al lba, "but not if it be by way of alms"."

{p} Piske Tosephot in Sabbat. c. 1. art. 134.

Matthew *6:4*

Ver. 4. That thine alms may be in secret,.... May be done in secret, and be kept a secret. The allusion seems to be to the secret chamber, where money was brought privately for the relief of the poor.

"There were two chambers in the sanctuary, the one was Myavx tkvl, "the chamber of secrets", and the other the chamber of vessels: the chamber of secrets was that into which pious persons put yavxb, "in secret", and the poor children of good men were maintained out of it privately {q}."

The Jews say many things in favour of doing alms privately.

"Greater, (say they {r},) is he that gives alms rtob, in secret, than Moses our master."

They tell us {s}, that

"R. Jannai seeing a certain man give Zuz (a piece of money) to a poor man publicly, said unto him, it would have been better, if thou hadst not have given him anything, than to have given him in this manner."

This was the practice of the ancient religious Jews, to give their alms privately; but the Scribes and Pharisees had brought that practice into disuse, and which our Lord labours to restore; adding, for encouragement,

and thy Father, which seeth in secret; beholds all secret actions, and knows the secret springs of actions,

himself shall reward thee openly; in the great day of account, before angels and men, when all secret things shall be brought to light, and every good man have praise of God. This duty, of giving alms to the poor, is mentioned by Christ before prayer to God; it may be for this reason, because it was usual to give alms before prayer.

"The great, or famous men, among the wise men, used to give a Prutah (a small piece of money) to a poor man before every prayer, and after that they prayed; as it is said, "I shall behold thy face in righteousness" {t}."

{q} Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 6. Mainnon. Hilch. Eracin, c. 2. sect. 12. {r} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 9. 2. {s} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 5. 1. {t} Maimon.

Hilch. Mattanot Anayin, c. 10. sect. 15.

Matthew ***6:5***

Ver. 5. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites,.... As the Scribes and Pharisees; whose posture in prayer, the places they chose to pray in, and the view they had therein, are particularly taken notice of:

for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. It was their usual custom to pray "standing"; nay, it is established by their canons.

"There are eight things, (says Maimonides {u},) that a man that prays ought to take heed to do; and the first he mentions is "standing"; for, says he, no man may pray dmyem ala, "but standing"; if he is sitting in a ship, or in a cart, if he can stand, he must stand; if not, he may sit in his place and pray."

Several hints of this custom there are in the Misna {w}.

"On their fast days they used to bring out the ark into the streets-- hlptb wdme, "and they stood in prayer", or praying; and caused an old man to go down before the ark, who was used to recite prayers, and he said them."

Again {x},

"whoever hlptb dmwe, "stood praying", and remembered that any uncleanness attended him, he might not break off, but he might shorten."

Yea, standing itself is interpreted of praying; for it is said {y},

"and Abraham rose up early in the morning to the place, where he stood, hdymeb ala hlpt Nyaw, "and there is no prayer but standing";"

though sometimes they prayed sitting, as David did, ***2Sa 7:18*** so it is said of R. Jose, and R. Eleazar, that yluw wbty, "they sat and prayed", and afterwards rose up and went on their way {z}. So it was likewise customary to go to the synagogues, and there pray; and indeed they were places built and appointed for this purpose.

"Wherever there were ten Israelites, a house ought to be provided, in which they may go to prayer at every time of prayer; and this place is called a synagogue {a}."

Hence some have thought, that not such places are here designed, but any assembly, or concourse of people gathered together upon any occasion; but such an interpretation will find no place, when the following things are observed.

"For ever let a man go, morning and evening, to the synagogue; for no prayer is heard at any time, but in the synagogue; and everyone that hath a synagogue in his city, and does not pray in it with the congregation, is called a bad neighbour {b}."

Again {c},

"he that prays in the house of the Lord, is as if he offered up a pure offering."

Now, partly on account of the publicness of the place, and partly because they thought their prayers were only heard there, therefore they chose to pray in the synagogues; and also in

the corners of the streets, where two streets met, and they might be the more easily seen. This was also a common thing to pray in the streets:

"says R. Jochanan, I saw R. Jannai stand and pray in the streets of Tzippore {d}."

And a little after, it is said of another, that he stood and prayed ayjroab, "in the streets"; though such places were not reckoned holy, as the synagogues were.

"The street of a city, (says Maimonides {e},) although the people pray in it at fasts and stations, because that there is a great collection of people, and the synagogues cannot hold them, has no holiness in it, because it is accidental, and not appointed for prayer."

Wherefore streets were only used in case of necessity, or by such of the

Pharisees, who chose to be seen of men. A reason is given for this practice in another place {f}, where it is asked,

"why do they go out to the streets, i.e. on their fast days? to show that we are reckoned as if we were carried captive before thee: says Joshua ben Levi, because they prayed in "secret", and were not answered; therefore they went without, wmorptyw, "that they might be made public"."

Now let it be observed, that neither the posture, nor places of prayer, are condemned by our Lord, but their view in all to

be seen of men; and a considerable emphasis lies upon the word "love"; they loved "standing" in prayer, rather than any other posture, because they could be better seen; and they loved to be in the synagogues and streets, rather than in their closets; they liked public better than private prayer, because it gained them applause among men.

Verily I say unto you, they have their reward; they gain their point; they have what they seek for; and this is all they will have.

{u} Hilch. Tephilla. c. 5. sect. 1, 2. {w} Misn. Taanith, c. 2. sect. 1, 2. {x} Misn. Beracot, c. 3. sect. 5. {y} Zohar in Lev. fol. 47. 1. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 26. 2. {z} Zohar in Exod. fol. 4. 4. {a} Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 11. 1. {b} lb. c. 8. sect. 1. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 8. 1. & Piske Tosephot Beracot, c. 1. art. 7. {c} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 8. 4. {d} Ib. fol. 8. 3. & 9. 1. {e} Hilch. Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 21. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Megilla, c. 3. sect. 1. {f} T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 65. 1.

Matthew 6:6

Ver. 6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet,.... Or "chamber", a secret place, fit for private retirement, meditation, and prayer.

And when thou hast shut thy door; see some such like phrases in *Isa 26:20* where they are used to express security, here secrecy. Our Lord does not mean to exclude and condemn public prayer, in joining with few, or more persons, in such service; for he himself directs to it, and approves of it, *Mt 18:19* but his view is to instruct persons that they should not only pray in public, but in private also; and especially the latter, which is more suitable and fitting for their particular cases, and less liable to pride, hypocrisy, and vanity.

Pray to thy Father, which is in secret; who is invisible; not to be seen with the eyes of the body, but to be approached with a true heart, in faith and fear, through his Son Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man; and who is the image of the invisible God, and in whom he is pleased to manifest himself to his people, so as he does not unto the world:

and thy Father, which seeth in secret, observes and takes notice of the secret breathings, pantings, desires, and requests of thy heart and lips,

shall reward thee openly, both here and hereafter; by pouring into thy bosom all the good things thou hast been praying for, both for time and eternity. This is agreeable to what the Jews sometimes say,

"that a man ought not to cause his voice to be heard in prayer; but should pray vxlb, "silently", with a voice that is not heard; and this is the prayer which is daily accepted {g}."

{g} Zohar in Gen. fol. 114. 4.

Matthew 6:7

Ver. 7. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions,.... Saying the same things over and over again,

as the Heathens do, as the worshippers of Baal, from morning till noon, *1Ki 18:26*. This our Lord observes, to dissuade from such practices, because the Gentiles, who were odious to the Jews, used them, and the Jews were guilty of the same; had they not, there would not have been any need of such advice:

for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking; as did the Jews, who, under pretence of "long prayers", devoured widows' houses; and with whom it is an axiom, that "everyone hnen hlyptb hbrmh, that multiplies prayer is heard" {h}; and whoever prolongs his prayer, his prayer does not return empty; and he that is long in prayer, his days are prolonged {i}: and, according to their canons, every day a man ought to pray eighteen prayers. Moreover, their prayer books abound in tautologies, and in expressing the same things in different words, and by a multiplicity of them.

{h} T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 67. 3. {i} Zohar in Exod. fol. 104. 4.

Matthew 6:8

Ver. 8. Be not ye therefore like unto them,..... Do not be imitators of them, and follow their ways, who have only the dim light of nature to guide them; it would be shameful in you to do as they do, when you have a divine revelation for your direction; and especially, because

your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him; and therefore have no need to make use of many words, or much speaking, or long prayers. The omniscience of God is a considerable argument, and a great encouragement to prayer; he knows our persons and our wants before hand; and as he is able to help us, we have reason to believe he will; especially since he stands in the relation of a Father to us.

Matthew 6:9

Ver. 9. After this manner therefore pray ye,.... That is, in such a concise and short way, without much speaking and vain repetitions; making use of such like words and expressions as the following: not that Christ meant to pin down his disciples to these express words, and no other; for this prayer is not a strict form, but a pattern of prayer, and a directory to it, both as to brevity, order, and matter; for we do not find the disciples ever making use of it in form; and when it is recited by another Evangelist, it is not in the selfsame words as here; which it would have been, had it been designed as an exact form. Besides, Christ does not bid them pray in these very words, but "after this manner"; somewhat like this: not but that it is very lawful to use the very express words of this prayer in any of the petitions here directed to; and which indeed were no other than what good people among the Jews did frequently make use of; and which were collected and singled out by Christ, as what he approved of, in distinction from, and opposition to, other impertinent expressions, and vain repetitions, which some used; as will appear by a particular consideration of them.

Our Father which art in heaven. This may be looked upon as the preface and introduction to the prayer, and regards the object of it, and his character, which is an epithet of God, often to be met with in Jewish writings, and particularly in their prayers; for thus they {k} say,

"Mymvbv wnyba, "our Father which art in heaven", show mercy "to us, because thy great name is called upon us."

Again {l}, let the prayers and the requests of all Israel be received by aymvb yd Nwhwba, "their Father, which is in heaven". They seem to have a regard to this prayer, when they apply that passage in ***Pr 3:35*** "shame shall be the promotion of fools", to the nations of the earth, who, they say {m},

"do not consider the glory of the law; and how, say they, "our Father which art in heaven", hear our voice, have mercy on us, and receive our prayer?"

So in confessions, thanksgivings, and sacrifices of praise, they required, and looked upon it, as the main thing, for a man to direct his heart Mymvbv wybal, "to his Father which is in heaven {n}." By "father", our Lord means the first person in the Trinity, who is the Father of all men by creation, and of the saints by adoption; who are to address him in prayer under the character of "our Father", partly to command a reverential fear of him, and partly to secure boldness and liberty of speech before him; and also to express fiducial confidence in him, faith of interest in him, and relation to him; which arises from some experience of his paternal love, and requires the witnessings of the Spirit of adoption; and inasmuch as the direction is not to say "my Father", but "our Father"; it shows that we should pray for others as well as for ourselves, even for all the dear children of God. It is a rule {o} with the Jews,

"that a man ought always to join himself in prayer with the church;"

upon which the gloss says,

"let him not pray the short prayer Mybr Nwvlb ala dyxy Nwvlb, "in the singular, but in the plural number", that so his prayer may be heard."

The object of prayer is further described by the place of his residence, "in heaven"; not that he is included in any place, but that the heaven of heavens is the place where he most eminently displays his glory: and this may teach us to look upwards in prayer, and seek those things which are above; and also, that this earth, on which we dwell, is not our native country, but heaven is, where our Father dwells. Next follows the first petition,

hallowed, or sanctified be thy name; so the Jews {p} in their prayers,

"Kmv vdqty, "let thy name be hallowed", or "sanctified by us", O Lord our God, before the eyes of all living."

And very often {q},

"let his great name be magnified and sanctified in the world, which he hath created according to his will."

And again {r},

"let us sanctify thy name in the world, as they sanctify it in the highest heavens."

By the "name" of God is meant he himself, the perfections of his nature, and the several names by which he is known, and which we are to think and speak of with holy reverence. By sanctifying his name, is not meant a making him holy, but acknowledging, and declaring him to be holy, and a glorifying him, and all his perfections. He is sanctified by himself, by declaring himself to be holy; by glorifying his perfections in his works; by implanting grace and holiness in the hearts of his people; by restoring the purity of his worship; by diffusing the knowledge of himself in the world; and by taking vengeance on the wicked: and he is sanctified by others, when they fear him, believe in him, call upon his name, use it reverently, submit to his will, acknowledge his mercies, regard his commands aud ordinances, and live a holy life and conversation; all which is earnestly desired by truly gracious souls.

{k} Seder Tephillot, fol. 4. 2. Ed. Basil. {l} Ib. fol. 33. 2. {m} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 34. 1. {n} T. Bab. Shebuot, fol. 15. 1. {o} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 30. 1. {p} Seder Tephillot, fol. 78. 1. Ed. Amstelod. Zohar in Exod. fol. 43. 4. {q} Seder Tephillot, fol. 17. 2, Ed. Basil. & passim. {r} Seder Tephillot, fol. 22. 1. & passim.

Ver. 10. Thy kingdom come,.... The form of expression used by the ancient Jews, relating to this article, before the coming of Christ, doubtless was, as it now stands in their prayers {r}, aby Kxyvm twklm, "the kingdom of thy Messiah come". Christ alters the expression, leaves out the word "Messiah", and puts it thus, "thy kingdom come", to let them know that the Messiah was come; and that it was the kingdom of the Father, in the power of his grace, upon the souls of men, they must pray for and expect: however, he conformed to a rule of their's in this, as well as in the former petition {s}; that

"every blessing, or prayer, in which there is no Mvh trbz, "mention made of the name", i.e. of God, is no prayer; and that every prayer, in which there is not twklm, "the kingdom", is no prayer."

In this petition the disciples were taught to pray for the success of the Gospel, both among Jews and Gentiles; for the conversion of God's elect, in which the kingdom of God would greatly appear, to the destruction of the kingdom of Satan, and the abolition of the kingdom of the beast, in the latter day; which will usher in the kingdom, of the mediator, he will receive from his Father, and this will terminate in the kingdom of glory: in a word, not the kingdom of nature and providence is meant, which always was; but the kingdom of heaven, which was at hand, nay had taken place, though as yet was not very visible, and which is spiritual in the hearts of God's people, Jews and Gentiles; and which will appear exceeding glorious in the latter day, and at last be swallowed up in the ultimate glory; all which must be very desirable by the sincere lovers of Jesus Christ.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. There is some appearance of this petition still remaining, in what the {t} Jews call the short prayer:

"what is the short prayer? R. Eliezer says, Mymvb Knwur hve, "do thy will in heaven"; and give quietness of spirit, or acquiescence of spirit in thy will, to them that fear thee below."

Christ says "thy will"; not the will of wicked men, nor the will of Satan, nor a man's own will, but the will of God: by which is meant either his secret will, which is the rule of all his proceedings both in providence and grace; is unknown to us, till facts make it appear; is always fulfilled in heaven and in earth; and sometimes is fulfilled by those who have no regard to his revealed will; and is what ought to be submitted to patiently, and without murmuring: or rather his revealed will, which consists partly in the declarations of his grace and mercy; as that salvation is by Christ, whoever believes in him shall be saved, that all the redeemed be sanctified, persevere to the end, and be glorified; and partly in the commands enjoined his people, which will of his is good, perfect, and acceptable. The will of God may be said to be done by us, when our wills are resigned to his; when we patiently submit to every adverse dispensation of providence; when our hearts and actions are, in some measure, conformed to his law; when what is done, is done in faith, with a view to his glory, and without dependence upon it; of which such only are capable who have a spiritual understanding of the will of God, believe in Christ, receive grace and strength from him, and are assisted by his Spirit. These desire to do the will of God, as it is done in heaven; meaning not so much by the inanimate creatures, the sun, and moon, and stars, as glorified saints and holy angels, who do it voluntarily and cheerfully; speedily, and without delay; constantly, and without any interruption; and perfectly and completely.

{r} Seder Tephillot, fol. 128. 2. Ed. Basil. {s} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 40. 2. {t} Ib. fol. 29. 2.

Matthew 6:11

Ver. 11. Give us this day our daily bread. The Arabic version reads it, "our bread for tomorrow"; and Jerom says, that in the Hebrew Gospel, used by the Nazarenes, he found the word rxm, which signifies "tomorrow": but this reading and sense seem to be contradicted by Christ, ***Mt 6:34*** were it not that it may be observed, that this signifies the whole subsequent time of life, and so furnishes us with a very commodious sense of this petition; which is, that God would give us, "day by day", as Luke expresses it, *Lu 11:3* that is, every day of our lives, to the end thereof, a proper supply of food: or the meaning of it is, that God would give us, for the present time, such food as we stand in need of; is suitable to us, to our nature and constitution, state and condition, and is sufficient and convenient for us: to which agrees the petition of the {u} Jews:

"The necessities of thy people are great, and their knowledge short; let it be thy good will and pleasure, O Lord, our God, that thou wouldst give to everyone wtonrp ydk, "what is sufficient for his sustenance", and to every one's body what it wants."

"Says R. Jose {w}, all the children of faith seek "every day" whyynwzm alavl, "to ask their food" of the Lord, and to pray a prayer for it."

By "bread" is meant all the necessaries of life, and for the support of it: it is called "our's"; not that we have a right unto it, much less deserve it, but to distinguish it from that of beasts; and because it is what we need, and cannot do without; what is appointed for us by providence, is our's by gift, and possessed by labour. It is said to be "daily" bread, and to be asked for "day by day"; which suggests the uncertainty of life; strikes at all anxious and immoderate cares for the morrow; is designed to restrain from covetousness, and to keep up the duty of prayer, and constant dependence on God; whom we must every day ask to "give" us our daily bread: for he is the sole author of all our mercies; which are all his free gifts; we deserve nothing at his hands: wherefore we ought to be thankful for what we have, without murmuring at his providences, or envying at what he bestows on others. All kind of food, everything that is eatable, is with the Jews called Mxl, "bread" {x}.

{u} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 29. 2. {w} Zohar in Exod. fol. 26. 2. {x} Jarchi in Job, vi. 7.

Matthew 6:12

Ver. 12. And forgive us our debts,.... Nothing is more frequent in the Jewish writings than to call sins ybwx, "debts"; and the phrase, of forgiving, is used both of God and men. Thus the prayer of Solomon is paraphrased {y} by the Targumist:

"and hear thou the petition of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make before this place; and do thou receive it from the place of the house of thy Shekinah, from heaven; and do thou accept their prayer Nwhybwxl qbvtw, "and forgive their debts"."

So Joseph's brethren signify to him, that it was their father's orders to say unto him, "forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin"; which is rendered by the Chaldee paraphrasts {z} ybwxl qwbv, "forgive the debts" of thy brethren, and their sins. Accordingly, by "debts" are meant sins here, as appears from *Lu 11:4* where it is read, "and forgive us our sin". These are called "debts"; not because they are so in themselves, for then it would be right to do them; debts should be paid; they are not debts we owe to God, but are so called, because on account of them we owe satisfaction to the law and justice of God: the proper debts we owe to God are love, obedience, and gratitude; and in default of these, we owe the debt of punishment. Now these debts are numerous, and we are incapable of paying, nor can any mere creature pay them for us; wherefore, we are directed to pray, that God would forgive them, or remit the obligation to punishment we lie under, on account of sin. This petition supposes a sense, acknowledgment, and confession of sin, and of inability to make satisfaction for it; and that God only can forgive it, who does, for Christ's sake, and on account of his blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction: what is here requested is a manifestation and application of pardon to the conscience of a sensible sinner; which, as it is daily needed, is daily to be asked for. The argument, or reason used, is,

as we forgive our debtors; which is to be understood not so much of pecuniary debtors, though they are to be forgiven, when poor and unable to pay; but of such who have offended, or done real injuries to others, either by word or deed: the injuries of enemies, the unkindness of friends, all sorts of offences, are to be forgiven by us; and not only so, but we are to pray to God to forgive them also. Now this is mentioned, not as if our forgiving others is the cause of God's forgiving us, or the model of it, or as setting him an example, or as if his and our forgiving were to be compared together, since these will admit of no comparison; but this is an argument founded upon God's own promise and grace, to forgive such who have compassion on their fellow creatures.

{y} Targum in 2 Chron. vi. 21. {z} Targum Onkelos & Jon. ben Uzziel in Gen. l. 17. Vid. Targum in 1 Chron. iv. 18. & in Cant. i. 1. & in Gen. iv. 13. & passim.

Ver. 13. And lead us not into temptation,.... Such a petition as this is often to be observed in the prayers of the Jews {a},

"ynaybt la, "do not lead me" neither into sin, nor into transgression and iniquity, Nwyon ydyl alw, "nor into temptation", or "into the hands of temptation";"

that is, into the power of it, so as to be overcome by it, and sink under it; in which sense the phrase is to be understood here. We are not here taught to pray against temptations at all, or in any sense, for they are sometimes needful and useful; but that they may not have the power over us, and destroy us. There are various sorts of temptations. There are the temptations of God; who may be said to tempt, not by infusing anything that is sinful, or by soliciting to it; but by enjoining things hard and disagreeable to nature, as in the case of Abraham; by afflicting, either in body or estate, of which Job is an instance; by permitting and letting loose the reins to Satan, and a man's own corruptions; by withdrawing his presence, and withholding the communications of his grace; and sometimes by suffering false prophets to arise among his people: his ends in them are on his own account, the display of his power; grace, wisdom, and faithfulness; on account of his Son, that his saints might be like him, and he might have an opportunity of exercising his power and pity: and on his people's account, that they might be humbled; their faith and patience tried; might see their weakness, and need of Christ, and be excited to prayer and watchfulness. There are also the temptations of Satan; which lie in soliciting to evil, suggesting hard and blasphemous thoughts of God, and filling with doubts and fears; which are cunningly formed by him, and are very afflictive. There are moreover the temptations of the world, which arise from poverty and riches, from the men of the world, the lusts of it, and from both its frowns and flatteries: add to all this, that there are temptations arising from a man's own heart. Now, in this petition, the children of God pray, that they may be kept from every occasion and object of sinning; from those sins they are most inclined to; that God would not leave them to Satan, and their own corrupt hearts; nor suffer them to sink under the weight of temptations of any sort; but that, in the issue, they might have a way to escape, and be victorious over all.

But deliver us from evil. This petition, with the Jews, is in this {b} form:

"er egpm ynlyutw, "but deliver me from an evil accident", and diseases; and do not trouble me with evil dreams, and evil imaginations."

R. Juda, after his prayer, or at the close of it, as is this petition, used {c} to say;

"let it be thy good pleasure, 0 Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, wnlyutv, "that thou wouldst deliver us" from impudent men, and impudence; from an "evil" man, and from an "evil" accident; from the "evil" imagination, i.e. the corruption of nature; from an "evil" companion; from an "evil" neighbour; and from Satan the destroyer; and from hard judgment; and from an hard adversary, whether he is the son of the covenant, or is not the son of the covenant."

And most, if not all of these things, may be very well thought to be comprised in the word "evil" here: particularly Satan may be meant, by "evil", or "the evil one", as the word may be rendered; who is eminently, originally, and immutably evil; his whole work and employment is nothing else but evil: and to be delivered from him, is to be rescued out of his hands, preserved from his snares, and delivered from his temptations. Evil men may also be intended: all men are naturally evil, and unalterably so, without the grace of God; and some are notoriously wicked; from whose company, sinful lusts, and pleasures, to which they are addicted, as well as from their rage and persecution, good men cannot but desire deliverance; as also from the evil of afflictions, and especially from the evil of sin; as that they may be kept from the commission of it; have the guilt of it removed; be preserved from its power and dominion; and, at last, be freed from the very being of it.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen. This conclusion is left out in the Arabic and Vulgate Latin versions, as it is in *Lu 11:4*. It stands thus in the Jewish prayers {d},

"ayh Klv twklmh yk, "for the kingdom is thine", and thou shalt reign in glory for ever and ever."

The usual response at the close of prayers, and reading the Shema, instead of "Amen", was {e} this:

"Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom, for ever and ever."

Which bears some resemblance to this concluding expression, which ascribes everlasting kingdom, power, and glory, to God: which may be considered either as a doxology, or an ascription of glory to God, which is his due; and ought be given him in all our prayers to him; or as so many reasons strengthening our faith in prayer; or as many arguments with God, with respect to the petitions made; since the kingdom of nature, providence, grace, and glory, is his: he is omnipotent, he has power to give us our daily bread; to forgive our sins; to preserve from, support under, and deliver out of temptation; to keep from all evil, and preserve from a total and final falling away: whose glory is concerned in all, to whom the glory of all is, and to whom it must, and shall be given; and all this for ever: and the whole is concluded with the word "Amen"; which is a note of asseveration, of the truth herein contained; is added by way of assent to every petition made; is expressive of an hearty wish, and desire to have all fulfilled; and also of faith and confidence, that they will be answered. And this word being retained, and kept the same in all languages, signifies the unity of the spirit, and faith in prayer, in all the saints, in all ages. I leave this prayer with one observation, and that is, whereas it has been so long, and so often said, that this is the Lord's prayer, it can never be proved that he ever made use of it; and it is certain that he did not make it, as appears from what has been cited out of the Jewish records: the several petitions in it were in being and use before he directed to them; and not only the petitions, but even the very preface and conclusion, are manifestly of Jewish original: what our Lord did was, he took the most proper and pertinent petitions, that had been used by good men among that people; which, with some alterations much for the better, he put together in this order, and gave his approbation of; and that with this view, to point out to his disciples some of the best and most suitable petitions to be made; and to give them a pattern of brevity and conciseness in prayer; and teach them to pray after such a manner, or in some such like words and expressions. This I observe, not to lessen the usefulness of this excellent pattern of sound words; the whole, and every part of it, being exceedingly instructive, and worthy of imitation; but to rectify a vulgar mistake, and to abate the formal and superstitious observance of it.

{a} Seder Tephillot, fol. 3. 1. Ed. Basil. fol. 4. 2. Ed. Amstelod. Shaare Zion, fol. 73. 1. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 60. 2. {b} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 60. 2. {c} Ib. fol. 16. 2. {d} Seder Tephillot, fol. 280. 1. Ed. Basil. {e} Misn. Yoma, c. 4. sect. 1. & 6. 2. T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 56. 1. & Taanith, fol. 16. 2. Seder Tephillot, fol. 70. 2. Ed. Basil.

Matthew 6:14

Ver. 14. For if ye forgive men their trespasses,.... Christ here refers to the petition in ***Mt 6:12*** which is enforced with this reason and argument, "as", or "for", so *Lu 11:4* "we forgive our debtors"; which he repeats and explains: and the reason why he singles out this particularly is, because he knew the Jews were a people very subject to revenge; and were very hardly brought to forgive any injuries done them: wherefore Christ presses it upon them closely to "forgive men their trespasses"; all sorts of injuries done them, or offences given them, whether by word or deed; and that fully, freely, from the heart; forgetting, as well as forgiving; not upbraiding them with former offences; and even without asking pardon, and though there might be no appearance of repentance. Now to this he encourages by saying,

your heavenly Father will also forgive you; will hear your prayers, and manifest his forgiving love to you: not that the forgiveness of others is the procuring cause of forgiveness with God, which is the blood of Christ; or of the manifestation and application of it, that is, the advocacy of Christ; nor the moving cause of it, that is, the free grace of God: but this enters into the character, and is descriptive of the persons, to whom God is pleased to make a comfortable discovery, and give a delightful sense of his pardoning grace; such persons, so disposed and assisted by his grace, may expect it of him.

Matthew 6:15

Ver. 15. But if you forgive not men their trespasses,.... On the other hand, where men are not of a forgiving temper to their fellow creatures and fellow Christians, how can they expect forgiveness at the hands of God? or what sense of pardoning grace can there be upon their minds? Had they any right apprehensions of the grace and goodness of God, in the forgiveness of their sins, this would influence their minds, and engage their hearts to forgive such who have offended them: wherefore, where this is wanting, it may be concluded of, and said to such persons,

neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. It is a plain case, that your Father has not given you a true sense of the pardon of your sins, nor can you be certain that he will; nor have you any reason to expect it, when you are so cruel and revengeful to others. There is a considerable emphasis lies upon the word "men", to which "heavenly Father" is opposed, and the sense, according to it, is, that if men, who are upon an equal foot with each other, should not forgive one another, how should it be expected that our Father which is in heaven, who is so much above, and no ways obliged to us, should forgive us?

Matthew 6:16

Ver. 16. Moreover when ye fast,.... This is to be understood, not so much of their public stated fasts, and which were by divine appointment, as of their private fasts; which, with the Jews, were very frequent and numerous, and particularly every Monday and Thursday; see *Lu 18:12* in which they affected great severity, and is here condemned by Christ:

be not as the hypocrites, the Scribes and Pharisees,

of a sad countenance; who put on very mournful airs, and dismal looks; made wry faces, and distorted countenances; banished all pleasantry and cheerfulness from them, so that they looked quite like other men than they really were;

for they disfigure their faces; not by covering them out of sight, by putting a veil over them, as some have thought; but they neglected to wash their faces, and make them clean, as at other times; and not only so, but put ashes upon their heads, and other methods they used: they discoloured their faces, or "made" them "black", as the Arabic version reads it; that they might look as if they became so through fasting: and such persons were in great esteem, and thought to be very religious. It is said {f}, in commendation of R. Joshua ben Chanamah, that all his days wynp wrxvwh, "his face was black", through fastings; and this is said {g} to be the reason of Ashur's name, in ***1Ch 4:5*** because "his face was black" with fasting: yea, they looked upon such a disfiguring of the face to be meritorious, and what would be rewarded hereafter.

"Whoever (say they {h}) wynp ryxvmh, "makes his face black", on account of the law in this world, God will make his brightness to shine in the world to come."

Now these practices they used,

that they might appear unto men to fast: so that either they did not really fast, when they pretended to it; only put on these outward appearances, that men might think they did; or, not content with real fasting, which they must be conscious of themselves, and God knew, they took such methods, that it might appear to men that they fasted, and that they might be taken notice of, and applauded by them: for their view in fasting was not to satisfy their own consciences, or please God, but that they might have glory of men. Hence, says Christ,

verily I say unto you, they have their reward; they obtain what they seek for, honour from men, and that is all they will have.

{f} Juchasin, fol. 59. 1. {g} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 12. 1. {h} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 100. 1.

Matthew ***6:17***

Ver. 17. But thou, when thou fastest,.... Christ allows of fasting, but what is of a quite different kind from that of the Jews; which lay not in an outward abstinence from food, and other conveniences of life, and refreshments of nature; but in an abstinence from sin, in acknowledgment and confession of it; and in the exercise of faith and hope in God, as a God pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin; wherefore cheerfulness, and a free use of the creatures, without an abuse of them, best became such persons.

Anoint thine head, and wash thy face; directly contrary to the Jewish canons, which forbid these things, with others, on fast days:

"On the day of atonement, (say {i} they,) a man is forbidden eating and drinking, hkyobwhuyxrbw "and washing and anointing", and putting on of shoes, and the use of the bed."

And the same were forbidden on other fasts: in anointings, the head was anointed first, and this rule and reason are given for it:

"he that would anoint his whole body, hlyxt wvar Ko, "let him anoint his head first", because it is king over all its members {k}."

Anointing and washing were signs of cheerfulness and joy; see ***Ru 3:3***.

{i} Misn. Yoma, c. 8. sect. 1. & Taanith, c. 1. sect. 4, 5, 6. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 77. 2. Taanith, fol. 12. 2. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 32.
{k} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 61. 1.

Matthew 6:18

Ver. 18. That thou appear not unto men to fast,.... Which is just the reverse of the hypocrites, the Scribes and Pharisees; and quite contrary to the customs of the Jews, who when they fasted, particularly on their noted fasts {l},

"brought out the ark into the street of the city, and put burnt ashes upon it, and upon the head of the prince, and upon the head of the president of the sanhedrim, and every man upon his own head."

All which was done, to be seen of men to fast; but Christ directs to such sorts of fasting, and which is to be done in such a manner, as only to be seen by God:

but unto thy Father which is in secret; who is invisible, and who sees what is done in secret, and takes notice of the internal exercise of grace; which he approves of, and prefers to outward fastings; and

thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly: and to have honour from God, is infinitely more than to have the applause of men; for as God delights in, so he will reward his own grace with glory.

{l} Misn. Taanith, c. 2. sect. 1.

Matthew 6:19

Ver. 19. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,.... Meaning either treasures that are of an earthly nature and kind, the more valuable and excellent things of the earth, worldly wealth and riches; or the things and places, in which these are laid up, as bags, chests, or coffers, barns and other treasuries, private or public. Christ here dissuades from covetousness, and worldly mindedness; an anxious care and concern, to hoard up plenty of worldly things for themselves, for time to come, making no use of them at present for the good of others: and this he does, from the nature of the things themselves; the places where they are laid up; the difficulty of keeping them; and their liableness to be corrupted or lost.

Where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal. Garments, formerly, were a considerable part of the treasures of great men, as well as gold and silver; see *Job 27:16*. So according to the {m} Targumist, Haman is bid to go aklmd yzng tybl, "to the king's treasury", and take from thence one of the purple garments, the best, and raiment of the best silk, &c. and these were liable to be eaten with the moth, ***Jas 5:2***. The word translated rust, does not here signify the rust of metals, as gold and silver; by which there is not so much damage done, so as to destroy them, and make them useless; but whatever corrupts and consumes things eatable, as blasting and mildew in corn, or any sort of vermin in granaries: for gold and silver, or money, with jewels and precious stones, which make a very great part of worldly treasure, seem to be more particularly designed, by what thieves break through into houses for, and carry away. So that here are three sorts of earthly treasures pointed at, which are liable to be corrupted, or taken away: garments, which may be destroyed, and rendered useless for wearing; provisions of things eatable, as all sorts of corn and grain, which may be so corrupted by smut and vermin, as not to be fit for use; and money and jewels, which may be stolen by thieves: so that no sort of worldly riches and treasure is safe, and to be depended on; and therefore it is a great folly and vanity to lay it up, and trust in it.

{m} Targum Sheni. in Esth. vi. 10.

Matthew 6:20

Ver. 20. But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven,.... That is, either be concerned for, and seek after heavenly treasure, the riches of glory, the joys and glories of another world, which infinitely excel everything that is valuable on earth; and which can never be corrupted, or taken away: or rather, lay up your earthly treasures in heaven; that is, put them into the hands of God in heaven; and this is done, by liberally communicating to the poor; by which means men "provide themselves bags which wax not old, and a treasure in heaven that faileth not", *Lu 12:33*. They shall never want any good thing here, and they "lay up in store for themselves, a good foundation against the time to come", ***1Ti 6:18***. This is the way to have worldly treasure secured from moth, rust, and thieves; for to lay it up in heaven with God, to give it to him, to his poor, to make use of it for his glory, is to lay it up in a place,

where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. Treasures are safer here than in our own hands, and will turn to better account, and more to our own advantage, both in this life, and that which is to come: see *Mt 19:21*. In this way, though not for it, men come to have treasure in heaven, even the treasure of eternal life, glory, and happiness. Heaven is often represented by the Jewish writers as a treasury; and the treasures which are in it are said {n} to be

"Myyx yzng, "treasures of life", and treasures of peace, and treasures of blessing; and the souls of the righteous, and the spirits and souls that shall be created, and the dew with which God will quicken the dead."

Those words in *De 31:16*. "And the Lord said unto Moses, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers", are thus {o} paraphrased.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, lo! thou shalt sleep in the dust with thy fathers, and thy soul shall be treasured up amle yyx yzngb, "in the treasury of eternal life", with thy fathers."

They tell us {p} of a story of Monbaz the king, who was son to queen Helena; in which are many things agreeable to these words of Christ, and which may serve to illustrate them.

"Monbaz the king stood and gave all his goods to the poor: his relations sent to him, and said, thy fathers added to that which was their's, and to that which was their fathers; but thou hast given away that which was thine, and that which was thy father's: he replied to them all thus: my fathers Mymvb ytzng ynaw Urab wzng, "laid up treasure on earth, but I have laid up treasure in heaven", according to *Ps 85:11*. My fathers laid up treasures, which do not bring forth fruit; but I have laid up treasures, which bring forth fruit, according to ***Isa 3:10***. My fathers gathered in a place, where the hand, i.e. of man rules, (where thieves break through and steal,) but I have gathered in a place where the hand of man does not rule, according to *Ps 97:2*. My fathers gathered mammon, money, but I have gathered souls, according to *Pr 11:30*. My fathers gathered for others, but I have gathered ymuel, for myself, according to *De 24:13*. My fathers gathered in this world, but I have gathered "for the world to come"."

One of their commentators {q} on the phrase, "my fathers laid up treasures below", as it is in the Babylonish Talmud {r}, has this remark:

"for lo! all that they treasured up was for the necessaries of this world; which is helwt hmr rpe Mwqm, "a place of dust and vermin", which corrupt and destroy everything; "but I have laid up treasures above", a place secure and firm, and which preserves everything that is put into it."

{n} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 12. 2. {o} Targum Jon. ben Uzziel, in Deut. xxxi. 16. {p} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 2. {q} Caphtor, fol. 97. 1. {r} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 11. 1.

Matthew 6:21

Ver. 21. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. This seems to be a proverbial expression, and contains in it another reason, dissuading from worldly mindedness; because of the danger the heart is in of being ensnared and ruined thereby: and the sense of it is, if your treasure is on earth, and lies in earthly things, your hearts will be set upon them, and be in them, in your bags, your coffers and storehouses; and so your souls will be in danger of being lost; which loss will be an irreparable one, though you should gain the whole world. But if your treasure is put into the hands of God, your hearts will be with him, and be settled on him; your desires will be after heavenly things; your affections will be set on things above; your conversation will be in heaven, whilst you are on earth; and that will be the place and seat of your happiness, to all eternity.

Matthew 6:22

Ver. 22. The light of the body is the eye,.... Or, the "candle of the body is the eye"; for the eye is that in the body, as a candle is in the house; by the light of it, the several members of the body perform their office; and what is said of the eye of the body, is transferred to the eye of the mind:

if therefore thine eye be single: that is, if thy mind be liberal, generous, and bountiful: for Christ is still upon the same subject of liberality, and against covetousness; and here speaks entirely in the language of the Jews, who could easily understand him; in whose writings we read of three sorts of eyes; a good eye, a middling one, and an evil one; so in the offerings of the first fruits {s},

"hpy Nye, "a good eye" gave the fortieth, the house Shammai say, the thirtieth part; a middling one, the fiftieth; and an evil one, the sixtieth part."

Upon which the commentators say {t}, a "good eye" means one that is liberal, and an "evil eye" the contrary: hence you often read {u} of "trading, dedicating", and "giving with a good" or "an evil eye"; that is, either generously, liberally, or in a niggardly and grudging manner; which may help us to the sense of our Lord in these words; whose meaning is, that if a man is not covetous, but his mind is disposed to generosity and liberality; if this be the case, as if he should say,

thy whole body shall be full of light: all thy actions will be influenced by this noble principle; thy whole life will be illuminated, guided and governed by it; thy mind will be cheerful and pleasant, and thy estate and condition will be prosperous and successful.

{s} Misn. Trumot, c. 4. sect. 3. {t} Maimon. Bartenora & Ez. Chayim in ib. {u} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 37. 2. & 71. 1. & 72. 1.

Matthew *6:23*

Ver. 23. But if thine eye be evil,.... If thou art of a sordid disposition, of an avaricious temper, if the sin of covetousness prevails over thee,

thy whole body will be full of darkness: thy judgment will be so influenced by that sordid principle, that thou wilt not be able to discern what is agreeable to the law of God, or human reason; what is fitting to be done for thyself, for God, or for thy fellow creatures; all the powers and faculties of thy soul will be enslaved by it, and all be intent upon, and employed in the gratification of it: thy mind will be always sad and sorrowful, harassed and distressed; and thy estate, and condition, will be most miserable and uncomfortable:

if therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! as it is in the body, so it is with the mind; as when the eye, the light of the body, is put out by any means, all the members of the body are in entire darkness; so when the light of reason in the mind is so far extinguished by any prevailing iniquity, particularly the sin of covetousness, so that it is wholly influenced and governed by it, what irregular actions is it led into! What deeds of darkness does it perform! and what will be the consequence of it, but utter and eternal darkness, if grace prevent not!

Matthew* *6:24

Ver. 24. No man can serve two masters,.... Whose orders are directly contrary to one another: otherwise, if they were the same, or agreed, both might be served; but this is rarely the case, and seldom done. This is a proverbial expression, and is elsewhere used by Christ, *Lu 16:13*. The Jews have sayings pretty much like it, and of the same sense as when they say {w},

"we have not found that twnxlwv ytvl hkwz Mda lk, "any man is fit for two tables.""

And again {x},

"that it is not proper for one man to have two governments:"

their meaning is, that two things cannot be done together:

for, either he will hate the one, and love the other; he will have less affection and regard to the one, than to the other; as the service or orders of the one, are less agreeable to him than the others;

or else he will hold to the one; hearken to his commands, obey his orders, and abide in his service;

and despise the other; show disrespect to his person, neglect his orders, and desert his service:

ye cannot serve God and mammon. The word "mammon" is a Syriac word, and signifies money, wealth, riches, substance, and everything that comes under the name of worldly goods. Jerom says, that riches, in the Syriac language, are called "mammon"; and so the word is often used in the above senses, in the Chaldee paraphrases {y}, and in the Talmudic writings; where {z} twnwmm ynyd, "pecuniary judgments", or causes relating to money affairs, in which were pecuniary mulcts, are opposed to twvpn ynyd, "judgment of souls", or causes relating to life and death. The account and interpretation Irenaeus {a} gives of the word, is very wide and foreign; who says, that

"Mammon, according to the Jewish way of speaking, which the Samaritans used, is one that is greedy, and would have more than he ought; but, according to the Hebrew language, it is called adjectively Mam, and signifies one that is gluttonous; that is, who cannot refrain himself from gluttony."

Whereas it is not an Hebrew word, nor an adjective, but a substantive, and signifies riches; which are opposed to God, being by some men loved, admired, trusted in, and worshipped, as if they were God; and which is incompatible with the service of the true God: for such persons, whose hearts go after their covetousness, and are set upon earthly riches, who give up themselves to them, are eagerly and anxiously pursuing after them, and place their confidence in them; whatever pretensions they may make to the service of God, as did the Scribes and Pharisees, who are particularly struck at by this expression, both here and elsewhere, they cannot truly and heartily serve the Lord. "Mammon" is the god they serve; which word may well be thought to answer to Pluto, the god of riches, among the Heathens. The Jews, in Christ's time, were notorious for the love of "mammon"; and they themselves own, that this was the cause of the destruction of the second temple: the character they give of those, who lived under the second temple, is this:

"we know that they laboured in the law, and took care of the commandments, and of the tithes, and that their whole conversation was good; only that they Nwmmh ta Nybhwa, "loved the mammon", and hated one another without a cause {b}."

{w} Praefat. Celi Jaker, fol. 3. 1. {x} Piske Tosephot Cetubot, art. 359. {y} Vid. Targum Onkelos & Jon. in Gen. xiii. 13. & in Jud. v. 19. & in Prov. iii. 9. & in Isa. xlv. 13. & passim. {z} Misn. Sanhed. c. 1. sect. 1. & c. 4. sect. 1. {a} Adv. Haeres. l. 3. c. 8. p. 249. {b} T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 38. 3.

Matthew ***6:25***

Ver. 25. Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life,.... Since ye cannot serve both God and "mammon", obey one, and neglect the other. Christ does not forbid labour to maintain, support, and preserve, this animal life; nor does he forbid all thought and care about it, but all anxious, immoderate, perplexing, and distressing thoughts and cares; such as arise from diffidence and unbelief, and tend to despair; which are dishonourable to God, as the God of nature and providence, and uncomfortable to men:

what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. The several and the only things, which are necessary for the support and comfort of human life, are mentioned; as meat, drink, and clothing; Eating and drinking are necessary to preserve life; and raiment, to cover and defend the body, from the injuries of the heavens: and having these, men have everything necessary, and ought herewith to be content; nor should they be anxiously thoughtful about these: for

is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? And yet, God has given these without man's thought: and since these are better, and much more excellent, than food and raiment, as all must and will acknowledge; and God has given these the greater gifts, it may be depended upon, that he will give the lesser; that he will give meat and drink; to uphold that valuable life, which he is the author of; and raiment to clothe that body, which he, with so much wisdom and power, has accurately and wonderfully made.

Matthew ***6:26***

Ver. 26. Behold the fowls of the air,.... Not such as are brought up in houses, but which fly abroad in the air, wild; and are not supported by their own, or any human care, but by the care of God: *Lu 12:24* particularly mentions the "ravens", referring probably to *Ps 147:9*, and because they are very voracious creatures: and there it is said, "consider the ravens"; look attentively upon them, and with observation,

for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. This is not said, that men should not sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns: but to reprove their diffidence and unbelief: who, though they have the opportunity of sowing, reaping, and gathering in, year by year, yet distrust the providence of God; when the fowls of the air do none of these,

yet your heavenly Father feedeth them; see *Ps 145:15*. The Jews acknowledge this, that the least and meanest of creatures are fed by God.

"Mar says {c}, the holy blessed God sits Nzw, "and feeds", i.e. all creatures, and takes care of them."

Are ye not much better than they? Do not you differ from them? are ye not much more excellent than they? And if God feeds and provides for inferior creatures, such as are very mean and contemptible, how much more will he not provide for you? There is a passage in the Talmud, which has great affinity to this of Christ's, and appears to have in it pretty much of the like kind of reasoning. In the Misna {d} it is said, that R. Simeon ben Eleazer should say,

"Did you ever see a beast, or a fowl, that had a trade? but they are fed without trouble."

In the Gemara {e} is added,

"Did you ever see a lion bearing burdens, an hart gathering summer fruits, a fox a money changer, or a wolf selling pots? And yet reu alb Nyonrptm, "they are nourished without labour", and wherefore are they created? To serve me, and I am created to serve my Maker: and lo! these things have in them an argument, "from the less to the greater"; for if these, which are created to serve me after this manner, are supported without trouble; I, who am created to serve my Maker, is it not fit that I should be supplied without trouble? And what is the reason that I am sustained with trouble? My sins."

{c} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 107. 2. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. {d} Kiddushin, c. 4. sect. 14. {e} T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 66. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 82. 1, 2.

Matthew **_6:27_**

Ver. 27. Which of you by taking thought,.... As Christ argued before, from the unnecessariness of anxious thoughts and cares, about the provisions of life; so here, from the unprofitableness of them; it being impossible for a man, with all his care and thought, to

add one cubit unto his stature, or "to his age"; so the word is rendered, ***Joh 9:21*** to the days of his life, he is so solicitous about; for a cubit may as well be applied to a man's age, as an "hand's breadth" is to his days, *Ps 39:5*. Nor is it so reasonable to think, that Christ should be speaking of making such an addition to a man's height; though that, to be sure, is an impossible thing: since the far greater part of Christ's hearers must be come to their full growth, and could not hope to have any addition made to their height; though they might hope to add to their days; much less such a monstrous one as that of a cubit, and which is a strong reason against the other sense of the word, and for this: for our Lord is speaking of something very small, which men cannot do; as appears from what Luke says, *Lu 12:26* "If ye then be not able to do that which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?" Whereas, to add a cubit to a man's height, is a great deal:

"the stature of a middling man (says {f} Bartenora) is three cubits."

And to add one more, makes a large addition to his stature; but to apply this to a man's age, is a small matter, and yet is what men cannot do: the sense of the words is this, that no man, by all the care and thought he can make use of, is ever able to add one cubit, or the least measure to his days; he cannot lengthen out his life one year, one month, one day, one hour; no, not one moment.

{f} In Misn. Erubim, c. 4. sect. 5. & Negaim, c. 13. sect. 11.

Matthew **_6:28_**

Ver. 28. And why take ye thought for raiment,.... Having exposed the folly of an anxious and immoderate care and thought, for food to support and prolong life, our Lord proceeds to show the vanity of an over concern for raiment:

consider the lilies of the field or "the flowers of the field", as the Arabic version reads it, the lilies being put for all sorts of flowers. The Persic version mentions both rose and lily; the one being beautifully clothed in red, the other in white. Christ does not direct his hearers to the lilies, or flowers which grow in the garden which receive some advantage from the management and care of the gardener; but to those of the field, where the art and care of men were not so exercised: and besides, he was now preaching on the mount, in an open place; and as he could point to the fowls of the air, flying in their sight, so to the flowers, in the adjacent fields and valleys: which he would have them look upon, with their eyes, consider and contemplate in their minds,

how they grow; in what variety of garbs they appear, of what different beautiful colours, and fragrant odours, they were; and yet

they toil not, or do not labour as husbandmen do, in tilling their land, ploughing their fields, and sowing them with flax, out of which linen garments are made:

neither do they spin; the flax, when plucked and dressed, as women do, in order for clothing; nor do they weave it into cloth, or make it up into garments, as other artificers do.

Matthew 6:29

Ver. 29. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory,.... This is a certain truth, to be affirmed in the strongest manner, and to be believed, that not only men and kings too in general; but even particularly Solomon, the richest and most magnificent of all the kings of Israel, whose grandeur, and glory, exceeded all the princes of the earth; that even he, not in his common dress, but when "in his glory", and in "all" his glory, when arrayed with his royal and richest robes, with his crown on his head, and when seated on his throne,

was not arrayed like one of these lilies, or flowers of the field: for the glory and beauty of his garments were purely from art, but their's by nature; which can never be equalled by art. This phrase, "Solomon in all his glory", is the same which the Jewish doctors, in their writings, express by wtevb hmlv, "Solomon in his hour" {g}: that is as their commentators explain it {h}, wtwklm teb, "in the time of his reign"; for they say he was first a king, and then a private person. Now, not whilst he was a private person, but when a king, in the height of his grandeur and magnificence, and when dressed out in the most splendid manner, he was exceeded in array by a single lily: or the sense is, in his royal apparel. For as the same doctors say,

"what is a man's "glory?" It is his clothing that is his outward glory; and again, garments are the glory of a man {i}."

{g} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 7. sect. 1. T. Bab. ib. fol. 49. 1. & 83. 1. & 86. 2. {h} Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. {i} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 95. 1. & 99. 4. & 110. 4.

Matthew 6:30

Ver. 30. Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field..... These words are a conclusion from the former, and contain an argument from the lesser to the greater; that if God, for this is solely his work, so clothes the lilies, the flowers of the field, and whatever grows up out of the earth, in such a beautiful and splendid manner, as even to outdo Solomon, in his richest apparel; there's no doubt to be made of it, or at least ought not, but that he will much more provide clothing for men. The argument is illustrated, by the short continuance of the grass of the field, which is so clothed; and the use it is put to, when cut down;

which today is in being, but abides not long, as it were but for a day: it flourishes in the morning, continues for the day in its glory and verdure, is cut down at evening, and withers and dies,

and tomorrow is cast into the oven, to heat it with, or as the Syriac version reads arwntb, "in the furnace". And so Munster's Hebrew edition of this Gospel. For furnaces used to be heated with straw and stubble, and such like things, as were gathered out of the fields; so, we read in the Misna {k}, that pots and furnaces were heated;

"a pot which they heat "with straw and stubble", they put into it that which is to be boiled--a furnace which they heat "with straw and stubble", they put nothing into it, nor upon it (i.e. till they have removed the coals or ashes): a little furnace, which they heat abbgbw vqb, "with straw and stubble", is as the pots."

The last word, abbg, Bartenora says, signifies wood, or sticks, small as stubble, which they gather out of the field; that is, the stalks of some sort of herbs and plants, that grow in the field: now if God clothes these plants, which are so short lived, and at last used for such mean purposes;

shall he not much more clothe you men, his people, who are of a much longer life, and designed for greater ends and purposes; for the worship and service of God, for his honour and glory here, and for eternal life and happiness hereafter,

O ye of little faith? As such persons are, who distrust the providence of God, with respect to food and raiment, The phrase, hnma ynjq, "men of little faith", is often to be met with in the Rabbinical writings: so Noah is represented by them, as one of "little faith", who believed, and did not believe the flood; and therefore did not go into the ark, till the waters drove him {l}: and though he is said to be perfect, this was not by his works, but by the grace of God {m}. So the Israelites at the Red Sea, who thought that when they came out on one side, the Egyptians would come out on the {n} other. So the little children that mocked Elisha, are said to be so called, because they were men "of little {o} faith". So everyone that exalts his voice in prayer, is reckoned such an one {p}. But what comes nearest to the case before us, is the following {q} passage;

"Says R. Eliezer the Great, whoever has a morsel in his basket, and says, what shall I eat tomorrow? is no other than hnma ynmqm, "one of those of little faith"."

{k} Sabbat, c. 3. sect. 1, 2. {l} Jarchi in Gen. vii. 7. {m} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 10. 2. {n} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 2. Erachin, fol. 15. 1. {o} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 46. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 90. 2. {p} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 24. 2. Zohar in Num. fol. 93. 2. {q} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 48. 2.

Matthew 6:31

Ver. 31. Therefore take no thought,.... That is, for the morrow, as it is explained, ***Lu 6:34*** for it is lawful to take proper care and thought for present food, drink, and raiment; but not to be anxiously concerned for futurity;

saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? These are a repetition of the several things instanced in, and are the very language and expressions of men of little faith; as in the above citation, rxml lkwa hm, "what shall I eat tomorrow?"

Matthew 6:32

Ver. 32. For after all these things do the Gentiles seek,.... Or "the nations of the world", as in *Lu 12:30*. The Syriac reads it so here: the phrase, Mlweh twmwa "the nations of the world", is used of the Gentiles, in distinction from the Israelites, thousands of times in the Jewish writings; it would be endless to give instances. These knew not God, nor acknowledged his providence; the greater part of them thought, that the soul perished with the body; few of them thought, that anything remained after death; and they that did, spoke very doubtfully of it: wherefore it is no wonder, that such persons should greedily seek after, and be anxiously concerned for all these things, food, raiment, and riches, and a great plenty of them; since this is all the happiness they expect; and imagine, that this is to be acquired by their care, thought, diligence, and industry; having no regard to a superior being, and his all wise providence: but for the Jews, and so Christians, who have a divine revelation, the knowledge of God, and his providence, and of a future state after this life, to act the same part the Heathens do, is exceedingly unbecoming, absurd, and wicked: and besides, such greedy desires, immoderate care, and anxious solicitude, are altogether unnecessary;

for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Every word almost, carries in it an argument, to strengthen the faith of God's children, to encourage them to believe, that he will bestow upon them, whatever is needful, for meat, drink, and clothing: he is a "father", and will take care of his children; "their father"; they have interest in him, being related to him, and need not doubt of his paternal care, and affectionate regard to them: their "heavenly" Father, or their Father in heaven; who has all things at his command, who sits there, and does whatever he pleaseth on earth: "he knoweth that they have need"; he knows all things, all their straits, difficulties, wants and necessities; he knows they need every day, "all these things", food and raiment, and cannot do without them: and therefore they may depend upon it, that as it is in his power to relieve them, and their persons and cases are not unknown to him; he who stands in the relation of a father to them, will supply them with whatever is proper and convenient for them.

Matthew 6:33

Ver. 33. But seek first the kingdom of God,.... Meaning either the Gospel, and the ministration of it; in which sense this phrase is often used, see *Mt 21:43* and which is diligently to be sought after, and into; to be constantly attended on, and to be preferred to our necessary food, to raiment, or riches, or any enjoyment of life: or else the kingdom of glory, which is prepared by God, and is his gift; for which he makes his people meet here, and will introduce them into it hereafter.

And his righteousness; the righteousness of God, which is revealed in the Gospel, and is what gives a right and title to the kingdom of heaven. This is not the righteousness of man, but of God; and is no other than the righteousness of Christ; so called, because he is God who has wrought it; it is what God approves of, accepts, and imputes, and which only can justify in his sight, and give an abundant entrance into his kingdom and glory. Heaven is to be sought for in the first place, as the perfection of the saints' happiness; and Christ's righteousness is to be sought for, and laid hold on by faith, as the way and means of enjoying that happiness; without which, there will be no entering into the kingdom of heaven.

And all these things shall be added unto you: of the free bounty, goodness, and liberality of God, without your thought and care, and much less merit; even "all these things", meat, drink, clothing, or whatsoever worldly sustenance else is necessary for you: which are not parts of the happiness of saints, only appendages thereunto; which they have over and above what they are, or should be chiefly seeking after. The Hebrews {r} say,

"that no good sign will be shown to Israel, until they return and "seek" three things: "afterwards the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord"; Mymv twklm wz, "this is the kingdom of heaven"; and "David their king", according to its literal sense; "and shall fear the Lord and his goodness"; this is the house of the sanctuary, as it is said, "this goodly mountain", and Lebanon."

{r} Jarchi & Kimchi, in Hos. iii. 5.

Matthew ***6:34***

Ver. 34. Take therefore no thought for the morrow,.... Reference is had to *Pr 27:1*. "Boast not of thyself tomorrow": a man cannot promise or assure himself, that he shall have a morrow, and therefore it is great weakness and folly to be anxiously thoughtful about it. This is expressed in the Talmud {s}, nearer the sense of Christ's words, after this manner:

"rxm tru rut la, "do not distress thyself with tomorrow's affliction, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth"; perhaps tomorrow may not be, and thou wilt be found distressing thyself, for the time which is nothing to thee."

And should it come, it is unnecessary to be thoughtful of it in a distressing manner before hand;

for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. The morrow is here introduced by a "prosopopeia", as if it was a person sufficiently thoughtful and careful for the necessaries of it: every day brings along with it fresh care and thought, being attended with fresh wants and troubles; and therefore, it is very unadvisable, to bring the cares and troubles of two days upon one; as he does, who is anxiously concerned today, for the things of tomorrow;

sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. This proverb is thus expressed in the Talmud {t}, htevb hrul hyd, "sufficient for distress", or "vexation, is the present time"; which the gloss explains thus,

"sufficient for the vexation it is, that men should grieve for it, at the time that it comes upon them."

It is very wrong to anticipate trouble, or meet it before hand; if it was for no other reason but this, that every day's trouble is enough, and should not be needlessly added to, by an over concern what shall be done for tomorrow; or how shall the necessities of it be answered, or the trials of it be endured.

{s} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 100. 2. {t} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 9. 2.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Matthew 7:1

Ver. 1. Judge not, that ye be not judged. This is not to be understood of any sort of judgment; not of judgment in the civil courts of judicature, by proper magistrates, which ought to be made and pass, according to the nature of the case; nor of judgment in the churches of Christ, where offenders are to be called to an account, examined, tried, and dealt with according to the rules of the Gospel; nor of every private judgment, which one man may make upon another, without any detriment to him; but of rash judgment, interpreting men's words and deeds to the worst sense, and censuring them in a very severe manner; even passing sentence on them, with respect to their eternal state and condition. Good is the advice given by the famous Hillell {u}, who lived a little before Christ's time;

"Do not judge thy neighbour, (says he,) until thou comest into his place."

It would be well, if persons subject to a censorious spirit, would put themselves in the case and circumstances the persons are in they judge; and then consider, what judgment they would choose others should pass on them. The argument Christ uses to dissuade from this evil, which the Jews were very prone to, is, "that ye be not judged"; meaning, either by men, for such censorious persons rarely have the good will of their fellow creatures, but are commonly repaid in the same way; or else by God, which will be the most awful and tremendous: for such persons take upon them the place of God, usurp his prerogative, as if they knew the hearts and states of men; and therefore will have judgment without mercy at the hands of God.

{u} Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 4.

Matthew 7:2

Ver. 2. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged,.... Both by God and men; to which agree those proverbial sentences used by the Jews;

"He that judgeth his neighbour according to the balance of righteousness, or innocence, they judge him according to righteousness."

{w} And a little after,

"As ye have judged me according to the balance of righteousness, God will judge you according to the balance of righteousness."

Hence that advice of Joshua ben Perachiah {x}, who, by the Jewish writers, is said to be the master of Christ;

"Judge every man according to the balance of righteousness."

Which their commentators explain thus {y}; when you see a man as it were in "equilibrio", inclining to neither part, it is not clear from what he does, that he is either good or evil, righteous or unrighteous; yet when you see him do a thing which may be interpreted either to a good or a bad sense, it ought always to be interpreted to the best.

And with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again. This was an usual proverb among the Jews; it is sometimes delivered out thus, hdm dgnk hdm, "measure against measure" {z}; but oftener thus, and nearer the form of it here, wl Nyddwm hb ddwm Mdav hdmb, "with what measure a man measures, they measure to him": one might fill up almost a page, in referring to places, where it is used in this form: besides those in the {a} margin, take the following, and the rather, because it gives instances of this retaliation {b}:

""With what measure a man measures, they measure to him"; so the woman suspected of adultery, she adorned herself to commit sin, and God dishonoured her; she exposed herself to iniquity, God therefore stripped her naked; the same part of her body in which her sin begun, her punishment did. Samson walked after his eyes, and therefore the Philistines plucked out his eyes. Absalom was lifted up in his mind, with his hair, and therefore he was hanged by it; and because he lay with his father's ten concubines, they therefore pierced him with ten lances; and because he stole away three hearts, the heart of his father, the heart of the sanhedrim, and the heart of Israel, therefore he was thrust with three darts: and so it is with respect to good things; Miriam waited for Moses one hour, therefore the Israelites waited for her seven days in the wilderness; Joseph, who was greater than his brethren, buried his father; and Moses, who was the greatest among the

Israelites took care of the bones of Joseph, and God himself buried Moses."

{w} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 127. 2. {x} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 6. {y} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {z} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 7. 4. {a} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 12. 2. Sota, fol. 8. 2. Sanhedrim, fol. 100. 1. Zohar in Gen. fol. 87. 4. & in Lev. fol. 36. 1. & 39. 3. & in Num. fol. 67. 3. Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 194. 1. Misn. Beracot, c. 9. sect. 5. {b} Misn. Sota, c. 1. sect. 7, 8, 9. Vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 99. 1, 2.

Matthew 7:3

Ver. 3. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye?.... By "mote" is meant, any little bit of straw, or small splinter of wood, that flies into the eye, and does it damage, hinders its sight, and gives it pain; and designs little sins, comparatively speaking, such as youthful follies, human frailties, and infirmities, inadvertencies and imprudencies; which may be said to be light faults, in comparison of others: and though not to be vindicated, nor continued in, yet not to be severely looked upon and chastised. To scrutinize diligently into, aggravate, dwell upon, and sharply reprove the lighter faults of others, is a conduct, which is here inveighed against, and condemned by Christ; and more especially, when it may be said with the greatest truth and justice to such,

but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye: by the "beam" is meant, greater sins, grosser abominations, and such as were more peculiar to the Pharisees; as pride, arrogance, a vain opinion of themselves, confidence in their own righteousness, hypocrisy, covetousness, and iniquity; things they did not advert to in themselves, when they loudly exclaimed against lesser evils in others. Such men must be of all persons inexcusable, who condemn that in others, which either they themselves do, or what is abundantly worse.

Matthew 7:4

Ver. 4. Or how wilt thou say to thy brother?.... This is not so much an interrogation, as an expression of admiration, at the front and impudence of such censorious remarkers, and rigid observators; who not content to point at the faults of others, take upon them to reprove them in a very magisterial way: and it is as if Christ had said, with what face canst thou say to thy friend or neighbour,

let me pull out the mote out of thine eye? give me leave to rebuke thee sharply for thy sin, as it deserves,

and behold a beam is in thine own eye; thou art guilty of a far greater iniquity: astonishing impudence! Art thou so blind, as not to see and observe thy viler wickedness? Or which, if conscious of, how canst thou prevail upon thyself to take upon thee to reprove and censure others? Dost thou think thy brother cannot see thy beam? And may he not justly retort thine iniquities upon thee, which exceed his? and then what success canst thou promise thyself? Such persons are very unfit to be reprovers of others.

Matthew 7:5

Ver. 5. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye,.... Very rightly does our Lord call such a man an hypocrite, who is very free in remarking and reproving other men's sins, and covering his own; and indeed, one end of his critical observations, rigid censures, and rash judgments is, that he might be thought to be holier than he is. Christ very manifestly points at the Scribes and Pharisees, who were men of such a complexion; and whom he often, without any breach of charity, calls hypocrites. The meaning of this proverbial expression is, that a man should first begin with himself, take notice of his own sins, reprove himself for them, and reform; and then it will be soon enough to observe other men's.

And then shalt thou see clearly, to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye: then will he, and not before, be a proper person to reprove others; all objections and impediments to such a work will then be removed. Our Lord here speaks in the language of the Jewish nation, with whom such like expressions were common, and of long standing {c}

"In the generation that judged the judges, one said to another, Kynye Nybm Moyq lwj, "cast out the mote out of thine eye"; to whom it was replied, Kynye Nybm hrwq lwj, "cast out the beam from thine eye": one said to another, "thy silver is become dross": the other replies, "thy wine is mixed with water"."

Again {d},

"R. Taphon said, I wonder whether there is any in this generation, that will receive reproof; if one should say to him, "cast out the mote out of thine eye", will he say to him, "cast out the beam out of thine eye?" Says R. Eleazer ben Azariah, I wonder whether there is any in this generation, that knows how to reprove."

From whence it is clear, that these phrases were used in the same sense they are by Christ; and which is still more evident by the gloss upon them: for upon the word "mote", it observes,

"That it is as if it had been said, Nwjq Nwe, "a little sin", which is in thine hand (i.e. which thou hast committed): the other could say to him, cast thou away
lwdg Nwe, "the great sin", which is in thine hand; so that they could not reprove, because they were all sinners."

Agreeable to these, are some other proverbs used by the Jews, such as

"a vice which is in thyself, do not speak of to thy neighbour,"

{e} or upbraid him with it: and {f} again,

"adorn thyself, and afterwards adorn others."

Which is produced by a noted commentator {g} of their's, to illustrate the text in ***Zep 2:1*** on which he also makes this remark;

"inquire first into your own blemishes, and then inquire into the blemishes of others."

The sense of each of them is, that a man should first reform himself, and then others; and that he that finds faults with others, ought to be without blame himself.

{c} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 2. {d} T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 16. 2. {e} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 59. 2. {f} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 19. 1. {g} R. David Kimchi in Zeph. ii. 1. Vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 142. 4.

Ver. 6. Give not that which is holy to the dogs,.... Dogs were unclean creatures by the law; the price of one might not be brought into the house of the Lord, for a vow, *De 23:18* yea, these creatures were not admitted into several temples of the Heathens {h}. Things profane and unclean, as flesh torn by beasts, were ordered to be given to them, *Ex 22:31* but nothing that was holy was to be given them, as holy flesh, or the holy oblations, or anything that was consecrated to holy uses; to which is the allusion here. It is a common maxim {i} with the Jews,

"Myblkl Nlykahl Myvdqh ta Nydwp Nyav, "that they do not redeem holy things, to give to the dogs to eat"."

Here the phrase is used in a metaphorical sense; and is generally understood of not delivering or communicating the holy word of God, and the truths of the Gospel, comparable to pearls, or the ordinances of it, to persons notoriously vile and sinful: to men, who being violent and furious persecutors, and impudent blasphemers, are compared to "dogs"; or to such, who are scandalously vile, impure in their lives and conversations, and are therefore compared to swine;

neither cast ye your pearls before swine. But since the subject Christ is upon is reproof, it seems rather to be the design of these expressions, that men should be cautious, and prudent, in rebuking and admonishing such persons for their sins, in whom there is no appearance or hope of success; yea, where there is danger of sustaining loss;

lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you: that is, despise the admonitions and reproofs given, and hurt the persons who give them, either by words or deeds; see ***Pr 9:7***. The Jews have some sayings much like these, and will serve to illustrate them {k};

"Myryzxh ynpl Mynynph wkylvt la, "do not cast pearls before swine", nor deliver wisdom to him, who knows not the excellency of it; for wisdom is better than pearls, and he that does not seek after it, is worse than a swine."

{h} Vid. Alex. ab. Alex. Gaeial. Dier. l. 2. c. 14. {i} T. Bab. Temura, fol. 17. 1. & 31. 1. & 33. 2. Becorot, fol. 15. 1. Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 27. 4. &

Maaser Sheni, fol. 53. 3. {k} Mischar Happeninim apud Buxtorf. Florileg. Heb. p. 306.

Matthew 7:7

Ver. 7. Ask and it shall be given you,.... This is to be understood of asking of God in prayer, for such things as are wanting; whether of a temporal nature, as food and raiment, which Christ, in the former chapter, had warned against an immoderate and anxious concern for; or of a spiritual nature, as grace, and wisdom to behave in a proper manner, both towards God and men: and such, who ask according to the will of God, in the name of Christ, and under the direction, guidance, and influence of the Spirit, who ask in faith and fear, and with submission to the divine will, shall have what they ask for; not as what they deserve, but as a free gift.

Seek, and ye shall find. This is still meant of prayer, and of seeking God, his face and favour: which such shall find, who seek in a right way, by Christ, and with their whole hearts, diligently:

knock and it shall be opened unto you as beggars do, who use much importunity for relief and assistance. So men should stand and knock at the door of mercy, which will not always be shut against them. Faith in prayer is a key that opens this door, when a poor soul finds grace and mercy to help it in time of need. Our Lord's design is to express the nature, fervour, and constancy of prayer, and to encourage to it.

Matthew 7:8

Ver. 8. For everyone that asketh receiveth,.... For God is no respecter of persons; whoever makes application, be he a Jew, or a Gentile, rich or poor, bond or free, a man of great gifts, or mean parts, provided he asks aright, from right principles, and with right views, shall not lose his labour; but shall receive all such good things at the hand of God, as are suitable and convenient for him.

And he that seeketh findeth; he that seeks for God in Christ, the grace and mercy of God, the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; that seeks after the true riches, both of grace and glory, shall be sure to find them; see *Pr*

21:21.

And to him that knocketh it shall be opened: that is, to him that is constant at the throne of grace, who continues knocking at the door of mercy, and will have no denial, it shall be opened to him; and he shall have entrance into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus.

Matthew 7:9

Ver. 9. Or what man is there of you,.... "That is a father", as in *Lu 11:11* that is, is in the relation, and has the affections of a father; and indeed is a man, and has the nature and passions of a man; unless he is become a mere brute, and devoid of all humanity,

whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? No, by no means; no man can act such a merciless, cruel part as this to a child: for though he might impose upon him by the likeness of some sort of stones with bread; yet could not hope to satisfy his hunger, or stop his mouth this way; but must expect to hear from him again with bitter complaints.

Matthew 7:10

Ver. 10. Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?] Which is somewhat like a fish, especially an eel. Fish and bread are mentioned, because these were common food; see ***Mr 6:41*** *Joh 21:13* and particularly in Galilee, a fish country, where Christ now was, and from whence he had called his disciples, who were fishermen. In *Lu 11:12* it is added, "or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" which is used, as the rest, to show the absurdity and inhumanity of such conduct; and that indeed nothing of this kind is to be found among men, unless it be among monsters in nature.

Matthew 7:11

Ver. 11. If ye then being evil,.... As all mankind in general are, both by nature and practice: they are conceived in sin, shapen in iniquity; are evil from their youth, and transgressors from the womb; are corrupt, and do abominable things; and such these Jews were Christ speaks unto; and who, very likely, has respect chiefly to the evil of covetousness they were addicted to. The argument is taken from the lesser to the greater, and runs thus; that if ye, who are but men, men on earth, yea evil men, not over liberal and beneficent, nay covetous and niggardly,

know how to give good gifts unto your children; can find in your hearts, having it in the power of your hands, to give suitable provisions for the support and sustenance of your children;

how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven; who is omniscient and omnipotent; who knows the persons and wants of his children, and what is proper for them, and is able to relieve them, being Lord of heaven and earth,

give good things to them that ask him? Not only temporal good things, as meat, drink, and clothing; but all spiritual good things; every supply of grace; all things pertaining to life and godliness. In *Lu 11:13* "the Holy Spirit" is mentioned, and so seems to design his gifts and graces, everything that is necessary for the spiritual and eternal good of his people: but for these things he must be inquired of, and sought after; and it is the least saints can do to ask for them; and they have encouragement enough to ask; for it is but ask and have.

Matthew 7:12

Ver. 12. Therefore all things whatsoever,.... These words are the epilogue, or conclusion of our Lord's discourse; the sum of what he had delivered in the two preceding chapters, and in this hitherto, is contained in these words; for they not only respect the exhortation about judging and reproving; but every duty respecting our neighbour; it is a summary of the whole. It is a golden rule, here delivered, and ought to be observed by all mankind, Jews and Gentiles. So the Karaite Jews {l} say,

"all things that a man would not take to himself, wyxal Mtwvel ywar Nya, "it is not fit to do them to his brethren"."

And Maimonides {m} has expressed it much in the same words our Lord here does;

"all things whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, (says he,) do you the same to your brethren, in the law, and in the commandments:"

only there seems to be a restriction in the word "brethren"; the Jews, perhaps, meaning no other than Israelites; whereas our Lord's rule reaches to all without exception, "all things whatsoever"

ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: let them be who they will, whether brethren, or kinsmen, according to the flesh, or what not; "for this is the law and the prophets": the sum of the law and the prophets; not the whole sum of them, or the sum of the whole law: but of that part of it which respects our neighbours. Remarkable is the advice given by Hillell {n} to one who came to be made a proselyte by him;

"whatsoever is hateful to thee, that do not thou to thy neighbour; hlwk hrwth lk ayh wz, "this is all the whole law", and the rest is an explication of it, go and be perfect:"

yea, this rule is not only agreeable to the law of Moses, and the prophets, but even to the law and light of nature. Aristotle being asked, how we ought to carry ourselves to our friends, answered {o}, as we would wish they would carry it to us. Alexander Severus, a Heathen emperor, so greatly admired this rule of Christ's, that he ordered it to be written on the walls of his closet.

{l} R. Eliahu Addaret, c. 3. apud Trigland de sect. Karaeorum, c. 10. p. 166. Vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 146. 4. {m} Hilch. Ebel. c. 14. sect. 1. {n} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 31. 1. Maimon. in Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1. {o} Diog. Laert. in Vit. Aristotel. l. 5.

Matthew 7:13

Ver. 13. Enter ye in at the strait gate,.... By the "strait gate" is meant Christ himself; who elsewhere calls himself "the door", *Joh 10:7* as he is into the church below, and into all the ordinances and privileges of it; as also to the Father, by whom we have access unto him, and are let into communion with him, and a participation of all the blessings of grace; yea, he is the gate of heaven, through which we have boldness to enter into the holiest of all by faith and hope now; as there will be hereafter an abundant entrance into the kingdom and glory of God, through his blood and righteousness. This is called "strait"; because faith in Christ, a profession of it, and a life and conversation agreeable to it, are attended with many afflictions, temptations, reproaches, and persecutions. "Entering" in at it is by faith, and making a profession of it: hence it follows, that faith is not the gate itself, but the grace, by which men enter in at the right door, and walk on in Christ, as they begin with him.

For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction; so that the one may be easily known from the other. There is no difficulty in finding out, or entering in at, or walking in the way of sin, which leads to eternal ruin. The gate of carnal lusts, and worldly pleasures, stands wide open,

and many there be which go in thereat; even all men in a state of nature; the way of the ungodly is "broad", smooth, easy, and every way agreeable to the flesh; it takes in a large compass of vices, and has in it abundance of company; but its end is destruction. Our Lord seems to allude to the private and public roads, whose measures are fixed by the Jewish canons; which say {p}, that

"a private way was four cubits broad, a way from city to city eight cubits, a public way sixteen cubits, and the way to the cities of refuge thirty two cubits."

{p} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 100. 1, 2. Vid. Maimon. & R. Sampson in Misn. Peah, c. 2. sect. 1. & Maimon in Sabbat. c. 1. sect. 1.

Matthew 7:14

Ver. 14. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way,.... And so, difficult to enter in at; and when entered, the way is unpleasant to the flesh to walk in, being hedged up on each side with afflictions and tribulations; and moreover, is like the "narrow place", or stenov topov, "the strait place", as the Septuagint in *Nu 22:26* render it; in which the angel that met Balaam stood; and in which there was no turning to the right hand or the left; and such is the way to eternal happiness. The great encouragement to walk on in it is, because it is that way

which leadeth unto life: unto eternal life: it certainly leads thither; it never fails of bringing persons to it; believers in Christ, all that walk in Christ the way, though they are said to be "scarcely" saved, by reason of their afflictions and trials, they meet with in their way to the kingdom; yet they are, and shall be certainly saved: they shall be safely brought to glory; which will be an abundant recompense for all the troubles and sorrows that have attended them in their journey.

And few there be that find it; the way, and so consequently the life it leads to. "The gate is strait"; small and little, and so unobserved: there is but one way to heaven, and the generality of men neglect it. "The way is narrow", and so disagreeable; the company few, and not engaging. Men choose large gates, broad ways, and much company. The flesh loves to walk at liberty, unconfined, and uncontrolled, and with a multitude to do evil: hence, Zion's ways are thin of passengers; a small number, comparatively speaking, walk thereto, and will be saved; a remnant, a little flock, a little city, and few men in it. It is asked in the Talmud {q},

"why is the world to come created with "jod?" (the least of the letters in the "Hebrew alphabet") the answer is, because Myjewm wbv Myqydu, "the righteous which are in it are few"."

Some read the words, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin, with a note of admiration, "how strait is the gate!" &c. and so some copies.

{q} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29. 2.

Matthew 7:15

Ver. 15. Beware of false prophets,.... Or false teachers; for not such who pretended to foretell things to come, but such who set up themselves to be teachers of others, are here meant; see ***2Pe 2:1***. It may be queried, whether our Lord has not respect to the Scribes and Pharisees, who sat in Moses's chair, and taught, for doctrines, the commandments of men? and of whose doctrines he elsewhere bids men beware: for whatever plausible pretences for holiness and righteousness might appear in them, they were repugnant to the word of God, and destructive to the souls of men; such as their doctrines of free will, justification by the works of the law, the traditions of the elders, &c. since it follows,

which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves; for these "loved to go in long clothing", *Mr 12:38*

tyljb, in a garment which reached to the feet, and was made of the wool of sheep. The Babylonish garment Achan saw and stole, Rab says {r}, was atlymd aljuya, a garment called "melotes": which is the very Greek word the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews uses for sheep skins, persecuted saints wandered about in, *Heb 11:37* and the gloss upon the place, in the Talmud referred to, says, that this was yqn rmu lv tylj, "a talith", or "garment of pure wool"; and Jarchi {s} says, that

"it was the way of deceivers, and profane men, to cover themselves, Mtyljb, "with their talith", or long garment, "as if they were righteous men", that persons might receive their lies."

All which agrees very well with the Pharisees, who would have been thought to have been holy and righteous, humble, modest, and self-denying men; when they were inwardly full of hypocrisy and iniquity, of rapine, oppression, and covetousness; and, under a pretence of religion, "devoured widows' houses". Though, it seems, by what follows, that Christ has respect, at least also, to such, who bore his name, and came in his name, though not sent by him, and called him Lord, and prophesied, and cast out devils, and did many wonderful works in his name; who, that they might get the good will and affections of the people, clothed themselves, not in garments made of sheep's wool, but in the very skins of sheep, with the wool on them, in imitation of the true prophets, and good men of old; pretending great humility, and self-denial, and so "wore a rough garment to deceive", *Zec 13:4* when they were inwardly greedy dogs, grievous wolves, of insatiable covetousness; and, when opportunity offered, spared not the flock to satisfy their rapacious and devouring appetites. The Jews speak of a "wolfish humility"; like that of the wolf in the fable, which put on a sheep skin.

"There are some men, (says one of their {t} writers,) who appear to be humble, and fear God in a deceitful and hypocritical way, but inwardly lay wait: this humility our wise men call tybaz hwne, "wolfish humility"."

Such is this our Lord inveighs against, and bids his followers beware of.

{r} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 41. 1. {s} In Zech. xiii. 4. {t} Abarbinel Nachalath Abot, fol. 192. 1.

Matthew 7:16

Ver. 16. Ye shall know them by their fruits,.... By "fruits" are meant, not so much their external works in life and conversation; for a false prophet may so behave, as not to be discovered thereby. So the Pharisees were outwardly righteous before men; and false teachers among Christians may have the form of godliness, and keep it up, though they are strangers to, and even deny the power of it: but their doctrines are here meant, and the effects of them. When doctrines are contrary to the perfections of God, repugnant to the Scriptures of truth, tend to depreciate the person and offices, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, to lessen the glory of God's grace, to exalt the creature, and to fill men's minds with notions of the purity, self-sufficiency, and ability of human nature; when they are calculated to feed the pride and vanity of men, to get money, and gain applause, to serve their own interests, and gratify men's lusts and passions, they may be easily discerned who they are, and from whence they come. The Jews have a proverb pretty much like this {u}, eydy hypjqm Nyuwb, "a gourd is known by its branches". The gloss upon it is,

"it is, as if it was said, from the time it buds forth, and goes out of the branch, it is known whether it is good or not;"

i.e. the goodness of the gourd is known by the fruit its branches bear. So a good preacher is known by the good doctrine he brings, and a bad one, by his unsound doctrine. Christ is not speaking of these false prophets, as men, or as private professors of religion, but as prophets, or teachers. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Grapes and figs were common fruit; there was great plenty of them in Judea; we often read of the "gathering" of them. It is a matter in dispute with the doctors {w},

"if a man intends Mybne jqwlw Mynat jqll, "to gather figs, and he gathers grapes", black ones, and he gathers white ones, white ones, and he gathers black ones, whether he is guilty of a sin offering or not."

One says he is, another says he is not. These words of Christ put me in mind of another passage, which seems to speak of grapes of thorns {x};

"he that marries his daughter to a scholar, it is like to grapes of the vine, with grapes of the vine, a thing beautiful and acceptable; but he that marries his daughter to a plebeian, it is like to grapes of the vine, hnoh ybneb, "with grapes of the thorn", a thing ugly, and unacceptable."

Though ybne, in the last sentence, must be taken for berries which grow on some thorn bushes, and not what are properly grapes; for grapes do not grow upon, and are not to be gathered from thorns, and bramble bushes. The meaning of our Lord is, that from the false doctrines of men comes no good fruit of faith, holiness, joy, peace, and comfort. Their doctrines are like "thorns", which prick and pierce, give pain and uneasiness; and, like "thistles", choke, and are unprofitable, afford no solid food and nourishment; yea, their words eat as do a canker, are contrary to vital religion and powerful godliness. This sense I prefer; because, on the one hand, it is possible for a false teacher to do works, which may be externally good; though indeed no good works, properly speaking, can be performed by an unregenerate man, because he has neither good principles to act from, nor good ends in view: and, on the other hand, a man who is destitute of the grace of God, and lives ill, may yet have right notions of the Gospel, though he has no experimental knowledge and relish of it; but where false doctrines are imbibed, and propagated, no good fruit can follow upon it.

{u} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 48. 1. {w} T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 19. 1, 2. & 20. 1.
{x} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 49. 1.

Matthew 7:17

Ver. 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit,.... As is the tree, so is its fruit; if the tree is good, it will bring forth good fruit. The tree that brings forth good fruit, is good antecedent to the fruit it produces; it is first good, and then puts forth good fruit: it is not the fruit that makes the tree good, but makes it appear to be so; but it is the goodness of the tree that makes the fruit good. As a good man does, and will do good works, but his works do not make him a good man; he is so before he performs good works, or he would never be able to do them; these make him appear to be a good man: so a good preacher, that has an experimental knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel, will deliver out sound doctrine, who is first made so by the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God; and by searching the Scriptures, and examining his doctrines by them, he will be known and appear to be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine; and such a good minister of the Gospel, out of the good treasure of Gospel truths put into his earthen vessel, will bring forth, from time to time, good and excellent truths, to the edification and profit of those that hear: "but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit"; if the tree is corrupt, the fruit will be corrupt; and as is the preacher, so will be his doctrines: if he is a corrupt preacher, or a man of a corrupt mind, destitute of the truth, his preaching will be such as will tend to corrupt both the principles and practices of men; for such evil men and seducers, out of the evil treasure of false doctrines, which they have received into their judgments, will bring forth, either more secretly or openly, evil tenets in their ministry, which prove of bad consequence to the souls of men.

Matthew 7:18

Ver. 18. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit,.... A man that is unprincipled with the grace of God, has an experimental acquaintance with the Gospel of Christ, and is guided by the Spirit of God into all truth, as it is in Jesus, cannot knowingly deliver, maintain, and abide by any doctrine that is contrary to the glory of God's grace, and the person of Christ, the work of the Spirit, the fundamental doctrines of the Bible; or what is repugnant to the experiences of God's people, and prejudicial to their souls.

Neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. A corrupt preacher, one destitute of the truth of the Gospel, reprobate concerning the faith, who never had any experience of the doctrines of grace, and denies them in the theory of them, cannot, consistent with himself, and his own principles, deliver, or preach good doctrine; or that which tends to produce any good fruit, either in the experience or lives of men. It is true, a corrupt man, that is, an unregenerate man, may preach sound doctrine, it being what he believes, though he has no experience of it: but then this man is not a corrupt tree, that is, a corrupt preacher, though a corrupt man. As our Lord means by "a good tree", not a good man, barely, or one that is made so by the grace of God; but a good minister, one that is furnished by the Spirit of God, and is well instructed in the kingdom of heaven: so by "a corrupt tree" he does not mean a corrupt man, a man that is in a state of nature, habitually and practically evil; but a corrupt preacher, a false prophet or teacher, that has sucked in corrupt principles, and has nothing else in him, and therefore can bring forth no other.

Matthew 7:19

Ver. 19. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit,.... Every preacher and teacher that does not bring the Gospel of Christ with him, and plainly and faithfully preach it to the people, sooner or later,

is hewn down: however he may have appeared as a tall lofty cedar, and have carried it with a high hand against Christ and his Gospel, spoke "great swelling words of vanity", and behaved with much "loftiness" and "haughtiness"; yet the time comes on, when all this is bowed and made low, "and the Lord alone is exalted": such preachers are either cut off from the churches of Christ, or hewn down by death,

and cast into the fire; into the fire of hell; into the lake of fire and brimstone, "where the beast and false prophet shall be".

Matthew 7:20

Ver. 20. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. This is the conclusion of the whole, and a repetition of what is before said, the more to fix the rule of judgment upon their minds, and engage them to try men by their doctrines, and their doctrines by the standard of the Scriptures, and not believe every spirit; for with some care and diligence such persons may be detected, and the malignant influence of their ministry be prevented. The sum of the whole is, that ordinarily, and generally speaking, as men are, so are the doctrines they preach, and by them they may be known, and judged to be what they are. Christ here, and in the preceding verses, is speaking not of men of bad lives and conversations, who take upon them to teach others; for there is not so much reason to caution good men against these; they are easily detected, and generally discarded; but of men that put on sheep's clothing, who pretended to much holiness of life and conversation, and strictness of religion; and under that disguise delivered out the most corrupt and unwholesome doctrines; which tended greatly to depreciate him and his grace, and to do damage to the souls of men.

Ver. 21. Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord,.... Not every one that calls Christ his Lord and Master, professes subjection to him, or that calls upon his name, or is called by his name; or makes use of it in his public ministrations. There are many who desire to be called, and accounted Christians, and who make mention of the name of Christ in their sermons, only to take away their reproach, to cover themselves, and gain credit with, and get into the affections and goodwill of the people; but have no hearty love to Christ, nor true faith in him: nor is it their concern to preach his Gospel, advance his glory, and promote his kingdom and interest; their chief view is to please men, aggrandize themselves, and set up the power of human nature in opposition to the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ. Now not everyone of these, no, not any of them,

shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. This is to be understood not of the outward dispensation of the Gospel, or the Gospel church state, or the visible church of Christ on earth, in which sense this phrase is sometimes used; because such persons may, and often do, enter here; but of eternal glory, into which none shall enter,

but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. This, as it may regard private Christians, intends not merely outward obedience to the will of God, declared in his law, nor barely subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel; but more especially faith in Christ for life and salvation; which is the source of all true evangelical obedience, and without which nothing is acceptable to God. He that seeth the Son, looks unto him, ventures on him, commits himself to him, trusts in him, relies on him, and believes on him for righteousness, salvation, and eternal life, he it is that does the will of the Father, and he only; and such an one, as he is desirous of doing the will of God in all acts of cheerful obedience to it, without dependence thereon; so he shall certainly enter the kingdom of heaven, and have everlasting life; see ***Joh 6:40*** but as these words chiefly respect preachers, the sense of them is this, that only such who are faithful dispensers of the word shall enter into the joy of their Lord. Such do the will of Christ's Father, and so his own, which are the same, who fully and faithfully preach the Gospel of the grace of God; who declare the whole counsel of God, and keep back nothing that is profitable to the souls of men; who are neither ashamed of the testimony of Christ, nor afraid of the faces of men; but as they are put in trust with the

Gospel, so they speak it boldly, with all sincerity, not as pleasing men, but God, and commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God: such as these shall have an abundant entrance into the kingdom and glory of God. The Vulgate Latin adds this clause, "he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven", and so does Munster's Hebrew edition of the Gospel according to Matthew.

Matthew 7:22

Ver. 22. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord,.... That is, in the last day, the day of judgment, the great and famous day, fixed by God, unknown to angels and men, which will be terrible to some, and joyful to others; the day in which the faithful ministers of the Gospel shall be owned by Christ, and received into the kingdom of heaven: "many", not of the common people only, but of the preachers of the word, who have filled up the highest station in the church below; not one, or two, or a few of them only, but many of them "will say to me"; to Christ, who will appear then as the judge of quick and dead, to which he is ordained by his Father,

Lord, Lord; not "my Lord, my Lord", as the Syriac version reads it; for they will not be able to claim any interest in him, though they will be obliged to own his dominion, power, and authority over them. The word is repeated to show their importunity, sense of danger, the confusion they will be in, the wretched disappointment they will have; and therefore speak as persons amazed and confounded, having expected they would have been the first persons that should be admitted into heaven. Their pleas follow;

have we not prophesied in thy name? This may be understood either of foretelling things to come; which gift wicked men may have, who have never had any experience of the grace of God, as Balaam, and Caiaphas, and others; or rather of preaching the word, which is sometimes called prophesying, *Ro 12:6* and which may be done in the name of Christ, pretending mission and authority from him, and to be preachers of him, and yet be no better than "sounding brass", or "a tinkling cymbal"; yea, nothing at all as to true grace, or spiritual experience.

And in thy name have cast out devils? Diabolical possessions were very frequent in the times of Christ; no doubt but they were suffered, that Jesus might have an opportunity of showing his power over Satan, by dispossessing him from the bodies, as well as the souls of men; and of giving proof of his deity, divine sonship and Messiahship: and this power of casting out devils was given to others, not only to the twelve apostles, among whom Judas was, who had the same power with the rest, and to the seventy disciples; but even to some who did not follow him, and his disciples, ***Mr 9:38*** and some did this in the name of Jesus, who do not appear to have any true faith in him, and knowledge of him; as the vagabond Jews, exorcists, and the seven sons of Sceva, *Ac 19:13*. An awful consideration it is, that men should be able to cast out devils, and at last be cast to the devil.

And in thy name done many wonderful works? that is, many miracles; not one, or a few only, but many; such as speaking with tongues, removing mountains, treading on serpents and scorpions, and drinking any deadly thing without hurt, and healing all manner of diseases and sicknesses. Judas, for one, was capable of pleading all these things; he had the gift of preaching, and a call from Christ to it, and yet a castaway; he had the power of casting out devils, and yet could not prevent the devil from entering into him; he could perform miracles, do wonders in Christ's name, and yet, at last, was the betrayer of him. These pleas and arguments will be of no use to him, nor of any avail to any at the great day. It may be observed, that these men lay the whole stress of their salvation upon what they have done in Christ's name; and not on Christ himself, in whom there is salvation, and in no other: they say not a syllable of what Christ has done and suffered, but only of what they have done. Indeed, the things they instance in, are the greatest done among men; the gifts they had were the most excellent, excepting the grace of God; the works they did were of an extraordinary nature; whence it follows, that there can be no salvation, nor is it to be expected from men's works: for if preaching the word, which is attended with so much study, care, and labour, will not be a prevailing argument to admit men into the kingdom of heaven; how can it be thought that ever reading, or hearing, or any other external performance of religion, should bring persons thither?

Matthew 7:23

Ver. 23. Then will I profess unto them,.... Publicly before men and angels, at the day of judgment, I never knew you; which must be understood consistent with the omniscience of Christ; for as the omniscient God he knew their persons and their works, and that they were workers of iniquity; he knew what they had been doing all their days under the guise of religion; he knew the principles of all their actions, and the views they had in all they did; nothing is hid from him. But, as words of knowledge often carry in them the ideas of affection, and approbation, see ***Ps 1:6*** the meaning of Christ here is, I never had any love, or affection for you; I never esteemed you; I never made any account of you, as mine, as belonging to me; I never approved of you, nor your conduct; I never had any converse, communication, nor society with you, nor you with me. The Persic version reads it, "I have not known you of old", from ancient times, or from everlasting; I never knew you in my Father's choice, and my own, nor in my Father's gift to me, nor in the everlasting covenant of grace; I never knew you as my sheep, for whom, in time, I died, and called by name; I never knew you believe in me, nor love me, or mine; I have seen you in my house, preaching in my name, and at my table administering mine ordinance; but I never knew you exalt my person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; you talk of the works you have done, I never knew you do one good work in all your lives, with a single eye to my glory; wherefore, I will neither hear, nor see you; I have nothing to do with you. In this sense the phrase is used in the Talmud {y}:

"Bar Kaphra went to visit R. Juda; he says to him, Bar Kaphra, Mlwem Krykm ynya, "I never knew thee"."

The gloss upon it is,

"he intimates, that he would not see him."

So here, Christ declares, he knew them not; that is, he did not like them; he would not admit them into his presence and glory; but said,

depart from me, ye workers of iniquity. The former of these expressions contains the awful sentence pronounced by Christ, the judge; which is, banishment from his presence, than which nothing is more terrible: for as it is his presence that makes heaven, it is his absence that makes hell; and this supposes a place and state, whither they are banished; which is elsewhere called their "own place, the lake" which burns with fire and brimstone; "everlasting fire", prepared for the devil and his angels. Departure from Christ's presence is the punishment of loss, and being sent to everlasting burnings, is the punishment of sense; and the whole, as it is an instance of strict justice, so a display of Christ's almighty power. The latter expression contains the character of these persons, and in it a reason of their punishment; they were "workers of iniquity": it may be, neither adulterers, nor murderers, nor drunkards, nor extortioners, nor thieves, or any other openly profane sinners; but inasmuch as they did the work of the Lord deceitfully, preached themselves, and not Christ; sought their own things, and not his; what they did, they did with a wicked mind, and not with a view to his glory; they wrought iniquity, whilst they were doing the very things they pleaded on their own behalf, for their admission into the kingdom of heaven. Some copies read, "all the workers of iniquity", as in ***Ps 6:8*** from whence the words are taken.

{y} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 16. 1.

Matthew 7:24

Ver. 24. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine,.... The comparison in this, and the following verses, is the concluding part of our Lord's discourses upon the mount, which are meant by these sayings, or doctrines, he here speaks of; and as he had in some foregoing verses chiefly respect to preachers, so here, to hearers, his disciples and followers in general. The subject of this comparison, in ***Lu 6:47*** is, "whosoever cometh unto me"; as all that are given to Christ by the Father will do, sooner or later: such whom he encourages to come to him, are they that labour and are heavy laden; and they that come aright, come as poor perishing sinners; they believe in him, give up themselves to him, to be saved by him with an everlasting salvation; all which is owing to efficacious grace. These hear his sayings, as doctrines, not merely externally, but internally, having ears to hear given unto them, so as to understand them, love them, believe them, feel the power, taste the sweetness, and have a delightful relish of them; and such an one hears them,

and doth them: he is not only an hearer, but a doer of the word of the Gospel; the doctrines of it he receives in the love of them, and exercises faith on them; upon Christ, his grace and righteousness held forth in them, which is the great work and business of a Christian, he is to do, and does do in this life: the ordinances of it he cheerfully obeys; and all the duties of religion he performs from love to Christ, without any view to obtain eternal life hereby, which he only expects from Christ, as his sayings and doctrines direct him. The comparison follows,

I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. Luke says, "he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation a rock". Every believer is a builder; the house he builds, is his own soul, and the salvation of it; in order to which he digs deep, till he comes to a rock, to a good foundation; he searches diligently into the Scriptures of truth; he constantly attends the ministry of the word; he inquires of Gospel preachers, and other saints, the way of salvation; which having found, he lays the whole stress of his salvation on the rock of ages, which rock is Christ: he makes him the foundation of all his hopes of eternal life and happiness; which is the foundation God has laid in Zion; and which has been laid ministerially by the prophets of the Old, and the apostles of the New Testament; and by believers themselves, when they build their faith and hope upon it. This foundation, the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, is as a rock, firm and strong, will bear the whole weight that is laid upon it; it is sure and certain, it will never give way; it is immoveable and everlasting; the house built upon it stands safe and sure.

Matthew 7:25

Ver. 25. And the rains descended, and the floods came,.... These several metaphors of "rain", "floods", "stream", and "winds", may design the temptations of Satan, the persecutions of the world, the corruptions of a man's own heart, and the errors and false doctrines of men; from all which such a man is safe, who is built upon the rock Christ Jesus; see *Isa 32:2* not but that the rain of temptation may descend upon him, with great violence and force, but shall not beat him down; he shall be made able to bear the whole force of it; the gates of hell cannot prevail against him; the floods of persecution may be cast after him, but shall not carry him away; the stream of corruption may run strong against him, yet shall not overset him; and the wind of divers and strange doctrines may blow hard upon him, but not cast him down: some damage he may receive by these several things, but shall not be destroyed; he may be shaken by them, but not so as to be removed off of the foundation, on which he is laid; yea, he may fail from some degree of the steadfastness of his faith, but not so as to fail totally and finally; the reason is, because he is founded on the rock Christ Jesus, which is sure and immoveable: whence it appears that such a man acts the wise and prudent part, and may be truly called "a wise man".

Matthew 7:26

Ver. 26. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine,.... Who only externally hears them, but has no understanding of them; do not believe them, nor like and approve of them, but hates and despises them; or if not, depends upon his external hearing of them, and contents himself with a speculative knowledge, without the practice of them,

and doth them not; does not yield the obedience of faith to the doctrines of the Gospel, nor submits to the ordinances of it, but neglects them, and all other duties of religion: or if he does obey, it is only outwardly, not from the heart; nor from a principle of love; nor in faith; nor in the name and strength of Christ; nor for the glory of God, but in order to obtain life for himself: such

shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; or, as Luke has it, "without a foundation upon the earth"; upon the surface of the earth, without digging into it for a foundation: and such may be said to build

without a foundation, who pretend to make their peace with God by their own works; who hope for pardon on the foot of the mercy of God, and their own repentance; seek for justification by their own, and not the righteousness of Christ; look for acceptance with God, for the sake of their own worthiness; and who expect salvation in any other way than by Christ: as in each of these articles, they leave out Christ, they may be said to build without a foundation indeed, and to build "upon" the surface of "the earth"; as they do, who build their hope of salvation upon anything that is merely external; as, their riches and grandeur, their wisdom and learning, their natural descent, and religious education, their civility, courteousness, and what is called good nature, their liberality and alms deeds, their morality, common justice and honesty, their legal righteousness, whether moral or ritual, and a round of religious duties; and such may be said to "build upon the sand", on that which will bear no weight, but gives way, and sinks. The salvation of the soul is a weighty thing; and that which is like sand, as is everything of a man's own, can never support it: God has therefore laid the salvation of his people on his own Son; and he must be a "foolish man" that builds on anything short of him.

Matthew 7:27

Ver. 27. And the rain descended, and the floods came,.... Such builders, and such a building, cannot stand against the violent rain of Satan's temptations, the floods of the world's persecutions, the stream and rapid torrent of their own heart's lusts, nor the blowing winds of heresy and false doctrine, and much less the storms of divine wrath and vengeance. They are in a most dangerous condition; they cannot support themselves; they must fall, and great will be their fall; their destruction is inevitable, their ruin is irrecoverable. The Jews make use of some similes, which are pretty much like these of Christ's.

"R. Eliezer ben Azariah used to say {z}, he whose wisdom is greater than his works, to what is he like? to a tree, whose branches are many, and its roots few, "and the wind comes", and roots it up, and overturns it; as it is said,
Jer 17:6 but he whose works are greater than his wisdom, to what is he like? to a tree, whose branches are few, and its roots many, "against which, if all the winds in the world were to come and blow", they could not move it out of its place: as it is said, *Jer 17:8*."

Again {a},

"Elisha ben Abuijah used to say, a man who hath good works, and learns the law much, to what is he like? to a man that "builds with stones below", and afterwards with bricks; and though hbrh Mym Myab, "many waters come", and stand at their side, they cannot remove them out of their place; but a man who hath no good works, and learns the law, to what is he like? to a man that "builds with bricks first", and afterwards with stones; and though few waters come, they immediately overturn them."

The same used to say,

"a man who hath good works, and learns the law much, to what is he like? to mortar spread upon bricks; and though Mymvg wyle Nydrwy, "the rains descend upon it", they cannot remove it out of its place: a man that hath no good works, and learns the law much, to what is he like? to mortar thrown upon bricks; and though but a small rain descends upon it, it is immediately dissolved, and "falls"."

{z} Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 17. & Abot R. Nathan, c. 22. fol. 6. 1, 2. {a} Abot R. Nathan, c. 24. fol. 6. 2.

Matthew 7:28

Ver. 28. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings,.... Delivered in this, and the two foregoing chapters, concerning true happiness; the duty and usefulness of Gospel ministers; the true sense and meaning of several commandments in the law; concerning alms, prayer, and fasting; concerning the care of worldly things, rash judging, rigid censures, and reproofs; the straitness and narrowness of the way to eternal life, and the largeness and breadth of the way to destruction; concerning false prophets, and the right hearing of the word.

The people were astonished at his doctrine; it being something new, and unheard of, what they had not been used to; and coming in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, it carried its own evidence along with it, wrought conviction in their minds, and obliged them to acknowledge the truth of it.

Matthew 7:29

Ver. 29. For he taught them, as one having authority,.... This does not so much respect the subject matter of his ministry, the gravity, weight, and solidity of his doctrine; which, to be sure, was greatly different from that of the Scribes, which chiefly lay in proposing and handling things trivial, and of no moment; such as the rituals of the law, the traditions of the elders, or washing of the hands and cups, &c. nor merely the manner of his delivery, which was with great affection, ardour, and fervency of spirit, with much liberty and utterance of speech, and with wonderful perspicuity and majesty; in which also he differed from the Scribes, who taught in a cold and lifeless manner, without any spirit and power; but this chiefly regards the method he used in preaching, which was by delivering truths of himself in his own name, and by his own authority; often using those words, "but I say unto you": he spoke as a lawgiver, as one that had authority from heaven, and not from men;

and not as the Scribes, who used to say, when they delivered any thing to the people, "our Rabbins", or "our wise men say" so and so: such as were on the side of Hillell made use of his name; and those who were on the side of Shammai made use of his name; scarce ever would they venture to say anything of themselves, but said, the ancient doctors say thus and thus: almost innumerable instances might be given, out of the Talmud, in which one Rabbi speaks in the name of another; but our Lord spoke boldly, of himself, in his own name, and did not go about to support his doctrine by the testimony of the elders; but spake, as having received power and authority, as man, from his Father, "and not as the Scribes". Some copies add, and Pharisees; these generally going together; and so read the Vulgate Latin, the Syriac, the Persic versions, and the Hebrew edition of Matthew by Munster.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Matthew 8:1

Ver. 1. When he was come down from the mountain,.... Into which he went up, and preached the sermon recorded in the "three" preceding chapters:

great multitudes followed him: which is mentioned, partly to shew, that the people which came from several parts, still continued with him, being affected with his discourses and miracles; and partly on account of the following miracle, of healing the leper, which was not done in a corner, but before great multitudes, who were witnesses of it: though some think this miracle was wrought more privately.

Matthew 8:2

Ver. 2. And behold there came a leper,.... As soon as he came down from the mountain, and whilst he was in the way; though Luke says, ***Lu 5:12*** "when he was in a certain city"; in one of the cities of Galilee; one of their large towns, or unwalled cities, into which a leper might come: he might not come into walled {b} towns, at least they might turn him out, though without punishment: for the canon runs thus {c}, "a leper that enters into Jerusalem is to be beaten; but if he enters into any of the other walled towns, though he has no right, as it is said, "he sitteth alone", he is not to be beaten."

Besides, this leper, as Luke says, was "full of leprosy", ***Lu 5:12*** see the note there; and he might be pronounced clean by the priest, though not healed, and so might go into any city or synagogue: the law concerning such an one, in *Le 13:1* is a very surprising one; that if only there were some risings and appearances of the leprosy here and there, the man was unclean; but if "the leprosy covered all his flesh", then he was pronounced clean; and such was this man: he was a very lively emblem of a poor vile sinner, full of sin and iniquity, who is brought to see himself all over covered with sin, when he comes to Christ for pardon and cleansing; and is so considered by Christ the high priest, when he applies his justifying righteousness and sin purging blood to his conscience. A leper, by the Jews {d}, is called evr, "a wicked" man; for they suppose leprosy comes upon him for evil speaking. This account is ushered in with a "behold", as a note of admiration and attention, expressing the wonderfulness of the miracle wrought, and the seasonableness of it to confirm the doctrines Christ had been preaching to the multitude. This man came of his own accord, having heard of the fame of Christ;

and worshipped him in a civil and respectful way, showing great reverence to him as a man; which he did by falling down on his knees, and on his face; prostrating himself before him, in a very humble and submissive manner, as the other evangelists relate: for that he worshipped him as God, is not so manifest; though it is certain he had an high opinion of him, and great faith in him; which he very modestly expresses,

saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean: he was fully assured of his power, that he could make him clean, entirely rid him of his leprosy, which the priest could not do; who could only, according to the law, pronounce him clean, so that he might be admitted to company, but could not heal him of his disease: this the poor man was persuaded Christ could do for him, and humbly submits it to his will; of which, as yet, he had no intimation from him. And thus it is with poor sensible sinners under first awakenings; they can believe in the ability of Christ to justify them by his righteousness, cleanse them by his blood; and save them by his grace to the uttermost: but they stick at, and hesitate about his willingness, by reason of their own vileness and unworthiness.

{b} Misn. Celim. c. 1. sect. 7. {c} Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 3. sect. 8. & in Misn. Celim. c. 1. sect. 8. {d} Maimon. in Misn. Negaim, c. 12. sect. 5. & Bartenora in ib. sect. 6.

Matthew ***8:3***

Ver. 3. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him,.... This is a wonderful instance both of the grace, and goodness of Christ, in touching this loathsome creature; and of his unspotted purity and holiness, which could not be defiled by it; and of his mighty power in healing by a touch, and with a word of his mouth,

saying, I will, be thou clean: in which he expresses at once his willingness, "I will", of which the leper before was not certain; and his power by a word of command, "be thou clean"; and in which also is shown the readiness of Christ to do it: he did not stand parleying with the man, or making any further trial of his faith, or objecting to him his uncleanness; but at once stretches out his hand, touches his filthy flesh, and commands off the disorder. A great encouragement this, for poor sensible sinners to betake themselves to Christ, under a sense of their guilt and filth; who readily receives such, in no wise casts them out, but gives immediate discoveries of his power and grace unto them:

And immediately his leprosy was cleansed, or he was cleansed from it; he was not only pronounced clean, but was made so; he was thoroughly healed of the disease of leprosy. The Jews, themselves acknowledge this fact; for so they tell us in their wicked and blasphemous book {e}, that Jesus should say,

"bring me a leper, and I will heal him; and they brought him a leper, and he healed him also by Shemhamphorash,"

i.e. by the ineffable name Jehovah. Though they greatly misrepresent the matter; for this man was not brought by others, at the request of Christ, but came of his own accord; nor was he healed by the use of any name, as if it was done by a sort of magic, but by a touch of his hand, and the word of his mouth. Whether this was the same man with Simon the leper, *Mt 26:6* as some have thought, is not certain.

{e} Toldos Jesu, p. 8.

Matthew 8:4

Ver. 4. And Jesus saith unto him, see thou tell no man, &c] Not that this fact could be concealed, if it was done publicly, before the multitude; nor was it Christ's design that it should be; only it was his counsel to this man, that whilst he was on the road to Jerusalem, and when he was come there, that he would speak of it to no man, before he came to the priest, or priests: lest out of ill will to Christ, they should refuse to pronounce him clean:

but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. The man was now in one of the cities of Galilee; from hence Christ orders him to make the best of his way, directly to Jerusalem; and present himself to one of the priests, by him to be examined, whether he was free of his leprosy; and then offer what was ordered by the law of Moses in such cases: for as yet the ceremonial law was not abolished: and therefore, as Christ was subject to it himself, so he enjoins others the observance of it. There was a two fold offering, according to the law of Moses, on account of the cleansing of the leper; *Le 14:1* the one was on the first day of his cleansing, when he first showed himself to the priest, and consisted of two birds, alive and clean, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop; the other, and which was properly the offering on the eighth day, was, if the man was able, two he lambs and one ewe lamb, with a meat offering; but if poor, one lamb, with a meat offering, and two turtle doves, or two young pigeons. The Jewish canons, concerning this matter, are as follow {f}:

"when a leper is healed of his leprosy, after they have cleansed him with cedarwood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and the two birds, and have shaved all his flesh, and bathed him; after all this he enters into Jerusalem, and numbers seven days; and on the seventh day he shaves a second time, as he shaved at first, and bathes--and on the morrow, or eighth day, he bathes a second time, and after that they offer his offerings--he bathes on the eighth day in the court of the women, in the chamber of the lepers, which is there--if it is delayed, and he shaves not on the seventh day, but he shaves on the eighth, or some days after, on the day that he shaves, he bathes, and his sun sets; and on the morrow he brings his offerings, after he hath bathed a second time, as we have declared: how do they do unto him? The leper stands without the court of Israel, over against the eastern gate, in the gate of Nicanor and his face to the west: and there stand all they that want atonement; and there they give the bitter waters to the suspected women: and the priest takes the leper's trespass offering, while it is alive, and waves it with the log of oil, towards the east, according to the way of all wave offerings; and if he waves this by itself, and this by itself, it is right: after that he brings the leper's trespass offering to the door, and he brings it in both his hands into the court, and layeth them upon it; they slay it immediately, and two priests receive its blood: the one receives it in a vessel, and sprinkles it upon the top of the altar; and the other, in his right hand, and pours it into his left hand, and sprinkles with his finger the right hand; and if he repeats it, and receives it in his left hand first, it is unlawful. The priest that receives some of the blood in a vessel, carries it, and sprinkles it upon the altar first; and after that comes the priest, who receives the blood in the palm of his hand, to the leper, the priest being within, and the leper without; and the leper puts in his head, and the priest puts of the blood that is in the palm of his hand, upon the tip of his right ear; after that he puts in his right hand, and he puts of it on the thumb of his hand; and after that he putteth in his right foot, and he puts of it upon the toe of his foot, and if he puts of it upon the left, it is not right; and after that he offers his sin offering, and his burnt offering: and after that he hath put the blood upon his thumb and toe, the priest takes of the log of oil, and pours it into the left hand of his fellow priest; and if he pours it into his own hand, it will do: and he dips the finger of his right hand into the oil, which is in his hand, and sprinkles it seven times towards the most holy place: at every sprinkling there is a dipping of the finger in the oil; and if he sprinkles, and does not intend it, over against the holy place, it is right; and after that, he comes to the leper, and puts of the oil upon the place of the blood of the trespass offering, on the tip of the ear, and on the thumb of his hand, and toe of his foot; and that which is left of the oil, that is in his hand, he puts it on the head of him that is to be cleansed; and if he puts it not, atonement is not made; and the rest of the log is divided among the priests; and what remains of the log is not eaten, but in the Court, by the males of the priests, as the rest of the holy things; and it is forbidden to eat of the log of oil, until he has sprinkled it seven times, and has put of it upon the thumb and toe; and if he eats, he is to be beaten, as he that eats holy things before sprinkling."

Now these were the things which, as the other evangelists say, this leper was ordered to offer for his cleansing, "for a testimony unto them"; meaning either to the priests; for the Syriac and Persic versions read the former clause, "show thyself to the priests", in *Lu 17:14* that they being satisfied of the healing and cleansing of this man, and accordingly pronouncing him clean, and accepting his offerings, this might be either a convincing testimony to them, that Jesus was the Son of God, and true Messiah, and that he did not deny or oppose the law given by Moses; or might be a standing testimony against them, should they continue in unbelief; or else to the Jews, who saw the miracle, and heard the orders Christ gave to the man after he had healed him; or to the lepers that they were cleansed; or this law of Moses was for a testimony or statute to be always observed by them in such cases.

{f} Maimon. Hilchot Mechosre Capporah, c. 14. per totum.

Matthew 8:5

Ver. 5. And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum,.... Was returned from his journey through Galilee, to the place where he before dwelt, and is called his own city, ***Mt 9:1***

there came unto him a centurion, a Roman officer, ham rv, "a commander of an hundred men", as the Hebrew Gospel by Munster reads it: though the number of men under a "centurion" was more, according to some accounts.

"A band (it is said {g}) made two centuries, each of which consisted of an hundred and twenty eight soldiers; for a doubled century made a band, whose governor was called an ordinary "centurion"."

Such an one was Cornelius, a centurion of a band, *Ac 10:1*. The other person that was healed was a Jew. The next instance of Christ's power and goodness is the servant of a Gentile; he came to do good both to Jews and Gentiles;

beseeching him, not in person, but by his messengers; see ***Lu 7:3*** and the Jews {h} say, wtwmk Mda lv wxwlvv, "that a man's messenger is as himself".

{g} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 13. {h} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2.

Ver. 6. And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home,.... It would be a difficulty whether it was a son or a servant he was so concerned for; since paiv, the word here used, more commonly signifies a "son" or "child"; but that Luke, supposing it to be the same case he relates, expressly calls him doulov, "a servant", ***Lu** 7:2*. The concern of the "centurion" for him, shows him to have been a good servant, faithful and obedient to his master; since he was so much affected with his case, and took so much care of him; and Luke says, he "was dear unto him"; in great esteem, highly valued, and much beloved: and also, that the centurion was a good master; he does not put his sick servant from him, but takes care of him at home, and seeks out for relief for him, being greatly desirous of his life. And as his keeping him at home discovered a tender regard to him; so his not bringing him forth, or ordering him to be brought out to Christ, which was sometimes done in such cases, shows his great faith in Christ, that he was as able to cure him lying at home, as if brought before him; absent, as well as present. It is in the original text, "is cast"; or, as it is rendered, ***Mt 8:14*** "laid in the house", as if he was dead, speechless, and without motion; and Luke says, that he was "ready to die", being as one laid out for dead. The phrase answers to ljwm, a word often used by the Rabbins; sometimes of sick persons, as when they say {i} of anyone, that he is hjmb ljwmw hlwx, "sick, and laid upon the bed"; and sometimes of a person really dead, and laid out: and often this phrase is to be met with, wynpl ljwm wtmv ym, "he that hath his dead cast", or "laid out before him" {k}; concerning whom they dispute many things; as what he is free from, the reading of Shema, prayer, and the phylacteries; and where he ought to eat and drink till such time his dead is buried out of his sight. But this man's servant was not dead, but lay as one dead;

sick of the palsy, his nerves all relaxed, and he stupid, senseless, motionless,

grievously tormented, or "punished", or rather "afflicted"; as the Ethiopic version, and Munster's Hebrew edition read it; for paralytic persons do not feel much pain and torment: but the meaning is, that he was in a miserable afflicted condition. The account of his disorder is given to move Christ's compassion, and recorded to show the greatness of the miracle.

{i} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 146. 2. 147. l. Cetubot, fol. 103. 2. {k} Misn.

Beracot, c. 3. sect. 1. T. Bab. Moed. Katon, fol. 23. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 4. sect. 7.

Matthew 8:7

Ver. 7. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. This answer of Christ's, which is short and full, not only shows the readiness of Christ to do good, how soon and easily he complied with the centurion's request, it being a prayer of faith, and so effectual, and was heard as soon as delivered; but also contains an absolute promise that he would heal him. He does not say that he would come and see him, and what his case was, and do what he could for him, as ordinary physicians do; but he would come and heal him at once: and indeed it is a proposal of more than what was asked of him; his presence was not asked, and yet he offered it; though Luke says, that he besought him by the messengers to "come and heal his servant"; and so this is an answer to both parts of the request; the whole is granted. Christ cannot deny anything to faith, his presence or assistance.

Matthew 8:8

Ver. 8. The centurion answered, and said,.... This, according to ***Lu 7:6*** was said by his friends in his name, when he understood that Christ had agreed to come to his house, with the elders of the Jews, he first sent to him; and after he was actually set out with them, and was in the way to his house; who, conscious of his own unworthiness, deputes some persons to him, to address him in this manner,

Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof. This is not said as rejecting and despising the presence and company of Christ; but is expressive of his great modesty and humility, and of his consciousness of his own vileness, and unworthiness of having so great a person in his house: it was too great a favour for him to enjoy. And if such a man was unworthy, having been an idolater, and lived a profane course of life, that Christ should come into his house, and be, though but for a short time, under his roof; how much more unworthy are poor sinful creatures (and sensible sinners see themselves to be so unworthy), that Christ should come into their hearts, and dwell there by faith, as he does, in all true believers, however vile and sinful they have been?

But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. As the former expression declares his modesty and humility, and the mean apprehensions he had of himself; so this signifies his great faith in Christ, and the persuasion he had of his divine power: he does not say pray, and my servant shall be healed, as looking upon him barely as a man of God, a prophet, one that had great interest in God, and at the throne of grace; but speak, command, order it to be done, and it shall be done, which is ascribing omnipotence to him; such power as was put forth in creation, by the all commanding word of God; "he spake, and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast", *Ps 33:9* yea, he signifies that if he would but speak a word, the least word whatever; or, as Luke has it, "say in a word"; let but a word come out of thy mouth, and it will be done.

Matthew ***8:9***

Ver. 9. For I am a man under authority,.... Of Caesar the Roman emperor, and of superior officers under him, as a tribune, &c.

having soldiers under me; an hundred of them at least, for military service, and some of them were used by him as his domestics:

and I say unto this man go, and he goeth, and to another come, and he cometh: for there is no disputing the commands of officers, by soldiers, in anything, in exercises, marches, battles, &c.

and to my servant, that was more properly his domestic servant, who waited upon him, and did those things for him which every soldier under him was not employed in,

do this, and he doth it; immediately, without any more ado; as indeed a servant ought. The Jews {l} have a saying, that

"a servant over whom his master twvr Nya, "hath no power", is not called a servant."

Now, these words are not a reason excusing Christ's coming to his house, or showing how unworthy it was, and how unfit it would be for him to come thither, since he was a man that held soldiers under him, and his house was encumbered with them; for these were not with him, but quartered out elsewhere: but they are an argument, from the lesser to the greater, that seeing he was a man, and Christ was God, he was under the authority of others. Christ was subject to none; and yet he had such power over his soldiers and servants, that if he bid one go, and another come, or ordered them to stand in such a place, and in such a posture, or do this and the other servile work, his orders were immediately obeyed: how much more easily then could Christ, who had all power in heaven and in earth, command off this distemper his servant was afflicted with? He suggests, that as his soldiers were under him, and at his command; so all bodily diseases were under Christ, and to be controlled by him, at his pleasure; and that, if he would but say to that servant of his, the palsy, remove, it would remove at once.

{l} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 72. 2.

Matthew 8:10

Ver. 10. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled,.... Which must be understood of him as man; for as God, nothing could present itself unto him at unawares, unthought of, and not known before; and so could not raise admiration in him, and which cannot properly fall on a divine person: or he behaved, both by words and gesture, as persons do when they are astonished at anything; and this he might do, to raise the attention and wonder of those that were with him:

and said to them that followed. This agrees perfectly with the account that Luke gives, that Christ was set out, with the messengers the centurion sent unto him, in order to come to his house, and heal his servant, and these that followed him were his disciples, and so some copies read, and others that were following him thither to see the miracle.

Verily, I say unto you; a strong asseveration, and which Christ used, when he was about to deliver anything of considerable importance, and required attention:

I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel: that is, among the people of Israel: so the Arabic version reads it, "in any of Israel"; and the Persic, "among the children of Israel"; and is to be understood, not of the patriarchs and prophets, and other eminent believers, which were in Israel formerly; but of the men of the then present generation, his mother and his apostles being excepted: though it may be questioned, whether the apostles themselves as yet, had expressed such a strong faith in him, as this man: or it may have a particular respect to them in Israel, who had applied to him for healing, and had been healed by him; that he had not met with and observed any such expression of faith, in his divine power from them, as this centurion had delivered. And it was the more remarkable, that it came from a Gentile, and from a soldier too: but as great as it was, he did not exceed it; he did not ascribe more to Christ than was proper, and which, by the way, is a clear proof of our Lord's divinity: for had he not been truly God, he would have rebuked, and not have commended this man's faith in him: who ascribed that power to him, which is peculiar to God: he is so far from finding fault with him, for thinking or speaking so highly of him, that he praises him for it, and prefers his faith in him, to any instance of it he had met with among the Israelites; who yet had far greater advantages of knowing him, and believing in him. There is a phrase in the Talmud {m} somewhat like this, only used of a person of a different character; where a certain Jew, observing another called by some of his neighbours Rabbi, thus expressed himself;

"If this be a Rabbi, larvyb wtwmk wbry la, "let there not be many such as he in Israel"."

And it is said {n} of Nadab and Abihu,

"that two such were not found larvyb whyytwwk, "as they in Israel"."

{m} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 2. Derech Eretz. fol. 18. 1 {n} Zohar in Lev. fol. 24. 1. & 25. 4.

Matthew 8:11

Ver. 11. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west,.... On occasion of the faith of the centurion, who was a Gentile, our Lord makes a short digression, concerning the call of the Gentiles; and suggests, that what was seen in that man now, would be fulfilled in great numbers of them in a little time: that many of them from the several parts of the world, from the rising of the sun to the setting of it, from the four points of the heaven, east, west, north, and south, as in *Lu 13:29* and from the four corners of the earth, should come and believe in him;

and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: signifying, that as the Gospel would be preached in a short time to all nations, many among them would believe in him, as Abraham, and the rest of the patriarchs did; and so would partake of the same blessings of grace with them; such as, adoption, justification, pardon of sin, and the like; for "they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham", ***Ga 3:9*** now, under the Gospel dispensation, though Gentiles; and shall enjoy with him the same eternal glory and happiness he does, in the other world. Which shows, that the faith of Old and New Testament saints, Jews and Gentiles, is the same; their blessings the same, and so their eternal happiness; they have the same God and Father, the same Mediator and Redeemer, are actuated and influenced by the same Spirit, partake of the same grace, and shall share the same glory. The allusion is to sitting, or rather lying along, which was the posture of the ancients at meals, and is here expressed, at a table, at a meal, or feast: and under the metaphor of a feast or plentiful table to set down to, are represented the blessings of the Gospel, and the joys of heaven; which are not restrained to any particular nation, or set of people; not to the Jews, to the exclusion of the Gentiles. Our Lord here, goes directly contrary to the notions and practices of the Jews, who thought it a crime to sit down at table, and eat with the Gentiles; see *Ac 11:3* and yet Gentiles shall sit at table and eat with the principal men, the heads of their nation, in the kingdom of heaven, and they themselves at the same time shut out.

Matthew 8:12

Ver. 12. But the children of the kingdom,.... The Jews, who were subjects of the kingdom, and commonwealth of Israel, from which the Gentiles were aliens; and who were also in the church of God, which is his kingdom on earth; and besides, had the promise of the Gospel dispensation, sometimes called the kingdom of heaven, and by them, often the world to come; and were by their own profession, and in their apprehension and expectation, children, and heirs of the kingdom of glory. These phrases, abh Mlweh Nb, "a son of the world to come", and ytad amle ynb, "children of the world to come" {o}, are frequent in their writings: these, Christ says, shall be cast out; out of the land of Israel, as they were in a few years after, and out of the church of God: these branches were broken off, and the Gentiles grafted in, in their room; and will be excluded from the kingdom of heaven, where they hoped to have a place,

and cast into outer darkness: into the Gentile world, and into judicial blindness, and darkness of mind, and into the blackness of darkness in hell,

where shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth. Phrases expressive of the miserable state and condition of persons out of the kingdom of heaven; who are weeping for what they have lost, and gnashing their teeth with the pain of what they endure. The Jews say {p},

"he that studies not in the law in this world, but is defiled with the pollutions of the world, he is taken hrbh wtwa wkylvyw, "and cast without": this is hell itself, to which such are condemned, who do not study the law."

The allusion in the text is, to the customs of the ancients at their feasts and entertainments; which were commonly made in the evening, when the hall or dining room, in which they sat down, was very much illuminated with lamps and torches; but without in the streets, were entire darkness: and where were heard nothing but the cries of the poor, for something to be given them, and of the persons that were turned out as unworthy guests; and the gnashing of their teeth, either with cold in winter nights, or with indignation at their being kept out. Christ may also be thought to speak in the language, and according to the notions of the Jews, who ascribe gnashing of teeth to the devils in hell; for they say {q}, that

"for the flattery with which they flattered Korah, in the business of rioting, "the prince of hell wynv qrx, gnashed his teeth at them"."

The whole of this may be what they call Mnhg zgwr, "the indignation", or "tumult of hell" {r}.

{o} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 4. 2. Taanith, fol. 22. 1. Megilla, fol. 28. 2. Yoma, fol. 88. 1. & Sanhedrim, fol. 88. 2. Raziel, fol. 37. 1. & 38. 1. Caphtor, fol. 15. 1. & 18. 2. & 60. 1. & 84. 2. Raya Mehimna, in Zohar in Lev. fol. 34. 2. {p} Zohar in Gen. fol. 104. 3. {q} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 52. 1. {r} Targum in Job, iii 17.

Matthew 8:13

Ver. 13. And Jesus said unto the centurion,.... Christ having finished the digression, returns an answer to the centurion, agreeably to his desire, saying to him,

go thy way; not as displeased with him, but as granting his request: for it follows,

and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. As he had faith to believe, that Christ could cure his servant by a word speaking, it was done accordingly. Christ by his almighty "fiat" said, let him be healed, and he was healed: just as God in the creation said, "let there be light, and there was light". He does not say according to thy prayer, or according to thy righteousness, and goodness, but according to thy faith: and it is further to be observed, that this cure was wrought, not so much for the sake of the servant, as his master; and therefore Christ says, "be it done unto thee"; let him be healed for thy sake, and restored unto thee, to thy use, profit, and advantage.

And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour, at the very exact time, even in that moment. Some copies add, "and when the centurion returned to his house, in the selfsame hour he found his servant healed"; which the Ethiopic version has, and it agrees with ***Lu 7:10***.

Matthew 8:14

Ver. 14. And when Jesus was come into Peter's house,.... And which was also Andrew's, ***Mr 1:29*** for these two brothers lived together, and this was in Capernaum, as appears from the context. Though Andrew and Peter were originally of Bethsaida, a place not far from this, but had removed hither since their call by Christ, this being his city; though probably this house was Peter's wife's mother's, and only called their's, because they lodged there, whilst in this city: into this house Christ entered, with James and John, and others; when

he saw his (Peter's) wife's mother, laid, or "cast" on a bed, See Gill "Mt 8:6".

and sick of a fever: Luke says, ***Lu 4:38*** that she "was taken", or rather held, or "detained with a great fever"; the distemper was very raging and furious, it had got to a very great height. The other evangelists say, that the persons in the house told him of her, and besought him for her, that he would heal her, having a very great affection for her, and desire of her life, which seemed to be in great danger. Hence it may be observed against the Papists, that ministers of the Gospel may lawfully marry; Peter, an apostle, and from whom they pretend to derive their succession of bishops, was a married man, had a wife, and that after he was called to be an apostle. His wife's mother is expressly mentioned, being the person labouring under a violent fever, and whom Christ cured in the following manner.

Matthew 8:15

Ver. 15. And he touched her hand,.... Sometimes he healed by a word, as the centurion's servant; and sometimes by a touch, as here; and sometimes by both, as the leper. Luke says, that he "stood over her", reached over her to take her by the hand, and lift her up, "and rebuked the fever". Just as he did the winds and sea, having all diseases, as well as the elements, at his beck and control;

and the fever left her immediately, as the other evangelists say.

And she arose and ministered unto them: the former of these actions is a proof of her being restored to health and strength, in so much that she could rise and walk about of herself; whereas generally, persons after fevers continue very weak a considerable time; which shows what a miracle was wrought upon her by Christ: and the latter of them expresses her gratitude, for the mercy she had received; she rises and serves him and his friends, preparing proper and suitable provisions for them.

Matthew 8:16

Ver. 16. When the even was come,.... The other evangelists say, when "the sun was set", or "setting"; which circumstances are observed, not as some think, because the cool of the evening, and when the sun was set, it was more seasonable and convenient, in those hot countries, to bring out their sick, than in the heat of the day: nor are they remarked, as others think, because it was an unseasonable time to bring them to Christ, when he had been fatigued all day long, and yet he healed them; such was his goodness and compassion: but the true reason of the mention of them is, because it had been their sabbath day, as appears from ***Mr 1:21*** and they could not, according to their canons, bring them sooner. Their sabbath began at sun setting; hence they say {s}, that on the eve of the sabbath, that is, immediately preceding it, when the sabbath is about to begin, it is lawful to work hmxh eqvtv de, "until the sun sets"; and so it ended at sun setting the next day, which they judged of by the appearance of three stars {t}.

"R. Phinehas, in the name of R. Aba Bar Papa, says, if but one star appears, it is certainly day; if two, it is a doubt whether it is night or not; if three, it is certainly night. On the eve of the sabbath, if he sees one star and does any work, he is free; if two, he brings a trespass offering for a doubt; if three, he brings a sin offering; at the going out of the sabbath, if he sees one star, and does any work, he brings a sin offering; if two, he brings a trespass offering for a doubt; if three, he is free."

So that till the sun was set, and three stars appeared as a proof of it, it was not lawful to do any sort of business; but as soon as it was out of doubt, that the sun was set, they might do anything: and this being the case,

they brought to him (Christ) many that were possessed with devils; whose bodies Satan had been suffered to enter into, and were acted, and governed, and thrown into strange disorders by him. Such possessions, through divine permission, were frequent; that Christ, who was come in the flesh, might have an opportunity of showing his power over Satan, and giving proof of his deity and Messiahship.

And he cast out the spirits with his word; only by speaking to them; who were obliged, at his command, and by his orders, to quit their tenements, though unwillingly enough.

And healed all that were sick; whoever they were, without any respect of persons, of whatsoever disease attended them: the most stubborn, inveterate, and otherwise incurable disorder, was not too hard for him, which he cured without the help of medicine, and where that could be of no use, and either by speaking, or touching, or some such like means.

{s} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 33. 1. {t} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 2. 2. Maimon. Sabbat, c. 5. sect. 4.

Matthew 8:17

Ver. 17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet,.... In *Isa 53:4* "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows", here rendered,

himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses: very agreeable to the Hebrew text, awh, "he himself", not another; avn, "took up", upon himself voluntarily, freely, as a man lifts up a burden, and takes it on his shoulders; wnylx, "our infirmities", diseases, sicknesses, whether of body or soul, Mlbo wnybakmw, "and bare", or carried, as a man does a burden upon his back, "our sicknesses", or diseases, which occasion pain and sorrow. And that these words are spoken of the Messiah, the Jews themselves own; for among the names they give to the Messiah, "a leper" is one; which they prove from this passage {u}.

"The Rabbins say, "a leper" of the house of Rabbi is his name; as it is said, "surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted". Says R. Nachman, if he is of the living, he is as I am, as it is said, *Jer 30:21* Says Rab, if of the living, he is as our Rabbi, the holy."

Upon which last clause the gloss is,

"If the Messiah is of them that are alive, our Rabbi the holy is he, "because Myawlxt lbwod he bears infirmities"."

Elsewhere {w} they say,

"There is one temple that is called the temple of the sons of afflictions; and when the Messiah comes into that temple, and reads all the afflictions, all the griefs, and all the chastisements of Israel, which come upon them, then all of them shall come upon him: and if there was any that would lighten them off of Israel, and take them upon himself, there is no son of man that can bear the chastisements of Israel, because of the punishments of the law;

as it is said, "surely he hath borne our griefs", &c."

And in another ancient book {x} of their's, God is represented saying to the Messiah,

"Nyrwvy lwbot, "wilt thou bear chastisements", in order to remove their iniquities? (the iniquities of the children of God,) as it is written, "surely he hath borne our griefs": he replied, "I will bear them with joy"."

Hence it is manifest, that according to the mind of the ancient Jews, this passage belongs to the Messiah, and is rightly applied to him by the evangelist. But the difficulty is, how it had its accomplishment in Christ's healing the bodily diseases of men; since Isaiah speaks not of his actions and miracles, but of his sufferings and death; and not of bearing the diseases of the body, as it should seem, but of the diseases of the mind, of sins, as the Apostle Peter interprets it, ***1Pe 2:24***. To remove which, let it be observed, that though the prophet chiefly designs to point out Christ taking upon him, and bearing the sins of his people, in order to make satisfaction for them, and to save them from them; yet so likewise, as to include his bearing, by way of sympathy, and taking away by his power, the bodily diseases of men, which arise from sin; and which was not only an emblem of his bearing and taking away sin, but a proof of his power and ability to do it: for since he could do the one, it was plain he could do the other.

{u} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 98. 2. {w} Zohar in Exod. fol. 85. 2. {x} Pesikta in Abkath Rochel, l. 1. par. 2. p. 309. Ed. Huls.

Matthew ***8:18***

Ver. 18. Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him,.... Who got together, partly out of novelty to see his person, of whom they had heard so much; and partly to see the miracles he wrought: some came to have their bodily diseases healed; few, if any, to hear the Gospel preached by him, and for the good of their immortal souls: the most part came with some sinister, selfish, and carnal views, wherefore

he gave commandment to depart unto the other side. Different were the reasons, which at certain times moved Christ to depart from the multitude; as that he might have an opportunity of private prayer, or to preach, to others, or to show he sought not popular applause, and to avoid seditions: his reasons here seem to be with respect to himself, that being wearied as man, with the work of the day, he might have an opportunity of refreshing himself with sleep; with respect to his disciples, that he might have a trial of their faith, when in danger at sea; and with respect to the multitude, because of their carnality, and sole concern for their temporal, and worldly good. The persons he gave commandment to, must be either the multitude, or the disciples; not the former, because he studiously avoided their company, and his concern was to be rid of them; but the latter, and so the Vulgate Latin and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read, "he commanded his disciples". The place he would have them go to was, the other side of the lake of Tiberias, or Genesareth; not over the river Euphrates, as says the author of the old Nizzachon {y}.

{y} Pesikta in Abkath Rochel, l. 1. par. 2. p. 205. Ed. Huls.

Matthew 8:19

Ver. 19. And a certain Scribe came,.... "As they went in the way", ***Lu 9:57*** to go to the sea side, in order to take shipping, and pass to the other shore;

and said unto him, Master, or Rabbi, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. One would have thought, that this man desired in good earnest to be a disciple of Christ, were it not for Christ's answer to him, who knew his heart: from whence it appears, that he, seeing the miracles which Christ wrought, and observing the fame of him among the people, began to think that he would be generally received as the Messiah; and by joining himself to him, promised himself much ease, honour, and wealth. These seem to be the motives, which prevailed upon him to take so sudden and hasty a step; for he did not wait to be called to follow Christ, as the other disciples were, but offers himself to be one; that is, to be one of his intimates, one of his apostles; and besides, he rashly promises to do that, which he knew nothing of, and which in some cases is impossible to be done.

Matthew 8:20

Ver. 20. And Jesus saith unto him,.... Knowing his heart, and the carnal and worldly views with which he acted;

the foxes have holes in the earth, where they hide themselves from danger, take their rest, and secure their whelps;

and the birds of the air have nests, where they sit, lay, and hatch their eggs, and bring up their young;

but the son of man has not where to lay his head, when he is weary, and wants rest and sleep, as he did at this time. So that though he was Lord of all, as being the mighty God; yet as "the son of man", a phrase, expressive both of the truth and meanness of his human nature, the most despicable of creatures in the earth and air, were richer than he. This he said, to convince the Scribe of his mistake; who expected much worldly grandeur and wealth, by becoming his disciple. When Christ styles himself "the son of man", it is no contradiction to his being God; nor any objection to trust and confidence in him, as the Jew {z} suggests; for he is truly and properly God, as well as really man, having two natures, human and divine, united in his person; so that he is, as was prophesied of him, Emmanuel, God with us, in our nature, God manifested in the flesh: and since he is so, it cannot be unlawful to trust in him; which it would be indeed, was he a mere man. The Jews ought not to object to this name and title of the "Messiah, the son of man": since he is so called, as their own writers and commentators acknowledge, in {a} *Ps 80:17* and {b} ***Da 7:13***. And whereas it is further urged against these words of Christ, that if he was God, why does he complain of want of place? Is not the whole world his, according to *Ps 24:1*? It may be replied, that it is very true, that the whole world is his, nor could he be in want of anything, as God; but yet, as man, for our sakes he became "poor", that we "might be rich": nor should this be any difficulty with a Jew, when they themselves say, as some have thought, if he (the Messiah) should come, hyb anbytyd atkwd yl, "there's no place in which he can sit down" {c}. Unless it be understood of Nebuchadnezzar, as the gloss explains it; let the learned inspect the place, and judge: the coming of the Messiah is immediately spoken of.

{z} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 12. p. 403. {a} Targum & Aben Ezra in loc, Abarbinel Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 81. 2. {b} R. Jeshua in Aben Ezra in loc. & Saadiah Gaon & Jarchi in loc. Zohar in Gen. fol. 85. 4. {c} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 96. 2.

Ver. 21. And another of his disciples said unto him,.... That is, one of his disciples; for this does not suppose, that the other, the Scribe before mentioned, was one. It is possible, he might be one of the twelve. The Persic version makes him one of the disciples, whom they call "Hawarion", apostles; and, according to ancient tradition, it was {d} Philip. And certain it is, that he was one, who was called to preach the Gospel; so that he was not a common ordinary disciple; nor could he be one of the seventy disciples, since it was after this, that they were called and sent forth; as appears from Luke's account, ***Lu 9:60***. But who he particularly was, cannot be certainly known, nor is it of any great importance to know it: his address to Christ is made with great respect and reverence, and in a very modest and humble manner,

Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father: for it seems, according to Luke, that Christ had bid him "follow" him: he had given him a call to be his disciple, and to go and preach the Gospel, which he did not refuse; but desires leave "first" to attend his father's funeral, who was now dead; as his requests, and Christ's answer, both suppose: though some conjecture, that he was only very aged, or was dangerously ill; and therefore it could not be thought he would live long: hence he was desirous of doing this last good office, before he entered on his public work; but these are conjectures, without any foundation: it is plain, his father was dead, and what he requested was, to go home, which perhaps might not be a great way off, and perform the funeral rites, and then return. This may seem very reasonable, since burying the dead was reckoned by the Jews, not only an act of kindness and respect to the deceased, but an act of piety and religion; and in which, men are followers of God, and imitate him, who himself buried the body of Moses {e}. And though this man was called to preach the Gospel, yet he might think he would be easily excused for the present, on this account; since, according to the Jewish canons, such whose dead lay before them, who were as yet unburied, were excused reading the Shema, they were free from performing the duty of prayer, and were not obliged to wear their phylacteries {f}.

{d} Clement. Alex. Strom. l. 3. p. 436. {e} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 30. 2. & Sota, fol. 14. 1. {f} Misn. Beracot, c. 3. sect. 1.

Matthew ***8:22***

Ver. 22. But Jesus said unto him, follow thou me,.... Christ would not excuse him on this account, but insists on what he had before called him to; to attend upon him, and give himself up to the ministry of the word: which was done, partly to shew, that a greater regard ought to be had to him, than to the nearest relation and friend whatever; and partly, on account of the dignity of the Gospel ministry, which greatly exceeds any such services; as also to signify, of what little account were the traditions of the elders with him; wherefore he says,

let the dead bury the dead. Our Lord is not to be understood, as speaking against, or disrespectfully of burying the dead; his words suppose it ought to be done: only it was not proper, that this person should be concerned in it at this time, who was called to an higher employment; and therefore should leave this to be done by persons, whom it better became. And however strange and odd such a phrase may sound in the ears of some, of one dead man's burying another, it was easily understood by a Jew; with whom it is common to say, tmk bwvx ajwxh, "that a sinner is counted as {g} dead, and that ungodly persons, even while they are alive", Mytm Nyywrq, are "called dead" {h}. And in this sense is the word used, in the former part of this phrase; and Christ's meaning is, let such who are dead in trespasses and sins, and to all that is spiritually good, bury those who are dead in a natural or corporal sense. It is likely the deceased was an unregenerate man; however, it is plainly suggested, that many of the relations were; and there were enough of them to take care of this service: and therefore, there was no need why he should neglect the ministry of the Gospel to attend that; but, ought to leave it to persons who were fitter for it.

{g} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 2. {h} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 18. 2. Jarchi in Gen. 11. 32. Baal Hatturim, in Deut. xvii. 6. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 58. 3. Midrash Kohelet. fol. 78. 2. Caphtor, fol. 79. 1, 2. & 84. 1.

Matthew ***8:23***

Ver. 23. And when he was entered into a ship,.... Which was got ready by his disciples, or hired by them for his use, according to the directions he had given, his disciples followed him into the ship, and they only; for as for the men hereafter mentioned, they were the men that belonged to the ship, and had the management of it: the multitude were dismissed, and in order to be clear of them, Christ took this method; and being desirous also of trying the faith of his disciples, he ordered it so, that they should be alone with him.

Matthew 8:24

Ver. 24. And behold, there arose a great tempest,.... "A great concussion", or "shaking" of the sea; the stormy wind moved the sea, and the waves thereof; and both wind and sea shook the ship, and the men that were in it. Luke calls this tempest a "storm wind", ***Lu 8:23*** and Mark says, it was "a great storm of wind", ***Mr 4:37*** and both use the word "loelaps", which signifies a particular kind of wind, which is suddenly whirled about upwards and downwards; or rather, a conflict of many winds: it seems to be a whirlwind, or hurricane. It is said, that this tempest "arose", not by chance, nor by the power of Satan, but by divine providence; for the trial of the faith of Christ's disciples, and that he might have an opportunity of giving proof of his deity on the sea, as he had lately done in several instances on the dry land. Luke says, that this storm of wind "came down"; referring to the motion and course of the winds, which are exhalations from the earth, raised up into the middle region of the air, from whence they are expelled by a superior force to the lower region, and from thence move in an oblique, slanting manner, downwards. The place where this tempest arose, or into which this storm of wind came down, is here said to be

in the sea. Luke calls it a "lake", and it was the lake of Genesareth. But both Matthew and Mark call it the sea, and is what is sometimes called the sea of Tiberias, and the sea of Galilee; see ***Joh 6:1*** agreeably to the language of the Jewish {i} writers. To all this, the word "behold!" is prefixed; which is sometimes used, when anything extraordinary and preternatural is spoken of: and this storm seems to be more than an ordinary one; at least, it was very sudden and unexpected: when the disciples entered the ship, the air was serene, and the sea still and quiet; but as soon as they had set sail, at once, on a sudden, this storm came down, with great force into the sea, and lifted up its waves;

insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves; it was just sinking to the bottom, so that they were in the utmost extremity: and what added to their distress was,

but he, Christ,

was asleep. Mark mentions the place where he was asleep, "in the hinder part of the ship"; that is in the stern: where he, as Lord and Master, should be, though to the great concern of his disciples, there asleep; and that in a deep sound sleep, as the word which Luke makes use of signifies; and as appears by the loud repeated call of his disciples to awake him: and though this sleep doubtless arose from natural causes, he being greatly fatigued with the business of the day past; yet was so ordered by the providence of God, to come upon him in such a manner at this time, for the trial of the faith of his disciples. Christ's body needing sleep, and refreshment by it, shows that it was a real human body he assumed; subject to the same infirmities as our's; excepting sin; and is no contradiction to the truth of his divinity, as the Jew {k} suggests. He slept as man, though, as God, he is Israel's keeper, who neither slumbers nor sleeps.

{i} T. Bob. Moed. Katon, fol. 18. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 81. 2. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 86. 2. {k} Vet. Nizzachon, p. 210.

Matthew 8:25

Ver. 25. And his disciples came unto him,.... From some other part of the ship, being in great consternation, and distress,

and awoke him; saying, Lord, save us, we perish. They awoke him by their loud cries, and repeated calls; for in Luke, the form of address is doubled, "Master, Master!" expressing their distress, importunity, and haste for deliverance saying, "save us, we perish", or "we are lost": which shows the apprehensions they had of their condition; not only that they were in danger of being lost, or were ready to be lost, but were lost: they saw no probability of escaping by any natural, rational methods: wherefore they apply to Christ, believing that he was able to save them, in this their extremity; as they had indeed a great deal of reason to conclude, from the miracles they had that day seen performed by him.

Matthew 8:26

Ver. 26. And he saith unto them, why are ye fearful?.... Though they had some faith in him, yet there was a great deal of fear and unbelief, for which Christ blames them, saying,

O ye of little faith: See Gill on "Mt 6:30". In Luke, the phrase is, "where is your faith?" what is become of it? You professed but just now to believe in me, is your faith gone already? In Mark it is, "how is it that ye have no faith?" That is, in exercise, their faith was very small, it could hardly be discerned: some faith they had, as appears by their application to him, but it was very little. They had no faith in him, as sleeping, that he could deliver them; but had some little faith in him that he might, could he be awaked out of sleep; and for this Christ blames them; for he, as the eternal God, was as able to save them sleeping as waking.

Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm: being awaked by his disciples, he raises his head from his pillow, stands up, and with a majestic voice, in an authoritative manner, showing some kind of resentment at the wind and sea, as if they had exceeded their commission; and the one had blown, and the other raged too much and too long; he rebukes them in such language as this, "peace, be still"; siwpa pefimwso, as it is in Mark, be silent, hold your peace, stop your mouth, put a bridle on it, as the words used signify; and go on no longer to threaten with shipwreck and loss of lives; upon which the wind ceased, the sea became calm, and the ship moved quietly on.

Matthew 8:27

Ver. 27. But the men marvelled,.... Mark says, "they feared exceedingly"; and Luke, "they being afraid, wondered": they were filled with astonishment and fear, or reverence: there was such a shine of majesty, such a lustre of divine power appeared in this affair. The other two evangelists seem to refer this to the disciples, which Matthew seems to ascribe to the men, the mariners that were in the ship; it is likely it had the same effect on both; and both were abundantly convinced of his deity and dignity, saying,

what manner of man, or person

is this? For the word "man", is not in the text; of what qualities, perfections and powers, is he possessed? Surely he must be more than a mere man; he can be no other than the mighty God,

that even the winds and the sea obey him: which can be said of no other, than the most high God: never was such a thing heard of, that the winds and sea should be rebuked by a mere creature, and should obey. That man must be infidel to "revelation", that can read this account, and deny the deity of Christ; to one or other of these he must be drove, either to deny the truth of the fact, and the circumstances of it, or believe that Jesus Christ is truly and properly God, as the disciples and mariners did.

Matthew ***8:28***

Ver. 28. And when he was come to the other side,.... Of the lake, or sea of Tiberias, right over against Galilee,

into the country of Gergesenes, the same with the Girgashites, *Ge 15:21* whom Joshua drove out of the land of Canaan; and who, as a Jewish writer {l} says, left their country to the Israelites, and went to a country, which is called to this day, Najoygrwg, "Gurgestan", of which these people were some remains: both in ***Mr 5:1*** it is called "the country of the Gadarenes"; and so the Syriac and Persic versions read it here; which is easily reconciled by observing, not that Gergesa and Gadara were one and the same city, called by different names; but that these two cities were near each other, in the same country, which was sometimes denominated from the one, and sometimes from the other. Origen {m} has a remarkable passage, showing the different situations of Gadara and Gergesa; and that the latter cannot be Gerasa in Arabia; and also the signification of the name, for the sake of which, I shall transcribe it.

"Gerasa (says he) is a city of Arabia, having neither sea nor lake near it; wherefore the evangelists, who well knew the countries about Judea, would never have said so manifest an untruth: and as to what we find in some few copies, "into the country of the Gadarenes", it must be said, that Gadara indeed was a city of Judea, about which were many famous baths; but there was no lake, or sea in it, adjacent with precipices; but Gergesa, from whence were the Gergasenes, is an ancient city about the lake; now called Tiberias; about which is a precipice adjacent to the lake, from whence is

shown, that the swine were cast down by the devils. Gergesa is interpreted, paroikia
ekbeblhkotwn, "the habitation of those that cast out"; being called so perhaps prophetically, for what the inhabitants of those places did to the Saviour, beseeching him to depart out of their coasts."

Dr. Lightfoot suggests, that this place might be so called, from atvgrg, which signifies "clay" or "dirt", and mentions Lutetia for an example. But to pass this, as soon as Christ was got out of the ship, and come to land in this country,

there met him two possessed with devils. Both Mark and Luke mention but one, which is no contradiction to Matthew; for they do not say that there was only one; and perhaps the reason why they only take notice of him is, because he was the fiercest, had a legion of devils in him, and was the principal one, that spake to Christ, and with whom he was chiefly concerned. This is to be understood, not of any natural disease of body, but of real possession by Satan. These possessed men met him, not purposely, or with design, but accidentally to them, and unawares to Satan too; for though he knows much, he is not omniscient: had he been aware of Christ's coming that way, and what he was about to do, he would have took care to have had the possessed out of the way; but so it was ordered by providence, that just as Christ landed, these should be

coming out of the tombs. Their coemeteria, or burying places, were at some distance from towns or cities; wherefore Luke says, the possessed met him "out of the city", a good way off from it; for the Jews {n} say, ryel Nykwmo twrbqh ytb wyh alv, "that the sepulchres were not near a city"; see ***Lu 7:12*** and these tombs were built so large, that persons might go into them, and sit and dwell in them, as these "demoniacs" did, and therefore are said to come out of them. The rules for making them are {o} these;

"He that sells ground to his neighbour to make a burying place, or that receives of his neighbour, to make him a burying place, must make the inside of the cave four cubits by six, and open in it eight graves; three here and three there, and two over against them; and the graves must be four cubits long, and seven high, and six broad. R. Simeon says, he must make the inside of the cave six cubits by eight, and open within thirteen graves, four here, and four there, and three over against them; and one on the right hand of the door, and one on the left: and he must make rux, "a court", at the mouth of the cave, six by six, according to the measure of the bier, and those that bury; and he must open in it two caves, one here and another there: R. Simeon says, four at the four sides. R. Simeon ben Gamaliel says, all is according to the nature of the rock."

Now in the court, at the mouth, or entrance of the cave, which was made for the bearers to put down the bier or coffin upon, before the interment, there was room for persons to enter and lodge, as these possessed with devils did: which places were chosen by the devils, either because of the solitude, gloominess, and filthiness of them; or as some think, to confirm that persuasion some men had, that the souls of men after death, are changed into devils; or rather, to establish a notion which prevailed among the Jews, that the souls of the deceased continue for a while to be about their bodies; which drew persons to necromancy, or consulting with the dead. It is a notion that obtains among the Jews {p}, that the soul for twelve months after its separation from the body, is more or less with it, hovering about it; and hence, some have been induced to go and dwell among the tombs, and inquire of spirits: they tell us {q},

"it happened to a certain holy man, that he gave a penny to a poor man, on the "eve" of the new year; and his wife provoked him, and he went twrbqh tybb Nlw, "and lodged among the tombs", and heard two spirits talking with one another."

Or the devil chose these places, to render the persons possessed the more uncomfortable and distressed; to make them wilder and fiercer, by living in such desolate places, and so do more mischief to others: which was the case of these, who were

exceeding fierce, wicked, malignant, mischievous, and troublesome, through the influence of the devils in them;

so that no man might pass that way, without being insulted or hurt by them.

{l} Juchasin, fol. 135. 2. {m} Comment. in Joannem, T. 2. p. 131. Ed. Huet. {n} T. Bab. Kiddushin. fol. 80. 2. Gloss. {o} Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 6. sect. 8. {p} Nishmat Chayim, par. 2. c. 22. p. 81. 2. c. 24. p. 85. 1. & c. 29. p. 93. 1. p. 94. 1, 2. {q} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 18. 2.

Ver. 29. And behold they cried out, saying,.... This is an instance and proof, of the wonderful power of Christ over the devils; and has therefore the note of admiration, "behold!" prefixed to it, that the devils themselves who had took possession of these men, and made them so fierce and cruel, and outrageous, that there was no passing the way for them; yet upon the sight of Christ, and especially at hearing his orders to come out from them, not only say, but cry out, as being in great consternation, horror, and fear, and with the utmost subjection to him,

what have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? They had nothing indeed to do with him; they had no interest in his grace, blood, righteousness, and salvation; he was no Saviour for them: but he had to do with them, and that was what they dreaded; and therefore mean, that he would let them alone, in the quiet possession of these men, and not disturb and dislodge them; for they knew that he was Jesus, the Saviour of sinful men, though none of their's, the true Messiah; and that he was also "the Son of God", a divine person, possessed of almighty power, and so an overmatch for them; at whose presence they trembled, and whose all commanding voice they were obliged to obey, though sorely against their wills.

Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? This question implies the apprehension the devils had of Christ as a judge, and their sense of his authority, and power, to punish them; as also that they deserved it, and expected it, nor do they say anything against it; only imagine that the time of their full torment was not yet come; which is generally referred unto the day of judgment, to which they were reserved by the appointment of God; which they had some notion of, and as at a distance; and therefore complain of Christ's coming to them now, and expostulate with him about it: though it may be understood of the time they had proposed to themselves, to abide in the men they had possessed, and which they concluded they had a permission for; and nothing could give more torment, pain, and uneasiness, than to be turned out, and remanded to their prison, and restrained from doing more mischief to the bodies and souls of men. Or whether this may not have some respect to the time of the preaching of the Gospel, and setting up the kingdom of Christ among the Gentiles, the devils might have some hint of, as not yet to be, I leave to be considered, with this observation; that there seems to be a considerable "emphasis" on the word "hither", meaning the country of the Gergesenes, an Heathen country, at least where many Gentiles inhabited: and it is as if they had said, is it not enough, that thou turnest us out of the land of Judea, and hast dispossessed us out of the bodies of men dwelling there; but thou pursuest us hither also, and will not let us have any rest, even in this Heathenish land; though the time is not yet come, for the dissolution of our empire and government in the Gentile world?

Matthew 8:30

Ver. 30. And there was a good way off from them,.... "Nigh unto the mountains", as Mark says, or "on the mountain", as Luke, bordering on the sea shore; so that though it was at some distance, yet within sight. The Vulgate Latin, and the Hebrew edition of Munster read, "not far off"; and the Persic version, "near them": which agree with the accounts of Mark and Luke, who say, that there were "there", or hard by, "an herd of many swine feeding". Since swine's flesh was forbidden the Jews to eat, *Le 11:7* it may be asked, how came it to pass, that there should be any number of these creatures, or that such a herd of them should be kept in the land of Israel? To which may be replied, that though the Jews might not eat swine's flesh, they were not forbid to bring them up; which they might do, in order to sell to the Gentiles, who dwelt among them; and particularly to the Romans, under whose government they now were, and with whom swine's flesh was in great esteem: but still a difficulty remains; for it was not only forbidden by the law of God to eat swine's flesh, but, by the Jewish canons, to bring them up, and make any advantage of them in any shape: their law was this, Mwqm lkb Myryzx larvy ldgy al, "an Israelite might not bring up hogs in any place" {r}: the reasons of this canon were many, partly because of the uncleanness of these creatures; hence one of their writers {s} observing, that next to those words, they "are unclean unto you", are, "and the swine", says, that this is to teach us, that "it is forbidden to bring up hogs"; and partly, because of the damage which these creatures do to other men's fields: hence {t}

"the wise men say, cursed is he that brings up dogs and hogs, hbwrm Nqyzhv ynpm, "because they do much hurt"."

But the chief reason given by the Gemafists {u} for this prohibition, was the fact following:

"When the Hasmonean family, or Maccabees, were at war with one another, Hyrcanus was within (Jerusalem), and Aristobulus without, and every day they let down to them money in a box; and they sent up to them the daily sacrifices: there was one old man who understood the wisdom of the Greeks, and he said unto them, as long as they employ themselves in the service (of God), they will not be delivered into your hands: on the morrow they let down their money, and they sent them up a hog; and when it came to the middle of the wall, he fixed his hoofs in the wall, and the land of Israel shook, &c. at that time they said, cursed be the man Myryzx ldgyv, "that breeds hogs"; and cursed is the man that teaches his son the learning of the Grecians."

Before this time, it seems to have been lawful to bring them up, and trade with them: but now it was forbid, not only to breed them, but to receive any gain or profit by them; for this is another of their rules {w}.

"It is forbidden to bring up a hog, in order to get any profit by his skin, or by his lard, or fat, to anoint with, or to light (lamps) with; yea, though it may fall to him by inheritance."

And nothing was more infamous and reproachful among them, than a keeper of these creatures: when therefore they had a mind to cast contempt upon a man, they would call him yryzx ldgm {x}, "a breeder of hogs", or ayrzx {y}, "a hog herd". But after all, it was only an Israelite that was forbid this; a stranger might bring them up, for this is one of their canons {z}.

"A man may sell fetches to give to a stranger that breeds hogs, but to an Israelite it is forbidden to breed them."

Yea, they say {a},

"If others breed them to anoint skins with their lard, or to sell them to an Israelite to anoint with them, it was lawful: all fat may be sold, which is not for eating."

And so some cities are supposed to have hogs in them, concerning which they observe {b}, that

"a city that has hogs in it, is free from the "mezuzah";"

the schedules which were fastened to the posts of doors and gates: but now supposing this herd of swine belonged to Jews in these parts, it may easily be accounted for; for since they lived among Heathens, they might not have so great a regard to the directions of their Rabbins; and especially, since it was so much for their profit and advantage, they might make no scruple to break through these ordinances. Though this herd of swine may well enough be thought to belong to the Gentiles, that dwelt in this country; since Gadara was a Grecian city, and then inhabited more by Syrians, than by Jews, as Josephus relates {c}.

{r} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 7. sect. 7. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 77. 2. {s} Baal Hatturim, in Deut. xiv. 7, 8. {t} Maimon. Nezike Mammon, c. 5. sect. 9. {u} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 82. 2. Menachot, fol. 64. 2. Sota, fol. 49. 2. {w} Tosaphot in Pesach, art. 62. {x} T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 47. 3. {y} lb. Trumot, fol. 46. 3. {z} Piske Tosaphot in Sabbat, art. 317. {a} Yom. Tob. & Ez. Chayim, in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 7. sect. 7. {b} Ib. art. 130. {c} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 33.

Matthew 8:31

Ver. 31. So the devils besought him, saying,.... All the devils, the whole legion of them, who perceiving that they must be obliged to go out of these men, and after they had earnestly entreated they might not be sent out of the country where they had long been, and had made themselves masters of the tempers, dispositions, and circumstances of the inhabitants, and so capable of doing the more mischief, begged hard,

if thou cast us out of these men, or "from hence", as the Vulgate Latin, the Ethiopic, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read, or "out of our place", as the Persic; since we must depart, and cannot be allowed to enter into other men,

suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. This request shows the weakness of the infernal spirits, they are not able to do anything without leave, and the superior power of Christ over them, and their acknowledgment of it; as well as the wretched malignity of their nature, who must be doing mischief, if not to the bodies and souls of men, yet to their property and goods; and if they cannot vent their malice on rational creatures, are desirous of doing it on irrational ones. Many reasons have been thought of, why the devils should desire to go into the herd of swine; as because of the filthiness of these creatures, these impure spirits delighting in what is impure; or out of pure hatred to the inhabitants of this country, who, because they could no longer hurt their persons, would destroy their goods; or that by so doing, they might set the people against Christ, and so prevent his usefulness among them; which last seems to be the truest reason, and which end was answered.

Matthew 8:32

Ver. 32. And he said unto them, go, &c]. He gave them leave, as God did to Satan, in the case of Job; for without divine permission, these evil spirits cannot do anything to the bodies, souls, or estates of men: they could not enter into the swine without leave, and much less do things of greater moment and consequence; and therefore are not to be feared, or dreaded by men, especially by the people of God. It may be asked, why did Christ suffer the devils to enter the herd of swine, and destroy them, which was a considerable loss to the proprietors? To which may be answered, that if the owners were Jews, and these creatures were brought up by them for food, it was a just punishment of their breach of the law of God; or if to be sold to others, for gain and filthy lucre's sake, it was a proper rebuke, both of the avarice and the contempt of the laws of their own country, which were made to be a hedge or fence for the law of God: or if they were Gentiles, this was suffered to show the malice of the evil spirits, under whose influence they were, and who would, if they had but leave, serve them as they did the swine; and to display the power of Christ over the devils, and his sovereign right to, and disposal of the goods and properties of men; and to evince the truth of the dispossession, and the greatness of the mercy the dispossessed shared in; and to spread the fame of the miracle the more.

And when they were come out of the men that had been possessed by them,

they went into the herd of swine; which shows the real existence of these spirits, the truth of possessions and dispossessions; and that by these devils cannot be meant the sins and corruptions of men's hearts, such as pride, covetousness, uncleanness, envy, malice, cruelty, &c. for these could never be said to enter into a herd of swine, or be the authors of their destruction:

and behold, the whole herd of swine, and which was a very large one, consisting of about two thousand,

ran violently down a steep place; a precipice of one of the rocks, by the sea side,

into the sea of "Tiberias", or lake of Genesareth, which were the same, and over which Christ had just now passed;

and perished in the waters of the sea, or lake, and not any other waters near Gadara, and afar off from hence.

Matthew 8:33

Ver. 33. And they that kept them fled,.... The hog herds, men of very low life, and whose employment was very infamous and reproachful, as has been observed. These, amazed at what they had seen, distressed with the loss of the swine, and so of their employment, and frightened also lest they should incur the blame and displeasure of their masters, ran away in great haste, fear, and astonishment;

and went their way into the city; either of Gergesa, or Gadara. Mark and Luke say, they "went and told it in the city, and in the country": in their fright and distress, some ran one way, and some another; some went into the city, others into the country, and so spread the affair far and near, and the fame of Christ, which was designed by this miracle;

and told everything they saw and heard; how the devils entered into the swine, and they ran headlong into the sea, and were drowned: this they told first, as being done last, and with which they were most affected, and what chiefly concerned their employers; and after they had told every circumstance of the affair, next they gave a narrative of

what was befallen to the possessed of the devils, and which was the occasion of the loss of their swine; how subject the devils, that were in them, were to Christ; how easily he dispossessed them by a word of command; how they entreated they might have leave to go into the herd of swine, which was granted; and how perfectly whole, and in health, both in body and mind, the men were.

Matthew ***8:34***

Ver. 34. And behold, the whole city,.... The inhabitants of it, not every individual person, but the greater number of them, or, at least, a very great number of them. Luke says, "the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about": for as the news was carried both into the city and country, great numbers flocked from all parts,

and came out to meet Jesus: not out of any love and respect to him, and in order to invite him, and conduct him into their city, and there receive him kindly, and treat him with due honour and reverence; but either out of curiosity to see such an extraordinary person, which, doubtless, was the case of many; or, else being terrified at the report concerning him, and distressed with their present loss, which was the case of others, went out to prevent his coming any further, lest they should suffer something worse: accordingly,

when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts; which was done not as though they thought themselves unworthy the presence of so great a person, as did the "centurion", in the former part of this "chapter", or, as Peter, when he said, "depart from me, I am a sinful man"; but as fearing, lest some greater punishment should be inflicted on them for their sins, of which they were conscious; and therefore make no complaint of any injustice being done them by the loss of their swine; though these they preferred to the presence of Christ, and even to any cures wrought, or which might have been wrought, either upon the bodies, or souls of men.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Matthew ***9:1***

Ver. 1. And he entered into a ship,.... Or "the ship", the selfsame ship he came over in, with his disciples. The Gergesenes, or Gadarenes, or both, having desired him to depart their coasts, showing an unwillingness to receive him, and an uneasiness at his company, he immediately turned his back upon them, as an ungrateful people, being no better than their swine; and who, by their conduct, judged themselves unworthy of his presence, ministry, and miracles: he returned to the sea side, took shipping, and passed over the sea of Tiberias again,

and came into his own city; not Bethlehem, where he was born, nor Nazareth, as Jerom thought, where he was educated, but Capernaum, as is clear from ***Mr 2:1*** where he much dwelt, frequently conversed, and his disciples: here he paid tribute as an inhabitant, or citizen of the place, which he was entitled to by only dwelling in it twelve months, according to the Jewish canons; where it is asked {d},

"how long shall a man be in a city ere he is as the men of the city? It is answered, "twelve months"; but if he purchases a dwelling house, he is as the men of the city immediately;"

that is, he is a citizen, and obliged to all charges and offices, as they are: though they seem to make a distinction between an inhabitant and a citizen {e}.

"A man is not reckoned ryeh ynbk, "as the children of the city", or as one of the citizens, in less than twelve months, but he may be called, or accounted, ryeh ybvwym, "as one of the inhabitants" of the city, if he stays there thirty days."

One or other of these Christ had done, which denominated this city to be his, and he to be either an inhabitant, or a citizen of it.

{d} Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 1. sect. 5. {e} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 112. 1.

Matthew 9:2

Ver. 2. And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy,.... That is, some of the inhabitants of Capernaum, four men of that city particularly; for Mark says, ***Mr 2:3*** he "was borne of four": these brought him to Jesus,

lying on a bed, or couch, he being so enfeebled by the disease upon him, his nerves so weak, and the members of his body in such a tremor, that he was not able to walk himself, nor even to be carried by others in any other way than this.

And Jesus seeing their faith; the faith of the bearers of him, his friends, who brought out a man to be healed, who was otherwise incurable; and though they could not, for the multitude, bring him directly to Christ, they were not discouraged, but took the pains to carry him to the top of the house, and there let him down through the roof, or tiling; as both Mark and Luke say; and then set him down before him, believing he was able to cure him: moreover, Christ took notice not only of their faith, but of the sick man's too, who suffered himself to be brought out in this condition, and was contented to go through so much fatigue and trouble, to get at him; when he

said unto the sick of the palsy, son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. He calls him son, either meaning by it no more than "man"; see ***Lu 5:20*** or using it as a kind, tender, and endearing appellation; or as considering him in the grace of adoption, as one that God had put among the children, had given to him as such, and whom he should bring to glory. He bids him "be of good cheer", whose animal spirits were fainting through the disease that was upon him, and the fatigue he had underwent in being brought to him; and his soul more distressed and dejected, under a sense of his sins and transgressions; which Jesus knowing, very pertinently says, "thy sins be forgiven thee"; than which, nothing could be more cheering and reviving to him: or Christ says this to show, that sin was the cause of the disease and affliction that were upon him, for Nwe alb Nyrwoy Nya, "there are no chastisements without sin", as the Jews say {f}; and that the cause being removed, the effects would cease; of both which he might be assured, and therefore had good reason to cheer up, and be of good heart. This was a wonderful instance of the grace of Christ, to bestow a blessing unasked, and that of the greatest moment and importance.

{f} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 1. Midrash Hohelet, fol. 70. 4. Tzeror. Hammor, fol. 99. 1.

Matthew 9:3

Ver. 3. And behold, certain of the Scribes said within themselves,.... And of the Pharisees also, as Luke says; for there were at this time Pharisees and doctors of the law, who were come out of every town of Galilee and Judea, and out of Jerusalem, sitting and hearing him teach, and observing what he said, and did; who upon hearing him pronounce the sentence of pardon, upon this "paralytic" man, reasoned and concluded in their own minds, though they did not care to speak it out, that

this man blasphemeth: the reason was, because they thought he ascribed that to himself, which was peculiar to God: and so he did, and yet did not blaspheme; because he himself was God, of which he quickly gave convincing proofs.

Matthew 9:4

Ver. 4. And Jesus knowing their thoughts,.... Which was a clear evidence, and full demonstration of his deity; for none knows the thoughts of the heart but God; and since he knew the thoughts of men's hearts, it could be no blasphemy in him to take that to himself which belonged to God, even to forgive sins. And this, one would think, would have been sufficient to have approved himself to them as the true Messiah; since this is one of the ways of knowing the Messiah, according to the Jews, and which they made use of to discover a false one.

"Bar Coziba, (they say {g},) reigned two years and a half: he said to the Rabbins, I am the Messiah; they replied to him, it is written of the Messiah, that he is "of quick understanding, and judges", (referring to *Isa 11:3*) let us see whether this man is of quick understanding, and can make judgment, i.e. whether a man is wicked, or not, without any external proof; and when they saw he was not of quick understanding, and could not judge in this manner, they slew him."

But now Christ needed not any testimony of men; he knew what was in the hearts of men, of which this instance is a glaring proof: hence he said,

wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? it was no evil in them to think that God only could forgive sin; but the evil was, that they thought Christ was a mere man, and ought not to have took so much upon him; and that, for so doing, he was a wicked man, and a blasphemer.

{g} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 93. 2.

Matthew 9:5

Ver. 5. For whether is easier to say,..... Christ proceeds to clear himself of the charge of blasphemy, and to prove his power to forgive sins, by putting a case to them, of which he makes themselves Judges, and is this: which is easiest to be said,

thy sins are forgiven thee? or to say, arise and walk? Neither of them were easy to a mere creature, but both of them easy to God; and he that could say the one with power and efficacy going along with his word, could say the other as effectually: and whereas it was a plain case, and out of all question, that he could bid this "paralytic" man, though in this weak condition, arise from his bed, stand upon his feet, and go home of himself; and since he had already healed many that were sick of the palsy, and particularly the "centurion's" servant, by a word speaking, he must have equal power to forgive sin. For to heal the diseases of the body in such a wonderful manner, was a very sensible proof of his power to heal the maladies of the soul; and though these are greater than those of the body, yet since both require divine power, he that is able to do the one, is able to do the other. And that it might appear he did not say this in a boasting manner, he adds,

Matthew 9:6

Ver. 6. But that ye may know that the son of man,.... That they might have a visible proof, an ocular demonstration, that though he was the son of man, truly and really man, yet not a mere man; but also as truly and properly God, God and man in one person, and so

hath power on earth to forgive sins: not only ability as God, but even authority to do it as mediator, even whilst he was on earth, in a state of humiliation, in fashion as a man, in the form of a servant, conversing with sinful mortals.

Then saith he to the sick of the palsy; turning himself from the Scribes, unto him, and without putting up any prayer to God, but by a mere word of command, says to him,

arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house: he ordered him to "arise" from his bed, on which he was carried by four men, and "take up his bed", and carry it himself; which would be not only an evidence that the disease had left him, but that he was in full strength, and perfect health; and to "go" to his own "house", not only that the multitude might see that he could walk home himself, whom they had seen brought by others; but that those in the house, who had been eyewitnesses of his great disorder and weakness, might be also of his cure.

Matthew 9:7

Ver. 7. And he arose, and departed to his house. Immediately, at the command of Christ, believing he was able to heal him by a word speaking; and, upon his attempt to arise, found himself perfectly healed of his disease, and endued with such strength, that he could, not only with the greatest ease, arise from his bed, stand upon his feet, and walk alone, without any help; but, as the other evangelists declare, took up his bed, on which he lay, carried it home on his shoulders, in the sight of all the people, praising, and giving glory to God for this wonderful cure, which he had received.

Matthew 9:8

Ver. 8. But when the multitude saw it,.... The miracle that was wrought; when they saw the man take up his bed, and carry it home, which was done by Christ, as a proof of his having power to forgive sin,

they marvelled, and glorified God: they were struck with amazement and astonishment at the sight, it being what was strange and unusual; the like to which they had never seen before, nor heard of: and concluding it to be more than human; they ascribed it to God; they praised, and adored the divine goodness,

which had given such power unto men; of working miracles, healing diseases, and delivering miserable mortals from such maladies, as were otherwise incurable; still looking upon Christ as a mere man, by whom God did these things; not knowing yet the mystery of the incarnation, God manifest in the flesh.

Matthew 9:9

Ver. 9. And as Jesus passed forth from thence,.... That is, from Capernaum to the sea side; where, as Mark says, the multitude resorted, and he taught them;

he saw a man named Matthew; the writer of this Gospel. The other evangelists call him Levi, who was the son of Alphaeus: he went by two names; Mark and Luke call him by the name, which perhaps was the more honourable, or the least known, on purpose to conceal the former life of the apostle, which might expose him to the contempt of some; but he himself chooses to mention the name by which he was most known, as an apostle, and that the grace of God might appear the more illustrious in his calling and conversion. The Jews say {h}, that one of Christ's disciples was called yatm, Matthew, which, as Levi, is an Hebrew name; for though he was a publican, yet a Jew; for it was common with the Jews either to be employed by the Roman officers in collecting the toll or tribute, or to farm it of them.

Sitting at the receipt of custom, or "at the custom house", or "toll booth"; which both the Syriac version, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, call okm, or aokwm tyb, the "publican's house". In the {i} Talmud mention is made of it, in the following parable, upon citing *Isa 61:8*

"it is like, (say the doctors,) to a king of flesh and blood, who passing by okmh tyb, "the toll booth", or "publican's house", says to his servants, give "toll to the publicans": they reply to him, is not all the toll thine? he says to them, all that pass by the ways will learn of me, and will not avoid the toll; so says the holy blessed God, &c."

The publicans had houses, or booths built for them, at the foot of bridges, at the mouth of rivers, and by the sea shore, where they took toll of passengers that went to and fro: hence we read {k} of bridges being made to take toll at, and of publicans being at the water side {l}, and of okwm yrvyq {m}, "the tickets", or "seals of the publicans"; which, when a man had paid toll on one side of a river, were given him by the publican, to show to him that sat on the other side, that it might appear he had paid: in which were written two great letters, bigger than those in common use {n}. Thus Matthew was sitting in a toll booth, near the seashore, to receive the toll of passengers that came, or went in ships or boats.

And he saith unto him, follow me; notwithstanding the infamous employment he was in, as accounted by the Jews: this was no bar in the way of his call to be a disciple of Christ; and shows, that there was no merit and motive in him, which was the reason of this high honour bestowed upon him; but was entirely owing to the free, sovereign, and distinguishing grace of Christ, and which was powerful and efficacious: for without telling him what work he must do, or how he must live, and without his consulting with flesh and blood, at once, immediately

he arose, and followed him: such a power went along with the call, that he directly left his employment, how profitable soever it might be to him, and became a disciple of Christ.

{h} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 43. 1. {i} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 30. 1. {k} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 33. 2. {l} Jarchi in Jud. v. 10. {m} Misn. Sabbat, c. 8. sect. 2. T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 11. 2. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 78. 2. & Bechorot, fol. 30. 2. & Avoda Zara, fol. 39. 1. {n} Jarchi, Maimonides, & Bartenora in Misn. Sabbat, c. 8. sect. 2. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Bechorot, fol. 30. 2.

Matthew ***9:10***

Ver. 10. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house,.... That is, as the Arabic version reads it, in the house of Matthew, not in the toll house, but in his own house; for he immediately quitted the toll booth, and his office there, and followed Christ, and had him to his own house, where he made a great feast for him, as Luke says, to testify the sense he had of the wondrous grace which was bestowed on him; and also, that other publicans and sinners might have an opportunity of hearing Christ, and conversing with him, whom he invited to this feast; his bowels yearning towards them, and sincerely desiring their conversion, which is the nature of true grace: for, when a soul is made a partaker of the grace of God, it is earnestly desirous that this might be the case of others, especially its sinful relations, friends, or companions; and it takes every opportunity of using, or bringing them under the means; so did Matthew: hence it is said,

behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples; not of their own accord, but by the invitation of Matthew, and with the good will, and full consent of Christ, who was far from being displeased with their company and freedom; but gladly embraced every opportunity of doing good to the souls of the worst of men; for such as these he came to call and save.

Matthew 9:11

Ver. 11. And when the Pharisees saw it,.... The feast Matthew made, the guests that were invited, and particularly that Christ sat down to meat with such vile and wicked company; they and the Scribes, as Mark and Luke add, who generally were together, of the same complexion, equally enemies to Christ, and watchful observers of his conduct, and pretending to a more strict and religious way of life, were offended at all this;

and said to his disciples, which they chose to do, rather than to Christ himself; partly, because they were afraid to engage in a dispute with him, who had just given them a full proof of his omniscience, that he knew the very thoughts and reasonings of their minds, and had so confounded them already, both by his arguments and miracles; and partly, because they might think themselves a match for the disciples, and might hope to stumble and ensnare them, and prevail upon them to quit their profession, and leave following him, whom they would suggest could not be a good man, that was guilty of so evil an action; which, with them, was very unlawful and abhorrent, as that for which they accuse and reprove him,

why eateth your master with publicans and sinners? The "publicans", or gatherers of the Roman tax, toll, or tribute of any sort, whether Jews or Gentiles, were persons of a very infamous character; and, as here, so often, in Jewish writings, are ranked with "sinners", and those of the worst sort: so false swearing was allowed to be made Nyokwmlw Nymrxlw Mygrwhl, "to murderers, and to robbers, and to publicans" {o}; and so "publicans and thieves" are joined together by Maimonides {p}, and a publican is said by him to be as a thief. And indeed this was not only the sense of the Jews, but also of other people, according to those words of Zeno the poet, pantev telwnai pantev eisin arpagev {q}, "all publicans are all of them robbers": though this was not originally their character; for formerly the best of the Roman gentry were employed in this office, till by malpractices it became scandalous, when the meaner sort of people, yea, even vassals, were put into it {r}. Now, with such sort of men as these the Pharisees held it unlawful to have any sort of conversation; they expelled such their society, would not dwell with them in the same house, nor eat or drink with them;

concerning which, their rules and methods are these;

"a companion, or friend, who becomes the king's collector, or a "publican", or the like, they drive him from society with them: if he abstains from his evil works, then he is as any other man {s}."

Again,

"when the king's collectors enter into a house to dwell, all that are in the house are defiled {t}."

Moreover, it is {u} said, that

"the former saints ate their common food with purity, i.e. with their hands washed, and took care of all defilements every day; and these were called Pharisees; and this sect was exceedingly holy, and was the way of piety; for such a man was separated, and he abstained from the rest of the people, and he did not touch them, Mhme htvyw lkay alw, "nor did he eat and drink with them"."

It was a general rule with them, that a clean person ought not to eat with an unclean, as they judged the common people to be; nay, that a Pharisee, who was unclean himself, might not eat with another person that was so, and which they boast of, as a great degree of holiness.

"Come and see, (say they {w},) to what a pitch purity has arrived in Israel; for they not only teach, that a pure person may not eat with one that is defiled, but that one that has a "gonorrhoea" may not eat with another that has one, lest he should be used to transgress this way; and a Pharisee that has a "gonorrhoea" may not eat with a common person that has one, lest he should be used to do so."

Hence they looked upon Christ and his disciples as such, and would insinuate that they were evil men, who had no regard to purity of life and conversation.

{o} Mis. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 4. {p} Hilch. Gezela, c. 5. sect. 9. 11. {q} Apud Fabricii Graec. Biblioth. l. 2. c. 22. p. 755. {r} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 29. {s} Maimon. Mishcab & Moshab, c. 10. sect. 8. {t} lb. c. 12. sect. 12. {u} lb. Hilchoth Tumaot Okelim. c. 16. sect. 12. {w} T. Bab.

Sabbat, fol. 13. 1.

Matthew 9:12

Ver. 12. But when Jesus heard that,.... The charge the Pharisees brought against him, and the insinuations they had made of him to his disciples; which he either overheard himself, or his disciples related to him,

he said unto them; the Pharisees, with an audible voice, not only to confute and convince them, but chiefly to establish his disciples, they were endeavouring to draw away from him:

they that be whole need not a physician; by which he would signify that he was a "physician": and so he is in a spiritual sense, and that a very skilful one: he knows the nature of all the diseases of the soul, without being told them by the patient; what are the true causes of them; what is proper to apply; when is the best time, and what the best manner: he is an universal one, with regard both to diseases and to persons, that apply to him; he heals all sorts of persons, and all sorts of diseases; such as are blind from their birth, are as deaf as the deaf adder, the halt, and the lame, such as have broken hearts, yea the plague in their hearts, and have stony ones, and all the relapses of his people; which he does by his stripes and wounds, by the application of his blood, by his word and Gospel, through sinners looking to him, and touching him: he is an infallible one, none ever went from him without a cure; none ever perished under his hands; the disease he heals never returns more to prevail, so as to bring on death and destruction; and he does all freely, without money, and without price. So Philo the Jew calls the Logos, or word, iatron kakwn, "an healer of diseases" {x}, and God our legislator, twn thv quchv payw n aristov iatrov, "the best physician of the diseases of the soul" {y}. Now Christ argues from this his character, in vindication of himself; as that he was with these persons, not as a companion of their's, but as a physician to them; and as it is not unlawful, but highly proper and commendable, that a physician should be with the sick; so it was very lawful, fit, and proper, yea praiseworthy in him, to be among these publicans and sinners, for their spiritual good. He suggests indeed, that "they that be whole", in perfect health and strength, as the Pharisees thought themselves to be, even free from all the maladies and diseases of sin, were strong, robust, and able to do anything, and everything of themselves; these truly stood in no "need of" him, as a physician, in their own apprehension; they saw no need of him; in principle they had no need of him, and in practice did not make use of him; and therefore it was to no purpose to attend them, but converse with others, who had need of him:

but they that are sick; who are not only diseased and disordered in all the powers and faculties of their souls, as all Adam's posterity are, whether sensible of it or not; but who know themselves to be so, these see their need of Christ as a physician, apply to him as such, and to them he is exceeding precious, a physician of value; and such were these "publicans" and sinners. These words seem to be a proverbial expression, and there is something like it in the {z} Talmud, ayoa ybl lyza abyak hyl byakd, "he that is afflicted with any pain goes", or "let him go to the physician's house"; that is, he that is attended with any sickness, or disease, does, or he ought to, consult a physician.

{x} Allegor. l. 2. p. 93. {y} Quod Deus sit immutab. p. 303. {z} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 46. 2.

Matthew 9:13

Ver. 13. But go ye and learn what that meaneth,.... dmlw au, "go and learn", is a phrase used by the Jews {a}, when they are about to explain a passage of Scripture, and fetch an argument from the connection of the text. So the phrase ti estin, "what that is", or "what that meaneth", is Talmudic, as, yhm, "what is it?" bytkd yam, "what is that which is written?" arq yam, "what is the Scripture?" that is, what is the meaning of it? Our Lord speaks in their own dialect, and tacitly reproves their ignorance of the Scriptures; and instead of finding fault with him, and his conduct, he intimates, it would better become them to endeavour to find out the meaning of that passage in ***Ho 6:6*** "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice"; which, if rightly understood, was sufficient to silence all their cavils and objections: and which words are to be taken, not in an absolute and unlimited sense; for sacrifices even of slain beasts, which were offered up in the faith of Christ's sacrifice, and were attended with other acts of religion and piety, were acceptable to God, being his own institutions and appointments; but in a comparative sense, as the following clause in the prophet shows; "and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings"; and so the sense is given in the "Chaldee paraphrase", after this manner: "for in those that exercise mercy is my good will and pleasure", or "delight", xbdmm, "more than in sacrifice": and the meaning is, that God takes more delight and pleasure, either in showing mercy himself to poor miserable sinners; or in acts of mercy, compassion, and beneficence done by men, to fallen creatures in distress, whether for the good of their bodies, or more especially for the welfare of their souls, than he does even in sacrifices, and in any of the rituals of the ceremonial law, though of his own appointing: and therefore must be supposed to have a less regard to sacrifices, which were offered, neither in a right manner, nor from a right principle, nor to a right end; and still less to human traditions, and customs, which were put upon a level, and even preferred to his institutions; such as these the Pharisees were so zealous of. The force of our Lord's reasoning is, that since his conversation, with publicans and sinners, was an act of mercy and compassion to their souls, and designed for their spiritual good; it must be much more pleasing to God, than had he attended to the traditions of the elders, they charge him with the breach of: besides, what he was now doing was the end of his coming into this world, and which was answered hereby;

for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. The phrase, "to repentance", is not in the Vulgate Latin, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, nor in the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Persic versions; but is in the Arabic, and in the ancient Greek copies, and is very justly retained. The "repentance" here designed, is not a legal, but an evangelical one: which is attended with faith in Christ, with views, at least hopes of pardon through his blood, and springs from a discovery and sense of his love: it lies in a true sense of sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of it, by the light of the Spirit of God; in a godly sorrow for it, and hearty loathing of it; in real shame and blushing for it, ingenuous confession of it, and departing from it; all which is brought on, influenced, heightened, and increased, by displays of the love of God through Christ. The persons called to this are not the "righteous"; meaning either such who are really so, because these are already called to it, though, whilst in a state of imperfection, daily need the exercise of this grace; or rather such who are so in their own opinion, and in the sight of men only, not in the sight of God, which was the case of the Scribes and Pharisees, and very few of these were called and brought to repentance; but "sinners", even the worst, and chief of sinners, who, as they stand in need of this grace, and when thoroughly convinced, see they do; so Christ came into this world as prophet and minister of the word to "call" them to it: which call of his does not suppose that they had a power to repent of themselves; for this man has not, he is naturally blind, and do not see his sin; his heart is hard and obdurate, and till his eyes are opened, and his stony heart taken away by a superior power to his own, he will never repent; though he may have space, yet if he has not grace given him, he will remain impenitent. No means will bring him to it of themselves, neither the most severe judgments, nor the greatest kindnesses, nor the most powerful ministry; repentance is entirely a free grace gift: nor does the call of Christ imply the contrary; which may be considered either as external, as a preacher of the word, and as such was not always attended to, and effectual, but often slighted and rejected: or as internal, being by the power of his grace effectual; for he who called to repentance, as a minister of the word, as a prince and a saviour, was able to give it, and which none but a divine person is able to do. The Jews have a saying {b} of

"shepherds, collectors of taxes and "publicans", hvq Ntbwvt, "that their repentance is difficult"."

Now, since this was the end of his coming into the world, his conduct in conversing with publicans and sinners was in all respects highly to be justified.

{a} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 5. 1. & Sanhedrim, fol. 86. 1. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. neg. 116. Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 5. sect. 11.
{b} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 94. 3.

Matthew 9:14

Ver. 14. Then came to him the disciples of John,.... Of John the Baptist, to whom they had addicted themselves, and by whom they abode: though their master was in prison, and the Messiah was known to be come, yet still they were attached to John, and particularly imitated him in the austerities of his life. These, either hearing of the great entertainment made at Matthew's house for Christ, and his disciples, at which they were offended; or else being moved, and set on by the Pharisees, with whom they were agreed in the business of fasting, came to Christ where he was, and put this question to him,

saying, why do we, and the Pharisees, fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? Not that they wanted to know the reason why they and the Pharisees fasted; that they could account for themselves, but why Christ's disciples did not: and this is said not so much by way of inquiry, as reproof; and their sense is; that Christ's disciples ought to fast, as well as they and the Pharisees, and not eat, and drink, and feast in the manner they did. The fastings here referred to are not the public fasts enjoined by the law of Moses, or in any writings of the Old Testament; but private fasts, which were enjoined by John to his disciples, and by the Pharisees to their's; or which were, according to the traditions of the elders, or of their own appointing, and which were very "often" indeed: for besides their fasting twice a week, on Monday and Thursday, *Lu 18:12* they had a multitude of fasts upon divers occasions, particularly for rain {c}. If the 17th of Marchesvan, or October, came, and there was no rain, private persons kept three days of fasting, viz. Monday, Thursday, and Monday again: and if the month of Cisleu, or November, came, and there was no rain, then the sanhedrim appointed three fast days, which were on the same days as before, for the congregation; and if still there was no rain came, they added three more; and if yet there were none, they enjoined seven more, in all thirteen, which R. Acha and R. Barachiah kept themselves {d}. Fasts were kept also on account of many other evils, as pestilence, famine, war, sieges, inundations, or any other calamity; sometimes for trifling things, as for dreams {e}, that they might have good ones, or know how to interpret them, or avoid any ill omen by them; and it is almost incredible what frequent fastings some of the Rabbins exercised themselves with, on very insignificant occasions. They {f} say,

"R. Jose Nymwu yynmt Mu, "fasted fourscore fasts" to see R. Chiyah Rubba; at last he saw, and his hands trembled, and his eyes grew dim: --R. Simeon Ben Lakish Nymwu Nwwam tlt Mu, "fasted three hundred fastings" to see R. Chiyah Rubba, and did not see him."

Elsewhere it is said, that R. Ase fasted "thirty days" to see the same person, and saw him not {g}. Again {h},

"R. Jonathan fasted every eve of the new year, R. Abin fasted every eve of the feast of tabernacles, R. Zeura fasted "three hundred fasts", and there are that say "nine hundred fasts"."

This may serve to illustrate and prove the frequency of the Jewish fastings. Luke represents this question as put by the Pharisees, which is here put by the disciples of John: it was doubtless put by both agreeing in this matter; and which shows that John's disciples were instigated to it by the Pharisees, who sought to sow discord between them, and to bring Christ and his disciples into contempt with them.

{c} Misn. Taanith, c. 1. sect. 4. 5, 6. & c. 3. sect. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {d} T. Hieros. Taanlot, fol. 65. 2. & 66. 4. {e} T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 10. 1. Maimon Taaniot, c. 1. sect. 12-14. {f} T. Hieros. Cilaim, fol. 32. 2. & Cetubot, fol. 35. 1. {g} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 79. 1. {h} lb. Nedarim, fol. 40. 4. & Taanioth, fol. 66. 1.

Matthew 9:15

Ver. 15. And Jesus said unto them,.... To the disciples of John, the Pharisees being present, who both have here a full answer; though it seems to be especially directed to the former:

can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom, is with them? By the "bridegroom" Christ means himself, who stands in such a relation to his church, and to all, believers; whom he secretly betrothed to himself from all eternity, in the covenant of grace; and openly espouses in the effectual calling; and will still do it in a more public manner at the last day John, the master of those men, who put the question to Christ, had acknowledged him under this character, ***Joh 3:29*** and therefore they ought to own it as belonging to him; so that the argument upon it came with the greater force to them. By "the children of the bride chamber" are meant the disciples, who were the friends of the bridegroom, as John also says he was; and therefore rejoiced at hearing his voice, as these did, and ought to do; their present situation, having the presence of Christ the bridegroom with them, required mirth and not mourning, John, their master, being witness. The allusion is to a nuptial solemnity, which is a time of joy and feasting, and not of sorrow and fasting; when both bride and bridegroom have their friends attending them, who used to be called hpwxh ynb, "the children of the bride chamber". The bride had her maidens waiting on her; and it is said {i},

"she did not go into the bridechamber but with them; and these are called, atpwx ynb, "the children of the bride chamber"."

So the young men that were the friends of the bridegroom, which attended him, were called by the same name; and, according to the Jewish canons, were free from many things they were otherwise obliged to: thus it is said {k}:

"the bridegroom, his friends, and all hpwxh ynb, "the children of the bride chamber", are free from the booth all the seven days;"

that is, from dwelling in booths at the feast of tabernacles, which was too strait a place for such festival solemnities. And again,

"the bridegroom, his friends, and all hpwxh ynb, "the children of the bride chamber", are free from prayer and the phylacteries;"

that is, from observing the stated times of attending to these things, and much more then were they excused from fasting and mourning; so that the Pharisees had an answer sufficient to silence them, agreeably to their own traditions. Give me leave to transcribe one passage more, for the illustration of this text {l}.

"When R. Lazar ben Arach opened, in the business of Mercava, (the visions in the beginning of Ezekiel,) Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai alighted from his ass; for he said it is not fit I should hear the glory of my Creator, and ride upon an ass: they went, and sat under a certain tree, and fire came down from heaven and surrounded them; and the ministering angels leaped before them, hpwx ynbk, "as the children of the bride chamber" rejoice before the bridegroom."

The time of Christ's being with his disciples, between his entrance on his public ministry, and his death, is the time here referred to, during which the disciples had very little care and trouble: this was their rejoicing time, and there was a great deal of reason for it; they had no occasion to fast and mourn; and indeed the Jews themselves say {m}, that

"all fasts shall cease in the days of the Messiah; and there shall be no more but good days, and days of joy and rejoicing, as it is said, ***Zec 8:19***."

But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; in a forcible manner, and put to death, as he was;

and then shall they fast and mourn, and be in great distress, as John's disciples now were, on account of their master being in prison.

{i} Zohar in Gen. fol. 6. 4. {k} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 25. 2. & Hieros. Succa, fol. 53. 1. Maimon. Succa, c. 6. sect. 3. {l} T. Hieros. Chagiga, fol. 77. 1. {m} Maimon. Hilchot Taaniot, c. 5. sect. 19.

Matthew ***9:16***

Ver. 16. No man putteth a piece of new cloth,.... These words are, by ***Lu 5:36*** called a "parable", as are those in the following verse; and both are commonly interpreted of the unreasonableness and danger of putting young disciples upon severe exercises of religion, as fasting, &c: and it is true, that young converts are to be tenderly dealt with, as they are by Father, Son, and Spirit, as the disciples were by Christ, and the first Christians were by the apostles: and some things in these parables may seem to agree; as that these austerities should be represented as "new", and as burdensome and troublesome, and the disciples as weak, and easily staggered: but then there are others that will not bear; as that the disciples should be compared to "old garments, and old bottles"; when they were "young" converts, and men "renewed" by the Spirit and grace of God, and had on the beautiful robe of Christ's righteousness; and that such severe exercises, under the notion of religion, should be signified by "new wine", which generally designs something pleasant and agreeable: nor were the disciples unable to bear such severities, who very probably had been trained up in them, and been used to them before their conversion; and could now as well have bore them as John's disciples, or the Pharisees, had they been proper and necessary; but the true reason why they were not required of them, was not their weakness, or danger of falling off, and perishing, of which there were none; but because it was unsuitable to their present situation, the bridegroom being with them. But our Lord, in this parable of putting "a piece of new", or "undressed cloth", such as has never passed through the fuller's hands, and so unfit to mend with,

unto an old garment, refers not only to the fastings of the Pharisees, but to their other traditions of the elders, which they held; as such that respected their eating, drinking, and conversing with other persons mentioned in the context, and which observances they joined with their moral performances; on account of which, they looked upon themselves as very righteous persons, and all others as sinners: and to expose their folly, Christ delivers this parable. Wherefore, by "the old garment", I apprehend, is meant their moral and legal righteousness, or their obedience to the moral and ceremonial laws, which was very imperfect, as well as impure, and might be rightly called "filthy rags"; or be compared to an old worn out garment, filthy and loathsome, torn, and full of holes, which cannot keep a person warm, nor screen him from the weather, and so old that it cannot be mended. And by the "piece of new cloth", or "garment", put unto it, or sewed upon it, are intended the traditions of the elders, these men were so fond of, concerning eating, and drinking, and fasting, and hundreds of other things, very idle and trifling, and which were new and upstart notions. Now, by putting, or sewing the new cloth to their old garment, is designed, their joining their observance of these traditions to their other duties of religion, to make up a justifying righteousness before God; but in vain, and to no purpose. Their old garment of their own works, in obedience to the laws of God, moral and ceremonial, was full bad enough of itself; but became abundantly worse, by joining this new piece of men's own devising to it;

for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse: their new obedience to the traditions of men, making void the law of God, instead of mending, marred their righteousness, and left them in a worse condition than it found them: and besides, as it is in Luke, "the piece that was taken out of the new, agreeth not with the old"; there being no more likeness between the observance of the commandments of men, and obedience to the laws of God, than there is between a piece of new undressed cloth, that has never been washed and worn, and an old worn out garment. Much such a foolish part do those men under the Gospel dispensation act, who join the righteousness of Christ, or a part of it, with their own, in order to make up a justifying righteousness before God; for Christ's righteousness is the only justifying righteousness; it is whole and perfect, and needs nothing to be added to it, nor can it be parted, any more than his seamless coat was; nor a piece taken out of it: nor is there any justification by works, either in whole or in part; the old garment of man's righteousness must be thrown away, in point of justification; it cannot be mended in such a manner; and if any attempts are made in this way, the rent becomes worse: such persons, instead of being justified, are in a worse condition; for they not only set up, and exalt their own righteousness, which is criminal, but disparage the righteousness of Christ as imperfect, by joining it to their's; and whilst they fancy themselves in a good state, are in a most miserable one; harlots and publicans being nearer the kingdom of heaven than these, and enter into it before them; self-righteous persons are more hardly, and with greater difficulty convinced, than such sinners.

Moreover, nothing is more disagreeable than such a patch work; Christ's righteousness and a man's own bear no likeness to one another; and such a patched garment must ill become the character and dignity of a saint, a child of God, an heir of heaven.

Matthew 9:17

Ver. 17. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles,.... As in the former parable, our Lord exposes the folly of the Scribes and Pharisees, in their zealous attachment to the traditions of the elders; so in this, he gives a reason why he did not call these persons by his Gospel, who were settled upon the old principle of self-righteousness, but sinners, whom he renews by his Spirit and grace: for by "old bottles" are meant, the Scribes and Pharisees. The allusion is to bottles, made of the skins of beasts, which in time decayed, waxed old, and became unfit for use: such were the wine bottles, old and rent, the Gibeonites brought with them, and showed to Joshua, ***Jos 9:4*** and to which the Psalmist compares himself, *Ps 119:83* and which the Misnic doctors call twtmx, and their commentators {o} say, were rwe lv tdwn, "bottles made of skin", or "leather", and so might be rent. Of the use of new and old bottles, take the following hint out of the "Talmud" {p}.

"The bottles of the Gentiles, if scraped and Myvdx, "new", they are free for use; if Mynvy, "old", they are forbidden."

Now the Scribes and Pharisees may be signified by these old bottles, being natural men, no other than as they were born; having never been regenerated, and renewed in the spirit of their minds; in whom the old man was predominant, were mere formal professors of religion, and self-righteous persons: and by "new wine" is meant, either the love and favour of God compared to wine, that is neat and clean, because free from hypocrisy in him, or motives in the creature; to generous wine, for its cheering and reviving effects; and to new wine, not but that it is very ancient, even from everlasting, but, because newly manifested, in the effectual calling and conversion: or the Gospel is signified by wine, for its purity, good flavour, and pleasant taste; for its generous effects, in reviving drooping spirits, refreshing weary persons, and comforting distressed minds; and by new wine, not that it is a new doctrine, an upstart notion, for it is an ancient Gospel, but because newly and more clearly revealed by

Christ and his apostles: or the blessings of grace which spring from the love of God, and are manifested in the Gospel, such as pardon of sin, reconciliation and atonement, justifying and sanctifying grace, spiritual joy and peace, and the like. Now as the new wine is not put into old bottles,

else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: so the love of God, the Gospel of the grace of God, and the blessings of it, are not received and retained, nor can they be, by natural men, by self-righteous persons: they do not suit and agree with their old carnal hearts and principles; they slight and reject them, and let them run out, which proves their greater condemnation.

But they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved. By "new bottles" are meant sinners, whom Christ calls by his grace, and the Spirit regenerates and renews, who are made new creatures in Christ; who have new hearts, and new spirits, and new principles of light, life, love, faith, and holiness, implanted in them; who have new eyes to see with, new ears to hear with, new feet to walk with, to and in Christ, new hands to work and handle with, and who live a new life and conversation. Now to such as these, the love of God is manifested and shed abroad in their hearts; by these, the Gospel of Christ is truly received and valued, and these enjoy the spiritual blessings of it; and so both the doctrine of the Gospel, and the grace of God, are preserved entire, and these persons saved in the day of Christ.

{o} Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Celim, c. 24. sect. 11. & Negaim, c. 11. sect. 11. {p} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 33. 1.

Matthew 9:18

Ver. 18. While he spake these things unto them,.... To the Scribes and Pharisees, and to John's disciples, concerning, and in vindication of his, and his disciples, eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, and their not fasting as others did; and while he spake these parables, to expose the folly of self-righteous persons, and justify his own conduct, in calling sinners to repentance,

behold, there came a certain ruler and worshipped him. This man, as both Mark and Luke say, was named Jairus; and was a ruler, not of the sanhedrim, or lesser consistory, but of the synagogue that was at Capernaum; and whom the Jews call, tonkh var, "the head of the synagogue". Mark says, he was "one of the rulers": not that there were more rulers than one, in one synagogue {q}: but as in great cities, so it is likely in Capernaum there were more synagogues than one, of which he was one of the rulers: so we read of twyonk yvar {r}, "heads", or "rulers of synagogues". As this is one mistake, so it is another to say, that Dr. Lightfoot speaks of this ruler, as the same with the "minister" of the congregation; when both here, and in the place referred to, he manifestly distinguishes them; as do the Jews: for, by this ruler, as their commentators {s} say,

"the necessary affairs of the synagogue were determined, as who should dismiss with a prophet, who should divide the "shema", and who should go before the ark."

Whereas the business of txnkh Nzx, "the minister of the synagogue", was to bring in and out the ark, or chest, in which was the book of the law; and particularly, when the high priest read, or pronounced the blessings, "he" took the book, and gave it to "the ruler of the synagogue"; and the ruler of the synagogue gave it to the "sagan", and the "sagan" to the high priest {t}. The doctor makes indeed rwbuh xylv, "the messenger of the congregation", to be the same with "the minister of the synagogue", and which is his mistake; for these were two different officers {u}: the former was the lecturer, or preacher; and the latter, a sort of a sexton to keep the synagogue clean, open and shut the doors, and do other things before mentioned. This Jairus was a man of great power and significance; who in such a very humble manner prostrated himself at the feet of Jesus, and expressed such strong faith in him:

saying, my daughter is even now dead, but come and lay thine hand upon her, and she shall live. Luke says, she was "his only daughter": and Mark calls her his "little daughter": though both he and Luke say, she was about "twelve" years of age, and that with strict propriety, according to the Jewish canons, which {w} say; that

"a daughter, from the day of her birth until she is twelve years complete, is called hnjq, "a little one" and when she is twelve years of age, and one day and upwards, she is called hren, "a young woman"."

Her case seems to be differently represented; Mark says, she was "at the point of death", or "in the last extremity"; and Luke, that she "lay dying": but Matthew here says, that she was "even now dead", which may be easily reconciled: for not to observe, that arti signifies "near", and the phrase may be rendered, "she is near dead", or just expiring, the case was this; when Jairus left his house, his daughter was in the agony of death, just ready to give up the ghost; so, that he concluded, by the time he was with Jesus, she had made her exit; as it appears she had, by a messenger, who brought the account of her death, before they could get to the house. The ruler's address to Christ on this occasion, is a very considerable, though not so great an instance of faith as some others; that he, who was a ruler of a synagogue, should apply to Christ, which sort of men were generally most averse to him; that he should fall down and worship him, if not as God, since as yet he might be ignorant of his deity, yet behaved with the profoundest respect to him, as a great man, and a prophet; that he should come to him when his child was past all hope of recovery; yea, when he had reason to believe she was actually dead, as she was; that even then, he should believe in hope against hope; he affirms, that he really believed, that if Christ would but come to his house, and lay his hand upon her, an action often used in grave and serious matters, as in blessing persons, in prayer, and in healing diseases, she would certainly be restored to life again.

{q} Vid. Rhenfurd. de decem otiosis dissert. 2. c. 7. {r} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 60. 1. {s} Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 1. & Sota, c. 7. sect. 7. {t} Misn. Sota, c. 7. sect. 7. & Bartenora in ib. {u} Vid. Rhenfurd, dissert. 1. p. 81, etc. {w} Maimon. Hilchot lshot, c. 2. sect. 1. & Bartenora in Misn. Nidda, c. 5. sect. 6.

Matthew *9:19*

Ver. 19. And Jesus arose and followed him,.... Immediately, without delay, or any more ado: he did not upbraid him with the treatment he and his followers met with, from men of his profession; who cast out of their synagogues such, who confessed him to be the Messiah: nor does he take notice of any weakness in his faith; as that he thought it necessary he should go with him to his house, when he could as well have restored his daughter to life, absent, as present; and that he should prescribe a form of doing it, by laying his hands upon her. These things he overlooked, and at once got up from Matthew's table, and went along with him, and so did his disciples, to be witnesses of the miracle; and according to the other evangelists, a large multitude of people besides; even a throng of them, led by curiosity to see this wondrous performance.

Matthew ***9:20***

Ver. 20. And behold a woman which was diseased..... This affair happened in the streets of Capernaum, as Christ was going from the house of Matthew the publican, to the house of Jairus the ruler of the synagogue, which were both in this city. This poor woman's case was a very distressed one; she had been attended

with an issue of blood twelve years; it was an uncommon flux of a long standing, was inveterate, and become incurable; though she had not been negligent of herself, but had made use of means, applied herself to regular physicians, had took many a disagreeable medicine, and had spent all her substance in this way; but instead of being better, was worse, and was now given up by them, as past all cure. This woman might be truly called hlwdg hbz, {x} "the greater profluvious woman", in the language of the doctors; for if one that had a flux but three days was called so, much more one that had had it twelve years. She having heard of Jesus, and his miraculous cures, had faith given her to believe, that she also should receive one from him; wherefore she

came behind him, through modesty, being ashamed to come before him, and tell him her case, especially before so many people; and fearing lest if her case was known, she should be thrust away, if not by Christ, yet by the company; she being according to the law an unclean person, and unfit for society:

and touched the hem of his garment; which was the tuyu, or "fringes", the Jews were obliged to wear upon the borders of their garments, and on it a ribband of blue; see *Nu 15:38* in both which places Onkelos uses the word Nydpowrk, the same with kraspedon, used here, and in ***Mr 6:56*** and rendered "hem". The Jews placed much sanctity in the wear and use of these fringes; and the Pharisees, who pretended to more holiness than others, enlarged them beyond their common size; but it was not on account of any peculiar holiness in this part of Christ's garment, that induced this poor woman to touch it; but this being behind him, and more easy to be come at, she therefore laid hold on it; for it was his garment, any part of it she concluded, if she could but touch, she should have a cure. However, we learn from hence, that Christ complied with the rites of the ceremonial law in apparel, as well as in other things.

{x} Ib. Issure Bia, c. 6. sect. 7, 8. & in Misn. Nidda, c. 4. sect. 7.

Matthew 9:21

Ver. 21. For she said within herself,.... That is, she thought within herself, she reasoned the matter in her mind, she concluded upon it, and firmly believed it; being strongly impressed and influenced by the Spirit of God, and encouraged by instances of cures she had heard were performed by persons only touching him; see ***Lu 6:19***

if I may but touch his garment. The Arabic version reads it, "the hem of his garment", as before; but is not supported by any copy, nor by any other version: her faith was, that if she might be allowed, or if she could by any means come at him, to touch any part of his garment, she should have a cure:

I shall be whole, or "I shall be saved"; that is, from her disease, from which she could have no deliverance, by the advice and prescriptions of all her former physicians, and by all the means she had made use of.

Matthew 9:22

Ver. 22. But Jesus turned him about,.... Knowing what was done behind him, that virtue was gone out of him, that the woman had touched him, and was healed; which is a clear proof of his omniscience, and so of his deity: not that he was angry with her for touching him, though she was an impure woman; for though men and garments were defiled by the touch of a profluvious {x} person; yet such was the power and holiness of Christ, that as he could not be defiled by any such means, so hereby, at once, this woman's impurity was also removed: but Christ turned about to observe and point out the woman, and her cure, to the company; not for the sake of his own honour, but for the glory of God, the commendation of the woman's faith, and chiefly for the strengthening the faith of Jairus, with whom he was going to raise his daughter from the dead:

and when he saw her. The other evangelists, Mark and Luke, record, that Jesus inquired who touched him, and what answer Peter and the disciples made to him; and how he looked around, and very likely fastened his eyes upon the woman; when she perceiving that she could not go off undiscovered, came trembling to him, fell down before him, and told him the whole matter; and then

he said, daughter be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole. He addressed her in a kind and tender manner, calling her "daughter"; an affable, courteous way of speaking, used by the Jewish doctors {y}, when speaking to women: which showed his affection, and bespoke his relation; and bidding her take heart and be of good cheer, since he meant not to blame her for what she had done, but to commend her faith in him, whereby she had received a cure: meaning, not that there was such virtue in her faith as to effect such a cure; but that he, the object of her faith, had performed it for her:

and the woman was made whole from that hour; her disease immediately left her, and from that time forward, was no more troubled with it: the cure was so effectual, and so perfect, that the disorder never returned more.

{x} Misn. Oholot, c. 1. sect. 5. & Zabim, c. 2. sect. 4. & 3. 1. 2, 3. & 4, 5. & 5. 1. {y} Misn. Yadaim. c. 3. sect. 1.

Matthew 9:23

Ver. 23. And when Jesus came into the ruler's house,.... Both Mark and Luke relate, how that before this, whilst they were in the way, and just as Christ had done speaking to the poor woman, that news was brought to the ruler, that his daughter was actually dead, and therefore need not give Jesus any further trouble; when Christ encouraged him not to be cast down at the tidings, but believe, and she should be restored again; and that he suffered none to follow him, but Peter, James, and John: and

saw the minstrels, or "pipers"; how many there were, is not known: it is certain there were more than one; and it was a rule with the {z} Jews that "the poorest man in Israel (when his wife died) had not less Mylylx ynvm, "than two pipes", and one mourning woman."

And since this was a daughter of a ruler of the synagogue that was dead, there might be several of them. These instruments were made use of, not to remove the melancholy of surviving friends, or allay the grief of the afflicted family; but, on the contrary, to excite it: for the Jewish writers say {a}, these pipes were hollow instruments, with which they made a known sound, lbahw hykbh rrwel, "to stir up lamentation and mourning": and for the same purpose, they had their mourning women, who answered to the pipe; and by their dishevelled hair, and doleful tones, moved upon the affections, and drew tears from others; and very likely are the persons, that Mark says, "wept and wailed greatly". Sometimes trumpets were made use of on these mournful occasions {b}; but whether these were used only for persons more advanced in years, and pipes for younger ones, as by the Heathens {c}, at least, at some times, is not certain.

And the people making a noise; the people of the house, the relations of the deceased, the neighbours, who came in on this occasion; and others, in a sort of tumult and uproar, hurrying and running about; some speaking in the praise of the dead, others lamenting her death, and others preparing things proper for the funeral; all which shew, that she was really dead: among these also, might be the mourners that made a noise for the dead;

"for since mourning was for the honour of the dead, therefore they obliged the heirs to hire mourning men, and mourning women, to mourn for the same {d}."

{z} Misn. Cetubot. c. 4. sect. 4. Maimon Ishot, c. 14. sect. 23. {a} Maimon & Bartenora in Misn. Sabbat, c. 23. sect. 4. {b} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 77. 4. {c} Vid. Kirchman. de funer. Roman. l. 2. c. 5. {d} Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 12. sect. 1.

Matthew 9:24

Ver. 24. And he said unto them, give place,.... Depart, be gone; for he put them out of the room, and suffered none to be with him, when he raised her from the dead, but Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the child, who were witnesses enough of this miracle.

For the maid is not dead, but sleepeth: not but that she was really dead; and Christ signifies as much, when he says, she "sleepeth"; a phrase that is often used in {e} Talmudic writings, for one that is dead: but Christ's meaning is, that she was not so dead as the company thought; as always to remain in the state of the dead, and not to be restored to life again: whereas our Lord signifies, it would be seen in a very little time, that she should be raised again, just as a person is awaked out of sleep; so that there was no occasion to make such funeral preparations as they did. The Jews say {f} of some of their dead, that they are asleep, and not dead: it is said, *Isa 26:19* "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust".

"These, say they, are they that sleep and die not; and such are they that sleep in Hebron, for they Nykymd ala Nytm wal, "do not die, but sleep", --the four couples in Hebron (Adam and Eve, &c.) they "sleep, but are not dead"."

And they laughed him to scorn; they mocked at his words, and had him in the utmost contempt, as a very weak silly man; taking him either to be a madman, or a fool; knowing that she was really dead, of which they had all the evidence they could have; and having no faith at all in him, and in his power to raise her from the dead.

{e} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 6. 1. Avoda Zara, fol. 42. 3. Bereshit Rabba Parash. 91. fol. 79. 3. {f} Zohar in Exod. fol. 62. 4.

Matthew 9:25

Ver. 25. But when the people were put forth,.... Either out of the house or room, by Christ, or, at least, by his orders: which was done, partly because he was desirous it might be kept a secret, as much as possible, and to shew, that he did not affect popular applause; and partly, because they were unworthy to be admitted spectators of such a wondrous action, who had treated him with so much scorn and contempt:

he went in; not alone, but with his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, who were taken in to be witnesses of this resurrection, and the parents of the child; who were so very solicitous for its life, under whose power she was, and to whom she was to be restored:

and took her by the hand; just as one would do to awake another out of sleep; and, perhaps, in compliance with her father's request, to lay his hand upon her: and though the touch of a dead body, according to the law, *Nu 19:16* was defiling; yet this did not defile him, any more than his touching the leper, or the profluvious woman's touching his clothes; for these actions produced supernatural effects, which came not under the cognizance of the law. His taking her by the hand, was not all that he did, but he called, as to a person asleep, and said unto her these words, "Talitha cumi", as recorded by Mark, and are also in Munster's Hebrew Gospel of Matthew; and which, in the Syriac language, signify, "maiden, arise"; and immediately, directly, as soon as ever he had thus said,

the maid arose, as out of sleep; she revived, her soul came to her again, and she got off of the bed, and walked about house, and food was ordered to be given to her. All which most fully demonstrated that she was really restored to life, which was as clear a case, as that before she was really dead.

Matthew 9:26

Ver. 26. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land. For though he strictly charged the parents, as the other evangelists say, that they should tell no man what was done, he not affecting the applause of men; yet it was not possible the thing should be entirely concealed; since there was such a number of people, not only relations, but neighbours, who full well knew, and were assured she had been dead: when these saw her alive, walk about, eat and drink, and converse with them, they must be persuaded of the miracle, and relate it wherever they came; so that the fame of it could not but be spread all over the country in which Capernaum was.

Matthew 9:27

Ver. 27. And when Jesus departed thence,.... From the house of Jairus, to another in the same city;

two blind men followed him: very closely, by the direction of others, having heard of the miracle just now performed by him; and from thence concluded he was able to restore them to their sight;

crying and saying, with great faith and fervour, with much importunity, and frequently repeating the following words,

thou son of David, have mercy on us. Whence it appears, that they firmly believed, and were fully persuaded, that he was the true Messiah; for "the son of David" was a known character of the Messiah among the Jews: nothing was more common than to call him by this title, without any other additional epithet, see Gill "Mt 1:1", and since it had been prophesied of the Messiah, that he should "open the eyes of the blind", *Isa 35:5* they might be greatly encouraged to hope and believe they should obtain mercy from him in this respect.

Matthew 9:28

Ver. 28. And when he was come into the house,.... In which he dwelt, whilst at Capernaum: for he took no notice of them by the way; but though they followed him close, and cried vehemently, he did not stop to speak to them, or give them a cure: according to their request, but went on his way; which he did, partly to avoid the populace, and that he might not be seen by men, in what he did, and partly to try their faith, and the constancy of it.

The blind men came to him; being directed by others, into what house he went, and where he was, and very probably with the leave of Christ:

and Jesus saith unto them, believe ye that I am able to do this? That is, to have mercy on them, as they requested, by curing them of their blindness; which, though not expressed, is implied, and is the thing designed: this question is put, not as being ignorant of, or as doubting their faith in him, which they had expressed, in calling him the son of David; and had shown the firmness and constancy of it, by following him, though he took no notice of them; but partly, for the further trial of their faith, and to bring them to a more open profession of it, as to this particular, his power to cure them of their blindness; and partly, for the sake of those, that were in the house:

they said unto him, yea, Lord. They firmly believed he had power to do it, they had not the least doubt and hesitation in their minds about it; for though their bodily eyes were at present dark, the eyes of their understandings were enlightened, to see and know Jesus to be the true Messiah, David's Son, and Lord.

Matthew 9:29

Ver. 29. Then touched he their eyes,.... Not but that he could have restored sight to them, without touching their eyes, by a word speaking, or by the secret communication of his power; but he might do this as a sign of his favour and kindness to them, and of his will to cure them; as also in compliance with their weakness, who might expect some manual operation upon them;

saying, according to your faith be it unto you: not that faith in his person and power, was the cause or condition of this cure, or the rule and measure according to which Christ proceeded; but the sense is, that as they had believed he was able to heal them, accordingly a cure should be effected; which, upon his so saying, they immediately found performed in them.

Matthew 9:30

Ver. 30. And their eyes were opened,.... Some copies read, "immediately"; and so do the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions: and this was certainly the true and real matter of fact, that as soon as Christ had touched their eyes, and said the above words, their sight was perfectly restored to them; and they had a clear, full, and true sight of objects, as men have, whose vision faculty is in its full strength and rigour, and their eyes open:

and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, see that no man know it. This was a very strict charge, and according to the signification of the word here used, it was given with great austerity of countenance, and severity of expression, in a very rough and threatening manner; which Christ might be the rather induced to, because he had given such like orders already, and they had not been observed: the reasons for concealing the miracle are not very obvious; it seems likely, that with the same view he took no notice of these blind men in the street, but went into an house, and cured them; which seems to be, to shun all appearance of vain glory, or seeking popular applause, that he gave these orders; or it may be, he did not choose to be made more known by this miracle, or at this time, or by these men; he might foresee that it would be attended with ill consequences; either the more to irritate the resentments of some persons against him; or to put others on doing things which were disagreeable to him; as setting him up for a temporal prince among them, being David's son.

Matthew 9:31

Ver. 31. But they, when they were departed,.... That is, out of the house where they received their cure, and out of the city; for it appears, by what follows, they went into other parts, where it is probable they might originally belong; they

spread abroad his fame in all that country. This they did, not in contempt of Christ and his orders; but rather out of gratitude to their benefactor, and through an honest zeal to spread his honour and glory: though they are not to be commended for disregarding the command of Christ; for, not our affection, but Christ's will, is to be the rule of our actions.

Matthew 9:32

Ver. 32. As they went out,.... The Syriac version reads it, "when Jesus went out"; to which agrees the Arabic, against all the copies: for not he, but the men who had been blind, and now had their sight restored, went out from the house where Jesus was; which circumstance is mentioned, and by it the following account is introduced, partly to show how busy Christ was, how he was continually employed in doing good, and that as soon as one work of mercy was over, another offered; and partly, to observe how closely and exactly the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled; in which, as it was foretold, that "the eyes of the blind" should "be opened"; so likewise, that "the tongue of the dumb" should "sing", *Isa 35:5*.

Behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. The word signifies one that is deaf, as well as dumb; as does the Hebrew word vrx, often used by the Jewish writers for a deaf and dumb man; one, they say {g}, that can neither hear nor speak, and is unfit for sacrifice, and excused many things: and indeed these two, deafness and dumbness, always go together in persons, who are deaf from their birth; for as they cannot hear, they cannot learn to speak: but this man seems to be dumb, not by nature, but through the possession of Satan, who had taken away, or restrained the use of his speech, out of pure malice and ill will, that he might not have the benefit of conversation with men, nor be able to say anything to the glory of God. This man did not come of himself to Christ, perhaps being unwilling, through the power and influence the devil had over him; but his friends, who were concerned for his welfare, and who were thoroughly persuaded of the power of Christ to heal him, by the miracles they had seen, or heard performed by him, brought him to him; and, no doubt, expressed their desire that he would cast out the devil, and cure him, which he did.

{g} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Trumot, c. 1. sect. 2. T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 2. 2.

Matthew ***9:33***

Ver. 33. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake,.... The cause of his dumbness being removed, the effect ceased, and the man spake as he did before, and as other men do; and this was done, according to the Persic version, "as soon as Christ saw him"; the devil not being able to bear his presence, much less withstand his power: but as soon as Christ had set his eyes upon the man possessed by him, and had given him orders to be gone, he immediately went out, and the man was restored to his speech again;

and the multitude marvelled, saying, it was never so seen in Israel. The vast crowds of people, who were alarmed with the former miracles of Christ, and came along with the friends of the dumb man, when they heard him speak so suddenly and plainly, and with so much freedom, nothing being said or done to him, were surprised; and declared very frankly, that though many wonderful things had been done in Israel, in times past, by Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and others, yet never were such things seen, or heard, or known of, as were done by Christ: referring not to this miracle only, but to all the rest he had just wrought; as curing the woman of her bloody issue, raising Jairus's daughter from the dead, restoring sight to the two blind men, and now casting out a dumb devil.

Matthew ***9:34***

Ver. 34. But the Pharisees said,.... Who were the sworn enemies of Christ, and were filled with envy at him, and malice against him: these men could not bear, that so much honour and glory should be given to Christ; and therefore said,

he casteth out the devils through the prince of the devils: they could not deny matter of fact, that he had cast out a devil; nor could they say he had done an ill thing in so doing; they could not but own that it was a preternatural action, more than human; nor could they contradict what the multitude said, that no such thing had been ever seen, or known, in Israel: but that Christ might not have the glory of the action, and to fix a mark of infamy upon him, foolishly impute it to a diabolical influence, as if one devil would eject another; and to Christ's familiarity with, and the assistance he had from, not a common devil, but the prince of them. In Beza's most ancient manuscript, and in some others, this whole verse is wanting; and were it not, for the general consent of copies, one should be tempted to think these words were not said at this time, because Christ returns no answer to them; and what is observed by *Lu 11:15* as following this miracle, is the selfsame as was spoken by Christ in *Mt 12:24* and where this passage is more thoroughly considered.

Matthew 9:35

Ver. 35. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages,.... He did not confine himself, and his acts of kindness and compassion, to his own city, Capernaum, but he took a circuit throughout all Galilee; and not only visited their larger and more principal cities and towns, but their villages also; doing good to the bodies and souls of men in every place, and of whatever state and condition.

Teaching in their synagogues; which were places of public worship, where prayer was made, the law and the prophets were read, and a word of exhortation given to the people; and which, it seems, were in villages, as well as in cities and towns: and indeed it is a rule with the Jews {h}, that

"in what place soever there are ten Israelites, they ought to build a house, to which they may go to prayer, at all times of prayer; and such a place is called tonkh tyb, "a synagogue"."

And hence we often read of {i} Myrpk lv tonkh tyb, "the synagogue of villages", as distinct from the synagogues of cities and walled towns; which confutes a notion of the learned Dr. Lightfoot {k}, who thought there were no synagogues in villages. Now, wherever Christ found any of these, he entered into them, and taught the people publicly,

preaching the Gospel of the kingdom; the good news and glad tidings of peace and pardon, reconciliation and salvation, by himself the Messiah; all things relating to the Gospel dispensation; the doctrines of grace, which concern both the kingdom of grace and glory; particularly the doctrine of regeneration, and the necessity of having a better righteousness than that of the Scribes and Pharisees; the one as a meetness, the other as a title to eternal happiness:

and healing every sickness, and every disease among the people. As he preached wholesome doctrine for the good of their souls; for their spiritual health, and the cure of their spiritual maladies; so he healed all sorts of diseases the bodies of men were incident to, that were brought unto him; and by his miracles confirmed, as well as recommended, the doctrines he preached.

{h} Maimon Hilchot Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 1. {i} T. Bab. Megilla. fol. 26. 1. & Gloss. in ib. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Megilla, c. 3. sect. 1. & Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 16. {k} In Mark i. 38. & Chorograph. ad Matt. c. 98.

Matthew 9:36

Ver. 36. But when he saw the multitudes,.... As he took his circuit through the several cities, towns, and villages, he made his observations upon the large numbers that flocked to his ministry, and seemed to be desirous of spiritual instructions, in what an unhappy and melancholy situation they were; and

he was moved with compassion on them: his bowels yearned for them, he was touched with a feeling of their infirmities, as the merciful high priest, the good shepherd, and faithful prophet; being heartily concerned for the souls of men, their comfort here, and everlasting happiness hereafter:

because they fainted; being fatigued and tired, not in their bodies, through journeying from place to place, to hear the word, but in their minds; being burdened and wearied with the various traditions and doctrines of the Scribes and Pharisees:

and were scattered abroad; thrown and tossed about, and divided through the different sects of religion among them; no due care was taken of them, to gather and keep them together, and feed them with wholesome doctrine; but were as abjects, outcasts, that no man regarded, and in great danger of the loss and ruin of their immortal souls: being

as sheep without a shepherd; that was good for anything, or did the office and duty of a shepherd to them: the Scribes and Pharisees were shepherds indeed, such as they were, but very bad ones; like the shepherds of Israel of old, who fed themselves, and not the flock; who strengthened not the diseased, nor healed the sick, nor bound up that which was broken; nor brought again that which was driven away, nor sought that which was lost: but on the contrary, caused them to go astray from mountain to hill; whereby they forgot their resting place, in the Messiah promised them, and who was now come.

Matthew 9:37

Ver. 37. Then saith he unto his disciples,.... His heart being drawn out, and filled with pity to these poor people, upon observing the miserable and sad condition they were in; he turns himself to his disciples, whom he was about to call, and send forth in a more public manner to preach the Gospel, of which we read in the following chapter; and in order to quicken them to this service, and engage their hearts in it, says unto them,

the harvest truly is plenteous; meaning the large number of God's elect, which were in these cities, towns, and villages, and in other places: not that these were maturely prepared by anything in themselves, or done by them, for the grace of God; and much less ripe for the kingdom of glory, and therefore called an harvest: but as there are the appointed weeks of the harvest, or a set time for the harvest to be gathered in, so there is a certain fixed time, settled in the counsel, and by the purpose of God, for the effectual calling and conversion of his elect; and this time being come, with respect to these in Galilee, and other parts, Christ calls them an "harvest"; and because of their number, a large, or "plenteous" one.

But the labourers are few: Gospel ministers; whose calling is a laborious one; whose business is to labour in the word and doctrine; to be constant in prayer; to give up themselves to meditation and reading; to study to show themselves workmen; to preach the word in season, and out of season; and diligently discharge the several duties of their office, to the glory of Christ, and the good of souls: but such painful and laborious ministers, who are willing to spend, and be spent for Christ and immortal souls, have been but few in all ages; generally speaking, there are more loiterers than labourers.

Matthew 9:38

Ver. 38. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest,.... By "the Lord of the harvest" is either meant God the Father, whose are all the elect, who has a hearty concern for them, and will have them all gathered in, not one of them shall be left; or the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who has the care and charge of the whole election of grace; and who as he must, he will bring them all in; and who has power of sending forth labourers, as the following chapter shows; and so this is a proof of prayer being made to Christ;

that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. This is the petition the disciples of Christ were put upon making to the Lord of the harvest, on consideration of the present condition multitudes of souls were in: they could not make, qualify, and send out ministers themselves; this is not man's work, but God's: he only is able to furnish with ministerial gifts, to work upon, and powerfully incline the hearts of men to this service, to call and send them forth into it, and to assist and succeed them in it. The persons desired to be sent are "labourers"; faithful, diligent, and industrious preachers of the Gospel; such as lay out themselves, their time, talents, and strength, in their master's service; and do not indulge themselves in sloth and idleness: the place they are desired to be sent into is, "into the harvest"; into the field of the world, where God's elect lie, and there labour in preaching the Gospel; hoping for a divine blessing, and an almighty power to attend their ministrations, for the conversion of sinners, and edification of saints. The request the disciples are directed to make, concerning these persons for this work, is, that the Lord of the harvest would "send", or "thrust" them "forth"; implying power and efficacy, and authority, on the part of the sender; and backwardness on the part of those that are sent, through modesty: a sense of the greatness of the work, and of their own unworthiness and unfitness for it. Very opportunely did our Lord move his disciples to put up this petition, and was done, no question, with a view to, and to prepare for, his mission of the twelve to preach the Gospel, of which there is an account in the next chapter.

Matthew 10:1

Ver. 1. And when he had called to him his twelve disciples,.... These persons had been for some time called by the grace of God, and were already the disciples of Christ, and such as were more familiar and intimate with him, than others, that went by that name. They had sat down at his feet, and had received of his words; they had heard his doctrines, and had seen his miracles, and had been by him training up for public work; but as yet had not been called and sent forth to enter on such service: but now all things being ready, they being properly instructed, and the time for the conversion of a large number of souls being up, he called them together privately; and gave them a commission to preach the Gospel, ordained them ministers of the word, and installed them into the office of apostleship. The number "twelve", is either in allusion to the twelve spies that were sent by Moses into the land of Canaan, or to the twelve stones in Aaron's breast plate; or to the twelve fountains the Israelites found in the wilderness; or to the twelve oxen on which the molten sea stood in Solomon's temple; or to the twelve gates in Ezekiel's temple; or rather, to the twelve patriarchs, and the tribes which sprung from them; that as they were the fathers of the Jewish nation, which was typical of God's chosen people; so these were to be the instruments of spreading the Gospel, not only Judea, but in all the world, and of planting Christian churches there. And that they might appear to come forth with authority, and that their doctrine might be confirmed,

he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out; or "over all devils", as ***Lu 9:1***. It was usual with the Jews to call a demon or devil hamwj xwr, "an unclean spirit"; especially such as frequented burying places: so in one place {l}, an unclean spirit is interpreted by the gloss, Mydv xwr, "the spirit of the demons", or devils; and in another {m} place, twrbqh tyb dv, "the demon of the graves"; where necromancers sought to be, that these spirits might be their familiars, and assist them in their enchantments: accordingly the devils are here called, "unclean spirits"; being in themselves, in their own nature, unclean, and being the cause and means of defiling others, and delighting in impure persons, places, and things. There were many of these spirits, who, because of the great impiety of the Jews, the prevalence of magic arts among them, and by divine permission, had at this time taken possession of great numbers of persons; whereby Christ had an opportunity of giving proof of his deity, of his being the Messiah, the seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head, by his ejecting them; and of confirming the mission of his disciples, and establishing the doctrine preached by them, by giving them power and authority over them, to cast them out also: and whereas various diseases frequently followed and attended such possessions; he likewise gave them power

to heal all manner of sicknesses, and all manner of diseases, as he himself had done. The expressions are very full and strong, and include all sorts of maladies incident to human bodies, either of men or women; all distempers natural or preternatural, curable or incurable, by human methods: so that at the same time they were sent to preach the Gospel, for the cure of the souls of men, they were empowered to heal the diseases of their bodies; and which, one should think, could not fail of recommending them to men, and of ingratiating them into their affections.

{l} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 3. 2. {m} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 65. 2.

Matthew 10:2

Ver. 2. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these,.... This is the first time these disciples are called "apostles", they were learners before; now being instructed, they are sent forth to preach publicly, and therefore are called apostles, or messengers, persons that were sent: so the elders of the priesthood are called Nyd tyb yxwlv, "the apostles", or messengers "of the sanhedrim" {n}, to whom the high priest were delivered, before the day of atonement. So six months in the year, Myxwlv, "apostles", or messengers, were sent by the {o} sanhedrim, throughout all the land of Israel, and to the captive Jews in other parts, to give notice of the new moon; in allusion to which, the disciples might be so called. It was proper to give the names of them, for the truth of the history, and confirmation of it; for the sake of the persons themselves, and the honour done them; and for the exclusion and detection of false apostles.

The first, Simon, who is called Peter; his pure Hebrew name was Nwemv, Simeon, as he is called, *Ac 15:14* but in the then Jerusalem dialect, and in Rabbinical language, this name is frequently read and pronounced Nwmyo, "Simon", as here: we often read of R. Simon, and of R. Juda bar Simon, in both Talmuds {p}. This apostle is also called Peter, to distinguish him from Simon the Canaanite, and which signifies a stone, or rock, in allusion to the object of his faith, and the steadiness of it. He is said to be the "first"; not that he was the head of the rest of the apostles, or had any primacy, dominion, and authority over them; but because he was first called, and was the first that was to open the door of faith to the Gentiles: but chiefly he is said to be so for order's sake; for, some one in the account must be named first, and he as proper as any:

and Andrew his brother; who was called at the same time with him, and therefore are put together. This name is also to be met with in the Talmudic writings; see Gill "Mt 4:18".

James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; these two were called next and together, and therefore are placed in this order: the former is so called, to distinguish him from another James, the son of Alphaeus, after mentioned; and the latter is the beloved disciple; these were surnamed "Boanerges", that is, "sons of thunder".

{n} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5. {o} Misn. Roshhashana, c. 1. sect. 3. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {p} T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 46. 4. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 55. 1. & Bava Kama, fol. 47. 2.

Matthew 10:3

Ver. 3. Philip and Bartholomew,.... The first of these was called next; his name is a Greek one, which his parents, though Jews, might take from the Greeks that dwelt among them, see *Joh 12:20* mention is made of one R. Phelipi, and Phulipa, in the Jewish writings {q}. The latter of these, Bartholomew, is conjectured, by Dr. Lightfoot, to be the same with Nathanael, he being called next in order after Philip; and that his name was Nathanael, ymlt rb, "Bar Talmai", or "the son of Talmai", or "Ptolomy": a name once common to the kings of Egypt: so Talmai, king of Geshur, is by the Septuagint, in ***2Sa 3:3*** *2Sa 13:37* called Tholmi, and in ***1Ch 3:2*** Tholmai: hence it appears, that Bartholomew is no other than Bartholmi, or the son of Tholmi. We read of one R. Jonathan, owmlwjba Nb, "ben Abtolemus", in the Talmud {r}, whether the same name with this, may be considered.

Thomas, and Matthew the publican: by the other evangelists Matthew is mentioned first; but he being the writer of this Gospel, puts Thomas first, which is an instance of his modesty; and also calls himself the "publican", which the other do not: this he mentions, to magnify the grace of God in his vocation. The Jews {s} speak of yatm, "Matthai", or "Matthew", as a disciple of Jesus. Thomas was sometimes called Didymus; the one was his Hebrew, the other his Greek name, and both signify a "twin", as it is very likely he was: mention is made of R. Thoma, or Thomas bar Papias, in a Jewish writer {t}. Next follow,

James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus: the former of these is so called, to distinguish him from James, the son of Zebedee. This is the James, who was the brother of our Lord, ***Ga 1:19*** and is called "James the less", *Mr 15:40*. Alphaeus his father, is the same with Cleopas, *Lu 24:18* or Cleophas, *Joh 19:25*. The Hebrew name, yplx, which often occurs among the Jews {u}, may be pronounced either Chlophi, or Alphi, or with the Greek termination Cleopas, or Alphaeus. The latter of this pair of apostles is the same person with Jude, the writer of the epistle, which bears that name, and was the brother of James, with whom he is coupled: he was called Lebbaeus, either from the town of Lebba, a sea coast town of Galilee, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks; or from the Hebrew word ybl, "my heart", as others, either for his prudence, or through the affections of his parents to him; as the Latins call one they love, "meum corculum", "my little heart"; or from aybl, "a lion", that being the motto of the tribe of Judah. His surname Thaddaeus, is thought by some to be a deflexion of Jude; or Judas, and as coming from the same root, hdy, which signifies "to praise", or "give thanks"; or from the Syriac word, dt, "a breast", and may be so called for the same reason as he was Lebbaeus. Frequent mention is made of this name, aydt, "Thaddai", or "Thaddaeus", among the Talmudic {w} doctors. The Jews themselves speak {x} of one hdwt, "Thodah", as a disciple of Jesus, by whom no doubt they mean this same disciple. Eusebius {y} mentions one Thaddaeus, as one of the seventy disciples, who was sent to Agbarus, king of Edessa, who was healed and converted by him. This Agbarus is reported to have wrote a letter to Jesus Christ, desiring him to come and cure him of his disease; to which Christ is said to return an answer, promising to send one of his disciples, who should do it; and that accordingly, after Christ's death, Thomas sent this Thaddaeus to him.

{q} Massechet Sopherim, c. 21. sect. 7. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 71. fol. 63. 4. {r} T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 19. 1. {s} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 43. 1. {t} Juchasin, fol. 105. 2. {u} Echa Rabbati, fol. 58. 4. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 60. 4. Juchasin, fol. 92. 1. {w} T. Hieros. Celaim, fol. 27. 2. Sabbat, fol. 6. 1. Erubim, fol. 23. 3. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 123. 1. & Erubim, fol. 71. 2. Juchasin, fol. 81. 1. & 105. 2. & 108. 1. {x} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 43. l. {y} Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 12, 13.

Matthew 10:4

Ver. 4. Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot,.... This is the last couple, for they are all mentioned by pairs, because they were sent forth "by two and two", as the Evangelist Mark says, ***Mr 6:7***. The former of these is called Simon the Canaanite, to distinguish him from Simon Peter, before mentioned; not that he was a Canaanite, that is, an inhabitant of the land of Canaan, a man of Canaan, as a certain woman is called a woman of Canaan, *Mt 15:22* for all the disciples of Christ were Jews; though in Munster's Hebrew Gospel he is called ynenkh Nwemv, "Simeon the Canaanite", or of Canaan, as if he belonged to that country; nor is he so called from Cana of Galilee, as Jerorm and others have thought; but he was one of the Myanq, "Kanaim", or "Zealots"; and therefore Luke styles him, "Simon called Zelotes", ***Lu 6:15***. The Kanaites, or Zelotes, were a set of men, who, in imitation of Phinehas, who slew Zimri and Cozbi in the very act of uncleanness, when they found any persons in the act of adultery, idolatry, blasphemy, or theft, would immediately kill them without any more ado: this they did, from a pretended zeal for the honour and glory of God: nor were they accountable to any court of judicature for it; yea, such an action was highly applauded, as a very laudable one {z}: under this specious name of Zealots, innumerable murders, and most horrible wickedness were committed, both before, and during the siege of Jerusalem, as Josephus {a} relates. Now Simon was one of this sect before his conversion, and still retained the name afterwards. Judas, the last of the twelve, is called Iscariot; concerning which name, the notation of it, and the reason of his being so called, many are the conjectures of learned men: some think that he belonged to the tribe of Issachar, and that he is called from thence, rkvvy vya, "a man of Issachar", as a certain man is, in *Jud 10:1* others, that he takes his name from the place he belonged to, and that he was called twyrq vya, "a man of Kerioth". A place of this name is mentioned, *Jos 15:25* and some manuscripts and copies in some places read Judas apo Karuwtou, of "Caryot". Caryota is said {b} to be a plain of the city of Jericho, about eighteen miles from Jerusalem, which abounded in palm trees, called yjyyrwq, "Caryotae", of which mention is made in the {c} Talmud, and other writers {d}. Others think he is so called, from the Syriac word, ajwyrko, "secariota", which signifies a "purse", or bag, because he carried the bag. Some copies read it, skariwtev, "scariotes": others are of opinion, that he is so called, from the manner of death he died, which was strangling: for arkoa, "ascara", a word often used in the {e} Talmudic writings, signifies "strangling"; and is accounted by the Jews the hardest of deaths, and an evil one; and which seems to bid fair for the true reason of his name: however, it is mentioned here, as elsewhere, to distinguish him from Jude, or Judas, the true and faithful apostle of Christ; for this was he,

who also betrayed him; that is, Christ, as the Persic version reads it; and which is mentioned, not only for further distinction's sake, but to his great reproach. We learn from hence, that in the purest society on earth there has been an impure person; nor can it therefore be expected it should be otherwise in the best of churches, in the present state of imperfection; yea, that a man may have the highest gifts and attainments, as Judas had, ministerial gifts, and power of performing miracles, and yet be a vile person.

{z} Misn. Sanhedrim, c. 9. sect. 6. & Bartenora, in ib. T. Avoda Zara, fol. 36. 2. Maimon. Issure Bia, c. 12. sect. 4, 5, 6. 14. & Sanhedrim, c. 18. sect. 6. & Obede Cochabim, c. 2. sect. 9. Philo de Monarchia, l. 1. p. 818. {a} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 1, 2. & 6. 1. Vid. Abot R. Nathan, c. 6. fol. 3. 2. {b} Vid. Wolfi Heb. Bibl. p. 410. {c} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 50. 2. & Avoda Zara, fol. 14. 2. {d} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 4. {e} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 8. 1. & Sabbat, fol. 33. 1. Sota, fol. 35. 1. Pesachim, fol. 105. 1. Taanith, fol. 19. 2. & 27. 2. Yebamot, fol. 62. 2.

Ver. 5. These twelve Jesus sent forth,.... And no other but them, under the character of apostles. These had been with him a considerable time, to whom he had been gradually communicating spiritual knowledge; and by the benefit of private conference with him, and the observation they had made upon his doctrine and conduct, were greatly qualified for public usefulness: wherefore he gives them a commission, furnishes them with power and authority; and sends them forth from him by pairs, that they might be assisting to one another, and bear a joint testimony to the Gospel they preached; but before he sent them forth from his presence, he gave them some directions where they should go, and to whom they should minister, and where not:

and he commanded them, as their Lord and Master; he gave them strict orders, which he expected them to comply with, and closely enjoined them, as they must answer it to him again,

saying, go not into the way of the Gentiles; meaning, not the customs' and manners of the Heathens, they were to avoid; but that they were not to steer their course, or take their journey towards them: they were not, as yet, to go among them, and preach the Gospel to them; the calling of the Gentiles was not a matter, as yet, so clearly revealed and known, nor was the time of their calling come: besides it was the will of God, that the Gospel should be first preached to the Jews, to take off all excuse from them, and that their obstinacy and perverseness in rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, might manifestly appear; and since Christ himself was the minister of the circumcision, he would have his apostles, for the present, whilst he was on earth, act agreeably to the character he bore, that there might be an entire harmony in their conduct.

And into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: the word "any" is supplied, and that very rightly; for, not the city of Samaria, the metropolis of that country, as the Arabic version reads it, is only meant, but any, and every city of the Samaritans: not that it was strictly unlawful and criminal to go thither; for he himself went into one of their cities, and so did his apostles, ***Joh 4:4 Lu 9:52*** and after his death preached the Gospel there; but he judged it not proper and expedient at this time, and as yet, to do it; that is, not before their preaching it to the Jews; for there was a very great hatred subsisting between the Jews, and the Samaritans, insomuch that they had no conversation with each other in things civil or religious. The Samaritans, though they boasted of their descent from Jacob, were a mongrel sort of people, partly Jews, and partly Gentiles, a mixture of both; and therefore are distinguished from both and though they had, and held the law, and five books of Moses, yet corrupted them in many places, to serve their purpose, and countenance their religion, particularly their worshipping at Mount Gerizim; on which account they were looked upon by the Jews as apostates, idolaters, and even as Heathens {f}, and are therefore here joined with them; and to shun giving offence to the Jews, seems to be the reason of this prohibition; see Gill "Joh 4:20".

{f} T. Hieros. Shekelim, fol. 46. 2. Bartenora in Misn. Taharot, c. 5. sect. 8.

Matthew 10:6

Ver. 6. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. To whom he himself was sent, *Mt 15:24*. By "the house of Israel" is meant the whole Jewish nation; for though this phrase, when distinguished from the house of Judah, designs only the ten tribes; yet here it intends all the Jews, then living in the land of Judea, among whom there were some of all the tribes: and by "the lost sheep" of this house, are meant either all the people of the Jews in general, who were wandering, and were lost in error and sin, and to whom the external ministry of the Gospel came; or rather the elect of God among them, for whose sake particularly the apostles were sent unto them. These are called "sheep", because they were chosen of God, and given to Christ to be redeemed, looked up, sought out, and saved by him; and "lost" ones, not only because lost in Adam, and by their own transgressions, so that neither they themselves, nor any mere creature, could save them from eternal ruin and destruction; but also, because they were made to go astray, and were lost through the negligence and errors of their pastors, the Scribes and Pharisees: and this character is the rather given of them, partly to reflect upon the characters of the shepherds of Israel: and partly to magnify the grace of God, in having regard to such ruined and miserable creatures; and also to excite the compassion and diligence of the apostles, to preach the Gospel to them: respect seems to be had to ***Jer 1:16***.

Matthew 10:7

Ver. 7. And as ye go,.... Through the cities of Judea, and the streets thereof, from one city to another, from place to place; for these were itinerant preachers, who were not to abide long in any place, but to move about, that the Gospel might be spread all over the land, and the lost sheep in every corner be sought out and found.

Preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. This was to be the subject matter of their ministry, which they were to proclaim aloud in every place; and which is expressed in the same words with which John the Baptist, and Christ himself, began their ministry,

Mt 3:2 which shows the entire harmony, and strict agreement, there were between them: for the meaning of the phrase; see Gill "Mt 3:2". The Cambridge copy reads, "repent, for the kingdom", &c.

Matthew 10:8

Ver. 8. Heal the sick,.... For so he had given them power to do, and this both for the confirmation of their doctrine, and the recommendation of them to men; for nothing could more evidently prove their mission to be divine, and their doctrine from heaven, or be more acceptable to men, than to "heal" their "sick" friends and relations, who were given up by physicians, and incurable by the art of man; and to do this without the use of medicines, either by a word speaking, or by laying on of their hands, or by anointing with oil, joined with prayer; and particularly to

cleanse the lepers, of which there were many in Israel, who otherwise could not get rid of that disorder, and by the law were deprived of many privileges, and advantages, which others enjoyed: and especially to

raise the dead, which had never been done before the times of Christ, since the days of Elijah and Elisha; and which must be allowed by all men to be more than human, and to require the arm of almighty power: and lastly, to

cast out devils, the sworn enemies of mankind, and who had taken possession of the bodies, as well as souls of multitudes in the Jewish nation; all which they are ordered to do, without taking any thing of the people, for so doing:

freely ye have received, freely give; which refers both to the working of miracles, and preaching of the Gospel. As they had these miraculous gifts freely imparted to them by Christ, they had them not of themselves, nor did they procure them at any charge, or expense of their's, or purchase them with their money, as Simon Magus impiously proposed to the apostles; so they were freely to make use of these wonderful powers, they were possessed of, for the relief of the distressed, without insisting upon, or receiving any thing for the same; a practice which was formerly disapproved and condemned in Gehazi, the servant of Elisha: and with respect to the Gospel, as the knowledge of it was freely communicated to them by Christ, and gifts qualifying them for the preaching of it, were of his mere grace and goodness bestowed upon them, so they were to dispense it without making a gain of godliness, or discovering in the least an avaricious disposition. Our Lord seems to have respect to a rule frequently inculcated by the Jews concerning teaching their oral law {g}; which is this;

"in the place where they teach the written law for a reward, it is lawful to teach it for a reward; but it is forbidden to teach the oral law for a reward, as it is said, "behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me", &c. ***De 4:5***. As I have Mnxb, "freely" learned, and ye have also Mnxb, "freely" learnt of me; so when ye learn posterity, ynmm Mtdmlv wmk Mnxb wdml, "teach them freely, as ye have learnt of me"."

Now what the Jews say of their traditions, Christ applies to the Gospel: in dispensing of which he would not have his disciples come behind them; but as they had freely received the Gospel from his lips; so they would as freely, as well as faithfully, make it known to others; and which no ways contradicts the maintenance of the Gospel ministers by the people; only forbids amassing wealth and riches by it, or preaching for sordid gain, or filthy lucre's sake: for otherwise it is Christ's own ordinance, that the preachers of the Gospel should live by it; and which is confirmed in the following verses.

{g} Maimon. Talmud Tora, c. 1. sect. 7. T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 36. 2. & 37. 1. & Becorat, fol. 29. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Nedarim, c. 4. sect. 3. & in Pirke Abot. c. 4. sect. 5.

Matthew 10:9

Ver. 9. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass,.... That is, not any sort of "money", as both Mark and Luke express it: for money was then coined, as now, of these three sorts of metals, and which include all kind of money; so that they were not to provide, get, prepare, or take along with them for their journey, as not gold, nor silver, or any parcel of this sort of money, which might be of considerable importance, and lasting consequence to them; so neither brass money, as, halfpence, and farthings, the least, and most inconsiderable: they were forbidden to carry any of either sort

in your purses: or, as it may be rendered, "in", or "within your girdles"; in which travellers, among the Jews, used to carry their money; and who, in their travelling dress, might not go into the temple, and are thus described {h};

"a man may not go into the mountain of the house with his staff, or with his shoes on, nor wtdnwpb, "with his girdle"."

The adnwp "phunda", Maimonides says {i}, is an inner garment, wore to keep off sweat from other garments, to which were sewed hollow things like purses, in which a man put what he pleased; though other {k} interpreters say it is twem wb Nyntwnv lwlx rwza, "a hollow girdle, in which they put their money": and so the Romans {l} had used to do; and so do the Turks {m} to this day; to which practice the allusion is here.

{h} Misn. Beracot, c. 9. sect. 5. {i} In ib. & Celim. c. 29. 1. & Sabbat, c. 10. 3. {k} Bartenora & Yom Tob in ib. Gloss in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 62. 2. & in Sabbat. fol. 92. 1. & 113. 1. & 120. 1. & Nedarim, fol. 55. 2. {l} Gracchus apud A. Gell. Noct. Attic. 1. 15. c. 12. Sueton. in Vita Vitellii, c. 16. {m} Bobovius de Peregr. Meccan. p. 14.

Matthew ***10:10***

Ver. 10. Nor scrip for your journey,.... This the Jews call lymrt, "tarmil": and which their commentators {n} say, is a large leathern bag, in which shepherds and travellers put their food, and other things, and carried with them, hanging it about their necks; so that the disciples were neither to carry money with them, nor any provisions for their journey:

neither two coats; one to travel in, and another to put on, when they came to their quarters: they were not allowed change of raiment; either because superfluous, or too magnificent to appear in, or too troublesome to carry:

nor shoes, only sandals, as Mark says; for there was a difference between shoes and sandals, as appears from the case of the plucking off the shoe, when a man refused his brother's wife {o}: if the "shoe" was plucked off it was regarded; but if the "sandal", it was not minded: this was the old tradition, though custom went against it. Sandals were made of harder leather than shoes {p}, and sometimes of wood covered with leather, and stuck with nails, to make them more durable {q}; though sometimes of bulrushes, and bark of palm trees, and of cork {r}, which were light to walk with.

"Says R. Bar bar Chanah {s}, I saw R. Eleazar of Nineveh go out on a fast day of the congregation, Mev ldnob, "with a sandal of cork"."

Of what sort these were, the disciples were allowed to travel with, is not certain:

nor yet with staves: that is, with more than one staff, which was sufficient to assist them, and lean upon in journeying: for, according to Mark, one was allowed; as though they might take a travelling staff, yet not staves for defence, or to fight with; see *Mt 26:55*. Now these several things were forbidden them, partly because they would be burdensome to them in travelling; and partly because they were not to be out any long time, but were quickly to return again; and chiefly to teach them to live and depend upon divine providence. Now, since they were to take neither money, nor provisions with them, and were also to preach the Gospel freely, they might reasonably ask how they should be provided for, and supported: when our Lord suggests, that they should not be anxiously concerned about that, he would take care that they had a suitable supply; and would so influence and dispose the minds of such, to whom they should minister, as that they should have all necessary provisions made for them, without any care or expense of their's:

for the workman is worthy of his meat; which seems to be a proverbial expression, and by which Christ intimates, that they were workmen, or labourers in his vineyard, and they, discharging their duty aright, were entitled to food and raiment, and all the necessaries of life: this to have, was their due; and it was but a piece of justice to give it to them, and on which they might depend. So that this whole context is so far from militating against a minister's maintenance by the people, that it most strongly establishes it; for if the apostles were not to take any money or provisions with them, to support themselves with, it clearly follows, that it was the will of Christ, that they should live by the Gospel, upon those to whom they preached, as the following words show: and though they were not to make gain of the Gospel, or preach it for filthy lucre's sake; yet they might expect a comfortable subsistence, at the charge of the people, to whom they ministered, and which was their duty to provide for them.

{n} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Sheviith, c. 2. sect. 8. & in Celim. c. 16. 4. & 24. 11. & Negaim. c. 11. sect. 11. {o} T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 12. 3. T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 102. 1. & Menachot, fol. 32. 1. {p} Gloss. in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 101. 1. & Bartenora in Misn. Yebamot, c. 12. sect. 1. {q} Misn. Yebamot, c. 12. sect. 2. Maimon. Bartenora in Sabbat, c. 6. sect. 2. & Edayot, c. 2. sect. 8. {r} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 78. 2. Gloss. in ib. Maimon. Hilch. Shebitat. Ashur, c. 3. sect. 7. {s} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 78. 2. Juchasin, fol. 81. 1.

Matthew 10:11

Ver. 11. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter,.... As Christ had instructed them in what manner they were to travel, so he directs them where to go, and who to ask for, and take up their abode with, in the several towns and villages to which they should come; that as soon as they had entered any town or village, they should, in the first place,

inquire, who in it is worthy; not of them, as the Arabic version reads, nor of the Gospel they preached, or of the grace of God, of which no man is worthy: and besides, who could answer to such a question when asked? Who in any town, or city, could tell who in it were worthy of Christ, of his Gospel, and ministers, to which they were all equally strangers before they came among them? Nor does it mean a man famous for piety and religion, or one that feared God, and was a worshipper of him, but an hospitable man; one that was very liberal; who was willing and ready to entertain strangers; for such a man they would want, having neither money nor food: and so the same word, in the Hebrew language, signifies "to be worthy", and "to give alms", because an eleemosynary man, or a man given to alms, was reckoned by the Jews a very worthy man: they thought giving of alms to be a matter of merit. Christ here speaks in the language of the masters of Israel; take an instance or two:

"saith R. Jona, blessed is the man that giveth to the poor; it is not written so, but "blessed is he that considereth the poor": he looks upon him, how he may wme twkzl, "give alms to him"."

And a little after,

""God hath set one against the other", that when evil comes to thy friend, thou mayest see how wb twkzl, "to do thine alms to him", and nourish him, so that thou mayest receive the gift of its reward."

Again, so a man says to his neighbour, yb ykz, "give alms unto me": and afterwards, in the same place, it is said, attya ayhhb ykz, "give alms unto that woman" {t}. Now, it was such a worthy generous man, that was beneficent to the poor, and kind to strangers, that the apostles were to inquire out, wherever they came; and having found such a person, they were to continue with him:

and there abide till ye go out; of that city or town, to another city or town: for to be often changing houses would bring upon them an ill character, as if they were difficult to be pleased, not content with the provision made for them; and would look as if they sought to serve their own bellies, and gratify their appetites, more than to do good to the souls of men; and besides, moving from the house of a bountiful man, might bring some reproach upon his character, as if he had not used them well, and therefore left him. In short, Christ's meaning is, that he would not have his disciples be difficult, and dainty, or fickle, and inconstant, but be content with such things they should have provided for them; and not seek for other, and better quarters, nor fear being troublesome where they were.

{t} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 34. fol. 173. 3, 4. & 174. 4. Midrash Kohelet c. 11. 1. fol. 82. 2.

Matthew *10:12*

Ver. 12. And when ye come into an house,.... Or the "house"; that is, the house of an hospitable man, when, upon inquiry, found out:

salute it; meaning the inhabitants of it; or, as the Persic version reads, those of the household, especially the master of the family. Some copies add, saying, peace be to this house, as in *Lu 10:5* and so read the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and is a very just, and proper explanation of saluting: for the usual form of salutation among the Jews was in such words; of which
See Gill on "Mt 5:47" by which is meant all kind of happiness, and prosperity, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

Matthew 10:13

Ver. 13. And if the house be worthy,.... If the family, and particularly the master of it, appeared to be civil, courteous, friendly, and hospitable, upon such a salutation, and ready to receive and embrace them, and provide for them,

let your peace come upon it, or it shall come upon it; the imperative for the future, which is not unusual; and so read the Syriac and Vulgate Latin. The sense is, the peace the apostles wished for, in their form of salutation, should come, and abide on the family; for not the Gospel of peace, and the preaching of it, are here meant, but the salutation itself, or the things desired in it, which should be granted, and the house be blessed for their sake, and as a reward of their generosity, and hospitality:

but if it be not worthy: does not prove to be what it was said to be, and they expected; namely, to be generous, liberal, and beneficent; but, on the contrary, uncivil and churlish, should neglect their salutation, discover an unwillingness to receive them, and turn their backs upon them:

let your peace return to you, or "it shall return to you"; the happiness wished for shall not come upon them, and the prayers and good wishes of the apostles shall be void, and of none effect, with respect to that family, but should be made good to themselves; and they should be directed to another house, where they should find persons more generous and free to entertain them.

Matthew 10:14

Ver. 14. And whosoever shall not receive you,.... Into their houses, and refuse to entertain them and provide for them in a friendly manner;

nor hear your words, slight their salutations, make no account of, but despise their good wishes for their welfare; and also treat with contempt the doctrines of the Gospel preached by them; and either would not attend on their ministry, or if they did, give no credit to what they should say, but deride and reject them.

When ye depart out of that house, or city; to another house, or to another city, being obliged to remove, through their contemptuous rejection of them:

shake off the dust of your feet. So Paul and Barnabas did at Antioch in Pisidia, when the Jews contradicted and blasphemed the Gospel preached by them, raised a persecution against them, and expelled them out of their coasts, *Ac 13:51* which ceremony was ordered by Christ to be observed even to the cities of Judea, that should despise and reject the ministry of his apostles; and that either to show that they did not come to them with worldly views, with any design to amass riches and wealth to themselves, for they would not so much as carry away with them the dust on their feet, but it was purely with a view to their welfare, both spiritual and temporal; or to testify that they had been among them, and that that very dust they shook off their feet would rise up in judgment against them, and declare that the Gospel had been preached among them, and they had rejected it, which will be an aggravation of their condemnation; or rather to observe to them, that such was their wickedness, that even the dust of their country was infected thereby, and therefore they shook it off, as though it defiled them, as the dust of an Heathen country was thought by the Jews to do; so that by this action they signified that they would have nothing more to do with them, or say to them, and that they looked upon them as impure and unholy, as any Heathen city or country. There seems to be an allusion to some maxims and customs of the Jews, with respect to the dust of Heathen countries.

"On account of six doubts, they say {u}, they burn the first offering, for a doubt of a field in which a grave might be, and for a doubt Mymeh Uram abh rpe, "of the dust which comes from the land of the Gentiles", &c."

On which Bartenora has this note;

"all dust which comes from the land of the Gentiles, is reckoned by us as the rottenness of a dead carcass; and of these two, "the land of the Gentiles", and a field in which is a grave, it is decreed that they "defile" by touching, and by carrying."

Again {w},

"the dust of a field in which is a grave, and the dust without the land (of Israel) which comes along with an herb, are unclean."

Upon which Maimonides makes this remark,

"that the dust of a field that has a grave in it, and the dust which is without the land of Israel, defile by touching and carrying; or if, when it hangs at the end of an herb, when they root it out of the dust of such a field, it is unclean."

Hence they would not suffer herbs to be brought out of an Heathen country into the land of Israel, lest dust should be brought along with them.

"A Misnic doctor teaches {x}, that they do not bring herbs from without the land (of Israel into it), but our Rabbins permit it; what difference is there between them? Says R. Jeremiah, they take care of their dust; that is the difference between them."

On that clause, "they take care of their dust", the gloss is,

"lest there should be brought with it Mymeh Ura vwgm, "any of the dust of the land of the Gentiles", which defiles in the tent, and pollutes the purity of the land of Israel."

{u} Misn. Taharot, c. 4. sect. 5. Vid. c. 5. 1. & Maimon & Bartenora in ib. {w} Misn. Oholot. c. 17. sect. 5. {x} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 12. 1.

Matthew ***10:15***

Ver. 15. Verily, I say unto you,.... This was not all the punishment that should be inflicted on such despisers of the Gospel of Christ, and the ministers of it; as not to enjoy that peace and prosperity wished for by the apostles, and to be declared to be on an equal foot with Heathen cities and countries: but they were to suffer everlasting punishment in the world to come; which is here asserted by Christ in the strongest manner, saying:

it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha, in the day of judgment, than for that city. The inhabitants of the land of Sodom and Gomorrha are the rather mentioned, because, as they were very notorious and abominable sinners, so their temporal punishment was well known, exemplary and awful, though not that, but their future damnation is here regarded, of which the Jews made no doubt; for they say {y},

"the men of Sodom have no part in the world to come; as it is said, *Ge 13:13* "the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners, before the Lord exceedingly": they were "wicked" in this world, and "sinners" in the world to come;"

meaning, that by this passage is designed their double punishment in this, and the other world. But though their punishment was very tremendous, and they will suffer also "the vengeance of eternal fire", as Jude says; yet, their punishment will be milder, and more tolerable, than that of the inhabitants of such a city, that rejects the Gospel of the grace of God: as there are degrees in sinning, for all sins are not alike, as the Stoics say; so there will be degrees in suffering; the sins of those that are favoured with the Gospel, are greater than those who only have had the light of nature, and so their torments will be greater. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, though they sinned against the light of nature, despised the advice and admonitions of Lot, and ill treated the angels, yet will be more mildly punished than the wicked Jews, who rejected Christ, and his Gospel, and despised his apostles, and ministers; because they sinned not against so much light, and such means of grace, and knowledge, as these did; see ***La 4:6*** which is thus paraphrased by the Targumist, and may be aptly applied to the Jews in Christ's time:

"the sin of the congregation of my people is greater than the sin of Sodom, which was overturned in a moment; and there dwelt no prophets in it to prophesy, and turn it to repentance."

The time referred to, signified by "the day of judgment", respects not the destruction of Jerusalem, which was a very severe judgment on that people, but the general judgment, at the end of the world, which is appointed and fixed by God, though unknown to angels and men. The phrase is Jewish, and often to be met with in their writings, who use it in the same sense; particularly in the book of Zohar {z}, mention is made of anydd amwy, "the day of judgment", when there will be no pollution in the sanctuary.

{y} Misn. Sanhedrim, c. 11. sect. 3. Hieros. Sanhedrim, fol. 29. 3. {z} In Gen. fol 13. 3. & 16. 1.

Matthew 10:16

Ver. 16. Behold, I send you forth, as sheep among wolves,.... This, and the following verses, chiefly respect the troubles, afflictions, persecutions, and sufferings which should befall the apostles after the death and resurrection of Christ; when their commission was enlarged, and they afresh sent out by Christ to preach his Gospel; of which he gives a faithful account before hand, that they might be prepared for them, and not be surprised when they came upon them. He compares them to "sheep", because they were meek and humble in their spirits, harmless, and inoffensive, in their lives and conversations; were weak, and unable to protect themselves, and were sent out by him unarmed and defenceless; and their oppressors and persecutors to "wolves", because fierce and furious, voracious and ravenous, cruel and hurtful, as these creatures are, especially to sheep; wherefore Christ gives them this wholesome advice,

be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. Much such an expression as this God is represented as saying of Israel {a}:

"Says R. Judah, in the name of R. Simon, the holy blessed God said, concerning Israel, with me they are Mynwyk Mymymt, "harmless as doves"; but among the nations of the world, they are Myvxnk Mymwre, "subtle as serpents"."

The serpent is a very sharp sighted, cunning creature, and uses various arts and stratagems for its own preservation, and especially of its head; and is so far to be imitated by the followers of Christ, as to make use of all proper methods to preserve themselves from the insults and rage of men, and not expose themselves to unnecessary dangers: and, as much as in them lies, they should be careful to give no just occasion of offence, or irritate, and provoke them to use them ill, and to avoid all snares and traps that are laid for them; and, at the same time, maintain the innocence and harmlessness of the dove, being free from all wicked cunning and craftiness, without rancour, malice, and wrath; not meditating and seeking revenge, but meek and humble in their deportment, leading inoffensive lives, and proceeding in the course of their calling, though liable to many insults, and much oppression.

{a} Shirhashirim Rabba, c. 2. 14. fol. 12. 1.

Matthew 10:17

Ver. 17. But beware of men,.... Of these men, comparable to wolves, before spoken of: the phrase is somewhat uncommon and emphatical, and designs not merely wicked men in common, the men of the world, and enemies of the Gospel; but chiefly such of them as were men of note and authority, ecclesiastical and civil governors of the people, the Scribes, Pharisees, elders, and chief priests, and other rulers; and the advice to the apostles is, to take care how they came into their company, and put themselves into their hands; who would seek all opportunities and occasions against them, and use their power and interest to do them hurt:

for they will deliver you up to the councils, or sanhedrim, of which there were three sorts; the greater, which consisted of seventy one persons, and was only held in Jerusalem; the lesser one, which was made up of twenty three members, and was kept in every place where there were an hundred and twenty Israelites; and the third, where there was not that number, and was a triumvirate, or a bench of three judges only {b}.

And they will scourge you in their synagogues; where the triumvirate, or bench of three Judges kept their court; under whose cognizance were pecuniary judgments, and such as related to thefts, damages, restitutions, ravishing, and enticing of virgins, and defamation; also to plucking off of the shoe, and refusing a brother's wife, to the plant of the fourth year, second tithes whose price is unknown, holy things, and the estimations of goods; to these belonged also laying on of hands, the beheading of the heifer, and, among the rest, hvlvb twkm, "scourging was by the bench of three" {c}. The manner of performing it was this {d}:

"they bind both his hands to a pillar, here and there; and the minister of the synagogue takes hold of his clothes, and if they are rent, they are rent; and if they are ripped in the seam, they are ripped till his breast is uncovered; for he is not to beat him on his clothes, as it is said, "he shall beat him", but not his clothes: and a stone is placed behind him, on which the minister that scourges stands, and a white leather whip in his hand, doubled two and two with four, and two lashes of an ass's hide, going up and down: the breadth of the whip was an hand's breadth, and the length of it, so as to reach to the navel, and the handle of the whip, by which he took hold, was the length of an hand; and he lifts up the whip with both his hands, and strikes with one hand, with all his might; and gives him the third part of his stripes before, upon his breast, between his paps, and two thirds behind him; one third upon this shoulder, and the other upon the other shoulder. He that scourges neither stands, nor sits, but bows; as it is said, "the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face"; for the eyes of the judge shall be upon him, that he do not look upon anything else, and smite him from thence; for no two strokes are as one; the greatest of the judges reads all the time he is scourging, viz. these passages; "if thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law", &c. and "the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful", &c. and he intends to finish the verses with the stripes; but if he does not finish, he returns to the beginning of the Scripture, and reads, and returns, and reads until the whole scourging is over: and the second of the judges numbers the stripes; and the third says to the minister strike: every time he strikes, it is at his orders he strikes."

Now, as this punishment was inflicted by the chazan, or minister of the synagogue, who was a sort of sexton, so it was done in the synagogue itself: and according to our Lord's predictions here, and in *Mt 23:34* as the former of these, delivering up to councils, had its accomplishment in part, in the apostles, ***Ac 4:1*** so the latter, scourging in their synagogues, was fulfilled both by Paul, *Ac 22:19* and upon him, *2Co 11:24*. Epiphanius tells {e} us of one Joseph, a Jew, who was caught by the Jews reading the Gospels in his own house; upon which they dragged him away, and had him to the synagogue, and there "scourged" him. Now as these things did not befall the apostles till after the death of Christ, it is clear that the context refers not to their first, but to an after mission.

{b} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrim, c. 1. sect. 3, 4. {c} Misn. Sanhedrim, c. 1.

sect. 1, 2, 3. {d} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrim, c. 16. sect. 8, 9, 10, 11. Misn. Maccot, c. 3. sect. 12, 13, 14. {e} Contra Haeres. 1. 1. Haeres. 30.

Matthew **10:18**

Ver. 18. And ye shall be brought before governors,.... Meaning Roman governors; so Paul was had before Gallio, Felix, and Festas; for judgments relating to life and death were to be taken away, and were taken away from the Jewish sanhedrim; and as they themselves say {f}, forty years before the destruction of the second temple, which was much about the time of Christ's death: so that what power they had, was only with regard to lesser matters, and to inflict lesser punishments, as beating and scourging: if they sought to take away life, they were obliged to bring the cause before the governors of the Roman provinces, who are here intended:

and kings for my sake; as Herod, Agrippa, Nero, Domitian, and others, before whom one or other of the apostles were brought; not as thieves, or murderers, or traitors, and seditious persons, or for having done any wrong or injury to any man's person or property; but purely for the sake of Christ, for the profession of their faith in him, and for preaching his Gospel; of all which they had no reason to be ashamed, nor were they:

for a testimony against, or "to"

them, and the Gentiles; that is, that thereby they might have an opportunity of bearing a testimony to the truths of the Gospel, which would be either to the conviction and conversion of many Gentiles, as well as Jews; or would be a testimony which would stand against them another day, both against the Jews, who charged, and accused them, and brought them before the Heathen kings and governors, to punish them with death; and against those Gentile magistrates, and others, who should join with them in rejecting the Gospel, and putting them to death for preaching it: so that they should have no pretext or excuse; since the Gospel had been faithfully and clearly preached to them, and they had despised it, and evil treated the ministers of it. This confirms what is before observed, that this passage refers to an after mission.

{f} Hieros. Sanhedrim, fol. 18. 1. & 24. 2. Juchasin, fol. 26. 2. & 51. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrim. c. 14. sect. 13.

Matthew 10:19

Ver. 19. But when they deliver you up,.... The apostles hearing that they should be delivered up to councils, and brought before governors and kings, might be under some concern how they should behave, and what they should be able to say in vindication of themselves and truth, before such great persons; they not being used to converse with men in such high stations: they were illiterate men, and of no elocution; men of mean birth, low life, most of them poor fishermen; and might fear, on these accounts, that the Gospel would suffer for want of able persons to defend it before the great ones of the earth. Now, in order to remove these their fears and objections, and to strengthen and comfort their minds, our Lord bids them, when this would be their ease, that the Jews would deliver them to the Roman magistrates, to

take no thought how, or what ye shall speak; not to be anxiously concerned, neither as to the matter, or manner of what they should say in their defence: they should have no occasion, as orators do, to take pains, and rack their thoughts, to prepare a studied, elaborate oration, dressed with all the flowers of rhetoric, filled with the most moving and powerful arguments, and clothed with diction of the strictest propriety and elegance; for they should want neither words, nor things; they should have arguments put into their mouths, and helped to proper language to express them in:

for it shall be given you in the same hour, what ye shall speak; immediate assistance should be afforded them either by his father, or himself; or rather, the blessed Spirit, who would suggest unto them, at once, things, the most proper to be said, and help them to deliver them in the most proper manner: and these are the most convincing arguments, and that the best elocution, which the Spirit of God helps men to; these vastly exceed all the art of men, and strength of nature. This was greatly verified in Peter and John, two poor fishermen, when before the council, and in Stephen the protomartyr.

Matthew 10:20

Ver. 20. For it is not ye that speak,.... Not but that they were to speak the words, and did; but then both the things they spoke, and the very words in which they spoke them, were not of themselves, but were suggested and dictated by the Spirit of God; for as "the preparation of the heart" in them, so "the answer of the tongue" by them, were both "from the Lord": the Spirit, he was the efficient cause, they were only instruments; for not they of themselves spoke; or not so much they,

but the Spirit of your father, which speaketh in you, or "by you": what they should say was not to be dictated by their own spirit or natural understanding, nor by an angel, but by the Spirit of God; called the "Spirit of" their "father", because he proceeds from him, is of the same nature with him, and is the reason of his being given to them: and this character of him might serve to strengthen their faith in the expectation of him, and in the assistance promised, and to be had by him; since he was the spirit of him, who stood in the relation of a father to them, and bore a paternal affection for them.

Matthew 10:21

Ver. 21. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death,.... Christ having fortified the minds of his disciples by the foregoing promises of divine influence and assistance, proceeds to open more largely and particularly the sorrows, troubles, and afflictions they must expect would attend the faithful ministration of his Gospel; as, that the true followers of Christ should not only be persecuted and betrayed, and delivered up into the hands of the civil magistrate, by persons that were strangers to them; but even by their nearest relations, brethren, whom the nearness of blood, should oblige to the tenderest regards to each other, to the securing of property and preserving of life: these should deliver up those that were so nearly related to them in the bonds of consanguinity, into the hands persecuting men in power, in order to be put to death; than which scarce anything can be more barbarous and unnatural, though the next instances exceed it:

and the father the child, and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. The father laying aside his natural affection for his child, whom he has begotten, and brought up, and has took so much care of, and delight in, and perhaps his only one, his son and heir; and yet, professing a faith different from his, such is his blind zeal and bigotry, that, breaking through all the ties of parental relation and affection, he delivers him up into the hands of wicked magistrates, to put him to death: and, on the other hand, children, forgetting the bonds they are in, and the obligations they lie under to their aged parents, rise up against them, and either with their own hands murder them, or appear as witnesses against them, and give their hearty consent to the taking away of their lives; even of them who have been the means and instruments of bringing them into the world, and of bringing them up in it. This shows the sad corruption of human nature, its enmity to the Gospel of Christ, and the inveterate malice and hatred of Satan against Christ, and his interest. Something like this is said by the Jews themselves, as what shall be in the times of the Messiah; for a little before his coming, or in the age in which the son of David comes, they say,

"the son shall deal basely by his father, the daughter shall rise up against her mother--a man's enemies shall be of his own household; the face of that generation shall be as the face of a dog; and the son shall not reverence his father {g}."

{g} Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15.

Matthew 10:22

Ver. 22. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake,..... This is more particularly directed to the apostles themselves, as what is said before regards the followers of Christ in general; for this was to be the lot of the apostles, that they should not only be ill treated in common with others, by their near friends and relations, whose love would be turned into hatred to them, but should be the butt and mark of the malice and wrath of all men; that is, of most men, or of the far greater part of the Jews, even of all wicked men who disbelieved and rejected the Messiah: for that the words are not to be understood in the utmost latitude, without any restriction, is certain; since there would be some who would be converted; and believe in Christ through their ministry, and consequently would love, esteem, and honour them as their spiritual fathers and guides, and as the disciples and apostles of Christ. This hatred they should be exposed to, would not be on account of any ill will to their persons; or because of any evil or immorality committed by them; but purely, and alone, for the name of Christ, in whom they believed, by which they were called, of which they made a profession, and zealously preached: which consideration, as it must needs secure peace and tranquillity in their breasts; so for their further encouragement, it is added,

but he that endureth to the end, shall be saved: which words suggest, that the tribulations and persecutions of the disciples of Christ, through the hatred of wicked men against them, shall not last always; there will be an end to them; respecting either the end of time and life, or the destruction of Jerusalem, when these their enemies would be cut off, or removed, and be capable of giving them no further trouble; and that such persons are happy, who patiently endure the hatred of men, and all manner of persecution, for Christ's sake; who are not moved by the afflictions they suffer, but stand fast in the faith, hold fast the profession of it, go on in their Christian course, and hold out to the end; for such shall be saved, not only with a temporal salvation, as the Christians were at the destruction of Jerusalem, but with an eternal one.

Matthew 10:23

Ver. 23. But when they persecute you in this city,.... Or any city into which they went, and preached the Gospel; and would not suffer them to go on in their work, they were not to desist, but to go elsewhere, where they might hope for a better reception, and a longer continuance, and so of doing more good:

flee ye into another; not so much for their own safety, though this, according to the circumstances of things, is lawful, but for the further spreading of the Gospel. The exhortation is not to take methods to avoid persecution, or to make an escape from it, but to perseverance under it: the sense is, they were not to be discouraged, and to leave off, because of persecution in one place, but to persist in the ministration of the Gospel, by carrying it to other cities; and it seems to be a spur to them to make haste, and fulfil their office of preaching the Gospel, in the land of Judea: nor need they fear going on too fast, lest they should have no places to preach in;

for verily I say unto you, this is a certain and indisputable truth not to be called in question, being strongly affirmed by truth itself,

ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, or "finished" them; that is, their tour through them, and their ministry, or the preaching of the Gospel in them,

till the son of man be come; which is not to be understood of his second coming to judgment, but either of his resurrection from the dead, when he was declared to be the Son of God, and when his glorification began; or of the pouring forth of the Spirit at the day of Pentecost, when his kingdom began more visibly to take place, and he was made, or manifested to be the Lord and Christ; or of his coming to take vengeance on his enemies, that would not have him to rule over them, and the persecutors of his ministers, at the destruction of Jerusalem.

Matthew 10:24

Ver. 24. The disciple is not above his master,.... So far from it, that he is inferior to him; as in knowledge, so in reputation and character; and cannot expect the same honour to be given him, and the same respect shown to him, as to his master; and therefore if his master is not used with that decency, and in that becoming manner he ought to be, he must not think it any hardship if he is treated in the same way. Our Lord hereby intends to fortify the minds of his disciples against all the reproach and persecution they were to meet with from the world, by observing to them the treatment he himself met with; wherefore, if he who was their master, a teacher that came from God, and taught as never man did, and was worthy of the utmost deference that could be paid, was maligned and evilly treated by men, it became them who were his disciples, to look for, and patiently bear such indignities; since they could expect no better usage than he himself had: the same doctrine is suggested in the next clause,

nor the servant above his Lord; and both seem to be proverbial expressions. The Jews have a saying {h} much like unto them, wbrm hkz dbeh Nya, "no servant is worthier than his master"; and Christ might make use of such common, well known expressions, that he might be the more easily understood, and in the most familiar manner convey what he intended, into the minds of his disciples; as, that since he was their Lord, and they were his servants, if his superior character and dignity did not secure him from the obloquy and insults of men, it could not be thought by them, who were inferior to him, that they should escape them.

{h} T. Hieros. Maaser Sheni, fol. 55. 1.

Ver. 25. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master,.... A disciple should think himself very well off, be entirely satisfied, yea, abundantly thankful, if he meets with no worse treatment than his master; if he has the same honour done him his master has, this is more than could be expected by him; and if he has the same ill usage with his master, he need not wonder at it, but should solace himself with this consideration, that it is no other, nor worse than his master had before him: and the same is equally true in the other case,

and the servant as his Lord: these expressions, as before, were proverbs, or common sayings among the Jews, which our Lord chose to make use of, and adapt to his present purpose; wbrk twyhl, "vel" ahyv dbel wyd, "it is enough for the servant, that he be as his master", is a saying often to be met with in their writings {i}; which our Lord applies, and reasons upon, in the following manner:

if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of the household? By "the master of the household"; he means himself, who is master of the family both in heaven and in earth; who is son over his own house, the high priest over the house of God, the lord and governor of all the household of faith; who takes care of, provides for, and protects all that are of God's household: and yet, though in such an high office, and of such great usefulness, he did not escape the severest lashes of the tongues of the wicked Jews; who called him by the most opprobrious names they could think of, and among the rest Beelzebub; see *Mt 12:24*. This was the god of the Ekronites, ***2Ki 1:2***. The word signifies "a masterfly" or the "lord of a fly": and so the Septuagint there call him baal muian, "Baal the fly", the god of the Ekronites. And this idol was so called, either because it was in the form of a fly: or else from the abundance of flies about it, by reason of the sacrifices, which it was not able to drive away; and therefore the Jews contemptuously gave it this name. They observe {k}, that in the temple, notwithstanding the multitude of sacrifices offered up there, there never was seen a fly in the slaughter house: or else this deity was so called from its being invoked to drive away flies, and the same with Myiodes, the god of flies, mentioned by Pliny {l}, or Myagros, which the same author {m} speaks of; so Jupiter was called apomuiov, a driver away

of flies; as was also Hercules {n}; and were worshipped by some nations on this account. In most copies, and so in the Arabic version, it is read Beelzebul; that is, as it is commonly rendered, the "lord of dung", or a dunghill god; and it is generally thought the Jews called the god of the Ekronites so, by way of contempt; as it was usual with them to call an idol's temple
lwbz, "zebul", "dung", and worshipping of idols lbzm, "dunging" {o}: but I must own, that I should rather think, that as Beelsamin, the god of the Phoenicians, is the same with Beelzebul, the god of the Ekronites, so it signifies the same thing: now Nymv leb, "Beelsamin", is "the lord of the heavens", and so is Beelzebul; for
lwbz, "Zebul", signifies "heaven"; so the word is used in ***Hab 3:11*** "the sun and the moon stood still", hlbz, "in their habitation"; by which, as a Jewish {p} writer observes, Mymvh wb Nwurh, "is meant the heavens"; for they are the habitation of the sun and moon: see also *Isa 63:15* and so among the seven names of the heavens, reckoned up by them, this is accounted one {q}. Now as the Jews looked upon all the deities of the Gentiles as demons, or devils; and since Beelzebub was the chief of them, they thought they could not fix upon a more reproachful name, to give to Christ, than this: and our Lord suggests, that since the great master of the family was called in such an abusive manner, it should be no cause of stumbling and offence, if those of a lower class in the family should be so stigmatized; if Christians are called by ever such hard names, even devils, they should not be disturbed at it; since their lord and master was called the prince of them.

{i} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 58. 2. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 43. 3. Juchasin, fol. 93. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 64. 2. Aben Ezra in Hos. i. 2. {k} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 5. {l} Nat. Hist. 1. 29. sect. 6. {m} lb. 1. 10. c. 28. {n} Pausanias, 1. 5. p. 313. & 1. 8. p. 497. Clement. Alex. ad Gentes, p. 24. {o} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 13. 2. {p} R. Sol. Urbinas in Ohel Moed, fol. 100. 1. {q} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 12. 2.

Matthew 10:26

Ver. 26. Fear them not, therefore,.... That is, be not afraid of men, and of their reproaches and revilings; which our Lord intimates would do them no more hurt, than they did him, and which in a little while would be all wiped away: time would bring all things to light, when the wickedness of these men would be discovered, their evil designs seen through; which were now covered with the specious pretences of sanctity, and zeal for religion, and the glory of God; and the innocence and integrity of him and his disciples would be made manifest. There is no need to refer this to the great day of account, when every secret thing shall be brought to light; but it chiefly regards the times when the Gospel should be more publicly known, and embraced, and should prevail against all the opposition made unto it; and then all these reproachful names and characters would be seen plainly to arise from spite and malice: to which may be applied those proverbial sayings in common use,

for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed, and hid, that shall not be known. Men may cover their malice and wickedness, for a while, under the best of names, but ere long it will all be revealed to their great shame and reproach: the innocence of the followers of Christ may, for some time, lie out of sight, and they may be traduced as the worst of men; but in process of time things take another turn, and their characters appear in quite another light: and so it is with the Gospel preached and professed by them, which, though sometimes it is little known, lies hid, and is covered with disgrace; yet in the Lord's own time its light breaks forth, power attends it, and it is made manifest to the consciences of men.

Matthew 10:27

Ver. 27. What I tell you in darkness,.... Hence Christ proceeds to encourage his disciples to an open, plain, and faithful ministration of the Gospel, not fearing the faces and frowns of men. For with respect to the Gospel, his meaning is, that what was hid and covered should not remain so, but should be revealed, and made known, and they were the persons who were to do it; and it was with that view that he had communicated it to them: and whereas he had told them it "in darkness"; not in a dark and obscure manner; for though he spoke in parables to others, yet to them he made known the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: and if at any time he delivered parables, or dark sayings, to them, he would afterwards, or when alone, explain them to them; but his meaning chiefly is, that what he communicated to them in private houses, when they were by themselves, and no one saw, or heard them, and so were in darkness with respect to others,

that speak ye in light; openly and publicly in the synagogues and temple, in the high places of the city, streets, or fields, wherever there is a concourse of people; hide and conceal nothing, but speak out all clearly, distinctly, fully, without the least reserve, or throwing any obscurity on it, which may cover the true sense of it from the view of the people.

And what ye hear in the ear, or is whispered to you by me, as your master. Christ alludes to the custom of the Jewish doctors, who had each an interpreter, into whose ear he used to whisper his doctrine, and then the interpreter delivered it to the people: so it is said {s},

"Rab came to the place of R. Shilla, and he had no speaker to stand by him; wherefore Rab stood by him, and explained."

The gloss upon it is,

"an interpreter stands before a doctor whilst he is preaching, and the doctor wl vxwl, "whispers to him" in the Hebrew tongue, and he interprets it to the multitude in a tongue they understand."

Again {t},

"they said to Judah bar Nachmani, the interpreter of Resh Lekish, stand for a speaker for him."

The gloss upon it is,

"to cause his exposition to be heard by the congregation, Kl vwxlyv, "which he shall whisper to thee"."

Now it was absolutely requisite, that the speaker, or interpreter, should faithfully relate what the doctor said; sometimes, it seems, he did not: it is said {u} in commendation of the meekness of R. Aba,

"that he delivered one sense, and his speaker said another, and he was not angry."

The gloss says,

"his speaker was, he that interpreted to the multitude what he wl vxwl, "whispered to him" in the time of preaching."

Sometimes one doctor is said to whisper in the ear of another, when he instructed him, or informed him of anything. R. Jochanan {w} whispered R. Joshua hyndwab, "in his ear". The Jews have a notion that the law was given this way; so they interpret "the eloquent orator" in ***Isa 3:3*** {x} this is he to whom it is fit to deliver the words of the law, vxlb hntynv, "which was given by whispering": and so, it seems, the Gospel was in like manner delivered by Christ to his disciples. It was reckoned a very great honour, and a token of magisterial dignity, to have one to whisper in the ear to, and speak for them. So to one that related his dream, that he saw an ass standing at his pillow, and braying, answer is made, thou shalt be a king, that is, the head of a school; and "a speaker" or "an interpreter shall stand by thee" {y}. Our Lord very justly takes upon him the character of a doctor, master, and dictator, and solemnly charges his disciples, clearly, loudly, and faithfully to declare what he suggested to them.

That preach ye, says he,

upon the housetops; for the roofs of their houses were not ridged, but plain, and flat, upon which they could stand or walk; and battlements were made about them to prevent their falling off, according to the law in *De 22:8*. Here many religious actions were performed: here Peter went up to pray, *Ac 10:9* and here persons sometimes sat and read: hence that passage in the Misna {z} if any one ggh varb arwq, "was reading on the top of a roof", and the book is rolled out of his hand, &c. and sometimes they made their proclamations from hence of their festivals and solemn days, and particularly of their sabbath; which was done by the sound of a trumpet, that the people might cease from work in the fields, and shut up their shops in the city, and light up their lamps. This proclamation, by the sound of a trumpet, was made six times by the chazan, or minister of the congregation, from an housetop; and, it is said, that there was, ryeh hbwgb dxwym gg, "a peculiar roof in the highest part of the city", and from the middle of it he blew the trumpet {a}. In allusion to this, our Lord orders his disciples to blow the trumpet of the everlasting Gospel; and loudly proclaim to all the truths and mysteries of grace, which he had made known to them.

{s} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 20. 2. {t} T. Bab. Sanhed. fol. 7. 2. {u} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 40. 1. {w} T. Hieros Kiddushin, fol. 65. 4. {x} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 1. {y} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 56. 1. {z} Erubin, c. 10. sect. 3. {a} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 35. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

Ver. 28. And fear not them which kill the body,.... This is a "periphrasis" of bloody persecutors, who, not content to revile, scourge, and imprison, put the faithful ministers of Christ to death, in the most cruel and torturing manner; and yet are not so to be feared and dreaded by them, as to discourage and divert them from the performance of their important work and office; for, as Luke says, *Lu 12:4* "after" that they "have no more than they can do". This is all they are capable of doing, even by divine permission, when they are suffered to run the greatest lengths in violence against the saints; this is the utmost of their efforts, which Satan, and their own wicked hearts, can put them upon, or is in the power of their hands to perform: and the taking away of the lives of good men is of no disadvantage to them; but sends them the sooner out of this troublesome world to their father's house, to partake of those joys that will never end; so that they have nothing to fear from their most implacable enemies; but should boldly and bravely go on in their master's service, openly, freely, faithfully, and fully discharging the work they were called unto: for, the loss of a corporal life is no loss to them, their souls live after death, in eternal happiness; and in a little time God will raise up their bodies, and reunite them to their souls, and be for ever happy together. A noble argument this, which our Lord makes use of, to engage his disciples to a public and diligent ministration of the Gospel, in spite of all opposers; who, when they have vented all their malice, can only take away a poor, frail, mortal life; and which, if they did not, in a little time would cease in course:

but are not able to kill the soul; which is immortal, and cannot be touched by the sword, by fire and faggot, or any instruments of violence: it is immortal, it survives the body, and lives in a separate state, enjoying happiness and bliss, whilst the body is in a state of death:

but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. This is a description of God, and of his power, who is able to do that which men are not: all that they can do, by divine permission, is to kill the body; but he is able to "destroy", that is, to torment and punish both body and soul "in hell", in everlasting burnings; for neither soul nor body will be annihilated; though this he is able to do. As the former clause expresses the immortality of the soul, this supposes the resurrection of the body; for how otherwise should it be destroyed, or punished with the soul in hell? Now this awful being which is able to hurl, and will hurl all wicked and slothful, unfaithful and unprofitable, cowardly and temporising servants and ministers, soul and body, into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, is to be feared and dreaded; yea, indeed, he only is to be feared, and to be obeyed: cruel and persecuting men are not to be feared at all; God alone should be our fear and dread; though the argument seems to be formed from the lesser to the greater; yet this, is the sense of the word "rather", that God is to be feared, not chiefly and principally only, but solely; and in some versions that word is left out, as in the Arabic, and Ethiopic, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel.

Matthew 10:29

Ver. 29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?.... A farthing, with the Jews, was a very small coin; according to them it contained four grains of silver {b}; was the ninety sixth part of a "sela", or shilling {c}; and sometimes they make it to be of the same value with an Italian farthing: for they say {d}, it is of the value of eight "prutahs": and a "prutah" is the eighth part of an Italian farthing: it is used proverbially to signify a very little thing in the Misna {e};

"if of a command, which is light royak "as a farthing", which Bartenora explains a "very little thing", the law says, "that it may be well with thee", much more of the weighty commands in the law."

Hence, in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, it is rendered by Nwjq ebj, "a little piece of money"; and this was the common price of two sparrows. Our Lord appeals to his disciples, for the truth of it, as a thing well known: according to the question in Luke, five sparrows were sold for two farthings, which makes them somewhat cheaper still. This shows they were of little account.

And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father: some copies add, "which is in heaven"; meaning, that one of them should not be shot, or be killed, without the knowledge, will, and pleasure of God. The design of Christ is to assert the doctrine of providence, as reaching to all creatures and things, even the most minute and worthless: he instances not in men, nor in the beasts of the field, but in the fowls of the air, and in those of the inferior sort, and more useless, in sparrows, yea in little sparrows; as the word may be rendered; whose price was so low, that two are obliged to be put together to fetch the least sum of money current: and yet the providence of God is concerned with each of these; so that not one of them is taken in a snare, or killed with a stone, or shot flying, or sitting, but by the will of God: from whence it may be strongly concluded, that nothing comes by chance; that there is no such thing as contingency with respect to God, though there is to men, with respect to second causes; that all things are firmly ordained by the purpose of God, and are wisely ordered by his providence: and our Lord's further view is, from this consideration, to animate his disciples to a free, open, and constant preaching of his Gospel, not regarding their lives for his sake; for since their heavenly Father, in his providence, takes care of the meanest, even of the most irrational creatures, so that the life of one of them is not taken away without his will, much more will he take care of them; nor could their valuable lives be lost without his will and pleasure. Much such a way of arguing is used by the Jews, who {f} say, avn rb Nkv lk adby al aymv ydelbm rwpu, "a bird without God does not perish, much less a man"; or, as it is elsewhere {g} expressed,

"a bird "without God" is not hunted, or taken, how much less does the soul of a man go out of him?"

And again {h},

"a bird "without God" does not fly away, much less the soul of a man."

Two birds, or sparrows, as the word may be rendered, in *Le 14:4* were used in cleansing the leper; one was killed, and the other let loose into the open field: and though it might be a contingent thing with men which was killed, and which preserved, yet not with God; and some think the allusion is here to that case.

{b} Maimon. in Misn. Peah, c. 8. sect. 1. {c} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 4. sect. 3. {d} Ib. in Misn. Eracin, c. 8. sect. 1. {e} Cholin, c. 12. sect. 5. {f} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 38. 4. {g} Bereshit Rabba, fol. 69. 3. {h} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 81. 2. & Midrash Esther, fol. 89. 3.

Matthew 10:30

Ver. 30. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. A proverbial expression, showing the perfect knowledge God has, and the exquisite care he takes, in providence, of all his creatures, particularly men, and especially his dear children and faithful ministers; as not a sparrow, so not a single hair of a man's head falls to the ground without the knowledge, and will of God: a way of speaking sometimes used to signify, that not the least hurt or damage should befall a person; see *1Sa 14:45* and the phraseology of the text was in use, and very well known by the Jews; for so they represent God speaking {i};

"do not I number all the hairs of every creature?"

As our Lord applies this particularly to his disciples, his sense is, that they had no reason to be afraid of men, or fear anything that should befall them, for their bearing a faithful testimony to him; for, their valuable lives were under the special and peculiar care of divine providence; not only the days, months, and years of their lives were with God, and put down in his book of purposes and decrees, which could neither be shortened nor lengthened; and not only the more principal, and even all the members of their bodies were written in his book of providence, and a singular care taken of them; but even their very excrescences, the more minute parts, and which were of no great account with them, the "hairs" of their head", even "all" of them, were not only known, but numbered", taken account of; yea, the thing was done already, it was not to be done; a very strong way of setting forth the doctrine of divine providence: a doctrine which the Jews were not unacquainted with, who say {k};

"that the events of man, and accidents which come upon him, Mymv ydyb lkh, "are all by", or "in the hands of God";"

and {l} that

"nothing is by chance, but all things are tnwkb, "with design";"

or, as they elsewhere say {m},

"a man does not hurt his finger below, but they proclaim concerning it above;"

that is, as the gloss explains it, wyle wrzg, "it is decreed" concerning it: which comes very near to the phrase here used.

{i} Pesikta, fol. 18. 4. apud Drusium in loc. {k} Piske Tosaphot ad Cetubot, art. 119. {l} Kimchi in Ps. civ. 4. {m} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 7. 2.

Matthew **10:31**

Ver. 31. Fear ye not therefore,.... Neither be afraid of men, nor distrust the providence of God; for if that reaches to the meanest of creatures, sparrows, and to that which is of the least account with men, the single hair of a man's head; much more must it regard the lives of men, and still more such useful lives as those of the disciples were, who were called to, and employed in preaching the everlasting Gospel; a work which so much concerned the glory of God, the interest of Christ, and the good of immortal souls:

ye are of more value than many sparrows. Two of them were worth no more than a farthing; there must be a great multitude of them to be mentioned with any man: and indeed there is no comparison between the whole species of them and the life of a single man, and much less between them and the apostles of the Lamb. Any man is more valuable, as a man, than many sparrows, and much more a Christian man, and still more an apostle: the argument then is, that if God takes care of sparrows and is concerned for their lives, much more will he take care of his faithful ministers, and not suffer their lives to be taken away, till they have done the will and work of their Lord.

Matthew **10:32**

Ver. 32. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men,.... The confession of Christ here, more especially designed, does not so much intend, though it may include, that which is less public, and is necessary to be made by every believer in Christ: for it is not enough to believe in him, with the heart, but confession of him must also be made with the mouth; and which lies in ascribing their whole salvation to him, giving him the glory of it; declaring their faith in him to others, and what he has done for their souls; and subjecting themselves to his ordinances, and joining in fellowship with his church and people: which confession, as it ought to be both by words and deeds, and to be hearty and sincere, so likewise visible, open, and before men. This, I say, may be included in the sense of these words; but what they chiefly relate to, is a confession of Christ by his ministers, in the public preaching of the Gospel; who ought openly, and boldly, to acknowledge, and declare, that Christ is truly and properly God, the eternal Son of God, the only mediator between God and men, the Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners; through whose blood alone is the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of grace; by whose righteousness only men can be justified before God; and by whose sacrifice and satisfaction sin is only expiated; that he died for, and in the room and stead of his people, rose again for their justification, ascended to heaven in their name, is set down at the right hand of God, and ever lives to make intercession for them, and will come again, and judge both quick and dead: such a free and open confession of Christ ought to be made by all his ministers before men, and in spite of all the rage and opposition of earth and hell; and such shall not fail of being taken notice of, and requited by Christ; for he himself says,

him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven: as he has a perfect knowledge of them, and bears an affectionate love to them; so he will openly own, and acknowledge them as his ministers, and speak in the praise and commendation of their works and labours; though they have been performed through the gifts, grace, and strength, which he has communicated to them: he will introduce them into his Father's presence, and recommend them to him, to be honoured, blessed, and glorified by him.

Matthew 10:33

Ver. 33. But whosoever shall deny me before men,.... Deny that he is a disciple of Christ, and that Christ is his Lord and master, act contrary to him, deliver things repugnant to his mind and will; which for a disciple to do to his master was a very heinous crime with the Jews:

"if (say they {n}) Rabbi Jochanan, rwpky, "deny" Rabbi Eleazar, his disciple, he will not "deny" Rabbi Jannai, his "master"."

Some regard may be had here to Peter's after denial of Christ; and this proviso be supposed, "except he repent", as he did. Moreover, to deny Christ, is to drop, or oppose any of those truths which regard his person, office, and grace; or to hide and conceal them from men, through fear, shame, or cowardice of mind: and even not to confess him, through fear of men, is interpreted, by Christ, a denial of him; and such who deny him in any form and shape, either by words or deeds,

him, says he,

will I also deny before my Father which is heaven; he will deny them to be disciples, or that they belong to him; he will deny that he ever knew them, loved or approved of them; he will declare in the presence of his Father, his disapprobation of them, his indignation against them, that they are workers of iniquity; yea, he will do more, he will banish them from his presence, and send them into everlasting burnings.

{n} Juchasin, fol. 80. 2.

Matthew 10:34

Ver. 34. Think not ye that I am come to send peace on earth,.... The Jews had a notion of great outward peace and prosperity in the days of the Messiah; which was grounded on several prophecies of the Old Testament, not rightly understood by them; and the disciples of Christ had imbibed the same notion: wherefore our Lord thought fit to let them know the contrary; and that they must not expect outward ease and quiet, and worldly tranquillity would attend their ministry; for though he came to be a peace maker between God and sinners, by the blood of his cross; and was both the author and donor of spiritual peace to his people; and the Gospel he brought with him, and sent them to preach, was the Gospel of peace; which, accompanied with his power, would produce peace in the consciences of men, and be the means of cultivating and maintaining peace among the saints; yet "peace on earth" in a temporal sense, whether in the world in general, or in Judea in particular, must not be expected as the consequence of his coming; so far from it, that he subjoins,

I came, not to send peace, but a sword. By the "sword" may be meant the Gospel, which is the means of dividing and separating the people of Christ from the men of the world, and from their principles and practices, and one relation from another; as also of divisions, discords, and persecutions arising from it: not that it was the intention and design of Christ, in coming into the world, to foment and encourage such things; but this, through the malice and wickedness of men, was eventually the effect and consequence of his coming; see *Lu 12:51* where, instead of a "sword", it is "division";

because the sword divides asunder, as does the sword of the Spirit, the word of God.

Matthew **_10:35_**

Ver. 35. For I am come to set a man at variance against,.... Or "to divide a man from his father". Here our Lord opens and explains what he means by the sword, intestine divisions, domestic broils, family differences, as well as such as appear in towns, cities, and kingdoms, which are exemplified by other instances following;

and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law: the case is this, a father believing in Christ, embracing his Gospel, and submitting to his institutions, is contradicted, opposed, and persecuted by his own son, and a mother by her own daughter; in both which relations, natural affection knit them together; and the mother-in-law by her daughter-in-law, who before lived together in the most peaceable, kind, and tender manner: which must be imputed, not to Christ, and the doctrines of Christ, and the natural tendency of them, embraced by the father, the mother, and mother-in-law; but to the natural enmity of the son, the daughter, and the daughter-in-law, to everything divine, spiritual, and evangelical, or "vice versa".

Matthew **_10:36_**

Ver. 36. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. His children, and his servants, such that he has either begotten and brought up, or are daily fed at his table, and maintained by him. This, with the former instances, are borrowed from ***Mic 7:6*** and the times of the Gospel are set forth in the same dismal and black characters, as those in which the prophet lived; and much such a description do the Jews themselves give, of the times of their expected Messiah; which agreeing in words, as well as things, I cannot forbear transcribing.

"The government shall be turned to heresy (Sadducism), and there will be no reproof; the synagogue shall become a brothel house, Galilee shall be destroyed, and Gablan shall be laid waste, and the men of the border shall wander from city to city, and shall obtain no mercy; the wisdom of the

Scribes shall stink, and they that fear to sin shall be despised, and truth shall fail; young men shall turn pale, or put to shame, the faces of old men, and old men shall stand before young men; the "son" shall deal basely "with his father, the daughter shall rise up against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and the enemies of a man shall be they of his own house": the face of that generation shall be as the face of a dog, and the son shall not reverence his father {o}."

All which characters, how exactly they agree with the generation in which Christ lived, is easy to observe.

{o} Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 97. 1. Zohar in Num. fol. 102. 3. & Raya Mehimna in ib. in Lev. fol. 28. 2. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4. Derech Eretz Zuta, fol. 19. 4.

Matthew 10:37

Ver. 37. He that loveth father or mother more than me,.... The design of these words, is not at all to lessen the due affection of children to their parents; or to detract from the respect and esteem, in which they ought to be had by them: it is the duty of children, to love, honour, and, obey them; who have been the means of bringing them into the world, and of bringing them up in it; nor do any of the doctrines of Christ break in upon the ties and obligations of nature, or in the least set aside any of the duties of natural religion: but the intent of this passage is, to show, that as Christ is infinitely above all creatures, he is to be loved above the nearest and dearest relations and friends; being God over all blessed for ever, and also the Saviour and Redeemer; which itself, makes him more amiable and lovely than a common parent. That man therefore, that prefers father and mother to Christ, and their instructions, and orders, to the truths and ordinances of Christ: who, to please them, breaks the commands of Christ, rejects his Gospel, and either denies him, or does not confess him, our Lord says,

is not worthy of me; or, as in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, he is not ytwal ywar, "fit for me": it is not fit and proper, that such a person should name the name of Christ, or be called by his name, and should be reckoned one of his disciples; he is not fit to be a member of the church of Christ on earth, nor for the kingdom of heaven, but deserves to be rejected by him, and everlastingly banished his presence: for otherwise no man, let him behave ever so well, is worthy of relation to Christ, and interest in him; or of his grace, righteousness, presence, kingdom and glory. The same is the sense of the following clause,

and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me: whoever, to gratify a child, drops the profession of Christ, renounces his Gospel, and neglects his commands, it is not proper and convenient that he should bear the name of Christ, be accounted one of his, or be treated as such, but all the reverse.

Matthew 10:38

Ver. 38. And he that taketh not his cross,.... By the "cross", which was a Roman punishment, whereby malefactors were put to death, are meant all sorts of afflictions, reproaches, persecutions, and death itself; and particularly the ill will, hatred, and persecution, of near relations and friends, which must be expected by such, who bear a faithful testimony for Christ. Every minister of Christ, or professor of his name, has "his" own cross, his own particular afflictions, appointed by God, and laid on him by Christ, and which he should cheerfully take up, and patiently bear, for his sake. The allusion is to the custom of persons sentenced to be crucified, to carry their own cross, as Christ did his, and Simon the Cyrenian for him; and which our Lord here may have a respect unto, as well knowing what death he was to die, and that some of his disciples also would die the same death: wherefore Christ says,

and followeth after me; led on by his example, to preach or profess the Gospel, submit to the ordinances of it, and cheerfully suffer for the sake of it, when called to it. If a man, who would be thought to be a disciple of Christ, is not willing to do all this, but, in order to avoid it, complies with his friends, conforms to the world, and turns his back on Christ; of such an one he may well say, he

is not worthy of me; it is not convenient that he should stand among his disciples and followers.

Matthew 10:39

Ver. 39. He that findeth his life shall lose it,.... That man that seeks to preserve his life, and the temporal enjoyments of it, by a sinful compliance with his friends and the world, and by a denial of Christ, or non-confession of him; if he is not, by the providence of God, deprived of the good things of life, and dies a shameful death, both which are sometimes the case of such persons; yet he is sure to lose the happy and eternal life of his soul and body, in the world to come: so that the present finding of life, or the possession of it, on such sinful terms, will in the issue prove an infinite and irreparable loss unto him. On the other hand, Christ observes,

he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it. That man that is willing to forego the present advantages of life, to suffer reproach and persecution, and lay down his life cheerfully for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, for the profession of his name, rather than drop, deny, conceal, or neglect any truth and ordinance of his, shall find his soul possessed of eternal life, as soon as separated from his body; and shall find his corporal life again, in the resurrection morn, to great advantage; and shall live with Christ in soul and body, in the utmost happiness, to all eternity.

Matthew 10:40

Ver. 40. He that receiveth you, receiveth me,.... This is said to comfort the disciples, lest they should conclude from this account of the sorrows, afflictions, and persecutions they were to meet with, that there would be none that would receive them and their message; Christ therefore suggests, that there would be some that would embrace the Gospel preached by them, and receive them kindly into their houses, and entertain them in a very hospitable manner: and, for the encouragement of such persons, who would risk their own goods and lives by so doing, he lets them know, that receiving of his disciples, was interpreted by him, a receiving of himself; and what they did to them, would be taken as kindly, as if done to him personally; and, in like manner, would it be understood and accepted by his Father:

and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. To which agrees, what the Jews say {p} of the angel, in *Ex 23:22* "If thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I shall speak": who observe, that it is not written, "that he shall speak", but "that I shall speak"; intimating, that Mylbqm Mta yl wlak wnmyh Mta Nylbqm

Ma, "if ye receive him, it is all one as if you received me": and the whole of this accords with a common saying among {q} them, wtwmk Mda lv wxwlvv, "that a man's messenger is as himself". The Jew {r}, therefore, has no reason to reproach Christ and his followers as he does, as if it was the sense of these words of Christ, and which the Christians give of them, that Christ and his twelve apostles were but one person.

{p} Shemot Rabba Parash. 32. fol. 135. 3. {q} T. Bab. Baracot, fol. 34. 2. Kiddushin, fol. 41. 2. 42. 1. & 43. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 96. 1. {r} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par 2. sect. 14. p. 404.

Matthew 10:41

Ver. 41. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet,.... By "a prophet" is meant, not one that foretells things to come, but a preacher of the Gospel; for as prophesying sometimes signifies preaching, so a prophet designs a minister of the word: and to "receive" him, is not only to embrace his doctrine, but to entertain him in a kind, and generous manner; and he that does this, "in the name of a prophet", not as coming in the name of another prophet, but upon this account, and for this consideration, because he himself is a prophet; so the phrase, Mvl, "in the name", or on the account of anything, is often used in the Misnic writings {s}: he that regards such a person, and shows him respect, by an hospitable entertainment of him; not because he may be related to him after the flesh; or because he may be a man of good behaviour, of a singular disposition and temper, of much learning and eloquence, of great natural parts and abilities; but because he is a faithful minister of the Gospel; he

shall receive a prophet's reward: either a reward from the prophet himself, who shall interpret the Scriptures to him, preach the Gospel to him, lead him more fully into the truths of it, and guide him to the true, and more clear and distinct sense of the sacred writings; which is an ample reward for his kind entertainment of him: or else, that reward which God has appointed, prepared, and promised, to them who receive his prophets; and which indeed is no other, than what the prophets themselves shall receive, even the reward of the inheritance, the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, a reward of grace, and not of debt; since both, in their way, serve the Lord Christ.

And he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man. He that is kind and liberal to any good man, whether he is a minister of the Gospel or not, who appears to have the work of grace upon his soul, and is justified by the righteousness of Christ, and expects eternal life on that account; if he shows respect to him, purely because he has the image of Christ stamped on him, and the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and not on any natural, worldly, or civil accounts,

he shall receive a righteous man's reward; either from the good man himself, who will not fail to pray for his benefactor, to wish him well, and give him all the assistance he can in his Christian course; to exhort, comfort, instruct him as much, and as far as his Christian experience will furnish him with; or else the same reward of grace the righteous man himself shall have, namely, eternal life, as God's gift, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

{s} Misn. Zebachim, c. 1. sect. 1. 2, 3, 4. & 4. 6. &. 6. 7. & 7. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Matthew ***10:42***

Ver. 42. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones,.... Our Lord gradually descends from prophets to righteous men, and from righteous men, to those of the lowest form and class among them; who have the least measure of grace, and share of spiritual light, and knowledge; who are outwardly the poorest, meanest, and most contemptible in the eyes of the world; and are little, even the least of saints, in their own esteem and account: whosoever takes notice but of "one" of these, receives him into his house, and gives him

a cup of cold water only, is regarded, a phrase used to express the least favour, or benefit whatever.

"So says {t} Maimonides, one that calls to his friend to dine with him, and he refuses, and swears, or vows, that he shall not enter into his house, nor will he give him to drink, Nnwu tpj "a drop of cold water", &c."

Moreover, this is said to prevent any objection, on account of the mean and low condition persons may be in, to their relieving necessitous objects; for everyone is capable of doing this, and if they can do no more, it is accepted. Now whosoever takes notice of, and shows favour to the meanest of Christ's people, though it be but bestowing so small a benefit as a cup of cold water; yet, if it is done in the name of a disciple, or because that poor person is a disciple of Christ, verily, says Christ, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward: it will be observed another day by Christ, who takes what is done to the least of his brethren, as done to himself. The Jews say many things in praise of hospitality, to Mkx dymlt, "a disciple of a wise man"; and observe {u}, that he that hospitably entertains such an one in his house, and causes him to eat and drink, and partake of the goods of his house, there is reason to believe, he shall be much more blessed than the house of Obed Edom was for the ark's sake, which neither ate nor drank with him; and which may be compared with this passage.

{t} Hilchot Nedarim, c. 8. sect. 10. {u} T. Bab, Beracot, fol. 63. 2. & 64. 1.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Matthew 11:1

Ver. 1. And it came to pass,.... In the course of things, and as before determined and resolved on, that when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples; when he had given them a commission to preach the Gospel, had finished all his instructions he thought fit to give them, and orders he enjoined them, relating to that work; as where they should go, what they should say, how they should behave, and what treatment they should meet with; and had given them all proper advice and encouragement, he departed thence, from the place where he then was: he did not desist either from the ministry of the word, or from working of miracles, but went out into other parts of the country, to teach and to preach in their cities: meaning either in the cities of the Jews, or in the cities of his disciples; and these, either the cities they belonged to, from whence they came, namely, the cities of Galilee; for the disciples were Galilaeans, and in which parts Christ now was; or else the cities where he sent them to preach first, and then came himself, and confirmed their doctrine by his own ministry and miracles.

Matthew 11:2

Ver. 2. Now when John had heard in the prison,.... The person here spoken of is John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, who was now in the prison of Machaerus; being put there by Herod, for his reproving him for taking Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; and whilst he was there, an account was brought him by his own disciples, see ***Lu 7:18*** of

the works of Christ, the miracles he wrought; as the healing of the centurion's servant, the raising from the dead the widow's son of Nain, and the like; upon hearing of which,

he sent two of his disciples, who might be the most prejudiced against Christ, because of the increase of his followers, and the decrease of their master's; and because he did not live such an austere life as John did; and who, notwithstanding all that they had heard, and their master had told them of Jesus, were not easily persuaded that he was the true Messiah. Moreover, two of them were sent, both because it was more honourable to Christ, and that they might be proper witnesses of what they saw and heard; and since it was not so much for himself, as for the sake of his disciples, that these messengers were sent.

Matthew 11:3

Ver. 3. And said unto him,.... By the disciples he sent; this was the message they came with, and this the question they were to ask, and did,

art thou he that should come? A "periphrasis" of the Messiah, well known to the Jews; for he had been spoken of frequently in the prophecies of the Old Testament, as the Shiloh, the Redeemer, the Prophet, and King that should come; particularly, by this circumlocution, reference seems to be had to ***Hab 2:3***. "It shall surely come", aby ab yk, which may be rendered, "for he that cometh", or "is to come, shall come". So that the question in plain terms is, whether he was the Messiah? John could not be ignorant of this, who had seen the Spirit of God descending on him at his baptism, heard a voice from heaven, declaring him the Son of God; and had so often pointed him out to others, and had borne frequent testimonies that he was the Lamb of God, and bridegroom of his church: wherefore this question was put, not upon his own account, but his disciples, that they might have from the mouth of Christ a full and satisfactory answer, which would remove all their doubts and scruples, and attach them to Christ, now he was about to die, and leave them, than which nothing was more desirable to him. Though some have thought, that John's faith was somewhat slackened; and through his long imprisonment, he began to doubt whether he was the Messiah or not: and others have been of opinion, as particularly Dr. Lightfoot, that the reason of this message was, neither the ignorance and unbelief of John, or his disciples; but that John, with the rest of the Jews, having a notion of a temporal kingdom, and hearing of the mighty works of Christ, wonders that he himself was not delivered out of prison by him, grows impatient upon it, and asks, if he was the Messiah? And if he was, why did he suffer his forerunner and chief minister to lie in prison?

or do we look for another, to release me, and set up this kingdom?

Matthew 11:4

Ver. 4. Jesus answered and said unto them,.... Not by an express declaration, that he was the Messiah that was to come, and they were not to look for any other; but he bids them

go, and show John again, those things which ye do hear and see. Christ would have them go back to John in prison, and relate to him the doctrines which they had heard preached by him to the poor; and the miracles which they had seen with their own eyes, then wrought by him; as well as many others, which were attested to them by credible witnesses; for there were at that time about Christ, that had infirmities, plagues, and evil spirits, and that were blind, and he instantly cured them in their presence; see ***Lu 7:21***.

Matthew 11:5

Ver. 5. The blind receive their sight,.... Our Lord here, has reference to several prophecies concerning the Messiah, in *Isa 35:6* and which having their accomplishment in him, John and his disciples might easily and strongly conclude, that he was he that was to come, and that they should not look for another. The several things here mentioned, were not all done at this time, but were what these disciples had sufficient and authentic evidence of; sight was restored to the blind before them then; and no doubt they were informed of the two blind men, that had their eyes opened, ***Mt 9:30***

and the lame walk; as did the man sick of the palsy, who was brought to him on a bed, carried by four men, but went away himself, with his bed upon his shoulders, ***Mt 9:2***

the lepers are cleansed: as the poor man was, that was full of leprosy, and who was cured by Christ, by touching him, ***Mt 8:3***

and the deaf hear; as did the man, into whose ears Christ put his fingers and said, Ephphatha, be opened, ***Mr 7:33***

and the dead are raised: as were Jairus's daughter, ***Mt 9:18*** and the widow's son of Nain, ***Lu 7:15***

and the poor have the Gospel preached them; by "the poor" are meant, either the preachers of the Gospel; for so the words may be rendered, "the poor preach the Gospel": and such were the apostles of Christ; they were poor with respect to the things of this world; they were chiefly fishermen; and, with respect to human literature, they were unlearned men, had no stock or furniture of acquired learning, and were mean, abject, and contemptible, in the sight and opinion of men; and yet Christ called, qualified, and sent them forth to preach the Gospel. Or else, the hearers of it are designed; who were also the poor of this world, made a very low figure in life, and had but a small share of knowledge and understanding, and so were despised, and reckoned as cursed by the Scribes and Pharisees: or they were such, who were poor in spirit, or spiritually poor; who saw their spiritual poverty, bewailed and acknowledged it, and sought after the true riches of grace, and glory in Christ. Now these, as they had the Gospel preached to them more fully and clearly, with more power and authority, and so as it never was before or since, so they "received" it, as Tremellius from the Syriac reads the text, readily and willingly, joyfully and gladly, with faith and love; and were, as it may be also rendered, "evangelized" by it, or thrown into a gospel mould and frame: which may be said to be done, when a man has a spirit of liberty, in opposition to a spirit of bondage; when he lives by faith on Christ alone; when his comforts do not spring from his works, but from Christ; when the love and grace of God influence his repentance and obedience; when a man has a spirit of meekness and of love to the saints, is of a forbearing and forgiving spirit: when he is desirous of performing all duties both to God and man, and yet depends upon none of them, but upon Christ alone, for salvation.

Matthew 11:6

Ver. 6. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. The Jews were offended at Christ's parentage and birth, at the poverty of his parents, and at the manner of his birth, by a virgin; and at the place of his birth, which they thought to be Galilee; at his education, because he had not learnt letters, and was brought up to a mechanical employment; at his mean appearance in his public ministry, in his own person, and in his attendants: his company and audience being the poorer sort, the more ignorant, and who had been loose and scandalous persons, publicans and sinners; at the doctrines he preached, particularly, which respected his own deity and eternity, the distinguished grace of God, and living by faith upon his flesh and blood. The disciples of John also were offended in him, because he and his disciples did not fast, and lead such an austere life as they and their master did; because of the meanness and obscurity of Christ's kingdom; the imprisonment of John, and the many reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, which did, and were likely to attend a profession of Christ: this our Lord knew, and had a peculiar respect to them in these words; but happy are those persons, who, notwithstanding all these difficulties and discouragements, are so far from stumbling at Christ, and falling from him, that they heartily receive him and believe in him, make a profession of him, and hold it fast; greatly love, highly value, and esteem him, and are willing to part with all, and bear all for his sake: these are blessed, notwithstanding all their sufferings for him even now; they have spiritual peace, joy, and comfort in their souls, and shall be happy in the full enjoyment of him to all eternity.

Matthew 11:7

Ver. 7. And as they departed,.... That is, the messengers of John, ***Lu 7:24*** when they returned to their master, to give an account to him of what they had heard and seen,

Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John; he took this opportunity before the whole company, who had heard what passed in conversation between him and the disciples of John, to say some things concerning his character and ministry: and which he did, partly to rectify and remove any wrong opinion they might have conceived of him, from this message of his, as if he had retracted his former sentiments concerning Christ, at least was wavering and doubtful about him; and partly, to put them in mind of their former zeal and attachment to John's ministry, when they went out in large bodies to attend upon it; and to revive a good opinion of him; and signifies, that they would do well to ask themselves, what views they had in attending on him, and how they came to grow indifferent to so great a man: and Christ, by giving an account of his character and office, confirms his own Messiahship; and this commendation of John, he chose to enter into, after the departure of his messengers, lest what he said of him should be interpreted as mere flattery:

what went ye out in the wilderness to see? This refers to ***Mt 3:5*** where we read, that great numbers from Jerusalem, Judea, and the country round about Jordan, went out into the wilderness of Judea, where John came preaching, to hear him, and be baptized by him; and our Lord asks, what was it that led such multitudes of them into the wilderness? What did they expect to see there?

A reed shaken with the wind? This may either refer to John's gesture in preaching, who might wave to and fro as a reed does, when shaken by the wind; and Christ's question is, did ye go out only to see and observe the preacher's gesture, to see him move his body to and fro? Was it not to hear his doctrine, and receive benefit for your souls? And did you not? Wherefore, you ought still to retain a valuable respect for him. Or this may regard their opinion of him; and the sense of the interrogation is, when you first went out to him, did you take him to be an unstable, inconstant man? Like a reed shaken with every wind! If you did, you were mistaken; he was firm and stable in his sentiments and ministry, his preaching was not yea and nay, his doctrine was all of a piece; he stood to it, that he was not the Messiah, but his forerunner; the testimony he bore was always alike, consistent with himself, and he is the same man now he ever was. The Jews use this comparison of a man to a reed, in a sense just the reverse, and make it to signify constancy, and not inconstancy, as well as tenderness, in opposition to roughness, severity, and stubbornness.

"Let a man (say they {w}) be always hnqb Kr, "tender as a reed", and let him not be hard and stubborn as a cedar: when the four winds of the world go out, the reed goes and comes with them; and when the winds are still, the reed stands in its place."

So they observe {x}, that it is said, that "the Lord shall smite Israel, as a reed shaken in the water", *1Ki 14:15* which they interpret by way of blessing.

"As a reed (say they) stands in a place of water, its body waves about, and its roots are many; and though all the winds in the world come and blow upon it, they cannot move it out of its place, but it goes and comes with them; and when the winds are still, the reed stands in its place."

{w} Derech Eretz, fol. 18. 1. {x} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 1.

Matthew 11:8

Ver. 8. But what went ye out for to see?.... Since it cannot be thought it was to see the reeds in the wilderness blow to and fro by the wind, or a man like one of them, either in gesture or doctrine; was it to see

a man clothed in soft raiment? In raiment made of soft materials, as fine wool, cotton, silk, &c. such as Mecaenos wore, and who was therefore called Malacinus {y}: one finely dressed, and richly apparelled, draws the eyes of persons to him; but such an one is not to be expected in a wilderness: and if the Jews went to see such a person, they were greatly disappointed; for John's raiment was of camel's hair, undressed, and he had a leathern girdle about his loins; and as for his diet, it was locusts and wild honey: no,

behold they that wear soft clothing, or, as Luke says, are "gorgeously apparelled"; to which he adds,

and live delicately, are in kings' houses, or "courts"; not in a desert, where John came preaching, nor in a prison, where he now was: he was no light, inconstant, flattering person, as generally courtiers are; had he, he would not have been in a prison; it was for his uprightness and faithfulness, in reproving Herod the king, that he was in such a place and condition. Thus from his very garb and diet, his character is vindicated from the charge of levity and change.

{y} Alex. ab Alex. Genial Dier. 1. 5. c. 18.

Matthew 11:9

Ver. 9. But what went ye out for to see?.... Since it was not any thing so mean as a shaking reed, or so grand as a man in gay clothing, pray what was it you went out to see?

A prophet? This was the truth of the matter, they expected to see a prophet, and they believed he was one; this was the common voice of the people; all held John to be a prophet. This made Herod afraid to put him to death, and the Pharisees to speak against his baptism: now, though this was giving him a great character, to believe and own him to be a prophet, yet it did not come up to his full character.

Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet; when they saw him, they saw not only a prophet, but one that was greater, and more excellent than any of the prophets that went before him: they prophesied of the Messiah at a distance, and in words not so clear, and easy to be understood; they spoke of him as to come, but he pointed him out with his finger, and declared that he was come; he saw him himself, and showed him to others; he saw the Spirit of God descending on him, and he himself baptized him; his office, as the harbinger of Christ, and the administrator of the ordinance of baptism to him, gave him a preference to all the prophets; and was such an one, as never any man was vested with but himself.

Matthew 11:10

Ver. 10. For this is he of whom it is written,.... ***Mal 3:1***

Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. That these words belong abh Mlwel, to the world to come, or the times of the Messiah, that is, the Gospel dispensation, the Jews {z} themselves own; but as to the particular person meant by the "messenger", or "angel", because they are not willing to acknowledge the right person, are at the utmost loss. Jarchi makes him to be the angel of death, who is to destroy the wicked; Aben Ezra conjectures it may be Messiah the son of Joseph, who they fancy will come before Messiah the son of David. Kimchi thinks an angel from heaven is designed; and Abarbinel Malachi himself: but the more ancient sense of the synagogue was, that the same person is meant, as in ***Mr 9:5*** under the name of Elijah the prophet; and some have thought, that Elijah the Tishbite himself, is intended; though others think, that some great prophet of equal degree with him, and who is called by his name, is what the prophecy has regard unto {a}; which last is the true sense of the passage: nor should it be once called in question, when our Lord himself has applied it to John the Baptist; to whom the things said in it perfectly agree. He was an "angel", not by nature, but by office; a "messenger" sent by God, "before the face" of the Messiah; six months before him: such a space of time he was born before him; and such a space of time he entered on his public ministry before him; and "prepared" his "way before" him, by preaching the doctrine of repentance, administering the ordinance of baptism, pointing at the Messiah, and exhorting persons to believe on him. All which proves him to be, what Christ says he was, "more than a prophet".

{z} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 219. 4. {a} Vid. Pocock in Mal. iii. 1.

Matthew 11:11

Ver. 11. Verily I say unto you,.... What Christ had before said, he proved from a testimony of Scripture; what he was about to say depending on his word, he asseverates in the most solemn manner:

among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. The phrase, "them that are born of women", is a "periphrasis", of men born into the world by ordinary generation; see *Job 14:1* and the sense is, that of all the prophets that have been in the world, since the beginning of it, Moses himself not excepted, there has not been raised up by God a greater prophet than John, the first administrator of baptism; were but considered, the uncommonness of his birth, his being filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, his exemplary life, the excellency of his doctrine; and especially, his work and office, as the harbinger of Christ, and the preparer of his ways.

Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he; which is to be understood, not of Christ, who was younger in age, and a junior preacher, and less in the esteem of the Pharisees, being greater than he, in nature and office, nor of the saints in heaven, where he that was least, the meanest, and most abject, when on earth, is more happy than John, who was then in prison; nor of all the believers under the Gospel dispensation; but of the apostles of Christ, and the least among them, who were then the kingdom of heaven, or the visible Gospel church state. These had a better opportunity of conversing with Christ, and of seeing and hearing the things they did, than John had; they had the power of performing miracles, which John had not; were immediately sent forth by Christ, to preach the Gospel, and had a clearer insight into the truths of it, than John; especially, after the Holy Ghost was in such an extraordinary manner poured forth upon them, on the day of Pentecost; particularly after the death and resurrection of Christ, they were able to preach him, not only as come in the flesh, but as having suffered and died, and obtained eternal redemption: they could speak of his blood being shed, of his righteousness being wrought out, and of his sacrifice and satisfaction as made, which John could not; and besides, were more successful in the conversion of sinners, both Jews and Gentiles, than ever he was. The comparison does not lie so much between their persons, as their several different degrees of light and doctrine.

Matthew 11:12

Ver. 12. And from the days of John the Baptist until now,.... From the time that he began to preach, to the then present time,

the kingdom of heaven, the Gospel, and the ministry of it, first by John, then by Christ and his apostles,

suffereth violence; or "comes with force", and power upon the souls of men: it was attended with the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; as appeared by its being the means of quickening persons that were dead in trespasses and sins; enlightening the blind; causing the deaf to hear; melting and softening hearts of stone; making, of enemies, friends to God and Christ; turning men from the power of Satan unto God; setting at liberty such as were slaves and vassals to their own corruptions; and, in a word, in being the power of God unto salvation, to many souls: and which was further seen, in the manner it did all this; suddenly, secretly, powerfully, and effectually, and yet not against the wills of men; and by such instruments as the apostles were, poor, sinful, mortal men; despised by the world, and attended with opposition and persecution: or "suffers violence"; which may be understood, either of the vast numbers, that pressed and crowded to hear the Gospel preached: great numbers followed John, when he first began to preach, and baptize: still a greater number followed Christ, some to hear his doctrine, others to see his miracles, others to behold his person, others out of selfish ends; and some behaved rudely and indecently: or of the ardour and fervency of spirit, which appeared in some, to the ministry of John and Christ, and in their desires and expectations of the kingdom of the Messiah: or of the Gospel's suffering violence by the persecutions of its enemies opposing and contradicting it, reproaching it, intimidating the professors of it, and seeking to take away the life of Christ, the great subject of it:

and the violent take it by force; meaning either publicans, and harlots, and Gentile sinners; who might be thought to be a sort of intruders: or rather the same persons, as being powerfully wrought upon under the ministry of the Gospel; who were under violent apprehensions of wrath and vengeance, of their lost and undone state and condition by nature; were violently in love with Christ, and eagerly desirous of salvation by him, and communion with him; and had their affections set upon the things of another world: these having the Gospel preached to them, which is a declaration of God's love to sinners, a proclamation of peace and pardon, and a publication of righteousness and life by Christ, they greedily catched at it, and embraced it.

Matthew 11:13

Ver. 13. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. These words are to be considered in connection with *Mt 11:11* and are a further proof of John's being greater than any of the prophets; because all the inspired writers and prophets, who were before him, prophesied of the Messiah as to come; and either spoke of him in obscure terms, or represented him under dark shadows and figures: whereas John spake of him as already come, and in plain terms, and directed to his very person;

and since his time, there have been no prophecies concerning the Messiah and his kingdom; vision and prophecy are now sealed up; all which are acknowledged by the Jews themselves, who {b} say, xyvmh twmyl ala wabntn al zlwk Myaybnh lk, "all the prophets did not prophesy but to, or of the days of the Messiah". This was the subject, and these the limits of their prophecies; for they own {c}, that

"from the day that the temple was destroyed, yaybnh Nm hawbn hlyjb, "prophecy was taken away from the prophets"."

Since that time, they confess they have had no prophet {d}, and that they are not able to observe their signs.

{b} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2. Sabbat, fol. 63. 1. Sanhedrim, fol. 99. 1. {c} T. Bava Bathra, fol. 12. 1. {d} Abarbinel in Dan. fol. 63. 4.

Matthew ***11:14***

Ver. 14. And if ye will receive it,.... The words carry in them some suspicion of unbelief and hardness of heart, as though they would not receive it: however, whether they would or not, it was a certain truth, that

this same person, "John the Baptist",

is Elias, which was for to come; who was appointed by God to come, and was prophesied of ***Mal 4:5*** that he should come; and even according to the doctrine of the Scribes and Rabbins, he was expected to come before the Messiah; only they in general thought that Elijah the Tishbite, in person, was meant; though some, as before observed {e}, were of opinion, that some great prophet equal to Elijah, and endued with the same spirit, is intended; and which is true of John the Baptist, who came "in the Spirit" and "power" of Elias, ***Lu 1:17***. And, as it was usual with the Jews {f}, to call Phinehas by the name of Elias, and Elias Phinehas, because of his zeal for the Lord of hosts; for the same reason may John be called by the same name, there being a great resemblance between Elias and him; in their temper and disposition; in their manner of clothing, and austere way of living; in their very great piety and holiness; in their courage and integrity, in reproving vice; and in their zeal and usefulness in the cause of God, and true religion: in respect to which, Christ must be here understood, when he affirms John to be Elias; not Elias in person, but he that was intended by Elias, that was said should come: hence here is no contradiction to the words of the Baptist, in ***Joh 1:21*** when he says, that he was not Elias; for the Jews, who put the question to him, whether he was Elias, or not? meant whether he was Elias in person, Elias the Tishbite, or not; and so John understood them, and very honestly and sincerely replies, he was not: but he does not deny that he was intended by this Elias, that was prophesied should come; yea, he says such things as might induce them to believe he was that person; hence, Christ, and he, say nothing contrary to, and irreconcilable, as the Jew {g} suggests, with each other.

{e} Vid. Pocock. not. in porta Mosis, p. 219. {f} Baal Hatturim in Num. xxv. 12. Kimchi in 1 Chron. ix. 20. Targum Jon. in Exod. vi. 18. {g} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 1. c. 39. & par. 2. c. 15.

Matthew 11:15

Ver. 15. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. A way of speaking used by Christ, when anything serious, and of great importance, was delivered; and which required attention, and was not easily understood: and such were the several things he had mentioned in this context; as that John was more than a prophet, more excellent than all the prophets; that the law and prophets were now at an end, and that John was Elias; which things, if rightly understood, would serve greatly to settle their judgment, with respect to himself as the Messiah: but his words imply, that everyone had not spiritual ears and understandings, to hear and take in things of such an high nature, and excellent use; none but those to whom they were given; and such ought to attend to them, and, seriously weigh and consider the importance of them. The phrase is to be met with in Jewish writings, where it is thus expressed {h};

""He that hears let him hear, and he that understandeth let him understand";"

See *Mt 13:43*.

{h} Zohar in Num. fol. 60. 3.

Matthew 11:16

Ver. 16. But whereunto shall I liken this generation? The men of that age, the stubborn and perverse Jews; who were pleased with nothing, with no man's ministry, neither with John's, nor with Christ's, but found fault with whatever they heard, or saw done:

it is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling to their fellows: that is, the case of such persons may be fitly represented by children in a public market, calling to their companions, to pipe or mourn with them, and who are so morose and sullen as to do neither: for the men of that generation, are not the good natured children, that called to their fellows, and were willing to join in innocent diversions and exercises; but rather John the Baptist, Christ and his disciples, who may be compared to "children", for their harmlessness and simplicity; and are represented as "sitting in markets", places of concourse, where much people met together; which may intend the synagogues and temple, and other public places, which they made use of to publish their doctrines in, to preach to, and exhort the people; and as "calling to their fellows", to their contemporaries, to those of their own nation, by the external ministry of the word.

Matthew 11:17

Ver. 17. And saying, we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced,.... The allusion is to Jewish children, who having seen their parents and friends at their festivals and weddings, some play upon the pipe, and others dance to them, mimicked the same in their diversions; and also having observed, at funerals, the mourning women, making their doleful ditties, and others answering to them, acted the part of these persons, expecting their fellows would make their responses, but did not: hence the complaint,

we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. The different characters of John and Christ, are here set forth, by "piping" and "mourning". The character and ministry of Christ and his disciples, by "piping"; by which is meant, the clear, comfortable, and joyful ministry of the Gospel; which is delightful music to a sensible sinner; and may be compared to it, for distinction of sounds, harmony, and agreement, being charming and delightful; its notes are all grace, mercy, love, liberty, peace, pardon, righteousness, and free salvation; and it is very powerful and engaging, it quickens and animates, attracts, allures and charms. The character and ministry of John, is signified by "mourning": his life was a very austere one; he and his disciples fasted oft; he appeared in a very coarse habit; his speech was rough, his voice thundering: his doctrine was the doctrine of repentance, and he used very severe threatenings, in case of impenitence: on the other hand, by the "fellows" to whom they piped, or ministered, in their different ministrations, are meant, the Scribes and Pharisees; who were neither affected to, nor with, either of them: as for John, he was too austere for them; they did not like his garb, nor his diet; nor did his doctrine, or baptism please them; nor were they wrought upon, or brought to repentance by his ministry; they did not lament, weep, or shed one tear, but sat unmoved, like stocks and stones, under those awful striking discourses, on mournful subjects, delivered by him: nor were they pleased with the free conduct, and pleasant conversation of Christ; nor did they dance, or rejoice, at the good news and glad tidings of grace, and salvation, which were brought by him: of such froward, peevish spirits they were, that neither John, nor Christ, could please them: they were a true picture and emblem of many persons, who like neither law nor Gospel, but are morose, sullen, and quarrelsome, let them hear what they will; as Solomon says,

"If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest", *Pr 29:9*. Upon which the Talmudists {i} comment, and illustrate it in this manner, and produce a proverbial saying, much like this in the text.

"Says God, I was angry with Ahaz, and I delivered him into the hands of the kings of Damascus; he sacrificed and burnt incense to their gods, *2Ch 28:22*. I played with Amaziah, and I gave the king of Edom into his hands; he brought their gods and worshipped them, *2Ch 25:14*. Says R. Papa, this is what men say, or it is a common proverb, edy ald rml hyl ykyyx edy ald rml hyl yykb, "they weep to a man who takes no notice of it, they laugh to a man who does not observe it"; woe to that man, who knows not the difference between good and evil."

{i} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 103. 1.

Matthew 11:18

Ver. 18. For John came neither eating nor drinking,.... This and the following verse are an explanation of the foregoing "parable"; and this shows, that John and his disciples are the persons that mourned, of which his austere life was a proof: for when he "came", being sent of God, and appeared as a public preacher, he was "neither eating nor drinking"; not that he did not eat or drink at all, otherwise he could not have lived, and discharged his office: but he ate sparingly, very little; and what he did eat and drink, was not the common food and drink of men; he neither ate bread nor drank wine, but lived upon locusts and wild honey; he excused all invitations to people's houses, and shunned all feasts and entertainments; he abstained from all free and sociable conversation with men, in eating and drinking: and though the Scribes and Pharisees pretended to much abstinence and frequent fastings, yet they did not care to follow his very severe way of living, and lament, in answer to his mournful ditty; but in a calumniating way,

they say he hath a devil; is a demoniac, a madman, one that is unsociable and melancholy; under a delusion of Satan, and influenced by him to abstain from proper food and company of men, under a pretence of religion.

Matthew 11:19

Ver. 19. The son of man came eating and drinking,.... Meaning himself, who ate and drank as men usually do, lived in the common way of life, was free and sociable, went to feasts, entertainments, and weddings, when he was invited; and was affable, courteous, and friendly in his deportment, to all men;

and they say, behold a man gluttonous, a voracious man, an epicurean, one that indulges his appetite to a very great degree, and in a scandalous manner;

a winebibber, a common tippler, one that drinks to excess; whom the Rabbins call {k}, Nrgrg, who is one, they say, that drinks up his cup at one draught; one that is given to wine, and is greedy of it:

a friend of publicans and sinners; such as are openly and notoriously wicked; and loves their company, for the sake of tippling with them; and encourages them in their revelling and drunkenness; a very black charge this!

But wisdom is justified of her children; either the wisdom of God, in making use of ministers of a different disposition and deportment, whereby some are gained, and others left inexcusable: or the Gospel, in which there is such a display of divine wisdom, which is vindicated from the charge of licentiousness, by the agreeable lives and conversations of the children of God: or rather Christ himself, who is the wisdom of God; and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; who, however he may be traduced by ignorant and malicious men, yet will be acquitted from all such charges, as here insinuated, by all the true sons of wisdom; or by such, who are made wise unto salvation. We may learn from hence, that no sort of preachers and preaching will please some men; that the best of Gospel ministers may be reproached as libertines, or madmen; and that they will be sooner, or later, justified and cleared from all such aspersions.

{k} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 86. 2. Betza, fol. 25. 2.

Matthew 11:20

Ver. 20. Then began he to upbraid the cities,.... When he had sent forth his disciples to preach, and had been in these several cities hereafter mentioned himself, and had taught and preached in them, and confirmed his doctrine by many wonderful works; when he had observed how ill they had used both John and himself, representing the one as having a devil, and the other as a licentious person; when they could not be pleased with the ministry of the one, nor of the other, he very seasonably and righteously began to reproach them with their ungenerous treatment of him, their ingratitude to him, their unbelief in him, the hardness and impenitence of their hearts; which could not be moved to repent of their evil ways, and believe in him, and acknowledge him as the Messiah, by all the instructions he gave them, and miracles he wrought among them: for the cities he has a view to, were such,

wherein most of his mighty works were done; the most for number, and the greatest in their kind; as particularly at Capernaum; where he cured the centurion's servant, recovered Peter's wife's mother from a fever, healed the man sick of a palsy, raised Jairus's daughter from the dead, made whole the woman that had a bloody issue, opened the eyes of two blind men, and cast out a devil from a dumb man, possessed with one: all these, and more, he did in this one city, and therefore he might justly upbraid them,

because they repented not: not because they did not commend him, and speak well of his works, for he sought not his own glory, but their good: all he did was, in order to bring men to repentance of their sins, and faith in himself, that they might be saved.

Matthew 11:21

Ver. 21. Woe unto thee, Chorazin!.... Though many of Christ's mighty works were done in this place, yet mention is made of it no where else, but here; whether it was a single city, or a country, is not easy to determine: the word Nyvrwx, "Chorasin", signifying "woody places", Dr. Lightfoot {l} conjectures it might include Cana, in which Christ wrought his first miracle, and a small adjacent country, situated in a wood, and be so called from thence; and Origen {m} reads it, cora zin, "the region of Zin":

woe unto thee, Bethsaida! This was the city of Andrew and Peter, see Gill "Joh 1:44"; so that as bad as it was, some persons were called out of it by the grace of God, and to the high office of apostleship; and which makes that grace in such the more distinguishing:

for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. These words are to be understood in a popular sense, as Grotius observes, and express what was probable, according to an human judgment of things; and the meaning is, that if the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon had had the advantages of Christ's ministry, and of seeing his miracles, as the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida had, it looks very likely, or one would be ready to conclude, especially from many coming out of these parts, to attend on Christ's ministry, ***Mr 3:8*** and from the conversion of some of them in after times, *Ac 21:3* they would have repented of their sins; at least, in an external way, signified by sackcloth and ashes, which were outward signs of repentance; see *Isa 58:5*. And which, if it had been only performed in such a manner by the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, would have saved them from temporal judgments, which their sins now called for. The words are an hyperbolical exaggeration of the wickedness of those cities, like to ***Eze 3:5*** showing, that they were worse than the Tyrians and Sidonians; an Heathenish and idolatrous people, who lived very profligate and dissolute lives, in all intemperance, luxury, and impiety; and therefore would be punished in a severer way: neither this passage, nor what follows, can be any proof of God's giving sufficient grace to all men alike, which in some is effectual to conversion, and in others not, but of the contrary; since the men of Tyre and Sidon had not the same means, or the same grace, as the inhabitants of the other cities, if the mighty works done among them are to be called so; or that man has a power to repent of himself, in a spiritual and evangelical way; or that outward means, as doctrines and miracles, are sufficient to produce such a repentance, without efficacious and unfrustrable grace; since only an outward repentance is here supposed, such as that of Ahab, and of the Ninevites.

{l} Chorogr. Cent. in Matth. p. 84. Vol. 2. {m} Philocalia, p. 109.

Matthew 11:22

Ver. 22. But I say unto you,.... What may be depended upon as true, and which shall certainly come to pass, however the inhabitants of these cities might flatter themselves; or in whatsoever light they might look upon their neighbours, the Tyrians and Sidonians; and fancy themselves to be the favourites of heaven, and these as the most execrable of creatures;

it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day off judgment, than for you. Their punishment in another world will be more mild and moderate; they will not have such severe stings of conscience, nor have reason to make such bitter reflections on themselves, as those will who have had the advantages of a Gospel revelation: all sins are not alike, nor will the punishment of them be the same; there will be degrees of torments in hell, and which the justice of God requires. These words suppose, that the men of Tyre and Sidon will be punished for their many abominable sins, committed against the law and light of nature; but that the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, having rejected the Messiah, and the doctrines of the Gospel, against all the evidence of miracles, and convictions of their own minds, and probably sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; as their sins are aggravated, their condemnation will be the greater, and their punishment the more intolerable.

Matthew 11:23

Ver. 23. And thou Capernaum,.... This city is singled out from all the rest, and spoken to particularly, because of its peculiar advantages:

which art exalted unto heaven; which has respect to the very great privileges this place enjoyed, it being the city where Christ chose to dwell, and for a time fixed his abode in; where he first began to preach, and where such a train of miracles were done; a particular enumeration, of which has been before given: as also it may refer to the situation of the place, which was very high and lofty, so that it seemed to reach unto heaven; for the account that R. Benjamin Tudelensis {n} gives of it is, that

"Capernaum, which is, by interpretation, "the village of comfort", at first sight looks to be ylmrk le Mwqm, "a place higher than Mount Carmel"."

And Nonnus on ***Joh 6:59*** calls it, bayukrhpidi cafarnaoum which the interpreter renders, the land of "Capernaum founded on high". But notwithstanding all this,

shalt be brought down to hell; meaning, it should be attended with very humbling providences, be reduced to a very low condition, see *Isa 14:15* be destroyed and laid waste, as a city, as it was in the times of Vespasian; and the inhabitants of it not only punished with temporal, but everlasting destruction;

for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. The sense of these words is the same with that of *Mt 11:22* only this may be observed, that whereas Capernaum was superior in privileges and advantages than the other cities, and yet acted the vile and ungrateful part it did; so that its impenitence and unbelief were the more aggravated; hence a still viler set of men are pitched upon, even the men of Sodom, to make the comparison of them with: for as wicked as the men of that place were, who were so infamous for their unnatural lusts; yet if they had enjoyed such a ministry as Christ's, and had had such miracles wrought among them, for the attestation of the doctrines taught them, in all human probability they would have repented of their flagitious crimes; at least in an external way, in such a manner as to have escaped that dreadful judgment, which laid their city, and several adjacent ones, in ashes; and so would have continued a city until this day. The phrase remained is Jewish, and is used of Sodom by the Rabbins, who say {o}, that

"Abraham was "ninety nine" years of age when he was circumcised, and then was the overthrow of Sodom; which was "fifty one" years, after the generation of the division (of the people and languages), and near "fifty two" years; but "Zoar remained" one year, Mwdo bwvy rxa, "after Sodom remained"."

According to the Jews, it stood but fifty two years at most {p}: and they have a notion, that Sodom and Gomorrha will be built again in the future state {q}, or world to come, the times of the Messiah.

{n} Itinerarium, p. 37. {o} Juchasin, fol. 8. 1. {p} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 11. 2. & Gloss. in ib. Jarchi in Gen. xix. 20. {q} Shemot Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 101. 3.

Matthew 11:24

Ver. 24. But I say unto you,.... Capernaum, and the inhabitants thereof, as before, to Chorazin and Bethsaida.

It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee: though the punishment of the men of Sodom will be very great, their iniquities being horribly dreadful and enormous, yet more easy to be borne than the vengeance, which, in the last and general judgment, will fall upon such, who have had the means of grace, and have despised them; especially such as had the personal presence, ministry, and miracles of Christ among them, as the Capernaites had. Such a way of expressing and setting forth the severer punishment of others, by that of Sodom, is not unusual in the Old Testament; see ***La 4:6*** nor in Jewish writers, who say {r}, that

"the Israelites were fit for, or deserved, Mwdo vnwem rwmx rtwy vnwel, "a far more heavy punishment than the punishment of Sodom": because they abounded with prophets, rising early, and sending them, but they did not hearken; whereas Sodom had no hands stayed on her, or prophets to warn them."

{r} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 82. 1.

Ver. 25. At that time Jesus answered, and said,.... The time referred to is, when the disciples returned to him, and gave him an account of the success of their ministry, *Lu 10:17* who say nothing of the conversion of sinners, but of the spirits being subject to them; and may also refer to the several things spoken of in the context: it was at that time when Christ spoke to the multitude about John, and the excellency of his ministry, which yet was ineffectual to great numbers, who for a while attended on it; and when he took notice to the people, how he himself, as well as John, was rejected and vilified by the Pharisees, and received by publicans and sinners; and when he upbraided Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, for their impenitence and unbelief: taking occasion from hence, he "answered and said"; an Hebrew way of speaking, used when nothing goes before, to which what is said can be an answer; see ***Job 3:2***.

I thank thee, 0 Father, Lord of heaven and earth. This is an address to God, by way of thanksgiving; glorifying and praising him, confessing and acknowledging his wisdom, power, grace, and goodness, discovered in the things he after mentions: so far was he from being discouraged and dejected at the poor success of the Seventy: at his ill treatment by the Pharisees; and at the general impenitence and unbelief of the cities, where he preached and wrought his miracles; that he is abundantly thankful, and admires the distinguishing grace of God in the calling of a few in those places. This address is made to God as a "Father", as his Father, his own Father; for he was the only begotten of him, and dearly beloved by him: this epithet he makes use of, to show the near relation he stood in to him, and the freedom he could use with him: he also addresses him as "the Lord of heaven and earth"; he being the maker, upholder, and governor of both, and which he fills with his presence; the one is his throne, and the other is his footstool. This he mentions to show the sovereignty of his Father, in the conversion of men; and that it was not for want of power in him, that there were no more wrought upon under the ministry of John, himself, and his disciples. The things he expresses his thankfulness for, follow;

because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent. The "things" he means are the doctrines of the Gospel; such as respect himself, his person, as God, and the Son of God; his office, as Messiah, Redeemer, and Saviour; and the blessings of grace, righteousness, and salvation by him.

The persons from whom these things were hid, are "the wise and prudent"; in things worldly, natural, and civil; men of great parts and learning, of a large compass of knowledge, having a considerable share of sagacity, penetration, and wisdom; or, at least, who were wise and prudent in their own conceits, as were the Scribes and Pharisees, and the schools of Hillell and Shammai, the two famous doctors of that day: and indeed the people of the Jews in common were so; who thus applaud themselves at the eating of the passover every year, and say, hrwth ta Myedwy wnlk Mynwbn wnlk Mymkx wnlk, "we are all wise, we are all prudent, we all understand the law" {s}; the same is elsewhere {t} said of all Israel; in their opinion they were so, yet the things of the Gospel are hidden from them. God may be said to "hide" these things, when either he does not afford the outward revelation of the Gospel; or, if he does, it is given forth in parables, or he does not give along with it the light of his Spirit and grace, but leaves men to their own darkness and blindness; so that they cannot see, perceive, and understand the beauty, glory, excellency, and suitableness of the doctrines of it. Now, when Christ confesses this, or gives thanks to God for it, it is a declaration that God has done so, and denotes his acquiescence in it; and is not properly a thanksgiving for that; but rather, that forasmuch as he has thought fit, in his infinite wisdom, to take such a method, he has been pleased to make a revelation of these things to others;

and hast revealed them unto babes; foolish ones, comparatively speaking, who have not those natural parts, learning, and knowledge others have, that wisdom and prudence in worldly and civil things; and are so in their own account, and in the esteem of the world; and who are as babes, helpless, defenceless, and impotent of themselves, to do or say anything that is spiritually good, and are sensible of the same: now to such souls God reveals the covenant of his grace, Christ, and all the blessings of grace in him, the mysteries of the Gospel, and the unseen glories of another world. The veil of darkness and ignorance is removed from them; spiritual sight is given them; these things are set before them; they see a glory and suitableness in them; their desires are raised after them; their affections are set on them; their hearts are impressed with them; and they are helped to view their interest in them. The Jews themselves have a notion, that in the days of the Messiah, children and babes shall have knowledge of divine things.

"Says Simeon ben Jochai {u}, it is not the pleasure of God that wisdom should be so revealed to the world; but when it is near the days of the

Messiah, even amled yybr, "little children", or the "babes that are in the world", shall find out the hidden things of wisdom, and know thereby the ends, and the computations of times; and at that time it shall be revealed to all:"

and there is more truth in what they own elsewhere {w}, than they themselves are aware of, when they say, that

"from the day that the temple was destroyed, prophecy has been taken away from the prophets, and given twqwnytlw Myjwvl, "to fools and babes"."

{s} Haggada Shel Pesach, p. 5. Ed. Ritangel. {t} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 135. 1. {u} Zohar in Gen. fol. 74. 1. {w} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 12. 2.

Matthew *11:26*

Ver. 26. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. Or, "so is the good will", or "pleasure before thee": thus, Kynplm Nwur yhy, "let it be the good will before thee", or "in thy sight, O Lord", is a phrase often to be met with in the Jews' forms of prayer {x}. Here the word designs the sovereign counsel and purpose of God, to which, and to which only, our Lord refers the different dispensations of God towards the sons of men: this is a reason which ought to satisfy everyone, and is better than ten thousand others that can be thought of, or devised by men. This difference among men, with respect to the Gospel revelation, cannot be owing to natural sagacity, prudence, and penetration; for these things are with those from whom it is hid; nor to any worthiness in those to whom it is revealed; for they are the poor, the base, the foolish things of this world, and even things that are not; nor to any foresight of their making a better use and improvement of such a revelation, but to the good will and pleasure of God only.

{x} Seder Tephillot, fol. 4. 2. & 5. 1. & passim. Ed. Amsterdam.

Matthew *11:27*

Ver. 27. All things are delivered unto me of my Father,.... This is to be understood of Christ, as mediator; for, as God, nothing was delivered to him; he had all things, all perfections, power, and glory his Father has; and is to be considered in the utmost extent: all persons are delivered to him, angels and men; good angels are delivered to him, to be confirmed in him, as their head, and to be made use of by him; spirits, evil spirits, which were subject to his disciples, are under him, and at his command and disposal; and their subjection to his disciples is owing to his power over them, which he communicated to them; all the elect of God are delivered to him, to be kept and saved by him; all the babes and little ones, to whom it was the Father's will to reveal the mysteries of grace, were his care and charge; all power in heaven, and in earth, are given unto him; and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid with him, which are distributed to any of the sons of men; all the blessings of grace, and the promises of the everlasting covenant, and all the glory and happiness of his people, are put into his hands:

and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; the transcendent glories and perfections of his nature, as the Son of God; nor the whole of his work and office, as mediator: or all that is committed to his charge, as such: all that he was to do, and suffer, for his people; all that he had done for them, and should communicate to, and bestow upon them.

Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son; his essence and glory, his mind and will, his purposes and decrees, his counsels and covenant; the grace and love of his heart to his chosen people; what he has prepared and laid up for them, and will make them partakers of to all eternity;

and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him; both himself, and his Father, and the grace and glory of each, which he does by his Spirit; who is a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; and which entirely depends on his own sovereign will and pleasure.

Matthew 11:28

Ver. 28. Come unto me,.... Christ having signified, that the knowledge of God, and the mysteries of grace, are only to be come at through him; and that he has all things relating to the peace, comfort, happiness, and salvation of men in his hands, kindly invites and encourages souls to come unto him for the same: by which is meant, not a local coming, or a coming to hear him preach; for so his hearers, to whom he more immediately directed his speech, were come already; and many of them did, as multitudes may, and do, in this sense, come to Christ, who never knew him, nor receive any spiritual benefit by him: nor is it a bare coming under the ordinances of Christ, submission to baptism, or an attendance at the Lord's supper, the latter of which was not yet instituted; and both may be performed by men, who are not yet come to Christ: but it is to be understood of believing in Christ, the going of the soul to him, in the exercise of grace on him, of desire after him, love to him, faith and hope in him: believing in Christ, and coming to him, are terms synonymous, ***Joh 6:35***. Those who come to Christ aright, come as sinners, to a full, suitable, able, and willing Saviour; venture their souls upon him, and trust in him for righteousness, life, and salvation, which they are encouraged to do, by this kind invitation; which shows his willingness to save, and his readiness to give relief to distressed minds. The persons invited, are not "all" the individuals of mankind, but with a restriction,

all ye that labour, and are heavy laden; meaning, not these who are labouring in the service of sin and Satan, are laden with iniquity, and insensible of it: these are not weary of sin, nor burdened with it; not do they want or desire any rest for their souls; but such who groan, being burdened with the guilt of sin upon their consciences, and are pressed down with the unsupportable yoke of the law, and the load of human traditions; and have been labouring till they are weary, in order to obtain peace of conscience, and rest for their souls, by the observance of these things, but in vain. These are encouraged to come to him, lay down their burdens at his feet, look to, and lay hold by faith on his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; when they should enjoy that true spiritual consolation, which could never be attained to by the works of the law.

And I will give you rest; spiritual rest here, peace of conscience, ease of mind, tranquillity of soul, through an application of pardoning grace, a view of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, and full atonement of sin by his sacrifice; and eternal rest hereafter, in Abraham's bosom, in the arms of Jesus, in perfect and uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit. The Jews say {y}, that hrwt txwnm, "the law is rest"; and so explain *Ge 49:15* of it: but a truly sensible sinner enjoys no rest, but in Christ; it is like Noah's dove, which could find no rest for the soles of its feet, until it returned to the ark; and they themselves expect perfect rest in the days of the Messiah, and call his world hxwnm, rest {z}.

{y} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 39. 3. {z} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 150. 2.

Matthew ***11:29***

Ver. 29. Take my yoke upon you,.... The phrase is Rabbinical. The Jewish doctors often speak {a} of Mymv twklm lwe, "the yoke of the kingdom of heaven", and of persons taking it upon them; and which they exhort to, and express in much such language as here {b}; avydq atwklm lwe wkyyle wlybq, "take upon you the yoke of the holy kingdom", every day. They distinguish this from the yoke of the law, and say {c}

"a man must first take upon him the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, and after that take upon him the "yoke" of the commandment."

Their sense I take to be this, that a man must first make a profession of his faith in the God of Israel, and then live conformably to his law: agreeably to this, Christ exhorts such persons who come to him for rest and happiness, to profess their faith in him, to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel, to submit to his ordinances, and to walk according to those laws, commands, and orders, which he, as king of saints, has made, and requires obedience to: so those who come to him for life, and believe in him, as the Saviour of their souls, though they are not to trust in, and depend upon any duties performed by them; yet they are not to sit still, or lay aside the performance of good works, or live a licentious course of life, but are always to be doing the will and work of their Lord. And this he calls "his yoke", in distinction from the yoke of the law of Moses, and of the traditions of the elders.

And learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly in heart: respect seems to be had to ***Zec 9:9*** where such characters as these are given of the Messiah. The meekness, humility, and lowliness of Christ appear in his assumption of human nature; in his subjection to his Father; in the whole of his deportment and conversation among men; in his submission to the ordinance of baptism; in the whole course of his obedience to God, and in his sufferings and death: and he is to be imitated herein, by all his followers, who may learn many excellent things from his example, as well as from his doctrine; and particularly, that whereas, though he was so great a person, yet condescended to perform every duty with readiness and cheerfulness, his disciples should not think it below them to conform to every ordinance of his, to every branch of his will; for he has set them an example, that they should tread in his steps, and walk even as he has walked. There never was such an instance of humility, and lowliness of mind, as Christ; nor is there any example so worthy of our imitation as his. The Jews have a saying {d},

"for ever let a man llyhk Ntwwne, "be meek as Hillell", and let him not be wrathful as "Shammai":"

which two men were presidents of their universities about the times of Christ. But our Lord says, "learn of me", not of "Hillell", or any of your doctors,

and ye shall find rest unto your souls; referring to ***Jer 6:16*** and which shows the rest he speaks of in the preceding verse, to be not a corporal, but a spiritual one; and which is to be enjoyed "in", though not "for" the observance of Christ's commands; whose "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all" whose "paths are peace".

{a} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 4. 1. Bab. Beracot, fol. 61. 2. Zohar in Lev. fol. 46. 4. Caphtor, fol. 44. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 2. 2. {b} Zohar in Num. fol. 51. 2. Caphtor, fol. 48. 2. {c} Misn. Beracot, c. 2. sect. 2. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 4. 2. {d} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 30. 2.

Matthew 11:30

Ver. 30. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Christ calls a profession of faith in him, and subjection to his ordinances, a yoke, in allusion to the law of Moses, and in distinction from it; and a "burden", with respect to the very heavy ones the Scribes and Pharisees laid upon the shoulders of the people, obliging them to a strict observance of them; though of a different nature from either of them; "for his commandments are not grievous", hard and heavy to be borne, as their's were, but "easy and light": not that they are so to unregenerate men, or are easily performed by the strength of nature, and power of men's free will: but they are good and amiable, and lovely in their own nature, and are cheerfully complied with, and abundance of spiritual pleasure and delight is enjoyed in them by believers, when they have the presence of God, the assistance of his Spirit, and the discoveries of his love. Moreover, the commands of Christ, and the ordinances of the Gospel, are so in comparison of the law of Moses; which required perfect obedience, but gave no strength to perform, and threatened with condemnation and death, in case of the least failure; and of the numerous, and some very severe rites and usages of the ceremonial law; and of the bulky and heavy traditions of the elders, and ordinances of men.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Matthew 12:1

Ver. 1. At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn,.... That is, the corn fields, as the other evangelists express it. It being on a sabbath day, it is very probable, that Christ and his disciples were going to some public place of worship, the way to which lay through some fields of corn, which were now ripe: for Luke says, it was on the "second sabbath after the first", or rather "the first sabbath after the second"; that is, the first sabbath after the second day of the passover, when the sheaf of the first fruit was offered, and harvest was begun.

And his disciples were an hungered; it being in the morning before they had broke their fast; and this circumstance is mentioned to show the reason of the following action, and to excuse it: at which the Pharisees were so much offended, and of which they accused them, as having done what was very criminal:

and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat; Luke adds, "rubbing them in their hands"; and so here in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, it is rendered, "they began to rub": as they passed along, they plucked off the ears of corn, either barley or wheat, and rubbed them in their hands, to get the grain clear of the husk, or beard, and eat them; contenting themselves with such mean and unprepared food, when the Jews on that day fed on the best of dainties {e}.

{e} Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 30. sect. 7, 8, 9, 10.

Matthew 12:2

Ver. 2. But when the Pharisees saw it,.... Who went along with him, or followed him, being employed to make observation on his words and actions, they said unto him; Luke says, "unto them", the disciples: it seems, they took notice of this action both to Christ and his disciples, and first spoke of it to the one, and then to the other, or to both together:

behold thy disciples do that which it is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day! they mention it with astonishment, and indignation. What they refer to, is not their walking on the sabbath day: this they might do, according to their canons, provided they did not exceed two thousand cubits, which were a sabbath day's journey {f} nor was it their passing through the corn fields; though, according to them {g},

"it was not lawful for a man to visit his gardens, wytwdvw, "or his fields", on the sabbath day, to see what they want, or how the fruits grow; for such walking is to do his own pleasure."

But this they knew was not the case of Christ, and his disciples, who were not proprietors of these fields: nor was it merely their plucking the ears of corn, and rubbing and eating them, which were not their own, but another man's; for this, according to the law, in *De 23:25* was lawful to be done: but what offended the Pharisees was, that it was done on a sabbath day, it being, as they interpret it, a servile work, and all one as reaping; though, in the law just mentioned, it is manifestly distinguished from it. Their rule is {h}

"he that reaps (on the sabbath day) ever so little, is guilty (of stoning), awh ruwq hdlwt vlwtw, and "plucking of ears of corn is a derivative of reaping";"

and is all one as its primitive, and punishable with the same kind of death, if done presumptuously: so Philo the Jew observes {i}, that the rest of the sabbath not only reached to men, bond and free, and to beasts, but even to trees, and plants; and that ou ernov ou kladon, all' oude petalon efeitai temein, "it was not lawful to cut a plant, or branch, or so much as a leaf", on a sabbath day: and it may be what might make this offence of the disciples the more heinous was, that they plucked these ears, and ate them, and so broke their fast before morning prayer; for a man might not eat any thing on a sabbath day until morning prayers were ended in the synagogue, nor indeed on any other day; for they used not to eat bread till after they had offered the daily sacrifice, which was about the third hour of the day, or nine o'clock in the morning; nor did they eat till the fourth hour, or ten o'clock {k}.

{f} Ib. c. 27. sect. 1. {g} R. Moses Kotzensis Mitzvot Tora prec. neg. 65. {h} Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 8. sect. 3. & 7. 1. {i} De Vita Mosis, 1. 2. p. 657. {k} Vid. Targum in Eccl. x. 17. Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 6. sect. 4.

Matthew 12:3

Ver. 3. But he said unto them, have ye not read,.... If they had not read the Scriptures, they were very unfit persons either to be teachers, or censurers of others, and must have been very slothful and negligent; and if they had, they could not but have observed the case of David, which Christ produces in vindication of his disciples:

what David did when he was an hungred; which was the case of the disciples, and is therefore mentioned; it being also the circumstance which could, and did excuse what was done by David and his men: and the Jews themselves own, that in case of hunger the showbread might be eaten, by those that were not priests; not only that which was removed from the table, but that which was upon it; yea, even when there was none to put in its room {l}; and that David was in the utmost distress, and therefore desired it, and it was granted him on that account. They represent him as thus saying to the priest {m},

"when he found there was none but showbread, give it me, that we may not die with hunger; tbv hxwd twvpn qpov, "for danger of life drives away the sabbath";"

which perfectly agrees with our Lord's argument, and justifies the apostles conduct: and this was not a single fact of David's, but of others also;

and they that were with him; for though in *1Sa 21:1* he is said to be "alone, and no man with him"; yet this must be understood either comparatively, having but very few with him, and which were as none, considering his dignity; or thus, though none came with him to Ahimelech, pretending to the priest he had a secret affair of the king's to transact; and therefore had left his servants in a certain place, and desires bread for himself and them; concerning whom the priest and he discourses, as may be seen in the place referred to: so that though no man was with him at the priest's house, yet there were some with him, and who partook with him in eating of the showbread.

{l} R. David Kimchi in 1 Sam. xxi. 5. {m} Laniado Cli Jaker, fol. 227. 2.

Matthew ***12:4***

Ver. 4. How he entered into the house of God,.... Not the temple, which was not then built; but the tabernacle, which was then at Nob, the city of the priests, and which probably adjoined to Abimelech's house:

and did eat the shewbread; for that this is meant by the hallowed bread, in *1Sa 21:6* is certain; though R. Joseph Kimchi {n} thinks it was the bread of the thank offering; to which R. Levi ben Getsom {o} seems to incline: but the general sense of the Jewish doctors {p} is, that it was the showbread; and which is very clear from that text, and is rightly affirmed by Christ;

which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests: see *Le 24:5* and so the Jews say that this bread Myrzl rwoa, "is forbidden to strangers" {q}; that is, to any but the priests, which, after the burning of the frankincense, was divided equally among them: that course of priests that came into the service had six cakes, and that which went out six; though the high priest had a right to half himself, but he did not use to take it, it being judged not to his honour to do so {r}. No hint is here given, nor in the history, in *1Sa 21:1* that it was on the sabbath day that David came to Ahimelech, and ate the showbread; but this is observed, and disputed, by the Jewish writers. Some indeed are in a doubt about it; but others {s} readily give into it, that it was on the sabbath day, which he chose to flee in, for the greater safety and preservation of his life: and indeed it seems reasonable it should be on that day; since on that day only the showbread was removed from the table, and other loaves put in the room. One of their writers {t} says,

"that showbread was not to be eaten, but on the day, and night of the sabbath day; and on the going out of the sabbath day; and on the going out of the sabbath David came there."

Now our Lord's argument stands thus, that if David, a holy, good man, and, the men that were with him, who were men of religion and conscience, when in great distress, through hunger, ate of the showbread, which was unlawful for any to eat of but priests, the high priest himself assenting to it; then it could not be criminal in his disciples, when an hungred, to pluck, rub, and eat a few ears of corn, which were lawful for any man to eat, even though it was on the sabbath day: and for the further vindication of them, he adds,

{n} Apud R. David Kimchi in 1 Sam. xxi. 6. {o} In ib. {p} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 95. 2. R. David Kimchi, Abarbinel & Laniado in 1 Sam. xxi. 6. {q} Laniado & Abarbinel in ib. {r} Maimon. Hilch. Tamidin, c. 4. sect. 12. 14. {s} Bemidbar Rabba Parash. 23. fol. 231. 9. Laniado Cli Jaker, fol. 226. 4. & 227. 2, 3, 4. & Jelammedenu in ib. {t} R. Isaiah in 1 Sam. xxi. 5.

Matthew **12:5**

Ver. 5. Or have ye not read in the law,.... *Nu 28:9* by which law the priests were obliged, every sabbath day, to offer up two lambs for a burnt offering; to which were annexed many servile works, as killing the sacrifice, flaying it, cutting it in pieces, and laying it on the altar, cutting of wood, and putting that in order, and kindling the fire: from all which, it might be observed,

how that on the sabbath days, the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless. There were many things, which, according to the Jewish canons, the priests might do on the sabbath day; particularly they might slay the sacrifice: it was a rule with them, tbv ta hjwxv htxd, "that slaying drives away the sabbath" {u}. They might also knead, make, and bake the showbread on the sabbath day: their general rule was, as R. Akiba says, that what was possible to be done on the evening of the sabbath, did not drive away the sabbath; but what was not possible to be done on the sabbath eve, did drive away the sabbath {w}: so they might kill the passover, sprinkle its blood, wipe its inwards, and burn the fat on the sabbath day {x}, with many other things. What exculpated these men was, that what they did was done in the temple, and for the service of it, upon which an emphasis is put; and agrees with their canons, which say, that there is no prohibition in the sanctuary; awh rth vdqmb twbv rwoya, "that which is forbidden to be done on the sabbath, is lawful to be done in the sanctuary" {y}: and whereas, it might be objected to the disciples of Christ, that they were not priests; and what they did was not in the temple, but in the fields; to this it is replied, in the following words:

{u} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 72. 2. {w} Misn. Menachot, c. 11. sect. 3. {x} Misn. Pesachim, c. 6. sect. 1. Maimon. Pesach. c. 1. sect. 18. {y} lb. sect. 16. & Hilchot Sabbat, c. 21. sect. 27.

Matthew 12:6

Ver. 6. But I say unto you,.... Who Christ knew would be ready to object, as above, and therefore prevents them, by saying,

that in this place is one greater than the temple; meaning himself, who was the Lord and Proprietor of the temple, and in his human nature the antitype of it; see ***Joh 2:19*** and was infinitely more sacred than that. Some copies read meizon, "something greater"; referring either to the human nature of Christ, in which the Godhead dwells bodily, and so infinitely greater than the temple; or to the health of his disciples, which was in danger, through hunger: or to the ministry of the apostles, which, by satisfying nature, they were more capable of performing; either of which was of more moment than the sacrifices and service of the temple. Christ's argument is, that if the temple, and the service of it, excused the priests from blame, in doing things in it on the sabbath day, which otherwise might not be done; then much more might his presence, who was greater than the temple, excuse his disciples from blame in this action of rubbing and eating the ears of corn; which was done to satisfy hunger, and to render them the more capable of performing their ministerial function; and which was of more importance than the service of the priests.

Matthew 12:7

Ver. 7. But if ye had known what this meaneth, &c,] The passage of Scripture in ***Hos 6:6***

I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; of the sense of which, see Gill "Mt 9:13"

ye would not have condemned the guiltless. Our Lord taxes the Pharisees both with ignorance of the Scriptures, in which they pretended to be very knowing, and took upon them to be the interpreters of; and with inhumanity, for condemning innocent persons, the apostles, for rubbing a few ears of corn, for the refreshment of nature; which they would never have done, had they understood the word, and will of God; who prefers acts of humanity, compassion, and mercy, to the observance of rites and ceremonies; or had they the common affections of human nature, and those bowels of compassion which one man ought to show to another.

Matthew 12:8

Ver. 8. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day. By "the Son of man" is meant, not any man, as some have thought; for no mere man is lord of any law, moral or ritual, natural or positive; or has a power of disposing of it, and dispensing with it at pleasure; but Christ himself; which is the constant sense of this phrase in the New Testament, and is a character of the Messiah in the old, ***Da 7:13*** who, as he was the institutor of the sabbath among the Jews, that being a ritual, and of mere positive institution, could dispense with it, and even abrogate it at his pleasure. The Jews so far agree to this, that he that commanded the law of the sabbath, could dispense with it; they say {z}, that

"the day on which Jericho was taken was the sabbath day; and that though they slew and burnt on the sabbath day, tbv llxl hwu tbvh le hwuv ym, "he that commanded the observation of the sabbath, commanded the profanation of it"."

And since Christ is greater than the temple, and has all the perfections of the divine nature in him, is equal to the Father in power and glory; and even as mediator, has all power in heaven and earth given him; so as he is Lord of all other things, he is of the sabbath, and has a power of dispensing with it, and even of abolishing it; see ***Col 2:16*** and since the Lord of the sabbath had a power of dispensing with it, and made use of it in the cases of David and his men, and of the priests in the temple formerly; the Pharisees ought not to think it strange, that the Son of man, who is equally Lord of the sabbath, dispensed with it in his disciples now.

{z} R. David Kimchi in Josh. vi. 11.

Matthew 12:9

Ver. 9. And when he was departed thence,.... From the corn fields, where the disciples had plucked the ears of corn, and this conversation passed between Christ and the Pharisees about the violation of the sabbath, he went into their synagogue; not on the same sabbath day, as one might be led to conclude from the account of this evangelist, but on another sabbath, as Luke expresses it, ***Lu 6:6***. He might indeed directly go into one of their synagogues the same day, where he and his disciples seem to have been going, and stay in the city the week following; and then, as it is said in ***Mr 3:1*** he entered again into the synagogue; not being afraid of the Pharisees, who sought an advantage against him; nor deterred by them from doing good to men; and willing to take another opportunity of exposing their ignorance and malice.

Matthew 12:10

Ver. 10. And behold, there was a man which had his hand withered,.... Or dry; the juices were dried up, the nerves and sinews contracted, so that it was of no manner of use to him: Luke says, it was his right hand, which was so much the worse; and means not only his hand, but the whole arm. Such a case is mentioned in the Talmud {a}, "it happened to one, "wewrz hvbyv, that his arm was dry, or withered. Jerom says {b}, in the Gospel which the Nazarenes and Hebionites used, this man is said to be a plasterer, and so might possibly come by his misfortune through his business; and being a man that got his bread by his hand labour, the case was the more affecting. This account is introduced with a "behold!" it being remarkable that such a case should offer so opportunely, of showing his divine power in healing such a disorder; and of his authority, as the Son of man, over the sabbath; and of putting to silence his enemies, the Pharisees: and who, upon seeing such an object, put the following question to him;

and they asked him, saying, is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? and which was put, not for information sake, as willing to be instructed in this point; for their determinations were, that healing was not lawful on such a day; nor were any means to be made use of for that purpose: if a man received a cure accidentally, it was very well; but no methods were to be taken with intention: as for instance {c};

"if a man had an ailment in his throat, he might not gargle it with oil, but he might swallow a large quantity of oil, aprtn aprtn Maw "and "if he was healed, he was healed" (i.e. it was very well, it was no breach of the sabbath); they may not chew mastic, nor rub the teeth with spice, on the sabbath day, hawprl Nywktmv Nmzb, "when it is intended "for healing"; but if it is intended for the savour of his mouth, it is free."

There are several things they allowed might be done on the sabbath; but then they did not reckon them to come under the notion of healing.

"Three {d} things R. Ishmael bar Jose said he had heard from R. Matthia ben Charash; they might let blood for the stranguary on the sabbath day; one that was bit by a mad dog, they might give him hog's liver to eat; and he that had an ailment in his mouth, they might put spice to it on the sabbath day: but the wise men say of these, that there is not in them hawpr Mwvm, anything of medicine."

Indeed, in case of extreme danger of life they did admit of the use of medicine, by the prescription of a physician {e}.

"Danger of life drives away the sabbath; wherefore, if there is any danger in a sick person, it is lawful to kindle a fire for him, &c. and they may kill, and bake, and boil: and though there may be no apparent danger, only a doubt of danger; as when one physician says there is a necessity, and another physician says there is none, they may profane the sabbath for him."

Hence it is very clear with what view the Pharisees asked Christ this question; and that it was, as the evangelist says, that they might accuse him: either of cruelty and weakness, should he answer in the negative, that either he was not able to heal the poor man before him, or wanted compassion; or should he answer in the affirmative, as they expected, and act upon it, then they might have wherewith to charge him before the sanhedrim as a violator of the sabbath, and of their canons concerning it.

{a} T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 40. 1. {b} In loc. {c} Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 21. sect. 24. {d} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 84. 1. Vid. Misn. Yoma, e. 8. sect. 7. {e} Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. neg. 65. Maimon. in Misn. Sabbat, c. 18. sect. 3.

Matthew ***12:11***

Ver. 11. And he said unto them,.... Well knowing their intentions, and also their usages and customs, which he was able to produce and object to them; in which, through covetousness, they showed more regard to their beasts, than they did humanity to their fellow creatures:

what man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? Christ appeals to them in a case which was usually done among them, and which, without delay, no man would scruple to do; though their present rule of direction, in such a case, is this {f}:

"if a beast fall into a ditch, or a pool of water, if food can be given it, where it is, they feed it till the going out of the sabbath; but if not, bolsters and pillows may be brought, and put under it, and if it can come out: it may come out:"

and which is elsewhere {g} a little differently expressed;

"if a beast fall into a ditch, or pool of water, it is forbidden a man to bring it out with his hand; but if he can give it food where it is, it may be fed till the going out of the sabbath:"

which seems to have been made since the times of Christ, and in opposition to this observation of his.

{f} Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 25. sect. 26. {g} Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. neg. 65.

Matthew ***12:12***

Ver. 12. How much then is a man better than a sheep?.... As a rational creature must be better, and more excellent, than an irrational one, more care is to be taken of, and more mercy shown unto, the one, than the other: even the health of a man is preferable to the life of a beast; and if it is lawful to give food to a beast, and make use of means for its relief, and for the lifting it up out of a ditch, when fallen into it on the sabbath day, "wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days", to men; to do acts of beneficence and humanity to them, among which must be reckoned healing of diseases and infirmities: and particularly, if it is lawful to take a sheep out of a ditch on the sabbath day, it must be right to restore to a man the use of his hand on such a day; and especially to one that gets his bread by his hand labour, as it is very likely this man did. This was such a strong way of arguing, that the Jews could not well object to it; and it appears, that they were confounded and put to silence; for, as Mark observes, "they held their peace": and indeed they allow of everything to be done where life is in danger, though not otherwise: they say {h},

"they may take care of the preservation of life on the sabbath; and if he is prepared for it, lo! this is praiseworthy, and there is no need to take a licence from the sanhedrim: as when a man sees a child fallen into the sea, he may spread a net, and bring him out; and if he is prepared for it, lo! this is praiseworthy, and there is no need to take a licence from the sanhedrim, though he was fishing: if he sees a child fallen into a ditch, he may rake into the mud and bring him out; and if he is prepared for it, lo! this is praiseworthy, and there is no need to take a licence from the sanhedrim, though he had set a ladder ready."

It is said of Hillell {i}, that

"he sat by a window to hear the words of the living God, from the mouth of Shemaia and Abtalion; and they say that that day was the evening of the sabbath, and the winter solstice, and the snow descended from heaven; and when the pillar of the morning ascended, (when it was daylight,) Shemaia said to Abtalion, brother Abtalion, all other days the house is light, but today it is dark, perhaps it is a cloudy day: they lift up their eyes, and saw the form of a man at the window; they went up, and found upon him snow the height of three cubits; they broke through and delivered him; and they washed him, and anointed him, and set him over against his dwelling, and said, very worthy is this man tbv ta wyle llhl, "to profane the sabbath for him"."

And if it was lawful to dig a man out of the snow, and do these several things for him on the sabbath day, why not cure a man of a withered hand, and especially when done by a word speaking, and without any labour?

{h} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 84. 2. {i} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 35. 2.

Matthew 12:13

Ver. 13. Then saith he to the man,.... That is, after he had looked round about upon them, to observe their countenances; and what answer they would make to his arguments; and with anger for their inhumanity and cruelty; being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, i.e. their unmercifulness to their fellow creatures, and the stupidity and blindness of their minds, being ignorant of the Scriptures, and of the sabbath, the nature, use, and Lord of it; which things are observed by the Evangelist Mark; then, in a commanding authoritative way, almighty power going along with his word, he says to the man who stood forth before him, and the Pharisees,

stretch forth thine hand, which was before contracted and shrivelled up;

and he stretched it forth with all the ease imaginable, and was, not only able to do this, but to make use of it any way;

for it was restored whole like as the other; his left hand, which had never been damaged. This was an instance of Christ's power; a proof of the lawfulness of healing on the sabbath day; and a rebuke to the Pharisees for their cruelty and uncharitableness. This man was an emblem of the inability of men to do anything that is spiritually good, and of the power and efficacy of divine grace to enable persons to stretch out their hands, and do things which they of themselves are not equal to.

Matthew 12:14

Ver. 14. Then the Pharisees went out,.... Of the synagogue, being, as Luke says, filled with madness, at the unanswerableness of his arguments; and because of the violation of the sabbath, as they thought; and most of all, because of the miracle wrought by him; and which was so glaringly a proof of his being Lord of the sabbath, and could not fail of creating him esteem among the people: and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. Mark says, the council was held by them with the Herodians; of whom,
See Gill on "Mt 22:16" who, though they differed from them both in

religion and politics, yet might be thought very proper persons to advise with about this matter; and especially, as they might have a greater interest at court, than they had. Nor did they scruple to enter into such a consultation, though on the sabbath day, and about the taking away of the life of an innocent person; which shows what scared consciences, and hard hearts they had, and how full of hypocrisy they were.

Matthew ***12:15***

Ver. 15. But when Jesus knew it,.... Their consultation against him, as he did, not by any discovery made to him by men, but as the omniscient God; he withdrew himself from thence; from the synagogue and city, where he was, to the sea of Galilee, and his disciples with him, as Mark observes; not through fear, but because his time was not yet come, that he must suffer and die for his people; he had some other work to do first, and therefore rightly and wisely provides for his safety. And great multitudes followed him; from Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and were joined by another multitude of people, who came from about Tyre and Sidon, as Mark relates: so that his departure was not so very private; nor was he forsaken by the common people, though the Pharisees were so offended with him. And he healed them all; that stood in need of healing, as many as had plagues and unclean spirits; practising agreeably to his doctrine, that it was lawful to do good on the sabbath day, and to heal the bodies as well as the souls of men.

Matthew ***12:16***

Ver. 16. And charged them that they should not make him known. This charge was given, either to the multitude that followed him, and were healed by him, that when they returned to the respective places from whence they came, they would not make it known to his enemies where he was, and what he had done to them; being neither desirous of popular applause and glory, nor willing to provoke them more, nor to fall into their hands as yet; or else, as Mark seems to intimate, to the unclean spirits, that they would not declare who he was, the Son of God, they confessed him to be: and very likely it was given to both, and that they should neither tell where he was, nor who he was; and this charge was a very severe one; for the word signifies a charge with threatenings, should they not observe his orders.

Matthew 12:17

Ver. 17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying. *Isa 42:1* not that Christ gave the above charge with this view, that this passage in Isaiah might have its accomplishment: but this is an observation of the evangelist, that what was now done by Christ, by his private departure from the Pharisees, being unwilling to irritate them more; by his preaching to the Idumeans, Tyrians, and Sidonians; by healing their diseases, and shunning all ostentation and popular applause; and prohibiting to tell who and where he was, was a fulfilling of this prophecy; in which the Holy Spirit foreknowing the disposition and actions of Christ, predicted them: which, when considered, must be looked upon as a very large proof of the truth of his being the Messiah. For that this prophecy belongs to the Messiah, is owned by the Jews themselves {k}.

{k} Targum & Kimchi in loc. Abarbinel Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 9. 1, 2. & 10. 1, 2. & 21. 2. & in Is. fol 64. 3, 4. R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, p. 299.

Matthew 12:18

Ver. 18. Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,.... These are the words of God the Father, speaking to the church, concerning Christ, as mediator; who, as such, is God's servant, employed by him, and obedient to him, in the work of man's salvation; and is a righteous, faithful, prudent, and diligent one; whom he, from all eternity, had chosen to this service, and in the fulness of time sent him to do it, and supported and upheld him in it; for it is whom I uphold, in the Hebrew text. My beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased; who always was the object of his love, not only as his own and only begotten Son, but as in his office capacity, as mediator; in regard to which he was his elect, as it is in Isaiah; and, as such, he was always delighted in his person, well pleased with his office, and the discharge of it, and which he declared more than once by a voice from heaven, as at his baptism, and at his transfiguration on the mount: I will put my Spirit upon him; as he did without measure, whereby he was abundantly qualified for his whole work, and particularly for preaching the Gospel, being richly anointed with gifts and graces, above his fellows; of which the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him, as a dove at his baptism, which immediately preceded his public ministry, was a symbol. And he shall show judgment unto the Gentiles; meaning, not the general judgment, at the last day, which is committed to him; nor the laws of Justice and equity; but the Gospel, which is the produce of the God of judgment; best informs the judgment of men about the business of salvation; gives an account of the righteous procedure of God in justifying sinners, by the righteousness of his Son; and teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly: this Christ brought forth, and showed, at this time, to the Heathens, the Idumeans, Tyrians, and Sidonians; who flocked unto him; whereby this part of the prophecy had its fulfilment: in the Hebrew it is, "he shall bring forth"; that is, out of his heart and mouth, and is the same as "show" here.

Matthew 12:19

Ver. 19. He shall not strive,.... Or contend in a wrangling way, as the disputers of this world do about words to no profit, and for the sake of victory only, and popular applause, but shall choose rather to withdraw, than to carry on a controversy to a great length, to little purpose; or, as men litigate a point in a court of judicature, where one is plaintiff, and the other defendant. In the Hebrew text it is, "he shall not cry"; he shall not act the part of a plaintiff; he shall not complain, or bring in any charge, or accusation against any, but choose rather to suffer wrong, than to contend: thus hqeu signifies such a cry, as is a complaint of injustice, ***Isa 5:7*** and qewu a plaintiff, one that brings an action against another {l}: but Christ did not so, he would not accuse to the Father, nor complain against his most implacable enemies, but left that to Moses, in whom they trusted; "nor cry", or, as in the Hebrew text, lift up; that is, his voice, in a clamorous way, using reviling and opprobrious language, or menaces and threatenings; but, on the contrary, he silently put up all abuses, and patiently bore every affront, and behaved peaceably, quietly, committing himself and cause to a righteous God.

Neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets; or, as in the Hebrew text, "nor cause his voice to be heard in the street": the sense is the same, and the meaning is, that he sought not worldly honour, popular applause, and to be seen of men; he did nothing in an ostentatious way, said nothing in his own commendation, was never heard to praise himself, and chose that others should be silent concerning him: for this does not so much regard the lowness of his voice, as if that was not so sonorous as to be heard without doors, when he preached within, as his modest mein and suitable deportment; nor the places where he usually ministered, which was sometimes in the street, as well as in an house, or on a mountain, or by the sea side, or in the temple, and the synagogues. The Ethiopic version here is very wrong, "no man shall hear his voice in the synagogues"; for his voice was often heard there.

{l} Vid. Cocc. Heb. Lex. in rad. qeu.

Matthew ***12:20***

Ver. 20. A bruised reed shall he not break,.... Various are the thoughts of interpreters, about what is meant by this, and by

the smoking flax shall he not quench. Some think the Scribes and Pharisees are designed, whose power Christ could easily crush, and their wrath and fury restrain, but would not, till the time of his vengeance was come. Others that the publicans and sinners are intended, of whose conversion and salvation there were more hope than of the Scribes and Pharisees; and which Christ greatly sought after, and therefore cherished and encouraged them in his ministry and conversation. Some are of opinion, that such who have fallen into sin, and are under great decays of grace, are meant, whom Christ has compassion on, succours, and restores: but rather young converts, such as are under first awakenings, are here pointed at; who, like to a "bruised reed", or "broken" one, one that is in some measure broke, near being broken to pieces, are wounded in their spirits, have their hearts broken and contrite, under a sense of their sinfulness, vileness, weakness, and unworthiness; whom Christ is so far from breaking and destroying, that he binds up their broken hearts, heals their wounds, and restores comforts to them: and who are like to "smoking flax", or, as the Syriac reads it, Pjpjmd agrv, "a smoking lamp"; to which the Arabic and Persic versions agree; meaning the wick of the lamp, which being just lighted, seems ready to go out, having scarce any light, only a little fire in it, which makes it smoke: so these have but little light of knowledge, faith, and comfort, and a great deal of darkness and infirmity; only there is some warmth in their affections, which go upwards "like pillars of smoke, perfumed with frankincense"; and such Christ is so far from neglecting, and putting out, that he blows up the sparks of grace into a flame, and never utterly leaves the work, till he sends forth judgment into victory; that is, till he sends forth the Gospel into their hearts, accompanied with his mighty power, in the light and comfort of it; which informs their judgments, enlightens their understandings, bows their wills, raises their affections, sanctifies their souls, works effectually in them, under the influence of his Spirit and grace, to the carrying on of the work of grace in them to the end; and making them victorious over all their enemies, and more than conquerors, through him that has loved them. The Targum of Jonathan paraphrases the words thus;

"the meek, who are as a bruised reed, he will not break; and the poor, who are as an obscure lamp, he will not quench."

Matthew 12:21

Ver. 21. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust. The former part of the text is omitted, "he shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth"; but is inserted in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and which some understand of the bruised reed, and smoking flax, and others of Christ; the latter sense is to be preferred. The passage, here cited, is somewhat different in Isaiah: for there it is, "and the isles shall wait for his law"; but the difference, at least, in sense, is not so great as it may appear at first sight: for, Myya, as Grotius observes, does not always signify "islands", but nations, and countries, that are upon the continent, *Ge 10:5* and so might be rightly rendered here, the Gentiles, or "nations"; and by "the name" of Christ is meant his Gospel: see ***Ac 9:15*** which Isaiah calls his "law": that is, his doctrine, the doctrine of righteousness, life, and salvation by him, which is the ground and foundation of hope, and trust in him; and they that wait for it, may be truly said to hope, or trust in it. This began to have its accomplishment in the Idumeans, Tyrians, and Sidonians, now attending on the ministry of Christ; and has had a greater accomplishment since: the Gospel having been preached in the Gentile world, both upon the main land, and in the isles afar off; whereby multitudes have been brought to hope, and believe in Christ, as their Saviour and Redeemer.

Matthew 12:22

Ver. 22. Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil,.... About this time, or some little time after, when he was returned from the sea of Galilee, and was come into a certain house; see ***Mr 3:19*** some persons brought him a demoniac, in compassion to the possessed man, and being persuaded of the power of Christ to heal him by the late cures he had performed. A like instance we have in ***Mt 9:32***, which had a like effect upon the people, and cavilled at by the Pharisees in much the same way; and which cavils were answered in much the same words; and yet the case is not the same; for that man was only dumb, but this both

blind and dumb; not by birth, or through the defect of nature, or by any natural distemper that had attended him, but through the malice of Satan, by divine permission; his blindness, and dumbness, were the effects of his being possessed with a devil, who had deprived him of his sight, and speech. The word rendered "dumb", signifies both deaf and dumb, and answers to the Hebrew word vrx, which sometimes {m} is used of a deaf man only, who can speak, but not hear; and often of one that can neither speak, nor hear; which is the case of such as are born deaf: it seems as if this man could hear, though he could not speak; since no mention is made of his want of hearing, or of Christ's restoring it to him; for it follows,

and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb, both spake and saw. This he did, not by making use of medicines, but by a word speaking, dispossessing Satan; so that the cause of blindness and dumbness being removed, the effects ceased, and the man was restored to his sight, and speech, as before. He had his sight to behold his Saviour, and a tongue to praise his name: so when men are turned from Satan unto God, and are delivered from his thraldom and bondage, they are brought into marvellous light, and put into a capacity of showing forth the praises of God.

{m} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Trumot, c. 1. sect. 2.

Matthew 12:23

Ver. 23. And all the people were amazed,.... At the cure; it was such an instance of divine power, and so glaring a proof, that the person who wrought it was more than a man, and must be the Messiah. This is to be understood of the greater part of the people, not of every individual, and of the common people only; for it had a different effect upon the Pharisees, as hereafter appears; but in these it not only produced admiration, but conviction, faith, and confession:

and said, is not this the son of David? or the Messiah; for dwd Nb, "the son of David", is a character of the Messiah, well known among the Jews; See Gill "Mt 1:1" because he was promised to David, was to be raised up of his seed, and to spring from his loins. This question they put, not as doubting of it, but as inclining, at least, to believe it, if not as expressing their certainty of it: and is, as if they had said, who can this person be but the true Messiah, that has wrought such a miracle as this? for from his miracles they rightly concluded who he was; though the Jews since, in order to deprive Jesus of this true characteristic of the Messiah, deny that miracles are to be performed by him {n}.

{n} Maimon. Hilch. Melacim, c. 11. sect. 3.

Matthew 12:24

Ver. 24. But when the Pharisees heard it,.... Very probably not the same that went out, and held a council against Christ to destroy him, *Mt 12:14* but others that were come from Judea and Jerusalem, and were with him in the house, and saw the miracle: these, when they heard what the people said, and how ready they were to believe, and own Jesus to be the Messiah, in order to prevent it, being filled with envy and malice,

they said, this fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. They could not deny the miracle, or that it was one; but to deprive him of the glory of it, and even reproach him for it, and to bring him into contempt with the people, they not only speak of him in a scornful manner, outov, "this" sorry man, "this" vile fellow; but ascribe the miracle he wrought to familiarity with the devil, to diabolical influence and skill in magic art: they pretended he was in confederacy with Satan, and was carrying on his interest: and therefore, that he might gain credit and reputation, the prince of devils suffered the inferior ones to remove at his word: and of these their ancestors, the Jews have learnt to fix this vile imputation, and blasphemous piece of slander upon Christ; who, they say {o}, brought enchantments, or witchcrafts, out of Egypt, in the cuttings of his flesh, whereby he performed the things he did. Concerning Beelzebub, See Gill "Mt 10:25" here called "the prince of devils"; it being a prevailing notion among the Jews, that there is one devil who is the head of all the rest, and who is by them sometimes called Asmodeus: they say {p}, when Solomon sinned against the Lord, he sent to him ydyvd aklm yadmva, "Asmodeus the king of the devils", and drove him from his throne, and so elsewhere {q}: and sometimes Samael, who is styled {r} Samael the prince, Mydvd aklm, "the king of devils"; and the angel Samael, the wicked, Mynjvh lk var, "the head of all the Satans", or devils {s}: and we often read {t} of Mnhygh rv, "the prince of hell"; by whom the same is meant, as here, by Beelzebub; for if anyone devil is more wicked, odious, and execrable than the rest, the chief of them may be thought to be so; for which reason he is here mentioned.

{o} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 13. 4. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 104. 2. {p} Targum in Eccl. i. 12. {q} T. Bab. Pesach, fol. 110. 1. Gittin, fol. 68. 1. & Raziel, fol. 41. 2. {r} Zohar in Deut. fol. 120. 3. {s} Debarim Rabba, fol. 245. 3. {t} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 52. 1. Imre Binah in Zohar in Gen. fol. 22. 3.

Matthew 12:25

Ver. 25. And Jesus knew their thoughts,.... He not only heard their blasphemous words, but was privy to their secret thoughts; he knew their vile malicious intentions and designs, with what view they expressed themselves in this manner, on purpose to reproach him, and set the people against him, contrary to the inward light of their minds, and dictates of their consciences; who must, and did know the contrary of what they said: and regarding the inward frame of their minds, as well as their words, and which is a proof of his omniscience, and so of his deity, and consequently of his Messiahship,

said unto them the following parables, as Mark calls them, ***Mr 3:23*** or proverbial expressions:

every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; a government, in which there is a disagreement between the chiefs of it, and the body of the people, or where one part is opposed to the other, or in which a civil and intestine war is begun and prosecuted, cannot continue in any comfortable situation, and flourishing state, but must come to nothing: this is a maxim that has been so often fatally verified, that no one will doubt the truth of it; and the same holds true of lesser communities, of cities, and families:

and every city, or house, divided against itself, shall not stand. If citizens fall out with their magistrates, or one with another, and turn out, and disfranchise each other; and if the heads of families, and the respective branches thereof, quarrel with, and divide from one another, a dissolution of the whole must ensue; and the same may be said of the kingdom and government of Satan. These, it is very likely, were common sayings among the Jews, and they might be very easily understood by them; and are very appropriately produced by Christ to illustrate the present case, and confute the vile and blasphemous suggestions of the Pharisees: a proverbial expression, much like to these, is to be read in the writings of the Jews, brxyl wpwo tqwlxm wb vyv tyb lk, "every house, in which there is a division, at the end shall come to desolation" {u}.

{u} Derech Eretz, c. 5.

Matthew ***12:26***

Ver. 26. And if Satan cast out Satan,.... That is, if Satan, the same with Beelzebub, casts out the rest of the Satans, or other devils, of which he is the prince and head,

he is divided against himself; he acts contrary to his own interest, which is to keep possession of the bodies and souls of men; and consequently it must, in course, be subversive of his power and dominion:

how shall then his kingdom stand? he will never be able to maintain his authority, and keep up the show of a government, as he does: for these words suggest, that there is a form of government among the devils, who are united in one body, under one head; and whose unity and concord are their greatest strength, as in all other governments. Our Lord's argument, and which is his first, for others follow, is, that since Satan, who is so cunning and crafty, can never be thought to act such an opposite part to himself, subversive of his kingdom and government; and which would give so much credit to Christ, and serve so much to strengthen his interest, as to assist him in the casting out of devils; the weakness, and maliciousness of such a suggestion, must be clear and evident to all.

Ver. 27. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils,.... As the Pharisees asserted, and would have the people believe; for this is not allowed, only for argument sake supposed:

by whom do your children cast them out? meaning not the apostles and disciples of Christ, the children of the Jews, to whom Christ gave power of casting out devils, and who had exercised it in his name; and therefore argues, if they in his name cast out devils, why could he not do it himself, without the help of Satan? wherefore these would be judges against them: but, no doubt, the Pharisees had no better opinion of the disciples, and of their ejection of devils, than of Christ; wherefore, it is not likely, that our Lord should argue with them from hence: but rather, he means, some among themselves, who pretended to have a power of exorcising and ejecting of devils, either in the name of Jesus, as some of them did, ***Mr 9:38*** or in the name of their kings, righteous men, prophets and patriarchs, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob {w}; and which practice, perhaps, they took up and made pretensions to, in imitation of Christ and his apostles; so as Christ healed men possessed of devils, they also affected to do the same. A story is reported {x},

"concerning Ben Talmion, that a miracle was wrought by R. Eleazar bar Jose, who healed a king's daughter at Rome, in whose body the devil entered, whose name was Ben Talmion; and they brought him (the Jew) to the king's treasury, to take what he would, but he would take nothing from thence, but letters, in which were written the decrees they had decreed against Israel; and when he found them, he tore them to pieces, and there he saw the vessels of the house of the sanctuary, in the treasury."

Now since the Jews pretended to do these things, Christ asks them, by whom they cast out devils? Whether by the Spirit of God, or by Beelzebub? They would doubtless say by the former, and not the latter, which would show their great partiality; for admitting that the like actions were done by them, as by him, why not by the same power? Why should their ejection of devils be ascribed to God, and his to Beelzebub?

Therefore they shall be your judges; who will rise up against you, and condemn you one day, for this unequal judgment you now pass; and which was just the reverse of the true state of the case: for he cast out devils by the

Spirit of God, which they imputed to the assistance of Beelzebub; their children cast out devils, or pretended to do so, and it was by the help of Satan; and yet they ascribed it to a divine power, even though they made use of the name of Satan, under that of Beelzebub, or Asmodeus, their exorcising, of which take the following form {y}.

"By the authority of the glorious and fearful name, I adjure thee Asmodeus, "king of the devils", and all thy company, &c. that ye hurt not, nor put in fear, nor trouble such an one, the son of such an one, but that ye help him, and sustain him (or deliver him) out of every distress and anguish, and from every evil thing, and from all diseases, that enter into the two hundred and forty eight members, &c."

{w} Justin Martyr, adv. Tryphon. p. 311. {x} In Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 57. 1. Meilah, fol. 17. 2. {y} Raziel, fol. 41. 2.

Matthew ***12:28***

Ver. 28. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God,.... As it was certain he did, from the nature, use, and design of such miracles; and it could not be reasonably thought, that Satan would assist in what was so very opposite to his kingdom and interest, and was so serviceable to the cause and glory of Christ. All the three persons had an hand in the miracles of the Messiah; they were done by Christ, in his Father's name, and by the power of the Spirit of God; from which the following inference may be justly deduced,

then the kingdom of God is come unto you: meaning, either the Messiah himself; or rather, his kingdom, the Gospel dispensation, which both Christ and John had declared to be at hand; of which the performing of miracles, particularly the casting out of devils, whereby the kingdom of Satan was so much weakened, was a clear proof.

Matthew ***12:29***

Ver. 29. Or else, how can anyone enter into a strong man's house,.... This is another argument of Christ's proving that his casting out of devils could not be by Satan, but by the Spirit of God; for if he did not act by any superior power to Satan's, and such by which he was able to master, overcome, and bind him, he could never

spoil his goods, as he did; or dispossess devils out of the bodies or souls of men: just as if a man should enter into another man's house, who is strong and robust, with a design to spoil his goods, who would never make use of the man himself to do it, and can never be thought to effect it, unless he has a power superior to his, and uses it;

except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house: by the "strong man", is meant the devil, see *Isa 49:24* who is powerful and mighty, as appears from his nature, being an angel, though a fallen one, excelling in strength human creatures; from his names, such as the roaring lion, the great red dragon, leviathan, &c. from the extent of his dominion, here called "his house"; which reaches to the whole posse of devils, and world of men; whence he is called the prince of the power of the air, and the prince of this world, and the god of it; and from his works and actions, in and over the bodies and estates of men, by divine permission; which might be exemplified in the case of Job, and the demoniacs in the time of Christ; and in and over the souls of men, not only over wicked men, but men under a show of religion, as antichrist and his followers; yea, saints themselves, and even over Adam in a state of innocence; but Christ is stronger than he, and attacked him, and dispossessed him of the bodies of men; and restraining him from doing them any hurt, enters into the souls of men, dethrone him, and leads him captive, who led others; and keeps him from doing them any damage; as he will in the latter day "bind" him and shut him up in prison a thousand years; and also "spoils his goods", or "vessels", and "his house"; the palace of Satan, by taking bodies and souls out of his possession; by awakening the conscience, enlightening the mind, working upon the affections, subduing the will, and implanting principles of grace and holiness in the heart; and so making it a fit habitation for God, which spoils it for the devil: in all which, Satan can never be thought to have any hand; and therefore the suggestion that Christ casts out devils by his assistance, even out of the bodies of men, has no show of reason in it.

Matthew 12:30

Ver. 30. He that is not with me, is against me,.... These words chiefly refer to Satan, and are a further proof, that Christ did not cast out devils by him; since they two are as much opposites, as can possibly be; Satan is not on the side of Christ, but an adversary to him; there is an original, and implacable enmity, between the serpent and the seed of the woman; there is an open war between them, and therefore one cannot be thought to lend assistance to the other. They were concerned in different things, had different views and interests, and so took different methods;

and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth: Christ is the good shepherd, that gathers his sheep to himself, and into his fold, by the external ministry of the word, and internal efficacy of his grace; Satan is the wolf, that catches and scatters the sheep, and seeks to kill and destroy them: and since there is such an open war proclaimed and carried on between Christ and the devil, none ought to be neutral; whoever is not on the side of Christ, is reckoned as an enemy; and whoever is not concerned by prayer or preaching, or other means to gather souls to his word and ordinances, and to his church, and to himself, is deemed by him a scatterer of them.

Matthew 12:31

Ver. 31. Wherefore I say unto you,.... This shows, that what follows is occasioned by what the Pharisees had said, concerning the miracles of Christ; imputing them to diabolical influence and assistance, when they were done by the Spirit of God, of which they themselves were conscious;

all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: not unto all men, for there are some, who, as they are never truly convinced of sin, and brought to repentance for it, so they never have the remission of it; but to such to whom God of his free grace has promised, and for whom he has provided this blessing, in the covenant of his grace; for whom the blood of Christ was shed, for the remission of their sins; and who, by the Spirit of God, are made sensible of them, and have repentance unto life given them, and faith in Christ, by which they receive the forgiveness of them: the sense is, that all kind of sin, whether committed more immediately against God, or man, the first or second table of the law, or against any of the divine precepts; be they sins small or great, secret or open, sins of heart, lip, or life, or attended with whatsoever aggravating circumstances; and all kind of blasphemy, or evil speaking of men, or of angels, or of the name of God, but what is hereafter excepted, there is forgiveness of in the grace of God, through the blood of Christ, even for all sorts of men and sinners whatever. The Jews have a saying {z}, that God pardons all sins, "hmzh Nm Uwx, "except lasciviousness"."

But this is not excepted by Christ, only what follows,

but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven unto men: by which is meant, not every ignorant denial of, and opposition to his deity and personality; nor all resistance of him in the external ministry of the word; nor every sin that is knowingly and wilfully committed; but it is a despiteful usage of the Spirit of grace, an opposing, contradicting, and denying the operations wrought, or doctrines revealed by him, against a man's own light and conscience, out of wilful and obstinate malice, on purpose to lessen the glory of God, and gratify his own lusts: such was the sin of the Scribes and Pharisees; who, though they knew the miracles of Christ were wrought by the Spirit of God, yet maliciously and obstinately imputed them to the devil, with a view to obscure the glory of Christ, and indulge their own wicked passions and resentments against him; which sin was unpardonable at that present time, as well as under that dispensation then to come, when the Spirit of God was poured down in a more plenteous manner.

{z} Tanchuma apud Buxtorf. Heb. Florileg. p. 126.

Matthew 12:32

Ver. 32. And whosoever speaketh a word against the son of man,.... By whom is meant, not any man, as Grotius thought, but the Lord Jesus Christ, so often called "the son of man", on account of his human nature, in which he appeared in great meanness and obscurity. Now many might, through ignorance of him, thinking him to be a mere man, and taking up with common fame, speak evil of him, deny him to be the Messiah, reproach him for the meanness of his parentage and education, and for the freedom of his conversation with publicans and sinners; and do many things contrary to his name, as Saul, whilst a Pharisee did, and thought he ought to do; and yet be afterwards convinced of their mistakes, and be brought to a sense and acknowledgment of them, and obtain pardoning grace and mercy, as Saul did, though a blasphemer; and who is an instance of what is here promised,

it shall be forgiven him through the grace of God, the blood and mediation of Christ, under the application of the blessed Spirit.

But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, in the sense before declared,

it shall not be forgiven him: not because the Holy Ghost is greater than Christ; or for want of efficacy in the blood of Christ; or because God cannot pardon it; but because such persons wilfully, maliciously, and obstinately oppose the Spirit of God, without whom there can be no application of pardon made; and remain in hardness of heart, are given up to a reprobate mind, and die in impenitence and unbelief, and so there is no forgiveness for them,

neither in this world, nor in the world to come; that is; they shall never be forgiven, see ***Mr 3:29***. The distinction here used, does not refer to a common one among the Jews, of the Jewish state and the times of the Messiah; but to the present state of life, and that which will be after, or upon death: and it does not suppose there may be forgiveness of other sins, though not of this, in the other world; but strikes at a notion the Jews had, that there are some sins, which repentance and the day of atonement expiate in this life; but there are others, which repentance and the day of atonement do not expiate; and these a man's death expiates, or makes atonement for {a}. The form of confession used by sick persons is the following {b};

"I confess before thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that my cure is in thy hands, and my death is in thy hands; if it be thy good pleasure, heal me with a perfect healing: but if I die, hxylo yttym aht, "let my death be for the pardon", forgiveness, and atonement of all the sins, iniquities, and transgressions, which I have sinned, acted perversely in, and transgressed before thee; and give me my portion in paradise, and justify me "in the world to come", which is hidden for the righteous."

But the sin against the Holy Ghost is such, as is not forgiven, neither before, nor at, nor after death, nor by it: all sins that are forgiven, are forgiven in this world, and that perfectly and at once; and all that are forgiven in this world, there will be a manifestation and declaration of the pardon of them in another; but such sins as are not forgiven here, there will be no declaration of the pardon of them hereafter. In short, the sense is, that the sin against the Holy Ghost never has forgiveness; it is not pardoned now, and consequently there will be no declaration of the pardon of it hereafter. The Jews use the phrase in the same sense {c}; a certain sick man said to his son,

"give me water, and such certain food; but if not, I will not "forgive thee, neither in this world, nor in the world to come"."

That is, I will never forgive thee.

{a} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 86. 1. {b} Seder Tephillot, fol. 333. 2. Ed. Basil. Vid. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 60. 1. {c} Sepher Chasidim: num. 234.

Matthew 12:33

Ver. 33. Either make the tree good, and his fruit good,.... That is, either assert them both good, or

else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: say they are both evil, for the contrary cannot be affirmed with any consistency and propriety: the matter is easy to be determined,

for the tree is known by his fruit; fruit will discover what a tree is, and accordingly judgment may be made. No man will say a tree is good, and its fruit corrupt; or say, that a tree is corrupt, and its fruit good: these are glaring contradictions, and can never be reconciled. The case Christ here puts, is a very easy and familiar one, and is obvious to common sense: the application of it may be made, either to the foregoing instance of Christ's casting out devils, which the Jews ascribed to the help of Satan; and then the sense is, either say I am a good man, and do good works, or that I am an evil man, and do evil works: to say that I do good works, as the casting out of devils must be allowed to be, and yet am an evil man, and do this under satanical influence, is as great an inconsistency, as to say that a corrupt tree brings forth good fruit; either therefore condemn these miracles as evil actions, done by confederacy with Satan; or if you will allow them to be good ones, as you do, ascribe them to the Spirit of God; for these things may as easily be determined, as the cause by its effect, or as a tree is known by its fruit: or else this may be applied unto the Pharisees, who, though wicked men, pretended to do good works; and though they set up for men of religion and holiness, yet did evil things, as their words and actions testified; particularly the blasphemy just now uttered by them, charging the miracles of Christ as done by the assistance of the devil, which discovered the malignity and rottenness of their hearts: and the meaning of Christ is, that they would either both say, and do, that which is right and good; or relinquish their pretensions to the character of good and religious men: nothing can be concluded from hence in favour of free will, or a power in the creature to make himself good; for the word "make", here signifies to "say, affirm, assert", and the like; see ***Joh 5:18***. Though it may be fairly inferred from hence, that a man must first be a good man, ever he can perform good works, truly and properly so called; and that these are fruits and evidences of the inward real goodness of a man; which must be understood not of a few single actions, but of the common, constant series and course of life.

Matthew 12:34

Ver. 34. O generation of vipers,.... Though they boasted of their being the seed of Abraham, yet their immediate ancestors were no other than vipers, deceitful, hurtful, poisonous creatures; and they were exactly like them: for though they made a fair show in the flesh, and outwardly appeared righteous, yet were inwardly full of the poison of wickedness, envy and malice; and which their pestilential breath, their blasphemy against the Spirit, fully discovered; and gave just cause and reason for so severe a reproof, and such resentment, as here made by Christ.

How can ye, being evil, speak good things? This is not to be expected, nor is it commonly and constantly done; an evil man may sometimes speak good things, or which seem to be so; but these are not his common talk; as he is, so, for the most part, is his language; his speech betrays him: and since these men were by nature evil, were destitute of the Spirit and grace of God, had no good thing in them, how should any good thing come out of them? And since they were so full of wickedness, spite and malice, it is no wonder that they belched out such blasphemous expressions concerning the miracles of Christ;

for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh: a phrase much like this is used by the Septuagint, in ***Ec 2:15***. "I spoke abundance", or "much in my heart"; dioto o afrwn ek perisseumatov lalei, "for the fool out of his abundance speaketh": as there is abundance of folly in him, there is much delivered out by him; and where there is abundance of wickedness in the heart, if the grace of God is wanting to restrain it, much of it will come out by the lips; as is a man's heart, ordinarily is his language.

Matthew 12:35

Ver. 35. A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart,.... "A good man", is a regenerated man, one that is renewed by the Spirit of God, a believer in Christ, a sincere lover of him, and one that follows him, wheresoever he goes, and who has the grace of God implanted in him: for "the good treasure the heart", is not what he is naturally possessed of, but what is put into him: and is no other than the superabundant grace of God, or that grace for grace, which he has received out of Christ's fulness, and the rich experience of it he is blessed with: and may well be called a "treasure"; for as a treasure is a collection of riches, so this consists of various graces, each of which is more precious than gold, silver, and precious stones; a "good" one, both from the quality and quantity of it; and "of the heart", though this is left out in many copies, from the seat and subject of it; and out of this the gracious man

bringeth forth good things; tells his experience, speaks of what God has done for his soul; says many things to the glory of the grace of God; of the person, offices, blood, righteousness, and fulness of Christ; and of the operations and influences of the blessed Spirit; and which are pleasant, profitable, useful, and edifying to the saints:

and an evil man, out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. The "evil man", is a man as he was born; who is wholly flesh, carnal, and in a state of nature; destitute of the Spirit, and having no principle of grace in him: "the evil treasure", is the corruption of his nature, the desperate wickedness of his heart; and those swarms of lusts, and all manner of sin that dwell there; from whence are continually proceeding evil and corrupt communications, which not only defile himself, but others; and among the rest, not only vain words and unprofitable talk, but blasphemies against God, Christ, and the blessed Spirit; all which men will be accountable for another day.

Matthew 12:36

Ver. 36. But I say unto you,.... This form of speaking is used, the more strongly to asseverate the truth of what is after said; and the rather, because men are apt to indulge a liberty with their tongues; fancying no great crime is committed, when only words are spoken, and no facts done;

that every idle word that a man shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. By an "idle word" is meant, what the Jews call, hlq hxyv, "light conversation", and ljb rbd, "vain discourse", as the Hebrew Gospel of Munster reads it here; frothy language, unprofitable talk, which, though it does not directly hurt God or man, yet is of no use to speaker or hearer; and yet even this, in the last general and awful judgment, if not forgiven, and repented of, must be accounted for; and much more such horrid blasphemies the Pharisees had vented against Christ, and the Spirit of Christ. The Jews {d} have a saying pretty much like this,

"That even hlq hxyv le, "for any light conversation", which passes between a man and his wife, he shall "be brought to judgment"."

{d} R. Jonah apud L. Capell. in loc.

Matthew 12:37

Ver. 37. For by thy words thou shalt be justified,.... Theophylact seems to take these words to be a passage of Scripture cited by Christ, in proof of what he had said, but does not point to any; nor is any such Scripture to be found. They are rather proverbial expressions, in common use among the Jews; or refer to the usual methods of proceeding in courts of judicature, upon the acknowledgments and confessions of persons.

"Says Resh Lakish {e}, such an one and such an one, they justify; and such an one and such an one, they condemn. R. Eliezer replies, ynwlp hkdzg Nhyrbdm, "by their words such an one and such an one are justified"."

The gloss upon it is,

"upon hearing the difference there is between them, and between their words, they are justified."

Our Lord's meaning is, that not only works and actions, but words of all sorts, will come into account in the day of judgment, and will be evidences for, or against a man, to acquit or condemn him:

and by thy words thou shalt be condemned: according to these, the sentence of justification, or of condemnation, will be pronounced; as these will appear to be evidences for, or against a man's being in a state of grace and righteousness: thus for instance, a man that has spoken for Christ, and has freely confessed that all his hope of justification before God, and acceptance with him, is solely upon the account of the righteousness of Christ imputed; such a man will be declared a justified man according to the tenor of his own words: on the other hand, a man that has spoken hard speeches against Christ, and his righteousness; declaring he has no dependence on it, expects no justification by it; he will be convinced of these ungodly sayings, and out of his own mouth will be condemned. Some have thought, that Christ here strikes at a notion which obtained among the Jews, that little or no account would be taken of a man's words in the day of judgment; provided his life and actions were good, and regular; but whatever were the sentiments of the Pharisees, or of any of Christ's present hearers, it is certain, that it is the opinion of Jewish writers, that words, as well as actions, will be accounted for hereafter: they say {f},

"When a man dies, he lifts up his eyes and sees two come to him, and write before him all that he has done in this world, hymwp Nm qypad hm lkw, "and all that has proceeded out of his mouth", alk le anyd byhyw, "and he gives an account for all"; and a little after, Nylm Nwnya lk, "all the words" of a man in this world, are prepared before him, and not one of them lost; and in the hour he goes to his grave, they are all set before him."

{e} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 30. 1. {f} Zohar in Num. fol. 53. 2.

Matthew **_12:38_**

Ver. 38. Then certain of the Scribes and Pharisees answered,.... Not the same that charged him with casting out devils, by the prince of devils; but others, that were present, as appears from *Lu 11:16* and who do not take upon them to make a proper reply to what he had said, or return an answer to that, but address him on another account; being willing to divert the discourse, and try what they could do with him in another, and more gentle and crafty way; saying, master, not fellow, magician, Samaritan, thou that hast a devil, and casts out devils by Beelzebub, and art a devil, and

Beelzebub himself; but doctor, teacher, allowing him, at least, in a flattering way, that he was an instructor of mankind, though they would not own him to be a prophet, unless he would give such signs, as would make it appear he was one; hence they say,

we would see a sign from thee: that is, a sign from heaven, as they desired at another time, *Mt 16:1* and, as Luke says, they did now, *Lu 11:16* they had seen a sign from him on earth, in the cure of the man that had a withered hand; and another, in dispossessing the devil out of the man, that was blind and dumb; but these they looked upon rather as signs from hell, and done by confederacy with the devil; and therefore desire, or rather, in an imperious way, demand one from heaven, where they thought Satan had not such power, as on earth; and where there could not be such collusion and deception, as they wickedly imagined were in this last action: they seem to require some such things to be done, as were on Mount Sinai, at the giving of the law, when there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud, and the voice of a trumpet, and some visible appearances of the divine majesty; and intimate, that if something of this kind was done, if there was any visible and miraculous appearance in the heavens, produced by him, they should believe him to be the prophet that was spoken of, and the true Messiah; but if not, should give no credit to him: however, this is to be learned from hence, that the Jews, in Christ's time, expected signs and wonders to be wrought by the Messiah, in proof of his being so, though now they reject them as needless {g}.

{g} Maimon. Hilch. Melachim. c. 11. sect. 3.

Matthew 12:39

Ver. 39. But he answered and said unto them,.... Not to the Pharisees, who were unworthy of an answer from him; having, in such an imperious manner, and with a sole view to tempt him, and after such miracles were wrought by him, required of him a sign from heaven; but to the multitude, the throng of people gathered thick together on this occasion, see *Mt 12:45* he turns himself from the Scribes and Pharisees, to the common people, and says to them concerning the former,

an evil and adulterous generation; not only in a spiritual sense, being degenerated from the faith, religion, and piety of their ancestors; but literally, which appeared not only in their polygamy, and frequent divorces on trivial occasions, but by criminal conversation with other women; see ***Joh 8:9*** and this, with the Jews themselves, is a character of the generation in which the Messiah comes: for they say {h},

"that just when the Messiah comes, or in the age the son of David comes, "impudence shall be increased", corn and wine shall be dear, the government shall be heretics, twnzl hyhy deww tyb, "and the synagogue shall become a brothel house"."

Their meaning is, that the chief magistrates should be Sadducees, and those that pretended to religion and holiness would be adulterers, which was now the case. Their writings {i} frequently speak of the increase and abounding of adulteries, under the second temple, and about this time; which obliged Jochanan ben Zaccai and the sanhedrim, to leave off the use of the bitter waters.

Seeketh after a sign; this is perfectly Talmudic language, the language of the Jews {k}.

"The disciples of R. Jose ben Kismai, asked him, when the Son of David came? He replied, I am afraid, lest twa ynmm wvqbt, "ye should seek of me a sign"; they say unto him, we will not "seek of thee a sign"."

This the Jews sought of Christ, time after time; not content with one, sought another, though such wonderful ones were wrought, which most fully demonstrated him to be the Messiah; and therefore he would not indulge this temper in them; but declared, that

there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. Not that no miracles should afterwards be wrought amongst them; for, after this, many wondrous works were done by Christ; but no such signs should be given they desired, not one from heaven; but one particularly should be given them, out of the earth, and should be, not for their conviction, but condemnation; and would seem very much like that which was done to the prophet Jonas, or Jonah; for so is his name in the Hebrew language, the other being the Greek termination of it.

{h} Misn. Sota c. 9. sect. 15. T. Bab. Sanhed. fol. 97. 1. {i} Misn. Sota, c. 9.

sect. 9. & Maimon. Hilch. Sota, c. 3. sect. 19. {k} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 98. 1. so Nmyo vqbm, "seeketh a sign", Shemot Rabba, Parash. 9. fol. 97. 2.

Matthew **12:40**

Ver. 40. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly,.... Or "in the belly of a great fish", as is said, ***Jon 1:17*** for that it was a whale, is not there said, nor is it certain it was; nor from the smallness of its swallow, is it thought probable it should; nor does the word here used, necessarily imply one, but some large fish; nor are there whales in the Phoenician Sea: it might be a kind of a sea dog, called Carcharias, and sometimes Lamia, or Lamina, from its vast swallow; in which whole men; even in coats of mail, have been found. However, be it what it will, Jonas was three days and three nights in the belly of it; which agrees with the account in the above mentioned place, and is the sign Christ speaks of in the foregoing verse; and a very great sign and miracle it was, that being swallowed down by such a fish, he should remain in the belly of it three days and three nights, as one dead; for, without a miracle, he could not have lived an hour; and on the third day, as one raised from the dead, be cast out of it upon the dry land; which was a very eminent type of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, as appears by what follows. The Jews reckon up several wonders or miracles in this case of Jonah's; as that a fish was prepared to swallow him up, and he not drowned in the sea; and that this was prepared for him from the creation of the world; that he should be three days and three nights in the fish's belly, and be alive; and that he should retain his senses and his understanding, so as to be able to pray: they represent him also as if he was in the state of the dead {l}, and that the fish itself was dead, and was quickened again. According to Josephus, after he had been carried 250 miles in the Hellespont of the Euxine Sea, he was cast ashore {m}.

So shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. That Christ means himself by the "son of man", there is no reason to doubt; and his being laid in a tomb, dug out of a rock, is sufficient to answer this phrase, "the heart of the earth", in distinction from the surface of it; but some difficulty arises about the time of his continuing there, and the prediction here made agreeable to the type: for it was on the sixth day of the week, we commonly call "Friday", towards the close, on the day of the preparation for the sabbath, and when the sabbath drew on, that the body of

Christ was laid in the sepulchre; where it lay all the next day, which was the sabbath of the Jews, and what we commonly call "Saturday"; and early on the first of the week, usually called "Sunday", or the Lord's day, he rose from the dead; so that he was but one whole day, and part of two, in the grave. To solve this difficulty, and set the matter in a clear light, let it be observed, that the three days and three nights, mean three natural days, consisting of day and night, or twenty four hours, and are what the Greeks call nucyhmera, "night days"; but the Jews have no other way of expressing them, but as here; and with them it is a well known rule, and used on all occasions, as in the computation of their feasts and times of mourning, in the observance of the passover, circumcision, and divers purifications, that wlwkk Mwyh tuqm, "a part of a day is as the whole" {n}: and so, whatever was done before sun setting, or after, if but an hour, or ever so small a time, before or after it, it was reckoned as the whole preceding, or following day; and whether this was in the night part, or day part of the night day, or natural day, it mattered not, it was accounted as the whole night day: by this rule, the case here is easily adjusted; Christ was laid in the grave towards the close of the sixth day, a little before sun setting, and this being a part of the night day preceding, is reckoned as the whole; he continued there the whole night day following, being the seventh day; and rose again early on the first day, which being after sun setting, though it might be even before sun rising, yet being a part of the night day following, is to be esteemed as the whole; and thus the son of man was to be, and was three days and three nights in the grave; and which was very easy to be understood by the Jews; and it is a question whether Jonas was longer in the belly of the fish.

{l} R. David Kimchi & Jarchi, in Jonah i. 17. & ii. 1. Zohar in Exod. fol. 20. 3. & 78. 3. {m} Antiq. 1. 9. c. 18. {n} T. Hieros. Pesach. fol. 31. 2. T. Bab. Moed. Katon, fol. 16. 2. 17. 2. 19. 2. & 20. 2. Bechorot, fol. 20. 2. & 21. 1, Nidda, fol. 33. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 7. sect. 1, 2, 3. Aben Ezra in Lev. xii. 3.

Matthew *12:41*

Ver. 41. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment,.... Alluding either to the custom and practice of witnesses, who rise up from their seats, and stand, when they give in their testimonies in a court of judicature; or else, referring to the time of the general resurrection from the dead, at the last day, when these men shall rise from the dead, and stand in judgment with this generation; shall rise when they do, and stand before the judgment seat together, and be against them,

and shall condemn them; not as judges of them, but by their example and practices, which will be brought above board, and observed as an aggravation of the guilt and condemnation of the Jews: so the lives and conversations of the saints condemn the wicked now, and will do hereafter: in this sense the word is used in the Talmud {o}; where having related how Hillell, though a poor man, and R. Eleazar, though a rich man, studied in the law, and Joseph, though youthful, gay, and beautiful, withstood the importunities of his mistress, it is observed, that Hillell byyxm, "condemned" the poor; and R. Eleazar ben Harsum condemned the rich; and Joseph condemned the wicked: in like manner, the Ninevites will condemn the Jews,

because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; a mere man, a single prophet, a stranger to these men, who only preached, and wrought no miracle among them, and his stay with them was very short; whereas the men of this generation had the Son of God "sent" to them, had the ministry of his apostles, and of John the Baptist, and a variety of miracles wrought among them; and all this for a series and course of years, and yet remained impenitent: the chief aggravation of their impenitence, and what made it the more astonishing was, that so great a person was in the midst of them;

and behold, a greater than Jonas is here; meaning himself, who was greater in person, office, doctrine, miracles, life, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead. The Ninevites, though a Heathenish people, having but forty days allowed them to repent in, upon Jonas's preaching, repented immediately; whereas the Jews, though God's: professing people, and having forty years, from Christ's resurrection, allowed them to repent in, yet did not at all; and though the repentance of the Ninevites was but an external one, in dust and ashes, yet it was what secured them from temporal ruin; as the Jews would have been saved from the destruction that came upon their temple, city, and nation, had they repented but as they did.

{o} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 35. 2.

Matthew **_12:42_**

Ver. 42. The queen of the south,.... Called the queen of Sheba, *1Ki 10:1*. Sheba was one of the sons of Joktan, a grandchild of Arphaxad, who settled in the southern parts of Arabia: hence this queen is called the queen of the south. Sheba is by the Targumist {p} called Zemargad: and this queen the queen of Zemargad: she goes by different names. According to some, her name was Maqueda {q}, and, as others say, Balkis {r}: a Jewish chronologer {s} tells us, that the queen of Sheba, who is called Nicolaa, of the kingdom of Jaman, or the south, came to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, and gave him much riches: and Josephus {t} calls her Nicaulis, queen of Egypt and Ethiopia; of whom it is here said, that she

shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: the meaning is, as before; that she shall rise from the dead, and stand as a witness against that generation at the day of judgment, and, by her example and practices, which will then be produced, condemn them, or aggravate their condemnation:

for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth; an hyperbolical expression, meaning a great way off from a far country, a very distant part of the world from Jerusalem, hmlv tmkx ewmvl, "to hear the wisdom of Solomon"; the very phrase used by the above Jewish {u} writer.

And behold, a greater than Solomon is here; one that was infinitely greater than Solomon was, in everything; so particularly in that, in which he excelled others, and on the account of which the queen of the south came unto him, namely, wisdom: for he is the wisdom of God, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The Jews themselves {w} own, that the king, meaning the Messiah, that shall be raised up of the seed of David, hmlvm rty hyhy hmkx leb, "shall be a greater master of wisdom", or "wiser than Solomon". Now what an aggravation of the condemnation of the Jews will this be another day, that a Gentile woman, living in a foreign and distant land, should, upon the fame of the wisdom of Solomon, leave her own kingdom and country, and come to Jerusalem, to hear his wise discourses about things natural, civil, and moral; and yet the Jews, who had a greater than Solomon in the midst of them, and had no need to take much pains to come to the sight and hearing of him, yet rejected him as the Messiah, blasphemed his miracles, and despised his ministry; though it was concerned about things of a spiritual and evangelic nature, and the eternal welfare of immortal souls.

{p} In 1 Chron. i. 9. & 2 Chron. ix. 1. {q} Ludolph. Hist. Aethiop. 1. 2. c. 3. & not. in Claud. Confess. sect. 1. {r} Pocock. Specimen Hist. Arab. p. 59. {s} Juchasin, fol. 136. 1. {t} Antiqu. 1. 8. c. 2. {u} Juchasin, fol. 136. 1. {w} Maimon. Hilchot. Teshuba, c. 9. sect. 2.

Matthew 12:43

Ver. 43. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man,.... By "the unclean" spirit, is meant Satan, the old serpent, the devil; who by the Jews, is wont to be called as here, abaom xwr, "the unclean spirit" {x}; and that, because he is by sin become so, though he was not so originally; is the cause of uncleanness in men, and delights in unclean persons, places, and things: his "going out of a man", is not to be understood of his being dispossessed of the bodies of men; nor of the ejection of him, and his going by force, through the power of divine grace, out of the souls of men; but either of his leaving the Jews for a while, in some sort, whilst Christ and the Gospel continued among them; and of his going out of the Scribes and Pharisees; not really, but putting on another form, appearing as an angel of light, and under the guise of holiness and righteousness: and so he may be said to go out of men, when any outward reformation is made in them; and they take up a profession of religion, though destitute of the grace of God:

he walketh through dry places; referring to a prevailing notion, that unclean spirits walk in, and haunt, desert and desolate places; and may have regard to the Gentiles, among whom Satan might go, seeking rest and satisfaction among them, in their idolatries and other wickedness, till he was there also disturbed by the Gospel sent among them: or by these "dry places" may be meant the saints, whom he takes his walks among, in order, by tempting, to distress them, being secure of pharisaical persons: and these may be so called, not for what they are in themselves; not because the sun of righteousness shines upon them: or because thirsty and desirous of divine and spiritual things; much less as if they had no moisture, since they have a well of living water in them, and are watered by the Lord; or were unfruitful, as dry places usually are; but for what they were to the unclean spirit, there being nothing in their grace, and the exercise of it, and in their spiritual performances, grateful to him; nothing to quench his thirst, and satisfy his sinful appetite; nor were there in them the mire and dirt of iniquity to roll in, as in unregenerate persons: wherefore he is represented as seeking rest, and findeth none: his view in walking in these places, or among such persons, is rest; not the rest of the saints, he seeks their disturbance, but his own rest; which is to do all the mischief he can, by stirring up corruption, tempting to sin, and discouraging the exercise of grace; but is not able to do so much mischief as he would, and so cannot find the rest he seeks for, nor satisfy his envious, spiteful, and malicious temper: and this being the case, it follows,

{x} Zohar in Gen. fol. 77. 2.

Matthew 12:44

Ver. 44. Then he said, I will return into my house,.... Into the land of Judea, particularly into the Scribes and Pharisees, outward professors of religion; who, notwithstanding their outward reformation, and great pretensions to holiness, are Satan's house still: he has a property in them, a claim upon them; and though he says,

from whence I came out, yet he never really and properly quitted it, only seemingly, and in appearance; and therefore his returning is only throwing off the guise, and reassuming his former character, as a vicious and unclean spirit.

And when he is come, he findeth it empty: not empty of sin: this puts me in mind of a passage in the Misna {y}, where it is said, that on a fast day,

"when they stand in prayer, they cause to descend, or go before the ark, an old man, who is used (to prayer,) whose children, Mqyr wtybw, "and his house, are empty", so that his heart is perfect in prayer,"

or entirely at leisure for it. The commentators {z} on that phrase, "his house is empty", note, that he was empty of sin, and free from it, and one concerning whom an evil report had not gone forth from his youth: but such was not this house; it was empty of God, of the true knowledge of him, of the fear of him, and love to him; of Christ, of faith in him, affection for him, and hope on him; of the Spirit of God, and of his graces, and of spiritual, internal religion, and powerful godliness.

Swept; not with the Spirit of grace convincing of sin, righteousness, and judgment; but with the besom of an outward reformation:

and garnished; not with internal grace, which makes saints all glorious within; but with secret lusts and corruptions, which rendered it an agreeable habitation for this unclean spirit; and at most, with some show of morality, a little negative holiness, or abstinence from outward acts of sin, an observance of some external rites and ceremonies, and a few hypocritical performances of fasting and prayer; which Satan can very well bear with, so long as the heart is empty of spiritual grace, and till an opportunity offers of throwing off all appearance of good.

{y} Taanith, c. 2. sect. 2. {z} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Matthew 12:45

Ver. 45. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits,.... This is said in allusion to, and in imitation of the seven spirits before the throne; or may denote a large number of devils, seven being a number of perfection; or else the various corruptions of a man's heart, the swarms of internal lusts which are there stirred up by Satan;

more wicked than himself, as these are more pernicious to man, than the devil himself:

and they enter in and dwell there; that is, though they were there before, now they exert and show themselves, and such men appear to be under the power and government of them; when leaving their seeming religion and holiness, they return like the dog to the vomit, and the swine to the wallowing in the mire.

And the last state of that man is worse than the first: he becomes more wicked than ever he was, before he made pretensions to religion; as such apostates generally are more extravagant in sinning, and are seldom or ever recovered by repentance, and their last end is eternal damnation; see ***2Pe 2:20***

even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation. This parable fitly suited them, the Scribes and Pharisees, and the men of that generation, from whom in some measure the unclean spirit might be said to depart through the doctrine, and miracles of Christ, to go into the Gentile world; but being followed there with the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles, returns to the Jews, and fills them with more malice, blasphemy, and blindness, than ever, which issued in their utter ruin and destruction; of which this parable may be justly thought to be prophetical.

Matthew 12:46

Ver. 46. While he yet talked to the people,.... Upon these subjects, which so nearly concerned the Scribes and Pharisees, and which could not fail of drawing upon him their resentment and ill will.

Behold his mother and his brethren: by "his mother" is meant Mary; but who are "his brethren", is not so easy to say: some are of opinion, that Joseph had children by Mary, who are here meant; but it is more generally believed, that these were either the sons of Joseph by a former wife, whose name is said to be Escha; or rather, Mary's sister's sons, the wife of Cleophas, the cousin-germans of Christ, it being usual with the Jews to call such kindred brethren; and so they might be James, Joses, Simon, and Judas: these

stood without: for Christ was within doors, not in a synagogue, as Piscator thought, but in an house; see *Mt 13:1* and his mother and brethren stood without doors, either because they could not get in for the throng of the people; or because they would not, it not being proper to make all within acquainted with what they had to say to him:

desiring to speak with him; not with a pure view to interrupt him in his work, or to divert him from it, lest he should overspend himself; nor from a principle of ambition and vain glory, to show that they were related to him, and that he was at their beck and command; but rather, to observe unto him the danger he exposed himself to, by the freedom he took with the Pharisees in his discourses, and probably to acquaint him with some conspiracies formed against him.

Matthew 12:47

Ver. 47. Then one said unto him,.... Either one of his auditors, or, as the Ethiopic version has it, one "of his disciples": the other evangelists intimate, that more than one acquainted him with it; which is easily reconciled: for, upon his mother and brethren calling to him, as Mark says they did; first one and then another, and more, might apprise him of it, and especially as he did not immediately go out unto them.

Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee: whether this message was carried at the request of the mother and brethren of Christ, and delivered in a simple manner, and with an honest intention; or whether it was officiously done, and with a design to interrupt him, and to try him, whether he would prefer his natural relations, and their society and conversation, to the spiritual work in which he was engaged, in doing good to the souls of men, is not certain; the latter seems probable, from the following words, and conduct of Christ. Some copies read, "desiring to see thee".

Matthew 12:48

Ver. 48. But he answered and said unto him that told him,.... Of his mother and brethren being without doors, desiring, and waiting to speak to him,

Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? These questions are put, not as if he himself was ignorant who were his mother or his brethren; or as suggesting as if he had none; or as denying that these were in such a relation to him; or as casting any slight upon them; or as intending to teach men disrespect to parents and kindred, according to the flesh; but as displeased with the man, or men, for interrupting him in his work; and to let them know, that the business of his heavenly Father was preferred by him to any his natural relations could have with him; and that he might have an opportunity of pointing out who were his relations in a spiritual sense.

Matthew 12:49

Ver. 49. And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples,.... By whom are meant, not only the twelve, but all others present, who truly believed in him, both men and women; and who might sit near him and together, and whom, by this motion of his hand, he pointed out as his spiritual relations, to the multitude that sat round him:

and said, behold my mother, and my brethren; in whose hearts he was formed, and who were the children of God by adopting grace, and so his brethren; and were as dear to him as his mother and brethren. It is reasonable to suppose, that when he said, "behold my mother", and, as in the following verse, "sister"; he might stretch forth his hand particularly, toward the pious and religious women that believed in him, and ministered to him of their substance, who might be now present; such as Mary Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and others; since these are mentioned by Luke in the same chapter in which this passage stands in his Gospel; and when he said "behold my brethren", he might point directly to the twelve, and the rest of the men that believed in him, and followed him.

Matthew 12:50

Ver. 50. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father,.... This is not to be understood of a perfect obedience to the will of God, revealed in his righteous law; for since this cannot be performed by any mere man, no one could be in such a spiritual relation to Christ: but of the obedience of faith to the will of God, revealed in the Gospel; which is to believe in Christ, and have everlasting life; see ***Joh 6:40***. This is the will of Christ's Father,

which is in heaven, and which is good news from heaven, to sinners on earth; and which Christ came down from heaven to do, and to declare to the children of men: such as "hear the word of God and do it", as Luke says, ***Lu 8:21*** that is, hear the Gospel, understand and believe it, and become obedient to the faith of it; these are in this near manner related to Christ, evidentially and openly, as well as those who were now present:

the same is my brother, and sister, and mother; as dear to me, as such are to those, to whom they stood thus related in the flesh: and these natural relations serve to convey some ideas of that relation, union, nearness, and communion, there are between Christ and his people; all these relative characters may be observed in the book of Solomon's Song, to which our Lord may be reasonably thought to have respect; see ***So 3:11***.

Matthew ***13:1***

Ver. 1. The same day Jesus went out of the house,.... Where he had been preaching, and working miracles: where this house was, is not certain; it seems to have been in one of the cities of Galilee, probably Capernaum, since that was by the sea coast: the reason of his going out of the house was, either to converse with his mother and brethren, as they desired; or to withdraw himself from company, and take some refreshment by the sea side; or because it would not hold the people, and therefore he quitted it for a more convenient place. The time he went out of it, was the same day he had cast the devil out of the man blind and dumb, and had delivered himself so freely concerning the Scribes and Pharisees, who had blasphemously ascribed that miracle to the assistance of Satan; and the same day his mother and brethren came to see him, and speak to him.

And sat by the sea side; either as weary, and for his refreshment, or in order to preach to the people; for, Mark says, "he began again to teach by the sea side", ***Mr 4:1***. This was the sea of Galilee, sometimes called the sea of Tiberias.

Matthew ***13:2***

Ver. 2. And great multitudes were gathered unto him,.... Some on one account, and some on another; some to see his person, others his miracles; some healing for their bodies, and others for their souls; some for the loaves, and others to hear him preach; and of these there were several sorts, as the following parable shows.

So that he went into a ship: both for his own advantage, that he might not be crowded, and pressed by the people, and have more room, and a freer air to speak in, and for theirs, that they might both see and hear him better.

And sat, and the whole multitude stood on the shore; as was the then custom of the Jewish doctors and hearers, the one to sit, and the other to stand. See Gill on "Mt 5:1". Christ sat upon the deck of the ship; or perhaps this ship was no other than an open boat, which was put to sea, some little distance from the shore; upon which the people stood in great numbers, with much convenience and attention.

Ver. 3. And he spake many things unto them in parables,.... For the parables of the sower, and the different sorts of ground the seed fell in, of the wheat and tares, of the grain of mustard seed, of the leaven in three measures of meal, of the treasure hid in a field, of the pearl of great price, of the net cast into the sea, and of the householder, were all delivered at this time. This way of speaking by parables was much in use among the eastern nations, and particularly the Jews. R. Meir was very famous among them for this way of teaching: they say {a},

"that when R. Meir died, Mylvm ylvwm wljb, "they that were skilled in, and used parables, ceased"."

The commentators {b} on this passage say,

"that he preached a third part tradition, and a third part mystical discourse, yltm atlytw, "and a third part parables":"

which method of discoursing was judged both pleasant and profitable, and what served to raise the attention of the hearer, and to fix what was delivered the more firmly in their minds: what was our Lord's reason for using them, may be seen in *Mt 13:13*. He begins with the parable of the sower. The design of which is to set forth the nature of the word of God, the work and business of the ministers of it, the different success of the preaching of it, and the fruitfulness of it; and to show when it is truly received, and the various degrees of fruit it produces; that the efficacy of it depends on the grace of God, which makes the heart good, and fit to receive it; and how few they be which hear the word to any spiritual advantage and benefit; and how far persons may go in hearing, and yet fall short of the grace of God; and therefore no dependence is to be had on the external hearing of the word.

Behold, a sower went forth to sow; Luke adds, "his seed"; as does also Munster's Hebrew Gospel here; and Mark introduces the parable thus, "hearken, behold!" it being a matter of great importance and concern, which is expressed by this parable, it deserves the most diligent attention. By "the sower" is meant "the son of man", as may be learnt from the explanation of another parable, *Mt 13:37* which is Jesus Christ himself, who is often so called on account of his human nature; and may the rather be thought to be intended here, since the seed he sowed is called "his seed"; meaning the Gospel, of which he is the author, publisher, sum and substance; and since he is, by way of eminency, called o speirwn, "the sower"; which must be understood of him as a prophet, or preacher of the word, who was eminently sent of God, and richly qualified for such an office, and was most diligent in it, and yet his success was but small. Indeed, every minister of the Gospel may be called a sower, who bears precious seed, sows spiritual things, and though in tears, he shall not return empty, but shall reap in joy, and bring his sheaves with him. This sower "went forth" from his own house to his field; which, as applied to Christ, may intend his incarnation, his coming into this world by the assumption of human nature, his appearance in the public ministry, in the land of Judea, and his going forth still in his ministers, and by his Spirit, in the preaching of the Gospel; and, as applied to the preachers of the word, may be explained of their commission, of their being sent, and of their going forth into the field of the world, preaching the Gospel every where. The end of the sower's going forth is to "sow his seed": by "his seed" is meant the word, the word of God; see ***Mr 4:14*** so called, because of the choiceness and excellency of it in itself, that grain which is reserved for seed being usually the best of the kind; and because of its smallness, it being mean and contemptible in the eyes of those, who know not the nature of it; and because of the generative virtue it has, though not without a divine influence. Nor does it bring forth fruit, unless it is sown in the heart, as seed in the earth; where its operation is secret, its growth and increase gradual, and its fruitfulness different. By "sowing", is meant preaching; which, as sowing, requires knowledge and skill, and an open and liberal hand; keeping back nothing that is profitable, a declaring the same doctrine in one place as another; and designs a constant ministration of it, notwithstanding all discouragements, and a patient waiting for success.

{a} Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. {b} Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. e Talmud. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 38. 2.

Matthew 13:4

Ver. 4. And when he sowed,.... Or, "as he sowed", as the other evangelists; that is, "whilst he was sowing", some seeds fell; either out of his hand, or out of the cart drawn by oxen; hence the {c} Talmudists distinguish between dy tlwpm, "the falling of the hand", or what falls out of the hand; and Myrwwv tlwpm, "the falling of the oxen", or what falls from them; where the gloss is,

"in some places they sow the grain with the hand; and in other places they put the seed on a cart full of holes, and oxen draw the cart on the ploughed land, and it falls upon it."

By the wayside; by the common road, or private paths, which led through corn fields, in which Christ and his disciples walked, *Mt 12:1* and which being beaten and trodden hard, the seed must lie open on it, and so be liable to be trampled upon by men, or devoured by the fowls of the air; and designs such hearers as are careless, negligent, and inattentive, who hear without understanding, judgment, and affection; see *Mt 13:19*

and the fowls came and devoured them; the other evangelists say, "the fowls of the air"; and so the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and some copies; and mean the devils; so called, because their habitation is in the air; hence they are said to be "the power of the air": and because of their ravenous and devouring nature, their swiftness to do mischief, and their flocking in multitudes, where the word is preached, to hinder its usefulness, as fowls do, where seed is sowing. Satan, and his principalities, and powers, rove about in the air, come down on earth, and seek whom they may devour, and often mix themselves in religious assemblies, to do what mischief they can; see ***Job 1:6***.

{c} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 105. 2.

Matthew 13:5

Ver. 5. Some fell upon stony places,.... Such a place as the Jews call tyolwx, a barren, stony place, a place from whence, they say, they take stones, and elo tyb, and which heyrzl ywar wnya, "is not fit for sowing" {d}; and such were those places and spots of ground, that some of these seeds fell upon; and design such hearers, in whom the natural hardness of their hearts continues, and who remain unbroken by the word, and are without any true sense of sin, and repentance for it.

Where they had not much earth, to cover them and take root in: this is expressive of such persons who have slight convictions of sin, and awakenings of the natural conscience; some little, light, and speculative notions of the word, in the understanding and judgment; some flashes of natural affection for it, and outward expressions of delight and pleasure in it; some show of grace, and a form of godliness, but no real heart work.

And forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth; to strike their roots downwards: and through the reflection of the heat, upon the rocks and stones, they quickly broke through the thin surface of the earth over them, and appeared above ground before the usual time of the springing up of seed: which may not only denote the immediate reception of the word by these hearers, and their quick assent to it; but their sudden and hasty profession of it, without taking due time to consider the nature and importance thereof; and the seeming cheerfulness in which they did both receive and profess it; though it was only outward and hypocritical, and more on account of the manner of preaching it, than the word itself, and through a selfish principle in them; and did not arise from any real experience of the power of it on their souls, or true spiritual pleasure in it: nor could it be otherwise, since their stony hearts were not taken away, nor hearts of flesh given them; wherefore the word had no place in them, and made no real impression on them; they remained dead in trespasses and sins; the word was not the savour of life unto life unto them, or the Spirit that giveth life; they did not become living and lively stones; they continued as insensible as ever of their state and condition by nature, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, of the danger they were in, and of their need of Christ, and salvation by him; they were as hard, and obdurate, and as inflexible, as ever, without any real contrition for sin, or meltings of soul through the influence of the love and grace of God; and as backward as ever to submit to the righteousness of Christ, being stout hearted, and far from it; and being no more cordially willing to be subject to the sceptre of his kingdom, or to serve him in righteousness and holiness, than they ever were; for the word falling upon them, made no change in them; their hearts were as hard as ever, notwithstanding the seeming and hasty reception of it; though they did not refuse to hearken to the word externally, did not put away the shoulder, or stop their ears, yet their hearts were still like an adamant stone: nothing but the mighty power of God, and his efficacious grace, can break the rocky heart in pieces; or give an heart of flesh, a sensible, soft, and flexible one, with which a man truly repents of sin, believes in Christ, and becomes subject to him.

{d} T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 32. 1. & Gloss. in ib. & Bava Bathra, fol. 156. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

Matthew 13:6

Ver. 6. And when the sun was up,.... Some time, and its heat was increasing, and it began to shine out hot, and beat with some vehemency and strength; which may denote some sore temptation, or severe affliction, or fiery trial of persecution and tribulation; see *Mt 13:21* for this is not to be understood of the glorious light of the Gospel, which, though very comfortable and refreshing, as well as illuminating to good men, is very distressing and tormenting to carnal minds; they cannot bear its truths and doctrines; this is the fire which comes out of the mouth of God's faithful witnesses, and torments them that dwell on the earth, and devours their enemies, *Re 11:5*. And it, moreover, like the sun, has different effects on different objects; as the sun hardens clay, and melts wax, so the Gospel is to the hardening of some, and softening of others; to the one it is the savour of life unto life, and to the other the savour of death unto death; but this cannot be intended, because the word by these hearers is first received with joy. Nor is Christ the sun of righteousness meant, who arises with healing in his wings, and gives grace and glory to his people; but the sun of persecution and affliction, in which sense the metaphor is used, in ***So 1:6*** the heat of which the church patiently bore, though she was made black with it: but these hearers think it strange that such a fiery trial should befall them; wherefore, as they take up their profession in haste, they as quickly drop it; see ***Re 7:16***.

They were scorched, and because they had not root, they withered away: they were offended with what they met with, for the sake of Christ, and the profession of his word; and therefore, not being rooted in him, nor in the love of God, nor having the root of the matter, true grace, in themselves, or, as Luke says, "lacked moisture", of divine grace, of the dews and waterings of it, fell away finally and totally. This is no instance of the apostasy of real saints, or any proof of true believers falling away finally and totally; since these were not rooted, and grounded in the everlasting and unchangeable love of God, were not interested in it, or were partakers of the effects of it; had they been so, they could never have been separated from it; tribulation, distress, and persecution could never have done it; none of these would ever have moved them; had they had the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, they would have gloried in tribulation: nor were they united to Christ, rooted and built up in him; had they, they would have continued to have derived life and nourishment from him; in him the life of believers is hid, and because he lives they live also; as long as there is life in the root, the branches will not die; he is the root that bears the branches, the root of the righteous that yields fruit, and is never moved: nor had these the truth of grace, which is an incorruptible seed, a well of living water springing up to everlasting life; had they, they could never have withered away; to such God gives more grace, he himself is as the dew unto them, and he waters them every moment.

Matthew 13:7

Ver. 7. And some fell among thorns,.... On a spot of ground which was full of the roots of thorns, and briars, which was not cleared of them as it should be. We often read {e} of huwqtnv hdv, "a field cleared of thorns"; but such was not this piece of ground, it was overrun with them, not on the surface of the earth, but within it: for it follows,

and the thorns sprung up: naturally, being neither sown nor planted; either before the seed, or, at least, as soon; and however grew faster, and higher,

and choked them; so that they came to nothing; hence the advice, "sow not among thorns", ***Jer 4:3*** and a lost kindness, or what is bestowed in vain, is expressed in this proverbial manner {f}, yrzyxa aydvw Kytwbyj hlwqv, "thy beneficence is taken away, and cast among thorns": these point out such hearers who seemed to be contrite, to have the low ground of their hearts broken up, their consciences tender, and to have a true sense of sin, as well as to be outwardly reformed; and yet inwardly were full of the thorns of sinful lusts, particularly of the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, the lusts of other things, and the pleasures of this life, which rendered the word useless and unfruitful; see *Mt 13:22* all which are comparable to thorns; it is hardly possible to be in the midst of, and meddle with these, without being scratched by them; they pierce, afflict, and wound, even where they have not their greatest power and influence; and where they do prevail, and get the ascendant, as they are fruitless themselves, they make others so too; they choke the word, and make that, and all ordinances, and opportunities, useless, and unserviceable. Thorns are a part of the earth's curse for the sin of man; and such persons in whom thorny cares and lusts prevail, as they are like unto the earth which beareth thorns, so, as that, they are rejected, and nigh to cursing, whose end is to be burned in everlasting flames of divine wrath and fury, ***Heb 6:8***.

{e} Misn. Sheviith, c. 4. sect. 2. T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 34. 3. & 35. 1. T. Bab. Bechorot, fol. 34. 2. {f} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 63. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 83. 1. Cetubot, fol. 53. 2. & Betza, fol. 29. 2.

Matthew ***13:8***

Ver. 8. But others fell into good ground,.... Not beaten and trodden by the feet of men, nor stony, nor thorny, but well broke up, manured, and tilled; which designs good, honest hearted hearers who become so by the Spirit and grace of God; who with a spiritual understanding, experience, savour, and relish, what they hear; see *Mt 13:23*

and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold: some seeds produced an hundred, others sixty, and others thirty. The first of these especially was a large increase, but what was sometimes had, and which Isaac received in Gerar, in the land of the Philistines, *Ge 26:12* and is what Pliny says {g} of Byzacium, a country of the Lybiphoenicians, that it yielded an hundred fold to its husbandmen; and of such fruitfulness was the land of Israel, of which the Jewish doctors say some things incredible: they tell us a story {h} of

"one that sowed a measure of vetches, or pease, Nyao twam vlv hvew, "and it produced three hundred measures"; they say unto him, the Lord hath begun to bless thee, &c."

Here, in the parable, these various increases intend the different degrees of fruitfulness in gracious souls; for though the fruits of grace, in believers, are of the same quality, yet not of the same quantity. Some believers are grown to a greater maturity than others; some are but little children, some are young men, some are fathers.

{g} Nat. Hist. 1. 5. c. 4. {h} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 20. 2.

Matthew ***13:9***

Ver. 9. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. Not externally only, but internally; he that has ears given him to hear, so as to understand, let him make use of them, and seriously consider of, and diligently attend to the use and importance of this parable. It is a way of speaking used by Christ, when anything of moment was delivered, and not so easy to be understood, on purpose to quicken the attention of his auditors, and stir up in them a desire of understanding what was said; which effect this had upon his disciples; see ***Mr 4:10***.

Matthew ***13:10***

Ver. 10. And the disciples came, and said unto him,.... Not the twelve only, but others that were about him, as Mark says, who also were his disciples, and believed in him: these, when he was alone, came nearer to him, who, whilst he was preaching to the people, were at some little distance from him, either in the ship, or on the shore, though within the hearing of him, and addressed him after this manner;

why speakest thou unto them in parables? not that this way of speaking was new and surprising to them; but because it was not easily understood, especially not by the common people, without an explanation, which, as yet, Christ had not given: and indeed the parable was not understood by the disciples themselves; who put this question, not only for the sake of the multitude, but for their own also, hoping to be favoured with the meaning of it.

Matthew ***13:11***

Ver. 11. He answered, and said unto them,.... Christ was always ready to give an answer to his inquiring disciples, concerning his ministry, and his conduct in it; which shows great respect to them, and condescension in him:

because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: by the "kingdom of heaven", is meant the Gospel, which treats of the kingdom of heaven, and of things pertaining to it; of the saints' meetness for it, which is the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Spirit; and of their right to it, which lies in the justifying righteousness of Christ. The "mysteries" of it intend the sublime doctrines thereof; such as relate to the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, to the incarnation of Christ, and the union of the two natures, human and divine, in him, eternal predestination, redemption by Christ, satisfaction by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and pardon through his blood, the resurrection from the dead, &c. things, though clearly revealed, yet may have difficulties attending them, and which are not very easily solved: now to know and understand the great truths of the Gospel, spiritually, savingly, and experimentally, is not from nature, or to be acquired by men's industry, but is the gift of God's grace, flowing from his sovereign will and pleasure; a favour which the disciples of Christ, as a chosen people, receive from the Lord, and which is denied others:

but to them it is not given; to the wise and prudent, to the Scribes and Pharisees, to the multitude, to the bulk and generality of the people, to the rest that were blinded. Mark calls them "them that are without"; who are not in the number of God's elect; nor within the covenant of grace, nor among the disciples of Christ; referring to a common way of speaking among the Jews, who used to call the Gentiles, all without their land, "they that are without"; and indeed all within themselves that despised the rules and judgment of the wise men {i}: but Christ here calls the wise men themselves such. Now our Lord, who was privy to the secret and sovereign dispensation of God, who, of his own will and pleasure, had determined to give a spiritual and saving knowledge of divine things to some, and deny it to others, made this the rule of his conduct in his ministry; that is to say, he preached in parables to some without an explication, whilst he spoke plainly to others; and, if in parables, yet gave them an interpretation, and an understanding of them.

{i} Vid. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 24. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

Matthew 13:12

Ver. 12. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given,.... Whoever has the true grace of God implanted in him, has a saving knowledge of Christ, and a spiritual acquaintance with the doctrines of the Gospel, shall have more grace given him; he shall grow in the knowledge of Christ, and the Spirit of truth shall lead him into all truth:

and he shall have more abundance: of grace, light, knowledge, and experience: all grace shall be made to abound towards him; he shall be filled with all the fulness of God, and shall arrive to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and his light shall shine more and more unto the perfect day.

But whosoever hath not: the truth of grace, nor a spiritual knowledge of Christ, nor any experience of the doctrines of the Gospel,

from him shall be taken away, even that he hath, or "that which he seemed to have", as Luke expresses it; for everything besides true grace is a mere show, and has no solidity in it; as natural parts, human learning, and a form of knowledge and of truth in the law, the national church state of the Jews, with all the outward privileges appertaining thereunto, all which may be here meant; and even speculative notions of the Gospel, the external gifts of the Spirit, the means of grace, the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and the ministry of it, which in process of time were wholly taken from these people.

Matthew 13:13

Ver. 13. Therefore speak I to them in parables,.... Because it was the will and pleasure of his Father to give the knowledge of divine mysteries to some, and not to others; and because even the outward good things they had, being wrongly used or abused by them, would be taken away from them:

and because they seeing, see not: they saw Christ with their bodily eyes, but not with an eye of faith; they saw the miracles he did, but did not discern, at least did not acknowledge the evidence of them, proving him to be the true Messiah.

And hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand: they heard externally, but not internally; they heard the sound of Christ's voice, but did not understand his words, even when he spake in the plainest and most intelligible manner; nor were they concerned to know the meaning of them: wherefore he spoke to them in this abstruse and parabolical way, that they might be what they really were, seers and not seers, hearers and not hearers, at least not understanding ones; and that what he said might remain sealed and hidden to them, as the things contained in the sealed book were to the Jews of old; the reason of which was, as a writer of their's {k} says, and which agrees with our Lord's reason and conduct here, hdyxw lvmb wyhv, "because they were in parable and riddle".

{k} Abarbinel in Isa. 29. 11.

Matthew 13:14

Ver. 14. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias,.... In ***Isa 6:9***

which saith, which runs, or may be read thus,

by hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive. The words are a prophecy concerning the people of the Jews, which began to be accomplished in the times of Isaiah; and were again fulfilled in the times of some after prophets; and had been in part fulfilled under the more plain and easy ministry of Christ; and was to have a further accomplishment under this parabolical way of preaching; as it also was to have, and had, a yet further completion under the ministry of the apostles; see *Ac 28:26* and the judicial blindness here predicted was to go on among them, until the land of Judea was utterly destroyed by the Romans, and the cities and houses thereof left without any inhabitants; all which accordingly came to pass: for that this prophecy refers to the times of the Messiah, and to the people of the Jews, is clear from this one observation made by Christ himself, that Esaias foretold those things when he saw the glory of the Messiah, and spake of him, *Joh 12:40* and because it was to have, and had, its accomplishment over and over again in that people, therefore the word anaplhroutai, which may be rendered "is fulfilled again", is made use of. The sense of the prophecy is, with respect to the times of the Messiah, that the Jews, whilst hearing the sermons preached by him, whether with, or without parables, should hear his voice, and the sound of it, but not understand his words internally, spiritually, and experimentally; and whilst they saw, with the eyes of their bodies, the miracles he wrought, they should see the facts done, which could not be denied and gainsayed by them, but should not take in the clear evidence, full proof, and certain demonstration given thereby, of his Messiahship. In the prophecy of Isaiah, the words run in the imperative, "hear ye, see ye", &c. but are here rendered in the future, "shall hear, shall see", &c. which rendering of the words is supported and established by the version of the Septuagint, by the Chaldee paraphrase, and by many Jewish commentators {l}; who allow, that the words in Isaiah may be so understood, which is sufficient to vindicate the citation of them, by the evangelist, in this form of them.

{l} In R. David Kimchi in Isa. vi. 9.

Matthew 13:15

Ver. 15. For this people's heart is waxed gross, &c,] Or fat, become stupid and sottish, and without understanding; and so incapable of taking in the true sense and meaning of what they saw with their eyes, and heard with their ears; for they had their outward senses of hearing and seeing, and yet their intellectual powers were stupefied.

And their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; which is expressive of the blindness and hardness, which were partly brought upon themselves by their own wilfulness and obstinacy, against such clear evidence as arose from the doctrine and miracles of Christ; and partly from the righteous judgment of God, giving them up, for their perverseness, to judicial blindness and obduracy; *Joh 12:40* and are in the prophet ascribed to the ministry of the word; that being despised, was in righteous judgment, the savour of death unto death, unto them; and they under it, as clay, under the influence of the sun, grew harder and harder by it, stopping their ears, and shutting their eyes against it:

lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart: which may be understood either of God's intention, and view, in giving them up to judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, under such miracles, and such a ministry, as a punishment for their wilful contempt of them; that so they might never have any true sight, hearing, and understanding of these things, and be turned from the evil of their ways, have repentance unto life, and remission of sins; which seems to be the sense of the other evangelists, ***Mr 4:12*** or, as if these people purposely stupefied themselves, stopped their ears, and pulled away the shoulder, and wilfully shut their eyes; fearing they should receive some conviction, light, and knowledge,

and be converted by the power and grace of God:

and I should heal them; or, as in Mark, "and their sins should be forgiven them"; for healing of diseases, and forgiveness of sins, are, in Scripture language, one and the same thing; and this sense of the phrase here, is justified by the Chaldee paraphrase, which renders it, Nwhl qbtvyw, "and they be forgiven", or "it be forgiven them", and by a Jewish commentator on the place; who interprets healing, of the healing of the soul, and adds hxyloh ayhw, "and this is pardon" {m}.

{m} R. David Kimchi in loc.

Matthew 13:16

Ver. 16. But blessed are your eyes, for they see,.... Which is to be understood both of corporal and intellectual sight: it was their happiness to see Christ in the flesh, and converse with him in person, be eyewitnesses of his majesty, and see with their own eyes the miracles performed by him, the proofs and attestations of those doctrines they were to publish to all the world; and it was still their greater happiness, that they saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth: many saw him in the flesh, as they did, with their bodily eyes, but saw no beauty, nor comeliness in him, nothing amiable and desirable in him; but these saw his personal and transcendent glories, as the Son of God, his fulness as mediator, his suitableness as a Saviour and Redeemer, and all the characters of the Messiah in him; and so believed, and were sure that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God: they saw Christ, not in the promise, as Abraham, and other patriarchs did; nor through types and shadows, as the saints of the Old Testament did; to them it was given to know and understand the mysteries of grace, respecting the person, offices, obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ.

And your ears, for they hear. This also must be understood of corporal and intellectual hearing, another branch of their present happiness. They heard the words of truth from the lips of that great prophet Moses said should rise up among them, like unto him, whom they should hear: they heard, with their own ears, a voice from heaven, declaring him to be the beloved Son of

God, in whom he was well pleased. They heard the Gospel preached by him, not only so as to be affected with it, and give their assent to it, but also to understand it spiritually, and experimentally, and to bring forth the fruit of it; and so were that sort of hearers, signified by the good ground in the parable Christ had just delivered. The forms of speech, in which the happiness of the disciples is here expressed, seem to be in common use with the Jews, when they would extol the peculiar attainments of a man, especially in matters of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. Thus, it being told R. Jochanan ben Zaccai of some persons that had expounded the work of Mercavah, that is, the beginning of Ezekiel's prophecy, and the mysterious passages in it, and what befell them, expressed himself thus concerning them {n};

"blessed are you, and blessed are your children, war Kkv ynye yrva, "and blessed are the eyes that so see"."

And elsewhere {o} mention being made of a book of secrets delivered to Solomon, and which he had understanding of, it is said,

"emvv Nzwaw harv Nye yrva, "blessed is the eye that sees, and the ear that hears", and the heart that understands, and causes to understand, the wisdom of it."

{n} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 2. {o} Sepher Raziel, fol. 34. 1.

Matthew 13:17

Ver. 17. For verily I say unto you,.... This is added for the further confirmation of what is before said, concerning the happiness of the disciples, in seeing and hearing what they did:

that many prophets, and righteous men; Luke says, *Lu 10:24* "kings"

have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. To see Christ in the flesh, and have a clearer insight into the knowledge of the mysteries of grace, were things very desirable to men of the highest class in church and state, and of the best characters, such as Abraham, ***Joh 8:56***. Jacob, *Ge 49:18*. David, *Ps 14:7*. Solomon, and the church in his time, ***So 8:1***. Isaiah, and the saints with him, *Isa 25:9* with many others. These indeed had a sight of Christ, but a very distant one; they saw him afar off in the promises and prophecies of him; and not very clearly, but through dark types and cloudy sacrifices; whereas the disciples saw him in person, heard him preach, took in the evidence of his miracles, and felt the power of his doctrines, and spiritually and savingly understood them. A way of speaking, somewhat like this, stands in the Talmud {p};

"Many have watched to expound in Mercavah (the beginning of Ezekiel's prophecy), Mhymym htwa war alw, "and have not seen it all their days"."

{p} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 24. 2.

Matthew ***13:18***

Ver. 18. Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. That is, the interpretation of the parable; for they had heard the parable before, and had desired an explanation of it; which, though not mentioned by Matthew, is, by the other evangelists, ***Mr 4:10***, ***Lu 8:9*** and since it was given to them to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, therefore Christ calls upon them to attend unto, and hear, so as to understand the spiritual meaning of this parable. Mark relates, that he moreover said to his disciples at this time, "know ye not this parable?" Do ye not understand the meaning of it, so easy to be taken in? them as it were reproving for their dulness of hearing, notwithstanding the grace given them, and the advantages they enjoyed: "how then will ye know all parables?" all that he had delivered, or was about to deliver at this time, or should hereafter; which were of more difficult interpretation, and not so easy to be understood as this.

Matthew ***13:19***

Ver. 19. When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom,.... Hence it appears, that by the "seed" in the parable is meant the Gospel, called the "word of the kingdom": because it treats of the king Messiah, of his person, office, and grace; and of his kingdom, and the administration of it by him, under the present dispensation; of the kingdom of grace saints enjoy now, and of the kingdom of heaven they shall enter into hereafter, through the grace and righteousness of Christ. Now such a hearer of this word is here described, who hears it accidentally, and only externally; hears the sound of it with his ears,

and understandeth it not with his heart. He is one that is careless and inattentive, negligent and forgetful; has some slight notions of things as he hears, but these pass away as they come; his affections are not at all touched, nor his judgment informed by them, but remains as stupid, and as unconcerned as ever; his heart is not opened to attend to, and receive the word, but continues hard and obdurate; and is like the common and beaten road, that is trodden down by everyone, and is not susceptible of the seed, that falls upon it.

Then cometh the wicked one, Satan, the devil, ***Mr 4:15*** who is, by way of eminency, so called, being the first creature that became wicked, and the worst that is so; who is entirely and immutably wicked; whose whole work and employment lies in wickedness; and who, was the original cause of the wickedness that is among men, and which he is continually instigating and promoting: so the Jews frequently call {q} Samael, by whom they mean the devil, Samael, evdh, "the wicked". This evil spirit, as soon as ever he observes one hearing the word, especially that has not been used to attend, comes immediately, and, as he is hearing,

catcheth away that which is sown in his heart: not the grace of God, which being once implanted in the heart, can never be taken away by Satan; but the word which was sown, not in his understanding, in a spiritual sense, nor even in his affections, so as to love it, delight, and take pleasure in it; much less in his heart, so as to become the engrafted word able to save, or so as to believe in it, and in Christ revealed by it; but in his memory, and that but very slightly neither; for the heart sometimes means the memory; see ***Lu 2:51***. Besides, the word only fell "upon", not "into" his heart, as into the good ground, as the metaphor in the parable shows; and it made no impression, nor was it inwardly received, but as soon as ever dropped, was "catched" away by the enemy; not by frightening him out of it, by persecution, as the stony ground hearer; nor by filling the mind with worldly cares, as the thorny ground hearer; but by various suggestions and temptations, darting in thoughts, presenting objects, and so diverted his mind from the word, and fixed his attention elsewhere; which is done at once, at an unawares, secretly, and without any notice of the person himself; so that the word is entirely lost to him, and he does not so much as remember the least thing he has been hearing:

this is he which receiveth the seed by the way side; such an hearer is comparable to such ground, on whom the word has no more effect, than seed sown upon a common beaten path.

{q} Sepher Bahir apud Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 2. Debarim Rabba, fol. 145. 3.

Matthew 13:20

Ver. 20. But he that receiveth the seed into stony places,.... Such a hearer, who is like to the stony ground on which the seed fell, is one that is not an accidental hearer of the word, as the former, but a settled constant hearer of it; and not one that is careless and negligent, but diligent and attentive, and has some understanding of what he hears;

the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: he is one that not only constantly attends upon it, but he receives it; he gives an assent to it, he believes in it historically, makes a profession of his faith in it, and holds it for a while, being under some convictions of the truth of it: and having some speculative notions of it, and light in his understanding and judgment in it, he has some flashes of natural affection for it, and delivers some outward expressions of pleasure and delight in it, like Herod, and the hearers of John the Baptist; but has no heart work, and so is like to the rock in stony ground; the natural hardness of his heart continues, it remains unbroken by the word, without any true sense of sin, and repentance for it, and destitute of spiritual life, and of true faith, love, and joy: hence, as his profession is taken up in haste, immediately, upon a flash of affection, and a little head knowledge, it does not last long, nor prove honourable.

Matthew 13:21

Ver. 21. Yet hath he not root in himself,.... Nor in Christ; the word is not rooted in him, nor has he the root of the matter, or the truth of grace in him:

but dureth for a while; a hearer of the word, a professor of religion, showing some outward respect to the word, and to the preachers of it:

for when tribulation or persecution ariseth, because of the word; which is often the case, and must be expected by those who embrace the Gospel, profess the name of Christ, and are willing to live godly in him. Tribulation may intend some lesser and lighter troubles for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; such as the revilings and reproaches of men, loss of character, and trade, &c. and persecution may design something more public and vehement; such as confiscation of goods, imprisonment, and danger of life, the most exquisite tortures, and death in the most cruel form and shape; things very disagreeable to flesh and blood, and which cannot be endured, and submitted to, by persons without a principle of grace, by one that has no root in himself. Luke calls this a time "of temptation", or trial, as it is either way, both by private troubles, and more public persecutions: these try men's principles and professions, and whether the truth of grace is in them or not; and where it is not in any person,

by and by he is offended; at the cross; he shrinks back from it, does not care to take it up, and follow Christ; but drops his religion, and the profession of it; apostatises, falls away, and comes to nothing.

Matthew 13:22

Ver. 22. He also that receiveth seed among the thorns,.... The hearer that is like to the thorny ground, on which the seed fell,

is he that heareth the word; not a profane sinner, nor a reviler of religion, or a persecutor of the saints; but one that not only shows a love to the word, but who seems to have his heart broken under it, and by it, his conscience tender, and his life outwardly reformed; one, who besides his being a settled, diligent, understanding, and affectionate hearer of the word, and a believing receiver and professor of it, seems to have a thorough work of grace upon him, to have the fallow ground of his heart ploughed up, and to be truly contrite; the thorns being under ground, and not yet to be seen, but afterwards appear:

and the care of this world; not the care of another world, nor a care about spiritual things in this world, nor even a proper, laudable care of the things of this present life, but an anxious and immoderate care of them; which, as thorns, is very perplexing and distressing to the persons themselves, and is what is vain and fruitless.

And the deceitfulness of riches: in opposition to some riches, the riches of grace and glory, which have no deceit in them; and not riches themselves, bare worldly riches but the deceitfulness of them, is here taken notice of; for riches often delude, and lead persons out of the right way, out of God's way; cause them to err from the faith; they do not give the satisfaction they promise, and often do not continue, as is expected: and are as thorns, pungent to the owners of them, who pierce themselves through with many sorrows in acquiring and keeping them; and are frequently injurious to others, their fellow creatures; and in the issue are useless and unprofitable, especially with respect to the concerns of another world. Mark adds, "and the lusts of other things"; besides riches; and Luke adds, and "pleasures of this life"; meaning divers other worldly lusts and pleasures, such as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life: which also, like thorns, are distracting and afflicting, sooner or later; are vain, and unprofitable, and lead to destruction: and these are called "the pleasures of this life", in opposition to, and distinction from the pleasures of that which is to come, which are real and lasting: the phrase is Jewish {r};

"says R. Judah, the prince, whoever takes upon him, hzh Mlweh ygwnet, "the pleasures of this world", to him are denied the pleasures of the world to come: and whoever does not take upon him "the pleasures of this world", to him are given the pleasures of the world to come."

Now these, all, and each of them,

choke the word: by overspreading all the powers and faculties of the soul, as thorns do a field; by overtopping the seed of the word, and by hiding it from the influences of the sun of righteousness, and rain of grace; and by attracting everything in the heart to themselves; and by bearing and pressing down all thought, concern, and care for the use, fruitfulness, and increase of the word.

And he becometh unfruitful: as in such circumstances he must needs be; or if there be any show of fruit in outward respect to the word, in an historical faith of it, in an external profession, and outward reformation, "yet brings not fruit to perfection", as Luke says; these in process of time shrivel up, wither away, and come to nothing.

{r} Abot R. Nathan, c. 28. Vid. Kimchi & Ben Melech in Psal. xvi 5. & Eben Ezra in Psal. xix. 10.

Matthew 13:23

Ver. 23. But he that received seed into the good ground,.... The hearer compared to good ground into which the seed fell, is he that heareth the word and understandeth it; has a new and spiritual understanding given him, feels the power of it on his heart, enlightening and quickening him; has an application of it made to him by the Spirit of God, and can discern the worth and excellency of it, and distinguish it from all others; and, as Mark says, "receives it"; as the word of God in faith, and with the love of it, and with all readiness and meekness; and, as Luke observes, "keeps it"; holds it fast against all opposition with great struggling; will not part with it at any rate, nor depart from it in the least, nor entertain any doubt about it; but abides by it, stands fast in it, and is valiant for it: and this he does in and with "an honest and good heart"; which no man naturally has; nor can any man make his heart so: this is the work of God, and is owing to his efficacious grace. This is an heart of flesh, a new and right heart, and spirit; an heart to fear God, to love him, and to trust in him; in which Christ dwells by faith; in which the Spirit of God has his temple; and in which every grace is implanted: and such an one, as he hears with a strict, and an honest intention, and in the exercise of grace; so he holds fast the word he hears, understands and receives, with all faithfulness and honesty:

which also beareth fruit and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, and some thirty: the fruit bore, and brought forth by such an hearer, is the true fruit of grace and righteousness, and is all from Christ, under the influences of the Spirit, through the word and ordinances, as means, and issues in the glory of God; and though not brought forth in the same quantity in all, yet is of the same quality; and is brought forth, as Luke says, "with patience": constantly, and continually, in all seasons, in old age, and even unto death; and is at last brought "to perfection", holds, and remains unto the end.

Matthew 13:24

Ver. 24. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying,.... Somewhat like the former, but with a different view: for whereas the design of the former was to show the different sorts of hearers that attend upon the ministry of the word, three parts in four being bad; this is to show the difference of members in churches, some being comparable to good seed, and others to tares.

The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: by "the kingdom of heaven", is not meant the ultimate glory of the saints in heaven, or the state of happiness in the other world; for there will be no tares there; nor the Gospel, and the ministration of it, but the Gospel dispensation, and times, and kingdom of the Messiah; or rather the Gospel visible church state, on earth, called a "kingdom", of which Christ is king, and in which the saints are subject to him; where proper laws are made for the orderly government of it, and proper officers appointed to explain, and put those laws in execution; and which consists of various persons, united under one head, and independent of any other government: and it is styled the kingdom of heaven, in distinction from the kingdoms of this world; the subjects of it are, or should be, heaven born souls; the word, laws, and ordinances of it are from heaven; and there is some resemblance between a Gospel church state and heaven, and it is very near unto it, and is even the suburbs of it: or else the king Messiah himself is intended, who is compared to a man, a sower; and so it is explained, *Mt 13:37* "he that soweth the good seed is the son of man": which is a name and title of the Messiah, by which he is called both in the Old and New Testament; who, though the seed of the woman, yet was the son of man, as of Abraham, and David; and which denotes the truth, and yet the infirmity of his human nature: he is the sower that went about preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, in the Jewish world, or throughout Judea and Galilee, in his own person: and who also, by the ministry of his apostles, sowed the seed of the word in the several parts of the world, which was made effectual for the beginning of a good work of grace on the souls of many; for by "his field" is meant "the world", as appears from *Mt 13:38* and means either the whole world, in which both good and bad men live and dwell; and is the field Christ is the proprietor of, both by creation, as God, and by gift, as mediator: or the church, the visible Gospel church state throughout the world; which is as a field well tilled and manured; and is Christ's by gift, purchase, and grace: and by the good seed sown in it, are meant "the children of the kingdom"; as is said, *Mt 13:38* such as have a good work begun in them, and bring forth good fruit in their lives and conversations.

Ver. 25. But while men slept,.... Good men, ministers, and churches; whose case this sometimes is to be asleep in a spiritual sense: and which sleepiness lies in a non-exercise of grace; in a sluggishness to and in duty; in a contentment in external exercises of religion; in lukewarmness about the cause of Christ; in an unconcernedness about sins of omission and commission; and in a willingness to continue in such a state; and which arises from a body of sin and death; from worldly cares; weariness in spiritual duties; a cessation from spiritual exercises; an absenting from spiritual company; oftentimes from outward ease, peace, and plenty, sometimes from a long expectation of the bridegroom's coming, and the delay of it; and from its being a night season, a time of darkness and security: such a case with the church, and good men, is very dangerous, as it exposes to every sin and snare; renders them liable to lose the presence of Christ, their liveliness and comfort; and tends to poverty and leanness of soul: such are in danger of being surprised with the midnight cry; and the churches are likely to be filled with hypocrites and heretics:

his enemy came; by whom is meant the devil, *Mt 13:39* who is an enemy to Christ personally, and showed himself to be so in his infancy, by stirring up Herod to seek his life: and, when grown up, by instigating the Jews to contrive his death; which they attempted by various methods, and which, at last, he compassed by Judas, and the Scribes and Pharisees; and also to Christ mystical, to the church, and all true believers; whose adversary he is, going about, like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour: the same came into the field, the world, and church in it;

and sowed tares among the wheat; by "the wheat", is meant the same with the "good seed", the children of God, true believers in Christ; who are comparable to wheat, for the choiceness of it, that being the choicest grain, so they are the chosen of God, and precious, and the excellent in the earth: and because it dies before it rises and springs up; so the saints do, and will do, both in a spiritual and corporal sense; and because of the purity and whiteness of it, so they are pure and white, being sanctioned by the Spirit, washed in the blood of Christ, and justified by his righteousness; and because of its substance, fulness, weight, and permanence, so they are filled from Christ's fulness, and with the fulness of God, and fruits of righteousness, and remain, and cannot be driven as the chaff is, but continue to live, because Christ their head lives; and because of its gradual increase, so they increase in spiritual light, grace, and experience; and because of the chaff that adheres to it, so sin and corruption cleave to the saints in this life; and lastly, because it needs both the flail and the fan, so believers need chastisements, afflictions, and corrections: by "the tares" sown among them, are meant "the children of the wicked one"; Satan, the enemy and adversary, as in *Mt 13:38* who are to be understood, not of profane sinners; though these are the children of the devil; but of professors of religion, men either of bad principles, or of bad lives and conversations; whom Satan, by some means or another, gets into churches, and they become members thereof: at first they look like wheat, like true believers, have a show of religion, a form of godliness, an appearance of grace, but are destitute of it; and prove tares, unfruitful, unprofitable, and of no account, yea hurtful, and whose end is to be burned.

And went his way; somewhere else, to do more mischief; and having done all he could at present here, undiscovered, not taken notice of by ministers and churches; they being all asleep, and having lost, in a great measure, the spirit of discerning. The word zizania, we render "tares", and the Ethiopic version "thistles", probably means the same the Jewish doctors call Nynwz, Zunin {s}; and which, they say, is a sort of wheat, and not of a different kind from it; that when it is sown it looks like wheat, and is sown for it, but is changed in the earth, both as to its nature and form, and brings forth this kind. In the generation in which the flood was, they say {t}, they sowed wheat, and the earth brought forth Nynwz, zizania, what we render "tares", and bids fair to be what is here meant; and fitly expresses false professors, nominal Christians, men of degenerate principles and practices: for not what we call tares, or vetches, can be meant, which may be removed from the wheat without danger, but rather this degenerate wheat; or that wheat which is blasted, and which may be observed sometimes to grow upon the same root, and therefore cannot be taken away, without rooting up the wheat also.

{s} Misn. Kilaim, c. 1. sect. 1. & Trumot, c. 2. sect, 6. & Maimon. in ib. T. Hieros. Kilaim, fol. 26. 4. Maimon. Hilch. Kilaim, c. 3. sect. 3. {t} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 28. fol. 23. 4.

Matthew 13:26

Ver. 26. But when the blade was sprung up,.... That is, the blade of the wheat; which designs the taking up, a profession of religion on principles of grace, called a profession of faith; and when right, it springs up from, and proceeds upon a work begun in the heart: and such a profession ought to be made by all that are partakers of the grace of God; and ought to be made both verbally, by a confession of the mouth, and a declaration of the work of God upon the heart, and by deeds, by submitting to the ordinances of the Gospel; and should be sincere, and from the heart, and be visible to men, and be held fast unto the end without wavering.

And brought forth fruit; which intends not the conversion of sinners, nor the performance of duties, nor the perfection of grace, but the first appearances of grace under a profession, such as sorrow for sin, after a godly sort, fear and reverence of God, great humility, much self-denial, ardent love to Christ, pantings and breathings after him, and communion with him, strong affection for the people of God, some exercise of faith on Christ, zeal for his cause and interest, and a concern to honour and glorify God.

Then appeared the tares also. They were not discernible for some time when they were first sown; they looked like good seed when they first appeared among the people of God; they seemed to have the truth of grace, as others had; their blade of profession, when it sprung up, looked like that of true wheat; but were now discernible both by their unfruitfulness in their lives and conversations, and by their bad principles, which they now endeavoured to spread, to the hurt of the churches where they were: they always appeared to be what they were to God the searcher of hearts; but now, through the zeal of true converts, to which these opposed themselves, and the fruitfulness of their lives, from which they were so very different, they became manifest to ministers and churches.

Matthew 13:27

Ver. 27. So the servants of the householder came,.... Christ is the "householder"; the house of which he is master is the church, called the household of God, the household of faith, the family in heaven, and in earth; in which house he bears and sustains many relations, as those of a son, a priest, a master, or governor. By "the servants" that came to him, are meant, not civil magistrates, who have nothing to do in the affairs of churches; nor the angels, though these are ministering servants to Christ, and will be employed by him, in the close of time, to gather up the tares, bind them in bundles, and cast them into the fire; but the ministers of the Gospel, the servants of Christ, and of the most high God, who are made use of in planting, and sowing, and weeding his field, the church: these observing the tares, and fearing the danger the wheat was in by them, as well as troubled and surprised at the appearance and growth of them, came to him, and spread the case before him in prayer; and

said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? Their manner of address, calling him Sir, or Lord, is expressive of their reverence of him, and obedience to him; and which is said, not in word only, but in the sincerity of their hearts, and under the influence of the Spirit of God. They ascribe the field, the church, the good seed, converts that sprung up in it, and the sowing, or making of them such, all to Christ, and not any of this kind, or any part of it to themselves; though they were employed by him in tilling this field, in sowing spiritual things to the saints, and were useful to them in their profession of religion. Moreover, they intimate, that nothing but good could come from Christ; no bad seed, no tares could be of his sowing: and declare their ignorance of the rise of them; which ignorance was owing to their being asleep, when the enemy sowed them.

Matthew 13:28

Ver. 28. He said unto them, an enemy has done this,.... This is the answer of the householder to the question of his servants. In the Greek text it is, "an enemy man"; and is so rendered in the several versions; meaning, not that the enemy was a man; for he was the devil, as in *Mt 13:39* but it is an Hebraism; such as in ***Es 7:6***, bywaw ru vya, "the man adversary and enemy" is this wicked Haman; and signifies a certain enemy, and one indeed that is an implacable enemy to man.

The servants said unto him, wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? which words express the concern of the ministers of Christ for the true members of the church, comparable to wheat, lest they should receive any damage by the ill examples, and pernicious principles of evil men among them; also their detestation and abhorrence of men of wicked lives and erroneous principles; they cannot bear them which are evil; likewise, they show great regard to the glory of God, and interest of religion, and their readiness to execute any orders Christ should give them; but not willing to proceed of themselves, ask counsel and advice of him.

Matthew 13:29

Ver. 29. But he said, nay,.... The answer is in the negative; and which, if spoken to angels, is to be understood, that they should not inflict punishments, or pour out, their vials, as yet, on formal professors, lest the righteous should share in them; and if to magistrates, the sense of it is, that they should not persecute with the sword, or put men to death for heretical opinions; but if to ministers of the word, which sense I choose, the meaning is, that not everyone suspected to be a tare, or a nominal professor, is to be removed from the communion of the church, because there is often danger in so doing:

lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them: not that men of openly scandalous lives are to be tolerated in churches; they are to be withdrawn from, and put away; nor men of known, avowed, heretical principles; such, after the first and second admonition, are to be rejected: yet there may be such in churches, not altogether agreeable in principle and practice, whose character and situation may be such, that there is no removing them without offending some truly gracious, useful persons, in whose affections they stand, who may be tempted, by such a step, to leave their communion; and so cannot be done without a considerable prejudice to the church. The scope of the parable, and the design of our Lord in it, are chiefly to be attended to; which are to show, that a pure and perfect church cannot be expected in the present state of things; and that saints should not be immoderately uneasy, but patiently bear such exercises, until Christ's time is come to relieve them, when the tares and chaff shall be separated from the wheat; when sinners shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous, and there shall be no more a pricking briar, nor a grieving thorn in the house of Israel.

Matthew 13:30

Ver. 30. Let both grow together until the harvest,.... By "the harvest", is meant "the end of the world", *Mt 13:39* either of the Jewish world, the dissolution of their church and state, which was near; or of a man's life, which is the end of the world to him; or rather of this present world, the system of the universe, of the material world, as to its present form and use, and of the inhabitants of it, and of time in it. Now the end of the world is compared to harvest, because the time of it is fixed and settled; though it is not known when it will be, yet it is as certain as the time of harvest; and because as that is in the summer season, in hot weather, so this will be a time of wrath, when the day of the Lord will burn like an oven; and as the harvest time is a time of hurry and labour, so will it be in the end of the world, especially with the angels, who will be gathering the elect from the four winds, and all men, to appear before the judgment seat of Christ; and as at harvest the corn is cut down, the fields cleared, and all brought home, so it will be at the end of the world; the sickle will be thrust in, and the earth reaped, the tares bound in bundles, and cast into the fire, and the wheat gathered into the garner; and as the harvest, as it falls out to be good or bad, is matter of joy or sorrow, so will the end of the world be joy to saints, who will then enter into the joy of their Lord, and be for ever with him, and sorrow to the wicked, who will then go into everlasting punishment. Until this time, wheat and tares are to "grow" together. The "wheat", or true believers, "grow" in the exercise of grace, as of faith, hope, love, humility, &c. and in spiritual knowledge of the will of God, of the doctrines of grace, and of Christ; which growth is owing to the dews of divine grace, to the sun of righteousness shining upon them, to the gracious influences of the blessed Spirit, and to the word and ordinances as means. The "tares", or nominal professors, may "grow" in riches, in credit, and reputation among men, and in speculative knowledge; and oftentimes so it is, that they grow worse and worse, both in doctrinal and practical wickedness: when they are ordered to "grow together", the meaning is, not that their growth is equal, or of the same kind, nor in the same way, nor in the same things; but this only notes the time and duration of their growth: nor is this suffered and permitted, because of any love God has unto them, or any delight in, or approbation of them; but either because they are not fully ripe for ruin; or for the exercise of the saints, and for their temporal and spiritual good; for it is entirely a tender regard to the wheat, and not to the tares, that they are ordered to grow together.

And in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, the angels, *Mt 13:39*

gather ye together first the tares; that is, formal professors, hypocrites, and heretics; whom he will have removed out of his kingdom, his church, his field, in the world: and this order shows, that the angels will have a perfect and exact knowledge of these persons; and that their work will be to separate them from the righteous; when the churches will be pure, and without spot, or wrinkle: and this will be done first; that is, these wicked men will be first removed out of the church, before their more severe punishment takes place:

and bind them in bundles to burn them: which denotes the power of angels over these persons, the certainty and inevitableness of their ruin, their association together, and their destruction in company with one another; which will be an aggravation of their misery, which is expressed by "burning" with fire; not material, but metaphorical; the wrath of God, which will be a consuming fire, and be everlasting and unquenchable.

But gather the wheat into my barn; meaning the kingdom of heaven, which is as a garner or repository, in which none but wheat is put, and where it is safe, and lies together: so none but righteous, pure, and undefiled persons, are admitted into heaven; and being there, they are safe, and out of the reach of all enemies; and what adds to their happiness is, that they are together, enjoying all satiety and fulness; and are in Christ's barn, or garner, which he has made, and prepared for their reception. The gathering of them into it designs the introduction of the saints into heaven by angels, as their souls at death, and both souls and bodies, at the last day, when their happiness will be perfect and complete.

Matthew 13:31

Ver. 31. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying,.... As the former parable sets forth the condition of the Gospel church state until the end of the world; this expresses the small beginnings of it, and the large increase and growth of it, and its great usefulness to the saints.

The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: by "the kingdom of heaven" is meant, as before, the Gospel dispensation, or the Gospel church state, and the ministry of the word, and the administration of ordinances in it: by the grain of mustard seed, either the Gospel, or the people of God, or the grace of God in them; and by the man that took and sowed it, the Lord Jesus Christ; and by his field, in which he sowed it, the world, or his church throughout the world.

Ver. 32. Which indeed is the least of all seeds,.... So mustard with the Jews {u}, is called Myerz Nym, "a kind of seeds"; and being very small, hence ldrxk, "as a grain of mustard", is often used, proverbially {w}, for the least thing, as it is by Christ, *Mt 17:20*. Not but there are seeds lesser than this; but the meaning is, that this is one of the least of all seeds; or was the least of seeds, which were commonly known in Judea; or the very least which grew to the size this sometimes did, and as here related. Now this is designed to express the small beginnings of the Gospel dispensation, of the ministry of the word, of the grace of God in the hearts of his people, and of the small number of them at first. The Gospel, and the ministry of it were like a grain of mustard seed, little, mean, and contemptible; the author of it, Christ, was so to the Jews, in his birth, parentage, education, and outward appearance; the subject of it a crucified Christ, and salvation by him; and the doctrines out of the reach, and contrary to carnal reason; the preachers of it, were persons of very mean and low life, few in number, weak, illiterate, and despicable, and the whole world against them; the circumstances which attended the Gospel were very discouraging; it was charged with novelty, represented as contrary to common sense, and the reason of mankind, and as opening a door to licentiousness; and was followed with violent opposition and persecution, wherever it went. The grace of God, which under the ministry of the word is implanted in the hearts of the Lord's people, is at first very small, like a grain of mustard seed; it is a day of small things; faith in Christ is very weak and low, spiritual strength small, comfort little, experience of the love of God not large, light and knowledge in the doctrines of grace but very obscure and glimmering: the church of God, which sprung up under the ministry of the word, and through the work of grace, upon the hearts of particular persons, was like the small grain of mustard seed; the persons of which it consisted were but few in number in Christ's time, and at his ascension into heaven, and when the Gospel was first preached among the Gentiles; and those persons which laid the foundation, and were at the beginning of the Gospel church state, made a very contemptible figure, by reason of their outward poverty, and mean circumstances in the world; and on account of the severe persecutions which every where attended them; and also through the errors and heresies introduced by evil men, that crept in among them.

But when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree. Luke says, "a great tree", *Lu 13:19* for to such a size did the mustard tree grow in the land of Judea, of which take the following instances {x}.

"At Shichin there was a mustard stalk, which had three branches, and one of them was cut down, and they covered a potter's booth with it; and found in it ldrx lv Nybq tvlv, "three kabs of mustard seed" (elsewhere {y} it is said, nine kabs). Says R. Simeon ben Chelphetha, I have one stalk of mustard seed in my field, and I go up to it, hnath varb hlwek, "as one goes up to the top of a fig tree"."

And though the mustard tree grew to this height and size, it was reckoned among herbs, as here by Christ; for they say {z},

"they do not put mustard in a field of fruits, but in a field of herbs."

All which serve to illustrate and confirm the account here given by Christ, and alluded to; and which expresses the very large growth and increase of the Gospel, and the ministry of it; of the grace of God in the heart, and of the church of Christ, and his interest in the world: of the Gospel, and the ministry of it, as to its large spread in the world; which at first was confined to the Jews, but was afterwards published to the Gentiles, and carried through the whole world; and, in ages since, has made a considerable progress, particularly at the Reformation; and will make a much greater one, towards the end of time: and of the grace of God in the heart, which gradually increases to a full assurance of understanding of hope, and of faith, and to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: and of the church of Christ, and his interest in the world; both as to the large numbers it did consist of in the times of the apostles, and since, and will more especially hereafter; for the church will fill the earth, and the kingdoms of the world will become the church, and all nations of the earth will flock unto it; the people of the Jews in general will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in: as also with respect to the figure it will make through the great personages, the kings and princes of the earth, that will be in it; the great power and authority the saints will then have; the peace and prosperity that will be enjoyed by them; the spirituality, holiness, righteousness, love, and unity, there will be among them; as also the presence of God and of the Lamb, they will be favoured with; all which glory and happiness will be brought about by a plentiful effusion of the Spirit, and by the glorious appearance of Christ.

So that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof: by "the birds of the air", some think angels are meant, compared to "birds" for their harmlessness and innocence; for their readiness and swiftness to do the will of God; and for their warbling notes and tuneful songs of praise; and who may be called birds "of the air", or heaven, because of their habitation: now these delight to be in the church, to be under the shadow of the Gospel ministry, and to look into the mysteries of it. Though rather, the saints and people of God are intended, who, in Scripture, are sometimes compared to particular birds; as to the eagle, the dove, and sparrow; and to birds in general, because timorous, weak, and defenceless, are exposed to danger, and wonderfully delivered, and are very subject to wander and go astray; and because of their chirpings, and singing songs of praise to their God and Redeemer; and to birds of the air or heaven, because they are heaven born souls, are partakers of the heavenly calling, and are pressing for, and soaring aloft towards the high calling of God in Christ: now the Gospel ministry, and the Gospel church state, are very useful to these; they "come" thereunto willingly, and cheerfully, deliberately, and with dependence on the grace and strength of Christ; humbly, under a sense of their own unworthiness, and yet with joy and thankfulness; heartily, and with their faces thitherwards, and they also "lodge" therein. This is what they desire, and their hearts are set upon; here they determine to be, and it is their happiness to be here; the shadow of Gospel ordinances is very delightful, very refreshing, and very fruitful to them, and under which saints dwell with great safety; and what a coming of these birds will there be hither, and a tabernacling of them herein, at the latter day! which are greatly designed in this part of the parable.

{u} Misn. Kilaim, c. 3. sect. 2. {w} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 31. 1. Megilla, fol. 23. 2. Nidda, fol. 66. 1. {x} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 20. 2. {y} T. Bab, Cetubot, fol. 111. 2. {z} Misn. Kilaim, c. 2. sect. 8.

Matthew 13:33

Ver. 33. Another parable spake he unto them,.... To the disciples and the multitude, and which was of the same kind, to the same purpose, and relating to the same subject as the former; the spread of the Gospel, and the increase of it in the world.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven. The word "leaven" is every where else used in a bad sense; and either designs immorality, as malice and wickedness, or false doctrine, such as that of the Pharisees and Sadducees: but here it seems to be taken in a good sense, and the Gospel to be compared unto it; nor for its disagreeable qualities, but on account of its small quantity; it is a little leaven that leavens the whole lump, and may express, as the grain of mustard seed does, the small beginnings of the Gospel, and its meanness in the eyes of men; and on account of its piercing, penetrating, and spreading nature: so the Gospel reaches the conscience, pierces the heart, enlightens the understanding, informs the judgment, raises and sets the affections on right objects, subdues the will, and brings down all towering thoughts, to the obedience of Christ, in particular persons; and has penetrated and made its way, under divine influence, through towns, cities, kingdoms, and nations: also on account of its heating, swelling, and assimilating nature; so the Gospel, where it takes place, warms the affections, causes the heart to burn within, inspires with zeal for God, and Christ, and the Gospel; it swells and fills churches with such as shall be saved, and assimilates the several persons it operates in, makes them like one another, one bread, one body, having like precious faith, knowledge, and experience, though in a different degree.

Which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal. By the "three measures of meal", are meant the elect of God; who, because of their nature and quality, are compared to meal, or fine flour; and that because of that of which it is made, wheat, to a corn of which Christ is compared, *Joh 12:24* and by whose grace the saints are what they are, justified, regenerated, and sanctified; and on account of the manner it becomes so, as by grinding the wheat, sifting it when ground, and separating it from the bran; all which may express the first convictions in the conscience of awakened sinners, the grace of God in conversion, and the separation of them from the rest of the world, in the effectual calling; as also by reason of its choiceness, purity, and goodness, the saints being chosen of God and precious, and being pure and spotless, through the grace and righteousness of Christ, and being highly valued, and had in great esteem by him; and because of their quantity, are compared to three measures of meal. The measure here designed, is the Hebrew seah, which held a gallon and an half, and three of these made an ephah; and which is often rendered by the {a} Targumists, Nyao tlt, "three seahs", or "measures", the very phrase here used; and the reason why three are particularly mentioned is, because such a quantity used to be fermented and kneaded by women at one time; see *Ge 18:6* and for the further illustration of this, take the following passage out of the Talmud {b}.

"The wise men say, that three women may be employed in one lump of dough; one may knead it, another may make it into loaves, and another may bake it--and it is a tradition, Nybq tvlv Nyjyxb "that in wheat they use three kabs", or "measures", and in barley four "kabs"."

These measures, as here used parabolically, may design the small number of God's elect; and, as some have thought, may have respect to the three then known parts of the world, where they were, or should be: by the woman that took and hid the leaven in these measures, is meant, either the church, sometimes compared to a woman in Scripture, *Re 12:1* or the ministers of the Gospel, wisdom's maidens; or rather, Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God; see ***Pr 9:1*** and the reason why a woman is mentioned is, because it was, with the Jews, the work of women to ferment the flour, knead the dough, and make the bread: and this action of taking and covering the leaven in the meal, may denote the power of Christ, in opening the heart, and putting in the Gospel, which unless he takes in hand, and uses, is ineffectual; as also the passiveness of men, under the first workings of the Spirit of Christ upon their souls, by the Gospel; and likewise, the secret and invisible power of divine grace, operating by the ministry of the word, upon the heart.

Until the whole was leavened: to be "leavened" by the Gospel, is to be evangelized by it, to be brought into the life and liberty of it, to a Gospel way of living by faith on Christ; to derive all peace, joy, and comfort from him, and not from any works of righteousness; and to have a man's obedience influenced by the love of God, so as to do it cheerfully, and without dependence on it. Now the Gospel, where it has entrance and takes place, powerfully and effectually, continues to operate more or less, as the leaven in the meal, until the whole man, soul and body, all the faculties of the soul, and members of the body, are influenced by it; and will continue with power and efficacy in the world, and church, until all the elect of God are wrought upon by it, and are brought in. There is a late ingenious interpretation {c} of this parable, which, since the word "leaven" is elsewhere always used in a bad sense, deserves consideration; according to which, this parable expresses not the spread of truth, but of error; by "the woman" is thought to be meant, the Apocalyptic woman, the woman spoken of in the Revelations, the whore of Rome, the mother of harlots; and the "leaven" which she took, the leaven of false doctrine and discipline; by her "hiding" it, the private, secret, artful methods, false doctrines, and bad discipline were introduced, and the gradual progress thereof; and by the "three measures of meal", the bishops and doctors of the church, among whom this leaven was spread, and who were fermented with it; particularly those three bishops of Rome at first, Sosymus, John the faster, and Boniface the third; which by degrees spread itself, until the whole Christian world was affected with it; and for a long time lay hid and undiscovered, till the Lord raised up Wyclif, John Huss, Jerom of Prague, Luther, and other reformers. The reader may choose which interpretation he likes best.

{a} Targum Onketos & Jarchi, in Exod. xvi. 36. & Targum Jon. in Ruth ii. 17. {b} T. Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 30. 2. {c} Vid. Teelman. Specimen Explic. Parabolarum, p. 64, 65, 66, 67, 68.

Matthew 13:34

Ver. 34. All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude,.... In the hearing of his disciples, whilst in the ship, the multitude being on the shore,

in parables; in the four foregoing ones;

and without a parable spake he not unto them: not that he never had preached but in a parabolical way unto them, or that he never did afterwards use any other way of speaking; for it is certain, that both before and after, he delivered himself plainly, and without figures: but the meaning is, that in that sermon, and at that time, he thought fit to make use of no other method, as appears from the many other parables he afterwards delivered; and though he explained the meaning of some of them to his disciples, at their request, yet he dismissed the multitude without any explication of them.

Matthew 13:35

Ver. 35. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,.... Not Isaiah, as some copies in the times of Jerom read, but Asaph, who is called Asaph the seer, *2Ch 29:30* which is all one as a prophet; vision is one sort of prophecy {d}; and there was such a thing as prophesying with harps, psalteries and cymbals, as well as in other ways, and with which Asaph and his sons are said to prophesy, *1Ch 25:1* so that he is very rightly called a prophet by the evangelist, who is cited, as

saying, *Ps 78:2*

I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world: which Psalm, though a history of the dealings of God with the people of Israel, and of the many deliverances wrought for them, yet as the {e} Jewish writers observe, contain many things in it, expressed in a parabolical and enigmatical way; such as God's furnishing a table in the wilderness, kindling a fire against Jacob, opening the doors of heaven, giving the corn of heaven, and angels' food, and delivering his strength into captivity; and besides, the very historical facts recorded of the people of Israel, were types of things future under the Gospel dispensation: now as Asaph, by divine inspiration, delivered these parables and dark sayings, so Christ expressed the Gospel, and the mysteries of it, in a parabolical way, which were hid in God, and under the shadows of the law; and so were kept secret from the beginning of the world, and from the multitude, though now made known to the apostles, and by them to others, according to the will of God.

{d} R. David Kimchi, Shorash. rad. hzx. {e} Aben Ezra & Kirachi in loc.

Matthew 13:36

Ver. 36. Then Jesus sent the multitude away,.... That his disciples might have the opportunity of conversing with him alone, about the sense of the parables he had delivered; and that he might instruct them by some others hereafter mentioned.

And went into the house: left the ship in which he had been preaching to the multitude, came on shore, and returned to the house he came out of, *Mt 13:1*

and his disciples came to him; and being alone, make an humble request to him,

saying, declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field: by which they mean, not a rehearsal of it, but an explication of the sense and meaning of it: they ask nothing about the parables of the mustard seed and leaven, either because they better understood them; or because there were some things very remarkable and striking in this, which made them very desirous to be particularly informed of the several parts of it, and their meaning.

Matthew 13:37

Ver. 37. He answered and said unto them,.... Being very ready to answer their request, and willing to communicate spiritual knowledge to them; thereby showing great condescension, and humility in himself, and great affection to them:

he that soweth the good seed, is the son of man; he that is signified by the man that sowed good seed in his field, is "the son of man"; by whom he means himself, the seed of the woman; and the son of David; who being anointed with the Holy Ghost without measure, went about Judea and Galilee, preaching the everlasting Gospel, to the conversion of sinners, thereby making them good seed; though this may be understood of him, as including his apostles and ministers, whom he makes use of as instruments for the good of souls, by preaching the Gospel.

Matthew 13:38

Ver. 38. The field is the world,.... That which is represented by "the field", in which the good seed is sown, is not only the land of Judea, where Christ preached in person, but the whole world, into which the apostles were afterwards sent; or the church of Christ, in the several parts of the world:

the good seed are the children of the kingdom: they which are designed by the good seed, are such, for whom the kingdom of heaven is prepared, to whom it is bequeathed, and who are appointed to it; who are possessed of the kingdom of grace here, and are heirs of the kingdom of glory; and have both a meetness for it, and a right unto it, being the children of God by adoption, and that appearing by regeneration:

but the tares are the children of the wicked one: the persons intended by "the tares", are such professors of religion, as both by their principles and practices, manifestly show that they are of their father the devil; they resemble and imitate him, and do his works; and plainly declare, that they were never born of God, and are in no better state, though under a profession, than openly profane and immoral persons; and are more hurtful and scandalous to the interest of Christ, than such are.

Matthew 13:39

Ver. 39. The enemy that sowed them is the devil,.... He that is designed by the enemy, who sowed the tares in the field among the wheat, is no other than the devil; the enemy of Christ, of mankind in general, of God's elect in particular, and the accuser of the brethren; and his getting of hypocrites and heretics into churches, is no small proof of his implacable enmity to Christ and his interest; and shows what an adversary he is to the peace, comfort, and fruitfulness of the churches of Christ.

The harvest is the end of the world; that which is meant by "the harvest", until which time wheat and tares, good and bad men, under a profession of religion, are to be together, is "the end of the world"; meaning either the day of wrath and vengeance upon the Jewish nation; when those that truly believed in Christ were separated from the rest, and that hypocritical generation of men were utterly destroyed; or else the day of judgment, the great and last day, when the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein, shall be burnt up; when the righteous will enter into life, and the wicked go into everlasting punishment:

and the reapers are the angels; the persons signified by "the reapers", who shall put in the sickle, cut down the tares, bind them in bundles, and cast them into the fire, and who shall gather the wheat into the barn; that is, who shall be the executors of God's wrath, upon wicked professors of religion, and who shall be the means of introducing the saints into the heavenly kingdom, are "the angels"; the holy and elect angels, who are the ministers of Christ, and ministering servants to them, who are the heirs of salvation; and are opposite to all secret and open enemies of Christ and his people; and will be employed in the end of time, against the wicked, and for the righteous.

Matthew 13:40

Ver. 40. As therefore the tares are gathered,.... As it is represented in the parable, that in the time of harvest, the tares shall be gathered out from the wheat first; and being bound in bundles, shall be

burnt in the fire, prepared for that purpose,

so shall it be in the end of this world; hypocritical and heretical men, and all formal professors, shall be gathered out from among the saints, and the several churches, among whom they have been; and shall be together cast into everlasting burnings, prepared for the devil and his angels, whose children they are.

Matthew 13:41

Ver. 41. The Son of man shall send forth his angels,.... Meaning himself, whose ministers the angels are; who wait upon him, and are at his beck and command; even the thousand thousands that minister unto him; these will be sent forth by his orders, into the several parts of the world, where he has any churches, or an interest;

and they shall gather out of his kingdom: the Gospel church, over which Christ is king, where he rules and governs in the hearts of his people; and who are cheerfully and willingly obedient to his laws, under the influence of his Spirit and grace: but all who are in the visible Gospel church state, are not such; some are wicked and rebellious, and though they are suffered to continue, yet not always; for if not removed by censures and excommunications, they will be at last by angels; who will separate them from the saints:

even all things that offend; who are scandals to Christ, his church, and Gospel, by their wicked principles, or infamous practices; and who give offence, not only to God, and his righteous law, but lay stumbling blocks in the way of the children of God, and are the authors of divisions and offences among them:

and them that do iniquity; that do nothing else but iniquity; and who, though they profess to be religious persons, are secretly, or openly, workers of iniquity; and are even doing iniquity, in and whilst they are professing religion.

Matthew ***13:42***

Ver. 42. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire,.... Not a material, but a metaphorical one; denoting the wrath of God, which shall fall upon wicked men, and abide upon them to all eternity: which is sometimes called hell fire, sometimes a lake which burns with fire and brimstone; and here a furnace of fire, expressing the vehemency and intenseness of divine wrath, which will be intolerable; in allusion either to Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, or as some think, to the custom of burning persons alive in some countries; or rather, to the burning of chaff and stubble, and the stalks of any unprofitable things that grew in the field {f}, for the heating of furnaces, and is the very language of the Jews, who used to compare hell to a furnace; so *Ge 15:17* is paraphrased by them {g}.

"And behold the sun set, and there was darkness; and lo! Abraham saw until the seats were set, and the thrones cast down; and lo! "hell", which is prepared for the wicked in the world to come, arwntk, "as a furnace", which sparks and flames of fire surrounded; hwgbd, "in the midst of which", the wicked fell, because they rebelled against the law, in their lifetime."

Which is expressed in much the same language, and conveys the same ideas as here; and no wonder is it that it follows,

there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth; declaring the remorse of conscience, the tortures of mind, the sense of inexpressible pain, and punishment, the wicked shall feel; also their furious rage and black despair.

{f} Misn. Sabbat. c. 3. sect. 1. & Maimon, & Bartenora in ib. {g} Hieros. Targum in Gen. xv. 17.

Matthew ***13:43***

Ver. 43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun,.... The time referred to is, when the tares shall be separated from the wheat: when they that offend and do iniquity, shall be gathered out of Christ's kingdom; when the wicked shall be cast into hell: then the "righteous", not who are so merely in their own apprehensions, and in the judgment of others; nor by their obedience, legal or evangelical; but who are made so, by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them: these, though they have been in this world loaded with reproaches, and attended with many afflictions and persecutions; and have been despised for their poverty and meanness, and want of outward glory, honour, riches, and prosperity; shall now "shine forth" in the robe of Christ's righteousness, in perfect holiness of nature, in all felicity and prosperity of soul; and in the shining dazzling robes of glory, incorruption, and immortality, on their bodies; even

as the sun, having no spot in them, or upon them, and without any clouds of darkness: they will be as Christ himself, the sun of righteousness, with whom, and in whose glory they shall appear, both in soul and body,

in the kingdom of their father; meaning either the same with the kingdom of Christ, the Father's and his, being one and the same; or as distinct from Christ's, see *Mt 13:41* the church, and the government of it in this world, in all ages of time, and especially in the latter day, and during the thousand years, Christ and his saints shall reign together, may be peculiarly called the kingdom of Christ; when it will be delivered to the Father, and God shall be all in all: so that the ultimate glory may, though not to the exclusion of the Son, be styled the kingdom of the Father; of God, who is the Father of Christ and of his people; and which is observed, to assure the saints of their interest in it, right unto it, and certain enjoyment of it. Some copies read, "the kingdom of heaven". Much the same images, here made use of, to set forth the glory of the saints, both in soul and body, in the world to come, are expressed by the Jews.

"The faces of the "righteous", they say, {h} in time to come, shall be hmxl twmwd, "like to the sun", and moon, to the stars and planets, and lightnings, and lilies, and to the lamp of the sanctuary."

And elsewhere {i} they observe, that

"God in time to come, will beautify the body of "the righteous", as the beauty of the first man, when he entered into paradise, according to *Isa 58:11* and that the soul, whilst in its dignity, shall be sustained with the superior light, and be clothed with it; and when it shall enter into the body hereafter, it shall enter with that light; and then shall the body shine, eyqrh rhzk, "as the brightness of the firmament": as is said in *Da 12:3*'

And a little after {k} it is said, that when

"the soul goes out, the body is left, which shall be there built again, avmvd arhnk, "as the light of the sun", and as the brightness of the firmament."

Who hath ears to hear, let him hear; and seriously consider of the several things said in this parable, concerning the wheat and tares, the righteous and the wicked, as being matters of the greatest moment and importance.

{h} Vajikra Rabba, fol. 170. 1. Siphre apud. Ceseph. Misna in Maimon. Hilch. Teshuba, c. 9. {i} Midrash haunealam apud Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 1. {k} lb. fol. 70. 1. Vid. Midrash Tillim. in Psal. xi. apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. 1. 12. c. 6. p. 712.

Matthew 13:44

Ver. 44. Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure,.... By which is meant, not eternal life, the incorruptible inheritance, riches of glory, treasure in heaven; nor Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and all the riches of grace and glory; but the Gospel, which is a treasure consisting of rich truths, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; of the most valuable blessings, and of exceeding great, and precious promises; and reveals the riches of God, of Christ, and of the other world; and is a treasure unsearchable, solid, satisfying, and lasting: this is said to be

hid in a field. The Gospel was in some measure hid, under the former dispensation, from the Old Testament saints; and for a long time was hid from the Gentile world; and is entirely hid from them that are lost, who are blinded by the god of this world; and even from the elect of God themselves, before conversion: this is sometimes said to be hid in God, in his thoughts, counsels, and purposes, and in the covenant of his grace; and sometimes in Christ; who is the storehouse of truth, as well as of grace; and may be thought to be hid under the Mosaic economy, in the types and shadows of the ceremonial law: but here "the field" means the Scriptures, in which the Gospel lies hid; and therefore these are to be searched into for it, as men seek and search for silver and hid treasures, by digging into mines, and in the bowels of the earth:

the which when a man hath found; either with or without the use of means, purposely attended to, in order to find it; such as reading, hearing, prayer, and meditation: for sometimes the Gospel, and the spiritual saving knowledge of it, are found, and attained to, by persons accidentally, with respect to themselves, though providentially, with respect to God; when they had no desire after it, or searched for it, and thought nothing about it; though by others it is come at, in a diligent use of the above means:

he hideth; which is to be understood not in an ill sense, as the man hid his talent in a napkin, and in the earth; but in a good sense, and designs his care of it; his laying it up in his heart, that he might not lose it, and that it might not be taken away from him: and

for joy thereof; for the Gospel, when rightly understood, brings good tidings of great joy, to sensible sinners;

goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth the field: which is not to be interpreted literally and properly; though a man that knows the worth and value of the Bible, rather than be without one, would part with all his worldly substance for one; but figuratively, and denotes the willingness of such souls, who are led into the glory, fulness, and excellency of the word of God, the scriptures of truth, and of the immense treasure of the Gospel therein, to part with all that has been, or is dear unto them; with their sins, and self-righteousness; with their good names and characters; their worldly substance, and life itself, for the sake of the Gospel, and their profession of it: and may also design the use of all means, to gain a larger degree of light and knowledge in the Gospel. It seems by this parable, according to the Jewish laws, that not the finder of a treasure in a field, but the owner of the field, had the propriety in it; when it should seem rather, that it ought to be divided. Such that have ability and leisure, may consult a controversy in Philostratus {l}, between two persons, the buyer and seller of a field; in which, after the purchase, a treasure was found, when the seller claimed it as his; urging, that had he known of it, he would never have sold him the field: the buyer, on the other hand, insisted on its being his property; alleging that all was his which was contained in the land bought by him.

{l} De Vita Apollonii, lib. 2. c. 15.

Ver. 45 & 46. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man,.... This parable may be understood of Christ's seeking, finding, and purchasing his elect: for, certain it is, that he has sought after them; which implies, that they were lost and going astray; expresses his great love to them, value for them, and desire after them; in doing which, he took much pains, and used much diligence: and certain it also is, that he finds them in redemption, and in effectual calling; and that they are to him a pearl of great price; as very precious to God, so highly esteemed of by Christ, as his portion, his inheritance, and his jewels. He has also parted with all he had for the sake of these persons; he became poor, emptied himself of everything, even gave himself a ransom for them, and so made a purchase of them, with the price of his own blood: though to this sense it may be objected, that it does not seem so agreeable, that Christ should be compared to a merchant man, which better suits with those that deal with him, than as he is concerned with them; nor does he seek after any other than his elect: whereas this merchant man is said to be

seeking goodly pearls; any pearls that were so: nor is Christ's finding his elect a chance business; nor have they any intrinsic excellency in them, to denominate them pearls, but by his grace. The more common interpretation of it is, that it designs a sensible sinner, seeking after the true way of salvation, and finding Christ, and parting with all for him: such a man is a spiritual merchant, who trades in foreign parts, and in things of worth and value; and such an one seeks after a variety of things, which at first sight seem "goodly", in order to obtain salvation by; as civility, morality, a legal righteousness, fasting, watchings, prayer, a profession of religion, and a submission to external ordinances; but at length finds Christ,

the pearl of great price: who is of an unspeakable brightness and glory, of intrinsic worth and value; who is enriching to those that possess him, and precious to them that believe; and of such a price, that no valuable consideration can be given for him: wherefore such a soul is willing to part with all for him; with sinful self, and righteous self; and with the honours, riches, and profits of this world; and buy him, his grace and righteousness, without money, and without price. Though I rather think, that in connection and agreement with the other parables, this is to be understood of such, who are seeking after knowledge in every branch of it, natural, moral, and spiritual; and so may be compared to a "merchant man, seeking goodly pearls"; and who find the Gospel, and prefer it to everything else.

Who when he had found one pearl of great price: for such who seek after wisdom and knowledge in the use of proper means, are like merchant men, that trade abroad, and for things of value; and these, under divine direction, find in the Scriptures, and through the ministry of the word, and by prayer and study, the truths of the everlasting Gospel, respecting Christ, his person, office, grace and righteousness; which are equal to, yea transcend a pearl of the highest price; for their original, coming from a far country, from heaven; for their brightness, clearness, and perspicuity; for their ornament and glory; for their firmness and solidity; for their virtue and value, to them that know the worth of them; and such will buy, but not sell them; reckon all things but loss and dung, in comparison of them; and will contend for them, and stand fast in them.

Matthew 13:46

See Gill on "Mt 13:45"

Matthew 13:47

Ver. 47. Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net,.... By which also is meant, the Gospel, and the ministry of it. This may be compared to a net, for its meanness in the esteem of men; being despicable, and of no account in the eyes of the world: and yet like a net, a piece of curious artifice and workmanship, being the produce of the grace of God; in which his manifold wisdom is displayed, and is what angels desire to look into: it is designed, and purposely contrived, for the gathering in of sinners to Christ, and to his churches, though by accident, it has other uses; such as troubling of the world, as the net does the waters of the sea, and drawing out the corruptions of the men of it, as that does weeds, stones, &c. and which, like a net, can do nothing of itself, unless cast; and not then neither, unless succeeded with a divine blessing:

that was cast into the sea; by "the sea" is meant the world, so called, for the storms and tempests of afflictions, and persecutions the saints meet with, and for the continual troubles that are in it; for the restlessness and instability of all things therein; for the dangers of it; and for its being the proper place and element of fishes, as the world is to the men of it. The casting of it into the sea, designs the opening of the Gospel, and the unfolding the mysteries of it, and the preaching it in all the world; and supposes persons qualified for it; such were the patriarchs and prophets under the Old Testament; and particularly Christ, John the Baptist, and the Apostles of Christ, and succeeding ministers under the New Testament; and requires art, skill, and wisdom, might and strength, industry, diligence, and patience; and which is done at a venture, whether there are fish or not; and sometimes succeeds, and sometimes not:

and gathered of every kind; the Persic version adds, "of animals"; but much more agreeably Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and the Vulgate Latin, add, "of fishes"; and so some copies read. The preaching of the Gospel, is the means of gathering souls to Christ, and into his churches; and those that are gathered into a visible Gospel church state, are of every kind, of all nations in the world; Jews and Gentiles: of all ranks and degrees of men, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free; of all sorts of sinners, and of men good and bad; some who have the truth of grace in them, and others that are only hypocrites: profess in words, and deny in works; have nothing more than a form of godliness, and name to live, and are dead.

Matthew 13:48

Ver. 48. Which when, it was full,.... As the Gospel, and the Gospel church state may be said to be, when all the ends of the preaching of the word are answered; when all are called by the one, and into the other, that were designed to be called; when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, and all Israel shall be saved.

They drew to the shore; which will be done, when the end of the world comes; then will an end be put to the Gospel ministry, the net will be drawn to shore; the preaching of the Gospel will cease, and no more use be made of it:

and sat down; the ministers of the word having done their work, enter into the joy of their Lord, and rest from their labours:

and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away; as fishermen used to do; though this last office seems, by the application of the parable, to be what will be performed by angels; who, as many as they find to have a good work of grace wrought and finished in their souls, they will gather into Christ's barn, into the everlasting habitations, the mansions in Christ's Father's house, he is gone to prepare: but as for the bad, who shall appear to be destitute of the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ, notwithstanding their profession of religion, they shall be rejected, as good for nothing, and shall be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

Matthew 13:49

Ver. 49. So shall it be at the end of the world,.... As the fisherman, when he has drawn his net to shore, picks out the good fish, and puts them into proper vessels, and casts the dead, putrid, and useless fish away; so, at the close of time, in the last day,

the angels shall come forth out of heaven, from the presence of God and Christ, and by his orders, as the judge of all the earth,

and sever the wicked from the just; with whom they have had not only civil conversation, but have been joined in a Gospel church state; but now these ungodly shall not stand in judgment with them; nor these sinners, these hypocrites, in the congregation of the righteous: the one will be set at Christ's right hand, the other at his left; the one will go into life eternal, and the other into everlasting punishment; and their separation from one another will be for ever.

Matthew 13:50

Ver. 50. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire,.... See Gill on "Mt 13:42"

Matthew 13:51

Ver. 51. Jesus saith unto them,.... This is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and in some Greek exemplars; though it is necessary to the connection and sense of the words:

have ye understood all these things? All the parables Christ had delivered, besides those he had given a particular explanation of; as of the mustard seed, and leaven, of the treasure hid in the field, the pearl of great price, and the net cast into the sea: Christ's putting this question to the disciples, shows that the things delivered, had some difficulty in them; that they were of moment and importance to be understood; and how concerned he was, that they should understand them; and how ready he was to communicate the knowledge of them, which he knew would be useful to them in their after ministrations:

they say unto him, yea, Lord. This answer, which was truly and faithfully made, is a proof of their close and strict attention to the words of Christ; the quickness of their understandings, at that time, being in a very special manner opened and illuminated by Christ; and which he knew, when he put the question to them; but was willing to have it owned and expressed by themselves, that he might have the opportunity of saying what follows.

Matthew 13:52

Ver. 52. Then said he unto them,.... Since the disciples had such a clear understanding of the above parables, and were by them, and by other things, so well furnished to preach the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven to others, Christ stirs them up by the following parable, to a diligent exercise of their gifts, and to a large, free, and cheerful communication of their knowledge to others.

Therefore every Scribe; meaning not legal ones, Scribes in the law of Moses, a sort of letter men, often mentioned by the evangelists, and the same with the lawyers, who were conversant with the letter of the law, and only understood that; as for the kingdom of heaven, they were so far from being instructed unto it, that they shut it up, and would neither go in themselves, nor suffer others; but evangelical Scribes are here meant, see *Mt 23:34* the preachers of the everlasting Gospel, now everyone of these,

which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, as each of them be more or less; that is, understands the nature of the Gospel church state, the discipline, laws, and rules of Christ's house, the doctrines of the Gospel, the way and things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven; as Christ and his righteousness, and the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Spirit: such an one,

is like unto a man that is an householder; that has an household or family under his care, as the ministers of the Gospel have, and which is the church of God; called the household of God, the household of faith, a spiritual house, and a family; consisting of fathers, young men, and children; of which indeed Christ is properly the householder and master, but Gospel ministers are deputies and stewards under him, and under him preside over the household, and have the government of it, provide food for it, and protect and defend it; all which require large gifts and abilities, great love and affection, both to Christ and his people; much wisdom, prudence, and knowledge; and great faithfulness and integrity, courage and firmness of mind.

Which bringeth forth out of his treasure, things new and old: by "his treasure" is meant, either Christ, who is the great treasury and storehouse of grace and truth; from whence his ministers receive all their gifts, grace, light, and knowledge; or the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, by which the men of God are thoroughly furnished for every good work; or the treasure of the Gospel, which is put into their earthen vessels, into their own hearts, and that stock of Gospel knowledge and experience they are blessed with; a large competency of which is necessary to these householders since they are to give out, not niggardly, but largely, and plentifully, and in great variety. The Syriac version reads it, htmyo Nm, "out of his treasures", and so may include them all. "Things new and old": not the new Gospel and the old law, for the law is not old, nor the Gospel new; the Gospel is much older than the law, being hid of God, and ordained before the world was, to our glory; and was even promulgated, long before the law was on Mount Sinai: nor things out of the Old and New Testament, for the New Testament was not yet in being; though it is right, and is the business of Gospel preachers, to bring forth such truths and doctrines, as are contained in both: rather truths that are old in themselves, but newly discovered to them, may be intended, and every new acquisition of knowledge and experience, added to the former stock and fund: the phrase seems to denote the plenty and variety of Gospel provisions, which the ministers of it are to bring forth, suited to the various cases of such who are under their care. The allusion is either to a good provider for his family, who lays up stores for them of all sorts, and upon proper occasions brings them forth for their relief; or to the people under the law, bringing their offerings out of the fruits, both of the old and new year; concerning which, take the following rule {m}.

"All offerings, both of the congregation and of a private person, came from the land (of Israel), and without the land, Nvyh Nmw vdxh Nm, "from the new and from the old" (i.e. from the new and old stock, the increase of the new and old year), except the sheaf of the first fruits, and the two wave loaves; for they come only from the new, and from the land of Israel."

The place where fruits of any kind were laid up, was called a treasure; hence it is said {n}, the palm tree has its fallen fruits, which they do not bring ruwal, "into the treasure"; and it produces dates, which they put into the treasure: perhaps some reference is had to ***So 7:13*** where mention is made of fruits new and old, and which the Jewish writers {o} interpret of the words of the Scribes, and of the words of the law; the fruits "new", are the words and sayings of the Scribes, their doctrines and decisions; and the "old", are the words of the law; and one that was well versed in both these; was with them a well instructed Scribe. Unless the allusion should rather be thought to be to old and new wine, see ***Lu 5:37***, it being usual to call a wine cellar a "treasure" {p}, in which all sorts of wine were kept; and a well instructed Scribe is full of matter, and, like Elihu, his belly is as wine that has no vent and is ready to burst like new bottles, *Job 32:19* and, like Jeremy, he is weary of forbearing, and cannot stay, *Jer 20:9* and, like David, his heart indites a good matter, and his tongue is as the pen of a ready writer, *Ps 45:1*.

{m} Misn. Parah, c. 2. sect. 1. {n} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 3. fol. 180. 3. {o} Targum in Cant. vii. 13. T. Bab. Erubim, fol. 21. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {p} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 178. 2.

Matthew 13:53

Ver. 53. And it came to pass that, when Jesus had finished these parables,.... Which he spoke both to the multitude from the ship, and to his disciples in the house,

he departed thence; from the house in which he was, and the city of Capernaum, where he had some time been.

Matthew 13:54

Ver. 54. And when he was come into his own country,.... Not where he was born, Bethlehem, for it is never observed, that he went thither; but where he was educated, and where his parents and near relations, according to the flesh, lived; who had been some little time ago seeking for him, and desirous of speaking with him, even Nazareth:

he taught them in their synagogue, it being the sabbath day; see ***Mr 6:1***. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Eastern versions, the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read, "in their synagogues"; but as Nazareth was so mean and obscure a place, it is not likely that there should be in it more synagogues than one; and of no more do we read in ***Lu 4:16*** where an account is given of Christ's preaching in this place before this time.

Insomuch that they were astonished; at the doctrines he taught, which were new and unheard of to them; and were delivered in such a graceful manner, and with so much power and authority; and also at the miracles he wrought, in confirmation of what he delivered; and said,

whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? They knew his education, how that he had not been put to school, had never learned letters of men, or received any instructions from their learned doctors; and therefore could not imagine, how he came by such sublime and divine knowledge, and by what power he performed such wonderful things; looking upon him to be a mere man, and a very mean, and contemptible one: not knowing that he was the wisdom of God, and the power of God; which had they been acquainted with, there would have been no room, nor reason, for such questions.

Matthew 13:55

Ver. 55. Is not this the carpenter's son?.... Meaning Joseph, who was by trade a carpenter, and whose son Jesus was supposed to be; and who very probably was now dead, which may be the reason he is not mentioned by name. The Greek word here used, signifies any mechanic, or artificer. The Syriac expresses it by a word, which signifies both a carpenter and a blacksmith; and Munster's Hebrew Gospel renders it, axpn Nb, "the blacksmith's son". But the generally received notion of the ancient

Christians is, that he was a carpenter, and that Jesus was brought up to the same business, which lay in making ploughs and yokes {q}. This also appears, from the answer the Christian schoolmaster at Antioch gave to Libanius the sophister; who being big with expectation of Julian the apostate's getting the victory, asked the schoolmaster, what he thought the carpenter's son was doing? To which, after a short pause, he replied; O sophister! the Creator of all things, whom thou callest the carpenter's son, is making a coffin for Julian; who accordingly died in a few days after {r}. The Jews make mention of one Abba Joseph, yanbh, "the builder", or carpenter {s}; but whether the same, is not certain. What they here say, was no doubt by way of derision and contempt; and yet the same phrase is used by them of a person of great note and fame, for his wisdom and knowledge: thus speaking of a difficult point, they {t} say,

"rgn rb alw rgn tyl, "no carpenter", or smith, or a carpenter's son, can solve this: says R. Shesheth, I am neither a carpenter, nor a carpenter's son, and I can solve it."

The gloss upon it is,

"a wise man, the son of a wise man."

Is not his mother called Mary? Plain Mary, without any other title, or civil respect; a poor spinstress, that got her bread by her hand labour: the Jews say {u}, she was a plaiter of women's hair, and treat her with the utmost scorn.

And his brethren; not strictly so, but either the sons of Joseph by a former wife; or Mary's, or Joseph's brothers or sisters sons, and so cousins to Christ; it being usual with the Jews to call such, and even more distant relations, brethren:

James; the son of Alphaeus, or Cleophas, one of Christ's disciples, *Mt 10:3* called the Lord's brother, ***Gal 1:19*** and the same that wrote the epistle that bears his name:

and Joses; or Joseph, as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read; and which two names are one and the same: hence, in Talmudic writings, we often read of R. Jose, who is the same with R. Joseph {w}: this Joses is, by Dr. Lightfoot, conjectured to be the same with Joseph, called

Barsabas, who was put in nomination for apostleship, after the death of Judas, ***Ac* *1:23***

And Simon; or Symeon, the son of Cleophas, who is said {x} to succeed James, as bishop of Jerusalem, and to be Christ's cousin, being son of Cleophas, the brother of Joseph, the supposed father of Christ:

and Judas; the same that is called Lebbaeus, and Thaddaeus, *Mt 10:3* and the brother of James, ***Lu 6:16*** and the same that wrote the epistle that goes by his name. The Jews ought not to have made these remarks, since many of their great doctors were of mean parentage; as R. Zachariah was a butcher's son {y}, and R. Jochanan a blacksmith's son {z}; hence that advice of R. Juda ben Bethira {a},

"take heed that ye do not reproach the sons of the common people, for from them comes forth the law."

{q} Justin Martyr. Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 316. {r} Tripartit. Hist. 1. 6. c. 44. {s} Shemoth Rabba, sect. 13. fol. 99. 2. {t} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 50. 2. {u} T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 104. 2. Chagiga, fol. 4. 2. Sanhedrim, fol. 67. 1. {w} Vid. Juchasin, fol. 61. & 62. {x} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. 1. 3. c. 11. {y} Misn. Sota, c. 5. sect. 1. {z} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 96. 1. {a} Ib.

Matthew ***13:56***

Ver. 56. And his sisters,.... Whose names, according to Epiphanius {b}, were Mary and Salome; whom he supposes were the daughters of Joseph, by a former wife; but rather of Alphaeus or Cleophas.

Are they not all with us? Lived in the same town with them, were well known by them, and familiar with them.

Whence then hath this man all these things? His wisdom and his mighty works; for since he had not them from any of their schools, and nurseries of learning, from their learned doctors and wise men; and could not have received them from his parents, and near relations, they could not devise from whence he should have them.

{b} Contr. Haeres. Tom. 2. 1. 3. Haeres. 78. &. lib. Ancorat.

Ver. 57. And they were offended in him,.... It was a stumbling to them, how he came by his wisdom and power; since he had not these things from men of learning, and could not have them from his relatives: and therefore, rather than believe he had them of himself, or from God, they chose to indulge at least a suspicion, that he had them from the devil, and so were offended in him: or this offence was taken at the meanness of his birth, parentage, and education, though without reason; for if without the advantage of an education without human literature, and the instructions of men, he was able to expound the Scriptures, preach such doctrine, and deliver such words of wisdom, and confirm all this by miracles, and mighty works, they ought to have considered him as a divine person, and all this, as a demonstration of it, and of his having a divine mission at least, and of his being raised up by God for extraordinary purposes.

But Jesus said unto them; being unmoved at their offence in him, and contempt of him, which was no other than what he expected:

a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house; which seems to be a proverbial speech in common use, though I have not met with it in Jewish writings; showing, that a prophet, or any teacher, or preacher, generally speaking, is more esteemed among strangers, who have no personal pique, nor prejudices against him, and who judge of him, not by what he has been, but by his present abilities, doctrine, and conduct, than among his countrymen; who are apt to think meanly of him, because familiarly acquainted with him, and knew, if not his vices, yet his infirmities, and envy him any superior degree of honour to them, he has attained unto. I say, generally speaking, for this is not always the case on either side; sometimes a prophet is affronted and abused in strange places, as Christ himself was: and sometimes is received with esteem and applause among his countrymen, relations, and acquaintance; but this is rare and uncommon; the proverb respects what is usually and ordinarily done, and the truth of it is easy to be observed.

Matthew ***13:58***

Ver. 58. And he did not many mighty works there,.... Some he did, though not many; partly that they might be left inexcusable, and partly that it might not be said, he did not wish well, to his own country: what he did, were not of the first class, and greatest note; he only "laid his hands", as Mark says, ***Mr 6:5*** "upon a few sick folk, and healed them"; and yet these were such as raised their wonder and astonishment, but did not command their faith, and were rather stumbling blocks unto them; such were their prejudices, their unbelief, and the hardness of their hearts: and the reason indeed why he did no more was,

because of their unbelief. These words in Mark are joined with this expression, "he marvelled"; showing, that their continued unbelief in him, notwithstanding his ministry and miracles among them, was matter of surprise to him; but here they are given as a reason why he did no more mighty works among them: and which Mark says he could not do, not for want of power, or as if their unbelief was too mighty for him to overcome; but he would not, because he judged them unworthy, and that it was not fit and convenient to perform any more, since they were offended with what was done; and that their condemnation might not be increased.

Matthew 14:1

Ver. 1. At that time Herod the tetrarch,.... Not Herod the Great, in whose reign Christ was born, and who slew the infants of Bethlehem, but his son; this was, as the Jewish chronologer {c} rightly observes,

"Herod Antipater, whom they call yqrtyj, "the tetrarch"; the son of Herod the First, and brother of Archelaus, and the third king of the family of Herod."

And though he is here called a "tetrarch", he is in ***Mr 6:14*** called a king: the reason of his being styled a "tetrarch" was this; his father Herod divided his large kingdom into four parts, and bequeathed them to his sons, which was confirmed by the Roman senate: Archelaus reigned in Judea in his stead; upon whose decease, that part was put under the care of a Roman governor; who, when John the Baptist began to preach, was Pontius Pilate; this same Herod here spoken of, being "tetrarch" of Galilee, which was the part assigned him; and his brother Philip "tetrarch" of Ituraea, and of the region of Trachonitis; and Lysanias, "tetrarch" of Abilene, ***Lu 3:1*** the word "tetrarch": signifying one that has the "fourth" part of government: and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, he is called "one of the four princes"; and in the Arabic version, "a prince of the fourth part"; and in the Persic, a "governor of the fourth part of the kingdom". The "time" referred to, was after the death of John the Baptist; and when Christ had been for a good while, and in many places, preaching and working miracles; the particular instant which respect is had unto, is the sending forth of the twelve disciples to preach and work miracles; and which might serve the more to spread the fame of Christ, and which reached the court of Herod; who, it is said here,

heard of the fame of Jesus: what a wonderful preacher he was, and what mighty things were done by him.

{c} David Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2. and so in Juchasin, fol. 142. 2.

Matthew 14:2

Ver. 2. And said unto his servants,.... Those of his household, his courtiers, with whom he more familiarly conversed; to these he expressed his fears, that it might be true what was suggested by the people, and he was ready to believe it himself;

this is John the Baptist: some copies add, "whom I have beheaded", as in ***Mr 6:16*** the guilt of which action rose in his mind, lay heavy on him, and filled him with horror and a thousand fears:

he is risen from the dead; which if he was a Sadducee, as he is thought to be, by comparing *Mt 16:6* with ***Mr 8:15*** was directly contrary to his former sentiments, and was extorted from him by his guilty conscience; who now fears, what before he did not believe; and what he fears, he affirms; concluding that John was raised from the dead, to give proof of his innocence, and to revenge his death on him:

and therefore mighty works do show themselves in him, or "are wrought by him"; for though he wrought no miracles in his lifetime, yet, according to a vulgar notion, that after death men are endued with a greater power, Herod thought this to be the case; or that he was possessed of greater power, on purpose to punish him for the murder of him; and that these miracles which were wrought by him, were convincing proofs of the truth of his resurrection, and of what he was able to do to him, and what he might righteously expect from him.

Matthew 14:3

Ver. 3. For Herod had laid hold on John,.... By his servants, whom he sent to apprehend him:

and bound him; laid him in chains, as if he was a malefactor;

and put him in prison, in the castle of Machaerus {d},

for Herodias's sake; who was angry with him, had a bitter quarrel against him, and by whose instigation all this was done; who was

his brother Philip's wife. This Herodias was the daughter of Aristobulus, son to Herod the Great {e}, and brother to Philip, and to this Herod; so that she was niece to them both; and first married the one, and then the other, whilst the former was living. Philip and this Herod were both sons of Herod the Great, but not by the same woman; Philip was born of Cleopatra of Jerusalem, and Herod Antipas of Malthace, a Samaritan {f}; so that Philip was his brother by his father's side, but not by his mother's; the Evangelist Mark adds, "for he had married her": the case was this, Herod being sent for to Rome, called at his brother Philip's by the way, where he fell into an amorous intrigue with his wife, and agreed, upon his return, to take her with him and marry her; as he accordingly did, and divorced his own wife, who was daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia Petraea; which occasioned a war between Herod and his wife's father, in which the former was beaten {g},

{d} Joseph. Antiqu. 1. 18. c. 7. {e} Ib. c. 6. {f} Joseph. Antiqu. 1. 18. c. 6. de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 28. sect. 7. {g} Joseph. Antiqu. 1. 18. c. 6.

Matthew 14:4

Ver. 4. For John said unto him,.... John having heard of this incestuous marriage, went to Herod, and reproved him to his face for it; and, as Luke says, "for all the evils he had done", ***Lu 3:19*** for he was a very wicked man, and guilty of many flagitious crimes: John, in so doing, showed his zeal for holiness, his hatred of sin, his courage and faithfulness in reproving thus freely so great a man; and made it manifest, that he came in the spirit of Elijah: what he said to him was,

it is not lawful for thee to have her, being forbidden, *Le 18:16* for though by another law it was right to marry a brother's wife, after his decease, when he left no issue, yet this was not the case here; Philip was now living, and, had he been dead, such a marriage would have been unlawful, because there was issue; she had a daughter, who afterwards is said to dance before Herod; and besides, he himself had another wife, whom he put away; so that his sin was a very aggravated and complicated one: lying with a brother's wife, was one of those sins which, according to the Jewish {h} canons, deserved cutting off, or death by the hand of God. Josephus {i} gives another reason of the imprisonment and death of John, that Herod feared that the people of the Jews, through his means, would be moved to sedition, and revolt from his government; which might be what Herodias suggested to him, or what he gave out himself, to cover the true cause of his proceedings: but the true reason is, what is here given, and is to be confirmed by the testimony of Jewish writers. One of their chronologers {k} delivers the account in these express words:

"Herod Antipater was a very wicked and pernicious man, many of the wise men of Israel he slew with the sword; and he took to wife, his brother Philip's wife, whilst he was living; and because John the high priest (for so through mistake they call him) hz le wxykwh "reproved him for this"; (see ***Lu 3:19***) he slew him with the sword, with many of the wise men of Israel."

And, says their historian {l},

"also he, Herod, slew John, because he said unto him, it is forbidden thee to take the wife of Philip, and he slew him; this is that John that practised baptism."

{h} Misn. Ceritot, c. 1. sect. 1. {i} Antiqu. lsss. 18. c. 6. {k} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2. {l} Joseph. Gorionides, 1. 5. c. 45.

Ver. 5. And when he would have put him to death,.... As soon as he apprehended him, and put him into prison; being provoked by his reproving him, and being stirred up by Herodias, who was greatly incensed and enraged, and would have killed him herself, but could not, being hindered by Herod: who, though he had a good will and strong inclination to take away his life, yet what with fearing the terror of his own conscience, and the reverence and respect he had for John, as a good man; and especially for the reason here given, he did not do it, for

he feared the multitude: not God, but the multitude; and these, not only the large number of people that attended on John's ministry, and were baptized by him, and became his disciples, but the generality of the people, the whole body of the Jewish nation. So God is pleased oftentimes to restrain the wickedness of princes, by the fear of their subjects:

because they counted him as a prophet; a holy good man, and who was sent of God; they respected him as such, believing him to be a true and real prophet, and treated him with honour and reverence, suitable to his character; wherefore Herod was afraid, should he take away his life, that the people would mutiny, rise up against him, and revolt from him. In what esteem John was with the people of the Jews in general, may be learned from the character Josephus gives of him, as a good man; who stirred up the Jews to the practice of virtue, especially piety and justice; which made the common people fond of him and his doctrine; and who were of opinion, that the defeat of Herod's army, which followed the death of John, was a just judgment of God upon him for it {m}.

{m} Antiqu. 1. 18. c. 6.

Matthew 14:6

Ver. 6. But when Herod's birthday was kept,.... The birthdays of princes, both of their coming into the world, and accession to the throne of government, were kept by the Gentiles; as by the Egyptians, *Ge 40:20* and by the {n} Persians, and Romans {o}, and other nations, but not by the Jews; who reckon these among the feasts of idolaters.

"These (say they {p}) are the feasts of idolaters; the "Calends", and the

"Saturnalia", the time kept in memory of subduing a kingdom (or when a king takes possession of it, the day of his accession), Myklm lv ayowng Mwyw, "and the birthday of kings" (when they are made and crowned, the day of coronation), and the day of birth, and the day of death."

And it is a question, whether this day, that was kept, was the day of Herod's natural birth, or of his civil government, being his accession, or coronation day: and it might also be a question, whether it was the then present Herod's birthday, or whether it was not his father Herod's, was it not that Mark says, ***Mr 6:21*** it was his birthday; since it is the latter the poet {q} refers to, as kept by Jews, when he says, "At cum Herodis venere dies"; and the old Scholiast upon him observes, that

"Herod reigned over the Jews in Syria, in the times of Augustus; therefore the Herodians kept Herod's birthday, as also the sabbath, on which day they set up candles in the windows lighted, and encircled with violets."

This they did, believing him to be the Messiah: and it is further to be observed, that the word here used, is said {r} to be proper to the dead, and not to the living; and that he that uses it of the living, speaks very inaccurately: but however, it was a festival, and a time of great mirth and jollity; and a proper opportunity offered to Herodias, to execute her malicious designs against John the Baptist; for at this time,

the daughter of Herodias danced before them: in the original text it is, "in the midst", in the middle of the hall; or in the midst of the company, the lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee, for whom Herod made a supper, ***Mr 6:21*** and the Syriac renders it akymo Mdq, "before the guests". Music and dancing were usual at such entertainments, they were the common appendages of a feast {s}: the daughter of Herodias, who danced before the company for their diversion, whether alone, or with others, was very probably Salome {t}, whom she had by her former husband; and therefore is called, not the daughter of Herod, but of Herodias:

and pleased Herod; and as Mark adds, "and them that sat with him"; so that the pleasure he had did not arise merely from the respect and honour shown to him and his birthday, by her appearing with so much cheerfulness on this occasion before him; who had taken her father's wife from him, and defiled her mother; but from the airs, gestures, and motions of the lady in dancing;

which were so extremely fine and regular, that she gave wonderful satisfaction and delight to Herod, and the whole company.

{n} Herodot. l. 1. c. 133. & 9. c. 109. {o} Plin. Ep. 1. 10. ep. 61. {p} Misn. Avoda Zara, c. 1. sect. 3. {q} Persius, Satyr. 5. prope finem. {r} Ammonius, peri omoiwn &c. in lit. {s} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 25. {t} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 6.

Matthew ***14:7***

Ver. 7. Whereupon he promised with an oath,.... On account of her fine dancing, and being extremely pleased with it himself; and the more, that it gave such pleasure to the whole court: he first promised her,

to give her whatsoever she would ask; and then repeating it, he confirmed it with an oath; adding, as Mark says, that he would give it her, even "to the half of his kingdom": a way of speaking used by princes, when they give full power to persons to ask what they will of them; and to express their great munificence and liberality; signifying, let it be ever so great, or cost what it will, though as much as half a kingdom comes to, it shall be granted; see ***Es 5:3***. A very foolish promise, and a rash oath these, which were made upon such a consideration, as only a fine dance. If she, as Theophylact observes, had asked for his head, would he have given it her? And if he swore by his head, which was a common form of swearing with the Jews {u}, she very appropriately, though unjustly, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, answers to him; as you have swore by your head, give me John Baptist's head.

{u} Misn. Sanhedrim, c. 3. sect 2. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 3. 1. Derech Eretz, c. 6. fol. 18. 2.

Matthew ***14:8***

Ver. 8. And she being before instructed of her mother,.... What request to make; for as Mark says, "she went forth" to her mother immediately, as soon as she had received the king's promise, and took advice of her, what she should ask; who bid her ask for the head of John the Baptist; and accordingly she went in, "straightway with haste unto the king", as the same evangelist observes, to take him at his word, and whilst he was in the mood; being urged and hastened on by her mother, who was eager to satisfy her revenge on John; and said,

give me here John Baptist's head in a charger: she desires his head, and this to be brought to her in a large dish, that her mother might be sure of his death; and have an opportunity of insulting that mouth and tongue, that had spoke against her incestuous marriage: and she desires to have it given "here", in that very place, at that very time, where, and while the company was together, who were witnesses of the king's promise and oath; and this she did, lest when the festival was over, and he was out of his cups, he should repent of his folly and rashness. The mother and daughter seem to be much alike, both for lasciviousness, revenge, and cruelty: and if what the historian says {w} be true, that this same person Salome, the daughter of Herodias, as she walked over a river which was frozen in the winter season, the ice broke, and she fell in, and the pieces of ice cut off her head; the "lex talionis", the law of retaliation, was righteously executed on her.

{w} Nicephorus, Hist. l. 1. c. 20.

Matthew 14:9

Ver. 9. And the king was sorry,.... As he might be upon many accounts; partly on account of John, whom, notwithstanding his freedom in reproving him, he had a respect; and partly on his own account, his conscience dictating to him that it was an evil action, and would leave a brand of perpetual infamy upon him; as also on account of the people, who were so much affected to John, lest they should make an insurrection, and rebel against him; and likewise, because it was reckoned an ill omen with the Romans, to take away life on that day they received their own; and therefore carefully abstained, on such days, from executions.

Nevertheless for his oath's sake; that he might not be guilty of perjury, chose rather to commit murder; though it would have been no iniquity in him, to have acted contrary to such a rash promise, and wicked oath; which would have been better to have been broke, than kept;

and them which sat with him at meat; lest he should be thought by them fickle and inconstant, and not a man of his word, and who had no regard to an oath: or it may be, they, either to curry favour with Herodias, or out of ill will they might bear to John; or in great respect to the damsel, who had so well pleased them with her dancing; instead of dissuading him from it, pressed him much to perform his promise: and therefore,

he commanded it to be given her; in the form and manner she requested it. Some have thought, that the whole of this affair was a concerted scheme; and that Herod himself was in it, though he pretended to be sorry and uneasy, having fixed on this season as a convenient time for it; and chose to have it done in this way, and in so public a manner, to lessen the odium of it; or otherwise, it is not easy to account for his extravagant promise, and his punctual performance of it.

Matthew 14:10

Ver. 10. And he sent,.... "An executioner", as in ***Mr 6:27*** where the Latin word "speculator", or as it is sometimes written "spiculator", is used; and is the name of an officer concerned in executions, and particularly in beheading of persons; and so is used by Latin writers.

"In a civil war (says {x} Seneca), a servant hid his master that was proscribed; and when he had fitted his rings for himself, and put on his clothes, he met "speculatoribus", the "speculators"; he told them he desired nothing, but that they would perform their orders, and immediately stretched out his neck."

And the same writer elsewhere {y} speaks of a soldier that was condemned by Piso, on suspicion of murdering his fellow soldier;

"Who was had without the camp, and as soon as he stretched out his neck, he, who was thought to be killed, suddenly appeared; upon which the centurion that had the management of the execution, ordered "speculatorem", the "speculator", to put up his sword, and returned the condemned person to Piso."

The word is also used by the Jewish doctors, and in the same sense: take the following instance among many {z}.

"R. Ishmael said to R. Simeon ben Gamaliel (when they were both apprehended, in order to be executed), brother, there was a man ready to receive his blow, and they entreated rwjlqpoal, "the speculator": one said, I am a priest, the son of an high priest, slay me first, that I may not see the death of my companion; and the other said to him, I am a prince, the son of a prince, slay me first, that I may not see the death of my companion: he replied unto them, cast lots; and they cast lots, and the lot fell on R. Simeon ben Gamaliel; immediately he took a sword, "and cut off his head"."

And as this word is often used by them {a} for an executioner, so alwqpo, "specula" is often made mention of by them {b}, as a sort of punishment by death: and such an officer was sent by Herod, to inflict this punishment upon John; who accordingly executed it,

and beheaded John in the prison; that is, of Machoeras, where he lay, without giving him a hearing, or allowing him to speak for himself, or with his friends: and which was done in this private manner, partly for dispatch, and partly on account of the people; who it might have been feared, had the execution been public and known, would have rose and rescued him.

{x} De beneficiis, 1. 3. c. 25. {y} De ira, l. 1. c. 16. Vid. Julium Firmicum, l. 8. c. 26. & Florum, l. 4. c. 7. & Suetonium in vit. Caligul. c. 52. Octav. August. c. 74. & Claud. c. 35. Tertullian. de Corona, c. 1. {z} Abot R. Nathan, c. 38. fol. 9. 1. {a} Vid Targum Jon. in Gen. xxxvii. 36. & xxxix. 1. & Targ. Sheni in Esth. v. 2. Jarchi in Exod. iv. 11. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 108. 1. & Gloss. in ib. {b} Bereshit Rab. sect. 79. fol. 69. 3. Vajikra Rab. sect. 24. fol. 165. 2. & Bemidbar Rab. sect. 7. fol. 187. 4.

Matthew 14:11

Ver. 11 And his head was brought in a charger,.... By the executioner that cut it off, to Herod, whilst he and his guests were at table; by which it should seem, that the prison was very near; and it is not improbable, that it was the castle of Macheerus that Herod made this entertainment in:

and given to the damsel; the daughter of Herodias, who, by her mother's instigation, had asked it, and who received it out of the hands of Herod himself; or however, it was delivered to her by his orders:

and she brought it to her mother; who had put her upon it, than which, nothing could be a more agreeable dish to her; and who, as Jerome says {c}, because she could not bear truth, that tongue which spoke truth; she plucked out, and pierced it through and through with a needle, as Fulvia did Cicero's: but this triumph over the faithful reprover of her, and Herod's vices, did not last long; for quickly after this, they were stripped of their honours and riches, and deprived of the kingdom, and banished to Lyons in France, where they died {d}. A Jewish chronologer says {e}, Herod was driven out of the land by Tiberius, and fled to Spain, and died there.

{c} Adv. Ruffin. Tom. 2. fol. 82. K. {d} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 8. {e} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2.

Matthew 14:12

Ver. 12. And his disciples came,.... To the prison where his body was left, and to which they had liberty of recourse before; see *Mt 11:2* and very probably, upon hearing what was done, might apply to Herod, as Joseph of Arimathea did to Pilate, for the body of Jesus; who might, as he did, give them leave to take it: and

took up the body and buried it. Theophylact says, his body was buried in Baste Caesarea, and that his head was first reposited in Emesesa. This was the last office of love to their master, and was done in respect and gratitude to him, and to show that they still abode by his doctrine; and was what decency and the belief of the resurrection of the dead, as well as the will of God, require should be done:

and went and told Jesus; that their master was dead, what kind of death he suffered, and by what means it was brought about; and how that they had interred him; and what Herod also had said of Jesus, that he was John risen from the dead. Their coming to Christ, and informing him of all this, show, that they were taught by their master to respect him as the Messiah, and believe in him, and adhere to him; and it is very likely that they continued with him.

Matthew 14:13

Ver. 13. When Jesus heard of it,.... Of the death of John, and of the cruel usage he had met with; and particularly, that his fame had reached the court of Herod, and that he was talked of there, and said by Herod himself to be John the Baptist, that was risen from the dead;

he departed thence by ship, into a desert place apart; to avoid Herod, though not through fear of death; but because his time was not yet come: which may teach us, that it is lawful to shun dangers, when there is an opportunity; which may be done, without betraying truth, or sacrificing a good conscience. The other evangelists, Mark and Luke, assign another reason of this departure of Christ's, that it was upon the return of his disciples to him from their embassy; when having given him an account of what they had done, and taught, he judged it proper they should retire, and get some refreshment and rest; and both may very well be thought to be the reasons of this recess. At the same time that John's disciples brought him the news of their master's death, Christ's disciples return to him, with the account of the success of their ministry; who might not only be weary, and want refreshment, but be discouraged in their minds, at this instance of cruelty; wherefore Christ thought it necessary to retire, partly for his own safety, and partly for their ease; and that he might have an opportunity of fortifying their minds against all trials and persecutions they were to meet with: the place from whence he departed, was either Capernaum, his own country and city, or Nazareth, where we have lately heard of him; or some other place in Galilee, where he was, when John's disciples came to him: the place whither he went, was "a desert place"; and, as Luke says, "belonging to the city called Bethsaida", the city of Andrew and Peter, which lay on the other side of the sea of Galilee, or Tiberias; over which he went by ship, ***Joh 6:1***.

And when the people had heard thereof; of his departure, and whither he went,

they followed him on foot out of their cities; such as Nazareth, Capernaum, Tiberias, and others; and passing the bridge at Jordan, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, they outwent the ship, and got thither before them, as Mark relates. This showed their great affection and zeal for Christ, and their diligence in attending on him.

Ver. 14. And Jesus went forth,.... Either from the mountain where he sat with his disciples, ***Joh 6:3*** or out of the desert, where he had retired for secrecy; or out of the ship, which seems best, the company having got thither before his landing:

and saw a great multitude; for, there were about five thousand men, beside women and children, *Mt 14:21*

and was moved with compassion toward them: partly on account of their bodily infirmities, which were very many and great; and partly on account of the bad situation they were in, through want of spiritual pastors to feed them with the bread of life; for Mark gives this as the reason, moving his compassion, "because they were as sheep, not having a shepherd": all which shows the truth of Christ's human nature; proves him to be a merciful high priest, and one truly concerned for both the bodies and souls of men:

and he healed their sick; which they brought along with them, and that without the use of any medicine, by a word speaking: so that as the former phrase gives proof of his humanity, this attests his divinity: but this was not all he did, he not only healed their bodies, but he taught them the doctrines of the Gospel; and spake to them concerning the kingdom of God, for the good of their souls, as the other evangelists relate.

Matthew 14:15

Ver. 15. And when it was evening,.... Mark says, "when the day was now far spent"; and Luke, "when the day began to wear away"; it was upon the decline of the day. The Jews, as Grotius rightly observes, had two evenings; the one began when the sun declined at noon, and the other at sun setting: now it was the former of these, and not the latter, that was now come; for after this, you read of another evening that was come, *Mt 14:23* between which two evenings Christ made the multitude to sit down, and he fed them in a miraculous manner; and the disciples reason for the dismission of the multitude, that might go into the neighbouring villages, and buy provisions, shows that it could not be the last, but the first of these evenings, that is here meant.

His disciples came to him; the twelve, whom he had left in that part of the desert he retired to; or on the mount, where he had sat down with them for their rest and refreshment:

saying, this is a desert place; where no food was to be had; where were no houses of entertainment:

and the time is now past; not the time of the day, but of dining: the usual dinner time was past, which, with the Jews, was the fifth hour of the day, and answers to eleven o'clock with us, or at furthest six; which, with us, is twelve at noon; concerning which, the Jewish doctors thus dispute {f}.

"The first hour, is the time of eating for the Lydians, or Cannibals; the second for thieves, the third for heirs, the fourth for workmen, and the fifth for every man: but does not R. Papa say, that the fourth is the time of dining for every man? But if so, if the fourth is the time for every man, the fifth is for workmen, and the sixth for the disciples of the wise men."

Which is elsewhere {g} delivered with some little variation, thus;

"the first hour is the time of eating for Lydians; the second, for thieves; the third, for heirs; the fourth, for workmen; the fifth, for scholars; and the sixth, for every man: but does not R. Papa say, &c."

But supposing the usual time of dining to be, at the furthest, at the sixth hour, at twelve o'clock, this time must be elapsed, since the first evening was commenced; so that the reasoning of the disciples is very just,

send the multitude away. Christ was preaching to them, the disciples move that he would break off his discourse, and dismiss them; in the synagogue the manner of dismissing the people was, by reading the hrjph, or "dismission", which was some passage out of the prophetic writings.

That they may go into the villages and buy themselves victuals; the little towns which lay nearest the desert, where they might be supplied with suitable provisions.

{f} T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 11. 1. {g} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 12. 2.

Ver. 16. But Jesus said unto them,.... the disciples,

they need not depart; meaning so long as he was with them, who had power enough to provide a sufficient meal for them, as well as by a word speaking, to heal their diseases; however, to try their faith, and make way for the working of the following miracle, he says to them,

give ye them to eat; such provisions as you have along with you.

Matthew 14:17

Ver. 17. And they say unto him,.... In order to excuse themselves, and to show the impossibility of feeding such a large number of people;

we have here but five loaves; and these barley ones, coarse bread;

and two fishes; small ones, which were dried and salted, and fit for present eating; which they either brought along with them for their own refreshment, or rather, were brought thither by a boy to sell, as is usual where a great concourse of people are got together: these words seem to be spoken by Andrew, Simon Peter's brother; who added, "but what are they among so many?" see ***Joh 6:8*** not thinking of the power of Christ, who was able to multiply, and make this provision a sufficiency for the whole company.

Matthew 14:18

Ver. 18. He said, bring them hither to me. The loaves and the fishes, signifying that they were sufficient; or that he would make them so: this he said, to try their faith in him, their obedience to him, and their liberality to others: and indeed, the best way to have an increase of temporal supplies, is to bring what we have, and put it into Christ's hands; whereby not only good is done to others, but that with an overplus is returned to the giver.

Matthew 14:19

Ver. 19. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass,.... The other evangelists say, that he ordered the disciples to cause the people to sit down; both no doubt were done: the multitude were commanded to sit down by Christ, which, without his orders, they would never have done; and the disciples were enjoined to place them in form, by companies, in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties, that their number might be the better taken, and the food more orderly distributed by the apostles:

and took the five loaves and the two fishes: into his hands, lifting them up, that they might be seen by the whole company; and they be fully convinced of the miracle going to be wrought by him:

and looking up to heaven; to his Father in heaven, who is the Father of mercies; and from whom every mercy and blessing of life comes; and giving thanks to him for the same, as was usually done by him,

he blessed the five loaves and the two fishes;

and brake the loaves, and divided the fishes;

and gave the loaves, and fishes also,

to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude; who were the ministers and servants of Christ, employed by him in this manner, for the more orderly and quick dispatch of this business: and which was an emblem of their spiritual work and office: who received all their food from Christ, which they distributed to the churches, and fed them with.

Matthew 14:20

Ver. 20. And they did all eat,.... Christ and his twelve disciples, and the five thousand men, with the women and children, of the five loaves and two fishes; everyone had their portion,

and were filled; they were satisfied, they had a full meal, they had enough, and to spare; see *2Ch 31:10* which the Targumist paraphrases thus.

"And Azariah said unto him, who was appointed chief over the house of Zadok, and said, from the time that they began to separate the offering, to bring it into the sanctuary of the Lord, Nyebvw Nylka, "we have eat and are filled", and have "left much"; for "the word of the Lord" hath blessed his people, and what is left, lo! it is this plenty of good."

The Jews used not to reckon it a meal, unless a man was filled, and account it an ill sign, if nothing was left: but here was fulness, and more left than was first had; which was gathered up, either for the use of the poor, or reserved for after service; teaching us liberality to the needy, and frugality, not to waste that which is left.

And they took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full; according to the number of the disciples, every man had his basket full. It may be inquired, where they could have so many baskets in the wilderness? It is not likely, that everyone of the apostles had a basket with him; it is indeed not improbable, but that they might be furnished with them from some in the company, who might bring provisions with them, either for their own use, or to sell; see ***Joh 6:9*** but perhaps the reason why they were so easily supplied with such a number of baskets in a desert place, might be a custom which the Jews {h} had of carrying baskets with hay and straw, in commemoration of what they did in Egypt; when they were obliged to carry bricks in baskets, and to go about and pick up straw in baskets to make bricks; hence the {i} Epigrammatist calls a "Jew", "cistifer", a "basket bearer", or "carrier"; and Juvenal {k} laughs at these people, as if all their household goods lay in a basket, and a little hay, or straw: it is said of R. Siraeon, that when he went to the school, anu lyqv, "he carried a basket" on his shoulders {l}; the gloss suggests, it was to sit upon; but a basket is not very proper for a seat; very likely it was for the above reason: such a custom will account for it, how such a number of baskets could be come at in the wilderness.

{h} Nicholas de Lyra, in Psal. lxxxi. 6. {i} Nubere: nupsisti Gellia Cistifero. Martial. Epigram. 1. 5. ep. 17. {k} Judaeis: quorum Cophinus foenumque supellex. Juvenal. Satyr. 3. cum dedit ille locum, Cophino, foenoque relicto. ib. Satyr. 6. {l} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 49. 2.

Matthew 14:21

Ver. 21. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men,.... The word "about", is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, which expressly say there were so many. A large number indeed, to be fed with five loaves and two fishes!

besides women and children; who were not taken into the account, though they all ate, and were filled, it not being usual with the Jews to number their women; and who might be near as large a number as the men: for generally there is a very great concourse of the female sex, and of children, where anything extraordinary, or out of the way, is to be seen or heard; and of this sort was a large number of Christ's audience, who only came out of curiosity, or for one sinister end or another.

Matthew 14:22

Ver. 22. And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples,.... As soon as ever he had wrought the above miracle, and perceived that the people were so convinced by it, of his being the Messiah, that they were determined, whether he would or not, to set him up for a temporal king, to deliver them from the Roman yoke; which they doubted not he was able to do, who could feed so large a number, with such a small quantity of provision; see ***Joh 6:14*** and knowing also, that his disciples had imbibed the same notion of a temporal kingdom, were very fond of it, and big with expectation thereof; and would have readily encouraged the populace, and joined with them in such an action: wherefore, in all haste, he hurried them away, obliged them to depart, lest any step should be taken, which might be of dangerous consequence to them, and the people: it looks as if the disciples were bent upon the same thing, and that it was with much difficulty and reluctance they were brought off of it. Christ was forced to use his power and authority; and order them directly

to get into a ship; very likely, the same they came over in;

and to go before him unto the other side of the lake of Tiberias or sea of Galilee, over against Bethsaida, to Capernaum, or the land of Gennesaret;

while he sent the multitudes away: who would not so easily have been prevailed upon to have departed, if Christ had not first shipped off his disciples; for had he withdrawn himself, and left his disciples with them, they would have been in hopes of his return, and would have continued in a body with them, in expectation of it; and therefore, the better to disperse them, and prevent their designs, he sends away his disciples before him.

Matthew 14:23

Ver. 23. And when he had sent the multitudes away,.... Had ordered them at least to go away; for, it seems, according to ***Joh 6:22*** that they did not in general disperse: there was a large body of them that continued upon the spot all night, expecting his return; in which being disappointed, they took shipping, and came to Capernaum.

He went up into a mountain apart to pray; perhaps the same he went up to before, and from whence he came down, ***Joh 6:3***. This he chose as a proper place for prayer, where he could be retired, and alone, have his thoughts free, and, as man, pour out his soul to his Father, on his own account, and on the behalf of others; and particularly, he might be concerned about this notion of a temporal kingdom, that his disciples and others were so fond of; and pray that his disciples might be convinced of their mistake, and that the people might be hindered from prosecuting their designs. His going up into a mountain and praying there, were quite contrary to the canons of the Jews; which forbid praying in places ever so little raised.

"Let not a man stand (say they {m}) hwbg Mwqmb, "in an high place", and pray, but in a low place and pray; as it is said, "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord", *Ps 130:1*. It is a tradition, that a man may not stand, neither upon a throne, nor upon a footstool, nor in any high place and pray, because there are no high places before God."

This rule is delivered by Maimonides {n}, in this form:

"A man may not stand in a place that is three hands high, or more, and pray, neither upon a bed, nor upon a seat, nor upon a throne."

But Christ did not look upon himself obliged, by these traditions of the elders; but chose such places, whether high or low, which were most private and retired.

And when evening was come; when it was now dark, ***Joh 6:17*** when the second evening was come and ended; see *Mt 14:15* and it was properly night,

he was there alone; in the mountain, where he continued the greatest part of the night, even until the fourth watch.

{m} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 10. 2. Piske Tosaph. in ib. art. 52, T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 4. 4. Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora precept. Affirm. 19. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 70. 3. {n} Hilch. Tephillah. c. 5. sect. 7.

Matthew 14:24

Ver. 24. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea,.... That is, the ship in which the disciples were put into, to go on the other side, had by this time got into the midst of the sea: the Syriac and Persic versions say, it was "many furlongs from land"; and the Arabic expressly says, "about twenty five furlongs": which account seems to be taken from ***Joh 6:19*** but this was not all, it was not only at such a distance from land, but was

tossed with waves: up and down, and in danger of being overset, and the passengers lost:

for the wind was against them; which beat the waves with such violence against them, that they were in the utmost danger of their lives, and not able to get forward; and what was worst of all, and most discouraging to the disciples, Christ was not with them. The ship in which the disciples were, was an emblem of the church of Christ, and of its state and condition in this world: this world is like a sea, for its largeness, and the abundance of nations and people in it, compared to many waters, *Re 17:15* and for the tumultuousness of its inhabitants; the wicked being like a troubled sea, which cannot rest, continually casting up the mire and dirt of sin, to the dishonour of God, and the grief of his people; and for its fickleness and inconstancy, changes and war being continually in it: now the church of Christ is like a ship in this troublesome sea; where the true disciples and followers of Christ are selected together; and are preserved from the pollutions of the world, and from the danger to which the men of it are exposed, being in their sins, and liable to the wrath and curse of God, and eternal damnation; which, they that are in Christ, and members of his body, are secure from; the port or haven to which they are bound, is heaven and eternal happiness; their's and Christ's Father's house, where are many mansions provided for them; and where they long to be, and hope, and believe, ere long they shall arrive unto; and hope is as an anchor of their soul, sure and steadfast: but in the mean while, whilst they are sailing through the sea of this world, they are often, as the church of old, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, *Isa 55:11* with the tempests of Satan's temptations, the storms of the world's persecutions, and with the winds of error and false doctrine; and then is it most uncomfortable to them, when Christ is not with them, which was the case of the disciples here.

Matthew 14:25

Ver. 25. And in the fourth watch of the night,.... This is said, according to the division of the night into four watches, by the Jews; who {o} say, that

"there are four watches in the night, and four watches in the day."

It is true indeed, that it is disputed among them, whether there were four watches, or only three in the night: some say there were four, others say there were but three {p}; not but that these made a division of the night into four parts, the three first of which, they thought were properly the watches of the night, and the fourth was the morning. The first watch began at six o'clock in the evening, and lasted till nine; the second began at nine, and ended at twelve, which was midnight; the third began at twelve, and closed at three; the fourth began at three, and ended at six in the morning. But since some {q} Jewish writers are so positive for the division of the night into three watches only, and a watch is with them called {r} the third part of the night; and it is dubious with some, whether the Jewish division is here referred to; and since it is so clear a point, that the Romans {s} divided their night into four watches, and their writers speak not only of the first, second, and third watches, but also of the fourth watch {t}; it is thought by some, that the evangelist speaks after the Roman manner: but however, certain it is, that within this period, probably at the beginning of it, after three o'clock in the morning, Christ came to his disciples, when they had been almost all the night at sea, tossed with waves, and in great danger.

Jesus went unto them; from the mountain where he had been praying, the greatest part of the night, to the sea side, and so upon the waters to them; for it follows, walking upon the sea; as on dry land: though it was so stormy and boisterous, that the disciples, though in a ship, were in the utmost danger, yet he upon the waves, was in none at all; by which action he showed himself to be the Lord of the sea, and to be truly and properly God; whose character is, that he "treadeth upon the waves of the sea", ***Job 9:8***.

{o} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 2. 4. Echa Rabbati, fol. 54. 4. {p} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 3. 1, 2. {q} Jaschi & Kimchi in Jud vii. 19. & in Psal. cxix. 147. {r} Gloss. in T. Bab. Betacot, fol. 2. 1. {s} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. 1. 4. c. 20. {t} Liv. Hist. 1. 36, c. 24.

Matthew 14:26

Ver. 26. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea,.... It being now morning, and perhaps might have moon light; and besides, there is always more light upon the water than land; they were able to discern something like a man, walking upon the surface of the sea, but had not light enough to distinguish what, or who it was; and, moreover, had no thought of Christ, or expectation of seeing him; and the appearance of a man walking upon the waters being so unusual, and astonishing,

they were troubled, saying it is a spirit: a nocturnal apparition, a demon in human form. The Jews, especially the sect of the Pharisees, had a notion, from whom the disciples might have their's, of spirits, apparitions, and demons, being to be seen in the night; hence that rule {u},

"it is forbidden a man to salute his friend in the night, for we are careful, lest awh dv, "it should be a demon"."

They say a great many things of one tylyl, "Lilith", that has its name from hlyl, "the night", a she demon, that used to appear in the night, with an human face, and carry off young children, and kill them. Some such frightful notions had possessed the minds of the disciples:

and they cried out for fear, as persons in the utmost consternation, in the greatest danger, and in want of help: the fear of spirits arises from the uncommonness of their appearance; from their superiority to men in power and strength; from the enmity there is between men and evil spirits; and from a general notion of their doing hurt and mischief: hence, demons are, by the Jews, called Nyqyzm, "hurtful", or "hurting", all their study being to do hurt to men; and the same word is here used in Munster's Hebrew Gospel: add to all this, that the fear of the disciples might be increased, through a vulgar notion among seafaring men, that such sights are ominous, and portend evil to sailors; and they might the more easily be induced to give credit to this, and fear, since they were already in such imminent danger.

{u} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 3. 1. Sanhedrim, fol. 44. 1.

Matthew 14:27

Ver. 27. But straightway Jesus spake unto them,.... Directly, the very moment, as soon as ever they cried out, and he perceived the consternation they were in, as one truly affected towards them, and concerned for their welfare; he called out aloud unto them, not coming with any intention to fright them, but to save them;

saying, be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid: take heart, be of good courage, do not be affrighted at my appearance, from whom you have nothing to fear; nor be afraid of the storm and tempest in which you are, I will deliver you; for it is I, your Master, Saviour, and Redeemer, and not any hurtful spirit; who am able to save you, and am come for that purpose. Christ may be sometimes near his people, and they not know him; as the Lord was in the place where Jacob was, and he knew it not, *Ge 28:16* and as Christ was standing by Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, and she took him to be the gardener: and for want of a distinct knowledge of Christ in his person, offices, and grace, persons have wrong apprehensions of him, and are filled with dread and fears, concluding they have no interest in him; that he is a Saviour, but not of them; that their sins are so many, and of such a die, and attended with such aggravating circumstances, that though he is able to save them, he never can be willing to receive such vile sinners as they are: but when Christ makes himself known unto them, as the able and willing Saviour, and their Saviour and Redeemer, then, instead of dreading him as a judge, their fears vanish, their faith increases, and they are ready to do anything he shall order them; as Peter says in the next verse, who was willing to come to Christ on the water, when he knew who he was, if he was but pleased to bid him come.

Matthew ***14:28***

Ver. 28. And Peter answered him and said,.... Who knew his voice, and was ready to believe it might be Christ; and having more courage, and being more forward than the rest of the disciples, ventured to speak to him; saying,

Lord, if it be thou; for he was not fully assured that it was he: he might consider that nocturnal apparitions are deceitful, and that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, and could put on the appearance, and mimic the voice of Christ; wherefore, to try whether it was a spectre, or really Christ, he says,

bid me come unto thee on the water; thereby expressing great love and affection to Christ, being willing to come to him, though through danger, through storms and tempests; and also his strong faith in him, supposing it to be he; who, he knew, was as able to support his body on the water, as his own; and yet much modesty, submission, and dependence; not willing to take a step without his order.

Matthew ***14:29***

Ver. 29. And he said, come,.... This he said, partly to assure them who he was; for had he denied him, he and the rest might have concluded, it was none of Jesus; and partly to commend his love, and confirm his faith, by giving a further instance of his power, in enabling him to walk upon the water, as he did:

and when Peter was come down out of the ship; as he immediately did, having orders from Christ; and being by this second speech fully convinced it was he

he walked on the water; a little way, being supported and enabled by the power of Christ; for this was an extraordinary and miraculous action: for if it was so in Christ, it was much more so in Peter: Christ walked upon the water by his own power, as God; Peter walked upon the water, being held up by the power of Christ. The Jews {w} indeed, call swimming Mymh ynp le hjyvh, "walking upon the face of the waters": hence we read of a swimmer's vessel, which is explained to be what men make to learn in it, how Mymh ynp le jwvl, "to go or walk upon the face of the waters" {x}; but then this is not going upon them upright, but prone, or lying along upon the surface of the waters, which was not Peter's case; he did not, as at another time, cast himself into the sea, and swim to Christ; see *Joh 21:7* but as soon as he came down from the ship, standing upright, he walked upon the waters,

to go to Jesus; not merely for walking sake, but for the sake of Christ, he dearly loved; that he might be with him, and be still more confirmed of the truth of its being he, and not a spirit.

{w} R. David Kimchi, Sepher Shorash. rad. hxv. {x} R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel moed, fol. 78. 1.

Matthew 14:30

Ver. 30. But when he saw the wind boisterous,.... Or "strong", blowing hard against him, and raising up the waves, which beat with great violence upon him,

he was afraid; though Christ was so nigh him, and he had had such an instance of his power in bearing him up, causing him to walk upon the waters thus far; which shows, that his faith was imperfect:

and beginning to sink; through fear, and the violence of the wind and waves, just ready to be immersed, and go down to the bottom of the sea,

he cried; being in a great fright and much danger, and with great importunity and eagerness,

saying, Lord, save me: I am just going, I shall certainly perish else; still having so much faith in Christ, that he was able to save him in the last extremity.

Matthew 14:31

Ver. 31. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand,.... The Syriac reads it, htevrbw, "and in that very moment"; for his case requires immediate assistance, and Christ readily gave it; he reached out his hand at once, being just by him,

and caught him; as he was sinking to the bottom, and lifted him up, and set him on his feet upon the water, and enabled him to walk with him to the ship; but not without reproving him for the weakness of his faith,

and said unto him, O thou of little faith: he does not say, O thou unbeliever! or, O thou who hast no faith! for some faith he had, though but small; of this phrase, See Gill "Mt 6:30".

Wherefore didst thou doubt? waver, fluctuate, or wast divided between faith and fear. He was worthy of reproof, since he had had the order of Christ to come to him upon the water; and an experience of his power in supporting him thus far; and was now so near unto him, that he had no room to doubt, whether it was he or not, nor of his power to preserve him.

Matthew 14:32

Ver. 32. And when they were come into the ship,.... Christ and Peter. The Arabic and Persic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read, "when he ascended", or "was come into the ship"; but there is no doubt but Peter went with him into it, though the following effect is only to be ascribed to Christ's coming into the ship, and not to Peter's:

the wind ceased: from blowing with that fury and violence it did before, and there was a perfect calm; which gave equal proof of the divine power of Christ, as his walking upon the sea: he walked upon the sea whilst the wind was blowing hard, and the waves were tumultuous; he comes into the ship, and all is calm; both winds and sea obey him, who is Lord of both.

Matthew 14:33

Ver. 33. Then they that were in the ship,.... Not only the rest of the disciples, who remained in it, whilst Peter came forth out of it, to walk upon the sea, to go to Christ: but the mariners also, the owners of the vessel, and their servants that managed it,

came and worshipped him: not merely in a civil, but in a religious way; being convinced, by what they saw, that he must be truly and properly God, and worthy of adoration;

saying, of a truth, thou art the Son of God: not by creation, as angels and men, nor by office, as magistrates, but by nature; being of the same essence, perfections, and power, with God, his Father: and which these actions of his now done, as well as many others, are full attestations of; as his walking upon the sea, causing Peter to do so too, saving him when sinking, and stilling the wind and waves upon his entrance into the vessel; all which being observed by the disciples and mariners, drew out this confession upon full conviction from them, that he was a divine person, and the proper object of worship.

Matthew 14:34

Ver. 34. And when they were gone over,.... That is, "the sea", as Munster's Hebrew Gospel adds, the sea of Tiberias, or Galilee;

they came into the land of Gennesaret; the same with Cinnereth, or Chinnereth, or Cinnerot, *Nu 34:11* in all which places, the Chaldee paraphrase renders it by rownyg, "Ginusar", the same word that is used in Munster's Hebrew Gospel here: it was a country in Galilee, in the tribe of Naphtali {y}, bordering upon a lake, called the lake of Gennesaret; taking its name from the country, or the country from the lake: it was exceeding fruitful, full of gardens and orchards; hence we often read in the Talmud {z}, of rowng twryp, "the fruits of Genusar", or Gennesaret, which are said to be exceeding sweet: and it is said to {a} be a country in the land of Israel, in which were many gardens; and by others {b}, a place in the land of Galilee (as it was) whose fruits were large and good; and was, as Josephus says {c}, thirty furlongs long and twenty broad. And thus the saints, after a long and troublesome passage over the sea of this world, arrive, at last, safe at their desired haven, and enter upon a most delightful country, a paradise, a garden of pleasure; where all delicious fruits and desirable things are enjoyed, even pleasures for evermore; where they shall be led to fountains of living waters, into fulness of joy; where all troubles will cease, and tears will be wiped away; and when they will have leisure and capacity to reflect upon all they have met with in their dangerous, and difficult voyage; and will admire the wonderful grace of God, which has been with them; and his divine power, which has appeared for them, and supported them, and brought them safe to eternal glory; and they ascribe greatness to Christ, as the Son of God, and for ever worship him as the eternal Jehovah, who has done such great things for them, as none but God can do.

{y} Targum Jon. in Deut. xxxiii. 23. {z} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 44. 1. Erubim, fol. 30. 1. & Pesachim, fol. 8. 2. Vid. Jarchi in Isa. xxviii. 1. & Kimchi in Josh. xi. & in 1 Kings xv. 20. {a} Maimon. in Misn. Maaserot, c. 3. sect. 7. {b} Bartenora, in ib. {c} De Bello Jud. 1. 3. c. 35.

***Matthew* 14:35**

Ver. 35. And when the men of the place had knowledge of him,.... Not merely by report, but by face, having seen, and heard him before; see ***Lu 5:1***.

They sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; which not only expresses their faith in him, that he was able to heal all their sick and diseased, were they ever so many; but also their affectionate regard to their fellow creatures and countrymen; and their care and diligence in sending messengers about to their respective cities, towns, and villages, and which must be attended with expense: for they neither spared cost nor pains, to do good to their country; in all which, they set an example worthy of imitation.

***Matthew* 14:36**

Ver. 36. And besought him that they might touch the hem of his garment,.... As the woman with the bloody issue did; ***Mt 9:20***. This they desired, partly to show the strength of their faith in him, that they doubted not of a cure, could they be admitted so near his person; and partly, to signify the sense of their unworthiness, to be in another way taken notice of by him, either by speaking to them, or putting his hands on them:

and as many as touched, were made perfectly whole. Christ condescended to this their request, and perfectly cured all such of their diseases, of whatever kind they were, who, in the exercise of faith, touched the hem of his garment, the fringe he wore, in compliance with the ceremonial law, *Nu 15:38*.

Matthew ***15:1***

Ver. 1. Then came to Jesus Scribes and Pharisees,.... After he had wrought so many miracles, particularly that of feeding five thousand men; besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes: the fame of which had reached Jerusalem, and occasioned much talk there about him: the Scribes and Pharisees, who were his inveterate enemies, hearing thereof, came to him, where he was, in Galilee: to know the truth of these things, to converse with him, and to watch, and observe, what he said and did;

which were of Jerusalem, saying. There were Scribes and Pharisees throughout the land, but those of Jerusalem were the chief; they were men of the greatest learning and abilities, and were more expert in their religion and customs: these were either sent by the sanhedrim at Jerusalem, or came of themselves; taking upon them a greater power, and authority of examining, correcting, directing, and advising.

Matthew ***15:2***

Ver. 2. Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?.... Having observed, for some little time, the conduct of Christ and his disciples, they thought proper to take no notice of him as yet, but of them; and of them, not as transgressing any command of God, but of men; not being able to charge them with any breach of the law of God: and could they have done this with any show of truth, yet they might choose rather to accuse them of breaking the rules of the elders; by whom they mean, not the elders of the present sanhedrim, but Hillell and Shammai; the two heads of their famous schools, and other ancient doctors; from whom were delivered by one to another, certain rules and laws of their own devising, which had no foundation in the word of God; and of these the Scribes and Pharisees were more tenacious, than of the Scriptures; and indeed they preferred them before them: most extravagant are their praises and commendations of these unwritten traditions; thus they say {d}, "Know then, that "the words of the Scribes" are more lovely than the words of the law: for, says R. Tarphon, if a man does not read, he only transgresses an affirmative; but if he transgresses the words of the school of Hillell, he is guilty of death, because he hath broke down a hedge, and a serpent shall bite him. It is a tradition of R. Ishmael, the words of the law have in them both prohibition and permission; some of them are light, and some heavy, but "the words of the Scribes" are all of them heavy--Mynqz yrbd Myrwmh, "weightier are the words of the elders", than the words of the prophets."

And elsewhere {e}, this advice is given;

"My son, attend to "the words of the Scribes", more than to the words of the law; for in the words of the law, are affirmatives and negatives; but the words of the Scribes
Myrpwo yrbd le rbweh lk, "everyone that transgresses the words of the Scribes", is guilty of death."

This is what they charge the disciples with here, and could they have had their wills, would have put them to death for it: the particular tradition, they accuse them with the breach of, follows,

for they wash not their hands when they eat bread; common bread, an ordinary meal; for, for eating of holy things, more than bare washing was required, even an immersion of them in water; but the hands were to be washed before eating common food, whether they were known to be defiled or not: "bread" is particularly mentioned, as including all sorts of food, and as distinct from fruit; for, for eating of common fruit, there was no need of washing of hands; he that washed his hands for eating fruit, was reckoned an ostentatious man {f}, who were the first authors of this tradition, it is not certain; it is said {g}, that

"Hillell and Shammai decreed Mydy twrhj le, "concerning the purification of the hands"; R. Jose ben R. Bon, in the name of R. Levi, says, so was the tradition before, but they forgot it; and these two stood up, and agreed with the minds of the former ones."

"However, it is a certain point, that the washing of the hands, and the dipping of them, are Myrpwo yrbdm, "from the words of the Scribes" {h}."

The breach of this rule was reckoned equal to the most flagitious crimes {i}: R. Jose says,

"whoever eats bread without washing of hands, is as if he lay with a whore: and, says R. Eleazer, whoever despiseth washing of hands, shall be rooted out of the world."

And elsewhere it is said by them {k}, that

"he that blesseth (food) with defiled hands, is guilty of death."

And again {l},

"whoever does not wash his hands as is fitting, although he is punished above, he shall be punished below."

And to fright people into an observance of this tradition, they talk of Shibta, a sort of an evil spirit, that hurts such as eat without washing their hands: they say, he sits upon their hands, and upon their bread, and leaves something behind, which is very dangerous {m}; and it is recorded {n}, to the praise of R. Akiba, that he chose rather to die, than to transgress this tradition; for being in prison, and in want of water, what little he had, he washed his hands with it, instead of drinking it. Eleazar ben Chanac was excommunicated for despising the tradition concerning washing of hands; and when he died, the sanhedrim sent and put a great stone upon his coffin, to show, that he that died in his excommunication, the sanhedrim stoned his coffin {o}: but of this, See Gill "Mr 7:3".

{d} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 2. {e} T. Bab. Erubim, fol. 21. 2. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 4. 2. {f} Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 5, 6. Maimon. Praefat. ad Tract. Yadaim, & Hilch. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 3. {g} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 3. 4. {h} Maimon Hilch. Mikvaot, c. 11. sect. 1. {i} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 4. 2. {k} Zohar in Deut. fol. 107. 3. {l} lb. in Gen. fol. 60. 2. {m} Gloss. in. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 77. 2. Taanith, fol. 20. 2. & Cholin, fol. 107. 2. {n} T. B. Erubim, fol. 2l. 2. {o} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 19. l.

Ver. 3. But he answered and said unto them,.... Taking no notice of the tradition about eating bread without washing the hands, whether it was right or wrong; it being at most but an human tradition, of no moment and importance, whether it was broke or kept; he makes a very just recrimination, by putting another question to them,

why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? suggesting, that, if his disciples were guilty, they were not so guilty as they themselves were; that his disciples, at most, were but guilty of the breach of an human precept, whereas they were guilty of the breach of a divine command; and that it was strange, that men who were so scrupulous of breaking, and bore so hard on such as did transgress the traditions of the elders, could allow themselves to transgress the commandments of God; yea, to do this by, and while they were observing their own traditions: and which observation carries a full acquittance of the disciples from blame; for, if by keeping the traditions of the elders, they broke the commands of God, it was a very good reason why they should not observe them.

Matthew 15:4

Ver. 4. For God commanded, saying,.... That he might not be thought to suggest this without any foundation, he gives them an instance, wherein a command of God was transgressed, by the observance of their tradition: the command he refers to, stands in *Ex 20:12* and is this;

Honour thy father and mother. This was a plain command of God, written with his own hand, and delivered by Moses to them; it was of a moral nature, and of eternal obligation: and to be understood, not merely of that high esteem parents are to be had in by their children, and of the respectful language and gesture to be used towards them, and of the cheerful obedience to be yielded to them; but also of honouring them with their substance, feeding, clothing, and supplying them with the necessaries of life, when they stand in need thereof; which is but their reasonable service, for all the care, expense, and trouble they have been at, in bringing them up in the world: nor did the Jews deny this to be the duty of children to their parents, and own it to be the sense of the commandment: they say {p}, that this is the weightiest commandment among the weighty ones, even this, the honouring of father and mother; and ask, "What is this honour? To which is replied, he must give him food, drink, and clothing; buckle his shoes, and lead him in, and bring him out."

They indeed laid down this as a rule, and it seems a very equitable one {q}; that,

"when a man's father has any money, or substance, he must be supported out of that; but if he has none, he must support him out of his own."

But then, as will be seen hereafter, they made void this command of God, and their own explications of it, by some other tradition. Moreover, Christ observes, that it is said, *Ex 21:17*

And he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death; temporal and eternal: and which is a positive command of God, made as a fence for the former; and is to be understood, not only of giving abusive language to parents, but of slighting, as the Hebrew word signifies, and neglecting them, taking no notice of them, when needy and in distress, to supply their wants. Now these commands of God, Christ shows the Jews transgressed by their tradition, as appears from the following verses.

{p} T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 61. 2. {q} Piske Toseph. ad T. Bab. Kiddushin, art. 61.

Matthew 15:5

Ver. 5 & 6. But ye say, whosoever shall say to his father or mother,.... That is, it was a tradition of their's, that if a man should say to his father and mother, when poor and in distress, and made application to him for sustenance,

it is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honour not his father, or his mother, he shall be free: or, as Mark expresses it, "it is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, he shall be free, and ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or mother". For the understanding of this tradition, let it be observed, that the word "Corban" signifies a gift, or offering, which was devoted to sacred use; and was unalienable, and could not be converted to any other use; and that this word was used among the Jews, from hence, as the form of an oath, or vow; and therefore, when anyone said "Corban", it was all one, as if he swore by "Corban"; or as if he had said, let it be as "Corban", as unalienable as "Corban": by which oath, or vow, the use of that which was spoken of, whether it respected a man's self, or others, was restrained and prohibited: the rule was {r} this rwoa awh Nbrqk rmwak Nbrq, "if a man said Corban, it was as if he said as Corban, and it was forbidden": and if he used the words "Conem", "Conach", and "Conas", which they call {s} the surnames of Corban, and were no other than corruptions of it, it was all one as if he had said "Corban" itself. There are many instances of this kind of vows, and the form of them in their oral law {t}, or book of traditions;

"If anyone should say, hnhn ynav Mnwq, "Conem (or "Corban") whatsoever I might be profited by the" sons of Noah, it is free of an Israelite, and forbidden of a Gentile; if he should say, "whatsoever I might be profited" by the seed of Abraham, it is forbidden of an Israelite, and is free of a Gentile--if anyone should say, Mylrel hnhn ynav Mnwq, "Conem (or "Corban") whatsoever I might be profited by the uncircumcised", it is free of the uncircumcised of Israel, and forbidden of the circumcised of the Gentiles; if he says "Conem (or "Corban") whatsoever I might be profited by the circumcised", it is forbidden of the circumcised of Israel, and free of the circumcised, of the Gentiles."

Again {u},

"if anyone says to his friend, Kl hnhn ynav Mnwq, "Conem (or "Corban") whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me", &c."

which is exactly the same form as here, unless it should be rather rendered, "whatsoever I might be profited by thee": once more {w},

"if a married woman should say to her husband, Kybalw abal tynhn ynav Mnwq "Conem (or Corban) whatsoever I might be profited by my father, or thy father, &c"."

Let these instances suffice: the plain and evident sense of the tradition before us, is this; that when, upon application being made to a man by his parents, for support and sustenance, he makes a vow in such form as this, "Corban, whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me"; that is, whatsoever profit or advantage thou mightest have, or expect to have from me, let it be as "Corban", as a gift devoted to God, that can never be revoked and converted to another use; or, in other words, I vow and protest thou shalt never have any profit from me, not a penny, nor a pennyworth of mine. Now, when a man had made such an impious vow as this, according to this tradition, it was to stand firm and good, and he was not to honour his father or mother, or do anything for them, by way of relief: so that our Lord might justly observe upon it as he does;

thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect, by your tradition: for if such a vow was valid, and a man was obliged to abide by it, according to the tradition of the elders, and not honour his father and mother, as the law of God requires; it is a plain case, that the command of God was made void by this tradition: nay they expressly say {x} that hwum yrbd le twlx Myrdn, "vows fall upon things of a (divine) commandment", as well as upon things in a man's power, and that he is bound by them; so that without sin he cannot do what the law commands; insomuch, that if a man vows a vow, and that it may be ratified, a command must be made void, his vow must stand, and the command be abrogated. So truly and justly does Christ charge them with making the command of God of none effect, by their tradition. It is indeed disputed by the doctors, and at last allowed, that such a vow might be dissolved by a wise man, for the honour of parents {y}.

"R. Eliezer says, they open to a man, (i.e. the door of repentance, and dissolve his vow,) for the honour of his father and his mother, but the wise men forbid "it". Says R. Tzadok, if they open to him for the honour of his father and mother, they will open to him for the honour of God, and if so, there will be no vows: however, the wise men agreed with R. Eliezer in the affair between a man and his parents, that they should open to him for the honour of them."

And this could be done only by a wise man; and very probably this last decree was made on account of this just reproof of Christ's, being ashamed any longer to countenance so vile a practice; and even, according to this determination, the vow stood firm till dissolved by of their doctors: so that notwithstanding, Christ's argument is good, and the instance full to prove that for which he brought it: for the above reason it may be, it is, that this tradition Christ refers to is not now extant; but that there was such an one in Christ's time, is certain; he would never have asserted it else; and had it not been true, the Pharisees would have been able to have retired him, and forward enough to have done it: and that such vows were sometimes made, and which were not to be rescinded, is clear from the following fact {z}.

"It happened to one in Bethhoron, hanh wnmyh rdwm wyba hyhv, "whose father was excluded, by a vow, from receiving any profit from him": and he married his son, and said to his friend, a court and a dinner are given to thee by gift; but they are not to be made use of by thee, but with this condition, that my father may come and eat with us at dinner;"

which was a device to have his father at dinner, and yet secure his vow. Upon the whole, the sense of this passage is, not that a man excused himself to his parents, according to this tradition, by saying, that his substance, either in whole, or in part, was "Corban", or devoted to the service of God, and therefore they could expect no profit, or relief, from him; but that he vowed that what he had should be as "Corban", and they should be never the better for it: so that a man so vowing might give nothing to the service of God, but keep his whole substance to himself; which he might make use of for his own benefit, and for the benefit of others, but not for his father and mother; who, after such a vow made, were to receive no benefit by it, unless rescinded by a wise man; and which seems to be an explanation of it, made after the times of Christ.

{r} T. Hieros. Nedarim, fol. 37. 1. Misn. Nedarim, c. 1. sect. 4. Maimon. Hilch. Nedarim, c. 1. sect. 7. {s} Misn. Nedarim, c. 1. sect. 1, 2. Maimon. Hilch. Nedarim, c. 1. sect. 16. {t} Misn. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 11. {u} lb. c. 8. sect. 7. Vid. c. 11. sect 3, 4. {w} lb. c. 11. sect. 11. {x} Maimon. Hilch. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 1. 6, 7. 9. {y} Misn. Nedarim, c. 9. sect. 1. {z} lb. c. 5. sect. 6.

Matthew 15:6

See note on Mt 15:5

Matthew 15:7

Ver. 7. Ye hypocrites,.... After our Lord had given so full a proof of their making void the commandments of God by their traditions, he might very justly, as he does, call them hypocrites; who pretended to so much religion and holiness, and yet scrupled not, upon occasion, to set aside a divine command; who affected so much sanctity, as to be displeased with the disciples, for not complying with an order of their elders, when they themselves made no account of a divine precept; and plainly showed they had more regard to men than God, and to the precepts of men, than to the commands of God, and to approve themselves to men more than to God; and that they sought the praise and applause of men, and not the honour which comes from God; and that their religion lay in mere rituals and externals, and those of men's devising, and not in the spiritual worship and service of God. Nor can it be thought that Christ, in calling them hypocrites, bears too hard upon them; when one of their own doctors, who lived not very distant from this age, says {a} of the men of Jerusalem, that

"if the hypocrites of the world were divided into ten parts, nine of them would belong to Jerusalem, and one to the rest of the world."

Well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, in *Isa 29:13* which prophecy, though it was directed to, and suited with many in that generation in which the prophet lived, yet had a further view to the Jews in after times: their own writers {b} acknowledge, that the whole prophecy is spoken of that nation; for by Ariel they understand the altar at Jerusalem, the city in which David dwelt,

{a} R. Nathan in Rabba, sect. 1. {b} Abarbinel, Jarchi, Kimchi, & Aben Ezra.

Matthew 15:8

Ver. 8. This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth,.... The preface to these words, or the form in which they are introduced by the prophet; "wherefore the Lord said", is left out in this citation, being unnecessary here, though of the greatest importance there; partly to show, that what was about to be said, was not the prophet's own words, but the words of the Lord, of which the Jews in Christ's time made no doubt; and partly to give a reason why that judicial blindness, threatened in the context, should be inflicted on them, which is no part of Christ's design here; but which is only to show, that the description here given exactly agrees with them, and so proves, and confirms the character he gives of them as hypocrites. They approached the ordinances of God, and drew nigh to him, and attended him in outward worship; they prayed unto him publicly, and constantly, in the streets, in the synagogues, and temple, and with much seeming devotion and sanctity:

and honoureth me with their lips: they owned him to be their creator and preserver; they made their boast of him, and of their knowledge of him, as the one only living, and true God, and as the God of Israel; they brought their sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, even the fruit of their lips, unto him, for their many peculiar mercies, privileges, and favours, as a nation, church, and people, and with much seeming sincerity and affection.

But their heart is far from me; they had no true love to God, nor faith in him, nor fear of him; they were not at all concerned for his presence with them, or for communion with him, or for his honour and glory; their hearts were in the world, and after their covetousness; they made religion a tool to their secular purposes, supposing gain to be godliness; sought the applause of men, and contented themselves with bodily exercise; having no regard to internal religion, powerful godliness, or where their hearts were, so be it, their bodies were presented to God in public worship; and what they did it was to be seen and approved of men, not caring what the searcher of hearts knew concerning them, or what he required of them.

Matthew 15:9

Ver. 9. But in vain do they worship me,.... In the Hebrew text it is, "their fear towards me": which is rightly expressed here by "worship"; for the fear of God often intends the whole worship of God, both external and internal: here it only signifies external worship, which these men only attended to. They prayed in the synagogues, read, and, in their way, expounded the books of Moses, and the prophets, to the people, diligently observed the rituals of the ceremonial law, brought their offerings and sacrifices to the temple, and neglected nothing appertaining to the outward service of it; and yet it was all "in vain", and to no purpose; since the heart was wanting, no grace there, they acted from wrong principles, and with wrong views; their worship was merely outward, formal, and customary; and besides, they added doctrines and traditions of their own inventing and devising. The phrase, "in vain", is not in the text in Isaiah: some have thought that it was not originally in Matthew, but inserted by some other hand, to make the sense more complete. Grotius thinks there was a various reading, which is followed by the Septuagint, and the evangelist; and that instead of yhtw, "and is", it was whtw, the same with whtl, "in vain": but there is no need to suppose either of these: Christ, who made this citation, either added it himself for the clearer illustration of the passage, and as being entirely agreeable to the sense of it, and which it required, for the true understanding of it; or he might have in his view another passage of the same prophet, speaking of the same people, and upon the same subject, ***Isa 1:11*** and from thence take the phrase, and, for explanation sake, join it to the passage here. It follows,

teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; that is, teaching the people to observe the traditions of the elders, the decrees and determinations of the doctors, as if they were doctrines delivered by God himself; or, instead of the doctrines contained in the Bible, which lay neglected by them, they obtruded on them the orders, and injunctions of men. In the text in Isaiah, are only these words, "taught by the precept of men": and which relate to their fear and worship of God; and which is here interpreted of their teachers teaching them it, and that explained of the commandments of men; as if, instead of hdmlm, "taught", it had been read, Mydmlm, "teaching". The Jews have no reason to quarrel with this construction and sense, since their Targum paraphrases it thus; "and their fear before me is, Nyplm Nyrbg tdyqptk, according to the commandment of men that teach": and a noted commentator {c} of their's has this remark on the text, "their fear towards me is" not with a perfect heart, but "by the commandment Mtwa Mydmlmh Myvnah, of the men that teach them".

{c} R. Sol. Jarchi in Isa. xxix. 13.

Matthew 15:10

Ver. 10. And he called the multitude,.... Having silenced the Scribes and Pharisees, and judging it not worth his while to say any more to men so obstinate and perverse; who were not open to conviction, nor would attend to any argument or reason, though ever so clear and strong, against their darling notions; he leaves them, as both disliking them, and despairing of them, and calls to the common people; who, through their great veneration for these men, upon their coming withdrew, and stood at a distance; nor indeed would they admit them very near unto them, lest they should be polluted by them: Christ, I say, calls to these to come nearer to him, hoping better of them, and knowing that they were more tractable, and teachable; and that there were some among them, that were to be brought off of their former principles and prejudices, to embrace him, and the truths delivered by him:

and said unto them, hear and understand; this he said, partly, by way of reflection upon the learned Scribes and Pharisees, who, with all their learning, could not hear him so as to understand him; and partly to excite the attention of the multitude to what he had to say; as also to show, that barely to hear with the outward hearing of the ear, will be of no service, unless what is heard is understood; and that the way to understand, is to hear.

Matthew 15:11

Ver. 11. Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth the man,.... No sorts of meats, or drinks, or whatever is proper food for men, or manner of eating and drinking them, when moderately used, defile a man, or render him loathsome and odious in the sight God. This is directly opposite to the notions of the Jews, who say {d}, that

"forbidden meats are unclean themselves, vpnhw Pwgh Nyamjmw, "and defile both body and soul"."

The first food of man was herbs; after the flood he had an allowance of the flesh of beasts, without distinction; under the Levitical dispensation, a difference of meats was enjoined to be observed; the laws respecting that distinction are now abolished, and not binding on us under the Gospel dispensation. Some scruples, about some of these things, did arise among the first Christians; but in process of time these difficulties were got over: nor is there any religion in abstinence from any sort of food; men, indeed, on a "physical" account, ought to be careful what they eat and drink, but not on a religious one; moderation in all ought to be used; and whatever is ate or drank, should be received with thankfulness, and done to the glory of God, and then no defilement can arise from hence:

but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. It is sin, and that only, which takes its rise from the heart, lies in thought, and is either expressed by the mouth, or performed by some outward action, which defiles the man, and renders him loathsome, abominable, and odious in the sight of God. The heart is the source of all evil; the pollution of it is very early, and very general, reaching to all the powers and faculties of the soul; which shows the ignorance of some, and folly of others, that talk of, and trust to the goodness of their hearts; and also the necessity of new hearts and right spirits being formed and created; and that the sinful thoughts of the heart, and the lusts thereof, are defiling to men; and that they are sinful in God's account, and abominable in his sight; that they are loathsome to sensible sinners, and are to be repented of, and forsaken by them; and need the pardoning grace of God or otherwise will be brought into judgment. Sinful words, which, through the abundance of wickedness in the heart, come out of the mouth, have the same influence and effect: words are of a defiling nature; with these men pollute both themselves and others: the tongue, though a little member, defiles the whole body; and evil and corrupt communication proceeding out of the mouth, corrupts the best of manners, and renders men loathsome to God, and liable to his awful judgment. And this is the nature of all sinful actions; they are what God can take no pleasure in; they are disagreeable, to a sensible mind; they leave a stain, which can never be removed by any thing the creature can do; nothing short of the blood of Christ can cleanse from it; and inasmuch as they are frequently committed, there is need of continual application to it. These are now the things men should be concerned about, as of a defiling nature; and not about meats and drinks, and the manner of using them, whether with hands washed, or unwashed.

{d} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 142. 1.

Matthew 15:12

Ver. 12. Then came his disciples, and said unto him,.... That is, after he had dismissed the people, and was come into a private house; see ***Mr 7:17*** his disciples came to him, being alone, full of concern, for what he had said to the Pharisees, and before all the people; and not so well understanding it themselves.

Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying?, that they set aside the commandments of God, by observing the traditions of the elders; or that they were hypocrites; and that the prophecy of Isaiah, which describes such persons, belonging to them; or that not what goes into, but what comes out of a man, defiles him: whichever it was they have respect unto, or it may be to the whole, they seem to wish Christ had not said it; because the Pharisees were, as they thought, grieved and troubled at it, as being contrary to true religion and piety; and lest they should be so stumbled, as no more to attend, and so all hopes of bringing them over to the faith of Christ be lost; and chiefly, because they perceived they were made exceeding angry, and were highly provoked; so that they might fear that both Christ, and they themselves, would feel the effects of their wrath and rage; and perhaps it was with some such view, that he would take some prudential step that he might not fall into their hands, that they acquaint him with it.

Matthew 15:13

Ver. 13. But he answered, and said,.... As being unconcerned at their rage, and having nothing to fear from them; and being well satisfied, that what he had said was right, and would produce proper effects, he gave his disciples this for answer:

every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up; which may be understood either of things, or of persons: it may have regard to doctrines and ordinances; and the meaning be, that whatever doctrine is not delivered by God, or whatever ordinance is not instituted by him; whatever is not of heaven, but of man, of man's devising, and of human imposition, as the traditions of the elders, must be opposed and rejected; and sooner or later will be utterly rooted up, and destroyed; as will all the false notions, corrupt worship, and errors, and heresies of men, in God's own time: or it may respect persons. There are some plants, which are planted by Christ's Father, which is in heaven; these are the elect of God, who are trees of righteousness; the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. These are planted by the river of God's love, in the person of Christ, in the likeness of his death and resurrection; they are transplanted out of a state of nature, are ingrafted into Christ, have the graces of the Spirit implanted in their souls, and are themselves planted in the courts of the Lord, in a Gospel church state; and being watered with the dews of grace, appear to be choice plants, plants of renown, pleasant ones, very fruitful, and which shall never perish, or be rooted, and plucked up, but there are others, like these Pharisees, hypocrites, formal professors, and heretics, who pretend to much religion and holiness, make a show of the leaves of profession, but have not the fruit of grace; these get into churches, and are outwardly and ministerially planted there; but being never rooted in Christ, nor partake of his grace, in time they wither, and die away; or persecution arising because of the Word, or truth being dispensed in so clear and glaring a light, that they cannot bear it; they are offended with it, and so are detected, discovered, and rooted up and it is necessary that truth should be freely spoken, as it was here by Christ, that such plants might be rooted out; for these words are said by Christ in justification of his conduct. So the Jews speak of God, as a planter, and of rooting up what he does not like.

"The holy, blessed God (say they {e}), "plants" trees in this world; if they prosper, it is well; if they do not prosper, Nwl rqea, "he roots them up", and plants them even many times."

And elsewhere it is said {f},

"let the master of the vineyard come, and consume its thorns: the gloss on it is, the holy, blessed God; for the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, is the house of Israel, and he will consume, and take away the thorns of the vineyard."

{e} Zohar in Gen. fol. 105. 3. {f} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 83. 2.

Matthew 15:14

Ver. 14. Let them alone,.... Have nothing to say, or do with them; do not mind their anger and resentment, their reproaches and reflections, nor trouble yourselves at the offence they have taken; if they will go, let them go; they are a worthless generation of men, who are not to be regarded, hearkened to, nor to be pleased; it matters not what they say of me, and of my doctrine:

they be blind leaders of the blind; the people that hearken to them, and are followers of them, are "blind", as to any true sense of themselves, their state, and condition by nature; as to any spiritual, saving knowledge of God; as to any acquaintance with the Messiah, and the method of salvation by him; as to the Spirit of God, and the work of grace, regeneration, and sanctification upon the soul; as to the Scriptures of truth, and doctrines of the Gospel; and the "leaders" of them were as "blind" as they: by whom are meant the Scribes and Pharisees, the learned doctors and rabbins of the Jewish nation; who thought themselves very wise and knowing, yet they were blind also; and none more than they. It was an old tradition {g} among the Jews,

"that there should be "blind teachers" at the time when God should have his tabernacle among them."

This was predicted, in *Isa 42:19* and all such leaders and teachers are blind, who, notwithstanding their natural abilities, and acquired parts, are in a state of unregeneracy; and have nothing more than what they have from nature, or have attained to at school; and as apparently all such are, who lead men from Christ, to mere morality, and to a dependence upon their own righteousness for justification, which was the darling principle of the blind leaders in the text.

And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch; of ignorance and error, immorality and profaneness, distress, if not despair, temporal ruin and destruction; which was notoriously verified in the Jewish people, and their guides: and of eternal damnation, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; what else can be expected?

{g} Midrash Tillim in Psal. cxlvi apud Grotium in loc.

Matthew 15:15

Ver. 15. Then answered Peter,.... Mark says, "his disciples asked him concerning the parable"; which might be by the mouth of Peter; who, probably, being the eldest man, and very forward to speak, was generally their spokesman: and who, at this time, might be requested, by the rest, to ask the meaning of the parable, which had given offence to the Pharisees, and was not clearly understood by them; which he accordingly did:

and said unto him, declare unto us this parable; that not what goes into the mouth, but what comes out of it, defiles the man; which, though expressed in very plain words, and easy to be understood, yet did not appear clear to their understandings; and seemed to be contrary, not only to the traditions of the elders, but to the laws of God, respecting the difference of clean and unclean meats; and therefore call it a "parable", and desire an explanation of

it.

Matthew 15:16

Ver. 16. And Jesus said,.... As wondering at, and as being displeased with, and as reproving them for their dulness and ignorance:

are ye also yet without understanding? you, my disciples, as well as the Scribes and Pharisees; you, who have been with me so long, who have heard so many discourses from me, who for so long a time have been instructed by me, both in private, and in public; and yet do not understand what is so plain and easy, that has nothing of difficulty in it, but what might easily be accounted for.

Matthew 15:17

Ver. 17. Do not ye understand,.... You must understand, you cannot be so ignorant,

that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? that is, that whatsoever food a man takes in at his mouth, he swallows down, and it is received into his stomach; which, having performed its office, the grosser parts go down into the belly, and passing through the bowels, are evacuated into the vault, or privy, "purging all meats", as Mark says; for that only receives the filth and excrementitious matter; so that what is left in the body is pure, wholesome, and nourishing: nor can any part of what goes into a man defile him, because it only enters into the body, and passes through it; and, as Mark says, "entereth not into the heart", which is the seat of moral impurity; so that no moral pollution can be contracted by eating any sort of food, even though it should not be clean itself, nor be eaten with clean hands.

Matthew 15:18

Ver. 18. But those things which proceed out of the mouth,.... Meaning not material things, as spittle, vomit, &c. but, as it follows, which come forth from the heart: are first conceived and formed there, and then come forth from thence, and are expressed by the mouth; as all idle words, foolish talking, filthy jesting, unsavoury communication, and every word that is rotten and corrupt, or which is done in the life and conversation;

and they defile the man: the heart is the corrupt fountain from whence all moral defilement flows; and sinful words and actions are the impure streams, which spring from thence, and increase the moral pollution of human nature.

Matthew 15:19

Ver. 19. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts,.... Of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, of fellow creatures, and of all sorts of wickedness. The thoughts of sin are evil, are to be hated, forsaken, and for which men are accountable to God. All wicked imaginations, carnal reasonings, lustful desires, and malicious contrivances, are here included; which take their rise from, and are devised, and forged, in the corrupt heart of man.

Murders; inveterate hatred of men's persons, malice prepense, schemes to take away life, all angry and wrathful words, and actual effusion of man's blood.

Adulteries; uncleanness committed between married persons, both in thought, and deed:

fornications; unlawful copulations of persons in a single state:

thefts; taking away from others by force or fraud, what is their right and property:

false witness: swearing falsely, or exhibiting a false testimony to the hurt of his neighbour, either his name, person, or estate:

blasphemies; evil speakings of God or men. To which Mark adds "covetousness"; a greedy and insatiable desire after the things of the world, or the neighbour's goods: "wickedness"; doing hurt and mischief to fellow creatures: "deceit"; in words and actions, in trade and conversation: "lasciviousness"; all manner of uncleanness, and unnatural lusts: "an evil eye"; of envy and covetousness: the vitiosity, or corruption of nature, is, by the Jews {h}, called Nye er, "the evil eye": "pride"; in heart and life, in dress and gesture; and "foolishness"; expressed in talk and conduct.

{h} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 141. 3.

Matthew 15:20

Ver. 20. These are the things which defile a man,.... These are filthy in themselves, and must pollute all in whom they are; they bring a defilement on the whole man, both body and soul, fasten guilt upon him, and expose him to everlasting punishment:

but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man: should a man neglect to wash his bands before eating a common meal, this need give him no uneasiness; he contracts no filth to his soul hereby, nor any guilt to his conscience; nor does he break any law of God; nor is he liable to any penalty for such an omission. This is a trifling matter, and merits no regard; but the things before mentioned are in their nature evil: they are contrary to the law of God; they are abominable in his sight; they render men loathsome and odious to the divine being; and expose them to shame and ruin; and it is only the blood of Christ can cleanse them from the pollution and guilt of them, and secure them from that punishment they deserve.

Matthew 15:21

Ver. 21. Then Jesus went thence,.... From the land of Gennesaret, after he had silenced the Pharisees, as to the charge brought by them against his disciples; and when he had reproved them for their hypocrisy and wickedness, in making void the commands of God by their traditions; and had explained some difficult and parabolical sayings he had made use of to his disciples, he then left that country, and departed very privately: either to shun the multitude, for the sake of retirement; or to avoid any snares the Scribes and Pharisees might be laying for him, who must be greatly galled with his free discourse, and strong arguments:

and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; two principal cities of

Phoenicia: not that he went into these places themselves, but into some places that bordered upon them; for as he ordered his disciples not to go in the way of the Gentiles, so neither did he himself.

Matthew 15:22

Ver. 22. And behold a woman of Canaan,.... That is, of Phoenicia, which was called Canaan; so Shaul, the son of a Canaanitish woman, is, by the Septuagint in ***Ex 6:15*** called the son of a Phoenician; and the kings of Canaan are, by the same interpreters in ***Jos 5:1*** called kings of Phoenicia: hence this woman is by Mark said to be a Greek, that is, a Gentile, as the Jews used to call all of another nation, and a Syrophenician, being a native of Phoenicia, called Syrophenician; because it bordered upon Syria, and had been formerly a part of it, by conquest: so Cadmus, who is reported to have first brought letters from Phoenicia to Greece, is called {i} a Syrophenician merchant.

Came out of the same coasts; being an inhabitant, it is very likely, either of Tyre or Sidon: this shows that Christ did not go into these places, but only to the borders of them, since she is said to come out of them to him; who, having heard of him, and the miraculous cures wrought by him, and being informed that he was near, at such a place, as the Persic version says, "suddenly came forth out of a corner"; and the Ethiopic reads it, "out of the mountains thereof"; and made to the house where he was privately retired, and would have hid himself, as Mark suggests,

and cried unto him; with a loud voice, with much vehemency, being in great distress,

saying, have mercy on me; meaning, by curing her daughter, with whose case she was so much affected, that she made it, as it were, her own:

O Lord, thou son of David. The first of these characters expresses her faith in his power, dominion, and government, that all persons and things, and so all diseases were at his command, and control; and that being Lord of all, he could remove them at his pleasure: the other shows her knowledge and belief of him, as the Messiah, that being a name by which he was usually known by the Jews;
See Gill "Mt 1:1" and which she, though a Gentile, might come at the

knowledge of, either through being a proselyte to the Jewish religion, or through a general report which might reach, especially the neighbouring nations, that the Jews expected a wonderful deliverer to arise among them, under this character of the son of David; and from what she had heard of him, she concluded he must be the person.

My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil, which had took possession of her, and most grievously afflicted her: and her request to him was, that he would cast him out of her: believing he had power so to do, without seeing or touching her, only by a word speaking: her faith was like that of the centurion's.

{i} Lucian. Dialog. Deor. Coneil. sect. 2,

Matthew 15:23

Ver. 23. But he answered her not a word,.... Not that he did not hear her, or that he despised either her person or petition, or that he was not moved with it; but to continue her importunity, and try her faith, and make it manifest: for like reasons the Lord does not always, and immediately, answer the requests of his people. This giving her no answer, either that he would, or would not help her, carried in it a tacit repulse of her, and a denial of assistance to her; and it seems as if she did for a while desist from her application to him, and betook herself to his disciples to plead with him for her:

and his disciples came; to the house where he was; who, it seems by this, had been elsewhere;

and besought him, saying, send her away; not in any shape, with any sort of answer, without curing her daughter, or without a promise of a cure; no, they desired she might be dismissed, with a grant of her request, to her entire satisfaction, as appears from Christ's answer: the reason they give is,

for she crieth after us; not only because she was troublesome to them, was importunate with them, and would take no denial from them: she followed them wherever they went; there was no getting rid of her: but also, because her case was so moving, was delivered in such an affecting manner, and her cries were piercing, that they could not bear them; and therefore entreat him, that he would relieve, and dismiss her.

Matthew ***15:24***

Ver. 24. But he answered, and said,.... To his disciples, who knew how limited their commission was, that they were not to go into the way of the Gentiles, not to preach to them, nor perform miracles among them; and therefore could not reasonably expect that either the woman, or they, on her behalf, should succeed in this matter.

I am not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; as a priest, or as a Saviour and Redeemer, he was sent to make satisfaction and atonement for the sins of all God's elect, and to obtain eternal redemption and salvation for all of them, whether Jews or Gentiles; but as a prophet, in the discharge of his own personal ministry, he was sent by his Father only to the Jews; he was the "minister of the circumcision", *Ro 15:8* that is, a minister to the circumcised Jews; he was sent only to preach the Gospel to them, and work miracles among them, in proof of his Messiahship; and upon their rejection of him, then his apostles were to be sent among the Gentiles; but he himself was sent only to the Jews, here styled "the lost sheep of the house of Israel": by "the house of Israel", is meant the whole body of the Jewish nation, so called from Israel, the name of Jacob their father, from whom they sprung; and by the "lost sheep" of that house, are more especially designed the elect of God among them: for though all the individuals of that house were "lost" persons, considered in Adam, and in themselves, as the rest of mankind, and Christ, in the external ministry of the word, was sent to preach to them all; yet the elect of God are only "sheep": they are the sheep of Christ, of his pasture, and of his hand, whom he has the particular care and charge of; and who, in their natural state, are lost and straying, and could never find their way, or recover themselves from their lost state in Adam, and by their own transgressions; but he came to seek, and to save them, and to these his ministry was powerful and efficacious.

Matthew ***15:25***

Ver. 25. Then came she and worshipped him,.... She followed the disciples into the house; and perceiving another repulse by Christ's answer to them, she pushes on, through all discouragements; her faith grows stronger, and her importunity greater: she had called Christ Lord, and the son of David before, but now she worships him as God:

Saying, Lord help me; a short petition, but what fully and fitly expressed her case: the object she prays unto is the Lord, by which she owns his sovereignty, dominion, and power: the request she makes is for "help", signifying that her case required it; that it was such, that she could not help herself, nor any creature help her, only he, which she firmly believed; and though it was her daughter, and not she herself, that was so miserably afflicted; yet such was her sympathy, love, and affection to her, that she makes the case her own, and calls helping her daughter, helping herself; for her daughter being relieved, she would be made easy.

Matthew ***15:26***

Ver. 26. But he answered, and said,.... To the woman, as the Persic version reads it, and the sense requires:

it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs; which he said, to try her faith the more, and make it the more illustrious; and that not so much from his own sense of things, as in the language of the Jewish people, and which she might not be a stranger to. By "the children", are meant the Jews, to whom the adoption belonged; who, as a nation and people, were the children of God in a large sense; being distinguished by many blessings and favours, which others had not, and being under the more peculiar care and notice of God; not that all of them were the children of God by special grace: by "the bread"; which belonged to them, is meant the external ministry of the word, and the miracles of Christ wrought among them: and particularly such outward favours which related to the good of the bodies of men, by healing their diseases, and dispossessing them of devils: and by "the dogs" are designed the Gentiles, so called by the Jews in a way of contempt, because of their ignorance, idolatry, and impurity. Christ here speaks not his own mind, as if he reproached the Gentiles, and held them in scorn and contempt, but uses the common dialect of the people; and which, this woman, living upon the borders of the Israelitish nation, was acquainted with; so that it was not so shocking and surprising, or quite so discouraging, as it would otherwise have been. The Jewish doctors say {k}, that the idolatrous Gentiles are not called men, that they are comparable to the beasts or the field {l}, to oxen, rams, goats {m}, and asses {n}: the foetus in the bowels of a Canaanitish servant, they say {o},

"ymd hmhb yemb dlwk, "is like the foetus in the bowels of a beast"."

Take the following passage, as an illustration of this, and as a further proof of the Jews calling the Gentiles dogs {p}.

"A king provides a dinner for the children of his house; whilst they do his will they eat their meat with the king, and he gives to the dogs the part of bones to gnaw; but when the children of the house do not do the king's pleasure, he gives the dogs the dinner, and the bones to them: even so: while the Israelites do the will of their Lord, they eat at the king's table, and the feast is provided for them, and they of their own will give the bones to the Gentiles; but when they do not do the will of their Lord, lo! the feast is yblkl, "for the dogs", and the bones are their's."

And a little after,

""thou preparest a table before me"; this is the feast of the king; "in the presence of mine enemies"; yblk Nwnya, "these are the dogs" that sit before the table, looking for their part of the bones."

In which may be clearly discerned the distinction between children and dogs, and the application of the one to the Jews, and the other to the Gentiles, and the different food that belongs to each: and hence it is easy to see from whom Christ borrowed this expression, and with what view he made use of it.

{k} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 114. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 35. 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 4. {l} Zohar in Gen. fol. 31. 1. & 34. 1. 2. {m} Jarchi in Gen. 15. 10. {n} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 68. 1. {o} lb. fol. 69. 1. {p} Zohar in Exod. fol. 63. 1, 2. Vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 147. 4.

Matthew 15:27

Ver. 27. And she saith, truth, Lord,.... She owns all that he had said to be true, that he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: that she was indeed but a dog, a poor sinful creature, and unworthy of any favour; and that it was not right and fitting that all the children's bread should be taken from them and given to dogs:

yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. The Syriac and Persic versions add "and live": thus she wisely lays hold upon and improves in a very beautiful manner, in her own favour, what seemed to be so much against her. It is observed {q} of the Syrophoenicians in general, that they have all, in their common talk, something hdu kai kecarismenon "pleasant and graceful", as there is indeed in this smart reply of her's, who was one of that people. She suggests that though the Gentiles were but dogs, and she one of them; yet their common Lord and Master had a propriety in them, and they in him; and were to be maintained and fed, and ought to live, though not in such fulness of favours and blessings, as the Jews, the children of God: nor did she desire their affluence, only that a crumb of mercy might be given her, that her poor daughter might be healed; which was but a small favour, in comparison of the numerous ones he heaped upon the children, the Jews: nor would this be any more detrimental to them, than it is to the children, for the dogs, under the table, to eat of the crumbs that fall.

{q} Eunapius in Vita Libanii.

Matthew 15:28

Ver. 28. Then Jesus answered, and said unto her,.... As one surprised at the strength of her faith, and the clearness and justness of her pious reasoning; and not concealing himself, and the designs of grace, any longer from her, breaks out in great admiration of her, saying,

O woman, great is thy faith! He seems surprised, that she, a woman, and a poor Gentile, should express such strong faith in him; calling him Lord, owning him to be the Messiah, worshipping him as God, believing him able to do what could not be done by human art; and though she met with such repulses, and even called a dog, yet still continued importunate with him, believing she should succeed:

be it unto thee even as thou wilt; let thy daughter be healed, as thou desirest, and in the way, and at the very time thou wouldst have it:

and her daughter was made whole from that very hour: power went forth from Christ, and dispossessed the devil; so that when she came home, as Mark observes, she found her daughter lying on the bed, quiet, and easy, and perfectly well. The conduct of our Lord towards this woman, and her behaviour under it, do, in a very lively manner, represent the methods which God sometimes takes with his people, when they apply to him in their distress; and the nature and actings of their faith upon him: as she, when she first applied to Christ for mercy and help, had not sword of answer given her; so sometimes they cry, and the Lord turns a deaf ear, or seems not to hear, and, in their apprehension of things, has covered himself with a cloud, that their prayer should not pass through; however, an immediate answer is not returned; yea, when others interpose on their behalf, and entreat for them, yet no favourable answer is returned, as was not by Christ to his disciples, when they besought him on this woman's account: and yet, notwithstanding all this, as she, they are not discouraged, but ply the throne of grace with fresh suits, acknowledge that the worst of names and characters belong to them: that they are unworthy of the least of mercies, and should be content with the crumbs of divine favour, but cannot go away without a blessing; they lay hold on every word of God, and hastily catch at it, and improve everything in their own favour, that faith can come at, and so, in the issue, succeed in their requests: effectual, fervent, and importunate prayer, the prayer of faith availeth much with God.

Matthew 15:29

Ver. 29. And Jesus departed from thence,.... From the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, where he would have been private and retired; but being discovered, and knowing that the fame of this last miracle would make him more public in those parts, he removed, and passed through the midst of the coast of Decapolis, as Mark says, "and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee": the same with the sea of Tiberias. ***Joh 6:1***, that is, he came to those parts of Galilee, which lay near the sea side,

and went into a mountain: which was very usual with him, either for solitude, or for prayer, and sometimes, for better conveniency, to preach to the people:

and sat down there: to take some rest, being weary with his journey, and as waiting for the multitude to come to him, both for instruction and healing.

Matthew **15:30**

Ver. 30. And great multitudes came unto him,.... From the adjacent places; having heard of his being where he was; and who had either attended on him before, or, however, the fame of him, and his miracles, had reached their ears: these flocked to him, having with them, in their hands, or arms, or upon their backs, or shoulders, leading some, and carrying others, in some form or another,

those that were lame; either in their legs, or arms:

blind; in one eye, or both, and that either from their birth, or since:

dumb: the word signifies both deaf and dumb: these often meet in the same person: and if a man is born deaf, he is always dumb:

maimed: having lost a limb, an arm, or a leg, or so enfeebled by some disease or another, as the palsy, that their limbs were useless to them. The Persic version reads it "leprous":

and many others; who were afflicted with various other diseases, too many to be mentioned particularly:

and cast them down at Jesus' feet; to ease themselves of their burdens, and with a view to move his compassion, believing he was able to cure them: nor do they say a word to him, or desire him to relieve these miserable objects; thinking it was enough to present them to him, and not doubting at all, but he would show favour to them:

and he healed them; immediately, either by a word speaking, or by touching them, or by putting his hands on them, or without any such outward sign, through a divine power proceeding from him, which, at once, removed all their disorders and complaints.

Matthew **15:31**

Ver. 31. Insomuch that the multitude wondered,.... The multitude of the spectators, who, though they came in expectation of seeing miracles wrought, yet these were so much beyond what they could have imagined, that they were amazed and surprised to see cures so instantly performed, in such a miraculous manner: these were such glaring proofs and evidences of the wonderful power of God, that they were astonished

when they saw the dumb to speak; that is, such who before were dumb, now spoke; and the same is to be observed in the other following instances: some copies have also, "the deaf to hear", and so the Arabic version: "the maimed to be whole". This is left out in some copies; nor is it in the Arabic, Ethiopic, and Vulgate Latin versions, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but the Syriac has it, and most Greek copies, and seems necessary; since these are particularly mentioned among the persons brought to be cured; and a wonderful cure this was, that persons who had not only lost the use of their limbs, but such who had lost the limbs themselves, should have them restored perfect; for doubtless, the power of our Lord was able to do this, and which was amazing to behold:

the lame to walk, and the blind to see; as was prophesied of the times of the Messiah, and as things to be effected by him, *Isa 35:5*

and they glorified the God of Israel. The Ethiopic version adds, "which had given such power to the son of man", or "unto men", which seems to be taken out of ***Mt 9:8***. This must be understood both of the multitude that saw these miraculous operations, and the persons on whom they were wrought; who were both affected with them, and gave God the praise and glory of them, by whose power alone such things could be done, who is the one only and true God: and therefore, to distinguish him from the fictitious deities of the Gentiles, he is here styled the God of Israel, of the people of Israel, so called from Jacob their ancestor, whose name was Israel; by whom God was known, and worshipped, and was their Covenant God, and Father.

Matthew 15:32

Ver. 32. Then Jesus called his disciples unto him,.... Who were at some little distance from him, to impart his mind unto them, whom he had made, and used, as his familiar friends; and to try their faith, and raise their attention, and prepare them for the following miracle; as well as to teach them by his example, and accustom them to show bowels of mercy and compassion to persons in any kind of want and distress:

and said, I have compassion on the multitude; which must be understood of him as man, whose bowels yearned towards them, having been so long without any food for their bodies, or very little; as he had compassion on the sick, and diseased, and healed them, so on the sound and whole, and was willing to feed them. Christ, our high priest, is a merciful one, and is touched with the feeling of the infirmities of men, of every sort, both of soul and body:

because they continue now with me three days; which time had been spent in healing their bodily disorders, and in preaching to them for the good of their souls; which shows the diligence and indefatigableness of Christ, as well as the attachment of the people to him; who were so struck with his miracles and ministry, that though they had been so long from their habitations and families, knew not how to leave him; nor did they talk, or show any signs of departing from him, and returning to their houses, and business of life;

and have nothing to eat; not that they had been so long without eating anything, though very likely it was but little, and what they brought with them, and was now expended; nor could they provide themselves in a desert place, and many of them were a great way off from home:

and I will not send them away fasting; he might have done it, nor did the multitude ask any food of him; but he could not bear the thoughts of dismissing them in such a condition; having had but very little sustenance all this while, and so might be said to be in a manner fasting during this time, at least now:

lest they faint by the way; to their own houses, not having strength and spirit enough to travel, and get home: for "divers of them", as Mark says, "came from far".

Matthew 15:33

Ver. 33. And his disciples said unto him,.... The former miracle of feeding five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes, being quite out of their thoughts, they reply, whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude? The question is big with objections, and is put with some vehemency and astonishment: the people to be led were a multitude, a great multitude, a very great multitude, and these too had had but little, or no food, for a great while; and therefore would require the more to fill and satisfy them; and besides, it was a wilderness where they were, and where no provisions were to be had; and if they could have been got for money, they had not stock enough to purchase such a large number of loaves, as were necessary to feed so great a company with.

Matthew *15:34*

Ver. 34. And Jesus saith unto them,.... In a very mild and gentle manner, taking no notice of their stupidity, nor upbraiding them with their forgetfulness of the late miracle, and willing to exercise their patience, and try their faith, asks,

how many loaves have ye? meaning in the common stock, and which they brought along with them, for their own supply:

and they said seven, and a few little fishes; which they mention as so small a provision, that it was as nothing for such multitudes; their loaves of bread were but seven, and their fishes, which were ready dressed, dried, or boiled, &c. were few in number, and small, as to quantity and size.

Matthew *15:35*

Ver. 35. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. Not regarding the smallness of the provisions, nor any further consulting with his disciples; but knowing his own power to increase this food, and determining to feed the multitude before he dismissed them, in an authoritative way ordered them to sit down upon the ground in rows, that they might be the better seen, and served.

Matthew *15:36*

Ver. 36. And he took the seven loaves and the fishes,.... Into his hands, and lifted them up, that it might be seen, and observed, that there were no other food than these, that so the miracle might appear in its true light:

and gave thanks; to God for the provision, though it was so small, in the name of the whole company, according to the usage of the Jewish nation; who, if there were ten thousand {r}, one for the rest used to say,

"let us bless the Lord our God, the God of Israel, the God of hosts, that sitteth between the cherubim:"

teaching us to do so likewise, and to be thankful for, and content with our portion, be it more or less:

and brake them; which also was the custom of the master of the family to do:

and gave to his disciples: as a fresh trial of their faith, to reprove their unbelief, to put them in mind of the former miracle, and that they might be witnesses of this, and, in order to distribute to the people, which they accordingly did:

and the disciples to the multitude; in doing which they obeyed their master's orders, though before they could not persuade themselves, that such a multitude of people could be filled with so small a quantity.

{r} Misn. Beracot, c. 7. sect. 3.

Matthew 15:37

Ver. 37. And they did all eat, and were filled,.... Every one had a share of the provision, and that to full satisfaction; no one was overlooked and neglected, and everyone had as much as he could eat:

and they took up of the broken meat that was left, seven baskets full. The disciples, after they had distributed to everyone his portion, went round, and collected the remaining fragments, and filled seven baskets therewith, according to the number of the loaves which were broken; and so had a full return for the loaves and fishes they spared on this occasion.

Matthew 15:38

Ver. 38. And they that did eat, were four thousand men,.... This number of men, as well as of the baskets of fragments, clearly shows this to be a distinct miracle from the former of this kind, recorded in *Mt 14:15*. There the number of men were five thousand, here four thousand; there the quantity of food was five loaves and two fishes, here seven loaves and a few fishes; there the number of the baskets of fragments was twelve, here seven; though the quantity might be as large; since the word here used for a basket is not the same as there, and designs one of a larger size:

besides women and children; who were not taken into the account, though they ate as well as the men, and whose number might be very large.

Matthew 15:39

Ver. 39. And he sent away the multitude,.... Dismissing them, either with a prayer for them, or with a suitable word of exhortation, to be thankful for the mercies, both spiritual and temporal, they had received, and behave agreeably in their lives and conversations:

and took ship; being near the sea side, the sea of Galilee,

and came into the coasts of Magdala: not far from Tiberias; for often mention is made of Magdala in the Talmud {s}, along with Tiberias, and Chammath, another place in the same neighbourhood; and was famous for some Rabbins, as R. Joden and R. Isaac {t}, who are said to be haldgm, "of Magdala". Thus the Syriac version reads it Magedo, and the Vulgate Latin Magedan; and Beza says, in one Greek exemplar it is read Magadan; and some have thought it to be the same with Megiddo, where Josiah was slain by Pharaohnecho, and which Herodotus calls Magdolos {u}. The Evangelist Mark says, that he came into the parts of Dalmanutha, which was a place within the coasts of Magdala. This was not the place, but another of the same name near Jerusalem, from whence Mary Magdalene may be thought to have her name. The Ethiopic version renders it, "they went into a ship, and departed into the mountains of Magdala"; that is, Christ, and his disciples.

{s} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 38. 4. Maaserot, fol. 50. 3. Erubin, fol. 21. 4.
{t} T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 64. 3. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 81. 2. & Nidda, fol. 33. 1. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 4. 4. {u} I. 2. c. 159.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Matthew 16:1

Ver. 1. The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, &c] Not from Jerusalem, as in *Mt 15:1* but from the neighbouring places: these were Galilean Sadducees and Pharisees, of whom mention is made in the Misna {w};

"says ylylg yqwdu, "a Galilean Sadducee", (i.e. one that was of the land of Galilee, as Bartenora on the place observes,) I complain of you Pharisees, because ye write the name of a ruler with the name of Moses, in a divorce; say the Pharisees, we complain of you Galilean Sadducees, that you write the name of a ruler with the name of God, in the same leaf:"

but though these two sects could not agree in this, and in many other things, yet they could unite against Christ, to whom they bore an implacable hatred.

And tempting, desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven: they came with no sincere view to be taught by him, or learn anything from him; but if they could, to ensnare him, and get an opportunity of exposing him to the people; and therefore pretending dissatisfaction with the miracles he wrought on the earth, they ask of him to produce a sign from heaven, of his coming from thence, of his being the Son of God, and the true Messiah. They wanted some such sign, as the standing still of the sun and moon, in the times of Joshua; and as raining manna, in the times of Moses; or some such appearances of thunder and lightning, as at the giving of the law. The appearance of the rainbow, in a very extraordinary manner, is looked upon by the Jews as a sign of the Messiah's coming {x}.

"Says a certain Jew, when my father departed out of the world, he said thus to me; do not look for the Messiah until thou seest the bow in the world, adorned with light colours, and the world enlightened by it; then look for the Messiah, as it is written, ***Ge 9:16***."

Some very unusual and uncommon sight in the heavens, was what these men asked of Christ in proof of his mission from God.

{w} Yadaim, c. 4. sect. 8. {x} Zohar in Gen. fol. 53. 2.

Matthew 16:2

Ver. 2. He answered and said unto them,.... Knowing full well their views, and having wrought sufficient miracles to confirm his Messiahship, he thought fit to give them no other answer than this:

when it is evening, ye say, it will be fair weather, for the sky is red; when the sun is setting, it is a common thing for you to say, looking up to the heavens, and observing the face and colour of them, that it is like to be fair weather; no rain, that night, nor perhaps the next day, for the sky is red like fire, through the rays of the sun; which show the clouds to be very thin, and so will soon waste away, and consequently fine weather must follow.

Matthew 16:3

Ver. 3. And in the morning, it will be foul weather today,.... When you rise in the morning, and take a survey of the heavens, it is a very usual thing with you to say, it is like to be windy or rainy weather today,

for the sky is red and lowring; which shows, that the clouds are so thick that the sun cannot pierce through them, and its face is not seen; so that it may be reasonably concluded they will issue in rain, or wind, or both.

O ye hypocrites. The Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, leave out this appellation; but all other versions, as well as copies, have it: and it is an usual epithet, bestowed very justly by Christ, on these men; who pretended to be the guides of the people, took upon them to teach and instruct them in divine things, and set up themselves as men of great holiness, piety and knowledge; and yet, instead of searching the Scriptures, and comparing the characters of the times of the Messiah therein fixed, with the present ones, spent their time in making such low and useless observations, and which fall within the compass of everyone's knowledge and reach.

Ye can discern the face of the sky; very distinctly, and make some very probable guesses, if not certain conclusions, what will follow, good weather or bad:

but can ye not discern the signs of the times? or, as the Syriac reads it, "the time", the present time: if they had not been blind, they might easily have discerned, that the signs of the time of the Messiah's coming were upon them, and that Jesus was the Messiah; as the departure of the sceptre from Judah, the ending of Daniel's weeks, the various miracles wrought by Christ, the wickedness of the age in which they lived, the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Christ, the great flockings of the people, both to one and to the other, with divers other things which were easy to be observed by them: but they pretend this to be a very great secret.

"The secret of the day of death, they say {y}, and the secret of the day when the king Messiah comes, who by his wisdom can find out?"

{y} Targum in Eccl. vii. 24.

Matthew 16:4

Ver. 4. A wicked and adulterous generation,.... He says the same things here, as he did to the Pharisees on a like occasion, in *Mt 12:39*.

And he left them; as persons hardened, perverse, and incurable, and as unworthy to be conversed with:

and departed: to the ship which brought him thither, and went in it to the other side of the sea of Galilee; see ***Mr 8:13***.

Matthew 16:5

Ver. 5. When his disciples were come to the other side,.... Of the sea, as Munster's Hebrew Gospel adds, to Bethsaida, ***Mr 8:22*** as they were either in the ship, or going from the shore to the said place, they recollected themselves, that they had forgotten to take bread: having but one loaf, as Mark says, in the ship; the seven baskets of fragments being either expended, or given away to the poor, of their own accord, or by Christ's orders. It seems, it was usual with the disciples to buy food at places most proper, and carry with them; since Christ often went into deserts and mountainous places, where provisions could not be had. This their forgetfulness to act according to their wonted method, might arise either from their being intent upon Christ's conversation with the Pharisees, and Sadducees, or from the suddenness of Christ's departure.

Matthew 16:6

Ver. 6. Then Jesus said unto them,.... Either taking occasion from the disciples observing that they had forgot to take bread with them, or on account of what passed between him and the Pharisees and Sadducees, he gave the following advice to his disciples;

take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Mark, instead "of the leaven of the Sadducees", says, "the leaven of Herod"; either because Christ might caution against all three; or because the Sadducees were generally Herodians, taking Herod to be the Messiah; or were on his party, or for his government, which the Pharisees disliked; and the Herodians were generally Sadducees. By "the leaven" of these is meant their doctrine, as appears from *Mt 16:12*. The doctrines the Pharisees taught were the commandments and inventions of men, the traditions of the elders, free will, and justification by the works of the law: the doctrine of the Sadducees was, that there was no resurrection of the dead, nor angels, nor spirits: now because they sought secretly and artfully to infuse their notions into the minds of men; and which, when imbibed, spread their infection, and made men sour, morose, rigid, and ill natured, and swelled and puffed them up with pride and vanity, Christ compares them to leaven; and advises his disciples to look about them, to watch, and be on their guard, lest they should be infected with them.

Matthew 16:7

Ver. 7 And they reasoned among themselves,.... Either what should be the meaning of this caution of Christ's, and upon what account he should say this to them; or they were anxiously concerned what they should do for provision:

saying, because we have taken no bread; for the phrase, "it is", is a supplement, and is not in the original text, which confines the sense to the first way of interpretation; the words may be read without it, and confirms the other sense, and which receives strength from what follows.

Matthew 16:8

Ver. 8. Which when Jesus perceived,.... Without hearing any of their debates, but by his omniscience; for he knew the doubts and unbelief, and anxious solicitude of their minds, as well as their private reasonings one with another:

he said unto them, O ye of little faith; a phrase used upon a like occasion, when he would dissuade his disciples from an anxious distressing care about a livelihood, ***Mt 6:30*** See Gill "Mt 6:30":

why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? blaming one another for your negligence and forgetfulness in this matter; distressing your minds, as if you should be famished and starved, because ye have not brought a quantity of bread, as you used to do with you.

Matthew 16:9

Ver. 9. Do ye not understand,.... Meaning either the sense of the advice he had now given; or rather his almighty power displayed in the two miracles of feeding five thousand at one time, and four thousand at another, with a very small quantity of provision; for to this the word "understand" refers, as well as the following:

neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Have you forgot what was so lately done, namely, the feeding five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes, when ye took up, after all were filled and satisfied, no less than twelve baskets of fragments? And can you, after this, distrust my power in the care of you? Have I fed so many with so small a quantity of food? and am I not able to feed twelve of you, though you have but one loaf? Why all these anxious thoughts and carnal reasonings?

Matthew ***16:10***

Ver. 10. Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand,.... Have you forgot the other miracle done but a very little while ago, when I fed four thousand men, beside women and children, with seven loaves and a few small fishes;

and how many baskets ye took up? no less than seven large baskets; and am I not able to provide for you? distress not yourselves about this matter; give not way to unbelief, which must argue great stupidity and insensibility.

Matthew ***16:11***

Ver. 11. How is it that ye do not understand,.... That you should be so senseless and void of thought, after such instances, as to imagine, that I concerned myself about what bread you brought with you; one would think you could not but know,

that I spake it not to you concerning bread, taken in a literal sense; but must be thought to speak figuratively and mystically, and to have an higher sense and meaning, when I said to you,

that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the Sadducees; how could you think that I had any regard to the leaven taken in a literal sense, the Pharisees and Sadducees approve or disapprove of?

Matthew ***16:12***

Ver. 12. Then understood they,.... Without any further explication of his sense and meaning,

how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread: which sense they first took him in; imagining, because the Pharisees were very particular and precise what sort of leaven they made use of {z}, that Christ forbad them buying bread that was made with leaven according to their directions: and since their rules in everything prevailed much in all places, they were concerned what bread they must, or could buy; but now they perceived that he did not speak of this, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. It was very common with the Jews {a} to call the corruption and vitiosity of nature by the name of hoyebv rwav, "leaven in the lump": hence our Lord calls their doctrine so, because it proceeded from thence, and was agreeable thereunto; and uses the phrase on purpose to expose it, and bring it into neglect and contempt.

{z} Misn. Pesach, c. 2. sect. 2, 3. T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 3. 3. {a} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 7. 4. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 29. 4. Caphtor, fol. 38. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 73. 2.

Matthew 16:13

Ver. 13. When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi,.... The towns that were in the neighbourhood of this city; which city went by several names before, as Leshem, *Jos 19:47* which being taken by the Danites, they called it Dan; hence we read of Nwyroyqd Nd, "Dan, which is Caesarea" {b}. It was also called Paneas, from the name of the fountain of Jordan, by which it was situated; and which Pliny says {c} gave the surname to Caesarea; and hence it is called by Ptolomy {d} Caesarea Paniae; and by the name of Paneas it went, when Philip the {e} tetrarch rebuilt it, and called it Caesarea, in honour of Tiberius Caesar; and from his own name, Philippi, to distinguish it from another Caesarea, of which mention is made in the Acts of the Apostles, built by his father Herod, and so called in honour of Augustus Caesar; which before bore the name of Strato's tower. The Misnic doctors speak of two Caesareas {f}, the one they call the eastern, the other the western Caesarea. Now, as Mark says, whilst Christ and his disciples were in the way to these parts; and, as Luke, when he had been praying alone with them,

he asked his disciples, saying, whom do men say that I the Son of man am? He calls himself "the son of man", because he was truly and really man; and because of his low estate, and the infirmities of human nature, with which he was encompassed: he may have some respect to the first intimation of him, as the seed of woman, and the rather make use of this phrase, because the Messiah was sometimes designed by it in the Old Testament, *Ps 80:17* or Christ speaks here of himself, according to his outward appearance, and the prevailing opinion of men concerning him; that he looked to be only a mere man, born as other men were; was properly a son of man, and no more: and therefore the question is, not what sort of man he was, whether a holy, good man, or not, or whether the Messiah, or not; but the question is, what men in general, whether high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, under the notion they had of him as a mere man, said of him; or since they took him to be but a man, what man they thought he was; and to this the answer is very appropriate. This question Christ put to his disciples, they being more conversant with the people than he, and heard the different opinions men had of him, and who were more free to speak their minds of him to them, than to himself; not that he was ignorant of what passed among men, and the different sentiments they had of him, but he was willing to hear the account from his disciples; and his view in putting this question to them, was to make way for another, in order to bring them to an ingenuous confession of their faith in him.

{b} Targum Hieros. in Gen. xiv. 17. {c} Hist. l. 5. c. 15, 18. {d} Geograph. l. 5. c. 15. {e} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. & de Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 13. {f} Misn. Oholot, c. 18. sect. 9.

Matthew 16:14

Ver. 14. And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist,.... It was the opinion of some of the Jews, that he was John the Baptist risen from the dead. This notion was spread, and prevailed in Herod's court, and he himself, at last, gave into it.

Some Elias; the Tishbite, because an extraordinary person was prophesied of by Malachi, under the name of Elias; and who was to come in his power and spirit before the great day of the Lord; and it being a prevailing notion with the Jews, that Elias was to come before the Messiah; See Gill "Mt 11:14" they concluded that he was now come:

and others Jeremias; this is omitted both by Mark and Luke; the reason why he is mentioned, is not because of what is said of him, in ***Jer 1:5*** but because the Jews thought he was that prophet spoken of, in *De 18:15* that should be raised up from among them, like unto Moses: and this is the sense of some of their writers {g}: and in their very ancient writings a parallel is run between Moses and Jeremy {h}.

"R. Judah, the son of R. Simon, opened *De 18:18* thus: "as thee", this is Jeremiah, who was, as he, in reproofs; you will find all that is written of the one, is written of the other; one prophesied forty years, and the other prophesied forty years; the one prophesied concerning Judah and Israel, and the other prophesied concerning Judah and Israel; against the one those of his own tribe stood up, and against the other those of his own tribe stood up; the one was cast into a river, and the other into a dungeon; the one was delivered by means of an handmaid, and the other by the means of a servant; the one came with words of reproof, and the other came with words of reproof."

Now they fancied, either that the soul of Jeremy was transmigrated into another body, or that he was risen from the dead.

Or one of the prophets; one of the ancient ones, as Hosea, or Isaiah, or some other: they could not fix upon the particular person who they thought was risen from the dead, and did these wondrous works among them. From the whole it appears, that these persons, whose different sentiments of Christ are here delivered, were not his sworn enemies, as the Scribes and Pharisees, who could never speak respectfully of him; saying, that he was a gluttonous man, a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, a very wicked man, and far from being one, or like one of the prophets: they sometimes represent him as beside himself, and mad, yea, as being a Samaritan, and having a devil, as familiar with the devil, and doing his miracles by his assistance; but these were the common people, the multitude that followed Christ from place to place, and had a great opinion of him on account of his ministry, and miracles: wherefore, though they could not agree in their notions concerning him, yet each of them fix upon some person of note and worth, whom they took him for; they all looked upon him as a great and good man, and as a prophet, as John the Baptist was accounted by all the people, and as one of the chief of the prophets, as Elias and Jeremiah; and they that could not fix on any particular person, yet put him into the class of the prophets: but still they came short of the true knowledge of him; they did not know him to be a divine person, which his works and miracles proved him to be: nor to be that prophet Moses had spoken of, who was alone to be hearkened unto, though his ministry was a demonstration of it: nor that he was the Messiah, so much spoken of in prophecy, and so long expected by the Jewish nation, though he had all the characters of the Messiah meeting in him. The chief reason why they could not entertain such a thought of him, seems to be the mean figure he made in the world, being of a low extract, in strait circumstances of life, regarded only by the poorer sort; and there appearing nothing in him promising, that he should deliver them from the Roman yoke, and set up a temporal kingdom, which should be prosperous and flourishing, which was the notion of the Messiah that then generally obtained: and since they could not, by any means, allow of this character as belonging to Jesus, though otherwise they had an high opinion of him; hence they could not agree about him, but formed different sentiments of him; which is usually the case in everything, where the truth is not hit upon and received.

{g} Baal Hatturim in Deut. xviii. 15. R. Abraham Seba; Tzeror Hammor, fol. 127. 4. & 143. 4. {h} Pesikta Rabbati apud R. Abarbinel, Praefat. ad Jer. fol. 96. 2.

Matthew ***16:15***

Ver. 15. He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am?] Without taking any further notice, or making any reflections on the different sentiments of men concerning him, he put this question to his disciples, and which is what he had chiefly in view, that he might have their sense of him; and which he puts in a different form, and leaves out the phrase, the son of man, because they knew he was more than a man: nor was his mean appearance an offence to them; they had believed in him, became his disciples, and were followers of him: but it was not enough to believe in him, they must confess him; both are necessary: therefore he does not say, whom believe ye, but whom say ye that I am? You who have been with me so long from the beginning; you who have heard so many discourses from me, and have seen so many miracles wrought by me; and who are to be the teachers of others, to preach my Gospel, and publish my salvation to Jews and Gentiles, what have you to say of me? Whom do you say I am? as for those men, it is no great matter who they say I am; but of great moment and consequence are your sense and confession of me. Such who have long sat under a Gospel ministry, or who have been long in the church and school of Christ, it is expected of them, that they should know more of Christ than others; and should be come to a point about his person and office, and be ready to make a confession of their faith, and give a reason of their hope in him; and especially such who are, or are to be preachers of Christ to others: these ought to be well acquainted with him, who, and what he is; they should have no doubt, nor hesitation in their minds, about him, but be fully satisfied concerning him; and be free, and open, and ready to declare what they know and believe of him.

Matthew *16:16*

Ver. 16. And Simon Peter answered and said,.... Either of his own accord, and for himself, being a warm, zealous, and forward man; one that dearly loved Christ, truly believed in him, and was ready to make a confession of him; or, as the mouth of the rest, in their name, and with their consent; or, at least, as full well knowing the sentiments of their minds. Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God: a short, but a very full confession of faith, containing the following articles: as that there is a God, that there is but one God; that he is the living God, has life in himself, is the fountain of life to others, and by this is distinguishable from the idols of the Gentiles: that Jesus is the Christ, the Christ of God, the true Messiah, that was promised by God, prophesied of by all the prophets, from the beginning of the world, and expected by the people of God: a character that includes all his offices, of prophet, priest, and king, to which he is anointed by God; and that this Messiah was not a mere man, but a divine person, the Son of God; not by creation, as angels and men are, nor by adoption, as saints, nor by office, as magistrates, but by nature, being his own Son, his proper Son, the only begotten of the Father, of the same nature with him, being one with him, and equal to him. This confession, as it is uniform, and all of a piece, and consistent with itself, and is what all the disciples of Christ agreed in, so it greatly exceeds the most that can be made of the different sentiments of the people put together. They took him, one and all, to be but a mere man; their most exalted thoughts of him rose no higher: but in this he is acknowledged to be the Son of God, a phrase expressive of his divine nature, and distinct personality: they thought him to be a dead man brought to life; but here he is called the Son of the living God, as having the same life in him the Father has: they indeed judged him to be a prophet, but not that prophet that was to come, superior to all prophets; but here he is owned to be the Christ, which not only takes in his prophetic office in a higher sense than they understood it, but all his other offices, and declares him to be the promised Messiah; which they who thought, and spoke the most honourably of him, could not allow of.

Ver. 17. And Jesus answered and said unto him,.... Not waiting for any other declaration from them; but taking this to be the sense of them all, he said,

blessed art thou Simon Bar Jona, or son of Jona, or Jonas, as in ***Joh 1:42***. His father's name was Jonah, whence he was so called: so we read {i} of R. Bo bar Jonah, and of a Rabbi of this very name {k}, anwy rb Nwemv r, Rabbi Simeon bar Jona; for Simon and Simeon are one, and the same name. Some read it Bar Joanna, the same with John; but the common reading is best; Bar Jona signifies "the son of a dove", and Bar Joanna signifies "the son of one that is gracious". Our Lord, by this appellation, puts Peter in mind of his birth and parentage, but does not pronounce him blessed on that account: no true blessedness comes by natural descent; men are by nature children of wrath, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity: though he was Bar Jona, the son of a dove, and his father might be a good man, and answer to his name, and be of a dove like spirit; yet such a spirit was not conveyed from him to Peter by natural generation: and though he might be, according to the other reading, Bar Joanna, or the son of a gracious man, yet grace was not communicated to him thereby; for he was not "born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God", ***Joh 1:13***. He was a blessed man, not by his first, but by his second birth; and the reason why our Lord makes mention of his father, is to observe to him, that he was the son of a mean man, and had had, but a mean education, and therefore his blessedness in general was not of nature, but of grace, and this branch of it in particular; the knowledge he had of the Messiah, was not owing to his earthly father, or to the advantage of an education, but to the revelation he had from Christ's Father which is in heaven, as is hereafter affirmed. He is pronounced "blessed", as having a true knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal; and all such as he are so, appear to be the favourites of God, to have an interest in Christ and in all the blessings of his grace; are justified by his righteousness, pardoned through his blood, are accepted in him, have communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, and shall live eternally with them hereafter.

For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee: nothing is more frequent to be met with in Jewish writings, than the phrase of "flesh and blood", as designing men in distinction from God: so the first man is said {l} to be "the workmanship of the blessed God, and not the workmanship Mdw rvbd, "of flesh and blood"."

Again {m}, Mdw rvb, "flesh and blood", who knows not the times and seasons, &c. but the holy, blessed God, who knows the times and seasons, &c. Instances of this way of speaking are almost without number: accordingly, the sense here is, that this excellent confession of faith, which Peter had delivered, was not revealed unto him, nor taught him by any mere man; he had not it from his immediate parents, nor from any of his relations, or countrymen; nor did he attain to the knowledge of what is expressed in it, by the dint of nature, by the strength of carnal reason, or the force of his own capacity and abilities:

but my Father which is in heaven; from whom both the external and internal revelation of such truths come; though not to the exclusion of the Son, by whose revelation the Gospel is taught, and received; nor of the Holy Ghost, who is a Spirit of wisdom and revelation, but in opposition to, and distinction from any mere creature whatever. Neither the Gospel, nor any part of it, is an human device or discovery; it is not after man, nor according to the carnal reason of man; it is above the most exalted and refined reason of men; it has in it what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of: its truths are the deep things of God, which the Spirit of God searches and reveals: and which men, left to the light of nature, and force of reason, must have been for ever ignorant of, and could never have discovered. The Gospel is a revelation, it consists of revealed truths; and which are to be received and believed upon the testimony and credit of the revealer, without entering into carnal reasonings, and disputes about them; and it is the highest reason, and the most noble use of reason, to embrace it at once, as coming from God; for this revelation is from heaven, and from Christ's Father; particularly the deity, sonship, and Messiahship of Christ, are doctrines of pure revelation: that there is a God, is discoverable by the light of nature; and that he is the living God, and gives being, and life, and breath, and all things, to his creatures; but that he has a Son of the same nature with him, and equal to him, who is the Messiah, and the Saviour of lost sinners, this could never have been found out by flesh and blood: no man knows the Son, but the Father, and he to whom he reveals him; he bears witness of him, and declares him to be his Son, in whom he is well pleased; and happy are those who are blessed with the outward revelation of Jesus Christ in the Gospel, but more especially such to whom the Father reveals Christ in them the hope of glory!

{i} Juchasin, fol. 85. 1. {k} Ib. fol. 105. 1. {l} Zohar in Gen. fol. 43. 3. {m} R. Simeon in Jarchi in Gen. ii. 2.

Matthew 16:18

Ver. 18. And I say also unto thee,.... Either besides what he had already said concerning his happiness; or, as the father had revealed something great and valuable, so likewise would he; or inasmuch as he had freely said and declared who, and what he was, in like manner he also would say what Peter was, thou art Peter: intimating, that he was rightly called Peter, or Cephas, by him, when he first became a follower of him, ***Mt 4:18***, which words signify the same thing, a rock, or stone; because of his firmness and solidity, and because he was laid upon the sure foundation, and built on the rock Christ, and was a very fit stone to be laid in the spiritual building. The aptness of this name to him is easy to be seen in his full assurance of faith, as to the person of Christ, and his free, open, and undaunted confession of him.

And upon this rock will I build my church: by the church, is meant, not an edifice of wood, stones, &c. but an assembly, and congregation of men; and that not of any sort; not a disorderly, tumultuous assembly, in which sense this word is sometimes taken; nor does it design the faithful of a family, which is sometimes the import of it; nor a particular congregated church, but the elect of God, the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven; and especially such of them as were to be gathered in, and built on Christ, from among the Jews and Gentiles. The materials of this building are such, as are by nature no better, or more fit for it, than others: these stones originally lie in the same quarry with others; they are singled out, and separated from the rest, according to the sovereign will of God, by powerful and efficacious grace; and are broken and hewn by the Spirit of God, generally speaking, under the ministry of the word, and are, by him, made living stones; and being holy and spiritual persons, are built up a spiritual house: and these are the only persons which make up the true and invisible church of Christ in the issue, and are only fit to be members of the visible church; and all such ought to be in a Gospel church state, and partake of the privileges of it: these materials are of different sorts, and have a different place, and have a different usefulness in this building; some are only as common stones, and timber; others are as pillars, beams, and rafters; and all are useful and serviceable; and being put, and knit together, grow up as an holy temple to the Lord: and are called, by Christ, "my" church, because given him by the Father; and he has purchased them with his own blood; are built by him, and on him; inhabited by him, and of whom he is the head, king, and governor; though not to the exclusion of the Father, whose house they also are; nor of the Spirit, who dwells in them, as in his temple. This church Christ promises to "build". Though his ministers are builders, they are but under builders; they are qualified, employed, directed, encouraged, and succeeded by him; he is the wise, able, and chief master builder. This act of building seems to have a special regard to the conversion of God's elect, both among Jews and Gentiles, particularly the latter; and to the daily conversions of them in all ages; and to the building up of saints in faith and holiness; each of which will more manifestly appear in the latter day; and are both generally effected through the word, and ordinances, as means, the Spirit of Christ blessing them. By the rock on which Christ builds his church, is meant, not the person of Peter; for Christ does not say, upon thee Peter, but upon this rock, referring to something distinct from him: for though his name signifies a rock, or stone, and there may be some allusion to it; and he is so called because of his trust and confidence in the Lord, on whom he was built; but not because he was the foundation on which any others, and especially the whole church, were built: it is true, he may be called the foundation, as the rest of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are, ***Eph 2:20*** without any distinction from them, and preference to them; they and he agreeing in laying doctrinally and ministerially Christ Jesus as the foundation of faith and hope, but not in such sense as he is; neither he, nor they, are the foundation on which the church is built, which is Christ, and him only. Moreover, what is said to Peter in these, and the following words, is not said to him personally and separately from the rest of the apostles, but is designed for them, as well as him, as appears by comparing them with *Mt 18:18*. As he spoke in the name of them all, to Christ; so Christ spake to him, including them all. Peter had no preeminence over the rest of the apostles, which he neither assumed, nor was it granted; nor would it ever have been connived at by Christ, who often showed his resentment at such a spirit and conduct, whenever there was any appearance of it in any of them; see *Mt 18:1* and though Peter, with James, and John, had some particular favours bestowed on him by Christ; as to be at the raising of Jairus's daughter, and at the transfiguration of Christ on the mount, and with him in the garden; and he appeared to him alone after his resurrection, and before he was seen by the rest of the disciples; yet in some things he was inferior to them, being left to deny his Lord and master, they did not; and upon another account is called Satan by Christ, which they never were; not to mention other infirmities of his, which show he is not the rock: and, after all, what is this to the pope of Rome, who is no successor of Peter's? Peter, as an apostle, had no successor in his office; nor was he bishop of Rome; nor has the pope of Rome either his office, or his doctrine: but here, by the rock, is meant, either the confession of faith made by Peter; not the act, nor form, but the matter of it, it containing the prime articles of Christianity, and which are as immoveable as a rock; or rather Christ himself, who points, as it were, with his finger to himself, and whom Peter had made such a glorious confession of; and who was prefigured by the rock the Israelites drank water out of in the wilderness; and is comparable to any rock for height, shelter, strength, firmness, and duration; and is the one and only foundation of his church and people, and on whom their security, salvation, and happiness entirely depend. Christ is a rock that is higher than they, where they find safety in times of distress, and the shadow of which is refreshing to them; and therefore betake themselves to him for shelter, and where they are secure from the wrath of God, and rage of men: he is the rock of ages, in whom is everlasting strength; and is the sure, firm, and everlasting foundation on which the church, and all true believers, are laid: he is the foundation of their faith, and hope, and everlasting happiness, and will ever continue; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The Jews speak of the gates of hell: sometimes of the gate of hell, in the singular number {p}; and sometimes of the gates of hell, in the plural number. They say {q}, that

"Mnhygl vy Myxtp hvlv, "hell has three gates", one in the wilderness, one in the sea, and one in Jerusalem."

They talk {r} of

"an angel that is appointed Mnhygd yert le, "over the gates of hell", whose name is Samriel; who has three keys in his hands, and opens three doors."

And elsewhere {s} they say, that

"he that is appointed over hell his name is Dumah, and many myriads of destroying angels are with him, and he stands Mnhygd axtp le, "at the gate of hell"; and all those that keep the holy covenant in this world, he has no power to bring them in."

Our Lord may allude to these notions of the Jews, and his sense be, that all the infernal principalities and powers, with all their united cunning and strength, will never be able to extirpate his Gospel, to destroy his interest, to demolish his church in general, or ruin anyone particular soul that is built upon him. Again, the gates of "Hades", or hell, sometimes seem to design no other than the gates of death, and the grave, and persons going into the state of death; see *Job 38:17* where the Septuagint use the same phrase as here; and then the sense is, that neither death, nor the grave, shall finally, and totally prevail over the people of God, and members of Christ; but they shall be raised out of such a state, and live gloriously with him for ever. By it here is not meant Peter himself; though it is true of him, that Satan, and his posse of devils that beset him, did not prevail against him, so as to destroy his grace, hurt his estate, and hinder his salvation: nor could death, in all its frightful appearances, deter him from holding, and preaching, and maintaining the doctrine of Christ; and though death, and the grave, have now power over him, yet they shall not always detain him: but rather, it designs the doctrine Peter made a confession of; which, though it may be opposed by hell and earth, by Satan, and his emissaries, by the open force of persecutors, and the secret fraud of heretics, it may be brought into contempt by the scandalous lives of professors; and though the true professors of it may die off, yet truth itself always lives, and defies the power of death, and the grave: or else the church in general is meant, and every true believer. These words do not ascertain the continuance of anyone particular congregated church, but secures the church universal, which will continue as long as the sun and moon endure, and the perseverance of everyone of God's elect; and assure that death, and the grave, shall not always have the dominion over the saints, but that they shall be rescued from them. Once more, this "it" may refer to Christ the rock, who, though he was brought to the dust of death, by the means of Satan, and the powers of darkness, yet to the ruin of him that had the power of death; and though death, and the grave, had power over him for a while, yet could not hold him; he rose victorious over them, and ever lives, having the keys of hell and death, to open the gates thereof, and let his people out when he thinks fit.

{p} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 39. 1. Succa, fol. 32. 2. Bava Bathra, fol. 84. 1. {q} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 19. 1. Menasseh ben Israel, Nishmat Chayim, fol, 33. 1, 2. {r} Zohar in Gen. fol. 47. 4. {s} Ib. fol. 7. 1.

Ver. 19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,.... By the kingdom of heaven is meant the Gospel, which comes from heaven, declares the king Messiah to be come, speaks of things concerning his kingdom, is the means of setting it up, and enlarging it, displays the riches of his grace, and gives an account of the kingdom of heaven, and of persons' right unto it, and meetness for it. "The keys" of it are abilities to open and explain the Gospel truths, and a mission and commission from Christ to make use of them; and being said to be given to Peter particularly, denotes his after qualifications, commission, work, and usefulness in opening the door of faith, or preaching the Gospel first to the Jews, ***Ac 2:1*** and then to the Gentiles, *Ac 10:1* and who was the first that made use of the keys of evangelical knowledge with respect to both, after he, with the rest of the apostles, had received an enlarged commission to preach the Gospel to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Otherwise these keys belonged to them all alike; for to the same persons the keys, and the use of them, appertained, on whom the power of binding and loosing was bestowed; and this latter all the disciples had, as is manifest from *Mt 18:18* wherefore this does not serve to establish the primacy and power of Peter over the rest of the apostles; nor do keys design any lordly domination or authority; nor did Christ allow of any such among his apostles; nor is it his will that the ministers of his word should lord it over his heritage: he only is king of saints, and head of his church; he has the key of David, with which he opens, and no man shuts, and shuts, and no man opens; and this he keeps in his own hand, and gives it to none. Peter is not the door-keeper of heaven to let in, nor keep out, whom he pleases; nor has his pretended successor the keys of hell and death; these also are only in Christ's hands: though it has been said of the pope of Rome, that if he sends millions of men to hell, none should say to him, what dost thou? but the keys here mentioned are the keys of the kingdom of heaven; or of the Gospel, which was shut up in the Jewish nation, through the ignorance, malice, and calumnies of the Scribes and Pharisees, who would neither embrace it, or enter into the kingdom of God themselves, nor suffer others that were going to enter into it; and through their taking away the key of knowledge, or the right interpretation of the word of God; and through a judicial blindness, which that nation in general was given up to: and this was shut up to the Gentiles through the natural darkness that was spread over them, and through want of a divine revelation, and persons sent of God to instruct them: but now Christ was about, and in a little time he would (for these words, with what follow, are in the future tense) give his apostles both a commission and gifts, qualifying them to open the sealed book of the Gospel, and unlock the mysteries of it, both to Jews and Gentiles, especially the latter. Keys are the ensigns of treasurers, and of stewards, and such the ministers of the Gospel are; they have the rich treasure of the word under their care, put into their earthen vessels to open and lay before others; and they are stewards of the mysteries and manifold grace of God, and of these things they have the keys. So that these words have nothing to do with church power and government in Peter, nor in the pope, nor in any other man, or set of men whatever; nor to be understood of church censures, excommunications, admissions, or exclusions of members: nor indeed are keys of any such similar use; they serve for locking and unlocking doors, and so for keeping out those that are without, and retaining those that are within, but not for the expulsion of any: but here they are used in a figurative sense, for the opening and explaining the truths of the Gospel, for which Peter had excellent gifts and abilities.

And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. This also is not to be understood of binding, or loosing men's sins, by laying on, or taking off censures, and excommunications; but only of doctrines, or declarations of what is lawful and unlawful, free, or prohibited to be received, or practised; in which sense the words, rtwmw rwoa, "bound and loosed", are used in the Talmudic writings, times without number, for that which is forbidden and declared to be unlawful, and for that which is free of use, and pronounced to be so: in multitudes of places we read of one Rabbi rowa, "binding", and of another rytm, "loosing"; thousands, and ten thousands of instances of this kind might be produced; a whole volume of extracts on this head might be compiled. Dr. Lightfoot has transcribed a great many, sufficient to satisfy any man, and give him the true sense of these phrases; and after him to mention any other is needless; yet give me leave to produce one, as it is short, and full, and explains these phrases, and points at the persons that had this power, explaining *Ec 12:11* and that clause in it, "masters of the assemblies".

"these (say they {t}) are the disciples of the wise men, who sit in different collections, and study in the law; these pronounce things or persons defiled, and these pronounce things or persons clean, Nyrytm Nllhw Nyrowa wllh, "these bind, and these loose"; these reject, or pronounce persons or things profane, and these declare them right."

And a little after,

"get thyself an heart to hear the words of them that pronounce unclean, and the words of them that pronounce clean; the words of them Nyrowa, that "bind", and the words of them Nyrytm, that "loose"; the words of them that reject, and the words of them that declare it right"

But Christ gave a greater power of binding and loosing, to his disciples, than these men had, and which they used to better purpose. The sense of the words is this, that Peter, and so the rest of the apostles, should be empowered with authority from him, and so directed by his Holy Spirit, that whatever they bound, that is, declared to be forbidden, and unlawful, should be so: and that whatever they loosed, that is, declared to be lawful, and free of use, should be so; and accordingly they bound some things which before were loosed, and loosed some things which before were bound; for instance, they bound, that is, prohibited, or declared unlawful, the use of circumcision, which before, and until the death of Christ, was enjoined the natural seed of Abraham; but that, and all ceremonies, being abolished by the death of Christ, they declared it to be nothing, and of no avail, yea, hurtful and pernicious; that whoever was circumcised, Christ profited him nothing, and that he was a debtor to do the whole law: they affirmed, that the believing Gentiles were not to be troubled with it; that it was a yoke not fit to be put upon their necks, which they, and their fathers, were not able to bear, ***Ga 5:1***. They bound, or forbid the observance of days, months, times, and years; the keeping holy days, new moons, and sabbaths, which had been used in the Jewish church for ages past; such as the first day of the new year, and of every month, the day of atonement, the feasts of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, the jubilee year, the sabbatical year, and seventh day sabbath, ***Ga 4:9***. They loosed, or declared lawful and free, both civil and religious conversation between Jews and Gentiles; whereas, before, the Jews had no dealings with the Gentiles, nor would not enter into their houses, nor keep company with them, would have no conversation with them; neither eat, nor drink with them; but now it was determined and declared, that no man should be called common, or unclean; and that in Christ Jesus, and in his church, there is no distinction of Jew and Gentile, *Ac 10:28*. They also loosed, or pronounced lawful, the eating of any sort of food, without distinction, even that which was before counted common and unclean, being persuaded by the Lord Jesus Christ, by the words he said, *Mt 15:11*. They asserted, that there is nothing unclean of itself; and that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; or that true religion does not lie in the observance of those things; that every creature of God is good, and fit for food, and nothing to be refused, or abstained from, on a religious account, provided it be received with thanksgiving, *Ro 14:14*. And these things now being by them bound or loosed, pronounced unlawful or lawful, are confirmed as such by the authority of God, and are so to be considered by us.

{t} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 3. 2.

Matthew ***16:20***

Ver. 20. Then charged he his disciples,.... When Peter had so freely and fully confessed him to be the Messiah, and which was the sense of all the disciples; and when Christ had expressed his approbation of his confession, and had promised such great and excellent things upon it, he gave a strict charge unto his disciples,

that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. The word Jesus is not in some copies; and is left out in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions; nor does it seem absolutely necessary; it was enough to charge them to tell no man that he was the Messiah: his reasons for it might be, lest his enemies, the Scribes and Pharisees, should be the more provoked and incensed against him, and seek his death before his time; and lest the jealousy of the Romans should be stirred up, who might fear he would set up himself against Caesar, as king of the Jews, which might lead them to take measures obstructive of his further designs; and lest some persons, hearing of this, should rise and proclaim him king of the Jews, who were big with the notion of the Messiah being a temporal prince: and moreover, because the disciples were to attest the truth of this after his resurrection; and he chose, for the present, that the people should collect this from his own ministry and miracles, which were sufficient to lead them into the knowledge of it, without any declarations of their's: and though they were possessed of true faith in him, as such, for themselves, as yet they had not the gifts and abilities to defend those doctrines respecting his person, and his offices, they had after the Spirit was poured down upon them.

Matthew ***16:21***

Ver. 21. From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples,.... From the time that Peter made the confession concerning Jesus, as that he was the Messiah, and Son of God, and which things were clear to all the apostles, he began to teach them more expressly, and to point out to them more clearly, and plainly, his sufferings and death, than he had done before: and this he chose to do now, partly because that their faith in him was well grounded and established, so that they were the better able to bear these things he told them, which before might have been more staggering and discouraging to them; and partly, that being forewarned of them, they would not be so shocking when they came to pass: as also to destroy all their expectations of a temporal kingdom, which they might now be big with, he having so fully and freely owned himself to be the Messiah: and this also furnishes out some reasons why Jesus would not have his disciples, for the present, declare him to be the Messiah, that his death might not, by any means, be prevented, which was so necessary; since, should the princes of the world know him, they would not crucify him: and besides, seeing he was to suffer, and die, and rise again for the salvation of his people, it was proper that all this should be over before he was so publicly declared to be the Messiah, the Saviour, and Redeemer.

How that he must go to Jerusalem: the metropolis of the nation, where the great sanhedrim sat, who only could take cognizance of him, under the imputation of a false prophet, and condemn him to death, and which therefore would be in the most public manner; and though it would add to his reproach, would leave no room to be doubted of. The word "must", not only belongs to his going to Jerusalem, but to his sufferings, death, and resurrection; all which must be because of the immutable decree of God, the council, and covenant of grace, and peace, the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the redemption and salvation of God's elect; these required them, and made them absolutely necessary:

and suffer many things of the elders, chief priests, and Scribes: who would lie in wait for him, send persons to apprehend him, insult, reproach, and despitefully use him; load him with false charges, accusations, and calumnies, and deliver him to the Gentiles, to be mocked, scourged, and crucified: and this is aggravated as what would be done to him, not by the common people, or the dregs of them, but by the principal men of the city, by the sanhedrim, which consisted of the "elders" of the people, their senators; for this is not a name of age, but of office and dignity; and of the "chief priests", the principal of them, those of the greatest note among them, who were chosen members of the grand council; and of "the Scribes", a set of men in high esteem for their learning and wisdom:

and be killed; signifying, that he should not die a natural death, but that his life should be taken from him in a cruel and violent manner, without any regard to law or justice; indeed, that he should be properly murdered; but for the comfort of his disciples, and that they might not be overmuch pressed and cast down, at the hearing of these things, he adds,

and be raised again the third day according to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and the type of Jonas.

Matthew 16:22

Ver. 22. Then Peter took him,.... The Arabic version reads it, "called to him": the Ethiopic, "answered him"; and the Syriac, "led him"; he took him aside, by himself; and as the Persic version, "privately said to him", or he took him by the hand in a familiar way, to expostulate with him, and dissuade him from thinking and talking of any such things;

and began to rebuke him: reprove and chide him, forgetting himself and his distance; though he did it not out of passion and ill will, but out of tenderness and respect; looking upon what Christ had said, unworthy of him, and as what was scarce probable or possible should ever befall him, who was the Son of the living God, and overlooking his resurrection from the dead, and being ignorant at present of the end of Christ's coming into the world, and redemption and salvation by his sufferings and death:

saying, far be it from thee, Lord, or "Lord, be propitious to thyself", or "spare thyself": the phrase answers to dl ox, often used by the Targumists {u} and stands in the Syriac version here. The Septuagint use it in a like sense, in *Ge 43:23*. Some think the word "God" is to be understood, and the words to be considered, either as a wish, "God be propitious to thee": or "spare thee", that no such thing may ever befall thee; or as an affirmation, "God is propitious to thee", he is not angry and displeased with thee, as ever to suffer any such thing to be done to thee: but it may very well be rendered, by "God forbid"; or as we do, "far be it from thee", as a note of aversion, and abhorrence of the thing spoken of:

this shall not be done unto thee: expressing his full assurance of it, and his resolution to do all that in him lay to hinder it: he could not see how such an innocent person could be so used by the chief men of the nation; and that the Messiah, from whom so much happiness was expected, could be treated in such a manner, and especially that the Son of the living God should be killed.

{u} Targum Hieros. in Gen. xlix. 22. & Targum Onkelos in 1 Sam. xx. 9.

Matthew ***16:23***

Ver. 23. But he turned,.... Either to Peter, changing his countenance, and looking sternly upon him, or rather to the disciples; for Mark says, "when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter": Peter had took him aside, and was arguing the case privately with him; but what he said was so offensive to him, that he chose to reprove him publicly before the disciples; and therefore turned himself from him to them, in a way of resentment,

and said unto Peter; in their hearing, and before them all,

get thee behind me, Satan. The Persic version renders it, O infidel! as he was at present, with respect to the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ: some take the word Satan, to be a general name for an adversary, or enemy, as it is used in *2Sa 19:22* and think that Christ calls Peter by this name, because he was against him, and opposed him in this point; which sense abates the harshness of this expression. But it seems rather to mean the devil, who took the advantage of Peter's weakness and ignorance; and put him upon dissuading Christ from suffering, for the salvation of his people: though it should be known, that the word Satan, is used by the, Jews {w}, to signify the vitiosity and corruption of nature; of which they say, awh Njv, this is Satan; so the messenger, or angel Satan, *2Co 12:7* may be thought to be the same;
See Gill on "2Co 12:7" And then our Lord's sense is, be gone from me, I cannot bear the sight of thee; thou art under the influence of the corruption of thy heart, and nature; thou talkest like a carnal, and not like a spiritual man; and therefore Christ denominates him from his carnality, Satan, one of the names of the vitiosity of nature, whom a little before he had pronounced

blessed; being then under the influence of another spirit, as appeared from the noble confession of his faith in Christ: this change shows the weakness of human nature, the strength of corruption, the inconstancy and fickleness of frames, and the imperfection of grace in the best of saints.

Thou art an offence unto me; or a stumbling block to me, a cause of stumbling and failing; not that he really was, but he endeavoured to be, and was as much as in him lay; and had he given heed unto him, would have been so. It may be observed, that nothing was more offensive to Christ, than to endeavour to divert him from the work his farther called him to; he had agreed to do; what he came into this world for, and his heart was so much set upon; namely, to suffer and die in the room of his people, in order to obtain salvation for them: never were such words uttered by him, and such resentment shown to any, but to the devil himself, when he tempted him to worship him.

For thou savourest not the things that be of God; meaning his sufferings and death, which were the appointment of God, the counsel of his will, the provision of his covenant; what he foretold in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and what he had an hand in, and in which the glory of his grace, power, and justice, was concerned, and were the end of the mission of his Son into this world; which things were out of sight and mind, and were not regarded by the apostle at this time;

but those that be of men: he thought of nothing but worldly grandeur in the kingdom of the Messiah, as a temporal prince and Saviour; and of the continuance of Christ's natural life, for his own carnal and worldly advantage; which showed him to be, at this time, greatly under the influence of corrupt nature. So, though the blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and death of Christ, are savoury things, things to be savoured, minded, and regarded by believers, and accounted precious; and they do mind them, so the word signifies, ***Ro 8:5*** when being blessed with a spiritual and experimental knowledge, and application of them to themselves, they exercise faith, hope, and love upon Christ, with respect unto them; when they remember them aright in the ordinance of the supper, the love from whence they spring, and the benefits that come hereby; and when they discern the Lord's body in it, a crucified Jesus, and the blessings of grace which come by him, and ascribe their whole salvation to his sufferings and death, and taste the sweetness there is in these things, eating his flesh and drinking his blood by faith; yet being left to themselves, they do not savour, mind, and regard these things, but carnal things, and human schemes; as when they are dilatory to profess a crucified Christ, and submit to those ordinances of his, which set forth his sufferings and death; or are negligent in their attendance on them, their place being often empty at supper time; or if they do attend, their hearts go after other things.

{w} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 16. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 2, 3. & passim.

Matthew 16:24

Ver. 24. Then said Jesus unto his disciples,.... Knowing that they had all imbibed the same notion of a temporal kingdom, and were in expectation of worldly riches, honour, and pleasure; he took this opportunity of preaching the doctrine of the cross to them, and of letting them know, that they must prepare for persecutions, sufferings, and death; which they must expect to endure, as well as he, if they would be his disciples:

if any man will come after me: that is, be a disciple and follower of him, it being usual for the master to go before, and the disciple to follow after him: now let it be who it will, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, young or old, male or female, that have any inclination and desire, or have took up a resolution in the strength of grace, to be a disciple of Christ,

let him deny himself: let him deny sinful self, ungodliness, and worldly lusts; and part with them, and his former sinful companions, which were as a part of himself: let him deny righteous self, and renounce all his own works of righteousness, in the business of justification and salvation; let him deny himself the pleasures and profits of this world, when in competition with Christ; let him drop and banish all his notions and expectations of an earthly kingdom, and worldly grandeur, and think of nothing but reproach, persecution, and death, for the sake of his Lord and Master: and

take up his cross; cheerfully receive, and patiently bear, every affliction and evil, however shameful and painful it may be, which is appointed for him, and he is called unto; which is his peculiar cross, as every Christian has his own; to which he should quietly submit, and carry, with an entire resignation to the will of God, in imitation of his Lord:

and follow me; in the exercise of grace, as humility, zeal, patience, and self-denial; and in the discharge of every duty, moral, or evangelical; and through sufferings and death, to his kingdom and glory. The allusion is, to Christ's bearing his own cross, and Simeon's carrying it after him, which afterwards came to pass.

Matthew 16:25

Ver. 25. For whosoever will save his life,.... Whoever is desirous of preserving himself from troubles, reproaches, persecutions, and death; and takes such a method to do it, as by forsaking Christ, denying his Gospel, and dropping his profession of it; and by so doing, curries favour with men, in order to procure to himself worldly emoluments, honour, peace, pleasure, and life,

shall lose it; he will expose himself to the wrath of God, to everlasting punishment, the destruction of soul and body in hell, which is the second death, and will be his portion:

and whosoever will lose his life for my sake: that is, is willing to forego all the pleasures and comforts of life, and be subject to poverty and distress, and to lay down life itself, for the sake of Christ and the Gospel, rather than deny him, and part with truth,

shall find it; in the other world, to great advantage; he shall enjoy an immortal and eternal life, free from all uneasiness and affliction, and full of endless joys and pleasures.

Matthew 16:26

Ver. 26. For what is a man profited,.... Such persons, though they are only seeking their own profit, will find themselves most sadly mistaken; for of what advantage will it be to such a man,

if he shall gain the whole world; all that is precious and valuable in it; all the power, pleasures, and riches of it; if with Alexander, he had the government of the whole world, and with Solomon, all the delights of it; and was possessed with the wealth of Croesus, and Crassus, and lose his own soul? If that should be consigned to everlasting torment and misery, be banished the divine presence, and continually feel the gnawings of the worm of conscience that never dies, and the fierceness of the fire of God's wrath, that shall never be quenched, he will have a miserable bargain of it.

Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Or, "for the redemption" of it, as the Ethiopic version renders it: see *Ps 49:8*. If he had the whole world to give, and would give it, it would not be a sufficient ransom for it; the redemption of an immortal soul requires a greater price than gold and silver, or any corruptible thing; nothing short of the blood and life of Christ, is a proper exchange, or ransom price for it. But in the other world there will be no redemption; the loss of a soul is irrecoverable: a soul once lost and damned, can never be retrieved. This passage is thought to be proverbial; what comes nearest to it, is the following {x}.

"If a scholar dies, we never find an exchange for him; there are four things which are the ministry or service of the world, Nypylx vy wdba Ma, if they are lost, they may be changed; and they are these, gold, silver, iron, and brass, *Job 28:1* but if a scholar dies, wtrwmt wnl aybm ym, who will bring us his exchange? or an exchange for him: we lost R. Simon, "who will bring us his exchange?"."

{x} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 72. 3, 4. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 3.

Matthew 16:27

Ver. 27. For the son of man shall come in the glory of his Father,.... This is a reason, proving the truth of what is before asserted, that men's lives may be lost by saving them, and be found by losing them, whatever paradoxes they may seem to be; and that the loss of a soul is irrecoverable, and no compensation can be made for it; and points out the time, when all this will appear: for nothing is more certain, and to be depended upon, than that Christ, who, though he was then a mean and contemptible man, and attended with the sinless infirmities of human nature, wherefore he calls himself, "the son of man", should come; either a second time to judgment at the last day, in the same glory as his Father, as his Son, equal with him, and clothed, with power and authority from him, and as mediator, to execute judgment: with his angels; the Holy Ones, so the Syriac and Persic versions read, and so some copies; who will add to the glory of his appearance; and will be employed in gathering all nations before him, and in executing his will: or, in his power, to take vengeance on the Jewish nation; on those that crucified him, or did not believe in him, or deserted and apostatised from him. And then he shall reward every man according to his works, or work; either that particular action of putting him to death, or their unbelief in him, or desertion of him; or any, or all of their evil works, they had been guilty of: for though good works are not the cause of salvation, nor for which men will be rewarded; though they may be brought into judgment, as proofs and evidences of true faith, in the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, by which good men will be acquitted and discharged; yet evil works will be the cause of condemnation, and the rule of judgment; and the reason of adjudging to temporal punishment here, and eternal destruction hereafter.

Matthew ***16:28***

Ver. 28. Verily I say unto you..... This is a strong asseveration, Christ puts his "Amen" to it; declaring it to be a certain truth, which may firmly be believed:

there be some standing here; meaning either his disciples, or some of the audience; for it is clear from ***Mr 8:34*** that the people were called unto him with his disciples, when he said these words:

which shall not taste of death: that is, shall not die; a phrase frequently used by the Jewish doctors: they say {y},

"All the children of the world, atwmd amej Nymej, "taste the taste of death"."

That is, die:

till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom; which is not to be understood of his personal coming in his kingdom in the last day, when he will judge quick and dead; for it cannot be thought, that any then present should live to that time, but all tasted of death long before, as they have done; for the story of John's being alive, and to live till then, is fabulous, and grounded on a mistake which John himself has rectified at the close of his Gospel: nor of the glorious transfiguration of Christ, the account of which immediately follows; when he was seen by Peter, James, and John, persons now present; for that, at most, was but an emblem and a pledge of his future glory: rather, of the appearance of his kingdom, in greater glory and power, upon his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to heaven; when the Spirit was poured down in an extraordinary manner, and the Gospel was preached all over the world; was confirmed by signs and wonders, and made effectual to the conversion and salvation of many souls; which many then present lived to see, and were concerned in: though it seems chiefly to have regard to his coming, to show his regal power and authority in the destruction of the Jews; when those his enemies that would not he should reign over them, were ordered to be brought and slain before him; and this the Apostle John, for one, lived to be a witness of.

{y} Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 4. & 37. 1. & in Exod. fol. 19. 2. & in Num. fol. 50. 4. & 51. 2. 4. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 7. 3, 4. Midrash Kohelet, fol, 83. 2.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Matthew 17:1

Ver. 1 And after six days,.... That is, so long after Christ's conversation with his disciples at Caesarea Philippi, Peter's confession of him, and the reproof he gave him, upon his intimating that he should suffer and die, and Christ's resentment of it; after he had discoursed about his disciples taking up their cross, and following him; and of men's losing and finding their lives; and after the promise, or prophecy, that he had given out, that some then present should not die, until he came into his kingdom. Mark says the same as here, ***Mr 9:2*** but ***Lu 9:28*** says, it was about an eight days after, which may be reconciled in this manner; Matthew and Mark leave out the day in which Christ delivered the above sayings, and that in which he was transfigured, and so reckon but six days; and Luke takes them both into the account, and makes it eight days, so that they all agree; and it appears, in short, to be that day seven night.

Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother: Peter is taken, though he had so lately offended his master; Christ did not bear the offence in mind, but freely forgave him, and still loved him: James was not the brother of our Lord, who was of that name, but the Son of Zebedee; as appears from John being his brother, who was the beloved disciple; these three were all favourite disciples, and were at other times admitted to be with him, when others were not, *Mt 26:37*. Such a number was taken, as being proper and sufficient to bear witness of the truth of the following account of Christ's transfiguration;

and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart. Luke says, to pray; as he was wont to do, in such places. This mountain is generally said to be Tabor; but for what reason does not appear. Christ was going to Caesarea Philippi, when he had that discourse with his disciples, which this account is connected with; and though it was a week after, yet we have no intimation of his removing from these parts, with his disciples; only of his leading them up into a mountain: and quickly after this, we hear of him at Capernaum, which was ten miles from Mount Tabor. Dr. Lightfoot {z} thinks, that this was the mountain, which Caesarea was at the foot of; where formerly, the first idolatry was set up, one of Jeroboam's calves; and now the eternal Son of God is shown, in the confession of Peter, and in the illustrious demonstration of the Messiah. Since the goodly mountain Lebanon, and which was a very high one, was in those parts which Moses had a sight of before he died; why may it not be that, which he now descended upon, to be one of the witnesses from heaven, of Christ's transfiguration?

{z} Hor. Heb. in Mar. ix. 2.

Matthew 17:2

Ver. 2. And was transfigured before them,.... Peter, James, and John, before whom he was metamorphosed, or changed into another form; for not the substance of his body was changed, nor even the shape of it altered, only it received a more glorious form; that whereas before he appeared in the form of a servant, and looked mean and despicable, now he appeared in the form and majesty of God; or there was a divine glory; which from his deity showed itself in a visible manner through his flesh:

and his face did shine as the sun it had still the same appearance of an human face, but had such a dazzling glory upon it, as equalled the sun shining in its full strength:

and his raiment was white as the light: he did not put off his clothes, nor were the nature and substance, and fashion of them changed; but such rays of glory darted through his flesh, and through his clothes, as made them as bright and shining, as the light of the sun at noon day. Mark says, they became "exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them". The Vulgate Latin reads, "as snow", here; and so do the Ethiopic version, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel. Snow has a peculiar whiteness in it, and is therefore made use of, to express the glittering brightness of Christ's raiment; and the fuller is mentioned, who by the Jews {a} is called obwk, and means one that whitens wool, or raiment, and such an one is here designed: not that any fuller makes garments of another colour white; for though this may be done, it is not the work of fullers, but dyers: but fullers, whatever colour garments are of, if sullied and spotted, can restore them to their native colour; and if white, can bring them to their former whiteness: now Christ's garments were as white, yea, whiter, than any such men could possibly make garments, that were white at first: what colour Christ's garments were of before, is not certain; now they appeared white, to the greatest degree of whiteness. Dr. Hammond {b} has a conjecture, that in the phrase "on earth", reference is had to the earth fullers make use of in cleaning, and which is called "fullers' earth"; and that the words are to be rendered, "as no fuller, by or with earth can white them"; but if this will not bear, the sense is, that there is no fuller, nor ever was, or ever will be upon earth, that can make raiment so white as Christ's was.

{a} Maimon. in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 10. sect. 10, {b} In Mark ix. 3.

Matthew 17:3

Ver. 3. And behold there appeared unto them,.... The disciples:

Moses and Elias; Moses the giver of the law, and Elias one of the chief of the prophets: one of them had been dead near a thousand and five hundred years, and the other had been caught up to heaven, about nine hundred years before this. The Jews sometimes speak of these two as together. They say {c},

"that the Shekinah never descends below, but whylaw hvm, "Moses and Elias" ascend above."

Yea, they expect that these two will come together in future time; for so they represent {d} a God saying to Moses;

"Moses, as thou hast given thy life for them (the Israelites) in this world, so in time to come (the days of the Messiah) when I shall bring Elias the prophet, txak Nyab Mkynv, "you two shall come together"."

Now they came. Luke says, they appeared "in glory": in glorious bodies, in a glory upon their bodies; like, though inferior, to the glorious body of Christ, now transfigured: that they appeared in their own real bodies, no doubt need be made; about the body of Elijah, or Elias, there is no difficulty; since he was carried soul and body to heaven, he died not, but was changed; and has ever since remained in a glorious body, in which he doubtless now appeared: and why this should not be the case of Moses, or why he should appear in another body, and not his own, I see not; for though he died, yet he was buried by the Lord, and no man ever knew the place of his sepulchre; and there was a dispute about his body, between Michael and the devil, all which are uncommon circumstances: so that it might be, that his body was, quickly after his death, raised and restored to him; or at this time, as a pledge of the resurrection of the dead, as Christ's transfiguration was of his glory. The Jews have a notion that Moses is not dead, but is ascended, and stands and ministers to God, in the highest heavens {e}: the appearance of these two with Christ, was to show, that Christ is the end of the law and prophets; that there is an entire agreement between him and them, and that they have their full accomplishment in him; and also shows, that he was neither Elias, nor any of the prophets, as some took him to be; since he was distinct from them, and the chief and more glorious than any of them. If it should be asked; how came the disciples to know these two to be Moses and Elias, since they never saw them before, nor could have any statues or pictures of them, these being not allowed among the Jews; nor do the accounts of them in Scripture seem to be sufficient to direct them to such a thought; especially, since by their glorification, they must be greatly altered: it may be replied, they knew them, either by immediate divine revelation, or by the discourse that passed between them and Christ; for it follows,

talking with him. The Jews often speak of the appearance of Elias to their doctors, and of his conversing with them, and teaching them. Whether this is done with design to lessen the glory of this appearance, I will not say;

however, they cannot reasonably object to the probability of this account, since they make it to be so frequent among themselves; though they look upon it as an high favour, and that such are holy good men, that are indulged with it, take an instance or two: thus they say {f} of a certain person,

"Lo! the pious man, whom Elias used hydhb yetvm, "to converse with"."

And elsewhere it is said {g},

"R. Phineas and R. Mari, the sons of R. Chasda, were godly men, Mhme rbdm whylaw, "and Elias was talking with them", and they were priests."

What Moses and Elias were talking with our Lord about, is expressed by Luke, See Gill on "Lu 9:31".

{c} T. Bab. Succab, fol. 5. 1. {d} Debarim Rabba, sect. 3. fol. 239. 2. {e} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 13. 2. Maimon. praefat. ad Seder Zeraim in Talmud. fol. 86. 4. {f} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 7. 2. {g} Juchasin, fol. 101. 1. Vid. fol. 79. 1. & 118. 2. & 13. 132. 1. & T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 106. 1.

Matthew 17:4

Ver. 4. Then answered Peter and said unto Jesus,.... Which was, as Luke informs us, after he, and James, and John, awoke out of sleep; for it being night when Christ was transfigured, and they weary, were overpressed, and fell asleep on the mount, as they afterwards did in the garden with him: but when they were awaked, either by the talk of the men with Christ, or by the rays of brightness and glory, which darted from them, and especially from Christ, to their great surprise; they saw the glory that was upon him, and observed the two men that were with him, who appeared also in glorious forms; whom either by revelation, or the sequel of their discourse, they knew to be Moses and Elias: and just as these were taking their leave of Christ, Peter, charmed with such objects, and with such delightful company, and pleasant conversation, he had the happiness of hearing part of, addresses himself to Christ and says,

Lord, it is good for us to be here; in this mountain, with thyself and such company; better than to be below among the throng and multitude, where nothing but misery and distress are to be seen, and noise and tumult heard; or it is better to be here, than to go to Jerusalem, and there suffer and die; the horror of which, is thought by some, still to abide on Peter's mind.

If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles: tents, or booths, such as were made, at the feast of tabernacles, of boughs and branches of trees, to keep off heat, cold, and rains:

one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias; Luke adds, "not knowing what he said"; and Mark, "for he wist not what to say": the one representing him, as with the rapture and surprise, not himself; and the other, under the awe and dread of such majesty, as at the utmost loss what to say, agreeably to such a situation of things: not but that he knew what words he did deliver, and with what view; but he spake as a mistaken man, being ignorant of the design of this appearance; which was, not that this glory should continue, only that he should be an emblem and pledge of what was future; and besides, he was wrong in putting these two men upon an equal foot with Christ, each of them being to have a separate tabernacle as he; and he appeared to be quite out of the way, in proposing earthly tabernacles for glorified persons to dwell in, who had an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: moreover, as to the mystical sense, Moses and Elias, the law and the prophets, were not to be considered as in distinct apartments, and separate from Christ, but as agreeing with him, and fulfilled and swallowed up in him; who only, according to the voice that followed, was to be heard and attended to, and not they, as distinct from him.

Matthew 17:5

Ver. 5. While he yet spake,.... That is, while Peter was proposing the above to Christ, before an answer could be given by him, and which was unworthy of one, another scene of things presents, and a full answer is returned him by a voice from the Father; directing him and his fellow disciples, to attend to Jesus only, and not to Moses and Elias;

and behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; that is, Jesus, Moses, and Elias; the two last of which were seen no more; and which cloud covered them, as the cloud of glory covered the Israelites in the wilderness: and which, as it ceased at the death of Moses, the first prophet; one like unto it appeared at the declaration of Christ, as the greater prophet, spoken of, and typified by Moses. The disciples at its first appearance were not under it, and overshadowed by it; for Luke adds, "and they feared as they entered into the cloud"; there was such a solemnity and glory in it, as struck their minds with awe and fear, as they gradually came into it, and under it. This cloud, which is said to be a "bright" one, was a symbol of the divine presence, and a token of the love, grace, and favour of God; and expressive of the brightness and clearness of the Gospel dispensation, in distinction from the obscurity of the legal one, signified by the thick, dark, and black cloud, God descended in on Mount Sinai, when he gave the law;

and behold, a voice out of the cloud. The word "behold", is prefixed both to the cloud and to the voice out of it, which were both wonderful and surprising; and which voice came from heaven, and from the excellent glory, from God the Father in heaven: as says Peter, who was now present, ***2Pe 1:17***. Which said,

this is my beloved Son; not a servant, as Moses, Elias, and the rest of the prophets were: though as Mediator, and as considered in his office capacity, he was a servant; but in this clause, he is considered in his personal character and relation to the Father, as a divine person, who was the Son of God: not by creation, as angels and men are the sons of God; nor by adoption, as saints are; or on account of his miraculous incarnation, and resurrection from the dead; whereby indeed, he was manifested and declared to be the Son of God, which he was before; but on account of his natural relation to God, as his Father; he being the eternal, essential, and only begotten Son of God, in a way of filiation no creature is, and which, is ineffable by us. And as such he is dearly beloved of God his Father, being his image and the brightness of his glory; of the same nature and perfections with him, and equal to him. So he ever was, and will be, and that even in the meanest form and lowest condition, in which he has appeared: he was his beloved Son, when he was made flesh and dwelt among men, while submitting to ordinances, as to baptism, and obeying his Father's will, when covered with reproach, and full of sorrows; when he hung upon the cross, and laid down his life for his people; which he showed, by concealing nothing from him; by putting all things into his hands, and by appointing him the head of the church, the Saviour of the body, and the judge of quick and dead.

In whom I am well pleased: Mark and Luke have not this clause, but Peter, who was present, and heard the words spoken, mentions it, ***2Pe 1:17*** which confirms Matthew's relation. This regards, not so much the well pleasedness of God with the person of Christ, which is expressed in the former clause; but signifies that he was in him, as Mediator, well pleased with all his people; he was well pleased with his righteousness he was working out, whereby the law was magnified, and made honourable; and with the sacrifice he was about to offer up, which would be of a sweet smelling savour to him, his justice being entirely satisfied with it; and with all he did and suffered in human nature; which were things that always pleased the Father, being according to his will, his counsel and covenant: and so he graciously accepted of, and was infinitely well pleased with all his elect, as considered in him, and represented by him, on account of his righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction:

hear ye him; as the former clause chiefly respects that part of his mediatorial office, the priestly, this regards his prophetic office principally, and also his kingly office; so that in this divine testimony, first his sonship is bore witness to, and then his several offices; which his sonship is the foundation of, and qualifies him to bear and execute. This clause has the very words which Moses delivered, when he spoke of the Messiah, the great prophet like unto himself, that should be raised up among the Jews; saying, "unto him ye shall hearken", *De 18:15*. So that these words, "hear ye him", most clearly point to Christ, as being this prophet, who is to be heard, and he only; not Moses, but he, the prophet Moses prophesied of; nor Elias, or any of the other prophets, but one greater than them all: hear and believe his prophecies, concerning his sufferings, death, and resurrection, lately delivered by him; listen to, and embrace his doctrines, as coming from God, and as having a divine impress upon them, and being confirmed by miraculous works; submit to his ordinances, and obey his commands, as king of saints; hear him always, and in all things.

Matthew 17:6

Ver. 6. And when the disciples heard it,.... The voice out of the cloud, and which they apprehended came from God, and was uttered with so much majesty:

they fell on their face: not so much out of reverence, or for the sake of adoration, but as persons struck with astonishment and fear, and were as half dead; and so fell with their faces fiat to the ground, not being able to stand before God, to behold his majesty, and hear his voice:

and were sore afraid: they were filled with fear, when, awaking out of their sleep, they saw the surprising glory of Christ, and of the two men that were with him, insomuch that they knew not what to think, or say; and so they were when they entered into the cloud, and still more upon hearing the voice of God himself, even though it was a voice of love, grace, and mercy; see ***De 5:24***. But yet they were not struck with so much amazement and surprise, as not to know what was said; for they distinctly heard the words, rightly understood, and faithfully related them; from whom the evangelists had them, and which Peter perfectly remembered, and recorded many years after.

Matthew 17:7

Ver. 7. And Jesus came and touched them,.... The disciples were at some little distance from Christ, but he observing the fear and surprise they were in, came to their relief and assistance; which he did not disdain to give, notwithstanding the glory he was covered with; but acts the part of a mediator between God and them, and lays hold on them to raise them up, whom the majesty of God's voice had cast down: the Persic version renders it, "he came and brought them to themselves"; who were just fainting and swooning away, at the awfulness of the voice:

and said, arise, and be not afraid: it is not the voice of an angry God, but of God well pleased with me, and in me with you; it is the voice of my God, and your God, of my Father, and your Father; arise, stand on your feet, take heart, and be of good courage, no hurt will come to you.

Matthew 17:8

Ver. 8. And when they had lift up their eyes,.... And "looked round about", as Mark says, to see whether the same objects still continued, as Moses and Elias; and the bright cloud:

they saw no man; neither Moses nor Elias, who were both gone: signifying, that though the law and the prophets were till this time, they were now finished and completed, and the Mosaic economy was to be no more; as these men appeared no more after, nor will they till the second coming of Christ. And Mark has it, "they saw no man any more"; that is, these men any more, neither then, nor afterwards, "save Jesus only". Mark adds, "with themselves"; in the same form as before his transfiguration. Christ is the only Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer; the only Prophet, Priest, and King; and who only is to be, and can be beheld as such; and who does, and will abide with his people; and helps, comforts, and saves them, when none else can. Luke observes, that "when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone"; which was so ordered, that it might be a clear case, that this voice was only concerning Christ, and not either Moses or Elias.

Matthew 17:9

Ver. 9. And as they came down from the mountain,.... Where all these things had been transacted,

Jesus charged them, saying, tell the vision to no man: by the "vision" is meant, as it is explained in Mark, "what things they had seen"; as Moses and Elias, and the bright cloud that overshadowed them, and Christ transfigured before them, in a surprising, glorious manner. These Christ strictly ordered Peter, James, and John, to speak of to no man whatever; no, not their fellow disciples; who either would be apt to disbelieve them, on account of the greatness of them, as Thomas did the resurrection of Christ afterwards; or lest they should be troubled and displeased, that they were not admitted to the same sight; and especially not to the multitude, or to any other person,

until the son of man be risen again from the dead; meaning himself and his resurrection, when such proof would be given of his mission, authority, and glory, which would make this account more easy to be believed: besides, he had told the Jews, that no sign, that is, from heaven, as this voice was, should be given, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas; referring to his resurrection, which would be a sure testimony of the truth of his Messiahship. This order of Christ was strictly observed by the disciples; for Luke, says, "they kept it close"; to themselves, in their own breasts; it lay concealed between these three; "and told no man in those days, any of those things which they had seen": and Mark says, "they kept that saying within themselves"; only as he adds, they were "questioning one with another, what the rising from the dead should mean": for they were not yet reconciled to the Messiah's dying, which was contrary to their expectation of a temporal kingdom; and therefore could not tell what to make of his rising again, whether this had not some secret, mystical meaning; for of his resurrection from the dead, in a literal sense, they had no notion; though it was foretold in the writings of the Old Testament, and had been so lately affirmed by Christ himself.

Matthew 17:10

Ver. 10. And his disciples asked him, saying,.... That is, these three, Peter, James, and John, before they came to the rest; whilst they were going down the mountain, or from it, to the place where the others were; for the rest knew nothing of the appearance of Elias, and so cannot be thought to join in a question concerning him.

Why then say the Scribes, that Elias must first come? That is, come before the Messiah comes; for certain it is, that this was the sense of the Scribes, as it was of the ancient Jews, and is still the opinion of the modern ones. They say {h},

"that in the second year of Ahaziah, Elias was hid; nor will he appear, till the Messiah comes; then he will appear, and will be hid a second time; and then will not appear, till Gog and Magog come."

And they expressly affirm {i}, that

"before the coming of the son of David, rvbl whyla aby, "Elias will come to bring the good news" of it."

And this, they say {k}, will be one day before the coming of the Messiah. And Maimonides {l} observes,

"that there are of their wise men that say, whyla aby xyvmh tayb Mdwqv, "that before the coming of the Messiah, Elias shall come"."

So Trypho the Jew, the same with R. Tarphon, so often mentioned in Talmudic writings, disputing with Justin Martyr, tells him {m}, that the Messiah, "shall not know himself, nor have any power, mecri an elywn Hliav, "till Elias comes", and anoints him, and makes him known to all."

And hence the Targumist {n} often speaks of Messiah and Elias as together, and of things done by them; and in their prayers, petitions are put for them, as to come together {o}: this is founded upon a mistaken sense of ***Mal 4:5*** and which is the general sense of their commentators {p}. Now the Scribes made use of this popular sense, to disprove Jesus being the Messiah: they argued, that if he was the Messiah, Elias would be come; but whereas he was not come, therefore he could not be the Messiah. The disciples having just now seen Elias, are put in mind of this tenet of the Scribes, and of their use of it; and inquire of Christ, not so much about the truth of it, and the reason of their imbibing it, as why they were suffered to make use of it, to his disadvantage; and especially why they, the disciples, should be forbid publishing what they had seen; whereas, were they allowed to divulge this vision, and bear their testimony to this truth, that Elias had appeared, and they had seen him, it might be a means of stopping the mouths of these Scribes; and of convicting men of the truth of the Messiahship of Jesus, upon their own principles, and of confirming them that believed it: or else the sense is, whereas they had seen Elias, and he was gone again, without making any public appearance in the nation, their question is, how came the Scribes to say, that he should come first? and if there was any truth in this, how came it to pass, that he did not come sooner, even before Christ came in the flesh; and inasmuch as he did now appear, why he did not appear more publicly, as the person that was to come, at least, before the setting up of the kingdom and glory of the Messiah; which they might hope were at hand, and that Elias was come to usher it in: but that he did not appear publicly, and they were not allowed to speak of it, they wanted to know Christ's sense of these things; and took this opportunity as they came from the mountain, to converse with him about it.

{h} Seder Olam Rabba, p. 45, 46. {i} Gloss. in T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 43. 2. {k} R. Abraham ben David in Misn. Ediot, c. 8. sect. 7. {l} Hilch. Melacim, c. 12. sect. 2. {m} Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 226. {n} In Exod. xl. 10. Deut. xxx. 4. & Lam. iv. 22. {o} Seder Tephillot, fol. 56. 2. & 128. 2. {p} Aben Ezra, Kimchi, & Abarbinel in loc.

Matthew ***17:11***

Ver. 11. And Jesus answered and said unto them,.... By way of concession,

Elias truly shall first come: this is indeed a tenet of the Scribes, and it is also certain, that there is a prophecy in ***Mal 4:5*** of the coming of Elias; of one that goes under that name, not of Elias the Tishbite, in person, but of one that was to come in his power and spirit,

and restore all things. The Syriac and Persic versions render it, "shall perfect, or complete all things", that are prophesied of him; and shall put a period to the law and the prophets, and close the Mosaic economy, and direct persons to Christ; in whom are the perfection of the law, and the fulfilling of the prophets. The Arabic version reads it, "he shall teach you all things"; the whole of the Gospel being to be reduced to these two heads, repentance towards God, and faith in Christ; both which were taught by the true Elias: but the truest sense of the phrase is to be learned out of ***Mal 4:6***. "He shall restore, byvh, he shall turn all things, the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers"; and as this is explained in ***Lu 1:17*** "he shall turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and make ready a people prepared for the Lord": which is other, and better sort of work, than what the Jews assign to their Elias, whom they expect, and whom they make to be a restorer of all things, in their way: they often speak of his purifying {q} of things, or pronouncing things pure, that were defiled; and among others, that he will purify bastards, and Mbyvy, "restore them" to the congregation of the Lord {r}. Though Maimonides {s} denies, that when he comes he will pronounce defiled that which is pure, or pronounce pure, that which is defiled. They pretend {t}, that he is now employed, and very busy, in writing everything that is done in every age; so that when he comes, he will be able to give an account of everything: and nothing is more common with them, than to say concerning any matter, that there is any doubt or difficulty about it {u}, whyla abyv de xnwm ahy, "let it be left till Elias comes".

{q} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 25. 1. & Becorot, fol. 33. 2. & 34. 1. {r} Kimchi in Zech. ix. 6. {s} Hilchot Melacim, c. 12. sect. 2. Vid. Misn. Ediot, c. 8. sect. 7. & Maimon & Bartenora in ib. {t} Seder Olam Rabba, p 46. {u} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 1. sect. 8. T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 3. 1. & 37. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 94. 1.

Ver. 12. But I say unto you,.... A way of speaking used by Christ, when he opposes and contradicts any of the tenets of the Scribes and Pharisees; see ***Mt 5:22*** "that Elias is come already"; the person that was signified by, and prophesied of, under the name of Elias: for Christ refers not to the late appearance of Elias on the mount, but to the coming of a certain person some time ago; who came in the power and spirit of Elias, and was the forerunner and harbinger of him, the Messiah; as was said of him he should, "and they knew him not"; that is, the Scribes and Pharisees, who believed that Elias would come before the Messiah; and yet when he who was designed by him was come, they knew him not, they did not know him to be the Elias; they knew him under the name of John the Baptist, and seemed pleased with his ministry for a while, but afterwards rejected his doctrine and baptism, which is referred to in the next clause:

but have done unto him whatsoever they listed; they did not believe what he said, nor repent upon his preaching to them; they rejected the counsel of God he declared, not being baptized of him; they treated him with indignity and contempt, charging him with having a devil, and were well pleased when Herod put him to death; some of whom were doubtless among those that sat at meat with him; for whose sake, as well as for his oath's sake, he ordered the execrable murder to be committed:

likewise also shall the son of man suffer of them. Christ takes this opportunity to confirm what he had said in the preceding chapter, concerning his sufferings and death; and his meaning is, that as sure as John the Baptist had suffered indignities, and death itself, so sure should the son of man suffer like things; if not from the same individual persons, yet from that generation of men.

Matthew 17:13

Ver. 13. Then the disciples understood,.... By his saying that Elias was come, and by the account he gave of his ill usage, it was clear to them,

that he spake unto them of John the Baptist; and that he was the Elias that was to come, and was come: so that this observation, that according to prophecy Elias was to come before the Messiah, was no objection to Jesus being the Messiah; but on the contrary, since he that was intended by Elias was come, and had done his work and office, it was a confirmation of the truth of his Messiahship.

Matthew 17:14

Ver. 14. And when they were come to the multitude,.... Which was on the next day, as in ***Lu 9:37*** when Christ and his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, came down from the mount to the other nine, with whom the multitude of the people were; during their stay on the mountain,

there came to him a certain man; who was, as Mark says, "one of the multitude"; and as Luke, "a man of the company": who had applied to the nine disciples on the behalf of his son, but without success, and was waiting till Christ came from the mount; who when he saw him, made up to him, and

kneeling down to him in the manner of a supplicant, doing him homage and worship; hereby showing his great esteem of him, and veneration for him,

and saying the following words:

Matthew 17:15

Ver. 15. Lord, have mercy on my son,.... He addressed him with great marks of honour and respect, not only by gesture, but by words; he craves mercy, pity, and compassion; for the case he had to present, was a miserable one; and his earnestness and importunity he hoped might be excused, since it was for a child of his own. Luke adds "for he is mine only child"; and therefore his affection for him must be thought to be very strong, and he greatly concerned for its grievous affliction, and earnestly desirous of its health and life.

For he is lunatic: not a mad man, but troubled with the epileptic disease; upon which, as on madness or lunacy, the changes and full of the moon have an influence: hence the next clause,

and sore vexed, is rendered in the Arabic version, "and sore vexed at the beginning of full moons"; at which times, he had very grievous and frequent fits of his disorder:

for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water: which shows it to be the "epilepsy", or "falling sickness", he was afflicted with; which, whenever it seized him, whether by the fireside, or by the side of a river or brook, or any place of water, or in any other dangerous situation, he fell into it, not being able to help himself, or avoid any danger to which he was exposed. A larger account of this child's disorder, and of the circumstances of his cure, are related by ***Mr 9:17*** where this case will be more fully considered. See Gill on "Mr 9:17". See Gill on "Mr 9:18".

Matthew 17:16

Ver. 16. And I brought him to thy disciples,.... To the nine, whilst Christ was with the other three upon the mountain: no doubt but his design was to bring him to Christ first; but he being absent, he applied to his disciples, and, desired them to make use of their power to heal him; and which they attempted, but without success:

and they could not cure him. This he said, partly to show the malignity and stubbornness of the disease, and partly to accuse the disciples of weakness; when he himself was as much in fault as they, as the following words show. Here the Jew {w} insults, and charges with contradiction, that in one place it should be said, that Jesus gave his disciples power to cast out unclean spirits, and here all the disciples could not cast a spirit out of one little child: but without any reason; let it be observed, that "all" the disciples were not present, the three principal ones were with Christ; besides, this was not owing to want of power in them, which Christ had conferred on them, and which they often made use of with success: but partly to their own unbelief, and partly to the unbelief of the father of this child, and others with him, as appears from what follows: and it is clear from Mark, that when he came to Christ, he had but little faith; he says to him, "if thou canst do anything, help us"; and after Christ had talked with him about his faith, he could only say, "Lord, I believe, help mine unbelief".

{w} Vet. Nizzachon, p. 219, 220.

Matthew **_17:17_**

Ver. 17. Then Jesus answered and said,.... Not to the disciples, but to the father of the child; see ***Mr 9:19*** and those that were with him, and the Scribes that were present, disputing with the disciples, upbraiding them with their weakness, and triumphing over them: "O faithless and perverse generation"; a way of speaking, which is never used of the disciples, and indeed could not be properly said of them; for though they often appeared to be men of little faith, yet not faithless; nor were they so rebellious, stubborn, and perverse, as here represented, though there was a great deal of perverseness in them: but the characters better suit the body of the Jewish nation, who, on account of the incredulity of this man, and those that were present, being of the same temper with them, are exclaimed against in words, which were long ago spoken of their ancestors, *De 32:5* and from whence they seem to be taken.

How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Upbraiding them with the length of time he had been with them, in which so many wonderful works had been done among them, and yet they remained unbelieving and incorrigible; and intimating, that his patience and longsuffering would not always continue; and that in a short time, he should be gone from them, and they should no longer enjoy the benefit of his ministry and miracles, but wrath should come upon them to the uttermost: but however, whilst he was with them, notwithstanding all their unbelief and obstinacy, he should go on to do good; and therefore says,

bring him hither to me, meaning the lunatic child. These words also are directed, not unto the disciples, but to the father of the child; for so it is said in ***Lu 9:41*** "bring thy son hither"; and so the Syriac renders it here whyta, "bring thou him"; though, as expressed in the plural number, may very well be thought to intend him, and his friends.

Matthew **_17:18_**

Ver. 18. And Jesus rebuked the devil,.... The words may indeed be rendered, "and Jesus rebuked him, and the devil departed out of him"; so the Vulgate Latin, and the Oriental versions; but the sense our version gives is certainly right; for it was not the father of the child Christ rebuked for his unbelief; this he had done already; nor the lunatic himself, as some have thought, either for his unbelief, or because he was possessed by the devil, for some sins of his own; which is not likely, since he was so from a child, and perhaps not now in his right mind, and capable of any rebuke: besides, the Evangelists Mark, and Luke expressly say, that he "rebuked the foul", or "unclean spirit": for though it was a natural disease which attended this child, yet he was afflicted with it in a preternatural way, by the means of Satan; who, by divine permission; had a power of inflicting bodily diseases: and that this disease was effected by him, is clear from the manner of curing, by the dispossession of him; for when

he departed out of him; at the command of Christ, whose power he could not withstand, but was obliged, whether he would or not, to obey;

the child was cured from that very hour; directly, immediately, and continued well, and in good health. Hence the word rendered lunatic, in *Mt 17:15* is in several Oriental versions, translated in the sense of "demoniac", or one possessed with a devil. The Arabic version renders it, "he is with a demon": the Persic thus, "on whom a demon hath power"; and the Ethiopic after this manner, "an evil demon takes hold on him". And it is usual with the Jews, to ascribe diseases to evil spirits; and perhaps this uncommon dispensation in the times of Christ, may give rise to such a notion; particularly, they ascribe this very same disease of the "epileptic", or "falling sickness", to the same cause, which they call {x} "Kordicus", or "Cardiacus", the "Cardiac" passion, which one of their commentators {y} explains thus.

"It is a disease which proceeds from the repletion of the vessels of the brain, whereby the understanding is confounded; wherefore it is one of the sorts lpwnh ylwx, "of the falling sickness"."

Says another {z} of them,

"It is hdyv Mv, "the name of a demon", that rules over such, that drink much wine out of the vat."

To which others agree, saying {a}, that one attended with this disorder, is one,

"whose understanding is confounded, dv tmxm, "by means of a demon", who rules over such, that drink new wine; and lo! the spirit's name is

"Kardiacus"."

From whence it is clear, that with them, the disease and the demon go by the same name; and that the former is from the latter.

{x} Misn. Gittin, c. 7. sect. 1. {y} Maimon. in ib. {z} Gloss. in T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 67. 2. {a} Bartenora & Yom Tob. in Misn. Gittin, c. 8. sect. 1.

Matthew 17:19

Ver. 19. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart,.... Or "secretly", as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read; that is, privately, and when alone; and as Mark says, "when he was come into the house"; and was by himself, then came the nine disciples to him, to converse with him about this matter,

and said unto him, why could not we cast him out? That is, the devil, and so cure the lunatic; the Syriac and Persic versions render it, "why could not we heal him?" The lunatic; which only could be done by casting out the demon: they were concerned, fearing they had lost the power which Christ had bestowed on them, and wanted to know what they had done, which had deprived them of it; and what should be the cause of their late unsuccessful attempt, when they had so frequently triumphed over the unclean spirits, that were subject to them. Though they might have learned from the answer Christ gave to the father of the lunatic, and the general character of the Jewish nations in that answer, the true reason of their own inability; but this they took no notice of, imagining it belonged entirely to others, and not to them.

Matthew 17:20

Ver. 20. And Jesus said unto them, because of your unbelief,.... The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "because of your little faith", or "the smallness of your faith"; and so does one Greek manuscript; and which is what is doubtless meant by their unbelief; for they were not altogether destitute of faith, but their faith was very low, and their unbelief very great. Christ says, not because of the unbelief of the parent of the child, and those that were with him, though that also was a reason; but because of their unbelief, being willing to convince them of their unbelief, as he had done the father of the child, who had confessed it, and desired it might be removed from him: but lest they should think they had lost their power of doing miracles, Christ adds;

for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed; which was a very small seed, the least of all seeds, and is used very often proverbially by the Jews, to signify anything of a small quantity or weight {b}, and is sometimes used of faith, as here; so speaking of the congregation of Edom, meaning the Christians, they {c} say,

"they have not ldrx lv Nyerg wmk hnwma, "faith as a grain of mustard seed"."

And it is used in like sense in other eastern nations; and by Mahomet in his Alcoran {d}, who says,

"We will appoint just balances in the day of resurrection, neither shall any soul be injured at all, although the merit or guilt of an action be of the weight of "a grain of mustard seed"."

So that it has no reference to the quality of mustard seed, being hot and acrimonious; which has led some interpreters wrong, to compare faith unto it, for its liveliness and fervency: when our Lord only means, that if his apostles had ever so small a degree of faith in exercise, which might be compared for its smallness to this least of seeds, such an effect as he after mentions would follow; and which therefore is to be understood, not of an historical faith, by which men assent to all that is in the Bible as true; nor of a special, spiritual faith, by which souls believe in Christ, as their Saviour and Redeemer; for of neither of these can the following things in common be said; but of a faith of miracles, peculiar to certain persons in those early times, for certain reasons; which such as had but ever so small a degree of, as the apostles here spoken to might say, as Christ observes to them,

ye shall say to this mountain; pointing perhaps to that he was just come down from, which might be in sight of the house where he was,

remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove: meaning, not that it would be ordinarily or ever done in a literal sense by the apostles, that they should remove mountains; but that they should be able to do things equally difficult, and as seemingly impossible, if they had but faith, when the glory of God, and the good of men, required it. So that it does not follow, because the apostles did not do it in a literal sense, therefore they could not, as the Jew insultingly says {e}; since it was meant that they should, and besides, have done, things equally as great as this, and which is the sense of the words. So the apostle expresses the faith of miracles, by "removing mountains", *1Co 13:2* i.e. by doing things which are difficult, seem impossible to be done: wherefore Christ adds,

and nothing shall be impossible to you; you shall not only be able to perform such a wonderful action as this, were it necessary, but any, and everything else, that will make for the glory of God, the enlargement of my kingdom and interest, the confirmation of truth, and the good of mankind.

{b} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 3l. 1. Megilla, fol. 28. 2. Nidda, fol. 66. 1. Maimon. lssure Biah, c. 11. sect. 4. Maacolot Asurot, c. 2. sect. 21. &c. 14. sect. 8. Tumaot Okelim, c. 4. sect. 2. & 7. 6. {c} Vet. Nizzachon, p. 148. {d} C. 21. p. 268. & c. 31. p. 336. Ed. Sale. {e} Vet. Nizzachon, p. 237.

Matthew 17:21

Ver. 21. Howbeit, this kind goeth not out,.... The Vulgate Latin renders it, "is not cast out"; and so do the Arabic version, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and which confirm the more commonly received sense of these words, that they are to be understood of that kind of devils, one of which was cast out of the lunatic, and was of the worst sort, of a fierce and obstinate kind; and having had long possession, was not easily ejected: and that there is a difference in devils, some are worse and more wicked than others, is clear from *Mt 12:45* and not of that kind of miracles, or kind of faith to the working of such miracles. Moreover, the above versions, as they fitly express the word ekporeutai, here used; see ***Mr 9:17*** compared with *Mt 15:17*. So they pertinently set forth the dispossession of devils, who do not go out voluntarily, but by force; and this sort could not be ejected,

but by fasting and prayer: that is, in the exercise of a miraculous faith, expressed in solemn prayer to God, joined with fasting. It seems that Christ not only suggests, that faith was greatly wanting in his disciples; for which reason they could not cast out the devil, and heal the lunatic; but they had been wanting in prayer to God, to assist them in the exercise of their miraculous gifts; and that whilst Christ, and the other three disciples were on the mount, they had been feasting and indulging themselves with the people, and so were in a very undue disposition of mind, for such extraordinary service, for which our Lord tacitly rebukes them. This agrees with the notions of the Jews, who think that, by fasting, a divine soul {f} hvqwbm ta gyvt, "may obtain that which is sought for"; and that among other things, for which a private person may afflict himself with fasting, this is one, her xwr ynpm, "because of an evil spirit" {g}; which they think may be got rid of this way.

{f} Jacchiades in Dan. x. 3. {g} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 22. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Taaniot, c. 1. sect. 6.

Matthew 17:22

Ver. 22. And while they abode in Galilee,.... Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it wklhvkw, "and while they were walking in Galilee", for they passed through it, when they departed from hence; see ***Mr 9:30*** and as they were going to Capernaum, and so onward, to the coasts of Judea, in order to be at Jerusalem at the feast of the passover; where, and when, Christ was to suffer: and observing that the time of his death drew nigh, he inculcates it again to his disciples a third time, that they might be prepared for it, and not be discouraged and terrified by it;

Jesus said unto them, the son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: some copies read, "sinful men"; and so the angels report the words, in *Lu 24:7* by whom may be meant the Gentiles, who, by the Jews, were reckoned very wicked men, and called sinners of the Gentiles. Now Christ intimates, that the son of man, meaning himself, should be betrayed by the Jews, into the hands of the Gentiles; than which, with the Jews, nothing was reckoned a fouler action, or a viler crime; their canons run thus {h}:

"It is forbidden to betray an Israelite into the hands of the Gentiles, whether in his body or in his substance; and though he may be a wicked man, and a ringleader in sin, and though he may have oppressed and afflicted him; and everyone that betrays an Israelite into the hands of the Gentiles, whether in his body, or in his substance, has no part in the world to come."

They forgot this rule, when they delivered Christ to Pontius Pilate. They go on to observe, that

"it is lawful to kill a betrayer in any place, even at this time, in which they do not judge capital crimes; and it is lawful to kill him before he betrays; but when he says, lo! I am about to betray such an one in his body, or in his substance, though his substance is small, he exposes himself to death; and they admonish him and say to him, do not betray: if he is obstinate, and says I will betray him, it is commanded to kill him; and he that is first to kill him, is a worthy man,"

{h} Maimon. Hilch. Chobel Umazzik, c. 8. sect. 9, 10.

Matthew 17:23

Ver. 23. And they shall kill him,.... Put him to death, with the death of the cross; for the angels in rehearsing these words, affirm, that Christ told his disciples at this time, and in this place, whilst they were in Galilee, that he should be crucified, *Lu 24:7*.

And the third day he shall be raised again: this he said for their comfort; and it is observable, that when Christ speaks of his rising again, he makes mention of the exact time, the third day, on which he should rise, according to the types and prophecies of the Old Testament:

and they were exceeding sorry: that he should be betrayed into the hands of the Gentiles, fearing that another nation would come, and take away, and possess the worldly kingdom and grandeur they were dreaming of; and that he should die at all; and much more that he should die such a cruel and ignominious death, as that of the cross. They seem to have overlooked, and to have taken no notice of his rising again from the dead; which might have administered comfort to them, and have relieved them under their melancholy apprehensions of things; but this they understood not, nor indeed truly any part of what he had said; so Mark and Luke intimate: but then it may be said, how came they to be so very sorrowful, if they did not know what was said? To which may be replied, that this might be the reason of their sorrow, because they did not understand what he said, and they were afraid to ask; they could not tell how to reconcile the betraying of him into the hands of men, and his sufferings and death, with their notions, that the Messiah should abide for ever, and should set up a temporal kingdom, in great splendour and magnificence; and what he meant by rising again from the dead, they could not devise; they could not tell whether all this was to be understood in a literal, or mystical sense.

Matthew 17:24

Ver. 24. And when they were come to Capernaum,.... Called Christ's own city, ***Mt 9:1*** where he dwelt some time ***Mt 4:13*** and Peter had an house, ***Mt 8:14*** "they that received tribute money", or the "didrachms"; in Talmudic language, it would be Mylqvh Nybwg {i}, "they that collect the shekels": for not the publicans, or Roman tax gatherers are meant; nor is this to be understood of any such tribute: there was a tribute that was paid to Caesar, by the Jews; see *Mt 22:17* but that is expressed by another word, and was paid in other money, in Roman money, which bore Caesar's image and superscription; and was exacted of them, whether they would or not: but this designs the collection of the half shekel, paid yearly for the service of the temple: the original of this custom, was an order of the Lord to Moses, upon numbering the people; that everyone that was twenty years of age and upwards, should give half a shekel as atonement money, or as a ransom for his soul; which was to be disposed of for the service of the tabernacle, *Ex 30:12*. This does not appear to have been designed for a perpetual law, or to be paid yearly; nor even whenever the number of the people was taken, but only for that present time: in the time of Joash king of Judah, a collection was set on foot for the repair of the temple; and the collection of Moses in the wilderness, was urged as an argument, and by way of example; nor is any mention made of the half shekel, nor was any sum of money fixed they should pay; but, according to the account, it was entirely free and voluntary. In the time of Nehemiah, there was a yearly charge of the "third" part of a "shekel", for the service of the temple; but this was not done by virtue of a divine order, or any law of Moses, with which it did not agree; but by an ordinance the Jews then made for themselves, as their necessity required. Aben Ezra {k} indeed says, that this was an addition to the half shekel. Now in process of time, from these instances and examples, it became a fixed thing, that every year an half shekel should be paid by every Israelite, excepting women, children, and servants, towards defraying the necessary charges of the temple service, and this obtained in Christ's time. There is a whole tract in the Jewish Misna, called Shekalim; in which an account is given of the persons who are obliged to pay this money, the time and manner of collecting it, and for what uses it is put: and so it continued till the times of Titus Vespasian, who, as Josephus says {l}, laid a tax of two drachms, the same with the half shekel, upon the Jews; and ordered it to be brought yearly into the capitol at Rome, as it used to have been paid into the temple at Jerusalem. We need not wonder that we hear of receivers of the half shekel at Capernaum; since once a year, on the "fifteenth" of the month Adar, tables were placed, and collectors sat in every city in Judea, as they did on the "twenty fifth" of the same month, in the sanctuary {m}. The value of the half shekel, was about "fifteen pence" of our money. The Syriac version renders the word here used, "two zuzim of head money": now a "zuz" with the Jews, answered to a Roman penny, four of which made a "shekel" {n}; so that two of them were the value of an half "shekel"; it is further to be observed, that shekels in Judea, were double the value of those in Galilee, where Christ now was: five "shekels" in Judea, went for ten in Galilee, and so ten for twenty {o}. The receivers of this money

came to Peter; not caring to go to Christ himself; but observing Peter a forward and active man among his disciples, they applied to him; or rather, because he had an house in this place, at which Christ might be:

and said, doth not your master pay tribute? or the "didrachms", the half "shekel" money. Had this been the Roman tribute, the reason of such a question might have been either to have ensnared him, and to have known whether he was of the same mind with Judas, of Galilee, that refused to pay tribute to Caesar; or because they could not tell whether he was reckoned as an inhabitant, or citizen of that city; for, according to the Jewish canons {p}, a man must be twelve months in a place, before he is liable to tribute and taxes; or because they might suspect him to be exempted, as a doctor, or teacher for the Jewish doctors, wise men, and scholars, were freed from all tribute and taxes {q} even from the "head money", the Syriac version here mentions; and which was a civil tax paid to kings {r}; to which sense that version seems to incline: the rule concerning wise men or scholars, is this {s}.

"They do not collect of them for the building a wall, or setting up gates, or for the hire of watchmen, and such like things; nor for the king's treasury; nor do they oblige them to give tribute, whether it is fixed upon citizens, or whether it is fixed on every man."

But this was not the Roman tax, nor tribute, on any civil account, but the half shekel for religious service: and it may seem strange that such a question should be asked; and especially since it is a rule with them {t}, that

"all are bound to give the half shekel, priests, Levites, and Israelites; and the strangers, or proselytes, and servants, that are made free; but not women, nor servants, nor children; though if they gave, they received it of them."

But a following canon {u} explains it, and accounts for it: on the fifteenth

"(i.e. of the month Adar,) the collectors sit in every province or city, (that is, in the countries,) lk txnb Nyebw, "and mildly ask everyone": he that gives to them, they receive it of him; and he that does not give, Ntyl wtwa Nypwk Nya, "they do not oblige him to give": on the five and twentieth they sit in the sanctuary to collect, and from hence and onward, they urge him that will not give, until he gives; and everyone that will not give, they take pawns of him."

So that it seems, there was a different usage of persons, at different times and places: our Lord being in Galilee at Capernaum, was treated in this manner.

{i} Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 2. sect. 4. {k} In Neh. x. 32. {l} De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 20. {m} Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 3. Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 9. {n} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 11. 2. Vid. Targum & Kimchi in 1 Sam. ix. 3. Maimon. in Misn. Shekalim, c. 2. 4. & Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 3. {o} Misn. Trumot, c. 10. sect. 8. & Cetubot, c. 5. sect. 9. T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 59. 1. {p} T. Hieros. Bava Bathra, fol. 12. 4. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 8. 1. {q} Maimon. & Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 5. {r} Gloss. in T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 100. 2. & Nedarim, fol. 62. 2. & Bava Metzia, fol. 73. 2. {s} Maimon Talmud Tora, c. 6. 10. {t} Ib. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 7. {u} Ib. sect. 9.

Matthew 17:25

Ver. 25. He saith, yes,.... Without any hesitation, knowing it had been his master's practice; and therefore as he had done it, did not doubt but he would again:

and when he was come into the house; that is, Peter, as both the Syriac and Persic versions express; when he was come into his own house, or at least into that where Christ was, in order to talk with him about this affair, the collectors had been speaking of to him, who seems to have been alone when they met with him; however, Christ was not with him:

Jesus prevented him; saying what he intended to say, on that head; for he being the omniscient God, though not present, knew what question had been put to Peter, and what answer he had returned; and therefore, before Peter could lay the case before him, he puts this question to him;

saying, what thinkest thou, Simon? How does it appear to thee, to thy reason and understanding? in what light dost thou consider this matter? what is thy judgment of it?

of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers, or others? What is the usual practice of earthly kings, whether of Judea, or of other countries? do their own children, sons, and heirs, such as are of their own family, pay? or is it only their subjects that are not of their family?

Matthew 17:26

Ver. 26. Peter saith unto him,.... The Vulgate Latin reads, "and he said": and so the Ethiopic, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but without doubt Peter is meant, and rightly expressed; whose answer to Christ's question is,

of strangers: meaning not foreigners, or such who formerly belonged to other nations, but were now taken captive, and brought into subjection; but their own native subjects, so called, in distinction from their domestics, their children, and those of their own family:

Jesus saith unto him, then are the children free; from paying custom, tribute, and taxes, and leaves Peter to make the application; and which he suggested might be made, either thus: supposing it was a civil tax, that since he was the son of David, king of Israel, was of his house and family, and heir apparent to his throne and kingdom; according to this rule, he must be exempt from such tribute: or, thus; taking it to have respect to the half shekel, paid on a religious account, for the service of the temple worship;

that since he was the Son of the King of kings, for the support of whose worship and service that money was collected; and was also the Lord and proprietor of the temple, and greater than that, he might well be excused the payment of it.

Matthew 17:27

Ver. 27. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them,.... Though Christ could have maintained his right of exemption from payment, by such strong and clear reasons and arguments; yet he chose to forego it, lest any should be offended with him, and look upon him as a transgressor of the law; one that had no regard to the temple, and slighted the worship and service of it, and so be prejudiced against him, and his doctrines: which, by the way, may teach us to be careful to give no offence, to Jew or Gentile, or the church of God; though it may be to our own disadvantage, when the honour and interest of religion lie at stake. This is following the example of Christ, who therefore said to Peter,

go thou to the sea; of Tiberias, which was near this city,

and cast an hook; a fisher's hook into it:

and take up the fish that first cometh up, and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: a "stater", as in the original text, the same with the arytoa of the Talmudists; and which word the Syriac version here retains, and was, they {w} tell us, of the same value with a "sela", or "shekel" of the province. The Arabic and Persic versions render it, by "four drachms", which also were the same with a "shekel": and so was just enough to pay the two half shekels, for Christ and Peter, and was worth, of our money, near "half a crown"; and not "nearly a crown", as in a late paraphrase is said, through mistake. This was a wonderful instance of the omniscience of Christ, who knew there was in such a fish, such a piece of money, as exactly answered the present exigence, and that that would come first to Peter's hook; and of his omnipotence, if not in forming this piece of money immediately in the fish's mouth, as is thought by some, yet in causing this fish to come to Peter's hook first, and as soon as cast in; and of his power and dominion over all creatures, even over the fishes of the sea; and so proved himself to be what he suggested, the Son of the King of kings; and to be a greater person than the kings of the earth, to whom tribute was paid: and yet, at the same time, it declares his great poverty as man, that he had not a shekel to pay on such an occasion, without working a miracle; and his great condescension to do it, rather than give offence by non-payment:

and take, and give unto them for me and thee; for the half shekel was expected of Peter, as well as of Christ, and he had not wherewith to pay it; and this Christ knew, and therefore provides for both. But why did not Christ pay for the other disciples, as well as for himself and Peter? It may be replied, that this money would pay for no more than two: but this is not a full answer; Christ could have ordered more money in the same way he did this: it may then be further said, that only he and Peter were looked upon as inhabitants of this place; and so the rest were not called upon here, but in their respective cities, where they might pay also, and, besides, were not now present.

{w} Gloss. in T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 64. 1. & 105. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 102. 2.

Ver. 1. At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus,.... When the receivers of the half shekel had spoke to Peter about his master's paying it, and Christ and he had conversed about it, by whose orders he had taken up a fish out of the sea, and from it a piece of money, which he had paid for them both; just at this time came the other eleven disciples to the house where Christ and Peter were: saying,

who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Mark says, that the disciples disputed this point in the way; and that when they came to Jesus, he put the question to them, what they had been disputing about: and Luke takes no notice of any question put by one or another; but observes, that Christ perceiving the thoughts of their hearts, in order to rebuke, and convince them, took the method hereafter mentioned. All which is reconcilable, and of a piece: the sum is this; that as they were in the way to Capernaum they fell upon this question, which, being known to Christ, the omniscient God; when they came to Capernaum, and to the house where he was, and knowing that the same thought was in them, he asked them what they had been talking of by the way; upon which they were silent; but calling them nearer to him, and they finding that the matter was known, took courage to put the question to him, and desired to have his sense of it. The Vulgate Latin reads, "who dost thou think"; and the Arabic version, "who in thy opinion", &c. The occasion of this could not be the respect shown to Peter, in paying the half shekel for him; for this conversation was begun in the way, and before this was done, or, at least, before they knew it: rather it might be occasioned by his promise of giving the keys of the kingdom of heaven to him; or by his taking him, and James, and John, so lately to the mountain with him, where he was transfigured before them; though it seems best to ascribe it to the mention Christ had made of his resurrection from the dead: for as Dr. Lightfoot, Hammond, and others, have observed, something of this kind generally followed any account Christ gave of his death and resurrection, as ***Mr 9:31*** and this thought of an earthly kingdom still continued, when they saw him risen, ***Ac 1:6*** for they had been taught, that the resurrection, and the kingdom of the Messiah, would be at the same time {x}. And, by the kingdom of heaven, they meant, not the kingdom of glory in another world, but the kingdom of the Messiah in this; and which they looked upon to be a temporal one, though they call it the kingdom of heaven; not only because Christ often used this phrase, but because the times of the Messiah, and his reign, were frequently so called by the Jews; See Gill "Mt 3:2". Now, what they wanted to be satisfied in was, who should be advanced to the post highest in that kingdom next to the Messiah; and, as they doubted not but it would fall on one of them, to have the most honourable post, and the place of the greatest trust, they were desirous of knowing who it should be.

{x} Vid. Poceck. not. miscell. ad. Port. Mosis, p. 103, 104, 105, 106.

Matthew 18:2

Ver. 2. And Jesus called a little child unto him,.... One, very likely, that was in the house, and might belong to the master of it, and which was big enough to come to him at his call. Some have thought that this was Ignatius the martyr, but without any foundation. His own words, in his epistle to the church at Smyrna {y}, can give no countenance to it; where he says, "for I also know, that after his resurrection he was in the flesh, and I believe that he is." The Latin version indeed renders it thus; "for I also saw him in the flesh after the resurrection, and believe that he exists." But it does not follow from hence that he must be this child, but rather the contrary; since it cannot be thought, that a child so young as this, in half a year after, had it seen Christ, when risen from the dead, could have took so much notice of him, as this version represents Ignatius to do; but it matters not who it was; Christ designed, by this emblem, to give them his sense of the question, and convey some proper instruction to the minds of his disciples:

and set him in the midst of them; that everyone might see him; and upon the very sight of him, had he said no more to them, they might easily have perceived what was his opinion; that he that was but a child, the most humble, and least in his own eyes, would be the greatest: but besides setting the child in such a situation, he pointed to him, saying what follows.

{y} p. 3. Ed. Voss.

Matthew 18:3

Ver. 3. And said, verily I say unto you,.... You may take it for a certain truth, and what may be depended upon, that

except ye be converted or turned; from that gross notion of a temporal kingdom, and of enjoying great grandeur, and outward felicity in this world; and from all your vain views of honour, wealth, and riches,

and become as little children: the Arabic renders it, "as this child"; that is, unless ye learn to entertain an humble, and modest opinion of yourselves, are not envious at one another, and drop all contentions about primacy and pre-eminence, and all your ambitious views of one being greater than another, in a vainly expected temporal kingdom; things which are not to be found in little children, though not free from sin in other respects,

ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven: ye shall be so far from being one greater than another in it, that you shall not enter into it at all; meaning his visible, spiritual kingdom, which should take place, and appear after his resurrection, upon his ascension to heaven, and pouring forth of the Spirit: and it is to be observed, that the apostles carried these carnal views, contentions, and sentiments, till that time, and then were turned from them, and dropped them; for, upon the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit, they were cleared of these worldly principles, and understood the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom; which they then entered into, and took their place in, and filled it up with great success, without envying one another; having received the same commission from their Lord, and Master: so that these words are a sort of prophecy of what should be, as well as designed as a rebuke to them for their present ambition and contentions.

Matthew 18:4

Ver. 4. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself,.... Whoever shall entertain mean thoughts of himself, and prefer others to himself, shall behave in a modest humble manner, not affecting dominion over others, or treating his brethren and Christians in a haughty and supercilious manner, with scorn and contempt; but condescend to those of the lowest state, and place himself in the lowest form, conversing with his friends freely and familiarly, without distinction,

as this little child; or any other of the like age; for there is no reason to suppose, that there was anything peculiar in this child, which was not in another, it being common to children to behave towards one another, as on a level; not to envy one another, or to set up one above another, or be vainly elated with the distinctions of birth and fortune.

The same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven; in the Gospel church state; which was verified in the Apostle Paul, though not one of the twelve: nor are these words limited to them; at least, this passage may be illustrated in his case: he thought himself to be the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints, and unworthy to be called an apostle; yet had the largest measures of grace, the greatest gifts and abilities; and was honoured with the greatest usefulness and success in the preaching of the Gospel to the conversion of sinners, and planting of churches; labouring more abundantly than they all.

Matthew 18:5

Ver. 5. And whoso shall receive one such little child,.... Which is to be understood, not literally but metaphorically; meaning not such an one in age, but one, as the Syriac renders it, and aylj Kya, "that is as this child": like unto it for modesty and humility; one, that is as that, free from pride, ambition, and envy. Christ's sense is, that whoever receives his disciples, that are meek and lowly, into their houses, or into their hearts and affections; that receives their ministry and message, embraces the Gospel preached by them with readiness and cheerfulness, with faith and love,

in my name; on his account, because they are his disciples, believe in him, preach his Gospel, and, as being sent by, and representing him,

receiveth me: it is so taken by Christ, as if he was personally present, and personally received, and had all the favours shown to his, done to himself in person; yea, such receive Christ in the ministry of the word, he being the sum and substance of it. This is said to encourage modesty and humility; and intimates, that proud and haughty persons will not be received as the disciples and followers of the meek and lowly Jesus; and to encourage persons to receive such that are modest and humble, since the respect shown to them, is all one as if shown to him.

Matthew 18:6

Ver. 6. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones,.... Not in age, but are little and mean in their own eyes, and contemptible in the esteem of the world; though otherwise men of great grace, gifts, and usefulness; who may be said to be offended, when they are not received; their persons despised, their ministry rejected, and they reproached and persecuted; and everything done to them to discourage, and cause them to stumble and fall, to drop their profession of Christ, to quit his service, and desert his cause: and that such persons are designed, appears by the following descriptive character of them,

which believe in me; which cannot be said of infants, or little ones in age, and who also are not capable of offence; but must be understood of adult persons, of such who by faith look unto, lay hold on, and receive the Lord Jesus Christ, as their Saviour and Redeemer, and who make a profession of their faith in him; and chiefly of such who preach the doctrine of faith, who having believed, therefore speak; and who are generally the butt of the contempt, reproach, and persecution of men.

It were better for him, that a mill stone be hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. The word translated "depth", is sometimes used for the Sea itself, *Isa 51:10* and signifies the middle, or deeper path, and answers to the Hebrew phrase, "the heart of the sea"; abr amyd owglyp, used by the Targum, in *Ps 46:3* and by Jonathan ben Uzziel, in *Ex 15:8*. Jerom thinks, that this was a sort of punishment in use among the Jews, that is here referred to; but this does not appear. The four capital punishments inflicted by them were stoning, burning, slaying with the sword, and strangling {z}: they had indeed other sorts of punishment, which they borrowed from other nations; and so they might this, either from the Romans, or Greeks, or their neighbours the Syrians. The mill stone, in the original, is called mulov onikov, which may be rendered "the ass mill stone", being either the nether mill stone, as some think, which was called "the ass", because, like an ass, it bears the chief of the weight and burden; or else respects such mill stones as were turned about by an ass, in distinction from those that were turned by the hand; for that it was usual with the Jews to make use of asses in grinding, as well as other nations, is certain: hence we read {a} of ayxyr armx "the ass of mills", that were employed in grinding in the mills, and of one that turned his mill with wild asses {b}: but it is further to be observed, that mention is made {c} of dy lv Myxr lv rwmx, "the ass of an handmill": which the commentators say {d}, was a beam on which an handmill was fixed, and was called "the ass." Now, I should rather think that this is meant than the other. It does not seem likely that a nether mill stone, or one that required an ass to turn it, should be tied to a man's neck, in order to drown him, when cast into the sea; for our Lord must be thought to refer to a practice somewhere in use: but rather, that such a beam, or log, of an handmill, so called, were wont to be put about the necks of malefactors, in drowning them. Our Lord's sense is, that it was much better for a man to endure the severest temporal punishment, rather than by offending, and evil treating any of his disciples, expose himself to everlasting destruction. The phrase of having a mill stone about the neck, I find, is sometimes used to denote anything very troublesome and burdensome {e}.

"The tradition is, a man that marries a wife, and after that learns the law, R. Jochanan says, wrawub Myxyr, "though a mill stone is about his neck", yet he must study in the law: that is, though his worldly circumstances are narrow, and his wife and family are as burdensome as if he had a mill stone about his neck, he must continue his studies."

{z} Misn. Sanhedrim. c. 7. sect. 1. {a} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 1. 10. 2.

Maimon. Hileh. Yom Tob, c. 8. sect. 15. {b} T Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 16. 2. {c} Mish. Zabim. c. 4. sect. 2. {d} R. Maimon. R. Sampson. & R. Obadiah Bartenora, in. ib. {e} T. Bab. Kiddusbin, fol. 29. 2.

Matthew 18:7

Ver. 7. Woe unto the world because of offences!.... By which are meant, not sins, as sometimes, but rather temptations to sin; and so the Ethiopic version renders this word by "temptation" in every clause, as the Arabic does in the next; and may design all the contempt and reproach cast upon the doctrines, ordinances, and people of Christ, and all those afflictions, distresses, and persecutions exercised on them, on purpose to cause them to stumble and fall; to tempt them to deny the truth, drop their profession of religion, and relinquish the service of Christ; things which are displeasing to God, discouraging to his people, and often attended with bad consequences to formal professors; and bring down the judgments of God upon the men of the world; who sooner or later will vindicate his own cause, avenge his own elect, and render tribulation to them that trouble them.

For it must needs be that offences come; considering the implacable malice of Satan, his unwearied and indefatigable pains, the malignity of the men of the world, their aversion and enmity to the Gospel of Christ, and all good men; it cannot be thought, God suffering such things for the trial of such as are truly gracious, and for the discovery of hypocrites, and for the manifestation of his grace, power, and faithfulness in the preservation of his dear children, that it should be otherwise, but that such offences should be:

but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh; for though God, for wise ends and reasons, as above, voluntarily permits such things to be in the world; and though they do not succeed, as to cause the true followers of Christ so to stumble and fall, as to perish, yet this does not excuse their sin and wickedness, in doing all that in them lay to effect it. For though God will, and does overrule all their base designs against his ministers, church, and people, for his glory, and their good, this is no thanks to them; and as it does not in the least extenuate their crime, it will not abate the severity of their punishment.

Matthew 18:8

Ver. 8, 9. Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot,.... The same words are repeated here on occasion of offences, as are spoken by Christ, ***Mt 5:29*** on account of unchaste looks, desires and lusts: giving offence to Christ's disciples, or endeavouring, by any means whatever, to cause them to stumble and fall, is equally gratifying the flesh, and no more to be indulged, than the other, on pain of eternal damnation. See Gill "Mt 5:29" See Gill "Mt 5:30"

Matthew 18:9

Ver. 9. See Gill on "Mt 18:8".

Matthew 18:10

Ver. 10. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones,.... That is, one of those little ones that believed in Christ; for he is not speaking of infants in age, but of those who might be compared to such, for their humility and modesty; who were little in their own eyes, and mean and despicable in the eyes of the world, as well as appeared but little in the eyes of their fellow disciples and brethren; for our Lord returns and addresses himself to his disciples, who had been contending among themselves who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven; and so were striving to lessen one another, each looking upon himself as the greater, and every other as little. Wherefore Christ cautions them against such a spirit, and bids them beware of despising their fellow disciples, as little, and below them; especially since so much notice and care were taken of them, both in heaven, and in earth:

for I say unto you, that in heaven: the phrase, "in heaven", is omitted in the Syriac and Persic versions, perhaps because it might be looked upon as unnecessary, since it afterwards appears; but is very proper, or pertinent, whether it be considered as descriptive of the angels, who have their habitation there, in distinction from the evil angels, who are cast down from thence; or as pointing out the place where the angels behold the face of God, and who are styled "their angels"; the angels of the little ones, that believe in Christ, who are ministering spirits unto them, the guardians of them, who encamp about them, and do many good offices for them. Some have thought from hence, that every good man has his peculiar angel that waits upon him, and cares for him; but this does not necessarily follow from, these words, only that they all have an interest in angels, and in their good services. This seems indeed to have been a notion that prevailed among the Jews, not only that there were angels which presided over particular nations, but who also had the care of particular persons; so they speak of an angel that was particularly appointed for Abraham {f}. Nor will they allow, that one angel does two messages, nor two angels one {g} message: but that everyone has his particular place, person, and work; of whom it is further said, that they

do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven: which is not so much to be understood of their intellectual knowledge, and apprehension of the divine being, of their beholding the glory of his nature, and essence, and of their contemplating and applauding his perfections; as of their ministering before him, waiting, as servants, upon him, watching to receive his orders, and ready to obey his commands. And our Lord's argument is, that if such excellent creatures as the angels in heaven, who are continually favoured with being in the presence of Christ's heavenly father, honoured with so high a station, as always to stand before him, as ministers of his; if these are the guardians of these little ones, if they are committed to their care, and they have the oversight of them, then they ought not to be despised: and besides, since the angels that have the care of them are so near the throne, it should deter everyone from having their charge in contempt, or doing any injury to them; since they arc capable of lodging accusations and complaints against them; and, when leave is given, have power of executing the sorest judgments upon men. This description of angels agrees with what the Jews say of them, especially of the chief of them. Michael, they say {h}, is the first and principal of the chief princes, Klmh ynp yawr "that behold the face of the king"; that is, the King of kings, the Lord of hosts. Suriel, which, with them, is another name of an angel, is called {i}, Mynph rv, "the prince of faces", who is always in the presence of God; and, as the gloss says, is "an angel that is counted worthy to come before the king."

{f} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 96. 1. {g} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 50. fol. 44. 4. {h} Jacchiades in Dan. x. 13. {i} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 51. 1.

Ver. 11. For the Son of man is come to seek that which was lost. This is another, and stronger reason, why these little ones should not be despised; because Christ, who is here meant by the Son of man, came into this world to save these persons; who were lost in Adam, and had destroyed themselves by their transgressions, and carries great force in it: for if God had so great a regard to these little ones, as to send his Son to obtain eternal salvation for them, when they were in a miserable and perishing condition; and Christ had so much love for them, as to come into this world, and endure the sorrows, sufferings, and death itself for them, who were not only little, but lost; and that to obtain righteousness and life for them, and save them with an everlasting salvation; then they must, and ought to be, far above the contempt of all mortals; and the utmost care should be taken not to despise, grieve, offend, and injure them in any form or shape whatever; see *Ro 14:15*. Beza observes, that this whole verse is left out in some Greek copies, but it stands in others, and in all the Oriental versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; nor can it be omitted; the following parable, which is an exemplification of it, requires it.

Matthew 18:12

Ver. 12. How think ye,.... Or, as the Arabic, "what do you think?" what is your opinion of this matter? what is your sense of it? how does it appear to you? It is a Talmudic way of speaking, the same with Nyrwbo Mta hm "what do you think?" what is your judgment? So the Rabbins, after they have discussed a point among themselves, ask {k}, Nl arybo yam, "what is our opinion?" or what do we think upon the whole? Christ here appeals to his disciples, makes them judges themselves in this matter, and illustrates it by a familiar instance of a man's seeking and finding his lost sheep, and rejoicing at it.

If a man have an hundred sheep; who is the proprietor of them; not the hireling, who has them under his care, and whose the sheep are not; but the owner of them, to whom they belong, and who must be thought to be most concerned for anyone of them that should go astray: a hundred sheep seem to be the number of a flock; at least flocks of sheep used to be divided into hundreds. In a Maronite's will, a field is thus bequeathed {l};

"the north part of it to such an one, and with it Nau ham, "a hundred sheep", and a hundred vessels; and the south part of it to such an one, and with it Nau ham, "a hundred sheep", and a hundred vessels; and he died, and the wise men confirmed his words, or his will."

Such a supposition, or putting such a case as this, is very proper and pertinent.

And one of them be gone astray; which sheep are very prone to; see *Ps 119:176*;

doth he not leave the ninety and nine, which are not gone astray, in the place where they are; it is usual so to do:

and goeth into the mountains; alluding to the mountains of Israel, where were pastures for sheep, *Eze 34:13* and whither sheep are apt to wander, and go from mountain to mountain, *Jer 50:6*, and therefore these were proper places to go after them, and seek for them in: but the Vulgate Latin version joins the words "in" or "on the mountains", to the preceding clause, and reads,

doth he not leave the ninety and nine in the mountains; and so read all the Oriental versions, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Persic; and in the same manner Theophylact;

and seeketh that which is gone astray? This is usual with men: no man that has a flock of sheep, and though but one strays from it, but takes this method. This parable now may be considered, either as an illustration of the Son of man's coming into this world, to seek, and to save his lost sheep, mentioned in the preceding verse; even the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the little ones that believed in him, who were despised by the Jews. And then by the "ninety and nine", we are not to understand the angels; who never went astray, never sinned, but kept their first estate, whom Christ left in the highest heavens, on the holy mountains of eternity, when he became incarnate, and came down on earth to redeem mankind: for these never go by the name of sheep; nor are they of the same nature and kind with the one that strays, and is sought out; nor is their number, with respect to men, as ninety nine to one; at least it cannot be ascertained; nor were they left by Christ, when he came on earth; for a multitude descended at his birth, and sung glory to God. Nor are the saints in heaven intended, whose state is safe; since it cannot be said of them, as in the following verse, that they went not astray; for they went astray like lost sheep, as others, and were looked up, sought out, and saved by Christ as others; but rather, by them, are meant the body of the Jewish nation, the far greater part of them, the Scribes and Pharisees, who rejected the Messiah, and despised those that believed in him: these were in sheep's clothing, of the flock of the house of Israel, of the Jewish fold; and with respect to the remnant among them, according to the election of grace, were as ninety nine to one: these were left by Christ, and taken no notice of by him, in comparison of the little ones, the lost sheep of the house of Israel he came to save: these he left on the mountains, on the barren pastures of Mount Sinai, feeding on their own works and services; or rather, he went into the mountains, or came leaping and skipping over them, ***So 2:8***, encountering with, and surmounting all difficulties that lay in the way of the salvation of his people; such as appearing in the likeness of sinful flesh, bearing, and carrying the griefs and sorrows of his people, obeying the law, satisfying justice, bearing their sins, and undergoing an accursed death, in order to obtain the salvation of his chosen ones, designed by the one sheep "that was gone astray"; who strayed from God, from his law, the rule of their walk, out of his way, into the ways of sin, which are of their own choosing and approving: or, the intention of this parable is, to set forth the great regard God has to persons ever so mean, that believe in Christ, whom he would not have stumbled and offended, and takes special care of them, that they shall not perish; even as the proprietor of a flock of sheep is more concerned for one straying one, than for the other ninety nine that remain.

{k} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 88. 2. {l} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 156. 2.

Matthew 18:13

Ver. 13. And if so be that he find it,.... Which is a casual and uncertain thing with the shepherd, but not so with Christ, who certainly finds all those he goes after, and seeks: for,

verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep; at the finding of it, whose loss greatly affected him,

than of the ninety and nine which went not astray; who seemed not to go astray, were outwardly righteous before men, and, in their own opinion, being the same with the ninety and nine just persons who needed no repentance in their own apprehension, *Lu 15:7*. This same parable is related in *Lu 15:3*, and it being there more largely expressed, and along with other parables of the same kind, I shall refer the more particular consideration of it to that place; only observe, that it seems to me that this parable was twice delivered by our Lord, and that on two different occasions; once, as here, in his discourse on offences, and upon mention of his coming into this world to save lost sinners; at another time, as there, upon the Pharisees murmuring at his receiving sinners, and eating with them.

Matthew 18:14

Ver. 14. Even so it is not the will of your father which is in heaven,.... This is the accommodation, or application of the parable of the lost sheep to the present purpose, and is the top of the climax or gradation here made use of. First, Christ observes, in order to deter any from despising and offending any of his disciples, even the meanest, that they have angels to be their guardians, who are continually in the presence of God; and next, that he himself in human nature came to be the author of salvation to these persons; and then rises up to the sovereign will of his Father, and their's, the source and security of their everlasting happiness; which will is, not

that one of these little ones, that believe in Christ,

should perish. It is his will of command that no stumbling block should be laid in their way to cause them to stumble and fall, to the grieving of their souls, the wounding of their consciences, and the perishing, or loss of their peace and comfort; and it is his unalterable will of purpose, or his unchangeable decree, that not one of them, even the meanest, shall perish eternally: in pursuance of which will, he has chosen them in his Son, he has put them into his hands, and secured them in his covenant; and having redeemed them by Christ, and called them by grace, he keeps them by his power, through faith unto salvation. Nor shall anyone of them finally and totally fall away and perish, through the power of their own corruptions, the temptations of Satan, the reproaches and persecutions of men, the frowns or flatteries of the world, or through the errors and heresies of false teachers, or any other way. It is to be observed, that when our Lord, in *Mt 18:10*, is speaking of the happiness of the angels, and the honour done to the little ones by having such guardians; then the more to aggrandize this matter, he represents those as in the presence of his "Father which is in heaven"; but here, when he would express the wonderful love and grace of God, in the resolutions of his heart, and purposes of his will, to save them, then it is "your Father which is in heaven"; and this, the rather to engage them to the belief of it, since they stood in such a near relation to him, as children to a father: and therefore must be infinitely more concerned for their welfare, than a proprietor of sheep can be, for one that is lost. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions indeed read, "my father", but without any authority; for the phraseology, "the will before your Father", as in the original text, See Gill "Mt 11:26"

Matthew 18:15

Ver. 15. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee,.... This is said to show, that as on the one hand, if any of those that believe in Christ, should commit a trespass against his fellow Christian, his sin is not to be connived at, for fear of offending him; for what Christ has before said, is not to be taken in such sense, as to prevent private reproof, or public censures, when there is occasion for them; so on the other hand, he is not to be despised and ill used, and treated in the same injurious manner; but gentle reproofs are to be made use of, for his good. This is spoken not to the apostles as such, but as believers in Christ; and concerns everyone that stands in the relation of a brother, or church member to each other, and only such; for they that are without, do not fall under their notice, nor are they obliged to take, nor can they take altogether, the same methods with them. This rule respects sins committed by one brother against another, either in word or deed; or such as are of a private nature, and which one only, or at least but few, are acquainted with: in such cases the advice is,

go and tell him his fault between thee, and him alone; do not wait for his coming to thee, as being the aggressor, to acknowledge his fault, testify his repentance, express his sorrow for his sin, and ask pardon: but go to him, and freely and faithfully lay his sin before him; but do not aggravate it, and reproach him with it, and bear hard on him for it, but gently rebuke and reprove him: let this be done in the most private manner; let none be present, nor any know of it, even the most intimate friend and acquaintance:

if he shall hear thee; patiently, take your reproof kindly, acknowledge his offence, declare his hearty sorrow for it, and desire it might be overlooked, and reconciliation made:

thou hast gained thy brother; recovered him from the error of his ways, restored him to his duty, and secured his friendship, and interest in his favour; nor should any mention be made of this ever after, either to him, or any other, or to the church.

Matthew 18:16

Ver. 16. But if he will not hear thee,..... But will either deny the fact, or extenuate and excuse it, or defend it, or at least is obstinate and incorrigible, shows no signs of repentance, but is angry, gives hard words, and ill language:

then take with thee one or two more; members of the church, and perhaps of weight, reputation, and character, who either know some thing of the matter, and so can confirm, by their testimony, what has been alleged, in order to bring the person to conviction and acknowledgment; or if they do not, and which seems rather to be the sense, they may, by hearing what is said on both sides, judge where the truth lies, and join with the offended person in the admonition, that it may fall with the greater weight, and become more effectual:

that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established, referring to *De 19:15*. So that should the matter be brought before the whole church, these witnesses would be able to testify the truth of the case, and report the steps that had been taken, and what effect they had had; so that things being thus prepared, the case would appear plain and easy, and without difficulty. The whole of this is very agreeable to the rules and customs of the Jews, and is founded on the law, in *Le 19:17*, upon which they form rules very much like to these. They represent God himself taking such a method as this, with the sons of men {m}:

"When the holy blessed God reproves a man, he reproves him in love, privately: if he receives it, it is well; if not, he reproves him among his friends: if he receives it, it is well; if not he reproves him openly before the eyes of all; if he receives it is well; if not, he leaves him, and reproves him no more."

And this is an instruction to men, how they should reprove their friends.

They say {n}, "he that sees anything in his friend that is not becoming, he ought to reprove him." And which is elsewhere more {o} largely expressed:

"he that seeth his friend walking in a way that is not good, he is bound to reprove him, even a disciple his master; and this he shall do for his good, and in order to bring him to the life of the world to come, or eternal life; and "if he takes it of him, it is well": but if not, he must reprove again, "a second and a third time"; and so he must reprove him many times, if, or until he hears him."

And this they require to be done, in the most private manner:

"reproof out of love (they {p} say) is secret from the children of men; whoever reproves his friend in love, seeks to secrete his words from the sons of men, that he may not expose him thereby to shame and reproach."

That is, as the gloss {q} on it observes,

"he seeks to reprove him in secret, so that he may not be put to shame before many."

If this way does not succeed, they allow of a public reproof, for so it is said {r};

"thou mayest not reprove him with hard words, till his countenance changes; for whoever causes the face of his friend to turn pale publicly, has no portion in the world to come; but thou mayest reprove in the words of heaven, or God; and if he does not return privately, thou mayest make him ashamed publicly, and expose his sin before him; and reproach and curse him, until he returns to do well; so did all the prophets to Israel."

They plead also for a second reproof, from the text in *Le 19:17* {s}.

"From whence does it appear, that he that sees anything in his friend unbecoming, ought to reprove him? As it is said, "thou shalt in any wise rebuke", &c. if he reproves him, lbq alw, "and he does not receive it", (he does not take it kindly, or, as here, he does not hear him,) from whence is it manifest, that he must return and reprove him (or repeat the reproof)? from what is said, reproving thou shall reprove."

The whole of this is very fully expressed in a few words, by one {t} of their best writers, and in great agreement with these rules of Christ:

"He that sees his friend sinning, or going in a way not good, he is commanded to cause him to return to that which is good; and to let him know, that he sins against himself by his evil works; as it is said, "thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour": he that reproveth his friend, whether for things between him and himself, or whether for things between him and God, "ought to reprove him", wmue Nybl wnyb, "between him and himself"; and should speak to him mildly, and in tender language; and let him know that he does not speak to, him, but for his good, and to bring him to everlasting life; "and if he receives it of him, it is well, and if not, he must reprove him", tyvylvw hyynv Mep "a second and a third time"; and so a man must continually reprove, until the sinner strikes him and says", I will not hear.""

Buxtorf has produced a passage out of one of their writers {u}, in the very language in which Christ here delivers himself:

"The wise man says, if thy friend does thee an injury, reprove him between him and thee alone: if he hears thee, thou hast already gained; if he does not hear thee, speak to him before one or two, who may hear the matter, and if he will not hear reckon him a "worthless friend"."

One would almost be ready to think, that this writer should mean Christ by the wise man, were it not for the implacable enmity they bear unto him. The above author has cited also the following passage out of the same {w} writer, pertinent to the present purpose:

"A friend that declares to thee thy faults, "between him and thee", whenever he meets thee, is better to thee than a friend, that whenever he meets thee, gives thee a golden penny."

{m} Raya Mehimna in Zohar, in Lev. fol. 35. 4. {n} T. Bab. Betacot, fol. 31. 1, 2. {o} Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. Affirm. 11. {p} Zohar. in Lev. fol. 19. 3. {q} Imre Binah in ib. {r} Milzvot Tora, pr. neg. 6. {s} T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 16. 2. {t} Maimon. Hilch. Deyot. c. 6. sect. 7. {u} Mischar happeninim apud Buxtorf. Florileg. Heb. p. 297. {w} Ibid.

Ver. 17. And if he shall neglect to hear them,.... The one or two, in conjunction with the offended person that shall hear the ease, and admonish and reprove; if he takes no notice of what they say to him, but remains stiff and impenitent, tell it unto the church: which some understand, of the Mybr, or "multitude", before whom it was lawful to reprove, after such private methods had been taken: others, the political magistrates, or sanhedrim; who took cognizance of cases between one person and other, either by themselves, or messengers; and gave admonitions and reproofs, as to parents, when they did not provide for their families {x}, and to wives that were perverse, and provoked their husbands {y}, &c. others, of the presbyters and governors of the Christian church; others, of the church itself, and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "the house of Christians"; to which it is objected, that as yet a Christian church was not formed: but what were the twelve apostles of the Lamb? They were the great congregation and church, in the midst of which Christ sung praise to his Father: and since the whole of this advice, and these excellent rules are given to them, and they are spoken of in the next verse, as having the power of binding and loosing, they may well be thought to be meant here; and that the design of Christ is, to instruct them how to behave, in case of offence to one another; that the reproof should be first private, and if it did not succeed, to be made before one or two more; and if that did not do, the whole body was to be acquainted with it; and which rules hold good, and are to be observed by all Christian men and churches, in all ages: though no doubt but allusion is made to the Jewish customs, in rebuking before the multitude, or carrying of a private case, after all other means used were ineffectual, to the sanhedrim.

But if he neglect to hear the church: the advice they should give unto him, the reproof they should think proper for him, or the censure they should pass upon him,

let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican. This is not a form of excommunication to be used among Christians, nor was there ever any such form among the Jews; nor could Heathens or publicans, especially such publicans as were Gentiles, be excommunicated, when they never were of the Jewish church.

"A religious person indeed, that becomes a collector of taxes, they first said, is to be driven from the society; but they afterwards said, all the time that he is a tax gatherer, they drive him from the society; but when he goes out of his office, lo! he is as a religious person {z}."

But one that never was of a religious society, could not be driven out of it. And besides, this is given, not as a rule to the church, but as advice to the offended person, how to behave towards the offender: after he has come under the cognizance, reproof, and censure of the church, he is to look upon him as the Jews did one that disregarded both private reproof by a man's self, and that which was in the presence of one or two more, twxp rbx, "a worthless friend", or neighbour; as a Gentile, with whom the Jews had neither religious nor civil conversation; and a "publican", or as Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it, hrbe leb "a notorious sinner", as a publican was accounted: hence such are often joined together, and with whom the Jews might not eat, nor keep any friendly and familiar acquaintance: and so such that have been privately admonished and publicly rebuked, without success, their company is to be shunned, and intimate friendship with them to be avoided.

{x} Maimon Hilehot Ishot, c. 12. sect. 14. {y} Ib. c. 14. sect. 9. & Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 81. {z} T. Hieros. Demai, fol. 23. 1.

Matthew ***18:18***

Ver. 18. Verily I say unto you,.... To them all, what he had said before to Peter; See Gill "Mt 16:19": what is said here, refers to things and not persons, as there also.

Matthew ***18:19***

Ver. 19. Again, I say unto you,.... As the words in the former verse seem to regard the whole body of the disciples, whose decisions in cases brought before them, declaring them just or unjust, are determinate and unalterable; these seem to respect the one or two, that should join the offended person in the reproof of the offender, and are spoken for their encouragement; who might think proper either to premise, or follow their engaging in such a work with prayer:

that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask; both in the case before mentioned, and in any other thing: whether it be for themselves or others; to assist them in the ministry of the word, and give success to it, for the conversion of sinners; and in the performance of any miracle, for the confirmation of the Gospel; in the administration of ordinances, for the comfort of saints; and in laying on of censures, for the reclaiming of backsliders; or be it what it will that may be done, consistent with the glory of God, the purposes of his mind, and the declarations of his will, and the good of men, provided they agree in their requests; though they are here on earth, and at such a distance from heaven, from whence their help and assistance come:

it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven; with whom nothing is impossible; and who, as he regards the effectual fervent prayer of any righteous man, so more, of two agreed together in anyone thing; and still more, of a church and community of saints in their united requests: a great encouragement this to social prayer, though ever so few are engaged in it.

Matthew 18:20

Ver. 20. For where two or three are gathered together,.... This seems to be said in opposition to a Jewish notion, that a number less than ten, is not a congregation {a}; whereas, though the number is ever so few that are met together to pray to God; or to hear his word, attend on his ordinances, or do the business of his house, or transact any affair that is for the glory of God, and the good of souls, in my name, says Christ; that is, by his authority, depending on his assistance, calling upon his name, and making use of it, and seeking the glory of it:

there am I in the midst of them; presiding over them, ruling in their hearts, directing their counsels, assisting them in all they are concerned, confirming what they do, and giving a blessing and success to all they are engaged in. The Jews, though they say there is no congregation less than ten, yet own that the divine presence may be with a lesser number, even as small an one as here mentioned {b}.

"Ten that sit and study in the law, the Shechaniah dwells among them, as it is said, *Ps 82:1*. From whence does this appear, if but five? from ***Am 9:6***, from whence, if but three? from *Ps 82:1*, from whence, if but two? from ***Mal 3:16***, from whence, if but one? from *Ex 20:24*."

And again {c},

"two that sit together, and the words of the law are between them, the Shechaniah dwells among them, according to ***Mal 3:16***, from whence does it appear, that if but one sits and studies in the law, the holy blessed God hath fixed a reward for him? from ***La 3:28***."

{a} Misn. Sanhedrim, c. 1. sect. 6. T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 23. 2. Gloss. in ib. {b} Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 6. {c} Ib. sect. 2.

Matthew 18:21

Ver. 21. Then came Peter unto him,.... Having heard and observed the rules Christ gave concerning offences and brotherly reproofs, he drew near to Christ, and put this question to him:

and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? He instances in a brother, because it was such an one Christ had been speaking of; he makes no doubt of its being his duty to forgive him upon his repentance, and acknowledgment, but wanted to be reformed, how often this was to be done, and asks, whether

until seven times? Which was, as he might think, a large number; and especially, since it was double the number of times, that the Jewish doctors set for forgiveness: for thus they say {d},

"A man that commits a sin, the "first" time they pardon him; the "second" time they pardon him; the "third" time they pardon him: the "fourth" time they do not pardon, according to ***Am 2:6***."

Again,

"he that says I have sinned, and I repent, they forgive him "unto three times", and no more {e}."

{d} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 36. 2. Mainion. Hilch. Teshuba. c. 3. sect. 5. {e} Abot. R. Nathan, c. 40. fol. 9. 3.

Matthew 18:22

Ver. 22. Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee,.... Which is as if he had said, observe what I am about to say, I do not agree to what thou sayest to fix the number, "until seven times only", but

until seventy times seven; a certain number for an uncertain, see ***Ge 4:24***. Christ's meaning is, that a man should be all the days, and every day of his life, forgiving those that sin against him, as often as they repent and acknowledge their fault; and that no time is to be set for the exercise of the grace of forgiveness; but as often as there are objects and occasions, though ever so many and frequent, it should be used; and which he illustrates by the following parable.

Matthew 18:23

Ver. 23. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven,.... The Gospel church state, or the church of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, and the methods of God's dealings in it;

likened unto a certain king: or "a man", "a king", pointing either to Christ, the king Messiah, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, the King of saints and churches; who, as God, has a natural kingdom of providence, and as man and Mediator, a kingdom of grace; and will have a more visibly glorious one, both in this world and in the other; or rather, the Father of Christ, as appears from the application of the parable, in *Mt 18:35*, who is the living God, and everlasting King: whose is the kingdom of nature, grace, and glory:

which would take account of his servants; not all mankind, though these are all in a sense his servants, and accountable to him; nor only ministers of the Gospel, who are so in an eminent and peculiar sense, and must give an account to God of their time and talents, and souls committed to them; but all that bear the Christian name, that are professors of religion, that are either really or nominally the subjects and servants of God. These, it is sometimes the will and pleasure of God, to "take account of": not of their persons, or number, but of their conduct and behaviour; which, as it will be more fully done at death, or at judgment, so sometimes is taken in this life: God sometimes calls, and brings, professors of religion to an account, and reckons with them by afflictive dispensations of providence; when he puts them upon reflecting how they have spent their time, made use of their talents and gifts, and have behaved in their families, and in the world, and church; or by dealing roundly with men's consciences, awakening and convincing them of their sins, of omission and commission, which seems to be intended here.

Matthew 18:24

Ver. 24. And when he had begun to reckon,.... To open the book of conscience, and to bring to account by some awakening providence, and strong conviction: one was brought unto him; whether he would or no, through the force of an awakened conscience, under guilt and terror;

which owed him ten thousand talents; which must be understood, either of gold, or silver: a talent of silver contained 3,000 shekels, as appears from *Ex 38:25*, and was in value of our money 375l. but a talent of gold was equal to 4,500l. of our {f} money. According to Dr. Prideaux {g}, a talent of silver was 450l. and a talent of gold, the proportion of gold to silver being reckoned as sixteen to one, was 7,200l. and according to Bishop Cumberland, a talent of silver was 353l. 11s. 10d. ob. and a talent of gold of the same weight, was 5,075l. 15s. 7d. ob. The whole, according to Dr. Hammond, was a thousand eight hundred seventy five thousand pounds, reckoning them silver talents; but if talents of gold are meant, what an immense sum must ten thousand of them be! According to some, seventy two millions sterling. The design of the phrase, is to set forth the exceeding greatness of the debt. Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it, "ten thousand manehs", or pounds; and so the Persic version: now the value of a maneh of gold, was 75l. and of silver, 7l 10s. {h} take the sum in the least quantity and value, it was exceeding large. The Arabic version renders it a "sum of talents", without mentioning the number, and may mean an innumerable one. Mention is made of such a number of talents of silver, in ***Es 3:9***, which Aben Ezra says is defective, and signifies ten thousand thousand talents. The "second" Targum on the place says, that the sum of six hundred thousand zuzim, drachms, or pence (i.e. Roman ones) is ten thousand talents of silver. These "ten thousand talents" intend sins, which are called debts, in Scripture; not that they are properly so, or owing to God, for then it would be right to pay them, but because they bind over to punishment. All men owe a debt of thankfulness to God, for their beings, the preservation of them, and all the mercies of life; and a debt of obedience to the whole law, in failure of which, they are obliged to punishment: hence every sin becomes a debt, and these are numerous; indwelling sin, and the lusts thereof, are innumerable; as are actual sins and transgressions, they are more than the hairs of a man's head, and are fitly expressed, both for the weight and quantity of them, by "ten thousand talents". In this light they appear to the conscience of an awakened sinner, who sees that he has been doing nothing but sin, all the days of his life; and that he has been continually breaking the law, one precept or another of it, in thought, word, or deed: which violations of the law, even in word and deed, are risen up to so great a sum, that he is not able to give it to any nearness, and with any exactness; he cannot understand all his errors, nor express the full number of them, or declare all their aggravated circumstances; besides the swarms of corruption of internal lusts and sins, which he observes dwelling in his heart, and are as innumerable as the motes and atoms in a sunbeam. The sins of God's people, which have been all made to meet upon Christ, have been laid upon him by his Father's imputation of them to him, with his own consent, are represented in this manner; see *Ps 40:12*. And indeed, if the debts of one of them amount to ten thousand talents, what must the sum of all be, put together! and how great must be the strength and power of Christ, to bear the weight of these sins, and not be broken or discouraged, and fail, as he did not! and what a rich virtue and efficacy must there be in his blood, to pay off all these debts, and make satisfaction for them, which could never have been done, if he had not done it! for, it is impossible that a person in such circumstances as here described, should ever be able to recover himself, or pay his debts, as follows.

{f} Brerewood de Nummis Heb. c. 4. {g} Connection, Vol. 1. Preface, p. 20. {h} Brerewood de Numuis. Heb. c. 4.

Matthew 18:25

Ver. 25. But forasmuch as he had not to pay,.... Every sinner is insolvent; sinful man has run out the whole stock of nature, and is become a bankrupt, and has nothing to offer by way of composition; nor has he any righteousness to answer for him, nor any works of righteousness which deserve that name: and if he had, these are nothing in point of payment: for a debt of sin cannot be discharged by a debt of obedience; since God has a prior right to the latter; and in paying it, a man does but what is his duty. Sin being committed against an infinite God, contracts the nature of an infinite debt, which cannot be paid off by a finite creature. Christ only was able to pay this debt, and he has done it for his people; and without an interest in his blood, righteousness, and satisfaction, every debtor is liable to be cast, and will be cast into the prison of hell, there to lie till the uttermost farthing of the ten thousand talents is paid, which will be to all eternity. We see what a sad condition sin has brought men into; it has stripped them of their estates and possessions; it has reduced them to want and beggary; it exposes them to a prison; to the just resentments of their creditor; to the wrath of God, and the curses of the law; and what little reason there is to think, yea, how impossible it is, that a man should be able to merit anything at the hands of God, to whom he is so greatly indebted: he must first pay his debts, which is a thing impracticable, before he can pretend to do anything deserving the notice of God; and even was he set free, and clear of all his debts, and entered upon a new life of obedience, and this strictly attended to, without contracting any debts for the future, yet all this would be but what is due to God, and could merit nothing of him; see *Lu 17:10*. We see also from hence, how much the saints are obliged to Christ Jesus, and how thankful they should be to him, who became a surety for such insolvent creatures; has paid all their debts for them, and procured for them every blessing of grace they stand in need of: but think, O sinner, what thou wilt be able to say and do, when God comes to reckon with thee, and thou hast nothing to pay, nor any to pay for thee, or be thy surety; a prison must be thy portion ever.

His Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had; according to the Jewish laws, in such a case: of a man's being sold, or selling himself when poor, see *Le 25:47*, for the law in *Ex 22:3*, referred to by some as an instance of this, respects the selling of a man for theft, and not for debt. Of the selling of a man's wife for the payment of his debts, I do not remember to have read any law concerning it, or instances of it; but of children being taken for bondmen by the creditor, for their father's debts, mention is made, ***2Ki 4:1***. These children, by the Jewish writers {i}, are said to be the children of Obadiah, who contracted the debt to feed the prophets in a cave, when they were persecuted by Jezebel; and the creditor, according to them, was Jehoram, the son of Ahab, who lent him money on usury for this purpose, in his father's time; and now Obadiah being dead, he takes his children for the debt, and makes them bondmen; see also ***Ne 5:5***. There seems to be an allusion to this practice, in *Isa 50:1*, and it was not only the custom of the Jews to come upon children for the debts of parents, but of other nations: with the Athenians, if a father could not pay his debts, the son was obliged to pay, and in the mean while to be kept in bonds till he did {k}: and as Grotius, in ***2Ki 4:1*** proves from Plutarch and Dionysius Halicarnassensis, children were sold by the creditors of their parents, as in Asia, at Athens, and at Rome. Now this expresses the state of bondage, sin, as a debt, brings men into; they become slaves to their own lusts, vassals of Satan, and in bondage to the law; and also the ruin and destruction it exposes them to; as, the curse and condemnation of the law, the wrath of God, eternal death, even the destruction of body and soul in hell:

and payment to be made by punishment, which will always be making, and never finished. This order of the king was not intended to be executed, as the sequel shows; but declares the will of God, that the sad and woeful condition of man should be set before him by the ministers of the word; signifying what his state is, how deserving of vengeance, and what must be his portion, if grace prevent not: the view of which is to vindicate the rights of law and justice, to express the sinner's deserts, and move him to apply to the Lord for grace and mercy, which effect it had.

{i} Targum Jon. in loc. Tanchuma in Abarbinel in loc. Jarchi, Kimchi & Laniado in ib. {k} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 10.

Matthew 18:26

Ver. 26. The servant therefore fell down,.... At his feet, upon his knees, or on his face, to the ground; not being able to stand before him, or look him in the face, and much less to answer the demands of his law and justice; but owned the debt, and his present inability to pay,

and worshipped him: the Vulgate Latin reads it, "prayed", or entreated him,

saying, Lord have patience with me; give me but time, spare me a little longer, send me not to prison, and I will pay thee all: a very weak and foolish promise, but what is usual for men in such circumstances to make. Thus men, under guilt, and dreadful apprehensions of wrath and ruin, frequently promise, that if their lives are but spared, what they will do for God, and in a religious way; and very foolishly and ignorantly imagine, that by their humiliation and tears, their prayers and other services by their good lives and conversations, for the future, they shall be able to make compensation to God for all the iniquities they have been guilty of: which shows them to be exceeding ignorant of the nature of sin, which is committed against an infinite being, and therefore reconciliation for it cannot be made by finite creature; as also of the nature of their duties and services, which, when performed, in ever so good a manner, can never make satisfaction for past offences, these being duties they are obliged to perform; and would have been equally obliged thereunto if they had never offended; and likewise betrays great vanity, pride, boasting, and conceit of themselves, and abilities, as that they shall be able, in a little time to pay all, when they have nothing at all to pay with: and was patience to be exercised towards them ever so long, they would still be in the same condition, and in no better capacity to make payment; but, on the contrary, would still run a larger score, and be more and more in debt. Indeed, the patience and longsuffering of God to his people is salvation; not that by giving them time, and bearing with them, they discharge their debts, and work out their salvation; but waiting upon them to be gracious to them, he brings them to repentance, to a sense of themselves and sins, and to an acknowledgment of them, and leads them, by faith, to his Son for righteousness, forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life; but as for others, his patience towards them, and forbearance of them, issue in their everlasting destruction, which, by their iniquities, they are fitted for.

Matthew 18:27

Ver. 27. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion,.... Or had compassion on him, showed pity to him, and extended mercy towards him; not that he was moved hereunto by any actions of his, as his prostrating himself before him, and his worshipping him, nor by his cries and entreaties, nor by his promises, which were not at all to be depended on, but by his own goodness, and will; for not to anything that this man said, or did, nor to any deserts of his, but to the pure mercy, and free grace of God, is to be ascribed what is after related:

and loosed him; from obligation to punishment, and from a spirit of bondage, through the guilt of sin, and work of the law upon his conscience:

and forgave him the debt; the whole debt of ten thousand talents: for when God forgives sin, he forgives all sin, original and actual, secret and open, sins of omission and commission, of heart, lip, and life, of thought, word, and deed, past, present, and to come; and that freely, according to his abundant mercy, and the riches of his grace; without any regard to any merits, motives and conditions in the creature; though not without respect to the satisfaction of Christ, which no ways detracts from the grace and mercy of God, since this is owing to his gracious provision and acceptation. It was grace in God that provided, sent, and parted with his Son to be the propitiatory sacrifice for sin, and accepted the satisfaction when made, in the room, and stead of sinners: it was grace in Christ to become a surety for them, to assume their nature, to shed his precious blood, and give himself an offering, and a sacrifice for them; and it is distinguishing grace that this satisfaction should be provided, made, and accepted, not for angels, but for men; and though it is at the expense of Christ's blood and life that this satisfaction is made, and remission of sins obtained, yet the whole is entirely free to those who are partakers of it; they have it without money; and without price. So, that though the satisfaction of Christ is not expressly mentioned in this parable, and forgiveness of sin, which lies in a non-remembrance, and non-imputation of it, in a covering, and blotting it out, and in remitting the obligation to punishment for it, is ascribed to the compassion and mercy of God, yet it is implied; since these two involve each other: the special mercy of God, in the forgiveness of sins, streams only through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ largely display the grace and mercy of God.

***Matthew* 18:28**

Ver. 28. But the same servant went out,.... From his Lord's palace and presence, immediately, directly, after he had got his pardon and liberty:

and found one of his fellow servants; a fellow creature and Christian; not only one of the same nature and species; but of the same profession of religion, and in the service of the same kind and generous master:

which owed an hundred pence; which, if understood of Roman pence, each penny being seven pence halfpenny of our money, amounted to no more than three pounds and half-a-crown; a small sum, in comparison of the ten thousand talents which had been just now forgiven him: for so sins committed against men, against fellow creatures, or fellow Christians; are but small, when compared with those which are committed against God. All which circumstances, as that it was immediately after he had been forgiven himself; that it was a fellow servant he found: and the sum he owed him so inconsiderable, greatly aggravate his inhuman carriage, next related:

and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, pay me that thou owest; he laid hold on him in a violent manner, and used him with great inhumanity: he took him by the collar, and shook him, and griped him so hard about the neck, that he almost throttled, and strangled, or choked him, as the word signifies, and is so rendered in most versions. It answers to the Hebrew word qnh, which is used by the Jews {l} in the same sense:

"qynxh, he that throttles anyone (who is indebted to him) in the streets, and his friend comes up and says, let him go, and I will pay thee, he is free, &c."

This man insisted on payment of the whole debt; which expresses the rigour and severity used by some professors of religion to their fellow Christians; who, having offended them, in ever so small a matter, will not put up with the affront, nor forgive the injury, without having the most ample satisfaction, and avenging themselves upon them to the uttermost.

{l} Apud Castell. Lexic. Polyglott. col. 1314.

Matthew 18:29

Ver. 29. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet,.... In the most humble and submissive manner, just as he himself had done a little before at the feet of his Lord:

and besought him, saying, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all; using the very same words, in which he had expressed himself to his Lord, and had succeeded.

Matthew 18:30

Ver. 30. And he would not,.... Have patience with him, give him time for payment, and forbear severity at present, as he requested:

but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt; had him before a proper officer, and proved his debt, and got him sent to jail, there to lie till the whole debt was paid; which, as it discovered ill nature, severe usage, so, great ignorance and stupidity; for a prison will pay no debt: which sets forth the rigorous proceedings of some church members against their brethren, that have displeased them; who immediately bring the matter before the church, and will not be easy unless some censure is laid upon them, or they are cast out, until full satisfaction is given them, whereby oftentimes an useful member of a church is lost.

Matthew 18:31

Ver. 31. So when his fellow servants saw what was done,.... What hard usage, and ill treatment, their fellow servant met with; the Syriac reads, "their fellow servants", being the fellow servants both of the creditor and the debtor:

they were very sorry; they were greatly grieved and troubled at the cruelty of the one, and the unhappiness of the other; being more tenderhearted, and of a more forgiving spirit than he:

and came and told unto their Lord all that was done; to their fellow servant, by one that had so lately received such favours from him: this may be expressive of the concern of some members of churches at such conduct: who, though they may not have strength and number sufficient to oppose such measures, yet being secretly grieved at such cruel methods, go to the throne of grace, and spread the case before the Lord, tell him all that is done by way of complaint; which, is no impeachment of his omniscience, only shows their trouble for such malpractices, and the sense they have, by whom only such grievances can be redressed.

Matthew 18:32

Ver. 32. Then his Lord, after that he had called him,.... Or ordered him to be called, and brought before him,

said unto him, O thou wicked servant! Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads, "thou servant of Belial"; thou cruel and hard hearted man to thy fellow servant, and ungrateful creature to me, on whom my goodness to thee has not made any impression, nor taken any effect:

I forgave thee all that debt: all that vast debt of ten thousand talents, and that freely:

because thou desiredst me: not to forgive the debt, but to have patience, and give time, and therefore unasked forgave the whole sum, every farthing of it; which was such an instance of pure goodness, as was enough to have wrought upon an heart of stone, and engaged the most tender concern and pity for a fellow creature, as well as filled with thankfulness to the kind benefactor. The favour so lately bestowed on him is justly observed as an aggravation of his wickedness.

Matthew 18:33

Ver. 33. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion..... It is but reasonable, what ought to be, and may be expected, that such who have received mercy, should show mercy; and as the Lord had compassion on this man, and had forgiven him such an immense sum, and saved him, his wife and children, from being sold for bondslaves, the least he could have done after this, would have been to have followed such an example, and have had mercy, as his Lord says to him,

on thy fellow servant; between whom, and him, there was not so great a distance, as between him, and his Lord; and the sum so small that was owing to him, as not to be mentioned with his:

even as, I had pity on thee; such an instance of pity and compassion did not only set him an example, worthy of his imitation, but laid him under an obligation to have acted such a part.

Matthew 18:34

Ver. 34. And his Lord was wroth,.... Very angry, greatly incensed, and justly provoked at such inhuman treatment:

and delivered him to the tormentors, or jail keepers. The Ethiopic version renders it, "to them that judge", or the judges; Munster's Hebrew Gospel, "to the punishers", or such that inflicted punishment according to the decree of the judge: from both, the sense may be, that he was delivered over to proper judges of his case, to be treated as the nature of it required, to be cast into prison, and there endure all the severities of law and justice:

till he should pay all that was due unto him; which being so vast a sum, and he but a servant, could never be done: but inasmuch as this man was fully and freely pardoned before, how comes it to pass, that full payment of debt is yet insisted on? It is certain, that sin, once pardoned by God, he never punishes for it; for pardon with him is of all sin; he forgives all trespasses, though ever so many, and remits the whole debt, be it ever so large; which act of his grace will never be revoked: it is one of his gifts which are without repentance; it proceeds upon, and comes through a plenary satisfaction for sin made by his own Son, and therefore it would be unjust to punish for it: by this act, sin is covered out of sight; it is blotted out, and entirely done away, and that for ever. Hence some think this man had only the offer of a pardon, and not that itself; but it is not an offer of pardon, that Christ, by his blood, has procured, and is exalted to give, but that itself; and this man had his debt, his whole debt forgiven him: others think, that this was a church forgiveness, who looked upon him, judged him, and received him as one forgiven; but for his cruel usage of a fellow member, delivered him to the tormentors, passed censures on him, and excommunicated him, till he should give full satisfaction, which is more likely: others, this forgiveness was only in his own apprehensions: he presumed, and hoped he was forgiven, when he was not; but then his crime could not have been so aggravated as is: rather, this forgiveness is to be understood of averting calamities and judgments, likely to fall for his iniquities, which is sometimes the sense of this phrase: see ***1Ki 8:34*** and so his being delivered to the tormentors may mean, his being distressed with an accusing guilty conscience, an harassing, vexing devil, many misfortunes of life, and temporal calamities. Though after all, this is not strictly to be applied to any particular case or person, but the scope of the parable is to be attended to; which is to enforce mutual forgiveness among men, from having received full and free pardon at the hands of God; and that without the former, there is little reason to expect the latter, as appears from what follows.

Matthew ***18:35***

Ver. 35. So likewise shall my heavenly Father,.... This is the accommodation and application of the parable, and opens the design and intent of it; showing that God, who is Christ's Father, that is in heaven, will act in like manner towards all such persons, who are cruel and hard hearted to their brethren, and are of merciless and unforgiving spirits; for so it is said,

he will do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. The phrase, "their trespasses", is omitted by the Vulgate Latin, the Arabic, and the Ethiopic versions, but is in all the Greek copies; and designs not pecuniary debts, though these are to be forgiven, and not rigorously exacted in some cases, and circumstances; but all injuries by word or deed, all offences, though ever so justly taken, or unjustly given; these should be forgiven fully, freely, and from the heart, forgetting, as well as forgiving, not upbraiding with them, or with former offences, and aggravating them; and should also pray to God that he would forgive also. It is certainly the will of God, that we should forgive one another all trespasses and offences. The examples of God and Christ should lead and engage unto it; the pardon of sin received by ourselves from the hands of God strongly enforces it; the peace and comfort of communion in public ordinances require it; the reverse is contrary to the spirit and character of Christians, is very displeasing to our heavenly Father, greatly unlike to Christ, and grieving to the Spirit of God.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Matthew ***19:1***

Ver 1. And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings,.... Concerning humility, avoiding offences, the methods to be taken in reproving offenders, and the forgiveness that is to be exercised towards them:

he departed from Galilee; where he had chiefly preached and wrought his miracles, no more to return thither till after his resurrection:

and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan; that is, to that country which was called "beyond Jordan", and bordered on Judea; coming still nearer and nearer to Jerusalem, where he had told his disciples, a little while ago, he must come, and suffer, and die. Rather, it should be rendered, "on this side Jordan", as also in ***Joh 1:28*** for the coasts of Judea were on this side; so Ndryh rbe, is rendered in ***De 4:49***

Matthew 19:2

Ver. 2. And great multitudes followed him,.... The Persic version adds, "of the sick and diseased"; but all that followed him were not such, though some were: these came not only from Galilee, but from the adjacent parts, from the country beyond Jordan, and the coasts of Judea, where he had been formerly; and who resort to him again, as Mark observes; and whom, according to his usual manner, he taught and instructed in the knowledge of divine things, and confirmed his doctrines by miracles:

and he healed them there; in the above mentioned places, even as many of them as were sick and diseased.

Matthew 19:3

Ver. 3. The Pharisees also came unto him,.... Either from the places round about, or from Jerusalem: these came unto him, not for the sake of learning, or to be instructed by him; but as spies upon him, to observe what he said and did, and watch every opportunity to expose him to the contempt and hatred of the people;

tempting him with a question about divorces, in order to ensnare him:

and saying to him, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? be it ever so trivial, as said the school of Hillell: for there was a difference between the school of Shammai and the school of Hillell about this matter; the former insisted that a man might not put away his wife but in case of uncleanness; but the latter allowed putting away for very trifling things; as if she spoiled her husband's food by over roasting, or over salting it; and, as one of the doctors say, if he found another woman that was more beautiful than her; see Gill "Mt 5:32". This question being now agitated in the schools, they artfully put to Christ; not for information, but with a view to reproach him in some way or other; and that he might incur the resentment of one party or another, as he should answer. They might argue thus with themselves, and hope to succeed in this manner; should he be on the side of the school of Shammai, which was the weakest side, and less popular, as they had reason to believe he would, he would then expose himself to the resentment of the school of Hillell, and all on that side the question; should he take the part of Hillell, he would make the school of Shammai his enemies; should he forbid putting away of wives, which Moses allowed, they would then traduce him as contrary to Moses, and his law, which could not fail of setting the people against him; and should he consent to it, they would charge him with contradicting himself, or with inconstancy in his doctrine, since he had before asserted the unlawfulness of it, but in case of adultery; and should he abide by this, they might hope to irritate the men against him, who would think their liberty granted by Moses was entrenched on; as, on the other hand, should he, according to the question, admit of putting away for every cause, the women would be provoked at him, who would be left to the uncertain humour and caprice of their husbands; so that either way they hoped to get an advantage of him.

Matthew 19:4

Ver. 4. And he answered and said unto them,.... Not by replying directly to the question, but by referring them to the original creation of man, and to the first institution of marriage, previous to the law of Moses;

have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female? This may be read in ***Ge 1:27*** and from thence this sense of things collected; that God, who in the beginning of time, or of the creation, as Mark expresses it, made all things, the heavens, and the earth, and all that is therein, and particularly "man", as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel supply it here, made the first parents of mankind, male and female; not male and females, but one male, and one female; first, one male, and then, of him one female, who, upon her creation, was brought and married to him; so that in this original constitution, no provision was made for divorce, or polygamy. Adam could not marry more wives than one, nor could he put away Eve for every cause, and marry another: now either the Pharisees had read this account, or they had not; if they had not, they were guilty of great negligence and sloth; if they had, they either understood it or not; if they did not understand it, it was greatly to their reproach, who pretended to great knowledge of the Scriptures, and to be able to explain them to others; and if they did understand it, there was no need for this question, which therefore must be put with an evil design.

Matthew ***19:5***

Ver. 5. And said,.... ***Ge 2:24*** where they seem to be the words of Adam, though here they are ascribed to God, who made Adam and Eve; and as if they were spoken by him, when he brought them together; and which is easily reconciled by observing, that these words were spoken by Adam, under the direction of a divine revelation; showing, that there would be fathers, and mothers, and children; and that the latter, when grown up, would enter into a marriage state, and leave their parents, and cleave to their proper yoke fellows, which relations then were not in being: this therefore being the effect of a pure revelation from God, may be truly affirmed to be said by him. Some think they are the words of Moses the historian; and if they were, as they were delivered by divine inspiration, they may be rightly called the word of God. A note by Jarchi on this text exactly agrees herewith, which is Nk trmwa vdqh xwr, "the holy Spirit says thus: for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife"; and not wives: and the phrase denotes that close union between a man and his wife, which is not to be dissolved for every cause, it being stricter than that which is between parents and children; for the wife must be cleaved unto, and father and mother forsaken: not that upon this new relation between man and wife, the former relation between parents and children ceases; nor does this phrase denote an entire separation from them, so as to have the affection alienated from them, or to be disengaged from all duty and obedience to them, and care and regard for them, for the future; but a relinquishing the "house of his father and the bed of his mother", as all the three Targums on the place explain it: that is, he shall quit the house of his father, and not bed and board there, and live with him as before; but having taken a wife to himself, shall live and cohabit with her:

and they twain shall be one flesh; the word "twain" is: not in the Hebrew text in Genesis, but in the Septuagint version compiled by Jews, in the Samaritan Pentateuch, and version, and in the Targum of Jonathan ben

Uzziel, who renders, it as here, dx arvybl Nwhywwrt Nwhyw, "and they two shall be one flesh". This is the true sense, for neither more nor less can possibly be meant; and denotes that near conjunction, and strict union, between a man and his wife, the wife being a part of himself, and both as one flesh, and one body, and therefore not to be parted on every slight occasion; and has a particular respect to the act of carnal copulation, which only ought to be between one man and one woman, lawfully married to each other;
See Gill on "1Co 6:16".

Matthew 19:6

Ver. 6. Wherefore they are no more twain,.... They were two before marriage, but now no more so; not but that they remain two distinct persons,

but one flesh; or, as the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, "one body": hence the wife is to beloved by the husband as his own body, as himself, as his own flesh, ***Eph 5:28***.

what therefore God hath joined together; or, by the first institution of marriage, has declared to be so closely united together, as to be, as it were, one flesh, and one body, as husband and wife are;

let no man put asunder; break the bond of union, dissolve the relation, and separate them from each other, for every trivial thing, upon any slight occasion, or for anything; but what is hereafter mentioned. The sense is, that the bond of marriage being made by God himself, is so sacred and inviolable, as that it ought not to be dissolved by any man; not by the husband himself, or any other for him; nor by any state or government, by any prince or potentate, by any legislator whatever; no, not by Moses himself, who is, at least, included, if not chiefly designed here, though not named, to avoid offence: and God and man being opposed in this passage, shows, that marriage is an institution and appointment of God, and therefore not to be changed and altered by man at his pleasure; this not merely a civil, but a sacred affair, in which God is concerned.

Matthew 19:7

Ver. 7. They say unto him,.... That is the Pharisees, who object the law of Moses to him, hoping hereby to ensnare him, and expose him to the resentment of the people, should he reject that, as they supposed he would;

why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and put her away? referring to *De 24:1* which they thought to be a contradiction, and what they knew not how to reconcile to the doctrine Christ had delivered, concerning the original institution of marriage, and the close union there is between a man and his wife, by virtue of it, and which is not to be dissolved by men. Concerning a writing of divorcement and the form, and manner of it,
see Gill "Mt 5:31"

Matthew 19:8

Ver. 8. He saith unto them,.... In answer to their objection;

Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: in which may be observed, that, though it was by direction that Moses, in his system of laws, allowed of divorces; yet not God, but he is said to do it, because it was a branch of the political and judicial laws, by which the people of the Jews were governed under Moses, and whilst the Mosaic economy continued, and did not concern other people, and other times; and therefore it is said "you" and "your" wives, you Jews, and you only, and not the Gentiles. And so the Jews say {m}, that the Gentiles have no divorces: for thus they represent God, saying;

"in Israel I have granted divorces, I have not granted divorces among the nations of the world. R. Chananiah, in the name of R. Phineas, observed, that in every other section it is written, the Lord of hosts, but here it is written, the God of Israel; to teach thee, that the holy, blessed God does not join his name to divorces, but in Israel only. R. Chayah Rabbah says, Nyvwryg Nhl Nya Mywg, "the Gentiles have no divorces.""

Besides, this was a direct positive command to the Jews, as the Pharisees suggest in their objection; it was only a sufferance, a permission in some cases, and not in everyone; and that because of the hardness of their hearts; they being such a stubborn and inflexible people, that when they were once displeased there was no reconciling them; and so malicious and revengeful, that if this had not been granted, would have used their wives, that displeased them, in a most cruel, and barbarous manner, if not have murdered them: so that this grant was made, not to indulge their lusts, but to prevent greater evils; and not so much as a privilege and liberty to the men, as in favour of the women; who, when they could not live peaceably and comfortably with a man, might be dismissed and marry another:

but from the beginning it was not so; from the beginning of time, or of the creation, or of the world, or at the first institution of marriage, and in the first ages of the world, there was no such permission, nor any such practice. This was not the declared will of God at first, nor was it ever done by any good men before the times of Moses; we never read that Adam, or Seth, or Noah, or Abraham, put away their wives, upon any consideration; though in the latter there might have been some appearance of reason for so doing, on account of sterility, but this he did not; nor Isaac, nor Jacob, nor any of the "patriarchs".

{m} T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 58. 3.

Matthew 19:9

Ver. 9. And I say unto you,.... To his disciples, when they were with him alone in the house, and asked him more particularly about the subject, concerning which he had been discoursing with the Pharisees, as Mark observes, *Mr 10:10* when he said to them much the same things, he had delivered before in ***Mt 5:32***

whosoever shall put away in his wife; separate her from his person, house and bed, and dismiss her as his wife, no more to be considered in that relation to him,

except it be for fornication; or whoredom, for defiling his bed: for this is not to be understood of fornication committed before, but of uncleanness after marriage, which destroys their being one flesh:

and shall marry another woman, committeth adultery; Marks adds, "against her"; which may be understood either of the woman he marries, which not being lawfully done, she lives in adultery with the husband of another woman; or of his former wife, and who is still his wife, and to whose injury he has married another; and he not only commits adultery himself, but, as in ***Mt 5:32*** "causeth her to commit adultery also", by being the occasion of marrying another man, when she is still his lawful wife:

and whoso marrieth her which is put away, for any other cause than adultery,

doth commit adultery also; since he cohabits with the wife of another man; see Gill "Mt 5:32"

Matthew 19:10

Ver. 10. His disciples say unto him,.... Being surprised at this account of things, it being quite contrary to what they had been taught, and very different from the general practice and usage of their nation:

if the case of a man be so with his wife; if they are so closely joined together in marriage; if they are, as it were, one flesh, or one body, that a man's wife is himself: that the bond between them is so inviolable, that it is not to be dissolved, but in case of adultery; that if a separation be made by a bill of divorce, in any other case, and either party marry again, they are guilty of adultery; if a man cannot part with his wife lawfully, provided she be chaste, and is faithful to his bed, let her be what she will otherwise, though ever so disagreeable in her person, and troublesome in her behaviour; though she may be passionate, and a brawler; though she may be drunken, luxurious, and extravagant, and mind not the affairs of her family, yet if she is not an adulteress, must not be put away:

it is not good to marry; it would be more expedient and advisable for a man to live always a single life, than to run the risk of marrying a woman, that may prove very disagreeable and uncomfortable; to whom he must be bound all the days of his or her life, and, in such a case, not to be able to relieve and extricate himself. This they said under the prejudice of a national law and custom, which greatly prevailed, and under the influence of a carnal heart.

Matthew 19:11

Ver. 11. But he said unto them,.... With respect to the inference or conclusion, the disciples formed from what he had asserted:

all men cannot receive this saying; of their's, that it is not good to marry, but it is more proper and expedient to live a single life! every man, as the Syriac version renders it, is not hl qpo, "sufficient", or "fit", for this thing; everyone has not the gift of continency, and indeed very few; and therefore it is expedient for such to marry; for what the disciples said, though it might be true in part, yet not in the whole; and though the saying might be proper and pertinent enough to some persons, yet not to all, and indeed to none,

save they to whom it is given; to receive such a saying, to live unmarried with content, having the gift of chastity; for this is not of nature, but of grace: it is the gift of God.

Matthew 19:12

Ver. 12. For there are some eunuchs,.... Our Lord here distinguishes the various sorts of persons, that can and do live in a single state with content: some by nature, and others by violence offered to them, are rendered incapable of entering into a marriage state; and others, through the gift of God, and under the influence of his grace, abstain from marriage cheerfully and contentedly, in order to be more useful in the interest of religion; but the number of either of these is but few, in comparison of such who choose a conjugal state, and with whom it is right to enter into it, notwithstanding all the difficulties that may attend it. Some men are eunuchs, and of these there are different sorts; there are some,

which were so born from their mother's womb; meaning, not such who, through a natural temper and inclination of mind, could easily abstain from marriage, and chose to live single; but such who had such defects in nature that they were impotent, unfit for, and unable to perform the duties of a marriage state; who, as some are born without hands or feet, these were born without proper and perfect organs of generation; and such an one was, by the Jews, frequently called, hmh oyro, "an eunuch of the sun {n}": that is, as their doctors {o} explain it, one that from his mother's womb never saw the sun but as an eunuch; that is, one that is born so; and that such an one is here intended, ought not to be doubted. The signs of such an eunuch, are given by the Jewish {p} writers, which may be consulted by those, that have ability and leisure. This sort is sometimes {q} called Mymv ydyb oyro "an eunuch by the hands of heaven", or God, in distinction from those who are so by the hands, or means of men, and are next mentioned:

and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: as among the Romans formerly, and which Domitian the emperor forbid by a law {r}; and more especially in the eastern countries, and to this day among the Turks, that they may the more safely be entrusted with the custody of their women; and this sort the Jews call Mda oyro, "an eunuch of men", or Mda ydyb, "by the hands of men". The distinction between an "eunuch of the sun", and an "eunuch of men", is so frequent with the Jews {s}, and so well known to them, that a question need not be made of our Lord's referring to it:

and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs; not in a literal sense, in which the words are not to be taken, as they were by Origen; who though otherwise too much pursued the allegorical way of interpreting Scripture, here took it literally, and castrated himself {t}; as did also a sort of heretics, called Valesians {u}, from one Valens an Arabian; and which practice is recommended by Philo the Jew {w}, and by Heathen philosophers {x}, for the sake of chastity. But here it means such, who having the gift of continency without mutilating their bodies, or indulging any unnatural lusts, can live chastely without the use of women, and choose celibacy:

for the kingdom of heaven's sake; not in order, by their chaste and single life, to merit and obtain the kingdom of glory; but that they might be more at leisure, being free from the incumbrances of a marriage state, to attend the worship and service of God, the ordinances of the Gospel church state, to minister in, and preach the Gospel of Christ, and be a means of spreading it in the world, and of enlarging his kingdom and interest.

He that is able to receive it, let him receive it: whoever is able to receive cordially, and embrace heartily, the above saying concerning the expediency and goodness of a single life, and having the gift of continency, can live according to it; let him take it, and hold it fast, and act up to it; he may have less of worldly trouble, and be more useful for God in the Gospel of Christ, and to the interest of religion; but this should be a voluntary thing: no man should be forced into it; and he that goes into it, ought to consider well whether he is able to contain, or not.

{n} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 75. 1. 79. 2. & 80. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 2. sect. 14. {o} Maimon & Bartenora in Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 4. {p} Bartenora, ibid. & Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, ut supra. {q} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 80. 2. {r} Philostrat. vit. Apollon. l. 6. c. 17. {s} Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 4. Zabim, c. 2. sect. 1. T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 9. 4. Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 2. sect. 26. & 4. 18. Mechosre Caphara, c. 3. sect. 6. Mishcabumoshab, c. l. sect. 5. {t} Euseb. Ecel. Hist. l. 6. c. 8. {u} Augustin de Haeres. c. 37. & Danaeus in ib. {w} Lib. quod deterius, p. 186. {x} Sexti Pythag. Sent. p. 8.

Matthew 19:13

Ver. 13. Then were there brought unto him little children,.... It does not appear that they were new born babes; the words used by either of the evangelists do not always signify such, but are sometimes used of such as are capable of going alone; yea, of receiving instructions, of understanding the Scriptures, and even of one of twelve years of age, *Mt 18:2* nor is it probable that infants just born, or within a month, should be had abroad. Moreover, these were such as Christ called unto him, *Lu 18:16* and were capable of coming to him of themselves, as his words following suppose; nor does their being brought to him, or his taking them in his arms, contradict this; since the same things are said of such as could walk of themselves, *Mt 12:22* ***Mr 9:36***. Nor is it known whose children they were, whether their parents were believers or unbelievers, nor by whom they were brought: but the end for which they were brought is expressed,

that he should put his hands on them, and pray; not that he should baptize them, nor did he; which may be concluded from the entire silence of all the evangelists; and from the mention of other ends for which they were brought, as that Christ should "touch" them, *Mr 10:13* as he sometimes used to do persons, when he healed them of diseases; and probably some of those infants, if not all of them, were diseased, and brought to be cured; otherwise, it is not easy to conceive what they should be touched by him for: or as here, that he might put his hands on them, and pray over them, and bless them, as was usual with the Jews to do; see *Ge 48:14* and it was common with them to bring their children to venerable persons, men of note for religion and piety, to have their blessing and prayers {y}:

and the disciples rebuked them; not the children, as the Persic version reads, but those that brought them, Mark observes; either because they came in a rude and disorderly manner, and were very noisy and clamorous; or they might think it would be too troublesome to Christ, to go through such a ceremony with so many of them; or that it was too mean for him, and below him to take notice of them; or for fear he should take fresh occasion, on the sight of these children, to rebuke them again for their pride and ambition. However, from this rebuke and prohibition of the disciples, it looks plainly as if it had never been the practice of the Jews, nor of John the Baptist, nor of Christ and his disciples, to baptize infants; for had this been then in use, they would scarcely have forbid and rebuked those that brought them, since they might have thought they brought them to be baptized; but knowing of no such usage that ever obtained in that nation, neither among those that did, or did not believe in Christ, they forbad them.

{y} Massechet Sopherim, c. 18. sect. 5. see the note on Luke ii. 42.

Matthew 19:14

Ver. 14. But Jesus said, suffer little children.... This he said to show his humility, that he was not above taking notice of any; and to teach his disciples to regard the weakest believers, and such as were but children in knowledge; and to inform them what all ought to be, who expect the kingdom of heaven; for it follows;

and forbid them not to come unto me, now, or at any other time;

for of such is the kingdom of heaven; that is, as the Syriac renders it, "who are as these" or as the Persic version, rather paraphrasing than translating, renders it, "who have been humble as these little children": and it is as if our Lord should say, do not drive away these children from my person and presence; they are lively emblems of the proper subjects of a Gospel church state, and of such that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: by these I may instruct and point out to you, what converted persons should be, who have a place in my church below, and expect to enter into my kingdom and glory above; that they are, or ought to be, like such children, harmless and inoffensive; free from rancour and malice, meek, modest, and humble;

without pride, self-conceit, and ambitious views, and desires of grandeur and superiority. Christ's entire silence about the baptism of infants at this time, when he had such an opportunity of speaking of it to his disciples, had it been his will, has no favourable aspect on such a practice. It is not denied that little children, whether born of believers or unbelievers, which matters not, may be chosen of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and have the passive work of the Spirit on their souls, and so enter into heaven; but this is not the sense of this text. It was indeed a controversy among the Jews, whether the little children of the wicked of Israel, abh Mlwel Nyab, "go into the world to come": some affirmed, and others denied; but all agreed, that the little children of the wicked of the nations of the world, do not. They dispute about the time of entrance of a child into the world to come; some say, as soon as it is born, according to *Ps 22:31* others, as soon as it can speak, or count, according to *Ps 22:30* others as soon as it is sown, as the gloss says, as soon as the seed is received in its mother's womb, though it becomes an abortion; according to the same words, "a seed shall serve thee": others, as soon as he is circumcised, according to *Ps 88:15* others, as soon as he can say "Amen", according {z} to *Isa 26:2* All weak, frivolous, and impertinent.

{z} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 110. 2.

Matthew 19:15

Ver. 15. And he laid his hands on them,.... "And blessed them", as Mark says; he put his hands upon them, according to the custom of the country, and wished all kind of prosperity to them:

and departed thence, out of the house where he had been, and his disciples with him: the Ethiopic version renders it, "and they went from thence", from those parts, towards Jerusalem.

Matthew 19:16

Ver. 16. And behold, one came,.... The Persic version reads, "a rich man"; and so he was, as appears from what follows: Luke calls him, "a certain ruler"; not of a synagogue, an ecclesiastical ruler, but a civil magistrate: perhaps he might be one of the sanhedrim, which consisted of "twenty one" persons; or of that which consisted only of "three", as in some small towns and villages Mark represents him as "running"; for Christ was departed out of the house, and was gone into the way, the high road, and was on his journey to some other place, when this man ran after him with great eagerness; and, as the same evangelist adds, "kneeled to him"; thereby paying him civil respect, and honour; believing him to be a worthy good man, and deserving of esteem and veneration:

and said unto him, good master: some say, that this was a title which the Jewish doctors were fond of, and gave to each other, but I have not observed it; he seems by this to intimate, that he thought him not only to be a good man, but a good teacher; that he was one that came from God, and taught good doctrine, which induced him to run after him, and put the following question to him:

what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? Or, as in the other evangelists, "inherit eternal life"; a phrase much in use with the Jewish Rabbins {a}:

"Judah confessed, and was not ashamed, and what is his end? abh Mlweh yyx lxn, "he inherits the life of the world to come" (i.e. eternal life); Reuben confessed, and was not ashamed, and what is his end? "he inherits the life of the world to come"."

This man was no Sadducee, he believed a future state; was a serious man, thoughtful about another world, and concerned how he should enjoy everlasting life; but was entirely upon a legal bottom, and under a covenant of works; and speaks in the language and strain of the nation of Israel, who were seeking for righteousness and life by the works of the law: he expected eternal life by doing some good thing, or things; and hoped, as the sequel shows, that he had done every good thing necessary to the obtaining it.

{a} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 7. 2.

Matthew 19:17

Ver. 17. And he said unto him,.... By way of reply, first taking notice of, and questioning him about, the epithet he gave him:

why callest thou me good? not that he denied that he was so; for he was good, both as God and man, in his divine and human natures; in all his offices, and the execution of them; he was goodness itself, and did good, and nothing else but good. But the reason of the question is, because this young man considered him only as a mere man, and gave him this character as such; and which, in comparison of God, the fountain of all goodness, agrees with no mere man: wherefore our Lord's view is, by his own language; and from his own words, to instruct him in the knowledge of his proper deity. Some copies read, "why dost thou ask me concerning good". And so the Vulgate Latin, and the Ethiopic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read; but the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, read as we do, and this the answer of Christ requires.

There is none good but one, that is God; who is originally, essentially, independently, infinitely, and immutably good, and the author and source of all goodness; which cannot be said of any mere creature. This is to be understood of God considered essentially, and not personally; or it is to be understood, not of the person of the Father, to the exclusion of the Son, or Spirit: who are one God with the Father, and equally good in nature as he. Nor does this contradict and deny that there are good angels, who have continued in that goodness in which they were created; or that there are good men, made so by the grace of God; but that none are absolutely and perfectly good, but God. What Christ here says of God, the {b} Jews say of the law of Moses, whose praise they can never enough extol; hrwt ala bwj Nya "there is nothing good but the law". The law is good indeed; but the author of it must be allowed to be infinitely more so. Christ next directly answers to the question,

but if thou wilt enter into life: eternal life, which is in the question, and which being sometimes expressed by a house, a city, and kingdom, by mansions, and everlasting habitations, enjoyment of it is fitly signified by entering into it; which, if our Lord suggests, he had a desire of having a right to by doing any good thing himself, he must

keep the commandments; that is, perfectly: he must do not only one good thing, but all the good things the law requires; he must not be deficient in any single action, in anyone work of the law, either as to matter, or manner of performance; everything must be done, and that just as the Lord in his law has commanded it. Our Lord answers according to the tenor of the covenant of works, under which this man was; and according to the law of

God, which requires perfect obedience to it, as a righteousness, and a title to life; and in case of the least failure, curses and condemns to everlasting death; see ***De 6:25***. This Christ said, in order to show, that it is impossible to enter into, or obtain eternal life by the works of the law, since no man can perfectly keep it; and to unhinge this man from off the legal foundation on which he was, that he might drop all his dependencies on doing good things, and come to him for righteousness and life.

{b} T. Hieroa. Roshhashanah, fol. 59. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 151. 2.

Matthew ***19:18***

Ver. 18. He saith unto him, which?.... Whether those commandments of a moral, or of a ceremonial kind; whether the commands of the written, or of the oral law; of God, or of the elders, or both; or whether he did not mean some new commandments of his own, which he delivered as a teacher sent from God:

Jesus said; according to the other evangelists, "thou knowest the commandments"; not the true nature, spirituality, and use of them, but the letter and number of them; being trained up from a child by his parents, in the reading them, committing them to memory, and the outward observance of them, particularly those of the second table:

thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness. Christ takes no notice of the ceremonial law, nor of the traditions of the elders, only moral precepts; and these only such as refer to the second, and not the first table of the law, which respect duty to the neighbour, and not to God: and this he does, because these commandments were more known, and were in common use; and he chose to instance in these, partly to show, that if men are under obligation to regard these, much more such as concern God more immediately; and partly, to observe, that if men are deficient in their duty to one another, they are much more so in their worship of God; and consequently, eternal life is never to be got and enjoyed by the performance of these things.

Matthew ***19:19***

Ver. 19. Honour thy father and thy mother:.... This, as it is the first commandment with promise, so the first of the second table, and yet is here mentioned last; which inversion of order is of no consequence: so the "seventh" command is put before the "sixth", and the "fifth" omitted, in *Ro 13:9* and with the Jews it is a common {c} saying, hrwtb rxwamw Mdqwm Nya, "there is neither first nor last in the law": that is, it is of no consequence which commandment is recited first, or which last. Moreover, it looks as if it was usual to recite these commands in this order, since they are placed exactly in the same method, by a very noted Jewish {d} writer.

And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; which is not a particular distinct command from the rest, or an explication of the tenth and last, not mentioned; but a recapitulation, or compendium, and abridgment of the whole, and is said to be a complement and fulfilling of the law; see *Ro 13:9*.

{c} T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 6. 2. Zohar in Num. fol. 61. 4. {d} R. Sangari, Sepher Cosri, par. 3. sect. 11, fol. 146. 2.

Matthew 19:20

Ver. 20. The young man saith unto him,.... For though he was so very rich and in such an exalted station in life, as to be a ruler, it seems he was but a young man; and to be so early serious and religious, amidst so much riches and grandeur, though it was but externally, was both remarkable and commendable: upon hearing the answer of Christ, with which he was highly pleased and greatly elated, he very pertly replies,

all these things have I kept from my youth up: as soon as he was capable of learning, his parents taught him these precepts; and ever since he had the use of his reason, and understood the letter, and outward meaning of them, he had been careful to observe them; nor could he charge himself with any open and flagrant transgression of them; not understanding the internal sense, extensive compass, and spirituality of them; and therefore asks,

what lack I yet? In what am I deficient hitherto? in what have I come short of doing these things? what remains at last to be performed? what other precepts are to be obeyed? if there are any other commands, I am ready to observe them, which may be thought necessary to obtain eternal life.

Ver. 21. Jesus said unto him, if thou wilt be perfect,.... Wanting nothing, completely righteous, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, having no evil, concupiscence, or worldly lusts: our Lord signifies it was not enough to be possessed of negative holiness, and do no hurt to his neighbour, to his person, property, and estate, but he must love him, and do him good; and therefore, though so far as he had complied with the law, it was right and commendable; wherefore it is said by Mark, "that Jesus beholding him loved him"; had an affectionate regard to him as man, and approved of his intentions, seriousness, and actions, so far as agreeable; yet tells him,

one thing thou lackest: not but that he lacked many more, but he was only willing to observe one thing to him, as a trial of his love to his neighbour, which is the fulfilling of the law:

go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: not that either the law of God, or Gospel of Christ, require this to be done of all men, and at all times; for though it is a duty binding upon all, and always, to relieve the poor and the needy, yet a man is not obliged to give all that he has to them; see ***2Co 8:11*** nor does either legal or Christian perfection lie in doing this: a man may give all his goods to the poor and yet be destitute of the grace of God, *1Co 13:3* much less can such an action merit the heavenly treasure of eternal life. Nevertheless of some persons, and in some cases, it has been required, that they part with all their worldly substance, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; as the apostles were called to leave all and follow Christ, as this man was also; for it is added,

and come and follow me: between these two, Mark puts, "take up the cross"; all which to do, was much more than to sell what he had, and give to the poor; and indeed, in this branch lies Gospel perfection, or to be really and truly a Christian: for to "come" to Christ, is to believe in him, lay hold on him, receive and embrace him as a Saviour and Redeemer; and to "follow" him, is to be obedient to his will, to be observant of his commands, to submit to his ordinances, and to imitate him in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; neither of which can be done, without "taking up the cross"; bearing reproach and persecution with patience; undergoing hardships and difficulties, of one sort or another, which attend faith in Christ, a profession of his name, and following him the Lamb, whithersoever he goes. The consequence of this now, not by way of merit, but by way of grace, is the enjoyment of the rich treasures of eternal glory: but this man was so far from complying with the latter, with coming to Christ, taking up the cross, and following him, that he could by no means agree to the former, parting with his worldly substance; and which is mentioned, as a test of his love to God and his neighbour, and to discover his sinful love of the world, and the things of it; and consequently, that he was far from being in a state of perfection. Moreover, it should be observed, that Christ is here speaking, not the pure language of the law, or according to the principles of the Gospel, when he seems to place perfection in alms deeds, and as if they were meritorious of eternal life; but according to the doctrine of the Pharisees, and which was of this man; and so upon the plan of his own notions, moves him to seek for perfection, and convicts him of the want of it, in a way he knew would be disagreeable to him; and yet he would not be able to disprove the method, on the foot of his own tenets: for this is their doctrine {e};

"It is a tradition, he that says this "sela", or shekel, is for alms, that my son may live, or I may be a son of the world to come, lo! rwmg qydu hz, "this man is a perfect righteous man"."

The gloss adds,

"In this thing; and he does not say that he does not do it for the sake of it, but he fulfils the command of his Creator, who has commanded him to do alms; and he also intends profit to himself, that thereby he may be worthy of the world to come, or that his children may live."

And so in answer to a question much like this, the young man put to Christ {f};

"How shall we come at the life of the world to come?"

It is replied,

"take thy riches, and give to the fatherless and the poor, and I will give thee a better portion in the law."

{e} T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 8. 1, 2. & Roshhashanah, fol. 4. 1. {f} Zohar in Gen. fol. 60. 4.

Matthew 19:22

Ver. 22. But when the young man heard that saying..... That he must sell his estates, and all his worldly substance, and the money made of them, give away to the poor; and become a follower of Christ, deny himself, and submit to hardships very disagreeable to the flesh:

he went away sorrowful; not with a godly sorrow for his sin and imperfections, but with the sorrow of the world, which worketh death: he was ashamed and confounded, that he could not perform what he had just now so briskly promised, at least tacitly, that whatever else was proper he would do; as also grieved, that he had not arrived to perfection, which he had hoped he had, but now began to despair of, and of obtaining eternal life; and most of all troubled, that he must part with his worldly substance, his heart was so much set upon, or not enjoy it:

for he had great possessions; which were very dear to him; and he chose rather to turn his back on Christ, and drop his pursuits of the happiness of the other world, than part with the present enjoyments of this.

Matthew 19:23

Ver. 23. Then said Jesus unto his disciples..... When the young man was gone; taking this opportunity to make some proper observations for the use and instruction of his disciples, after, as Mark observes, he had "looked round about"; with concern, and in order to affect their minds with this incident, and to raise their attention to what he was about to say:

verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven: either into the Gospel dispensation, and receive the truths, and submit to the ordinances of it, or into the kingdom of glory hereafter; not but that there have been, are, and will be, some that are rich, called by grace, brought into a Gospel church state, and are heirs of the kingdom of heaven; though these are but comparatively few: nor is it riches themselves that make the entrance so difficult, and clog the way, either into grace or glory, but putting trust and confidence in them; and therefore in Mark, they "that have riches", are by Christ explained of such, that "trust in riches"; and which rich men in common are very apt to do, as this young man did, against which the apostle cautions, ***1Ti 6:17***

Matthew 19:24

Ver. 24. And again I say unto you,.... After the apostles had discovered their astonishment at the above expression, about the difficulty of a rich man entering into the kingdom of heaven; when they expected that, in a short time, all the rich and great men of the nation would espouse the interest of the Messiah, and acknowledge him as a temporal king, and add to the grandeur of his state and kingdom; and after he had in a mild and gentle manner, calling them "children", explained himself of such, that trusted in uncertain riches, served mammon, made these their gods, and placed their hope and happiness in them; in order to strengthen and confirm what he had before asserted, and to assure, in the strongest manner, the very great difficulty, and seeming impossibility, of rich men becoming followers of Christ here, or companions with him hereafter, he expresses himself in this proverbial way:

it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God: thus, when the Jews would express anything that was rare and unusual, difficult and impossible, they used a like saying with this. So speaking of showing persons the interpretation of their dreams {g};

"Says Rabba, you know they do not show to a man a golden palm tree i.e. the interpretation of a dream about one, which, as the gloss says, is a thing he is not used to see, and of which he never thought, ajxmd apwqb lyyed alyp alw, "nor an elephant going through the eye of a needle"."

Again, to one that had delivered something as was thought very absurd, it is said {h};

"perhaps thou art one of Pombeditha (a school of the Jews in Babylon) ajxmd apwqb alyp Nylyyemd, "who make an elephant pass through the eye of a needle"."

That is, who teach such things as are equally as monstrous and absurd, and difficult of belief. So the authors of an edition of the book of Zohar, to set forth the difficulty of the work they engaged in, express themselves in this manner {i}:

"In the name of our God, we have seen fit, ajxmd apwqb alyp oynkhl, "to bring an elephant through the eye of a needle"."

And not only among the Jews, but in other eastern nations, this proverbial way of speaking was used, to signify difficulties or impossibilities. Mahomet has it in his Alcoran {k};

"Verily, says he, they who shall charge our signs with falsehood, and shall proudly reject them, the gates of heaven shall not be opened to them, neither shall they enter into paradise, "until a camel pass through the eye of a needle"."

All which show, that there is no need to suppose, that by a camel is meant, not the creature so called, but a cable rope, as some have thought; since these common proverbs manifestly make it appear, that a creature is intended, and which aggravates the difficulty: the reason why instead of an elephant, as used in most of the above sayings, Christ makes mention of a camel, may be, because that might be more known in Judea, than the other; and because the hump on its back would serve to make the thing still more impracticable.

{g} T. Bab. Beracot fol. 55. 2. {h} T. Bab Bava Metzia, fol. 38. 2. {i} Prefat. ad Zohar, Ed. Sultzbach. {k} Chap. 7. p. 120. Ed. Sale.

Matthew 19:25

Ver. 25. When his disciples heard it..... That is, the difficulty of a rich man's entering into the kingdom of heaven, aggravated by the above proverbial expression,

they were exceedingly amazed. They were surprised at his first words; but when he confirmed them by the proverb of a camel's passing through the eye of a needle, they were, as Mark says, "astonished out of measure": they did not imagine there was any difficulty of rich men coming into the kingdom of the Messiah, which they took to be a worldly one, and would be filled with rich men; for so they understood Christ; though he meant by the kingdom of heaven a spiritual kingdom, a Gospel church state here, or the heavenly glory, or both; but when he expressed, by the proverb, the impracticableness of such men becoming the subjects thereof, their amazement increased;

saying, as in Mark, "among themselves", privately to one another,

who then can be saved? meaning, not with a spiritual and everlasting salvation, but a temporal one: for upon Christ's so saying, they might reason with themselves, that if rich men did not come into the kingdom of the Messiah, they would oppose him and his kingdom, with all their force and strength; and then what would become of such poor men as themselves, who would not be able to stand against them? nor could they hope to be safe long, or enjoy any continued happiness in the expected kingdom, should this be the case.

Matthew 19:26

Ver. 26. But Jesus beheld them,.... Looking wishfully and earnestly at them; signifying thereby, that he knew their reasonings among themselves, though they did not speak out so as to be heard by him; and that there was no reason why they should be in so much concern, as their countenances showed, or possess themselves with such fears:

and said unto them, with men this is impossible. Mark adds, "but not with God; for with God all things are possible"; to be done by him, if he will, which are consistent with the glory and perfections of his nature: for as he could, by his almighty power, if he would, reduce a camel to so small a size, as to be able to go through the eye of a needle, which, with men, is an impossible thing; so by the mighty power of his grace he can work upon a rich man's heart, in such a manner, as to take off his affections from his worldly substance, and cause him to drop his trust and confidence in it: he can so influence and dispose his mind, as to distribute his riches cheerfully among the poor, and largely, and liberally supply their wants, and even part with all, when necessity requires it: he can change his heart, and cause the desires of his soul to be after true riches of grace and glory; and bring him to see his own spiritual poverty, his need of Christ, and salvation by him;

and to deny himself, take up the cross, and follow him, by submitting to his most despised ordinances, and by suffering the loss of all things for his sake; and he can carry him through a thousand snares safe to his kingdom and glory, which is Christ's sense; though the thing is impossible upon the foot of human nature, and strength, which can never effect anything of this kind: and as to what the apostles suggested concerning the safety of persons in the Messiah's kingdom, if no rich man could enter there, but should be in opposition to it; our Lord's answer implies, that though, humanly speaking, it was not possible and practicable that they, a company of poor, mean, and despicable men, should be able to stand against the united force of the great and mighty men of the earth; yet God was able to support, and uphold them, succeed, and keep them, and make them both useful and comfortable, amidst all the opposition and persecution they should meet with, until he had finished his whole will and work by them.

Matthew 19:27

Ver. 27. Then answered Peter and said unto him,.... Peter observing what Christ said to the young man, bidding him sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and he should have treasure in heaven, and come and follow him, lays hold on it, and addresses him in the following manner,

behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee. Though their worldly substance was not so large as the young man's, they had not such estates to sell, nor that to give to the poor, he had; yet all that they had they left for Christ's sake, their parents, wives, children, houses, and worldly employments, by which they supported themselves and families; and became the disciples and followers of Christ, embraced his doctrines, submitted to his commands, imitated him in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, denying themselves, and suffering many hardships on his account: wherefore it is asked,

what shall we have therefore? what reward for all this? what part in the Messiah's kingdom? or what treasure in heaven?

Matthew 19:28

Ver. 28. And Jesus said unto them,.... To all the disciples whom Peter represented;

verily I say unto you: the thing being something very considerable, and of great moment, Christ uses the asseveration he sometimes does in such cases:

that ye which have followed me. Christ does not deny that they had forsaken all for his sake, nor does he despise it, because it was but little they left, though he does not repeat it; but only takes notice of their following him, which, including their faith in him, their profession of him, and subjection to him, was a much greater action, and of more importance that the other, and therefore is only mentioned, and which our Lord confirms:

in the regeneration. This clause is so placed, that it may be read in connection with the preceding words, and be understood of the disciples following Christ in the regeneration; meaning, not the grace of regeneration, in which they could not be said, with propriety, to follow Christ; and one of them was never a partaker of it: but the new state of things, in the church of God, which was foretold, and is called the time of reformation, or setting all things right, which began upon the sealing up the law, and the prophets, and the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Christ; who both, when they began to preach, declared, that this time, which they call the kingdom of heaven, was at hand, just ushering in. Now the twelve apostles followed Christ herein: they believed, and professed him to be the Messiah; they received, what the Jews called, his new doctrine, and preached it to others; they submitted to the new ordinance of baptism, and followed Christ, and attended him wherever he went, working miracles, preaching the Gospel, and reforming the minds and manners of men. Now this new dispensation is called the regeneration, and which more manifestly took place after our Lord's resurrection, and ascension, and the pouring down of the Spirit; wherefore the phrase may be connected with the following words,

when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory in the regeneration; not in the resurrection of the dead, or at the last judgment, but in this new state of things, which now began to appear with another face: for the apostles having a new commission to preach the Gospel to all the world; and being endued with power from on high for such service, in a short time went every where preaching the word, with great success. Gentiles were converted, as well as Jews, and both brought into a Gospel church state; the ceremonies of the old law being abolished, were disused; and the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper, every where practised; old things passed away, and all things became new: agreeably to this the Syriac version renders the phrase, atdx amleb, "in the new world"; and so the Persic. The Arabic reads it, "in the generation", or "age to come"; which the Jews so often call the world, or age to come, the kingdom of the Messiah, the Gospel dispensation.

When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, or glorious throne; as he did when he ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God; and was then exalted as a prince, and made, or declared to be Lord and Christ; and was crowned in human nature, with honour, and glory, and angels, principalities, and powers, made subject to him:

ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones: for though Judas fell from his apostleship, yet Matthias was chosen in his room, and took his place, and made up the number twelve; a metaphorical phrase, setting forth the honour, dignity, and authority of their office and ministry, by which they should be

judging the twelve tribes of Israel; doctrinally and practically; by charging them with the sin of crucifying Christ, condemning them for their unbelief, and rejection of him, denouncing the wrath of God, and the heaviest judgments that should fall upon them, as a nation, for their sin; and by turning from them to the Gentiles, under which judgment they continue to this day. So the doctors among the Jews are represented as sitting and judging others: of "the potters", in ***1Ch 4:23*** they say {l},

"these are the disciples of the law, or the lawyers, for whose sake the world is created, anyd le Nybtyd "who sit in judgment", and establish the world; and build, and perfect the ruins of the house of Israel."

{l} Targuru in 1 Chron. iv. 23.

Matthew 19:29

Ver. 29. And everyone that hath forsaken houses,.... Not only the then disciples of Christ, but any other believer in him, whether at that time, or in any age, that should be called to quit their habitations, or leave their dearest relations, friends, and substance: as brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, lands, for my name's sake; or, as in Luke, "for the kingdom of God's sake"; that is, for the sake of the Gospel, and a profession of it. Not that believing in Christ, and professing his name, do necessarily require a parting with all worldly substance, and natural relations, but when these things stand in competition with Christ, he is to be loved and preferred before them; and believers are always to be ready to part with them for his sake, when persecution arises, because of the word. All these things are to be relinquished, rather than Christ, and his Gospel; and such who shall be enabled, through divine grace, to do so,

shall receive an hundred fold: Mark adds, "now in this time"; and Luke likewise, "in this present time", in this world; which may be understood either in spiritual things, the love of God, the presence of Christ, the comforts of the Holy Ghost, the communion of saints, and the joys and pleasures felt in the enjoyment of these things, being an hundred times more and better to them, than all they have left or lost for Christ's sake; or in temporal things, so in Mark it seems to be explained, that such shall now receive an hundred fold,

even houses and brethren, and sisters and mothers, and children and lands; not that they should receive, for the leaving of one house, an hundred houses; or for forsaking one brother, an hundred brethren, &c. which last indeed might be true, as to a spiritual relation; but that the small pittance of this world's goods, and the few friends they should have "with persecutions" along with them, and amidst them, should be so sweetened to them, with the love and presence of God, that these should be more and better to them than an hundred houses, fields, and friends, without them:

and shall inherit everlasting life. The other evangelists add, "in the world to come", which is infinitely best of all; for this is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, which fades not away, reserved in the heavens, when all other inheritances are corruptible, defiled, fading and perishing; houses fall, relations die, friends fail, and lands and estates do not continue for ever: they then have the best of it, who being called, in providence, to quit all terrene enjoyments for Christ's sake, are favoured with his presence here, and shall enjoy eternal glory and happiness with him in another world.

Matthew ***19:30***

Ver. 30. But many that are first shall be last,.... This may refer unto, or be occasioned by, either the young ruler; signifying that he, and others like him, who were superior in riches and honour, were first in this world, of the first rank and figure, should be the last in the world to come:

and the last shall be first; the apostles, who were last in this world, being poor, mean, and abject, should be the first in the other: or to the Scribes and Pharisees, who were in the chief place, and highest esteem, in the Jewish church, and yet least in the kingdom of heaven; when, on the other hand, the publicans and sinners, who were in the lowest class, and in least esteem, went first into it: or to the case of persecution, when some, who seem most forward to endure it at a distance, when it comes nearer, are most backward to it; whilst others, who were most fearful of it, and ready to shrink at the thoughts of it, most cheerfully bear it: or to the apostles themselves, one of which, who was now first, Judas, should be last; and the apostle Paul, who was last of all, as one born out of due time, should be first: or to Jews and Gentiles, intimating, that the Jews, who were first in outward privileges, would be rejected of God for their unbelief, and contempt of the Messiah; and the Gentiles, who were last called, should be first, or chief, in embracing the Messiah, professing his Gospel, and supporting his interest. This sentence is confirmed, and illustrated, by a parable, in the following chapter.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Matthew 20:1

Ver. 1. For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man,.... That is, the Gospel dispensation, or times of the Messiah, may fitly be represented by a man

that is an householder, or master of a family, as Christ is; See Gill "Mt 10:25" He is master of the whole family of God, in heaven, and in earth, of all the children of God, and household of faith; his house they are, he is Father and master, son and firstborn, priest and prophet there.

Which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard: by "the vineyard" may be meant the church, which, like a vineyard, is separated by electing, redeeming, and calling grace, and by the order and ordinances of the Gospel, from the rest of the world; is set with various vines, with trees of righteousness, with pleasant plants, both fruitful and profitable; and which are dear and valuable to Christ; and about which much care is used to preserve, keep, and improve them. This may be called "his", Christ's, being what he has chosen for himself, his Father has given him, and he is heir of; which he has purchased with his blood, and which he plants, waters, takes care of, and enjoys. The "labourers" design either the ministers of the Gospel, who labour in the word and doctrine, who are, or at least ought to be, labourers in Christ's vineyard, and not loiterers; whose work in study, meditation, and prayer, in the ministration of the word and ordinances, and in performing other services they are called unto, is very laborious; and made more so, through the wickedness of some, and weakness of others: the employment of these labourers in the vineyard is various; the business of some is to plant; they are chiefly made use of in conversion: the work of others is to water; these are instruments in edification, and means of the growth of grace: others have a good hand at pruning, giving reproofs and corrections, in a suitable manner, with success, to the checking of sin, and bringing forth more fruit: others are useful in propping and supporting the vines, comforting and strengthening weak believers; and others in protecting and defending the outworks of the church, the doctrines and ordinances of it: or else private Christians in general may be intended, who all are, or should be labourers, both in the exercise of grace; for there is the work of faith, and the labour of love, to God, Christ, and his people, in which they should be continually employed; and in the discharge of duty, with regard to themselves; and in the care of their own vineyard, with respect to their families, which are their charge, and also to the church of Christ, of which they are members. These labourers are said to be "hired" by the householder, or owner of the vineyard, Christ, not strictly and properly speaking; nor does it mean that he had no prior right to their obedience, or that there is any merit in their labour, or that that is the condition of their salvation; but it signifies the influence of his grace, in making them willing to serve him cheerfully, and labour in his vineyard freely; to encourage them in which, he makes them many gracious, and exceeding great and precious promises, and particularly that of eternal life: for which purpose, it is said, that he "went out", either from his Father as mediator, being sent by him; or from heaven into this world, by the assumption of human nature; or by his Spirit, and the influence of his grace, in the calls of his people, to their several services, in his church; and that "early in the morning": some of them being very early called to labour there; meaning either in the morning of the world, as Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, and others; or in the morning of the Jewish church state, as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and the like; or in the morning of the Gospel dispensation, as the apostles of Christ, which seems most likely; or in the morning of youth, as Timothy and others. Several things, in this first part of the parable, might be illustrated from the Jewish writings. They have a parable indeed, which, in the several parts of it, greatly resembles this, and begins thus {m};

"to what is R. Bon like? to a king that hath a vineyard, Mylewp wyle rkvw, "and hires labourers into it", &c."

Out of which some other things will be remarked, in the following parts of this parable: of a son's being sent, and going out to hire labourers into the vineyard, take the following instance {n}:

"it happened to R. Jochanan ben Matthia, that said to his son, rkvw au, "go out, and hire labourers" for us: "he went out", and agreed with them for their food."

The time of hiring labourers, here mentioned, exactly agrees with the Jewish accounts {o}.

"Says R. Juda ben Bethira, when the face of all the east is light unto Hebron, all the people go out, every man to his work; and when it is so light, it is good "to hire labourers we say"."

Upon which the gloss says,

"every man goes out to his work, not for labourers, but the "householder", who rtwy Mykvm, "rises earlier to find labourers to hire"."

Perhaps it may not be worth while to observe, how large a spot of ground, set with vines, was, by them, called a vineyard: it is frequently said by them {p},

"that a vineyard planted by less than four cubits, is no vineyard; but R. Simeon, and the wise men, say it is a vineyard."

{m} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 21. 3. Vid. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 72. 4. & Talmud Hicros. Beracot, fol 5. 3. {n} Misua Bava Metzia, c. 7. sect. 1. {o} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 28. 2. {p} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 33. 2. T. Bab. Bava

Bathra, fol. 37. 2. & 33. 1.

Matthew 20:2

Ver. 2. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day,.... These labourers were of that sort that were called Mwy rykv, "hired for a day"; concerning whom is the following rule {q}:

"he that is hired for a day, may demand it all the night; and he that is hired for a night may demand it all the day: he that is hired for hours, may demand it all the night, and all the day; he that is hired for a week, he that is hired for a month, he that is hired for a year, he that is hired for seven, if he goes out in the day, may demand all the day; and if he goes out in the night, he may demand it all the night, and all the day."

And the wages of a day were usually rnyd "a penny"; which, if understood of a Roman penny, was seven pence halfpenny of our money. One of their canons runs thus {r}:

"he that hires a labourer in the winter, to work with him in the summer, Mwy lkb, "for a penny every day", and he gives him his hire; and, lo! his hire is alike to that in the winter, a "sela" every day, this is forbidden; because it looks as if he chose that time to lessen his wages; but if he says to him, work with me from this day, to such a time, "for a penny every day", though his hire is the same, a "sela" every day, this is lawful."

By the penny a day agreed for with the labourers, may be meant external privileges; or the free promise made, whether to ministers, or private believers, of a sufficient supply of grace daily, that as their day is, their strength shall be; together with that of eternal life and happiness at last.

He sent them into his vineyard; to labour there: for none have any business there, but such who are called and sent by the owner of it; and where sons are sent, and work, as well as servants; see *Mt 21:28*.

{q} Misna Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 11. Maimen Hilch. Shericut, c. 11. sect. 2. {r} Maimon. Hilch. Milvah Ulavah, c. 7. sect. 12. Vid. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 86. 2. & 87. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

Matthew **_20:3_**

Ver. 3. And he went out about the third hour,.... About nine o'clock in the morning,

and saw others standing idle in the market place: the place where labourers used to be hired: and may design the world, because a place full of people, and of great wickedness, for the whole world lies in it; a place of trade and traffic in worldly things, and likewise of worldly and carnal pleasure, and also of idleness. Now God's elect before calling, are in this place: they are natives of it, have their conversation according to it: here Christ came in person, and here he sends his ministers, his Gospel, to find them out, and by his Spirit and grace he calls them from hence; so that afterwards they are no more of it, though they are in it: but before conversion they belong to it, and their posture then is standing idle; being sluggish, and slothful in business, unwilling to work, and afraid of a little danger and trouble, sauntering away their time in carnal pleasures, and so clothed with rags, and in a starving, famishing condition: but Christ's eye is upon them; he observes, and takes notice of them in this disagreeable position and situation, and speaks of them in the following manner.

Matthew **_20:4_**

Ver. 4. And said unto them, go ye also into the vineyard,.... Expressive of a call of divine grace out of the world, into the church; and which arises from mere grace, and good will, without any merit in, or motive from man, as the case here shows: for the householder went out to these men, not they to him; he puts the question to them, and calls them, and bids them go into his vineyard; they do not ask him to hire them, nor desire to be in his service. Moreover, the persons called were a parcel of idle, mean, vulgar people, as market folks commonly are; the weak, base, and foolish things of the world. The encouragement given them follows,

and whatsoever is right I will give you which is to be understood, not of strict justice; for in this sense nothing could be given to sinful mortals, for their services; but of grace, for what is had on this score, whether in this, or in the other world, is in a way of giving and receiving, which are the phrases used here, and in the context. It properly signifies what is meet and convenient, and will be satisfying; and since it is not expressed what he would give them, and they should receive, it calls for faith and dependence on divine goodness: for it does not yet appear, what the faithful labourers in Christ's vineyard will want, and shall receive in this life, nor what will be their happiness in the world to come: the glories and joys of heaven are unseen things; and eternal life is a hidden one at present, and must be trusted for:

and they went their way: into the vineyard, the church, to labour there; which shows, that the call was powerful and efficacious; they were powerfully wrought upon by it; were at once inclined, and made willing to, and did go cheerfully, without standing to dispute about their work or wages.

Matthew 20:5

Ver. 5. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour,.... About twelve o'clock, or at noon, and three o'clock in the afternoon. These three last mentioned seasons of the day, were the hours of prayer; see ***Ac 2:15*** and did likewise: seeing others in the same place, and posture, he called them, and sent them into his vineyard, to labour there, giving them the same promise he did to others.

Matthew 20:6

Ver. 6. And about the eleventh hour he went out,.... About five o'clock in the afternoon. The Persic version reads it, "the twelfth hour", which was six o'clock in the afternoon, the last hour of the day. The Jews divided their day into twelve hours, *Joh 11:9* and these twelve hours into four parts; ***Ne 9:3*** each part containing three hours, to which division there is a manifest respect in this parable. These different seasons of the husbandman's going out to hire labourers, may have regard either to the several periods of time, and ages of the world, as before the law, under the law, the times of the Messiah, and the last days; or the various dispensations of the Gospel, first by Christ, and John the Baptist to the Jews, then by the apostles to the same in their first mission, afterwards when their commission was renewed, first to the Jews in Judea, and then to the same among the nations of the world, and last of all to the Gentiles; or to the several stages of human life, and may regard Christ's call of persons in childhood, youth, manhood, and old age; which last may be signified by the eleventh hour, as also the Gentiles, and the remainder of God's elect in the last day:

and found others standing idle; in the same place and position as before: for the state and condition of God's elect, by nature, as it is the same with others, it is the same with them all. The word "idle" is omitted here by the Vulgate Latin, the Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but is retained in the Syriac and Persic versions; and stands in the Greek copies:

and saith unto them, why stand ye here all the day idle? for being about the eleventh hour, the day was far spent, it was almost gone, a small portion of it remained, but one hour, as appears from *Mt 20:12*.

Matthew 20:7

Ver. 7. They say unto him, because no man hath hired us,.... This may be fitly applied to the Gentiles, who hundreds of years were neglected by God; he overlooked the times of their ignorance, took no notice of them in their state of stupidity, blindness, and irreligion; but suffered them to walk in their own ways, sent no prophets to instruct them, nor messages, nor messengers to them; till at length the Jews, having rejected and crucified the Messiah, and persecuted his apostles, and contradicted, and blasphemed the Gospel, they were ordered to go to the Gentiles, and preach it to them:

he saith unto them, go ye also into the vineyard: the Gospel was made the power of God unto salvation to them; they were called by grace, became of the same body the church, were fellow heirs with the believing Jews, partakers of the same promises and privileges, in a Gospel church state, and were equally labourers in the Lord's vineyard:

and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive; with the rest of the labourers in it. This clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; nor is it in Beza's most ancient Greek copy, though in all the rest; nor is it in the Persic version, which has added, "and they went", as they were bidden, into the vineyard, the call being effectual; but is retained in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions.

Matthew 20:8

Ver. 8. So when even was come,.... At six o'clock, or when the sun was set, which was the time of paying labourers their wages: thus in the parable of the Jews, before referred to, which bears some resemblance to this, it is said,

"bre tel, {s} that "at evening time" the labourers came to take their wages."

Sooner than this, one that was hired for a day, could not demand it; nor was the master of the vineyard, who hired him, obliged to pay him till the sun was set {t}, which was the time of his going forth from his labour {u}. This even may be understood, either of the evening of the Jewish state, upon the calling of the Gentiles; or of the end of the world, the close of the Gospel dispensation; when the work of it will be over, when all the elect of God, Jews and Gentiles, shall be called and gathered in, and all brought to repentance towards God, and faith in Christ.

The lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward: by the lord of the vineyard may be meant God the Father, who has chosen and separated the vineyard of the church for himself; and has made it the care and charge of his Son Jesus Christ; who, as mediator, may be designed by "his steward"; who has not only all the stores of grace in his hand, to distribute to his people, in this life, as their cases require; but has also eternal life and happiness in his possession for them; not only the promise of it, but that itself; and has a power of giving it to as many as the Father hath given him; and which he, the righteous judge, and faithful steward, will give at the day of judgment, to all that love his appearing.

Call the labourers, and give them their hire; the proper time being come: for the Jews say {w}

"it is an affirmative precept to give the wages of an hired person in its time; as it is said, *De 24:15* at "his day thou shalt give him his hire"; and if it is prolonged after its time, it is transgressing a negative precept, as it is said, (in the same place,) "neither shall the sun go down upon it.""

So Jews and Gentiles were called to partake of the same Gospel privileges; and so will all the faithful labourers in the Lord's vineyard be called together, and have the reward of eternal life bestowed upon them, and be bid to enter into the joy of their Lord, and inherit the kingdom prepared for them, as they before were ordered to go into the vineyard, and work. And though eternal life may be called hire or reward, because as hire is given to labourers, so is eternal life; and as that is given at the even and close of the day, and when the labourer has done his work, so everlasting glory will be given to the saints at the end of life, and when they have done the will and work of God: yet it will not be bestowed by way of merit, or, as if there was a just proportion between the work, labour, and services of the saints, and the glory that shall be revealed in them. Their purest services, even their sufferings for Christ, are not worthy to be compared with that; nor are there any that are done by them, but what are due to God, what he has a right unto, and are their duty to perform; so that when they are done by them in the best and most perfect manner, they are but unprofitable servants: nor can they, by anything they do, be profitable to God, or give anything to him, which can be obligatory upon him, to do anything for them, or be a valuable consideration for anything they should receive from him; and therefore they cannot merit anything at his hand, and much less eternal life: besides, their services are impure and imperfect, and whenever anything is well done by them, it is done not by their own strength and might, but by the assistance and grace of God; and therefore they can have no demand upon him for what they do: eternal life, though a reward, is not a reward of debt, but of grace; it is the free gift of God through Christ; God has graciously promised it in the covenant of his grace, before the world began; he has given it into the hands of his Son for his people, with whom it is sure; and he gives it freely to all the sheep the Father has given him.

Beginning from the last unto the first; beginning with the last that was called and sent into the vineyard, and so proceeding on to the next to them; giving them their wages as he went along, till he came to the first, who were early in the morning hired into this service; intimating, that some such method will be taken in the introducing of the saints into the kingdom of the Messiah here, and into his everlasting kingdom hereafter; whereby that saying of our Lord's which occasioned this parable, will be also fulfilled, "the first shall be last, and last first".

{s} Shirashirim Rabba, fol. 21. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 72. 4. T. Hicros.

Beracot, fol. 5. 3. {t} Bartenora in Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 11. {u} Jarchi in Lev. xix. 13. {w} Maimen, Helch. Secirut, c. 11. sect. 1.

Matthew 20:9

Ver. 9. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour,.... Who were the last that were hired; and signify either such, as are called in their last days, in old age; or Gentile sinners; or the last of God's elect, that will be called by grace, in the end of the world:

they received every man a penny: the same they first agreed for, that were hired early into the vineyard; and all, and every man alike, not one more and another less. So the same church privileges and immunities are common to all believers, Jews or Gentiles, sooner or later called; and equal title give to the same eternal life and happiness, which will be enjoyed alike, by one saint as another: they are all loved with the same everlasting love by God; they are chosen alike by him in his Son, at the same time, in the same way and manner, and to the same grace and glory; they are interested in the same covenant, in all the promises and blessings of it; they are bought with the same price of a Redeemer's blood, are justified by the same righteousness, and are called in one hope of their calling; they are equally the sons of God, and their glory and happiness are always expressed by the same thing, as a kingdom, a crown, and inheritance, &c. They are all equally heirs of the same kingdom and glory, and are born again to the same incorruptible inheritance, of which they will all be partakers; they will all be called to inherit the same kingdom, they will sit on the same throne of glory, and wear the same crown of righteousness, and enjoy the same uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit. Now, indeed, they have not the same measures of grace; some have more, others less; but in heaven, it will be alike, complete and perfect in all; and even now, they have the same grace for nature and kind, only it is not in all in the same exercise; now the saints are distinguished by the several stations and places in which they are; though they are members of the same body, they have not the same office, and have gifts differing from one another; but in the other state, all such offices and gifts will cease, and all will be upon an equal foot; be where Christ is, and behold his glory, and will stand in no need of each other's instruction and help. Now the capacities of man are different, according to the different temperament of their bodies, their different education, opportunities, advantages, and stations in life, but in the other world, where this difference will be no more, every vessel of mercy being prepared for glory, will be equally capable of receiving it: and though there will be degrees of punishment in hell, proportionate to the sins of men, which the justice of God requires, yet it follows not, that there will be degrees in glory; since that is not proportioned to the works of men, but springs from the grace of God, and yet in a way of justice too, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ: and since the saints have an equal interest in these things, it seems that upon the foot of justice, they should equally enjoy all that happiness which these entitle them to.

Matthew 20:10

Ver. 10. But when the first came,.... Who were early hired into the vineyard; and design either the first saints that were in the world; or the Jews that first believed in Christ, either really or nominally; or such, who were called by grace in their early days:

they supposed, or "hoped", as the Syriac version renders it,

that they should have received more; than a penny, a greater reward: not that they could expect it on the foot of their agreement, or on account of their work; but because they observed, that they that came last into the vineyard, had as much as they agreed for; and therefore hoped, from the goodness of their Lord to them, that they should receive more:

and they likewise received every man a penny; the selfsame privileges of the Gospel, and a title to the selfsame reward of free grace, the selfsame glory and happiness.

Matthew 20:11

Ver. 11. And when they had received it,.... The external privileges of the Gospel dispensation, an inheritance among them that are sanctified, and a right unto it, on the foot of free grace,

they murmured against the good man of the house; who had been so kind and liberal, to those who came last into the vineyard, and had done no injury to them, but gave them a full reward. So the Jews that first believed in Christ, were at first uneasy at the Gospel being preached to the Gentiles, at the calling of them, and their partaking of the same privileges in a Gospel church state with them, without submitting to the ceremonies of the law, as they had done; just as the Pharisees, in Christ's time, murmured against him; for receiving sinners, and eating with them: though in the latter day, the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and in the ultimate glory there will be no murmuring at each other's happiness.

Matthew 20:12

Ver. 12. Saying, these last have wrought but one hour,.... Thinking it hard, that they should have the same reward for the service of one hour, others had for the service of many. This is grudged by the Jews {x};

""Bath Kol", a voice from heaven, went out and said, "Ketiah bar Shallum", is prepared for the life of the world to come; Rabbi wept, and said, there is that obtains his world (or the world to come for himself) txa hevb, "in one hour"; and there is that obtains it in many years."

The same observation is also made by the same person, on account of R. Eleazar ben Durdia {y}. So in the parable of the Jews above mentioned, which is the broken remains of a common proverb among them like {z} this; it is observed, that there being one labourer among those that were hired, who did his work better than all the rest, and who was taken notice of by the king; that when

"at even the labourers came to take their wages, this labourer also came to take his; and the king gave him his wages equal with them, (or, as in another place, a perfect one,) the labourers began to press him with difficulty, (or as elsewhere {a} Nymertm, "they murmured",) and said, Oh! our Lord, the king, "we have laboured all the day"; but this man has not laboured but two or three hours in the day, and he takes his wages, even as ours, or a perfect reward."

And so it follows here,

and thou hast made them equal to us, who have borne the burden and heat of the day; of all the Jewish rites and ceremonies, which were burdensome and intolerable. The ceremonial law was a burden to the Jewish people; the multitude of sacrifices enjoined them, and the frequent repetition of them, together with the great number of other ordinances and institutions, produced a weariness in them; especially in the carnal part of them, who saw not the things typified by them, the use and end of them, and so did not enjoy spiritual pleasure in them, ***Mal 1:13***. It was a yoke, and a yoke of bondage to them, which brought on them a spirit of bondage, through the fear of death, which was the penalty annexed to it; and it was an insupportable one, which neither they, nor their forefathers, were able to bear, because it made them debtors to keep the whole law: and this was made still more burdensome, by the traditions of the elders, which were added to it, and which the Scribes and Pharisees obliged to the observance of; to which they themselves still added, and bound heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and laid them on men's shoulders. The law was a fiery law, and the dispensation of it was a hot and scorching one; it was uncomfortable working under the flashes of a mount, that burned with fire: the law worked wrath, and possessed the minds of men with a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation. This may also be applied to such Christians, who are called to more severe service or sufferings for Christ, than others are; who are almost pressed down without measure, and endure fiery trials, are scorched, and made black, with the sun of persecution beating upon them; as the saints under the ten persecutions of the Roman emperors, and as the confessors and martyrs in the times of papal power and cruelty; and who, it might be thought, will have a greater degree of glory and happiness hereafter; and so some have been of opinion, that these are they that shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years, *Re 20:4* But it rather seems, that others will be made equal with them, who have not endured what they have done; for all the dead in Christ, all that have part in the first resurrection, when Christ comes, as all the saints will then rise, will share in that glory; even the innumerable company, chosen, redeemed, and called, out of every nation, tongue, and people, and will be admitted to the same honour and happiness, ***Re 7:9*** And this character will also agree with many other servants of Christ, who are called to harder and more laborious service than others are, and labour more abundantly in the Lord's vineyard than others do, and are longer employed in it; as for instance, the Apostle Paul; and yet the same crown of righteousness that is laid up for him, and given to him, will be given to all that love the appearance of Christ, though they have not laboured for his name's sake, as he has done.

{x} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 10. 2. {y} Ib. fol. 17. 1. {z} Shirhashirim

Rabba, fol 21. 4. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 72. 4. {a} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 3.

Matthew ***20:13***

Ver. 13. But he answered one of them,.... Who was the forwardest and loudest in his complaints, and represented the rest;

and said, friend, I do thee no wrong; by giving all alike, the same privileges and blessings to the last, as to the first, since nothing was withheld from him. And indeed the Lord does no wrong to any, by the distinction which he makes among his creatures: he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works: he does no injury to the evil angels, by choosing the good angels, and confirming them in the estate in which they were created; when the others are reserved in chains of darkness, to the judgment of the great day; or by choosing fallen men, in Christ, and making provisions of grace for them, and not devils: and so there is no unrighteousness in him, nor does he do any wrong to any, when, like the potter, out of the same clay, he makes one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour; any more than when, in a providential way, he gives riches and wealth to some, and withholds them from others; or sends his Gospel, the means of grace to one, and not to another: and still less can he be thought to do wrong to the sons of men, by giving to them alike the same grace and privileges here, and the same happiness and glory hereafter; since neither have any right to what they have, or shall enjoy, and no one has the less for what is given to the other.

Didst thou not agree with me for a penny? That is, to labour in the vineyard all the day for a penny; yea, this agreement was made personally with him, not with a servant, or messenger of his; though if it had, it ought, according to the Jewish canons, to have been abode by, which run thus {b}:

"A man says to his messenger, or servant, go and hire workmen for me for three pence; he goes and hires them for four pence: if the messenger says to them, your wages be upon me, he gives them four pence, and takes three pence of the master of the house; he looses one out of his own purse: if he says to them, your hire be upon the master of the house, the master of the house gives them according to the custom of the province: if there are one in the province that hired for three pence, and others that are hired for four pence, he gives them but three pence, "and the murmuring" is against the messenger; in what things? When the work is not known, but when the work is known, and it is worth four pence, the master of the house gives them four pence; but if his messenger does not say to them four pence, they do not labour and do what deserves four pence. The householder says to him, hire me for four pence, and the messenger goes and hires for three pence, though the work deserves four pence, they have but three pence; because that Nmue le wlbq, "they took it upon themselves", (i.e. they agreed for so much,) and their murmuring is against the messenger."

Thus the argument in the parable proceeds upon the agreement, which ought to be abode by.

{b} Maimon. Hilch, Shecirut, c. 9. sect. 3.

Matthew *20:14*

Ver. 14. Take that thine is,.... By agreement, and go thy way; out of my sight, give me no more trouble on this head; which looks like a dismissal from his service, and after privileges; and was true of many among the Jews, who were only nominal professors, and from whom the Gospel and ordinances of it were taken:

I will give unto this last man that was called, and sent into the vineyard,

even as unto thee; the same outward privileges, besides special grace, and eternal glory, which it looks as if the other had not.

Matthew *20:15*

Ver. 15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?.... External gifts and outward privileges, such as enjoying the word and ordinances, are God's own; and he may, as he does, bestow them on whom he will, and when and where he pleases; as he gave them to the Jews, and continued them many hundred years, when the Gentiles were utterly with them destitute of them; and as he has bestowed them in a more abundant manner for a long time on the Gentiles, whilst the Jews despise and reject them. Special grace is his own, which he gives to whom he pleases; it is by his own grace, and not the merits of men, that any are chosen, adopted, justified, pardoned, regenerated, and called; that they have faith, hope, love, repentance, or perform new obedience from a new heart, and new principles. Heaven and glory is his own, of his own preparing and giving; and both grace and glory are disposed of, and that very rightly and lawfully, according to his sovereign good will and pleasure: he chooses, adopts, justifies, pardons, regenerates, calls, and sanctifies whom he pleases; and brings what sons to glory he thinks fit, and bestows it equally upon them: and in so doing, does no wrong, or any injustice to any of his creatures; not to the fallen angels, by choosing some of their species, and confirming them in their original constitution; and by leaving them, the fallen angels, in their apostasy; nor by making provision for fallen man, and not them, nor by punishing them with everlasting destruction; nor do they ever complain of any wrong being done them: nor to non-elect men; for none of Adam's race have any right to grace or glory, and therefore no wrong is done to any of them, by withholding them from them, whereby nothing is taken from them, and given to others; and by punishing them for sin; nor to any elect men, by making others partners with them; since they are all alike by nature, unworthy of grace and glory, and deserving of wrath: what is enjoyed by any of them, is of mere grace, and not through merit; and one has not a whit the less, for what the other is possessed of; so that there is no room for envy, murmuring, and complaint:

is thine eye evil because I am good? An "evil eye", is opposed to a good eye, frequently in Jewish writings, as a "good eye" signifies beneficence and liberality; hence it is said {c}

"He that gives a gift, let him give it hpy Nyeb "with a good eye"; bountifully and generously; and he that devoteth anything, let him devote it with a "good eye","

cheerfully and freely: so an "evil eye" intends envy and covetousness, as it does here: and the sense is, art thou envious at the good of others, and covetous and greedy to monopolize all to thyself, because I am liberal, kind, and beneficent? Men are apt to complain of God, and charge his procedures in providence and grace, with inequality and injustice; whereas he does, as he may, all things according to his sovereign will, and never contrary to justice, truth, and goodness; though he is not to be brought to man's bar, and men should submit to his sovereignty.

{c} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 65. 1. & 71. 1. & 72. 1.

Matthew 20:16

Ver. 16. So the last shall be first, and the first last,.... As he had asserted in *Mt 19:30* and which is clearly illustrated by this parable, as it may be applied to Jews or Gentiles, or to nominal and real Christians:

for many be called; externally, under the ministration of the Gospel, as the Jews in general were, by Christ and his apostles; but

few chosen; in Christ from all eternity, both to grace and glory; and in consequence, and as an evidence of it, but few among the Jews; as also in the Gentile world, comparatively speaking: and even but a few of those that are outwardly called, are inwardly and effectually called by the powerful grace of God, out of darkness into marvellous light, into the grace and liberty of the Gospel, into communion with Christ, and to the obtaining his kingdom and glory, according to the eternal purpose of God. It is a saying of R. Simeon ben Jochai {d}

"I have seen the children of the world to come (elsewhere {e} it is, of the chamber), Nyjewm Nhw, "and they are few"."

Though he vainly thought, that if those few were but two, they were himself and his son.

{d} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 13. 4. {e} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 45. 2. & Sanhedrim, fol. 97. 2.

Matthew 20:17

Ver. 17. And Jesus going up to Jerusalem,.... Which was situated {f} in the highest part of the land of Israel: the land of Israel, is said to be higher than any other land whatever; and the temple at Jerusalem, higher than any part of the land of Israel; wherefore Christ's going to Jerusalem, is expressed by going up to it. Whither he came either from the coasts of Judea, from beyond Jordan, *Mt 19:1* where he had been some time healing diseases, disputing with the Pharisees, discoursing with the young ruler, and instructing his disciples; or from a country near to the wilderness, from a city called Ephraim, *Joh 11:54* where he continued some time with his disciples, after the sanhedrim had took counsel to put him to death; for this was his last journey to Jerusalem.

Took the twelve disciples apart in the way: into some private place, which lay near the road; for it seems that there were others that followed him, besides the twelve; when he was not willing they should hear what he had to say to them, concerning the issue of this, journey; lest either they should be discouraged and desert him, or it should be made public, and methods be used to prevent it: and said unto them; the disciples, whom he thought fit once more to remind of his sufferings and death, and to prepare them for the same; and though they would not so thoroughly understand all that he should say, yet when it was come to pass, they would remember it, and which would be of service to confirm their faith in him, as the true Messiah. See Gill "Mk 10:32".

{f} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 87. 1.

Matthew 20:18

Ver. 18. Behold, we go up to Jerusalem,.... This is the last time of our going thither; observe, and take notice of what I am about to say; some extraordinary things will come to pass, and, as Luke relates that he said,

all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man, shall be accomplished; everything that is recorded in *Ps 22:1*, and in *Isa 53:1*, or in any other prophecies of the Old Testament, relating to the ill treatment the Messiah should meet with, to his sufferings and death, and all the circumstances attending them, shall be exactly fulfilled in every point: and that they might not be at a loss about what he meant, he gives an account of various particular things, which should befall him;

and the Son of man shall be betrayed: he does not say by whom, though he knew from the beginning who should betray him, that it would be one of his disciples, and that it would be Judas; but the proper time was not yet come to make this discovery: the persons into whose hands he was to be betrayed, are mentioned;

unto the chief priests, and unto the Scribes; who were his most inveterate and implacable enemies; and who were the persons that had already taken counsel to put him to death, and were seeking all advantages and opportunities to execute their design:

and they shall condemn him to death; which is to be understood not of their declaring it as their opinion, that he was guilty of death, and ought to die by a law of their's, which declaration they made before Pilate; nor of their procuring the sentence of death to be pronounced by him, upon him; but of their adjudging him to death among themselves, in the palace of the high priest; which was done by them, as the sanhedrim and great council of the nation; though either they could not, or did not, choose to execute it themselves, and therefore delivered him up to the Romans; for this act of condemning him to death, was to be, and was, before the delivery of him up to the Gentiles, as is clear from what follows.

Matthew 20:19

Ver. 19. And shall deliver him to the Gentiles,.... To Pilate, an Heathen governor, and to the Roman officers and soldiers under him; see *Joh 18:35*.

To mock him, as they did, by putting on him a scarlet robe, platting a crown of thorns, and placing it on his head, and a reed in his hand; and then bowed the knee to him, and cried, hail, king of the Jews!

and to scourge him: as he was by Pilate, at least by his orders: Mark adds, "and spit upon him"; as not only did the Jews in the palace of the high priest, but also the Gentiles, the Roman soldiers, after they had mocked him in the manner before described:

and to crucify him: which, as it was a cruel and shameful death, such as slaves and the worst of malefactors were put to, so it was a Roman one; for which reason, the Jews choose to deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. The Persic version here adds, "and put him into the grave": which though it followed his crucifixion, was not done by the Gentiles, but by Joseph of Arimathea, a Jew, and a disciple of Jesus; and that not in a contemptuous, but honourable manner

and the third day he shall rise again: this he said for the comfort of his disciples; but now, though these things were so clearly and distinctly expressed by Christ, and which show his omniscience, and give proof both of his deity and Messiahship, yet Luke observes of the disciples, "that they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken": the words were plain, the grammatical sense of them was easy, but they could not imagine that they were to be taken literally; which was such a glaring contradiction to their received and rooted principles of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, and the grandeur of it, that they fancied these expressions carried a mystical, secret meaning in them, which they were not masters of: and certain it is, that what our Lord now said, was so far from destroying, or weakening these prejudices of theirs, that it rather confirmed them in them; particularly, what he said about rising again, which seemed to have put them afresh in mind, and to excite their hopes of this external felicity, as appears from the following case.

Matthew 20:20

Ver. 20. Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children,.... Whose name was Salome, as may be concluded from *Mt 27:56* compared with *Mr 15:40*. She is not called the wife of Zebedee, who might be now dead, but the mother of his children, his two sons, as the Arabic version renders it: James and John, and who were the disciples of Christ: it is not certain, that Zebedee was ever a follower of him; and therefore the woman is described by her relation to her children, and not her husband; and the rather, because it was in their name, and on their account, that she came to Jesus. She is said to be the sister of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of our Lord; and if so, might hope to succeed in her request, on the foot of relation; as also, since she herself had been a constant follower of, and attendant on him; and especially, inasmuch as her sons were his favourite disciples;

with her sons; her two sons, James and John, whom Mark mentions by name:

worshipping him,

and desiring a certain thing of him; that is, she came in a very submissive manner to him, either bowed unto him, or kneeled down before him, or threw herself at his feet, and signified that she had a single favour, and a very considerable one, to ask of him. Mark represents the case thus, that her two sons, James and John, came to Christ, and that they themselves spoke to him, and addressed him in this manner: "Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us, whatsoever we shall desire": which was a very odd request, both as to the matter and manner of it; that they should ask; and insist upon everything to be done for them, they desired; and suggest, that they expected that he would promise them this, before they declared the particular favour they had to ask of him. The matter may be reconciled thus. These two disciples, having observed what Christ had said concerning the twelve disciples sitting on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and what he had just related, concerning his rising again the third day, which they might understand of some display of his glory; and concluding from all this, that the setting up of his temporal monarchy was at hand, inform their mother of it, and move to her, to use her interest with Christ, in their favour: and which they did, partly to shun the envy and ill will of the rest of the disciples; and partly, to conceal their own pride and vanity; as also, they might think a request from her, on their behalf, would be more easily granted: accordingly, she agreeing to the motion, they all three came, as Matthew relates, and the mother is the mouth, and speaks for her sons; so that they may be said to make such a request by her, she representing them; or they joined in the petition with her; or as soon as she had made it, they seconded it, and made it their own.

Matthew 20:21

Ver. 21. And he said unto her, what wilt thou?.... Mark says, "he said unto them"; her two sons, James and John, "what would you that I should do for you?" Both is true; what is this singular favour? what business of moment and importance is it, you would have me do for you, you are so eager and pressing for, and so solicitous of? This he said, not as being ignorant of the matter; he knew the corruption of their hearts, the vanity of their minds, their carnal, worldly, and ambitious views; but to lead them on to say all they had to say upon this head; in which may be observed the goodness, humanity, and patience of Christ, in not upbraiding them with their pride and insolence, in bearing with their rashness and folly, and in giving them room to believe, that he should answer their request in every thing that was right and reasonable to be done,

She saith unto him, grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on the right hand, and the other the left in thy kingdom: or, as in Mark, "in thy glory" that is, in thy glorious kingdom; meaning a temporal one, which would outdo all the kingdoms of the world, in external glory, pomp, and splendour, as they imagined: to sit one on the right hand and the other on the left hand of Christ, when he should be seated, literally, on the throne of his father David, signifies to be nearest to his person; to be next to him in power and authority; to have the highest posts of honour, and places of trust and profit; to be his prime ministers; and, in a word, to have the greatest share next to him of worldly honour, riches, and power. To sit at the right hand, was, with the Jews, reckoned a great mark of honour and affection; see ***1Ki 2:19*** and so with other nations: with the Egyptians especially, it was accounted a great honour to be placed on the right hand, but the greatest to be in the middle: which was equally observed among the Romans, and the same with the Africans and Numidians; though Xenophon relates, that Cyrus, with a singular prudence, that he might receive his guests the more honourably, used to place them at the left hand, accounting that part, as nearest the heart, to be the more worthy. {g} These two, the best and most honourable places, this woman was for engrossing for her two sons, who joined with her in the request; for Mark says, that "they said unto him, grant unto us that we may sit, &c." and Christ's answer here, which follows, implies as much.

{g} Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 19.

Matthew 20:22

Ver. 22. But Jesus answered, and said,.... To her two sons,

ye know not what ye ask. They were ignorant of the nature of Christ's kingdom, which is spiritual, and not of this world: or they would never have asked such a question, or sued for that which will never be enjoyed by any and supposing that Christ's kingdom had been such as they imagined, yet in asking for honours and riches, they might not know what they asked for; they might promise themselves much pleasure and happiness in the enjoyment of them, and yet, if indulged with them, might be disappointed, and find unexpected troubles and uneasiness. It would have been much more proper and seasonable, on hearing of Christ's being mocked, scourged, spit upon, and crucified, if they had put such a question to themselves, Christ here directs to, are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with? meaning his reproaches, sorrows, sufferings, and death; which because of the disagreeableness of them, he compares to a bitter cup of vengeance, wrath, fury, and indignation; and because they were appointed to him, and allotted for him, they were his portion, therefore he expresses them by a "cup"; and because they were so many and great, of such an overwhelming nature, that he seemed to be plunged into them, and covered with them, therefore he likens them to a "baptism" and which the ordinance of water baptism, performed by immersion, is a lively representation of. Now Christ suggests to these disciples, that instead of indulging their ambitious desires of worldly grandeur, that they would do well to consider what a bitter cup he had to drink of, and what a sea of sorrows and sufferings he was about to be plunged into, and drenched in; and whether they could think of enduring anything of the like kind, for his sake, which was most likely to be in a short time, what they would be called unto, and not to honours, ease, and pleasure; and what they must be sure, more or less, to undergo, before they entered the everlasting kingdom of glory:

they say unto him, we are able; not considering the nature of these sufferings, and their own weakness; but partly through ignorance of themselves, and a vain confidence which possessed them; and chiefly through a vehement desire of the places in his kingdom, they asked for, and which they thought drinking his cup, and being baptized with his baptism, were the condition, and the means of enjoying; and so rashly affirm their ability, and which includes their willingness to comply herewith.

Matthew 20:23

Ver. 23. And he saith unto them, ye shall drink indeed of my cup,.... Not of the selfsame, but of what was like unto it; meaning, that they should endure much persecution for his name's sake, as all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must expect in one shape or another. Thus James, who was one of these persons, was slain with the sword by Herod; John, the other, was imprisoned, and beaten by the order of the Jewish sanhedrim, was banished into the isle of Patmos by Domitian; and, some say, was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, though saved in it: so that these words seem to be a prophecy of what they should suffer for Christ, instead of enjoying places of worldly honour and profit under him, they were seeking for.

And be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: this clause is here, and in the former verse, omitted by the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, and in some Greek copies, and is thought to be transcribed hither out of Mark's Gospel; but the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions have it, and so has Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and it appears in many Greek copies. James, being bathed in his own blood, when killed with the sword, and John being cast into a vessel of scalding oil, these are fitly expressed by a baptism.

But to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine, to give; in the sense in which they asked it, since he was no temporal prince; nor was his kingdom of this world; nor had he any such external favours, or worldly honours: and as to the true and spiritual sense of such a phrase, it was not a point to be fixed now by him, as man, and according to his own will; as who should reign with him in the kingdom of heaven, who should sit down on the same throne with him, and enjoy all the glories and happiness of the world to come; and though, as mediator, all this glory was given to him, and he had it in his hands to give to others, yet to none

but those for whom, says he, it is prepared of my Father: for this is the true reading and sense of the last clause; signifying, that eternal life, or the heavenly glory, is a kingdom prepared by his Father, from the foundation of the world, and not for anybody, and every person, but for some only, according to his Father's sovereign will and pleasure; and that this is an affair that was fixed by him, in his eternal counsels and purposes, and in the covenant of his grace, and not to be adjusted now; nor was the designation of it to be, nor will the distribution of it be according to the merits of men, but the free grace of God; and though he, as mediator, was appointed to bestow both grace and glory on men, yet only on those the Father had given to him, for whom grace was laid up in him, and glory prepared.

Matthew 20:24

Ver. 24. And when they ten heard it,.... The other ten apostles, who either were within hearing the request made, and Christ's answer, or had by some means information of it:

they were moved with indignation against the two brethren; the two sons of Zebedee, James and John: they were not so much displeased with the mother of them, who asked the favour for them, as with her sons, knowing that they have put her upon making this motion to Christ; nor were they so much moved with indignation at the action, detesting all notions of superiority and preeminence; for they were all tinctured with the same carnal principle, and each was desirous of the chief place for himself; but they were angry, and out of all temper, that these two brethren should move for that, which they thought they had as good a right unto, as any of them: wherefore, as Mark says, "they began to be much displeased with" them, and to show their resentment, not only by their looks and gestures, but by words; and very probably they would have rose to very high words, and a downright quarrel, had not Christ interposed; as, from the following verse, it appears he did.

Matthew 20:25

Ver. 25. But Jesus called them unto him,.... All his twelve disciples, perceiving that the same ambitious views prevailed in them all: to discourage which, and to prevent their quarrelling one with another, he called them to him, and made use of the following reasonings:

and said, ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; appealing to them in a case that was well known by them, what the princes of the Gentiles did; or, as Mark expresses it, "they which are accounted", or "seem to rule over the Gentiles": who know not God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who neither serve and obey him, or have any dependence on him, but assume a power of governing others, take upon them to rule the nations of the world, and are acknowledged as such by them: these claim a superiority over others, and exercise lordly power over them; and they that are their great ones, their lords, and nobles under them; these also assert a preeminence, and exercise authority on those that are below them; which they have received from those that are above them: this is the usual way and method of the governments of the kingdoms of this world: wherefore, for the apostles to affect and desire a superiority to each other, in the kingdom of Christ, was to imitate the Gentiles, and to act according to worldly forms of government; which is very unsuitable to the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, whose kingdom is spiritual, and not of this world.

Ver. 26. But it shall not be so among you,.... This is not to be extended to Christian nations, as if there were to be no order of magistracy subsisting in them; but that all must be on a level, and no distinction of princes and subjects, of governors and governed; nor to Christian churches, as if there was no ecclesiastical authority to be used, or any church government and power to be exercised; none to rule, whom others are to obey and submit themselves to; but is to be restrained to the apostles as such, among whom there was an entire equality; being all apostles of Christ, being equally qualified and sent, and put into the selfsame office by him: the same holds good of all pastors of churches, who have no superintendency and pre-eminence over one another, or can, or ought to exercise any lordly power and authority, one, or more, over the rest; being equally invested with the same office power, one as another: for otherwise Christ's kingdom would appear like the nations of the world, and to be of a worldly nature; whereas it is spiritual, and does not lie in worldly pomp and grandeur, and in external superiority and pre-eminence of one another; but in the spiritual administration of the word and ordinances; which every pastor of a church has an equal right to exercise, and obedience to them lies in a submission to these things:

but whosoever will be great among you, let him be, or, as in Mark, shall be your minister: whoever would be reckoned a great man in the kingdom of Christ, or under the Gospel dispensation, must be a minister to others if he is desirous of being truly great in the esteem of God, and of men, he must do great service for Christ, and to the souls of men; and seek to bring great glory to God, by faithfully ministering the word and ordinances, and by denying himself worldly honour and glory, and by serving others, through much reproach, difficulty, and opposition.

Ver. 27. And whosoever will be chief among you,.... Or first, or have the pre-eminence, the first place in the kingdom of the Messiah,

let him be your servant; or, as in Mark, shall be servant of all: not only a minister, but a servant; not a servant of some only, but of all. This was verified in the Apostle Paul, who became a servant to all men, though he was free, that he might gain some to Christ; and by so doing was the chief, though he reckoned himself the least of the apostles, yea, less than the least of all saints. The Jews have a saying somewhat like this, that {h}

"everyone that makes himself dbek, as a servant, for the words of the law in this world, shall be made free in the world to come."

{h} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 35. 2.

Matthew 20:28

Ver. 28. Even as the son of man,.... Meaning himself, the seed of the woman, the son of Abraham, and of David, according to the flesh; and whom he proposes as an example of humility, and as an argument to draw them off from their ambitious views of worldly grandeur, and from all thoughts of the Messiah's setting up a temporal kingdom; since he

came not to be ministered unto by others; to be attended on in pomp and state, to have a numerous retinue about him, waiting upon him, and ministering to him; as is the case of the princes, and great men of the world; though he is Lord of all, and King of kings;

but to minister; in the form of a servant unto others, going about from place to place to do good, both to the bodies and souls of men: he "came" forth from his Father, down from heaven, into this world, by his assumption of human nature, to "minister" in the prophetic office, by preaching the Gospel, and working miracles, in confirmation of it; and in the priestly office, one branch of which is expressed in the next clause,

and to give his life a ransom for many: what he came to give was his life, which was his own, and than which nothing is more dear and precious: besides, his life was an uncommon one, being not only so useful to men, and entirely free from sin in itself, but was the life of the man Jesus, who is in union with the Son of God: this he came to "give", and did give into the hands of men, to the justice of God, and death itself; which giving, supposes it to be his own, and at his own disposal; was not forfeited by any act of his, nor was it forced from him, but freely laid down by him; and that as a "ransom", or redemption price for his people, to deliver them from the evil of sin, the bondage of Satan, the curses of a righteous law, from eternal death, and future wrath, and, in short, from all their enemies: which ransom price was paid "for" them in their room and stead, by Christ, as their substitute; who put himself in their legal place, and laid himself under obligation to pay their debts, and clear their scores, and redeem them from all their iniquities, and the evil consequences of them: and this he did "for many"; for as many as were ordained to eternal life; for as many as the Father gave unto him; for many out of every kindred, tongue, and people, and nation; but not for every individual of human nature; for many are not all.

Matthew **_20:29_**

Ver. 29. And as they departed from Jericho,.... Which, was distant about ten parsas, or miles, from Jerusalem {i}, through which Christ just passed, and had met with Zacchaeus, and called him, and delivered the parable concerning a nobleman's going into a far country. The Syriac and Persic versions render the words, "when Jesus departed from Jericho"; and the Arabic, "when he went out of Jericho"; not alone, but "with his disciples", as Mark says; and not with them only, for a great multitude followed him out of the city; either to hear him, or be healed by him, or to see him, or behold his miracles, or to accompany him to Jerusalem; whither he was going to keep the feast of the passover, and where they might be in some expectation he would set up his kingdom. The Ethiopic version reads it, "as they went out from Jerusalem", contrary to all copies and versions.

{i} Bartenora in Misn. Taraid, c. 3. sect. 8.

Matthew **_20:30_**

Ver. 30. And behold, two blind men,.... Mark and Luke make mention but of one; which is no contradiction to Matthew; for they neither of them say that there was but one. A greater difficulty occurs in Luke's account; for whereas Matthew and Mark both agree, that it was when Jesus came out of Jericho, that this cure was wrought, Luke says it was "when he came nigh unto it"; which some reconcile by observing, that that phrase may be rendered, "while he was near Jericho"; and so only signifies his distance from it, and not motion to it; but this will not solve the difficulty, because we after read of his entrance into it, and passing through it. Some therefore have thought, that Christ met with, and cured one blind man before he entered the city, and another when he came out of it and that Matthew has put the history of both together: but to me it seems, that there were three blind men cured; one before he went into Jericho, which Luke only relates, and two as he came out of Jericho, which Matthew here speaks of; and one of which, according to Mark, was by name Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus; for so Bartimaeus signifies. Tima, or Timaeus, was a name in use among the Jews: we often read of R. Judah amyt Nb, Ben Tima {k}, the son of Tima, or Timaeus. Origen {l} thinks, he had his name from the Greek word timh, which signifies "honour"; and so ymyj, "Time", with the Jews, is used for honour and profit {m}. This man's father might have been a very honourable and useful man, though the son was fallen into poverty and distress, through blindness; for which reason he may be mentioned, as being a person well known to the Jews.

Sitting by the wayside; Mark says, "begging", where such were wont to sit, in order to ask alms of persons, as they passed by;

when they heard that Jesus passed by; who, upon perceiving that there was an unusual concourse of people, might ask the reason of it, when it was told them that Jesus of Nazareth was coming that way: or, without asking, they might hear the people speak of him; and inasmuch as they had heard many things concerning him, and the miracles he wrought, applied to him for help, and

cried out, saying, have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David: in which may be observed the titles of honour they give him, which declare their faith in him; calling him Lord, expressing their sense of his deity, dominion, and power; and "Son of David", thereby owning and professing him to be the Messiah, that being a common name of him, well known among the Jews; See Gill on "Mt 1:1", the petition they make is, that he would "have mercy on them", who, through blindness, were in a poor, helpless, and miserable condition; and this was made with great vehemency: they "cried" out aloud, that he might hear them, and take pity on them; being eagerly desirous of having their sight, and firmly believing that he was able to restore it to them.

{k} T. Hieros. Nazir, fol. 52. 1. Erubin, fol. 19. 4. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 84. 1.

Bava Metzig, fol. 94. 1. Massech. Semachot, c. 9. Juchasin, fol. 159. 2. {l} Comment. in Matt. vol. 1. p. 428. Ed. Huet. {m} Targum in Esth. iii. 8. & v. 13. T. Hicros. Peah, fol. 15. 4.

Matthew 20:31

Ver. 31. And the multitude rebuked them,.... Who were either the friends or enemies of Christ: if his friends, they might rebuke them, that they might not be so troublesome to him, and judging it unworthy of him to have anything to do with such mean persons, and supposing that their business was only to ask alms of him; or if they were his enemies, or not so well affected to him, they might chide them for giving him such high characters, as Lord, and Son of David; and therefore being displeased with such encomiums, reproved them,

because they should hold their peace; be silent, and say no more of that kind, lest others should take up the same notion of him, and it should prevail among the people.

But they cried the more, saying, have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. They lifted up their voice higher, and cried the more loudly, that their voice might be above the noise of the people, and be heard by Christ; and renewed their request with more eagerness and importunity, repeating the characters they before gave him, being not in the least intimidated by the rebukes of the people: their faith in Jesus, as the Messiah, being more increased, and their desires of his pity and compassion being more enlarged, they grew bolder, and more resolute, as faith often does by opposition, and trials.

Matthew 20:32

Ver. 32. And Jesus stood still,.... Made a full stop, when he was near, or right against where these blind men sat; which shows the strength of faith, the force of prayer, and the great regard Christ has to both:

and called them: himself, being near unto them, and within the reach of his voice; or he commanded them to be brought to him, as Mark says: he ordered others to call them, or let them know, that it was his will they should come to him; upon which they threw away their garments, their long upper garments, which were some hindrance to a quick motion, at least Bartimaeus did; that they might be the sooner with him: and when they were come to him, he said,

what will ye that I shall do unto you? is it alms you want? or would you have your sight restored? This question he put, not as being ignorant of their desires, but to show both his power and willingness to do anything for them they should ask; and that their faith in him might be made manifest, and the people have their expectations raised, and they prepared to attend the miracle now to be wrought.

Matthew 20:33

Ver. 33. They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. That is, that their sight might be restored to them; for being deprived of that, it was all one as if their eyes were so closed, that they could not open them; and so the recovery of it is expressed by an opening of them. The opening of the eyes of the blind was prophesied of, as what should be done in the days of the Messiah, and by him, as an evidence of his being that person, *Isa 35:5* which prophecy these blind men might be acquainted with, and be an encouragement to their faith to expect a cure from him. They do not ask for alms, but for the recovery of their sight; which being granted, they would be able to get their bread in another way; for they were not like some idle persons that choose rather to be under such a calamity, or any other, that they might not be obliged to work with their hands for a livelihood. Their request shows, that they made no doubt of it, but firmly believed that Christ was able to do this for them, though the thing was impossible to be done by man; who therefore must conclude that he was not a mere man, but the Son of the living God.

Matthew 20:34

Ver. 34. So Jesus had compassion on them,.... His bowels moved towards them as a man; he pitied their miserable and distressed condition, and discovered the tenderness of his heart towards them by some outward sign, by his looks, or by some gesture or another: and touched their eyes; with his bare hand, without the use of any instrument or medicine. The Ethiopic version adds; "and said unto them, according to your faith shall it be unto you"; which seems to be taken out of ***Mt 9:29***. The Evangelist Mark relates, that "Jesus said unto him (Bartimaeus) go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole": not that the virtue of healing came from the act of faith, but from the object of it; his faith was not the cause of, nor the reason why, but the way and means in and by which he received the cure:

and immediately their eyes received sight; or, as the Syriac and Persic versions render the words, "that moment their eyes were opened": the cure was wrought at once, directly; a clear proof of the omnipotence of Christ, and of his true and proper deity: the words, "their eyes", are not in some copies: and are omitted by the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, which read thus, "they immediately saw". The Persic version adds, and they saw the world; the men and things of it, which they either had never seen before, or, at least, for a considerable time; which must be a very surprising and agreeable sight to them.

And they followed him; in a corporal sense they joined the multitude, and went after him to Jerusalem; partly to express their gratitude for such a wonderful favour bestowed upon them; and partly that they might be witnesses of the power of his deity, and the truth of his Messiahship, as they went along, and at Jerusalem: and in a spiritual sense; they became his disciples, they embraced his doctrines, believed in him as the Messiah, submitted to his ordinances, imitated him in the exercise of grace, and in the performance of duty: for, at the same time he restored their bodily sight, he gave them a spiritual one to look to him, and follow him, the light of the world, that they might enjoy the light of life in another world.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Matthew 21:1

Ver. 1. And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem,.... The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, "when he drew nigh, or was near"; but not alone, his disciples were with him, and a multitude of people also; as is evident from the following account. They might well be said to be near to Jerusalem, since it is added,

and were come to Bethphage; which the Jews say {n} was within the walls of the city of Jerusalem, and was in all respects as the city itself, and was the outermost part of it {o}; and that all within the outward circumference of the city of Jerusalem was called Bethphage {p}: it seems to me to be part of it within the city, and part of it without, in the suburbs of it, which reached to Bethany, and that to the Mount of Olives. Various are the derivations and etymologies of this place: some say it signifies "the house", or "place of a fountain", from a fountain that was in it; as if it was a compound of "Beth", an house, and phgh, "pege", a fountain: others, "the house of the mouth of a valley"; as if it was made up of those three words, ayg yp tyb, because the outward boundary of it was at the foot of the Mount of Olives, at the entrance of the valley of Jehoshaphat: others say, that the ancient reading was "Bethphage, the house of slaughter"; and Jerom says {q}, it was a village of the priests, and he renders it, "the house of jaw bones": here indeed they might bake the showbread, and eat the holy things, as in Jerusalem {r}; but the true reading and signification of it is, ygap tyb, "the house of figs"; so called from the fig trees which grew in the outward limits of it, near Bethany, and the Mount of Olives; hence we read of {s} ynyh tyb ygp, "the figs of Bethany"; which place is mentioned along with, Bethphage, both by Mark and Luke, where Christ, and those with him, were now come: the latter says, they were come nigh to these places, for they were come

to the Mount of Olives; near to which were the furthermost limits of Bethany, and Bethphage, from Jerusalem. This mount was so called from the abundance of olive trees which grew upon it, and was on the east side of Jerusalem {t}; and it was distant from it a sabbath day's journey, ***Ac 1:12*** which was two, thousand cubits, or eight furlongs, and which made one mile:

then sent Jesus two disciples; who they were is not certain, perhaps Peter and John, who were afterwards sent by him to prepare the passover, *Lu 22:8*.

{n} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 14. 2. & Pesach. fol. 91. 1. {o} Gloss. in T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 63. 2. & 91. 1. {p} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sota, fol. 45. 1. & Bava Metzia fol. 90. 1. {q} In loc. & ad Eustoch, fol. 59. 3. Tom. 1. {r} Misn. Menachot, c. 11. sect. 2. T. Bab. Menachot fol. 63. 1. & 78. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Pesul. Hamukdash, c. 12. sect. 16. Gloss. in Pesach. fol. 63. 2. {s} T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 53. 1. & Erubin, fol. 28. 2. {t} Zech. xiv 4. Targum in Ezek. xi. 23. & Bartenora in Misn. Mid. dot. c. 1. sect. 3.

Ver. 2. Saying unto them, go into the village over against you,.... Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads, "before you"; not Jerusalem, as some have thought, for that would never be called a village; though the Ethiopic version reads it, "the city"; but rather Bethany, which was near to Bethphage, and is mentioned with it; though the Jews say {u}, the name of the village was Nob, and was near to Jerusalem, and own, that Christ had an ass from hence, on which he rode to Jerusalem, and applied to himself the prophecy in ***Zec 9:9***. And it is very likely this was the village; for Nob was very near to Jerusalem; it was over against it, within sight of it, and from thence might be taken a view of the whole city, according to the Jews; who say {w}, that Sennacherib stood in Nob, a city of the priests, over against the walls of Jerusalem, and saw the whole city, and it was little in his eyes; and he said; is not this the city of Jerusalem, &c.

and straightway, or, as in Mark, "as soon as ye be entered into it"; and in Luke, "at your entering", at the town's end, at one of the first houses in it, at the door thereof,

ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her. The other evangelists only make mention of the colt, or young ass; but, no doubt, both were spoken of by Christ, and both were found by the disciples, the ass, and the colt by her, and both were brought away by them; and on both of them, very probably, Christ rode; first on one, and then on the other, as the prophecy hereby fulfilled seems to require, and as the sequel of the account shows. The ancient allegorical sense of the ass and colt is not to be despised: that the ass may signify the Jews, who had been used to bear the burdensome rites and ceremonies of the law; and the colt, the wild and untamed Gentiles, and the coming of Christ, first to the one, and then to the other:

loose them, and bring them unto me, both ass and colt. So the Arabic version reads it, "loose both, and bring them, both to me".

{u} Toldos Jesu, p. 9. {w} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 95. 1. Targum, Jarchi, & Kimchi in Isa. x. 32.

Ver. 3. And if any man say ought unto you,.... As, what business have you with the ass and colt? why do you loose them? as certain persons, the owners of them did, as Mark and Luke relate;

ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them: he that is our Lord, and your Lord, and the Lord of these creatures, and of all things else, wants them for his present service;

and straightway he will send them: which is either a continuation of what the disciples should say to any that should ask them the reason of their loosing the ass and colt, in order to make them easy: that the Lord who had need of them, as soon as he had done with them, would send them back to their proper owners, safe and well: or they are spoken for the encouragement of the disciples to go, and not be disheartened, though they should be thus examined; for immediately upon saying, that the Lord stood in need of them, and had an use for them at that time, the owner thereof, without any more words, would immediately send them along with them; which latter rather seems to be the sense of the clause; and which is confirmed by Mark: a very clear proof is this of the omniscience of Christ. He knew, that there were an ass, and a colt, in such a village, fastened to such a door, just at the entrance into the town: he knew the owners of it would examine the disciples about loosing and taking them away, and prepares them to give an answer; and he knew that the minds of these owners would be immediately wrought upon, and inclined to let them go directly and quietly.

Matthew 21:4

Ver. 4. All this was done,.... The disciples were sent to the neighbouring village for the ass and colt, and they brought them, and Christ rode upon them; not because of the distance of the place from Jerusalem, for he was just at it; or because he was weary, or it would be very fatiguing to him to walk thither on foot; for he had been used to travelling, and had gone through most parts of Galilee and Judea; but

that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: the Ethiopic version adds, Isaiah; for the former part of the following citation stands in *Isa 62:11* as the latter does in ***Zec 9:9***. It was usual with the Jews to cite

Scripture in this manner, by taking a part from one writer, and another from anther, and joining them together: saying, the following words.

Matthew ***21:5***

Ver. 5. Tell ye the daughter of Zion,.... These words seem to be taken out of *Isa 62:11* where it is said, "say ye to the daughter of Zion, behold thy salvation cometh", or "thy Saviour cometh"; meaning, without doubt, the Messiah: by the daughter of Zion is meant, not the city of Jerusalem, but the inhabitants thereof, the Jewish synagogue; or as the Targum renders it, Nwyud atvynk, "the congregation of Zion", the people of the Jews; particularly the elect of God among them, those that embraced the true Messiah, and believed in him:

behold, thy king cometh unto thee: this, and what follow, are cited from ***Zec 9:9*** and to be understood of the king Messiah, who, in a little time after this prophecy was given out, was to come to Zion, and redeem Jacob from all his iniquities, and was now come. One of the Jewish commentators says {x}, that interpreters are divided about the sense of this prophecy; but observes, that there are some that say this is the Messiah: and another {y} of them affirms, that it is impossible to explain it of any other than the king Messiah; and that it can be understood of no other, I have elsewhere {z} shown. "Meek"; in the prophecy of Zechariah it is, yne, "poor", as the Messiah Jesus was, in a temporal sense; but the word, both by the Septuagint, and our evangelist, is rendered

meek; as it is by the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, who all explain it by Ntwne, "lowly, humble, or meek": and a character it is, that well agrees with Jesus, who, in the whole of his deportment, both in life and in death, was a pattern of meekness and lowliness of mind: and

sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass. This is applied to the Messiah by the Jews, both ancient {a} and modern {v}, who consider this as an instance and evidence of his humility: they suppose, this ass to be a very uncommon one, having an hundred spots on it; and say, that it was the foal of that which was created on the eve of the sabbath {w}; and is the same that Abraham and Moses rode upon: and they own, as before observed, that Jesus of Nazareth rode on one to Jerusalem, as is here related. Their ancient governors, patriarchs, princes, and judges, used to ride on asses, before the introduction and multiplication of horses in Solomon's time, forbidden by the law of God: wherefore, though this might seem mean and despicable at this present time, yet was suitable enough to Christ's character as a king, and as the son of David, and king of Israel; strictly observing the law given to the kings of Israel, and riding in such manner as they formerly did.

{x} Aben Ezra in Zech. ix. 9. {y} Jarchi in ib. {z} Prophecies of the Messiah literally fulfilled in Jesus, c. 9. p. 151, &c. {a} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 98. 1. & 99. 1. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 66. 2. & 85. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 63. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 127. 3. & in Num. fol. 83. 4. & in Deut. fol. 117. 1. & 118. 3. Raya Mehimna in Zohar. in Lev. fol. 38. 3. & in Num. fol. 97. 2. {v} Jarchi in Isa. xxvi 6. Baal Hatturim in Exod. fol. 88. 2. Abarbimel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 15. 4. {w} Pirke Eliezer, c. 31. Caphtor, fol. 81. 2.

Matthew ***21:6***

Ver. 6. And the disciples went,.... The two disciples, as the Arabic version reads, to the village over against them; and, as Mark says, "found the colt tied to the door without, in a place where two ways met": the house was just at the entrance of the village, at the door of which, on the outside in the street, was the colt fastened, where were two ways of going into, and coming out of the town; so that it was a public place; the colt was easily seen, nor could it well be taken away without being observed, as it was by the owners of it: and

did as Jesus commanded them; they loosed the colt; and whereas whilst they were loosing it, the owners of it asked them, what they meant by so doing? they returned for answer what Christ had directed them to say; upon which they were satisfied, and let them go with it; see *Mr 11:4*. This is a very considerable instance of the faith of the disciples in Christ, and their ready and cheerful obedience to him; who might have objected the appearance of theft, the scandal that might be brought upon them, and the trouble they might be exposed to hereby; but they make no hesitation, but go and do as he had ordered them; and in which, they are worthy of the imitation of all the followers of Jesus.

Matthew ***21:7***

Ver. 7. And brought the ass and the colt,.... To Jesus, as Mark and Luke add, and who only make mention of the colt: both were undoubtedly brought; the colt being unloosed and taken away, the ass, its dam, followed after:

and put on them their clothes; their loose upper garments, to be instead of saddles and trappings, and that Christ might sit thereon with ease and decency: the other evangelists say, that they cast their garments on the colt; and the Syriac version here reads, "they put their garments on the colt, and Jesus rode upon it": but as both were brought, it is clear from hence, that their clothes were put upon both; not knowing which Christ would choose to ride on. And it should seem, that it was not unusual to put garments on asses to ride on; for the Targumist on ***Jud 5:10*** represents the princes of Israel as riding upon asses, strewed or saddled with all kind Nyrwyu, of "painted garments". The Persic version, without the least colour of authority from the original text, renders it, "and Jesus put his own garment on the colt, and sat thereon"; which is ridiculous, as well as contrary to truth:

and they sat him thereon, or "on them": meaning either on the ass and colt, that is, on one of them, or both successively, or on the clothes they put upon them.

Matthew 21:8

Ver. 8. And a very great multitude,.... Which consisted partly of the great multitude which followed Christ from Jericho, and partly of the much people that were come up to the feast of the passover from divers parts, and met him from Jerusalem; see *Joh 12:12*. These, many of them, for it cannot be thought to be done by them all,

spread their garments in the way; either in the middle of the road, instead of carpets, to ride upon; the Persic version adds, "that he might pass over them": this they did, in honour to him as a king. So when Jehu declared to the princes of Israel, that he was anointed king of Israel, they hastened, and took every man his garment, and put it under him, ***2Ki 9:13*** that is, to tread upon; though the Jewish writers {x} say, it was done that he might be higher than them all, suitable to the dignity of a king: and it is reported {y} of Cato Uticensis, the emperor, that his soldiers strewed their garments for him to walk upon: or these garments were spread by the way side. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, that little tents might be raised by them along the road, upon which they spread their garments to make a show, in imitation of the feast of tabernacles, to which there is a very great resemblance in many things which occur in this account; when they used to spread linen cloth, garments, and fruits, over their booths, for decoration and ornament; as appears from their traditions about these things:

"Nydo hyle oryp, "if a man spreads a linen cloth over it", (his booth,) because of the sun, or under it, because of the falling of leaves, &c. or spreads it over a canopy, it is not right; but he may spread it over the bedposts {z}."

That is, for ornament, as the commentators observe {a}. Again,

"dgb hyle vrp, if a man spreads a garment over it, (his booth,) or if he spreads it under it, because of what falls it is not right; but if he spreads it so as that it is, htwanl, "for ornament", it is right; and so if he covers it according to the tradition of it, and encompasses it with various kinds of fruits, and precious things, and vessels which hang upon it, whether on its walls, or on its covering, so they be for ornament, it is right {b}."

In like manner, the multitude might hang their garments, to make the show the greater, either on such booths, or on the houses and trees, that were upon the road, as they went along.

Others cut down branches from the trees; from the olive trees, as the Persic version expresses it, which grew in great plenty hereabout; and also from the palm trees, the branches of which, with the boughs of other trees, were what the Jews used to carry in their hands on the feast of tabernacles; see *Le 23:40* and the Evangelist John expressly says, that the people which met Christ from Jerusalem at this time, did take branches of palm trees in their hands,
Joh 12:13. And though this was not the time of the feast of tabernacles, but of the passover, yet it was common with the Jews to signify their joy upon any occasion, by such ways and methods they used at that least: so upon the cleansing of the tower of Jerusalem, by Simon Maccabeus, the Jews entered into it with thanksgiving, and branches of palm trees:

"And entered into it the three and twentieth day of the second month in the hundred seventy and first year, with thanksgiving, and branches of palm trees, and with harps, and cymbals, and with viols, and hymns, and songs: because there was destroyed a great enemy out of Israel." (1 Maccabees 13:51)

Likewise upon purifying the temple, which had been polluted by Antiochus, they kept eight days with gladness as in the feast of tabernacles, and bare branches and fair boughs, and palms also, as in the Apocrypha:

6 And they kept the eight days with gladness, as in the feast of the tabernacles, remembering that not long afore they had held the feast of the tabernacles, when as they wandered in the mountains and dens like beasts. 7 Therefore they bare branches, and fair boughs, and palms also, and sang psalms unto him that had given them good success in cleansing his place. (2 Maccabees 10)

But here it is said,

and they strawed them in the way: not in the middle of the road, which would have been an hindrance to riding; but by the way side, upon, the booths, or houses in the road, in honour of him; just as the Jews {c} say,

"the streets were strewed with myrtles, and the courts with purple, when Mordecai went out of the king's gate."

{x} R. Levi ben Gersom, & R. Samuel Laniado in loc. {y} Plutarch in Aleibiade. {z} Misn. Succa, c. 1. sect. 3. {a} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {b} Maimon. Hilch. Succa, c. 5. sect. 17. {c} Targum in Esther viii. 15.

Matthew 21:9

Ver. 9. And the multitudes that went before,.... That is, that went before Christ; accordingly the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, read, "that went before him": these seem to be the much people that met him from Jerusalem,

and that followed him; which were perhaps those that came from Jericho, and other parts;

cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: by calling Jesus the Son of David, they owned and proclaimed him to be the Messiah; this being the usual title by which the Messiah was known among the Jews; see the note on ***Mt 1:1*** and by crying and saying Hosanna to him, which was done with loud acclamations, and the united shouts of both companies, before and behind; they ascribe all praise, honour, glory, and blessing to him, and wish him all prosperity, happiness, and safety. The word is an Hebrew word, and is compounded of an, and heyvwh, which signifies, "save I beseech"; and which words stand in *Ps 118:25* to which the multitude had reference, as appears from what follows; and are formed into one word, anevwh, "Hosana", or "Hosanna", in which form it frequently appears in the Jewish writings; and because of the often use of it at the feast of tabernacles, that feast was called "Hosanna", and the seventh day of it was called hbr anevwh, "the great Hosanna" {d}. Moreover, the "Lulabs", or the bundles made of branches of palm trees, and boughs of willow and myrtle, which they carried in their hands at the feast of tabernacles, often go by this name: it is said {e},

"the Egyptian myrtle is right or fit anevwhl, "for the Hosanna"."

That is, to be put into the "Lulab", or bundle of boughs and branches, which was carried about, and shaken at the above feast. Again {f},

"it is a tradition of R. Meir, that it was the practice of the honourable men of Jerusalem, to bind their "Lulabs" with golden threads says Rabbah, these are they anevwh yldgm, "that bind the Hosanna": the gloss on it is, "that bind the Lulabs", of the house of the head of the captivity; for in binding the Hosanna of the house of the head of the captivity, they leave in it an hand's breadth and says the same Rabbah, a man may not hold an Hosanna in a linen cloth."

Once more {g},

"says R. Zera, a man may not prepare anevwh, "an Hosanna" for a child, on a good day."

Sometimes the Hosanna seems to be distinguished from the "Lulab", and then by the "Lulab" is meant, only the branches of palm tree; and by the

Hosanna, the boughs of willow and myrtle; as when {h},

"Rabbah says, a man may not fix the "Lulab", anevwhb, "in the Hosanna"."

And a little after says the same,

"a man may not bind the "Lulab" with the "Hosanna"."

Now these bundles might be so called, because they were lifted up and shaken, when the above words out of *Ps 118:25* were recited: for thus it is said {i},

"when do they shake, that is, their "Lulabs", or "Hosannas?" At those words, "O give thanks unto the Lord", *Ps 118:1* the beginning and end; and at those words, "Save now I beseech thee", *Ps 118:25*. The house of Hillell, and the house of Shammai say also at those words, "O Lord I beseech thee, send now prosperity": says R. Akiba, I have observed Rabban Gamaliel and Rabbi Joshua, that all the people shook their Lulabs, but they did not shake, only at those words, Save now I beseech thee, O Lord."

Hence some have thought, that these are meant by the Hosanna in this text; and that the sense is, that the multitude cried, saying, These branches of palm trees we carry in our hands, and strow by the way side, are in honour to the Son of David, the true Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth: but then this sense will not agree with the following clause, "Hosanna in the highest": it may therefore be further observed, that certain prayers and songs of praise, were called "Hosannas": hence we read {k} of tbv lv twnevwh, "the Hosannas of the sabbath"; which consisted of various sentences in praise of the sabbath, and thanksgiving to God for it, and are concluded with this word "Hosanna"; and of various petitions that God would save them, as he had done others; and at the end of each petition, is this word. As also of {l} hbr anevwh lv twnevwh, "the Hosannas of the great Hosanna"; which are certain words of prayer and praise, used on the seventh day of the feast of tabernacles: and whereas at that feast the "Hallell", or hymn, was sung, which concluded with the 118th Psalm where the words, "Save now I beseech thee, O Lord", stand, from whence this word is formed; the true sense and meaning of it here appears to be this; that the multitude that attended Christ to Jerusalem, as they went along, sung songs of praise to him, as the true Messiah; particularly, applying the above passage to him, and earnestly wished him all success and prosperity; and importunately prayed for salvation by him; adding,

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: which words are taken also out of *Ps 118:26* and is an ascription of blessing and praise to Jesus, the Messiah; who being sent by God, came from him with his authority, as his apostle, and as representing him; and contains another petition for him, that he might be crowned with the blessings of divine goodness, for his people; and be blessed and praised by them, for all the spiritual blessings they are blessed with in him. And very properly and pertinently were those words used and applied to Christ, since the Psalm from whence they are taken belongs to him: the whole of it is, by some Jewish interpreters {m}, said to be spoken concerning him; and particularly, he is designed in *Ps 118:22* by the stone the builders refused, as is clear from *Mt 21:42* of this chapter, and from ***Ac 4:11*** and ***1Pe 2:7*** and which is allowed by some Jewish writers, ancient and modern {n}; and *Ps 118:27* the words following these, are by them interpreted of the days of the Messiah, the times of Gog and Magog, and the future age {o}. And others of them said, as Mark observes, *Mr 11:10*. "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord"; See Gill on "Mr 11:10". Moreover, as it may be thought others of the people said, as Luke relates, *Lu 19:38*.

Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord; See Gill on "Lu 19:38". To which is added,

Hosanna in the highest; that is, let songs of praise be sung to God, who is in the highest heavens, for all his grace and goodness vouchsafed to the sons of men, through Christ his beloved Son; or let not only all salvation, happiness, and prosperity attend the Messiah, David's son, here on earth, but all glory and felicity in the highest heavens, above which he will be exalted.

{d} Seder Tephillot. fol. 298. 2. {e} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 33. 1. {f} Ib. fol. 37. 1. {g} Ib. fol. 45. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Lulab, c. 8. sect. 10. {h} Maimon. Hilch, Lulab, fol. 37. 2. {i} Misn. Succ, c. 3. sect. 9. {k} Seder Tephillot, fol. 297. 1. {l} Ib. fol. 298. 2. {m} Vid. Kimchi in Psal. cxviii. 1. {n} Zohar in Exod. fol. 93. 3. Jarchi in Mic. v. 2. {o} T. Hicros. Megilla, fol. 73. 1.

Ver. 10. And when he was come into Jerusalem..... The metropolis of the nation, the seat of the ancient kings of Judah, and of his father David, entering into it in this very public manner; as he never did before; riding in the manner the ancient judges and kings of Israel did, attended with a numerous retinue, shouting as they went along, and singing their "Hosannas" to him:

all the city was moved; as Bethlehem was, when Naomi with Ruth returned thither; and of which the same phrase is used, as here, ***Ru 1:19***.

all the city was moved about them; which the Chaldee paraphrase renders,

"all the inhabitants of the city were gathered in troops about them."

And so here the sense is, that the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem were in general alarmed at the uncommon apparatus, and shouting, and ran in great numbers to inquire what was the matter:

saying, who is this? They knew him not; for though he had preached unto them, and wrought miracles among them, yet they had never seen him in any such pomp and state; and could not devise who he should be, that entered their city in such a manner, amidst the shouts and acclamations of so great a multitude: it seemed greatly to affect them, and fill them with concern, astonishment, and fear.

Matthew 21:11

Ver. 11. And the multitude said,.... Or the people, as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read; the common people, that went before, and followed after him: these knew Christ better than the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Scribes and Pharisees, and rulers of the people.

This is Jesus the prophet: that prophet Moses spoke of, in *De 18:15* and the nation of the Jews in general expected:

of Nazareth of Galilee; who, though he was not born there, yet being educated, and having lived much in that place, is said to be of it; and which was the common opinion of the people.

Ver. 12. And Jesus went into the temple of God,.... At Jerusalem, which was built by his order, and dedicated to his worship, and where the Shechaniah, or the divine presence was. Christ went not to the tower of David, the strong hold of Zion, the palace of his father David; for he entered not as a temporal king; but he went to the house of his heavenly Father, as the lord and proprietor of it, to preach in it, and purge it; whereby the glory of the latter house became greater than that of the former; and so several prophecies had their accomplishment, particularly ***Hag 2:7*** though this was not the first time by many, of Christ's being in the temple; yet this his entrance was the most public and magnificent of any: after, he had alighted from the colt, and sent back that and the ass to their proper owners, as is very probable, he went by the eastern gate, called the king's gate, ***1Ch 9:18*** into the temple;

and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple: not in the holy of holies, nor in the holy place, nor in the court of the priests, nor in the court of the Israelites, but in the court of the Gentiles, and in the mountain of the house, in which were shops, where various things were sold, relating to sacrifices. What these persons bought and sold, whom Christ cast out, is not said, but may be collected from ***Joh 2:14*** where besides "doves", of which hereafter, mention is made, of "sheep" and "oxen"; which were brought to be sold, on account of the passover, for it was then near their time of passover as now; for besides the lambs and kids, which were here also sold and bought for the passover supper, sheep and oxen were here also killed and sold for the Chagiga, or feast {p}, which was the day following: here likewise the drink offerings were bought and sold, of which take the following account.

"There were fifteen presidents vdqmb, "in the sanctuary": Jochanan ben Phinehas was over the tickets, and Ahijah over the drink offerings, &c.--He that inquired for drink offerings, went to Jochanan, who was appointed over the tickets: he gave him the money, and took a ticket; he then went to Ahijah, that was appointed over the drink offerings, and gave him the ticket, and received from him the drink offerings; and in the evening they came together, and Ahijah produced the tickets, and took for them the money {q}."

This was one way of buying and selling in the temple;

and overthrew the tables of the money changers; of which sort were they, who sat in the temple at certain times, to receive the half shekel, and change the money of such, who wanted one, by which they gained something, to themselves. It was a custom in our Lord's time, for every Israelite, once a year, to pay half a shekel towards the temple charge and service, which was founded upon the orders given by God to Moses in the wilderness; that upon his numbering the people, to take of everyone that was twenty years of age and upwards, rich or poor, half a shekel, *Ex 30:13* though this does not seem to be designed as a perpetual rule. However, it now obtained, and was annually paid:

"On the first day of Adar (which answers to our February) they proclaimed concerning the shekels {r}."

That is, they gave public notice, in all the cities in Israel, that the time of paying the half shekel was near at hand, that they might get their money ready, for everyone was obliged to pay it: the Jews {s} say,

"it is an affirmative command of the law, that every man in Israel should pay the half shekel every year; even though a poor man that is maintained by alms, he is obliged to it, and must beg it of others, or sell his coat upon his back and pay it, as it is said, *Ex 30:15*. The rich shall not give more, &c.--All are bound to give it, priests, Levites, and Israelites, and strangers, and servants, that are made free; but not women, nor servants, nor children."

Notice being thus given {t},

"on the fifteenth day (of the same month), twnxlwv, "tables" were placed in the province, or city (which Bartenora {u} interprets of Jerusalem; but Maimonides {w} says, the word used is the name of all the cities in the land of Israel, excepting Jerusalem), and on the twenty fifth they sit, vdqmb, "in the sanctuary"."

The same is related by Maimonides {x}, after this manner:

"On the first of Adar they proclaim concerning the shekels, that every man may prepare his half shekel, and be ready to give it on the fifteenth; Mynxlwvh, "the exchangers" sit in every province or city, and mildly ask it;

everyone that gives them it, they take it of them; and he that does not give, they do not compel him to give: on the twenty fifth, they sit in the sanctuary to collect it; and henceforward they urge him that does not give, until he gives; and everyone that does not give, they oblige him to give pledge, and they, take his pledge, whether he will or not, and even his coat."

This gives us a plain account of these money changers; of their tables, and of their sitting at them in the temple, and on what account. Now these exchangers had a profit in every shekel they changed {y}.

"When a man went to an exchanger, and changed a shekel for two half shekels, he gave him an addition to the shekel; and the addition is called Nwblq, "Kolbon"; wherefore, when two men gave a shekel for them both, they were both obliged to pay the "Kolbon"."

Would you know what this "Kolbon", whence these exchangers are called, kollubistai, "Collybistae", in this text, or the gain which these men had, take this question and answer in their own words {z}.

"How much is the "Kolbon?" A silver "meah", according to. R. Meir; but the wise men say, half an one."

Or as it is elsewhere expressed {a},

"what is the value of the "Kolbon?" At that time they gave two pence for the half shekel, the "Kolbon" was half a "meah", which is the twelfth part of a penny; and since, "Kolbon" less than that is not given."

Now a "meah" was the half of a sixth part of the half shekel, and the twenty fourth part of a shekel, and weighed sixteen barley corns: half a "meah" was the forty eighth part of a shekel, and weighed eight barley {b} corns; a "meah" was, of our money, the value of somewhat more than a penny, and half an one more than a halfpenny. This was their gain, which in so large a number that paid, must amount to a great deal of money. There seems to be nothing lie against these men being the very persons, whose tables Christ overturned, unless it should be objected, that this was not the time of their sitting; for it was now within a few days of the passover, which was in the month Nisan; whereas it was in the month Adar, that the half shekel was paid: but it should be observed, according to the above account, that they did not begin to sit in the temple to receive this money, until the twenty fifth of Adar; and it was now but the tenth of Nisan, when Christ entered the temple and found them there: so that there was but fifteen days: between the one and the other; and considering the large numbers that were obliged to pay, and the backwardness and poverty of many, they may reasonably be thought to be still sitting on that account: and what Maimonides before relates deserves notice, and will strengthen this supposition; that on the twenty fifth: of Adar, they sat in the temple to collect this money; and that henceforward they urged and compelled persons to pay it. Moreover, these men had other business, in a way of exchange, than this to do; and especially at such a time as the passover, when persons came from different parts to attend it; and who, might want to have their foreign money changed for current coin; or bills of return, to be changed for money: add to all this the following account, which will show the large and perpetual business of these men {c}.

"In the sanctuary there were before them, dymt, "continually", or "daily", thirteen chests (and there were as many tables {d}); every chest was in the form of a trumpet: the first was for the shekels of the present year, the second for the shekels of the year past; the third for everyone that had a "Korban", or vow upon him to offer two turtledoves, or two young pigeons; the one a burnt offering, the other a sin offering: their price was, cast into this chest: the fourth for everyone that had the burnt offering of a fowl only on him, the price of that was cast into this chest. The fifth was for him, who freely gave money to buy wood, to be laid in order on the altar; the sixth, for him that freely gave money for the incense; the seventh, for him that freely gave gold for the mercy seat; the eighth, for the remainder of the sin offering; as when he separated the money for his sin offering, and took the sin offering, and there remained of the money, the rest he cast into this chest; the ninth, for the remainder of the trespass offering; the tenth, for the remainder of the doves for men and women in fluxes, and women after childbirth; the eleventh, for the remainder of the offerings of the Nazarite; the twelfth, for the remainder of the trespass offering of the leper: the thirteenth, for him that freely gave money for the burnt offering of a beast."

And the seats of them that sold doves, which were the offerings of the poor sort after child bearing, and on account of running issues: which cases were very frequent, and sometimes raised the price of doves very high, of which what follows is an instance {e}.

"It happened at a certain time, that doves were sold in Jerusalem for a golden penny each; said Rabban ben Simeon Gamaliel, by this habitation (or temple which he swore by) I will not lodge (or lie down) this night, until they are sold for a silver penny each: he went into the council house and taught, that if a woman had five certain births, or five certain issues, she should bring one offering, and eat of the sacrifices, nor should there remain any debt upon her; and doves were sold that day for two fourths."

That is, for a silver penny; now a golden penny was the value of twenty five silver pence {f}; so that the price, by this means, was sunk very much: but not only doves were sold in the markets in Jerusalem, but in the temple itself {g}.

"There was a president over the doves, which was he with whom they agreed, who sold doves for the offerings, so and so by the shekel; and everyone that was obliged to bring a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons, brought the price of them, vdqml, "to the sanctuary"; and the president gave the doves to the masters of the offerings, and made up the account with the treasurers."

Now at a feast time as this was, there was a greater demand for doves than usual; for women who had lain in, and such as had fluxes, whether men or women, who lived in distant parts, reserved their offerings till they came up to the feast {h}; and which in consequence must occasion a greater call for these creatures, and furnishes out a reason, why there should be so many sitting at this time in the temple to sell doves. Some have thought, that those persons are here meant, which are often mentioned by the Jewish doctors {i}, as an infamous sort of men, who are not admitted as witnesses in any case; and are reckoned among thieves, robbers, usurers, and players at dice; who Mynwy yxyrpm, "teach doves to fly", either to decoy other doves from their dove houses, or to out fly others for money, or to fight one against another; and these sat in the temple to sell this sort of doves, which was still more heinous; but the other sense is more agreeable.

{p} Vid. R. Sol. Jarchi, in Deut. xvi. 2. {q} Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 4. Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect, 10, 11, 12. {r} Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 1. {s} Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 1. 7. {t} Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 3. {u} In ib. {w} In ib. {x} Hilch. Shekalim, c, 1. sect. 9. {y} Ib c. 3. sect. 1. {z} Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 7. {a} Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 3. sect. 7. {b} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Shekalim, c. 1, sect. 7. & Cholin, c. 1. sect. 7. {c} Maimon. Hilch. Shckalim, c. 2. sect. 2. {d} Misn.

Shekalim, c. 6. sect 1. {e} Misn. Cerithot, c. 1. sect. 7. {f} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {g} Maimon. Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 9. {h} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 11. 1. {i} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 82. 1. T. Sanhedrin, fol. 25. 2. & Gloss. in ib. Misn. Sanhedrin. c. 3. sect. 3. Maimon Bartenora, & Ez. Chayim in lb. & Edayot, c. 2. 7. & Bartenora in ib. Maimon. Hilch. Gazela veabada, c. 6. sect. 7. Toen unitan, c. 2. sect. 2. & Eduth, c. 10. sect. 4.

Matthew 21:13

Ver. 13. And said unto them, it is written,.... In *Isa 56:7*.

My house shall be called the house of prayer. These are the, words of God, calling the temple his house, which was built according to the plan he gave; and was the place of his worship, and where he dwelt, and vouchsafed his presence to his people; and signifying, that in time to come, it should be an house of prayer; not for the Jews only, but for the Gentiles also: "for all people", as it is expressed by the prophet, and cited by Mark; and particularly this part of it, in which were the money changers and sellers of doves; for that was the court of the Gentiles, where they were admitted to pray, and perform other parts of worship. These words are rightly applied by Christ to the temple; nor can the Jews themselves deny it; for their own Targum paraphrases it thus, yvdqm tyb, "the house of my sanctuary shall be called an house of prayer"; or shall be one; for the meaning is not that it should go by such a name, but should be for such use, and not for buying and selling, and merchandise, to which use the Jews now put it: hence it follows,

but ye have made it a den of thieves. These are the words of Christ, affirming what is complained of in ***Jer 7:11*** and applying it to the present case, on account of the wicked merchandise, unlawful gain, avarice and extortion, of the priests and other officers of the temple, who had a considerable share in these things; and to whom the temple was, and by them used, as a den is to and by thieves and robbers, where they shelter themselves; for these persons robbed both God and man, and the temple was a sanctuary to them: here they screened themselves, and, under the appearance of religion and devotion, devoured widows' houses, plundered persons of their substance, and were full of extortion and excess.

Matthew **_21:14_**

Ver. 14. And the blind and the lame came to him,.... The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "they brought unto him the blind and the lame". The blind could not come to him unless they were led, nor the lame, unless they were carried: the sense therefore is, they came, being brought to him:

in the temple; that part of it, the court of the Gentiles, and mountain of the house, out of which he had cast the buyers and sellers, &c. and in the room of them, were brought in these objects of his pity:

and he healed them; to the blind he restored sight, and caused the lame to walk; which miracles he wrought in confirmation of the doctrine he preached: for all the other evangelists relate, that he taught in the temple.

Matthew **_21:15_**

Ver. 15. And when the chief priests and Scribes,.... The inveterate enemies of Christ; who upon hearing the shouts of the people at Christ's entrance into the city, and passage through it to the temple; and understanding that it was Jesus of Nazareth that was come thither, they came also to awe the people, and pick up what they could against him: who, when they

saw the wonderful things that he did; as the overturning the tables of the money changers, and the seats of those that sold doves, without any opposition, when these traders were so many, and in great power, and he a single person, and unarmed; and that the blind received their sight, and the lame were cured,

and the children crying in the temple; who came from the various parts of the city, with their parents, to see the sight; who, when the multitude had done, they began the same ditty:

and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; proclaiming Jesus to be the Messiah, and ascribing praise and glory to him, and wishing him all happiness and prosperity: the form they had taken up from the people, and might be encouraged by their parents; and which they pronounced without fear of the high priests, and Scribes, being disposed, directed, and overruled hereunto by the providence of God. It was indeed no unusual thing for children to sing the "Hosanna" at the feast of tabernacles; for, according to the Jewish canons {k},

"a child that knew how to shake, was obliged to carry the "Lulab","

or bundle of myrtle, and willow boughs, and palm tree branches, at the shaking of which "Hosanna" was said: but that they should cry "Hosanna" to Jesus, as David's son was very extraordinary, and what the high priests, and Scribes, took notice of with great resentment:

they were sore displeased; at the children, that so said, at their parents that suffered them, and especially at Christ, who did not forbid them. The Persic version renders it, "it displeased the priests"; the Arabic reads, "they murmured"; and the Ethiopic has it, "it was not pleasant to them".

{k} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 42. 1. Erachin, fol. 2. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Lulab, c. 7. sect. 19.

Matthew 21:16

Ver. 16. And said unto him, hearest thou what these say?.... Suggesting, that if he did, he ought to reprove them, or else he would be a very vain, as well as a weak man, to take such things to himself, which did not belong to him, and that from such poor, little, silly creatures, so void of knowledge and understanding:

and Jesus said unto them, yea: signifying he did hear, and well approved of what they said, and was ready to vindicate it; and did, by putting the following question to them,

have ye never read; that passage of Scripture in ***Ps 8:2***

out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? in the original text it is, "thou hast ordained", or "founded strength"; and which is rendered by the Septuagint, as it is by Matthew here; and glory and strength are mentioned together, as being to be given to God, *Ps 29:1* and so "strength" and "praise" by the Targumist in *Isa 13:3* by which is meant strong glory, or glory and praise expressed with a strong voice, or in a very vehement manner, as it was by these babes and sucklings; and this owing to God's disposing them hereunto, putting it into their mouths, and strengthening them to declare it in a very strong and powerful manner; so that his strength was made perfect in their weakness, and his praise the more glorious. In the Psalm it is added, "because of thine enemies, that thou might still the enemy, and the avenger": by whom are meant the high priests, the Scribes and Pharisees, the mortal enemies of Christ, who were full of enmity against him, and wanted to revenge themselves on him for spoiling their market at this time; but were stilled by the "Hosannas" of the children, and Christ's defence of them. The Jews themselves seem to be conscious, that these words relate to the Messiah; for they say {l}, that

"babes and sucklings, apqwt Nybhy, shall give strength to the king Messiah"

manifestly referring to this passage.

{l} Zohar in Exod. fol. 4. 2.

Matthew 21:17

Ver. 17. And he left them,.... The high priests and Scribes, confounded and put to silence, and as unworthy of his company and conversation;

and went out of the city; of Jerusalem, partly to prevent being apprehended by his enemies before his time, and partly to remove all suspicion of seizing the city and government, and setting himself up as a temporal prince;

to Bethany; which was about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, or almost two miles, *Joh 11:18*. Hither he went to converse with his dear friends, Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary, who were all of this place, and where he could lodge and rest quietly. The name of the town is variously interpreted: according to some ancient writers {m}, it signifies "the house of obedience"; so Christ went from the disobedient and faithless city, to a place of obedience, where he had some faithful and obedient disciples: others read it, and so Munster's Hebrew Gospel, hyne tyb, "the house of affliction"; a suitable place for Christ to go to, who was about to suffer for the sins of his people. The Syriac version renders it ayne tyb, and which is interpreted "an house", or "place of business", as this town of Bethany was. We read {n} of wnyh tyb lv twywnx, "the shops of Bethany", which were destroyed three years before Jerusalem, because they made their affairs to stand upon the words of the law; that is, as the gloss explains it, they found that what was forbidden by the wise men, was free by the law: a great trade might be drove here for olives, dates, and figs, which grew hereabout in great plenty: mention is made in the Talmud of {o} ynyh tyb ygp, "the figs of Bethany": hence, as Christ departed from this place, the next morning he saw a fig tree. But the true etymology and signification of the name is ynyha tyb "the house", or "place of dates", the fruit of the palm tree: hence they that came from Jerusalem to meet Christ, might have their palm tree branches. One part of Mount Olivet abounded with olives, from whence it had its name; another part bore palm trees, and that was called "Bethany", from whence this town over against it had its name; and another part had great plenty of fig trees growing on it, and this called "Bethphage"; and that part of Jerusalem which was nearest to it went by the same name. We read {p} also of ynyh tyb lv Uxrm, "the washing place of Bethany"; which seems to me to be not a place for the washing and purification of unclean men and women, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, but for washing of sheep; for the story is, that

"a fox tore a sheep in pieces at the washing place of Bethany, and the affair came before the wise men;"

that is, at Jerusalem, to know whether that sheep might be eaten or no, since that which was torn was forbidden. And some have interpreted "Bethany, an house", or "place of sheep": but so much for this town, and what account is given of it.

And he lodged there; either in the house of Lazarus, and his two sisters, or in that of Simon the leper; for it was eventide when he went out of Jerusalem, as Mark observes. The Ethiopic version adds, "and rested there"; and so Origen {q} reads it; and, according to Harpocratian {r}, the word used by the evangelist signifies to lie down, and sleep, and take one's rest. Christ lodged here all night.

{m} Jerom. in loc. Origen. in Joan. p. 131. T. 2. & in Matt. p. 435, 446, 447. T. 1. Ed. Huet. {n} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 88. 1. {o} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 53. 1. & Erubin, fol. 28. {p} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 53. 1. {q} In Matt. p. 447. {r} Lexic. Decem Orator. p. 55.

Matthew 21:18

Ver. 18. Now in the morning,.... Greek "in the first", or morning light, in the dawn, or break of day, the first spring of light; so the Latins {s} use "prima luce" for early in the morning, as soon as ever day breaks: so early did Christ rise, and return from Bethany to Jerusalem;

and as he returned to the city. The Persic version renders it, "they returned"; which, though not a good version, gives a true sense; for, as Christ went with the twelve to Bethany, as Mark affirms, so these returned with him, as is clear from what follows. Thus Christ, day after day, went to and from Jerusalem: in the evening he went to Bethany, or to some part of the Mount of Olives, and there abode all night, and returned in the daytime to Jerusalem, and taught in the temple; for it does not appear that he was one night in Jerusalem, before the night of the passover.

He hungered, rising so early before his friends were up, he had eaten nothing that morning, and so before he had got far from Bethany, found himself hungry; which proves the truth of his human nature, which was in all respects like to ours, excepting sin.

{s} Caesar. Comment. 1. 1. p. 14. & passim. Curtius, 1. 5. c. 5. passim. Apulei Metamorph. 1. 9. p. 134.

Matthew 21:19

Ver. 19. And when he saw a fig tree,.... In the Greek text it is "one fig tree", one remarkable fig tree: he must see a great many, as he went along; for a large tract of the Mount Of Olives was full of fig trees, and therefore called "Bethphage": and notice has been taken already of the figs of Bethany: but he saw none that had such large and spreading leaves as this; for it was the time when the fig tree was just budding, and putting forth its leaves: wherefore he took notice of it; and though it was "afar off", as Mark says, yet being hungry, he made up to it, expecting, from its promising appearance, to find fruit on it. This fig tree was "in the way"; by the road side, and probably had no owner; was common to anybody, and so no injury was done to any person by losing it: he came to it,

and found nothing thereon but leaves only: Mark says, "he came, if haply he

might find anything thereon"; which must be understood of him as man; for as he hungered as man, so he judged and expected as man, from the appearance of this fig tree, that he might find fruit upon it; and which is no contradiction to his deity, and his having the Spirit of God, as the Jew {t} objects; and especially since, as Bishop Kidder {u} observes, such an expectation is attributed to God himself, in ***Isa 5:2*** and it may be added, and with regard to that people, of which this fig tree was an emblem, and designed by Christ to be considered as such in what he did to it. The same evangelist further observes, "and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for the time of figs was not yet". The word "yet" is not in the original text; which last clause is a reason, either why he found no fruit, or nothing but leaves upon it, because it was not a time, or season of figs: it was not a good fig year, so Dr. Hammond interprets it; and yet though it was not, since this tree was so very flourishing, fruit might have been expected on it: and also, it furnishes out a reason why Christ took so much pains to go to it, seeing there were very few figs to be had elsewhere, and this bid very fair to supply him with some in this time of scarcity: or else, as a reason why, besides its promising appearance, he expected fruit upon it, because the time of figs, that is, of the gathering of the figs, was not come: in which sense the phrase is used in *Mt 21:34*; and is Bishop Kidder's interpretation of the passage: and since therefore the time was not come for the ingathering of the figs, none had been taken off of it, the more might be expected on it. This sense would be very probable, did it appear that figs were usually ripe about this time; but the contrary seems manifest, both from Scripture, which represents the fig tree putting forth its leaves, as a sign the summer is nigh, *Mt 24:32* and from the Talmudists, who say {w}, that the beginning of leaves, or putting forth of the leaves of trees, is in the month Nisan, the month in which the passover was kept, and so the then present time of the year; and who, from this time, reckon three times fifty days, or five full months before the figs are ripe {x}: so that these words are rather a reason why Christ did not expect to find figs on other trees, which he saw in great abundance as he passed along, because the time of common, ordinary figs being ripe, was not come; and why he particularly expected to find some on this tree, because it being full of leaves, appeared to be of a different kind from other fig trees: and was either of that sort which they call
xwv twnb, "Benoth Shuach", as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures which were a kind of white figs that were not ripe till the third year {y}. This tree put forth its fruit the first year, which hung on it the second, and were brought to perfection on the third: so that when it was three years old, it had fruit of

the first, second, and third year on it: this being such a tree, by its being full of leaves, when others had none, or were just putting out, fruit, of one year, or more might have been expected on it, when it had none at all, and therefore was cursed: or it might be one of that sort which brought forth fruit twice a year; for of such sort of fig trees we read in the Jewish writings {z}: and therefore though it was not the time of the common figs being ripe, yet this being one of the seasons, in which this tree bore ripe fruit, and being so very flourishing, might reasonably be expected from it: but there being none,

he said unto it, let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever; or, as it is expressed in Mark, "no man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever": for if none grew on it henceforward, no man could hereafter eat of it. Both expressions design the same thing, the perpetual barrenness of the fig tree:

and presently the fig tree withered away: immediately, upon Christ's saying these words, its sap was dried up, it lost its verdure; its leaves were shrivelled and shrunk up, and dropped off, and the whole was blasted. This tree was an emblem of the Jews: Christ being hungry, and very desirous of the salvation of men, came first to them, from whom, on account of their large profession of religion, and great pretensions to holiness, and the many advantages they enjoyed, humanly speaking, much fruit of righteousness might have been expected; but, alas! he found nothing but mere words, empty boasts, an outward show of religion, an external profession, and a bare performance of trifling ceremonies, and oral traditions; wherefore Christ rejected them, and in a little time after, the kingdom of God, the Gospel, was taken away from them, and their temple, city, and nation, entirely destroyed.

{t} R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 30. p. 421. {u} Demonstration of the Messiah, par. 2. p. 38. {w} Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Sheviith, c. 4. sect. 10. {x} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 35. 4. {y} Misn. Sheviith, c. 5. sect. 1. & Demai, c. 1. sect. 1. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {z} Misn. Demai, c. 1. sect. 1. & Maimon. in ib. T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 18. 1.

Matthew 21:20

Ver. 20. And when the disciples saw it,.... The next day in the morning, as Mark says: they had, heard what Christ had said to it the day before, as the same evangelist observes; but did not take notice of the immediate withering of the tree; but the next morning, as they returned from Bethany, they saw it dried up from the roots:

they marvelled; not that Christ should curse it, but that it should wither away so soon, and upon his saying what he did; which was a considerable instance of his power and Godhead, all creatures, animate and inanimate, being at his command and disposal:

saying, how soon is the fig tree withered away? This was said by Peter, in the name of the rest, who recollecting what Jesus had said to it the day before, and observing how the event had answered his words so soon, addressed Christ after this manner: "master, behold the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away"; expressing his wonder at it, and ascribing, it to the power of Christ; of which this was an amazing proof and evidence.

Matthew 21:21

Ver. 21. Jesus answered and said unto them,.... His disciples wondering at his power, in causing the fig tree to wither so suddenly:

verily I say unto you, if ye have faith; that is, in God, in his power, which reaches to all things: the object of faith is expressed in Mark, and by way of exhortation, "have faith in God", that he will enable you to perform whatsoever ye shall desire; which must be understood, not of spiritual faith in the promises of God, and person of Christ, but of, the faith of miracles, or faith in the power of God to perform things that are above the strength of nature:

and doubt not; either of the power, or will of God to do for you, and by you, the thing desired; for this kind of faith would not admit of the least degree of doubting: there must be no hesitation in the mind, no reasoning upon the thing, how it can be performed; the mind must not be divided between the power and will of God, and the difficulties and discouragements which attend the case, but must believe in hope against hope, with a full persuasion of accomplishment: for want of this faith, without doubting, the disciples could not cure the child that was lunatic.

Ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree; cause one to be dried up, and wither away by a word, as Christ had done to this, which, comparatively speaking, was but a lesser sort of miracle;

but also, if ye shall say to this mountain; the Mount of Olives, where Christ and his disciples now were, and were passing over, or, at least, were very near it; or any other mountain wherever they might be, to which they should, upon any occasion, think fit to say,

be thou removed, and cast into the sea; which was many miles off from Mount Olivet, and must he a very surprising performance for a mountain to be rooted up, so large as that was, and be carried several miles from its former situation, and be thrown into the sea; and yet, as difficult and amazing as this may seem,

it shall be done: that is, provided the person doubts not; or, as it is said in Mark, "shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things, which he saith, shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith": for this must not be confined to the particular instances of drying up a fig tree, or removing a mountain, but the doing of any sort of miracle, how great soever. Nor is it our Lord's meaning that they should do these particular things; nor is it certain that they ever did: but his sense is, that, had they faith, they should be able not only to do such lesser miracles, as, comparatively speaking, the withering of the fig tree was, but they should be able to perform things much more difficult and surprising, whenever the good of the souls of men, the propagation of the Gospel, and the glory of God required them.

Matthew 21:22

Ver. 22. And all things whatsoever,.... Not only miracles, but any other thing which may be for the honour of God, the interest of religion, the spreading of the Gospel, the enlargement of the kingdom, of Christ, their own spiritual good, and the welfare of immortal souls,

ye shall ask in prayer, believing. Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it, "in prayer, and in faith"; and the Arabic version renders it, "in prayer with faith"; both to the same purpose, and aptly express the sense of the words, which design the prayer of faith; or that prayer which is put up in the strength of faith; and is of great avail with God: for whatever is asked in faith, agreeable to the will of God, which is contained in his covenant, word, and promises, and makes for his glory, and the good of his people, shall be given, be it what it will; though to carnal sense and reason it may seem impracticable and impossible:

ye shall receive; of God, through Christ, freely and fully, and shall have and enjoy them, either they themselves, if asked for themselves, or others, for whom they are asked.

Matthew 21:23

Ver. 23. And when he was come into the temple,.... The day following the cursing the fig tree: for the withering of it, and the notice the disciples took of it, and our Lord's discourse with them about it, were not in one and the same day, as is clear from the account the Evangelist Mark gives; but on the morning that Christ had conversed with his apostles by the way from Bethany to Jerusalem, concerning the strength of faith in prayer, and the success of it; when they were come into the city, and to the temple, whither he directly went, and entered upon his work of preaching to the people,

the chief priests and elders of the people came unto him. The "chief priests" were not the high priest, and his "sagan", or deputy, but the principal of the priesthood, who were chosen from the rest of their brethren, to sit in the sanhedrim; and "the elders of the people" were the laity that were chosen from among the people, to be members of the same grand council: in this sense the Jewish writers interpret the word "elders", in *De 21:2* "thy elders, and thy judges"; that is,

"thy elders, who are thy judges: it is a tradition, R. Eliezer ben Jacob says, lwdgh Nyd tyb hz: Kynqz, "thine eiders; this is the great sanhedrim" {a}."

The other Evangelists Mark and Luke add to these, Scribes, who also were a part of this great assembly; so that the principal members of it, if not the whole sanhedrim, came in a body together, if possible, by their presence and authority, to daunt Christ, discourage his ministry, bring it into contempt with the people, and stop his proceedings and success. And this they did

as he was teaching; the people, that is, preaching the Gospel to them, as

Luke explains it: he was instructing them in the things relating to himself, and his kingdom, dispensing the mysteries of his grace, the doctrines of regeneration, justification, and salvation. Mark says, it was "as he was walking in the temple": and at the same time teaching the people, who flocked about him in like manner, as the Peripatetic philosophers taught their scholars walking: whence they had their name.

And said, by what authority dost thou these things? that is, drive out the buyers and sellers out of the temple, which greatly provoked them, their own gain and interest being concerned therein; and perform these miracles of restoring sight to the blind, and causing the lame to walk; which he had very lately wrought in the temple; and particularly preach these doctrines, the work in which he was then engaged:

and who gave thee this authority? They do not object to his doctrines, or dispute whether they were true or false; nor examine his miracles, whether they were of God, or of the devil: in these points they might fear he would be able to put them to silence and confusion, of which some of them had had an experience before; but they proceed in another way, in which they might hope for success, and attack him about his commission and authority under which he acted, whether he pretended to derive his authority from God, or from men: by this they designed to ensnare him and hoped they should gain their point, let him answer in what form he would. Should he say that God gave him the authority to do these things, they would charge him with enthusiasm and blasphemy, urging, that it was wickedness and presumption any man to pretend to be sent immediately from God; since the order of the priesthood, and of teaching was fixed, and none were to take upon them the office of a priest, or of a teacher of the people, but by their appointment; or none were called and sent, but through them, or by their means: and if he should say, that he had his authority from men, they would confront him, and absolutely deny that he had any from them, who only had the power of giving men an authority of preaching in the temple; wherefore he must be an usurper of this office, and a turbulent, seditious person, that sought to destroy all order, civil and ecclesiastical.

{a} T. Hieros Sota, fol. 23. 3. Jarchi in Deut. xxi. 2.

Ver. 24. And Jesus answered and said unto them,.... Not by replying directly to their question, but by putting another question to them, whereby he escaped the snare he saw they laid for him:

I also will ask you one thing, word, or question,

which if ye tell me; honestly, and plainly answer to it,

I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: which was putting the thing upon such a foot, and in such a form, as they could not well object to; for Christ promises, that if they would return a plain answer to the question he had to put to them, and which was no unreasonable, nor impertinent one, he would thoroughly satisfy them in this point; and expressly declare his commission and authority, what it was, and from whence he had it. The question is as follows:

Matthew 21:25

Ver. 25. The baptism of John, whence was it?.... By the baptism of John, is meant the ordinance of water baptism, which was first administered by him; from whence he took the name of John the Baptist: and the doctrine which he preached concerning it, and previous to it, and even the whole of his ministry; which is denominated from a principal part of it, and which greatly distinguished his ministry from all others: and the question put by Christ concerning it is, whence it was? by what authority did John administer the ordinance of water baptism, which had never been administered before by any? who sent him to preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, a doctrine the world had never heard of before? who gave him a commission to discharge the several parts of his ministry, which he performed in such a wonderful and powerful manner? did he receive his authority

from heaven, or of men? that is, from God or man? as the opposition requires; and as it was usual for the Jews to call God by the name of "heaven": in this sense it is used by them, when they say {b}, that such have no part in the world to come, who affirm, that the law is not Mymvh Nm, "from heaven", that is, from God; which is exactly the phrase here: and when they observe {c}, that care should be taken that a man does not pronounce Mymv Mv, "the name of heaven", that is, God, in vain: and when they tell {d} us of a certain man that built large buildings by the way side, and put food and drink there, so that everyone that came went in and eat, and drank, Mymvl Krbw, "and blessed heaven"; that is blessed, or gave thanks to God; and when they speak of {e} Mymvl htym, "death by heaven"; that is, death which is immediately inflicted by God. So when Christ here asks, whether John's baptism was from heaven, or of men, his meaning is, whether it was of divine institution, and that John acted by divine authority, and commission; or whether it was an human device of his own, or of other men, and that he took the office of preaching and baptizing upon himself of his own head, or by some human appointment: to this he requires a direct answer, as is said in Mark, "answer me"; whether it was from the one, or from the other;

and they reasoned with themselves; either "within themselves", as the Arabic version renders it, "in their own minds", as the Syriac; or they took some little time and privately conferred together, what answer they should return; when they argued the point among themselves,

saying, if we shall say from heaven; if we shall return for answer, that the baptism and ministry of John were of divine appointment, and that he acted by a divine authority,

he will say unto us, why did ye not believe him? why did not ye believe the doctrine that he preached? and receive the testimony that he gave concerning the Messiah? and why were ye not baptized by him? why did ye reject the counsel of God against yourselves? They saw plainly, that if they owned the divine authority of John's baptism and ministry, they must allow Jesus to be the true Messiah, John bore witness to; and consequently, that it was by a divine authority he did what he did; and then there was an end of the question, and is the very thing that Christ had in view.

{b} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 27. 3. Vid. ib. fol. 19. 3. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1. {c} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 3. 1. {d} Abot. R. Nathan, c. 7. fol. 3. 2. {e} Ib. c. 11. fol. 4. 1. Vid. ib. c. 14. fol. 4. 4. & 5. 1. & c. 27. fol. 7. 1.

Matthew 21:26

Ver. 26. But if we shall say of men,.... They reasoned with themselves, that should they give their answer in this form, and say, that the ministry and baptism of John, were merely human, and what he took up of himself, or which he performed by an authority derived from men,

we fear the people; that were then upon the spot, in the temple; who, as many of them were now the followers of Christ, more of them had been the admirers of John, and probably had been baptized by him: wherefore the sanhedrim were afraid of them, lest if they should affirm, that the authority by which John acted was human, they would immediately rise up against them; and, as Luke says, "stone" them: so high a veneration had they for him, and so dear was his memory still unto them.

For all held John as a prophet. These are the words of the high priests and elders, and not of the evangelist, expressing the reason of their fears from the people, who, in general, were thoroughly persuaded, as Luke expresses it, and firmly believed that John was a prophet, that was raised up, and sent immediately by God; and did not derive his authority and commission to preach and baptize from any man, or set of men, whatever.

Matthew 21:27

Ver. 27. And they answered Jesus and said, we cannot tell,.... They saw the dilemma they were brought into; they chose rather therefore to speak against their own consciences, and tell a wilful lie, and incur the reproach of ignorance: who, at other times, took upon them to judge of a prophet, whether he was a true or a false one, and by what authority he acted, whether of God, or man: but now being reduced to this wretched condition, contrary to their office and character, declare they did not know, and could not tell from whence John had his commission, and who gave him his authority:

and he said unto them, neither tell I you by what authority I do these things: since, according to the proposal of Christ, and the agreement he entered into with them, they did not give him a direct answer to his question, he looked upon himself under no obligation to inform them, what was his authority, and from whence he had it; though by the question he put to them he tacitly suggests, that he had his authority not from man, but from God; and by this his answer signifies, that since John preached and baptized without their authority and approbation, so might he; nor was he dependent on them, or accountable to them.

Ver. 28. But what think you?.... See Gill on "Mt 18:12"

a certain man had two sons. This is a parable; the design of which is to show the hypocrisy and deceit of the Scribes and Pharisees, in pretending to works of righteousness, and not doing them; and to reprove them for their disbelief and rejection of John's ministry; and to make it appear, that the worst of sinners in the Jewish nation were preferable to them; and that many of them were, and would be, happy, when they would be miserable. By the "certain man", in the parable, God is designed; who, though he is not a man, nor to be represented by any human form; yet, as man is the image of God, he is therefore, in an improper and figurative sense, compared to man, and set forth by him; which may be allowed in a metaphorical and parabolical way: and though the Son of God only assumed human nature, and really became man; yet God, the Father, seems rather to be here intended, who is sometimes compared to a husbandman and a vinedresser; see *Joh 15:1* and as appears from the relation of the "two sons" unto him; by whom are meant not Jews and Gentiles; for the latter can never be intended by the first son; for these were not sons in such sense as the Jews were, nor were upon an equal foot of sonship with them, as the parable supposes; much less were they called first, and bid to work in the vineyard: but, on the contrary John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, were first, and only sent to the Jews; and God, as yet, was not come even in the external ministry of the word to the Gentiles; nor were they brought to repentance and obedience: but by them are meant two sorts of people, among the Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees, and publicans and sinners; as the application of the parable, by our Lord himself, most clearly shows: these were both the sons of God; not only by creation, as all men are, all having, in this sense, but one common father, whose offspring they be; but also by national adoption; for to all, who were Israelites, according to the flesh, whether good men, or bad men, alike belonged the general privilege of adoption, ***Ro 9:4***. This publicans and sinners had an equal right to, as well as the Scribes and Pharisees, though they were not all the sons of God by special grace, or spiritual adoption:

and he came to the first; the publicans and sinners among the Jews, by the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ, and his disciples, who first and chiefly preached to such sort of persons;

and said, son, go work today in my vineyard: by the "vineyard", is meant the kingdom of God, or of heaven, the Gospel church state, the then present dispensation of things, which was set up, and which men were called to embrace and enter into; the doors of which the Pharisees, who pretended to have the key of knowledge, did all they could to shut up, and hinder persons going in, as they refused to do themselves: this is called it a "vineyard"; See Gill on "Mt 20:1". To work in it signifies to hear the word preached, to believe in the Messiah, embrace his doctrines, and submit to his ordinances, particularly the ordinance of baptism, which was the then principal ordinance of that dispensation. The time of working in it is "today"; directly, immediately, and whilst it is day; for the hour cometh when no man can work, and when all these means and ordinances will be at an end, and attending on them will be over: the argument used to engage hereunto, is taken from the relation the person stood in as a "son", highly favoured by God, with the blessing of national adoption, besides that of natural sonship common to all mankind.

Matthew 21:29

Ver. 29. He answered and said, I will not,.... Which answer fitly expresses the language and practice of openly profane and unregenerate sinners, who will not come to Christ, that they may have life; nor will they serve the Lord, but are bent upon indulging their lusts; nor will they be subject to the law of God; nor will they hear and receive the Gospel of Christ, or submit to his ordinances, and are averse to every good work: where is man's free will? this is the true picture of it; man has no will naturally to that which is good.

But afterward he repented, and went: a change of mind was wrought in him, and this produced a change of life and conversation: so, many of the publicans and sinners repented of their sins of disobedience, and rebellion against God, under the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles; not of themselves, men do not naturally see their sin, or need of repentance; their hearts are hard and obdurate; nor have they any spiritual sense and feeling: nothing will bring them to repentance, not the most powerful ministry, the severest judgments, or the kindest mercies, without the grace of God: but it was of God, and owing to his powerful and efficacious grace, that they repented: it was his will they should come to repentance: he called them to it, and gave it to them, as a free grace gift of his: and they repented not in a mere legal way, with a legal repentance, which lies in a mere conviction of the outward acts of sin; in an external sorrow for it, in horror and terror of mind about it, and in shedding tears for it, accompanied with a cessation from the grosser acts of sin, and an outward reformation of life and manners: but they repented in an evangelical manner, as such do, who are really converted, and spiritually instructed; who are true believers in Christ, have views, and, at least, hopes of pardoning grace and mercy; and have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit: the repentance of such lies in a spiritual sight and sense of sin, of the evil nature of indwelling sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of it, as well as of the outward actions of life; in a hearty, godly sorrow for it, because committed against a God of purity, grace, and goodness; in a loathing it, and themselves for it; in a holy shame, and blushing, on account of it; and is attended with an ingenuous confession of it, and forsaking it: the consequence of which is, that such go readily and cheerfully into the Lord's vineyard; hear the word with all diligence, receive it with gladness; walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; and are taught, by the grace that has appeared to them, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world.

Matthew 21:30

Ver. 30. And he came to the second,.... The Scribes and Pharisees, by the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles also:

and said likewise; the same things as to the other son, the publicans and sinners; calling them into the Gospel dispensation, to hear the word, embrace truth, attend on ordinances, and labour in promoting the kingdom, and interest of the Messiah, whilst they had the light of the Gospel with them. Urging also the relation they stood in to God, as a part of the Jewish body; to whom, among other external privileges, the adoption belonged:

and he answered and said, I go, sir, and went not: the word "go" is not in the generality of the Greek copies; the phrase is only "I sir", though it is rightly enough supplied as to the sense. Beza says, it was in his most ancient copy; and so it is in the Arabic and Persic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; though it is not in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions. So, the Scribes and Pharisees seemed pleased with the ministry of John for a while, and at first were forward to submit to his baptism, and were very inquisitive about the Messiah: yet, when he was declared in John's ministry, and by his own doctrine, and miracles, they refused to give in to the belief of him; they would neither enter into the Gospel kingdom, embrace the doctrines, and obey the commands of it themselves, nor suffer others to enter in; but, as much as in them lay, by their reproaches, menaces, and excommunications, deterred them from it. They, were like some other persons, who promise fair, and talk much of doing good works, but do none; teach the people to do them, but do not perform them themselves, though they would seem to do them; make great pretensions to them, boast of them, and trust in them; and therefore, of all men, ought to be careful to maintain them, and yet do the least.

Matthew 21:31

Ver. 31. Whether of them twain did the will of his father?.... This is the question put by Christ, upon the preceding parable to the chief priests, elders, and Scribes;

they say unto him, the first: an answer which natural reason, and common sense, directed them to; and therefore they give it out at once, directly, without staying upon it, and demurring about it; though they seemed not to be aware of the application of it to themselves, which follows:

Jesus saith unto them, verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots; that is, such who had been so; See Gill on "Mt 9:10".

go into the kingdom of God before you. They are signified by the first son, who repenting went, and did the will of his father: these repented under John's ministry, were called, and brought to repentance by the preaching of Christ, and his apostles: these justified God, their Father, by being baptized with John's baptism: these embraced the Messiah, believed in him, and were the first in his kingdom, and set an example to the chief among the Jews to follow: and it is easy to observe, that a poor profane sinner may, by the grace of God, be brought to repentance, that before was obstinate, rebellious, and disobedient, and be made willing to go and work in the Lord's vineyard here, and be at last glorified; when a self righteous person, notwithstanding all his fair promises and resolutions to do good, his professions of, and pretensions to religion, neither repents of his sins, nor believes in Christ; has no share in the kingdom of grace here, nor will he enter into the kingdom of glory.

Matthew 21:32

Ver. 32. For John came unto you in a way of righteousness,.... He had a commission from God; he was no impostor; the doctrine he taught was true, and which he faithfully delivered; his life and conversation were unblamable; there was nothing in his credentials, ministry, and conduct, that could justly be found fault with:

and ye believed him not; to be the forerunner of the Messiah, or the Elias that was to come; nor attended to the doctrine of repentance preached by him, nor were subject to the ordinance of baptism he administered; nor gave any assent, or credit, to the Messiah he so manifestly pointed out:

but the publicans and harlots believed him; what he said concerning the wrath to come, and the miserable state and danger they were in; and they repented of their sins, and confessed them, and were baptized of him in Jordan; believing the testimony he gave of Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah, and Son of God:

and ye, when ye had seen it; the repentance and faith of these persons, and what a wonderful reformation was wrought in them,

repented not afterwards; of their disobedience, impenitence, and unbelief, after they had seen the effects of John's ministry on these very profligate sinners, and after, the death of John; who, by his constancy, zeal, and faithfulness, had shown himself to be a true, and upright minister of the word; and afterwards under the ministry of Christ, and his apostles, by, whom the same doctrines were preached, and the same ordinances administered,

that ye might believe him; the testimony he has left behind him concerning the Messiah.

Matthew 21:33

Ver. 33. Hear another parable,.... Which, though Luke says was spoken to the people, who, were gathered round about him, yet was directed to, and against the chief priests; who continued with him till it was delivered, and the application of it made; when they perceived it was spoken of them. The design of it is, to set forth the many favours and privileges bestowed on the Jewish nation; their unfruitfulness, and the ingratitude of the principal men among them; and their barbarous usage of the servants of the Lord, and particularly of the Son of God himself: the consequence of which would be, the removal of the Gospel from them, and the miserable destruction of them. So that this parable is partly a narrative, of some things past, and partly a prophecy of some things to come:

there was a certain householder: by whom the great God of heaven and earth is meant; who may be so called, either with respect to the whole world, which is an house of his building, and the inhabitants of it are his family, who live, are nourished, and supplied by him; or to the church, the house of the living God, the family in heaven and in earth, called the household of God, and of faith; or to the people of Israel, often called the house of Israel, the family, above all the families of the earth, God took notice of, highly favoured, and dwelt among.

Which planted a vineyard: of the form of a vineyard, the manner of planting it, and the size of it, the Jews say many things in their Misna {f}.

"He that plants a row of five vines, the school of Shammai say, "it is a vineyard"; but the school of Hillell say, it is not a vineyard, unless there are two rows--he that plants two vines over against two, and one at the tail or end, Mrk hz yrh, "lo! this is a vineyard"; (it was a little vineyard;) but if two over against two, and one between the two, or two over against two, and one in the midst, it is no vineyard, unless there are two over against two, and one at the tail or end."

Again {g},

"a vineyard that is planted with less than four cubits (between every row), R. Simeon says, is no vineyard; but the wise men say it is a vineyard."

And the decision is according to them. Now by this vineyard is meant, the house of Israel and the men of Judah, the nation of the Jews, as in ***Isa 5:7*** from whence our Lord seems to have taken many of the ideas expressed in this parable; who were a people separated from the rest of the world, and set with valuable plants, from whom fruit might reasonably be expected: the planting of them designs the removing them out of Egypt, the driving out the natives before them, and settling them in the land of Canaan, where they were planted with choice vines, such as Joshua, Caleb, &c. and where they soon became a flourishing people, though for their iniquities, often exposed to beasts of prey, the neighbouring nations, that were suffered at times to break in upon them. The Jews often speak {h} of the house of Israel, as the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, and even call their schools and universities vineyards: hence we read {i} of hnbyb Mrk, the vineyard in Jabneh, where the scholars were placed in rows, as in a vineyard.

And hedged it round about; as it was usual to set a hedge, or make a wall round a vineyard, which according to the Jewish writers, was to be ten hands high, and four broad; for they ask {k},

"rdg hz ya, "what is a hedge?" That which is ten hands, high."

And elsewhere {l},

"An hedge that encompasses a vineyard, which is less than ten hands high, or which is ten hands high, but not four hands broad, it has no circuit (or void place between that and the vines)--an hedge which is ten hands high, and so a ditch which is ten hands deep, and four broad, lo! this is lawful to plant a vineyard on one side of it, and herbs on the other; even a fence of reeds, if there is between the reeds the space of three hands, lo! this divides between the vineyard and the herbs, as an hedge."

By this "hedge" is designed, either the law, not the oral law, or the traditions of the elders, which the Jews {m} call hrwtl gyo, "an hedge for the law", which was none of God's setting, but their own; but either the ceremonial law, which distinguished them from other people, was a middle wall of partition between them, and the nations of the world, and kept them from coming among them, and joining together; or the moral law, which taught them their duty to God and man, and was the means of keeping them within due bounds; or else the protection of them by the power of God, which was an hedge about them, is here intended; and which was very remarkable at the time of their three feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; when all their males went up to Jerusalem, and the whole country was, left an easy prey to the nations about them; but God preserved them, and, according to his promise, suffered not their neighbours to have any inclination or desire after their land.

And digged a winepress in it; which is not Uyrx, "the ditch", that went through a, vineyard; for this cannot be said of a winepress, and is Dr. Lightfoot's mistake {n}; but tg, "the winefat", in which they squeezed the grapes and made the wine, and this used to be in the vineyard: the rule about it is this,

"Mrkbv tgh, the winepress that is ten hands deep and four broad, R. Eliezer says, they may set in it; but the wise men do forbid it {o}."

By this may be meant, the altar where the drink offerings of wine were poured forth; and so the Targumist {p} renders it by yxbdm, "my altar I have given them, to atone for their sins": though one of their commentators {q}, by it, understands the prophets, who taught Israel the law, that their works might be good before God and men; they urged and pressed them to the performance of them, as grapes are squeezed in the winepress:

and built a tower; the same the Jews call hrmwv, "the watch house"; which was an high place, in which the watchman stood to keep {r} the vineyard, and which was built in the vineyard; of this they say,

"Mrkbv hrmwv, the "watch house which is in the vineyard", that is ten hands high and four broad, they set in it {s}."

By this is meant, either the city or Jerusalem, which stood in the midst, and on the highest part of the land of Israel; or the temple, which stood on the highest part of Jerusalem, where the priests and Levites kept their watch every night; and so the Targumist {t} interprets it, by yvdqm, "my sanctuary I built among them": that is, the temple:

and let it out to husbandmen; of which there were different sorts, as there were different methods of hiring and letting out fields and vineyards among the Jews: one sort was called rkwvh, and such was he, who hired of his neighbour a field to sow in it, or a vineyard to eat of the fruit of it, for a certain sum of money yearly; see ***So 8:11*** another sort was called rkwxh, and this was one that hired a field, or a vineyard, and agreed to give the proprietor of it yearly, so many measures of the fruit thereof, whether it yielded more or less; and there was a third sort, called oyra, or lbqm, and such was he, who agreed to give the owner half, or a third, or a fourth part of the increase of the field, or vineyard {u}. Now it is not of the former, but of the latter sort of letting out and farming, that this is to be understood; not of letting it out for money, but for fruit, as appears from *Mt 21:34* and by the husbandmen are meant, the rulers of the Jews, civil and ecclesiastical, especially the latter; the priests, Levites, and Scribes, who were intrusted with the care of the Jewish people, to guide and instruct them, and cultivate the knowledge of divine things among them, that they might bring forth fruits of righteousness; and to offer their gifts and sacrifices, and the like, which are meant by letting out the vineyard to them: and went into afar country; which must be interpreted consistent with the omnipresence of God, who is every where, and cannot be said properly to move from place to place; but fills heaven and earth with his presence, and cannot be contained in either: but this phrase seems to design his taking up his residence in the thick darkness, in the tabernacle and temple, when the civil and ecclesiastical state of the Jews was settled, and God did not appear to them in that visible manner he had done before; but having fixed their order of government, worship, and duty, left them to themselves and their rulers; for many years; in which he expressed much longsuffering and patience towards them.

{f} Misna Kilaim, c. 4. sect. 5, 6. Maimon. Hilch. Kilaim, c. 7. sect. 7. {g} Ib. c. 5. sect. 2. Maimon ib. sect. 1. {h} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 148. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 2. 1. {i} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 7. 4. T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 42. 2. {k} Misn. Kilaim, c. 4. sect. 3. {l} Maimon. Hilch. Kilaim, c. 7. sect. 14, 15. {m} Pirke Abot. c. sect, 1. {n} Horae in Mark xii. 1. {o} Misn. Kilaim, c. 5. sect. 3. {p} Targum Jon. in Isa. v. 2. Vid. T. Hicros. Succa, fol. 54. 4. {q} R. David Kimchi in loc. {r} Maimon. in Misn. Kilaim, c. 5. sect. 3. Aben Ezra in Isa. v. 2. {s} Misn. Kilaim, c. 5. sect. 3. Maimon. Hilch. Kilaim, c. 7. sect. 22. {t} Targum Jon. in Isa. v. 2. {u} T. Hieros. Demai, fol. 25. 1. Gloss in T. Bab. Moed. Katon, fol. 11. 2. & in Bava Metzia, fol. 103. 1. in Avoda Zara, fol. 21. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Shecirut, c. 8. sect. 1, 2. Bartenora in Misn. Pea, c. 5. sect. 5. & in Demai, c. 6, sect. 1.

Matthew 21:34

Ver. 34. And when the time of the fruit drew near,.... Of gathering the fruit, when it was ripe, and might be eaten, or profit made of it, according to the law in *Le 19:23*. The fruit of all manner of trees, for the first three years, was uncircumcised; it was not to be eaten, nor any profit made of it, and on the fourth year it was to be holy to praise the Lord with; being either given to the priests, or eaten by the owners before the Lord at Jerusalem; and on the fifth year it might be eaten, and made use of for profit, and henceforward every year; which law regarded the fruit of the vine, as any other fruit: hence it is said {w}, that

"the grapes of the vineyard of the fourth year, the sanhedrim ordered that they should be brought up to Jerusalem, a day's journey on every side, so that they might crown or adorn the streets with fruits."

To this time of fruit, and the custom of bringing it up to Jerusalem, the allusion seems to be here. Thus, God after a long time, after he had waited a great while for fruit from the Jewish nation, from whom much might have been expected, by reason of the advantages they enjoyed; he sent his servants to the husbandmen: by his servants are meant, the prophets of the Old Testament; who were sent by God from time to time, to the kings, priests, and people of the Jews; to instruct them in their duty, to exhort them to the performance of it, to reprove them for their sins, to stir them up to repentance, and to bring forth fruits meet for it, signified in the next clause:

that they might receive the fruits of it; of the vineyard from the husbandmen, for the use of the owner; for fruits of justice and judgment, of righteousness and holiness, might be justly expected and demanded of such persons, to be brought forth by them, to the honour and glory of God.

{w} Maimon. Hilch. Maaser. Sheni, c. 9. 5. Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 59. sect. 2.

Matthew 21:35

Ver. 35. And the husbandmen took his servants,.... They seized and laid hold of them in a rude and violent manner: so far were they from treating these servants with respect, as they ought to have done; considering whose they were, from whom they came, and upon what account; and also so far from delivering to them the fruit due to their master, or excusing their inability to make a suitable return, as might be expected, they use them very roughly:

and beat one; either with the fist, as Jeremiah was struck by Pashur, the son of Immer, the priest, one of these husbandmen, *Jer 20:1* and as Micaiah was smitten on the cheek by Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, the false prophet, *2Ch 18:23* or with a scourge, and may refer to the punishment of beating with forty stripes, save one, by which the skin was flayed off; as the word here signifies; for some of these servants had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, *Heb 11:36*. And killed another; that is, with the sword. There were four kinds of death in the power of the sanhedrim, of which this is one, and what follows is another; and were these, stoning, burning, killing (i.e. beheading with the sword), and strangling: the manner of executing this punishment here expressed, was this:

"They cut off the person's head Pyyob, "with a sword", in the manner the government orders it. R. Judah says, this is indecent (i.e. to cut off his head standing, they do not do so), but they put his head upon a block, and cut it off with an axe; they reply to him, there is no death more abominable than this {x}."

So the prophets, in the time of Elijah, were killed with the sword, *1Ki 19:14* see also *Da 11:33*.

And stoned another; as they did Zechariah, *2Ch 24:21* and doubtless many others; since Jerusalem had the character of killing the prophets, and stoning them that were sent unto her, *Mt 23:37* these seemed such that were stoned, but not killed; but as Mark says, were wounded in the head with the stones thrown at them, and shamefully handled, and sadly abused.

{x} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 1, 3.

Matthew 21:36

Ver. 36. Again he sent other servants,.... Meaning, perhaps, such as suffered in the times of the Maccabees:

more than the first; their number was greater, though their office was the same, at least not higher:

and they did unto them likewise; they beat them with rods, they killed them with the sword, and stoned them, *Heb 11:36*.

Matthew 21:37

Ver. 37. But last of all,.... In the last times, in the last days, in the end of the world, the Jewish world, at the close of their ecclesiastic and civil state; after all the prophets had been sent, and finished their course, came the greatest prophet of all, to seal up the vision and prophecy:

he sent unto them son; not a servant as before, but a son; his own son, his only begotten son, the son of his love, his dearly beloved one; him he sent to these husbandmen the Jews. The Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, was sent only to the house of Israel: he was the minister of the circumcision; he was the great prophet raised up among them, and was sent to bless them, by turning them from their iniquities; he came to them, to his own, to them of his own nation, but they received him not:

saying, they will reverence my son. The Son of God is to be reverenced equally as his Father, since he is in nature and glory equal to him; and it is the will of his Father he should be so reverenced, as he is by the angels in heaven, and by the saints, both in heaven and in earth; but did these husbandmen reverence him? no; they despised and rejected him; they reproached and traduced him, as the vilest of men, and used him in the most cruel and barbarous manner. And did not his Father know this? yes; this is certain from his omniscience, which reaches to all future events, the most minute and contingent; and from the predictions of the usage of these persons of him, delivered long before it came to pass. Luke says, "it may be they will reverence him": so that it was not a positive affirmation, that they would do it, and which also is to be understood after the manner of men: that humanly speaking, it might be expected that they would give him reverence, in consideration of the dignity of his person, his character, and relation to God, which was his due and their duty; but he had a very different treatment from them.

Matthew 21:38

Ver. 38. But when the husbandmen saw the son,.... Whom many of them knew, though some did not: some were entirely ignorant of him; some knew him, but durst not confess him, yet were not injurious to him; others acted against light and conscience, with spite and malice, as did these men. They expected the Messiah about this time; they knew, by prophecy, it could not be long ere he appeared: when they saw Jesus of Nazareth, they knew by various circumstances, by all the characters of the Messiah meeting in him, and by his miracles, that he must be the same.

They said among themselves; privately, not openly to the people,

this is the heir; as indeed he is of all things, as the Son of God, and as the mediator of the new covenant: he is heir of all that his Father has, as he is his natural, essential, and only begotten Son; and as mediator, he is heir of all things, natural, spiritual, and eternal, for the use and benefit of his church and people, who are also his portion and inheritance: but here it seems to denote, his being heir to the throne of Israel, the government of the Jewish nation, as he was the son of David; and the Jews confess {y}, that because it was said that Jesus of Nazareth was twklml bwrq, "near to the kingdom", therefore they put him to death:

come let us kill him, and seize on his inheritance: concluding, that could they be rid of him, their nation would be in peace, their temple would stand, and temple worship and service continue, and they remain in their office and authority undisturbed; the contrary of which they feared, should he be suffered to live; though what they feared from his life, befell them upon, and in consequence of his death, quite beyond all their counsels and expectations.

{y} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

Matthew 21:39

Ver. 39. And they caught him,.... Seized and laid hold of him, in a rude and violent manner, as they had some of the servants before. This regards their apprehending of Christ in the garden, by a band of soldiers and officers, sent by the chief priests and Pharisees, who with swords and staves took him, bound him, and led him away:

and cast him out of the vineyard; which is not to be understood of their casting him out of the synagogue, which is never said of them; nor does it so much relate to the leading of him without the gates of Jerusalem, where they crucified him, though this is a sense not to be despised and rejected; but rather, to the delivery of him to those, that were without the vineyard of the Jewish church and nation, to the Gentiles; to be mocked, scourged, and put to death by them:

and slew him: for though the sentence of death was pronounced on him by Pilate, an Heathen governor, and was executed by the Roman soldiers; yet it was through the instigation and at the pressing importunity of these husbandmen, the Jewish rulers; and who were afterwards frequently charged by the apostles with the murder of him.

Matthew 21:40

Ver. 40. When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh,.... In a way of providence, to call these husbandmen to an account; not only for the fruit they were to bring to him; but for their barbarity to his servants, the prophets, time after time; and especially, for the inhuman usage and murder of his own son;

what will he do unto those husbandmen? This question is put to the chief priests, elders, and Scribes: and they themselves, who are designed hereby, are made judges in this case, just as the inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah are, in ***Isa 5:4*** which passage of Scripture our Lord had greatly in view when he spake this parable.

Matthew 21:41

Ver. 41. They say unto him,.... Either the common people that were about him; or rather the chief priests, scribes, and elders, to whom he put the question; little thinking then, that they were the persons intended in this parable:

he will miserably destroy those wicked men: in saying which, they own that persons guilty of such crimes, as beating, killing, and stoning, servants sent to them by the proprietor of the vineyard, to receive his due and proper fruit, and at last murdering his son and heir, were very wicked persons, and deserved the severest punishments to be inflicted upon them, and that without mercy; nor could it be thought, but this must and would be unavoidably their case, when the Lord of the vineyard should come: thus tacitly did they condemn themselves as wicked men, and as deserving the worst of deaths, who in a few days after this, were concerned in the death of the Son of God:

and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen; allowing it to be a very just thing, not only to put these men to the most miserable and tormenting death that could be devised, but to take the vineyard out of the hands of their posterity, and let it out to other persons; as it was a righteous thing with God, to remove the church state, Gospel and ordinances from the Jews, and deliver them to the Gentiles:

which shall render him the fruits in their seasons; that is, his due, and that in proper time. The other evangelists relate these words, as spoken by Christ: for the reconciliation of which let it be observed, that they were first spoken by the Jews, as is here signified; and after that were spoken by Christ, confirming what they said, and applying it to them; upon which they said, "God forbid"; that we should ever be guilty of such crimes, incur such punishment, and this should be our case: but in proof of it, that so it would be, our Lord alleges the following words.

Matthew 21:42

Ver. 42. Jesus saith unto them, did ye never read the Scriptures,.... The passage which stands in *Ps 118:22*.

The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Very appropriately is this Scripture cited, and applied to the present case; which expresses the rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish builders, priests, and scribes: the whole Psalm may be understood of the Messiah. R. David Kimchi owns {z}, that there is a division among their Rabbins about it: some say that the Psalm is spoken of David, and others, that it is spoken of the days of the Messiah; and these are certainly in the right; and as for this particular passage, it is applied by some of them to the Messiah: so on mentioning ***Ho 3:5*** they {a} say, "David was king in this world, and David shall be king in the time to come: wherefore it is said, the stone which the builders refused, &c."

And one of their noted commentators {b} on those words, "though thou be little among the thousands of Judah", has this note:

"It is fit thou shouldest be little among the families of Judah, because of the impurity of Ruth the Moabitess, which is in thee: out of thee shall come forth unto me, Messiah, the son of David; for so he saith, "the stone which the builders refused", &c."

Christ is often in Scripture compared to a stone, and is called the stone of Israel; is said to be a stone of stumbling to some, and a precious tried stone to others: is represented as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and on which are seven eyes: and is fitly compared to one, for his usefulness in the spiritual building the church, where he is as both the foundation and corner stone, and for his strength and duration. Christ is the sure, firm, and everlasting foundation, which God has laid in Zion, and the only one of any avail; nor can any other be laid to any purpose; and if he is neglected, and laid aside, in the ministration of the word, the building which men endeavour to rear, or exhort unto, will come to nothing. Whoever build on him are safe, and on nothing else: Christ is the foundation, on which the church, and every believer, are built, and therefore will abide; for the gates of hell cannot prevail against them: the covenant of grace is immoveable, being established in him; its mercies are sure, and its promises yea and amen: the salvation of immortal souls is certain, resting upon him; the faith and hope of the saints fail not, being directed to, and settled on him: the house not made with hands, which is in heaven, is an eternal one; and the city, which has foundations, is a continuing one, because of the concern that Christ has in it; and though he is of such eminent use and importance in the building, yet, as such, the "builders rejected" him: by the builders are meant, the Jewish rulers, both political and ecclesiastical, especially the latter, who pretended to instruct, and build up the people in knowledge and understanding; but in a very bad way did they do it, and upon a very sandy foundation, upon their fleshly privileges, their moral righteousness, and the observance of the ceremonial law, and the traditions of the elders. The Jews used to call their doctors and their scholars "builders" {c}: says R. Jochanan, "the disciples of the wise men are called Nyanb, "builders", because they study in the building of the world all their days, which is the law."

These rejected the Messiah, refused to receive, and acknowledge him as such: they disallowed and disapproved of him, as base and vile, and the most contemptible of mortals, and set him at nought, and had him in the utmost scorn and derision. And so he is rejected by some who bear the characters of builders among Christians: as when his proper deity, and eternal sonship are denied, and he is treated as a mere creature; when his satisfaction and atoning sacrifice are either wholly rejected, or little regarded, lessened, and depreciated, and repentance and good works are put in the room of them; when his imputed righteousness is opposed, and laid aside, and the righteousness of men preferred unto it, and cried up as the matter of justification in the sight of God; when his efficacious grace is represented as unnecessary to regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, and to the performance of good works; and when he is left out of public ministrations, as the way of life and salvation, as the fountain of all grace, and foundation of all happiness, and human power, free will, and moral righteousness are put in his room. But notwithstanding the former and present rejection, and ill treatment of him, he is

become the head of the corner: he is the corner stone in the building which knits and cements it together, angels and men, Jews and Gentiles; Old and New Testament saints; saints above, and saints below, and in all ages and places, all meet, and are united together in this corner stone; which also strengthens and supports the building, and holds it together, and is the ornament and beauty of it: he is the chief corner stone; he is higher than the kings of the earth; he is superior to angels, and the chiefest among ten thousands of his saints; he is exalted above all creatures, angels, and men, who, by the Jewish builders, was despised and rejected, and scarce allowed to be worthy the name of a man:

this is the Lord's doing; this stone is laid in the building by him: the rejection of him is according to his determinate counsel and foreknowledge; and the exaltation of him, above every name, is owing to him, and he is by, and at his own right hand: and

is marvellous in our eyes; in the eyes of all the saints; there being in all this such, a wonderful display of the wisdom, grace, mercy, power, and faithfulness of God.

{z} In Psal. cxviii. 1. {a} Zohar in Exod. fol. 93. 3. {b} Jarchi in Mic. v. 2. {c} T. Bab. Subbut, fol. 114. 1. Vid. En Israel, fol. 64. 3. & Juchasin, fol. 80. 2. & 81. 1.

Matthew 21:43

Ver. 43. Therefore I say unto you,.... This is the application of the parable; and the words are directed to the chief priests, elders, scribes, and people of the Jews; and are delivered as what would be in consequence of the builders, rejecting the Messiah, the foundation and corner stone of the building.

The kingdom of God shall be taken from you: by which is meant, not their political estate, their civil government, which was of God, and in a short time was to depart from them, according to ancient prophecy, and which is come to pass, as the event shows; nor their legal national church state and ordinances only, or the priesthood, and the appendages of it; all which, in a little while, were shaken and removed; but the Gospel, which had been preached among them by John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles; so called because it treats of the kingdom of God, and things pertaining to it, and shows men both their right and meetness for it; the one as in the righteousness of Christ, and the other in the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Spirit, which Gospel may be taken away from a people, as from the Jews, because of their contempt of it, and opposition to it, or lukewarmness and indifference about it, or unfruitfulness under it; and when God has no more souls to gather in by it in such a place, and which is a very unhappy case, whenever it is the case of any people: for when the Gospel is taken away, the riches of a people are gone; the glory of a nation is departed; the light of it is put out; the spiritual bread of a people is no more; the means of conversion and spiritual knowledge cease: all which have a melancholy aspect on posterity. Moreover, the Gospel church state, which was set up in Judea, may be here meant; which, though it continued and flourished a while, in process of time was to be removed: and which may be done elsewhere, as it has been in Judea, by God's suffering persecution to arise, as he did against the church of Jerusalem, whereby the ministers of the Gospel are driven into corners, or scattered abroad; or by ordering his ministers to preach no more unto such a people, as the apostles were ordered to turn from the Jews to the Gentiles; or by taking away ministers and members of churches by death, and not raising up others in their room; or by withholding a blessing from the word; or by permitting the growth of errors and heresies, which, in course of time, must issue in the dissolution of the church state in such a place, and which necessarily follows upon the removing of the Gospel:

and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. Though God may take away the Gospel from a people, as he did from the Jews; yet he does not, nor will he, as yet, take it out of the world: he gives it to another "nation"; to the Gentiles, to all the nations of the world, whither he sent his apostles to preach and where it must be preached before the end of the world comes, in order to gather his elect out of them: for not one particular nation is meant, unless the nation of God's elect, among all nations, can be thought to be designed. It may be observed, that the Gospel, wherever it comes, it comes as a gift; it is "given": to have it only in the external ministration of it, is a favour; and more especially to understand it spiritually; this is an unmerited gift; as is also ability to preach it: and it is likewise a national mercy wherever it comes; for though it comes in power only to a few in a nation, yet it is more or less a blessing to the whole: nor is it easy to say what temporal advantages a nation enjoys through the ministration of the Gospel in it: and where it is given, and comes in power, it brings forth fruit, as it did in all the world of the Gentiles; even the fruits of grace, and righteousness, and every good work; all which come from Christ, under the influence of his Spirit, and by the word and ordinances, as means, and highly become the Gospel, and the professors of it; and for want of which it is removed sometimes from one nation to another: for this cause it was taken from the Jews, and given to the Gentiles. One of the Jewish commentators {d} on these words, in *Jer 13:17* "my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride", has this note;

"because of your grandeur, which shall cease; because of the excellency of "the kingdom of heaven", Mylyopl Ntntv, "which shall be given to the profane";"

i.e. the nations of the world.

{d} Jarchi in Jer. xiii. 17.

Matthew 21:44

Ver. 44. And whosoever shall fall on this stone,.... This is not to be understood of believing in Christ, or of a soul's casting itself on Christ, the foundation stone; relying on him, and building all its hopes of happiness and salvation on him; which is attended with contrition and brokenness of heart, or repentance unto life, which needed not to be repented of nor of a believer's offending Christ by evil works, whereby his conscience is wounded, his soul is grieved, and his faith shaken; and though he is hereby in great danger, he shall not be utterly destroyed, but being recovered by repentance, shall be preserved unto salvation; but of such to whom Christ is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence: for as he is the foundation and corner stone to some, and is set for the rising of them, and to whom he is precious; so he is a stone set for the fall of others, and at which they stumble and fall, and fall upon it: and such are they who are offended at Christ's state of humiliation on earth; at the manner of his birth, the meanness of his parentage, and education; the despicable figure he made in his person, disciples, and audience; and at his sufferings and death: and these "shall be broken": as a man that stumbles at a stone, and falls upon it, breaks his head or his bones, at least bruises himself, does not hurt the stone, but the stone hurts him; so all such as are offended at Christ, injure their own souls, being filled with prejudices against him, and contempt and disbelief of him, which if grace prevents not will issue in their everlasting destruction: but whilst there is life, the means of grace continue, the kingdom of God is not taken away; there is hope that such may be recovered from their impenitence and unbelief: "but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder". Just as if a millstone, or any stone of such like weight and bulk, was to fall upon an earthen vessel; or, as the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, by which the Messiah and his kingdom, are designed, brake in pieces the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, so that it became like the chaff of the summer threshing floor. As the former part of this verse expresses the sin of unbelievers, and the danger they are exposed unto by it, this sets forth their punishment; and has respect both to the vengeance of Christ, on the Jewish nation, at their destruction, which would fall heavy from him in his state of exaltation, for their evil treatment of him in his state of humiliation; and to his severe wrath, which will be executed at the day of judgment on all unbelievers, impenitent Christless sinners, who have both offended him, and been offended at him; when their destruction will be inevitable, their salvation irretrievable, and their souls irrecoverably lost, and ruined. Some have thought, that there is an allusion in these words to the manner of stoning among the Jews, which was this {e}:

"the place of stoning was two men's heights; one of the witnesses struck him on his loins, to throw him down from thence, to the ground: if he died, it was well; if not, they took a stone, which lay there, and was as much as two men could carry, and cast it, with all their might, upon his breast: if he died, it was well; if not, he was stoned by all Israel."

Maimonides observes {f}, that

"stoning, or throwing down from the high place, was that he might fall upon the stone, or that the stone might fall upon him; and which of them either it was, the pain was the same."

{e} Misu. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 45. 1, 2. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 15. sect 1. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. Affirm. 99. {f} In Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4.

Matthew 21:45

Ver. 45. And when the chief priests and Pharisees,.... Which latter, though not before mentioned, were many of them of the grand sanhedrim, as well as the chief priests, scribes, and elders: "had heard his parables"; that of the two sons being sent into the vineyard, and that of the letting out the vineyard to husbandmen,

they perceived that he spake of them: they plainly saw that they were designed by the son, that promised to go into the vineyard, but did not; only talked of works, but did not do them: and that they were the husbandmen that acted the ungrateful part to the householder, and the cruel one to his servants, and would to his son, their own consciences told them they were the men. They knew that the whole was levelled against them, and designed for them, and exactly hit their case.

Matthew 21:46

Ver. 46. But when they sought to lay hands on him,.... Not that they attempted by any outward action to apprehend him, and carry him off, or by any immediate act of violence to take away his life; but they secretly wished, and earnestly desired to do it: they were so irritated and provoked, that they could scarcely keep their hands off of him, and could have been glad of an opportunity of satiating their revenge upon him: and whereby they would but have fulfilled what he in this parable had prophetically said of them: and yet so hardened were they, though they understood his meaning, they were not deterred thereby, but on another account:

they feared the multitude; which were now about Christ, lest there should be a tumult, and they should take the part of Christ against them, to which they seemed inclined; when their lives, had they attempted anything of this nature, would have been in a great deal of danger:

because they took him for a prophet; by the doctrines which he taught, by the boldness and freedom of speech he used, and by the miracles he wrought: wherefore, though they might not all of them believe that he was the Messiah, or that prophet Moses spoke of; yet, since it was exceeding manifest, that he was a teacher sent of God, and endowed with very wonderful gifts; and from whom many of them had received singular benefits, if not for their souls, yet for their bodies; being healed by him of their lameness, or blindness, or other diseases; therefore would not suffer him to be abused, and ill treated by them: so that, as Mark says, "they left him, and went their way"; to consult together what was proper to be done, and wait for a better opportunity to seize him.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**
Matthew 22:1

Ver. 1. And Jesus answered and spake unto them again,.... Not to the multitude only, but to the chief priests, elders, Scribes, and Pharisees: for though Mark seems to intimate, that upon the delivery of the last parable of the vineyard, they left him, and went their way; yet since he does not relate the following parable, they might not leave him until they had heard that, which is spoken with much the same design as the former, and might increase their resentment the more: or if the chief priests and elders did go away, the Pharisees remained behind, as is clear from *Mt 22:15* to whom he spake

by parables, similitudes, and comparisons, taken from earthly things, and against whom he directed the following one;

and said, as hereafter related.

Matthew 22:2

Ver. 2. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king,.... The Gospel dispensation which had now taken place, the methods of divine grace in it, and the behaviour of men under it, may be fitly illustrated by the following simile, or parable; the design of which is to express the great love of God the Father, who is represented by this

certain king, in espousing any of the children of men to his own son: as, that he a king, who is the King of kings, and Lord of Lords, should concern himself in this manner; and especially, that he should espouse such mean and unworthy creatures to his own, his only, and beloved son, his equal, and his heir: also, the view of it is to set forth the plenteous provisions of grace made under the Gospel dispensation in the word and ordinances; the great neglect and contempt of these by the Jews, who were externally called unto them; the wrath of God upon them for their abuse of them, and ill usage of his servants; the calling of the vilest among them, or of the Gentiles, and how far persons may go in a profession of religion without the wedding garment, and at last be lost:

which made a marriage for his son: which may be understood either of contracting and bringing him into a marriage relation, or of making a marriage feast on that account: in the former sense, the persons concerned are the Father, the bridegroom, and the bride: the parties contracted are the Son of God and sinful creatures. The bridegroom is no other than the only begotten of God the Father, his only Son and heir, the Maker and Governor of the universe, who has all the, perfections of the Deity, and fulness of the Godhead in him; and, as mediator, has all accomplishments and, excellencies; he has all the riches of grace and glory; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; all loveliness, beauty, and amiableness in his person, and everything to recommend him as the chiefest among ten thousand: on the other hand, the bride is the church, which consists of a set of persons chosen by God, in Christ, before the foundation of the world; who were considered as sinless creatures, and viewed as such when first betrothed to Christ in the everlasting covenant: but for the further demonstration of his love to them, were suffered to fall in Adam, with the rest of mankind, and to be scattered abroad; when they lost the image of God, came short of his glory, passed under a sentence of condemnation, became liable to the curse of the law, and eternal death; were defiled and polluted in their nature, and in their estate became bankrupts and beggars; and yet this hindered not the consummation of the marriage between Christ and them. The person that contracted this relation between them, is the Father of Christ, who chose them for him to be his spouse and bride; brought and presented them to him, as he did Eve to Adam before the fall; and gave them to him, and made them one body and flesh with him, in the everlasting covenant; and draws them, and brings them to him by his powerful grace, in the effectual calling; there was a secret betrothing of all these persons to him in eternity, at his own request, and the full consent of his Father, who had the disposal of them; there is an open espousal of them, as particular persons, at conversion; and there will be a more public and general consummate marriage of them, at the last day, when they are all called by grace, and brought home: moreover, this may be understood of the marriage feast which the Father makes on this extraordinary account. So the Syriac version renders the word by atytvm, "a feast"; and in this sense is it used by the Septuagint in *Ge 29:22* by which is meant, not the latter day glory, or marriage feast of the Lamb, to which only saints will be invited, and partake of; nor the ultimate glory, when all the elect shall go with Christ into the marriage chamber, and spend an eternity in endless and unspeakable felicity with him; nor the spiritual blessings of grace enjoyed by believers now; but the external ministry of the word and ordinances, which are a feast of fat things, a rich entertainment, the particulars of which are after given; which many are invited to, who never partake thereof, and others do, and yet destitute of the grace of God; for both good and bad were guests at this feast. The allusion is to the custom of the Jews, and of other nations, in making feasts and grand entertainments at such times. The Jews used to make feasts both at espousals, and at marriage: hence we {g} read of Nyowrya tdweo, "a feast of espousals", and of Nyawvyn tdweo, "a marriage feast": the reference here is to the latter; and which used to be made at the charge of the father: for so runs one of their canons {h}:

"a father marries his son, htvm wl hvew, "and makes a feast for him", and the expense is the father's &c."

{g} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 43. 1, 2. {h} Maimon. Hilch. Nechalot, c. 9. sect. 13. Vid. Misn. Sheviith, c. 7. sect. 4. & Juchasin, fol. 88. 1.

Ver. 3. And sent forth his servants,.... The ministers of the Gospel, who are the servants of the most high God, of his choosing and ordaining, of his calling and sending, and of his qualifying and employing, and who voluntarily and cheerfully serve him; and may intend John the Baptist, and the twelve apostles of Christ, who were sent

to call them that were bidden to the wedding; Myawrqh, "those that were called", as in ***1Sa 9:13*** by whom are meant the Jews, who were the "bidden", or "called ones"; called of God, and therefore styled "Israel my called" *Isa 48:12* and by the Targum interpreted ynmzm, "my bidden". They were called by the name of God, and called the people of God, and the children of God, and were the children of the kingdom; and were called to many valuable and external privileges; and had previous notice of the Gospel dispensation by the prophecies concerning Christ, and the blessings of his grace under the former dispensation; and by the ordinances and sacrifices of it, which in a very significant manner set him forth to that people; and now were called to embrace him, to receive his doctrines, and submit to his ordinances, by the ministry of John the Baptist, and the disciples of Christ. It seems, it was sometimes customary to give two invitations to a feast, or to send a second time to the persons bidden to the feast {i}; to which the allusion is here;

and they would not come: which shows the insolence and ingratitude of men, their natural aversion to the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; the depravity of the will of man, with respect to things spiritual and evangelical; the insufficiency of outward means, to work with effect, upon the minds of men; and the necessity there is of efficacious and unfrustrable grace to bring men to believe in Christ, cordially to receive his truths, and be subject to his commands. There is a two fold call by the ministry the word; the one is internal, and that is, when the word comes not in word only, but in power; is the power of God unto salvation, and the savour of life unto life; for by the Gospel are the elect of God called to the obtaining of the glory of Christ; ***2Th 2:14***. This call is of grace; it springs from the free grace and favour of God, and it is effected by the mighty power of his grace; and it is to special blessings of grace; it is a fruit of God's everlasting love, and an evidence of it; and is according to the eternal purpose of God, which is never frustrated: it is a call to the enjoyment of spiritual blessings, as peace, pardon, righteousness, and everlasting happiness; by it men are called to light and liberty, to the grace of Christ, and communion with him; to all the privileges of God's house here, and eternal glory hereafter; to which he that calls them, gives them a right and meetness, and infallibly brings them to it: and therefore it is styled an heavenly calling, and the high calling of God in Christ; for this call is ever effectual, and the ends of it are always answered; it is unchangeable, irreversible, and never repented of. But besides this, there is a bare external call to the sons of men, through the preaching of the word; which is not to make their peace with God, a thing impossible to be done by them, and which is contrary to the Gospel, and reflects dishonour on Christ, the peacemaker; nor to get an interest in him, which, wherever possessed, is given, and not gotten; nor to regenerate themselves; this is the work of the Spirit of God, and in which men are as passive, as the infant in its natural generation, conception, and birth; nor to the exercise of evangelical grace, as faith, love, &c. which are not in them, and no man can exercise that which he has not, nor should he be called to it; nor to any spiritual vital act, since men are dead in trespasses and sins, and cannot put forth any: but this call in the word, is to the natural duties of religion, as to hear, read, and pray; to attend on the word, to wait at Wisdom's gates, and watch at the posts of her door, and so lie in the way of being effectually called by the grace of God; but this call may be where election does not go before, and where sanctification does not follow, and where there may be no salvation, *Mt 20:16* and is often slighted, neglected, and of no effect, which is the case here.

{i} via. Joseph. apud Grotium in loc.

Matthew 22:4

Ver. 4. Again he sent forth other servants,.... The seventy disciples, and other ministers of the Gospel, as Barnabas and Saul, and others that were joined to, and were helpers of the apostles, who were sent, and preached to the Jews, any time before the destruction of Jerusalem:

saying, tell them which are bidden; for these preachers of the word were first sent to the Jews, and preached unto them, until they by their carriage and conduct, showed themselves to be unworthy of the blessing. These men had notice of the Gospel feast by the prophets, and were invited to it, by the forerunner of Christ, by him, and his disciples, and again by them, and others; which strongly expresses the goodness, grace, and condescension of God to these people, and aggravates their stupidity, ingratitude, and wickedness:

behold, I have prepared my dinner. The ministry of the word and ordinances under the Gospel dispensation, is signified by a "dinner"; of God's preparing and providing; which is a full meal at noon, and in it is plenty of food, and of that which is wholesome to the souls of men, sweet and savoury to a spiritual taste, and very nourishing and satisfying; and this dinner is a feast, a rich banquet, a grand entertainment; in which are a variety of provisions, suited to all sorts of persons, and plenty of the richest dainties, attended with the largest expressions of joy; and this feast is a marriage one, and that not for an ordinary person, but for the king's son, the son of the King of kings; it is large, grand, and noble, rich and costly, and yet all free to the guests; it is kept in the king's palace, the banqueting house, the church, is common to all, and of long continuance, it will last unto the end of the world. What privileges the patriarchs and prophets, and the people of the Jews enjoyed, in the morning of the world, before the coming of Christ, who made the bright and full day of the Gospel, were but as a "breakfast", a short meal; the means of grace were not so rich and plentiful, and their knowledge of spiritual things not so large; they had but, as it were, a taste of what is plentifully bestowed under the Gospel dispensation, and therefore that is called a "dinner"; grace and truth in all their fulness, coming by Jesus, by whom God has delivered at once his whole mind and will; whereas, before, it was delivered piecemeal, at sundry times and divers manners; and this is distinguishable from the "supper" of the Lamb, in the evening of the world, in the latter day, when the Jews will be converted, and will not act the part they are represented to do in the parable; and the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in, and the Gospel will have a general spread all over the world. The dinner is the same with the feast of fat things, which God is said to make for all people, Gentiles as well as Jews, in his holy mountain the church, *Isa 25:6* and the table which wisdom has furnished, ***Pr 9:2*** with all sorts of suitable food, proper to persons of every age: here's milk for babes, even the sincere milk of the word, that their souls may grow thereby, who are newborn babes, and have tasted of the grace of God; namely, the plainer and more easy truths of the Gospel, to be taken in, understood, fed upon, and digested; and meat for strong men, the more sublime doctrines of it, which such as are strong in faith, receive, relish, and live upon, and are greatly refreshed and edified with: here's the wine of God's everlasting love set forth, in the election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and salvation of his people; and fruits served up both new and old, for their comfort, delight, and pleasure; in the ordinances of the Gospel, are the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, and fatted calf, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed: here is everything for delight and nourishment, for faith to feed and live upon; and therefore may well be called a dinner, and what is worthy of him, who is the maker of it, and exceedingly well suited to the persons who are to partake of it.

My oxen and my fatlings are killed; in allusion to feasts and large entertainments, when oxen and fatted calves, and the best of the flock were killed and dressed; or to the sacrifices of oxen and other creatures, under the law, as typical of the sacrifice of Christ; and may here represent Christ as crucified and slain, held forth in the ministry of the word and ordinances; who as such, is suitable food for believers, is spiritual, solid, and substantial, and greatly to be desired; is nourishing and strengthening, comforting and quickening, delightful and satisfying:

and all things are ready; for upon the crucifixion and death of Christ, and after the renewed commission of Christ to his disciples, to preach the Gospel, beginning at Jerusalem, it might be justly represented in the ministry of the word, that all things were now ready. Redemption was obtained by Christ; an everlasting righteousness was wrought out and brought in; pardon of sin was procured; peace and reconciliation were made; the sacrifice of Christ was offered up, and full satisfaction given to law and justice; the covenant of grace, with all the blessings and promises of it, were ratified and confirmed; and all were ready in Christ's hands to distribute, to as many as came to him; in whom are life and salvation, and everything necessary for peace and comfort here, and eternal happiness hereafter. This shows the completeness and perfection of the Gospel dispensation, this being that better thing, which God has provided for his people in the last times, that former saints might not be perfect without them, See Gill "Heb 11:40". The law made nothing perfect; there was nothing got ready by that; the works, sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies of it, could not justify men's persons, nor sanctify their hearts, nor purge the consciences of the worshippers, nor take away sin, nor pacify God, or give satisfaction to his justice, or procure peace, pardon and salvation; but now all these things are declared to be ready in the Gospel: but this is not owing to man, it is all of God; it is of his providing and preparing; and he is a rock, and his work is perfect; and nothing can be brought by the Creature to be added to it, nor does it need it; there is everything exhibited in the Gospel that a poor sinner stands in need of, or can desire, even that can make him comfortable here, and happy hereafter.

Come unto the marriage; the marriage feast; come into the Gospel dispensation, attend the word and ordinances: the invitation is pressing, the arguments are strong and moving, but the persons invited were averse, self-willed, stubborn, obstinate, and inflexible.

Matthew 22:5

Ver. 5. But they made light of it,.... The invitation. They neglected the ministry of the Gospel; they did not care for it, nor showed any regard to it: and this is the ease, when either it is not attended on, though there is an opportunity, yet having no heart to embrace it, and no value for it, neglect attendance on it; and which often arises from loving of the world too much: or when it is attended on, but in a very negligent and careless manner; when men pull away the shoulder, or stop their ears; when they do not mind what they hear, let it slip and forget it; when they are unconcerned for it, and their thoughts are employed about other things: or when the Gospel and the ordinances of it are looked upon as things of no importance; not knowing the real worth and value of them; seeing no wisdom in them, having never tasted the sweetness, or felt the power of them, or seen the need of the things revealed by them: as also when there is an aversion to the Gospel, a loathing of it, as a novel, upstart doctrine, received but by a few, and these the meanest and most illiterate; as contrary to reason, and tending to licentiousness; and especially, when it is contradicted and blasphemed, as it was by the Jews, and its ministers despised: some men make light of it, because of the loss of time from worldly employments; because of the charge attending it; because it teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; and because they prefer their bodies to their souls, and things temporal, to things eternal. The aggravations of their sin, in slighting and neglecting the Gospel and Gospel ordinances, are, that this is a grand entertainment, a very expensive provision, as well as a very plentiful one; that it was a wedding dinner, a feast of love, they were invited to; that it was prepared by so great a person as a king, and who is the King of kings, and the only potentate; who provided this dinner of his own sovereign good will and pleasure, in the everlasting council and covenant of grace and peace: for the things of which it consists, there was a scheme so early contrived to bring them about; and that this was made on the account of the marriage of his Son, the Messiah, who had been so often spoken of by the prophets of the Old Testament, these men professed a value for; one so long expected by their forefathers, and is the messenger of the covenant, whose coming they themselves desired and sought for; and that they should be invited to it again and again, and one set of servants sent after another, and the most striking and moving arguments made use of; and yet they slighted and made light of all this, and were careless and unconcerned; to which may be added, that the things they were invited to, were such as concerned their immortal souls, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of them; in short, it was no other than the great salvation, wrought out by the great God, and our Saviour, for great sinners, at the expense of his blood and life, which they neglected; See Gill "Heb 2:3".

And went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: they all turned their backs on the Gospel, and the ministration of it, and pursued their own worldly inclinations, ways, and methods of life: those that were brought up in a rural way, lived a country life, and were concerned in meaner employments, went everyone to their "village", as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read it, and to their farms, there to manage their cattle, and till their ground; and others, that lived in larger towns and cities, and were concerned in greater business of life, betook themselves to trade at home, or traffic abroad; placing their happiness in the affluence of this life, which they preferred to the word and ordinances of Christ. Such a division of worldly employment is made by the Jews {k};

"the way of that host is like to a king, who makes a grand entertainment, and says to the children of his palace, all the rest of the days ye shall be everyone in his house; this shall do his business, hytrxob lyza adw, "and this shall go about his merchandise", hylqxb lyza adw, "and this shall go to his field", except on my day."

{k} Zohar in Lev. fol. 40. 2.

Matthew 22:6

Ver. 6. And the remnant took his servants,.... They that went to their several worldly callings and occupations of life, troubled themselves no further about the Messiah, his doctrines and ordinances; but others of them were more spiteful and injurious: they not only slighted the message, and took no notice of the invitation, but also abused the messengers; some of the servants they laid hold upon, and put them in the common prison, and detained them there a while; as they did the apostles quickly after our Lord's ascension, particularly Peter and John:

and entreated them spitefully; gave them very hard words, and reproachful language; menacing and threatening them what they would do to them, if they did not forbear preaching in the name of Jesus; though they were not intimidated hereby, but rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame on such an account; and even their malice and wickedness proceeded so far, as to take away the lives of some of them:

and slew them: thus they stoned Stephen to death, the first martyr for Christ; and killed James, the brother of John, with the sword; which last, though he was put to death by Herod, yet with the consent and approval of the Jews.

Matthew 22:7

Ver. 7. But when the king heard thereof,.... Of this maltreatment, and barbarous usage of his servants, their cries coming up into his ears, and their blood calling for vengeance at his hands; and he full well knowing what they did unto them, and upon what account, being the omniscient God; and observing their malignity and wickedness,

he was wroth: who, though slow to anger, bears much, and suffers long; yet was now highly incensed and provoked, and stirred up all his wrath, determining to take vengeance on such a vile generation of men. Christ, when he was here on earth, was sometimes provoked by the Jews, through their unbelief, their obstinacy, and the hardness of their hearts and was angry with them, being grieved for them, ***Mr 3:5***, but then was not the proper time to execute his wrath; he then appeared as the Lamb of God, to take away the sin of the world; he came to save men, and not to destroy their lives, nor to condemn the world: when his martyr Stephen was suffering, he was seen by him standing at the right hand of God, being risen from his seat, as one incensed at the usage his servant met with from the wicked Jews; but the time of his vengeance was not yet come, more patience and forbearance were to be exercised towards them: but now his kingdom came with power, and he appears as the Lion of the tribe of Judah; and pours out his wrath to the uttermost upon them, destroys their city and temple, and puts an end to their civil and ecclesiastical state, and cuts them off from being a nation; and now it was, that he ordered these his enemies, who would not have him to rule over them, brought before him, and slain in his presence; and in all this, he showed his kingly power and authority; and by removing the sceptre from them, and all show of dominion and government, made it fully appear that he, the Messiah, was come. Well had it been for them, had they taken the advice of the Psalmist, "Kiss the Son", the Son of God, believe in him as such, embrace him as the Messiah, yield subjection and obedience to his word and ordinances, "lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little", ***Ps 2:12***. But now his wrath was kindled very much, and was poured out like fire, and there was no standing before it; the day of the Lord burned like an oven, and destroyed the Jews root and branch: the manner and means, in and by which this utter ruin was brought about, are as follow:

and he sent forth his armies; not the angels, who are the armies and hosts of heaven; nor desolating judgments only, as pestilence and famine, though the latter was severely felt by the Jews, but chiefly the Roman armies are here meant; called "his", because they came by the Lord's appointment and permission; and were used by him, for the destruction of these people:

and destroyed those murderers; of Christ and his apostles, as their fathers had been of the prophets before them:

and burnt up their city; the city of Jerusalem, the metropolis of the Jews, and where the principal of these murderers dwelt; and which was burnt and destroyed by the Roman army, under Titus Vespasian. And a worse punishment than this, even the vengeance of eternal fire, may all the neglecters of the Gospel, and persecutors of the ministers of it expect, from him, whose vengeance is, and who will repay it; for if judgment began at the house of God, the people of the Jews who were so called, what will be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of Christ? How sore a punishment shall they be thought worthy of, who trample under foot the Son of God, count his blood a common thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace? If the law, when transgressed; demanded a just recompense of reward, or inflicted deserved punishment, how shall the neglecters of the great salvation revealed in the Gospel escape?

Matthew **_22:8_**

Ver. 8. Then saith he to his servants,.... That were preserved from their rage and malice, and outlived their implacable enemies, and saw their utter ruin and destruction:

the wedding is ready; meaning not the marriage contract, which was secretly performed in eternity; or the calling of God's elect among the Jews, and their open espousal to Christ, which for the present was now over; but the marriage feast, or the Gospel dispensation, which was ushered in, and the ministry of it, to which nothing was wanting; all the promises, prophecies, types, and shadows, of the former dispensation, were now accomplished; the Lamb of God was slain, and all things to be done by him, were now finished; the ministers of the Gospel, the apostles, were called, their commission enlarged, and they qualified with a greater measure of the Spirit, and were sent to preach both to Jews and Gentiles:

but they which were bidden were not worthy; that is, the Jews, who had notice of this dispensation by the prophets, were told by John the Baptist, that it was at hand; were once, and again externally called unto it by the ministry of the apostles; but they were not only unworthy in themselves, as all men are, of such a blessing and privilege, but they behaved towards it in a very unworthy manner; they were so far from attending on it in a diligent and peaceable way, as becomes all such persons that are blessed with the external ministry of it; who when they do so, may be said to behave worthily, and, in some sense, to be worthy of such a privilege being continued with them; see *Mt 10:13* compared with *Lu 10:6* that they contradicted and blasphemed it, and by their own outrageous carriage, showed plainly that they were unworthy of it; and were so judged by Christ and his apostles, who ordered them to turn from them, and go to the Gentiles, and which may be intended in the following words.

Matthew **_22:9_**

Ver. 9. Go ye therefore into the highways,.... Either of the city, which were open and public, and where much people were passing to and fro; or of the fields, the high roads, where many passengers were travelling; and may design the Gentile world, and Gentile sinners, who, in respect of the Jews, were far off; were walking in their own ways, and in the high road to destruction; and may denote their being the vilest of sinners, and as having nothing to recommend them to the divine favour, and to such privileges as this entertainment expresses:

and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage; to the marriage feast, not the marriage supper, but the dinner, *Mt 22:4*, their orders were to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, Jew or Gentile, high or low, rich or poor, outwardly righteous, or openly profane, greater or lesser sinners, and exhort them to attend the Gospel ministry, and ordinances.

Matthew 22:10

Ver. 10. So these servants went out into the highways,.... Turned from the Jews, and went among the Gentiles, preaching the Gospel to them; particularly the Apostle Paul, with Barnabas, and others:

and gathered together all, as many as they found, both good and bad: the Persic version reads it, "known or unknown". The Gospel ministry is the means of gathering souls to Christ, and to attend his ordinances, and into his churches; and of these that are gathered by it into churches, and to an attendance on outward ordinances, some are good and some bad, as the fishes gathered in the net of the Gospel are said to be, in *Mt 13:47* which may either express the character of the Gentiles before conversion, some of them being outwardly good in their civil and moral character; closely adhering to the law and light of nature, doing the things of it, and others notoriously wicked; or rather, how they proved when gathered in, some being real believers, godly persons, whose conversations were as became the Gospel of Christ; others hypocrites, empty professors, having a form of godliness, and nothing of the power of it; destitute of grace in their hearts, and of holiness in their lives; and the whole sets forth the diligence of the servants, in executing their master's orders, with so much readiness and exactness:

and the wedding was furnished with guests; that is, the wedding chamber, or the place where the wedding was kept, and the marriage dinner was prepared, and eat; so the Syriac renders it, atytvm tyb, "the house of the feast", or where the feast was kept; and so the Ethiopic version: the Persic version reads it, "the house of the nuptial feast":

which designs the house and church of God, into which large numbers of the Gentiles were brought, by the ministry of the apostles; so that it was filled with persons that made a profession of Christ and his Gospel.

Matthew 22:11

Ver. 11. And when the king came in to see the guests,.... Professors of religion, members of churches, whom God takes particular notice of; he is an omniscient being, and his eyes are upon all men and their actions, and especially on such as are called by his name: he takes notice how they behave in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, and distinguishes hypocrites from real believers; the latter of which he has a special affection for, makes rich and large provisions for them, and protects and defends them; he knows them that are his, and gives them marks of respect; and he spies out such as are not, and will in his own time discover them, to their utter confusion and ruin. There are certain times and seasons, when God may be said to come in to see his guests; as sometimes in a way of gracious visits to his dear children, when he bids them welcome to the entertainment of his house, and invites them to eat and drink abundantly: and sometimes in a way of providence, against formal professors and hypocrites; and at the last judgment, when he will separate the sheep from the goats, and discern between the righteous and the wicked:

he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment; by which is meant, not good works, or a holy life and conversation, nor any particular grace of the Spirit, as faith, or charity, or humility, or repentance, or any other, nor the whole work of sanctification, nor the Holy Ghost, but the righteousness of Christ: for though good works are the outward conversation garments of believers, and these greatly become them and adorn the doctrine of Christ, yet they are imperfect, and have their spots, and need washing in the blood of Christ, and cannot in themselves recommend them to God; and though the Holy Spirit and his graces, his work of holiness upon the heart, make the saints all glorious within, yet not these, but the garment of Christ's righteousness, is their clothing of wrought gold, and raiment of needlework, in which they are brought into the king's presence: this, like a garment, is without them, and put upon them; and which covers and protects them, and beautifies and adorns them; and which may be called a wedding garment, because it is that, in which the elect of God were betrothed to Christ; in which they are made ready and prepared for him, as a bride adorned for her husband: and in which they will be introduced into his presence, and be by him presented, first to himself, and then to his Father, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. This man had not on this garment, this robe of righteousness; it was not imputed to him; he had no knowledge of it; or if he had any, it was only a speculative one; he had no true faith in it; he had never put on Christ, as the Lord his righteousness; he had got into a church state without it, though there is no entrance into the kingdom of heaven but by it.

Matthew 22:12

Ver. 12. And he saith unto him, friend,.... Either in an ironical way, or because he professed to be a friend of God and Christ:

how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? Which way didst thou come in hither? since he did not come in by faith, in the righteousness of Christ; intimating, that he climbed up some other way, and was a thief and robber; or with what face, or how couldest thou have the assurance to come in hither in such a dress, having nothing but the filthy rags of thine own righteousness? How couldest thou expect to meet with acceptance with me, or to be suitable company for my people, not being arrayed with the garments of salvation, and robe of righteousness, as they are?

And he was speechless: or muzzled: his mouth was stopped, he had nothing to say for himself: not but that there will be pleas made use of by hypocrites, and formal professors, another day; who will plead either their preaching and prophesying in Christ's name; or their attendance on outward ordinances; or the works they have done, ordinary or extraordinary; but then these will all be superseded and silenced, their own consciences will condemn them, their mouths will be stopped, and they will have nothing to say in vindication of themselves; their righteousness will not answer for them in a time to come. The Jews have a tradition {l}, that

"Esau the wicked, will veil himself with his garment, and sit among the righteous in paradise, in the world to come; and the holy blessed God will draw him, and bring him out from thence, which is the sense of those words, ***Ob 1:4***. "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.""

{l} T. Hieros. Nedarim, fol. 38. 1.

Matthew 22:13

Ver. 13. Then said the king to his servants,.... By whom are meant, either the ministers of the Gospel, and pastors of churches, who by the order of Christ, and in the name of the churches, cast out all such as appear, by their bad principles and evil practices, to be without the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ; or rather, the angels, who will bind up the tares in bundles, and burn them, and gather out of Christ's kingdom all that offend and do iniquity; and sever the wicked from the just, and use them in the manner here directed to:

bind him hand and foot; as malefactors used to be, to denote greatness of his crime, his unparalleled insolence, and the unavoidableness of his punishment; such methods being taken, that there could be no escaping it:

and take him away; from hence, to prison; a dreadful thing, to go out of a church of Christ to hell. This clause is not in the Vulgate Latin, nor in the Syriac and Arabic versions, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, but is in all the ancient Greek copies;

and cast him into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; See Gill "Mt 8:12"

Matthew 22:14

Ver. 14. For many are called, but few chosen. See Gill "Mt 20:16"

Matthew 22:15

Ver. 15. Then went the Pharisees,.... After they had heard the parables of the two sons being bid to go into the vineyard, of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, and of the marriage feast; for it is clear from hence, that these stayed and heard the last of these parables, in all which they saw themselves designed; and though they were irritated and provoked to the last degree, they were obliged to hide their resentments, nor durst they use any violence for fear of the people; wherefore they retired to some convenient place, to the council chamber, or to the palace of the high priest, or where the chief priests were gone, who seem to have departed some time before them:

and took counsel; among themselves, and of others, their superiors; not how they should behave more agreeably for the future, and escape due punishment and wrath to the uttermost, which the King of kings would justly inflict on them, very plainly signified in the above parables; but

how they might entangle him in his talk, or "take hold of his words", as in Luke; or "catch him in his words", as in Mark: they consulted to draw him into a conversation, on a dangerous and ensnaring subject; when they hoped a word might drop unwarily from him, which they might catch at, lay hold on, and improve to his disadvantage; either with the common people, or the government, and especially the latter; as is to be learned from Luke, who expressly says their end was,

that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor; the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, should he say any thing against Caesar, which they endeavoured to ensnare him into; by which means, they doubted not of setting the populace against him, and of screening themselves from their resentments; and of gaining their main point, the delivery of him up into the hands of the civil government, who, for treason and sedition, would put him to death.

Matthew 22:16

Ver. 16. And they sent out unto him their disciples,.... Who were trained up in the same way of thinking with themselves, had imbibed the same tenets, and were strenuous defenders of them; and no doubt they selected the most crafty and artful among them; and who were the best versed in their principles and sophistic method of arguing: these they the rather sent, imagining they would not be known, as they themselves were: and from their age and air of simplicity, might be taken for innocent persons, who in great sincerity, came to be instructed by him,

with the Herodians: learned men are very much divided in their sentiments about these men; some think they were Gentiles under the government of Herod; but it is not likely that the Pharisees would join themselves with such, whose company they carefully shunned; others, that they were Gentile proselytes, as Herod was; but that on either of these accounts, they should be called by his name, there seems to be no reason: others say, they were Greeks, whom Herod brought out of a desert into his own country, and formed a sect, which from him were called Herodians: this way went Drusius, in which he was followed by several learned men, until the mistake was detected; who took it from a passage in the Hebrew Lexicon, called "Baal Aruch", mistaking the word Mynwy, for "Greeks", which signifies "doves": the Jewish writer referring to a passage in the Misna {m}, which speaks of twayodrx ynwy, "Herodian doves"; that is, tame ones, such as were brought up in houses: for that these are meant, is clear from the Misnic and Talmudic writers, and their commentators {n}; and were so called, because that Herod was the first that tamed wild doves, and brought up tame ones in his own palace; and so Josephus {o} says, that he had many towers stored with tame doves, which was a new thing in Judea. Others, that they were Sadducees, which carries some appearance of truth in it; since what is styled the leaven of the Sadducees, in *Mt 16:6* is called the leaven of Herod, in ***Mr 8:15*** And very probable it is, that Herod was a Sadducee, and that his courtiers, at least many of them, were of the same sect; but yet it is certain, that the Sadducees are spoken of, as distinct from these Herodians, in *Mt 22:23* of this chapter. Others, that they were a set of men, that formed a new scheme of religion, consisting partly of Judaism, and partly of Gentilism, approved and espoused by Herod, and therefore called by his name; and others, that they were such as held, that Herod was the Messiah; but it is certain, that Herod did not think so himself, nor the people of the Jews in common; and whatever flatterers he might have in his life time, it can hardly be thought, that this notion should survive his death, who was odious to the Jewish nation: others think, that they were such, who were not for paying tribute to Caesar, but to Herod, and were encouraged and defended by him and his courtiers, as much as they could; since he and his family looked upon themselves to be injured by the Romans, and secretly grudged that tribute should be paid unto them: others, on the contrary, say, that these were such, who pleaded that tribute ought to be paid to Caesar, by whose means Herod enjoyed his government, and was supported in it; and were just the reverse of the Pharisees, with whom they are here joined, in their attempts on Christ. The Syriac version renders the word by odwrh tybd, "those of the house", or "family of Herod", his courtiers and domestics: in Munster s Hebrew Gospel, they are called owdwrh ydbe, "the servants of Herod"; and certain it is, that Herod was at Jerusalem at this time, *Lu 23:7* We read {p} of Menahem, who was one while an associate of

Hillell, who with eighty more clad in gold, went Klmh tdwbel, "into the service of the king", that is, Herod, and hence might be called Herodians. Wherefore these seem rather to be the persons designed, whom the Pharisees chose to send with their disciples, though they were of Herod's party, and were on the other side of the question from them; being for giving tribute to Caesar, by whom their master held his government; that should Christ be ensnared by them, as they hoped he would, into any seditious or treasonable expressions against Caesar, these might either accuse him to Herod, or immediately seize him, and have him before the Roman governor. Luke observes, that these men, the disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians, were sent forth as "spies, which should feign themselves just men"; men of religion and holiness, and who were upright and sincere in their question, and who had strong inclinations to become his disciples: the Jews themselves own, that they sent such persons to Jesus, whom they mention by name, in such a disguised manner to deceive him: their words are these {q};

"They (the Sanhedrim) sent unto him Ananiah and Ahaziah, honourable men of the lesser sanhedrim, and when they came before him they bowed down to him--and he thought that they believed in him, and he received them very courteously."

Saying, master: as if they were his disciples, or at least were very willing to be so: however, they allow him to be a doctor or teacher, and a very considerable one:

we know that thou art true; a true and faithful minister, that teachest truth, and speakest uprightly; one of great integrity, and to be depended upon:

and teachest the way of God in truth; rightly opens the word of God, gives the true and genuine sense the law of God, faithfully instructs men in the worship of God; and with great sincerity, directs men to the way of coming to God, and enjoying eternal happiness with him; having no sinister ends, or worldly interest in view:

neither carest thou for any man; be he ever so great and honourable, in ever so high a station, be he Caesar himself; signifying, that he was a man of such openness and integrity, that he always freely spoke the real sentiments of his mind, whether men were pleased or displeased; being in no fear of man, nor in the least to be intimidated by frowns and menaces, or any danger from men: for thou regardest not the person of men; as he had not the persons of the high priests and elders, the grand sanhedrim of the nation, who had lately been examining him in the temple: and seeing therefore he made no difference among men, whether learned or unlearned, rich or poor, high or low; whether they were in exalted stations and high offices, or not he feared no man's face, and accepted no man's person, but gave his sense of things, without fear or flattery; they hoped he would give a direct answer to the following question, though Caesar himself was concerned in it.

{m} Cholin, c. 12. sect 1. {n} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 139. 1. & Betza, fol. 24. 1. & 25. 1. Misn. Sabbat. c. 24. 8. & Cholin, c. 12. sect. 1. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {o} De Bello Jud. 1. 6. c. 13. {p} Juchasin, fol. 19. 1. {q} Toldos Jesu, p. 8.

Matthew 22:17

Ver. 17 Tell us therefore what thinkest thou, &c:] Since, as they suggested he was a person of great understanding and sincerity, they earnestly desire that he would be pleased, according to his usual frankness and openness, to give them his opinion; in which they intimate, they should sit down satisfied and contented:

whether is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? Meaning, according to the law of God: this was a question among the Jews: the Herodians were for it, the Pharisees were against it, at least secretly; and, indeed, this latter was the general sense of the nation, who looked upon themselves to be, or however ought to be, a free people, being the children of God, and the seed of Abraham; and who urged, that according to their law, none but one of their own brethren, who was of their own nation and religion, was to be set as king over them; whereas Caesar, the Roman emperor, was a stranger, one of another nation, and an idolater; and some openly refused it, and made mutinies and insurrections on account of it, as Theudas, and Judas of Galilee: now by putting this question to Christ, in the presence of different parties, they hoped to get an advantage of him either way; for had he been silent, they would have reproached him, as not being the honest, faithful, frank, and open man, they pretended to take him to be; and if he had answered either in the affirmative or negative, they were prepared to make use of it to his injury; had he said that it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar, this being contrary to the general notions of the people, they would have improved it to draw them from him, and to set them against him; and had he affirmed it was not lawful to do it, they would then have accused him to the Roman governor, and delivered him up into his hands, to judge and condemn him, according to the Roman laws; which latter was what they were wishing for.

Matthew 22:18

Ver. 18. But Jesus perceived their wickedness,.... Luke says, "their craftiness"; and Mark says, "knowing their hypocrisy"; for there was, a mixture of malice, hypocrisy, and artfulness, in the scheme they had formed; but Christ being the omniscient God, saw the wickedness of their hearts, knew their hypocritical designs, and was well acquainted with all their artifice: he judged not according to the outward appearance of their affection for him, and opinion of him, of religion, righteousness, and holiness in themselves, and of a sincere desire to have their conscience satisfied about this matter; the snare they laid was visible to him, the mask they put on could not screen them from him, nor impose upon him:

and said, why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? as he might well call them, who feigned themselves just persons, pretended a great deal of respect for him, call him master, compliment him with the characters of a faithful, sincere, and disinterested preacher; yet by putting the above question, designed no other than to ensnare him, and bring him into disgrace or trouble.

Matthew 22:19

Ver. 19. Shew me the tribute money,.... Not any money, or any sort of coin that was current among them; but that in which the tribute was usually paid, which was Roman money: and they brought unto him a penny; not as, being what was the usual sum that was paid for tribute at one time, but as a sample of what sort of money it was paid in, in Roman pence; one of which was seven pence halfpenny of our money.

Matthew 22:20

Ver. 20. And he saith unto them,.... Having the penny in one hand, and pointing to it with the other,

whose is this image and superscription? or inscription? for the penny that was, brought him had an image upon it, the form of a man's head struck on it, and round about it an inscription, or writing, showing who it was the image of, and whose money it was, and when it was coined: this is enough to show, that this penny was not a Jewish, but a Roman one; for the Jews, though they put inscriptions, yet no images on their coin; and much less would they put Caesar's thereon, as was on this: it is asked {r},

"What is the coin of Jerusalem? The answer is, David and Solomon on one side, and Jerusalem the holy city off the other side, i.e. as the gloss observes, David and Solomon were "written" on one side, and on the other side were written Jerusalem the holy city."

It follows,

"and what was the coin of Abraham our father? an old man and an old woman, (Abraham and Sarah,) on one side, and a young man and a young woman, (Isaac and Rebekah,) on the other side."

The gloss on it is,

"not that there was on it the form of an old man and an old woman on one side, and of a young man and a young woman on the other, for it is forbidden to make the form of a man; but so it was written on one side, an old man and an old woman, and on the other side, a young man and a young woman."

{r} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 97. 2. Vid. Bereshit Rabbas sect. 39. fol. 34. 4. & Midrash Kohelet, fol 95. 4.

Matthew 22:21

Ver. 21. They say unto him, Caesar's,.... Either Augustus Caesar's; for there was a coin of that emperor's, as Dr. Hammond reports, from Occo, which had his image or picture on it, and in it these words written, Augustus Caesar, such a year, "after the taking of Judaea"; which if this was the coin, was a standing testimony of the subjection of the Jews to the Romans; and this being current with them, was an acknowledgment of it by them, and carried in it an argument of their obligation to pay tribute to them; or it might be Tiberius Caesar's, the then reigning emperor, in the nineteenth year of whose reign, Christ was crucified; and seeing he had reigned so long, it is reasonable to suppose, his money was very common, and most in use: we read in the Talmud {s}, of hnaroyq arnyd, "a Caesarean penny", or "Caesar's penny", the same sort with this: now this penny having Caesar's image and inscription on it, our Lord tacitly suggests, that they ought to pay tribute to him; since his money was allowed of as current among them, which was in effect owning him to be their king; and which perfectly agrees with a rule of their own, which runs thus {t}:

"A king whose "coin" is "current" in any country, the inhabitants of that country agree about him, and it is their joint opinion, Mydbe wl Mhw Mhynwda awhv "that he is their Lord, and they are his servants"."

This being the case now with the Jews, Christ's advice is,

render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God, the things that are God's: give Caesar the tribute and custom, and fear, and honour, and obedience, which are due to him; which may be done without interfering with the honour of God, and prejudicing his interest and glory, when care is taken, that all the worship and obedience due to God are given to him: subjection to civil magistrates is not inconsistent with the reverence and fear of God; all are to have their dues rendered unto them, without entrenching upon one another. And the Jews themselves allow, that a king ought to have his dues, whether he be a king of Israel, or of the Gentiles:

"a publican, or tax gatherer, (they say {u},) that is appointed by the king, whether a king of Israel, or of the Gentiles, and takes what is fixed by the order of the government; it is forbidden to refuse payment of the tax to him, for anyd twklmd anyd, "the right of a king is right"."

Just and equitable, and he ought to have his right.

{s} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 6. 2. {t} Maimon. Hilch. Gerala, c. 5. sect. 18. {u} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Nedarim. c. 3. sect. 4. & Maimon. Hilch. Gezala, c. 5. sect. 11.

Matthew ***22:22***

Ver. 22. When they had heard these words,.... This answer returned unto them, this advice which was given them, which they could not gainsay or deny to be good,

they marvelled: were amazed and astonished, at his prudence and wisdom, in answering them, in such an unexpected and cautious manner:

they left him: being silenced, confounded, and disappointed:

and went their way: not being able to get any advantage against him, neither to bring him into contempt with the people, and alienate their affections from him; nor to charge him with sedition or treason to the Roman governor; and so had but a very indifferent account of their success, to report to them that sent them.

Matthew ***22:23***

Ver. 23 The same day came to him the Sadducees, &] Quickly after the Pharisees and Herodians had left him; and which shows, that the Herodians and Sadducees were not the same; but that the Sadducees were a distinct sect, both from the Pharisees and the Herodians. These understanding that the former had not succeeded, came with a knotty question, with which they had often puzzled the Pharisees, and hoped they should nonplus Christ with it, showing the absurdity of the doctrine of the resurrection, an article which they denied; as it follows,

which say, that there is no resurrection of the dead: they denied that there were angels and spirits, and the immortality of the soul; they affirmed, that the soul died with the body, and that there was no future state: the rise of this sect, and of these notions of their's, was this, as the Jews relate {w}.

"Antigonus, a man of Socho, used to say, be not as servants, that serve their master on account of receiving a reward, but be as servants that serve their master, not on account of receiving a reward; and let the fear of heaven (God) be upon you, so that your reward may be double in the world to come: this man had two disciples, who altered his words, and taught the disciples, and the disciples their disciples, and they stood and narrowly examined them, and said, what did our fathers see, to say this thing? Is it possible, that a labourer should work all day, and not take his reward at evening? But if our fathers had known that there is another world, and that there is Mytmh tyyht, "a resurrection of the dead", they would not have said thus: they stood and separated from the law, and of them there were two parties, the Sadducees and Baithusites; the Sadducees on account of Sadoc, and the Baithusites on account of Baithus."

The Syriac version reads, "and they said" and the Ethiopic version also, "saying, there is no resurrection of the dead"; taking the sense to be, that they at this time declared their sense of this doctrine, and according to a settled notion of their's, affirmed before Christ, that there was no such thing; that never any was raised from the dead, nor never will; and they were desirous of entering into a controversy with him about it:

and asked him; put the following question to him, in order to expose the weakness and absurdity of such a doctrine.

{w} Abot R. Nathan, c. 5. fol. 3. 1.

Matthew 22:24

Ver. 24. Saying, master,.... Rabbi, or doctor, as he was usually called;

Moses said, in *De 25:5*

if a man die having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother; which, though not expressed in the self same words, yet is the sense of the passage referred to, and was a practice in use before the times of Moses, as appears from the case of Er and Onan; the design of which was, to preserve families, and keep their inheritances distinct and entire. This law only took place, when a man died without children; for if he left any children, there was no need for his brother to marry his wife; yea, as a Jewish writer observes {x}, she was forbidden, it was not lawful for him to marry her, and was the case if he had children of either sex, or even grandchildren: for as another of their commentators notes {y}, his having no child, regards a son or a daughter, or a son's son, or a daughter's son, or a daughter's daughter; and it was the eldest of the brethren, or he that was next in years to the deceased, that was obliged by this law {z}, though not if he had a wife of his own; and accordingly in the following case proposed, each of the brethren married the eldest brother's wife in their turn, according to the course of seniority; and by this law, the first child that was born after such marriage, was reckoned the seed of the deceased, and was heir to his inheritance. The Jews in their Misna, or oral law, have a whole tract on this subject, called Yebamot, which contains various rules and directions, for the right observance of this law.

{x} Aben Ezra in Deut. xxv. 5. {y} Jarchi in ib. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Yebum, c. 1. sect. 3. {z} Jarchi in Deut. xxv. 5. Misn. Yebamot, c. 2. sect. 8. & 4, 5. Maimon. Hilch. Yebum, c. 2. sect. 6.

Matthew *22:25*

Ver. 25. Now there were with us seven brethren,.... That is, there was in the city, town or neighbourhood, where these Sadducees dwelt, probably at Jerusalem, a family, in which were seven sons, all brethren by the father's side; for brethren by the mother's side were not counted brethren, nor obliged by this law {a}; whether this was a reigned case which is here and in the following verses put, or whether it was real fact, which is possible, it matters not: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: the eldest of these seven brethren married a wife, and after some time died, having no children, son or daughter, by his wife; and therefore, according to the above law, leaves her to his next brother to marry her, and raise up seed unto him; which, according to the Jewish canons {b}, could not be done before ninety days, or three months after the decease of his brother; for so long they were to wait and see, whether she was with child by his brother or not; for if she was, it was not necessary, yea, it was unlawful for him to marry her.

{a} Maimon. Hilch. Yebum, c. 1. sect. 7. {b} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 47. 1. Maimon. ib. c. 1. sect. 19.

Matthew *22:26*

Ver. 26. Likewise the second also,.... The eldest of the surviving brethren, having married his brother's wife, after sometime died also without children, and left her to his next brother to marry her; and the third brother accordingly did marry her, and in process of time died likewise, leaving no issue behind him; and thus they went on in course, unto the seventh: the fourth, fifth, and sixth, married her in turn, and so did the seventh; and all died in the same circumstances, having no children by her.

Matthew 22:27

Ver. 27. And last of all the woman died also.] A widow and childless, having never married another person but these seven brethren; and the case with them being alike, no one having any child by her, upon which any peculiar claim to her could be formed, the following question is put.

Matthew 22:28

Ver. 28. Therefore in the resurrection,.... As asserted by the Pharisees and by Christ, supposing that there will be such a thing, though not granting it; for these men denied it, wherefore the Ethiopic version reads it hypothetically, "if therefore the dead will be raised"; upon such a supposition,

whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her, or were married to her. By putting this question, they thought to have got some advantage against Christ, and in favour of their notion; they hoped, either that he would give into their way of thinking, and relinquish the doctrine of the resurrection upon this, and join with them against the Pharisees, and so there would be no need of an answer to the question; or they judged, that if he returned an answer, it would be either that he did not know whose wife she should be, and then they would traduce him among the common people, as weak and ignorant; or should he say, that she would be the wife of one of them only, naming which of them, or of them all, or of none of them, they fancied that such absurd consequences would follow on each of these, as would expose the doctrine of the resurrection to ridicule and contempt; but they missed their aim, and were sadly disappointed by Christ's answer and reasonings which follow.

Matthew 22:29

Ver. 29. Jesus answered and said unto them,.... The Sadducees: as idle and impertinent as the case they put may seem to be and really was, our Lord thought fit to return an answer to them, thereby to expose their ignorance, and put them to silence and confusion: ye do err; not only in that they denied the immortality of the soul and the resurrection, but that supposing that there would be a resurrection, things in that state would be just they were in this; as particularly for instance, that there would be the same natural relation of husband and wife, which their question supposes. Mark reads these words by way of interrogation,

do ye not therefore err, because? &c] And by Luke they are wholly omitted, as also what follows,

not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. These two things were the spring and source of their errors: they had not a true knowledge, and right understanding of the Scriptures; which if they had had, it must have appeared to them, from many places in the Old Testament, that the soul remains after death, and that the body will be raised from the dead: they owned the authority of the Scriptures, and allowed of all the writings of the Old Testament; for it seems to be a mistake of some learned men, who think that they only received the five books of Moses, and that therefore Christ takes his proof of his doctrine from thence; but though they had the greater esteem for the law, and would admit of nothing that was not clearly proved from that; yet they did not reject the other writings, as what might serve to confirm and illustrate what was taught in the law; but then, though they approved of the Scriptures and read them, yet they did not understand them, and so fell into those gross errors and sad mistakes; nor did they attend to the power of God, which, as it was able to make men out of the dust of the earth, was able to raise them again, when crumbled into dust; but this was looked upon by them, as a thing impossible, and so incredible; see *Ac 26:8*.

Matthew 22:30

Ver. 30. For in the resurrection,.... At the time of the resurrection, and in that state; when the bodies and souls of men shall be reunited,

they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither the men marry wives, nor are the women given in marriage to men, which is done by their parents here, generally speaking, they having the right of disposing of children in marriage: but, as Luke says, "they which shall be accounted worthy"; not through their own works of righteousness, but through the grace of God and righteousness of Christ, "to obtain the world", the world to come, a future state of happiness, "and the resurrection of the dead", that which will be unto everlasting life and glory, "neither marry nor are given in marriage"; shall not enter into any such natural and carnal relation: and this agrees with the notion of the other Jews, who say {c}; that

"In "the world to come", there is neither eating nor drinking, hybrw hyrp alw, "nor fructification, nor increase" (of children), no receiving and giving, (no commerce), nor envy, nor hatred, nor contention."

But are as the angels of God in heaven; or, as in Luke, "are equal unto the angels"; and which he explains their immortality: "neither can they die any more"; no more than the angels can: for this must not be extended to everything; not in everything will the saints be like, or equal to the angels; they will not be incorporeal, as the angels are, but then, even their bodies will be spiritual, and in some respects, like spirits; they will not stand in any need of sustenance, by eating and drinking, any more than the angels; nor will there be any such things as marriage, and procreation of children among them, any more than among angels; for they "are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection": they will then appear to be the children of God by adopting grace, through their enjoying the adoption, even the redemption of their bodies; and possessing, in soul and body, the heavenly inheritance they are heirs of: indeed, the souls of the saints before the resurrection, during their separate state, are in some sense like the angels, to which may be applied those words of Maimonides {d}.

"In the world to come, there is no body, but the souls of the righteous only, without a body, trvh ykalmk "as the ministering angels"; and seeing there is no body, there is no eating nor drinking in it, nor any of all the things which the bodies of the children of men stand in need of in this world; nor does anything befall which happens to bodies in this world, as sitting or standing, or sleep or "death", or grief, or laughter, or the like."

And according to the sense of the Jews, they will be like to the angels after the resurrection: so God is by them introduced speaking {e};

"At the appointed time known by me, to quicken the dead, I will return to thee that body which is holy and renewed, as at the first, to be Myvwdq

Mykalmk, "as the holy angels"."

This was an usual way of speaking with them, to compare saints in a state of immortality, to angels {f}. Christ, by making mention of angels, strikes at another notion of the Sadducees, that there were no angels, *Ac 23:8*.

{c} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. {d} Hilch. Teshuba, c. 8. sect. 2. {e} Midrash Hanneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 66. 4. {f} Vid. Abot. R. Nathan, c. 1. fol. 1. 3. Caphtor, fol. 18. 2. Philo de Sacrific. Abel & Cain, p. 131.

Matthew 22:31

Ver. 31. But as touching the resurrection of the dead,.... In proof of that doctrine, and which will greatly serve to confirm and establish it, and that it may appear that the dead are, or will be raised, and to put it out of all doubt,

have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, as Mark adds, "in the book of Moses"; which was written by him, the book of ***Ex 3:6*** and though the words were spoke to Moses, yet were designed for the use, instruction, and comfort of the Israelites; not only at that time, but in succeeding ages, they being the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; whose God the Lord there declares himself to be. Moreover, whereas these words were spoken by God to Moses, there is some little difficulty occasioned, by Luke's representing them to be the words of Moses; for he says, "Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham", &c. which may be removed by observing, that the sense is, that when Moses showed to the children of Israel, what he heard and saw at the bush on Mount Sinai, he called the Lord by these names, in which he spoke of himself to him; he recited to them what the Lord said to him; and indeed he was bid to say to them these words; See ***Ex 3:14***

saying, as follows,

Matthew 22:32

Ver. 32. I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,.... The Sadducees expressly denied, that the resurrection could be proved out of the law.

"Says R. Eliezer, with R. Jose {g}, I have found the books of the Sadducees to be corrupt; for they say that the resurrection of the dead is not to be proved out of the law: I said unto them, you have corrupted your law, and ye have not caused anything to come up into your hands, for ye say the resurrection of the dead is not to be proved out of the law; lo! he saith, *Nu 15:31* "That soul shall be utterly cut off, his iniquity shall be upon him; he shall be utterly cut off" in this world; "his iniquity shall be upon him", is not this said with respect to the world to come?."

Hence, in opposition to this notion of the Sadducees, the other Jews say {h}, that

"Though a man confesses and believes that the dead will be raised, yet that it is not intimated in the law, he is an heretic; since it is a fundamental point, that the resurrection of the dead is of the law."

Hence they set themselves, with all their might and main, to prove this doctrine from thence, of which take the following instances {i}.

"Says R. Simai, from whence is the resurrection of the dead to be proved out of the law? From ***Ex 6:4*** as it is said, "I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan: to you" it is not said, but "to them"; from hence then, the resurrection of the dead may be proved out of the law."

The gloss upon it is,

"the sense is, that the holy blessed God, promised to our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that he would give to them the land of Israel; and because he gave it to them, has he not given it to their children? But we learn from hence, that they shall be raised, and that God will hereafter give them the land of Israel."

And which the learned Mr. Mede takes to be the sense of the words of this text, cited by our Lord;, and this the force of his reasoning, by which he proves the resurrection of the dead. Again,

"the Sadducees asked Rabban Gamaliel, from whence does it appear that the holy blessed God will quicken the dead? He said unto them, out of the law, and out of the prophets, and out of the Hagiographa; but they did not receive of him (or regard him): out of the law, as it is written, "Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, and rise up", *De 31:16* And there are that say from this Scripture, ***De 4:4***. "But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God, are alive every one of you this day": as this day all of you stand, so in the world to come, all of you shall stand."

Thus our Lord having to do with the same sort of persons, fetches his proof of the doctrine of the resurrection out of the law, and from a passage which respects the covenant relation God stands in to his people, particularly Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and which respects not their souls only, but their bodies also, even their whole persons, body and soul; for God is the God of the whole: and therefore as their souls now live with God, their bodies also will be raised from the dead, that they, with their souls, may enjoy everlasting glory and happiness; which is the grand promise, and great blessing of the covenant of grace.

God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; as all the saints are; for though their bodies are dead, their souls are alive, and their bodies will be raised in consequence of their covenant interest in God, to enjoy an immortal life with him: so the Jews are wont to say, that the righteous, even in their death, are called living {k}:

"from whence is it proved, (say they,) that the righteous, even in their death, Myyx Nyywrq, "are called living?""

from *De 34:4* as it is written, "and he said unto him, this is the land which I have sworn to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying." Menasseh ben Israel, a learned Jew, of the last century, has produced {l} this same passage of Scripture, Christ here does in proof of the immortality of the soul, and argues from it in much the same manner: having mentioned the words, he adds,

"for God is not the God of the dead, for the dead are not; but of the living, for the living exist; therefore also the patriarchs, in respect of the soul, may rightly be inferred from hence to live."

{g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 90. 2. {h} Gloss. in ib. col. 1. {i} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 90. 2. {k} T. Hieros. Betacot, fol. 4. 4, Midrash Kohelet, fol. 78. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 158. 3. {l} De Resurrect. Mort, l. i. c. 10. sect.

Matthew 22:33

Ver. 33. And when the multitude heard this,.... This wise and full answer of Christ to the posing question of the Sadducees, with which perhaps they had puzzled many, and never had met with their match before:

they were astonished at his doctrine; concerning the pure, perfect, and angelic state of the righteous in the world to come;, and how strongly and nervously he proved the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the dead, which were both denied by the Sadducees; and who were so confounded with his answer, proof, and reasonings, that Luke says, "after that they durst not ask him any question at all": and the Scribes were so pleased therewith, that certain of them applauded him, saying, "master, thou hast well said".

Matthew 22:34

Ver. 34. But when the Pharisees had heard,.... Either with their own ears, they being some of them present: or rather from the relation of others, from the Scribes, who expressed their approbation of Christ's answer to the Sadducees; for the Pharisees, with the Herodians, in a body, had left him, and were gone to their respective places of abode; or to them that sent them, being baffled and confounded by him: but now hearing

that he had put the Sadducees to silence, or stopped their mouths, having nothing to reply, which itself, was not disagreeable; for they were as opposite as could be to them in the doctrine of the resurrection, and in other things, and were their sworn and avowed enemies: and yet it sadly gravelled them, that Christ should be too hard for, and get the victory over all sects among them. Wherefore, considering that should he go on with success in this manner, his credit with the people would increase yet more and more; and therefore, though they had been so shamefully defeated in two late attempts, yet

they were gathered together in great hurry upon this occasion. The Ethiopic version reads it, "they were gathered to him", that is, to Christ; and so reads the copy that Beza gave to the university of Cambridge: but the other reading, as it is general, so more suitable to the place: they gathered together at some certain house, where they consulted what to do, what methods to take, to put a stop to his growing interest with the people, and how they might bring him into disgrace with them; and they seemed to have fixed on this method, that one among them, who was the ablest doctor, and best skilled in the law, should put a question to him relating to the law, which was then agitated among them, the solution of which was very difficult; and they the rather chose to take this course by setting a single person upon him, that should he succeed, the victory would be the greater, and the whole sect would share in the honour of it; and should he be silenced, the public disgrace and confusion would only fall on himself, and not the whole body, as in the former instances. This being agreed to, they went unto him.

Matthew* *22:35

Ver. 35. Then one of them, which was a lawyer,.... Or that was "learned", or "skilful in the law", as the Syriac and Persic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read. The Ethiopic version calls him, "a Scribe of the city", of the city of Jerusalem; but I do not meet with any such particular officer, or any such office peculiar to a single man any where: mention is made of "the Scribes of the people" in ***Mt 2:4*** and this man was one of them, one that interpreted the law to the people, either in the schools, or in the synagogues, or both; and Mark expressly calls him a "Scribe": and so the Arabic version renders the word here; and from hence it may be concluded that the lawyers and Scribes were the same sort of persons. This man was by sect a Pharisee, and by his office a Scribe; or interpreter of the law, and suitable to his office and character,

asked him a question, tempting him, and saying: he put a difficult and knotty question to him, and thereby making a trial of his knowledge and understanding of the law; and laying a snare for him, to entrap him if he could, and expose him to the people, as a very ignorant man: and delivered it in the following form.

Matthew* *22:36

Ver. 36. Master, which is the great commandment in the law?] He calls him "master, Rabbi, or doctor", as the Sadducees had in *Mt 22:24* either because he was usually so called by his disciples, and by the generality of the people; or merely in complaisance to engage his attention to him, and his question: and might hereby suggest, that should he return a proper and satisfactory answer to it he should be his master. The question is not which of the laws was the greatest, the oral, or the written law: the Jews give the preference to the law delivered by word of mouth; they prefer the traditions of the elders before the written law of Moses; See Gill on "Mt 15:2"; but the question was about the written law of Moses; and not merely about the decalogue, or whether the commands of the first table were greater than those of the second, as was generally thought; or whether the affirmative precepts were not more to be regarded than negative ones, which was their commonly received opinion; but about the whole body of the law, moral and ceremonial, delivered by Moses: and not whether the ceremonial law was to be preferred to the moral, which they usually did; but what particular command there was in the whole law, which was greater than the rest: for as there were some commands that were light, and others that were weighty, a distinction often used by them {m}, and to which Christ alludes in *Mt 23:23*. It was moved that it might be said which was the greatest and weightiest of them all. Some thought the commandment of the sabbath was the greatest: hence they say {n}, that he that keeps the sabbath is as if he kept the whole law: yea, they make the observance of the three meals, or feasts, which, according to the traditions of the elders, they were obliged to eat on the sabbath, to be at least one of the greatest of them.

"These three meals (says one of their writers {o}) are a great matter, for it is one hrwtbv twlwdgh twumhm, "of the great commandments in the law"."

Which is the very phraseology used in this question. Others give the preference to circumcision, on which they bestow the greatest encomiums, and, among the rest {p}, say, it drives away the sabbath, or that is obliged to give place unto it. Others {q} say of the "phylacteries", that the holiness of them is the greatest of all, and the command to be arrayed with them all the day, is more excellent than all others; and even of the fringe upon the borders of their garments, others observe {r}, that a man that is guilty of that command, is guilty of all others, and that single precept is equal to all the rest. In this multiplicity of opinions, Christ's is desired on this subject, though with no good intention.

{m} Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 1. & c. 4. sect. 2. {n} Zohar in Exod. fol. 37. 1. {o} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 3. 3. {p} Misn. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 11. {q} Maimon. Hilch. Tephillin, c. 4. sect. 25, 26. {r} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 43. 2.

Matthew ***22:37***

Ver. 37. Jesus said unto him,.... Directly, without taking time to think of it; and though he knew with what design it was put to him, yet, as an answer to it might be useful and instructive to the people, as well as silence and confound his adversaries, he thought fit to give one; and is as follows, being what is expressed in ***De 6:5***.

thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; that is, with all the powers and faculties of the soul, the will, the understanding, and the affections; in the most sincere, upright, and perfect manner, without any dissimulation and hypocrisy, and above all objects whatever, for this the law requires; and which man, in his state of innocence, was capable of, though now fallen, he is utterly unable to perform; so far from it, that without the grace of God, he has no true love at all to God, in his heart, soul and mind, but all the reverse; his carnal mind is enmity against God, and everything that is divine and good, or that belongs unto him: and though this is now the case of man, yet his obligation to love the Lord in this manner is still the same; and when the Spirit of God does produce the grace and fruit of love in his soul, he does love the Lord sincerely; because of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands, and because of the blessings of grace bestowed, and especially for Christ, the unspeakable gift of his love; and most affectionately does he love him, when he is most sensible of his everlasting and unchangeable love to him, and when that is shed abroad by the Spirit; "for we love him, because he first loved us", ***1Jo 4:19*** instead of, "with all thy mind", as here, in ***De 6:5*** it is read, "with all thy might"; and which clause is here added by the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, as it is in *Mr 12:30*. The Hebrew phrase seems to denote the vehemency of affections, with which God is to be beloved. Though the Jewish writers {s} paraphrase and interpret it, "with all thy substance", or "money"; and in the Misna {t}, the following interpretation is given of the whole;

""with all thy heart", with thy imaginations, with the good imagination, and with the evil imagination; and "with all thy soul", even if he should take away thy soul; and "with all thy strength", with all thy "mammon", or riches; or otherwise, "with all thy might", with every measure he measures unto thee, do thou measure unto him;"

that is, as one of the commentators says {u}, whether it be good or evil; or, as another {w}, in every case that happens give thanks to God, and praise him. And certain it is, that as God is to be loved in the strongest manner we are capable of, and with all we have, and are; so always, at all times, under all dispensations of his providence, and upon all accounts, and for all he does towards, in, upon, and for us.

{s} Targum Onk. & Jarchi in Deut. vi. 5. {t} Beracot, c. 9. sect. 5. Vid. Targum Jon. in Dent. vi. 5. {u} Bartenora in Misn. ib. {w} Maimon. in ib.

Matthew *22:38*

Ver. 38. This is the first and great commandment. Whether the object of it is considered, who is the first and chief good; or the manner in which it is to be observed, which requires and engrosses the whole heart, soul, and mind, and all the strength and power of man; or its being the principle from whence all the duties, and actions of men should flow, and the end to which all are to be referred; and is not only a compendium of the duties of the first table of the decalogue, but of all others that can be thought to, and do, belong to God. This is the first command in order of nature, time, dignity, and causality; God being the first cause of all things, infinitely above all creatures, and love to him being the source, spring and cause of love to the neighbour; and it is the greatest in its object, nature, manner, and end. That this command, and these words our Lord cites, are so full and comprehensive, the Jews themselves cannot deny. A noted writer of their's {x} says,

"the root of "all the commandments" is, when a man loves God with all his soul, and cleaves unto him."

And, says {y} another,

"in this verse only, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God", &c. twrbdh trve Mylwlk, "the ten words, or decalogue, are comprehended"."

{x} Aben Ezra in Exod. xxxi. 18. {y} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 138. 1.

Matthew 22:39

Ver. 39. And the second is like unto it,.... For there is but a second, not a third: this is suggested in opposition to the numerous commandments in the law, according to the opinion of the Jews, who reckon them in all to be "six hundred and thirteen": of which there are "three hundred and sixty five" negative ones, according to the number of the days of the year; and "two hundred and forty eight" affirmative ones, according to the members of a man's body {z}. Christ reduces all to two, love to God, and love to the neighbour; and the latter is the second in order of nature, time, dignity, and causality; the object of it being a creature; and the act itself being the effect of the former, yet like unto it: for though the object is different, yet this commandment regards love as the former, and requires that it be as that, true, hearty, sincere, and perfect; that it be with singleness of heart, always, and to all men; and that it spring from love to God, and be performed to his glory: and which is expressed in the words written in *Le 19:18* "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"; as heartily and sincerely, and as a man would desire to be loved by his neighbour; and do all the good offices to him he would choose to have done to himself by him. This law supposes, that men should love themselves, or otherwise they cannot love their neighbour; not in a sinful way, by indulging themselves in carnal lusts and pleasures; some are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; but in a natural way, so as to be careful of their bodies, families, and estates; and in a spiritual way, so as to be concerned for their souls, and the everlasting happiness of them: and in like manner should men love their neighbours, in things temporal do them all the good they can, and do no injury to their persons or property; and in things spiritual pray for them, instruct them, and advise as they would their own souls, or their nearest and dearest relations. And this is to be extended to every man; though the Jews restrain it to their friend and companion, and one of their own religion.

""Thy neighbour"; that is, (say they {a},) thy friend in the law; and "this is the great comprehensive rule in the law", to show that it is not fit there should be any division, or separation, between a man and his companion, but one should judge every man in the balance of equity: wherefore, near unto it is, "I am the Lord": for as I the Lord am one, so it is fit for you that ye should be one nation without division; but a wicked man, and one that does not receive reproof, it is commanded to hate him; as it is said, "do not I hate them that hate me?""

But our Lord intends by it to include, that love, benevolence, and good will, which are due to every man; and suggests, that this comprehends not only all that contained in the second table of the decalogue, but all duties that are reducible thereunto, and are obligatory on men one towards another whatever; all which should spring from love, and be done heartily and sincerely, with a view to the neighbour's good, and God's glory: and with this Maimonides agrees, saying {b}, that

"all the commands, or duties, respecting a man, and his neighbour, Mydyox twlymgb twonkn, "are comprehended in beneficence.""

{z} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 23. 2. {a} Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. affirm. 9. {b} In Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1.

Matthew 22:40

Ver. 40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Not that all that is contained in the five books of Moses, and in the books of the prophets, and other writings of the Old Testament, is comprehended in, and is reducible to these two precepts; for there are many things delivered by way of promise, written by way of history, &c. which cannot, by any means, be brought into these two general heads: but that everything respecting duty that is suggested in the law, or is more largely explained and pressed in any of the writings of the prophets, is summarily comprehended in these two sayings: hence love is the fulfilling of the law; see *Ro 13:8*. The substance of the law is love; and the writings of the prophets, as to the preceptive part of them, are an explanation of the law, and an enlargement upon it: hence the Jews have a saying {c}, that "all the prophets stood on Mount Sinai", and received their prophecies there, because the sum of them, as to the duty part, was then delivered. Beza thinks, that here is an allusion to the "phylacteries", or frontlets, which hung upon their foreheads and hands, as a memorial of the law. And certain it is, that the first of these commands, and which is said to be the greatest, was written in these phylacteries. Some take the phrase, "on these hang all the law and the prophets", to be a mere Latinism, but it is really an Hebraism, and often to be met with in the Jewish writings: so Maimonides says {d},

"the knowledge of this matter is an affirmative precept, as it is said, "I am the Lord thy God"; and he that imagines there is another God besides this, transgresses a negative, as it is said, "thou shalt have no other Gods before me"; and he denies the fundamental point, for this is the great foundation, wb ywlt lkhv, "on which all hang":"

and so the word is used in many other places {e}. The sense is plainly this, that all that are in the law and prophets are consistent with, and dependent on these things; and are, as the Persic version renders the word, "comprehended" in them, and cannot be separated from them.

{c} Jarchi in Isa. xlviii. 16. & in Mal. i. 1. {d} Hilch. Yesode Hatorah, c. 1. sect. 6. {e} Vid. Abkath Rokel. l. 1. p. 3.

Matthew 22:41

Ver. 41. While the Pharisees were gathered together,.... Or rather, "when" they were gathered together, and while they continued so, before they left him: for this is to be understood not of their gathering together, to consult privately about him; this is expressed before in *Mt 22:34* but of their gathering together about Christ, to hear what answer he would return to the question their learned doctor would put to him: and he having given an answer to that, which the Scribe was obliged to allow was a good one; and he having no more to say, Christ directs his discourse not to him individually, but to all the Pharisees before he parted with them, and puts a question to them, in his turn; and which would lead on to another they could not answer, and they must therefore leave him once more with great shame and confusion.

Jesus asked them: as the lawyer put a question to him suitable to his office and character, Christ puts another to the Pharisees suitable to his office and character, as a Gospel preacher; suggesting by it, that salvation was not by the law, and the works of it, which they set up for doctors and interpreters of, and advocates for, but by the Messiah, who was promised to their fathers, and they expected.

Ver. 42. Saying, what think ye of Christ,.... Or the Messiah; he does not ask them whether there was, or would be such a person in the world. He knew, that he was so plainly spoken of in the writings of the Old Testament, which they had in their hands, that they could not be ignorant, that such a person was prophesied of: he knew that they believed that he would come, and that they were in continual expectation of his coming; wherefore he asks them what they thought of him, what were their sentiments and opinions concerning him; as about his person, whether they thought him to be divine, or human, a mere man, or God, as well as man; what they thought of his work and office he came to perform, whether it was a spiritual, or temporal salvation, they expected he should be the author of; and so of his kingdom, whether it would be of this world or not; and particularly, what thoughts they had of his sonship, and who was his father;

whose son is he? and which the Pharisees understanding only as respecting his lineage and descent as man, as, of what family he was? who were his ancestors and progenitors?

they say unto him, the son of David. This they said directly, without any hesitation, it being a generally received notion of their's, and was very right, that the Messiah should be of the seed and family of David: and hence he is frequently, in their writings, called by no other name, than the son of David; See Gill on "Mt 1:1". If this question was put to some persons, it would appear, that they have no thoughts of Christ at all. The atheist has none; as God is not in all his thoughts, nor in any of them, for all his thoughts are, that there is no God; so neither is Christ the Son of God. The deist thinks thing of him, for he does not believe the revelation concerning him. The epicure, or voluptuous man, he thinks only of his carnal lusts and pleasures: and the worldling, or covetous man, thinks nothing but of his worldly substance, and of the much good things he has laid up for many years: to say nothing of the Heathens, who have never heard of him; others, and such as bear the Christian name, have very wrong thoughts of Christ, mean, and undervaluing. The Arrian thinks he is a created God, of a like, but not or the same nature with the Father. The Socinian thinks he is a God by office, and did not exist until he was born of the Virgin Mary; and has no notion of his sacrifice, and satisfaction for the sins of men. The Arminian thinks meanly of his righteousness, and denies the imputation of it to them that believe. And indeed, all such think wrongly of Christ, who divide their salvation between their works and him, and make them their Christ, or their frames their Christ, or their graces, and particularly their believing in him; that is, that ascribe that to them, which properly belongs to him. And as for those who do not bear the name Christians, it is no wonder that they entertain wrong and low thoughts of Christ. The Jews thought him to be a mere man, and the carpenter's son. The Pharisees thought that he was an Antinomian, a libertine, a loose, and licentious person, that had no regard to the law, and good works: hence those words of his, "think not that I am come to destroy the law", ***Mt 5:17***. Yea, they thought him to be a Samaritan, and to have a devil, and to cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. The Mahometans, though they allow him to be a prophet, yet think that he is inferior to Mahomet their prophet. There are others that think well of Christ, admire the loveliness of his person, and the fulness of his grace, but are afraid Christ does not think well of them: they think well of the suitableness there is in Christ, of his righteousness to justify, of his blood to cleanse and pardon, and of the fulness of his grace to supply all wants, but think these are not for them: they often revolve in their minds his ability to save, and firmly believe it, but question his willingness to save them: they often think of Christ, what he is to others, but cannot think of him for themselves; only believers in Christ have a good thought of him, to their own joy and comfort: faith is a good thought of Christ; to them that believe, he is precious; and such, through believing in him, are filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; such think often, and well, of the dignity of Christ's person, of the excellency and usefulness of his offices, of the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and of the sufficiency of his grace for them: they think well of what he did for them in eternity, as their surety, in the council and covenant of peace; and of what he has done for them in time, by suffering and dying for them in their room and stead; and of what he is now doing for them in heaven, as their advocate and intercessor.

Matthew 22:43

Ver. 43. He saith unto them,.... Not denying it to be a truth they affirmed; but rather granting and allowing it: he argues upon it, though he tacitly refuses their sense and meaning of the phrase, thus,

how then doth David in spirit call him Lord? that is, if he is a mere man, if he is only the son of David, according to the flesh, if he has no other, or higher descent than from him, how comes it to pass, that David, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, by which he wrote his book of Psalms, see *2Sa 23:1* where the passage, after cited, stands, to call him Lord; which supposes him to be more than barely his son, and to be a greater person than himself, one superior in nature and dignity to him? for the phrase "in spirit", is not to be connected with the word Lord; as if the design of it was to show, that the Messiah was Lord, or God, in spirit, or with respect to his divine nature, but, with the word "call", expressing the influence of the Spirit of God, under which David wrote; otherwise the Pharisees would have had a direction how to have answered the question, which much puzzled them:

saying, as in *Ps 110:1*.

Matthew 22:44

Ver. 44. The Lord said unto my Lord,.... By the Lord that said, is meant "Jehovah" the Father, who said the following words at the time of Christ's ascension, and entrance into heaven, after he had finished the great work of man's salvation; prophetically delivered by the Psalmist, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, being what was before purposed and promised: by "my Lord", the person spoken to, the Messiah is designed, who was David's "Adon", or Lord, by right both of creation and redemption: as God, he made him: and as the Messiah and Saviour, redeemed him; and on both accounts had a right to rule over him. The words said unto him are,

sit thou on my right hand; which is a figurative phrase, and expressive of the exaltation, dignity, power, and authority of the Messiah; and of an honour done to him, which was never granted to the angels, nor to any mere man:

till I make thine enemies thy footstool; till all the enemies of him, and his people, are subdued under him; carnal professors, as the Pharisees, and profane sinners, who neither of them would have him to rule over them; the world, the devil, antichrist, and all the powers of darkness, and the last enemy, death itself. That these words were spoken of the Messiah, and therefore pertinently cited, and properly applied to him, by Jesus, is evident from the silence of the Pharisees; for had it not been the generally received sense of the Jewish church, they would, at once, have objected it to him;

which might, in some measure, have relieved them under that distress, into which they were brought by this passage proposed unto them: but by their silence they acknowledged, that the Psalm was wrote by David; that it was wrote by him under the inspiration of the Spirit of God; and that the Messiah was the subject of it. And the same is owned by some of their doctors, ancient, and modern.

"Says R. Joden, in the name of R. Chijah, in time to come the holy blessed God will cause the king Messiah to sit at his right hand; as it is said, "the Lord said unto my Lord", &c. {f}."

And the same says, R. Berachiah, in the name of R. Levi, elsewhere {g}. And, says, another of their writers {h},

"we do not find any man, or prophet, whose birth was prophesied of before the birth of his father and mother, but Messiah our righteousness; and of him it is intimated, "from the womb of the morning", &c. i.e. before the womb of her that bore thee was created, thy birth was prophesied of: and this these words respect, "before the sun, his name is Yinnon", *Ps 72:17* i, e. before the creation of the sun, the name of our Messiah was strong and firm, and he shall sit at the right hand of God; and this is what is said, "sit at my right hand"."

In some writings of the Jews, esteemed by them, very ancient {i}, the "Adon" or Lord, to whom these words are spoken, is interpreted of Messiah ben Joseph, whom they make to sit at the right hand of Abraham; which, though a false interpretation of the words, carries in it some marks and traces of the ancient sense of them: yea, even some of the more modern Jews {k} have owned, that they belong to the Messiah, and apply them to him. Though others, observing what confusion their forefathers were thrown into by Jesus, and what improvement his followers have made of this sense of the words since, have quitted it, and introduced strange and foreign ones. Some {l} of them would have Abraham the patriarch to be the subject of this Psalm; and that it was composed either by Melchizedek or by Eliezer, the servant of Abraham; or by David, on account of the victory Abraham obtained over the four kings, in rescuing his kinsman Lot: but Melchizedek could not be the author of it, because he was a far greater person than Abraham; he blessed him, and took tithes of him, and therefore would not call him Lord. Eliezer might indeed, as being his servant; but then he could not assign to him a seat at the right hand of God, or say of him, that he had an everlasting priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek: and though the Psalm was composed by David, yet not on the above account, for the same reasons. Nor is David the subject of it, as others {m} have affirmed; for it cannot be thought that David would say this of himself, or call himself his Lord, which this sense of the words makes him to do: and whereas others of them say, that it was wrote by one of the singers concerning him; it may be replied, that the title declares the contrary: besides, David is not ascended into heaven, nor is he set down at the right hand of God, nor had he any thing to do with the priesthood, much less was he a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and that for ever: but all is true of the Messiah Jesus, of whose kingdom and priesthood, sufferings, and exaltation, conquest of his enemies, and success of his Gospel, this whole Psalm is a very plain and manifest prophecy

{f} Midrash Tillira in Psal. xviii. 35. apud Galatin. de Cath. ver. arcan. l. 8. c. 24. {g} R. Moses Hadarsan in Gen. xviii. 1. apud ib. {h} R. Isaac Arama in Gen. xlvii. 6. spud ib. l. 3. c. 17. {i} Zohar in Num. fol. 99. 2. & Raya Mehimna, in ib. in Gen. fol. 37. 3. {k} R. Saadiah Gaon in Dan. vii. 13. Nachman. disp. cure Paulo. p. 36, 55. {l} Zohar in Gen. fol. 60. 3. Jarchi in Psal. cx. 1. Vet. Nizzachon, p. 179, 180. {m} Kimchi & Aben Ezra in Psal. cx. 1. R. Isaac Chizuk Emuna, par. 1. c. 40. p. 321.

Matthew 22:45

Ver. 45. If David then call him Lord,.... That is, the Messiah, which is taken for granted, nor could the Pharisees deny it,

how is he his son? The question is to be answered upon true and just notions of the Messiah, but unanswerable upon the principles of the Pharisees; who expected the Messiah only as a mere man, that should be of the seed of David, and so his son; and should sit upon his throne, and be a prosperous and victorious prince, and deliver them out of the hands of their temporal enemies: they were able to make answer to the question, separately considered, as that he should be of the lineage and house of David; should lineally descend from him, be of his family, one of his offspring and posterity, and so be properly and naturally his son; but how he could be so, consistent with his being David's Lord, puzzled them. Had they understood and owned the proper divinity of the Messiah, they might have answered, that as he was God, he was David's Lord, his maker, and his king; and, as man, was David's son, and so both his root and offspring; and this our Lord meant to bring them to a confession of, or put them to confusion and silence, which was the consequence.

Matthew 22:46

Ver. 46. And no man was able to answer him a word,.... They saw the dilemma they were reduced to, either to acknowledge the deity of the Messiah, or confess their ignorance; and neither of them they cared to do, and therefore judged it to be the wisest part to be silent.

Neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions: neither Pharisees nor Sadducees, for the same is observed by *Lu 20:40* of the Sadducees particularly, and was true of all sorts, and every sect, of men among them: and thus our Lord was freed from a cavilling, captious, and troublesome generation of men, from this time forward, to the time of his sufferings, which was not very long after; for this was the third day before the passover, as appears from *Mt 26:1*.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Matthew 23:1

Ver. 1. Then spake Jesus to the multitude,.... To the common people that were about him in the temple; the high priests and elders, Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, having left him, being all nonplussed and silenced by him: and now, lest on the one hand, the people seeing the ignorance and errors of these men detected by Christ, should be tempted to conclude there was nothing in religion, and to neglect the word and worship of God, on account of the concern these men had in it; and on the other hand, because of their great authority and influence, being in Moses's chair, lest the people should be led into bad principles and practices by them, he directs them in what they should observe them, and in what not: that they were not altogether to be rejected, nor in everything to be attended to; and warns them against their ostentation, pride, hypocrisy, covetousness, and cruelty; and, at the same time, removes an objection against himself, proving that he was no enemy to Moses, and the law, rightly explained and practised:

and to his disciples; not only the twelve, but to all that believed in him, and were followers of him.

Matthew ***23:2***

Ver. 2. Saying, the Scribes and Pharisees,.... The Persic version adds, the priests: but Christ does not here speak of the sanhedrim, or grand council of the nation, and of their legislative power; but of those that were the teachers of the people, and the interpreters of the law; and of those, who, though they corrupted the word with their glosses and traditions, yet retained some truth, and at least came nearer truth, than the Sadducees; who therefore are omitted, and only Scribes and Pharisees mentioned, who gave the literal and traditional sense of the Scriptures; of whom he says, they

sit in Moses's seat: not that they were his successors in his office as a legislator and mediator; though the Persic version reads it, "sit in the place and chair of Moses"; but they read his law, and explained it to the people: this post and place, as yet, they kept in the office they were, and were to continue; and the people were to regard them so far as they spoke consistent with the law, until it had its full accomplishment in Christ. The allusion is not to the chairs in which the sanhedrim sat in trying and determining causes, but to those in which the doctors sat when they expounded the law; for though they stood up when they read the law, or the prophets, they sat down when they preached out of them: this custom of the synagogue was observed by our Lord; see ***Lu 4:16***.

Matthew ***23:3***

Ver. 3. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe,.... This must be restrained to things that were agreeable to the chair of Moses, in which they sat, to the law of Moses, which they read and explained, to other parts of Scripture and truth in general; for otherwise many of their glosses and traditions were repugnant to the law, and ought not to be observed, as appears from ***Mt 5:1***. The word "observe", in this clause, is omitted by the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and Beza says, it is wanting in one ancient copy, but is in others; and is retained in the Syriac and Persic versions that observe and do; hearken to what they say, give diligent heed unto it, take notice of it, and act according to it:

but do not ye after their works; let their doctrine be the rule of your lives, so far as it agrees with the law of Moses; but let not their actions be drawn into an example by you; conform to their instructions, but do not imitate their practices:

for they say, and do not; they talk of good works, but do none; they bid others do them, but do not practise them themselves; they very strictly and severely enjoin them on others, but are very careless themselves to observe them; and of this the Jews are so conscious, that they suggest the same doctrine {n}.

"The daughter of Ahar (a wicked man) came before Rabbi; she said to him, Rabbi, supply me with the necessaries of life: he replied to her, daughter, who art thou? she answered him, the daughter of Ahar: he said to her, is there any of his seed in the world? for lo! it is written, *Job 18:19*. "He shall neither have son, nor nephew, among his people, nor any remaining, in his dwellings": she replied to him, wyvem rwkzt law wtrwtl rwkz, "remember his law, or doctrine, but do not remember his works."--Says R. Jochanan, what is that which is written, ***Mal 2:7***. "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." If the doctor is like to an angel, or messenger of the Lord of hosts, they should seek the law at his mouth; and if not, they should not seek the law at his mouth. Says Resh Lekish, R. Meir found and explained that Scripture, *Pr 22:17*. "Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart to my knowledge": to their knowledge it is not said, but to my knowledge. R. Chanina says, hence, *Ps 45:10*. "Hearken, O daughter! and consider, incline thine ear, forget thine own people, and thy father's house": on which the gloss is, forget their works, and do not learn them: he that knows how to take care not to learn their works, may learn the law from their mouths."

--And a little after,

"the disciples of the wise men are like to a nut; as a nut, though it is defiled with mire and filth, yet that which is within it is not to be rejected; so a scholar, or a disciple of a wise man, though he act wickedly, his law, or doctrine, is not to be despised."

Good doctrine is not the worse for being taught by bad men; nor are good works to be slighted and neglected, because they are not done by all that teach them; but it must be owned that examples are very useful and forcible, and practice greatly recommends doctrine; and it is to be wished, that they both always went together.

{n} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 15. 2.

Matthew 23:4

Ver. 4. For they bind heavy burdens,.... Meaning not the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, circumcision, and other rituals, which obliged to the keeping of the whole law, which was a yoke men were not able to bear; but the traditions of the elders, which the Scribes and Pharisees were very tenacious of, and very severely enjoined the observance of, and are called their "heavy" things {o}.

"It is a tradition of R. Ishmael, there are in the words of the law, that, which is bound or forbidden, and that which is loose or free; and there are in them light things, and there are in them heavy things; but the words of the Scribes, Nh Nyrwmx Nlwk, "all of them are heavy"."

And a little after,

"the words of the elders, Myrwmx, "are heavier" than the words of the prophets."

Hence frequent mention is made of

"the light things of the school of Shammai, yrmwxmw, "and of the heavy things of the school of Hillell" {p}"

two famous doctors, heads of two universities, in being in Christ's time: these are also called, Nyvwrp twkm, "the blows, or wounds of the Pharisees" {q}; not as Bartenora explains them, the wounds they gave themselves, to show their humility; or which they received, by beating their heads against the wall, walking with their eyes shut, that they might not look upon women, under a pretence of great chastity; but, as Maimonides says, these are their additions and heavy things, which they add to the law. Now the binding of these heavy things, means the imposing them on men, obliging them to observe them very strictly, under great penalties, should they omit them. The allusion is, to those frequent sayings in use among them, such a thing is "bound", and such a thing is loosed; such a "Rabbi binds", and such an one looses; that is, forbids, or allows of such and such things; See Gill on "Mt 16:19".

and grievous to be borne. This clause is left out in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; but is in all the Greek copies, and serves to illustrate and aggravate the burdensome rites and institutions of these people: and

lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers: the sense is, not that they were so rigid and hardhearted, that they would not move a finger to remove these burdens from the shoulders of men, or ease them in the least degree, or dispense with their performance of them in the least measure, upon any consideration, though this also was true in many respects; but that they were so slothful and indolent themselves, that though they strictly enjoined the observance of their numerous and unwritten traditions on the people, yet in many cases, where they could without public notice, they neglected them themselves, or at least, made them lighter and easier to them, as in their fastings, &c. In the Misna {r}, mention is made of "a crafty wicked man", along with a woman Pharisee, and the blows of the Pharisees before spoken of; and in the Gemara {s}, is explained by R. Hona, of one,

"that makes things "light" for himself, and makes them "heavy" for others."

Such crafty wicked men were Scribes and Pharisees; though R. Meir pretended that he made things "light" to others and "heavy" to himself {t}.

{o} T. Hieros. Peracot, fol. 3. 2. {p} T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 19. 2. Yom Tob. fol. 60. 2. & Berncot, fol. 3. 2. {q} Misn. Sota, c. 3. sect. 4. {r} Ubi supra. (Misn. Sota, c. 3. sect. 4.) {s} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 21. 2. {t} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 1.

Ver. 5. But all their works they do for to be seen of men,.... All their prayers, alms deeds, and fastings, were all done in a public manner, that men might behold them, and they might have applause and glory from them: they sought neither the glory of God, nor the good of their fellow creatures, nor any spiritual advantage and pleasure to themselves, in their performances; they neither attended to moral duties, nor ceremonious rites, nor the traditions of their fathers, any further than they could be seen by men in them, and keep up their credit and esteem among them. Hence,

they make broad their phylacteries: these were four sections of the law, wrote on parchments, folded up in the skin of a clean beast, and tied to the head and hand. The four sections were these following, viz. the "first", was *Ex 13:2* the "second", was *Ex 13:11* the "third", was ***De 6:4*** the "fourth", was *De 11:13*. Those that were for the head, were written and rolled up separately, and put in four distinct places, in one skin, which was fastened with strings to the crown of the head, towards the face, about the place where the hair ends, and where an infant's brain is tender; and they took care to place them in the middle, that so they might be between the eyes. Those that were for the hand, were written in four columns, on one parchment, which being rolled up, was fastened to the inside of the left arm, where it is fleshy, between the shoulder and the elbow, that so it might be over against the heart {u}. These, they imagined, were commanded them by God, in *Ex 13:16* whereas the sense of these passages only is, that the goodness of God in delivering them out of Egypt, and the words of the law, should be continually before them, in their minds and memories, as if they had tokens on their hands, and frontlets between their eyes; but they understood them literally, and observed them in the above manner. These the Jews call "Tephillin", because they use them in time of prayer, and look upon them as useful, to put them in mind of that duty: they are here called "phylacteries", because they thought they kept them in the fear of God, preserved in them the memory of the law, and them from sin; yea, from evil spirits, and diseases of the body. They imagined there was a great deal of holiness in, and valued themselves much upon the use of them {w}; and the Pharisees, because they would be thought to be more holy and religious, and more observant of the law than others, wore these things broader than the rest of the people;

and enlarge the borders of their garments. These were the fringes which they put upon the borders of their garments, and on them a ribbon of blue, to put them in mind of the commandments, to obey them, *Nu 15:38*. The observance of this law is of so much consequence with the Jews, that they make all the commandments to depend on it {x}; and say, that it is equal to them all, and that he that is guilty of the breach of it, is worthy of death {y}: they ascribe the like virtue to these fringes, as to their phylacteries, and think themselves much the better for the wearing them; and the Pharisees, because they would appear with a greater air of sanctity and devotion than others, made their's larger. We {z} read of one Ben Tzitzith Hacceseth, a man of this complexion, who was so called, because his Tzitzith, or fringes, were drawn upon, a pillow; and there are some that say, that the pillow was bore between the great men of Rome: it was drawn after him, not upon the ground, but upon a cloth or tapestry, and the train supported by noblemen, as is pretended. This was one of those, that enlarged the Tzitzith, or fringes, beyond the ordinary size; hence Mark calls it, "long clothing."

{u} Targ. Jon. Jarchi, & Baal Hatturim in Exod. xiii. 16. & Deut. vi. 8. Maimon. Hilch. Tephillin, c. 1. sect. 1. & c. 2. sect. 2. & c. 3. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. & c. 4. sect. 1, 2. {w} Maimon. ib. c. 4. sect. 25, 26. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 3. 23. Targ. in Cant. viii. 3. {x} Maimon. Hilch. Tzitzith, c. 3. sect. 12. {y} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 25, 1. Shebuot, fol. 29. 1. & Menachot, fol. 43. 2. {z} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 56. 1.

Matthew 23:6

Ver. 6. And love the uppermost rooms at feasts,.... Or the first and chief places to sit, or lie down on, at ordinary meals, and especially at large entertainments, where the great ones sat, as in ***1Sa 9:22*** where Jarchi on the place observes, that by the manner of their sitting, it was known who was the greatest; and this the Scribes and Pharisees affected. With the Romans, the most honourable place was at the upper end of the table: some think it was more honourable to sit in the middle, but the master of the feast sat at the lower end; and to senior men, and who were venerable with age, or excelled in prudence and authority, the first sitting down, and the more honourable place, were given; and when the table was taken away, they used to rise first {a}: the middle place was the more honourable with the Numidians {b}, and so it seems to be with the Romans {c}, and also with the Jews; and this the Scribes and Pharisees loved, desired, sought for, and were pleased if they had not it. It is said {d} of Simeon ben Shetach, a noted Pharisee, about, or rather before the time of Christ, that having fled upon a certain account from king Jannai, he sent for him, and when he came,

"he sat himself between the king and the queen: the king said to him, why dost thou mock me? he replied to him, I do not mock thee, thou hast riches and I have learning, as it is written, "Wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence", ***Ec 7:12***. He said to him, but why dost thou "sit between the king and queen?" He replied, in the book of Ben Sira, it is written, "Exalt her and she shall promote thee, and cause thee to sit among princes." He ordered to give him a cup, that he might ask a blessing; he took the cup and said, blessed be the food that Jannai and his friends eat."

Thus on account of their wisdom and learning, they thought they had a right to take the upper hand of kings themselves:

and the chief seats in the synagogues; for these were different; the seats of the senior men were turned towards the people, and the backs of them were towards the ark or chest, in which the holy books were put; and these seem to be what the Scribes and Pharisees coveted, that they might be in the full view of the people. And so says Maimonides {e}, "How do the people sit in the synagogues?"

"The elders sit, i.e. first, and their faces are towards the people, and their backs are to the temple, or holy place; and all the people sit in rows, and the faces of one row are to the backs of the row that is before them; so that the faces of all the people are to the holy place, and to the elders, and to the ark."

{a} Alex. ab Alex. Genial Dier. l. 5. c. 21. {b} Sallust. Bell. Jugurth. p. 45. {c} Vid. Alstorph. de lect. vet. p. 117. Minut. Felix, p. 3, 4. {d} T. Hieros. Betacot, fol. 11. 2. Beresh. Rabba, sect. 91. fol. 78. 4. {e} Hilchot Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 4.

Matthew 23:7

Ver. 7. And greetings in the markets,.... They used to stroll about the markets, being public places, where there was a great concourse of people, on purpose to be taken notice of before multitudes, with singular marks of respect; as stretching out the hand, uncovering the head, and bowing the knee:

and to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi; because of their great authority, and largeness of their knowledge: the repetition of the word Rabbi, is not made in the Vulgate Latin, nor in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, but is in all the Greek copies, and very justly; since it was usual in the salutations of them, to double the word. It is reported {f} of R. Eleazar ben Simeon, of Migdal Gedur, that having reproached a deformed man he met in the road; when he came to the city where the man lived,

"the citizens came out to meet him, and said to him, peace be upon thee, yrwm yrwm ybr ybr, "Rabbi, Rabbi, Master, Master"; he (Eleazar) said to them, who do you call "Rabbi, Rabbi?" They replied to him, he who followed thee: he said unto them, if this be a Rabbi, let there not be many such in Israel."

The Jews pretend, that king Jehoshaphat used to salute the doctors with these titles; though they forget that they were not in use in his time, as will be hereafter observed: they say {g},

"whenever he saw a disciple of the wise men, he rose from his throne, and embraced and kissed him, and called him, yrm yrm ybr ybr yba yba, "Father, Father, Rabbi, Rabbi, Master, Master"."

Where you have the three different words used by our Lord in this and the following verses, by which these men loved to be called, and he inveighed against; nay, they not only suggest, that kings gave them these honourable titles, and they expected them from them, but even they liked to be called kings themselves. It is said {h} of R. Hona arid R. Chasda, that as they were sitting together, one passed by them,

"and said to them, "peace be to you kings", yklm wkyle amlv, "peace be to you kings": they said to him, from whence does it appear to thee, that the Rabbins are called kings? He replied to them, from what is written, "by me kings reign", &c. They said to him, from whence hast thou it, that we are to double or repeat peace, or salutation to kings? He answered them, that R. Judah said, that Rab said from hence, *1Ch 12:18*. "Then the spirit came upon Amasai", &c."

This title began but to be in use in the time of our Lord, or a very little while before: none of the prophets had it, nor Ezra the Scribe, nor the men of the great synagogue, nor Simeon the Just, the last of them; nor Antigonus, a man of Socho, a disciple of his: and it is observed by the Jews themselves {i}, that

"the five couple are never called by the name of Rabban, nor by the name of Rabbi, only by their own name."

By whom are meant, Joseph ben Joezer, and Joseph ben Jochanan; Joshua ben Perachia, said to be the master of Jesus of Nazareth, and Nittai the Arbelite; Judah ben Tabai, and Simeon ben Shetach; Shemaiah and Abtalion; Hillell and Shammai. The sons, or disciples of the two last, first took these titles. Rabban Simeon, the son of Hillell, thought by some to be the same Simeon that had Christ in his arms, is {k} said to be the first that was called by this name; and it is also observed by them {l}, that Rabban was a name of greater honour than Rabbi, or Rab, and that Rabbi was more honourable than Rab; and to be called by a man's own name, was more honourable than any of them. The Karaite Jews make much the same complaint, and give much the same account of the pride and vanity of the Rabbinical doctors, as Christ here does; for so one of them says {m};

"The Karaites do not use to act according to the custom of the wise men among the Rabbans, to make to themselves gods of silver, and guides of gold, with this view, br arqhl, "to be called Rab"; and also to gather wealth and food to fulness, &c."

{f} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 2. {g} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 24. 1. & Cetubot, fol. 103. 2. {h} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 62. 1. {i} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 21. 1. {k} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 1. {l} lb. {m} Eliahu Adderet, c. 6. apud Trigland. de. Sect. Kar. c. 10. p. 164.

Matthew 23:8

Ver. 8. But be not ye called Rabbi,.... Do not be ambitious of any such title, fond of it, or affect it, or be elated with it, should it be given you; nor look upon yourselves as men of power and authority over others; as having the dominion over men's faith, a power to make laws for others, impose them in a magisterial way, and bind and loose men's consciences at pleasure, as these men do:

for one is your master, even Christ; meaning himself, the true Messiah, the head of the church, King of saints, and Lord of all; who had all power in heaven and in earth, to make laws, appoint ordinances, and oblige men to receive his doctrines, and obey his commands: the word "Christ", is left out in the Vulgate Latin, the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; but is in the Arabic version, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and in all the ancient Greek copies Beza consulted, excepting two: no other indeed can be meant; he is the great Rabbi, and doctor, that is to be hearkened to, and the master we are all to obey:

and all ye are brethren; not merely as the descendants of Adam, but as being in a spiritual relation, the children of God, and disciples of Christ, and so have no superiority one over another: this may regard the disciples, both as believers and Christians, partakers of the same grace, and standing in the same relation to God, Christ, and one another, and having an equal right to the same privileges: and as apostles and ministers, one as such, no, not Peter, having no pre-eminence over the other, having the same commission, doctrine, and authority, one as the other.

Matthew 23:9

Ver. 9. And call no man your father upon the earth,.... Not but that children may, and should call their natural parents, fathers; and such who have been instrumental in the conversion of souls, may be rightly called by them their spiritual fathers; as servants and scholars also, may call those that are over them, and instruct them, their masters: our Lord does not mean, by any of these expressions, to set aside all names and titles, of natural and civil distinction among men, but only to reject all such names and titles, as are used to signify an authoritative power over men's consciences, in matters of faith and obedience; in which, God and Christ are only to be attended to. Christ's sense is, that he would have his disciples not fond of any titles of honour at all; and much less assume an authority over men, as if they were to depend on them, as the founders of the Christian religion, the authors of its doctrines and ordinances; and to take that honour to themselves, which did not belong to them; nor even choose to be called by such names, as would lead people to entertain too high an opinion of them, and take off of their dependence on God the Father, and himself, as these titles the Scribes and Pharisees loved to be called by, did: and who were called not only by the name of Rabbi, but Abba, "Father", also: hence we read of Abba Saul, or "Father" Saul {n}; Abba Jose ben Jochanan, a man of Jerusalem {o}, Abba Chanan {p}, Abba Chelphetha, a man of the village of Hananiah {q}; Abba Gorion {r}, and others; and this name was ybr wmk dwbk Nwvl, "a name of honour, even as Rabbi" {s}, and of great authority: the wise men are said to be lkh twba, "the fathers of all" {t}, to whom all gave heed, and upon whom all depended, as so many oracles. There is a whole treatise in their Misna, called Pirke Abot, which contains some of the oracles, and peculiar sayings of these "fathers", the Misnic doctors, and which are preferred to the writings of Moses, and the prophets. In this sense, and upon this score, our Lord inveighs against them, and cautions his disciples against giving or taking all such titles, in such sense. "For one is your Father, which is in heaven"; who is so, both by creation and adoption, and is possessed of all paternal authority; and is to be honoured and obeyed by all; from whom all wisdom and knowledge is derived, and who has the care and government of all in heaven and in earth.

{n} Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 8. {o} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 53. 2. {p} Ib. fol. 64. 1. {q} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 94. 1. & Bava Bathra. fol. 56. 2. {r} Massech Sopherim, c. 15. sect. 10. {s} Juchasiu, fol. 31. 2. & 61. 2. {t} Maimon. in Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1.

Matthew 23:10

Ver. 10. Neither be ye called masters,.... Or guides and leaders; not but that, the ministers of the word are in a sense such; it is their business to lead and direct souls to Christ, to guide their feet in the way of peace, and to go before them, as examples to them, in word, in conversation, faith, and purity; but then they are to guide them according to the word of God, and not their own dictates; and teach them to observe the rules, and obey the ordinances of Christ, and not what are of their own inventing and prescribing; and to enforce the authority of their great Lord and Master, and not their own; and direct men to a dependence on Christ, as head of the church, who is the one Lord, as his faith is one, and his baptism one also: "for one is your master, even Christ"; which is said before, in *Mt 23:8* but being a matter of so much importance to the honour of Christ, and men being so apt to set up for masters themselves, in opposition to him, or in conjunction with him, or above him, it was necessary to repeat it; for in an authoritative sense he is the one, and only master of the assemblies.

Matthew 23:11

Ver. 11. But he that is greatest among you,.... Either who really is so, having more grace, and greater gifts bestowed upon him, than others; which doubtless was the case of some of the disciples, or who desired to be the greatest, was ambitious of, and affected a superiority over others, and to be in the highest post and place, as it is certain some of them did. This was what they were often contending about among themselves, who should be greatest: and Christ here seems to have regard to that vain spirit, which appeared among them; and his view is, to check and restrain it: "shall be your servant"; or "let him be your servant". Service is the way to honour; he that would be most esteemed ought to do the most work; and the man that has the most grace, and the greatest gifts, ought to employ them for the use and benefit of others; See Gill on "Mt 20:27".

Matthew 23:12

Ver. 12. And whosoever shall exalt himself,.... Above his fellow Christians, or fellow ministers, by entertaining too high an opinion of himself, by boasting of his gifts, as preferable to others, and as if he had not received them; by assuming, or eagerly coveting titles of honour among men, or by affecting honour that do not belong to him, or, abusing what he has: "shall be abased"; or humbled by God, or men, or both; such shall lose the honour they have, and come greatly short of what they are ambitious of; they shall fall into disgrace with men, and are abominable in the sight of God: "and he that shall humble himself"; by entertaining low thoughts, and a mean opinion of himself, behaving modestly among men; not being elated with his gifts, but acknowledging that they are owing to the grace and goodness of God; and using them in an humble manner, for, the advantage of others; not coveting honour from men, nor lifted up with what is conferred on him: "shall be exalted"; by God, or men, or both; if not in this world, yet in the world to come: and indeed, generally speaking, such modest, humble, persons, are most esteemed among men; and God gives more grace unto them, and will at last give them glory. This is a saying, often used by our

Lord on different accounts, both with respect to his disciples, for their instruction, and with regard to the scribes and Pharisees, for their mortification; see *Lu 14:11*. It seems to be a proverbial expression, and much in use among the Jews: it is said in so many words in the Talmud {u}, as here;

"whosoever shall humble himself, the holy blessed God shall exalt him; and whosoever shall exalt himself, the holy blessed God shall humble him."

{u} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 13. 2. & 54. 1. & Nedarim, fol. 55. 1.

Matthew 23:13

Ver. 13. But woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,.... It seems from hence, that the Scribes and Pharisees had not left him, at least not all of them, notwithstanding the confusion they were thrown into; but were still about him, observing what he said to the people, and watching an opportunity to take every advantage against him; whom he addresses in a very awful manner, calling them "hypocrites", as he truly might; for they were such, both to God and men: he had detected them already before the people, in several instances of hypocrisy; and gives sufficient reasons, in the following part of this chapter, to support the character, he gives of them, and his charge against them; denouncing a woe upon them in this world, and that which is to come, no less than eight times; expressing his abhorrence of their wickedness, his commiseration of their case, and their certain destruction: "for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men": not eternal life and happiness, the entrance into which can neither be opened nor shut by men: those whom God determines to bring thither, shall have an entrance abundantly ministered to them, in spite of the opposition of men and devils; though these men did all that in them lay, to hinder persons enjoying everlasting glory. But the Gospel dispensation is here meant, which opened by the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ and his disciples, and which the Scribes and Pharisees did all they could to shut; by discouraging the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of ordinances, in which this dispensation lay; and prejudicing the minds of men against it, that they might not embrace the doctrines of it, nor submit to its ordinances: they, by their office, ought to have opened and explained the Scriptures, the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah, and led the people into a knowledge of the mysteries of his kingdom, and encouraged them to enter into this new state of things; which, according to the true intent of Scripture, was to take place, and now did: but instead of this, they shut up the Scriptures, took away the key of knowledge, and laid it aside; and darkened the Scriptures by their false glosses, and obliged the people to observe the traditions of the elders, and which they call hrwtl gyo, "an hedge for the law" {w}; to which Beza thinks, the allusion is here, and by which men were shut up, and kept from the true knowledge both of law and Gospel:

for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in: they neither believed in the Messiah themselves, nor embraced the doctrines relating to his person and office: have any of the Pharisees believed on him? No; they received him not, they rejected him, and also the counsel of God, against themselves, not being baptized with the baptism of John, the forerunner of Christ; nor would they suffer others, that were inclined to profess their faith in him, and be baptized, to do it; but discouraged them all they could, by their reproachful treatment of the person, miracles, and ministry of Christ, and by their threatenings and menaces, and by their excommunications of such as made a confession of him.

{w} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1.

Matthew 23:14

Ver. 14. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,.... The same character is given as before, and the same woe denounced, and a fresh reason given of it:

for ye devour widows' houses; that is, the goods in the houses of such as were left with fatherless children, and but little to support them; who being left alone, and none to advise them, and being weak, and prone to superstition; these greedy dogs, as Isaiah calls them, who could never have enough, easily imposed upon them, wormed them out of all their substance, stripped them bare of the necessaries of life, prevailed on them to sell their houses and goods, and bestow them on them; or got their little estates into their hands, pretending to take care, and dispose of them for them, to their advantage:

and for a pretence make long prayers: as if they were very holy, good men; or pretended that the substance of these widows, which they got into their hands, was for their long prayers for them; or they made long prayers for them in return for their substance. Maimonides {x} says, that

"the ancient saints, or good men, used to stay an hour before prayer, and an hour after prayer, hev hlptb Mkyramw and "prolonged", or "held an hour in prayer":"

and this being three times a day, nine hours every day, as is observed in the Talmud {y}, were spent in this manner; and on this account they got the character of very devout and religious men, and hereby covered all their avarice, rapine, and oppression of the poor: but God will not be mocked;

therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation; both on account of their plundering and distressing the poor, the widows, and the fatherless; and also because of their hypocrisy in doing this under the cover of religion and holiness. Hence it appears, that there are degrees of punishment in hell, and that hypocrites, and all such who oppress the poor, under the mask of godliness, supposing gain to be that, will be partakers of the greatest degree of it. In Munster's Hebrew Gospel it is called Kwra jpvm, "a long judgment", or "damnation", in allusion to their long prayers: and is the very reverse of what they expect on account of them: they say {z}

"three things prolong a man's days and years, wtlptb Kyramh, "he that is long in his prayer""

is the first mentioned; and he that is long at his prayer, it is an excellency, they say; but instead of a long and happy life, he shall have a long damnation. This verse is left out in some copies, and in others it stands before the former; in which order it is read in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions.

{x} Hilch. Tephillah, c. 4. sect. 16. {y} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 32. 2. {z} Ib. fol. 54. 2.

Matthew 23:15

Ver. 15. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,.... The same character, and woe, are still continued, and a new reason added, confirming the justness of them, in order to awaken and convince them, or, however, to caution the people against them:

for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; that is, to the Jewish religion, and their particular sect. There were two sorts of proselytes among them; one was called bvwt rg, "a proselyte of the gate", one that might dwell in any of their towns, and cities, and who is thus described {a};

"Who is a proselyte of the gate? whosoever takes upon him, before three neighbours, that he will not commit idolatry. R. Meir and the wise men say, whosoever takes upon him the seven precepts which the sons of Noah took upon them: others say, these do not come into the general rule of a proselyte of the gate: who is then a proselyte of the gate? this is a proselyte, that eats what dies of itself, but takes upon him to fulfil all the commandments said in the law, except that which forbids the eating of things that die of themselves."

But the usual account of such an one is, who agrees to the seven precepts commanded the children of Noah {b}, which were these {c}; the first forbad idolatry, the second blasphemy, the third murder, the fourth uncleanness, the fifth theft, the sixth required judgment, or punishment on malefactors, the seventh forbad eating the member of any creature alive. The other proselyte was called qdu rg, "a proselyte of righteousness"; and he was one that submitted to circumcision {d}, and the rest of the ceremonies of the law; and was in all respects as an Israelite himself; and of this sort is the text to be understood. The Ethiopic version reads the words, "baptize one proselyte, and when he is baptized"; referring to a custom among the Jews, who baptized; or dipped their proselytes in water, as well as circumcised them; about which there are great disputes in their writings; some alleging, that the dipping of them was necessary to the making them proselytes; others affirming, that it was not:

"a proselyte that is circumcised, and not dipped, dipped, and not circumcised, the whole follows after, or depends on circumcision, says R. Eliezer."

R. Joshua says, even dipping delays it; (i.e. the want of it, hinders a man from being a proselyte;) but R. Joshua ben Levi says, it should go according to the tradition of Bar Kaphra; for the tradition of Bar Kaphra is, "that he that is circumcised, and not dipped, lo! he is right; for there is no proselyte but what is dipped, because of the pollutions that happen to him {e}."

And elsewhere {f} this is debated in the following manner:

"a proselyte that is circumcised, and not dipped, R. Eliezer says, lo! this is a proselyte; for so we find concerning our fathers, that they were circumcised, but not dipped. One that is dipped, and not circumcised, R. Joshua says, lo! this is a proselyte; for so we find concerning our mothers, that they were dipped, but not circumcised. The wise men say, one that is dipped, and not circumcised, or circumcised, and not dipped, is no proselyte, until he is both circumcised and dipped."

So the dispute ended, and it became a settled point, that one should never be reckoned a proselyte, unless he was both circumcised and dipped. And after this it became customary to receive proselytes by circumcision, dipping, and sacrifice; and the manner was this {g}:

"a stranger that comes to be made a proselyte at this time, they say unto him, what dost thou see, that thou comest to be made a proselyte? dost thou not know that the Israelites at this time are miserable, banished, drove about, and plundered, and chastisements come upon them? If he says, I know this, but it does not satisfy me, they receive him immediately, and make known some of the light commands, and some of the heavy commands to him; and they acquaint him with the business gleanings, the forgotten sheaf, the corner of the field left standing, and the poor's tithe: they also inform him of the penalties of the commands, and say unto him, know thou, that before thou camest into this way, thou didst eat fat, and was not punished with cutting off; thou didst profane the sabbath, and was not punished with stoning? but now if thou eatest fat, thou wilt be punished with cutting off; and if thou profanest the sabbath, thou wilt be punished with stoning: and as they inform him of the penalties of the precepts, so they acquaint him with the giving of the rewards of them; saying to him, know thou that the world to come is not made but for the righteous; and the Israelites at this time cannot receive neither much good, nor much punishment? but they do not multiply words, nor critically inquire of him; if he receives these things, they immediately circumcise him; and if there remain in him obstructions, hindering circumcision, they circumcise him a second time; and when he is healed they immediately dip him; and two disciples of the wise men stand over him, and acquaint him with some of the light commands, and some of the heavy commands; then he dips, and comes up, and is as an Israelite in all respects: if a woman, the women set her in water up to her neck, and two disciples of the wise men stand by her without, and inform her of some of the light commands, and some of the heavy commands."

And, as Maimonides {h} adds, who gives a larger account of this matter,

"she sits in the water, and after that dips herself before them; and they turn away their faces, and go out, so that they do not see her, when she comes out of the water."

From all which it appears, that this affair was moved after our Lord's time; was not a settled point till a good while after; and is a custom that has obtained since the Jews were drove out of their own land; though they pretend to say it was an ancient practice of their fathers, of which they can give no sufficient proof; wherefore there could be no regard had to it in this text, and consequently the Ethiopic version of it is not a right one; nor can the dipping of proselytes by the Jews be what Christian baptism takes its rise from, or in any respect be modelled according to it, between which, in many things, there is a wide difference. Now the Jews were very diligent and industrious, which is meant by compassing of sea and land: they used all kinds of methods, ways and means, to gain such a point, and sometimes very wicked ones.

"Rabbenu Tam {i} allowed a daughter of Israel to change her religion, and a stranger to lie with her, that she might confirm it, when he became a proselyte."

And this they were so exceeding fond of, not out of any regard to the glory of God, or the good of the souls of men; nor did they really love the proselytes: and it is often said by them {k}, that

"proselytes are hard or uneasy to Israel, as the itch or scab."

The gloss says, because they were not expert in the commandments, and were the cause of punishment, and the Israelites were apt to imitate their works; but they coveted to make them, because hereby either they strengthened their own party, or filled their purses with their substance, or got applause and credit among the common people; for the making a proselyte was reckoned a very great action, and is ascribed to the patriarchs Abraham and Jacob, and made equal to creation {l}.

"Says R. Eliezer, in the name of R. Jose ben Zimra, if all that come into the world were gathered together to create even one fly, they would not be able to put breath into it: but you will object what he saith, "the souls they made in Haran", *Ge 12:5*, but these are the proselytes whom Abraham proselyted; but why does he say "made", and not proselyted? to teach thee, that whoever brings near a stranger, and proselytes him, "is as if he created him". You will say Abraham made proselytes, but not Sarah: the text is, "the souls which they made in Haran": which he made is not written, but which they made: Abraham proselyted the men, and Sarah proselyted the women."

And a little after,

"Jacob made proselytes, as it is written, *Ge 35:2* "Jacob said unto his household","

And in imitation of these they might be fond of making proselytes, but no further than their own interest was some way or other concerned:

and when he is made, ye make him two fold more the child of hell than yourselves; for to their former errors in heathenism, some of which they might still retain, they added new ones, they received from them, equally as bad, and were but more and more deserving of hell, and even more than their masters; and besides, were trained up by them in the most bitter prejudices against Christ, and his Gospel; and many of them proved more violent persecutors of the followers of Christ, than the original Jews themselves: see *Ac 15:5* Our Lord here seems to oppose a common notion and saying of their's {m}, that when

"one was made a proselyte, he became entirely like a new born babe;"

but so far from being like one in innocence and harmlessness, that he became a child of hell, filled with wrath and malice, and fitted for destruction; and so opposes another notion of their's, that hellfire has no power over their disciples, nor even over the transgressors of Israel {n}: but they will find it, by experience, that neither their descent from Abraham, nor their learning, nor their religion, will save them from the devouring flames, which their sins have made them so deserving of, and so are Mnhyg ynb, "children of hell" {o}; a Talmudic phrase; the meaning of which they understood well enough, and which was applicable to them, and more so to their proselytes; and that as owing to them, which was an aggravation of their own guilt and condemnation.

{a} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 64. 2. {b} Maimon. Hilch. Obede Cochabim, c. 10. sect. 6. & Maacalot Asurot, c. 11. sect. 7. & Issure Biah, c. 14. sect. 7. {c} lb. Hilch. Melachim, c. 9. sect. 1. {d} Zohar in Exod. fol. 36. 1. {e} T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 64. 4. {f} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 46. 1, 2. {g} Ib. fol 47. 1, 2. {h} Hilch. Issure Biah, c. 14. sect. 6. {i} Piske Toseph. Cetubot, art. 7. {k} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 47. 2. & 109. 2. Kiddushin, fol. 70. 2. & Nidda, fol. 13. 2. {l} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 39. fol. 35. 1. & sect. 84. fol. 72. 3, 4. {m} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 22. 1. & 48. 2. & 62. 1. & 97. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Issure Biah, c. 14. sect. 11. & Eduth, c. 13. sect. 2. {n} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 27. 1. {o} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 17. 1.

Matthew ***23:16***

Ver. 16. Woe unto you, you blind guides,.... Meaning the same persons, the Scribes and Pharisees, as before, though not named, who pretended to be "guides of the blind", ***Ro 2:19*** but were them selves blind, and so very unfit to be guides of others; they were as they were born, ignorant of divine things, of God in Christ, of the true Messiah, of the true meaning of the Scriptures, of the spirituality of the law, and of the Gospel of Christ; and the way of salvation by him; and their minds were blinded by the God of this world, and with a greedy, and insatiable covetousness after the things of it, of which Christ here gives an instance:

which say, whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; meaning either that it was no sin to use such an oath, or it was not binding upon a man: he might choose whether he would abide by what he swore by the temple he would do; and thus they ignorantly, and wickedly encouraged vain swearing and perjury. It was usual with them to swear by the temple: take an instance or two.

"Says R. Jochanan {p}, alkyh, "by the temple", it is in our hands; but what shall I do?"

The gloss upon it is;

"it is an oath by the temple of God, that it is in our power to reveal the illegitimacy of the families of the land of Israel."

"Says R. Zechariah ben Hakatzab {q}, hzh Nwemh, "by this habitation" (meaning the temple), her hand was not removed from my hand from the time the Gentiles entered into Jerusalem, to the time they went out."

Jarchi and Bartenora's note on it is, this is an oath. Again,

"says R. Simeon ben Gamaliel {r}, hzh Nwemh, "by this habitation"; I will not rest this night until they (doves) are sold for pence apiece."

The gloss on it is, "he swore by the sanctuary."

But whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is guilty; or is bound, or is a debtor, to make good his oath; he cannot be excused, but must be obliged to fulfil it; or if he does not, he is guilty of perjury. This is to be understood not of the gold that covered any part of the temple; nor of the golden vessels in it; but of the gold, or money, or gifts which were offered for the service of the temple: and the sense is, that whosoever swore by "Korban", and that this, or that should be as "Korban", he should not go back from it; he was obliged to give it. This showed the covetous disposition of these men, who made nothing of oaths that were swore by the temple; but those that were made by the "Korban", or the gifts of it, were binding, because their interest was in it; it was for their gain.

{p} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 71. 1. {q} Misn. Cetubot, c. 2. sect. 9. Juchasin, fol. 56. 1. {r} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol 166. 1. Misn. Ceritot, c. 1. sect. 7. Vid. c. 6. sect. 3.

Matthew 23:17

Ver. 17. Ye fools, and blind,.... That argue after so ridiculous a manner, that make use of such thin sophistry, that everybody may see through it; who must be stupid and sottish to the last degree, and their minds foolishly blinded with avarice; as to please and satisfy themselves: with so poor a distinction; that would by no means serve them, but make against them:

for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? The temple, to be sure: for that was the seat of the divine majesty; built for him to dwell in, and in which he took up his residence; and was dedicated to his service, and in it was divine worship performed unto him. The temple was sanctified by the presence of God in it; and the gold sanctified by the temple, being devoted to the service of it: whatever holiness it had, it had it from the temple, and therefore the temple must be greater than that; and consequently it must be most extravagantly ridiculous and foolish in them, to make oaths by the gold of the temple, and gifts dedicated to its service, and on that score sanctified by it, more binding and sacred than such as were by the temple itself.

Matthew 23:18

Ver. 18. And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing,.... These are again the words or savings of the scribes and Pharisees, and express their sentiments and practice: it was usual with them to swear by the altar; and this was reckoned either no sin at all, or such an oath was not accounted binding on a man; he might break, or keep it as he thought fit: of this kind of swearing, we have the following instances. One said to another {r},

"swear to me that thou wilt not discover me, and he swore to him; by what did he swear? says R. Jose bar Chanina, ymynph xbzmb, "by the innermost altar"."

Again, it is said of Zedekiah {s},

"that he (Nebuchadnezzar) made him to swear; by what did he make him to swear? says R. Jose, by the covenant he made him to swear; Rabbi says xbzmb, "by the altar" he made him to swear."

And elsewhere {t} it is said of him,

""and he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who made him swear by God", *2Ch 36:13*. By what did he make him swear? says R. Jose bar

Chanina, "by the horns of the innermost altar" he made him swear."

But whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty: of perjury, if he does not make good his oath; he is bound to perform it, it is obligatory; whatever he swore should be a gift for the altar, he was indispensably obliged to bring it; for whatever he swore by "Korban", or the gift, could never be put to any other use.

{r} Echa Rabbati, fol. 54. 1. {s} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 78. 1. {t} Midrash Megillat Esther, fol. 89. 1.

Matthew 23:19

Ver. 19. Ye fools, and blind,.... This is very justly repeated, since this is no less an instance of their folly, blindness, and stupidity. In three copies of Beza's the word "fools" is not; nor is it in the Vulgate Latin, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions have it:

for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? The gift, or offering, before it was devoted to sacred use, and brought, and laid upon the altar, was common, had no ceremonial sanctity in it, and might be put to any use; but when it was brought, and laid upon the altar, it became holy; for, according to the law, whatever touched the altar, and indeed all, or any of the vessels of the sanctuary, was holy, *Ex 29:37*. Christ speaks the sense of the law, and their own traditions, and in their own language, and argues from the same to the confutation of them: vdqm xbzmx, "the altar", they say {u}, "sanctifies" that which is fit for it; that is, that which is proper to be offered up upon it:

"as the altar sanctifies that which is fit for it, so the ascent unto it sanctifies; and as the altar, and the ascent, sanctify what is fit for them, so the vessels sanctify; the vessels for liquids sanctify the liquids, and the dry measures sanctify the dry; the vessels for liquids do not sanctify the dry, nor the dry measures sanctify the liquids; the holy vessels, which are bored, (or broken,) when they do the service they used to do, when whole, sanctify, if not, they do not sanctify; nor does anything sanctify but in the sanctuary."

Now, since this is a clear case, that the altar sanctifies the gift, and not the gift the altar, our Lord's question is, which is the greater? A man that has the least share of common sense will easily see, that the altar must be the greater: wherefore these scribes and Pharisees must be wretchedly stupid to give out, that an oath made by the altar was not binding, when one that was made by the gift, or Korban, was binding; seeing the gift, or offering, received its sanctity from the altar: hence, of the two, an oath made by the altar should be more sacred and obligatory than one made by the gift.

{u} Misn. Zebachim, c. 9. sect. 7.

Matthew 23:20

Ver. 20. Whosoever therefore shall swear by the altar,.... Not that Christ allowed of swearing by the altar, or by the temple, or by heaven, or by any creature, animate or inanimate; for such swearing is elsewhere disapproved of by him, and forbid, but if a man did swear by the altar, he ought to know, and consider that he not only

sweareth by it, but by all the gifts, and offerings that are brought, and laid upon it,

and by all things thereon; whatever gifts and sacrifices are offered upon it; which, by being put there, become holy, as the altar itself: so that he that swears by the altar, swears also by the gifts of the altar; and consequently, according to their own traditions, such oaths must be binding.

Matthew 23:21

Ver. 21. And whoso shall swear by the temple,.... As we have before seen they used to do, and as appears from what the poet says {w}:

Ecce negas, jurasque mihi per templa tonantis Non credo: jura, verpe, per Anchialum.

In which he intimates, that if the Jew swore by the temple, he would not believe him; as well he might not, since such an oath was accounted nothing; but bids him swear by Anchialus, that is, by hwla yx, "Chi Eloah", or Nwyle yx, "Chi Alon", or "Elion, the living God", or Mlweh yh, "Chi Haolam, he that lives for ever" {x}; and suggests, that he should then believe him. Now our Lord, though he did not allow of such swearing, yet justly argues, that he that sweareth by the temple, not only "sweareth by it", which could not be a witness of what was swore; but he must be interpreted to swear by the inhabitant of it, and by him that dwelleth in it; that is, God, for whom it was built, to whom it was dedicated; where he was worshipped, and where he vouchsafed to reside; taking up his dwelling between the cherubim upon the mercy seat, in the most holy place; from whence he communed with men, and gave tokens of his presence; and who only could be the proper witness of the truth, or falsehood, of what was swore; and therefore an oath, by the temple, ought to be looked upon as if made by God himself, and so to be sacred and binding.

{w} Martial. Epigr. l. 11. Ep. 60. {x} Vid. Selden. Prolegomena ad lib. de Successionibus.

Matthew ***23:22***

Ver. 22. And he that shall swear by heaven,.... As the Jews were wont to do in common, but did not look upon such an oath as obligatory on them; See Gill on "Mt 5:34", though such an one

sweareth by the throne of God; for heaven is God's throne, where he sits, and, in an eminent manner, displays the glory of his majesty:

and by him that sitteth thereon, by God himself. Thus swearing by anything that has any relation to God, is implicitly swearing by him; and therefore ought to be considered as binding, as if he was expressed in it; since an appeal cannot be made to things inanimate, nor indeed to any creature, but to God, the searcher of hearts.

Matthew ***23:23***

Ver. 23. Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,.... Christ returns to the former epithets he had very rightly given to these men, and very pertinently repeats them here; and which are confirmed by the instances of their conduct and practice here alleged, which abundantly show their hypocrisy and deceit; since they were very strict in observing some outward things, which gave them credit with the people, and especially the priests and Levites, some little trifling ceremonies and traditions of their elders, whilst they neglected internal religion, and those things which were of the greatest moment and importance:

for ye take tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin; which ought not commanded by the law, they were obliged to by the traditions of the elders. Mint is an herb well known, and has its name in the Greek from its sweet smell; on account of which the Jews used to spread it on the floors of their synagogues {y}. This was one of the herbs that was subject to the law of the seventh year {z}, and is mentioned with those which were to be tithed {a}. The Ethiopic version, instead of mint reads "hyssop"; and which also was an herb that was obliged to be tithed {b}. "Anise" is a seed also well known, and which the Jews call tbv, and of which they often observe, that it is subject to tithing, both seed, herb, flowers, or stalks {c}: instead of this Munster's Hebrew Gospel has Mgyp, "rue"; and which, in the Misna {d}, is mentioned along with mint, as it is by *Lu 11:42* and said to be one of the things the Pharisees gave tithe of; though in their oral law it is reckoned among the things that are free from tithe {e}: and therefore this must be a sort of work of supererogation to give tithe of that, which they were not obliged to. "Cummin" is a sort of anise; its seed is much like fennel seed, and which pigeons are very fond of: mention is made of it in *Isa 28:25* and is reckoned with figs, dates, carobes, or Egyptian figs, and rice, which were obliged to be tithed {f}, and was what was also bound to the offering of the first fruits to the priest {g}. Christ mentions these particular herbs and seeds, as a specimen of what they paid tithes of. In Luke, it is added, "and all manner of herbs": for, according to the traditions of the elders, they were in general subject to tithes: and it is a common saying or maxim of the Jews, that the tithing of corn is from the law, but Nnbrd qry rvem, "the tithing of herbs is from the Rabbins" {h}: it is a constitution of their's, and not of Moses:

and have omitted the weightier matters of the law. The distinction of the commandments of the law into lighter and heavier, or weightier, to which Christ here refers, is frequent with the Jews. When one comes to be made a proselyte, they acquaint him with some of twlq twum, "the light commands", and some of twrwmx twum, "the heavy", or "weighty commands" {i}. So again, they paraphrase the words in *Isa 33:18* "where is the scribe?" he that numbers all the letters in the law. "Where is the receiver?" who weighs the "light" things, hrwtbv Nyrwmxw, and "heavy", or "weighty things in the law" {k}. Again {l},

"in the words of the law there are some things "light", and some things "heavy", or "weighty":"

but those weighty things they omitted, and regarded those that were light; yea, that had no foundation in the law at all: and no wonder, since, in the place last cited, they say {m}, that

"the words of the Scribes are all of them "weighty" and that the sayings of the elders are more "weighty" than the words of the prophets."

The things our Lord refers to, and instances in, are as follow;

judgment, mercy, and faith. "Judgment" may mean the administration of justice in courts of judicature; the putting in execution good judgments, righteous laws and statutes; protecting and relieving the injured and oppressed, and doing that which is right and equitable between man and man: but, on the contrary, these men devoured widows' houses, and oppressed the poor and fatherless. "Mercy" includes all acts of compassion to the distressed, relieving the necessitous, distributing to their wants, and showing all kindness and beneficence to the poor and needy; which the scribes and Pharisees very little practised, being a set of cruel, hard hearted, and covetous persons. "Faith" may not only design faithfulness in a man's keeping his word and promise, and fidelity to a trust reposed in him; but also faith in God, as the God of providence, and as the God of grace and mercy; believing in his word and promises, and worshipping him, which the law requires; and the rather this seems to be intended, because Luke, instead of "faith", puts "the love of God", which faith includes, and works by, and is the end of the commandment, arising from faith unfeigned: so that Christ instances in the weightier matters of both tables of the law, which these men neglected, and the latter, as well as the former; not believing the revelation of the Gospel, nor the Messiah, who was promised, and prophesied of by God, in the writings of the Old Testament:

these ought ye to have done: more especially, and in the first place, as being of the greatest use and importance:

and not to leave the other undone; meaning either the lighter matters, and lesser commands of the law; or even their tithes of herbs: if they thought themselves obliged to them, Christ would not dispute the matter with them; if they thought fit to observe them, they might, so long as they did not interfere with, and take them off from things of greater moment. But alas! these men preferred the rituals of the ceremonial law, and the traditions of the elders, above the duties of the moral law; and reckoned that the latter were nothing, if the former were wanting; for they {n} Say, that

"the words of the Scribes, are more lovely than the words of the law."

And also {o}, that

"he that profanes the holy things, and despises the solemn feasts, and makes void the covenant of Abraham our father (circumcision), and behaves impudently towards the law (ceremonial), although the law and good works are in his hands, he has no part in the world to come."

The Persic version renders the words thus; "these ought ye to do, and not them"; as if it was our Lord's sense, that they ought to observe the weightier matters of the moral law, and not regard their tithing of herbs, and other traditions of, their fathers.

{y} Jarchi in Misn. Oketzim, c. 1. sect. 2. {z} Misn. Sheviith, c. 7. sect. 1, 2. {a} T. Hieros. Dermai, fol. 22. 3. {b} Misn. Maaserot, c. 3. sect. 9. {c} lb. c. 4. sect. 5. T. Hieros. Maaserot, fol. 51. 2. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 7. 2. Jarchi & Maimon. in Misn. Oketzim, c. 3. sect. 4. {d} Oketzim, c. 1. sect. 2. {e} Misn. Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 1. {f} Misn. Demai, c. 2. sect. 1. {g} Misn. Trumot, c. 10. sect. 4. {h} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 83. 2. & T. Hieros. Challah, fol. 60. 2. & Maaserot, fol. 48. 3. {i} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 47. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Issure Bia, c. 14. sect. 2, 6, 9. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 116. {k} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 15. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 2. {l} T. Hieros Beracot, fol. 3. 2. {m} Ib. {n} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 2. {o} T. Hieres. Pesachim, fol. 33. 2.

Matthew 23:24

Ver. 24. Ye blind guides,.... As in *Mt 23:16* who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel: the Syriac and Persic versions read the words in the plural number, gnats and camels. The Jews had a law, which forbid them the eating of any creeping thing, *Le 11:41* and of this they were strictly observant, and would not be guilty of the breach of it for ever so much.

"One that eats a flea, or a gnat; they say {p} is rmwm, "an apostate";"

one that has changed his religion, and is no more to be reckoned as one of them. Hence they very carefully strained their liquors, lest they should transgress the above command, and incur the character of an apostate; and at least, the penalty of being beaten with forty stripes, save one; for,

"whoever eats a whole fly, or a whole gnat, whether alive or dead, was to be beaten on account of a creeping flying thing {q}."

Among the accusations Haman is said to bring against them to Ahasuerus, and the instances he gives of their laws being different from the king's, this one {r}; that

"if a fly falls into the cup of one of them, whtwvw wqrwz, "he strains it, and drinks it"; but if my lord the king should touch the cup of one of them, he would throw it to the ground, and would not drink of it."

Maimonides says {s},

"He that strains wine, or vinegar, or strong liquor, and eats "Jabchushin" (a sort of small flies found in wine cellars {t}, on account of which they strained their wine), or gnats, or worms, which he hath strained off, is to be beaten on account of the creeping things of the water, or on account of the creeping flying things, and the creeping things of the water."

Moreover, it is said {u},

"a man might not pour his strong liquors through a strainer, by the light (of a candle or lamp), lest he should separate and leave in the top of the strainer (some creeping thing), and it should fail again into the cup, and he should transgress the law, in *Le 11:41*."

To this practice Christ alluded here; and so very strict and careful were they in this matter, that to strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel, became at length a proverb, to signify much solicitude about little things, and none about greater. These men would not, on any consideration, be guilty of such a crime, as not to pay the tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and such like herbs and seeds; and yet made no conscience of doing justice, and showing mercy to men, or of exercising faith in God, or love to him. Just as many hypocrites, like them, make a great stir, and would appear very conscientious and scrupulous, about some little trifling things, and yet stick not, at other times, to commit the grossest enormities, and most scandalous sins in life.

{p} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 26. 2. & Horaiot, fol. 11. 1. {q} Mainon. Hilch. Maacolot Asurot, c. 2. sect. 22. {r} T. Bab. Megilla, fol, 13. 2. Vid. T. Hietos. Sota, fol. 17. 1. {s} Ubi supra, (Mainon. Hilch. Maacolot Asurot, c. 2.) sect. 20. {t} Gloss. in T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 67. 1. {u} Ib.

Matthew ***23:25***

Ver. 25. Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,.... Our Lord cannot be thought to bear too hard upon these men, nor does he continue this character of them, and denunciations of woe against them, without a reason:

for ye make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. The allusion is to their traditions about washing their cups and pots, and brazen vessels; see ***Mr 7:4*** which they strictly observed. In their oral law is a whole tract, called "Mikvaot", which gives rules about the places where they washed, the things to be washed, and the manner of washing them; about which they were very nice, pretending to much outward cleanness, but had no regard to inward purity. Christ's sense is, that they took much pains, and were very careful, that the cup they drank out of, and the platter, or dish they ate out of, should be very clean; when at the same time, the food and drink that were within them, were got by oppression and rapine; by devouring widows' houses, by making undue claims upon, and extorting unjust sums from the fatherless, the poor, and the needy; and were abused by them, to luxury and intemperance. In like manner the Jews themselves say of hypocrites {w};

"They make show of a pure and clean soul, but under it lies hid a leprosy: they are like to "vessels full of uncleanness"; they are outwardly washed with the water of fraud and craftiness; but whatsoever is within, in the midst or them, is unclean."

The Vulgate Latin version of the text, instead of "excess", reads "uncleanness", and so does Munster's Hebrew Gospel: many copies read "unrighteousness". Excess is thought to be a sin the Pharisees were not guilty of, though they were of extortion, injustice, and uncleanness.

{w} R. Sol Gabirol in Cether Malcuth apud L. Capell in loc.

Matthew *23:26*

Ver. 26. Thou blind Pharisee,.... Well might Christ call such an one a blind Pharisee, who was so scrupulously careful to cleanse his cup and platter; and yet made no conscience of filling them with what was gotten in an unjust way, and so defiled himself and them:

cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also: get food and drink in an honest way, remove all extortion and oppression out of thine hands, and luxury and intemperance from thy table; and so shall the outward cleanness of thy cup and dish, be no reproach unto thee, or testimony against thee, of thine hypocrisy. So the great concern of all men should be, inward purity; that their hearts be purified by faith in the blood of Christ, and sprinkled from an evil conscience by the same; that principles of grace and holiness be formed in them by the Spirit of God; and then their outward lives and conversations being influenced thereby, will be honourable and agreeable to their professions. Otherwise, an external reformation, or an outward show of holiness, and bare pretensions to it, without internal grace, will never be of any avail in the sight of God.

Matthew *23:27*

Ver. 27. Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,.... It is much these men could bear to hear themselves so often called by this name; and it shows great courage in our Lord, so freely to reprove them, and expose their wickedness, who were men of so much credit and influence with the people:

for ye are like unto whited sepulchres; or "covered with lime", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, render it. For the Jews used to mark their graves with white lime, that they might be known: that so priests, Nazarites, and travellers, might avoid them, and not be polluted with them. This appears from various passages in their writings:

"The vineyard of the fourth year, they marked with clods of earth, and an uncircumcised one with dust, dyob twrbq lvw, "and graves with chalk", mixed (with water) and poured (on them {x}.)"

Of this marking of the graves, the reason of it, the time and manner of doing it, Maimonides {y} gives us this account:

"Whoever finds a grave, or a dead carcass, or anything for the dead that defiles, by the tent he is obliged to put a mark upon it, that it may not be a stumbling to others; and on the intermediate days of a feast, they go out from the sanhedrim, to mark the graves.--With what do they mark? hxmm dyob, "with chalk infused" in water, and poured upon the unclean place: they do not put the mark upon the top of the unclean place, (or exactly in it,) but so that it may stand out here and there, at the sides of it, that what is pure may not be corrupted; and they do not put the mark far from the place of the uncleanness, that they may not waste the land of Israel; and they do not set marks on those that are manifest, for they are known to all; but upon those that are doubtful, as a field in which a grave is lost, and places that are open, and want a covering."

Now because when the rains fell, these marks were washed away, hence on the first of Adar (February) when they used to repair the highways, they also marked the graves with white lime, that they might be seen and known, and avoided; and so on their intermediate feast days {z}: the reason why they made use of chalk, or lime, and with these marked their graves, was because it looked white like bones {a}; so that upon first sight, it might be thought and known what it was for, and that a grave was there: hence this phrase, "whited sepulchres":

which indeed appear beautiful outward; especially at a distance, and when new marked:

but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness; worms and rottenness, which arise from the putrefied carcasses, and are very nauseous and defiling.

{x} Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 5. sect. 1. {y} Hilch. Tumath Meth, c. 8. sect. 9. {z} Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 1. & Moed Katon, c. 1. sect. 2. Maimon. & Bartenora in lb. {a} Jarchi in Misu. Moed Katan, c. 1. sect. 2. & Bartenora in Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 5. sect. 1.

Matthew 23:28

Ver. 28. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous,.... By making broad their phylacteries, enlarging the borders of their garments, praying long prayers, compassing sea and land to make one proselyte, paying tithes of all manner of herbs, and cleansing the outside of the cup and platter, and doing all their works, prayers, fastings, and alms deeds, to be seen of men. This is the accommodation of the above simile; by reason of these things they looked like whited sepulchres, outwardly beautiful: so these appeared outwardly righteous, they looked like righteous persons, and were not; they were what Hagar, as the Jews say, charged her mistress with being; for so they interpret these words, "her mistress was despised in her eyes", *Ge 16:4* {b}.

"She said, this Sarah is not secretly, what she is openly; she appears tqdu ayh wlyak, "as if she was righteous" and she is not righteous."

The same they say of {c} Leah. This was a misrepresentation; but the representation Christ gives of these men, is right; they were of that sort of the Pharisees, which they call Nyewbuh, "the dyed", or "coloured" ones: it is said of Jannai the king, that he should say to those of his family {d};

"Do not be afraid of them that are Pharisees, (that are truly so,) nor of them that are not Pharisees; but of them that are, Nyewbuh, "dyed", for they are like to Pharisees; for their works are as the works of Zimri, (adulterers, as these were,) and they expect the reward as Phinehas."

The gloss upon it is,

"the Pharisees hated him, because he had slain many of their wise men, and

was turned Sadducee; and when he was dying, his wife was afraid of them, lest they should take away the kingdom from her sons, and she desired him to seek their favour for her; but he said unto her, do not be afraid of the Pharisees, for they are "righteous", and will not render evil to thee, nor to thy sons; for they have not sinned against them; nor of them that are not Pharisees, for they are their friends; but of "the dyed ones": as if he had said, their appearance is not according to their nature, but they are dyed without,
Mrbk Mkwt Nyaw, "and their inside is not as their outside": for their works are as the work of Zimri, for they are ungodly; and they expect the reward as Phinehas, saying to men, to honour them as Phinehas."

But this outward show and appearance of righteousness, was only "unto men", not unto God: they did not appear so to him, who is the searcher of hearts, and knows what is in man, and knew all the secret wickedness that was in them; for though they imposed upon, and deceived men, they could not deceive God; nor was their iniquity hid from Christ, who adds, "but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity": and which was evident from their ambition and vain glory, in desiring the uppermost rooms at feasts, the chief places in the synagogue, greetings in the markets, and titles of honour and grandeur; from their avarice and cruel oppression of the widows, and fatherless, under a pretence of long prayers; from their neglecting the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith, and practising extortion and excess: that saying of their's {e}, may be applied to themselves;

"every disciple of a wise man, wrbk wkwt Nyav, "whose inside is not as his outside", is no disciple of a wise man."

And it is expressly ascribed by some of their writers to one sort of the Pharisees, of whom they say {f},

"they are desirous to appear to men to be holy, but their inside is not as their outside;"

which is much the same Christ here says of them. What our Lord charges these men with, is owned by their own doctors; they say {g}, that

"the iniquity of those that were under the first temple, was open and manifest, but the iniquity of those that were under the second temple, was not open."

But as the gloss says,

"the children of the second temple, rtob wyh Myevr, "were secretly wicked"."

{b} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 45. fol. 40. 3. Jarchi in Gert. xvi. 4. {c} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 71. fol. 63. 2. {d} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 22. 2. {e} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 72. 2. {f} Bartenora in Misn. Sota, c. 3. sect. 4. {g} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 9. 2.

Matthew 23:29

Ver. 29. Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,.... This is the seventh and last time, in which these words are delivered in this exact form by our Lord, in this chapter; and expresses the certainty, both of their sin and punishment: and the instance annexed to it, no less discovers the hypocrisy of these persons, and supports the character given of them; as also furnishes out a sufficient reason, why a woe is denounced upon them;

because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous; meaning by the "prophets" and "righteous" men, the same persons, the prophets, who were righteous men; or else the prophets, and also other righteous men besides them. Rightly is the word "build", used of tombs and sepulchres; the Jews have a canon, which runs thus {h};

"they do not dig graves nor sepulchres, on a feast day."

The commentators {i} on it say, that the graves are the holes which they dig in the earth, and the sepulchres are the buildings over the graves. In the Gemara it is asked {k},

"what are the graves? and what are the sepulchres? says R. Judah, the graves are made by digging and the sepulchres or tombs Nynbb, "by building";"

and these edifices which they built over the graves of some of their prophets, and righteous men, were very grand and beautiful. The Cippi

Hebmici furnish us with many instances of this kind: in Hebron, in the land of Canaan, which is Kirjath Arba, is the cave of Machpelah; in which were buried the fathers of the world, Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah; and over it is a wonderful, hanw, "and beautiful" building and it is the building of David the king; and opposite the city, in the mountain, is a beautiful building, and there was buried Jesse, the father of David the king: in the way from Hebron to Jerusalem, is Chalchul, where Gad, David's seer, was buried; and Tekoah, where Isaiah the prophet was buried, and over him a "beautiful" structure: at the Mount of Olives is a beautiful fabric, which they say is the sepulchre of Huldah, the prophetess; at the bottom of the mount is a very great cave, attributed to Haggai the prophet, and in the middle of it are many caves; near it, is the sepulchre of Zechariah the prophet, in a cave shut up, and over it is han hpyk, "a beautiful arch", or vault of one stone: between Rama and Jerusalem are caves ascribed to Simeon the just, and the seventy (elders of the) sanhedrim: at Rama, Samuel was buried, also his father Elkanah, and Hannah his mother, and in a cave shut up, and over the cave buildings: at Cheres, which is Timnath Cheres, in Mount Ephraim, are buried Joshua the son of Nun, and Nun his father, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and over them are trees. At Avarta is the school of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, and Eleazar is buried upon the mountain; and below the village, between the olive trees, Ithamar, and over him a large monument: at the barns is a temple of the Gentiles, with a vault and a cave, where they say are buried seventy elders. At Belata, a village about a sabbath day's journey from Shechem, Joseph the righteous was buried: at Mount Carmel, is the cave of Elijah the prophet, and there was buried Elisha, the son of Shaphat the prophet: at Jordan was buried Iddo the prophet, and over it is a great elm tree, and it is in the form of a lion; and there was buried Shebuel, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, over whom is a great oak tree: at Geba, in Mount Lebanon, is buried Zephaniah the prophet, in the middle of a cave shut up. On a mountain, a sabbath day's journey from Zidon, Zebulun was buried, in a beautiful vault; at Cephar Noah, was buried Noah the just; and at Kadesh Nephtalim, Barak the son of Abinoam, and Deborah his wife, and Jael; and at Timnath, Shamgar the son of Auath, over whom are two marble pillars. At Cephar Cana, is buried Jonah, the son of Amittai, on the top of a mountain, in a temple of the Gentiles, in a "beautiful" vault: at Jakuk, was buried in the way, Habakkuk the prophet; and at the north of the village of Raam, was buried Obadiah the prophet: at Susan the palace, was buried Mordecai the Jew, and over him a beautiful stone statue; and on it written, this is the sepulchre of Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a man of Jemini; and near the river Hiddekel, Ezekiel the prophet was buried. In this account, many things may be observed, which confirm and illustrate the words of the text. And certain it is, that it was accounted very honourable and laudable in persons, to beautify the sepulchres of the patriarchs and prophets. Among the excellent characters given of Benaah, R. Jochanan's master, it is said {l},

"that he was a very wise man, and a judge, and understood mysteries and parables; trem Nyyuw, "and painted the cave" of Adam the first, and the cave of Abraham."

Though perhaps this is to be understood of him in a figurative sense, but yet must allude to a literal one: the sepulchres of the prophets, were especially very sacred:

"all sepulchres (they say {m}) might be removed, but the sepulchres of a king, and the "sepulchres of a prophet"; they say unto him, were not the sepulchres of the sons of David removed? and the sepulchres of the sons of Huldah were in Jerusalem, and a man might not touch them, to remove them for ever. R. Akiba replied to them because of decency it was forgiven (or allowed) there, and from thence the uncleanness being channelled, went out to the brook Kidron."

Now our Lord must not be understood as blaming them for barely building the tombs of the prophets, and garnishing the sepulchres of the righteous, which they might have done without blame. But because they did all this, that they might be thought to be very innocent and holy men, and far from being guilty of the crimes their forefathers were; when they were of the very selfsame blood thirsty, persecuting spirit; and did, and would do the same things to the prophets and apostles of the New Testament, their fathers had done to the prophets of the Old. They have a saying {n}, that

"they do not erect monuments "for the righteous"; for their words are their memorial."

But this can only mean, that there is no need of monuments for them; since their sayings are sufficient to keep up the memory of them. Hence Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that our Lord reproves them out of their own mouths, for despising the words of the prophets; imagining they performed piety enough, by bestowing cost in adorning their sepulchres; when they themselves own, their sayings are the best remembrances of them, and therefore ought to be regarded more than their tombs.

{h} Misn. Moed Katon, c. 1. sect. 6. {i} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {k} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 8. 2. {l} Juchasin, fol. 86. 1. {m} T. Hieros. Nazir, fol. 57. 4. {n} T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 47. 1.

Matthew 23:30

Ver. 30. And say, if we had been in the days of our fathers,.... Their ancestors and predecessors: signifying, that if they had lived in the times they did, or had been in the same post and office with them, they should have opposed, at least not consented to their measures:

we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets; would not have joined them in persecuting the prophets, and in shedding their blood, and putting them to death; but would have received them as the prophets of the Lord, have hearkened to their advice and message, and have honoured and obeyed them as such; and this they thought they sufficiently declared, by building and adorning their tombs.

Matthew 23:31

Ver. 31. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves,.... Or "against yourselves", as the Syriac reads; for what they said was a plain acknowledgment, and a full confession, what their fathers had done, and whose offspring they were; and from whom better things were not to be expected; since they were their fathers' own children, and of the same temper and disposition with them:

that ye are the children of them that killed the prophets. They plainly owned, that their fathers killed the prophets, and that they descended from them; though they meant not so much to reproach, their ancestors, as to give themselves a greater character; yet it did not with those, that knew them; not with our Lord: for as their own words testified against them, that they were a seed of evildoers; their practices showed them to be of the same spirit and principles with their progenitors.

Matthew **_23:32_**

Ver. 32. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Of their sins; for there were bounds and limits set how far they should proceed, and no further; as yet they had not got to the end of their iniquity: their fathers had gone great lengths in sin, but their iniquity was not yet full, as is said of the Amorites, *Ge 15:16* these their sons were to fill it up. They had shed the blood of many of the prophets; and indeed there were none of them but they had persecuted and abused, in one shape or another: some they entreated shamefully, others they beat: some they stoned, and others they put to death with the sword, or otherwise; and now their children were about to fill the measure brimful, by crucifying the Son of God, which they were at this time meditating and contriving; and by persecuting and slaying his apostles, and so would bring upon them the vengeance of God. The Jews well enough understood these words, which were spoken to them in an ironical way, and expressing what they were about, and what they would hereafter do, and what would be the issue and consequence of it: they have a saying {o}, that

"the holy blessed God does not take vengeance on a man, wtao almttv de, "until his measure is filled up"; according to *Job 20:22*."

Which the Chaldee paraphrase renders,

"when his measure is filled up, then shall he take vengeance on him;"

and that this is Christ's sense, appears from what follows.

{o} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 9. 1.

Matthew **_23:33_**

Ver. 33. Ye servants, ye generation of vipers,.... The latter of these names, John the Baptist calls the Sadducees and Pharisees by, in ***Mt 3:7*** and Christ, in *Mt 12:34* both express their craft and subtlety, their inward poison, and venomous nature; their fair outside, and specious pretences; their hypocrisy, malice, and wickedness; in which they were like to the old serpent, their father the devil, and to their ancestors, that murdered the prophets; nor could any good thing be expected, from such a viperous generation:

how can ye escape the damnation of hell? signifying, that it was impossible that they should; nor could they surely expect it themselves, who must be conscious to themselves of their wickedness, malice, and deceit. The Persic version reads it, "where can ye escape?" &c. and so Beza says it was read, in one ancient copy of his; and the sense is, whither can ye flee? to whom, or what can you have recourse to, to screen you from the wrath to come? Rocks and mountains, caves and dens, will be of no service. The phrase, Mnhyg lv hnyd, "the judgment, or damnation of hell", is a phrase often used in the Talmud {p}, and Midrashes {q} of the Jews; and intends future torment, and the everlasting vengeance and wrath of God, the unquenchable fire prepared for the devil and his angels, and which impenitent unbelieving sinners cannot escape.

{p} T. Bab. Berncot, fol. 61. 1. Erubin, fol. 18. 2. Yebamot, fol. 102. 2. Sota, fol. 4. 2. & 5. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 10. 1. {q} Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 203. 1. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 14. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 76. 1.

Matthew 23:34

Ver. 34. Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets,.... To try them, whether they would show the respect to prophets, they pretended to have for them; by building and beautifying their sepulchres; by exclaiming against their forefathers for shedding their blood; and by declaring, that had they lived in their days, they would not have joined with them in it; and to make it appear, that these were all empty words, and specious pretences; and that they had the same malicious and bloody principles in them; and would be guilty of the same practices, and so fill up the measure of their fathers' sins; and bring upon them the punishment of everlasting burnings hereafter, as well as ruin and destruction on their nation, city, and temple now. Christ here speaks, as, one having power and authority, to qualify and send forth men, under the several characters here mentioned, and of what he should do after his resurrection: for notwithstanding the people of the Jews would crucify him, and use him as they did, in a barbarous manner; yet after all this, he would send his ministers to them, to gather his elect out from among them, to render the rest inexcusable, and to show his longsuffering and patience. The persons designed by "prophets", "wise men", and "Scribes", are his apostles: called "prophets"; because they were divinely inspired to write, and preach in his name; had the gift of foretelling future events, and of explaining with the greatest clearness and exactness, the prophecies of the Old Testament; showing their respect unto, and accomplishment in Christ: "wise men"; because they were made wise unto salvation, and capable of instructing others: they were filled with all spiritual and evangelical wisdom, and preached the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom: and Scribes; because they were well instructed in the kingdom of heaven, and had the true knowledge of the law, and could rightly interpret it, as well as make known the Gospel of the grace of God. Christ chooses to use these names and titles, because the Jews pretended to have great veneration for the ancient prophets, and these he should send, would not be a whit inferior to them, but in many things exceed them; and they had great esteem for their wise men and Scribes, who would be vastly exceeded by these ministers of his, and yet would be used very badly by them:

and some of them ye shall kill; as Stephen, the first "martyr", who was stoned to death by them; and James, the brother of John, whom Herod, to their good liking, killed with the sword; and the other James they threw headlong from off the pinnacle of the temple, and killed him with a fuller's club {r}.

And crucify; so Simeon, the son of Cleophas, was crucified at the instigation of the Jews, as Eusebius relates {s}.

And some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues; as John, Peter, and Paul:

and persecute them from city to city; as they did Paul and Barnabas, as the Acts of the Apostles testify.

{r} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 23. {s} Ib. l. 3. c. 32.

Matthew 23:35

Ver. 35. That upon you may come all the righteous blood,.... Or "the blood of all the righteous men", as the Syriac: Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read; for there is no righteousness in blood, nor any conveyed by it: all men are of one blood, and that is tainted, they that are righteous, are not so naturally, nor by any righteousness of their own, but by the righteousness of Christ: and such were the persons here meant, whose blood being shed in the cause of righteousness, God would revenge; and the punishment for such a crime, and the vengeance of God for it, were to come upon the nation of the Jews by this means, through their crucifying of Christ, and killing, and persecuting his apostles; whereby they would make it manifest, that they approved of, and consented to, what others had done to all the righteous men, whose blood had been

shed upon the earth; whether in Judea, or elsewhere; and continued in the same wicked practices, or committed worse, and so justly incurred the wrath of God to the uttermost; which would quickly come upon them, when the measure of their fathers' sin were filled up by them, from the beginning of time, to the present age: even

from the blood of righteous Abel: who was the first person in the world that was killed, and that for righteousness sake too, because his works were righteous, his person being so; not by his works, but through the righteousness and sacrifice of the Messiah, which were to be brought in; in the faith of which he offered up his sacrifice, whereby he obtained a testimony from God, that he was righteous, having respect to his person in Christ, and so to his offering. This epithet of "righteous" seems to be what was commonly given him by the Jews: hence, with a peculiar emphasis, he is called, qyduh lbh, "Abel the righteous" {t}; as he is also said to be Mygrhnl var, "the head of them that killed" {u}; he being the first man that was slain; for which reason he is mentioned here by Christ; and also, because his blood cried for vengeance, and still continued to do, upon all such persons that should commit the like crime. It is an observation frequently made by the Jews, on those words in ***Ge 4:10*** "the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me", that

"it is not said in the Hebrew text, the blood of thy brother, but the bloods of thy brother; his blood, and the blood of his seed {w}; and that from hence may be learned, that the blood of his children, and of his children's children, and of all his offspring, to the end of all generations, that should proceed from him, all stood and cried before the Lord {x}."

The Jerusalem Targum paraphrases the words in this remarkable manner;

"the price of the bloods of "the multitude of the righteous", that shall spring from Abel thy brother."

And Onkelos thus,

"the voice of the blood of the seed that shall rise from thy brother, &c."

unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Learned men are very much divided about this person, who he was. Some think our Lord speaks prophetically of Zechariah, the son of Baruch; who, as Josephus says {y}, was slain in the middle of the temple, just before the siege of Jerusalem; and who was, as he also relates, a rich man, of an illustrious family, a hater of wickedness, and a friend to liberty: and because, as Abel was the first man that was slain, and this man being killed in the temple, at the close of the Jewish state; and because the words may be rendered, "whom ye shall have slain", therefore he is thought to be intended: but there are several things that do not agree with him, besides its being a narration of a fact, as past, according to the usual rendering of the word: for this Zacharias was the son of Baruch, and not Barachias, which are two different names; he was killed in the middle of the temple, not between the temple and the altar; nor does he appear to be a man of such great character, as to be distinguished in this manner; and besides, his death was what the Jews did not consent to in general, and therefore could not be charged with it; he was acquitted by the sanhedrim of the charge of treachery laid against him, and was assassinated by two zealots. Others have thought that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, is meant, who is supposed to be murdered by the Jews very lately; and it being a recent action, is mentioned by our Lord: the reason of it is a tradition, which several ancient writers {z} speak of, and is pretended to be this; that there was a place, in the temple appropriated to virgins, and that Mary, the mother of our Lord, after his birth, came and took her place here, as a virgin, when the Jews, knowing her to have a child, objected to it; but Zechariah, who was acquainted with the mystery of the incarnation, ordered her to keep her place, upon which the Jews slew him upon the spot: but this tradition is not to be depended on; nor does it appear that there ever was any such particular place in the temple assigned to virgins; nor that the father of this Zacharias was Barachias; or that the son was slain by the Jews, and in this place. Others have been of opinion, that Zechariah the prophet is designed; and indeed, he is said to be the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, ***Zec 1:1*** and the Jewish Targumist speaks of a Zechariah, the son of Iddo, as slain by the Jews in the temple. His words are these {a};

"as ye slew Zechariah, the son of Iddo, the high priest, and faithful prophet, in the house of the sanctuary of the Lord, on the day of atonement; because he reproved you, that ye might not do that evil which is before the Lord."

And him the Jews make to be the same with Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, in ***Isa 8:2*** and read Berechiah {b}: but the Targumist seems to confound Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, with him; for the prophet Zechariah was not an high priest, Joshua was high priest in his time; nor does it appear from any writings, that he was killed by the Jews; nor is it probable that they would be guilty of such a crime, just upon their return from captivity; and besides, he could not be slain in such a place, because the temple, and altar, were not yet built: it remains, that it must be Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, who was slain in the court of the house of the Lord, *2Ch 24:20* who, as Abel was the first, he is the last of the righteous men whose death is related in the Scriptures, and for whose blood vengeance was required, as for Abel's. He was slain in the court of the house of the Lord; and so the Ethiopic version here renders it, in the midst of the holy house. It is often said by the Jewish writer {c}, that

"R. Joden (sometimes it is R. Jonathan) asked R. Acha, whether they slew Zechariah, in the court of the Israelites, or in the court of the women? he answered him, neither in the court of the Israelites, nor in the court of the women, but in the court of the priests."

And elsewhere they say {d}, that they

"slew a priest and a prophet in the sanctuary; this is Zechariah the son of Jehoiada."

Now it should be observed, that the temple, or sanctuary, is sometimes put for the whole sacred building, with all its courts and appurtenances; and sometimes, as in this text, for that part of it that was covered, between which, and the altar of burnt offerings, in the court of the priests, which must he here meant, and not the altar of incense, in the most holy place, was a space of twenty two cubits {e}, frequently called, in Jewish writings, the space between the porch and the altar; that is, the porch which led into the temple, and the brazen altar in the court of the priests, which was open to the air, and is the very spot here intended. Now this was a very sacred place, and is mentioned as an aggravation of the sin of the Jews, that they should enter where none but priests might; nor these neither that had any defect in them; and defile it also by shedding innocent blood.

"The court of the Israelites is holier than the court of the women; because those that wanted atonement might not enter there; and a defiled person that entered there, was obliged to be cut off: the court of the priests was holier than that, because the Israelites might not enter there, but in the time of their necessities, for laying on of hands for atonement, for killing and waving: the place between the porch and the altar was holier than that; for such that had any blemishes, or were bareheaded, or had their garments rent, might not enter {f}."

Hence they say {g}, that

"the Israelites committed seven transgressions on that day: they slew a priest, and a prophet, and a judge; and they shed innocent blood, and they blasphemed God, and defiled the court, and it was a sabbath day, and the day of atonement."

The chief objections to its being this Zechariah are, that the names do agree; the one being the son of Jehoiada, the other the son of Barachias; and the killing of him was eight hundred years before this time; when it might have been thought our Lord would have instanced in a later action: and this he speaks of, he ascribes to the men of that generation: to which may be replied, that as to the difference of names, the father of this Zechariah might have two names, which is no unusual thing; besides, these two names signify much the same thing; Jehoiada signifies praise the Lord, and Barachias bless the Lord; just as Eliakim and Jehoiakim, are names of the same person, and signify the same thing, *2Ch 36:4*. Moreover, Jerom tells us, that in the Hebrew copy of this Gospel used by the Nazarenes, he found the name Jehoiada instead of Barachias: and as to the action being done so long ago, what has been suggested already may be an answer to it, that it was the last on record in the writings of the Old Testament; and that his blood, as Abel's, is said to require vengeance: and Christ might the rather pitch upon this action, because it was committed on a very great and worthy man, and in the holy place, and by the body of the people, at the command of their king, and with their full approbation, and consent: and therefore, though this was not done by the individual persons in being in Christ's time, yet by the same people; and so they are said to slay him, and his blood is required of them: and their horrible destruction was a punishment for that load of national guilt, which had been for many hundreds of years contracting, and heaping upon them.

{t} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 8. 2. {u} Juchasin, fol. 5. 2. {w} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 22. fol. 20. 1. Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 5. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. affirm. 98. {x} Abot. R. Nathan, c. 31. {y} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 1. {z} Origen. in Matth. T. 3. Homil. 26. fol. 44. Greg. Nyssen. in diem nat. Christ. Vol. 2. p. 777. Basil. de human. gen. Christ. & Theophylact. in loc. {a} Targum in Lam. ii. 20. {b} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 24. 2. {c} T. Hieros. Tannioth, fol. 69. 1. Praefat. ad Echa Rabbati, fol. 36. 4. & Echa Rabbati, fol. 52. 4. & 58. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 68. 3. {d} Echa Rabbati, fol. 55. 1. {e} Misn. Middot, c. 3. sect. 6. {f} Maimon. Beth. Habbechira, c. 7. sect. 18, 19, 20. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 188. 4. {g} T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 69. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 53. 1. & 58. 3. Midrash Kobelet, fol. 68. 4.

Matthew 23:36

Ver. 36. Verily I say unto you,.... An usual form of introducing something of moment to raise attention to it, and to ascertain the truth of it:

all these things shall come upon this generation; all the things which Christ had foretold should come to pass in the present age; as that the apostles and ministers of the word he should send to them, some of them they would kill and crucify, and others they would scourge in their synagogues, or persecute from place to place; and all the horrible murders and bloodshed in any age, committed by that people, would be placed to the account of the men of that generation; and the guilt of them imputed to them, and the punishment due unto them be inflicted on them. And which came to pass, and had its full accomplishment about forty years after this, in the utter destruction of Jerusalem, and the whole nation; so that many now living were personally involved in that temporal ruin, as well as escaped not the damnation of hell, *Mt 23:33*.

Matthew 23:37

Ver. 37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,.... The metropolis of Judea, the seat of the kings of Judah, yea, the city of the great king; the place of divine worship, once the holy and faithful city, the joy of the whole earth; wherefore it was strange that the following things should be said of it. The word is repeated to show our Lord's affection and concern for that city, as well as to upbraid it with its name, dignity, and privileges; and designs not the building of the city, but the inhabitants of it; and these not all, but the rulers and governors of it, civil and ecclesiastical; especially the great sanhedrim, which were held in it, to whom best belong the descriptive characters of killing the prophets, and stoning them that were sent by God unto them; since it belonged to them to take cognizance of such who called themselves prophets, and to examine, and judge them, and, if false, to condemn them {h}; hence that saying of Christ, *Lu 13:33* which goes before the same words, as here, "it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem": and who are manifestly distinguished from their "children": it being usual to call such as were the heads of the people, either in a civil or ecclesiastic sense, "fathers", and their subjects and disciples, "children": besides, our Lord's discourse throughout the whole context is directed to the Scribes and Pharisees, the ecclesiastic guides of the people, and to whom the civil governors paid a special regard.

Thou that killest the prophets; that is, with the sword, with which the prophets in Elijah's time were slain by the children of Israel, *1Ki 19:10* and which was one of the capital punishments inflicted by the Jewish sanhedrim {i}; and also that which follows was another of them.

And stonest them which were sent unto thee; as particularly Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, before mentioned. The Jews themselves are obliged to own, that this character belongs to them: say {k} they,

"when the word of God shall come, who is his messenger, we will honour him. Says R. Saul, did not the prophets come, Mwngrhw, "and we killed them", and shed their blood, and how shall we receive his word? or how shall we believe?"

And a celebrated writer of their's, on those words {l}, "but now murderers", has this note;

"they have killed Uriah, they have killed Zechariah."

How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Christ here speaks as a man, and the minister of the circumcision, and expresses an human affection for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and an human wish, and will for their temporal good; which he very aptly signifies by the hen, which is a very affectionate creature to its young, and which it endeavours to screen from danger, by covering with its wings. So the "Shekinah" with the Jews is called, avydq arpu, "the holy bird" {m}; and that phrase, xnykvh ypnk txt twoxl, "to betake one's self, or to come to trust under the wings of the Shekinah", is often used {n} for to become a proselyte to the true religion, and worship of God, as Jethro, and Ruth the Moabitess did. An expression much like to this here is used by an apocryphal writer of 2 Esdras:

"I gathered you together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings: but now, what shall I do unto you? I will cast you out from my face." (2 Esdras 1:30)

It seems to be a simile much in use with that people. Our Lord is to be understood not of his divine will, as God, to gather the people of the Jews internally, by his Spirit and grace, to himself; for all those whom Christ would gather, in this sense, were gathered, notwithstanding all the opposition made by the rulers of the people; but of his human affection and will, as a man, and a minister, to gather them to him externally, by, and under the ministry of his word, to hear him preach; so as that they might be brought to a conviction of, and an assent unto him as the Messiah; which, though it might fall short of faith in him, would have been sufficient to have preserved them from temporal ruin, threatened to their city and temple, in the following verse. Instances of the human affection, and will of Christ, may be observed in *Mr 10:21* which will of his, though not contrary to the divine will, but subordinate to it, yet not always the same with it, nor always fulfilled: whereas his divine will, or his will as God, is, always fulfilled: "who hath resisted his will?" this cannot be hindered, and made void; he does whatsoever he pleases: and further, that this will of Christ to gather the Jews to himself, is to be understood of his human, and not divine will, is manifest from hence, that this will was in him, and expressed by him at certain several times, by intervals; and therefore he says, "how often would I have gathered", &c. whereas the divine will is one continued, invariable, and unchangeable will, is always the same, and never begins or ceases to be, and to which such an expression is inapplicable; and therefore these words do not contradict the absolute and sovereign will of God, in the distinguishing acts of it, respecting the choice of some persons, and the leaving of others. And it is to be observed, that the persons whom Christ would have gathered, are not represented as being unwilling to be gathered; but their rulers were not willing that they should, and be made proselytes to him, and come under his wings. It is not said, "how often would I have gathered you, and you would not!" nor, "I would have gathered Jerusalem, and she would not"; nor, "I would have gathered thy children, and they would not"; but, "how often would I have gathered thy children, and ye would not!" Which observation alone is sufficient to destroy the argument founded on this passage in favour of free will. Had Christ expressed his desire to have gathered the heads of the people to him, the members of the Jewish sanhedrim, the civil and ecclesiastical rulers of the Jews: or had he signified how much he wished, and earnestly sought after, and attempted to gather Jerusalem, the children, the inhabitants of it in common, and neither of them would not; it would have carried some appearance of the doctrine of free will, and have seemed to have countenanced it, and have imputed the non-gathering of them to their own will: though had it been said, "they would not", instead of, "ye would not", it would only have furnished out a most sad instance of the perverseness of the will of man, which often opposes his temporal, as well as his spiritual good; and would rather show it to be a slave to that which is evil, than free to that which is good; and would be a proof of this, not in a single person only, but in a body of men. The opposition and resistance to the will of Christ were not made by the people, but by their governors. The common people seemed inclined to attend his ministry, as appears from the vast crowds, which, at different times and places, followed him; but the chief priests, and rulers, did all they could to hinder the collection of them to him, and their belief in him as the Messiah; by traducing his character, miracles, and doctrines, and by menacing the people with curses, and excommunications, making a law, that whoever confessed him should be turned out of the synagogue. So that the plain meaning of the text is the same with that of *Mt 23:13* and consequently is no proof of men's resisting the operations of the Spirit and grace of God; but only shows what obstructions and discouragements were thrown in the way of attendance on the external ministry of the word. In order to set aside, and overthrow the doctrine of grace, in election, and particular redemption, and effectual calling, it should be proved that Christ, as God, would have gathered, not Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it only, but all mankind, even such as are not eventually saved, and that in a spiritual, saving way and manner, to himself; of which there is not the least intimation in this text: and in order to establish the resistibility of the grace of God, by the perverse will of man, so as to become of no effect; it should be shown that Christ would have savingly converted persons, and they would not be converted; and that he bestowed the same grace upon them, he does bestow on others, who are converted: whereas the sum of this passage lies in these few words, that Christ, as man, out of a compassionate regard for the people of the Jews, to whom, he was sent as the minister of the circumcision, would have gathered them together under his ministry, and have instructed them in the knowledge of himself, as the Messiah; which if they had only notionally received, would have secured them, as chickens under the hen, from impending judgments, which afterwards fell upon them; but their governors, and not they, would not; that is, would not suffer them to receive him, and embrace him as the Messiah. So that from the whole it appears, that this passage of Scripture, so much talked of by the Arminians, and so often cited by them, has nothing to do with the controversy about the doctrines of election and reprobation, particular redemption, efficacious grace in conversion, and the power of man's free will. This observation alone is sufficient to destroy the argument founded on this passage, in favour of free will.

{h} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 5. {i} lb. c. 7. sect. 1. {k} R. Isaac Arama in Gen. xlvii. apud Galatin. Arcan. Cath. ver. l. 3. c. 5. {l} Jarchi in Isa. i. 21. {m} Zohar in Numb. fol. 106. 3. & Imre binah in ib. {n} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 77. 4. &. 115. 2. Vid. Targum in Ruth ii. 12. Zohar in Exod. fol. 28. 3. & 29. 2.

Matthew 23:38

Ver. 38. Behold your house is left unto you desolate. Signifying that the city in which they dwelt, where they had their ceiled houses, and stately palaces, would, in a little time, within the space of forty years, be destroyed, and become a desert; and the temple, formerly the house of God, but now only their's, and in which they trusted, would be abandoned by God, he would grant his presence no more in it; and the Messiah, the proprietor of it, and who was now in it, would then take his leave of it, and never more return to it; and that also should share the same fate as the city, and at the same time. Our Lord seems to have in view those passages in *Jer 12:7* and which the Jewish {o} writers understood of the temple. The author of the apocryphal the second book of Esdras has much such an expression as this:

"Thus saith the Almighty Lord, Your house is desolate, I will cast you out as the wind doth stubble." (2 Esdras 1:33)

{o} Targum & Kimchi in Jer. xii. 7.

Matthew 23:39

Ver. 39. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth,.... Meaning in a very little time after the passover, from the time of his crucifixion and death; otherwise they saw him many times after this, as in the palace of the high priest, in Pilate's judgment hall, and on the cross; but not after his resurrection. This shows the reason of their house being desolate, and in what sense it should be so, and immediately became so; namely, by being then directly, and ever after, destitute of his presence: and though they might afterwards seek for, and expect the Messiah in it, yet they would never be able to see him, nor throughout their long captivity: till ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; that is, until the time comes, that the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, and all Israel shall be saved, the Jews shall be converted, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; when they shall readily and cheerfully say these words to Christ, who will then appear in his glory; which they were now displeased at in the multitude that followed him, and the children in the temple. Though some think this is said by way of threatening, since the rest that is spoken to them by Christ is of that sort, and regards the men of that generation; and is given as a reason of their house being left desolate: and the sense is, that they should never see him with joy and pleasure; since, though they would be obliged to confess that he was Lord and Christ, they would never say the above words to him in faith, and holy reverence of him. The Cambridge exemplar of Beza's, and the Persic versions, read, "in the name of God."

Matthew 24:1

Ver. 1. And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple,.... He not only went out of it for that time, but took his final leave of it, never to return more to it; having foretold its desolation, which he, in part, by so doing, immediately fulfilled: this the disciples observing, and being intent on the outward splendour, and worldly grandeur of it, were concerned that so beautiful a structure should be deserted; and almost thought it incredible, that so strong, and firm a building could be destroyed.

And his disciples came unto him: as he went, and as soon as he was come out of the temple, and whilst in view of it:

for to show him the buildings of the temple; the walls of it, and courts adjoining to it, how beautiful and firm they were: whether this was done by them to raise in him admiration or commiseration, in hopes he might change the sentence he had passed upon it, is not easy to say; or whether this did not express their incredulity about the desolation of it; which Christ's answer, in the next verse, seems to imply. Mark says, it was "one of the disciples" that observed these to him, who might be accompanied with the rest, and in their name address him; and who, probably, might be Peter, since he was generally their mouth; and that he should speak to him in this manner: "master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!" Luke says, "how it was adorned with goodly stones, and gifts." The Jews give very great encomiums of the second temple, as repaired by Herod; and it was undoubtedly a very fine structure. They say {p}, that he built the house of the sanctuary, "an exceeding beautiful building"; and that he repaired the temple, in beauty "greatly exceeding" that of Solomon's {q}. They moreover observe {r}, that

"he who has not seen the building of Herod, has never seen, han Nyynb, "a beautiful building." With what is it built? says Rabbah, with stones of green and white marble. And there are others say, that it was built with stones of spotted green and white marble."

These, very likely, were the very stones the disciples pointed to, and admired; and were of a prodigious size, as well as worth. Some of the stones were, as Josephus {s} says,

"forty five cubits long, five high, and six broad."

Others of them, as he elsewhere affirm {t},

"were twenty five cubits long, eight high, and twelve broad."

And he also tells us, in the same place, that there were,

"in the porches, four rows of pillars: the thickness of each pillar was as much as three men, with their arms stretched out, and joined together, could grasp; the length twenty seven feet, and the number of them an hundred and sixty two, and beautiful to a miracle."

At the size of those stones, and the beauty of the work, it is said {u}, Titus was astonished, when he destroyed the temple; at which time his soldiers plundered it, and took away "the gifts", with which it is also said to be adorned. These were rich and valuable things which were dedicated to it, and either laid up in it, or hung upon the walls and pillars of it, as it was usual in other temples {w}. These may, intend the golden table given by Pompey, and the spoils which Herod dedicated; and particularly the golden vine, which was a gift of his {x}; besides multitudes of other valuable things, which were greatly enriching and ornamental to it. Now the disciples suggest, by observing these, what a pity it was such a grand edifice should be destroyed; or how unaccountable it was; that a place of so much strength, could easily be demolished.

{p} Juchasin, fol. 139. 1. {q} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 24. 2. {r} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1. & Succa, fol. 51. 2. {s} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 5. {t} Antiq. Jud. l. 15. c. 14. {u} Egesippus, l. 5. c. 43. {w} Vid. Ryckium de Capitol. Rom. c. 21, &c. {x} Joseph. Antiq. l. 15.

Matthew 24:2

Ver. 2. And Jesus said unto them, see ye not all these things?.... "These great buildings", as in Mark; all these goodly stones, so beautiful and large, and so firmly put together:

verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down; or broken, as Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it: which prediction had a full and remarkable accomplishment; and which is not only attested by Josephus {y}, who relates, that both the city and temple were dug up, and laid level with the ground; but also by other Jewish writers; who tell us {z} that

"on the ninth of Ab, a day prepared for punishments, Turnus Rufus the wicked, lkyhh ta vrx, "ploughed up the temple", and all round about it, to fulfil what is said, "Zion shall be ploughed as a field"."

Yes, and to fulfil what Christ here says too, that not one stone should be left upon another, which a plough would not admit of.

{y} De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 7. {z} Maimon. Hilch. Taaniot, c. 5. sect. 3. T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 23. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

Matthew 24:3

Ver. 3. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives,.... Which was on the east of the city of Jerusalem {a}, "over against the temple", as Mark says, and where he could sit and take a full view of it; for the wall on the east side was lower than any other, and that for this reason; that when the high priest burnt the red heifer on this mount, as he did, and sprinkled the blood, he might have a view of the gate of the temple. It is said {b},

"all the walls which were there, were very high, except the eastern wall; for the high priest, when he burned the heifer, stood on the top of the mount of Olives, and directed himself, and looked to the gate of the temple, at the time he sprinkled the blood."

This place, very probably, our Lord chose to sit in, that he might give his disciples an occasion to discourse more largely with him on this subject; and that he might take the opportunity of acquainting them with what would be the signs and forerunners of this desolation, and so it proved:

the disciples came to him privately; these four at least, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, as Mark relates; and that either separately from the rest of the disciples, or from the multitude: it might not be thought so proper, to ask the following questions before them, and they might suppose that Christ would not be so ready to give an answer to them plainly, before the common people; when they might hope to be indulged with one by him, in private:

saying, tell us, when shall these things be? That this house will be left desolate, these buildings will be destroyed, and not one stone left upon another? This first question relates purely to the destruction of the temple, and to this Christ first answers, from *Mt 24:4*.

And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? Which two are put together, as what they supposed would be at the same time, and immediately follow the destruction of the temple. That he was come in the flesh, and was the true Messiah, they firmly believed: he was with them, and they expected he would continue with them, for they had no notion of his leaving them, and coming again. When he at any time spake of his dying and rising from the dead, they seemed not to understand it: wherefore this coming of his, the sign of which, they inquire, is not to be understood of his coming a second time to judge the world, at the last day; but of his coming in his kingdom and glory, which they had observed him some little time before to speak of; declaring that some present should not die, till they saw it: wherefore they wanted to be informed, by what sign they might know, when he would set up his temporal kingdom; for since the temple was to be destroyed, they might hope a new one would be built, much more magnificent than this, and which is a Jewish notion; and thai a new state of things would commence; the present world, or age, would be at a period; and the world to come, they had so often heard of from the Jewish doctors, would take place; and therefore they ask also, of the sign of the end of the world, or present state of things in the Jewish economy: to this Christ answers, in the latter part of this chapter, though not to the sense in which they put the questions; yet in the true sense of the coming of the son of man, and the end of the world; and in such a manner, as might be very instructive to them, and is to us.

{a} Bartenora in Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 3. {b} Misn. lb. c. 2. sect. 4.

Matthew 24:4

Ver. 4. And Jesus answered and said unto them,.... Not to indulge their curiosity, but to instruct them in things useful to be known, and which might be cautions to them and others, against deceivers; confirm them in the faith of himself, when they should see his predictions accomplished; and be directions to them, of what might shortly be expected.

Take heed that no man deceive you: by pretending to come from God with a new revelation, setting himself up for the Messiah, after my departure; suggesting himself to be the person designed by God to be the deliverer of Israel, and to be sent by him, to set up a temporal kingdom, in great worldly splendour and glory; promising great names, and high places of honour and trust in it; things which Christ knew his disciples were fond of, and were in danger of being ensnared by; and therefore gives them this suitable and seasonable advice, and caution.

Matthew 24:5

Ver. 5. For many shall come in my name,.... by his orders, or with delegated powers and authority from him; but should assume the name of the Messiah, which was peculiarly his, to themselves; and take upon them his office, and challenge the honour and dignity which belonged unto him:

saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. This is the first sign, preceding the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem; as there was a general expectation among the Jews of a Messiah; that is, of one that should arise and deliver them from the Roman yoke, which was the common idea tacked to that word; in this period of time, many set up themselves to be deliverers and redeemers of the people of Israel: who had each of them their followers in great numbers, whom they imposed upon, and brought to destruction. Of this sort was Theudas, not he that Gamaliel speaks of, ***Ac 5:36*** for he was before this time; but one that was in the time of Claudius Caesar, when Cuspius Fadus was governor of Judea; who persuaded a great number to follow him to the river Jordan, which he promised to divide, by a word of command, and give them a passage over; and thereby, as the historian observes {c}, pollouv hpathshn, "he deceived many"; which is the very thing that is here predicted: but he and his company were routed Fadus, and his head cut off. There was another called the Egyptian, mentioned in *Ac 21:38* who made an uproar, and led four thousand cut-throats into the wilderness; and this same man persuaded thirty thousand men to follow him to Mount Olivet, promising a free passage into the city; but he being vanquished by Felix, then governor of Judea; fled, and many of his followers were killed and taken {d}: and besides, there were many more magicians and impostors, that pretended to signs and wonders, and promised the people deliverance from their evils, by whom they were imposed upon to their ruin. There were others also besides these, that set up for deliverers, who called themselves by the name of the Messiah. Among these, we may reckon Simon Magus, who gave out that he was some great one; yea, expressly, that he was the word of God, and the Son of God {e}, which were known names of the Messiah; and Dositheus the Samaritan, asserted himself to be Christ {f}; and also Menander affirmed, that no man could be saved, unless he was baptized in his name {g}; these are instances before the destruction of Jerusalem, and confirm the prophecy here delivered.

{c} Joseph. Antiq. l. 20. c. 2. {d} Joseph. Antiq. l. 20. c. 6. {e} Jerom in loc. Iren. adv. Haeres. l. 1. c. 20. {f} Origen contr. Cels. l. 1. p. 44. {g} Tertull. de prescript. Haeret. c. 46.

Matthew 24:6

Ver. 6. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars,.... This is the second sign of the destruction of Jerusalem: it is observable that this, and some of the following signs, are given by the Jews, as signs of the Messiah's coming; whereas they were forerunners of their ruin, for the rejection of him who was already come. They suppose the Messiah will come in the seventh year, or the year of rest and release:

"On the seventh year (they say {h}) will be twmxlm, "wars": and in the going out, or at the close of the seventh year, the son of David will come."

Which wars, the gloss says, will be between the nations of the world, and Israel. Here wars may mean the commotions, insurrections, and seditions, against the Romans, and their governors; and the intestine slaughters committed among them, some time before the siege of Jerusalem, and the destruction of it. Under Cureanus the Roman governor, a sedition was raised on the day of the passover, in which twenty thousand perished; after that, in another tumult, ten thousand were destroyed by cut-throats: in Ascalon two thousand more, in Ptolemais two thousand, at Alexandria fifty thousand, at Damascus ten thousand, and elsewhere in great numbers {i}. The Jews were also put into great consternation, upon hearing the design of the Roman emperor, to put up his image in their temple:

see that ye be not troubled; so as to leave the land of Judea as yet, and quit the preaching of the Gospel there, as if the final destruction was just at hand;

for all these things must come to pass; these wars and the reports of them and the panic on account of them; these commotions and slaughters, and terrible devastations by the sword must be; being determined by God, predicted by Christ, and brought upon the Jews by their own wickedness; and suffered in righteous judgment, for their sin:

but the end is not yet; meaning not the end of the world, but the end of Jerusalem, and the temple, the end of the Jewish state; which were to continue, and did continue after these disturbances in it.

{h} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. & Megilia, fol. 17. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 3. 3, 4. {i} Vid. Joseph. Antiq. l. 20. c. 6. & de Bello Jud. l. 2, &c.

Matthew ***24:7***

Ver. 7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom,.... This seems to be a distinct and third sign, foreboding the general calamity of the Jews; that there should be not only seditions and intestine wars, in the midst of their country, but there should be wars in other nations, one with another; and with the Jews, and the Jews with them: and this also is made a sign of the Messiah's coming by them, for so they say {k};

"when thou seest, wlab wla twrgtm twyklm, "kingdoms stirred up one against another", look for the feet of the Messiah: know thou that so it shall be; for so it was in the days of Abraham: by the means of kingdoms stirred up one against another, redemption came to Abraham."

Poor blinded creatures! when these very things were the forerunners of their destruction. And so it was, the Jewish nation rose up against others, the Samaritans, Syrians, and Romans: there were great commotions in the Roman empire, between Otho and Vitellius, and Vitellius and Vespasian; and at length the Romans rose up against the Jews, under the latter, and entirely destroyed them; compare the writings in 2 Esdras:

"And one shall undertake to fight against another, one city against another, one place against another, one people against another, and one realm against another." (2 Esdras 13:31)

"the beginning of sorrows and great mournings; the beginning of famine and great death; the beginning of wars, and the powers shall stand in fear; the beginning of evils! what shall I do when these evils shall come?" (2 Esdras 16:18)

"Therefore when there shall be seen earthquakes and uproars of the people in the world:" (2 Esdras 9:3)

And there shall be famines: a fourth sign of the desolation of the city and temple, and which the Jews also say, shall go before the coming of the Messiah:

"in the second year (of the week of years) in which the son of David comes, they say {l}, there will be "arrows of famine" sent forth; and in the third year, lwdg ber, "a great famine": and men, women, and children, and holy men, and men of business, shall die."

But these have been already; they followed the Messiah, and preceded their destruction: one of these famines was in Claudius Caesar's time, was foretold by Agabus, and is mentioned in *Ac 11:28* and most dreadful ones there were, whilst Jerusalem was besieged, and before its utter ruin, related by Josephus.

And pestilences: a pestilence is described by the Jews after this manner {m}:

"a city that produces a thousand and five hundred footmen, as Cephar Aco, and nine dead men are carried out of it in three days, one after another, lo! rbd hz, "this is a pestilence"; but if in one day, or in four days, it is no pestilence; and a city that produces five hundred footmen, as Cephar Amiko, and three dead men are carried out of it in three days, one after another, lo! this is a pestilence."

These commonly attend famines, and are therefore mentioned together; and when the one was, the other may be supposed sooner or later to be:

and earthquakes in divers places of the world; as, at Crete {n}, and in divers cities in Asia {o}, in the times of Nero: particularly the three cities of Phrygia, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse; which were near to each other, and are all said to perish this way, in his reign {p};

"and Rome itself felt a tremor, in the reign of Galba {q}."

{k} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 1. {l} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. {m} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 21. & 19. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Taaniot, c. 2. sect. 5. {n} Philostrat. in vit. Apollon. l. 4. c. 11. {o}

Sueton. in vit. Nero, c. 48. {p} Orosius, l. 7. c. 7. {q} Sueton. in vit. Galba, c. 13.

Matthew 24:8

Ver. 8. All these are the beginning of sorrows,.... They were only a prelude unto them, and forerunners of them; they were only some foretastes of what would be, and were far from being the worst that should be endured. These were but light, in comparison of what befell the Jews, in their dreadful destruction. The word here used, signifies the sorrows and pains of a woman in travail. The Jews expect great sorrows and distresses in the times of the Messiah, and use a word to express them by, which answers to this, and call them, xyvmh ylbx, "the sorrows of the Messiah"; ylbx, they say {r}, signifies the sorrows of a woman in travail; and the Syriac version uses the same word here. These they represent to be very great, and express much concern to be delivered from them. They {s} ask,

"what shall a man do, to be delivered from "the sorrows of the Messiah?" He must employ himself in the law, and in liberality."

And again {t},

"he that observes the three meals on the sabbath day, shall be delivered from three punishments; from "the sorrows of the Messiah", from the judgment of hell, and from Gog and Magog."

But alas there was no other way of escaping them, but by faith in the true Messiah, Jesus; and it was for their disbelief and rejection of him, that these came upon them.

{r} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 2. {s} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. {t} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 2.

Matthew 24:9

Ver. 9. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted,.... Our Lord proceeds to acquaint his disciples, what should befall them in this interval; and quite contrary to their expectations, who were looking for a temporal kingdom, and worldly grandeur, assures them of afflictions, persecutions, and death; that about these times, when these various signs should appear, and this beginning of sorrows take place; whilst these will be fulfilling in Judea, and other parts of the world; the Jews continuing in their obstinacy and unbelief, would deliver them up to the civil magistrates, to be scourged and imprisoned by them; either to their own sanhedrim, as were Peter and John; or to the Roman governors, Gallio, Festus, and Felix, as was the Apostle Paul.

And shall kill you; as the two James', Peter, Paul, and even all the apostles, excepting John, who suffered martyrdom, and that before the destruction of Jerusalem:

and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake; as the apostles and first Christians were, both by Jews and Gentiles; the latter being stirred up against them by the former, wherever they came, and for no other reason, but because they professed and preached in the name of Christ, as the Acts of the Apostles show: and their hatred proceeded so far, as to charge all their calamities upon them; as war, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, &c. as the apologies of the first Christians declare.

Matthew 24:10

Ver. 10. And then shall many be offended,.... That is, many who had been hearers of the apostles, and professors of the Christian religion; who were highly pleased with it, and were strenuous advocates for it, whilst things were tolerably quiet and easy; but when they saw the apostles, some of them beaten, and imprisoned; others put to death, and others forced to fly from place to place; and persecutions and affliction, because of Christ and his Gospel, likely to befall themselves, would be discouraged hereby, and stumble at the cross; and fall off from the faith of the Gospel, and the profession of it:

and shall betray one another; meaning, that the apostates, who would fall off from the Christian religion, would prove treacherous to true believers, and give in their names to the persecutors, or inform them where they were, that they might take them, or deliver them into their hands themselves: these are the false brethren, the Apostle Paul was in perils among:

and shall hate one another; not that the true Christians should hate these false brethren, any more than betray them; for they are taught to love all men, even their enemies; but these apostates should hate them, in whose communion they before were, and to whom they belonged; and even to a very great degree of hatred, as it often is seen, that such who turn their backs on Christ, and his Gospel, prove the most bitter enemies, and most violent persecutors of its preachers and followers.

Matthew 24:11

Ver. 11. And many false prophets shall rise,.... Out of, from among the churches of Christ; at least under the name of Christians; for false teachers are here meant, men of heretical principles, pretending to a spirit of prophecy, and to new revelations, and a better understanding of the Scriptures; such as Simon Magus, Ebion, and Cerinthus, who denied the proper deity, and real humanity of Christ; Carpocrates, and the Gnostics his followers, the Nicolaitans, Hymcneus, Philetus, and others:

and shall deceive many: as they all of them had their followers, and large numbers of them, whose faith was subverted by them; and who followed their pernicious ways, being imposed upon and seduced by their fair words, specious pretences, and licentious practices.

Matthew 24:12

Ver. 12. And because iniquity shall abound,.... Meaning, either the malice and wickedness of outrageous persecutors, which should greatly increase; or the treachery and hatred of the apostates; or the errors and heresies of false teachers; or the wickedness that prevailed in the lives and conversations of some, that were called Christians: for each of these seem to be hinted at in the context, and may be all included, as making up the abounding iniquity here spoken of; the consequence of which would be,

the love of many shall wax cold. This would be the case of many, but not of all; for in the midst of this abounding iniquity, there were some, the ardour of whose love to Christ, to his Gospel, and to the saints, did not abate: but then there were many, whose zeal for Christ, through the violence of persecution, was greatly damped; and through the treachery of false brethren, were shy of the saints themselves, not knowing who to trust; and through the principles of the false teachers, the power of godliness, and the vital heat of religion, were almost lost; and through a love of the world, and of carnal ease and pleasure, love to the saints was grown very chill, and greatly left; as the instances of Demas, and those that forsook the Apostle Paul, at his first answer before Nero, show. This might be true of such, who were real believers in Christ; who might fall under great decays, through the prevalence of iniquity; since it does not say their love shall be lost, but wax cold.

Matthew 24:13

Ver. 13. But he that shall endure to the end,.... In the profession of faith in Christ, notwithstanding the violent persecutions of wicked men; and in the pure and incorrupt doctrines of the Gospel, whilst many are deceived by the false teachers that shall arise; and in holiness of life and conversation, amidst all the impurities of the age; and shall patiently bear all afflictions, to the end of his life, or to the end of sorrows, of which the above mentioned were the beginning:

the same shall be saved; with a temporal salvation, when Jerusalem, and the unbelieving inhabitants of it shall be destroyed: for those that believed in Christ, many of them, through persecution, were obliged to remove from thence; and others, by a voice from heaven, were bid to go out of it, as they did; and removed to Pella, a village a little beyond Jordan {u}, and so were preserved from the general calamity; and also with an everlasting salvation, which is the case of all that persevere to the end, as all true believers in Christ will.

{u} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 5.

Matthew 24:14

Ver. 14. And this Gospel of the kingdom,.... Which Christ himself preached, and which he called and sent his apostles to preach, in all the cities of Judah; by which means men were brought into the kingdom of the Messiah, or Gospel dispensation; and which treated both of the kingdom of grace and glory, and pointed out the saints' meetness for the kingdom of heaven, and their right unto it, and gives the best account of the glories of it:

shall be preached in all the world; not only in Judea, where it was now confined, and that by the express orders of Christ himself; but in all the nations of the world, for which the apostles had their commission enlarged, after our Lord's resurrection; when they were bid to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; and when the Jews put away the Gospel from them, they accordingly turned to the Gentiles; and before the destruction of Jerusalem, it was preached to all the nations under the heavens; and churches were planted in most places, through the ministry of it:

for a witness unto all nations; meaning either for a witness against all such in them, as should reject it; or as a testimony of Christ and salvation, unto all such as should believe in him:

and then shall the end come; not the end of the world, as the Ethiopic version reads it, and others understand it; but the end of the Jewish state, the end of the city and temple: so that the universal preaching of the Gospel all over the world, was the last criterion and sign, of the destruction of Jerusalem; and the account of that itself next follows, with the dismal circumstances which attended it.

Matthew 24:15

Ver. 15. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation,.... From signs, Christ proceeds to the immediate cause of the destruction of Jerusalem; which was, "the abomination of desolation", or the desolating abomination; or that abominable thing, which threatened and brought desolation upon the city, temple, and nation: by which is meant, not any statue placed in the temple by the Romans, or their order; not the golden eagle which Herod set upon the temple gate, for that was before Christ said these words; nor the image of Tiberius Caesar, which Pilate is said to bring into the temple; for this, if true, must be about this time; whereas Christ cannot be thought to refer to anything so near at hand; much less the statue of Adrian, set in the most holy place, which was an hundred and thirty years and upwards, after the destruction of the city and temple; nor the statue of Titus, who destroyed both, which does not appear: ever to be set up, or attempted; nor of Caligula, which, though ordered, was prevented being placed there: but the Roman army is designed; see *Lu 21:20* which was the Mmvm Myuwqv Pnk, "the wing", or "army of abominations making desolate", ***Da 9:27***. Armies are called wings, ***Isa 8:8*** and the Roman armies were desolating ones to the Jews, and to whom they were an abomination; not only because they consisted of Heathen men, and uncircumcised persons, but chiefly because of the images of their gods, which were upon their ensigns: for images and idols were always an abomination to them; so the "filthiness" which Hezekiah ordered to be carried out of the holy place, *2Ch 29:5* is by the Targum called, aqwxyr, "an abomination"; and this, by the Jewish writers {w}, is said to be an idol, which Ahaz had placed upon the altar; and such was the abomination of desolation, which Antiochus caused to be set upon the altar:

"Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side;" (1 Maccabees 1:54)

And so the Talmudic writers, by the abomination that makes desolate, in *Da 12:11* to which Christ here refers, understand an image, which they say {x} one Apostomus, a Grecian general, who burnt their law, set up in the temple. Now our Lord observes, that when they should see the Roman armies encompassing Jerusalem, with their ensigns flying, and these abominations on them, they might conclude its desolation was near at hand; and he does not so much mean his apostles, who would be most of them dead, or in other countries, when this would come to pass; but any of his disciples and followers, or any persons whatever, by whom should be seen this desolating abomination,

spoken of by Daniel the prophet: not in *Da 11:31* which is spoken of the abomination in the times of Antiochus; but either in *Da 12:11* or rather in ***Da 9:27*** since this desolating abomination is that, which should follow the cutting off of the Messiah, and the ceasing of the daily sacrifice. It is to be observed, that Daniel is here called a prophet, contrary to what the Jewish writers say {y}, who deny him to be one; though one of {z} no inconsiderable note among them affirms, that he attained to the end, yyawbnh lwbgh, "of the prophetic border", or the ultimate degree of prophecy: when therefore this that Daniel, under a spirit of prophecy, spoke of should be seen, standing in the holy place; near the walls, and round about the holy city Jerusalem, so called from the sanctuary and worship of God in it; and which, in process of time, stood in the midst of it, and in the holy temple, and destroyed both; then

whoso readeth, let him understand: that is, whoever then reads the prophecy of Daniel; will easily understand the meaning of it, and will see and know for certain, that now it is accomplished; and will consider how to escape the desolating judgment, unless he is given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart; which was the case of the greater part of the nation.

{w} R. David Kimchi, & R. Sol. ben Melech, in 2 Chron. xxix. 5. {x} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 28. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {y} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1. & Megilla, fol. 3. 1. & Tzeror Ham, mor, fol. 46. 4. Zohar in Num. fol. 61. 1. {z} Jacchiades in Dan. i. 17.

Matthew 24:16

Ver. 16. Then let them which be in Judea,.... When this signal is given, let it be taken notice of and observed; let them that are in the city of Jerusalem, depart out of it; or who are in any other parts of Judea, in any of the towns, or cities thereof; let them not betake themselves to Jerusalem, imagining they may be safe there, in so strong and fortified a place, but let them flee elsewhere; see *Lu 21:21* and accordingly it is observed, that many did flee about this time; and it is remarked by several interpreters, and which Josephus {a} takes notice of with surprise, that Cestius Gallus having advanced with his army to Jerusalem, and besieged it, on a sudden, without any cause, raised the siege, and withdrew his army, when the city might have been easily taken; by which means a signal was made; and an opportunity given to the Christians, to make their escape: which they accordingly did, and went over Jordan, as Eusebius says {b}, to a place called Pella; so that when Titus came a few mouths after, there was not a Christian in the city, but they had fled as they are here bidden to

flee into the mountains; or any places of shelter and refuge: these are mentioned particularly, because they are usually such; and design either the mountains in Judea, or in the adjacent countries. The Syriac and Persic versions read in the singular number, "into the mountain"; and it is reported that many of them did fly, particularly to Mount Libanus {c}.

{a} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 19. sect. 7. {b} Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 5. p. 75. {c} Joseph. ib.

Matthew 24:17

Ver. 17. Let him which is on the housetop,.... Who should be there either for his devotion or recreation; for the houses of the Jews were built with flat roofs and battlements about them, which they made use of both for diversion and pleasure, and for private meditation and prayer, for social conversation, and sometimes for public preaching; see *Mt 10:27*

not come down to take anything out of his house: that is, let him not come down in the inner way, but by the stairs, or ladder, on the outside of the house, which was usual. They had two ways of going out of, and into their houses; the one they call {d}, Myxtp Krd, "the way of the doors"; the other, Nygg Krd, "the way of the roof": upon which the gloss is,

"to go up on the outside, Mlwp Krd, "by way" or "means" of a ladder, fixed at the entrance of the door of the upper room, and from thence he goes down into the house by a ladder;"

and in the same way they could come out; see ***Mr 2:4*** and let him not go into his house to take any of his goods, or money, or food along with him necessary for his sustenance in his flight; lest, whilst he is busy in taking care of these, he loses his life, or, at least, the opportunity of making his escape; so sudden is this desolation represented to be.

{d} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 117. 1.

Matthew 24:18

Ver. 18. Neither let him which is in the field,.... Ploughing, or sowing, or employed in any other parts of husbandry, or rural business,

return back to take clothes; for it was usual to work in the fields without their clothes, as at ploughing and sowing. Hence those words of Virgil {e}.

"Nudus ara, sere nudus, hyems ignava colono."

Upon which Servius observes, that in good weather, when the sun warms the earth, men might plough and sow without their clothes: and it is reported by the historian {f} of Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, that the messengers who were sent to him, from Minutius the consul, whom he had delivered from a siege, found him ploughing naked beyond the Tiber: not that he was entirely naked, but was stripped of his upper garments: and it is usual for people that work in the fields to strip themselves to their shirts, and lay their clothes at the corner of the field, or at the land's end; and which we must suppose to be the case here: for our Lord's meaning is not, that the man working in the field, should not return home to fetch his clothes, which were not left there; they were brought with him into the field, but put off; and laid aside in some part of it while at work; but that as soon as he had the news of Jerusalem being besieged, he should immediately make the best of his way, and flee to the mountains, as Lot was bid to do at the burning of Sodom; and he might not return to the corner of the field, or land's end, where his clothes lay, as Lot was not to look behind; though if his clothes lay in the way of his flight, he might take them up, but might not go back for them, so sudden and swift should be the desolation. The Vulgate Latin reads, in the singular number, "his coat"; and so do the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and so it was read in four copies of Beza's, in three of Stephens's, and in others; and may design the upper coat or garment, which was put off whilst at work.

{e} Georgic. l. 1. {f} Aurel Victor. de illustr. viris, c. 20.

Matthew 24:19

Ver. 19. And woe unto them that are with child,.... Not that it should be criminal for them to be with child, or a judgment on them; for it was always esteemed a blessing to be fruitful, and bear children: but this expresses the miserable circumstances such would be in, who, by reason of their heavy burdens, would not be able to make so speedy a flight, as the case would require; or would be obliged to stay at home, and endure all the miseries of the siege: so that these words, as the following are not expressive of sin, or punishment, but of pity and concern for their misery and distress:

and to them that give suck in those days; whose tender affection to their infants will not suffer them to leave them behind them; and yet such their weakness, that they will not be able to carry them with them; at least, they must be great hindrances to their speedy flight. So that the case of these is much worse than that of men on the house top, or in the field, who could much more easily leave their goods and clothes, than these their children, as well as had more agility and strength of body to flee. So twqynymw twrbwe, "women with child, and that give suck"; are mentioned together in the Jewish writings, as such as were excused from certain fasts, though obliged to others {g}.

{g} T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 64. 3. Maimon. Hilch. Taanioth, c. 5. sect. 10.

Matthew 24:20

Ver. 20. But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter,.... When days are short, and unfit for long journeys, and roads are bad, and sometimes not passable, through large snows, or floods of water; and when to dwell in desert places, and lodge in mountains, must be very uncomfortable: wherefore Christ directs to pray to God, who has the disposal of all events, and of the timing of them, that he would so order things in the course of his providence, that their flight might not be in such a season of the year, when travelling would be very difficult and troublesome. Dr. Lightfoot observes, from a Jewish writer {h}, that it is remarked as a favour of God in the destruction of the first temple, that it happened in the summer, and not in winter; whose words are these:

"God vouchsafed a great favour to Israel, for they ought to have gone out of the land on the tenth day of the month Tebeth; as he saith *Eze 24:2* "son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day": what then did the Lord, holy and blessed? If they shall now go out in the winter, (saith he,) they will all die; therefore he prolonged the time to them, and carried them away in summer."

And since therefore they received such a favour from him at the destruction of the first temple, there was encouragement to pray to him, that they might be indulged with the like favour when Jerusalem should be besieged again:

neither on the sabbath day: the word "day" is not in the Greek text; and some {i} have been of opinion, that the "sabbatical year", or the seventh year, is meant, when no fruits would be found in the fields, and a great scarcity of provisions among people; who would not have a sufficiency, and much less any to spare to strangers fleeing from their native places; but rather the sabbath day, or "day of the sabbath", as the Persic version reads it, is designed; and Beza says, four of his copies read it in the genitive case: and so four of Stephens's. And the reason why our Lord put them on praying, that their flight might not be on the sabbath day, was, because he knew not only that the Jews, who believed not in him, would not suffer them to travel on a sabbath day more than two thousand cubits; which, according to their traditions {k}, was a sabbath day's journey; and which would not be sufficient for their flight to put them out of danger; but also, that those that did believe in him, particularly the Jerusalem Jews, would be all of them fond of the law of Moses, and scrupulous of violating any part of it, and especially that of the sabbath; see *Ac 21:20*. And though the Jews did allow, that the sabbath might be violated where life was in danger, and that it was lawful to defend themselves against an enemy on the sabbath day; yet this did not universally obtain; and it was made a question of, after the time of Christ, whether it was lawful to flee from danger on the sabbath day; of which take the following account {l}.

"Our Rabbins teach, that he that is pursued by Gentiles, or by thieves, may profane the sabbath for the sake of saving his life: and so we find of David, when Saul sought to slay him, he fled from him, and escaped. Our Rabbins say, that it happened that evil writings (or edicts) came from the government to the great men of Tzippore; and they went, and said to R. Eleazar ben Prata, evil edicts are come to us from the government, what dost thou say? xrbn, "shall we flee?" and he was afraid to say to them "flee"; but he said to them with a nod, why do you ask me? go and ask Jacob, and Moses, and David; as it is written, of Jacob, *Ho 12:12* "and Jacob fled"; and so of Moses, ***Ex 2:15*** "and Moses fled"; and so of David, *1Sa 19:18* "and David fled, and escaped": and he (God) says, *Isa 26:20* "come my people, enter into thy chambers"."

From whence, it is plain, it was a question with the doctors in Tzippore, which was a town in Galilee, where there was an university, whether it was lawful to flee on the sabbath day or not; and though the Rabbi they applied to was of opinion it was lawful, yet he was fearful of speaking out his sense plainly, and therefore delivered it by signs and hints. Now our Lord's meaning, in putting them on this petition, was, not to prevent the violation of the seventh day sabbath, or on account of the sacredness of it, which he knew would be abolished, and was abolished before this time; but he says this with respect to the opinion of the Jews, and "Judaizing" Christians, who, taking that day to be sacred, and fleeing on it unlawful, would find a difficulty with themselves, and others, to make their escape; otherwise it was as lawful to flee and travel on that day, as in the winter season; though both, for different reasons, incommodious.

{h} Taachuma, fol. 57. 2. {i} Vid. Reland. Antiq. Heb. par. 4. c. 10. sect. 1. & Hammond in loc. {k} Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 27. sect. 1. {l} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 231. 4.

Matthew 24:21

Ver. 21. For then shall be great tribulation,.... This is urged as a reason for their speedy flight; since the calamity that would come upon those who should remain in the city, what through the sword, famine, pestilence, murders, robberies, &c. would

be such as was not since the beginning of the world, to this time, no, nor ever shall be. The burning of Sodom and Gomorrha, the bondage of the children of Israel in Egypt, their captivity in Babylon, and all their distresses and afflictions in the times of the Maccabees, are nothing to be compared with the calamities which befell the Jews in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. Great desolations have been made in the besieging and at the taking of many famous cities, as Troy, Babylon, Carthage, &c. but none of them are to be mentioned with the deplorable case of this city. Whoever reads Josephus's account will be fully convinced of this; and readily join with him, who was an eyewitness of it, when he says {m}, that

"never did any city suffer such things, nor was there ever any generation that more abounded in malice or wickedness."

And indeed, all this came upon them for their impenitence and infidelity, and for their rejection and murdering of the Son of God; for as never any before, or since, committed the sin they did, or ever will, so there never did, or will, the same calamity befall a nation, as did them.

{m} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 11.

Matthew 24:22

Ver. 22. And except those days should be shortened,.... That is, those days of tribulation which commenced at the siege of Jerusalem; and therefore cannot refer to the times before it, and the shortening of them by it, which were very dreadful and deplorable through the murders and robberies of the cut-throats and zealots; but to those after the siege began, which were very distressing to those that were within; and which, if they had not been shortened, or if the siege had been lengthened out further,

there should no flesh be saved; not one Jew in the city of Jerusalem would have been saved; they must everyone have perished by famine, or pestilence, or sword, or by the intestine wars and murders among themselves: nor indeed, if the siege had continued, would it have fared better with the inhabitants of the other parts of the country, among whom also many of the same calamities prevailed and spread themselves; so that, in all likelihood, if these days had been continued a little longer, there had not been a Jew left in all the land.

But for the elect's sake; those who were chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to believe in him, and to be saved by him with an everlasting salvation; both those that were in the city, or, at least, who were to spring from some that were there, as their immediate offspring, or in future ages, and therefore they, and their posterity, must not be cut off; and also those chosen ones, and real believers, who were at Pella, and in the mountains, and other places, for the sake of these, and that they might be delivered from these pressing calamities,

those days shall be shortened: for otherwise, if God had not preserved a seed, a remnant, according to the election of grace, that should be saved, they had been as Sodom and as Gomorrha, not one would have escaped. The shortening of those days is not to be understood literally, as if the natural days, in which this tribulation was, were to be shorter than usual. The Jews indeed often speak of the shortening of days in this sense, as miraculously done by God: so they say {n}, that

"five miracles were wrought for our father Jacob, when he went from

Beersheba to go to Haran. The first miracle was, that amwyd ywev hyl wruqta, "the hours of the day were shortened for him", and the sun set before its time, because his word desired to speak with him."

They also say {o},

"that the day in which Ahaz died, was shortened ten hours, that they might not mourn for him; and which afterwards rose up, and in the day that Hezekiah was healed, ten hours were added to it."

But the meaning here is, that the siege of Jerusalem, and the calamities attending it, should be sooner ended: not than God had determined, but than the sin of the Jews deserved, and the justice of God might have required in strict severity, and might be reasonably expected, considering the aggravated circumstances of their iniquities. A like manner of speech is used by the Karaite Jews {p}, who say,

"if we walk in our law, why is our captivity prolonged, and there is not found balm for our wounds? and why are not Mhymy wjemtn, "the days" of the golden and silver kingdom "lessened", for the righteousness of the righteous, which were in their days?"

{n} Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel, & Targum Hieros. in Gem xxviii. 10. {o} R. Sol. Jarchi in Isa. xxxviii. 8. {p} Chilluk M. S. apud Trigland. de sect. Karaeorum, c. 9. p. 147.

Matthew 24:23

Ver. 23. Then if any man shall say unto you,.... Either at the time when the siege shall be begun, and the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place; or during the days of tribulation, whilst the siege lasted; or after those days were shortened, and the city destroyed, and the Roman army was gone with their captives: when some, that were scattered up and down in the country, would insinuate to their countrymen, that the Messiah was in such a place: saying,

lo! here is Christ, or there, believe it not; for both during the time of the siege, there were such that sprung up, and pretended to be Messiahs, and deliverers of them from the Roman power, and had their several abettors;

one saying he was in such place, and another that he was in such a place; and so spirited up the people not to fly, nor to deliver up the city; and also, after the city was taken and destroyed, one and another set up for the Messiah. Very quickly after, one Jonathan, a very wicked man, led many into the desert of Cyrene, promising to show them signs and wonders, and was overthrown by Catullius, the Roman governor {q}; and after that, in the times of Adrian, the famous Barcochab set up for the Messiah, and was encouraged by R. Akiba, and a multitude of Jews {r}.

{q} Joseph. Antiq. l. 7. c. 12. {r} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 28. 2.

Matthew ***24:24***

Ver. 24. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets,.... Such as the above mentioned: these false Christs had their false prophets, who endeavoured to persuade the people to believe them to be the Messiah, as Barcochab had Akiba, who applied many prophecies to him. This man was called Barcochab, which signifies the son of a star, in allusion to *Nu 24:17* he was crowned by the Jews, and proclaimed the Messiah by Akiba; upon which a Roman army was sent against him, and a place called Bitter was besieged, and taken, and he, and a prodigious number of Jews were destroyed. This deceiver was afterwards, by them, called Barcoziba, the son of a lie:

and shall show great signs and wonders; make an appearance of doing them, though they really did them not: so that Jonathan, before mentioned, pretended to show signs and sights; and Barcochab made as if flame came out of his mouth; and many of the Jewish doctors in these times, and following, gave themselves up to sorcery, and the magic art; and are, many of them, often said {s} to be Myonb Mydmwlm, "expert in wonders", or miracles:

if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. By whom we are to understand, not the choicest believers, or the persevering Christians: not but that such who are truly converted, are choice believers in Christ, and persevering Christians are undoubtedly the elect of God; but then the reason why they are elect, and why they are so called, is not because they are converted, are choice believers, and persevering Christians; but, on the contrary, the reason why they are converted, become true believers, and persevere to the end, is, because they are elected; conversion, faith, and perseverance being not the causes or conditions, but the fruits and effects of election: besides to talk of the final seduction of a persevering Christian, is a contradiction in terms. Such an interpretation of the phrase must be absurd and impertinent; for who knows not that a persevering Christian cannot be finally and totally deceived? But by the elect are meant, a select number of particular persons of Adam's posterity, whom God, of his sovereign goodwill and pleasure, without respect to their faith, holiness, and good works, has chosen, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, both to grace and glory: and to deceive these finally and totally, is impossible, as is here suggested; not impossible, considering their own weakness, and the craftiness of deceivers, who, if left to themselves, and the power of such deception, and the working of Satan with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, might easily be seduced; but considering the purposes and promises of God concerning them, the provisions of his grace for them, the security of them in the hands of Christ, and their preservation by the mighty power of God, their final and total deception is not only difficult, but impossible. They may be, and are deceived before conversion; this is one part of their character whilst unregenerate, "foolish, disobedient, deceived", ***Tit 3:3*** yea, they may be, and oftentimes are, deceived after conversion; but then this is in part only, and not totally; in some lesser, and not in the greater matters of faith; not so as to let go their hold of Christ their head, and quit the doctrine of salvation by him, or fall into damnable heresies: they may be seduced from the simplicity of the Gospel, but not finally; for they shall be recovered out of the snare of the devil, and not to be left to perish in such deceivings. This clause, as it expresses the power of deceivers, and the efficacy of Satan, so the influence and certainty of electing grace and the sure and firm perseverance of the saints, to the end, notwithstanding the cunning and craft of men and devils; for if these, with all their signs and wonders, could not deceive them, it may be pronounced impossible that they ever should be finally and totally deceived.

{s} T. Bab. Meila, fol. 17. 2. Juchasin, fol. 20. 1, 2. & 42. 2. & 56. 2. & 77. 1. & 96. 2.

Matthew 24:25

Ver. 25. Behold, I have told you before. Meaning not before in this discourse, though he had in *Mt 24:5* signified also, that false Christs, and false prophets should arise, but before these things came to pass; so that they had sufficient notice and warning of them, and would be inexcusable if they were not upon their guard against them; and which, when they came to pass, would furnish out a considerable argument in proof of him, as the true Messiah, against all these false ones, showing him to be omniscient; and so would serve to establish their faith in him, and be a means of securing them from such deceivers.

Matthew 24:26

Ver. 26. Wherefore if they shall say unto you,.... Any of the false prophets, or the deluded followers of false Christs:

behold, he is in the desert, go not forth: that is, should they affirm, that the Messiah is in such a wilderness, in the wilderness of Judea, or in any other desert place, do not go out of the places where you are to see, or hear, and know the truth of things; lest you should, in any respect, be stumbled, ensnared, and brought into danger. It was usual for these impostors to lead their followers into deserts, pretending to work wonders in such solitary places: so, during the siege, Simon, the son of Giora, collected together many thousands in the mountainous and desert parts of Judea {t}; and the above mentioned Jonathan, after the destruction of the city, led great multitudes into the desert:

behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not; or should others say behold, or for certain, the Messiah is in some one of the secret and fortified places of the temple; where, during some time of the siege, were John and Eleazar, the heads of the zealots {u}; do not believe them. Some reference may be had to the chamber of secrets, which was in the temple {w};

"for in the sanctuary there were two chambers; one was called Myavx tkvl, "the chamber of secrets", and the other the chamber of vessels."

Or else some respect may be had to the notions of the Jews, concerning the Messiah, which they imbibed about these times, and ever since retained, that he was born the day Jerusalem was destroyed, but is hid, for their sins, in some secret place, and will in time be revealed {x}. Some say, that he is hid in the sea; others, in the walks of the garden of Eden; and others, that he sits among the lepers at the gates of Rome {y}. The Syriac version here reads in the singular number, "in the bedchamber"; in some private apartment, where he remains till a proper time of showing himself offers, for fear of the Romans: but these are all idle notions, and none of them to be believed. The true Messiah is come, and has showed himself to Israel; and even the giving out these things discovers a consciousness, and a conviction that the Messiah is come.

{t} Joseph de Bello. Jud. l. 5. c. 7. {u} Ib. c. 6. l. 4. {w} Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 6. {x} Aben Ezra in Cant. vii. 5. Targum in Mic. iv. 8. {y} Vid. Buxtorf. Synag. Jud. c. 50.

Matthew 24:27

Ver. 27. For as the lightning cometh out of the east,.... The eastern part of the horizon,

and shineth even unto the west; to the western part of it, with great clearness; in a moment; in the twinkling of an eye, filling the whole intermediate space;

so shall also the coming of the son of man be; which must be understood not of his last coming to judgment, though that will be sudden, visible, and universal; he will at once come to, and be seen by all, in the clouds of heaven, and not in deserts and secret chambers: nor of his spiritual coming in the more sudden, and clear, and powerful preaching of the Gospel all over the Gentile world; for this was to be done before the destruction of Jerusalem: but of his coming in his wrath and vengeance to destroy that people, their nation, city, and temple: so that after this to look for the Messiah in a desert, or secret chamber, must argue great stupidity and blindness; when his coming was as sudden, visible, powerful, and general, to the destruction of that nation, as the lightning that comes from the east, and, in a moment, shines to the west.

Matthew 24:28

Ver. 28. For wheresoever the carcass is,.... Not Christ, as he is held forth in the Gospel, crucified and slain, through whose death is the savour of life, and by whom salvation is, and to whom sensible sinners flock, encouraged by the ministry of the word; and much less Christ considered as risen, exalted, and coming in great glory to judgment, to whom the word "carcass" will by no means agree, and but very poorly under the former consideration: but the people of the Jews are designed by it, in their fallen, deplorable, miserable, and lifeless state, who were like to the body of a man, or any other creature, struck dead with lightning from heaven; being destroyed by the breath of the mouth, and brightness of the coming of the son of man, like lightning, just as antichrist will be at the last day:

there will the eagles be gathered together: not particular believers here, or all the saints at the day of judgment; though these may be, as they are, compared to eagles for many things; as their swiftness in flying to Christ, their sagacity and the sharpness of their spiritual sight, soaring on high, and renewing their spiritual strength and youth: but here the Roman armies are intended, whose ensigns were eagles; and the eagle still is, to this day, the ensign of the Roman empire: formerly other creatures, with the eagle, were used for ensigns; but C. Marius, in his second consulship, banished them, and appropriated the eagle only to the legions: nor was it a single eagle that was carried before the army, but every legion had an eagle went before it, made of gold or silver, and carried upon the top of a spear {z}: and the sense of this passage is this, that wherever the Jews were, whether at Jerusalem, where the body and carcass of them was, in a most forlorn and desperate condition; or in any other parts of the country, the Roman eagles, or legions, would find them out, and make an utter destruction of them. The Persic version, contrary to others, and to all copies, renders it "vultures". Though this creature is of the same nature with the eagle, with respect to feeding on carcasses: hence the proverb,

"cujus vulturis hoe erit cadaver?"

"what vulture shall have this carcass?" It has a very sharp sight, and quick smell, and will, by both, discern carcasses at almost incredible distance: it will diligently watch a man that is near death; and will follow armies going to battle, as historians relate {a}: and it is the eagle which is of the vulture kind, as Aristotle {b} observes, that takes up dead bodies, and carries them to its nest. And Pliny {c} says, it is that sort of eagles only which does so; and some have affirmed that eagles will by no means touch dead carcasses: but this is contrary not only to this passage of Scripture, but to others; particularly to *Job 39:30* "her young ones also suck up blood, and where the slain are, there is she": an expression much the same with this in the text, and to which it seems to refer; see also *Pr 30:17*. Though Chrysostom {d} says, both the passage in Job, and this in Matthew, are to be understood of vultures; he doubtless means the eagles that are of the vulture kind, the Gypaeetos, or vulture eagle. There is one kind of eagles, naturalists say {e}, will not feed on flesh, which is called the bird of Jupiter; but, in common, the eagle is represented as a very rapacious creature, seizing, and feeding upon the flesh of hares, fawns, geese, &c. and the rather this creature is designed here; since, of all birds, this is the only one that is not hurt with lightning {f}, and so can immediately seize carcasses killed thereby; to which there seems to be an allusion here, by comparing it with the preceding verse: however, the Persic version, though it is literally a proper one, yet from the several things observed, it is not to be overlooked and slighted.

{z} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 4. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 2. {a} Aelian. de Animal. Natura, l. 2. c. 46. {b} De Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 32. {c} Hist. Nat l. 10. c. 3. {d} In Matt. Homil. 49. {e} Aelian. de Animal. l. 9. c. 10. {f} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 55.

Matthew 24:29

Ver. 29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days,.... That is, immediately after the distress the Jews would be in through the siege of Jerusalem, and the calamities attending it; just upon the destruction of that city, and the temple in it, with the whole nation of the Jews, shall the following things come to pass; and therefore cannot be referred to the last judgment, or what should befall the church, or world, a little before that time, or should be accomplished in the whole intermediate time, between the destruction of Jerusalem, and the last judgment: for all that is said to account for such a sense, as that it was usual with the prophets to speak of judgments afar off as near; and that the apostles often speak of the coming of Christ, the last judgment, and the end of the world, as just at hand; and that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, will not answer to the word "immediately", or show that that should be understood of two thousand years after: besides, all the following things were to be fulfilled before that present generation, in which Christ lived, passed away, *Mt 24:34* and therefore must be understood of things that should directly, and immediately take place upon, or at the destruction of the city and temple.

Shall the sun be darkened: not in a literal but in a figurative sense; and is to be understood not of the religion of the Jewish church; nor of the knowledge of the law among them, and the decrease of it; nor of the Gospel being obscured by heretics and false teachers; nor of the temple of Jerusalem, senses which are given into by one or another; but of the Shekinah, or the divine presence in the temple. The glory of God, who is a sun and a shield, filled the tabernacle, when it was reared up; and so it did the temple, when it was built and dedicated; in the most holy place, Jehovah took up his residence; here was the symbol of his presence, the mercy seat, and the two cherubim over it: and though God had for some time departed from this people, and a voice was heard in the temple before its destruction, saying, "let us go hence"; yet the token of the divine presence remained till the utter destruction of it; and then this sun was wholly darkened, and there was not so much as the outward symbol of it:

and the moon shall not give her light; which also is to be explained in a figurative and metaphorical sense; and refers not to the Roman empire, which quickly began to diminish; nor to the city of Jerusalem; nor to the civil polity of the nation; but to the ceremonial law, the moon, the church is said to have under her feet, *Re 12:1* so called because the observance of new moons was one part of it, and the Jewish festivals were regulated by the moon; and especially, because like the moon, it was variable and changeable. Now, though this, in right, was abolished at the death of Christ, and ceased to give any true light, when he, the substance, was come; yet was kept up by the Jews, as long as their temple was standing; but when that was destroyed, the daily sacrifice, in fact, ceased, and so it has ever since; the Jews esteeming it unlawful to offer sacrifice in a strange land, or upon any other altar than that of Jerusalem; and are to this day without a sacrifice, and without an ephod:

and the stars shall fall from heaven; which phrase, as it elsewhere intends the doctors of the church, and preachers falling off from purity of doctrine and conversation; so here it designs the Jewish Rabbins and doctors, who departed from the word of God, and set up their traditions above it, fell into vain and senseless interpretations of it, and into debates about things contained in their Talmud; the foundation of which began to be laid immediately upon their dispersion into other countries:

and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; meaning all the ordinances of the legal dispensation; which shaking, and even removing of them, were foretold by ***Hag 2:6*** and explained by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, *Heb 12:26* whereby room and way were made for Gospel ordinances to take place, and be established; which shall not be shaken, so as to be removed, but remain till the second coming of Christ. The Jews themselves are sensible, and make heavy complaints of the great declensions and alterations among them, since the destruction of the temple; for after having taken notice of the death of several of their doctors, who died a little before, or after that; and that upon their death ceased the honour of the law, the splendour of wisdom, and the glory of the priesthood, they add {g};

"from the time that the temple was destroyed, the wise men, and sons of nobles, were put to shame, and they covered their heads; liberal men were reduced to poverty; and men of violence and calumny prevailed; and there were none that expounded, or inquired, or asked. R. Elezer the great, said, from the time the sanctuary were destroyed, the wise men began to be like Scribes, and the Scribes like to the Chazans, (or sextons that looked after the synagogues,) and the Chazans like to the common people, and the common people grew worse and worse, and there were none that inquired and asked;"

that is, of the wise men there were no scholars, or very few that studied in the law.

{g} Misn. Sotah, c. 9. sect. 15.

Matthew 24:30

Ver. 30 And then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven,.... Not the sound of the great trumpet, mentioned in the following verse; nor the clouds of heaven in this; nor the sign of the cross appearing in the air, as it is said to do in the times of Constantine: not the former; for though to blow a trumpet is sometimes to give a sign, and is an alarm; and the feast which the Jews call the day of blowing the trumpets, *Nu 29:1* is, by the Septuagint, rendered hmera shmasiav, "the day of signification"; yet this sign is not said to be sounded, but to appear, or to be seen, which does not agree with the sounding of a trumpet: much less can this design the last trumpet at the day of judgment, since of that the text does not speak; and, for the same reason, the clouds cannot be meant in which Christ will come to judgment, nor are clouds in themselves any sign of it: nor the latter, of which there is no hint in the word of God, nor any reason to expect it, nor any foundation for it; nor is any miraculous star intended, such as appeared at Christ's first coming, but the son of man himself: just as circumcision is called the sign of circumcision, ***Ro 4:11*** and Christ is sometimes called a sign, ***Lu 2:34*** as is his resurrection from the dead, *Mt 12:39* and here the glory and majesty in which he shall come: and it may be observed, that the other evangelists make no mention of the sign, only speak of the son of man, *Mr 13:26* and he shall appear, not in person, but in the power of his wrath and vengeance, on the Jewish nation which will be a full sign and proof of his being come: for the sense is, that when the above calamities shall be upon the civil state of that people, and there will be such changes in their ecclesiastical state it will be as clear a point, that Christ is come in the flesh, and that he is also come in his vengeance on that nation, for their rejection and crucifixion him, as if they had seen him appear in person in the heavens. They had been always seeking a sign, and were continually asking one of him; and now they will have a sign with a witness; as they had accordingly.

And then shall the tribes of the earth, or land, mourn; that is, the land of Judea; for other lands, and countries, were not usually divided into tribes, as that was; neither were they affected with the calamities and desolations of it, and the vengeance of the son of man upon it; at least not so as to mourn on that account, but rather were glad and rejoiced:

and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. The Arabic version reads it, "ye shall see", as is expressed by Christ, in *Mt 26:64*. Where the high priest, chief priests, Scribes, and elders, and the whole sanhedrim of the Jews are spoken to: and as the same persons, namely, the Jews, are meant here as there; so the same coming of the son of man is intended; not his coming at the last day to judgment; though that will be in the clouds of heaven, and with great power and glory; but his coming to bring on, and give the finishing stroke to the destruction of that people, which was a dark and cloudy dispensation to them: and when they felt the power of his arm, might, if not blind and stupid to the last degree, see the glory of his person, that he was more than a mere man, and no other than the Son of God, whom they had despised, rejected, and crucified; and who came to set up his kingdom and glory in a more visible and peculiar manner, among the Gentiles.

Ver. 31. And he shall send his angels,.... Not the angels, i.e. ministering spirits, so called, not from their nature, but their office, as being sent forth by God and Christ; but men angels, or messengers, the ministers and preachers of the Gospel, whom Christ would call, qualify, and send forth into all the world of the Gentiles, to preach his Gospel, and plant churches there still more, when that at Jerusalem was broken up and dissolved. These are called "angels", because of their mission, and commission from Christ, to preach the Gospel; and because of their knowledge and understanding in spiritual things; and because of their zeal, diligence, and watchfulness.

With a great sound of a trumpet, meaning the Gospel; see *Isa 27:13* so called in allusion either to the silver trumpets which Moses was ordered to make of one piece, and use them for the calling of the assembly, the journeying of the camps, blowing an alarm for war, and on their solemn and festival days, *Nu 10:1*. The Gospel being rich and precious, all of a piece, useful for gathering souls to Christ, and to his churches; to direct saints in their journey to Canaan's land; to encourage them to fight the Lord's battles; and is a joyful sound, being a sound of love, grace, and mercy, peace, pardon, righteousness, life and salvation, by Christ: or else so called, in allusion to the trumpet blown in the year of "jubilee"; which proclaimed rest to the land, liberty to prisoners, a release of debts, and restoration of inheritances; as the Gospel publishes rest in Christ, liberty to the captives of sin, Satan, and the law, a payment of debts by Christ, and a release from them upon that, and a right and title to the heavenly inheritance. The Vulgate Latin reads it, "with a trumpet, and a great voice"; and so does Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and so it was read in four of Beza's copies:

and they shall gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other; that is, by the ministration of the Gospel; the Spirit of God accompanying it with his power, and grace, the ministers of the word should gather out of the world unto Christ, and to his churches, such persons as God had, before the foundation of the world, chosen in Christ, unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; wherever they are under the whole heavens, from one end to another; or in any part of the earth, though at the greatest distance; for in *Mr 13:27* it is said, "from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of the heaven". The Jews {h} say, that "in the after redemption (i.e. by the Messiah) all Israel shall be gathered together by the sound of a trumpet, from the four parts of the world."

{h} Zohar in Lev. fol. 47. 1.

Matthew 24:32

Ver. 32. Now learn a parable of the fig tree,.... Take a similitude, or comparison from the fig tree, which was a tree well known in Judea; and the putting forth of its branches, leaves, and fruit, fell under the observation of everyone:

when its branch is yet tender; through the influence of the sun, and the motion of the sap, which was bound up, and congealed in the winter season:

and putteth forth leaves; from the tender branches, which swell, and open, and put forth buds, leaves, and fruit:

ye know the summer is nigh; spring being already come: the fig tree putting forth her green figs, is a sign that the winter is past, the spring is come, and summer is at hand; see ***So 2:11***.

Matthew 24:33

Ver. 33. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things,.... That are mentioned above, relating to the signs of the destruction of the temple and city, and the destruction itself, with all those several things that should directly take place upon it; this is an accommodation of the above parable, similitude, or comparison:

know that it is near, even at the doors; meaning, either that "he is near", as the Ethiopic version reads it, the son of man is near, even at the doors; or as the Vulgate Latin renders it, "in the gates", or "doors", and so does Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and signifies, that he was already come; for to be in the doors, or within the gates, is more than to be at the doors, or at the gates: and thus the fig tree putting forth its leaves, is a sign that summer is not only nigh, but is already come, even that part of it we call spring; for the

Scripture divides the whole year only into two parts, summer and winter; so these calamities and desolations on the Jews, were a sign that the son of man was come, was in the gates, displaying his power and his glory: or the redemption and deliverance of the people of God was at hand, from the persecutions of the Jews; for till the destruction of Jerusalem, the persecutions of the Christians were chiefly from the Jews, or occasioned by them; but now, they being destroyed, the summer of deliverance was at hand: or else the kingdom of God, or a more enlarged state of the Gospel dispensation was near; the winter of the legal dispensation was over, the spring of the Gospel dispensation was come, through the preaching of John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles; and now the summer of it was at hand, through the general spread of it, all over the Gentile world. So the second coming of Christ, will be a summer of joy and comfort to the saints: Christ will appear most lovely and amiable to them, he will be glorified by them, and admired in them; great grace will be brought unto them, and great glory will be put upon them; they will then enjoy full redemption and salvation: the winter of sorrows, afflictions, and persecutions, and of coldness, darkness, and desertion, will be over; the sun shall no more go down, nor the moon withdraw itself, but the Lord will be the everlasting light of his people.

Matthew* *24:34

Ver. 34. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass,.... Not the generation of men in general; as if the sense was, that mankind should not cease, until the accomplishment of these things; nor the generation, or people of the Jews, who should continue to be a people, until all were fulfilled; nor the generation of Christians; as if the meaning was, that there should be always a set of Christians, or believers in Christ in the world, until all these events came to pass; but it respects that present age, or generation of men then living in it; and the sense is, that all the men of that age should not die, but some should live

till all these things were fulfilled; see *Mt 16:28* as many did, and as there is reason to believe they might, and must, since all these things had their accomplishment, in and about forty years after this: and certain it is, that John, one of the disciples of Christ, outlived the time by many years; and, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, many of the Jewish doctors now living, when Christ spoke these words, lived until the city was destroyed; as Rabban Simeon, who perished with it, R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, who outlived it, R. Zadoch, R. Ishmael, and others: this is a full and clear proof, that not anything that is said before, relates to the second coming of Christ, the day of judgment, and end of the world; but that all belong to the coming of the son of man, in the destruction of Jerusalem, and to the end of the Jewish state.

Matthew 24:35

Ver. 35. Heaven and earth shall pass away,.... This is either an assertion, which will be true at the end of time; not as to the substance of the heavens and earth, which will always remain, but as to the qualities of them, which will be altered: they will be renewed and refined, but not destroyed; the bad qualities, or evil circumstances, which attend them through the sin of man, will be removed and pass away, but they themselves will continue in being: or is a comparative expression, and the sense is, that the heavens and the earth, and the ordinances thereof, than which nothing can be more firm and strong, being fixed and supported by God himself, shall sooner pass away, than anything asserted and predicted by Christ shall:

but my words shall not pass away; be vain and empty, and unaccomplished; which is true of anything, and everything spoken by Christ; and especially here regards all that he had said concerning the calamities that should befall the Jews, before, at, or upon the destruction of their nation, city, and temple; and the design of the expression, is to show the certainty, unalterableness, and sure accomplishment of these things; see *Jer 31:36*.

Matthew 24:36

Ver. 36. But of that day and hour knoweth no man,.... Which is to be understood, not of the second coming of Christ, the end of the world, and the last judgment; but of the coming of the son of man, to take vengeance on the Jews, and of their destruction; for the words manifestly regard the date of the several things going before, which only can be applied to that catastrophe, and dreadful desolation: now, though the destruction itself was spoken of by Moses and the prophets, was foretold by Christ, and the believing Jews had some discerning of its near approach; see *Heb 10:25* yet the exact and precise time was not known: it might have been: calculated to a year by Daniel's weeks, but not to the day and hour; and therefore our

Lord does not say of the year, but of the day and hour no man knows; though the one week, or seven years, being separated from the rest, throws that account into some perplexity; and which perhaps is on purpose done, to conceal the precise time of Jerusalem's destruction: nor need it be wondered at, notwithstanding all the hints given, that the fatal day should not be exactly known beforehand; when those who have lived since, and were eyewitnesses of it, are not agreed on what day of the month it was; for, as Dr. Lightfoot {i} observes, Josephus {k} says,

"that the temple perished the "tenth" day of "Lous", a day fatal to the temple, as having been on that day consumed in flames, by the king of Babylon."

And yet Rabbi Jochanan ben Zaccai, who was also at the destruction of it, as well as Josephus, with all the Jewish writers, say it was on the "ninth of Ab"; for of this day they {l} say, five things happened upon it:

"On the "ninth of Ab" it was decreed concerning our fathers, that they should not enter into the land (of Canaan), the first and second temple were destroyed, Bither was taken, and the city ploughed up."

Though the words of R. Jochanan, cited by the doctor, refer to the first, and not to the second temple, and should have been rendered thus:

"If I had been in the generation (which fixed the fast for the destruction of the first temple), I would not have fixed it but on the tenth (of Ab); for, adds he, the greatest part of the temple was burnt on that day; but the Rabbins rather regarded the beginning of the punishment {m}."

And so the fasting of Rabbi, and R. Joshua ben Levi, on the "ninth" and "tenth" days, were on account of the first temple; for they were under the same difficulty about the one, as the other:

no, not the angels of heaven; who dwell there, always behold the face of God, stand in his presence ready to do his will, and are made acquainted with many of his designs, and are employed in the executing of them, and yet know not the time of God's vengeance on the Jews; to this agrees the sense that is given of the day of vengeance in *Isa 63:4* it is asked {n},

"what is the meaning of these words, "the day of vengeance is in my heart?"

Says R. Jochanan, to my heart I have revealed it, to the members I have not revealed it: says R. Simeon ben Lakish, to my heart I have revealed it, ytylg al trvh ykalml, "to the ministering angels I have not revealed it"."

The Ethiopic version adds here, "nor the son", and so the Cambridge copy of Beza's; which seems to be transcribed from *Mr 13:32* where that phrase stands; and must be understood of Christ as the son of man, and not as the Son of God; for as such, he lay in the bosom of the Father, and knew all his purposes and designs; for these were purposed in him: he knew from the beginning who would betray him, and who would believe in him; he knew what would befall the rejecters of him, and when that would come to pass; as he must know also the day of the last judgment, since it is appointed by God, and he is ordained to execute it: but the sense is, that as he, as man and mediator, came not to destroy, but to save; so it was not any part of his work, as such, to know, nor had he it in commission to make known the time of Jerusalem's ruin:

but my Father only; to the exclusion of all creatures, angels and men; but not to the exclusion of Christ as God, who, as such, is omniscient; nor of the Holy Spirit, who is acquainted with the deep things of God, the secrets of his heart, and this among others.

{i} In Mark xiii. 32. {k} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 26. {l} Misu. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 7. T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 68. 3. & Maimon. Hilch. Taanioth, c. 5. sect. 2. {m} T. Bab, Taanith, fol. 29. 1. {n} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1.

Matthew ***24:37***

Ver. 37. But as the days of Noe were,.... So Noah is usually called Noe by the Septuagint: the sense is, as were the practices of the men of that generation, in which Noah lived, so will be the practices of the men of that age, in which the son of man comes; or as the flood, which happened in the days of Noah, was sudden and unexpected; it came upon men thoughtless about it, though they had warning of it; and was universal, swept them all away, excepting a few that were saved in the ark:

so shall also the coming of the son of man be; to take vengeance on the Jews, on a sudden, at an unawares, when they would be unthoughtful about it; though they were forewarned of it by Christ and his apostles, and their destruction be as universal; all would be involved in it, excepting a few, that were directed a little before, to go out of the city of Jerusalem to Pella; where they were saved, as Noah and his family were in the ark.

***Matthew* 24:38**

Ver. 38. For as in the days that were before the flood,.... Not all the days before the flood, from the creation of the world; but those immediately preceding it, a century or two before it:

they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage: not that these civil actions of life were criminal in themselves, had care been taken that they were not abused. It is lawful to eat and drink, provided it be in moderation, and not to excess; and to marry, and give in marriage, when the laws, rules, and ends thereof, are observed: and therefore this must be understood, either of their wholly giving themselves up to the pleasures of life, and lusts of the flesh, without any concern about the affairs of religion, the worship and glory of God, the welfare of their souls and their approaching danger, of which Noah had given them warning; or of their luxury and intemperance, in eating and drinking, and of their libidinous and unlawful marriages; for the word here used for eating, signifies eating after the manner of brute beasts: they indulged themselves in a brutish way, in gluttony and drunkenness; and it is certain from the account given of them, in ***Ge 6:2*** that they entered into unlawful marriages, and unclean copulations: wherefore these things may be spoken of them, as what were really sinful and wicked, and denote a course of sinning, a constant practice of these sins of intemperance and lust, and which is still more fully expressed in the next clause:

until the day that Noe entered into the ark. The Arabic version renders it, "the ship"; the vessel which God directed him to make, for the saving of himself and family. Now the men of that generation persisted in their wicked course of living, after, and notwithstanding, the warning God had given them by Noah, of the flood that would come upon them; and all the while the ark was building, even to the very day that Noah and his family, by the order of God, went into the ark.

***Matthew* 24:39**

Ver. 39. And knew not until the flood came,.... That is, they did not advert or give heed to what Noah said to them about it: they slighted and despised his warnings; they did not believe, that what he said of the flood was true; they had notice of it, but they would not know it, and therefore God gave them up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart; and so they remained, until it came upon them at once:

and took them all away; the whole world of the ungodly, every man, woman, and child, except eight persons only; Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their wives; for the deluge was universal, and reached to all the inhabitants of the world, who all perished in it, excepting the above persons.

So shall also the coming of the son of man be: such shall be, as it was, the case of the Jews, before the destruction of Jerusalem: they gave themselves up to all manner of wickedness and uncleanness; they disregarded the warnings of Christ and his apostles; they were careless and secure of danger; they would not believe their ruin was at hand, when it was just upon them; they buoyed themselves up to the very last, that a deliverer would arise, and save them; they cried peace, peace, when sudden destruction was nigh; even of them all, their nation, city, and temple, a few only excepted, as in the days of Noah: and though they were so much like the men of that generation, yet they themselves say of them, that

"the generation of the flood have no part in the world to come, nor shall they stand in judgment, according to ***Ge 6:3*** {o}."

{o} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 3.

Matthew 24:40

Ver. 40. Then shall two be in the field,.... About their proper business, of husbandry, ploughing, or sowing, or any other rural employment:

the one shall be taken; not by the preaching of the Gospel, into the kingdom of God, or Gospel dispensation; though such a distinction God makes, by the ministry of the word, accompanied by his Spirit and power; nor by angels, to meet Christ in the air, and to be introduced into his kingdom and glory; but by the eagles, the Roman army, and either killed or carried captive by them:

and the other left; not in a state of nature and unregeneracy, as many are, to whom the Gospel is preached; nor with devils at the last day, to be thrust down by them into the infernal regions; but by the Romans, being by some remarkable providence, or another, delivered out of their hands; which was the case of some few, and these of the meaner sort; and therefore persons of a rural life and occupation are instanced in.

Matthew 24:41

Ver. 41. Two women shall be grinding at the mill,.... Though the word women is not in the Greek text, yet it is rightly supplied by our translators, as it is in the Persic version; for the word rendered grinding, is in the feminine gender, and was the work of women, as appears both from the Scripture, *Ex 11:5* and from several passages in the Jewish writings, concerning which their canons run thus {p};

"These are the works which a woman is to do for her husband, tnxwj, "she must grind", and bake, and wash, and boil, and make his bed, &c."

And elsewhere it is asked {q},

"how does she grind? she sits at the mill, and watches the flour, but she does not grind, or go after a beast, that so the mill may not stop; but if their custom is to grind at a hand mill, she may grind. The sanhedrim order this to poor people; for if she brings one handmaid, or money, or goods, sufficient to purchase, she is not obliged to grind, &c."

Frequent mention is made, of women grinding together at the same mill: a case is put concerning two women grinding at an hand mill {r}, and various rules are given about it; as, that {s}

"a woman may lend her neighbour that is suspected of eating the fruits of the seventh year after time, a meal sieve, a fan, a mill, or a furnace, but she may not winnow, nor "grind with her"."

Which it supposes she might do, if she was not suspected: again {t}, "the wife of a plebeian, tnxwj, "may grind" with the wife of a learned man, in the time that she is unclean, but not when she is clean."

Nor was this the custom of the Jews only, for women to grind, but also of other countries, as of the Abyssines {u}, and of both Greeks and Barbarians {w}:

the one shall be taken, and the other left; as before, one shall be taken by the Romans, and either put to death, or carried captive; and the other shall escape their hands, through the singular providence of God. The Ethiopic version, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel add, "two shall be in one bed, one shall be taken, and the other left"; but these words are not in the copies of Matthew in common, but are taken out of *Lu 17:34* though they are in the Cambridge copy of Beza's, and in one of Stephens's.

{p} Misn. Cetubot, c. 5. sect. 5. Vid. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 47. 9. & 48. 1. {q} Maimon. Hilch. Ishot. c. 21. sect. 5, 6. {r} T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 60. 2. {s} Misn. Sheviith, c. 5. 9. & Gittin, c. 5. sect. 9. {t} T. Hieros. Teruinot, fol. 46. 3. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 61. 2. & Cholin, fol. 6. 2. Misn. Taharot, c. 7. sect. 4. {u} Ludolph. Hist. Ethiop. l. 4. c. 4. {w} Plutarch apud Beza. in loc.

Matthew 24:42

Ver. 42. Watch therefore,.... Since the time of this desolation is so uncertain, and since it will come upon the Jews unawares, and some wilt escape, whilst others perish; for the words are plainly an inference from what precedes, and clearly relate to things going before, and are not a transition to a new subject:

for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come; to avenge himself of the unbelieving Jews, and fulfil what he in person, and by his apostles, had predicted and warned them of: though I will not deny, but that what follows may be much better accommodated and applied to the second coming of Christ, and the last judgment, and the behaviour of men with regard to both, than anything said before; and it may be our Lord's intention, to lead his disciples gradually, and as it were imperceptibly, to the last scene of things on earth, to make way for the parables and description of the future judgment, in the next chapter; still keeping in view, and having reference to, the subject he had been so long upon.

Matthew 24:43

Ver. 43. But know this,.... Or you do know this: this may be illustrated by supposing a case well known to men, and in which common prudence would direct a man how to behave:

that if the good man of the house, or householder, or master of the family,

had known in what watch the thief would come; whether at the first, second, third, or fourth watch; for the night was divided into four watches; had he any previous notice given by any of the associates of the thief, or by those that had overheard, or by any means had got intelligence of his design and measures, and the time of his pursuing them,

he would have watched; in every watch either in person, or by employing others, or both:

and would not have suffered his house to be broken up: or "dug through"; see *Job 24:16* concerning which, there is a law in *Ex 22:2* and is explained by the Jewish canonists thus:

"He that comes in by digging, whether by day or by night, there is no blood for him (i.e. to be shed for him, if he is killed); but if the master of the house, or any other man kill him, they are free; and every man has power to kill him, whether on a weekday, or on a sabbath day; and with whatsoever death he can put him to, as it is said, there is no blood for him, *Ex 22:2*. And one that comes in, trtxmb, "by digging", or a thief that is found in the midst of a man's roof, or in his court, or within his hedge, whether in the day or in the night, (may be killed;) and wherefore is it called digging? because it is the way of most thieves to come in by digging in the night {x}."

Wherefore no doubt since the master of the house had such a law on his side, he would never suffer, if possible, his house to be entered by digging, when he had, especially, any previous notice of it. Now the application of this case, or parabolical way of speaking, is to the coming of Christ, and the watchfulness of every good man who has notice of it, that he may not be surprised with it, but be in a readiness to receive him. The coming of the son of man, is here represented by the coming of the thief in the night: but when he is compared to a thief, this is not to be understood in a bad sense, in which Satan is called one, who comes to kill and to destroy the souls of men; and likewise heretics and false teachers, and everyone that climbs up, and gets into the church of God in a wrong way; but this only respects the manner of Christ's coming, which is like that of a thief, secretly, suddenly, and at unawares. The "good man of the house", or householder, is every Christian, or believer in Christ, who has a house to look after, his own soul, the spiritual affairs and everlasting salvation of it, things of moment and concern unto him: and as the Christians, before the destruction of Jerusalem, had notices of Christ's coming in that way, by our Lord's predictions, by the hints the apostles gave, to refresh their memories with them, and by the signs of the times and voices that were heard; so the saints have of Christ's coming to judgment: wherefore as it became the one, so it does the other, to watch, to be upon their guard, to be in a readiness, to have their loins girt about, and their lights burning, and they like men that wait for their Lord; that so when he comes, their houses may not be broken up, may not be surprised, and the several powers and faculties of their souls may not be thrown into disorder and confusion; wherefore it follows,

{x} Mairmon. Hilch. Genibah, c. 9. sect. 7, 8.

Matthew 24:44

Ver. 44. Therefore be ye also ready,.... Or prepared for the coming of the son of man; which as it is said to be like a thief in the night, expresses the suddenness of it, may excite to watchfulness and readiness; which readiness is to be understood, not of a readiness to do the will and work of God, though this is absolutely necessary; as to watch and pray, to hear the word preached, to confess Christ, and give a reason of the hope that is in us, to communicate to the support of the cause and interest of Christ, and to suffer for his sake; but of a preparedness to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments, when desolating judgments are coming on the earth, such as these in Jerusalem; by faith and trust in the power, providence, and care of God; by humiliation before him, and resignation to his will: and if this can be applied to a readiness for a future state after death; for the second coming of Christ, and last judgment; this lies not in a dependence on the absolute mercy of God; nor in an external humiliation for sin; nor in an abstinence from grosser sins, or in mere negative holiness; nor in any outward, legal, civil, and moral righteousness; nor in a submission to Gospel ordinances; nor in a mere profession of religion; but in being in Christ, having on his righteousness, and being washed in his blood; and also in regeneration and sanctification, in having true knowledge of Christ, and faith in him; for all which it becomes men to be concerned, as also all believers to be actually, as well as habitually ready; being in the lively exercise of grace, and cheerful discharge of duty, though without trusting to either. And such a readiness in either branch of it, is not of themselves, but lies in the grace of God, which gives a meetness for glory; and in the righteousness of Christ, the fine linen, clean and white, which being granted by him, his people are made ready for him: and as for their faith, and the exercise of it, and their constant performance of duty, these are not from the strength of nature and the power of freewill, but from the Spirit of God and his grace; who makes ready a people prepared for the Lord, and all according to the ancient settlements of grace, in which provision is made for the vessels of mercy, afore prepared for glory: though there should be a studious concern in men for such readiness, for nothing is more certain than death, and nothing more uncertain than when it will be; and after death, no readiness can be had, but he that is then righteous, shall be righteous still, and he that is filthy, shall be filthy still, and a deathbed is by no means to be trusted to; and though a person may not be snatched away suddenly, but may have space given him to repent, yet if grace is not given him, to repent and believe in Christ, he never will; the grave is ready for men, and in a little time all will be brought to this house, appointed for all living, where there is no wisdom, knowledge, and device; and therefore whatever we are directed to do, should be now done, with all that might, and strength, and grace, that is given us; to which may be added, that after death comes judgment; the day is fixed, the judge is appointed, and all must stand before his judgment seat; and nothing is more sure than that Christ will come a second time, to judge both quick and dead; and happy will those be that are ready; they will be received by Christ into everlasting habitations, and be for ever with him: and miserable will those be, who will not be ready, who will not have the oil of grace in their hearts with their lamps, nor the wedding garment on them; they will be shut out, and bid to depart into everlasting burnings: how fit and proper is such an advice and exhortation as this, "be ye also ready". A readiness the Jews report Bath Kol, or the voice from heaven, gave out concerning the Israelites.

"Bath Kol (say {y} they) went out, and said to them, abh Mlweh yyxl Nynmwzm Mklwk, "ye are all of you ready for the life of the world to come"."

And elsewhere it is said of Bath Kol, that it went forth and affirmed of some particular Rabbins, that they were ready for eternal life; as of Ketiah bar Shalom, R. Eleazar ben Durdia, and R. Chanina {z}:

for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh: this is true of his coming in power to destroy Jerusalem, and of his second coming to judgment. The Jews say much the same of the coming of the Messiah, whom they expect:

"there are three things, they say {a}, which come, tedh xoyhb, "without knowledge", or unthought of, at an unawares; and they are these, the Messiah, anything that is found, and a scorpion."

{y} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 9. 1. {z} T. Bab Avoda Zara, fol. 10. 2. & 17. 1. & 18. 1. & Callah, fol. 17. 2. & Cetubot, fol. 103. 2. {a} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1.

Matthew 24:45

Ver. 45. Who then is a faithful and wise servant,.... The Vulgate Latin adds, "do you think?" and is a question put to the disciples, which they might apply to themselves: in *Lu 12:42*, it is spoken in answer to a question of Peter's, in relation to the above exhortation, whether it was spoken to them, or to all; and by this answer, it looks as if it was more especially designed for them, though it may be applied to other. The "servant" is there called a "steward", for such a servant is meant; and a name that is very proper for the apostles and ministers of the word, who are stewards of the mysteries of Christ, and of the manifold grace of God; and whose characters are, that they are "faithful": for this is required in stewards, that they be faithful to the trust reposed in them; as ministers are, when they preach the pure Gospel of Christ, and the whole of it; conceal no part, nor keep anything of it; seek not to please men, but God; neither seek their own things, their ease, honour, and profit, but the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the good of souls; and abide by the truths, cause, and interest of a Redeemer, at all hazards. And they are "wise", who know and are well instructed in divine things; who make Christ the main subject of their ministry; who improve their talents and time for their master's use, and the advantage of those that are under their care; who seek for, and deliver acceptable words and matter; and manage their whole trust, so as to be able to give in a good account of their stewardship another day. The post that such a person is put in, and the work he is to do, follow:

whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household; or "family", the church of God, which is the household of God, and of faith, in which are believers of various growths and sizes; some fathers, some young men, some children; and over these, the ministers are, by their Lord, made and placed as rulers; not as lords and tyrants over God's heritage, to govern them in an arbitrary way, but as over them in the Lord, to rule them according to the word of God, and the laws of his house; by preaching the Gospel, administering ordinances, and keeping up his worship and the discipline of the church; and whose principal business it is,

to give them meat in due season; even "their portion" of it, as in *Lu 12:42*: for the word of God is to be cut and rightly divided, and everyone in the family, according to his age, appetite, and digestion, is to have his proper part and portion given him: it must be meat, proper food, such as is solid, substantial, and nourishing; even the wholesome words of Christ Jesus, that must be given them, and not husks and empty trash; and all in due season, in its proper time, as their cases and circumstances require, and call for; as whether weary, or uncomfortable, or in the dark, or under temptations and afflictions: for a word fitly and seasonably spoken, how useful is it!

Matthew 24:46

Ver. 46. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh,.... Whether in a way of judgment, as against Jerusalem; or at death, when he comes to remove him out of time, into eternity; or at the day of judgment, when he, the righteous judge, will give the crown of righteousness to him:

shall find so doing; acting the faithful and wise part, ruling the household of God well; giving to all wholesome food, a proper portion of it, and that in the right time.

Matthew 24:47

Ver. 47. Verily I say unto you,.... Nothing is a greater truth, more certain, or to be depended on, than this; all such wise, faithful, diligent, and industrious servants may expect it:

that he, shall make him ruler over all his goods; will honour him with greater gifts, bestow a larger degree of Gospel light and knowledge on him, make him more useful in the church below, and at last cause him to inherit all things in the other world, all glory, happiness, and bliss.

Matthew 24:48

Ver. 48. But and if that evil servant,.... Or should there be an evil servant, an unwise and faithless one, who though he may have gifts and talents, yet destitute of the grace of God; and though he may be in the highest post and office in the church of God for sometimes wicked and graceless men are in such places; yet if he

shall say in his heart; secretly to himself, and with pleasure to his mind, and strengthen himself in a full persuasion of this,

my Lord delayeth his coming; and begins to think that either he will not come at all, to call him to an account for the use of his time, gifts, and talents; or if he does, it will be long first ere he will come, and visit the people of the Jews, by desolating calamities; or by death, to summon him to his bar; or at judgment, to give in his account of his stewardship.

Matthew 24:49

Ver. 49. And shall begin to smite his fellow servants,.... By abusing the power lodged in him, usurping a dominion over their faith, and imposing on their consciences things which Christ has never commanded; vexing and burdening them with trifling rites and ceremonies, and other unnecessary things; wounding, grieving, offending weak minds by his conduct and example; or persecuting the saints, such of them as cannot come into everything in his way of believing and practising:

and to eat and drink with the drunken; giving himself up to luxury and intemperance; feeding himself instead of the family; serving his own belly, and not his Lord and Master Christ; living an ungodly and licentious life, altogether unbecoming the Gospel of Christ: such servants and stewards have been, and are in the church of God; but sad will be their case, when their Lord comes, as follows. Respect seems to be had either to the ecclesiastical rulers among the Jews, who went under the name of the servants of the Lord, but persecuted the apostles, and those that believed in Christ; or the "Judaizing" Christians, and false teachers, that were for imposing the ceremonies of the law upon believers; or Simon Magus, and his followers, a set of licentious, men; or all of them; who lived in this period of time, between the death of Christ, and the destruction of the temple.

Matthew 24:50

Ver. 50. The lord of that servant,.... Not by redemption and grace, but by creation and profession;

shall come in a day when he looked not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of: suddenly and unexpectedly: such was his coming in wrath and vengeance on the Jewish nation; and such is his coming oftentimes by death; and such will be his coming at the day of judgment.

Matthew 24:51

Ver. 51. And shall cut him asunder,.... The Persic version renders it, "he shall separate him from himself": he shall separate soul and body by death; he shall take away all his gifts and talents from him; and remove him from his place and office, and from the church of God, and communion of the saints, and out of this world. Some think the allusion is to the cutting up of the sacrifices, and dividing them into pieces; and the sense is, that this wicked servant should have no share in the sacrifice of Christ; but should fall himself a victim to divine justice, and be used as sacrifices were; or, in other words, be severely punished for his sins; though the allusion seems rather to be to the manner of punishing treacherous and unfaithful persons, by dismembering them, cutting them in pieces, or in two: and so the Arabic version renders it, "he shall cut him in the middle": this was certainly a way of putting persons to death; though some say it was not known to the Jews;

but the following instances show the contrary. Mention is made of some that were sawn asunder, *Heb 11:37* and the Jews say {b}, that Isaiah was sawn asunder by Manasseh; and such a kind of death is spoken of in the Targum {c}; where it is said, that

"the priests went before Mordecai, and proclaimed, saying, whoever does not salute, or wish prosperity to Mordecai, and to the Jews, dybety Nymdh "he shall be cut into pieces", and his house be made a dunghill."

And elsewhere {d} it is said of a wicked man, that they put him upon a carpenter's block, and wb Myronm, "sawed him asunder"; and he cried out, woe, woe, woe, that I have provoked my Creator. This was also a punishment used among the Heathens, as Gataker {e}, and others out of Heathen writers, have shown. It must not here be understood literally, that this wicked servant should be put to such a corporeal death; but that he should be punished in the severest manner, and should be the object of the fierce wrath and sore displeasure of God;

and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. Luke says, "with the unbelievers" *Lu 12:46*: very likely both phrases were used by Christ; intimating, that such as make a profession of him, and have only a form of godliness, without the power of it, and are wicked and hypocritical men, will share the same fate with those that believe not; and the portion of these is the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; see *Re 21:8* or all such persons are intended, who put on the mask of religion, and do not answer to the character they bear: and are unfaithful to the trust reposed in them, and therefore will made examples of righteous judgment, and have their part in the lowest hell:

there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth: See Gill on "Mt 13:42"

{b} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 28. 3. & T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 49. 2. {c} Targum in Esth. viii. 15. {d} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 65. fol. 58. 4. {e} Adversaria, p. 455.

Ver. 1. Then shall the kingdom of heaven,.... The Gospel church state; See Gill on "Mt 13:24" either as it would be a little before the coming of the son of man to take vengeance on the Jews; or as it will be a little before his second coming to judgment: for the parable is manifestly connected with, and refers to the preceding chapter, which chiefly treats of Jerusalem's destruction: but though the Jews were in great security before their utter ruin, yet it does not appear that the Christian church was then in such a lukewarm, drowsy, and sleepy condition, as this parable represents; and since, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, there are some hints of Christ's second and last coming; when the servant found doing his Lord's will, will be greatly honoured, and the wicked, cruel, and licentious servant will be severely punished; and since, at the close of this and the following parable, there is a very lively description given of the last judgment; as also, because it appears elsewhere, that such will be the formal, lukewarm, cold, indifferent, secure, and sleepy state of the church, before the second coming of Christ: it seems right and best to understand this parable, and the following, as having respect to that: and that the design of it is to show, what will be the case of professors at that time; the difference between nominal and real Christians; how far persons may go in a profession of religion, and yet, at last, be shut out of heaven: as also the suddenness of Christ's coming; the necessity of being ready for it; and how watchful the saints should be, that they be not surprised with it. Now some time before this, the Gospel church state, or the body of professing Christians, will

be likened unto ten virgins; to "virgins" for quality; being betrothed ones to Christ, at least in profession; and because of the singleness of their love, and chaste adherence to him, however, as they will declare, and which, in some of them, will be fact; and for their beauty, comeliness, and gay attire, being, as they will profess, clothed with the righteousness of Christ; with that fine linen, clean and white, with cloth of gold, and raiment of needlework, and so perfectly comely through his comeliness: and for their purity and uncorruptness of doctrine, worship, and conversation, at least in appearance, and which will be true of many of them; and all, from their profession, will bear the same character: these for their quantity and number, are compared to "ten" virgins; which may, perhaps, denote the small number of professors at this time; see *Ge 18:32* that there will be but few, that will then name the name of Christ, and fewer still who will not have defiled their garments, and be virgins indeed. The number "ten" was greatly taken notice of, and used among the Jews: a congregation, with them, consisted of ten persons, and less than that number did not make one {f}: and wherever there were ten persons in a place, they were obliged to build a synagogue {g}. Ten elders of the city were witnesses of Boaz's taking Ruth to be his wife, ***Ru 4:2***. Now it may be in reference to the former of these, that this number ten is here expressed, since the parable relates to the congregated churches of Christ, or to Christ's visible church on earth: moreover, they say, that

"with less than ten they did not divide the "shema", (i.e. "hear O Israel", and say any part of the blessings that went before it;) nor did (the messenger of the congregation) go before the ark (to pray); nor did (the priests) lift up their hands (to bless the people); nor did they read in the law (in the congregation); nor did they dismiss (the people) with (a passage out of one of) the prophets; nor did they make a standing, and a sitting (when they carried the dead to the grave, which used to be done seven times, to weep over the dead); nor did they say the blessing of the mourners, nor the comforts of the mourners (when they returned from the grave, and stood in a row to comfort the mourner; and there was no row less than ten); Myntx tkrbw, "nor the blessing of the bridegrooms","

which consisted of seven blessings, and this was not said but in the presence of ten persons {h}: to which there may be an allusion here: for the whole alludes to the solemnities of a marriage among the Jews, when the bridegroom fetched home his bride from her father's house, attended with his friends, the children of the bridechamber, and which was usually done in the night: and, at the same time, the bride was waiting for him, accompanied with virgins, or bridemaids; see *Ps 45:14* who, when they perceived the bridegroom coming, went out with lamps, or torches, to meet him, and conduct him to her; hence it follows,

which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions, add, "and the bride", contrary to the "Greek" copies, excepting the Cambridge copy of Beza's. Nor do the Arabic and Ethiopic versions so read; nor Munster's Hebrew Gospel; nor does it agree with the above custom. By "the bridegroom" is meant Christ, who stands in this relation to his church and people; he saw them in the glass of the purposes and decrees of God, and loved them, and asked them of his father to be given him as his spouse and bride; and who did give them to him, when he secretly betrothed them to himself, in the everlasting covenant, as he does their particular persons at conversion, and will consummate the marriage of them all at the last day; and, in the mean while, acts the part of a bridegroom to them; he loves them as a bridegroom loves his bride, with a love prior to theirs, free and unmerited; with a love of complacency and delight, which is single and chaste, strong and affectionate; constant and perpetual, wonderful, matchless, and inconceivable: he sympathizes with them, nourishes, and cherishes them as his own flesh; providing spiritual food, and rich clothing for them; and indulging them with intimate communion with himself, and interests them in all he has; and when he comes again a second time, he will appear under this character. His first appearance was mean, in the form of a servant, in the likeness of sinful flesh, in garments rolled in blood; but when he comes a second time, he will appear as a bridegroom in his nuptial robes; all his elect will be prepared for him, beautified and adorned as a bride for her husband; when he will come and take them home to himself, and will avow them to be his before his Father, and his holy angels: and which will be a time of great glory, and great joy. Now these virgins are said to take their lamps, and go forth to meet him: by their lamps are meant, either the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, particularly the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; which, like a lamp, were lighted in the evening of the Jewish dispensation, and will shine the brightest towards the end of the world: these are like lamps both to walk by, and work by, and were a light to all these virgins; some were savingly enlightened into them, and by them; and others only notionally, but were taken up, owned, and professed, as the rule of faith and practice, by them all; and that in order to meet and find the bridegroom, for they testify of him: or rather an external profession of religion is designed by the lamps, which is distinct from the oil of grace, and the vessel of the heart, in which that is; and is that into which the oil is put and burns, so as to become visible: and must be daily recruited, and trimmed with fresh supplies of grace from Christ, without which it cannot be kept up, nor will be of any use and service; and is what may go out, or be dropped and lost, as some of these lamps. Now this was what was taken up by them all; they all made a profession of Christ, and his Gospel: some of them took it up aright, upon an experience of the grace of God, and principles of grace wrought in their souls; others, without any experience, and without considering the nature, importance, and consequences of a profession: and so they all went forth to meet the bridegroom: some in the exercise of faith on him, and in his coming; in love to him, and his appearance; desiring, and longing to see him; expecting, and waiting for him: others only in a way of a visible profession of religion, and an outward attendance on ordinances. The custom here alluded to of meeting the bridegroom, and attending the bride home to his house in the night, with lighted torches, or lamps, and such a number of them as here mentioned, was not only the custom of the Jews, but of other eastern nations {i}. Jarchi says {k}, it was the custom of the Ishmaelites; his words are these:

"it was a custom in the land of Ishmael, to bring the bride from her father's house to her husband's house, hlylb, "in the night", before she entered the nuptial chamber; and to carry before her Nyodnwq rvek, "about ten staves"; and upon the top of the staff was the form of a brazen dish, and in the midst of it, pieces of garments, oil, and pitch, which they set fire to, and lighted before her."

Something like this is the custom of the East Indians now, which is thus related {l}:

"on the day of their marriage, the husband and wife being both in the same "palki", or "palanquin", (which is the ordinary way of carriage in the country, and is carried by four men upon their shoulders,) go out between seven and eight o'clock "at night", accompanied with all their kindred and friends; the trumpets and drums go before them; and they are "lighted" by a multitude of "massals", which are a kind of flambeaux; immediately behind the "palanquin" of the newly married couple, walk many "women", whose business is to sing verses, wherein they wish them all kind of prosperity.--The newly married couple go abroad in this equipage, for the space of some hours; after which they return to their own house, where the "women" and domestics wait for them: the whole house is enlightened with little lamps, and many of these "massals", already mentioned, are kept ready for their arrival, besides those that accompany them, and go before their "palanquin". This sort of lights are nothing else, but many pieces of old linen squeezed hard against one another, in a round figure, and forcibly thrust down into a mould of copper; those who hold them in one hand, have, in the other, a bottle of the same metal, with the mould copper, which is full of oil; and they take care to pour out of it, from time to time, upon the linen, which otherwise gives no light."

{f} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 6. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 11. 3. {g} Maimon. Hilch. Tephillah, c. 11. sect. 1. {h} Misn. Megilia, c. 4. sect. 3. Maimon, Hilch. Tephilla, c. 8. sect. 4, 5. {i} Bartenora in Misn. Megilla, c. 4. sect. 3. T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 8. 2. {k} In Misn. Celim, c. 2. sect. 8. {l} The Agreement of Customs between the East Indiana and Jews, art. 17. p. 68, 69.

Ver. 2. And five of them were wise,.... The order of these words is inverted in some versions, as in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, which read, "and five of them were foolish, and five of them were wise"; but this is of no great consequence. There is a parable of R. Jochanan ben Zaccai {m}, who lived before, and after the destruction of the second temple, which bears some likeness to this part of the parable, and others in it, and is this;

"a certain king invited his servants, but did not fix any time for them; those of them that were Myhqp, "wise", adorned themselves, and sat at the gate of the king's house, and said, is there any want at the king's house? but those of them that were Myvpj, "fools", went and did their work, and said, is there any feast without trouble? on a sudden, the king inquired after his servants: the wise went in before him, as they were, adorned; but the fools went in before him, as they were, filthy: the king rejoiced at meeting the wise, and was angry at meeting the foolish; and ordered, that those who had adorned themselves for the feast should sit and eat, and those that had not adorned themselves for the feast should stand."

The wise virgins are such, who are wise, not in their own conceits, which is the case of natural men, and empty professors; nor in the things of nature, or in the things of the world, of which the saints are oftentimes less knowing than others; nor in notional and speculative knowledge, much less in things that are evil: but they are such who are wise unto salvation; who not only know the scheme of it, but are sensible of their need of it; apply to Christ for it; venture their souls on him, and commit them to him: they trust in his righteousness for justification; in his blood for pardon; in his sacrifice for atonement; in his fulness for daily supplies; in his grace and strength to perform every duty; and expect eternal life in, and from him: they know him, prize him, and value him as their Saviour; rejoice in him, and give him all the glory; and they are such who are also wise in the business of a profession, as well as in the affair of salvation; they are such who take up a profession of religion aright, upon principles of grace, and after mature thought and deliberation; and when they have so done, hold it fast without wavering, walk becoming it in their lives and conversations; and yet do not depend on it, or trust to it:

and five were foolish; not in their own apprehension, in which they might be wise enough; nor in the judgment of others; nor in natural knowledge; or with respect to the things of the world; nor in speculative notions of the Gospel; nor merely so called, because unconverted; every unconverted man being a foolish man: but they were so in the business of salvation; as all are who build their hopes of it on birth privileges; on a carnal descent from good men; on a religious education; on their own righteousness; or on the absolute mercy of God; and not on Christ, the one only, and sure foundation: they are such who know not themselves; the impurity of their hearts, and nature; their impotency to that which is spiritually good; and the imperfection and insufficiency of their own righteousness: they know not Christ, and his salvation, neither the worth, nor want of him, or that; and are altogether strangers to the power of godliness, and spiritual experience: and are also as foolish in the affair of a profession, which they take up without a work of the Spirit of God upon their souls, and without considering the cost and charge of it; and either in a little time wholly drop it, or, if they hold it, they foolishly depend upon it, or lead lives unsuitable to it. The number of wise and foolish virgins being equal, does not imply that there will be just the same number of nominal, as of real believers in the churches, in the latter day, a little before the coming of Christ; only that there will be a large number of such among them.

{m} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 153. 1. Vid. R. David Kimchi in Isa. lxv. 13.

Matthew 25:3

Ver. 3. They that were foolish took their lamps,.... The Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, read, "the five foolish", whose folly is here exposed; and which lay not merely, or only in taking up the lamps of a profession in a wrong way, and upon a wrong bottom, but chiefly in what follows;

and took no oil with them: by oil is meant, not temporal blessings, nor spiritual ones, nor the Gospel, nor the gifts of the Spirit, all which are sometimes signified by oil; but either the Spirit of God himself, who is the oil of gladness, and the anointing which teacheth all things; or the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Spirit, even all the graces which are implanted by him in conversion: this is so called, in allusion to the anointing oil under the law, in its excellent nature, its costly matter, its curious make, and particular application; and in the use of it to anoint both things, the tabernacle and its vessels, and persons, prophets, priests, and kings; see *Ex 30:23*, &c. The grace of the Spirit being of an holy and sanctifying nature, exceeding valuable and precious, and a curious piece of workmanship, and what is only applied unto, and bestowed on the elect of God; and with which all the vessels of mercy, small and great, are anointed, and are made prophets, priests, and kings, and is what is, as that was, lasting and abiding: or else with respect to the precious oil, or ointment poured on Aaron's head, which was emblematical of the grace of the Spirit, which was poured forth, without measure, on Christ, and from him descends to all his members: or to the lamp oil for the candlestick in the tabernacle, which was oil olive, pure, beaten, and was for light, to cause the lamp to burn always; and fitly represented grace, which comes from Christ, the true olive tree; is pure, and of a purifying nature; and comes through a bruised, crucified Christ; and being put into the heart, causes the light of good works, and a becoming conversation, to shine forth: or else to oil in common, which is of a cheering and refreshing nature; is beautifying and adorning, supplying and healing, feeding and fattening, searching and penetrating, and will not mix with any thing else; upon all which accounts grace may be compared to it. Now these foolish virgins, though they took up a lamp of a profession, yet were unconcerned for the oil of grace, to fill, maintain, and trim this lamp: they were ignorant of the nature and use of true grace; they saw no need of it, and therefore did not ask for it, or about it; they neglected it, made light of it, and denied it as useless; and being destitute of it, took up their profession without it; and in this lay their folly.

Matthew 25:4

Ver. 4. But the wise took oil,.... They were concerned for the true grace of God, being enlightened by the Spirit of God; they saw their need of the grace of God, and being directed by him where it was to be had, went to Christ for it; and having received it from him, through the power of the Holy Ghost, exercised it on him; and herein lay their wisdom: for a stock of this in the heart, daily renewed by Christ, will supply the lamp of a profession well. This they had

in their vessels, their oil vessels; by which are meant their hearts; so called in allusion either to the vessels in which the oil was put, when pressed out of the olives, *Jer 40:10* or to the oil vessels of the candlestick, ***Nu 4:9***. These are vessels of God's making, though through sin are become impure, and empty of all spiritual good: they are indeed large and capacious; here's room for Father, Son, and Spirit, and for abundance of grace; they are capable of comprehending much of the love of God, and besides natural, a great deal of spiritual knowledge: here, in these vessels, sanctified by the Spirit of God, the wise virgins had the oil of grace, which is an internal thing: it is nothing in the head, in the tongue, or in the hand, but something in the heart: it does not lie in notion, in talking, nor in doing; a man may know much, say a great deal, and do many external works, and yet be destitute of the grace of God; nothing external is that: it is not a mere outward reformation of life, an external humiliation for sin, an abstinence from the grosser sins of life, or a conformity to the ordinances of the Gospel, or a profession of religion: it is a principle of light, life, love, and holiness wrought in a man's heart; it has its seat in the mind, understanding, and judgment, in the will, conscience, and the affections. This oil of grace was not naturally in them; nor was it obtained by the power of their freewill; but was freely given unto them, and powerfully wrought in them: the case is this; all grace was put into Christ's hands for them; the Spirit of God was sent down to apply it to them, and work it in them; Which is generally done by means, which they made use of by his direction and assistance, and so may be said to take it:

with their lamps, of an external profession; they did not take up a profession before they had grace, or without it; but when they received the one, they took up the other; and which was acting the wise part.

Matthew 25:5

Ver. 5. While the bridegroom tarried,.... The space of time here referred to, is either from the ascension of Christ, to his coming to take vengeance on the Jews; or from thence to his second coming; or rather from the time of some general expectation by the saints, of the near approach of Christ, till such time he does come: for as there was a general expectation of the coming of Christ before he came in the flesh, so there will be a general expectation of Christ being near at hand some time before his second coming; and because such an expectation will not be answered, or Christ will not come so soon as was hoped for, and expected, a general drowsiness, and security, and unconcernedness, especially about the coming of Christ, will fall upon the churches. Thus, in the last century, there was among the people of God, in these kingdoms, a general expectation of Christ's speedy coming; but being in this disappointed, professors of all sorts are fallen asleep, and do not at all, or very little, at least very few, concern themselves about it: in a word, this interval of time seems to regard that period which is pointed out by the Laodicean church state, which will usher in the coming of Christ, and the last judgment. Now Christ, the bridegroom, may be said to tarry, not with respect to the time fixed by the Father and himself; for as this is settled, though unknown to man, it will not be passed by him; he does not, nor will he tarry beyond the appointed time: but either with respect to the time fixed by men; or with respect to the declaration of Christ, and his apostles, that he would come "quickly", and the length of time since; or rather with respect to the expectations of the saints, and their impatience. The reason why he tarries is, because his time is not come, and there are many things to be done first; there is to be a glorious spread of the Gospel all over the world; all the elect must be gathered in, both among Jews and Gentiles; and the man of sin must be destroyed; and the ungodly must fill up the measure of their iniquities; and Christ tarries to try the graces of his people, who should exercise faith in his coming, by looking, watching, and waiting for it, desirous of it, and hastening unto it; being ready for him, prepared to receive him, and to go with him to the nuptial-chamber; but instead of this

they all slumbered and slept: which is not to be understood as if that one only slumbered, and the other slept; that is, that the wise virgins slumbered, and the foolish virgins slept; for the wise virgins, or true believers, are elsewhere said to sleep, and formal professors to slumber; but both these are spoken of them all: and by this slumber, and sleep, is not meant a natural death; though that is sometimes called a sleep, and to which true believers are subject, as well as others; yet all at the coming of Christ will not be asleep in this sense: and were this intended, their resurrection would be designed by their "arising", in the seventh verse; and so the resurrection of the saints, and of others, would be together, which is not true, for the dead in Christ will rise first; and would be also before the coming of Christ, whereas the resurrection of the saints is not till at his coming; and it would look, by the account in some following verses, as if grace might be had, or, at least, be thought to be had, after the resurrection: nor is this to be understood of the dead sleep of sin: a death in sin may be signified by sleeping, and be so called, and conviction be an awakening out of it; but the foolish virgins were always asleep in this sense, and were never truly and thoroughly awaked; and wise virgins never do, nor can, fall into this sleep; for being quickened by Christ, they never die again: nor of a judicial slumber and sleep, which the saints are never given up to; but a dead, lifeless, and sleepy frame of spirit in the wise virgins: which lies in grace not being in exercise; in a slothfulness to perform religious duties; in taking up a satisfaction with the outward parts of religion; in an indifference about the interest of Christ; in an unconcernedness at the omission of duty, or commission of sin; and in an entire ease of mind with regard to such a frame and state: the causes of it are a body of sin; an anxious care of the world; a being weary of spiritual exercises, and a leaving them off; abstaining from an awakening ministry, and spiritual conversation; and keeping company with sleepy and slothful professors, or the men of the world: and often it arises from ease, peace, and liberty; and sometimes from long watchfulness, and waiting for the bridegroom's coming; in which, being disappointed, such a frame of spirit ensues: and also in the foolish virgins it intends great carnal security in themselves; a rest and confidence in their external profession; and a laying aside all thoughts of Christ, and his coming to judgment: for a difference there is between the sleep and slumbering of the one and of the other; the wise virgins are children of the day, and not of the night; though they sleep, their hearts wake, and they sleep with grace in their hearts; neither of which can be said of the foolish virgins, or formal professors: as to the phraseology here used, the Jews would distinguish upon it, for they make a difference between slumbering and sleeping:

"they do not dismiss (the company) after the passover with the sweet-meats: if some of them sleep, they may eat, but if all of them, they may not eat. R. Jose says, wmnmntn, "if they slumber" they may eat; wmdrn, "if they sleep they may not eat" {n}: which Maimonides thus {o} explains, "if they slumber"; that is, if they begin to sleep, but are not yet overwhelmed with sleep, but bear when others speak to them, and answer immediately to them that call them: "if they sleep": if they are oppressed with a deep sleep."

Though the phrase bykvw Myyn, which I should choose to render, "he slumbered and slept", is often said {p} of the same person, without any distinction, as here.

{n} Misn. Pesachim, c. 10. sect. 8. & Maimon. Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 14. {o} In Misn. ib. {p} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 47. 2. & 65. 1. & 67. 2.

Ver. 6. And at midnight there was a cry made;.... Which is no other than the following notice of the bridegroom's coming, expressed in these words:

behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him: which supposes that then all things will be ready for his coming: all things respecting this world; all the strange and surprising events that were to come to pass, before the coming of Christ, will now be accomplished; an end put to all the monarchies of the earth; and all the preparations in nature, for the burning of the world finished: all things respecting the ungodly of the world: they will have filled up the measure of their iniquities, and finished their persecutions of the saints: and all things respecting the elect of God, they will be all born, and born again; they will have gone through all their sufferings for Christ, and have all their graces tried and perfected; for when the bridegroom comes, he will come to espouse them openly to himself, for which they must be prepared and adorned, and to take them to himself, that they may be for ever with him. It also supposes, that his coming will be very nigh at hand; it was so represented long ago; it is greatly desired by the saints to be quickly; and it will be in a very short time after this notice: and it signifies that there will be some notice given of it, a little before he comes; and that partly for the glory of his majesty; and that his own people, the wise virgins, may be ready; and that the foolish ones may be left without excuse: and this being prefaced with a "behold", shows the certainty of his coming, than which nothing is more certain, and to be depended on; as appears from Enoch's prophecy, and others of the Old Testament; from Christ's own promise; from the testimony of angels: from the words of the apostles; and from the ordinance of the Lord's supper: and also the importance of it; for things of the greatest moment will follow on it; such as the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the whole world, the complete happiness of the saints, and the destruction of the wicked: and likewise, that it will be wonderful and astonishing; Christ will come in amazing glory, in his own, in his Father's, and in the glory of the holy angels, and of his power and authority, as the judge of quick and dead. And in this notice advice is given to the virgins,

go ye out to meet him; see ***So 3:11***, and may intend either a going forth internally, as the wise virgins did in the exercise of grace, of faith in the coming of Christ, of love of his appearance, and earnest desire after it; or a going forth externally, as all the virgins did in a way of visible profession, taking up and trimming their lamps; or literally and corporeally, as the saints will, that will be found alive at Christ's coming. Now this notice is called "a cry"; and refers not to the voice of Christ in raising the dead, for this will be before the coming of Christ, whereas that will be when he is come; and for the same reason, not to the voice of the archangel, if he can be thought to be distinct from Christ. Some think it regards a secret general impulse, that will be upon the spirits of the people of God, with respect to the bridegroom's coming, but this does not seem to answer to a cry; rather it should intend some remarkable providence, as the earthquake in *Re 11:13* when a tenth part of the city shall fall, seven thousand men of note be slain, and the rest affrighted; or the sounding of the seventh angel, *Re 11:15*, or, what is most likely, the voice of a great multitude, as of many waters, and of mighty thunderings, declaring, that the marriage of the Lamb was come, and the bride ready, *Re 19:6*, and will be a very loud one: it will awaken all the virgins, and will be the cry, not of one, but of many; and will be very sudden and surprising, though joyful to the saints: this cry will be made, not by the virgins, for they will be asleep; nor by Christ himself, for he will not be come; nor by the angels, for they will come with him, and not before; rather by the ministers of the Gospel, who are the angels so often spoken of in the book of the Revelations, who sound the trumpets at different times, and on different occasions; who also will sound this trumpet, and give this last and general notice of Christ's coming; who will be all at once apprized of it, and give an universal alarm of it together in all the churches: thus, as the notice of Christ's first coming was made by the prophets, the notice of his second coming will be made by the ministers of the Gospel: and this will be at "midnight": which expresses the state of the church a little before the coming of Christ: it will be a night season with it, a time of darkness both with respect to Gospel light, and the presence of God with his people; a time of coldness and lukewarmness, as to zeal for God, love to his people, and concern for the interest of Christ; a time of drowsiness and sleep, of insensibility and security, of indolence and inactivity: so as the coming of Christ will be later than was first expected; it will be sudden, and at unawares, and like a thief in the night; but whether it will be literally in the night season, as his first coming, is not certain. The Jews expect {q}, that at the end of the world Moses and Messiah will come in the night, the one from the wilderness, and the other from Rome: and they make frequent mention of God's going into the garden of Eden, or paradise, at midnight, and there rejoicing with good men. It is said {r}, that R. Eliezer and R. Jose

"were sitting one night, and studying in the law, and about midnight, a man cried (or the cock crowed), bless ye the blessing; says R. Eliezer, now is, the time that the holy, blessed God goes into the garden of Eden, to rejoice with the righteous."

{q} Targum Hieros. in Exod xii. 42. {r} Zohar in Exod. fol. 76. 4. & in Lev. fol. 21. 1. & 23. 2.

Matthew 25:7

Ver. 7. Then all these virgins arose,.... Not out of their graves; for the righteous and wicked will not rise together; the dead in Christ will rise first, and this first resurrection will not be till Christ is come; nor will grace be to be had, or be thought to be had after the resurrection; nor will there be any trimming of lamps then, in order to meet the bridegroom, for he will be come: nor out of the graves of sin; for the wise virgins were not in such a state, and the foolish virgins were never brought out of it: but the meaning is, that they arose out of their sleepy and slumbering frame. True believers may fall into a very low condition, with respect to the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; but they shall arise again, for they are held and upheld by the right hand of God: it is sometimes midnight with them, and they are fallen fast asleep, but they shall be awaked, and arise; which arising here, as it respects them, signifies, that they were thoroughly awaked, that they quitted their former place and posture, were upon their feet, and ready to meet the bridegroom. The foolish virgins also arose; which may intend some awakenings of conscience, and reformation of life, and a more diligent attendance on duties and ordinances; all which they did to make them meet for Christ, and to obtain salvation; but after all it appears, they were destitute of the oil of grace:

and trimmed their lamps: both wise and foolish: the former by removing what hindered the clear burning of them; by casting off the works of darkness, and causing the light of good works to shine before men, in the discharge of them, from a principle of grace; and chiefly by applying to Christ for fresh supplies of the oil of grace, to fill their lamps, revive their light and heat, and keep them burning: and the latter, only by a few outward decorations, and external performances; to make their outward profession of religion look as bright as possibly they could.

Matthew 25:8

Ver. 8. And the foolish said unto the wise, give us of your oil,.... A graceless person may be able to see the grace of God in others, be convinced of it, and acknowledge it, as these foolish virgins did: they saw that the wise virgins had oil, that is, grace; this they knew by the bright burning of their lamps, by their readiness in trimming them, and that in a different way from them; by their sedate composure of mind, and confidence of soul, notwithstanding the midnight cry; and by their ardent and affectionate desire to meet the bridegroom. A graceless person may also see a need of grace: these foolish virgins had no such sense, when they first took up their profession; they went on a long time in a course of religion, without any thoughts of it; and the sense they had now was not of the need of it, in the vessels of their hearts, but in their lamps only; nor was it from the Spirit of God, but through the surprise and terror of the midnight cry. Such persons may also be desirous of the grace of God; not because of the intrinsic nature and worth of it, nor for the service and glory of God, but from a mere principle of self-love; and when they can go on no longer with the lamp of profession; and then they desire to have it any where, rather than from Christ, as did these foolish virgins; and who betrayed their folly by applying to saints for it. Had they asked their advice in this their distress, it would have been wisely done; or had they desired their prayers for them; or that they would impart some spiritual instructions to them; but to ask their grace of them was exceeding foolish; when grace only comes from God, who is the God of all grace, through Christ as mediator, in whom the fulness of it dwells, and by the Spirit, who is a Spirit of grace and of supplication; but is never to be had from men, no, not from the best men on earth, nor from the angels in heaven. The reason of this their request follows,

for our lamps are gone out; which may be said to be when professors neglect the duties of religion, drop, or deny the doctrines of the Gospel formerly professed by them, become bad in their principles, and scandalous in their lives, or withdraw themselves from the churches of Christ; though neither of these seem to be the case here: wherefore this going out of their lamps seems to intend the insufficiency of an external profession of religion to meet the bridegroom, and support a person with confidence and intrepidity in his presence: these foolish virgins now saw, when too late, that their lamps availed them nothing; they were gone out, and become useless and unprofitable, because they had not the oil of grace with them; or what they had was only counterfeit grace, or only an appearance of it; a mere form of godliness, without its power; or only gifts which are perishable, and now failed, ceased, and were vanishing away; wherefore this is no instance of the loss of true grace, nor at all militates against the perseverance of the saints.

Matthew 25:9

Ver. 9. But the wise answered, saying, not so,.... A flat denial; and which sprung not from want or compassion; for the saints are taught not only to compassionate one another, and to pity fallen professors, but even to regard their very enemies in distress: nor from a narrow, niggardly spirit, since such are directed and exhorted to communicate freely, both in things temporal and spiritual, they are capable of, to them that are in need, and even to lay down their lives for the brethren; nor from an uncivil, morose, and churlish disposition; or from a careless and indolent one, as being unconcerned what became of these persons; but from an indignation at the honour put upon them, and the slight put upon God and Christ, and the Spirit of grace: saints know that all grace comes from Father, Son, and Spirit; and frankly own, that what they have is from thence; and they give God all the glory of it, and cannot bear any such application to them for it, as this; but show the same spirit, as Paul and Barnabas did, when the Lystrians were going to sacrifice to them. Moreover, this denial arose from a consciousness of insufficiency to help them in this respect: it is the saints' mercy that they cannot lose the grace they have, nor can any take it away from them, and it is not in their power to give it away; nor can any be sanctified, or justified, or saved, by another man's grace: the reason alleged by them is,

lest there be not enough for us and you; saints have a large abundance of grace communicated to them; some have more, others less; at least it so appears, as to exercise; but they that have the most, have none to spare, and see their need of more; and ask for more, being sensible that present grace in them, is not sufficient for time to come, but grace in Christ only; wherefore their answer, and the reason of it, were like themselves, wise; and this destroys the notion of supererogation;

but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. This advice is thought by some, to be ironical and sarcastic; but it seems rather to be serious, and in good earnest; directing them to go to proper persons for grace; not to men, even ministers of the Gospel, nor to angels; but to God the Father, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, who sits on a throne of grace, and gives it liberally to them that come to him for it through Christ, and ask it of him; and to Christ the mediator, who is full of grace and truth, and counsels persons to buy of him gold tried in the fire, grace more precious than the purest gold; and to the Spirit of grace, who gives it to all severally as he will: who are said to "sell", and "men" to buy; not in a proper sense, by giving any valuable consideration for the grace of God, which is impossible to be done; but in an improper sense, without money and without price; or in other words, by giving and receiving freely.

Matthew 25:10

Ver. 10. And while they went to buy,.... The foolish virgins so far took the advice of the wise, as to go forth to buy oil for themselves: they not only had some thoughts about it, and resolutions to do it, but they really did go out to buy; which may design their attendance on the word and ordinances, where they stopped: they did not go to Christ for grace, for if they had gone directly to him, they had met him; but they went another way, and missed him; they took buying in a proper sense, and thought to have obtained grace by their own works: wherefore, though they went to buy, they did not, nor could they, their attempts were vain and fruitless; and while they were employing themselves in this way, to no purpose,

the bridegroom came; in person, to raise the saints that were dead, to change the living ones, to espouse them all openly, and take them all to himself, and to judge the world; for this must be understood of his second and personal coming:

and they that were ready; not by a mere profession of religion, or submission to Gospel ordinances, or by an external righteousness, or negative holiness, and abstinence from the grosser sins of life, or an outward humiliation for them, or by a dependence on the absolute mercy of God; but through being clothed with the wedding garment, washed in the blood of Christ, being regenerated and sanctified, and having the oil of grace in their hearts, a spiritual knowledge of Christ, faith in him, and interest in him: such are ready for every good work, and to give a reason of their faith and hope, to confess Christ, and suffer for his sake; and are ready for death and eternity, and to meet the bridegroom, and for the marriage of the Lamb, to enter into the new Jerusalem. The Jews say {s}, that

"the Jerusalem of the world to come, is not as the Jerusalem of this world: the Jerusalem of this world, everyone may go into it that will; but the Jerusalem of the world to come, none may go into it, but hl Nynmwzmh, "those that are prepared for it"."

And these

went in with him to the marriage: the Syriac reads it, "into the wedding house", and the Persic, "the nuptial parlour"; the marriage chamber, where the bridegroom and bride celebrated their marriage; kept their marriage feast; and where were received the bridemaids, and friends of the bridegroom, called in Talmudic language, hyyle ynb, "the children of the bridechamber" {t}. Such as were these that went in: and the marriage may here denote, either heaven, Christ's Father's house, and the mansions of glory in it, which the saints shall enter into along with Christ; or the act of celebrating the marriage between Christ and the Lamb, and the whole body of the elect; when these virgins will not be bare spectators and witnesses, but parties concerned; and which will only be a publication before his Father and the holy angels, of what has been already done: for these were secretly betrothed to him from everlasting, and were particularly espoused to him, one by one, in conversion; but it now will be declared of them all together, that they are his spouse and bride: or the marriage feast, or supper, is here intended; and which designs not the provision of the Gospel in Christ's house, or church on earth, in general, nor the ordinance of the Lord's supper in particular, nor the feast in the latter day, but the heavenly glory; and happy are those, who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and who will be ready when he comes; these shall partake of it: they will go in with Christ, and be for ever with him, and never return more.

And the door was shut: which expresses both the happy and comfortable case of the wise virgins, and the sad and miserable state of the foolish ones. The door being shut, the wise virgins will at once be freed from the disagreeable company of profane sinners, and formal professors; their state and condition will be everlastingly settled, their communion with Christ will be free and uninterrupted, and that, for ever; no enemy of their souls can follow them, to give them any disturbance; and they shall never return to a state of sin, sorrow, and imperfection: and it also represents, the woeful and miserable condition of the foolish virgins, in whatsoever sense the word "door" is taken. The church is a door, ***So 8:9***, and an open one, to receive in proper persons, and will be so more especially in the latter day; but this will be shut, when all the elect of God are called and gathered in; there will be no longer a church state on earth, or ordinances. Christ himself is called a door, *Joh 10:7*, he is the door into the church and into the blessings of grace, and into heaven itself; and which stands open in the ministry of the word, to receive sinners, but will now be shut; Christ will be no more preached, and held forth in the word, as God's salvation: and there is the door of faith, *Ac 14:27*, which is the Gospel, so called, because faith is hereby let into the soul, and souls are by it let into the doctrine of faith; and this is sometimes an open door, when ministers have a fair opportunity of preaching it, and have freedom and liberty in it; when attention is given to it, and many souls are gathered in by it; and this will be shut when Christ comes; there will be no more preaching; and there is also the door of hope, ***Ho 2:15***, which now stands open, whilst the Gospel church state lasts: whilst Christ is preached, the word and ordinances administered, and whilst there is life, and Christ not yet come, there is hope of salvation, pardon, and eternal life; but when Christ comes, either by death, or at judgment, and finds persons in a graceless state, there is then no hope: add to all this, that the door of Christ's heart is now open, to receive all coming sinners; but then will be shut, against all their cries, entreaties, and importunities: it will be shut by himself, who opens and no man shuts, shuts and no man opens; and that against all wicked and profane sinners, all hypocrites and formal professors; even all without his righteousness, and the grace of the Spirit of God.

{s} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 2. {t} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 45. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 2.

Matthew 25:11

Ver. 11. Afterwards came also the other virgins,.... The "other five virgins", as the Persic version reads. The "other"; that were only virgins in name, not in reality; they were different from the wise, they were foolish ones; they were other than those that were ready, they were unprepared ones; and in another situation than those that entered in; they were without, they were now separated from the company of the wise virgins, with whom they had been so long; and what was worst of all, they were to be so for ever. These "also came"; from buying oil: they went about, and came just as they went without any; they came to the door of the bridechamber, being desirous to be let in, and hoping to partake of the marriage feast, and join in the solemnity: but alas! they came too late, they came "afterwards"; after the bridegroom was come, after they that were ready had entered in, and after the door was shut;

saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. They do not call him their Lord, for they had no interest in him, nor could they claim any; though the Syriac version reads it, "our Lord, our Lord": they give him the title, and the bare title, without having yielded that obedience, which was due unto him. They double the word, to show their importunity, earnestness, sense of danger, and confusion: this title or character is the rather used, because Christ will then appear more clearly to be Lord and God, and every tongue shall confess him to be such: their request to him is, that he would "open" the door unto them, and let them in: they were sensible that the door was shut, and that none but Christ could open it; they did not at once conclude that their case was desperate, but were willing to hope the door might be opened, through their entreaties, and what they had to say for themselves; for though no pleas or arguments are here mentioned, yet, as elsewhere, such as these will be made by the foolish virgins; namely, prophesying in the name of Christ, casting out devils in his name, doing many wonderful works in his name, hearing his word preached, and eating and drinking in his presence; but all in vain, and to no purpose.

Matthew 25:12

Ver. 12. But he answered and said,.... The Lord and bridegroom from within, thought fit to give them an answer, but an unexpected and awful one to them:

verily I say unto you, I know you not; which must be understood in consistence with the omniscience of Christ: he knew their persons, conduct, and state; he knew they were foolish virgins, graceless professors, who had made no account of him and his righteousness; but had trusted to, and depended upon, their external profession of religion: they were none of the people whom he foreknew, or knew as his own, and loved with an everlasting love; he never knew them as his father's choice in him, or as this father's gift to him; he never knew them in the everlasting covenant, or as his sheep, for whom he died; he never knew them to believe in him, or love him; nor ever exalt his person, blood and sacrifice, at his table, nor do any good work with a single eye to his glory; he never approved of them, liked their persons, or their conduct; or ever owned them as the true companions, either of his bride, or of himself: which answer implies, that as the door was shut, so it should remain; there was no admittance for them, nor any to be hoped for; and it is all one as if he had said, begone, and depart hence. The Persic version adds such a clause, "begone from my door".

Matthew 25:13

Ver. 13. Watch therefore,.... In ordinances, in prayer, public and private, in hearing the word, at the Lord's supper, and in every religious exercise; over the heart, the thoughts and affections of it; over words, actions, life, and conversation; and against all sin and unbelief, Satan's temptations, the world, and its charms and snares, false teachers, and their doctrines, and for the bridegroom's coming. This is the use and application of the whole parable, and shows the general design of it; the reason to enforce watchfulness follows:

for ye know neither the day nor the hour; of death, or of judgment, or of the coming of the son of man, of one or the other; for it is added,

wherein the son of man cometh: that he will come is certain, and that quickly; the time is fixed, but when it will be is unknown; and therefore it becomes us to be our watch and guard. This last clause is not in the Vulgate Latin, nor in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and was wanting in three of Beza's copies, but is in most Greek copies, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and seems to be necessary.

Matthew 25:14

Ver. 14. For [the kingdom of heaven] is as a man travelling,.... Our Lord adds another parable to illustrate the Gospel dispensation, or its visible church state; or the state of things respecting the church of Christ, before, and at his second coming, and during the interval between his ascension and that: for by the man here, is meant Christ, who in the everlasting covenant agreed to become man, was prophesied of as such, frequently appeared in human form, under the Old Testament dispensation; and in the fulness of time, really became man; though he was not a mere man, but was God as well as man; having all the perfections and fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in him: this man is said to travel

into a far country; by which heaven is designed, and is so called, not only because of its great distance from the earth, and which is very great indeed; but because the better country and land afar off, is out of sight; and what views we have of it, are very distant ones; and is afar off, in respect of our state of pilgrimage in this world, in which, whilst Christ was here, he was a pilgrim and a stranger too; who might be said to be as a "man travelling", whilst he was in it, and when going out of it, and ascending to heaven: he came from thence, and stayed here a while, walking up and down, and doing good; and when he had finished what he came about, he ascended on high, went to his God and Father, entered into heaven, where he is received until the times of the restitution of all things:

who called his own servants; before he took his journey, to commit some things to their trust and management; and to give them some instructions how to behave during his absence: for, according to the Jewish {u} canons,

"a master that had a mind to go out of the land (of Israel) could not take his servant with him, unless he pleased; and this is a rule at all times, even at this time, that the land is in the hand of the Gentiles."

And here no mention is made of any going with him, only how they were to be employed whilst he was gone: by "his own servants" are meant, not all mankind; for though they are all in some sense his servants, or ought to be, yet they are not so called in Scripture, much less with such an emphasis, his own servants; and besides, more than what are in the kingdom of heaven, or Gospel church state, cannot be intended; since the parable reaches to, and concerns no other: nor all the elect of God only, or all are not the elect of God that are designed; for though these are the servants of Christ, and his own peculiarly, yet all intrusted with talents, are not such; one of these was wicked, slothful, graceless, and at last was eternally lost, and perished; which is not true of anyone of the elect: but ministers of the word are here meant, who are eminently the servants of Christ, his own, whom he has called, qualified, commissioned, and sent forth; for the ministers of the word, whether faithful or slothful, good or bad, are in a very lively manner described in this parable, which is a distinct one from the former; for whereas that gives an account of the different members of the visible church, this describes the several ministers of it: nor can it be any objection to this sense of it, that these servants are all of them said to be his own servants, and called, commissioned, and gifted by him; since Judas, as well as the rest, was called, ordained, qualified, and sent forth by Christ, as an apostle.

And delivered unto them his goods; the Gospel, that rich treasure of divine truths, the dispensation of it, and gifts to preach it; all which are Christ's goods and his gifts, and not man's; and which was in a very eminent manner done, when Christ ascended on high, and received gifts for, and gave them unto men. Just before it, as he was ready to go, he gathered his disciples together; he renewed and enlarged their commission to preach the Gospel; and quickly after it, gave them greater and larger gifts of the Spirit than before; and has been ever since giving ministerial gifts to men, to some more, others less, and which are signified by the talents following.

{u} Maimon. Hilch. Abadim, c. 8. sect. 9.

Matthew 25:15

Ver. 15. And unto one he gave five talents,.... A "talent" with the Jews, if of silver, was, according to Brerewood {w}, of the value of 375 l. of our money; according to Bishop Cumberland, 353 l. 11 s. 10 1/2 d.; and if of gold, was equal to 4500l. and, according to the latter, 5075 l. 15 s. 7 1/2 d.: so that five of these talents, if of silver, were 1875 l. and if of gold, 22,500 l. according to Brerewood; a very large sum for one servant to be intrusted with. The Persic version reads "pounds", as in *Lu 19:13*. By these talents, special grace is not meant; for the parable speaks not of what was wrought in these servants, but of what was committed to their trust, and of what might lie useless by them, and be taken away from them; whereas special grace is internal, something, implanted in man, and is an incorruptible seed, that can never be lost, or will be taken away; and it is certain, that one of these servants had not special and saving grace, but was wicked, slothful, and unprofitable, and was cast into utter darkness: but outward gifts are designed by the talents; and these not merely the gifts of natural knowledge and riches, the gifts of nature and of providence; nor the external ministry of the word, Gospel ordinances, and opportunities of enjoying them; but ministerial gifts, such as fit and qualify men to be preachers of the Gospel, as appears from their name, "talents": they being the greatest gifts for usefulness and service in the church, as talents were the greatest of weights and coins among the Jews; from the nature of them, being what may be improved or lost, and for which men are accountable; from the persons to whom they were delivered, the servants of Christ; from the time of their delivery, when Christ went into a far country, to heaven, when he ascended on high, and received gifts for men, and gave them to them; and from the unequal distribution of them, being given to some more, and others less; all which perfectly agree with ministerial gifts: for it follows,

to another two, and to another one; and these were given to every man, according to his several ability, or "according to his own power"; his proper power that belonged to him, as the Lord of these servants: for the sense is, not that he gave these talents, or gifts, according to the different capacities, abilities, stations, and employments of these men; but according to that power and authority which he, as Mediator, had, to dispense these gifts to each as he would; to some more, others less, as he knew would best serve his interest and kingdom:

and straightway took his journey; after he had signified, that all power in heaven and earth was given to him, by virtue of which he ordered them to go into all the world, and preach his Gospel, and administer his ordinances; for which he had, and would abundantly qualify them; with a promise of his presence with them to the end of the world; he took his leave of them, blessed them, and was parted from them, and went up into heaven.

{w} De Nummis Jud. c. 4.

Matthew *25:16*

Ver. 16. Then he that had received the five talents,.... The largest measure of gifts; an account is first given of him, how he behaved, and conducted in his Lord's absence, and what use he made of the gifts bestowed upon him: this must be understood, not of a single man, but of that sort of the servants of Christ, who have the greatest ministerial gifts: he went; it denotes immediate application to business, and signifies that such servants went according to their commission, preached the Gospel to every creature, and administered the ordinances to proper subjects; they went directly, as soon as they had their talents; they did not stay to consult with flesh and blood, whether it would be for their interest and credit or not; they did not stick at any difficulties and discouragements, nor were deterred by the cross, reproaches, and persecutions; but went forth with courage and boldness, not in their own name and strength, but in the name and strength of Christ, who sent them, and promised them his presence and assistance, on which they depended:

and traded with the same: with the five talents, or their ministerial gifts. The ministers of the Gospel are traders, not in their own name, nor on their own stock, and for themselves, but for Christ, and for the good of immortal souls: they closely attend unto, and work at, their business and employment; by constant reading, and diligent search into the word of God; by studious meditation on it; by frequent prayer; and continual preaching the Gospel, and administering ordinances; and their success follows:

and made them other five talents; that is, increased in spiritual knowledge; gifts were improved and enlarged; a greater stock of divine things were laid in; and many souls gained to Christ: such are they whom Christ has ordained to go forth, and bear and bring forth fruit in their ministry, and whose fruit remain.

Matthew 25:17

Ver. 17. And likewise he that received two,.... Talents, or a lesser measure of ministerial gifts:

he also gained other two; he worked and laboured, and traded, in proportion to the gifts he had received; and his improvements and success, under a divine blessing, were answerable.

Matthew 25:18

Ver. 18. But he that received one,.... Talent, or the least degree of gifts, for the ministry of the word:

went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "silver", and the Ethiopic, "gold"; but whether these talents were silver or gold, is not certain. Where he buried it; that is, he neglected the gift that was in him, he made no use of it, either to his own advantage, or to the good of others, and the interest of his Lord; he either never went into the ministry, or if he did, he left it as Demas did, having too great affection for the world, and the things of it: he minded earth and earthly things, and employed himself in them, and not in his master's work and service. The phrase seems to point out the earthly mindedness of the man, his worldly disposition, and his eager pursuit after the things of life; which were the reason why he disregarded his talent, and made no use of his ministerial gifts: he could not deny worldly self, nor leave all to follow Christ; but rather than drop the world, he chose to bury his talent in it: it was his Lord's money and not his own, and he was accountable to him for it, and should have used it in another manner.

Matthew 25:19

Ver. 19. After a long time, the Lord of these servants cometh,.... Either in a providential way, by a fit of illness, or in a time of persecution, and awakens the conscience, and calls them to give an account of their stewardship; or by death, when their trading or working time is over, and they become accountable for their whole conduct, throughout their ministrations; or rather, at the last judgment, when all must appear before the judge of quick and dead, ministers as well as others, and give an account of their gifts, and the use of them, to their Lord, from whom they have received them, and whose servants they profess to be. Which coming of his is after a long time; for seventeen hundred years are now past, and he is not yet come; which is a long time in man's account, though not in God's account, with whom a thousand years are as one day; and in the apprehension of the saints, who love long for, and hasten to, the coming of Christ, are desirous of it, and impatient for it. But though it may seem long, he will certainly come: he stays long, to give time to his laborious ministers to exercise all those gifts he has bestowed upon them, and to leave slothful ones without excuse. It is not to be inferred from his delay, that he will not come: he is not unmindful of his promise, or slack concerning it; though he tarries long, he will not tarry beyond the appointed time; at the end he will come, though it is long first:

and reckoneth with them; what talents they received from him, what they had done with them, and what they had gained by them. The things that ministers of the word are intrusted with, are things of value; the Gospel is a pearl of great price, or rich treasure, that is put into their earthen vessels; it is the unsearchable riches of Christ; gifts to preach it are spiritual, and preferable to gifts of nature, and providence; and the souls of men committed to their care, are of great worth and esteem with Christ; nor are any of these their own, but Christ's, and therefore must give an account of them: this shows both the awfulness and usefulness of the Gospel ministry.

Matthew 25:20

Ver. 20. And so he that had received five talents,.... Or the greatest gifts: as this man is the first to whom his Lord gave any talents, and the first that went and traded with them; he is also the first that is reckoned with; who

came and brought other five talents: he came freely and cheerfully, with a holy confidence and intrepidity of mind, and gave in his account very readily, both of what he had received, and of what he had gained;

saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents, behold I have gained besides them five talents more. True ministers of the Gospel frankly own, that what gifts they have are delivered to them by Christ; and such are willing that he should have all returned to him, principal and increase: it is not to be imagined that this will be said in so many express words by them, nor will there be any need thereof; for Christ will not be ignorant of what they have been doing, and of what use they have been of; but the sense is, that as all will be manifest to Christ the searcher of hearts, with whom they have to do, so the account will stand fair and open; and it will be seen and known by all, that such and such faithful ministers of Christ have behaved in this agreeable manner, and have been thus and thus serviceable in his interest.

Matthew 25:21

Ver. 21. His Lord said unto him, well done,.... Gospel ministers do not say so to themselves; they know they can do nothing well of themselves, and when they have done all they can, they own they are but unprofitable servants; they acknowledge all they do is owing to the grace of God, and strength of Christ, and that no praise is due to them; nor do they expect or seek for such eulogies from men: but this is said, to show how acceptable a diligent laborious ministry is to Christ, and to encourage industry in the preachers of the word, whose works will follow them, though not go before them:

thou good and faithful servant: such may be said to be good, who have the grace of God implanted in them, some good thing in them towards the Lord God; a good work begun in their hearts, without which men can never be good ministers of Christ; and who have good abilities, not only natural and acquired parts, but ministerial gifts; which are the good things committed to them, and that dwell in them, which they are to keep by the Holy Ghost; and who make a good use of them, and freely communicate and impart their spiritual gifts, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; and who being employed in a good work, as that of the ministry is, do it well, and abide in it: and such may be said to be "faithful", who preach the pure Gospel of Christ, and the whole of it; who neither mix it with the inventions of men, nor keep back any part of it from the saints; who seek not to please men, but their Lord and Master; and not their own honour and applause, but his glory; and who abide by him and his cause, notwithstanding all reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions. In such language as this, the Jews used to praise their servants,

"Nmanw bwj vya ywh "O man! good and faithful", and from whose labour one had {x} profit."

Thou hast been faithful over a few things: not as considered in themselves; for the truths of the Gospel which ministers are intrusted with, and in which they are faithful, are neither few, nor inconsiderable; they are the manifold grace of God, and the unsearchable riches of Christ: nor are their gifts mean and despicable; nor are their labours worthless, and of no account; but in comparison of the unseen and eternal things of glory, which are prepared and laid up for them; so that there is no proportion between their works, and the glory that shall be revealed in them:

I will make thee ruler over many things; either on earth, where they shall reign with Christ a thousand years; and when the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of it, will be given to the saints of the Most

High; and when they who have turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars in that kingdom: or else in heaven, where as kings, they shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them, sit down with Christ in his throne, and wear the never fading crown of glory, life, and righteousness;

enter thou into the joy of our Lord; not their own, or what was of their own procuring, but their Lord's; which Jehovah the Father has prepared for his people, and gives unto them; which the son possesses for them, and will bestow on them; and which the Holy Spirit makes them meet for; and which will chiefly lie in the enjoyment of Christ their Lord: this happiness of theirs is expressed by "joy", which will be full and perfect, and without any interruption or mixture; will be unspeakable and glorious, and continue for ever; for when the saints shall enter into it, as into an house or mansion, they shall take possession of it, and abide in it for ever. It was usual with the Jews to express the, happiness of the world to come by "joy"; not only that which is from the Lord, but that with which he himself rejoices with his people: for they say {y},

"there is no joy before, or in the presence of the holy blessed God, since the world was created, hxmv htwak, "like that joy", with which he will rejoice with the righteous, in the world to come."

{x} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2. {y} Midrash Haneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 4.

Matthew 25:22

Ver. 22. He also that had received two talents,.... A lesser degree of ministerial gifts; and who as he received next to the other, and was the next, who in proportion to what he had received, had traded and gained, he is mentioned in the next: place, as giving in his account; who

came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents, behold I have gained two other talents besides them: his account, abating the sum and gains, is given in, in the same form as the other.

Matthew 25:23

Ver. 23. His Lord said unto him,.... The same words as he did to the other servant,

well done good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord: where the same commendation is made, and the same characters are given, as before; for a man that has lesser gifts, and is of less usefulness, may be as good and as faithful in his service, and as praise worthy, as a man of greater gifts, and more extensive usefulness; and the same happiness is bestowed on one, as the other, which in neither is of merit; but of grace; and whatever difference may be made between the saints, or between one minister and another in the Millennium state, yet in the ultimate glory, their joy, bliss, and happiness, will be alike. It is not to be established from this parable, that man has a power to improve the stock of sufficient grace given him, and by his improvement procure eternal happiness to himself; since such a stock of grace is not designed by the talents; nor is that either gotten or improved, by the industry of man; nor does the parable suggest, that men by their improvement of the talents committed to them, do, or can, procure eternal happiness: "good and faithful" servants are indeed commended by Christ, and he graciously promises great things to them, which are not proportioned to their deserts; for whereas they have been "faithful over a few things", he promises to make them "rulers over many things"; and bids them "enter into the joy of their Lord"; into the joy, which of his grace and goodness, he has provided for them, and not which they have merited and procured for themselves: nor is it to be inferred from hence, that true grace once given, or implanted, may be taken away or lost; for the parable speaks not of what is wrought in men, but of goods and talents bestowed on them, and committed to their trust; which may be lost or taken away, or be wrapped up in a napkin, and lie useless by them; when true grace is the incorruptible seed which never dies, but always remains; that good part which shall never be taken away nor lost, but is inseparably connected with eternal glory.

Matthew 25:24

Ver. 24. Then he which had received the one talent came,.... For he that has the least gifts, is accountable for them; and therefore ought to make use of them to the good of his fellow creatures, and the interest of his Lord and Master; though these often lie neglected, and frivolous, and even wicked pretences are formed to excuse such neglect, as here:

and said, Lord, I knew that thou art an hard man; he calls him "Lord", though he had not served him, and pretends he knew him; but if he had, he would have had a true affection for him, faith in him, and would have observed his commands; and he would also have appeared altogether lovely to him, and of an amiable character, and not in such a light as he represents him; which makes it a clear case, that he was ignorant of him, or he would never have said, that he was an hard, severe, or austere man; one very difficult of being pleased, cruel and uncompassionate to his servants, unjustly withholding from them what was due unto them, and rigorously exacting service that could not be performed by them: all which is the reverse of Christ's true character; who accepts of the meanest services of his people: and takes what is done, though ever so little, as even a cup of cold water, given to the least of his disciples, as done to himself; is merciful and compassionate, both to the bodies and souls of men; and is not unrighteous to forget any labour of love, shown to him or his; and makes his strength perfect in the weakness of his servants, and his grace always to be sufficient for them: but this wicked servant goes on to traduce him, and adds,

reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: which seem to be proverbial expressions; see ***Joh 4:37***, describing either a covetous man, that is desirous of that which does not belong to him; or an hard master that requires work to be done, and gives neither tools nor matter to work with; like the Egyptian task masters, who demanded the full tale of bricks, but gave no straw: whereas Christ is neither niggardly, nor exacting; he requires nothing that is not his, and gives his grace, and bestows his gifts liberally, and upbraids not; nor does he call any to service, of whatsoever sort, but he gives them grace, strength, and abilities, proportionate to it; and as he has promised, he makes it good, that as their day is, so shall their strength be.

Matthew 25:25

Ver. 25. And I was afraid,.... The Persic version adds, "to negotiate with thy money": he was afraid, lest by trading he should not gain what his Lord expected; and most of all, lest he should lose the talent itself; and dreaded his Lord's austerity, should that be the case, fearing that he would have no mercy on him. This was his pretence; but the true causes were sloth and earthly mindedness:

and went and hid thy talent in the earth; that it might not be lost, though it lay useless, and turned to no account. The Arabic version renders it, "and buried thy goods in the earth": he owned the money to be his Lord's, and thought he did very well, and enough, that he preserved it, though he had not improved it; and this he hoped would be a sufficient excuse, and on which he laid the greatest stress:

lo! there thou hast that is thine: he again acknowledges, that the gifts he had were not his own, but his master's; and whereas he had kept them entire, as he had received them, and there was the full sum he was intrusted with, he hoped no more would be required: but it is not sufficient to retain what is given, it must be made use of and improved; for every spiritual gift is given to profit with: and besides, there seems to be a degree of rudeness in these words; he does not bring the talent with him, and return it, but only signifies that he had hid it in the earth, in such a place, and "there" it was, where his Lord might take it, and have it again, if he pleased.

Matthew 25:26

Ver. 26. His Lord answered and said unto him,.... Resenting, as he well might, not only his indolence and sloth, his neglect of his duty, and his worldly disposition, but the abusive character he had given of him, in order to cover his own wickedness:

thou wicked and slothful servant; a very just character of him: he was a "wicked" servant; all men in a state of nature are wicked; they lie in wickedness, and are under the power of the wicked one; and there are many wicked men among professors of religion, and many wicked ministers, who, though not openly profane, yet either trusting to their works, or doing the work of the Lord deceitfully, or wholly neglecting it, justly merit this character. This man's wickedness lay in his slothfulness, in not doing the good he might, and had gifts and abilities for; and in entertaining wrong thoughts of, and in bringing false charges against his Lord: and he might be truly said to be "slothful"; since he took no pains to improve in spiritual knowledge; and instead of digging for that, as for silver and hid treasure, dug in the earth, and hid his talent there: he neglected the gift that was in him; did not stir it up, or study to show himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; did not give himself up to reading, meditation, and prayer; but trusted to, and depended on what other men had done; stole away his neighbour's words, reaped that for which he had not laboured, and entered into the labours of others; and being afraid of difficulties, indulged himself in ease and pleasure, served his own belly, and not the Lord Jesus; he gratified his worldly lusts, and had no regard to his master's interest.

Thou knowest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: not granting that he was such an one, and that his servant knew him to be such, and had given a true character of him; but supposing he was such a person he had wickedly represented him to be; he turns the argument upon him, that therefore he must needs know, that he expected to have had his money improved, and to have received it with an increase; and that upon such a consideration he ought to have been the more diligent and industrious, in using and improving his talent, and not to have indulged sloth, and idleness; and thus he convicts, judges, and condemns him, as a wicked, slothful servant, by his own words.

Matthew 25:27

Ver. 27. Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers,.... "Trapezites", or "tablets", the same whom the Jews {z} call Mynxlwv, and is the same word which is here used in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; who were so called from the table that stood before them, on which they told, and paid their money, and the exchange and use: hence all the Oriental versions here read, "thou shouldest have put my money to, or on the table"; put it into the hand of these bankers, where it would have been not only safe, as in the earth, where it was hid, but also would have made some increase, and would have been returned with profit;

and then at my coming I should have received my own with usury: this is said not so much to encourage usury, though it may be lawful; and it seems to have been a practice in those times to put money out to use upon a reasonable interest; but to reprove the sloth and inactivity of this servant, upon his own reasonings, and the character he had given of his master.

{z} Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 9. & c. 2. sect. 1.

Matthew 25:28

Ver. 28. Take therefore the talent from him,.... This shows it was not special grace, which is intended by the talent; for the gift and calling of special grace are without repentance, and are that good part which shall not be taken away: but gifts may fail, cease, and vanish; they may be taken away from men, and men from them; a right arm may be clean dried up, and a right eye be utterly darkened:

and give it unto him which hath ten talents; for to diligent and laborious ministers of the word, more spiritual light and knowledge is given: but this is not to be understood, as though other men's gifts are, properly speaking, taken away from them, and bestowed on them; but that their gifts appear the more illustrious through the slothfulness of others.

Matthew 25:29

Ver. 29. For unto everyone that hath shall be given,.... This seems to be a frequent saying of Christ's, or a common maxim of his, which he made use of on different occasions; See Gill on "Mt 13:12", and accords with some usual sayings, and proverbial expressions of the Jews; who say {a}, that "the blessed God does not give wisdom, but to him that has wisdom"; and of a man, in other respects, they use this is a common proverb {b},

"if he adds or increases, they add unto him, and if he lessens, they lessen to him:"

and so here; he that has gifts; and talents, shall have an addition to them.

And he shall have abundance of spiritual gifts and knowledge;

but from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he hath. The Vulgate Latin reads, "that which he seemed to have", and so reads Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and so it is read in some Greek copies; though it seems to be taken out of ***Lu 8:18***.

{a} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 55. 1. Zohar in Exod. fol. 89. 4. {b} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 30. fol. 170. 2.

Matthew 25:30

Ver. 30. And cast ye the unprofitable servant,.... All the servants of Christ are unprofitable with respect to God; for no man can be profitable to him, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself, or others; or in a way of merit, since when they have done the most and best, they have done but their duty: but this man was unprofitable with respect to himself, having not improved the gift and talent bestowed on him; and with respect to men, being of no use for the conversion of sinners, or the comfort of saints, or the edifying of the body of Christ; and brought no honour to his master, and was of no service for the spreading of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his kingdom and interest; and therefore, as one good for nothing, the ministering angels are bid to take him, and cast him

into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth: he shall be turned out of doors into outer darkness, to be a companion of other unhappy creatures; who are also without, bewailing their miserable condition, and reflecting on their past conduct; whilst faithful, diligent, and laborious servants will be within, partaking of a rich entertainment, prepared by their Lord, accompanied with joy unspeakable, and full of glory:
See Gill on "Mt 8:12".

Matthew 25:31

Ver. 31. When the son of man shall come in his glory,.... What is before signified in the two preceding parables, is here clearly and distinctly represented without a parable: and it should be observed, that as the foregoing parables only regard the Gospel church state, and the ministers and members of it, good and bad, or all sorts of Christian professors; so this account of the last judgment only concerns them; for though all men that ever have been, are, or shall be in every nation under heaven, from Adam to the last man that will be born, will be judged; yet the part or it here described, though it gives a general and lively idea of the whole, only regards the judgment and final state of such who have made a profession of the Christian religion. The judge himself is first described, who is said to be "the son of man"; a name by which Christ is frequently called, and by which he styles himself in his state of humiliation; expressing both the truth of his human nature, and the meanness of it in that state: but as despicable as he appeared then in human nature, in the form of a servant, a man of sorrows, despised by men, and subject to sufferings and death; yet when he comes again, it will be in another guise manner: he will appear "in his glory"; in the glory of the only begotten of the Father, in the glory of his proper deity, in the glory of all the perfections of the divine nature; which glory was, in a great measure, and from most persons, hid in the days of his flesh, though he was in the form of God, and equal with him. He will also come in his mediatorial glory, which he had with the Father before the world was, and with all the honour, power, and authority of the judge of the whole earth, to execute judgment upon men; and in the glory of his human nature, of which his transfiguration on the mount was a pledge and emblem.

And all the holy angels with him; which splendid retinue will add to the glory of his appearance; and who will accompany him not merely, or only as his attendants, to make the solemnity more grand, pompous, and magnificent; but as ministering spirits, who will be employed by him in gathering all before him, separating the wicked the good, and conducting each to their several apartments of bliss or woe: and when he thus appears,

then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; or glorious throne, upon the clouds of heaven, where he will sit as judge, and be visible to all.

Matthew 25:32

Ver. 32. And before him shall be gathered all nations..... That is, all that have professed the Christian religion in all the nations of the world, whether Jews or Gentiles, high or low, rich or poor, wise and foolish, such as have had greater or lesser talents; though it is also true of every individual of mankind of every nation, tribe and family, of every sex, age, and state, that ever has been, is, or will be. Yet Christian professors seem only here intended, as the following distinction of them, their final state, and the reasons of it show. This collection of them before Christ, the righteous judge, will be made by the holy angels, who will come with him for this purpose; and being mighty, as they are, will be able to accomplish great a work; and especially as being under the direction, influence, and authority of so divine, glorious, and illustrious a person, as the son of man will then to all appear to be.

And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: they shall be gathered before him, as they were together in their visible church state, as being all under a profession of religion; some wise, some foolish virgins; some sheep, and others goats; some industrious, diligent, faithful, and laborious servants; others wicked, slothful, and unprofitable ones; many of whom pass undistinguished and undiscovered now: but then the judge, who is of quick understanding, will easily discern the one from the other; such as have the oil of grace in the vessels of their hearts, together with their lamps, from such as have only the outward visible lamp of a profession, but destitute of the grace of God; and good and faithful servants, who have made a right use of their gifts, from such who have been negligent, careless, and remiss; and though these have been folded together, sheep and goats, in the sheepfold of the church, where they have all bore the character of the sheep of Christ; yet now when the chief shepherd appears, who knows his own sheep, and calls them by name, he will as easily separate the one from the other, and more so, than any shepherd, among men, can part a flock consisting of sheep and goats. Hypocrites in Zion shall now be no more, nor sinners stand any longer in the congregation of the righteous, nor both together as one body, and on one side in judgment.

Matthew 25:33

Ver. 33. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand,.... That is, the elect of God, and true believers, such as have the grace of God truly implanted in them; the sheep the Father gave unto Christ, and made his care and charge, whom he, as the good shepherd, laid down his life for; and who know his voice in effectual calling, and follow him in the way of his ordinances and appointments; and are comparable to sheep for their meekness and innocence, their simplicity and usefulness, and their harmless and inoffensive lives, and conversations: these Christ will set on his right hand, as a token of his affection for them, and a mark of respect and honour shown them, and as a pledge of that exaltation and glory he will be about to raise them to.

But the goats on the left; that is, the foolish virgins, wicked, and slothful servants, graceless professors, who, because of the impurity of their hearts, the filthiness of their lives, and their offensiveness to Christ, are compared to goats: these he will place at his left hand, in token of his disaffection for them, as a brand of disgrace upon them, and as an intimation of that dishonour, and miserable condition they will quickly be in. These different situations plainly pre-signify how things will go with each, that one will be acquitted, and made happy, the other will be condemned, and become miserable. Agreeable to which the Jews say {c}, that there is a right hand and a left hand with the Lord: they that are on the right hand, are such as have done well, and are twkzl, "for absolution"; and they that are on the left hand are criminals, and are hbwxl, "for condemnation". Some think the allusion is to the two Scribes in the sanhedrim, who stood before the judges, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, and wrote the sentences; the one of those that were acquitted, and the other of those that were condemned {d}.

{c} Jarchi in Gen. i. 26. Kimchi in 1 Kings xxii. 19. Lex. Cabalist. p. 132. Zohar in Numb. fol. 93. 4. {d} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 3. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 9. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. affirm. 97.

Matthew 25:34

Ver. 34. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand,.... Before Christ is called "the son of man", now "the king"; who is not only king of saints, but king of the whole world; the king of kings, and lord of lords, the judge of all the earth; he appearing in glory and majesty, sitting on a throne of glory, being attended with his glorious angels, and all nations gathered before him, waiting for the final sentence to be pronounced upon them by him; and who accordingly begins with those on his right hand, his sheep, the chosen, redeemed, and called of God, saying to them,

come. The Arabic version adds, "to me": by such a phrase he sometimes had invited, and encouraged poor sensible sinners: to come and partake of his grace: and here by it he calls the righteous, and bespeaks them in the most tender and endearing manner, and yet with the majesty of a king, and the authority of a judge, to come near unto him, with intrepidity and confidence, and take possession of a glorious kingdom; bestowing on them this high and illustrious character,

ye blessed of my Father: so called, partly because they were his Father's, not only by creation, but by his choice of them to grace and glory, and therefore most happy and blessed; and partly, because, as such a choice shows, they were dear unto him, highly in his favour, and loved by him with an everlasting love; as also, because they were blessed by him as the Father of Christ, and theirs, with all the spiritual blessings of the everlasting covenant in him; with the pardon of their sins, the justification of their persons, the sanctification of their nature, with adoption, and a right unto, and meetness for the eternal inheritance: hence it follows,

inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. The happiness of the saints, in the other world, is here expressed by a "kingdom", because of the glory, riches, grandeur, and magnificence of it; as it is sometimes by a crown, for the same reason, suitable to their character and dignity, who are made kings and priests by Christ: and is likewise represented as an "inheritance", as it is elsewhere, being not acquired by industry, or obtained by merit; but is the gift of their heavenly Father, and in right of adoption, as the children of God, being made such by his free grace and favour, and denotes the stability and perpetuity of it: and this is said to be prepared, not only appointed and designed in the council purposes, and decrees of God, but got ready; it is a kingdom erected, an inheritance reserved, and a crown of righteousness laid up in heaven; a glory really provided and secured in an everlasting covenant, and that for you: for some, and not others; for the sheep on the right hand, and not the goats on the left; for the peculiar favourites of God, the objects of his love and choice, the redeemed of the Lamb, and that are born of the Spirit; and that for them,

from the foundation of the world. The place itself, where this happiness is to be enjoyed, was actually made on the first day of the creation, when the heavens were formed, and the foundations of the earth were laid, and the glory itself long before. The Ethiopic version here reads, "before the world"; and the Persic, "before the foundation of the world was laid"; and Grotius himself owns, that the phrase is the same as "before the foundation of the world"; and Dr. Hammond's paraphrase is, "before all eternity": for as early were these persons, the beloved, the chosen, and blessed of the Father: so that this glory must be of free grace, and not merit, or owing to any works of righteousness done by men; since it was not only designed and appointed, but prepared and laid up for persons before they had a being, and had done neither good nor evil. The Jews {e} speak of the law being an inheritance for all Israel, from the six days of the creation; but a much more glorious one is here spoken of: nearer to this is what they say {f} that Bathsheba was appointed to be David's wife from the day that the world was created; and add, but the mystery of the thing is, alyeld atwklm, "the kingdom that is above", which is called by her name. So in 2 Esdras, "the kingdom is already prepared for you":

"Go, and ye shall receive: pray for few days unto you, that they may be shortened: the kingdom is already prepared for you: watch." (2 Esdras 2:13)

{e} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2. {f} Zohar in Exod. fol. 44. 3.

Matthew 25:35

Ver. 35. For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat..... This, and the following, are not mentioned as causes of the kingdom being prepared for them, or of their being entitled to it, or of their being put into the possession of it; but as descriptive of their characters, and as testimonies and evidences of the grace of God in them; by which it appeared, that they were the blessed of his Father, having his special grace vouchsafed unto them; and that they were the children of God, to whom the inheritance of the kingdom belonged, and for whom it was prepared: for what was done by them in time, could never be the cause of what was done for them in eternity, or before, or from the foundation of the world; nor is there any proportion between a kingdom, and such services as here mentioned: and besides, this kingdom is by inheritance, and not, merit; is prepared by God, and not procured by men, and was got ready for them before they had a being; and therefore could not be caused by any actions of theirs: what is here, and in the following instances, said to be done to Christ, is not to be understood of him personally, but mystically, of the members of his body, as he himself explains it, *Mt 25:40*, and the sense is, that when some of the servants of Christ, ministers, or private Christians, were in distress for want of the necessaries of life, these gracious souls supplied them with food; which to do, especially in a time of persecution, showed not only love to Christ, but great faith in him, and that they were not ashamed of him, and their profession of him, nor of his poor ministers and members; for this was done by them, not as the effect of mere humanity to the poor in general, but as an instance of affection to Christ's poor; and was done for his sake, and because they belonged to him, were preachers of his Gospel, and professors of his name; and therefore was considered as if done to himself personally:

I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; not gall and vinegar, as the Jews did, but a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, prophet, and righteous person, and because belonging to Christ: this is taken notice of with acceptance by him; and such shall not lose the reward of grace. The Targumist {g} has a passage which may be compared with this:

"Solomon said, by a spirit of prophecy from before the Lord; the Lord of the world shall say to all the righteous in the presence of everyone, go taste, with joy, thy bread which is returned unto thee, for thy bread which thou hast given to the poor and needy, who were hungry; and drink with a good heart the wine which is laid up for thee in paradise, instead of thy wine, which thou hast mingled for the poor and needy, who were thirsty; for, lo! now are thy works accepted before the Lord."

I was a stranger, and ye took me in, or "gathered me": an Hebraism; see *2Sa 11:27*, and the Septuagint there. Such servants of Christ as were obliged to quit their habitations through the violence of persecution, and were scattered abroad, or went about preaching the Gospel; such were by these righteous ones taken into their houses, and provided for with food and lodging, and every convenience of life; as they were by Gaius, and others.

{g} Zohar in Eccl. ix. 7.

Matthew 25:36

Ver. 36. Naked, and ye clothed me,.... For in such a condition sometimes are the dear children of God, and members of Christ; see ***1Co 4:11***, when others, who, Dorcas like, have made coats and garments for them, and clothed them with them; and which will be shown another day, or taken notice of as the fruits, and so evidences of the grace of God in them.

I was sick, and ye visited me, or "looked after me", or "over me": or, as the Persic version renders it, ye had the care of me; and which is the true sense and import of the word: for it not only intends visits paid to sick persons in a Christian manner, relieving them with their substance, giving good advice, or speaking comfortable words to them; but attending them, and waiting on them, and doing such things for them which, in their weak state, they are not capable of doing for themselves. Visiting of the sick was reckoned, by the Jews, a very worthy action: they speak great things of it, and as what will be highly rewarded hereafter.

"Six things, (they say {h},) a man eats the fruit of them in this world, and there is a stable portion for him in the world to come:"

and the two first of them are, Nyxrwa tonkh "the taking in of travellers", or "strangers", which is mentioned in the preceding verse, and Mylwx rwqyb, "visiting the sick". One of their Rabbins {i} says,

"he that does not visit the sick, is as if he shed blood: says another, he that visits the sick is the cause of his living; and he that does not visit the sick, is the cause of his death: and, says a third, whoever visits the sick shall be preserved from the damnation of hell."

I was in prison, and ye came unto me: which has been often the lot of the saints, as it was frequently of the Apostle Paul, who had this respect shown him by many of the people of God, as by the house of Onesiphorus, and by Epaphroditus, who brought him a present from the Philippians, when in bonds; and which will be remembered another day.

{h} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol, 127. {i} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 40. 1. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 14. sect. 4, 5, 6.

Matthew 25:37

Ver. 37. Then shall the righteous answer him,.... From whence it appears, that only such shall be at the right hand of Christ, who are righteous persons, who have the righteousness of Christ imputed to them; and, in consequence of which, are created anew unto righteousness and true holiness; and, under the influence of divine grace, live soberly, righteously, and godly: and those, upon hearing such works ascribed unto them, will, with wonder and astonishment, reply,

saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? which answer arises partly from not attending to, or thoroughly understanding the words of Christ, which they seem to take in such sense, as if he meant these things were personally done to him; whereas the far greater part of them had never seen him in the flesh, and much less in such circumstances as required such things to be done to him; and partly from surprise and astonishment, that he should take notice of such mean actions, and so highly extol them, and graciously reward them; as also from a forgetfulness of them, their left hand not knowing what their right hand had done: which shows, that they had put no confidence in their works, or depended upon them for their justification before God, and acceptance, with him; these were out of sight, and mind; their only trust being in the person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ.

Matthew 25:38

Ver. 38. When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in?.... As they had never seen him hungry and thirsty, in his own person, though he was both in the days of his flesh, and were ministered to, both by angels, and by good women out of their substance; so they had never seen him a stranger, and took him into their houses; yet they had, seen him hungry and thirsty, and as a stranger in his members, and had done these good offices to him in them, and to them for his sake:

or naked, and clothed thee? for so Christ in person never was, until stripped of his raiment by the soldiers, and officers; but they had seen many of his poor saints without clothing, and had covered their nakedness.

Matthew 25:39

Ver. 39. Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?] For though he bore the sicknesses of his people, yet we never read of his being sick himself, nor was he ever cast into prison; but this has been the case of many of his servants, as John the Baptist, Peter, and Paul, and multitudes of others, who have been tenderly and affectionately used by their fellow Christians.

Matthew 25:40

Ver. 40. And the king shall answer, and say unto them,.... Christ, though a king, and now appearing in great glory and majesty, yet such will be his goodness and condescension, as to return an answer to the queries of his people; blushing and astonished at his notice of their poor services, which they know to be so imperfect, and are always ready to own themselves unprofitable servants; and this he will do in the following manner:

verily I say unto you; a way of speaking often used by him, when here on earth, when he, in the strongest manner, would asseverate anything as truth, and remove all doubt and hesitation about it.

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me: which is to be understood, not in so limited a sense, as to regard only the apostles, and the least of them, for these were not the only brethren of Christ; nor in so large a sense, as to include all in human nature; but the saints only, the children of God, and household of faith: for though acts of charity and humanity are to be done to all men, yet especially to these; and indeed, these only can be considered as the brethren of Christ, who are born of God, and do the will of Christ; for such he accounts his mother, brethren, and sisters; and who are not only of the same human nature, but in the same covenant with him, and the sons of God, not by nature, as he is the Son of God, but by adoption, and so are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: now he that does any of the above acts of kindness to these "brethren" of Christ, and because they stand in such a relation to him, even the "least" of them: though he is not an apostle, or a martyr, or a preacher of the Gospel, or has any considerable gifts and abilities for usefulness, but is a weak believer in spiritual things, as well as poor in temporal things; and though it is but to "one" of these opportunity and circumstances not allowing it to be done to more; yet as such is the humility and condescension of this great king, as to account such mean persons his brethren; such also is his grace and goodness, as to reckon every instance of kindness and respect shown to them, as done to himself in person; and will take notice of it, accept and reward it, as if it had been so done.

Matthew 25:41

Ver. 41. Then shall he also say unto them on his left hand,.... The goats, the foolish virgins, and slothful and wicked servants,

depart from me: a like expression is used by him to preachers of the word, and professors of religion, that are mere nominal ones. ***Mt 7:23*** and such are intended here, who professed to be on Christ's side, had been in his visible church, and hoped to have been with him for ever; but having nothing but the lamp of a profession, and some external works to trust to, they are bid to be gone from him; they are banished his presence, which is what is commonly called the punishment of loss; the loss of the presence of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, angels, and saints; and is thought to be greater than the punishment of sense, hereafter expressed. The character given of them, which is the reverse of the former, is,

ye cursed; for having sinned against God, and his righteous law, they are cursed by it, which curses everyone that is under its works, as these were, and do not perfectly fulfil whatsoever it requires; and so were justly rejected of God, and hated by him: and therefore are condemned and sent,

into everlasting fire: by which is meant, the wrath of God; and the phrase expresses the intolerable fierceness of it, and its perpetual continuance; the sense of which, without intermission, will ever be felt in the conscience; and is the punishment of sense, the wicked will for ever endure: it may also intend the pit and prison of hell, where these torments will be for ever inflicted; and so hell is called by the Jews {k}, the hell Mle twdyqy, "eternal fire", or "everlasting burning": and is here said to be

prepared for the devil and his angels; for Satan, or Beelzebub, the prince of devils, and all his principalities and powers under him: it is not said to be prepared for these persons, though it was, and who were foreordained to this condemnation, but for the devil and his angels; showing, that the same punishment will be inflicted on hypocrites and carnal professors, as on the devils themselves; and it is indeed of such, that the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings are spoken, in *Isa 33:14*, to which this passage seems to have some respect; for no where else is mention made of this everlasting fire: it is not said neither when it was prepared. It is a notion of the Jews {l}, that the angels were created on the second day; and it should seem by them, that they fell the same day; hence it is a prevailing opinion among them {m}, that hell was made on the second day of the creation; though at, other times, they reckon hell among the seven things which were created before the world was {n}, and which may be reconciled together: for as heaven, the place of the saints' happiness, was prepared from the foundation of the world, or on the first day of its creation, though the happiness itself was provided long before; so hell, the place of the torments of the devils and wicked, though it was not made or prepared until the second day of the creation, when, according to this opinion, the angels were made and fell; yet the punishment they were to endure there, was appointed before the world was; and so hell is said to Nymle Nm ardom, "be ordained from eternity", because of their sins {o}.

{k} Targum in Isa. xxxiii. 14. {l} Targum Jon. in Gen. i. 26. Pirke Eliezer, c. 4. {m} Targum in Cant. viii. 6. T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 54. 1. Zohar in Gen. fol. 13. 3. & 30. 2. & in Exod. fol. 61. 4. & in Deut. fol. 120. 1. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 4. 1. & sect. 21. fol. 19. 1. Shemot Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 101. 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 2. & 121. & 1. 2. & 130. 3. {n} T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 54. 1. & Nedar. fol. 39. 2. Zokar in Lev. fol. 14. 4. Targum Jon. in Gen iii. 24. {o} Targum in Isa. xxx. 33.

Matthew 25:42

Ver. 42. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat,.... Hence it appears, that these were such as dwelt among Christians, and professed the Christian name, and yet disregarded the poor members of Christ in distress, when it was in the power of their hands to help them; but when they were hungry and ready to starve for want of food, did not communicate to them for Christ's sake; which showed I that they had no true faith in him, and love to him, and therefore are justly condemned by him; whereas such who never knew Christ, nor any of his people, or any obligation they were under to regard any for Christ's sake, these will never be condemned for the non-performance of these things:

I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; as not the least morsel of bread to eat, so not so much as a cup of cold water to drink; which with what follows, are manifest tokens and evidences, that they did not belong to Christ, were not true believers in him, nor had they any real love to him: the grace of God was not in them, and therefore had neither right unto, nor meetness for, the kingdom of heaven; but were righteously banished from the presence of the Lord, and sent to dwell among everlasting burnings; for righteous it was, that such as they who would not show any love to him here, should not dwell with him for ever hereafter.

Matthew 25:43

Ver. 43. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in,.... Did not take the poor members of Christ into their houses, and take care of them in their families, when they were obliged to flee from their places of abode, or wandered about preaching the Gospel; and who must have perished in the streets, if others, that bore the Christian name; had not been more compassionate than they:

naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not: their conduct, behaviour, and character, are just the reverse of the righteous, and therefore it is no wonder that their sentence is different.

Matthew 25:44

Ver. 44. Then shall they also answer him,.... As well as the righteous, being likewise astonished at what he had said, but on a different account;

saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to thee? Hence it is clear again, that these men were nominal Christians, who had made a profession of Christ: they own him as Lord; and suggest that they had seen him, and known him, though never in such circumstances; for if they had, such was their love to him, and great respect and veneration for him, as they pretend, they would, to be sure, have ministered unto him; and if ever they had seen him in such a case, which they could not call to mind, they could not believe, but they must have supplied him with all things necessary and convenient.

Matthew 25:45

Ver. 45. Then shall he answer them,.... With a stern countenance, in great resentment, as one highly offended, and with the authority of a judge:

saying, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me: since they had given no food not to the least of his brethren and friends that stood at his right hand, no not to anyone of them; not so much as the least bit of bread to them when hungry, nor a drop of water to them when thirsty; had not taken them into their houses, nor provided the meanest lodging for them, when they were exposed in the streets to the inclemency of the weather, and insults of men; nor gave them the least rag to cover them, when they were almost naked, and ready to perish; nor did they minister to their wants, either physical, or food, or give attendance, when on sick beds, and in prison houses; therefore he reckoned this neglect of them, and want of compassion to them, all one as if he himself in person had been so treated: and if then judgment will righteously proceed against men for sins of omission, much more for sins of commission; and if such will be dealt with in this manner, who have taken no notice, and shown no respect to the members of Christ; what will the end be of those, who are injurious to them, their persons, and properties, and persecute and kill them?

Matthew 25:46

Ver. 46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment,.... Their excuses will not be regarded, their pleas will be of no avail, their pretensions to interest in Christ, and love to him, will be set aside; the sentence will remain irrevocable, and there will be no appeal from it, for there is no higher tribunal to bring the cause before; judgment having passed, the execution of it immediately follows: these goats, or formal professors, shall be obliged, whether they will or not, to depart from the presence of Christ; the angels will be ordered to take and cast them into everlasting burnings; they will be driven by them into hell, the place appointed for them; where they shall endure yxun vnwe "everlasting punishment", as the Jews {p} also express it; and that both in soul and body, as the just desert of sin; which being committed against an infinite God, cannot be satisfied for by a finite creature; who therefore must ever bear the punishment of it, because its pollution and guilt will always remain:

but the righteous into life eternal; such as are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and who, though they have done works of righteousness under the influence, and by the assistance of the grace of God, yet have not depended upon them, but upon Christ, for life and salvation: these shall go into heaven, the place appointed for them, to enjoy that eternal life in soul and body, which is the free gift of God, through Christ; and will be a life free from all the sorrows of the present one; a life of perfect holiness and knowledge, and inconceivable pleasure; a life of vision of God, and communion with him, and which will continue for ever; and which ascertains the eternity of the punishment of the wicked: for as the happiness of the righteous will be eternal, the punishment of the wicked will be so too; for no reason can be given why the word which is the same in both clauses, should be taken in the one for a limited time, and in the other for an eternal duration. The Jews have a saying {q} which agrees with this last clause, "the world to come is not made but for the righteous".

{p} Caphtor, fol. 113. 1. Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 71. 1. {q} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol, 47. 1.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**

Matthew 26:1

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings,.... Meaning either all that are recorded by this evangelist, all the sermons and discourses of Christ, delivered both to the people of the Jews, and to his disciples; his conversation with the former, and his divine instructions and prudent advice to the latter, together with all his excellent parables, which are largely related in this book; or else what is said in the two preceding chapters, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world, the state of the church, and conduct of his servants to the end of time, expressed in the parables of the virgins and talents, and concerning the last judgment and final state of all men:

he said unto his disciples; who now were alone with him: having finished his prophetic, and being about to enter on his priestly office, he gives his disciples some intimations of its near approach.

Matthew 26:2

Ver. 2. Ye know that after two days is [the feast of] the passover,.... Which was kept in commemoration of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt; and was typical of Christ the passover, who was now to be sacrificed for his people. This was said on Tuesday, and on the Thursday following, the passover began. Christ speaks of this as a thing well known to the disciples, as it must be, since it always began on a certain day, the fourteenth of the month Nisan; which month answered to part of our March, and part of our April; and though there was very frequently an intercalation of a whole month in a year, made by the sanhedrim, to keep their festivals regularly in the proper season of the year; yet previous public notice was always given of this, either by fixing a paper upon the door of the sanhedrim {r}, signifying such an intercalation made, which served for the inhabitants of Jerusalem; or by sending messengers with letters into all distant places {s}, acquainting them with it. So that the times of these festivals were always well known; even to the common people:

and the son of man is betrayed to be crucified; it must not be thought that this was equally known by the disciples, as the former; for though they might know, or at least remember, that Christ had told them that he should suffer many things of the priests, Scribes, and elders, who would deliver him to the Gentiles, to be crucified; yet might not understand that this passover was to be the time, when this should be done: by "the son of man", Christ means himself, who was truly and really man, the seed of the woman, the son of Abraham and of David; a character by which the Messiah is described in the Old Testament, *Ps 80:17* ***Da 7:13***, and hence frequently used by Christ of himself; which, as it expresses the truth of his human nature, so the weaknesses and infirmities he bore in it; and is very properly used here, when he is speaking of his being to be betrayed and crucified. What he says of himself is, that he is "betrayed"; that is, is to be betrayed, or will be betrayed, meaning at the passover, which was to be in two days time. Christ speaks of his being betrayed, as if it was already done; not only because it was so near being done, there being but two days before it would be done; but because it was a sure and certain thing, being determined in the purpose of God, and foretold in prophecy that it should be; and besides, Judas had now resolved upon it within himself, and was forming a scheme how to bring it about. And this respects not only the act of Judas in betraying him into the hands of the chief priests, but also the delivery, as the word here used signifies, of him by them, to the Roman governors; for they, as Stephen says, were also his betrayers and murderers; yea, it may include the delivery of him by Pilate, to the Jews and Roman soldiers; and the rather, because it follows, "to be crucified"; which was a Roman, and not a Jewish punishment. This was typified by the lifting up the brazen serpent on a pole, and foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament, *Ps 22:16*, and predicted by Christ himself, sometimes more covertly, *Joh 12:32*, and sometimes in express words, *Mt 20:19*, and was a very painful and shameful death, and which showed him to be made a curse for his people. It appears from hence; that the crucifixion and death of Christ, were not casual and contingent events, but were determined by the counsel of God, with all circumstances attending: the betraying and delivery of him were by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; and not only his death, but the manner of it by crucifixion, was pointed out in prophecy, and was a certain thing; and the very time of his death was fixed; which shows the early concern of God for the salvation of his people, and his wonderful grace and mercy to them: and it is clear from hence, that Christ had perfect knowledge of all this: he knew not only that he should be betrayed, but he knew from the beginning who would betray him; he not only knew that he should die, but he knew what kind of death he should die, even the death of the cross; and he knew the exact time when he should die, that it would be at the following passover, which was just at hand; and he had suggested this to his disciples, and therefore he speaks of it as a thing known unto them; at least what they might have known, and concluded from what he had said to them, *Mt 20:18*, and the whole is a considerable proof of his being God omniscient. And he thought fit to put his disciples in mind of it, because the time drew nigh; that their memories being refreshed with it, they might be prepared for it, and not be surprised, shocked, and offended at it, when it came to pass; which shows the tender concern our Lord had for them.

{r} Targum in Cant. vii. 4. {s} Maimon Hilch. Kiddush Hachodesh, c. 4. sect. 17.

Matthew 26:3

Ver. 3. Then assembled together the chief priests,.... About the same time, two days before the passover, that Jesus said these things to his disciples, as is plain from *Mr 14:1*. By "the chief priests" are meant, either such who had been high priests, or such as were the heads of the twenty four courses of the priests; or rather, the principal men of the priesthood, who were chosen out of the rest, to be members of the great sanhedrim:

and the Scribes; the doctors, of the law, who wrote out copies of the law for the people, and interpreted it to them in a literal way: this clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, and in the Alexandrian copy, and some others, but is retained in, the Syriac version; and no doubt, but these men had a place in this grand council:

and the elders of the people; these were the civil magistrates; so that this assembly consisted both of ecclesiastics and laymen, as the sanhedrim did, of priests, Levites, and Israelites {t}: these came unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas; his name was Joseph, but his surname Caiaphas; a word not of the same original with Cephas, as Camero thought; for these two words begin with different letters, nor are the rest the same. Now, though a king of Israel might not sit in the sanhedrim, yet an high priest might, provided he was sufficiently qualified with wisdom {u}. The president of this grand council at this time, should be Rabban Gamaliel, Paul's master; unless it was Caiaphas, at whose house they were: how they came to meet at the high priest's palace, deserves inquiry; since their proper and usual place of meeting, was a chamber in the temple, called Gazith {w}, or the paved chamber: now let it be observed, that according to the accounts the Jews themselves give, the sanhedrim removed from this chamber, forty years before the destruction of the temple {x}; and which, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, was about a year and a half before the death of Christ; and as others say {y}, four years; at least three years and a half before that time: but then, though the sanhedrim removed from the paved chamber, they met at Chanoth, "the sheds", which was a place within the bounds of the temple, in the mountain of the house; and the question still returns, how came it to pass they did not meet there? To me the reason seems to be, that they chose not to meet there, but at the high priest's palace, because of privacy, that it might not be known they were together, and about any affair of moment; and particularly this: the high priest's house was always in Jerusalem, and he never removed from thence; nor did he go from the temple thither only in the night, or an hour or two in the day; for he had an apartment in the temple, which was called the chamber of the high priest, where he was the whole day {z}.

{t} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1. {u} lb. sect. 4. {w} Misn. Middot c. 5. sect. 3. {x} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 15. 1. Avoda Zara, fol. 8. 2. Sanhedrin, fol. 41. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 14. sect. 13. Juchasin, fol. 21. 1. {y} Edzard. not. in Avoda Zara, c. 1. p. 236. {z} Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 7.

Matthew 26:4

Ver. 4. And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety,.... The Jews had often attempted his life, but he escaped out of their hands; they had sent officers to apprehend him, but to no purpose; they therefore meet and consult together, to form some scheme, and make use of some stratagem, that they might lay hold on him, and keep him; they were for doing this in the most private manner they could:

and kill him; not with their own hands, nor privately; but their scheme was to apprehend him privately, by some secret artifice, and then deliver him to the Roman governor; to put him to death according to law, publicly, for crimes they had to charge him with; hereby ***Ps 2:2***, had its accomplishment, at least in part.

Matthew 26:5

Ver. 5. And they said, not on the feast day,.... Upon mature deliberation, it was an agreed point with them, at least it was carried by a majority, that nothing of this kind should be attempted to be done on the feast day, on any of the days of the feast of passover, which was now at hand; though this was contrary to their common rules and usages: for, a person that sinned presumptuously, and such an one they accounted Jesus to be, they say {a},

"they do not put him to death by the order of the sanhedrim of his own city, nor by the sanhedrim of Jabneh; but they bring him up to the great sanhedrim at Jerusalem, and keep him "until the feast", and put him to death, lgrb, "on a feast day"; as it is said, *De 17:13*, "and all the people shall hear and fear", &c."

But what influenced them at this time to take another course, is the reason following;

lest there be an uproar among the people: they had no fear of God before their eyes, or in their hearts, only the fear of the people; many of whom believed in Christ, and others that did not, yet had a great veneration for him, having seen his miracles, and received favours from him; themselves, or their friends and relations, being cured by him of various diseases: besides, at the feast, people from all parts came up to Jerusalem; and they knew that large numbers from Galilee, where he had the greatest interest, would be present; and they feared, should they attempt anything of this nature at this time, the people would rise, and rescue him out of their hands. But God had determined otherwise, and his counsel shall stand; it was his pleasure, that he should be put to death at this feast, that the truth might answer the type of the passover lamb; and that all Israel, whose males now met together, might be witnesses of it: and so it was, that though these men had concluded otherwise in their council; yet an opportunity offering by Judas, to get him into their hands, they embrace it; and risk the danger of the people's uprising, who they found compliant enough to their wishes.

{a} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 4. Maimon. Hilch. Memarim, c. 3. sect 8.

Matthew ***26:6***

Ver. 6. Now when Jesus was in Bethany,.... Which was about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, *Joh 11:18*, or about two miles from it. The time of Christ's death being at hand, he keeps nigh to Jerusalem, where he was to suffer and die, in the room and stead of sinners:

in the house of Simon the leper; so called, to distinguish him from others of the name. This epithet was either a family one, some person of note in it having been a leper; or else he is so named, because he himself had been one, but was now cured; though the reason interpreters give for this, that otherwise he would not have been suffered to live in a town, is not a good one; for lepers, according to the Jewish {b} canons, were only forbid Jerusalem, and towns and cities that were walled round, and not others, such as the village of Bethany. There were many lepers healed by Christ, which, among other things, was an evidence of his being the Messiah, and a proof of his deity, and this Simon was one of them; whether the same mention is made of in ***Mt 8:1***, is not certain, nor very probable; since that man lived in Galilee, at, or near Capernaum; this at Bethany, near Jerusalem: however, he was one of those lepers that had a sense of his mercy, and was grateful for it, as appears by his entertaining Christ at his house; and may teach us thankfulness to Christ, who has healed all our diseases; and particularly, the spreading leprosy of sin, with which all the powers and faculties of our souls were infected; and which was not in our own power, or any creature's, to cure, but his blood cleanses from it: and it may be observed, that Christ goes in and dwells with such whom he heals, and with such he is always welcome.

{b} Misn. Celim, c. 1. sect. 7. Maimon. Beth Hamikdash, c. 3. sect. 8.

Matthew ***26:7***

Ver. 7. There came unto him a woman,.... By some thought to be the same that is spoken of in ***Lu 7:37***, and by most, to be Mary, the sister of Lazarus, *Joh 12:3*, which may be true; for it is possible that one and the same woman, might perform a like action at different times; for to neither of the above, at the same time, will the following agree: not to the former, for though that was done in the house of one Simon, yet not Simon the leper, but Simon the Pharisee; who though he had a particular respect for Christ, which few of that sect had, yet appeared to be then of a Pharisaical spirit; that was done in Galilee, this near Jerusalem in Bethany; the woman there anointed the feet of Christ, but this woman poured the ointment on his head; nor did any such conversation as here follow upon it, between Christ and his disciples; but what discourse was had on that occasion, was between Simon and Christ. Not to the latter, for that does not appear to be done in Simon's house, but rather in the house of Lazarus; no mention is made of the alabaster box, nor was the ointment poured on his head, but on his feet; besides, that was done six days before the passover, whereas this was but two; moreover, Judas only objected to that, but the disciples in general had indignation at this; and though the objections to it, and Christ's defence of it, are much in the same language, in one place as in the other, yet it was no unusual thing with Christ, to make use of the same words on a like incident, or when the same objections were made. The fact here recorded, is the same as in *Mr 14:3*, where it stands in the same order as here, and seems to have been done at the supper, of which mention is made, *Joh 13:2*, when Satan entered into Judas, and put it into his heart to betray his master, the account of which follows this here:

having an alabaster box of very precious ointment; Mark calls it, "ointment of spikenard", *Mr 14:3*, which was very odorous, and of a very fragrant smell; see ***So 1:12***. Some there render it, "pure nard"; unadulterated, unmixed, sincere and genuine; others, "liquid nard", which was drinkable, and easy to be poured out; and some "Pistic" nard, so called, either from "Pista", the name of a place in India, from whence it was brought, as some think; or as Dr. Lightfoot, from aqtoyp, "Pistaca", which is the maste of a tree {c}, and of which, among other things, Pliny says {d}, the ointment of nard was made. The Persic version in both places read it, "ointment of Gallia"; and the just now mentioned writer {e}, speaks of "nardum Gallicum", "Gallic nard", which is what may be meant by that interpreter; but be it what ointment it will; it was ointment, very precious: very costly, and of a very great price; for the disciples observe, it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence: and for the better preserving of such ointments incorrupt, they used to be put into vessels made of "alabaster" {f}; though some think not the matter, but the form of these vessels is referred to; and observe, that vessels of gold, silver, and glass, for this use, being made in the form of "alabasters", were called by that name; and that this might be made of the latter, since Mark says, that she brake the box; not into pieces, for then she could not be said to pour it out; but either the top, or side of it: though some critics observe, that the word signifies no more, than that she shook it, that the thicker parts of the ointment might liquify, and be the more easily poured out. The Arabic version has omitted that clause, and the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic, read it, "she opened it"; that is, as the Persic adds, "the top of the vessel": she took off the covering of the box, or took out the stopple,

and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat: which was usually done at festivals, or at any considerable entertainments, as at weddings, &c.

"Says Rab, they "pour ointment on the heads of the doctors"; (the gloss is, the women put ointment on the heads of the scholars;) says R. Papa to Abai, does the doctor speak of the ointment of the bridechamber? He replies, thou orphan, did not thy mother cause for thee, that "they poured out ointment on the heads of the doctors", at thy wedding? for lo! one of the Rabbins got a wife for his son, in the house of R. Bar Ula; and they say, that R. Bar Ula got a wife for his son in the house of one of the Rabbins, Nnbrd avyra axvym gydrdw, "and poured ointment on the head of the doctors" {g}:"

to this custom are the allusions in *Ps 23:5*. The pouring of this ointment on the head of Christ was emblematical of his being anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows; of his having the holy Spirit, and his gifts and graces without measure; which, like the ointment poured on Aaron's head, that ran down to his beard, and the skirts of his garments, descends to all the members of his mystical body: and was a symbol of the Gospel, which is like ointment poured forth; and of the sweet savour of the knowledge of Christ, which was to be diffused, throughout all the world, by the preaching of it; and was done by this woman in the faith of him, as the true Messiah, the Lord's anointed, as the prophet, priest, and king of his church.

{c} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 69. 1. Gloss. in ib. {d} Hist. Nat. l. 13. c. 1. {e} Ib. c. 2. & l. 12. c. 12. {f} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 13. 2. & 36. 8. {g} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 17. 2.

Matthew ***26:8***

Ver. 8. But when his disciples saw it,.... What the woman did, what a costly box of ointment it was, and with what profusion she used it,

they had indignation: Mark says, "within themselves", *Mr 14:4*; either among themselves, or their indignation was secret in their breasts; their resentment was private, though it might be betrayed by their looks, and afterwards showed itself in words. This indignation was either at the woman, for the Evangelist Mark observes, that "they murmured against her", *Mr 14:5*, that she should act such an imprudent part, and be guilty of such extravagance; or at Christ himself, for suffering such an action to be done unto him; for so the Syriac version reads the above clause in Mark, and "they murmured wb, against him"; so De Dieu observes it should be rendered; though Tremellius, Boderianus, and others, translate it, "against her": or else their indignation was neither at Christ, whom they dearly loved; nor at the woman, they being taught to love their enemies, and much more the friends of Christ; but at the action, which they looked upon as an ill judged thing, that sprung from misguided zeal, and which they thought could never be acceptable to their master, who was not used to encourage such profuseness and extravagance.

Saying, to what purpose is this waste, or "loss?" They call that waste, or loss, which was spent on Christ himself; whereas, whatever is laid out for the honour of Christ, or the good of his interest, ought not to be reckoned loss, for it will be returned with great increase and advantage; but they could not see what end was to be answered by this expense. It is easy to observe the variableness and inconstancy of the disciples: one time, because the inhabitants of a certain village did not receive Christ, they were for calling for fire from heaven to destroy them; and here is a poor woman that exceeds, as they thought, in her respects to him, and they are filled with indignation.

Matthew ***26:9***

Ver. 9. For this ointment might have been sold for much,.... Mark says, "for more than three hundred pence", *Mr 14:5*: now if this is to be understood of

Roman pence, each penny being seven pence half penny of our money, three hundred pence come to nine pounds, seven shillings, and six pence; but if it is to be understood of the penny of the sanctuary, which was one shilling and three pence, they come to just as much more: it might well be called very precious and costly ointment; and this was the reason of the disciples indignation, that so much cost and expense should be thrown away, as they thought, in such a manner, which might have been applied, in their opinion, to a better purpose. For had it been sold for its worth, so much might have been had for it,

and given to the poor; which was a very plausible objection to the action; and which they seem to have taken from Judas, who had made the same, on a like occasion, about four days before this, and he might instigate the disciples now: which shows what mischief an hypocrite may do in a church, and what influence he may have over good men to draw them into his measures, under the specious pretences of carefulness, frugality, and doing good to the poor. It seems our Lord inured his disciples to this good work of relieving the poor: they kept one common purse, and one of them, who was Judas, was appointed the bearer of it; whatever they collected, or was made a present to them, they put into this purse; out of which they were provided with the necessaries of life; and the rest expended on the poor.

Matthew *26:10*

Ver. 10. When Jesus understood it,.... The indignation of his disciples at this action of the woman's; which he might know, as man, partly by their looks, and partly by their words; though without these, as God, he knew the secret indignation, and private resentment of their minds:

he said unto them, why trouble ye the woman? by blaming her, and censuring the action she had done; as it must, no doubt, greatly trouble her to meet with such treatment from the disciples of Christ: had any of the Pharisees blamed her conduct, it would have given her no pain or uneasiness; but that Christ's own disciples should show indignation at an action done by her from a sincere love to Christ, and to do honour to him, must cut her to the heart: and so it is when either ministers of the Gospel, or private believers, are blamed for their honest zeal in the cause of Christ, by any that profess to love him; this grieves them more than all the enemies of religion say or do unto them:

for she hath wrought a good work upon me; upon his body, by pouring the ointment on it: the Persic version reads it, "according to my mind": it was done, in the faith of him, as the Messiah; it sprung from real and sincere love to him, and was designed for his honour and glory; and so had the essentials of a good work in it. This is the first part of our Lord's defence of the woman: he goes on in the next verse.

Matthew 26:11

Ver. 11. For ye have the poor always with you,.... This is said in answer to the objection of the disciples, that the ointment might have been sold, and the money given to the poor. Christ seems to have respect to *De 15:11*, and which, agreeably to the sense of the Jews, refers to the times of the Messiah: for they say {h},

"there is no difference between this world (this present time) and the times of the Messiah, but the subduing of kingdoms only; as it is said, *De 15:11*, "for the poor shall never cease out of the land": the gloss on it is, from hence it may be concluded, that therefore, twyne vy Mlwel, "for ever there will be poverty, and riches"."

Our Lord's words also show, that there will be always poor persons in the world; that there will be always such with his people, and in his churches; for God has chosen, and he calls such by his grace; so that men may always have opportunities of showing kindness and respect to such objects: in Mark it is added, "and whensoever ye will ye may do them good", *Mr 14:7*; by relieving their wants, and distributing to their necessities:

but me ye have not always; referring not to his divine and spiritual presence, which he has promised to his people, churches, and ministers, to the end of the world, but to his corporeal presence; for he was to be but a little while with them, and then go to the Father; be taken up to heaven, where he now is, and will be until the restitution of all things; so that the time was very short in which any outward respect could be shown to him in person, as man.

{h} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 63. 1.

Matthew ***26:12***

Ver. 12. For in that she hath poured this ointment,.... Which was so very precious, and cost so much,

upon my body: for being poured on his head, it ran down all over his body.

She did it for my burial; not for the interment of his body, but for the embalming of it, previous to it: the Jews used to embalm their dead, to show their constant respect to the deceased, and their belief of the resurrection; at least not only used to wash them, but anoint them with oil; for so runs one of their canons {i}:

"they do all things necessary to the dead, (i.e. on the sabbath day,) Nyko, "they anoint him": that is, as Bartenora adds, "with oil"; and they wash him;"

but the body of Christ, when dead, was not to be so used: the women intended it, and prepared materials for it, but the sabbath coming on, they rested according to the commandment; though, according to this canon, they might have anointed him, but they waited till the sabbath was over; and early on the first day, in the morning, they came to the sepulchre, in order to do it, but it was too late, Christ was risen; see *Lu 23:56*. Now either this woman had some revelation made to her, that the death of Christ was near at hand, and she feared, or knew, she should not be able to anoint him when dead; and therefore, as Mark has it, "she hath done what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying", *Mr 14:8*: or if she had no knowledge of all this, nor any such intention, yet the Holy Ghost directed her to this action, with this view, as it were, for the performing of these funeral rites before he was dead; and so the Syriac version renders it, "she hath done it, ynrbqmld Kya, as it were, to bury me".

{i} Misn. Sabbat, c. 23. sect. 5.

Matthew ***26:13***

Ver. 13. Verily I say unto you,.... The following words are prefaced in this manner, to excite attention, and command belief:

wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world. The Syriac version reads it, ytrbo, "my Gospel"; and so the Persic version; and has respect chiefly to the doctrine of his death, burial, and resurrection, which this action of the woman had relation to; for though the incarnation of Christ, and all the actions of his life, and whatsoever he did for the good, and in the room and stead of his people, are good news and glad tidings to the sons of men, and so the Gospel; yet his dying for sin, and making atonement for it, thereby satisfying justice, fulfilling the law, destroying death, and him that had the power of it, and his lying in the grave, and leaving the sins of his people behind him, and rising again for their justification, which were the ends of his coming into the world, make up the most glorious and principal part of the Gospel: and these words of Christ show that "this" Gospel should be preached; for which purpose he gave a commission and gifts to his disciples, and has done so, more or less, to men, ever since, for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints, and the glory of his name; and that this Gospel shall be preached all over the world, as it was by the apostles, agreeably to the commission; and will be again, towards the close of time, when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord and then

there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her; of her faith, love, and gratitude; for the memory of the just is blessed, and the righteous are had in everlasting remembrance. Christ suggests, that, though the disciples blamed this action, it should be spoken of by others to her praise and commendation, in all succeeding ages, throughout the world: "a good name", the wise man says, "is better than precious ointment", ***Ec 7:1***. This woman got a good name, and obtained a good report by her precious ointment; and if this woman's action was to be told for a memorial of her, much more what Christ has done and suffered should be told as a memorial of him.

Matthew 26:14

Ver. 14. Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot,.... Who was provoked and exasperated, to the last degree, by this action of the woman, and Christ's defence of it, and because the ointment was not sold, and the money put into his hand; and being instigated by Satan, who had now entered into him, formed a scheme in his mind to betray his master, and was resolved to put it in execution, whereby he might, in some measure, satisfy both his avarice and revenge; and, as an aggravation of this his wickedness, he is described, as "one of the twelve": of his twelve disciples; so the Persic and Ethiopic versions: this is a way of speaking used by the Jews {k}; they call the twelve lesser prophets, rve Mynv or rve yrt "the twelve", without any other word added thereunto. He was not an open enemy, nor one of Christ's common hearers, nor one of the seventy disciples, but one of his twelve apostles, whom he made his intimates and associates; whom he selected from all others, and called, qualified, and sent forth to preach his Gospel, and perform miracles: it was one of these that meditated the delivery of him into the hands of his enemies, and never left pursuing his scheme till he had effected it, even Judas Iscariot by name; so called, to distinguish him from another disciple, whose name was also Judas. This man

went to the chief priests; of his own accord, unasked, from Bethany, to Jerusalem, to Caiaphas's palace, where the chief priests, the implacable enemies of Christ, with the Scribes, and elders of the people, were met together, to consult his death: Mark adds, "to betray him unto them", *Mr 14:10*, which was manifestly his intent in going to them; and Luke, that he "communed" with them "how he might betray him unto them", *Lu 22:4*; in the safest, and most private manner; and both observe that they were glad; for nothing could have fallen out more to their wishes, who were met together on this design. The Jews, in their blasphemous account of Jesus {l}, say as much: they own, that Judas, or Juda, as they call him, offered to betray him into the hands of the wise men, saying to them, almost in the words expressed in the following verse,

"if you will hearken unto me, wtwa rwoma, "I will deliver him into your hands tomorrow";"

and which agrees very well with the time also: for it was two days before the passover that Jesus was in Bethany, where he supped with his disciples, and washed their feet, and had the box of ointment poured on his head; and on the night of the day after all this was done, Judas set out from thence to Jerusalem; see *Joh 13:30*, so that it must be the next day before he could meet the high priests, and on the morrow, at night, he delivered him into their hands; on the proposal of which, they say, that Simeon ben Shetach, whom they make to be present at this time, and all the wise men and elders, hlwdg hxmv wxmv "rejoiced exceedingly".

{k} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. & 15. 1. {l} Toldos Jesu, p. 16.

Matthew ***26:15***

Ver. 15. And said [unto them],.... Though the words, "to them", are not in the original text, they are rightly supplied; as they are by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and mean the chief priests to whom Judas went, and to whom he made the following proposal;

what will ye give me, and I will deliver him to you? They did not ask him to do it, he first made the motion; a barbarous and shocking one! to deliver his Lord and Master, with whom he had familiarly conversed, and from whom he had received so many favours, into the hands of those that hated him; nor was he concerned what they would do to him, or what would become of him, when in their hands: all his view, and what he was intent upon, was, what they would give him for doing it. They did not tempt him, by first offering him so much money, if he would betray him; but he himself first moves it to them, and tempts them with it to offer him an handsome reward: and it is to be observed, that he does not mention the name of Jesus, either because they might be talking of him, when he came into their company; or else as suiting his language to theirs, who, when they spake of him, usually said, "he", or "that man", or "this fellow". And in the same rude way Judas now treats his master:

and they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver; that is, thirty shekels of silver; for it is a rule with the Jews, that when mention is made in Scripture of pieces of silver, without expressing the species, shekels are meant: so Onkelos, and Jonathan ben Uzziel, in their Targums on *Ge 20:16*, render pieces of silver, by shekels of silver; so pieces of gold signify shekels of gold: thus the 1700 pieces of gold in ***Jud 8:26***, are, in the Septuagint, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin versions, called so many shekels of gold; and our version supplies the word "shekels" also, as it does in ***2Ch 9:15***, and yet some learned men have asserted {m}, that there were no shekels of gold among the Jews, though express mention is made of them in *1Ch 21:25*. The value of a shekel of gold, according to Brerewood {n}, was, of our money, "fifteen shillings"; and some make it to come to a great deal more; to "one pound sixteen shillings and sixpence" sterling: had these thirty pieces been pieces, or shekels of gold, they would have amounted to a considerable sum of money; but they were pieces of silver, and not talents, or pounds, but shekels. The silver shekel had on one side stamped upon it the pot of manna, or, as others think, "a censer", or incense cup, with these words around it, in Samaritan letters, "shekel Israel", "the shekel of Israel"; and, on the other, "Aaron's rod" budding, with this inscription about it, "Jerusalem Hakedushah", "Jerusalem the holy" {o}. As for the weight and value of it, R. Gedaliah says {p}, we know by tradition that the holy shekel weighs 320 grains of barley of pure silver; and the same writer observes {q}, that the "selah", or holy shekel, is four "denarii", or pence; that is, Roman pence, each being of the value of seven pence halfpenny of our money: and to this agrees what Josephus {r} says, that a "shekel" is a coin of the Hebrews, which contains four Attic drachms, or drams; and an Attic dram is of the same value with a Roman penny: so that one of these shekels was worth about "half a crown"; and it usually weighed half an ounce, as not only some Jewish writers affirm, who profess to have seen them, and weighed them themselves, as Jarchi {s}, Gerundensis {t}, Abarbinel {u}, and Gedaliah ben Jechaiah {w}; but other writers also, as Masius {x} Arias Montanus {y}, Waserus {z} and Bishop Cumberland. Now thirty shekels of silver were the price of a servant, *Ex 21:32*. So {b} Maimonides observes, that the

"atonement of "servants", whether great or small, whether male or female, the fixed sum in the law is "thirty shekels of good silver", whether "the servant" is worth an hundred pound, or whether he is not worth but a farthing,"

and which was in value of our money about "three pounds fifteen shillings". This was the "goodly price", which Christ, who appeared in the form of a servant, was prized at, according to the prophecy in *Zec 11:12*, and which the high priests thought a very sufficient one; and the wretch Judas, as covetous as he was, was contented with.

{m} Waseras de numis Heb. l. 2. c. 3. {n} De numis Jud. c. 3. {o} Waser ib. & Ar. Montan. Ephron. sive de Siclo in Jud. Antiq. p. 126. Brerewood de ponder. & pret. vet. num. c. 1. {p} Shaishelet Hakabala, fol. {q} Ib. {r} Antiq. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 2. {s} Perush in Exod. xxi. 32. {t} Ad fin. Expos. in Pentateuch. {u} Comment. in 1 Reg. 7. fol. 221. 2. {w} Shalshelet Hahohala, fol. 72. 2. {x} In Joshua, 7. 21. p. 135. {y} De Siclo, ut supra. (in

Jud. Antiq. p. 126) {z} De numis Heb. l. 2. c. 3. {b} Hilch. Niske Mammon. c. 11. sect. 1.

Matthew 26:16

Ver. 16. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him. Luke adds, "in the absence of the multitude", *Lu 22:6*; in the most private manner, when he was alone, and in some solitary place, that no tumult might arise, and that there might be no danger of a rescue: for so he, and the chief priests, had consulted, and settled it, as what would be most prudent and advisable; and therefore, from that time forward, being prompted on by Satan, and the lucre of the money he was to receive, he narrowly watched, and diligently observed, the best and most fitting season to perform his enterprise, and quickly offered.

Matthew 26:17

Ver. 17. Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread,.... There were seven of these days, and this was the first of them, in which the Jews might not eat leavened bread, from the fourteenth, to the twenty first of the month Nisan; in commemoration of their being thrust out of Egypt, in so much haste, that they had not time to leaven the dough, which was in their kneading troughs: wherefore, according to their canons {c}, on the night of the fourteenth day; that is, as Bartenora explains it, the night, the day following of which is the fourteenth, they search for leaven in all private places and corners, to bring; it out, and burn it, or break it into small pieces, and scatter it in the wind, or throw it into the sea. Mark adds, "when they killed the passover", *Mr 14:12*; and Luke says, "when the passover must be killed", *Lu 22:7*; which was to be done on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, after the middle of the day; and this was an indispensable duty, which all were obliged to: for so they say {d},

"every man, and every woman, are bound to observe this precept; and whoever makes void this commandment presumptuously, if he is not defiled, or afar off, lo! he is guilty of cutting off."

The time of killing the passover was after the middle of the day; and it is said {e} that "if they killed it before the middle of the day it was not right; and they did not kill it till after the evening sacrifice, and after they had offered the evening incense; and after they had trimmed the lamps, they began to slay the passovers, or paschal lambs, unto the end of the day; and if they slayed after the middle of the day, before the evening sacrifice, it was right."

The reason of this was, because the lamb was to be slain between the two evenings; the first of which began at noon, as soon as ever the day declined: and this was not done privately, but in the temple; for thus it is {f} affirmed,

"they do not kill the passover but in the court, as the rest of the holy things."

The time and manner of killing the lamb, and by whom, of the sprinkling of the blood, and of their flaying it, and taking out the fat, and burning it on the altar, may be seen in the Misna {g}.

The disciples came to Jesus; that is, Peter and John, as may be learnt from *Luke 22:8*, for these only seem to have had any notion of Judas's betraying Christ, from what had been said at the supper in Bethany, two days before; the rest thought he was gone to prepare for the feast, and therefore were under no concern about it; but these two judged otherwise, and therefore came to Christ to know his mind concerning it; for it was high time that a preparation should be made; for this was Thursday morning, and the lamb was to be killed in the afternoon, and ate at even.

Saying unto him, where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? This question in Luke follows upon an order which Christ gave to these disciples; "saying, go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat", *Lu 22:8*: for masters used to give their servants orders to get ready the passover for them; and which were expressed in much such language as this {h}:

"he that says to his servant, xop ta yle jwxvw au, "go and slay the passover for me": if he kills a kid, he may eat of it."

It is reported {i} of

"Rabban Gamaliel, that he said to his servant Tabi, hluw au, "go and roast" the passover for us upon an iron grate."

The disciples having received such an order from their master, inquire not in what town or city they must prepare the passover, for that was always ate in Jerusalem; see *De 16:5*, where they were obliged, by the Jewish canon {k}, to lodge that night; though they might eat the unleavened bread, and keep the other days of the feast any where, and in every place {l}; but they inquire in what house he would have it got ready; for they might make use of any house, and the furniture of it, where they could find room, and conveniency, without any charge; for they did not let out their houses, or any of their rooms, or beds, in Jerusalem; but, at festivals, the owners of them gave the use of them freely to all that came {m}: and it is {n} observed among the wonders and miracles done at Jerusalem, that though there were such multitudes at their feasts, yet

"a man could never say to his friend, I have not found a fire to roast the passover lambs in Jerusalem, nor I have not found a bed to sleep on in Jerusalem, nor the place is too strait for me to lodge in, in Jerusalem."

{c} Misn. Pesach. c. 1. sect, 1. Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c. 2. sect. 3, 4. & 3. 11. {d} Maimon. Hilch. Korban Pesaeh. c. 1. sect. 1. 2. {e} Ib. sect. 4. Moses Kotsensis Mitavot Tora pr. affirm. 39. {f} Maimon. lb. sect. 3. {g} Pesachim, c. 5. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10. {h} Ib. c. 8. 2. {i} Ib. c. 7. sect. 2. {k} T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 95. 2. & Gloss in ib. {l} Maimon. Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 6. sect. 1. {m} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 12. 1. Megilia, fol. 26. 1. & Gloss. in ib. Maimon Hilch. Beth Habbechira, c. 7. sect. 14. & Ceseph Misna in ib. {n} Abot R. Nathan, c. 35. Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 5.

Matthew ***26:18***

Ver. 18. And he said, go into the city to such a man,.... That is, to such a man in the city of Jerusalem, for, as yet, they were in Bethany, or at the Mount of Olives however, without the city; he does not mention the man's name, but describes him, as Mark and Luke say, and tells them, "there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house, where he entereth in", *Mr 14:13*; who seems to be not the master of the house, but a servant, that was sent on such an errand. This is a very considerable instance of our Lord's prescience of future contingencies; he knew beforehand, that exactly at the time that the disciples would enter Jerusalem, such a man, belonging to such a house, would be returning with a pitcher of water in his hand; and they should meet him; and follow him, where he went, which would be a direction to them what house to prepare the passover in;

and say unto him; not to the man bearing the pitcher of water; but, as the other Evangelists say, to the good man of the house, the owner of it, who probably might be one of Christ's disciples secretly; for many of the chief rulers in Jerusalem believed on Christ, though they did not openly confess him, for fear of the Pharisees, as Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea; and this man might be one of them, or some other man of note and wealth; since they were to find, as they did, a large upper room furnished and prepared. For, it seems, that without mentioning his name, the man would know him by their language, he dictates to them in the following clause, who they meant;

the master saith; the Syriac and Persic versions read, our master; thine and ours, the great master in Israel, the teacher sent from God:

my time is at hand; not of eating the passover, as if it was distinct from that of the Jews, and peculiar to himself, for he ate it at the usual time, and when the Jews ate theirs; and which time was fixed and known by everybody, and could be no reason to move the master of the house to receive him: but he means the time of his death, that he had but a little while to live; and that this instance of respect would be the last he would have an opportunity of showing him whilst living, and the last time Christ would have an opportunity of seeing him; and he might say this to prepare him to meet the news of his death with less surprise:

I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples; not with him and his family, but with his disciples, who were a family, and a society of themselves, and a sufficient number to eat the passover together; for there might be two companies eating their distinct passovers in one house, and even in one room: concerning which is the following rule,

"dxa tybb Mylkwa wyhv twrwbx ytv, "two societies that eat in one house"; the one turn their faces this way and eat, and the other turn their faces that way and eat, and an heating vessel (in which they heat the water to mix with the wine) in the middle; and when the servant stands to mix, he shuts his mouth, and turns his face till he comes to his company, and eats; and the bride turns her face and eats {o}."

{o} Misn. Pesachim, c. 7. sect. 13.

Matthew 26:19

Ver. 19. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them,.... They went into the city of Jerusalem; they met the man carrying a pitcher of water home; they followed him into the house he entered; they addressed the master of the house, in the manner Christ directed, who showed them a large upper room, prepared with all proper furniture for such an occasion, as Christ had foretold:

and they made ready the passover; they went and bought a lamb; they carried it to the temple to be slain in the court, where it was presented as a passover lamb for such a number of persons; they had it flayed, cut up, the fat taken out, and burnt on the altar, and its blood sprinkled on the foot of it: they then brought it to the house where they were to eat it; here they roasted it, and provided bread, and wine, and bitter herbs, and a sauce called "Charoseth", into which the herbs were dipped: and, in short, everything that was necessary.

Matthew 26:20

Ver. 20. Now when the even was come,.... The second evening, when the sun was set, and it was dark, and properly night; for

"on the evenings of the passovers near the Minchah, a man might not eat Kvxtv de, "until it was dark" {p}."

This was according to the rule, *Ex 12:8*,

he sat down with the twelve, his twelve disciples; so the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel; and which also adds, "at table"; even all the twelve apostles, who were properly his family, and a sufficient number for a passover lamb {q}: for

"they do not kill the passover for a single man, according to the words of R. Judah, though R. Jose permits it: yea, though the society consists of an hundred, if they cannot eat the quantity of an olive, they do not kill for them: nor do they make a society of women, servants, and little ones?"

Judas was now returned again, and took his place among the disciples, as if he was as innocent, and as friendly, as any of them: this he might choose to do, partly to avoid all suspicion of his designs; and partly that he might get intelligence where Christ would go after supper, that he might have the opportunity he was waiting for, to betray him into the hands of his enemies. "He sat, or lay down with them", as the word signifies; for the posture of the Jews, at the passover table especially, was not properly sitting, but reclining, or lying along on coaches, not on their backs, nor on their right side, but on their left;
See Gill on "Joh 13:23". The first passover was eaten by them standing, with their loins girt, their shoes on, and staves in their hands, because they were just ready to depart out of Egypt: but in after passovers these circumstances were omitted; and particularly sitting, or lying along, was reckoned so necessary to be observed, that it is said {r}, that

"the poorest man in Israel might not eat, boyv de, "until he lies along", or leans;"

that is, as some of their commentators {s} note, either upon the couch, or on the table, after the manner of free men, and in remembrance of their liberty: and another of them {t} says,

"we are bound to eat, hbohb, "lying along", as kings and great men eat, because it is a token of liberty."

Hence they elsewhere say {u},

"it is the way of servants to eat standing; but here (in the passover) to eat, Nybwom, "sitting", or "lying along", because they (the Israelites) went out of bondage to liberty. Says R. Simon, in the name of R. Joshua ben Levi, that which a man is obliged to in the passover, though it be but the quantity of an olive, he must eat it, bowm, "lying along"."

The account Maimonides gives of this usage, is in these words {w}:

"even the poorest man in Israel may not eat until he "lies along": a woman need not lie; but if she is a woman of worth and note, she ought to lie: a son by a father, and a servant before his master ought to lie: "but a disciple before his master does not lie, except his master gives him leave" (as Christ did his); and lying on the right hand is not lying; and so he that lies upon his neck, or upon his face, this is not lying; and when ought they to lie? at the time of eating, the quantity of an olive, of unleavened bread, and at drinking of the four cups; but at the rest of eating and drinking, if he lies, lo! it is praiseworthy: but if not, there is no necessity."

This custom was so constantly and uniformly observed at the passover, that it is taken particular notice of in the declaration, or showing forth of the passover by the master of the family, when he says {x}, "how different is this night from all other nights", &c. and among the many things he mentions, this is one;

"in all other nights we eat either sitting, or lying along; that is, which way we please, but this night all of us Nybwom, "lie along"."

{p} Ib. c. 10. sect. 1. {q} Ib. c. 8. sect. 7. {r} Misn. Pesachim, c. 10. sect. 1. {s} Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. {t} Maimonides in ib. {u} T. Hieros. Pesach. fol. 37. 2. {w} Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 7. sect. 8. {x} Maimon ib. c. 8. 2. Haggadah Shel Pesach. p. 5.

Matthew 26:21

Ver. 21. And as they did eat,.... The passover lamb, the unleavened bread, and bitter herbs: he said it was usual, whilst they were thus engaged, to discourse much about the reason and design of this institution. What they talked of may be learnt from what follows {y}:

"it is an affirmative precept of the law, to declare the signs and wonders which were done to our fathers in Egypt, on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan, according to *Ex 13:3*, "remember this day", &c. and from whence on the night of the fifteenth? from *Ex 13:8*, "and thou shalt show thy son", &c. at the time that the unleavened bread, and bitter herbs lie before thee. And though he has no son, or though they are wise, and grown up, they are bound to declare the going out of Egypt; and everyone that enlarges, or dwells long on the things that happened and came to pass, lo! he is praiseworthy. It is a command to make known to children, even though they do not ask; as it is said, "and thou shalt show thy son": according to the son's knowledge, his father teaches him; how if he is a little one, or foolish? he says to him, my son, all of us were servants, as this handmaid, or this servant, in Egypt; and on this night the holy, blessed God redeemed us, and brought us into liberty: and if the son is grown up and a wise man, he makes known to him what happened to us in Egypt, and the wonders which were done for us by the hands of Moses, our master; all according to the capacity of the son. And it is necessary to make a repetition on this night, that the children may see, and ask, and say, how different is this night from all other nights? until he replies to them, and says to them, so and so it happened, and thus and thus it was.--If he has no son, his wife asks him; and if he has no wife, they ask one another, how different is this night? and though they are all wise men, everyone asks himself alone, how different is this night? and it is necessary to begin with reproaches, and end with praise, how? he begins and declares, how at first our fathers were in the days of Terah, and before him, deniers (of the divine being), and wandering after vanity, and following idolatrous worship; and he ends with the law of truth, how that God brought us near to himself, and separated us from the nations, and caused us to draw nigh to his unity; and so begins and makes known, that we were servants to Pharaoh in Egypt, and all the evils he recompensed us with; and ends with the signs and wonders which were wrought for us, and with our liberties: and he that expounds from--"a Syrian was my father, ready to perish": till he has finished the whole section: and every one that adds and enlarges in expounding this section, lo! he is praiseworthy. And everyone that does not say these three words on the night of the fifteenth, cannot be excused from blame; and they are these, the passover, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs: "the passover", because God passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt, as it is said, *Ex 12:27*, "the bitter herbs", because the Egyptians made bitter the lives of our fathers in Egypt: "the unleavened bread", because they were redeemed: and these things all of them are called the declaration, or showing forth."

Christ now took up some part of the time, at least, whilst they were eating, in discoursing with his disciples about the traitor:

he said, verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me; meaning to the chief priests and Scribes, who should condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles, to be mocked, scourged, and crucified, as he had told them some time before, *Mt 20:18*, though he did not tell them as now, that it should be done by one of them; he had indeed signified as much as this two days before, at the supper in Bethany, but none seemed to understand whom he meant, but Peter and John, and the thing wore off their minds; and therefore he mentions it again to them, with great seriousness, and in the most solemn manner, declaring it as a certain and undoubted truth.

{y} Maimon. ib. c. 7. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Vid. c. 8. 2, 3, 4, 5. & Haggadah Shel. Pesach. p. 5, 6, 7, 8.

Matthew 26:22

Ver. 22. And they were exceeding sorrowful,.... Partly that Christ should be betrayed at all, into the hands of his enemies, by whom they knew he would be ill used; and partly, that so vile an action should be done, by one from among themselves; and greatly, because they knew not, nor could not conceive, who of them could be guilty of such an horrid sin:

and began everyone of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? excepting Judas, who afterwards spoke for himself. This they said, though conscious to themselves the thing had never entered into their hearts; nor had they taken any step towards it, but with their whole souls abhorred it; yet, as knowing the treachery and deceitfulness, of their hearts, which they could not trust to; and fearing lest should they be left thereunto, they might commit such a dreadful iniquity; and as desirous of being cleared by Christ from any such imputation, and even from all suspicion of anything of this kind.

Matthew 26:23

Ver. 23. And he answered and said,.... In order to make them easy, and point out the betrayer to them,

he that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. This seems to refer to the dipping of the unleavened bread, or bitter herbs, both, into the sauce called "Charoseth", which the Jews {z} say,

"was made of figs, nuts, almonds, and other fruits; to which they added apples; all which they bruised in a mortar, and mixed with vinegar; and put spices into it, calamus and cinnamon, in the form of small long threads, in remembrance of the straw; and it was necessary it should be: thick, in memory of the clay."

The account Maimonides {a} gives of it is,

"the "Charoseth" is a precept from the words of the Scribes, in remembrance of the clay in which they served in Egypt; and how did they make it? They took dates, or berries, or raisins, and the like, and stamped them, and put vinegar into them, and seasoned them with spices, as clay in straw, and brought it upon the table, in the night of the passover."

And in this he says, the master of the family dipped both the herbs, and the unleavened bread {b}, and that both separately and conjunctly; for he says {c}, that

"he rolled up the unleavened bread and bitter herbs together, lbjmw and dipped them in the Charoseth."

And this was twice done in eating the passover; for so it is observed {d} among the many things, which distinguished this night from others: "in all other nights we dip but once, but in this night twice". By this action, Christ gave his disciples a signal, whereby they might know the betrayer: for this is not the general description of one, that sat at the table, and ate of his bread with him, and so fulfilled the prediction, in *Ps 41:9*, though this is too true; but then, this was saying no more than he had before done, when he said, "one of you shall betray me"; though the phrase is so {e} used; for instance,

"if a man goes and sits at table with them, Nhme lbwjw, and "dips with them", though he does not eat the quantity of an olive, they bless for him."

But this refers to a particular action then performed by Judas, just at the time Christ spoke these words; and who might sit near him, and dip into the same dish he did; for since there were thirteen of them, there might be more dishes than one; and two or three might have a dish to themselves, and Judas dip in the same dish with Christ.

{z} Bartenora in Misn. Pesach. c. 10. sect. 3. Vid. Maimon. & Yom Tob, in ib. & Piske Tos. Pesach. art. 322. {a} Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 7. sect. 11. {b} Ib. c. 8. sect. 2. 8. {c} Ib. sect. 6. & T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 115. 1. {d}

Misn. Pesach. c. 10. sect. 4, Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c 8. sect. 2. Haggadah Shel Pesach, p. 5. {e} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 91. fol. 78. 4.

Matthew 26:24

Ver. 24. The son of man goeth,.... Meaning himself, not to the Mount of Olives, or Gethsemane, or the garden, whither he went a little after this, but out of the world, to his Father: the phrase is expressive of his death, as in *Jos 23:14*, and denotes the voluntariness of it, and which is no ways inconsistent with the divine determinations about it: nor the violence that was offered to him by his enemies.

As it is written; in the book of God's eternal purposes and decrees; for Luke says, "as it was determined" *Lu 22:22*: or as it was recorded in the books of the Old Testament; in *Ps 22:1*, *Isa 53:1* and ***Da 9:1*** for Christ died for the sins of his people, in perfect agreement with these Scriptures, which were written of him:

but woe unto that man by whom the son of man is betrayed; for God's decrees concerning this matter, and the predictions in the Bible founded on them, did not in the least excuse, or extenuate the blackness of his crime; who did what he did, of his own free will, and wicked heart, voluntarily, and to satisfy his own lusts:

it had been good for that man if he had not been born. This is a Rabbinical phrase, frequently, used in one form or another; sometimes thus; as it is said {f} of such that speak false and lying words, and regard not the glory of their Creator, amlel Nwtyy ald Nwl bj, it would have been better for them they had never come into the world; and so of any other, notorious sinner, it is at other times said {g}, yrba ald hyl bj, or {h}, arbn alv wl xwn, "it would have been better for him if he had not been created"; signifying, that it is better to have no being at all, than to be punished with everlasting destruction; and which was the dreadful case of Judas, who fell by his transgression, and went to his own place.

{f} Zohar in Gen. fol. 41. 1. Vid. Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 1. T. Bab Chagiga, fol. 16. 1. {g} Zohar in Gen. fol, 46. 4. & in Exod. fol. 1. 4. & 36. 3. & 62. 3. & 66. 3. & 105. 4. & 106. 1. {h} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 3. 2. T.

Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. & Erubin, fol. 13. 2. Midrash Kobelet, fol. 79. 1.

Matthew ***26:25***

Ver. 25. Then Judas, which betrayed him,.... Or that was about to betray him, as the Ethiopic version reads it: he had taken a step towards it, was seeking an opportunity to do it, and at length effected it: the Persic version reads, Judas Iscariot; who after all the rest had put the question,

answered and said, Master, is it I? Who though he knew what he had been doing, and what he further resolved to do, and was conscious to himself he was the man; nay, though he had been pointed out as the person, and the most dreadful woe denounced on him, that should be the betrayer, in his hearing; yet all this did not at all affect his marble heart; but in the most audacious manner, and without any concern of mind, or show of guilt, asks if he was the person; suggesting, that surely he could, not mean him. It is observed by some, that the word Rabbi, used by Judas, is a more honourable name than that of Lord, used by the disciples; thereby reigning to give Christ more honour, and exceed in his respect to him, than the rest of the disciples; in order, if he could, to cover his wicked designs:

he said unto him, thou hast said: that is, it is as thou hast said; thou hast said right, thou art the man; a way of speaking used, when what is asked is assented to as truth: thus it being

"said to a certain person, is Rabbi dead? He replied to them, Nwtyrma Nwta, "ye have said"; and they rent their clothes {i}."

Taking it for granted, by that answer, that so it was.

{i} T. Hieros Kilaim, fol. 32. 2.

Matthew ***26:26***

Ver. 26. And as they were eating,.... The paschal lamb, and just concluding the whole solemnity, which was done by eating some of the {k} lamb: for

"last of all he (that kept the passover) eats of the flesh of the passover, though it be but the quantity of an olive, and he does not taste anything after it; and at the same time he eats the quantity of an olive of unleavened bread, and does not taste anything after it; so that his meal endeth, and the savour of the flesh of the passover, or of the unleavened bread, is in his mouth; for the eating of them is the precept."

So that the paschal supper was now concluded, when Christ entered upon the institution of his own supper:

Jesus took bread; which lay by him, either on the table, or in a dish. Though this supper is distinct from the "passover", and different from any ordinary meal, yet there are allusions to both in it, and to the customs of the Jews used in either; as in this first circumstance, of "taking" the bread: for he that asked a blessing upon bread, used to take it into his hands; and it is a rule {l}, that

"a man does not bless, wdyb Mxlh owptyv de, "until he takes the bread into his hand", that all may see that he blesses over it."

Thus Christ took the bread and held it up, that his disciples might observe it:

and blessed [it]; or asked a blessing over it, and upon it, or rather blessed and gave thanks to his Father or it, and for what was signified by it; and prayed that his disciples, whilst eating it, might be led to him, the bread of life, and feed upon him in a spiritual sense; whose body was going to be broken for them, as the bread was to be, in order to obtain eternal redemption for them: so it was common with the Jews, to ask a blessing on their bread: the form in which they did it was this {m}:

"Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, the king of the world, that produceth bread out of the earth."

What form our Lord used, is not certain; no doubt it was one of his composing, and every way suitable to the design of this ordinance. It was customary also when there were many at table, that lay down there, however, as Christ and his disciples now did, for one to ask a blessing for them all; for so runs the rule {n},

"if they sit to eat, everyone blesses for himself, but if they lie along, Mlkl Krbm dxa, "one blesses for them all"."

Moreover, they always blessed, before they brake: "Says Rabba {o}, he blesses, and after that he breaks:" this rule Christ likewise carefully observes, for it follows, and brake it. The rules concerning breaking of bread, are these {p};

"The master of the house recites and finishes the blessing, and after that he breaks:--no man that breaks, is allowed to break, till they have brought the salt, and what is to be eaten with the bread, before everyone--and he does not break neither a small piece, lest he should seem to be sparing; nor a large piece, bigger than an egg, lest he should be thought to be famished;--and on the sabbath day he breaks a large piece, and he does not break, but in the place where it is well baked: it is a principal command to break a whole loaf."

Christ broke the bread, as the symbol of his body, which was to be broken by blows, and scourges, thorns, nails, and spear, and to be separated from his soul, and die as a sacrifice for the sins of his people: and having so done, he

gave it to the disciples; which being a distinct act from breaking the bread, shows that the latter does not design the distribution of the bread, but an act preceding it, and a very significant one: and which ought not to be laid aside: according to the Jewish {q} usages,

"He that broke the bread, put a piece before everyone, and the other takes it in his hand; and he that breaks, does not give it into the hand of the eater, unless he is a mourner; and he that breaks, stretches out his hand first and eats, and they that sit, or lie at the table, are not allowed to taste, until he that blesses, has tasted; and he that breaks, is not allowed to taste, until the Amen is finished out of the mouth of the majority of those that sit at table."

And said, take, eat, this is my body; in Luke it is added, "which is given for you", *Lu 22:19*; that is, unto death, as a sacrifice for sin; and by the Apostle Paul, *1Co 11:24*, "which is broken for you"; as that bread then was, and so expressive of his wounds, bruises, sufferings, and death, for them. Now when he says, "this is my body", he cannot mean, that that bread was his real body; or that it was changed and converted into the very substance of his body; but that it was an emblem and representation of his body, which was just ready to be offered up, once for all: in like manner, as the Jews in the eating of their passover used to say {r} of the unleavened bread,

"ayned amxl ah, this is "the bread of affliction", which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt."

Not that they thought that was the selfsame bread, but that it resembled it, and was a representation of the affliction and distress their fathers were in at that time: to which some think our Lord here alludes: though rather, the reference is to the passover lamb, which is frequently, in Jewish writings, called "the body" of the lamb: thus mention being made of the bringing of the herbs, the unleavened bread, and the sauce "Charoseth", with other things to the master of the house, it is added {s}:

"and in the sanctuary (whilst that stood) they bring unto him, xop lv wpwg, "the body of the lamb"."

Again, elsewhere {t} it is said,

"they bring a table furnished, and on it the bitter herbs and other greens, and the unleavened bread, and the sauce, xoph vbk lv wpwgw "and the body of the paschal lamb"."

And a little further {u},

"he recites the blessing, blessed art thou O Lord, &c. for the eating of the passover, and he eats, xop lv wpwgm, "of the body of the passover"."

And now it is, as if Christ had said, you have had "the body" of the lamb set before you, and have eaten of it, in commemoration of the deliverance out of Egypt, and as a type of me the true passover, quickly to be sacrificed; and this rite of eating the body of the paschal lamb is now to cease; and I do here by this bread, in an emblematical way, set before you "my body", which is to be given to obtain spiritual deliverance, and eternal redemption for you; in remembrance of which, you, and all my followers in successive generations, are to take and eat of it, till I come. The words, "take, eat", show that Christ did not put the bread into the mouths of the disciples, but they took it in their hands, and ate it; expressive of taking and receiving

Christ by the hand of faith, and feeding on him in a spiritual manner.

{k} Maimon. Hilch. Charnetz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 9. Vid. Bartenora in Misn. Pesach. c. 10. sect. 8. {l} Levush hattecheleth Num. 167. sect. 3. & Shlchan Aruch in Buxtorf. Exercit. de Coena Dominic. Thes. 45. {m} Haggadah Shel. Pesach. fol. 249. 2. Ed. Basil. Misn. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 1. {n} Ib. sect. 6. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 42. 2. & 43. 1. {o} T. Bab. Berncot, fol. 39. 2. {p} Maimon. Hilch. Beracot, c. 7. sect. 2, 3, 4. T. Bab. Berncot, fol. 47. 1. {q} Ib. sect. 5. {r} Haggadah Shel Pesach, p. 4. Ed. Rittangel. fol. 242. 2. Ed. Basil. {s} Misn. Pesach, c. 10. sect 3. {t} Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 1. {u} Ib. sect. 7.

Matthew 26:27

Ver. 27. And he took the cup and gave thanks,.... For the Jews blessed, or gave thanks for their wine, as well as for their food, and generally did it in this form {w}:

"Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, the king of the world, who hast created the "fruit of the vine"."

Hence the phrase, "the fruit of the vine", in *Mt 26:29*, not that we are to suppose, that Christ used or confined himself to this form of words: and it is to be observed, that they not only gave thanks for their wine before food, and whilst they were eating {x}, but also after meat; and as this relates to the blessing of the cup after eating, or as the Apostle Paul says, "when he had supped", *1Co 11:25*. I shall only transcribe what the Jews say {y} concerning that:

"When wine is brought to them after food, if there is but that cup there, the house of Shammai say, Nyyh le Krbm, "he blesses", or gives thanks "for the wine", and after that gives thanks for the food: the house of Hillell say, he gives thanks for the food, and after that gives thanks for the wine."

And as this was usual at ordinary meals, to bless or give thanks for the wine, so at the passover; and which our Lord continued in his supper, and is to be practised by us. It should be further known, that the wine at the passover, and so what Christ used at his supper, was red.

"Says R. Jeremiah {z} it is commanded to perform this duty, Mwda Nyyb "with red wine"."

And elsewhere it is said {a},

"that it is necessary, that there should be in it (the wine) taste and look."

The gloss on it is, Mwda ahyv, "that it should be red": and which, as it most fitly represented the blood sprinkled on the door posts of the Israelites, when the Lord passed over their houses; so the blood of Christ, shed for the remission of the sins of his people. It is scarcely worth observing the measure of one of the cups, that was used at such a time: they say {b}, that the four cups which were drank at this feast, held an, Italian quart of wine, so that one cup contained half a pint. More particularly, they ask how much is the measure of a cup? the answer is, two fingers square, and a finger and a half and the third part of a finger deep; or as it is elsewhere {c}, the fifth part of a finger:

and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it; for this is not to be restrained from one sort of communicants, and only partook of by another; but all are to drink of the cup, as well as eat of the bread: whether here is not an allusion to the custom of the Jews at the passover, when they obliged all to drink four cups of wine, men, women, and children, and even the poorest man in Israel, who was maintained out of the alms dish {d}, may be considered.

{w} Haggadah Shel Pesach. fol. 241. 1. {x} Vid. Misn. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 1. 6. {y} Ib. c. 8. sect. 8. {z} T. Hieros. Pesach. fol. 37. 3. & Sabbat, fol. 11. 1. {a} T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 108. 2. & R. Samuel ben Meir in ib. {b} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 11. 1. {c} T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 109. 1. {d} Misn. Pesach. c. 10. sect. 1. T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 108. 1. Mitzvot Torah, pr. affirm. 41.

Matthew ***26:28***

Ver. 28. For this is my blood of the New Testament,.... That is, the red wine in the cup, was an emblem and representation of his precious blood, whereby was exhibited a new dispensation, or administration of the covenant of grace; and by which it was ratified and confirmed; and whereby all the blessings of it, such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, come to the people of God: the allusion is to the first covenant, and the book of it being sprinkled with the blood of bulls, and therefore called the blood of the covenant, *Ex 24:8*. But the second covenant, or the new administration of the covenant of grace, for which reason it is called the New Testament, is exhibited and established in the blood of Christ the testator. It was usual, even among the Heathens, to make and confirm their covenants by drinking human blood, and that sometimes mixed with wine {e}.

Which is shed for many, for the remission of sins; that is, was very shortly to be shed, and since has been, for all the elect of God; for the many that were ordained to eternal life, and the many that were given to Christ, the many that are justified by him, and the many sons he will bring to glory: whereby the full forgiveness of all their sins was procured, in a way consistent with, and honourable to the justice of God; full satisfaction being made to the law of God, for all their transgressions.

{e} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 3.

Matthew 26:29

Ver. 29. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth,.... From whence it seems natural to conclude, that Christ had drank of the cup in the supper, as well as at the passover; and it is reasonable to believe, that he also ate of the bread; since it appears from what has been observed before, See Gill on "Mt 26:26", that none might eat, till he that blessed and brake the bread had tasted of it {f}: the reason why wine is here called

the fruit of the vine, and not wine, See Gill on "Mt 26:27". The design of this expression is to show, that his stay would be very short: the cup he had just drank of, was the last he should drink with them: he should drink no more wine at the passover; he had kept the last, and which now of right was to cease; nor in the Lord's supper, for though that was to continue to his second coming, he should be no more present at it corporeally, only spiritually; nor in common conversation, which is not contradicted by *Ac 10:41*. Since, though the apostles drank with him in his presence, it does not necessarily follow, that he drank with them; and if he did, it was not in a mortal state, nor in the ordinary manner and use of it, but to confirm his resurrection from the dead, nor can it be proved that he drank of the fruit of the vine: the design of the phrase, as before observed, is to signify his speedy departure from his disciples. The allusion is to an usage at the passover, when after the fourth cup, they tasted of nothing else all that night, except water; and so Christ declares, that he would drink no more, not only that night, but never after.

Until the day I drink it new with you, in my Father's kingdom: Mark says, "in the kingdom of God", *Mr 14:25*; and Luke, "until the kingdom of God come", *Lu 22:18*; and both the Syriac and Persic versions read it here, "in the kingdom of God"; by which is meant, something distinct from the kingdom of the Son, or of the Messiah, which was already come; and appeared more manifestly after the resurrection of Christ, upon his ascension to heaven, and the effusion of the holy Spirit, and the success of the Gospel, both among Jews and Gentiles; and which will be more glorious in the latter day: and when all the elect of God are gathered in, and have been presented to Christ by himself, he will then deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all; and then the kingdom of the Father will take place here mentioned, and which is no other than the ultimate glory; so called, because it is of the Father's preparing and giving, and in which he will reign and dwell, and the saints with him, to all eternity; which must not be understood to the exclusion of Christ, for it is called his kingdom also, *Lu 22:30*, in this state, Christ will drink new wine, not literally, but spiritually understood; and which designs the joys and glories of heaven, the best wine which is reserved to the last: which is sometimes signified by a feast, of which wine is a principal part; by sitting down as at a table, in the kingdom of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, ***Mt 8:11***, and expressed by "wine", because of its refreshing and exhilarating nature, in God's presence is "fulness of joy"; and by "new wine", because these joys are the most excellent, because they are always new, and never change; they are "pleasures for evermore": to "drink" hereof, denotes the full enjoyment of them, which Christ, as man and mediator, and his people with him, shall be possessed of; and is different from the superficial "taste of the powers of the world to come", ***Heb 6:5***, which hypocrites have, and those real prelibations of glory which saints have in this life; there being a difference between drinking and tasting, *Mt 27:34*, and this will be social; Christ and his true disciples shall be together; and drink this new wine together; or enjoy the same glory and felicity in the highest measure and degree, they are capable of; and which society therein will yield a mutual pleasure to each other, as the words here suggest. The Jews often express the joys of the world to come, by such like figurative phrases: they make mention of, ytad amled Nyy, "the wine of the world to come" {g}; and of ynxwr rkv, "a spiritual drink", in the last days, which is called the world to come {h}: and so they explain {i} after this manner, *Isa 64:4*. "Neither hath the eye seen, O God", &c., Nyy hz, "this is the wine", which is kept in the grapes from the six days of the creation; of which they often speak in their writings {k}

{f} Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 10. Piske Toseph. Pesach. art. 328. {g} Zohar in Lev. fol. 17. 2. {h} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 3. 4. En Israel, fol. 30. 1. {i} T. Bab. Berncot, fol. 34. 2, & Sanhed. fol. 99. 1. {k} Targum in Cant. viii. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 81. 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 30. 3.

Matthew 26:30

Ver. 30. And when they had sung an hymn,.... The "Hallell", which the Jews were obliged to sing on the night of the passover; for the passover, they say {l}, was llh Nwej, "bound to an hymn". This "Hallell", or song of praise, consisted of six Psalms, the 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, and 118th {m}: now this they did not sing all at once, but in parts. Just before the drinking of the second cup and eating of the lamb, they sung the first part of it, which contained the 113th and 114th Psalms; and on mixing the fourth and last cup, they completed the "Hallell", by singing the rest of the Psalms, beginning with the 115th Psalm, and ending with the 118th; and said over it, what they call the "blessing of the song", which was *Ps 145:10*, &c., and they might, if they would, mix a fifth cup, but that they were not obliged to, and say over it the "great Hallell", or "hymn", which was the 136th Psalm {n}. Now the last part of the "Hallell", Christ deferred to the close of his supper; there being many things in it pertinent to him, and proper on this occasion, particularly *Ps 115:1*, and the Jews themselves say {o}, that xyvm lv wlbx, "the sorrows of the Messiah" are contained in this part: that this is the hymn which Christ and his disciples sung, may be rather thought, than that it was one of his own composing; since not only he, but all the disciples sung it, and therefore must be what they were acquainted with; and since Christ in most things conformed to the rites and usages of the Jewish nation; and he did not rise up from table and go away, until this concluding circumstance was over; though it was allowed to finish the "Hallell", or hymn, in any place they pleased, even though it was not the place where the feast was kept {p} however, as soon as it was over,

they went out to the Mount of Olives; he and his disciples, excepting Judas:

first he himself alone, and then the disciples followed him, according to *Lu 22:39*, and the Persic version here reads it, "he went out". This seems to be contrary to a Jewish canon; for the passover was hnyl Nwej, "bound to lodging a night" {q}; that is, as the gloss explains it,

"the first night (i.e. of the passover) a man must lodge in Jerusalem; thenceforward it was lawful to dwell without the wall, within the border."

And a little after, the same phrase, being bound to lodge, is explained, one night in the midst of the city: but Christ had more important business to attend unto, than to comply with this rule, which was not obligatory by the word of God, though the Jews pretend to found it on *De 16:7* {r}. The place where he went with his disciples, was the Mount of Olives, which was on the east side of Jerusalem; and was the place where the high priest stood, and burnt the red heifer, and sprinkled its blood {s}: now from the temple, or from the mountain of the house, there was a causeway, or bridge on arches, made to the Mount of Olives, in which the high priest and the heifer, hydeom lkw, "and all his assistants", (the priests that helped him in this service,) went to this mount {t}: in this same way it is very probable, went Christ the great high priest, who was typified by the red heifer, and his companions the disciples, to the same place, where he had his bloody sweat, and where his sorrows and sufferings began.

{l} Misn. Pesach. c. 9. 3. T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 95. 1, 2. {m} Seder Tephillot, fol. 101, &c. Ed. Amstelod. {n} Maimon. Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 5. 10. {o} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 1. {p} Maimon. ut supra. (Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 5. 10.) {q} T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 95. 2. {r} Talmud ib. & Jarchi in Dent. xvi. 7. {s} Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 4. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 16. 1. {t} Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 6. & Middot, c 1. sect. 3. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Matthew 26:31

Ver. 31. Then saith Jesus unto them,.... Either before they went out of the house, where they had been eating the passover, and the supper; or as they were going along to the Mount of Olives; which latter rather seems to be the case:

all ye shall be offended because of me this night. The words are spoken to the eleven disciples; for Judas was now gone to the high priests, to inform them where Jesus was going that night, and to receive of them a band of men and officers to apprehend him; which is what would be the occasion of all the rest of the disciples being offended: for when they should see their master betrayed by one of themselves, and the officers seize him and bind him, and lead him away as a malefactor, our Lord here suggests, that they would be filled with such fear and dread, that everyone of them would forsake him and run away, and provide for their own safety; yea, would be so stumbled at this unexpected event, that they would begin to stagger and hesitate in their minds, whether he was the Messiah, or not, as the two disciples going to Emmaus, seem to intimate; they would be so shocked with this sad disappointment, and so offended, or stumble, as to be ready to fall from him: and their faith in him must have failed, had he not prayed for them, as he did for Peter; for they thought of nothing else but a temporal kingdom, which they expected would now quickly be set up, and they be advanced to great honour and dignity; but things taking a different turn, it must greatly shock and affect them; and it was to be the case not of one or two only, but of all of them: and that because of him, whom they dearly loved, and with whom they had been eating the passover, and his own supper, and had had such a comfortable opportunity together; and because of his low estate, his being seized and bound, and led away by his enemies; as the Jews were before offended at him, because of the meanness of his parentage and education: and this was to be that very night; and it was now very late, it may reasonably be supposed to be midnight: for since the last evening, or sun setting, they had ate the passover, the ceremonies of which took up much time, and after that the Lord's supper; then the Hallell, or hymn was sung, when Christ discoursed much with his disciples, and delivered those consolatory and instructive sermons, about the vine and other things, occasioned by the fruit of the vine, they had been just drinking of, recorded in the 15th and 16th chapters of John; and put up that prayer to his Father for them, which stands in the 17th chapter; and indeed within an hour or two after, see *Mr 14:37*, this prediction of Christ's had its accomplishment, and which he confirms by a prophetic testimony:

for it is written, in *Zec 13:7*,

I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered. This text is miserably perverted by the Jewish writers; though they all agree, that by "the shepherd", is meant some great person, as a king; so the Targum renders it, "kill the king, and the princes shall be scattered": one {u} of them says, that a wicked king of Moab is designed; another {w}, a king of the Ishmaelites, or of the Turks; and a third {x}, that any, and every king of the Gentiles is meant; a fourth says {y}, it is a prophecy of the great wars that shall be in all the earth, in the days of Messiah ben Joseph; and a fifth {z}, after having taken notice of other senses, mentions this as the last: that

"the words "my shepherd, and the man my fellow", in the former part of the verse, are to be understood of Messiah, the son of Joseph; and because he shall be slain in the wars of the nations, therefore the Lord will whet his glittering sword against the nations, to take vengeance on them; and on this account says, "awake, O sword! for my shepherd, and for the man my fellow": as if the Lord called the sword and vengeance to awake against his enemies, because of Messiah ben Joseph, whom they shall slay; and who shall be the shepherd of the flock of God, and by reason of his righteousness and perfection, shall be the man his fellow; and when the nations shall slay that shepherd, the sword of the Lord shall come and smite the shepherd; that is, every shepherd of the Gentiles, and their kings; for because of the slaying of the shepherd of Israel, every shepherd of their enemies shall be slain, and their sheep shall be scattered; for through the death of the shepherds, the people that shall be under them, will have no standing."

Now though this is a most wretched perversion of the passage, to make the word "shepherd" in the former part of it, to signify one person, and in the other part of it another; yet shows the conviction of their minds, that the Messiah is not be excluded from the prophecy, and of whom, without doubt, it is spoken, and rightly applied by him, who is concerned in it, the Lord Jesus Christ; who feeds his flock like a shepherd, is the great shepherd of the sheep, the chief shepherd, the good shepherd, that laid down his life for the sheep; which is intended by the smiting of him: in the text in *Zec 13:7* it is read, "smite the shepherd"; being an order of Jehovah the Father's, to Justice, to awake its sword, and sheath it in his son, his equal by nature, his shepherd by office; and here, as his own act, and what he would do himself, "I will smite the shepherd"; for his ordering Justice to smite, is rightly interpreted doing it himself. The Jews cannot object to this, when their own interpreters in general explain it thus, tyrky Mvh, "God shall cut off the shepherd" {a}. The sufferings of Christ, which are meant by the smiting him, were according, not only to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, the will of his good pleasure, but according to his will of command; which justice executed, and Christ was obedient to, and in which Jehovah had a very great hand himself: he bruised him, he put him to grief, he made his soul an offering for sin; he spared him not, but delivered him up into the hands of men, justice, and death, for us all: the latter clause, "and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered", respects the disciples, and their forsaking Christ, and fleeing from him, when be was apprehended; for then, as was foretold in this prophecy, and predicted by Christ, they all forsook him and fled, and were scattered every man to his own, and left him alone. In Zechariah it is only said, "the sheep shall be scattered", *Zec 13:7*: here, the sheep of the flock; though the Evangelist Mark reads it, as in the prophet, *Mr 14:27*, and so the Arabic here, and the sense is the same; for the sheep are the sheep of the flock, Christ's little flock, the flock of slaughter, committed to his care; unless it may be thought proper to distinguish between the sheep and the flock; and by "the flock" understand, all the elect of God, and by "the sheep", the principal of the flock; "the rams of his sheep", or "flock", as the Syriac version renders it; the apostles of Christ, who are chiefly, if not solely intended; though others of Christ's followers might be stumbled, offended, and staggered, as well as they; as Cleophas was, one of the two that went to Emmaus.

{u} R. Sol. Jarchi, in Zech. xiii. 7. {w} Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 1. c. 37. p. 310. {x} R. David Kirachi, in Zech. xiii. 7. {y} R. Aben Ezra in ib. {z} Abarbitnel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 74. 4. {a} R. Aben. Ezra, R. David Kimchi, & Miclol Yophi in loc.

Matthew 26:32

Ver. 32. But after I am risen again,.... This he says for their comfort, that though he, their shepherd, should be apprehended, condemned, and crucified, should be smitten with death, and be laid in the grave, yet he should rise again; and though they should be scattered abroad, yet should be gathered together again by him, their good shepherd; who would after his resurrection, appear to them, be at the head of them, and go before them, as a shepherd goes before his sheep: for it follows,

I will go before you into Galilee; the native place of most, if not all of them. This the women that came to the sepulchre after Christ's resurrection, were bid, both by the angel, and Christ himself, to remind the disciples of, and ordered them to go into Galilee, where they might expect to see him: accordingly they did go thither, and saw and worshipped him; see *Mt 28:7*.

Matthew **_26:33_**

Ver. 33. Peter answered and said unto him,.... Who was always a forward man, free to speak his mind, and was often the mouth of the rest; observing what Christ had affirmed concerning all of them, that that very night, in a very short space of time, they would be offended because of him; and knowing the strong love he had for Christ, and being persuaded it could never be his case, thus addresses him;

though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended: his sense is, that though all the men in the world, friends, and foes, though even all the rest of the disciples, who were his most intimate friends, most closely attached to him, and who dearly loved him, and sincerely believed in him, should be so stumbled at what should befall him, as to flee from him, and be tempted to relinquish his cause, and interest; yet nothing should ever cause him, in the least, to stumble and fall, to desert him, or hesitate about him, or cause him to take the least umbrage and offence at what might come upon him; and this he was positive of would be the case, not only that night, but ever after. No doubt he said this in the sincerity of his heart, and out of his great fervour of affection for Christ; but what he failed in, was trusting to his own strength, being self-confident; and in entertaining greater opinion of himself, and his steady attachment to Christ, than of the rest of the disciples; and in contradicting what Christ had so strongly affirmed of them all, without any exception, and so of himself, and had confirmed by so glaring a prophecy concerning this matter.

Matthew **_26:34_**

Ver. 34. Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee,.... Christ, the more strongly to asseverate what he was about to say, uses the word verily, or prefixes his "Amen" to it, as being a certain truth, and what Peter might assure himself of would certainly come to pass:

that this night before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice; which is, as if he should say, thou wilt not only be offended because of me, and flee from me, and be scattered with the rest, as will be the case of all of you; but thou wilt deny that thou knowest me, that thou belongest to me, or hast any concern with me; and this thou wilt do not only once, but again and again, even three times, one after another, and that this very night, before the cock has done crowing. In Mark it is said, "that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice", *Mr 14:30*; which may be reconciled with the words of Matthew, and the other evangelists, by observing, that the word "twice" is not in Beza's ancient copy, which he gave to the university of Cambridge, nor is it in the Ethiopic version; which if allowed to be the true reading, the difficulty is removed at once; but whereas it is in other copies, no stress must be laid on this, nor is there any need of it: for whereas the cock crows twice in the night, once at midnight, and again near break of day; and which latter crowing being louder, and more welcome, and most taken notice of, is, by way of eminence, called the cock crowing; and is what Matthew here has respect to, and so designs the same as Mark does; and the sense of both is, that before the cock crow a second time, which is most properly the cock crowing, Peter should three times deny his master, as he did; see *Mr 13:35*, where cock crowing is distinguished from midnight, the first time the cock crows, and means the second time of crowing; and where Mark is to be understood in the same sense as Matthew, and both entirely agree. So cock crowing and midnight are distinguished by the Jews, who say {b},

"that on all other days they remove the ashes from the altar, rbgh tayrqb, "at cock crowing", or near unto it, whether before or after; but on the day of atonement,
twuhm, "at midnight":"

and who also speak of the cocks crowing a first and second, and even a third time {c}.

"Says R. Shila, he that begins his journey before cock crowing, his blood be upon his head. R. Josiah says, he may not proceed bwvyv de, "until he repeats"; that is, until he crows twice: and there are, who say, until he trebles it, or crows a third time: of what do they speak? of a middling one, i.e. which neither crows too soon, nor too late."

{b} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 8. {c} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21. 1.

Ver. 35. Peter saith unto him,.... Mark says, "he spake the more vehemently", *Mr 14:31*; his spirits were raised to a greater pitch of resentment, and he expressed himself in stronger terms, and in more peremptory and self-confident language;

though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee: he seems to have understood Christ, that he should suffer death, and that he would be in great danger himself, and therefore rather than lose his life would deny his master; wherefore he most confidently affirms, that should this be the case, should he be called to suffer death for his sake, or along with him, he would most cheerfully embrace it, rather than be guilty of so dreadful a crime, which he could not look upon but with the utmost detestation and abhorrence, as to deny his dear Lord and Saviour:

likewise also said all the disciples; that they would never be offended because of him, and would die with him rather than deny him. This they said, being also self-confident and ignorant of their own weakness, and drawn into these expressions through Peter's example; and that partly to show their equal abhorrence of so horrible an iniquity, as denying Jesus; and partly to remove all suspicion from them, lest they should be thought to have less love and zeal for Christ than Peter had.

Matthew 26:36

Ver. 36. Then cometh Jesus with them,.... The eleven disciples,

unto a place called Gethsemane; the Syriac version calls it Ghedsiman; the Persic, Ghesmani, so the Arabic; the Vulgate Latin, and the Ethiopic, Gethsemani: in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and in the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, it is called a "village"; and in the Ethiopic version, "a village of wine"; and in the Syriac and Persic versions, a place. Here, according to an Ethiopic writer, the Virgin Mary was buried by the apostles {d}. Its etymology is very differently given: some read, and explain it, as if it was Mynmv yg, "a valley of fatness", or "of olives", as it is called in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; see *Isa 28:1*; others as if it was ynmyod yg, "a valley of signs", or a very famous valley; so Mount Sinai is called {e}, yanmyo rh, "Harsemanai", the mountain of signs: but, to take notice of no more; the true reading and signification of it is, ynmv tg, "an olive press", or a press for olives: so we read {f} of a chamber in the temple which is called "the chamber", aynmv tyb, "Beth Semania", or "Bethsemani", where they put their wine and oil for temple service. It is very probable that at, or near this place, was a very public olive press, where they used to squeeze the olives, for the oil of them, which they gathered in great plenty from off the Mount of Olives; at the foot of which this place was; and a very significant place it was for our Lord to go to at this time, when he was about to tread the wine press of his Father's wrath, alone, and of the people there were none with him: for it follows,

and saith unto the disciples, sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder: perceiving a time of distress was coming upon him, he betakes himself to prayer, an example worthy of our imitation; in the performance of which duty he chose to be retired and solitary, and therefore left eight of his disciples at a certain place, whilst he went to another at some distance, convenient for his purpose; who perhaps might be the weakest of the disciples, and not able to bear the agonies and distress of their Lord and Master.

{d} Ludolph. Lex. Ethiop. p. 554. {e} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 89. 1. {f} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 16. 1.

Matthew 26:37

Ver. 37. And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee,.... James and John, who perhaps were the strongest, and best able to bear the shocking sight, and were his favourite disciples; who were admitted to be with him at other times, when the rest were not; as at the raising of Jairus's daughter, ***Mr 5:37***, and moreover, these were at his transfiguration on the mount, *Mt 17:1*, which was a representation and presage of his glory; and so were very proper persons to be witnesses of his sorrows and agonies, which were the way to it; and three of them were taken by him for this purpose, being a sufficient number to bear testimony, since by the mouth of two or three witnesses everything is established:

and began to be sorrowful; his soul was troubled on the same account six days before, *Joh 12:27*, but was now sorrowful. He was a man of sorrows all his days, and acquainted with griefs, being reproached and persecuted by men: but now a new scene of sorrows opened; before he was afflicted by men, but now he is bruised, and put to grief by his Father: his sorrows now began, for they did not end here, but on the cross; not that this was but a bare beginning of his sorrows, or that these were but light in comparison of future ones; for they were very heavy, and indeed seem to be the heaviest of all, as appears from his own account of them; his vehement cry to his Father; his bloody sweat and agony; and the assistance he stood in need of from an angel; and the comfort and strength he received from him in his human nature: all which, put together, the like is not to be observed in any part of his sufferings:

and to be very heavy; with the weight of the sins of his people, and the sense of divine wrath, with which he was so pressed and overwhelmed, that his spirits were almost quite gone; he was just ready to swoon away, sink and die; his heart failed him, and became like wax melted in the midst of his bowels, before the wrath of God, which was as a consuming fire: all which shows the truth, though weakness of his human nature, and the greatness of his sufferings in it. The human nature was still in union with the divine person of the Son of God, and was sustained by him, but left to its natural weakness, without sin, that it might suffer to the utmost, and as much as possible for the sins of God's elect.

Matthew 26:38

Ver. 38. Then saith he unto them,.... The three disciples, Peter, James, and John, who, by his looks and gestures, might know somewhat of the inward distress of his mind; yet he choose to express it to them in words, saying,

my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. That Christ had an human soul, as well as an human body, is clear from hence; and which was possessed of the same passions as ours are, but without sin, such as joy, love, grief, sorrow, &c. and at this time its sorrows were exceeding great: his soul was beset all around with the sins of his people; these took hold on him, and encompassed him, which must, in the most sensible manner, affect his pure and spotless mind; the sorrows of death and hell surrounded him on every side, insomuch that the least degree of comfort was not let in to him; nor was there any way open for it, so that his soul was overwhelmed with sorrow; his heart was ready to break; he was brought even, as it were, to the dust of death; nor would his sorrows leave him, he was persuaded, until soul and body were separated from each other; see a like phrase in *Jud 16:16*, tarry ye here. The Ethiopic adds, "till I shall return", for he was going a little further from them, to vent his grief, and pour out his soul unto God. Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it, "expect me", or "wait for me here", signifying, that he should return to them shortly;

and watch with me. It was night, and they might be heavy and inclined to sleep: he knew it would be an hour of temptation both to him and them, and therefore advises them to watch against it; and to observe how it would go with him, and what should befall him, that they might be witnesses of it, and be able to testify what agonies he endured, what grace he exercised, and how submissive he was to his Father's will.

Matthew 26:39

Ver. 39. And he went a little further,.... Luke says, *Lu 22:41*, "about a stone's cast", about fifty or sixty feet from the place where they were,

and fell on his face, and prayed; partly to show his great reverence of God, the sword of whose justice was awaked against him, the terrors of whose law were set in array before him, and whose wrath was pouring down upon him; and partly to signify how much his soul was depressed, how low he was brought, and in what distress and anguish of spirit he was, that he was not able to lift up his head, and look up. This was a prayer gesture used when a person was in the utmost perplexity. The account the Jews give of it, is this {g},

"Mhynp le Nylpwnvk, "when they fall upon their faces", they do not stretch out their hands and their feet, but incline on their sides."

This was not to be done by any person, or at any time; the rules are these {h}:

"no man is accounted fit wynp le lwpyl, "to fall upon his face", but he that knows in himself that he is righteous, as Joshua; but he inclines his face a little, and does not bow it down to the floor; and it is lawful for a man to pray in one place, and to "fall upon his face" in another: it is a custom that reaches throughout all Israel, that there is no falling upon the face on a sabbath day, nor on feast days, nor on the beginning of the year, nor on the beginning of the month, nor on the feast of dedication, nor on the days of "purim", nor at the time of the meat offering of the eves of the sabbath days, and good days, nor at the evening prayer for every day; and there are private persons that fall upon their faces at the evening prayer, and on the day of atonement only: they fall upon their faces because it is a time of supplication, request, and fasting."

Saying, O my father; or, as in Mark, "Abba, Father", *Mr 14:36*; "Abba" being the Syriac word he used, and signifies, "my father"; and the other word is added for explanation's sake, and to denote the vehemency of his mind, and fervour of spirit in prayer. Christ prayed in the same manner he taught his disciples to pray, saying, "our Father"; and as all his children pray under the influence of the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry "Abba, Father". God is the Father of Christ, not as man, for as such he was without father, being the seed of the woman, and made of a woman, without man; nor by creation, as he is the Father of spirits, of angels, and the souls of men, of Adam, and all mankind; nor by adoption, as he is the Father of all the chosen, redeemed, and regenerated ones; but by nature, he being the only begotten of the Father, in a manner inconceivable and inexpressible by us. Christ now addresses him in prayer in his human nature, as standing in this relation to him as the Son of God, both to express his reverence of him, and what freedom and boldness he might use with him; what confidence he might put in him; and what expectation he might have of being heard and regarded by him; and what submission and resignation of will was due from himself unto him.

If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; meaning not only the hour, as it is called in Mark, the present season and time of distress, and horror; but all his future sufferings and death, which were at hand; together with the bearing the sins of his people, the enduring the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, all which were ingredients in, and made up this dreadful bitter cup, this cup of fury, cursing, and trembling; called a cup, either in allusion to the nauseous potions given by physicians to their patients; or rather to the cup of poison given to malefactors the sooner to dispatch them; or to that of wine mingled with myrrh and frankincense to intoxicate them, that they might not feel their pain, see Gill "Mr 15:23", or to the cup appointed by the master of the family to everyone in the house; these sorrows, sufferings, and death of Christ being what were allotted and appointed by his heavenly Father: and when he prays that this cup might pass from him, his meaning is, that he might be freed from the present horrors of his mind, be excused the sufferings of death, and be delivered from the curse of the law, and wrath of God; which request was made without sin, though it betrayed the weakness of the human nature under its insupportable load, and its reluctance to sufferings and death, which is natural; and yet does not represent him herein as inferior to martyrs, who have desired death, and triumphed in the midst of exquisite torments: for their case and his were widely different; they had the presence of God with them, Christ was under the hidings of his Father's face; they had the love of God shed abroad in them, he had the wrath of God poured out upon him; and his prayer bespeaks him to be in a condition which neither they, nor any mortal creature were ever in. Moreover, the human nature of Christ was now, as it were, swallowed up in sorrow, and intent upon nothing but sufferings and death; had nothing in view but the wrath of God, and the curse of the law; so that everything else was, for the present, out of sight; as the purposes of God, his counsel and covenant, his own engagements and office, and the salvation of his people; hence it is no wonder to hear such a request made; and yet it is with this condition, "if it be possible". In Mark it is said, "all things are possible unto thee", *Mr 14:36*; intimating, that the taking away, or causing the cup to pass from him, was: all things are possible to God, which are consistent with the perfections of his nature, and the counsel of his will: and all such things, though possible in themselves, yet are not under such and such circumstances so; the removal of the cup from Christ was possible in itself, but not as things were circumstanced, and as matters then stood; and therefore it is hypothetically put, "if it be possible", as it was not; and that by reason of the decrees and purposes of God, which had fixed it, and are immutable; and on account of the covenant of grace, of which this was a considerable branch and article, and in which Christ had agreed unto it, and is unalterable; and also on the score of the prophecies of the Old Testament, in which it had been often spoken of; and therefore without it, how should the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be? they would not have been the Scriptures of truth. Besides, Christ had foretold it himself once and again, and therefore consistent with the truth of his own predictions, it could not be dispensed with: add to all this, that the salvation of his people required his drinking it; that could not be brought about no other way in agreement with the veracity, faithfulness, justice, and holiness of God. This condition qualities and restrains the above petition; nor is it to be considered but in connection with what follows:

nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt; which shows that the request was far from being sinful, or contrary to piety to God, or love to men, or to true fortitude of mind; the pure natural will of Christ, or the will of Christ's human nature, being left to act in a mere natural way, shows a reluctancy to sorrows, sufferings, and death; this same will acting on rational principles, and in a rational way, puts it upon the possibility the thing, and the agreement of the divine will to it. That there are two wills in Christ, human and divine, is certain; his human will, though in some instances, as in this, may have been different from the divine will, yet not contrary to it; and his divine will is always the same with his Father's. This, as mediator, he engaged to do, and came down from heaven for that purpose, took delight in doing it, and has completely finished it.

{g} Gloss. in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2. {h} Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 5. sect. 14, 15.

Matthew 26:40

Ver. 40. And he cometh unto the disciples,.... The three he took with him, Peter, James, and John, after he had finished his prayer;

and findeth them asleep: many things might contribute to, and bring this drowsiness upon them; as the great fatigue they had had in preparing the passover in the day, the plentiful meal they had eaten at night, though without excess, and the lateness of the night, it being now probably midnight; but the chief reason of their sleepiness was their sorrow, as is expressed in *Lu 22:45*, what Christ had said to them of his soul troubles, and what they saw in him, had filled their hearts with sorrow, which brought on them an amazement and stupidity of mind; and this issued in sleep. We have other instances of persons in excessive grief and trouble falling asleep, as Elijah in *1Ki 19:4*, and Jonah in ***Jon 1:5***, so that this did not arise from a secure, lazy, indolent frame of spirit; or from any disregard to Christ, and neglect of him, and unconcernedness for him; but from their great sorrow of heart; for, the trouble and distress that he was in, added to the causes above mentioned. Though some have thought, that Satan might be, concerned in it, who induced this sleepiness, or increased it, that he might the more easily surprise them with his temptations, he was preparing for them, which I will not deny. Now, though this sleep was natural bodily sleep, which the disciples fell into, yet was an emblem of, and carried in it a resemblance to, the spiritual sleep and drowsiness of the people of God; for as this was after a delightful entertainment and conversation with Christ at the passover and Lord's supper, so it sometimes is, that the children of God fall into a sleepy frame of soul, after much communion with Christ, as the church did in ***So 5:1***, and as this sleep befell them, when Christ was withdrawn a little space from them; so it was with the church, when her beloved was absent from her, ***So 3:1***, and with the wise virgins when the bridegroom tarried, *Mt 25:6*, and as this was not an entire thorough sleep; they knew all the while what Christ was doing, and could relate, as they have done, the circumstances of it; so the children of God, when asleep, they are not like unregenerate persons, in a dead sleep of sin, that hear, and see, and feel, and know nothing; but though they are asleep, their hearts are awake, as was the church's, ***So 5:2***, yet as the disciples were so much asleep, that the bare words of Christ did not arouse them from it for a while; so such is the sleep of the saints sometimes, that they are not to be aroused by the bare ministry of the word, though the most powerful arguments, and the most moving and melting language are made use of, as were with the church, ***So 5:2***,

and saith unto Peter, what! could ye not watch with me one hour? This was said particularly to Peter, because he had so lately, in such a confident manner, declared, that he would not be offended with Christ, but abide with him, stand by him, and even die with him, was there an occasion for it; and yet, in so short a space of time, was fallen asleep, as were the rest who said the same things also: and it is as if Christ should say, how will you be able to stand by me throughout this night, when ye cannot watch with me so much as one hour, though I so earnestly desired you to tarry here, and watch with me, and you saw in what distress I was in? how will you be able to withstand the temptations that will beset you quickly, and perform your promises of love, fidelity, constancy, and close attachment to me, in the greatest dangers, when you cannot keep yourselves awake one hour for my sake?

Matthew 26:41

Ver. 41. Watch and pray,.... These two are very justly put together. There is, and ought to be, a watching before prayer, and "unto" it; a watching all opportunities, the most suitable and convenient to perform it; and there is a watching in it, both over our hearts, thoughts, words, and gestures, and after it, for a return of it, and answer to it: the reason of this exhortation follows,

that ye enter not into temptation; not that they might not be tempted at all;

for none of the saints have been, or are without temptations; and they are needful for them; and it is the will of God they should be attended with them; and he has made gracious provisions for their help and relief under them; but that they might not enter into them, throw themselves in the way of temptation, be surprised by them at an unawares, fall into them headlong, be immersed in them, fall by them, and be overcome with them, so as to forsake Christ, or to deny him:

the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak: meaning either that the evil spirit Satan was very desirous of having them in his hands; very forward and ready to make the onset upon them; was cheerful, alert, and confident of victory; and was strong, robust, and powerful; and they were but flesh and blood, very weak and infirm, and unequal to the enemy; which is a sense not to be despised, seeing it carries in it a very strong reason why they ought to watch and pray, lest they fall into the temptations of such a powerful adversary; see ***Eph 6:12***, or else by "spirit" may be meant the soul, as renewed and regenerated by the spirit of God; particularly the principle of grace in it, which is born of the Spirit, and is called by the same name, and which lusts against the flesh, or corrupt nature: this was willing to watch and pray, and guard against falling into temptations; was willing to abide by Christ, and express its love to him every way; but "the flesh", or "body", so the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, is "weak" and infirm, prone to sleep, indulges ease, and unfit to bear trouble, but ready to sink under it, and is for fleeing from it: and so the words contain our Lord's excuse of his disciples in their present circumstances. Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads the words thus, and "indeed the spirit is tdqwv, watchful, but the flesh is weak". The Ethiopic version after this manner, "the spirit desires, and the body is fatigued". The Persic version, contrary both to the letter and sense of the words, renders them, "my spirit is firm, but my body is infirm".

Matthew 26:42

Ver. 42. He went away again the second time,.... To the same place as before, or at some little distance; after he had reproved his disciples for their sleeping, and had exhorted them to watchfulness and prayer, suggesting the danger they were liable to, and the condition they were in:

and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done. The sense of this prayer to his God and Father is, that if his sufferings and death could not be dispensed with; if it was not consistent with the decrees of God, and the covenant of grace, that he should be excused from them; or if the glory of God, and the salvation of his people required it, that he must drink up that bitter cup, he was content to do it; desiring in all things to submit unto, and to fulfil his Father's will, though it was so irksome and disagreeable to nature.

Matthew 26:43

Ver. 43. And he came and found them asleep again,.... For they were aroused and awaked, in some measure, by what he had said to them; but no sooner was he gone but they fell asleep again, and thus he found them a second time; or, "he came again and found them asleep"; so read the Vulgate Latin, the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel:

for their eyes were heavy; with sleep through fatigue, sorrow, &c. Mark adds, "neither wist they what to answer him", *Mr 14:40*; they were so very sleepy, they knew not how to speak; or they were so confounded, that he should take them asleep a second time, after they had had such a reproof, and exhortation from him, that they knew not what answer to make him; who probably rebuked them again, or gave them a fresh exhortation.

Matthew 26:44

Ver. 44. And he left them, and went away again,.... At some little distance from them; they being so overpowered with sleep, that he could have no conversation with them:

and prayed the third time; as the Apostle Paul did, when under temptation, he prayed thrice that it might depart from him, *2Co 12:8*,

saying the same words: the Arabic version renders it, "in the words which he before expressed"; and Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads, "he said the same prayer"; not in the selfsame words, or in the express form he had before delivered it; for it is certain, that his second prayer is not expressed in the same form of words as the first: but the sense is, that he prayed to the same purpose; the matter and substance of his prayer was the same, namely, that he might be exempted from suffering; but if that could not be admitted of, he was desirous to be resigned to the will of his heavenly Father, and was determined to submit unto it.

Matthew 26:45

Ver. 45. Then cometh he to his disciples,.... The three that were nearest to him, "the third time", as Mark says, *Mr 14:41*, and as it was;

and saith unto them, sleep on now, and take your rest. The Evangelist Mark adds, "it is enough", *Mr 14:41*; which has induced some interpreters to think, that these words were spoken seriously by Christ: though the sense cannot be that they had watched sufficiently, and now might sleep, and take their rest, for they had not watched at all; but rather, that he had now no need of them, or their watching with him; the conflict was over for the present; or, as the Syriac version renders it, "the end is come"; and so the Arabic; and to the same purpose the Persic, "the matter is come to an end", or to an extremity; the sense being the same with what is expressed in the following clause, "the hour is at hand"; and shows, that the words are to be understood in an ironical sense, sleep on and take your rest, if you can: I have been exhorting you to watchfulness, but to no purpose, you will be alarmed from another quarter; a band of soldiers is just at hand to seize and carry me away, and now sleep if you can: that this is the sense appears from the reason given, and from the exhortation in the following verse, and the reason annexed to that:

behold the hour is at hand, and the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners: by the son of man Christ means himself, and under this diminutive title expresses his Messiahship, this being a character of the Messiah in the Old Testament; and the truth of his human nature, and the weakness and infirmities of it: by the "betraying", or delivery of him, is intended either the betraying of him by Judas into the hands of the high priest, Scribes, and Pharisees; or the delivery of him, by them, into the hands of Pilate, and by him to the Roman soldiers; all which were by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. The high priest, elders, Scribes, and Pharisees, notwithstanding all their pretensions to religion, righteousness, and holiness, were very wicked persons; though the Gentiles, the band of

Roman soldiers, Judas brought with him to take Christ, are here rather meant, it being usual to call the Gentiles sinners. This betraying and delivery of Christ into the hands of these, was determined by God; the time, the very hour was fixed, and was now approaching; the last sand in the glass was dropping; for as soon as Christ had said these words, Judas, with his band of soldiers, appeared.

Matthew *26:46*

Ver. 46. Rise, let us be going,.... Not to run away from the enemy, but to meet him: this was said, partly to arouse his sleepy disciples; and partly to show his love to his Father, and his submission to his will; as also to express the fortitude of his mind as man; he was now rid of his fears, and free from those agonies and dreadful apprehensions of things, he was but a little while ago possessed of; and likewise, to signify his willingness to be apprehended, and to suffer, and die, in the room of his people:

he is at hand that doth betray me. This shows his omniscience: he not only knew, as he did from the beginning, who should betray him; but he knew when be would do it; and he knew where the betrayer now was, that he was just now coming upon him, in order to deliver him the hands of sinful men. And this he spake with trepidity of soul, with greatness of mind, being no more concerned at it, than when he gave him the sop, and bid him do what he did quickly: he does not mention his name; nor did he ever, when he spoke of him as the betrayer; either because the disciples, as yet, did not fully and certainly know who should betray him, and he would not now surprise them with it; or because they did, and therefore it was needless to mention his name; or rather, because he was unworthy to be mentioned by name: a "behold" is prefixed to this, partly to awaken the attention of his disciples; and partly to express what an horrid, insolent, and unparalleled action that was, Judas was now about to be guilty of.

Matthew *26:47*

Ver. 47. And while he yet spake,.... While he was thus speaking to his disciples, before the last words, he is at hand that doth betray me, were well out of his mouth; such an exact knowledge had Christ of every motion of Judas, of what he was about, and where he was:

lo! Judas, one of the twelve, came. The Persic version adds, "in sight"; of Christ, and the disciples; they saw him, and knew him, though some little distance: he came to Gethsemane, and into the garden, where they were, with a design to betray his master. He is described by his name Judas; as in *Mt 26:14*, for there was another Judas among the apostles; the Syriac and Persic read, Judas the betrayer, to distinguish him from the other: and also by his office, "one of the twelve"; i.e. apostles, whom Christ called from the rest of his disciples and followers, and bestowed extraordinary gifts upon, and sent forth to preach the Gospel, cast out devils, and heal all manner of diseases; and "lo!", one of these betrays him! an apostle, and yet a devil! one of the twelve, one of his select company, and bosom friends, and yet a traitor!

and with him a great multitude, with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders the people. Judas was at the head of them, went before them to show them where Christ was, and to deliver him into their hands: he had not been asleep, he had been with the chief priests, and acquainted them with the opportunity he had of making good his agreement with him: he had got the band of soldiers, and other persons together, in order to make sure work of it. Thus we see how diligent wicked men are in the accomplishment of their evil designs, whilst good men are asleep and indifferent to godly and spiritual exercises. Judas is here described by his company; he who but a few hours ago was at table with his Lord, and the rest of the apostles, is now at the head of band of Roman soldiers, and other miscreants, and blood thirsty wretches, intent upon the death of his master. They may well be called a "multitude", because made up of various sorts of persons, and these, many of them; of Roman soldiers, of the officers and servants of the chief priests; yea of the chief priests themselves, captains of the temple, and elders of the people, who were so eager upon this enterprise, that they could not forbear going in company with them, to see what would be the issue of it. And "a great one"; for the "band" of soldiers, if it was complete, consisted of a thousand men itself; and besides this, there were many others, and all to take a single person, and who had no more about him than eleven disciples; though the {i} Jews pretend he had two thousand men with him: and who came also "with swords and staves, or clubs"; the Roman soldiers with their swords, and the servants of the chief priests with their clubs: the reason of this posse, and of their being thus armed, might be either for fear of the people, who, should they be alarmed, and have any notice of their design, might rise and make an uproar, and attempt to rescue him; or that by having a Roman band with them, and the chief priests and their officers, it might appear, that what they did they did by authority; and that they seized him as a malefactor, as one guilty either of sedition, or heresy, or both. And this account is confirmed by the Jews themselves, who say {k}, that the citizens, of Jerusalem were Mynywzm, "armed", and equiped, and so took Jesus: and this multitude also came "from the chief priests and elders of the people". Mark joins the Scribes with them, *Mr 14:43*: these composed the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, who had been consulting the death of Christ; had agreed to give Judas thirty pieces of silver to betray him into their hands; had obtained a band of soldiers of the Roman governor to apprehend him, and sent their officers and servants to assist herein; these all acted under their direction, influence, and authority. The Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read, "sent", from them.

{i} Toldos Jesu, p. 16. {k} Ib.

Matthew ***26:48***

Ver. 48. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign,.... By which it might be known who he was; for it being night, though they had lanterns and torches, as John says, *Joh 18:3*, yet Judas himself might not be able to discern, him, so as to point him out, until he came very near him: moreover, Christ and his apostles might be clothed alike, so that a mistake might be easily made, and one of them be took for him: and so the Jews say {l}, that the two thousand men, they pretend were with him, were clothed with the same apparel; which story may take its rise from hence: add to this, that James, the son of Alphaeus, called the brother of our Lord, is reported to be very like unto him. Besides, it is very likely that the Roman soldiers, who were to be the principal persons in apprehending, binding, and carrying him away, might never have seen him, and so could not know him without some sign was given them; and which Judas gave them before he came out with them: and is as follows:

saying, whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he, hold him fast. Judas might the rather pitch upon this to be the sign, partly because it might be what had been usual with the disciples, when they had been at any time absent from Christ, and which he admitted of; and partly because he might think this would best cover his treacherous designs, who, with all his wickedness, had not effrontery enough to come sword in hand and seize him in a violent manner, and besides, might not judge such a method advisable, had he impudence enough to prosecute it, lest this should put Jesus upon taking some measures to make his escape. The reason of his advice, "hold him fast", was, because he knew that once and again, when attempts were made to seize him, he easily disengaged himself, passed through the midst, and went his way; see ***Lu 4:30*** *Joh 10:39*; and therefore gave them this caution, and strict charge, lest, should he slip from them, he should lose his money he had agreed with the chief priests for; or to let them know, that when he was in their hands, he had made good his agreement, and should expect his money: and that it lay upon them then to take care of him, and bring him before the sanhedrim. The account the Jews themselves give of the directions of Judas, is not very much unlike this; who represent him advising in this manner, only as on the day before:

"gird yourselves ready about this time tomorrow, and the man whom shall worship and bow to, the same is he; behave yourselves like men of war, fight against his company, and lay hold on him {m}."

{l} Toldos Jesu, p. 16. {m} Ib.

Matthew 26:49

Ver. 49. And forthwith he came to Jesus,.... As soon as ever he appeared, before the rest could come up; for, he went before them, as Luke says, and that not only as, their guide to direct them to the person they wanted, but he separated himself from them, that it might not be thought that he came with them, or belonged to them:

and said, hail, master; and kissed him. Just as Joab asked Amasa of his health, and took him by the beard to kiss him, and smote him under the fifth rib, *2Sa 20:9*. The salutation he gave him was wishing him all health, prosperity, and happiness. The Syriac version renders it, "peace, Rabbi"; and the Persic, "peace be upon thee, Rabbi"; which was the very form of salutation the disciples of the wise men gave to their Rabbins.

"Says {n} Aba bar Hona, in the name of R. Jochanan, in what form is the salutation of a disciple to his master? ybr Kyle Mwlv, "peace be upon thee, Rabbi"."

In *Mr 14:45*, the word "Rabbi" is repeated, this being usual in the salutation of the Jewish doctors; and the rather used by Judas under a pretence of doing him the greater honour, and of showing the highest respect, and strongest affection for him. So this deceitful wretch still addresses him as his master, though he was now serving his most implacable enemies; and wishes him all peace and joy, when he was going to deliver him into the hands of those that sought his life; and to cover all, kissed him, as a token of his friendship and the sincerity of it. It is rightly observed by Dr. Lightfoot, that it was usual for masters to kiss their disciples, particularly their heads; but then not for disciples to kiss their masters: of the former there are many instances in the Jewish writings, but not of the latter: yet, I can hardly think that this was done out of open contempt and derision; but under a pretence of respect and love; and even as being concerned for his present case, and as condoling him under the circumstances he was now likely to be in, through an armed hand, which was just upon him; and which he, by this artifice, would have suggested he had no concern with.

{n} T. Hieros. Shebuot. fol. 34. 1.

Matthew 26:50

Ver. 50. And Jesus said unto him, friend,.... Not in an ironical and sarcastic way, but because he pretended to be his friend, by saluting and kissing him, in the manner he had done; or rather, because Christ had always used him as his friend, his familiar friend, who had been of his councils, and had ate at his table; and therefore this carried in it something very cutting, had Judas had any conscience, or sense of gratitude:

wherefore art thou come? The Ethiopic version reads, "my friend, art thou not come?" that is, art thou come as my friend? is thy coming as a friend, or as an enemy? if as a friend, what means this company with swords and staves? if as an enemy, why this salutation and kiss? or what is thine end in coming at this time of night? what is thy business here? thou hast left my company, and my disciples, what dost thou do here? The Syriac version reads it, "to that"; and the Arabic, "to this art thou come?" to kiss me, and by a kiss to deliver me into the hands of my enemies? to which agrees what is said in Luke, "Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?" *Lu 22:48*. This he said, to let him know he knew him, and therefore he calls him by name; and that he knew his design in kissing him, and that what he was doing was against light and knowledge; he, at the same time, knowing that he was the son of man, the true Messiah.

Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him; that is, the multitude, the Roman band, the captains and officers of the Jews, when Judas had given the sign; though not till Christ had given them a specimen of his power, in striking them to the ground; to let them know, that Judas could never have put him into their hands, nor could they have laid hold on him, had he not thought fit to surrender himself to them. The seizing and apprehending him is related by Luke and John as after the following circumstance; though the Ethiopic version here reads, "they lift up their hands, and did not lay hold on the Lord Jesus".

Matthew 26:51

Ver. 51. And behold one of them which were with Jesus,.... Either one of the three that Jesus took with him whilst he was in his agony, leaving the other eight at some distance; or of the eleven, who might now be all with him: however, it is certain, Peter is the person meant; for though he is not named here, nor by Mark, nor Luke, he is by John, *Joh 18:10*; whose Gospel being wrote last, and many years after the rest, there was no danger like to accrue, by telling who it was that did the following action: he being now thoroughly awaked with the rest, by what Christ had said to him; and more so by the surprise of the multitude of armed men about him; and remembering his solemn protestations of abiding by his master; and seeing him just now ready to be seized, and carried away; without knowing his master's mind, or waiting his answer to the question the other disciples put,

stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. It seems he had a sword by his side, upon what account is not certain; this he drew, and struck at a servant of the high priest's, who might show great malignity against Christ, and was foremost, and most busy in apprehending him. The blow was levelled at his head, and with an intention, no doubt, to have, cleaved him down, but sloping on one side took off his ear. The servant's name was Malchus, as John says; and it was his right ear that was cut off, as both he and Luke relate, *Joh 18:10*.

Matthew 26:52

Ver. 52. Then said Jesus unto him,.... That is, unto Peter,

put up again thy sword into its place, or sheath. This Christ said not only to rebuke Peter for his rashness, but to soften the minds of the multitude, who must be enraged at such an action; and which was still more effectually done by his healing the man's ear: and indeed, had it not been for these words, and this action of Christ's; and more especially had it not been owing to the powerful influence Christ had over the spirits of these men, in all probability Peter, and the rest of the apostles, had been all destroyed at once.

For all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword. This is not to be understood of magistrates who bear not the sword in vain, are ministers of God for good, and revengers of evil works; but of private persons that use the sword, and that not in self-defence, but for private revenge; or engage in a quarrel, to which they are not called; and such generally perish, as Peter must have done, had it not been for the interposition of almighty power. Though this seems to be spoken not so much of Peter, and of the danger he exposed himself to, by taking and using the sword, and so to deter him from it, but rather of these his enemies: and as an argument to make and keep Peter easy and quiet, and exercise patience, since, in a little time, God would avenge himself of them; and that the Jews, who now made use of the sword of the Roman soldiers, would perish by the sword of the Romans, as in a few years after the whole nation did.

Matthew 26:53

Ver. 53. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father,.... Meaning, if he thought proper, or that there was any necessity for it, or that he was desirous of being rescued out of such hands he was falling into. This must be understood of him as man: for, as God, the angels were his creatures and ministering servants, whom he had the command of himself, and so had no need, as such, to pray to his Father to detach a number of them to his assistance, and which, as man, he could only want.

And he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels. A Roman legion consisted of about six thousand soldiers, or upwards; some add six hundred sixty six; and others make the number far greater. Twelve are mentioned, either with respect to the twelve apostles; or in allusion, as others think, to the Roman militia; a proper and full army with them consisting of such a number of legions: and that there is an innumerable company of angels, thousand thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, is certain; and the Persic version here reads; "twelve myriads" of legions; and that these are at the command of God, and he can dispatch them at once, on any emergent occasion, is very evident; and what is it that such a company of angels is not capable of, when a single angel slew in one night an hundred, fourscore, and five thousand men, *2Ki 19:35*, wherefore had Christ had any inclination to have been rescued from the present danger, he stood in no need of Peter's sword.

Matthew 26:54

Ver. 54. But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled,.... That is, should Christ make such a request to his Father, and he should grant it, and an host of angels should be sent to rescue him, and he should be rescued by them; how then should the Scriptures, which speak of Christ's being taken, and led as a lamb to the slaughter, and of his various sufferings, and the circumstances of them, have their accomplishment? "declaring", as the Arabic version supplies, or as the Ethiopic version, "which say",

that thus it must be; that the Messiah must be apprehended, and suffer, and die. The several parts of the sufferings of the Messiah are foretold in the writings of the Old Testament; the spirit of Christ, in the prophets, testified before hand of them; as that he should be reproached and despised of men, *Ps 22:6*, be spit upon, smote, and buffeted, ***Isa 1:5***, be put to death, *Ps 22:15*, and that the death of the cross, *Ps 22:15*, and be buried, *Isa 53:9*, and also the several circumstances of his sufferings, which led on to them, or attended them; as the selling him for thirty pieces of silver, *Zec 11:12*, the betraying him by one of his familiar friends, *Ps 41:9*, the seizing and apprehending him, and which is particularly referred to here, *Isa 53:7*, his disciples forsaking him, *Zec 13:7*, and even his God and Father, *Ps 22:1*, his suffering between two thieves, *Isa 53:12*, the parting of his garments, and casting lots on his vesture, *Ps 22:18*, the giving him gall and vinegar when on the cross, *Ps 69:21*, and not breaking any of his bones, *Ps 34:20*, yea, the Scriptures not only declared, that these things should be; but the necessity of them also, that they must be; because of the purposes and decrees of God, which are eternal, immutable, and unfrustrable; for as God had determined on his salvation of his people by Christ, and that through his sufferings and death, these were determined by him also, even the time, nature, manner, and circumstances of them; and which the Scriptures declare, and therefore must be likewise; and because of the covenant of grace, which is sure, unalterable, and unchangeable; in which Christ agreed to assume human nature, to obey, suffer, and die in it, and so do his Father's will, which was to bear the penalty of the law, and undergo the sufferings of death, and which therefore must be, or Christ's faithfulness fail. Moreover, on account of the law and justice of God, which required his bearing the curse, as well as fulfilling the precept of the law: and especially on account of the salvation of his people, which could not be effected without them, they must be. Christ, in these words, discovers a very great concern for the fulfilling of Scripture; and that because it is the word of God, which must not be broken; and because throughout it he is spoken of, in the volume of it, it is written of him, to do the will of God; even in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms: and besides, he was the minister of the circumcision, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and even agreeably to them, and upon the foundation of them, he had himself predicted his own sufferings: and as those were to be the rule of the faith and practice of his people in all ages, he was concerned for their accomplishment in every point; and which may teach us to value the Scriptures, and to be confident of the fulfilment of them in things yet future.

Matthew 26:55

Ver. 55. In that same hour said Jesus to the multitude,.... That is, to the heads and chief of them, the chief priests, captains of the temple, and elders, as Luke says, *Lu 22:52*, for though it was in the dead of the night, and the company such, as they would not have chose to have been seen in at another time; yet so intent were they upon this affair, that they could not satisfy themselves without being in it, and seeing the issue of it; and this the Jews themselves confirm in their account; for they say {o}, that the elders of Jerusalem took Jesus, and brought him to the city. Now in that same hour, immediately, that very moment, that Christ had made an end of rebuking Peter for his rash action, and reasoning with him upon it, he turned and addressed himself to these men, saying;

are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves, for to take me? as an highwayman, or notorious robber, that had done great mischief to the country; and being armed, and having associates, was not easy to be taken: the Syriac renders it, as a cut-throat: and the Persic, as a robber, and a cut-throat; a desperate villain, that would by no means yield, unless overpowered by numbers, by force of arms, by the dint of the sword, by knocks and blows: but how different from this, was the character of Jesus! who never did any injury to any man's person or property, but saved both; was meek, lowly, and humble in his deportment, throughout the whole of his life; never strove with men, or cried, and caused his voice, in any riotous manner, to be heard in the streets; and even when reviled, reviled not again, but took every insult patiently; and was now unarmed, and ready to submit at once; nay, before they could well come up to him, he asked them who they sought; and on mentioning his name, declared he was the person; and signified he was ready to surrender himself, only desired his disciples might have leave to go away: he adds,

I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. The business he was employed was not thieving and stealing, but teaching; and that wholesome doctrine, which he, as man, had received from his Father, and as the great prophet in Israel taught; and with such power and authority, as the Scribes and Pharisees did not: the place where he taught, was the temple; not a corner, or a private place, but a place of public worship, and of public resort: the time when he taught there, was the daytime, and day by day; for some days past, it had been his custom in the daytime to teach in the temple, and at night to go out, and abide in the Mount of Olives; and his continuance day by day in the temple, or his constant teaching there, is signified by sitting daily there, and teaching; unless it should be thought rather to have regard to the posture in which he taught; see ***Mt 5:1***. And yet, though this had been his common practice for some days past, and at other times before, yet no man laid hands on him then; which was not wanting to a good will in them, who were very desirous of it, and sought every opportunity to do it, but were prevented; either through fear of the people, or through Christ's making his escape from them; and particularly, by the singular providence and power of God, which restrained them, because his time was not yet come. However, Christ suggests by this, that they had no need to take such extraordinary methods to apprehend him, as to make use of one of his disciples to betray him; to come in the middle of the night to take him, and that in such great numbers, and with swords and staves, when he was every day with them in the temple.

{o} Toldos Jesu, p. 17.

Matthew ***26:56***

Ver. 56. But all this was done, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled,.... Some have thought these to be the words of the evangelist, making this remark upon what was said and done; but by what both Mark and Luke record, *Mr 14:49*, they appear to be the words of Christ himself; who observes this, partly to make himself, as man, easy under the treatment he met with; and partly, to fortify the minds of his disciples against offence at it; and also to throw conviction, or confusion, into the minds of his enemies. The Scriptures of the prophets he refers to, as having, or about to have, by this conduct, their accomplishment, were such, as regarded the betraying him by Judas, the taking him in this secret, private, insidious, yet violent manner; in all which he showed great meekness, calmness, and submission, as *Ps 41:9*. As also what respected the scattering, and hasty flight of his disciples from him, *Zec 13:7*, which in the next clause is shown to be accomplished.

Then all the disciples forsook him and fled; not only went away from him, and left him alone, as he foretold they would, *Joh 16:32*, but they ran away from him in a precipitant manner, like timorous sheep, the shepherd being about to be smitten; and they fearing, lest Peter's rash action should be imputed to them all, and they suffer for it; or lest they should be laid hold on next, and bound, as their master was, or about to be. Every thing in this account is an aggravation of their pusillanimity, and ingratitude; as that they were the "disciples" of Christ that forsook him, whom he had called, and sent forth as his apostles to preach his Gospel; and to whom he had given extraordinary gifts and powers; who had forsaken all and followed him, and had been with him from the beginning; had heard all his excellent discourses, and had seen all his miracles, and yet these at last forsake him, and even "all" of them: John the beloved disciple, that leaned on his bosom, and Peter, that professed so much love to him, zeal for him, and faith in him; the three that had just seen him in his agony and bloody sweat, and everyone of them left him; not one stood by him, and this too, after they had had a fresh instance of his power, in striking the men to the ground, that came to take him; and when he was sueing for them with their enemies, to let them go peaceably and safely: so that they had no need to have fled in such haste; and to leave him "then", in the midst of his enemies, in his great distress and trouble, was very unkind and ungrateful: and to this account of the evangelist, pretty much agrees what the Jews themselves say of it; for they report {p}, that

"when his disciples saw that he was taken, and that they could not fight against them, Mhylgrb wuwry, "they ran away on foot", and lift up their voice and wept greatly."

Though they also pretend, that the citizens of Jerusalem killed many of them, and that the rest "fled" to the mountain, which is false.

{p} Toldos Jesu, p. 16, 17.

Matthew 26:57

Ver. 57. And they that had laid hold on Jesus,.... Who were the band, and the captain, and the officers of the Jews, as *Joh 18:12*, or as the Jews themselves say {q}, the elders of Jerusalem; who not only laid fast hold on him, but bound him; and that both for greater security of him, some of them perhaps knowing how he had made his escape from them formerly; or at least taking the hint from Judas, to hold him fast, and lead him away safely; and by way of reproach and contempt, thereby showing that he was a malefactor, and had done some crime worthy of bonds; and having him thus in fast and safe custody, they

led him away to Caiaphas, the high priest; who was high priest that year; for the priesthood was frequently changed in those times, and men were put into it by the Roman governor, through favour or bribery. The year before this, Simeon, or Simon ben Camhith, was high priest; and the year before that, Eleazar, the son of Ananus; and before him, Ishmael ben Phabi, who were all three, successively, made high priests by the Roman governor: as was also this Caiaphas, this year; and who by Josephus {r}, and in the Talmud {s} likewise, is called Joseph. From whence he had his name Caiaphas, is not certain: Jerom {t} says, it signifies "a searcher", or "a sagacious person"; but may be better interpreted, he adds, "one that vomits at the mouth"; deriving the word, as I suppose, from awq, "to vomit", and yp, "the mouth"; See Gill on "Mt 26:3". It was to the house, or palace of this man, the high priest, that Jesus was led;

where the Scribes and elders were assembled: a council was held about a week before this, in which Caiaphas assisted, and then gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient, that one man should die for the people, *Joh 11:47*, whether that was held at his house, or elsewhere, is not certain, very probably it might; however, it is clear from *Mt 26:2*, that two days ago, the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, were assembled together in his palace, to consult about putting Jesus to death; and here they were again met together on the same account, waiting to have him brought before them.

{q} Toldos Jesu, p. 16, 17. {r} Antiq. l. 18. c. 14. {s} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 47. 1. {t} De Heb. nominibus, fol, 104. col. 4. Tom. 3.

Matthew ***26:58***

Ver. 58. But Peter followed him afar off,.... The Ethiopic version adds, alone; and which seems to be the true case; for though there was another disciple who also followed Jesus, and is thought to be John, yet it looks as if they followed him separately, and not together; for the other disciple went into the palace with Jesus, but Peter not till afterwards, being espied by his fellow disciple standing without. These two it seems, having a little recovered themselves from the fright they had been put into, stopped and turned back, and followed after Jesus, to see what would be the issue of things. Peter's following Christ, showed love to him; he was lothe to leave him, his bowels moved towards him, and he wanted to know how it would fare with him, and what would become of him; and yet keeping at a distance, following him afar off, betrayed fear, lest he should be observed, and taken up, and come into danger: however, he proceeded on his way in a slow pace, till he came

unto the high priest's palace, and went in and sat with the servants, to see the end; of the matter, or business, as the Ethiopic and Persic versions add; to see how it would go with him, whether he would exert his divine power, and deliver himself out of their, hands, which he knew he was able to do, when he would again join him; or what punishment they would inflict upon him, whether they would scourge him, and then let him go; or whether they would sentence him to death; that so he might know how to provide for his own safety: all which was indulging curiosity, and the carnal reasonings of his mind; and it showed want of integrity at that time, and some degree of hypocrisy, in placing himself among the servants of the high priest, as if he was none of the followers of Jesus, but was of the same complexion and cast with them: he had got into bad company, and was in the way of temptation; and though he had no design in following Jesus, and in going into the high priest's palace, and seating himself among the servants to deny his Lord, yet all this led on to it; for which reason these several circumstances are taken notice of, the account of which denial of his, is afterwards related.

Matthew 26:59

Ver. 59. Now the chief priests and elders, and all the counsel,.... Or sanhedrim, which consisted, as the Jewish writers say {u}, of priests, Levites, and Israelites, of both ecclesiastics and laics; the ecclesiastics were the priests and Levites, and the laics the Israelites, or elders of the people; for if priests and Levites could not be found, a sanhedrim might consist of those only; and so those words in *De 21:2*, "thy elders", are thus interpreted {w},
lwdgh Nyd tyb hz, this is the great sanhedrim; and though a king of Israel might not sit in the sanhedrim, yet an high priest might, if he was a man of wisdom {x}, and it seems as if Caiaphas was now at the head of this council, by its being assembled at his palace; which though it was not the usual place where they met, yet might be chose at this time for greater secrecy. Now these thus assembled together,

sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; they first take him up, and then seek out for witnesses against him; being determined, right or wrong, to put him to death, if possible; and false witnesses too, even those whose business it was, to examine and detect false witnesses, and to inflict the same punishment upon them, which they by their false testimony intended to have brought on another, *De 19:18*. And besides, it was in the night, when it was forbid by their canons to begin the trial of capital causes, or to receive and admit of witnesses {y}. Indeed the Syriac and Persic versions read, only witnesses, or witness, and leave out the word "false"; perhaps imagining, that men could never be so wicked, to seek out for false witnesses: but this need not be wondered at, when these men were bent upon the death of Christ at any rate; and were aware that nothing true could be objected to him, that would legally take away his life; and besides, their manner of procedure in judgment against a false prophet, a deceiver, and one that enticed to idolatry, and such an one they would have Jesus to be, was quite different from what they took with other persons: their canon runs thus {z}:

"the judgment of a deceiver, is not as the rest of capital judgments; his witnesses are hid; and he has no need, or ought not to have any premonition, or warning, as the rest of those that are put to death; and if he goes out of the sanhedrim acquitted, and one says I can prove the charge against him, they turn him back; but if he goes out condemned, and one says I can prove him innocent the do not return him."

So in the Misna {a} it is said,

"of all that are condemned to death in the law, none have their witnesses hidden but this (the deceiver, or one that entices to idolatry)--and they hide his witnesses behind a wall, or hedge; and he (whom he endeavoured to seduce) says to him, say what thou hast said to me privately; and if he repeats it to him, he must say, how shall we leave our God that is in heaven, and go and serve stocks and stones! if he repents, it is well; but if he should say, so we are bound to do, and so it becomes us, they that stand behind the wall, or hedge, shall carry him to the sanhedrim and stone him."

In the Gemara it is thus expressed {b},

"they light up a lamp in the innermost house, and set the witnesses in the outermost house, so that they can see him and hear his voice, and he cannot see them."

And then follows what is said before, to which is added, "so they did to Ben Stada"; by whom they mean Jesus of Nazareth. Moreover, this need not seem strange, that they took such a course with Christ, when in the case of Stephen, they suborned and set up false witnesses against him. The sanhedrim cannot be thought to do this in person, but they sent out their officers to seek for such men, as could or would produce anything against him, and no doubt promised them an handsome reward.

{u} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1, 2. Abarbinel in Tora, fol. 366. 2. {w} T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 23. 3. {x} Maimon. ib. sect. 4. {y} Maimon. ib. c. 3. sect. 3, 4. {z} lb. c. 11. sect. 5. {a} Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 10. {b} T.

Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 67. 1.

Matthew 26:60

Ver. 60. But found none,.... That were fit for their purpose;

yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none; whose testimonies were sufficient to put him to death, which was what they were resolved upon, or whose witness were not alike and agreed; for according to their law, a man must not die by the mouth of one witness only, but by the mouth of two or three witnesses agreed in a point; and though they might be willing enough to dispense with the law in this case, yet might have some regard to their own character and reputation; and especially as they meant to deliver him to the Roman governor, in order to be condemned by him; they knew they must have a charge, and this supported with a proper evidence, or they could not hope to succeed; for which reason, they could not put up, as they otherwise willingly would, with any sort of witnesses:

at the last came two false witnesses; who were agreed in a point, and whose testimonies were alike; at least, had a greater appearance of truth and agreement than the rest; though Mark says, "neither so did their witnesses agree together", *Mr 14:59*, as to prove the point, for which it was given.

Matthew 26:61

Ver. 61. And said, this fellow said,.... Or saith, as De Dieu observes, the Syriac version of this place should be rendered; that is, he has not only said in times past, referring to ***Joh 2:19***, but continues to say it, and glory in it:

I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days; in which they did injury, both to his words and sense: he did not say, "I am able to destroy the temple", but only said, "destroy this temple"; signifying neither his power, nor his will and inclination to it; but put it upon the Jews, and left it to them to do it: nor did he say one word about the temple of God, or as it is in *Mr 14:58*, "this temple that is made with hands"; the temple at Jerusalem, which was made by the hands of men, and devoted to the worship of God; but only "this temple", referring to his body, or human nature; in which he, the Son of God, dwelt, as in a temple; nor did he say that he was able to "build" it in three days, but that he would "raise it up" in three days; intending the resurrection of his body by his own power, after it had been dead three days; and so they perverted his sense, as well as misquoted his words; applying that to the material temple at Jerusalem, what he spoke of the temple of his body, and of its resurrection from the dead, on the third day; designing hereby to fix a charge, both of sacrilege and sorcery upon him: of sacrilege, in having a design upon the temple of God to destroy it; and of sorcery, or familiarity with the devil, and having assistance from him, or knowledge of the magic art, that he could pretend in three days to rebuild a temple, which had been forty and six years in building; and was what could never be done, but by help of Beelzebub, the prince of devils, by whom it was insinuated he did all his miracles.

Matthew ***26:62***

Ver. 62. And the high priest arose and said unto him,.... He rose up from his seat in great wrath and anger; partly being vexed, that they could get no other and better testimony; and partly because of Christ's contemptuous silence, giving no answer to the witnesses, as judging they deserved none; and which highly provoked the high priest, and therefore in passion said,

answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? Is it true or false, right or wrong? The Vulgate Latin renders it, "dost thou answer nothing to those things which these witness against thee?" To which agree the Arabic version, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel.

Matthew ***26:63***

Ver. 63. But Jesus held his peace,.... Knowing it would signify nothing, whatever he should say, they being set upon his death, the time of which was now come; and therefore he quietly submits, and says nothing in his own defence to prevent it. To be silent in a court of judicature, Apollonius Tyanaeus {c} says, is the fourth virtue; this Christ had, and all others:

and the high priest answered and said unto him; though Christ had said nothing, a way of speaking very frequent among the Jews, and in the sacred writings:

I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God; the Christ; the anointed, that David speaks of in the second Psalm, and who is there said to be the Son of God, ***Ps 2:2***, to which the high priest seems to have respect; since there is no other passage, in which both these characters meet; and which was understood by the ancient Jews of the Messiah, as is owned by modern ones {d}. Jesus was given out to be the Messiah, and his disciples believed him to be the Son of God, and he had affirmed himself to be so; wherefore the high priest, exerting his priestly power and authority, puts him upon his oath; or at least with an oath made by the living God, charges him to tell the truth, and which when ever any heard the voice of swearing, he was obliged to do, ***Le 5:1***.

{c} Philostrat. Vita Apollouii, l. 8. c. 1. {d} Jarchi & Aben Ezra in Psal. ii. 1. & Kimchi in ver. 12.

Matthew 26:64

Ver. 64. Jesus saith unto him, thou hast said,.... That is, thou hast said right; or as Mark expresses it, "I am", *Mr 14:62*, the Christ, the anointed of God, who was so from everlasting, and in time; being before the world was, installed into, and invested with the office of mediator; and in the fulness of time, anointed with the holy Spirit without measure: he might truly say he was the Messiah, since all the characters of him in the books of the prophets, met in him; and all the miracles he was to work in proof of his Messiahship were wrought by him: as also that be was the Son of God, not by creation, as angels and men; nor by adoption, as saints; nor as man, or in the human nature, in which he was the son of man, and not the Son of God; nor was he begotten as man, whereas he is called the only begotten Son, and the begotten of the Father; and was he the Son of God as man not the first, but the third person must be his Father; besides, he was the Son of God before his incarnation: nor as mediator neither; be was the Son of God, antecedent to his office as mediator; his sonship is distinct from it, is an illustration of it, and what puts virtue into it; but he is so as God, as a divine person, by natural and eternal filiation; being begotten of the Father in the divine essence, and of the same nature; and having the same perfections with him, and in all things equal to him; and is the sense in which he always affirmed God to be his Father, and himself to be his Son. For this phrase, "thou hast said", as answering to an affirmation, "I am", See Gill on "Mt 26:25". Now, though Christ had so fully answered to the adjuration, and so strongly affirmed himself to be the Messiah, the Son of God, yet he knew they would not believe; and therefore refers them to an after proof thereof, which whether they would or not, would oblige them to acknowledge the whole:

nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the son of man, sitting at the right hand of power: the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, read "the power of God", as in *Lu 22:69*, though it is not absolutely necessary; for "power" designs God himself, who is all powerful; as appears by the creation of all things out of nothing, the upholding of all things in their being, the redemption of men, the conversion of sinners, and the preservation of his saints. In the Jewish writings {e}, God is frequently called,
hrwbgh, "the power": such a thing, say they, we have heard, hrwbgh ypm, "from the mouth of power", or might; that is, from God himself: and so he is by the Grecians called dunamiv, "power" {f}: by "the son of man", is meant Christ in the human nature; who then appeared at their bar as a mere man, in a very despicable form and condition, but hereafter they should see him in a more glorious one, and at "the right hand of God": a phrase expressive of his exaltation, above all creatures whatever: respect is had to the prophecy of him in *Ps 110:1*. "Sitting" there, denotes his having done his work; and his continuance in his exalted state, until all enemies are subdued under him: and when he says they should "see" him, his meaning is not, that they should see him at the right hand of God with their bodily eyes, as Stephen did; but that they should, or at least might, see and know by the effects, that he was set down at the right hand of God; as by the pouring forth of the holy Spirit upon his disciples, on the day of pentecost; by the wonderful spread of his Gospel, and the success of it, notwithstanding all the opposition made by them, and others; and particularly, by the vengeance he should take on their nation, city, and temple; and which may be more especially designed in the next clause;

and coming in, the clouds of heaven. So Christ's coming to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, as it is often called the coming of the son of man, is described in this manner, *Mt 24:27*. Though this may also be understood of Christ's second coming to judgment, at the last day; when as he went up to heaven in a cloud, he will return, and come also in the clouds of heaven; see ***Ac 1:9 Re 1:7***, when he will be seen by the eyes of all, good and bad; and when this sanhedrim, before whom he now was, will see him also, and confess that he is Lord and Christ, and the Son of God. Though the former clause seems to have regard to what would quickly come to pass, and what they should soon observe, and be convinced of; for ap' arti, rendered "hereafter", may be translated "henceforwards"; or as it is in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, "from this time"; meaning, that in a very little while, they should begin to see the effects of his being set down at the right hand of God, and which would be full proofs of it, and should see him come in the clouds of heaven, at the last day: reference seems to be had to ***Da 7:13***, where one like unto the son of man is said to come in the clouds of heaven, and which is understood of the Messiah by many, both of the ancient and modern Jews {g}: with whom one of his names is "Anani" {h}, which signifies "clouds".

{e} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 24. 1. & Horayot, fol. 8. 1. Debarim Rabba, fol. 245. 4. Maimon. Hilch. Memarim, c. 5. sect. 15. & Melacim, c. 8. sect. 10. & alibi passim. {f} Sententiae Secundi, p. 21. Ed. Gale. {g} Zohar in Gert. fol. 85. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 13. fol. 209. 4. R. Jeshuah in Aben Ezra, in Dan. vii. 13. & Jarchi & Saadiah Gaon in loc. {h} Targum in 1 Chron. iii. 24. & Beckius in ib. Midrash Tillim apud Galatin. de arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 10. c. 1.

Matthew 26:65

Ver. 65. Then the high priest rent his clothes,.... Both his outer and inner garments. This he did, to show his zeal for the honour and glory of God, his grief and concern at the profanation of his holy name by a false oath, and his abhorrence of, and indignation at the blasphemy he supposed Christ to be guilty of, in asserting himself to be the Son of God. Some have thought, that Caiaphas in this action, transgressed the law, in *Le 21:10*, where it is said, that "the high priest--shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes": and it is one of the Jews' negative precepts {i}, that

"an high priest is prohibited, Mlwel, "ever" to rend his garments:"

and that therefore being transported with passion at the greatness of the supposed crime, could not forbear expressing his detestation of it in this manner, though it was forbidden him: but it does not appear to have been unlawful: as for the law in Leviticus, it only regards the rending of garments at funerals, or in mourning for the dead, as the context shows; and so Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases the text, "nor rent his clothes": yqyna tevb "in the time of mourning"; and so the Jewish {k} interpreters, in general, expound it; and besides, this prohibition, according to them, only regards the manner of rending: their rule is this {l};

"an high priest rends below, and a common person above:"

the sense of which, according to their commentators, is {m},

"that if anyone dies for whom an high priest is obliged to rend his garments, he must rend below, at the extreme part of his garment, near his feet; and as for what is written, nor rend his clothes; the meaning is, he shall not rend as other men do, above, over against the breast, near the shoulder, as the rest of the people."

Moreover, a priest might not go into the sanctuary, nor perform any part of service with his clothes rent; the canon runs thus {n},

"the judgment, or the law of them that rend their garment, and of those that uncover the head, is one and the same, as it is said, *Le 10:6*, lo! if he is in service, and rends his garments, he is guilty of death by the hands of heaven, though his service is right, and not profaned."

And indeed no man, whether a priest or an Israelite, might go into the temple with his clothes rent; and a priest might not rend his sacerdotal garments, on any account; yet such were not these that Caiaphas now had on; but in case of hearing blasphemy, everyone, be he what he would, was obliged to rend his garments {o}:

"Whosoever hears the cursing of the name (of God) is obliged to rend, even at the cursing of the surnames he is obliged to rend; and he that hears it from an Israelite, both he that hears, and he that hears from the mouth of him that hears, he is obliged to rend; but he that hears from the mouth of a Gentile, is not obliged to rend; and Eliakim and Shebna would not have rent, but because Rabshakeh was an apostate."

So when witnesses expressed the blasphemy of such they testified against, the judges were obliged to rise up and rend their garments; concerning which, take the following rule {p}:

"a blasphemer is not guilty, unless he expresses the name (of God); says R.

Joshua ben Korcha, all the day the witnesses are examined by the surnames; but when the cause is finished, they do not put to death because of the surnames, but they bring every man out, and ask the chief among them, and say to him, say expressly what thou hast heard, and he says it: then the judges stand upon their feet, Nyerwqw, "and rend their garments", and do not sow them up again; and then the second and the third say, I have heard the same as he."

From all which it appears, that Caiaphas did what was the custom of the nation to do in such a case. The observation, that some learned men have made, that the high priest's rending his garments, was, though without his intention, an emblem and presage, of the rending of the priesthood from him, and his brethren, and the entire change of it; as the abolition of the whole ceremonial law, was signified by the rending of the vail of the temple in twain; and as the removing of the kingdom from Saul, was represented by Samuel's rending his mantle; and the revolt of the ten tribes to Jeroboam, by Abijah's rending his garment into twelve pieces, and giving ten to him; would have had a much better foundation to be built on, were these clothes that Caiaphas rent, his priestly ones: but such they were not; for both the high priest, and the other priests, only wore their sacerdotal garments in the temple; nor was it lawful for them to go out in them elsewhere; for so the Jews say {q};

"it is forbidden to go out into the province; city, or country, in the garments of the priesthood; but in the sanctuary, whether in the time of service, or not in the time of service, it was lawful."

In the temple, there were chests on purpose for the garments of the priests {r}; from whence they took them, and where they laid them up when they had performed their service: of these there were ninety six in number; for as there were twenty four courses, there were four chests for every course; in which the garments were put by themselves, the breeches by themselves, the girdles by themselves, the bonnets by themselves, and the coats by themselves; sealed up with an inscription on them, showing what was in them: and when the men that belonged to such a course, came to perform their service in turn, they opened these chests, and clothed themselves: and when they went out of their service, they put them up in them again, and sealed them; and as for

"the high priest, he left his golden garments, wlv hkvlb, "in his chamber", (an apartment in the temple, peculiar to him, and for this use,) in the night, and at whatsoever time he went out of the sanctuary {s}"

Nor might he go abroad with them, unless lwdg Krwul, "in great necessity" {t}; as Simeon the Just went out in priestly garments to meet Alexander the Great, to appease him, being warned of God so to do: hence the Apostle Paul knew not Ananias the high priest, *Ac 23:5*, which he must have done, had he had on his priestly garments: for when the priests were not in the temple, and out of service, they wore no distinguishing habits, but were dressed as laics, and as the common people were {u}. The reason of Caiaphas's rending his clothes, is expressed in, the next clause,

saying, he hath spoken blasphemy: not only because Jesus asserted that he was the Messiah, but also the Son of God; hereby making himself equal with God, which is the sense in which the Jews always understood this phrase; and he appearing to them to be but a mere man, they charged it as blasphemy against God, to assume such a character and relation to himself:

what further need have we of witnesses? of seeking after others, as they had done: or of further examining and taking the depositions of those, who were before them: he was for putting a stop to the process, and bringing the cause at once to an issue: and therefore addresses the court in the following manner;

behold now, ye have heard his blasphemy: out of his own mouth, as *Lu 22:71*, expresses it; and with their own ears, and at that very time; so that they had no need of recourse to things past, or examine witnesses about what they had heard from him formerly: and therefore he proposes, that they would attend to, and take notice of his present words; and which, as he suggests, were shocking and astonishing: for the word, "behold!" may not only be a note of attention, but of astonishment.

{i} Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 302. {k} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, &c. in loc. {l} Misn. Horayot, c. 3. sect. 5. {m} Bartenora & Maimon. in ib. {n} Maimon. Hilch. Biath Hamikdash, c. 1. sect. 14, 17. {o} Maimon. Hilch. Obede Cochabim, c. 2. sect. 10. Vid. T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 25. 1. {p} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 5. {q} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 69. 1. & Tamid, fol. 27. 2. {r} Misn. Tamid, c. 5. sect. 3. {s} Maimon. Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 8, 9, 10. {t} Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pt. affirm. 173. {u}

Maimon. ib. c. 10. sect. 4. Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 15.

Matthew ***26:66***

Ver. 66. What think ye?.... Of the words just now spoken by him; do not they in your opinion amount to a charge of blasphemy and what punishment do you think ought to be inflicted on him? is he guilty of death, or not? This question he put, as being president of the court:

they answered and said, he is guilty of death; they were unanimous in their vote, for Mark says, "they all condemned him to be guilty of death"; only Joseph of Arimathea must be excepted, who consented not to their counsel and deed, *Lu 23:51*, and so must Nicodemus, if he was present; who seeing what they were determined to do, withdrew themselves before the question came to be put, and so it passed "nemine contradicente"; and indeed, if he had been guilty of blasphemy, as they charged him, the sentence would have been right. Now this was in the night, in which they begun, carried on, and finished this judicial procedure, quite contrary to one of their own canons {w} which runs thus:

"pecuniary causes they try in the day, and finish in the night; capital causes (such was this) they try in the day, and finish in the day; pecuniary causes they finish the same day, whether for absolution, or condemnation; capital causes they finish the same day for absolution, and the day following for condemnation; wherefore they do not try causes neither on the sabbath eve, nor on the eve of a feast day."

But in this case, they begun the trial in the night, examined the witnesses, finished it, and passed the sentence of condemnation, and that in the eve of a grand festival, their Chagigah.

{w} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 1. Maimom. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1, 2. T. Hieros. Yom Tob, fol. 63. 1.

Matthew ***26:67***

Ver. 67. Then did they spit in his face,.... Not the judges, the members of the sanhedrim, but the servants of the high priest, and the officers that had

Jesus in hold, and were the guard upon him; see *Lu 22:63*, who seeing him condemned as guilty of death, thought they might insult him at pleasure, and use him in the most indecent and barbarous manner; and therefore, in a way of contempt, spit in his face; than which nothing was more reproachful and disgraceful: the Jews {x} say, that he that spits before, or in the presence of his master, is guilty of death, so nauseous and filthy was it accounted; and how much more must it be so, to spit in the face of anyone? hereby a prophecy was fulfilled, *Isa 50:6*, "I hid not my face from shame and spitting": and hereby, together with his sweat and blood, his visage was more marred than any man's, and his form than the sons of men:

and buffeted him; cuffed, or boxed him with their double fists:

and others smote him, with the palms of their hands; gave him many a slap on the face with their open hands, or struck him on the face with rods, as the word will bear to be rendered: they rapped him with the wands they had in their hands, and struck him on the head with the rods or staves they had with them; whereby was accomplished the prophecy, in ***Mic 5:1***, "they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek". This was very injurious treatment, the Jews themselves being witnesses; who have in their canons enjoined {y}, that

"if a man strikes his neighbour with his double fist, he must give him a shekel; R. Judah says, on account of R. Jose the Galilean, a pound: if he gives him a slap of the face, he must pay him two hundred zuzims, or pence; and if with the back of his hand (which was accounted {z} the more ignominious) four hundred zuzims: if he plucked him by his ear, or plucked off his hair, or spit, so as that the spittle came upon him, or took away his cloak--he must pay four hundred zuzims, and all according to his honour or dignity."

All these indignities were done to Christ; see *Isa 50:6*.

{x} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 99. 1. {y} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6. {z} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Matthew 26:68

Ver. 68. Saying, prophesy unto us, thou Christ,.... Not that they owned him to be the Messiah; but because he asserted himself to be the Messiah, and his followers believed in him as such, they call him so; and in an ironical and sarcastic way, call upon him to divine, and tell them who the persons were, that used him in this manner; suggesting, that if he was the Christ, or Messiah, he would know all things, and what were done to him:

who is he that smote thee? for they had covered his face, or blindfolded him, as the other Evangelists say, *Mr 14:65*, and then bid him tell them who smote him last. Christ did not think fit to give them an answer to this question, but he will let them know hereafter, who the particular person, or persons were, that smote him; and when it will appear to all the churches, and to all the world, that he is the Lord God omniscient. Some learned men have observed {a}, that there was a play formerly used, called by the ancients, kollabismov, at which, one person having his face covered, the rest smote him; or one put his hands over his eyes, and another smote, and asked him who it was that smote? and such an exercise is yet in being among us, which is commonly called Blindman's Buff; and such pastime as this the Jews had with Christ; in this ludicrous way did they use him, and made him their sport and diversion, as the Philistines did Samson; but it will cost them dear another day.

{a} Braunii Select. Sacr. l. 5. Exerc. 2. sect. 38. p. 622, 623. & Capelt. in loc. e Polluce, l. 9. c. 7.

Matthew 26:69

Ver. 69. Now Peter sat without in the palace,.... Peter's denial of his Lord, the account of which follows, is related among the sufferings of Christ; and indeed, the ill usage he met with from his enemies, their spitting in his face, buffeting him with their fists, smiting him on the cheeks with their hands, and rods, did not give him so much pain and grief, as to be denied by his own disciple: we are before told, *Mt 26:58*, that Peter followed Christ afar off, and went into the high priest's palace, and sat with the servants there, to see what would be the end and issue of these things: and here now he was in the apartment, where the council sat, and were examining and trying Jesus; though, as Mark says, "beneath in the palace", *Mr 14:66*; in the lower part of the room, in the great hall, in the midst of which the servants had made a fire: the Arabic version reads it, "in the area of the court": here Peter had placed himself, and here he sat making his observations:

and a damsel came unto him; one of the maids of the high priest, as Mark says, *Mr 14:66*; and according to the Evangelist John, was she that kept the door, and had let him in, *Joh 18:16*,

saying, thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. The Arabic and Persic versions read, Jesus the Nazarene, or of Nazareth, as below. So she called him, not so much to distinguish him from any other of that name, as by way of reproach; suggesting, that he could not be the Messiah, or that prophet; since Christ comes not out of Galilee, nor does any prophet arise from thence: and when she charges him with being "with" him, her meaning is not, that he was with him in the garden, when he was taken; where it cannot be thought she was to see him; nor with him in the temple, or in any part of Jerusalem, where she possibly might have seen him; but that he was a disciple of his, one that believed in him, embraced him as the Messiah, had imbibed his principles and doctrines, and was of his party; and was only come thither as a spy, to see what would be done to him.

Matthew 26:70

Ver. 70. But he denied before them all,.... Which was a very great aggravation of his sin; for, as it is to a man's commendation to profess a good profession of Christ before many witnesses, so it is to his disgrace, and is resented by Christ, to deny him before men: he did not deny that Christ was God, or the Son of God, or that he was come in the flesh, or that Jesus was the Christ, or that he was the only Saviour of sinners; but that he was with him, or one of his disciples;

saying, I know not what thou sayest: which was a very great falsehood; he knew the sense and import of her words; he denied that which was most true; he had been with him from the beginning, had heard all his discourses, and seen his miracles; he had been with him at particular times, and in particular places, when and where some others of the disciples were not admitted, as at the raising of Jairus's daughter, at the transfiguration in the mount, and in the garden, very lately; and yet, O base ingratitude! now denies that he had been with him; or that he knew what was meant by such an expression. He denied that he was a disciple of Christ, which was his greatest character, and highest glory; and this denial did not arise from any diffidence of his being one, or from a sense of his unworthiness to be one, but from the fear of man, which brought this snare upon him: and the more his weakness is discovered in it, that he should be intimidated by a servant maid into such a denial, who but a few hours before had confidently affirmed, that though he should die with Christ, he would not deny him; and who had so courageously drawn his sword in his master's cause, in the face of a band of soldiers, and a multitude of armed men with swords and staves. This was his first denial; a second follows.

Matthew 26:71

Ver. 71. And when he was gone out into the porch,.... The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "the gate": and so does Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but more rightly it is rendered, "the porch": he did not attempt to go out at the door, and run away, though he could gladly have done it; but he feared to do this, lest, as this would discover him, they should pursue him, and overtake him, and bring him before the sanhedrim: he chose rather to keep his ground, but was very uneasy; and therefore moved into the porch, where he sat very pensive, considering what was proper for him to do; when

another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, this [fellow] was also with Jesus of Nazareth: she speaks of Christ in the same contemptuous manner, as her fellow servant had done; for this appellation of Christ was commonly, if not always used by way of contempt; and she means the same thing by his being with him, the other did, and is rather more spiteful, and bent on mischief; for, the other addressed him alone, and what she said, said to himself; but this directs her speech to the servants and officers that were near at hand, and uses him in a very scurrilous manner: this sorry fellow, that is sauntering and lurking about here, is certainly one of this man's disciples.

Matthew 26:72

Ver. 72. And again he denied with an oath,.... He denied a second time, that he had ever been with Jesus, or was a disciple of his; and to put it out of all doubt, and an end to all dispute about it, and further charge of this kind, as he hoped, he annexed an oath to it: he swore by the God of truth; made a solemn appeal to the omniscient God, the searcher of hearts, that he was so far from being ever with Jesus of Nazareth, or a disciple of his, that, says he,

I do not know the man: meaning not only that he had no personal knowledge of him, or acquaintance with him; but that he had never seen the man in his life, nor did he know what manner of man he was. This, as it was a downright falsehood, it was what he had no need to have said; for there were multitudes that knew Christ in this sense, who never joined with him, or became his disciples. This was so much overdoing it, that it was much it had not given them a suspicion of him. Those that would excuse Peter's sin, by supposing that he meant, that he knew Christ to be God, and did not know him as a mere man, have no foundation for such a supposition; and indeed, such an ambiguous expression, and mental reservation, is no other than dealing fallaciously. Peter knew Christ in every sense; he knew him spiritually, whom to know is life eternal: and he valued the knowledge of him above all things else: he knew him to be God, and the Son of God; he knew him as mediator, and the Saviour of lost sinners; he knew him as man, and had had personal intimacy and conversation with him of a long time, and yet now denies he knew him; and that with an oath, adding perjury to lying; and so it is, that one sin leads on to another. This instance of Peter's shows the wickedness and deceitfulness of man's heart; and what the best of men are, or would be, when left to themselves, and of God: they become like other men, even like the men of the world, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.

Matthew 26:73

Ver. 73. And after a while,.... Mark says, "a little after", *Mr 14:70*, and Luke observes, that it was "about the space of one hour after", *Lu 22:59*: so that here was time to reflect upon what he had been saying, and to guard against another temptation, should he be attacked; but, alas! as yet he was unmindful of his Lord's words, and persists in the denial of him, and that with greater aggravation, than at his first surprise: and indeed his temptation was now more violent: for there

came unto him they that stood by; the officers and servants of the high priest, his attendants that waited upon him, and who stood by the fire, where Peter was warming himself: before he was attacked by single maidservants, now by a body of men, and one of them the kinsman of the man whose ear he had cut off, and who challenged him, as having seen him in the garden: and another confidently affirmed, and swore to it, that he was with Jesus, and was a Galilean; and all of them agreed in this,

and said to Peter, surely thou also art one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee: not his spiritual speech, for he had not been speaking in the language of a disciple of Christ, like one that had been with Jesus; nor his swearing neither, for this rather showed him to be one of them; but his country language, the brogue of his speech, the Galilean dialect which he spoke: for in Mark it is said, "thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereunto", *Mr 14:70*: for though the same language was spoken in Galilee as at Jerusalem, yet it was not so accurate and polite in Galilee, nor so well pronounced; words of different signification were confounded together. Hence the Talmudists say {b}, that

"the men of Judah, who were careful of their language, their law was confirmed in their hands; the men of Galilee, who were not careful of their language, their law was not confirmed in their hands--the men of Galilee, who do not attend to language, what is reported of them? a Galilean went and said to them, Naml rma Naml rma, they said to him foolish Galilean, rmx, "Chamor" is to ride upon, or "Chamar" is to drink, or "Hamar" is for clothing, or "Immar" is for hiding for slaughter."

By which instances it appears, that a Galilean pronounced "Chamor", an ass, and "Chamar", wine, and "Hamar", wool, and "Immar", a lamb, all one, and the same way, without any distinction; so that it was difficult to know which of these he meant. Many other instances of the like kind are given in the same place, which show the Galilean to be a more gross, barbarous, and impolite language, than what was spoken at Jerusalem; and Peter using this dialect, was known to be a Galilean: just as the Ephraimites were known by their pronouncing Shibboleth, Sibboleth.

{b} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 53. 1, 2. Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. in rad. llg.

Matthew 26:74

Ver. 74. Then began he to curse, and to swear,.... He swore before, and now he began "to curse"; not Christ, as Saul compelled some to blaspheme him, who professed him, and as the Jews formerly cursed Christ, and his followers, in their synagogues: for Peter's crime was bad enough, it need not be made worse than it was: he could never call Jesus accursed; in so doing he would have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; but he cursed himself; "he began to imprecate himself", as the Arabic version renders it; he made dreadful imprecations and wishes; wished that all the miseries and calamities he could think of might fall upon him, if he was one of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, or knew anything of him: saying,

I know not the man; if I do, God do so to me, or more also: let vengeance light upon me; may I be the most miserable creature in the world, if I know anything of him;

and immediately the cock crew: as he was swearing and cursing in this manner; as soon as ever the words were out of his mouth, and he had in this sad and solemn manner three times denied that he knew Christ, or was ever with him, or a disciple of his. It is forbid, by a Jewish canon, to keep cocks at Jerusalem; it runs thus {c}:

"they do not bring up cocks in Jerusalem, because of the holy things, neither do the priests in all the land of Israel, because of the purifications."

Whether this canon was then in being, or how it was dispensed with, or whether there was any particular providence in the cock being here now, and so nigh the high priest's palace, is not certain; but one there was: nor can the Jews deny that there were cocks at Jerusalem; for they themselves speak of a cock, Mylvwryb lqonv {d}, "that was stoned at Jerusalem".

{c} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 7. sect. 7. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 82. 2. Abot R. Nathan, c. 35. Maimon. Hilch. Beth Habechirah, c. 7. sect. 14. Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 9. 2. {d} T. Hieros Erubin, fol. 26. 1. Caphtor, fol. 42. 1.

Matthew 26:75

Ver. 75. And Peter remembered the words of Jesus,.... Forgetfulness of God, of his works, of his words, and of his law, of his revealed mind and will, is often the cause of sin; and a remembrance of things is necessary to the recovery of a fallen or backsliding professor; as, of what he is fallen from, of the love and kindness of God formerly shown to him, of his evil ways and works he is fallen into, and of the words and truths of Christ he has been very indifferent unto and lukewarm about:

which said unto him, before the cock crow, or is done crowing,

thou shalt deny me thrice; which he was put in mind of on hearing the cock crow. So by one means, or another, sometimes by some remarkable providence, and sometimes by the ministry of the word, God is pleased to alarm and awaken sleepy professors, backsliding believers, and remind them of their condition and duty, and restore them by repentance, as he did Peter:

and he went out; of the high priest's palace, either through fear, lest he should be seen weeping, and be suspected; or rather through shame, not being able to continue where his Lord was, when he had so shamefully denied him; as also to leave the company he had got into, being sensible he was wrong in mingling himself with such, and thereby exposed himself to these temptations; as well as to vent his grief in tears privately:

and wept bitterly; being thoroughly sensible what an evil and bitter thing the sin was, he had been guilty of: his repentance sprung from Christ's looking upon him, and from his looking to Jesus, and was truly evangelical: it was a sorrow after a godly sort, and was increased by the discoveries of Christ's love unto him; and was attended with faith in him, and views of pardon through him: the Persic version adds, "and his sin is forgiven"; which, though not in the text, yet is a truth; for Peter's repentance was not like Cain's, nor Esau's, nor Judas's; it was not the repentance of one in despair, but was a repentance unto life and salvation, which needed not to be repented of.

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Matthew 27:1

Ver. 1. When the morning was come,.... Or, as soon as it was day, as Luke says, Lu 22:66. The sanhedrim had been up all night, which, after eating the passover, they had spent in apprehending, trying, and examining Jesus, and the witnesses against him; and had come to an unanimous vote, that he was guilty of death; upon which they either put Jesus out of the room for a while, or went into another themselves, to consult what further steps should be taken: or if they went home to their own houses, they very quickly got together again, and met in the temple, where they seem to be, Mt 27:5, unless the story of Judas is, by anticipation, inserted here; and in their council chamber, where they led Jesus, and examined him again concerning his being the Son of God; see Lu 22:66, all which shows how intent they were upon this business, and with what eagerness and diligence they pursued it; their feet ran to evil, and they made haste to shed blood. This was the time of their morning prayers, of their saying their phylacteries, and reciting the "shema", "hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord", according to their canon, which is this {e}:

"from what time do they read the "shema" in the morning? from such time that a man can distinguish between blue and white: says R. Eliezer, between blue and green; and he finishes it before the sun shines out. R. Joshua says, before three hours had elapsed:"

but religion, rites, ceremonies, and canons, must all give way to the accomplishment of what their hearts were so much set upon:

all the chief priests and elders of the people. The Syriac and Persic versions leave out the word "all", but it is retained in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and that very rightly. The Scribes and elders met at Caiaphas's house before, Mt 26:57, but it being in the night, they might not be all together; Annas particularly seems to have been absent, Joh 18:24, but now they all assemble together, as in a case of necessity they were obliged to do: their rule was this {f};

"the sanhedrim, consisting of seventy and one (as this was), are obliged to sit all of them as one, (or all, and everyone of them,) in their place in the temple; but at what time there is a necessity of their being gathered together, Nlwk Nyubqtm, "they are all of them assembled"; but, at other times, he who has any business may go, and do his pleasure, and return: yet so it is, that there may not be less than twenty three sitting continually all the time of their sitting; (their usual time of sitting was from the morning daily sacrifice, to the evening daily sacrifice {g};) one that is under a necessity of going out; this looks upon his companions that remain, and if twenty three remain, he may go out; but if not, he may not, until the other returns."

This being now a case of necessity, and great importance, they are all summoned and gathered together, unless we except Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus; who yet might be there, though they did not consent to their counsel and deed, as is certain of the former, Lu 23:51, these

took counsel against Jesus; God's holy child Jesus, his anointed, the Messiah; and which was taking counsel against the Lord himself; and so the prophecy in **Ps 2:2**, had its accomplishment: what they consulted about was

to put him to death; it was not what punishment to inflict upon him, whether scourging or death; that was before determined; they had already condemned him to death: but now they enter into close consultation what death to put him to, and in what manner; whether privately, he being now in their hands; or whether by the means of zealots, or by the Roman magistrate; or whether it should be by stoning, which must have been the case, if they put him to death according to their law; and by their authority; or whether by crucifixion, which they chose as the most ignominious and painful; and therefore determined to deliver him up to the Roman governor, and use their interest with him to put him to death, according to the Roman law.

{e} Misn. Beracot, c. 1. sect. 2. {f} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect. 2. {g} lb. c. 3. sect. 1. Bernidbar Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 177. 3.

Matthew 27:2

Ver. 2. And when they had bound him,.... The captain, and officers, bound him when they first took him, and brought him to Annas, and Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas, Joh 18:12. Perhaps he might be unloosed whilst he was examining before the high priest, under a show of freedom to speak for himself; or they might bind him faster now, partly greater security, as he passed through the streets, and partly for his greater reproach; as also, that he might be at once taken to be a malefactor by the Roman judge;

they led him away: the chief priests and elders of the people led him, at least by their servants, and they themselves attending in person, that they might awe the people from attempting a rescue of him, as they passed along; and that they might influence the Roman governor speedily to put him to death; and lest he should be prevailed upon to release him, through his own commiseration, the innocence of Jesus, and the entreaty of his friends.

And delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor; and so fulfilled what Christ had predicted, Mt 20:19. This they did, either because the power of judging in cases of life and death was taken away from them; or if it was not, they chose that the infamy of his death should be removed from them, and be laid upon a Gentile magistrate; and chiefly because they were desirous he should die the death of the cross. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions leave out the first name Pontius, and only call him Pilate: the Ethiopic version calls him Pilate Pontinaeus; and Theophylact suggests, that he was so called because he was of Pontus. Philo the Jew {h} makes mention of him:

"Pilate, says he, was epitropov thv Ioudaiav, "procurator of Judea"; who not so much in honour of Tiberius, as to grieve the people, put the golden shields within the holy city in the palace of Herod."

And so Tacitus {i} calls him the procurator of Tiberius, and Josephus also {k}. It is said {l} of him, that falling into many calamities, he slew himself with his own hand, in the times of Caligula, and whilst Publicola and Nerva were consuls; which was a righteous judgment of God upon him for condemning Christ, contrary to his own conscience.

{h} De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1033, 1034. {i} Hist. l. 15. {k} De Bello Jud. l. 2. e. 9. sect. 2. {l} M. Aurel-Cassiodor. Chronicon in Caligula, Joseph. Antiq. l. 18. c. 11. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 7.

Matthew 27:3

Ver. 3. Then Judas, which had betrayed him,.... Before, he is described as he that shall, or should, or doth betray him; but now having perpetrated the horrid sin, as he that had done it.

When he saw that he was condemned; that is, that Jesus was condemned, as the Syriac and Persic versions read, either by the Jewish sanhedrim, or by Pilate, or both; for this narrative concerning Judas may be prophetically inserted here, though the thing itself did not come to pass till afterwards; and the sense be, that when he, either being present during the whole procedure against Christ; or returning in the morning after he had received his money, and had been with his friends; finding that his master was condemned to death by the sanhedrim, who were pushing hard to take away his life; that they had delivered him bound to the Roman governor; and that he, after an examination of him, had committed him to the soldiers to mock, and scourge, and crucify him; and seeing him leading to the place of execution,

repented himself: not for the sin, as committed against God and Christ; but as it brought a load of present guilt and horror upon his mind, and exposed him to everlasting punishment: it was not such a repentance by which he became wiser and better; but an excruciating, tormenting pain in his mind, by which he became worse; therefore a different word is here used than what commonly is for true repentance: it was not a godly sorrow for sin, or a sorrow for sin, as committed against God, which works repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but a worldly sorrow, which issues in death, as it did in him. It did not spring from the love of God, as evangelical repentance does, nor proceed in the fear of God, and his goodness; but was no other than a foretaste of that worm that dieth not, and of that fire which cannot be quenched: it was destitute of faith in Christ; he never did believe in him as the rest of the disciples did; see **Joh 6:64**, and that mourning which does not arise from looking to Jesus, or is not attended with faith in him, is never genuine. Judas's repentance was without hope of forgiveness, and was nothing else but horror and black despair, like that of Cain's, like the trembling of devils, and the anguish of damned souls. It looks as if Judas was not aware that it would issue in the death of Christ: he was pushed on by Satan, and his avarice, to hope, that he should get this money, and yet his master escape; which he imagined he might do, either through such a defence of himself, as was not to be gainsaid; or that he would find out ways and means of getting out of the hands of the Jews, as he had formerly done, and with which Judas was acquainted: but now, there being no hope of either, guilt and horror seize his mind, and gnaw his conscience; and he wishes he had never done the accursed action, which had entailed so much distress and misery upon him:

and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders: which was the sum he; had covenanted for, and they had agreed to give him, on condition of delivering Jesus into their hands, which he had done: and it appears from hence, that the money had been accordingly paid him, and he had received it. But he being filled with remorse of conscience for what he had done, feels no quietness in his mind; nor could he save of what he had desired, but is obliged to return it; not from an honest principle, as in the case of true repentance, but on account of a racking and torturing conscience.

Matthew 27:4

Ver. 4. Saying, I have sinned,.... Here was a confession, and yet no true repentance; for he confessed, but not to the right persons; not to God, nor Christ, but to the chief priests and elders; nor over the head of the antitypical scape goat, not seeking to Christ for pardon and cleansing, nor did he confess and forsake sin, but went on adding sin to sin, and so found no mercy. The same confession was made by a like hardened wretch, Pharaoh, **Ex 9:27**. He proceeds and points out the evil he had committed:

in that I have betrayed innocent blood, or "righteous blood"; so the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read, and some copies; that is, have betrayed an innocent and righteous person, and been the occasion of his blood being about to be shed, and of his dying wrongfully. So God, in his all-wise providence, ordered it, that a testimony should be bore to the innocence of Christ, from the mouth of this vile wretch that betrayed him; to cut off the argument from the Jews, that one of his own disciples knew him to be a wicked man, and as such delivered him into their hands: for though Judas might not believe in him as the Messiah, and the Son of God, at least had no true faith in him, as such; yet he knew, and believed in his own conscience, that he was a good man, and a righteous and innocent one: and what he here says is a testimony of Christ's innocence, and what his conscience obliged him to; and shows the terrors that now encompassed him about; and might have been a warning to the Jews to have stopped all further proceedings against him; but instead of that,

they said, what is that to us? see thou to that: signifying, that if he had sinned, he must answer for it himself; it was no concern of theirs; nor should they form their sentiments of Christ according to his: they knew that he was a blasphemer, and deserving of death; and whatever opinion he had of him, it had no weight with them, who should proceed against him as an evildoer, let him think or say what he would to the contrary; and suggest, that he knew otherwise than what he said: so the Syriac and Persic versions render it, "thou knowest", and the Arabic, "thou knowest better".

Matthew 27:5

Ver. 5. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple,.... Upon the ground, in that part of the temple where they were sitting; in their council chamber, tyzgh tkvl, "the paved chamber", where the sanhedrim used to meet {m}: for it seems they would not take the money of him; and he was determined not to carry it back with him, and therefore threw it down before them, left it,

and departed; from the sanhedrim: and went; out of the temple; not to God, nor to the throne of his grace, nor to his master, to ask pardon of him, but to some secret solitary place, to cherish his grief and black despair,

and hanged himself. The kind and manner of his death, as recorded by Luke in **Ac 1:18** is, that "falling headlong, he burst asunder the midst, and all his bowels gushed out"; which account may be reconciled with this, by supposing the rope, with which he hanged himself, to break, when falling; it may be, from a very high place, upon a stone, or stump of a tree; when his belly burst, and his guts came out: or it may be rendered, as it is in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, "he was strangled"; and that either by the devil, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks; who, having been in him for the space of two or three days, caught him up into the air, and threw him down headlong; and dashing him on the ground, he burst in the midst, and his bowels gushed out, and the devil made his exit that way: or by a disease called the squinancy, or quinsy, a suffocation brought upon him by excessive grief, deep melancholy, and utter despair; when being choked by it, he fell flat upon his face, and the rim of his belly burst, and his entrails came out. This disease the Jews call arkoa, "Iscara"; and if it was what he was subject to from his infancy, his parents might call him Iscariot from hence; and might be designed in providence to be what should bring him to his wretched end: and what is said of this suffocating disorder, seems to agree very well with the death of Judas. They say {n}, that

"it is a disease that begins in the bowels, and ends in the throat:"

they call death by it, her htym, "an evil death" {o}; and say {p}, that "there are nine hundred and three kinds of deaths in the world, but that arkoa Nlkbv hvq, "the hardest of them all is Iscara"; which the Gloss calls "strangulament", and says, is in the midst of the body:"

they also reckon it, hnwvm htym, "a violent death" {q}; and say {r}, that the spies which brought a bad report of the good land, died of it. Moreover, they affirm {s}, that

"whoever tastes anything before he separates (i.e. lights up the lamp on the eve of the sabbath, to distinguish the night from the day), shall die by "Iscara", or suffocation."

Upon which the Gloss says, this is

"measure for measure: he that satisfies his throat, or appetite, shall be choked: as it is said {t} he that is condemned to be strangled, either he shall be drowned in a river, or he shall die of a quinsy, this is "Iscara"."

{m} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 88. 2. {n} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol 33. 1. {o} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 62. 9. {p} Beracot, fol. 3. 1. {q} Gloss. in T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 19. 2. {r} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 35. 1. {s} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 105. 1. {t} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 30. 2.

Matthew 27:6

Ver. 6. And the chief priests took the silver pieces,.... Off of the ground, after Judas was gone, no other daring to meddle with them; for in any other it would have been deemed sacrilege; and they being the proper persons to take care and dispose of money brought into the temple: and if not, their covetous disposition would have moved them to take up the money:

and said, one to another, it is not lawful to put them into the treasury, or "Corban"; as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave the word untranslated: and which is the place where the offerings for the repair and service of the temple were put, and is the same into which Christ beheld the people casting their money, Mr 12:41. Josephus {u} observes, that

"there was, with the Jews, an holy treasure, which is called "Corbonas";"

and this is the Nbrqh tkvl, "the chamber of the Korban", of which the Jews make mention {w}: the reason the high priests give why it was not lawful to put this money into the treasury, or into any of the chests in the "Corban" chamber, was,

because it is the price of blood. Thus they strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel. It is highly probable, that they took this selfsame money out of the treasury to buy this blood with, and yet scruple to put it in, having bought it: and besides, they made no hesitation about seeking for, and shedding this innocent blood, and yet boggle at putting this money into the "Corban", because it was the price of it; proceeding upon the same reason as the law in De 23:18 does, pretending much religion, and great veneration for holy pieces and things, when they made no conscience of committing the most flagitious crimes.

{u} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 3. {w} Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect, 1.

Matthew 27:7

Ver. 7. And they took counsel,.... With one another, considered of the matter, and deliberated about it a while; and at last came to a resolution,

and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in: a field of no great value, or it could not have been bought so near Jerusalem for so small a sum as thirty pieces of silver. Grotius's conjecture seems to be a good one, that it was a field the potter had dug up for his use, and had made the most of it; so that it was good for nothing, but for the purpose for which these men bought it, "to bury strangers in": either such as were not of their own nation, as the Roman soldiers, many of which were among them, and who they did not suffer to be buried among them; or proselytes, or such as came from distant parts, at their three festivals, many of whom may be supposed to die at such times: now by this act of humanity in providing for the interment of strangers, they designed, and hoped to have covered their wickedness in bargaining with Judas to betray innocent blood, for this sure of money; but it was so ordered by divine providence, that this became a public and lasting memorial of their sin and infamy: for it follows,

Matthew 27:8

Ver. 8. Wherefore that field was called,.... Not by the priests and elders, but by the common people, who knew by what money it was purchased,

the field of blood; or "Aceldama", which so signifies, as in **Ac 1:19**, not called the field of the priests, the purchasers; nor the field of the strangers, for whom it was bought; but the field of blood, being purchased with that money, for which innocent blood was betrayed; and this name it bore

unto this day; in which Matthew wrote his Gospel, about eight years after, as is thought. Jerom {x} says, that in his time this field was shown on the south side of Mount Sion.

{x} De locis Hebraicis.

Matthew 27:9

Ver. 9. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet,.... Through the purchasing of the potter's field with the thirty pieces of silver, the price that Christ was valued at, a prophecy in the writings of the Old Testament had its accomplishment: but about this there is some difficulty. The evangelist here says it was spoken by Jeremy the prophet; whereas in his prophecy there is no mention of any such thing. There is indeed an account of his buying his uncle Hanameel's son's field, in Jer 32:7, but not a word of a potter, or a potter's field, or of the price of it, thirty pieces of silver; and that as a price at which he, or any other person was valued; but the passage which is manifestly referred to, stands in Zec 11:12, where are these words, "and I said unto them, if ye think good, give [me] my price, and if not, forbear; so they weighed for my price thirty [pieces] of silver: and the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the potter, a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty [pieces] of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord": the removing of this difficulty, it might be observed, that the Syriac and Persic versions make no mention of any prophet's name, only read, "which was spoken by the prophet"; and so may as well be ascribed to Zechariah, as to Jeremy, and better: but it must be owned, that Jeremy is in all the Greek copies, in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel. Various things are said for the reconciling of this matter: some have thought that Zechariah had two names, and that besides Zechariah, he was called Jeremy; but of this there is no proof. Jerom {y} affirms, that in an Hebrew volume, being an apocryphal work of Jeremy, which was shown him by one of the Nazarene sect, he read these words verbatim: so that though they do not stand in the writings of Jeremy, which are canonical Scripture, yet in an apocryphal book of his, and which may as well be referred to, as the book of Maccabees, the traditions of the Jews, the prophecies of Enoch, and the writings of the Heathen poets. Moreover, Mr. Mede {z} has laboured, by various arguments, to prove, that the four last chapters of Zechariah were written by Jeremy, in which this passage stands; and if so, the reason is clear, for the citation in his name. But what seems best to solve this difficulty, is, that the order of the books of the Old Testament is not the same now, as it was formerly: the sacred writings were divided, by the Jews, into three parts: the first was called the law, which contains the five books of Moses; the second, the prophets, which contains the former and the latter prophets; the former prophets began at Joshua, and the latter at Jeremy; the third was called Cetubim, or the Hagiographa, the holy writings, which began with the book of Psalms: now, as this whole third and last part is called the Psalms, Lu 24:44, because it began with that book; so all that part which contained the latter prophets, for the same reason, beginning at Jeremy, might be called by his name; hence a passage, standing in the prophecy of Zechariah, who was one of the latter prophets, might be justly cited, under the name of Jeremy. That such was the order of the books of the Old Testament, is evident from the following passage {a}

"it is a tradition of our Rabbins, that the order of the prophets is, Joshua and Judges, Samuel and the Kings, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the twelve."

Moreover, it is usual with them to say {b}, that the spirit of Jeremiah was in Zechariah; and it is very plain, that the latter prophets have many things from the former; and so might Zechariah have this originally from Jeremy, which now stands in his prophecy: all this would be satisfactory to a Jew: and it is to be observed, that the Jew {c}, who objects to everything he could in the evangelist, with any appearance on his side, and even objects to the application of this prophecy; yet finds no fault with him for putting Jeremy for Zechariah. That the prophecy in Zechariah belongs to the Messiah, and was fulfilled in Jesus, manifestly appears from the context, for as well as the text itself. The person spoken of is in Zec 11:4, called to "feed the flock of slaughter", which being in a very poor condition, Zec 11:5, the state of the Jews, at the time of Christ's coming, is hereby very aptly represented: he agrees to do it, Zec 11:7, and accordingly furnishes himself for it; but he is despised, abhorred, and rejected by the shepherds, the principal men in church and state; because he severely inveighed against their doctrines and practices, Zec 11:8, upon which he rejects them, and dissolves both their civil and church state; which can suit with no other times than the times of Jesus, Zec 11:9, and lest it should be thought that he used them with too much severity, he gives one single instance of their ingratitude to him, which shows how little they esteemed him; and that is, their valuing him at no greater a price than "thirty pieces of silver", Zec 11:12, which were afterwards "cast unto the potter". The Jews {d} themselves own, that this prophecy belongs to the Messiah, though they interpret it of him in another manner.

"Says R. Chanun, the Israelites will have no need of the doctrine of the king Messiah in the time to come; as it is said, Isa 11:10, "to him shall the Gentiles seek", and not the Israelites: if so, for what does the king Messiah come? and what does he come to do? to gather the captives of Israel, and to give them the thirty precepts, as it is said, Zec 11:12, "and I said unto them, if ye think good", &c. Rab says, these are the thirty mighty men; and Jochanan says, these are the thirty commands."

Should it be objected, that supposing the Messiah is intended, the money is said to be given into his hands, and not into the hands of him that was to betray him; "if ye think good, give [me] my price", Zec 11:12: it may be replied, that the words yrkv wbh, should not be rendered, "give me my price", but "give my price"; i.e. give what you think fit to value me at, into the hands of the betrayer; and accordingly they did: "so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver", Zec 11:12; which is the very sum the chief priests agreed with Judas for, and which he received; see Mt 26:15, and if it should be objected to the citation of the evangelist, that it is considerably different from the word of the prophet, it being in the latter, "I took the thirty pieces of silver"; whereas in the former, the words are quoted thus,

saying, and they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value: it may be observed, that the word which Matthew uses may be rendered, "I took", as it is in the Syriac version; and that the thirty pieces of silver were the goodly price, at which the Messiah was valued by the children of Israel, is manifest enough;

and is an instance of egregious ingratitude, that this should be the price of the "innocent one", as the Arabic Version renders the phrase, "of him that was valued"; of the "honoured one", as the Ethiopic; of the "most precious one", as the Syriac; he who in his person, and the perfections of his nature, is equal to his father, and his fellow; who has all the riches of grace and glory in him, as mediator; who is superior to angels, and fairer than the sons of men in human nature: is the chiefest among ten thousands, and more precious than rubies; and all the things that can be desired are not to be compared with him, and yet sold for a sum of money, the price of a slave, Ex 21:32, and that by the children of Israel, to whom the Messiah was promised; who expected him, and desired his coming; and who sprung from among them, and was sent unto them, and yet they received him not, but undervalued him in this exceeding mean way. Wicked men have no value for Christ; they sell him and themselves for nought; but gracious souls cannot value him enough, nor sufficiently express their esteem of him.

{y} In loc. {z} Mede's Works, p. 963, 1022, 1023. {a} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. Vid. Praefat. R. David Kimchici in Jer. {b} Sepher Hagilgulim apud Surenhus. Biblos Katallages, p. 41. {c} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 25. p. 412. {d} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 85. 3, 4.

Matthew 27:10

Ver. 10. And gave them for the potter's field,.... In the prophet it is, "and I cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord", Zec 11:13; whereas here it is, "they gave them"; but the word Matthew uses may be rendered, "I gave", as it is by the Syriac; and as the last words require it should, "as the Lord commanded me"; otherwise there will be no coherence between them: and whereas the thirty pieces of silver are, in the prophet, said to be cast, or given "to the potter", and here, "for the potter's field", there is no contradiction: the plain sense is, that they were given to the potter, as a valuable consideration for his field: and whereas it is added, "in the house of the Lord", which the evangelist does not cite the reason is, because this money was first cast down in the temple by Judas, and after being taken up by the priests, they covenanted with the potter for his field, and paid him for it with this money in the sanctuary. The evangelist, instead of this last clause, puts,

as the Lord commanded me; which have made some think, that there should: be a different reading; and that instead of tyb, "the house", it should be read tdk, "according to the commandment": but there is no need to suppose this: the evangelist is justified in the use of this phrase, by what is said in the prophet in the beginning of Zec 11:13, "and the Lord said unto me": and this is only a transposition and explanation, according to a rule the Jews have, whvrdw arqmh oro, "invert, or transpose the Scripture, and explain it" {e}. Should it be said that the Messiah, and not the betrayer, nor the priests, is said to cast this money to the potter, or give it for the potter's field; it may be replied, that Jesus may be said to do that which Judas, and the chief priests did; because, by his almighty power and providence, he overruled those things for good, which in themselves were evil. Judas thought to have converted the money to his own use, and the priests would have been glad to have taken it again to themselves; but Christ obliged Judas to carry back the money to the priests, and cast it into the temple, and worked upon the minds of the priests, not to put it into the treasury, but to buy the potter's field with it, whereby the prophecy, in its literal sense, was fully accomplished.

{e} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 119. 2. & Vajikra Rabba, sect. 27. fol. 167. 4.

Matthew 27:11

Ver. 11. And Jesus stood before the governor,.... Pilate who sat; for so was the custom for the judge to sit, and those that were judged, to stand, especially whilst witness was bore against them {f}.

"Says R. Bo, in the name of Rab Hona, the witnesses ought to stand whilst they bear witness. Says R. Jeremiah, in the name of R. Abhu, also Nydmwe twyhl Nkyru Nynwdynh, "those that are judged ought to stand", whilst they receive their witness."

And again {g},

"how do they judge? the judges sit, Nydmwe Nynwdynhw, and "they that are judged stand"."

Think what a sight was here, the eternal Son of God in human nature, the Lord of life and glory, the Prince of the kings of the earth, standing before an Heathen governor! he before whom Pilate must stand, and even all men, small and great, another day; all must appear, and stand before the judgment seat of Christ; he himself stands at the bar of men! the reason of this was, because he stood in the legal place, and stead of his people: he became their substitute from everlasting, was made under the law in time, and was subject to its precept, and its penalty: and though he had no crimes of his own to answer for, he had the sins of his people on him; on account of which he stood before the governor, to receive the sentence of condemnation on himself; that so sin being condemned in his flesh, the whole righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in them: he stood here, that they might stand before God, and at the throne of his grace with boldness and intrepidity; a new, and living way to it being opened for them, through his blood and sacrifice; and that they might stand before him, the judge of all the earth, with confidence, and not be ashamed at his coming.

And the governor asked him, saying, art thou the king of the Jews? for the Jews had suggested to Pilate, that Jesus had given out that he was Christ a king; and he being Caesar's procurator, it became him strictly to inquire into this matter, lest there should be any encroachment made on his master's dignity, authority, and dominions, and he himself should suffer blame; wherefore, he does not ask Jesus, whether he said he was the king of the Jews, or others said so of him, but whether he was their king: he knew he was not in fact; but his question was, whether he was so in right; or if he thought he was, what claim he made, and what he did to support it:

and Jesus said unto him; thou sayest; which is all one as if he had said, "I am"; see Mt 26:25, compared with Mr 14:62, and that this was the sense of his answer is clear from Joh 18:36, though, at the same time, he let him know that his kingdom was not of this world; that he was not a temporal king, nor did he lay any claim to any earthly dominions; and therefore neither he, nor his master Caesar, had anything to fear from him: he was only a king in a spiritual sense, over the Israel of God; such as received him, as the Messiah, and believed in his name.

{f} T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 43. 2, 3. {g} Ib. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 2.

Matthew 27:12

Ver. 12. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders,.... As that he was a perverter of the people, a stirrer of sedition, discord, and rebellion among them; that he taught them not to give tribute to Caesar, and set up himself for a king; all which he had done not in one place only, but throughout all the land of Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem; see Lu 23:2,

he answered nothing; the things laid to his charge being notoriously false, and known to be so by all the people; and the evidence with which they were supported being so slender, the judge could never receive it; he therefore judged it unnecessary, and not worth a while to return an answer to them: besides, he knew they were bent upon his death, and that, should he set aside these charges, as he easily could, they would invent new ones, and so increase their sin, and their condemnation: but the chief reason of all, of his silence, was, he had the sins of his people to answer for, and the time of his dying for them was now come, and for which he was ready; and therefore would say nothing to remove these false charges, and retard his death.

Matthew 27:13

Ver. 13. Then saith Pilate unto him,.... Observing he made no reply to the accusations of the chief priests and elders, and in order to draw something out of him,

hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? art thou deaf? or dost thou not take in what is alleged against thee? dost thou not consider the nature of these charges? how many, and of what kind the depositions are now made by persons of such rank and figure? art thou under no concern to make answer to them?

Matthew 27:14

Ver. 14. And he answered him to never a word,.... He made no reply to anyone thing which Pilate suggested to him, though it seems to have been in a kind and friendly way, and with a view to his good:

insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly; that a man, who at other times had such fluency of speech, and readiness of expression, who both for matter and words, and also weight and authority, spake as never man did:

and who had so often silenced the Scribes and Pharisees, men of the greatest learning among the Jews, of which Pilate, doubtless, had knowledge, should say nothing in his own defence; and especially when the charges brought against him were of a capital nature, and touched his life, and yet were so easy to be refuted, and proved to be false ones: and what might increase his wonder, was, that he should take no notice of them, nor return an answer to them, considering by whom they were brought; not by the common people, but by the sanhedrim of the nation, and that before him the Roman governor, who had power to crucify or release him: and above all, he marvelled at the patience of Jesus, that he could hear such notorious falsities, and which so affected his character, and his life, and say nothing to them; and at the fortitude of his mind, at his being so regardless of his life, and fearless of death.

Matthew 27:15

Ver. 15. Now at [that] feast,.... The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "at every feast": which looks as if the authors of these versions thought the sense was, that the following custom was used at each feast in the year, at the feasts of pentecost, and tabernacles, and passover; whereas it was only at the feast of the passover; and which is meant by the feast here, as is clear from Joh 18:39. It was but once a year that this was done; at every returning passover; and so the Persic version renders it, "every year on the day of the feast"; that is, of the passover, and which was frequently called by way of emphasis, gx, "the feast":

the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. It was not a law, but a custom; it was not enjoined by the law of Moses; for they that sinned against that; died without mercy: nor is it agreeable to strict justice, that there should be such a release of criminals; nor was it a Jewish custom, as an emblem of their deliverance out of Egyptian bondage. I have not met with the least trace of any such custom of theirs at the time of the pass over in any of their writings; but it seems to be a Roman one: and from all the accounts of the evangelist, it appears to be peculiar to the Roman governor, who, either by the order of Caesar, or of himself, introduced such a custom to get the favour of the people; for it was to them the release was made, and the person, whom they pleased; and this being repeated annually for some time, was expected by them, and at last became necessary.

Matthew 27:16

Ver. 16. And they had then a notable prisoner,.... The Vulgate Latin reads, "he had"; that is, Pilate, who had committed him to prison, and under whose power he was: for the Jews had lost all authority of this kind, at least in capital cases. This prisoner is called a "notable" one; that is, a famous, or rather an infamous one: he was a thief, and a robber, and had been guilty of sedition; had made, or joined with others in an insurrection, and had committed murder in it; and so, on more accounts than one, was deserving of death: nor could it be otherwise expected by himself, or others, but that he should die: his name was

called Barabbas; that is, as the Syriac version reads it, aba rb, which signifies "the son of a father": a father's child that was spoiled and ruined, and a child of his father the devil. This was a name common among the Jews. Frequent mention is made of R. Abba {h}, and Bar Abba is the son of Abba: hence we read of Abba Bar Abba {i}, and of R. Samuel Bar Abba {k} and of R. Simeon Bar Abba {l}, and of R. Chijah Bar Abba {m}. In Munster's Hebrew Gospel it is read hbr rb, "Bar Rabbah, the son of a master"; and so Jerom says, that in the Gospel according to the Hebrews it is interpreted, "the son of their master"; but the former is the right name, and the true sense of the word. The Ethiopic version adds, "the prince", or "chief of robbers, and all knew him"; and the Arabic, instead of a "prisoner", reads, a "thief", as he was.

{h} Juchasin, fol. 70. 1, &c. {i} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 18. 2. & Hieros Pesachim, fol. 32. 1. & Juchasin, fol. 104. 1. {k} T. Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 32. 1. {l} T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 53. 3. Juchasin, fol. 105. 1. {m} T. Hieros. Succa, fol, 55. 3. Juchasin, fol. 91. 2.

Matthew 27:17

Ver. 17. Therefore when they were gathered together,.... Meaning not the chief priests and elders; for these were together before, but the common people; and so the Persic version renders the words, when the people increased into a multitude: for it was to them the release of a prisoner was to be made, and so the proposal of one; and it was at their option, who should be the person; for it was "whom they would", as in Mt 27:15, and where the Ethiopic version adds, "and should choose".

Pilate said unto them, whom will ye that I should release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus, which is called Christ? He puts it to them, whom they would choose to have released, Barabbas, the thief and robber, the seditious person and murderer, or Jesus, whom some called the Christ, the Messiah, the king of the Jews. Pilate on purpose proposed such an infamous person along with him, not doubting but they would have preferred him, whatever were their prejudices against him, before such a scandalous person as Barabbas; and whatever good will they might secretly have to put Jesus to death, and release Barabbas, yet he thought they could not, for shame, speak out their sense, and desire him, and not Jesus. His view was not to reproach Christ, by joining him with so wicked a man, but in order to save him.

Matthew 27:18

Ver. 18. For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. He saw in their countenances, and by their charges against him, and by the whole of their conduct, that it was not out of any regard to Caesar, or to the peace and tranquillity of the civil government, or to strict justice; but from envy, at his popularity, at his fame and credit, the honour, glory, and applause he had among the people, on account of his doctrine, and miracles, that they had delivered him up into his hands; and therefore Pilate might the rather hope to succeed in this scheme of his to release him, by proposing him with so notorious a person to the populace, when the one, as he might reasonably judge, was abhorred by them, and the other had got great credit and esteem among a large number of them. The Persic version here adds the people's answer; "they answered, release Barabbas, but deliver Jesus to us".

Matthew 27:19

Ver. 19. When he was set down on the judgment seat,.... That is, when Pilate the governor, as the Syriac and Persic versions read, was set down upon the bench, and while he was sitting there, and trying of Jesus:

his wife sent unto him: her name, according to the Ethiopians, was Abrokla {n}; who might be a Jewess, as the wife of Felix was, Ac 24:24, and a favourer of Jesus, or, at least, a religious person; and if, only a mere Heathen, yet had some notion of justice being to be done; and however, pressed by her dream, sent a messenger to her husband, as he was trying this cause:

saying, have thou nothing to do with that just man; meaning Jesus, whom she either knew to be so, or concluded from her dream that he was one: and her sense is, that her husband would have no hand in his condemnation and death, but rather do all he could to release and save him. She might know that he had gone some lengths already against him; that he had the night before granted a band of soldiers to the chief priests to apprehend him; and knew he rose early that morning, at the request of the same, to try him; and he was now before him, and she might be apprehensive that he was forward to condemn him to death, and therefore sends this cautionary message; alleging this for a reason,

for I have suffered many things this day, in a dream, because of him. The Arabic and Persic versions read, "this night". Pilate might rise that morning before she was awake, and had an opportunity of telling her dream; or she might dream it after he was gone; in which she was sadly distressed about Jesus, and might have some hints given her of the miserable consequences of his death, not only to the Jewish nation, but to her husband and family; which gave her great uneasiness and disquietude. Some have thought, that this dream was from the devil, willing to hinder the death of Christ, and so man's redemption and salvation by it; but had he had any such intention, the most effectual method would have been to have persuaded the chief priests and elders off of it, and in attempting it; whereas, on the contrary, they were instigated by him to it: and whatever natural causes there might be of this dream, as the chief priests coming over night to desire a band of soldiers to take Jesus, and the discourse they might have with Pilate about him; which things might run in her mind in her sleep; yet, doubtless, this was of God, and with a design that a testimony should be bore to the innocency of Christ every way; as by Judas that betrayed him, by Pilate his judge, and by his wife.

{n} Ludolph. Lex. Ethiop. p. 541.

Matthew 27:20

Ver. 20. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude,.... Among whom the choice lay who should be released. This they did not by haranguing them, or making a public oration to them; but by sending their servants, or proper persons among them, telling them that Jesus had been examined before the sanhedrim that morning, and was found to be a blasphemer; and that the whole court had unanimously condemned him to death, and therefore it became them to act according to their decree: and besides, should this man be set free, they might suggest to them, since he has given out that he is the king Messiah, the Romans hearing of it, will be jealous of such a person, and come and take away both our place and nation, or deprive us of the privileges we have remaining: with such sort of arguments as these, it may be supposed they worked upon the common people. The Persic version reads, "commanded", instead of "persuaded",

that they should ask Barabbas to be released to them,

and destroy Jesus; for nothing short of that would satisfy them: they thirsted after his blood, and were bent upon his death: to release Barabbas, if Jesus was not destroyed, would not answer their end: they desired Barabbas's liberty for no other reason, but for the sake of the destruction of Jesus.

Matthew 27:21

Ver. 21. The governor answered and said unto them,.... A second time, after some time had been allowed and taken up to consider of the matter, and which the chief priests and elders improved among the people against Jesus.

Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? for as these two were proposed, one of them must be released; and it lay in the breast of the people to choose which they would:

they said, Barabbas; so that Christ was not only numbered among, and reckoned with transgressors, but he was accounted worse than the worst of them; a seditious person, a robber, and a murderer was preferred before him: see **Ac 3:14**.

Matthew 27:22

Ver. 22. Pilate saith unto them,.... As one astonished at their choice: he could not have thought they would have asked the life of so vile a wretch, that had been guilty of such capital crimes, crimes to be abhorred by all men:

what shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? Surely you would not have me put him to death, and that for no other reason but this, because he is called either by himself or others, Christ, or the Messiah, or the king of the Jews!

they all say unto him, let him be crucified; which was a Roman punishment, inflicted on the meanest and worst of men; as wicked servants, thieves, robbers, and cut-throats {o}; and so was not only a torturing and painful death, but a very shameful and ignominious one; yea, an accursed one: in this they all agreed, being instigated to it by the chief priests and elders.

{o} Lipsius de Cruce, l. 1. c. 12, 13.

Matthew 27:23

Ver. 23. And the governor said, why, what evil hath he done?.... What reason can be given, why he should be crucified? what sin has he committed, that deserves such a death? From whence it is clear, that of all the things they had accused him, they had not, in Pilate's account, given proof of one single action, that was criminal, nor had he done any: he came into the world without sin, he did none in it; he knew no sin, nor could any be found in him, by Satan, nor his accusers, nor his judge:

but they cried out the more, saying, let him be crucified: the more they saw Pilate inclined to favour him, and pleaded for him, and attested his innocence; the more clamorous, outrageous, and urgent they were to have him crucified.

Matthew 27:24

Ver. 24. When Pilate saw he could prevail nothing,.... That it was to no purpose to talk to them, and in favour of Jesus; he saw they were determined upon his crucifixion, and that nothing else would satisfy them:

but that rather a tumult was made; there was an uproar among the people, and he might fear the consequences of it, should he not grant their request; otherwise, as Philo the {p} Jew says of him, he was, thn fusin akamphv kai meta tou anyadouv ameiliktov, "naturally inflexible, rigid, and self-willed": but he knew the temper of these people, and had had experience of their resoluteness, when they were determined on any thing; as in the case of his introducing the golden shields into the holy city, of which the same author speaks: and was then obliged, though sore against his will, as now, to yield unto them:

He took water, and washed his hands before the multitude; either in conformity to a custom among the Jews, whereby they testified their innocence as to the commission of murder; see De 21:6, or to a Gentile one, used when murder was committed, for the lustration or expiation of it {q}:

saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; though this did not clear him from all guilt in this matter: he ought to have acted the part of an upright judge, and not have yielded to the unrighteous requests of the people; he ought not to have scourged an innocent man, and much less have condemned and delivered him to be crucified, as he did; though in this he bore a testimony to the innocence of Christ, and which is somewhat remarkable in him; who was, as Philo says {r}, notoriously guilty of receiving bribes, of injuries, rapine, and frequent murders of persons uncondemned:

see ye [to it]; you must be answerable for this action, and all the consequences of it. The Syriac version renders it, "you have known"; and the Persic version, "you know": and the Arabic version, "you know better"; See Gill on "Mt 27:4".

{p} De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1034. {q} Vid. Ovid. Fast. l. 2. Anticlidis Redit. l. 74. Triclinius in Ajac. Sophocl. 3. 1. {r} Ubi supra. (De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1034.)

Matthew 27:25

Ver. 25. Then answered all the people,.... They were as unanimous in their imprecations upon themselves, as in desiring the crucifixion of Christ:

and said, his blood be on us, and on our children; not for the cleansing of them from sin, which virtue that blood has, but if there were any stain, blot, or pollution, through the shedding of it, they wished it might be on them and theirs: not for the forgiveness of sins, which that blood was shed for; but on the contrary, if there was any sin and guilt in it, they desired it might be imputed to them: nor for their justification before God, and security from wrath to come, both which are by his blood; but all the reverse of this, that if there were any punishment, and condemnation, and death, due for the shedding of it, they imprecated it all upon themselves, and their posterity: so this phrase is used in **Jos 2:19**, and in other places, and in the Talmud {s}: and it is a notion of the Jews, that the guilt of innocent blood, and the blood of that innocent man's children, lie not only upon the persons immediately concerned, but upon their children to the end of the world: and so the judges used to address the witnesses upon a trial, after this manner {t};

"know ye, that capital causes, are not as pecuniary ones: in pecuniary causes, a man gives his money, and it atones for him; but in capital causes, wb Nyywlt werz Mdw wmd, "his blood, and the blood of his seed, hang upon him", to the end of the whole world: for lo! of Cain it is said, "the voice of the blood of thy brother cryeth", &c. his blood, and the blood of his seed."

And this imprecation of theirs, has been notoriously verified in them; for though this blood was shed for many of them, and Christ prayed for the forgiveness of them, and they had the Gospel, and the doctrine of remission of sins first preached among them, which was made the power of God unto salvation to some of them, even of those who were concerned in the crucifixion of Christ; yet, on the generality of them, his blood was in the sense they wished it; and for the shedding of it, wrath came upon them to the uttermost, in the entire destruction of their nation, city, and temple, and very remarkable it is, that great numbers of them were put to death by crucifixion; and very likely some of those very persons, that were so clamorous for the crucifying of Christ; and if not, at least their children; five hundred of the Jews and more, were sometimes crucified in a day, whilst Titus was besieging the city; till at length there wanted "room for crosses", kai stauroi toiv swmasi "and crosses for bodies", as Josephus {u} says, who was an eyewitness of it: and to this day, this dreadful wish of the blood of

Christ upon them, is to be seen in their miserable, abject, and captive state; and will be, until such time that they look to him whom they have pierced, and mourn.

{s} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 110. 1. Yoma, fol. 2l. 1. & Avoda Zara, fol. 12. 2. {t} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 12. sect. 3. {u} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 12.

Matthew 27:26

Ver. 26. Then released he Barabbas unto them,.... The seditious person, robber, and murderer, for which crimes he was in prison. This man was an emblem of the persons for whom Christ suffered, both in his character and in his release: in his character; for they are such as have rebelled against God, robbed him of his glory, and destroyed themselves; many of them are notorious sinners, the chief of sinners, and all of them by nature, children of wrath, as others; and as the descendants of Adam, under the sentence of condemnation and death; and yet in Christ, they are children of Abba, Father; being of God predestinated by him, to the adoption of children: and in his release; for when Christ was apprehended, they were let go; when he was bound they were loosed; when he was condemned, they were released, and acquitted; and when the sword of justice was awaked against him, the hand of grace and mercy was turned upon them.

And when he had scourged Jesus; which was done some time before his examination, trial, and condemnation were over, though mentioned here, as appears from Joh 19:1, and was done by Pilate, in order to move the pity and compassion of the Jews; hoping they would have been satisfied with it, and not have resisted upon his death: and he indeed moved it to them, that he might chastise him and let him go, Lu 23:22, but nothing would do but crucifixion. Whether the previous scourging sufficed, or whether he was not scourged again upon his condemnation, is not certain: if he was scourged twice, John may be thought to relate the one, and Matthew the other; for certain it is, that it was usual with the Romans to scourge either with rods or whips, just before crucifixion {w}: our Lord was scourged with whips, as the word here used shows. Persons of birth and blood, and freemen of Rome, were beaten with rods; but such as were servants, which form Christ had taken, were scourged with whips; to which, sometimes were fastened, the hip bones of beasts {x}; so that this kind of whipping, was very severe and cruel. The

Jews themselves own this scourging of Jesus, only they ascribe it to the elders of Jerusalem, and relate it thus {y}:

"the elders of Jerusalem took Jesus, and brought him to the city, and bound him to a marble pillar in the city, Myjwvb whwkyw, "and smote him with whips", or "whipped him"; and said unto him, where are all thy miracles which thou hast done?"

Hereby the prophecy in **Isa 1:6**, and our Lord's prediction in Mt 20:19, had their accomplishment. This scourging of Christ, was an emblem of the scourges and strokes of divine justice, which he endured in his soul, as the surety of his people; being smitten of God by the sword of justice, as he stood in their place and stead, and stricken for their transgressions; and may furnish out several instructions: as that it is no wonder, if any of the followers of Christ have, do, or shall, meet with such like treatment from men; and that it becomes them to bear patiently the scourges of their heavenly Father, since these are in love; and that they need not fear being trodden down, or carried away by the overflowing scourge of God's wrath, since Christ has endured this in their room. This being done,

he delivered him to be crucified; either into the hands of the Jews, to their will and at their request; or into the hands of his soldiers, to execute the sentence he passed upon him; which was done in a judicial way, and according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

{w} Lipsius de Cruce l. 2. c. 2. {x} Ib. c. 3. {y} Toldos Jesu, p. 17.

Matthew 27:27

Ver. 27. Then the soldiers of the governor,.... Those that were about him, his attendants and guards,

took Jesus into the common hall; the "praetorium", or judgment hall, as it is sometimes called; the governor's palace, into which the Jews would not enter, lest they should defile themselves: Pilate therefore came out to them, and went into the pavement called Gabbatha, and sat upon a judgment seat there; see Joh 18:28, where he passed sentence on Christ; which being done, the soldiers took him into the hall of judgment; which being both magnificent and large, was fit for the scene they intended to act there.

Munster's Hebrew Gospel reads it, they took him "in the house of judgment"; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "out of the court of judicature"; both wrong.

And gathered unto him whole band [of soldiers]; the same that Judas had with him to take him, consisting of five hundred, and some say more: these their fellow soldiers, to whom Jesus was committed, got together to him, or "against him", as the Syriac and Persic versions render it, make themselves sport and diversion with him. Think in what hands and company our dear Lord now was: now was he encompassed with dogs, and enclosed with the assembly of the wicked indeed; see Ps 22:16. The Persic version renders it, "multitudes of knaves being gathered together to him".

Matthew 27:28

Ver. 28. And they stripped him,.... Of his clothes; at least of his upper garment: for one man to spit upon another, as these soldiers afterwards did on Christ, or to strip him of his garment, according to the Jewish canons, were punishable with a fine of four hundred pence {z}, which amounted to twelve pounds and ten shillings of our money; but the soldiers were in no danger of being prosecuted, for stripping Christ. This is one part of the low estate Christ submitted to: his clothes on his back seem to be all he had in this world, and of these he is stripped:

and put on him a scarlet robe, or "a red coat", as the Persic version renders it; very likely an old coat of one of their officers. The Evangelists Mark and John say it was "purple", Mr 15:17, and so the Arabic version renders it here: whether there were two garments put upon him, the one a purple vest, and the other a scarlet robe over it; or whether scarlet was used instead of purple, is not certain; which was a colour wore by kings, and a sign of imperial dignity {a}; and therefore put upon Christ by way of mockery, upbraiding him with the character he bore, as king of the Jews. This was an emblem of his being clothed, as it were with our sins, which are as scarlet, and of his bloody sufferings in the human nature.

{z} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6. {a} Alexander ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 28.

Ver. 29. And when they had platted a crown of thorns,.... What sort of thorn this crown was made of, whether of the bramble, or of the white thorn, is not very material {b}: the word used in the Syriac version, is rendered by interpreters, "white thorns", and which were common in Judea: these, be they what they will, they made into the form of a crown, and

they put it upon his head; both to reproach him as a king, and to torture him as a man: however, it had its significance, and was an emblem of men, comparable to thorns; either of wicked men, and of his being encompassed with them at this time; or of good men, chosen out from among them, redeemed by him, and accounted as a royal diadem with him {c}: or it might represent the sins of his people, which, like thorns, pierced him, and like a crown of them surrounded him every side; or else the many troubles he was exercised with, and through which he did, as his members do, enter the kingdom: and especially, his being made a curse for us, thorns and briers being the curse which was inflicted on the earth, for the sin of man: in this Christ was the antitype of the ram, caught by his horns among the thickets, which "Abraham" sacrificed in the room of his son. This may teach us many useful lessons: we may see what a curse sin brought upon man, and upon the earth for man's sake; and even upon the Messiah, in the stead of men: we may observe the difference between us and Christ: we are a crown of glory, and a royal diadem in his hand; we are crowned with loving kindness and tender mercies, and have a crown of righteousness, life, and glory, laid up for us, and he was crowned with thorns; as also the difference between Christ in his state of humiliation wearing such a crown, and his state of exaltation, in which he is crowned with glory and honour. The Jews acknowledge this circumstance of the sufferings of Jesus, though they ascribe it to the elders of Jerusalem; who, they say {d},

"took thorns and made a crown of them, and put it upon his head."

Which are the very words of the evangelist:

and a reed in his right hand, or "cane"; and Munster's Hebrew Gospel uses the word, hnq, "a cane", such as men walk with; and this may be confirmed from the barbarous use they afterwards made of it, by smiting him on the head with it: a "reed" indeed may fitly express the weakness of his kingdom in the eye of the world: but any cane or common staff, or stick, put into his hands in the room of a sceptre, would also signify the meanness of his kingdom, which was not of this world, and came not with observation: they meant to reproach him with it, but they will find one time or another, that he, has another sceptre, even a sceptre of righteousness, a staff of strength, a rod of iron, with which he will rule and break in pieces, all the wicked of the earth. However, we may learn from hence, Christ does not disdain to hold a reed in his hand: nor will he break the bruised reed, or discourage, or crush the weakest believer.

And they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews: being thus clad in a scarlet, or purple robe, or both; and having a crown of thorns on his head, and a reed instead of a sceptre in his hand, they carry on the mockery still further, and bend the knee to him, as to a prince just come to his throne, and salute as such; and in a mock way, wish him long life and prosperity: thus deriding him in his kingly office, as all such do, who call him Lord, Lord, but disregard his commands.

{b} Vid. Bartholin. de Spinea Corona, sect. 1. 2. {c} Vid. Paschal. de Coronis, l. 10. c. 12. p. 701, 702. {d} Toldos Jesu, p. 17.

Matthew 27:30

Ver. 30. And they spit upon him,.... The Syriac and Persic versions add, "upon his face", which he did not hide from spitting; see **Isa 1:6**, and so what with sweat, by being hurried from place to place, and with blood trickling down from his temples, scratched with thorns, and with the spittle of these filthy soldiers, his visage was more marred than any man's, and his form than the sons of men, Isa 52:14.

And took the reed, or "cane", which was put into his right hand,

and smote him on the head; whereby they drove the sharp points of the thorns into it, which must give him inexpressible pain and torture.

Matthew 27:31

Ver. 31. And after that they had mocked him,.... Gone through the whole farce, and glutted themselves with derision of him, and with sport and diversion with him,

they took the robe off from him; it belonging to one of their company,

and put his own raiment on him; partly that he might be known to be the selfsame person that was condemned and committed to them, which they now brought forth to crucify; and partly, that the four soldiers that were appointed to be the executioners, might have the perquisite of his clothes, which belonged unto them:

and led him away to crucify him; for a condemned person was always executed the same day: their canon is {e},

"after that his judgment, or sentence is finished, they do not tarry with him, but slay him, wmwyb, "that very day"."

And their custom was this;

"he whose sentence for death is finished, they bring him out from the house of judgment; and one stands at the door of it, and linen clothes in his hand, and a horse at some distance from him; and a crier goes out before him, "saying", such an one is going to be executed with such a death, because he has committed such a sin, in such a place, at such a time, such and such being witnesses; whoever knows him to be innocent, let him come, and speak in his favour: if one says, I have something to say in his favour: this waves with the linen clothes, and the other rides upon the horse, and runs and brings back him that is judged, to the sanhedrim; and if he is found innocent, they dismiss him: but if not, he returns, and goes to execution {f}."

The Jews pretend {g}, that a crier went out before Jesus of Nazareth, forty days before his execution, and made such a proclamation, but found none that had any thing to say in his favour, and therefore hanged him on the evening of the passover. But this is false; Christ had no such length of time, or his friends any liberty granted them to speak for him. They led him out of the common hall, through Jerusalem, and through one of the gates of it, without the city, in order to crucify him, to which he was condemned, when that prophecy was fulfilled in Isa 53:7. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth": as he made no opposition or struggle, but quietly went along with them, where they led him; so he took every thing patiently from them, uttered not one complaint, or any murmuring and repining word, or any thing by way of reviling; but became meekly subject to them, and submitted himself to him that judgeth righteously.

{e} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 12. sect. 4. Misn. Sanhed. c. 6. sect. 1. {f} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 13. sect. 1. {g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

Matthew 27:32

Ver. 32. And as they came out,.... Of the city; for no execution was made, neither in the court of judicature, nor in the city, but at some distance; as it was at stoning, so at crucifixion {h}:

"when judgment was finished, they brought him out to be stoned; the place of stoning was without the sanhedrim, as it is said, Le 24:14, "bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp"."

Upon which the gloss and Gemara say {i}, without the three camps; which were these, the court which was the camp of the Shekinah; or the divine presence; and the mountain of the house, the camp of the Levites; and the city, the camp of Israel; so that he that was executed, was had without the city. Maimonides {k} says,

"the place in which the sanhedrim executed, was without it, and at a distance from it, as it is said, Le 24:14, and it appears to me, that it was about six miles distant; for so far it was between the sanhedrim of Moses our master, which was before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the camp of Israel."

So Jesus went without the camp, and suffered without the gate, as the antitype of the red heifer; see Nu 19:3, compared with Heb 13:11, and the notes there.

They found a man of Cyrene: a place in Libya, and one of the five cities called Pentapolis: which were these, Berenice, Arsinoe, Ptolemais, Apollonia, and Cyrene {l}; Kir in **Am 1:5** is rendered by the Targum, ynryq, "Cyrene", as it is also by the Vulgate Latin. There were many Jews dwelt here, as appears from **Ac 2:10**, as this man was a Jew, as his name shows; and besides, there was a synagogue of the Cyrenian Jews at Jerusalem, **Ac 6:9**, so that though he was a native of Cyrene, he might now dwell there, and some of these were converted to the faith of Christ; for of those that were scattered abroad at the death of Stephen, some were men of Cyrene, Ac 11:19. And it is very likely, that this man was a favourer of Christ, which might be one reason why they laid hold on him, and obliged him to bear the cross of Christ; since he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, who were men of note among the first Christians:

Simon by name; of which name was one of the apostles, and a common name among the Jews, and signifies hearkening and obedient: and none are fit to bear, or will bear the cross of Christ, but such who hearken to his voice, and are obedient to him, being made willing in the day of his power:

him they compelled to bear his cross; which they did, not out of good will to Christ, but fearing lest through his faintness and weakness, he should, die before he got to the place of execution, and they be disappointed of their end, the crucifixion of him; or because they were in haste to have him executed, and he was not able to go so fast as they desired; for when they, first came out, the cross was laid upon Christ, and he bore it, as John relates; but he being weak and ready to faint under it, and not able to go the pace they would have him, and meeting with this man, they press him to bear it after him: which he might be unwilling to do, partly because it was scandalous and ignominious; and partly, because if a favourer of Jesus, he did not choose to be any ways accessary to his death: but he was obliged to it; and it may be observed from hence, that taking up the cross and following Christ, is disagreeable to flesh and blood: though the spirit may be willing, the flesh recoils; none care for it, or choose to bear it, unless constrained to it.

{h} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 1. {i} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 42. 2. {k} Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 12. sect. 3. {l} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 5.

Matthew 27:33

Ver. 33. And when they were come to a place called Golgotha,.... The true pronunciation is "Golgoltha", and so it is read in Munster's Hebrew Gospel. It is a Syriac word, in which language letters are often left out: in the Syriac version of this place, the first "l" is left out, and the latter retained, and it is read "Gogoltha": and so, in the Persic, "Gagulta"; and in the Arabic, "Gagalut". The Ethiopic version reads it, "Golgotha"; and so, Dr. Lightfoot observes, it is read by the Samaritan interpreter of the first chapter of Numbers:

that is to say, a place of a skull: some say Adam's skull was found here, and from thence the place had its name; this is an ancient tradition, but without foundation {m}: it seems to be so called, because it was the place where malefactors were executed, and afterwards buried; whose bones and skulls in process of time might be dug up, and some of them might lie scattered about in this place: for, one that was executed as a malefactor {n},

"they did not bury him in the sepulchres of his ancestors; but there were two places of burial appointed by the sanhedrim; one for those that were stoned, and for those that were burnt; and another for those that were killed with the sword, and for those that were strangled; and when their flesh was consumed, they gathered the bones, and buried them in their place;"

i.e. in the sepulchres of their ancestors. This place was as infamous as our Tyburn, and to be crucified at "Golgotha", was as ignominious as to be hanged at Tyburn; which shows what shame and disgrace our Lord was brought, and what he condescended to bear on our account.

{m} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4. 5. {n} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sauhedrin, c. 13. sect. 2, 3.

Matthew 27:34

Ver. 34. They gave him vinegar to drink,.... It was a custom with the Jews {o} when

"a man went out to be executed, to give him to drink a grain of frankincense in a cup of wine, that his understanding might be disturbed, as it is said, Pr 31:6. "Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts"; and the tradition is, that the honourable women in

Jerusalem gave this freely; but if they did not, it was provided at the charge of the congregation."

The design of it was to cheer their spirits, and intoxicate their heads, that they might not be sensible of their pain and misery. But such a cup was not allowed Christ at the public expense, nor were the honourable women so compassionate to him; or if it was sent him, the soldiers did not give it him, but another potion in the room of it; indeed Mark says, they gave him "wine mingled with myrrh", Mr 15:23; which was either a cordial provided by his friends, and given him, and is different from what the soldiers gave him here; or the sense is, that they gave him the cup, that was so called, but not the thing; but instead of it,

vinegar mingled with gall. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, instead of "vinegar", read "wine"; and so does Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and so it is read in Beza's most ancient copy, and in another exemplar, and in one of Stephens's; and which may be easily reconciled with the common reading, and that with Mark; for the wine they gave him was flat and sour, and no other or better than vinegar; and real vinegar may be so called, as this seems to be; and the rather, because vinegar was a part of the Roman soldiers' allowance, and so they had it ready at hand; See Gill on "Joh 19:29". As also, because it was thought that vinegar was useful to prolong the life of a man ready to die; and therefore they might choose to give it to Christ, that he might live the longer in misery: so the Jews {p} write, that

"if a man swallows a wasp or hornet alive, he cannot live; but they must give him to drink a quarter, zgmv alxd, "of vinegar of Shamgaz", (which the gloss says is strong vinegar,) and it is possible he may live a little while, until he hath given orders to his house."

The Arabic version, instead of "gall", reads "myrrh"; nor are we to suppose that this drink was mixed with the gall of a beast itself, but with something that was as bitter as "gall"; as wormwood, or myrrh, or any other bitter, to make it distasteful. This potion of vinegar with gall, was an aggravating circumstance in our Lord's sufferings, being given to him when he had a violent thirst upon him; and was an emblem of the bitter cup of God's wrath, he had already tasted of in the garden, and was about to drink up: the Jews had a notion of vinegar's being expressive of the chastisements of the Messiah; the words in **Ru 2:14**, they say {q}, "speak of the king Messiah; "come thou hither", draw nigh to the kingdom; "and eat of the bread", this is the bread of the kingdom, "and dip thy morsel in the vinegar", Nyrwoyyh wla, "these are the chastisements", as it is said in Isa 53:5, "he was wounded for our transgressions"."

By this offer was fulfilled the prophecy in Ps 69:21, and which he did not altogether refuse; for it follows,

and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink: not because it was the vinegar of Gentiles, which was forbidden by the Jewish canons {q}, lest it should have been offered to idols; but because he would make use of no means either to prolong his life, or discompose his mind; and that it might appear he knew what he did, and that he was not afraid nor unwilling to die; though he thought fit to taste of it in a superficial way, to show he did not despise nor resent their offer; and that he was really athirst, and ready to drink a more disagreeable potion than that.

{o} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 12. 2. {p} Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2. {q} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 29. 2.

Matthew 27:35

Ver. 35. And they crucified him,.... That is, the soldiers: they laid the cross upon the ground, and stretched Christ upon it; they extended his two arms as far as they could, to the transverse part of it, and nailed his hands unto it: his two feet they fixed by each other on a basis, in the body of the cross, through which they also drove nails; and then raising it up, fixed it in the earth, and left him hanging on it till he expired. This death was not only painful and cruel, but exceedingly shameful and ignominious: it was what was inflicted on the meanest of persons, as servants, whose form Christ had taken; and upon the worst of men, as murderers, cut-throats, thieves, and the vilest of men {r} among whom Christ was now numbered:

and parted his garments, casting lots: for they stripped him of his clothes before they fixed him to the cross, and crucified him naked, as was the custom of the Romans {s}; as it was of the Jews to stone and hang persons naked: their canons run thus {t};

"when he is four cubits off of the place of stoning, they strip off his garments; a man they cover before, a woman both behind and before; the words of Judah: but the wise men say, a man is stoned naked, and a woman is not stoned naked: a man, they hang him with his face to the people; a woman, with her face to the tree. R. Eliezer, and the wise men say, a man is hanged, but a woman is not hanged."

On which the Gemara {u} says,

"what is the sense of the Rabbins? the Scripture says, "thou shalt hang him"; him, and not her: and, says R. Eliezer, him, wtwok alb, "without his clothes"."

So our Lord was crucified; his clothes were a perquisite of the soldiers; there were four of them, as we learn from Joh 19:23, and they parted them into four parts, and then cast lots whose each part should be; or rather, they divided his garments into four parts, and each took his part; but his vesture, or coat, being seamless, and woven from top to bottom, they did not choose to tear it into pieces, but cast lots for it, who should have it:

that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, by David, in Ps 22:18,

they parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. All this, Beza says, is not in any of the ancient copies; nor is it in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, but stands in the Vulgate Latin, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; See Gill on "Joh 19:24".

{r} Lipsius de Cruce, l. 1. c. 12. & 13. {s} Lipsius de Cruce, l. 2. c. 7. {t} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 3, 4. {u} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 46. 1.

Matthew 27:36

Ver. 36. And sitting down, they watched him there. That is, the soldiers, after they had crucified Jesus, and parted his garments, sat down on the ground at the foot of the cross, and there watched him, lest his disciples should take him down; though there was no need to fear that, since they were few, and weak, and wanted courage, and were in the utmost dread and consternation themselves; or lest the people, who were very changeable with respect to Christ, one day saying Hosanna to the son of David, and another day crucify him, crucify him, should once more change their sentiments of him, and through pity to him rise and take him down; or rather, lest Jesus himself should, by his miraculous power, unloose himself, come down, and make his escape. It was usual with the Romans to set a soldier, or soldiers, to watch those that were crucified, not only before they expired, but after they were dead, lest they should be took down and buried; as appears from Petronius, Plutarch, and others {w}. This seems to be the watch Pilate refers to, Mt 27:65, and over which there was a centurion, Mt 27:54.

{w} Vid. Lipsium de Cruce, l. 2. c. 16. & Lydium. de re militari, l. 5. c. 4. p. 191. Kirchman. de funeribus Rom. append. c. 9. p. 726.

Matthew 27:37

Ver. 37. And set up over his head his accusation written,.... The Evangelist John calls it a "title", Joh 19:19, and Luke, a "superscription", Lu 23:38, and Mark, the "superscription of his accusation", Mr 15:26: it was what contained the sum and substance of what he was accused, and for which he was condemned, and suffered. The Syriac and Persic versions here render it, "the cause of his death". It was written by Pilate in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, that all might read it; and by his orders it was put upon the cross, and over the head of Jesus by the soldiers. This title, or inscription, setting forth the person's crime, used to be carried before him, or put upon him, as he was led to execution {x}: but here it was set upon the cross, and perhaps nailed unto it; to which the apostle seems to allude in **Col 2:14**, the substance of it was,

this is Jesus the king of the Jews. This was what the chief priests accused him of to Pilate, and about which he questioned him, and for which they desired he might be crucified; urging, that should he let him go, he could not be Caesar's friend. Hence Pilate wrote his accusation in this form, not so much in derision of Jesus; for by conversation with him he understood what sort of a king he was, as to the reproach of the Jews for crucifying him who was their king; being the person that was prophesied of in their books, as king of Zion, and whom they expected as such, though now they denied and rejected him.

{x} Lipsius de Cruce, l. 2. c. 11.

Matthew 27:38

Ver. 38. Then were there two thieves crucified with him,.... Which seems contrary to one of their canons, which runs thus; dxa Mwyb Mynv Nynd Nya, "they do not judge two in one day" {y}, unless they were both in the same crime, and died the same death: but here were three persons, Jesus, and these two malefactors, condemned and executed in one, and the same day: these two thieves were led out with Jesus, to be put to death with him, according to Lu 23:32, and were crucified with him upon the same spot of ground; their death was the same, but not their crime:

one the right hand, and another on the left; and Jesus in the midst, as John relates, Joh 19:18, and hereby was fulfilled, as Mark observes, Mr 15:28, a prophecy in Isa 53:12. If this was so ordered by Pilate, it might be done in order to cover the sin, and take off the reproach of putting an innocent person to death, suggesting hereby he was one of them; though this seems rather to be done by the Jews, the soldiers agreeing to it, for the greater reproach of Jesus; intimating, that he was the worst of these malefactors, and a ringleader of such sort of persons: and whereas they had observed, he took it ill at their hands that they should come to apprehend him with swords and staves, as if he was a thief and a robber; to vex and distress him the more, they crucify him between two such persons: but the grand reason why it was so ordered, was, that though Christ was no transgressor, he was accounted one, and stood in the room and stead of sinners, and was numbered with them, and as such was treated by divine justice, and accordingly died for them.

{y} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 35. 1. & 46. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 190. 1.

Matthew 27:39

Ver. 39. And they that passed by,.... In the road to or from Jerusalem; for, it seems, the crosses were placed by the wayside; or they who passed by the cross, the populace that came from Jerusalem, on purpose to see the sight,

reviled him, or "blasphemed him": they spoke all manner of evil of him, they could think of, to which he answered not a word; and which may teach us patience under the revilings of men: this was foretold of him, Ps 89:51, "they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed", or "Messiah"; and which Jarchi explains by ypwo, "the ends of the king Messiah"; his last times, towards the close of his days; and cites that passage in the Misna {z},

"in the heels, or, as Buxtorf renders it, in the end of the days of the Messiah impudence shall be multiplied,"

as it now was exceedingly:

wagging their heads; in derision of him, and as exulting in his misery; see Isa 37:22. This also was prophesied of him in Ps 22:7.

{z} Sota, c. 9. sect. 15.

Matthew 27:40

Ver. 40. And saying, thou that destroyest the temple,.... The Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, read, "the temple of God"; and add "ah!" here, as in Mr 15:29, and so Beza says it is read in a certain copy. They refer to the charge of the false witnesses against him, who misrepresenting his words in **Joh 2:19**, declared that he gave out that he was able to destroy the temple of Jerusalem, and rebuild it in three days time; wherefore it is added,

and buildest it in three days, save thyself. They reproach him with it, and suggest, that these were vain and empty boasts of his; for if he was able to do any thing of that kind, he need not hang upon the tree, but could easily save himself:

if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. The Jews themselves say {a} that the following words were said to Jesus on the cross,

"if thou be the Son of God, why dost thou not deliver thyself out of our hands?"

As Satan before them, they put an "if" upon the sonship of Christ: and seeing his followers believed in him as the Son of God, and he had owned himself to be so before the sanhedrim, they require a sign of it by his power, and to do that which they believed no mere man in his situation could do; which shows, that they had no other notion of the Son of God, but that he was a divine person: but his sonship was not to be declared by his coming down from the cross, which he could have easily effected, but by a much greater instance of power, even by his resurrection from the dead; and no other but that sign was to be given to that wicked and perverse generation.

{a} Toldos Jesu, p. 17.

Matthew 27:41

Ver. 41. Likewise also the chief priests,.... Who as they attended at his apprehension, and in their own council condemned him to death unanimously, and were very busy at his arraignment, examination, and trial before Pilate, and persuaded the people to be urgent for his crucifixion; they follow him to the cross to exult over him, and insult him, and to see that the execution was strictly performed: and forgetting their character, office, and education; and laying aside all humanity, decent, and good manners; instead of rebuking and restraining the populace from using him in an ill and unkind manner, they themselves stood

mocking him, with the Scribes and elders; who composed the whole sanhedrim of the nation. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, and several copies, read, "and the Pharisees": of which, no doubt, there were great numbers present, who had been indefatigable and implacable enemies of Christ every where, and to whom it must be a pleasing sight to see him hanging on the cross: these scoffed at him, gibed, and reproached him; and

said, as follows;

Matthew 27:42

Ver. 42. He saved others, himself he cannot save,.... This was not so much a concession of theirs, that he had done many saving works, as healing the sick, cleansing lepers, causing the blind to see, and the lame to walk, and raising the dead; but rather a suggestion, that these were only pretensions and illusions; that either they were not really done, or done by the help of the devil; since now he himself was in the utmost extremity, he could not save himself: but of this they might have been convinced by his striking many of them to the ground, that came to apprehend him in the garden, and of which these men were eyewitnesses; and he, as man, could easily have obtained of his Father more than twelve legions of angels that would have rescued him out of their hands: but so it must not be; he came not to save himself, but others, and to save them spiritually and eternally by dying himself.

If he be the king of Israel; that is, the Messiah, who was promised and expected as a king, as Zion's king, or king of Israel; see **Joh 1:49**, hence in Mr 15:32 it is Christ the king of Israel.

Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. The Persic version reads, "that the people may see, and believe in him"; and the Syriac and Arabic versions, "that we may see, and believe in him", as in Mr 15:32. But, alas! they had seen greater things already than this, and yet had not believed. He could easily have caused the nails to have given way, and unloosed himself, and come down, who had done such mighty works among them; and if he had, there is no reason to conclude they would have believed him to be the Son of God, and the true Messiah; for though after this, he did a much greater work, raised himself from the dead, of which they had the fullest evidence, yet they remained unbelieving.

Matthew 27:43

Ver. 43. He trusted in God,.... That is, he pretended to claim an interest in him, to be high in his favour and esteem, and to have great faith and confidence in him:

let him deliver him now; directly, from the cross, and the death of it:

if he will have him; or if he is well pleased with him as his own Son, or delights in him as such, and will show him any favour and good will; see Ps 22:8, where are these very words, and which are predicted should be said by these men to Christ; and are a wonderful confirmation of the truth of that Psalm and prophecy belonging to him:

for he said, I am the Son of God; not only in his ministry, but he had said so in their grand council, before them all.

Matthew 27:44

Ver. 44. The thieves also,.... One or other of them, not both; an Hebrew way of speaking, as Drusius {b} observed: so it is said of Jonah, **Jon 1:5**, that he was "gone down into the sides of the ship"; not into both sides, but into one or other of them: so here the thieves, one or other of them, not naming which, railed at Jesus, for it was but one of them; see Lu 23:39, unless it can be thought, as it is by some, that they both at first reviled him; but one being quickly convinced of his evil, ceased, and rebuked his fellow sufferer, confessed his, sin, bore a testimony to the innocence of Christ, and desired to be remembered by him in his kingdom. This was an aggravation of the sufferings of Christ, that he should be vilified by those,

which were crucified with him; who ought to have been, considering the condemnation they were in, and the future state they were just entering into, lamenting and confessing the sins they had been guilty of, instead of adding sin to sin, and so aggravating their condemnation. These, at least one of them,

cast the same into his teeth; as the populace, the chief priests, Scribes, elders, and Pharisees had done; twitted him with his pretensions of being the Son of God, the Messiah, and king of Israel; and urged, that if he was, why did not he save himself, and them also?

{b} Quaest. Heb. l. 1. qu. 5.

Matthew 27:45

Ver. 45. Now from the sixth hour,.... Which was twelve o'clock at noon,

there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour; till three o'clock in the afternoon, the time the Jews call "between the two evenings"; and which they say {c} is "from the sixth hour, and onwards". Luke says, the sun was darkened, Lu 23:45. This darkness was a preternatural eclipse of the sun; for it was at the time when the moon was in the full, as appears from its being at the time of the passover; which was on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, the Jews beginning their months from the new moon: and moreover, it was over all the land, or earth, as the word may be rendered; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "the whole world was dark"; at least it reached to the whole Roman empire, or the greatest part of it; though some think only the land of Judea, or Palestine, is intended: but it is evident, that it is taken notice of, and recorded by Heathen historians and chronologers, as by Phlegon, and others, referred to by Eusebius {d}. The Roman archives are appealed unto for the truth of it by Tertullian {e}; and it is asserted by Suidas, that Dionysius the Areopagite, then an Heathen, saw it in Egypt; and said,

"either the, divine being suffers, or suffers with him that suffers, or the frame of the world is dissolving."

Add to this the continuance of it, that it lasted three hours; whereas a natural eclipse of the sun is but of a short duration; see **Am 8:9**. The Jews {g} have a notion, that in the times of the Messiah

"the sun shall be darkened, amwy twglpb, "in the middle of the day", (as this was,) as that day was darkened when the sanctuary was destroyed."

Yea, they speak {h} of a darkness that shall continue a long time: their words are these:

"the king Messiah shall be made known in all the world, and all the kings shall be stirred up to join together to make war with him; and many of the profligate Jews shall be turned to them, and shall go with them, to make war against the king Messiah; so amle lk Kvxty, "all the world shall be darkened" fifteen days, and many of the people of Israel shall die in that darkness."

This darkness that was over the earth at the time of Christ's sufferings, was, no doubt, an addition to them; the sun, as it were, hiding its face, and refusing to afford its comforting light and heat to him; and yet might be in detestation of the heinousness of the sin the Jews were committing, and as expressive of the divine anger and resentment; for God's purposes and decrees, and the end he had in view, did not excuse, nor extenuate their wickedness; as it shows also their wretched stupidity, not to be awakened and convinced by the amazing darkness, with other things attending it, which made no impression on them; though it did on the Roman centurion, who concluded Christ must be the Son of God. It was an emblem of the judicial blindness and darkness of the Jewish nation; and signified, that now was the hour and power of darkness, or the time for the prince of darkness, with his principalities and powers, to exert himself; and was a representation of that darkness that was now on the soul of Christ, expressed in the following verse; as well as of the eclipse of him, the sun of righteousness, of the glory of his person, both by his incarnation, and by his sufferings.

{c} T. Hieros Pesachim, fol. 31. 3. {d} In Chronicis. {e} Apolog. c. 21. {g} Zohar in Exod. fol. 4. 1. {h} Ib. fol. 3, 4.

Matthew 27:46

Ver. 46. And about the ninth hour,.... Or three o'clock in the afternoon, which was about the time of the slaying and offering of the daily sacrifice, which was an eminent type of Christ. The Jews say {i}, that

"every day the daily sacrifice was slain at eight and a half, and was offered up at nine and a half:"

about which time also the passover was killed, which was another type of Christ; and as they say {k}, "was offered first, and then the daily sacrifice." Though the account they elsewhere {l} give of these things, is this;

"the daily sacrifice was slain at eight and a half, and was offered up at nine and a half; (that is, on all the common days of the year;) on the evenings of the passover, it was slain at seven and a half, and offered at eight and a half, whether on a common day, or on a sabbath day: the passover eve, that happened to be on the sabbath eve, it was slain at six and a half, and offered at seven and a half, and the passover after it."

At this time,

Jesus cried with a loud voice: as in great distress, having been silent during the three hours darkness, and patiently bearing all his soul sufferings, under a sense of divine wrath, and the hidings of his Father's countenance, and his conflicts with the powers of darkness; but now, in the anguish of his soul, he breaks out,

saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani: which words are partly Hebrew, and partly Chaldee; the three first are Hebrew, and the last Chaldee, substituted in the room of "Azabthani"; as it was, and still is, in the Chaldee paraphrase of the text in Ps 22:1, from whence they are taken;

that is to say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? He calls him his God, not as he was God, but as he was man; who, as such, was chosen by him to the grace of union to the Son of God; was made and formed by him; was anointed by him with the oil of gladness; was supported and upheld by him in the day of salvation; was raised by him from the dead, and highly exalted by him at his own right hand; and Christ, as man, prayed to him as his God, believed in him, loved him, and obeyed him as such: and though now he hid his face from him, yet he expressed strong faith and confidence of his interest in him. When he is said to be "forsaken" of God; the meaning is not, that the hypostatical union was dissolved, which was not even by death itself; the fulness of the Godhead still dwelt bodily in him: nor was he separated from the love of God; he had the same interest in his Father's heart and favour, both as his Son, and as mediator, as ever: nor was the principle and habit of joy and comfort lost in his soul, as man, but he was now without a sense of the gracious presence of God, and was filled, as the surety of his people, with a sense of divine wrath, which their iniquities he now bore, deserved, and which was necessary for him to endure, in order to make full satisfaction for them; for one part of the punishment of sin is loss of the divine presence. Wherefore he made not this expostulation out of ignorance: he knew the reason of it, and that it was not out of personal disrespect to him, or for any sin of his own; or because he was not a righteous, but a wicked man, as the Jew {m} blasphemously objects to him from hence; but because he stood in the legal place, and stead of sinners: nor was it out of impatience, that he so expressed himself; for he was entirely resigned to the will of God, and content to drink the whole of the bitter cup: nor out of despair; for he at the same time strongly claims and asserts his interest in God, and repeats it; but to show, that he bore all the griefs of his people, and this among the rest, divine desertion; and to set forth the bitterness of his sorrows, that not only the sun in the firmament hid its face from him, and he was forsaken by his friends and disciples, but even left by his God; and also to express the strength of his faith at such a time. The whole of it evinces the truth of Christ's human nature, that he was in all things made like unto his brethren; that he had an human soul, and endured sorrows and sufferings in it, of which this of desertion was not the least: the heinousness of sin may be learnt from hence, which not only drove the angels out of heaven, and Adam out of the garden, and separates, with respect to communion, between God and his children; but even caused him to hide his face from his own Son, whilst he was bearing, and suffering for, the sins of his people. The condescending grace of Christ is here to be seen, that he, who was the word, that was with God from everlasting, and his only begotten Son that lay in his bosom, that he should descend from heaven by the assumption of human nature, and be for a while forsaken by God, to bring us near unto him: nor should it be wondered at, that this is sometimes the case of the saints, who should, in imitation of Christ, trust in the Lord at such seasons, and stay themselves on their God, and which may be some support unto them, they may be assured of the sympathy of Christ, who having been in this same condition, cannot but have a fellow feeling with them. The Jews themselves own {n}, that these words were said by Jesus when he was in their hands. They indeed apply the passage to Esther; and say {o}, that

"she stood in the innermost court of the king's house; and when she came to the house of the images, the Shekinah departed from her, and she said, "Eli, Eli, lama Azabthani?" my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Though others apply the "Psalm" to David, and others to the people of Israel in captivity {p}: but certain it is, that it belongs to the Messiah; and many things in it were fulfilled with respect to Jesus, most clearly show him to be the Messiah, and the person pointed at: the first words of it were spoken by him, as the Jews themselves allow, and the very expressions which his enemies used concerning him while suffering, together with their gestures, are there recorded; and the parting his garments, and casting lots on his vesture, done by the Roman soldiers, are there prophesied of; and indeed there are so many things in it which agree with him, and cannot with any other, that leave it without all doubt that he is the subject of it {q}.

{i} T. Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 31. 3, 4. {k} lb. {l} Misn. Pesachim, c. 5. sect. 1. {m} Vet. Nizzachon, p. 162. {n} Toldos Jesu, p. 17. {o} Bab. Megilia, fol. 15. 2. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 29. 1. {p} Vid. Jarchi & Kimchi in Psal. xxii. 1. {q} See my Book of the Prophecies of the Old Test. &c. p.

Matthew **27:47**

Ver. 47. Some of them that stood there,.... Near the cross, looking on, and mocking at him,

when they heard that; the words, "Eli, Eli", spoken by Christ,

said, this man calleth for Elias. These could not be the Roman soldiers that said so, who had no notion of Elias; rather the Hellenistic Jews, who not so well understanding the Hebrew language, hearing the above words, and having some notion of the prophet Elias, fancied he was calling for him; though it seems most likely to be the Jews, who either through the nearness of the sound of the words, and mistake of them, and not near enough to hear and distinguish them, really thought he called for that prophet; or rather wilfully mistook him, with an intent to banter and ridicule him.

Matthew **27:48**

Ver. 48. And straightway one of them ran and took a sponge,.... Which was not far from the cross, where a vessel full of vinegar was set, Joh 19:29,

and filled it with vinegar; dipping it into it, it sucked it up. Some of these sponges had leathern handles to them. {r}

And put it on a reed; a stalk of hyssop; See Gill on "Joh 19:29",

and gave him to drink; not to revive his spirits, or hasten his death, as some have thought, but in contempt of him, and to mock him, he having signified that he was athirst.

{r} Misn. Sabbat, c. 21. sect. 3.

Matthew **27:49**

Ver. 49. The rest said, let be,.... The others, to whom he belonged, that fetched the sponge, said to him, let him alone, keep at a distance from him, give him nothing to drink:

let us see whether Elias will come to save him; whom the Jews looked upon to be the forerunner of the Messiah, and therefore suggest, that should he come to save him, they would believe he was the Messiah; and they had a mighty notion of Elias appearing to persons frequently {s}, and talking, and conversing with them; See Gill on "Mt 17:3", though they did not believe he would come, and appear to Christ; for they were persons of great note for piety and learning, to whom he appeared, as they pretend, whereas they had no such opinion of him. The Ethiopic version here adds, and one took a spear and pierced his side with it, and blood and water flowed out: but this circumstance is only recorded by the Evangelist John, Joh 19:34, though Beza says the same is read here in two ancient copies.

{s} Vid. Juchasin, fol. 79. 1. & 86. 1. & 101. 1. & 118. 2. & 132. 1.

Matthew 27:50

Ver. 50. Jesus, when he had cried again,.... "A second time", as the Persic version; for he had cried once before, and expressed the words he did, as in Mt 27:46, what he now delivered were, "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit", Lu 23:46, and "it is finished", Joh 19:30, which he said

with a loud voice; which showed the vehemency of his affection, his strong confidence in God, and his being fearless of death; as also he thus spoke, that he might be heard, and his words attended to, since they contained things of the greatest importance and consequence: moreover, being able to express himself in such a manner, this declared him to be more than a mere man; for after such agonies in the garden, and so much fatigue in being hurried from place to place, and such loss of blood by being buffeted, scourged, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the accursed tree, where, being stretched, he had hung for some hours; to speak with so loud a voice was more than human, and was a conviction to the centurion, that he was a divine person: for when he saw that he so cried out, and "gave up the ghost", he said, "truly this man was the Son of God", Mr 15:39, and likewise it shows, that he died freely and voluntarily, and not through force and necessity: it was not all that men had done, or could do to him, that could have forced his life from him: he died willingly, and when nature was in its full strength; and which is signified in the next phrase,

yielded up the ghost, or "dismissed the Spirit", as the Syriac version truly renders it; he sent it away. It was not taken from him, he laid down his life of himself, as the Lord of it, and gave himself freely to be an offering and sacrifice in the room of his people; which is a proof of his great love, and amazing grace unto them.

Matthew 27:51

Ver. 51. And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain,.... Just at the time that Christ spake with so loud a voice, and expired, and which was at the time of the offering up of the evening incense; and so must be seen by the priest that was then offering, and those that assisted him, for the incense altar was near the vail; and which must be a very astonishing sight unto them: the vail was of a very great thickness; it was made of fine twined linen,
Ex 26:31, and it is a rule with the Jews {t}, that

"where ever mention is made in the law of fine linen, or fine twined linen, it means a thread six times doubled:"

and whereas this was made of blue, and purple, and scarlet, Jarchi's note on the place is, that

"every kind was doubled with each thread of six threads."

His sense is more clearly expressed in his note on Ex 26:1,

"lo! here are four sorts to every thread; one of linen, and three of wool, and every thread is six times doubled; behold four sorts when they are twisted together, make twenty four doubles to a thread."

Yea, some of them make it to be forty eight doubles {u}. What a thick piece of tapestry must this be! and this makes the rending of it the more amazing; for no doubt but that the vail of the second temple was made after the manner of the first; and this was rent from top to bottom; and which was no less than forty cubits in length, which was the height of the holy of holies in the second temple; and which made the rent the more astonishing. The account the Jews give of the vail, is this {w}:

"R. Simeon ben Gamaliel said, on account of R. Simeon, the son of the Sagan, the thickness of the vail is an hand's breadth, and it is woven of seventy two threads, and every thread has twenty four threads in it: it is forty cubits long, and twenty broad, and is made of eighty two myriads; (which is either the number of the threads in it, or the sum of the golden pence it cost. Some copies read, is made by eighty two virgins {x};) two are made every year; and three hundred priests wash it."

The Syriac version renders it, "the face of the gate of the temple"; by which may be meant, perhaps, the vail of the gate of Ulam, or of the porch {y}. The Jews have a tradition {z} that

"forty years before the destruction of the temple, the gates of it opened of themselves. R. Jochanan ben Zaccai reproved them, saying, O temple! temple! wherefore dost thou fright thyself? I know thy end is to be destroyed; for so prophesied of thee Zechariah, the son of, Iddo, "open thy gates, O Lebanon", &c. Zec 11:1."

But whether this may be referred to in the above version, or has any reference to the evangelic history, I will not say. Other writers, as Josephus {a}, and Egesippus {b}, speak of the eastern gate of the city, which was of brass, and as much as twenty men could shut, opening of its own accord, before the destruction of the temple; which perhaps the Jewish tradition rather regards. This rending of the vail was done, as some think, in token of mourning for, and testifying abhorrence at the crucifixion of Christ; the temple rending its garments, the vail, at the death of its Lord, proprietor, and type, as the high priest did his at supposed blasphemy; or to show that the Lord, who had taken up his residence in the most holy place between the cherubim, over the mercy seat, in thick darkness, was now about to remove, and leave the house desolate; or it signified the rending of Christ's flesh, the breaking of his body for us, which was typified by the vail; see Heb 10:20, and may also denote both the fulfilment and abrogation of the ceremonial law, which had its end in the death of Christ; and likewise the more clear discoveries of the mysteries of grace under the Gospel, in which they are laid to open view, and are beheld with open face: to which may be added, that this pointed out, that the way to the holiest of all, to heaven, of which this was a figure, was now made manifest; and was plain and accessible, as it was, first to Christ, who entered by his own blood, as the forerunner; and also to his people, who likewise have boldness to enter by the same.

And the earth did quake: whether this earthquake reached only to the spot of ground where Christ was crucified, and on which the city and temple of Jerusalem stood; or whether it extended to other parts of the earth; since, in the reign of Tiberius Caesar, as Pliny {c} relates, there was an earthquake, in which twelve cities in Asia fell, is not certain. However, it was an indication of the divine anger and resentment, and in detestation of the sin of crucifying Christ; see Ps 18:7, and was an emblem of the shaking and removing of the Jewish church state and ordinances, Heb 12:26.

And the rocks rent; which were near Mount Calvary, and about Jerusalem; and, as we are told, the clefts are to be seen to this day, and which appear to be supernatural. This was also a token of divine wrath and fury, **Na 1:5**, and a rebuke of the stupidity and hardness of the Jews, who were unmoved when rocks were rent asunder, being harder than they; and an emblem of the future conversion of many through the powerful ministry of the word, and in consequence of Christ's death; when hearts, as hard as rocks, were broke in pieces, stony hearts taken away, and hearts of flesh given; of which the three thousand being pricked to the heart under Peter's sermon, were an instance.

{t} Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 14. Kimchi in Sepher Shorash rad. rzv. {u} T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 51. {w} Misn. Shekalim, c. 8. sect. 5. Shernot Rabba, sect. 50. fol. 144. 2. Bernidbar Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 183. 2. {x} Vid. Bartenora & Yom. Tob. in ib. {y} Vid. Bartenora in ib. {z} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39. 2. Jarchi & Kimchi in Zech. xi. i. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2. {a} L. 8. c. 12. {b} L. 5. c. 44. {c} L. 2. c. 84.

Matthew 27:52

Ver. 52. And the graves were opened,.... Which were near the city of Jerusalem: this was a proof of Christ's power over death and the grave, by dying; when he through death, destroyed him that had the power of it, and abolished death itself; and became the plague of death and the destruction of the grave, taking into his hands the keys of hell and death:

and many bodies of saints which slept, arose: not that they arose at the time of Christ's death: the graves were opened then, when the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent; but the bodies of the saints did not arise, till after Christ was risen, as appears from the following verse; but because the other event now happened, they are both recorded here: these were saints, and such as slept in Jesus; and of whom he is the first fruits that now rose; and not all, but many of them, as pledges of the future resurrection, and for the confirmation of Christ's, and the accomplishment of a prophecy in Isa 26:19. And they rose in the same bodies in which they before lived, otherwise they could not be called their bodies, or known by those to whom they appeared: but who they were is not to be known; some have thought them to be the ancient patriarchs, as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, &c. In the Septuagint on Job 42:17, Job is said to be one of them, and a tradition is there recorded, which runs thus:

"it is written, that he rose with whom the Lord rose."

But it should seem rather, that they were some later saints, such as Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, John the Baptist himself, good old Simeon, Joseph the husband of Mary, and others, well known to persons now alive. Some think they were such, as had been martyrs in the cause of religion; and so the Persic version renders the words, "and the bodies of many saints who suffered martyrdom, rose out of the graves".

Matthew 27:53

Ver. 53. And came out of the graves after his resurrection,.... The resurrection of Christ; for he rose as the first fruits, as the first begotten of the dead, and the firstborn from the dead; for he was the first that was raised to an immortal life; for though others were raised before him, by himself, and in the times of the prophets, yet to a mortal life; but these saints came forth to the resurrection of life, and therefore it was necessary that Christ the first fruits, should rise first. The Arabic version indeed reads, "after their own resurrection"; and the Ethiopic version, "after they were raised"; both wrong, and scarcely sense:

and went into the holy city; the city of Jerusalem, which though now a very wicked city, was so called, because of the temple, and the worship of God, and his residence in it: the burying places of the Jews were without the city {a}, and therefore these risen saints, are said to go into it:

and appeared unto many; of their friends and acquaintance, who had personally known them, and conversed with them in their lifetime. These saints, I apprehend, continued on earth until our Lord's ascension, and then joining the retinue of angels, went triumphantly with him to heaven, as trophies of his victory over sin, Satan, death, and the grave.

{a} Vid. Gloss. in T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 80. 2. & Maimon. Hilch. Shemitta veyobel, c. 13. sect. 3.

Matthew 27:54

Ver. 54. Now, when the centurion,.... That was over the band of soldiers, that mocked Christ in Pilate's hall, and who was particularly over the guard of soldiers, set about the cross of Christ:

and they that were with him, watching Jesus: the soldiers that were with him, who were set to watch the cross of Christ, lest he should come down, or any should take him down from thence;
See Gill on "Mt 27:36".

Saw the earthquake, and those things that were done; as besides that, the darkening of the sun, the rending of the rocks, and particularly heard with what a loud voice Christ spoke, and then at once expired:

they feared greatly; not with a true godly fear, but with a fear of punishment; lest divine vengeance should light on them, for their concern in this matter:

saying, truly this was the Son of God; which they concluded, not from any mediatorial performances, which they were utter strangers to, but from effects of divine power; and which to them showed him to be a divine person, what he said he was, and the Jews charged him with blasphemy, on account of, and condemned him for, as these soldiers might have seen and heard.

Matthew 27:55

Ver. 55. And many women were there,.... At the cross of Christ, at some little distance from it; but where was Peter, who had declared he would never be offended, though all men were; and would die with Christ, rather than deny him? and where were the rest of the disciples, who said the same things? None were present excepting John, as can be learnt from the evangelists; but many women, those of the weaker sex, were there, which was a rebuke of the former vanity and confidence of the disciples, and of their present pusillanimity and cowardice:

beholding afar off; Christ upon the cross, in all his agonies, the chief priests and people mocking him, the darkness upon the earth, the quaking of it, and the rending of the rocks: they were witnesses of all this, being at some little distance, by reason of the crowd of people and soldiers about the cross; and they beheld with an eye of faith, their bleeding, dying Lord, as crucified for them, and as bearing and taking away their sins: a sight which at once stirred up their affection and love to Christ, their concern for him, and sorrow for sin; and yet joy and peace, in believing in him:

which followed Jesus from Galilee: where they had seen his miracles, heard his doctrines, and had been savingly converted by him; and therefore followed him wherever he went, though an hundred miles or more, and through many difficulties and discouragements: they attended him in his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and now at his cross; nor did they leave him when dead, and in his grave:

ministering unto him: not now, for he stood in no need of their assistance, nor could they give him any; but this respects what they had done heretofore, in their journey with him from Galilee to Jerusalem; when they ministered to him of their worldly substance, as a token of their affection for him; and which expresses the low estate and mean condition he was in, and is an instruction to his followers, how to behave towards the faithful preachers of his Gospel; see **Lu 8:3**.

Matthew 27:56

Ver. 56. Among which was Mary Magdalene,.... Out of whom Christ had cast out seven devils; and who having received much from him, loved much, which she showed by her zealous and constant attachment to him. She was called Magdalene, either because she was an inhabitant of Magdala, Mt 15:39, so we read {e} of R. Isaac, haldgm, of "Magdala", or "Magdalene"; and the rather, because that Magdala was famous, or rather infamous, for whoredom; for which reason the Jews {f} say, it was destroyed: or else she was so called, because she was tldg, a "tonstrix", or plaiter of women's hair, as the word signifies {g}; and so we often read of Mary, ayyvn reyv aldgm, "the plaiter of women's hair" {h}; by whom the Jews seem to design Mary, the mother of Jesus, whom they confound with this Mary Magdalene. Jerom says {i}, her name signifies "towered", or "fortified", because of her care and diligence, and the ardour of her faith; and "Migdal", in Hebrew, does signify a tower:

and Mary the mother of James and Joses: the same with the wife of Cleophas, and sister to Mary, the mother of Jesus: instead of Joses, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read Joseph: yowy "Jose", in Hebrew, is the same with "Joseph", the last letter being cut off; the Arabic version reads Mary, the mother of James, and the mother of Joses, Joh 19:25.

And the mother of Zebedee's children: that is, of James and John; her name was Salome, Mr 15:40.

{e} Juchasin, fol. 96. 2. {f} T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 69. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 52. 4. {g} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 2. sect. 3. {h} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 104. 2. Chagiga, fol. 4. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 67. 1. {i} Ad Principiam, Tom. l. fol. 41.

Matthew 27:57

Ver. 57. When the even was come,.... The second evening, when it was just at sunset; at which time the Jewish sabbath began, and when the bodies of those that were crucified, must be taken down; and if not dead, their bones must be broken, and they dispatched, in order to be interred in the common burying place of malefactors:

there came a rich man Arimathea: not from thence now, for he lived at Jerusalem; but this was the place of his nativity, or former abode, and from whence he originally came; and is the same with Ramathaim Zophim, and

Ramah, and was the birthplace of Samuel the prophet, **1Sa 1:1**, and is by the Septuagint called Armathaim, in **1Sa 1:1**. His character, as a rich man, is particularly mentioned, not merely to show that such men may be, and sometimes are, instances of the grace of God; much less in a way of boasting, that such a man was attached to Jesus; but rather to point out the reason, how he came to have such easy access to Pilate, and to succeed in his business with him; as well as to observe the accomplishment of a prophecy, in Isa 53:9,

named Joseph; the same name with one of the patriarchs, the sons of Jacob; between whom there was a resemblance, not only as good men, but in their observance of funeral rites and obsequies; the one in those of his father, the other in those of his dear Lord and Master. Some think {k} he is the same with Joseph ben Gorion, the brother of Nicodemus ben Gorion, often spoken of as a priest, and one of the richest of them in Jerusalem:

who also himself was Jesus' disciple; though he was only a secret one, as Nicodemus was: he had not as yet, or till now publicly professed him, for fear of the Jews, who had made a law, that whoever did, should be cast out of the synagogue; see Joh 19:38.

{k} Alting. Shilo, p. 309.

Matthew 27:58

Ver. 58. He went to Pilate,.... To his house where he lived, and went in, as Mark says, Mr 15:43, boldly; not being ashamed of Christ crucified, or afraid to own him, and show his respect to him as dead, though he knew he should incur the displeasure, reproach, and persecution of the Jews:

and begged the body of Jesus; which could not be taken down and interred, without the leave of the Roman governor; and which was generally granted to the friends of the deceased, when asked; otherwise they were buried in places {l} appointed for such persons;
See Gill on "Mt 27:33". And this would have been the case of Christ, had not Joseph craved his body; and which he did, to prevent its being abused by the Jews, and interred in such an ignominious manner:

then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered; to Joseph, after he had understood by the centurion that Jesus was dead, which he at first could not tell how to believe, and marvelled at it, Mr 15:44. Joseph might the more easily obtain his request, as he was a person of character and riches; and because Pilate himself had a good opinion of Jesus, and of his innocence, as well as his wife was much in his favour: so that Joseph had no difficulty to obtain the body of Christ; but as soon as he asked, he had the favour granted, and orders were given to the centurion and his soldiers, to deliver it to him.

{l} See Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 5, 6. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 14. sect. 9.

Matthew 27:59

Ver. 59. And when Joseph had taken the body,.... Down from the cross, with the assistance of others, or from the hands of those who had orders to deliver it to him:

he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth: that is, he wound up the body in it round and round, as was the custom of the Jews; see **Ac 5:6** Joh 11:44. Nor was it usual to bury in any thing but linen: so it is said {m},

"let the wrappings, or grave clothes, be Mynbl Ntvp lv, "of white linen"; and let not the price of them be dear, for it is forbidden to bury in wrappings of silk, or broidered garments, even to a prince of Israel: for this is pride and destruction, and the work of the Gentiles."

This clean linen cloth, in which the dead body of Christ was wrapped, may be an emblem of his purity and innocence, who did no sin; nor did he die for any of his own, but for the sins of others; and also of his pure and spotless righteousness, which is compared to fine linen, clean and white, and which he now had wrought out, and brought in; see Re 19:8.

{m} Juchasin, fol. 54. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Ebel, c. 4. sect. 2.

Matthew 27:60

Ver. 60. And laid it in his own new tomb,.... Christ was laid not in his own, but in another's tomb; for as in his lifetime he had not where to lay his head; so when he was dead, he had no sepulchre of his own to put his body in: and moreover, this shows that as he was born for others, and suffered and died not for himself, but them; so he was buried for them, as well as rose again for their justification: and it was a "new" tomb in which he was laid, in which none had been laid before; and was so ordered by providence, for the confirmation of the truth of his resurrection; for had another body been laid there, it might have been said that it was that, and not his that was raised. The Jews distinguish between a new grave, and an old grave {n}:

"a new grave may be measured, and sold, and divided; an old one may not be measured, nor sold, nor divided: there is a new grave, which is as an old one; and an old one, which is as a new one; an old grave, in which are ten dead bodies, which is not in the power of the owners, lo! this is as a new grave."

Which he had hewn out in the rock; it was usual with the Jews to make their sepulchres in rocks:

"in the midst (of the court of the sepulchre, they say {o}) two caves are opened, one on one side, and the other on the other; R. Simeon says, four on the four sides; Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel says, all are eloh ypl, "according to the rock";"

i.e. according to the nature of the rock, out of which the sepulchre is hewn; see Isa 22:16.

And he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre; for the sepulchres were made with doors to go in and out at: hence we often read {p} of rbqh xtph, "the door of the sepulchre"; and this was not only the custom of the Jews, but of other nations also {q}: the stone rolled to the door, was what the Jews call, llwg, from its being rolled to, and from the door of the sepulchre; and which, they say {r}, was a large and broad stone, with which the mouth of the sepulchre was stopped above: and it was at the shutting up of the sepulchre with this stone, that mourning began {s}; and after it was shut with this sepulchral stone, it was not lawful to open it {t}: now this was done by Joseph, to preserve the body from any injury, either from beasts, or from the Jews:

and when he had so done, he departed to his own house; for the sabbath drew on, and there was no more time to do any thing more in this affair. The Syriac version reads these last clauses in the plural number; "they rolled a great stone, and they put it", &c. and they went away; intimating, that Joseph did not do this himself; the stone was too great; but by others, or with their assistance. It may be observed, that all this was done on a feast day; on one of the days of the feast of the passover, when no servile work was to be done; and yet this was agreeably to the Jewish canons, which say {u},

"they do all things needful for the dead on a feast day; they shave his head, and wash his clothes, and make him a coffin; and if they have no boards, they bring timber and saw boards of it, silently within doors; and if the person is a man of note, they do it even in the street; but they do not cut wood out of the forest, to saw planks of it for the coffin; nor do they hew stones, to build a tomb with them."

In this case, there was no need for the latter, because the sepulchre in which the body of Christ was laid, had been hewn out of a rock before; but the body was wrapped in a clean linen cloth, and wound up in it with myrrh and aloes to preserve it, and was interred; and so the women on this day, prepared spices and ointments, to anoint it with; though they rested on the sabbath day according to the commandment; but then as soon as that was over, though it was a feast day, they came to the sepulchre with their spices and ointments, Lu 23:56.

{n} Massech. Semachto, c. 14. fol. 16. 2. {o} Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 6. sect. 8. {p} Misn. ib. & Bartenora in Misn. Ohalot, c. 15. sect. 8. {q} Vid. Kirchman de Funer. Roman. l. 3. c. 15. p. 438. {r} Bartenora & Yom. Tob. in Misn. Ohalot, c. 2. sect. 4. {s} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 47. 2. Maimon. Hilchot Ebel, c. 1. sect. 2. & c. 2. sect. 8. {t} Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Rab. p. 437. {u} Maimon. Hilchot Yom. Tob. c. 7. sect. 15.

Matthew 27:61

Ver. 61. And there was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary,.... The wife of Cleophas, and the mother of James and of Joses:

sitting over against the sepulchre; observing where the body of Christ was put, and how it was laid; for they intended to prepare spices and ointments to anoint it with; and were mourning for the death of Christ: for sitting was a mourning posture, which now they were allowed, the body being taken down from the cross, and interred by leave of the governor; for, for one that died as a malefactor, they might not use the outward signs of mourning: the canon is this {w}; for such

"they do not mourn, but they grieve; and there is no grieving but in the heart:"

hence these women before stood, Joh 19:25, but now they sat.

{w} Misn. Sarhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4.

Matthew 27:62

Ver. 62. Now the next day that followed the day of preparation,.... Which was the sabbath day; for the day of preparation was the day before the sabbath, Mr 15:42, in which they prepared every thing necessary for the sabbath, and therefore was so called: and as this introduces the account of the chief priests and Pharisees, making application to Pilate, to secure the sepulchre; and which by his leave they did, by sealing the stone, and setting a guard about the sepulchre; it shows what consciences these men had, who accused the disciples of Christ of a violation of the sabbath, for plucking a few ears of corn on that day; and sought to kill Jesus, because he healed a man on it, and bid him take up his bed and walk; and yet they themselves could leave their devotions, and first meet together and agree upon an address to Pilate, and then go in a body to his palace; and having obtained their request, march to Joseph's garden, and make the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch, which were servile works, and, according to their laws and traditions, not to be done on the sabbath day; and yet they scrupled them not, notwithstanding their characters and profession, which follow:

the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate; these were the inveterate and implacable enemies of Christ; they took counsel how to put him to death; they employed Judas to betray him, and sent a band of soldiers with him to take him; they suborned false witnesses against him; they moved the people to prefer Barabbas to him; they got him condemned to death, and followed him to the cross, where they mocked him; and still, like the troubled sea, they were restless and uneasy; for though he was dead, they feared his resurrection; and though they could not prevent the thing, they consult to hinder the credit of it.

Matthew 27:63

Ver. 63. Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said,.... Meaning Jesus; for no better name could they give him alive or dead, and they chose to continue it; and the rather to use it before Pilate, who had a good opinion of his innocence; and to let him see, that they still retained the same sentiments of him: tyom, "a deceiver", is with the Jews {x},

"a private person, that deceives a private person; saying to him there is a God in such a place, so it eats, and so it drinks; so it does well, and so it does ill."

But which can never agree with Jesus, who was not a private person, but a public preacher; and who taught men, not privately, but openly, in the temple and in the synagogues; nor did he teach idolatry, or any thing contrary to the God of Israel, or to the unity of the divine being; or which savoured of, and encouraged the polytheism of the Gentiles. The Ethiopic version renders these words thus; "Sir, remember", &c. as if Christ had said this to Pilate in their hearing, and therefore put him in mind of it.

While he was yet alive; so that they owned that he was dead; and therefore could not object this to the truth of his resurrection, that he was taken down from the cross alive, and did not die:

after three days I will rise again: now, though he said to his to his disciples privately, Mt 16:21, yet not clearly and expressly to the Scribes and Pharisees; wherefore they must either have it from Judas, and lied in saying they remembered it: or they gathered it either from what he said concerning the sign of the prophet Jonas, Mt 12:40, or rather from his words in **Joh 2:19**, and if so, they acted a most wicked part, in admitting a charge against him, as having a design upon their temple, to destroy it, and then rebuild it in three days; when they knew those words were spoken by him concerning his death, and resurrection from the dead: they remembered this, when the disciples did not: bad men have sometimes good memories, and good men bad ones; so that memory is no sign of grace.

{x} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 10.

Matthew 27:64

Ver. 64. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure,.... By this also they own, that he was buried; and they knew in what, and whose sepulchre he was laid, and where it was; and request of Pilate, that as he had given leave to Joseph to take the body and inter it, that he would also give orders that the sepulchre might be watched, that no body might come near it, and remove the body, and that

until the third day: not from the time they made this request, but from the time of Christ's death; for no longer did they desire the sepulchre to be guarded; for if he did not rise, and no pretensions could be made to it in that time, they then very likely intended to expose his dead body, and triumph over him as an impostor; and after that time, they cared not what became of it, and were in no concern about watching the sepulchre; but till then they judged it necessary and desired it,

lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away: but of this there was no danger; they were too fearful and timorous to do such an action, had they been ever so much inclined to it; they all forsook him and fled immediately upon his apprehension; nor durst any of them appear at the time of his crucifixion, but John; and were now shut up for fear of the Jews; and besides, they had forgot what Christ said to them about his resurrection, though these men remembered it, and even disbelieved it when it was told them: the phrase "by night", is not in two copies of Beza's, nor in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, nor in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but is in other copies, and in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions:

and say unto the people, he is risen from the dead; to the common people, that were illiterate, credulous, and easily imposed on: as for themselves, who were the learned, the wise and knowing, they were in no danger of being carried away with such a deception; but the populace, for whom they pretend a great concern, were:

so the last error shall be worse than the first; either their own error and mistake, should the sepulchre be neglected, and an opportunity given for such a report; this would be of more fatal consequence than their first mistake, in suffering him and his followers to go on so long: or rather, the error of the people, in believing that Jesus was the Messiah; which would be greatly strengthened and received by greater numbers, should it be given out, and there was any proof of it, that he was risen from the dead: nor were they mistaken in this, for the number of the disciples and followers of Christ greatly increased after his resurrection; to an hundred and twenty, which was their number upon Christ's resurrection, three thousand were added at one time; being converted under one sermon, and that the first preached after Christ was risen.

Matthew 27:65

Ver. 65. Pilate said unto them, ye have a watch,.... Meaning either the watch of the temple, said to be placed in the tower of Antonia, for the service of it: hence mention is made of the captain of the temple, **Ac 4:1**, but it is not likely they would remove the temple guards, to watch a sepulchre night and day: or rather, therefore, the soldiers that had had the care of the crucifixion of Christ, and watched him on the cross, are designed: the words may be read imperatively, "have yea watch", or "take a watch", as the Ethiopic version renders it, and which seems best; for if they had a watch already, what occasion had they to have applied to Pilate for one? but having none, he gives them leave to take one, or such a number of soldiers as were sufficient:

go your way; as fast as you can, take the watch as soon as you please, make no stay, but satisfy yourselves in this point:

make [it] as sure as you can; or, as you know how to do it, and what will be proper and necessary.

Matthew 27:66

Ver. 66. So they went,.... From Pilate's palace, to the garden of Joseph, and to the sepulchre there; which whether more than a sabbath day's journey, or two thousand cubits, may be inquired; and if so, then they broke one of their own traditions, which allowed a person to go no further on a sabbath day; See Gill on "Ac 1:12".

And made the sepulchre sure; in the following manner,

sealing the stone; that was rolled to the door of it, it may be with some public seal, with Pilate's, or with the sanhedrim's; as the stone at the mouth of the lions' den, in which Daniel was put, was sealed with the king's signet, and with the signet of his lords, **Da 6:17**, that there might be no change of the sentence upon him, and by which it appeared, that his deliverance was by no human assistance: so the stone at Christ's sepulchre was sealed, that it could not be removed without breaking it; which would show, whether any fraudulent methods were taken to remove the body:

and setting a watch; a guard of soldiers, to observe and prevent any person coming near it; or "with the watch": they made sure the sepulchre with the watch; or sealed the stone, the watch being present; all which was overruled by the providence of God, for the greater confirmation of the truth of Christ's resurrection: by the methods taken, it clearly appears, there could be no fraud in the case; the body was laid in a tomb, where no corpse had ever been before; in a tomb hewed out of a rock, to which there was no access, but at the door; where a great stone was rolled; and this had a seal upon it, and a guard of soldiers about it; and hereby there were more witnesses of Christ's resurrection, than otherwise would have been; as the soldiers, though they were afterwards bribed to tell another story; and even the chief priests and Pharisees were convicted that he was risen, or they would never have taken such a method with the soldiers, as they did.

<ALIGN="CENTER"**John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.**
Matthew 28:1

Ver. 1. In the end of the sabbath,.... This clause is by some joined to the last verse of the preceding chapter, but stands better here, as appears from Mr 16:1, and intends not what the Jews call the sabbath eve, for that began the sabbath; but what they call tbv yauwm, "the goings out of the sabbath"; and as Mark says, Mr 16:1, "when the sabbath was past": that is, when the sun was set, and any stars appeared. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel render it, "the evening of the sabbath"; and the Persic version, "the night of the sabbath"; but must mean, not the evening and night, which preceded the sabbath, and was a part of it, but what followed it, and belonged to the first day.

As it began to dawn; not the day, but the night; a way of speaking used by the Jews, who call the night, rwa, "light": thus they say {y}, rve hebral rwa, "on the light, or night of the fourteenth" (of the month Nisan) "they search for leavened bread", &c. And so the word is used, in Lu 23:54, of the eve of the sabbath, or the beginning of it, as here of the going out of it;

towards the first day of the week, or "sabbaths"; so the Jews used to call the days of the week, the first day of the sabbath, the second day of the sabbath, &c. take an instance or two {z}

"The stationary men fast four days in the week, from the second day to the fifth day; and they do not fast on the sabbath eve (so they sometimes call the sixth day), because of the glory of the sabbath; nor tbvb dxab, "on the first day of the sabbath", or week, that they may not go from rest and delight, to labour and fasting, and die."

On which the Gemara has these words {a};

"the stationary men go into the synagogue, and sit four fastings; tbvb ynvb, "on the second of the sabbath", or "week": on the third, and on the fourth, and on the fifth."

Came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and mother of James and Joses, with whom also was Salome, the mother of Zebedee's children, Mr 16:1. There seems to be some difference between the evangelists about the time of the women's coming to the sepulchre. Matthew says, it was "at the end of the sabbath, when it began to dawn; towards the first day of the week". John says, that "Mary Magdalene" came "when it was yet dark", Joh 20:1, and yet Mark says, that they came "at the rising of the sun", Mr 16:2. Though they all agree it was early in the morning: all they say is no doubt true, and may be reconciled thus. As soon as the sabbath was ended, the women set out on their journey, and as they went, bought spices and ointment to anoint the body with: they passed through the gates of the city before they were shut, and might stay some time in the suburbs; when Mary Magdalene, eager to be at the sepulchre, set out first, whilst it was dark, and came back and reported to Peter what she had seen, and returned again by such time the other women came, which was at sunrising. From all the accounts it is clear, that he rose, as is expressly said, Mr 16:9, on the first day of the week, and which was the third from his death: on the sixth day, which was Friday, he was crucified, and buried that evening; he lay in the grave all sabbath day, or Saturday; and rose early on the first day of the week, before the women got to the sepulchre; who came thither, as it is here said,

to see the sepulchre: not merely to see it, for they had seen it before, and where, and how the body of Christ was laid in it; but to see whether they could enter into it, and anoint the body with the spices and ointments, which they had prepared and brought with them for that purpose.

{y} Misn. Pesachim, c. 1. sect. 1. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {z} Misn. Taanilh, c. 4. sect. 3. {a} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 27. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 4. 2. & 11. 1. & 67. 2.

Matthew 28:2

Ver. 2. And behold there was a great earthquake,.... Or "there had been one"; which, how far it reached, and whether further than the spot of ground in which the sepulchre was, is not certain: it was an emblem of the shaking of the earth by the preaching of the Gospel, the sound of which was now to go after Christ's resurrection to the ends of the world; and a prelude of the general resurrection, when the earth shall be shaken, and the graves opened, and the dead come forth; and was a symbol and token of the presence and majesty of Christ, at whose rising, as at his death, the earth shook and trembled. Think whether the watch could now be asleep, as they afterwards gave out, Mt 28:13. The Persic version renders it very wrongly; "and there was great consternation and fear"; which was the consequence of the earthquake, and the descent of the angel, and was so great that it was not possible for the keepers to sleep, if ever so much inclined:

for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven; perhaps Gabriel, who brought the news of the conception of Christ to the virgin, and of his incarnation to the shepherds, and might be the same angel that strengthened him in the garden: nor is this any contradiction to the other evangelists, which speak of two angels, Lu 24:4, for Matthew does not say there were no more than one, though he makes mention but of one.

And came and rolled back the stone from the door; of the sepulchre, which by Joseph, or his orders, was put there, and was sealed by the Jews. This might be done, that way might be made for the risen body of Christ to pass out of the sepulchre; for to suppose, as some do, that he penetrated through this stone with his risen body, is not to be credited: it is true, he could have caused the stone to have given way, or removed it himself, and put it in the place again; as he caused the doors of the house in which the disciples were, to open and shut so quick, that they could not discern it when he appeared in the midst of them, Joh 20:19; see Ac 12:10, but he might choose to do it by the ministry of an angel, which is no ways derogatory to his power and majesty, but rather agreeable. Moreover, this might be done, that the women might have access to the sepulchre, and enter into it, which was the thing they were concerned about by the way, who should roll away the stone for them. Besides, this the angel did, as a token that Christ was risen, and to let the guard know as much, who, if they thought fit, might come and see what was done; but chiefly the stone was rolled away by the angel, as an emblem of the acquittance and discharge of Christ, as the surety of his people. He had taken upon him their sins; he had bore them in his body on the tree; he had suffered and died for them, and was laid as a prisoner in the grave; and now full satisfaction being made, an angel is sent from heaven to roll away the stone; thereby signifying, that the debt was fully paid, and he was now legally discharged. It is added,

and sat upon it; thereby showing who it was that rolled it away; that it was done by him, not by the earthquake, nor by any human power: he sat there defying the guard of soldiers to come nigh; and waiting for the coming of the women, to tell them the good news, that their Lord was risen; and as the keeper of the sepulchre, that no corpse might be brought and laid in the room of Christ, and it be said that he was not risen. This posture of the angel does not contradict what other evangelists say of this, and the other angel, that they stood by the women, and also were sitting in the sepulchre, Mr 16:5, for each was true: when the women first came, the angel sat upon the stone; after that, with the other, stood by them; when having invited them to the grave, placed themselves, sitting the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Christ had lain.

Matthew 28:3

Ver. 3. His countenance was like lightning,.... There was such a lustre and brightness in his face, that it glittered like lightning: such a description is in

Da 10:6,

and his raiment white as snow: the word "white" is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel: the angel appeared clad in white, as a token of the purity and innocence of his nature; and because of the victory and triumph of Christ over death and the grave; and that he might be known and taken by the women for a good angel, it being a commonly received notion of the Jews, that ministering angels were clothed in white {b}.

"Said R. Ame to R. Levi, show me the Persians; he said to him, they are like to the mighty men of the house of David: show me the Chaberin, (another nation near the Persians,) they are like to destroying angels: show me the Ishmaelites, they are like to devils of the house of Hacsa: show me the disciples of the wise men in Babylon, they are like to the ministering angels."

Upon which the gloss says,

""to the devils", because they are clothed in black, and are like to devils; to "the ministering angels", Mynbl yvwbl, "they are clothed in white", and veiled like the ministering angels; as it is written in **Eze 9:2**, "and the man was clothed with linen": and it is said {c} of R. Judah, that he was veiled, and sat in fine linen fringed, and was like to an angel of the Lord of hosts: and elsewhere {d} it is said, who are the ministering angels? the Rabbins: and why are they called ministering angels? because they are fringed, as the ministering angels, in beautiful garments."

{b} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 72. 1. {c} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 25. 2. {d} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 20. 2.

Matthew 28:4

Ver. 4. And for fear of him the keepers did shake,.... Though they were soldiers, Roman soldiers and veterans, who had been used to terrible sights in the field of battle; were men of courage, and fearless of danger; and yet were seized with a panic, and every limb of them shook and trembled at the sight of the angel, for fear he was come as an executioner of divine vengeance upon them; who had been concerned in the crucifixion of Christ, had watched him as he hung upon the cross, and now his body in the sepulchre: and even supposing no consciousness of guilt in them, or dread of punishment from him; yet such was the glory and majesty in which he appeared, of which they had never seen the like before, that it had this effect upon them:

and became as dead men: they turned pale, as dead men, and had scarce any life, or spirit, left in them.

Matthew 28:5

Ver. 5. And the angel answered and said unto the women,.... Who being come up, were also affrighted at the sight of the angel. The Arabic version leaves out the first part, "and the angel answered": which is a Jewish way of speaking, when nothing goes before, to which it is a reply; and renders the other part thus, "and said to the two women": but from the other evangelists it appears, that there were more women than two; see Mr 16:1,

fear not ye; some put an emphasis upon the word "ye", as if used in opposition to the keepers, who had reason to be afraid, but not these good women. It was very common with gracious persons to be filled with fear at the sight of an angel, as Zacharias, and the shepherds; but without reason; they are their friends, their fellow servants, and ministering spirits to them. The Persic version adds, "but come near before, for ye are his familiars": the reason alleged, by the angel, why they had no reason to fear, is,

for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified: the knowledge which angels have of saints is very considerable, and which arises from their frequent embassies to them, care and guardianship of them, the good offices they perform, and their several ministrations to them; and the knowledge which the angel had of these good women, might not be from immediate revelation, but from the observations he had made of them: they had followed Jesus from Galilee, they had attended him all the while he was on the cross, and were now come to his grave to anoint him; and from their words and gestures, the angel might know that they were the disciples of Christ, and now sought him; and therefore had no reason to fear, as those who were his adversaries: and indeed, such as seek a crucified Christ, and life and salvation by him, have no reason to be afraid of any thing; not of sin, and its damning power, since Christ saves, his blood cleanses, and his righteousness justifies from all sin; nor of the law, its menaces, curses, and condemnation, for Christ has redeemed them from it; nor of Satan, and his principalities and powers, who are spoiled by Christ, and out of whose hands he has ransomed his people; nor of the world, since Christ has overcome it, and delivered his people from it; nor of death, whose sting is taken away, and that abolished as a penal evil; nor of hell, and wrath to come, from which he has saved them; and much less of good angels, who are kindly disposed to them: and such are they that seek a crucified Christ, whom Christ has first sought, and looked up, and found in redemption and the effectual calling; who are made sensible of their lost and dangerous state by nature, to whom Christ has been manifested; and who see both their need of him, and his worth and value: these seek to him in the first place, and with all their hearts, for cleansing, pardon, righteousness, rest, food, salvation, and eternal life: they seek for him where he is, and is revealed, in the Scriptures, in the Gospel, in the ordinances, and at the Father's right hand.

Matthew 28:6

Ver. 6. He is not here,.... In the grave, where he was laid, and these women saw him laid: he was dead, but is now alive; he was laid in the grave, but God would not leave him there, nor suffer him to see corruption:

for he is risen, as he said; not stolen away, as the chief priests hired the soldiers to say he was; nor removed to another place, as Mary Magdalene first thought, when she found him gone; but he was risen from the dead, by the power of his Father, and by his own power, as he had before said he should. In one of Beza's exemplars it is added, "to you"; for the words that Christ said in Galilee, that he should be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and rise again, the third day, were said in the presence and hearing of these women, and to them, as well as to the disciples; see Luke 24:6. This clause is left out in the Persic version: it follows,

come see the place where the Lord lay; the Lord both of angels and men: the Syriac and Persic versions read, "our Lord". The Arabic and Ethiopic versions leave out the word "Lord", and only read "he". Christ, as the Son of God, lay in the bosom of his Father, and in the arms of his love, from all eternity; as mediator, he lay in the womb of God's purposes and decrees, being his elect, in whom his soul delighted; as man, he lay in the womb of the virgin; and, as an example to his people, he lay, when baptized, in the waters of Jordan; and as the language of the ordinance of the Lord's supper is, "come see my hands, and my feet"; that of baptism is, "come see the place where the Lord lay": but here it regards the grave, in which the body of Christ had been laid; and the women are invited by the angel to go along with him, into the sepulchre, to see the place where he had lain; to assure them the more of the truth of his resurrection, that they might, with their own eyes, see that he was gone, who before had beheld where, and how he was laid; as also to affect them with the condescending grace of Christ, in making his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; as well as to strengthen their faith in their discharge from sin and condemnation by Christ, who was risen for their justification; as also to let them see that the grave was perfumed and sanctified by him; and he was risen as the first fruits and pledge of them that slept.

Matthew 28:7

Ver. 7. And go quickly and tell his disciples,.... Who were mourning and weeping for the death of Christ; despairing of his resurrection, of which, at least, they had but little hope, nor indeed much thought, though Christ had so often told them of it; and therefore a quick dispatch was necessary to remove their sorrow, revive their faith, and relieve their souls, to which the errand these women were sent upon, and the news they were to bring, had a tendency; namely,

that he is risen from the dead: than which nothing could be more joyful news unto them, as it is to all believers; for on this depend the justification and salvation of God's elect; their security from condemnation, and their resurrection from the dead. This news was first brought to the apostles by women, who were greatly honoured hereby; that as the woman was first in the transgression, and the cause of death, so the first news of the resurrection of Christ to life, and of life and immortality being by him, who was first showed the path of life, were brought by women; and to a woman it was that Christ first appeared after his resurrection, Mr 16:9. The Vulgate Latin only reads, "that he is risen", as in the former verse.

And behold he goeth before you into Galilee. These are still the words of the angel to the women, telling them what they should say to the apostles, that he should go before them into Galilee; and which might serve to confirm the resurrection to them, and to give the greater credit to the report of the women, since this very thing Christ had promised them before; see Mt 26:32, though it was also true, that he should go before these women into Galilee, and who also should see him there: for the next words,

there shall ye see him; though they may chiefly design the apostles, who should have a sight of Christ in Galilee, yet may include these women also:

lo! I have told you; I "Gabriel", who am an angel of the Lord, sent by him to inform you of these things; and you may depend upon the truth of them, that Jesus is risen, and that he is about, in a very little time, to go before his disciples into Galilee, where they shall see him with their bodily eyes, and have a free and familiar conversation with him. The reasons why this place was pitched upon for Christ and his apostles to meet in, were, because here he first preached, and chiefly conversed, and had the largest number of disciples there, to whom he meant to show himself, as he did, 1Co 15:6, as well as to his apostles: moreover, the apostles were of Galilee, and so were these women; and to go into their own country, and there meet with Jesus, must be very agreeable; and besides, there they would be safer and freer from the molestations and persecutions of the Jews; and might follow their former calling, as they did, until the time they were to be further employed in preaching the Gospel.

Matthew 28:8

Ver. 8. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre,.... Or "they went out from it", as it may be rendered, and as it is in Mr 16:8, which shows, that they went into the sepulchre upon the invitation of the angel, and saw the place where the Lord lay; and here it was the angel gave them their instructions, and errand to the disciples; which as soon as they received, they quitted the sepulchre in all haste, partly in obedience to the angel's orders, and partly through surprise and fear; for Mark says, "they fled from the sepulchre", Mr 16:8, as persons terrified and affrighted: and it is added here,

with fear and great joy: a mixture of both these; with fear and dread, because of the vision they had seen, and with joy at the news of Christ's resurrection; and yet in this their faith might not be so confirmed, as to have no doubt about it: they might fear the body was taken away, and removed to some other place, and that this they had seen might be a deception and a delusion. However, between both joy and fear, they set out,

and did run to bring his disciples word; as Mary Magdalene ran to Peter, Joh 20:2, nor is running unusual for women, or unbecoming them on certain occasions; see Ge 24:20. Their fright, as well as their joy, and their regard to the angel's order, might cause them to run, and make the quicker dispatch.

Matthew 28:9

Ver. 9. And as they went to tell his disciples,.... This clause is wanting in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, and in Beza's most ancient copy; but it stands in the Ethiopic version, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel,

behold, Jesus met them: that they might be confirmed in what the angel had told them, and their fear might be removed, and their joy increased; and also be capable of reporting to the disciples not only what they had heard from the angel, but what they had seen themselves; they being now eyewitnesses, as well as earwitnesses of his resurrection: so souls in the way of their duty, as these women were, oftentimes meet with Jesus, and he with them, as they may expect, and indeed not otherwise:

saying, all hail; all health of soul and body, all happiness and prosperity, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal, attend you. The Syriac and Persic versions, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel render it, "peace be to you"; which, it is highly probable, was the phrase used by Christ, since it was the common form of salutation among the Jews, and what Christ made use of at other times; see Joh 20:19,

and they came; near unto him, being encouraged by the above salutation, and knowing who he was by his voice, habit, and gesture:

and held him by the feet; they threw themselves prostrate at his feet, in token of reverence and humility; and they laid hold on his feet, that they might know, and be assured that he was really risen, and that it was not a spirit, or a mere phantom and appearance; and they held him in affection to him, and as desirous of his continuance with them:

and worshipped him: with divine adoration, expressing their love to him; their faith and hope in him, owning him to be their Lord and God; he being, by his resurrection from the dead, declared to be the Son of God, with power; and so the proper object of religious worship.

Matthew 28:10

Ver. 10. Then said Jesus unto them, be not afraid,.... Of me, or what you have seen; or lest there should be any deception in the case. In other respects the saints are subject to fears; as lest they should have no share in the love of God, nor interest in Christ, or the work of God is not begun in their hearts; and by reason of sin, lest that should get the ascendant over them, and they perish by it, and so fall short of eternal glory; when it is the will of Christ to have these fears removed, by shedding abroad his love in their hearts, by affording his gracious presence, views of interest in him, and promises of his grace, by sending his Spirit, word, and ministers to comfort them, by discovering and applying pardoning grace to them, and showing his power to keep them.

Go tell my brethren; meaning not his kinsmen according to the flesh, but his disciples, who were in this relation to him, as all the elect of God are; not only through his incarnation, he being their "Goel", their near kinsman, and Redeemer, and of the same nature, flesh, and blood with them, and like unto them in all things, excepting sin; but on account of their divine adoption, to which they were predestinated, and which they received through his redemption, and under the witnessings of the Spirit: he that is his God being theirs; and he that is his Father being theirs also: and which was made manifest in their regeneration, by their faith in him; and obedience to him, and his Father; see Mt 12:49. A very considerable relation this is, that the disciples stood in to Christ, who is the eternal Son of God, and heir of all things; and wonderful grace and condescension it was in Christ to own the relation, when they had so lately forsaken him; and now he was raised from the dead, and had glory given him:

that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me: he does not say they should not see him before: for they saw him, all but Thomas, that very evening, and all of them eight days after; and both times were before they went into Galilee: but this he said, to put them in mind of what he had promised them, Mt 26:32, and to confirm the words of the angel; and which might serve for a confirmation of the truth of these things, both to the women, and to the disciples, when they observed the exact agreement between the words of Christ, and of the angel. Moreover, it may be remarked, that wherever Christ has appointed to meet his people, they may expect, and be sure to see him at one time or another; as in his house and ordinances, where they are sometimes indulged with a sight of him by faith, which is an appropriating, assimilating, soul rejoicing, and satisfying one; when with pleasure they behold the glory of his divine person, and of his offices, the transcendent excellencies and perfections of his nature, his love and his loveliness, the beauty and amiableness of him, the fulness of grace, life, and righteousness in him, and so the suitableness of him as their Saviour and Redeemer; and when they are favoured with communion with him, and the joys of his salvation.

Matthew 28:11

Ver. 11. Now when they were going,.... Or were gone from the sepulchre: that is, the women, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, and their companions, when they were going, or gone, and before they could come to the disciples, to inform them of what they had seen and heard, and deliver the message both of the angel, and of Christ, unto them:

behold, some of the watch came unto the city: that is, "of Jerusalem". The word "behold" is left out in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; but ought to be retained as expressive of what is wonderful, and worthy of observation and attention; that the very persons who were placed to prevent every thing, that might be the foundation of a report, that Christ was risen, should be the first persons that should relate it to the chief priests and elders, that employed them: not all the watch, for some still stayed behind, till they had orders to come away; but some of them, the principal of them, or who were deputed by the rest, came. The Persic version, rather commenting than translating, has these words:

"moreover, the rulers and governors, who watched the sepulchre, coming to themselves, returned to the city with a pale and frightened countenance."

And showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done; how that there had been a very great earthquake, and a very surprising appearance; one like a young man descended from the clouds, whose countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, which filled them with astonishment and dread; that he rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and then sat upon it; and that some women coming to the sepulchre, were shown by him where the body had been laid, but was now gone; and how, that after they had recovered themselves from the fright, they had themselves examined the sepulchre, and the body was certainly gone; and sure they were that the women did not carry it away, nor any other: all which they thought proper to relate to the chief priests; partly on their own account, to clear themselves from the charge of bribery and corruption, and sloth and negligence; and partly that the chief priests might consider what was proper to be done at such a juncture.

Matthew 28:12

Ver. 12. And when they were assembled with the elders,.... Upon this the grand sanhedrim was convened together, which consisted of the chief priests, Scribes, and elders;

and had taken counsel among themselves what steps to take to stifle this matter, that it might not spread and be believed by the people; they agreed upon this, as the best expedient, to bribe the soldiers to give a false account of it, as they did:

they gave large money unto the soldiers, or "sufficient money"; they gave large sums of money, as were enough to satisfy the soldiers; they gave them whatever they would have; for though these men were very covetous, yet upon this occasion gave liberally; and that perhaps which were for the sacrifices, or for the repair of the temple, or for the supply of the poor.

Matthew 28:13

Ver. 13. Saying, say ye his disciples came by night,.... They charged them to tell every one that should ask them about this affair; and even publish it every where, that the disciples of Christ came in the dead of the night,

and stole him away while we slept: which was a very unlikely thing, and a foolish scheme this, for such a body of men to form. There is no show of probability in it, that the disciples, who were intimidated by the taking and putting Christ to death, and were now shut up in a house, for fear of the Jews, that these should venture out in the night, to take away the body of Christ, which was decently and honourably interred in a garden of one of his disciples: and when they knew it was guarded by a company of Roman soldiers; and who besides had no notion of his resurrection from the dead, nor never thought of it till he was risen, and therefore would never attempt any thing of this kind, in order to give out such a report. Moreover, had they took it away by stealth, it is not reasonable to think that they would afterwards have reported such a lie every where, that he was risen from the dead, when they were sure to obtain nothing by it, but reproach, afflictions, persecutions, and death: add to this, that this was never objected to them by their worst enemies, when they most strongly asserted his resurrection: nor was it a feasible account, or well put together, with respect to the watch. It can hardly be thought that they should be all of them asleep at once; and if they were, it is much they were not awaked by the coming up of the disciples, and the rolling away of the stone, and the bustle there must be in taking up the body, and carrying it away; and besides, if they were asleep, and continued so, what is their evidence good for? for how could they know that his disciples came and took him away? if they awaked, though too late, and saw them at a distance, why did not they pursue them, who might easily have been overtaken with such a burden? at least, why did not they search their houses for the body? and take up both the women and the disciples, and prosecute them for it? and yet nothing of this was done. Besides, how came the linen clothes to be left behind? why did they take the napkin from his head, and give themselves all that trouble to unwrap the body, and carry it away naked? It is clear the chief priests themselves were convinced in their own minds, that he was truly risen, or they would have punished the soldiers severely for their sleep and negligence, and would never have given them money to spread such a story.

Matthew 28:14

Ver. 14. And if this come to the governor's ears,.... Not the governor of the watch, but Pontius Pilate the governor of Judea: if this should be told him, and should be heard by him; or this matter should come before him, and be under his examination, and there should be any danger of punishment; for to sleep on the watch was severely punished by the Romans:

we will, persuade him; that this is the true state of the case, and intercede with him, and make use of all our interest, not to punish for it: or will persuade him, that though this is a false account, yet it will be much better that it should go in this way, for his own peace, and the peace of the nation, and the security of the Roman government; since, should it spread among the people, that this person was really raised from the dead, they would, one and all, believe he was the true Messiah, and would set him up as a king, and seize upon the government in favour of him:

and will secure you; indemnify you, bear you harmless, keep you from punishment; so that you need not be under any care, or concern on this account.

Matthew 28:15

Ver. 15. So they took the money, and did as they were taught,.... Though they had been just now in the greatest fright and consternation imaginable, at the sight of the angel, and knew what was done; yet being men of no religion or conscience, were tempted with the money, and took it, and reported every where what had been put into their mouths by the chief priests and elders.

And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews unto this day; to the time that Matthew wrote this Gospel; which according to the subscriptions to a most ancient copy of Beza's, and the Syriac and Arabic versions of De Dieu, was in the "eighth" year after our Lord's ascension; though others make it to be the "ninth"; and others the "fifteenth". The sense is, not that this narrative the evangelist gives, that the sanhedrim bribed the soldiers to give out such a lying story, was known to the Jews, and commonly reported by them; though some take this to be the sense; but that it was reported and believed among the Jews in common, to that time, that the disciples of Christ did really come in the night, and steal away the body of Christ, while the watch slept: to such judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, were they given up, as to believe a lie, and which had no appearance of truth in it. They have since contrived a more monstrous and ridiculous story than this. They say {e}, that Judas, seeing where the body was laid, and the disciples sitting upon the tomb, and mourning over it, in the middle of the night, took his opportunity to take away the body, and buried it in his own garden, under a current of water; having first turned the water another way, and then put it in the same course as before; and which he afterwards discovered to the Jews; and the body was taken up and exposed, and insulted in the most ignominious manner: but alas! Judas had hanged himself some days before; and had he been living, would not have been capable of doing what they ascribe unto him.

{e} Toldos Jesu, p. 18, 19, 21.

Matthew 28:16

Ver. 16. Then the eleven disciples,.... For Judas was not only gone from them, but was dead; so that there were now but eleven of them: went

away into Galilee: not directly, as soon as the women had delivered their message; for Christ appeared to them the same day at Jerusalem; and so he did at the same place that week; see Joh 20:19, but some time, after this they went together into Galilee, according to Christ's direction both before and after his resurrection, Mt 26:32,

into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them; either before his death, or since he was risen; and very likely at one of the above interviews he had with them. This is generally thought to be Mount Tabor; but of this there is no proof, nor certainty: it might be the mountain near Capernaum, on which he taught, **Mt 5:1**, or that, if not the same with the other, near the sea of Galilee, where Christ fed four thousand with seven loaves, and a few fishes, Mt 15:29. A mountain was appointed for this meeting, both for solitariness and for sight; for here it was he was seen by above five hundred brethren at once, 1Co 15:6.

Matthew 28:17

Ver. 17. And when, they saw him, they worshipped him,.... With divine adoration, as the eternal Son of God; for so he was now declared to be by his resurrection from the dead, **Ro 1:4**,

but some doubted; or "some of them", as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; that is, some of the eleven disciples: not that they doubted now that Christ was risen from the dead; since he had appeared several times to them before this, and had given them all the proofs of the truth of his resurrection they could desire; but they, who worshipped him now in Galilee, had doubted before in Jerusalem; not only Thomas, but all of them: they looked upon the words of the women as idle tales; nor did the rest believe the two disciples, with whom Christ travelled to Emmaus: wherefore he upbraids them for their unbelief, Lu 24:11, or else the sense is, that some of them, though they believed Christ was risen from the dead, of which they had had the strongest assurance; yet they doubted whether what they then saw on the mountain was he, or whether it was not a spirit, or a mere phantom; and therefore, as in the next verse, he "came" nearer to them, when they knew him: or else this may be understood of some of the seventy disciples, or of the five hundred brethren, who saw him at this time, and at first had some doubts of his resurrection, but were afterwards fully satisfied.

Matthew 28:18

Ver. 18. And Jesus came and spake unto them,.... To the eleven disciples and apostles; for though there might be so large a number as before observed, yet the following words were only spoken to the apostles:

saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; which is to be understood of him, not as God, who has the same original and underived power and authority over all creatures, and things in heaven and earth, as the Father has; but as mediator, to whom all things are delivered by the Father; and not of a power of doing this, or the other thing, or of omnipotence, being the Almighty; nor of doing miracles, and forgiving sins, which he had, and exercised before his death and resurrection, but of governing: he was king before, but his kingdom was not with observation; but now he was declared, and made manifest, to be both Lord and Christ; he had "all" power and authority for the settling the affairs of his church and kingdom, to appoint offices and officers in it, and, to bestow gifts upon men, to qualify them for the same, and to institute ordinances to be observed till his second coming: and this power of his reached to things in heaven; he having the angels in heaven subject to him, as ministering spirits to be sent forth by him at his pleasure; and all the gifts of the Spirit to dispose of as he thought good; and to things on earth, not only to the saints, whose King he is, and who are made willing to serve him; but to all flesh, to kings and princes, who rule and reign by him; and even to all the wicked of the world, who in some shape or another are made to subserve the ends of his mediatorial kingdom and government: and this is not usurped power, but what is given him, and what he has a right to exercise; having finished sin, abolished death, overcome the world, and destroyed the devil; and must reign till all enemies are subject to him: and this he says, and it was necessary to say it at this time, partly on account of his late sufferings and death, which were attended with weakness and reproach; and partly on account of the following commission he gives to his disciples, that it might be seen and believed, he had power and authority sufficient to give them such an one; as also to animate and encourage them under all the weakness, contempt, and persecution that should attend them in their ministry. The Syriac and Persic versions add, "as the Father hath sent me, even so I send you", as in Joh 20:21, from whence these words seem to be taken.

Matthew 28:19

Ver. 19. Go ye therefore,.... Into all the world; some into one place, and some into another; since his power and authority, and so now the commission he gave them, reached every where: before it was confined to Judea, but now it is extended to all the nations of the world; see Mt 10:6,

and teach all nations; Jews and Gentiles, first the one, and then the other, the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; whatever they had learned from Christ, or were ordered by him, or "disciple all nations": make them disciples by teaching them; or, as the Persic version, by way of explanation, adds, "bring them to my religion and faith": not that they were able to do this of themselves, but they were to teach men externally, or outwardly minister the word, whilst the Spirit of God internally applied it, and taught, and made men true disciples of Christ: and they are such, who have learned to know themselves, their sin, and lost estate by nature; to deny themselves, both sinful and righteous self; who have learnt to know Christ, and the way of righteousness, peace, pardon, life, and salvation by him; and who are taught and enabled to part with all for Christ, and to bear all for his sake, and to believe in him, and give up themselves to him, and follow him whithersoever he goes:

baptizing them; not all nations, for the antecedent to the relative "them", cannot be "all nations"; since panta ta eynh, the words for "all nations", are of the neuter gender, whereas autouv, "them", is of the masculine: nor can it be thought that it should be the mind of Christ, that all the individuals of all nations should be baptized, as Heathens, Turks, and Jews; but mayeutav, "disciples", supposed and contained in the word mayeteusate, "teach", or "make disciples"; such as are taught, and made disciples by teaching, or under the ministry of the word by the Spirit of God: Christ's orders are to "baptize": wlbj, "dip" them, as Munster's Hebrew Gospel renders it; that is, in water, which, though not expressed, is implied; for with no other baptism could the apostles baptize: not with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; for this was Christ's peculiar prerogative; but with water, which they in obedience to this commission practised, **Ac 8:36**, and which was to be done

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; by the authority of these three divine persons, who all appeared, and testified their approbation of the administration of this ordinance, at the baptism of Christ: and as they are to be invocated in it, so the persons baptized not only profess faith in each divine person, but are devoted to their service, and worship, and are laid under obligation to obedience to them, Hence a confirmation of the doctrine of the Trinity, there are three persons, but one name, but one God, into which believers are baptized; and a proof of the true deity both of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and that Christ, as the Son of God, is God; since baptism is administered equally in the name of all three, as a religious ordinance, a part of divine instituted worship, which would never be in the name of a creature. This is the first, and indeed the only, place in which the Trinity of persons is expressed in this order, and in the selfsame words. Galatinus {f} pretends, that the ancient Jews used the same way of speaking. It would be well if proof could be made of it: he asserts it to be in Zohar on **De 6:4**, and in the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel on **Isa 6:3**. In the former he says, it is expressed thus, "hear, O Israel; the Lord", he is called "the Father; our God", he is called the Son; "is one Lord", this is "the Holy Ghost", who proceeds from both; and again, by the same R. Simeon, it is said, "holy", this is ba, "the Father"; "holy", this is Nb, "the Son"; "holy", this is vdqh xwr, "the Holy Ghost": and in the latter after this manner, "Holy Father, Holy Son, and Holy Holy Ghost"; but no such words are now to be found in either of these places. He affirms, that he himself saw a copy of Jonathan's Targum that had these words. The Jews often speak of the Tetragrammaton, or name of four letters, the name Jehovah, which they say is not lawful to be pronounced; and also of the name of twelve letters, which the above writer {g} makes to be "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost"; and of forty two letters, which from a book called Gale Razia, he says is,

"Father God, Son God, Holy Ghost God, three in one, and one in three;"

which in the Hebrew language make up so many letters; but this wants better authority.

{f} L. 2. c. 1. {g} Ib. c. 11, 12. Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Heb. in voce hwh

Matthew 28:20

Ver 20. Teaching them to observe all things,.... All ordinances, not only baptism, but the Lord's supper; all positive institutions, and moral duties; all obligations, both to God and men; all relative duties that respect the world, or one another, those that are without, and those that are within; and these are to be taught them, and therefore to be insisted on in the ministry of the word; and not merely in order that they may know them, and have the theory of them, but that the may put them into practice:

whatsoever I have commanded you; every thing that Christ has commanded, be it what it will, and nothing else; for Christ's ministers are not to teach for doctrines the commandments of men; or enjoin that on the churches, which is of their own, or other men's devising, and was never ordered by Christ; and for their encouragement he adds,

and lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world: meaning, not merely to the end of their lives, which would be the end of the world to them; nor to the end of the Jewish world, or state, which was not a great way off, though this is sometimes the sense of this phrase; but to the end of the world to come, the Gospel church state, which now took place; or to the end of the present world, the universe: not that the apostles should live to the end of it; but that whereas Christ would have a church and people to the end of the world, and the Gospel and the ordinances of it should be administered so long, and there should be Gospel ministers till that time; Christ's sense is, that he would grant his presence to them, his immediate disciples, and to all that should succeed them in future generations, to the end of time: and which is to be understood not of his corporeal presence, which they should not have till then, but of his spiritual presence; and that he would be with them, in a spiritual sense, to assist them in their work, to comfort them under all discouragements, to supply them with his grace, and to protect them from all enemies, and preserve from all evils; which is a great encouragement both to administer the word and ordinances, and attend on them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO MARK

This is the title of the book, the subject of which is the Gospel; a joyful account of the ministry, miracles, actions, and sufferings of Christ: the writer of it was not one of the twelve apostles, but an evangelist; the same with John Mark, or John, whose surname was Mark: John was his Hebrew name, and Mark his Gentile name, Ac 12:12, and was Barnabas's sister's son, **Col 4:10**, his mother's name was Mary, Ac 12:12. The Apostle Peter calls him his son, **1Pe 5:13**, if he is the same; and he is thought to have wrote his Gospel from him {a}, and by his order, and which was afterwards examined and approved by him {b} it is said to have been wrote originally in Latin, or in the Roman tongue: so say the Arabic and Persic versions at the beginning of it, and the Syriac version says the same at the end: but of this there is no evidence, any more, nor so much, as of Matthew's writing his Gospel in Hebrew. The old Latin copy of this, is a version from the Greek; it is most likely that it was originally written in Greek, as the rest of the New Testament.

{a} Papias apud Euseb. Hist. l. 3. c. 39. Tertull. adv. Marcion. l. 4. c. 5. {b} Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccles. p. 91. sect. 18.

Ver. 1. The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,.... Not that the Gospel first began to be preached at this time, for it was preached by Isaiah, and other prophets before; and long before that, was preached unto Abraham; yea, it was preached as early as the times of our first parents, in Eden's garden; and is indeed that mystery, which was hid in God before the creation of the world; and was ordained before that was, to the glory of the saints: but the sense is, that this narrative Mark was about to write, began with the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Christ; which was a Gospel one, and was the beginning of the Gospel dispensation, in distinction from the legal one: the law and the prophets were until John, and they ceased and ended in him; when the abh Mlwe, "the world to come", the kingdom of God, or Gospel state, took place. The design of this evangelist, is not to give an account of the genealogy of Christ, of his conception and birth, of what befell him in his infancy, or of any actions and sayings of his from thence, to his appearance in Israel; but to give an account of his ministry and miracles, sufferings and death: which is introduced with the preaching and baptism of John his forerunner, and which he chiefly intends by "the beginning of the Gospel": he first points out Christ, who is the author and substance, as well as the great preacher of the Gospel; the sum of which is, that he is Jesus, the Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners; the Christ, the Messiah, that was to come; the Mediator between God and man, the prophet that has declared the whole mind and will of God; the great high priest, who has offered himself a sacrifice for his people, made peace, procured pardon, brought in everlasting righteousness, and obtained eternal redemption, and now lives to make intercession for them; and King of saints, who reigns over them, protects and defends them, and is no other than

the Son of God; equal with his Father; of the same nature with him, possessed of the same perfections, and enjoying the same glory; and which is a grand article of the Gospel, and without which he could not be an able Saviour, nor the true Messiah. Mark begins his account of the Gospel, and which he calls the beginning of it, with the same article of the divine sonship of Christ, as the Apostle Paul began his ministry with, **Ac 9:20**. Matthew began his Gospel with the humanity, Mark with the divinity of Christ: the one calls him the son of David, the other the Son of God, both true: Christ is the son of David according to his human nature, the Son of God according to his divine nature; so a testimony is bore to the truth of both his natures, which are united in one person.

Mark 1:2

Ver. 2. As it is written in the prophets,.... Malachi and Isaiah; for passages out of both follow; though the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions read, "as it is written in the prophet Isaias"; and so it is in some Greek copies: but the former seems to be the better reading, since two prophets are cited, and Isaiah is the last; to which agree the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, and the greater number of Greek copies. The following citations are made to show, that according to the writings of the Old Testament, John the Baptist was to be the harbinger of Christ, to come before him, and prepare his way; and also the propriety of the method the evangelist takes, in beginning his Gospel with the account of John's ministry and baptism: the first testimony stands in **Mal 3:1**, and the words are the words of the Father to the son, concerning John, pointing out his character and his work:

behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. John the Baptist is here called a messenger, and the message he was sent and came with, was of the greatest moment and importance, and required the closest attention to it; wherefore this passage is introduced with a "behold!" signifying that something momentous, and what should be strictly regarded, was about to be delivered: and indeed, the work of this messenger was no other, than to declare that the long expected Messiah was born; that he would quickly make his public appearance in Israel; that the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of the Messiah, was at hand; and that it became the Jews to repent of their sins, and believe in Christ: he is called the messenger of God, "my messenger"; because he was sent, and sanctified by him; he was called unto, and qualified for his work by him; see **Joh 1:6**, his father Zechariah says, he should be called the prophet of the Highest, **Lu 1:76**. The reason of his being called the messenger of God, may be observed in the text itself, "behold, I send": the words in Malachi are by us rendered, "behold, I will send", **Mal 3:1**: because this was at the time of the prophet's writing a thing future, but in the times of the evangelist a thing done: and indeed, it is a more literal version of the Hebrew text, to render it "I send", or "am sending"; and it is so expressed, to denote the certainty of it, and because in a little time it would be done: the words "before thy face", are not in the original text of Malachi, nor in the Septuagint version, but are inserted by the evangelist; who might do it with authority, since Christ had done it before him, Mt 11:10, and which, as Surenhusius {c} observes, is for the greater elucidation of the matter. The prophet does not say before whom he should be sent, though it is implied in the next clause, but here it is expressed: besides, this messenger had now appeared before the face of Christ, had prepared his way in the wilderness, and had baptized him in Jordan; all which is designed in the following words, "which shall prepare thy way before thee", by his doctrine and baptism: in the text in Malachi it is, "before me", **Mal 3:1**; which has made it a difficulty with the interpreters, whether the words in the prophet, are the words of Christ concerning himself, or of his Father concerning him. But sending this messenger before Christ, may be called by the Father sending him before himself, and to prepare the way before him; because Christ is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and is the angel of his presence, or face; besides, Jehovah the Father was greatly concerned, and the glory of his perfections, in the work the Messiah was to do, whose way John came to prepare. That the prophecy in Malachi here cited, is a prophecy of the Messiah, is owned by several Jewish writers {d}; who expressly say, that those words which follow, "the Lord whom ye seek", are to be understood of the king Messiah: and though they are divided among themselves, who should be meant by this messenger, See Gill on "Mt 11:10", yet some of them are of opinion, that Elias is intended, even Abarbinel himself: for though in his commentary he interprets the words of the prophet Malachi himself, yet elsewhere {e} he allows Elias may be intended: indeed he, and so most that go this way, mean Elijah the prophet, the Tishbite; who they suppose will come in person, before the Messiah appears: yet not he, but one in his Spirit and power is designed; and is no: other than John the Baptist, in whom the passage has had its full accomplishment.

{c} Biblos Katallages, p. 229. {d} Kimchi & Ben Melech in Mal. iii. 1. Abarbinel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 76. 4. {e} Abarbinel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 76. 4.

Mark 1:3

Ver. 3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness,.... This is the other testimony in proof of the same, and may be read in Isa 40:3. See Gill on "Mt 3:3".

Mark 1:4

Ver. 4. John did baptize in the wilderness,.... Of Judea, **Mt 3:1**, where he first appeared as a preacher; and is the same wilderness Isaiah has respect to in the above prophecy, Isa 40:3. The words are best rendered in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; "John was in the wilderness, baptizing and preaching the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins": according to which, the account of the Baptist begins with his name, John; describes the place where he was where he made his first appearance, and continued in, the wilderness; which was not a wild uninhabited place and without people, but had many cities, towns, and villages in it; and also declares his work and ministry there, which was preaching and baptizing: for though baptizing is here put before preaching, yet certain it is, that he first came preaching in these parts; and there baptized such, to whom his preaching was made useful. Baptism is here called, the

baptism of repentance: because John required repentance antecedent to it, and administered it upon profession of repentance, and as an open testification of it; and this

for, or unto the remission of sins: not for the obtaining the remission of sins, as if either repentance, or baptism, were the causes of pardon of sin; but the sense is, that John preached that men should repent of their sins, and believe in Christ, who was to come; and upon their repentance and faith, be baptized; in which ordinance, they might be led to a fresh view of the free and full forgiveness of their sins, through Christ; whose blood was to be shed for many, to obtain it: see **Ac 2:38**.

Mark 1:5

Ver. 5. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea,.... The people of the land, a great number of them:

and they of Jerusalem; the inhabitants of Jerusalem, hearing of this new preacher, the new doctrine that he taught, and the new ordinance that he administered:

and were all baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins; that is, as many of them as were brought to a sight and sense of their sins, and made a confession of them, these he baptized, or immersed, in the river Jordan; for certain it is, that there were many of the Pharisees and Sadducees who came, whom he rejected;
See Gill on "Mt 3:5",
See Gill on "Mt 3:6",
See Gill on "Mt 3:7".

Mark 1:6

Ver. 6. And John was clothed with camel's hair,.... This is a description of John by his clothes; See Gill on "Mt 3:4", to which may be added, that it was usual for penitents, and men of austere lives, and of the first class for holiness and religion, to live in deserts, to fare hard, and wear coarse apparel. Mention is made of one man, who is called, atyuwud Ntn {f}, because he had on a garment of goat's hair, which cut his flesh, that so it might atone for him, for he was a penitent:

and with a girdle or skin about his loins; a leathern one, as in **Mt 3:4**, not a golden one, such as the high priest wore, though the {g} Jews call John an high priest: he was indeed of the priestly race: his father was a priest, but he did not wear a priestly girdle, nor any of the priest's garments;

and he ate locusts and wild honey. The Ethiopic version renders it, "honey of earth bees": in Ethiopia was a sort of bees, little bigger than flies, and without a sting, which had their hives in the earth, where they produced honey of a white colour, very pleasant and wholesome; and this is thought, by the Ethiopians, to be the honey which John ate {h}; but then there must have been the same in Judea, which does not appear. Moreover, in the land of Judea, there was Myrmt lv vbd, "the honey of palm trees"; and it is said {i}, that it is the best honey; and therefore the Scripture calls, honey of the palm trees, honey; and the palm trees which grow in the plains and valleys, abound most with it; wherefore there was much of this about Jericho, the city of palm trees: there was also Mynyat lv vbd, "honey of figs"; which in some places was in great plenty:

"R. Jacob ben Dosthai says {k}, it is three miles from Lud to Ono (see **Ezr 2:33**) one time I walked before break of day, and I went up to my ankles in honey of figs."

Dr. Lightfoot thinks, this was the honey the evangelist speaks of, and John ate of. I have observed on **Mt 3:4** that with the Jews, the honey of bees was lawful to eat {l} though the bees themselves were not. So Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases, Le 11:20,

"Let the species of bees be an abomination to you, but the honey of bees may be eaten;"

they being reckoned among reptiles that fly: and it may be further observed, that according to them, the honey of wasps and hornets was lawful to be eaten, as well as the honey of bees {m} and this may be truly called, as here, wild honey; for which they give these reasons {n}, because it is not of the substance of their bodies, but they gather it from herbs; and because in the same manner as bees, they take it into their bodies, but do not produce it from them; though some of the doctors dissent, and think it not lawful {o}.

{f} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 56. 2. Vid. Buxtorf. not. in Sepher Cosri, p. 156, 157. {g} Gauz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2. {h} Ludolph. Lex. Ethiop. p. 447. {i} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Biccurim, c. 1. sect. 10. {k} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 111. 2. {l} Vid. Piske Tosephot Becorot, art. 13. {m} Misn. Macshirin, c. 6. sect. 4. T. Bab. Becorot, fol. 7. 2. {n} Maimon. Hilch. Maacalot Asurot, c. 3. sect. 3. Ib. & Bartenora in Misn. Macshirin, ibid. {o} In Piske Tosephot Becorot, art. 13. Maggid Misna in Maimon. Hilch. Maacolot ib.

Mark 1:7

Ver. 7. And preached, saying, there cometh one mightier than I after me,.... From whence it appears, that John was a preacher of Jesus Christ; of the dignity of his person, the excellency of his office, and the nature and importance of his work:

the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose; expressing the great veneration he had for him, and the great sense he had of his own unworthiness, to be concerned in the lowest and meanest service of life for him; and that he was far from being worthy of the high honour done him, to be his messenger and forerunner; See Gill on "Mt 3:11".

Mark 1:8

Ver. 8. I indeed have baptized you with water,.... This was spoken to the baptized persons, partly to take off their dependence upon him and his baptism; and partly to direct their views to Christ, from whom the gifts and graces of the Spirit are alone to be had:

but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost; See Gill on "Mt 3:11". One copy adds, "and with fire", as there: a Jewish writer says, the holy blessed God baptizeth with fire, and the wise shall understand {p}.

{p} R. Menachem in Lev. viii. apud Ainsworth on Gen. xvii. 12.

Mark 1:9

Ver. 9. And it came to pass in those days,.... Whilst John was preaching and baptizing in the wilderness, and had large crowds of people flocking to him, to see his person, hear his doctrine, and to be baptized by him; some for one thing, and some another;

Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee; the place where he had been brought up, and lived, and dwelt in from his infancy, to this time:

and was baptized of John in Jordan; which was the reason of his coming from Nazareth to him; see **Mt 3:13**, where this is observed; and in some verses following, an account is given of what passed between Christ and John, on this occasion.

Mark 1:10

Ver. 10. And straightway coming up out of the water,.... Not John, as many think; though it was true of him, that he came up out of the water, as the administrator of the ordinance of baptism to Christ, but Christ himself; who having descended into the water, the river of Jordan, and being baptized by immersion in it by John, came up out of it; not from the river side, and up the declivity to it, but out of the river itself: when

he saw the heavens opened; or "cloven", or "rent"; this may be understood, either of John, who was the spectator of all this, which was done for the manifestation of the Messiah to him, and the confirmation of his faith in him, and that he might bear record of him; and so the Persic version reads, "John saw", &c. see **Joh 1:30**, or of Jesus Christ himself, who came up out of the water; and when he did, saw the heavens part,

and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him. The position of these words here, is a little different from that in **Mt 3:16**, there it is, "the Spirit of God descending like a dove"; which seems rather to point out the manner of his descent, than the form in which he descended: here it is put, "the Spirit like a dove descending on him"; which seems rather to incline to such a sense, that the Spirit appeared in the form of a dove, as well as descended like one; and both may be designed, and indeed the latter follows upon the former: if it was the form of a dove the Spirit of God descended in, it was a very suitable one: the dove is a very proper emblem of the Spirit of God: "the voice of the turtle", in **So 2:12**, is by the Targum interpreted, the voice of the holy Spirit: he may be likened to a dove, for its simplicity and sincerity; he guides into all truth as it is in Jesus, and teaches to speak the word in all plainness, openness, and sincerity, and preserves the saints in the simplicity of the Gospel; and for its mildness and meekness; one of the fruits of the Spirit of God is meekness, **Gal 5:23**. And this it produces in converted persons, making them meek; humble, and gentle: and also for its harmlessness and innocence; and which appears, or at least should, in those who mind the things of the Spirit: hence that advice of Christ, "be harmless as doves", Mt 10:16. Likewise for its purity and cleanness; the Spirit of God is a Spirit of holiness, he is the author of sanctification; such as are washed, sanctified, and justified, are so in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, **1Co 6:11**. The dove is a mournful and bemoaning creature; and the Spirit of God makes intercession for the saints, with groanings which cannot be uttered, **Ro 8:26**. To which may be added, that Noah's dove bringing the olive leaf in its mouth, as a sign, of peace and reconciliation, fitly resembled the holy Spirit, one of whose fruits is peace, **Ga 5:22**, and which he produces, by leading to the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, whereby peace is made, and reconciliation obtained: and his descending upon Christ here, points him out as the peacemaker, through whom was come peace on earth, good will towards men, and glory to God. Christ, on whom he lighted, is comparable to a dove; he is said to have doves' eyes, **So 5:12**, and he has all the fruits and graces of the dove like Spirit of God, which rested on him; like the dove, he is humble, meek, and lowly; in which characters, he is to be followed and imitated by his people: and as that creature is a very loving one to its mate, so is Christ to his church; whom he has so loved, as to give himself for her: and as that is a lovely beautiful creature, so is Christ; he is altogether lovely; and especially his eyes of love, as they are set and fixed upon his church and people. With this descent of the Spirit as a dove on Christ, compare Isa 11:2; See Gill on "Mt 3:16".

Mark **1:11**

Ver. 11. And there came a voice from heaven,.... What the Jews call "Bath Kol", saying,

thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: it is in Matthew, "this is my beloved Son", **Mt 3:17**; as if the words were spoken to others, to John, the administrator of baptism to him, and to those that were spectators; directing them to Christ, on whom the Spirit now descended, and testifying to them how great a person he was, how nearly related to God; how much he was the object of his love, and what a pleasure and delight he took in him; but here they are delivered as an immediate address to Christ himself, "thou art my beloved Son". Christ, as he was the only begotten Son of God from eternity, so his filiation was owned and declared to him as early, **Ps 2:7**. This therefore was not the first time, nor was it only for his sake that this was said unto him, but also for the sake of those that stood by: but it may be observed, that he is not only called his Son, but his "beloved Son"; which might be necessary to be said to him in his state of humiliation, whilst he was yielding obedience to the will of God, and fulfilling all righteousness; and when he was about to be, as he quickly after this was, tempted by Satan in the wilderness, by whom his sonship was called in question. Now these words being directed to Christ, show that the former are spoken of him, and are applicable to him, as well as to John; See Gill on "Mt 3:17".

Mark **1:12**

Ver. 12. And immediately,.... As soon as he was baptized, and this testimony had been given of his divine sonship, the very selfsame day,

the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness: into a more remote and desolate part of it; for it was in the wilderness John was baptizing and preaching, when Christ came to him, and had the ordinance of baptism administered by him; and it was the same Spirit that descended on him at his baptism, which remained with him; by whose impulse he was moved, though not against his will, to go into, this desert and forlorn place. For this was not the evil spirit Satan, by whom he was tempted; for Matthew expressly says, that he was "led up of the Spirit--to be tempted by the devil", **Mt 4:1**: where the devil that tempted him, is manifestly distinguished from the Spirit by whom he was led, and the same Spirit is meant here, as there. Moreover, in one of Beza's copies, and in his most ancient one, and in one of Stephens's, it is read, "the Holy Spirit driveth him"; See Gill on "Mt 4:1".

Mark 1:13

Ver. 13. And he was there in the wilderness forty days,.... The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, "and forty nights": for so long was he there,

tempted of Satan: the several temptations of Satan, and how they were overcome by Christ, are particularly related by the Evangelist Matthew, **Mt 4:3**, which are here omitted; and what is not mentioned there, is here recorded:

and was with the wild beasts: which shows, that he was now in an uncultivated and uninhabited part of the desert by men, and where only the most fierce and most savage of creatures dwelt; and yet was as secure and unhurt by them, being the Lord of them, as Adam in Eden's garden, or Daniel in the lions' den. This circumstance is only related by the Evangelist Mark, and is what adds to the uncomfortable situation Christ was in, when tempted by Satan; and his being not hurt by them, may declare, partly his innocence, as man, being as pure and holy as the first man was in his state of integrity, when all creatures were brought before him, to give them names; and partly the power of God, who shut up the mouths of these creatures, that they did him no hurt; and also may signify, the awe they stood in of him, who, as God, is Lord of all. These creatures were more gentle to Christ, and used him better than the wicked Jews, among whom he dwelt, who are compared to lions, dogs, and "bulls" of Bashan, Ps 22:12.

And the angels ministered unto him; after the temptations were over, and Satan had left him, preparing for him, and bringing to him proper food, after so long a fast; and waiting upon him, and serving him as their great Lord and master; See Gill on "Mt 4:11".

Mark 1:14

Ver. 14. Now after that John was put in prison,.... In the castle of Macherus, by Herod, for reproving him for taking his brother Philip's wife:

Jesus came into Galilee: again, from whence he came to be baptized of John:

preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God: the good news and glad tidings of the kingdom of the Messiah, or Gospel dispensation; which lies not in worldly pomp and splendour, in outward observances, in legal rites and ceremonies, but in righteousness, peace, and joy; in peace and pardon by the blood of Christ, in justification by his righteousness, and in free and full salvation by him.

Mark 1:15

Ver. 15. And saying, the time is fulfilled,.... Either that which was fixed for the end of the law and prophets, the legal and Mosaic dispensation, and the Jewish church state; or the fulness of time for the Messiah's appearance in the world; which was agreed upon between the Father and the Son, was predicted in various prophecies, and the people of the Jews were in a general expectation of:

and the kingdom of God is at hand: the same with the kingdom of heaven, in **Mt 3:2**, see the notes: See Gill on "Mt 3:2", See Gill on "Mt 4:17".

repent ye, and believe the Gospel. He called them to repent, not only of their former sins and vicious course of life, but of their bad principles and tenets, concerning a temporal kingdom of the Messiah; concerning merit and free will, justification by the works of the law, and salvation by their obedience to the ceremonies of it, and the traditions of the elders: these he exhorts them to change their sentiments about, and to relinquish them, and give into the Gospel scheme; which proclaims liberty from the law, peace, pardon, and righteousness by Christ, and salvation and eternal life by the free grace of God.

Mark 1:16

Ver. 16. Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee,.... The same with the sea of Tiberias, **Joh 6:1**,

he saw Simon: whose surname was Peter, the son of Jonas:

and Andrew his brother; the brother of Simon,

casting a net into the sea; of Galilee, in order to catch fish:

for they were fishers: by occupation, this was their trade and business, by which they got their livelihood; See Gill on "Mt 4:18".

Mark 1:17

Ver. 17. And Jesus said unto them, come ye after me,.... Leave your worldly employments, and become my disciples,

and I will make you to become fishers of men: which will be a much more excellent and honourable employment, as men, and the souls of men, are more excellent, and of more worth than fishes; See Gill on "Mt 4:19".

Mark 1:18

Ver. 18. And straightway they forsook their nets,.... Which perhaps were their all; see Mt 19:27.

And followed him; both in a corporeal and spiritual sense; See Gill on "Mt 4:20".

Mark 1:19

Ver. 19. And when he had gone a little further thence,.... From the place where Simon and Andrew were casting their nets, though still by the sea side;

he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother. The former was be whom afterwards Herod killed with the sword, and the latter the beloved disciple; these were also fishermen:

who also were in the ship mending their nets: as the other two disciples were on board the ship, casting their nets into the sea to catch fish; these were also in a ship, repairing their nets, in order to use them the same way, and for the same purpose;
See Gill on "Mt 4:21".

Mark 1:20

Ver. 20. And straightway he called them,.... As soon as he saw them; for he was looking out for them, having appointed them long before to the service he now called them to;

and they left their father Zebedee with the hired servants, and went after him. It might seem unnatural, had they left their father alone in the ship, to have taken the care and management of it, and therefore it is added, "with the hired servants"; who were hired for that purpose, to assist in mending the nets, and casting them, and managing the ship, and conducting it from place to place, and therefore were not to be charged with want of humanity; and such was the power that went along with Christ's call, that notwithstanding natural affection to their parents, and the gain they might get by these servants and their trade, they cheerfully quitted all, and followed Christ; See Gill on "Mt 4:22".

Mark 1:21

Ver. 21. And they went into Capernaum,.... Jesus and his four disciples he had just called, Simon and Andrew, James and John; though the Arabic and Persic versions read, "he went"; that is, Christ; and so Beza says it was read in a certain copy:

and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught; that is, immediately, as soon as he entered the, city, it being then sabbath day; or, as soon as the sabbath day came, he went to the synagogue at Capernaum, and his disciples with him; where the people used to meet weekly to hear the law read, and to be instructed in divine things; which opportunity Christ laid hold on to preach the Gospel to them, and teach them things concerning the kingdom of God.

Mark 1:22

Ver. 22. And they were astonished at his doctrine,.... The nature and importance of it, it being what they had not been used to hear; only at best the doctrine of the law, and sometimes only the traditions of the elders, or an allegorical and traditional sense of the Scriptures, and things very trifling and unedifying: and also they were amazed at the manner of his preaching, which was with so much gracefulness, gravity, and majesty, and was attended with so much evidence and power:

for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes; or "their Scribes", as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read. He did not go about to establish what he said by the authority of the Rabbins, as the Scribes did; saying, Hillell says so, or Shammai says thus, or such a doctor says thus and thus; but he spoke as from himself, as one sent of God, that had an authority from him, and was independent of man; and this was what they had not observed in others, and wonder at it; See Gill on "Mt 7:28". See Gill on "Mt 7:29".

Mark 1:23

Ver. 23. And there was in their synagogue,.... In the synagogue of the Capernaites, at the same time that Jesus was teaching there,

a man with an unclean spirit: not with an unclean heart, for there were doubtless many such there, but that had a devil; for in **Lu 4:33**, it is said, "he had a spirit of an unclean devil": so called, because he is impure in himself, and the cause of uncleanness in men, in which he delights: and such spirits sometimes are where religious persons meet, but with no good design; either to disturb the preacher, or to divert the hearer, that the word may be unfruitful and unprofitable:

and he cried out: either the man, or rather the unclean spirit in him, who had possessed his body, and made use of the organs of it: he cried out through dread of the majesty of Christ, whose presence he could not bear; and through grief and envy at the success of his ministration, and the influence it had upon the minds of men; and through fear of being dispossessed of the man, in whom he was.

Mark 1:24

Ver. 24. Saying, let us alone, &c.] Meaning with himself, the rest of the unclean spirits, that had possessed the bodies of men in Galilee, and in all Judea; knowing that Christ had power to dislodge them, and fearing he would, entreats him he would let them alone, quietly to dwell in their beloved habitations:

what have we to do with thee? They had nothing to do with Christ, as a Saviour; they had no interest in him, nor in his redemption, but he had something to do with them, to show his power over them, and to deliver men out of their hands:

thou Jesus of Nazareth: calling him so, from the place where he was educated, and had lived the greatest part of his life, though he knew he was born at Bethlehem; but this he said, according to the common notion of the people, and it being the usual appellation of him:

art thou come to destroy us? not to annihilate them, but either to turn them out of the bodies of men, which to them was a sort of a destruction of them, and was really a destroying that power, which they had for some time exercised over men; or to shut them up in the prison of hell, and inflict that full punishment on them, which is in reserve for them:

I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God: he whom God had called his Holy One, Ps 16:10, and who is so, both in his divine nature, as the Son of God, the Holy One of Israel; and as the Son of man, being the holy thing born of the virgin, and is without the least stain of original sin, or blemish of actual transgression; and also as the mediator, whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, the true Messiah; and all this the devil knew from his wonderful incarnation, by the voice from heaven at his baptism, from the conquest over him in the wilderness, and by the miracles he had already wrought: in the high priest's mitre was written, hwhyl vdwq, which may be rendered, "the Holy One of the Lord": the high priest was an eminent type of him.

Mark 1:25

Ver. 25. And Jesus rebuked him,.... Checking his insolence, despising his flattery, and refusing to receive a testimony from him; and which he wanted not, lest it should be thought he had a familiarity and confederacy with him:

saying, hold thy peace; stop thy mouth, I need no such witness as thine, nor thy praises; I am not to be soothed by thy flattery, nor is my mouth to be stopped, or power restrained, by such methods: wherefore he adds,

and come out of him: I will not let thee alone, thy encomiums of me shall not prevail upon me to leave thee in the quiet possession of the man; I will give a testimony of who I am, by the dispossessing of thee out of this man. In imitation of this authoritative power of Christ, the Jewish exorcists, in their pretensions to cast out devils, use a like form: so they tell us {q}, that R. Simeon ben Jochai, cast a devil out of Caesar's daughter, saying, "Ben Talmion" (which was the name of the devil) au, "come out, Ben Talmion come out"; and he came out of her; See Gill on "Mt 12:27".

{q} T. Bab. Meilab, fol. 17. 2.

Mark 1:26

Ver. 26. And when the unclean spirit had torn him,.... Not that he had torn any limb from him, or had made any wound in any part of his body; for Luke says, **Lu 4:35**, that he "hurt him not", but he shook him; and as Luke there says, "threw him in the midst", of the people, or synagogue; and so the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read here, "he cast him", or "threw him to the ground": he threw him into convulsions, and laid him prostrate on the floor:

and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him; though sorely, against his will, as his loud cry showed, and being obliged to it by a superior power.

Mark 1:27

Ver. 27. And they were all amazed,.... The people that were in the synagogue, who were met together for divine worship, were astonished, not only at his doctrine, as before, but at this miracle and power of his in casting out devils:

insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, what thing is this? They spake among themselves, as Luke says, **Lu 4:36**; they inquired of one another; they conferred together, talked over the point, and disputed among themselves, concerning both the doctrine and power of Christ, what, and how wonderful they were:

what new doctrine is this? This they said, not as fixing a brand of novelty upon it, as the Athenians did on Paul's doctrine, Ac 17:19, but as admiring it; being what was rare and unusual, and which they had never heard of from their Rabbins and Scribes, and which was confirmed by miracles;

for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him: they not only observed the authority with which he delivered his doctrine, but the authority with which he cast out devils, by a word speaking; he not only commanded them to come out, but they immediately came out; their exorcists took authority upon them to command, but could not oblige the devils to obey; but these men took notice, that such was the authority of Christ in commanding, that the unclean spirits were obliged to obey, and did.

Mark 1:28

Ver. 28. And immediately his fame spread abroad,.... Not only in the city of Capernaum, where these things were done, and where his fame was first spread, but also

throughout all the region round about Galilee: and not only throughout Galilee, but throughout all the country that was bordering upon it, and adjacent to it; see **Mt 4:23**. The Persic version reads, "through all the provinces".

Mark 1:29

Ver. 29. And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue,.... Christ having wrought this miracle, and finished his sermon, and the whole synagogue service being over, when it was usual for every one to repair to their own houses, or their friends, for refreshment; he, and they that were with him, departed from it, and directly, being not far from it,

they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew; who being brethren, dwelt together in a house at Capernaum, where it seems they were now inhabitants, though their native place was Bethsaida, **Joh 1:44**,

with James and John; whom they took along with them, being fellow disciples of Christ.

Mark 1:30

Ver. 30. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever,.... "A great fever", Luke says, **Lu 4:38**; a very violent one, which threatened with death, and must be very dangerous to an old person; See Gill on "Mt 8:14",

And anon they tell him or her; for it seems, that not as soon as he came into the house, but some time after, when he had sat awhile, and rested himself after his fatigue in preaching; they acquainted him with her case, and beseeched him to look upon her, and restore her: this was done, either by Simon and Andrew, or by some others of their friends that were in the house; who having either seen, or heard of his dispossessing the unclean spirit, might rightly conclude he had power to remove a fever.

Mark 1:31

Ver. 31. And he came and took her by the hand,.... He went into the room where she lay, and took hold of her hand; not to feel her pulse, and thereby judge of the nature and strength of her disorder, as physicians do; nor merely in a friendly manner, as is customary, but in order to restore her:

and lift her up; to sit upright in the bed, who before was laid along upon it, so weak as not to be able to turn herself, much less to sit erect by any assistance whatever:

and immediately the fever left her: and there was not the least symptom of it, nor none of the effects which it usually leaves; such was the virtue that went forth from Christ by touching her, and such his great power:

and she ministered unto them; she immediately arose from the bed, and put on her clothes, being at once in perfect health and strength; and, in gratitude to her Saviour and physician, she assisted in preparing food for him and his disciples, and served at table to them.

Mark 1:32

Ver. 32. And at even, when the sun did set,.... At which time the Jews' sabbath was ended; See Gill on "Mt 8:16", for this was a sabbath day, **Mr 1:21**, when according to them, it was not lawful to heal; nor did they offer to bring their sick to him on that day; but the last of the two evening days being come, and the sun set, the sabbath was over; and therefore being under no restraint on account of that,

they brought unto him all that were diseased; with any sort of disease whatever, even all that were in their city;

and them that were possessed with devils. The Persic version renders it "epileptics", such as were troubled with the falling sickness, as many of those were, whose bodies the devils possessed.

Mark 1:33

Ver. 33. And all the city was gathered together at the door.] That is, the inhabitants of the city of Capernaum, a very great number of them at least, who having either heard of, or seen the dispossession of the unclean spirit in the synagogue in the daytime; and being willing to see what miraculous cures might be wrought by Christ upon the diseased and possessed that were brought to him, got together in great crowds about the door of the house of Simon and Andrew where Jesus now was.

Mark 1:34

Ver. 34. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases,.... Not that there were some, who had some sorts of diseases, whom he did not heal; but he healed all that came, or were brought to him, which were many, of every sort of disease, which were divers, with which they were afflicted:

and cast many devils; even as many as were brought to him, or were possessed with any:

and he suffered not the devils to speak; either for him, or against him; which shows his great power over them:

because they knew him, or "that they knew him": he would not suffer them to say a word about him, because he knew that they knew that he was the Christ, the Son of God, or he would not permit them to say who he was; because he had others to bear witness of him, and better testimonies than theirs, and lest his enemies should reproach him with an agreement and familiarity with them.

Mark 1:35

Ver. 35. And in the morning, rising up a great white before day,.... On the morrow after the sabbath, on the first day in the morning, notwithstanding the fatigue of the former day, through preaching and working miracles; yet he rose up very early while it was very much within the night, as the light and day were coming on, and before the day broke; though it might be broad day before he departed out of the house, as Luke suggests, **Lu 4:42**,

he went out; out of the house of Simon and Andrew, and out of the city of Capernaum, leaving his disciples and friends behind him:

and departed into a solitary place, and there he prayed; as man, to his God and Father; it may be for his disciples he had lately chosen; for himself, as man, that he might be strengthened as such for service; and for success in his ministry, and that his Gospel might run and be glorified; he chose a desert, and solitary place, for the sake of retirement, from the crowd of people that attended at Peter's door; where he could not be alone, and in private, and as most suitable for the exercise of prayer. His early and private devotion may be an example to us.

Mark 1:36

Ver. 36. And Simon, and they that were with him,.... Peter, and his brother Andrew, together with James and John,

followed after him; some time after he was gone; for he privately withdrew from them, so that they might not be aware when he went, nor apprized of his departure, for some considerable time; which when they were, they set out, in diligent search, and eager pursuit after him, until they found him.

Mark 1:37

Ver. 37. And when they had found him,.... In the desert and solitary place, where he had been praying:

they said unto him; in order to engage him to go with them, and as the reason why they sought him with so much eagerness and diligence,

all men seek for thee; not all the men in the world, nor, it may be, all the inhabitants of Capernaum, but a large number of them, who were inquiring after him, some for one thing, some for another; some to see him, what manner of man he was, and some to hear him, what sort of doctrine he preached, and others to see his miracles, or to have themselves, or their sick healed; and the disciples were loath that such an opportunity of doing good should be missed, and therefore sought for him, till they found him.

Mark 1:38

Ver. 38. And he said unto them, let us go into the next towns,.... Instead of returning with his disciples to Capernaum, as they expected he would, and especially since there was such a concourse of people got together, he proposes to go to "the next towns"; or "village cities"; towns that were neither villages, nor cities, but between both, as the word signifies: hence the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions render it, "villages and cities": and it designs such towns in which there were synagogues. The Jews distinguish between walled towns, villages, and large cities {r}. They ask,

"what is a large city? every one in which there are ten leisure men; if less than so, lo! it is a village."

And

"every place in which there were ten Israelites, they were obliged to provide a house into which they might go to prayer, at every prayer time, and that place is called a synagogue {s}."

These were the places Christ judged it advisable to go to; he had preached already at Capernaum, the day before, and had confirmed his doctrine by miracles, which was sufficient for the present, and therefore thought fit to go elsewhere, and orders his disciples to go likewise; for the Syriac version renders it, "go ye to the next cities"; and in the same way read the Arabic and Persic versions:

that I may preach there also; as well as at Capernaum, that so the Gospel may be spread, and have its usefulness in other parts as well as there: the Arabic version renders it, "that we may preach"; both I and you; but without any foundation; nor does the reason following suit such a version,

for therefore came I forth: meaning, not from Simon's house, nor from Capernaum, though there may be a truth in that; for Christ might come from thence, with that view, to preach the Gospel elsewhere; but from God his Father, from whom he came forth, and by whom he was sent to preach the Gospel to other cities also, both in Galilee and Judaea; even to all the inhabitants of that country, to all the lost sheep of the house of Israel; so that this was but answering the end of his coming, and acting according to the commission given him.

{r} Misn. Megilla, c. 1. sect. 1, 2, 3. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 2. 2. & 3. Maimon. Megilla, c. 1. sect. 4, 5, 8. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, affirm. pr. 154. {s} Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 1.

Mark 1:39

Ver. 39. And he preached in their synagogues,.... Which were in the next towns, in the village cities, and

throughout all Galilee: taking every town and city in his circuit, he continued preaching the Gospel of the kingdom in one place and another, until he had gone over the whole country:

and cast out devils; as out of the souls, so out of the bodies of men, whereby he confirmed the doctrine he preached.

Mark 1:40

Ver. 40. And there came a leper to him,.... After he was come down from a certain mountain, in Galilee, where he had been preaching to the people, **Mt 8:1**, and when be was in a certain city, **Lu 5:12**, either Capernaum, or some other city of Galilee. This man was full of leprosy, as Luke says, and very probably deemed incurable; of the nature and symptoms of the leprosy, See Gill on "Lu 5:12",

beseeching him; to cure him of his leprosy:

and kneeling down to him; in token of submission, respect, and reverence, and to worship him:

and saying unto him, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean; See Gill on "Mt 8:2". Mark omits the word "Lord".

Mark 1:41

Ver. 41. And Jesus, moved with compassion,.... At the sad and deplorable case the poor man was in, being a merciful high priest, and not with a desire of popular applause, and vain glory:

put forth his hand and touched him; though the leprosy was spread all over him, and there was no place clean, and touching him was forbidden by the law:

and saith unto him, I will be thou clean; See Gill on "Mt 8:3".

Mark 1:42

Ver. 42. And as soon as he had spoken,.... The above words,

immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed; from it, and which seems to be done not by touching him, but by the words spoken, which were accompanied with such power, as to effect the cure in an instant; See Gill on "Mt 8:3".

Mark 1:43

Ver. 43. And he straitly charged him;.... Either with the sin which had been the cause of this leprosy, and to take care that he sinned that sin no more, lest a worse evil should befall him; for sin was usually the cause of leprosy, as the cases of Miriam, Gehazi, and Uzziah show. It is said to come upon men for seven things. The seven abominations mentioned in **Pr 6:16**, are said, by the Jewish writers {t}, to be the reasons of persons being stricken with leprosy: "a proud look"; as appears from the instance of the daughters of Zion, **Isa 3:16**, the crowns of whose heads were smitten with a scab, and who were attended with a stink, boldness, and burning. "A lying tongue"; as in the case of Miriam, who, with Aaron, spoke against Moses; upon which the cloud departed from the tabernacle, and Miriam became leprous, white as snow, Nu 12:1. "And hands that shed innocent blood"; which is proved from Joab, on whose head the blood of Abner and Amasa returned; and on account of which a leper was not to fail from his house; see **1Ki 2:31**, compared with **2Sa 3:29**. "An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations"; which was fulfilled in Uzziah, who sought to bring the high priesthood into contempt, and therefore was smitten with leprosy, which arose in his forehead, while he had the censer in his hands, and was contending with the priests; and he continued a leper to his death, 2Ch 26:18. "Feet that be swift in running to mischief"; which was true of Gehazi, who ran after Naaman the Syrian, and took a gift of him which he should not; for which, the leprosy, Naaman was cured of, seized him, and cleaved unto him, **2Ki 5:20**. "A false witness that speaketh lies"; of this no instance is given. "And him that soweth discord among brethren"; as Pharaoh between Abraham and Sarah; wherefore the Lord plagued Pharaoh, &c. Ge 12:17, which the Jews understand of the plague of leprosy. These seven things are, in another place {u}, said to be an evil tongue, shedding of blood, a vain oath, uncleanness, a proud spirit, theft, and envy. Elsewhere it is said {w}, that for eleven things leprosy cometh; for cursing God, for uncleanness, for murder, for saying of a neighbour a thing that there is nothing in it, for pride, for entering into a border which is not a man's own, for a lying tongue, for theft, for a false oath, for profaning the name of God, for idolatry: and R. Isaac says, for an evil eye; and the Rabbins also say, it comes upon him who despises the words of the law: the first is proved from Goliath, 1Sa 17:26; the second from the daughters of Jerusalem, **Isa 3:16**; the third from Cain, **Ge 4:15** and from Joab, **2Sa 3:29**; the fourth from Moses, **Ex 4:5**; the fifth from Naaman, **2Ki 5:1**; the sixth from Uzziah, 2Ch 26:16; the seventh from Miriam, Nu 12:10; the eighth and ninth from **Zec 5:4**, compared with Le 14:45; the tenth from Gehazi, **2Ki 5:20**; the eleventh from the children of Israel when they made the calf, Ex 32:25, compared with **Nu 5:2**. But whether this man's sin was either of these, or what it was, is not certain: however, he was, by this cure, laid under an obligation, for the future, to avoid it, and all other sins: or rather the charge was to tell no man of his cure, before he came to the priest: nor to him, or any other, how he came by it, and by whom he was healed;

and forthwith sent him away; to the priest, in all haste; and it looks as if the man was unwilling to have gone from him, but chose rather to have continued with his kind benefactor: for the word signifies, he cast him out; he drove him from him; he obliged him to go without delay.

{t} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 16. fol. 158. 1, 2. {u} T. Bab. Eracin, fol. 16. 1. Vid. Abarbinel. in 2 Kings v. 27. {w} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 188. 2, 3.

Mark 1:44

Ver. 44. And saith unto him, see thou say nothing to any man,.... By the way, till he came to the priest;

but go thy way, show thyself to the priest: the Syriac and Persic versions read, "to the priests"; and the Vulgate Latin renders it, "to the chief priest"; but any priest might judge of the cleansing of a leper;

and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them; See Gill on "Mt 8:4".

Mark 1:45

Ver. 45. But he went out,.... Either out of the synagogue; for in **Mr 1:39**, it is said, that Christ preached in their synagogues, &c. and in **Mr 1:40**, "there came a leper to him"; and Luke very, plainly suggests, that he was in the city, **Lu 5:12**, and he might be in the synagogue: and this was allowed a leper, according to the Jewish canons, provided some rules were observed; which were these {x}:

"if a leper enters into a synagogue, they make for him a partition ten hands high, and four cubits broad; he enters in first, and goes out last:"

or, it may be, he went out of the house where he was, into the city, and parts adjacent; for it seems as if the cure was done privately: and yet a leper was not allowed to enter into a house {y};

"if he did, all the vessels which were there, i.e. all the goods in the house were defiled, even to the very beams. R. Simeon says, as far as four cubits. R. Judah says, if he stayed so long as the lighting of a lamp."

And began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter; contrary to the charge Christ gave him; though this might be done by him, not out of disobedience to Christ, but out of a transport of joy for the mercy received; and perhaps with a good intention to spread the fame and glory of his Saviour:

insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city; of Capernaum, or whatever city it was, where this cure was wrought, without a crowd of people about him, and danger from them, at least from his enemies, who envied his applause and glory.

But was without in desert places; devoid of inhabitants, where he spent his time in prayer:

and they came to him from every quarter; whenever the people could learn where he was: so agreeable was his doctrine to some; and so useful his miraculous work of healing to others.

{x} Misn. Negaim, c. 13. sect. 12. {y} Ib. sect. 11.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 2:1

Ver. 1. And again he entered into Capernaum after some days,.... After he had been preaching in the synagogues throughout Galilee, and after he had spent some days in prayer, and private retirement in desert places: and it was noised that he was in, the house; a report was spread throughout the city that he was in the house of Simon and Andrew, where he was before, and where he used to be when in Capernaum.

Mark 2:2

Ver. 2. And straightway many were gathered together,.... From all parts of the city,

insomuch that there was no room to receive them; in the house: by which it should seem to be a large one, though not large enough to hold such a numerous company as were got together:

no, not so much as about the door; or the places before the door, the porch, the court, or courtyard. The crowd was so great, that neither the house, nor the out places before, could hold them, nor could they come even near the door;

and he preached the word unto them. The Ethiopic version renders it, "he spake his own word to them that came to him"; he preached the Gospel, the word of grace and truth, of life and salvation, to as many as could come near him, and were within the hearing of him. To me it seems, that our Lord went up into an upper room, and out of the window preached to the people, that were, in great numbers, without doors; and the following narrative seems to confirm this conjecture.

Mark 2:3

Ver. 3. And they came unto him,.... A considerable body of people, townsmen, friends, and relations of the person after mentioned:

bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four; carried by four men upon their shoulders, as if he was a dead carcass; so weak and enfeebled was he by his disease, that he could not walk, or be otherwise brought; or rather upon a bed, which four men, at the four comers of it, carried in their hands; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "four men carried him on a bed"; and certain it is, by what follows, that he was brought upon a bed. This man's case appears to be a very bad one, and what seems to be incurable by the art of medicine: it was not a slight touch of the palsy, but a general one, which had deprived him of motion and sensation. The palsy is a disease, whereby the body, or some of its parts, lose their motion, and sometimes their sensation or feeling: the causes of it are an impeded influx of the nervous spirits into the villi, or the muscles, or of the arterious blood into their vessels; which may happen from some fault either in the brain, the nerves, muscles, or their vessels. The palsy is said to be "perfect", or complete, when there is a privation of motion and sensation at the same time; "imperfect", when one of the two is destroyed, the other remaining. The palsy again is either "universal, lateral", or "partial". The "universal" palsy, called also "paraplegia", or "paraplexia", is a general immobility of all the muscles that receive nerves from the cerebrum, or cerebellum, except those of the head--its cause is usually supposed to reside in the ventricles of the brain, or in the root of the spinal marrow.--The "lateral" palsy, called also "hemiplegia", is the same disease with the "paraplegia", only that it affects but one side of the body. Its cause is the same, only restrained to one side of the brain, or spinal marrow. The "partial" palsy is where some particular part, or member, alone is affected; as, for instance, where the motion of the arm, or leg, is destroyed {z}. Now this man's disease seems to be the perfect and general palsy, which affects the whole body, or the "paraplegia", which reaches every part but the head; whereby all sense, as well as motion, are destroyed, and sometimes only one of them: but in this case it seems as if both of them were lost: that he was motionless, is clear from his being carried by four persons; and it looks as if he had lost his feeling, since he is not said to be grievously tormented, as the centurion's servant is said to be, **Mt 8:6**, whose disease seems to have been of the partial or imperfect kind; or however, though it deprived him of motion, yet not of sensation; his might be a kind of scorbutic palsy. This man is an emblem of a sinner in a state of nature, who is insensible of his condition, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, of his danger and misery to which he is exposed, of his lost and undone state, of the necessity of the new birth, and of the need of salvation by Jesus Christ; and who, as he is destitute of spiritual life, can have no spiritual motion to come to Christ for life and salvation, or any spiritual strength and activity to move in, or perform any thing that is spiritually good: and as the friends of this man took him, and brought him to Christ, and laid him down before him, hoping he might receive a cure from him, though from what appears, it was unasked by him, as he did; so it becomes the friends and relations of unregenerate persons, who have received the grace of God themselves, and are in a sound and safe estate, to be concerned for them; to bring them under the means of grace, where they may be brought to a sense of their sins, and to a comfortable view of the free and full forgiveness of them, as this man: and this should be done, even though there may be difficulties in the accomplishment of it, as there were in this case, as is manifest from what follows.

{z} Chambers's Cyclopaedia, in the word "palsy".

Mark 2:4

Ver. 4. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press,.... To the room where Jesus was, nor into the house, nor even to the door, the crowd about it was so great,

they uncovered the roof where he was. The Arabic version reads it, "they went up to the roof"; and the Persic thus, "they carried him up upon the roof". The place where Christ was, seems to be an upper room; for in such an one the Jewish doctors used to meet, and discourse together about religious matters; see **Ac 1:13**. Though some think this was a mean house in which Christ was, and had no upper room, but the ground floor was open to the roof, through which the man, sick of the palsy, was let down on his bed to Christ; and the rather, because the people crowded about the door to get in, and there was no room to receive them, no not about it: but even from this circumstance it seems most reasonable, that there was an upper room in which Christ was, and at a window in which he might preach to the people, with much more convenience, than at, or about the door, where they were pressing: for, certain it is, that he did preach the word to them, **Mr 2:2**, and many instances may be given of the above mentioned doctors, whose usages, when indifferent, and not sinful, might be complied with by Christ, as these were, of their meeting and conversing together in upper rooms. Instead of many, take the few following {a}:

"It happened to Rabban Gamaliel, and the elders, who were sitting hyyleb, "in an upper room in Jericho", that they brought them dates, and they did eat, &c,"

Again {b},

"these are some of the traditions which they taught, tyyleb, "in the upper chamber" of Hananiah ben Hezekiah, ben Garon."

So it is likewise said {c}, that

"R. Tarphon, or Tryphon, and the elders, were sitting "in the chamber" of the house of Nithzah, in Lydda, and this question was asked before them, is doctrine greatest, or practice greatest?"

Once more {d},

"the elders of the house of Shammai, and the elders of the house of Hillell, went up, tyylel, "to the upper chamber" of Jochanan ben Bethira, and said, that the Tzitzith, or fringes, had no measure, &c."

Now, over this upper room, was a flat roof, with battlements about it; for so the Jews were obliged to build their houses, De 22:8, to which they had a way of going to and from, both within and without side their houses; See Gill on "Mt 24:17". Hence we so often read {e} of twgg Krd, "the way of the roofs", in distinction from Myxtp Krd "the way of the doors"; by which they entered into their houses, and by which means, things might be carried from a court to a roof, and from a roof to a court; about which the doctors dispute, saying, that on a sabbath day {f},

"it is forbidden to ascend and descend from the roofs to the court, and from the court to the roofs; and the vessels, whose abode is in the court, it is lawful to move them in the court, and which are in the roofs, it is lawful to move them in the roofs.--Says Rabbi, when we were learning the law with R. Simeon at Tekoah, we brought up oil, and a confection of old wine, water, and balsam, from roof to roof, and from roof to court, and from court to court, and from the court to a close, and from one close to another, till we came to the fountains, in which they washed. Says R. Judah, it happened in a time of danger, and we brought the book of the law from court to roof, and from roof to court, and from court to a close, to read in it."

Now, in these roofs, there was a door, which they call, twgg xtp, "the door of the roofs" {g}; now when they had brought up the sick man to the roof of the house, by a ladder fastened on the outside, which was common {h}; they took up this door, and let him down in his bed into the room where Jesus was: and because they wrenched the roof door open with violence, therefore it is said,

and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay: opening the door, and perhaps taking up the frame of it, and removing some tiles about it, to make the way wider, they let down with ropes, the bed, and the man on it, together. The Persic version thus renders it, "and the paralytic man being put upon a bed, at the four corners of the bed so many ropes being fastened, they let him down through a window to Jesus, into the place where he was sitting"; which is rather a paraphrase, or exposition of the words, than a translation.

{a} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 37. 1. {b} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 12. 1. & Misn. Sabbat, c. 1. sect. 4, {c} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 40. 2. Vid. T. Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 30. 2. & T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 74. 1. {d} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 41. 2. Vid. Targum in Cant. iii. 4. {e} T. Pesach. fol. 92. 1. Moed. Katon, fol. 25. 1. Cetubot, fol. 10. 2. Gittin, fol. 81. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 88. 1, in 117. 1. {f} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 91. 1. & Hieros. ib. fol. 25. 3. {g} T. Hieros. Erubin, fol. 26. 2. {h} Gloss. in T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 117. 1.

Mark 2:5

Ver. 5. When Jesus saw their faith,.... The faith of the sick man, and his friends, who seemed confident, that could they get at Christ, a cure would be wrought: the faith of the one appears in suffering himself to be brought in such a manner, under so much weakness; and with so much trouble; and of the other in bringing him, and breaking through so many difficulties to get him to Christ.

He said unto the sick of the palsy, son, thy sins be forgiven thee; pointing and striking at the root of his disorder, his sins. Christ calls him son, though, in this afflicted condition a person may be a child of God, and yet greatly afflicted by him; afflictions are not arguments against, but rather for sonship: "for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" He scourgeth every son whom he receiveth, and by chastising them, dealeth with them as with sons; and such as are without chastisement are bastards, and not sons,
Heb 12:6, yea he calls him a son, though a sinful creature, and who had not, as yet, until these words were spoken by Christ, any discovery and application of pardoning grace unto him: he was a son of God by divine predestination, being predestinated to the adoption of children: he was a son by virtue of the covenant of grace, he was interested in, as appears by his enjoying pardon of

sin, a blessing of it; which runs thus, "I will be their Father, and they shall be my sons and daughters", **2Co 6:18**. He was one of the children which were given to Christ as in such a relation: and for the sake of whom Christ was now a partaker of flesh and blood, and in a little time was to die for them, in order to gather them together, who were scattered abroad. The blessing Christ conferred on this poor man is of the greatest consequence and importance, forgiveness of sin: it is what springs from the grace and mercy of God; it is provided in a promise in the covenant of grace; Christ was sent to shed his blood to procure it, in a way consistent with the holiness and justice of God; and this being done, it is published in the Gospel, and is a most considerable article in it, and than which, nothing can be more desirable to a sensible sinner: and blessed are they that are partakers of it, their sins will never be imputed to them; they will never be remembered more; they are blotted out of God's book of debts; they are covered out of his sight, and are removed as far as the east is from the west, even all their sins, original and actual, secret or open, of omission, or commission; See Gill on "Mt 9:2".

Mark 2:6

Ver. 6. But there were certain of the Scribes sitting there,.... In the upper room where Jesus was, to watch and observe what he said:, and did:

and reasoning in their hearts; upon the above words of Christ, in the following manner.

Mark 2:7

Ver. 7. Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies?.... They took Christ to be a mere man, and reasoned with themselves, that he must be a blasphemer, in assuming that to himself, which was peculiar to God: they seem astonished at his words, and wonder at his arrogance, and to be filled with indignation and resentment at him; saying,

who can forgive sins but God only? this was a generally received maxim with them, and a very just one. The Chaldee paraphrase of
Job 14:4, runs thus;

"who can give a pure man out of a man that is defiled with sins, but God, who alone is he, hyl qwbvy yd, "that can pardon him?""

They even deny that Metatron, so they call the angel in Ex 23:20, of whom they say, that his name is as the name of his master, has a power of forgiving sins; for which reason the Israelites rejected him as a messenger {i}. They were right in saying, that none but God could forgive sin, against whom it is committed; but wrong in charging Christ with blasphemy on this account; because he is truly God, as well as man, as his omniscience and omnipotence hereafter manifested, did abundantly show. That no mere creature can forgive sin, is certain: good men may, and ought to forgive one another, and even their very enemies; but then they can only forgive sin as an injury done to themselves, not as committed against God. The ministers of the Gospel may be said to remit sins ministerially, or declaratively, by preaching the doctrine of pardon, declaring, that such as believe in Christ shall receive the remission of sins; but for any man to assume such a power to himself, as to grant pardons and indulgences, to absolve from sins, is anti-christian, as the pope of Rome does; in which he takes that to himself, which is peculiar to God; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God, **2Th 2:4**. Nor can any man procure the forgiveness of his sins by any thing he has, or can do; not by his riches, which will not profit in a day of wrath, they being not a sufficient ransom price for a man's self, or any of his brethren and friends; nor by his repentance, for though this, and remission of sins, go together in grace and experience, yet repentance is not the cause of remission of sins, but rather the effect of remission applied; nor by his faith, for faith does not procure, but receives this blessing: and much less by good works, for then the forgiveness of sins would not be according to the riches of grace; and a man would be saved by his works, since a principal part of salvation lies in the pardon of sin; and besides the blood of Christ would be shed in vain. That God only can forgive sin, is evident, because it is against him, and him only, that men sin: sin is a transgression of his law, a contrariety to his nature, and a contradiction of his will, an affront to his justice and holiness, a contempt of him, who is the lawgiver, that is able to save and to destroy; it is of the nature of a debt, which he only can loose from. Moreover, if there were any besides himself that could forgive sin, he would have one equal with him, and like unto him; whereas, "who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?" **Mic 7:18**. This is a prerogative peculiar to him, which he challenges to himself: "I even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions", Isa 43:25, but then this is common to all the three divine persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit. The Father, he has prepared this grace in his own heart; for the moving cause of it, is his sovereign grace and mercy; he has promised and secured it in the covenant of his grace; he set forth, and sent forth his Son to obtain it, by the shedding of his blood, that so his justice might he satisfied; and it is for

Christ's sake he forgives all trespasses. The Son of God is concerned in it: as man, his blood was, shed for it; and that being the blood, not of a mere man, but of him that is God, as well as man, it was effectual to that purpose; it is in his name that it is preached, and he is exalted as a Saviour to give it; and as the advocate of his people he calls for it, and requires it; and as he is truly and properly God, he has equal power to bestow it, and apply it as his Father. The holy Spirit, as he makes men sensible of their need of it, he shows it to them, and their interest in it; he sprinkles the blood of Christ upon their consciences, and declares them pardoned through it; he bears witness of the truth of it to them, and seals it up unto them; so that it is wholly of God.

{i} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 38. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

Mark 2:8

Ver. 8. And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his Spirit,.... "His own Spirit", as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; not his human soul, nor the holy Spirit of God, though both may be said to be his Spirit; but his divine nature, in and by which he knew all things, even the most sacred thoughts of men's hearts: and as soon as ever the above thoughts were conceived in the minds of the Scribes and Pharisees, they were perceived by him, and told to them,

that they so reasoned within themselves; he said unto them, why reason ye these things in your hearts? thereby reproving them, not for reasoning and concluding in their own minds, that none but God can forgive sins; but for imputing blasphemy to him, for pronouncing this man's sins pardoned; he being God, as well as man, of which his knowing the thoughts and reasonings of their minds might have been a convincing proof.

Mark 2:9

Ver. 9. Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy,.... This question was put to them by Christ, in order to prove his deity, and clear himself from the charge of blasphemy; for he that could cure the sick of the palsy, by a word speaking, had power to forgive him his sins: and therefore proposes it to them, which was easiest to say,

thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? Both

of them were easy to say, but not with power and effect: they were both instances of divine power, and proofs of deity; and only he that could do the one, could do the other, and the one was as easy to be performed, by a divine person, as the other: and though it may be hard to say which is the greatest instance of power, or the strongest proof of deity, to pardon a sinner, or to cure a paralytic by a word speaking; perhaps forgiveness of sin may be the greatest evidence of divine power and goodness; however, it is certain, it is a greater blessing to be pardoned, than to be cured of a palsy; yet curing of a palsy, in the manner in which Christ did it, was a more sensible proof of his deity to the Scribes and Pharisees, than pronouncing a man's sins forgiven; because this was visible, and could not be denied; whereas the other, though pronounced, they might question whether it had its effect: but by the one, which they would see done before their eyes, there would be left no room for them to doubt of the reality of the other;
See Gill on "Mt 9:5".

Mark 2:10

Ver. 10. But that ye may know that the son of man,.... Meaning himself, who was really man, and the true Messiah, in which sense this phrase had been used in the writings of the Old Testament; see
Ps 80:17, and though by reason of his outward form; and mean appearance, he might be thought by them to be but a mere man, and had no right, nor authority, to say what he had; in order to convince them; he affirms, that he

hath power on earth to forgive sins. As there is an emphasis lies on the phrase, "the son of man", suggesting, that his being so was no contradiction to his deity, nor any hindrance to the exertion of his power; so there is another on those words, "upon earth"; intimating, that though he was upon earth, in a very low estate, in a state of humiliation, yet he had the same power to forgive sin as in heaven; his humbling himself in human nature did not strip him of his perfections, power, and prerogative as God: and if he had power on earth to forgive sin, there can be no room to doubt of it now he is in heaven; since as mediator, he is "exalted to be a prince, and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins", **Ac 5:31**, And that it might appear he had such a power on earth,

he saith to the sick of the palsy; turning to, and addressing him in the following words, with great majesty, authority, and power;
See Gill on "Mt 9:6".

Mark 2:11

Ver. 11. I say unto thee, arise, and take up thy bed,.... He bid him, in an authoritative way to arise from his bed, in which he was brought, and on which he lay before him, and take it up upon his shoulders, directly, and in the face of all the people, carry it away:

and go thy way into thine house; to show himself whole to his family and friends, and go about his business; See Gill on "Mt 9:6",

Mark 2:12

Ver. 12. And immediately he arose,.... Power going along with the words of Christ, he found himself perfectly well; and at once sprung up from off his bed,

and took up his bed, upon his shoulders, with all the ease imaginable:

and went forth before them all: the Scribes and Pharisees, and the whole multitude of the people, who were eyewitnesses of this wonderful cure: or "against them all"; for being strong and robust, he made his way through the crowd, with his bed on his back;

insomuch that they were all amazed; at the power of Christ, and the strength of the man:

and glorified God, saying, we never saw it on this fashion; or any thing like this in our days. They easily perceived it was a preternatural action, and what could never be done by any mere man; they therefore attribute it to God, and give him the glory of it; they celebrated the perfections of God, particularly his power, and his goodness, which were very visible in this instance; they praised him and his works, and gave thanks to him for this wonderful cure, which was wrought; and that he had given such power to Christ, who they looked upon to be but a man; though they might have concluded from hence that he was God, to perform such mighty works: and these that glorified God, and expressed their thankfulness for this instance of his kindness to men, were not the Scribes and Pharisees, who had charged Christ with blasphemy; for the miracles of Christ rarely, if ever, had such an effect upon them, as to acknowledge that they were from God, and that Christ performed them by a divine power, but rather by a diabolical influence. We never read of their praising God, and glorifying him for any thing that was done by Christ; but generally went away, after a miracle, hardened, and full of spite and malice, going and consulting together how to take away his life. But these were the "multitude", as Matthew says, who attended on the ministry of Christ, and followed him from place to place, and had a high opinion of him, as a great and good man; though they did not believe in him as the Messiah, and did not know him to be the Son of God; See Gill on "Mt 9:8",

Mark 2:13

Ver. 13. And he went forth again by the sea side,.... The sea of Galilee, where he had met with, and called Peter and Andrew, James and John; and not far from which were the solitary place, and the desert places, where he was before he entered into Capernaum:

and all the multitude resorted unto him; who had been with him at Peter's house, and about the door, and those who could not get near him:

and he taught them; the word of God, the Gospel, and the doctrines of it.

Mark 2:14

Ver. 14. And as he passed by,.... As he went from Simon's house, and from the city of Capernaum, to go to the sea side:

he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus; the same with Matthew, **Mt 9:9**, and son to the same Alphaeus as James was, Mt 10:3, Beza's most ancient copy reads "James", instead of "Levi", very wrongly; but he was the brother of James, and also of Simon and Jude; so that there were four brothers of them apostles: and if Joses, called Barsabas, was the same Joses that was brother to these, as seems probable, a fifth was put up for an apostle, though the lot fell on Matthias. James, and Joses, and Simon, and Jude, are mentioned together, Mt 13:55, because they lived together, and were men of religion and seriousness, and known by their neighbours; but Matthew, or Levi, is not mentioned: it is thought, by some, probable, that he was a loose, extravagant young man, and so might depart from his father's family, and enter into this scandalous employment of a publican; and herein went contrary to his father's will, Cleophas, or Alphaeus, who was the husband of the sister of Mary, the mother of our Lord:

sitting at the receipt of custom; the toll booth, or custom house, where he sat to take toll of passengers that came, or went in ships or boats, The Syriac version renders it, "sitting among the toll gatherers"; and the Persic, "among publicans"; not only signifying the business in which he was, but the company he was among; which makes the grace of Christ the more illustrious and distinguishing, in looking upon him, and calling him:

and said unto him, follow me; and he arose, and followed him. Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, who came to seek, in order to save that which was lost, was now locking up his lost sheep; and Matthew, or Levi, being one of them, he finds him, and calls him by his grace. Christ is always first with his people; he first seeks them, and then they seek him; he first finds them, and then they find him; yea, he is found of them that sought him not. Levi took no notice of him, inquired not about him, and had no thought of leaving his employ; and going after him, but Christ knew him: his eye was upon him as he passed by him, and his time was a time of love, and so a time of life; he looked upon him, and said unto him, live; quickening power went along with his words, and he arose, and left all, and followed him: Christ, as the good shepherd, went before; and Levi, through the grace that was now given him, as one of his sheep, heard and knew his voice, and, without the least hesitation or reluctance, quitted his business, and became a follower of him. How powerful is efficacious grace! what is it, it can not do! it turns the heart of a sinner at once, inclines it to Christ, and causes it to leave all for his sake; it at once fills the soul with love to Christ, faith in him, and obedience to him; it works powerfully, and yet freely; it always obtains, and effects what it designs, yet puts no force upon the will: Levi, under the drawings of divine grace, followed Christ most willingly and cheerfully;
See Gill on "Mt 9:9".

Mark 2:15

Ver. 15. And it came to pass, that as Jesus sat at meat in his house,.... In the house of Levi; not in the custom house, or toll booth, for that he left; but in his house in the city of Capernaum, where he had him, and made an entertainment for him, in token of gratitude, for the high favour bestowed on him:

many publicans and sinners sat also together, with Jesus, and his disciples;

being invited by Levi, and not objected to by Christ;
See Gill on "Mt 9:10".

for there were many, and they followed him; either Christ whom they had observed to have called Matthew, and had heard preach by the sea side; or else Matthew; and so the Persic version renders it, "for many followed Matthew". The Ethiopic version reads the words, "and they were many", that is, publicans and sinners, "and the Scribes and Pharisees followed him"; mentioned in the next verse, from whence it seems to be taken; though true it is, that not only a large number of publicans and sinners followed Christ, but also many of the Scribes and Pharisees; yet with a different view from the former, not to get any advantage to themselves, but, if they could, an advantage against Christ.

Mark 2:16

Ver. 16. And when the Scribes and Pharisees saw him eat,.... They were offended at his eating and drinking, though it was in moderation; because he did not fast as they, and their disciples did; and especially, that he eat

with publicans and sinners; men of very infamous characters, and bad lives, with whom the Pharisees disdained to keep company:

they said unto his disciples, how is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, "your master", See Gill on "Mt 9:11"; so some Greek copies here.

Mark 2:17

Ver. 17. When Jesus heard it, he saith to them,.... Christ either overheard what they said to his disciples, or he heard it from the relation of the disciples; and when he did, he turned to the Scribes and Pharisees, and spoke to them the following words:

they that are whole, have no need of the physician, but they that are sick; which seems to be a proverbial expression, signifying that he was a physician; that these publicans and sinners were sick persons, and needed his company and assistance; but that they, the Scribes and Pharisees, were whole, and in good health, in their own esteem, and so wanted no relief; and therefore ought not to take it amiss, that he attended the one, and not the other. These words give a general view of mankind, in their different sentiments of themselves and of Christ; and of the usefulness of Christ to one sort, and not another. There are some that cry up the power of man's freewill, and plead for the strength and purity of human, nature, and extol its excellencies and abilities; and it is no wonder that these see no need of Christ, either for themselves or others: hence preachers of this complexion leave Christ out of their ministry for the most part; and generally speaking, lessen the glory and dignity of his person, depreciate his offices, reject his righteousness, and deny his satisfaction and atonement: and such reckon themselves the favourites of heaven, and are ready to say, whom shall God delight to honour, but us, who are so pure and holy? they therefore trust in their own righteousness, and despise others, and submit not to the righteousness of Christ; they make their own works their saviours, and so neglect the great salvation by Christ. There are others that are sick, and are quite sick of themselves; they see the impurity of their nature, how unsound and unhealthful they are; that from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness in them, nothing but wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores: their loins are filled with the loathsome disease of sin; they are sensible of their inability to cure themselves, and that no mere creature can help them; and that all besides Christ, are physicians of no value: and therefore they apply to him, whose blood is a balm for every wound, and a medicine for every sickness and disease, and which cleanses from all sin: and whereas such, and such only, see their need of Christ as a physician, these only does he attend under this character; See Gill on "Mt 9:12". Adding this as a reason,

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. These words explain, what is more obscurely and figuratively expressed in the former; it appears from hence, that by "the whole" are meant, "righteous" persons; not such who are made righteous, by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, but such who were outwardly righteous before men, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, depended on their own righteousness, and fancied themselves, with respect to the righteousness of the law, blameless; and so, in their own apprehensions, stood in no need of Christ and his righteousness: yea, even needed not repentance, according to their own thoughts of things, and therefore were not called to it, but were left to their own stupidity and blindness; these were the Scribes and Pharisees; and by the "sick", are meant "sinners"; such who are made sensible of sin, and so of their need of Christ as a Saviour; and who have evangelical repentance given them, and are called to the exercise and profession of it: and Christ's calling sinners to repentance, and bestowing that grace, together with the remission of sins, which goes along with it, is doing his work and office as a "physician". This evangelist makes no mention of the passage in **Ho 6:6**, with which these words are introduced in

Matthew. The last words, to "repentance", are omitted by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and are wanting in some ancient copies; but are retained in the Arabic version, and in most copies, as in **Mt 9:13**. See Gill on "Mt 9:13".

Mark 2:18

Ver. 18. And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast,.... Or "were fasting"; perhaps that very day, and so were the more displeased at this entertainment, Matthew had made for Christ and his disciples, and at their being at it; or fasting was usual with them: they fasted often, both John's disciples, and the disciples of the Pharisees, or the Pharisees themselves; so the Vulgate Latin reads: of their frequent fasting, See Gill on "Mt 9:14",

and they came: both the disciples of John, **Mt 9:14**, and the Scribes and Pharisees, **Lu 5:30**,

and say unto him, why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? See Gill on "Mt 9:14".

Mark 2:19

Ver. 19. And Jesus said unto them,.... Both to John's disciples and the Pharisees,

can the children of the bride chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? Suggesting that he was the bridegroom, as John their master had called him, **Joh 3:29**, and that his disciples were the children of the bride chamber; and that it was very unsuitable for them, and very unreasonable to desire them to fast at such a time, and under such a character: wherefore the answer returned by Christ himself to the question is,

as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast: all which the Syriac version expresses by al, "no": see Gill "Mt 9:15".

Mark 2:20

Ver. 20. But the days will come,.... As they were in some sense now come to the disciples of John, their master being taken up by Herod, and confined in prison, and so it was a mourning time with them:

when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days: referring to the time of the sufferings and death of Christ, which would be, and was a sorrowful season to his disciples.

Mark 2:21

Ver. 21. No man also seweth a piece of new cloth, The traditions of the elders are meant, particularly concerning eating and drinking, and fasting, things before spoken of; and which occasioned this parable, and which were new things in comparison of the commands of God: some of them were of very short standing, devised in, that age; and most, if not all of them, were since the times of Ezra.

On an old garment; the moral and ceremonial righteousness of the Jews, in obedience to the law of God; signifying, that the former were not to be joined with these, to make up a justifying righteousness before God; which were not sufficient for such a purpose, either singly, or both together:

else the new piece that filled it up, taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse; for by attendance to the traditions of the elders, the Jews were taken off from, and neglected the commandments of God; nay, oftentimes the commands of God were made void by these traditions, so that the old garment of their own righteousness, which was very ragged and imperfect of itself, instead of being purer and more perfect, became much the worse, even for the purpose for which it was intended; See Gill on "Mt 9:16".

Mark 2:22

Ver. 22. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles,.... By "old bottles" are meant, the Scribes and Pharisees, the whole, which needed not a physician, and the righteous, Christ came not to call; and by new wine, either the love of God, which is not shed abroad in the hearts of such persons; or the blessings of the new covenant, which are not bestowed upon them; or the Gospel, which brings an account of both, which is not received by carnal men:

else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: the Gospel will only fill them with rage and fury, and they will despise it, and let it go; which will be an aggravation of their sin and misery, and so will prove the savour of death unto death unto them:

but new wine must be put into new bottles; into the hearts of sinners, who are called to repentance, and are renewed in the Spirit of their minds; are newborn babes, that desire the sincere milk of the word, and wine of the Gospel; in these the love of God is exceeding abundant, and it comes in with full flows into their souls; all grace is made to abound towards them, and the word of Christ richly dwells in them; in whom these things remain and abide, and they themselves are saved with an everlasting salvation;
See Gill on "Mt 9:17".

Mark 2:23

Ver. 23. And it came to pass,.... The Vulgate Latin adds, "again"; and so Beza says it was read in one of his copies:

that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day, and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn, and to rub them, and get the grain out of them, and eat them;
See Gill on "Mt 12:1".

Mark 2:24

Ver. 24. And the Pharisees said unto him,.... To Christ, the same they said to his disciples, **Lu 6:2**.

Behold, why do they on the sabbath day, that which is not lawful? see how they pluck the ears of corn and rub them, and eat things, which by the law, especially by the traditions of the elders, were not lawful to be done on the sabbath day; See Gill on "Mt 12:2".

Mark 2:25

Ver. 25. And he said unto them,.... By way of answer to their question, and which was a full one, and enough to silence them:

have ye never read what David did; referring to the history in 1Sa 21:1.

when he had need: of bread, was in great necessity, and in the utmost distress:

and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him? which was a justifiable reason for what he and his company did; as it was for the action of the disciples; being in a like case, and therefore very appropriate to the purpose; See Gill on "Mt 12:3".

Mark 2:26

Ver. 26. How he went into the house of God,.... The tabernacle; for the temple was not yet built: thither David went to get bread for himself and his men, being hungry: so in a spiritual sense, where should such go, who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, but into the house of God? Here is bread enough, and to spare; here is a table furnished with excellent provisions; here the Gospel is dispensed, which is milk for babes, and meat for strong men; here Christ, the bread of life, is set forth, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed; here the ordinances are administered, which are breasts of consolation to the children of God; here is a feast of fat things, all things are ready, and souls are welcome, and therefore it must be right to attend here. And this was on the sabbath day that David went into the house of God: when the showbread loaves were removed, and divided, among the priests, and new ones were placed in their room: and so under the Gospel dispensation, on the Lord's day, the day set apart for public worship, it becomes the saints to go up to the house of the Lord, and feed upon the provisions of it: they are a royal priesthood, they are priests, as well as kings to God; and their business is in the house of the Lord, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to him; and as the goodness and fulness of his house appertains to them, they do well to attend and partake thereof.

In the days or Abiathar the high priest: and yet from the history it is clear, that it was in the days of Ahimelech the high priest, the father of Abiathar; wherefore the Jew charges {k} Mark with an error, and Matthew and Luke too: whereas the two last make no mention of the name of any high priest; and it might be observed, that in the Persic version of Mark it is rendered, "under Abimelech the high priest"; and in an ancient copy of Beza's, the whole clause is omitted; though it must be owned, that so it is read in other Greek copies, and in the ancient versions, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and others:

wherefore let it be further observed, that the fact referred to was done in the days of Abiathar, though it was before he was an high priest; and the particle epi may be so rendered, about, or "before Abiathar was high priest", as it is in **Mt 1:11**. Besides, Abiathar was the son of an high priest, and succeeded his father in the office: and might be at this time his deputy, who acted for him, or he by has advice; and according to a rule the Jews {l} themselves give,

"the son of an high priest, who is deputed by his father in his stead, rwma lwdg Nhk yrh, "lo! he is called an high priest"."

So that Abiathar might at this time be called the high priest; and is the rather mentioned, because he was the more eminent and famous man; and whom the Jews call {m} Urim and Thummim, because there was much inquiry made by them; in his and his father's days, and very little after: to which may be added, that the names of the father and the son are sometimes changed; Ahimelech is called Abiathar, and this Abiathar is called Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar, **2Sa 8:17**, and Abimelech the son of Abiathar, 1Ch 18:16. And it seems as if both father and son had two names, and were sometimes called by the one, and sometimes by the other: for as the father is sometimes called Abiathar, the son is called Ahimelech, or Abimelech, as in the places mentioned; and which refer to the times when David was king of Israel, and long after the death of Saul, and consequently long after Ahimelech, and the rest of the priests at Nob, were killed by the order of Saul: wherefore Ahimelech, or Abimelech, in the said places, must be the son of Abiathar; and who afterwards was thrust out of the priesthood by Solomon, for joining with Adonijah in his usurpation, **1Ki 1:25**. And from whence it appears, that his father was called Abiathar also, and which some take to be their family name; and if so, then there is no difficulty, and the evangelist rightly says, that this affair was in the days of Abiathar: but be it that he intends the son, what has been before observed is a sufficient solution of this difficulty; for the evangelist does not say that Abiathar was high priest, when David came and eat the showbread; he only says, "it was in the days of Abiathar the high priest": for certain it is, that this happened in his days; and as certain, that he was an high priest; and Mark might with great propriety call him so, though he was not strictly one, till after this business was over: besides, he was not only the son of an high priest, and it may be his deputy, and some have thought officiated at this time, his father being sick or infirm through old age; but inasmuch as his father was directly killed by the order of Saul, he narrowly escaping, immediately succeeded him in the office of the high priesthood; and therefore his being an high priest so very near the time of this action, without any impropriety and impertinence, and especially without incurring the charge of falsehood, the evangelist might express himself as he does.

And did eat the showbread, which is not lawful to eat, but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? Who not only ate the showbread, which was set before the Lord, and was sacred, and which none but the priests might eat of, after it was removed from the table; but he did this on the sabbath day; and he not only eat of it himself, but the soldiers that were with him: and all this with the knowledge and leave of the high priest: for the Jews {n} have no reason to charge this evangelist and the others with an error, that others besides David ate of the showbread, urging that he came alone to Ahimelech; since it is evident from 1Sa 21:2,

that David had servants in company with him when he fled, though they did not attend him when he went to the high priest; and that he asked bread, and it was given him, not only for himself, but for the young men that he had appointed to be at such a place: and therefore, if this was allowed to David and his men, when hungry, it ought not to be charged as an evil upon the disciples, for plucking and rubbing a few ears of corn to satisfy their hunger, though on a sabbath day; and especially when he, who was Lord of the sabbath, was present, and admitted of it; See Gill on "Mt 12:4".

{k} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 9. c. 28. p. 419. {l} Siphra, fol. 17. 2. apud Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, par. 2. p. 73. {m} Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 16. 2. {n} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 28. p. 420. Jacob Aben Amrara apud Kidder, Demonstr. of the Messiah, par. 3. p. 48.

Mark 2:27

Ver. 27. And he said unto them,.... Continuing his answer to them, and adding, in confirmation of what he had said, and for the further vindication of his disciples,

the sabbath was made for man; for his good, and not for his hurt; both for the good of his soul, that he might have an opportunity of attending divine worship, both in public and private; and for the good of his body, that he might have rest from his labour; and this was the end of the original institution and appointment of it; and therefore works of necessity are not forbidden on this day; such as are for the necessary comfort, support, and preservation of life; or otherwise it would be apparent, that the sabbath was not appointed for the good, but for the hurt of men. By "man", is not meant all mankind; for the sabbath was never appointed for all mankind, nor binding upon all; only the Jews, who are emphatically called "man", or "men"; see Eze 34:30, upon which the Jewish writers remark {o}, that

"they are called, Mda, "man"; but the idolatrous Gentiles, and nations of the World, are not called "men";"

but dogs, beasts, &c. Our Lord may here be thought to speak in their language, as he does in Mt. 15:26, See Gill on "Mt 15:26". And that the observation of the seventh day, was only designed for the children of Israel, seems manifest from Ex 31:16, "wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant; it is a sign between me and the children of Israel"; and not between him and the rest of the world: and in Ex 31:14, "ye shall keep the sabbath, for it is holy unto you": on which the Jews {p} make this remark, Nymme ravl alw Mkl, "to you, and not to the rest of the nations": nor did they ever think that the Gentiles were obliged to observe their sabbath, only such who became proselytes to their religion; even those who were proselytes of righteousness: for a proselyte of the gate, was not bound to observe it; for so says {q} Maimonides,

"those who take upon them the seven commandments of Noah only, lo! they are as a proselyte of the gate, and they are free to do work on the sabbath day for themselves, openly, as an Israelite on a common day."

Yea, they not only say, they were not obliged to keep the sabbath, but that it was not lawful for them to observe it; and that it was even punishable with death them to regard it; for so they say {r},

"a Gentile that keeps the sabbath before he is circumcised, is guilty of death, because it is not commanded him."

They judged them unworthy of having this precept enjoined them, as being not men, but beasts, and worse than they, and had not the privilege the ass has: hence one of their commentators {s} says,

"concerning the rest of an ass, thou (O Israelite!) art commanded; but concerning the rest of a Gentile, thou art not commanded."

And not man for the sabbath; who was in being long before that was appointed and enjoined.

{o} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 114. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 35. 4. {p} Zohar in Exod. fol. 26. 4. {q} Hilchot Sabbat, c. 20. sect. 14. {r} Debarim Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 234. 4. {s} Bartenora in Misn. Sabbat, c. 24. sect. 1.

Mark 2:28

Ver. 28. Therefore the son of man is Lord also of the sabbath. Meaning himself, who had a power not only to dispense with it, but to abrogate it as he did, with the rest of the rituals of the ceremonial law; See Gill on "Mt 12:8". So that it did not become them to find fault with what his disciples did, with his leave and approbation.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 3:1

Ver. 1. And he entered again into the synagogue,.... Perhaps in Capernaum, where he had before cast out the unclean spirit; but not on the same day, nor on that day he had had the debate with the Pharisees, about his disciples plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day; but on another sabbath, perhaps the next; see **Lu 6:6**.

And there was a man there which had a withered hand; who came there either for a cure, knowing Christ to be in the synagogue, or for the sake of worship; See Gill on "Mt 12:10".

Mark 3:2

Ver. 2. And they watched him,.... The ruler of the synagogue, and the principal men in it; particularly the Scribes and Pharisees, who followed him wherever he went; they observed him diligently, and kept their eyes upon him; this lame man being in the synagogue, to see

whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; which, knowing his readiness to do good, they might expect he would:

that they might accuse him; as they had accused his disciples before, of the violation of the sabbath: according to the Evangelist Matthew, they put a question to him, whether it was lawful to heal on the sabbath day? with this view, that they might, one way or another, have something to accuse him of, either to the people, or to the sanhedrim; See Gill on "Mt 12:10".

Mark 3:3

Ver. 3. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand,.... After he had reasoned with them from the lesser to the greater, upon their own principles and practices, in relieving and taking out a sheep fallen into a ditch, on a sabbath day, Mt 12:10, and knowing "their thoughts", as Luke says, **Lu 6:8**, their reasonings and designs; and as the Persic version here, from thence "understanding their conspiracy", turns himself to the lame man, and bids him

stand forth: or, as in Luke, "rise up and stand forth in the midst", **Lu 6:8**. He bid him rise up from his seat, and stand forth in the midst of the synagogue: this he said, partly to raise the attention of the people to the following miracle; and partly to move commiseration upon the sight of the object; and to aggravate the hard heartedness of the Pharisees; as also, that it might be manifest to all, that the man's hand was really withered; and that there was no fraud in the following cure.

Mark 3:4

Ver. 4. And he saith unto them,.... Either to the whole multitude, to all the assembly in the synagogue; and so the Persic version renders it, "again he said to the multitude"; or rather, to the Scribes and Pharisees, who were watching him, and had put a question to him, which he answers by another:

is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil, to save life, or to kill? The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, or "to destroy", as in **Lu 6:9**, To do evil, kill, or destroy, are not lawful at any time; and to do good, and to save life, must be right at all times: our Lord has a particular view to the Scribes and Pharisees, and the question is put home to their own consciences; whose hearts and thoughts, designs and views, were all open to Christ; and who were now watching to do evil to him, and even to destroy and take away his life: for the violation of the sabbath was death by the law, and this was what they sought to accuse him of: now he puts the question to them, and makes them judges which must appear most right and just in the sight of God and men, for him to heal this poor man of his withered hand, though on the sabbath day; which would be doing a good and beneficent action to him, whereby his life would be saved, and preserved with comfort and usefulness, and he would be in a capacity of getting his livelihood; or for them to cherish an evil intention against him, to seek to bring mischief on him; and not only destroy his character and usefulness as much as in them lay, but even take away his very life also: he leaves it with them to consider of which was most agreeable to the law of God, the nature of a sabbath, and the good of mankind;

but they held their peace; or "were silent", not being able to return an answer, but what must have been in his favour, and to their own confusion, and therefore chose to say nothing.

Mark 3:5

Ver. 5. And when he had looked round about on them,.... In the several parts of the synagogue; for there were many of them on every side of him; which he might do, to observe their countenances, which might justly fall, upon such a close question put to them, and what answer they would return to him: and his look upon them was

with anger, with a stern countenance, which showed indignation at them, though without sin, or any desire of revenge, for the evil they were meditating against him; for at the same time he had pity and compassion for them,

being grieved for the hardness of their hearts: or "the blindness of their hearts", as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it; being troubled in his human soul, both at their inhumanity and cruelty to a miserable object, whose cure, in their opinion, would have been a breach of the sabbath; and to himself, having a malicious design against him, should he perform it; and at their stupidity and ignorance of the law of God, the nature and design of the sabbath, and of their duty to God, and their fellow creatures: wherefore as one not to be intimidated by their evil designs against him, or prevented thereby from doing good,

he saith unto the man, stretch forth thine hand; that is, the lame one; and such power went along with his words, as at once effected a cure:

and he stretched it out, and his hand was restored whole as the other. This last clause, "whole as the other", is not in the Vulgate Latin, nor in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; and may be added from Mt 12:13; see the note there; since it is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in Beza's most ancient copy, and in others.

Mark 3:6

Ver. 6. And the Pharisees went forth,.... Out of the synagogue, being dreadfully galled with the reasonings of Christ, at the silence and confusion they were put to, and with the miracle he wrought, to the exposing of them, and establishing his own credit:

and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him:
See Gill on "Mt 22:16".

How they might destroy him: persisting still in their evil intentions, though Christ had so fully and clearly exposed the wickedness of them: and it is to be observed, that those men who thought it was not lawful to heal a lame man on the sabbath day, yet make no scruple of meeting and consulting together on that day, and even with profane men, what measures and methods were best to take, to destroy the life of an innocent person.

Mark 3:7

Ver. 7. But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea,.... Knowing their evil designs against him, he departed out of the synagogue, and city of Capernaum; and taking his disciples with him, he went to the shore of the sea of Galilee; not out of fear, but because his time was not yet come, and he had more work to do:

and a great multitude from Galilee: from the several parts of it, in which country he now was:

and from Judea: that part of the land of Israel, which was particularly so called, and belonged to the tribe of Judah.

Mark 3:8

Ver. 8. And from Jerusalem,.... The metropolis of the country of Judea;

and from Idumea, or Edom, as the Syriac version reads it; a country that lay on the south of Judea, formerly inhabited by the sons of Edom, but now by Jews; or at least the inhabitants of it were proselytes to the Jewish religion. Mention is made of the plains of Idumea, along with Gazera, Azotus, and Jamnia, as in 1 Maccabees:

"Howbeit all the hindmost of them were slain with the sword: for they pursued them unto Gazera, and unto the plains of Idumea, and Azotus, and Jamnia, so that there were slain of them upon a three thousand men." (1 Maccabees 4:15)

Pliny {t} speaks of Idumea and Judea together, as a part of Syria; and Ptolemy says {u}, this country lies on the west of the river Jordan; and it is here added,

and from beyond Jordan; the country of Peraea, on the east of Jordan:

and they about Tyre and Sidon; either the inhabitants of these places, as the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions favour, reading "a great company from Tyre and Sidon"; or those that lived near the borders, and upon the confines of these cities of Phoenicia:

a great multitude; when all met together, from these several parts; who

when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him: for his fame went through all the countries, for the miracles he wrought; which drew this vast concourse of people after him; and who, inquiring where he was, came to him at the sea of Galilee.

{t} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 12. {u} Geograph. l. 5. c. 16.

Mark 3:9

Ver. 9. And he spake unto his disciples,.... In an authoritative way; he ordered and commanded them,

that a small ship should wait on him: that a boat should be got ready, be near at hand, and attend him, who was on shore; that he might go into it, should there be any occasion for it; and from thence preach to the people:

because of the multitude; which came from the above parts, and all together made a very numerous body of people:

lest they should throng him; crowd, press, afflict, and distress, and make him uneasy, that he could not be able to stand conveniently, and preach to them: so that should this be the case, as it was very likely it would, having a small vessel near the shore, he could go into it, and free himself from such an inconvenience.

Mark 3:10

Ver. 10. For he had healed many,.... Of various diseases, and the fame of this brought more still to him:

insomuch that they pressed upon him; or pushed upon him, with great eagerness and violence. The Arabic version renders it, "they rushed upon him, so that they fell": they pushed on, and pressed so hard to get to him, that they fell upon one another, and on him: the Persic version renders it, "they cast themselves on him, for the sake of touching him"; which must be very troublesome indeed. Though some think the phrase signifies no more, than that they fell down before him at his feet, in a submissive and petitionary way, entreating they might have the favour

for to touch him; either any part of his body, or his garments, even the hem of them: and so the Ethiopic version translates the words; "they prayed him that they might touch him"; see **Mr 6:56**.

As many as had plagues; of leprosy, and other diseases, which were inflicted on them by God, as scourges and chastisements for their sins, as the word signifies, and which answers to Myegn, "Negaim"; concerning which, there is a whole treatise in the Misna; and which bears that name, and particularly regards the plagues of leprosy. Some versions join this with the beginning of the next verse. The Syriac version reads thus, "who had plagues of unclean spirits"; as if these plagues were their being possessed by unclean spirits. The Persic version thus, "having plagues from unclean spirits"; as if these plagues were inflicted upon them by them, and which was sometimes the case. The Arabic version after this manner, "who had diseases and unclean spirits"; both the one and the other.

Mark 3:11

Ver. 11. And unclean spirits, when they saw him,.... That is, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "they who had unclean spirits": or, as the Ethiopic, "they that were possessed with unclean spirits"; as soon as ever they beheld Christ, though they had never seen him before, and he was an entire stranger to them, yet

fell down before him: the unclean spirits being said to do that, which they that were possessed with them did; and which, notwithstanding their possession of them, they could not prevent, but were obliged to admit of it, as a token of their subjection to Christ:

and even the devils themselves in the men,

cried, saying, thou art the Son of God; a divine person, equal with God; and such his power over them, and his healing all manner of diseases, by a word, or touch, showed him to be.

Mark 3:12

Ver. 12. And he straitly charged them,.... Or vehemently rebuked them, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; or threatened them much and vehemently, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic. The Persic version renders it, "threatened many"; both the devils that confessed him, and the many that were healed of their diseases: he gave them a strict and severe charge,

that they should not make him known; or "his work", as the Arabic, his miracles: he sought not vain glory and popular applause, nor did he need the testimony of men or devils; and especially did not choose the latter, lest his enemies should traduce him, as having familiarity with them, as they did.

Mark 3:13

Ver. 13. And he goeth up into a mountain,.... Near Capernaum, being solitary, and a place of recess and retirement, "to pray", as Luke says, **Lu 6:12**, who adds, "and continued all night in prayer to God", notwithstanding the great fatigue of the day past. His prayer, as is very probable, was chiefly concerning the great and important work, which was upon his mind, and he was about to do; the making and constituting twelve of his disciples, as his apostles, to preach in his name, and work miracles:

and calleth unto him whom he would; that is, "when it was day", as the above evangelist observes; when he called his disciples, such as had been for some time followers of him, as many of them as he thought fit: for it seems by the same evangelist, that others were called to him besides the twelve; and out of them he chose them: the phrase "whom he would", is in the Arabic version rendered, "whom he loved"; and it is a common observation of expositors, that the choice and call of the apostles to office, were not according to their will, works and merits, but according to the sovereign will and grace of Christ, who chose them, and not they him: but to me there seems no foundation for such a remark here, though it is a truth; because this regards not the call of the twelve only, and much less of them to office, but a call of many of the followers of Christ to come to him on the mountain:

and they came unto him; as many as he called out of the multitude; and from among these he made the following choice.

Mark 3:14

Ver. 14. And he ordained twelve,.... Or made, constituted, and appointed twelve men, out of those he called to him. The Arabic version adds, "and called them apostles"; which seems to be taken out of **Lu 6:13**.

That they should be with him; constantly, in private and in public; be taken into his family, and reckoned such; be his familiars, and privy to all his affairs; hear all his discourses, and see his miracles; that so they might be trained up and fitted for the great work he designed them for:

and that he might send them forth to preach; the Gospel in Judea first, and then in all the world: for he did not at this time send them to preach, only chose; called, and appointed them; and after they had been with him some time, and were better qualified for such service, he sent them forth, as in Mt 10:1, for this constitution of them was before that mission, and was in order to it.

Mark 3:15

Ver. 15. And to have power to heal sicknesses,.... All manner of corporeal diseases that attend men and women:

and to cast out devils; from such who were possessed with them: that is, he chose and appointed them to be his apostles, with a view of conferring such powers upon them hereafter; for as yet, they were not vested with them, nor sent out to exercise them; no, not till near twelve months after.

Mark 3:16

Ver. 16. And Simon he surnamed Peter. Or Cephas, which signifies a rock, or stone, because of his courage and constancy, his strength and fortitude, steadiness and firmness of mind: this name was imposed upon him, not at the time of his mission as an apostle; nor when he made that noble confession of his faith in Christ, as the Son of the living God, at which time this name was taken notice of; but when Christ first called him to be his disciple and apostle; see **Joh 1:42**.

Mark 3:17

Ver. 17. And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James,.... These are mentioned next, as being first called after Peter and Andrew:

and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, the sons of thunder: either because of their loud and sonorous voice; or their warm zeal for Christ, and fervency in their ministry: or for their courage in opposing the enemies of Christ, and the power that went along with their words; which either put to confusion and silence, or issued in conviction and conversion. The Syriac version reads, "Benai Regesh", and the Persic, "Beni Reg'sch". The Jews, as our learned countryman Mr. Broughton has observed {w}, sometimes pronounce "Scheva" by on, as Noabyim", for "Nebyim"; so here, "Boanerges" for Benereges", or "Benerges". There is a city which was in the tribe of Dan, mentioned in Jos 19:45, which is called "Bene-berak, the sons of lightning"; and is spoken of in the Jewish {x} writings, as a place where several of the Rabbins met, and conversed together: the reason of this name may be inquired after.

{w} Broughton's Requ. of Consent, in his Works, p. 620. {x} Haggada Shel Pesach. p. 6. Ed. Rittangel. & in Seder Tephillot, Ed. Basil, fol. 243. 1. Juchasin, fol. 36. 1.

Mark 3:18

Ver. 18. And Andrew,.... The brother of Peter;

and Philip, who was of Bethsaida;

and Bartholomew, whom Dr. Lightfoot thinks is the same with Nathaniel: the name may be the same with Nwymlt rb, "Bar Talmion", with the Jews {y};
See Gill on "Mt 10:3".
See Gill on "Joh 1:41".

and Matthew, the publican, who was called Levi;

and Thomas, who was called Didymus, from his being a twin;

and James, the son of Alphaeus, to distinguish him from the other James, the son of Zebedee, and who is sometimes called "the less";

and Thaddaeus, whose name was also Lebbaeus, and likewise Jude, the author of the Epistle that bears that name;

and Simon the Canaanite, or Zelotes; of these men, and their several names,
See Gill on "Mt 10:2".
See Gill on "Mt 10:3".
See Gill on "Mt 10:4".

{y} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 6. fol. 151. 1.

Mark 3:19

Ver. 19. And Judas Iscariot,.... So called to distinguish him from the other Judas; and is mentioned last for the following reason:

which also betrayed him; and which action of his will ever render his name infamous among men. This man, with the rest, our Lord chose to be an apostle of his, though he knew he would betray him; in order to fulfil the purposes of God, the prophecies of the Old Testament, and bring on the work of man's redemption he came into the world to perform.

And they went into an house at Capernaum; the house of Simon and Andrew, where Jesus used to be when there: they went home with him from the mountain; and from that time became his domestics, and were looked upon by him as his family, and were admitted to the greatest nearness and intimacy with him.

Mark 3:20

Ver. 20. And the multitude coming together again,.... Either the multitude that were about the door of this house; insomuch that there was no room about, nor any coming near it, **Mr 2:2**, or the multitude that came from different parts, and had thronged about him at the sea side, before he went up into the mountain: these understanding that he was come down from thence, and was returned to Capernaum, and was at Simon's house, flocked thither, in great numbers, to see his person, hear his doctrines, and observe his miracles;

so that they could not so much as eat bread; the press was so great, and their importunities so urgent, either to hear him preach, or have their sick healed, that Christ, and his disciples, had neither room nor opportunity to eat some food for the refreshment of nature; though it was very necessary, and high time they had, especially Christ, who had been up all night, which he had spent in prayer; and had been very busy that morning in calling and appointing his apostles, and instructing them what they should do.

Mark 3:21

Ver. 21. When his friends heard of it,.... Not his spiritual friends, his disciples and followers, that believed in him; but his kinsmen, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render the words, who were so according to the flesh; when they heard where he was, and what a crowd was about him, so that he could not so much as take the necessaries of life for his refreshment and support,

they went out to lay hold on him: either out of their houses at Capernaum, or they went forth from Nazareth, where they dwelt, to Capernaum, to take him from this house, where he was thronged and pressed, along with them; where he might have some refreshment without being incommoded, and take some rest, which seemed very necessary: so that this was done in kindness to him, and does not design any violent action upon him, in order to take him home with them, and to confine him as a madman; though the following words seem to incline to such a sense;

for they said, he is beside himself: some render it, "he is gone out": that is, out of doors, to preach again to the people, which they might fear would be greatly detrimental to his health, since, he had had no sleep the night before; had been much fatigued all that morning, and for the throng of the people could take no food; so that for this reason they came to take him with them, to their own habitations, to prevent the ill consequences of such constant exercise without refreshment. Moreover, though this may not be the sense of the word, yet it is not to be understood of downright madness and distraction, but of some perturbation of mind, which they imagined, or heard, he was under; and answers to a phrase frequently used by the Jews, that such an one, wted hprjn, "his knowledge is snatched away", or his mind is disturbed; which was sometimes occasioned by disorder of body: so it is said {z},

"a deaf woman, or one that is foolish, or blind, hted
hprjnvw, or "whose mind is disturbed"; and if there are any wise women, they prepare themselves, and eat of the oblation."

On that phrase, "whose mind is disturbed", the note of Maimonides is,

"it means a sick person, whose understanding is disturbed through the force of the disease:"

and was sometimes the case of a person when near death {a}: and it was usual to give a person that was condemned to die, and going to be executed, a grain of frankincense in a cup of wine, wted Prjtv
ydk, "that so his knowledge may be snatched away", or his mind disturbed {b}, and: be intoxicated; that so he might not be sensible of his pain, or feel his misery; in all which cases, there was nothing of proper madness: and so the kinsmen and friends of Christ, having heard of the situation that he was in, said one to another, he is in a transport and excess of mind; his zeal carries him beyond due bounds; he has certainly forgotten himself; his understanding is disturbed; he is unmindful of himself; takes no care of his health; he will certainly greatly impair it, if he goes on at this rate, praying all night, and preaching all day, without taking any rest or food: wherefore they came out, in order to dissuade him from such excessive labours, and engage him to go with them, where he might have rest and refreshment, and be composed, and retire.

{z} Misn. Nidda, c. 9. sect. 1. {a} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 63. 1. {b} Ib. fol. 43. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 10, fol. 198. 4.

Mark 3:22

Ver. 22. And the Scribes which came down from Jerusalem,.... Or, "but the Scribes", &c. who had an aversion to Christ, and a different opinion of him: these were they, who having heard much of the doctrine and miracles of Christ, came down from Jerusalem, which lay in the upper, and higher part of the land of Israel, into Galilee, a low country, to make their observations upon him; and take every advantage they could against him, being men, in their way, letter learned, and artful, and cunning: these

said, he hath Beelzebub: or, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it, "Beelzebub is in him": sometimes they call him Beelzebub; sometimes say that he cast out devils by him; and here, that he had him, or was in him; Beelzebub possessed him, and assisted him, and there was a confederacy and familiarity between them:

and by the prince of devils casteth he out devils; for so they reckoned Beelzebub to be; See Gill on "Mt 10:25",
See Gill on "Mt 12:24".

Mark 3:23

Ver. 23. And he called them unto him,.... The Jerusalem Scribes, to come nearer to him, and attend to what he had to say in defence of his character and miracles:

and said unto them in parables: similitudes, and proverbial expressions, as the following seem to be,

how can Satan cast out Satan? or one devil cast out another? how unreasonable is it to suppose it? can it ever be thought that such, whose interest it is to unite, would ever oppose and dispossess one another? if therefore, as if he should say, I am Beelzebub, or have him, and he is in me, and I am in confederacy with him; was this the case, can any think I should ever cast him out of others, as I do?

Mark 3:24

Ver. 24. And if a kingdom be divided against itself,.... Any of the kingdoms of this world, and the kingdom of "Satan":

that kingdom cannot stand: not long; its internal broils and divisions will, soon bring it to desolation; See Gill on "Mt 12:25".

Mark 3:25

Ver. 25. And if a house be divided against itself,.... Any family, small or great,

that house cannot stand; its contentions and discords will soon bring it down from a comfortable and flourishing situation, to a very distressed one; See Gill on "Mt 12:25".

Mark 3:26

Ver. 26. And if Satan rise up against himself,.... As he must do in such a case as this, if devils are cast out by Beelzebub, the prince of devils:

and be divided; one devil against another, as the above calumny supposes;

he cannot stand, but hath an end: his kingdom cannot stand long, but must soon come to an end; his power and authority will soon be destroyed, both over his own species, and among men;
See Gill on "Mt 12:26".

Mark 3:27

Ver. 27. No man can enter into a strong man's house,.... This is properly a parable; the other seem to be proverbs, or sayings, that were commonly used to show the ill consequences of discords, factions, and divisions, as is explained in the note on
See Gill on "Mt 12:29".

Mark 3:28

Ver. 28. Verily I say unto you,.... The Scribes and Pharisees, who had not only blasphemed him, but the Spirit of God also:

all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme; God; or the Son of God, angels, and men, and that through the blood of Christ, and when brought to a sense of the evil of them; for though pardon is procured before, it is not applied till then; See Gill on "Mt 12:31".

Mark 3:29

Ver. 29. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost,.... Against his person, and the works performed by him, by ascribing them to diabolical power and influence, as the Scribes did,

hath never forgiveness: there is no pardon provided in the covenant of grace, nor obtained by the blood of Christ for such persons, or ever applied to them by the Spirit;

but is in danger of eternal damnation. The Vulgate Latin reads it, and so it is read in an ancient copy of Beza's, guilty of an eternal sin; a sin which can never be blotted out, and will never be forgiven, but will be punished with everlasting destruction;
See Gill on "Mt 12:32".

Mark 3:30

Ver. 30. Because they, said, he hath an, unclean spirit. They charged Christ with having a devil, and his miracles with being wrought by the help of the devil; when, at the same time, they knew in their own consciences they were works which were wrought by the finger and Spirit of God, and so were guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost; the unpardonable sin, for which there is no remission: and this is mentioned as a reason why our Lord said what he did concerning that sin; because they had been guilty of it, and so were liable to everlasting punishment on account of it.

Mark 3:31

Ver. 31. There came then his brethren and his mother,.... At the same time he was speaking to the Scribes, who seem to be different persons from his friends and kinsmen, **Mr 3:21**,

and standing without; for Christ was within, in the house, talking with the Scribes and Pharisees, and preaching to the people; and the crowd being so great, that they could not get into the house; they

sent unto him, calling him: they not only sent one in to let him know who they were, and that they were without doors, desirous to speak with him; but also, with a voice as loud as they could, called to him themselves; See Gill on "Mt 12:46".

Mark 3:32

Ver. 32. And the multitude sat about him,.... In a circle, all around him, to hear him preach; so that there was no such thing as the messenger coming near him; but the message being whispered from one to another, it came to those who sat nearest him:

and they said unto him, behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee: in five of Beza's ancient copies, and in his most ancient one, are added, and thy sisters: agreeably, Christ hereafter makes mention of sister, as well as mother and brother;
See Gill on "Mt 12:47", and so it is read in the Alexandrian copy.

Mark 3:33

Ver. 33. And he answered them,.... The multitude that sat about him, and informed him of his mother and brethren being without, and desirous of speaking with him:

saying, who is my mother, or my brethren? which is said not through ignorance or contempt, but either, as displeased with the interruption given him; or with a view to take an opportunity from hence of expressing his superior value to his spiritual relations; which looks with no favourable aspect on the superstitious notions, and veneration of the virgin Mary among the papists;
See Gill on "Mt 12:48".

Mark 3:34

Ver. 34. And he looked round about on them which sat about him,.... To find out his disciples among them, and point them out particularly, by stretching forth his hand towards them: and said,

behold my mother and my brethren: not in a natural, but in a spiritual sense; his mother, because, in regeneration, he was formed in them; his brethren, because, by adoption, his God was their God, his Father their Father; See Gill on "Mt 12:49".

Mark 3:35

Ver. 35. For whosoever shall do the will of God,.... By believing in Christ, receiving him as a Saviour and Redeemer, and submitting to him in all his ordinances, as King of saints:

the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother: such are openly, and manifestly related to Christ in a spiritual sense; and are as dear to him, and more so, than such persons are who stand in such a relation to others, or did to him according to the flesh. And this shows not only the near relation, and strong affection which Christ has for his people, but that he is not ashamed of them; and it may be concluded, that he will resent, in the keenest manner, every injury that is done them; See Gill on "Mt 12:50".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 4:1

Ver. 1. And he began again to teach by the sea side,.... He went out of the house where he was at Capernaum, the same day he had the above discourse with the Scribes and Pharisees, and on which his mother and: brethren came to speak with him; and from thence he went where he had been before, and taught the people; namely, to the sea side, the shore of the sea of Galilee, or Tiberias:

and there was gathered unto him a great multitude; which followed him from the house, and from other parts of the city, and perhaps from the adjacent places:

so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; in the ship at sea, at some little distance from the shore; the sea of Tiberias being rather a lake, and within land, had no tide, and so was still and quiet:

and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land; stood on the land, all along the sea shore; See Gill on "Mt 13:1",
See Gill on "Mt 13:2".

Mark 4:2

Ver. 2. And he taught them many things by parables,.... As he sat in the ship, and they stood on shore;

and said unto them in his doctrine; as he was teaching them, and delivering unto them the doctrine he had received from his Father: though the Jews say {c}, that

"the Israelites will have no need xyvm Klm lv wdwmltl, "of the doctrine of the king Messiah, in the time to come"; because it is said, "unto him shall the Gentiles seek", and not the Israelites."

But it appears from hence, and many other places, that the Israelites both stood in need of his doctrine, and sought after it; and very excellent it was; the doctrine of God, and of the grace of God; and was spoken with authority, and in such a manner as never man spake, and which he delivered to his apostles; and which, if ministers bring not with them, should not be bid God speed.

{c} Bereshit Rabba, sect 98. fol. 85. 3.

Mark 4:3

Ver. 3. Hearken, behold, there went out a sower to sow. By whom is meant Jesus Christ, who came forth from God as a teacher, and went out into the land of Judea to preach the Gospel, which is sowing spiritual things among men; and this may be also applicable to any faithful minister of the word.

Mark 4:4

Ver. 4. And it came to pass, as he sowed,.... Whilst he was preaching the, Gospel, casting about the precious seed of the word, he was laden with:

some fell by the way side; the common beaten path: the word was dispensed among some men comparable to it, on whom it lighted, but made no impression; there it lay, though not long, and was not inwardly received, and took no root, and consequently was of no effect:

and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up; the devils, who have their abode in the air, especially the prince of the posse of them; and the Syriac version reads it in the singular number, "and the fowl came"; that ravenous bird of prey, Satan, who goes about seeking what he may devour; and for this purpose attends where the word is preached, to hinder its usefulness as much as in him lies.

Mark 4:5

Ver. 5. And some fell on stony ground,.... The word was preached to some persons who had hearts of stone, and which remained so:

where it had not much earth; and so could be received only in a notional and superficial way, but could take no place, so as to produce any good effect:

and immediately it sprung up; a sudden and hasty profession of the word was made, without a powerful experience of it:

because it had no depth of earth; if it had, it would have been longer in coming up; more work would have been done by it, which would have required more time, before a profession of it had been made.

Mark 4:6

Ver. 6. But when the sun was up, it was scorched,.... When persecution arose because of the word, and that became very hot and vehement, it tried and pierced through this thin speculative knowledge of the word, which could not stand before it, and bear the heat of it:

and because it had no root, it withered away; the word had only a place in the head, and not in the heart; wherefore the profession of it was soon dropped, and came to nothing.

Mark 4:7

Ver. 7. And some fell among thorns,.... The word was ministered to some who were eat up with the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and other lusts:

and the thorns grew up, and choked it; the word did not take place so as to beat down, overcome, and root out these things, nor even to weaken, and keep under, and prevent the influence of them; but these got the ascendant of the word, and prevailed over it, and made it altogether useless and unsuccessful: for whilst it was administered, the minds of these persons were after their riches and worldly things, and gave no heed to the word; and last were prevailed upon, not to attend upon it, but drop the profession of it:

and it yielded no fruit; it was not the means of grace; faith did not come by it, nor any other grace; nor did it produce good works in the life and conversation.

Mark 4:8

Ver. 8. And other fell on good ground,.... The word was preached to some whose hearts were disposed by the Spirit and grace of God to receive it; and their understandings were enlightened by it; and they had a savoury and comfortable experience of the truths of it, it coming with power to them; it was a good word to them, and through the grace of God they became good by it; a good work of grace was wrought upon their souls, and they were filled with all goodness and righteousness:

and did yield fruit that sprang up, and increased; they not only appeared, and made an outward profession of the word, and brought forth a little show of fruit, which comes to nothing, as in others; but they were filled with the fruits of righteousness, and increased with the increase of God, and grew in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and continued to bring forth fruit to the end of their lives:

and brought forth some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred; that is, so many fold: in some the word of God produced larger and greater effects; the grace of God was more in exercise in some, than in others, and some were more fruitful and useful; yet in all of them there was true grace, and a measure of it; some degree of lively exercise, and some usefulness.

Mark 4:9

Ver. 9. And he said unto them,.... To the multitude of hearers that were on the sea shore attending to the word preached, and among whom, doubtless, there were all those sorts of hearers mentioned in this parable:

he that hath ears to hear, let him hear: observe, and take notice of what has been said, as being of the greatest moment and importance: for a larger explanation and illustration of this parable, see the notes on Mt 13:3.

Mark 4:10

Ver. 10. And when he was alone,.... After the multitude was dismissed, and he either remained in the ship, or left it, and retired to some private place, it may be to Simon's house in Capernaum. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, "when they were alone"; meaning as follows,

they that were about him with the twelve; that is, such disciples of his, who, besides the twelve, constantly attended him; perhaps those who now were, or hereafter were the seventy disciples. The Vulgate Latin reads, "the twelve that were with him". In Beza's most ancient copy it is read, "his disciples"; and to this agrees the Persic version; and so the other evangelists, Matthew and Luke, relate, that his disciples came and

asked of him the parable; the meaning of it, and why he chose this way of speaking to the people, Mt 13:10, though that word may include others besides the twelve.

Mark 4:11

Ver. 11. And he said unto them,.... His disciples;

unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; or the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, the secrets of the Gospel dispensation, the

mysterious doctrines of grace;
See Gill on "Mt 13:11",

but unto them that are without; "to strangers", as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, who were not the disciples of Christ, nor admitted to any intimacy with him; who came only to amuse themselves with the sight of his person and miracles:

all [these] things are done in parables; are wrapped up in dark sayings, and figurative expressions, the sound of which they heard, and might be pleased with the pretty similes made use of, but understood not the spiritual meaning of them.

Mark 4:12

Ver. 12. That seeing they may see,.... Which the end and reason of his speaking to them in parables. The passage referred to is in **Isa 6:9**.
See Gill on "Mt 13:14".
See Gill on "Mt 13:15".

Mark 4:13

Ver. 13. And he saith unto them, know ye not this parable?.... So easy to be understood, taken from things common, and which fall under every one's observation:

and how then will you know all parables? if not this single one, and which is so plain, how will ye be able to understand the numerous parables hereafter to be related, and which will be much more difficult?

Mark 4:14

Ver. 14. The sower soweth the word. Though our Lord thought fit to give the above gentle rebuke to his disciples for their dulness; yet he condescends to favour them with an interpretation of the above parable, which here begins: by this it appears, that the seed in the parable, before delivered, and which fell on different sorts of ground, is the word of God, which was preached to hearers of different dispositions: the word is the word of life and truth; the word of peace and reconciliation; the word of faith and righteousness; the word of salvation; the word which publishes and declares all these to be in and by Jesus Christ.

Mark 4:15

Ver. 15. And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown,.... Such hearers are represented by the way side, in which the seed fell; who, coming where the Gospel is preached, stop awhile and hear it, and so are only casual and accidental hearers of it:

but when they have heard; and indeed whilst they are hearing, and before they are well got out of the place of hearing,

Satan cometh immediately and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. The devil, signified by the fowl, or fowls of the air, immediately takes notice of such hearers, and is very busy with them; filling their minds with other things suitable to their dispositions, and setting before them other objects, whereby their minds are, at once, taken off from what they have been hearing; so that all that they have observed, and laid up in their memories, is lost at once, and never thought of any more.

Mark 4:16

Ver. 16. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground,.... Such sort of hearers of the word are signified by the stony ground, on which the seed were sown, who are constant hearers of the word, and have some understanding of it, and some sort of affection for it, and yet their hearts are not truly broken by it; they are not brought to a thorough sight and sense of sin, and of their need of Christ, and salvation by him; their stony hearts are not taken away, and hearts of flesh given them:

who when they have heard the word immediately receive it with gladness; seem highly pleased, and greatly delighted with it, as being a well connected scheme things; and which declares things, as heaven and eternal happiness, which they, from a principle of self love, are desirous of enjoying.

Mark 4:17

Ver. 17. And have no root in themselves,.... The word has no root in their hearts, only in their natural affections: nor is the root of grace in them; there is no heart work, only speculative notions, and flashy affections:

and so endure but for a time: they continue hearers and professors of the Gospel but for a small season; like the Jews, who rejoiced in the ministry of John the Baptist for a while, and then left him:

afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. As soon as any small degree of trouble comes upon them, and especially when there is a hot persecution of the professors of religion, because of the Gospel they have embraced; such hearers are stumbled at these things, and cannot bear the loss of any thing, or endure any thing severe for the sake of the word they have professed a pleasure in; and therefore, rather than suffer, they relinquish at once their profession of it.

Mark 4:18

Ver. 18. And these are they that are sown among thorns,.... Such hearers of the word are designed by the thorny ground, upon which other seed fell, as it was sown, who are of worldly dispositions; who are immoderately careful and anxious about the things of this life, and are bent upon acquiring earthly riches, and gratifying their carnal and sensual appetites:

such as hear the word; who notwithstanding are prevailed upon through custom, or the dictates of their consciences, to attend upon the ministry of the word.

Mark 4:19

Ver. 19. And the cares of this world,.... The perplexing and distressing cares of it to get as much of it as they can, for themselves and families, fill their minds, and possess their souls even when and while they are hearing the word: and the deceitfulness of riches; or riches which are deceitful, especially when trusted in, and being obtained, they do not give the satisfaction they promise: and the lusts of other things entering in: carnal desires after other objects, which are pleasing to the sensual mind, entering into their hearts, and gaining, the ascendant there: choke the word, and it, becometh unfruitful; these being more attended to than the word is, that is quite lost, and becomes useless, and unprofitable.

Mark 4:20

Ver. 20. And these are they which are sown on good ground,.... Such hearers who are intended by the good ground on which other seed fell, are those who are made good men by the grace of God; for there is none good naturally, nor that doeth good, no not one; these are

such who hear the word, and receive it; as the word of God, in whose hearts it works effectually; who receive it not into their heads only, but into their hearts; and having received it, hold it fast, and abide by it in the worst of times:

and bring forth fruit, some thirty fold, some sixty, and some an hundred; all bring forth good fruit of the same quality, though not of the same quantity: for a larger exposition of this explanation of the parable, see the notes on Mt 13:19.
See Gill on "Mt 13:19".
See Gill on "Mt 13:20".
See Gill on "Mt 13:21".
See Gill on "Mt 13:22".
See Gill on "Mt 13:23".

Mark 4:21

Ver. 21. And he said unto them,.... At the same time, after he had explained the parable of the sower; for though the following parabolical and proverbial expressions were delivered by Christ at other, and different times, and some of them twice, as related by other evangelists; yet they might be all of them expressed or repeated at this time, by our Lord, showing why he explained the above parable to his disciples; and that though he delivered the mysteries of the Gospel in parables to them that were without, yet it was not his design that these things should be always kept a secret, and that from all men: for as the Gospel might be compared to seed, so likewise to a candle, the design and use of which is to give light to men: wherefore he asks,

is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed, and not to be set on a candlestick? when a candle is brought into a room, in the night, where company are together, to converse, or read, or work; is it proper that it should be covered with a bushel, or any other hollow vessel? or when brought into a bedchamber, is it right to put it under the bed? is it not most fitting and convenient, that it should be set in a candlestick, and then it will be of use to all in the room? so the Gospel, which is the candle of the Lord, he had lighted up in the evening of the Jewish world, in the land of Judea; it was not his will that it should be always, and altogether, and from all men, covered with parables, and dark sayings, without any explanation of them; but that the light of it should be communicated, especially to them his; disciples, who were to be the lights of the world, and which were to shine openly before men, for their good, and the glory of his heavenly Father; see **Mt 5:14**.

Mark 4:22

Ver. 22. For there is nothing hid,.... In these parables, and figurative expressions used by Christ,

which shall not be manifested, sooner or later, to his disciples:

neither was any thing kept secret; any doctrine of the Gospel, or mystery of the kingdom:

but that it should come abroad; it was designed to be published in all Judea, and afterwards, throughout the whole world, for the benefit of God's chosen ones, to their conversion, comfort, and edification: wherefore it becomes the ministers of the Gospel to keep back nothing that may be profitable to the churches, nor shun to declare the whole counsel of God; but faithfully dispense the mysteries of grace, and commend the truth to every man's conscience, without any fear of men, or dreading the effects and consequences of things: since nothing is declared in the word, or made known, but with a design to be published to others, to answer some divine end and purpose; See Gill on "Mt 10:26".

Mark 4:23

Ver. 23. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. What is now delivered, being very momentous and important; see Mt 11:15.

Mark 4:24

Ver. 24. And he said unto them,.... At the same time, though he had said what follows at another time, still continuing his discourse with his disciples:

take heed what you hear: diligently attend to it, seek to understand it, and lay it up in your minds and memories, that it may be of use to you in time to come, and you may be useful in communicating it to others:

with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you; a common proverb among the Jews, used on various occasions, and to different purposes; See Gill on "Mt 7:2". Here it seems to intimate, that if the disciples carefully hearkened to what they heard from Christ, and studiously laboured to understand it, and faithfully dispensed it to others, in return, a larger measure, and greater degree of spiritual knowledge, would be bestowed upon them: for it follows, and

unto you that hear, shall more be given; that is, that hear so as to understand, keep, and make a good use of what they hear, more shall be communicated to them; they shall have an increase of knowledge in the doctrines of grace, and mysteries of the Gospel.

Mark 4:25

Ver. 25. For he that hath, to him shall be given,.... He that has Gospel light and knowledge, and makes a proper use of it, he shall have more; his path shall be as the path of the just, which shines more and more to the perfect day; the means of grace and knowledge shall be blessed, to him, he attending constantly thereon, that he shall arrive to such a knowledge of the Son of God as to be a perfect man in comparison of others, who are in a lower class; and shall come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, shall grow up to maturity, and be a man in understanding: and he that has the truth of grace, though its beginning is but small, yet that making and keeping him humble, as it always does, he shall have more grace, or that he has shall open and enlarge in its actings and exercises; his faith shall grow exceedingly, he shall abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost; and his love to God, and Christ, and to the saints, shall be greater and greater; and he shall increase in humility, patience, self-denial, &c. and so he that has gifts for public usefulness, and does not neglect them, but stirs them up for the profit of others, he shall have an increase of them; he shall shine as a star in Christ's right hand, and appear brighter and brighter in the firmament of the church:

and he that hath not, from him shall be taken, even that which he hath; or seemed to have, or thought he had, **Lu 8:18**, a saying often used by Christ, both with respect to the ignorant Jews, and professing Christians, and even, as here, to the disciples themselves, respect perhaps being had to Judas. He that has only a speculative notion of the Gospel, and is without any experience and practice of it, in course of time his candle is put out; his light becomes darkness; he drops and denies the truths he held, and relinquishes the profession of them: and he that has only counterfeit grace, a feigned faith, a false hope, and a dissembled love, in due time these will be discovered, and the name of them, and the character he bore, on account of them, will be taken from him: for true grace is never taken away, nor lost; it is a solid, permanent thing, and is inseparable to everlasting glory and happiness: but bare notions of the Gospel, and a mere show of grace, are unstable and transient things; as also are the greatest gifts without the grace of God. Judas had doubtless all the appearance of a true Christian; he had the Gospel committed to him, and the knowledge of it, and gifts qualifying him to preach it, and a commission from Christ for it, yea, even a power of working miracles to confirm what he preached; and yet not having true grace, all was taken away from him, and were of no use unto him in the business of salvation: and so sometimes it is, that even in this life the idle and worthless shepherd has his right arm clean dried up, and his right eye utterly darkened; his ministerial light and abilities are taken away from him; these being either not used at all by him, or used to bad purposes; see Mt 12:12.

Mark 4:26

Ver. 26. And he said,.... He went on saying the following parable, which was delivered at the same time that the parable of the sower was, though omitted by Matthew; and is here placed between that, and the other concerning the grain of mustard seed; which shows the time when it was spoken. The design of it is to set forth the nature of the word, and the ministration of it; the conduct of the ministers of the Gospel, when they have dispensed it; the imperceptibleness of its springing and growth; the fruitfulness of it, when it has taken root, without the help of man; the gradual increase of grace under the instrumentality of the word; and the gathering of gracious souls, when grace is brought to maturity:

so is the kingdom of God; such is the nature of the Gospel dispensation; and such are the things that are done in it, as may fitly be represented by the following;

as if a man should cast seed into the ground: by "the man", is not meant Christ, for he sleeps not; and besides, he knows how the seed springs and grows; but any Gospel minister, who is sent forth by Christ, bearing precious seed: and by seed is intended, not gracious persons, the children of the kingdom, as in the parable of the tares; nor the grace of God in them, though that is an incorruptible and an abiding seed; but the word of God, or Gospel of Christ, so called for its smallness, the diminutive character it bears, and contempt it is had in by some; and for its choiceness and excellency in itself, and in the account of others; and for its generative virtue under a divine influence: for the Gospel is like the manna, which was a small round thing, as a coriander seed; and as that was contemptible in the eyes of the Israelites, so the preaching of the Gospel is, to them that perish, foolishness; and yet it is choice and precious seed in itself, and to those who know the value of it, by whom it is preferred to thousands of gold and silver; and, as worthless and unpromising as it may seem to be, it has a divine virtue put into it; and, under the influence of powerful and efficacious grace, it is the means of regenerating souls, and produces fruit in them, which will remain unto everlasting life: though, as the seed is of no use this way, unless it is sown in the earth, and covered there; so is the Gospel of no use for regeneration, unless it is by the power of God let into the heart, and received there, where, through that power, it works effectually. By "casting" it into the earth, the preaching of the word is designed; which, like casting seed into the earth, is done with the same sort of seed only, and not with different sorts, with plenty of it, and at the proper time, whatever discouragements there may be, and with great skill and judgment, committing it to God to raise it up again: for the faithful dispensers of the word do not spread divers and strange doctrines; their ministry is all of apiece; they always sow the same like precious seed, without any mixture of the tares of error and heresy; and they do not deal it out in a narrow and niggardly way; they do not restrain and conceal any part of truth, but plentifully distribute it, and declare the whole counsel of God; and though there may be many discouragements attend them, many temptations arise to put off from sowing the word; the weather bad, storms and tempests arise, reproaches and persecutions come thick and fast, still they go on; using all that heavenly skill, prudence, and discretion God has given them, preaching the word in season, and out of season; and when they have done, they leave their work with the Lord, knowing that Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God only that gives the increase: and by the "ground", into which it is cast, As meant the hearers of the word, who are of different sorts; some like the way side, others like the stony ground, and others like the thorny earth, and some like good ground, as here; whose hearts are broke up by the Spirit of God, the stoniness of them taken away, and they made susceptive of the good word.

Mark 4:27

Ver. 27. And should sleep,.... That is, the man that casts in the seed, who represents the ministers of the Gospel: and, as applied to them, is not to be understood of natural sleep, and indulging themselves in that; much less of spiritual sloth and indolence, as if they cared not what became of the seed sown, whether it sprung up, and came to any thing, or not; for neither of these belong to the characters of the true ministers of the word: for though bodily sleep in them, as in other men, is necessary for the support of nature, and to put them in a capacity of discharging their work; yet perhaps none have less of it than studious and laborious preachers of the Gospel; and much less do they indulge a spiritual sleep and slothfulness; though this may sometimes attend them, as well as others: but then, whilst they sleep, in this sense, tares are sown, and they spring up, and not the good seed of the word, as in this parable; besides, as they labour in the word and doctrine, by studying and preaching it, so they follow their ministrations with incessant prayers that they be succeeded to the conversion of sinners, and comfort of saints; nor can they be easy, unless they have some seals of their ministry: but rather, this may be understood of the sleep of death; for so it often is, that the seed sown by them does not appear in the fruits of it to the churches of Christ, among whom they have ministered, until after they are fallen asleep in Jesus: though it seems best to understand it of their holy security, confidence, and satisfaction in their own minds, that it will turn to profit and advantage, both to the good of souls, and glory of God, not despairing of success; but having left their work with their Lord, they sit down easy and satisfied, believing that the word shall prosper to the thing whereunto it is sent:

and rise night and day; which shows their diligence and laboriousness, and their constant attendance to other parts of their work, rising up early, and sitting up late, to prepare for, and discharge their ministerial work; and their continued expectation of the springing-up of the seed sown, which accordingly does in proper time:

and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how; it is a mystery in nature, how the seed under the clods, where it dies before it is quickened, should spring and grow up, and bring forth fruit; and so it is in grace, how the word of God first operates on a sinner's heart, and becomes the ingrafted word there; the time when, and much less the manner how, grace, by this means, is implanted in the heart, are not known to a soul itself, and still less to the ministers of the word, who sometimes never know any thing of it; and when they do, not till some time after: this work is done secretly, and powerfully, under the influence of divine grace, without their knowledge, though by them as instruments; so that though the sowing and planting are theirs, all the increase is God's: this may encourage attendance on the ministry of the word, and teach us to ascribe the work of conversion entirely to the power and grace of God.

Mark 4:28

Ver. 28. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself,.... Without any further help, or cultivation from the husbandman; though under the influence of the sun, dews, and showers of rain from heaven: this is said, not to denote that man of himself, upon hearing the word, can bring forth the fruit of grace in himself; he cannot regenerate himself, nor quicken, nor convert himself; he cannot believe in Christ, nor love the Lord of himself; nor repent of his sin, nor begin, or carry on the good work; he can neither sanctify his heart, nor mortify the deeds of the body; or even bring forth the fruits of good works, when converted. For all these things are owing to the Spirit, power, and grace of God: men are regenerated according to the abundant mercy of God, of water and of the Spirit, by the word of truth, through the sovereign will and pleasure of God; and they are quickened, who before were dead in trespasses and sins, and were as dry bones, by the Spirit of God breathing upon them: conversion in the first production, is the Lord's work; "turn thou me, and I shall be turned": faith in Christ is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; and so is repentance unto life; love is one of the fruits of the Spirit, and in short, the whole work of grace is not by might, nor by power of man, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts; who begins and carries on, and performs it until the day of Christ: the work of sanctification, is therefore called the sanctification of the Spirit; and it is through him the deeds of the body are mortified: and indeed, without Christ, believers themselves can do nothing at all; even cannot perform good works, or do any action that is truly and spiritually good. But the design is to show, that as the earth without human power, without the husbandman, under the influence of the heavens, brings forth fruit; so without human power, without the Gospel minister, the word having taken root under divine influence, through the sun of righteousness, the dews of divine grace, and operations of the blessed Spirit, it rises up and brings forth fruit:

first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear; which, as it very aptly describes the progress of the seed from first to last; so it very beautifully represents the gradual increase of the work of grace, under the instrumentality of the word, accompanied with the Spirit and power of God. Grace at first appearance is very small, like the small green spire, when it first shoots out of the earth: light into a man's self, his heart, his state and condition, in the knowledge of Christ, and the doctrines of the Gospel, is but very small; he is one of little faith, and weak in the exercise of it: faith is but at first a small glimmering view of Christ, a venture upon him, a peradventure there may be life and salvation for such an one in him; it comes at length to a reliance and leaning upon him; and it is some time before the soul can walk alone by faith on him: its experience of the love of God is but small, but in process of time there is a growth and an increase; light increases, which shines more and more unto the perfect day; faith grows stronger and stronger; experience of the love of God is enlarged; and the believer wades in these waters of the sanctuary; not only as at first up to the ankles, but to the knees and loins; when at length they are a broad river to swim in, and which cannot be passed over.

Mark 4:29

Ver. 29. But when the fruit is brought forth,.... Unto perfection, and is fully ripe; signifying that when grace is brought to maturity, and faith is performed with power, and the good work begun is perfected; then, as the husbandman,

immediately he putteth the sickle; and cuts it down, and gathers it in;

because the harvest is come; at death or at the end of the world, which the harvest represents: when all the elect of God are called by grace, and grace in them is brought to its perfection, and they have brought forth all the fruit they were ordained to bear, they will then be all gathered in; either by Christ himself who comes into his garden, and gathers his lilies by death; or by the angels, the reapers, at the close of time, who will gather the elect from the four winds; or the ministers of the Gospel, who shall come again with joy, bringing their sheaves with them; being able to observe with pleasure a greater increase, and more fruit of their labours, than they knew of, or expected.

Mark 4:30

Ver. 30. And he said,.... Still continuing his discourse on this subject, and in order to convey to the minds of his disciples clearer ideas of the Gospel dispensation, the success of the Gospel, and the usefulness of their ministration of it, for their encouragement, how unpromising soever things might then be:

whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God, or with what comparison shall we compare it? It was usual with the Jewish doctors, when about to illustrate anything in a parabolical way to begin with such like questions; as, hmwd rbdh hml, "to what is this thing like" {d}? when the answer is to such or such thing, as here.

{d} T. Hieros. Bava Bathra, fol. 16. 2. T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 82. 1. & Sabbat, fol. 108. 1. & passim.

Mark 4:31

Ver. 31. It is like a grain of mustard seed,.... That is, the kingdom of God spoken of in the preceding verse, is like unto a grain of mustard seed; by which is meant, either the Gospel, or the Gospel church state, or the grace of God in the hearts of his people, and it may include them all: the Gospel is so called, because it treats of the two latter; but more especially, because it brings life and immortality to light, or points to the kingdom of heaven, directs the way unto it, and shows what qualifies persons for it, and gives them a claim unto it: and the Gospel church state may be so called, because here Christ dwells, and rules as king; the members of it are his subjects, and the ordinances of it are his laws, to which they are obedient: and the grace of God in the hearts of his people may be so called, because it is a governing principle in them; it reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, and by it Christ reigns in and over them: now the kingdom of God in each of these senses, may be compared to a grain of mustard seed, for the smallness of it, as follows;

which when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth. The Gospel was first preached by very few persons, and these of no figure and account, especially at their first setting out. John the Baptist came preaching the kingdom of God, clothed with a garment of camel's hair, and with a leathern girdle about his loins; our Lord himself made no pompous appearance, there was no form nor comeliness in him; he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, and of a mean descent and occupation; his disciples were fishermen, and illiterate persons; those to whom it was preached, and by whom it was received at first were but few, and these were the poor and the unlearned, and publicans and sinners. The Gospel church state at first, consisted of very few persons, of Christ and his twelve apostles; and at his death, the number of the disciples at Jerusalem, men and women, were but an hundred and twenty; the several Gospel churches formed in the Gentile world, rose from small beginnings; from the conversion of a very few persons, and these the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things. The grace of God in the hearts of his people at first, is very little; it can scarcely be discerned by themselves, and is ready to be despised by others; their light and knowledge, their faith and experience being so exceeding small.

Mark 4:32

Ver. 32. But when it is sown, it groweth up,.... So the Gospel, when it was preached, it spread notwithstanding all the opposition made against it by, the Jews and Gentiles: there was no stopping it; though the Jewish sanhedrim charged the apostles to speak no more in the name of Jesus, they regarded them not; though Herod stretched forth his hands against the church, and killed one apostle, and put another in prison, yet "the word of God grew and multiplied",
Ac 12:1, and Gospel churches when set up, whether in Judea, or among the Gentiles, presently had additions made unto them, and "grew up", as holy temples in the Lord: and wherever the grace of God is really implanted, there is a growing in it, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus:

and becometh greater than all herbs: the Gospel exceeds the traditions of the Jews, and the philosophy of the Gentiles, and any human scheme whatever, in its nature, usefulness, and the largeness of its spread: and the Gospel church state will ere long fill the world, and all nations shall flow unto it; when the Jews shall be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall come, it will be a greater kingdom, than any of the kingdoms of the earth ever were: and the grace of God in the heart, is vastly above nature, and does that which nature can never perform; and which spreads and enlarges, and at last issues in eternal glory:

and shooteth out great branches, so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it: by whom are meant, saints; such to whom the Gospel is come in power, and who have the grace of God wrought in their hearts, who are partakers of the heavenly calling: these come where the Gospel is preached, and where gracious souls are met together, even in the several Gospel churches; where they not only come and go, but where they lodge, abide, and continue, under the shadow of the Gospel, and Gospel ordinances, and that with great delight and pleasure; singing songs of praise to God, for his electing

and redeeming love, and for calling grace, and for all spiritual blessings, and Gospel privileges: for a larger explanation and illustration of this parable, See Gill on "Mt 13:31",
See Gill on "Mt 13:32".

Mark 4:33

Ver. 33. And with many such parables,.... As those of the tares, of the leaven in three measures of meal, of the treasure hid in the field, the pearl of great price, the net cast into the sea, and of the Scribe instructed unto the kingdom of God; which though not related at length here, are by the Evangelist Matthew, in
Mt 13:24 together with others elsewhere:

spake he the word unto them; preached the Gospel to the multitude,

as they were able to hear it: meaning either that he condescended to their weakness, accommodated himself to their capacities, and made use of the plainest similes; and took his comparison from things in nature, the most known and obvious, that what he intended might more easily be understood; or rather, he spoke the word to them in parables, as they were able to hear, without understanding them; and in such a manner, on purpose that they might not understand; for had he more clearly expressed the things relating to himself, as the Messiah, and to the Gospel dispensation, so as that they could have took in his meaning, such were their pride, their wickedness, and the rancour of their minds, that they would have at once rose up, and attempted to have destroyed him.

Mark 4:34

Ver. 34. But without a parable spake he not unto them,.... For the above reason, as well as for the accomplishment of Scripture;
See Gill on "Mt 13:34",
See Gill on "Mt 13:35".

And when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples: after they returned with him from the sea side, to the house in Capernaum, where he usually was when there; see Mt 13:36. The multitude being dismissed, he unfolded and explained all these parables to his disciples, and led them into a large knowledge of himself, and the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; whereby they were furnished for the work he had called them to, and designed them for.

Mark 4:35

Ver. 35. And the same day, when the even was come,.... After he had finished his parables among the multitude, and had explained them to his disciples:

he saith unto them; his disciples,

let us pass over unto the other side: that is, of the sea of Galilee, or lake of Gennesaret, to the country of the Gadarenes, and Gergesenes; with a view for retirement and rest, after the fatigue of the day; and for the trial of the faith of his disciples, by a storm which he knew would arise, whilst they were on the sea; and for the sake of a miracle he was to work on the other side, after related.

Mark 4:36

Ver. 36. And when they had sent away the multitude,.... Who had been attending him all day on the sea shore; though they seem to have been dismissed by Christ, when he went into the house, and privately interpreted the parables to his disciples: see Mt 13:36, wherefore it is possible, that upon Christ's going to the sea shore again, in order to take boat for the other side, they might gather together the disciples acquainted them that he was not about to preach any more to them, but was going to the other side of the lake; upon which they departed: and

they took him even as he was in the ship; which may be understood of his being taken and carried in the ship, in which he had been preaching all the day, without being moved into another; though this does not so well agree with his quitting that, and going home to his house in Capernaum; where, being alone with the disciples, he opened the parables to them. Some think it refers to the situation and posture in which he laid himself, as soon as he entered the ship; placing himself at the stern, and laying his head upon a pillow there, and so they carried him: others, that they took him into the ship, as he was alone without the multitude, who were sent away, only the disciples with him, which seems best:

and there were also with him other little ships; or boats, that were in company with that, in which Christ was; and had in them either seafaring men upon business, taking fish, or carrying passengers over; or might have in them persons, who were going along with Christ to the other side: these seem to be ordered in providence to be in company, that they might be witnesses of the after miracle.

Mark 4:37

Ver. 37. And there arose a great storm of wind,.... Called Laelaps, a wind that is suddenly whirled about upwards and downwards, and is said to be a storm, or tempest of wind with rain; it was a sort of a hurricane:

and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was full; of water, and ready to sink. Beza says in one copy it read, buyizesyai, and so in one of Stephens's. It was immersed, covered all over with water, and was going down at once to the bottom; so that they were in imminent danger, in the utmost extremity; See Gill on "Mt 8:24".

Mark 4:38

Ver. 38. And he was in the hinder part of the ship,.... That is, Christ was in the stern of the ship: the Persic version renders it, "he was in the bottom of the ship, in a corner", but very wrongly; here he was

asleep on a pillow, which some say was a wooden one, framed at the stern: however, he was fast asleep on it, being greatly fatigued with the work of the day; See Gill on "Mt 8:24".

And they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? The disciples came to him and jogged him, and awoke him out of sleep; saying, Master, arise, and save us, or we are lost: hast thou no concern for us? how canst thou lie sleeping here, when we are in such danger? are our lives of no account with thee? is it a matter of no moment with thee, whether we are saved or lost? They seem to say this, not so much praying and interrogating, as complaining and reproving.

Mark 4:39

Ver. 39. And he arose and rebuked the wind,.... He arose from off his pillow, and stood up; and in a majestic and authoritative way reproved the wind, as if it was a servant that had exceeded his commission; at which he shows some resentment:

and said unto the sea, peace, be still; as if that which was very tumultuous and boisterous, and threatened with shipwreck and the loss of lives, had raged too much and too long:

and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm; which was very unusual and extraordinary; for after the wind has ceased, and the storm is over, the waters of the sea being agitated thereby, keep raging, and in a violent motion, for a considerable time; whereas here, as soon as ever the word was spoken, immediately, at once, the wind ceased, and the sea was calmed: a clear proof this, that he must be the most high God, who gathers the winds in his fists, and stills the noise of the seas and their waves.

Mark 4:40

Ver. 40. And he said unto them,.... His disciples,

why are ye so fearful? since he was with them in person, whose power to keep and preserve them, they had no room to question, when they reflected on the miracles they had so lately seen performed by him:

how is it that ye have no faith? That is, in exercise: faith they had, but it was very small, and scarcely to be called faith: they did indeed apply to him to save them, which showed some faith in him, but then they feared it was too late, and that they were past all hope, and were just perishing; See Gill on "Mt 8:26".

Mark 4:41

Ver. 41. And they feared exceedingly,.... That is, the men in the ship, the mariners to whom the ship belonged, and who had the management of it:

and said to one another, as persons in the greatest amazement, what manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? Surely this person must not be a mere man; he must be more than a man; he must be truly God, that has such power over the wind and sea. This best suits with the mariners, since the disciples must have known before, who and what he was; though they might be more established and confirmed in the truth of Christ's deity, by this wonderful instance of his power.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 5:1

Ver. 1. And they came over unto the other side of the sea,.... Of Galilee, or Tiberias;

into the country of the Gadarenes: in the Evangelist Matthew it is called, "the country of the Gergesenes", as it is here in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions. The Vulgate Latin reads, "of the Gerasenes", and so some copies, from Gerasa, a place in the same country; but the Syriac and Persic versions read, "Gadarenes", as do most copies; so called from Gadara, a city either adjacent to, or within the country of the Gergesenes; which was called by both names, from these different places. It was not far from Tiberias, the place from whence this sea has its name, over which Christ and his disciples passed, Joh 6:1. Chammath was a mile from {e} Tiberias, and this Chammath was so near to the country of Gadara, that it is often called, rdgd tmx, "Chammath of Gadara" {f}; unless it should be rather rendered, "the hot baths of Gadara": for so it is {g} said, that at Gadara are the hot baths of Syria; which may be the same with the hot baths of Tiberias, so often mentioned in the Jewish writings {h}; hence the town of Chammath had its name, which was so near to Tiberias, that it is sometimes reckoned the same with it {i}: Pliny {k} places this Gadara in Decapolis, and Ptolemy {l} in Coelo Syria; and Meleager, the collector of epigrams, who is called a Syrian, is said {m} to be a Gadarene, a native of this Gadara. Mention is made of the whirlpool of Gadara {n}, which remained ever since the flood. It appears to be an Heathen country, both from its situation, and the manners of the people.

{e} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 2. 2. {f} T. Hieros. Erubin, fol. 23. 3. & Trumot, fol. 41. 3. & Sabbat, fol. 5. 4. {g} Eunapius in Vita Iamblici, p. 26. {h} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 108. 1. T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 6. 1. {i} T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 6. 1. {k} L. 5. c. 18. {l} L. 5. c. 15. {m} Fabricii Bibliotheca Grace. T. 2. p. 683. {n} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 108. 1.

Mark 5:2

Ver. 2. And when he was come out of the ship,.... As soon as he was landed,

immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit. The Jews have a notion, that a man by dwelling among the tombs, becomes possessed with an unclean spirit: hence they say of one that seeks to the dead, or a necromancer {o}, this is he that starves himself, and goes "and lodges in the tombs"; hamwj xwr wyle
hrvtv ydk, "that so an unclean spirit may dwell upon him": which notion may arise from unclean spirits hurrying persons possessed by them, unto such places; partly for the terror, both of themselves and others; and partly to possess the minds of men with a persuasion, that they have power over the dead, and which is very great in such places. This case is the same with that, which is mentioned in **Mt 8:28** as appears partly from its following the storm, from which the disciples had a remarkable deliverance; and partly from the country, in which this affair happened; for the country of the Gergesenes, and of the Gadarenes, is the same, as has been observed; only it is called by different names, from two principal places in it: as also from various circumstances in this relation; as the character of the possessed being exceeding fierce, dwelling among the tombs, and coming out from thence; the expostulation of the devil with Christ, and adjuration not to torment him; his entreaty to go into the herd of swine, and the leave he had; the destruction of the swine in the sea; the fear and flight of the swine herds; the report they made to their masters and others; and the request of the people in general to Christ, that he would depart out of their coasts. And though Matthew makes mention of two that were possessed, and Mark but of one, there is no contradiction in the one to the other; for Mark does not say there were no more than one; had he, it would have been a glaring contradiction to the other evangelist; but as he has put it, there is none, and it creates no difficulty: wherefore the Jew {p} has no reason to object this as he does, as if the evangelists clashed with one another; and Mark may only take notice of this one, because he was the fiercest of the two, and had the most devils in him, having a legion of them; and because the conversation chiefly passed between Christ and him; and because the power of Christ was more manifestly seen in the dispossession of the devils out of him.

{o} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 65. 2. Nidda, fol. 17. 1. & Chagiga, fol. 3. 2. {p} Jacob Aben Amram, porta veritatia, No. 1028. apud Kidder's Demonstr. of the

Messiah, par. 3. p. 51.

Mark 5:3

Ver. 3. Who had his dwelling among the tombs,.... Which is one of the characters of a madman among the Jews; who say it is {q}

"the sign of a madman, that he goeth out in the night, twrbqh tybb Nlhw, "and lodges among the tombs", and rends his garments, and loses what is given to him."

The same they say, in the same place, of an hypochondriac, and melancholy man; and of Kordiacus, which they give out {r} is a demon that possesses, and has power over some sort of persons:

and no man could bind him, no, not with chains; so as to hold him for any length of time: not only cords were insufficient to hold, but even chains of iron; so strong was he through the possession; for this could not be by his own natural strength.

{q} T. Hieros. Gittin, fol. 48. 3. & Trumot, fol. 40. 2. {r} Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Gittin, c. 7. sect. 1.

Mark 5:4

Ver. 4. Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains,.... Trial had been made several times, to no purpose; his arms had been bound with chains, and his feet with fetters, which was very proper to prevent doing hurt to himself, and injury to others:

and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces; as if they had been twine threads; such was his strength, through the force of madness, and the possession of Satan, and his diabolical influence:

neither could any man tame him; by any methods whatever; even such who undertook the cure of madness, or to exorcise those that were possessed: this man was so furious and outrageous, that he was not to be managed any way, either by art or force.

Mark 5:5

Ver. 5. And always night and day, he was in the mountains,.... And this being in an Heathen country, would have rendered him an unclean person, if he had not been possessed with an unclean spirit; for so runs one of the Jewish canons {s}:

"he that walks in an Heathen land, on mountains and rocks, is unclean."

And in the tombs: which very likely were on the mountains, and cut out of them, it being usual to cut their sepulchres out of rocks:

crying, and cutting himself with stones; with sharp pieces of stone, which he picked up among the broken tombstones, or from off the mountains, where he was night and day; and besides taking up stones with his hands, and cutting himself with them, he might cut his feet with the sharp stones of the mountains, in which he ran about; these mountains were those, that encompassed the sea of Tiberias; for of it is htwa Nypyqm Myrhv, "that the mountains surround it" {t}: for the place where this man was, was near the sea of Tiberias, over which Christ was just now come; and soon as he arrived on shore, he met him, and found him in this condition. This man was a lively emblem of a man in a state of nature and unregeneracy: he had "an unclean spirit", as every natural man has; his soul or spirit is defiled with sin, particularly his mind and conscience: this pollution is natural to him; he brings it into the world with him; it is very universal, it has spread itself over all the powers and faculties of his soul, and is what he cannot cleanse himself from: "who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" Pr 20:9. Nothing that he can do, or can be done for him by a mere creature, can free him from it: nothing but the blood of Christ, and that cleanses from all sin: this man, through the possession of Satan, was a madman, and exceeding fierce and furious: there is a spirit of madness in all unregenerate men; they are exceeding mad against God, and Christ, and the saints, as Saul was before conversion, Ac 26:9. For who but madmen would stretch out their hands against God, strengthen themselves against the Almighty, run upon him, even on his neck, and upon the thick bosses of his bucklers? Job 15:25. Who but such would oppose themselves to the Son of God, or do despight to the Spirit of grace, who are equal in power and glory with God the Father? or kick against the pricks, by persecuting the members of Christ? Who but men out of their senses, would seek to ruin and destroy themselves, both soul and body? This man was altogether under the power and influence of Satan, and had a legion of devils within him. Satan is in every unconverted man, in every child of disobedience; and works effectually in him, and leads him captive at his will: and he has besides a swarm of fleshly lusts in him, which have the government over him. This man had his dwelling among the tombs, where the dead lay: so unregenerate men dwell among dead sinners, they have their conversation among the men of the world, who are dead in trespasses and sins, and according to the course of it: and as this man could not be bound with chains and fetters, but these were broke asunder by him; so wicked men are not to be bound, restrained, and governed, by the laws, commands, and ordinances of God; they despise them, break through them, and cannot be subject to them, their language is, "let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us", **Ps 2:3**. And as no man could tame this man, so it is not in the power of men, by the force of moral persuasion, by all the arguments, expostulations, exhortations, promises, or threatenings, they can make use of, to influence the carnal minds of men, or make any real change in them: or bring them into a subjection to the law of God, or Gospel of Christ, and remove from them the spirit of madness, and opposition to all that is good: and to say no more; as this man was mischievous to himself, and cut himself with stones, so carnal men are the worst enemies to themselves; they cut and wound themselves with their sins, though, like the madman, they are not sensible of it; and if grace prevent not, will destroy themselves, both soul and body, with their transgressions.

{s} Misn Oholot, c. 19. sect. 6. {t} T. Hieros. Erubin, fol. 25. 2.

Mark 5:6

Ver. 6. But when he saw Jesus afar off,.... For it seems the tombs among which this man dwelt, were at some distance from the sea shore: wherefore when it is said, **Mr 5:2**, that this man met Jesus, as soon as he came out of the ship: the meaning that he then came forth to meet him, as he might do upon sight of persons landing afar off; though he might not know then, who Jesus was: but coming nearer, and perceiving who he was, such was the power of Christ over the devils in him, that though sore against their wills, they obliged him to move on speedily towards him; so that

he ran and worshipped him: he made all imaginable haste to him; and when he came up to him, fell down at his feet before him, acknowledging his superiority and power, whom no chains nor fetters could bind, nor any man tame; nor durst any man pass that way, for fear of him: and yet, upon sight of

Christ, without a word spoken to him, he runs and prostrates himself before him. This is an instance of the superiority of Christ over the devils, who knowing who he is, are filled with horror at him, fall down before him, and in their way do homage to him; though it is impossible they should be spiritual worshippers of him: unless this is rather to be understood of the man himself, who, at the sight of Christ, might have his senses for the present restored, and a knowledge of Christ given: to whom he ran speedily, and threw himself at his feet, hoping for relief from him: however, it may be an emblem of a poor awakened sinner, having a distant sight of Christ, who, upon it, makes haste unto him, and prostrates itself before him, believing he is able, if willing, to save him from the power of Satan, the evil of sin, and from eternal ruin and damnation.

Mark 5:7

Ver. 7. And cried with a loud voice,.... The man possessed with the devil; or the devil in him, making use of his voice, expressing great fear, dread, and horror, at the appearance of Christ in these parts:

and said, what have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? The devils in the man, own the being of a God, and his supreme government over all, under the title of the Most High. The word here used, answers to the Hebrew word, Nwyle, "Elion", a name of God known to the ancient Canaanites: hence Melchizedek, a Canaanitish king, is called the priest of the most high God,
Ge 14:18. And among the Phoenicians, he is called Elion, which a Phoenician writer {u} says, signifies "the Most High"; and hence in Plautus {w}, he goes by the name of Alon, which is the same word a little differently pronounced; and by the same name he might be known among other neighbouring nations of the Jews, and by the Gadarenes; and the devil now being in a Gadarene, makes use of, this name. Devils believe there is one God, and tremble at him; and they confess that Jesus of Nazareth, who was born of the virgin, according to the human nature, is the Son of God, according to his divine nature: and whereas they had no interest in him, as a Saviour, they desired they might have nothing to do with him as God; and since they had no share in the blessings of his grace, they beg they might not feel the power of his hand. Truly they choose not to have any thing to do with God himself; they have cast off allegiance to him, and rebelled against him; and have left their estate, and departed from him; and still less do they care to have any thing to do with his Son: and indeed it seems as if it was the decree and counsel of God, made

known unto them, that the Son of God should assume human nature, and in it be the head over principalities and powers, as well as men, which gave umbrage to them: upon which they apostatized from God, being unwilling to be under subjection to the man Christ Jesus; though whether they will or not, they are obliged unto it: for though they desire to have nothing to do with Christ, yet Christ has something to do with them; he had when he was here on earth, and when he hung upon the cross, and will have when he comes again to judge both quick and dead: they might be glad, one would think, to have to do with him as a Redeemer; but this they are not, their sin being the same with that against the Holy Ghost: they are malicious, obstinate, and inflexible, they cannot repent; and there is no pardon, nor was there any provided for them; they were passed by in the counsel and purposes of God's grace, and were not taken notice of in the covenant of grace: Christ took not on him their nature, but the nature of men; yea he came to destroy them, and their works; so that indeed they had nothing to do with him as a Saviour, though he had something to do with them as a judge, and which they dreaded: however, they own, and acknowledge him to be the Son of the most high God; they know and confess as much of him, and more too, than some that call themselves Christians, and hope to be saved by Christ; and yet at the same time own, they had nothing to do with him. Men may know much of Christ notionally; may know, and confess him to be God, to be the Son of God, in the highest and true sense of the phrase; to be the Messiah, to have been incarnate, to have suffered, died, and risen again: to be ascended to heaven, from whence he will come again; and yet have no more to do with him, or have no more interest in him, than the devils themselves; and will, at the last day, be bid to depart from him.

I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not: not that he required an oath of Christ, that he would swear to him by the living God, that he would not distress him; but he most earnestly and importunately entreated and beseeched him, in the name of God; see **Lu 8:28**, that he would not dispossess him from the man, and send him out of that country, to his own place, to his chains and prison; but suffer him either to lodge in the man, or walk about seeking, as a roaring lion, his prey: for it is torment to a devil to be cast out of a man, or to have his power curtailed, or to be confined in the bottomless pit, from doing hurt to men: See Gill on "Mt 8:29".

{u} Sanchoniatho in Philo Bybl. apud Euseb. prepar. Evangel. l. 1. c. 10. p. 36.
{w} In Poenulo.

Mark 5:8

Ver. 8. For he said unto him,.... Or he had said unto him, as soon as he came up to him, and fell before him; even before he had confessed, and adjured him; and which indeed drew out the confession from him, that he was superior to him, and therefore became his supplicant:

come out of the man, thou unclean spirit; which was said with so much authority and power, that there was no withstanding it: the devil knew he was not a match for him; that he must, at his command, quit his possession, and therefore fell to confession and entreaty. Christ will not dwell where Satan does; when therefore he is about to take up his residence in the hearts of any, he outs with Satan; he binds the strong man armed, and dispossesses him; he causes the spirit of uncleanness to depart; he sanctifies the heart by his grace and Spirit, and so makes it a proper habitation for him to dwell in by faith; and this is done by mighty power: a man cannot deliver himself out of the hands of Satan, or cause him to quit his hold of him, or the unclean spirit to depart; nor can he sanctify and cleanse himself, and make himself meet for the master's use: this is all owing to efficacious grace.

Mark 5:9

Ver. 9. And he asked him, what is thy name?.... Which question Christ put, not for his own sake; for he was not ignorant of his name, nor of the number of the unclean spirits which were in the man; but partly, that it might be known what a miserable condition this poor man was in, being infested, and vexed with such a large company of devils; and partly, that his own pity and power in delivering him, might be more manifest;

and he answered, saying, my name is Legion: the Syriac version renders it, "our name is Legion"; the reason of which name is given,

for we are many: as a Roman legion did consist of many, though its number was not always alike: in the time of Romulus, a legion consisted of three thousand foot, and three hundred horse; afterwards, when the city was, increased, of six thousand foot, and six hundred horse; sometimes it was six thousand and two hundred foot, and three hundred horse; sometimes four thousand foot, and three hundred horse; sometimes five thousand foot, and three hundred horse {x}. Some make a legion to consist of six thousand six hundred sixty six; and others make it much larger, even twelve thousand five hundred: however, the number in a legion was many; hence the word is retained among the Jews, and is used for a large number, either of persons or things; as, Mytyz lvm dxa Nwygl, "a legion of olives" {y}: that is, a large number of them; though sometimes it is used of a single person, who has others under him, as the general of an army: thus it is said {z} that one man should say to another,

"from whence art thou? he replies, from such a "legion" am I;--the man went to the legion--the legion heard, and was afraid--the man said, woe unto me! now will the legion slay me--the legion heard, &c."

And again {a},

"a certain legion asked R. Abba, is it not written, &c."

Once more {b},

"Lo! such a legion shall go with thee, to keep thee, &c."

Upon which the gloss is, abuh rv, "the general of an army"; so called, because he had a legion, or a large number of soldiers under his command: and just so this unclean spirit is called by this name, because he had a great many more with him, and under him, in that man; sometimes it is only used of a single person himself, as of a king's servant sent into a foreign country, to collect his {c} tax: a legion was reckoned by the Jews unclean and defiled, whatsoever place they entered into {d}; how much more unclean must this man be, that had a legion of unclean spirits in him! From hence it appears, that the devils are very numerous; for if there was a legion of them in one man, how many must there be in all the children of disobedience, to maintain their ground, and support their interest among them? As there is an innumerable company of holy angels to encamp about the saints, and do them all the service they can, and axe appointed to; so there is undoubtedly an innumerable company of devils, who do all the hurt they can, or are permitted to do, unto the sons of men: hence they are expressed by words, which signify number as well as power; as principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places, the power or posse of the air, the angels of Satan, the angels that sinned and left their habitations, &c. As also that they are in a body, and in the form of an army; with a general at the head of them, the prince of devils, and king of the bottomless pit: there are whole squadrons and regiments of them, yea, even legions; which are formed in battle array, and make war against Christ, the seed of the woman; as they did when he was in the garden, and hung upon the cross, which was the hour and power of darkness; and against his members; as they did in Rome pagan against the Christian church, and in Rome papal, against the same, Re 12:7, and what a mercy it is for the saints, that besides twelve legions of good angels and more, which are ready to assist and protect them, they have God on their side, and therefore it signifies not who is against them; and they have Christ with them, who has spoiled principalities and powers; and greater is the Holy Spirit that is in them, than he that is in the world.

{x} Alexander ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 5. Liv. Hist. l. 8. c. 8. {y} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 17. 4. {z} Zohar in Gen. fol. 96. 4. & Ivare Binah in ib. {a} Ib. in Exod. fol. 50. 2. {b} Zohar in Exod. fol. 51. 4. {c} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 30. fol. 170. 4. & Mattanot Cehuna in ib. {d} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 123. 1.

Mark 5:10

Ver. 10. And he besought him much,.... The devil that was at the head of this legion, who had the rest under his command, he, in their name, and on their behalf, entreated Jesus with great earnestness. This shows the authority Christ has over the devils, and their subjection to him; they are not only obliged to quit their former possession, when he gives orders, but they cannot go any where else, or where they would, without his leave: though the man they were in could not be bound and held with chains and fetters of iron, through the great strength they put forth in him; yet these themselves are bound and held in chains, and cannot move without Christ's permission, or as he is pleased to lengthen out the chain unto them: and though they are no humble supplicants to him for grace and mercy, yet they are, that they may continue where they are; or be suffered to be somewhere else, to do mischief to the souls and bodies of men: and though they are such proud spirits, they be, they are very willing to humble themselves and in the most submissive and pressing manner ask a favour, even of him whom they hate, when they have an end to answer by doing injury to others; and in this, as well as in many other things, they are imitated by them who are truly called the children of the devil, and do the lusts of him their father.

That he would not send them away out of the country; that if he did think fit to dispossess them from that man, that however he would permit them to stay in that country, and not drive them wholly from thence; and which they might be the more desirous of, because it was an Heathen country, inhabited by the blind Gentiles, that knew not God, or apostate Jews, or both; among whom their power and authority were very great; and where they had long been, and had had a large experience of the tempers and dispositions of men, and knew how to bait their temptations with success.

Mark 5:11

Ver. 11. Now there was there, nigh unto the mountains,.... Where this man often was, **Mr 5:5** according to Beza, the mountains of Galaad, which ran through that country, or the mountains that surrounded Tiberias. Some copies, as the Alexandrian copy and others, read "at", or "about the mountain", in the singular number. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, "about the mountain". The Syriac and Ethiopic, "at the mountain"; so in **Lu 8:32**,

a great herd of swine feeding; on one side of the mountain, or mountains; it may be called a great one, for there were about two thousand hogs in it.

Mark 5:12

Ver. 12. And all the devils besought him,.... The whole legion of them, not only their chief, in the name of the rest, but all of them earnestly entreated him; they were all humble supplicants, not from love, but fear, and with a view to do mischief: though the word "all" is omitted in some copies, as it is in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions; neither has the Ethiopic the word devils, but both are retained in the Arabic version:

saying, send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. The Persic version renders it, "seeing thou drivest us from the man, give leave that we may enter into the swine": which is rather a paraphrase than a version, and expresses the sense very well. They chose to be any where, rather than depart the country; and especially than to be sent into the deep, the abyss, or bottomless pit; and they chose to be sent into the swine, as being impure creatures like themselves; and no doubt with a view to destroy them, that they might satisfy themselves as much as they could with doing mischief; though not to that degree they would, nor to those persons they were desirous of; and so bring as much odium and reproach upon Christ as they could, who gave them leave. The devils are unwearied in doing mischief, they cannot rest unless they are about it; and they choose to be concerned in doing it in a lesser way, if they are not allowed to do it as largely as they would; if they are not suffered to touch the lives of men, or ruin their souls, it, is some satisfaction to them to be suffered to hurt their bodies; and if that is no longer permitted, rather than be doing nothing, they are desirous of doing injury to irrational creatures, the property of men; all which shows the malice and wickedness of these evil spirits: See Gill on "Mt 8:31".

Mark 5:13

Ver. 13. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave,.... For the reason of this See Gill on "Mt 8:32".

and the unclean spirits went out; of the man, in whom they had for some time dwelt:

and entered into the herd of swine; according to the leave given them by Christ: this shows not only the existence of spirits, but their going from one to another shows that they are circumscribed by space; that they are here, and not there, or there, and not here: there is an "ubi", a somewhere, where they are; and whilst there, are not elsewhere:

and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "the herd ran to the rock", or "promontory", and "fell into the sea". The Ethiopic, the "herd grew mad, and was carried headlong into the sea": the sense is, that the devils having entered into them, it had a like effect on them, as on the man possessed; they ran mad, and were hurried on by the devils, to the rocks on the sea shore; where, falling down the precipice, they were all lost; and a considerable loss it was to their owners; for

they were about two thousand; a very large herd, but there were devils enought in that one man, to possess all these, and run them into the sea:

and were choked in the sea; not suffocated by the devils, but drowned in the waters of the sea, or lake, as Luke calls it; the lake of Gennesareth, or sea of Tiberias and Galilee; which, as often observed, were the same. Though some think it was not this lake or sea, but some other place of water near Gadara. Strabo says {e}, that in the country of Gadara, there was a very bad laky water, of which if cattle tasted, they cast their hair, hoofs, and horns; which perhaps may be the same with what the Talmudists call {f},
rdgd hewlb, "the whirlpool of Gadara"; said to be from the time of the deluge, and so called from its swallowing up every thing that came into it; but the sea of Tiberias seems rather to be the place, where this herd perished. The Jew {g}

objects to the destroying this herd of swine as an unjust action, being a great injury to the owners; and seeks to blacken the character of Christ, as being concerned in it: but, as Bishop Kidder {h} well observes, it does not appear that Jesus destroyed it; it was the devils that did it: he suffered them indeed to go into it, nor did he restrain the natural power which they had; nor did he think fit to do it, nor was he obliged to it: but had he destroyed it himself, since he is Lord of all, the proprietor of all creatures, who has all under him, and at his disposal, can give and take away as he pleases, no charge of evil and injustice can be brought against him: and this should be satisfactory to a Christian, who believes him to be God over all blessed for ever; though it will not be to a Jew: let it therefore be further observed, that the owners of these swine were either Jews or Gentiles; if they were Jews, and they brought up these swine in order to eat them themselves, to destroy them was a just punishment, for their violation of the law of God, De 14:8. And if they brought them up to sell to others, this was contrary to their own canons;
See Gill on "Mt 8:30", to the rules and customs of their own country, which were made as a fence to keep off from breaking the above law; and such a practice could only proceed from an avaricious disposition, of which this was a proper rebuke: or if they were Gentiles that were the owners of them, these were idolatrous persons, worshippers of devils; and it was but a righteous thing, to suffer the devils, whom they worshipped, to do this mischief to their property, to whom they devoted themselves soul and body; and a Jew cannot well find fault with this, who believes that idolaters cannot be punished too severely: add to this, what the above learned prelate observes; this practice of the Gentiles in breeding hogs, was a temptation to the Jews to follow the same business, and even to taste of the forbidden flesh; so that to use his words, it was in truth an act of grace and favour to the Jews, to remove from them so dangerous a snare, and so bad an example: and it may be added, by suffering the devils to go into the swine, several valuable ends were answered, infinitely preferable to the herd of swine; such as evincing the truth of the dispossession; showing the greatness of the mercy to the dispossessed; the power of Christ over the devils; and making for the spread of the fame of this miracle the more; as well as giving further proof of the malignity and mischievous disposition and actions of these evil spirits; by which the inhabitants of the adjacent places might learn, how hurtful they were to them, and what a blessing it was to be rid of them: and therefore ought to have been thankful to Christ for this dispossession, notwithstanding the loss of their swine; but such an effect it had not upon them, but the reverse, as the words following show.

{e} Geograph. 1. 6. {f} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 108. 1. {g} Jacob Aben Amram, port. ver. No. 1028. apud Kidder, Demonstr. of the Messiah, par. 3. p.

51. {h} Kidder ib. p. 52.

Mark 5:14

Ver. 14. And they that fed the swine,.... Not the owners, but the keepers of them, the swine herds, "fled"; being astonished at the power of Christ, affrighted at the noise of the devils, and terrified at the sight and loss of the swine:

and told it in the city and country; or "in the fields": they went into the city of Gadara, and told the story of the dispossession of the devils out of the man, that had been for some time troublesome in those parts; and of their entrance into the swine, and the destruction of them: and they went into the fields, or country adjacent; they went to the "villages" thereabout, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render the word; or to those houses that were in the fields, scattered about, here, and there one, and where perhaps the owners of the herd lived: and they not only hasted away to the owners of the swine, to acquaint them with what had happened, in order to remove all blame from themselves, and any suspicion of negligence in them; to make it appear that it was not their fault, or owing to any carelessness of theirs the swine perished; as that they suffered them to go too near the sea side, and did not keep a good lookout, and were not, as they should have been, between them and the sea, to have prevented such an accident: this they not only did, but the affair, in all its circumstances, being such an amazing one; as the dispossession of the devils out of the man; the health, the calmness, and happy condition the dispossessed was in; the entrance of the devils into the swine; their madness, and precipitant running into the sea, and suffocation there; that they told it to every body they met with, whether in the fields belonging to Gadara, or in the city itself; which drew out a large concourse of people to see what was done to the man that had been possessed, and to the swine, and also to see the person who had done all this; and which made the miracle the more notorious; city and country rung of it: so that, as Matthew says, "the whole city came out to meet Jesus", **Mt 8:34**; and Luke observes, that "the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart", &c. **Lu 8:37**. So we sometimes read, in the Jewish writings, of the men, or inhabitants of the field, as opposed to the men, or inhabitants of the city, who differed both in their clothes and diet.

"The garments, azwxm ynbd, "of the children", or "inhabitants of the city", who live deliciously, and do no work, are broad, like women's; but the garments, atylqx ynbd, "of the children of the field"; such as do business in the field, are short {i}:"

and so of their food, it is observed {k}, that the bread, yalqxd, "of the men of the field", which the gloss explains by rpk ynb, "the children", or "inhabitants of a village", is what they put much flour into; but the bread, azwxmd, "of a city", which the gloss interprets of Krk ynb, "the children", or "inhabitants of a walled town", or "city", is what they do not put much flour into.

And they went out to see what it was that was done: that is, the inhabitants of the city of Gadara, and those that dwelt in the villages, and in lone houses in the fields, went forth to the places where the possessed man used to be, and where Jesus and he now were, and where the swine used to feed, to see with their own eyes, and satisfy themselves of the truth of the narration the swineherds gave them.

{i} Bab. Sabbat, fol. 12. 1. & Gloss. in ib. {k} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 37. 2.

Mark 5:15

Ver. 15. And they come to Jesus,.... Who had wrought this miracle, and of which, and whom, the keepers of the swine had given them some account:

and see him that was possessed of the devil, and had a legion. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the last clause, "and had a legion", and so Beza's ancient copy; the Persic version renders it, "the legion being gone out of him": they saw, along with Jesus, the man who had been possessed with a legion of devils, whom they knew very well to be the same man;

sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind, and they were afraid; not of the man, as they were before, when he was possessed, not daring to come that way because of him; but of Christ, and his amazing power; who was able to dispossess a legion of devils, and restore a man to his perfect senses, to such composure and decency, who was before in such a dreadful condition, and so exceeding furious and outrageous: they saw the man was still and quiet, harmless and inoffensive; they had nothing to fear from him; but they knew not what to make of Christ: they might take him for an exorcist, or a magician, and fear that he would exercise his art to the ruin and destruction of them: they did not fear and reverence him as a divine person, but they dreaded him, as one possessed of a power of doing hurt: they were conscious to themselves of their sins, and that they deserved the just judgments of God upon them; and they were afraid that Christ was sent to execute them upon them: and it is observable, that they say not one word to him, by way of complaint, for the loss of their swine; but thought themselves well off, could they but get rid of him. There was a strange change and alteration in the man; he, who before was running about among the tombs, and upon the mountains, and scarce ever sat still, but was always in motion, as persons distracted commonly are, was now sitting at the feet of Jesus, his kind benefactor, **Lu 8:35**, and he who before was naked, and whenever any clothes were put upon him, tore them off again, and to pieces, as madmen usually do, was now "clothed"; perhaps with some the swine herds had left behind them, in their fright, or the disciples had with them: and he who before was quite out of his senses, knew not what he said, or did, was now "in his right mind"; of a sound mind, of a good understanding, sober, modest, and knowing. This man, as whilst under the possession of Satan, was an emblem of a man in a natural estate; so, being now dispossessed, he very aptly represented a converted man; who, being brought out of a state of nature, out of an horrible pit, a pit wherein is no water, is "sitting" at the feet of Jesus; where he places himself, imploring his grace and mercy, entreating him to receive and save him, resolving, if he perishes, he will perish there; and where he is, as a scholar, at the feet of his master, hearing his words, and receiving instruction from him; and which also is expressive of his submission to his Gospel and ordinances, and of pleasure and continuance under them; as well as of that calmness and serenity of mind, which attends a sense of justification, pardon, reconciliation, and adoption, and hope of glory: and whereas, before he was naked, and without a righteousness, or, which was no better than filthy rags; he is now "clothed" with the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, with fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints, with change of raiment, and clothing of wrought gold; the righteousness of Christ being not only imputed to him by the Father, but revealed in the Gospel, brought near by the Spirit, and put upon him, and received by faith; as well as having put on the new man, and being clothed with humility, and other graces of the Spirit, and with the garments of a holy conversation; and so will at last be clothed with the shining robes of immortality and glory. Such an one, who before was not himself, is now "in his right mind"; is come to himself like the prodigal; is become sensible of the evil of sin, and is brought to true repentance for it; and of his lost state and condition, of his need of Christ, and salvation by him; has his spiritual senses exercised upon Christ; beholds the loveliness and suitableness of him as a Saviour, hears his voice, handles him, the word of life, tastes the sweetness there is in him, and in his Gospel, and savours the things of his Spirit; and whose senses also are exercised to discern between good and evil, and truth and error; who likewise has a new heart, and a right Spirit created in him; and has the same mind in him, as was in Jesus Christ, for humility and lowliness; and whose mind is stayed upon him, and trusts in him.

Mark 5:16

Ver. 16. And they that saw it,.... Not the keepers of the swine, for they were fled and gone; but others that were eyewitnesses of the whole affair, who lived in houses hard by, or were working in the fields; or the disciples of Christ:

told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil; gave a particular account, how, upon first sight of Christ, he ran to meet him, and fell down and worshipped him; how Christ ordered the unclean spirit to come out of him; and how he was dispossessed of a legion of devils by a word speaking:

and also concerning the swine; how, at the request of the devils, and by the leave of Christ, they entered into them; upon which they ran mad; and betaking themselves to the rocks by the sea side, fell down the precipice, and were suffocated in the sea.

Mark 5:17

Ver. 17. And they began to pray him,.... That is, the inhabitants of the city of Gadara, and of the villages round about, very earnestly importuned him

to depart out of their coasts; fearing, lest for their sins, some sorer judgment should fall upon them, than the loss of their swine; since they perceived he was a person of great power and authority; which shows great ignorance and worldly mindedness: they knew not how great a person they had among them; that he was the Son of God, and Saviour of the world: they might have known from the miracles wrought, that he was a very wonderful and extraordinary person; but then they considered him as one endued with great power, rather, to do them hurt than good; as one sent to scourge them for their sins, than to save them from them: such very contrary notions have carnal men of Christ; they are afraid of being sufferers, or losers by him: they do not care to part with their swinish lusts for him; these they prefer to a Saviour, and love the world, and the things of it, more than he, and therefore are not worthy of him; See Gill on "Mt 8:34".

Mark 5:18

Ver. 18. And When he was come into the ship,.... For at the request of these men, who were unworthy of his presence, and of any favour from him, either by his doctrine, or miracles, he turned back to the sea side again; and as he was about to take ship,

he that had been possessed with the devil, prayed him that he might be with him: for when Jesus turned his back upon the Gadarenes, and returned to the sea shore, this poor man, who had received so great a benefit by him, rose up and followed him; and when he perceived that he was entering on ship board, in order to go over into another country, earnestly entreated he might go over with him in the ship, and continue with him: which he did, partly to testify his great love to him, and the grateful sense he had of the mercy he had received from him; and partly, that be might enjoy his presence, and have his protection: for he might fear, that when he was gone, and should he remain in that country, the devils would repossess him with greater rage and fury. So gracious souls who know Christ, and have received out of his fulness, and grace for grace, earnestly desire to be with him, to enjoy communion with him, receive instruction from him, and be always under his care, influence, and protection. For to be with Christ, is to have his gracious presence; to have nearness to him, and fellowship with him; to have familiarity and acquaintance with him, yet more and more; to be guided with his counsel, and upheld with the right hand of his righteousness: than which, nothing can be more desirable to those that spiritually and savingly know him: for such desires arise from the knowledge they have of his personal glories and excellencies, as the Son of God; and as mediator? he has all power to protect them, all strength to support them, all grace to supply them, all wisdom to direct them, all provisions to feed them, and all blessings of grace and glory to bestow upon them; and from the gracious experience they have had of his favour and lovingkindness, which is better than life; and from the sense they have of their need of him; for without him they can do nothing; they cannot perform any duty aright, nor withstand any temptation, or bear up under any affliction: they are sensible of the blessed effects of his presence; they know it brings light to their souls in darkness; that it quickens them when dead and lifeless in their frames and duties, and enlivens their spirits when dull and heavy; that it comforts and rejoices their hearts, and puts more joy and gladness into them, than any outward blessing whatever; that it removes their fears, and emboldens, them against their enemies, and is their safety and defence; that it makes ordinances pleasant and delightful, and gives contentment in the meanest state; there is nothing enjoyed by them in this life which gives them the pleasure and satisfaction that does: and hence it is that they often desire even to depart out of this world, that they may be with Christ, which is far better; and indeed, if the presence of Christ is so sweet and desirable now, what will the, everlasting, and uninterrupted enjoyment of his presence be in the world to come? for in his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore.

Mark 5:19

Ver. 19. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not,.... He being as able to preserve him from those evil spirits, when absent, as present; and besides, to take him along with him, would look like ostentation and boasting, which Christ was averse unto; and more especially, as is clear from what follows, he chose he should stay behind, because he had work for him to do in those parts, which would be for the glory of God, the spread of the knowledge of himself, and his Gospel, among his friends, relations, and countrymen: wherefore it follows,

but saith unto him, go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee: he bids him go to his "own house", as it is in Luke, **Lu 8:39** to the place of his former abode; to the town, or city, where he before dwelt, and where his father and mother, brethren and sisters, wife and children might live; and there relate to them what great things the Lord, or God, as the Ethiopic version reads, had done for him; by casting out a legion of devils from him, and had restored him to his perfect senses and health, and had had compassion on him, both as of his soul and body, and had wrought a great salvation for him. So such as are called by grace, and are turned from darkness to light; and from the power of Satan unto God, ought to go, to their Christian friends, and to the church of God, and declare in Zion the great things which God has done for their souls; in enlightening, quickening, converting, and comforting them, to the glory of his rich mercy, and abundant grace. They are "great things" indeed which the Lord has done for his people: he has done great things for them in eternity; he has loved then with an everlasting love; he has chosen them in his Son to holiness and happiness; he has made a covenant with him, for them, full of spiritual blessings and promises; he has provided him, as a Saviour, for them, and has appointed, and called him to that work; all which is more or less made known to them in the effectual calling, when they receive the Spirit of God, that they may know the things which are freely given to them of God. The Lord Jesus Christ has done great things for them, as before time, by engaging for them as their surety; so, in time, by taking upon him their nature, by bearing their sins, and suffering in their room and stead, thereby working out a great salvation, which, in conversion, is brought near, and applied unto them. And the Lord, the Spirit, does great things for them, when he calls them by his grace, and afterwards; in opening their eyes who were born blind, and who otherwise must have lift them up in hell; and in bringing them into the marvellous light of, the Gospel; in quickening them, when dead in trespasses and sins, who otherwise must have died the second death; in causing them, to hear the voice of Christ in the joyful sound of the word, who otherwise must have heard the curses of a righteous law; in taking away their stony hearts, and giving them hearts, of flesh; in rescuing them out of Satan's hands; in leading them to Christ for righteousness, life, and salvation; in discovering pardoning grace and mercy to them, through the blood of Christ; in delivering out of many and great temptations; in applying great and precious promises, suitably and seasonably; and in restoring them when backslidden, and speaking comfortably to them; in witnessing to their spirits, their adoption; and in sealing them up to the day of redemption; and all this flows from divine "compassion", and not from any motive and merit in the creature. It was sovereign pity and compassion; the Lord "has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and has compassion on whom he will have compassion", **Ro 9:15**. It was discriminating mercy: this man was not only dispossessed of Satan, but possessed of special grace, which caused him to desire to be with Christ, when his countrymen desired him to depart from them; it was shown him, when he had no pity on himself, when he cut and wounded himself; and it was bestowed upon him, when he could, not help himself, when he had a legion of devils within him: and now these great things, which spring from great love and mercy, should be told to others, especially to them that fear the Lord, to the churches of Christ: this is the will of God, and has been the practice of the saints in former ages; it rejoices the hearts of God's: people to hear of these things, and enhances the glory of the grace of God: and what may serve to encourage souls, to such a work is, that it is to their "friends" they are to declare these things; who are well disposed to: them, rejoice at their conversion, sympathize with them in their troubles, know what the things they speak of mean, and gladly receive them into their affections and fellowship.

Mark 5:20

Ver. 20. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis,.... He submitted to the will of Christ, though he could gladly have gone with him; he hearkened to his instructions, took his advice, and obeyed his commands, as every one that has received favours from him ought to do and he went not only to his own, or his father's house, and acquainted his nearest friends and relations with what had befallen him, but he published the account, as Luke says, **Lu 8:39**, throughout the whole city, very likely of Gadara, where he might be a native; and which, as Pliny {l} relates, was in Decapolis, and agrees with the accounts of both the evangelists: here he published, as Christ had ordered him,

how great things Jesus had done for him: only instead of saying the Lord had done them, for him, he attributed them to Jesus, who: is Lord and God; and by that miracle, as by many others, gave full proof of his deity, as well, as Messiahship. This is an instance of the obedience of faith, and is a considerable branch of it; for, as with the heart, men believe in Christ unto righteousness, so, with the mouth, confession must be made to the glory of that salvation which Christ has wrought out: many are backward to this part of the service of faith, through fears, through unbelief, and Satan's temptations; but this man, though to have continued with Christ was greatly desirable by him, yet he submits to his will and pleasure, and is obedient to his orders; and that at once, immediately dropping his suit: unto him, no longer insisting on his being with him; for he was sensible of the great obligations he was laid under to him, and saw it to be his duty to observe whatever he commanded him: and this was indeed but a reasonable, piece of service, and what if he had not been ordered to do, one would think he could not have done otherwise; at least, had he not, he would not have acted the grateful and generous part: and indeed, if such for whom the Lord has done great things as these, should hold their peace, the stones would even cry out.

And all men did marvel; at the power of Jesus, at the miracle wrought by him, and the benefit the man had received, who they all knew had been in so deplorable a condition. It is not only marvellous to the persons themselves, for whom great things are done by the Lord; but it is amazing to others, to angels and men, when it is considered who they are, on whose account they are wrought; great sinners, very unworthy of such high favours, yea, deserving of the wrath of God, and of eternal damnation; and likewise, who it is that has done these things for them, the Lord of heaven and earth; he against whom they have sinned, and is able both to save, and to destroy; he who is the great God, is their Saviour; to which may be added, the consequence of these things, they issue in everlasting glory and happiness.

{l} Nat. Hist. 5. c. 19.

Mark 5:21

Ver. 21. And when Jesus was passed over again,.... Over the sea of Tiberias, that part of it which was necessary to go over from the country of Gadara, to Capernaum,

by ship, or "boat",

unto the other side. This may seem to some unnecessary to be added; and it may be asked, what way but by ship, or boat, could he have gone over to the other side of the sea of Galilee? To which it may be replied, there was a bridge at Chammath of Gadara {m}, over an arm of this sea, over which Christ and his disciples might have passed, and have gone by land to Capernaum; so that this phrase is very necessarily and significantly used:

much people gathered unto him; who had before attended on his ministry in these parts, and had seen his miracles; as the casting out of an unclean spirit from a man, healing the centurion's servant, curing the man sick of the palsy, and Simon's wife's mother of a fever, and a man that had a withered hand:

and he was nigh unto the sea; he seems to have been at Capernaum, which was nigh unto the sea, and in the house of Matthew or Levi, whom he had called at the sea side from the receipt of custom; see **Mt 9:9**.

{m} T. Hieros. Erubin, fol. 22. 4.

Mark 5:22

Ver. 22. And behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue,.... Having heard of his return, and where he was;
See Gill on "Mt 9:18".

Jairus by name; in Hebrew ryay, "Jair": and Jerom says {n}, it signifies "enlightening", or "enlightened": deriving it from
rwa, "to be light": and it is no doubt a Jewish name, since he was a ruler of the synagogue; and besides, it is often mentioned in the Old Testament, and particularly in **Es 2:5**, where, in the Septuagint, it is read, Iairov, Jairus. Matthew makes no mention of his name; but both Mark and Luke do, **Mr 5:22**.

And when he saw him, he fell at his feet: as soon as he came into his presence;

though he was a person of such authority; yet having heard much of the doctrine and miracles of Christ, and believing him to be a great prophet, and man of God; though he might not know that he was the Messiah, and truly God, threw himself at his feet; and, as Matthew says, "worshipped him", **Mt 9:18**; showed great reverence and respect unto him, gave him homage, at least in a civil way, though he might not adore him as God.

{n} De Hebr. Nominibus in Luc.

Mark 5:23

Ver. 23. And besought him greatly,.... Used much importunity with him, and was very urgent in his requests:

saying, my little daughter lieth at the point of death, or "is in the last extremity"; just breathing out her last; for she was not actually dead when he left her, though she was before he returned, and was at this time, as he might expect, expiring, or really gone;
See Gill on "Mt 9:18".

[I pray thee] come and lay thine hands on her, that she may be healed, and she shall live; expressing faith in the power of Christ to restore his daughter, though in the utmost extremity; yet seemed to think his presence, and the imposition of his hands were necessary to it.

Mark 5:24

Ver. 24. And Jesus went with him,.... Immediately without objecting to the weakness of his faith:

and much people followed him; to see the miracle performed, which they were exceedingly fond of:

and thronged him; so that it was with some difficulty and trouble that he passed along the streets to: the ruler's house.

Mark 5:25

Ver. 25. And a certain woman which had an issue of blood twelve years. See Gill on "Mt 9:20". This woman was in the crowd that thronged Jesus, as he passed through the streets of Capernaum. Eusebius relates {o}, that it was reported, that this woman was of Caesarea Philippi, where her house was to be seen; where were extant some wonderful monuments of the benefits conferred upon her by Christ; as that at the door of her house was an effigy of a woman in brass, set upon an high stone on her bended knees, and arms stretched out like a supplicant; and opposite to her, another effigy of a man, of the same metal, standing, and decently clothed in a tunic, and his hand stretched out to the woman; at whose feet, upon the pillar, a strange form of a plant arose, reaching up to the border of the brazen tunic, which is a remedy against all diseases; and he says it remained to his times, and was then to be seen: and Theophylact {p} says, in the times of Julian the apostate it was broke to pieces. But this woman rather seems to be an inhabitant of Capernaum, in the streets of which the after cure was wrought; and therefore what credit is to be given to the above accounts I leave to be judged of. It may be more useful to observe, that this profluvious woman is an emblem of a sinner in a state of nature: as her disease was in itself an uncleanness, and rendered her unclean by the law, whereby she was unfit for the company and society of others; so the disease of sin, with which all are infected, is a pollution itself, and of a defiling nature; all the members of the body, and all the powers and faculties of the soul are polluted with it, and the whole man is filthy in the sight of God, and is pronounced unclean by the law of God; and such persons are very unfit for the society of saints on earth, and much less to be with those in heaven, nor even to be with moralized persons; for evil communications corrupt good manners: openly profane and impure sinners are infectious, and to be avoided. Likewise, as this woman's disease was of long standing, she had it twelve years, and it was become inveterate and stubborn, and not easy to be removed; so such is the disease of sin, and indeed it is much worse; it is what is brought into the world with men, and is as old as themselves; is natural to them, and cannot be removed by any ordinary and natural methods, but requires supernatural power and grace; and it is in such a like case and condition, that the Spirit of God finds his people, when he quickens, sanctifies, and cleanses them: "and when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live", Eze 16:6.

{o} Eccl. Hist. l. 7. c. 18. {p} In Matt. ix. 20.

Mark 5:26

Ver. 26. And had suffered many things of many physicians,.... She took many a nauseous medicine, and had gone through courses of physic with different physicians; for there were many among the Jews that pretended to the cure of fluxes; and various are the prescriptions the Jewish doctors give for such a disorder, as may be seen in their Talmud {q}; and many of which Dr. Lightfoot {r} has transcribed: and among the rest, they direct to the use of gum of Alexandria, alum, saffron, Persian onions, cummin, and "faenum graecum", put into wine and drank.

And had spent all that she had; had wasted her substance, and brought herself to poverty, by pursuing the directions given her; so that she was not in circumstances now to employ a physician;

and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse: the several medicines she had taken had done her no good, had not, in the least, restrained and checked the disorder, but it was rather increased thereby. This is often the case of persons who are, in some measure, sensible of the disease of sin, but are ignorant of the proper methods to be taken for the cure of it. They apply to their own works of righteousness, moral and civil, to the duties of religion, private and public, to a legal repentance, external humiliation and tears, and an outward reformation of life, hoping hereby, in process of time, to be rid of their disorder, and be in good health; whereas these are physicians of no value, and of no real service in their case: they are so far from being the better, that they are rather worse and worse, there being so much impurity, imperfection, and sin, in all these things, and which is increased by a dependence on them; that their iniquities grow upon them, and the score of their transgressions is become greater, and their distemper the more inveterate, and less easy to be cured; yea, not only they spend their money for that which does not bring them a cure, and exhaust all the stock of nature's power to no purpose, but they also suffer much hereby. For such a course of action, such conduct and methods as these bring them into a spirit of bondage; for when they fail in their duties, do not come up to the rules prescribed them, what terror of mind possesses them! what horror and wrath does the law work in their consciences! what a fearful looking for is there of fiery indignation, to consume them! It cannot be expressed what some have suffered by following such prescriptions.

{q} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 110. 1, 2. {r} Hor. Heb. in loc.

Mark 5:27

Ver. 27. When she had heard of Jesus,.... Of the many miracles he had wrought, and cures he had performed, in cases as difficult and desperate as hers, or more so; and that he was now passing along the streets,

came in the press behind; though she was so weak, and much enfeebled, as she must needs be, by such, and so long a disorder; yet she ventures into the crowd, which were pushing and pressing after Christ; and got up to him, behind him, being ashamed to tell her case, and desire a cure:

and touched his garment; the hem or border of it, with her hand, very softly, and in a private manner, so as not to be observed by any. Christ is the sinner's last shift; he tries every one first before he comes to him; he spends all his money, strength, and time, with others, to no purpose; and finding them all to be useless and unserviceable, he applies to him, who is the only physician that can give relief in this case: like this woman, having heard of his ability to save to the uttermost those that come to him; and being encouraged by the many cures of the worst of sinners, of such who were in the most desperate condition, presses in the throng, through a great many temptations, difficulties, and discouragements thrown in the way by Satan, and its own evil heart of unbelief, and which arise from a sense of vileness and unworthiness; and in a modest and bashful manner, fearing it should be thought presumption in him, and yet persuaded it is the only way for a cure, and that it is to be had in this way, lays hold on the robe of Christ's righteousness, and the garment s of his salvation; or, in other words, thus reasons with himself: though I am such a vile, sinful, unrighteous, and impotent creature, yet surely in the Lord there is righteousness and strength, if I can but by faith lay hold thereon; though it be but in a weak way, only by a touch, and in a trembling manner; I shall be justified from all things, I could not be justified by all the works of righteousness I have been doing, and that evidentially and comfortably; and therefore I will venture and draw nigh unto him, and though he slay me I will trust in him; I will throw off my own filthy rags of righteousness; I will make mention of, and lay hold on his righteousness, and that only; he shall be my salvation. And such an one finds, as this woman afterwards did, a perfect cure, cleansing from all sin, a free and full forgiveness of it, and complete justification from it.

Mark 5:28

Ver. 28. For she said,.... Within herself, such were her thoughts, and so great her faith:

if I may touch but his clothes I shall be whole;
See Gill on "Mt 9:21".

Mark 5:29

Ver. 29. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up,.... It was usual with the Jews to call the womb, in which the child is formed, rwqm, "a fountain" {s}; and because, from hence, issued the blood in a menstruous and profluvious person, they called it, as here, hymd rwqm, "the fountain of her blood" {t}; and sometimes use the same phrase of the drying up of it, as in this place: they say {u}, when a woman is searched and found to be pure, she is forbidden her house, hnyyem bgntyv de, "until her fountain be dried up"; so that as no blood issued from it, there was none in it, and which was now this woman's case, as she found;

and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague: she not only found by that quick alteration there was in her animal spirits, which were now free and vigorous; but she perceived, in that part of her body, from whence the issue sprung, that she was perfectly well, and that the disorder was entirely gone, which had been for so many years a sore affliction to her, and a severe correction and chastisement of her, as the word used implies. It properly signifies a "scourge", as every affliction is, a scourge for sin; and very likely this woman's disease was on the same account: sometimes afflictions are God's scourges in a way of wrath, and sometimes in a fatherly way, in love: "for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth", Heb 12:6, and who, as he wounds, he heals, and which is sensibly perceived by his people. The word "plague" carries in it something more dreadful, and fitly enough expresses the nature of sin, which is a pestilential disease; the corruption of nature, indwelling sin is called the "plague of the heart", **1Ki 8:38**. It is a loathsome disease, and without the grace of God, a mortal one; the body of sin, is a body of death; and all sin is of the same nature and kind; the end of it is destruction and death: the healing of it is the forgiveness of sin, which is through the blood of Christ, and the application of it to the soul; which, when made, is sensibly felt, for it immediately produces spiritual joy, peace, and comfort: this makes the bones, which were broken, to rejoice; this bids every son and daughter of the Lord God Almighty to be of good cheer; it causes the inhabitants of Zion to hold their peace, and no more say they are sick, because their sins are forgiven them. And a man may as easily perceive when his spiritual maladies are healed in this way, as when he is cured of any bodily disorder.

{s} Maimon. Issure Bia, c. 4. sect. 20, 22. & 5. 3. & 6. 1. Misn. Nidda, c. 2. sect. 5. {t} T. Hieros. Nidda, fol. 50. 2. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 111. {u} T. Hieros. Nidda, fol. 48. 4.

Mark 5:30

Ver. 30. And Jesus immediately knowing in himself,.... As soon as ever the woman had touched his garments, and had a cure, Christ, who knew all things in his Spirit, or divine nature, that dwelt in him, knew what was done, that the woman had touched him, and was healed thereby; though, as not without his knowledge, so neither without his will, and entirely by his power:

that virtue was gone out of him; to the healing of some person, though not at all to the diminution of that virtue, which remained as powerful and effective in him as ever. This shows that there was an internal essential virtue in Christ to cure diseases: it was not what he derived from another, or exercised under another's influence; but what was his own, and which he put forth as the Lord God omnipotent. The apostles of Christ cured diseases, but not by their own power and holiness, by any innate virtue in them; but in the name of Christ, and by power derived and received from him: but Christ, being God, had infinite virtue within himself, which went forth from him when he pleased, to the curing of whatsoever disease he thought fit; and which was no ways lessened by the frequent exertions of it; no more than the light and heat of the sun by the continual emanations of them; only there is this difference between the emission of light and heat from the sun, and the sending forth virtue from Christ, that the one is by the necessity of nature, without knowledge, or will, but the other voluntarily, and when, and as he pleases, The same holds good with respect to healing spiritual diseases: Christ has a power within him to forgive all trespasses; and virtue may be said to go out of him to this purpose, when it is his will to make application of pardoning mercy to his people; which requires an exertion of power, as well as a display of grace.

Turned him about in the press, and said, who touched my clothes? that is, turned himself towards the woman behind him, though the press was so large about him, and asked who touched his clothes; not for his own sake, who knew very well who had done it; but that the cure might be known to others: not for the sake of ostentation and popular applause, but for the manifestation of his glory, and for the glory of God, and for the strengthening the faith of Jairus, who was with him, and with whom he was going to raise his daughter to life; and also that he might have an opportunity of showing forth, and commending this poor woman's faith, and of confirming the cure wrought, and of dismissing her with the utmost pleasure and joy.

Mark 5:31

Ver. 31. And his disciples said unto him,.... Peter, and they that were with him; after the crowd that were about him denied that any of them had touched him; see **Lu 8:45**,

thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou who touched me? They seem astonished at his question, and answer with some degree of warmth, and almost ready to charge it as weak: and impertinent; since, as there was such a crowd about him, pressing him on every side, he could not but be touched by many; and therefore to ask who touched him, when this was the case, they thought was a very strange and unnecessary question.

Mark 5:32

Ver. 32. And he looked round about,.... The press and throng of people, on every side of him; though he knew very well where she stood, who had done the thing, and had received the cure:

to see her that had done this thing; how she looked, and whether her countenance, and the confusion she was thrown into by the question, would not betray her; though he himself wanted no such signs, by which to discover her. Christ, as God, being omniscient, knew who she was, and where she was; and, as man, did not want to see her to gratify his curiosity: nor was his view to chide her for what she had done, but to express his well pleasedness in her faith and actions, and to observe it to others, and the cure she had; not in an ostentatious way, to gain glory to himself, but to commend her faith, and encourage others in the exercise of it on him; and especially Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, who was with him, and in great distress, on account of his daughter, whom Christ was going to raise from the dead.

Mark 5:33

Ver. 33. But the woman fearing and trembling,.... Lest she should be reproved, and suffer the penalties of the law, for appearing in public during the time of her uncleanness, Le 15:25, or that Christ was displeased with her, for her taking an improper method to obtain her cure; or lest he should recall it, or was angry with her for concealing it, and attempting to go away undiscovered, and without so much as thanking him for it. After conversion, after souls have laid hold on Christ for righteousness and life; after they have had the pardon of their sins, and are cured of their diseases, they are not without their fears and tremblings, though there is no just reason for them: they fear where no fear is; that is, where there is no true cause of fear; which was this woman's ease: they are sometimes afraid they have no interest in Christ, and in his love; that they are hypocrites; that the truth of grace is not in them; that they shall never hold out to the end; that they shall perish, and come short of eternal glory, notwithstanding they know, as this woman did, what has been done in them, and done for them.

Knowing what was done in her, and by her; being conscious to herself that she was the person that had touched him, and that upon it the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she was thoroughly healed of her disease:

Came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. Christ did not point her out, though he knew her; or call her by her name, though he could have done it, and have ordered her to come to him, and account for her conduct: he had said enough to work upon her, and engage her to come; who came of herself, and with the greatest reverence to his person, and sense of her own unworthiness, threw herself at his feet, and gave him a relation of the whole matter, with the utmost truth and, exactness; what had been her case, what was her faith, and what she had done, and what a cure she had received; and which she acknowledged with the greatest thankfulness. In some copies it is added, "before all"; before Christ and his disciples, and the throng of people that were along with him: she that came behind Christ, and privately took hold of the hem of his garment, her faith secretly going out unto him; now appears openly before him, not being able to hide herself any longer. Nor is she ashamed to tell what she had done, and had been done in her: truth is to be spoken, even all the truth; no one has reason to be ashamed of that, and especially of the truth of grace, truth in the inward parts; this is what God requires, and gives, and delights in. The secret experiences of grace in our souls we should not be ashamed to relate to others; this makes for the glory of divine grace, and the good of others. In some copies it is read, "and told him all her cause before all": her whole affair, how it had been with her, and now was, and what was the cause of her taking such a method she did.

Mark 5:34

Ver. 34. And he said unto her, daughter,.... Instead of reproving her, or showing any anger, or resentment at her, as she feared, he speaks to her in a very soft, kind, and tender manner, and called her "daughter", which was not only an expression of affection and civility, this being an affable, courteous way of speaking used by the Jews; but might signify her spiritual relation through him, being a child of God by adopting grace. She was a daughter of Abraham by natural descent, as was the woman bound by Satan eighteen years, Lu 13:16 and so she was likewise in a spiritual sense, being one that walked in the steps of his faith, believing in hope against hope; and she was also a daughter of the Lord God Almighty, as her faith showed her to be, **Ga 3:26**, and to this our Lord may chiefly refer; she was one of those that were predestinated to the adoption of children, and were given to Christ as such; and who are evidentially the children of God by faith in him: and to have a testimony of adoption from the Spirit of God, and from the mouth of Christ himself, as this woman had; how great a blessing is it!

thy faith hath made thee whole: through faith in Christ she received the cure from him; for it was not her act of faith that either merited, or procured it, but his power, and he himself the object of her faith that effected it: though he is pleased to take no further notice of the virtue that went out from him; but commends her faith, for her further and future encouragement in the exercise of it, and for the encouragement of others to believe in him. In the Greek text it is, "thy faith hath saved thee"; both from her bodily disease, and from her sins: not that there is such an intrinsic virtue in faith as to deliver from either; for certain it is, that it was not virtue that went out of her faith, but virtue which went out from Christ, that cured her of her issue; though faith was the means of drawing it out; or it was that, through which, virtue from Christ exerted itself, and produced such an effect: and it is as certain, that not faith, but Christ, is the author and cause of spiritual salvation: faith looks to Christ for salvation, and receives every blessing of it from him, as righteousness, peace, pardon, adoption, and eternal life; so that believers are saved by grace, through faith; through the exercise of that grace they have the joy, and comfort Of salvation now; and through it they are kept, by the power of God, unto the full possession of it hereafter.

Go in peace; to thine house; all health and happiness attend thee; let no uneasy thought, about what has passed, dwell on thy mind; be joyful and thankful for the mercy received, and never fear, or dread, a return of the disorder. Peace is the effect of faith in Christ, of pardon through his blood, and salvation in him; true, spiritual, solid peace is enjoyed in a way of believing; it is the fruit of a view of interest in justification by faith in Christ's righteousness; and nothing more effectually produces and secures it than a sense of, all spiritual diseases being healed, or an application of pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of Christ; which itself speaks better things than that of Abel, even pardon, and so peace: such who are blessed in this manner, and walk under a view and sense of these things, go in peace all their days, and at last enter into peace, even into the joy of their Lord.

And be whole of thy plague: she was so already; but this was a confirmation of it, and what might assure her, that she should remain so, and no more be afflicted with that chastisement. Sin pardoned, though sought for, shall not be found; nor condemnation come upon the pardoned sinner; he is whole and sound, and shall be no more sick, and much less die the second death.

Mark 5:35

Ver. 35. While he yet spake,.... The above things to the poor woman, in commendation of her faith, and for her future encouragement, peace, and comfort in soul and body:

there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain that said. The Vulgate Latin renders it, "from the ruler of the synagogue", and which is indeed the literal version of the phrase; but they could not come from him in person, for he was with Jesus: hence some versions, as the Arabic and Ethiopic, read, "there came to the ruler of the synagogue"; but the sense is easy, by supplying the word house, as we do, and as the Syriac and Persic versions also do. Luke speaks but of "one" that came, **Lu 8:49** whereas this evangelist suggests there were more, which is no contradiction; for Luke does not say there was but one; there might be more that came with the news, though but one related it as the mouth of the rest; or they might come one after another with it.

Which said, thy daughter is dead, why troublest thou the master any further? these brought him the account that his daughter was actually dead, which he himself feared before; and therefore they thought it was in vain to give Christ any further trouble to drag along through a crowd of people pressing him; whom they looked upon as a very worthy person, an eminent doctor and prophet, a master in Israel, and one that had done great cures on living persons in distress; yet imagined it was wholly out of his power to raise one from the dead, of which, as yet, they had had no instance, unless the raising of the widow of Nain's son was before this, as indeed it seems to be; but perhaps persons, who were some of the relations, or domestics of the ruler, had heard nothing of it; for if they had, they might have hoped he would have exerted his power in raising the ruler's daughter, as well as the widow's son.

Mark 5:36

Ver. 36. As soon as Jesus had heard the word that was spoken,.... By those that came from the ruler's house; as that his daughter was dead, and it was to no purpose to give him any further trouble, since all hope of recovery was now gone:

he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue; who was overwhelmed with trouble, and quite dispirited, and ready to swoon and die away;

be not afraid, only believe: do not be discouraged at these tidings, or distrust my power to help thee, only believe that I am able to raise her, even from the dead; and fear not, but it will be done. If a man can but believe, he has no reason to fear; for what is it that almighty power cannot do? it can raise the dead; there is nothing can stand in its way, or stop its course; and faith in it surmounts difficulties which are insuperable to carnal sense and reason: this was the support and foundation of Abraham's faith; hence he was strong in the exercise of it, and believed in hope against hope, because he was fully persuaded that God was able to perform what he had promised, **Ro 4:18**. And whereas the ruler had expressed some faith in Christ, that his daughter, though at the point of death, would be, healed by him and live, provided he would but come and lay his hands on her; and Christ had assented to go along with him, and had given him an intimation that he would restore her; he had nothing to do but to believe in him, that even though she was dead, he was able to raise her from the dead, as well as to recover her at the point of death, and that he would do it, but, oh! this thing, "only believe", how hard a matter is it, though there is so much encouragement to it both in the power and will of Christ! Faith is not of a man's self at first; it is the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit; and the lively and comfortable exercise of it is owing to the influence of efficacious grace: but if Christ, who is the author and finisher of faith, says "believe", or "only believe"; such power goes along with his words, as doubtless did at this time, as causes souls to exercise faith in him; and the more faith, the less fear; and such walk most comfortably in themselves, and most to the glory of Christ, who walk by faith on him. This word "only" does not exclude the exercise of other graces, but rather implies it, for where this grace is in exercise, generally speaking, others are; nor the performance of good works, which are the fruits and effects of true faith, and without which faith is dead; but it stands opposed to fears and doubting, and to all carnal reasonings, as well as to all trust and confidence in other objects besides Christ.

Mark 5:37

Ver. 37. And he suffered no man to follow him,.... To the house of the ruler, but dismissed the multitude, being not desirous of the honour and applause of men: probably what he said to the ruler, was privately, and with a low voice, so that the multitude did not hear him; and understanding by the messengers that the child was dead, were the more easily prevailed upon to depart, since they might conclude there was nothing now to be done;

save Peter, and James, and John, the brother of James: three favourite disciples, who were a sufficient number of witnesses; and who were taken alone along with Christ on some other occasions, as at his transfiguration, and when in the garden.

Mark 5:38

Ver. 38. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue,.... Along with him, and the three disciples above mentioned; and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, "and they came", the above persons:

and seeing the tumult; the throng and crowd of people, of relations, friends, neighbours, and acquaintance, on this occasion, all in a hurry, and in one motion or another, expressing their concern by words and gestures.

And them that wept and wailed bitterly; the mourning women, the same with the "preficae" of the Romans, who sung mournful songs, and made hideous noises, being hired for this purpose; as also those who played doleful tunes on musical instruments; See Gill on "Mt 9:23".

Mark 5:39

Ver. 39. And when he was come in,.... Into the house, within doors, into one of the apartments, and where the company of mourners, and the pipers, and mourning women were, singing and saying their doleful ditties:

he saith unto them, why make ye this ado and weep? why all this tumult and noise? this grief and mourning, whether real or artificial?

the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth: not but that she was truly dead, but not so as to remain under the power of death: she was like a person in a sleep, who would in a little time be awaked out of it: and which was as easily performed by Christ, as if she had been only in a natural sleep; See Gill on "Mt 9:24".

Mark 5:40

Ver. 40. And they laughed him to scorn,.... The servants of the house that had laid her out; and the neighbours and relations that were come in on this occasion, and had satisfied themselves that she was dead; and the players on the pipe and flute, with the mourning women, who got their livelihood this way; See Gill on "Mt 9:24";

but when he had put them all out: of the house, or that part of it where he was; that is, ordered them to depart, with the leave and consent of the master of the house:

he taketh the father, and the mother, of the damsel, and them that were with him: either with Jairus, who had accompanied him to Christ, and returned with him; the Ethiopic version reads it, "with them", who were with the father and the mother of the damsel, their near relations, and intimate friends; or rather with Christ, namely, the three disciples, Peter, James, and John;

and entereth in where the damsel was lying; into an inner room, where the child was laid out on a bed.

Mark 5:41

Ver. 41. And he took the damsel by the hand,....
See Gill on "Mt 9:25".

And said unto her; in the Syriac language, which was then commonly spoken by the Jews, and well understood: hence the Syriac version expresses the following words without an interpretation,

Talitha Cumi. The Ethiopic version reads it, "Tabitha Cumi"; and so do some Greek copies, and Latin versions, taking it to be the same word as in **Ac 9:36** whereas that signifies "Dorcas, a roe"; but this word is of another signification, as here explained,

which is, being interpreted, damsel (I say unto thee) arise. The phrase, "I say unto thee", is no part of the interpretation of the above Syriac words; but is added, by the evangelist, as being what was expressed by Christ at the same time, signifying his authority and power over death; only "damsel arise", is the interpretation of them, ylj, "Tali", signifies a "boy", and atylj, "Talitha", a "girl"; and so they are often used in the Targums {w}, and in the Talmud: the one is used for a boy of seventeen years of age {x}, and the other for a girl of sixteen or seventeen years of age {y}; so that this child might well be called by this name, since she was but twelve years of age; and ymwq, "Cumi", is the imperative Mwq, "to arise".

{w} Targum Hieres in Deut. xxii. 21. & Targum Sheni in Esther ii. 9. {x} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 142. 2. Gloss. in ib. {y} lb. fol. 91. 2.

Mark 5:42

Ver. 42. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked,.... As soon as ever the above words were pronounced by Christ, such divine power went along with them, that the child returned to life; and raised herself up from the bed, got off of it, and walked about the room in perfect health and strength:

for she was of the age of twelve years; and so, when alive and well, was able to walk; though one of this age was called a little one, as this is by another evangelist; See Gill on "Mt 9:18",

and they were astonished with a great astonishment; they were exceedingly amazed at such a signal instance of the power of our Lord, even both the parents of the child, and the disciples of Christ.

Mark 5:43

Ver. 43. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it,.... From them, immediately, and whilst he was upon the spot; for that the thing could be long concealed, it was not reasonable to suppose: this charge he gave, to show his dislike of ostentation and popular applause, and to avoid the envy of the Scribes and Pharisees, and prevent the people from making any attempts to proclaim him king; his time not being yet come to die, he having some other work to do; and a more full manifestation of him being reserved for another time, and to be done in another way.

And commanded that something should be given her to eat; which would be an evidence not only that she was really alive, but that she was restored to perfect health: she was both raised from the dead, and entirely freed from the distemper she laboured under before her death; death had cured her of that, as it does of all distempers: she did not rise with it, but was free from it; and was now like one that had been asleep for a while, and was hungry upon it; as children of such an age generally are upon rising from sleep.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 6:1

Ver. 1. And he went out from thence,.... From Capernaum;

and came into his own country; or "city", as the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, the city of Nazareth; so called because it was the place where Christ was conceived, and where he was educated; for which he had a regard, and was willing it should partake of the benefit of his doctrine and miracles:

and his disciples follow him; as they did wherever he went; and which is a true characteristic of a disciple of Jesus.

Mark 6:2

Ver. 2. And when the sabbath day was come,.... For it seems that it was on a weekday, or on one of the common days of the week, that he entered into the city, where he remained without making himself known, till the sabbath day came: and then he began to teach in the synagogue; that is, at Nazareth; where he expounded the law and the prophets, and preached the Gospel:

and many hearing [him] were astonished. The Vulgate Latin adds, "at his doctrine"; and so it is read in Beza's most ancient copy:

saying, from whence hath this man these things? This skill of explaining Scripture, this doctrine which he teaches, and these miracles he is said to work? This question they the rather put, because they had known him from the beginning: he had lived long among them, and they knew he had not learnt of men, and therefore wondered how he came by such things as these:

and what wisdom is this which is given to him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? which were but the other day employed in servile work, and mechanical operations.

Mark 6:3

Ver. 3. Is not this the carpenter?.... Some copies read, "the carpenter's son", as in Mt 13:55 and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; but all the ancient copies, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions, read "the carpenter": such may Christ be reasonably thought to be, since his father was; and which business he might follow, partly through the meanness and poverty of his parents; and partly that he might set an example of industry and diligence; and chiefly to bear that part of the first Adam's curse, which was to eat his bread with the sweat of his brow: nor ought this to have been objected to him by the Jews, with whom it was usual for their greatest doctors and Rabbins to be of some trade or secular employment; so R. Jochanan was a shoemaker {z} R. Isaac was a blacksmith {a}, R. Juda was a tailor {b}, Abba Saul and R. Jochanan, were undertakers for funerals {c}; R. Simeon was a seller of cotton {d}, R. Nehemiah was a ditcher {e}, R. Jose bar Chelphetha was a skinner {f}; and others of them were of other trades, and some exceeding mean: the famous R. Hillell was a hewer of wood, and Carna, a judge in Israel, was a drawer of water {g}; and so Maimonides says,

"the great wise men of Israel were some of them hewers of wood and drawers of water {h}."

They say,

"a man is obliged to learn his son an honest and easy trade {i}:"

there are some businesses they except against {k}, but this of a carpenter is not one; yea, they say,

"if a man does not teach his son a trade, it is all one as if he taught him thievery {l}."

Nor did they think it at all inconsistent with learning; for they have a saying {m}, that

"beautiful is the learning of the law, along with a trade."

The Jews ought not to have flouted Christ with this trade of a carpenter, since, according to them, it was necessary that a carpenter, in some cases, should be a regular priest; as in repairing of the temple, especially the holy of holies. So says Maimonides {n};

"there was a trap door, or an open place in the floor of the chamber, open to the holy of holies, that workmen might enter thereby into the holy of holies, when there was a necessity of repairing any thing; and since we make mention of workmen, it may be observed here, when there is need of building in the midst of the temple, great care should be taken, rvk Nhk Nmwah hyhyv, "that the workman, or carpenter, be a right priest"."

Yea, they expressly say, that the Messiah is one of the four carpenters in **Zec 1:20**. "And the Lord showed me four carpenters"; they ask {o},

""who are the four carpenters?" Says R. Chana bar Bizna, says R. Simeon the saint, Messiah the son of David, Messiah the son of Joseph, and Elijah, and a priest of righteousness."

This is with some variation elsewhere expressed thus {p},

""and the Lord showed me four carpenters"; and these are they, Elijah, and the king Messiah, and Melchizedek and the anointed for war."

And one of their commentators {q} on the same text says,

"our Rabbins of blessed memory, explain this verse of the days of the Messiah;"

and then cites the above passage out of the Talmud; and another {r} refers unto it; See Gill on "Mt 13:55". The inhabitants of Nazareth go on, in order to reproach Jesus, calling him

the son of Mary; a poor woman of their town, and perhaps now a widow, since no mention is made of Joseph:

the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda and Simon? who were all of them the sons of Alphaeus or Cleophas, who was himself brother, or his wife sister, to Joseph or Mary; so that Christ was the near kinsman of these his sons: and it was usual with the Jews to call such an one a brother, and even indeed a more distant relation. The Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, instead of Joses, read Joseph:

and are not sisters here with us? And they were offended at him: either at the manner he came by his wisdom, with which he delivered such doctrine he did; and by his power, through which he wrought his mighty works, or miracles; they suspecting he came by them in an unlawful way, through familiarity with the devil, which they sometimes charged him with having: or at the meanness of his trade and employment; they could by no means think of him as the Messiah, who made so contemptible a figure, and was brought up in such a low way of life; and the rather, since one of their kings in common, was not be a mechanic, or at least of any mean occupation: of their canons runs thus {s};

"they do not appoint to be a king, or an high priest, one that has been a butcher, or a barber, or a bath keeper, or a tanner; not because they were unfit, but because their business was mean, and the people would always despise them."

Other trades are elsewhere {t} mentioned, from among whom a king, or an high priest, were never taken; as founders, combers, borers of handmills, druggists, weavers, notaries, fullers, a letter of blood, or a surgeon, &c. particularly such as related to women's business. Now, as it was not usual to choose any one to be a king that wrought at a trade, they could not bear that the king Messiah should be of one; and because Jesus was, they were offended at him, and rejected him as the Messiah. Or they were offended at the meanness of his extraction and descent, his father, and mother, and brethren, and sisters, being all persons in low circumstances of life; whereas they expected the Messiah would be born and brought up as a temporal prince, in great grandeur and splendour;

See Gill on "Mt 13:55",
See Gill on "Mt 13:56",
See Gill on "Mt 13:57".

{z} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 11. T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 104. 2. Cetubot, fol. 34. 1. & 58. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 71. 1. {a} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 24. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 96. 1. Bava Bathra, fol. 170. 1. {b} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 164. 2. {c} T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 24. 2. {d} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 28. 2. Megilla, fol. 17. 1. & 18. 2. {e} Caphtor, fol. 75. 2. {f} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 30. 1. {g} Maimon. in Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 5. {h} Ib. Hilch. Talmud Tora, c. 1. sect. 9. {i} Misn. Kiddush. c. 4. sect. 14. T. Bab. Kiddush. fol. 82. 1. & Beracot, fol. 63. 1. {k} T. Kiddush. ib. {l} Ib. fol. 30. 2. {m} Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 9. {n} In Misn. Middot, c. 4. sect. 5. {o} T. Bab. Succa. {p} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4. {q} R. David Kimchi in Zech. i. 20. {r} R. Sol. Jarchi in ib. {s} Maimon. Hilch. Melachim, c. 1, sect. 6. {t} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 82. 1.

Mark 6:4

Ver. 4. But Jesus said unto them,.... The following proverb;

a prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house; the same as in Mt 13:57;
See Gill on "Mt 13:57". Only the phrase, "among his own kin", is here added: very probably some of those that made these reflections, were some distant relations of Joseph, or Mary; for as Jesus was now in his own country and city, and in his own native place, so among his kindred and relations; who envied his gifts and attainments, and objected to him his rise from that branch of their family, which was the most mean and abject.

Mark 6:5

Ver. 5. And he could there do no mighty work,.... Or miracle; not that Christ had no power in himself to work miracles, though their unbelief and contempt of him were very great; but it was not fit and proper that he should do any there, since such were their prejudices against him: it is an usual way of speaking with the Hebrews, when either it is not "fit" and proper that a thing should be done, or they "will" not do it, to say it cannot be done; see Ge 19:22; and even it is said of God himself, "So that the Lord could no longer bear, because of your evil doings", Jer 44:22. Not but that he could if he would, but he would not; nor was it fit and proper that he should; the same is the sense here: besides, in Mt 13:58 it is said, "he did not many mighty works there"; and so the Arabic version here, "and he did not many mighty works there"; he did not think it proper to do any of any great consequence, nor did he. Wherefore the Jew {u} has no reason to object this to the divinity of Christ, as if there was a want of power in him. Christ is omnipotent, and he has given proof of his almighty power, by the miracles which he has wrought; and though he wrought no mighty work "there", yet he wrought many elsewhere, which sufficiently attest the truth of his proper deity: the emphasis lies upon the word there; though he did not work any considerable miracle in that place, he did in others; which shows, that it was not a defect of power in him, that was the reason of it, but something else; and Matthew gives the reason of it, and says, it was "because of their unbelief": not that their unbelief was an over match for his power; he could have removed that, if he had thought fit, but he did not do it; he, who is the author and finisher of faith, could have took away their unbelief, as the man that brought his dumb child to Christ, concluded he could; and therefore said to him, "Lord, help my unbelief", **Mr 9:24**. Christ sometimes required of the persons he was about to heal, faith in him, that he could heal them; and so did his apostles, **Mt 9:28**. Not that faith contributed any thing to the cure, but it was the way and means in which Christ was pleased to communicate his healing virtue: besides, when persons applied to him for healing, and expressed their faith in him, it gave him an opportunity of working a miracle for that purpose; but now these people did not so much as ask such a favour of him, and so gave him no occasion of doing any mighty work; for which reason it may be said, he could not, no opportunity offering: and moreover, seeing they disbelieved him, and rejected him as the Messiah, they were unworthy of having any wrought among them; and it was but just and right, to do none: nay, it was rather an instance of kindness not to do any among them; since had he, and they had remained impenitent and unbelieving, as he knew they would, these would have been aggravations of their condemnation.

Save that he laid his hands upon a sick folk, and healed them. There were some few sick people that had faith in him, and came to him, beseeching him to heal them; and accordingly he did lay his hands on them, and cured them, which was a way he sometimes used: and these cures he wrought, to show his power, what he could do, and what benefits they might have enjoyed by him, and to leave them inexcusable.

{u} MS. Lusit. N. 83. apud Kidder, Demonstr. of the Messiah, par. 2. p. 59.

Mark 6:6

Ver. 6. And he marvelled because of their unbelief,.... Which was the reason, as Matthew says, Mt 13:58, why he did not many mighty works there, because they continued their prejudices against him, and their unbelief in him, notwithstanding what he did do, which was matter of admiration to him; wherefore he took his leave of them, as an ungrateful and unworthy people; and it is never after observed, that he returned there any more. It was a surprise to Christ, as man, that his country men should not believe in him, but reject him as the Messiah, on account of the above things: since they knew his parentage and education, and mean employ among them, even almost to that time; and yet such were his ministry and miracles, and such were his wisdom and power he was possessed of, that they could not account for; they might at least have concluded, seeing it was clear to them he had not them from men, that he had a mission and commission from God, and was qualified by him for such service and work; though they might have carried their reasonings further, and it was marvellous they should not, and have believed him to be more than a man, to have been a divine person, and the true Messiah; the proofs of Christ's deity and Messiahship are so plain and incontestable, that it is amazing that there should be any, who have read them or heard of them, that should be deists, or continue unbelievers. Such unbelief must be owing to a wretched stupidity, and judicial blindness of mind.

And he went round about the villages teaching: he took a circuit throughout all the little towns and villages round about Nazareth, instructing the ignorant country people, in the things concerning the kingdom of God.

Mark 6:7

Ver. 7. And he called unto him the twelve,.... "His twelve disciples", as some copies read; whom he had before called by his grace, and had appointed and ordained them his apostles, but had not yet publicly sent forth; in order to which, he now called them to him, and gave them their commission, qualifications, and instructions:

and began to send them forth by two and two: he first sent forth one couple, and then another; the reason of his sending them by pairs, was partly for the sake of company, and that they might be useful and assisting to one another; and partly to show their agreement in doctrine; and that they might be proper and sufficient witnesses of it, whereby it might be established; and the rather, being thus sent by pairs into different parts, their message would be the sooner dispatched, than if they had all went together:

and gave them power over unclean spirits; that is, to cast them out; as it is expressed in Mt. 10:1, See Gill on "Mt 10:1"; and which is here added in the Syriac and Persic versions. Many things are omitted by this evangelist, which are mentioned by Matthew: he does not give us the names of the twelve apostles; the reason of that indeed may be, because they are related by him in **Mr 3:16**, and he did not choose to repeat them here: nor does he take any notice of the places where the apostles were to go, and where not; nor of the persons to whom, or not; as not into the way of the Gentiles, nor into any of the cities of the Samaritans, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: nor does he say any thing of the subject matter of their ministry or what they had in charge to publish; as that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, or the Gospel dispensation: nor does he observe the several things they were to do in confirmation of their doctrine and mission; as healing the sick, cleansing lepers, raising the dead, and casting out devils: he only relates the directions given them with respect to their journey, in the following verses; the reason of all which seems to be, because he refers not to the same time as Matthew does, to their appointment and ordination; but to the time they were sent out, and proceeded on their journey.

Mark 6:8

Ver. 8. And commanded them that they should take nothing for [their] journey,.... To accommodate them in it, except those things after directed to:

save a staff only; a single one, for staves in the plural number are forbidden, See Gill on "Mt 10:10";

no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse. Travellers used to put their bread, or any other sort of food into their scrips, and their money in their girdles; but the disciples were not allowed to carry either, because provision was to be made for them wherever they came at free cost, it being what their labour was worthy of;
See Gill on "Mt 10:9",
See Gill on "Mt 10:10".

Mark 6:9

Ver. 9. But be shod with sandals,.... Which were different from shoes, and more fit to travel with, and therefore allowed when shoes were forbidden; See Gill on "Mt 10:10", though some think there was no difference between shoes and sandals, and that Christ, in Mt 10:10, does not forbid the taking of shoes, but two pair of shoes; as not two coats, nor two staves, but one of a sort only. And

not put on two coats; that is, at a time; an inner and an outward one, or one at one time, and another at another: they were forbid change of raiment; the reasons for it See Gill on "Mt 10:10". From all which it appears, that as a minister of the Gospel ought not to be a worldly minded man, that minds earth and earthly things, and seeks to amass wealth and riches to himself, and preaches for filthy lucre's sake; nor to be a sensual and voluptuous man, serving his own belly, and not the Lord Jesus Christ, feeding himself, and not the flock; so neither should he be filled with worldly cares, overwhelmed in worldly business, and entangled with the affairs of this life: he ought to have his mind free from all solicitude and anxious concern, about a subsistence for himself and his, that so he may with greater and more close application attend to his ministry, to preparations for it, and the performance of it; and give up himself entirely to the word and prayer, and not have his mind distracted with other things: upon which account it is highly necessary, that the people to whom he ministers should take care, that a sufficient provision be made for him; that he may live without any anxious care and thought about such things, and his mind be more intent about the work he is called unto: and which is what our Lord chiefly designs by all this, who has ordained that they that preach the Gospel, should be comfortably provided for, and live of it; and which, as it makes for the peace of their minds that minister, it issues in the advantage of those who are ministered to.

Mark 6:10

Ver. 10. And he said unto them,.... He continued giving orders and directions to them, saying,

in what place soever you enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place: that is, in whatsoever city or town they should come to, the first house they went into, they should continue in, during their stay in that city or town, and not shift from house to house; See Gill on "Mt 10:11".

Mark 6:11

Ver. 11. And, whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you,.... Who would neither take them into their houses, nor hear what they had to say to them:

when ye depart thence; from the house or the city, or town, in which it is,

shake off the dust under your feet, for a testimony against them; that they had been with them, and attempted to preach the Gospel to them, but they despised and rejected it; wherefore they departed from them as an unworthy people, against whom the dust of their feet would rise as a testimony, in the day of judgment;
See Gill on "Mt 10:14".

Verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. This clause is omitted in some copies, and so it is in the Vulgate Latin version, and may perhaps be transcribed from Mt. 10:15, See Gill on "Mt 10:15"; though it is in most copies, and is read in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions. It is certain that there will be a day of judgment; it is fixed, God has appointed it, though it is not known by men or angels: this will be universal; all must appear in it before God, the judge of all, Jews and Gentiles; such who have lived in the earlier ages of time, as well as those that will live nearer that day; such who have only had the dim light of nature to guide them, and also who have been favoured with the Gospel revelation: the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, though they have had the judgments of God upon them in this world, they will not escape the righteous judgment of God hereafter; things are not over with them, there is still a reckoning to be made, an account to pass with them; their full punishment is not yet executed, even though they have been suffering the vengeance of eternal fire; their bodies must be raised, and they must receive for the things which they have done in them, and which they have so dreadfully and unnaturally abused; and yet, as vile sinners as they have been, and as sore a punishment as they are worthy of, their punishment will be milder and more tolerable, than that of the inhabitants of such places, where the Gospel has been preached, and they have despised and rejected it. May the inhabitants of our land, especially of some parts of it, as of London, and others, consider this!

Mark 6:12

Ver. 12. And they went out,.... From that part of the country where they then were, some one way, and some another, two by two, with these instructions, and according to these directions; in order to preach the word, and work miracles, in the several parts where they were sent:

and preached that men should repent; both of the evil practices which they were guilty of, and of the bad principles they had imbibed, and change both their sentiments and their conduct: this, they exhorted them to, as John the Baptist, and Christ, had done before, who set out in their ministry the same way; and these, as they did also, preached the Gospel, and the things appertaining to the kingdom of God, and Gospel dispensation, and called upon men to believe them. For faith and repentance went together in Christ's ministry, **Mr 1:15**, and so they did in the ministry of John, the Baptist, Ac 19:4, and in the ministry of the apostles, Ac 20:21. When they preached that men should repent, it does not from hence follow, that they have a power to repent of themselves: for such is the condition of men by nature, that they neither see their need of repentance, and their hearts are so hard and obdurate, that they cannot work themselves up to it, or work it in them, and exercise it; this requires the powerful and efficacious grace of God to produce it, and it is a gift of his grace; and if he gives the means, and not the grace of repentance itself, it will never appear: but the apostles preaching that men should repent, shows that they were in such a state as to need it; and how necessary it was for them to have it, seeing without it they must all perish: and such a ministration is proper, to awaken the minds of men to a sense of the need of it, and to direct them to Christ the Saviour, who is exalted to give it, as well as the remission of sins.

Mark 6:13

Ver. 13. And they cast out many devils,.... Which they had power given them to do; and this they did, in confirmation of their mission and doctrine, and for the benefit of miserable creatures, who were possessed by them; and to show their power over the devils, and as a prelude of what they were to be the instruments of, in casting Satan out of the souls of men, both Jews and Gentiles; and especially, in the ejection of him out of the Gentile world:

and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. This they were doubtless directed to by Christ, as an outward sign of healing; but not as a medicine; otherwise there would have been no miracle in the cure: though it is certain, the Jews used anointing with oil medicinally in many cases, as the means of healing; but they did not always succeed, as the apostles did: on the day of atonement {w},

"it was not lawful to "anoint" part of the body, as the whole body; but if a man was sick, or had ulcers on his head, he might anoint according to his usual way, and no notice was taken of it."

Again {x},

"a man may not anoint with wine, or vinegar, but he may anoint with oil: he that has a pain in his head, or has ulcers upon him, Nmv Ko, "he may anoint with oil", but he may not anoint with wine and vinegar: wine of the second tithe, which they mix, is forbidden to anoint with; oil of the second tithe, which they mix, is lawful to anoint with."

And it is elsewhere said {y}, that

"R. Meir allowed of the mixing of oil and wine, hlwxl Kwol, "to anoint the sick" on a sabbath; but when he was sick, and we sought to do so to him, he would not suffer us."

But that oil was used by the apostles as a medicine for the healing of diseases, cannot well be thought; since oil, though it may be useful in some cases, it is not an universal medicine, which is proper to all; nor were the apostles instructed by Christ in the art of physic, but were possessed by him with extraordinary gifts, to cure the disorders of the body, for the confirmation of the Gospel, which they preached; and it is easy to observe, that healing the sick by anointing with oil, is joined with the extraordinary power of casting out devils; and it was the same power by which they performed the one, as the other; see **Lu 9:1**. Hence it appears, that this passage gives no countenance to the use of such a practice in our days; since these were apostles only, who used it, who were extraordinary persons, and whose office in the church was an extraordinary one, and is now ceased; and healing in this way, was by an extraordinary power bestowed upon them, which has ceased; and therefore the rite, or ceremony of anointing with oil, for such a purpose, should be of course discontinued; however, it cannot be supported by this instance, whatever countenance it may seem to have from **Jas 5:14**, for it must be owned, there is some difference in the passages: the persons that anointed here were apostles, there the elders of the church; the persons anointed there, were good people, the members of the church, but here any sort of persons, and chiefly, if not altogether unbelievers; the healing of them is ascribed to the prayer of faith in James, but here to the extraordinary power of the apostles, by anointing with oil; though it may be, the healing was equally miraculous in the one, as the other: but be this as it will, nothing can be concluded from hence, in favour of the sacrament of extreme unction, used by the Papists; who administer that to persons, just at the point of death, and that for the remission of their sins, and the saving of their souls; whereas oil was used by the apostles to sick persons, and for the recovery of their bodily health. But since these were extraordinary cures which they performed this way, why did they make use of oil at all, seeing the virtue of healing did not come from that, and they could as well have healed sicknesses without it, as with it? To which it may be replied, that they did not always make use of it; sometimes only words were expressed, sometimes only hands were laid on the sick, and sometimes the sick persons were healed by handkerchiefs and aprons taken from them; which show, that the "healing" virtue was not in the means, nor was it tied to any: moreover, this was only used as an outward sign of healing, and might have some spiritual significancy in it; it might show, that they were sent forth by Christ the anointed one, who is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows; it might be symbolical of the grace of the Spirit, which is often compared to oil, which they themselves were possessed of in a large measure, and which is communicated through the ministration of the Gospel; and it might be significative of the Gospel itself, which brings light and joy, health and comfort along with it, to the souls of men, which they were the happy messengers of.

{w} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 77. 2. Maimon. Hikh. Shebitat Ashur, c. 3. sect. 9. {x} T. Hieros. Maaser Sheni, fol. 53. 2. {y} Ib. Betacot, fol. 3. 1. & Sabbat, fol. 14. 3.

Mark 6:14

Ver. 14. And king Herod heard [of him],.... "Of Jesus", as the Syriac version supplies it; or "the miracles of Jesus", as the Persic version. This Herod here called a king, as he might be by his courtiers, and the common people, is the same with the Tetrarch in
Mt 14:1, for he was only Tetrarch of Galilee. This was Herod Antipater, the son of Herod the Great; the fame of Jesus reached his ears, he being governor of those parts, which were mostly visited by Christ:

for his name was spread abroad; by means of his ministry and miracles, and through those of his disciples, whom he had sent two by two into all parts of the country:

and he said that John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him; for Herod had some time before put John to death; and hearing of these wonderful things that were done by Christ, his conscience smote him for the murder of John; and such a thought struck into his mind, that he was risen from the dead, and did these miracles: and the more he thought of it, the more strongly he was persuaded of it; and told it to his courtiers with a great deal of assurance, that it was certainly he; See Gill on "Mt 14:2".

Mark 6:15

Ver. 15. Others said that it is Elias,.... This was the opinion, either of many of the Jews, who expected that Elias the Tishbite would come in person, before the coming of the Messiah; and thought by the appearance and wonderful works of Jesus, that he was now come: or of Herod's courtiers, who said this to divert him from his notion of John the Baptist, which they might perceive was very distressing to him; though the former seems rather to be the sense:

others said, that it is a prophet: or "the prophet", that was to come, whom Moses had spoken of, and the Jews expected; this was the opinion of others of them: or

as one of the prophets. The word h, "or", is left out in some copies; and so it is in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; and then the sense is, this new prophet lately raised up, is as one of the old prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others; or one of them had risen up.

Mark 6:16

Ver. 16. But when Herod heard thereof,.... Either of Christ, or rather of the different opinions about him,

he said, it is John, whom I have beheaded: the thought stuck close to him, and continued with him; he could not get rid of it, nor persuade himself to the contrary; nor could any of his servants get him off of it, but he affirmed it with the greatest assurance imaginable. These different sentiments of the people concerning Jesus, greatly perplexed the mind of Herod, as appears from **Lu 9:7**, for it was first given out by others, and not by Herod, that John the Baptist was

risen from the dead; which he hearing of, gave him great uneasiness: he thoroughly considered the matter; he called to mind how he had used him, imprisoned him, and put him to death. At first he could not receive it, that since he was beheaded by him, he should be restored to life; but hearing of the miracles that were done by him, his conscience accused him, his fancy worked, and at length he firmly believed it, that he must be risen: and this sentiment, which he himself gave into at last, distressed him above all the rest, because of his concern in his death, fearing he was come to life to take vengeance on him: it might not sit very easy upon his mind, to bear that Elias had appeared the forerunner of the Messiah, the king of the Jews; who himself might be quickly expected, and who, he might fear, would seize upon, and take away that part of the kingdom which he was possessed of: and even to be told, that one of the prophets was risen from the dead, might be shocking to him; imagining that something of considerable moment was to be done, some revolution to be made; that the people would be stirred up by him, to attempt a change of government: but the first of these made the greatest impression on him, and what he could not get off, but fully gave into, as a thing unquestionable. He owns he beheaded John; he was conscious to himself of the sin, and confesses it; he does not lay it to the charge of Herodias and her daughter, though they requested it; the guilt of it lay upon his conscience, and he dreaded this appearance of John, as he fancied. And if he was a Sadducee before, as he has been thought to be, he now changed his mind, and believed a resurrection from the dead. So men may be convinced of sin, and entertain other and better notions of religion, and yet not be converted persons.

Mark 6:17

Ver. 17. For Herod himself had sent forth,.... Some of his guard, a detachment of soldiers,

and laid hold upon John; who seized upon him, and took him up:

and bound him in prison; in the castle of Machaerus:

for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife, for he had married her; whilst his brother was living, and who had had children by her; See Gill on "Mt 14:3".

Mark 6:18

Ver. 18. For John had said unto Herod,.... He had been personally with him, and had plainly and freely told him of his sin, and faithfully reproved him for it; alleging what he had done was contrary to the law of God:

it is not lawful, for thee to have thy brother's wife:
See Gill on "Mt 14:4".

Mark 6:19

Ver. 19. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him,.... Was angry with him, conceived wrath, and laid up hatred against him, and was an adversary to him; which is the sense of the Oriental versions. She bore him an inward grudge, and lay in wait to take the first opportunity of dispatching him:

and would have killed him, but she could not; being hindered by Herod, who as yet would not suffer it; partly through fear of the people, and partly through the respect he had for John.

Mark 6:20

Ver. 20. For Herod feared John,.... Had him in great respect; he had a great veneration for him; which was the reason that Herodias could not as yet accomplish her design against him, and vent her rage upon him. Though some understand this not of his reverence, but of his dread of him: he knew as follows, that he was a man exemplary for justice and holiness, which gained him great esteem among the people; wherefore, though Herod, as well as Herodias, could very willingly have put him to death, yet, as Matthew says, "he feared the multitude", Mt 14:5: who, in general, had an high opinion of John as a prophet, and a holy good man: he feared therefore to take away his life, lest they should rise and rebel against him; nor would he suffer Herodias to do it, for the same reason.

Knowing that he was a just man, and an holy; by what he had heard of him, by his own conversation with him, and the observation he had made upon his tenets and conduct. He was a "just", or "righteous" man, in a civil, legal, and evangelical sense: he did that which was just, between man and man; he did to others, as he would be done by himself; he was outwardly righteous before men, he lived soberly and righteously; nor was he chargeable with any notorious breach of the law; his conversation was strictly moral: and he was just or righteous before God, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; in whom he believed, and to whom he looked as the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world: but it was in the former sense, that he was known by Herod to be a just man; who only could pass such a judgment upon him, by his outward conduct and manner of life: and so as he had true principles of internal holiness wrought in him by the Spirit of God, with which he was filled from his mother's womb; he was externally holy in his walk and conversation, which was visible to others, and was taken notice of by this wicked prince: the former of these characters may regard his justice, uprightness, and integrity among men; the latter, his piety and devotion unto God: and the whole agrees with the account the Jewish historian {z} gives of him, that he was

"an excellent good man, who stirred up the Jews to the study of virtue, and especially piety and justice."

These were epithets, which used to be given to men, famous for religion and piety; so we read of Simeon, qydu, "the just" {a}, and of R. Simeon, adyox, "the Holy One" {b}:

and observed him: or "kept him" in custody, in prison, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic render it; and did not put him to death, but preserved him from the designs of Herodias against him. Or he observed and took notice of what he had heard him say in his ministry; he laid it up, and kept it in his mind, and memory; the remembrance of which kept him in awe, and he durst not, and could not for the present, give heed to the solicitations of Herodias, or suffer her to take away his life: and he also observed his exemplary life and conversation, which was so just and upright, that his conscience would not admit him to give him up to her will and pleasure.

And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly: when he heard John explain the law and the prophets, open the writings of the Old Testament, preach the doctrine of repentance towards God, and faith in the Messiah to come; set forth the evil, danger, and punishment of sin, and exhorted to a holy life and conversation; taught the doctrine of baptism for the remission of sin by Christ, and spoke of the glories and happiness of a future state, and of the nature of the Gospel dispensation, just now ushering in; Herod, like one of the stony ground hearers, received the word with joy, was pleased with it, and in some things outwardly reformed: but the word did not take root in his heart, and therefore what external effects it produced, came to nothing; nor was he able to withstand the lusts and corruptions of his heart. The sense seems to be, that while he was hearing John, his natural affections were moved, and he had a kind of pleasure in the things he delivered; just as the Jews for a season rejoiced in his light, **Joh 5:35**, his natural conscience dictating to him, that the things which were spoken, were right, and just, and good; and they were delivered in such a solemn and striking manner, as commanded attention and awe; and were things of such a nature and importance, that from a principle of self-love, he could not but wish himself an interest in: and so far they had such an influence upon him, as to engage him to do many things in an external way, which had the appearance of good, at least of moral good: so that it is manifest from hence, that persons may have a natural affection for the ministry of the word, and seem delighted with it for a while; yea, may do a great many good actions, which seem to be such; and yet the word come in word only, and not in power: there may be all this, and yet true grace may not be wrought, and the word not be the engrafted word, which is able to save. In one of Beza's copies, and so in one of Stephens's, and in the Coptic version, instead of "he did many things", it is read, "he hesitated much": he was perplexed and distressed, he did not know what to do with himself; his conscience was uneasy, some things were pleasing to him, and others greatly afflicted him; his mind was distracted, he could not tell what to think, say, or do: however, it had such an effect upon him, that he had some respect for John; a veneration of him; at least, some fear and dread of him, which kept him from taking away his life, or suffering any others to do it.

{z} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 7. {a} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 9. {b} T. Bab. Succah, fol. 52. 2.

Mark 6:21

Ver. 21. And when a convenient day was come,.... For Herodias; who had long sought and watched for an opportunity of avenging herself on John, and such a time Herod's birthday proved; though some think, that this phrase is the same with bwj Mwy, "a good day"; often used by the Jews for a festival, any one of their feast days; there is a tract in their Misna which bears this name; and that such a day was this. But not one of the festivals of the Jews was this, as either their passover, or pentecost, or feast of tabernacles, which Herod had no regard to; but his own birthday, which he kept as a festival, in eating, and drinking, and dancing; and so was a very opportune and seasonable time for Herodias to take the advantage of Herod when in a good humour, amidst his company, and in his cups, to solicit that, which she had often done without success: and so it was now,

that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee: this birthday, was either the day of his natural, or civil birth; the day when he was born into the world, or of his accession to the throne; See Gill on "Mt 14:6", when he made a grand entertainment in the evening for his nobles, and the officers of the army, the captains of thousands, and the principal men, those of the first rank and quality in Galilee, of which he was Tetrarch.

Mark 6:22

Ver. 22. And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in,.... To the hall, where Herod and his guests were, after supper was over; or rather, whilst at it: she is called the daughter of Herodias, and not of Herod; she having had her not by him, but by his brother Philip: her name is thought to be Salome; See Gill on "Mt 14:6",

and danced and pleased Herod, and them that were with him; at supper, his lords, captains, and principal men in his dominions;
See Gill on "Mt 14:6".

The king said unto the damsel, ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee; which shows how exceedingly pleased he was; and the more, in that she gave such general pleasure to his whole company.

Mark 6:23

Ver. 23. And he sware unto her,.... He added an oath to what he had before said, the more to confirm it, and to encourage her in her request, and which he repeated in stronger language:

whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom; See Gill on "Mt 14:7".

Mark 6:24

Ver. 24. And she went forth and said unto her mother,.... The king having made such a promise to her, and annexed his oath to it, she thought proper before she asked any thing of him, to withdraw from the hall and company, and consider with herself, and consult with her mother, who was not at the entertainment; it being not usual in those eastern countries, for women to sit at table, at any grand festival: to whom she reported the offer the king had made, and desired she would be pleased to direct her, what request to make saying,

what shall I ask? To which her mother made answer, without taking any further time to think of it, being prepared for it, and determined in her mind, whenever she had an opportunity of asking a favour of the king, what it should be:

and she said, the head of John the Baptist. So sweet is revenge, that to have her will on that great and good man, was more to her, than to have half the king's dominions.

Mark 6:25

Ver. 25. And she came in straightway with haste unto the, king,.... Having had her mother's advice, and being hastened by her, she immediately returned to the hall, where the king and his guests were, with much Concern, eagerness, and diligence:

and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger, the head of John the Baptist: her petition proceeding upon a promise with an oath, is presented by way of demand; insisting upon it, that in a very little time, "this hour", as the Syriac version renders it, within an hour's time, or less; and "here", as Matthew has it,
Mt 14:8, in that very place, and whilst the company was there; that orders should be given to cut off the head of John the Baptist, and that that should be brought, in a large dish, unto her; and this was what she had to ask, and insisted upon the immediate and punctual performance of it; See Gill on "Mt 14:8".

Mark 6:26

Ver. 26. And the king was exceeding sorry,....
See Gill on "Mt 14:9"

yet for his oath's sake, [and] for their sakes which sat with him; as Matthew adds, "at meat", Mt 14:9; for it seems as if supper was not over, when all this was transacting.

He would not reject her; deny her her request, or send her away without granting it which could not be without grieving her, and treating her with contempt, and defrauding her of the promise; all which ideas are expressed by some versions.

Mark 6:27

Ver. 27. And immediately the king sent an executioner,....
See Gill on "Mt 14:10"

and commanded his head to be brought; ordered him to cut off his head in prison, and bring it away forthwith in a charger to him:

and he went and beheaded him in the prison; according to his orders.

Mark 6:28

Ver. 28. And brought his head in a charger,.... In a large dish, to Herod, who

gave it to the damsel; the daughter of Herodias, as she had requested:

and the damsel gave it to her mother; who had instigated her to it;
See Gill on "Mt 14:11".

Mark 6:29

Ver. 29. And when his disciples heard of it,.... That is, when the disciples of John heard of this barbarous execution of their master,

they came; to the prison in the castle of Machaerus, and took up his corpse; the trunk of his body; for his head was carried away, to glut the revenge of Herodias;

and laid it in a tomb; See Gill on "Mt 14:12".

Mark 6:30

Ver. 30. And the apostles gathered themselves together,.... The twelve apostles of Christ, whom he had sent out, two by two, into different parts, having gone through them, and finished the embassy, they were sent about, met together in one place, and came in a body together,

unto Jesus; their Lord and master, who had sent them, and to whom they were accountable, as all the ministers of the Gospel are:

and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught; they gave him an exact and full account of what miracles were wrought by them, what diseases they had cured, and what a number of devils they had cast out; and also what doctrines they had preached, and what success in all they had had: so every Gospel minister must give an account of his ministrations to Christ.

Mark 6:31

Ver. 31. And he said unto them,.... After he had heard their account, was satisfied with it, and approved of what they had said and done:

come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: where they might be free from noise and hurry, and take some rest and refreshment, after their wearisome journey, hard labours, and great fatigue in preaching and working miracles; which shows the great compassion, tenderness, and care of Christ, for his disciples:

for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat; the people were continually going to and fro; as soon as one company was gone, who came with their sick and diseased to be healed, or upon one account or another, another came: so that there was no opportunity of private meditation and prayer, nor of spiritual converse together: nor even so much as to eat a meal's meat for the refreshment of nature.

Mark 6:32

Ver. 32. And they departed into a desert place,.... Which belonged to the city of Bethsaida, Lu 9:10,

by ship, privately; over some part of the sea of Tiberias, this place lying on a more remote side of it.

Mark 6:33

Ver. 33. And the people saw them departing,.... The multitude that came to and fro, saw Christ and his disciples taking ship, and launching off; for though they were as private as could be, and intended to have gone in a very private manner, yet the people observed them:

and many knew him: Jesus; some copies read, "them"; and so do the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; they knew both Christ and his disciples, though they were in the ship, and at some distance:

and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and out went them, and came together unto him; they went on foot, as they might from Capernaum, Nazareth, and the parts adjacent, over the bridge at Chammath of Gadara, to this place, that belonged to Bethsaida; whither they perceived they steered, and made such haste, that they got thither before them; and the people that flocked from several cities met together, and came to Jesus, to hear his doctrine, and see his miracles,

Mark 6:34

Ver. 34. And Jesus, when he came out,.... Of the ship, and was got ashore,

saw much people; who came partly from the places where he came from, and partly from the cities and towns adjacent:

and was moved with compassion towards them; See Gill on "Mt 14:14", the reason follows, because they were as sheep, not having a shepherd. Christ observed, that they were hungering and thirsting after the word of righteousness, and had no faithful, spiritual pastors to feed them with knowledge and understanding; for the Scribes and Pharisees were blind guides, and shepherds that could not understand; so that the people were ready to perish for lack of knowledge, not having any spiritual comfort and refreshment under their ministry: hence they followed Christ, wherever he went, with great zeal and fervency, earnestly desiring the bread of life: this moved his compassion, so that though his view in coming to this place was retirement, and that his disciples might have some rest and refreshment, and might solace themselves in private conversation with him, and each other; yet postponing private advantage to public good, instead of reproving them for giving him this fresh trouble, kindly and tenderly received them:

and he began to teach them many things; relating to the kingdom of God, the Gospel dispensation, the doctrines and ordinances of it; things relating to their spiritual and eternal welfare, the comfort, and salvation of their immortal souls: and he dwelt long upon these subjects, because he found they were very ignorant, and needed instruction, and were very desirous of it; as well as healed all such of bodily diseases that stood in need thereof; of which Matthew only takes notice, Mt 14:14; as Mark only of doctrine; but Luke mentions both doctrine and miracles of healing, **Lu 9:11**.

Mark 6:35

Ver. 35. And when the day was now far spent,.... Or "much time was gone", in teaching the people, and healing the sick:

his disciples came unto him; nearer to him, as he was preaching, or healing the sick;

and said, this is a desert place, and now the time is far passed;
See Gill on "Mt 14:15".

Mark 6:36

Ver. 36. Send them away,.... Leave off preaching, dismiss the assembly; see Mt 14:15;

that they may go into the country round about; or "into the fields"; that is, to the odd houses; which were here and there in the fields;
See Gill on "Mr 5:14";

and into the villages; the little country towns that were near at hand:

and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat; they brought no provisions with them, and there were none to be had in that desert place; and it was high time they had some refreshment; for the usual time of dining was past, the first evening was come, the day was on the decline, and was far spent.

Mark 6:37

Ver. 37. He answered and said unto them, give ye them to eat,.... This he said to try their faith, and make way for the following miracle:

and they say unto him, shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? This might be just the sum of money they now had in the bag, as Grotius, and others conjecture; and the sense be, shall we lay out the two hundred pence, which is all we have in hand, to buy bread for this multitude? is it proper we should? is it thy will that so it should be? and if we should do so, as Philip suggests, **Joh 6:7**, it would not be enough to give every one a little: wherefore they say this, as amazed that he should propose such a thing unto them: or the reason of mentioning such a sum, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, might be, because that this was a noted and celebrated sum among the Jews, and frequently mentioned by them. A virgin's dowry, upon marriage, was "two hundred pence" {c}; and so was a widow's; and one that was divorced {d}, if she insisted on it, and could make good her claim: this was the fine of an adult man, that lay with one under age; and of a male under age, that lay with a female adult {e}; and of one man that gave another a slap of the face {f}. This sum answered to six pounds and five shillings of our money.

{c} Misn. Cetubot, c. 1. sect. 2. & 4. 7. & 5. 1. {d} Ib. c. 2. sect. 1. & 11. 4.
{e} Ib. c. 1. sect. 3. {f} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 6. sect. 8.

Mark 6:38

Ver. 38. And he saith unto them, how many loaves have ye?.... This he said, not as ignorant, but as willing to try their faith yet more, and that the after miracle might be more manifest and illustrious:

go and see; meaning, either that they should examine their own store, if they had any; or rather go and see what was to be had upon the spot, among the company, for money;

and when they knew, they say five loaves and two fishes: when they had made inquiry what provisions there were, and the most that could be got at any rate, they tell him, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, particularly, that there was a boy among the multitude that had five barley loaves, and two small fishes; and, at the same time, suggests, that they were nothing for so great a company.

Mark 6:39

Ver. 39. And he commanded them to make all sit down,.... Christ ordered his disciples, without any more ado, to cause the whole multitude, men, women, and children, to sit, or lie down, as they used to do at table when about to take a meal: and as they had no table before them, nor beds, or couches to sit, or lie down upon, he directed them to place them

by companies upon the green grass; that there might be some order among them, as at a meal; and that their number might be the more easily known; and that all of them might more plainly see the miracle that was to be wrought: and the provision be more orderly distributed to them.

Mark 6:40

Ver. 40. And they sat down in ranks,.... Or "beds": in such form as little beds are placed in a garden, or as rows of vines in a vineyard, in which form the scholars of the wise men sat in their schools: it is said {g},

"R. Eliezer ben Azariah expounded before the wise men in the vineyard (i.e. the university) of Jabneh: though was there a vineyard there? but these are the disciples of the wise men, who are made, or placed, twrwv twrwv, "rows, rows", or "in ranks", as a vineyard."

By hundreds, and by fifties; that is, an hundred in "each" bed, or row, and fifty in "each" bed, or row, as the word ana, signifies: each distinct bed, or row, had either a hundred, or fifty in it.

{g} T. Hieros. Beraeot, fol. 7. 4. Vid. Gloss. in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 42. 2.

Mark 6:41

Ver. 41. And when he had taken the five loaves and two fishes,.... Out of the hands of those that brought them into his own:

he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves:
See Gill on "Mt 14:19",

and gave them to his disciples to set before them; the multitude, in order to eat of them:

and the two fishes divided he among them all; that every one might have a part. The Syriac and Persic versions read, they divided; that is, the apostles.

Mark 6:42

Ver. 42. And they did all eat, and were filled.
See Gill on "Mt 14:20".

Mark 6:43

Ver. 43. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments,.... Of the broken pieces of bread, after all had eaten, and were satisfied:

and of the fishes; what remained of them:, for though there was but one loaf for a thousand persons and more, and two small fishes to be divided among five thousand and more: yet, through the wonderful power of Christ increasing both, as they were distributing and eating, there was enough of both for them all, and such a quantity of each left as filled twelve baskets.

Mark 6:44

Ver. 44. And they that did eat of the loaves,.... And also of the fishes; for they all ate of both;

were about five thousand men; the word wsei, "about", is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic and Ethiopic versions, reading five thousand men certain. The Evangelist Matthew adds, "beside children and women", Mt 14:21.

Mark 6:45

Ver. 45. And straightway he constrained his disciples,.... The reasons of this is See Gill on "Mt 14:22",

to get into the ship; in which they came to this place, and which was waiting for them:

and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida; or rather "to go to the other side over against Bethsaida"; for they were now in a desert belonging to that city, wherefore they were ordered to go, and did go to the other side of the sea of Tiberias, or Galilee, even to Capernaum, as appears from **Joh 6:17**;

while he sent away the people; See Gill on "Mt 14:22".

Mark 6:46

Ver. 46. And when he had sent them away,.... Either his disciples, or rather the multitude:

he departed into a mountain to pray: after his disciples were gone, and he had dismissed the people, he went from the desert where he had been, up into a mountain; being a retired place, to spend some time in private prayer to God; See Gill on "Mt 14:23".

Mark 6:47

Ver. 47. And when even was come,.... The second evening, and it was properly night:

the ship was in the midst of the sea; of Galilee, about twenty five or thirty furlongs from the shore; see **Joh 6:19**;

and he alone on the land; upon the mountain. This is observed, partly to show what distress the disciples were in, in the midst of the sea, having a hard gale of wind, and their master not with them; and partly to show that there was no way, humanly speaking, of Christ's getting to the ship, in order to go over; and is an illustration of the following miracle, of walking so many furlongs, as he must, upon the water, in a stormy, blustering night, to get to it.

Mark 6:48

Ver. 48. And he saw them toiling in rowing,.... He saw them either with his bodily eyes from the mountain on which he was; or he perceived in his Spirit, he knew, by virtue of his omniscience as God, what distress his disciples were in; being tossed about with the waves of the sea, and were labouring with all their might and main against the wind: and were vexed and tortured, as the word signifies; they were in the utmost pain and uneasiness of mind, as well as fatigue of body, assisting the men in rowing; for the ship they were in was no other than a vessel managed by oars; and hard work it was to keep it from being overset:

for the wind was contrary unto them; it blew from the other side they were making to, full in their face, hard against them; so that it was with great toil and difficulty, that they got any thing forward:

and about the fourth watch of the night; or three o'clock in the morning: so that it is very likely, that as the evening when they took to the vessel was sun setting, or about six o'clock, they had been nine hours at sea, and had got but twenty five or thirty furlongs from shore; See Gill on "Mt 14:25";

he cometh unto them walking upon the sea: being in this distress, Christ came down from the mountain to the sea side; and then, by his divine power, as the mighty God, that treadeth on the waves of the sea, he walked upon the surface of the waters of it; "as on dry land", as the Persic version adds:

and would have passed by them; that is, he made as though he would; see Lu 24:28. By the course he steered, by the swiftness of his motion, and his seeming negligence of them, it looked as though he intended to have gone by them, and said nothing to them, though this was far from his real design.

Mark 6:49

Ver. 49. But when they saw him walking on the sea,....
See Gill on "Mt 14:26";

they supposed it had been a spirit; a phantom, a spectre, an apparition, a nocturnal demon:

and cried out; as men affrighted at the sight, and fearing they should be hurt by it, or that it portended some evil to them;
See Gill on "Mt 14:26".

Mark 6:50

Ver. 50. For they all saw him, and were troubled,.... Had it been only seen by one, it might have been thought a fancy, and the effect of mere imagination; but as every one saw it, it was out of all doubt that so it was, and which gave them the greater concern:

and immediately he talked with them; as soon as they saw him, "that very moment", as the Syriac renders it; that so by hearing his voice their fears might be allayed:

and saith unto them, be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid;
See Gill on "Mt 14:27".

Mark 6:51

Ver. 51. And he went up unto them in the ship,.... That is, after Peter had desired he might be bid to come to him upon the water, and having got leave, made an essay; but the wind being boisterous, and beginning to sink, he cried out for help; when Christ stretched out his hand, and saved him; and then he, together with Peter, went up into the ship to the rest of the disciples, as is related by Matthew, Mt 14:28, though omitted by this evangelist:

and the wind ceased; from blowing; it was laid at once, as soon as ever Christ entered the ship:

and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. The Ethiopic version adds, "at him"; they were astonished, when they found it was Christ, and not a spirit; and they were more amazed at his walking upon the sea; and they marvelled still more abundantly, when they observed that the wind ceased upon his coming into the ship; their amazement was beyond expression, and therefore many words are made use of to signify it by.

Mark 6:52

Ver. 52. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves,.... Which they had seen but the day before; they did not attend to it, nor learn from it, as they might, the wonderful glory of Christ, and the greatness of his power; which was as much an act of omnipotence, as either his walking upon the water, or causing the wind to cease, or more so.

For their heart was hardened; or "blinded"; not by sin, or against Christ, much less in a judicial way: but there was a great deal of dulness and stupidity, and want of attention in them. The glory of Christ, which he manifested, and showed forth in his miracles, was not so clearly and fully discerned, attended to, and acknowledged by them, at it might reasonably be thought it would; for notwithstanding these miracles, which they daily saw, they stood in need of divine illuminations, that the darkness of their minds being removed, they might behold the glory of Christ, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father.

Mark 6:53

Ver. 53. And when they had passed over,.... The lake of Gennesaret, or sea of "Galilee",

they came into the land of Gennesaret; See Gill on "Mt 14:34"; to Capernaum, as appears from **Joh 6:17** for Capernaum was in the land of Gennesaret; to which agrees what Josephus says, that the land of Gennesaret was watered with a very excellent spring, which the inhabitants of that place called Capernaum {h}:

and drew to the shore: this is omitted in the Syriac and Persic versions: and the Arabic reads, "and they cast anchors".

{h} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 35.

Mark 6:54

Ver. 54. And when they were come out of the ship,.... Christ and his disciples, and were ashore,

straightway they knew him; that is, the men of that place, as in Mt. 14:35, See Gill on "Mt 14:35"; and so the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read here, "the inhabitants of that country", the country of Gennesaret; they knew him, having seen and heard him before.

Mark 6:55

Ver. 55. And ran through that whole region round about,.... That is, the inhabitants of that part of the country where Christ landed, ran many of them themselves, and others sent messengers into all parts of it, on every side:

and began to carry about in beds those that were sick; or lame, or so disordered that they could not walk, or bear any other way of being carried: these they brought to him,

where they heard he was: in whatsoever part of the country they could learn he was in; for he went about from place to place doing good.

Mark 6:56

Ver. 56. And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country,.... Whether in smaller towns, or larger cities, or the fields, where were houses, here and there one:

they laid the sick in the streets; or "markets", in any public places:

and besought him that they but might touch the border of his garment; if they might not be admitted to touch his person, or he did not choose to lay his hands on them:

and as many as touched him; or "it", the border of his garment, as they desired:

were made whole; of whatsoever sickness, or disease, they were afflicted with; See Gill on "Mt 14:36".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 7:1

Ver. 1. Then came together unto him the Pharisees,.... Having heard of his miracles, and that he was come into the land of Gennesaret; they consulted with one another, and came together to Jesus, to watch and observe what was said and done by him, and take what advantage they could against him. These were not of that country, but were of Jerusalem, as were their companions the Scribes:

and certain of the Scribes, which were of Jerusalem; for the fame of Christ had reached the metropolis of the nation; and these men being the more artful and cunning of the whole sect, either came of themselves, or were sent by the sanhedrim, to make their observations upon his doctrine and conduct; See Gill on "Mt 15:1".

Mark 7:2

Ver. 2. And when they saw some of his disciples,.... An opportunity soon offered of giving them an handle against him: for observing some of his disciples to sit down to meat, they took notice that they

eat bread with defiled (that is to say, with unwashen) hands, and
they found fault; with them, and charged them with the breach of the traditions of the elders, and took an occasion from hence of quarrelling with Christ. The Jews use the same phrase the evangelist here does, and interpret it in just the same manner: so, speaking of things eaten, twbawom Mydyb, "with defiled hands"; that is, says the commentator {i}, it is all one as if it was said, Mydy tlyjn alb, "without washing of hands"; which was esteemed a very great crime, and especially if done in a contemptuous way: for they say {k},

"he that despiseth washing of hands, shall be rooted out of the world; for in it is the secret of the decalogue:"

and particularly to eat with unwashed hands, was unpardonable in a disciple of a wise man; for they looked upon this to be the characteristic of one of the vulgar people, a common and illiterate man: for they ask {l},

"who is one of the people of the earth, or a plebeian? he that does not eat his common food with purity."

By this also they distinguished a Jew from a Gentile; if he washed his hands, and blessed, he was known to be an Israelite, but if not, a Gentile {m}; See Gill on "Mt 15:2".

{i} Bartenora in Misn. Cholin, c. 2. sect. 5. {k} Zoharin Numb fol. 100. 3. {l} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 61. 1. {m} Bevaidbar Rabba, fol. 228. 4.

Mark 7:3

Ver. 3. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews,.... The far greater part of them; all, excepting the Sadducees; and especially the Pharisees, were very tenacious of this tradition of washing hands before eating: hence Pharisees are described as such, hrhjb
Nhylwx ylkwa, "that eat their common food with cleanness" {n}, i.e. of hands: these,

except they wash their hands oft, eat not; or except they wash very cautiously, with great care, diligence, and exactness, as the Syriac version suggests; and about which there are various rules given, to be observed with great strictness {o}. Some render the words, "they wash their hands to the elbow"; and this is a rule with the Jews, which is closely to be abode by, that the washing of hands is to be,
qrp de, "to the joint", which joins the hand and arm together {p}: particularly it is observed {q}, that

"washing of the hands for the eating of the offering, is unto the elbow, and for common food, to the joints of the fingers: he that eats with an ancient man, and does not wash his hands to the elbow, he may not eat with him."

Well may it be added,

holding the tradition of the elders; nor do the Jews pretend the authority of the Scriptures as obliging them to such rules; for, they say, the command concerning washing of hands is, Myrpwo yrbdm, "from the words of the

Scribes" {r}; and is Mymkx twum, "a command of the wise men" {s}. The tradition is this:

"they wash hands for common food, but for the tithe, and for the first offering, and for that which is holy, they dip them, and for the sin offering; for if the hands are defiled; the body is defiled {t}."

And this tradition of the elders, the Scribes, and Pharisees, strictly observed.

{n} Gloss in T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 18. 2. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 7. {o} Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Bcracot, c. 6. {p} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 106. 1, 2. Maimon. Hilch. Beracot, c. 6. 4. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Eracin, c. 5. sect. 1. Zohar in Deut. fol. 115. 2. {q} T. Hieros. Betacot, fol. 12. 1. {r} Maimon. Hilch. Mikvaot, c. 11. sect. 1. {s} Ib. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 2. {t} Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 5.

Mark 7:4

Ver. 4. And when they come from the market,.... In Beza's most ancient copy, and in one of Stephens's, it is read as we supply, "when they come": wherefore this respects not things bought in the market, a sense favoured by all the Oriental versions, for many of them could not be washed; but the persons of the Scribes and Pharisees, who when they came from market, or from any court of judicature, immersed themselves all over in water, according to the true sense of the word baptizw, here used: for,

"if the Pharisees touched but the garments of the common people, they were defiled, all one as if they had touched a profluvious person, hlybj Nkyruw, "and needed immersion";"

and were obliged to it {u}: hence, when they walked the streets, they walked on the sides of the way, that they might not be defiled by touching the common people {w}:

wherefore, except they wash, they eat not, or immerse themselves in water, as well as used, Mydy tlybj, "immersion of the hands", or washing of the hands by immersion; and which, if only intended, is sufficient to support the primary sense of the word, "baptizo":

and, many other things there be which they have received to hold; by tradition from their elders;

as the washing of cups and pots, brazen, vessels, and of tables: and here the word baptismov, "baptism", is rightly used in its proper and primary signification; for all these things were, according to the traditions of the elders, washed by immersion:

"in a laver, (they say {x}) which holds forty seahs of water, which are not drawn, every defiled man dips himself, except a profluvious man; and in it Nyamjh Mylkh lk
ta Nylybjm, "they dip all unclean vessels";"

"as cups, pots, and brazen vessels": very particularly brazen vessels are mentioned, because earthen ones that were unclean, were to be broken {y}; which were all washed before eaten in, even on a sabbath day, and that by dipping {z}:

""dishes", in which they eat at evening, (i.e. of the sabbath,) they wash them, to eat in in the morning; in the morning they wash them, to eat in at noon; at noon they wash them, to eat in at the "minchah"; and from the "minchah", and forward, they do not wash again: but "cups", and "jugs", and "pots" they wash, and it goes through all the day; for there is no fixed time for drinking."

All such vessels, whether had of a Gentile, or an Israelite, or even a wise man, were to be immersed before used {a}.

"He that buys a vessel for the use of a feast, of Gentiles, whether molten vessels, or glass vessels--Nlybjm, "they dip them", in the waters of the laver; and after that they may eat and drink in them: and such as they use for cold things, as "cups", and "pots", and "jugs", they wash them,
Nlybjmw, "and dip them", and they are free for use: and such as they use for hot things, as "cauldrons" and "kettles", ("brazen vessels",) they heat them with hot water, and scour them, Nlybjmw, "and immerse them", and they are fit to be used: and things which they use at the fire, as spits and gridirons, they heat them in the fire till the crust (the covering of rust, or dirt) falls off, Nlybjmw, "and dip them", and they may be lawfully made use of. This is the immersion with which they immerse vessels for a feast, bought of Gentiles; and after that they are free for eating and drinking; for the business of uncleanness and purification is only from the words of the Scribes--and none are obliged to this immersion, but molten vessels for a feast, bought of Gentiles; but if he borrows of Gentiles, or a Gentile leaves in pawn molten

vessels, (made of cast brass, or iron,) he washes, or boils, or heats in the fire, but need not immerse them; and so if he buys vessels of wood, or vessels of stone, he washes, or boils them, but need not dip them; and so earthen vessels need not be immersed; but those that are covered with lead, are as molten vessels, hlybj Nykyruw, "and need immersion"."

And not only such that were bought of Gentiles, but even that were made by Jews, and scholars too, were to be immersed in water.

"Vessels, (they say {b},) that are finished in purity, even though a disciple of a wise man makes them, care is to be taken about them, lo! these ought to be immersed:"

and also "tables", at which they eat; and because their posture at them were lying, reclining, or leaning: hence the word klinwn, is used for them here: these were capable of defilement in a ceremonial sense, according to the traditions of the Jews: one of their rules is this {c};

"every vessel of wood, which is made for the use of vessels, and of men, as, Nxlwvh, a "table", a bed, &c. receive defilement."

And there were several sorts of tables, which, by their laws, were unclean, or might be defiled by the touch of unclean persons, or things: so they say {d},

"a table, and sideboard, which are made less, or covered with marble, if there is a space left, in which cups may be set, they may be defiled. R. Judah says, if a space is left, in which may be put pieces, i.e. of bread or flesh: a table of which the first of its feet is taken away is clean; if the second is taken away it is clean; if the third is taken away it may be defiled."

Again {e}, every vessel of wood, that is divided into two parts, is, clean, excepting a double table, &c., i.e. a table which consisted of various parts, and were folded together when it was removed: and these were washed by covering them in water; and very nice they were in washing them, that the water might reach every part, and that they might be covered all over; that there might be nothing which might separate between them and the water, and hinder its coming to them: as for instance, pitch being upon a table, whether within or without, divided between that and the water; and when this was the case, it was not rightly washed {f}: but to washing tables by immersion, there is no objection; wherefore, to perplex this matter, and give further trouble, it is insisted on that the word should be rendered "beds"; and it must be owned that it is so rendered in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, (in the Arabic version the clause is omitted,) and in many modern translations: and we are contented it should be so rendered. And these beds design either the couches they lay, or leaned upon at meals; or the beds they slept in at nights: these were capable of being polluted, in a ceremonial sense; for of such pollution, and such washing, are we to understand these traditions: for those things regard not the bare washing of them when naturally unclean, when they ought to be washed; and it is the custom of all people to wash them when this is the case. A bed, and bedstead, are capable of such pollution as soon as they are shaved with a fish skin, or are completed without polishing {g}; that is, as soon as they are finished; and there are several ways by which they are defiled. A bed is defiled, tm amj, "by one that is defiled with the dead" {h}; that is, who has touched a dead body, and he sits upon the bed, or touches it, he defiles it. Again, a bed that is made to lie upon, is defiled, ordm, "by treading" {i}; that is, it is defiled if a man, or a woman, that has a "gonorrhoea", or a menstruous woman, or one in childbirth, or a leper, should sit, stand; lie, hang, or lean upon it; yea, if any thing should touch it, which has been touched by any of these. Also, a bed which is not made for to lie upon, but to lay a dead body on, is defiled in the same way; and so are even the pillow and bolster {k}. Now these were to be washed when they had received any defilement, and that by immersion. Their canons run thus:

"hjm, "a bed", that is wholly defiled, if hlybjh, "he dips" it, part by part, it is pure {l};"

again {m},

"hjmh ta wb lybjh, "if he dips the bed in it", (the pool of water,) although its feet are plunged into the thick clay (at the bottom of the pool), it is clean."

If it should be insisted upon, that it ought to be shown and proved, that the very bolsters and pillows on which they lay and leaned, were washed in this way, we are able to do it:

"ytokhw rkh, "a pillow", or "a bolster" of skin, when a man lifts up the ends, or mouths of them, out of the water, the water which is within them will be drawn; what shall he do? Nlybjm, "he must dip them", and lift them up by their fringes {n}."

In short, it is a rule with the Jews, that "wheresoever, in the law, washing of the flesh, or of clothes, is mentioned, it means nothing else than the dipping of the whole body in water--for if any man wash himself all over, except the top of his little finger, he is still in his uncleanness {o}."

So that the evangelist uses the words baptizw and baptismov, most properly, without departing from their primary and literal sense; nor could he have used words more appropriate and fit. Various rules, concerning these things, may be seen in the treatises "Celim" and "Mikvaot". Hence it appears, with what little show of reason, and to what a vain purpose this passage is so often appealed to, to lessen the sense of the word baptizw, "baptizo"; as if it did not signify to dip, but a sort of washing, short of dipping; though what that washing is, is not easy to say, since vessels and clothes are in common washed by putting them into water, and covering them with it: this passage therefore is of no service to those who plead for sprinkling, or pouring water in baptism, in opposition to immersion; nor of any disservice, but of real use to those who practise immersion, and must confirm them in it. Nor need they have recourse to a various reading, which one of the manuscripts in the Bodleian Library furnishes with, which is, unless they are sprinkled; which reading must be wrong, not only because, contrary to all other copies, but also to the usages of the Jews in the washing of themselves.

{u} Maimon. in Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 7. {w} Ib. Hilch. Abot Tumaot, c. 13. sect. 8. {x} Ib. Hilch. Mikvaot, c. 9. sect. 5. {y} Maimon. Hilch. Mikvaot, c. 1. sect. 3. {z} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 1. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 23. 7. {a} Maimon. Hilch. Maacolot Asurot, c. 17. sect. 3, 5, 6. {b} Maimon. Hilch. Abot Hatumaot, c. 12. sect. 6. {c} Ib. Hilch. Celim, c. 4. sect. 1. {d} Misn. Celim, c. 22. sect. 1, 2. {e} Ib. c. 16. sect. 1. {f} Misn. Mikvaot, c. 9. sect. 5. Maimon. Hilchot Mikvaot, c. 8. sect. 2. {g} Misn. Celim, c. 16. sect. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Celim, c. 5. sect. 1. {h} Maimon ib. c. 27. sect. 8. {i} Misn. Celim, c. 18. sect. 5, 6. & c. 24. sect. 8. Maimon. ib. c. 27. sect. 7. {k} Misn. Celim, c. 23. sect. 4. {l} Maimon. Hilch. Celim. c. 26. sect. 14. {m} Misn. Mikvaot, c. 7. sect. 7. {n} Ib. sect. 6. & Celim, c. 16. 4. {o} Maimon. Hilch. Mikvaot, c. 3. 2.

Mark 7:5

Ver. 5. Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked him,.... Not the disciples, but Christ himself; for their chief view was to find fault, and quarrel with him:

why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with unwashen hands? or "with common", that is, defiled "hands", as in **Mr 7:2**. So the words are read in Beza's most ancient copy, and in one of Stephens's copies, and in the Vulgate Latin version. The word "common" is used for that which is unclean or unholy, Ac 10:14, and so signifies unwashen hands, as we read, and render it: besides, "common hands" may have some respect to the hands of the common people, the vulgar and illiterate, who showed no regard to this tradition, but ate their common food without washing their hands. Instead of "the tradition of the elders", the Ethiopic version reads, "the constitution of the Scribes and Pharisees"; and which are sometimes by the Jews called,
Myrpwo yrbd, "the words", or "sayings of the Scribes" {o}, and are preferred by them to the written law; and the same are commonly called twkylh, "ways", in which a man is to walk, and according to which he is to steer his course of life; and to which reference is here had in the word, "walk", used by the Pharisees; who suggest, that these decisions, constitutions, and traditions of the elders, were the rule, according to which men ought to order their manner of life and conversation; blaming the disciples, that they did not conform to them, and particularly in the case of eating bread, which they did without washing their hands, which was strictly enjoined among these canons; and they wanted to know the sense of Christ upon it. Though they might have known from the Scriptures, particularly from Eze 20:18 that it was their duty, as well as the disciples of Christ, to walk, not in the, statutes of their fathers, nor observe their judgments, the laws and ordinances instituted by them; but to walk in the statutes of the Lord, and to keep his judgments, and do them: not the traditions of men, but the word of God, should be the rule of walk and conversation; and as many as walk according to this rule, peace will be upon them; but those that walk according to the commandments of men, justly deserve the character given of such by the prophet Isaiah, whose words our Lord produces in the following verses.

{o} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 2.

Mark 7:6

Ver. 6. He answered and said unto them,.... Matthew postpones the following citation and application of the prophecy of Isaiah, to the account of the command of God being broken by the tradition of Corban; which Mark makes the answer of Christ to begin with:

well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites; which in Matthew is read, "ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you", Mt 15:7; to the same sense as here: for the prophecy of Isaiah not only described the hypocrites of his time, but had respect chiefly to the Jews in succeeding ages, in the times of Christ, and both before and after; when they would, as they did, greatly degenerate, and lost the power and spirituality of religion, and had only the form of it; left the word of God for the traditions of men, and were given up to great stupidity, and to judicial blindness: hence the Apostle Paul refers to a passage in the same chapter, Isa 29:10, and applies it to the Jews in his time, Ro 11:8;
See Gill on "Mt 15:7", saying,

as it is written in Isa 29:13,

this people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. In the Prophet Isaiah more is said than is here cited; and so in Matthew more is produced, and the whole is there expressed thus: "this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me",
Mt 15:8: they presented their bodies before the Lord in the synagogues, or in the temple, and prayed to him with an air of devotion and fervency, and offered up their praises to him, for their external privileges and blessings; but, alas! this was all lip labour; there was no lifting up their hearts, with their hands, unto God; these were not united to fear his name, but were distracted in his worship, and carried away from him to other objects; See Gill on "Mt 15:8".

Mark 7:7

Ver. 7. Howbeit, in vain do they worship me,.... This is the continuation of the citation out of Isaiah, as is also what follows:

teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. As all these traditions mentioned were such; as washing their hands before they ate bread, and their whole bodies, when they came from the market, or from any court of judicature, or concourse of men, where they had been touched by the common people, and the washing of cups, pots, brazen vessels, and tables, or beds; these they taught the people, and enjoined them the observance of them: instead of instructing them in the doctrines of the Bible, respecting the Messiah, and salvation by him, the right fear, and true worship of God, his ordinances and statutes; wherefore their worship of him, though attended with a great show of sanctity and religion, was a vain thing, a mere empty thing, devoid of life, power, and spirituality, unacceptable to God, and of no real use, profit, and advantage to themselves: it neither issued in the glory of God, nor brought any true pleasure, or solid peace to themselves; and they would find, by sad experience, that their hope of being in the favour of God, and of enjoying eternal happiness on account of it, would prove a vain hope; See Gill on "Mt 15:9".

Mark 7:8

Ver. 8. For laying aside the commandment of God,.... Meaning not any particular commandment, but all the commandments of God, the whole written law; to which they preferred the oral law, or the traditions of the elders, and the decisions of their doctors. So the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, "the commandments of God".

Ye hold the tradition of men: very significantly are the elders, whom the, Jews revered, and whose traditions and constitutions they extolled above the Scriptures, called "men", in distinction from "God", whose commands they neglected; which exposes and aggravates their sin, that they should leave the one, which had the stamp of divine authority on them, and hold the other, which were only the devices of men's brains;

as the washing of pots and cups. The Arabic version adds, "and vessels", from **Mr 7:4**, and the Ethiopic version, between "chalices" and "cups", places "monies"; as if they also contracted uncleanness in some cases, and needed washing: and indeed, there is a tradition to this purpose {p},

"lopnv rnyd, "a penny which is rejected" (that is, as the commentators say {q}, which a kingdom or province has made void, or which wants weight), if any one prepares it to hang about the neck of a child, it is "unclean"; and so a "sela" (which was the value of four pence) and it is prepared to weigh with it, is "unclean"."

And many other such like things you do; so many, that it is almost endless to reckon up. The treatise "Celim", or "of vessels", in the Misna, is full of rules, concerning the cleanness and uncleanness, of almost all things in use with men; and so of what do, and what do not stand in need of washing. And these things they did, not according to the commandment of God, nor did they pretend to it; but according to the words of the Scribes, and traditions of the elders, which reached to all sorts of vessels: their rule is this {r};

"vessels made of wood, and of skin, and of bone, and of glass, if they are plain, they are clean; but if they are hollow, (or made to hold things,) they are liable to pollution."

Which Maimonides {s} explains thus;

"vessels of wood, and of skin, and of bone, if hollow, receive defilement from the words of the law; but if they are plain, as tables, a seat, a skin on which they eat, they do not receive defilement, but, Myrpwo yrbdm, "from the words of the Scribes"."

And this washing of vessels, not only concerned such as were for private use, but the vessels of the sanctuary: so it is said {t};

"after a feast, at the close of a good day, or festival, "they dip all the vessels in the sanctuary"; because the "common people" have "touched" them at the feast, in the time of keeping it: wherefore they say, touch not the table (the showbread table), when they show it to them that come up to the feast, that it may not be defiled by touching it; and if after the feast, it is found (polluted), it must be dipped and all the vessels are obliged to immersion, excepting the golden altar, and the altar of brass."

So that our Lord might well say, "and many such like things ye do".

{p} Misn. Celim, c. 12. sect. 7. {q} Jarchi & Battenora in ib. {r} Misn. Celim, c. 2. sect. 1. {s} Hilch. Celim, c. 1. sect. 10. {t} Maimon. Hilch. Mishcab Umoshab, c. 11. sect. 11.

Mark 7:9

Ver. 9. And he said unto them,.... He continued his discourse, saying,

full well, or "fairly",

ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition: these words may be considered, as spoken ironically, thus; as pious and excellently good men, you in a very fair and handsome manner, reject and make void the commandments and laws of God; and it is very fit it should be so, in order to preserve your own traditions, that nothing may be wanting to keep up the honour of them, and a due regard to them. The Arabic version reads the words by way of interrogation, "is it fit that you should omit the commandments of God, and keep your own statutes?" and so the Ethiopic, "do ye rightly make void the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own commandment?" Which makes them come nearer to the passage in Matthew; See Gill on "Mt 15:3".

Mark 7:10

Ver. 10. For Moses said,.... That is, God by Moses; for the following precept was spoken by God, and written by him on one of the tables of stone, and delivered into the hands of Moses, to be given to the children of Israel:

honour thy father and thy mother, Ex 20:12, the sanction of which law is,

and whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death,
Ex 21:17. As the former of these commands is to be understood, not only of honouring parents in thought, word, and deed, but also of providing for them, when in want and distress, through poverty and old age; so the latter is to be interpreted, not merely of wishing or imprecating the most dreadful things upon parents, which some may not be guilty of, and yet transgress this command; but likewise of every slight put upon them, and neglect of them, when in necessitous circumstances: and both these laws were broken by the Jews, through their tradition hereafter mentioned;
See Gill on "Mt 15:4".

Mark 7:11

Ver. 11. But ye say,.... Your elders, doctors, and wise men, in opposition to God and Moses:

if a man shall say to his father or his mother, it is Corban, that is to say, a gift; in the same manner is this word interpreted by Josephus, who speaking of some that call themselves Corban unto God, says {u} in the Greek tongue, dwron de touto semainei, "this signifies a gift": now, according to the traditions of the elders, whoever made use of that word to his father or his mother, signifying thereby, that what they might have expected relief from at his hands, he had devoted it; or it was as if it was devoted to sacred uses;

adding,

by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, [he shall be free]; and not under any obligation to regard and relieve his parents, let their case and circumstances be what they would. This is the form of a vow, which a man having made on purpose, to free himself from the charge of the maintenance of his parents, when reduced, repeats unto them; or which he makes upon their application to him: various forms of this kind of vows, are produced in the note "Mt 15:5", which see: this was not the form of an oath, or swearing by Corban, or the sacred treasury in the temple, mentioned in Mt 27:6, of which I do not remember any instance; nor was it a dedication of his substance to holy and religious uses; to the service of God and the temple; but it was a vow he made, that what he had, should be as Corban, as a gift devoted to sacred uses: that as that could not be appropriated to any other use, so his substance, after such a vow, could not be applied to the relief of his parents; though he was not obliged by it to give it for the use of the temple, but might keep it himself, or bestow it upon others. L. Capellus has wrote a very learned dissertation upon this vow, at the end of his Spicilegium on the New Testament; very and our learned countryman, Dr. Pocock, has said many excellent things upon it, in his miscellaneous notes on his Porta Mosis; both which ought to be read and consulted, by those who have learning and leisure.

{u} Autiqu. Jud. l. 4. c. 4. sect. 4.

Mark 7:12

Ver. 12. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father, or his mother. According to the Jewish canons {w}, if a man vowed a thing which is contrary to a command, he was obliged to keep his vow, and break the command: thus, if a man vowed that his father or his mother should never receive any benefit from what he had, but that his substance was as "Corban", or as any thing devoted to divine service, he was obliged to keep his vow; nor was he allowed after this to do any thing for his father, or mother, however poor or helpless they might be; unless he applied to a wise man to revoke his vow, or to give him liberty to do it; for he could not do it of himself, as wicked as it was; and though he might heartily repent of it, and was ever so willing to make it null and void: and though a dissolution it by a wise man was allowed of, yet hereby they set up their own power and authority against God, and his law; they did not rescind the vow, because it was contrary to the command of God: for notwithstanding its being contrary to the command of God, it was to be observed, though to the breaking of that, unless loosed by a wise man, at the man's request; whereby they established their magisterial power and authority, without any regard to the honour and glory of God; and therefore what follows, is justly observed by our Lord; See Gill on "Mt 15:5".

{w} Maimon. Hilch. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 1.

Mark 7:13

Ver. 13. Making the word of God of none effect, through your tradition,.... Beza says, in his most ancient copy it is read, "your foolish tradition"; and such it was indeed, that a vow made rashly, and in a passion, or if ever so deliberately entered into, should be more binding upon a man than the law of God; that rather than break this, he should transgress a divine command; and that though he might see his folly, and repent of his sin in making such a wicked vow, he could not go back from it, without the permission of a wise man: should his poor distressed parents come to him for assistance, he was obliged to answer them, that he had bound himself by a vow, that they should receive no advantage from his substance; and should they remonstrate to him the command of God, to honour them and take care of them, and observe that that command is enforced by promises and threatenings; he had this to reply, and was instructed to do it, that it was the sense of the wise men and doctors, and agreeably to the traditions of the elders, to which he ought rather to attend, than to the words of the law, that he should keep and fulfil his vow, whatever command was neglected or broken by it.

Which ye have delivered: they received it from their ancestors, and delivered it to their disciples; and it is in this way, that all their traditions were delivered: they say {x}, that

"Moses received the law (the oral law) at Sinai, hromw, "and delivered" it to Joshua; and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets; and the prophets to the men of the great synagogue; the last of which was Simeon the just; and Antigonus, a man of Socho, received it from him; and Jose ben Joezer, a man of Tzeredah, and Jose ben Jochanan, a man of Jerusalem, received it from Antigonus; and Joshua ben Perachiah (said to be the master of Jesus Christ), and Nitthai the Arbelite, received it from them; and Judah ben Tabai, and Simeon ben Shetach, received it from them; and Shemaiah and Abtalion received it from them; and from them Hillell and Shammai."

Who were now the heads of the two grand schools of the Jews; these received, and delivered out these traditions to the Scribes and Pharisees, and they to their disciples:

and many such like things do ye; meaning, that there were many other traditions besides this now mentioned; whereby, instead of preserving the written law, which, they pretended, these were an hedge unto {y}, they, in a great many instances, made it void.

{x} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. {y} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1.

Mark 7:14

Ver. 14. And when he, had called all the people unto him,.... The Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, instead of "all", read again, and so do some copies: having said what was sufficient to stop the mouths of the Scribes and Pharisees, about their unwarrantable traditions; he turns himself to the common people, who stood at some distance, because of these venerable doctors, and called to them to come nearer to him:

he said unto them, hearken to me every one of you, and understand; signifying, he had something of moment to say to them, which they would do well to attend unto, and what they should be desirous of understanding aright, it being what concerned every one of them;
See Gill on "Mt 15:10".

Mark 7:15

Ver. 15. There is nothing from without a man,.... As any sort of food and drink, whether it be received, with, or without washing of the hands:

that entering into him can defile him; in a moral sense, or render him loathsome and unacceptable in the sight of God:

but the things which come out of him; the Arabic: version reads, "out of the mouth of man", as in Mt 15:11, for the things are, all sinful words which proceed from the imaginations and lusts of the heart; as all idle, unchaste, blasphemous, and wrathful words and expressions: and may include evil thoughts, words, and actions; which actions first in thought, take their rise from the corrupt heart of man; and in word, come out of the mouth; and in action, are performed by some one or other of the members of the body: these are

they that defile the man: his mind and conscience, the faculties of his soul, and the members of his body; and render him abominable in the sight of God, and expose him to his wrath and displeasure;
See Gill on "Mt 15:11". The sense of the whole is, that not what a man eats and drinks, and in whatsoever way he does either, though he may eat and drink with unwashen hands, or out of cups, pots, and platters, not properly washed, according to the traditions of the elders, renders him a polluted sinful man, in the sight of God; or such as one, whose company and conversation are to be, avoided by good men; but that it is sin in the heart, and what proceeds from it; as all evil thoughts, wicked words, and impure actions; which denominate a man filthy and unclean, and expose him to the abhorrence of God, and of his people: the words may be rendered, "there is nothing from without a man, can make him common"; that is, as a plebeian, a vulgar common man, a sinful wicked man, as the common people were, or at least were so esteemed by the Pharisees; nothing that he took into his body, by eating or drinking, could put him into the class of such persons: "but the things which come out of him"; out of his heart, by his lips: "those are they that make a man common"; or a vulgar wicked man. The Ethiopic version renders it, "it is not what enters from without into the mouth of man, which can defile him; but only what goes out of the heart man, this defiles the man": the Persic version adds, "and is the sin of death"; or sin unto death, a deadly, mortal sin.

Mark 7:16

Ver. 16. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.
See Gill on "Mt 11:15".

Mark 7:17

Ver. 17. And when he was entered into the house,.... Very probably at Capernaum, and it may be the house of Simon and Andrew, where he used to be when there:

from the people; being separated from them, having dismissed and left them, when he and his disciples were by themselves alone:

his disciples asked him concerning the parable; that saying of his to the people, which was somewhat dark and intricate to them; that nothing without a man going into him defiled him, but what comes out of him: this was asked by Peter, in the name of the rest;
See Gill on "Mt 15:15".

Mark 7:18

Ver. 18. And he saith unto them,.... With some warmth of spirit and resentment, at their stupidity:

are ye so without understanding also? As well as others, and to such a degree; and "yet", as Matthew expresses it, Mt 15:16, so wretchedly stupid, and so long, and as much, as others:

do ye not perceive? common sense will tell you,

that whatsoever thing from, without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;
See Gill on "Mt 15:16".

Mark 7:19

Ver. 19. Because it entereth not into his heart,.... Which is the seat and fountain of all moral pollution; and if that is not defiled, no other part can be; and that that is not defiled by eating and drinking, unless in case of intemperance, is clear; because food and drink do not go into it:

but into the belly; it is taken in at the mouth, goes down the throat, and is received into the stomach, and from thence it passes through the bowels:

and goeth into the draught; aokh tyb, "the private house", as the Jews call it, without going into the heart at all:

purging all meats; that which it leaves behind, is pure and nourishing; and whatever is gross and impure, is carried with it into the draught, so that nothing remains in the man that is defiling.

Mark 7:20

Ver. 20. And he said,.... Continued to say in his discourse; though this is left but in the Syriac version;

that which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man; meaning, not his excrements, which were unclean by the law, De 23:13 but what comes out of his heart, by his mouth; or is expressed in action, as appears by what follows; See Gill on "Mt 15:18".

Mark 7:21

Ver. 21. For from within, out of the heart of man,.... The inside of man is very bad, his inward part is not only wicked, but wickedness itself, yea, very wickedness, **Ps 5:9**, in him dwells no good thing naturally, his heart is wicked, and desperately so; it is full of evil; and out of the abundance of it, proceed the evil things hereafter mentioned; all its powers and faculties are vitiated, there is no place clean; the understanding and judgment are dreadfully corrupted; the mind and conscience are defiled; the affections are inordinate; not only the thought, but every imagination of the thought of the heart is evil, and that continually: what good thing therefore, can come out of such a Nazareth as this? Nothing, but what follows: for from hence

proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders; which several things are related in Mt. 15:19 see the note on "Mt 15:19"; only the order here is a little different; "murders", which are here mentioned last, are there put after "evil thoughts".

Mark 7:22

Ver. 22. Thefts,.... These also are mentioned in Matthew, but Mark omits "false witnesses", and adds the following; which, excepting "blasphemy", are not taken notice of by the other evangelists;

covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; See Gill on "Mt 15:19".

Mark 7:23

Ver. 23. All these evil things come from within,.... All evil thoughts, words, and actions, take their rise from the inward parts of man; from his heart; which is sadly corrupted, and is the fountain from whence all these impure streams flow. And if these come from within, then not from without; they are not by imitation or are the mere effects of example in others: example may indeed, and often does, draw out the evil that is within; but it does not produce it there; if it was not there before, it could not draw it out from thence: and if all these evils come from within, then the inward part of man must be sinful and polluted, previous to the commission of these evil things; and from whence springs then that inward pollution? It is the fruit of original sin, of Adam's transgression; the consequence of which is, a corrupt nature, which is derived to all his posterity: for his nature being corrupted by sinning, and he having all human nature in him, the individuals of it could not be propagated by ordinary generation, without the pollution of sin cleaving to them; "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one", Job 14:4. Nor has there ever been any instance to the contrary, but the man Christ Jesus; whose human nature was holy, it not descending from Adam by ordinary generation; otherwise, all men, as David was, are "shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin", Ps 51:5, and this is the source and spring of all sinful action, internal and external.

And defile the man; both soul and body; all the powers and faculties of the soul, and all the members of the body; or "make a man common": these show him to be one of the common people, a very sinful man; as such were reckoned, and therefore are called emphatically, "sinners": and are joined with "publicans", who were esteemed the worst of sinners: from all which it appears, that sin in thought, word, and deed, is the defiling thing, and is what ought to be carefully avoided; and not meats, and the manner of eating them, provided moderation is used.

Mark 7:24

Ver 24. And from thence he arose,.... From the land of Gennesaret, or from Capernaum, which was in it:

and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon; two cities of Phoenicia: not into them, but into the borders of them; into those parts of Galilee, which bordered on Phoenicia; See Gill on "Mt 15:21".

And entered into an house; in some one of the towns, or cities, in those parts; which house might be, for the entertainment and lodging of strangers:

and would have no man know it; took all proper precaution as man, that nobody should know who, and where he was; that the, Gentiles, on whose borders he was, might not flock to him, which would create envy and disgust in the Jews:

but he could not be hid; he had wrought so many miracles in Galilee, and his fame was so much spread, and he had been seen, and was known by so many persons, that, humanly speaking, it was next to impossible, that he should be long unknown in such a place.

Mark 7:25

Ver. 25. For a certain woman,.... One way and means by which he came to be more openly discovered who he was, was this; a woman in those parts,

whose young daughter had an unclean spirit; a devil, with which she was possessed; hearing of some miracles he had wrought in healing the sick, and casting out devils;

heard of him, and came; and understanding that he was in such a place made all haste to him;

and fell at his feet; and with great respect and reverence to so venerable a person, threw herself at his feet, and earnestly entreated mercy for her child; believing he had power to cast the devil out of her, though at a distance from her.

Mark 7:26

Ver. 26. The woman was a Greek,.... Or Gentile, an Heathen woman, which made her faith the more remarkable. So the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions call her; which she might be, and was, though she was a woman of Canaan, as she is said to be in Mt 15:22, for though the land of Israel in general, was called the land of Canaan, yet there was a particular part, which was at first inhabited by Canaan himself, which bore this name; and is the same with Phoenicia, of which this woman was an inhabitant, and therefore she is afterwards called a Syrophoenician; See Gill on "Mt 15:22". And this place was now inhabited by Gentiles; hence the Jews often distinguish between an Hebrew and a Canaanitish servant; of which take an {z} instance or two;

"an Hebrew servant is obtained by money, and by writing, a Canaanitish servant is obtained by money, and by writing, and by possession."

Again {a},

"he that does injury to an Hebrew servant, is bound to all these (i.e. to make compensation for loss, pain, healing, cessation from business, and reproach), excepting cessation from business--but he that hurts a Canaanitish servant, that belongs to others, is bound to them all."

And by a Canaanitish servant, they understand any one that is not an Israelite; for an Hebrew and a Canaanite, are manifestly opposed to one another. This woman being of Phoenicia, as appears by what follows, which was sometimes called Canaan, might be said to be a woman of Canaan, and also a Gentile.

A Syrophoenician by nation; or extract. The Syriac and Persic versions say she was "of Phoenicia of Syria"; and the latter, by way of explanation, "of Emisa". The Arabic version adds, "her extraction was of Ghaur"; and the Ethiopic version says, she was "the wife of a Syrophoenician man"; See Gill on "Mt 15:22".

And she besought him, that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter; which she was persuaded, by what she had heard of him, he was able to do, by a word speaking, though her daughter was not present.

{z} Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. scct. 2, 3. {a} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 3.

Mark 7:27

Ver. 27. But Jesus said unto her,.... Not directly and immediately, upon her first request; for he answered not a word to that; but after his, disciples had desired she might be sent away, her cries being so troublesome to them; and after she had renewed her request to him; see Mt 15:23.

Let the children first be filled: according to this method, our Lord directed his apostles, and they proceeded: as he himself was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he ordered his disciples to go to them, and preach the Gospel to them, and work miracles among them; and not go in the way of the Gentiles, nor into any of the cities of the Samaritans; but when they had gone through the cities of Judea, he ordered them, after his resurrection, to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem: and this order they observed in other places, where there were Jews; they first preached to them, and then to the Gentiles; knowing that it was necessary, that the word of God should be first spoken to them; and it was the power of God to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile: and the expression here used, though it gives the preference to the Jew, does not exclude the Gentile; nay, it supposes, that after the Jews had had the doctrines of Christ, confirmed by his miracles, sufficiently ministered unto them, for the gathering in the chosen ones among them, and to leave the rest inexcusable; and so long as until they should despise it, and put it away from them, judging themselves unworthy of it; that then the Gentiles should have plenty of Gospel provisions set before them, and should eat of them, and be filled; and should have a large number of miracles wrought among them, and a fulness of the blessings of grace bestowed on them. The Jews are meant, who were the children of God by national adoption; who were first to be filled with the doctrines and miracles of Christ, before the Gentiles were to have them among them; as they were, even to a loathing and contempt of them:

for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs: as by "the children" are meant the Israelites, who were not only the children of Abraham by natural descent, but the children of God, to whom pertained the adoption, by virtue of the national covenant made with them; so by "the dogs", are meant the Gentiles, who were reckoned as such by the Jews; and by the "bread", which it was not fit and proper should be taken from the one for the present, and cast to the other, is designed the ministry of the Gospel; which is as bread, solid, substantial, wholesome, and nourishing; and the miraculous cures wrought on the bodies of men, which accompanied it: now it was not meet and convenient as yet, that these things should be taken away from the Jewish nation, until they had answered the ends for which they were designed, and the Jews should express their loathing and abhorrence of them: which when they did, they were taken away from them, and were ministered to the nations of the world, they contemptuously called dogs;
See Gill on "Mt 15:26".

Mark 7:28

Ver. 28. And she answered and said unto him, yes, Lord,.... Agreeing to, and acquiescing in, what he said; which she seemed to have understood, though delivered in a proverbial way; and very appropriately replies,

yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs; which they leave, or let fall: signifying that she did not envy the blessings of the Jews, or desire any thing might be done injurious to them; only that this favour might be granted her, which she owned she was unworthy of, that her daughter might be healed. She tacitly owns, that the character of dogs belonged to the Gentiles, and to her and hers among the rest; that they were vile and base in themselves, inferior to the Jews, as to privileges, like dogs under the table; that the provisions with which the table of the Gospel ministry was furnished, was not for them; at least, that they were quite undeserving of them: but however, whereas dogs were allowed to eat crumbs, which now and then fell from the table, or out of the children's hands and laps; so such unworthy Gentiles as she, might be allowed a small benefit or favour by the bye, when it did not take from, and was no disadvantage to the Jews;
See Gill on "Mt 15:27".

Mark 7:29

Ver. 29. And he said unto her, for this saying,.... Or word of faith; in which she expressed such great faith in him: the Persic version reads it, "go thy way; for with the blessing of this word, the devil is gone out of thy daughter": as if this saying referred to the word Christ, and the divine power that went along with it, to the ejection of the devil; when it refers to the saying of the woman, and not to the words of Christ, which follow,

go thy way; in peace, thy request is granted; it is as thou wouldst have it:

the devil is gone out of thy daughter. Christ, who as God is every where, and whose divine power reaches to all places, persons, and things had, in a secret and powerful manner, cast the devil out of this woman's daughter; without going to her, or speaking to him, his power had wrought the miracle effectually.

Mark 7:30

Ver. 30. And when she was come to her house,.... For with those words of Christ; she was abundantly satisfied, and went away with as great a faith, and as strong a persuasion of the dispossession, as that she came with, that Christ was able to effect it: and accordingly

she found the devil gone out; of her daughter; that she was entirely dispossessed of him, and no more vexed and tormented with him, but in perfect ease, and at rest:

and her daughter laid upon the bed; without any violent motions, convulsions, and tossings to and fro, as before; but composed and still, taking some rest, having been for some time greatly fatigued with the possession. The Ethiopic version reads, "she found her daughter clothed, and sat upon the bed": for persons in these possessions, would often put off their clothes, and tear them in pieces; and were seldom composed, and rarely sat long in a place or posture; but now it was otherwise with her.

Mark 7:31

Ver. 31. And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon,.... The Vulgate Latin version reads, "and coming out again from the borders of Tyre, he came through Sidon"; and so two of Beza's copies; the Arabic version, which De Dieu made use of reads "to Sidon"; as he must needs come to it, if he came through it; though the version in the Polyglot Bible of Walton's reads, Nym, "from Sidon": but the greater number of copies, and the Syriac and Persic versions read as we do, and which is rightest; since it does not appear, that Christ went out of the land of Israel, into any Heathen cities: and besides, Sidon was further from Galilee than Tyre, and so did not lie in his way to it; and therefore it is not likely he should pass through that city, in order to go to it. The Ethiopic version reads, "and coming out again from Tyre, he went through Sidon": both these places were in Phoenicia, and it is probable that the woman before mentioned might belong to one or other of them. According to this version, she may be thought to be of Tyre, and that it was there, where the above discourse passed between Christ and her; though some Dutch pictures, Dr. Lightfoot {b} takes notice of, represent her as praying for her daughter, at the gate of Sidon; and Borchard the monk, as he relates from him, says, that before the gate of Sidon eastward, there is a chapel built in the place, where the. Canaanitish woman prayed to our Saviour for her daughter. But Christ, for the reason before given, could be in neither of these places, being out of the land of Israel; besides, the text is express, that it was to the borders of this country he came, and from thence he went; and to, or from, or through any of these places.

He came unto the sea of Galilee; or Tiberias, the same with the lake of Gennesaret: he came to those parts of Galilee, which lay by it, where he had been, before he went the borders of Tyre and Sidon:

through the midst the coasts of Decapolis; of this place,
See Gill on "Mt 4:25". It was a country which consisted of ten cities, from whence it had its name: now not through the middle of these cities, or of this country, as the Ethiopic version reads; but through the midst of the borders of it Christ passed, which lay in his way from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, to the sea of Galilee. The Syriac and Persic versions render the words, "unto the borders of Decapolis, or the ten cities"; and the Arabic version, "unto the middle of the coasts of the ten cities"; See Gill on "Mt 15:29".

{b} Chorograph. Decad. in Mark, ch. vi. sect. 1.

Mark 7:32

Ver. 32. And they bring unto him one that was deaf,.... There were two sorts of persons that were called deaf among the Jews; one that could neither hear nor speak; such were they who were born deaf; and so having never heard any thing, it was impossible they should ever speak: the other sort were they that could speak, but not hear; who lost their hearing by some disaster or another, but retained their speech {c}: of this sort seems to be this man, who though he had some difficulty in speaking, yet could speak a little,

and had an impediment in his speech; or could "scarcely speak", as the word signifies; though it is sometimes used by the Septuagint, for one that was entirely dumb, as in Isa 35:6 and so it is here rendered "dumb", by the Vulgate Latin, and other versions; yet it seems to design one that stammered, and could not speak plainly, and without great difficulty: he was tongue tied, as it should seem from **Mr 7:35**. This man, the inhabitants of the parts where Christ now was, his relations or friends, bring to him, having heard of his fame, and perhaps they had seen miracles performed by him:

and they beseech him to put his hand upon him; firmly believing, that upon his so doing, the man's hearing would come to him, and he would speak without difficulty: very likely they had seen cures performed by Christ in this way, or at least heard, that by laying his hands on persons disordered, they had been restored to the right use of their senses, or limbs; wherefore they most earnestly entreated, he would be pleased to do the same favour to this poor man. The case of this man much resembles that of a sinner in a state of nature, who is deaf to the voice, both of law and Gospel: he does not hearken to the commanding voice of the law, or attend to its precepts, nor can he be subject to it; nor does he hear its menaces and curses, nor is he at all affected and disturbed with these things; and, like the deaf adder, he stops his ear to the charming voice of the Gospel; he despises it, and has it in the utmost abhorrence: he is deaf to all the instructions, directions, cautions, and exhortations, of the ministers of the word; and even of his best friends, relations, and acquaintance nor can he speak the language of Canaan; it is a strange language to him; he can neither talk it himself, nor understand it in others; for as he has no experience of the grace of God in him, he must be dumb, and cannot speak of what he has no knowledge: and indeed, it may be observed of such who are under the first workings of the spirit of God upon the soul, that they are often as it were tongue tied, and through fear or bashfulness, or the temptations of Satan, care not to speak; or with great difficulty are brought to speak of what God has done for them; and at first, it is but in a lisping, stammering way, they do speak of these things and as the friends and relations of this man, having a great opinion of Christ, and a persuasion of his ability to relieve and cure him, bring him unto him, that he might put his hands upon him; so do such who know Christ themselves, and have felt the power of his grace upon their own souls, bring their deaf and dumb, their relations in a state of nature, under the means of grace; being very desirous that Christ would make bare, and put forth his mighty arm of grace, and lay hold upon them, and work a good work in them, and give them ears to hear his voice, and a tongue to speak his praise.

{c} Mish. Trumot, c. 1. sect. 2. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Mark 7:33

Ver. 33. And he took him aside from the multitude,.... To shun all appearance of ostentation and vain glory:

and put his fingers into his ears; the finger of his right hand into his left ear, and the finger of his left hand into his right ear:

and he spit and touched his tongue; that is, either he spit upon his tongue, for so the Vulgate Latin renders it, "spitting he touched his tongue"; and the Persic version thus, "he cast his spittle on his tongue"; or rather, he spit on his finger, and touched his tongue with it. These actions were not done as means of healing, or as having any natural virtue, or tendency in them, to effect a cure; but to show the power of Christ, that by the mere touch of his finger, and by the spittle of his mouth, as well as by laying on of hands, as was desired, and by a word speaking, he could at once remove this, or any such disorder. The taking this man aside from the multitude, is an emblem of the Lord's separating his people from the rest of the world, when he calls them by his grace; for as they are distinguished from others, in the choice of them in Christ, and in redemption by him; so in the effectual calling, they are bid to come out from among them, and by the power of divine grace, they are brought out from among them, and give up themselves to Christ, and to his churches: and Christ's putting his fingers into the ears of this man, represents the exertion of his power, and his removing by the finger of his Spirit, the obstructions of spiritual hearing; or rather, the planting of the spiritual ear, or forming a principle ot spiritual nearing in the soul: and his touching his tongue with the spittle of his mouth, may lead us to observe the application of his word, through the efficacy of his grace, as a means of loosing his tongue and opening his lips to show forth his praise.

Mark 7:34

Ver. 34. And looking up to heaven,.... To his Father there, by whom he was sent, and from whom, as man, he received his authority and power; though this was not for assistance in the working of this miracle, which he had power to do of himself; nor do we find that he put up any request to his Father: but he seems to have made use of this motion, not for his own sake, but for the sake of the man: to teach him, that every good gift, blessing, mercy, and favour, and so this he was about to partake of, was from above:

he sighed; not as unequal to the work of healing the man, or as despairing of doing it; but as commiserating the case of the poor man, and reflecting with concern upon his sin, that had been the occasion of it. These actions of looking up to heaven and sighing, as they may be understood in a spiritual sense, or with relation to the spiritual healing of a sinner, may show that such a blessing comes from above: it is received from heaven; it is God that gives the hearing ear, as well as the seeing eye; and that in a spiritual, as well as in a natural sense: and therefore this directs to apply to God for it, whether for a man's self, or for others; and when enjoyed, to look up again to heaven, and return thanks for it: and also that such a favour flows from divine mercy and compassion, Christ pitying the case of persons in such a condition; and he being an high priest that can have compassion on those that are in distress, and having ability to help them, makes use of it, and expresses both his pity and his power, as in the following manner.

And saith unto him; in the Syriac language, which he then spoke,
xtpta,

Ethphatha, or "Ephphatha";

that is, being interpreted,

be opened, both ears and mouth. And this way of speaking is used by the Jews, of a deaf man being restored to hearing, as of a blind man's being restored to sight; of which, take the following instance {d};

"a minor that receives (i.e. a divorce), and afterwards becomes adult, or a deaf man, xqptnw, "and is opened" (i.e. his ears are opened, or his hearing is restored), or a blind man, xtptnw, "and is opened" (has his sight again), or a fool, and he is restored to his reason, or a Gentile, and he becomes a proselyte, is unfit or unlawful (to carry a divorce from a man to his wife), but xqp, "one that is open", and afterwards becomes deaf, and then again "opened"; xwtp, or "open", and afterwards become blind, and again "opened"; or a fool, and is restored to his senses, and again becomes a fool, he is right or fit"

(for the above purpose). It is common with them to call one that hears well, in distinction from a deaf man, "one that is open" {e}. This is an instance of the power of Christ in curing disorders, merely by a word speaking, without the use of means; for what he did before, were not as means of healing, but significative of his power; which now went along with his word, and which was expressed with great majesty and authority: and such a power attends the word of his grace, to the opening of the heart, to give heed to the things which are spoken; and to the opening of the ear to discipline, and sealing instruction to it; land to the opening of the mouth and lips, in praise and thankfulness.

{d} Gittin, c. 2. sect. 6. {e} Vid. Misn. Yebamot, c. 14. scct. 10. & T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 114. 2.

Mark 7:35

Ver. 35. And straightway his ears were opened,.... It is in the Greek text, "his hearings"; the instruments of his hearing, and so rightly rendered, "his ears": the Persic version reads, "both his ears"; but the word "both" is unnecessary, since the word, "ears", takes in both. Such a power went along with the words of Christ, when he said, "be opened"; that immediately, as soon as ever the words were pronounced, the man's hearing came to him, and he heard as quick as ever he did before he lost it, or, as any other man:

and the string of his tongue; which caused it to cleave to his jaws, or the roof of his mouth, and hindered him from speaking plainly,

was loosed, and he spake plain; tyaqyvp, "easily", as the Syriac version renders it; without any difficulty to himself, and so as to be readily understood by others. Thus those whose ears are opened, and whose tongues are loosed in a spiritual manner by Christ, speak plainly of what they have heard and seen, and felt; they can give a plain and clear account of the work of God upon their souls; how they have been convinced of the impurity of their nature, the corruptions of their hearts, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, in heart, lip, and life; how they have seen Christ to be an all sufficient and suitable Saviour, and have been directed, and encouraged, to go to him, for healing, pardon, righteousness, and everlasting salvation; they can tell what promises have been applied to them, and what comforts they have enjoyed; how busy Satan has been with them; and what temptations of his they have been delivered out of, and by what means: in a word, they can speak plainly of the love of God to them; of the glories and excellencies of Christ; of their faith and hope in him, and love to him; and of the operations of the Spirit of God upon their hearts; and of the glories of the world to come, they are in the expectation of, so far as they are taught of God.

Mark 7:36

Ver. 36. And he charged them,.... The man that had his hearing and speech restored to him, and those that brought him, and as many as were witnesses of the miracle:

that they should tell no man; of the cure that was wrought, being not desirous of the applause of men; and knowing it would bring upon him the envy of the Scribes and Pharisees; and be a means of putting the common people upon setting him up as a temporal king, such as they expected the Messiah would be:

but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published [it]; or "spake of him", as the Ethiopic version reads it; for they looked upon his charge merely to proceed from modesty, and that made them the more forward to speak of his greatness and in his praise, to publish his mighty works, and spread the fame of his miracles far and near. So, such who have received the grace of God, are become acquainted with Christ, and have a real experience of divine things, cannot but speak of them; they are like new wine which hath no vent; and are ready to burst like new bottles; to forbear speaking is a pain, and weariness to them; nay, they think, should they hold their peace, the stones in the walls would cry out. Wherefore, partly for the glory of God, the magnifying of the riches of his grace, and the honour of Christ, and the blessed Spirit; and partly to show their own sense of things, the gratitude of their minds, and the thankfulness of their hearts, as well as for the use, comfort, edification, and instruction of others, they must speak, and cannot be silent, whatever restraints are laid upon them.

Mark 7:37

Ver. 37. And were beyond measure astonished,.... The man that was cured, the men that brought him, and the whole multitude were exceedingly, beyond all expression, amazed at what was done, in this case, and many others; for there were other miracles also wrought at this time; see Mt 15:30. The grace of God, in opening the ears and heart of a sinner, and causing the tongue of the dumb to sing his praise, is very astonishing, to men and angels; to the persons themselves that partake of it; and to all the saints that hear of it; it is amazing that such grace should be bestowed at all; and it is more, that it should be communicated to such unworthy persons it is; as also that it should produce such effects it does; that it should make such a surprising change, and be attended with such blessed consequences:

saying, he hath done all things well; not by Beelzebub, the prince of devils, as said the Scribes and Pharisees; nor in any ostentatious manner, for the sake of the honour and applause of men, as they plainly saw; but for the good of mankind, and for the glory of God: and as all the miraculous works, which Christ did, were well done by him, so all other works of his: all that he did in eternity before the world was, he did well; what he did in the council and covenant of grace, in espousing the persons and cause of his people, and in all his federal transactions and suretyship engagements for them: he drew nigh to

God on their account; he cheerfully agreed to what his Father proposed; he entered into a covenant with him, and took the care and charge of all his people, and of all promises and blessings of grace for them: and whatsoever he has done in time is well done; as his assumption of human nature; taking a nature, and not a person, this of a virgin, and an holy nature, though subject to sinless infirmities, and this in due and proper time; also his subjection to the law, moral, civil, and ceremonial, as it became him to fulfil all righteousness; and his preaching the Gospel, which he did with authority, and which he spake as never man did, and which he confirmed by his miracles; but especially the great work of redemption he came about, was well done by him: this he has thoroughly done; he has redeemed his people from the law, its curse, and condemnation; he has ransomed them out of the hands of Satan; he has saved them from all their sins; he has procured the remission of them, made reconciliation for them, and brought in an everlasting righteousness: he has done this work to the satisfaction of all parties; to the glory of all the divine perfections, of justice, as well as of grace and mercy; to the contentment and pleasure of all the divine persons; his Father, himself, and the blessed Spirit: and to the joy of angels and men: and all that he has done, or is now doing in heaven, as an advocate and intercessor, is done well; and we may be assured, that all that he will do hereafter, as the judge of quick and dead, will be done in like manner.

He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb, or those that could not speak, at least without a great deal of difficulty,

to speak; an instance of both which there was in this single man's case.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 8:1

Ver. 1. In those days,.... The Ethiopic version reads, on that day; as if it was on the same day that the deaf man was healed; and so it might be; and on the third day from Christ's coming into those parts; and so is very properly expressed, "in those days"; see **Mr 7:31**, compared with the following verse:

the multitude being very great: for the number of men that ate, when the following miracle was wrought, were about four thousand; see **Mr 8:9**. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, "again"; referring to the former miracle of the five thousand, who were fed with five loaves, and two fishes, **Mr 6:44**.

And having nothing to eat; what they might have brought with them being expended, and they in a desert, where nothing was to be had, nor bought for money:

Jesus called his disciples to him, and saith unto them;
See Gill on "Mt 15:32".

Mark 8:2

Ver. 2. I have compassion on the multitude,.... Christ is a compassionate Saviour both of the bodies and souls of men: he had compassion on the souls of this multitude, and therefore had been teaching them sound doctrine and he had compassion on the bodies of many of them, and had healed them of their diseases; and his bowels yearned towards them all;

because, says he,

they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat; for if they brought any food with them, it was all spent, and they were in a wilderness, where nothing was to be got; where they had no house to go into, nor bed to lie upon, and no provisions to be bought; and in this case they had been two nights and three days; which showed great affection and zeal in these people, and a close attachment to Christ, in exposing themselves to all these difficulties and hardships, which they seemed to bear with much patience and unconcernedness. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions prefix the word "behold" to this clause, as expressing admiration at their stay with him so long in such a place.

Mark 8:3

Ver. 3. And if I send them away fasting to their own houses,.... Greek, "to their own house", or home; but all the Oriental versions render it as we do, in the plural, "their own houses", or habitations; and it seems from hence that they were now tasting, and at least had had no food all that day, whatever they might have the day before, which it not certain.

They will faint by the way; for want of food their strength will be exhausted, their animal spirits will fail, their nerves will be loosened, they will not be able to perform their journey, or get to the end of it:

for divers of them came from far; perhaps some had followed him from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, from whence he came last; and others from Decapolis, through the midst of the borders of which he passed hither; and others from different parts, who had heard of his coming; See Gill on "Mt 15:32".

Mark 8:4

Ver. 4. And his disciples answered him,.... The Syriac version renders it, "say unto him"; and the Persic and Ethiopic, "said unto him"; forgetting the late miracle of feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, when they had now a less number, and more provisions:

from whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness? from what place, and by what ways and means can it be thought, that such a quantity of bread can be got at any rate in a desert, as to satisfy so large a number of hungry men?
See Gill on "Mt 15:33".

Mark 8:5

Ver. 5. And he asked them, how many loaves have ye?....
See Gill on "Mt 15:34";

and they said, seven. Matthew adds, "and a few little fishes", which are here afterwards mentioned.

Mark 8:6

Ver. 6. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground,....
See Gill on "Mt 15:35";

and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake them;
See Gill on "Mt 15:36";

and gave to his disciples to set before [them], the multitude, and they did set [them] before the people; in which they were obedient to their Lord's commands, though they were so forgetful, unbelieving, and stupid.

Mark 8:7

Ver. 7. And they had a few small fishes,.... Which they also acquainted Christ with, and brought out unto him:

and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before [them]. It looks, by this account, as if the fishes were blessed, and brake, and distributed separately, alter the blessing, breaking, and distribution of the bread; and so the Syriac version renders it, "upon whom also he blessed"; and the Persic thus, "and he also blessed the fishes"; but, according to Matthew they were both blessed, and brake, and distributed together, as it is highly reasonable to suppose they were both ate together;
See Gill on "Mt 15:36".

Mark 8:8

Ver. 8. So they did eat, and were filled,.... Christ and his disciples, and the whole multitude: they not only had some, but they had all enough, a full meal. It was surprising that it could be divided so, is that every one should have a bit; but that they should all be satisfied to the full, is amazing:

and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets; as many as there were loaves; See Gill on "Mt 15:37".

Mark 8:9

Ver. 9. And they that had eaten were about four thousand,.... That is, men, besides women and children, as Matthew observes;
See Gill on "Mt 15:38".

and he sent them away; some that came dumb, with their speech, and deaf, with their hearing; others that were maimed, with perfect healing of their wounds, and with their limbs sound and whole; others that came lame, he dismissed leaping; and others that were blind, with their sight restored to them, and all of them full.

Mark 8:10

Ver. 10. And straightway he entered into a ship, with his disciples,.... As soon as ever he had, dismissed the multitude, he took shipping with his disciples; for he was at the sea of Galilee, either at a place near it, or upon the shore of it; see Mr 7:31;

and came into the parts of Dalmanutha; which Matthew calls, "the coasts of Magdala"; See Gill on "Mt 15:39". The Arabic version reads it, "Magdal"; and in two of Beza's copies it is read, "Madegada"; but the Syriac version reads, "Dalmanutha"; and the Persic, "Dalmanuth"; and the Ethiopic, "Dalmathy": it was a city in the coasts of Magdala, and is thought by Dr. Lightfoot to be the same with Tzalmon, or Salmon, a place often mentioned {f} in the Jewish writings.

{f} Misn. Celaim, c. 4. sect. 9. & Yebarnot, c. 16. sect. 6. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 82. 2.

Mark 8:11

Ver. 11. And the Pharisees came forth,.... Out of their houses; who dwelt in the coasts of Magdala, and parts of Dalmanutha, and came to Jesus, hearing of his being arrived in their neighbourhood:

and began to question with him; or to dispute with him, it being their manner to carry on disputations by questions and answers. The Persic version has the question they put, and about which they disputed, "if thou art the Christ"; in proof of which they required a sign:

seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him;
See Gill on "Mt 16:1".

Mark 8:12

Ver. 12. And he sighed deeply in his Spirit,.... In his human soul; and which shows that he had one, and was subject to grief and sorrow, and all passions and infirmities, excepting sin. This deep sigh was on account of the hardness of their hearts, the malignity of their minds, and insincerity of their intentions; who had no view to come at truth by this inquiry, but to ensnare him:

and saith, why doth this generation seek after a sign? when so many have been shown among them, and they will not believe:

verily I say unto you, there shall no sign be given to this generation: such as they desired; namely, one from heaven. The Evangelist Matthew adds, "but the sign of the Prophet Jonas";
See Gill on "Mt 16:4",
See Gill on "Mt 12:40".

Mark 8:13

Ver. 13. And he left them,.... As a perverse and hardened generation of men, and as such with whom it was not worth while to discourse:

and entering into the ship again; which brought him over, and waited for him:

departed to the other side; of the sea of Galilee, towards Bethsaida, **Mr 8:22**.

Mark 8:14

Ver. 14. Now the disciples had, forgotten to take bread,.... At Dalmanutha, or Magdala, or whatever place in those parts they were at, before they took shipping, as was their usual method.

Neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf; for thirteen passengers of them. The Persic version reads the whole thus: "and they forgot to take bread with them, not indeed one loaf, and there was no bread with them in the ship"; See Gill on "Mt 16:5".

Mark 8:15

Ver. 15. And he charged them,.... When they were in the ship, and had just recollected themselves, that they had took no care to bring any provisions with them:

saying, take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees; and of the leaven of Herod: in Matthew, instead of "the leaven of Herod", it is read, "the leaven of the Sadducees": which are either the same, Herod and his courtiers being Sadducees, or favourers of them; or the Sadducees being sticklers for Herod, and his government, which the Pharisees had no good opinion of; or else distinct from one another; and so Christ cautions against the doctrines of the Pharisees, which regarded the traditions of the elders, and of the Sadducees, concerning the resurrection, and of the Herodians, who thought Herod to be the Messiah; and against the unreasonable request and demand of them all to have a sign from heaven, in proof of his own Messiahship; See Gill on "Mt 16:6".

Mark 8:16

Ver. 16. And they reasoned among themselves,.... Upon Christ's giving this caution, and recollecting with themselves, that they had forgot to buy any provisions, and take with them:

saying, it is because we have no bread; that he says these words; tacitly chiding and reproving us, for our want of thought and care;
See Gill on "Mt 16:7".

Mark 8:17

Ver. 17. And when Jesus knew it,.... As he did immediately, by his omniscience; for as he knew the thoughts and reasonings of the Scribes and Pharisees, **Mt 9:4**, so he did those of his own disciples:

he saith unto them, why reason ye because ye have no bread? or imagine that I have given you this caution on that account; or are distressed because this is your case, as if you should be reduced to great difficulties, by reason of your forgetfulness and negligence:

perceive ye not yet, neither understand? the meaning of the parabolical expressions, which he had used them to; or his power in providing food for them, and supporting a great number of persons with very little food, of which they had some very late instances:

have ye your heart yet hardened? as after the first miracle; see **Mr 6:52**, for it might have been expected, that by a second miracle of the loaves, their understandings would have been more enlightened, and their faith increased, and that they would have relinquished their gross notions, their anxieties, doubts, and unbelief.

Mark 8:18

Ver. 18. Having eyes, see ye not?.... Meaning perhaps both the eyes of their bodies, and of their understandings: they had bodily eyes, and with them saw the miracles he wrought, and yet took little notice of them; and the eyes of their understandings were enlightened by Christ, and yet saw things but very darkly:

and having ears, hear ye not? They had their natural hearing, and yet made but little use of it; and did not so diligently attend to the sound of Christ's words: and though they had spiritual ears given them to hear, yet were very dull of, understanding, and taking in things:

and do ye not remember? the interpretation of parables formerly given, and the miracles of the loaves lately wrought.

Mark 8:19

Ver. 19. When I brake the five loaves among five thousand,.... This, with what follows, chiefly regards the last question:

how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? do not you remember? have you forgot what was so lately done? surely you cannot:

they say unto him, twelve. Their memories were hereby refreshed, and they call to mind the exact number of the baskets of fragments that were taken up, which were above double the number of the loaves, the multitude were fed with.

Mark 8:20

Ver. 20. And when the seven among four thousand,.... That is, when seven loaves were broken among four thousand men,

how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? this surely you must remember, it being so recent an action, but just done, as it were:

and they said, seven; for this, as yet, could not have slipped their memories; though they had, been reasoning among themselves because of their straitness of provisions, as if these things had never been done.

Mark 8:21

Ver. 21. And he said unto them,.... Since this was the case, and they so well remembered the miracles he had wrought, and the circumstances of them:

how is it that ye do not understand? my words concerning the leaven of the Pharisees, of the Sadducees, and of Herod, as to imagine I spoke of bread, taken in a literal sense; or that I concerned myself about the scantiness of your provisions, when you, might have learnt from my late miracles, how able I am to support you, if you had not so much as one loaf with you: wherefore it argues great want both of understanding and faith, and shows great stupidity, ignorance, and unbelief, to give such a sense of my words, and to be anxiously concerned on the score of your provisions.

Mark 8:22

Ver. 22. And he cometh to Bethsaida,.... The city of Andrew, Peter, and Philip, **Joh 1:44**; a fishing town, which was situated by the sea of Galilee. Beza's ancient copy, and the Gothic version, wrongly read "Bethany". The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "they came"; Christ, and his twelve apostles, who landed at this place:

and they bring a blind man unto him; for Christ had been here before, and was known by the inhabitants of the place; who, as soon as they heard of his arrival, and knowing what miracles were done by him, brought a poor blind man, of their town, to him, to be cured by him:

and besought him to touch him; having heard of, or seen cures performed by him this way. This man is an emblem of such who are spiritually blind: he had no natural sight at all; he could see nothing; he had not the least glimmering of any thing, until he was touched by Christ: so men, in a state of nature, are quite dark, even darkness itself, until they are made light by the Lord: they have no sight, nor sense of themselves, of their sinful, lost, and dangerous estate and condition they are in; they know not because they are blind, that they are wretched, and poor, and miserable, and naked: they have no sight of Christ, neither of the glory of his person, nor of the fulness of his grace, nor of the nature, necessity, and suitableness of his salvation: they are quite blind as to any saving knowledge of God in Christ, the way of life and peace by him, and the work of the Spirit of God upon the soul; or with regard to any spiritual experience of the power of Gospel truths, or views of the glories of another world: and as this man seemed to be unconcerned himself about the cure of his blindness, only his friends were affected with his case, and brought him to Christ, and solicited a cure, so it is with unregenerate men, they are insensible of their case, and so thoughtless of it, and unaffected with it, and do not, of themselves, seek for a deliverance out of it; nor do they make use of means for that purpose; but it becomes their friends, relations, and acquaintance, that are spiritual, who know their case, and their need of Christ, and his grace, to bring them to him under the means, and pray unto him, that he would put forth the mighty power of his grace upon them, and give them spiritual sight to see in what a lost condition they are, and their need of him.

Mark 8:23

Ver. 23. And he took the blind man by the hand,.... Not for the sake of touching him, in order to heal him, as they desired, but to be his guide:

and led him out of the town; to shun all appearance of vain glory and popular applause, being willing to do the miracle in a private manner; and because of the obstinacy and unbelief of the inhabitants of this place, who were not worthy to be witnesses of such a cure; see Mt 11:21;

and when he had spit on his eyes; not as a cause of healing him; for whatever use spittle may be of to such that have weak eyes, it can have no causal influence upon, or be of any service, in a natural way, to a blind man to restore his sight unto him:

and put his hands upon him; as he sometimes did, when he healed persons of any disorder:

he asked him, if he saw ought; any object whatever, whether he could perceive he had any sight at all. Christ's taking the blind man by the hand, and leading him out or the town, and spitting on his eyes, and putting his hands upon him, and then asking him if he saw ought, are emblematical of what he does in spiritual conversion, when he turns men from darkness to light: he takes them by the hand, which expresses his condescension, grace, and mercy, and becomes their guide and leader; and a better, and safer guide they cannot have; he brings them by a way they know not, and leads them in paths they had not known before; makes darkness light before them, and crooked things straight, and does not forsake them: he takes them apart, and separates them from the rest of the world; he calls them out from thence to go with him, teaching them, that, when enlightened by him, they should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, and the workers of them; for what communion has light with darkness? his putting spittle upon his eyes, may signify the means of grace, the eye salve of the word, which, when attended with a divine power, enlightens the eyes; and which power may be represented here by Christ's putting his hands upon the man; for the Gospel, without the power of Christ, Is insufficient to produce such an effect; but when it is accompanied with that, it always succeeds.

Mark 8:24

Ver. 24. And he looked up,.... This is omitted in the Arabic and Persic versions. The sense is, that he opened his eyelids, and lifted up his eyes, to try if he could see, and he could, and did see again; his sight was returned again, though very imperfectly as yet:

and said, I see men, as trees, walking: he saw some objects at a little distance from him, which, by their motion, he supposed to be men; otherwise his sight was so imperfect, that he could not have distinguished them from trees: he was capable of discerning the bulk of their bodies, and that they walked, or moved forward; but he could not distinguish the particular parts of their bodies; they seemed to be like trunks of trees, in an erect posture, and which he should have took for such, had it not been for their walking. As this man immediately, upon Christ's putting spittle on his eyes, and laying his hands on him, had sight given him, though it was very obscure and glimmering; so, as soon as ever the Gospel comes with power, it dispels the darkness of the mind, and introduces light; though at first it is but very small; it is let in gradually: the sinner is first convinced of the evil of his actions, and then of the sinfulness of his nature; he first sees the ability and suitableness of Christ as a Saviour, and after that his willingness, and his interest in him as such; and all this is commonly before he is so well acquainted with the dignity and infiniteness of his person, as the Son of God: and it is some time before he has his spiritual senses exercised to discern between good and evil, between truth and error; or arrives to a clear and distinct knowledge of Gospel truths, and a stability in them. Hence it is, that such are greatly harassed with Satan's temptations; are disquieted in their souls; are filled with doubts and fears, and are in danger of being imposed upon by false teachers.

Mark 8:25

Ver. 25. After that he had put his hands again upon his eyes,.... By the former account it does not appear on what part of him he put his hands; but this determines it; and from hence it seems plain, that he first spit on his eyes, and then closed them, and put his hands on them; which last action of his he repeated, though not the former:

and made him look up. This is omitted in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions. The Vulgate Latin reads it, "he began to see"; and so Beza's ancient copy: but this he did before, upon the first imposition of hands on him. The Arabic version renders it, "he saw well": this is expressed afterwards. The words are an order, or command of Christ to the man to lift up his eyes, and try again how he could see, and whether any better than before, which he did:

and he was restored; his sight was restored to him as before, and he was perfectly cured of his blindness;

and saw every man clearly; or "all things", as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read: he saw every object distinctly, and afar off, as the word used also signifies; he could distinguish men from trees, and trees from men. This man, as before observed, was a very lively emblem of one that is spiritually enlightened by the grace of God: Christ first separated this man from the rest of the multitude; and such are first distinguished from others in election, and redemption, and calling, who are illuminated by the Spirit of God: means were made use of by Christ for healing this man; though the bare actions, without a divine power, would have been insufficient, as the spittle of his mouth, and the imposition of his hands: and, generally speaking, in the illumination of a sinner the word of Christ's mouth is a means; though this, without the efficacy of his grace, is not of itself sufficient. This man, upon his first reception of sight, had a very dim, obscure, and imperfect view of things; could not well distinguish one thing from another, though he saw. As at first conversion, the enlightened soul has but a very glimmering view of things, particularly of Christ, the glory and fulness of his person, the efficacy of his blood, the excellency of his righteousness, of his ability, willingness, and suitableness as a Saviour; and especially of those doctrines of the Gospel, that are more sublime and distinguishing. But as this man afterwards had a more clear, and distinct view of objects; so it is with true believers in Christ; their shining light increases, and shines more and more unto the perfect day. For Gospel light at present is not perfect in any such who have the clearest views of things, have some darkness and imperfection in them; though they may be said to see all things clearly in comparison of what they sometimes did, and others do: particularly saints, under the Gospel dispensation see more clearly than those under the legal dispensation did; the object was at a greater distance from them; they saw the promises afar off; and the medium of their sight or through which they saw were obscure types shadows and sacrifices and dark prophecies. Moses, and his law, had a veil over them; but New Testament saints with open face without a veil behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord Jesus and of Gospel truths: indeed, they that know most see things most clearly and speak of them most distinctly know but in part and prophesy but in part in comparison of the beatific vision; when saints shall see face to face and know, as they are known; they now see but through a glass darkly. How clearly will all things be seen in the new Jerusalem state when there will be no need of the light of the sun or moon of ordinances; but Christ, the Lamb will be the everlasting light thereof in which the nations of them that are saved shall walk!

Mark 8:26

Ver. 26. And he sent him away to his house,.... Which seems to have been in one of the neighbouring villages or was one of the houses scattered about in the fields for the conveniency of rural business.

Saying, neither go into the town: or "that town", as the Syriac, the town or city of Bethsaida:

nor tell it to any in the town; to any of the inhabitants of the town that he should meet with any where or at any time: the reason of this was not merely or only because Christ would have the miracle concealed; but chiefly because the inhabitants of this place were notorious for their impenitence and unbelief. Christ had done many wonderful works among them and yet they repented not; nor did they believe in him; but despised him, his doctrine and his miracles;

and therefore for their neglect and contempt of such means he was determined to withdraw them from them. So Christ sometimes deals with nations cities and towns that disbelieve reject and despise his Gospel; he takes it away from them he orders his ministering servants to preach no more to them; no more to tell them of the good news of life and salvation by him: thus he dealt with the Jews who contradicted and blasphemed and judged themselves or by their conduct made themselves appear to be unworthy of the words of eternal life; he took away the kingdom of God or the Gospel from them and sent it among the Gentiles: and thus he threatened the church of Ephesus for leaving its first love to remove the candlestick out of its place in case of non-repentance; and a grievous judgment it is upon a place and people when God commands the clouds to rain no rain upon them, **Isa 5:6**; or, in other words when he enjoins his ministers no more to tell, or publish his Gospel to them; he determining to withdraw from them and have no more to do with them; so Christ and his disciples departed from this place, declared in the following verse.

Mark 8:27

Ver. 27. And Jesus went out, and his disciples,.... From Bethsaida and even from Galilee

into the towns Caesarea Philippi; in the jurisdiction of Philip, tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis; for this Caesarea was rebuilt by him and called so in honour of Tiberius Caesar; and the towns and villages adjacent to it are here intended: See Gill on "Mt 16:13";

and by the way he asked his disciples; as they were going from Galilee to those parts:

saying unto them; whom do men say that I am? not that he needed any information of this; for he knew not only what was said by men but What was in them; but he put this question, in order to bring out their sense of, and faith in him, and to impart something to them which was necessary they should be acquainted with;
See Gill on "Mt 16:13", where it is read, "whom do men say that I, the son of man am?"

Mark 8:28

Ver. 28. And they answered,.... That some said he was

John the Baptist; which was the opinion of Herod, and others:

but some say Elias; that is the "Tishbite", whom the Jews in general expected in person before the coming of the Messiah and imagined that Jesus was he:

and others one of the prophets; as Jeremiah or Isaiah or some other. The Vulgate Latin reads, "as one of the prophets"; and so Beza's ancient copy as in **Mr 6:15**. All spake highly and honourably of him: the people in common did not look upon him as a mean person; they perceived by his doctrine and more especially by his miracles that he was an extraordinary one: the several persons which they differently took him to be and make mention of were such as were of great repute; as John the Baptist, who had lately, been among them and whom all held to be a prophet, and indeed was more than a prophet; and Elias who was so very zealous for the Lord of hosts and wrought many miracles in his day; and whose coming the Jews were in expectation of to usher in the Messiah; and none thought him less than one of the prophets; and all agreed he was an uncommon man; even one raised from the dead as he must be, if he was John the Baptist or Elias or one of the old prophets; but they knew him not at least did not confess him to be the Messiah; he not appearing as a temporal prince, they were taught to believe he would be;
See Gill on "Mt 16:14".

Mark 8:29

Ver. 29. And he saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am?.... It was for the sake of this question he put the former;
See Gill on "Mt 16:15";

and Peter answereth and saith unto him, thou art the Christ; the Messiah that was long ago promised and so often prophesied of in the books of Moses and the prophets; and whom the Jews have so much and long expected. This confession of Peter's in which all the apostles agreed with him speaks out what Jesus really was, and exceeds the most exalted sentiments which the people had of him: he was not the harbinger of the Messiah but the Messiah himself; not Elias in whose Spirit his forerunner was to come and did come; nor any one of the prophets; but he who was spoken of by all the holy prophets; which have been since the beginning of the world. Not one of the various opinions of the people being just, and answering the true character of Jesus, he demands the sense of his disciples which is here given by Peter in their name, and which was right; and on account of which he declared Peter blessed and ascribed his knowledge of him not to flesh and blood but to the revelation of his Father. The Syriac and Persic versions add, "the Son of the living God"; and so Beza found it in one ancient copy; but it may be it is only taken from Mt 16:16; See Gill on "Mt 16:16".

Mark 8:30

Ver. 30. And he charged them,.... His disciples, after he had declared his approbation of Peter's confession of faith, and signified he would build his church on that rock, and the gates of hell should not prevail against it: and promised Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and that whatsoever was bound, or loosed by him on earth, should be bound and loosed in heaven; which are omitted by Mark, but related by Matthew, Mt 16:17: after this he gave a strict and severe charge,

that they should tell no man of him; that he was the Messiah, and the Son of God; See Gill on "Mt 16:20".

Mark 8:31

Ver. 31. And he began to teach them,.... For as yet he had said nothing to them about his sufferings and death, at least in express terms; but now they being firmly established in the faith of him, as the Messiah, he thought it proper to inform them,

that the son of man must suffer many things; meaning himself, as that he should be betrayed, apprehended, and bound, should be smitten, spit upon, buffeted, and scourged; and which things must be done, and he suffer them, because it was so determined by God, and foretold in the Scriptures:

and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests and Scribes; which composed the grand sanhedrim of the nation, and are the builders that were prophesied of by whom he should be rejected,
Ps 118:22,

and be killed; in a violent manner; his life be taken away by force, without law, or justice:

and after three days rise again: not after three days were ended, and on the fourth day, but after the third day was come; that is, "on the third day", as the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read; and even the Pharisees themselves thus understood Christ, Mt 27:63, so the phrase, "after eight days", is used for the eighth day, being come, or that same day a week later; see **Lu 9:28** compared with Mt 17:1.

Mark 8:32

Ver. 32. And he spake that saying openly,.... Concerning his sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead. He not only spoke it before them all, but in plain words, without a figure; so that it might be, and was clearly understood by them; and he spake it as the word will also bear, not only very freely, but likewise boldly, with an undaunted courage, with intrepidity of mind; being not in the least discouraged, nor showing any concern or fear about what was to befall him:

and Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. Peter might more especially be concerned at this free and open account Christ gave of his sufferings and death, because he had just now acquainted him, that he should have the keys of the kingdom of heaven; by which he might understand some high post in the temporal kingdom of the Messiah he expected; and immediately to hear of his sufferings and death, damped his spirits, and destroyed his hopes, and threw him into such difficulties he was not able to remove; and therefore he takes Christ aside, and very warmly expostulates with him about what he had said, and chides him for it, and entreats him that he would not think, or talk of such like things: the words of Peter are recorded by Matthew, See Gill on "Mt 16:22".

Mark 8:33

Ver. 33. But when he had turned about,.... Upon Peter, and showed quick resentment at what he said:

and looked on his disciples; he cast his eye toward, them at the same time, and expressed to them the same displeasure in his countenance, they being of the same mind:

he rebuked Peter, saying, get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God; things which were according to the will of God, as the sufferings of Christ were: they were according to the determinate counsel of his will; what he had determined in his purposes and council should be; and what he had declared in the Scriptures of truth, the revelation of his will, would be; and in which, according to them, he should have a great concern himself, Isa 53:6, and whereby all his divine perfections would be glorified, and therefore may well be said to be the things of God; and which ought to be savoured, minded, and attended to, as things of the greatest moment and importance: and which, though the apostle had often read of in the books of the Old Testament; yet either had not a clear understanding of them, as being the will of God; or however, they were greatly out of his view at this time, his mind being possessed with notions of a temporal kingdom, and of worldly honour and grandeur: wherefore it follows,

but the things that be of men; as were the notions of Christ's being a temporal prince, that would set up a worldly kingdom, and deliver the Jews from the Roman yoke, and make his subjects happy, with an affluence of all worldly things; and particularly his favourites, as the disciples were: these were schemes of men's devising, and were suited to the corrupt nature, and carnal inclinations of men; and these things at present too much possessed Peter's mind: wherefore the Lord rebuked him in a very severe, though just manner; being touched in his most tender part, and dissuaded from that which his heart was set upon, and he came into the world for; whose keen resentment is seen by using a phrase he never did but to the devil himself, **Mt 4:10**;
See Gill on "Mt 16:23".

Mark 8:34

Ver. 34. And when he had called the people unto him,.... Who, it seems, followed him out of Galilee, from Bethsaida, and these parts; for it was in the way from thence to Caesarea Philippi, that Christ had this conversation with his disciples; who walked together alone, the multitude following at some distance; and the private conversation being ended, Christ called, or beckoned to the people, to come nearer to him:

with his disciples also; for what he was about to say, concerned them both:

whosoever will come after me; in a spiritual sense, as this multitude did in a natural one, and which is the same as to be a disciple of his:

let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me; signifying, that his followers must deny themselves of worldly advantages, and suffer many things, as well as he, which he had been but just before acquainting his disciples with;
See Gill on "Mt 16:24".

Mark 8:35

Ver. 35. For whosoever will save his life,.... Life is a valuable thing, and all that a man has he will give for it; self preservation is a principle in nature; and it becomes every man to take all lawful methods to save his life, when it is threatened, or is in danger: but whoever is willing to save it, when it is called for to be laid down for Christ's sake; and rather than lay it down, will deny Christ, and give up a profession of him, and his Gospel,

shall lose it: he shall not enjoy it with honour and comfort now, and much less with peace, pleasure, and happiness hereafter, but shall be under the power of the second death:

but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's; that is, shall willingly part with it when he is called to it, rather than deny Christ and his Gospel,

the same shall save it: though he will lose it now, he will find it again in the resurrection of life; for he will rise to eternal life; when such, who have apostatized from Christ, will rise to shame, and everlasting contempt: this man will have greatly the advantage over such; they will die the second death, or be destroyed soul and body in hell; and he will live for ever with Christ, in endless pleasure and glory; See Gill on "Mt 16:25".

Mark 8:36

Ver. 36. For what shall it profit a man,.... In the long run, in the issue of things, who by denying Christ, and his Gospel, may not only save his life for the present, but procure for himself great riches and wealth:

if he shall gain the whole world; were that possible to be done, and which the ambitious, worldly man is desirous of; yet supposing he: had his desire, of what avail would this be in the upshot of things, should the following be his case, as it will,

and lose his own soul? which is immortal and everlasting, when the world, and the glory of it pass away, and so is of more worth than the whole world. The world can only be enjoyed for a season, and that with a great deal of fatigue and trouble; but the soul continues for ever; and if it is lost and damned, its torment always abides, and the smoke of it ascends for ever, its worm never dies, and its fire is never quenched; See Gill on "Mt 16:26".

Mark 8:37

Ver. 37. Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?] To deliver it out of its miserable state and condition; all the riches of the world, and the whole world itself, are not an equivalent to it, or a sufficient ransom for it; riches will not profit in the day of wrath, or deliver a soul from damnation, and ruin: wherefore, if he had the whole world, he could not redeem his soul with it; and he has nothing else to give for it, and therefore it is past all recovery: See Gill on "Mt 16:26".

Mark 8:38

Ver. 38. Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me,.... As suffering, crucified, and put to death; things he had been speaking of before: whoever through scandal of the cross, and fear of men, will be ashamed of Christ, and dare not profess faith in him, but shall conceal and keep it to themselves:

and of my words; the doctrines of the Gospel, of remission of sins by his blood, of justification by his righteousness, and of salvation alone by him, with every other truth relating to him, or connected with these;

in this adulterous and sinful generation; which was so both in a moral and spiritual sense; for both corporeal and spiritual adultery prevailed among them, And particularly the Scribes and Pharisees adulterated the word of God by their false glosses, in which they acted a very sinful part; and such was their authority, that few durst contradict them, or profess doctrines which were the reverse of them. Wherefore our Lord assures his disciples and followers, that should they be deterred by these men from a free and open profession of him, and his Gospel, by which it would appear that they were ashamed of both, of him also shall the son of man be ashamed; will not own such an one for his; he will take no notice of him; he will not confess his name; but, as one that he is ashamed of, he will turn away from him; not so much as look at him, or say one favourable word to him, or for him; but bid him be gone from him, as a worker of iniquity: this he will do,

when he cometh in the glory of his Father; the same that the Father has; being his Son, of the same nature with him, and equal to him; and as mediator, endued with power and authority from him, to judge the world; and when he will be accompanied

with the holy angels; who will descend from heaven with him, and be employed on earth by him; See Gill on "Mt 16:27".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 9:1

Ver. 1. And he said unto them,.... Both to his disciples, and the multitude,

verily I say unto you, there be some of them that stand here; that were then living, and upon the spot,

which shall not taste of death, or die,

till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. When Jesus was declared both Lord and Christ, by the wonderful effusion of the Holy Spirit; the Gospel spread in the world both among Jews and Gentiles, in spite of all opposition, under the power and influence of the grace of God, to the conversion of thousands of souls; and that branch of Christ's regal power exerted in the destruction of the Jewish nation; See Gill on "Mt 16:28". This verse properly belongs to the foregoing chapter, to which it is placed in the Vulgate Latin version; and so it concludes one in Matthew, and ought not to begin a new chapter.

Mark 9:2

Ver. 2. And after six days,.... Six days after this discourse with his disciples, in their way to Caesarea Philippi, and after they were come into those parts:

Jesus taketh with him Peter, James, and John; favourite disciples, and a sufficient number, to be witnesses of his transfiguration:

and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves; where he and they were alone. This was not Mount Tabor, as is generally said, but either the mountain which Caesarea was at the foot of, or it may be Mount Lebanon; See Gill on "Mt 17:1";

and he was transfigured before them; the above three disciples;
See Gill on "Mt 17:2".

Mark 9:3

Ver. 3. And his raiment became shining,.... With the rays of glory and brightness which darted from his body through his clothes, and made them as bright as the light of the sun at noon day: and

exceeding white as snow; than which nothing is whiter;

so as no fuller on earth can white them. The Syriac version renders it, "as men cannot white on earth"; and the Persic thus, "so as men could not behold him". Just as the Israelites could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, because of the glory of his countenance, when he came down from the mount; See Gill on "Mt 17:2".

Mark 9:4

Ver. 4. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses,.... Or Moses and Elias, as all the Oriental versions read, as in Mt. 17:3,
See Gill on "Mt 17:3":

and they were talking with Jesus; concerning his decease, and what he was to do and suffer at Jerusalem, and of which he himself had lately talked with his disciples; so that this might have been a confirmation of these things to them;
See Gill on "Mt 17:3".

Mark 9:5

Ver. 5. And Peter answered and said to Jesus,.... He addressed himself to him, as being more familiar with him; as also because he was the principal person: wherefore he says,

master, it is good for us to be here: the company and conversation were exceeding agreeable to him and his fellow disciples; and the glory that Christ appeared in surpassed every thing they had seen before:

and let us make three tabernacles; or, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "and we will make", &c. expressing not a petition, but a resolution; to which the Persic version premises, "if thou wilt give us commandment"; submitting it to the will of Christ:

one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias;
See Gill on "Mt 17:4".

Mark 9:6

Ver. 6. For he wist not what to say,.... He did not know what he should say, or what was proper to be said by him, at such a time, in such circumstances, and before such persons;

for they were sore afraid. The Persic version reads, "he was": and so the Latin translation of the Syriac, though that itself is, "they were"; for all three were filled with consternation at what they saw and heard; so that they were scarcely themselves, and knew not well what they said or did.

Mark 9:7

Ver. 7. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them,.... Jesus, Moses, and Elias, and also the disciples; who, according to Luke, entered into it, and so were covered by it.

And a voice came out the cloud, saying, this is my beloved Son, hear him. This was the voice of God the Father, bearing a testimony to the sonship of Christ; and was directed, not to Moses and Elias, but to the disciples, enjoining them to hear and obey him, who was the end of the law and prophets; was the great prophet Moses had spoken of, and was to be hearkened to, and whom all the prophets had testified of, and in whom they all centred; See Gill on "Mt 17:5".

Mark 9:8

Ver. 8. And suddenly, when they had looked round about,.... Upon hearing the voice, to see if they could observe any other object, by whom it was pronounced, and whether the same they had seen continued:

they saw no man any more; neither Moses, nor Elias, not at that time, nor ever after;

save Jesus only with themselves: the voice only regarded him, and being directed to them; See Gill on "Mt 17:8".

Mark 9:9

Ver. 9. And as they came down from the mountain,.... Christ and his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, whom he led up thither:

he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen; on the mount, as the transfiguration of himself, the persons of Moses and Elias, and the bright cloud from whence the voice came, which bore testimony of Christ's sonship: he ordered to keep the whole of this a secret from every man, even from their fellow disciples,

till the Son of man were risen from the dead;
See Gill on "Mt 17:9".

Mark 9:10

Ver. 10. And they kept that saying with themselves,.... "They retained it in their own mind", as the Persic version renders it; "they kept [it] close", as Luke says, Lu 9:36, among themselves, and acquainted no man with it: and which refers either to the whole of Christ's charge, relating to the vision on the mount; or else only to what he said about his resurrection from the dead; and which they took notice of particularly, and laid hold upon, as the word will bear to be rendered; and so the Ethiopic version does render it, "and they observed his saying"; what he last said concerning the son of man's rising from the dead;

questioning with one other what the rising from the dead should mean: they inquired, disputed, and reasoned with one another, what should be the meaning of such an expression: not that they were ignorant of the general resurrection of the dead; for this was the hope of Israel, and the general sense of the Jewish nation: but they did not know what he meant by his particular rising from the dead: whether he meant it in a literal sense, which supposed his death; and that though he had lately told them of, they knew not how to reconcile to the notions they had of a long and flourishing temporal kingdom of the Messiah; or whether he meant a and interest, in such manner as they expected.

Mark 9:11

Ver. 11. And they asked him, saying,.... Being put in mind of it, by seeing Elias on the mount, or else by what Christ had said concerning his resurrection, or both:

why say the Scribes, the Vulgate Latin adds, "and Pharisees",

that Elias must first come? before the Messiah comes, or before the setting up his kingdom in greater glory; See Gill on "Mt 17:10".

Mark 9:12

Ver. 12. And he answered, and told them,.... Allowing that their observation was right, and that this was the sense of the Scribes, and that there was something of truth in it, when rightly understood:

Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things:
See Gill on "Mt 17:11";

and how it is written of the son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. The sense of Christ is, that John the Baptist, whom he means by Elias, comes first, and restores all things: and among the rest of the things he sets right, this is one, and not of the least; namely, that he gives the true sense of such passages of the sacred writings, which related to the contemptuous usage, rejection, and sufferings of the Messiah; as that in these he was the Lamb of God typified in the sacrifices of the law, who by his sufferings and death takes away the sin, of the world; and therefore he exhorted and directed those to whom he ministered, to look unto him, and believe in him; see **Joh 1:29**.

Mark 9:13

Ver. 13. But I say unto you, that Elias is indeed come,.... Meaning John the Baptist, who in prophecy is designed by him.

And they have done unto him whatsoever they listed;
See Gill on "Mt 17:12"; which words should be read in a parenthesis, as they are in the Vulgate Latin version; for what follows, as

it is written of him, respects not what the Scribes and Pharisees, and the people of the Jews did to John at their pleasure; despising his ministry and message, rejecting the counsel of God delivered by him, and remaining impenitent and unbelieving, notwithstanding his powerful and awakening ministry, with many other things, which are no where written of him; but the words regard his coming, and the prophecies concerning him, and particularly, that under the name of Elijah, in **Mal 4:5** and which had had their accomplishment.

Mark 9:14

Ver. 14. And when he came to his disciples,.... The other nine, who were left at the bottom of the mountain, and were waiting for him:

he saw a great multitude about them: there was a multitude that followed him from Bethsaida hither; and which, very likely, was greatly increased upon Christ's arrival in those parts, and the people hearing of it;

and the Scribes questioning with them; disputing and contending with them about their master, his doctrines and miracles, and their mission and authority from him; insulting them, on account of their inability to dispossess a dumb spirit, hereafter related.

Mark 9:15

Ver. 15. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him,.... As soon as ever they saw him, to many of whom, especially those that followed him out of Galilee, he was personally known.

Were greatly amazed; either that he should come at that juncture, to assist and relieve his disciples, when the Scribes were triumphing over them, as some think; or rather, as others, on account of that remaining lustre and glory which was on his countenance, through his transfiguration, and not yet wholly gone off; like that which was on the face of Moses, when he came down from Mount Sinai:

and running to him, saluted him; wishing him all peace and prosperity, expressing their great joy at his coming to them; which was very desirable by them, and exceedingly pleasing to them, and especially at this time, as both their words and gesture showed.

Mark 9:16

Ver. 16. And he asked the Scribes,.... The Vulgate Latin renders it, "he asked them"; and the Ethiopic version, he said unto them; meaning either that he asked the disciples when he came to them, or else the people that ran to salute him; but the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, "the Scribes"; seeing them about his disciples, in close debate with them, and running hard upon them, he asks them,

what question ye with them? what is it ye seek and require of them? what is your dispute with them? what is your debate about? The Vulgate Latin version reads, "what question ye among you?" among themselves, and one another; and so Beza's most ancient copy.

Mark 9:17

Ver. 17. And one of the multitude answered and said,.... The Scribes made no reply, being afraid to engage with him, whom they had often found too hard for them; and the disciples, if they were spoken to, were silent, through shame, because they had not succeeded in the cure of the person brought to them, which gave their enemies an handle against them: wherefore the parent of the afflicted child made answer, saying; the occasion of this debate between the Scribes, and thy disciples, is as follows:

Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; signifying, that he had heard much of him, as a very great man, and he believed him to be a master in Israel, who was famous both for doctrine and miracles, and therefore he brought his son to him, to be cured by him; but Christ not being in the way, he proposed him to his disciples, who attempted it without success. The case of his son was, he had a "dumb spirit". The Evangelist Matthew says he was "lunatic", Mt 17:15; and by his account of him it appears, that he had the "epilepsy", or falling sickness; and which, when upon him, took away the use of his speech. And so the Jews ascribe dumbness to the violence of a disease: thus they ask {g};

"what is "Cordiacus" (kardiakov)? one that has a disorder which affects the heart, and causes a deliquium (a fainting and swooning away), but a man, Mla hvenv, "who is become dumb", through the force of a disease;"

which was the case of this child: though this disease did not arise from natural causes, but from a diabolical possession; for he had a spirit, a foul spirit, a devil, as he is called: some further account is given of this unhappy case, in the next verse.

{g} Jarchi in Misn. Gittin, c. 7. sect. 1.

Mark 9:18

Ver. 18. And wheresoever he taketh him,.... The spirit, or devil, whether it be near fire, or water, whatsoever danger, or dangerous place:

he teareth him; or throws him into it, or dashes him against it; or inwardly racks, tortures, and convulses him:

and he foameth; at the mouth, like one that is mad:

and gnasheth with his teeth; through the excessive pain he is in:

and pineth away; his flesh is withered, dried up, and consumed away. This was the sad deplorable case this child was in, who was his father's only child, and therefore his health and life were very desirable: now he further observes to Christ, saying,

and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not.

Christ being absent, he entreated the disciples, who had power against unclean spirits, to cast them out; that they would make use of it, and dispossess this dumb and evil spirit; and who did make trial to cast him out, but were not able to effect it;
See Gill on "Mt 17:16".

Mark 9:19

Ver. 19. He answereth him,.... The father of the child, and who is included in the reproof afterwards given, for his unbelief, and taking part with the Scribes against his disciples; though the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, read, "them"; meaning not his disciples, but the Scribes and Pharisees, with the father of the child: and saith,

O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me; See Gill on "Mt 17:17".

Mark 9:20

Ver. 20. And they brought him unto him,.... The father of the child, and those that were with him, brought the child to Jesus, into his presence, before him:

and when he saw him, that is, either when Jesus saw the child, or the child saw Jesus; or the evil spirit in him, and by him which were all at once:

straightway the spirit tare him; threw him into a violent fit, shook him, and convulsed him in a dreadful manner; knowing his time was short, and being filled with indignation and rage, that he should be obliged, as he knew he must, to leave the child very speedily; and was therefore resolved to do all the mischief, and put him to all the pain he could:

and he fell on the ground; at the feet of Jesus, not being able to stand, through the violent motions and convulsions he threw him into:

and wallowed, foaming; rolled about from side to side, foaming at the mouth, and in the most exquisite rack and torture.

Mark 9:21

Ver. 21. And he asked his father,.... As he lay rolling about in this miserable condition, that the length and stubbornness of his disorder might be known, and so the cure the more remarkable, and appear the more expressive of his divine power and goodness:

how long is it ago since this came unto him? since this evil spirit entered into him, and these disorders have attended him?

and he said of a child; or "from his infancy"; so that it was not for any actual sin that he had committed, that this sore affiction came upon him; and yet he could not be without sin, since it was not agreeable to the justice, mercy, and goodness of God, to afflict, or suffer to be afflicted, one that is innocent; and therefore must be tainted with original sin, which is the source and spring of all afflictions, calamities and judgments.

Mark 9:22

Ver. 22. And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire,.... When he has been near it; so that one part or other of his body has been scorched, or burnt, and his life in danger:

and into the waters to destroy him: when he has been near any brook, or river, it has thrown him into it, in order to drown him, as into the fire to burn him. The Ethiopic version before fire and water reads, "into the deep"; meaning either the sea or some deep pit, or off a precipice. All this is said to aggravate the case, and show the miserable condition the child was in, from the frequency of the fits, and the danger he was exposed to:

but if thou canst do any thing. This man's faith was very weak, and perhaps weaker than when he first came from home with his child. He had brought him to the disciples of Christ, and they could not cure him; the evil spirit was as strong, or stronger in him than ever; he now lay in a violent fit, and in a most miserable condition; so that he was almost ready to despair of healing: some small hopes he had that Christ might be able to relieve in this case; but he puts an if upon his power, and earnestly entreats him, if he had any, he would put it forth:

have compassion on us, and help us; his child that lay in such a deplorable condition, rolling on the ground at his feet; and himself, who was greatly afflicted for him: he tries, in very moving language, both the power and pity of Christ; and begs that if he had either, he would exert them on this occasion.

Mark 9:23

Ver. 23. Jesus said unto him, if thou canst believe,.... As the man put an "if" on the power of Christ, Christ puts an "if" on the faith of the man; and tacitly suggests, that power was not wanting in himself, but faith in him; and should that cure not be performed, it would not be owing to any inability in him, but to his own incredulity. The Arabic version renders it, "what is this thy: saying, if thou canst do any thing?" What dost thou mean by it? Thou oughtest not to doubt of my power; there is no reason for it, after so many miracles wrought; upbraiding the man with his unbelief; and the Ethiopic version renders it thus, "because thou sayest, if thou canst": wherefore to show that power was not wanting in him, provided he had but faith, it follows,

all things are possible to him that believeth; that is, "to be done" to him, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions supply: for all things are not possible to be done by the believer himself, but all things are possible to be done for him, by God, or Christ, or the Spirit of God: thus our Lord, as he elsewhere does, ascribes that to faith, which is done by a divine power.

Mark 9:24

Ver. 24. And straightway the father of the child cried out,.... As soon as ever he found it was put upon his faith, and that the issue of things would be according to that, he expressed himself with much vehemency, being in great distress; partly with indignation at his unbelief, and partly through fear of missing a cure, by reason of it:

and said with tears; repenting of his unbelief, and grieved at the present weakness of his faith; which he very ingenuously confesses, saying,

Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief; not forward, but out of the way: he found in himself some small degree of faith in the power of Christ, but it was mixed with much unbelief, through the greatness of the child's disorder; and therefore desires it might be removed from him, and he might be helped against it: he saw it was not in his own power to believe; nor had he strength of himself to oppose his unbelief; but that both faith must be given him, and power against unbelief. The Syriac version renders it, "help", ytwnmyh twryoxl, "the defect of my faith": till up that which is lacking in it, it is very deficient, Lord, increase it; and the Arabic and Ethiopic translate thus, "help the weakness of my faith". He found his faith very weak, he desires it might be strengthened, that he might be strong in faith, and give glory to God; and in this way belief is helped, or men helped against it: every believer, more or less, at one time or another, finds himself in this man's case; and also that it is necessary to make use of the same petition; for faith is but imperfect in this life, and often very weak and defective in its exercise.

Mark 9:25

Ver. 25. When Jesus saw that the people came running together,.... hytwl, "to him", as the Syriac version adds, and so the Persic; upon hearing the vehement cry of the father of the child, and the earnest solicitations he made, expecting that something would be done:

he rebuked the foul spirit; that brought this disorder on the child, had continued it so long, and with so much violence. Matthew calls this foul spirit, "the devil", See Gill on "Mt 17:18":

saying unto him, thou dumb and deaf spirit; so calling him, not because the spirit was dumb and deaf, but because he had been the cause of dumbness and deafness in the child: he had at times taken away both his speech and hearing:

I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him. Christ, in an authoritative way, ordered the unclean spirit to leave his possession, and never attempt to regain it more. This he said, partly with regard to the devil, who would be desirous of repossession; and partly with respect to the disease, which had its intervals, and returned at certain times; and also with respect to the father of the child, to confirm his faith in the cure, and that he might be in no pain about the return of the disorder.

Mark 9:26

Ver. 26. And [the spirit] cried, and rent him sore,.... We rightly supply, "the spirit", as do the Syriac and Persic versions, "the demon"; for it was he, and not the child, that cried, and made an hideous noise, at his ejection; being filled with wrath and rage, that he must be obliged to quit the possession he had so long held; and therefore, in spite and malice, before it left him, shook and tore him, and threw him into dreadful convulsions:

and came out of him; though sore against his will, being obliged to it, by the superior power of Christ:

and he was as one dead: that is, the child, when the devil had left him, lay as still as if he had no breath, nor life in him:

insomuch that many said, he is dead; really dead: that there was no life in him, nor any hopes of his coming to himself again.

Mark 9:27

Ver. 27. But Jesus took him by the hand,.... "Took hold of the hand of the child", as the Persic version renders it;

and lifted him up; from the ground, on which he was cast by the spirit;

and he arose: this is omitted in the Syriac and Arabic versions, though in one edition of the latter, according to De Dieu, it is rendered, "and he stood"; to which is added, "and went into his own house". The Persic version, instead of this clause, reads, "and the child was healed"; and all the expressions show, that he was perfectly well.

Mark 9:28

Ver. 28. And when he was come into the house,.... Perhaps into the man's house whose child he had healed, or into some other in these parts, for the sake both of retirement and refreshment:

his disciples asked him privately, why could not we cast him out? The nine disciples, who were particularly concerned in this matter, fearing they had lost the power of casting out devils, conferred upon them, inquired of Jesus, when he was alone, why they could not cast the demon out of the child, when they had ejected unclean spirits out of many others; See Gill on "Mt 17:19".

Mark 9:29

Ver. 29. And he said unto them,.... Matthew, besides the following reason, assigns another, as given by our Lord, why they could not cast out the foul spirit, which was their unbelief; of which they were guilty in some sort, as well as the Jews, and the father of the child; but Mark omits it, and only relates this as the reason;

this kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting; which they had not observed; See Gill on "Mt 17:21".

Mark 9:30

Ver. 30. And they departed thence,.... From the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, from that part of the country where the mountain was, on which Christ was transfigured, and at the foot of which the above miracle was wrought. This is to be understood of Christ and his twelve disciples, though the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read in the singular number, "he went out"; not alone, but with his disciples, as the following account shows:

and passed through Galilee; in order to go to the coasts of Judea, and so to Jerusalem, where he was shortly to suffer: and therefore that his journey might not be retarded, and he be hindered by the conversation of the people in Galilee, and their importunity to stay with them, and teach, and work miracles among them, he passed through the country, in as private a manner as could be:

and he would not that any man should know it; partly for the reason just mentioned, and partly that he might have the opportunity of conversing alone with his disciples, and of reminding, and informing them, of some important things, which it was necessary they should be acquainted with, and observe.

Mark 9:31

Ver. 31. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them,.... What he had some little time before suggested to them; see **Mr 8:31**.

The son of man is delivered into the hands of men: in one of Beza's copies it is read, "sinful men", as in Lu 24:7 and so the Persic version reads here, and adds rebellious. This is represented as if it was already done, because it was determined and agreed upon, that it should be; and because, in a very little time, the son of man would be delivered into the hands of wicked men, according to the will of God, with his own consent, by the means of Judas, the Jews, and Pilate:

and they shall kill him; put him to death, in a violent manner, contrary to all law and justice:

and after that he is killed; this is omitted in the Arabic version, and in the Persic version in the room of it it is read, "and shall put him into a sepulchre"; that being what followed next upon his death:

and he shall rise the third day. This Christ always takes care to mention, for the comfort of his disciples, when he tells them of his death.

Mark 9:32

Ver. 32. But they understood not that saying,.... Meaning either the whole of what he had said, concerning his delivery, death, and resurrection: and which then must be interpreted with some limitation; for they must understand the sense of his words, which were clear and express; especially concerning his death, which affected their minds with trouble and grief; for Matthew says, "they were exceeding sorry upon it", See Gill on "Mt 17:23"; but they could not understand how it could be, and upon what account, and for what end, so holy and good, and innocent a man as he was, could be put to death; nor how this could consist with his character, as the Son of God, the Messiah, and king of Israel; and with the notions they had of the Messiah's abiding for ever, and setting up a temporal kingdom on earth: or this may regard only his resurrection from the dead; which whether it was to be taken in a literal or mystical sense, they could not tell:

and were afraid to ask him; lest they should be upbraided with their ignorance and stupidity, as they had been lately rebuked by him for their unbelief, and the neglect of their duty; and as Peter had been severely reprimanded for expostulating with him about the selfsame things, delivered by him to them, not before.

Mark 9:33

Ver. 33. And he came to Capernaum,.... Where he met with the collectors of the tribute money, and paid it to them, as related by Matthew, Mt 17:24, though Mark takes no notice of it. The Vulgate Latin and the Syriac versions, read in the plural number, "they came"; Christ and his twelve apostles; and which is the sense of the words, read in the singular number; for Christ came not alone, but with his disciples:

and being in the house; of Simon and Andrew, very likely where he used to be when at Capernaum:

he asked them, what was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? Whilst in their journey from Caesarea Philippi, to Galilee; or as they travelled through the parts of Galilee to Capernaum. This question Christ put, not as ignorant of what had passed among them, but in order to have the case laid before him; that he might reprove them for their pride and ambition, and have an opportunity of teaching them humility, and of informing them of the nature of his kingdom, and subjects; concerning which, they had entertained very wrong notions. The phrase "among yourselves", is omitted in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, but stands in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic.

Mark 9:34

Ver. 34. But they held their peace,.... Fearing a reprimand, for their vanity and affectation of worldly grandeur:

for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who [should be] the greatest; that is, who should be advanced to the highest post, and have the greatest place of authority, honour, and dignity, in the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, they expected would be in a little time set up; for notwithstanding what Christ had said to them, concerning his being given up to the power of men, and concerning his death and resurrection, they still retained their former principle, to which they knew not how to reconcile his dying; and therefore chose rather to leave his meaning in suspense, and remain ignorant about it, than quit so darling a notion: and doubtless this dispute was occasioned by what Christ had said to them; who afterwards, getting by themselves, talked about it, which led on to a warm contest, about precedence in his kingdom.

Mark 9:35

Ver. 35. And he sat down,.... As their master, as one having authority; and in order to examine into this matter, and pass judgment upon it:

and called the twelve; all the disciples, who though they might not be all engaged in this dispute, nor equally criminal, yet were all, possessed of the same notion; and therefore Christ calls them all unto him, what he had to say, being pertinent unto them all:

and saith unto them, if any man desire to be first; to have the pre-eminence, and be in the chief place in the kingdom of the Messiah,

the same shall be last of all, and servant of all: his pride and vanity shall be checked; his ambitious views shall be frustrated; instead of being first, he shall be last; and instead of having superior reverence and respect, he shall be debased, and treated with neglect and contempt; and instead of being the master over others, shall be the servant of all. Some copies read, "let him be"; and so the Persic version, "let him be last, and minister to every one"; and the Ethiopic thus, "let him subject himself to all, and be servant to all"; for the only way to preferment in Christ's kingdom, or in the Gospel dispensation, is humility and meekness, and performing the lowest services to all, with diligence and cheerfulness.

Mark 9:36

Ver. 36. And he took a child,.... Which was in the house, and which he called unto him, and set by him, as the other evangelists observe:

and set him in the midst of them; his disciples, that all might see and learn from this instance;

and when he had taken him in his arms; and embraced him, to show his great regard to humility, and humble persons:

he said unto them; the following words.

Mark 9:37

Ver. 37. Whosoever shall receive one of such children,.... That is, any believer, who is like to such a child for humility, meekness, and lowliness of mind; and

so the Syriac version renders it, aylj
anh Kya, "one like to this child": and so the Arabic and Persic versions; for it cannot be thought that Christ's meaning is, that whoever takes up any little child, embraces, and takes notice of it, as he did, does what is after related; but that whoever shows respect, and performs the least office of love and kindness to the meanest believer, comparable to a little child, for the above excellent qualities, and he does this, says Christ,

in my name; on account that he belongs to Christ, is one of his, bears his image, partakes of his grace, is loved by him, and shall be glorified with, him: such is Christ's great regard to his humble followers, that he takes it all one as if done to himself:

he receiveth me; this humble believer, being a member of his, and like unto him, and respected by him;

and whosoever shall receive me; Christ, in any of his members:

receiveth not me; that is, not him only; for he does receive him, otherwise there would be a contradiction in the words; but his meaning is, that he does not hereby receive him, by receiving one of his, nor him so much, as his Father:

but him that sent me; for as showing respect to one of Christ's members, is showing respect to him; so showing respect to Christ, is showing respect to his Father, from whence he came, by whom he was sent, in whose name he acted, and whose work and service he was concerned in.

Mark 9:38

Ver. 38. And John answered him, saying,.... Taking notice of what Christ just now said, and observing how well pleasing it was to him, to receive in a meek and humble manner, the least believer in his name; and reflecting upon an action, in which he and some of his fellow disciples were concerned, and which he perceived was not so agreeable to this rule of Christ, thought proper to relate it to him; that he might have his sense of it, and give him an opportunity of enlarging on a subject, so suitable to the temper and disposition of this beloved disciple.

Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name: very likely he called him

Rabbi, as the Syriac version renders it, or Rabboni, as in Joh 20:16, a title commonly given to Christ, both by his disciples and others: the case related, very probably happened, when the disciples being sent forth by Christ to preach the Gospel and cast out devils, took a tour through Judea and Galilee, where they saw this man. John was not alone; there were others with him, at least another, who was an eyewitness with him; for the apostles were sent out, by two and two: who this man was, is not said, his name is not mentioned, perhaps was unknown to the apostles; though Beza says, in one ancient exemplar it is read, "we knew one". This person not only attempted to cast out devils, but really did; and that more than one; but in which of Christ's names he did it, is not expressed; if in the name of the Messiah, Dr. Lightfoot's conjecture may be right, that he was one of John's disciples; who had been baptized in the name of the Messiah, that was just expected to come; to whom, as to others of his disciples, was given a power of casting out devils, to make the way of the Messiah more plain; wherefore the reason why he did not cast out devils in the name of Jesus, but in the name of the Messiah, and did not follow him, nor his disciples, was not out of contempt, but ignorance, not knowing that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah: or if he cast out devils in the name of Jesus, which seems most likely, he might be, as others think, a disciple of John's, who really did believe in Jesus, though he did not associate with, his disciples, but continued with the disciples of John: wherefore it is said,

and he followeth not us; was neither one of the twelve apostles; nor one of the seventy disciples; nor even one of the lower class of the professed disciples of Jesus. This clause is omitted in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions:

and we forbad him; going on in this way, casting out any more devils:

because he followeth, not us; was not one of their company, nor any of Christ's disciples; who had received no authority and commission from Christ, to do what he did: wherefore they feared, that by such an irregular way of proceeding, the dignity of Christ would be lessened, and some dishonour and reproach reflected on him: and besides the honour of Christ, they might consult their own; and their case be too much like that of Joshua, when Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp. This clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin, but stands in all the eastern versions.

Mark 9:39

Ver. 39. But Jesus said, forbid him not,.... Neither him, nor any other they should hereafter meet with, who might be casting out devils in his name, giving this as a reason for it;

for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name; or "miracles", as the Syriac version, as to cast out devils, or heal any sickness and disease,

that can lightly speak evil of me: such a man can never reproach and blaspheme that name, which he makes use of in doing, and by which he does wonderful works; no man can call Jesus accursed, who casts out devils in his name; see 1Co 12:3, if he has spoken evil of him before, he cannot do it "again", as the Persic version renders it, with any face; or he cannot do it "quickly, immediately", as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions interpret it: there must be some time before such an one apostatizes, if he ever does; he cannot very easily and readily go into a way of blaspheming that name, by which he does his mighty works: his conscience will not admit of it; and besides, it would be contrary to his interest; it must sink his credit, and he lose the esteem and applause of men, he had gained by his miracles; for to dishonour that name, would be to reproach himself.

Mark 9:40

Ver. 40. For he that is not against us, is on our part. Many copies read, "he that is not against you, is for you"; as this man; he was not against either Christ, or his disciples; he was doing the same work, promoting the same interest, and destroying the kingdom of Satan: and therefore, though he did not follow them, and had not his commission immediately from Christ; yet, inasmuch as he was opposing the same common enemy, and did nothing against them, he ought to be reckoned as one for them, and on their side. It is a proverbial expression, signifying that all that are not against a man, and take not the part of his enemy, are to be accounted his friends.

Mark 9:41

Ver. 41. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink,.... Not only one that does a miracle in the name of Christ, but he that shows the least respect, or does the least kindness to any one of his; See Gill on "Mt 10:42"; is to be reckoned a friend, and is so accounted by Christ; and will be sooner or later taken notice of by him, especially, if what he does, be it ever so little, is done on his account:

in my name, because ye belong to Christ; or as the Syriac version renders it, "on account that ye are Christ's"; are his disciples, are called by his name, are partakers of his grace, bear his image and likeness, are loved by him, interested in him, given to him, redeemed by him called by his grace, and shall be with him:

verily l say unto you, he shall not lose his reward;
See Gill on "Mt 10:42".

Mark 9:42

Ver. 42. And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me,.... Whosoever shall do the, least injury to the meanest person that believes in Christ, who are mean both in their own eyes, and the eyes of others; for Christ is not speaking of little children in age, who are neither capable of believing in Christ, nor are they ready to take offence; but of such as belong to him; his disciples and followers, of whom he is speaking in the preceding verse:

it is better for him that a mill stone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea; and drowned there: the allusion is to the drowning of malefactors, by tying a stone, or any heavy thing about their necks, and casting them into the sea. Casaubon, and others, have shown out of Heathen writers, that this has been a practice of some nations, particularly the Grecians: Jerom says, Christ speaks according to the custom of the country; this being a punishment of the greatest crimes among the Jews; but I have no where met with it in their writings: Christ's sense is, that such who give offence to any of his ministers or people, how mean soever they may appear, shall undergo the severest punishment;
See Gill on "Mt 18:6".

Mark 9:43

Ver. 43. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off,.... I have observed on **Mt 5:30** that by the Jewish canons, cutting off of the hand was ordered in some cases there mentioned; which, though literally enjoined, must not be understood, as

though the Jewish sanhedrim had a power of inflicting such a punishment, on persons found guilty of the things instanced in; or that it was required they should do this to themselves; but such rules were delivered in such language, to show the heinousness of the crimes committed, to express an abhorrence of them {g}, and to deter persons from them; and to show, as the gloss {h} on one place observes, that it is better that the hand be cut off; or it should be more eligible to the person himself, to have it cut off, than to be guilty of such evil: and in like manner, Christ there and here, directs to what is most proper and fit to be done; even to part with what is ever so near and dear, rather than be drawn into evil by it: and his sense in this place is, that the dearest friends and acquaintance, or be they what they will, though ever so near and dear, like a right hand, the instrument of action, that obstruct the spiritual welfare of men, are to be renounced and parted with, and treated as real enemies, and of the most pernicious consequence;
See Gill on "Mt 5:29",
See Gill on "Mt 5:30".

It is better for thee to enter into life maimed: not that there will be any such thing, as upon the resurrection, going into heaven without a limb; for the words are to be understood, not literally, but figuratively; and the sense is, it is better to part with every thing here, that is detrimental to a man's doing, or enjoying, what is spiritually good, and enter into eternal life,

than having two hands, to go into hell; than by enjoying such persons and things, agreeable to the flesh, to the ruin of the soul, and be cast into hell;

into the fire that never shall be quenched. This is a periphrasis of hell, and is an allusion to the valley of Hinnom, from whence hell has its name, here and elsewhere; where a constant fire was kept, for the burning of polluted things: one of the Jewish writers says {i}, that it

"was a place in the land near to Jerusalem, and was a place contemptible: where they cast things defiled, and carcasses; and there was there, dymt va, "a continual fire", to burn polluted things and bones; and therefore the condemnation of the wicked, in a parabolical way, is called "Gehinnom"."

And says another of them {k},

"Gehinnom is a place known, near to Jerusalem, and a valley, tybkn vah Nyav, "whose fire is never quenched"; and in which they burn bones of defilement, and carcasses, and other polluted things."

This whole clause is left out in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; and the phrase, "that never shall be quenched", is not in the Arabic version.

{g} Maimonides in Misn. Nidda, c. 2. sect. 1. {h} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 108. 2. {i} Kimchi in Psal. xxvii. 13. {k} R. Isaac Saugari, Sepher Cosri, fol. 57. 2.

Mark 9:44

Ver. 44. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. The passage referred to, is in Isa 66:24, and as there, the words are spoken of such, as transgressed against the Lord; so here, of such as offended any of Christ's little ones, or were offended by an hand, a foot, or eye, and retained them: by their worm is meant, their conscience; for as a worm that is continually gnawing upon the entrails of a man, gives him exquisite pain; so the consciences of sinners, will be continually flying in their faces, bringing their sins to remembrance, accusing them of them, upbraiding them with them, aggravating them, tormenting them for them, filling them with dreadful anguish and misery, with twinging remorses, and severe reflections, and which will never have an end. This will be always the case; conscience will be ever distressing, racking, and torturing them; it will never cease, nor cease doing this office, and so the Chaldee paraphrase of Isa 66:24 renders this phrase,
Nwtwmy al Nwhtmvn, "their souls shall not die"; but shall ever continue in the dreadful torments and unspeakable horrors of a corroding conscience; and by "the fire" may be meant the fire of divine wrath let into their souls, which will never be extinguished; and so Jarchi interprets the phrase in Isa 66:24, "their fire",
Mnhygb, "in hell". It is a tradition of the Jews {l}, that the light, fire, which God created on the second day, "there is no quenching it for ever"; as it is said, "for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched", Isa 66:24, the passage which is here referred to; the reason they give is, because it is the fire of hell; the sense of which is sometimes given by the Jewish doctors thus {m}; "their worm shall not die" from the body, "and the fire shall not be quenched" from the soul.

{l} T. Bab. Pesachim. fol. 54. 1. & Gloss. in ib. {m} Zohar in Exod. fol. 62. 3.

Mark 9:45

Ver. 45. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off,.... Such who are that to men, as the foot is to the body, the support of them through whom they have their maintenance and subsistence; and yet these, if they are a means of causing them to stumble and tail, or of leading out of the ways of Christ, and off from him, their company is to be shunned and abstained from;

it is better for thee to enter halt into life. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "eternal life", which is undoubtedly intended by "life"; and so reads the Cambridge copy of Beza's; and the meaning is, that it is better to go alone without such company into heaven,

than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; See Gill on "Mr 9:44".

Mark 9:46

Ver. 46. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. The Persic version renders it, "because from thence there can be no deliverance": which is rather an interpretation of these figurative expressions, and is a good one; since they design the eternity of hell torments, as well as point at the anguish and misery of them.

Mark 9:47

Ver. 47. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out,.... Than which, nothing is dearer to man, it being very tender, and exceeding useful: this metaphor the Lord sometimes makes use of, to show how dear his people are unto him, and what a tender concern he has for them, De 32:10. And here it may design such, as are most beloved by men, and are their most intimate acquaintance, and bosom friends; and yet these are to be parted with, when they prove snares and stumbling blocks, or give offence, by endeavouring to draw into sin, and from Christ:

it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye; that kingdom, which God has prepared for his people, from the foundation of the world, and of his rich grace, gives unto them, and in which they will enjoy him to all eternity;

than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire. In the two instances before it is added, "that never shall be quenched".

Mark 9:48

Ver. 48. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. This is repeated again, not only to assure the truth of the thing, but to raise the attention of the mind unto it, and fix an awful impression upon it: the Persic version renders it, "from whence thou shall never find redemption": there is no redemption from hell, as Origen and others have thought.

Mark 9:49

Ver. 49. For every one shall be salted with fire,.... That is every one of those that transgress the law of God, offend any that, believe in Christ, retain their sins, and sinful companions; every one of them that are cast into hell, where the worm of conscience is always gnawing, and the fire of divine wrath is always burning, with that fire every one of them shall be salted: that fire shall be to them, what salt is to flesh; as that keeps flesh from putrefaction and corruption, so the fire of hell, as it will burn, torture, and distress rebellious sinners, it will preserve them in their beings; they shall not be consumed by it, but continued in it: so that these words are a reason of the former, showing and proving, that the soul in torment shall never die, or lose any of its powers and faculties; and particularly, not its gnawing, torturing conscience; and that the fire of hell is inextinguishable; for though sinners will be inexpressibly tormented in it, they will not be consumed by it; but the smoke of their torments shall ascend for ever and ever; and that they will be so far from being annihilated by the fire of hell, that they shall be preserved in their beings in it, as flesh is preserved by salt:

and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt; referring to **Le 2:13**. "With all thine offerings thou shall offer salt"; not only the meat offerings, but the burnt offerings, and all others, were to be offered with salt {n}; of which, the Jews say the following things {o}:

"It is an affirmative precept to salt all the sacrifices, before they go up to the altar, as it is said, **Le 2:13**. With all thine offerings thou shall offer salt; and there is nothing brought to the altar without salt, except the wine of drink offerings, and blood, and wood; and this thing is a tradition, and there is no Scripture to support it; and the commandment is to salt the flesh very well, as one salts flesh for roasting, who turns the part, and salts it; though if he salts the whole, with even one grain of salt, it is right; he that offers without any salt at all, is to be beaten; as it is said, "thou shall not suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking": and though he is to be beaten, the offering is right, and acceptable, except the meat offering.--The salt, with which they salt all the sacrifices, is from the congregation, as the wood; and a private person does not bring salt, or wood, for his offering, from his own house: and in three places {p} they put on salt, in the chamber of salt, and upon the ascent of the altar, and upon the top of the altar: in the chamber of salt they salt the skins of the holy things; and upon the ascent of the altar they salt the parts (of the sacrifice); and upon the top of the altar they salt the handful, and the frankincense and the meat offerings, that are burnt, and the burnt offerings of fowls."

Something of this kind also obtained among the Heathens, who thought their sacrifices were not rightly offered, nor acceptable to God, unless salt was used with them {q}. Now our Lord in this has either respect to the same persons, as before; and signifies hereby, that the wicked in hell shall be victims to divine justice, and sacrifices to his wrath and vengeance; and that as the sacrifices under the law were salted with salt, these shall be salted with the fire of hell, and shall never be utterly destroyed; but shall ever remain the objects of God's sore displeasure; and fiery indignation: or he may have respect to a different sort of persons, even to the saints and people of God, who are an holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice to him; and in the prophecy referred to in the context, Isa 66:20, they are said to be brought for "an offering to the Lord--as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord": and so as the sacrifices of the Jews were salted with salt, and became acceptable to God; such who are seasoned with the grace of God, are preserved from the corruptions of the world, are acceptable in the sight of God, and are kept safe to his kingdom and glory.

{n} Piske Toseph. Ceritot, c. 1. art. 3. {o} Maimon. Hilch. Issure Mizbeach, c. 5. sect. 11, 12, 13. Vid. ib. in Misn. Menachot, c. 3. sect. 2. {p} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 21. 2. & Baal Hatturim in Lev ii. 13. {q} Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 2. p. 568, 569. & in l. 12. p. 1751. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 17.

Mark 9:50

Ver. 50. Salt is good,.... To make meat savoury, and keep flesh from

corrupting; and so is the grace of God, to season men's hearts, make their discourse savoury, and preserve them from the corruption of sin: and so men made partakers of the grace of God; they are good and useful to others, both by their words and actions, and especially ministers of the Gospel, who are "the salt of the earth",
See Gill on "Mt 5:13"; and here Christ may chiefly intend his apostles:

but if the salt hath lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it? there is no recovering it, it becomes good for nothing;
See Gill on "Mt 5:13";

have salt in yourselves; the doctrine of grace, and word of Christ, prudence in talk and conversation, and holiness of heart and life, so as to behave wisely towards them that are without;

and have peace one with another; which the God of peace calls unto, the Gospel of peace requires, and the grace of God teaches. Salt is an emblem of firm union, concord, and agreement: hence the covenant of peace is called a covenant of salt, Nu 18:19, compared with
Nu 25:12. This exhortation, very appropriately follows upon the making mention of salt in different senses; especially, this exhortation was the more necessary to the disciples at this time, since they had been very lately warmly disputing the point among themselves, who should be greatest in the kingdom of the Messiah; and which had occasioned this discourse of Christ's.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 10:1

Ver. 1. And he arose from thence,.... From Galilee, and particularly from Capernaum:

and cometh into the coasts of Judea; into those places, which bordered on that part of the land of Israel, called Judea, as distinct from Galilee:

by, or rather "to"

the further side of Jordan; which he crossed at the bridge of Chammath: the particular place he came to was Bethabara; see Joh 10:40: where John formerly preached, and baptized:

and the people resorted unto him again; great multitudes followed him out of Galilee, and more doubtless flocked to him from the adjacent parts, when they heard of his coming again to them.

And, as he was wont, he taught them again: it had been his custom before, and so it was wherever he went, to preach the word of God, and teach men what was profitable to them, and useful for the good of their immortal souls; and so he did now, and here: and not only so, but healed many of them of their bodily disorders, as Matthew relates, Mt 19:2.

Mark 10:2

Ver. 2. And the: Pharisees came unto him,.... As they every where did; not to be instructed by him, but to ensnare him;

and asked him, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? that is, as Matthew adds, "for every cause", See Gill on "Mt 19:3": for, a divorce might be lawfully made for a cause, or reason, namely, adultery, but not for any, or every cause; which is the sense of this question of the Pharisees; and, which they put, not for information, but

tempting him; trying to entangle him by opposing the authority of Moses, should he deny the lawfulness of divorces, or by objecting his former doctrine, **Mt 5:32**, and so expose him as an inconsistent preacher, should he allow them to be lawful for every reason. This clause is placed in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions before the question.

Mark 10:3

Ver. 3. And he answered and said unto them,.... Very prudently and wisely,

what did Moses command you? according to Matthew, he put another question to them; see Mt 19:4; no doubt but both were put, and this after they had urged the authority and law of Moses: and therefore be very pertinently asks them, what Moses had said about divorces, what law he had left; and puts them upon producing and repeating it, that the sense of it might be examined, and it be considered, upon what account it was given.

Mark 10:4

Ver. 4. And they said,.... By way of reply,

Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away, Moses did not command them to divorce their wives, only suffered them to do so: and gave orders that if they could not bear that they should live with them, but would divorce them, that they should give them a bill, which should certify, they were so divorced, and then send them out of their houses, free to marry other men; this law, or permission, is in De 24:1, of the form of a bill of divorcement,
See Gill on "Mt 5:31".

Mark 10:5

Ver. 5. And Jesus answered and said unto them,.... With respect to this command, or sufferance of Moses, which they urged:

for the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept; it was, not because it was right in its own nature, or according to the original will of God; but, because the Jews were such cruel, and hard hearted men, that if this had not been permitted, some of them, that had wives not so agreeable to them, would have used them in a very inhuman manner, if not murdered them; and therefore to prevent further, and greater mischief, Moses indulged them with such a precept; See Gill on "Mt 19:8".

Mark 10:6

Ver. 6. But from the beginning of the creation,.... Of the world, or of man: Mlwe lv wtyyrb tlxtm, "from the beginning of the creation of the world", is a way of speaking often used by the Jews {r}: the phrase "of the creation" is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions; and so it was in Beza's most ancient copy, and it is only read, "from the beginning", as in Mt 19:4,8, See Gill on "Mt 19:4",
See Gill on "Mt 19:8".

God made them male and female; the first that were created, Adam and Eve, the first parents of mankind, the first couple that came together were one male and one female; so that there could be no polygamy or divorce: Adam could not have more wives than one: nor could he put away Eve, and marry another; no provision was made for any such usages and practices; See Gill on "Mt 19:4". In the Complutensian edition, it is added, "and said", the following words.

{r} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 3. fol. 2. 3. & sect. 4. fol. 4. 1.

Mark 10:7

Ver. 7. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother,.... The Persic version adds, "and brethren and sisters", though without any foundation in the original text, in **Ge 2:24**, from whence this passage is cited; or in any copy of the evangelist:

and cleave to his wife; See Gill on "Mt 19:5".

Mark 10:8

Ver. 8. And the twain shall be one flesh,.... This is the remaining part of the citation out of **Ge 2:24**;
See Gill on "Mt 19:5";

so then they are no more twain; but one flesh; as Adam and Eve were both by creation and marriage: and so two persons, a man and woman, being lawfully married together, become one flesh, or "one body", as the Arabic and Persic versions render the phrase; and therefore the wife is to be loved by the husband as his own body, and from whom there should be no separation, until death, but in case of adultery;
See Gill on "Mt 19:6".

Mark 10:9

Ver. 9. What therefore God hath joined together,....
See Gill on "Mt 19:6".

Mark 10:10

Ver. 10. And in the house,.... To which Christ retired, after he had put the Pharisees to silence, and dismissed the multitude:

his disciples asked him again of the same matter; concerning the affair of divorces, be bad been discoursing with the Pharisees about; some things being said, they had not been used to, and which they did not thoroughly understand; and therefore chose privately to converse with him on this subject, for their further information.

Mark 10:11

Ver. 11. And he saith unto them,.... The same things as in Mt 5:32, 19:9; See Gill on "Mt 5:32",
See Gill on "Mt 19:9":

whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another; when there is no uncleanness in the case; when his former wile has not injured him by violating the marriage bed:

committeth adultery against her; to the injury of his lawful wife; or "upon her", or "with her", with the person he marries. The Syriac and Persic versions leave out the phrase, "against her".

Mark 10:12

Ver. 12. And if a woman shall put away her husband,.... Not that there was the same law, or the same sufferance by the law of Moses, for a woman to put away her husband, as for the husband to put away the wife; nor was it practised among the Jews, unless it came to be in use about this time, in their declining state, having taken it from the Gentiles; of whom they say {s}, that

"they divorce one another: says R. Jochanan, wtvrgm wtva, "his wife divorces him", and gives him the dowry."

So Salome, the sister of Herod the Great, sent a bill of divorce to her husband Costobarus; and in this she was followed by Herodias, the daughter of Aristobulus, as Josephus {t} relates; and which his own wife also did. And by such examples the practice might prevail among the Jews: and we have a story told {u} us of a holy man, and a holy yeoman, who were married, and had no children, hz ta hz wvrgw, "and they divorced one another"; and the one went and married a wicked woman, and she made him wicked; and the other went and married a wicked man, and she made him righteous but I do not find that this practice was approved, or established by any rule, or canon. They allow {w} indeed a woman to write her husband's divorce of her, with proper witnesses; and they also oblige one, that was espoused in her minority, and refuses her husband, when adult, to write a bill of refusal; the form of that, and the rules about it, take as follow {x}:

"they do not allow one to marry a minor; he that marries a minor that is fatherless, and she is not pleased with her husband, lo! she may refuse, and go away, and she has no need of a divorce from him, because the espousals of a minor are not perfect espousals, as we have explained: and so a minor, whom her father marries, and she becomes a widow, or is divorced whilst she is a minor, lo! she is as one fatherless, in, her father's life time; and if she marries whilst she is a minor, she may refuse--how does she refuse? she says before two witnesses, I do not like such an one my husband; or I do not like the espousals with which my father, or my brother, espoused me; and such like words.--The two, before whom the minor refuses, write for her; on such a day, such an one, the daughter of such an one, refused, before us, such an one her husband; and they seal, and give it to her: and this is the body, or substance of a bill of refusal--in such a week, on such a day of the month, in such a year, such an one, the daughter of such an one, refused before us, and said, that my mother, or my brother, forced me, and married me, or espoused me, and I, a minor, to such an one, the son of such an one; and now I reveal my mind before you, that I do not like him, and I will not abide with him: and we have searched such an one; and this is manifest to us, that she is yet a minor, and we have written, and sealed, and have given this to her, for her justification, and a clear proof;"

"Such an one, the son of such an one, witness. Such an one, the son of such an one, witness."

And such a writing was called, Nwaym jg, "a bill of refusal", and sometimes Nynwaym yrjv, "letters of refusal" {y}, but a bill of divorcement given by a married woman to her husband, I have not met with. Justin Martyr speaks {z} of a Christian woman that, repoudion
dousa, "gave a bill of divorce" to her husband: such things, therefore, have been done, and might be done in Christ's time, to which he refers; and concerning which he says, that if a woman do so,

and be married to another, she committeth adultery; with the man she marries, and against, and to the injury of her former husband, unjustly left by her.

{s} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 18. fol. 15. 3. {t} Antiqu. l. 15. c. 11. & 18. 7. {u}

Bercshit Rabba, sect. 17. fol. 14. 4. {w} Misn. Edict. c, 2. sect. 3. {x} Maimon. Hilch. Gerushim, c. 11. sect. 1, 8, 9, 11. {y} Misn. Bava Metzta, c. 1. sect. 8. {z} Apolog. 1. p 42. Yid. Euscb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 17.

Mark 10:13

Ver. 13. And they brought young children to him,.... The parents, or friends, or nurses of the children in those parts, having heard of the fame of Jesus; and having entertained an high opinion of him, as a great prophet, and a holy, good man, brought their children in their arms, or hands,

that he should touch them; as he did when he healed diseased persons, as these might be, though not expressed:

and [his] disciples rebuked those that brought [them];
See Gill on "Mt 19:13".

Mark 10:14

Ver. 14. But when Jesus saw it,.... Observed that his disciples reproved those that brought their children to, him,

he was much displeased; with his disciples, who took too much upon them; for they ought first, to have known their master's will; whether it was his pleasure to grant the favour desired for these children, and not to have forbid them of themselves:

and said unto them; the disciples, as the Persic version reads:

suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God; or "of them who" are, Nylh Kya, "as these", as the Syriac version, renders the words; or, as the Arabic, who "are like to these"; and the Persic, who are "like to these little children"; in innocence and humility; See Gill on "Mt 19:14".

Mark 10:15

Ver. 15. Verily I say, unto you,.... A form of speech used when our Lord was about to asseverate a thing, and assert something of moment and importance, and which he would have attended to.

Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God; the Gospel, and the mysteries of it:

as a little child; laying aside all pride and prejudice, attending thereunto with humility and meekness:

he shall not enter therein; he shall attain to no true spiritual knowledge of the Gospel; nor should he be admitted into a Gospel church state, and to the ordinances of it.

Mark 10:16

Ver. 16. And he took them up in his arms,.... "Upon his arms", the Syriac version says; "he put them into his bosom", according to the Ethiopic; and the Persic renders it, "he took them into his bosom": all which expresses great tenderness towards them, and affection for them:

put his hands upon them, and blessed them. The Ethiopic version transposes these clauses, and puts blessing first, contrary to the natural order of the words, and things; for he first put his hands on the children, according to the custom of the Jews, and then prayed over them, and wished all happiness and prosperity to them;
See Gill on "Mt 19:15".

Mark 10:17

Ver. 17. And when he was gone forth into the way,.... For when he had blessed the children he departed from the coasts of Judea, on the further side of Jordan, and steered his course towards Jerusalem, Mr 10:32, and as he was on the road thitherwards,

there came one running; a young man, a ruler among the Jews, and very rich, a person of great dignity, and large substance; he hearing that Christ was going from those parts, ran in great haste to him, to have some conversation with him, before he was entirely gone;

and kneeled to him; as a token of great respect and civility: some versions, as the Persic and Ethiopic, render it, "and worshipped him"; which must be understood not in a religious, but in a civil way: the words might be literally rendered, "and kneeled him"; and Dr. Lightfoot suspects, that more is meant than bending his knees to Christ; that he also might take hold of the knees of

Christ, and kiss them, as was usual with the Jewish Rabbins, and which he illustrates by several instances:

and asked him, good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? This man, though a young man, and also a rich man, was thoughtful of the world to come, and the life of it: he believed there was an eternal life after this state of things, and so was no Sadducee; but he had wrong notions about the way and manner of attaining it: he thought it was to be had by the works of the law, which shows him to be a Pharisee; whereas eternal life is the gift of God, through the Messiah, the person he now applied to, and who had the words of eternal life; and to a more proper person he could not have put the question, he being himself the way, the truth, and the life, or the true way to eternal life: and had he attended to his own words, which suggest, that eternal life is an inheritance, he might have learned, that it is not to be acquired by the industry and works of men; but, that it is the bequest of our heavenly Father to his children, and comes by will, by promise, and as a free gift; so that it is not of the law; nor are they that are of the law heirs of it, **Ro 4:14**;
See Gill on "Mt 19:16".

Mark 10:18

Ver. 18. And Jesus said unto him,.... The same as in Mt. 19:17,
See Gill on "Mt 19:17".

Why callest thou me good? This is said, not as denying that he was good, or as being angry with him for calling him so, but in order to lead this young man to a true knowledge of him, and his goodness, and even of his proper deity:

there is none good, but one, [that is], God; some render it, "but one God", as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and so the words are a proof of the unity of the divine being, and agree with **De 6:4**, but are not to be understood to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, who, with the Father, are the one God: nor do these words at all militate against the deity of Christ, or prove that he is not God, as the Jew objects {a}; seeing this is not to be understood of the person of the Father, in opposition to the Son and Spirit, who are equally good: nor does Christ, in these words, deny himself to be God, but rather tacitly suggests it; since he is good in the same sense in which God is good: in Matthew it is added, "but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments", Mt 19:17: this Christ said not as his sense, that the way to eternal life lies in keeping the commandments of the law; but he speaks in the language of the Pharisees, and of this man; and his view is, to bring him to a sense of the impossibility of obtaining eternal life by these things, as the sequel shows: wherefore the above Jew {b} has no reason to confront the followers of Jesus with this passage, as if it was a concession of his, that it is impossible any should be saved without keeping the commands of the law of Moses.

{a} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 19. p. 408. {b} Ib.

Mark 10:19

Ver. 19. Thou knowest the commandments,.... Which God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai; these the Jews taught their children; so that this young man might reasonably be thought to know what, and how many they were, though he was ignorant of the extent and spirituality of them;

do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honour thy father and mother. In which may be observed, that the strict order in which the commandments stood is not kept; the seventh commandment, "thou shalt not commit adultery", is set before the sixth, "thou shalt not kill"; though the Arabic version places them in their order; and the fifth command, "honour thy father and thy mother", is placed last of all: but a Jew has no reason to object to this, when it is a rule with them, that hrwtb rxwamw Mdqwm Nya {c}, there is no first nor last in the law; that is, order is not strictly attended to; but sometimes, that which is first is mentioned last, and the last first. There is one precept, "defraud not", wrong no man of his property, either by force or fraud, which none of the other evangelists have. Dr. Hammond, and others, think, that it is an explanation of the tenth command, "thou shalt not covet"; signifying, that a man should be so satisfied with his own condition, as not to desire another's goods, or, by any means, seek to lessen them to enlarge his own. A certain Jew {d} objects against our Lord Jesus, that he did not mention the other precepts in Ex 20:3, by which he seems to mean the precepts of the first table, which respect the unity of God, and his worship, which are of greater moment; to which may be replied, that our Lord does suggest the unity of the Divine Being, and his essential, infinite, and independent goodness, which are the ground and foundation of his fear and worship in the preceding verse; and besides, as Bishop Kidder observes {e}, nothing is more common than to put some precepts for the whole; see **Mic 6:8**; yea, that Jesus may be justified from the Old Testament in this method, as from Ps 15:1, where a question, very like this of the young man, is put; and yet in answer to it we find nothing mentioned but obedience to the second table: to which reply of the learned prelate, may be added, that Christ instances in the commandments of the second table, as being more known, and better understood by this young man; "thou knowest the commandments"; that is, the following ones he mentions: and besides the argument runs strong from the lesser to the greater, which is implied, that if the commands of the second table, which respect the neighbour, are necessary to be observed, then much more those which concern God himself; and if men fail short in keeping the lesser commands, it can hardly be thought they should be perfect in the observance of greater ones; and so consequently, and which is our Lord's drift, eternal life is never to be obtained by the works of the law.

{c} T. Bab. Yesachim, fol. 6. 2. {d} R. Jacob Aben Amram, Porta Verit. num. 1026. Apud Kidder's Demonstr. of the Messiah, par. 3. p. 50. {e} Demonstrat. ib. p. 50, 51.

Mark 10:20

Ver. 20. And he answered and, said unto him,.... With a great deal of pertness,

master, all these have I observed from my youth;
See Gill on "Mt 19:20". In a certain copy, Beza says, it is added, as there, "what lack I yet?" and so in one of Stephens's copies.

Mark 10:21

Ver. 21. Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him,.... Not as God, with that special love, with which he loves his people, who were given him by the Father, are redeemed by his blood, whom he calls by his grace, justifies by his righteousness, forgives their iniquities, and, at last, glorifies: but as man, he had an human affection for him; so far as there was any appearance of moral good in him, it was agreeable to him, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; and though the young man betrayed much vanity, pride, and conceit, he did not use him roughly, but kindly, and tenderly; he beheld him, he looked wistly upon him, when he said the above words; which look intimated, that he could not believe he had perfectly, and completely kept all the commandments; however, he did not choose to reproach him with a lie, and charge him with pride and arrogance, but gave him good words, and spoke friendly to him; and, as far as he could, commended him for his diligence in observing the commands: in this sense the word is observed to be used by the Septuagint interpreters, as when it is said of Ahab, 2Ch 18:2, that he "persuaded him" (Jehoshaphat), they render it, hgapa, "he loved him to go up to Ramoth Gilead": he gave him good words, he spake friendly to him, and by fair speeches prevailed upon him: and so when it said of the Israelites, Ps 78:36; "they did flatter him", (God,) they render it, hgaphsan, "they loved him with their mouth"; spoke very well to him, and of him, praised him, and his works, and in this way expressed affection to him, though it was only with their mouths. Moreover, Christ might not only speak kindly to this young man, but he might make use of some external gesture: which showed an human affection to him, and respect for him. Dr, Lightfoot conjectures it might be by kissing his head, which might be conveniently done, as he was now on his knees; and since this was frequently used by the Jewish doctors, as an expression of respect, of which he gives various instances; and more might be added, especially out of the book of Zohar, where we often read of one Rabbi kissing the head or another, or of his pupil. But the sense of this phrase, which pleases me best of all, is what may be collected from the use of it among the "seventy" interpreters, who often render the Hebrew Mxr, which signifies to "have compassion", or "show pity", by the word here used: so Pr 28:13, "whoso confesseth and forsaketh, shall have mercy", they interpret agaphyhsetai, "shall be loved" and **Ho 2:23**, "I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy", they render agaphsw, "l will love her that was not beloved"; once more, Zec 10:6. "I will bring them again to place them, for I have mercy upon them", they translate oti hgaphsa autouv, "because I have loved them"; see also Isa 60:10 and then, according to this use of the word, the sense is, that Jesus looked upon him when he expressed himself in such a pert manner, and had a compassionate concern for him; he pitied him for his ignorance of the law, in its spirituality and large extent; for his pride and vanity, his conceit of, and glorying in himself: wherefore, in order to mortify him, and abate these swelling thoughts of himself;

he said unto him, one thing thou lackest; before which last clause the Ethiopic version puts this, "if thou wilt be perfect", out of Mt 19:21, see the note there: and the Coptic version, and two of Stephens's copies read it before the following,

go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me. This young man's reigning sin seems to have been an overweening affection for the things of this world; his riches were his idol, on which his heart was set, and in which he trusted: wherefore he was so far from keeping all the commandments, that he had not kept the first; "thou shalt have no other gods before me": there was more than one thing wanting in him, but Christ takes notice of this as the first; and there was no need to mention any other; this touched him sensibly, and fully tried, and sufficiently exposed the vanity of his

boasted perfection. That clause, "take up the cross", is omitted in the Vulgate Latin version, as it is not mentioned by Matthew. The Ethiopic version reads it, "the cross of thy death", and places it before, "come and follow me"; as do also the Syriac and Persic versions; but the Arabic reads it last of all;
See Gill on "Mt 19:21".

Mark 10:22

Ver. 22. And, he was sad at that saying,.... That he lacked one thing, and especially that he should be bid to sell all that he had, and give it away; and what might add to his sadness is, that he must take up the cross of reproach, affliction, persecution, and death; his countenance fell upon this,

and went away grieved: finding that he must part with two things his heart was set upon, his idol of self-righteousness, and his mammon of unrighteousness; the bladder of his pride was pricked, and his vanity and self-conceit were exposed; and he was called upon to part with his substance; all which were sadly mortifying, and exceedingly disagreeable to him:

for he had great possessions; See Gill on "Mt 19:22".

Mark 10:23

Ver. 23. And Jesus looked round about,.... To see what effect the discourse he had with the young man, and the consequence of it, had upon his disciples; as also to raise their attention to what he was about, to say:

and saith unto his disciples, how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! the Gospel dispensation, by embracing the doctrines, and submitting to the ordinances of it;
See Gill on "Mt 19:23".

Mark 10:24

Ver. 24. And the disciples were astonished at his words,.... For they expected, in a little while, that the kingdom of the Messiah would be set up in great worldly pomp and grandeur; and that all the rich men of the nation would come into it, become his subjects, and join to support the glory and splendour of it:

but Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, children: it was common with the Jews to call the disciples, or scholars of the wise men, "children"; hence that saying of theirs {f}, Mynb Mywrq Mydymlth, "the disciples are called children", which they prove from **2Ki 2:3** **Isa 8:18**.

How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! This he said partly to confirm what he had before said, at which his disciples were astonished; and partly to explain it, as that he was to be understood of such that trusted in their riches, set their hearts upon them, and placed their hope and happiness in them: and the great difficulty, or rather impossibility of such, at least continuing so, entering into the kingdom of God, is still more strongly expressed in the following words.

{f} Maimon. Hilch. Talmud Tora, c. 1. sect. 2. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 12. Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 36. 4. & Vajikra Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 154. 4.

Mark 10:25

Ver. 25. It is easier for a camel,.... See Gill on "Mt 19:24".

Mark 10:26

Ver. 26. And they were astonished out of measure,.... They were still more amazed, their surprise increased exceedingly upon our Lord's using the above comparison; which, in their apprehension, showed, that it was utterly impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God; and they expressed their astonishment,

saying, among themselves, who then can be saved? in the Messiah's kingdom, if rich men are not? See Gill on "Mt 19:25". The Persic version renders it, "how can this man be saved?" as if the words had a particular respect to the young man, that had great possessions, and was gone away sorrowful.

Mark 10:27

Ver. 27. And Jesus, looking upon them,.... And by their countenances saw the surprise and anxiety of mind they were in, as well as by his omniscience, knew their private reasonings among themselves:

saith, with men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible; even to reduce a camel to so small a size, as to go through the eye of a needle; and to work upon a rich man's heart, so as to take him off of his trust and confidence in his worldly riches, and bring him to a compliance with his will, and into his kingdom; and also to protect, and save his poor and mean followers, notwithstanding all the difficulties, dangers, and oppositions they meet with; See Gill on "Mt 19:26".

Mark 10:28

Ver. 28. Then Peter began to say unto him,.... only observing that Christ promised treasure in heaven to the young man, provided he sold all that he had, and gave it to the poor; but being, in some measure, freed from that surprise and astonishment, which had seized him, and his fellow disciples, at the representation of the difficulty of a rich man's entering into the kingdom of God, by the last words; and taking heart from thence, began to take notice of the following case, as an instance and illustration of what Christ had said; for that same power, which had caused them to quit all their worldly substance for Christ, though it was but small, could also work a like effect upon the heart of a man ever so rich:

lo! we have left all, and have followed thee: in Matthew it is added, "what shall we have therefore?" See Gill on "Mt 19:27".

Mark 10:29

Ver. 29. And Jesus answered and said, verily I say unto you,.... This evangelist omits what Matthew relates; that whereas Peter, and his fellow disciples had followed Christ in the present time, hereafter when he appeared in his glory, they should sit upon twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel; see Mt 19:28, and where it is added to the same sense as here;

there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sister, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the Gospel's; for the sake of preaching, or professing Christ, and his Gospel. The word "wife" is left out in the Vulgate Latin version, perhaps because it is not repeated in the following verse; but all copies, and other versions have it; See Gill on "Mt 19:29".

Mark 10:30

Ver. 30. But he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time,.... Not that he should have an hundred houses, brethren, &c. but that he should enjoy that even in this present life, which was an hundred times better than any of the things mentioned; namely,

houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands; See Gill on "Mt 19:29" it is added here,

with persecutions. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read in the singular, "with persecution"; signifying that this must be expected amidst the greatest happiness, and highest enjoyments of this life; though often even that which the saints enjoy, whilst they are, in the severest manner, persecuted for Christ, is an hundred times better than, yea, infinitely above, all that they part with, or lose for his sake; and so is an ample compensation for all: and yet this is not all they shall have; for it follows,

and in the world to come eternal life: so that they will be doubly recompensed; once in this life, and again in the other world: in the Targum on **So 8:7** is a passage somewhat like this, where the Lord of the world is represented saying;

"if a man will give all the substance of his house to obtain wisdom in the captivity, I will return unto him,
ytad amlel lwpk, "double in the world to come"."

Mark 10:31

Ver. 31. But many that are first shall be last,....
See Gill on "Mt 19:30".

Mark 10:32

Ver. 32. And they were in the way,.... Upon the road, having left the coasts of Judea on the further side of Jordan:

going up to Jerusalem; to the passover there, which was to be in a short time, and where Christ was to suffer and die; for this was the last journey he took, and the last passover he was to eat there:

and Jesus went before them; as their forerunner, their guide and leader, with unconcernedness and intrepidity; though he knew what would befall him, and what designs were forming against him: and this he did to inspire his disciples with courage, and to leave them an example that they should tread in his steps:

and they were amazed; at his readiness to go up to Jerusalem, and the cheerful Spirit he discovered, when he had so many, and such powerful enemies at that place, in going to which he exposed himself to the greatest dangers.

And as they followed; for they did not choose to leave him, but were determined to continue with him at all events, though

they were afraid; what would be the consequence of it to themselves, as well as to him; for they being his followers, could not expect any other than ill usage from his enemies.

And he took again the twelve; the disciples, as he had done before, **Mr 8:31**,

and began to tell them what things should happen unto him; being what were determined by God, agreed unto by himself, and foretold in the Scriptures; for these were not casual and contingent events.

Mark 10:33

Ver. 33. [Saying], behold we go up to Jerusalem,.... They were now upon the road thither.

And the son of man; meaning himself,

shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the Scribes; by the determinate counsel, and foreknowledge of God, and by the means of a treacherous disciple of his, Judas. The Vulgate Latin version adds, "and to the elders"; but this is not in any of the copies, nor in other versions:

and they shall condemn him to death; as they did in the palace of the high priest, "nemine contradicente"; see Mr 14:64,

and shall deliver him to the Gentiles; the Romans, to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor; either because they had not then power to put him to death themselves, or because they were desirous he should die the death of the cross, a Roman punishment.

Mark 10:34

Ver. 34. And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him,.... The Gentiles, as the Roman soldiers did; the one at the connivance, and the other by the order of their governor:

and shall spit upon him; on his face, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it, and as they did; see Mr 15:19. This clause is placed by the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, between the two former; though, according to the order in which these things were executed, he was first scourged, then mocked, and then spit upon: all which express both the cruel and indecent usage he was to meet with:

and shall kill him, and the third day he shall rise again. The Persic version between these two clauses read, "and shall put him in a grave"; which is not in any copy of this text, nor in any other version; nor indeed was this done by the Gentiles, but by Joseph of Arimathea.

Mark 10:35

Ver. 35. And James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, came unto him,.... Along with their mother, who was their mouth, and spoke for them, and they by her:

saying, master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire: that is, we earnestly desire, that whereas we have a favour to ask of thee, that thou wouldst not deny us it, be it what it will; See Gill on "Mt 20:20".

Mark 10:36

Ver. 36. And he said unto them,.... And also to their mother, and to them by her, what

would ye that I should do for you? Christ insists upon their telling him the particular thing they wanted to have done for them, before he would give them any promise, though he knew very well what it was they were desirous of.

Mark 10:37

Ver. 37. They said unto him,.... By their mother, or seconding her motion:

grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory; or glorious kingdom, which they expected would be quickly set up; and which they might conclude from his having lately promised to all the twelve, that when he should sit on his throne, they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; and from his having just now mentioned his rising from the dead, which they might understand of some revival, or breaking forth of this glorious state; See Gill on "Mt 20:21".

Mark 10:38

Ver. 38. But Jesus said unto them,.... Not by granting them what they desired, but by observing their ignorance to them;

ye know not what ye ask: for sometimes good men are ignorant petitioners at the throne of grace; they are under the influence of their own spirits, and not the Spirit of God; they are prompted to ask things from a selfish principle, and not with a view to the glory of God, and their own spiritual welfare, and that of others: and indeed, the best of saints know not what they should pray for as they ought; and always stand in need of the help, assistance, and intercession of the Spirit of God; who is a Spirit of grace and supplication, and searches the deep things of God, and knows his mind and will, and what is suitable and convenient for his people; and whenever they pray without him, there is much darkness and ignorance in them, and in their petitions. In particular, these disciples knew not what they were asking for; they had no true notion of Christ's kingdom and glory, they were asking the chief places in; they were dreaming of worldly glory and grandeur, in which they imagined the kingdom of the Messiah would quickly appear: whereas his kingdom, in the present state of things, is not of this world, but of a spiritual nature; namely, the Gospel dispensation, which lies in the ministration of his word and ordinances, and in the distribution of his gifts and grace; and his kingdom and glory in the world to come, are things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard: they talked of things which would never be, either in Christ's kingdom, in earth or in heaven; fancying there would be posts of honour and profit, which some would be advanced to in it, signified by sitting at his right hand and left; whereas in the Gospel church state, the apostles, governors, and officers of the church were alike, and had no superiority over one another, but were all brethren, having one master, Christ; and the members of the churches are of the same body, and members one of another; and in the ultimate glory, there will be no degrees, but all the saints will share the same happiness:

can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? Which Christ speaks of in the present time, partly because his sorrows and sufferings were already begun: he had already been drinking of the cup of sorrows, being a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs, all his days; and he was wading in the waters of affliction, though as yet they were not come into his soul, and he as it were immersed in them; he was not yet baptized with the bloody baptism he came into this world for, and he was desirous of, Lu 12:50, and partly because of the certainty of these things, the cup was not to pass from him, and the baptism of his sufferings was to be surely accomplished; See Gill on "Mt 20:22".

Mark 10:39

Ver. 39. And they said unto him we can,.... That is, drink of Christ's cup and be baptized with his baptism which is another instance of their ignorance; for as they knew not the glorious state of things and the nature of it they desired places in so they were unacquainted with themselves; they were ignorant of their own weakness as well as of the greatness of the sufferings Christ should endure or even they should be called unto: had they had a just notion of either, they would not have expressed themselves in this manner without any mention of the grace of God or any dependence on the strength of Christ; See Gill on "Mt 20:22".

And Jesus said unto them, ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized; meaning, not that they should undergo the same sufferings he did and much less for the same end and purpose: he trod the winepress alone and bore the whole punishment due to the sins of his people himself; and of them there were none with him to take a part: but that they should endure sufferings in some sort like to his for his sake as they both afterwards did; See Gill on "Mt 20:23".

Mark 10:40

Ver. 40. But to sit on my right hand and on my left, is mine to give,.... There being no such places in his kingdom in the sense they petitioned; and as for the glories of the heavenly state or eternal life, the gift of these was not to be settled now it being done already: and though he had a power to give yet only to them who were given him of his Father and who were ordained to such happiness as it follows:

but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared; that is, of his Father as is expressed in Mt 20:23 which is not to be understood as excluding these two persons but as including all others with them for whom the kingdom was prepared before the foundation of the world: the Ethiopic version therefore wrongly renders the words "but to sit on my right hand and on my left, I do not give to you, it is prepared for other": the Jew {g} very badly concludes from hence against the deity of Christ and his unity with the Father he not having power to do this; whereas Christ does not say he had no power to give this honour, but only describes the persons to whom he should give it; and these being persons for whom it, is prepared by his Father instead of destroying, proves their unity.

{g} R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 20. p. 409.

Mark 10:41

Ver. 41. And when the ten heard it,.... The request made by the sons of Zebedee or their mother for them:

they began to be much displeased with James and John; Matthew says "they were moved with indignation against them", Mt 20:24; they were filled with, wrath and were very angry with them; which they showed in their countenances and by their behaviour towards them as well as by words: the Syriac and Arabic versions, render it, "they began to murmur against them"; they highly resented it and were ready to break out into an open quarrel upon it;
See Gill on "Mt 20:24".

Mark 10:42

Ver. 42. But Jesus called them to him,.... Who were at some little distance from him, though so nigh, that he could discern the heat and passion they were in, and knowing that they had the same ambitious views with the two brethren:

and saith unto them, to check their pride and vanity and reprove them for their ambitious desires of superiority and pre-eminence over, one another; by showing them that this was a part which the Heathens that knew not God acted and therefore was very unbecoming them:

you know that they which are accounted, or "seem to" or rather "do",

rule over the Gentiles; or are reckoned worthy of government who are, Mybwvx, men of honour, reputation, and esteem; who are either by birth or merit thought to be deserving of high places: these

exercise lordship over them; rule over them in a lordly tyrannical and arbitrary way:

and their great ones; their nobles and lords under them

exercise authority over them; the Gentiles; by a delegated power from those who have the supreme rule; See Gill on "Mt 20:25".

Mark 10:43

Ver. 43. But so shall it not be among you,.... Or "so let it not be", as in many copies; or as the Persic version renders it, "it ought not to be so among you"; such a lordly spirit does not become you; this is heathenish:

but whosoever will be great among you shall be, as in Matthew "let him", Mt 20:26, be

your minister. This was just the reverse of what the two disciples were seeking for; they were indeed for being ministers but then they were for being prime ministers of state; and would have had all the rest subject to them and attendants on them to be sent out and employed as they should think fit: whereas the only way to preferment and greatness in Christ's kingdom, or rather Gospel church state, is to labour, in the work, of the ministry more abundantly than others; to take great pains and endure great hardships in order to bring great glory to God, and do great good to the souls of men; See Gill on "Mt 20:26".

Mark 10:44

Ver. 44. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest,.... Is desirous of the highest place and the greatest honour

shall be servant of all: for the ministers of the Gospel are not only the servants of Christ Jesus, but also of the churches for his sake; and in serving them, they serve Christ: not that they are to be the servants of men and to take their instructions from them and act according to rules prescribed by them; or seek to please men for then they would not be the servants of Christ: but they become servants to all that they may win souls to Christ, and increase his churches, and enlarge his interest; and such as are most useful this way are the chiefest in the Gospel church state; they are honoured by Christ and esteemed by his people; See Gill on "Mt 20:27".

Mark 10:45

Ver. 45. For even the son of man,.... That is, Christ himself; a name by which he frequently goes both in the Old and New Testament to the arguments before produced, Christ adds his own example, to teach his disciples humility and lowliness of mind and to check their ambitious views and desires:

came not to be ministered unto: not but that he was ministered unto even by the angels of God; who ministered to him in the wilderness, after he had been tempted by Satan; and he was also ministered unto by some women out of their substance; but these show the low estate he was in to stand in need of such ministrations: here the sense is that he did not appear as an earthly prince, with a fine equipage, a large retinue and attendance,

but to minister; to be a servant, as he is in his mediatorial office and capacity: he was sent, and came as the servant of the Lord; and he ministered, in his prophetic office, the Gospel unto men; and went about in the form of a servant, doing good, ministering medicine both to the souls end bodies of men: but the great work he came about, was the work of man's redemption; which he willingly and cheerfully undertook, diligently and faithfully prosecuted, and has completely finished; to which respect is had in the next clause:

and to give his life a ransom for many; even for all the elect of God, to redeem them from sin, Satan, and the law; and secure them from the wrath of God, and eternal death; and this he has done, by laying down his life as the ransom price for them;
See Gill on "Mt 20:28".

Mark 10:46

Ver. 46. And they came to Jericho,.... Christ and his disciples, from the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan, in their way to Jerusalem; where Christ met with Zaccheus and converted him, and after some short stay at his house, departed thence;

and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples, and a great number of people: which followed him out of that city, to go with him to Jerusalem, being but ten miles off:

blind Bartimeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging; who was one of the two blind men Matthew makes mention of it,
See Gill on "Mt 20:30".

Mark 10:47

Ver. 47. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth,.... "That passed by", as reads the Persic version; which he might learn, by inquiring the meaning of such a multitude of people, and the noise; or he might hear his name frequently mentioned, and it said, that, he, was coming, or passing by:

he began to cry out; aloud, and with great vehemency, and often repeating it:

and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me: he did not call him Jesus of Nazareth, as the common people did, but Jesus, the son of David, a title of the Messiah; nor did he ask for money, but for mercy; See Gill on "Mt 20:30".

Mark 10:48

Ver. 48. And many charged him that he should hold his peace,.... And be silent, and not call him the son of David, at least; nor ask any thing of him:

but he cried the more a great deal: he lifted up his voice more loudly, and repeated the same words quicker and oftener, and with greater vehemency and importunity:

thou son of David, have mercy on me; See Gill on "Mt 20:31".

Mark 10:49

Ver. 49. And Jesus stood still,.... Hearing his voice, and knowing what charges and reproofs were given him to be silent:

and commanded him to be called and led and brought unto him: this order was given; either to his disciples, or to some of the multitude, probably the latter:

and they call the blind man, saying unto him, be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee; or "because he calleth thee", as the Arabic version renders it; suggesting, that some hopes might be conceived from thence, that something would be done in his favour. The Persic version renders it, "our master calleth thee", so that that interpreter thought, that the disciples were the persons that were ordered to call, and did call the blind man: the word "rise", is left out in the Persic and; Ethiopic versions. It may be observed from hence, that such whom Christ effectually calls by his grace, of which this instance is emblematical, have reason to be of good comfort; or that the effectual calling is a ground of comfort: called ones may take comfort from it, and be assured that they are loved by God; since it is a fruit, effect, and evidence, of God's everlasting love to them; and that they are the chosen of God, for, whom he did predestinate, he calls; and that they are Christ's, and are redeemed by him, seeing he has called them by name: and they may expect all good things from him; seeing they are called according to grace, given them in him before the world began; and are called to the participation of the blessings of grace; and it is affirmed that all things work together for their good: wherefore they may live in the faith of eternal glory and happiness; since they that are called, are justified, and shall be glorified.

Mark 10:50

Ver. 50. And he casting away his garment,.... His upper garment, and which no doubt was little worth; though this he did, that he might make the quicker dispatch to Christ:

rose; from off the bank, or ground, whereon he sat, in an instant: and "sprung up", as the Vulgate Latin, and Beza's ancient copy read, with great nimbleness, and in haste:

and came to Jesus; being led by the persons that were sent to call him. It may be observed from hence, that such who are effectually called by the grace of Christ, of which this man was an emblem, hate the garment spotted with the flesh; and: put off the old man, as to the former conversation, being called by an holy God, with an holy calling, to holiness in heart and life; and that by the Gospel, which teaches to deny sin, and live a holy conversation: and these also cast away the garment of their own righteousness, it being as fig leaves, a spider's web, filthy rags, and a beggarly robe, as this man's was; and come nakedly to Christ, for righteousness, and renounce their own in point of justification, that being an hinderance to their coming to him for his. The Gospel reveals a better righteousness to them than their own, more suitable to them, who are called from the dunghill, to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory; and then such rise in the strength of grace, and come forth to Christ, for righteousness, peace, pardon, life, and salvation.

Mark 10:51

Ver. 51. And Jesus answered and said unto him,.... Being come to him, and standing before him:

what wilt thou that I should do unto thee? What means this vehement cry? what is it thou designest by mercy? is it money thou askest for, to relieve thy wants? or is it that thy sight may be restored?

The blind man said unto him, Lord; "Rabboni", or, as the Syriac version reads it; "Rabbi"; thou, great master in Israel, and Lord, of the whole world, my request to thee, and which thou, art, able to effect; is,

that I might receive my sight; See Gill on "Mt 20:33".

Mark 10:52

Ver. 52. And Jesus said unto him, go thy way,.... The Syriac version reads, it, azx, "see"; receive thy sight, be it unto thee as thou dost desire; and which is the sense of, "go thy way": to to thine own house, or place of abode; and about thy business; thy request is granted:

thy faith hath made thee whole; or "saved thee"; and which respected not only the power of Christ in restoring his sight, but his faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the son of David: so that by Christ, the object of his faith, he was saved, both in soul and body; and had his spiritual sight, before he had his bodily sight, and both from Christ:

and immediately he received his sight; or saw again as well as ever he did, or as other men:

and followed Jesus in the way: that is, to Jerusalem. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read "him", instead of "Jesus"; but the Syriac and Persic versions read neither. This man was an emblem of the people of God, before, at, and after conversion: before conversion; for, as he was blind, so are they; they are without any spiritual sight and discerning of God, as in Christ, as the God of all grace, as their Covenant God and Father; and of themselves, being without any true sight of sin, or sense of their state and condition; and of Christ, and of the way of peace, life, and salvation by him, seeing no beauty in him, nor any need they stand in of him; and of the Spirit, of his person, grace, and operations, of the things of the Spirit, which they know not, because they are spiritually discerned: at conversion; when they receive their sight from Christ, as he did, are made light in the Lord, and become the children of the day; when the eyes of their understandings are enlightened, to see their sad and ruinous state, the pollution of their hearts, the sinfulness of their thoughts, as well as of their actions; the imperfection and insufficiency of their righteousness, to justify them before God; the loveliness of Christ, the fulness of his grace, and righteousness; the suitableness, ability, and willingness of him, as a Saviour; and that salvation by him, is all of free grace; and that eternal glory and happiness, is secured by him, for them. All which light they have, not from themselves, nor from any mere creature, but from Christ; and which they receive as a benefit and favour; they have it as a gift, and in a way of receiving; and that at once, suddenly, and immediately: and after conversion; for, as this man, when he had received his sight from Christ, followed him in the way; so the people of God, being enlightened by Christ, follow him as their leader and commander, as the captain of their salvation, as the shepherd of the flock, as their guide and forerunner, as their pattern and exemplar, and as the light of the world: him they follow and imitate, in the duties of morality, in the way of public instituted worship, and in Gospel ordinances; as baptism, and the Lord's supper; and to follow him in the way of duty, is safe, honourable, pleasant, comfortable, and profitable; it issues in good here, and if happiness hereafter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 11:1

Ver. 1. And when they came nigh to Jerusalem,.... The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "when he came nigh"; that is, Jesus; though not without his disciples, nor the multitude:

unto Bethphage and Bethany; two places so called, near Jerusalem: Bethphage began where Bethany ended, and reached to the city itself. The Vulgate Latin only makes mention of Bethany;
See Gill on "Mt 21:1".

At the Mount of Olives; near which, the above places were:

he sendeth forth two of his disciples; perhaps Peter and John.

Mark 11:2

Ver. 2. And saith unto them, go your way into the village,.... Either of Bethany or of Nob. The Ethiopic version renders it "the city", and so reads a copy of Stephens's: some have thought the city of Jerusalem is intended, but without any reason;
See Gill on "Mt 21:9";

over against you. The Syriac and Persic versions read, "over against us": the sense is the same; for Christ and his disciples were together: this suits with either of the above mentioned places:

and as soon as ye be entered into it; are come to the town's end, and to one of the first houses in it,

ye shall find a colt tied: Matthew says, "an ass tied, and a colt with her", Mt

21:2; both no doubt true:

whereon never man sat; which had never been backed and broke, and which makes it the more wonderful, that Christ should choose to ride upon it, and that that should quietly carry him:

loose him, and bring him; that is, away to me.

Mark 11:3

Ver. 3. And if any man say unto you,.... As very likely they would, and it would be strange if they should not say something to them, especially the owners of it:

why do ye this? Why do ye untie the ass, and attempt to carry it away, when it is none of your own, and it belongs to another man?

Say ye that the Lord hath need of him; our Lord and yours, the Lord of heaven and earth, and all things in it; it looks as if this title, "the Lord", was what Jesus was well known by; see Joh 11:28; unless it can be thought, that the owners of the colt were such, that believed in Christ, as is not improbable; and so would at once understand by the language who it was for, and let it go:

and straightway he will send him, hither; as soon as ever he hears that the Lord, by whom he would presently understand Jesus, wanted him for his present purpose; he will send him with all readiness and cheerfulness, without the least hesitation, or making any dispute about it.

Mark 11:4

Ver. 4. And they went their way,.... The two disciples went to the village, where Christ sent them, without objecting any difficulties that might present, in the execution of these orders:

and found the colt tied by the door without; in the street, fastened to the door of the owner's house, at the town's end:

in a place where two ways met; to go into and out of the village; at the corner house, where two ways met; so that the place was very public, and such an affair could not be transacted, without being seen:

and they loose him; as soon as ever they came to the place, they immediately began to untie the colt, and were going away with him.

Mark 11:5

Ver. 5. And certain of them that stood there,.... The Ethiopic version reads, who walked there; who were either standing hard by, or walking about the place, being inhabitants of it; and either the owners of the colt, or their servants, or both:

said unto them, what do ye loosing the colt? What do ye mean by it? do you intend to take the colt away? what business have you with it? what right have you to do so? and what is your end in it?

Mark 11:6

Ver. 6. And they said unto them,.... The very express words,

even as Jesus had commanded: not that these were the words they said, but "the Lord hath need of him": upon which they said no more, were satisfied and contented, that they should untie the colt, and take it with them:

and they let them go; and the colt with them, very freely;
See Gill on "Mt 21:6".

Mark 11:7

Ver. 7. And they brought the colt to Jesus,.... Where he was,

and cast their garments on him; their clothes to be instead of a saddle, for Christ to sit upon:

and he sat upon him; or "Jesus rode on him", as the Syriac version renders it. The Ethiopic version reads, "they made him to mount him"; that is, the disciples assisted him in getting upon it, and having mounted it, he sat on it without any trouble, though it had never been backed before, and rode on his

way to Jerusalem;
See Gill on "Mt 21:7".

Mark 11:8

Ver. 8. And many spread their garments in the way,.... Instead of carpets to ride on, and in honour to him as a king:

and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way; in token of joy, as at the feast of tabernacles;
See Gill on "Mt 21:8".

Mark 11:9

Ver. 9. And they that went before, and they that followed,.... They that came from Jerusalem to meet him, and they that followed him from Jericho and other parts; which two bodies, the one went before him, and the other followed after him: and

cried, saying, Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; See Gill on "Mt 21:9".

Mark 11:10

Ver. 10. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David,.... It was more usual with the Jews to call Abraham their father; but, because the Messiah was David's son, therefore, with respect to him, they here call him their father: and their meaning is, let the kingdom promised to our father David, and to his seed for ever,

that cometh in the name of the Lord; which is now coming, and appears in the auspicious reign and government of his son, the Messiah, who is clothed with majesty and authority; be prosperous and successful and be established, and endure for ever; to the glory and happiness of him as king, and of all the subjects of it. Unless the words should be rendered, as by their situation they may be, thus, "blessed be the kingdom that cometh in the name of the Lord, of our father David"; and the sense be, let the kingdom of the Messiah, which is now come, and is set up in his name, who, as God, is David s Lord, greatly flourish, and long continue; may its king be blessed, and all its subjects happy. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, leave out the clause, "in the name of the Lord"; it is also left out in Beza's ancient copy, and in another; but the Ethiopic version retains it, reading it "in the name of God". It is added,

Hosanna in the highest: See Gill on "Mt 21:9".

Mark 11:11

Ver. 11. And Jesus entered into Jerusalem,.... this public manner, riding upon an ass, with the multitude attending hin, some going before, and others after, crying, "Hosanna" to him:

and into the temple; which he rode up directly to; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the copulative "and"; his great concern being there; and having dismounted, and dismissed the colt, and sent it by proper persons to the owner of it, he went into the temple, into the court of the Gentiles; where he found and overturned the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and healed the lame and the blind:

and when he had looked round about upon all things; that is, in the temple, as the Lord and proprietor of it; and made a thorough visitation of it, and search into it, and corrected what was amiss in it:

and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve; having spent great part of the day in reforming abuses in the temple, in healing diseases, and disputing with the chief priests and Scribes: the evening being come, he did not think fit, for some reasons, to stay in the city; but went out to Bethany, which was near two miles off, and lodged there;
See Gill on "Mt 21:17".

Mark 11:12

Ver. 12. And on the morrow,.... The next day early in the morning,

when they were come from Bethany; Christ, and his twelve disciples. The Syriac and Persic versions read, "when he came out of Bethany"; though not alone, but with the twelve disciples, who went with him there, and returned with him, as appears from Mr 11:14, as he and they came out of that place early in the morning, having ate nothing, before they came from thence,

he was hungry; See Gill on "Mt 21:18".

Mark 11:13

Ver. 13. And seeing a fig tree afar off,.... By the wayside, at some distance from him:

having leaves; very large and spreading, which made a great show, as if there might be fruit on it:

he came; unto it; either he went out of his way to it, or having seen it before him a good way off, at length came up to it

if haply he might find any thing thereon; that is, any fruit; for he saw at a distance, there were leaves upon it; and which was the more remarkable, since it was the time of the fig tree just putting forth its tender branches, leaves, and fruit:

and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; no fruit at all upon it, contrary to his expectation as man, and the promising appearance the tree made:

for the time of figs was not [yet]; or, "for it was not the time of figs"; for the word "yet", is not in the text: and the words seem rather to be a reason, why Christ should not have expected fruit on it, than that he should: but the sense is, either because the time of gathering figs was not come; and since therefore they were not gathered, he might the rather hope to find some on it; or because it was not a kind season for figs, a good fig year; and this tree appearing in such a flourishing condition, might raise his expectation of finding fruit, yet he found none but leaves only; because it was so bad a season for figs, that even the most promising trees had none upon them: or this, tree being of an uncommon sort, though Christ expected to find no fruit on other trees, because the time of common: figs was not come, yet he might hope to, find some on this. Some critics neglecting the accents, render the words, "where he was, it was the season of figs";
See Gill on "Mt 21:19".

Mark 11:14

Ver. 14. And Jesus answered and said unto it,.... The fig tree; a Jewish way of speaking, often used when nothing before is said; the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, leave out the word "answered", as they do also the word "Jesus"; and which is likewise omitted by the Vulgate Latin, though the other is retained:

no man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever; which is all one, as if he had said, as the other evangelist does, let no fruit grow on thee; for where no fruit is, none can be had, or eaten of. This tree may not only be an emblem of the Jewish people, who made a great show of religion, and enjoyed a great many privileges; and from whom, speaking after the manner of men, the fruits of good works, righteousness, and holiness, might have been hoped and looked for; when instead thereof, there was nothing but talk about them, and an observance of some insignificant rites and traditions of the "elders"; on which account, utter ruin and destruction ensued; but also of any outward professor of religion, who enjoying the means of grace, and making great pretensions to devotion and piety, it might be expected that he should do good works, well pleasing to God, and bring forth fruit to the glory of his name: whereas he only talks of good works, but does none; at least, no fruits of grace and righteousness are to be found on him; and at the last day, he will be cast as dry wood, as a withered branch, into everlasting burnings, being fit fuel for them.

And his disciples heard [it]; "this saying", as the Persic version adds, and took notice of it, being in company with him.

Mark 11:15

Ver. 15. And they came to Jerusalem,.... The Ethiopic version reads, "he came"; that is, Christ; but not alone, for his disciples were with him: Beza says, that, one exemplar he had met with, adds "again", and so one of Stephens's copies; for they had been there the day before:

and Jesus went into the temple: the Syriac and Persic versions add, "of God"; into the court of the Gentiles, as he did the preceding day:

and began to cast out them that bought and sold in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; which was done, as Matthew relates, the same day that he made his public entry into Jerusalem: wherefore it is highly probable, that upon Christ's leaving the city, they returned "again", and were the next morning sitting and doing business in the temple as before; and were drove out again by Christ, who, upon his return, found them there. They "that bought and sold in the temple", were those that bought and sold lambs for the passover, which was now at hand; and the sheep and oxen for the "Chagiga", or feast the day following; as well as doves hereafter mentioned, for new mothers, and such as had fluxes: and that part of the temple where this business was carried on, was in a large space within the area of the temple, where shops were built for that purpose: and by "the money changers", whose "tables" are said to be "overthrown", are meant, such as sat at tables to receive the half shekel, who changed those that brought whole shekels, or foreign money: and who had so much for changing, which was called "Kolbon"; from whence they had the name of "Collybistae", in the text: and "doves", as before observed, were the offering of the poorer sort of women after birth, at the time of their purification, and of profluvious persons; of which many came from all parts, at the time of the passover: upon which account, there was a great demand for these creatures; and many sat upon seats to sell them, which Christ overturned; See Gill on "Mt 21:12".

Mark 11:16

Ver. 16. And would not suffer that any man,.... He was more strict and severe than the day before; and gave orders, that they should be so far from being allowed to sit and trade in that sacred place, that no man

should carry any vessel through the temple; should make a, thoroughfare of it, by carrying through to any other place, any vessel that was for common use, or any sort of burden whatever: and this they could not well find fault with, nor complain of, since it was agreeable to one of their own canons; for they say {h},

"a man may not go into the mountain of the house, with his staff (in his hands); nor with shoes (on his feet); nor with his girdle, and his money in it; nor with a bag thrown over his shoulders; nor with dust upon his feet; nor might he make it, ayrdnpq, "a thoroughfare", and much less spit in it."

{h} Misn. Beracot, c. 9. sect. 5. Vid. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 62. 2. & Yebamot, fol. 6. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 70. 3. & Maimon. Hilch. Beth Habbechira, c. 7. sect. 1, 2, 3.

Mark 11:17

Ver. 17. And he taught, saying unto them, is it not written,.... In Isa 56:7.

My house shall be called of all nations, the house of prayer? For not only the Jews went up to the temple to pray, see Lu 18:10, but the Gentiles also, who became of the Jewish religion, and had a court built for that purpose; and so the whole temple, from hence, was called an house of prayer: and the meaning is, not only that it should be called so by the Gentiles, but that it should be so to them, and made use of by them as such. Jarchi's note on the clause in Isa 56:7 is, "not for Israel only, but also for the proselytes."

But ye have made it a den of thieves; for no other, in our Lord's esteem, were the buyers and sellers of sheep, oxen, and doves, and the money changers, and the priests that encouraged them, and had a profit out of them: now these had their seats, shops, and tables, within the mountain of the house; and even in that part of it, which was assigned to the Gentiles, the nations of the world, who became proselytes, and came up to Jerusalem to worship there at certain times; See Gill on "Mt 21:13".

Mark 11:18

Ver. 18. And the Scribes and chief priests heard it,.... The reproof he gave to the money changers, and buyers, and sellers in the temple; and his strict prohibition that none should carry any vessels through it; and the argument he used from the prophecy of Isaiah, and the sharp rebuke he gave for the profanation of the holy place:

and sought how they might destroy him: they took counsel together to take away his life, for they hated reformation:

for they feared him; lest he should go on to make great changes and alterations among them, which would affect their credit and character, and their gains also, and draw the people after him:

because all the people were astonished at his doctrine; both as to the matter of it, which were such words as never man spake; and, as to the manner of it, being with such majesty, power, and authority, as the Scribes and Pharisees taught not with; and also at the miracles, by which it was confirmed, as well as at the reformation and discipline he was introducing; which was done with such an air of sovereignty and power, as was amazing.

Mark 11:19

Ver. 19. And when even was come, he went out of the city. Of Jerusalem, as he did the evening before, and for the same reasons: probably he went to Bethany, where he had lodged the last night, with Lazarus, Martha, and Mary; or to the Mount of Olives, where he sometimes spent the night in prayer: the Syriac version renders it, "they went out"; for Christ took his disciples with him, as is evident from the following verse.

Mark 11:20

Ver. 20. And in the morning, as they passed by,.... The fig tree; when they returned the next morning from Bethany, or the Mount of Olives, or the place, wherever it was, they had been that night:

they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots; they did not see it immediately wither as it did, nor could they see it, as they went from Jerusalem to this place, because it was then in the evening; but in the morning, as they came along, they observed it; not only that the tender branches and boughs of it, but the trunk and body of the tree, and even the roots of it, were all dried up; so that it was entirely dead, and there was no room ever to expect it would revive, and bear any more fruit.

Mark 11:21

Ver. 21. And Peter, calling to remembrance,.... Not so much the tree, and its spreading leaves, and the greatness of it, and the flourishing condition it was in, the other day, as the imprecation of Christ upon it:

saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away; which he observed, as matter of astonishment, and as an instance of Christ's surprising power and authority;
See Gill on "Mt 21:20".

Mark 11:22

Ver. 22. And Jesus answering, saith unto them,.... To all the disciples; for what Peter said, he said in the name of them all; and according to Matthew, the disciples said, "how soon is the fig tree withered away?" To which this is an answer; though the Arabic version renders it, "to him"; as if the words were directed particularly to Peter:

have faith in God; or "the faith of God", so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; that is, exercise, and make use of that faith which has God for its author, which is the work of God, and of his operation, a free grace gift of his; and which has God for its object; and is supported by his power, and encouraged by his goodness, truth, and faithfulness: and so the Arabic version renders it, "believe in God"; not only that such things may be done, as the drying up a fig tree, but those that are much greater.

Mark 11:23

Ver. 23. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain,.... The Mount of Olives, at, or near which they now were,

be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; that is, of Galilee, which was nearest, and yet many miles off:

and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; not only as to removing a mountain, and casting it into the sea, but any thing equally difficult;

he shall have whatsoever he saith: whatever he commands shall be done; See Gill on "Mt 21:21".

Mark 11:24

Ver. 24. Therefore I say unto you,.... For encouragement in prayer more particularly, without which nothing should be attempted, and especially which is above the power of nature, and is of a miraculous kind:

whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray; that is, according to the revealed will of God, is for the confirmation of his Gospel, and for the glory of his name:

believe that ye receive [them], and ye shall have [them]; the petitions that are desired, and the things asked in them: that is, be as much assured of having them, as if you had already received them, and you shall have them; for the sense can never be, that they should believe they received them before they had them; this would be a contradiction in terms; and Beza's ancient copy, and one of Stephens's copies read it, "believe that ye shall receive", as in Mt 21:22, and so the Vulgate Latin version; with which agree the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, which render it, "believe that ye shall enjoy", or "obtain"; and the Syriac version, "believe that ye are about to receive"; and great faith it is so to believe; and this is the prayer of faith; see **1Jo 5:14**.

Mark 11:25

Ver. 25. And when ye stand praying,.... Are about to engage in that work, or are engaged in it, performing it in such a posture; for standing was an usual posture in praying; See Gill on "Mt 6:5";

forgive, if ye have ought against any, that your Father also in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. The sense is, that if, while a man is praying, it comes into his mind that such an one has committed a trespass against him, has done him an injury, of which he has just reason to complain; but instead of complaining of it before God, and calling upon him to avenge his cause, he should immediately in his heart, and from his heart, forgive him, even though he is not present to acknowledge his sin, and ask his pardon; and such an one may expect forgiveness of God, and a manifestation of it to his soul; which is one the things he is constantly praying for, as his daily case makes it necessary: not that it is to be understood as though his for, giving the person that has offended him, is the cause, or condition, of his receiving remission of sin at the hand of God; for then it would not be through the blood of Christ, and according to the riches of his grace; but this points at a temper and disposition of mind well pleasing to God, and describes persons who may expect this favour from him; See Gill on "Mt 6:14".

Mark 11:26

Ver. 26. But if ye do not forgive,.... Freely and fully, such as have trespassed against you, remit the debts they owe, and pass by the offences and injuries done you, and put up with every affront and indignity:

neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses; that is, such persons do not appear to have any true, or right notions of forgiveness; nor is there any evidence that their hearts are duly affected, or truly impressed with a sense of it; nor can they, upon their own principles and conduct, expect it: not but that to whomsoever God stands in the relation of a Father, and they are his children by adopting grace; these he pities and pardons, Christ's sake; the same covenant which contains the blessing of adoption, provides for pardoning mercy, and a non-remembrance of sin; the same persons that are predestinated to the adoption of children by Christ, and whom he has redeemed, that they might receive it, have the forgiveness of their sins, according to the riches of God's grace; for redemption and forgiveness of sins go together; and as many as are the children of God by faith in Christ, by the same faith receive the remission of sins; and without a view of pardon through the blood of Christ, a child of God cannot draw nigh to its heavenly Father, with that boldness, and cheerfulness, and filial fear it should; but there is forgiveness with him, that he may be feared; to whomsoever God stands in the relation of a Covenant God and Father, to them he manifests himself as a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin: unless the word "father" here not to be taken for such a special relation of grace, but only as expressive of him as the God of nature and providence, who has made; and takes care of all his creatures; in which sense he is the Father of all: as it is said, "have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" **Mal 2:10**; and so "our heavenly Father", or "our Father" which is in heaven, may be so called only from the place where he dwells; and not from the grace he bestows on men, making them partakers of his heavenly gifts and calling, and blessing them in heavenly places, or things in Christ Jesus: in the former view of him it will not necessarily follow, that he does forgive sin, whereas under the latter consideration of him it will; for forgiveness is one of the heavenly gifts and things which he blesses his children with; See Gill on "Mt 6:15".

Mark 11:27

Ver. 27. And they come again to Jerusalem,.... The Persic and Ethiopic versions read, "he came", which must be understood with his disciples; for they never parted from him till he was apprehended in the garden. Luke says, Lu 20:1, that it was "on one of those days"; and the Persic version here reads, "on another day": it was the day after the cursing of the fig tree, and two days after his public entrance into Jerusalem:

and as he was walking in the temple; not alone, but his disciples with him, and a multitude of people, whom he was teaching and preaching the Gospel to, as he walked to and fro; and whilst he was there employed,

there come to him the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the elders: the Jewish sanhedrim; for of these that great council of the nation consisted; See Gill on "Mt 21:23".

Mark 11:28

Ver. 28. And say unto him, by what authority dost thou do these things?.... Enter into the temple, as if he was Lord of it; and correct in such a magisterial way every thing he thought an abuse in it; do the miracles he did, as healing the lame, and blind; and take upon him to instruct the people, a work he was now engaged in:

and who gave thee this authority to do these things?
See Gill on "Mt 21:23".

Mark 11:29

Ver. 29. And Jesus answered and said unto them,.... Being not in the least intimidated by such a body of men:

I will also ask of you one question; or "one word", or "one thing";
logov, here answers to the Hebrew word rbd, which signifies both "word" and "thing":

and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things; See Gill on "Mt 21:24".

Mark 11:30

Ver. 30. The baptism of John,.... The doctrine of which he was the first preacher, and the ordinance of which he was the first administrator:

was it from heaven, or of men? was it of divine or of human institution?

answer me; directly and plainly, without any shuffling, or evasion: it is a fair question, and may be answered; and the answer to it our Lord suggests would naturally lead to a proper one to their question; See Gill on "Mt 21:25".

Mark 11:31

Ver. 31. And they reasoned with themselves saying,.... Privately; perhaps, they withdrew at a little distance for a short time, and consulted among themselves what answer to return; and the amount of their reasonings were this;

if we shall say from heaven, he will say, why then did ye not believe him? that is, should they say that John had a divine commission for what he said and did, they were aware that Christ would reply, why did not ye give credit to him? and had you done so, seeing he testified of me, you would have had no occasion to have put the above question; See Gill on "Mt 21:25".

Mark 11:32

Ver. 32. But if we shall say, of men,.... That John's baptism was an human invention, and he had no authority from God to preach and administer it,

they feared the people; lest being enraged thereby they should, at once, rise up, and destroy them:

for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed; a real prophet, one truly sent from God, and had his commission and credentials from him: this was the general sentiment of the people;
See Gill on "Mt 21:26".

Mark 11:33

Ver. 33. And they answered and said unto Jesus,.... Being reduced by this dilemma to the greatest streight and difficulty;

we cannot tell: they could, if they would, but they did not care to tell; they knew if they did, they should expose themselves one way or other:

and Jesus answering, saith unto them, neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things; See Gill on "Mt 21:27".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 12:1

Ver. 1. And he began to speak unto them by parables,.... As of the two sons the father bid go to work in the vineyard; and of the planting of a vineyard, and letting it out to husbandmen, as here; though the latter is only related by this evangelist, yet both are by Matthew. This was not the first time of his speaking by parables to the people, though it might be the first time he spake in this way to the chief priests and elders, and who are particularly designed in them.

A certain man planted a vineyard. The Persic version adds, "with many trees": that is, with vines, though sometimes other trees, as fig trees, were planted in vineyards; see Lu 13:6. This man is, by the Evangelist Matthew, called an "householder": by whom is meant God the Father, as distinguished from his Son, he is afterward said to send: and by the "vineyard", planted by him, is meant the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, the men of Israel, **Isa 5:1**;

and set an hedge about it, or "wall", as the Persic version renders it; meaning either the law, not the Jews oral law, or the traditions of the elders, which were not of God's setting, but the ceremonial and moral law; or the wall of protection by divine power, which was set around the Jewish nation especially when they went up to their solemn feasts.

And digged a place for the winefat. The Syriac and Arabic versions add, "in it"; and the Persic version, "in the vineyard"; for this was made in the vineyard, where they, trod and squeezed the grapes when gathered; and may design the altar in the house of the Lord, where the libations, or drink offerings, were poured out;

and built a tower. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, "in it"; for this also was built in the vineyard, and may intend either the city of Jerusalem; or the temple in it, the watch house where the priests watched, and did their service, day and night.

And let it out to husbandmen; or "workmen", as the Arabic version renders it, who wrought in it, and took care of the vines. The Ethiopic version renders it, "and set over it a worker and keeper of the vineyard"; by whom are meant the priests and Levites, to whom were committed the care of the people, with respect to religious things:

and went into a far country; left the people of the Jews to these husbandmen, or rulers, whether civil or ecclesiastical, but chiefly the latter, to be instructed and directed by them, according to the laws and rules given them by the Lord; See Gill on "Mt 21:33".

Mark 12:2

Ver. 2. And at the season he sent unto the husbandman a servant,.... The Evangelist Matthew says, "when the time of the fruit drew near", Mt 21:34; and so the Persic version here reads. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "in its own time", or "season", which was the fourth year from the planting of it; and then it was holy to the Lord; and might not be eaten until the fifth year, Le 19:23. According to the Jewish canons {l}, a vineyard of the fourth year was marked with clods of earth, to show it was not to be eaten of; and the fruit of it was brought up to Jerusalem, from every place that was but a day's journey from thence, there to be eaten, or redeemed. Nor by the "servant" are intended the prophets of the Old Testament, who were sent to the Jews to call upon them to bring forth fruits of righteousness; for not a single person, but a set of men, are here designed; and the Evangelist Matthew expresses it in the plural number, "servants":

that he might receive from the husbandmen the fruit of the vineyard: by the hands of his servants; for in Matthew it is, "that they might receive", &c. such as righteousness and judgment, truth and holiness, so as to give an account of them, which might have been expected from a people under such advantages, **Isa 5:7**;
See Gill on "Mt 21:34".

{l} Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 5. sect. 1, 2.

Mark 12:3

Ver. 3. And they caught him,.... This clause is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions, though it seems proper to be retained; and denotes the rudeness and violence with which the prophets of the Lord were used by the Jewish nation:

and beat him: either with their fists, or with rods, and scourges, till the skin was flayed off:

and sent him away empty; without any fruit to carry with him, or give an account of, to the owner of the vineyard.

Mark 12:4

Ver. 4. And again he sent unto them another servant,.... Another set of good men, to instruct, advise, and counsel them, and exhort them to their duty; such as were Isaiah, Zechariah, and others:

and at him they cast stones, and wounded [him] in the head; for of these were stoned, as well as sawn asunder, and slain with the sword; though it seems, that this servant, or this set of men, were not stoned to death, because he was afterwards said to be sent away: nor could the stoning be what was done by the order of the sanhedrim, which was done by letting an heavy stone fail upon the heart {k}; but this was done by all the people, by the outrageous zealots, in the manner Stephen was stoned. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, the usual sense of the Greek word may be retained; which signifies "to reduce", or "gather into a certain sum": and so as this servant was sent to reckon with these husbandmen, and take an account from them of the fruit of the vineyard, one cast a stone at him, saying, there is fruit for you; and a second cast another stone, saying the same thing; and so they went on one after another, till at last they said, in a deriding way, now the sum is made up with you:

and sent [him] away shamefully handled; with great ignominy and reproach.

{k} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4.

Mark 12:5

Ver. 5. And again he sent another,.... That is, another servant, or set of men, it may be in the times of the Maccabees, who were used in a very inhuman manner; see Heb 11:37;

and him they killed; either with the sword, or by inflicting some capital punishment, as stoning, strangling, &c.

and many others; that is, either the owner of the vineyard sent many other servants, or the husbandmen ill used many others that were sent to them:

beating some; with their hands, or with scourges;

and killing some; in one or other of the above ways.

Mark 12:6

Ver. 6. Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved,.... The Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the one, and only Son of God his Father, his only begotten Son, for he has no other Son in the same way of filiation; and who is his dear Son, the Son of his love, who was loved by him before the foundation of the world; and whom he declared to be his beloved Son, both at his baptism, and at his transfiguration upon the mount, by a voice from heaven: this Son he having with him, in his bosom, as one brought up with him, and rejoicing before him,

he sent him also last unto them; after all the prophets had been with them, when the last days were come, the end of the Jewish state, civil and ecclesiastical; see **Heb 1:1**;

saying, they will reverence my son. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, "perhaps they will reverence my son", as in Lu 20:13;
See Gill on "Mt 21:37".

Mark 12:7

Ver. 7. But those husbandmen said among themselves,.... This, in the Persic version, is introduced thus, "when the vine dressers saw the son of the lord of the vineyard": agreeably to Mt 21:38. The Ethiopic version renders it, "and the servants said"; not the servants that had been sent, but the workmen in the vineyard:

this is the heir; that is, "of the vineyard", as the Persic version expresses it they knew him by the prophecies of the Old Testament which had described him, and by the miracles which were wrought by him; and they could not deny but that the vineyard of the house of Judah belonged to him, and he was right heir to the throne of Israel; though they refused to embrace him, confess him, and declare for him: but, on the other hand, said,

come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours; that is, "the vineyard", and the Persic version again read. The priests, Scribes, and elders of the people consulted together to take away his life, with this view: that they might continue in the quiet possession of their nation, temple, and worship, in the office they bore, and in the privileges they partook of; and that the Romans might not come, and take away their place and nation, Joh 11:47;
See Gill on "Mt 21:38".

Mark 12:8

Ver. 8. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him, out of the vineyard. They sent their officers and servants, and apprehended him in the garden; they delivered him to the Gentiles, who were without the vineyard, and by whom, at their instigation, he was put to death, even to the death of the cross. The Ethiopic version reads it in the same order as in Matthew; "they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed hin"; See Gill on "Mt 21:39".

Mark 12:9

Ver. 9. What shall therefore the Lord of the vineyard do?.... The Arabic and Ethiopic versions add, to them; that is, to the husbandmen, as is expressed in Mt 21:40,
See Gill on "Mt 21:40":

he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. As the former clause contains a question put by Christ upon his having finished the parable, this is an answer to it, given by the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, in whose presence, and for whose sake it was delivered; See Gill on "Mt 21:41".

Mark 12:10

Ver. 10. And have ye not read this Scripture?.... In
Ps 118:22 these are the words of Christ directed to the above persons, who

were, many of them, teachers of the people, and therefore ought to have read the scriptures, and have taken notice of, and considered more especially such as respected the Messiah, as this passage did, and was very appropriate to the case in the parable Christ had respect unto:

the stone which the builders rejected, is become the head of the corner: by "the stone" is meant the same with the son and heir in the parable, even himself, the true Messiah; and by "the builders", the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, the same with the husbandmen, whose rejection of the stone, or of the Messiah, is signified by their seizing him, casting him out of the vineyard, and killing him; and yet notwithstanding all this, according to this Scripture, he was to be, and now is become, the head of the corner, exalted above angels and men, at the right hand of God;
See Gill on "Mt 21:42".

Mark 12:11

Ver. 11. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. That is, the exaltation of the Messiah, after he had been so ill treated, and at last put to death by the Jews. These words are a continuation of the passage cited out of Ps 118:22.

Mark 12:12

Ver. 12. They sought to lay held on him,.... That is, the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, after they had heard the parables he spake to them, were greatly irritated, and provoked, and had a good will to have seized him, and carried him away, and have had him before their court, and condemn him:

but feared the people; lest they should rise up in his defence, and fall on them; for many of them liked; and were attached to his ministry; and others had received favours of one kind or another from him through his miracles:

for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and that they were the husbandmen designed, who had not brought the fruit of the vineyard to their lord, but had ill treated his servants, and would his son.

And they left him; in the temple, not daring to do any thing to him:

and went their way; to their council chamber, perhaps to consult what measures to take, and how to destroy him.

Mark 12:13

Ver. 13. And they send unto him,.... That is, the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, who had been with Jesus in the temple, and were silenced by his reasonings, and provoked by his parables; and therefore left him, and went together to consult what methods they should take to get him into their hands, and be revenged on him; the result of which was, they send to him

certain of the Pharisees. The Syriac and Persic versions read "Scribes", who were the more skillful and learned part of that body of men, and scrupled paying tribute to Caesar, he being an Heathen prince, and they the Lord's free people:

and of the Herodians; who were, as the Syriac and Persic versions read, "of the household of Herod"; his servants and courtiers, and consequently in the interest of Caesar, under whom Herod held his government, and must be for paying tribute to him: these two parties of such different sentiments, they sent to him,

to catch him in his words; or "in word", or discourse; either with their word, the question they should put to him, or with his word, the answer he should return: and so the Ethiopic version supplies it, reading it, "with his own word"; they thought they should unavoidably catch him, one way or other; just as a prey is hunted, and taken in a net or snare, as the word used signifies: for if he declared against giving tribute to Caesar, the Herodians would have whereof to accuse him, and the Pharisees would be witnesses against him; and if he should be for it, the latter would expose him among the people, as an enemy to their civil liberties, and one that was for subjecting them to the Roman yoke, and consequently could not be the Messiah and deliverer they expected; See Gill on "Mt 22:16".

Mark 12:14

Ver. 14. And when they were come,.... Unto Jesus in the temple:

they said unto him, master; they saluted him in like manner, as they did their doctors and Rabbins, calling him "Rabbi", though they were not his disciples; but one part of them were the disciples of the Pharisees, and the other had Herod for their master;

we know that thou art true; an honest, sincere, and upright man,

and carest for no man, for thou regardest not the person of men; no, not Caesar himself;

but teachest the way of God in truth; instructest men in the word, will, and worship of God, with all integrity and faithfulness; answer therefore this question,

is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not? The Syriac and Persic versions read, "head money"; and so it is read in Beza's most ancient copy; a tax that was levied on the heads of families; or on every particular head in a family;
See Gill on "Mt 22:16",
See Gill on "Mt 22:17".

Mark 12:15

Ver. 15. Shall we give, or not give?.... They not only ask whether it was lawful, but whether also it was advisable to do it, that they might not only accuse him of his principles, but charge him with persuading, or dissuading in this case. These words are left out in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions:

but he knowing their hypocrisy; expressed in their flattering titles and characters of him, and which lay hid in their secret designs against him; which being thoroughly known to him,

said unto them, why tempt ye me: bring me a penny, that I may see it; what it is, that is required for tribute;
See Gill on "Mt 22:18",
See Gill on "Mt 22:19".

Mark 12:16

Ver. 16. And they brought it,.... The penny, which was a Roman one, and worth seven pence halfpenny of our money:

and he saith unto them, whose is this image, and superscription; for it had the head of an emperor upon it, very likely the image of the then reigning emperor Tiberius, and a superscription on it, expressing his name, and perhaps a motto along with it:

and they said unto him, Caesar's; one of the Roman emperors, Augustus, or Tiberius; most probably the latter;
See Gill on "Mt 22:20",
See Gill on "Mt 22:21".

Mark 12:17

Ver. 17. And Jesus answering said unto them,.... Very wisely and pertinently,

render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's: or "to the king, which are the king's", as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it:

and to God the things that are God's; See Gill on "Mt 22:21";

and they marvelled at him; at his wisdom and prudence in returning such an answer, which cut off all occasion against him.

Mark 12:18

Ver. 18. Then came unto him the Sadducees,.... The same day, immediately after he had silenced the Pharisees and Herodians: these were a set of men distinct from the former, in some of their sentiments, especially in their religions ones, and particularly in the following:

which say there is no resurrection: of the dead, in a literal sense, either general or particular; See Gill on "Mt 22:23";

and they asked him, saying; as in the next verse.

Mark 12:19

Ver. 19. Master, Moses wrote unto us,.... Has left in writing for us the following precept to observe; for they acknowledged the writings of Moses, and indeed all the Scriptures of the Old Testament; adhering to the literal sense of them, and rejecting the traditional interpretation of them by the Rabbins:

if a man's brother die, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother; which is the sense of the law in De 25:5;
See Gill on "Mt 22:24".

Mark 12:20

Ver. 20. Now there were seven brethren,.... In a certain family, at a certain place; perhaps at Jerusalem, who were brethren by the father's side; for such only were reckoned so, and such only did this law oblige:

and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed: no child: hence it is clear that the ancient Jews used the word seed, of a single person, as these Sadducees did; though modern ones deny such an use of it in our present controversies with them about the sense of **Ge 3:15**;
See Gill on "Mt 22:25".

Mark 12:21

Ver. 21. The second took her,.... To wife, married her, as the next eldest brother, by the above law was obliged to: and so the Jewish {l} canon upon it runs thus;

"the command is, lwdgb, "for the eldest" to marry his brother's wife: if he will not, they go to all the brethren; if they will not, they return to the eldest, and say, the command is upon thee, either pluck off the shoe, or marry."

Maimonides {m} relates it in this manner;

"if a man dies, and leaves many brethren, the command is upon the eldest to marry, or pull off the shoe; as it is said, De 25:6, "and it shall be the firstborn which she beareth". From tradition, it is learned that it does not speak but of the firstborn among the brethren; and it is all one as if it was said, the eldest of the brethren shall succeed in the name of his brother that is dead; and this is what is said, "which she beareth": the sense is, which the mother has borne, and not which the brother's wife beareth; if the eldest will not marry her, they go round to all the brethren; and if they will not, they return to the eldest, and say, upon thee is the command, either pluck off the shoe, or marry; and they do not compel him to marry, but they compel him to pluck off the shoe;"

i.e. in case he will not marry.

And died, neither left he any, seed, and the third likewise; married her, and died without issue, as the second did. The Persic version adds, "and the fourth, and fifth"; for so they all did to the seventh.

{l} Misn. Yebamot, c. 4. sect. 5. & T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 39. 1. {m} Hilch. Yebum Uchalitza, c. 2, sect. 6, 7. Vid. Jarchium in Deut. xxv. 6.

Mark 12:22

Ver. 22. And the seventh had her, and left no seed,.... All, the seven brethren married her, one after another, and neither of them had any children by her:

and last of all the woman died also; after all the seven brethren, to whom she had been married.

Mark 12:23

Ver. 23. In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise,.... This last clause, "when they shall rise", is omitted in two copies of Beza's, and in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, because, perhaps, it might be thought superfluous; but this is agreeably to the way of speaking and writing with the Jews: so in the Targum on Zec 3:7: Knyxa aytym twyxab, "in the quickening of the dead I will quicken thee"; or, in the resurrection of the dead I will raise thee. The question put on supposition of a resurrection, and that these seven brethren, and the wife they all had should rise, then is,

whose wife shall she be of them? of the seven brethren;

for the seven had her to wife. She was, according to law, the lawful wife of all seven; what particular and special claim could one have to her above the rest? See Gill on "Mt 22:28".

Mark 12:24

Ver. 24. And Jesus answering said unto them,.... Which they thought he was not able to do, but would have been silenced at once by them, as many of their antagonists had been:

do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God? what is expressed in Matthew affirmatively, is here put by way of interrogation, which, with the Jews, was a more vehement way of affirming; See Gill on "Mt 22:29".

Mark 12:25

Ver. 25. For when they shall rise from the dead,.... These seven brethren, and the woman; and so any, and every other:

they neither marry, nor are given marriage: there will be no such natural relation subsisting, nor any need of any:

but are as the angels which are in heaven; See Gill on "Mt 22:30".

Mark 12:26

Ver. 26. And as touching the dead, that they rise,.... For the proof of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead,

have ye not read in the book of Moses; that is, in the law of Moses; for though it was divided into five parts, it was but one book; just as the Psalms are called the Book of Psalms, **Ac 1:20**, and the Prophets, the Book of the Prophets, **Ac 7:42**. The book of Exodus is particularly intended; for the passage referred to is in **Ex 3:6**,

how in the bush God spake unto him, or "out of the bush", as the Syriac and Persic versions read;

saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? See Gill on "Mt 22:31",

See Gill on "Mt 22:32".

Mark 12:27

Ver. 27. He is not the God of the dead,.... This is our Lord's reasoning upon the passage; showing from hence, that since God is the God of these persons, they must be now alive in their souls, for God is not the God of the dead; and that their bodies must rise again, or he will not be the God of their whole persons;

but the God, of the living: the word "God", in this clause, is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, but retained in the Persic and Ethiopic versions; See Gill on "Mt 22:32";

ye therefore do greatly err; signifying, that it was not a slight mistake, an error of small importance, but a very great one; inasmuch as it was contrary to the Scriptures, and derogated from the power of God, and destroyed that covenant interest, which God has in his people, and particularly in the principal men of their nation, who were the fathers and founders of them.

Mark 12:28

Ver. 28. And one of the Scribes came,.... Matthew calls him a lawyer, Mt 22:35, an interpreter of the law, as a Scribe was:

and having heard them reasoning together; being present at the dispute between Christ and the Sadducees, which he diligently attended to:

and perceiving that he had answered them well: in a most beautiful manner. The Jews have adopted the very Greek word here used, and make use of it in the same sense as Mwlaq hyl rma {n}, "he answered him well": or, as the gloss upon it, "praise worthily"; in a manner deserving praise; and is the same with trmaq rypv {o}, "thou hast said well", or beautifully; and so the answer here was with great solidity, and judgment, and strength of argument, to their utter confusion and silence; whereby he understood he had considerable knowledge in the law, and yet was willing to try if he could not puzzle him with a question relating to it:

asked him, which is the first commandment of all? of all the commandments in the law, moral and ceremonial.

{n} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 108. 1. {o} Zohar in Lev. fol. 2. 3. & 15. 1.

Mark 12:29

Ver. 29. Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is,.... Christ replied at once, without taking any time to consider of it, that the chief and principal of all the commands of the law, and what is of the greatest importance is,

hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. The Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions read, "one God"; but the Syriac, and Ethiopic render it, "one Lord"; and that rightly, agreeably to the Greek text, and to **De 6:4**, from whence this is taken. This passage of Scripture, to the end of the ninth verse, is the first of the sections which were put into their phylacteries; See Gill on "Mt 23:5"; and was repeated twice every day, morning and evening; which is by the Jews called from the first word emv tayrq, "the reading of the Shema": concerning the exact time of the reciting of this, morning and evening, and of the posture in which they do it, reclining in the evening, and standing in the morning, and of the prayers before and after it, various rules are given in their Misna {p}, or oral law; it is a precept of great esteem and veneration with them, and attended to with much solemnity. The account Maimonides {q} gives of it is this:

"twice every day they read Keriath Shema; (i.e. "hear, O Israel", &c.) in the evening and in morning, as it is said, **De 6:7**. "When thou liest down, and when thou risest up"; in the hour it is the custom of men to lie down, and this is night; and in the hour it is the custom of men to stand, and this is day: and what does he read? three sections; and they are these, "hear", &c. **De 6:4**, and it shall come to pass, "if ye shall hearken", &c. De 11:13, "and Moses said", &c. Ex 13:3, and they read the section, "hear, O Israel", first, because there is in it the unity of God, and the love of him and his doctrine; for it is, lwdgh rqeh, "the great root", or "foundation", on which all hangs or depends."

And it is observable, that the last letter of the word "hear", and the last of the word "one", are both written in very large characters in the Hebrew Bible, to denote the greatness of the command, and to cause attention to it. The Jews seek for mysteries in these letters, and think the unusual size of them, points at some very great things: they observe, that the first of these letters is numerically "seventy", and directs to the seventy names of the law, and the seventy ways in which it may be interpreted, and the seventy nations of the world, from whom the Israelites are distinguished, by their belief of the one God {r}; and that the latter stands for the number "four", and shows that the Lord is the one God, in heaven and in earth, in all the world, and in the four parts of it; and that both these letters put together, make a word, which signifies "a witness"; showing that this passage is a glorious testimony of the unity of God, and that the Israelites are witnesses of it, by believing and professing it; and that should they depart from the faith of it, God would be a witness against them: and now, though there is no solid foundation for such interpretations, yet this shows what an opinion they had of the greatness of this command; to which, may be added, they ask {s},

"why does, "hear, O Israel", &c. go before that passage in De 11:13. "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments", &c. but because a man must take upon him, first the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, and after that he must take upon him the yoke of the commandments."

The sense is, that he must first make a confession of his faith in God, which is contained in **De 6:4** and then he must obey his commands; so that they plainly considered this, as the first and greatest of all. These words are frequent in the mouths of the modern Jews, in proof of the unity of God, and against a plurality in the Deity; but the ancient ones, not only consider them as a good and sufficient proof, that there is but one God, but as expressive of a Trinity in the Godhead: with a view to this text they observe {t}, that

"Jehovah, "our God, Jehovah"; these are, Nygrd tlt, "three degrees" (or persons) with respect to this sublime mystery, "in the beginning, God", or "Elohim, created", &c."

And again {u},

"there is an unity which is called Jehovah the first, our God, Jehovah; behold! they are all one, and therefore called one: lo! these three names are as one; and although we call them one, and they are one; but by the revelation of the Holy Ghost it is made known, and they are by the sight of the eye to be known, that "these three are one", (see **1Jo 5:7**,) and this is the mystery of the voice that is heard; the voice is one; and there are three things, fire, and wind, and water, and they are all one, in the mystery of the voice, and they are not but one: so here, Jehovah, our God, Jehovah, these, Nynwwg atlt, "three modes, forms", or "things", are one."

Once more they {w} say,

"there are two, and one is joined to them, and they are three; and when they are three, they are one: these are the two names of hear, O Israel, which are Jehovah, Jehovah, and Elohenu, or our God, is joined unto them; and it is the seal of the ring of truth."

To which I shall subjoin one passage more, where R. Eliezer is asking his father R. Simeon ben Jochai, why Jehovah is sometimes called Elohim, he replies {x}, among other things;

"come see, there are Nygrdg, "three degrees", (or persons,) and every degree is by itself; although they are all one, and bound together in one, and one is not separated from another."

To believe this, is the first and chief commandment in the law, and is the principal article of the Christian faith; namely, to believe that there is one God, and that there are three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, in the Godhead.

{p} Berncot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4. {q} Hilch. Keriat Shema, c. 1. sect. 1, 2. {r} Baal Hatturim, in Deut. vi. 4. {s} Misn. Berncot, c. 2. sect. 2. {t} Zohar in Gen. fol. 1. 3. {u} Zohar in Exod. fol. 18. 3, 4. {w} Ib. in Num. fol. 67. 3. {x} Zohar in Lev. fol. 27. 2.

Mark 12:30

Ver. 30. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God,.... Which is to be understood of the one God, Father, Son, and Spirit; for all the three divine persons are to be equally loved, being possessed of the same perfections and excellencies, and having done the same works, and having bestowed like benefits and favours upon men: and though there is now no principle of love to God in men; but, on the contrary, men are enemies to God in their minds, which appears by their wicked works; yet this commandment is still in force, and the obligation to it is the same; the fall of man, the corruption of nature, and the impotency, and even aversion in man to observe this command, do not make it null and void: and in regeneration, when God puts his laws into the heart, and writes them in the mind; love is produced in such persons, to God the Father, who has begotten them again, according to his abundant mercy; and to Christ, who has saved them from their sins; and to the blessed Spirit, who has quickened and comforted them: and this love is in some measure exercised as it should be, and as here directed to,

with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; that is, with all the powers and faculties of the soul; or with the affections, as under the influence and guidance of the more noble faculties of the soul, the mind, the understanding, judgment, and will: it is added here, which is not in Matthew,

and with all thy strength; which answers to the phrase in **De 6:5**, "with all thy might"; that is, with the greatest vehemency of affection, in the strongest expressions of it, and with all the strength of grace a man has. This passage follows the former in **De 6:5** and is what is only cited in Mt 22:37,
See Gill on "Mt 22:37".

Mark 12:31

Ver. 31. And the second is like,.... "Unto it", as in Mt 22:39 and so it is read here in two ancient copies of Beza's, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions;

[namely] this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. This commandment stands in Le 19:18 and respects not an Israelite only, or one of the same religion with a man's self, or his intimate friend and acquaintance, or one that lives in the same neighbourhood; but any man whatever, to whom affection should be shown, and good should be done to him, and for him, as a man would have done to and for himself; as much as lies in his power, both in things temporal and spiritual; see the note on Mt 22:39.

There is none other commandment greater than these; in the whole law, moral or ceremonial; not the sabbath, nor circumcision, nor the phylacteries, nor the fringes on the borders of the garments, nor any other.

Mark 12:32

Ver. 32. And the Scribe said unto him,.... This reply of the Scribe, is not related by Matthew:

well, Master, thou hast said the truth: what thou hast said is truth, and thou hast expressed it in a most beautiful manner: the Scribe was charmed with his answer, and could not forbear speaking in commendation of it, and even before the multitude, and those of his own sect: this was a rare and uncommon instance; it was not usual with the Scribes and Pharisees, whatever convictions they were laid under, either by the miracles or discourses of Christ, to own any thing, or make any concessions in his favour, or speak in his praise: but this man not only commends him, but gives reasons for it, and confirms the doctrine he taught in his own words;

for there is one God, and there is none other but he. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the word "God"; but it is in the Greek copies, and rightly retained in other versions: for the sense is, that there is one God, and but one; and which is perfectly agreeable to the Christian doctrine, of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead; for though the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, yet there are not three Gods, but one God. Nor are we to imagine, that this man said or thought any thing to the contrary, or had it in his mind to oppose the doctrine of the Trinity; which, though more clearly revealed in the New Testament, was not unknown to the ancient Jews, and might be learned from the writings of the Old Testament: but this he said, in opposition to the many idols, and fictitious deities of the Gentiles; and if he spake in the Hebrew language, as it is probable he did, there must be a beautiful "paranomasia" in his words; "for there is", dxa, "Achad, one God; and there is none", rxa, "Achar, other but he": and it is observed by a Jewish writer {y}, that the reason why the last letter of, dxa, "one", is greater than the rest, as before observed, in Mr 12:29 is, that there might be no mistake of d, for r, which are much alike; and if mistook, the word would signify "another", and not "one": but this is done, lest a man should mistake, and worship "another", and not the "one" God.

{y} Baal Hatturim, ib.

Mark 12:33

Ver. 33. And to love him with all the heart,.... That is, the one God, with a sincere hearty love and affection;

and with all the understanding; of his being, perfections, and works, which will serve to draw the affections to him: this clause answers to that, "with all thy mind", in Mr 12:30;

and with all the soul; with all the powers and faculties of it;

and with all the strength; a man has, or is given him; with all the vehemency and fervency of soul he is master of:

and to love his neighbour as himself; which are the two great commandments of the law:

is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices; that is, more excellent in their nature, more acceptable to God, and more useful among men, than all the rituals of the ceremonial law, than any sacrifice whatever: for the two words here used, "burnt offerings and sacrifices", include all offerings; as those which were wholly consumed upon the altar, and those of which part was given to the priests; and all sin offerings, meat offerings, and peace offerings, and whatever else. This man had now at least a different sense of things, from the rest of his brethren; who placed religion chiefly in the observance of the rituals of the law, and the traditions of the elders; and neglected the duties of the moral law, respecting God and their neighbour: things which are to be preferred and attended to, before any ceremonial institutions, and especially the inventions of men. This entirely agrees with the sense of the passage in **Ho 6:6**. "For I desired mercy and, not sacrifice"; that is, willed and required, that men should show mercy to one another; or that every one should love his neighbour as himself, and attend to this, rather than to the offering of any ceremonial sacrifice: this being more delightful and well-pleasing to God, than that: "and the knowledge of God"; of his unity, perfections, and glory: "more than burnt offerings"; which were entirely devoted to him: and it also agrees with the ancient sentiments of the people of God; so Samuel says to Saul, "Hath the Lord [as great] delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? behold, to obey [is] better than sacrifices, [and] to hearken, than the fat of rams", 1Sa 15:22. And yet it may be observed, that there is some likeness between these things, burnt offerings and sacrifices, and the love of God and love to our neighbour; though the latter are greatly preferable to the former; true love to God being no other than the offering up of the soul, as a whole burnt offering to God, in the flames of love to him; and love to the neighbour, or doing good and communicating to him, is a sacrifice well-pleasing to God.

Mark 12:34

Ver. 34. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly,.... Wisely and prudently, as a man of sense and understanding; by taking in the several parts of our Lord's answer very distinctly, and reasoning upon them, and confirming them:

he said unto him, thou art not far from the kingdom of God: not meaning from heaven, and eternal happiness; for right and distinct notions of the above commandments, and even the performance of the in by a sinful and imperfect creature, can neither give a man a title to, or bring him near, or introduce him into the heavenly glory, which is a pure gift of God's grace; but our Lord's sense is, that he was not far off from the Gospel dispensation, and was in a fair way of entering into it; his sentiments were very near to such, who became followers of Christ, and embraced the doctrines, and submitted to the ordinances of the Gospel state: since he preferred those things, which related to the knowledge of the being and perfections of God, to the love and worship of God, and to the good of his neighbour; before the ceremonies of the law; which were quickly to be abolished, and make way for the setting up of the kingdom of God, or of the Messiah, in a more glorious and visible manner. Indeed there are some persons, who seem not far off from the kingdom of God, in the other sense of the phrase, as it may respect eternal glory and happiness, who will never enter into it: there are some that seem very devout and religions; hear the word, attend on all ordinances, join themselves with a church, submit to baptism, and sit down at the Lord's table, and live a moral life and conversation, and yet are destitute of the grace of God: yea, there are some who have clear notions of the Gospel, and make a bright profession of it, and yet have no experience of the power of it upon their hearts, and have not the oil of grace there: and even hold this profession to the end, and yet come short of the kingdom and glory of our Lord Jesus: such are almost Christians, but not altogether; virgins, but foolish ones; have lamps, but no oil; come as far as the door, but that is shut upon them.

And no man after that durst ask him any question; in any captious matter in order to ensnare him; finding they could get no advantage, or occasion against him that way; he having silenced the Herodians, Sadducees, Scribes, and Pharisees.

Mark 12:35

Ver. 35. And Jesus answered and said,.... To the Pharisees that were gathered together about him; See Gill on "Mt 22:41".

While he taught in the temple; Whilst he was in the temple, and as he was teaching the people there; among other things in his doctrine, he put this question,

how say the Scribes, that Christ is the son of David? Not that Christ meant to deny or invalidate the truth of this; for the Messiah was certainly to be the son of David, and was; but he wanted to know, inasmuch as they commonly said, and instructed the people to believe, and it was in general believed by them, that he was David's son, how they could reconcile this to his being the Lord of David: or how they could give out, that he was only and merely the Son of David, when he was David's Lord. Matthew relates the matter thus; that Christ first put these questions to them, what they thought of the Messiah, and whose son he was; and that they immediately replied, he was the son of David: wherefore this question seems to be put upon that, with another along with it,

how then doth David in spirit call him Lord?
See Gill on "Mt 22:42",
See Gill on "Mt 22:43".

Mark 12:36

Ver. 36. For David himself said by the Holy Ghost,.... In Ps 110:1, being inspired by the Spirit of God:

the Lord said to my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. This is a proof, that David did call Christ his Lord; and that he called him so in spirit; since these words were delivered by him under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: that the psalm was wrote by David, the title shows; and that he spake it as he was influenced by the Holy Ghost, our Lord declares: the passage relates to what God the Father said to Christ, when being risen from the dead, he ascended on high, and entered into the most holy place; he bid him sit down at his right hand, as having done the work of man's salvation, he was sent about, to full satisfaction; and as a mark of affection to him, and honour conferred upon him in the human nature; where he should continue, till all his enemies, Jews, Pagans, Papists, and Mahometans, as well as Satan, and all his principalities and powers, were so subdued under him, as to be as a footstool to his throne: and when David prophetically speaks of this, he calls the Messiah his Lord; saying, the "Lord said to my Lord"; on which account the prophecy is cited; who was so, as he is God, and his Creator and Redeemer. That this prophecy is a prophecy of the Messiah, and is applicable to no other but he; and is therefore pertinently cited, and applied to him here, See Gill on "Mt 22:44".

Mark 12:37

Ver. 37. David therefore himself calleth him Lord,.... David, whose son you say the Messiah is, speaks of him as one superior to himself; as Lord, and as his Lord:

whence is he then his son? from what passage of Scripture does it appear, that he is his son? and how can these two different characters of him, be made to agree in him? Our Lord meant by this, to observe to them, that the Messiah was God, as well as man; that he was not merely the son of David, as was commonly received, or a mere man, but that he had a superior nature, in which he was David's Lord, and even Lord of all. This is a Talmudic way of speaking, frequently used when a proof from Scripture, or reason, is demanded to support any opinion or article of faith; as, arbo yah Nyynm, "from whence is this opinion" {z}? what proof is there of it? And again it is said {a}, Mytmh tyyxtl Nyynm, "from whence" is the proof of the resurrection of the dead out of the law? It is said, **Ex 6:4**, "and I have also established", &c. Sometimes it is expressed thus {b}, Nnyedy anm, "from whence do we know that it is so?" And sometimes the word is doubled {c}; says, R. Simeon ben Lekish, there is an intimation out of the law, concerning that which is torn, Nyynm Nyynm, "from whence? from whence?" Ex 22:31: "Neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn", &c. But the Scribes produced neither Scripture nor reason to support their assertion, though it was true; because they could not reconcile it with the passage cited by Christ.

And the common people; or the "whole multitude", as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; or a "great multitude", as the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; or "all the people", as the Ethiopic; all but the Scribes and Pharisees, the populace in general,

heard him gladly; with great pleasure and satisfaction, observing that his doctrine was superior to that of any of the sects among them; particularly his reasoning about the Messiah, was listened to with great attention, and who, no doubt, could gladly have heard how these things could be reconciled; but we read not that any answer was returned to our Lord's queries, either by himself or any other.

{z} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 54. 2. {a} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 90. 2. {b} T. Bab. Nazir, fol. 5. 1. {c} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 42. 1.

Mark 12:38

Ver. 38. And he said unto them in his doctrine,.... As he was preaching, not to the Scribes and Pharisees but to the multitude, and to his disciples particularly; and to them in the audience of the people, as appears from Mt 23:1.

Beware of the Scribes; for though he had just spoken favourably of one of them, this was but a single man, and a singular instance; the body of that set of men, were very bad in their principles and practices, and therefore to be avoided, and that for the reasons following:

which love to go in long clothing; the Persic version renders it, "who affect to walk in coats and garments conspicuous, and in long robes"; such as were very particular, and different from others, and out of the common way of apparel; and so were observable and taken notice of by others: very likely it may have reference to the common length of their fringes on the borders of their outward garment, which they enlarged beyond others; See Gill on "Mt 23:5";

and [love] salutations the market places; or "streets", as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, in any public places, where there was a resort of men, and they were taken notice with respect, in a public manner. The Syriac Persic supply the word "love", as we do from Mt 23:6,
See Gill on "Mt 23:6",
See Gill on "Mt 23:7".

Mark 12:39

Ver. 39. And the chief seats in the synagogues,.... Where the rulers of the synagogue, and the elders of the people sat;
See Gill on "Mt 23:6".

And the uppermost rooms at feasts; or the first and chief places where they sat, or rather lay along at public entertainment;
See Gill on "Mt 23:6".

Mark 12:40

Ver. 40. Which devour widows' houses,.... See Gill on "Mt 23:14".

Mark 12:41

Ver. 41. And Jesus sat over against the treasury,.... the Arabic version reads, "at the door of the treasury"; the place where the chests stood, into which money was put for various uses: there were thirteen chests in the temple {d}; six of them were, hbdnl, for voluntary oblations, or freewill offerings; for what remained of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the turtles; for those that had fluxes, and for new mothers; and of the sacrifices of the Nazarite, and of the trespass offering for the leper; and the last was for a freewill offering in general; and into one of these chests, or all them, was the money cast, afterwards spoken of. The Ethiopic version renders it, "over against the alms chest"; but this contribution in the temple, was not for the maintenance of the poor, but for the supply of sacrifices, and other things, as mentioned. Jesus having done preaching, and the Scribes and Pharisees having left him, and the multitude being dismissed, he sat down, being weary, and rested himself in this place:

and beheld; with pleasure.

how the people, of all sorts, rich and poor,

cast money into the treasury; into one or other of the above chests: the word rendered "money", signifies "brass", which the Jews call, twem; for they had shekels of brass, as well as silver; and brazen pence, as well as silver pence {e}; and also "prutas", or mites of brass {f}; and such, the poor woman cast in:

and many that were rich cast in much: they gave very liberally and largely, as they were possessed with much worldly substance; for though religion was at a low ebb with them, yet they took care to support the external and ritual part of it.

{d} Misn. Shekalhim, c. 6. sect. 5. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. & Moses Kotsensis, Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 44. & Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 2. sect. 2, 3. {e} Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 2. sect. 8, 9. & Ediot, c. 1. sect. 9, 10. {f} Vid. Hottinger de Nummis Heb. p. 118.

Mark 12:42

Ver. 42. And there came a certain poor widow,.... Among the many that came to offer their gifts freely, there came one that was particularly taken notice of by Christ; and she was a "widow", had no husband to provide for her, and was a "poor" one; had no substance left her by her husband to support her with; very likely she was an inhabitant of Jerusalem:

and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing; a "quadrant", which was the fourth part of the Roman assis, or farthing; which seems to be much the same with the tetarthmorion of the Greeks, which is said {g} to be,

"the fourth part of an obolus (the least Athenian coin), that is, two brass pieces."

These mites seem to be the same with the "prutas", the Jews often speak of; who say {h}, that a "pruta" is the eighth part of an Italian farthing; though some make it to be the sixth: hence the Syriac version here renders it, "two menin, that is, eighths"; and the Jerusalem Talmud expressly says {i}, that, ojnydrq twjwrp ynv, "two prutas make a quadrant", the very word here used: and that the Jews took the freewill offerings of the poor as well as the rich, though ever so little, is clear from this canon of theirs {k};

"a poor man that gives a "pruta", or mite, into the alms dish, or a "pruta" into the poor's chest, they take it of him; but if he does not give, they do not oblige him to give."

Nor were they obliged to cast into the treasury; but if they did, they received it, be it less or more: and indeed, the rich might throw in as little as they pleased: as for instance; into the chest for gold, they might throw in as little as the weight of a barley corn of gold; and into the chest for frankincense, as little as the weight of a barley corn of frankincense {l}. The Persic version here, different from all others, instead of "two mites", renders it, "two bottoms of thread", or "yarn".

{g} Harpocratian. Lexic. p. 281. {h} Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 1. T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 58. 4. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 12. 1. Bava Metzin, fol. 44. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 3. {i} Kiddushi, fol. 58. 4. {k} Maimon. Hilch. Mattanot Anayim, c. 9. sect. 19. {l} Maimon. & Battenora in. Misn. Shekalim, c. 6. sect. 6.

Mark 12:43

Ver. 43. And he called unto him, his disciples,.... Who were at some little distance from him, he having finished his discourses:

and saith unto them, verily I say unto you: a way of speaking he often used, when he was about to deliver something of importance, and not so easy of belief, and which required attention, and what he solemnly affirmed:

that this poor widow, pointing to her,

hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: not that she had cast in more, or so much as any one of them as to value and substance, much less more than them all put together; but that she had cast in more in proportion to what she had, than they had in proportion to their substance; and that hers, though very small in itself, and might be contemptible to others, yet it was more in the account of God and Christ, and more highly valued and esteemed of by them, than all that the rich men put in: since what she gave, she gave in faith, and from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God; when theirs was given only in hypocrisy, to make an outward show, and to be seen of men.

Mark 12:44

Ver. 44. For all they did cast in of their abundance,.... Or "superabundance", as the Arabic version renders it; or "superfluity", as the Ethiopic: they abounded in the things of the world, of which they gave only a part; and though they might give much, yet they could easily spare it, and had enough remaining:

but she, of her want; or "penury", as in Lu 21:4; see **2Co 8:2**;

did cast in all that she had, even all her living; her whole substance, all that she had in the world; what was to have bought her food, for that day; she left herself nothing, but gave away all, and trusted to providence for immediate supply.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 13:1

Ver. 1. And as he went out of the temple,.... The Ethiopic version reads, "as they went out"; Christ and his disciples: for when Christ went out of the temple, the disciples went out with him; or at least very quickly followed him, and came to him, as appears from what follows; though the true reading is, "as he went out": and the Syriac and Persic versions are more express, and read, "as Jesus went out": for having done all he intended to do there, he left it, never more to return to it:

one of his disciples: it may be Peter, who was generally pretty forward, and commonly the mouth of the rest, as this disciple was, whoever he was: the Persic version reads, "the disciples"; and Matthew and Luke represent them in general, as observing to Christ, the beauty and grandeur of the temple, as this disciple did: who

saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings [are here]. The temple, as repaired by Herod, was a very beautiful building, according to the account the Jews give of it, and its stones were of a very great magnitude; See Gill on "Mt 24:1".

Mark 13:2

Ver. 2. And Jesus answering said unto him,.... The Persic version reads, "unto them"; and so Beza's most ancient copy but as that question is put by one, the reply is made to him:

seest thou these great buildings? how beautiful and strong they are. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, add the word all; and the sense is, dost thou take a survey of all these buildings, and of the whole of this stately edifice? and dost thou not admire the strength and grandeur of them? and dost thou not think they will be of long duration, and that the demolition of them is scarcely possible?

There shall not be left one stone upon another. The Syriac and Arabic versions add, "here": as in Mt 24:9, and so it is read in four of Beza's copies, and in others:

that shall not be thrown down; See Gill on "Mt 24:2".

Mark 13:3

Ver. 3. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives,.... On the east of Jerusalem:

over against the temple: where he could have a full view of it; the eastern wall of the temple being lower than the rest;
See Gill on "Mt 24:3".

Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, asked him privately; apart from the rest of the disciples, they being, especially the first three, his favourites, and very familiar with him.

Mark 13:4

Ver. 4. Tell us when shall these things be?.... When the temple will be destroyed, and these fine buildings shall be demolished, and not one of these large stones shall be left upon another:

and what shall be the sign when all these things [shall be] fulfilled? And what is the sign of his coming, and of the end of the world, as Matthew relates; See Gill on "Mt 24:3".

Mark 13:5

Ver. 5. And Jesus answering them,.... His four disciples, Peter, John, James, and Andrew: "began to say"; or "said", a way of speaking frequent with this evangelist:

take heed lest any man deceive you; See Gill on "Mt 24:4".

Mark 13:6

Ver. 6. For many shall come in my name,.... Taking upon them the name of the Messiah: saying,

I am [Christ]; the word "Christ", is rightly supplied from
Mt 24:5; otherwise in the original it is only, "I am"; which the Persic version

doubles, reading it, "I am indeed, I am": he that was promised and expected, the true Messiah; he that was to come:

and shall deceive many; See Gill on "Mt 24:5".

Mark 13:7

Ver. 7. And when ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars,.... Among the Jews themselves, and with the Romans:

be not troubled; keep your place, abide by your work, go on preaching the Gospel, without distressing yourselves about the event of things:

for [such things] must needs be: being decreed by God, foretold by Christ, and made necessary by the sins of the people:

but the end shall not be yet; of the temple, of Jerusalem, and of the Jewish state and nation; See Gill on "Mt 24:6".

Mark 13:8

Ver. 8. For nation shall rise against nation,.... The nations of the world one against another, and the Romans against the Jews, and the Jews against them:

and kingdom against kingdom; which is a synonymous phrase with the former, and what the Jews call, twnwv twlm, "different words", expressing the same thing, often used in their commentaries:

and there shall be earthquakes in divers places; of the world:

and there shall be famines: especially in Judea, as in the times of Claudius Caesar, and at the siege of Jerusalem:

and troubles; public ones of various sorts, as tumults, seditions, murders, &c. This word is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions.

These are the beginnings of sorrows; as of a woman with child, as the word signifies; whose pains before, though they are the beginnings and pledges of what shall come after, are not to be compared with those that immediately

precede, and attend the birth of the child: and so all those troubles, which should be some time before the destruction of Jerusalem, would be but small, but light afflictions, the beginning of sorrows, in comparison of what should immediately go before, and attend that desolation;
See Gill on "Mt 24:7",
See Gill on "Mt 24:8".

Mark 13:9

Ver. 9. But take heed to yourselves,.... This does not so much regard their doctrine and conversation, they were to take heed to; in which sense this phrase is sometimes used; but the security of their persons and lives; and the advice is, to take care of them selves, as much as in them lay, how they came into the hands of the persecuting Jews, and exposed themselves to danger, when at any time it could be avoided:

for they shall deliver you up to councils; their greater and lesser sanhedrim; the one consisting of seventy one persons, the other of twenty three, and the least of three only; and before the greater of these, Peter and John were brought, quickly, after the ascension of Christ:

and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten; with forty stripes, save one, as the Apostle Paul was, five, times:

and ye shall be brought before rulers; governors of Roman provinces, as the same apostle was, before Gallio, Festus, and Felix:

and kings for my sake; for the sake of professing Christ, and preaching his Gospel; as some of the apostles were, before Herod, Agrippa, Nero, Domitian, and others:

for a testimony against them: both against the rulers and kings before whom they should be brought, and bear a testimony for Christ, and against the Jews, who should bring them thither;
See Gill on "Mt 10:17",
See Gill on "Mt 10:18".

Mark 13:10

Ver. 10. And the Gospel must first be published among all nations. The Syriac version reads, "my Gospel"; the Gospel which Christ was the author, subject, and preacher of; this "must be published". There was a necessity of the promulgation of it by the will of God, the command and commission of Christ; and for the gathering in of the Jews, that were the elect of God, "among all nations" of the world, especially in the Roman empire; and that "first", or before the destruction of Jerusalem; See Gill on "Mt 24:14".

Mark 13:11

Ver. 11. But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up,.... Lead to councils and courts of judicature, and deliver up to kings and rulers, to the civil magistrate, to be punished by the secular arm:

take no thought before hand; be not previously anxious, and carefully solicitous, in a distressing way:

what ye shall speak: to kings and rulers, by way of apology for yourselves, and your own innocence, and in defence of the Gospel:

neither do ye premeditate; or "meditate", as the generality of copies read: Beza says in one copy it is read, "premeditate": and so in one of Stephens's, as we render it: this clause is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions:

but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour; whatever shall be immediately suggested to your thoughts, be put into your minds, and laid upon your hearts:

that speak ye; freely and boldly without the fear of men:

for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost: not but that they did speak, but they were not the principal authors, either of the matter they spoke, or of the words and language in which they spoke; they were only the instruments of the Holy Ghost; they spoke as they were moved by him: hence their wisdom and eloquence in their self-defence, were amazing, and their arguments strong and unanswerable; See Gill on "Mt 10:19",
See Gill on "Mt 10:20",

Mark 13:12

Ver. 12. Now the brother shall betray the brother to death,.... Signifying, that such should be the rage of men, particularly the Jews, against Christ and his Gospel, that those that were in the nearest relation, were of the same flesh and blood, children of the same parents, should betray and deliver up each other into the hands of the civil magistrate, in order to be put to death:

and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death; things unnatural and shocking; See Gill on "Mt 10:21".

Mark 13:13

Ver. 13. And ye shall be hated of all men,.... Not only of your friends and relations of your countrymen the Jews; but of all men, the generality of men, in, all nations of the world, wherever they came:

for my name's sake; for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, they professed and preached:

but he that shall endure; reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, patiently; or persevere in the faith of Christ, in the profession of his name, and in preaching his Gospel:

to the end; of such troubles, and of life:

the same shall be saved; if not with a temporal, yet with an everlasting salvation; See Gill on "Mt 10:22",
See Gill on "Mt 24:13".

Mark 13:14

Ver. 14. But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation,.... The Roman army encompassing Jerusalem, which was an abomination to the Jews, and an "impure sign" of their destruction, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; and a desolating one to their nation, city, and temple:

spoken of by Daniel the prophet, in **Da 9:27**. This clause is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, and was not found by Beza, in two of his copies, and is thought to be transcribed from Matthew:

standing where it ought not; round about the city, in the midst of it, and even in the temple: in one of Beza's exemplars it is added, "in the holy place", as in Matthew; and so it is read in the Ethiopic version:

let him that readeth understand; either the passage in Daniel, or the citation of it by the evangelist, when he shall see this come to pass: this seems to be rather the words of the evangelist, than of Christ; since this was not written (and so not to be read), but spoken by Christ; and since his usual phrase was, "he that hath ears, let him hear": though indeed the same exhortation is in Matthew, and may be understood of Christ, as it may refer to the written prophecy in Daniel, and indeed to the Gospel, which might be read before this event came to pass: See Gill on "Mt 24:15".

Then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains; they that are in Jerusalem, or in any of the cities and towns of Judea, let them make their escape, as soon as possible, to the mountainous parts of the country; where they may be more safe from, the devastations of the Roman army; See Gill on "Mt 24:16".

Mark 13:15

Ver. 15. And let him that is on the house top,.... On the battlements of the house, either for diversion or devotion:

not go down into the house; in the inner way by the stairs, or ladder within doors:

neither enter therein; being come down from the top of the house, by stairs, or a ladder without, which was usual:

to take any thing out of his house; to take care of his goods, or take any thing along with him, that might be useful in his flight, and journey, and stay abroad; See Gill on "Mt 24:17".

Mark 13:16

Ver. 16. And let him that is in the field,.... At work, in any sort of business there, not turn back again: either to his own house, or rather to that part of the field where he laid down his clothes:

for to take up his garment; but let him flee without it, or otherwise he would be in great danger; See Gill on "Mt 24:18".

Mark 13:17

Ver. 17. But woe to them that are with child,.... Who because of their burdens, would be very unfit for, and very incapable of fleeing with any haste; and therefore very liable to fall into the hands of the enemy, and become their prey:

and to them that give suck in those days; who could not bear to leave their children behind, and yet would not be able to carry them with them; at least not without great trouble, and which would much retard their flight, and endanger their being taken by the enemy;
See Gill on "Mt 24:19".

Mark 13:18

Ver. 18. And pray ye that your flight be not in winter. When days are short, roads bad, the weather inclement; and when to lodge in mountains, is very incommodious, and uncomfortable. The Persic version adds, "neither on the sabbath day"; See Gill on "Mt 24:20".

Mark 13:19

Ver. 19. For in those days shall be affliction,.... What with the close siege of the Romans; the fury of the zealots, and seditious; the rage of different parties among the Jews themselves; the ravage of the sword, both within and without, together with dreadful plagues and famines:

such as was not from the beginning of the creation, which God created, unto this time, neither shall be; of which there never was the like in any age, and cannot be paralleled in any history, since the beginning of time, or the world was made, or any thing in it, down to that period; nor ever will the like befall

any one particular nation under the heavens, to the end of the world;
See Gill on "Mt 24:21".

Mark 13:20

Ver. 20. And except that the Lord had shortened those days,.... Had determined that those days of affliction should be but few, and not last long; that the siege should not be longer continued, and the devastations within and without be prolonged:

no flesh should be saved; there would not have been a Jew left; that nation and race of men must have been utterly destroyed from off the face of the earth:

but for elect's sake, whom he hath chosen; in Christ, unto eternal salvation; who were either then upon the spot, called or uncalled, or that were to spring from in succeeding times:

he hath shortened the days; he hath determined they shall be but few, that a remnant might be saved, and among them his elect; or from whom should descend, such as he had chosen, who should be saved with an everlasting salvation: though the people in general have been given up to blindness and unbelief, yet they are preserved as a distinct people in the world; and in the latter day will be called and converted, and all Israel shall be saved and therefore it was the will of God to shorten those days of affliction, that they might not be entirely cut off, but that a number might be left, as a stock for future ages; See Gill on "Mt 24:22".

Mark 13:21

Ver. 21. And then if any man shall say to you,.... During those days of tribulation and affliction, or when shortened and at an end:

lo! [here is] Christ, or lo! [he is] there; the Messiah has appeared in such or in such a place, to deliver you from your national distresses and calamities, and from the Roman yoke and bondage:

believe him not; give no credit to such a report, for the reason following; See Gill on "Mt 24:23".

Mark 13:22

Ver. 22. For false Christs and false prophets shall rise,.... As there did, both before and after the destruction of Jerusalem:

and shall show signs and wonders; as they pretended to do, and did, at least to the appearance of people:

to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect; who were chosen in Christ, unto eternal life; in consequence of which they truly believed in him, and were constant followers of him; but this was not possible: though such was the force of their deception, that there was apparent danger of it, were it not for the power and grace of God; See Gill on "Mt 24:24".

Mark 13:23

Ver. 23. But take ye heed,.... The Persic version adds, "of them"; of the false Christs, and false prophets: for though the purposes of God, concerning the salvation of his elect, are infrustrable; his promises are yea and amen; his grace is efficacious and irresistible, and his power uncontrollable; and the salvation of his chosen ones certain; yet it becomes them to be on their guard against every deception, and temptation, and to make use of all means for their perseverance:

behold, I have foretold you all things; relating to the destruction of the temple, city, and nation of the Jews; the signs that would go before it, as the disciples had desired; the miseries and calamities that would attend it, and the danger they would be exposed to through false Christs, and false prophets; and therefore would be inexcusable, if they did not observe the caution he now gave them: and moreover, when all these should be accomplished, they would remember that he had told them of them beforehand; which would be a proof of his omniscience, and so an establishment of them in the truth of him, as the Messiah; See Gill on "Mt 24:25".

Mark 13:24

Ver. 24. But in those days, after that tribulation,.... That is, after the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, and the miseries and calamities attending it, in the times immediately following it; see Mt 24:29;

the sun shall be darkened: so the Shekinah, or glory of the divine majesty was withdrawn, and all the symbols of the divine presence were gone, when the temple was destroyed:

and the moon shall not give her light; the ceremonial law, which though abolished by the death of Christ, was observed by the Jews as long as the temple stood; but now ceased, particularly that principal branch of it, the daily sacrifice; See Gill on "Mt 24:29".

Mark 13:25

Ver. 25. And the stars of heaven shall fall,.... The Jewish Rabbins and doctors, who fell off from the written word, and compiled their "Misna", or oral law, their book of traditions, and set it up above the Bible, the foundation of which was laid immediately upon their dispersion.

And the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken; the ordinances of the legal dispensation, which were shaken before, but now so shaken as to be removed; compare **Hag 2:6** with Heb 12:26;
See Gill on "Mt 24:29".

Mark 13:26

Ver. 26. And then shall they see the son of man,.... Not in person, but in the power of his wrath and vengeance; of which the Jews then had a convincing evidence, and full proof; and even of his being come in the flesh, as if they had seen him in person: this shows, that the sign of the son of man, in Mt 24:30 is the same with the son of man:

coming in the clouds with great power and glory; not to judgment, but having taken vengeance on the Jewish nation, to set up his kingdom and glory in the Gentile world; See Gill on "Mt 24:30".

Mark 13:27

Ver. 27. And then he shall send his angels,.... The ministers of the Gospel to preach it, and plant more churches among the Gentiles, since that at Jerusalem was entirely broken up:

and shall gather together his elect; that is, he the son of man, or Christ, shall gather them by the ministry of his servants; or "they shall gather them", as the Ethiopic version reads; and as Beza says it is read in a certain copy: these ministers shall be the means of gathering such whom God has chosen from all eternity, to obtain salvation by Christ, out of the world, and unto Christ, and into a Gospel church state: even

from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of the heaven; be they where they will, on earth, and under the whole heavens; See Gill on "Mt 24:31".

Mark 13:28

Ver. 28. Now learn a parable of the fig tree,.... Our Lord was now upon the Mount of Olives, in one part of which fig trees grew in great plenty, and one, or more, might be near, and in view; and it was the time of year, the passover being at hand, for its putting forth:

when her branch is yet tender; and soft and opening, through the sap now in motion:

and putteth forth leaves; from the branches:

ye know, that summer is near; from such an appearance on the fig tree; See Gill on "Mt 24:32".

Mark 13:29

Ver. 29. So ye, in like manner,.... This is an accommodation of the parable to the present case:

when ye shall see these things come to pass; the signs preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, and especially the abomination of desolation, or the Roman army surrounding it:

know that it, or he is nigh, even at at the doors; either that the destruction of

Jerusalem is near; or that the son of man is just ready to come to take vengeance on it; or as Luke says, Lu 21:31, the kingdom of God is nigh at hand; or a more glorious display of the kingly power of Christ, in the destruction of his enemies, and a greater spread of his Gospel in the Gentile world;
See Gill on "Mt 24:33".

Mark 13:30

Ver. 30. Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass,.... Not the generation of men, in general, or Jews in particular, nor of Christians; but that present generation of men, they should not all go off the stage of life,

till all these things be done; which were now predicted by Christ, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, the signs of it, and what, should immediately follow upon it; See Gill on "Mt 24:34".

Mark 13:31

Ver. 31. Heaven and earth shall pass away,.... Which may be understood either affirmatively, as what will be at the second coming of Christ; or comparatively, rather than any thing said by Christ should; and so shows the certainty and irreversibleness of his predictions, as it follows:

but my words shall not pass away; which is true of all the words of Christ he ever spake, and here particularly relates to those he had just delivered, concerning the calamities that should come upon the Jewish nation; See Gill on "Mt 24:35".

Mark 13:32

Ver. 32. But of that day, and of that hour,.... Of Jerusalem's destruction; for of nothing else had Christ been speaking; and, it is plain, the words are anaphorical, and relate to what goes before:

knoweth no man; nay, they that lived to see it, and have spoken of it, are not agreed about the particular day, when it was; much less did they know it beforehand, or could speak of it, and make it known to others:

no, not the angels which are in heaven; who are acquainted with many of the divine secrets, and have been employed in the imparting them to others, and in the executing divine purposes:

neither the Son; Christ, as the son of man; though he did know it as the Son of God, who knows all things, and so this; but as the son of man, and from his human nature he had no knowledge of any thing future: what knowledge he had of future things in his humanity, he had from his deity; nor, as man, had he any commission to make known, nor did he make known the day of God's vengeance on the Jews:

but the Father; who has the times and seasons in his own power, for the executing of any particular judgment on a nation, or the general one; See Gill on "Mt 24:36".

Mark 13:33

Ver. 33. Take ye heed, watch and pray,.... This seems to be the principal reason why the day and hour of Jerusalem's destruction, though known by the Father, were not made known to any man, neither to the angels, nor by them; nor to the son of man in the days of his flesh, nor by him when on earth; that his people might be upon their guard, against false Christs, and prophets, and their deception; and watch unto prayer, and in it, lest they fell into temptation, and that day should come upon them unawares:

for ye know not when the time is; the exact and precise time: for though the people of God had notice of it, and were sensible it was at hand, and did make their escape out of Jerusalem; yet they knew not the exact time, but that it might be sooner or later; and the unbelieving Jews were blinded, and in the dark about it to the very last; See Gill on "Mt 24:42".

Mark 13:34

Ver. 34. [For the son of man is] as a man taking a far journey,.... Or this case of the son of man's coming to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, is like a man that takes a journey into a far country. This puts me in mind of a question asked {m} by the Jews:

"what hqwxr Krd, "a far journey" from Modiim, and without."

from Modiim, according to the Gemara {n}, and commentators {o} on this passage, was a place fifteen miles from Jerusalem; so that, according to them, fifteen miles were reckoned a far journey {p}.

Who left his house; and his goods in it, to the care and management of others during his absence:

and gave authority to his servants; to govern his house, and exercise power one over another, according to their different stations;

and to every man his work; which he was to do, while he was gone, and to give him an account of when he returned:

and commanded the porter to watch; his house, and take care that it was not broke open by thieves, and plundered of the substance that was in it. So Christ, when he ascended on high, went to heaven, the land afar off; left his house, his church, particularly in Judea, and at Jerusalem, to the care of his apostles, and gave authority to govern it, according to the laws, rules, and directions prescribed by him; and assigned every man his particular work, for which he gave him proper gifts and abilities; and ordered the porter to be on his watch, not Peter only, but all the apostles and ministers, whose business it is to watch over themselves, and the souls of men committed to their care.

{m} Misn. Pesachim, c. 9. sect. 2. {n} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 93. 2. {o} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. ib. {p} Maimon. Hilch. Korban Pesach. c. 5. sect. 9.

Mark 13:35

Ver. 35. Watch ye therefore,.... Against false Christs, and false prophets; over yourselves, and the whole church; for the words are particularly addressed to the disciples of Christ:

for ye know not when the master of the house cometh; when Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven, and in earth, is named, who is a Son in his own house, is an high priest over the house of God, and Lord of his church and people, whom he has bought with his blood, and provides for with his grace, and by his Spirit, when he will come to break up housekeeping with the Jews, and bring his wrath upon them to the uttermost: whether

at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning. This is agreeably to the division of the night among the Jews, who speak of the first watch, the middle of the night, the cock crowing, and morning, as distinct from each other. The three first of these we have in one passage {q}:

"every day they remove the ashes from the altar, rbgh
tayrqb, "at cock crowing", or near it, either before, or after it; and on the day of atonement, twuhm, "at midnight"; and on the feast days, "at the first watch","

the same with the evening here: and elsewhere the morning and cock crowing are distinguished {r};

"for a last of the congregation, how long may a man eat and drink? until the pillar of the morning ascends, (or until it is morning,) the words of R. Eliezer ben Jacob; R. Simeon says, until cock crowing."

And so the phrase, from cock crowing till morning, is used by them {s}. The Romans also divided the night in like manner, into evening, the dead of the night, or midnight, cock crowing, and the morning {t}. The allusion seems to be to the time of the president of the temple's coming into it, who had the management of the affairs of it, and of appointing to each priest his work: it is said {u},

"whoever would remove the ashes from the altar, rose up early, and washed himself before the president came; but in what hour does the president come? not at all times alike: sometimes he comes, rbgh tayrqm, "at cock crowing", or near it, before it, or after it; and the president comes and knocks for them, and they open to him; and he says unto them, whosoever has washed himself, let him come and cast lots: they cast lots, and he is worthy whom he counts worthy."

Such who understand these words of Christ's coming by death, or at judgment, apply these seasons to the several ages of men, as childhood, youth, manhood, and old age.

{q} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 8. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 20. 9. & Zebachim, c. l. 96. 2. {r} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 2. 2. & Taanith, fol. 12. 1. {s} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 20. 2. {t} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 20. {u} Misn. Tumid. c. 1. sect. 2.

Mark 13:36

Ver. 36. Lest coming suddenly,.... Unthought of, and unexpected, at an unawares:

he find you sleeping; inactive in the exercise of grace, and negligent in the performance of duty; unprepared for his coming, and unfit for service.

Mark 13:37

Ver. 37. And what I say unto you,.... The four disciples, Peter, James, John, and Andrew; who came privately to him, and put to him the questions, which occasioned this long discourse; see
Mr 13:3.

I say unto all. The Syriac and Persic versions read, "you all"; meaning all the rest of his apostles, and all his disciples and followers in Jerusalem, and in all Judea; who were all concerned in these things, and whom it became to

watch, and be upon their guard, and cast off all sloth and negligence; since they knew not soon the son of man would come, and all these evil things would be brought upon the Jewish nation, city, and temple: and the same exhortation is suitable to saints in all ages, times, and places, on account of the various snares, temptations, and evils, that they are liable to, the suddenness of death, and the uncertainty of the second coming of Christ.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 14:1

Ver. 1. After two days was [the feast of] the passover,.... That is, two days after Christ had delivered the foregoing discourse concerning the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, was the feast of the passover; which was kept in commemoration of God's passing over the houses of the Israelites, when he destroyed the firstborn of Egypt, and made way for the deliverance of the children of Israel from thence: and which was kept by eating the passover lamb; and which, properly speaking, is the feast of the passover:

and of unleavened bread; which was the same feast with the other, called so from the unleavened bread which was then eaten; though with this difference, the passover lamb was only eaten on the first night, but unleavened bread was eaten for seven days together. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions render it, "the passover of unleavened bread", leaving out the copulative "and".

And the chief priests and Scribes sought how they might take him by craft; that is, Jesus,

and put him to death: for which purpose they assembled together in Caiaphas the high priest's palace, and there took counsel together how to accomplish it; see Mt 26:2.

Mark 14:2

Ver. 2. But they said not on the feast day,.... The feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread, which was nigh at hand, and would be two days hence, when there would be a great concourse of people from all parts to keep it: and therefore they did not choose to seize him, and put him to death at that time,

lest there should be an uproar of the people; or among them, lest they should rise in his favour, and rescue him out of their hands;
See Gill on "Mt 26:5".

Mark 14:3

Ver. 3. And being in Bethany,.... A place about two miles from Jerusalem, whither he retired after he had took his leave of the temple, and had predicted its destruction; a place he often went to, and from, the last week of his life; having some dear friends, and familiar acquaintance there, as Lazarus, and his two sisters, Martha and Mary, and the person next mentioned:

in the house of Simon the leper; so called because he had been one, and to distinguish him from Simon the Pharisee, and Simon Peter the apostle, and others; See Gill on "Mt 26:6";

as he sat at meat there came a woman; generally thought to be Mary Magdalene, or Mary the sister of Lazarus:

having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard; or "pure nard", unmixed and genuine; or liquid nard, which was drinkable, and so easy to be poured out; or Pistic nard, called so, either from "Pista", the name of a place from whence it was brought, or from "Pistaca", which, with the Rabbins, signifies "maste"; of which, among other things, this ointment was made. Moreover, ointment of nard was made both of the leaves of nard, and called foliate nard, and of the spikes of it, and called, as here, spikenard. Now ointment made of nard was, as Pliny says {w}, the principal among ointments. The Syriac is, by him, said to be the best; this here is said to be

very precious, costly, and valuable:

and she brake the box. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, "she opened it"; and the Persic version, "she opened the head", or "top of the bottle", or "vial":

and poured it on his head; on the head of Christ, as the same version presses it; See Gill on "Mt 26:7".

{w} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 12.

Mark 14:4

Ver. 4. And there were some that had indignation within themselves,.... The Syriac version reads, "some of the disciples": agreeably to Mt 26:8, particularly Judas, and others might be incensed by his means:

and said, why was this waste of the ointment made?
See Gill on "Mt 26:8".

Mark 14:5

Ver. 5. For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence,.... Which, was to the value of our money nine pounds, seven shillings, and sixpence:

and given to the poor; which was thought to be a better way of expending it, than by pouring it on the head of Christ:

and they murmured against her: that she should lavish so much money away in such an imprudent manner; they reproved her for it, expressed much resentment at it, and were very angry with, her upon the account of it; See Gill on "Mt 26:8",
See Gill on "Mt 26:9".

Mark 14:6

Ver. 6. And Jesus said, let her alone,.... Jesus knowing the secret indignation of some of his disciples, and their private murmurings at the woman, and their continual teasings of her, because of the expense of the ointment, said to them, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read; or "to the disciples", as the Persic, let the woman alone, cease to chide and reprove her for what she has done;

why trouble ye her? why do you grieve her, by charging her with imprudence and extravagance, as if she had been guilty of a very great crime? she is so far from it, that

she hath wrought a good work on me; she has done me an honour; expressed faith in me, and shown love to me, and ought to be commended, and not reproved; See Gill on "Mt 26:10".

Mark 14:7

Ver. 7. For ye have the poor with you always,....
See Gill on "Mt 26:11";

and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; by feeding them when hungry, clothing them when naked, and supplying them with the necessaries of life:

but me ye have not always; meaning, with respect to his bodily presence, which, in a short time, would be removed from them, and they would have no opportunity of showing him any such outward respect personally; See Gill on "Mt 26:11".

Mark 14:8

Ver. 8. She hath done what she could,.... What she had in her heart, and in the power of her hands to do; she hath done according to her ability, and her good will; and if she had not done it now, she could not have done it at all.

She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying; or, "as if it was to bury me", as the Syriac version renders it. Christ signifies by this, that he should shortly die, and that this woman came before hand to anoint him, and, as it were, to perform the funeral rites before he was dead; it being revealed to her by the Spirit, that Jesus would quickly die, and she should not be able to perform this good work when dead, and therefore came to do it before; or, at least, she was directed by the Spirit of God, because she would be prevented doing it afterwards; See Gill on "Mt 26:12".

Mark 14:9

Ver. 9. Verily I say unto you,.... And you may assure yourselves of the truth of it:

wheresoever this Gospel, of the death and resurrection of Christ,

shall be preached throughout the whole world, as it shall be,

[this] also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her; in remembrance of her, and her work, and in commendation of her faith, love, and duty; See Gill on "Mt 26:13".

Mark 14:10

Ver. 10. And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve,.... Apostles of Christ; who was the principal person that had indignation at the woman, and murmured against her, for the profusion of the ointment:

went unto the chief priests; as soon as this affair was over, and Christ had defended the woman's conduct to his shame and silence: he immediately went out of the house, where they were, and set out from Bethany to Jerusalem; and understanding the chief priests were in consultation together at Caiaphas's house, how to apprehend Jesus, and put him to death, went directly to them, unsent for, and unthought of by them:

to betray him unto them; which Satan had put into his heart, and what his avarice and revenge for the late action of the woman, and Christ's defence of it, prompted him to; See Gill on "Mt 26:14".

Mark 14:11

Ver. 11. And when they heard it, they were glad,.... That such an opportunity offered, and from such a quarter, by one of his own disciples; so that it might be done more secretly and effectually, and with less blame to themselves:

and promised to give him money; any sum he should ask; and what was agreed upon were thirty pieces, or shekels of silver; and so the Ethiopic version here, instead of money, reads, "thirty pieces of silver"; See Gill on "Mt 26:15".

And he sought how he might conveniently betray him; after this promise, and upon this agreement: henceforward he sought the most fitting opportunity, and the best season of betraying his master into the hands of these men, when he was alone, and the multitude absent, and there was no danger of a tumult, or a rescue;
See Gill on "Mt 26:16".

Mark 14:12

Ver. 12. And the first day of unleavened bread,.... Being come, which was the fourteenth of Nisan:

when they killed the passover; that is, "the Jews", as the Syriac and Persic versions supply; for any Israelite, that not a priest, might slay it: their canon runs thus {x},

"an Israelite kills (the passover), and a priest receives (the blood), and gives it to his neighbour, and his neighbour to his neighbour, and he receives (the basin) full, and returns it empty; the priest that is near to the altar sprinkles it, at one sprinkling, over against the bottom of it."

Upon which the commentators {y} observe, that the slaying of the passover by strangers; that is, such as are not priests, lawful. And so Philo the Jew, speaking of the passover, says {z};

"at which time the common people do not bring their sacrifices to the altar, and the priests slay; but by the command of the law, sumpan to eynov, "the whole nation", does the work of a priest; every one particularly bringing the sacrifices for himself, and then slaying them with his own hands."

But then it was always killed in the court of the temple, and after the middle of the day; See Gill on "Mt 26:17";

his disciples said unto him, where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayst eat the passover: for it was now Thursday morning, and the passover was to be slain after the middle of the day, between the two evenings, and eaten in Jerusalem at night; and they were now at Bethany, near two miles from the city; and it was usual for servants to get ready the passover for their masters;
See Gill on "Mt 26:17".

{x} Misn. Pesachim, c. 5. sect. 6. {y} Jarchi, Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {z} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 686.

Mark 14:13

Ver. 13. And he sendeth forth two of his disciples,.... Peter and John, as appears from Lu 22:8;

and saith unto them, go ye into the city; the city of Jerusalem; for there only the passover might be eaten, De 26:2;

and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; a servant of the master of the house that was sent for water, to mix with the wine, at the passover:

follow him; into the house to which he goes.

Mark 14:14

Ver. 14. And wheresoever he shall go in,.... Into whatsoever house he shall enter, go in after him:

and say ye to the good man of the house; the owner, and master of it, who might be Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea, or some man of note and wealth in Jerusalem, that might have some knowledge of Christ, and faith in him, though he did not openly profess him; since by only saying what follows, he would at once, as he did, direct them to a suitable and convenient room;

the master saith. The Syriac and Persic versions read, our master saith: he that is yours, and ours, our master Jesus; though that is not expressed, yet it was understood by the master of the family; which confirms the above conjecture, that he was a secret disciple of Christ.

Where is the guest chamber; the chamber provided for guests that might be expected at the passover:

where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? where it might be done conveniently, and in a proper and comfortable manner;
See Gill on "Mt 26:18".

Mark 14:15

Ver. 15. And he will show you a large upper room,.... A room in the highest part of the house, large enough for such a company, for thirteen persons, which was the number of Christ and his disciples:

furnished and prepared; with a table, and a sufficient number of couches to sit, or lie upon, and with all proper vessels necessary on such an occasion:

there make ready for us; the passover.

Mark 14:16

Ver. 16. And his disciples went forth,.... The two disciples, as the Arabic version has it, Peter and John, set out from Bethany to Jerusalem directly:

and came into the city; the city of Jerusalem:

and found as he had said unto them; a man bearing a pitcher of water, whom they followed to the house he went into, and addressed the master of the house, as Jesus had bid them; when he showed them an upper room, very commodious and fit for the purpose, as Christ had said; and which is a considerable proof of the prescience of Christ:

and they made ready the passover; they bought a lamb; they had it killed in the temple, according to rule; and they brought it to the house, where they were to sup, and got it roasted; and provided unleavened bread, and wine, and bitter herbs, and every thing that was proper for the feast; See Gill on "Mt 26:19".

Mark 14:17

Ver. 17. And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. In the afternoon, as it is very reasonable to suppose, Christ set out from Bethany with the rest of the twelve, with the other nine, and came to Jerusalem; where they were joined by Judas, who had covenanted with the chief priests to betray him, and by Peter and John, who had been sent before to prepare the passover; and when it was night, when the second evening had took place, he went with all twelve of them to the house, where the provision to eat the passover together was made for them; See Gill on "Mt 26:20".

Mark 14:18

Ver. 18. And as they sat and did eat,.... Or "as they lay along"; for such was their posture at the eating of the passover;
See Gill on "Mt 26:20":

Jesus said, verily I say unto you, one of you which eateth with me shall betray me; See Gill on "Mt 26:21".

Mark 14:19

Ver. 19. And they began to be sorrowful,.... And were so, all but Judas, at this saying of Christ's:

and to say unto him, one by one; even till it came to Judas himself,

is it I? that shall betray thee;

and another said, is it I? This clause is wanting in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and in two of Beza's copies; and indeed seems to be redundant, since the disciples are said before to express

themselves in this manner, one by one;
See Gill on "Mt 26:22".

Mark 14:20

Ver. 20. And he answered and said unto them,.... In order to relieve their minds, and point out the particular person:

it is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish; just at that very instant;
See Gill on "Mt 26:23".

Mark 14:21

Ver. 21. The son of man indeed goeth,.... Out of this world by death,

as it is written; both in the book of God's decrees, and in the Scriptures of the Old Testament;

but woe to that man by whom the son of man is betrayed! whose sin will not be excused, nor lessened by fulfilling the decrees of God, and by accomplishing the prophecies of the Bible:

good were it for that man if he had never been born; so aggravating will be his crime, so dreadful his punishment; See Gill on "Mt 26:24".

Mark 14:22

Ver. 22. And as they did eat,.... The paschal lamb, and the unleavened bread, just at the conclusion of that feast:

Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; beginning and instituting a new feast, to be kept in aftertimes, in commemoration of his sufferings and death, now near at hand;

and gave to them, the disciples,

and said, take, eat: the word eat is not in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and is wanting in some copies:

this is body; a figure and representation of it;
See Gill on "Mt 26:26".

Mark 14:23

Ver. 23. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks,.... Over it, and for it, by blessing it, and appropriating it to the present use and service:

he gave it to them; his disciples,

and they all drank of it; Judas, as well as the rest, as he bid them do; See Gill on "Mt 26:27".

Mark 14:24

Ver. 24. And he said unto them,.... Not after they had drank of it, but before, and as he gave it to them:

this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many; in Matthew it is added, "for the remission of sins";
See Gill on "Mt 26:28".

Mark 14:25

Ver. 25. Verily I say unto you,.... This seems, to have been said after the eating of the passover, according to Lu 22:18, but was, in reality, not till after the Lord's supper was ended, and the last cup was drank, which was wont to be drank at the passover:

I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine; that is, wine,

until that day that I drink it new; in a figurative and mystical sense; by which are meant the joys of heaven:

in the kingdom of God; Father, Son, and Spirit, upon the general resurrection of the dead, when the kingdom of the Mediator will be delivered up, and there will be no distinction of government; but God, Father, Son, and Spirit, will be

all in all, and shall reign in the saints, and they with them, to all eternity;
See Gill on "Mt 26:29".

Mark 14:26

Ver. 26. And when they had sung an hymn,.... The Hallell, used at the passover:

they went out into the Mount of Olives; Christ, and eleven of his disciples; for Judas now separated from them, and went to the chief priests to acquaint them how things were, where Jesus was going, and where they might apprehend him; See Gill on "Mt 26:30".

Mark 14:27

Ver. 27. And Jesus saith unto them,.... As they were going to the Mount of Olives. The Persic version reads, in this place; meaning the Mount of Olives, having got thither:

all ye shall be offended because of me this night;
See Gill on "Mt 26:31";

for it is written in Zec 13:7,

I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: Christ is meant by the shepherd, and the apostles by the sheep. The Syriac version reads, "his sheep".

Mark 14:28

Ver. 28. But after that I am risen,.... From the dead, which, for their comfort, he assures them of; though they would be offended and discouraged at the seizing, and condemning, and crucifixion of him:

I will go before you into Galilee; the place of their nativity, and where he had often conversed with them; See Gill on "Mt 26:32".

Mark 14:29

Ver. 29. But Peter said unto him,.... Being greatly moved at what Christ had said, that all of them would be offended with him that night, and run away from him, and be scattered from him, and one another:

although all shall be offended, yet will not I; though all the rest of the disciples, the other ten, should do as Judas had done, should fall off from Christ, and either betray him, or deny him, or, at least, turn their backs on him, yet he would do neither;
See Gill on "Mt 26:33".

Mark 14:30

Ver. 30. And Jesus saith unto him, verily I say unto thee,.... As confident as thou art of standing by me, and abiding with me;

that this day, which was then begun; for the Jews reckoned their days from evening, as in **Ge 1:5**;

even in this night; this night to be observed, this night of the passover, before it is past:

before the cock crow twice; for there was a first and second cock crowing, the one at midnight, and the other near break of day, and which last is properly the cock crowing: the word "twice" is left out in the Ethiopic version:

thou shalt deny me thrice; as he did; See Gill on "Mt 26:34".

Mark 14:31

Ver. 31. But he spake the more vehemently,.... With a louder voice; with more spirit and eagerness; in a more peremptory and self-confident way.

If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. The Syriac version adds, "O my Lord", my dear Lord, I will never deny thee upon any consideration whatever; and the Persic version, O Lord:

likewise also said they all; as he said, so said "all the disciples", as the Syriac version reads it; See Gill on "Mt 26:35".

Mark 14:32

Ver. 32. And they came to a place which is named Gethsemane,.... At the foot of the Mount of Olives, where the olives, which grew in great plenty on the mount, were pressed: and where our Lord began to be bruised, for our sins:

and be saith to his disciples: to eight of them:

sit ye here while I shall pray; at some distance from hence;
See Gill on "Mt 26:36".

Mark 14:33

Ver. 33. And he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John,.... Who were witnesses of his transfiguration on the mount, and now of his sorrows in the garden:

and began to be sore amazed; to be in great consternation and astonishment, at the sight of all the sins of his people coming upon him; at the black storm of wrath, that was gathering thick over him; at the sword of justice which was brandished against him; and at the curses of the righteous law, which, like so many thunderbolts of vengeance, were directed at him: no wonder it should be added,

and to be very heavy: both with sin and sorrow;
See Gill on "Mt 26:37".

Mark 14:34

Ver. 34. And saith unto them,.... The above three disciples;

my soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: he was surrounded with sorrow, and it pressed him so hard, and close, on every side, that he was just ready to die with it:

tarry ye here, and watch: in Matthew it is added, "with me":

See Gill on "Mt 26:38".

Mark 14:35

Ver. 35. And he went forward a little,.... About a stone's cast,
Lu 22:41,

and fell on the ground, and prayed; he fell on his face to the ground, which was a praying posture. One of the Jewish canons concerning it, is this {a}:

"worshipping, how is it done? after a man has lifted up his head; he bows it five times, he sits upon the ground, and "falls upon his face", hura, "to the ground", and supplicates with whatsoever supplication he pleases: worshipping, or bowing, is the stretching out of hands and feet, until a man is found cast upon his face to the ground."

See Gill on "Mt 26:39". The supplication Christ made in this posture was,

that, it were possible, the hour might pass from him; the time fixed and agreed upon for his sufferings and death; that is, that it might pass without his enduring them, if there was any possibility of excusing him, and of his people's being saved without them;
See Gill on "Mt 26:39".

{a} Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 5. sect. 13.

Mark 14:36

Ver. 36. And he said, Abba, Father,.... In the original text, the former of these is a Syriac word, and the latter a Greek one, explanative of the former, as in **Ro 8:15** and **Ga 4:6** or the repetition is made, to express the vehemency of his affection, and his strong confidence in God, as his Father, amidst his distress, as the Syriac version renders it, yba aba, "Abba, my Father": or "my Father, my Father"; and so the Ethiopic version:

all things are possible unto thee; so Philo the Jew {b}, taking notice of Isaac's question about the burnt offering, and Abraham's answer to it, represents the latter as adding, in confirmation of it, "all things are possible to God, and which are both difficult and impossible to be done by men;"

suggesting, that God could easily provide a lamb for a sacrifice; and Christ here intimates, that every thing consistent with his perfections, counsels, and covenant, were possible to be done by him; and how far what he prays for, was agreeable to these, he submits to him, and to his sovereign will:

take away this cup from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt: See Gill on "Mt 26:39".

{b} De Abrahamo, p. 374.

Mark 14:37

Ver. 37. And he cometh and findeth them sleeping,.... His three disciples, Peter, James, and John:

and saith unto Peter; particularly, he having so lately asserted, with so much confidence, his love to Christ, and close attachment to him:

Simon, sleepest thou? Christ calls him by the name he first went by, and not by that which he had given him, Cephas, or Peter; he not now having that firmness and constancy, though he boasted of it, which answers to that name:

couldst thou not watch one hour? The Arabic and Persic versions add, with me; and so does the Complutensian edition;
See Gill on "Mt 26:40".

Mark 14:38

Ver. 38. Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation,.... Of denying Christ, and falling off from him, which would quickly offer to them, when they should see him apprehended, bound, and led away.

The spirit truly is ready. The Persic version renders it, "my mind"; as if the Spirit or soul of Christ was meant; whereas it is either to be understood of the evil spirit, Satan, who was disposed to attack them, and especially Peter, whom he desired to have, and sift as wheat; or else the spirit of the disciples, their renewed spirit, which was ready and disposed watching and praying, and willing to abide by Christ:

but the flesh is weak; they were but flesh and blood, and so not a match of themselves for so powerful an adversary as Satan, and therefore had need to watch and pray; or "their body", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it, was weak, and subject to drowsiness and sleep; and especially they were weak and feeble, and very unequal of themselves for spiritual exercises, as they had flesh, or a corrupt nature in them; See Gill on "Mt 26:41".

Mark 14:39

Ver. 39. And again he went away,.... To the same place, or at much such a distance from them, as before:

and prayed and spake the same words; or word, that is, the same matter; for logov, here, answers to rbd, which signifies a thing, or matter, as well as word: Christ prayed to the same effect, for matter and substance the same as before, though not in the same express words, as is clear from Mt 26:39.

Mark 14:40

Ver. 40. And when he returned, he found them asleep again,.... Notwithstanding the expostulation he had used with them, the exhortation he had given them, and the danger he had suggested to them:

for their eyes were heavy: with sleep and sorrow:

neither wist they what to answer him; partly through confusion and shame, not knowing how to excuse themselves; and partly, through their being stupefied with sleep and grief.

Mark 14:41

Ver. 41. And he cometh the third time,.... After he had prayed a third time, to the same purport as before:

and saith unto them, sleep on now, and take your rest; which words are spoken ironically:

it is enough; or "the end is come"; as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, of watching and praying:

the hour is come, behold the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners; both Jews and Gentiles, by one of his own disciples;
See Gill on "Mt 26:45".

Mark 14:42

Ver. 42. Rise up let us go,.... To meet the enemy and the danger; for there is no escaping;

lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand; Judas, that he had hinted at supper should betray him, was now about doing it; and was just now coming upon him, in order to deliver him into the hands of the Jews, and the Roman band of soldiers; See Gill on "Mt 26:46".

Mark 14:43

Ver. 43. And immediately, while he yet spake,.... The above words:

cometh Judas one of the twelve: apostles of Christ, and which was an aggravation of his wickedness; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic, versions add, "Iscariot"; and so it is read in one of Beza's copies. The Ethiopic version reads, "one of the ten", very wrongly:

and with him a great multitude; a band of men and officers, with many of the chief priests and captains of the temple, and elders of the people, that mixed themselves with the crowd, to see how things would issue:

with swords and staves; which they intended to make use of, should any resistance be made in apprehending him, or any attempt to rescue him:

from the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the elders; from the Jewish sanhedrim, which consisted of these; See Gill on "Mt 26:47".

Mark 14:44

Ver. 44. And he that betrayed him had given them a token,.... A common sign, in which they agreed; and so this same Greek word is used by the Jews {c}:

"said R. Phinehas in the name of R. Reuben, did you ever see one man go out of the north, and another from the south, and meet each other, except they made, anmyo, "a common sign", between them."

Such an one the traitor gave his company;

saying, whomsoever I shall kiss, the same is he; Jesus of Nazareth; who was to be delivered to them:

take him, and lead him away safely; with care and caution, lest he should get out of their hands, and make his escape, as he had sometimes done: the word "safely", is omitted in the Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions. The Vulgate Latin renders it "cautiously", and so does the Syriac version, which joins it to the words, "take him"; See Gill on "Mt 26:48".

{c} Midras Samuel, sect. 9. apud Buxtorf. Lex. Rab. p. 1519.

Mark 14:45

Ver. 45. And as soon as he was come,.... To the place where Jesus was:

he goeth straightway to him; alone; as if he had nothing to do with the company behind, and as if he was his friend, and concerned for his safety:

and saith, Master, Master; expressing great affection for him, and respect to him, by repeating this word. The Ethiopic version has it but once, and so two exemplars of Beza's; and the Vulgate Latin reads, "hail, Master", as in Mt 26:49.

and kissed him; See Gill on "Mt 26:49".

Mark 14:46

Ver. 46. And they laid hands on him, and took him. After Christ had said to

Judas, "friend, wherefore art thou come?" as in Matthew; and also, "Judas, betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?" as in
Lu 22:48;
See Gill on "Mt 26:50".

Mark 14:47

Ver. 47. And one of them that stood by,.... One of the disciples that stood by Jesus, as Judas was betraying him, and the soldiers were laying hold on him, Peter by name:

drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear; his right ear; the servant's name was Malchus;
See Gill on "Mt 26:51".

Mark 14:48

Ver. 48. And Jesus answered and said unto them,.... To the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, that came with the band and officers, as appears from Lu 22:52. The Persic version reads, "to the multitude":

are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and with staves, to take me?
See Gill on "Mt 26:55".

Mark 14:49

Ver. 49. I was daily with you in the temple,.... That is, for several days past; ever since he made his public entry into Jerusalem:

teaching; the people, in a public manner:

and ye took me not; did not attempt to lay hands on him, seize him, and carry him away; which he signifies might have been easily done; See Gill on "Mt 26:55".

But the Scriptures must be fulfilled: which spoke of the betraying him by Judas; and of their taking him in this private and secret manner; and of the flight of the disciples from him next mentioned;

See Gill on "Mt 26:56".

Mark 14:50

Ver. 50. And they all forsook him and fled. That is, his disciples, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read; and who seem to have transcribed it from Matthew, and lest it should be thought, that the multitude whom Christ addressed, were intended.

Mark 14:51

Ver. 51. And there followed him a certain young man,.... Some think this was John, the beloved disciple, and the youngest of the disciples; others, that it was James, the brother of our Lord; but he does not seem to be any of the disciples of Christ, since he is manifestly distinguished from them, who all forsook him and fled: some have thought, that he was a young man of the house, where Christ and his disciples ate their passover; who had followed him to the garden, and still followed him, to see what would be the issue of things: but it seems most likely, that he was one that lived in an house in Gethsemane, or in or near the garden; who being awaked out of sleep with the noise of a band of soldiers, and others with them, leaped out of bed, and ran out in his shirt, and followed after them, to know what was the matter:

having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; which was either his shirt in which he lay, or one of the sheets, which he took and wrapped himself in, not staying to put on his clothes: though the word "Sindon", is used both by the Targumists {d} and Talmudists {e} for a linen garment; and sometimes even for the outer garment, to which the fringes were fastened {f}; and he might take up this in haste, and slip it on, without putting on any inner garment: the word "body", is not in the text, and the phrase epi gumnou, may be rendered, "upon his nakedness"; and answers to twre, in **Ge 9:23** and Le 20:11, and the meaning be, he had only a piece of linen wrapped about his middle, to cover his nakedness; and in this garb ran out, to see what was doing:

and the young men laid hold on him. The Roman soldiers, who were commonly so called: so David's soldiers are called "young men", that were with him, 1Sa 21:4; these attempted to lay hold on this young man, taking him to be a disciple of Christ, or one at least affected to him, and did take hold of his linen cloth. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, leave out the words, "the young men". The design of Mark in relating this incident, is to show the rage and fury of these men; who were for sparing none that appeared to be or were thought to be the followers of Christ; so that the preservation of the disciples was entirely owing to the wonderful power of Christ.

{d} Targum in Psal civ. 2. & Lam ii. 20. {e} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 41. 1. {f} Ib. fol 40. 1.

Mark 14:52

Ver. 52. And he left the linen cloth,.... "In their hands", so the Persic version renders it; just as Joseph left his garment in the hands of his mistress, Ge 39:12;

and fled from them naked; to the house from whence he came. The Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the words "from them".

Mark 14:53

Ver. 53. And they led Jesus away to the high priest,.... Caiaphas, as is added in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions. This was done, after they had took Jesus and bound, him, and after they had had him to Annas, who sent him bound to Caiaphas; see
Joh 18:12;

and with him, the high priest Caiaphas,

were assembled all the chief priests, and the elders, and the Scribes; even the whole sanhedrim, who met at Caiaphas's house, and were waiting there for Jesus; whom Judas with his band of soldiers and others, were gone to secure, and brng before them;
See Gill on "Mt 26:57".

Mark 14:54

Ver. 54. And Peter followed him afar off,.... And did another disciple, perhaps John; Joh 18:15, who having somewhat recovered themselves from their fright, turned back, and followed Jesus, and the company that led him away; keeping at some distance, that they might not be observed, and exposed to danger; and proceeded till they came to Jerusalem, and to the place where the sanhedrim were convened; and the other disciple went in along with Jesus; and Peter afterwards, by his means, got in:

even into the palace of the high priest; being let in by her that kept the door, at the motion of the other disciple

and he sat with the servants; as if he was one of them, and had no concern with Jesus:

and warmed himself at the fire; or "light", as the Greek word signifies, and answers to the Hebrew word rwa, by which both: light and fire are expressed; of which, take an instance or two, in the room of many {g}:

"a murderer that strikes, his neighbour with a stone, or with iron, and plunges him into water, or into rwah, "fire", so that he cannot get out, and dies, is guilty."

Again {h}, a

"book which rwah, "fire", takes hold upon on one side, he puts, water on the other; and if it is quenched, it is quenched; if the "fire" takes hold on both sides, he opens it, and reads in it; and if it is quenched, it is quenched: a cloak which "fire" takes hold upon on one side, he puts water on the other side; and if it is quenched, it is quenched; if the "fire" takes hold on it on both sides, he takes, it and wraps himself in it, and if it is quenched, it is quenched."

So we read {i} of Mnhyg lv rwa, "the fire of hell"; and Ur of the Chaldees has its name from the fire, that was worshipped there, as a symbol of the sun: and fire was the rwa, or "light", created on the first day, **Ge 1:3**;
See Gill on "Mt 26:58".

{g} Misn. Sanhedrin, c 9. sect 1. {h} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 15. 4. & T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 120. 1. Vid. Misn. Avoda Zara, c. 5. sect. 12. {i} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 27. 1.

Mark 14:55

Ver. 55. And the chief priests, and all the council,.... Especially the former, who were of all most busy and active in this matter:

sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; on which they were determined, right or wrong; in this they went contrary to one of their own canons, which runs thus {k}:

"in pecuniary causes, they begin either for absolution, or condemnation; but in capital causes, they begin for absolution, and do not begin for condemnation."

That is, they begun with such evidences as tended to acquit a man, and not with such as served to condemn him; whereas this court was only seeking for such evidence to begin with, that they might condemn Jesus to death:

and found none; that would answer their purpose;
See Gill on "Mt 26:59".

{k} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 1.

Mark 14:56

Ver. 56. For many bare false witness against him,.... The word "false", is not expressed in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions: which only signify, that they bore witness against him, accused him of, and laid many things to his charge:

but their witness agreed not together; which showed it to be false, and so not to be admitted; for witnesses were to be as one in their testimony, or not to be received: the, rules concerning them with the Jews, are these {l};

"the tradition is, for ever let not their testimony be joined together, unless they both see, dxak, "as one": says R. Joshua ben Korcha, even one after another; and their testimony is not ratified in the council, until they both witness "as one"."

Though this is not much the sense of the passage here; it was not the falsehood of their testimony, which this council was unconcerned about, or the contradiction that was in it, which does not appear; but their testimonies were not, isai, "equal", or answerable to the wishes of the council; they were not sufficient to prove a capital crime upon him, in order to, put him to death, which was what they wanted: they only respected some light and trivial matters, and did not amount to a charge of blasphemy, or sedition.

{l} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 30. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Eduth, c. 4. sect. 1.

Mark 14:57

Ver. 57. And there arose certain,.... Two false witnesses, as in
Mt 26:60, who stood up in court; for witnesses were obliged to stand, whilst they gave in their testimony:

"says R. Bo, in the name of R. Hona, witnesses ought dwmel, "to stand", whilst they bear witness; as it is said,
De 19:17. "Both the men shall stand" {m}, &c."

And bare false witness against him, saying; as follows.

{m} T. Herios. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 3. & Yoma, fol. 43. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 21. sect. 3.

Mark 14:58

Ver. 58. We heard him say,.... In a discourse of his, recorded in **Joh 2:19**:

I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands; which was a very false testimony; for Christ did not say be would destroy any temple at all, only put the Jews on doing it; much less did he point at, or design the temple of Jerusalem, but his own body; nor did he use the distinction of a temple, made with and without hands; nor did he affirm that he would build another; only said, he would raise up in three days, that which they should destroy. By this testimony these witnesses would suggest, that Christ had a design upon their temple to demolish it, and that he must be a sorcerer, or a magician, to pretend to build a temple without hands in three days time;
See Gill on "Mt 26:61".

Mark 14:59

Ver. 59. But, neither so did their witness agree together. Their witness did agree together, for they both witnessed the same thing; but not so as to found upon it the charge of a capital crime against him; their witness was not so, ish, "equal", was not answerable to their desires, nor sufficient to convict him of a capital crime, for which they could condemn him to death, as before observed on
Mr 14:56.

Mark 14:60

Ver. 60. And the high priest stood up in the midst,.... Of the sanhedrim, of which he was now president: he sat at the head of them, and Ab Beth Din, or the father of the council, at his right hand; and the rest of the council sat before him, in a semicircular form, as the half of a round corn floor, so that the president, and the father of the council, could see them {n}; for they were all before him, he being situated in the middle, right against them; so that when he stood up, he might be said to stand in the midst of them:

and asked Jesus, saying, answerest thou nothing? For he had made no reply to the several witnesses, that came against him:

what is it which these witness against thee? Is it true, or false?
See Gill on "Mt 26:62".

{n} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 3. Maimon. Hiltch. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 3.

Mark 14:61

Ver. 61. But he held his peace, and answered nothing,.... Knowing it would be to no purpose, and signifying hereby, that the things alleged against him were unworthy of an answer:

again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? The Vulgate Latin adds, "God": in Matthew it is "God" only, Mt 26:63. This is one of the names and epithets of God, with the Jews; nothing is more common in their writings, than this abbreviature, hbqh, which is, awh Kwrb vwdqh, "the holy blessed he"; who is blessed in himself, and the fountain of all blessedness to his creatures, and who is blessed and praised by angels and saints; See Gill on "Mt 26:63".

Mark 14:62

Ver. 62. And Jesus said, I am,.... That is, the Son of God; in proof of which he adds,

and ye shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power; that is, of God, who is all power, the Lord God Almighty:

and coming in the clouds of heaven; either at the destruction of Jerusalem, or at the last day, referring to the prophecy in **Da 7:13**;
See Gill on "Mt 26:64".

Mark 14:63

Ver. 63. Then the high priest rent his clothes,.... As was usual upon hearing blasphemy; which he now supposed the case, or at least would have it so thought:

and saith, what need we any further witnesses? or trouble ourselves to see for any more, or to hear and take the depositions of any others; See Gill on "Mt 26:65".

Mark 14:64

Ver. 64. Ye have heard the blasphemy,.... The "manifest" blasphemy, as the Arabic version renders it; and "out of his own mouth", as the Syriac version adds, agreeably to Lu 22:71,

what think ye? what sentence is to, be passed upon him?

And they all condemned him to be guilty of death; excepting Joseph of Arimathea, Lu 23:51;
See Gill on "Mt 26:66".

Mark 14:65

Ver. 65. And some began to spit on him,.... The men that held him, Lu 22:6, fulfilling the prophecy in Isa 50:6;

and to cover his face; with a veil, or linen cloth, to blindfold: him, as a person unworthy to behold the light: or rather, in order to make sport with him:

and to buffet him; with their double fists;

and to say unto him, prophesy. The Arabic version adds, "unto us, O Christ, who it is that hath buffeted thee now?" that gave thee the last blow? and to the same purpose the Ethiopic. The Persic version adds, "and deliver thyself";

and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands. The Syriac version renders it, "on his cheeks": they gave him slaps on the face. These were the officers of the high priest, that used him in this indecent manner. This clause is omitted in the Ethiopic version.

Mark 14:66

Ver. 66. And as Peter was beneath in the palace,.... Not at the lower and further end of the room, but in the lower part of it; that part in which Jesus and the sanhedrim were, being upon an advanced ground, with steps ascending to it:

there cometh one of the maids of the high priest; the same that kept the door, and let him in. The Ethiopic version renders it, "a daughter of the high priest".

Mark 14:67

Ver. 67. And when she saw Peter warming himself,.... At the life which was in the midst of the hall:

she looked upon him; very earnestly, knowing him to be the same, she had let in at the motion of one, that was known in the high priest's family; and suspecting him, by being a stranger, and by his looks:

and said, and thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth; that is, one of his disciples; See Gill on "Mt 26:69".

Mark 14:68

Ver. 68. But he denied,.... That he was with Jesus, or a disciple of his:

saying, I know not; Jesus of Nazareth: neither understand I what thou sayest; about him, and of being with him: the last phrase, "neither understand I", is omitted in the Syriac and Persic versions:

and he went out into the porch; adjoining to the palace, to consider what to do, being surprised and confounded at such a challenge:

and the cock crew; the first time, being about midnight; and yet he took no notice of it, nor remembered what Christ had but a few hours before said to him: or if he did, he might hope he should not meet with another attack, or he should have more courage and strength than to deny a second time.

Mark 14:69

Ver. 69. And a maid saw him again,.... Either the same maid, so the Syriac and Persic versions read, "that maid": that selfsame maid, as before, or another, as in Mt 26:71, and so the Arabic version reads it here; but the Ethiopic as before "a daughter"; that is, of the high priest:

and began to say to them that stood by; the fire, along with Peter, warming themselves:

this is one of them; this man is one of the disciples and followers of Jesus of Nazareth; he is of that sect, he certainly belongs to them, and is come here only as a spy.

Mark 14:70

Ver. 70. And he denied it again,.... That he was one of the disciples of Jesus:

and a little after; about an hour after, Lu 22:59;

they that stood by, said again to Peter, surely thou art one of them; one confidently affirmed that he was with Jesus, and another challenged him with seeing him in the garden with him, Lu 22:59, and in general they were of opinion, that he must be one of that sect, giving this as a reason,

for thou art a Galilean: as they supposed Jesus to be; and knowing that in Galilee he had chiefly preached, and wrought his miracles, and had there a large number of followers:

and thy speech agreeth [thereto]; he used words and phrases peculiar to the Galileans, and pronounced as they did: See Gill on "Mt 26:73". This clause is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, and is wanting in Beza's most ancient copy; but is in the other copies, and in all the eastern versions.

Mark 14:71

Ver. 71. But he began to curse and to swear,.... To wish the most dreadful things upon himself, and to swear by the living God;

[saying], I know not this man of whom ye speak:
See Gill on "Mt 26:74".

Mark 14:72

Ver. 72. And the second time the cock crew,.... Immediately, as soon as he had so said and swore, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, and as it is read in one of Beza's copies; which was about three of the clock in the morning, and is what is properly called the cock crowing:

and Peter called to mind; upon hearing the cock crow a second time,

the word that Jesus said unto him, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice: as he now had done twice, to the maid or maids, and a third time to the servants that stood by the fire along with him:

and when he thought thereon; on the words of Christ, and on his sin in denying him, and on the aggravated circumstances of it. The Arabic version renders it, "he turned himself to weep"; he turned away from the company, he threw himself out of it, and got out of doors as fast as he could, and broke out into a violent fit of weeping. The Syriac, Persic, and Vulgate Latin versions, render it, "he began to weep"; this phrase is omitted in the Ethiopic version: some choose to render it, "he looked upon him", that is, on Christ: as Christ looked upon him; which produced true evangelical repentance in him, so Peter looked upon his dear Lord with concern, whom he so had shamefully denied; he looked upon him and mourned, he looked upon him with an eye of faith, and sorrowed for his sin after a godly sort: but the true sense of the word is, "he covered himself"; he cast his garment over his head, he veiled himself as mourners did, who covered their heads, and their faces, and even their lips. So Maimonides {o};

"from whence, says he, is uncovering the head, forbidden a mourner? For, lo! it is said to Eze 24:17, "cover not thy lips" at all, for the rest of mourners are obliged to the covering of the head; the linen cloth, or veil, with which he covers his head, he covers with a part of it, a little over his mouth; as it is said, Le 13:45, "He shall put a covering upon his upper lip": and Onkelos paraphrases it,
Pjety albak, "as a mourner he shall cover himself"."

And so it is said of Haman {p},

"that he went to his house, and mourned for his daughter,
albak hyvyr le Pjetmw, "and put a covering on his head as a mourner": for his daughter, and for his reproach."

And this, it seems, was the custom of the Ishmaelites: hence that saying {q},

"all veiling (in mourning) which is not as the veiling of the Ishmaelites (who cover all the face), is no veiling?"

And thus Peter, through shame, and as a token of sorrow and mourning for his sin, threw his garment over him:

and he wept; as Matthew says, "bitterly": being fully convinced of his sin, and heartily sorry lot it; See Gill on "Mt 26:75".

{o} Hilch. Ebel, c. 5. sect. 19. {p} Targum in Esther vi. 12. Vid. Targum in Mic. iii. 7. {q} T. Bab. Moed. Katon, fol. 24. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 15:1

Ver. 1. And straightway in the morning,.... As soon as it was break of day, or daylight appeared:

the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and Scribes; who were the principal men in the sanhedrim:

and the whole council; which, on this extraordinary occasion, was convened; the result of which was, to bind Jesus, and deliver him up to the Roman governor, to be put to death by him, as a seditious person, and an enemy to Caesar, and accordingly they did so:

and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate. The Syriac and Persic versions add, "the governor";
See Gill on "Mt 27:1",
See Gill on "Mt 27:2".

Mark 15:2

Ver. 2. And Pilate asked him, art thou the king of the Jews?.... Which either he had heard before that it was said by him, and his followers; or was what the Jews now suggested to him as his crime, which they desired sentence of death might pass upon him:

and he answering, said unto him, thou sayest it; which is all one as if he had said, I am; See Gill on "Mt 26:25"; for so he was in a sense, in which he explained himself to Pilate's satisfaction,
Joh 18:36;
See Gill on "Mt 27:11".

Mark 15:3

Ver. 3. And the chief priests accused him of many things,.... As that he was a magician, and a blasphemer, and gave out that he was the Son of God; and that he made himself a king, and even forbad the people to give tribute to Caesar, and moved discord, sedition, and rebellion throughout the land;

but he answered nothing. This clause is wanting in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions; but is in the Greek text of the Complutensian edition, and in the Ethiopic version, and agrees with Mt 27:12,
See Gill on "Mt 27:12".

Mark 15:4

Ver. 4. And Pilate asked him again,.... In the presence of the chief priests, who laid so many things to his charge; for the former question was put, when Jesus and he were alone in the judgment hall, whither the Jews would not enter for fear of being defiled; see
John 18:28;

saying, answerest thou nothing behold how many things they witness against thee? The charges were many, and very heinous, and which Pilate thought called for self-defence; See Gill on "Mt 27:13".

Mark 15:5

Ver. 5. But Jesus yet answered nothing,.... He still continued silent, and made no defence for himself, which the governor was willing to give him an opportunity to make, and, as his friend, urged him to it:

so that Pilate marvelled; what should be the meaning of his silence, when he was so capable of defending himself, and was so innocent, as Pilate himself was ready to believe; and yet the things he was charged with were of, the highest nature, and by persons of the greatest figure in the nation; so that his silence exposed him to a great deal of danger, which Pilate thought might easily be avoided by answering for himself; See Gill on "Mt 27:14".

Mark 15:6

Ver. 6. Now at that feast,.... The feast of the passover, which was at that instant; see Joh 18:39. The Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, "at every feast"; as if the following custom was used at every feast in the year, at the feasts of pentecost and tabernacles, as well as at the passover; whereas it was only at the latter:

he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired; of this custom See Gill on "Mt 27:15".

Mark 15:7

Ver. 7. And there was one named Barabbas,.... A prisoner of that name at Jerusalem;

which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him: he had been at the head of a seditious mob, and he and his accomplices were taken and put in prison:

who had committed murder in the insurrection; which may be connected either with Barabbas, and read in the singular number, as it is in the Vulgate Latin version, "he had committed"; or with the seditious persons he lay bound with, and be read in the plural number, "they had committed murder", as it is in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions; and so in the ancient copies; and the Ethiopic renders it, "he was bound with seditious persons and murderers"; though, no doubt, he was guilty of murder as well as they; and so Peter calls him a murderer, **Ac 3:14**. About this time murders were very frequently committed: the Jews say {r} that

"from the time that murderers increased, the slaying of the red heifer ceased; (the reason the commentators {s} give, is, because they were known who were accustomed to commit murder;) and that was from the time that Eleazar ben Dinai came, and Techinah ben Perishah he was called; and they called him again the son of a murderer;"

See Gill on "Mt 27:16".

{r} Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 9. Maimon. Hilch. Rotzeach. c. 9. sect. 12. {s} Jarchi & Bartienora in ib.

Mark 15:8

Ver. 8. And the multitude crying aloud,.... The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, and when the "multitude", or "people went up", to the place called the pavement, where the judgment seat was; and so it is read in Beza's most ancient copy; but the former reading is to be preferred:

began to desire [him to do] as he had ever done to them: that is, release a prisoner to them, as he had done at every passover, since he had been a governor over them.

Mark 15:9

Ver. 9. But Pilate answered them; saying,.... Being satisfied of the innocence of Jesus, and being willing to dismiss him:

will ye that I release unto you the king of the Jews? he who is called so; and which he either said by way of derision both of Christ, and them; or else in order to prevail upon them to ask his release, it being scandalous and reproachful to put their king to death.

Mark 15:10

Ver. 10. For he knew that the chief priests,.... The Persic version reads in the singular, "the chief of the priests", or the high priest, Caiaphas,

had delivered him for envy; at his popularity through his doctrine and miracles, and not from any principle of equity and justice, or from any regard to Caesar; See Gill on "Mt 27:18".

Mark 15:11

Ver. 11. But the chief priests moved the people,.... Greatly solicited and persuaded them, both in person, and by their officers they employed, and dispersed among them, to make use of arguments with them to prevail upon them:

that he should rather release Barabbas unto them; than Jesus of Nazareth; choosing rather to have a murderer granted unto them, than the holy and just one. The Persic version, as before, reads, "the chief of the priests"; but they were all concerned, and were the most active men in bringing about the death of Christ; though Caiaphas was behind none of them in envy, rage, and malice; See Gill on "Mt 27:20".

Mark 15:12

Ver. 12. And Pilate answered and said again unto them,.... Being astonished that they should ask the release of such an infamous person; and being very desirous of saving Jesus:

what will ye then that I shall do unto him, whom ye call the king of the Jews? at least many of you; would you have me put him to death? surely this can never be desired; or would you have me inflict some slight punishment on him, as scourging him, and so dismiss him?
See Gill on "Mt 27:22".

Mark 15:13

Ver. 13. And they cried out again, crucify him. For they had cried so once before, though Matthew and Mark relate it not, yet Luke does, Lu 23:21.

Mark 15:14

Ver. 14. Then Pilate said unto them,.... The third time,
Lu 23:22;

why, what evil hath he done? worthy of death. They had charged him with many things, but proved nothing against him. Pilate could find no fault in him, and judged him an innocent person, and therefore was loth to condemn him:

and they cried out the more exceedingly; with louder voices, and greater vehemency, the more they found he was inclined to save him:

crucify him; nothing short of death would satisfy them, and no other death but that of the cross; See Gill on "Mt 27:22",
See Gill on "Mt 27:23".

Mark 15:15

Ver. 15. And so Pilate, willing to content the people,.... To satisfy and make them easy, who were become very noisy and tumultuous, and fearing the consequences of their resentment, should he not comply, of which he had formerly had experience; therefore to humour them, and keep in their favour, after he had washed his hands, to testify his innocence in the matter, he released Barabbas unto them; the seditious person, robber, and murderer, as they desired:

and delivered Jesus when he had scourged him; or having scourged him; for this he had done before, hoping the Jews would have been satisfied with that, and not have insisted on any further punishment. The Arabic version very wrongly renders the words, "and delivered unto them Jesus, that he might be scourged": as if this was afterwards to be done by the Jews, or Roman soldiers; whereas he had scourged him before, and now delivered him

to be crucified, as they desired; in which he acted contrary to law and justice, to the violation of his own conscience, and merely to gratify the humour of the people; See Gill on "Mt 27:26".

Mark 15:16

Ver. 16. And the soldiers led him away into the hall,.... From the place called the pavement, where was the judge's bench, from which he passed sentence on Christ, to a large room,

called the praetorium, or judgment hall; being the hall, or room, where the praetor, or Roman magistrate, kept his court of judicature; and is the same place the Jews would not go into, lest they should be defiled, and become unmeet to eat the Chagigah that day; and into which Pilate had Jesus more than once alone,
Joh 18:28, but now he had a large company with him:

and they call together the whole band; very likely the soldiers, into whose custody Jesus was put, and who led him away, were the four soldiers that attended his crucifixion, and parted his garments; but for greater diversion they got together the whole band to which they belonged; See Gill on "Mt 27:27".

Mark 15:17

Ver. 17. And they clothed him with purple,.... Matthew calls it a "scarlet" robe; and the Persic version here renders it a "red garment": it was of a colour resembling purple; it was pretty near it, and therefore so called; which is what kings were used to wear; and so in derision of him, as a king, clothed him with this mock purple robe; and which was very likely one of the soldiers' old coats:

and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head; for a crown, and also a reed in his hand, instead of a sceptre, as Matthew relates; See Gill on "Mt 26:28",
See Gill on "Mt 26:29".

Mark 15:18

Ver. 18. And began to salute him, hail, king of the Jews!] In a mock way, wishing him long life and prosperity, as if he was a king just come to his throne, and this was his coronation day.

Mark 15:19

Ver. 19. And they smote him on the head with a reed,.... Or cane, a walking stick which they had put into his hands for a sceptre: this they took out again, and struck him on the head with it, which drove the sharp pointed thorns into his temples:

and did spit upon him; "upon his face", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read:

and bowing their knees, as to a sovereign prince,

worshipped him; saying the above words, hail, king of the Jews?
See Gill on "Mt 27:29",
See Gill on "Mt 27:30".

Mark 15:20

Ver. 20. And when they had mocked him,.... To their satisfaction, and had had enough of this sort of diversion:

they took off the purple from him; and so, in their way, unkinged him;

and put his own clothes on him: both that he might be known to be the same person; and that the four soldiers, who had the charge of him, might have the perquisites of his clothes at his execution:

and led him out to crucify him: they led him out of the "praetorium", or judgment hall, and through the city, without the gates of it, to the usual place of crucifixion; he bearing his own cross, when first led out.

Mark 15:21

Ver. 21. And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian,....
See Gill on "Mt 27:32";

who passed by; as they were leading Jesus to be crucified:

coming out of the country; from some country village hard by, according to the Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions; or out of the field, as the Persic and Ethiopic: he might have been in the field, about some rural business; or, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, to fetch wood from thence, which was lawful to be done on a feast day, with some provisos, according to the Jewish canon, which runs thus {t};

"they may bring wood out of the field, (i.e. on a feast day, as this was,) of that which is gathered together, and out of a place that is fenced about, and even of that which is scattered abroad: what is a fenced place? whatever is near to a city, the words of R. Judah. R. Jose says, whatever they go into by a door, and even within the border of the sabbath."

And according to the commentators {u}, it must be wood that is gathered together, and that lies not in an open field, but in a fenced place, and this near the city; at least with in two thousand cubits, a sabbath day's journey.

The father of Alexander and Rufus; who were men well known when Mark wrote his Gospel, and very likely men of eminence among Christians: mention is made of Alexander in Ac 19:33 and of Rufus, in
Ro 16:13, which some have thought the same as here; but whether they are or not, is not certain: however, they obliged "Simon"

to bear his cross: the cross of Christ, after him;
See Gill on "Mt 27:32".

{t} Misn. Betza, c. 4. sect. 2. {u} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Yom Tob, c. 2. sect. 14.

Mark 15:22

Ver. 22. And they bring him unto the place, Golgotha,.... A famous, or rather an infamous one, well known, and much noted for the many executions there:

which is, being interpreted, the place of a skull; because the skulls of men that had been executed and buried there, being dug up again, lay scattered about; See Gill on "Mt 27:33".

Mark 15:23

Ver. 23. And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh,.... Wine mingled with frankincense was what was usually given by the Jews to persons going to die {w}:

"he that goes to be executed they mix for him, Nyy lv owkb hnwbl lv jrwq, "a grain of frankincense in a cup of wine", that his mind may be disturbed, or not sensible; as it is said, Pr 31:6, "give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to the bitter in soul": and the tradition is, that the honourable women in Jerusalem gave this freely, and brought it them; and if they did not, it was provided by the congregation,"

at the public expense; the design of it was to intoxicate, that they might not feel their pain and misery: but neither the rich women in general, nor were the public so disposed towards Christ, as to provide such a potion for him: it is most likely therefore that this was prepared by his friends, as Mary Magdalene, Martha, and others, in order to cheer and refresh his spirits; and was different from what the soldiers gave him, which was vinegar mixed with gall, though the Persic version so reads here:

but he received it not; nor would he so much as taste of it, as he did of the other, to show that he needed no such outward means to support his spirits, nor desired any allay of his sorrows, and was not afraid to meet death in all its terrors; and besides, he had said he would drink no more of the fruit of the vine till he drank it new in his Father's kingdom, Mt 26:29;
See Gill on "Mt 27:34".

{w} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 10. fol. 193. 4.

Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 13. sect. 2, 3. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 98.

Mark 15:24

Ver. 24. And when they had crucified him,.... Had fastened him to the cross, and reared it up, and he was hanging upon it:

they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. This last clause, "what every man should take", is left out in the Arabic version. His garments they divided into four parts; and each soldier, as there were four of them, took a part; and upon his vesture, or seamless coat, because they would not rend it, they cast lots who should have it, and so fulfilled a prophecy in Ps 22:18;
See Gill on "Mt 27:35".

Mark 15:25

Ver. 25. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him. The time of the daily sacrifice of the morning, at which the priests ought to have been; and the time when the sanhedrim usually began to sit {x}; for

"the grand sanhedrim sat from the daily sacrifice of the morning, to the daily sacrifice of the evening:"

but this being an extraordinary case, and they in a hurry to put Jesus to death, had been sitting up all night; and early in the morning had procured the sentence of death on him, which they were going to execute by the time they used to sit: this was about nine o'clock in the morning, and takes in the time between that and twelve at noon. The Ethiopic version reads, "and it was the sixth hour", to make it agree with Joh 19:14; and for the reconciling of these two places, See Gill on "Joh 19:14".

{x} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 3, sect. 1.

Mark 15:26

Ver. 26. And the superscription of his accusation,.... Or "the cause of his death", as the Syriac and Persic versions read; the crime for which he suffered:

was written; over his head, upon the cross, to which it was fastened; the sum of which was,

the king of the Jews; See Gill on "Mt 27:37".

Mark 15:27

Ver. 27. And with him they crucified two thieves,.... For his greater reproach;

the one on his right hand, and the other on his left; as if he had been one of them, and a principal among them; See Gill on "Mt 27:38".

Mark 15:28

Ver. 28. And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith,.... In Isa 53:12;

and he was numbered with the transgressors: he was no transgressor of the law of God himself, but was perfectly conformable to it in his holy nature, harmless conversation, and complete obedience: he knew no sin, nor committed any in thought, word, or deed, nor could any be found in him by men or devils; and yet he was traduced as a sinner, and charged with many foul things, none of which could be proved upon him: but inasmuch as he stood in the room, and stead of sinners, and had all the sins of his people imputed to him, and laid upon him, with his own consent, he was treated by the justice of God as if he had been a transgressor, and was reckoned as such; of which his being placed between two thieves, was a symbol and representation: hence he was stricken, and wounded, and died, for the sins of those in whose place he stood. The fifty third chapter of Isaiah, where this passage stands, is a manifest prophecy of the Messiah, as several of the Jewish writers themselves, both ancient and modern, acknowledge; though some would apply it to some other persons {y}.

{y} See my Book of the Prophecies of the Old Testament, &c. p. 160, 161, &c.

Mark 15:29

Ver. 29. And they that passed by,.... In the road, and went by the cross. The Arabic version adds, "before him", Christ, as he hung on the cross:

railed on him, wagging their heads; gave him opprobrious language, and used indecent gestures;

and saying, ah! thou that destroyest the temple; the Vulgate Latin version adds, "of God":

and buildest it in three days; thou poor vain miserable creature, that boasted of thy power, where art thou now? and what dost thou think of thyself?

Mark 15:30

Ver. 30. Save thyself, and come down from the cross. Suggesting that if he was what he had pretended to be, and could do what he gave out he could, he might easily free himself from the cross, and make his escape; See Gill on "Mt 27:39",
See Gill on "Mt 27:40".

Mark 15:31

Ver. 31. Likewise also the chief priests mocking,.... Or "laughed at one another", as the Syriac version renders it, having gained their point, and satiated their revenge on him:

said among themselves with the Scribes; who were likewise his implacable enemies;

he saved others, himself he cannot save; See Gill on "Mt 27:41",
See Gill on "Mt 27:42".

Mark 15:32

Ver. 32. Let Christ the king of Israel,.... Who sets up for the Messiah, and whose followers call him the king of Israel, whom the nation expected: and if he is so, let him descend now from the cross, that we may see; see him come down, and be eyewitnesses of his power:

and believe; that he is the Messiah that was prophesied of, and has been waiting for:

and they that were crucified with him reviled him; that is, the thieves, at least one of them; See Gill on "Mt 27:44".

Mark 15:33

Ver. 33. And when the sixth hour was come,.... Or twelve o'clock at noon, having hung upon the cross from about the third hour, or nine in the morning:

there was darkness over the, whole land until the ninth hour; or three o'clock in the afternoon. The Ethiopic version renders the whole thus, "and when it was noon, the sun was darkened, and the whole world was darkened until the ninth hour";
See Gill on "Mt 27:45".

Mark 15:34

Ver. 34. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice,....
See Gill on "Mt 27:46";

saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? in Matthew it is, "Eli, Eli", Both "Eli" and "Eloi", are Hebrew words, and signify the same; and are both used in Ps 22:1, from whence the whole is taken:

which is, being interpreted, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? See Gill on "Mt 27:46".

Mark 15:35

Ver. 35. And some of them that stood by,.... The cross:

when they heard [it]; the loud voice of Jesus, and the words he uttered:

said, behold he calleth Elias; whom they ignorantly, or wilfully took for Eloi; See Gill on "Mt 27:47".

Mark 15:36

Ver. 36. And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar,.... Christ at the same time saying, I thirst; see Joh 19:28;

and put it on a reed; an hyssop stalk, Joh 19:29;

and gave him to drink; and so fulfilled a prophecy in Ps 69:21;

saying, or "they said", as the Syriac version reads it; not he that fetched the sponge, but the others that were with him, and which agrees with Mt 27:27;

let alone; as forbidding him to go near him, and offer him any thing to drink:

let us see whether Elias will come and take him down; from the cross; See Gill on "Mt 27:49".

Mark 15:37

Ver. 37. And Jesus cried with a loud voice,.... A second time, and said the words which are in Lu 23:46 and in Joh 19:30

and gave up the ghost. The Syriac version renders it, "and finished": his life, his days, his race, his ministry, and the work which was given him to do; See Gill on "Mt 27:50".

Mark 15:38

Ver. 38. And the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. At which time also there was an earthquake, and the rocks were rent, and graves were opened, as Matthew relates,
See Gill on "Mt 27:51",
See Gill on "Mt 27:52".

Mark 15:39

Ver. 39. And when the centurion, which stood over against him,.... To watch him, that nobody released him, and that he did not come down from the cross himself;

saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost; that he cried with so loud and strong a voice, and the next moment expired:

he said, truly this man was the Son of God; and so said the rest of the soldiers that were with them, as appears from Mt 27:54,
See Gill on "Mt 27:54".

Mark 15:40

Ver. 40. There were also women looking on afar off,.... At some distance from the cross, observing what was said and done;

among whom was Mary Magdalene; who had received great favours from Christ:

and Mary the mother of James the less; or "little", so called to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee, and because he might be little of stature: nor was it unusual with the Jews to distinguish persons after this manner: so we read {z} of R. Jesa,
aryez, "the little", and of Samuel, Nwjqh, "the little" {a}, which some have thought to be the Apostle Paul, so called from the littleness of his stature:

and of Joses; or "Joseph", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read;

and Salome; the mother of Zebedee's children, James and John;
See Gill on "Mt 27:56". This was a common name among the Jews; Herod had a sister and a daughter of this name; and the daughter of Herodias, who demanded the head of John, the Baptist, was of this name; and it is the same with Shalom: we read {b} of one Imme Shalom, or mother Shalom, wife of R. Eliezer, and sister to Rabban Gamaliel. Salome, with the Ethiopians {c}, is said to be Mary's midwife, and to accompany Christ, with Mary, and Joseph, when they fled into Egypt.

{z} Zohar in Exod. fol. 63. 2. & passim. {a} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 28. 2. & 29. 1. {b} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 116. 1. {c} Ludolph. Lex. Ethiop. p. 525, & Castell. Lex. Polyglot, col. 3767.

Mark 15:41

Ver. 41. Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him,.... Wherever he went in Galilee, and from thence to Jerusalem:

and ministered unto him; of their worldly substance, **Lu 8:3**:

and many other women which came up with him into Jerusalem; from the same parts; see Mt 27:55.

Mark 15:42

Ver. 42. And now when the even was come,.... "Of the preparation", as the Syriac version reads; or "the night of the sixth day":, as the Persic version renders it, "Friday" night:

because it was the preparation; of the passover, and of the sabbath, when they prepared their food, and got it ready for the ensuing sabbath, on which it was not lawful to dress any;

that is, the day before the sabbath; that is, Friday; on which day, it is clear, Christ suffered, died, and was buried.

Mark 15:43

Ver. 43. Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor,.... A man of a good aspect, well dressed, and that behaved well and honourably in his office, as a counsellor: he seems to have been a priest, and one of the bench of priests that sat in the high priest's chamber, which is called, yjwwlb tkvl, "the chamber of the counsellors" {d}; with whom he advised there, in matters of moment:

which also waited for the kingdom of God; for the coming and kingdom of the Messiah, for the Gospel dispensation, the world to come, the Jews were so much in expectation of.

Came and went in boldly unto Pilate; not now ashamed of Christ, or afraid openly to appear in his cause, and declare himself a lover of him, a believer in him, and a disciple of his, though he formerly was:

and craved the body of Jesus; desired leave to take it down from the cross, and bury it; See Gill on "Mt 27:58".

{d} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 3. 2. & Hieros. Yoma, fol. 38. 3.

Mark 15:44

Ver. 44. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead,.... For death, by crucifixion, was a slow lingering death; persons that were in their full strength hung a great while before they expired; and the two thieves, which were crucified with Christ, were not dead when he was:

and calling unto him the centurion; who was set to watch him:

he asked him, whether he had been any while dead; he inquired of him, whether he was dead, and how long he had been dead.

Mark 15:45

Ver. 45. And when he knew it of the centurion,.... Who might inform him of his giving up the ghost after he had cried with a loud voice, which so much affected him; and how he was found to be really dead when they came to break the legs of the malefactors; and how that one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, from whence flowed blood and water; so that there was no room to doubt of his being really dead; with which Pilate being satisfied,

he gave the body to Joseph; ordered it to be given to him; gave him leave to take it down from the cross, and inter it.

Mark 15:46

Ver. 46. And he bought fine linen,.... That is, Joseph, as is expressed in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions; which, when he had done, as is highly probable, in the city of Jerusalem, he went to Mount Calvary,

and took him down; took the body of Christ down from the cross; though, no doubt, with the assistance of others, or by others, and not he himself, at least not alone:

and wrapped him in the linen; wound him up in it, as was the manner of the Jews; See Gill on "Mt 27:59";

and laid him in a sepulchre, which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre;
See Gill on "Mt 27:60".

Mark 15:47

Ver. 47. And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses,.... Or Joseph, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read:

beheld where he was laid: very likely they saw Joseph, and his men, take him down from the cross, and they followed him, and observed where he laid him; or, as the Ethiopic version reads, "where they buried him"; placing themselves, as Matthew suggests, right "over against the sepulchre", Mt 27:61; so that they were witnesses of his death, and of his burial, as they afterwards were of his resurrection from the dead.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Mark 16:1

Ver. 1. And when the sabbath was past,.... "In the end of it", as Matthew says, Mt 28:1; not "when it was the sabbath", as the Arabic version reads; for it was not lawful to buy spices, and anoint with on the sabbath day; See Gill on "Mt 28:1".

Mary Magdalene, and Mary, [the mother of James,] and Salome; who was the wife of Zebedee, and the mother of the other James and John:

had bought sweet spices; or "brought", as the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions read; for though the women might have bought some on the preparation day, the day before the sabbath, the same evening that Christ was buried, Lu 23:56, yet, they might buy more for the same purpose, after the sabbath was over: for this there was a particular market at Jerusalem {d}; for we are a told, that

"there were there three markets, one by another; in the first of which were sold, all kinds of precious things, silks, and embroidered work; in the second, various kinds of fruits and herbs; and in the third, all kinds of spices."

That they might come and anoint him; with those sweet spices, as was the manner of the Jews: hence we read {e} of, Mytm lv Mymvbh, "the spices of the dead"; which were used to expel an ungrateful savour: this they did, out of affection to Christ, but seemed to have no faith in his resurrection, though he had told them of it, which they had forgot. The Vulgate Latin reads, "that they might anoint Jesus"; the Ethiopic version, "anoint his body": but the Arabic thus, "anoint the sepulchre"; his body being anointed before, and wound up by Joseph and Nicodemus; and therefore they came to strew the sepulchre with spices and ointments, and give it a sweet perfume. Though it seems most likely, that they came to anoint his body; for this was one of the things which was customary in Israel to do to dead men, as Maimonides {f} observes, Mymvb ynmb wtwa Nyko, "they anoint him with various sorts of spices".

{d} Jechus Haabot, p. 24. Ed. Hottinger. {e} Misn. Betacot, c. 8. sect. 6. & Barrenors in ib. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 12. 2. {f} Hiichot Ebel, c. 4. sect. 1.

Mark 16:2

Ver. 2. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week,.... See Gill on "Mt 28:1".

They came to the sepulchre at the rising of the sun; of the sun of righteousness, as Mr. Mede observes; or rather, of the natural sun: for though it was dark when they set out, and when it dawned towards the first day, yet by that time that they all got to the sepulchre, the sun was rising; the Jews say {g}, that

"from the ascending of the morning, or break of day, until the sun rises, is an hour and a half."

And so much time may very well be allowed the women, from their setting out, to their coming to the sepulchre. Moreover, they say {h}, that "from the hind of the morning, to the time the east is enlightened, a man may walk four miles, and from the time that the east is enlightened, hmxh Untv de, "until the sun rises", four miles."

But women must not be thought to walk so fast: let it be observed, that Christ, who is called the hind of the morning, Ps 22:1 (title, "Aijeleth Shahar"), and the morning star, Re 22:16, rose at this time.

{g} Piske Tosaphot in Pesach. art. 44. {h} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 2. 3. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 50. fol. 45. 2.

Mark 16:3

Ver. 3. And they said among themselves,.... Either before they set out, or as they were going along:

who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? Which they saw was placed there by Joseph, or his orders: this was the only difficulty they had, that they were aware of; for they seem to know nothing of the sealing of the stone, and of the watch that was set to guard the sepulchre: things which were done on the sabbath day, on which they rested: for had they, in all likelihood they would never have attempted to have gone to it; the guard of soldiers would have been a sufficient discouragement: but all their concern was, how, and by whom, the stone should be rolled away, that lay at the door of the sepulchre; and perhaps their concern might be, not only on account of the largeness of the stone, as being too much for them to remove, but because such a stone defiled by touching it, according to the Jewish traditions {i}.

{i} Misn. Oholot, c. 2. sect 4.

Mark 16:4

Ver. 4. And when they looked,.... Towards the sepulchre, as they came near it:

they saw that the stone was rolled away; they perceived it lay at some distance from the door of the sepulchre, which doubtless was very grateful, and matter of rejoicing to them:

for it was very great; these words are to be read, in connection with the preceding verse; for they are not a reason, why when they looked towards the sepulchre, they saw the stone rolled, because it was a very large one, and so easily to be seen at a distance; but a reason why they were so thoughtful and concerned, who should roll it away for them, it being so big, that they could not think that they were able to do it themselves.

Mark 16:5

Ver. 5. And entering into the sepulchre,.... For the sepulchres of the Jews were made so large, that persons might go into them: the rule for making them is this {k};

"he that sells ground to his neighbour to make a burying place, or that receives of his neighbour to make a burying place, must make the inside of the cave four cubits by six, and open in it eight graves; three here, and three there, and two over against them: and the graves must be four cubits long, and seven high, and six broad. R. Simeon says, he must take the inside of the cave six cubits by eight, and open within thirteen graves: four here, and four there, and three over against them; and one on the right hand of the door, and one on the left; and he must make, rux, "a court", at the mouth of the cave, six by six, according to the bier, and those that bury; and he must open in the midst of it two caves, one here and another there. R. Simeon says, four at the four sides; R. Simeon ben Gamaliel says, all is according to the nature of the rock."

Now it was in the court that the women entered, where the bier was to be put down by the bearers; and where they could look into the sepulchre, and the several caves and graves in it, and what were in them. So Maimonides says {l},

"they dig caves in the earth, and make a grave on, the side of the cave, and bury in; it."

And there being a door into one of these caves, persons might enter in, and see where the graves were, and the bodies lay.

They saw a young man; an angel; as angels used to appear in the form of men: nor is this any contradiction to John's account, who says there were two angels, one at the head, and another at the feet,
Joh 20:12; since Mark does not say there was no more than one; besides, John relates what Mary Magdalene saw, when alone, and Mark what all the women

saw:

sitting on the right side; from whence we learn, on what side of the door of the sepulchre Christ was laid, according to the above description of one:

clothed long white garment: See Gill on "Mt 28:3"; which was as white as snow:

and they were affrighted; at the sight of him; not expecting such a vision, but to have seen, the body of their Lord.

{k} Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 6. sect. 8. {l} Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 4. sect. 4.

Mark 16:6

Ver. 6. And he saith unto them, be not affrighted,....
See Gill on "Mt 28:5",
See Gill on "Mt 28:6", where the same things, and almost in the same words, are said as here.

Mark 16:7

Ver. 7. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter,.... Peter is particularly mentioned, not as distinct from the apostles, or as if he was not one of them, having sinned in the manner he had done; much less because he was the chief of them; but to comfort him in his great sorrow, on account of his fall; and to encourage him to meet Christ with the rest of his disciples, who might be both afraid and ashamed, because he had so basely denied him: this is a kind intimation, in favour of Peter; none of the other evangelists observe it; but this Gospel being published, as is thought by some, under the direction and examination of Peter himself, he was careful to relate every thing, that either aggravated his own crime, or illustrated the grace of God, and love of Christ towards him. The Persic version puts Peter first, rendering it, "say to Cephas and the rest of the disciples"; all copies, and other versions, put him last:

that he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him;
See Gill on "Mt 28:7";

as he said unto you, as in Mr 14:28.

Mark 16:8

Ver. 8. And they went out quickly,.... Out of the sepulchre, into which they had been, to see where Christ lay, as invited by the angel, Mr 16:6. The word "quickly", is not read in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions: "which when they heard"; that is, when they heard the angel's and instructions, immediately they went out:

and fled from the sepulchre; as surprised and affrighted:

for they trembled and were amazed; at what they saw and heard, and yet this dread and fear were mixed with joy at the news of Christ's resurrection, as Matthew relates, Mt 28:8.

Neither said they any thing to any man; they met with by the way, till they came to the disciples; to whom they told all, otherwise they would not have acted according to the angel's orders

for they were afraid; not only affrighted with what they had seen and heard, but the were afraid to tell any but the disciples of these things, for fear of the Jews; lest they should be thought to have stolen the body of Christ, and so be taken up on that account, and punished.

Mark 16:9

Ver. 9. Now when [Jesus] was risen early the first [day] of the week,.... Though the word "Jesus" is not in the text, it is rightly supplied; for of the rising of no other, can the words be understood; and so the Persic version supplies "Messiah", or "Christ"; that Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, agrees with the accounts of all the evangelists, and is here expressly affirmed; the phrase, "the first day of the week", is so indeed placed, as that it may be thought to connected with the following words; as it is by some; fancying there would otherwise be a disagreement with Mt 28:1, whereas there is none;
See Gill on "Mt 28:1" though it is true also, that he did appear on that day to Mary Magdalene, it being the same day he rose from the dead. But the true reading and pointing are as here placed; and the phrase belongs to, and points out the day of Christ's rising from the dead; and which ambiguity is removed

in the Syriac version, which renders it, "now early on the first day of the week he rose"; and so the Persic version, "the Messiah", or "Christ, therefore on the morning of the, first day, rose from the dead": and that he rose early on that day, is clear from the women, who set out at the end of the sabbath, when that was past and over; and got to the sepulchre by the time the day dawned; and one of them, while it was dark, and all of them by break of day, at least by sunrising, and he was then risen:

he appeared first to Mary Magdalene; in the habit of a gardener, for whom she took him at first; and this was at the sepulchre, where she staid after the disciples were gone. That she was the very first person that Christ showed himself to, after his resurrection, may be concluded from hence, and from the account the Evangelist John has given, Joh 20:14, nor is there any reason to think, that before this, he appeared to his mother, of which the evangelists are entirely silent. This was a very great favour, and an high honour that was bestowed upon her; and who had received large favours from him before:

out of whom he had cast seven devils, see **Lu 8:2**. And if she had been a very wicked person, as she is commonly thought to be, and very likely she had been, since Satan had such a power over her, as to lodge seven devils in her, it is an instance of abounding grace, that Christ should heap up favours on such an one; and she should be the first that he should appear to and converse with after his resurrection.

Mark 16:10

Ver. 10. And she went and told them that had been with him,.... Not "with her", as the Persic version reads, but "with him"; that is, with Christ: she went, as she was bid by Christ, and told his disciples, what she had heard and seen; even those who had been with him from the beginning, and had heard his doctrines, and seen his miracles, and had had communion with him, and truly believed in him, and were his constant followers, and real disciples; not only Peter, James, and John, who were with him, particularly at the raising of Jairus's daughter, and at his transfiguration on the mount, and when in his sorrows, in the garden; but the rest of the eleven, and not only them, but others that were with them; see Lu 24:9.

As they mourned and wept, being inconsolable for the death of their Lord, and the loss of his presence; and also for their carriage towards him, that one among them should betray him, another deny him, and all forsake him: thus were they like doves of the valley, mourning for their absent Lord, and for their own iniquities; and in this condition were they, when Mary brought them the joyful news of Christ's resurrection from the dead.

Mark 16:11

Ver. 11. And they, when they had heard that he was alive,.... That is, the apostles, and those that were with them; when they heard the report of Mary Magdalene, that Christ was raised from the dead, and was certainly alive; or of all the women, for the Syriac version reads, "when they heard them saying that he was alive", not only Mary Magdalene, but Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women; for these all related this to the apostles, and the rest; see
Lu 24:9.

And had been seen of her; of Mary Magdalene, or "of them"; as the Syriac version reads, and as it is read in one of Beza's copies:

they believed not; the words of Mary, and the other women, for they seemed as idle tales to them, Lu 24:11, imagining they were deceived with the sight of a spectre, or apparition; and fearing the news were too good and great to be true; forgetting the words of their Lord, that he should rise again the third day, and which had been so often repeated to them; and all this through stupidity of mind, occasioned by the trouble and consternation they were in.

Mark 16:12

Ver. 12. After that,.... A little time, or some few hours after, on the selfsame day; see Lu 24:13;

he appeared in another form: it seems to have been the form, or habit of a gardener that he appeared in to Mary; since she thought him to be one, and to be the gardener that belonged to the garden, in which the sepulchre was: but now it was in another form, or habit, that he appeared; very likely in the habit of a Scribe, or doctor; since he took upon him to expound the Scriptures to the persons he appeared to; as also took bread, and blessed it, when at supper with them, Lu 24:27. According to the Jewish canons {m}

"if two persons eat together, and one of them is a Scribe, and the other an unlearned man, Krbm rpwo, "the Scribe blesses", and the unlearned man is excused."

This is not to be understood of any change in the shape of his body, or the features of his face; for as soon as their eyes were opened, which had been before held, they knew him perfectly well: whereas, if there had been such an alteration made in him, that he could not have been known for the same, there would have been no need of holding their eyes, that they should not know him, Lu 24:16. This appearance was

unto two of them; one of them was Cleophas, or Alphaeus, which is the same, Lu 24:18; the other is by some {n} thought to be Simon Peter, from what is said in Lu 24:34 though others {o} think it was Nathanael, and others {p} Luke the evangelist, who conceals his own name, when he mentions the other; and some {q} that his name was Ammaon, which perhaps may be through mistake of the place, Emmaus, where they were going, for the name of one of them, and the appearance to them was,

as they walked, and went into the country: to a country village called Emmaus, about sixty furlongs, or seven miles and a half from Jerusalem; see Lu 24:13.

{m} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 45. 2. {n} Lightfoot, Hor. in. v. 13. & in Luk. xxiv. 13. {o} Epiphan contra Haeres. l. 1. Haeres. 23. {p} Vid. Theophylact. in Luc. xxiv. 13. {q} Ambros in Luc. 12. 49. & 24.

Mark 16:13

Ver. 13. And they went and told it unto the residue,.... Upon their return to Jerusalem, which was on the same night, they went to the eleven apostles, and the other disciples that were with them, and related the whole affair to them; how that Jesus had joined them by the way, and discoursed much with them about himself, and expounded the Scriptures on the road; and when they came to the end of their journey, sat down at meat with them, when he was very plainly discerned, and known by them, and then disappeared; see Lu 24:33;

neither believed they them. "These two", as the Arabic version reads; though they were men, and fellow disciples; and this was a repeated testimony, and a second set of witnesses of Christ's resurrection to them; all which aggravates their unbelief: upon sight of them they said, "the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon", Lu 24:34; the reason of which Dr. Lightfoot thinks was this, that Peter hearing that Christ was risen, and went before them into Galilee, was eager to see him, and therefore took this journey along with Cleophas, which the rest of the disciples knew; and he returning so soon, they concluded he had seen him: but when he, and Cleophas, told the whole affair, they were as unbelieving as ever.

Mark 16:14

Ver. 14. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven,.... Apostles; for this was now the number of them, Judas being gone from them, and dead; and they were so called, though Thomas was not now with them, because their whole company consisted of this number: this appearance of Christ to them was on the same first day of the week, at evening, Joh 20:19, though it must be very late at night; for it was after the two above disciples were returned from Emmaus, where Christ and they had supped together; see Lu 24:29;

as they sat at meat; or "sat together"; being assembled together, and the doors shut fast for fear of the Jews, Joh 20:19, and so the Arabic renders it, "while they were gathered together"; and the Persic version, "who being gathered together were sitting": nor does the word necessarily signify sitting at meat; nor is it very likely that they should be eating so late at night; though it is probable they had been eating, as seems from Lu 24:41;

and upbraided them with their unbelief, and hardness of heart: not but that their hearts were very contrite for their sinful carriage to Christ; and very much humbled they were under the present dispensation: their hearts were much affected, and they were filled with sorrow and trouble for the loss of Christ; but in this point their unbelief increased by their fears, and so much prevailed, that all that were said by one, and another, made no impression on them: and a great aggravation of their incredulity, and a reason of Christ's upbraiding them in this manner were,

because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen; as Mary Magdalene, and the other women, and Cleophas, and the other disciple that was with him, who were eyewitnesses that he was risen from the dead; and such as might have been depended on.

Mark 16:15

Ver. 15. And he said unto them,.... Not at the same time, and place, as before; not on the first day of the week, on which he rose from the dead, but forty days after, just upon his ascension to heaven; see Mr 16:19; nor at Jerusalem, but in Galilee, where be appointed to meet his disciples, and did, when he gave them the following commission; see Mt 28:16.

go ye into all the world: not only into Judea, and through all the cities of it, where they had been before confined; nor only into the Roman empire, which is sometimes so called, because great part of the world was under that government; but into every known and habitable part of the whole universe, to all the nations of the world under heaven: and it is to be observed, that this command is not enjoined on every apostle separately, as if each of them was to go into all the world, and travel over every part; but that one was to go one way, and another another way; every one had his line, or that part of the world marked out for him, whither he was to steer his course, and where he was to fulfil and finish his ministry: and besides, this commission not only included the Apostles, but reaches to all the ministers of the Gospel in succeeding ages, to the end of the world; and since this, one part of the world, which was not known, is now discovered; and the order includes that, as well as the then known parts of the world, and the Gospel accordingly has been sent into it.

And preach the Gospel to every creature; not to inanimate and irrational creatures, as stocks and stones, the beasts of the field, &c. nor to all rational creatures, as angels, good or bad; the former need not the preaching of the Gospel, and the latter are denied the blessing; but men, the offspring of fallen Adam, the objects of God's good will: these are styled "the creatures", because the chief of God's creation on earth; and are often in the Jewish writings so called; take an instance or two:

"R. Chuninn ben Dousa {r} used to say, all in whom, twyrbh, "the creatures" (i.e. men) have delight, God has delight; and in whomsoever "the creatures" (or men) have no, delight, God has no delight."

One of the seven qualifications of a member of the sanhedrim is, twyrbh tbha, "love of the creatures" {s}, or love of men: so it is said {t}, that

"the holy blessed God, sits in the height of the world, and gives a portion of food, hyrb lkl, "to every creature","

that is, to every man: and particularly the Gentiles, as distinguished from the

Jews, are often intended by this phrase: thus

"says {u} R. Judah, perhaps, twyrbh, "the creatures", (i.e. the Gentiles,) knew the love with which the holy blessed God loved Israel, and roared like lions to pursue after them."

It is elsewhere {w} said,

"all the prayers, twyrb lv, "of the creatures" (the Heathens) are only concerning the earth; Lord, let the earth bring forth! Lord, let the earth be fruitful! All the prayers of the Israelites, are only for the house of the Lord; Lord, let the house of the sanctuary be built, &c."

And in this sense is the phrase used, in **Ro 8:22** **2Pe 3:4**. Now to these, Christ would have the Gospel preached, as well as to the Jews; even to all, without any distinction of people, Jews and Gentiles, Barbarians, Scythians, bond and free, male and female, rich and poor, greater or lesser sinners, even to all mankind; than which, nothing was more provoking to the Jews; who would, if they could, have revoked and made null this commission of Christ; see **1Th 2:16**. It was the Gospel he would have preached to them, the word of peace and reconciliation, by his atoning sacrifice; the doctrine of free and full pardon by his blood; and of justification by his righteousness; and of complete salvation by him: even every doctrine relating to his person, as God and man; to every office of his, as prophet, priest, and king; to his incarnation, sufferings, and death, his resurrection, ascension, session at the right hand of God, and intercession for his people, and second coming to judgment; with every doctrine relating to the grace of God, of the Father in election, and the covenant of peace, of the Son in redemption, and of the Spirit in regeneration and sanctification: all which he would have published and declared in the most free, plain, and open manner, with all boldness, faithfulness, and constancy. A compendium and summary of which, is given in the next words.

{r} Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 10. {s} Maimon. Hilch. Sandedfin, c. 2. sect. 7. {t} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 1. Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 86. 1. {u} Zohar in Exod. fol. 2, 3. {w} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 13. fol. 11. 3. Vid. T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 12. 2.

Mark 16:16

Ver. 16. He that believeth,.... Not notionally only, or that gives a bare assent to the truth of the Gospel; but spiritually, who sees Christ, his need of him, and the worth and excellency, suitableness and fulness of him; who comes to him as a poor perishing sinner, and ventures on him, and commits himself to him, and lives upon him; believing alone in him, and expecting life and salvation alone by him:

and is baptized; faith must precede baptism, as these words of Christ, and Scripture examples show; and such as have it, ought to make a profession of it, and be baptized; and in which way it is that faith discovers itself, and works by love to Christ; namely, in observing his commands, and this among the rest:

shall be saved, such receive the remission of their sins a justifying righteousness, the privilege of adoption, a right and meetness for heaven now, and shall be saved in Christ, with an everlasting salvation; not that either faith or baptism, are the procuring causes of salvation: not faith, for Christ is the author of salvation; and faith is the grace that looks to him for it, receives the assurance of it now, and that will be the end of it hereafter: faith and eternal life are so connected together, that he that has the one, shall have the other; and it is descriptive of the person that shall enjoy it: and baptism, though it is said to save by the resurrection of Christ, as it is a means of leading faith to Christ's resurrection for justification, yet has no casual influence upon salvation; it is not essential to it; the thief on the cross, went to heaven without it, and Simon Magus to hell with it; but it is the duty of every one that believes, and he that truly believes, ought to be baptized, and prove the truth of his faith, by his obedience to Christ, and such shall be saved:

but he that believeth not shall be damned; such are here chiefly designed, who, are favoured with the Gospel revelation; but either deny it, reject and despise it, or neglect it, and are disobedient to it; whose guilt is the greater, and whose punishment and damnation will be the more intolerable; even more so, than that of Sodom and Gomorrha, Tyre and Sidon, or any of the Gentiles that perish without the law, and the knowledge of the Gospel; and also such are meant, who are finally unbelievers, who live and die in a state of impenitence and unbelief; otherwise, one that believes not today, may believe tomorrow, and be saved.

Mark 16:17

Ver. 17. And these signs shall follow them that believe,.... Not all of them, but some; and not always, only for a time; and which were necessary for the confirmation of the Gospel, and the establishment of Christianity in the world; and not only believing hearers, but believing ministers of the word, are chiefly designed; and this is said, for the encouragement both of those that preach the Gospel, and of them that hear, believe and obey. The Persic version, contrary to all others, reads, "ye shall show signs and wonders to them that believe not"; see 1Co 14:22.

In my name shall they cast out devils; so the Apostle Paul dispossessed the damsel, that had a spirit of divination; commanding the spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her, and it did; and evil spirits also went out of others, through his means, by the power of Christ, Ac 16:18; and this power continued for a considerable time among the saints: the phrase "in my name", is in the Arabic version, joined to the word "believe", in the preceding clause; and is omitted in the Persic version, but is rightly retained by all others in this place; for by the power and authority of Christ, and not their own, and by calling upon, and making use of his name, such miraculous operations were wrought by the apostles:

they shall speak with new tongues: or languages, not such as were new made, and had never been heard and known before; but foreign languages, such as they had never learned, or were able to speak, or understood before; and this not only did the apostles on the day of pentecost, but even common believers at other times, **Ac 2:4**
Ac 10:45.

Mark 16:18

Ver. 18. They shall take up serpents,.... The Arabic version adds, "in their own hands"; and in an ancient manuscript of Beza's it is read, "in the hands"; so the Apostle Paul had a viper, which fastened and hung on his hand, which he shook off, without receiving any harm from it, Ac 28:3.

And if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; not that they were hereby warranted to drink poison, to show what power they had; but should they accidentally drink it, or rather should they be forced to it by their enemies in order to destroy them, they should find no hurt by it: and Papias {x} reports of Barsabas, surnamed Justus, who was put up with Matthias for the apostleship, **Ac 1:23**, that he drank a poisonous draught, and by the grace of the Lord, received no hurt: and the Jews themselves report {y}, that "a son of R. Joshua ben Levi, swallowed something hurtful; and one came and whispered to him in the name of Jesus, the son of Pandira (so they call our Lord), and he did well."

It follows,

and they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover; as the Apostle Paul did on the father of Publius, who was thereby healed of a fever, and a bloody flux, and also others, Ac 28:8; nay, some were healed by the shadow of Peter, **Ac 5:15**, and others, by handkerchiefs and aprons taken from the body of Paul, Ac 19:12. The Persic version adds, without any authority, "whatsoever ye ask in my name, shall be given unto you".

{x} Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 39. {y} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 14. 4. & Avoda Zara, fol. 40. 4. & Midrash Kobelet, fol. 81. 1.

Mark 16:19

Ver. 19. So then, after the Lord,.... The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions add, "Jesus"; and the Ethiopic version reads, "our Lord, the Lord Jesus"; and both Syriac and Persic read, "our Lord"; which is common in these versions, where the word "Lord" is used:

had spoken unto them; the disciples, the above words, which commissioned them where to go, what to do, and what to say; and what should follow them, for the confirmation of their mission and doctrine:

he was received up into heaven; in a cloud, angels attending him, and devils led captive by him, and with a welcome into his Father's presence:

and sat on the right hand of God; the Ethiopic version adds, "his own Father", and which is an evidence of his having done his work, and that to full satisfaction; and is an honour never conferred on angels, or any mere creature; and is a peculiar dignity conferred on the human nature of Christ, in union with his divine person; and here he will remain, till his second coming.

Mark 16:20

Ver. 20. And they went forth,.... After this the apostles went forth, from

Galilee to Jerusalem; and on the day of pentecost, they appeared publicly, and preached the Gospel in divers languages; and after the death of Stephen, and the persecution raised upon that, they went forth from Jerusalem; see **Isa 2:3**.

And preached every where; not only in Judea, and in the neighbouring countries, but all over the world, in process of time:

the Lord working with them; making their ministry useful, for the conviction and conversion of large multitudes, and for the forming and settling abundance of Gospel churches, and for the comfort and edification of the saints; all which was done, by the power and grace of Christ, without whom they could do nothing; see **1Co 3:9**.

And confirming the word with signs following; the Arabic version adds "them"; or "which they did", as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; not by their own power, but, as the latter of these versions adds, "by the help of our Lord"; see **Heb 2:4**; to all which, the evangelist puts his

Amen; so let it be, or so it shall be, and so it was.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO LUKE

The writer of this Gospel, Luke, has been, by some, thought, as Origen {a} relates, to be the same with Lucius, mentioned in
Ro 16:21, but he seems rather to be, and without doubt is, Luke the beloved physician, who was a companion of the Apostle Paul in great part of his travels in the Gentile world: he came with him to Jerusalem, and from thence accompanied him to Rome, and continued with him when in prison, and was with him to the last; see
Ac 16:10, &c. **Col 4:14**. Jerom {b}, and others, say, he was a physician of Antioch in Syria; where it may be the Apostle Paul met with him, and might be the happy instrument of his conversion; so that he seems to be, by nation, a Syrian, as Jerom {c} calls him. Grotius thinks his name is Roman, and that it is the contraction of Lucilius. It is not an Hebrew name, but might be in common use in Syria; for though the Jews reckon owqwl, "Lukus", among foreign names, yet say {d} a it was a very illustrious one, and well known to them, as

it may well be thought to be if Syriac, the language being spoke by them: and many Jews lived in Syria, and particularly in Antioch. Some say that this Gospel was written by the advice, and assistance, and under the direction of the Apostle Paul, as the Gospel according to Mark was by that of Peter; though the following preface does not seem so well to accord with this. Eusebius says {e} that it was the sense of the ancients, that whenever the Apostle Paul makes mention of his Gospel, he intends this according to Luke. The time of the writing of it is not certain; some say it was written in the fifteenth year after the ascension of our Lord; others in the twenty second; and others in the twenty seventh. It is commonly thought to have been written after the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, according to the order in which it stands; but this is rejected by some learned men, who rather think that Luke wrote first of all: and indeed, there are some things in his preface which look as if there had not, as yet, been any authentic account published, at least which was come to the knowledge of this evangelist. The place where he wrote it is also uncertain. Jerom says {f}, he wrote it in the parts of Achaia, perhaps at Corinth: according to the titles prefixed to the Syriac and Persic versions, he wrote it in Alexandria: the former of these runs thus;

"the Gospel of Luke, the Evangelist, which he spake and published in Greek in Alexandria the great."

And the latter thus;

"the Gospel of Luke, which he wrote in the Greek tongue in Alexandria of Egypt."

However, it is agreed on all hands, that it is genuine, and of divine inspiration. Eusebius {g} relates, that it was affirmed by some, that this Gospel, together with those of Matthew and Mark, were brought to the Apostle John, who approved of them, and bore witness to the truth in them.

{a} In Rom. xvi. 21. {b} Catalog. Script. Eccles. sect. 17. fol. 91. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 4. {c} Praefat in Luc. {d} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 11. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {e} Ubi supra. (Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 39.) {f} Praefat in Luc. {g} Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 24.

Ver. 1. Forasmuch as many have taken in hand,.... From hence, to the end of **Lu 1:4** is a preface of the evangelist to his Gospel, setting forth the reasons of his writing it; and which he wrote and sent to the excellent Theophilus, for the further confirmation of him in the faith of Christ. It seems that many had took in hand, or attempted

to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us; that is, they undertook to write and publish a very particular and exact narrative of the birth, life, actions, doctrines, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ; things which Luke, and other Christians, had the fullest and strongest evidence, and were confidently assured of, and most firmly believed, even with a full assurance of faith. By these many, he cannot mean the authentic historians of evangelical facts, as Matthew and Mark; for they two cannot, with any propriety, be called many; and besides, it is not so very clear and certain a point, that they had, as yet, wrote their Gospels; nor would this evangelist suggest any deficiency, weakness, and inaccuracy in them, as he seems to do: nor does he intend such spurious writers as the authors of the Gospels according to the Nazarenes, Hebrews, and Egyptians; of Nicodemus, Thomas, Matthias, and of the twelve apostles; and still less, the Gospels of Cerinthus, Basilides, and other heretics; since these would not have passed without a censure from him, for the falsehood, fabulous, and trifling stuff in them, as well as for the wicked and heretical opinions propagated by them; and besides, these pieces were not extant when this Gospel was written: but he seems to design some honest and well meaning Christians, who undertook to write, and did write an account of the above things, which were firmly believed by all; and which they took from the apostles, and first ministers of the Gospel, from their sermons and discourses, and from conversation with them; and which they committed to writing, partly to help their own memories, and partly for the benefit of others; in which, no doubt, they acted an upright part, though attended with weakness: wherefore, the evangelist does not censure them as false, wicked, and heretical, nor approve of them as divine and perfect for though they honestly meant, and designed well, yet there might be many things collected by them, which were impertinent, and not proper to be transmitted to posterity; and what might be wrote with great inaccuracy and deficiency, and in a style the Holy Ghost thought improper things of this kind should be delivered in: and therefore the evangelist, moved and inspired by the Spirit of God, set about the following work, and under the same influence completed it. The phrase, anataxasyai dihghsin, "to set forth in order a declaration", is as Dr. Lightfoot observes, out of the Talmud {h}, agreeably to the Jewish way of speaking.

"R. Chasdai said to one of the Rabbins, who was atdga rdom, "setting in order a declaration" before him. &c. or relating in order a story before him."

{h} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 53. 1.

Luke 1:2

Ver. 2. Even as they delivered them unto us,.... By whom the evangelist means, as appears from the after description of them, the twelve apostles, and seventy disciples; who handed down to others the accounts of the birth, life, and death of Christ; and according to which the above Christians proposed to write:

which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word; either of the Gospel, or rather of Christ himself, the eternal Word of God; for from the beginning of Christ's preaching the Gospel, or as soon as he entered upon his public ministry, he called his apostles, as Simon, Andrew, James, John, &c. and afterwards seventy disciples; who were eyewitnesses of him, of the truth of his incarnation, and of his ministry and miracles; saw, and conversed with him after his resurrection from the dead and beheld his ascension to heaven; and were ministers that were called, qualified, and sent out by him and waited on him, and served him. This shows, as is by some rightly observed, that Luke was not one of the seventy disciples, as some {i} have thought, and as the title of this Gospel, to the Arabic version of it, expresses; for then he would have been an eyewitness himself: nor did he take his account from the Apostle Paul; for he was not a minister of the word from the beginning, but was as one born out of due time.

{i} Epiphan. contra Haeres. l. 2. Haeres. 51. Theophylact. in Argument in Luc.

Luke 1:3

Ver. 3. It seemed good to me also,.... Being moved to it by the Holy Ghost; for he did not undertake this work of himself, merely by the motion of his own will, but was influenced, and directed to it by the Spirit of God, as well as by him assisted in it:

having had perfect understanding of all things; relating to the subject of this Gospel, concerning the conception, birth, ministry, baptism, and death of John the Baptist; concerning the conception, birth, private and public life of Christ, together with his sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension. The Syriac and Persic versions refer the word "all" to persons, to the eyewitnesses and ministers of the word; rendering the clause thus, "who have been studiously near to them all": and both senses may be taken in, and the meaning be, that Luke had diligently sought after, and had attained unto a perfect knowledge of all the affairs of Christ; having studiously got into the company of, and intimately conversed with all, or as many as he could, who had seen Christ in the flesh; and were, from the very first of his ministry, attendants on him, that he might have the most certain and exquisite account of things, that could be come at:

from the very first; and to the last; from the conception of John, the forerunner of the Messiah, which is higher than any other evangelist goes, to the ascension of Christ; though some choose to render the word here used, "from above", as it may be, and sometimes is; and may signify, that the evangelist had his perfect knowledge of things by a revelation from above, by divine inspiration; and this moved him to write, and which he mentions, that Theophilus, to whom he writes, and every other reader, may depend, with certainty, on what is said in it. This clause is omitted in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, but is in all copies, and by all means to be retained: this being the case, these reasons prevailed upon him, as he says,

to write unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus; which regards not so much the order of time, which he does not always strictly observe, as the particulars of things, related in order, and with great exactness: who this Theophilus was, to whom he writes his Gospel, cannot be said; by his title, which is such as was given to governors of provinces, as to Felix and Festus, Ac 23:26, he seems to be, or to have been, a civil magistrate in some high office; for though not many rich, and mighty, yet some have been, and are, called by grace. Theophylact {k} says, he was of the order of the senators, and perhaps a nobleman, or prince: however, this name was not a general name, for every "lover of God", as the word signifies, as Salvian {l} thought; but the name of a particular man, who believed in Christ, and was an acquaintance of Luke's; though Epiphanius {m} makes a doubt of it which it should be.

{k} Ut supra. (Epiphan. contra Haeres. l. 2. Haeres. 51. Theophylact. in Argument in Luc.) {l} Salonio Epiat. p. 237. {m} Ut supra. ({m})

Luke 1:4

Ver. 4. That thou mightest know the certainty,.... The end the evangelist had in writing this Gospel, and sending it to Theophilus, was, that he might be more strongly assured of and more firmly established in the truths of the Gospel.

The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it, "that thou mightest know the truth"; that is, the certain truth of things: the truth he did in some measure know before, but Luke's view was, that he might have a more certain knowledge of it; both truth, and the certainty of it may be intended: so the Hebrew word, hnwma, signifies both truth and firmness; and the word here used signifies such a certain evidence of things, as may be safely depended on; even

of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed; or catechised, signifying, that he had been hitherto taught, as a catechumen, the rudiments, and first principles of the Christian religion, by word of mouth; and he had taken them in upon the evidence they came with, and the authority of those that instructed him in them; and now he sent him in writing this account, to increase his knowledge, strengthen his faith, and to give him such a sure proof of things, as might preserve him safe in the belief of them, from all doubting and defection. Having finished his preface, he proceeds to the narrative itself, which begins as follows.

Luke 1:5

Ver. 5. There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea,.... This was Herod, the son of Antipater, sometimes called Herod the Great, and is rightly here said to be the king of Judea; for, by deputation from the Roman emperor, he had the government of all Judea, which upon his death was divided among his sons. The phrase, "in the days of", is an eastern way, of speaking; see Ge 14:1; and intends the time of his reign; in which there was

a certain priest named Zacharias: a name famous among the Jews, for an high priest, who was slain by them the court of the temple, 2Ch 24:20, and for one of the later prophets, **Zec 1:1**, who were of this name. This man, the father of John the Baptist, was not an high priest, as this character of him, and the work afterwards ascribed to him, show; though he has been thought to be so by some; and John himself is so called by the Jews {n}: he was

of the course of Abia. The Ethiopic version reads, "in the days of Abia": and it has been the opinion of some, that Zacharias and Abia were two priests, who performed their ministry in succession, one after another; one ministered one time, and another at another time; but such betray their ignorance both of Scripture, and of Jewish affairs. In David's time, there was a division of the sons of Aaron into "twenty four" orders, or courses; and this of Abia was one, and the "eighth" of them; see 1Ch 24:1. The account the Jews {o} give of this matter, and in which they are not agreed, is this;

"says Rab Chama bar Guria, says Rab, Moses ordered for the Israelites eight courses, four from Eleazar, and four from Ithamar; Samuel came and made them "sixteen"; David came and made them twenty four.--It is a tradition, that Moses ordered for the Israelites sixteen courses, eight from Eleazar, and eight from Ithamar; and when the children of Eleazar increased above the children of Ithamar, they divided them, and appointed them twenty four."

The account, as given by Maimonides {p}, is as follows:

"Moses, our master, divided the priests into eight courses, four from Eleazar, and four from Ithamar, and so they were until Samuel the prophet; and in the days of Samuel, he and David, the king, divided them into twenty four courses; and over every course one head was appointed, and they went up to Jerusalem to the service of the course every week; and from sabbath to sabbath they changed; one course went out, and another came in, till they finished, and returned again."

Now of these there were but four courses returned from the Babylonish captivity, as appears from **Ezr 2:36** and with this the Jewish accounts agree {q}.

"The Rabbins teach, that four courses came up from the captivity, Jedaiah, Harim, Pashur, and Immer; the prophets that were among them stood up, and divided them, and appointed four and twenty lots, and put them into a box: Jedaiah came and took his lot, and the lot of his companions, six; Harim came and took his lot, and the lot of his companions, six; and so Pashur and Immer: and so the prophets that were among them taught, that if Jehoiarib, the first course, came up from captivity, he should not drive away Jedaiah out of his place; but Jedaiah should be the principal, and Jehoiarib an appendix to him."

Now, though the course of Abia did not return from captivity, yet its order and name were retained as the rest of the courses, being divided between these four by whom they were supplied; and therefore Zacharias is not said to be of the posterity of Abia, but of his course. To these courses there were added as many stations; and what they were, and their use, may be learnt from what follows {r}.

"The former prophets offered four and twenty courses; and to every course there was a station at Jerusalem; consisting of priests, Levites, and Israelites: and when the time came for the course to go up, the priests and Levites went up to Jerusalem, but the Israelites, which were in that course, gathered themselves to their cities, and read in the history of the creation; and the men of the station fasted four days in the week, from the second day, to the fifth."

The sense of which, according to their commentators {s}, is, that these stations were substituted in the room of, and represented all Israel; and their business was to give themselves up to divine worship, prayer, and sacrifices; and such of them as were near Jerusalem, when the time of their course came, assisted at the sacrifices; and such as were afar off, betook themselves to the synagogues in their cities, and there fasted, prayed, and read. And so another of their authors {t} says,

"there were twenty and four courses of the priests, and so twenty and four courses of the Levites; and every week the course of the priests and Levites goes to Jerusalem; and the twenty and four stationary men, half of them go thither, and half are left in their houses, and pray over the offerings:"

for they had their stationary cities, where these men dwelt {u}. Jericho was one: they say {w},

"Jericho was able to produce a complete station itself; but because of dividing the glory to Jerusalem, it furnished out but half an one:"

hence you need not wonder to hear of a priest and Levite on the road to Jericho from Jerusalem, as in Lu 10:31 for they say, in the same place, that twenty four thousand, a station consisted of at Jerusalem, and there was half a station at Jericho: as for the heads of the courses of the houses of their fathers,

"there were in a course five, six, seven, eight, nine of them; a course which had five (heads) in it, three offered three days, and two offered four days; a course in which were six, five offered five days, and one offered two days: a course in which were seven, every one offered on his day; a course in which were eight, six offered six days, and two offered one day; a course in which were nine, live offered five days, and four offered two days: and there were some that fixed themselves for ever; and a course that was (or began) on a sabbath day, was always on a sabbath; and that which was at the going out of the sabbath, was always at the going out of the sabbath: and there were some of them that offered at every course: and there were some that cast lots at every course {x}."

But to say no more of these courses and stations, I conclude with what Maimonides {y} says of them:

"it is not possible, that a man's offering should be offered up, and he not stand by it; but the offerings of the congregation are the offerings of all Israel; and it is not possible that all Israel should stand, in the court at the time of sacrifice: wherefore the former prophets ordered, that they should chose out of Israel men that were fit, and feared to sin, that they may be the messengers of all Israel to stand by the offerings, and these are called the men of the station; and they divided them into twenty and four stations, according to the number of the courses of the priests and Levites; and at every station one of them was appointed over them all, and he called the head of the station; and every week the men of the station of that week gather together; and such of them as are in Jerusalem, or near to it, go into the temple, with the course of the priests and Levites of that week; and they who are in that station, that are at a distance, when their station comes, they gather together to the synagogue, which is in their place."

Then he goes on to give an account, as before, how often they fast in that week, how many prayers they say, and what they read.

And his wife was of the daughters of Aaron. It is a saying of R. Jochanan {z};

"he that would be rich, let him join himself to the seed of Aaron; so it is, that the law and the priesthood make rich.--R. Idi bar Abin married a priestess, and from him proceeded that were made doctors, R. Shesheth, the son of R. Idi, and R. Joshua, the son of R. Idi."

This is not so much said in commendation of Zacharias, that he took a wife of the same tribe, and of the priestly line: for it was lawful for the tribe of Levi to take a wife of any other, because it did not make any alteration in the inheritances of tribes; and it a rule with the Jews {a}, that priests, Levites, and Israelites, might marry with one another; as Mary, who was of the tribe of Judah, was akin to Elizabeth: but to point the original of John, and show of what extraction he was, his father and mother being both of the family of Aaron.

And her name was Elizabeth; the same name with ebvyla. "Elisheba", the wife of Aaron, **Ex 6:23**, and whom the Septuagint interpreters there call, as here, Elisabeth: and this being the name of Aaron's wife, it is very probable it might be a common name among the daughters of Aaron, in succeeding generations.

{n} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2. {o} T Bab. Taanith, fol. 27. 1. {p} Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 4. sect. 3. {q} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 27. 1, 2. Eracin, fol. 12. 9. & 13. 1. T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 68. 1. {r} Misn. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 2. 3. {s} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {t} Piske Toseph. Moed Katon, art. 62. {u} Misn, Biccurim, c. 3. sect. 2. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {w} T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 67. 4. {x} Ib fol. 68. 1. {y} Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 6. sect. 1, 2. {z} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 49. 1. {a} Misn. Kiddushin, c. 4. sect. 1.

Luke 1:6

Ver. 6. And they were both righteous before God,.... Not as the Pharisees, only righteous before men, but in the sight of God, who sees the heart, and whose judgment is according to truth; and therefore were not justified by the deeds of the law; for by them no man can be justified in the sight of God; but were made righteous through the righteousness of Christ, by which the saints were made righteous before the coming of Christ, as those after it: see Ac 15:11. God beheld them in his Son, as clothed with that righteousness he engaged to bring in, and as cleansed from all sin in that blood of his which was to be shed: and they appeared to him, and in the eye of his justice, and according to his law, righteous persons: though this character may also regard the internal holiness of their hearts, and the truth and sincerity of grace in them: which God, who trieth the hearts and reins of the children of men, knew, took notice of, and bore testimony to: as likewise their holy, upright walk and conversation before men, and which was observed by God, and acceptable to him, though imperfect, as arising from a principle of grace, being performed in the faith and fear of him, and with a view to his glory, and for the sake, and through the righteousness of his Son.

Walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord: this was not the matter of their righteousness before God, but the evidence of it before men: "by the commandments" are meant, all those that are of a moral nature, which regarded their duty to God and man, and which are comprehended in love to both; and by "the ordinances of the Lord", are intended the injunctions and institutions of the ceremonial law, which is called the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, which, though now abolished, were then in force: and it was right and commendable in them to observe them, who, by their "walking" in them, showed they loved them, both one and the other; esteemed them, concerning all things to be right; and had respect to them all, and observed them, and took pleasure in walking in them, which, by the grace of God, they continued to do; for walking not only shows that these commands and ordinances were a way marked out for them, but in which they took pleasure, and made progress: and were

blameless; not that they were without sin, as none are; and it appears from this chapter that Zacharias was not, see **Lu 1:20** but they were so in the sight of God; as they were justified by the righteousness of Christ, so they were without fault before the throne, and unreproveable before God; and as to their moral and religious character and conduct before men, they did not indulge themselves in any known sin, but lived in all good conscience among men: nor were they remiss and negligent in the discharge of duty: they were not guilty of any notorious breach of the law of God, or of any remarkable negligence in the business of religious observances: and though they might observe enough in them to charge themselves with, and to humble themselves before God and men; yet so strict were they, in their lives and conversations, that those who were the most intimately acquainted with them, had nothing very material to blame them for.

Luke 1:7

Ver. 7. And they had no child,.... Son or daughter: and which was accounted a great infelicity: but this was not owing to the judgment of God upon them for any sins they had been guilty of, as the above character of them shows: and it had been the case of some righteous pairs before them for a great while, as Abraham and Sarah, Manoah, and his wile, Elkanah and Hannah:

because that Elizabeth was barren; so that it was peculiarly her case, and not Zacharias's: and though God had promised the people of Israel that there should be no male nor female barren among them, **De 7:14** yet there were instances and exceptions to this general rule, as before mentioned, when it was the pleasure of God to make himself known, and magnify his power in the extraordinary conception and birth of any person; and therefore, though barrenness was reckoned a reproach to a person, there was, in this case, a particular hand of God, to answer a special purpose: the signs of sterility are, according to the Jews {b}, when a woman had not breasts as other women have, her voice gross, so that it could not be discerned, whether it was a man's or a woman's, &c.

and they both were now well stricken in years; which made the conception and birth of John the more extraordinary, and even

miraculous, and so the belief of it the more difficult; see Ge 17:17 It may be literally rendered, "they had proceeded", or had far advanced "in their days": it is an "Hebraism", and answers to, Mymyb Myab in
Ge 18:11 where the Septuagint render it by the same phrase as here. The Mahometan writers Beidavi and Jallallo'din say {c} that Zacharias was "ninety nine" years of age, and his wife "eighty nine".

{b} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 80. 2. Maimon. & Bartenora. in Misn. Yebamot, c. 1. sect. 1. & Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 2. sect. 6. {c} In Koran, c. 3.

Luke 1:8

Ver. 8. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office,.... To which he was called and ordained, even to offer gifts and sacrifices for men; whilst he was in the way of his duty, when oftentimes God appears to, and in favour of his people; whilst he was performing it,

before God; in the temple, where was the symbol of the divine presence, before the altar of the Lord; and as having the fear of God before his eyes; considering himself as in the sight of God, and doing his work faithfully and sincerely:

in the order of his course; taking his turn in the order of the course of Abia, to which he belonged; See Gill on "Lu 1:5".

Luke 1:9

Ver. 9. According to the custom of the priest's office,.... In which, every man took his part in the execution of it by lot; and which was not an original settled law of God; but a custom, which, in process of time, through the number of the priests, took place, and prevailed: the occasion of it was this;

"at first, whoever would, might sweep the altar, or cleanse it----it happened that two alike ran, and came up to the ascent of the altar, and one thrust down the other, and he fell, and his leg was broke; and when the sanhedrim saw that they came into danger, they ordered that they should not cleanse the altar, but by lot {d}."

And so likewise all other sorts of service were settled by lot:

his lot was to burn incense, when he went into the temple of the Lord; where was the altar of incense, and which was burnt upon it morning and evening; see Ex 30:1, and was typical of the continual intercession of Jesus Christ; and this part of service was assigned him by lot. The priests used to cast lots, what part they should take in the service of the temple, in the order of the course, to which they belonged {e}.

"There were four lots there, and this was the first lot (i.e. to cleanse the altar); the second lot was, who should slay (the sacrifice,) who should sprinkle (the blood), who should remove the ashes from the innermost altar, who should cleanse the candlestick, who should bring the members (or parts of the sacrifice) to the ascent of the altar----the third lot was, ye new ones, to the incense come, woyphw, and "cast lots"; and the fourth, ye new ones, with the old ones, who shall bring up the parts from the ascent of the altar to the altar."

And this was not only the case on the day of atonement, to which these rules belong; but every day in the daily service and sacrifice, when the same rules were observed, as appears from the rubric of the daily sacrifice: {f}

"the president said unto them (the priests), come and cast lots who shall slay, who shall sprinkle, who shall remove the ashes from the innermost altar, who shall remove the ashes from the candlestick, who shall bring up the parts to the ascent of the altar, &c."

Again, {g},

"he says to them, O ye new ones, to the incense come, and cast lots; and they cast lots, and he is worthy, whom he accounts worthy--and he that is accounted worthy of the incense, takes a vessel, and the vessel is like to a large golden bushel, that holds three kabs, and a bowl in the middle of it, full and heaped up with incense, with a cover, and a sort of a linen cloth put over it."

And it is afterwards said {h},

"he that is worthy of the incense, takes the bowl out of the vessel, and gives it to his friend, or he that is near to him; and if it is scattered from it, in the midst of it, he puts it into his fist; and they teach him, "saying", take care that thou dost not begin before thy face, that thou art not burnt: when he begins, he spreads it and goes out; and he that burns incense, may not do it, until the president says, burn incense."

The account Maimonides gives {i} of this matter, is as follows;

"all the services that they do every day, they do, oyypb, by lot; and how do they do it? All the priests of the houses of the fathers, of the day, go into the paved chamber, after the pillar of the morning has ascended, and clothe themselves with the priestly garments; and the president who is over the lots is with them, and they stand in a circle; and the president takes a mitre from off the head of one of them, and goes round with it, and the man from whom he begins to number, and they cast lots, as has been explained----how do they cast lots? they stand in a circle, and agree upon a number, eighty, a hundred, or a thousand, or whatsoever number they may agree upon; and the president says to them, put out your fingers, and they put out their fingers, one, or two; and if one puts out three, they number him three; and they do not put out the thumb in the sanctuary, because of deceivers; for the thumb is short, and easy to be put out, and to bend; and he that puts out the thumb, they do not number for him: and the president begins to number from the man that is known, whose mitre he took off first, and he numbers by their fingers, and returns in the round, until he has perfected the number they agreed upon; and the man that completes the number with his finger, he is he that goes out by the first lot to service: and why does he number the number they agree upon, by their fingers that they put out, and does not number them by the men themselves? Because it is forbidden to number Israel, but by means of another thing; as it is said, 1Sa 15:4 "And numbered them in Telaim". There were four lots they cast every day in the morning; the first lot; was, who should cleanse the altar: they cast lots, and he was worthy that was accounted worthy to cleanse it; and he sets the row in order, and brings up the two pieces of wood to the altar, and he brings in the censer full of fire, from the outer altar, to the golden altar, to burn incense upon it: and the second lot, thirteen were worthy of it, according to the order of their standing; how? the president says to them, put out your fingers, and he numbers in the way that has been explained; and he that goes out by the first lot, is he that slays the daily sacrifice of the morning; and the second that stands by his side, is he that receives the blood of the daily sacrifice, and sprinkles it; and the third that is next to the second, receives the ashes from the innermost altar, which is the altar of incense; and the fourth, that is by his side, cleanses the candlestick, and trims the lamps; and the fifth brings up the head of the daily sacrifice, and its leg to the ascent of the altar: and the sixth brings up the two shoulders; and the seventh brings up the extreme part of the backbone, and the other leg; and the eighth brings up the breast and the gullet; and the ninth brings up the two sides; and the tenth brings up the inwards; and the eleventh brings up the fine flour, and the drink offerings; and the twelfth brings up the things that were fried; and the thirteenth brings up the wine of the drink offerings: the third lot, the president says to them, "even" to all the men of the house of the father of that day, whoever has never burnt incense, let him come and "cast lots"; and they gather together to the president, and cast lots; and he that goes out by the lot first, he is he that is worthy to burn incense; the fourth lot, they all gather together, and cast lots to know who shall bring up the parts from the ascent of the altar, to the altar; they cast lots, and he is worthy who is accounted worthy: the daily evening sacrifice, they do not cast another lot for it; but every priest that is worthy of any service of the services of the morning, is worthy of the evening, except that of the incense; for they cast another lot for that in the evening; and every one may come, who has never burnt incense of the men of that house of the fathers, and cast lots for it; but if they have all of them burnt incense already, they all of them cast lots, in the morning, at the third lot; and he that is worthy of it in the morning, burns incense in the evening."

Hence it appears, that the burning of incense, as other parts of the priest's service, was by lot; and that they were new priests, or such who had never burnt incense, that cast lots for it: for it is a tradition {k}, that no man ever burnt incense twice; the reason assigned for it is, because it makes a man rich; and therefore that every one might partake of the blessing in their turns, new ones were called unto it: whether Zacharias had ever burnt incense before, and whether he now did it in the morning or evening, is not certain.

{d} Misn. Yoma, c. 2. sect. 1, 2. {e} Ib. sect. 2, 3, 4. {f} Misn. Tamid. c. 3. sect. 1. {g} Ib. c. 5. sect. 2. 4. {h} Misn. Tamid. c. 6. sect. 3. {i} Hilchot Tamidin, c. 4. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 25. 1. & Gloss in fol. 22. 1. & Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 2. sect. 1. {k} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 26. 1.

Luke 1:10

Ver. 10. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without,.... In the court of the Israelites, whilst Zacharias was in the holy place; though not in the holy of holies, where only the high priest entered: it looks, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, as if this was on a sabbath day, since there was such a multitude of people together; for on the weekday, there were only the priests and Levites of the course, and the stationary men, which represented the Israelites, and some of the more devout sort of the people; but here was the whole multitude of the people; or as the Ethiopic version renders it, "all the people were in a full congregation praying": prayer, was wont to be made at the time of incense; hence it is compared to it, Ps 141:2. And hence it is, that Christ is said to offer up the prayers of all saints, with his much incense, **Re 8:3**

in the time of incense: whether it was morning or evening, the people were obliged to be at a distance, whilst that was burning; the Jewish canons confirm this {i}:

"in the time they burn the incense in the temple every day,
Meh lk Nyvrwp, "they separate all the people", from the temple, and from between the porch and the altar; there is not a man there, till he comes out that burns the incense."

{i} Maimon. Hilch. Tamidin, c. 3. sect. 3. 9. & Yore. haccipurim, c. 4. sect. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 44. 1.

Luke 1:11

Ver. 11. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord,.... Gabriel, as seem's manifest from **Lu 1:19** the same angel that had appeared to Daniel, about the time of the evening oblation, near five hundred years before, and gave him an account of the time of the Messiah's coming, **Da 9:21**. The Jews sometimes speak of divine and wonderful appearances to their priests, at such times, and in such places:

"it is a tradition that R. Ishmael ben Elishah should say, one time I went in, trjq ryjqhl, "to burn incense": and I saw Actariel (one of the names of God with them) the Lord, the Lord of hosts, who was sitting on a throne, high and lifted up. {m}"

And so they say of Simeon the just, that there was always an appearance when he went into the holy of holies; it is related thus {n}:

"Simeon the just, ministered unto Israel in the high priesthood, forty years; and in the last year, he said to them, I shall die this year: they said to him, from whence dost thou know it? He replied to them, every year that I have entered into the holy of holies, there was, dxa Nqz, "one old man" clothed in white, and veiled in white, that went in with me, and came out with me; and this year he went in with me, but did not come out with me."

And according to Josephus {o}, the high priest Hyrcanus received an oracle, or answer from God, as he was offering incense; so that the Jews ought not to discredit such an appearance to Zacharias:

standing on the right side of the altar of incense; of which, see Ex 30:1 the situation of it, according to the Jews, was this {p}:

"the table (of showbread) was in the north, two cubits and a half distant from the wall; and the candlestick was in the south, two cubits and a half distant from the wall; and the altar (of incense) was in the middle, and stood between them."

And to

"this agrees the account of Maimonides {q}, who says, the candlestick was on the south, on the left hand, as you go in; and the table of shewbread on the right hand, and both of them on the side of the holy of holies without; and the altar of incense was between them both without."

So that it was on the north side that the angel stood.

{m} T. Bab. Berncot, fol. 7. 1. {n} T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 42. 3. {o} De Bello Jud. l. 13. c. 18. {p} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 33. 2. {q} Hilch. Beth Habbechira, c. 1. sect. 7.

Luke 1:12

Ver. 12. And when Zacharias saw him,.... The angel; he was troubled, and fear fell upon him; for such appearances of angels were not now so common as formerly: and when they were more usual, generally had such effects on the minds, even of good men; see **Jud 6:22**.

Luke 1:13

Ver. 13. But the angel said unto him, fear not, Zacharias,.... He calls him by his name; for holy men are known to angels in person, and by name; to whom they are ministering spirits, and for whose good they are concerned; and bid him not be afraid, as the angel also said to the women at Christ's sepulchre, Mt 28:5 for he saw by his countenance and gestures, that he was greatly surprised and terrified at the sight of him:

for thy prayer is heard; which he had many years ago put up for a son; for it cannot be thought that he had been now praying for one, being in such an advanced age, and having for years past given up all hopes of one, and was even unbelieving, when he was told by the angel he should have one: prayer is sometimes immediately heard, and answered; and sometimes an answer is deferred a long time, to try the faith and patience of the saints, and to discover the more the wisdom, power, and goodness of God: or this may have regard to his present prayer, one branch of which might concern the coming of the Messiah, which was now expecting, and therefore is told, that his prayer was heard; since the angel that appeared to him, brought him the news of the conception and birth of his forerunner:

and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son; who had been always barren, and was called so, **Lu 1:7**

And thou shalt call his name John; in Hebrew, "Jochanan", and signifies "gracious": a fit name for one that was filled with the gifts and graces of the Spirit; and was the harbinger of the Messiah, who is full of grace and truth; and the ushered in the Messiah's kingdom, which is a dispensation of grace.

Luke 1:14

Ver. 14. And thou shalt have joy and gladness,.... Not only because of his having a son; but because this his son would be the prophet of the Highest; would go before the Lord, and prepare his ways; give knowledge of salvation to many, and light to them that were in darkness, and guide their feet in the way of peace: all which, and more, he afterwards expresses in his song, whereby this part of the angel's prediction had its accomplishment:

and many shall rejoice at his birth; as the neighbours and cousins of his parents did; see **Lu 1:58** and not only they, but all others, who, afterwards had knowledge of him as prophet, and as the forerunner of the Messiah.

Luke 1:15

Ver. 15. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord,.... Of Jehovah, the Father; with whom, what is highly esteemed among men, is oftentimes an abomination; and of the Lord Jesus Christ, before whom he was to go, and who pronounced him a prophet, and more than a prophet, and even greater than any born of women, Mt 11:9 and of the Lord, the Spirit, with whom he was filled from his mother's womb: he was great, not in birth and blood, in worldly riches and grandeur, but in gifts and grace, in his work, office, and usefulness, and in the esteem of God, and even of men too:

and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; which were forbidden the Nazarites, **Nu 6:3** where the Jews, by "wine", understand "new wine"; and by "strong drink", old wine: so all the "three Targums", of Onkelos, Jonathan ben Uzziel, and the Jerusalem, paraphrase the words there, "from wine new and old, he shall separate himself"; and they allow strong drink to a Nazarite, that has no wine in it: their canon {r} runs thus,

"three things are forbidden a Nazarite, defilement, and shaving, and whatever proceeds from the vine, whether fruit, or the refuse of fruit; but strong drink made of dates, or dried figs, and such like, is free for a Nazarite; and the strong drink which is forbidden him in the law, is strong drink made of mixture of wine."

But the Hebrew word, rkv, and which is here retained by the evangelist, signifies {s} any sort of liquor, which is inebriating, whether it is made of fruits, or honey, or what not. The Jews had no such strong drink as ours, which we call beer or ale; but they speak of the strong drink of the Medes, which they say was an inebriating liquor, made of barley {t}:

and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb; or "whilst in his mother's womb", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it: like Jeremiah, he was sanctified, set apart, and ordained to be the prophet of the Highest, before he came out of his mother's womb; and was then under such an influence of the Spirit of God, as to leap in it for joy, at the salutation of the mother of Christ to his, **Lu 1:41** and very early appeared to have the extraordinary gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, qualifying him for his work.

{r} Maimon. Hilch. Nezirut, c. 5. sect. 1. {s} R. David Kimchi in Sepher Shorashim, rad. rkv {t} Misn. Pesach. c. 3. sect. 1. & Jarchi, Maimom. &

Bartenora in ib.

Luke 1:16

Ver. 16. And many of the children of Israel,.... To whom only, or at least chiefly, he was sent, and came preaching, and administering the ordinance of baptism; and great multitudes of them flocked unto him, attended on his ministry, believed in his doctrine, and submitted to his baptism, but not all; for some slighted his preaching, and rejected his baptism: however, some there were, and many too, that were converted under his ministry, confessed their sins, and were baptized by him; which verified this prediction:

shall he turn to the Lord their God; not Jehovah, the Father; for though he was the Lord God of the Jews in general, and of those that were turned by John's ministry in a special manner; yet John cannot be said "to go before him", as he is in the next verse; but the Messiah is here meant, who is the Lord Jehovah, and is often so called in the Old Testament; particularly in a prophecy afterwards respected, Isa 40:3 a name peculiar to God alone: and who also is called God, as he is frequently with additional epithets; as the mighty God, God over all, the great God, the true God, and eternal life; and our, your, and their God, the God of his covenant people, whether Jews or Gentiles; see Isa 25:9. Conversion, which is meant by turning to God, is not man's work, but God's; and is effected by his mighty power, which is only equal to it; but John was to be, and was, an instrument of the conversion of many among the Jews, by preaching the doctrine of repentance towards God, and faith in the Messiah, that was just ready to come: he was the means in the hand of God, of turning many from sin, of bringing them to a true sense of it, and to an hearty and ingenuous confession and acknowledgment of it; and from trusting to, and depending upon, their birth privileges, legal duties, and self-righteousness; and from their gross notions of a temporal Messiah; and of leading them to believe in Christ as a spiritual Saviour, as the Lamb of God, that should take away the sin of the world.

Luke 1:17

Ver. 17. And he shall go before him,.... The Lord his God, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose forerunner he was; the messenger of him, that according to the prophecies in Isa 40:3 was to go before him, and prepare his ways; as he did by his wonderful conception and birth, which made way for the more easy belief of the conception and birth of the Messiah, by a virgin; and by his preaching the doctrine of repentance, and administering the ordinance of baptism; which, were done to awaken the people's expectation of the Messiah, and that he might be made manifest in Israel, and by pointing him out to them in his preaching:

in the spirit and power of Elias: or Elijah, the Syriac and Persic versions add, "the prophet"; John the Baptist, and Elijah, were men much of the same spirit and disposition, and of like power, life, and zeal in religion; and therefore the one goes by the name of the other: they both much conversed in the wilderness; agreed in the austerity of their lives; their habit and dress were much alike; they were both restorers of religion, when very low, and much decayed; were famous for their faithfulness in reproving the vices of kings, and for their warm zeal for true religion, and for the persecution they endured for the sake of it:

to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children in **Mal 4:6** which is the prophecy referred to, it is added,

and the heart of the children to their fathers; which some understand, of his turning the degenerate offspring of the Jews, to the sentiments of their forefathers, and causing them to agree with them in their notions of the Messiah: others, of the turning of the Jews to Christ, and his apostles; and others, of his being a means, through his ministry and baptism, of reconciling Jews and Gentiles together, which is the great business of the Gospel dispensation, ushered in by John; and who preached that all men should believe in Christ, and baptized publicans and Roman soldiers, as well as Jews; and which sense pretty much agrees with the interpretation the Jews put upon the prophecy, as referring to Elijah the Tishbite, whom they expect in person, before the coming of the Messiah: say {u} they,

"Elijah comes to defile and to cleanse (i.e. to pronounce what things are clean or unclean), and to remove afar off, and to bring near (i.e. to determine what families are legitimate or illegitimate). R. Simeon says, "to compose differences"; and the wise men say, neither to remove, nor to bring near, but Mwlv twvel, "to make peace" in the world; as it is said, "behold, I send unto you Elijah the prophet", &c. "and he shall turn the heart of the fathers", &c."

But the true meaning is, that John the Baptist, who is meant by Elias, should be an instrument of turning fathers with their children, and children with their fathers, to the Lord; that he should be a means of converting both fathers and children, one as well as another; and to gather persons of every age and station; for the particle le which we render "to", is the same as Me, "with", as Kimchi on the text observes: "and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just". By the "disobedient" are meant, either Jews or Gentiles; some understand it of the Gentiles, who were children of disobedience, before the light of the Gospel came among them: but rather the former are meant, who were a disobedient, rebellious, and gainsaying people; who were gone off from the wisdom, knowledge, and religion, of the just, or righteous ones, their forefathers; who prophesied of Christ, rejoiced to see his day, longed for him, and believed in him: now John was to be an instrument of turning some of the unbelieving Jews, to the true knowledge of salvation by Christ; which their righteous progenitors waited for, had a right knowledge of, and an interest in: and of leading them either into the Gospel of Christ, that wisdom of God is a mystery; the manifold wisdom of God, in which he has abounded in all wisdom and prudence: and which the righteous men among the Jews, searched diligently into, attained some knowledge of, and which even the holy angels desire to look into; so the patriarchs were called just, or righteous; as righteous Abel, just Noah, &c. and so the Jewish fathers: hence in the Targum on Jer 12:5 mention is made of thy fathers, ayqydu "the just", who were of old: or to Christ himself, who is the wisdom of God, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, to know him, and believe in him; who in the same Targum on Jer 23:5 is called ayqydud xyvm, "the Messiah of the just".

To make ready a people prepared for the Lord. The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "a perfect people"; and the Persic version, "all the people": not all the people of the Jews, but God's elect among them who from all eternity were "prepared", as a people in a covenant relation, as the portion of Christ, and as his spouse and bride, and as such, given to him; they were in electing grace, vessels of mercy, afore prepared for glory; and heaven, as a kingdom, was prepared for them from the foundation of the world: they were provided with all spiritual blessings, which were prepared for them, and bestowed on them in heavenly places, in Christ, before the foundation of the world; even all their grace, and all their glory; yea, even their good works are such, which God has foreordained, or foreprepared that they should walk in. Now, the work of John the Baptist, was "to make ready" this people, by pointing out to them, in a ministerial way, wherein their readiness lay, to meet the Lord, and be for ever with him in heaven; not in a civil, moral, or legal righteousness; or in outward humiliation for, and abstinence from sin; nor in a submission to Gospel ordinances, and in a mere profession of religion, and in an observance of a round of duties; but in justification by the righteousness of Christ, and in regeneration and sanctification, by his Spirit and grace; the one giving a right to, the other a meetness for the heavenly inheritance: and John; and so any other Gospel minister, may be said to make ready a people, in this sense; when they are the instruments of the regeneration and conversion of sinners, and of leading them to the righteousness of Christ, for their justification before God, and acceptance with him.

{u} Misn. Ediot, c. 8. sect. 7.

Luke 1:18

Ver. 18. And Zacharias said unto the angel, whereby shall I know this?.... Notwithstanding such an appearance of an angel to him, which in those times was not so usual, and this in the holy place; and the things themselves which were told him, and these as the return of prayer; yet he distrusted, and wanted a sign, whereby he might know the truth of them, as the Jews were generally desirous of, and as the father of them was; who expressed himself in much such language, on a certain occasion, as this his son did; see Ge 15:8.

For I am an old man; at least sixty years of age; for with the Jews, sixty years were reckoned, hnqzl, "for old age" {w}; and a man of these years, was accounted an old man: and the Jewish Rabbins observe {x}, that the word for old age in Job 30:2 is by "gematry, sixty"; that is, the letters of the word, numerically make so much. The Mahometan writers, as before observed on **Lu 1:7** make him to be ninety nine years of age: he was not discharged from service; the Levites were at fifty, but not the priests; blemishes, as the Jewish writers say {y}, made them unfit for service, but years did not: and even the law concerning the Levites, they say {z}, only respected the time they carried the sanctuary from place to place, and not future generations; and that they are disqualified neither by blemishes, nor by years, only by voice, for singing of the song; but then they might be among the porters; so that they were not on that account laid aside from all service:

and my wife well stricken in years. The Mahometan writers, as before, say, she was "eighty nine"; a like objection Abraham made, though he afterwards got over it, and was strong in faith, giving glory to God, believing in his power and faithfulness; see Ge 17:17.

{w} Misn. Abot, c. 5. sect. 21. & Maimon. in ib. {x} R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 24. 2. {y} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 24. 1. {z} Maimon. Hilch. Cele

Hamikdash, c. 3. sect. 8.

Luke 1:19

Ver. 19. And the angel answering, said unto him, I am Gabriel,.... The name of an angel well known to Zacharias from Daniel's prophecies, **Da 8:16** and is the first time we read of the name of an angel: the Jews say {a}, the names of angels came out of Babylon, by the means of the Israelites; and it was there that Daniel became acquainted with this name of Gabriel, and also of Michael. Frequent mention is made of Gabriel in the Jewish writings {b}: were there a particular angel appointed over conception, as the Jews say {c} there is, one would be ready to think it should be Gabriel, since he was sent to declare the conception and birth both of John the Baptist, and of our Lord Jesus Christ: the name of that angel the Jews indeed say {d} is Lilah; but yet the Cabalistic doctors {e} affirm, that that angel is under Gabriel. In what language this angel spoke to Zacharias, and afterwards to Mary, may be a needless inquiry; but since the Syriac language was generally spoken, and understood by the Jews at this time, it is highly reasonable that he spoke to them in that. The Jews have a notion, that none of the ministering angels understand the Syriac language, excepting Gabriel; and he, they say, understood seventy languages {f}. Now the angel, by making mention of his name, puts Zacharias in mind of the prophecy of Daniel concerning the coming of the Messiah, which he had from him; and whereas his name signified, "a man of God", or "the power", or "strength of God", or "God is my strength", he suggests unto him, that he ought not to have distrusted his Words, since with God all things are possible: he adds,

that stand in the presence of God; beholding his face, hearkening to his voice, and ministering to him, and so had this affair immediately from him: and therefore he had no reason to doubt of the accomplishment of it. Gabriel, according to the Jews, is one of the four angels that surround the throne of God: their names are Michael, Uriel, Raphael, and Gabriel {g}.

"Michael they place at his right hand, and Uriel at his left hand, and Gabriel, wynplm, before him, (in his presence, as he here says of himself,) over against the kingdom of Judah, and Moses and Aaron, who were in the east (of the camp of Israel); and why is his name called Gabriel? of Judah it is written, **1Ch 5:2** "for Judah", rbg, "prevailed above his brethren"; and of Moses it is written, **Le 1:1** "and God called unto Moses"; and it is written, **Isa 9:6** "and shall call his name Wonderful, Counselor, rwbg la the mighty God, lo!

Gabriel"."

And am sent to speak unto thee, and to show unto thee these glad tidings: wherefore, on account of his name, his office, and his mission, especially the subject of it being welcome news, good tidings, what he said ought to have obtained credit with him. Gabriel was one of the ministering spirits sent to minister to them that were heirs of salvation; his messages were messages of mercy, grace and love; he was not a minister of the wrath and vengeance of God, but of his favour. Agreeably to this the Jews say of him, that his name Gabriel is, by "gematry", or numerically, the same with Mxr "merciful" {h}: he is called, in the Talmud {i}, tynwqop xwr "the decisive spirit", and is said to have three names, Piskon, Itmon, and Sigron. He is called Piskon, because he decides, or determines judgment against them that are above; and Itmon, because he stops up the sins of the Israelites; and Sigron, because when he shuts (the gates of judgment) there is none can open again. Hence also they say, that he is the angel that is appointed over water which quenches fire. The Targumist on Job 25:2 paraphrases the words thus:

"Michael on the right hand, who is over fire; and Gabriel on the left hand, who is over water; and the holy creatures mingle fire and water, and by his dominion and fear, make peace in his heaven of heavens."

{a} T. Hicros. Rosh Hashana, fol. 56. 4. {b} Targum Jon. in Exod. xxiv. 10. Targum in Esth. iv. 12. & in Psal. cxxxvii. 8. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 2. Shemot Rabba, fol. 91. 2. Sithre Toro in Zohar in Gen. fol. 65. 3. & 66. 2. {c} Targum in Job. iii. 3. {d} T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 16. 2. {e} Lex. Cabbal. p. 230. {f} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 33. 1. & Tosephot in Sabbat, fol. 12. 2. {g} Bernidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 179. 1. {h} Lex. Cabbal. p. 230. {i} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 44. 2.

Luke 1:20

Ver 20. And behold, thou shalt be dumb, &c] Or "silent; and not able to speak", if he would. Silence is sometimes voluntary; but this was what he could not help;

until the day that these thing shall be performed; which he had said concerning the conception and birth of a son, and the imposition of a name on him; for this dumbness remained upon Zachariah, not only until his wife had conceived, and the child was born, but until the eighth day after, when he was circumcised, and his name was given him the angel directed to: "because thou believest not my words": he was struck both deaf and dumb, as appears from his friends making signs to him, **Lu 1:62** which they had no need to have done, could he have heard: he was struck with deafness, because he hearkened not to the angel's words; and with dumbness, because from the unbelief of his heart he objected to them. We learn from hence, what an evil unbelief is, and how much resented by God, and how much it becomes us to take heed, that it prevails not in us: and especially since it easily besets us: "which shall be fulfilled in their season"; first the conception, then the birth; after that the calling him by his name, and in process of time, the doing of his work and office; so that the unbelief Zacharias did not make the faith of God of none effect; for though sometimes the people of God are very unbelieving, yet he abides faithful to his word and promises. Mahomet, in his Alkoran {k}, very wrongly makes the angel to say these words to Zacharias;

"thy sign shall be, that thou shalt speak unto no man for three days, otherwise than by gesture."

And elsewhere {l} it is said three nights.

{k} C. 3. p. 40. Ed. Sale. {l} C. 10. p. 249.

Luke 1:21

Ver. 21. And the people waited for Zacharias,.... That were without, in the court of the Israelites, praying there, while he was offering incense: these were waiting for his coming out, in order to be blessed by him, according to **Nu 6:23** and be dismissed: and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple; beyond the usual time of burning incense; which might be occasioned either by a longer discourse of the angel with him than what is here related; or being struck with amazement at the sight and hearing of the angel, he might continue long musing on this unexpected appearance and relation; or he might spend some time not only in meditation upon it, but in mental prayer, confession, and thanksgiving. The high priest, when he went in to burn incense on the day of atonement,

"made a short prayer in the outward house, (in the temple,) and he did not continue long in his prayer, tyebhl alv, "that he might not affright" the Israelites" {m}, thinking that he was dead; for many high priests that were unfit for, or made alteration in the service, died in the holy of holies {n}.

"It is reported {o} of one high priest, that he continued long in his prayer, and his brethren, the priests, thought to have gone in after him; and they began to go in, and he came out; they say unto him, why didst thou continue long in thy prayer? he replied to them, is it hard in your eyes that I should pray for you, and for the house of the sanctuary, that it might not be destroyed? they answered him, be not used to do so; for we have learned, that a man should not continue long in prayer, that he may not affright Israel."

This high priest, they elsewhere say {p}, was Simeon the just.

{m} Misna Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1. {n} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {o} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 53. 2. {p} T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 42. 3.

Luke 1:22

Ver. 22. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them,.... Or deliver the benediction they were waiting for:

and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: which he made them to understand, by the gestures he used: for he beckoned unto them; nodding his head, or by some motions of his hands the Ethiopic version adds, "with his hand": or of his lips; for the signs of a dumb man are distinguished into hzymr, and huypq {q}; the one is a sign which is expressed by the head and hands; and the other is a sign expressed by the lips: hence that rule, {r}

"a dumb man beckons, and is beckoned to; and Ben Bethira says, he moves his lips, and lips are moved to him:"

and remained speechless; to the time the angel fixed.

{q} Bartenora in Misa. Gittin, c. 5. sect. 7. {r} Misn. ib.

Luke 1:23

Ver. 23. And it came to pass, that as soon as the days of his ministration,.... In the order of the course, which might be three, four, five, or six days, according to the number of the heads of the house of their fathers in the course; See Gill on "Lu 1:5"

were accomplished: for though he was deaf and dumb, he was not hereby disqualified for service. Deafness and dumbness excused persons from various duties {s} but did not disqualify priests: a Levite, if he had lost his voice, was disqualified, but not a priest; {t} the reason was this, because it was one part of the work of the Levites to sing, and therefore could not perform it without a voice; but such was the work of the priests, that though deaf and dumb, they could discharge it; as cleansing the altar, trimming the lamps, carrying the parts to the altar, laying them upon it, and burning them, or offering any sacrifice, burning incense, &c. which was the business of Zacharias; which when he had fulfilled, he departed to his own house; which was not at Jerusalem, but in the hill country, in a city of Judah there; see **Lu 1:39**.

{s} Misn. Trumot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2. Chagiga, c. 1. sect. 1. {t} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Cholin, c. 1. sect. 6.

Luke 1:24

Ver. 24. And after those days,.... The days of his ministration in the temple, quickly after his return home; the Ethiopic version reads, "after two days":

his wife Elisabeth conceived; according to the angels prediction, and notwithstanding her barrenness, and the unbelief of her husband;

and hid herself five months. The Arabic and Persic versions render it, "hid her size"; but there could be no occasion to take any methods to hide this, since, if she said nothing of it herself, and there could be no suspicion of it in one of her years, it could not be much discerned in her by such a time; but she hid herself, or lived retired, that she might be fully satisfied that she was with child, before she said any thing about it; and that she might not discover any pride or vanity on account of it; and to avoid all discourse with others about it, which might be rumoured abroad; and chiefly to shun all ceremonial uncleanness, which one, that bred a Nazarite, was obliged to; see Jud 13:14 and most of all, that she might be retired, and spend her time in meditation upon the goodness of God, and in returning thanks to him for the favour she had received; saying; as in the following verse.

Luke 1:25

Ver. 25. Thus hath the Lord dealt with me,.... In a very gracious and bountiful manner; in giving her strength to conceive a son in her old age, and such an one that was to be great, and so useful in his day; of which her husband had doubtless informed her by writing, though he could not speak:

in the days wherein he looked on me; with a favourable eye, with a look of love and mercy:

he took away my reproach from among men; as barrenness was accounted, especially among the Israelites, the seed of Abraham; to whom was promised a numerous issue, as the stars in the sky, and as the sand on the sea shore, and particularly the Messiah; see Ge 30:23.

Luke 1:26

Ver. 26. And in the sixth month,.... After Elisabeth's conception; for so long was John the Baptist conceived before Christ, and so long he was born before him; and it seems as if there was the same distance between the public ministry of the one, and the other: John was before Christ, as man, being his forerunner; but Christ was preferred unto him as mediator, and existed before him, as the eternal Son of God:

the angel Gabriel was sent from God; the same angel, that near five hundred years before gave Daniel an exact account of the time of the Messiah's coming, and six months ago acquainted Zacharias with the conception, birth, character, and office of his forerunner:

unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth; the whole country of Galilee was mean and contemptible with the Jews: they observe, though through mistake, that no prophet arose out of it, **Joh 7:52** and Nazareth particularly was exceeding despicable in their eye: hence those words of Nathanael, "can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" **Joh 1:46** and yet hither an angel was sent by God; and here dwelt the mother of our Lord. See Gill on "Mt 1:23"

Luke 1:27

Ver. 27. To a virgin,.... A pure virgin, that never knew man;

See Gill on "Lu 1:34" and yet

espoused to a man whose name was Joseph; but they were not come together, nor had he taken her for his wife, and home to his house, nor had they cohabited:

of the house of David; which, according to the grammatical construction of the words, may be connected either with the virgin, or with Joseph, to whom she was espoused; and is true of both; for they both were of the house and lineage of David: and this shows what a low condition David's family was in, that the persons that were the nearest allied to it were a carpenter, and a poor virgin; and both residing in so despicable a place as Nazareth in Galilee:

and the virgin's name was Mary; a name frequent among the Jews, and the same with Miriam; of which name was the sister of Moses and Aaron.

Luke 1:28

Ver. 28. And the angel came in unto her,.... Into her house, and into the room where she was:

and said, hail; all health, happiness, and prosperity attend thee;
Mt 28:9

thou art highly favoured; or graciously accepted, or hast obtained grace; not referring to electing, redeeming; justifying, pardoning, adopting, and sanctifying grace, which she had in common with other saints; but to that special and particular favour, in being chosen and singled out from all other women, to be the mother of the Messiah:

the Lord is with thee; so the angel to Gideon, **Jud 6:12** or "be with thee", an usual form of salutation among the Jews; **Ru 2:4**

thou art blessed among women; and will be pronounced so by other women, as she was by Elisabeth, **Lu 1:42** and by another woman,
Lu 11:27.

Luke 1:29

Ver. 29. And when she saw him,.... The Persic version renders it, "when Mary saw the angel"; which expresses the true sense of the words, The Vulgate Latin reads, "when she heard"; i.e. the salutation:

she was troubled at his saying; at his speaking to her; she was surprised at the sight of him, and more at what he said to her;

and cast in her mind, or thought and reasoned within herself,

what manner of salutation this should be; for it was not usual with the Jews for a man to use any salutation to a woman; with them it was not lawful to be done in any shape or form; not by a messenger, nor even by her own husband {u}; so that Mary might well be thrown into a concern what should be the meaning of this; and especially, that she should be addressed in such language, and saluted as a peculiar favourite of God, and blessed among women.

{u} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 70. 1, 2. Maimon. Hilch. Issure Biah, c. 21.

Luke 1:30

Ver. 30. And the angel said unto her, &c] Observing the consternation and confusion she was in;

fear not, Mary; he calls her by her name, signifying that she was well known to him, as the saints are to the ministering angels, who are often sent unto them, encamp about them, and do them many good offices; and bids her not be afraid, he had no ill design upon her, nor brought any ill news to her:

for thou has found favour, or "found grace with God"; and what that particular grace and favour was, is expressed in the following verses.

Luke 1:31

Ver. 31. And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb,.... Though a pure virgin, which never knew a man; and therefore, "a behold", is prefixed to it, as being what was extraordinary and wonderful; as it is also, in the prophesy of it, in **Isa 7:14** to which the angel manifestly refers, and is, by Matthew cited, as accomplished hereby;
See Gill on "Mt 1:22" See Gill on "Mt 1:23"

and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus; which signifies a "Saviour"; and a Saviour Christ is of God's appointing, providing and sending; and a very suitable one, being a spiritual Saviour, and a complete one, both able and willing to save to the uttermost all that believe in him; nor is there any other, nor salvation in any other: he is the Saviour of his people, whom the Father has given him, even of all the elect, whether of Jews or Gentiles; and of them from all their sins, and from all their enemies; and whom he saves with a spiritual and eternal salvation.

Luke 1:32

Ver. 32. He shall be great,.... In his person, as God-man; this child born, and Son given, being the angel of the great counsel, the mighty God, and everlasting Father; **Isa 9:6** which is here referred to; and in his offices, in his prophetic office, being that great and famous prophet Moses spoke of, mighty in word and deed, in his doctrine and miracles; in his priestly office, being a great high priest, both in the oblation of himself, and in his prevalent intercession; and in his kingly office, being the King of kings, and Lord of Lords; and in the whole of his office, as Mediator, being a great Saviour, the author of a great salvation for great sinners; in which is greatly displayed the glory of all the divine perfections: great also in his works, the miracles that he wrought, as proofs of his Deity and Messiahship, the work of redemption, the resurrection of himself from the dead, and of all men at the last day; and in the glory he is now possessed of in human nature, at the Father's right hand, where he is highly exalted above all principality and power:

and shall be called the Son of the Highest; that is, of God, of whose names is Nwyle, "the Most High"; see Ge 14:18 not by creation, as angels and men, nor by adoption, as saints, nor by office, as magistrates, are called "the children of the Most High", Ps 82:6 but by nature, being the eternal Son of God; of the same nature with him, and equal to him: for he was not now to begin to be the Son of God, he was so before, even from all eternity; but the sense is, that he should now be known, owned, and acknowledged to be the Son of God, being as such manifested in human nature, and should be proved to be so by the works he wrought, and declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead:

and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. Christ, as God, is the Son of God, as man, the son of David; a name often given to the

Messiah, and by which he was well known among the Jews; and as Christ descended from him as man, in a literal sense, he had a right to the throne of his father David; and the Jews themselves say, that he was twklml bwrq, "nearly allied to the kingdom" {w}: but here it intends not his throne, in a literal, but in a figurative sense; for as David was a type of the Messiah in his kingly office, hence the Messiah is called "David their king", **Ho 3:5** so his throne was typical of the Messiah's throne and kingdom; which is not of this world, but is in his church, and is set up in the hearts of his people, where he reigns by his Spirit and grace; and this is a throne and kingdom "given" by the Lord God. The kingdom of nature and providence he has by right of nature, as the Son of the Highest; the kingdom of grace, or the mediatorial kingdom, the kingdom of priests, or royal priesthood, is a delegated one; his Father has set him as king over his holy hill of Zion; and he is accountable for his government to him, and will one day deliver it up complete and perfect.

{w} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

Luke 1:33

Ver. 33. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob,.... Not over the Jews, the posterity of Jacob, in a literal sense; but over the whole Israel of God, consisting of Jews and Gentiles. For as his father David reigned over the Idumeans, Syrians, and others, as well as over the house of Judah and Israel, so this his son shall reign over both Jews and Gentiles: his kingdom shall be from one end of the earth to the other, even over all the elect of God; who in successive generations call themselves by the name of Jacob, and surname themselves by the name of Israel, of whatsoever nation they be; and this reign of his shall be "for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end"; referring to **Isa 9:7** see also **Da 2:44** **Da 7:14** he shall reign in the hearts of his people here unto the end of the world; and with his saints a thousand years in the new heavens and new earth; and with them to all eternity, in the ultimate glory.

Luke 1:34

Ver. 34. Then said Mary to the angel, how shall this be,.... This she said not as doubting the truth of what was said; for she required no sign, as Zacharias did; nor is she charged with, and blamed for unbelief, as he was; yea, it is expressly said, **Lu 1:45** that she believed: nor was this a curious question, as whether she should have this son by a man in a married state, or in her present virgin state;

for she clearly understood the angel to mean the latter; and therefore her words express her admiration at it, and also her desire to be informed of the manner how it should be: as to the matter of fact, she did not dispute it, but wanted to be resolved by what means it would be brought about: she knew, by prophecy, that the Messiah was to be born of a virgin, and she perceived, by the angel's declaration, that she was that virgin, but could not imagine in what way this amazing thing should be effected; and therefore proposes this question for the following reason,

seeing I know not a man? "A husband", as the Arabic version renders it; not Joseph, nor any other man; for though she was espoused to Joseph, yet he had not taken her to wife; nor were they, as yet; come together; and before they did, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost, **Mt 1:18** she was a pure virgin, untouched by man. The words are an "euphemism", or a modest way of expressing carnal copulation; see **Ge 4:1**.

Luke 1:35

Ver. 35. And the angel answered and said unto her,.... The angel gave her an account of the manner in which what he had said should be effected, as well as observed some things for the strengthening of her faith.

The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee. The words, "upon thee", are left out in the Syriac and Persic versions; but are retained in others, and in all copies: the formation of Christ's human nature, though common to all the three persons, yet is particularly, and most properly ascribed to the Spirit; not to the first person, the Father, lest it should be thought that he is only the Father of him, as man; nor to the second person, the Son, since it is to him that the human nature is personally united; but to the third person, the Spirit, who is the sanctifier; and who separated, and sanctified it, the first moment of its conception, and preserved it from the taint of original sin. His coming upon the virgin must be understood in consistence with his omnipresence, and immensity; and cannot design any local motion, but an effectual operation in forming the human nature of her flesh and substance; and not in the ordinary manner in which he is concerned in the formation of all men, Job 33:4 but in an extraordinary way, not to be conceived of, and explained. The phrase most plainly answers to le ab, in frequent use with the Jews {x}, as expressive of coition.

And the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. By "the power of the Highest" is not meant the Lord Jesus Christ, who is sometimes called the

power of God; but rather the Holy Ghost, as before, who is styled the finger of God, and power from on high, Lu 11:20 unless it should be thought that the perfection of divine power common to all the three persons is intended: and so points out the means by which the wondrous thing should be performed, even by the power of God; and which should not only be employed in forming the human nature of Christ, but in protecting the virgin from any suspicion and charge of sin, and defending her innocence and virtue, by moving upon Joseph to take her to wife. In the word, "overshadow", some think there is an allusion to the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters, in **Ge 1:2** when, tpxrm, he brooded upon them, as the word may be rendered; and which is the sense of it, according to the Jewish writers {y} as a hen, or any other bird broods on its eggs to exclude its young: and others have thought the allusion may be to Myntx tpwh, {z}, "the nuptial covering": which was a veil, or canopy, like a tent, supported on four staves, under which the bridegroom and bride were betrothed; or, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, it is a modest phrase alluding to the conjugal embraces, signified by a man's spreading the skirt of his garment over the woman, which Ruth desired of Boaz, **Ru 3:9** though the Jewish writers say {a}, that phrase is Nyawvyn
Nwvl expressive of the act of marriage, or taking to wife. The phrase of being hawbn xwrb Nylljm "overshadowed", or "covered with the spirit of prophecy", as the virgin also was, is used by the Targumist, on **1Ch 2:55**

therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. The human nature of Christ is here called a "thing"; for it was not a person; it never subsisted of itself, but was taken at once into union with the person of the Son of God, otherwise there would be two persons in Christ, whereas he is God, and man, in one person; and it is said to be "holy", being free from that original pollution and sin, in which all that descend from Adam, by ordinary generation, are conceived, and brought forth; and is, moreover, said to be born of a virgin, "of thee", or "out of thee". Christ's flesh was formed out of the Virgin's; he took flesh of her; his body did not descend from heaven, or pass through her, as water through a pipe, as some heretics of old said: nor did his human nature, either as to soul or body, pre-exist his incarnation; but in the fulness of time he was made of a woman, and took a true body of her, and a reasonable soul, into union with his divine person; and "therefore should be called the Son of God": not that he was now to become the "the Son of God"; he was so before his incarnation, and even from all eternity; but he was now to be manifested as such in human nature: nor does the angel predict, that he should, for this reason, be called the Son of God; for he never was, on this account, so called, either by himself, or others: nor is the particle, "therefore", causal, but consequential: the angel is not giving a reason why Christ should be the Son of God, but why he should be owned, and acknowledged, as such by his people: who would infer, and conclude from his wonderful conception and birth, that he is the "Emmanuel", God with us, the child that was to be born, and the Son given, whose name should be Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, &c. **Isa 7:14**. Moreover, the word, "also", is not to be overlooked; and the sense is, that seeing that human nature, which should be born of the virgin, would be united to the Son of God, it likewise should bear the same name, being in personal union with him, who was so from all eternity.

{x} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7, sect. 4. & passim alibi {y} R. Sol. Jarchi, R. Aben Ezra, & R. Levi ben Gerson in Gen. 1. 2. {z} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 49. 2. Vid. David de Pomis, Lex. Heb p. 67. 2. {a} Targum, Jarchi, & Aben Ezra in loc.

Luke 1:36

Ver. 36. And behold thy cousin Elisabeth,.... For though Elisabeth was of the daughters of Aaron, or of the tribe of Levi by her father's side, yet might be of the tribe of Judah by her mother's side, and so akin to Mary. The Persic version calls her "aunt by the mother's side": intermarriages between the two tribes of Levi and Judah were frequent; nor were they at all contrary to the intention of that law, that forbid the tribes to intermarry, which was to preserve the inheritance in each tribe, since the tribe of Levi had none at all. Though she might be called her cousin in a more general sense; it being usual with the Jews to call all of their own nation their kinsmen and kinswomen, according to the flesh: but the former sense seems more agreeable; and so Mary is directed to her own family, and to her own relations, and known friends, for a sign, by which her faith might be confirmed, in what the angel had said unto her; for if she found the one to be true, she might conclude the other was also; which is as follows:

she hath also conceived a son in her old age: though Mary asked no sign, yet one is given her, whereby she might know the truth of what was spoken: for if it should appear that Elisabeth had received strength to conceive, as was declared by the angel; and that a son, too, which he could not have known without a divine revelation; and that in her old age, which, was extraordinary and supernatural, she might assure herself, that the message brought to her was from God; and that she likewise, though a virgin, might conceive, and bear a son: the angel adds, as a further testimony of the truth of things;

and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. Elisabeth, was generally known to be barren, and was, by way of reproach, usually called so, but was now six months gone with child; so that it was a plain case, and out of question; the signs of her pregnancy were very apparent.

Luke 1:37

Ver. 37. For with God nothing shall be impossible. That is consistent with his nature and perfections, with his counsels, purposes, and promises: every thing that he has said, purposed, or promised, he is able to do, and will; every word that he has spoken, every thing predicted by his prophets, or declared by his angels, and particularly this of a virgin's conceiving and bearing a Son: so that the angel not only answers her question, how this should be, but confirms her faith in it; partly by the instance of her cousin Elisabeth, and partly by observing the infinite omnipotence of God.

Luke 1:38

Ver. 38. And Mary said, behold the handmaid of the Lord,.... In which words she expresses her obedience of faith; she owns herself to be the handmaid of the Lord, and desires to obey him, and be submissive to him as such; and tacitly acknowledges her meanness, and great unworthiness:

be it unto me according to thy word; she assented to what the angel said should be unto her; she earnestly desired it might be, and firmly believed it would be; she set her "Amen" to the angel's message:

and the angel departed from her; to the heavenly regions from whence he came; to his great Lord and master, that sent him; having dispatched the business he came about, and which he was accountable to him for.

Luke 1:39

Ver. 39. And Mary arose in those days,.... The Ethiopic version renders it, "in that day"; directly, immediately, as soon as the angel was gone from her; partly to know the truth of things, and to make use of the sign which had been given her, for the further confirmation of her faith, which was very right and proper for her to do; and partly to converse with Elisabeth about the great things which God had done for each of them, and to praise his name together: "and

went into the hill country with haste"; the same which is called the country of the hills, and the hills, and the mountains, in Jos 10:40 where the Septuagint use the same word as here: the land of Judea was divided into three parts, rhh, "the mountain", or hill country, the champaign country, and the valley {b}: from Betboron to Emmaus is
rh, "the hill country"; from Emmaus to Lud, or Lydda, is the champaign country; and from Lydda to the sea, the valley {c}. This place is frequently called, in the Jewish writings {d}, the king's mountain, or the royal mountain, and is said to be very full of cities: ten thousand cities, they say {e}, were in the king's mountain, and a thousand of them belonged to R. Eleazer ben Harsum: yea, they say {f}, that king Jannai had sixty myriads of cities in the mountain of the king. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it, "went to the mountain", to this mountain, and which is called the mountain, or, as we read it, the hill country of Judah, Jos 21:11 on which Hebron was situated; and seems to be the city next mentioned: into a city of Judah; for that was given to the children of Aaron and so may reasonably be thought to be the city where Zacharias dwelt, and not Jerusalem, which was in the tribe of Benjamin. Hebron was a city peculiar to the priests; whereas Jerusalem was not; and it was in the hill country of Judea; it was remarkable for the goodness of its stones. It is said {g}

"you have no stones in all the land of Israel harder than at Hebron; hence they buried the dead there."

{b} Misn. Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 2. Maimon & Bartenora in ib. {c} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 38. 4. {d} Targum in Jud. iv. 5. T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 44. 4. {e} T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 69. 1. {f} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 57. 1. {g} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 34. 2. & Cetnbot, fol. 112. 1.

Luke 1:40

Ver. 40. And entered into the house of Zacharias, &c] Which was in the above city, and might be well known to her: and saluted Elisabeth; not Zacharias; either because he was not at home; or because he was deaf and dumb, and could neither hear her salutation, nor return it; or because it was not usual for women to salute men, nor men to salute women; See Gill on "Lu 1:29", yet one woman might salute another; and especially Mary saluted Elisabeth, because she came to pay the visit to her, and it was with her she was principally concerned.

Luke 1:41

Ver. 41. And it came to pass that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary,.... Which might be before she saw her, and at some little distance from her:

the babe leaped in her womb: which motion was not natural, but supernatural; being made at hearing the voice of Mary, who had now conceived the Messiah, whose forerunner this babe, John the Baptist, was to be; and who, by this motion, gave the first notice of his conception, which his mother Elisabeth took from hence; as he afterwards pointed him out by his finger, and by his baptism made him manifest to Israel:

and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost not with the ordinary graces of the Spirit, for these she had been filled with before, but with extraordinary gifts, with a spirit of prophecy; by which she knew that the Messiah was conceived, and that Mary was the mother of her Lord; that many things had been told her; that she had believed them; and there would be a performance of them; and perhaps it was at this time that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost also; see **Lu 1:15**.

Luke 1:42

Ver. 42. And she spake out with a loud voice,.... So as that all in the house might hear; she spake with great vehemency of soul, and strength of affection, being under a very powerful impression of the Spirit of God: and said,

blessed art thou among women; the same words that the angel had said to her before, **Lu 1:28**

and blessed is the fruit of thy womb: this is a reason why she is called blessed, because her child was blessed; being in union with a divine person, who is God over all, blessed for ever; and who has all spiritual blessings in him, and is that seed, in which all nations of the earth were to be blessed; and so is both blessed in himself, and the source of all blessedness to others. The Jews say {h}, that the six measures of barley, Boaz gave to Ruth, **Ru 3:15** signified, that six righteous men should spring from her, and among, them the Messiah; who should be blessed with six blessings, and they are these; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and of might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the

fear of the Lord; see
Isa 11:2.

{h} Targum & R. Sol. Jarchi in loc.

Luke 1:43

Ver. 43. And whence is this to me,..... How comes it to pass, that such notice is taken of me, such an honour is done me; that besides being favoured with a child, who shall be great,

that the mother of my Lord should come to me? Elisabeth was far from envying the superior honour conferred on her kinswoman, who was both meaner and younger than she; that she esteems it a wonderful favour, that she should be indulged with a visit from her, who had already conceived the Messiah: and in due time would be the mother of him, as man; who, in his divine nature, is Lord of all angels, and men, and every creature; and in an especial manner was her Lord, and the Lord of all the saints; by his Father's gift from eternity, by his own purchase in time, and by the power of his grace on each of their souls. Thus the virgin is said to be the mother of our Lord, and so may be called the mother of God; because she was parent of that child, which was in union with him, who is truly Lord and God: Just in such sense as the Lord of life and glory is said to be crucified, and God is said to purchase the church with his own blood, **1Co 2:8**

Luke 1:44

Ver. 44. For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears,.... This she mentions, as the signal by which she knew that she was the mother of her Lord; namely, from that unusual and extraordinary motion of the child, she felt within her:

the babe leaped in my womb for joy; that the mother of her Lord, and his, was come thither: the Jews ought not to object to this, who affirm, that the embryos, or infants in their mother's womb, sung the song at the Red Sea, and praised God. {i}

{i} Targum in Ps lxviii. 27. Zohar in Exod. fol. 23. 3. T. Hieros, Sota, fol. 20. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 75. 3.

Luke 1:45

Ver. 45. And blessed is she that believed..... Meaning Mary, a woman, a very young woman, and who had had things very incredible to nature and reason told her; and yet she believed, without objecting thereto, or requiring a sign; tacitly referring to the unbelief of Zacharias, who was a man, a man in years, a priest by office; and yet had been very incredulous, in a thing that was much more possible; because there had been instances of it before, in Sarah, Hannah, and Manoah's wife; than what was related to the virgin, of which there had been none; and which to reason, and with men, was impossible: and happy indeed is every one, that has true faith in any degree; for faith is the faith of God's elect, and is both a fruit and evidence of electing grace, which is the source of all blessings; it is the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit, and can never be lost: many are the blessings such as believe are in the possession of, and openly entitled to; as the justification of their persons, the remission of their sins, their adoption into the household of God, liberty at the throne of grace, and a right to the eternal inheritance; they enjoy much solid peace, joy, and comfort in their own souls; bring much glory to God, and shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation:

for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord: these words may be considered, either as the subject matter of her faith, and be rendered in connection with the former, thus, "blessed is she that believed, that there shall be a performance, &c", being fully persuaded, that what the angel had told her, concerning the conception and birth of a son, concerning his name, and the greatness of his person, and the nature, extent, and duration of his kingdom, should be certainly and punctually fulfilled; or as a reason of her happiness, because there should be a sure accomplishment of them. Whatever God has spoken to any of his people, whether it be with respect to things temporal, spiritual, or eternal, shall be performed; as may be strongly concluded from the veracity of God, who cannot lie; and from his power, who is able to do all things; and from his faithfulness, which he will never suffer to fail; and from instances, and matters of fact; from the experience of the saints in all ages, who know, and are conscious to themselves, that not one of the good things the Lord God has spoken to them, has ever failed, but that all have come to pass; see Jos 23:14.

Luke 1:46

Ver. 46. And Mary said, my soul doth magnify the Lord. Either Jehovah, the Father, or the Son; who, as he was David's Lord, according to his divine nature, though his son after the flesh, was, in the same sense, Mary's Lord, as well as her son: and by "magnifying" him is meant, not making him great, for he cannot be made greater than he is; but ascribing greatness to him, even all the perfections of the Deity, and praising him on account of them; and also declaring and speaking well of his many and mighty works of power, goodness, grace, and mercy, and giving him the glory of them: this Mary did, not in lip and word only, but with her whole heart and, soul, and with all the powers and faculties of it; being filled with the Holy Ghost, and under a more than ordinary influence of his, as her cousin Elisabeth was: and it is to be observed, that she all along speaks in the prophetic style, of things, as if they were done, which were doing, or would shortly be done.

Luke 1:47

Ver. 47. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Which also, may be understood, either of God the Father, who was her Saviour, both as the God of nature and providence; so the Persic version renders it, "in God that gives me life"; and who had supported, maintained, and preserved her life; and as the God of grace, who has contrived the scheme of salvation, fixed upon, and appointed Christ to be the Saviour; and who saves by him, and therefore is sometimes said to be our Saviour. **Tit 3:4** or of Christ, the Son of God, who being truly and properly God, was fit to be a Saviour; and is a very suitable, able, and willing one; and which is the great encouragement to sensible sinners, to look up to him, and be saved; and lays a solid foundation for rejoicing in him, since what he did as man, had hereby an infinite virtue and efficacy put into it, as was put into his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness; whereby the purposes designed were answered by them; and since he must be able to keep their immortal souls, which they commit unto him, and must have an interest with his Father, as their advocate, and a fulness, to supply all their wants: the consideration of Christ, by Mary, as God her Saviour, as having an interest in him, as a Saviour, and this her Saviour, God, gave her greater joy, than being the mother of him as man; and this her joy was not carnal, nor merely external, but inward and spiritual: it was a joy in her own spirit, and was excited there by the holy Spirit of God.

Luke 1:48

Ver. 48. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden,.... Meaning, either her outward temporal estate, which was very low and mean: David's family was now very much reduced, it had its seat not at Jerusalem, but at Nazareth, in Galilee: Mary, of that house, was a poor virgin, and Joseph, of the same, to whom she was betrothed, was a poor carpenter; and yet God passed by the rich and noble families of Jewish people, and pitched upon this poor virgin to be the mother of the Messiah: or her estate, in a spiritual sense, which, as that of every son and daughter of Adam, was very low by the fall; for sin has run all mankind into debt, and they have nothing to pay: it has stripped them of original righteousness, and clothed them with rags; it has filled them with diseases, from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet; it has exposed them to a prison, into which being cast, they must lie, till they have paid the uttermost farthing; and has left them hopeless and helpless, poor and miserable, and blind and naked: but God has remembered his elect, in this their low estate, and has provided a Saviour for them, and sent him to deliver them out of it; because his mercy endures forever; and this Mary was sensible, and there rejoiced in God her Saviour:

for behold, from henceforth all generations; not Jews only, but Gentiles also,

shall call me blessed; both on account of her son she had now conceived, and was bearing; because she was the mother of our Lord, who had reason so to conclude, from the nature of the thing, and from the words of the angel, and of Elisabeth, **Lu 1:28** and much more than Leah had, who said something like this, at the birth of her second son, Ge 30:13 and also on account of her interest in Christ, as God her Saviour: in whom she was blessed, with all spiritual blessings; so that she was truly blessed, and might well be called so.

Luke 1:49

Ver. 49. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things,.... With respect to the incarnation of Christ, a new, a great, and unheard of thing; in causing her, though a virgin, to conceive; and also to bear such a Son, who should be called Jesus, a Saviour, Immanuel, God with us; and who was no other than the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace: wherefore she describes God the author of it, by a proper periphrasis of him, "he that is mighty"; since this was a work of almighty power, and very justly adds,

and holy is his name: seeing this was brought about without any impurity, through the overshadowing influence of the Holy Ghost; whereby the human nature was preserved from the infection of sin, was sanctified, and fit to be united to the Son of God, and to be a sacrifice for the sins of his people. This may also have regard to the great things God had done for her in a spiritual sense; in the choice of her to eternal life, in the redemption of her by the Messiah, and in her regeneration and sanctification; wherein God had displayed his sovereign grace and goodness, and his almighty power, in a way consistent with his justice and holiness.

Luke 1:50

Ver. 50. And his mercy is on them that fear him,.... Not with slavish fear of hell and damnation, but with reverence and godly fear; with a filial fear, with a reverential love of God, and affection for him; with that fear which springs from the goodness of God, which has that for its object, and is encouraged by it: and though this fear is not the cause and reason of the mercy of God, yet is descriptive of the persons towards whom it is exercised in various ways, and to whom it is openly shown; they hereby appearing to be the vessels of mercy, afore prepared to glory; and in whose redemption, mercy and truth have met together, and who, according to the abundant mercy of God the Father, have been begotten again; whose unrighteousnesses he has been merciful to, and whose sins he will remember no more: and it may have a particular regard to the incarnation of Christ, which in this chapter is said to be in remembrance of mercy; to be the mercy promised, and to come through the tender mercy of our God, **Lu 1:54**. And which was a mercy Mary considered, not as peculiar to herself, but as extended to all that fear the Lord; not in that age only, but from

generation to generation; to the end of the world, to God's elect in all times and places, who should all be partakers of it, and sharers in it.

Luke 1:51

Ver. 51. He hath showed strength with his arm,.... Of almighty power, in the business of the incarnation, and in working out salvation for his people; which is done by his own arm, he being mighty to save, and travelling in the greatness of his strength; see
Isa 63:1.

He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts; whom he always resists, and both in providence and grace, takes such methods, as tend to humble and confound them: here particularly, it may regard the proud and haughty Jews; who imagined nothing less, than that the Messiah would be born of one of the rich and noble families in Judea; that he would appear as a temporal prince, and set up a temporal kingdom in great state and splendour, and make them a free and flourishing people: when instead of this, he was to be born of a poor virgin, of whom they disdainfully say, is not his mother called Mary? who was of Nazareth in Galilee, of which it is said, shall Christ come out of Galilee? or any good thing out of Nazareth? A virgin betrothed to a carpenter, and her son of that business also, with which both were flouted; and because of this meanness, the Messiah was rejected by them; and thus were they scattered and confounded in their imaginations.

Luke 1:52

Ver. 52. He hath put down the mighty from their seats,.... As mighty kings and emperors from their thrones, as he often does, in the course of his providence; setting up one, and putting down another: or the mighty angels, from their seats of bliss and happiness in heaven; who rebelling against God, opposing the incarnation of Christ, taking it ill, that the human nature should be advanced above theirs, were cast down to hell; and are reserved in chains of darkness, to the judgment of the great day: or this may have respect to the putting down the monarchies and kingdoms of this world, by the kingdom of the Messiah to be set up; which, though at first was mean and despicable, like a stone cut out of a mountain, will increase, spread, and break in pieces, and destroy all other kingdoms:

and exalted them of low degree; as David to the throne of Israel, from the sheepfold, and following the ewes great with young; and now his house and family, which were sunk very low, by raising of his seed, of a poor virgin in his family, unto Israel, a Saviour Jesus; in whose days the poor had the Gospel preached, and received it: these were chosen and called: the great things of the Gospel were revealed to babes, and hid from the wise and prudent; and beggars were raised from the dunghill, to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory: a method, which God in his infinite wisdom and grace has been pleased to take, more or less, in all ages of time; for not many mighty and noble are called by grace; but usually the foolish, the weak, and the base things of the world.

Luke 1:53

Ver. 53. He hath filled the hungry with good things,.... Such as earnestly desired and longed after the coming of the Messiah, as good old Simeon, and Anna the prophetess; and those that looked for redemption in Israel, to whom she spake: and all such persons as heartily desire salvation by Christ, and breathe after the forgiveness of their sins through his blood, and thirst after his righteousness, and long for communion with him, and a greater knowledge of him, and more conformity to him, and pant after his word and ordinances; these are filled, sooner or later, with a sense of their interest in Christ, and his salvation; with a view of the full and free forgiveness of their sins, and with his righteousness they hunger after; and with every good thing they stand in need of, with joy and peace, with food and gladness, even to satisfaction; so that they can say with Jacob, they have enough, yea, all things; seeing Christ is theirs, and all things with him:

and the rich he hath sent empty away: not the rich in this world's goods, though such who trust in their wealth, and boast of their riches, or do not make a proper use of them, God, in his providence, sometimes strips them of all, and turns them into the world naked and empty; much less the rich in grace, who are often the poor of the world; and who, though they seem to have nothing, yet possess all things, and are full: but such who are rich in their opinion, and in their own works; and trust in their righteousness, and despise others; these, as they come full of themselves to the throne of grace, as the Pharisee, are sent empty away; without any token of the love and favour of God, or any blessing from him: and as they come to ordinances in their own strength, and trust in the performance of them, they go away empty, as they came; these are dry breasts unto them, whilst they are full breasts of consolation to the poor in spirit, and to all meek and humble souls: and what is still worst of all, notwithstanding all their good works they boast of, and trust in, they will be sent away at the last judgment from the presence of Christ, as not known by him, and as workers of iniquity.

Luke 1:54

Ver. 54. He hath holpen his servant Israel,.... Meaning, not the natural posterity of Jacob, or Israel in general, but the elect of God among them; for all were not Israel, who were of Israel; and not them only, but also the chosen ones among the Gentiles; who, with the former, make up the whole Israel of God, in a spiritual and mystical sense: these are the Israel, God has chosen, redeemed, and calls by his grace, and are here styled his "servant", as Israel is frequently called, Isa 41:8. The word signifies a "child", as well as a "servant": and may design, either the weak and helpless condition God's elect are in by nature, which calls for, and requires divine help and assistance; or the relation they stand in to him, being his adopted children, and which is the reason of his helping them: and which signifies to take them by the hand, and lift them up, and support and uphold them; and supposes them to have been fallen down, and unable to raise themselves up; but God having laid help for them on one that is mighty, sent him to take upon him their nature; and by obeying, suffering, and dying for them, to help them out of their state of sin and misery; and to uphold them with the right hand of his righteousness, and bring them safe to glory; and all this,

in remembrance of his mercy; which he had in his heart towards them, and had promised in his covenant to them: the mercy of God, is the spring and source of redemption; mercy provided a Redeemer, and a ransom; and it is owing to it, that the Redeemer came; and he, in his love and pity, performed the work: and therefore salvation is to be ascribed, not to works of righteousness done by men, but to the abundant mercy of God our Saviour.

Luke 1:55

Ver. 55. As he spake to our fathers,.... To David, of whose family Mary was; and to Jacob, or Israel, of whose stock she was; and to Isaac, in whom the seed was to be, called; and particularly,

to Abraham and to his seed for ever: not his natural, but his spiritual seed; both among Jews and Gentiles, to the end of the world; to these God promised this mercy of a Saviour and Redeemer, and to these he performs it, and will to all generations.

Luke 1:56

Ver. 56. And Mary abode with her about three months,.... That is, she continued with Elisabeth, as the Syriac and Persic versions express, about the space of three months; in which time, she had full satisfaction of the truth of the sign the angel had given her; namely, of Elisabeth's conception and pregnancy, for by this time she was ready to give birth; and she must now be fully assured, that she was with child herself: this space of three months is a term of time fixed by the Jewish doctors, to know whether a woman is with child or not, as in case of divorce or death: the rule runs thus {k};

"every woman that is divorced, or becomes a widow, lo! she may not marry, nor be betrothed, until she waits, Mwy
Myevt, ninety days (i.e. three months), exclusive of the day in which she is divorced, or her husband dies, and of the day in which she is betrothed; that so it may be known whether she is with child or not, in order to distinguish between the seed of the former, and the seed of the second husband."

And so in the case of marrying the wife of a brother, that died without issue {l}, and of newly married couples mistaking their spouses {m}:

and returned to her own house; at Nazareth, in Galilee; and now it was, that Joseph, to whom she was betrothed, perceived she was with child; and suspecting evil, had a mind to put her away privately; but was informed by an angel of God, in a dream, of the whole matter; and was advised and encouraged to take her to wife, which he accordingly did; see **Mt 1:18**.

{k} Maimon. Hilch. Gerushin, c. 11. sect. 18. Vid. T. Bab. Becorot, fol. 47. 1.
{l} Misn. Yebamot, c. 4. sect. 10. T. Hieros, Yebamot, fol. 6. 1. T. Bab. ib. fol. 34. 2. & 35. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Yebum, c. 1. sect 19. T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 47. 1.
{m} Misn. Yebamot, c. 3. sect. 10.

Luke 1:57

Ver. 57. Now Elisabeth's full time came,.... The nine months, which is the full time of a woman's going with child, were now complete; for in the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy, or when she had been gone six months with child, the angel acquainted Mary with it, and she had stayed about three months with her; but now had left her, to shun the company which would be at the delivery of her; though some think, she stayed till that time was over, which is not so probable; and so her reckoning being out, and the time come,

that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son, according to the angel's prediction both to Zacharias and Mary, **Lu 1:13**.

Luke 1:58

Ver. 58. And her neighbours, and her cousins,.... That lived in Hebron, and the parts adjacent, whether of the house of Aaron, or of the tribe of Judah; to both which she was related, and who dwelt near her, the priests in the city of Hebron, and the children of Judah in the places about it:

heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her; or "had magnified his mercy with her"; see Ge 19:19 in removing her barrenness, and so taking away her reproach from among men; in giving her strength to conceive, and bring forth a son, that was to be so great, as the prophet of the Highest; and more than a prophet, and greater than any born of women:

and they rejoiced with her: as the angel had foretold they should, **Lu 1:14** The Persic version reads, "with him, Zacharias"; having rendered the other clause thus, though wrongly, "hearing that God had poured out his mercy on the house of Zacharias"; see Ro 12:15.

Luke 1:59

Ver. 59. And it came to pass that on the eighth day,.... The precise time fixed in the normal restitution of the ordinance of circumcision, Ge 17:12 though this was not always attended to, but circumcision was sometimes deferred to another time; yet keeping the exact time was judged most commendable and praiseworthy;
See Gill on "Php 3:5"

they came to circumcise the child; that is, the neighbours and cousins of Elisabeth, who were at the time of her delivery; eight days after they came again to be at the circumcision of the child: who was the operator is not known; nor was there any particular person appointed for this service; but any one might do it, whether ecclesiastic or laic, men or women, father or mother, or any other friend; for the rule is {n},

"all are fit to circumcise; even an uncircumcised person, and a woman, and a minor, may circumcise in a place where there is no man; but a Gentile may not circumcise at all."

The circumcision of John seems to be performed in Zacharias's house, and by one of those that came; for Zacharias, being dumb, could not say the blessing which the circumciser was obliged to say: nor indeed could he say that, which, as the father of the child, belonged to him; concerning which, take the following account {o}:

"the circumciser blesses before he circumcises, "saying", blessed is he that hath sanctified us by his precepts, and hath commanded us concerning circumcision: if he circumcises the son of his friend, or if he circumcises his own son, he blesses him with "this blessing"; and hath commanded us to circumcise a son: and the father of the son blesses with another blessing; blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who hath sanctified us by his precepts, and hath commanded us to enter him into the covenant of Abraham our father.----If his father is not there, they do not say this other blessing.----And if there are any standing there, they say, as he hath brought him into the covenant, so bring him to the law, and to matrimony, and to good works; and after that the father of the child, or the circumciser, or one of those that stand by, bless, "saying", blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who sanctified the beloved (Isaac) from the womb, &c."

How many of Elisabeth's neighbours and relations were present at this ceremony, is not related; but the Jews require ten persons as witnesses of it; for they say {p}, that

"testimonies worthy of belief, in Israel, are ten, the witnesses of the covenant of circumcision are ten, the witnesses of a dead person ten, &c."

and at this time also it was usual to give the child a name, which was not by divine appointment, but was a custom that prevailed among them; which took its rise from Abraham, having his name changed at the time when circumcision was enjoined him, Ge 17:5 and from the naming and circumcision of Isaac, mentioned together,
Ge 21:3

and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father: as the neighbours of Naomi gave a name to the son of Boaz and Ruth, calling him Obed, **Ru 4:17**. This they took upon them to do, because that Zacharias was deaf and dumb; but why they should call him by his name, cannot well be accounted for, it not being usual to call the father, and the son, by the same name; unless they were desirous of continuing the same name in the family, which had been famous in Israel for a prophet, and a priest: to call children by Gentile names was not lawful. In the Targum on **Am 6:1** it is said,

"woe to them that name their children after the names of the Gentiles."

{n} Maimon. Hilch. Milah, c. 2. sect. 1, {o} Ib. c. 3. sect. 1, 2, 3. {p} Pirke Eliezer, c. 19.

Luke 1:60

Ver. 60. And his mother answered and said,.... That is, Elisabeth:

not so, but he shall be called John; knowing that this was the name wherewith the angel said he should be called; either by divine revelation, she being filled with the Holy Ghost, **Lu 1:41** or by information of her husband, who, doubtless, in writing, gave her an account of all that the angel had said unto him.

Luke 1:61

Ver. 61. And they said unto her,.... Her neighbours and relations, there is none of thy kindred that is called by this name; from whence it appears, that it was usual to give names to children after their ancestors, relations, and friends. The Persic version renders it, "in thine Israel there is not any one of this name": but this could not be true; for the name of Jochanan, or John, was a name very common among the Israelites, though not in Elisabeth's family, or her husband's.

Luke 1:62

Ver. 62. And they made signs to his father,.... Who was deaf, as well as dumb; otherwise there would have been no occasion to have signs made to him: and so the word used, in **Lu 1:20** signifies both deaf and dumb. These signs were made by hands or head; for such used to be made to a dumb man. According to the canon {q}, a dumb man nods, and zmrnw "and is nodded", or "beckoned to": and which beckoning one of the commentators {r} says, is a sign which is expressed either by the hands or head. Such a method as these took with Zacharias, about the name of his son, is directed to in case of a father's deafness, in relation to knowing who is his firstborn; {s}

"father that is dumb, they search or examine him in the way they search for divorces; if he makes signs, or writes, that this is his firstborn, lo! this takes the double portion."

How he would have him called; by what name, Zacharias or John; and they were right in applying to him, to whom it most properly belonged, to give a name to his child.

{q} Misn. Gittin, c. 5. sect 7. {r} Bartenora in ib. {s} Maimon. Hitch. Nechalot, c. 2. sect. 15, & 4. 1.

Luke 1:63

Ver. 63. And he asked for a writing table,.... That is, he made signs for one, for as yet he could not speak. The Persic version renders it "ink", and the Ethiopic, a book, and the Vulgate Latin, a notebook. The word signifies "a little table", such as they used to write not only "upon", but "in"; and was sometimes of brass {t}, sometimes of wood, and sometimes of wax {u}, on which they wrote with a style or pen;

and wrote, saying, his name is John: not that he must be, or shall be, so called; but this is his name, and no other; being what the angel had given him before his conception, and Zacharias now confirms:

and they marvelled all; they were astonished, not so much at the new name brought into the family, as at the agreement between Elisabeth and Zacharias in this point, when the latter was both deaf and dumb; they knowing nothing, as yet, of the angel's message to him.

{t} Haryocration. Lex. p. 244. {u} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 30.

Luke 1:64

Ver. 64. And his mouth was opened immediately,.... As soon as ever the child was named, and so all things accomplished which the angel had foretold;

and his tongue loosed; the impediments of speech were removed, and the use of his tongue and lips was restored unto him:

and he spake and praised God; for the safe delivery of his wife; for the birth of his son, the forerunner of Christ; for the conception of the Messiah; for God's gracious regards to his church and people, in these instances; and for the restoration of speech and hearing to himself, of which he had been some time deprived for his unbelief.

Luke 1:65

Ver. 65. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them,.... That is, the fear of God, an awful reverence of the divine majesty; they perceived the hand of God was in these things, and that these were effects of divine power; and which made very serious impressions upon their minds, and they thought, and spoke of them with great solemnity; see **Ac 2:43**.

and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea: the several things relating to the appearance of the angel to Zacharias in the temple; his message to him; the striking him deaf and dumb; the conception of Elisabeth, who had been barren; the birth of her son; the unusual name given him; and the more unusual manner in which it was given; and the opening of Zacharias's mouth, and the loosening of his tongue upon this, were reported, and commonly talked of by all people to that part of Judea, where the parents of John dwelt.

Luke 1:66

Ver. 66. And all they that heard them,.... The above things, laid them up in their hearts; treasured them up in their memories, and often thought of them in their minds, what should be the meaning, and what would be the issue of them:

saying, what manner of child shall this be? what will he be, or come to? and what is it that he shall do? surely he must be designed in providence to be put into some high station, and some eminent work and service; since so many, and such great things, have gone before, and attended his birth:

and the hand of the Lord was with him; which may intend the special care, and peculiar providence of God in preserving his life, giving him health, causing him to grow strong and robust, and in stature of body, and in endowments of mind; and also the communications of grace unto him, and the gracious presence of God with him, so soon as he was capable of enjoying them; as likewise a spirit of prophecy, which is sometimes signified by the hand of the Lord; and the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which, in process of time, appeared in him, qualifying him for his high office and work: the hand of the

Lord, with the Jews, is the Holy Ghost: thus they interpret 1Ch 28:19 "all in writing", this is the "Masora"; "from the hand of the Lord", vdwqh xwr wz, "this is the Holy Ghost". {w}

{w} T. Hieros. Megilla, fol. 70. 1.

Luke 1:67

Ver. 67. And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost,.... With a spirit of prophecy, as his wife Elisabeth had been before, **Lu 1:41**

and prophesied saying; the following things, relating to the Messiah, his incarnation and redemption by him; to the accomplishing of the covenant, oath, promise and mercy of God to his people; and to his son, the forerunner of Christ; and to his work and office, in the various parts and branches of it, which he should perform. Whence it appears, that the following song is of divine inspiration; and that Zacharias spake it as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, as the prophets of old did.

Luke 1:68

Ver. 68. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,.... This was a form of blessing of long standing, Ps 72:18 and very likely was in use, more or less, ever since Israel was distinguished from other nations, became a body politic, and were settled in the land of Canaan, in the enjoyment of peculiar privileges, both civil and religious; see other forms before it in **Ge 9:26** and now, this was very near being antiquated, and out of date; for upon the birth of Christ, the Son of God manifest in the flesh, the New Testament form of blessing runs, as in **2Co 1:3** The reason of its being now made use of might be, because the Messiah, the principal subject of this song, was peculiarly promised unto Israel, was raised up for them, and sent unto them. To bless God, is not to invoke a blessing on him; for there is none greater than he to ask one of; nor does he stand in need of any, being the Creator, who is blessed for ever in himself, and is the fountain of blessedness to his creatures: and therefore, also, cannot signify to confer a blessing on him, but to praise and glorify him, on account of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hands; and to give thanks unto him for all mercies, spiritual and temporal; and especially for Jesus Christ, his mission, incarnation, and salvation by him, which are the things the God of Israel is blessed for in this song:

for he hath visited, and redeemed his people; as he did Israel of old, **Ex 3:16** when the Lord looked upon them, and delivered them out of the bondage of Egypt, and which was a type and resemblance of redemption by Christ; and to which reference here seems to be had. The "people" here said to be visited, and redeemed, design all the elect of God, not only among the Jews, but Gentiles also; all those whom God has chosen to be his people, and has in his covenant taken and declared to be such; whom he has given to Christ, as his people and portion; for whose sins he was stricken, and made reconciliation, and whom he saves from their sins. The act of "visiting" them, as previous to redemption, may include God's look of love upon them from everlasting; his choice of them in Christ unto salvation; the appointment and provision of a Saviour for them; the covenant of grace made with them in Christ, the foundation and security of their salvation; and particularly the mission of Christ in human nature, in consequence of the council, covenant, and promise of God: or it designs his incarnation, for he was now actually conceived in the womb of the virgin: so that God had visited, and looked upon his people, and remembered his love and mercy, his covenant and promise to them: and the "redemption" of them, which was now said to be made, or done, because Christ was now sent to do it, and because it was as sure, as if it was done, intends the spiritual and eternal redemption of them by the price of his blood, from the slavery of sin, the bondage of the law, and curse of it, and the captivity of Satan, and a deliverance out of the hands of every enemy; a redemption which reaches both to soul and body, and secures from all condemnation and wrath to come; and includes every blessing in it, as justification, forgiveness of sins, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life; and is a plenteous, full, complete, and everlasting one.

Luke 1:69

Ver. 69. And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us,.... Meaning the Messiah, whom God had now raised up:

in the house of his servant David; in David's family, he being now conceived by a virgin of his house; and who, in a little time, would be born in Bethlehem, the city of David. He is called "an horn of salvation", because he is a powerful Saviour. "Horn" denotes power; it being that to a beast, as the arm is to a man, by which it defends itself, and pushes down its enemies; and "salvation" is the work Christ came to effect, and for which he was raised up, and sent: and a Saviour he is, and a mighty one, as appears from his doing and suffering what he has; as bearing all the sins of his people, and making reconciliation for them; obeying all the precepts of the law, and undergoing the penalty of it; being made a curse, and becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross: as also, from his delivering them from sin, Satan, and the law, which no other could have done; and from his grappling with, conquering, spoiling, and destroying all his, and our enemies. Moreover, the word "horn" signifies regal power, honour, and dignity; see **Da 7:24** and so may not only denote the work of Christ as a Saviour, but his office also as a King, who in the discharge of that is likewise a Saviour; for he not only rules, and governs, but protects, defends, and preserves his, people, by his power; see **1Sa 2:10**.

Luke 1:70

Ver. 70. As he spake, by the mouth of his holy prophets,.... Which shows not only the veracity and faithfulness of God in his promises, but the early intimations that were given by him concerning the Messiah: for it follows,

which have been since world began; or from the beginning of the world; ever since the first hint of the Messiah, as the seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head, was given, he was more or less spoken of. Adam, the first prophet, seems to have respect to him, when he calls his wife Eve, which signifies life; and because she should be the mother of all living. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of him, of his second coming, which supposes his first; and Lamech may be thought to have some regard to him, when he named his son Noah, and said what he did concerning him: Christ was spoken of to Abraham, as his seed, in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed; and God spake of him by the patriarch Jacob, under the name of Shiloh, as who should spring from the tribe of Judah, before the sceptre and lawgiver were departed from it. Moses foretold that there should arise a prophet from the midst of his brethren like unto him, to whom the Israelites were to hearken. David, the prophet, often speaks of him, particularly of his death, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to heaven, and session at God's right hand; and the evangelical prophet Isaiah predicts his birth of a virgin, and testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Micah points out the very place of his birth; and Zechariah describes the manner of his entrance into Jerusalem, as riding on an ass: to say nothing of what Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and others, have prophesied of him, It is a common saying of the Jews {x}, that

"all the prophets, all of them prophesied not, xyvmh twmyl ala "but of the days of the Messiah.""

The men, by whom God spoke of the Messiah, of the mission of him, and of raising up this horn of salvation, for his people, were "prophets"; men endued with a spirit of prophecy; "holy", men, who were sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and spake, as they were moved by him; and these all spake as if it were with one "mouth"; they all agree in their accounts concerning Christ, though they lived in different periods of time, from the beginning of the world.

{x} T. Bab, Beracot, fol. 34. 2. & Sabbat, fol. 63. 1. Maimon. Hilchot Teshuva, c. 8. sect. 7.

Luke 1:71

Ver. 71. That we should be saved from our enemies,.... This, and the two following verses, either contain and express the sum and substance of what God spake by the prophets; or point out the end or ends of his raising up an horn of salvation, or a Saviour for his people; namely, that they should be saved by him from their enemies: from sin, which wars against the soul, and threatens the destruction of it; from Satan, the avowed and implacable adversary of mankind; from the world, the seed of the serpent, which has always bore an enmity to the seed of the woman; from the law, the killing letter; and from death, the last enemy that is to be destroyed;

and from the hand of all that hate us: which is only an illustration of the former sentence, or a repetition of it in other words; and designs the same as before.

Luke 1:72

Ver. 72. To perform the mercy promised to our fathers,.... By "mercy" is meant salvation by Christ, which springs from the mercy of God; the promise of which was an instance of mercy to the Jewish fathers under the Old Testament, and also the performance of it; for they were saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus, even as we: his blood was shed for the remission of sins that were past, and for the redemption of transgressions under the first Testament:

and to remember his holy covenant; which was made between him, and his Son from all eternity; and was, at various times, dispensed and manifested to the patriarchs, and eminent saints, as Adam, Noah, Abraham, &c. This is called an "holy" one; not only because it was made by, and between holy persons, and provided for the holiness of the people of God, both here, and hereafter; but because in the article of redemption and salvation by Christ, which is here more particularly regarded, care was taken to secure the glory of God's holiness and justice, as well as to display his grace and mercy. Now raising up, and sending Jesus a Saviour, showed, that God was mindful of this covenant, and therefore sent redemption to his people.

Luke 1:73

Ver. 73. The oath which he swore to our father Abraham. When he swore by himself, because he could swear by no greater, that in blessing he would bless him; that his seed should possess the gates of his enemies, and in it all the nations of the earth should be blessed: all which have been fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah; see Ge 22:16.

Luke 1:74

Ver. 74. That he would grant unto us,.... What is said in this and the following verse, is the substance of the promised mercy, covenant, and oath:

that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, as before, in **Lu 1:71**

might serve him without fear. One principal end of deliverance from spiritual enemies by Christ, is the service of God; and nothing lays a greater obligation on men to serve the Lord, and glorify him, than redemption by Christ; nor is there any thing that makes men more zealous of good works: spiritual and evangelical service, in distinction from the legal service, and worship of God, is here meant; since it is said to be "without fear", which the threatenings and curses of the law filled men with; but being delivered from it, they become free from that spirit of bondage unto fear, it genders to; as being delivered also from sin and Satan, they are without fear of hell and damnation; and from the world, they are without fear of men; and from death, they are without fear of that, through which many under the legal dispensation, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. It is a saying of the Jews {y}, that:

"greater is he that serves from love, than he that serves from fear."

But such sort of service is not of a man's self, or performed by his own power and strength, but is a "grant" from God, and owing to the influence of his Spirit and grace.

{y} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 31. 1. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Teshuva, c. 10, sect. 1, 2.

Luke 1:75

Ver. 75. In holiness and righteousness,...., Not in mere outward rites and legal ceremonies but as the saints serve, from principles of righteousness and true holiness; in which the new man is created, and of which the kingdom of God, or spiritual and internal religion consists; so in acts of piety and devotion towards God, and justice among men, which is the substance of the perfect and acceptable will of God:

before him; it is one thing to serve the Lord with an outward appearance of holiness and righteousness before men, and another thing to be righteous before God, and to walk in all his commandments and ordinances, as in his sight: all the days of our life; which denotes the constancy and continuance of this service; it is not for a day or two, or only on festivals and sabbath days, such as were under the Jewish dispensation, but every day we live. In the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and in two copies of Beza's, and two of Stephens's, and in the Alexandrian copy, it is only read, "all our days"; but the Arabic version reads, as the generality of copies, and as we render it.

Luke 1:76

Ver. 76. And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest,.... Here Zacharias turns himself to his son John, though an infant, and incapable of knowing what was said to him; and for the sake of those that were present, describes his office and work; and says, that he should be "called", that is, that he should "be", and be accounted a "prophet": for he was not only a preacher of Christ and his Gospel, but he also foretold the coming of the Messiah; and the vengeance that should fall on the Jewish nation, for their unfruitfulness, impenitence, and unbelief: and the Prophet "of the Highest"; that is, of God; as the Persic version renders it, of the most high God; and by whom is meant, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose prophet, harbinger, and forerunner John was; and so is a proof of Christ being the supreme, or most high God:

for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways; as the angel had suggested in **Lu 1:17** and as was prophesied of him in Isa 11:3.
See Gill on "Mt 3:3".

Luke 1:77

Ver. 77. To give knowledge of salvation,.... This is still said of John, and belongs to his work and office; though the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "that he may give"; as if it was spoken of the Lord, before whose face John was to go, and whose ways he was to prepare: by "salvation" is meant, not a temporal salvation, or a deliverance from the Roman yoke, the Jews were expecting, for John gave no intimation of any such salvation; but of a spiritual and eternal salvation, and of Christ himself, the author of it; who is often called Salvation, because he was appointed to this business, was fitted for it, and has effected it; and there is salvation in him, and in no other, the "knowledge" of this is not merely, notional and speculative, but experimental, approbative, fiducial, appropriating, sure, and certain; and is more excellent, than any other kind of knowledge whatever: and this is a "gift"; it is not what is attained unto, and acquired by application, diligence, and industry, as other sort of knowledge; but is a gift of God, though in the use of means, and through the ministry of the word: and so John is said to give it ministerially, he being an instrument in the hand of God, whereby souls came to the knowledge of salvation by Christ, and believed in him: it was communicated by God through his ministry,

unto his people: meaning not the people of John the Baptist, the Jews, though it was true of God's elect among them; but the people of Christ, and that not all mankind, who are his by creation; but a special people, whom the Father has given him, and he has purchased by his blood; whom he conquers by his grace, and makes a willing people, in the day of his power: to these, and only these, is the knowledge of salvation by Christ given; for none else are appointed to it, and for no other is it wrought out. It follows,

by the remission of their sins; the sense of which is, either that salvation is by the forgiveness of sin, and lies in it, that being a principal part of it; see **Eph 1:7**. Sins are debts; forgiving them is a remitting these debts, a loosing them, or the obligation to payment, which is done freely and fully, for Christ's sake, and through his blood; and herein lies the blessedness and salvation of men; see **Ro 4:6**. Or else that the knowledge of salvation was conveyed through the ministry of John, not by preaching the works of the law, but the doctrine of remission of sins, by Christ; **Mr 1:4** and which is the sum and substance of the Gospel, as it was ordered to be preached by Christ, and was preached by his apostles. The Alexandrian copy reads, "our sins".

Luke 1:78

Ver. 78. Through the tender mercy of our God,.... or "bowels of mercy", to which the forgiveness of sin is owing; the source and spring of pardon, is the free grace and abundant mercy of God; it takes its rise from thence, though it is channelled in the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and which no way derogates from, but rather heightens the riches of God's grace and mercy: for it was mercy that moved God to enter into a covenant with his Son, in which forgiveness of sin is promised; and it was mercy to set forth his Son, in his eternal purposes and decrees; and to send him forth in the fulness of time, to shed his blood for the remission of sins; it was the mercy of God to us, that provided a lamb for a burnt offering, and then accepted of the sacrifice and satisfaction of his Son, in our room and stead, and forgave all our sins, for his sake; and whatever the pardon of our sins cost God and Christ, it is all free grace and mercy to us: it is owing not to the absolute mercy of God, or to the mercy of God as an absolute God, but to the mercy of "our" God; our God in Christ, our covenant God and Father, whose bowels yearned towards us, and whose pity is that of a tender parent: whereby

the day spring from on high hath visited us: the word anatolh, here used, and is translated "the day spring", is the same which the Septuagint use, in Jer 23:5 where the Messiah is spoken of, under the name of the "branch": and undoubtedly the Messiah Jesus, is intended here, who is the man, that branch, that has grown up out of his place; not from below, but from above; and who is the phosphorus, or bringer of light, that bright and morning star, that sun of righteousness, who has light in himself, and communicates light to others; even light natural, spiritual, and eternal; and with his rays and beams of light, life, and love, refreshes, exhilarates, and warms, the hearts of his people: and by the "visit" he has made in our "horizon", is meant his assumption of human nature; which, like a friendly visit, proceeded from pure love to the children of God; and was a drawing near unto them, for it was a taking on him their nature, in which he represented their persons; and was done through much difficulty and great condescension, since he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with him; and his stay on earth in this nature, was but for a little while; so that on all accounts, it may be truly called a "visit": and which, as the remission of sin is wholly owing to the tender mercy of our God, who put him upon it, called him to it, sent him forth made of a woman, and in the likeness of sinful flesh, to obtain eternal redemption, in which mercy and truth met together: the end and design of this visit, are signified in the next verse; for the following words belong to the day spring from on high, and not to John the Prophet of the Highest.

Luke 1:79

Ver. 79. To give light to them that sit in darkness,.... God's elect among the Jews, who were not only in a state of unregeneracy, which is a state of darkness, ignorance, and unbelief; but in the darkness of the legal dispensation, and at this time under more than ordinary darkness and ignorance; having lost the knowledge of the righteousness of God, and of the spirituality of his law, the true sense of the Scriptures, and right notions of the Messiah; being led by blind guides, the Scribes and Pharisees;

and, were as it were also,

in the shadow of death; in a state seemingly irrecoverable, when Christ, the great light arose, and shone upon them; and communicated spiritual light, life, and heat unto them; see **Isa 9:2** compared with **Mt 4:13** though Christ is also a light, to lighten his chosen ones among the Gentiles, **Lu 2:32** but the Jews seem chiefly to be intended here:

to guide our feet into the way of peace; which we knew not: not that he came to teach us how to make our peace with God, but to make peace for us, by the blood of his cross; and so by his Spirit and word, lead us into the true way of enjoying spiritual peace here, and eternal peace hereafter.

Luke 1:80

Ver. 80. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit,.... That is, John, the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth, grew in stature of body, and increased in wisdom and knowledge, and fortitude in his soul:

and was in the deserts; or "desert", as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read; not in the wilderness of Judea, where he came preaching, but either of Ziph or Maon, which were near to Hebron; see 1Sa 23:14 he was not brought up in the schools of the prophets, nor in the academies of the Jews, or at the feet of any of their Rabbins and doctors; that it might appear he was not taught and sent of men, but of God: nor did he dwell in any of the cities, or larger towns, but in deserts; partly that he might be fitted for that gravity and austerity of life, he was to appear in; and that it might be clear he had no knowledge of, nor correspondence with Jesus, whose forerunner he was, and of whom he was to bear testimony, till such time he did it; and in this solitude he remained,

till the day of his showing unto Israel; either till the time came that he was to appear before, and be examined by the sanhedrim, that judged of persons fitness and qualifications for the priesthood, in order to be admitted to it; which should have been when he was thirty years of age, but that he was designed for other service; or rather therefore till he appeared in his prophetic office, and showed himself to the people of Israel; to whom he came preaching the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins, administering the ordinance of baptism, giving notice of the near approach of the Messiah, and pointing him out unto the people.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 2:1

Ver. 1. And it came to pass in those days,.... When John the Baptist was born, and Christ was conceived, and his mother pregnant with him, and the time of his birth drew on. The Ethiopic version reads, "in that day"; as if it was the same day in which John was circumcised, and Zacharias delivered the above song of praise: that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus; second emperor of Rome; the name Caesar was common to all the emperors, as Pharaoh to the Egyptians, and afterwards Ptolemy. His name Augustus, was not his original surname, but Thurinus; and was given him, after he became Caesar, to express his grandeur, majesty, and reverence; and that by the advice of Munatius Plancus, when others would have had him called Romulus, as if he was the founder of the city of Rome {z}: by him a decree was made and published,

that all the world should be taxed; or "registered", or "enrolled"; for this was not levying a tax, or imposing tribute upon them, but a taking an account of the names of persons, and of their estates; and which might be, in order to lay a tax upon them, as afterwards was: for the payment of a tax, there was no need of the appearance of women and children; and so the Arabic version renders it, "that the names the whole habitable world might be described, or written down": such an enrolment had been determined on by Augustus, when at Tarracon in Spain, twenty seven years before; but he was diverted from it by some disturbances in the empire, so that it was deferred to this time, in which there was a remarkable interposition of divine providence; for had this enrolment been made then, in all likelihood it had not been done now, and Joseph and Mary would not have had occasion to have come to Bethlehem: but so it must be; and thus were things ordered by an infinite, and all wise providence to effect it: nor did this enrolment reach to all the parts of the known world, but only to the Roman empire; which, because it was so very large as it was, and in the boasting language of the Romans was so called, as, Ptolemy Evergetes {a} calls his kingdom, kosmov, "the world". Though some think only the land of Judea is meant, which is called the earth, in Lu 21:26 and "all the world", in Ac 11:28 but the other sense seems more agreeable; and so the Syriac version renders it, "that all the people of his empire might be enrolled": and the Persic version, "that they should enrol all the subjects of his kingdom"; and is justified by the use of the phrase for the Roman empire, in several passages of Scripture, **Ro 1:8**. Now at the time of this enrolment, and under this august emperor, and when the whole world was in a profound peace, was the Messiah born, the King of kings, and the only potentate; the Shiloh, the peaceable and prosperous, the Prince of Peace, and Lord of life and glory; and that, in order to redeem men from that worse subjection and bondage they were in to sin, Satan, the law, and death, than they were to the Roman emperor. The Jews say {b}, the son of David shall not come, until the kingdom (of Edom, or Rome, as some copies read, in others it is erased) shall be extended over all Israel, nine months, according to **Mic 5:3**. The gloss on it is, that is, "all the world", in which the Israelites are scattered.

{z} Suetonius in Vita Octav August. sect. 7. {a} Apud Fabricii Biblioth Gr. Tom. 2. p. 608. {b} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.

Luke 2:2

Ver. 2. And this taxing was first made,.... Or "this was the first enrolment, or taxing" in the Jewish nation; for there was another afterwards, when Judas the Galilean arose, and drew many after him, **Ac 5:38**.

When Cyrenius was governor of Syria; or "of Cyrenius" "governor of Syria"; that is, it was the first that he was, concerned in; who not now, but afterwards was governor of Syria; and because he had been so before Luke wrote this history, and this being a title of honour, and what might distinguish him from others of that name, it is given him; for as Tertullian says {c}, Sentius Saturninus was now governor of Syria, when Cyrenius was sent into Judea, to make this register, or taxing; and which is manifestly distinguished from that, which was made during his being governor of Syria, when Archelaus was banished from Judea, ten or eleven years after Herod's death; which Josephus {d} gives an account of, and Luke refers to, in **Ac 5:37**. Moreover, the words will bear to be rendered thus, "and this tax, or enrolment, was made before Cyrenius was governor of Syria"; prwth, being used for protera, as in **Joh 1:15**. This Cyrenius is the same whom the Romans call Quirinius, and Quirinus; a governor of Syria had great power in Judea, to which it was annexed, when Cyrenius was governor there. It is reported of R. Gamaliel, that he went to take a licence, ayrwob Nwmghm, "from a governor of Syria" {e}; i.e. to intercalate the year: and Syria was in many things like to the land of Judea, particularly as to tithes, and the keeping of the seventh year {f}.

{c} Contr. Marcion, l. 4. c. 19. {d} Antiqu. l. 18. c. 1. {e} Misn. Ediot. c. 7. sect. 7. {f} T. Bab. Gittin. fol. 8. 1.

Luke 2:3

Ver. 3. And all went to be taxed,.... Throughout Judea, Galilee, and Syria; men, women, and children;

every one into his own city; where he was born, and had any estate, and to which he belonged.

Luke 2:4

Ver. 4. And Joseph also went up from Galilee,.... Where he now lived, and worked at the trade of a carpenter; having for some reasons, and by one providence or another, removed hither from his native place:

out of the city of Nazareth; which was in Galilee, where he and Mary lived; and where he had espoused her, and she had conceived of the Holy Ghost:

into Judea; which lay higher than Galilee, and therefore he is said to go up to it:

unto the city of David; not what was built by him, but where he was born and lived; see 1Sa 17:12.

which is called Bethlehem: the place where, according to **Mic 5:2** the Messiah was to be born, and was born; and which signifies "the house of bread": a very fit place for Christ, the bread which came down from heaven, and gives life to the world, to appear first in. This place was, as a Jewish chronologer says {g}, a "parsa" and half, or six miles from Jerusalem; though another of their writers, an historian and traveller {h}, says, it was two "parsas", or eight miles; but Justin Martyr {i} says, it was but thirty five furlongs distant from it, which is not five miles; hither Joseph came from Galilee,

because he was of the house and lineage of David; he was of his family, and lineally descended from him, though he was so poor and mean; and this is the reason of his coming to Bethlehem, David's city.

{g} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 14. 2. {h} R. Benjamin Itin. p. 47. {i} Apolog. 2. p. 75.

Luke 2:5

Ver. 5. To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife,.... Whom also he had married, though he had not known her in a carnal way; she came along with him to be taxed and enrolled also, because she was of the same family of David, and belonged to the same city:

being great with child; very near her time, and yet, though in such circumstances, was obliged by this edict, to come to Bethlehem; and the providence in it was, that she might give birth there, and so the prophecy in **Mic 5:2** have its accomplishment: this was an instance, and an example, of obedience to civil magistrates.

Luke 2:6

Ver. 6. And so it was, that while they were there,.... At Bethlehem, waiting to be called and enrolled in their turn;

the days were accomplished that she should be delivered; her reckoning was up, the nine months of her going with child were ended, and her full time to bring forth was come.

Luke 2:7

Ver. 7. And she brought forth her firstborn son,.... At Bethlehem, as was predicted; and the Jews themselves own, that the Messiah is already born, and born at Bethlehem. They have a tradition, that an Arabian should say to a Jew {k}

"Lo! the king Messiah is born; he said to him, what is his name? Menachem: he asked him, what is his father's name? he replied to him, Hezekiah; he said unto him, from whence is he? he answered, from the palace of the king of Bethlehem."

Which is elsewhere {l} reported, with some little variation; the Arabian said to the Jew,

"the Redeemer of the Jews is born; he said unto him, what is his name? he replied, Menachem is his name: and what is his father's name? he answered, Hezekiah: he said unto him, and where do they dwell? he replied, in Birath Arba, in Bethlehem."

And the Jewish chronologer affirms {m}, that

"Jesus the Nazarene, was born at Bethlehem Judah, a "parsa" and a half from Jerusalem."

And even the author of the blasphemous book of the life of Christ owns {n}, that

"Bethlehem Judah was the place of his nativity."

Jesus is called Mary's firstborn, because she had none before him; though she might not have any after him; for the first that opened the matrix, was called the firstborn, though none followed after, and was holy to the Lord, Ex 13:2. Christ, as to his human nature; was Mary's firstborn; and as to his divine nature, God's firstborn:

and wrapped him in swaddling clothes; which shows, that he was in all things made like unto us, sin only excepted. This is one of the first things done to a new born infant, after that it is washed, and its navel cut; see Eze 16:4 and which Mary did herself, having neither midwife nor nurse with her; from whence it has been concluded, that the birth of Jesus was easy, and that she brought him forth without pain, and not in that sorrow women usually do;

and laid him in a manger. The Persic version serves for a comment; "she put him into the middle of the manger, in the place in which they gave food to beasts; because in the place whither they came, they had no cradle": this shows the meanness of our Lord's birth, and into what a low estate he came; and that now, as afterwards, though Lord of all, yet had not where to lay his head in a proper place; and expresses his amazing grace, in that he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor: and the reason of his being here laid was,

because there was no room for them in the inn. It seems that Joseph had no house of his own to go into, nor any relation and friend to receive him: and it may be, both his own father and Mary's father were dead, and therefore were obliged to put up at an inn; and in this there was no room for them, because of the multitude that were come thither to be enrolled: and this shows their poverty and meanness, and the little account that was made of them; for had they been rich, and made any considerable figure, they would have been regarded, and room made for them; especially since Mary was in the circumstances she was; and it was brutish in them to turn them into a stable, when such was her case.

{k} T. Hieros. Berncot, fol. 5. 1. {l} Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 1. {m} David Ganz, ut supra. (par. 2. fol. 14. 2.) {n} Toldos Jesu, p. 7.

Luke 2:8

Ver. 8. And there were in the same country shepherds,.... For Bethlehem was a place of pasture: near to Ephrata, the same with Bethlehem, were the fields of the wood, Ps 132:6 and the tower of Edar or the tower of the flock, Ge 35:21 and here David kept his father's sheep, 1Sa 17:15 so that we need not wonder to hear of shepherds here,

abiding in the field, watching over their flock by night: from whence it appears, that Christ was born in the night; and the {o} Jews say, that the future redemption shall be in the night; and Jerom says {p}, it is a tradition of the Jews, that Christ will come in the middle of the night, as was the passover in Egypt: it is not likely that he was born, as is commonly received, at the latter end of December, in the depth of winter; since at this time, shepherds were out in the fields, where they lodged all night, watching their flocks: they were diligent men, that looked well to their flocks, and watched them by night, as well as by day, to preserve them from beasts of prey; they were, as it is in the Greek text, "keeping the watches of the night over their flock." The night was divided into four watches, the even, midnight, cock crowing, and morning; and these kept them, as the Arabic version adds, alternately, some kept the flock one watch, and some another, while the rest slept in the tent, or tower, that was built in the fields for that purpose. There were two sorts of cattle with the Jews; there was one sort which they called twyrbdm, "the cattle of the wilderness", that lay in the fields; and another sort which they called twtyyb, "the cattle of the house", that were brought up at home: concerning both which, they have this rule {q};

"they do not water nor slay the cattle of the wilderness, but they water and slay the cattle of the house: these are the cattle of the house, that lie in the city; the cattle of the wilderness, are they that lie in the pastures."

On which, one of their commentators {r} observes,

"these lie in the pastures, which are in the villages, all the days of cold and heat, and do not go into the cities, until the rains descend."

The first rain is in the month Marchesvan, which answers to the latter part of our October, and the former part of November; and of this sort, seem to be the flocks those shepherds were keeping by night, the time not being yet come, of their being brought into the city: from whence it appears, that Christ must be born before the middle of October, since the first rain was not yet come; concerning this, the Gemara {s} is more large;

"the Rabbins teach, that these are they of the wilderness, or fields, and these are they of the house; they of the field are they that go out on the passover, and feed in the pastures, and come in at the first rain; and these are they of the house, all that go out and feed without the border, and come and lie within the border (fixed for a sabbath day's journey): Rabbi says, those, and those are of the house; but these are they that are of the field, all they that go out and feed in the pastures, and do not come in to remain, neither in the days of the sun, nor in the days of the rains."

To the shepherds, the first notice of Christ's birth was given; not to the princes and chief priests, and learned men at Jerusalem, but to weak, mean, and illiterate men; whom God is pleased to choose and call, and reveal his secrets to; when he hides them from the wise and prudent, to their confusion, and the glory of his grace: and this was a presage of what the kingdom of Christ would be, and by, and to whom, the Gospel would be preached.

{o} Tzeror Hamrnor, fol. 73. 3. {p} In Matt. xxv. 6. {q} Misn. Betza, c. 5. sect. 7. {r} Maimon. in ib. {s} T. Bab. Betza, for. 40. 1. & Sabbat. fol. 45. 2. Vid Maimon Hilch. Yom Tob, c. 2. sect. 2.

Luke 2:9

Ver. 9. And lo, the angel of the Lord,.... It may be Gabriel, who had brought the tidings of the conception of the Messiah to the virgin, and now the birth of him to the shepherds:

came upon them; on a sudden, unexpectedly, at once, and stood by them, as some versions read; or rather, stood over them, over their heads, just above them; so that he was easily and perfectly seen by them;

and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; or a very glorious and extraordinary light shone with surprising lustre and brightness all around them; by which light, they could discern the illustrious form of the angel that was over them:

and they were sore afraid; at the sight of such a personage, and at such unusual light and glory about them: they were not used to such appearances, and were awed with the majesty of God, of which these were symbols, and were conscious to themselves of their own sinfulness and frailty.

Luke 2:10

Ver. 10. And the angel said unto them; fear not,.... For he was not a messenger of bad, but of good tidings:

for behold, I bring you good tidings; tidings, that were both wonderful and amazing, and therefore a "behold" is prefixed to them, as well as to excite to attention; and which were good news, and glad tidings, for such the birth of Christ of a virgin is: in which the good will and amazing love of Cod to man are displayed, and the promises, and prophecies relating to him fulfilled; and the work of man's salvation, his peace, pardon, righteousness, &c. about to be accomplished, and so matter

of great joy: not carnal, but spiritual; not feigned, but real; not temporary, but lasting; even such as cannot be taken away, nor intermeddled with; and not small, but great, even joy unspeakable, and full of glory:

which shall be to all people; not to every individual of mankind; not to Herod and his courtiers, who were troubled at it; nor to the greater part of the Jewish nation, who when he came to them, received him not, but rejected him as the Messiah; particularly not to the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, who when they saw him, said, this is the heir, let's kill him, and seize on the inheritance; but to all that were waiting for him, and were looking for redemption in Israel; to all sensible sinners who rejoice at his birth, and in his salvation; see **Isa 9:3** to all the chosen people of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, whom God has taken to be his covenant people, and has given to his Son, as such, to redeem and save; to these the incarnation of Christ, with all the benefits resulting from it, is the cause of great joy, when they are made a willing people in the day of Christ's power.

Luke 2:11

Ver. 11. For unto you is born this day,.... Day is here put for a natural day, consisting both of night and day; for it was night when Christ was born, and the angels brought the tidings of it to the shepherds. The particular day, and it may be, month and year, in which Christ was born, cannot be certainly known; but this we may be sure of, it was in the fulness of time, and at the exact, season fixed upon between God and Christ in the council and covenant of peace; and that he was born, not unto, or for the good of angels; for the good angels stand in no need of his incarnation, sufferings, and death, having never fell; and as for the evil angels, a Saviour was never designed and provided for them; nor did Christ take on him their nature, nor suffer in their stead: wherefore the angel does not say, "unto us", but "unto you", unto you men; for he means not merely, and only the shepherds, or the Jews only, but the Gentiles also; all the children, all the spiritual seed of Abraham, all elect men; for their sakes, and on their account, and for their good, he assumed human nature; see **Isa 9:6**

in the city of David; that is, Bethlehem, as in **Lu 2:4** where the Messiah was to be born, as being, according to the flesh, of the seed of David, his son and offspring; as he is, according to his divine nature, his Lord and root. The characters of this new born child follow, and which prove the tidings of his birth to be good, and matter of joy:

a Saviour; whom God had provided and appointed from all eternity; and had been long promised and much expected as such in time, even from the beginning of the world; and is a great one, being God as well as man, and so able to work out a great salvation for great sinners, which he has done; and he is as willing to save as he is able, and

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 3:1

Ver. 1. Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar,.... Emperor of Rome, and the third of the Caesars; Julius was the first, and Augustus the second, in whose time Christ was born, and this Tiberius the third; he was the son of Livia, the wife of Augustus, but not by him; but was adopted by him, into the empire: his name was Claudius Tiberius Nero, and for his intemperance was called, Caldius Biberius Mero; the whole of his reign was upwards of twenty two years, for he died in the twenty third year of his reign {g}; and in the fifteenth of it, John began to preach, Christ was baptized, and began to preach also; so that this year may be truly called, "the acceptable year of the Lord".

Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea; under the Emperor Tiberius, in whose reign the Jewish chronologer {h} places him, and the historian {i} also, and make mention of him as sent by him to Jerusalem: he was not the first governor of Judea for the Romans; there were before him Coponius, Marcus Ambivius, Annins Rufus, and Valerius Gratus:

and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee; this was Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the great, and brother of Archelaus; the above chronologer {k} calls him also a tetrarch, and places him under Tiberius Caesar: he is sometimes called a king, and so he is by the Ethiopic version here called "king of Galilee"; and in the Arabic version, "prince over the fourth part of Galilee"; besides Galilee, he had also Peraea, or the country beyond Jordan, as Josephus {l} says, and which seems here to be included in Galilee; See Gill on "Mt 14:1".

And his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis: Pliny {m} makes mention of the nation of the Itureans, as belonging to Coele Syria;

perhaps Iturea is the same with Batanea, or Auranitis, or both; since these with Trachon, the same with Trachonitis here, are allotted to Philip by Josephus {n}: it seems to take its name from Jetur, one of the sons of Ishmael, Ge 25:15 Trachonitis is mentioned by Pliny {o}, as near to Decapolis, and as a region and tetrarchy, as here: Ptolemy {p} speaks of the Trachonite Arabians, on the east of Batanea, or Bashan: the region of Trachona, or Trachonitis, with the Targumists {q}, answers to the country of Argob. This Philip, who as before by Josephus, so by Egesippus {r}, is said, in agreement with Luke, to be tetrarch of Trachonitis, was brother to Herod Antipas, by the father's, but not by the mother's side. Philip was born of Cleopatra, of Jerusalem, and Herod of Malthace, a Samaritan {s}: he died in the twentieth year of Tiberius {t}, five years after this:

and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene: mention is made of Abila by Pliny {u}, as in Coele Syria, from whence this tetrarchy might have its name; and by Ptolemy {w}, it is called Abila of Lysanius, from this, or some other governor of it, of that name; and the phrase, "from Abilene to Jerusalem", is to be met with in the Talmud {x}, which doubtless designs this same place: who this Lysanias was, is not certain; he was not the son of Herod the great, as Eusebius suggests {y}, nor that Lysanias, the son of Ptolemy Minnaeus, whom Josephus {z} speaks of, though very probably he might be a descendant of his: however, when Tiberius Caesar reigned at Rome, and Pontius Pilate governed in Judea, and Herod Antipas in Galilee, and Philip his brother in Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias in Abilene, John the Baptist began to preach and baptize; to fix the area of whose ministry and baptism, all this is said.

{g} Suetou. Octav. Aug. c. 62, 63. & Tiberius Nero, c. 21, 49, 73. {h} R. David Ganz par. 2. fol. 15. 1. {i} Joseph. de Bello, Jud. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 2, 3. {k} Par. 1. fol. 25. 2. {l} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 6. sect. 5. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 23. {n} Ib. ut supra. (de Bello, Jud. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 2, 3.) {o} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 12. {p} Lib. 5. c. 15. {q} Targum Jon. in Deut. iii. 4. 14. 1 Kings iv. 13. & T. Hiefos. in Deut. iii. 14. & Numb. xxxiv. 15. {r} De Excid. l. 1. c. 46. & 3. 26. {s} Joseph de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 28. {t} Ib. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 6. {u} Lib. 5. c. 18. {w} Lib. 5. c. 15. {x} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 59. 2. {y} Hist. Eccl l. 1. c. 9. 10. {z} De Belle Jud. l. 1. c. 13. sect. 1.

Luke 3:2

Ver. 2. Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests,.... Some difficulty here arises, how these two could be both high priests; when according to the law of

God, and the usages of the Jewish nation, there was to be, and was but one high priest at a time: many things are observed by writers, to solve this difficulty: some go this way; that though according to the divine institution, and the practice of former times, there was but one high priest at a time; yet now, through the corruption of the present age, there were two high priests; or at least, which officiated alternately in the same year: but of such a corruption, no instance can be given, even in those corrupt times; and as Maimonides says {a}, there can be but "one high priest" Mlweh lkb, "in all the world"; and besides, is contrary to their canons, which were then in being, and still remain; one {b} of which runs thus, txak Mylwdg Mynhk ynv Nynmm Nya "they do not appoint two high priests at once". Others suppose, that these two annually performed the office of high priests by turns; that Caiaphas was high priest one year, and Annas another: it is true indeed, that through the corruption of those times, this office became venal, hence it is said in the Talmud {c},

"because they gave money for the priesthood, they changed it every twelve months."

And which is more largely expressed by one of their commentators {d},

"because the high priests, who were under the second temple, after Simeon the just, gave money to minister in the high priest's office, and because they were wicked, they did not fill up their years, therefore they changed every year."

But though it is certain, that there were frequent, and sometimes annual changes in the priesthood, hence it is said of Caiaphas,
Joh 11:49 that he was "high priest the same year", yet it does not appear that he and Annas took it yearly by turns: for Caiaphas continued in that office some years, even till after the death of Christ: and besides, had this been the case, as one of them could be but high priest for the year being, both in one year as here, could not with propriety be said to be high priests. Others take another method, and suppose Caiaphas to be properly the high priest, as he certainly was; and Annas so called, because he had been one formerly, the same with Ananus, the son of Seth; who was put into the priesthood by Quirinius, in the room of Joazar, and was deposed by Valerius Gratus, and Ishmael ben Phabi was put into his room: but though there may be instances of persons being called high priests, who had been in that office, after they were removed from it, yet no reason can be given, why Annas should be peculiarly called so, when there were in all probability several alive, who had been in that office as well as he; as Joazar his predecessor, and Ishmael ben Phabi, who succeeded Joazar, and after him Eleazar, the son of Annas, and then Simeon ben

Camhith; nor why he should be put in the annals of the high priests, in a year in which he was not one. It seems most likely therefore, that he was the "Sagan" of the priests, of which office mention is frequently made, in the Jewish writings {e}; yea, we often read of Chanina, or Chananiah, or Ananias, perhaps the same with this Annas, who is called, Mynhk Ngo, "the Sagan of the priests" {f}. This officer was not a deputy high priest, or one that was substituted to officiate occasionally, in the room of the high priest, when any thing hindered him, or rendered him unfit for his office; as on the day of atonement, if the high priest contracted any pollution, they substituted another to minister {g}; which was not the "Sagan", but another priest; and even such an one was called an high priest, as appears from the following story {h}.

"It happened to Simeon ben Camhith (a predecessor of Caiaphas), that he went out to speak with the king, on the evening of the day of atonement, and the spittle was scattered from his mouth, upon his garments, and he was unclean; and his brother Judah went in, and ministered in his stead in the high priesthood; and their mother saw her "two sons",
dxa Mwyb Mylwdg Mynhk ynv "high priests in one day"."

But the "Sagan" was not an officer pro tempore, or so much under the high priest, and one in his stead, as a ruler and governor over other priests. Maimonides says of him thus {i};

"they appoint one priest, who is to the high priest as a second to the king, and he is called "Sagan"; and he is called a ruler: and he stands at the right hand of the high priest continually; and this is an honour to him, and all the priests are under the hand of the Sagan."

The account given of him in the Talmud {k} is this;

"in five things the "Sagan" ministers; the "Sagan" says to him, my lord, high priest, lift up thy right hand (i.e. when he took the lots out of the vessel for the goats, on the day of atonement {l}; which should be slain); the "Sagan" is on his right hand, and the father of the sanhedrim on his left (i.e. when he went to the east of the court and the north of the altar {m}, where were the two goats, and the vessel in which were the lots); the "Sagan" waved with the veils, or linen clothes; the "Sagan" held him by his right hand, and caused him to ascend (by the steps to the altar); and no man was appointed an high priest, before he was a "Sagan.""

Now these might be as Serojab and Zephaniah, the one chief priest, and the other second priest, Jer 52:24 where the Targum and Jarchi interpret the text, the "Sagan" of the priests. And this being an office of such dignity and authority, supposing Annas in it, though he was not "the" high priest, yet being the head of the other priests, he might be called one, and be joined with Caiaphas, and set before him; not only because he had been an high priest, but because he was his father-in-law:

the word of God came to John the son of Zachariah: a priest of the order of "Abia"; and of Elisabeth, a daughter of Aaron, and cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus; as it had come formerly to the prophets, and particularly to Jeremiah, who was sanctified from the womb, as the Baptist was: he was blessed with a prophetic spirit, and with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and with a wonderful revelation of the Messiah, and of the Gospel dispensation; and was abundantly qualified for the work he was called to, and sent to perform: and this befell him

in the wilderness; that is, of Judea; where he had been brought up and lived, and from whence and where he came, preaching: he had lived a solitary life, and had not learnt his doctrine from men, but had his mission, ministry, and baptism, from heaven.

{a} In Misn. Menachot, c. 13. sect. 10. {b} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 4. sect. 15. {c} T. Bab. Yorma, fol. 8. 2. {d} Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c 1. sect. 1. {e} Targum in 2 Kings xxiii. 4. & xxv. 18. & in Jer. xx. 1. 3. & xxix. 26, & lii. 24. {f} Misn. Shekalim, c. 6. sect. 1. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 1. Juchasin, fol. 57. 1. {g} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1. {h} T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 38. 4. Megilla, fol. 72. 1. Horayot, fol. 47. 4. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 47. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 180. 3. {i} Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 4. sect. 16. {k} T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 41. 1. {l} Misn. Yoma, c. 4. sect. 1. {m} Ib. c. 3. sect. 9.

Luke 3:3

Ver. 3. And he came into all the country about Jordan,.... He came out of the wilderness of Judea, where he first began his ministry, to some parts of the country that bordered on Jordan, and was near unto it, on either side the river; sometimes he was at Bethabara, and sometimes at Aenon, near Salim; for he did not take a tour round about all, the country that encompassed Jordan, but being at it, or in places adjacent to it, all the country round about came to him; see **Mt 3:5**.

Preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins: this was the work and office of John, as signified by Elias, in **Mal 4:5** the Jews say {n},

"the Israelites will not repent, till Elias comes; as it is said, **Mal 4:5** in the land of Israel repentance delights."

John came into this land, preaching this doctrine;
See Gill on "Mr 1:4".

{n} Pirke Eliezer, c. 44.

Luke 3:4

Ver. 4. As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet,.... Isa 40:3

saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord make his paths straight; See Gill on "Mt 3:3".

Luke 3:5

Ver. 5. Every valley shall be filled,.... Luke cites more out of the same prophecy, as relating to the times of John the Baptist, and the Messiah, than the other Evangelists Matthew and Mark do: in the prophet it is, "every valley shall be exalted"; which is done, by filling it up; the metaphor is persisted in, of preparing and clearing the way, for the coming of the Messiah, done by the ministry of John; under which, such souls as were lowly and humble, and depressed with the sense of sin, should be raised and directed to believe in Christ, and be filled with divine consolation from him. These words are owned by the Jews {o} to belong to the world to come; that is, the times of the Messiah; though they understand them, of making way for the return of the Israelites from captivity, by the Messiah: just as they suppose such things were done by the miraculous cloud, for the children of Israel, as they passed through the wilderness; of which they say {p},

"that it went before them, smote the serpents and scorpions, and fiery serpents, and the rock; and if there was any low place, it raised it up; or high place, it made it low, and caused them to be plain; as it is said, Isa 40:3 "And every valley shall be exalted", &c."

But what they say of this cloud literally, as preparing the way for the Israelites, is in a spiritual sense true, of the ministry of John; whereby many of the children of Israel, had the way prepared for them, for the reception of the Messiah; when as every humble soul had its expectation raised, and its faith encouraged, and its heart filled with spiritual joy; so such as were proud and haughty, were humbled:

and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; all such as are elated with their own abilities, and boast of their righteousness, trust in themselves, and look with disdain and contempt on others, their loftiness shall be bowed down, and their haughtiness made low; and the Messiah alone, in his person, grace, and righteousness, be exalted:

and the crooked shall be made straight: such as are of a crooked spirit, and walk in crooked ways, with the workers of iniquity, shall have new spirits given them, and be directed to right ways, and be led in the paths of righteousness and truth:

and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and men of rough tempers, comparable to lions and bears, shall become quiet and peaceable, smooth and easy; and moreover, whatever difficulties were in the minds of men concerning the Messiah, the end of his coming, and the nature of his kingdom; and whatever impediments were in the way of embracing him when come, should now be removed at least from many persons: R. David Kimchi, a very noted Jewish commentator {q}, acknowledges that the whole of this passage is to be understood, lvm Krd, "by way of parable", in a mystical and figurative sense.

{o} T. Hieros. Erubin, fol. 25. 2. {p} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 177. 1, 2. Vid. Targ. in Cant. ii. 6. & Jarchi in Cant. iii. 6. {q} In Isa. xl. 4.

Luke 3:6

Ver. 6. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. "By the salvation of God" is meant, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of God's appointing and sending; and who is the author of that salvation which God resolved on, contrived, and approved of; and is his ordinance for salvation, unto the ends of the earth, for all his elect; **Lu 2:30** whom a great number among the Jews should, and did see, with their bodily eyes; and whom not only God's elect

among them, but also all of them among the Gentiles, should behold with an eye of faith, for themselves, as their Saviour and Redeemer. It is matter of question, what passage is here referred to; whether
Isa 40:5 or **Isa 3:10** the latter comes nearest to the words, and the former stands closely connected with the expressions before cited; though it is usual with the New Testament writers, to join together passages, which stand in different places of the same prophet, and even which are in different books; **Ro 9:33** compared with **Isa 8:14** and Mt 21:5 compared with
Isa 62:11 and that agreeably to the method used by Jewish writers {r}.

{r} Vid. Surenhus. Biblos Katallages, de modis Allegandi, &c. Thes. 7. p. 45, 46, 319.

Luke 3:7

Ver. 7. Then said he to the multitude,.... That is, John, as the Ethiopic version reads; and the multitude to whom he spake the following words, were many of the Pharisees and Sadducees, as appears from **Mt 3:7**

That came forth to be baptized of him; who came out of their houses, towns, and cities, round about, to the place where John was; and hearing and seeing what he was about, desired to be admitted to his baptism: not that they "were baptised of him"; as the Arabic version renders it; but they came with a view of being baptized, were it thought fit and proper they should: but John refused them, saying to them,

O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? See Gill on "Mt 3:7".

Luke 3:8

Ver. 8. Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance,.... Or "meet" for it, such as will show it to be true and genuine: "and begin not to say within yourselves": in one of Beza's copies, and in another of Stephens's, it was read, "think not", as in **Mt 3:9**. the sense is the same. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, leave out the phrase, "within yourselves": what they are forbid to say follows,

we have Abraham to our father, for I say unto you, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham; which need not be thought strange, when the creation of Adam out of the earth, and the production of such a numerous offspring, as the Israelites were, from Abraham and Sarah, when past all hope of children, and are signified by the rock and pit in Isa 51:1 are considered; See Gill on "Mt 3:9".

Luke 3:9

Ver. 9. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees,.... Not only to Jesse's family, which as a root in a dry ground, and to Jerusalem, the metropolis of the nation; but to the root of the vain boasting of every Jew; their descent from Abraham, the covenant made with him, their ecclesiastical state and civil polity, all which would quickly be at an end: the Romans were now among them, the axe in God's hand; by means of whom, utter ruin and destruction would be brought upon their nation, city, and temple:

every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire; See Gill on "Mt 3:10".

Luke 3:10

Ver. 10. And the people asked him,.... Not the same as in **Lu 3:7** the Sadducees and Pharisees, for they seemed not to be at all affected with, and wrought upon, by the ministry of John; but rather were displeased with him, and turned their backs on him, and rejected him and his baptism; but the common people, that stood by; who hearing John speak of wrath to come, and of repentance, and fruits worthy of it, were filled with concern about these things, and inquire,

saying, what shall we do? either to escape the wrath and vengeance coming on the nation, and also eternal ruin and destruction; and Beza says, that in two of his copies, and one of them his most ancient one it is added, "to be saved", and so in two of Stephens's; which confirms the above sense, and makes their inquiry to be the same with the jailor's, Ac 16:30 or else their meaning is, what are the things we are to do, or the fruits we are to bring forth, the duties we are to perform, in order to testify the truth and genuineness of our repentance? which latter seems most agreeable.

Luke 3:11

Ver. 11. He answereth and saith unto them,.... By telling them what they should do; and he does not put them upon ceremonial observances, nor severe exercises of religion, nor even the duties of the first table of the law, and others of the second, though necessary to be done; but upon acts of beneficence and kindness, to fellow creatures in distress; and are what may be called love of our neighbour, and which involves the love of God, and so the whole law; for the one cannot be rightly exercised without the other:

he that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; not both of them, but one of them: a man is not obliged to go naked himself, in order to clothe another; and so the Persic and Ethiopic versions read, "let him give one to him that has not"; that has not a garment to wear. This is not to be understood strictly and literally, that a man is obliged to give one of his coats, if he has more than one, to a person in want of clothing; it will be sufficient to answer the intent of this exhortation, if he supplies his want another way, by furnishing him with money to buy one: the meaning is, that persons according to their abilities, and of what they can spare, should communicate to those that are in distress: much less is it to be concluded from hence, that it is not lawful for a man to have more coats than one:

and he that hath meat, or meats, let him do likewise; that is, he that has a sufficiency of food, and more than enough for himself and family, let him give it freely and cheerfully to the poor and needy, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased: and when such acts of kindness are done in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, they are the fruits of grace, and such as are meet for repentance, and show it to be genuine. John instances in these two articles, food and raiment, as containing the necessaries of human life, and including every thing, by which one may be serviceable to another.

Luke 3:12

Ver. 12. Then came also publicans to be baptized,.... Being convinced under John's ministry of the evils of their past life, and desirous of being admitted to baptism, to which they understood repentance, and fruits meet for the same, were pre-requisite: these came nearer to John,

and said unto him, master, what shall we do? we have been very wicked persons, what shall we do to escape divine vengeance? or what are the particular duties we are to perform? or the fruits meet for repentance, we are to bring forth; that so we may be admitted to the ordinance of baptism, which requires, as previous to it, a true and hearty repentance? of these men,

See Gill on "Mt 5:46" See Gill on "Mt 9:9" See Gill on "Mt 9:10" See Gill on "Mt 9:11"

Luke 3:13

Ver. 13. And he said unto them,.... Not by advising them to quit their employments, as if it was a thing unlawful to impose pay, and collect taxes, but by directing them to perform their office aright:

exact no more than that which is appointed you; by the government: there were two sorts of publicans; there were some that exacted more than what they were ordered, and settled the tax at their own pleasure, and collected what they would themselves; and these were very odious to the people, and were reckoned with the worst of sinners, as thieves and robbers; but there were others, who behaved according to the orders of the government, and these were submitted to, as appears from the Jewish canons:

"says {s} Samuel, the judgment a kingdom, is judgment (i.e. the orders of a government ought to be regarded); R. Chanina bar Cahana says, that Samuel says it of a publican, hbuyq wl Nyav "who has nothing appointed for him": the house of R. Jannai say, of a publican that stands of himself."

The gloss is,

""the judgment of a kingdom is judgment"; this is he that receives from a king, a tax (to gather) in a thing, bwuq, "that is fixed", so and so for the year, and he is no robber: "who has nothing appointed for him", but takes according to his whole will and pleasure."

Maimonides expresses this in plainer language {t}

"in what things is it said that a publican is as thieves? when a Gentile publican, or a Gentile that stands of himself, or a publican that stands for the king, and hath nothing fixed for him, but he takes what he pleases, and leaves what he pleases: but a publican with whom the king agrees, and orders that he should take a third or a fourth, or, bwuq rbd "any thing that is appointed"; and he constitutes an Israelitish publican to collect that part for the king, and it is known that the man is faithful, and does not add any thing to what the king has decreed; he is not in the class of robbers, for the judgment of a king is judgment.--And so a king that lays a tax upon citizens, or upon every man and man, "a thing fixed"; or decrees, that whoever transgresses this thing, they shall take all his goods into the king's house; or that whatever shall be found in the field in the time of the barn (i.e. when it should be there) should pay tribute for it, whether he is the owner of the field or not: and so with respect to any thing else of this kind, it is not a robbery; and an Israelite that collects them for the king, is not in the number of robbers; for lo! he is right, and he does not add nor alter, nor take any thing to himself."

Now such publicans as these, were received and submitted to, but others were rejected; so Moses Kotsensis says {u}, that

"publicans that take, Nhl bwuqh rbdm rtwy "more than what is appointed for them", are rejected."

From all which we may learn what publicans these were that came to John's baptism, and put the above question to him; that they were Jewish publicans, and not Gentiles; and therefore John says nothing to them, but what concerned their employment, which he doubtless would have done, if they had been ignorant Gentiles: and also we see the reason of his expressing himself in this manner, since publicans were very apt to go beyond their orders, and require more than was fixed for them to collect; and likewise that John, in this advice, spoke the sense of the Jews themselves; who did not refuse to pay tribute, excepting some few, provided no more was exacted, than the government appointed; and as temptations to such evils were very great, and it lay in the power of these men to impose on the people, and extort from them, to abstain from such practices was an argument of the fear of God, of the truth of grace, and of the sincerity of repentance.

{s} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 113. 1. {t} Hilch. Gezala, c. 5. sect. 11, 12. {u} Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 214. Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 25. 2. Gloss in ib.

Luke 3:14

Ver. 14. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him,.... Or "asked him": why our translators have rendered it, "demanded of him", I know not, unless they thought that such language best suited persons of a military character. Some think these were Gentile soldiers, since it does not look so likely that the Romans would employ Jews as soldiers in their own country; though it is more probable that they were Jews, in the pay of the Romans, who belonged to Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, or to Philip of Ituraea, whose dominions lay near the place where John was: since it is certain, that there were many of the Jews that betook themselves to a military life; and seeing John instructed them in no part of natural or revealed religion, but what was suitable to their character and employment: for upon these men saying,

what shall we do? to avoid the threatened ruin, and to prove the truth of our repentance, that so we may be admitted to the holy ordinance of baptism; John replied,

do violence to no man; or "shake" him, or put him, into bodily fear, by threatening, hectoring, and bullying him, and drawing the sword upon him, which is usual, upon the least offence, for such persons to do;

neither accuse any falsely, or play the sycophant; who, in order to flatter some, bring malicious accusations against others; and which was a vice that too much prevailed among the Jewish soldiery; who either to curry favour with the Roman officers and governors, would wrongfully accuse their fellow soldiers, or country men, to them; or in order to extort sums of money from them, that they might live in a more luxurious manner than their common pay would admit of: wherefore, it follows,

and be content with your wages; allowed by the government, and do not seek to increase them by any unlawful methods, as by mutiny and sedition, by rebelling against your officers, or by ill usage of the people. The Jewish Rabbins have adopted this word, aynopa, into their language in the Misnic and Talmudic writings {w}: and their gloss explains it by the money, for the soldiers, and the hire of soldiers, as here; and it includes every thing which by the Romans were given to their soldiers for pay, and which was food as well as money.

{w} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 2. & 21. 2.

Luke 3:15

Ver. 15. And as the people were in expectation, of the coming of the Messiah;

Daniel's seventy weeks being now accomplished, the sceptre being departed from Judah, and the Romans having the government in their hands, from whom they hoped for a deliverance by Christ;

and all men mused in their hearts of John; whether he were the Christ, or no; about which they had many reasonings and debates: some doubting of it, others ready to believe it, from his extraordinary birth, the singular holiness of his life, the power and efficacy of his doctrine, the new ordinance he administered, the restoration of religion by him, the freedom he took in reproving the vices of men, and the apt answers he gave to the questions now put to him. And that the Messiah was born, though he was not, as yet, made manifest, they might conclude, not only from the fulfilment of several prophecies, but from the song of Zacharias, the declaration of Simeon and Anna in the temple, and of the wise men that came from the east; and John appearing in such an unusual manner, they were ready to hope that he was the person; though they did not consider that he was of the tribe of Levi, and not of Judah; from which latter the Messiah was to spring; but this might be unattended to by them, and Satan might have an hand in it to hide the true Messiah from them.

Luke 3:16

Ver. 16. John answered, saying unto them all,.... For some of them might not only so think in their hearts, but express with their mouths the apprehension they had of him; and might put the question to him, as the priests and Levites from Jerusalem afterwards did; or he might know the secret thoughts of their hearts by divine revelation; or be apprized by his disciples of the private sentiments of the people concerning him: and therefore, to put them out of doubt, and that he might not have an honour conferred on him, which did not belong to him, he addressed himself, in a very public manner, to the whole multitude, in the hearing of them all: though the word "all" is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions, but rightly retained in others, being in all copies, and having a considerable emphasis on it: and said the following words.

I indeed baptize you with water; Matthew adds "unto repentance"; upon the profession of repentance:

but one mightier than I cometh; that is, after me; as Matthew records it:

the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; neither to bear his

shoes after him, as Matthew says, nor to untie his shoe string, or unbuckle his shoe, both which were menial actions with the Jews: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; as he did some of their nation, his own disciples, on the day of pentecost;
See Gill on "Mt 3:11"

Luke 3:17

Ver. 17. Whose fan is in his hand,....
See Gill on "Mt 3:12"

Luke 3:18

Ver. 18. And many other thing's,.... Relating to the person and office of the Messiah, to the nature of his kingdom, the Gospel dispensation, and to faith in him; for he pointed him out to the people, and exhorted them to believe in him, and expressed much joy and pleasure on the hearing of his success and increase; and these, with others beside, in his "exhortation", or whilst he was

exhorting, or "comforting", preached he unto the people: publishing the Gospel, the good news, and glad tidings of the Messiah's being come, and of life, righteousness, and salvation by him.

Luke 3:19

Ver. 19. But Herod the tetrarch being reproved by him,.... By John, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions add:

for Herodias his brother Philip's wife; for taking her to wife, whilst his brother Philip was living. The account, which the Jewish chronologer {x} gives, of this Herod, and of this fact of his, and John's reproving him for it, and the consequence of it, perfectly agrees with this of the evangelist.

"Herod Antipater, and there are some that call him, yqrjyj "the tetrarch", was a son of Herod the first, and brother of Archelaus'; and he was the third king of the family of Herod; and he was very wicked, and a destroying man: many of the wise men of Israel he slew with the sword; and he took the wife of his brother Philip, whilst he was alive, to himself for wife; and John, the high

priest, because
wxykwh, "he reproved him" for this, he slew him with the sword, with many of the wise men of Israel."

And John reproved him not only for this sin, but others:

and for all the evils which Herod had done; his revellings, debaucheries, murders, &c. all which John, in great faithfulness, and with much freedom, told him and rebuked him for: for Herod had had a particular respect for him, and often had him with him, and heard him gladly, when John had an opportunity of speaking personally to him.

{x} Ganz. Tzemach David, par, 1. fol. 25. 2.

Luke 3:20

Ver. 20. Added yet this above all,.... This sin to all other sins, and which was of a more flagitious nature; and attended with more aggravating circumstances, especially in the issue of it:

that he shut up John in prison; in the castle of Machaerus, by the instigation of Herodias; See Gill on "Mt 14:3".

Luke 3:21

Ver. 21. Now when all the people were baptized,.... That came from several parts to John for this purpose, even as many as he judged to be proper subjects of that ordinance, as many of the common people, publicans, soldiers, &c.

it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized; of John in Jordan, he coming from Galilee thither on that account:

and praying; after he was baptized, for the coming down of the Spirit upon him, as man, to anoint, and qualify him for his office he was now about to enter on publicly: and for success in it, and for a testimony from heaven, that he was the Son of God, and true Messiah:

the heaven was opened;
See Gill on "Mt 3:16".

Luke 3:22

Ver. 22. And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape,.... In a corporeal form, in a visible manner, and was seen with bodily eyes, at least by John the administrator; to whom this was a signal of his being the Messiah, and a fresh confirmation of it:

like a dove upon him; either in the form of a dove, or this corporeal form, whatever it was, descended and hovered on him as a dove does:

and a voice came from heaven; at the same time the Holy Ghost came down upon him; which said,

thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased: and was the voice of the Father; and the whole of this was an answer of Christ's prayer;
See Gill on "Mt 3:16" See Gill on "Mt 3:17" See Gill on "Mr 1:11".

Luke 3:23

Ver. 23. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age,.... Or Jesus, when he was baptized and began his public ministry, was about thirty years of age: an age at which the priests, under the law, who were typical of Christ, entered on their work, **Nu 4:23** The word, "began", is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions: and is often indeed redundant, as in **Lu 3:8** and frequently in Mark's Gospel. The Arabic version renders it, "Jesus began to enter into the thirtieth year", which carries the sense the same with our translation:

being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph; who had espoused Mary before she was with child of the Holy Ghost, and afterwards took her to wife, and brought up her son; so that it was not known but that he was the son of Joseph. Whether or no the Jewish notion of the Messiah, the son of Joseph {y} may not take its rise from hence, may be considered: however, Joseph might very rightly be called, as he was supposed to be, the father of Jesus, by a rule which obtains with the Jews {z} that he

"that brings up, and not he that begets, is called the father,"

or parent; of which they give various instances {a} in Joseph, in Michal, and in

Pharaoh's daughter.

Which was the son of Eli; meaning, not that Joseph was the son of Eli; for he was the son of Jacob, according to **Mt 1:16**, but Jesus was the son of Eli; and which must be understood, and carried through the whole genealogy, as thus; Jesus the son of Matthat, Jesus the son of Levi, Jesus the son of Melchi, &c. till you come to Jesus the son of Adam, and Jesus the Son of God; though it is true indeed that Joseph was the son of Eli, having married his daughter; Mary was the daughter of Eli: and so the Jews speak of one Mary, the daughter of Eli, by whom they seem to design the mother of our Lord: for they tell {b} us of one,

"that saw, yle tb Myrm, "Mary the daughter of Eli" in the shades, hanging by the fibres of her breasts; and there are that say, the gate, or, as elsewhere {c}, the bar of the gate of hell is fixed to her ear."

By the horrible malice, in the words, you may know who is meant: however, this we gain by it, that by their own confession, Mary is the daughter of Eli; which accords with this genealogy of the evangelist, who traces it from Mary, under her husband Joseph; though she is not mentioned, because of a rule with the Jews {d}, that

"the family of the mother is not called a family."

{y} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 52. 1. Jarchi & Aben Ezra in Zech. xii 10. & xiii. 7. {z} Shemot Rabba, sect. 46. fol. 143. 1. {a} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 13. 1. {b} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 25. 3. {c} Ib. Chagiga, fol. 77. 4. {d} Juchasin, fol. 55. 2.

Luke 3:24

Ver. 24. Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi,.... These two, Grotius says, are omitted in the ancient exemplars; and he thinks they ought to be left out; and for which he mentions the authorities of Irenaeus, Africanus, Eusebius, Nazianzen, Jerom, and Augustin: but not only the Vulgate Latin, but all the Oriental versions, retain them:

which was the son of Melchi: and who, he thinks, was the immediate father of Eli:

which was the son of Janna: frequent mention is made, in the Jewish writings {e} of aklm yany, "king Jannai", who is said to be the same with king Jochanan, or John, the son of Simeon, the son of Mattithiah, that was called Hyrcanus; and his son Alexander, that reigned after him, was also called Jannai {f}; but whether either of these is the same with this Janna, is not certain: but this may be observed, that they were both before the times of Herod, and the birth of Jesus, some years. And Jannai is called; in the chronicle of Jedidiah of Alexandria, or Philo the Jew {g}, Hyrcanus the second, who reigned sixteen years:

which was the son of Joseph. This Joseph, according to the same chronicle, is called Joseph the second, and surnamed Arsis, and was greatly honoured by Ptolemy, and governed sixty years; and accordingly we shall meet with another Joseph anon.

{e} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 11. 2. & passim. {f} Juchasin. fol. 15. 1. & 16. 2. {g} Apud. Vorst. Not. ad. Chronol. R. David Ganz, p. 311.

Luke 3:25

Ver. 25. Which was the son of Mattathias,.... Surnamed Siloah, by the same Philo, who governed ten years:

which was the son of Amos; whose surname, according to the same author, was Sirag; or, as some, Syrach, or Shyrach, who governed fourteen years:

which was the son of Naum; who was called Mesalut, or Maslot, who governed seven years:

which was the son of Esli; or Eli, surnamed Haggai, who governed eight years;

which was the son of Nagge: with Philo he is called Nagid Artasat, or Artaxat, and said to govern ten years.

Luke 3:26

Ver. 26. Which was the son of Maath,.... Surnamed Aser, who governed nine years:

which was the son of Mattathias; called Eli Matathias, who governed twelve years:

which was the son of Semei; and named Abner Semei, who governed eleven years:

which was the son of Joseph; called Joseph the first, who governed seven years:

which was the son of Juda; who, according to the same writer, must be Judas, surnamed Hyrcanus the first, who governed fourteen years.

Luke 3:27

Ver. 27. Which was the son of Joanna,.... Johannes, or John, the son of Rhesa Mesullam, who governed fifty three years:

which was the son of Rhesa, called, by the above writer, Rhesa Mesullam; **1Ch 3:19** and said, by him, to govern sixty six years:

which was the son of Zorobabel who governed fifty eight years:

which was the son of Salathiel; the same with Shealthiel;
See Gill on "Mt 1:12"

which was the son of Neri; the same with Jechonias, according to the Alexandrian, chronicle; See Gill on "Mt 1:12"

Luke 3:28

Ver. 28 Which was the son of Melchi,.... This, with the following, "Addi, Cosam, Elmodam, Er, Jose, Eliezer, Jorim, Matthat, Levi, Simeon, Juda, Joseph, Jonan, Eliakim, Melea, Menan, and Mattatha", all lived before the captivity, and were of the house of David, in the line of Nathan; for it follows,

which was the son of Nathan: of which persons no mention is made in the Old Testament, nor even of Mattatha, the son of Nathan: his sons that are mentioned are Azariah, Zabud, and Ahishar, **1Ki 4:5** which last is thought to be the same with Mattatha: that Nathan was the son of David, as the order of things here directs,

which was the son of David, is clear from **2Sa 5:14**.

Luke 3:29

Ver. 29. See Gill on "Lu 3:28"

Luke 3:30

Ver. 30. See Gill on "Lu 3:28"

Luke 3:31

Ver. 31. See Gill on "Lu 3:28"

Luke 3:32

Ver. 32. Which was the son of Jesse,.... The order of the persons from Jesse to Abraham, as Obed, Boaz, Salmon, Naasson, Aminadab, Aram, or Ram, Esrom, (for Joram, which the Arabic version here inserts, is to be rejected,) Phares, Judah, Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, perfectly agrees with the genealogy of Matthew, and the accounts of the Old Testament:

which was the son of Thara; the same with Terah, Ge 11:26 called by the Septuagint, Tharra:

which was the son of Nachor;, the same with Nahor, Ge 11:24 called there, by the Septuagint, as here.

Luke 3:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "Lu 3:32"

Luke 3:34

Ver. 34. See Gill on "Lu 3:32"

Luke 3:35

Ver. 35. Which was the son of Saruch,.... The Septuagint call him Serouch, the same with Serug, Ge 11:22

which was the son of Ragau; so the Septuagint, the same with Reu, Ge 40:20

which was the son of Phaleg; the same with Peleg, Ge 11:18 the Septuagint reads as here: "which was the son of Heber", or Eber, Ge 11:16

which was the son of Sala, or Salah, Ge 11:14 the Septuagint there call him Sala.

Luke 3:36

Ver. 36. Which was the son of Cainan,.... This Cainan is not mentioned by Moses in Ge 11:12 nor has he ever appeared in any Hebrew copy of the Old Testament, nor in the Samaritan version, nor in the Targum; nor is he mentioned by Josephus, nor in **1Ch 1:24** where the genealogy is repeated; nor is it in Beza's most ancient Greek copy of Luke: it indeed stands in the present copies of the Septuagint, but was not originally there; and therefore could not be taken by Luke from thence, but seems to be owing to some early negligent transcriber of Luke's Gospel, and since put into the Septuagint to give it authority: I say "early", because it is in many Greek copies, and in the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, even in the Syriac, the oldest of them; but ought not to stand neither in the text, nor in any version: for certain it is, there never was such a Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, for Salah was his son; and with him the next words should be connected,

which was the son of Arphaxad; Ge 11:12

which was the son of Sem, or Shem, Ge 11:10

which was the son of Noe, or Noah, **Ge 5:32** which was the son of Lamech, **Ge 5:28**

Luke 3:37

Ver. 37. Which was the son of Mathusala,.... The same with Methuselah; and so he is called by the Septuagint in **Ge 5:25**

which was the son of Enoch, **Ge 5:21**

which was the son of Jared **Ge 5:18**,

which was the son of Maleleel; the same with Mahalaleel; who is also so called by the seventy interpreters, in **Ge 5:15** as here; which was the son of Cainan, **Ge 5:12**.

Luke 3:38

Ver. 38. Which was the son of Enos,.... **Ge 5:9**

which was the son of Seth, **Ge 5:6**

which was the son of Adam **Ge 5:3**

which was the son of God: not begotten, as all the rest were, by their immediate parents, but created by God, in a supernatural manner, out of the dust of the earth, and quickened with the breath of God: so Adam is, by the Jews {h} called, Myhla Nb, "the son of God": though this may be understood of Jesus; the son of Joseph, of Heli, &c. and so on to this clause, "the son of God"; being so as a divine person, to whom the human nature was united, and on that account so called; see **Lu 1:35** Thus, as Matthew gives us the regal line of Christ, showing him to be heir to the throne of his father David, Luke gives the natural line of Christ; and as Matthew traces his genealogy down from Abraham, in a descending line, to Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus, Luke traces it upwards, in an ascending line, from Mary by Joseph, even up to Adam; to whom the Messiah was first promised, and who was a type of the second Adam, from whom he descended, though not by ordinary generation; nay, even to God himself: Christ, according to his divine nature, was the only begotten of the Father; and as to his human nature, had a body prepared by him, and in the fulness of time was God manifest in the flesh.

{h} Sepher Cosri, orat. 2. Sig. 14. fol. 68. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 4:1

Ver. 1. And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost,.... The Spirit of God having descended on him at his baptism, and afresh anointed, and filled his human nature with his gifts, whereby, as man, he was abundantly furnished for the great work of the public ministry, he was just about to enter upon; yet must first go through a series of temptations, and which, through the fulness of the Holy Spirit in him, he was sufficiently fortified against.

Returned from Jordan; where he came, and had been with John, and was baptized by him; which, when over, he went back from the same side of Jordan, to which he came:

and was led by the Spirit; the same Spirit, or Holy Ghost he was full of; See Gill on "Mt 4:1"

into the wilderness; of Judea, which lay near Jordan, and where John had been preaching and baptizing, namely, in the habitable: part of it: but this was that part, which was uninhabited by men, and was infested with wild beasts, and where Christ could neither have the comfort and benefit of human society, nor any thing for the sustenance of life, and where he was exposed to the utmost danger; and so in circumstances very opportune and favourable for Satan to ply him with his temptations, for which purpose he was led thither.

Luke 4:2

Ver. 2. Being forty days tempted of the devil,.... The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read the phrase, "forty days", in connection with the latter part of the preceding verse; according to which the sense is, that Jesus was led by the Spirit forty days in the wilderness, before he was tempted by Satan, and in order to it: but our reading is confirmed by **Mr 1:13** who affirms, as here, that he was so long tempted by Satan; as he might be invisibly, and, by internal suggestions, before he appeared visibly, and attacked him openly, with the following temptations. The Ethiopic version adds, "and forty nights": and such were these days in which Christ was in the wilderness, and fasted, and was tempted there: they, were such as included nights, as well as days; see **Mt 4:2**

and in those days he did eat nothing not any sort of food whatever; he tasted of no kind of eatables or drinkables, during the whole space of forty days; nor in the nights neither, in which the Jews allowed persons to eat in times of fasting; See Gill on "Mt 4:2". And this entire abstinence, as it shows the power of Christ in the supporting of his human nature, without food, for such a time, and the disadvantages under which, as man, combated with Satan; so, that this fast was never designed as an example to his followers, and to be imitated by them:

and when they were ended; the forty days, and forty nights:

he afterward hungered; which he did not before; and which shows the truth of his human nature; and is mentioned to observe the occasion of the following temptation, and the advantage on the tempter's side.

Luke 4:3

Ver. 3. And the devil said unto him,.... Who now visibly appeared, and spoke unto him with an articulate voice:

if thou be the Son of God; as has been just now declared by a voice from heaven; or seeing thou art in such a relation to God, and so equal to him, and possessed of all divine perfections, and among the rest, of almighty power; wherefore, since thou art hungry, and in a wilderness, where no food is to be had,

command this stone that it be made bread; say but the word, and this stone, which he held out to him, or pointed at, as lying before them, or any one of the stones, which were in sight, for Matthew speaks of them in the plural number, will immediately be converted into bread, if he was what he was said to be: this he suggests might easily be effected by him, and he had no need to continue hungry.

Luke 4:4

Ver. 4. And Jesus answered him, saying, it is written,.... In **De 8:3**

that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God; suggesting hereby, that when it is the will of God, human nature may be maintained by the influence of divine power, without the use of ordinary means; and that bread itself, without a divine blessing, would not support life; and so not this stone, or stones, if turned into it: wherefore, it became him, as man, to depend upon God, submit to his will, and wait the issue of providence, who had brought him thither, and not take any such steps to remove his hunger; and especially at his solicitations, who had no other end, but to have him, if he could, at his beck and will. By "every word of God", is not meant all Scripture, and every part of it, which is given by inspiration of God, and may be said to proceed out of his mouth; neither the law, and the precepts of it, as the Jews interpret it, by obedience to which the Israelites lived in the land Canaan; nor the Gospel, and the truths of it, which are the wholesome words of Christ, and the words of faith and good doctrine, with which believers are nourished, and are that to the soul, as bread, or any other wholesome food, is to the body; for of spiritual living, and the means of that, the text is not to be understood; but either of the word of God's power, by which he upholds and sustains all things in being, which he has created; and with which he could, if he would, support the bodies of men without the use of any sort of food; as the bodies of Moses and Elijah, and now the body of Christ, were for many days; and as the bodies of the saints will be after the resurrection, to all eternity: or else the blessing of God, which he commands on bread, and other food, and the virtue and strength which he puts into them, and conveys by them, are meant, without which not, any sort of food is nourishing; or rather every thing which God declares and orders to be eaten, even every creature of his which is good, and not to be refused, but received, with thanksgiving, being sanctified by the word of God, and prayer, as well as bread; so manna, which is mentioned in the text in Deuteronomy; and likewise any other food, as pulse: and water, he is pleased to direct to. Some little difference there is between Matthew and Luke, in citing this passage; in the latter it is, "by every word of God"; and in the former it is nearer the Hebrew text in **De 8:3** "by, every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"; and so some copies read here, as do also the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: but neither of them have the words exactly as in the original text, where it is added, "doth man live"; which, doubtless, were not produced by our Lord, as being unnecessary, and therefore not mentioned by any of the evangelists.

Luke 4:5

Ver. 5. And the devil taking him up into an high mountain,.... Somewhere near Jerusalem, but what mountain is not certain. The Evangelist Luke makes this to be the second temptation, which, with Matthew, is the third and last; and whose order seems to be more proper and natural than this, and to be the true and genuine one, which Luke neglects, though he does not contradict it: he relates matters of fact, without attending to the strict order of them; whereas Matthew strictly regards it, observing, that after the first temptation, "then the devil taketh him, &c." and that being finished, says, "again the devil taketh him, &c." and upon those words, "get thee hence", with what follows, remarks, that then the devil leaveth him: all which show, that his order is the most accurate, and to be followed. But to go on with the account; the devil having taken him from the pinnacle of the temple, and carried him to some high mountain, as Lebanon, or Pisgah, or some other near Jerusalem, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world; not of the Roman empire only, though that consisted of many kingdoms, and is called the whole world, **Lu 2:1** where the same word is used, as here; but of the whole universe, every kingdom that was under the heavens; which he represented to Christ, not in a map, since the glory of them could not be described in that way: for

he showed him all the glory of them, as Matthew adds; and for this a mountain was no more a proper place, than any other; nor was, it any real object he presented to his bodily sight, or any real prospect he gave him of the kingdoms of the world, which are not to be seen from any one place, no not one of them, not even from the highest mountain in the world, and still less to be seen together at once in a moment: but this was a mere phantasm, a deception of the sight, with which he endeavoured to impose on Christ, but could not; nor did Christ; who is the maker of the world, and the governor among the nations, need any representation of the kingdoms of the world from him,
See Gill on "Mt 4:8" and this he did in a moment of time; in the twinkling of an eye, not by succession, and in process of time, as one kingdom after another, but all at once, and in an instant: what a moment of time is, See Gill on "Mt 4:8".

Luke 4:6

Ver. 6. And the devil said unto him, all this power will I give thee,..... That is, all the kingdoms of the world, and all the government and jurisdiction over them:

and the glory of them; the riches, honours, and grandeur belonging to them:

for that is delivered unto me: so far he spoke modestly, in that he owned an original, superior governor of them, by whom he pretended they were transferred to him; but lied, in that he suggested they were put into his hands by him, who had the supreme power over them; and that he acted by his constitution and appointment, as a deputy under him; when what power he had, as the God of the world, was by usurpation, and not by designation of God; and at most only by permission: and least of all was it true what follows;

and to whomsoever I will I give it; or "these", as the Vulgate Latin reads; that is, these kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; when so to do is the peculiar and sole prerogative of God: nor can Satan dispose of the goods of a single man, nor of a herd of swine, nor enter into them without leave from God.

Luke 4:7

Ver. 7. If thou therefore wilt worship me,.... Or "before me"; that is, fall down before him, and give him divine worship and homage. A wide difference there is between a good angel and a fallen angel; a good angel will not suffer himself to be worshipped by men, but directs to the worship of God only, Re 19:10 but a fallen angel not only seeks to be worshipped by men, but by the Son of God himself, even by him whom all the holy angels worship, **Heb 1:6** This was what Satan at first aspired after, and by which he fell: he affected deity, and sought to have divine worship given him; and in this sin he still persisted, and grew worse and worse, more daring and insolent, desiring worship of him who is God over all, blessed for ever.

All shall be thine: he promises to give him a title to all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, on condition of homage done him, by which he should hold the tenure of them under him; these being delivered up solely to him, by the author of them; and he having them in his power, to dispose of them at pleasure. O horrid impudence, arrogance, and insolence!

Luke 4:8

Ver. 8. Jesus answered and said unto him,.... The following words, with indignation at him, and detestation of his proposals:

get thee behind me, Satan; which are omitted in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and in three ancient copies of Beza's, and in his most ancient one; but stand in other copies, and in the Arabic version.

For it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. This passage stands in **De 6:13** where the words are, "thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and thou shalt swear by his name": the last clause is not cited by Christ at all, swearing being only a species, or part of religious worship; and the other two clauses are somewhat different from the original text, as here cited, and may be accounted for: instead of "fear the Lord", it is "worship the Lord"; and the one well explains the other; the fear of God being often, in Scripture, put for the whole worship of God, both internal and external: and in the next clause, the word "only" is added by Christ, as expressing the true sense of it, and agreeably to other places of Scripture, particularly **1Sa 7:3**,
See Gill on "Mt 4:10".

Luke 4:9

Ver. 9. And he brought him to Jerusalem,.... The holy city, as Matthew calls it, from the wilderness thither; where he found him, and first attacked him, and perhaps he brought him through the air: and set him on a pinnacle of the temple; which was in Jerusalem;
See Gill on "Mt 4:6".

And said unto him, if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence; from the pinnacle of the temple, on which he was set;
See Gill on "Mt 4:6".

Luke 4:10

Ver. 10. For it is written,.... In Ps 91:11 "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." It is an observation made long ago by Jerom, on Ps 91:11 that Satan, in citing this text, has left out the middle clause,

to keep thee in all thy ways, which he knew was against him, and has only taken that which made for him; and on **Mt 4:6** he observes, that this prophecy

is not concerning Christ, but any holy man; therefore the devil wrongly interpreted Scripture; and that had he certainly known, that this is written concerning the Saviour, he ought to have cited what follows, "thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet": and in these observations, he has been followed by many interpreters; but Surenhusius {i} is not satisfied with them, especially with what respects the manner of citation, leaving out some words, and not mentioning others that follow; since such a way of citing perfectly agrees with the method of the Jewish doctors; who reckon one word of a passage being cited all that follows, if it makes to the purpose, all one as if it was cited, and to be so accounted; and since, if such a method is blame worthy, Christ, the evangelists, and apostles, must be blamed also, seeing they frequently use the same, which can never be allowed of: besides, supposing the clause omitted was added, he asks of what advantage it would be? since the two verses being connected together as they are, the sense with respect to God's providence and preservation, is clear enough and complete: and I must confess, though I have pursued the above observation, in the note on
See Gill on "Mt 4:6" yet by comparing the evangelists together, it is not a clear case to me, what Satan did leave out, or whether any thing at all; but it seems rather, that the words are put, as the evangelists themselves thought fit to transcribe them, in which they are not exactly alike; more is left out by one, than by another; Matthew leaves out the whole clause, "to keep thee in all thy ways"; but Luke only omits these words, "in all thy ways": but I am still of opinion, that the passage is applicable to Christ, as to any holy good man, yet it appears that Satan failed not, neither in the manner of citing it, nor in the application of it to Christ; but by wresting it to a wicked purpose, to countenance an action unwarrantable and criminal, being a tempting God; when the text only regards the preservation of good men in the way of duty, trusting in the Lord; and which is confirmed by the answer of Christ, who takes no notice of any faulty citation of the passage, or misapplication of it, as to his person; only suggests, by opposing another Scripture to him, that what he had produced, was to a wrong and wicked purpose; and to take it in his sense, would be to tempt God, See Gill on "Mt 4:6".

{i} Biblos Katallages, p. 210, 211.

Luke 4:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "Lu 4:10"

Luke 4:12

Ver. 12. And Jesus answering said unto him, it is said,.... In **De 6:16**

Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God: in the text in Deuteronomy the words are, "ye shall not tempt the Lord your God." The second person plural, is here changed into the second person singular, to accommodate the words to Satan; whom Christ singly addresses, and makes answer to, and who was under this same general law as other rational creatures: and Jehovah may be called the Lord his God, as he is his creator and governor; by whom he is upheld in his being, and to whom he is subject, whether he will or not; though not his covenant God: and even if our Lord Jesus Christ is intended by the Lord God, as some think; he is God over all; over all principalities and powers, good and bad, by whom all are created, and in whom all consist; and whose power and authority over Satan and his angels, have abundantly appeared, in dispossessing devils out of men, sending them where he pleased, and in spoiling the powers of darkness, and in destroying him that had the power of death, the devil; and great insolence and wickedness it must be in a creature, to tempt the Lord his God, in any way, or form whatever; See Gill on "Mt 4:7"

Luke 4:13

Ver. 13. And when the devil had ended all the temptation,.... Or "all his temptations", as the Syriac version reads; not only the last mentioned, but all the rest, whether inward or outward, in a visible or in an invisible manner; whether during his forty days fast, or after he was an hungered, when he had tried every way, and all sorts of temptations with him; and when he had done this, "in", or "with all his power", as the Ethiopic version reads; "when he had done his utmost", and his best; and as the Persic version adds, "and profited nothing"; could not succeed, or get any advantage over him:

he departed from him for a season; till another opportunity should offer, or till that time should come, when would be the hour and power of darkness; and by means of one of his disciples, he should bruise his heel, and bring him to an accursed death;
Joh 14:30.

Luke 4:14

Ver. 14. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit,.... Of which he was full, and by which he was led into the wilderness, and had combated with Satan, and had got the victory over him; and by virtue of which, he entered on his public ministry, wrought miracles, and taught with authority. A like way of speaking is used by the Targumist, on **Mic 3:8**. I am filled, hawbn xwr Pwqtb, "with the power of the spirit of prophecy", from before the Lord. Moreover, this phrase is used, to show that his return

into Galilee, where he had been brought up, and from whence he came to John at Jordan, did not arise from a natural love to his country, and a fond desire of being there again; but was owing to the powerful impulse of the Holy Spirit, which was in him, and moved him to return thither; where he was to begin his ministry, and work his miracles, and so fulfil a prophecy of him, in **Is 9:1** see **Mt 4:12**.

And there went out a fame of him through all the region round about: throughout all Galilee and Syria, Decapolis and Judea; see **Mt 4:23**, the report of his doctrines and miracles, was spread far and near; and on account of them, he became the subject of the common talk of people every where, who highly applauded and commended him for them.

Luke 4:15

Ver. 15. And he taught in their synagogues,.... In the public places of worship used by the Galilaeans, where they met on sabbath days and weekdays, to read and pray, and hear the Scriptures expounded; and Christ engaging here as a public teacher, was the reason of his fame being spread around the country:

being glorified of all; that heard him: they were astonished at his doctrine; they wondered at his gracious words; they praised him as a preacher; and glorified him, and God for him, because of the mighty works which were done by him.

Luke 4:16

Ver. 16. And he came to Nazareth,.... After some length of time, when he had gone through all Galilee, and had acquired great credit and reputation by his ministry and miracles; he came to the place, where he had been brought up: where he was conceived, though not born; and where he had his education, and wrought at a trade, and was well known to the inhabitants; and therefore it was proper that he should first exercise his ministry, and obtain a character in other places, which would prepare him a reception among his townsmen, who otherwise, in all likelihood, would have treated him at once with neglect and contempt:

and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day. This was either his custom from his youth, when he dwelt at Nazareth, while a private person, and before he was engaged in public service, whither he had used to repair as an inhabitant of the city, and a member of the congregation, to attend synagogue worship, as he now did; or it refers to his custom, since he became a public preacher, who at Capernaum, or any other city of Galilee, where there was a synagogue, used to frequent it, whether on sabbath days, or any other, and so he did here:

and stood up for to read: by rising and standing up, and perhaps by some other gesture he signified his inclination to read a portion of Scripture, if liberty was given, and a book delivered him, for, as yet, he had no book to read in; nor might any read in public, unless he had an order from the congregation, or the chief of it; for so runs the Jewish canon {k}:

"a reader may not read until the chief of the congregation bids him read; yea, even a minister of the congregation, or a ruler of the synagogue, may not read of himself, until the congregation, or the chief among them, bids him read."

This custom of reading the Scriptures publicly, was an appointment of Moses, according to the account of the Jews; who say {l}

"Moses our master, ordered the Israelites to read in the law publicly, on the sabbath, and on the second and fifth days of the week, in the morning; so that they might not be three days without hearing the law and Ezra ordered, that they should read so at the evening sacrifice, every sabbath, on account of those that sit in the corners of streets; and also he ordered, that three men should read on the second and fifth days of the week, and that they should not read less than twenty verses."

It was also the custom to stand at reading the law and the prophets: with regard to the book of Esther, the rule is {m} this;

"he that reads the "Megilia", or book of "Esther", stands or sits."

That is, as their commentators {n} explain it, if he will he may stand, and if he will he may sit, he may do as he pleases; but so he might not in reading the law: hence it is asked {o},

"why is it not so in the law? R. Abhu replies, because the Scripture says, **De 5:3** "Stand thou here by me.""

Wherefore they say {p}, the law must be read standing, and it is even forbidden to lean on any thing. Christ conformed to these rules; he went into the synagogue to read on the sabbath day, and stood up when he read, and waited for order, and a book to be given him to read: it may be asked, how he came to be admitted to read publicly in the synagogue, when he was not of the tribe of Levi, nor was he brought up in the schools and academies of the Jews, and was known to be a mechanic? It may be observed, that common Israelites, as well as priests and Levites, were allowed to read the Scriptures publicly; every sabbath day, seven persons read, a priest, a Levite, and five Israelites: the order was this; the priest read first, and after him the Levite, and after him an Israelite: and it is said to be a known custom to this day, that even an unlearned priest read before the greatest wise man in Israel; and he that was greater than his companion in wisdom, read first {q}. Now Christ, on account of the great fame he was in for his wisdom and mighty works, was admitted to this public service, though he was no Levite, and known by the inhabitants of this place, to have been brought up to a trade.

{k} Maimon. Hilchot Tephilla, c. 12. sect. 7. {l} Maimon. Hilchot Tephilla, c. 12. sect. 1. {m} Misn. Megilia, c. 4. 1. {n} Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. {o} T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 21. 1. {p} Robbenu Asher in T. Megill. c. 3. sect. 1. & Piske Harosh in ib. {q} Maimon. Hilch. Tephillah, c. 12. sect. 16, 18.

Luke 4:17

Ver. 17. And there was delivered unto him,.... By the "Chazan", or minister, to whom he gave it again, **Lu 4:20**, for the "Chazan" of the synagogue, was, vmv, "the minister" {r}; one part of whose business was, to deliver the book of the law to, and take it from him that read: when an high priest read, the method taken was this {s};

"the "Chazan", or minister of the synagogue, took the book of the law, and gave it to the ruler of the synagogue, and the ruler of the synagogue gave it to the "Sagan", and the "Sagan" gave it to the high priest, and the high priest stood and received, and read standing."

The same method was observed, when a king read in the book of the law {t}; but when a common priest, or an inferior person read, so much ceremony was not used, as to hand the book from one to another: the manner in their synagogues and schools, was this {u};

"the "Chazan" brought out the book of the law, and the priest read, and after him a Levite; then the "Chazan" of the synagogue brought the book of the law down, to the head of the captivity, and all the people stood; and he took the book of the law into his hands, and "stood and read" in it; and the heads of the schools stood with him, and the head of the university of Sofa interpreted it; and returned the book of the law to the "Chazan", and he returned it to the chest."

That part of the sacred volume which was delivered unto Jesus at this time, was

the book of the prophet Esaias; it is very likely, that the lesson out of the prophets for that day, was to be read out of the prophecy of Isaiah; and it seems probable, that it was the single book of Isaiah, or that prophecy rolled up by itself, in one volume, that was delivered to Christ; as the law was divided, into five parts, each fifth part was sometimes in a book, or volume by itself: hence a fifth part of the law, is by the Jews interpreted {w}, rpo, "a book" of the law, in which there is but one fifth part; so might the prophets be in separate and distinct books, and it as if they sometimes were, by the following account {x} a man may

"join together the law, the prophets, and the holy writings, as one, the words of R. Meir. R. Juda says, the law by itself, the prophets by themselves, and the holy writings by themselves; and the wise men say, each by themselves (i.e. each book by itself;) and says R. Judah, it happened to Baithus ben Zunin, that he had eight prophets joined together as one; and there are that say, that he had not, but, wmue ynpb dxa dxa, "every one by itself.""

And when he had opened the book; or unrolled it, for books formerly were written in rolls of paper and parchment; and in this form, is the book of the law with the Jews, in their synagogues, to this day:

"all books, they say {y}, are rolled from the beginning to the end of them, but the book of the law is rolled to the middle of it, and a pillar, or column, is made for it here and there; says R. Eliezer with R. Zadok, so the writers of books in Jerusalem made their books: the Rabbins teach, that they do not make the book of the law its length, more than its circumference, nor its circumference more than its length."

Such a roll, or volume, of the prophet Isaiah, Christ unrolled, till he came to the place he intended to read: it is a rule with the Jews {z} that

"they do not unroll the book of the law in the congregation, because of the glory of the congregation."

It may therefore be asked, whether Christ did not break this rule, since he unrolled the book that was given him, publicly in the synagogue? To which it may be replied, that it was lawful to unroll the book of the prophets, which was what Christ did, but not the law; for so runs another of their rules, {a}

"they skip in the prophets, but not in the law, because,
Mybrb aybn Nyllwgv, "that they unroll a prophet publicly", but they do not unroll the law publicly."

Christ having thus unrolled the volume of the prophet Isaiah, which was put into his hands by the "Chazan", or minister,

he found the place where it was written; as is expressed in the following verse, and which is to be seen in Isa 61:1, and which was either the lesson of the day, or what Christ particularly sought for, and looked out; or was providentially directed to, as what was pertinent to himself, and proper to read and insist on at this time; for it was not by chance that he hit on this place, and read it, but it was according to purpose, and with design. Before the reading of the prophets, a blessing used to be said, which was in this form {b};

"blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the king of the world, Who hath chosen the good prophets, and art well pleased with their words, which are said in truth; blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast chosen the law, Moses his servant, and Israel his people, and the prophets of truth and righteousness."

Whether this was delivered by Christ, is not certain; however, he read the following passage.

{r} Jarchi & Battenora in Misn. Sota, c. 7. sect. 7. & Yoma, c. 7. 1. {s} Misn.

Yoma, c. 7. sect. 1. Maimon. Yom Haccippurim, c. 3. sect. 10. {t} Misn. Sota, c. 7. sect. 8. {u} Juchasin, fol. 123. 1. {w} Gloss. in T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 27. 1. {x} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 13. 2. & Massechet Sopherim, c. 3. sect 1, 5. {y} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 1. {z} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 70. 1. Maimon. Hilch, Tephilla, c. 12. sect. 23. {a} Massecheth Sepherim, c. 11. sect. 2. {b} Seder Tephillot, fol. 127. 2. Ed. Basil.

Luke 4:18

Ver. 18. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,.... By whom is meant, the third person in the Trinity; so called, to distinguish him from all other spirits; and who was given to Christ as man, without measure, whereby he was qualified for his great work: and intends the Spirit of Jehovah, with all his gifts and graces, who was, and abode on Christ, as a Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, of counsel and of might, of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord; he was upon him, and in him, the first moment of his conception, which was by his power; and he visibly descended on him at his baptism; and the phrase denotes the permanency and continuance of him with him:

because he hath anointed me; or "that he might anoint me": the Ethiopic version renders it, "by whom he hath anointed me"; for it was with the Holy Ghost he was anointed, as to be king and priest, so likewise to be a prophet: hence he has the name Messiah, which signifies anointed: and this unction he had, in order

to preach the Gospel to the poor: in Isaiah it is, "to the meek"; which design the same persons, and mean such as are poor in spirit, and are sensible of their spiritual poverty; have low and humble thoughts of themselves, and of their own righteousness; and seek to Christ for durable riches and true righteousness, and frankly acknowledge that all they have and are, is owing to the grace of God: and generally speaking, these are the poor of this world, and poor in their intellectuals, who have but a small degree of natural wisdom and knowledge: to these the Gospel, or glad tidings of the love, grace, and mercy of God in Christ, of peace, pardon, righteousness, life and salvation by Christ, were preached by him; and that in so clear a manner, and with such power and authority, as never was before, or since; and for this purpose was he anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows:

he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted; whose hearts are broken, and made contrite by the word of God, under the influence of the Spirit of God, and with a sense of sin; and are wounded with it, and are humbled for it; and are in great pain and distress, and even inconsolable, and ready to faint and die; for a wounded spirit who can bear? now Christ was sent to heal such persons by his own stripes, by binding up their wounds, by the application of his blood to them, which is a sovereign balm for every wound; by the discoveries of pardoning grace to their souls, and by opening and applying the comfortable promises of the Gospel, by his Spirit, to them:

to preach deliverance to the captives; who are captives to sin, Satan, and the law; from which, there is only deliverance by him; who saves his people from their sins, redeems them from the law, and leads captivity captive; and which liberty and deliverance are preached and published in the Gospel, and by Christ the author of them:

and recovering of sight to the blind; which in the prophet is, "and the opening of the prison to them that are bound"; and which the Septuagint render, as here in Luke, and the Chaldee paraphrase in part agrees with it, interpreting it thus, "to the prisoners", rwhnl
wlgta, "be ye revealed to the light" now because persons in prison are in darkness, and see no light, therefore they are represented as blind; and both are the case of sinners, they are in the prison of sin and of the law, and are blind, ignorant, and insensible of their state; until Christ both opens the prison, and sets them free, and opens their eyes, and gives them spiritual sight; when he says to the prisoners go forth, to them that are in darkness show yourselves, Isa 49:9

To set at liberty them that are bruised: these words are not in Isa 61:1 but in the Septuagint version of Isa 58:6 from whence they seem to be taken, or else from Isa 42:7 it being allowable for a reader in the prophets, to skip from place to place, which our Lord here did, in order to explain this passage more fully.

Luke 4:19

Ver. 19. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. The time which he willed and fixed for the redemption of his people, and in which he showed his goodwill and pleasure unto sinful men, in the gift of his Son to them, and for them; and which, as the Arabic and Syriac versions render it, was a time "acceptable to the Lord": the sufferings of Christ were according to his will; his sacrifice was of a sweet smelling savour to him; his righteousness he was well pleased with; and the satisfaction and atonement for sin he made was a plenary and complete one: all Christ did, and suffered, were grateful to God, because hereby his perfections were glorified, his purposes, counsel, and covenant were accomplished, and his people saved. The Persic version renders it, "to preach the law acceptable to God", neither agreeable to the original text, nor its sense; for Christ was sent to preach the Gospel, and not the law. In the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions is added, "and the day of vengeance", out of the prophecy in Isa 61:2 but is not in any of the copies, or other versions. Our Lord did not read through all the three verses in the prophet, as it might be thought he would, and which was agreeable to the Jewish canon {c}:

"he that reads in the law may not read less than three verses, and he may not read to an interpreter more than one verse, and in a prophet three; and if those three are three sections, they read everyone; they skip in a prophet, but they do not skip in the law."

This last our Lord did, though he did not strictly attend to the former. Indeed, their rule, as elsewhere {d} given, obliged to read one and twenty verses; but this was not always observed; for

"if on a sabbath day there was an interpreter, or a preacher, they read in a prophet three verses, or five, or seven, and were not solicitous about twenty and one {e}"

{c} Misn. Megilia, c. 4. sect. 4. Massechet Sopherim, c. 11. sect. 1. {d} Piske Harosh Megilla, c. 3. art. 6. {e} Massechet Sopherim, c. 12. sect. 7.

Luke 4:20

Ver. 20. And he closed the book,.... "Or rolled it up"; and so the high priest did, after he read in the book of the law, on the day of atonement, all that was necessary to be read, hrwt rpo llwg, "he rolled the book of the law", and put it in his bosom {f}:

and he gave it again to the minister; the Chazan {g}, who was the minister, or servant of the congregation, who had the affairs of it upon him, to let in, and bring out, and to order all things; and particularly to take care of the book of the law, and the chest, or ark in which it was. If the same rule was observed giving and taking the book of any prophet, as the book of the law; then Christ gave it to the minister, and he received it with his right hand: for so it is said {h},

"he that gives the book of the law to his friend, may not give it but with the right hand; and he that receives it may not receive it but with the right hand; for so was the giving of it on Mount Sinai, according to De 33:2."

And sat down; as was the manner of the Jews, when they taught, or preached; See Gill on "Mt 5:1".

and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him: they looked very wistly at him, and were very attentive to what he should say, upon such a passage of Scripture, which they knew referred to the Messiah; and the rather, as they had known him formerly, and had heard that he was said to be the Messiah.

{f} Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 1. {g} Bartenora in Misn. Sota, c. 7. sect. 7. {h} Massechet Sopherirn, c. 3. sect. 10.

Luke 4:21

Ver. 21. And he began to say unto them,.... To preach from those words; the explanation of which he gave, though not here recorded, and applied them to himself, to whom they belonged, saying:

this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears; which is as if he should say, I am the person here spoken of; and at this present time the Spirit of God is upon me; I am anointed with the Holy Ghost, and now preach glad tidings to you, and all the good things here mentioned, and for the several ends proposed; and this Scripture has its full accomplishment which has been read unto you, and you have heard this day. So the Syriac version renders it, Nwkyndabd, "which is in your ears"; that is, which you have now heard. The Jews themselves acknowledge, that these words are spoken of the Messiah. One of their writers {i} says,

"these are the words of the prophet with respect to the Messiah; for the Messiah shall say so, "because the Lord hath anointed me", &c."

And so said the true Messiah Jesus. Another of them expresses himself thus {k}:

"these are the words of the prophet with respect to the Messiah; for the Messiah shall say thus, "because the Lord hath anointed me", &c. or they are the words of the prophet concerning himself."

And elsewhere it is said by them {l},

"the holy, blessed God, will send his Messiah to us, and he shall be worthy of this, (i.e. the character of a meek person) as it is said, Isa 61:1 "he hath sent me to preach glad tidings to the meek.""

{i} Kimchi in Sepher Shorash. rad. xvm {k} R. Sol. Hamelec in Miclol Yophi in loc. {l} Juchaain, fol. 69. 1.

Luke 4:22

Ver. 22. And all bare him witness,.... That he was right in applying the words to the Messiah; but not that he himself was the Messiah, and that he was right in applying them to himself; for they did not believe in him, as appears from what follows

and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth; not so much at the matter, the sum, and substance of them, as expressive of the love, grace, and favour of God shown in the mission and unction of the Messiah, and in that liberty, deliverance, and salvation he was sent to effect and proclaim; as at the graceful manner in which he delivered himself, and the aptness of his words, the propriety of his diction, and the majesty, power, and authority, with which his expressions were clothed; and they were more amazed at all this, since they knew his parentage and education, and in what manner he had been brought up among them; and therefore it was astonishing to them, where he had his learning, knowledge, and wisdom:

and they said, is not this Joseph's son? the carpenter, and who was brought up, by him, to his trade, and never learned letters; from whom had he this doctrine? of whom has he learned this way of address, and to speak with so much eloquence and propriety, since his education was mean, and he has never been at the feet of any of the doctors, or has been brought up in any of the academies and schools of learning?

Luke 4:23

Ver. 23. And he said unto them, ye will surely say unto me this proverb,.... Or "parable"; for any pithy sentence, or proverbial expression, was, by the Jews, called a parable:

physician heal thyself; and which was a proverb in use with the Jews; and which is sometimes expressed thus, Kvpn yoa lyz, "go heal thyself" {m}; and sometimes in this form, Ktrgx yoa ayoa, "physician, heal thy lameness" {n}: the meaning of which is, that a man ought to look at home, and take care of himself, and of those that belonged to him; and Christ was aware that his townsmen would object this to him, that if he was the person he was said to be, and could do the miracles and cures which were ascribed to him, he ought to do something of this kind at home, among them, who were his townsmen, neighbours, relations, and acquaintance; that is, heal their sick, lame, blind, leprous, deaf, and dumb: and that this is the sense of it, is manifest from what follows,

whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum: a place where Christ often was, and where he cured the centurion's servant of the palsy, and Peter's wife's mother of a fever, and another man sick of a palsy, and the woman of her bloody issue, and a man that had a withered hand, and where he raised Jairus's daughter from the dead:

do also here in thy country; or city, as the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions render it: hence it appears, that this was not the first of our Lord's ministry; he had preached elsewhere, and wrought miracles before he came to Nazareth, and of which his townsmen had heard; and therefore were desirous that he would do the like among them, if he was able, for they seem to be very incredulous, and to question the reports of him, and his ability to perform such things; however, if he could, they thought they had as good a right to his favours and benefits, as any, this being his native place.

{m} Zohar in Exod. fol. 31. 2. {n} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 20. 4.

Luke 4:24

Ver. 24. And he said, verily I say unto you,.... Another proverb in use among them, the meaning of which was well known to them, and was very appropriate to the present case:

no prophet is accepted in his own country; See Gill on "Mt 13:57"

Luke 4:25

Ver. 25. But I tell you of a truth,.... Or in truth: it answers to tmab, a phrase often used by the Jewish writers {o}; and, which, they say {p}, wherever, and of whatsoever it is spoken, it signifies a tradition of Moses from Mount Sinai, and so that which is most true, sure, and firm, and to be depended on; and such is what our Lord hereafter delivers; yea, the word, atwnmyh, "truth", or "of a truth", and which is the same as "in truth", is used by the Jews {q}, as hewbv Nwvl, "the form of an oath": so that these words of Christ are a strong asseveration, and amount to a solemn oath with respect to what follows:

many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias; or Elijah, the prophet; that is, there were many that were not only widows, but poor widows, and in very famishing circumstances in the land of Israel, when Elijah was the prophet of the Lord to that people:

and when the heaven was shut up three years and six months; so that no rain descended all that time: the same is observed by **Jas 5:17** and though the space of time, in which there was no rain, is not so clear from the history of it in the book of Kings; yet, as this is fixed by Christ, and his apostle, and there is nothing in the history that contradicts it, it is to be received without scruple:

when great famine was throughout all the land of Israel; and which so long a drought must needs bring.

{o} Misn. Sabbat, c. 1. sect. 3. Trumot, c. 2. sect. 1. {p} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 3. 2. & 12. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Trumot, c. 3. sect. 1. {q} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 55. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

Luke 4:26

Ver. 26. But unto none of them was Elias sent,.... That is, to none of the poor widows in the land of Israel was the prophet sent, to supply them with food, and relieve them in their famishing circumstances, as might most reasonably have been expected:

save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon; which in 1Ki 17:10 is called "Zarephath"; and by the Septuagint there, "Sarepta of Sidon", as here. Pliny {r} speaks of it by the same name, and reckons it to Sidon:

unto a woman that was a widow: she is said by the Jews {s}, to be the mother of Jonah the prophet. Our Lord meant to observe, by this instance, as by the following, that God bestows his favours on persons in a sovereign way, and sometimes upon the most unlikely; as in a time of famine, he overlooked the poor widows in Israel, his peculiar people, and sent his prophet to a Gentile woman in one of the cities of Sidon; and therefore they should cease to wonder if he wrought his miracles in other places, and not in his own country; since this was agreeable to the divine procedure in other cases, especially since they were a cavilling and unbelieving people. The Jews say {t}, that in all that generation there was not found any one that was worthy, as this woman.

{r} L. 5. c. 19. {s} Pirke Eliezer, c. 33. {t} Zohar in Exod. fol. 89. 2.

Luke 4:27

Ver. 27. And many lepers were in Israel,.... The leprosy was a disease very common among the Jews; hence those laws concerning it in Le 13:1 and it seems by this account, that it was very prevalent,

in the time of Eliseus the prophet; that is, the prophet Elisha; who, by the Septuagint, in 1Ki 19:16 and, in other places, is called "Elisaie": and none of them was cleansed; from their leprosy, by any direction of the prophet,

saving Naaman, the Syrian: or but Naaman, who was not an Israelite, but a Syrian: he was cleansed and cured of his leprosy, being ordered by Elisha to dip himself seven times in Jordan, which he did, and was healed, **2Ki 5:14**.

Luke 4:28

Ver. 28. And all they in the synagogue,.... The ruler and minister, and the whole multitude of the common people that were met together there for worship; and who before were amazed at his eloquence, and the gracefulness of his delivery; and could not but approve of his ministry, though they could not account for it, how he should come by his qualifications for it:

when they heard these things; these two instances of Elijah and Elisha, the one supplying the wants of a Sidonian woman, and the other healing a Syrian leper, when no notice were taken by them of poor widows and lepers in Israel:

were filled with wrath; for by these instances they perceived, that they were compared to the Israelites in the times of wicked Ahab and Jezebel; and that no miracles were to be wrought among them, or benefits conferred on them, though they were his townsmen; yea, that the Gentiles were preferred unto them: and indeed the calling of the Gentiles was here plainly intimated, which was always ungrateful and provoking to the Jews; and it was suggested, that the favours of God, and grace of the Messiah, are dispensed in a sovereign and discriminating way, than which nothing is more offensive to carnal minds.

Luke 4:29

Ver. 29. And rose up,.... In great wrath, and, in a noisy and tumultuous manner, before the service was well over, and without being regularly dismissed:

and thrust him out of the city; first out of the synagogue, and then out of their city, as unworthy to be in it, though an inhabitant of it; and as if he had done something deserving of death; and therefore to be punished as a malefactor without the city:

and led him unto the brow of the hill; the edge of it, where it run out, and hung over the precipice:

whereon their city was built; so that it was a city upon an hill, and very visible, to which Christ may allude in **Mt 5:14**. That they might cast him down headlong; and break him to pieces: in this manner ten thousand Edomites were destroyed by the Jews, in the times of Amaziah, 2Ch 25:12 though this was not an usual way with the Jews of putting persons to death, as with some other nations {u}; their four capital punishments were stoning, strangling, burning, and killing with the sword {w}: nor did the inhabitants of Nazareth proceed in any judicial manner with Christ, but hurried him away, in order to destroy him, without any formal process, in the manner the zealots did; though to put any man to death, or to inflict any punishment on a person on the sabbath day, as this was, was contrary to their own canon, which runs thus {x};

"they do not inflict punishment on the sabbath day, even though it is the punishment of an affirmative precept; they do not beat one that is guilty, nor put to death, as it is said, Ex 35:3 "ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day": this is a caution to the sanhedrim, that they do not burn on the sabbath day he that is condemned to burning; and this is the law with respect to any one that is liable to the other punishments."

But these men, without any regard to the place where they were, and the worship they were concerned in, and the day of the sabbath which then was, rise up in great wrath and fury, and without any show of justice, and in the most brutish and barbarous manner attempt to take away the life of Christ.

{u} Vid. Rycquium de Capitol. Born. c. 4. {w} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 1. {x} Moses Kotseneis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 67.

Luke 4:30

Ver. 30. But he passing through the midst of them,.... Either in so strong and powerful a manner, and with so much swiftness, that being once out of their hands, they could not lay hold on him again; or else he put on another form, or made himself invisible to them; or he held their eyes that they could not see him, or know him, as in Lu 24:16 however it was, he made use of, and showed his divine power; and which he did, because his time to die was not yet come, nor was he to die such a death: and this also shows, that when he did die, he laid down his life freely and voluntarily, since he could then have exerted his power, and delivered himself out of the hands of his enemies, as now: and

went his way; from Nazareth elsewhere; nor do we read of his returning there any more.

Luke 4:31

Ver. 31. And came down to Capernaum,.... Which was, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, sixteen miles or more from Nazareth; and Christ may be said to "come down" to it, because of the situation of Nazareth, which was upon an hill:

a city of Galilee: of lower Galilee, near the sea of Galilee:

and taught them on the sabbath days: that is, he went into the synagogue at Capernaum, on the sabbath days, whenever he was there, and taught the inhabitants, explained some passage or other in the Old Testament, as he had done at Nazareth and instructed them in the doctrines of the Gospel.

Luke 4:32

Ver. 32. And they were astonished at his doctrine,.... At the matter of it, as well as the manner in which it was delivered, it being so different from the Scribes and Pharisees, they had been used to:

for his word was with power: he spake with great fervency, majesty, and authority, and not with coldness and indifference, and dependence on the sense and authority of others, as their teachers did; and besides, such power went along with the word, that it reached their hearts; and as the Persic version renders it, "he penetrated them with it"; and he also confirmed it by powerful operations, by miraculous works, such as casting out devils, and healing diseases, of which an account follows.

Luke 4:33

Ver. 33. And in the synagogue there was a man,.... That is, in the synagogue at Capernaum, as Christ was there teaching, on one of the sabbath days before mentioned; there was a certain man,

which had a spirit of an unclean devil: who was possessed with the devil, who is by nature and practice unclean; and was filled with the spirit of the devil, with a spirit of divination, and was acted by him, to impose upon the people; he influenced his mind as an enthusiast, as well as possessed his body: and this was on the sabbath day; whereas the Jews say {y}, that

"Satan and the evil demon flee on the sabbath day to the mountains of darkness, and do not appear all the sabbath day, because that day is holy, and they are "unclean"; but in the evening of the sabbath they prepare themselves, and meet the children of men, and hurt them."

And cried out with a loud voice;
See Gill on "Mr 1:23".

{y} Ib pr. affirm, 29.

Luke 4:34

Ver. 34. Saying, let us alone,.... Not that there were more spirits in him than one, as the whole account shows; but he includes the rest of the devils in that country; See Gill on "Mr 1:24".

Luke 4:35

Ver. 35. And Jesus rebuked him,.... Not the man, but the unclean spirit: or "that demon", as the Persic version reads it:

saying, hold thy peace, or "be thou muzzled", as the word signifies,

and come out of him;
See Gill on "Mt 1:25".

and when the devil had thrown him in the midst; in the "midst of them", as the Arabic version adds; that is, in the midst of the people that were in the synagogue; or, as the Ethiopic version reads, "in the midst of the synagogue", where he threw him into convulsive fits, and left him:

he came out of him, and hurt him not; though he sadly convulsed him, and put him to great pain, yet he did not wound him in any part of his body, or take away the use of any of his limbs; and much less hurt his soul so as to destroy it; all which was desired and intended by him, but was hindered by Christ; See Gill on "Mr 1:26".

Luke 4:36

Ver. 36. And they were all amazed,.... The people in the synagogue; they were astonished at his doctrine before, and now at his miracles:

and spake among themselves; as they were in the synagogue,

what a word is this? meaning, either what sort of doctrine is this which is attended with such power and miracles; or what a word of command is this, "hold thy peace, and come out of him?" and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "what is this mandatory", or "commanding word?" to which agrees the Syriac version, rendering it with the following clause thus; "what is this word", that "with authority and power it commands the unclean spirits, and they come out?" See Gill on "Mr 1:27".

Luke 4:37

Ver 37. And the fame of him went out,.... From hence on account of his dispossessing this unclean spirit, which seems to be the first instance of this kind:

into every place in the country round about; into every city, town, and village in Galilee, and even into all places round about Galilee; **Mr 1:28**.

Luke 4:38

Ver. 38. And he arose out of the synagogue,.... That is, when he had dispossessed the unclean spirit, he rose up, and went out of the synagogue:

and entered into Simon's house; the house of Simon Peter, and which was also Andrew's; and in Beza's ancient copy, and in one of Stephens's, it is added, "and of Andrew"; who, though they were both natives of Bethsaida, yet, it seems, had an house at Capernaum, whither Christ went of his own accord, or by an invitation given him:

and Simons wife's mother was taken with a great fever. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "with great fevers". The fever is

"a disease, or rather a class of diseases, whose characteristic is a preternatural heat felt through the whole body, or, at least, the principal parts thereof, attended with other symptoms----"One" defines a fever, a strenuous endeavour, or effort of nature to throw off some morbific matter, that greatly incommodes the body.---- "Another", an augmented velocity of the blood; others, a fermentation of the blood; accompanied with a quick pulse and excessive heat.----The causes of fevers are innumerable, and the disease even often arises in the soundest bodies, where there was no previous morbific apparatus, as cachochymia, plethora, &c. but merely from a change of air, food, or other alteration in the non-naturals. A fever, "one" observes, is an inseparable companion of an inflammation. The symptoms are many: every fever, arising from any internal cause, is attended with a quick pulse, and unusual heat at different times, and in different degrees. Where these are intense, the fever is acute, where remiss, slow. The disease begins almost always with a sense of; chillness, and in its progress is chiefly distinguished by the velocity of the pulse: so that a too quick contraction of the heart, with an increased resistance, or impulse against the capillaries, furnishes the proper idea of a fever {z}."

The fever Peter's wife's mother lay ill of, is said to be a "great one"; which circumstance is the rather mentioned, to illustrate the miraculous cure of it by Christ; See Gill on "Mt 8:14".

And they besought him for her; either his disciples Peter, Andrew, James, and John, who were all present, or the other relations and friends of the sick person, which were in the house; who having heard of his casting out the unclean spirit in the synagogue, believed that he had power to heal this disease; and therefore intreat him, for her sake, and upon her account, that he would restore her health.

{z} See Chambers's Cyclopaedia in the word "Fever".

Luke 4:39

Ver. 39. And he stood over her,.... "At her head", as the Persic version reads: he inclined himself towards her, to see how she did, and to take her by the hand, and lift her up;

and rebuked the fever. The Syriac and Persic versions read, "her fever", that which was upon her;

and it left her, as Mark says, "immediately"; as soon as ever he had touched her hand, and rebuked the fever, and bid it be gone:

and immediately she arose, and ministered unto them;
See Gill on "Mt 8:15".

Luke 4:40

Ver. 40. Now when the sun was setting,.... And so the sabbath was over; See Gill on "Mt 8:16".

all they that had any sick, with divers diseases, brought them unto him; that is, as many of the inhabitants of Capernaum as had sick persons in their houses, let their diseases be what they would, brought them to Christ in Simon's house; which, sabbath being over, they might do consistent with their laws, and the traditions of the elders, and without any just offence to the Scribes and Pharisees, who were tenacious of them; and they were encouraged to do so, partly through the dispossessing the unclean spirit in their synagogue that day, which many of them had been witnesses of; and partly through the cure of Peter's wife's mother, which they had heard of:

and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them; without the use of medicine, by the mere imposition of his hands; which was accompanied with such power and virtue from him, as to remove, at once, every disease; nor did he refuse any person, how unworthy soever they might be in themselves, and how obstinate their disease might be.

Luke 4:41

Ver. 41 And devils also came out of many,.... Not willingly, nor of themselves, but at the word and command of Christ, who ordered them to depart,

crying out and saying; as they left the bodies, of men, and not with any goodwill to Christ:

thou art Christ; the true Messiah, that was of old promised and prophesied of, and has been long expected to come:

the Son of God; the only begotten Son of God, possessed of the same perfections with God his Father; and particularly of almighty power, of which they were convinced by his dispossessing them;

and he rebuking them, suffered them not to speak; for he needed not their testimony, nor did he choose to be made known by them:

for they knew that he was Christ, or "that they knew that he was Christ"; so the Syriac version: they certainly did know that he was the Messiah, partly by the voice from heaven at his baptism, and partly by his power over them: but Christ would not suffer them to say that he was the Messiah, or that they knew him to be so; either because the time was not come for such a declaration to be made, or they were not the proper persons to make it; and lest such a publication, by them, should be made a handle of by the Scribes and Pharisees, to say that he had society with devils, and by them cast them out.

Luke 4:42

Ver. 42. And when it was day,.... The "day after", as the Persic version renders it;

at the dawning, or "break of day", as the Syriac. He rose a great while before it was day, as Mark says, **Mr 1:35** but did not go out till it was day, or till day was coming on, when

he departed from Peter's house, and from Capernaum:

and went into a desert place; for the sake of solitude, that he might be retired from company, and have an opportunity of privately praying to God:

and the people sought, and came unto him: they first went to Simon's house, and not finding him there, sought for him elsewhere: and when they understood where he was, they came to him,

and stayed him that he should not depart from them; they laid hold on him, and held him, and did all they could to persuade him, to abide with them constantly, and not think of removing from them: though perhaps this was not so much from love to Christ's person and presence, or any regard to his ministry, and the good and welfare of their immortal souls, as on account of the miracles he wrought, and the corporal benefits he bestowed on them.

Luke 4:43

Ver. 43. And he said unto them,.... In answer to their importunate requests:

I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; as well as to Capernaum; and though they did not express their desire of his continuance with them, in order to preach the Gospel to them; yet Christ signifies, that a principal part of his work lay in preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, the Gospel dispensation on earth, the doctrines and ordinances of it, as well as the things which relate to the kingdom of glory; as what is the saints meetness for it, their regeneration, and their right unto it, which lies in his righteousness: and that as he had preached these things at Capernaum, there was a necessity upon him to preach them in other cities of Galilee and Judea: for therefore am I sent; as he was by his heavenly Father, and had himself also undertook and engaged to do it.

Luke 4:44

Ver. 44. And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee. In the several synagogues that were in different cities and towns throughout all Galilee.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 5:1

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, that as the people pressed upon him,.... As Christ went through Galilee, and preached in the synagogues there, great crowds of people attended on him, and they followed him wherever he went; and so large were their numbers, and so very eager were they to see him, and hear him, that they were even troublesome to him, and bore hard upon him, and were ready to press him down, though they had no ill design upon him, but only

to hear the word of God; the scriptures of the Old Testament explained, and the doctrines of the Gospel preached; and which were preached by him, as never were before or since, and in such a manner as were not by the Scribes and Pharisees; and both the matter and manner of his ministry drew a vast concourse of people after him:

he stood by the lake of Gennesaret; the same with the sea of Chinnereth, Nu 34:11 where the Targums of Onkelos, Jonathan, and the Jerusalem, call it, rowngd amy, "the sea of Geausar" or "Gennesaret": and so it is elsewhere called {a}, and is the same which is called the sea of Galilee, and of Tiberias, **Joh 6:1** and is, by other writers {b}, as here, called the lake of Gennesaret, and said to be sixteen miles long, and six broad. Josephus says {c}, it is forty furlongs broad, and an hundred long. The Jews say {d}, that

"the holy, blessed God created seven seas, but chose none of them all, but the sea of Gennesaret."

And indeed, it was a place chosen by Christ, and honoured, and made famous by him, by his preaching at it, his miracles upon it, and showing himself there after his resurrection.

{a} Targum in Ezek. xxxix. 11. Zohar in Gen. fol. 3. 2. & 17. 2. & in Exod. fol. 52. 4. & 61. 4. {b} Plin. l. 5. c. 15. Solin, c. 48. Ptolom. l. 5. c. 15. {c} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 18. {d} Pirke Eliezer, c. 18.

Luke 5:2

Ver. 2. And saw two ships standing by the lake,.... Or two fishing boats; which were, as the Arabic version renders it, "detained by anchors at the shore of the lake"; the one belonging to Peter and Andrew, and the other to Zebedee, and his two sons, James and John:

but the fishermen were gone out of them; that is, either the above persons, or their servants:

and were washing their nets; on shore; they having gathered a great deal of soil and filthiness, but had caught no fish; and therefore were cleansing their nets, in order to lay them up, finding it to be in vain to make any further attempts with them at present; and which considered, makes the following miracle the more illustrious.

Luke 5:3

Ver. 3. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's,.... Simon Peter's, and Andrew his brother's, who were both together at this time, though the last is not here mentioned:

and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land: as Simon was the owner of the vessel, Christ desired him; he asked the favour of him to put off a little way from shore; though the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, "he commanded him", being his Lord and master: To which the Syriac and Persic versions agree; only they make the orders to be given not to Simon singly, but to others, to all in the boat; the former rendering it, and he said, or ordered, that they should carry him a little way from the dry land to the waters; and the latter thus, and said, carry ye the ship from dry land a little into the sea. And which adds, agreeable to the sense enough, though it is not in the text, "when they had executed his command": had done as he entreated, or ordered, and put off the vessel a little way from the shore:

he sat down and taught the people out of the ship; for the boat was not carried neither out of sight, nor beyond the hearing of the people: this method Christ took at another time, and that for conveniency, as now; see Mt 13:1 and whereas he sat while he taught, this was according to the then custom of the times with the Jews;
See Gill on "Mt 5:1".

Luke 5:4

Ver. 4. Now when he had left speaking,.... Teaching the people, and preaching the word of God unto them out of the ship, as they stood on the shore before him.

He said unto Simon, launch out into the deep; he spoke to Simon Peter, being the master of the vessel, to thrust it out, or put it off further into deep water, more convenient for fishing;

and let down your nets for a draught; of fishes: his meaning is, that he would give orders to his servants, to put out the vessel to sea, to take their nets and cast them into the sea, in order to take and draw up a quantity of fish, which was their business.

Luke 5:5

Ver. 5. And Simon answering said unto him, master,.... Or Rabbi, as the Syriac version renders it: he knew him to be the Messiah, the king of Israel, and a teacher sent from God:

we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; which carries in it an objection to what Christ advised and directed to: they had been fishing that "night", which was the best time for catching fish; and they had been at it all the night, and had "laboured" hard; and were even "fatigued", and quite wearied out; and what was most discouraging of all, their labour was in vain; they had caught "nothing":

nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net; which showed faith in Christ, and obedience to him: thus the faithful preachers of the Gospel, sometimes labour and toil in the ministry of the word a great while, with little or no success; and are discouraged from going on, and would be tempted to leave off, were it not for the commission and word of command they have received from Christ, which they dare not be disobedient to; and for the word of promise he has given them, to be with them, on which they depend.

Luke 5:6

Ver. 6. And when they had done this,.... Had put the ship out further to sea, and had let down their net:

they enclosed a great multitude of fish; in their net, which by the secret divine power of Christ, were gathered together just in that place, where by his order they cast the net:

and their net brake; with the weight and number, of the fishes, yet not so as to let the fish out; the Arabic version reads, "it was within a little that their nets were broke": they were just upon breaking, the draught was so numerous, the struggling so great, and the weight so heavy.

Luke 5:7

Ver. 7. And they beckoned unto their partners,.... Zebedee, and his two sons, James and John; **Lu 5:10** who were at some distance from them, probably lay at anchor near the shore, not having put out to sea when the other vessel did, and so were not within call; but they were obliged to make signs to them, and beckon with their hands to come to them:

which were in the other ship; mentioned in **Lu 5:2** which lay by the shore:

that they should come and help them; take up the net, and take the fish out of it:

and they came and filled both the ships; with the fishes they took out of the net, as full as they could hold, and which they were not well able to carry:

so that they began to sink; or "were almost immersed", as Beza's ancient copy, and another manuscript, with the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read; the vessels were so heavy laden, with the vast quantity of fish that was taken, that they were just ready to sink with their burden.

Luke 5:8

Ver. 8. When Simon Peter saw it,.... The multitude of fish that was taken, and both vessels filled with them, and the danger they were in of sinking,

he fell down at Jesus' knees. The Arabic and Persic versions read, "at" his "feet": he fell on his knees before him, and threw himself prostrate at his feet, as a worshipper of him, and a supplicant unto him:

saying, depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord; this he said, not as though the presence of Christ was burdensome, or disagreeable to him; but as one amazed at the greatness of the miracle wrought, and struck with the sense of the power of Christ, put forth therein; and with the greatness of his majesty so near him; and as conscious to himself of his own vileness and unworthiness to be in his presence; and so the Persic version adds, and which may serve as a comment, "and am not worthy that thou shouldst be with me": he had much the same sense of things as the centurion had, **Mt 8:8** and when it is considered how gracious persons have been struck with awe and fear, and a consciousness of sin, weakness, and unworthiness, at the appearance of an angel, as Zacharias, **Lu 1:12** and the shepherds, **Lu 2:9** yea, at the presence of an holy man of God, as the widow of Sarepta at Elijah, saying much the same as Peter does here, 1Ki 17:18 it need not be wondered at, that Peter should so express himself, in these circumstances.

Luke 5:9

Ver. 9. Far he was astonished, and all that were with him,.... His brother Andrew, and the servants they had with them to manage the vessel, and cast the nets:

at the draught of the fishes they had taken; being so large and numerous, as the like was never seen, nor known by them before.

Luke 5:10

Ver. 10. And so was also James and John, the sons of Zebedee,.... Who were in the other ship, and had been beckoned to them to come and help them, and did come, and were witnesses of the miracle:

which were partners with Simon; were sharers with him in loss and gain in the fishing trade; these were equally astonished at the miracle, as Simon and his brother, and the men that were in the boat with them, where Jesus was:

and Jesus said unto Simon; who was at his knees, and expressed his dread of his majesty, and the consternation of mind he was in particularly:

fear not; do not be afraid of me, I shall do thee no harm, nor shall the boats sink, or any damage come to any person, or to the vessels, nor be so much amazed and affrighted, at the multitude of the fish taken:

from henceforth thou shalt catch men; alive, as the word signifies, or "unto life", as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; thou shalt cast the net of the Gospel, and be the happy instrument of drawing many persons out of the depths of sin and misery, in which they are plunged, into the way of life and salvation; and which was greatly verified, in the conversion of three thousand at one cast, under one sermon of his, **Ac 2:41**

Luke 5:11

Ver. 11. And when they had brought their ships to land,.... Both Simon Peter's, and the other in which his partners were, and which were laden with fish:

they forsook all; even all their fish, which they doubtless might have made much money of, and their nets, and their ships, and their servants, and their relations, and friends:

and followed him; Christ; and became his disciples, even all four of them, Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

Luke 5:12

Ver. 12. And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city,.... Or near it, hard by it, very probably Capernaum; **Mt 8:1** Behold a man full of leprosy; a disease to which the Jews were very incident, and concerning which, many laws and rules are given, in
Le 13:1. The symptoms of the ancient "lepra", as laid down by Galen,

Aretaeus, Pontanus, Aegineta, Cardan, Varanda, Gordon, Pharaeus, and others, are as follow. The patient's voice is hoarse, and comes rather through the nose than the mouth; the blood full of little white shining bodies, like groins of millet, which upon filtration, separate themselves from it; the serum is scabious, and destitute of its natural humidity, insomuch that salt applied to it, does not dissolve; it is so dry, that vinegar poured on it boils; and is so strongly bound together by little imperceptible threads, that calcined lead thrown into it swims. The face resembles a coal half extinct, unctuous, shining, and bloated, with frequent hard knobs, green at bottom, and white at top. The hair is short, stiff, and brinded; and not to be torn off, without bringing away, some of the rotten flesh, to which it adheres; if it grows again, either on the head or chin, it is always white: athwart the forehead, run large wrinkles or furrows, from one temple to the other; the eyes red and inflamed, and shine like those of a cat; the ears swollen and red, eaten with ulcers towards the bottom, and encompassed with little glands; the nose sunk, because of the rotting of the cartilage; the tongue dry and black, swollen, ulcerated, divided with furrows, and spotted with grains of white; the skin covered with ulcers, that die and revive on each other, or with white spots, or scales like a fish; it is rough and insensible, and when cut, instead of blood, yields a sanious liquor: it arrives in time to such a degree of insensibility, that the wrist, feet, or even the large tendon, may be pierced with a needle, without the patient's feeling any pain; at last the nose, fingers, toes, and even privy members, fall off entire; and by a death peculiar to each of them, anticipate that of the patient: it is added, that the body is so hot, that a fresh apple held in the hand an hour, will be dried and wrinkled, as if exposed to the sun for a week {e}. Think now what a miserable deplorable object this man was, said to be full of it. Between this disease and sin, there is a very great likeness. This disease is a very filthy one, and of a defiling nature, by the ceremonial law; under which it was considered rather as an uncleanness, than as a disease; the person attended with it was pronounced unclean by the priest, and was put out of the camp, and out of the cities and walled towns, that he might not defile others; and was obliged to put a covering on his upper lip, and cry Unclean, Unclean, to acknowledge his pollution, and that others might shun him: all mankind, by reason of sin, are by the Lord pronounced filthy; and by their evil actions, not only defile themselves, but others; evil communications corrupt good manners; and when they are made sensible, freely own that their righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and they themselves as an unclean thing: it is a very nauseous and loathsome disease, as is sin; it is abominable to God, and renders men abominable in his sight; it causes the sinner himself, when convinced of it, to loath and abhor himself: David calls his sin a loathsome disease, Ps 38:7 it is of a spreading nature: this was a sign of it, if it did not spread, it was only a, scab; if it spread, it was a leprosy, Le 13:5. Sin has spread itself over all mankind, and over all the powers and faculties of the soul, and members of the body; there is no place free of it: and as the leprosy is of consuming nature, it eats and wastes the flesh, see Nu 12:10 **2Ki 5:10** so sin eats like a canker, and brings ruin and destruction upon men, both soul and body. This disease was incurable by medicine; persons that had it were never sent to a physician, but to a priest; and what he did was only this, he looked upon it, and if it was a clear case, he declared the person unclean; and if it was doubtful, shut him up for seven days, and then inspected him again; and after all he could not cure him; this was the work of God, **2Ki 5:7**. All which shows the nature and use of the law, which shuts men up, concludes them under sin, and by which they have knowledge of it, but no healing: the law heals none, it is the killing letter, the ministration of condemnation and death; Christ only, by his blood and stripes, heals the disease of sin, and cleanses from it. There is one thing in the law of the leprosy very surprising, and that is, that if there was any quick raw flesh, or any sound flesh in the place where the leprosy was, the man was pronounced unclean; but if the leprosy covered his skin, and all his flesh, then he was pronounced clean: this intimates, that he that thinks he has some good thing in him, and fancies himself sound and well, and trusts to his own works of righteousness, he is not justified in the sight of God; but if a man acknowledges that there is no soundness in his flesh, that in him, that is, in his flesh, dwells no good thing, but that his salvation is alone, by the grace and mercy of God, such a man is justified by faith in Christ Jesus: the parable of the Pharisee and publican will illustrate this, Lu 18:10. "Who, seeing Jesus, fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean"; See Gill on "Mt 8:2". Christ could cure lepers, and did; and which was a proof of his Messiahship, and is given among the signs of it, to John's disciples, Mt 11:5 and as there is a likeness between the leprosy and sin, so between the cleansing of a leper under the law, and the healing of a sinner by Christ: for the cleansing of a leper, two birds were to be taken clean and alive, which were both typical of Christ, and pointed at the meekness of his human nature, his innocence, harmlessness, and purity, and that he had a life to lay down; one of these was to be killed, in an earthen vessel over running water, showing that Christ must be killed, his blood must be shed for the cleansing of leprous sinners; the earthen vessel denoted his human nature, his flesh, in which he was put to death; and the running water signified the purifying nature of his blood, and the continued virtue of it, to cleanse from all sin; and the blood and the water being mixed together, may put us in mind of the blood and water which flowed from the side of Christ, when pierced with the spear; which was an emblem of our justification and sanctification being both from him, on account of which, he is said to come both by water and by blood, **1Jo 5:6**. The other bird, after it was dipped with the cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop in the blood of the slain bird, was let go alive; which typified the resurrection of Christ, who was put to death in the flesh, and quickened in the Spirit; and who rose again, for the justification of his people from all sin: the cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop, which were used in the cleansing of the leper, may either relate to the sufferings, and death, and blood of Christ; the scarlet wool may denote the bloody sufferings of Christ, through which he was red in his apparel; the cedar wood may signify the incorruptibleness and preciousness of the blood of Christ, and the hyssop the purging virtue of it; or else these three may have regard to the three principal graces of the Spirit of God, which have to do with, and are in influenced by the sin cleansing blood of Christ: the cedar wood may signify the incorruptible and precious grace of faith; the green hyssop, the lively grace of hope; and the scarlet, the flaming grace of love, when it is in its full exercise: or else the grace of faith, by which dealing with the blood of Christ, the heart is purified, is only meant; signified by cedar wood, for its permanency; by scarlet, for its concern with the crimson blood of Christ; by which sins, though as scarlet, are made white as wool; and by hyssop, for its being an humble and lowly grace: now the cedar stick, with the scarlet wool, and bunch of hyssop bound unto it, was used to sprinkle the blood of the bird upon the leper seven times, when he was pronounced clean; and expresses the instrumentality of faith, in the application of the blood of Christ for cleansing: though after this, the leper was to shave off all his hair, and wash himself and clothes in water; suggesting to us, that holiness of life and conversation which should follow, upon cleansing through faith in the blood of Christ.

{e} Chambers's Cyclopaedia in the word "Leprosy".

Luke 5:13

Ver. 13. And he put forth his hand and touched him,.... Having compassion on him, and commiserating his sad case:

saying, I will, be thou clean; and immediately the leprosy departed from him; See Gill on "Mt 8:3".

Luke 5:14

Ver. 14. And he charged him to tell no man,.... Of his cure, and by whom he received it;

but go show thyself to the priest. The Syriac and Persic versions read, "to the priests: and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses has commanded, for a testimony unto them"; See Gill on "Mt 8:4".

Luke 5:15

Ver. 15. But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him,.... For the more he charged the man to keep silence, the more he blazed it abroad, being elated with the cure he received, and filled with gratitude to his benefactor; **Mr 1:45**.

And great multitudes came together to hear: him, or from him, as the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions add; to hear the doctrines of the Gospel preached by him: "and to be healed by him of their infirmities"; their bodily weaknesses and disorders.

Luke 5:16

Ver. 16. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness,.... Into a desert place, that he might have rest from the fatigues of preaching and healing diseases; and being alone, and free from company, might have an opportunity for private prayer to God, for so it lows:

and prayed; this is to be understood of Christ, as man: as God, he is the object of prayer, and petitions are often addressed unto him; and as mediator, he offers up the prayers of all saints, and presents them to his Father; which are acceptable to him, through the incense of his mediation; and as man, he prayed himself: what he now prayed for, is not known; sometimes he prayed for his disciples, and for all that should believe; for their conversion, sanctification, union, perseverance, and glorification; and sometimes for himself, that the cup might pass from him, and he be saved from death; but always with submission to the will of his Father.

Luke 5:17

Ver. 17. And it came to pass on a certain day,.... When he was at Capernaum, as appears from **Mr 2:1**

As he was teaching: in the house where such numbers were gathered together, to hear the word of God preached by him, that there was not room for them, neither within the house, nor about the door, **Mr 2:2**

That there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by; who were sometimes called Scribes, and sometimes lawyers, and were generally of the sect of the Pharisees:

which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: having heard much of his doctrine and miracles, they came from all parts to watch and observe him, and to take all opportunities and advantages against him, that they might expose him to the people:

and the power of the Lord was present to heal them; not the Pharisees and doctors of the law, who did not come to be healed by him, either in body or mind; but the multitude, some of whom came to hear his doctrine, and others to be healed of their infirmities, **Lu 5:15**. The Persic version reads the words thus, "and from all the villages of Galilee, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, multitudes came, and the power of God was present to heal them."

Luke 5:18

Ver. 18. And behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy,.... Four men brought him, as Mark says, **Mr 2:3** and which the Ethiopic version expresses here: "and they sought means to bring him in": into the house where Jesus was:

and to lay him before him; at his feet, in hope of moving his compassion, and to obtain a cure of him: of the nature of this disease, and of the sort which this man's seems to be, See Gill on "Mr 2:3".

Luke 5:19

Ver. 19. And when they could not find by what way,.... As by the door, or in at a window of the house:

they might bring him in; to Jesus, in the house:

because of the multitude; which was about the door, and all the fore part of the house:

they went upon the housetop; by a ladder, or pair of stairs, which usually were on the outside of houses; See Gill on "Mt 24:17" the houses of the Jews being flat roofed:

and let him down through the tiling with his couch, into the midst before Jesus; that is, they untiled the roof, or took away the tiles which were about the trap door, or passage, into the inside of the house; and so making it wider, let down the man upon his couch, or bed, into the middle of the room and of the people, just before Jesus, where he was sitting; See Gill on "Mr 2:4".

Luke 5:20

Ver. 20. And when he saw their faith,.... That is, Jesus, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it; when he saw the faith both of the paralytic man, and of the men that brought him, which was shown in the pains they took, and trouble they were at, in getting him to him;

he said unto him. The Vulgate Latin only reads, "he said"; but the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, still more fully express the sense, rendering it, "he said to the paralytic man"; and the Ethiopic version, "he said to the infirm man"; as follows:

man, thy sins are forgiven thee. The other evangelists say, he said "son"; perhaps he used both words: however, all agree that he pronounced the forgiveness of sins, which were the cause of his disease; and which being removed, the effect must cease; so that he had healing both for soul and body; See Gill on "Mt 9:2".

Luke 5:21

Ver. 21. And the Scribes and the Pharisees began to reason,.... To think and say within themselves, and it may be to one another, in a private manner:

saying, who is this which speaketh blasphemies? what vain boaster, and blaspheming creature is this, who assumes that to himself, which is the prerogative of God?

Who can forgive sins but God alone? against whom they are committed, whose law is transgressed, and his will disobeyed, and his justice injured and affronted. Certain it is, that none can forgive sins but God; not any of the angels in heaven, or men on earth; not holy good men, nor ministers of the Gospel; and if Christ had been a mere man, though ever so good a man, even a sinless one, or ever so great a prophet, he could not have forgiven sin; but he is truly and properly God, as his being a discerner of the thoughts of these men, and his healing the paralytic man in the manner he did, are sufficient proofs. The Scribes and Pharisees therefore, though they rightly ascribe forgiveness of sin to God alone, yet grievously sinned, in imputing blasphemy to Christ: they had wrong notions of Christ, concluding him to be but a mere man, against the light and evidence of his works and miracles; and also of his office as a Redeemer, who came to save his people from their sins; and seem to restrain the power of forgiving sin to God the Father, whereas the Son of God, being equal with him, had the same power, and that even on earth, to forgive sin; See Gill on "Mr 2:7".

Luke 5:22

Ver. 22. But when Jesus perceived their thoughts,.... Being God omniscient;

he answering said unto them, what reason ye in your hearts? This he said, not as being ignorant what their reasonings were, for it is before said he perceived their thoughts, but to expose the wickedness of them; in one exemplar of Beza's it is added, "evil things", as in **Mt 9:4**.
See Gill on "Mt 9:4".

Luke 5:23

Ver. 23. Whether is it easier to say,.... Mark adds, "to the sick of the palsy"; to whom Christ had said that his sins were forgiven him, which had given offence to the Scribes and Pharisees, imagining that he had assumed too much to himself: wherefore he proposes the following case to them, which they thought was most easy for man, or more proper and peculiar to God to say,

thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, rise up and walk? Neither of them could be said by a mere man, with effect, so as that sins would be really remitted on so saying; or that a man sick of a palsy, by such a word speaking, would be able

to stand upon his feet and walk; but both of them were equally easy to him, that is truly God; and he that could say the one effectually, could also say the other: or in other words, he that could cure a man of a palsy with a word speaking, ought not to be charged with blasphemy, for taking upon him to forgive sin: our Lord meant, by putting this question, and acting upon it, to prove himself to be God, and to remove the imputation of blasphemy from him;
See Gill on "Mt 9:5".
See Gill on "Mr 2:9".

Luke 5:24

Ver. 24. But that ye may know, that the son of man,.... Whom the Scribes and Pharisees took for a mere man, in which they were mistaken; for though he was really a man, and the son of man, yet he was God as well as man; he was God manifest in the flesh:

hath power upon earth to forgive sins; even in the days of his flesh, whilst he was in his humble form on earth; for he did not cease to be God by becoming man, nor lose any branch of his power, not this of forgiving sin, by appearing in the form of a servant; and, that it might be manifest,

he said unto the sick of the palsy: these are the words of the evangelist, signifying, that Christ turned himself from the Scribes and Pharisees to the paralytic man, and thus addressed him:

I say unto thee, arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

Luke 5:25

Ver. 25. And immediately he rose up before them,.... As soon as ever these words were spoken by Christ, the man, before sick of the palsy, finding himself perfectly well, got off of his couch, and stood up on his feet before the Scribes and Pharisees, and all the people:

and took up that whereon he lay; his couch, or bed: and departed to his own house; with it upon his back: "and went to his business", as the Persic version renders it:

glorifying God; both for the healing of his body, and for the pardon of his sins; each of which he knew none but God could do. This circumstance is only mentioned by Luke, and shows the sense the man had of the great favours bestowed upon him: he glorified God, by ascribing them to his goodness and power; by offering the sacrifice of praise, or giving thanks unto him for them; by publishing them among his neighbours, to the honour of his name; and by living a holy life and conversation, to his glory, under a grateful sense of his kindness: yea, he glorified Jesus Christ as God, who he knew must be God, by forgiving his sins, and curing his disease; he proclaimed his divine power, and ascribed greatness to him; he confessed him as the Messiah, and owned him as his Saviour, and became subject to him as his Lord.

Luke 5:26

Ver. 26. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God,.... Not the Pharisees, and doctors of the law, but the common people:

and were filled with fear; of the Divine Being, whose presence and power they were sensible must be in this case:

saying, we have seen strange things today; paradoxes, things wonderful, unthought of, unexpected, and incredible by carnal reason, and what were never seen, nor known before; as that a man, who was so enfeebled by the palsy, that he was obliged to be carried on a bed by four men, yet, on a sudden, by a word speaking, rose up, and carried his bed, on his back, home.

Luke 5:27

Ver. 27. And after these things he went forth,.... After his discourse with the Scribes and Pharisees, and his healing of the man, sick with the palsy, he went forth from the city of Capernaum, to the sea side; not only for retirement and recreation, after the work of the day hitherto, but in order to meet with, and call one that was to be a disciple of his:

and saw a publican named Levi who is said to be the son of Alphaeus, **Mr 2:14** and so it is said to be in Beza's ancient copy here; and who was also called Matthew, see **Mt 9:9**

sitting at the receipt of custom; at the place where custom was received, and toll taken, near the sea side, of such that went over. The Syriac and Persic versions read, "sitting among publicans", of which business he himself was; and these might be his servants under him, or partners with him; See Gill on "Mr 2:14"

and he said unto him, follow me: of all the publicans that were there, he singled out Levi, or Matthew, and directed his discourse to him, and called him to be a follower of him: an instance of powerful, special, and distinguishing grace this; See Gill on "Mt 9:9".

Luke 5:28

Ver. 28. And he left all,.... His company, his business, and all the profits of it:

rose up; directly; such power went along with the words of Christ, that he could not withstand it:

and followed him; not only in a literal, but in a spiritual sense, and became a disciple of his.

Luke 5:29

Ver. 29. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house,.... At Capernaum, which, very likely, was made some time after his call, though recorded here; for it is not reasonable to think there could be time enough that day to get ready so great a feast, as this is said to be Levi, it should seem, was a rich man, and in gratitude to Christ for his special grace and honour bestowed on him, made this entertainment for him; and he seems to have had also another view in it, to bring him into the company of his fellow publicans, hoping he might be useful to them, as he had been to him; for of this nature is true grace, to wish for, and desire the salvation of the souls of others, as well as a man's own:

and there was a great company of publicans, and of others: Myrxa, which word is sometimes used in Talmudic writings for Gentiles; so Myrxa tva, "the wife of others", is interpreted the wife of the Cuthites, or Samantans {f}: and thus the Jews explain the text in De 24:14 "thou shalt not oppress an hired servant, that is poor and needy", whether he be "of thy brethren", on which they make this remark, Myrxal jrp, "this excepts others"; that, is, as the gloss interprets it, it excepts the nations of the world, or the Gentiles: they go on to expound the text, "or of thy strangers that are in thy land"; these are the proselytes of righteousness: "within thy gates"; these are they that eat things that are torn {g}: so that the "others" are distinguished from the Jews, and from both the proselytes of righteousness, and of the gate; and it is easy to observe, that publicans and Heathens are sometimes mentioned together: here it means sinners, as appears from **Mt 9:10** such the Gentiles were reckoned:

that sat down with them; being invited by Matthew.

{f} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 52. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {g} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 111. 2. & Gloss. in lb.

Luke 5:30

Ver. 30. But their Scribes and Pharisees,.... Not the Scribes of the publicans and sinners that sat down, but the Scribes of the people in general; the Scribes of the Jewish nation: all the eastern versions leave out the word "their":

murmured against his disciples, saying; or, "murmured, and said unto his disciples", as the Syriac and Persic versions render it: that is, they either murmured at the publicans and sinners sitting down at meat; or "against him", as the Ethiopic version reads: either against Matthew for inviting them; or rather against Christ for sitting down with them: and not caring to speak to him, address themselves to his disciples in these words,

why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? The other evangelists represent these as saying, why does he, or your master, eat with such? doubtless, they included both Christ, and his disciples; though they chiefly designed him, and to bring an accusation against him, and fix a charge upon him, in order to render him odious to the people.

Luke 5:31

Ver. 31. And Jesus answering, said unto them,.... Knowing that they aimed at him; though, according to this evangelist, they only mentioned his disciples, however, he takes up the cause, and vindicates both himself and them, by observing to them the following proverb;

they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick: suggesting hereby, that as such who are in good health, who are free from all diseases, wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores, stand in no need of the advice and assistance of a physician, or surgeon, but such who have either distempers or sores on their bodies; so they, the Scribes and Pharisees, who, in their own opinion, were free from the disease of sin, original and actual, and touching the righteousness of the law, were blameless, stood not in any need of him, the physician, who came to cure the maladies of the souls, as well as of the bodies of men; but such persons, who not only are sick with sin, but sick of it, who are sensible of it, and desire healing: and therefore this was the reason of his conduct, why he conversed with sinners, and not with the Scribes and Pharisees; his business, as a physician, lying among the one, and not the other; See Gill on "Mt 9:12".
See Gill on "Mr 2:17".

Luke 5:32

Ver. 32. I came not to call the righteous,.... Such as the Scribes and Pharisees were in their own apprehension, and in the esteem of others, who trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and submitted not to the righteousness of Christ: these Christ came not to call by his grace, and therefore did not associate himself with them: but sinners to repentance; such as the publicans, and others, with them, were; and therefore he was chiefly with such, and chose to be among them: these he not only called to repentance by the outward ministry of the word, but brought them to it; he having power to bestow the grace of repentance, as well as to call to the duty of it; See Gill on "Mt 9:13".
See Gill on "Mr 2:17".

Luke 5:33

Ver. 33. And they say unto him,.... The Scribes and Pharisees, or the disciples of John; see **Mt 9:14**

why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers? set times apart frequently for fasting and prayer. The Ethiopic version reads, "why do the disciples of John baptize frequently, fast, and make prayers?" in which the former clause is added; and as without any authority, so without judgment, since it must suppose that the Pharisees did so likewise, whereas they rejected the baptism of John; for it follows, and "likewise" the disciples of "the

Pharisees"; who fasted often, at least twice in the week, and made frequent prayers in the synagogues, and corners of the streets, and in widows' houses.

But thine eat and drink? instead of fasting and praying;
See Gill on "Mt 9:14".

Luke 5:34

Ver. 34. And he said unto them,.... The disciples of John, or the Scribes and Pharisees:

can ye make the children of the bride chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? signifying, that he was the bridegroom, and his disciples the children of the bride chamber; and that as it is unreasonable to expect, and morally impossible, that persons, attending the festivals of a nuptial solemnity, should be engaged in severe fastings; so it was not to be thought, that whilst Christ was corporeally present with his disciples, that they should be prevailed upon to live such an austere and mortified life.

Luke 5:35

Ver. 35. But the days will come,.... And that in a very little time, as they did:

when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them: as their master, John, was taken away from them, and now in prison, and therefore it was no wonder they mourned and fasted; signifying, that in a short time he, the bridegroom of his church and people, should be taken away by death:

and then they shall fast in those days; mourn, and be humbled, of which fasting was, a sign, for the death of their Lord, and on account of the many afflictions and persecutions they should endure for his sake; See Gill on "Mt 9:15".

Luke 5:36

Ver. 36. And he spake also a parable unto them,.... The Scribes and Pharisees; illustrating what he had just now said:

no man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; by "a piece of a new garment" meaning the new and upstart notions and traditions of the elders, which were so in comparison of the law of Moses; and by the "old", the robe of their own righteousness, wrought out in obedience to the moral and ceremonial law: and Christ suggests, that to join these together, in order to patch up a garment of righteousness, to appear in before God, was equally as weak and ridiculous, as to put a piece of new and undressed cloth into a garment that was old, and wore threadbare.

If otherwise, then both the new, maketh the rent; that is, much worse than it was, as it is expressed both in Matthew and Mark; the old and new cloth being unsuitable, and not of equal strength to hold together: by this Christ intimates, that the Jews, by being directed to the observance of the traditions of the elders, were drawn off from a regard to the commandments of God; so that instead of having a better righteousness, they had one much the worse, a ragged, and a rent one.

And the piece that was taken out of the new, agreeth not with the old; and so the statutes of men, and the ordinances of God, or the traditions of the elders, and the commands of God, are no more like one another, than the piece of a new and an old garment, and as unlike is obedience to the one, and to the other;

See Gill on "Mt 9:16".
See Gill on "Mt 9:17".
See Gill on "Mr 2:21".

See Gill on "Mr 2:22" where this, and the following parable, are more largely explained.

Luke 5:37

Ver. 37. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles,.... To which the Scribes and Pharisees are here compared, into whose hearts the new wine of Gospel grace was not put; or to whom was not made known the love of God Comparable to new wine; nor the blessings of the new covenant of grace, now exhibited; nor the truths of the Gospel now more clearly and newly revealed.

Else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled; they not being able to receive and bear these things, no, not the relation of them: these were hard sayings to them, of which they said, who can hear them? they could not hear them with patience, much less receive them in the love of them; but were at once filled with wrath and indignation, and rejected them.

And the bottles shall perish; their condemnation shall be the greater.

Luke 5:38

Ver. 38. But new wine must be put into new bottles,.... Such as the disciples of Christ were, and sinners called to repentance are, who are renewed by the Spirit and grace of God: and these are filled with spiritual joy and comfort, as with new wine, arising from discoveries of the love of God, a view of interest in the blessings of the covenant, and an application of Gospel truths and promises.

And both are preserved; both these renewed ones, who are preserved unto the kingdom and glory of Christ; and the grace that is put into them, which is a well of living water, springing up to everlasting life; as well as the Gospel, and its blessings.

Luke 5:39

Ver. 39. No man also having drunk old wine,.... "Wine", though not in the text, is rightly supplied by our translators, as it is by the Syriac and Persic versions:

straightway desireth new; new wine: for he saith, the old is better; old wine is more grateful, more generous, and more reviving to the spirits, than new wine is. This is a proverbial expression, and which Luke only records; which may be applied to natural men, who having drunk the old wine of their carnal lusts and pleasures, do not desire the new wine of the Gospel, and of the grace of God, and of spiritual things, but prefer their old sins and lusts unto them: carnal lusts may be signified by old wine, both for the antiquity of them, being as old as men themselves, and therefore called the old man, and for the gratefulness of them to them; and who may be said to drink of them, as they do drink iniquity like water; which is expressive of their great desire and thirst after it, and delight in it: now whilst they are such, they cannot desire the new wine of the Gospel, which is insipid and ungrateful to them; nor the grace of God, to which their carnal minds are enmity; nor any thing that is evangelical and spiritual, at least, not straightway, or immediately; not until they are regenerated by the Spirit of God, and their taste is changed, but will prefer

their old lusts and former course of life unto them: or it may be accommodated to legalists, and men of a "pharisaical spirit", to whom spiritual and evangelical things are very disagreeable: Scribes and Pharisees, who have drank of the old wine of the law, and the traditions of the elders, do not desire the new wine of the Gospel, but prefer the former to it: the ceremonial law may be expressed by old wine, being originally instituted of God, and acceptable to him; and one part of which lay in libations of wine, and was of long standing, but now waxen old, and ready to vanish away; and likewise the traditions of the elders, which were highly pleasing to the Pharisees, and which pretended to great antiquity: and of these they might be said to drink, being inured to them from their youth, and therefore could not like the new dispensation of the Gospel, neither its doctrines, nor its ordinances; but preferred their old laws and traditions to them: or rather this proverb, as used by Christ here, may be considered as intimating the reason why the disciples did not give into the practices of the Pharisees, because they had drank of the old wine of the Gospel; which, as upon some account it may be called new, because of the new dispensation, fresh discovery and clearer revelation of it; in other respects it may be said to be old, being what was prepared and ordained before the world began; and what Adam drank of, in the first hint and promise of the Messiah; and after him Noah, the preacher of righteousness; and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the Gospel was preached before; and even Moses, who wrote and testified of Christ; and David, and Solomon, and Isaiah, and all the prophets of the former dispensation: and now the disciples having more largely drank of it, under the ministry of Christ, could not easily desire the new wine of the fastings and prayers of the Pharisees, and John's disciples; for the old wine of the Gospel was much better in their esteem, more grateful to the taste, more refreshing to their spirits, and more salutary and healthful, being the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ. Old wine, with the Jews {h} was wine of three years old, and was always by them preferred to new: so they descant on those words in
De 15:16 "because he is well with thee {i}, (i.e. the servant,)"

"with thee in food, with thee in drink; for thou shalt not eat bread of fine flour, and he eat bread of bran; or thou drink, Nvy Nyy, "old wine", and he drink, vdh Nyy, "new wine"."

And sometimes they use this distinction of old and new wine proverbially and parabolically, as here {k}.

"Rabbi Jose bar Juda, a man of a village in Babylon, used to say, he that learns of young men, to what is he like? to him that eateth unripe grapes, and drinks wine out of the fat: but he; that learns of old men, to what is he like? to him that eats ripe grapes, and drinks, Nvy Nyy, "old wine""

signifying, that the knowledge of old men is more solid, and mature, and unmixed, and free from dregs of ignorance, than that of young men: though it follows, that

"Ribbi had used to say, do not look upon the tankard, but on what is in it; for sometimes there is a new tankard full of old wine, and an old one in which there is not so much as new in it:"

signifying, that sometimes young men are full of wisdom and knowledge, when old men are entirely devoid of them.

{h} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 51. 1. & Gloss. in ib. & Bava Bathra, fol. 98. 1. & Maimon. Hilch. Mecira, c. 17. sect. 6. {i} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 22. 1. {k} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 20.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 6:1

Ver. 1. And it came to pass on the second sabbath day after the first,.... Or "second first sabbath", concerning which interpreters are greatly divided. Some think, that it was either the seventh day of the feast of unleavened bread, or the eighth day of the feast of tabernacles. Others, that it was the sabbath which fell that year on the day of Pentecost; and that as there were three grand festivals among the Jews, the feasts of passover, Pentecost, and tabernacles; so when the sabbath day fell on the feast of the passover, it was called the first prime sabbath, when on the feast of Pentecost, it was called the second prime sabbath, and when on the feast of tabernacles, the third prime sabbath. Others have been of opinion, that as the Jews had two beginnings of their year, the one on civil accounts in Tisri, the other on ecclesiastical accounts in Nisan; so the first sabbath in Tisri was called the first first sabbath, and that in Nisan, which was this, the second first sabbath: but what seems most likely is, that this sabbath was, as it may be rendered, "the first sabbath after the second"; that is, the first sabbath after the second day of the passover, when the sheaf of the firstfruits was offered, and harvest might be begun; which suits well with ears of corn being ripe at this time, which the disciples rubbed. So the Jews reckoned the seven weeks from thence to Pentecost by sabbaths; the first after the second day they called the second first, or the first after the second day; the second they called the second second; and the third was named the second third; and so on, the second fourth, the second fifth, the second sixth, and second seventh, which brought on Pentecost, when the harvest was ended. So in the Jewish liturgies, there are collects for the first sabbath after the passover, and for the second sabbath after the passover, and so on to the sabbath before Pentecost. The eastern versions, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic, not knowing what should be meant by it, have only rendered it, "on the sabbath day", as in Mt. 12:1. See Gill on "Mt 12:1".

That he went through the corn fields; that is, Jesus, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions:

and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands: after they had plucked them they rubbed them in their hands to get clean off the husk or beard, that were on them, and then ate the grains. And as plucking of the ears of corn was forbidden on a sabbath day, See Gill on "Mt 12:2", so was rubbing them; though if they were rubbed before, the chaff might be blown off from them in the hand, and eat on the sabbath day: the rule is this {l};

"he that rubs ears of corn on the evening of the sabbath, (i.e. on the sixth day,) may blow them from hand to hand on the morrow, and eat"

But the disciples both plucked them, and rubbed them, and blew away the chaff from them on the sabbath day, and therefore were complained of by the Pharisees.

{l} T. Bab. Betza, fol. 12. 2. & 13. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 21. sect. 14. 17.

Luke 6:2

Ver. 2. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them,.... Unto the disciples. The Evangelists Matthew and Mark say, that they said this to Jesus: no doubt but they said it to both, first to one, and then to the other; probably last of all to Christ, who returned an answer to it:

why do ye that which is not lawful on the sabbath day? as to pluck ears of corn, and rub them, and eat them; See Gill on "Mt 12:2"

Luke 6:3

Ver. 3. And Jesus answering them, said,.... For they brought the charge against the disciples to him, being desirous to know what he would say, and that they might have something to accuse him of; and who, at once, took up the cause of his disciples, and vindicated them, by observing what David did, when he, and his men were an hungry; how that he went into the tabernacle, and took the showbread, and ate of it, and gave it to his men, who also ate of it; which, according to the law, was only allowed to priests; and by taking notice of another instance, which this evangelist does not relate; namely, how on the sabbath days the priests, by doing various servile works, profaned the sabbath day, and yet were not charged with any blame;
See Gill on "Mt 12:3".
See Gill on "Mt 12:4".
See Gill on "Mt 12:5".

Luke 6:4

Ver. 4. See Gill on "Lu 6:3"

Luke 6:5

Ver. 5. And he said unto them,.... He adds this at the close of the instances he gave, at the end of his vindication of his disciples, and discourse with the Pharisees, as a full answer to their cavils;

that the son of man is Lord also of the sabbath; and may do what he will, and suffer his disciples to do whatever he pleases on that day;
See Gill on "Mt 12:8".

Luke 6:6

Ver. 6. And it came to pass also on another sabbath,.... Whether the following sabbath, or some time after, is not certain,

that he entered into the synagogue. The Arabic version reads, "into their synagogue", as in Mt 12:9 the synagogue of the Jews; in what place, whether at Capernaum, or some other city of Galilee, is not so clear:

and taught; explained the Scriptures to the people, and instructed them in the doctrines of the Gospel:

and there was a man whose right hand was withered; who was in the synagogue, and one of his hearers; See Gill on "Mt 12:10"

Luke 6:7

Ver. 7. And the Scribes and Pharisees watched him,....
See Gill on "Mr 3:2"

whether he would heal on the sabbath day: there being such an object before him:

that they might find an accusation against him; as they had before against his disciples.

Luke 6:8

Ver. 8. But he knew their thoughts,.... Being the omniscient God; though they had said nothing of their intentions, he knew what they designed, should he heal the man with his withered hand, as they expected he would:

and said to the man which had the withered hand, rise up, and stand forth in the midst. The Syriac and Persic versions add, "of the synagogue", and which is the true sense; See Gill on "Mr 3:3"

and he arose and stood forth; he rose up from his seat, and stood up in the midst of the synagogue, and of the people, that he might be seen of all.

Luke 6:9

Ver. 9. Then said Jesus unto them,.... The Scribes and Pharisees, who were watching him, and whose thoughts, and the reasonings of their minds, purposes, and intentions, he full well knew:

I will ask you one thing; or question, as they had asked him one before; Mt 12:10

is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?
See Gill on "Mr 3:4" to which may be added, that to save life on the sabbath day was agreeable to their own canons: there were many things which they allowed might be done on the sabbath day, when life was in danger, which otherwise were not lawful; See Gill on "Mt 12:8".

Luke 6:10

Ver. 10. And looking round about upon them all,.... The Scribes and Pharisees, and the rest of the people in the synagogue;
See Gill on "Mr 3:5".

he said to the man; who had the withered hand,

stretch forth thy hand, and he did so; he stretched it out, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it, which he was not able to do before:

and his hand was restored well as the other; the phrase, "well as the other", is left out in one copy, and in the Vulgate Latin version; and so is the word "well" in the Syriac and Arabic versions; and the word "immediately" is added in the Ethiopic version. And certain it is, that his withered hand was restored sound and well as the other, directly.

Luke 6:11

Ver. 11. And they were filed with madness,.... Both at the cure, and because they could not answer him; nor properly fix a charge upon him, or accuse him before the people, without bringing their resentments on them:

and communed one with another what they might do with Jesus: this they did after they came out of the synagogue, and when with the Herodians, as in See Gill on "Mr 3:6".

Luke 6:12

Ver. 12. And it came to pass in those days,.... When Christ was teaching by the lake of Gennesaret, or in one or other of the cities of Galilee near that place:

that he went out; of the synagogue and city where he had been:

into a mountain to pray; for the sake of solitude, and which lay near the sea of Tiberias; See Gill on "Mt 14:23".

and continued all night in prayer to God; or "with" God, as the Ethiopic version renders it; or "in the prayer of God" as the phrase may be literally rendered; not in a prayer of God's making; though the Jews {m} sometimes speak of the prayer of God, and give us a form of it: but either this respects the object of his prayer; it was made to God, as our translation suggests; or the nature, matter, and manner of it: it was a divine prayer, it regarded divine things, and was put up in a very fervent manner, and with great vehemence; so the coals of love or jealousy are said to be "coals of fire, which hath hy tbhlv, the flame of Jehovah"; that is as we render it, "a most vehement flame", **So 8:6** In like manner, "prayer of God" is a most vehement prayer; strong cries sent up to God with great eagerness and importunity, fervency, and devotion; and such was Christ's prayer, and in which he continued all night: unless by the prayer of God should be meant, as is thought by many, an house of prayer to God, in which Christ lodged all night, and spent it in prayer to God in it. Certain it is, the Jews had their "proseuchre", or prayer houses. Philo the Jew {n} often speaks of them, and so does Josephus {o}; and there seems to be mention made of them in the Talmudic writings: when R. Jochanan ben Zaccai came to Vespasian, in his camp before Jerusalem, Vespasian asked him, what he should give him? he replied {p},

"I desire nothing of thee but this "Jabneh", (a famous university,) that I may teach in it the disciples, and fix in it hlpt, "an oratory", or "prayer house", and do in it, all the commandments said in the law."

And in another place {q},

"R. Judah says, that Samuel said it is free for a man to make water within four cubits, hlypt lv, which I should choose to render, "of the proseucha", or "prayer house":"

though the Gemarists afterwards, and so the gloss seem to explain it of the time after prayer, in which a man should wait before he evacuates, even as long as he might go the length of four cubits. Juvenal {r} has reference to one of these oratories, when he says, "in qua te qucero proseucha?" and in one of these, it is very likely, Christ was in prayer all night long; for by the sea side, and by the side of rivers, these oratories were used to be; Ac 16:13.

{m} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 7. 1. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 56, fol. 50. 2. {n} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 685. in Flaccum, p. 971, 972, 982. leg. ad Caium. p. 1011, 1012, 1013, 1014, 1016, 1040, 1043. {o} In Vita. {p} Abot R. Nathan, c. 4. fol. 2. 4. {q} T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 27. 2. {r} Satyr. 3. l. 295.

Luke 6:13

Ver. 13. And when it was day,.... Or morning; having spent the whole night in prayer to God, no doubt for his disciples, whom he was about to send forth as his apostles, to preach his Gospel, and work miracles, and for their success therein:

he called unto him his disciples; the whole company of them, as in **Lu 6:17** all that were his followers, and professed to believe in him, or as many as he pleased; see **Mr 3:13**.

And of them he chose twelve; and ordained them, and sent them out to preach, heal sicknesses, and cast out devils:

whom he also named apostles; or "messengers", from their being sent by him on such important business; and their names are as follow.

Luke 6:14

Ver. 14. Simon, whom he also named Peter,.... Which signifies a rock, or stone, as Cephas also does, see **Joh 1:42** from his constancy, steadfastness, and solidity:

and Andrew his brother; who was called at the same time with him, and were brethren, both in nature and grace:

James and John: the two sons of Zebedee, who were called next:

Philip and Bartholomew; the latter of these is by some thought to be

Nathanael.

Luke 6:15

Ver. 15. Matthew and Thomas,.... The first of these was a publican, and who also was called Levi; and the latter had besides the name of Didymus, and was he that was so unbelieving of Christ's resurrection:

James the son of Alphaeus; sometimes called James the less, and the brother of our Lord: and

Simon called Zelotes; or the Canaanite;
See Gill on "Mt 10:4".

Luke 6:16

Ver. 16. And Judas the brother of James,.... Of that James, that was the son of Alphaeus; though the Syriac and Arabic versions call him "the son of James", very wrongly: this Judas was also called Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus, and is the writer of the epistle that bears his name:

and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor; both his surname and his character are mentioned, to distinguish him from the other Judas: it is easy to observe, that these twelve are mentioned by pairs, or couples, and so they were sent out, two by two; see **Mr 6:7** as were also the seventy disciples afterwards; see Lu 10:1 There seems to be an allusion to the pairs and couples of the Jewish fathers and doctors, who in their succession are thus paired: Jose ben Joezer, and Joseph ben Jochauan; Joshua ben Perachia, and Nathan the Arbelite; Simeon ben Shetach, and Judah ben Tabai; Shemain and Abtalion; the two sons of Bethira, whose names were Judah and Joshua; Hillell and Shammai {s}: all before Christ's time.

{s} Pirke Abot, c. 1.

Luke 6:17

Ver. 17. And he came down with them,.... With the twelve apostles, from the top of the mountain, where he had been praying all night, and where he had been that morning, ordaining, and giving instructions to the twelve he had chosen:

and stood in the plain; in a lower part of the mountain, in a plain place on it; which was large, and capable of holding a great number of people; for it was still upon the mount, that Christ taught his disciples, and said many of the things hereafter mentioned in this chapter; see **Mt 5:1**.

And the company of his disciples: not only the twelve, but the large number out of which he had chosen twelve;

and a great multitude of people; who were hearers of him, and attendants on him, and who had a great esteem for him, though they were not as yet of the number of his disciples; who came

out of all Judea, and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon: drawn from these several parts by the fame of him, some for one thing, and some another; some of

which came to hear him: to hear him preach, and that they might know what manner of doctrine he taught: and others of them,

to be healed of their diseases; their bodily diseases, and some came perhaps for both.

Luke 6:18

Ver. 18. And they that were vexed with unclean spirits,.... Were possessed with devils, and sadly tormented and afflicted by them:

and they were healed: both such that had bodily diseases, and were under diabolical possessions.

Luke 6:19

Ver. 19. And the whole multitude sought to touch him,.... That is, the multitude of those that were sick and possessed; for they were persuaded, and they found it true by experience, that if they could but touch any part of his body, or his garments, they should be cured of their diseases:

for there went virtue out of him; in great abundance, as water from a fountain; without his speaking a word, or using any gesture, such as laying his hands on them:

and they were healed; in this secret and private way, of whatsoever disease they were afflicted with.

Luke 6:20

Ver. 20. And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples,.... Either the whole company of them, or rather the twelve apostles, whom he saw coming to him, and fixing his eyes on them, he sat,

and said; what follows, with many other things recorded by Matthew:

blessed be ye poor; not only in the things of this world, having left all for Christ, but poor in Spirit, as in **Mt 5:3**,
See Gill on "Mt 5:3":

for yours is the kingdom of God; or heaven, so in **Mt 5:3**.

Luke 6:21

Ver. 21. Blessed are ye that hunger now,.... Not only suffer hunger and thirst in a literal sense, in this present life, but who have hunger and thirst in a spiritual sense, after righteousness and eternal life, as in **Mt 5:6** where it is also said as here:

for ye shall be filled: with righteousness and life;
See Gill on "Mt 5:6".

blessed are ye that weep now; under afflictions and pressures of life, and mourn for sin, their own, and others:

for ye shall laugh; be filled with spiritual joy and pleasure, and be comforted with the consolations of the Spirit;
See Gill on "Mt 5:4".

Luke 6:22

Ver. 22. Blessed are ye when men shall hate you,.... For the sake of Christ, and his Gospel:

and when they shall separate you from their company; either from civil conversation with them, as if they were Gentiles and uncircumcised persons; or from their religious assemblies, and so may have respect to that sort of excommunication in use, among the Jews, called ywdn or "separation": by which persons were not only excluded from the congregation, but from all civil society and commerce: such a person might not sit nearer to another than four cubits, and this continued for thirty days; and if not discharged then, he continued thirty more {t}:

and shall reproach you: as heretics, apostates, and enemies to the law of Moses, as the Jews did reproach the Christians;

and cast out your name as evil; or "as of evil men": as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it: this may have respect to the greater sorts of excommunication, used among them, called "Shammatha" and "Cherem", by which a person was accursed, and devoted to destruction; so that our Lord's meaning is, that the should be esteemed and treated as the worst of men, and stigmatized in the vilest manner they were capable of:

for the son of man's sake; not for any immorality committed by them, but only for professing and, preaching that the Messiah was come in the flesh, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he; and that he who was the son of man, according to his human nature, was, the Son of God according to his divine nature.

{t} Vid. Maimon. Talmud Tora, c. 7. sect. 4, 5, 6.

Luke 6:23

Ver. 23. Rejoice ye in that day,.... When they should be hated, discarded, reproached, and anathematized: and leap for joy; as if the greatest honour and happiness imaginable had been conferred on them; and as persons do, when in the greatest rapture:

for behold, your reward is great in heaven, for in the like manner did their

fathers unto the prophets;
See Gill on "Mt 5:12".

Luke 6:24

Ver. 24. But woe unto you that are rich,.... Not in worldly riches and substance, for some of these have been, and are happy persons in a spiritual sense; and at most, it can only mean such, who trust in their riches, and place their, happiness in them; but it chiefly regards such, as are rich in their own opinion, and stand in need of nothing; who place their confidence in their own righteousness, and do not apply to Christ, in whom alone are durable riches and righteousness:

for ye have received your consolation; which they take from their own works, and a very unstable and short lived one it is; for while they are crying Peace, Peace, to themselves, from their own services, sudden destruction comes upon them, and all their comforts vanish away: for there is no true solid comfort but in Christ, and in his righteousness; that administers consolation now, and lays a foundation for everlasting comfort hereafter.

Luke 6:25

Ver. 25. Woe unto you that are full,.... Not so much with the plenty and affluence of the things of this life, as of themselves, and their own righteousness, and so with conceit, vanity, and pride, and have no appetite for spiritual things, nor do they hunger and thirst after Christ, and the grace that is in him:

for ye shall hunger; not that they shall truly and spiritually desire an interest in Christ, and his righteousness, or heaven and eternal life hereafter; but they shall be in starving and famishing circumstances; and whilst the saints are feeding upon the joys and glories of the other world, compared to a banquet, they shall be without, and have no share in these things; Isa 65:13.

Woe unto you that laugh now; at sin, rejoice in iniquity, make a mock at it, instead of mourning for it; or that glory in themselves, and in their righteousness, and rejoice in their boastings:

for ye shall mourn and weep; shall be cast into outer darkness, where are weeping, waiting, and gnashing of teeth; and for all the fire they have kindled, and sparks they have encompassed themselves with, and danced in and about, this they shall have at the hand of God, they shall lie down in sorrow, and ever continue in it.

Luke 6:26

Ver. 26. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you!.... The word "all", is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic; Persic: and Ethiopic versions, and is wanting in many copies, though it is in the Alexandrian copy; and the meaning is, it looks ill in persons, when the men of the world, wicked men, all of them, or the greater part of them, applaud and commend them; for this can never be, if they are truly religious persons, and are faithful to their principles, and upright in their practices; and do not connive at, or comply with the errors and evil ways of wicked men; for it is no bad sign, to have the good word of good men, and therefore these must be excepted, and the passage must be limited to bad men;

for so did their fathers to the false prophets; they spoke well of them, and heaped favours, riches, and honours upon them, that they might prophesy unto them things; 1Ki 22:6, smooth things and deceit.

Luke 6:27

Ver. 27. But I say unto you which hear,.... The Ethiopic version adds "me", and the generality of interpreters understand the passage of the hearers of Christ, as distinct from the disciples, or together with them, and of the better sort of them; and of such as had ears to hear, and who heard with a desire of understanding, and of putting into practice what they heard; but I rather think it regards the hearers of the Scribes and Pharisees, then present, who had heard and received the traditions of the elders, to which the following rules of Christ are opposed; and to each of which, with others in Matthew, these words are prefixed;

ye have heard that it was said by them of old time--but I say unto you,.... **Mt 5:21** with which compare this phrase, and the sense will appear to be this; to you that hear day by day, the traditions of the elders urged upon you, and the false glosses the Scribes and Pharisees put upon the word of God; in opposition to them, I say to you what follows:

love your enemies; whereas you have heard them say, hate your enemies, keep enmity in your hearts to them, and revenge yourselves on them:

do good to them that hate you; whereas you have heard it said, that you should only do good to your friends, and should keep anger in your bosoms to such who hate you, and do you an injury;
See Gill on "Mt 5:43" See Gill on "Mt 5:44"

Luke 6:28

Ver. 28. Bless them that curse you;.... In common discourse, or anathematize you in their synagogues:

and pray for them which despitefully use you: so Christ himself did;
See Gill on "Mt 5:44".

Luke 6:29

Ver. 29. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek,.... The right cheek,

offer also the other; the left cheek, by turning it to him, that he may smite that likewise, if he thinks fit: by which proverbial expression, Christ teaches patience in bearing injuries and affronts, and not to seek private revenge; but rather, suffer more, than indulge such a temper; and for the same purpose is what follows urged:

and him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also: the phrase is inverted in Matthew;
See Gill on "Mt 5:39.
See Gill on "Mt 5:40.

Luke 6:30

Ver. 30. And give to every man that asketh,....
See Gill on "Mt 5:42"

And of him that taketh away thy goods; not by force, but by consent, having either lent them, or sold them to him: for if they were taken away by force, the person so taking them was to be deemed a thief and a robber, and to be treated as such; but one that takes them by agreement, and is not able to make a return of them, or to give a valuable consideration for them, of such an one ask them not again: do not exact or demand them, but give him a release, as the law requires, in De 15:2 which seems to be respected here; and where the same word is used by the Septuagint, as here.

Luke 6:31

Ver. 31. And as ye would that men should do to you,.... In matters of justice and beneficence were they in your case, and you in theirs;

do ye also to them likewise: a golden rule this, agreeably to the light of nature, and divine revelation, and is the sum and substance of the law and prophets; See Gill on "Mt 7:12".

Luke 6:32

Ver. 32. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye?.... Or, "what grace have ye?" this is no fruit, nor evidence of grace, nor any exercise of the true grace of love; nor is it any favour conferred upon the object loved, which deserves the respect shown, nor can any reward be expected for such treatment: and thus it is expressed in Matthew, "what reward have ye?" and the Arabic version renders it so here:

for sinners also love those who love them: men that are destitute of the grace of God, profligate sinners, even the worst of them, such as publicans, do this; See Gill on "Mt 5:46".

Luke 6:33

Ver. 33. And if ye do good to them which do good to you,.... As one good turn deserves another:

what thank have ye? what grace or goodness is there in such an action? what glory or merit is there in it?

for sinners also do even the same: wherefore no man should conclude himself a righteous man, or better than sinners, on such an account: this is to be found among the worst of men, and is natural to them, unless they are brutes indeed, to be kind to such as are kind to them. And yet, this was the whole of the doctrine of the Jews about doing good to men: for so they say {u},

"an Israelite is obliged to do good to an Israelite his companion, and to lend without usury: this is kindness and goodness, and a greater good it is than a gift; for many men are ashamed to take a gift, and are not ashamed to take a loan: but not so an Israelite to a Gentile; for he is not bound to do good, or show kindness to him, or to lend him his money freely; for many of them hate the Israelites; but it must be owned, that if a Gentile does a kindness, or good, to an Israelite; the Israelite is also bound to show kindness to him, and do him good."

In direct opposition to such narrow sentiments does our Lord deliver himself in this, and the following verses.

{u} Kimchi in Psal. xv. apud Huls. Theolog. Jud. par. 1. p. 420.

Luke 6:34

Ver. 34. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive,.... The same again, as from their brethren the Jews; or usury, as from the Gentiles:

what thank have ye? and yet they looked upon this, in the first instance of it, as a very great kindness, and act of goodness, as appears from the above citation:

for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again; or "what is equal", and answerable to what they have lent them; that is, the same, or what is equivalent to it.

Luke 6:35

Ver. 35. But love ye your enemies,.... As before urged in **Lu 6:27**

and do good and lend; not to your friends only, but to your enemies;

hoping for nothing again; either principal or interest, despairing of seeing either; lending to such persons, from whom, in all appearance, it is never to be expected again. The Persic version renders it, "that ye may not cause any to despair": and the Syriac version, "that ye may not cut off", or "cause to cease the hope of men"; and the Arabic version, "that ye do not deceive the hope of any" that is, by sending such away, without lending to them, who come big with expectations of succeeding:

and your reward shall be great: God will bless you in your worldly substance here, and will not forget your beneficence hereafter:

and ye shall be the children of the Highest: that is of God; one of whose names is Nwyle "the Most High"; Ps 82:6 the meaning is, that such who from principles of grace, and with right views do such acts of kindness and beneficence to their fellow creatures and Christians, shall be, made manifest, and declared to be the children of God; since they will appear to be born of him, and made partakers of the divine nature, and bear a resemblance to him, by their imitating him:

for he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil; by causing his sun to rise, and his rain to fall on them, as on the righteous and the good; for as Jews {w} observe,

"there is no difference with him, whether on the right hand or the left; for he is gracious, and does good, even to the ungodly."

And elsewhere they say {x}, that

"he does good, and feeds the righteous and the ungodly."

{w} R. Abraham ben Dior in Sepher Jetzira, p. 19. {x} Zohar in Exod. fol. 69. 2, 3.

Luke 6:36

Ver. 36. Be ye therefore merciful,.... Tenderhearted, kind, beneficent to all men, friends and foes:

as your Father also is merciful; that is your Father which is in heaven; who is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works: nothing is more

common in Zohar {y}, and the Talmud {z} than to express the Divine Being by no other name, than "the Merciful"; rma
anmxr, "the Merciful said" so, and so; that is, God: and so the Arabians generally begin their books and chapters with these words, "in the name of God, exceeding merciful", or "the merciful commiserator": a saying much like to this in the text, is the Targum of Jonathan, on
Le 22:28.

"O my people, the children of "Israel, as your father",
Nmxr, "is merciful" in heaven, so be ye merciful on earth."

{y} Zohar in Lev. fol. 2. 2. & 9. 4. & 20. 1. & 22. 1. {z} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 15. 2.

Luke 6:37

Ver. 37. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged,....
See Gill on "Mt 7:1".

Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; censure not men's persons, and judge not their state, or adjudge them to condemnation, for every offence in practice, or because they differ in principle, lest you should be treated in like manner by others; and especially, lest you should fall under the righteous censure, judgment, and condemnation of God:

forgive; offences and trespasses committed against you, bear with, and pass by injuries and affronts:

and ye shall be forgiven; of God;
See Gill on "Mt 6:14".

Luke 6:38

Ver. 38. Give, and it shall be given unto you,.... Give liberally of your worldly substance to indigent persons, as you have an opportunity, according to your ability, and as cases require: and it shall be returned again to great advantage; with great recompense, either in temporals or spirituals, or both:

good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. The allusion is to dry measure among the Jews, for to liquids, the terms used will not agree; and which, though right and full, which is here called good measure, they thrust and pressed to make it hold more; and shook it also for the same purpose, and then heaped it up as much as they could, till it fell over: of all these methods used in measuring, we have instances in their writings; which may serve to illustrate this passage: it is said of {a} one, that

"he measured, hvwtk hdmb, "with measure pressed down"; and therefore they measured to him, with measure pressed down."

Some of their measures they heaped, and some they did not: they say {b};

"all the measures which were in the sanctuary, twvwdgn "were heaped", except the high priest's, and his heap was contained in it."

And elsewhere they observe {c} that

"there were two decimaries (or tithing vessels) in the sanctuary, one was vwdg, "heaped", and the other was qwxm, "stricken": with that which was heaped they measured all the fine flour for the meat offerings, and with the stricken, that which was for the cakes of the high priest."

With respect to this distinction of measures, they say it is a tradition of the Rabbins {d}, that they do not "strike" in the place where

"they "heap", nor heap in the place where, they strike."

Between these two measures there was another, which was full measure and just, and right, without heaping or striking {e}, R. Papa inquired, whether the handful

"(of sweet incense the high priest took on the day of atonement) which is spoken of Le 16:12 was of "stricken" or "heaped" measure; R. Abba said to R. Ase, come, hear, the handful spoken of, is neither of stricken nor heaped measure, twpwpj ala, "but of equal measure";"

sufficiently full, and no more. Dr. Lightfoot reads it, twpwum, "flowing over"; by what authority I cannot say; though the gloss says, the word signifies,

"flowing over, by reason of its height," But flowing or running over measure, was the same with that which was heaped, as appears from the following instance {f}:

"all those that hog hdmb Nyeypvmh "cause to abound", or run over with the great "measure", it is lawful for them to sell that, of which it is doubted whether it has been tithed or not; and these are they, that "cause to run over", or "heap" with the great measure, as corn factors and fruiterers."

Who buy corn and fruits to sell again, and which they buy by the large measure, and fill it up, add unto it, and heap it up; and so get more than what is properly due unto them, as the commentators observe {g}: would you know the quantity of the heap, or that which ran over, or the difference between even measure, and that which was heaped, learn, it from hence: in **1Ki 7:26** it is said, the molten sea held two thousand baths, and in **2Ch 4:5** three thousand baths; which difficulty the Jewish writers solve this way, by observing, that the former text is to be understood of liquid measure, and the latter of dry measure, which was heaped: hence says R. Abai, we learn that, ywh atlt avdwg, "the heap is the third part" of the measure {h}: now to this superabundant measure, Christ here refers; and signifies, that a large compensation should be made to such, who give liberally and generously to needy persons; that as they abounded in their acts of beneficence, so an overflowing plenty of good things should be returned to them: and when he says, that this should be "given into their bosom", he alludes to the long and large garments the Jews wore, into which they were capable of receiving large lapfuls of good things: the words may be read impersonally, "shall be given into your bosom"; or if personally, they may be understood of God, angels, and men, in different senses: the phrase "shaken together", is not in the Syriac and Persic versions: "for with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again"; a common proverb with the Jews:
See Gill on "Mt 7:2".

{a} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 107. 2. T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 13. 3. {b} Misn. Menachot, c. 9. sect. 5. {c} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 37. 1, 2. {d} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 89. 1. {e} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 48. 1. {f} Misn. Demai, c. 2. sect. 4. {g} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {h} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 14. 2. Vid Targum, Jarchi, Kimchi, & R. Levi ben Getshorn, in 1 Kings vii. 26. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 204. 3.

Luke 6:39

Ver. 39. And he spake a parable unto them,.... The Vulgate Latin reads, "he spake also a parable unto them"; besides what he said; and the Arabic version renders it, "another similitude", parable, or proverb, distinct from the comparisons, allusions, and proverbial expressions in the preceding verses. Though it should be observed, that these words were not spoken at the same time, nor on the mount, as the foregoing were; but this, and what follow, are a collection of various expressions of Christ at different times, some delivered on the mount, and others elsewhere; unless it should be rather thought, that these proverbs and sentences were repeated at different places and times, which is not improbable:

can the blind lead the blind? they may do so, as the blind Scribes and Pharisees led the blind people of the Jews, which is what our Lord intends; but if they do, as they did,

shall they not both fall into the ditch? yes, verily, what else can be expected? See Gill on "Mt 15:14".

Luke 6:40

Ver. 40. The disciple is not above his master,.... Or "more excellent", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it; that is, in learning and knowledge; if the master is ignorant, the scholar will be so too; and thus it is with teachers, and their people under their care; if the leaders are blind and ignorant, those under their instructions will remain so likewise. These words are an illustration of the preceding parable, and are used to another purpose here than in Mt 10:24.
See Gill on "Mt 10:24"

but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. The Vulgate Latin reads it, "every one shall be perfect if he is as his master"; that is, if his master is a man of general learning, and a complete scholar, if he is like him, he will be so too: the Persic version renders it, "every disciple that desires perfection shall be as his master": whoever is ambitious of being a thorough scholar, and is diligent and industrious, by all ways and means, to obtain such a character, shall be even as good an one as his master, under whom he learns, and better he cannot well expect to be; and this is sufficient; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "is it not enough that every one be as his master?" agreeably to Mt 10:25

Maimonides {i} has an expression much like this:

"he that learns, shall not be greater than he of whom he learns, but shall be, wtwmk, "as he"."

Christ, in this last clause, seems to design his own disciples, who, when perfect in knowledge, which is not to be expected in this state, unless in a comparative sense, will be like himself.

{i} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 2. sect. 5.

Luke 6:41

Ver. 41. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye,.... A lesser sin in comparison of others; for all sins are not alike, as the Stoics asserted: and though none are to be countenanced and indulged, yet some are not so severely to be animadverted upon as others, the nature, occasions, circumstances, and aggravations considered; for no man is perfect, or wholly free from sin; nor are the words preceding to be understood of such a perfection; for which reason perhaps these words, with what follow, are mentioned:

but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? meaning a greater sin, such are guilty of, who are inquisitive searchers into the faults of others, and severe animadverters on them; and yet are blind to their own iniquities, and take no notice of them. These proverbial expressions were delivered by Christ on the mount, and are the same with those in **Mt 7:3**.
See Gill on "Mt 7:3".
See Gill on "Mt 7:4".
See Gill on "Mt 7:5".

Luke 6:42

Ver. 42. Either how canst thou say to thy brother,.... Guilty of the lesser sin;

brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye; that is, suffer me to reprove thee for thy sin: the word "brother" is omitted in the Cambridge copy of Beza's, and in the Persic version; nor is it in Matthew; but in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions it is read, "my brother"; pretending great affection and sincerity:

when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? that is, takest no notice of, and dost not refrain from a greater iniquity continued in:

thou hypocrite; as such an one must be, that bears hard upon his brother, and severely censures him for a small crime, when he indulges in himself a far more abominable sin:

cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye: the sense is, that a man should first reform himself, and then others.

Luke 6:43

Ver. 43. For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit,.... The particle, "for" is left out in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; and so it is in Beza's ancient copy: nor do these words stand in close connection with the preceding in Matthew's Gospel, though they may be very well considered as an illustration of them; for as that cannot be called a good tree, which brings forth bad fruit; so such men cannot be accounted good men, let them make ever so large pretensions to such a character, who are very busy in espying, discovering, and censuring the faults of their brethren; when they take no notice of, nor refrain from, nor relinquish their own. These words, with what follow in this, and the next verse, and the similes in them, are used by our Lord in Matthew, on account of false prophets or teachers; where he suggests, that as good and faithful ministers of the Gospel cannot, and do, not bring forth, and publish corrupt notions, and false doctrines, usually and knowingly; even usual, nor can it be, that a good tree should bring forth corrupt fruit; so,

neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit; or men of corrupt minds deliver good and sound doctrine, or the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ: but here they seem to be applicable to other persons, even true believers and hypocrites: the former are comparable to good trees, and are called trees of righteousness, which being planted by the river of the love of God, and rooted in Christ, and filled with the fruits of righteousness by him, do not bring forth the evil fruit of sin, as the common and constant course of their lives and conversations; for that they never commit sin, or are entirely without it, cannot be said; but sin is not their usual and common practice, or they do not live in sin: and the latter, hypocrites, who pretend to a great deal of religion, and have none that is true and real, these are comparable to corrupt trees; which, though they may make a fair show, yet do not bring forth good fruit, or perform works of righteousness which are truly such; what they do have only the appearance of good works, and are not properly so;

See Gill on "Mt 7:16".
See Gill on "Mt 7:17".
See Gill on "Mt 7:18".

Luke 6:44

Ver. 44. For every tree is known by its own fruit,.... Good and bad preachers are known by their doctrines, the one being agreeable, the other disagreeable to the word of God; and good and bad men are known by their lives and conversations: the grace of God revealed to good men, and wrought in them, teaches them to live soberly, righteously, and godly; a holy life is the fruit of grace, and an evidence of it; and the wickedness that is in the heart of unregenerate men, and even the hypocrisy of formal professors, will show themselves in the common and ordinary course of their conversations:

for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes; nor can they be expected from them: and no more can an unregenerate man perform good works, or bring forth: fruits of righteousness acceptable unto God; for these require a knowledge of his will, obedience to it, a principle of grace, love to God, faith in Christ, and a view to the glory of God; all which are wanting in such a person.

Luke 6:45

Ver. 45. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart,.... This, because of its suitableness and agreement with what goes before, is placed by Luke here; though, according to Matthew, it was spoken at another time and place, unless it should be a repetition there;
See Gill on "Mt 12:35"

for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, Ethiopic, Syriac, and Persic versions, leave out the word "his"; and the two latter read "lips", instead of "mouth";
See Gill on "Mt 12:34".

Luke 6:46

Ver. 46. And why call ye me Lord, Lord,.... Or, "my Lord, my Lord", as the Syriac version renders it; acknowledging, in words, his government over them; claiming an interest in him, and making use of his name and authority:

and do not the things which I say; or "command"; and therefore such words in their mouths would be of no use to them, since they neither did his Father's will, which he taught them, nor observed his commands and ordinances which he enjoined them; and therefore should not enter into the kingdom of heaven, nor be owned by him another day, but should be bid to depart from him; See Gill on "Mt 7:21".
See Gill on "Mt 7:22".
See Gill on "Mt 7:23".

Luke 6:47

Ver. 47. Whosoever cometh to me,.... To be a disciple and follower:

and heareth my sayings, and doth them;
See Gill on "Mt 7:24".

I will show you to whom he is like; or "to what thing he is like"; so the Syriac and Arabic versions; though what follows seems better to agree with person than thing.

Luke 6:48

Ver. 48. He is like a man which built an house,.... That is, intended to build one, having drawn the scheme of it in his mind, and provided materials, and fixed upon the spot of ground:

and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; that is, he dug deep in the earth, till he came at a rock, and there, and then, he laid the foundation of his house; in which he acted the part of a wise man, as he is called in Matthew: so a sensible sinner, desirous of building his soul, and the salvation of it, on a sure bottom, digs deep into the Scriptures, diligently searches them, till he finds out the scheme of salvation by Christ; which lies deep in God's counsel and covenant, was ordained before the world began, and was hid in God till revealed in the Gospel: and finding Christ to be the rock of ages, in whom is everlasting strength, and the foundation which God has laid, nor is there another; he makes use of him as such, and builds the hope of his eternal salvation on him:

and when the flood arose; an inundation, a multitude of waters, the swelling of the sea; or rather "when it was tide", as the word here used signifies {k}:

the stream beat vehemently upon the house; or the river, up which the tide came, dashed and broke against it; by which may be signified the temptations of Satan, the persecutions of the world, the corruptions of men's hearts, and the errors and heresies of false teachers:

and could not shake it; as none of these can so shake as to move a soul, thus built on Christ, off of him the foundation:

for it was founded upon a rock;
See Gill on "Mt 7:24".
See Gill on "Mt 7:25".

{k} Vid. Rivinum de Venilia Salacia, &c. p. 681, 632.

Luke 6:49

Ver. 49. But he that heareth, and doth not,.... Hears Christ's sayings externally, but does not obey his commands:

is like a man that without a foundation built upon the earth: that is, without digging for a foundation, built his house upon the surface of the earth; "upon the dust of it", as the Syriac version renders it; or, "upon the sand", as Matthew says: "against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great";
See Gill on "Mt 7:26".
See Gill on "Mt 7:27".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 7:1

Ver. 1. Now when he had ended all his sayings,.... That is, when Jesus, as the Persic version expresses it, had finished all the above sayings, doctrines, and instructions; not all that he had to say, for he said many things after this:

in the audience of the people; of the common people, the multitude besides the disciples; and that openly, and publicly, and with a loud and clear voice, that all might hear:

he entered into Capernaum; Jesus entered, as the Syriac version reads, into his own city, and where he had been before, and wrought miracles.

Luke 7:2

Ver. 2. And a certain centurion's servant,.... The same that Matthew makes mention of, **Mt 8:5**,
See Gill on "Mt 8:5".
See Gill on "Mt 8:6".

who was dear unto him; to the centurion, being an honest, upright, faithful, and obliging servant; as Tabi was to Rabban Gamaliel, of whom his master said {l},

"Tabi my servant, is not as other servants, hyh rvk, "he is upright"."

was sick: of a palsy; see **Mt 8:6**,

and ready to die; in all appearance his case was desperate, and there was no help for him by any human means, which makes the following cure, the more remarkable.

{l} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2.

Luke 7:3

Ver. 3. And when he heard of Jesus,.... That he was come, as the Ethiopic version adds, into the city of Capernaum; or of his miracles, which he had done there, and elsewhere:

he sent unto him the elders of the Jews: in whom he had an interest, judging himself, being a Gentile, very unworthy and unfit to go himself, and ask a favour of so great a person as Christ was, such was his modesty and humility. These elders he sent, were not the more ancient inhabitants of the city, called Urah Me ynqz, "the elders of, or among the common people", as distinguished from hrwt ynqz, "the elders of the law", or those that were old in knowledge; of both which it is said by R. Simeon ben Achasia {m}, that

"the elders of the common people, when they grow old, their knowledge fails in them, as it is said, Joh 12:20 but so it is not with the "elders of the law"; but when they grow old, their knowledge rests in them, as it is said, Job 12:12."

But these were either some principal officers of the city, called the elders of the people elsewhere; particularly, who were members of the sanhedrim; for as elders, when they design the elders in Jerusalem, mean the great sanhedrim {n} there; so elders, in other places, intend the sanhedrim, consisting of twenty one persons, or the bench of three; and such were these, the centurion sent to Christ:

beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant: he besought him most earnestly by these messengers, that he would come to his house, and cure his servant of the palsy, by laying his hands on him, or commanding the distemper off, by a word speaking; or in what way he should think fit, for he made no doubt that he was able to heal him.

{m} Misn. Kenim, c. 3. sect. 6. {n} T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 23. 3.

Luke 7:4

Ver. 4. And when they came to Jesus,.... To that part of the city where he was; either at Peter's house, where he used to be when in this place; or rather it might be as he was passing along the streets, that they came up to him

they besought him instantly; or with great vehemence and importunity; very studiously and carefully they urged the case, and pressed him much to it:

saying, he was worthy for whom he should do this; or, "for whom thou shouldst do this", as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, and some copies; and which reading connects the words best. This speech of theirs savours of their "pharisaic" tenet and notion of merit, and is very different from the sense the poor centurion had of himself.

Luke 7:5

Ver. 5. For he loveth our nation,.... The Jewish nation, which was Christ's nation, as well as theirs, he being a Jew; see Joh 18:35. This they mention as an argument to induce him to have a regard to the centurion, though he was a Gentile; since he was a friend of the Jews, and well affected and disposed to them, which was very rare: it was not common for the Gentiles to love the Jews, any more than the Jews the Gentiles; there was an hatred, yea, an enmity between them; but this man, very likely, was a proselyte to their religion, as the following instance seems to show:

and he hath built us a synagogue; at his own private charge, and by the assistance of his soldiers under him, whom he might employ in this work: sometimes a single person built a synagogue at his own expense, and gave it to the citizens; of which the Jews say, {o}

"if a man builds an house, and afterwards devotes it to a synagogue, it is as a synagogue."

{o} Piske Harosh Megilia, c. 4. art. 1.

Luke 7:6

Ver. 6. Then Jesus went with them,.... The elders of the Jews, towards the centurion's house, after hearing their request, and their reasons for it; and that without any reluctancy, he at once complied, made no hesitation, or difficulty about it, but went with them very freely:

and when he was now not far from the house; of the centurion, where his servant lay sick; he having some notice of his coming, and of his being near his house, in his great humility, and being conscious to himself of his unworthiness to have such a person under his roof, sent messengers to prevent him:

the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; or do not fatigue thyself by coming to the house, stop, go no further;

for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof: he might know full well the law of the Jews, that it was not lawful for a Jew to go into the house of an uncircumcised Gentile; and though he might be a proselyte of righteousness, and so his house was free of entrance; yet considering his own meanness, and the greatness of Christ, who was become so famous for his doctrines and miracles, he thought it too great a stoop for Christ to come into his house, and too high a favour for him to enjoy.

Luke 7:7

Ver. 7. Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee,.... In person; therefore he sent the elders of the Jews to him first, and now some of his friends, who delivered these words in his name:

but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed; speak but the word only, rebuke the distemper, command it off, and it will be gone; so great was his faith in the power of Christ.

Luke 7:8

Ver. 8. For I also am a man set under authority,.... Of the Roman senate; "or belonging to the emperor", as the Arabic version renders it; and under the command of a tribune, as a centurion was: so that this is not an amplification, but a diminution of his office; and his sense is, that even he who was but an inferior officer, yet had such power as after related:

having under me soldiers; an hundred, or more:

and I say unto one, go, and he goeth, and to another, come, and he cometh, and to my servant, do this, and he doth it; as this his servant used to do, and whom he may intend, who now lay sick, and therefore was dear unto him. His meaning is, that Christ could as easily command, and call off a distemper, add it would obey him, as he could command obedience from his soldiers and servant, and have it, and more so.

Luke 7:9

Ver. 9. When Jesus heard these things,.... Which the friends of the centurion related from him, and in his name; or which he himself delivered, coming up to Christ after them:

he marvelled at him; at his great humility and modesty, and the strength of his faith, and his manner of reasoning:

and turned him about; from him, and his friends:

and said unto the people that followed him; from the mount to Capernaum, and as he was passing along the streets:

I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel; or "among the Israelites", as the Syriac; or "among the children of Israel", as the Persic; or "in all Israel", as the Arabic version reads, as he did in this single Gentile; See Gill on "Mt 8:10".

Luke 7:10

Ver. 10. And they that were sent,.... Both the elders of the Jews, and the friends of the centurion:

returning to the house; of the centurion, where his servant lay, and from whence they came:

found the servant whole that had been sick; for he was healed directly, as soon as the centurion had expressed his faith, and Christ had declared that it should be according to it, **Mt 8:13**.

Luke 7:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass the day after,.... The Vulgate Latin reads "afterward", not expressing any day, as in **Lu 8:1**, but the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, read to the same sense as we, the day after, the next day, on the morrow, after he had cured the centurion's servant in Capernaum, where he staid all night:

that he went into a city called Naim; which Jerom {p} places near Mount

Tabor, and the river Kison. The {q} Jews speak of a Naim in, the tribe of Issachar, so called from its pleasantness, and which seems to be the same place with this. The Persic version reads it, "Nabetis", or "Neapolis", the same With Sychem in Samaria, but without reason:

and many of his disciples went with him; not only the twelve, but many others:

and much people; from Capernaum, and other parts, that followed him to see his miracles, or for one end or another, though, they did not believe in him; at least these were only hearers, and had, not entered themselves among the disciples,

{p} Tom. 1. ad Marcellum, fol. 44. B. & Epitaph. Paulae. fol. 60. A. {q} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 86. 1.

Luke 7:12

Ver. 12. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city,.... Of Naim:

behold: there was a dead man carried out; of the city; for they, used not to bury in cities, but in places without, and at some distance: the burying places of the Jews were not near, their cities {r}; and they had different ways of carrying them out to be buried, according to their different ages: a child under a month old was carried out in the bosom of a person; if a full month old, in a little coffin, which they carried in their arms; one of a twelve month old was carried in a little coffin on the shoulder; and one of three years old on a bier or bed, {s} and so upwards; and in this manner was this corpse carried out: who was

the only son of his mother; hence the sorrow and mourning were the greater; see Zec 12:10

and she was a widow; and if she had been supported by her son, her loss was very considerable; and having neither husband, nor son, to do for her, her case was very affecting:

and much people of the city was with her; according to the age of persons was the company that attended them to the grave: if it was an infant, not a month old, it was buried by one woman, and two men, but not by one man, and two women; if a month old, by men and women; and whoever was carried out on a bier or bed, many mourned for him; and whoever was known to many, many accompanied him {t}; and which was the case this dead man: he seems to have been well known and respected by the company that attended him to his grave; of these some were bearers, and these had their deputies, and these again theirs; for as they carried their dead a great way, they were obliged often to change their bearers; and of the company, some went before the bier, and others went after it {u}: besides, what served to increase company at a funeral was, that it was looked upon as an act of kindness and mercy to follow a corpse to the grave {w}; to which may be added, and what must always tend to increase the number at such a time, that, according to the Jewish canons {x}

"it was forbidden to do any work at the time a dead man was buried, even one of the common people."

{r} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 80. 2. Gloss. {s} T. Moed Katon, fol. 24. 1, 2. & Kiddashin, fol. 80. 2. Massech. Semachot, c. 3. sect. 2, 3. Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 12. sect. 10, 11. {t} Ut in locis supra citatis. {u} Vid Misn. Beracot, c. 3. sect. 1. {w} Maimon. in Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1. {x} Piske Tosaphot Megilla, art. 106. T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 27. 2.

Luke 7:13

Ver. 13. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her,.... Knowing her case, that she was a widow, and had lost her only son:

and said unto her, weep not; signifying, that he would help her, which he did without being asked to do it, as usual in other cases.

Luke 7:14

Ver. 14. And he came and touched the bier,.... Or "bed", as the Syriac version renders it; and such was hjm, "the bier", or bed, on which one of three years old, and upward, was carried as above mentioned: so that on which Herod was carried to his grave is called
klinh "a bed", by Josephus {y}. As for the bed, or bier, of what sort it was that they carried out their dead upon, take the following account: {z}

"formerly the rich carried out (their dead) upon a bed called Dargash, (which is said {a} to be a bed that was not platted with ropes, and is called a bed of fortune {b},) and the poor carried out (their dead) upon one that was called

Celicah, (or Celibah, as sometimes read; and this was made in the form of an iron horn, on which they bound the corpse, that it might not fall; and it was called so, because it was made like a coup of birds {c} as the word is used in **Jer 5:27**) and the poor, were made ashamed; and therefore they ordered that all should carry out (their dead) on a Celicah, for the honour of the poor."

To this Christ came near and touched: not that by his touching of that, the dead should be raised; but this he did as a signal, that the bearers should stop. The Jews {d} say, one of the charges that Jacob gave to his sons before his death, was, to:

"take care (says he) that no uncircumcised person, ytjmb
egy, touch my bed, or "bier", lest the Shekinah remove from me; but, according to this order, do unto me, carry me, three on the north, three on the south, three on the east, and three on the west, &c."

From whence it should seem, that a circumcised person, as Christ was, might touch a bier without offence, or hurt, and without contracting any ceremonial pollution: to touch a dead body, or the bone of man, or a grave, was forbidden by the law, Nu 19:16 and so, according to the traditions of the elders {e}, the stone that was rolled at the mouth of the sepulchre, and the, side of the sepulchre, defiled by touching; but I do not find that touching a bier was ever forbidden.

And they that bare him stood still: these are they that are called
hjmh yavwg "the bearers of the bed", or "bier": and Maimonides {f} says,

"they carry the dead upon their shoulders to the grave; and the bearers of the bier are forbidden to put on their sandals, lest the latchet of any one of them should fail, and should be found to hinder him doing his duty."

And elsewhere it is said {g},

"the bearers of the bed, or bier, and their deputies, and their deputies' deputies, both before the bier and after it, find whoever the bier stood in need of, were free;"

i.e. from reading the Shema, or, "hear, O Israel", &c. and from prayer: the reason of their having so many bearers was, because they carried the dead a great way to be buried. King Herod was carried after this manner two hundred furlongs from Jerusalem, to the castle of Herodion {h}:

and he said, young man, I say unto thee, arise. The Ethiopic version adds, "and he arose": Christ spoke as one that had the keys of death and the grave; and divine power went along with his words, which raised the dead man to life; and full proof this is of the true and proper deity of Christ.

{y} De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 33. sect. 11. {z} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 27. 1, 2. {a} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 4. {b} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 56. 2. {c} R. Sampson & Bartenora in Misn. Para, c. 12. sect. 9. {d} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 100. fol. 87. 4. {e} Misn. Oholot, c. 2. sect. 4. {f} Hilchot. Ebel, c. 4. sect. 2. 3. {g} Misn. Beracot, c. 3. sect. 1. {h} Josephus, ut supra. (De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 33. sect. 11.)

Luke 7:15

Ver. 15. And he that was dead,.... That had been dead, (for he was now alive,) as it was a clear case to all his relations and friends, or they would never have brought him out to bury him:

sat up; upon the bed, or bier: and began to speak; both which, his sitting up and speaking, were plain proofs of his being brought to life:

and he delivered him to his mother; for whose sake he raised him from the dead, commiserating her case: wherefore, as Christ showed his power in raising the dead man, he discovered great humanity, kindness, and tenderness, in delivering him alive to his mother; which might be done after he came off of the bier, by taking him by the hand, and leading him to his mother, and giving him up into her arms: think what affecting scene this must be!

Luke 7:16

Ver. 16. And there came a fear on all,.... That were there present, and heard, and saw what was done. Not a fear of dread, and terror, and of punishment, as in devils and wicked men; but a fear and reverence of the divine majesty, whose power and presence they were sensible must be there at that time:

and they glorified God; they praised him, and gave thanks to him, ascribing this amazing action to divine power, and gave God the glory of it; and blessed him for the Messiah, who was sent unto them, as they concluded Jesus to be, from this wonderful instance:

saying, that a great prophet is risen up among us; even that great prophet Moses wrote of, and said should be raised up from among the children of Israel, De 18:15 and that God hath visited his people. The Arabic version adds, "for good". For God sometimes visits for evil, in a wave of wrath and sore displeasure; but this was a visitation for good: they concluded that God had looked upon them with a look of love, and had a gracious regard to them, and had sent them the Messiah, who, they hoped, would deliver them from the Roman yoke; as he had formerly looked upon, and visited their fathers, and sent a redeemer to them, to deliver them from Egyptian bondage. The Ethiopic version renders it, "and God hath mercy on his people"; and the Persic version, "God hath looked upon his people, and hath taken care of them."

Luke 7:17

Ver. 17. And this rumour of him,.... Or the report of this surprising miracle in raising a dead man to life, that was carrying to his grave,

went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about; not only Judea, and the several cities, towns, and villages in it, but all the country round about it, especially Galilee. The Persic version reads, "all countries which are round about Jordan"; see **Mt 3:5**.

Luke 7:18

Ver. 18. And the disciples of John showed him of all these things. The miracles that were wrought by Christ; particularly the healing of the centurion's servant, and the raising from the dead the widow of Naim's son, and what fame and reputation Christ got every where by his doctrine, and mighty works. John was now in prison, when these his disciples came and related these things to him; see
Mt 11:2 and they spoke of them, not as commending Christ for them; but as envying, grieving, and complaining, that he carried away all the honour and glory from John their master, for whom they had the greatest regard.

Luke 7:19

Ver. 19. And John calling unto him two of his disciples,.... Which were a sufficient number to be sent on an errand, to ask a question, and report the answer, or bear witness to any fact they should see, or hear done.

Sent them unto Jesus, saying, art thou he that should come, or look we for another? not that he doubted that Jesus was the Messiah; nor was it for his own satisfaction so much that he sent these disciples of his with this question, but for theirs; and to remove all doubt and hesitation from them about Christ.

Luke 7:20

Ver. 20. When the men were come to him,.... To Jesus; "those two men", as the Arabic version reads; "the disciples", as the Persic version; the same that John sent from the castle of Machaerus, where he was now a prisoner, to Christ, who was teaching in some city or town of Galilee:

they said, John the Baptist; so well known by his being the administrator of the ordinance of baptism:

hath sent us unto thee, saying, art thou he that should come, or look we for another? See Gill on "Mt 11:3".

Luke 7:21

Ver. 21. And in that same hour,.... Or at that same time, for a precise hour is not intended: one exemplar reads, "in that day", in which these men came to Christ,

he, Jesus, as the Persic version expresses it,

cured many of their infirmities; bodily weaknesses and disorders: and plagues; which were inflicted on them as scourges and corrections for sin, very severe diseases, as epilepsies, leprosies, palsies, &c. and of evil spirits; or devils, which he dispossessed and commanded out of the bodies of men; though sometimes evil spirits, with the Jews, signify some kinds of bodily diseases: as when it is said {i}

"whoever puts out a lamp because he is afraid of Gentiles, or of thieves, or of her xwr, "an evil spirit", or because of a sick man that is asleep, he is free."

Upon which Maimonides observes,

"an evil spirit they call all kinds of diseases, which, in the Arabic language, go by the name of "melancholy"; for it is one kind of the diseases mentioned, which makes a sick man to fly, and separate himself from mankind, as if he was afraid of the light, or of coming into the company of men:"

and unto many that were blind he gave sight; freely, as an act of grace and kindness, as the word signifies, without any merit, or motive, in them.

{i} Misn. Sabbat, c. 2. sect. 5. Vid Maimon. Hilchot Gerushin, c. 2. sect. 14.

Luke 7:22

Ver. 22. Then Jesus answering said unto them,.... "To the disciples", as the Persic; to both, as the Arabic: when he had wrought these cures, he turned himself to the disciples of John, and made answer to their question. The Vulgate Latin leaves out the word "Jesus", rendering it, "and he answering"; in the following words:

go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard. They had just seen many cured of infirmities, plagues, and evil spirits, and they had heard the doctrines of the Gospel preached by him; and the former were in confirmation of the latter, and both were proofs of his being the Messiah: the particulars of which follow,

how that the blind see; that is, they that had been blind, and some that were born blind received their sight, which was what was never heard of before, from the beginning of the world; and which, as it is an instance of Christ's almighty power, showing him to be God; so it was a fulfilment of a prophecy concerning him as the Messiah, who, when he came, was to open the eyes of the blind, Isa 35:5 and this was true, not only in a corporeal, but in a spiritual sense: and generally so it was, that when the blind received their bodily sight, they also received their spiritual sight; and both were evidences of the true Messiahship of our Lord Jesus.

The lame walk; these were among those who were cured of their infirmities; and this also was prophesied of the Messiah, and was now accomplished by Jesus, that "the lame man" should "leap as an hart", Isa 35:6 and so was to be considered by John, and his disciples, as another proof of his being the true Messiah:

the lepers are cleansed; of this sort were they who were cured of their plagues: the leprosy was called a plague; hence the treatise of leprosy, in the Misna, is, by the Jews, called Negaim, or "plagues".

The deaf hear; so in the above prophecy in Isaiah, it is predicted, that "the ears of the deaf should be unstopped" in the days of the Messiah; and which therefore must be considered as a further confirmation of Jesus being he that was to come, and that another was not to be looked for.

The dead are raised: whether there were any raised at this time, or no, is not certain; but certain it is, that there had been one raised from the dead, if not in the presence of these disciples, yet just before they came to Christ, of which John had been informed by some of his disciples, if not these; and of which an account is given before in this chapter, and which is what none but the mighty God can do.

To the poor the Gospel is preached: it was preached both by the poor, the disciples of Christ, and to the poor, mean, base, and illiterate among the Jews; and also to the poor, meek, and lowly in heart, as was prophesied should be, by the Messiah, Isa 61:1 so that put all together, here were undoubted proofs, and a full demonstration, that Jesus was the Messiah; See Gill on "Mt 11:4".
See Gill on "Mt 11:5".

Luke 7:23

Ver. 23. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. The Arabic version renders it, "blessed is he that doubts not of me". The Persic and Ethiopic versions both add to the text, the former rendering the words thus, "blessed is he that is not brought into offence and doubt concerning me"; and the latter thus, "blessed are they who do not deny me, and are not offended in me": particular regard is had to the disciples of John, who both doubted of Christ as the Messiah, and were offended at his popularity and success;
See Gill on "Mt 11:6".

Luke 7:24

Ver. 24. And when the messengers of John were departed,.... The Syriac and Persic versions read, "the disciples of John"; and the Arabic version, "the two disciples of John"; the two that he sent, when they were gone back with the answer of Christ;

he, "Jesus", as the Persic version expresses it,

began to speak unto the people concerning John; not caring to say any thing about him to the messengers, or whilst they were present, lest he should be charged with flattery; See Gill on "Mt 11:7"

What went ye into the wilderness for to see? a reed shaken with the wind? an inconsistent, wavering, and unstable man? if so, they were greatly mistaken; or the motions and gesture of the man?
See Gill on "Mt 11:7".

Luke 7:25

Ver. 25. But what went you out for to see?.... If not his air and action, what was it? was it his apparel and dress? was it to see

a man clothed in soft raiment? If this was the case, their labour was in vain, and they had their walk for nothing; for John was clothed with camels' hair, rough and undressed, and was girt with a leathern girdle; there was nothing in his person, mien, and garb, that was attractive:

they which are gorgeously, apparelled; or richly clothed, as John was not:

and live delicately; in the most elegant manner, and on the richest dainties, as John did not, his food being locusts and wild honey:

are in kings' courts; and not in a wilderness, where John; came preaching.

Luke 7:26

Ver. 26. But what went ye out for to see?.... What led your curiosity to go into the wilderness after him, since it could not be any of the above things? was it to see a prophet? which was the case; for John was a prophet, and was known to be one; and the fame of him, as such, drew vast numbers to see and hear him, there not having been a prophet among the Jews, for some hundreds of years:

yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet; not that he was the prophet Moses did say should come; nor was he the priest that should arise with the "Urim" and "Thummim", that the "Tirshatha", Nehemiah spoke of; nor was he the king Messiah; but he was his forerunner, he saw him and baptized him, and so was greater than any of the prophets that went before him.

Luke 7:27

Ver. 27. This is he of whom it is written,.... In **Mal 3:1**.
See Gill on "Mt 11:10".
See Gill on "Mr 1:2".

Luke 7:28

Ver. 28. For I say unto you----here is not a greater prophet,.... The word "prophet" is left out in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, as in Mt 11:11.
See Gill on "Mt 11:11".

Luke 7:29

Ver. 29. And all the people that heard him,.... Either Christ saying these things in commendation of John, and gave their assent to them, and showed their approbation of them, having been baptized by him; or rather, the people that had heard John preach the doctrines of repentance and faith, and of baptism; for these words seem rather to be the words of Christ, relating the success of John's ministry among different persons:

and the publicans justified God; even those wicked men, who were before profligate and abandoned sinners, when they came under John's ministry, were so wrought upon by the power and grace of God through it, that they approved of, and applauded the wisdom, goodness, and grace of God, in sending such a prophet as John; in qualifying him in the manner he did, and giving in him a commission to preach such doctrines, and administer such an ordinance as he did: and this their approbation of the divine conduct, and their thankfulness for the same, they testified by their

being baptized with the baptism of John; they expressed their sentiments by their obedience; they declared it was right in God to institute such an ordinance, and for John to administer it; and that it became them to submit to it, as a part of righteousness to be fulfilled; they hereby signified, that they thought that it was agreeable to the nature of God, who is holy, just, and good, suitable to the Gospel dispensation, and very fit and proper for them.

Luke 7:30

Ver. 30. But the Pharisees and lawyers,.... Or Scribes, as the Syriac and Persic versions read; for the Scribes and lawyers were the same sort of persons. The Ethiopic version calls them, "the Scribes of the city": these "rejected the counsel of God against themselves"; against their own advantage, to their hurt and detriment; since by their impenitence and unbelief, and through their rejection of Christ and his forerunner, and the Gospel and the ordinances of it, they brought ruin and destruction, both temporal and eternal, upon themselves: or "towards themselves", or "unto them"; that is, they "rejected the command of God unto them", as the Arabic version renders it: for by "the counsel of God" here, is not meant his purpose, intention, and design, with respect to these persons, which was not, nor never is frustrated; but the precept of God, and so the Ethiopic version renders it,

they despised the command of God: that is, the ordinance of baptism, which was of God, and the produce of his counsel and wisdom, as the whole scheme, and all the ordinances of the Gospel are, and not the invention of men: or they rejected this "in themselves", as it may be rendered, and is by the Syriac and Persic versions; not openly and publicly, for they were afraid of the people, but inwardly and privately, and which their actions and conduct declared:

being not baptized of him; of John: by their neglect of this ordinance, they testified their aversion to it, and rejection of it.

Luke 7:31

Ver. 31. And the Lord said,.... This clause is not in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, nor in some copies, nor in Beza's most ancient copy; and being omitted, more clearly shows, that the two former verses are the words of Christ, and not an observation the evangelist makes, on the different behaviour of Christ's hearers, upon the commendation he had given of John:

whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation; or "to what men shall I liken them", as the Persic version: the phrase "men of this generation", is Rabbinical; so yvwa awhh ard, the men of that "generation", are more beautiful in work than these, says the Targumist on **Ec 7:11**. "And to what are they like?" To that which follows.

Luke 7:32

Ver. 32. They are like to children,.... The Pharisees and lawyers, who rejected the counsel of God, and the baptism of John, were like to "children"; not for innocence, simplicity, meekness, and humility; their characters were the reverse; but rather, for their ignorance, and want of understanding, their folly and weakness; nor are they here compared to the children that piped and mourned, but to those surly and ill natured ones, who made no answer to those that did. They, together with Christ, and John the Baptist, are in general likened to children,

sitting in the market place; where children were wont to be, there being a variety of persons and things to be seen; and which may design the temple, or the synagogues, or any place of concourse, where the Pharisees met, with John, Christ, and their disciples:

and calling one to another, and saying; they that were good natured, and more disposed to mirth and innocent diversions:

we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept: they imitated the pipers at weddings, expecting their companions would have danced, as was usually done by the others, when the pipe was played upon; and they mimicked the mourning women at funerals, expecting their fellows would have made as though they had wept; whereas they would do neither, showing a dislike both to the one and to the other. The children that imitated the pipers, represent Christ and his disciples, who delivered the joyful sound of the Gospel; and the children that acted the part of the mourners, signify John the Baptist, and his disciples, who preached the doctrine of repentance; and the children that would not join with, nor make any answer to the one, or the other, intend the Scribes and Pharisees, who were not pleased with either of them, as the following words show; See Gill on "Mt

11:16".
See Gill on "Mt 11:17".

Luke 7:33

Ver. 33. For John the Baptist,.... Who is designed by the children that mourned in the above simile, with whom his character and conduct agree; he preached very mournful doctrine, delivered it in a very solemn and awful manner, and lived a very austere life, and fasted much, as did also his disciples. The word "Baptist" is here added by Luke, which Matthew has not, to distinguish him from others; and it may be, because he had just spoke of his baptism. The Persic version only reads, "the Baptist"; of him our Lord says, that he

came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; which were the common food and drink of men, but his diet were locusts and wild honey, and from this he often abstained; nor would he attend festivals and entertainments, or be free and sociable with men: "bread" and "wine" are here mentioned, which are not in Matthew:

and ye say, he hath a devil; is mad, or melancholy; for madness and melancholy, or the hypochondriac disorder, was by them sometimes imputed to a diabolical possession, and influence, as the cause of it; and though these men pretended to great austerity of life, and frequent fastings, yet John was too abstemious for them, and they could not agree with his doctrine nor method of living;
See Gill on "Mt 12:18".

Luke 7:34

Ver. 34. The son of man is come eating and drinking,.... That is, eating bread and drinking wine, as other people do; and shuns no man's company, goes to a wedding, dines with a Pharisee, and eats with publicans and sinners, and carries it freely and courteously to all men:

and ye say, behold a gluttonous man and a wine bibber; an epicurian, a drunkard, a mere sot, one that gives up himself to sensual pleasures:

a friend of publicans and sinners; a good fellow, a boon companion, that sits with them, and encourages them in their revellings and drunkenness: such an ill use did the Jews make of our Lord's free, harmless, and innocent conversation with men; and in such a horrid manner did they traduce and vilify him, who was holy in his nature, harmless in his life, separate from sinners, knew no sin, nor ever committed any.

Luke 7:35

Ver. 35. But wisdom is justified of all her children. That is, Christ, who is the wisdom of God, and who acted the wise part, in behaving in such a free manner with all sorts of men, and even with publicans and sinners, whereby he became useful to their souls, called them to repentance, converted and saved them: and these are his children, which were given him by the Father; for whose sake he partook of flesh and blood, and whom he redeemed, that they might receive the adoption of children; and to whom, believing in him, he gives power to become the children of God: and these justify him from all such scandalous imputations, and by their lives and conversations show, that the doctrine of Christ is not a licentious one, or leads to libertinism, and indulges men in their carnal sensual lusts and pleasures; but, on the contrary, teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly: the word "all", is inserted by Luke, which is not in Matthew; signifying, that this is the universal sense and practice of all the real offspring of Christ, the sons of wisdom, who are wise to do good.

Luke 7:36

Ver. 36. And one of the Pharisees,.... Whose name was Simon, **Lu 7:40**

Desired that he would eat with him; take a meal with him, either a dinner or a supper: this he did under a disguise of respect, and show of affection to him; though very likely with a design upon him to ensnare him, or take some advantage against him if he could; for it is certain, that he did not treat him with those civilities and ceremonies commonly used to guests; see **Lu 7:44**.

And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat: he made no hesitation about it, but at once accepted of his invitation, though he knew both the man and his intentions; having nothing to fear from him, and being willing to carry it courteously to all men, and give proof of what he had just now said of himself, **Lu 7:34**.

Luke 7:37

Ver. 37. And behold, a woman in the city,.... Not Mary Magdalene, spoken of in **Lu 8:2** under another character; and is a different person, who had not been taken notice of by the evangelist before; nor Mary the sister of Lazarus, who is said to anoint the feet of Christ, and wipe them with her hair, Joh 12:3. The character given of this woman, does not seem so well to agree with her; at least, the fact here recorded, cannot be the same with that; for this was in Galilee, and that in Bethany; this in the house of Simon the Pharisee, that in the house of Lazarus; this was some time before Christ's death, and after this he went a circuit through every city and village, that was but six days before his death, and after which he never went from those parts; nor is this account the same with the history, recorded in Mt 26:6 for that fact was done in Bethany also, this in Galilee; that in the house of Simon: the leper, this in the house of Simon the Pharisee; that was but two days before the death of Christ, this a considerable time before; the ointment that woman poured, was poured upon his head, this upon his feet: who this woman was, is not certain, nor in what city she dwelt; it seems to be the same in which the Pharisee's house was; and was no doubt one of the cities of Galilee, as Naim, Capernaum, or some other at no great distance from these:

which was a sinner; a notorious sinner, one that was known by all to have been a person of a wicked, life and conversation; a lewd woman, a vile prostitute, an harlot, commonly reputed so: the Arabic word here used, signifies both a sinner and a whore {k}; and so the word, sinners, seems to be used elsewhere by Luke; see Lu 15:1 compared with Mt 21:31. Some think she was a Gentile, Gentiles being reckoned by the Jews sinners, and the worst of sinners; but this does not appear:

when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house; having observed it herself, that he was invited by him, and went with him, or being informed of it by others,

brought an alabaster box of ointment: ointment was used to be put in vessels made of "alabaster", which kept it pure and incorrupt; and this stone was found about Damascus, {l} so that there might be plenty of it in Judea; at least it might be easily had, and such boxes might be common; and as this woman appears to have been a lewd person, she might have this box of ointment by her to anoint herself with, that she might recommend herself to her gallants. The historian {m} reports, that

"Venus gave to Phaon an alabaster box with ointment, with which Phaon, being anointed, became the most beautiful of men, and the women of Mitylene were taken with the love of him."

If this box had been provided with such a view; it was now used to another and different purpose.

{k} Vid. Castell. Lex. Heptaglott. col. 1195. {l} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 8. {m} Aelian. var. Hist. l. 12. c. 8.

Luke 7:38

Ver. 38. And stood at his feet behind him,.... Christ lay upon a bed, or couch, as was the custom of the ancients, both Jews and others, at meals, with his feet put out behind; and between the couches and the walls of the room, there was a space for servants to wait and serve, and such are therefore said to "stand at the feet"; and the phrase is used, as descriptive of servants in waiting {n}; and in such a situation this woman put herself, as being also ashamed and afraid to come before Christ, and look him in the face; and here she stood weeping for her sins, and melted down with the love of Christ to her soul, and at his discourse:

and began to wash his feet with tears: which fell from her eyes in such abundance upon his feet, as she stood by him that they were like a shower of rain, as the word signifies, with which his feet were as it were bathed and washed; his shoes or sandals being off, as was the custom at eating so to do, lest they should daub the couch or bed, on which they lay {o}. Her tears she used instead of water; for it was the custom first to wash the feet before they were anointed with oil, which she intended to do; and for which purpose she had brought with her an alabaster box of ointment: it is said {p} of one,

"when he came home, that his maid brought him a pot of hot water, and he washed his hands and his feet in it; then she brought him a golden basin full of oil, and he dipped his hands and his feet in it, to fulfil what is said, De 33:24 and after they had eaten and drank, he measured out oil, &c."

And it is: a general rule with the Jews {q},

"that whoever anoints his feet, is obliged to washing or dipping."

And did wipe them with the hairs of her head; which were long, and hung loose about her shoulders, it being usual and comely for women to wear long hair, 1Co 11:15. That which was her ornament and pride, and which she took great care of to nourish and put in proper form, to, render her desirable, she uses instead of a towel to wipe her Lord's feet, and her tears off of them. A like phrase is used of one by Apuleius,

"his verbis & amplexibus mollibus decantatus maritus, lachrymasque ejus suis crinibus detergens, &c. {r}:"

"and kissed his feet". This was no unusual practice with the Jews; we often read of it {s}:

"R. Jonathan and R. Jannai were sitting together, there came a certain man, ywlgr qvnw, "and kissed the feet" of R. Jonathan."

Again {t}

"R. Meir stood up, and Bar Chama, hyerka hyqvn, "kissed his knees", or "feet"."

This custom was also used by the Greeks and Romans among their civilities, and in their salutations {u}:

and anointed them with the ointment; which she brought with her.

{n} Vid Alstorphium de lectis veterum, p. 106, 107. {o} Ib. p. 123, 124. {p} T. Bab. Meuachot, fol. 85. 2. {q} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 26. 2. Maimon. Hilchot Biath Harnikdash, c. 5. sect. 5. {r} Metamorph. l. 5. {s} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 4. & Kiddushin, fol. 61. 3. T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 49. 2. Vid. ib. fol. 63. 1. {t} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol 27. 2. {u} Vid. Aristophanem in vespis, p. 473. Arvian Epictet. l. 3. c. 26. & Alex. ab. Alex. Gen. Dier. l. 2. c. 19.

Luke 7:39

Ver. 39. Now when the Pharisee, which had bidden him, saw it,.... Simon, who had invited Christ to eat with him, when he saw what was done by the woman, how she stood at his feet, and washed them with her tears, and wiped them with her hairs, and then kissed and anointed them:

he spoke within himself; not openly and publicly, being in good manners, though not in real respect to Christ, unwilling to affront his guest; but turned these things over in his mind, and reasoned upon them within himself:

saying, this man, if he were a prophet; as he was said, and believed to be by many, but questioned by this Pharisee:

would have known who and what manner of woman this is, that toucheth him; he took it for granted that Christ did not know this woman personally, that she was one of the city; nor her character, or "what" was "her fame", as the Syriac version renders it, which was very ill; or "her condition", as the Arabic version, she being not a religious person, but a notorious lewd one: this he concluded, from his admitting her to such nearness to him, and familiarity with him; and from hence argues within himself, that he could not be a prophet; since, according to his notion of a prophet, he must know persons and their characters; though this was not always requisite in a prophet, nor did the prophetic gift at all times show itself in this way: however, this man reasoned upon the commonly received notions of the Pharisees, both of the Messiah, the prophet that Moses said should come, and of their own conduct, and of all religious men: their notion with respect to the Messiah was, that he should be of so quick an understanding, or smell, as in Isa 11:3 that he should know at once who was a wicked person, and who not.

"Bar Coziba (they say {w}) reigned two years and a half; he said to, the Rabbans, I am the Messiah; they replied to him, it is written of the Messiah, Isa 11:3 that he smells, or is of quick understanding and judges (the gloss on it is, he smells on a man, and judges and knows,
byyhh ym, "who is a wicked man"): let us see whether he smells and judges; and when they saw that he did not smell and judge, they killed him."

But Jesus, the true Messiah, could do so; he knew who were sinners, he knew this woman to be one, as the following account shows: and their notion with respect to the conduct of religious persons towards the common people, and those of a bad character, and which the Pharisee here suggests, was, that the touch of such persons was defiling, and therefore to be avoided: for they say {x}, that

"the Pharisees, if they touched the garments of the common people, they were defiled."

And therefore when they walked in the streets,

"they walked in the sides (of the ways), that they might not be defiled, egmb, "by the touch" of the common people {y}"

For she is a sinner; a notorious one; or "that she is a sinner"; and the sense is, Christ, had he been a prophet, the Pharisee intimates, would have known that this woman was a vile creature; and he would have shown it; by his abhorrence and rejection of her; or as the Persic version adds, "would have declared her sins".

{w} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 9. {x} Maimon. in Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 7. {y} Ib. Hilchot Abot Hatumaot, c. 13. sect. 8.

Luke 7:40

Ver. 40. And Jesus answering said unto him,.... Christ being God omniscient, knew not only the character and conversation of this woman, which were publicly known by all, that knew any thing of her, but also the secret thoughts and reasonings of the Pharisee, and makes answer to them; which shows, that he was a prophet, in the sense of this man; yea, more than a prophet:

Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee; this could not be Simon Peter, Christ spoke to, as some have suggested; for the answer is made unto the Pharisee, and he is the person addressed by the name of Simon; even he, into whose house Christ entered, and now was, as appears from **Lu 7:44**.

And he saith, Master; or teacher, or doctor; or as the Syriac version, "Rabbi"; which was the common salutation of doctors:

say on. This was a way of speaking in use with the Jews, giving leave to proceed in a discourse; and as Christ was now a guest in this man's house, he asks leave of him, and he grants him it: so we read of R. Simeon ben Gamaliel {z} that he said to R. Ishmael ben Elishah,

"is it thy pleasure that I should say before thee one thing? he said unto him, rwma, "say on"."

Again, R. Jochanan ben Zaccai said {a} to a certain governor,

"suffer me to say one thing to thee: he replied to him,
rwma, "say on"."

{z} Abot R. Nathan, c. 38. fol. 9. 2. {a} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 183. 1.

Luke 7:41

Ver. 41. There was a certain creditor,.... All the Oriental versions premise something to this. The Syriac version reads, "Jesus said unto him". The Arabic version, "then he said". The Persic version, "Jesus said"; and the Ethiopic version, "and he said to him"; and something of this kind is understood, and to be supplied in the text:

which had two debtors, the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty; these were, as the word shows, Roman "denarii" or "pence"; the former of these sums, reckoning a Roman penny at seven pence halfpenny of our money, amounted to fifteen pounds and twelve shillings and six pence; and the latter, to one pound eleven shillings and three pence; the one of these sums was ten times larger, than the other. This is a parable: by "the creditor", God is meant, to whom men owe their beings, and the preservation of them, and all the mercies of life; and are under obligation to obedience and thankfulness: hence: no man can merit any thing of God, or pay off any old debt, by a new act of obedience, since all is due to him: by the "two debtors" are meant, greater and lesser sinners: all sins are debts, and all sinners are debtors; not debtors to sin, for then it would not be criminal, but lawful to commit sin, and God must be pleased with it, which he is not, and men might promise themselves impunity, which they cannot; but they are debtors to fulfil the law, and in case of failure, are bound to the debt of punishment: and of these debtors and debts, some are greater, and others less; not but that they, are all equally sinners in Adam, and equally guilty and corrupted by his transgression; and the same seeds of sin are in the hearts of all men, and all sin is committed against God, and is a breach of his law, and is mortal, or deserving of death, even death eternal; but then as some commands are greater, and others less, so must their transgressions be: sin more immediately committed against God, is greater than that which is committed against our neighbour; and besides, the circumstances of persons and things differ, which more or less aggravate the offence.

Luke 7:42

Ver. 42. And when they had nothing to pay,.... Neither the lesser nor greater debtor; for though not alike in debt, yet both insolvent: man has run out his whole stock, which the God of nature gave him, in his original creation and primitive state; and is become a bankrupt and a beggar, is poor, wretched, and miserable; he has no money, he has nothing to offer for a composition, much less for payment; he has no righteousness, and if he had, it would be nothing to pay with; since that itself, even in perfection, is due to God, and cannot discharge a former debt: sin being committed against an infinite being, is in some sense an infinite debt, and requires an infinite satisfaction, which a finite creature can never give; and he is therefore liable to a prison, and that for ever: but behold the wonderful grace of God, the creditor!

he frankly forgave them both: their whole debts, without regard to any merits of theirs, which they could not have, or any motives in them, or any conditions to be performed by them, but purely of his sovereign will, free grace, and rich mercy, though not without regard to the satisfaction of his Son; which by no means hinders the frankness of the pardon, or obscures the grace of it, but increases and illustrates it; seeing this satisfaction is of God's own finding out, providing, and accepting; and is at his own expense, and without money and price, to the debtors:

tell me therefore, which of them will love him most; or "ought to love him most", as the Ethiopic version. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, leave out the first part of this clause, "tell me".

Luke 7:43

Ver. 43. Simon answered and said,.... Very readily, without any hesitation, not being aware of the application of it, to the instance he had been pondering in his mind:

I suppose, that he to whom he forgave most; it was his opinion, and to him a plain case, that he that owed the largest debt, and that being forgiven him fully, and freely, as he was under the greatest obligation, so as he ought, he would show the greatest love and affection to his kind and gracious creditor:

and he said unto him; that is, Jesus said, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it:

thou hast rightly judged; this is a right and true judgment of the case; it is according to the nature and truth of things, and what is obvious and clear at first sight, and which every one must agree to.

Luke 7:44

Ver. 44. And he turned to the woman,.... That stood behind him at his feet,

and said to Simon, seest thou this woman? and what she has done? pointing to her, and comparing him, and her, and their actions together, whereby he might judge of the preceding parable, and how fitly it might be applied to the present case:

I entered into thine house; not of his own accord, but by the invitation of Simon, and therefore might have expected the usual civilities:

thou gavest me no water for my feet: to wash them with, no, not so much as water; a civility very common in those hot countries, where walking without stockings, and only with sandals, they needed often washing; and which was very refreshing, and was not only used to travellers and strangers, but to guests, and was usually done by the servants of the house; See Gill on "Lu 7:38".

but she hath washed my feet with tears. The Persic version reads, "with the tears of her eyes"; which made a bath for his feet;

and wiped them with the hairs of her head. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read only, "with her hair", which she used instead of a towel, when Simon neither gave him water to wash with, nor a towel to wipe with.

Luke 7:45

Ver. 45. Thou gavest me no kiss,.... A token of civility among friends, when they met together on any occasion. The Jews have a saying {b}, that

"all kisses are foolish, excepting three; the kiss of grandeur or dignity, as in 1Sa 10:1 and the kiss at parting, as in **Ru 1:14** and the kiss at meeting, as in **Ex 4:27** (of which sort this kiss may be thought to be), to which some add the kiss of consanguinity (or that used by relations to one another), as in Ge 29:11' but this woman, since the time I came in. The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "since she came in"; and so two of Stephens's copies; which seems to be the more agreeable reading, seeing Christ was in Simon's house before this woman came; for she knowing that he was there, came thither after him:

hath not ceased to kiss my feet; which shows, that this action was repeated by her times without number, even ever since she came into the house.

{b} Shemot Rabba, sect. 6. fol. 91. 3, 4.

Luke 7:46

Ver. 46. Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint,.... No not with common oil, so usually done at feasts, see Ps 23:5

but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment; even "with ointment" amobd, "of spices", as the Syriac version renders it. There is, throughout the whole account, an opposition between the conduct of Simon, and this woman: he gave him no common water to wash his feet with, she shed floods of tears, and with them bathed his feet, and then wiped them clean with the hairs of her head; he gave him not the usual salutation by kissing his head or lips, but she kissed his feet, and that over and over again; he did not so much as anoint his head with common oil, when she anointed his feet with costly ointment brought in an alabaster box. These several ceremonies to guests were used by their hosts, in other nations, such as washing, anointing, and kissing {c}.

{c} Vid. Apuleii Metamorph. i. 1. prope finem.

Luke 7:47

Ver. 47. Wherefore I say unto thee,.... Not "for this that she hath done", as the Persic version very wrongly renders it; not because she had washed Christ's feet with tears, and wiped them with her hairs, and kissed and anointed them, therefore her sins were forgiven; nor upon this account, and for those reasons did Christ say, or declare, that they were forgiven; but ou carin, "for this cause", or reason, he said this to Simon the Pharisee, to remove his objections, to rectify his mistakes, and stop his murmuring and complaining, by observing, that though she had been a great sinner, yet she was now not such an one as he took her to be; she was a pardoned sinner, and not that guilty and filthy creature he imagined; the guilt of all her sins was removed, and she was cleansed from all her filthiness:

her sins, which are many, are forgiven; though she was like the largest debtor in the parable, which owed five hundred pence, yet the whole score was cleared; though her sins were numerous, and attended with very aggravating circumstances, which denominated her a sinner in a very emphatic sense, a notorious one, yet they were all fully, and freely forgiven:

for she loved much; or "therefore she loved much": her great love was not the cause of the remission of her sins, but the full and free remission of her many sins, which had been, manifested to her, was the cause of her great love, and of her showing it in the manner she had done: that this is the sense of the words, is clear from the parable, and the accommodation of it to the present case, otherwise there would be no agreement. Upon relating the parable of the two debtors, Christ puts the question to Simon, which of the two it was most reasonable to think would love most? his answer is and which Christ approved of, he to whom most was forgiven; where, it is plain, that according to our Lord's sense, and even Simon's opinion of the case, that forgiveness is the cause, and love the effect; and that according as the forgiveness is of more or less, love is proportionate; and which is applied to the case in hand: this poor woman had been a great sinner; her many sins were pardoned; and therefore she expressed much love to him, from whom she had received her pardon by the above actions, and much more than Simon had done:

but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little; this is an accommodation of the other part of the parable, and has a very special respect to Simon, the Pharisee, whose debts, in his own opinion, were few or none, at least ten times less than this woman's; and he had little or no sense of the forgiveness of them, or of any obligation to Christ on that account; and therefore was very sparing of his love and respect, and even of common civilities to him.

Luke 7:48

Ver. 48. And he saith unto her,.... Directing his discourse to the woman that now stood before him:

thy sins are forgiven; which was said, partly on account of the Pharisee, to let him see, that he knew this woman, what she was, and had been; that she had been a sinner, a great sinner, one that owed five hundred pence, but was now forgiven, washed, cleansed, sanctified, and justified, and therefore not to be shunned and avoided; and partly on the woman's account, that she might have a fresh discovery of the forgiveness of her sins, for her comfort under the severe censure of the Pharisee, and that her faith in it might be strengthened; as also on his own account, to show that he was not only a prophet that had extraordinary knowledge of persons, and their characters, but that he was the most high God, to whom belonged the prerogative of pardoning sin.

Luke 7:49

Ver. 49. And they that sat at meat with him,.... Other Pharisees that sat at Simon's table with Christ, whom he had invited as guests, on this occasion of seeing and conversing with Jesus; or some of Simon's family, that sat down to eat with him;

began to say within themselves; that is, either thought and reasoned in their own minds, or whispered among themselves:

who is this that forgiveth sins also? who not content to transgress the traditions of the elders, by admitting a sinful woman to touch him, but assumes that to himself which is peculiar to God, to forgive sin: this they said, not as wondering at him, what manner of person he must be, that with such authority pronounced the forgiveness of sin, as Grotius thinks; but rather as offended with him, and filled with indignation against him, and so censuring and reproaching him for wickedness and blasphemy.

Luke 7:50

Ver. 50. And he said to the woman,.... Notwithstanding the Pharisee's censure, both of him and her:

thy faith hath saved thee; meaning either the object of her faith, himself, who was the author of eternal salvation to her; or that she, through faith in him, had received the blessings of salvation, pardon, righteousness, and life from him, and the joys and comfort of it; and had both a right unto, and a meetness for eternal glory and happiness:

go in peace; of conscience, and serenity of mind; let nothing disturb thee; not the remembrance of past sins, which are all forgiven, nor the suggestions of Satan, who may, at one time or another, present them to view; nor the troubles and afflictions of this present life; which are all in love; nor the reproaches and censures of men of a "pharisaic" spirit: go home to thy house, and about thy business, and cheerfully perform thy duty both to God and men; and when thou hast done thy generation work, thou shalt enter into eternal peace and joy.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 8:1

Ver. 1. And it came to pass afterwards, &c;] After Christ had healed the centurion's servant at Capernaum, and had raised a widow's son that was dead, to life, at Naim; after John's disciples had been with and he had dismissed them, and had said many things in commendation of John, and in vindication both of him, and of himself: and after he had taken a meal in a Pharisee's house, where he met with a woman that had been a notorious sinner, who showed great affection for him, which occasioned much course between him and the Pharisee:

that he went throughout every city and village: that is, in Galilee, where he now was, as is clear from the foregoing chapter, and from what follows in this, **Lu 8:26** and besides, it was by the sea of Galilee that he delivered the following parable concerning the sower; see Mt 13:1

preaching, and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God; of the Gospel dispensation, which was now taking place, and had been long expected; publishing the doctrines and mysteries of it, such as free and full remission of sins for his own sake, justification by his righteousness, acceptance in him the beloved Son of God, and complete salvation by him as the Saviour of his people, than which nothing could be more welcome news, or better tidings; pointing out the ordinances of that dispensation, and showing who were the proper subjects of them, and directing and encouraging such to submit unto them; as also signifying what the kingdom of grace lies in, not in meats and drinks, or any outward things, but in inward holiness, peace, and joy; and what is a meetness for entrance into the kingdom of glory, namely, regenerating grace; and what gives a right unto it, even a better righteousness than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, and which was no other than his own:

and the twelve were with him; the twelve apostles, whom Christ had chose, and ordained as such: these attended him wherever he went, that they might be witnesses of his miracles, and learn his doctrines; that so they might be thoroughly furnished for their future ministry, both in Judea, and among the Gentiles.

Luke 8:2

Ver. 2. And certain women which had been healed of evil spirits,.... Of devils, who had possessed them, and were healed by Christ, dispossessing them; See Gill on "Lu 7:21".

and infirmities: various diseases of body: some were dispossessed of devils, and others freed from bodily disorders; of the first sort was

Mary Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils: by the order of Christ, for he cast them out, Mr 16:9 and which shows, that this is to be understood, in a literal sense, of devils, and the dispossession of them by Christ; and not in a figurative sense, of vices, and the expulsion of them by the power of divine grace; for this same phrase is used where real dispossessions are intended: nor need it be thought strange that seven devils should be in one person, when, in this same chapter, we read of a legion in one man, and which also Christ cast out, **Lu 8:30**. This woman seems to be a different person from her spoken of in the latter part of the preceding chapter, seeing this looks as if it was the first time of her being taken notice of by this evangelist, and is described by a different character. She is called "Magdalene", to distinguish her from others of the same name; the reason of which See Gill on "Mt 27:56". She is said {d} to be a widow, and so not being bound to an husband, was at leisure to follow Christ.

{d} Jerom in Mar. xv. 40.

Luke 8:3

Ver. 3. And Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward,.... Joanna, or Juchan, as the Syriac version calls her, was a name, among the Jews, for a woman, as Jochanan, or John, was for a man. In the Talmud {e} we read of one Jochani, or Joanni, the daughter of Retibi, the same name with this. Her husband's name was Chuza. Dr. Lightfoot observes, from a Talmudic treatise {f}, such a name in the genealogy of Haman, who is called the son of Chuza; and Haman being an Edomite, and this man being in the family of Herod, who was of that race, suggests it to be an Idumean name. But in my edition of that treatise, Haman is not called the son of Chuza, but azyk rb, "the son of Ciza"; and besides, Chuza is a Jewish name, and the name of a family of note among the Jews: hence we read {g} of R. Broka the Chuzite; where the gloss is, "for he was", yazwx ybm, "of the family of Chuzai". And elsewhere {h} mention is made of two sons of Chuzai; and both the gloss, and Piske Harosh upon the place, say, "they were Jews": so Abimi is said to be of the family of Chuzai, or the Chuzites {i}; and the same is said of R. Acha {k}. This man, here mentioned, was Herod's steward; a steward of Herod the "tetrarch", of Galilee. The Arabic version calls him his "treasurer"; and the Vulgate Latin, and the Ethiopic versions, his "procurator"; and some have thought him to be a deputy governor of the province under him; but he seems rather to be a governor, or "chief of his house", as the Syriac version renders it: he was one that presided in his family, and managed his domestic affairs; was an overseer of them, as Joseph was in Potiphar's house; and the same Greek word that is here used, is adopted by the Jews into their language, and used of Joseph {l}: and who moreover say {m},

"let not a man appoint a steward in his house; for if Potiphar had not appointed Joseph, owpwrjwpa, "a steward" in his house, he had not come into that matter,"

of calumny and reproach. It was common for kings, princes, and great men, to have such an officer in their families. We read {n} of a steward of king Agrippa's, who was of this same family. The Persic version is very foreign to the purpose, making Chuza to be "of the family of Herod". This man might be either dead, as some have conjectured; or, if living, might be secretly a friend of Christ, and so willing that his wife should follow him; or, if an enemy, such was her zeal for Christ, that she cheerfully exposed herself to all his resentments; and chose rather meanness, contempt, and persecution with Christ, and for his sake, than to enjoy all the pleasures of Herod's court without him.

And Susannah; this also was a name for a woman with the, Jews, as appears from the history of one of this name with them, which stands among the apocryphal writings. She, as well as Joanna, and perhaps also Mary Magdalene, were rich, and persons of substance, as well as note, as should seem by what follows: "and many others"; that is, many other women; for the words, are of the feminine gender:

which ministered unto him of their substance; four ancient copies of Beza's, and five of Stephens's, and the Syriac version read, "which ministered unto them"; that is, to Christ, and his disciples, as the Persic version expresses it. This shows the gratitude of these women, who having received favours from Christ, both for their souls and bodies, make returns to him out of their worldly substance, in a way of thankfulness; and also the low estate of Christ, and his disciples, who stood in need of such ministrations; and may be an instruction to the churches of Christ to take care of their ministers, and to communicate in all good things to them, of whose spiritual things they partake; and may be a direction to them to minister to them of what is their own substance, and not another's; and to minister a proper part, and not the whole, as these women ministered to Christ, and his apostles, of substance which was their own, and that not all of it, but out of it.

{e} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 22. 1. {f} Massechet Sopherim, c. 13. sect. 6. {g} T. Bab. Tasnith, fol. 22. 1. {h} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 22. 1. {i} Juchasin, fol. 75. 1. {k} Juchasin, fol. 78. 1. {l} Targum Jon. & Jerus. in Gen. xxxix. 4. {m} T. Bab. Beracot, fol 63. 1. & Maimon Issure Bia, c. 22. sect. 15. & Maggid Misn. in ib. {n} T. Bab. Sacca, fol. 27. 1.

Luke 8:4

Ver. 4. And when much people were gathered together,.... To Jesus, as he was by the sea side, the sea of Galilee, or Tiberias:

and were come to him out of every city; of Galilee, to hear him preach, and see miracles:

he spake by a parable; the following things.

Luke 8:5

Ver. 5. A sower went out to sow his seed,.... By whom Jesus Christ is chiefly designed; though it is true of every preacher of the Gospel: who goes forth, being sent by Christ, with the precious seed of the word: for the phrase, "his seed", which only Luke has, best agrees with Christ, he being the proprietor and subject of it. The Alexandrian copy reads, "the seed of himself", The Persic version reads the whole clause thus, "a sower chose ground, and there he sowed seed": he fixed on the spot of ground to sow his seed in, as Christ did on the people of the Jews, and afterwards the Gentiles.

And, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; on the road, which was by the side of the field, in which people commonly walked, and so was beaten hard, and the seed lay upon it, and was not received; which designs such hearers of the word, as are not susceptive of it, do not take it in, and have no manner of understanding of it.

And it was trodden down; by every one that passed by, as the Gospel preached to such hardened and ignorant hearers, is despised and trampled under foot by them.

And the fowls of the air devoured it; who generally flock about places where seed is sowing; and here intend the devil and his angels, that have their dwelling in the air; and frequent places of public worship to hinder the usefulness of the ministry of the word, as much as in them lies.

Luke 8:6

Ver. 6. And some fell upon a rock,.... Which the other evangelists call "stony places", and "stony ground"; by which are meant such hearers whose hearts are, hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and continue so notwithstanding the preaching of the word unto them.

And as soon as it sprung up; as it did immediately, as the other evangelists say; and that for this reason, which they give, "because it had no depth of earth"; only a small crust, or shell of earth over the rock; and signifies, that these hearers had only a superficial knowledge of the word, and hastily made a profession of it, which soon came to nothing:

it withered away, because it lacked moisture; the other evangelists say, "when the sun was up, it was scorched"; meaning tribulation and persecution, the grace of God being wanting to support under fiery trials: the reason given in Matthew and Mark why it withered, is,

because it had no root; and so read the Persic and Ethiopic versions here.

Luke 8:7

Ver. 7. And some fell among thorns,.... On ground which had within it the roots of thorns and briars; and design such hearers who have their hearts filled with worldly cares, and sensual lusts and pleasures:

and the thorns sprang up with it; and grew faster than that:

and choked it; as the above things do the word, and make it useless and unprofitable; so that though it took place for a while, and was professed, yet process of time was neglected and dropped; and, as Mark says, "it yielded no fruit"; at least that came to perfection.

Luke 8:8

Ver. 8. And other fell on good ground,.... The Syriac version reads, "on good and beautiful ground"; and so the Cambridge copy of Beza's; ground which both looked well, and proved well; and signifies such hearers who have good and honest hearts, made so by the Spirit of God; who receive the word in the love of it, have a spiritual understanding, and real experience of it;

and sprang up, and bare fruit, an hundred fold; or, "a hundred for one", as the Syriac version renders it; a hundred grains for one that was sown. The Ethiopic version adds, "and it was to thirty, and it was to sixty": that is, as the other evangelists say, "some thirty", and "some sixty fold"; for the word of God is more fruitful in some of those gracious hearers, than in others:

and when he had said these things, he cried: with a loud voice, that what he was about to say might be attended to:

he that hath ears to hear, let him hear; see this parable more largely explained in the following notes.
See Gill on "Mt 13:3" See Gill on "Mt 13:4" See Gill on "Mt 13:5" See Gill on "Mt 13:6" See Gill on "Mt 13:7" See Gill on "Mt 13:8" See Gill on "Mt 13:9"

Luke 8:9

Ver. 9. And his disciples asked him,.... That is, as Mark says, "when he was alone"; after the multitude were departed, and they were by themselves, it may be in some house with other disciples:

saying, what might this parable be? what is the sense and meaning of it? According to Matthew, they asked why he spake in parables to the people; and to such a question the following words are a proper answer.

Luke 8:10

Ver. 10. And he said, unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God,.... The doctrines of the Gospel, which to have spiritual knowledge is a special and peculiar gift of God. The Vulgate Latin and Persic versions read, "the mystery", in the singular, as in Mark: "but to others in parables"; that is, the doctrines of the Gospel are delivered in a parabolical way to others; to such as "are without", as the Evangelist Mark expresses it, who are strangers and foreigners, and not children, who are not the favourites of heaven, and the disciples of Christ:

that seeing they might not see, and hearing, they might not understand; what was delivered to them; see the following notes.
See Gill on "Mt 13:11" See Gill on "Mt 13:12" See Gill on "Mt 13:13"

Luke 8:11

Ver. 11. Now the parable is this, &c] "Or this is the sense of the parable", as the Arabic version renders it: "the seed is the word of God", the Gospel, as preached by Christ, his apostles, and faithful ministers, which has God for its author, is concerning the grace of God, and is what he blesses, and makes effectual to answer any good purpose.

Luke 8:12

Ver. 12. Those by the wayside are they that hear,.... The word of God, though only by accident, and very carelessly, and without understanding what they hear:

then cometh the devil; signified by the fowls of the air:

and taketh away the word out of their hearts, or memories; that little of it, which is retained there, and diverts their minds from it by other objects; so that they quite forget what they have heard;

lest they should believe, and be saved: this clause is only in Luke; and with it may be compared **2Co 4:4** for with true faith in Christ the sum and substance of the word salvation is connected; and Satan being an enemy to the salvation of souls, does all he can to hinder their faith in him.

Luke 8:13

Ver. 13. They on the rock are they, which when they hear,.... The seed that fell upon the rock, or stony ground, signify such sort of hearers,

who receive the word with joy. The Ethiopic version reads, "with joy of heart". But, this sort of hearers receive not the word into their hearts, or with their hearts believe it, and from their hearts obey it, only into their heads; and have only, an historical faith of it; nor with hearty, spiritual, solid joy, or joy in the Holy Ghost: for their hearts remain like a rock, unbroken by the word; but with a flash of natural affection, which quickly goes off.

And these have no root; neither "in themselves", as the other evangelists say, they have no true grace in them; nor have they any root in Christ, nor in the love of God:

which for a while believe: their faith is a temporary one, like that of Simon Magus; which shows it is not true faith; for that is an abiding grace, Christ, who is the author, is the finisher of it, and prays for it, that it fail not. The Persic version renders it, "in the time of hearing they have faith"; and such sort of hearers there are, who, whilst they are hearing, assent to what they hear, but when they are gone, either forget it, or, falling into bad company, are prevailed upon to doubt of it, and disbelieve it. The Arabic version renders it, "they believe for a small time"; their faith do not continue long, nor their profession of it, both are soon dropped:

and in the time of temptation fall away: "or go back", as the Vulgate Latin version, they draw back unto perdition; or "forsake that", as the Arabic version reads, the word, they have heard, and received, their faith in it, and profession of it: "and soon become apostates", as the Persic version renders it. By "the time of temptation", is not meant any particular and sore temptation of Satan, but a time of affliction and persecution, as appears from the other evangelists; which is a trying time to professors of religion, and when those who have not the root of the matter in them, fall away.

Luke 8:14

Ver. 14. And that which fell among thorns are they,.... The seed that fell among thorns, or were sown on thorny ground, represent such hearers:

which, when they have heard, go forth; from hearing the word to their worldly business; or go on in the pursuit of their worldly lusts and pleasures notwithstanding; for the word translated, "go forth", belongs to the next clause;

and are choked with cares and riches, and pleasures of this life; and with it to be read thus, "and going on in or under", that is, under the power and influence of, "the cares, and riches, and pleasures of life", they are choked; to which agrees the Arabic version, which renders it, "in which they walk", or "which they follow". The Vulgate Latin version is, "and from the cares, and riches, and pleasures of life, going, they are choked": but it is not going from them, but going on in them, which chokes them, or suffocates the word they have heard, whereby it becomes of no effect; unless it should be rendered, "by the cares", &c. "they are choked, and bring no fruit to perfection"; for what fruit such hearers do bring forth, in a way of profession, soon drops off, and perishes.

Luke 8:15

Ver. 15. But that on the good ground are they,.... The seed that fell on good ground design such hearers,

which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it: who hear with an honest and good intention, and faithfully keep it, and hold it fast:

and bring forth fruit with patience; with great constancy, suffering much for the sake of it; and the more they suffer, the more fruitful they are. See this explanation of the parable more largely insisted on in the following notes. See Gill on "Mt 13:19" See Gill on "Mt 13:20" See Gill on "Mt 13:21" See Gill on "Mt 13:22" See Gill on "Mt 13:23"

Luke 8:16

Ver. 16. No man, when he hath lighted a candle,.... Christ by this, and some proverbial sentences following, observes to his disciples, that though the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven were delivered in parables for the present, that they might not be seen and understood by some; and though he gave to them the explanation of such parables, as of the above, in a private manner; yet his intention was not, that these things should always remain a secret with them; but as they were the lights of the world, they should communicate them to others; and that that light of the Gospel, and the knowledge of the doctrines of it, which he had imparted to them, were not to be retained and concealed in their bosoms, but to be diffused and spread among others: even as no man, when he lights a candle,

covereth it with a vessel; any sort of vessel, as with a bushel,
See Gill on "Mt 5:15", or with a bucket, or with a shell, as the Persic version here interprets, rather than translates:

or putteth it under a bed; whether a bed to sleep on, or a couch to sit or lie upon at meals:

but setteth it on a candlestick; a vessel, or instrument made for that use and purpose, to put and hold a candle in:

that they which enter in; to the house, or room, where it is,

may see the light of it, and be enlightened by it: even so it is the will of Christ, that what evangelical light and knowledge he bestows on any persons, they should not hide it, nor their gifts and talents, or keep it back from the view of others, but should hold it forth both in their preaching, and in their practice.

Luke 8:17

Ver. 17. For nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest,.... Meaning, whatever was then wrapped up in parables and dark sayings, or was secretly, and in a private manner, committed to them, should be made manifest by them to others hereafter:

neither any thing hid, that shall not be made known, and come abroad; for what had been whispered to them, in the most secret and silent manner, was to come abroad not only in Judea, but in all the world, and to be published upon the house tops; See Gill on "Mt 10:26" See Gill on "Mt 10:27"

Luke 8:18

Ver. 18. Take heed therefore how ye hear,.... That ye hear not in a careless and negligent manner, since what truths and doctrines ye now hear with the ear, are to be preached by you unto others:

for whosoever hath; that is, hath knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel, and hath gifts and abilities to preach them to others:

to him shall be given; more knowledge, and by using his gifts they shall be increased:

but he that hath not; true, solid, spiritual knowledge of divine things, though he has had considerable advantages and opportunities of learning it, as the apostles especially had:

from him shall be taken, even that which he seemeth to have; or "that which he thinks he has", as the Syriac version renders it; that which he seemed to others to have, or thought himself he had: the knowledge he had of truth, and which was rather a show of knowledge than real, shall be taken from him; his seeming gifts and parts shall die, and vanish away, and he shall be left to fall into ignorance, error, and heresy. Observe that this is to be understood not of internal grace, and experimental knowledge, but of speculative notions of the Gospel, and of external gifts; and so furnishes out no argument against the final perseverance of real saints; See Gill on "Mt 13:12".
See Gill on "Mt 25:29".

Luke 8:19

Ver. 19. Then came to him his mother and his brethren,.... It was when Christ was preaching in an house at Capernaum, that Mary his mother, and some of his near kinsmen with her, came from Nazareth to him: these brethren of his were relations according to the flesh, either by Joseph, or his mother's side: who they were, cannot be said with certainty: it may be they were Joses and Simon; for as for James and Judas, they were among the twelve apostles, and with him; and these are the four only persons that are mentioned by name, as his brethren, Mt 13:55 though there were others that were so called, who did not believe in him, **Joh 7:5** and could not come at him for the press; the multitude of people that were about him, who were so thick, that there was no coming near him, much less was there an opportunity of speaking privately, with him. The Syriac version renders it, "they could not speak unto him for the multitude".

Luke 8:20

Ver. 20. And it was told him by certain, which said,.... The phrase, "which said", is omitted in the Vulgate Latin version, and in Beza's most ancient copy. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions only read, "and they said unto him"; and the Persic version renders it, "a certain person said"; some one person, as in Mt 12:47

thy mother, and thy brethren, stand without, desiring to see thee; and to speak with thee, as in Mt 12:47.
See Gill on "Mt 12:47".

Luke 8:21

Ver. 21. And he answered and said unto them,.... Not to his mother and brethren, but to those that told him of them, who either designed to reproach him with them, by reason of the meanness of them, or to interrupt him in his work:

my mother and my brethren are these; pointing to his disciples:

which hear the word of God; which he had been preaching, and was meant by the seed in the preceding parable:

and do it; behave in their lives and conversations agreeably to it; and observe the precepts and ordinances in it; elsewhere called the will of God his Father;
See Gill on "Mt 12:49".
See Gill on "Mt 12:50".

Luke 8:22

Ver. 22. Now it came to pass on a certain day,.... The same day at even, as

Mark says, **Mr 4:35** in which he delivered the parables of the sower, and of the seed cast into the ground, and of the grain of mustard seed:

that he went into a ship with his disciples; they following him into it, **Mt 8:23**

and he said unto them, let us go over unto the other side of the lake; of Gennesaret, or sea of Galilee:

and they launched forth; into the sea; they set sail, and proceeded: this clause is omitted in the Syriac and Persic versions.

Luke 8:23

Ver. 23. But as he sailed he fell asleep,.... On a pillow, in the hinder part of the ship, as in **Mr 4:38**

and there came down a storm of wind on the lake,
See Gill on "Mt 8:24".

and they were filled; with water: not the disciples, but the ship in which they were; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "their ship was filled with water". The Syriac and Persic versions render it, "the ship was almost sunk", or immersed:

and were in jeopardy; of their lives, in the utmost danger, just ready to go to the bottom. This clause is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions.

Luke 8:24

Ver. 24. And they came to him, and awoke him,.... That is, the disciples came from some part of the ship, to the hinder part of it, where Christ was asleep; and by their shrieks and cries, and repeated vociferations, awaked him out of sleep:

saying, Master, Master, we perish. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, only read "master", without a repetition of the word, as in Matthew and Mark; but the Syriac and Persic versions repeat it, and render the words, "our master, our master";
See Gill on "Mt 8:25".

Then he rose, and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water, and they ceased, and there was a calm;
See Gill on "Mt 8:26".

Luke 8:25

Ver. 25. And he said unto them, where is your faith?.... That is, he said so to his disciples, who had professed faith in him, but now discovered very little:

and they being afraid, wondered; being filled with awful sense of his majesty, were amazed at his power and authority, in rebuking the wind and sea, which at once obeyed him, and were still:

saying one another; among themselves, privately:

what manner of man is this? for he commandeth even the winds and water; or the sea, as the Vulgate Latin. The Syriac version reads both, "the floods and the sea";

and they obey him: according to Matthew, these words seem to be spoken by the men of the ship, the mariners; but here, according to Luke, they seem to be the words of the disciples;
See Gill on "Mt 8:27" See Gill on "Mr 4:41".

Luke 8:26

Ver. 26. And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes,.... In **Mt 8:28** it is called the country of the Gergesenes,
See Gill on "Mt 8:28" as it is here, in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; and "of the Gerasenes", in the Vulgate Latin; but the Syriac and Persic versions read, "of the Gadarenes", as in **Mr 5:1**.
See Gill on "Mr 5:1".

which is over against Galilee: from whence the ship launched, and Christ and his disciples came.

Luke 8:27

Ver. 27. And when he went forth to land,.... The Persic and Ethiopic versions read,

when they went forth to land; when Christ and his disciples came out of the ship, and went ashore:

there met him out of the city a certain man; or rather, there met him a certain man of the city; that is, one that belonged to, and was an inhabitant of Gadera, or some city thereabout; who had been born and brought up, and had lived there; for certain it is, that he did not now come out of the city, but out of the tombs, as in **Mt 8:28** and to which agrees the account of him that follows here; in the Vulgate Latin version, these words, "out of the city" are omitted; which the interpreter not understanding, might leave out, as carrying in it a seeming contradiction to the accounts of him:

which had devils long time. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Arabic versions, read in the singular number, which had a devil: and which agrees with **Lu 8:29** for though more are after mentioned, yet the many might be under one head, and chief of them; but in all the copies, it is read in the plural number, "devils"; and to this agrees the name of legion, for there were many devils in him, and they had a possession of him a long time which aggravates the miserable condition of this man, and illustrates the power of Christ in freeing him from them:

and wore no clothes; but went naked, and when any were put upon him, would tear them in pieces:

neither abode in any house, but in the tombs;
See Gill on "Mr 5:3".

Luke 8:28

Ver. 28. When he saw Jesus,.... Even afar off, at some considerable distance, he ran towards him, **Mr 5:6**.

He cried out, and fell down before him; that is, the man possessed with the devil did so, under his impulse, and through his agitation of him:

and with a loud voice said; which was the unclean spirit in the man:

what have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God, most high? I beseech thee torment me not; i.e. before the time;
See Gill on "Mt 8:29".

Luke 8:29

Ver. 29. For he had commanded the unclean spirit..... That had the rest of the devils under his authority, and power,

to come out of the man; this he had done, either before, or just as he came up to him; See Gill on "Mr 5:8".

For oftentimes it had caught him; possessed him, and wrought so strongly in him, and with so much fury, that there was no governing him:

and he was kept bound with chains and fetters; attempts were made to bind him, and keep him bound, but in vain: and he brake the bands;
See Gill on "Mr 5:4".

And was driven of the devil into the wilderness: into some desert and desolate place, where were the tombs and sepulchres of the dead; this was done by the prince of the legion.

Luke 8:30

Ver. 30. And Jesus asked him, saying, what is thy name?.... This question was put, not out of ignorance in Christ, but for the sake of those that were with him; and partly, that the miserable condition of this man might be the more known; and partly, that his own power might be the more manifest in the dispossession:

and he said, legion, because many devils were entered into him;
See Gill on "Mr 5:9".

Luke 8:31

Ver. 31. And they besought him,.... That is, all the devils, the whole legion of them, entreated Jesus, under whose power, and at whose dispose they were:

that he would not command them to go out into the deep; meaning, not the deep waters of the sea, for thither they ran the swine at their own request; but the bottomless pit of hell, where others of these spirits lay in chains of darkness; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "into hell": they desired, that when they went out of this man, they might not be ordered thither, or remanded to their former prison; for they knew that if he gave the word of command, they must obey; but that they might be suffered to continue in that country, and range about on earth, or be any where, rather than in hell.

Luke 8:32

Ver. 32. And there was there an herd of many swine,.... About two thousand, **Mr 5:13**,

Feeding on the mountain; See Gill on "Mr 5:11"

And they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them; which they could not do, without his leave: and he suffered them:
See Gill on "Mr 5:12" See Gill on "Mr 5:13"

Luke 8:33

Ver. 33. Then went the devils out of the man,.... Being obliged by the power of Christ, sore against their wills, having had possession of him a long time:

and entered into the swine; possessed them:

and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake; that is of Gennesaret; or the sea, as the Syriac and Persic versions read; that is, the sea of Galilee, the same with the former:

and were choked; in the waters, and died, as the Ethiopic version adds.

Luke 8:34

Ver. 34. When they that fed them saw what was done,.... That the devils went out of the man possessed by them, and entered into the herd of swine, which becoming mad therewith, ran furiously down the precipice into the sea, and were drowned:

they fled; as persons affrighted, at these uncommon and surprising events, and as afraid to see their owners:

and went and told it in the city; that is, of Gadara, or some other city near at hand; the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "in the cities"; in all the cities round about, in that country:

and in the country, or "fields", in the villages adjacent, and in the houses which were scattered about in the fields for conveniency, for rural business.

Luke 8:35

Ver. 35. Then they went out to see what was done,.... That is, the inhabitants of the city, or cities and villages, and houses in the fields; these went out from their respective places of abode, to see with their own eyes, what the swine herds had related to them, concerning the man that had been possessed with devils, and what was become of the swine:

and came to Jesus; where he was, which was not far from the sea shore:

and found the man out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus; quiet and serene, in an humble posture, and as a disciple of Christ, receiving instructions from him:

clothed, and in his right mind, and they were afraid;
See Gill on "Mr 5:15".

Luke 8:36

Ver. 36. They also which saw it,.... The disciples of Christ, or the men of the ship, or persons who lived hard by in the fields, who were eyewitnesses of these several things:

told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed;
See Gill on "Mr 5:16".

Luke 8:37

Ver. 37. Then the whole multitude,.... For it seems, a very large number of people were presently gathered together, from all parts of the country, upon the report of the swine herds, who fled, it is very likely, some one way, and some another:

of the country of the Gadarenes round about; of the country that was round about Gadara. The Vulgate Latin reads, "of the Gergesenes"; and the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, "of the Gergesenes": and they all, with one accord,

besought him to depart from them, for they were taken with great fear: lest they should suffer other and greater losses, than the loss of the swine; choosing rather that the devils should be retained among them, than Christ continue with them:

and he went up into the ship; directly, granted their request at once; not desirous of staying with such an ungrateful people, that loved their swine more than him, yea, than the bodily health and welfare of their countrymen:

and he returned back again; to Galilee, at least in a very little time, after some short discourse with the dispossessed man; having staid but a very small time in that place, just landed as it were, and not having proceeded far from the seashore.

Luke 8:38

Ver. 38. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed,.... Sensible of the power of Christ, and of the favour he had received from him, was of a quite different mind from his countrymen: and

besought him that he might be with him;
See Gill on "Mr 5:18".

But Jesus sent him away; from him, into the country:

saying, as follows.

Luke 8:39

Ver. 39. Return to thine own house,.... Which very likely was in the city of Gadara, whither he went, and throughout the whole of which he published the account of the dispossession of the devils from him: Mark adds, "to thy friends"; relations, acquaintance, and countrymen:

and show how great things God hath done unto thee; for none but God could effect such things, tacitly suggesting to him hereby, that he himself was God. Mark adds, "and hath had compassion on thee": signifying, that what he had done for him, did not arise from merit in the man, but from mercy in himself; See Gill on "Mr 5:19".

And he went his way; he obeyed the orders of Christ, as love and gratitude obliged him:

and published throughout the whole city; of Gadara, and not only there, but in the rest of the ten cities, called Decapolis, **Mr 5:20** one of which was this of Gadara, as Pliny relates {o}:

how great things Jesus had done unto him; having cast out a legion of devils from him, clothed him, and brought him to his right mind; and had not only delivered his body from a diabolical possession, but had given him spiritual and saving instructions for his soul, on which he had wrought a real work of grace.

{o} Lib. 5. c. 18.

Luke 8:40

Ver. 40. And it came to pass, that when Jesus was returned,.... From the country of the Gadarenes, to the other side of the sea of Tiberias, to Galilee; and particularly to his own city, Capernaum; **Mt 9:1**.

The people gladly received him; who were of a different cast from those he had just left; being sensible of the benefits they received from him, both by his ministry and miracles; and which was the reason of their receiving him with so much joy and gladness:

for they were all waiting for him; on the shore, looking out very eagerly for him, being earnestly desirous of his speedy return to them; having many that wanted his assistance, both for their souls and bodies, of which the following are instances.

Luke 8:41

Ver. 41. And behold, there came a man named Jairus,....
See Gill on "Mr 5:22".

and he was a ruler of the synagogue; at Capernaum; and it was the more remarkable, that such an one should come to Christ, and express any regard to his person, or faith in his power, and therefore a "behold" is prefixed to this account; See Gill on "Mt 9:18".

And he fell down at Jesus' feet; showing great reverence and humility, and as Matthew says, "worshipped him"; if not in a religious, yet in a civil way:

and besought him that he would come into his house; which was at some distance from thence, as appears by what follows.

Luke 8:42

Ver. 42. For he had one only daughter,.... And so exceedingly dear to him:

about twelve years of age;
See Gill on "Mt 9:18"

And she lay a dying, or "was near death", as the Syriac and Persic versions; or "was just ready to die", as the Ethiopic version. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it, "she was dead", or "now dead", and which agrees with **Mt 9:18**.
See Gill on "Mt 9:18".

but as he went; along the streets of Capernaum, from Matthew's house; where he had been entertained with his disciples, and others, and where he had a conversation with some of the Pharisees and John's disciples, to the ruler's house:

the people thronged him; such a vast multitude followed him to see the cure, that he was even crowded, and so pressed on all sides, that it was difficult to walk along.

Luke 8:43

Ver. 43. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years,.... The Persic version reads, "there was a woman in that city", &c. in the city of Capernaum; See Gill on "Mt 9:20".

Which had spent all her living upon physicians; she had applied to one physician and another, and had consumed all her substance in this way:

neither could be healed of any; though she had followed the directions and prescriptions of many, who pretended they were able to cure her; See Gill on "Mr 5:26".

Luke 8:44

Ver. 44. Came behind him,.... In the press and crowd of people, being ashamed to come before him, and tell him her case:

and touched the border of his garment the fringe the Jews were obliged to wear at the bottom of their garments, Nu 15:38 and which the more religious sort did, for by this they were distinguished from the common people: it is asked {p},

"who is a plebeian, or one of the common people? every one that does not read "Keriat Shema", (i.e. hear, O Israel), &c. **De 6:4** morning and evening, with the blessings belonging to it, the words of R. Meir: but the wise men say, whoever does not put on the "Tephillin" (the frontlets, **De 6:8**) Ben Azzai says, whoever has not tyuyu, "the fringe" on his garment"

See Gill on "Mt 9:20". This woman was persuaded in her own mind, if she could but touch the clothes of Christ, she should be healed, and accordingly she was:

and immediately her issue of blood staunched; stopped, and was dried up; **Mr 5:28**.

{p} T. Bab Succa, fol. 22. 1.

Luke 8:45

Ver. 45. And Jesus said, who touched me?.... This he said, not as ignorant of the person that had done it, but in order to discover her to the people, and the cure she had received, as well as her faith; See Gill on "Mr 5:30".

When all denied; both the disciples and the multitude, as many as were near him, and who might be thought to have done it; all excepting the woman, who afterwards came and declared it; for it is very likely, that as soon as she had touched his garment, and got her cure, she drew further off:

Peter, and they that were with him; the rest of the disciples, who were in company together, as appears from **Mr 5:31**

Said, Master, the multitude throng thee, and press thee, and sayest thou, who touched me? or "my garment", as the Ethiopic version reads;
See Gill on "Mr 5:31".

Luke 8:46

Ver. 46. And Jesus said, somebody hath touched me,.... Not in a common and accidental way, but with design, and in the strength of faith:

for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me: for the cure of the person that had touched him, and that not without his knowledge and will; See Gill on "Lu 6:19".

Luke 8:47

Ver. 47. And when the woman saw that she was not hid,.... From Christ, among the crowd, nor the thing that she had done. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "that he had not forgot her"; she hoping he would be diverted from taking any notice of her and her action, through the crowd of people about him;

she came trembling; for fear of the anger and resentment of Christ, and lest the favour would be revoked, and the penalty of the law inflicted; See Gill on "Mr 5:33".

And falling down before him; in the most humble manner, "at his feet", as the Arabic version reads; "and worshipped him", as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions have it; gave him the glory of the cure, and thanks for it:

she declared unto him before all the people; the whole truth of the matter, what a disease she had laboured under for so long a time, what means she had used to no purpose:

for what cause she had touched him; namely, in order to have a cure, which she believed she should have in that way:

and how she was healed immediately; as soon as ever she had touched him.

Luke 8:48

Ver. 48. And he said unto her, daughter,.... Instead of frowning upon her, and chiding her for what she had done, he addressed her in a very affable and affectionate manner; bidding her

be of good comfort; and not be afraid; this clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin version, as in **Mr 5:34** but is in the copies, and other versions:

thy faith hath made thee whole, go peace;
See Gill on "Mt 8:2".
See Gill on "Mr 5:34".
See Gill on "Lu 7:50".

Luke 8:49

Ver. 49. While he yet spake,.... The above words to the woman;

there cometh one: Mark suggests there were more than one, **Mr 5:35**,
See Gill on "Mr 5:35" and the Persic version here reads, "some of the ruler's family came"; that is, to him, who was now with Jesus: from the ruler of the synagogue's house; so the word "house" is supplied by the Syriac and Ethiopic

versions; otherwise the words would be,

from the ruler of the synagogue; which could not be, since he was still with Christ: hence some versions, as the Vulgate and Arabic, render them, "to the ruler of the synagogue"; and which give a true sense, and a right view of the case; for this messenger both came from his house, and to him:

saying to him, thy daughter is dead, trouble not the master; to bring him any further, since all hope of help was now gone. The Vulgate Latin version, instead of "master", reads "him"; and the Ethiopic version, "Jesus".

Luke 8:50

Ver. 50. But when Jesus heard it,.... The message that was brought to the ruler, and the hint that was given, that it was needless to give him any further trouble:

he answered him; not the messenger, but the father of the child, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read:

saying, fear not: do not be dismayed at this message, nor despair of help, notwithstanding such is the case:

believe only, and she shall be made whole; exercise faith in me, that I am able to raise her from the dead, and I will do it; and she shall be restored to life, and to perfect health and strength again.

Luke 8:51

Ver. 51. And when he came into the house,.... Of the ruler of the synagogue;

he suffered no man to go in: to the room, where the dead body lay:

save Peter, James and John; not one of the multitude that followed him, nor any of the disciples, but these three; who were his favourite ones, and were a sufficient number to be witnesses of the miracle:

and the father and mother of the maiden; these also were admitted. The Persic version very wrongly joins these last words with the beginning of the next verse, reading them thus, "the father and mother of the maiden, with the domestics, wept and bewailed her".

Luke 8:52

Ver. 52 And all wept and bewailed her,.... Not only her relations and friends, and the servants of the house, but the mourning women, that were hired on this occasion, and employed for this purpose:

but he said, weep not; neither in show, as the mourning women did, nor in reality, as the friends of the deceased:

she is not dead, but sleepeth;
See Gill on "Mt 9:24".
See Gill on "Mr 5:39".

Luke 8:53

Ver. 53. And they laughed him to scorn,.... The servants, neighbours, and relations, the pipers, and mourning women: these, from weeping for the dead, fell to laughing at Christ, having him and his words in the utmost derision:

knowing that she was dead: some of them having been employed in laying her out, and all of them having seen her, and were satisfied, and thoroughly assured, that she was actually dead, as ever any person was, as she doubtless was; but they were ignorant in what sense Christ meant she was not dead, but asleep; See Gill on "Mt 9:24".
See Gill on "Mr 5:39".

Luke 8:54

Ver. 54. And he put them all out,.... Of the room, where the maiden lay, all the mourners and pipers; all excepting the parents of the child, and his three disciples, This clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions; nor was it in two of Beza's ancient copies, and in two of Stephens's; but in the rest, and in the other versions:

and took hereby the hand, and called, saying; in the Syriac language, "Talitha cumi", as in **Mr 5:41**

Maid, arise;
See Gill on "Mr 5:41".

Luke 8:55

Ver. 55. And her spirit came again,.... Her soul, which was departed from her, upon the all-powerful voice of Christ, returned to her body; and "re-entered", as the Ethiopic version adds: this shows that the soul is immortal, and dies not with the body; that it exists in a separate state from it after death, and will hereafter re-enter the body, and be again united to it in the resurrection, of which this instance was a kind of pledge and emblem: where her spirit was during this time of separation, is needless, and would be curious and rash to inquire; it is enough to say with the Scripture, that it had returned, to God, that gave it, Ec 12:7 and by whom it was sent back to its body again:

and she arose straightway: from off the bed, and as Mark says, "walked"; for she was at an age capable of it, and which actions of arising and walking, clearly proved that she was alive, and in health:

and he commanded to give her meat; which was done, partly to show, not only that she was alive, but that her disorder was removed, and her appetite restored, and that she could eat and drink, as she had done before her illness; and partly, to observe that she was raised not to an immortal life, as none were before Christ, but to an animate life, which was to be supported by eating and drinking, and so a mortal one;
See Gill on "Mr 5:43".

Luke 8:56

Ver. 56. And her parents were astonished,.... At the miracle that was wrought, to see their child restored to life; to see her arise, walk, and eat, being in perfect health and strength, and no disorder attending her;

but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done. The Ethiopic version reads, "what he had done, nor any thing that was done" not that the thing itself could be concealed, but the way and manner in which, and the means by which it was done, and the circumstances of it; how that by taking her by the hand, and commanding her to arise, she forthwith arose, and walked and ate: Christ's meaning is, that he would not have them take any pains to publish this affair, or to make it more known than was necessary; not to acquaint any person with the particulars of it, but keep them as private as they could: his reasons for this, See Gill on "Mr 5:43".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 9:1

Ver. 1. Then he called his twelve disciples together,.... The Persic version reads, "all his twelve disciples", the other nine, besides the three that were with him, when he raised Jairus's daughter, recorded in the foregoing chapter; the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "the twelve apostles", for so Christ had named his disciples; See Gill on "Mt 6:13". The Syriac version only reads, "his own twelve"; and this is agreeably to Luke's way of speaking; see **Lu 8:1**.

And gave them power and authority over all devils; that is, all kinds of devils, particularly to cast them out of the bodies of men, possessed by them:

and to cure diseases; of all sorts.

Luke 9:2

Ver. 2. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God,.... The Gospel, which gives an account of the kingdom of the Messiah; of his kingly office and power; of his church, which is his kingdom, and of the government of it, by the ministration of the word, and the administration of ordinances; of the kingdom of grace in the hearts of Christ's subjects, and the nature of it; and of the kingdom of glory, and what is the saints' meetness for it, and right unto it:

and to heal the sick; of every disease of body, and thereby confirm their mission and commission from Christ, to preach the Gospel; and recommend it to men.

Luke 9:3

Ver. 3. And he said unto them, take nothing for your journey,.... Throughout the towns and cities of Judea, where they were sent to preach the Gospel:

neither staves, The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read in the singular number, "neither staff, rod, or club"; and so it was in one of Beza's ancient copies, but in all the rest in the plural, as in Matthew; which last must be the true reading, since one staff was allowed, according as in **Mr 6:8** though more than one were forbidden:

nor scrip; or bag to put provision in;
See Gill on "Mt 10:10"

Neither bread, neither money; gold, silver, or brass, to buy bread with; because they were to have it, wherever they came, given them, as their due, and the reward of their labour;

neither have two coats apiece; the word "apiece" is left out in one copy, nor is it expressed in the Vulgate Latin and the eastern versions, which read as in Mt 10:10 though the word does aptly and clearly express the sense of the prohibition, which was not that they should not have two coats among them, but not two apiece; or each man should not have two, or have change of raiment; See Gill on "Mt 10:10"

Luke 9:4

Ver. 4. And whatsoever house ye enter into,.... In any town, or city, they should come to in their journey through Judea, and should enter into for the sake of lodging, during their stay:

there abide; do not shift quarters, or move from house to house:

and thence depart; the house you come into first, go out of last, when ye leave the town or city. The Vulgate Latin and Persic versions read, and thence do not depart: and so Beza says it is read in a certain copy, but then the sense is the same, as the Ethiopic version renders it, "do not go out from thence, until ye depart"; that is, do not leave the house, till you depart out of the town or city; agreeably to which is the Arabic version, "remain in it until the time of your going out"; See Gill on "Mt 10:11".

Luke 9:5

Ver. 5. And whosoever will not receive you,.... Unto their houses:

when ye go out of the city; where lodging and entertainment are refused you;

shake off the very dust from your feet, for a testimony against them;
See Gill on "Mt 10:14" See Gill on "Mr 6:11"

Luke 9:6

Ver. 6. And they departed,.... That is, the apostles, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it: they went from Christ, and the place where he was, from Capernaum, at least from some place in Galilee:

and went through the towns; the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions add, "and cities"; that is, of Judea, as well as Galilee, even the whole land of Israel:

preaching the Gospel; which explains what is meant by the kingdom of God, **Lu 9:2** and healing everywhere; all sorts of bodily diseases, wherever they came.

Luke 9:7

Ver. 7. Now Herod the tetrarch,.... Of Galilee, and who is called a king in **Mr 6:14** as he is here in the Ethiopic version:

heard of all that was done by him; of all the miracles that were wrought by Christ, and his apostles; the fame of which were the more spread through the mission of the apostles, and the journey they took through all the towns and cities of Galilee, which were in Herod's jurisdiction; by which means he, and his court, came to the knowledge of them, the whole country, ringing with the account of the same:

and he was perplexed; anxious, and distressed, not knowing well what to think of Christ, and the different sentiments of men about him: be was afraid lest he should be John the Baptist risen from the dead, whom he had beheaded: he hesitated about it at first, though he afterwards was fully persuaded, in his own mind, that it was he, as some affirmed; and this gave him great uneasiness, and filled him with distress and horror:

because that it was said of some that John was risen from the dead; and he began to fear it was true, though willing to disbelieve it, at least to make a question of it, especially in public; though in private, to his own family and servants, he was free to tell his mind.

Luke 9:8

Ver. 8. And of some, that Elias had appeared,.... Who had been translated, body and soul, to heaven, and whom the Jews expected a little before the coming of the Messiah:

and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again; that is, one of the former prophets. It is well known, that the Jews distinguish the prophets into the former and latter; the books of the prophets of the Old Testament are so distinguished; the writings of the former prophets are those of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 of Samuel, and the first and second of Kings: the latter prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, which are the greater prophets, and the twelve lesser ones: and in the Talmud {q} it is asked,

"who are Mynwvarh Myaybn, "the former prophets?" Says R. Huna, they are David, Samuel, and Solomon--and why are they called former prophets? to except (or distinguish) them from Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi, who are the latter."

So that by one of the old prophets, may be meant one of those that were before the times of Elias, as Samuel or David.

{q} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 48. 2.

Luke 9:9

Ver. 9. And Herod said, John have I beheaded,.... That is, he had ordered him to be beheaded, and which was accordingly done by the executioner; of which he had full proof, since the head was brought him in a charger, and which he delivered to the daughter of Herodias:

but who is this of whom I hear such things? such, wonderful things, such amazing miracles, as were done by Christ: he seems to have reasoned after this manner with himself, surely this cannot be John, for I have beheaded him! and yet who should it be? and whereas some affirmed, that it was John that was risen from the dead, he began to fear that it was he;

and he desired to see him: that he might be satisfied whether it was he or not; for he had had personal knowledge of John, and converse with him, and therefore, upon sight of him, could tell whether it was he that was risen from the dead, or not; but we do not find Herod had a sight of Christ, until he was sent by Pilate to him at Jerusalem; see
Lu 23:7.

Luke 9:10

Ver. 10. And the apostles, when they were returned,.... From the several parts of the land where they had been sent, and had been preaching and working miracles, having gone through their circuit, and finished the service they were sent to do:

told him all they had done; what doctrines they had taught, how they had been received, and what success they met with, what miracles they had wrought, how they had dispossessed devils, and healed all sorts of diseases:

and he took them and went aside privately; by ship, over some part of the sea of Galilee; See Gill on "Mr 6:32"

into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida; the city of Andrew and Peter, **Joh 1:44**, and which, as Josephus {r} says, was by the lake of Gennesaret, and by Philip called Julias; and this desert place was the desert of Bethsaida, a lonely, wild, uncultivated, and desolate place, not far from it. Hither Christ went with his disciples, that they might be retired and alone, and have some refreshment and rest from their labours, and where they might privately converse together; and he give them some fresh instructions, and directions, and comfort.

{r} Antiqu. l. 18. c. 3.

Luke 9:11

Ver. 11. And the people, when they knew it,.... Having heard of his departure from others, and seeing him go off themselves:

followed him; not by ship, but on foot, going over the bridge at Chainmath of Gadara, and got thither before Christ and his disciples did:

and he received them; very kindly, and in a very affectionate manner, and with great respect, though they had prevented the private interview between him and his apostles;

and he spake unto them of the kingdom of God; of the Gospel dispensation, now setting up, and of the doctrines and ordinances of it, of the governing principle of grace in the hearts of his people, and of the glory of the world to come:

and healed them that had need of healing; for their bodies; as well as preached the doctrines of grace for the good of their souls; he both taught doctrine and wrought miracles.

Luke 9:12

Ver. 12. When the day began to wear away,.... Or "to decline", as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions; or "to incline", as the Syriac; that is, as the Ethiopic version renders it, "when the sun was declining" towards the "horizon" and was almost set; or "when the evening time was come", as the Persic version:

then came the twelve; that is, "the disciples", as the Persic version; or "his disciples", as the Syriac: and

said unto him, send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about; the place where they were, round about the city of Bethsaida, the several adjacent houses in the fields, villages, towns, and cities:

and lodge, and get victuals; where they might have lodging for that night, it being too far for them to reach their habitations that evening; and also that they might provide themselves with proper and sufficient food, which was not to be had in the place where they were:

for we are here in a desert place; which afforded no conveniency for lodging, nor any supply of food.

Luke 9:13

Ver. 13. And he said to them, give ye them to eat,.... Signifying, that it was not his will to dismiss people, and send them scattering abroad into the adjacent cities, towns, or houses; and that there was no need of it, but that his will was, that they should be supplied with provisions out of their stock:

and they said, we have no more than five loaves and two fishes; and these loaves were barley loaves, and the fishes small, **Joh 6:9**

except we should go and buy meat for all this people; which would at least cost them two hundred pence; and which they represent as impossible to be done, either through want of so much money, or the scarcity of provision in those parts; where, had they money, it would be difficult, at least to get such a quantity of provisions at once, which so great a number of persons required.

Luke 9:14

Ver. 14. For they were about five thousand men,.... Beside women and children, Mt 14:21,

and he said to his disciples, make them to sit down by fifties in a company; and by hundreds also; some companies had a hundred apiece in them, and others fifty; and which was done partly, for the more easy numbering of them, and partly and chiefly for the more convenient distribution of food to them;
See Gill on "Mr 6:39".
See Gill on "Mr 6:40".

Luke 9:15

Ver. 15. And they did so, and made them all sit down. The disciples did not dispute the case any longer with Christ, but obeyed his orders, and ranged the multitude in companies, a hundred in one, and fifty in another; and ordered them to sit down in their distinct companies and ranks upon the green grass. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "and they all sat down"; and so it is read in some copies of the Vulgate Latin version.

Luke 9:16

Ver. 16. Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes,.... Into his hands, being brought him by the disciples from the lad that had them:

and looking up to heaven: to his Father there, from whom all the mercies and blessings of life come;

he blessed them; either asked, or commanded a blessing on them, that they might multiply and increase, that there might be a sufficiency for all the people, and that, they might be nourishing to them. Beza observes, that in his most ancient copy, it is read, "he blessed upon them"; which perfectly agrees with the Jewish way of speaking, tph le Kdb "he that blesseth upon the bread"; Nyyh le Krb "he that blesseth upon the wine"; and so upon the fruits of trees, and upon the fruits of the earth, and upon other things {s};

and brake; the loaves, and divided the fishes into parts:

and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude; as they sat in ranks, and in their distinct companies.

{s} Misn. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7.

Luke 9:17

Ver. 17. And they did eat, and were all filled,.... Every one had a part, and enough:

and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them, twelve baskets; See Gill on "Mt 14:20".

Luke 9:18

Ver. 18. And it came to pass, as he was alone praying,.... To his God and Father, for himself as man, and mediator; for the success of his Gospel, and the increase of his interest; and for his disciples, that they might have a clearer revelation of him; and which they had, as appears in their after confession of him by Peter, as the mouth of them all. The place where he now retired for private devotion, was somewhere in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi; for he was now gone from the desert of Bethsaida, as appears from Mt 16:13 and when he is said to be alone, the meaning is, that he was retired from the multitude, but not from his disciples; for it follows,

his disciples were with him, in this solitary place:

and he asked them, being with them alone;

saying, Whom say the people that I am? what are the sentiments of the common people, or of the people in general concerning me? The Alexandrian copy, and the Arabic version read, "men", as in Mt 16:13.
See Gill on "Mt 16:13".

Luke 9:19

Ver. 19. They answering said, John the Baptist,.... This was the opinion of some who thought that he was risen from the dead, as in **Lu 9:7**.

but some say Elias; the prophet, and the Tishbite; who according to the Jewish notion, was to be the forerunner of the Messiah, so in **Lu 7:8**.

and others say: that one of the old prophets is risen again; thus were they divided in their sentiments about him.
See Gill on "Lu 9:8"

Luke 9:20

Ver. 20. He said unto them, but whom say ye that I am?.... Which was the main thing he had in view in this private conference; and in order to introduce which, he puts the former question:

Peter answering: in the name of the rest of the disciples, they assenting to it:

said, the Christ of God; The Persic version reads, "Christ God"; the Messiah, who is the Son of God, and God over all, blessed for ever. The Cambridge copy of Beza's reads, "the Christ, the Son of God".
See Gill on "Lu 2:26".

Luke 9:21

Ver. 21. And he strictly charged them, and commanded them,.... Though he highly approved of this their confession, and pronounced Peter blessed upon it; and signified that it was a discovery which flesh and blood could not make, but what was made to him his Father: yet he gave them a strict charge, and laid his commands on them,

to tell no man that thing; that he was the Messiah, and the eternal Son of God, and the true God, as well as the son of man, and really man: the reasons for this: See Gill on "Mt 16:20".

Luke 9:22

Ver. 22. Saying, the son of man must suffer many things,.... In his person and character, in his soul and body, at the hands of God, and of men, and devils:

and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and Scribes; who made up the grand sanhedrim of the nation: by these he was to be, and was rejected as the Messiah; and when put up with another which should be released, that other should be preferred, and he rejected; and which was done at the instigation of these men, who were the builders; of whom it was foretold that they should reject the head stone of the corner, Ps 118:22

and be slain; or put to death, with the death of the cross:

and be raised the third day; according to the types and prophecies of the Old Testament. This he added for the comfort of his disciples.

Luke 9:23

Ver. 23. And he said to them all,.... Not only to all the disciples, but "to the multitude", as the Arabic version renders it, who were now called unto him, with his disciples, as is clear from **Mr 8:34**,

any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me; the same is said here, as in
Mt 16:24,
See Gill on "Mt 16:24",

See Gill on "Mr 8:34", only here the word, "daily", is added; and which, though as Beza observes, is not in the Complutensian edition, nor in five ancient copies; yet is in others, and in the Vulgate Latin, and in all the Oriental versions; and to be retained, as having a very considerable emphasis in it; showing that afflictions, trials, and persecutions of one sort or another, are to be expected every day by the people of God, and to be continually submitted to, and borne with cheerfulness.

Luke 9:24

Ver. 24. For whosoever will save his life,....
See Gill on "Mt 16:25".

Luke 9:25

Ver. 25. For what is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world,.... Or what profit will it be unto him? all the honours, riches, and enjoyments of it will be of no use and service to him if he himself is lost:

and lose himself; or his own soul; for he that loses his soul, which is his better and immortal part, loses himself:

or be cast away: finally, and eternally, or "suffer loss" of eternal happiness and glory; that is, perishes, and is destroyed with an everlasting destruction; See Gill on "Mt 16:26".

Luke 9:26

Ver. 26. For whosoever shall be ashamed of me,.... Of my person and offices, of me, as the Messiah, Saviour, and Redeemer, of my grace, righteousness, blood, and sacrifice:

and of my words; of the doctrines of the Gospel, one and another of them. In Mark, it is added, "in this adulterous and sinful generation"; having a peculiar respect to the people of the Jews, and the age in which Christ lived; but is true of any other people and age in which men live:

of him shall the son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory;

in the glory of his human nature, when his glorious body, as now, in heaven, shall be seen by all; and in the glory of his office, as mediator, and the judge of all the earth; and in the glory of his divine nature, which will appear in the resurrection of the dead, in the gathering of all nations before him, in separating one sort from another, and in passing and executing the definitive sentence on them; particularly the glory of his omnipotence and omniscience will be very conspicuous:

and in his Father's; which is the same with his own, as he is the Son of God, and the brightness of his glory; and which, as mediator, he has from him, and will be the object of the saints' vision to all eternity;

and of the holy angels; who shall attend him at his second coming, and be employed in various offices under him. The Syriac version renders, these last clauses as they are in Mt 16:27 in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels;
See Gill on "Mt 16:27".
See Gill on "Mr 8:38".

Luke 9:27

Ver. 27. But I tell you of a truth,.... And let it be received as such; you may assure yourselves of it, that not only at the last day, the son of man will come in this glorious manner, and show his resentment to all such as have been ashamed of him; but, also

there be some standing here, which shall not, taste of death till they see the kingdom of God; the Gospel dispensation visibly taking place, both among Jews and Gentiles, upon the resurrection of Christ, and the pouring fourth of his Spirit; and when it should come in power both in the conversion of God's elect in great numbers, and in the destruction of the Jewish nation, for their rejection, of the Messiah:
See Gill on "Mt 16:28"

Luke 9:28

Ver. 28. And it came to pass, about an eight days after those sayings,.... About a week after he had declared the above things, at, or near to Caesarea Philippi. The other evangelists, Matthew and Mark, say it was six days after: the reason of this difference is, because Luke takes in the day in which he delivered these sayings, and that in which he was transfigured, and they only reckon the intermediate days:

he took Peter, and John, and James; the same that he admitted to be with him at the raising of Jairus's daughter, and in the garden afterwards:

and went up into a mountain to pray; to his God and Father, that his disciples might have a visible display of his glory, as an emblem and pledge of that in which he shall hereafter appear: it was usual with Christ to go up into a mountain to pray; Mt 14:23.
See Gill on "Mt 17:1".

Luke 9:29

Ver. 29. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered,.... It became exceeding bright and glorious, it shone like the sun,
Mt 17:2 and hereby his prayer was answered; and thus, as Christ was heard and answered, whilst he was yet speaking, so are his people sometimes; and even their countenance is altered, when they are favoured with communion with God, and instead of a sad and dejected countenance, they have a cheerful one.

And his raiment was white and glistering; it was as white as the light, as snow, and whiter than any fuller on earth could whiten, as the other evangelists say, and so glistened exceedingly;
See Gill on "Mt 17:2".
See Gill on "Mr 9:3".

Luke 9:30

Ver. 30. And behold there talked with him two men,.... Of great note and fame:

which were Moses and Elias; the one the giver of the law from God to the people "of Israel", as well as the redeemer of them from Egyptian bondage, and who led them through the wilderness, to the borders of Canaan's land; and the other a prophet famous for his zeal for God, and his worship, and who was translated, soul and body, to heaven: these appeared and talked with Christ on the mount; and what they talked of is mentioned in the following verse;
See Gill on "Mt 17:3".

Luke 9:31

Ver. 31. Who appeared in glory,.... In a very glorious manner, in most divine and beautiful forms to Christ, and to his disciples:

and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem; the word, rendered "decease", is "Exodus", the name of the second book of Moses; so called from the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, it gives an account of; and which departure is expressed by this word, in Heb 11:22 and to which the allusion is here. Death is a departure out of this world, and goes by this name, **2Pe 1:15** and so here it signifies Christ's death, or exit, which he was to make at Jerusalem; and Moses and Elias talk with him about this; the nature, manner, use, and near approach of it; and to which they might encourage him, as man. The sufferings and death of Christ were what Moses and the prophets had foretold; and these two speak of the same things now; and which must serve to confirm what Christ a few, days ago had showed his disciples, that he must go to Jerusalem, and there suffer and die. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that the ascension of Christ to heaven is contained in the word "Exodus", which was his final departure out of this world, as well as his sufferings and death; and especially if there is any, allusion to the Israelites' departure out of Egypt, which was in victory and triumph; and the rather, because "the time of his receiving up", **Lu 9:51** may be thought to refer to this; and so Moses and Elias conversed with him, not only about, his sufferings and death; but his ascension, and of which also the "Exodus", or going of Elias out of this world to heaven, which was by a translation and ascension, was a figure. Some render this word, "Expedition", and think it refers to the whole affair of the redemption of Christ's people by him, from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law, by his sufferings and death; of which the deliverance of the people of Israel out of Egypt was a lively representation: an expedition which Moses was sent upon, and accomplished: but now the discourse turns upon an expedition of greater importance, which shortly was to be accomplished at Jerusalem, where Christ was to be arraigned, and condemned, and then suffer without the gates of it, in order to obtain eternal redemption for the whole Israel of God.

Luke 9:32

Ver. 32. But Peter, and they that were with him,.... The other two disciples, James and John;

were heavy with sleep; as they afterwards were in the garden, while Christ was praying, as he had been now; being weary with the labours of the day past, and it being now night, as is very probable, since that was an usual time Christ spent in prayer:

and when they were awake, The Syriac version reads, "scarcely awake"; they were so heavy with sleep, that it was with difficulty they were awaked out of it, even by the rays of light and glory that were about them. The Ethiopic version adds, "suddenly"; such a lustre darted from these glorious forms, especially from the body of Christ, as at once surprised them out of their sleep; and being thoroughly awake,

they saw his glory; the brightness of his countenance, and the whiteness of his raiment: and the two men that stood with him: Moses and Elias, and the glory in which they appeared.

Luke 9:33

Ver. 33. And it came to pass, as they departed from him,.... That is, as Moses and Elias departed from Christ; or "when they began to depart", as the Syriac version renders it; or "would depart", as the Arabic and Persic versions; seemed desirous of going, or made some signal or other by which the disciples perceived they were about to go; for, as yet, they were not gone;

Peter said unto Jesus, master, it is good for us to be here, let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias; See Gill on "Mt 17:4"

not knowing what he said, nor "what to say", as Mark observes, being in a surprise, and not in a situation to consider and weigh things well, whether what he said was right and proper, or not;
See Gill on "Mt 17:4"

Luke 9:34

Ver. 34. While he thus spake there came a cloud,.... While Peter was making the above request, before an answer was returned, a cloud appeared, a very uncommon one, as a symbol of the divine presence: "and overshadowed them"; Jesus, Moses, Elias, and the disciples:

and they feared as they entered into the cloud; either as they themselves entered into it, that coming gradually over them, because of the glory of it, and the solemnity that attended it; or as Moses and Elias entered into it; and so the Syriac and Persic versions read, "they feared when they saw Moses and Elias enter into the cloud"; which took them out of their sight: just as the cloud received Jesus out of the sight of his disciples, when he ascended to heaven, **Ac 1:9**.

Luke 9:35

Ver. 35. And there came, a voice out of the cloud,....
See Gill on "Mt 17:5".

Luke 9:36

Ver. 36. And when, the voice was past,.... The above words were delivered, and it was heard no more: Jesus was found alone; by his disciples; Moses and Elias being gone, and he in the same form in which he was before his transfiguration.

And they kept it close; as Christ strictly charged them, when coming down from the mount with them; Mt 17:9.

And told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen; no, not any of their fellow disciples, until that Christ was risen from the dead.

Luke 9:37

Ver. 37. And it came to pass, that on the next day,.... For Jesus and his disciples staid all night on the mountain:

when they were come down from the hill; to the bottom of it:

much people met him. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions read, "met them".

Luke 9:38

Ver. 38. And behold, a man of the company,.... One that was in the company, and among the multitude, that met him:

cried out; with great vehemence and earnestness:

saying, Master; doctor, or "Rabbi":

I beseech thee: most humbly, for he was now on his knees:

look upon my son: with pity and compassion, and help him:

for he is mine only child; wherefore he was dear unto him, and he was greatly concerned for him, and earnestly desirous of his being restored to health; and this he mentions, to move the compassion of Christ.

Luke 9:39

Ver. 39. And, lo, a spirit taketh him,.... An evil spirit, the devil, as in **Lu 9:42** seizes and possesses him at once,

and he suddenly crieth out; in a most terrible manner, giving dreadful shrieks, as soon as he perceives that he is seized by the demon:

and it teareth him, that he foameth again; throws him into convulsions, so that he foams at the mouth: and so we read {t} of a son of a certain Jew, that

"a certain spirit passed before him and hurt him, convulsed his mouth, and his eyes, and his hands were convulsed, and he could not speak."

And bruising him; by dashing him against the wall, or throwing him to the ground:

hardly departeth from him; is very loath to leave him, even after he has distressed, convulsed, and bruised him in this dreadful manner, such was his cruelty and malice; See Gill on "Mt 17:15" See Gill on "Mr 9:18" {t} Zohar in Lev. fol. 21. 4.

Luke 9:40

Ver. 40. And I besought thy disciples,.... The nine disciples that were left behind, whilst Christ, and the other three, were gone up to the mountain:

to cast him out; the devil out of his child:

and they could not;
See Gill on "Mt 17:16".

Luke 9:41

Ver. 41. And Jesus answering, said,.... To the father of the child, and those that were with him; and with a particular view to the Scribes and Pharisees, who had been insulting the disciples, and triumphing over them, because of their inability to cast out the evil spirit: for the words are not spoken to the disciples, as they might seem at first view to be, and as the Persic version renders them, "and Jesus turned his face to the disciples, and said"; but to the unbelieving Jews,

O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? bring thy son hither;
See Gill on "Mt 17:17".

Luke 9:42

Ver. 42. And as he was yet a coming,.... Whilst he was in the way bringing to Jesus, before he came to him:

the devil threw him down, and tare him; knowing who Jesus was, and that he was able to dispossess him: and having reason to believe he would, was resolved to do all the mischief he could, and give him all the pain add distress he was able, whilst he was in him; and therefore threw him to the ground, and convulsed him in a terrible manner at the same time:

and Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit; for his malice and cruelty, and ordered him to depart:

and healed the child; by dispossessing the spirit:

and delivered him again to his father; free from the possession, and in perfect health, and which must be very pleasing and acceptable to him.

Luke 9:43

Ver. 43. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God,.... Or at "the greatness", or "majesty of God"; which was displayed in this cure: for the great power of God was manifestly seen in it, to the astonishment of the disciples, who could not cure this child, and of the parent and friends of it, and of the whole multitude: and to the confusion of the Scribes and Pharisees:

but while they wondered every one, at all things which Jesus did; and were applauding him for them, and speaking in his praise on account of them:

he said unto his disciples; privately, when they were alone together, the following words, that he might not seem to be lifted up with the praise of men; and also to show their inconstancy, that those who, now admired him, would one day crucify him; and to take off the thoughts of the disciples from a temporal kingdom and glory, they were so much in expectation of, and which every miracle of Christ, and the applause he got thereby among men, strengthened them in.

Luke 9:44

Ver. 44. Let these sayings sink down into your ears,.... The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "in your hearts": Christ's sense is, that they would, diligently attend to them, seriously consider them, and carefully lay them up in their memories; and what he refers to are not the words he had spoken, but what he was about to say; namely, as follow:

for the son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men; by whom he should be killed, though he should rise again the third day;
See Gill on "Mt 17:22" See Gill on "Mt 17:23"

Luke 9:45

Ver. 45. But they understood not this saying,.... What was meant by being betrayed into the hands of men, and by his being put to death; they knew not, how these things could possibly be, for they could not by any means reconcile them with the notions they had of a temporal Redeemer, and victorious Messiah:

and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not; the true meaning of this saying was hid from their understanding, which was veiled with the above notion of the worldly grandeur of the Messiah, that they did not take it in;

and they feared to ask him of that saying, of the meaning of it; imagining that he had a secret mystical meaning in it, which they could not reach; lest he should reproach them with their dulness and stupidity; or should rebuke them with the like sharpness and severity he had reproved Peter not long ago, upon the same head.

Luke 9:46

Ver. 46. Then there arose a reasoning among them,.... The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, "a thought entered into them"; suggested very likely by Satan, which broke out into words, and issued in a warm dispute among them; and this was in the way, as they were travelling from Caesarea Philippi, to Capernaum; see **Mr 9:33**.

Which of them should be greatest; that is, "in the kingdom of heaven", as in Mt 18:1 in the kingdom of the Messiah, which they expected would be a temporal one: wherefore the dispute was not about degrees in glory, nor in grace; nor who should be the greatest apostle and preacher of the Gospel; but who should be prime minister to the king Messiah, when he should set up his monarchy in all its grandeur and glory.

Luke 9:47

Ver. 47. And Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart,.... Not by any words he had heard; for the dispute was on the road, as they came along behind him; but as the omniscient God, who is the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, he was privy to all their ambition, and the vanity of their minds, and to all their reasonings and debates: though he was before them, and out of the reach of hearing of them: and when he came to Capernaum, after having asked them what they disputed about by the way;

he took a child and set him by him. The Ethiopic version reads, "before them", the disciples; and Matthew and Mark say, "he set him in the midst of them"; all which were true, Jesus sitting in the midst of them; so, that the child he set by him, was in the middle of them and before them; See Gill on "Mt 18:2".

Luke 9:48

Ver. 48. And said unto them, whosoever shalt receive this child,.... Or "one such little child", as in Mt 18:5 and so the Syriac version here, "a child like to this"; and the Arabic version, "one like to this child"; not in age, but in meekness and humility; one that is not proud and haughty, ambitious of worldly honour, and envious at the superior state of others: whoever receives such an one into his house and heart, and the Gospel he preaches,

in my name; because he belongs to me, is sent by me, and represents me, and delivers my message:

receiveth me; represented by him, and will be so taken:

and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me;
See Gill on "Mr 9:37"

For he that is least among you all; that is so, in his own opinion, and behaves as such in his conduct, who is lowly and meek, and humble; and so the Ethiopic version, rather interpreting than translating, renders it, "for he that makes himself humble, who is lesser than all"; who considers himself as the least of the apostles, and unworthy to be one, as did the Apostle Paul:

the same shall be great; shall be highly honoured with gifts, and made greatly useful, as the above mentioned apostle was: a saying like this, the Jews have {u};

"every one, wmue Nyjqmh, "that makes himself little", for the words of the law in this world, lwdg hven, "shall be made great" in the world to come;"

that is, in the days of the Messiah: and again it is said by {w} them, "worthy is he that makes himself little in this world, how great and high shall he be in that world!--whoever is little shall be great, and he that is great shall be little."

{u} T. Bab Bava Metzia, fol. 85. 2. {w} Zohar in Num. for. 70. 1. & Tosaphta in Zohar in Gen. fol. 76. 2.

Luke 9:49

Ver. 49. And John answered and said, Master,.... The Syriac and Persic versions read, "our Master":

we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him;
See Gill on "Mr 9:38"

Because he followeth not with us; the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, "because he followeth not thee with us"; did not join in company with them, and follow Christ along with them, and as they did.

Luke 9:50

Ver. 50. And Jesus said unto him, forbid him not,.... "Or forbid not" him, or any other so doing:

for he that is not against us, is for us: in two exemplars of Beza's it is read, "for he is not against you": the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, instead of "us", in both clauses read "you", and so likewise the Persic and Ethiopic versions;
See Gill on "Mr 9:39",
See Gill on "Mr 9:40".

Luke 9:51

Ver. 51. And it came to pass, when the time was come,.... Or "days were fulfilled", an usual Hebraism; when the period of time fixed for his being in Galilee was come to an end: when he had fulfilled his ministry, and finished all his sayings, and wrought all the miracles he was to work in those parts; when he was to quit this country, and go into Judea, and up to Jerusalem, signified in the next clause:

that he should be received up; or as all the Oriental versions rightly render the words, "when the time, or days of his ascension were fulfilled"; not of his ascension to heaven, as interpreters generally understand the passage, because the word is used of that, in Mr 16:19 **Ac 1:2** much less as others, of his being taken and lifted up from the earth upon the cross, and so signifies his crucifixion, and sufferings, and death; for of neither of these can it be said, that the time of them was come, or the days fulfilled, in which either of these should be: for if Christ was now going to the feast of tabernacles, as some think, it must be above half a year before his death, and still longer before his ascension to heaven: and if to the feast of dedication, it was above three months to his ascension: hence interpreters that go this way, are obliged to interpret it, that the time drew near, or was drawing on, or the days were almost fulfilled; whereas the expression is full and strong, that the time was come, and the days were fulfilled; and which was true in the sense hinted at, that now the time was up, that Jesus must leave the low lands of Galilee, having finished his work there; and go into the higher country of Judea, and so up to Jerusalem; for of his ascension from Galilee to Jerusalem are the words to be understood;
See Gill on "Mt 19:1"

See Gill on "Mr 10:1" And it is observable that after this, he never went into Galilee any more; and this sense is confirmed by what follows:

he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem; or "strengthened his face", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; set his face like a flint, as in **Isa 1:7** denoting not impudence, as hardening of the face is used in Pr 21:29 but boldness, courage, constancy and firmness of mind: or "he prepared his face", as the Syriac; or "turned his face", as the Arabic, he looked that way, and set forward; or as the Persic version renders it, "he made a firm purpose", he resolved upon it, and was determined to go to Jerusalem, his time being up in Galilee; and though he knew what he was to meet with and endure; that he should bear the sins of his people, the curse of the law, and wrath of God; that he should have many enemies, men and devils to grapple with, and undergo a painful, shameful, and accursed death; yet none of these things moved him, he was resolutely bent on going thither, and accordingly prepared for his journey;
See Gill on "2Ki 12:17".

Luke 9:52

Ver. 52. And sent messengers before his face,.... Who very likely were his two disciples, James and John, since they so highly resented the ill treatment their master met with from the Samaritans:

and they went; before him:

and entered into a village of the Samaritans; or "city", as the Vulgate Latin, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, and so one of Stephens's copies; which lay in the way from Galilee to Judea, where the disciples had been forbid to enter, that is, in order to preach,
Mt 10:5

To make ready for him; to prepare a lodging, and proper food for him and his disciples, as they passed on in their journey, for his intention was not to make any stay there.

Luke 9:53

Ver. 53. And they did not receive him,.... The Ethiopic version reads "them", the messengers; but it should rather seem that they did receive the messengers, and promised them lodging and entertainment; being glad that so great a person would honour them with his presence, hoping that miracles would be done by him, among them; and that he would stay with them, and show some approbation of them, and their worship; but when Christ came in person, with his disciples and the multitude, they would not admit him; the reason follows,

because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem: by all circumstances, by his words and looks, and gestures; by all that they could see and hear, and learn from him, his determination was to make no stay with them, but proceed on to Jerusalem, after he had took a night's lodging with them, and had refreshed himself and company and therefore they would not receive him: it had been of a long time a controversy between the Jews and Samaritans, which was the right place of worship; whether at the temple at Jerusalem, or whether at their temple on Mount Gerizzim? Now if Christ would have interested himself in this contest, in favour of them, and would have staid with them, and worshipped where they did, they would have gladly received him; but they perceived he was going to Jerusalem, either to keep the feast of "tabernacles" there, or the feast of the dedication of the temple; and if the latter, it must be still more provoking to them, because it showed, that he preferred that temple to theirs: and however, it seems to be on this account that they would not admit him, because he favoured the temple worship at Jerusalem; otherwise his bare going thither, could not give the offence.

Luke 9:54

Ver. 54. And when his disciples, James and John, saw this,.... The Persic version reads thus; when "James and John, and the disciples saw this"; that is, the other disciples besides them, so making all the disciples say what follows; whereas only those two are intended, who having been the messengers, were the more provoked at this indignity to their Lord and master:

they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them; being enraged at this conduct of the Samaritans towards, Christ, and burning with love to him, and zeal for his honour; being "Boanerges's", sons of thunder, they were for punishing of them in a most terrible manner, even with, fire from heaven; by which Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain, were destroyed: this they doubted not of doing, knowing what miraculous power was conferred upon them; but did not think proper to attempt to exert it, until they had asked leave of Christ to do it:

even as Elias did; upon the two captains of fifties, with their fifties, as recorded in **2Ki 1:9** This clause was wanting in a certain copy of Beza's, and is not in the Vulgate Latin version; but is in other copies and versions, and by all means to be retained.

Luke 9:55

Ver. 55. But he turned and rebuked them,.... He turned himself about to them, and looking upon them with a stern countenance, sharply reproved them for their intemperate zeal, their passion of wrath, and anger, and desire of revenge:

and said, ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; or do not consider that this is not the true spirit of zeal, but of anger and revenge; and is not agreeable to the spirit of the meek and humble followers of Christ, or to the Spirit of God, and those gifts of his bestowed on them, nor to the spirit of the Gospel dispensation: so good men, for want of attention, may not know sometimes from what spirit they act; taking that for a good one, which is a very bad one; being covered with specious pretenses of love and zeal, and the examples of former saints; not observing the difference of persons; times, and things.

Luke 9:56

Ver. 56. For the son of man,.... Meaning himself, in his state of humiliation:

is not come to destroy men's lives; the word "men's" is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions: and both words, "men's lives", are left out in the Arabic version:

but to save them; as they might easily observe, by his casting out devils from the bodies of men, and healing all sorts of diseases: and therefore, though it was agreeably to the legal dispensation, and the times of Elijah, to punish offenders in such a manner, it was not agreeably to the Gospel dispensation, and to the ends of the Messiah's coming into the world: so far in this verse, and the latter part of the former verse, are left out in five ancient copies of Beza's, and in the Ethiopic version, but are in the rest of the Eastern versions, and in other copies, and are rightly retained:

and they went to another village; in Samaria, more civil and courteous, and less prejudiced, and where they got lodging and entertainment.

Luke 9:57

Ver. 57. And it came to pass, as they went in the way,.... From one village of the Samaritans, to the other; though if this is the same history related in **Mt 8:19** it was as Christ went from Capernaum to the sea side, in order to go to the other side of it; and must be inserted here, without regard to the order of time:

a certain man said unto him; if the same as in Matthew, he is there said to be a "Scribe";

Lord, I will follow thee, wheresoever thou goest. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read these words by way of question, "Lord, shall I not follow thee wheresoever thou goest?" See Gill on "Mt 8:19".

Luke 9:58

Ver. 58. And Jesus said unto him, foxes have holes,.... Both the words of this man to Christ, and Christ's answer to him, are exactly the same as in Matthew, which makes it look as if it was the same history; though it is not improbable, that Christ might be accosted in the same manner by another person, at another time and place, and return a like answer to each; See Gill on "Mt 8:20".

Luke 9:59

Ver. 59. And he said unto another, follow me,.... According to Matthew, one of his disciples, who had attended him some time, and whom he now called to the ministerial work; See Gill on "Mt 8:20". The Ethiopic version reads, "another said to him, shall I not follow thee?" but without any foundation: they are certainly the words of Christ, directed to another person, at the same time he met with the former:

but he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father; See Gill on "Mt 8:21".

Luke 9:60

Ver. 60. Jesus said unto him, let the dead bury the dead,....
See Gill on "Mt 8:22".

but go thou and preach the kingdom of God; that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, the Gospel dispensation is now ushering in, and the kingdom of the Messiah is setting up; go and publish the things concerning the kingdom of grace, which lies not in outward rites and ceremonies, but in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and declare the things relating to the kingdom of glory, and eternal life and happiness; assert, that unless a man is born again, and has a better righteousness than his own, he is neither fit for, nor has he a right unto everlasting bliss.

Luke 9:61

Ver. 61. And another also said,.... "To him", as the Syriac and Arabic versions add, that is, to Christ; the Ethiopic version reads, "and a third said to him"; for this is the third person mentioned in this relation of Luke's; only two are spoken of by Matthew, but a third is added here:

Lord, I will follow thee; he moves it himself, to be a disciple of his, and a preacher of his Gospel, only with this condition:

but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house: as Elisha desired Elijah, that he might go and kiss his father and his mother and then he promises he would follow him, 1Ki 19:20. The Syriac version adds, "and I will come"; and the Persic, "and give commands, and then, will I come": and the phrase not only signifies, that he desired to take leave of his friends, but to compose and set in order his family affairs, and dispose of his worldly effects among his domestics, relations, and friends, in the best manner he could; and then he should have leisure, and be at liberty to follow Christ, and attend his service.

Luke 9:62

Ver. 62. And Jesus said unto him,.... The copulative "and", is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions:

no man having put his hand to the plough; or "ploughshare", as reads the Syriac version; or "plough handle", as the Persic; referring, as Beza thinks, to the business of Elisha, in 1Ki 19:19

And looking back; behind him; for the ploughman ought to look before him, on his plough, and the ground he is ploughing, or he is not fit to be a ploughman; nor will he make proper furrows, or do his work well; and so he that enters upon the ministerial work, and looks back, and engages himself in the affairs of the world, sets his heart on them, and spends his time in them,

is not fit for the kingdom of God: that is, to preach the kingdom of God, as in **Lu 9:60**. He cannot serve God and mammon, his own interest, and the interest of Christ; he cannot rightly perform the work of the ministry, whilst his thoughts and time are taken up in the affairs of the world.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 10:1

Ver. 1. After these things,.... After the calling and mission of the twelve apostles, and giving them their powers, commissions, and instructions, with other things that followed thereon; **Lu 9:1**

the Lord appointed other seventy also; not that he had appointed before seventy, and now made an appointment of seventy more; but as the Syriac version renders it, "Jesus separated out of his disciples, seventy others" that is, besides the twelve, whom he chose and called out, from among the multitude of the disciples, and ordained them apostles, he selected and ordained seventy others, in allusion to the seventy elders of Israel, Nu 11:16. The Vulgate Latin and Persic versions read, "seventy two", and so does Epiphanius {x}. The Jewish sanhedrim is sometimes said to consist of seventy one {y}, and sometimes of seventy two {z}; though commonly said to be of the round number seventy, as these disciples might be. The above mentioned ancient writer gives the names of some of them, as the seven deacons; Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas; together with Matthias, Mark, Luke, Justus, Barnabas, Apelies, Rufus, and Niger. The names of all these disciples, according to ancient traditions, though not to be depended on, are given in an alphabetical order, with the places where they afterwards presided as bishops, or pastors, by a late learned writer {a}, and are as follow, viz. Agabus, the prophet; Amphias, of Odyssus, sometimes called Amphiatus; Ananias, who baptized Paul, bishop of Damascus; Andronicus, of Pannonia, or Spain; Apelies, of Smyrna, or, according to others, of Heraclea; Apollo, of Caesarea; Aristarchus, of Apamea; Aristobulus, of Britain; Artemas, of Lustra; Asyncritus, of Hyrcania; Barnabas, of Milgin; Barnabas, of Heraclea; Caesar, of Dyrrachium; Caius, of Ephesus; Carpus, of Berytus, in Thracia; Cephas, bishop of Konia; Clemens, of Sardinia; Cleophas, of Jerusalem; Crescens, of Chalcedon, in Galatia; Demas, a priest of idols; Epaenetus, of Carthage; Epaphroditus, of Andriace; Erastus, of Paneas, or, according to others, of the Philippians; Evodus, of Antioch; Hermas, of Philippi, or Philippolls; Hermes, of Dalmatia; Hermogenus and Phygellus, who followed Simon Magus; Hermogenus, bishop of the Megarenes; Herodion, of Tarsus; James, the brother of our Lord, of Jerusalem; Jason, of Tarsus; Jesus Justus, bishop of Eleutheropolis: Linus, of Rome; Luke, the evangelist: Lucius, of Laodicea, in Syria; Mark, who is also John, of Biblopohs, or Byblus; Mark the evangelist, bishop of Alexandna; Mark, the sister's son of Barnabas, bishop of Apolloma; Matthias, added to the apostles; Narcissus, of Athens; Nicanor, he died when Stephen suffered martyrdom; Nicolaus, of Samaria; Olympius, a martyr at Rome; Onesiphorus, bishop of Corone; Parmenas, of the Soli, Patrobulus, the same with Patrobas, in Ro 16:14 of Puteoli, or as others, of Naples; Philemon, of Gaza; Philemon (in the Acts he is called Philip), by whom the eunuch of the queen of Ethiopia was baptized, of Trallium, of Asia; Philologus, of Sinope; Phlegon, bishop of Marathon; Phygellus, of Ephesus; Prochorus, of Nicomedia, in Bithynia; Pudens; Quartus, of Berytus; Rhodion, a martyr at Rome; Rufus, of Thebes; Silas, of Corinth; Sylvanus, of Thessalonica; Sosipater, of Iconium; Sosthenes, of Colophon; Stachys, of Byzantium; Stephen, the first martyr; Tertius, of Iconium; Thaddaeus, who carried the epistle of Jesus to Edessa, to Abgarus; Timon, of Bostra, of the Arabians; Trophimus, who suffered martyrdora with the Apostle Paul; Tychicus, bishop of Chalcedon, of Bithynia; Tychicus, of Colophon; Urbanus, of Macedonm; and, Zenas, of Diospolis. According both to this account, and Epiphanius, Luke was one of these seventy, and he is the only evangelist that makes mention of the appointment of them:

and sent them two and two before his face: as he did the twelve before, to be his harbingers and forerunners:

into every city and place, whither he himself would come: which he intended to visit: he sent them beforehand to acquaint the inhabitants of it; and prepare them by their ministry, for the reception of him; as John the Baptist, who was in a more eminent sense the harbinger and forerunner of Christ, went before him in his ministry, and prepared the way for him.

{x} Contr. Haeres. haeres. 20. {y} Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrim, c. 1. sect. 3. {z} Misn. Yadim, c. 3. sect. 5. Aben Ezra in Num 11. 25. {a} Fabricii lux Evangelii, p. 115, 116, &c.

Luke 10:2

Ver. 2. Therefore said he unto them,.... That is, the "Lord Jesus", as the Ethiopic version expresses it; he said to the seventy disciples, what he had before said to the twelve apostles in **Mt 9:37** where are the same words as here:

the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few, pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest; for though there was such a number of disciples called to the ministerial work, and sent out, there was still need of more; so great was the harvest of souls, or number of hearers, that the labourers were yet but few; and therefore the Lord of the harvest and whose all souls are, was to be prayed unto to send forth more laborious preachers; See Gill on "Mt 9:37".

See Gill on "Mt 9:38".

Luke 10:3

Ver. 3. Go your ways,.... Into all the villages, towns, cities, and places, where he directed them to go, to make ready for him.

Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves; as harmless, innocent, profitable, and defenceless creatures, among spiteful, malicious, cunning, and cruel men; See Gill on "Mt 10:16".

Luke 10:4

Ver. 4. Carry neither purse,.... The Syriac version reads, "purses, "to put money, gold, silver, and brass in; and the prohibition regards the money in the purse chiefly:

nor scrip; the Syriac version here also reads in the plural number, "scrips", to put victuals in, provisions or any sort for their journey, which they were not to carry with them, any more than money, to buy food with

Nor shoes; any more than those they had upon their feet;
See Gill on "Mt 10:9" See Gill on "Mt 10:10" and salute no man by the way; that they might not be retarded, and hindered in their journey by tedious ceremonies, and long inquiries into the health of persons and friends, and the business they were going about, and places where; and by discourses and confabulations, drawn out to great length, as was often the case at meeting on the road: and, for the same reason, a like charge is given to Gehazi, **2Ki 4:29**, and which, as the Jewish commentators on the place observe {a}, was, that he might not multiply words with persons he met with, and might not be stopped by the way; and that his intention might be in his work, and his mind might not turn to any other thing, either by word or deed. So our Lord's intention, by this order was, not to teach them incivility, or to be morose and uncourteous; but that they might dispatch their business with the utmost expedition, and rather forego some common civilities and ceremonies, than to neglect, or, in the least, to hinder a work of so much importance they were sent about: and this was the more necessary, since, according to the Jewish maxim {b},

"prevent every man with a salutation;"

they saluted all that they met, which took up time, and hindered business. Some sorts of persons indeed were excused, as those who were mourners {c} for the dead, and such as kept fasts for rain {d}: but such were not these disciples; they neither mourned, nor fasted, nor could they, so long as the bridegroom was with them.

{a} Jarchi, Kimchi, & R. Levi Ben Gersom in 2 Kings iv. 29. {b} Pirke Abot. c. 4. sect. 15. {c} T. Bab. in Misn. Moed Katon, c. 3. sect. 6. {d} Misn. Taanith, c. 1. sect. 7.

Luke 10:5

Ver. 5. And into whatsoever house ye enter,.... When ye come into any city, town, or village,

first say, peace be to this house: salute the inhabitants in the usual form, saying, peace be to you; wishing them all happiness and prosperity, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. This shows our Lord did not disapprove of civil salutations.

Luke 10:6

Ver. 6. And if the son of peace be there,.... If there be any elect person or persons in the house, whom God has chosen to partake of peace by the blood of Christ, and the benefits arising from it; and of a conscience peace in their souls, upon the best foundation; and of eternal peace in the world to come, though yet in a state of nature; and which may be known by this sign;

your peace shall rest upon it: the salutation, or wish of peace, shall be well taken, and gratefully received; and upon this you will be kindly invited into the house, and used well by, those of the family;

if not, it shall turn to you again: if there are no sons of peace, no elect persons there, your salutation, or wish of peace and prosperity to the family, will be despised and rejected, and will return to you without any good effect upon them.

Luke 10:7

Ver. 7. And in the same house remain,.... Where the sons of peace are, and the peace rests, and into which you are invited, and kindly received and used:

eating and drinking such things as they give; or rather, "such things as are with them", as the Vulgate Latin renders it; or "of that which is theirs", as the Syriac version; all one, and with as much freedom, as if they were your own; the reason follows,

for the labourer is worthy of his hire; what you eat and drink is your due; what you ought to have; your diet is a debt, and not a gratuity; See Gill on "Mt 10:10"

go not from house to house; as if fickle and inconstant, as if not satisfied with your lodging and entertainment, and as seeking out for other and better, or as if burdensome where they were;
See Gill on "Mt 10:11". The Jews have a proverb, expressing the inconvenience and expensiveness, and the danger of moving from place to place:

"he that goes, tybl tybm, "from house to house", (loses his) shirt, (i.e. comes to distress and poverty,) from place to place (his) life {e};"

or he is in great danger of losing his life.

{e} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 39. fol. 34. 3.

Luke 10:8

Ver. 8. And into whatsoever city ye enter,.... Into whatsoever house in it ye go, and apply to for lodging and entertainment,

and they receive you, readily and cheerfully,

eat such things as are set before you; though ever so mean, accept of them, and do not object to them on that account, lest it should be thought you serve your own bellies, and seek to gratify your appetites; nor, on the other hand, do not think anything too good for you, or that you are burdensome and chargeable, but eat as if it were your own; nor ask questions about the cleanness and uncleanness of it, or whether it has been tithed or not; but feed upon it without any scruple.

Luke 10:9

Ver. 9. And heal the sick that are therein,.... Of all their bodily diseases, which would not only show their power and warrant, theft mission and commission, but also their goodness and beneficence to men; and would be a sufficient return for what they ate and drank:

and say unto them; not only to the sick that are healed, and those in the house in which they were, but to all the inhabitants of the city;

the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you: the Gospel dispensation, the kingdom of the Messiah, and even the Messiah himself, as might be concluded from the miracles they wrought; and thus by their ministry and works, were they to go before Christ, and prepare his way.

Luke 10:10

Ver. 10. But into whatsoever city ye enter,.... On the other hand Christ here directs how to behave towards other cities they should come to, and be rejected:

and they receive you not; refuse to admit them into their houses, or provide in any shape for them, nor hear their message:

go your ways out into the streets of the same. The Ethiopic version reads, "cast the dust off your feet into the streets of it: and say"; aloud, in the most public manner, in the ears of all the people, as follows.

Luke 10:11

Ver. 11. Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us,.... The Syriac version adds, "to our feet"; and so in Beza's most ancient copy, and the Arabic and Persic versions read, "which cleaves to our feet"; which agrees with Mt 10:14.

we do wipe against you: for a testimony against them, that they had been with them, and were rejected by them; See Gill on "Mt 10:14" See Gill on "Mr 6:11"

notwithstanding be ye sure of this; they might assure themselves of this, and which will be an aggravation of their guilt, and increase their punishment another day:

that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you; was at their very doors, since the ministers of it, of the Gospel dispensation, the harbingers of the Messiah, who were sent to publish his Gospel, to proclaim him as king, and de clare that his kingdom was at hand, had been with them, and they had despised them.

Luke 10:12

Ver. 12. But I say unto you,.... The same that he said to the twelve apostles, when he sent them out, Mt 10:15,

that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city. By "that day" is meant, the famous day to come, the last day; the day of judgment, as it is expressed in Matthew; and so the Ethiopic version reads here, "it shall be better in the day of judgment". Sodom was a very wicked city, and was destroyed by fire from heaven for its iniquity, and its inhabitants suffer the vengeance of eternal fire: and there was also Gomorrha, a neighbouring city, guilty of the same crimes, and shared the same fate; and which is mentioned along with Sodom in Matthew; and is here read in the Persic version. And the sense of the whole is, that though the iniquities of Sodom and Gomorrha were very great, and their punishment very exemplary; yet, as there will be degrees of torment in hell, the case of such a city, which has been favoured with the Gospel, and has despised and rejected it, will be much worse than the case of those cities, which were devoured by fire from heaven; and than that of the inhabitants of them in the future judgment, and to all eternity;
See Gill on "Mt 10:15".

Luke 10:13

Ver. 13. Woe unto thee Chorazin,....
See Gill on "Mt 11:21".

Woe unto thee Bethsaida; a city of Galilee, a fishing town, from whence it has its name, and was the native place of those two fishermen, Peter and Andrew: very likely Chorazin was near it, since they are here, and in Matthew, mentioned together; and woe is pronounced upon them both for their impenitence and unbelief, which were attended with aggravating circumstances:

for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you; meaning both the ministry of the word by Christ, which was with power and authority, and the miracles of Christ, which were the works of almighty power, and showed him to be the mighty God: these were not done in Tyre and Sidon, cities in Phoenicia; for though our Lord was on the borders of those places, yet not in them, they being Gentile cities, to which he was not sent, and in which he did not preach, nor do miracles; but he did both in Bethsaida and Chorazin, and they repented not of their sins; nor did they embrace his doctrine, though confirmed by miracles; whereas, in all likelihood, humanly speaking, had the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon had the like advantages,

they had a great while ago repented: they would have repented immediately, it would have been soon visible in them, of which they would have given proof, by

sitting in sackcloth and ashes; which was an outward token of repentance, used by penitent sinners, as by the Ninevites, and others. The same things are said at another time, and on another occasion, as here; See Gill on "Mt 11:21" See Gill on "Mt 11:22" See Gill on "Mt 11:23" See Gill on "Mt 11:24"

Luke 10:14

Ver. 14. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment,.... Or "in the day of judgment", as read the Syriac, Persic, Ethiopic, and Gothic versions; and as it is in Mt 11:22

than for you; the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, who will be more severely punished than these Gentile cities; for by how much greater were their light, privileges, and advantages against which they sinned, by so much will be their severer punishment.

Luke 10:15

Ver. 15. And thou Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven,.... Referring either to the situation of it, which was on a very high hill; or to its privileges, through the ministry and miracles of Christ; or the phrase may be expressive of the pride and loftiness of the inhabitants of it, who were elated with the mercies they enjoyed, it being a most delightful, pleasant, and comfortable place to live in, as its name signifies. It was a famous port, commodiously situated by the sea of Tiberias; and, as Josephus {f} says, was in an excellent temperament of the air, and watered with a most choice fountain, called by the same name.

Shalt be thrust down into hell; meaning either the low condition to which it was to be, and has been reduced in a temporal sense, and continues in to this day; there being nothing of it now remaining, as travellers, who have been eyewitnesses of it, say {g}, but a few little houses and cottages; or else the sad and miserable condition of the inhabitants of it hereafter: and so it is, that such who have lived in great plenty and pleasure in this life, and have thought themselves to be the favourites of heaven, and that they should enter there, shall be thrust down to hell by the arm of vengeance, with the utmost indignation in God, and shame to themselves: it follows in Matthew, "for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day; but I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee".

{f} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 35. {g} Vid. L'Empereur, Not. in Benj. Itinerar. p. 68.

Luke 10:16

Ver. 16. He that heareth you, heareth me,.... This is said for the encouragement of the seventy disciples, that though they would be rejected by some, they would be received by others, who would hear them, and embrace their doctrine, as if the Messiah himself had been among them; they looking upon them as representing him: and so Christ himself considers them as ambassadors in his name, and as representing his person, taking what is done to them, as done to himself; See Gill on "Mt 10:40"

and he that despiseth you, despiseth me: every degree of contempt cast upon them by words or actions, Christ looked upon as cast on himself, and will resent it another day, and punish for it. The despising of wise men, or doctors, and their disciples or scholars, was accounted with the Jews a very heinous crime, and was severely punished both by excommunication and fines: for thus it is said {h},

"a great iniquity it is to despise the wise men, or to hate them. Jerusalem was not destroyed until the disciples of the wise men were despised in it, as it is said, 2Ch 36:16 "but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets": as if he should say, they despised those that taught his words: and thus saith the law, "if ye despise my statutes"; they that teach my statutes ye will despise; and every one that despiseth the wise men, hath no part in the world to come; and lo! this is included in that general rule, "for he hath despised the word of the Lord". Although he that despiseth the wise men hath no part in the world to come, if witnesses come (and depose) that he hath despised them even in words, he is guilty of excommunication: and the sanhedrim excommunicate him publicly, and fine him a pound of gold in every place, and give it to the wise men: and he that despiseth a wise man by words, even after his (the wise man's) death, the sanhedrim excommunicate him; and they free him when he returns by repentance: but if the wise man is alive, they do not free him till he pleases."

And he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me: this is said to aggravate the sin of the despisers of Christ's ministers, and to deter from it; since the contempt does not terminate in them, nor even in Christ, but reaches his Father also. The Ethiopic version adds, "and he that heareth me, heareth him that sent me": but is not supported by any copy, or any other version.

{h} Maimon. Hilch. Talmud Tora, c. 6. sect. 11, 12.

Luke 10:17

Ver. 17. And the seventy returned again,.... The Syriac version adds, "whom he had sent": these disciples having received orders and instructions from Christ, went as he directed them; and when they had finished their embassy, they returned again to him, and gave him an account of their journey and success. The Vulgate Latin and Persic versions read here, "the seventy two", as they do in
Lu 10:1

with joy; with great joy, as read the Syriac and Persic versions; notwithstanding the difficulties that had attended them, reproaches cast upon them, the ill treatment they might have met with in some places, and the labours and fatigues of their journey, and the dangers they had been exposed to:

saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name: they found the miraculous power conferred on them was greater than they at first imagined, or could collect from what Christ said to them, who only bid them heal the sick, Lu 10:9, but when they came to make use of it they found they had a power of casting out devils; not in their own name and strength, but in the name, and through the power, and by the authority of Christ; and this had thrown them into an ecstasy of joy, and in a sort of a rapture: they express themselves as men astonished at the powers bestowed on them.

Luke 10:18

Ver. 18. And he said unto them,.... In order to abate their surprise, and reduce their transport of mind:

I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven; meaning, that this was no news to him, nor any surprising event, that devils should be cast out of men, and be in a state of subjection; for as he existed as the eternal Son of God before his incarnation, he was present, and saw him and his angels fall from heaven, from their first estate, their habitation of bliss and glory, down to hell, upon their sin and rebellion, as violently, swiftly, and suddenly, as the lightning falls from heaven to earth; and when he sent out these his disciples, as soon as they began their work, and all along in it, he, by his divine omniscience, saw the powers of darkness falling before their ministry and miracles; and he also foresaw how Satan hereafter, in a more conspicuous manner, would fall before the preaching of his Gospel by his apostles, not only in Judea, but especially among the Gentiles, where he, the prince of this world, would be cast down from his throne, and out of his kingdom; so that what they related, as it was what he knew before, it was but little in comparison of what he himself had seen long ago, and of what he foresaw would be; and even he would give them power to do other miraculous works besides these.

Luke 10:19

Ver. 19. Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions,.... Which may be literally understood, as in Mr 16:18, or figuratively of the devil, and his principalities and powers, and all his emissaries, who, for their craft and cunning, and for their poisonous and hurtful nature and influence, may be compared to serpents and scorpions:

and over all the power of the enemy; of mankind in general, and of the seed of the woman, Christ and his people in particular, Christ has a power over all his power, his whole posse of devils, even the power of the air, of which he is prince; and he communicated this power to his disciples, even to the seventy: adding,

and nothing shall by any means, hurt you; not the most hurtful and poisonous animals, nor the most malicious persecutors on earth, nor all the devils in hell: as the former venomous creatures, when took up in their hands, should not hurt, their bodies; so the other, whatever they might be permitted to do with respect to their lives, and outward estate, should never hurt their souls, and the eternal welfare of them; nor even hinder the work of God prospering in their hands.

Luke 10:20

Ver. 20. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not,.... That their power was enlarged, or that they had, the same as before:

that the spirits, evil spirits, devils, are subject unto you; and come out of men at your command; rejoice not so much in this, or chiefly and principally; not but that it was matter of joy both with respect to the gift bestowed upon them, and the benefits men received by it, and the glory that was brought to Christ through it;

but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven; in the book of life, called the Lamb's book of life, written from the foundation of the world: in divine predestination to everlasting glory and happiness: which shows that God's election to eternal life is of particular persons, of persons by name; that it is sure, and certain, and immutable, being in opposition to what is written in earth,
Jer 17:13, that the knowledge of this may be attained to, through the grace of God, the revelation of Christ, and the witnessings of his Spirit; and that this is matter of the greatest job, since it is the foundation and security of all the blessings of grace and glory.

Luke 10:21

Ver. 21. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit,.... In his human soul: his heart was filled with joy, not so much at the success of the seventy disciples, and the subjection of the devils to them, as in the view he had of the spread of the Gospel, and of the revelation and application of the truths of it to multitudes of mean and despicable persons, while it was rejected by the wise and learned; and particularly at the sovereign and distinguishing grace of God towards the elect, whose names are written in heaven; upon the mention of which his soul was so affected, that he broke out in, an exulting strain, into thanksgivings to God, in the following manner,

and said, I thank thee, O Father,.... In three ancient copies of Beza's, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions it is read, "in the Holy Spirit"; and the Persic version reads, "he spake, or confabulated with the Holy Spirit": but the former reading and sense are best. See Gill on "Mt 11:25" See Gill on "Mt 11:26"

Luke 10:22

Ver. 22. All things are delivered to me of my Father,.... In some ancient copies, and in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, before these words, are read, "and turning to his disciples he said, all things", &c.

and no man knoweth who the Son is; what is his name, his nature, his perfections and glory; and how he is the Son of God, his only begotten Son:

but the Father; who begat him, and whose own, and proper Son he is:

and who the Father is; what are his perfections, purposes, grace, greatness, mind, and will:

but the Son; who is of him, and lay in his bosom:

and he to whom the Son will reveal him: in himself, by his Spirit;
See Gill on "Mt 11:27".

Luke 10:23

Ver. 23. And he turned him unto his disciples,.... Both to the twelve apostles, and seventy disciples;

and said privately; or to them apart: the phrase "privately" is wanting in the Vulgate Latin version:

blessed are the eyes that see the things that ye see; the person of the Messiah, his kingdom setting up in the world, miracles wrought by him, and Satan falling before him; See Gill on "Mt 13:16".

Luke 10:24

Ver. 24. For I tell you that many prophets and kings,.... As Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, who were prophets, as well as patriarchs, and David, Solomon, and others:

have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them, meaning himself, doctrines, and miracles; See Gill on "Mt 13:17".

Luke 10:25

Ver. 25. And behold a certain lawyer stood up,.... From his seat, having been hearing Christ preach, very likely, in some synagogue; when and where this was, is not certain. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions call this man a Scribe; and a lawyer and a Scribe were the same, as appears from Mt 22:35 compared with Mr 12:28

and tempted him; or tried him whether he understood the law, or whether he would say any thing contrary to it, and see if he could gain any advantage against him, and expose him, and get credit and applause to himself:

saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? the same question as was put by the young ruler in Mr 10:17 for they were both of the same complexion, and upon the same foundation, seeking eternal life by their own works: See Gill on "Mt 19:16"

he said unto him; that is, Jesus, as all the Oriental versions express it.

Luke 10:26

Ver. 26. What is written in the law?.... Christ, with great propriety, sends him to the law, to see and observe what was written there, what are the terms and conditions of life, as fixed there; partly, because this man, by his office and character, was an interpreter of the law; and partly, because his question was, what shall I do?

how readest thou? in the law, every day; referring to the "Keriat Shema", the reading of the Shema, i.e. those words in **De 6:4**, &c, "Hear, O Israel, &c." morning and evening {i} as appears by his answer

{i} Vid. Misn. Beracot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2.

Luke 10:27

Ver. 27. And he answering said, thou shalt love the Lord thy God,.... This was part of their phylacteries, which they recited every day; See Gill on "Mt 22:37" See Gill on "Mt 22:39" See Gill on "Mr 12:28" See Gill on "Mr 12:29"

Luke 10:28

Ver. 28. And he said unto him, thou hast answered right,.... It is so written, and read; and this, as if he should say, is the sum and substance of the law, and what that requires men should do; wherefore,

do this, and thou shalt live; for the bare reading of it was not sufficient; though these men placed great confidence in reading this passage, or in reciting their phylacteries, of which this was a part, morning and night. Our Lord intimates by this, that, according to the tenor of the law, eternal life was not to be had without a complete and perfect performance of the duties of love to God, and to the neighbour, contained in these words; and this he suggests, in order to convict him of the impossibility of obtaining life by the works of the law, since such a performance cannot be made by man.

Luke 10:29

Ver. 29. But he willing to justify himself,.... Upon the foot of his own righteousness, and to make himself appear to be righteous to others; for this the Jews thought themselves able to do, both to justify themselves before God by their own works, and make it out to men, that they were truly righteous persons; and it is a maxim with them, that

"every one wmue ta qydumh that justifies himself, below (on earth), they justify him above (or in heaven) {k}."

No wonder then that this man was desirous of justifying himself; and in order to which

he said, and who is my neighbour? he takes no notice of God, and love to him, as coming into the account of his justification, only of his neighbour; thinking when this question was answered, he should be very able to make it out, that he was not wanting neither in doing justice between himself and his neighbour, nor in showing kindness and beneficence to him; for by his neighbour he meant only an Israelite; one of the same nation and religion with him. So the Jews commonly interpret the word neighbour, either of one that is related to them in nature, wbwrq, that is, near akin to them in blood {l}; or that professes the same religion as they do, and whom they call a neighbour in the law; and so they explain the passage now cited, "and thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself", hrwtb Ker awhv; "that is, who is thy neighbour in the law" {m}: for they will not allow a Gentile, no, not even a proselyte of the gate to be a neighbour: for thus they say {n},

"an Israelite that slays a proselyte of the gate, or the stranger that dwells with him, is not slain for him by the sanhedrim; for it is said, Ex 21:14 but if a man comes presumptuously upon his neighbour to slay him, &c. and there is no need to say he is not slain for a Gentile."

And again {o},

"when a man sees one of them (the Gentiles) fall into the sea, he need not take him up; as it is said, Le 19:16 "neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour", Ker hz Nyaw "but this is not thy neighbour.""

This notion Christ opposes and disproves in the following parable, which is an answer to the lawyer's question.

{k} T. Bab. Tasnith, fol. 8. 1. {l} Kimchi in Psal. xv. 3. {m} Moses Kotsensis

Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 9. {n} Maimon. Hilch. Rotzeach, c. 2. sect. 11. {o} Ib. c. 4. sect. 11.

Luke 10:30

Ver. 30. And Jesus answering, said,.... The following things; which may either be considered as a narrative of matter of fact, or as a supposed case, and delivered by way of parable; and in either way, though the general design of it is in answer to the lawyer's question, to show who may be called a neighbour; and that a man who is a stranger, and accounted an enemy, yet doing acts of mercy, kindness, and beneficence, to one in distress, ought to be accounted a neighbour: and has a much better title to such a character, than one of the same nation and religion, who takes no notice of a distressed object; yet it may be considered, as representing the sad estate and condition of mankind by the fall, and their recovery by Christ; whereby he shows himself to be their best neighbour, and truest friend:

a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. The distance between these two places, the Jews say {p}, was ten "parsas", that is, forty miles; for every "parsa" was four miles, and ten "parsas" are expressly said {q} to be forty miles; which must be understood of the lesser miles, otherwise a parsa itself was but a mile: the Jews had two sorts of miles, the greater was 2000 cubits, the lesser 1000 cubits: the man is said to go down from the one to the other, because Jerusalem stood on high ground, and Jericho in a valley. This "certain man", may represent mankind failing in Adam, from a state of happiness, into misery: human nature was originally in one man, but one man was created at first, and he had all human nature in him, and was the representative of mankind; he was made upright, but sinned, and fell from his uprightness, and all mankind in him: he may be said to go down, from Jerusalem, which signifies peace, and the vision of it; and was a city compact together, beautiful and well situated; where were the worship of God, and his Shekinah, or divine presence; to Jericho, a city accursed by Joshua, and a very wicked place in the days of Christ: since man by sinning against God, departed from his happy and peaceful state, from a state of peace and tranquillity with God, with the holy angels, and even with the beasts of the field; and also from peace and serenity in his own conscience, as well as from communion with God; and from his pure worship and service, to a sensual, earthly, worldly, wicked, and accursed state:

and fell among thieves: in the way to Jericho, was a place called Adomim, which signifies "bloods", because much blood was shed there, by the frequent incursions of thieves and robbers, as Jerom observes {r}; and was about four hours journey from Jericho {s}: and by the man's falling among thieves, may be expressed mankind coming into the hands of sin and Satan, which are as robbers, that steal, kill, and destroy; since these have robbed man of his honour, defaced the image of God in him, and deprived him of the glory of God, and were murderers of him from the beginning:

which stripped him of his raiment; as thieves and robbers are used to do; signifying the loss of original righteousness, by sin, which was a covering to man, in which he could appear before God; and was very ornamental to him, being pure and perfect in its kind, though only a creature's righteousness, and a created one; and which was natural and loseable, as the event has shown: hence man is become a naked creature, has nothing to cover himself with, but stands exposed to the law, justice, and wrath of God; is destitute of a righteousness, nor can he work out one that will stand him in any stead, or justify him before God:

and wounded him: which is the common usage of such men; and may set forth the morbid and diseased condition that sin has brought man into; being from the crown of the head, to the sole of the foot, full of wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores; and such as are in themselves mortal, and incurable by any, but the great physician of souls, the Lord Jesus Christ; and yet men are naturally insensible of them, and unconcerned about there:

and departed, leaving him half dead; or "near death", as the Arabic version renders it; which may be applied to death natural, spiritual, and eternal: to death natural, which comes by sin, seeing it is but one part, or half of the man that dies this death, namely, his body; and to a spiritual death, or the death of the soul, which is dead in trespasses and sins, whilst the body is alive; and to eternal death, to which men are exposed for sin, and are under the sentence of it, though not executed; and in each of these senses may be said to be "half dead": and which is no ways to the advantage of the doctrine of man's freewill, and the powers and abilities of; as if man was not in a spiritual sense so dead, that he can do nothing in a spiritual manner; but the phrase is used, to show the power of sin, and the malice of Satan, and yet that man is still recoverable by the grace of God.

{p} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 20. 2. & 39. 20. Bartenora in Misn. Tamid, c. 3. sect. 8. {q} T. Bab. Pesachim. fol. 93. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {r} Ad Eustochium, Tom. I. fol. 59. I. K. {s} Masius in Josh. xv. 7.

Luke 10:31

Ver. 31. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way,.... Who had been at Jerusalem, to take his turn in the courses, and was now returning to Jericho, where the stationary men were, to which he belonged: for it is said {t}, that

"the former prophets appointed twenty and four courses; and for every course there was a station at Jerusalem, of priests, and of Levites, and of Israelites; and when the time of the course came to go up, the priests and Levites went up to Jerusalem. The Rabbins teach, that there were twenty four courses in the land of Israel, and there were twelve at Jericho."

And which is elsewhere {u} related thus;

"the former prophets appointed four and twenty courses, and for every course there was a station at Jerusalem, of priests, of Levites, and of Israelites; the tradition is, that four and twenty thousand were the station from Jerusalem, and half a station from Jericho; though Jericho was able to furnish out a perfect station itself; but for the sake of dividing the glory to Jerusalem, it produced but half a station."

So that it is no wonder to hear of priests and Levites passing to and fro in this road. Nor was this a chance matter with respect to God, by whose providence all things are ordered, directed, and governed; nor any wonderful thing with respect to men, which fell out in an uncommon way, beyond expectation; the phrase only signifies, that so it came to pass:

and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side: when he saw him naked, and in such a bloody condition, he might take him for one really dead, and therefore crossed the way on purpose, lest he should any ways touch him, and be defiled by him, and so break the law, and incur the penalty of it, mentioned in Nu 19:16 or to shun so horrible a sight; or rather, through hardness of heart, and want of compassion.

{t} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 27. 1. {u} T. Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 30. 3. & Taanith, fol. 67. 4.

Luke 10:32

Ver. 32. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place,.... Where the poor man lay in this deplorable condition:

came and looked on him; and that was all; but neither spoke a comfortable word, nor administered any relief to him, or in the least assisted him:

and passed by on the other side; as the priest had done before him: by the "priest" may be meant, the moral law, and by the Levite the ceremonial law; and so by both, the whole law of Moses; and intimates, that no mercy is to be expected from thence: the law makes no abatement in its demands, nor any allowance for the fall and weakness of man: nor is it become milder under the Gospel dispensation; nor will it accept of an imperfect, though sincere obedience, in the room of a perfect one; and is deaf to all repentings, cries, and tears: no relief is to be had from thence, for a naked, wounded, and dead man; no robe of righteousness to cover a naked soul; for by the law is the knowledge of sin, but not a justifying righteousness by the deeds of it: for the deeds of the law, performed by sinful men, are impure and imperfect; and were they pure and perfect, they would be unprofitable, and could not justify in the sight of God from former sins; for could they, they would establish boasting, and disannul the death of Christ, and frustrate the grace of God; and therefore righteousness cannot be by the law, that leaves a man as naked as it finds him: nor is there any healing by it to a wounded conscience; there is no pity from it, no justification by it, no pardon through it, no expiation or atonement of sin, by obedience to it; no word of comfort is spoken by it; so far from it, that when it comes with power, it opens the wounds of sin, fills the conscience with wrath and terror, destroys all the man's former hopes of happiness, and leaves him where it found him; without healing him itself, or pointing out a physician to him: much less can it give life to a dead sinner: spiritual life is not communicated by it, nor can eternal life, or any true hope of it, be attained through it; it is so far from it, that it is the killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death.

Luke 10:33

Ver. 33. But a certain Samaritan,.... By whom Christ may be meant; not that he was really so, for he was a Jew, a son of Abraham, and of David, according to the flesh, but he was so called by the Jews, **Joh 8:48** and was treated as such by them: and since it is the design of the parable in general to show, that he that does acts of kindness and mercy to persons in distress, is a neighbour in the truest sense, though he is not an Israelite, but even a Samaritan, who was, above all men, hated by the Jews; why may it not be thought to be the view of Christ in particular, to prove himself the best neighbour and friend of men, though he was traduced by the Jews as a Samaritan?

as he journeyed; which may design the assumption of human nature, which is sometimes expressed, by his coming from his Father, by his descending from heaven, and coming into this world; which phrases intend his incarnation, and carry in them the idea of journeying: for as his ascent to heaven is expressed by taking a journey, Mt 25:15 so may his descent from heaven; and while he was here on earth, he was as a stranger and pilgrim, as a sojourner and traveller:

came where he was; put himself in the legal place, and stead of his people, who fell with the rest of mankind in Adam; he became their surety from eternity, and clothed himself with their nature in time; he took upon him their sins, as their representative, and fulfilled the righteousness of the law on their account, and bore the penalty of it in their room:

and when he saw him; Christ saw the elect before the fall, as they were chosen in him, and given unto him, in all the glory they were to be brought into; when he loved them, and his delight was with them: and when he came to redeem them, he saw them as follows; as lost, as weak and strengthless, as wicked, and as the worst of sinners, as ungodly, and enemies, as children of wrath by nature, as others; and he shed his blood for them, and washed them from their sins, that he might present them to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; just such an one he had seen them to be, in the glass of his Father's purposes, in his council and covenant; and he sees them in their blood, and in the impurity of their nature, when he comes to call them by his grace:

and he had compassion on him. The compassion of Christ on his elect, is to be seen in his eternal covenant engagements; for his tender mercies have been ever of old; and in his assumption of their nature, which was through his own, as well as the tender mercy of his Father; and in the redemption of them, which was in love and pity; and also in their regeneration and conversion, for the great things there, and then done for them by him, are owing to his compassion.

Luke 10:34

Ver. 34. And went to him, and bound up his wounds,.... Which sin had made; it being part of the work of Christ, to bind up the broken-hearted, to heal wounded sinners, and restore comforts to mourners; and which he does, by

pouring in oil and wine: by which, in general, may be designed, the blood of Christ, applied to the conscience of a wounded sinner; which cleanses from all sin, heals all the wounds and diseases of sin, cheers and revives fainting spirits, gives ease, peace, and pleasure, and is therefore exceeding valuable and precious: and in particular by "oil" may be meant, the grace of the Spirit of God; compared unto it, for its sweet smell, its cheering and refreshing virtue and efficacy, and its cooling, softening, supplying, and healing nature: and by "wine", the doctrines of the Gospel; such as free justification by Christ's righteousness, and pardon through his blood; which when applied to distressed minds, cause joy and gladness, and them to forget their sorrow, and remember their misery no more: and the pouring in of these, may denote the plentiful effusion of Christ's blood, and the riches of his grace in the application of it; and the freeness and generousness of this action, which is his own: for man cannot do it. It was usual with the Jews, to mix oil and wine together, for the healing of wounds: hence those rules and traditions {w};

"they anoint a linen cloth for a sick man on the sabbath; when? when they mingle the oil and the wine on the sabbath eve, but if they do not mingle it on the sabbath eve, it is forbidden; it is a tradition, says R. Simeon ben Eleazer, R. Meir pronounced it lawful,
Nmvw Nyy Pwrjl to mingle wine and oil, and to anoint the sick on the sabbath."

So oil and wine were mingled together, and used to heal the sore occasioned by circumcision {x}

and set him on his own beast; by which may be meant, either the red horse of Christ's humanity, **Zec 1:8** to which he has united all his people; and in which he has bore their persons, and has represented them, and still bears them on his heart: or the white horse of the Gospel, **Re 6:2** compared to a horse for its strength, swiftness, and usefulness in battle; and to a "white" one, for the purity of its doctrines, the joy and peace it brings, and the victory it obtains: and this is Christ's own, and on which he himself rides, and shows his glory, and goes forth conquering and to conquer: and on which he sets his people, and they are carried out of the reach of men and devils to destroy them, and are caused to ride on the high places of the earth:

and brought him to an inn; a church of Christ, where the Gospel guides, directs, and carries souls: saints are not at home in their proper city and country, they are travellers here, and need refreshment by the way; and a church of Christ is as an inn, for the entertainment of such: it is large, and has room enough for as many as come to it; and is well stored with provisions of all sorts, signified by bread, and milk, and wine, a feast of fat things, a furnished table, Zion's provisions, the goodness and fatness of God's house; and has rivers of pleasure, and very good lodgings, sure dwellings, and quiet habitations; all which is agreeable to weary travellers: and hither Christ brings his people, whom he saves and calls; it is his will that they should be in a church state, and it is his own act to bring them there, and it is their great privilege to be thither brought:

and took care of him; clothed him with his righteousness, fed him with the choicest of provisions, gave him reviving cordials of love, refreshing promises, exceeding great and precious ones; and larger supplies of grace, with protection and preservation from all evils.

{w} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 14. 3. & Beracot, fol. 3. 1. {x} Misn. Sabbat, c. 19. sect. 2.

Luke 10:35

Ver. 35. And on the morrow when he departed,.... Having taken care of him all night, and put him into a comfortable way, leaves him, though in good hands; as Christ does his people, to learn to live by faith upon him:

and he took out two peace; two Roman denarii, or pence; which amount to about fifteen pence of our money, and were equal to the half shekel, paid for the redemption of an Israelite: by which may be meant, not the law and Gospel; for though these both bear the image and superscription of God, and are his current coin, and are both delivered by Christ, and to be regarded and dispensed by the ministers of the word; yet they are not of equal value and use, as these two pence seem to be: wherefore, rather the two Testaments, Old ann New, may be designed, since they are both inspired by God, and dictated by the same Spirit, and bear the same impress; and are alike, and exactly agree, as two pence do; and are given to the ministers of the Gospel to handle, and make use of for the good of souls: unless the two ordinances of baptism, and the

Lord's supper, should rather be thought to be intended: these bear the same stamp and authority, and are both jointly necessary to communion, and church order; and are given by Christ to his ministers, to be administered by them, for the good of his church; and are similar, as two breasts are, they being both breasts of consolation, and agree in setting forth the sufferings and death of Christ: or rather, the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, to qualify men for the work of the ministry; which both come from the selfsame Spirit of God, and are jointly necessary to fit a man for such service; and are given for the benefit and advantage of the Lord's people, and in an eminent manner by Christ, on his departure from hence, when he ascended on high, and received gifts for men, and gave them to them:

and gave them to the host; or the keeper and master of the inn; by whom are meant, the ministers of the Gospel; who are governors, in the church, the masters of that spiritual inn; who have the provisions of God's house under their care, and whose business it is to invite travellers in, and to dress their food for them, and set it before them, and bid them welcome:

and said unto him, take care of him: which is the work of Christ's ministers to do, by feeding souls with the words of faith and sound doctrine; by ministering the Gospel to them in a faithful manner; and by a constant administration of the ordinances of it; and by keeping a diligent watch over them, both with respect to principles and practice; and by speaking a word in season to them:

and whatsoever thou spendest more: faithful ministers spend much, and are at great expense in taking care of the souls of men; in fervent and frequent prayer to God; in diligent searching the Scriptures; in the laborious ministry of the word and ordinances; and in the constant exercise and improvement of their spiritual gifts; and in the loss of reputation and credit, and of health, and sometimes of life itself:

when I come again, I will repay thee: Christ will certainly come again a second time, to judge both quick and dead; and then he will recompense his ministers, for all their toil and labour, care and expense; he will then bid them, as good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of their Lord; and when they shall every one receive the reward of his own work, in a way of grace, and shall shine as the stars in the firmament, for ever and ever.

Luke 10:36

Ver. 36. Which now of these three,.... The priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan,

thinkest thou, was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves? the priest and Levite that passed by, and took no notice of him, and gave him no relief, neither by words nor actions; or the Samaritan, that did all the above kind and generous things to him?

Luke 10:37

Ver. 37. And he said, he that showed mercy to him,.... Meaning the Samaritan; which he was obliged to declare, though of another country and religion, and accounted as an enemy; yet the case was so plain, as put by Christ, that he could not with any honour or conscience, say otherwise:

then said Jesus unto him, go and do thou likewise; such like acts of beneficence and kindness, though to a person of a different nation and religion, and though even an enemy; and by so doing, thou wilt not only appear to be a good neighbour thyself, but to love thy neighbour as thyself.

Luke 10:38

Ver. 38. Now it came to pass as they went,.... As Christ and his disciples went from Jerusalem, having been at the feast of tabernacles, **Joh 7:2** or at the feast of dedication, Joh 10:22 to some other parts of Judea:

that he entered into a certain village; called Bethany, which was about fifteen furlongs, or two miles from Jerusalem, Joh 11:1

and a certain woman named Martha. This is a common name with the Jews; hence we read of Samuel bar Martha {y}, and of Abba bar Martha {z}, and of Isaac bar Martha {a}; and of Martha, the daughter of Baithus {b}, who is said to be a rich widow; and this Martha here, is thought by Grotins to be a widow also, with whom her brother Lazarus, and sister Mary lived: though sometimes, this name was given to men; so we read of Martha, {c} the uncle of Rab, who had five brethren; and the same writer observes {d}, that it is not known whether Martha is, a man or a woman, but this is determined here:

received him into her house; in a very kind and courteous manner, she being mistress of it; and having known Christ before, or at least had heard much of him, and believed in him, as the true Messiah.

{y} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 13. 2. & 25. 2. & Pesachim, fol. 106. 2. Yoma, fol. 19. 2. Juchuin, fol. 76. 2. {z} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 121. 2. Juchasin, fol. 72. 2. {a} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 33. 2. Juchasin, fol. 91. 1. {b} Misn. Yebamot, c. 6. sect. 4. T. Bob. Yoma, fol. 18. 1. Succa, fol. 52. 2. Cetubot, fol. 104. 1. Gittin, fol. 56. 1. Juchasin, fol. 57. 1. {c} Juchasin, fol. 99. 1. {d} lb. fol. 105. 1.

Luke 10:39

Ver. 39. And she had a sister called Mary,.... Which also was a common name with the Jews, and is the same with Miriam; so we read of Mary, the daughter of Nicodemon, the same perhaps with Nicodemus; and the same person that is before called Martha, the daughter of Baithus, is sometimes called Mary, the daughter of Baithus {e}, though these two names are certainly distinct:

which also sat at Jesus' feet; was a disciple of his, as well as Martha; for it was usual for disciples, or the scholars of the wise men, to sit at the feet of their masters, to which the allusion is in
De 33:3,
See Gill on "Ac 22:3" The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Coptic versions, read "at the Lord's feet": so Beza's ancient copy, and one of Stephens's; and the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, "at our Lord's feet". The phrase is expressive of her great affection for Christ, her humble deportment, and close attention:

and heard his word; or discourse; for as soon as he entered into the house, he began to preach to those that were in it, and that came along with him, improving every opportunity for the good of souls; and Mary heard him with great eagerness and diligence, affection, pleasure, and profit.

{e} Echa Rabbati, fol. 49. 2.

Luke 10:40

Ver. 40. But Martha was cumbered about much serving,.... "Or was drawn off", from hearing the word, from attending on Christ; being taken up in providing for him, and those that came with him; in dressing food, or in ordering her servants, how she would have every thing done, and in overlooking them, that every thing was done in proper order; so that she had a great deal of business upon her head and hands, which distracted her thoughts, or took them off of divine things, and put her in great hurry and concern. The Ethiopic version renders it, "Martha laboured in preparing many things for him"; making a large and sumptuous entertainment: and the Persic version, which is rather a comment than a translation, renders it, "Martha was busied in preparing food, and making a feast": sparing no cost nor pains, thinking nothing too good, nor too grand, for such a guest she had in her house:

and she came to him and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? she came to him; that is, to Jesus, as the Persic version expresses it: she came out of the room where she was getting ready the entertainment, into the room where Christ was preaching; and, as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "she stood and said": she did not sit down at his feet, as Mary did, to hear his word, but stood as about to go away again, after she had said what she came about: she did not think fit to speak to Mary herself, though perhaps she might do that first; who, showing an unwillingness to go with her, she therefore applies to Christ, as believing that he would, with her, look upon it as a very reasonable thing that she should take her part with her; and that a word from him would go a great way with her sister. And she seems to speak, not only by way of complaint of Mary, who had left her to prepare and serve up this entertainment alone; but even of Christ himself, in some sort, as if he had not showed that care and concern in this matter, which she thought was necessary. However, she was willing to have his sense of her sister's conduct, and hoped, and even doubted not, but that he would be of the same mind with herself:

bid her therefore that she help me; that she join, assist, and put an helping hand in this service; speak but a word to her, give her orders, and she will observe and obey.

Luke 10:41

Ver. 41. And Jesus answered and said unto her,.... Calling her by her name, and repeating it, Martha, Martha, which expresses great intimacy and friendship, and much earnestness, and, as it were, pitying her present situation and circumstances:

thou art careful and troubled about many things; intimating, that she was over anxious, and too solicitous, and more thoughtful and careful than she need be: he did not require such preparations for him, and so much attendance; she gave herself an unnecessary trouble in providing so many things for his entertainment, when less would have sufficed; so that instead of joining with her in her request, he reproves her for her over anxious care and solicitude, to have a nice and plentiful feast. The Persic version gives a sense quite contrary to the design of the text, rendering the words thus, "thou art adorned in all things, and hast the preference above many women".

Luke 10:42

Ver. 42. But one thing is needful,.... Meaning not that one dish of meat was sufficient, and there was no need of any more, in opposition to Martha's carefulness in preparing many; for this is too low a sense of the words; which yet some ancient writers have given into: but rather the hearing of the word, the Gospel of Christ, which Mary was engaged in; and which, ordinarily speaking, is necessary to the knowledge of Christ, and salvation by him, and to faith in him, Ro 10:14 not that this is the only needful thing; nor does Christ say there is but one thing needful, but that there is one thing needful; for there are other things that are also needful, and useful, as meditation and prayer, and attendance on, and submission to the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper, and all the duties of religion: but Christ's meaning seems plainly to be, that Mary hearing the word from his mouth, and at his feet, was one necessary thing, in opposition to Martha's many unnecessary ones, about which she was cumbered:

and Mary hath chosen that good part; or "the good part", or "portion"; Christ, the sum and substance of the word she heard, and eternal life and salvation by him. God himself is said to be the portion of his people, and a good one he is, and a portion that lasts for ever; and so is Christ; see Ps 73:26 where the Septuagint use the same word as here. The heavenly inheritance also, eternal glory and happiness, is the saints' portion; it is called in **Col 1:12** the part, or portion of the inheritance with the saints in light. The word answers to the Hebrew word, qlx; as in that saying of the Misnic doctors {f},

"all Israel have, qlx, "a part", or "portion" in the world to come."

All the Oriental versions add, "for herself", and this choice she made, not from the natural power of her own freewill, but as directed, influenced, and assisted by the Spirit and grace of God, and in consequence of God's eternal choice of her unto salvation by Jesus Christ: and the part she chose is, that

which shall not be taken away from her; by men or devils: faith which comes by hearing of the word, and so every other grace of the Spirit is what can never be lost; nor an interest in God, as a covenant God, or in Christ as a Saviour, nor a right and title to, nor meetness for eternal life, nor that itself, can be taken away, or the believer ever be deprived thereof.

{f} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 11:1

Ver. 1. And it came to pass that as he was praying,.... The following directions concerning prayer, though they agree with those in **Mt 6:9** &c. yet were delivered at another time, and in another place, and upon another occasion: Christ was then in Galilee, now in Judea: he gave the former directions unasked for, these at the request of one of his disciples; the other were given as he was preaching, these immediately after he had been praying; as soon as he had done a work he was often employed in, as man and mediator, on account of himself, his disciples, cause, and interest: and this was done

in a certain place; perhaps in the Mount of Olives, which was not far from Bethany, where we hear of him last, since this was a place where he used to abide in the night, and pray, Lu 21:37. The Arabic version reads, "in a desert place"; and after he had been at Bethany, he did go to a country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, Joh 11:54

when he ceased; from praying; when he had concluded his prayer, and finished all his petitions, and was off of his knees:

one of his disciples; perhaps one of the seventy disciples who had not heard the summary of prayer, and the directions about it before given on the mount, **Mt 6:9** The Persic version reads, "his disciples": as if they all united in the request:

and said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples, who, as Tertullian says {g}, brought in a new order and method of praying, and gave his disciples some instructions and directions concerning it, much better than what the Jews in common had: and this disciple looking upon his Lord and master as much better qualified to give directions in this important affair than even John himself was, requests of him that he would; and what might put him upon it at this time seems to be, his observing that Christ had now been at prayer.

{g} Contr. Marcion. l. 4. c. 26.

Luke 11:2

Ver. 2. And he said unto them,.... That is Jesus, as the Syriac and Persic versions express, who directed his speech to all the disciples; for though but one of them addressed him, it was in the name of the rest: and besides, the instructions Christ was about to give concerned them all, even those that heard them before, and those that had not:

when ye pray, say, our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth; the last petition is left out in the Vulgate Latin;
See Gill on "Mt 6:9",
See Gill on "Mt 6:10".

Luke 11:3

Ver. 3. Give us day by day our daily bread. Or "for the day"; or "every day", as the Syriac version renders it;
See Gill on "Mt 6:11"

Luke 11:4

Ver. 4. And forgive us our sins,.... Beza's most ancient copy reads "debts", as in See Gill on "Mt 6:12"; and which best agrees with the phrase "indebted", after mentioned:

for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;
See Gill on "Mt 6:12",
See Gill on "Mt 6:13". The doxology there used, and the word "Amen", are here omitted. Some of the petitions in this prayer are not delivered in the very

same words as they are in Matthew. The three first petitions are word for word the same; for though the third petition is different in our translation, it is the same in the original. The fourth and fifth vary: in Matthew the fourth is, "give us this day our daily bread"; here in Luke, "give us day by day our daily bread." The fifth in Matthew is, "and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"; here, "and forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us". And these verbal variations, though the sense is the same, together with the omission of the doxology, and the word "Amen", show, that this prayer was not designed to be an exact form, and to be so used, but as a directory of prayer. I have, in my notes See Gill on "Mt 6:9" &c. shown the agreement there is between the petitions in this prayer, and some that were made use of among the Jews; and have supposed that our Lord took notice of such petitions, which the good people among the Jews frequently used; and which he approved of, and singled out, and put them into the order and method in which they stand, with some alterations for the better, to be a directory to his disciples and followers. Which to suppose, I apprehend, does not at all countenance the making and using stinted forms of prayer; since the petitions used by good men among the Jews, were not used as forms of prayer, but what they were led unto by the Spirit of God from common and constant experience to make use of; just as we may observe now, that good people in different parts, who use no form of prayer, nor have ever heard one another pray, and yet make use of the same petitions, and almost, if not altogether, in the selfsame words, their wants, necessities, cases, and circumstances being the same; and these frequently returning, oblige to a repeated use of them, in the same words, or near unto them. And though forms of prayer might not be in use among the Jews in the times of Christ, yet it is easy to account for it, how Christ came to be acquainted with the petitions in general use with good men; since not only he is God omniscient, and knows all the prayers of his people, both in public and private; but, as man, must know what were used, by his attendance on public worship, and by the private communion he had with the saints and children of God. It must indeed be owned, that forms of prayer very early obtained among the Jews; and if not in Christ's time, yet in the times of his apostles. There is frequent mention {h} of the eighteen prayers in the times of Gamaliel, the master of the Apostle Paul; and of a nineteenth composed by one of his disciples {i}, Samuel the little, who is thought, by some, to be Saul himself, whilst he was a scholar of his; and which is directed against the heretics, or Christians, as they were called by the Jews; and this easily accounts for, how the petitions of the ancient good men among the Jews came to be put with others into their forms of prayer, where we now find them. For that they should take these petitions from this directory of Christ's, is not reasonable to suppose, considering their implacable enmity against him.

Moreover, supposing, but not granting, that these petitions which our Lord took, and put into this order, for the use and instruction of his disciples, had been used by good men as forms of prayer, it will not justify the use of forms by any authority of Christ, or as being agreeably to his will; since it is certain, that however these petitions were used by good men before, our Lord never designed they should be used as an exact, precise form of prayer by his disciples; seeing there are several variations in them as here delivered, from what they are as they stand in Matthew; whereas, had they been intended as a stinted form, they would have been expressed in the selfsame words: and moreover, to approve of here and there a petition, which for their matter are excellently good, and to approve of them all together, as a form, are two different things: to which may be added, that though there is an agreement between the petitions, as used by the Jews, and those our Lord directs to; yet there are some variations and alterations much for the better, which destroy the form of them.

{h} Misn. Beracot, c. 4. sect. 3. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 28. 2. T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 65. 3. Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 7. sect. 7. {i} T. Bab. Beracot, ib. Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 2. sect. 1, 2. Gauz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2.

Luke 11:5

Ver. 5. And he said unto them, which of you shall have a friend,.... A neighbour, or acquaintance:

and shall go unto him at midnight; which may seem a very unseasonable time, and which nothing but real distress, not knowing what otherwise to do, would put a man upon:

and say unto him, friend, lend me three loaves: it was usual of the Jews to borrow bread of one another, and certain rules are laid down, when, and on what condition, this is to be done; as for instance, on a sabbath day {k},

"a man may ask of his friend vessels of wine, and vessels of oil, only he must not say, lend me: and so a woman,
twrkk htrybxm, "bread of her friend"."

Again {l},

"so said Hillell, let not a woman lend htrbxl rkk "bread to her friend", till she has fixed the price; lest wheat should be dearer, and they should be found coming into the practice of usury."

For what was lent, could not be demanded again under thirty days {m}.

{k} Misn. Sabbat, c. 23. sect. 1. {l} Misn. Bava Metzia. c. 5. sect. 9. {m} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 3. 2. Jarchi in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 148. 1. Bartenona in Misn. Sabbat, c. 23. sect. 1.

Luke 11:6

Ver. 6. For a friend of mine in his journey,.... Or "out of the way"; having lost his way, being benighted; and has rambled about for some time, and at length,

is come to me; for lodging and entertainment:

and I have nothing to set before him; to refresh him with, after such a fatigue, before he goes to bed, which was very requisite and proper.

Luke 11:7

Ver. 7. And he from within shall answer and say,.... The friend within doors, shall reply to him that is without at his door, in the street:

trouble me not; by knocking at the door, and importuning to rise and lend loaves; whereby his rest would be disturbed, and trouble given him;

the door is now shut; being very late at night, and which could not be opened without noise and inconvenience:

and my children are with me in bed: sleeping, as the Persic version adds; there were none, children, or servants up, to let him in:

I cannot rise; without disturbing them:

and give thee; the loaves desired.

Luke 11:8

Ver. 8. I say unto you,.... This is the accommodation of the parable; to these words are premised, in the Vulgate Latin version, the following, "if he continue knocking":

though he will not rise and give him, because he is a friend; though mere friendship will not influence and engage him to rise from his bed, at such an unseasonable time, and fulfil the request of his friend;

yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth: as he asks for, or more, if necessary: the design of this parable, is the same with that of the widow and the unjust judge, in Lu 18:1 which is to show the force of importunity, where friendship, as here, and the fear of God, and regard of men, which were wanting there, have no influence; and so to encourage to constancy and perseverance in prayer, with earnestness; taking no denial at the hand of God, but still continuing to make pressing instances.

Luke 11:9

Ver. 9. And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you,.... This is said by Christ, to encourage to prayer, and importunity in it; that if any one asks of God, in the name of Christ, and in faith, whether it be bread for the body, or food for the soul; or any blessing whatever, whether temporal or spiritual, it shall be given; not according to their deserts, but according to the riches of the grace of God; who is rich unto all that call upon him, in sincerity and truth:

seek, and ye shall find: whether it be Christ, the pearl of great price, or God in Christ; or particularly, pardoning grace and mercy through Christ, or the knowledge of divine things; and both grace here, and glory hereafter, as men seek for hidden treasure; such shall not lose their labour, but shall enjoy all these valuable things, and whatever they are by prayer, and in the use of other means, seeking after:

knock, and it shall be opened to you; the door of mercy with God; the door of fellowship with Christ; the door of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it and of the Gospel dispensation and church state, into which is admission, to all that seek; and the door of heaven, into which there is entrance by the blood of Jesus: the several phrases denote prayer, the continuance of it, and importunity in it;

See Gill on "Mt 7:7"

Luke 11:10

Ver. 10. For every one that asketh receiveth,.... Some indeed ask and receive not, because they ask amiss, **Jas 4:3** who either apply to a wrong person, or ask in a wrong manner, or from wrong principles, or with wrong ends in view: but when a man is right in the object of prayer, and in the matter and manner of prayer, and in the end he proposes to himself, let him be what he will, of whatsoever nation, or ever mean a person, he has the petitions which he asks, either immediately, or, at least, he may be assured he shall have them in God's due time:

and he that seeketh findeth; whoever not only prays, but makes use of means, as attendance on other ordinances, and is diligent in the use of them, sooner or later finds his account herein, and what his soul seeks for:

and to him that knocketh it shall be opened; not only who prays heartily, and seeks diligently, but who is importunate, and will have no denial; continues knocking; though there may be some time a seeming delay, yet the door will not always be shut to him; after much knocking it will be opened; See Gill on "Mt 7:8"

Luke 11:11

Ver. 11. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father,.... Our Lord illustrates and confirms what he had said before by an instance common among men: the relation between a father and a son is natural, and it is very near; and it is usual for a son, when hungry, and at the proper times of meals, to ask bread of his father: and when he does,

will he give him a stone? should he do so, he would show that his heart was as hard, or harder than the stone he gives:

or if he ask a fish, will he, for a fish, give him a serpent? And endeavour to deceive him by the likeness of the one to the other, especially some sort of fish, which would poison or sting him, but not refresh and nourish him: such inhuman brutish parents are not surely to be found;
See Gill on "Mt 7:9",

See Gill on "Mt 7:10".

Luke 11:12

Ver. 12. Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion.... Of which there are three sorts; some are terrestrial, or land scorpions, scorpions of the earth, a kind of serpents, very venomous and mischievous, to whom the wicked Jews are compared, **Eze 2:6** and the locusts in **Re 9:3** others are airy, or flying scorpions, a sort of fowl; and others are sea scorpions; of the fish kind: it is not easy to say which of them is here meant. There is an herb which is called Nynbrqe {n}, "the scorpion": it leaves are like unto a scorpion, as the Jewish commentators say {o}. This is observed with the same view as the former. By it may be meant here, either the fish that is so called, since a fish is mentioned before; or rather, the land scorpion, which is of the serpent kind; this brings forth little worms, in the form of eggs, as {p} Pliny says: and it is said, that a scorpion put into an empty eggshell, has been used to be given to persons, whose death has been desired; which it bursting from, at once strikes and kills: but what father would do so to a child!

{n} Misn. Erubin, c. 2. sect. 6. {o} Maimon. & Bartonora in lb, {p} Lib. 11. c. 25.

Luke 11:13

Ver. 13. If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children,.... See Gill on "Mt 7:11".

How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? instead of the Holy Spirit here, the Vulgate Latin version reads, "good Spirit", and so two copies of Beza's; and the Ethiopic version, "the good gift of the Holy Spirit"; and doubtless intends the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, in distinction from, and as preferable to the good things given by earthly parents, to their children.

Luke 11:14

Ver. 14. And he was casting out a devil,.... At a certain time, either the same that is recorded in **Mt 9:32** or in Mt 12:22 for both of them were attended with the same effect upon the people, and with the same calumny of the Pharisees, mentioned here:

and it was dumb. The Ethiopic version reads, "deaf and dumb"; that is, the devil, which possessed the man, made him both deaf and dumb; if the same as in Mt 12:22 he was blind, as well as dumb:

and it came to pass, when the devil was gone out; of the man possessed by him, by the command of Christ:

the dumb spake; as other men did, and as he had done before; the cause being removed, the effect ceased:

and the people wondered; at the power of Christ, and concluded that he must be the Messiah, the son of David.

Luke 11:15

Ver. 15. But some of them said,.... The Pharisees, **Mt 9:34**
Mt 12:24 who could not bear that he should be thought to be the Messiah, and therefore put an ill construction on the miracle:

he casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of devils; in several copies he is called Beelzebul, and in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; which last adds these words, "and he answered and said, how can Satan cast out Satan?" See Gill on "Mt 12:20".

Luke 11:16

Ver. 16. And others tempting him,.... Others of the Scribes and Pharisees, or Sadducees: sought of him a sign from heaven;
See Gill on "Mt 12:38",
See Gill on "Mt 16:1".

Luke 11:17

Ver. 17. But he knowing their thoughts,.... Being God omniscient, said unto them; the following parables, as they are called in **Mr 3:23** or proverbial expressions, very pertinent to the purpose, and sufficient to set aside the base calumnies of the Pharisees:

every kingdom divided against itself, is brought to desolation; in process of time, division will end in destruction; and as it does in the kingdoms of the world, of which there have been fatal instances, so it would in the kingdom of Satan, was there in it a division, which the calumny of the Pharisees supposes:

and an house divided against an house, falleth. The Persic version renders it, "an house divided from the foundation, falls"; the sense is, a family, in which one part is opposed to the other, issues in the ruin of both; See Gill on "Mt 12:25",
See Gill on "Mr 3:24",
See Gill on "Mr 3:25".

Luke 11:18

Ver. 18. And if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?.... This is the accommodation of the above parables, or proverbial sentences; suggesting, that Satan must be against himself, if what the Pharisees said was true; and consequently, his kingdom and government, could not long subsist:

because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub; which is all one as to say, that Satan is divided against himself, which is not reasonable to suppose; See Gill on "Mt 12:26" and
See Gill on "Mr 3:26".

Luke 11:19

Ver. 19. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils,.... Which is what the Pharisees charged him with; in the Greek copies, and so in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions it is read, "by Beelzebul", and so in the preceding verses; See Gill on "Mt 10:25"

By whom do your sons cast them out? by whose help? or in whose name? for the Jews pretended to cast out devils, and to heal those that were possessed with them; which they did sometimes, by making use of the names of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and sometimes of the name of Solomon: Josephus {q} speaks of many in his time, who had this power of healing; and he himself saw one Eleazar, in the presence of Vespasian, his children, officers, and soldiers, cure many that were possessed of devils: and his method was, by putting a ring to the nose of the possessed, under the seal of which, was a root directed to by Solomon, and thereby brought out the unclean spirit; and as soon as the man was healed, he adjured the devil never to return more; at which time he made mention of the name of Solomon, and rehearsed the enchantments written by him: the said Eleazar, to give a specimen of the efficacy of his art, set a cup full of water upon the ground, and commanded the devil when he went out of the man, to turn it over, as a sign that he had left the man, and the devil immediately obeyed his order: now if these sons of theirs cast out devils, which they would not say were done by the help of the devil, or in his name, why should they ascribe the ejection of devils by Christ, to a diabolical assistance?

therefore shall they be your judges; or "judges against you", as the Arabic version; or "shall reprove you", as the Ethiopic; convict and condemn you; See Gill on "Mt 12:27"

{q} Antiqu. Jud. l. 8. c. 2.

Luke 11:20

Ver. 20. But if I with the, finger of God,.... The power of God, referring to Ex 8:19 and so the Cabalistic Jews {r} explain it,

"the finger is one of the five in the hand, and is that finger which works by the power of Elohim;"

it is the same with the Spirit of God; See Gill on "Mt 12:28" which is often called the hand of the Lord, Eze 1:3.

{r} R. Mosch in Sepher Hashem, apud Cabal. Denudata. T. I. par. l. p. 146.

Luke 11:21

Ver. 21. When a strong man armed,.... By the strong man, is meant the devil;

See Gill on "Mt 12:29" and who may be said to be "armed", both with his own temptations, which are as fiery darts, and which are thrown by him thick and fast, suddenly and swiftly, privily, and with great art and cunning, and with great strength, and are very injurious; and also with the sins and lusts of men, which are armour of unrighteousness, and which Satan turns upon them, and makes use of against them, to their great detriment; and who

keepeth his palace: which is the corrupt heart of an unregenerate man, where he dwells as a king, has his throne, keeps his court, and has his courtiers, and attendants, the lusts of the flesh, and the desires of the will, and the carnal affections; and which, as filthy a palace as it is, is perfectly agreeable to his nature; and this is kept by a guard of devils, and worldly lusts, till its strong holds are demolished by the Gospel, and Christ the King of glory enters in; till such time,

his goods are in peace: there is no concern in such an heart about sin, no uneasiness on that account, no sense of danger, nor inquiry after salvation; no dread upon the mind at the curses of the law, nor fears of hell, and damnation; but such a man lives in entire security, crying Peace, Peace, to himself.

Luke 11:22

Ver. 22. But when a stronger than he,.... By whom is meant Christ, who is the mighty God, the Almighty; and appears to be so, in the creation of all things, in upholding them by the word of his power, in the government of the world, and the works of providence, in the redemption of his people from sin, Satan, and the law, and in the conversion of them, by the efficacy of his grace, and in the preservation of them by his power; and who is manifestly stronger than Satan; not only by these instances, but by what follows:

shall come upon him; as he did in person, when he dispossessed him from the bodies of men; and does by his Spirit in conversion, when he enters into his palace, the heart of man, binds him, and looses men from him, and turns them from the power of Satan, to God, and sets up a throne of grace, where he himself dwells and reigns: so he comes upon him as an adversary, and often at an unawares; and always with great power and strength, and succeeds: Satan came upon Christ in the wilderness, in the garden, and on the cross, and attacked him, but without success; whence it is clear, that he is stronger than he:

and overcame him; he overcame him in the wilderness, and obliged him to retreat; and on the cross, when he obtained a complete victory over him, destroyed him, his principalities and powers, and all his works, and led him captive; and in conversion, so as to deliver his people from him, that were led captive by him, as that he can never regain his dominion over them more; and though he is suffered to tempt them; he cannot destroy them; and the saints shall overcome him at last, and have him bruised under their feet: and at the same time,

he taketh from him all his armour, wherein he trusted; as his temptations, which he himself repelled in the wilderness, and wrenched out of his hands, and made them useless, and he gives power to his people to resist them, and succours them under them, and delivers them out of them; and also the sins of men, which he took away on the cross, when he bore them, and the punishment of them there: and in conversion, he greatly weakens the power of sin, and takes away the dominion of it; and though the being of it is not removed, hence Satan has something to work upon, yet its power is so far gone, that neither that nor Satan, can destroy such who are truly called by the grace of God:

and divideth his spoils: he spoils his house, the heart of man, from being any longer a palace for him, and his goods, his mind and conscience, which are enlightened and awakened, and purged: or by his spoils are meant, the souls of men; which are taken as a prey out of his hands, and become trophies of victorious grace.

Luke 11:23

Ver. 23. He that is not with me, is against me,.... Our Lord does not mean one, that was not personally with him; for there might be some, and doubtless were many, who were not in person with him, and yet were not against him, but friends to him, and to his interest; nor one that was not a professed disciple of his, or not a follower of him, and his apostles; for there were some who called themselves John's disciples, and did not attend on Christ, and yet were not against him, but cast out devils in his name; and such an one perhaps was he, that is made mention of in **Mr 9:38** on occasion of whom, Christ there says some words, which may seem at first view, not so well to accord with these: but such are intended, who acted a neutral part between him and the Pharisees; who could bear to hear them accuse him of casting out devils by the prince of devils, and be easy at it: and such persons are condemned, who can hear all manner of blasphemy against the deity, sonship, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, and express no indignation at it; these, as they cannot be said to be with Christ, may be truly ranked among those that are against him:

and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth; whoever did not encourage persons to attend on the ministry of Christ, which was confirmed by such miracles the Pharisees spoke so reproachfully and contemptuously of, were reckoned by Christ as such, who were the means of hindering persons gathering unto him; as well as those who menaced and excommunicated them for so doing: the allusion is either to the gathering of the sheep into the fold, and the scattering of them by the wolf; or to the gathering of the wheat, and binding it in sheaves, and bringing it home in harvest; and to the scattering of the wheat loose in the field, whereby it is lost, and comes to nothing; See Gill on "Mt 12:30".

Luke 11:24

Ver. 24. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man,.... That is, the devil, who is in, and works in the children of disobedience, whether under a profession of religion or not; whose hearts are unclean like himself, wherefore there he delights to dwell; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "the evil demon": who may be said to go out of a man in appearance, when he outwardly reforms and takes up a profession of religion.

He walketh through dry places; or "a desert", as the Ethiopic version; to which the Gentile world is sometimes compared in the Old Testament Isa 35:1 whither Satan might go, being disturbed in Judea, through the many dispossessions by Christ; or rather leaving for a while the Scribes and Pharisees, who outwardly appeared righteous before men, he went to the Gentiles;

seeking rest, and finding none; being also made uneasy among them, through the preaching of the Gospel, which was sent unto them after Christ's resurrection; and not being able to keep his place in the hearts of men, nor do the mischief he was desirous of.

He saith, I will return unto my house, whence I came out; to the Jews again, who were blinded and filled with rage and enmity to the Gospel by him, and whom he instigated to persecute the apostles of Christ, and preachers of the word, wherever they came;

See Gill on "Mt 12:43" and
See Gill on "Mt 12:44".

Luke 11:25

Ver. 25. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. In Matthew it is also said to be "empty"; and so it is read here in the Arabic version; and in the Ethiopic version, "empty of men": but rather the sense is, that he found it empty of all goodness, notwithstanding all the sweeping and garnish of an outward reformation. The Persic version renders it, "heated and prepared"; heated with wrath and fury against Christ, and his Gospel, and so was prepared and fitted to be a proper habitation for Satan; and in such a case as this was the Jewish nation from the time of Christ's death to the destruction of Jerusalem; See Gill on "Mt 12:44"

Luke 11:26

Ver. 26. Then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits,.... Or "demons", as the Ethiopic version, whom he took to him as his consorts and companions, as the same version calls them.

More wicked than himself; for it seems there are degrees of wickedness among the devils, as well as among men:

and they enter and dwell there; the unclean spirit, and the other seven: so seven devils were in Mary Magdalene, and a legion in another man; and indeed the evil heart of man is an habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit: here it may chiefly design the place and power which the devil had among the Jews before their destruction:

and the last state of that man is worse than the first; the Persic version adds, "and more miserable"; as was the case of the Jews, to which this parable refers; as appears by what is subjoined in Matthew, which manifestly applies it to them,

even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation;
See Gill on "Mt 12:45".

Luke 11:27

Ver. 27. And it came to pass as he spoke these things,.... That is, as Christ spoke, or "had finished these sayings", as the Persic version expresses it, before related, in vindication of himself and his miracles, from the blasphemy of the Scribes and Pharisees to their entire confusion, and had delivered the above parable concerning the unclean spirit, which had a particular regard to them:

a certain woman of the company: observing the miracle he had wrought, in casting out a devil, and being affected with his discourse, in which he so fully cleared himself, and so strongly confuted his enemies, and set them forth in so just a light:

lift up her voice, and said unto him, aloud, in the hearing of all the people, and with great earnestness and fervour:

blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked: whether this woman personally knew Mary, the mother of Christ, is not certain; it may be that she was now present, or at least not far off; and this woman hearing that she, with the brethren of Christ, were without, and desired to speak with him, might be the occasion of her uttering these words; Mt 12:46 though they are said not so much in praise, and to the honour of Mary, as in commendation of Christ, from whom, and for the sake of bearing and suckling so great a person, she was denominated blessed as before, both by the angel and Elisabeth, **Luke 1:28** This was a form of blessing among the Jews: so it is said {s} of R. Joshuah ben Chananiah, a disciple of R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, who lived about these times, wtdlwy yrva, "blessed is she that bore him": and they had also a form of cursing among them, much after the same manner, as qnyya Nkd azyb jyl, "cursed be the paps that suckled him" {t}. The Jews, in their blasphemous rage against Christ, and all that belong to him, say of Mary, the daughter of Eli, by whom they seem to design the mother of our Lord, that she hangs in the shades by the fibres of her paps {u} but this woman had a different opinion of her.

{s} Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 8. {t} T. Hieros. Celaim, fol. 27. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 5. fol. 5. 1. {u} T. Hieros. Chagiga, fol. 77. 4. & Sanhedrin, fol. 23. 3.

Luke 11:28

Ver. 28. But he said,.... Christ said "to the woman", Persic version reads, as correcting her, though not denying it, nor reproving her for it, but improving upon it:

yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it; intimating, that though his mother was happy in bearing and suckling such a son, yet it was a far greater happiness to hear the word of God; meaning either himself, the eternal "Logos", so as to embrace him, believe on him, and have him formed in the heart; or the Gospel preached by him, so as to understand it, receive it as the ingrafted word, and bring forth fruit, and act in obedience to it, observe it, and abide by it, and never relinquish it. This is a greater happiness than to be related to Christ in the flesh, though ever so nearly. The Ethiopic version reads, "that hear the word of God, and believe, and keep it": for faith comes by hearing, and shows itself in doing. Barely to hear the word, and even give an assent to it, will be of little avail, unless what is heard and believed is put in practice.

Luke 11:29

Ver. 29. And when the people were gathered thick together,.... Upon this woman's lifting up her voice, and saying the things she did; or rather to see what sign he would give, which some had desired Lu 11:16

he began to say, this is an evil generation. The Alexandrian copy, two copies of Beza's, and the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions read, "this generation is an evil generation"; and also it was an "adulterous one", as is added in Mt 12:39

they seek a sign; for they had asked one of him, Lu 11:16

and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet; one like unto it: See Gill on "Mt 12:39"

Luke 11:30

Ver. 30. For as Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites,.... As he was by lying three days and three nights in the whale's belly, and then cast on shore alive; which sign, or miracle was wrought to confirm his mission and message, and to engage the Ninevites to give credit to him, and repent, or they might assure themselves they would be utterly destroyed;

so shall also the son of man be to this generation; by lying three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, and then rising again from the dead the third day; and which should be done to confirm the truth of his Messiahship, and to declare him to be the Son of God with power, and to engage persons to believe in him; and to assure that wicked generation, that in case they remained, after such a sign, impenitent and unbelieving, wrath would come upon them to the uttermost; see Mt 12:40.

Luke 11:31

Ver. 31. The queen of the south,.... That is, the queen of Sheba, which was a country of Arabia, which lay south of Judea; of whom it is said, that

she shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: the sense is, that at the last day, when all shall rise from the dead, both Jews and Gentiles, this Heathen queen shall rise together with the men of the present generation among the Jews, stand in judgment with them, and against them; and that her conduct would be brought as an evidence against them, and be improved as an aggravation of their condemnation:

for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here: the difference between them, and what aggravates the case is, that she was a Gentile that knew not God, they were Jews, his professing people; she came from afar, they were near, upon the spot, where Christ was, he was preaching in their streets, temple, and synagogues; she came to hear only natural or moral wisdom, but they might have heard spiritual and heavenly wisdom, with which eternal happiness is connected; she came to hear only a mere man, but they might have heard him who is the wisdom of God, and the only wise God, and our Saviour; See Gill on "Mt 12:42".

Luke 11:32

Ver. 32. The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it,.... Luke changes the order of these instances; Matthew mentions this before the instance of the queen of Sheba; but Luke puts it last: this circumstance is not material, and the design of it is the same with the former:

for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here: what in this case will aggravate the condemnation of the Jews in the day of judgment is, that these men were Heathens, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, and were not used to have prophets sent to them; and yet as soon as Jonas, a mere man, came to them, and preached but one sermon among them, they repented of their sins, and turned from them; whereas the Jews, who had a better notion of religion, and who, though they had the Son of God himself among them, and preached to them, and that many sermons, and whose ministry was confirmed by miracles, and afterwards his apostles for a course of years, had yet remained impenitent and unbelieving;
See Gill on "Mt 12:41".

Luke 11:33

Ver. 33. No man when he hath lighted a candle,.... These words are often repeated by Christ on different occasions,
See Gill on "Mt 5:15" and
See Gill on "Lu 8:16" and here seem to design the free, open, and clear ministry of Christ, who excelled Solomon in wisdom, and Jonas in powerful preaching. It being as a candle, which, when lighted, no man

putteth in a secret place; as under a bed, **Mr 4:21** where it cannot be seen, and its light be of any use:

neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come may see the light; intimating, that Christ and his disciples did not preach in corners, or in private houses, and secret places, but in the streets of the city, and in the temples and synagogues, the public places of worship: and therefore the Jews were the more inexcusable, that they did not attend to the ministry of the word; and this would be their condemnation, that light was come among them, and they preferred darkness to it, **Joh 3:19**.

Luke 11:34

Ver. 34. The light of the body is the eye,.... The Vulgate Latin and all the eastern versions read "the light of thy body is thine eye". The sense is, that as the eye gives light, to the body, and the several members of it, by which they are guided and directed; so the understanding is the light of the soul, and the guide to all the powers and faculties of it;

therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light: as when the eye is free from vicious humours, and its sight is clear, the whole body reaps the advantage of it, and is perfectly illuminated by it; so when the eye of the understanding is opened and enlightened by the Spirit of God, into the truths of the Gospel, and a single regard is had unto them, and to the glory of Christ in them, the whole soul is filled with light, joy, and comfort:

but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness; as when the eye of the body is attended with any bad humours that hinder the sight, all the members of it are in darkness; so, when the understanding is darkened through the blindness and ignorance there is in men, with respect to Gospel truths, all the powers and faculties of the soul are in a very miserable and uncomfortable condition. The 35th and 36th verses are not in Beza's most ancient copy.

Luke 11:35

Ver. 35. Take heed therefore,.... By attending to the light of the Gospel, shining in the ministration of it, and do not neglect and despise it:

that the light which is in thee be not darkness; lest being given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart, not only the light of nature, which the Jews had in common with the Gentiles, but even that notional light and knowledge of divine things, which they had by being favoured with an external revelation, the writings of the Old Testament, should be lost.

Luke 11:36

Ver. 36. If thy whole body therefore be full of light,.... That is, if the whole soul, as the Ethiopic version reads, be full of Gospel light, through the illuminating influences of the blessed Spirit accompanying the word:

having no part dark; every power and faculty of the soul being affected with it, and influenced by it, though, as yet, the light and knowledge of evangelical things is not perfect in any:

the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light; the whole soul shall be as full of light and joy, which the Gospel always brings with it, as a room is full of light, when a candle is lighted, and shines brightly, and burns clearly in it.

Luke 11:37

Ver. 37. And as he spake,.... Either the above words, or others at another time:

a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: as one of the same sect had before, in **Lu 7:36** and who either was better affected to Christ than the generality of them were; or had a design upon him to get him into company with others, in private, and ensnare him if they could, and overcome him, who was an overmatch for them before the people; among whom they feared, should they go on thus publicly to attack him, their credit and reputation would sink, and be lost.

And he went in and sat down to meat: whatever were the intentions of the Pharisee, Christ, who was always affable and free with all sorts of men, readily accepted of the invitation, and at once went along with him to his house; and dinner being ready, and on the table, he immediately sat down without any ceremony.

Luke 11:38

Ver. 38. And when the Pharisee saw it,.... That Christ laid himself down on one of the couches and began to eat:

he marvelled; that so great a prophet as he was, and a man of so much religion and holiness, should show no regard to a common custom with them, and which was one of the traditions of their elders, and which they put upon a level with the commands of God. The Vulgate Latin version, and so Beza's most ancient copy, and another exemplar, read, "he began to say, thinking" (or judging) "within himself": he was "moved" at it, as the Persic version renders it; he was filled with astonishment and indignation,

that he had not first washed before dinner; especially since he had been in a crowd of people, Lu 11:29 for the Pharisees not only washed their hands, by immersing them up to the elbow before eating; but when they had been at

market, or among any large number of people, or had reason to think they had, or feared they had touched any unclean person or thing, they immersed themselves all over in water: and which is the sense of the word baptizomai, here used; See Gill on "Mr 7:2",
See Gill on "Mr 7:3" and
See Gill on "Mr 7:4".

Luke 11:39

Ver. 39. And the Lord said unto him,.... Jesus, as the Syriac and Persic versions read; the Lord Jesus, as the Ethiopic.

Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup, and the platter; being very tenacious of the traditions of the elders, concerning the washing of cups and pots, which had been of late years brought in among them, and therefore the word "now" is used;
See Gill on "Mt 23:25" and
See Gill on "Mr 7:4",

but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness: meaning either their souls, which were full of all manner of sin, the cleansing and purity of which they had no concern about, whilst they were very strict and curious in washing their bodies, their cups and platters; or rather the vessels which were filled with meat and drink got by extortion, rapine, and oppression; see Mt 23:25.

Luke 11:40

Ver. 40. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without,.... That is, made clean that which is without, or the outside of the cup and platter;

make that which is within also? does not he make the inside clean likewise? whoever washes a cup or platter, but washes and makes clean the inside, as well as the outside? and so ye who are so very careful to have your cups and platters clean, should be as careful what you put in them, that they are clean also; not only that they are clean according to the law, in a ceremonial sense, but in a moral sense, that they are honestly and lawfully got. The word, poiew, rendered "made" and "make", answers to the Hebrew word hve, which sometimes signifies to beautify and adorn, and to cleanse, and remove away filth, as by paring nails, and washing the feet; so in De 21:12 it is said of a captive woman that a man takes into his house for his wife, among other things, htvew, "she shall make her nails"; that is, "pare" them, as we render it, and remove the filth from them. Again, in 2Sa 19:24 it is said of Mephibosheth, that from the day king David departed, he had not, hve, "made his feet"; that is, as the Targum renders it, Pjv al, "he had not washed his feet"; and so other Jewish interpreters understand it, either of his having not washed his feet, much less his whole body {w}, or of not having pared his nails {x}; and so the Vulgate Latin renders it, that he came to meet the king "with unwashen feet"; which may serve to illustrate and confirm the sense before given: though interpreters generally understand this of God, as the maker of the soul, as well as of the body; and therefore the purity of the former should be regarded, as well as that of the latter.

{w} R. David Kimchi and Rabbenu Isaiah in loc. Vid Jarchi in ib. {x} R. Levi ben Gersom in ib.

Luke 11:41

Ver. 41. But rather give alms of such things as ye have,.... The phrase ta enonta, is variously rendered, and so furnishes out various senses: the Syriac version renders it, "give that which is", which is yours; or "which is given to you", as the Persic version, and agrees with ours, "such things as ye have"; and which carries in it but a very odd sense; for none can give of that which they have not. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "that which is over and above"; superfluous substance, and which may be easily spared without hurting a man, or his family: others, "as much as you can": according to a man's ability, and as God has prospered him in the world. The Ethiopic version renders it, "that which is necessary"; which the necessities of the poor call for, and is right and proper to give them: and the Arabic version, very foreign from the sense of the phrase, reads, "before every thing"; above all things give alms. But the true sense of it is contained in the literal version of it, "things that are within"; that is, that are within the cup and the platter; give meat and drink to the poor, your platters and cups are full of, gotten by injustice and oppression. Some read it not imperatively, "give", but indicatively, "ye do give": you oppress and defraud men, devour widows' houses, and fill your own with the spoils of others; and then give out of your cups and platters drink to the thirsty, and meat to the hungry, to make atonement for your avarice and extortion:

and behold all things are clean unto you; that is, according to their own opinion, who fancied that alms deeds justified them in the sight of God, cleansed them from their sins, delivered them from hell, and gave them a title to eternal life; See Gill on "Mt 6:1" for it can never be thought to be our Lord's meaning in earnest, that either their persons, or what they had, should be pure and clean unto them, by giving a part of their ill-gotten goods to the poor; but he speaks their sense, in an ironic way. From this opinion of theirs it is, that the Hebrew word, hkz, which signifies "to be clean", is used by them for giving alms: so it is said {y}, that

"R. Jonathan and Resh Lekish went down to bathe themselves in the baths of Tiberias; and a certain poor man met them, and said unto them, yb Nyykz, "give me alms"; they said unto him, when we come back we will Kb Nyykz, "give thee alms":"

and so the Mahometans call alms by the same name, because they imagine that they cleanse their other substance from pollution, and their souls from avarice.

{y} Vajikra Rabba, Sect. 34. fol. 174. 2. Vid. fol. 173. 3, 4. & 174. 4.

Luke 11:42

Ver. 42. But woe unto you Pharisees,.... Though these words, with several other passages in this chapter, are much alike with those in Matthew 23 yet it is clear that they were spoken at different times, these in the house of a Pharisee, and they in the temple at Jerusalem:

for ye tithe mint and rue; See Gill on "Mt 23:23" the Persic version here reads, "mint and anise", as there; and the Ethiopic version only "hyssop":

and all manner of herbs; or "every herb"; that is, all sorts of herbs that grow in the garden, and were not common to all;

and pass over judgment, and the love of God: by "judgment" may be meant justice, or doing that which is right between man and man, both publicly and privately, which was greatly neglected by these extortioners and unjust men: and by "the love of God" may be intended, both love to God, which shows itself in the observance of the first table of the law, and love to the neighbour, which God requires, and regards the second table:

these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone;

See Gill on "Mt 23:23".

Luke 11:43

Ver. 43. Woe unto you Pharisees, for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues,.... And also the uppermost rooms at feasts,
Mt 23:6

and greetings in the market; See Gill on "Mt 23:6" and
See Gill on "Mt 23:7".

Luke 11:44

Ver. 44. Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,.... As they are all along called by Matthew; though only here by Luke. The Vulgate Latin only reads, "woe unto you", leaving out all the rest: but the whole is retained in all the Oriental versions;

for ye are as graves which appear not; being covered with grass; "or which were not marked", as the Ethiopic version renders it; that is, were not whited or covered with lime, as some were, that they might be seen at a distance, and be known what they were; that so men might avoid going near them, and prevent their being defiled with them; See Gill on "Mt 23:27"

and the men that walk over them

are not aware of them; and so are defiled by them. Christ compares the Pharisees, because of their hypocrisy, and secret iniquity, both to whited sepulchres, and to those that were not: to those that were, because, like them, they looked beautiful without, and righteous in the sight of men, and yet were inwardly full of all manner of pollution and sin; and to those that were not, because they did not appear to be what they were, and men were deceived by them; and under specious pretences to religion and holiness, were by their corrupt doctrines and practices unawares drawn into the commission of sin. Regard may not only be had to graves covered with grass, or not marked with lime, by which they might be known; but also to what the Jews call, Mwhth rbq, "the grave of the abyss" {z}; a grave that is not known no more than if it was in the bottomless pit: so uncleanness by touching a dead body, which a man is not conscious of, is called the uncleanness of the abyss, or an unknown one {a}.

{z} Misn Parah. c. 3. sect. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Parah. c. 3. sect. {a} Maimon. in Misn. Nazir, c. 9. sect. 2. & Pesach. c. 7. sect. 7.

Luke 11:45

Ver. 45. Then answered one of the lawyers,.... Or Scribes, as the Syriac and Persic versions read: and so the Ethiopic version calls him, "a Scribe of the city": the Scribes and lawyers were the same sort of persons who were interpreters of the law, and equally tenacious of the traditions of the elders Christ had referred to, as the Pharisees, and in general were Pharisees; though some of them might be of the sect of the Sadducees. This man observing that Christ, in his last words, joined the Scribes and Pharisees together, and charged them both with hypocrisy, and pronounced a woe upon them, was very uneasy at it:

and saith unto him, master, thus saying, thou reproachest us also; us lawyers, or Scribes also; both by mentioning their names, and accusing the Pharisees of the same things, which they must be conscious to themselves they were equally guilty of; so that if the one were criminal, the others were also. The Ethiopic version reads by way of interrogation, "what thou sayest, does it not injure us?"

Luke 11:46

Ver. 46. And he said, woe unto you also, ye lawyers,.... Christ was so far from calling back what he had said or suggested, that he repeats and confirms it, and more particularly names them, and enlarges on their evil practices:

for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers; see Gill on "Mt 23:4".

Luke 11:47

Ver. 47. Woe unto you,.... Meaning particularly the lawyers or Scribes, together with the Pharisees, and even the whole body of the people, who in general were of the cast and complexion here described:

for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets;
See Gill on "Mt 23:29"

and your fathers killed them; the prophets; "or whom your fathers killed", as read the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions; the one put them to death, and the other erected stately monuments over them, or adorned them; and yet both had the same malignant spirit against the faithful servants and messengers of God; and which showed their great hypocrisy.

Luke 11:48

Ver. 48. Truly ye bear witness, that ye allow the deeds of your fathers,.... Or "ye bear witness, and ye allow"; that is, they both witnessed that their fathers killed the prophets, and they consented to what they did, and approved of their actions:

for they indeed killed them; it must be owned, and not their sons:

and ye build their sepulchres; which was a bearing and keeping up a testimony against them, and a continuing a remembrance of their crimes; and which looked as though they approved of them, or otherwise they should have been content to have the prophets lie buried in silence, and not erected stately monuments over them, which seemed to be raised more for the honour of those that put them to death, than of the prophets themselves. Or, whereas they did this under specious pretences of disliking their fathers' sins, which yet secretly they loved, and were of the same wicked disposition against the ministers of the word, and which they would quickly show; this discovered their hypocrisy, and confirmed the character Christ had before given of them; for it follows,

Luke 11:49

Ver. 49. Therefore also said the wisdom of God,..... The Syriac version only reads "wisdom"; by which seems to be meant not the perfection of God's wisdom: though it is usual with the Jews to represent the divine perfections as speaking, as the justice and mercy of God. They say {b}, that

"when the holy blessed God sought to make Hezekiah the Messiah, and

Sennacherib, Gog, and Magog, Nydh tdym, "the property of judgment", or "justice, said" before the holy, blessed God, Lord of the world, &c."

and so the sense may be here, that the infinite wisdom of God said within himself, determined in his own breast, to do what follows. But I rather think that Christ is intended, who, as God, is the essential wisdom of God; and, as man and mediator, has the spirit of wisdom resting on him, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in him; since this is said by Christ, Mt 23:34 though the words here seem to be the words of the evangelist relating what Christ had said. Some have thought, that some book, under the name of "The Wisdom of God", is here cited, which had in it the following words,

I will send them prophets and apostles; which, in Matthew, are called prophets, wise men, and Scribes; and by whom are meant the apostles of Christ, and the ministers of the Gospel. The Persic version reads, "lo, I send to you", as in Mt 23:34,

and some of them they shall slay and persecute; some of them they shall put to death, and others they shall persecute from one place to another; See Gill on "Mt 23:34".

{b} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1. Vid. Targum in Eccl. x. 8. & in Lam. i. 1. & ii. 20.

Luke 11:50

Ver. 50. That the blood of all the prophets,.... The same with "all the righteous blood", or the blood of all the righteous men, in
Mt 23:35,

which was shed from the foundation of the world: for there were prophets from the beginning, which prophesied of Christ, **Lu 1:70** and whose blood was shed very early; for Abel, the son of the first man, and who was the first whose blood was shed, was not only a righteous man, but a prophet; for by the sacrifice which he offered up, he gave a prophetical hint of the sacrifice of Christ, in that he spoke beforehand of it, as being dead he yet speaks: and now the Lord was about to send apostolical prophets, whom the Jews would slay, and he would suffer them to slay, that so the blood of all the former ones,

may be required of this generation; and they be punished for it: just as in

Babylon will be found, when God makes inquisition for blood, as he sooner or later always does, the blood of the prophets and saints, and of all that are slain upon earth, ever since Rome papal has been in power, Re 18:24.

Luke 11:51

Ver. 51. From the blood of Abel,.... "Righteous Abel", as in Mt 23:35 and so read the Arabic version here, and two manuscripts in the Bodleian library, and three of Stephens's copies; the Persic version renders it, "innocent Abel": he is mentioned because he was the first man that was slain, and he was slain because of his righteousness.

Unto the blood of Zacharias; in the Cambridge copy of Beza's, it is added, "the son of Barachias", as in Mt 23:35 and so the Arabic version, "the son of Barasciah"; who he was,
See Gill on "Mt 23:35"

which perished between the altar and the temple; or "the house", that is, the holy place: and the Ethiopic version renders it, "the holy house"; here he died, being slain by the Jews; see the note, as before.

Verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation; as it was at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Luke 11:52

Ver. 52. Woe unto you lawyers,.... Who are particularly addressed again in distinction from the Pharisees, though much the same things are said to them both in Mt 23:13

for ye have taken away the key of knowledge; of the Scriptures, of the law, and the prophets, and the true interpretation of them, and especially of such places as refer to the Messiah, and the Gospel dispensation, called the kingdom of heaven, Mt 23:13 they had not only arrogated the knowledge of these to themselves, setting up for the only interpreters of the sacred writings; but they had took away from the people the true knowledge and sense of them, by their false glosses upon them, so that they were destroyed for lack of knowledge: and hence came that famine of hearing the word, which they say {c} should be before the coming of the King Messiah, and now was. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "the keys of knowledge"; and the Ethiopic version, "the key of righteousness". The Jews sometimes speak of "the keys of the law", and represent the oral law as the root and key of the written law {d}: but, alas! it was by the oral law, or traditions of the elders, that they took away the key, or obscured the true sense of the written law. Some think, that here is an allusion to the custom of delivering a key to any one, when he was ordained or promoted to the dignity of a doctor: it is said of R. Samuel {e}, that

"when he died they put, wxtpm, "his key", and his writing book into his coffin, because he was not worthy of a son"

to succeed him:

ye entered not in yourselves; into the kingdom of heaven, the Gospel dispensation, neither receiving doctrines, nor submitting to its ordinances:

and them that were entering in ye hindered; by reproaching the miracles and ministry of Christ; by threatenings and excommunications; See Gill on "Mt 23:13".

{c} Targum in Ruth i, 1. {d} Zohar in Exod. fol. 46. 1. {e} Vid. Cameron. in loc.

Luke 11:53

Ver. 53. And as he said these things unto them,.... Denounced the above woes upon them, charging them with the above crimes, and threatening them with divine vengeance:

the Scribes and Pharisees began to urge him vehemently; to fall upon him with their tongues, and express great rage, wrath, and virulence against him:

and to provoke him to speak of many things; they put questions to him, and urged him to answer them, and did all they could to irritate him to say things that they could improve against him, to draw words out of his mouth, and then wrest and pervert them.

Luke 11:54

Ver. 54. Laying wait for him,.... To ensnare and entangle him, watching his words, observing what he said, and laying hold thereon:

and seeking to catch something out of his mouth; like beasts of prey, or hunters, that were watching for their prey; or lay ambush, diligently looking out, and greedily catching at every thing they thought for their purpose:

that they might accuse him; either of heresy or sedition, to the Jewish sanhedrim, or the Roman governor.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 12:1

Ver. 1. In the mean time,.... While Christ was discoursing with the Pharisees, and they were using him in the vilest manner, throwing out their invectives against him in order to draw off the people from him:

when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people. There were "myriads" of them, as in the original text, and a myriad is ten thousand; the meaning is, that there were several thousands of them:

insomuch that they trod one upon another; striving to get near to Christ, either to see his person, or to hear his discourses; and particularly, what he would say to the Pharisees, who had fallen upon him in so violent a manner:

he began to say unto his disciples first of all; he directed his discourse not to the Pharisees, nor to the multitude, but to his disciples in the first place; at least, chiefly to them; for whom he had a regard, who were his dear friends, and were to be the preachers of his Gospel every where; and therefore it was proper that they should be aware of the dissembling arts of the Scribes and Pharisees, and have their minds fortified against approaching dangers, persecutions, and death itself: the last phrase, "first of all", is omitted in the Vulgate Latin version; and by all the Oriental versions, it is joined to the next clause, and read thus, "especially", or

before all things, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy; expressed both in their doctrines, and in their lives; which carried a great show of piety and holiness, but was in appearance only: very aptly is hypocrisy in doctrine and manners, compared to leaven; which at first is small and little, but gradually increases and spreads itself, and lies hid and covered, and is not easily discerned, nor its influence and effects observed; but in time, it infects and corrupts the whole of men's principles and practices, and puffs and swells them up with a vain opinion of themselves; and when our Lord bids his disciples beware of it, his meaning not only is, that they take heed that they were not infected with it themselves, but that they were not imposed upon by the specious pretences of these artful and designing men.

Luke 12:2

Ver. 2. For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed,.... No sin, be it ever so secret or privately done, as nothing is more covered than hypocrisy, but what shall be detected sooner or later; if not in this world, which is often the case, yet the last judgment, and in the world to come:

neither hid, that shall not be known; for how careful soever men may be to hide their vices from others, they are known to God; who will bring every thing into judgment, and make manifest the secrets of all hearts. These were general sentences, which were used by Christ at different times, upon different occasions, and applied to particular cases; See Gill on "Mt 10:26".

Luke 12:3

Ver. 3. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness,.... In the most private manner, to one another:

shall be heard in the light; which makes all things manifest, the day shall declare it:

and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets; whispered to persons in their bedchambers, and places of the most secret retirement;

shall be proclaimed upon the housetops; declared in the most public manner: in Mt 10:27 these words are so expressed, as to carry in them such a sense as this; that what was told the disciples by Christ, in the most private place and way, should be published by them, in the most free and open manner; See Gill on "Mt 10:27".

Luke 12:4

Ver. 4. And I say unto you, my friends,.... Whom he dearly loved, and had taken into the greatest intimacy and familiarity; making known to them whatever he had heard from his Father; giving them the best instructions, the most faithful and friendly advice, and proper precautions; all which, and more, showed them to be his friends, and for whom he after laid down his life:

be not afraid of them that kill the body; though he would have them beware of the Pharisees, he would not have them be afraid of them; he would have them know them, and avoid their hypocrisy, and guard against it; but not fear them, or the worst they could do unto them, which was to kill the body; and that they had no need to be afraid of, since at death, their souls would be immediately happy, in the enjoyment and vision of God; and their bodies would sleep in Jesus, and be raised in the resurrection morn, and be united to their souls, and be both for ever blessed:

and after that have no more that they can do; they have nothing more to kill, or which they can put to pain or misery; the soul is out of their reach, is an immortal spirit, and cannot be hurt or destroyed by them.

Luke 12:5

Ver. 5. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear, I will be your monitor, and direct you to the proper object of fear and reverence, and whom you should be careful to displease and offend:

fear him, which after he hath killed; your body, as the Persic version adds; hath taken away the life of it, by separating soul and body asunder, by sending one disease or another, or death in one shape or another:

hath power to cast into hell; your soul, as the above version also adds; yea, to destroy both body and soul in hell, as in
See Gill on "Mt 10:28"

yea, I say unto you, fear him; and none else, not with a servile, but with a filial fear.

Luke 12:6

Ver. 6. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings,.... As two were sold for one farthing, See Gill on "Mt 10:29"; so in buying and selling, where more money is laid out, things are bought cheaper; the Persic version reads, "for two barley corns":

and not one of them is forgotten before God; a single sparrow, a bird of little value and worth, is taken notice and care of by him; it has its life from him, and is provided for with food by him, and is under his protection; nor does he ever forget it, nor can any thing be done to it, without his permission; it cannot be struck, so as to cause it to fall on the ground, or be taken in a snare, or be killed in any shape, without the knowledge of God: his providence reaches to the minutest creatures and things, and much more then to rational creatures, to men; and still more to his dear children, ministers, and apostles.

Luke 12:7

Ver. 7. But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered,.... Not only their persons had passed under the hands of him that telleth them, who is the "Palmoni", or "wonderful numberer", as in the margin of **Da 8:13** and not only the several members of their bodies, or the more substantial parts of them, were written in the book of his purposes, according to which they were fashioned in time, but the more minute parts, and less to be regarded, were all told over, and kept in account; even the very hairs of their head, and not one of them could fall to the ground, any more than a sparrow; or be plucked off by men, without the knowledge and will of God; so careful is the providence of God, of all his people:

fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows; for if the hairs of their heads are as much regarded as sparrows, their persons and their lives must be of more account, than an infinite number of them, nor are they to be mentioned with them.

Luke 12:8

Ver. 8. Also I say unto you, &c. The same as in Mt 10:32

whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the son of man also confess before the angels of God; only instead of I, he here calls himself "the son of man"; and instead of "before my Father which is in heaven", here it is, "before the angels of God"; who will accompany Christ when he comes to judgment, and will be present, when he shall acknowledge his true followers as the blessed of his Father, the chosen of God, his redeemed and sanctified ones; and reject others before his Father, and the whole universe of rational beings: it is said in the Targum on **So 1:15**.

"when the children of Israel do the will of their king, he by his word (the Logos) praises them in the family of the holy angels."

This Christ, the eternal word, will do at the great day.

Luke 12:9

Ver. 9. But he that denieth me before men,.... That is, that continues to deny Christ, and lives and dies a denier of him; for otherwise it is possible for a person to deny Jesus to be the Son of God, or the Messiah, and afterwards confess him, as a Pagan or Jew; and through temptation, a real Christian may be left for a while, in one shape or another, to deny him and his truths, and afterwards truly repent, and at last be saved, as Peter; but they that deny Christ publicly, and persist in it,

shall be denied before the angels of God: they will be denied by Christ as belonging to him; they will be denied admission into heaven; they will be covered with shame and confusion publicly; they will be sent into everlasting burnings, and be ever tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels.

Luke 12:10

Ver. 10. And whosoever shall speak a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him,.... These words, though introduced by Luke among the sayings of Christ, recorded in Matt. 10 yet were said by Christ, on occasion of the Pharisees, ascribing his works to diabolical influence and assistance, See Gill on "Mt 12:32"

but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost; as the Pharisees did, by charging the miracles of Christ with being done by the help of the devil, when they were wrought by the finger of the Spirit:

it shall not be forgiven. The Ethiopic version adds at the close of this verse, as in Matthew, "neither in this world, nor in that which is to come".

Luke 12:11

Ver. 11. And when they bring you unto the synagogues,.... Of the Jews, to be examined and scourged by the rulers of them:

and unto magistrates and powers; Heathen ones; the Persic version reads, "princes and kings"; and the Ethiopic version, "princes, kings, and judges"; see Mt 10:18

Take ye no thought how, or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say; be not anxiously concerned, neither about the manner, nor the matter of your answer, apology, and defence: in the first part of this clause, the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, only read, "how"; and the Arabic version only, "what"; See Gill on "Mt 10:19".

Luke 12:12

Ver. 12. For the Holy Ghost shall teach you,.... Shall give both words and matter: in the same hour; instantly, immediately:

what ye ought to say; what will be proper to be said, for the honour of Christ, the defence of the Gospel, and the confusion of enemies; See Gill on "Mt 10:20".

Luke 12:13

Ver. 13. And one of the company said unto him,.... Not one of the disciples of Christ, but one of the multitude, or crowd, about him, Lu 12:1

Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me: the firstborn, according to the law, in De 21:17 had a double portion: but the eider brother here, it seems, was for keeping all, and would not divide any part to his younger brother; wherefore he applies to Christ, to interpose his authority, which he imagined would have great weight with his brother, who might be a hearer of Christ, and favourer of him: or however, such was the fame of Christ, and such credit he obtained by his ministry and miracles, that he concluded a word from him, would go a great way with his brother, to engage him to make a right and proper division, as he ought; and especially, if he looked upon him, as the king Messiah the Jews expected, he might take this to be part of his work and office, to settle such civil affairs as these: we often read in the Jewish writings, of brethren dividing their substance, left by their parents; so it is said {f},

"wqlxv Nyxax, "brethren that divide", (a field,) give two corners (to the poor); if they return and become partners, they give but one."

Where there were but two brethren, as here, the one was called rwkb, "the firstborn"; and the other, jwvp, "simple"; having no title or character: and concerning dividing inheritances, there are the following rules {g}:

"the firstborn takes a double portion of his father's goods, as is said, De 21:17 how? a man leaves five children, and one of them is the firstborn: the firstborn takes the third part of the substance, and every one of the four simple ones, takes a sixth part: if he leaves nine children, and one of them is the firstborn, he takes the fifth part, and every one of the eight simple ones, takes a tenth part; and so according to this division, they divided for ever----he that has two sons, a firstborn and a simple one, and they both die in his lifetime, the firstborn leaves a daughter, and the simple one leaves a son; lo, the son of the simple one inherits the third part of the old man's goods, which is his father's part; and the daughter of the firstborn, inherits the two thirds, which is the part of her father."

And again {h},

"two brethren that "divide", and a brother comes to them from the province of the sea: and so three brethren that "divide", and a creditor comes and takes the part of one of them, though the one takes land, and the other money, the division is void, and they return and divide the rest equally: if any one orders at the time of death, that there should be given to such an one a palm tree, or a field out of his substance, and the brethren "divide", and do not give such an one any thing, lo, the division is void; and how do they do? they give what he ordered the heirs, and after that they return and divide as at the beginning: brethren that divide, value what is upon them; but what is upon their sons and their daughters, which they have in possession, they do not value--he that leaves fatherless children, some that are grown up, and others little ones, and they are willing to divide their father's goods, so that those that are grown up may take their part, the sanhedrim appoint a guardian for the little ones, and he chooses a good part for them: and when they are grown up, they cannot make it void, for lo, by the decree of the sanhedrim, they divided for them; but if the sanhedrim err in computation, and give them less, they may make it void, and make another division when, they are grown up."

But it would be tedious to transcribe all the rules, relating to such cases.

{f} Misn. Peah, c. 3. sect. 5. {g} Maimon. Hilchot Nechalot, c. 2. sect. 1. 7.
{h} Maimon. Hilchot Nechalot, c. 10. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Luke 12:14

Ver. 14. And he said unto him, man,.... Or "friend", as the Ethiopic version renders it; that is, Jesus said to him, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions express it:

who made me a judge, or a divider over you? referring to the words of one of the Hebrews to Moses, when he interposed in a difference, **Ex 2:14** suggesting, that the same might be retorted on him, should he engage in such an affair: the reason why Christ avoided meddling with it, was not because it is unlawful for Christians to concern themselves in arbitrations about civil affairs, and in making up family differences, which is very commendable; but lest by such a step, he should give occasion to them, to conclude he was a temporal king: whereas his kingdom was not of this world, and his business lay not in civil affairs, and the management of them; but in spiritual concerns, in preaching the Gospel, and doing good to the souls of men; wherefore this was out of his province: and besides, it was a matter of covetousness, either in this person, or his brother, or both; which Christ takes an occasion from hence to expose, agreeably to his office; to which may be added, that this man seems to have disturbed Christ in his public work, and was of such a worldly spirit, as to prefer the care of his secular affairs, to the hearing of the word, and the welfare of his immortal soul.

Luke 12:15

Ver. 15. And he said unto them,.... Either to the two brethren, or to his disciples, as the Syriac and Persic versions read, or to the whole company:

take heed, and beware of covetousness; of all covetousness, as read the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and some copies; that is, of all sorts of covetousness, and every degree of it, which of all vices is to be avoided and guarded against, being the root of all evil; and as the Persic version renders it, is worse than all evil, and leads into it:

for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth; of flocks and beasts, as the Persic version renders it: a man's natural life cannot be prolonged by all the good things of the world he is possessed of; they cannot prevent diseases nor death; nor do the comfort and happiness of life, lie in these things; which are either not enjoyed by them, but kept for the hurt of the owners of them, or are intemperately used, or some way or other imbittered to them, so that they have no peace nor pleasure in them: and a man's spiritual life is neither had nor advantaged hereby, and much less is eternal life to be acquired by any of these things; which a man may have, and be lost for ever, as the following parable shows.

Luke 12:16

Ver. 16. And he spake a parable unto them, saying,.... He supposed the following case, and made use of it by way of illustration of what he had said:

the ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; who notwithstanding his riches, was but a fool, as the sequel shows; rich men are not always wise in things natural and civil; and very few of them are spiritually wise, or wise in spiritual things, in things which relate to the welfare of their souls; but however, this man was very prosperous in his worldly affairs, as a man of a small share of common sense may be, and wicked men often are: the word translated "ground", signifies a "region", or "country", which expresses the more, the riches of this man, that he had not a common and ordinary farm, but a whole country as it were; at least a very large part of one, and all this fruitful.

Luke 12:17

Ver. 17. And, he thought within himself,.... And foolish thoughts they were; he did not think of God, or that there was one, and much less that he was the author, of all his outward prosperity and plenty; and was still further off of thinking of returning thanks to God for it: or of asking counsel of him, what he should do with it; but he consults himself only, and thought only within, and for himself; and not at all of his poor neighbours, or for the good of others; nor did he think even of his own soul, but altogether about his worldly substance:

saying, what shall I do? he does not say what shall I do for God? for his interest service, and glory? for the poor, the hungry, and thirsty, and naked? or for my own soul, that that may be eternally saved? but what shall I do with my goods?

because I have no room where to bestow my fruits: he had gathered in his harvest, and filled his barns as full as they could hold, so that they had no room for more; and yet had still an abundance to lay up, and about which he was anxiously concerned; not thinking of the empty bellies, barns, and houses of the poor, where he might have stowed much.

Luke 12:18

Ver. 18. And he said, this will I do,.... This was the resolution he came to, and which he took up, without consulting God, or asking leave of him:

I will pull down my barns, and build greater; which was not a very wise one; for he might have let his present barns have stood, and have added new ones to them:

and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods; he ascribes the increase of his substance to himself, and reckons them his own acquisitions, and entirely owing to his diligence and industry; and therefore calls them my fruits, and my goods; and accounts them his good things, his only good things; as worldly men place all good and happiness in outward enjoyments, having no notion of spiritual and eternal good things he determines to lay up all in his barns, for his own use and service, and nothing for God and his interest, nor any thing for the poor and their relief.

Luke 12:19

Ver. 19. And I will say to my soul,.... Himself, see
Ps 49:18 or to his sensual appetite, which he sought to indulge and gratify, for he was wholly a sensual and carnal man:

soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: he foolishly promises himself a long life, when no man can boast of tomorrow, or knows what a day will bring forth; or can assure himself he shall live a day, an hour, or moment longer: and he also depended upon the safety of his goods, thus laid up; whereas his barns might be consumed by fire at once, or his goods be devoured by vermin, or plundered by thieves, and by various ways taken out of his hands; for riches are uncertain things, and make themselves wings and fly away:

take thine case, eat, drink, and be merry; spend thy life in ease, luxury, and mirth; put away the evil day far from thee: never trouble thyself about a future state, tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundantly; and thou hast enough to make thyself happy, and let nothing disturb thee, and give a loose to all sensual pleasures, and carnal joys. This is the language of epicure among the Jews, and is forbidden to be used, especially on fast days; for so it is said, {i}

"let not a man say I will go to my house, "and I will eat and drink", (and say) yvpn Kyle Mylv, "peace to thee, O my soul"; if he does so, of him the Scripture says,
Isa 22:13 "Behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die---surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, &c.""

{i} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 11. 1.

Luke 12:20

Ver. 20. But God said unto him,.... He determined within himself he should die that night; for the time of a man's death, as well as of his birth, is fixed by God; or he sent the messenger of death, some disease or another, the language of which was, immediate death, or death in a very short time; or spoke to his conscience, and impressed it on his mind, that he should die that night, and not live:

thou fool: as he appeared to be, throughout the whole of his conduct:

this night thy soul shall be required of thee: which is of God's immediate formation, is immortal, of more worth than a world, and its loss is irreparable;

and for which a man is accountable to God, the Father of spirits; and which he requires at a man's hands at death, which is here designed; and shows, that a man has no power over it to retain it, but must give it up when it is called for, even that very instant, "this night" which may refer to the time when covetous persons are employing their thoughts about their worldly goods, or when epicures and sensual persons are indulging themselves in luxury and intemperance; and to the condition the soul is in, being in the night and in darkness, and knows not whither it is going; and denotes its immediate remove, and the suddenness of divine wrath and vengeance; the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, agreeably to the Greek text, read the words, "this night do they require thy soul of thee"; or "out of thy body", as the Persic version reads: the Ethiopic version renders it, "they shall take thy soul from thee"; that is, the evil angels, the devils having a commission from God, shall demand thy soul; and as soon as ever it is separated from the body, shall seize upon it, and carry it to hell; just as the good angels carry the souls of the saints to heaven, Lu 16:22

Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? not his own, for he can carry nothing with him; nor does he know whose they will be, whether the persons he designed them for, or some others whom he abhorred, and would, if possible, have prevented their enjoyment of them; and should he have them for whom he intended them, he does not know how he will turn out, whether a wise man or a fool, or what use he will make of them.

Luke 12:21

Ver. 21. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself,.... This is the accommodation of the parable. Just such a fool is he, and this will be the end or him, who employs all his thoughts, and spends all his time, in amassing to himself worldly riches and wealth, in laying up treasures on earth for himself, for futurity: and makes no use of his earthly substance to be the good of others; nor shows any concern for spiritual and eternal riches; but places all his hope, trust, and confidence, in uncertain riches:

and is not rich towards God; or "in God", as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; in things pertaining to God, in spiritual things, in faith, and in good works; and is not concerned to lay up a treasure in heaven, to have an interest in durable riches and righteousness; whereas one that is rich towards God, acknowledges that he receives all his riches from God, as the Ethiopic version reads; he gives up all into the hands of God, depends upon his providence for the increase, security, and continuance of it; and uses it to his honour and glory, and for the good of his interest; and is chiefly concerned for the riches of grace and glory; and enjoys much of God, and places all his riches in him: such a man is a wise man, but the reverse of this is the fool in the parable.

Luke 12:22

Ver. 22. And he said unto his disciples,.... Having finished the parable which he spake to the whole audience in common, he directed himself to his disciples, who were poor, and apt to be over anxious about their living in the world:

therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat. The Ethiopic version adds, "and what ye shall drink"; and so a manuscript in Gonvill and Caius College in Cambridge, which seems to be transcribed from **Mt 6:27** life is very near and dear to man; all that a man has, he will give for it; and it is his duty to be careful to preserve it, and to make use of means for the support of it; but then, as he should not be dainty about the food he eats, and should refuse no good creature of God, but receive it with thanksgiving, so he should not distress himself for fear of wanting bread, nor distrust the promises of God, and a supply from him; but should cast all his care upon the Lord, who daily cares for him:

neither for the body, what ye shall put on: it is highly proper and necessary that the body should be clothed, partly for decency, and partly to secure it from the inclemency of the weather; but then persons should not be difficult and over nice about what they wear, nor be distressed, fearing they should be clothed with rags; but should trust in the Lord, who gives food and raiment, and all things richly to enjoy.

Luke 12:23

Ver. 23. The life is more than meat,.... What in Matthew is put by way of question, is here strongly affirmed; and these words contain a reason or argument to dissuade from an anxious, distressing thought and care about the necessaries, conveniencies, and comforts of life: and all the Oriental versions read, "for", or "seeing the life is more than meat"; that is, it is more excellent and valuable in its own nature, being that for the support of which meat is provided; and seeing God is the author and giver of life, it need not be doubted but he will give meat for the maintenance and continuance of it, so long as is his pleasure it should subsist.

And the body is more than raiment; it is of more worth than the richest clothing that can be had; the finest piece of embroidery is not comparable to the curious workmanship of the body,
Ps 139:15 and he that has so curiously wrought that, will not fail to provide suitable and proper clothing for it; and therefore there ought to be no anxiety on this account; See Gill on "Mt 6:5".

Luke 12:24

Ver. 24. Consider the ravens,.... According to the Jews {k} there are three sorts of ravens, the black raven, the raven of the valley, which is said to be white, and the raven whose head is like a dove. In Matthew the "fowls of the air" in general are mentioned, as they are here in the Cambridge copy of Beza's; but in others, "the ravens" in particular, they being fowls of very little worth, and disregarded by men, and odious to them, as well as unclean by the law; and yet these are taken care of by God. The Arabic version reads, "the young ravens"; and these are which are said to cry unto God, who provides food for them, and gives it to them,
Job 38:41

for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have storehouse nor barn; and yet they are provided for, and therefore, why should men, and especially God's own people, distrust his providence over them, when they both sow and reap, have the seedtime, and harvest in the appointed seasons: they cast their seed into the earth, and it springs up and brings forth much fruit, which they reap when ripe, and gather into their barns and storehouses, from whence they are supplied till another season returns; wherefore they have no reason to distress themselves, seeing, though this is not the case of ravens, yet

God feedeth them; their young ones, as the above places show. Jerom says {l}, that it is affirmed by some philosophers, that they live upon dew. The Jews {m} have a notion, that the old ravens being cruel to their young, and hating them, the Lord has pity on them, and prepares flies, or worms for them, which arise out of their dung, and enter into their mouths, and they them. One of their commentators says {n}, when the young ones are hatched they are white, and the old ones leave them, not taking them for their own, and therefore bring them no food, and then they cry to God; and this is mentioned by some

Christian writers, but not sufficiently confirmed: and another of them observes {o}, that the philosophers of the Gentiles say, that the ravens leave their young as soon as they are hatched; but what Aristotle {p}, Pliny {q}, and Aelianus {r} affirm of these creatures is, that as soon as they are able to fly they turn them out of their nests, and even drive them out of the country where they are; when, as it is said in Job, "they wander for lack of meat, and cry unto God, who gives it to them": and since this is the case, and the providence of God is so much concerned for such worthless creatures, the people of God, and disciples of Christ, ought by no means to distrust it: for as it follows,

how much more are ye better than the fowls: or "than these", as the Vulgate Latin version reads; that is than these ravens, or any other fowls whatever; See Gill on "Mt 6:26".

{k} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 63. 1. {l} Comment. in Job xxxviii. 41. & in Psal. cxlvii. 9. {m} Jarchi in Job xxxviii. 41. & in Psal. cxlvii. 9. & Kimchi in lb. {n} Kimchi ib. Vid. T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 49. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {o} Aben Ezra in Psal. cxivii. 9. {p} Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 31. {q} Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 12. {r} De Animal. Natura, l. 2. c. 49.

Luke 12:25

Ver. 25. And which of you with taking thought,.... In an anxious and distressing manner, for food and raiment, in order to preserve and continue life,

add to his stature one cubit? The Persic version reads, "to his stature and height", as if this referred to the height of stature; whereas it seems rather to regard the age of a man, and the continuance of his life; See Gill on "Mt 6:27".

Luke 12:26

Ver. 26. If ye then be not able to do that which is least,.... As to make the smallest addition to a man's stature, or rather to add one moment to his days:

why take ye thought for the rest? which are much greater, as to preserve the body in its whole bulk, and all its parts, or for the feeding and clothing of it, or rather for the continuation and preservation of life to any length of time; for if it cannot be by all a man's care and solicitude lengthened out one moment longer than is the pleasure of God, how should it be by such anxiety continued for months and years?

Luke 12:27

Ver. 27. Consider the lilies how they grow,.... Some copies read, "the lilies of the field", as in **Mt 6:28** The Persic version renders the word, "the roses and lilies of the field": and the Arabic version, the "flowers"; any flowers of the field; for what is afterwards said, is true of any of them, but particularly of the lilies: now, as the former instance of God's feeding the ravens is designed to remove all anxious and distressing thoughts about food for the body; this is mentioned to take off every thing of that kind with respect to clothing for it; wherefore, in Matthew, these words are premised to it, "and why take ye thought for raiment?" there will be no need of it, when it considered how the lilies, or tulips, or any other flowers grow up out of the earth, and in what a fine beautiful dress they appear, without any care or labour of their own, and even without the care and management of a gardener; for flowers of the field are here meant:

they toil not, they spin not; they neither labour as men do, in sowing flax, and dressing it, or in combing of wool, or in spinning of either:

and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. The Ethiopic version renders it, "in the whole time of his glory"; throughout his glorious reign, at any time; whenever upon any extraordinary occasion he was dressed out in the finest manner, yet even then a lily outdid him; its glory being natural to it, whereas his, at best, was but artificial, and an imitation of nature; See Gill on "Mt 6:29".

Luke 12:28

Ver. 28. If then God so clothe the grass,.... lilies and tulips; for they are no other than grass, weak, frail, fading, short lived flowers, which have all their gaiety and beauty from the great Creator of them:

which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven: the grass is one day in the field, in all its verdure, glory, and beauty; and being cut down before evening, the next day it is withered and dried, and made fit to put into an oven, or under a furnace to heat them with:

how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? The Persic version renders the words, "how much more excellent are ye than that, O ye of little faith?" they are more excellent in their nature, and of a longer duration, and are designed for greater ends and purposes; and therefore if God clothes the one in such a manner as he does, how much more will he not clothe the other? and such who are distrustful and diffident in this matter, may well be called men of little faith; See Gill on "Mt 6:30".

Luke 12:29

Ver. 29. And seek not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink,.... That is, in an anxious and distressing manner, with a tormenting and vexatious care; otherwise food is to be both asked of God every day, and to be sought for and after in the use of proper means:

neither be ye of doubtful minds; questioning and distrusting that ye shall have any thing to eat or drink: be not fickle, unstable, and inconstant, and wandering in your thoughts about these things, like the meteors in the air, which are carried about here and there; let not your minds be disturbed and distracted about them; or be anxiously solicitous for them; See Gill on "Mt 6:31".

Luke 12:30

Ver. 30. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after,.... That is, the Gentiles, as in **Mt 6:32** who are frequently, in the Jewish writings, called, in distinction from the Jews, Mlweh twmwa, "the nations of the world" {s}. This is an argument used to dissuade from an immediate and anxious concern for food and raiment, because it is Heathenish, and therefore very unbecoming the disciples and followers of Christ: it need not be wondered at in those that know not God, and do not acknowledge his providence, and are strangers to his covenant and promises; but must be very unsuitable to the characters of such who know that godliness has the promise of this life, and of that which is to come:

and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things; and therefore it is needless to be so anxious about them: the Persic version reads, "all these things", and so some copies; that is, meat, drink, and clothing, all the necessaries of life;

See Gill on "Mt 6:32".

{s} Vid. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 28. 2. & 29.

Luke 12:31

Ver. 31. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God,.... The Vulgate Latin version adds, "first", as also, "and his righteousness", as in **Mt 6:33** and the Ethiopic version reads, "seek his kingdom and righteousness" meaning either the grace of God, which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,
Ro 14:17 or the heavenly glory; unless the Gospel, and the dispensation of it, which is the Messiah's kingdom, and which was then just ushering in, should rather be intended.

And all these things shall be added unto you; food and raiment, which are as much as can be enjoyed; and godliness with these, and contentment with them, is great gain; See Gill on "Mt 6:33".

Luke 12:32

Ver. 32. Fear not little flock,.... these words are particularly directed to the immediate apostles and disciples of Christ; but are true of all the saints in all ages of time, who are compared to a "flock of sheep", being separated from the rest of the world in election, redemption, and the effectual calling, and being folded together in a Gospel church state; and also for their patience, meekness, humility, and harmlessness: these are a "little" flock; few in number, when compared with the wicked of the world; and mean and despicable in the account of men; and little in their own eyes: these are subject to many "fears"; some relate to their outward state, and condition, as that they shall want food and raiment, and not have the necessaries of life; which seems to be in the first place here intended, as appears from the context: and some regard their spiritual and eternal estate, as lest they should have no interest in the love of God, and in the covenant, in the blessings and promises of his grace; lest they should not belong to Christ; or the good work of grace should not be begun in them; or that they should not persevere to the end, and should at last miscarry of eternal life and happiness: and these fears arise from a body of sin, from the temptations of Satan, the hidings of God's face, and the prevalence of unbelief; for they have no true reason for them: God is on their side, and will not leave, nor forsake them, nor shall they want any good thing Christ is their shepherd, and he has bought them, with his own blood, and will lose none of them; and therefore they need not fear being taken care of both in soul and body, for time and eternity: and especially when what follows is considered,

for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom; not only the Gospel, and the knowledge of the mysteries of it; nor the Gospel church state, and a right to all its ordinances; nor only the kingdom of grace, which cannot be moved; but the kingdom of glory: and which is a gift unto them, not obtained by any deserts or works of theirs; nor is their right unto, and enjoyment of it depending upon any such thing: and it their Father's gift, who is so by adopting grace, and through Christ Jesus their Lord; and which he gives according to his sovereign will and pleasure, and with a good will, delighting in them, and rejoicing over them to do them good, both here and hereafter: so that they may depend upon every good thing needful for them both in this world, and in the world to come; nor should they indulge anxious cares, or slavish fears.

Luke 12:33

Ver. 33. Sell that ye have, and give alms,.... Since they had a kingdom bequeathed them by their heavenly Father, they should be so far from indulging an anxious care about food and raiment, that when there was a call in providence for it, and rather than the poor should go without a supply, it became them to sell their houses and lands, and whatever possessions they had, and relieve them; and so they did not long after; for some of those who sold their estates, and brought the money to the apostles, **Ac 4:34**, might be now present; and the more readily and cheerfully do what they did, remembering these words of Christ:

provide yourselves bags which wax not old; as do the bags of misers: their bag is, bwqn rwru, "a bag pierced through", or that has a hole in it, which lets the money out as it is put in, **Hag 1:6** and which the Targum renders by, atraml, "for a curse"; as money hoarded up in bags by covetous persons generally is: Christ would have his followers put their money up in other bags; not in such which rot through age, or are worn out, and are full of holes through use; but into the hands and bellies of the poor, the fruit and reward of which will always abide;

a treasure in the heavens that faileth not: whereas treasure on earth does, being either taken away from the possessors of it by various ways, or they from that:

where no thief approacheth; can come near to steal it away, which is often the case here on earth:

neither moth corrupteth; as it does the best of garments, wore by men: but the robes of glory and immortality can never be corrupted:
See Gill on "Mt 6:20".

Luke 12:34

Ver. 34. For where your treasure is,.... Whether in heaven, or in earth, there will your heart be also: the heart is always set upon the treasure, and as is a man's treasure, such is his heart, that is, set upon it; if his treasure is only here, and he has not the true riches, his heart is only earthly and carnal; but if his treasure is heavenly, his heart and conversation will be in heaven;
See Gill on "Mt 6:21".

Luke 12:35

Ver. 35. Let your loins be girded about,.... With the girdle of truth, **Eph 6:14** keeping close to the doctrines of the Gospel, abiding faithfully by them, even unto death: the allusion is either to the eating of the first passover, Ex 12:11 or rather to servants, who, in these eastern countries, wore long garments; and therefore, when in business, used to gather them up, and gird them about them, that they might perform their service with greater strength, more ease, quicker dispatch, and less hinderance: the phrase denotes readiness for business:

and your lights burning. The Vulgate Latin version adds, "in your hands"; meaning torches that were held in the hand: and may design either the Scriptures of truth, which were to be a light or lamp unto them, guiding and directing them in the ministration of the Gospel; or the lamps of profession, which should be kept clear and bright, and good works, becoming them, that should so shine before men, that all may see them, and glorify God. The allusion is to persons waiting at a wedding in the night, with torches and flambeaus in their hands.

Luke 12:36

Ver. 36. And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord,.... Who either was at a wedding, or was the bridegroom himself; so be ye in a readiness, waiting for the coming of Christ, the bridegroom of the church:

when he will return from the wedding, The Syriac version renders it, "from the house of feasting"; from any entertainment, or from the marriage feast, or rather the marriage itself, to the bride chamber: so when Christ has, by the preaching of the Gospel, and the power of his grace, espoused all his elect, he will descend from heaven, and take them to himself; they shall then be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and enter with him into the nuptial chamber, and be for ever with him:

that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately; and let him in without any delay, as soon as ever he comes to the door; and at the first knock, open it to him at once, having light, and being in a posture of readiness, and in constant expectation of him: so such who have believed in Christ, and have been faithful to his cause and interest, and have held fast the profession of their faith without wavering, when Christ shall either come and knock at their doors by death, or shall come to judgment, and sound the alarm of it, they shall be ready to obey the summons with the greatest cheerfulness, and meet him with the utmost pleasure.

Luke 12:37

Ver. 37. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord,.... The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "their Lord", the master of them, or the Lord Jesus Christ:

when he cometh shall find watching: for him, and not asleep. The Ethiopic version reads, "so doing, and watching"; girding up their loins, trimming their lamps, and waiting for their Lord's coming: such servants are happy, they will appear to be in the favour of their master, who will take notice of them and show some marks of respect to them; as Christ will to all his good and faithful servants, whenever he comes, whether at death, or at judgment; and who will be happy then, being found so doing, and found in him:

verily I say unto you that he shall gird himself; not that Christ shall really do this, or appear in the form of a servant; but that he shall readily, cheerfully, and at once introduce his servants into his joy, and make them partakers of all the glories of the other world:

and make them to sit down to meat; at his table in his kingdom; see **Mt 8:11**

and will come forth and serve them; with food, yea, will feed them himself, and lead them to fountains of living water, **Re 7:17** The Arabic version renders it, "he shall stand to minister unto them": the phrase is expressive of the posture of a servant; who, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, is Klwh, "walking", and who goes round about the table, whilst others sit {t}: some think there is allusion in the words to a custom used at some feasts, particularly at the feasts in honour of Saturn, in which servants changed clothes with their masters, and sat at their tables, and their masters served them {u}

{t} Jarchi in T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 77. 2. {u} Vide Lipsii Saturnal. l. 1. c. 2. p. 6.

Luke 12:38

Ver. 38. And if he shall come in the second watch,.... Of the night, that is, after nine o'clock, or any time between nine or twelve; for the second watch was from nine o'clock till twelve; and this was coming early from an entertainment, or a wedding, which were commonly kept in the night, and late;

or come in the third watch, or after twelve o'clock, or any time between twelve and three; for the third watch was from twelve o'clock to three, which was late; See Gill on "Mt 14:25" The Persic version reads, "in the second, or third part of the night"; and the Ethiopic version, "in the second or third hour of the night";

and find them so. The Arabic version adds, "doing"; as above described, with their loins girt, lights burning, and they watching for their Lord's coming:

blessed are those servants; since they shall be used and treated as before related.

Luke 12:39

Ver. 39. And this know,.... The Ethiopic version reads, "this only know"; only take notice of this one thing, and it may be of some use to direct you in your conduct how to behave during the absence of your Lord, until the time he shall come again:

that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come; that is, if the owner, or master of the house, whose the goods in the house are, could by any means know what time of the night the thief would come to break into his house, in order to plunder it, and carry off his goods:

he would have watched; either he himself in person, or he would have set a watch about his house, or in it:

and not have suffered his house to be broken through; either the door to be broken up, or the wall to be dug through, but by a guard about it, or within it, would have prevented such a design. And so in like manner, could it be known in what time Christ would come, either to the destruction of Jerusalem, or at death, or to judgment, every thoughtful, prudent man that should know it, would be upon his guard, that he might not be surprised with it; and though the precise time could not be known, yet inasmuch as the thing itself is certain, it became all the servants of Christ to be watching for it;
See Gill on "Mt 24:43".

Luke 12:40

Ver. 40. Be ye therefore ready also,.... Not habitually, but actually, in the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty, with loins girt, and lights burning. This may be understood either of a readiness to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments, and particularly the destruction of Jerusalem, which was to be in a few years; or of a preparation for death, and the last judgment, which lies in the righteousness of Christ imputed, and his grace imparted: and to have a comfortable view of the one, and a gracious experience of the other, as they will engage to the performance of good works, to which such are ready; so they make meet for the coming of Christ, be it in what way, and whensoever it will: and the rather, a concern should be had for such a preparation, because of the following reason,

for the son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not; in either of the above ways; See Gill on "Mt 24:44".

Luke 12:41

Ver. 41. Then Peter said unto him, Lord,.... The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, "our Lord":

speakest thou this parable: of the master at the wedding, and his servants waiting for him, or of the housekeeper watching that his house be not broken up, or both:

unto us, or unto all? Peter was in doubt whether the above discourse was peculiarly directed to them, the apostles, as containing special instructions to them in the discharge of the ministerial work; or whether it was designed for all his disciples and followers, both in the present age, and in time to come, to the end of the world.

Luke 12:42

Ver. 42. And the Lord said, who then is that faithful and wise steward,.... Christ does not directly, and in express words, answer to Peter's question, but suggests, that though he intended it as a caution to all his people, and in it spoke to them all to be upon their watch and guard, Mr 13:37 yet that he had a special regard to them, his apostles, and succeeding ministers of the Gospel, whose characters, office, work, dignity, and honour, are here described. Such are stewards in Christ's family, they are entrusted with the stores and provisions of his house, and "faithfulness" and "wisdom" are requisite in them; the one, that they do not corrupt and adulterate the word of God, and mix it with human doctrines, but that they deliver it out pure and sincere as it is; and the other, that they may rightly divide it, and wisely distribute it:

whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household: Christ's "household", or family, is his church, over which the ministers of the Gospel are appointed "rulers", to govern the house according to the laws of Christ, and keep every thing in good decorum and order; and particularly their work, and which agrees to their character as stewards is,

to give them their portion of meat in due season: in doing which they answer the characters of faithful and wise stewards: they are faithful who give out the whole portion allotted, without adulterating it, or keeping back any part of it; and they are wise, who deliver it to them in proper time and season. The word translated "portion of meat", is only used in this place, and is rendered in the Vulgate Latin version, "a measure of wheat"; but it may be applied to any food in general, and an allotment of it; and signifies such a portion as was given to servants for one month, or rather every day; and may signify that portion of the word of God, and the interpretation of it, which is to be given forth every Lord's day to his people, suitable to their condition, cases, and circumstances. The Septuagint translators use the verb in Ge 47:12 who render the text thus, "and Joseph, esitometrei, measured out to his father", and to "his brethren, and to all the house of father, wheat", or bread, "according to their persons", i.e. the number of them: to which passage there may be some reference here; at least it serves to illustrate this; See Gill on "Mt 24:45".

Luke 12:43

Ver. 43. Blessed is that servant,.... Who is faithful and wise, rules well, and discharges his trust with integrity, and disposes of the provisions of the house, in his hands, with great discretion and prudence:

whom his Lord, when he cometh; to take vengeance on the wicked Jews, or by death, or at judgment:

shall find so doing; behaving as a good ruler, and as a wise and faithful steward.

Luke 12:44

Ver. 44. Of a truth I say unto you,.... This, with Christ, was a strong way of asserting the truth of any thing; and the sense is, you may assure yourselves of it, this will certainly be the happy case of such servant:

that he will make him ruler over all that he hath; as Joseph was made by Pharaoh. Such an one shall reign with Christ on earth a thousand years, and then in heaven with him to all eternity, where he shall enjoy all things; See Gill on "Mt 24:47"

Luke 12:45

Ver. 45. But and if that servant say in his heart,.... Not the same servant before spoken of as a wise and faithful steward, that gives to all in the family the portion of meat in due season, and shall be found doing, and be made ruler over his master's goods but another, who also, as he, is made by his Lord ruler over his household, and is in a like post, and in the same office, but is an "evil servant", as Matthew calls him, to distinguish him from the other; and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read here:

my Lord delayeth his coming; though a wicked servant, he calls Christ his Lord; but it is not saying Lord, Lord, that will be of any avail, but doing the will of God, by believing in Christ, and obeying his commands: he had a notion of the coming of Christ, though he did not desire it; and because he tarried longer than was expected, supposed him to be slack concerning his promise, and began to think, and hope, and at length to believe, that he would not come at all, and therefore gave himself up to a wicked and licentious way of living:

and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens; to persecute the ministers of the Gospel, and the true disciples of Christ, the undefiled virgins, that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes:

and to eat, and drink, and to be drunken: to live a voluptuous and sensual life, to give himself up to intemperance and debauchery: and, generally speaking, as professors of religion, when they turn apostates, are the most violent persecutors of the saints; so such persecutors of Christ's, faithful followers are commonly drunkards and debauchees; See Gill on "Mt 24:48",
See Gill on "Mt 24:49".

Luke 12:46

Ver. 46. The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him,.... For, not coming as was expected, he gives over looking, and concludes he will not come at all; in which he will find himself mistaken, for he will come in the very day which is appointed, though men know not of it, and do not look for it:

and at an hour when he is not aware; for as neither the day, nor hour of Christ's coming are known to any man, it becomes men to look for it every day and hour, lest it come upon them unawares; as it will, on such evil servants before described, with whom it will go ill, as follows:

and will cut him in sunder, and appoint him his portion with unbelievers; whose portion is the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the

second death, Re 21:8 and by these are meant, not only the Heathens, who never heard of Christ; nor the Jews only, who disbelieved the Messiah, and rejected him when he came; but all deists and atheists, who deny revelation; even all unbelievers of, and scoffers at the coming of Christ, and who put away the evil day far from them; compare with this Job 20:29,
See Gill on "Mt 24:51".

Luke 12:47

Ver. 47. And that servant which knew his Lord's will,.... Not his secret, but his revealed will; the will of God, which lies in the declarations of his grace and mercy in the Gospel, and in the commands and ordinances expressed in his word; and which are the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God; the knowledge of which is necessary, in order to practice: and where there is a spiritual and saving knowledge, there will be practice: but there may be knowledge, where there is no practice, and which was the case here: Christ here distinguishes between wicked servants, some being knowing, and others ignorant; and accordingly the aggravations of their guilt are more or less:

and prepared not himself; so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions supply, but the Syriac version, "for him", that is, for his Lord: but it may as well be read as in the Vulgate Latin, without any supplement, "and prepared not"; he took no thought nor care about doing it; there is no preparation, readiness, nor disposition, in a natural man, to the will of God: no man is prepared or ready to do it, but he that is regenerated, or is made a new creature; who has the laws of God written on his heart, and who has the Spirit of God put within him, to cause him to keep them; and who has faith in Christ, and strength from him to observe them; but there may be knowledge, where such a preparation is wanting; persons may know much, and profess to know more, and in works deny all, and be to every good work, unfit, disobedient, and reprobate: this clause is left out in the Persic version:

neither did according to his will; the will of God is done aright, when what is done, is done according to the command of God, in the strength of Christ, from love to him, in the exercise of faith on him, and with a view to his glory, and without any dependence on what is done; but there may be knowledge, without any thing of this: the words, "neither did", are wanting in the Syriac version: and such a man that has knowledge without practice,

shall be beaten with many stripes; alluding to the law of the Jews, by which a

wicked man was to be punished, by beating him with stripes, not exceeding, forty, according to the nature of his fault,
De 25:2 and here it signifies, that persons who have light and knowledge, and the means thereof, and act not according to them, shall be punished with the greatest severity, and endure the greatest degree of torments in hell; see Mt 11:21

Luke 12:48

Ver. 48. But he that knew not,.... His Lord's will; either not having the means of knowing it, as the Heathens; or through neglect of them, not attending to them, and making use of them, which is the case of many, where the Gospel revelation is:

and did commit things worthy of stripes; or punishment; as the Gentiles, by sinning against the law, and light of nature; and those who might have the advantage of a divine revelation, but neglect it: the Septuagint in De 25:2 have the same phrase as here,
axiov plhgwn, "worthy of stripes":

shall be beaten with few stripes; their punishment shall be less, and it shall be more tolerable for them in the day of judgment, than for knowing professors. The Jews did not always inflict forty stripes, or forty save one, upon delinquents; but according to their crimes, and as they were able to bear them, more or fewer: so it is said {w},

"when they judge a sinner, how many (stripes) he can bear, they do not reckon, but by stripes that are fit to be trebled: if they judge he is able to bear "twenty", they do not order that he be beaten with twenty one, that so they may be trebled, but that he be beaten with "eighteen": if they condemn him to receive forty, and after he is begun to be beaten, they observe him to be weak, and they say he cannot bear any more than these "nine", or "twelve", with which he has been beaten, lo, he is free; if they condemn him to receive "twelve", and after that he is beaten, they see that he is strong and able to bear more, lo, he is free, and he is not to be beaten any more, upon that estimation: if they condemn him today that he is to be beaten with "twelve" (stripes), and they do not beat him till tomorrow, and lo, tomorrow he is able to bear eighteen, they do not beat him but with twelve."

And elsewhere the rule is {x},

"he that commits a sin, in which there are two negative (commands broken) if they pronounce but one sentence, he is beaten and is free; but if not (i.e. if more than one) he is beaten, and when he is healed, he is beaten again."

For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall, much be required: the more knowledge a man has, the more practice is expected from him; and the greater his gifts are, the more useful he ought to be, and diligent in the improvement of them:

and to whom men have committed much, or to whom much is committed, of him they will ask the more; not more than what was committed to him, but more than from him, who has less committed to him; in proportion to what a man is entrusted with, the greater increase and improvement it is expected he should make.

{w} Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 17. sect. 2, 3. {x} Misn. Maccot, c. 3. sect. 11.

Luke 12:49

Ver. 49. I am come to send fire on the earth,.... Meaning either the Gospel, which is as fire, that gives both light and heat, warms the hearts of God's people, and causes them to burn within them; though very distressing and torturing to wicked men; so the word of God is compared to fire, in Jer 20:9. Or else zeal for it, and which would be opposed with sharp contentions by others; or rather persecution for the sake of the Gospel, called sometimes the fiery trial; which tries men, as gold is tried in the fire, what they are, and what their principles and profession be; unless the Holy Ghost, and baptizing with him, and with fire, should be meant; since Christ in the next verse, speaks of the baptism of his sufferings, which that was to follow:

and what will I? what shall I say concerning this fire? what shall I wish and pray for? what would be pleasing and agreeable to me? even this,

if it be already kindled; or "that it were already kindled", or "O that it were already kindled"; meaning either that the Gospel was warmly preached by his disciples, and zealously defended by them, as it was after his death and resurrection; or that hot persecution was raised against it which was now beginning, since the advantage of it would be far greater than the evil in it: or that the Holy Ghost was come down in cloven tongues, like as of fire.

Luke 12:50

Ver. 50. But I have a baptism to be baptized with,.... Not water baptism, for he had been baptized with that already; nor the baptism of the Spirit, which he had also received without measure; though the Ethiopic version reads it actively, "with which I shall baptize", referring doubtless to that; but the baptism of his sufferings is meant, which are compared to a baptism, because of the largeness and abundance of them; he was as it were immersed, or plunged into them; and which almost all interpreters observe on the text, and by which they confess the true import and primary signification of the word used; as in baptism, performed by immersion, the person is plunged into water, is covered with it, and continues awhile under it, and then is raised out of it, and which being once done, is done no more; so the sufferings of Christ were so many and large, that he was as it were covered with them, and he continued under them for a time, and under the power of death and the grave, when being raised from thence, he dies no more, death hath no more dominion over him. This baptism he "had", there was a necessity of his being baptized with it, on his Father's account; it was his will, his decree, and the command he enjoined him as Mediator; it was the portion he allotted him, and the cup he gave unto him: and on his own part, he obliged himself unto it, in the counsel and covenant of peace; for this purpose he came into this world, and had substituted himself in the room and stead of his people; and it was necessary on their part, for their sins could not be atoned for without sufferings, nor without the sufferings of Christ; moreover, the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament concerning them, made them necessary:

and how am I straitened until it be accomplished: these words express both the trouble and distress Christ was in, at the apprehension of his sufferings as man; which were like to the distress of persons, closely besieged by an enemy; or rather of a woman, whose time of travail draws nigh, when she dreads it, and yet longs to have it over: and likewise they signify, his restless desire to have them accomplished; not that he desired that Judas should betray him, or the Jews crucify him, as these were sins of theirs; nor merely his sufferings as such; but that thereby the justice of God might be satisfied, the law might be fulfilled, and the salvation of his people be obtained: and this eager desire of his, he had shown in various instances, and did show afterwards; as in his ready compliance with his Father's proposal in eternity; in his frequent appearances in human form before his incarnation; in sending one message

after another, to give notice of his coming; in his willingness to be about his Father's business, as soon as possible; in rebuking Peter, when he would have dissuaded him from all thoughts of suffering: in going to Jerusalem on his own accord, in order to suffer there; in his earnest wish to eat the last passover with his disciples; in the joy that possessed him, when Judas was gone out, in order to betray him; in stopping in the midst of his sermon, lest he should overrun, or outslip the time of meeting him in the garden,
Joh 14:30 in his going thither, and willingly surrendering himself up into the hands of his enemies; and in cheerfully laying down his life: all which arose from the entire love he had for the persons he died for; and because it was his Father's will, and his glory was concerned herein, and his own glory also was advanced thereby; moreover, his death was the life of others, and the work required haste.

Luke 12:51

Ver 51. Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth?.... To set up a temporal kingdom, in great pomp, and outward peace and tranquility? Christ came to make peace with God for men, and to give the Gospel of peace, and spiritual and eternal peace to men; but not external peace, especially that, which is not consistent with the preservation of truth:

I tell you, nay; whatever suppositions you have made, or whatever notions you have entertained, I solemnly affirm, and you may depend upon it, I am not come into the world on any such account, as to establish outward peace among men;

but rather division; so he calls the Gospel, which in Matthew is styled a "sword"; and the Ethiopic version seems to have read both here, since it renders it, "but a sword that I may divide": the Gospel is the sword of the Spirit, which divides asunder soul and Spirit, and separates a man from his former principles and practices; and sets men apart from one another, even the nearest relations, at the greatest distance; and is, through the sin of man, the occasion of great contention, discord, and division.

Luke 12:52

Ver. 52. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house,.... Which are the five following, mentioned in the next verse; the father and the son, the mother and the daughter, and her daughter-in-law, or son's wife; for the mother and mother-in-law are one and the same person, only standing in different relations; as a mother to her own daughter, and a mother-in-law to her son's wife, or to her husband's daughter by his first wife; though the former best answers to the word used: now from the time of Christ's saying these words, or quickly after this, immediately upon his baptism of sufferings, or soon after his death, when the Gospel should be preached more publicly and extensively, this should be the effect of it; that supposing a family consisting of the above number, they should be

divided from one another, in the following manner:

three against two, and two against three; three that did not believe in Christ, against two that did believe in him; or two that did not believe, against three that did; or three that did, against two that did not; or two that did, against three that did not. The Ethiopic version reads, "two shall be separated from three, and one shall be separated from two".

Luke 12:53

Ver. 53. The father shall be divided against the.... Shall oppose him, differ with him, and be alienated from him, and so the other relations as follow; See Gill on "Mt 10:35",
See Gill on "Mt 10:36".

Luke 12:54

Ver. 54. And he said also to the people,.... For what Christ had before said, were chiefly, if not solely, directed to his disciples; but now he turned himself to the innumerable multitude that were about him, and particularly addressed himself to the Scribes and Pharisees that were among them:

when ye see a cloud rise out of the west; the watery vapours being attracted by the heat of the sun, out of the Mediterranean Sea, which lies west of the land of Judea, and formed into a cloud, and drove by the wind:

straightway ye say there comes a shower; as soon as it is seen, it is presently concluded and affirmed, that a very heavy shower will soon fall, it having been frequently observed so to do, when this has been the case:

and so it is; for the most part, there commonly follows a large shower on such an appearance, and they were seldom mistaken in their conclusions.

Luke 12:55

Ver. 55. And when ye see the south wind blow,.... From the hot countries of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Arabia, which lay south of Judea:

ye say there will be heat; or hot sultry weather, scorching heat, which such a wind brings with it:

and it cometh to pass; generally speaking, as is asserted.

Luke 12:56

Ver. 56. Ye hypocrites,.... A word often used of the Scribes and Pharisees, and which suggests, that there were such in company, to whom Christ more especially directs his discourse; and this may be the rather thought, since much the like things are said by him to the Pharisees, with the Sadducees, in Mt 16:1 and the same appellation is given them there, as here:

ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; from the appearance of the sky, they could tell how it would be with the earth, and the inhabitants of it, whether they should have dry or wet weather, heat or cold:

but how is it that ye do not discern this time? that this is the time of the Messiah's coming, and that it is the accepted time, and day of salvation, if ye receive him, and believe in him; and a time of vengeance, if ye reject him: this might have been discerned by the prophecies of the Old Testament, which fix the characters of the Messiah, and the time of his coming; and describe the manners of the men of that generation, in which he should come: and point out both their happiness and their ruin; as also by the doctrines they heard Christ preach, and especially by the miracles which were wrought by him, it might have been known he was come.

Luke 12:57

Ver. 57. Yea, and why even of yourselves,.... From their own observation, as in discerning the signs of the weather; in a rational way, by the light of reason, and according to the dictates of their own consciences; by what they themselves saw and heard; by the signs and wonders which were done, they might have concluded, that now was the time of the Messiah's coming; and that he was come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he: this was as easy, by observation, to be discerned, as the face of the sky was; even of themselves, without any hints or directions from others:

judge ye not what is right? or "truth", as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; concerning the present time, the coming of the Messiah, and the accomplishment of the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament in him: or why do ye not of yourselves judge, what is fit and right to be done between man and man, without going to law? and that, in cases which are plain and clear, the consequences of which may be as easily discerned, as what weather it will be by the signs in the heavens; to which sense the following words incline.

Luke 12:58

Ver. 58. When thou goest with thine adversary,.... The creditor, as the Persic version, and who is the prosecutor, that has commenced a suit of law against another, in order to obtain his right: for Christ is here speaking of a bad man, that will not pay his just debts, so that his creditor is obliged to prosecute him, and have him to the

magistrate; ruler, or prince; the Nasi, or prince of the sanhedrim, who sat as judge there: as thou art in the way; going along with the creditor, or prosecutor, to the court of judicature;

give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him. The Persic version renders it, "give him the money"; and the Arabic version, "give what thou owest"; and the Syriac version, "give the gain"; or pay the interest, about which the dispute is, and so escape out of his hands; lest when the matter is brought into court, sentence should be given, to pay both interest and principal, with all costs and charges; or however, make up matters with him, satisfy him in some way or other, before things are brought to an extremity:

lest he hale thee to the judge; the same that is called the magistrate, or prince before, that sits chief upon the bench, hears and tries causes, and passes sentence:

and the judge deliver thee to the officer: who upon hearing the matter in difference, and giving the cause against the defendant, and for the prosecutor, delivers the debtor into the hands of a proper officer, in order to commit him to prison: the word rendered "officer", signifies an exactor of debts, or fines, and was one that obliged such as were cast, to do what the judge appointed to be done: in the Septuagint on **Isa 3:12** it answers to an "oppressor"; and such men were wont to use rigour, to bring persons to the payment of their debts, or fines:

and the officer cast thee into prison; which he had power to do, when committed into his hands by the judge, in case the sentence pronounced was not immediately complied with; See Gill on "Mt 5:25".

Luke 12:59

Ver. 59. I tell thee,.... The Syriac version before these words, prefixes an "Amen", or "verily", for the sake of the stronger affirmation, which seems to be taken from **Mt 5:26**

thou shalt not depart thence; get out of prison:

till thou hast paid the very last mite: of the sum in debate, which was what the Jews call a "prutah", and that was the eighth part of an Italian farthing, and half a common farthing;
See Gill on "Mr 12:42": with this agrees what Mainonides says {y}, that

"when he that lends, requires what he has lent, though he is rich, and the borrower is distressed, and straitened for food, there is no mercy showed him in judgment, but his debt is, demanded of him, hnwrxa hjwrp de, "unto the last prutah, or mite"."

{y} Hilchot M. vah. c. 1. sect. 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 13:1

Ver. 1. There were present at that season,.... Among the innumerable multitude of people, Lu 12:1 that were then hearing the above discourses and sayings of Christ:

some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. These Galileans were very likely some of the followers of Judas Gaulonitis, or Judas of Galilee; see **Ac 5:37** who endeavoured to draw off the Jews from the Roman government, and affirmed it was not lawful to give tribute to Caesar; at which Pilate being enraged, sent a band of soldiers, and slew these his followers; who were come up to the feast of the passover, as they were offering their sacrifices in the temple, and so mixed their blood with the blood of the passover lambs: this being lately done, some of the company spoke of it to Christ; very likely some of the Scribes and Pharisees, whom he had just now taxed as hypocrites; either to know his sense of Pilate's conduct, that should he condemn it as brutish and barbarous, they might accuse him to him; or should he approve of it, might traduce him, and bring him into contempt among the people; or to know his sentiments concerning the persons slain, whether or no they were not very wicked persons; and whether this was not a judgment upon them, to be put to death in such a manner, and at such a time and place, and which sense seems to be confirmed by Christ's answer. Josephus {z} relating a slaughter of the Samaritans by Pilate, which bears some likeness to this, has led some, though without any just reason, to conclude, that these were Samaritans, who are here called Galileans. This history is neither related nor hinted at, by any other writer but Luke. The phrase of mingling blood with blood, is Jewish; it is said of one Trogianus the wicked (perhaps the Emperor Trajan), that he slaughtered the Jews, Nmdb Nmd bryew, "and mingled their blood with their blood"; and their blood ran into the sea, unto Cyprus {a}. The Jews {b} have a notion, that

"in the age in which the son of David comes, Galilee shall be destroyed."

Here was a great slaughter of the Galileans now, see **Ac 5:37** but there was a greater afterwards by the Romans: it may be that the Pharisees made mention of this case to Christ, to reproach him and his followers, who were called Galileans, as his disciples chiefly were.

{z} Antiqu. l. 18. c. 5. {a} T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 55. 2. Vid. Lightfoot Hor. in loc. {b} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1.

Luke 13:2

Ver. 2. And Jesus answering, said unto them,.... Neither approving, nor condemning Pilate's action; and though he allowed the Galileans to be sinners, which could not be denied, he does not bear hard upon them, but improves the instance for the conviction of his hearers, and in order to show them the necessity of repentance, and to bring them to it:

suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? such a supposition they seem to have made, by their speaking to Christ concerning this matter; and concluded from their violent and untimely deaths, that they had been notorious and uncommon sinners, and guilty of the most enormous crimes, which had brought upon them the just judgments of God: whereas this is not a rule of judging; oftentimes the best of men suffer exceedingly in this life; God's judgments are a great deep, and not to be fathomed by us, nor is it to be easily known, when any thing befalls persons in a way of judgment; there is nothing comes by chance, but every thing by the wise disposal of divine providence, to answer some end or another; nor are persons that are punished, either immediately by the hand of God, or by the civil magistrate, to be insulted, but rather to be pitied; besides, love and hatred, the characters and states of men, are not to be known by these effects in providence.

Luke 13:3

Ver. 3. I tell you, nay, &c,] They were not greater sinners than others of their neighbours, nor is it to be concluded from the bloody slaughter that was made of them; others might be much more deserving of such an end than they, who yet escaped it:

but except ye repent; of sin, and particularly of the disbelief of the Messiah:

ye shall likewise perish; or perish, in like manner, as these Galileans did: and so it came to pass in the destruction of Jerusalem, that great numbers of the unbelieving Jews, even three hundred thousand men were destroyed at the feast of passover {c}; and that for sedition, as these men very likely were.

{c} Vid. Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 11. & l. 7. c. 17. Euseb. l. 3. c. 5.

Luke 13:4

Ver. 4. Or those eighteen,.... Men; the Persic version reads, "those twelve"; but all copies, and other versions, agree in this number:

upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them; there was a pool near Jerusalem, called the Pool of Siloam, **Joh 9:7** near, or over which, was a tower built, which fell down and killed eighteen men; very likely as they were purifying themselves in the pool, and so was a case very much like the other, and might be a very late one: and this Christ the rather observes, and puts them in mind of, that they might see that not Galileans only, whom they had in great contempt, but even inhabitants of Jerusalem, died violent deaths, and came to untimely ends; and yet, as not in the former case, so neither in this was it to be concluded from hence, that they were sinners of a greater size, or their state worse than that of other men:

think ye that they were sinners; or debtors; for as sins are called debts, **Mt 6:12** so sinners are called debtors:

above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? there might be, and doubtless there were, as great, or greater sinners, in that holy city, and among such that made great pretensions to religion and holiness, as they were.

Luke 13:5

Ver. 5. I tell you, nay,.... I affirm it, and you may depend upon it, they were not greater sinners than others: though such a melancholy accident befell them, not without the providence of God:

but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish; or perish in the same manner; that is, shall be buried under the ruins of the city and temple of Jerusalem, when one stone should not be left upon another; just as these eighteen men were buried under the ruins of the tower of Siloam, of which it was a pledge and emblem; and accordingly great numbers of them did perish in the temple, and were buried under the ruins of it {d}.

{d} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 4.

Luke 13:6

Ver. 6. He spoke also this parable,.... That is, Jesus spake, as the Persic version expresses it, that which follows; and at the same time, and upon the above occasion; setting forth the patience of God towards the Jewish nation, their unfruitfulness, and the danger of their being destroyed, in case of non-amendment:

a certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. This was not at all contrary to the law in De 22:9 "thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds": for according to the Jewish canons {e},

"the prohibition on account of divers seeds in a vineyard, concerned divers sorts of corn, (as wheat, barley, &c.) and divers sorts of herbs only: but it was lawful to sow other sorts of seeds in a vineyard, and there is no need to say other trees."

And there are cases put, and instances given, which express, or suppose fig trees, particularly, to have been planted in vineyards; for it is said {f},

"if a man carries a vine over part of a tree for meat, he may sow seed under the other part of it--it happened that R. Joshua went to R. Ishmael to Cephar Aziz, and he showed him a "vine", carried over, hnat huqm, "part of a fig tree"."

Again, more than once it is said in a parabolical way {g},

"this is like unto a king that has a paradise, or orchard planted, Mynpg lvw Mynat lv hrwv, "a row of fig trees, and of vines", and of pomegranates, and of apples, &c."

By the "certain man" may be meant, either God the Father, who is sometimes called an husbandman; or rather the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly man, as well as properly God; and "by his vineyard" may be meant, the Jewish nation; see **Isa 5:1** which were his own nation and people, from whence he sprung, and to whom he was particularly sent, and among whom he had a special property; and may also be applied to the church of God in any age or nation, which is often compared to a vineyard, consisting of persons separated from the world, and planted with various plants, some fruitful, pleasant, profitable, and valuable, and are Christ's by his Father's gift, and his own purchase. And by "the fig tree planted" in it, may be principally meant the Scribes and Pharisees, and the generality of the Jewish people; who were plants, but not of Christ's Father's planting, and therefore to be cut down, or rooted up: and may be accommodated to professors of religion; some of which are true and real, and may be compared to the fig tree, because of its large and green leaves, expressive of their profession; and become fruitful, as they are, being filled with the fruits of the Spirit, of righteousness, and of grace; and because it puts forth its fruit before its leaves, as there should be the fruit of grace before a profession of faith is made. Others are only nominal professors; and are like a fig tree, of which sort was this in the parable, that has large leaves, but no fruit; make a large profession, but bring forth no fruit to the glory of God; and though they are planted in the house of God, yet not by God the Father, nor by Christ, only at best by ministers and churches hoping well of them, but mistaken in them:

and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. This, if understood of God the Father, designs his coming to the Jewish people by his servants and prophets, time after time, and at last by John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ, and his apostles, seeking and requiring fruits of holiness, righteousness, and judgment, but found instead thereof the wild grapes of wickedness, oppression, and violence: but if of Christ, which sense is rather to be chosen, it denotes his incarnation, or his coming into the world in human nature, and seeking by his ministry, the fruits of faith in himself, and repentance towards God among the people of the Jews, but found none; at least instances of faith in Israel were very rare, and few repented of their evil works; and hence he upbraided many with their impenitence and unbelief; see Mt 11:20.

{e} Maimon. Hilchot Celaim, c. 5. sect. 6. {f} Misn. Celaim, c. 6. sect. 4. {g} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 164. 3. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 9. 2.

Luke 13:7

Ver. 7. Then said he unto the dresser of the vineyard,.... If by the owner of the vineyard is meant God the Father, then by the dresser of the vineyard Jesus Christ is intended; but as he seems rather designed by the owner, the vinedresser, or "the gardeners", as the Persic version reads, in the plural number, may signify the ministers of the word, to whom Christ, who is Solomon's antitype, lets out his vineyard to dress and cultivate it, and to keep the fruit of it; see **So 8:11**,

behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none; or "behold, there are three years since I came"; so read the Vulgate Latin and Persic versions, and Beza's most ancient copy. Some think Christ here refers to the three years of his public ministry, which he had now gone through among the Jews with little success; but he seems rather to allude to the nature of fig trees, which, if fruitful, bear in three years time; for even xwv twnb, "a sort of white figs", which are the longest before they bring forth fruit to perfection, yet their fruit is ripe in three years time. These trees bear fruit once in three years; they bear fruit indeed every year, but their fruit does not come to maturity till after three years {i}; and this may be the reason why this number is fixed upon; for if such fig trees do not bring forth ripe fruit in three years time, there is little reason to expect any from them: and thus it was time after time with the Jewish nation; and so it is with carnal professors: hence it follows,

cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? or "that it may not cumber"; or "render the ground useless", as read the Arabic version, and one of Beza's copies; for unfruitful trees suck up the juices of the earth, and draw away nourishment from other trees that are near them, and so make the earth barren, and not only hurt other trees, but stand in the way and place of fruitful ones; and therefore it is best to cut them down. So barren professors, as were the Jews, are not only useless and unprofitable themselves, being fruitless, but make churches barren, and stand in the way of others, who are stumbled by them; they are grieving to God, to Christ, and to the blessed Spirit, and are troublesome and burdensome to churches, ministers, and true believers: and the cutting them down may regard the judgment of God upon the nation of the Jews, which Christ would not have his apostles and ministers interpose for the averting of; or the excommunication of such worthless and hurtful professors out of the churches by them.

{i} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 35. 4. Jarchi, Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Demai, c. 1. sect. 1. & Sheviith, c. 5. sect. 1.

Luke 13:8

Ver. 8. And he answering, said unto him, Lord,.... Which, if understood of God the Father, may intend the intercession of Christ with him, who not only intercedes for his elect, for those that are unconverted, that they may be converted; and for converted ones, for the carrying on of the work of sanctification; for fresh discoveries of pardoning grace; for consolation and support under trouble; for their final perseverance, and eternal glorification: but also for his enemies, for profane sinners, and for formal professors; for the sake of his own people among them, and for their preservation, and for the averting of divine judgments from them, at least as yet: and so the Jewish nation was spared for some time after this, though now deserving of immediate destruction. But rather, the intercession of the ministers of Christ, and other good men, may be here meant; who, as Abraham interceded for Sodom, and Moses and Aaron for Israel, so do they for a sinful nation, a barren and unfruitful church and people, and particular persons, that they may be spared, at least a little longer, as here:

let it alone this year also; have patience one year more, or a little while longer. The Ethiopic version renders it, "until the winter", that being a time for digging about, and dunging of trees, as follows,

till I shall dig about it, and dung it; these same phrases are used in the "Misna" {k},

"Nyrdemw Nylbzm, "they dung and dig" in gardens of cucumbers, and gourds, until the beginning of the year:"

upon which their commentators say {l}, that they carry dung into their gardens to moisten the earth, and dig about the roots of the trees, and lay them bare, and cover them again, and prune them, and smoke them to kill the worms. And by these phrases may be signified the various means Christ made use of by his own ministry, and by the ministry of his apostles, to make the Jews a fruitful people; and rather the means Christ's ministers make use of, as did the apostles with the Jews, to reach the cases of barren professors; as by "digging", striking at, and exposing some secret sin or sins, which are the root and source of their barrenness; showing them, that they have no root in Christ, nor the root of the matter in them; and declaring to them the insufficiency of a mere profession of religion to save them: and "dunging", which as it supposes want of heat, or coldness, which is the cause of barrenness, and signifies, that such professors are without spiritual life, and without spiritual heat, or real warmth of love to Christ, his truths, ordinances, and people, and discharge their duty in a cold and lifeless manner; so it may design the means they make use of to warm and fire them with zeal for God, and true religion; by preaching the soul quickening doctrines of the Gospel, and by laying before them the agreeableness of a becoming zeal, and the disagreeableness of a lukewarm spirit and disposition, an indolence and unconcern for the glory of God, and interest of Christ.

{k} Sheviith, c. 2. sect. 2. {l} Jarchi, Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Luke 13:9

Ver. 9. And if it bear fruit, well,.... If hereby barren professors, as the Jews, become fruitful, it is well, a good thing is done; it is well for themselves, they shall eat the fruit of their doings; it is well for the churches where they are, for good works are profitable to men; and it is well for the owner of the vineyard, and the dresser of it too, for when Christ has his fruit from his churches, his ministers have theirs also:

and if not, then

after that; "for the time to come", as the Vulgate Latin; or "year following", as the Persic version renders it:

thou shall cut it down; do with it as thou pleasest, nothing more will be said or pleaded in its behalf; full consent shall be given, and no more intercession used: any trees might not be cut down, only barren ones; there is a law in De 20:19 about cutting down trees, and which the Jews explain thus {m};

"they may not cut down trees for meat without the city, nor withhold from them the course of water, that so they may become dry; as it is said, "thou shall not destroy the trees"; and whoever cuts any down is to be beaten, and not in a siege only, but in any place: whoever cuts down a tree for meat, by way of destroying it, is to be beaten; but they may cut it down if it hurts other trees, or because it hurts in the field others, or because its price is dear; the law does not forbid, but by way of destroying. Every barren tree it is lawful to cut down, even though a man hath no need of it; and so a tree for meat, which does hurt, and does not produce but little fruit, and it is not worth while to labour about it, it is lawful to cut it down: and how much may an olive tree produce, and it may not be cut down? the fourth part of a "Kab" of olives; and a palm tree which yields a "Kab" of dates, may not be cut down."

Much such a parable as this is formed by the Jews, upon Moses's intercession for the people of Israel {n}

"Says R. Abin, in the name of R. Simeon ben Josedech, a parable, to what is it like? to a king that hath an uncultivated field; he says to his gardener, go and manure it, and make it a vineyard: the gardener went and manured that field, and planted it a vineyard; the vineyard grew, and produced wine, and it turned to vinegar; when the king saw that the wine turned to vinegar, he said to the gardener, go, htwa Uwqw, "and cut it down", why should I seek after a vineyard that brings forth that which is sour? the gardener replied, my lord, the king, what expense hast thou been at with this vineyard before it was raised? and now thou seekest to cut it down; and shouldst thou say because its wine turns sour; the reason is, because it is young, therefore its wine turns sour, and it does not produce good wine: so when Israel did that work (of the golden calf), the holy blessed God sought to consume them; said Moses, Lord of the world, hast thou not brought them out of Egypt from a place of idolatry, and now they are young, or children, as it is said, Ho 11:1 wait a little for them, and go with them, and they will do good works in thy presence."

{m} Maimon. Hilch. Melacim, c. 6. sect. 8, 9. {n} Shemot Rabba, sect. 43. fol. 141. 2.

Luke 13:10

Ver. 10. And he was teaching in one of the synagogues,.... That is Jesus, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it; which was his work, he being a teacher sent from God, and who took all opportunities of instructing men in the truths of the Gospel; this was done either in Galilee, or in Judea, in one of the synagogues of some city there, for in their larger cities there were more synagogues than one. In Jerusalem, we are told {o}, there were three hundred and ninety four synagogues; and other writers {p} increase their number, and say, there were four hundred and eighty: and it was

on the sabbath; which was now in force, and was religiously observed by Christ.

{o} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 105. 1. {p} Pesikta in Jarchi in Isa. i. 21. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 20. 3. Ecka Rabbati, fol. 37. 4.

Luke 13:11

Ver. 11. And behold there was a woman,.... In the synagogue, who, as infirm as she is hereafter described, got out to the place of worship; and which may be a rebuke to such, who, upon every trifling indisposition, keep at home, and excuse themselves from an attendance in the house of God:

which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years; or a weakness that was brought upon her by an evil spirit, by Satan; as appears from Lu 13:16 who, by divine permission, had a power of inflicting diseases on mankind, as is evident from the case of Job; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "whom a demon had made infirm": and this disorder had been of a long standing; she had laboured under it for the space of eighteen years, so that it was a known case, and had been given up as incurable, which made the following miracle the more illustrious and remarkable.

And was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself; or lift up her head, look up, or stand upright; it was a thing utterly impossible, which she could by no means do; her body was convulsed, and every part so contracted, that, as the Persic version renders it, "she could not stretch out a hand or foot".

Luke 13:12

Ver. 12. And when Jesus saw her,.... In the synagogue among the people, either whilst, or after he had done teaching:

he called her to him, to come nearer him, and said unto her; of his own accord, without being asked by the woman, or any other for her, out of great compassion to her, seeing her in this miserable condition, and knowing full well the nature, cause, and long continuance of her disorder:

woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity; which had not only bowed her, but it had bound her, as if she had been bound with cords; but Christ by saying these words, with his hands laid upon her, burst her bonds asunder, dispossessed the evil spirit, and delivered her from her long affliction.

Luke 13:13

Ver. 13. And he laid his hands on her,.... As he spoke the above words, which he sometimes did when he healed diseases.

And immediately she was made straight; she lift up herself, stood upright, and her body, and all the parts of it were as straight as ever they had been, or as any were in the synagogue.

And glorified God; that is, "the woman" glorified God, as the Persic version expresses it; she was filled with thankfulness for the mercy, and gave God the glory of it. This woman was an emblem of a poor sinner held in the bonds of iniquity by Satan, and led captive by him at his will, who can by no means raise himself; nor is he able to lift up his head to heaven, or look upwards to Christ for deliverance; and yet attends upon the outward ministry, when Christ, in his own time, meets with him under it, and manifests his power and grace, breaks his bonds asunder, delivers him out of Satan's hands, and from the bondage of his own corruptions, sets him straight, and causes him to lift up his head, and look to him for life and salvation; and so puts a new song into his mouth, even praise to God, to whose free grace and favour he readily ascribes his deliverance.

Luke 13:14

Ver. 14. And the ruler of the synagogue,.... For there never was but one in a synagogue, whatever some writers have observed to the contrary; See Gill on "Mt 9:18" the Ethiopic version reads, "the chief priests", but wrongly; these dwelt at Jerusalem, and in Galilee:

answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day; his indignation was at Christ, and the miracle he had wrought, being filled with envy at the honour it would bring unto him; though he covered it under pretence of its being a violation of the sabbath, and that it ought not to have been done on such a day, and in such a place, which were appropriated not to servile works, but to religious worship;

and said unto the people; over whom he had an authority, and who stood in awe of him, because of his office and dignity; and not daring to attack Christ himself, at least not directly, though he struck at him through the people, whose doctrine and miracles were so extraordinary.

There are six days which men ought to work, in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day; referring to the fourth command: but this observation and reproof were impertinent and needless, for the people did not come to be healed; for ought appears, the cure was unthought of and unexpected; nor was healing, especially as performed by Christ, by a word and a touch, a servile work, and therefore could not be any breach of the law referred to. The Ethiopic version reads, "is there not a sixth day?----come on that day"; the day before the sabbath.

Luke 13:15

Ver. 15. The Lord then answered him and said,.... Though he did not direct his speech to him, he knew that he struck at him, and suggested that he was a violator of the sabbath, as well as the people: and therefore in defence of himself, and of what he had done, and to expose the hypocrisy of this man, made answer as follows,

thou hypocrite; the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read in the plural, "hypocrites"; as do the Complutensian edition, and four ancient copies of Beza's, and the Alexandrian copy; but the Syriac and Persic versions read in the singular, "hypocrite"; as this man was, who covered his malice and envy at Christ, with a show of zeal for the sabbath day; and yet did that upon it, which must be allowed by themselves, and others, to be a much greater violation of the sabbath, than this cure could ever be thought to be:

doth not each one of you, on the sabbath day, loose his ox, or his ass, from the stall, or rack, where he is fastened with a rope;

and lead him away to watering? to some place of water, where he may drink, after having filled himself at the rack: and that this was agreeably to their own canons and practice, that beasts may be led out on a sabbath day, is certain; for they deliver various rules concerning leading them out, with what they might, and with what they might not be brought out; and particularly, among others, mention asses and heifers {q}; and they speak {r} of leading them to water, not only to drink of it, but to wash their chains in it, which, it seems, received pollution, and needed washing, and might be done on a sabbath day; yea, they allow, that not only a beast may be led out to watering, but a man might fill a vessel of water, and pour it out into a trough for it, provided he did not directly set it before it: the rule is this {s}

"a man may not fill water (a vessel of it), and put it on a sabbath day before his beast, but he may fill it, and pour it out, and it may drink of it."

And particularly on a feast day, their rule is {t}, that

"they do not water nor slay beasts of the desert, but they water and slay domestic ones. Domestic ones are such as lie in the city (i.e. as Maimonides says {u}, within the sabbatical border, 2000 cubits from the city), and those of the desert are such as lie in pastures."

And therefore very justly does our Lord observe to the ruler of the synagogue their own practices towards a beast, in defence of his works of mercy to men.

{q} Misn. Sahbat, c. 5. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4. & 18. 2. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 51. 2. & Piske Tosephot in ib. art. 226, 227, 228, 233. {r} Bartenora in Misn. Sabbat, c. 5. sect. 1. {s} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 20. 2. {t} Misn. Betza, c. 5. sect. 7. {u} In ib.

Luke 13:16

Ver. 16. And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham,.... Not only a woman, or rational creature, and much preferable, as such, to an irrational one; but a descendant of Abraham, of whom the Jews gloried, and in descent from him prided themselves, and trusted; and chose to call their women by this name {w}, which gave them a character above others: and who, besides all this, was doubtless a good woman, a spiritual worshipper of the God of Israel; who, in a spiritual sense, was a daughter of Abraham, that walked in the steps of his faith, and was now a believer in Christ, and appeared to be a chosen vessel of salvation:

whom Satan hath bound, lo these eighteen years; with a bodily distemper that none could loose her from in so long a time. The Persic version, very wrongly, reads "twelve years"; though in Lu 13:11 it observes the right number.

Should not such an one be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? the force of Christ's reasoning is this, that if it was lawful, on a sabbath day, to lead out a beast to watering, to quench its thirst, that so it may not suffer so much as one day for want of water, how much more reasonable must it be, that a rational creature, one of Abraham's posterity, and a religious person, who had been for eighteen years under a sore affliction, through the power of Satan over her, by divine permission, should be freed from so long and sore an affliction on the sabbath day? if mercy is to be shown to beasts, much more to men and women.

{w} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 72. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 109. 1.

Luke 13:17

Ver. 17. And when he had said these things,.... Had argued with them from their own practices, and in a way so strong and rational, that carried such evidence and conviction with it:

all his adversaries were ashamed; not only the ruler of the synagogue, but the Scribes and Pharisees, that were present, who followed him wherever he went, and were his implacable enemies; these were confounded and silenced; shame appeared in their countenances; they could not lift up their heads, and look him in the face.

And all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him; for the doctrines he taught, and the miracles he wrought, and his wise and close reasonings at this time, to the shame and confusion of all that opposed him: for his audience consisted of different sorts, and what he said, and did, had different effects upon them. Some were filled with joy, and others with wrath, malice, and envy. And this is true with respect to spiritual and eternal things. Glorious things have been done by Christ in eternity, by becoming the surety of his people, by entering into a covenant with his Father on their account, and by taking the care and charge of their persons, and of all grace, blessings, and promises for them; and in time, by assuming their nature, fulfilling the law, bringing in an everlasting righteousness, making peace and reconciliation, procuring pardon, and finishing the work of redemption and salvation; and now in heaven, by entering as the forerunner for them, appearing in the presence of God on their account, presenting their prayers, and making intercession for them: and these are glorious things; they make for the glory of all the divine perfections; they issue in the glory of Christ himself; and in consequence of them, the saints enjoy eternal glory and happiness: these are things of the greatest importance, are wonderful and amazing, and for which saints and angels will glorify God both here and hereafter; and these occasion joy, and gladness in the Lord's people now. For not carnal and profane persons, or hypocrites, and formal professors, or Pharisees, and self-righteous persons rejoice at these things; but such as are the Lord's own people, who are openly his; who have passed under a work of the Spirit of God, who have seen their need of these things, and are sensible of the value of them; who know Christ, and love him, and believe in him.

Luke 13:18

Ver. 18. Then said he, unto what is the kingdom of God like?.... The same with the kingdom of heaven, in Mt 13:31 and so the Ethiopic version reads it here, "and whereunto shall I resemble it?" of this way of speaking, See Gill on "Mr 4:30".

Luke 13:19

Ver. 19. It is like a grain of mustard seed,.... Both for its smallness at first, and its after increase; wherefore both the Evangelists Matthew and Mark observe, that it "is the least of all seed": which is true of the ministry of the Gospel, of the Gospel church state, and of the grace of God in the hearts of his people:

which a man took and cast into his garden; the Ethiopic version renders it, "and sowed in his field", as in Mt 13:31 though mustard used to be sowed in gardens as well as in fields. {x} Says R. Simeon ben Chelphetha, I have one stalk of mustard seed,
ylv dwtb, "in my garden": so {y} Buxtorf translates it. And by the place in the text, where this seed is cast, may be meant, either the "field" of the world, where the Gospel is preached, and churches are raised; or the "garden" of the church, where the word and ordinances are administered, and in the hearts of the members of it, the grace of God is implanted and increased; see **So 4:12**

and it grew and waxed a great tree, which may design the spread of the Gospel in the world, the flourishing state of the church of Christ, and the growth of grace in the hearts of believers.

And the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it; the Syriac version reads in the singular number, "the fowl of the air"; not Satan, and his principalities and powers, which devour the seed sown by the wayside; nor the angels of heaven; but rather gracious men on earth, who sit under the shadow of a Gospel ministry with great delight; and "make their nests", as the Persic version here renders the words, and take up their residence in Gospel churches;
See Gill on "Mt 13:31",
See Gill on "Mt 13:32",
See Gill on "Mr 4:31",
See Gill on "Mr 4:32".

{x} T. Hieros. Peah, fol 20. 2. {y} Lex. Talmud. col. 823.

Luke 13:20

Ver. 20. And again he said,.... That is, Jesus, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it; besides the parable of the grain of mustard seed, that also of the leaven hid in three measures of meal:

whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God; either the Gospel of the kingdom, and the mysteries of it; or the church, which is Christ's kingdom; or the grace of God in the heart, which makes meet for the kingdom of glory; the first seems rather to be intended;
See Gill on "Mt 13:33".

Luke 13:21

Ver. 21. It is like leaven,.... Which is small in quantity, but is of a swelling, spreading quality; and fitly expresses the small beginnings of the Gospel ministry, and its increase, also the state and case of Gospel churches, and the nature of the grace of God; unless false doctrine should rather be meant, which privately, secretly, and by little and little, got into the churches of Christ, the kingdom of God, and spread itself all over them, as in the times of the papacy:

which a woman took; Christ, and his ministers, Wisdom, and her maidens, understanding it of the Gospel; but if the leaven of error is intended, that woman, Jezebel, is meant, who calls herself a prophetess, and teaches, and seduces the servants of God, **Re 2:20**

and hid in three measures of meal: among a few of God's people at first, both among Jews and Gentiles,

till the whole was leavened; until all the elect of God are gathered in, and evangelized by it; even the whole fulness of the Gentiles, and all the people of the Jews, which shall be saved in the latter day; but if the parable is to be understood of the false doctrine and discipline of the Antichristian and apostate church of Rome, it may denote the small beginnings of the mystery of iniquity, which began to work in the apostle's time by the errors and heresies then propagated, and the manner in which the man of sin was privately introduced; whose coming is after the working of Satan, with signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, first among a few, and then more, until at length the whole world wondered after the beast, **2Th 2:7**.

Luke 13:22

Ver. 22. And he went through the cities and villages,.... Either of Galilee, or of

Judea, or both; since he was upon his journey from Galilee, through Judea, to Jerusalem, as it follows:

teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem; as he was journeying he taught in every place he came, where he could have an opportunity; his delight was to do good both to the bodies and souls of men; and he was constant and assiduous in it.

Luke 13:23

Ver. 23. Then said one unto him,.... Not one of his disciples, but one of the company, in some one of the cities or villages he passed through, or as he was in the road to Jerusalem:

are there few that be saved? It is a received opinion among the Jews {z}, that all Israel shall have a part in the world to come; and this man might put the question to know whether Christ was of this sentiment or not. And by some things he had observed drop from him, and it may be the foregoing parables, which express the small beginnings of his kingdom, and seem to signify, that at first his Gospel should be received but by a few, though it should afterwards spread, he might collect, that his sense was, there would be but a few saved; or this might be a question of mere curiosity and speculation, as it seems to be, by Christ's treatment of it, who does not give a direct answer to it, but puts him and others upon showing a concern for their own salvation.

And he said unto them; not to the man only that put the question, but to the whole company; though the Persic and Ethiopic versions read, "he said unto him", as follows.

{z} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1.

Luke 13:24

Ver. 24. Strive to enter in at the strait gate,.... What is meant by the strait gate, and by entering in at it,
See Gill on "Mt 7:13". To "strive", is to be diligent in the use of means; to search the Scriptures with care; to attend on the preaching of the word with constancy, neglecting no opportunity; to pray earnestly for spiritual light, knowledge, and grace; to contend with every enemy that opposes the salvation

of the soul, as sin, Satan, and the world; to bear all reproaches and persecutions, and press through all difficulties, for the prize of the incorruptible crown: the metaphor seems to be taken from the striving, wrestling, and combat in the Olympic games, for a corruptible crown:

for many I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able: either when it is too late, when the door is shut; or else before, very faintly, in a superficial manner, from a mere natural affection, from a principle of self-love, which leads every one to desire happiness; and by very indirect and improper methods, by their own civility, morality, and righteousness; by works of the law, moral, or ceremonial; or by a profession of religion, and an outward compliance with the ordinances of the Gospel, and not by Christ, and faith in him.

Luke 13:25

Ver. 25. When once the master of the house is risen up,.... From table, or off of his couch, the entertainment being over: and so here, the Gospel feast, or dispensation, being at an end, and all the guests come in, who were effectually called, and long patience and forbearance being used towards others; or has entered in, as the Vulgate Latin version reads, and so Beza's ancient copy, and one of Stephens's; is come from the wedding; see Lu 12:36 Christ having espoused all his elect to himself, by the ministry of the word: for by "the master of the house" is meant, the bridegroom of the church, the head of the body, the King of saints, who is Son over his own house, and high priest there; of whom the whole family in heaven and earth, is named:

and hath shut to the door; the door of mercy and of hope; the door of faith; the preaching of the word, and the administration of ordinances, when these shall be no more:

and ye begin to stand without; or "do stand without"; without the holy city, where dogs are; having no admittance to the nuptial chamber, to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the joys of heaven:

and to knock at the door; which shows how near some persons may come to heaven, and yet not enter there, even to the very door; and what an expectation, yea, an assurance they may have, of admission into it, not at all doubting of it; and therefore knock as if they were some of the family, and had a right to enter; but not finding the door opened to them, so soon as they imagined, they begin to call as well as knock:

saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; they acknowledge Christ to be Lord, as all will at the last day, to the glory of God the Father, even professors and profane; they repeat the word, to show the vehemency and earnestness of their entreaty; and according to the Syriac and, Persic versions, they claim an interest in Christ, which read, "our Lord, our Lord"; and on account of which they doubted not, but the door would be opened: but alas! he was only their Lord in a professional way; they had only called him Lord, Lord, but had never truly and heartily yielded obedience to him; their hearts had never been opened to him, and he had never had a place there, nor his Gospel; wherefore though they knock, he will not open;

and he shall answer and say unto you. The Persic version adds, "nay, but be ye gone hence", for the following reason,

I know you not, whence you are: not but that Christ being the omniscient God, will know who they are, from whence they come, of what country and place they be, and to whom they belong; but the sense is, that he will not own them, and express any approbation of them, as his; but will treat them as strangers, that come, it is not known, from whence; he will reject them, as not being born from above, as not being the sheep of his fold, or members of his true church: they did not come from heaven, they were not heaven born souls, or partakers of the heavenly calling, and therefore shall not be received there; they belonged to the men of the world, and were of their father the devil, and shall be sent to him: so the foolish virgins, or formal professors of religion, and such as have been preachers of the Gospel, will entreat Christ at the last day, and shall have such an answer as this returned to them, which will be very awful and startling; See Gill on "Mt 7:23",
See Gill on "Mt 25:12".

Luke 13:26

Ver. 26. Then shall ye begin to say,.... Or ye shall say; in favour of themselves, and in order to be admitted within, the following pleas will be made by them:

we have eaten and drank in thy presence: which may be understood both literally of many, who were miraculously led by Christ, or at whose tables he had ate and drank, and they with him; as did not only publicans and sinners, but some of the Pharisees, who invited him to their houses; and in a religious sense, of many who eat of the legal sacrifices; and of others, who eat the bread, and drink the wine at the Lord's table; all which will be insufficient to introduce men into the kingdom and glory of Christ: natural relation to Christ, which the Jews may claim, being born of them, and personal acquaintance with him, and a bare profession of him, will be of no avail another day:

and thou hast taught in our streets; in the streets of many cities in Galilee and Judea: it was customary with the Jewish doctors to teach in the streets:

"says Rabba, behold I am as Ben Azzai, in the streets of Tiberias {a};"

the gloss upon it is,

"who was yqwvb vrwd, "expounding in the streets of Tiberias.""

And it is said {b} of Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai,

"that he was sitting in the shade of the temple, and expounding all the whole day;"

the gloss on the place is,

"the temple being an hundred cubits high, its shade went very far "in the street", which is before the mountain of the house; and because "the street" was large, and held abundance of men, he was expounding there by reason of the heat, for no school could hold them:"

and it is also said of R. Chija {c}, that

"he went out and taught his brother's two sons, qwvb, "in the street"."

So that what our Lord did, was no other than what was usual with their doctors; nor is this contrary to what is said in
See Gill on "Mt 12:19": this is also a fruitless plea and which will be of no service; it will signify nothing, to have heard Christ preached, or Christ himself preach, unless there is faith in him, which works by love; for not hearers of the word only, but doers of it are regarded.

{a} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 29. 1. {b} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 26. 1. {c} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 16. 2.

Luke 13:27

Ver. 27. But he shall say, &c] The Persic version adds, "be gone from my sight, and be far from my door"; expressing indignation at them, an abhorrence of them, as not being able to bear them in his sight, or near unto him:

I tell you, I know you not whence you are; this is repeated, and with a strong asseveration, to denote the certainty of the truth expressed, and to cast off all hope in them, of ever succeeding by their entreaties and importunity:

depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; or "of a lie", as the Syriac and Persic versions render it: for they were deceitful workers, they professed what they did not from the heart believe; they said they were Christians, but were not, and now are found liars; they only attended on the word and ordinances in an hypocritical way, and trusted in, and depended upon, their outward profession of religion, and subjection to ordinances; and by so doing, instead of working righteousness, wrought iniquity; and so as they did not submit to Christ and his righteousness, they are bid to depart from him, as wicked and unrighteous men, as they were: the word "all" is here used, which is not in **Mt 7:23** which agrees with **Ps 6:8** to which there seems to be a reference, though it is omitted here, in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions;
See Gill on "Mt 7:23".

Luke 13:28

Ver. 28. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,....
See Gill on "Mt 8:12". This will be upon hearing the above sentence and character, "depart from me", &c. and will be increased,

when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: whose offspring they were, and to whom they stood related according to the flesh; and of descent, from whom they boasted, and even trusted in it, thinking themselves the favourites of heaven, and expecting to be admitted into the kingdom of God, on account of it: sad will be the disappointment of such persons; a being born of religious parents, will neither give right unto, nor meetness for eternal glory; regeneration is not of blood:

and all the prophets in the kingdom of God; whose prophecies were transmitted to them, and whose books they had in their hands, and read; and who desired to see and hear what they did, and which they now plead, and yet they did not enjoy, but were nevertheless happy: and

you [yourselves] thrust out: with indignation and contempt, with shame and "ignominy", as the Persic version adds; not suffered to go in with them, though their sons and successors; but bid to depart, and ordered to be for ever separated from them, as only fit company for devils and damned spirits.

Luke 13:29

Ver. 29. And they shall come,.... From all parts the world, from every nation under the heavens; meaning the Gentiles, and which will be a greater aggravation of the punishment of the Jews, and cause still more rage and madness: these shall

come from the east and from the west; from the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same, Isa 45:6

and from the north, and from the south; from the most distant parts of the world inhabited by men; see Isa 43:5. God has his chosen ones, and Christ has a people in all parts of the world; and therefore his Gospel must be preached to all nations, for the gathering of them in, which will be done in the latter day; and in the resurrection morn, as these will be raised in the several places where they will have been buried, they will come from thence, and make one body, and will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and will be for ever with him:

and shall sit down in the kingdom of God; in Christ's kingdom, in the new heavens, and new earth, as persons that sit down at a table, to partake of a feast; see Lu 22:30 and in the ultimate glory, where they shall have rest, peace, and joy, for evermore. The Ethiopic version renders it, "they shall rejoice in the kingdom of God"; they shall partake of the joys of heaven; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away; and the Persic version, "and they shall take a repose, and sit and rest"; they shall rest from all their labour, and be in perfect ease and peace; See Gill on "Mt 8:11".

Luke 13:30

Ver. 30. And behold, there are last which shall be first,.... The Gentiles, the most mean and abject, afar from God, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, called last of all; these shall be first, and sit down among patriarchs and prophets, men of the first rank here on earth, in the kingdom of heaven, and enjoy the same glory and happiness with them:

and there are first which shall be last: the Jews, who were first the visible professing people of God, to whom the oracles of God, and outward privileges and ordinances were given; who had the Messiah first sent to them, and the Gospel first preached among them; these shall be last, be rejected and despised, and shut out of the kingdom of heaven, they thought themselves heirs of, and expected to enjoy; see Mt 19:30.

Luke 13:31

Ver. 31. The same day there came certain of the Pharisees,.... Who dwelt in Galilee, for they were in all parts of the country: these being nettled and filled with indignation at Christ, because of the parables he had that day delivered, the miracles he had wrought, and the several awful and striking things which dropped from him, and which they knew respected them; contrived to get rid of him, by frightening him with a design of Herod's, to take away his life, should he continue there: for this seems to be rather a stratagem of theirs, than of Herod's; though it may he, that Herod might take this method, and make use of these men in this way, to terrify him; fearing to lay hold on him, and put him to death; partly because of the people, and partly because of the remaining uneasiness and terror of his mind, for taking off the head of John the Baptist:

saying, get thee out and depart hence; in all haste, as soon as possible:

for Herod will kill thee: he is resolved upon it, he has formed a design, and will quickly take methods to execute it. This was Herod the tetrarch, of Galilee; from whence we learn, that Christ was as yet in Galilee, though he was journeying towards Jerusalem,
Lu 13:22 for Herod's jurisdiction reached no further than Galilee: this was either a device of Herod's, or of the Pharisees, or of both, to get rid of Christ in the easiest manner.

Luke 13:32

Ver. 32. And he said unto them, go ye and tell that fox,.... Herod, who it may be sent them, of which Christ was not ignorant, nor of his design in it; and who, as Nero, for his cruelty, is compared to a lion, so he for his subtlety in this instance, as well as in the whole of his conduct, to a fox; though some think Christ has a regard to the Pharisees, and their craftiness, in forming this story, pretending good will to him, by acquainting him of Herod's malicious designs, when their view was only to scare him out of their country; so the false prophets and teachers, are for their cunning, subtlety, and flattery, compared to foxes, **So 2:15** as well as for their greediness and voraciousness: the word is used with the Jews, for a vain and empty man, in opposition to a good man; as in that saying {d} of R. Jannai,

"be thou the tail of lions, and not the head of "foxes;""

or "vain men", as the gloss explains it:

behold, I cast out devils; or "I will cast out devils", as the Ethiopic version reads, in spite of him, let him do his worst:

and I do cures today and tomorrow; and so for some time to come; and which was doing good, and was what Herod and the Pharisees, had they any humanity in them, would have rejoiced at, and have chose that he should have continued with them, and not have threatened him with his life, or have took any methods to send him from them:

and the third day I shall be perfected; that is, in a little time after, I shall be made perfect by sufferings, my course will be finished, and I shall have done all the work completely, I came about; and till that time come, it is not in his power, nor yours, nor all the men on earth, or devils in hell, to take away my life, or hinder me doing what I am about.

{d} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 15. & Jarchi in ib.

Luke 13:33

Ver. 33. Nevertheless, I must walk,.... The Syriac version reads, "I must work", and so the Arabic: as going about doing good, casting out devils, and healing diseases:

today and tomorrow, and the day following: a few days more in Galilee, and towards Jerusalem: all the Oriental versions read, "the day following I shall depart"; either out of this world; or out of Galilee, and go to Jerusalem, and there suffer and die:

for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem; because the great sanhedrim only sat at Jerusalem, to whom it belonged to try and judge a prophet; and if found false, to condemn him, and put him to death; the rule is this {e};

"they do not judge, neither a tribe, nor a false prophet, nor an high priest, but by the sanhedrim of seventy and one."

Not but that prophets sometimes perished elsewhere, as John the Baptist in Galilee; but not according to a judicial process, in which way Christ the prophet was to be cut off, nor was it common; instances of this kind were rare, and always in a violent way; and even such as were sentenced to death by the lesser sanhedrim, were brought to Jerusalem, and publicly executed there, whose crimes were of another sort; for so runs the canon {f};

"they do not put any one to death by the sanhedrim, which is in his city, nor by the sanhedrim in Jabneh; but they bring him to the great, sanhedrim in Jerusalem, and keep him till the feast, and put him to death on a feast day, as it is said De 17:13 "and all the people shall hear and fear.""

And since Jerusalem was the place where the prophets were usually put to death, it follows,

{e} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 5. & T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 2. {f} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 4.

Luke 13:34

Ver. 34. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets,.... These words, with what follow, as they stand in Mt 23:37 were delivered by Christ, when he was in the temple at Jerusalem; but here they were spoken by him when in Galilee, in Herod's jurisdiction; so that it appears, that the same words were spoken by Christ at different times, in different places, and to different persons: unless it can be thought, that Luke transcribed them from Matthew, and inserts them here, on occasion of Christ's having mentioned the perishing of a prophet in Jerusalem; where many had been killed and put to death, in one way or another, and particularly in the following:

and stonest them that are sent unto thee; as Zechariah,
2Ch 24:20

how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not? and therefore ought not to have been condemned as a false prophet by their sanhedrim, as he suggests he should be, and as he afterwards was; See Gill on "Mt 23:37".

Luke 13:35

Ver. 35. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate,.... That is, would be in a little time, both city and temple;
See Gill on "Mt 23:38"

and verily I say unto you; affirm in the strongest manner:

ye shall not see me; the Arabic version adds, "from henceforth", and so some copies, as in Mt 23:39 and so the Ethiopic version, "from this time"; that he spoke these words, whether in Galilee, or in the temple:

until the time come; or "until he shall come", meaning himself, and his second coming:

when ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; not they themselves in person, but their posterity, who will be converted in the latter day: and shall acknowledge the Messiah, the blessed of the Lord, who will come in his name, to judge the world in righteousness: or else the meaning is, that when Christ shall come a second time, and every eye shall see him, these Jews, among the rest, shall behold him, whom they have pierced, and mourn; and wish themselves among those, that shall receive him with joyful acclamations; and however, will be obliged to own him as the Messiah, and to confess that he comes in the name, and with the authority of the Lord, and that he is blessed for evermore.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 14:1

Ver. 1. And it came to pass,.... The Persic version adds, "on a certain day"; and it is afterwards said to be the sabbath day. This seems to have been somewhere or other in Galilee; see Lu 17:11.

As he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees; or rather, one of the rulers, and of the sect of the Pharisees: and he might be either a ruler of a synagogue, or a member of one of the lesser or greater sanhedrim; such another as Nicodemus, who was of the Pharisees, and a ruler of the Jews, **Joh 3:1** for that there was any distinction among the Pharisees as a sect, does not appear: to this man's house Christ went, after he came out of the synagogue, being invited by him;

to eat bread on the sabbath day. The sabbath day was a feasting day with the Jews, in which they made very large and magnificent entertainments, for the honour of the sabbath; and he was reckoned the most praiseworthy, that exceeded this way; and no doubt, since this man was a Pharisee, one that was tenacious of the traditions of the elders, and was also a ruler, his table was well spread: the rules concerning this part of keeping the sabbath, are these {g};

"what is this delight? the wise men say, a man ought to prepare abundance of food and spiced liquids, for the sabbath, all according to a man's substance; and whoever multiplies in the expenses of the sabbath, and in preparing food, much and good, lo, he is praiseworthy; and if he is not able, though he only prepares boiled food, and such like, on account of the glory of the sabbath, lo, this is the delight of the sabbath: and he is not obliged to straiten himself, nor to ask of others, to increase the food of the sabbath: the ancient wise men said, make thy sabbath a common day, and do not make thyself necessitous to men; he who is delicate and rich, and lo, all his days are as a sabbath day, ought to have food on a sabbath day, different from that on a weekday; and if it is not possible to change, let him alter the time of eating; if he had been used to have it soon, let him have it late; and if late, let him have it sooner: a man is obliged to eat three meals, or feasts, on a sabbath day; one in the evening, and one in the morning, and one at the time of the meat offering; and he ought to take heed to those three feasts, that he does not diminish them at all; and even a poor man that is maintained by alms, must keep the three feasts."

And this last canon, or rule, is of the utmost importance with them; for they {h} say,

"whoever keeps the three feasts on the sabbath day, shall be delivered from three punishments, from the sorrows of the Messiah, from the judgment of hell, and from the war of Gog and Magog."

That they watched him; that is, those that sat down to meat with him, the lawyers and Pharisees: and it is very probable, that it was not out of pure respect to him, that he was asked to eat meat at this ruler's house; but with a design to observe whatever might be said, or done by him, they could take any advantage from, against him.

{g} Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 30. sect. 7, 8, 9. {h} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 1. Kimchi in Isa. lviii. 13.

Luke 14:2

Ver. 2. And behold, there was a certain man before him,.... Who sat just before him, as he was at table; who either came there of himself, in order to receive a cure; or rather, since it was in a private house, and he at table too, was brought and set there on purpose by the Pharisees, to try whether Christ would heal him on the sabbath day, that they might have somewhat against him; which they doubted not but he would do, knowing his compassionate and beneficent disposition to do good to creatures in distress, whenever he had an opportunity:

which had the dropsy: or "gathered waters", as the Syriac version renders it; was filled with water, which is the nature of that disease, and distinguishes it from what is called the dry dropsy: this disease is a preternatural collection of serum, or water in some part of the body; or a too great proportion thereof in the blood. The "dropsy" acquires different names, from the different parts it afflicts, or the different parts the waters are collected in; that of the "abdomen", or lower belly, called simply and absolutely "dropsy", is particularly denominated "ascites"; that of the whole habit of the body, "anasarca", or "leucophlegmatia"; that of the head, "hydrocephalus"; that of the scrotum, "hydrocele".---There is also a species of this disease, supposed to be caused instead of water, by a collection of wind, called "tympanites"; and by Hippocrates, the "dry dropsy": we also meet with dropsies of the breast, pericardium, uterus, ovaries, &c. The causes of dropsies in general, are whatever may obstruct the serous part of the blood, so as to make it stagnate in the vessels; or burst the vessels themselves, so as to let the blood out among the membranes; or weaken and relax the tone of the vessels; or this the blood, and make it watery; or lessen perspiration. These causes are various, viz. sometimes acute diseases, scirrhous tumours of any of the more noble viscera, excessive evacuations, particularly haemorrhages, hard drinking, &c. The "ascites", or "water dropsy" of the "abdomen", is the most usual case, and what we particularly call the "dropsy": its symptoms are tumours, first of the feet and legs, and afterwards of the "abdomen." which keep continually growing; and if the belly be struck or shook, there is heard a quashing of water: add to this, three other attendants, viz. a dyspnoea, intense thirst, and sparing urine; with which may be numbered heaviness, listlessness, costiveness, a light fever, and an emaciation of the body {i}. Such we must suppose to be the case of this man, and that he was now in such a condition, as to be thought incurable.

{i} Chamber's Cyclopaedia on the word "Dropsy".

Luke 14:3

Ver. 3. And Jesus answering, spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees,.... All the Oriental versions, for "lawyers", read "Scribes": these, with the Pharisees, were got together in a body, in their brother Pharisee's house, to watch the motions of Christ; who knew their designs upon him, and the thoughts of their hearts, and made answer to them, by putting the following question;

saying, is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? The occasion of the question was the object before him, whom Christ had a compassionate regard to, and determined to cure; but knowing that these men were catching at every thing, to traduce him, was desirous of having their sentiments first; not but that he knew full well, what was agreeable to the law of God, and what was not; and what also were the traditions of their elders, which they held, and which allowed of healing on the sabbath day, where life was in danger.

Luke 14:4

Ver. 4. And they held their peace,.... Or were silent, choosing to say nothing, which might countenance such an action; and yet knew not how to condemn it:

and he took [him], and healed him, and let him go; he took him by the hand, or laid his hands on him; he touched him, and, it may be, stroked the part affected, and in an instant the prodigious swelling of his body came down: for he who at his rebuke could dry up the sea, could by a touch dry up such a quantity of water, as was in this man's body; and then he dismissed him from the table and company, and he went home perfectly cured.

Luke 14:5

Ver. 5. And answered them, saying,.... Murmuring secretly at what he had done:

which of you shall have an ass, or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day? being just ready to be drowned there; and therefore it must be much more right and necessary to cure a man, a reasonable creature, just drowning with a dropsy, as this man was. The Syriac and Persic versions, instead of "an ass", read "a son", very wrongly: a like kind of reasoning is used by Christ, in See Gill on "Mt 12:11",
See Gill on "Lu 13:15".

Luke 14:6

Ver. 6. And they could not answer him again to these things,.... The justice, equity, mercy, and humanity that appeared in our Lord's reasonings, and the cases he instanced in, being agreeable to their own tenets and practices, their mouths were shut up, and they could not return an answer to them, without being exposed,

Luke 14:7

Ver. 7. And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden,.... To the dinner at the Pharisee's house, particularly the lawyers, or Scribes and Pharisees:

when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; the uppermost places at the table, which these men loved, coveted, and sought after; See Gill on "Mt 23:6"

saying unto them; as follows.

Luke 14:8

Ver. 8. When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding,.... To a wedding dinner, or to any other; such an one as the present entertainment was, which was not a marriage feast, for they might not marry on the sabbath day; See Gill on "Joh 2:1" but a common sabbath meal:

sit not down in the highest room: in the chief place at table, as soon as come in:

lest a more honourable man; for age, office, dignity, wisdom, learning, or riches:

than thou be bidden of him: the master of the feast; and who may not yet be come, and for whom the chief place may be designed, and will better suit him.

Luke 14:9

Ver. 9. And he that bade thee and him,.... To the feast, and who is the master of it, and has a right to dispose of, and order his guests at his table, as he thinks fit:

come and say to thee, give this man place; pray rise up, and give this honourable man this seat, which is more suitable for a person of his rank and figure, and take another:

and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room; or place, which must unavoidably fill a man with shame and confusion; because hereby his pride and vanity, in affecting the uppermost room, will be publicly exposed; and he who before sat in the chief place, will have the mortification, before all the guests, to be seated in the lowest.

Luke 14:10

Ver. 10. But when thou art bidden,.... To an entertainment, and the time is come,

go and sit down in the lowest room: place thyself at the lower end of the table, or in the most inferior seat; which will show humility and lowliness of mind, and prevent shame and mortification; since there can be no putting into a lower place, and there may be an advance to an higher:

that when he that bade thee cometh; into the dining room, and observe in what place thou art:

he may say unto thee, friend, go up higher; to a more honourable seat at table, pointing to it, and saying, there is such a seat empty, go up and take it, it best becomes thee:

then shalt thou have worship; or glory, as the word signifies; honour and esteem, instead of shame and blushing; not only from the master of the feast,

but in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee; and from them, who will take notice of the honour done thee, and will entertain an high opinion of thee, and commend thee for thine humility and modesty. Advice, like to this, is given by Solomon in
Pr 25:6 and which is explained by the Jews in like manner as here {k}:

"Ben Azzai used to say, descend, from thy place two or three degrees, and sit; it is better that it should be said to thee, hle, "go up", than that it should be said to thee, descend, as it is said in Pr 25:7."

Which is elsewhere {l} thus expressed:

"R. Akiba taught it (or expounded, Pr 25:7) in the name of R. Simeon ben Azzai, remove from thy place two or three seats, and sit until it is said to thee, hle, "go up"; but do not go up (i.e. first,) for it will be said to thee descend; it is better that it should be said to thee go up, go up, than that it should be said to thee go down, go down: and Ben Hillell used to say, my humiliation is my exaltation, and my exaltation is my humiliation."

{k} Abot R. Nathan, c. 25. fol. 6. 4. {l} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 146. 4. Vid. Shemot Rabba, sect. 45. fol. 142. 1.

Luke 14:11

Ver. 11. For whosoever exalteth himself,.... Either in the above way, or any other, shall be abased, humbled and mortified:

and he that humbleth himself; behaves in an humble and modest manner,

shall be exalted; See Gill on "Mt 23:12".

Luke 14:12

Ver. 12. Then said he also to him that bad him,.... As he had given advice and instructions to the guests, so he likewise thought fit to give some to the master of the house, that had given both him and them an invitation to the present meal; observing, very likely, that his guests consisted of such persons as are hereafter described.

When thou makest a dinner, or a supper; any entertainment for other persons, at what time of the day soever, whether sooner or later, at noon, or at night, on sabbath days, or others:

call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours: that is, do not invite thy rich friends, rich brethren, and rich kinsmen, as well as not rich neighbours: not that our Lord's meaning is, that such should not be invited at all; which would be to destroy friendship and sociable conversation among persons in such a relation, and of such rank and fortune: but his sense is, that not these only should be invited, to the neglect of poor friends, poor brethren, poor kinsmen, and poor neighbours; and who, comparatively speaking, should rather be invited than the former, as being what would be more serviceable to them, and of a greater advantage in the issue to the master of the feast himself.

Lest they also bid thee again; and thee only, and not the poor, to as grand an entertainment, which is commonly done:

and a recompense be made thee: one feasting bout for another, so that there will be no obligation on either side; and this will be all the advantage that will be gained; the return is made here, and there will be no reward hereafter.

Luke 14:13

Ver. 13. But when thou makest a feast,.... An entertainment for others, a dinner, or a supper:

call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind; that is, the poor maimed, the poor lame, and the poor blind; otherwise it is possible that rich men may be maimed, lame, and blind; whereas these are not intended, but such who are in indigent circumstances, that stand in need of a meal, and to whom it is welcome.

Luke 14:14

Ver. 14. And thou shalt be blessed,.... By God, with an increase of worldly substance, or with spiritual blessings, and with eternal glory and happiness; and by these poor objects, who will pray to God for a blessing upon such a kind benefactor:

for they cannot recompense thee; by inviting again to a like entertainment, as rich guests can do, and when they have done that there is nothing else to be expected; but such that entertain the poor can have no return from them, and yet a retaliation will be made:

for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just; when the just shall rise again, which will be the first resurrection; and happy is he that has part in it: for the righteous, or dead in Christ will rise first; and notice will be taken of the good works of the saints, particularly of their acts of beneficence to the poor members of Christ; and which they have done in faith, from a principle of love to Christ, and with a view to the glory of God, and the good of their fellow creatures and Christians.

Luke 14:15

Ver. 15. And when one of them that sat at meat with him,.... One of the Scribes, lawyers, or Pharisees, that were guests at this feast:

heard these things: which were spoken by Christ, and was pleased and affected with them, though he was ignorant:

he said unto him, blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God; in the world to come, in the kingdom of the Messiah; concerning feasting in which, the Jews had entertained very gross notions; and which this man was reminded of by Christ's making mention of the resurrection of the just, and of recompense at that time, which the Jews expected at the Messiah's coming. They suppose, that God will make a splendid feast, a sumptuous entertainment; in which, besides "bread", which they call, twklm lv hmxl, "the bread of the kingdom", and "the bread of the world to come" {m}, there will be great variety of flesh, fish, and fowl, plenty of generous wine, and all sorts of delicious fruit: particularly they speak of a large ox, which they suppose to be the Behemoth in Job, that will then be prepared; and of Leviathan and his mate, which will then be dressed; and of a large fowl, called Ziz, of a monstrous size; and of old wine kept in the grape from the creation of the world, which will then be drank; and of the rich fruits of the garden of Eden, that will then be served up {n}: such gross and carnal notions have they entertained of the world to come; and which this man seemed to have imbibed, and placed happiness in.

{m} Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 82. fol. 72. 4. {n} See my Notes on the Targum in Cant. viii. 2.

Luke 14:16

Ver. 16. Then said he unto him,.... That is, Jesus, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions express it; he said to the man that was so affected with the happiness of such that shall share in the provisions of the Messiah's kingdom;

a certain man made a great supper: by which is meant not the Lord's supper, which was not as yet instituted; nor the supper of the Lamb, which will be at the end of the world; but the Gospel dispensation, which was now taking place, and the provisions of it in the word and ordinances: and which is called a "supper"; because made in the end of the world, in the last days: and a "great" one, because of the maker of it, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and the matter of it, a variety of rich provisions, a feast of fat things, an entertainment consisting of the greatest dainties, and most delightful food; and on account of the number of the guests invited, all people, every creature, to whom the outward ministration of the Gospel comes; and those who are properly guests that come, are a great number which no man can number; as well as because of the cost and charges of it to the maker, though it is all free to the guests; and likewise because of the circumstances of exceeding great joy and pleasure that attend it; to which may be added, the long duration of it, even from the first to the second coming of Christ.

And bade many. This first bidding more especially respects the Jews, who are said to be "many", in reference to the promise made to Abraham, that his seed should be as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand of the sea; and to set off the magnificence of the feast; and in distinction from all the world, and every creature, which were afterwards put into the Gospel commission: a foundation was laid for this supper in eternity, in the purposes, counsel, and covenant of God; and many prophecies concerning it were given out from the beginning;

and sacrifices and ordinances were instituted, as emblematical of it, and to lead on to it, and give notice of it.

Luke 14:17

Ver. 17. And sent his servant at supper time,.... Either John the Baptist, the harbinger and forerunner of Christ, who declared that the kingdom of heaven, or the Gospel dispensation, was at hand; and exhorted the people to believe in Christ that should come after him; or Christ himself, who is God's servant as man, of his choosing and appointing, and whom he sent in the fulness of time in the form of a servant, as the minister of the circumcision, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to call sinners to repentance; or servant may be put for servants, since in Mt 22:3 mention is made of more; and so the Persic version here; which parable bears some likeness to this, if it is not the same; and may design the apostles of Christ, who were the servants of the most high God, and the ministers of Christ, who were first sent by him to preach the Gospel to the Jews, and to them only for a while:

to say to them that were bidden, come: this call, or invitation, was not the internal call, which is a fruit of love, and by grace, and of mighty power; to special blessings, grace, and glory; and is irresistible, effectual, and unchangeable: but external, to outward ordinances: and is often slighted and neglected; and is sometimes of persons who are neither chosen, nor sanctified, nor saved:

for all things are now ready; the Syriac version adds, "for you": righteousness, pardon of sin, peace, and reconciliation, sin put away by the sacrifice of Christ, redemption obtained, and life and salvation secured; which shows the perfection of the present dispensation, and the large provisions of the Gospel, to which nothing is, or can be brought to be added to them, or qualify for them.

Luke 14:18

Ver. 18. And they all with one consent began to make excuse,.... Or, "they all together", as the Vulgate Latin version, txab, "in one", or "at once": in Jer 10:8 rendered "altogether"; and so the Ethiopic version, which adds, "with one voice": but their words and language were not the same: their excuses are differently expressed. Some render apo miav, "from one hour": or the selfsame hour; immediately, directly, as soon as ever they were bidden, they began to frame excuses; they at once agreed, as by common consent, to excuse themselves from coming.

The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, or a field, and I must needs go and see it: he ought to have seen it before he bought it; and however, it was a very improper time, at evening, at supper time, as this was, to go and see a piece of ground; and at least it might have been put off till next morning; so that it was a mere excuse indeed.

I pray thee have me excused: coming to the supper: these were the principal men among the Jews, the Pharisees and rulers among the people; who were rich and covetous, worldly men; seeking their own worldly advantage more than their spiritual and eternal welfare, or the interest of God and religion.

Luke 14:19

Ver. 19. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen,.... To plough the field with,

and I go to prove them: this also being at, or near evening, was an unsuitable time to go into the field with yokes of oxen to try them, how they would draw the plough, and work in the field; the morning would have been a much more proper time:

I pray thee have me excused; to the master of the feast: this man represents also the carnal and worldly Jews, who preferred temporal things before spiritual.

Luke 14:20

Ver. 20. And another said, I have married a wife,.... And his pretence might be, that he had his own marriage feast, and friends to attend, nor could he leave his wife directly; but his circumstances were such as made an invitation to a feast the more agreeable, and he might have brought his wife and friends along with him, who would have been as welcome as himself:

and therefore I cannot come. The Arabic version renders it, "therefore I will not go": this man is more rustic and rude than the former; he does not so much as desire to be excused; and represents such who are fond of their sensual lusts and pleasures, and are resolved to indulge them, and will not be taken off from them by any means whatever.

Luke 14:21

Ver. 21. So that servant came and showed his Lord these things,.... The several excuses which those that were bidden to the supper made. So the ministers of the Gospel come to God and Christ, and give an account of the success of their ministry, which is often with grief, and not with joy:

then the master of the house being angry; as well he might, at their ingratitude to him, their slighting of his kindness, and the contempt they poured upon his entertainment. Christ resented the impenitence and unbelief of the Jews, who were favoured with his ministry and miracles; and looked upon them with anger, and was grieved because or the hardness of their hearts; and threatened them with a sorer punishment, more aggravated condemnation, and more intolerable torments, than other men.

And said to his servants; the apostle, when their commission was enlarged to preach to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem:

go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city; to the Jews, who lived under a civil government, under the law of Moses; though the meaner sort of them, the poor, and such as knew not the law in such sort as the Scribes and Pharisees did, who rejected the counsel of God against themselves; and so are comparable to persons that lie about the streets, and live in lanes and alleys: and, it may also regard the Jews that were scattered abroad in other places, and the proselytes to their religion among the Gentiles; to whom the Gospel was first preached, after it was rejected by the Jews at Jerusalem and in Judea:

and bring in hither the poor; not in a literal, but in a mystical and spiritual sense; such as have no spiritual food to eat, but ashes, gravel, wind, and husks of carnal lusts and sins; nor any spiritual clothing, no righteousness, but what may be justly called filthy rags; nor money to buy either, but are in debt, owe ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay; of which spiritual poverty some are sensible, and others are not.

And the maimed; who are debilitated and enfeebled by sin; and so weak and strengthless, that they are not able to keep the law of God; to atone for sin; to redeem themselves, or others, from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law; to begin and carry on a work of grace and holiness in them; or to do any thing that is spiritually good:

and the halt; which is sometimes a character of persons that are in suspense about matters in religion, and know not which side to take; or who halt in religion, and falter and fail in the exercise of it: but here, of such who are in an incapacity of going or walking in a spiritual sense; as unto Christ, for life and salvation, without the drawings and influences of the Father's grace:

the blind: who are so, as to any saving knowledge of God in Christ; of Christ, and the way of righteousness, life, and salvation by him; of the plague of their own hearts, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the need of a Saviour; of the work of the Spirit of God upon their souls, and the necessity of it; and of the truths of the Gospel, in a spiritual and experimental way. In short, under these characters are represented natural and unconverted men, and the most vile, profligate, and abandoned of them; which are sometimes under the power of divine grace accompanying the ministration of the Gospel brought to Christ, and into his church. So the "blind and the lame", in **2Sa 5:6** are by the Targum on the place, explained of,
ayybyxw ayyajx, "sinners and wicked persons".

Luke 14:22

Ver. 22. And the servant said,.... After he had been and brought in a large number of such as are before described, and he was directed to, and succeeded to the gathering of them in:

Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded; the apostles exactly observed the orders of their Lord and master; they began to preach the Gospel at Jerusalem; and being drove from thence, they went and preached to the Jews of the dispersion, and to the proselytes among the Gentiles:

and yet there is room; that is, for the Gentiles, after God's elect, among the Jews, for that time were gathered in: there was room provided for them in the heart and love of God from everlasting, and in electing grace; in the suretyship engagements of Christ, in the covenant of his grace; and they had a place in the redeeming grace of Christ, in time; and in the last commission he gave to his disciples; and there was now room for them in the church of God; and will be in the new Jerusalem, and in the heavenly glory.

Luke 14:23

Ver. 23. And the Lord said unto the servant,.... A second time; that since the Jews put away the word of eternal life from them, and judged themselves unworthy of it by their contradicting and blaspheming it, he commanded his apostles to turn from them to the Gentiles; see Ac 13:45,

go out into the highways and hedges: the Persic version adds, "of the vineyards"; see **1Ch 4:23** and may in general design the mean, base, vile, and sinful state of the Gentiles; who might be said to be "in the highways", because they were without the commonwealth and church of the Jews; were not admitted to civil conversation, nor to religious worship with them; and were left to walk on in their own ways, of their own devising and choosing, in which they delighted: they were not in God's highway, which is a way of holiness,
Isa 35:8 but in their own highways; either following the various sects of the philosophers, which were vain and foolish; or going into different practices of idolatry, and walking in very sinful and vicious courses; and so were in the broad road and highway to destruction: and their being in, and under "the hedges", may denote their state of separation from God; being without him, alienated from the life of him, and afar off from him; being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, **Eph 2:12** they were not in the gardens and enclosures, but under the hedges:

and compel them to come in; to the house of God, and church of Christ; to come and hear the word, and quit their former course of living, and attend the word and worship of God; and upon an evidence of the truth of grace upon their souls, to come into a Gospel church state, and partake of all privileges and ordinances in it; to which they are to be compelled, not by outward force, but by forcible words, by powerful arguments, and by the strength of persuasion; which expresses the nature of the Gospel ministry, which is to persuade Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem; and the power that attends it by the divine Spirit; the case and condition of souls, who are generally bashful and backward, judging themselves unworthy; as also the earnest desire, and great liberality of Christ, the master of the feast, whose end in it is as follows:

that my house may be filled; with men, like a flock, and these with gifts and grace; with such as shall be saved, as with elect Jews, so with the fulness of the Gentiles.

Luke 14:24

Ver. 24. For I say unto you,.... Most solemnly affirm it, and even swear to it, nothing is more certain, or will be found more true:

that none of those men that were bidden: the impenitent and unbelieving Jews, the Scribes, and Pharisees, and the greater part of the nation; who first had the Gospel published to them, who are the many that were called, though few were chosen, and therefore came not; nor did, nor

shall taste of my supper: nor had they so much as a superficial knowledge of the Gospel, of the truths, blessings, promises, and ordinances of it; being given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart; and from whom, in a little while, the Gospel was wholly taken; and is not yet afforded to them as a body; nor will till the latter day, when the veil shall be taken away, and they shall turn to the Lord, and all Israel shall be saved; but as for the first disbelievers and rejecters of Christ among the Jews, they died in their sins, and perished eternally.

Luke 14:25

Ver. 25. And there went great multitudes with him,.... From Galilee, as he journeyed from thence to Jerusalem; some for one thing, and some another, and all perhaps were in expectation of his setting up a temporal kingdom when he came there; and hoped they should share, more or less, the worldly advantages of it; for the whole nation was big with such carnal notions of the Messiah. Jesus therefore, to draw off their minds from such views, and that they might not be disappointed, acquaints them, that if they would be his disciples, they must part with all that was near and dear to them; and prepare to suffer great hardships and difficulties for his name's sake: for it follows,

and he turned; himself to the company that was behind: and said unto them; with a grave and stern countenance, looking wistly at them, and in the most solemn manner delivered what is hereafter related.

Luke 14:26

Ver. 26. If any man come to me,.... Not in a corporeal, but in a spiritual way;

nor barely to hear him preach; but so come, as that he believes in him, applies to him for grace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation; professes to be his, submits to his ordinances, and desires to be a disciple of his;

and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple: not that proper hatred of any, or all of these, is enjoined by Christ; for this would be contrary to the laws of God, to the first principles of nature, to all humanity, to the light of nature, to reason and divine revelation: but that these are not to be preferred to Christ, or loved more than he, as it is explained in Mt 10:37 yea, these are to be neglected and forsaken, and turned from with indignation and resentment, when they stand in the way of the honour and interest of Christ, and dissuade from his service: such who would be accounted the disciples of Christ, should be ready to part with their dearest relations and friends, with the greatest enjoyment of life, and with life itself, when Christ calls for it; or otherwise they are not worthy to be called his disciples. The Ethiopic version inserts, "his house", into the account.

Luke 14:27

Ver. 27. Whosoever doth not bear his cross,.... All reproach, afflictions, persecutions, and death itself, cheerfully and patiently; the Ethiopic version renders it, "of his death the cross"; it signifies whatever is trying and disagreeable to flesh and blood:

and come after me; bearing his cross; as Christ himself was about to do, and which doubtless he had in view;

cannot be my disciple; he is not so in reality, nor does he deserve the name.

Luke 14:28

Ver. 28. For which of you intending to build a tower,.... Taking up a profession of Christ and his Gospel, is like building a tower; which, as a tower, must be laid on a good foundation; not on carnal descent and parentage; nor on a sober and religious education; nor on a civil, moral life and conversation; nor on a bare knowledge of Gospel truths and a flash of affection for them, and the people of God; but upon Christ the sure foundation; and on principles of grace formed by his Spirit, in their hearts: and this, like a tower, is carried very high;

not by professing high things, but by living on high amidst a profession; by having the affections set on things above; and by looking down with contempt on things below; and by looking to, and pressing after, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ: the profession of some persons is very low; it arises from low principles, and proceeds on low views, aims, and ends; but where it is right, and well founded, it is like a tower, firm and steady, and is a fortress and bulwark against apostacy. Now what person acting deliberately in such a case as this, and proceeding with intention and design,

sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? as every wise man would, who has any thoughts of building a tower, or any other edifice: and so such that have an intention to take up a profession of religion, should sit down and well consider of it; which does not imply, that persons should delay making a profession, on whom it is incumbent; but that this should be done with thoughtfulness, care, and prudence: it should be considered on what foundation a man is going to build: whether the work of grace is truly wrought upon his soul; what be the nature and use of Gospel ordinances; with what views he takes up a profession, and submits to ordinances; what the church and minister are, he intends to walk with; and what the charge and cost of a profession; for such a work is chargeable and costly, and should be thought of and considered, whether he is able to bear it: for he will be called to self-denial; and must expect to suffer the loss of the favour of carnal relations and friends; and to be exposed to the scorn and rage of the world; a cross must be took up and bore; and great grace and strength are requisite to all this.

Luke 14:29

Ver. 29. Lest haply after he hath laid the foundation,.... Has begun to build, has taken up a profession, has submitted to ordinances, and got into a church state:

and is not able to finish it; a foundation may be laid, and the building may never be finished, because the foundation is not laid right; was it, it would continue, and the building go on, and at last be finished; though no man is able to finish it of himself, yet those hands which have laid the foundation, will raise up the superstructure, and complete the whole building, through the power and efficacy of divine grace: but where there is a beginning, and which at first looks well, and there is no progress, but the work is dropped and left unfinished, all that behold it, begin to mock; as follows;

Luke 14:30

Ver. 30. Saying, this man began to build,.... He set out well, he promised great things, and made a considerable bluster and stir, as if he would carry things at once to a very high pitch:

and was not able to finish; it was all noise and talk, and nothing else: falling off from a profession of religion, exposes men to contempt and scorn; such are not only cast out of churches with disgrace, but are despised by men, by wicked men; and are a reproach, a proverb, and a taunt in all places; and even are mocked by devils too.

Luke 14:31

Ver. 31. Or what king going to make war against another king,.... Our Lord illustrates the same thing, the business of a profession, by another similitude, or parable; taking up a profession of religion, is like to two kings engaging in a war. The king on the one side, is the Christian professor; true believers are kings, they have the apparel of kings, the royal robe of Christ's righteousness; they live like kings, at the table of the King of kings; have the attendance of kings, angels ministering unto them; have crowns and thrones as kings have, and greater than theirs; and have a kingdom of grace now, and are heirs of the kingdom of glory. The king on the other side, is the devil; who is the king and prince of the rest of the devils, and over the men of the world; a kingdom is ascribed to him, which is a kingdom of darkness; and he is said to be a great king, and is represented as proud, cruel, and tyrannical: now the Christian professor's life is a warfare; he is engaged with many enemies; the corruptions of his own heart within, and the world without; and especially Satan, who is to be resisted, and by no means to be yielded to, though there is a great inequality between them: and therefore what man that engages in such a warfare,

sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? and such a difference there is between the Christian professor and the devil; the one is flesh and blood, the other a spirit; the one is raw and undisciplined, the other a veteran soldier; the one a stripling, and the other the strong man armed: their numbers are unequal; the people of Christ are few, and their force and strength in themselves small; and they have a large number of devils, and of the men of the world, and of the lusts of their own hearts, to grapple with; wherefore it is necessary to sit down and consult, not with flesh and blood, but with other Christians; and chiefly, and above all, with God himself; what will be the charges of this warfare; the hardships to be endured; in whose name and strength they are to engage; what weapons to take, and how to use them; and how to get knowledge of the designs, methods, and strength of the enemy, and take every advantage of him.

Luke 14:32

Ver. 32. Or else, while the other is a great way off,.... Upon his march, with resolution to come up and give battle, though as yet at a distance:

he sendeth an ambassage; or men, with an embassy to him:

and desireth conditions of peace; greatly to his disadvantage and reproach: so to give out, and leave off fighting with sin, Satan, and the world, and make peace with them, is shameful and scandalous; but on the other hand, such who have engaged in this war, should pursue it with rigour and courage; considering that God is on their side; that Christ is the captain of their salvation; that the Spirit of God that is in them, is greater than he that is in the world; that angels encamp around them; that it is a good cause they are engaged in; that they have good weapons, the whole armour of God provided for them; are sure of victory, and shall at last enjoy the crown of life, righteousness and glory.

Luke 14:33

Ver. 33. So likewise whosoever he be of you,.... Let him be ever so forward to follow me, to make a profession of me and of my Gospel, and to become a disciple of mine:

that forsaketh not all that he hath; when called to it, relations, friends, possessions, estates, and what not, which is an explanation of Lu 14:26

he cannot be my disciple; he is not in fact one, and is not worthy to be called one.

Luke 14:34

Ver. 34. Salt is good,.... See Gill on "Mt 5:13",
See Gill on "Mr 10:50".

Luke 14:35

Ver. 35. It is neither fit for the land,.... For the manuring of it, when it has lost its savour and spirit; otherwise it makes land fruitful, if too much is not used, and especially fixed salts have this use; though Pliny says {o},

"every place in which salt is found, it is barren and brings forth nothing."

Nor yet for the dunghill; to mix with dung, and help it, that it may be the more serviceable for the earth; and just such useless things, are a mere external profession of religion, and professors of it, and ministers of the word, without the grace of God; they are of no use, but hurtful to the church, and to the world; these phrases are left out in the Persic and Ethiopic versions:

but men cast it out; into the streets, as entirely useless: and so such graceless professors and ministers, are to be cast out of the churches of Christ now, and will be excluded the kingdom of heaven hereafter:

he that hath ears to hear, let him hear; this being a point of great importance and consequence; See Gill on "Mt 11:15".

{o} Nat. Hist. l. 31. c. 7.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 15:1

Ver. 1. Then drew near to him,.... To "Jesus", as the Persic and Ethiopic versions express it: this was on the sabbath day, and either when he was in the Pharisee's house, where he was invited to dinner, Lu 14:1 or rather when he came out of it, when the multitude, who could not come near him whilst there, took the opportunity of gathering about him;

even all the publicans and sinners; whom the Pharisee would not admit into his

house, it being contrary to their traditions to eat, and drink, and converse with persons of such an infamous character;
See Gill on "Mt 9:10" see Gill on "Mt 9:11" The word "all" is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; but the Arabic version has it, and the Greek copies; and signifies that there were a very large number of them, even all that were in that place, and in the adjacent cities and towns, that got together

for to hear him, or "from him", as the Arabic version; or "doctrine" from him, as the Persic version adds: these having heard much of him; and it may be, might be under some remorse of conscience on account of their vicious lives, came to hear him preach.

Luke 15:2

Ver. 2. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured,.... When they saw the easy access these wicked men had to Christ; and that he stopped and stayed with them, and very freely imparted instructions to them: saying,

this man receiveth sinners. The Persic version reads, "publicans and sinners", as in the preceding verse: the word "man" is not in the original text, it is only "this"; which is to be understood not by way of eminence, as this great person, this prophet, this master in Israel; but by way of diminution and reproach, this fellow; as it is sometimes supplied: the word "man" be very rightly inserted, for they took him to be a mere man; though it is certain he was more than a man, even the true and mighty God; and therefore was able to save those sinners that came to him: and great condescension and grace did he show in receiving them who were "sinners", not only by nature, but by practice; and not merely guilty of common infirmities, but were notorious sinners, covetous, extortioners, oppressors of the poor, and very debauched persons; and such as these Christ "receives": hence no man should be discouraged from coming to Christ, on account of sin; all that do come to him, should come as sinners, for he receives them as such; nor does he receive any for any worthiness there is in them: these persons he received first at his Father's hand, as he did all the elect, as his portion, and to be preserved and saved by him; with all gifts, grace, blessings, and promises for them; and in consequence of this, he receives them upon their coming to him as sinners, into his open love and affection, into his arms; which denotes communion and protection; into his house and family, and not only to hear him preach, or preached, but to converse and eat with him at his table, and even to live by faith upon him; and when he has freed them from all their sins, he will receive them to himself in glory. And there is the greatest reason imaginable to believe, that Christ still does, and will receive sinners; since he came to save the chief of sinners; and has bore their sins, and died for them; and now makes intercession for transgressors; and by the ministers of the word calls sinners to repentance.

And eateth with them; as he did in the houses of Matthew the publican, and of Zaccheus; see **Mt 9:10** each of which occasioned great murmurings among the Pharisees; and who therefore traduced him as a friend of publicans and sinners; and he is indeed so in the best sense: and not only did he eat with them corporeally, but in a spiritual sense, as he still does; admitting them into his house to eat of the provisions of it, to live on him the bread of life, to sup with him, and he with them; and feeding and delighting himself in the exercise of those graces, which he himself is the donor and author of, in them.

Luke 15:3

Ver. 3. And he spake this parable unto them,.... To the Pharisees, for their conviction and confutation; and to the publicans and sinners for their encouragement; and in vindication of himself; and not only this, but the other two, concerning the lost piece of money, and the prodigal son, which were said at this time, and on the same occasion;

saying, as follows.

Luke 15:4

Ver. 4. What man of you having an hundred sheep,.... A flock of sheep, consisting of such a number; See Gill on "Mt 18:12",

if he lose one of them, by straying from the flock,

doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, upon the common where they were feeding,

and go after that which is lost until he find it? by which parable Christ vindicates his conduct in conversing with sinners, and neglecting the Scribes and Pharisees; for if it was right for an owner of an hundred sheep, when he had lost one of them, to leave all the rest, and go in search after that one till he

had found it; then it was right in Christ to do what he did. The Jewish nation seems to be designed "by the hundred sheep", who are frequently represented as a flock of sheep, Ps 77:20 which are divided into ninety nine, and one: for by the "ninety nine" left in the wilderness, cannot be meant angels, as some have thought; for angels are never called sheep; and besides, the one lost sheep is of the same kind with the ninety and nine; and, according to this sense, must design an angel, or angels likewise; whereas none of the fallen angels are sought up, recovered, and saved. Moreover, when Christ became incarnate, he did not leave the angels; they accompanied and attended him in his state of humiliation; and much less in a wilderness, and still less can heaven be so called; to which may be added, that the angels in heaven are distinguished from the ninety nine as well as from the one lost sheep in
Lu 15:7 nor can elect men be designed by them, who are already called by grace, whether they be in heaven or on earth; for though they in heaven are the spirits of just men made perfect, and are in a state that need no repentance, yet it cannot be said of them, that they went not astray, as in Mt 18:13 for all God's people have been like sheep going astray, and were as such considered when Christ was here on earth, and bore their sins; and especially those could never be said to be left in a wilderness: nor the saints on earth: for though they are just persons, being justified by the righteousness of Christ, yet they daily need repentance; nor can it be said of them that they went not astray; nor are they left by Christ in the wilderness of this world; nor can there be more joy in heaven over one repenting sinner, than over these; but the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, that murmured at our Lord's receiving sinners, are meant. These were sheep, at least were in sheep's clothing; they were nominal professors, and belonged to the Jewish fold, or national church state; their number was ninety nine, to one; which is not to be taken strictly, as though only one in a hundred of them were saved; but it shows, that the greater part of the Jews were of this sort. The dividing of an hundred after this manner, into ninety nine and one, was usual with the Jews; so in their traditions {p}, concerning distributing filberts to the poor,

"R. Simeon says, if "ninety nine" say "divide", and "one" says spoil, or scatter, they hearken to him, because he speaks according to the constitution; but of a vine and date, it is not so: if "ninety and nine" say spoil, and "one" says divide, they hearken to him, for he speaks according to the constitution."

And elsewhere {q} they say,

""ninety and nine" die by an (evil) eye, and "one" by the hand of heaven; R. Chanina and Samuel, both of them say, "ninety and nine" die by cold, and "one" by the hand of heaven---R. Samuel bar Nachman, in the name of R. Jonathan says, "ninety and nine" die by heat, and "one" by the hand of heaven; and the Rabbans say, "ninety and nine" die by transgression, and "one" by the hand of heaven. Says R. Eleazar, "ninety and nine" die by bitterness, and "one" by the hand of heaven."

And in another place {r} it is said,

""ninety and nine" die by an evil eye, and "one" by the way of the earth;"

in the common way: once more it is said {s},

"of the "hundred" cries which a woman cries, when she sits upon the stool (in travail), "ninety and nine" are death, and "one" for life."

And this way of speaking also prevailed in other eastern nations, as in Arabia; in the Alcoran of Mahomet {t} there is such an expression as this;

"this my brother had "ninety nine sheep", and I had only "one" ewe."

The "one lost sheep" in this parable, though it may include all the elect of God, and be accommodated to a single elect sinner, yet chiefly respects the chosen of God among the Jews; which were very few, a remnant according to the election of grace: and which lay among the profane part of them, the publicans and sinners; Who are particularly pointed out here, as appears from the context: these are called "sheep", even before conversion; not because they had the agreeable properties of sheep, for they were all the reverse; nor could some things be said of them before as after, as, that they heard the voice of Christ, and followed him; nor because they were unprejudiced against, and predisposed to receive the Gospel: but they are so called by anticipation, because they would be so; or rather in virtue of electing grace, by which they were chosen, and separated from others, and made the care and charge of Christ the great shepherd, and were the sheep of his hand: these are represented as going astray from the shepherd, and from the fold, and out of the right way; and who being like sheep, stupid and insensible of their danger, wander about, and never return of themselves till they are returned to, and by the great shepherd and bishop of souls. And in their unregenerate estate they are lost sheep, not irretrievably and eternally lost, as the world's goats; for though they are lost in Adam, yet not in Christ; and though lost in themselves, so as there is no possibility of ever recovering and saving themselves; yet as they were preserved in Christ, they are recovered and saved by him; who is the owner and proprietor of the whole flock, of all the "hundred" sheep, of the whole body of the Jewish nation; who were his by creation, and by being chosen from, and above all other people; and were distinguished by peculiar favours, had the "Shekinah", and presence of God among them, and his worship, word, and ordinances. Christ was peculiarly promised to them, and was born of them; and was a minister of the circumcision, being sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: though the "ninety and nine" were not his sheep in the most peculiar sense, or in such sense as the "one" lost sheep, which were his by his Father's gift, as all the elect are; hence he knows them, calls them, and receives them, and keeps them, and highly values them: he had them, they were put into his hands, he took the care and charge of there, he undertook to bring them in, to feed them, to die for them, and save them; and they are his by purchase, and he asserts his right to them, by calling them by his grace, and will distinguish them as his own, at the last day: and now, because of the different interest Christ has in the ninety and nine, and the one, different regards are had to them; the ninety and nine, the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees,

he leaves in the wilderness, in a state of unregeneracy; so called, because in those that are in such a state, nothing is sown or planted, what grows there is natural; there is no seed of grace, no plants of pleasure, no ingrafted word, no fruits of righteousness, nothing but thorns and briers, of sins and corruptions: and also because of the want of provisions; no bread of life, nor water of life; no sincere milk of the word, no breasts of consolation; nothing but husks, and bread of deceit: and it is like a wilderness, because of solitariness; such as are in this state, are alone, without God, and Christ, and the blessed Spirit; they are aliens from the people of God, and converse with none but wicked men, comparable to savage beasts of the desert: moreover, it may be so called, because of the various perplexing cross ways in it; the ways of sin are many, and crooked, and dark; and indeed, such are the religious ways of unregenerate men: to which may be added, that it bears this name, because of the danger of it; for such as are in it are exposed to beasts of prey; particularly to Satan, the red dragon, and roaring lion; and to pits, gins, and snares, to hellfire, destruction, and misery. Christ's "leaving" persons in such a state, supposes they were in it, antecedent to their being left: man was originally placed in a garden, sinning against God, he forfeited his happy situation, and was drove out from it; and wandering from God he fell into this wilderness state. Christ does not lead any into it, but leaves them in it; which is done in consequence of his Father's act of preterition, or passing them by when he chose others; and this he does, when he does not call them by his grace, as he does others; does not manure, till, and cultivate them as he does his own husbandry and vines;

makes no provision of food and pasture for them; leaves them to themselves, and without the enjoyment of himself; to follow their own ways, without a guide, and to beasts of prey without a guard. Now the persons he thus leaves are such whom the Father has left out in his choice and covenant; and who left Christ, rejected and despised him; and were persons that made great pretensions to religion, were righteous in their own eyes, and in their own account never were astray, nor needed repentance. On the other hand, the one lost sheep, the chosen of God among publicans and sinners, a special regard is had to them: Christ

goes after that which is lost until he find it; not after all mankind; for though they are all lost, yet they are not all redeemed by Christ; nor are they made sensible of their lost condition; nor effectually called by grace; nor brought home: nor does he go after the ninety nine, for Christ came not to call the righteous; though these were lost, and irretrievably too, yet they were not sensible of their condition: but God's elect among the Jews are the persons here said to be lost; to show their common condition with the rest of mankind; to express the love of Christ towards them the more; and to magnify the riches of his grace in their salvation: these he went after in redemption, he came forth from his Father, and came down from heaven for their sakes; he died to gather them together, and represented them all in his sufferings and death; he bore all their sins, and made reconciliation for them, and procured the full pardon of them; he satisfied the law and justice of God, wrought out an everlasting righteousness, and obtained eternal redemption, and a complete salvation for them: and he went after them in the effectual calling; before conversion an elect sinner is without Christ, and goes astray from him; nor does he ever come to Christ till Christ comes after him, and lays hold upon him; he sends his ministers after such, and his Spirit into them, and comes himself, and takes possession of them. To find his lost sheep by redeeming grace he came into this world, a world of wickedness, sorrow, and trouble, of cruelty, and barbarity; and the reason of his coming here was, because his sheep were here; he came after them, and on their account: and to find them by effectual calling, he still comes into the world by his word and Spirit; God's elect are in the world, Christ sends his Gospel into it, and by his Spirit and grace comes and separates them from the men of it. In Mt 18:12 he is said to go "into the mountains" after his lost sheep; which, with respect to redemption, may denote the difficulties that lay in the way of it; such as his incarnation, obedience, sufferings and death, and the many enemies he had to grapple with and subdue; and with respect to calling grace, may express the state and condition God's elect are in by nature, being on the mountains of sin, of Sinai, of the law, and of their own righteousness. Now Christ goes after them "till he finds" them; which denotes continuance, his indefatigable industry and diligence, his resolution and courage, and his success. The reasons why he thus goes after them are not their number, for they are the fewest of all; nor their nature, which is no better than others, nor any previous dispositions, or good characters, for those designed here were publicans and sinners; nor any future improvements and service by them, for they were the base and foolish things of this world; nor because near at hand, and so easily looked up, for they were afar off; but because of his love to them, and the relation between them as shepherd and sheep; and because of his Father's will, and his own obligation by covenant; and because of his own interest and glory.

{p} Misn. Pesach. c. 4. sect. 1, 2. {q} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 14. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 16. fol. 158. 4. {r} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 107. 2. {s} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 27. fol. 168. 3. {t} C. 38.

Luke 15:5

Ver. 5. And when he hath found it,.... In a sad plight and condition: so Christ finds his sheep in a most desolate one, in a pit, in the mire and clay of nature; in the paw of the roaring lion, Satan; helpless, hopeless, wretched, miserable, and naked; and not only starving, famishing, and dying, but even dead in trespasses and sins: and finding them with respect to redemption, designs his procuring eternal salvation for them; and with regard to calling, his laying hold upon them by his Spirit and grace, and bringing them to a sense of themselves, and to the knowledge of himself. There are several things which Christ does to his sheep when he has found them, which are not here expressed, but understood: finding them dead in sin he speaks life into them; he calls them by name, and asserts his property in them; he takes them out of the pit of nature; he rescues them out of the hands of Satan; he washes them from their filthiness, and heals all their diseases; he feeds and refreshes them; he covers them with his robe of righteousness; he beautifies and adorns them, and brings them home in the manner after described:

he layeth it on his shoulders; he does not put them on their own legs to go alone; nor does he lead them, and much less drive them before him; but he takes them up in his arms, and lays them on his shoulders: which shows the passiveness of men in conversion, and their weakness and impotency to any thing that is spiritually good of themselves; they cannot think a good thought, nor do a good action, and still less begin and carry on the work of grace in their hearts; as also the strength of Christ in bearing and carrying them, as he does, through all afflictions, temptations, and difficulties, safe to glory; and likewise his great love and affection for them; he loved them before the world began, and he showed it in dying for them, and manifests it to them, when he calls them by grace; and this also expresses the safety of his sheep; for being on him, they are in no danger from the law and justice of God; nor from Satan, or any other enemy; nor of a final and total falling away: and moreover this signifies the spiritual ease and rest which such have in Christ: the manner in which Christ the shepherd carries them, having found them, and laid them on his shoulders, is

rejoicing: not upbraiding them with going astray; nor complaining of, or groaning under the burden; but rejoicing in a kind of triumph, and carrying them as a trophy of victory, and a spoil obtained.

Luke 15:6

Ver. 6. And when he cometh home,.... The house, or home, to which Christ comes and brings thither his lost sheep on his shoulders when found, is either the church of God, which is Christ's house and home, and into which he himself comes; it is his by gift and purchase, and which he has built, and here comes and dwells as a son over it, as king in it, and as priest and prophet there, and as the master of it; and hither he brings his people when he has called them by his grace, where they have a good fold and green pastures, and where they delight to be; or else heaven is this home, which is an house of God's building, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; and which is Christ's Father's house, and his own house and home, and also the saints' house and home, whither they are all brought by Christ; for they cannot go there alone, and of themselves; they are brought by the power of divine grace as trophies of it, as to their own home; and such that Christ takes into his arms, and on his shoulders, he never drops them till he has brought them safe to heaven:

he calleth together his friends and neighbours: the friends of Christ are the saints, so called, because of their share in his friendship to them; shown by his becoming a surety for them; by his assuming their nature, and dying in their room and stead; by his paying their debts, and redeeming their persons; by his intercession for them, and preparing a place for them in his Father's house; by supplying all their wants, and by his kind and comfortable visits to them; by his free and familiar converses with them, and by unfolding his secrets, and giving wholesome advice and counsel to them: as also on account of their bearing and showing friendship to him; as by their great affection to his person; by their attachment to his cause and interest; by their strict regard to his Gospel, and the truths of it; and by their diligent observance of his commands and ordinances; and by their regard to his people, and disregard to his enemies: and these are also Christ's "neighbours", they dwell near to each other; he dwells in them, and they in him; they love each other as themselves, and perform every office cheerfully in love to one another: moreover, the angels may be meant by the friends and neighbours of Christ, as may be collected from Lu 15:10 these are his "friends" whom he has shown himself friendly to, in the confirmation of them in the state in which they were created; in the choice of them to eternal happiness; and in being an head of protection to them, as well as of eminence over them: and these are friendly to him; as they were at his incarnation, and when tempted in the wilderness, and when in agony in the garden, and at his resurrection and ascension; and will attend him at his second coming: and they are friendly to his; are ministering spirits to them, rejoice at their conversion, encamp about them in life, and at death carry their departed souls to heaven: and these are likewise his "neighbours": their habitation is in heaven where he is, and they always behold the face of his Father there, and will come along with him when he appears a second time. Now saints are called together to hear what great things Christ has done for poor sinners when he brings them to Zion; and angels are also made acquainted with their conversion; and both saints and angels will be called together, when the sheep of Christ shall be brought home to glory.

Saying unto them, rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost: the joy of Christ, and his friends, is mutual on this occasion; Christ rejoices himself, and his friends with him: he rejoiced in his people from everlasting; they were the objects of his Father's love, and of his own; and he took delight in them, as he saw them in the glass of his Father's purposes, as they were chosen in him, and given to him; and this joy in them still continued, notwithstanding their fall in Adam, and their own actual sins and transgressions; but whereas they were lost in the fall, and by their own sins, there were some new expressions of joy upon Christ's finding them in redemption: it was with the utmost pleasure he engaged in that work; and with the greatest readiness did he come into the world to do it; and he went through it with great delight; he was, as it were, straitened until it was accomplished; the consideration of it made him easy under the apprehensions of what he was to endure, and supported him under his most dolorous sufferings; his rising again from the dead as the presentative of his people, filled him with gladness, and he ascended to heaven in a triumph: but yet still these persons, though redeemed, are in a lost estate with respect to themselves; wherefore in conversion there are fresh breakings forth of joy in Christ; for that is the day of his open espousals to them, and so the day of the gladness of his heart; when he sees of the travail of his soul with satisfaction; and large expressions of love are made to him; and his people are brought to some conformity to him; and communion with him, but still they are not yet at home; wherefore with joy he brings them into his church, which is his house, and their home, where he rejoices over them to do them good; and will express still more joy in the new Jerusalem church state, and still more when he shall have brought them to glory, and have presented them to himself, and to his Father, which will be done with exceeding joy. Christ's friends and neighbours, his saints and people, also rejoice at the conversion of a sinner; because the glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, is displayed therein; and because Satan has lost his prey, and Christ has got a new subject; and because of the grace of God bestowed upon the sinner, and the addition that is made to their number; particularly this is matter of joy to the ministers of the Gospel: and angels also rejoice at it, because of the glory of God that is advanced thereby.

Luke 15:7

Ver. 7. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be heaven,.... In the church below, and among the members of it; which is sometimes called heaven, especially in the book of the Revelations; or in heaven above, and among the angels there; see Lu 15:10

Over one sinner that repenteth; for the joy in heaven, is not over sinners as such; for as such, they are not grateful to God, nor to Christ, nor to the angels, nor to saints; only sinners delight in each other, as such; but as repenting sinners, who are truly so: and these are not such, who only legally and outwardly repent; nor all that declare a sense of sin; or that are externally sorry for it; or are terrified about it, and shed tears on account of it; or that cease from grosser sins of life, and outwardly reform: but such who repent in an evangelical way; who are turned to God, and are instructed by his Spirit; who believe in Christ, and have views, at least hopes, of pardon through his blood; and have the love of God and Christ shed abroad in their hearts; from whence arise a true sight and sense of sin, a godly sorrow for it, an hearty loathing of it, shame on account of it, an ingenuous confession, and a real forsaking of it. Now the reason why there is joy in heaven over such persons is, because, without such a repentance, they must perish; and by this they appear to be openly in a state of grace; and become proper subjects of the ordinances of Christ; and this repentance is unto life and salvation; or these are inseparably connected with it; and this joy is abundantly more, than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance; by whom are meant, either such who are really righteous persons; not naturally and of themselves, nor legally by the deeds of the law, but by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them: and who need no repentance to be added to their righteousness, it being perfect of itself; nor the grace and principle of repentance, because they have it, and it cannot be lost; or change of life and manners, which is not to be seen in such: and the more joy over repenting sinners, than over these is, because the salvation of the one is before certain to them, and the other is unexpected: but to this sense it may be objected, that saints, even righteous persons, need frequent conversions, and the continual exercise of the grace of repentance; nor does it seem feasible, that there should be more joy over a repenting sinner, than over one, whose life, through grace, is a series of righteousness: rather therefore, such who seem to be just, or are so in their own opinion, are here meant; for only such sort of righteous persons and repenting sinners, are opposed to each other, as in **Mt 9:13** moreover, the occasion and scope of the parable, determines this to be the sense; the Scribes and Pharisees, that murmured at Christ's receiving sinners, are the ninety and nine just persons, who were only outwardly righteous before men, and trusted in themselves that they were righteous, perfectly righteous, and without sin, and so stood in no need of repentance for it; now there is more joy in heaven over one repenting sinner, than over all these: hence learn, that a self-righteous person, is an impenitent one; that a repenting sinner is more regarded in heaven than a self-righteous man: our Lord here seems to have regard to a conceit of the Jews, who distinguish between penitents that were allowed to be righteous, and such who never were guilty of any notorious crime, and so were perfectly righteous, and needed no repentance, and were preferred to penitent sinners: some of them say {u}, that

"the prophets did not prophesy (good things and comforts), but hbwvt ylebl, "to penitents"; but as for Myrwmg
Myqydu, "the perfect righteous", to them belongs that, "eye hath not seen", O God, "besides thee".---But R. Abhu says, the place in which "penitents" stand, the "perfect righteous" do not stand."

Though Maimonides seems {w} to understand this, as if it gave the preference to penitents; his words are these:

"let not a penitent man imagine that he is afar off from the excellency, or degree of the righteous, because of the sins and iniquities he has committed, the thing is not so; but he is beloved and desired before the Creator, as if he had never sinned; for his reward is great; for lo, he hath tasted the taste of sin, and hath separated from it, and hath subdued his evil imagination: the wise men say, the place where "penitents" stand, the "perfect righteous" cannot stand; which is as if it was said, their degree of excellency is greater, than those who never sinned, because they have subdued their imagination more than they."

However, these instances, with others that might be produced, show that the Jews had a notion of some men being perfectly righteous and without sin; which they oppose to penitent sinners, and which our Lord here designs, and seems to describe in their own language, and serves to confirm the sense given; See Gill on "Heb 12:23".

{u} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2. & Sanhedrim, fol. 99. 1. {w} Hilchot Teshuba, c. 7. sect. 4. Vid. Kimchi in Isa. lvii. 10. & Jarchi in Isa. xliv. 5. & Zohar in Lev. fol. 7. 2.

Luke 15:8

Ver. 8. Either what woman, having ten pieces of silver,.... Or "drachmas": a "drachma" was the fourth part of a shekel, and of the same value with a Roman penny; and was worth of our money, seven pence half penny; so that the ten pieces amounted to six shilling's, and three pence: the Ethiopic version renders it "ten rings": this parable is delivered, with the same view as the former; the scope and design of them are alike, being occasioned by the same circumstance, only the passiveness of a sinner in conversion is here more fully signified; who can contribute no more to the first act of conversion, which is purely God's work, than a lost piece of silver to its being found: by the "ten pieces or silver" are designed, all the Jews, or the whole body of that people; as they were before signified, by the hundred sheep; they having been God's peculiar treasure, though they were now in general become reprobate silver: and by the "woman" the proprietor of them, is meant Christ; and in what sense he was the owner of them, has been shown on Lu 15:4. The "nine" pieces design the Scribes and Pharisees; and the one lost piece, expressed in the next clause,

if she lose one piece, intends the elect among the Jews, and who chiefly consisted of publicans and sinners; and the regard had to these, is signified by the following expressions, doth not light a candle: by which is meant, not the light of nature or reason in man: for though this is called a candle, and is of Christ's lighting, yet that by which he looks up his lost people, for this is become very dim: and though by it men may know there is a God, and the difference between moral good and evil, by it they cannot come at the knowledge of things spiritual; as of God in Christ, of the sin of nature, and of the plague of the heart; nor of the way of salvation by Christ, nor of the work of the Spirit, and the nature and need of it; nor of the Scriptures of truth, and of the doctrines of the Gospel, nor of the things of another world: neither is the law of Moses intended; for though there was light by it into the knowledge of sin, yet not clear; and though the ceremonial law was a shadow of Christ, and did give some instructions about him, and the doctrines of the Gospel, and blessings of grace, yet but very obscure hints: but by this candle is meant, the Gospel itself; which, like a candle, is lighted up in the evening of the world; and may be removed, as it sometimes is, from place to place; and where it is set, and blessed, it gives light, and is useful both to work and walk by; it does not always burn alike clear, or is always held forth in the same purity: and it will give the greatest light at last, as a candle does, even at the end of the world: now Christ is the lighter of this, and from him it has all its light, who is the maker of it; he keeps it light, and by it he looks up and finds out his elect ones; though this is not a direction to him, who perfectly knows who they are, and where they be, but is rather a light to them, that they may know and find him:

and sweep the house: which phrase sometimes designs outward reformation, as in Mt 12:44 and sometimes God's judgments upon a people, as in Isa 14:23 but here the preaching of the Gospel, and the power that goes along with it, to the the effectual calling of the elect: the "house" in which Christ's lost piece of silver, or his chosen ones were, may design the nation of the Jews, who are often called the house of Israel; this was a house of God's building and choosing, and where he dwelt; and among these people for a long time, God's elect lay, though all of them were not so; and about this time the Lord was about to break up house keeping with them; yet as there were some few among them, that were to be looked up and called, therefore this house must be swept, as it was by the ministry of John the Baptist, by Christ himself, and by his apostles: and this suggests, what must be the state and condition of God's elect, being in this house, before it was swept, and they found out; they were out of sight, in great obscurity and darkness, with a deal of rubbish and dirt upon them, and pollution in them; and impotent to that which is good, and to their own recovery, and yet capable of being recovered: and this phrase hints at the power and efficacy of divine grace, that goes along with the word, in looking up and finding lost sinners; in enlightening their dark minds, quickening them, being dead in sin, taking away their stony hearts, regenerating them, enstamping the divine image upon them, removing every thing from them they trusted in, and working faith in them, to look to, and believe in Christ: and as in sweeping of an house, a great stir is made, a dust raised, and things are moved out of their place; so by the preaching of the Gospel, an uproar is made in the sinner himself; in his conscience, which is filled with a horrible sight of sin; which is very loathsome, and causes uneasy reflections, fills with shame and confusion, and greatly burdens and distresses, and with the terrors of the law, and with dreadful apprehensions of hell and damnation; in his will there is a reluctancy to part with sinful lusts and pleasures, with sinful companions, and with his own righteousness, and to be saved by Christ alone, and to serve him, and bear his cross: and in his understanding, things appear in a different light than they before did: and great stir and opposition is made by Satan, to hinder the preaching of the Gospel, as much as in him lies, and persons from coming to hear it; and if they do, he endeavours to hinder, by catching it from them, or diverting them from that; by insinuating, it is either too soon or too late, to mind religion; or that sin is either so great that it cannot be forgiven, or so trivial, that a few prayers, tears, alms deeds, &c. will make amends for it; by distressing them about their election, or about the willingness of Christ to save them; or by stirring up others to dissuade and discourage them. Moreover, when the Gospel is preached in purity and with power, and souls are converted, there is a great stir and uproar in the world, and among the men of it; because the doctrines of it are foolishness, and strange things to them; and oppose their sense of things, and strip them of what is valuable; and men are hereby distinguished from them, and taken from among them: and there is also a stir and an uproar made by it, among carnal professors of religion, as there was at this time among the Scribes and Pharisees; and all this bustle is made, for the sake of a single piece of money:

and seek diligently till she find it? not only a light is set up, an hand of power put forth in using the besom, but a quick sharp eye looks out for the piece of silver: this diligent seeking and finding, are to be understood not of the grace of Christ in redemption; nor of his restoring backsliders; but of his converting sinners, through the preaching of the Gospel, both in his own person, and by his ministers, his Spirit making their ministrations effectual: the diligence, care, and circumspection of Christ, to find out lost sinners, while the Gospel is preaching, are here signified: it is not the preacher that looks out for them, though he that is a faithful minister of the word performs his office diligently and carefully, and he desires nothing more earnestly than the conversion of sinners; but then he knows not who are, and who are not the elect of God, and is ignorant of what Christ is doing, whilst he is preaching: Christ's eye is upon his lost piece; he perfectly knows the persons of the elect, as they are his Father's choice, and his gift to him; he knew them in the counsel of peace, and covenant of grace, in the fall of Adam, and their natural estate; he knows the places where they all are, and the time when they are to be converted; and distinguishes them amidst all the filth that attends them, and the crowd among which they are; and he continues seeking, till he finds them; which shows the perpetuity of the Gospel ministry the indefatigableness of Christ, and his sure and certain success: the reasons of all this care and diligence, are his love to them, his propriety in them, his Father's will, and his own engagement; and because they must be for ever lost, did he not seek after them.

Luke 15:9

Ver. 9. And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends,....
See Gill on "Lu 15:6" a parable somewhat like to this, the Jews {x} have on those words in **Pr 2:4** "If thou seekest her as silver", &c.

"it is like to a man that has lost a "shekel", (a piece of money,) or beryl rings, within his house; he lights up many lamps and many candles, until he lights on them; and lo, these things much more: for if a man for the things of the temporary life of this world, lights many lamps and candles, until he lights upon them and finds them; the words of the law, since they are the life of this world, and the life of the world to come, shouldest thou not search after them as for hidden treasure?"

{x} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 1. 4.

Luke 15:10

Ver. 10. Likewise I say unto you,.... As before, in Lu 15:7

there is joy in the presence of the angels of God; who are the friends and neighbours of Christ: See Gill on "Lu 15:6",

over one sinner that repenteth; which they have knowledge of, either by immediate revelation from God, or by observation in the church where they attend: the reason of this joy is, because there is one rescued out of the hands of Satan and his angels, between whom and them, there is an implacable enmity; and because another subject is added to Christ's kingdom, and by which it is enlarged, the prosperity of which they greatly desire; and because another heir is born in that family, to which they belong, and they have another social worshipper with them: and this joy is said to be "in the presence of" them; and so may design the joy of others, as of Father, Son, and Spirit, which is in their sight and knowledge; and also the joy there is among themselves.

Luke 15:11

Ver. 11. And he said,.... The Syriac and Persic versions read "and Jesus said again"; he added another parable to the two former, at the same time, of the same import, with the same view, and on the same occasion; setting forth the different characters of the Scribes and Pharisees, and of the publicans and sinners; and what little reason the one had to murmur, at his conversation with the other:

a certain man had two sons; by "the certain man" is meant, God the Father: God indeed is not a man, nor is he to be represented by any human image; but inasmuch as man is the image of God, God is sometimes compared to man, and is called a man of war, an husbandman, &c. which no ways contradict his being a spirit; and true it is, that the second person only assumed human nature; and therefore, whenever a divine person is spoken of as man, Christ is commonly intended: but though the Father never appeared in an human form, yet he seems here to be designed; because the character of a Father, and having sons, more properly belong to him; and the reception of sinners, and the forgiveness of them for Christ's sake, agree with him: and besides, Christ is distinguished from the Father in this parable; and he and his blessings of grace, are signified by other things: by the "two sons" are meant, not angels and men, as that angels are the elder, and men the younger son; for though angels are called the sons of God, and may be said to be elder than men, with respect to creation; and good angels may be said to have been ever with God, and always serving him, and never sinned against him; yet they are never called the brethren of men, nor men their brethren; and besides, are never angry at the return and reception of repenting sinners; for this would be to represent them just the reverse of what they are said to be, in the preceding verse: nor are the Jews and Gentiles here intended, which is the more received and general sense of the parable: those who go this way, suppose the Jews to be the elder brother; and indeed they were so, with respect to external privileges; and were with God, being his household and family; all he had were theirs, that was external; and the character of the elder brother throughout the parable, agrees with the far greater part of that nation; and it is certain, that they did resent the calling of the Gentiles: and these suppose the Gentiles to be the younger brother, who indeed were brought into a church state, later than the Jews; and might be said to be afar off in a far country, and to have spent their substance in idolatry and wickedness; to have been in the utmost distress, and in the most deplorable condition: but to this sense it may be objected, that the Gospel was not as yet preached to the Gentiles; nor were they brought to repentance; nor were they openly received into the divine favour; nor as yet had the Jews murmured at, and resented the kindness of God to them: rather standing and fallen professors may be designed: since the former are very apt to carry it toward the latter, in like manner as the elder brother is represented in this parable, as carrying himself towards the younger: but the true sense, and which the context and occasion of the parable at once determine, is, that by the elder son are meant, the Scribes and Pharisees, and self-righteous persons, among the Jews; and by the younger, the publicans and sinners among the same people; as it is easy to observe, the same are meant by the two sons in the parable in Mt 21:28. Now these are called the sons of God because the Jews in general were so by national adoption; and the self-righteous Pharisees looked upon themselves as the children of God, and favourites of heaven, in a special sense; and God's elect among them, even those that lay among publicans and sinners, were truly so; and that before conversion; for they were not only predestinated to the adoption of children, but were really taken into the relation of children, in the covenant of grace; and as such were given to Christ, and considered by him, when he assumed their nature, and died for them; and are so antecedent to the spirit of adoption, who is sent to witness their sonship to them; and which is consistent with their being children of wrath, as the descendants of Adam, and their being the children of God openly and manifestatively, by faith in Christ Jesus.

Luke 15:12

Ver. 12. And the younger of them said to his father,.... God's chosen ones among the publicans and sinners, are fitly signified by the younger son, since man, as a sinner, is younger than man as righteous; and since there are instances of God's choice of the younger, before the elder, as Jacob before Esau, &c. and the characters and conduct of young men agree with God's elect, in a state of nature; who are imprudent and ignorant, without any knowledge of divine and spiritual things, and of themselves, their state and condition, and of Christ, and salvation by him; and yet are conceited of themselves, and fancy themselves very wise and knowing, and capable of acting for themselves, independent, and without any assistance or advice; do not care to be under restraints, withdraw from all yokes, and break all bands asunder; and so become children of disobedience, prone to every vice, and servants and slaves to every lust; by which they are deceived, and in which they take a great deal of imaginary pleasure; and are often envious and spiteful, and live in malice, hateful, and hating one another: the request made by this younger son, is "to his Father"; to God, who was his Father by creation, by providential care, and by national adoption, and by special grace; though as yet he knew it not, nor could he call him so in faith: many call God Father, who should not, and many that should, do not: the request follows;

father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me: this portion may be considered, as internal or external; as internal, and such who think the Gentiles are meant by the younger son understand it of the light of nature, and of natural gifts and talents. The ancients generally interpret it, of man's free will: it may intend natural knowledge in general, to which there is in man a natural desire, and in which he is self-sufficient: or rather as external, such as the outward blessings of food, raiment, health, &c. the honours, pleasures, and riches of the world: the good things of this world belonged to men by right of creation, and according the laws and dues of it, but have been all forfeited by the sin of man; and yet this is a portion, which in the apprehension of men, of right belongs to them; and which suits their nature, which is carnal and worldly:

and he divided unto them his living; natural gifts, external privileges, and worldly good things; which of all men in the earth, the Jewish nation shared; see Ps 115:16.

Luke 15:13

Ver. 13. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together,.... That his father had divided to him, all his goods and substance: as soon as a man has any internal substance, any considerable degree of natural knowledge, he immediately sets out from God, and employs it against him, in reasoning against him, against his being, his works, his providence, his purposes, his revelation, and will; as soon as a man has the exercise of his reason, as soon as he can think and speak, nay, as soon as he is born, he goes astray from God, speaking lies; and as soon as a wicked man has of this world, what his carnal heart desires, he is for living independent of God, and his providence; he is for gathering together all for himself, in order to spend it on his lusts, and at a distance from his father, the father of his mercies, of whom he is not mindful;

and to whom he says, depart from me, having no regard to his worship and service, to his honour and glory, to his cause and interest:

and took his journey into a far country; which sets forth the state of alienation a sinner is in, while unconverted; he is afar off from God, from God the Father; from the presence of God, and communion with him: from the knowledge of God, and desire after it; from love to him, or fear of him; and from the life of God, or a living soberly, righteously, and godly; and from Christ, from the knowledge of him, from faith in him, love to him, fellowship with him, and subjection to his ordinances; and from the Spirit of God, and every thing that is spiritual; and from all that is good, from the law of God, and from the righteousness of it, and from righteous men:

and there wasted his substance in riotous living; his internal substance, his knowledge and understanding, even in natural things, and became brutish, and even like the beasts that perish; and his worldly substance in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, with harlots, as in Lu 15:30 whereby he was brought to a piece of bread, and to the want of it,

Luke 15:14

Ver. 14. And when he had spent all,.... Sin strips a man of all that is good and valuable; of the image of God, of the knowledge of divine things, of natural holiness, of moral righteousness, and of strength to perform moral good; hence man is in a wretched and miserable condition, he is poor, and blind, and naked: and if man has spent all, and sin has stripped him of all, where is his free will? there is no good thing in man, but what comes from the grace of God; nor has he any thing to recommend him to God, or to offer to his creditor, to compound his debts with; nor can he prepare himself for conversion, or any good work:

there arose a mighty famine in that land; sin brings men into a starving and famishing condition; for in the far country, the land of sin, there is a famine of the word: though the Gospel is preached, it is only food to spiritual persons; unregenerate men have no desire to it, but neglect and despise it; and if they attend it, it has no place in them: they that are in this land, are aliens from the ordinances of God, the breasts of consolation, the goodness and fatness of his house; they are in a pit, wherein is no water; their taste is vitiated to every thing that is spiritually good; they live on bread of deceit, and labour after that which satisfies not; wherefore they look like skeletons, and are as the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision:

and he began to be in want; or was in want: when the above is the case, the sinner may be truly said to be in want; an unregenerate man is in want of every thing that is good; of wisdom and knowledge, of grace and holiness, of righteousness or clothing, of food, and of all the necessaries of life: and he may be said to "begin" to be in want, because man was not originally so, but was possessed of a natural fulness; and because sin is the beginning of want, as soon as one takes place, the other does: moreover, this man now began to see and feel himself to be in want, though as yet he was not rightly and truly sensible of his wants, at least of the way to redress them.

Luke 15:15

Ver. 15. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country,.... Not to any one of the saints, for they are not citizens of the far country, but of the church of God below, and of heaven above; besides, carnal men do not like the company of such citizens: nor is the devil intended, for though he dwells in this country, he is more than a citizen, than an inhabitant; he is king and governor, the prince of the world, and the god of it; nor is it feasible, that a man under conviction, and beginning to be sensible of his want, should go and join himself to the devil: but an unregenerate, "pharisaical", legal preacher, is designed; a man may be a preacher, and yet in the far country of sin and unregeneracy; there may be large gifts, where there is no grace; and a man may have a form of religion and godliness, and know nothing of the power of it; and a great stir and bluster may be made about good works, as were by the Pharisees, when few or none are done: now it is common for persons under legal convictions, to seek after such a preacher, and such a ministry, and to such an one this man "went"; he went not out of the land of sin, nor to his father's house, but to one in the same country, where the famine was, and he was starving: "he went"; it was his own choice, he took his own way; he went and told him his case, how he had spent all he had, and in what manner, and what condition he now was in; and he asked his advice and assistance: and he "joined himself" to him; he sat under his ministry, and became a member with him, and stuck close to him, as the word signifies; and was a stickler for him, and his principles:

and he sent him into his field to feed swine; he did not give him the least bit of bread to satisfy his hunger; nor did he say one word to him of Christ, the bread of life; nor did he advise him to go to his father's house, where there was bread enough, and to spare: but he "sent him, into his fields"; to work, to cleanse his heart, to reform his life, to fulfil the law, to perform the conditions of the covenant, to make his peace with God, and get an interest in his love and favour; and go through a round of duties continually, and all would be well: he sent him to "feed swine" there; to converse with self-righteous persons, who may be compared to swine, because of their selfishness; doing all they do for themselves, and not for God and his glory; because they prefer dung before pearls, their own righteousness before Christ, the pearl of great price; and live upon the husks of their own duties and never look upwards to heaven, as this creature does not, but always downwards on the earth; and though they were outwardly reformed, yet inwardly filthy, and often return to wallowing in the mire again: he sent him there also to gratify the selfish principles of nature; to please himself with his wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and other excellencies he fancied he had attained unto. In short, the expression shows the base employment of a self-justitiary amidst all his pretensions to religion and virtue: for feeding of swine was very disagreeable to the Jews, and with them scandalous; to whom the eating of swine's flesh was forbidden by the law of God, and the breeding of swine by their traditions; and this is said to be done in a country, out of Judea.

Luke 15:16

Ver 16. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks,.... abwrx, the fruit of the "Charub" tree, as the Syriac version interprets it; and which the Jews {y} say is hmhb lkam, "the food of beasts": though, according to what is elsewhere said of it, it should be the food of men also. It is said {z} of R. Simeon ben Jochai, and his son, that they hid themselves in a cave for fear of the king, and a miracle was wrought for them, abwrx whl yrbya, a "Charub" tree was created for them, and a fountain of water; the one, as the gloss observes, was to eat the fruit of, and the other to drink of: but be they what they will, by them are meant, not worldly riches and honours, and carnal lusts and pleasures; though these are the principal things of the far country, of this world, or an unregenerate estate; and are greatly desired by carnal minds, and are but swine's meat, very mean food, yea, pernicious, empty, unsatisfying, and perishing; but these were the things this man had been desirous of, and lived upon before, and had ran through them, and had spent all his substance in the pursuit and enjoyment of them; and now he felt the gripes of a natural conscience for them, and found himself in want of something else: wherefore by these "husks" are meant works of righteousness done by men; which are like husks, external things, done only before men; empty things that have nothing within them; mere trash, and not food; and which can give no satisfaction; mere sordid food, fit only to be cast to dogs or swine; of an ill savour, hard to eat, and difficult digestion, and which affords no real nourishment; these this man greatly desired to fill his belly with: he found himself empty, and in want; as yet he had no thought of, at least not any desire after the bread in his father's house; but would fain have satisfied himself with his own doings, and have quieted his mind and conscience with a few external performances, a negative holiness, a legal repentance, and outward reformation: he laboured hard to make his own righteousness do; which was but striving to fill his belly with the east wind; and is what can never satisfy, because it is not answerable to the law and justice of God; and was no other than

that the swine did eat, self-righteous persons, like himself; for such an one was now the publican and sinner become, though he did not continue so. Christ's lambs and sheep do not eat such food, nor will, nor can they, only swinish, selfish persons; this is suitable to their nature, they eat it, and live upon it; which shows them to be unrenewed, and that their taste is not changed.

And no man gave unto him: not the husks, though this is the sense of the Arabic version, which renders it, "neither did he obtain them"; and so it seems to be ours and others: but these were at hand, which he might have taken himself, and did; nor is it reasonable to think he should wait to have them given him by another; or that he should be restrained from them; but it is to be understood of bread, or proper food, and that no man gave that unto him: and the words, as Calvin observes, may be read causally, "for no man gave to him"; and so are a reason why he craved husks, because no man gave him any bread: the citizen, or legal preacher, to whom he joined himself, gave him none; nor the swine, the self-righteous persons, to whom he was sent, and with whom he conversed, gave him none; he had nothing under the ministry, nor in conversation, that was proper food to him; there were nothing but these husks that presented, and he tried to satisfy himself with them; and indeed none but Christ can give the true bread, the bread of life, to those that are hungry, and in want.

{y} T. Hieros. Maascrot, fol. 50. 2. {z} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 33. 2.

Luke 15:17

Ver. 17. And when he came to himself,.... An unregenerate man, whether while a voluptuous man, or a self-righteous man, is not himself; he is beside himself; and is no other than a madman. The man that pursues his worldly lusts and pleasures, promises himself liberty, while he is a slave; he ruins himself, his soul, body, and estate, and chooses to do it rather than part with his lusts; he takes delight in doing mischief himself, and in seeing it done by others; he proclaims his folly publicly, declares his sin, and glories in it; all which a man in his right mind would never do. The self-righteous person trusts in his own heart, which is the greatest madness and folly in the world; he compasses himself about with sparks of his own kindling, and sacrifices to his own net; he dresses himself in his rags, and pleases and prides himself with them, when a robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, are provided; which no man in his senses would ever do. But when the Spirit of God comes to work upon a sinner's heart in conversion, he brings him to himself; which a man may be said to be, when he is brought to true evangelical repentance for sin; and that is, when he has a true sense of it, as committed against God, and a godly sorrow for it, and makes an hearty and ingenuous acknowledgment of it, and forsakes it; and when he is brought to a sense of the insufficiency of his own righteousness, and is made willing to part with it, and desires to be found in Christ, and in his righteousness alone, which he is encouraged to lay hold on, and receive by faith, trust to, and rejoice in; when he has his spiritual senses exercised on Christ, and to discern between good and evil; and is brought to the feet of Jesus, as to submit to his righteousness, so to serve him; when he is all this, then, like the man in the Gospel, he is clothed, and in his right mind:

he said, how many hired servants of my father's; who, according to some, were the Scribes and Pharisees, men of a servile disposition, and of mercenary views; and were, by profession, the servants of God, and had plenty of bread, because they had all the external means and ordinances: but these are designed by the elder brother in the parable; and besides, this man had endeavoured to live as they did in this far country. It may be queried, whether the ministers of the Gospel are not intended, since these are the servants of the most high God; are labourers hired by him, and are worthy of their hire, and abound with Gospel provisions for the service of others. But to this it may be objected, the desire of this man to be made as one of them, Lu 15:19 which petition expresses his humility; whereas to be a servant, in this sense, is to have the highest place and office in his father's house. Rather therefore the meanest of the saints, and household of God, are here meant, who have the least degree of evangelical light, whose faith is weak, and their consolation small; and who, though they are sons, yet by reason of that legality and mercenariness that appear in their frames and services, differ little from servants: and yet these, in comparison of him, who was in a hungry and starving condition,

have bread enough, and to spare; as the doctrines, promises, and ordinances of the Gospel, the fulness of grace that is in Christ, and Christ himself the bread of life; which are more than enough for them, and sufficient for the whole family in heaven, and in earth; and even the meanest and weakest believer may be said to have enough and to spare, because he has an interest in all these; though by reason of the weakness of his faith, it is but now and then he has a full and comfortable meal; but this is infinitely better than to be starving, as this man was:

and I perish with hunger. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions add, "here"; in this far country, in the citizen's fields, among his swine, and their husks: all mankind are in a lost and perishing condition; for having sinned against God, they have exposed themselves to the curses of the law, and are destitute of a justifying righteousness, and are in the way, to ruin and destruction; but all are not sensible of it, being ignorant of God, and his righteousness, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the insufficiency of their own righteousness; but some are sensible of it, and in their own apprehensions are ready to perish: these see sin in its true light, without a view of pardon; an angry God without a smile; injured justice without a righteousness; and a broken law without a satisfaction for the violation of it; and such was this man's case. The Jewish writers {a} say,

"a sinner is like to a son that runs away from his father, and turns his back upon him, who yet afterwards repents, and has a mind to return to his father's house:"

so it was now with the publicans and sinners, signified by this man.

{a} R. Chayim in Lib. Chayim, par. 4. c. 6. apud Maii Jud. Theolog. loc 15. p. 243.

Luke 15:18

Ver. 18. I will arise,.... This is the resolution which at last, through divine grace, he came into: he determines to quit the country, and his companions; he had left his harlots, and his old course of living before, but was in the same country still; for this a man may do, and yet remain unregenerate: but he is now for leaving the country itself, and his new acquaintance; he is now determined to drop his legal preacher, to be gone out of his fields, and from under his ministry, and to leave his swine and husks;

and go to my father: not to his old companions in debauchery and sin; nor to his elder brother, the Pharisees; he had made trial of both these to his cost already; nor to his father's servants, but to his father himself; to which he was moved and encouraged, from his being ready to perish, from the fulness of bread in his father's house and from the relation he stood in to him; notwithstanding, all that had passed, he was his father, and a kind and merciful one: this shows, that he knew him as his father, having now the Spirit of adoption sent down into him; and the way unto him, which lies through Christ the mediator:

and will say unto him, father; or, "my father", as the Syriac and Persic versions read:

I have sinned against heaven; by preferring earthly things to heavenly ones; and have sinned openly in the face of the heavens, who were witnesses against him; and against God, who dwells in heaven. It was usual with the Jews to call God, Mymv, "heaven";
See Gill on "Mt 21:25". They have this very phrase;

"there is a man, (say {b} they), who sins against earth, and he does not Mymvb ajh, "sin against heaven"; against heaven, and he does not sin against earth: but he that speaks with an ill tongue sins against heaven and earth, as it is said, Ps 73:9 "they set their mouth against the heavens and their tongue walketh through the earth.""

And so the sense is, that he had sinned against God himself, and not merely against men, and human laws. All sin is a transgression of the law of God; and the thought of sin being committed against a God of infinite holiness, justice, goodness, grace, and mercy, is cutting to a sensible sinner: and this being the case, this man determined to go to God his Father, and him only, for the pardon of his sin, against whom it was committed. It is added,

and before thee; for he was now convinced of his omniscience. Sin may be committed against a man, and not before him, or he not know it; but whatever is committed against God, is before him, it is in his sight, he knows it: he is God omniscient, though sinners take no notice of this perfection of his, but go on in sin, as if it was not seen, known, and observed by God. But when God works powerfully and effectually upon the heart of a sinner, he convinces him of his omniscience, as this man was convinced: hence he determined to go to God, and acknowledge his sin before him; and that it was committed before him, and was in his sight; and that he could not be justified in his sight by any righteousness of his own; and therefore humbly desires pardon at his hands. This man's sense of sin and sorrow for it, and confession of it, appear very right and genuine, which he determined to express; they appear to be the convictions of the Spirit of God: it was not a sense of sin, and sorrow for it, as done before men, but God; and the concern was not so much for the mischief that comes by sin, as for the evil that was in it; and this did not drive him to despair, as in the cases of Cain and Judas, but brought him home to his father; and his confession appears to be hearty, sincere, and without excuse.

{b} Midrash Kohclet, in c. 9. 12. fol. 79. 4.

Luke 15:19

Ver. 19. And am no more worthy to be called thy son,.... As all the Jews were; not only by creation, and providential care, as all men are; but by national adoption: and however worthy this man might think himself to be called a Son of God before, and value himself upon it; he now sees, and was ready to own his unworthiness to be called so in any sense; and much more to be called and accounted a Son of God by special adoption;

make me as one of thy hired servants; this is said not from a servile spirit, but to express the mean thoughts he had of himself, and the great desire he had to be fed from his father's table, in the meanest way; and what an happiness and honour it would be to him, could he be the meanest in his family, a doorkeeper in his house; which was more eligible to him, than to dwell in the tents of sin, or continue in this hungry and starving condition.

Luke 15:20

Ver. 20. And he arose,.... This shows that his resolution to arise was not of nature, but of grace, by its being put into execution; for it was made and executed, not in his own strength, but in another's. He did not confer with flesh and blood; nor listen to discouragements which might present; as the distance of the way, the danger in it, the cold reception, if not rejection, he might expect from his father: but he arose immediately; he arose and stood upon his feet, in obedience to the heavenly call, being assisted by divine grace; he arose, and quitted the far country, the citizen, swine, and husks, and denied both sinful and righteous self;

and came to his father; his own father; "the father of himself", as in the Greek text, who was so before he came to him; a sense of which he had, and was what encouraged him the rather to go to him: and this coming to him denotes a progression towards him; for as yet he was not come to him, but was at some distance, as the next clause expresses; and means not so much attendance on ordinances, as some inward secret desires after God:

but when he was yet a great way off. This is not to be understood of his state of alienation from God, which is before signified by his being in a far country; but the distance he observed, as conscious of his vileness, and unworthiness; and the humility he expressed on a view of himself; and a sense he had of his need of divine grace: and which is grateful to God; he looks to such that are of an humble, and of a contrite spirit, and dwells among them, and gives more grace to them:

his father saw him; he saw him when in the far country, spending his substance with harlots, and in riotous living; he saw him when among the swine and husks; he saw him when he came to himself, and all the motions and determinations of his heart; he saw him in his progress towards him, and looked upon him with an eye of love, pity, and compassion, as it follows,

and had compassion: God is full of compassion, and pities him, as a father does his children; yea, as a woman's heart of compassion yearns after the son of her womb: he had compassion on him, and his heart of pity moved towards him, he being as one grieved in spirit for his sins, and wounded with a sense of them, and wanting a view of pardon, as starving and famishing, and as naked, and without clothing.

And ran; to him, which shows the quick notice God takes of the first motions of his own grace in the hearts of sensible sinners; the speedy relief he gives to distressed ones; and this points out his preventing grace and goodness.

And fell on his neck; expressive of the strength of his affection to him, Ge 45:14 and of his great condescension and grace to fall on that neck which had been like an iron sinew, so stiff and rebellious; though now, through divine grace, was made flexible and pliable, and subject to him, and willing to bear the yoke, and to do whatever he would have him; and this was grateful to his father:

and kissed him; as a token of love; and as owning the relation he stood in to him; as a sign of reconciliation and friendship; and was an admission of him to great nearness to his person; and an application and manifestation of great love indeed to him; and a strong incentive of love in the son to him again; see **1Jo 4:19**.

Luke 15:21

Ver. 21. And the son said unto him, father,.... Or "my father", as the Syriac version reads; and the Persic version adds, "pardon me": sin lay heavy on him, and he wanted a view and application of pardoning grace, though he seems to be prevented making this request by the kiss he received from his father:

I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight; this is what he determined to say, and was allowed to say, having a deep sense of his sin and vileness, and which was increased by the love and kindness his father had shown him. The phrase is Jewish;
See Gill on "Lu 15:18" to which may be added, what is elsewhere said {c},

"what is the sense of that passage, Ps 12:4 "who have said, with our tongues we will prevail?" &c. it designs all the transgressions a man sins against earth; and if
Mymvb Nyajwx, "they sin against heaven", and earth; what is the sense of that in Ps 73:9?"

and am no more worthy to be called thy son: so much he was suffered to say, which fully expresses his sense of his vileness and unworthiness: but he was not allowed to say, "make me as one of thy hired servants"; because this could not be granted; for a son is always a son, and cannot become a servant; see **Ga 4:6**.

{c} T. Hieros Peah, fol. 16. 1.

Luke 15:22

Ver. 22. But the father said to his servants,.... The word "but", with which those words begin, is expressive of much grace, as it often is; see **1Co 6:11** and signifies, that though the son had behaved so badly, and was now so sensible of it himself, as that he desired to be a hired servant, being unworthy to be called a son; but the "father", against whom he had sinned, would hear nothing of it: but

said to his servants; not the angels, but the ministers of the Gospel; who are the servants of the most high God; and whose business it is to set forth, in the ministry of the word, the righteousness of Christ, and the everlasting love of God; and to direct souls to a life and conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ; and to set before them the rich provisions of the Gospel for their nourishment, joy, and comfort. These servants, the father of the son ordered, not to take him away from his presence, as one whose person he could not endure in his sight; nor to terrify and affright him with the curse and condemnation of the law, and fill his mind with wroth and terror; nor even to chastise and correct him for his former course of living, and to upbraid him with it; but to confer upon him all the honour, and high favours, and blessings that could be expressed in the following language:

bring forth the best robe; out of the wardrobe, that it is in. The Vulgate Latin version adds "quickly"; which increases the father's regard to him and shows that he was in haste to have his son appear in a better condition: the Arabic version adds it in the next clause, "and put it on him quickly"; which expresses the same thing: and the Ethiopic version renders it, "hasten ye, bring", &c. By the "best robe" is meant, not water baptism; nor an holy life and conversation; nor any particular grace, as faith, or hope, or charity; or the whole of sanctification; nor Adam's robe of innocence; but the righteousness of Christ which is often compared to a robe, or garment, Isa 61:10 because it is not any thing in believers, but what is unto them, and upon them, and is put there by an act of God's grace in imputation; and is what covers their naked souls, and hides their sins from the avenging eye of divine justice; protects them from all injuries, and saves them from wrath to come; as well as beautifies and adorns them, and renders them acceptable in the sight of God; and keeps them warm and alive; and gives them a right and title to eternal life. This is as in the Greek text "the first robe"; and so it is rendered by the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions; because it was first in God's designation and counsel, and in Christ the head of his people, in whom they are blessed with all spiritual blessings before the foundation of the world, and so with this blessing; and it was also provided and secured in the everlasting covenant of grace, long before Adam's robe of innocence and righteousness was made and wore by him: the reference is not to the first that should be come at in the wardrobe; or to that which the son wore before he went into the far country; but to the tylj, "Talith", which was the first and uppermost garment wore by the Jews, and answers to the

Greek word
stolh, "the stole", here used: so the Babylonish garment is called, atlymd aljuya, {d} which the gloss interprets a "Talith", made of pure wool. The Ethiopic version renders the phrase, "fragrant garments"; and such are Christ's garments of salvation, and robe of righteousness; see Ps 45:8 the Persic version renders it, "the splendid robe"; and the Syriac, as ours, the "chief", or "best robe"; and such is Christ's righteousness: it is a better righteousness, not only than that of a self-righteous Pharisee; but better than the outward conversation garment of a real good man, which, at best, is imperfect; or than the inward sanctification of the Spirit of God, which, though pure, is not yet perfect: it is better than the robe of innocence wore by Adam in his sinless state; for that was but a natural righteousness, and the righteousness of a creature, and was loseable, as the event has shown; and had he kept it, would not have given him a title to eternal life: yea, it is better than the righteousness of the angels heaven; for what is said of Adam's, may be said of theirs, that it is natural, the righteousness of a creature; and had it not been for confirming grace, a loseable one: but Christ's righteousness is pure and perfect; the righteousness of God, and an everlasting one: and when the servants of God, the ministers of the Gospel, are ordered to bring it out,

and put it on him: this is done, not by the imputation of it to men, for that is the Father's act; nor by application of it to them, that is the Spirit's work; but by a declaration of it, setting it forth in a ministerial way before them; declaring it to be a justifying one, and encouraging their faith to lay hold upon it as such:

and put a ring on his hand; on one of the fingers of his hand: by which is intended not the grace of faith; that is, rather the hand on which the ring is put; and though this grace is both precious and ornamental, as will be allowed, yet it does not unite to Christ, this must be denied; it being a grace which flows from union, as all grace does; and by which souls have communion with Christ: nor are good works designed; such indeed who are called by grace, are to be set to work from a right principle, to a right end; and true grace does show itself by works; and good works are the seal and token of grace to the world; but then, as before, these are rather meant by the hand; since that is the instrument of action: nor is the seal and earnest of the Spirit meant by the ring. The Spirit of God is certainly the seal of grace, and the earnest of glory; and to have this is a high favour, and a precious benefit indeed, and what will never be taken away; but as faith, so not the Spirit is the bond of union between God and his people, but the fruit of it: by the "ring" is meant the everlasting love of God; and which, as a ring, is round, and has neither beginning nor end; it does not begin with the obedience of his people, nor with their love to him; nor with their conversion; nor with the mission, sufferings, and death of Christ; but was from all eternity; nor will it have any end, nor can there be any separation from it: this is the bond of union, that can never be dissolved; and this being manifested to the soul, is a token of freedom; it sets a man free from the bondage of corruption, and from the slavery of Satan, and introduces into the liberty of the children of God: it is a mark of great honour, a sign of riches, both of grace and glory; it is a declaration of sonship, and heirship; and is a seal and pledge of everlasting happiness: now the putting on of this ring does not design the shedding abroad of this love in the heart by the Spirit of God; but the declaration of it by his servants in a ministerial way; setting it forth in its nature and effects, to the great joy and comfort of souls; when believers receive it by the hand of faith, and which constrains them, and makes them active, and puts them upon doing good works to the glory of God.

And shoes on his feet: by feet are meant the outward walk and conversation; which in persons called by grace should be different from what it was before, and from that of others: it should not be loose and naked, as those that walk barefoot, but should be upright, straight, and regular; not carnal and earthly, but spiritual and heavenly; and should be with prudence, care, and circumspection, and worthy of their calling, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ: and by "the shoes" may be meant, the preparation of the Gospel of peace, **Eph 6:15**. The Gospel is as shoes to the feet; it beautifies and adorns, **So 7:1** it keeps the feet tight and straight, the conversation regular and upright; preserves from slipping and failing; strengthens and makes more fit for walking; directs, guides, and influences in walking, and protects from the stones, thorns, and scorpions of the world's reproaches; and the doctrines of it are shoes that will never wear out: and to walk according to the Gospel of Christ, is what Gospel ministers direct and exhort unto, and may be meant by their putting on those shoes; they pressing a good life and conversation from, and by the doctrines of grace. A person with all these things on him was reckoned, among the Jews, as one thoroughly dressed: a canon of theirs, relating to the defilement of leprosy, runs thus {e};

"a man of Israel that goes into a house infected with the plague of leprosy, wydyb wytwebjw wylgrb wyldnow wydgbb
vwbl, "clothed with garments, and his sandals on his feet, and his rings on his hands", lo, that man is immediately defiled."

{d} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 44. 1. Vid. Targum in Jos. vii. 21. {e} Maimon Hilch. Tumaot Tzaraath, c. 16. sect. 6. T. Bab. Cholin, fol 71. 2.

Luke 15:23

Ver. 23. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it,.... By which Christ is designed, in allusion to the calves offered in sacrifice, which were offered for sin offerings, and for peace offerings, and for burnt offerings; and were one of the sacrifices on the day of atonement: so Christ has offered up himself in soul and body, freely and voluntarily, in the room and stead of his people, an offering and sacrifice to God, of a sweet smelling savour; which is well pleasing to him, and effectual to the purposes for which it was offered, and therefore will never be repeated; and has hereby satisfied law and justice, procured peace and reconciliation, and made full atonement and expiation for all their sins and transgressions: or else in allusion to the feasts and liberal entertainments of friends, when the fatted calf made a considerable part, Ge 18:7 Christ is the best provision that can be set before a believer, or he can feed upon; yea, the best that God can give, or saints desire: he is true and real food, spiritual, savoury, satisfying, and durable; what both gives and preserves life; nourishes, strengthens, refreshes, delights, and fattens. Now by "bringing it hither", is meant preaching Christ; opening the Scriptures concerning him; setting him before believers, as their only proper food, both in the ministry of the word, and in the Lord's supper: and "killing" him does not design either the slaying of him in purpose, promise, and type, from the foundation of the world; nor the actual crucifixion of him by the Jews; but the setting him forth in the Gospel in a ministerial way, as crucified and slain, for saints by faith to feed and live upon:

and let us eat and be merry: for as the Jews {f} say,

"there is no mirth without eating and drinking:"

this is a mutual invitation or encouragement to eat of the fatted calf: the parties called upon to eat of it are the Father, the servants, and the returned son. The Father, to whom the salvation of his people, by the death of Christ, is as a feast; his heart was set upon this from everlasting; and he was infinitely well pleased with Christ, as the surety of his people from all eternity; his eye was upon him as such throughout the several dispensations before his coming; he sent him forth with great pleasure in the fulness of time; and not only did not spare him, but it even pleased him to bruise him; and he accepted of his sacrifice with delight; and takes pleasure in seeing his people feed upon their crucified Saviour; and this is expressive of that communion which God admits his people to with himself, and which, as it is signified by walking and talking,

and sitting and dwelling, so by eating together; and is in consequence of union to him; and is only enjoyed by true believers; and is the greatest blessing on earth, and what is next to heaven. The servants, the ministers of the Gospel, they are among the "us", who are to eat; and it is but reasonable they should, and it is even necessary that they do eat, and live upon a crucified Christ themselves, whose business it is to set him forth as such to others: and especially the returned son makes a principal guest at this entertainment; for whom it is made, and for whose sake chiefly the invitation to eat is given: by which is meant not corporeal eating, but eating by faith; which supposes food to eat, of which there is plenty in the Gospel provision; a principle of life infused, for a dead man cannot eat; and spiritual hunger and thirst, otherwise there will be no appetite; and the grace of faith; which is the hand that takes, and the mouth that receives, and eats spiritual food: and believers have full and free liberty to eat of it; nor should they object their own unworthiness, but consider the suitableness of the food unto them; that it is on purpose prepared for them; that they are in their Father's house, and at his table; and the invitation to eat is hearty and cordial; and both the Father and Christ give this food, and bid welcome to it; and there is a necessity of eating it, for without this there can be no living in a spiritual sense: it is hereby that life is supported and maintained; without this the saints must be starving; it is this which preserves from hunger, and satisfies it, and nourishes up unto eternal life. The manner of eating, or the circumstance attending it, is "mirth", both in Father, son, and servants; and as corporeal, so spiritual eating should be with joy, and with a merry heart, **Ec 9:7** and indeed is the most proper means of stirring and increasing spiritual joy and pleasure; see the note on the latter part of the following verse,
See Gill on "Lu 15:24".

{f} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 9. 1.

Luke 15:24

Ver. 24. For this my son was dead,.... These words contain the reasons of the above entertainment, and of all that spiritual joy and mirth; in which the father acknowledges the returning penitent as his son; though he had behaved so wickedly before, and though he judged himself unworthy of the relation; and this he did, by sending the Spirit of adoption into his heart, to witness his sonship to him; and takes notice of his past state and condition, to show the great reason there was for joy, at his present one: for before be was "dead", dead in Adam, in whom all died; dead in law, being under a sentence of condemnation and death; and dead in trespasses and sins, which is a spiritual or moral death: in which all mankind by nature are: and which lies in a separation from God, Father, Son, and Spirit; in an alienation from the life of God; in a deformation of the image of God; in a loss of original righteousness; in the darkness of the understanding; in the inordinateness of the affections; in the pollution of the mind and conscience; in the stubbornness of the will; and in an impotency to that which is spiritually good; and in a privation of spiritual sense and motion: this had been the case, but now it was otherwise:

and is alive again: the Spirit of life from Christ had entered into him, and Christ was formed in his heart; and a principle of life was infused into him; a divine image was enstamped upon his soul; the understanding was enlightened in divine things; the affections were set upon them; the will was subjected to God, to his will and law, and to Christ and his righteousness, and the way of salvation by him, and to his commands and ordinances; and principles of grace and holiness were wrought in him, to do as well as to will; a spiritual sense of things were given him; a spiritual sight, hearing, tasting, and feeling, and savouring; he lived a life of holiness from Christ, of faith upon him, and of communion with him, and to his glory: and he came to be so, not of himself, nor by any creature; for no man can quicken himself, nor can any creature do it for him; it was entirely owing to the power and grace of God: and great reason here was for joy and mirth, as there is for every one that is quickened by the Spirit of God; for such shall never enter into condemnation, nor die again, but shall live and reign with Christ for ever:

he was lost; lost in Adam, and in himself; so he was when in the far country, and when among the swine and husks; so as that he knew not where he was, nor what a condition he was in; nor did he know how to get out of it, nor could he help himself; nor could any other creature; though not irretrievably and irrecoverably lost; not to the love of God, his knowledge of him, care and provision for him in Christ, in his counsel and covenant: hence the following mercy,

and is found; not only by Christ, in redemption, but by the Spirit of Christ in the effectual calling; when he was brought and came to himself, and saw his lost state and condition by nature; and when he was directed and brought home to his Father's house, and entertained with all the provisions of it; and such have reason to rejoice and be glad, for they shall be found in Christ at death and at judgment, and shall be with him to all eternity:

and they began to be merry: all parties. The Father expressed his joy, and the gladness of his heart, upon the return of his son to him; he exhorted to be merry on this account, Lu 15:23 and enforces it with reasons in this verse, taken from the relation he stood in to him, and the wonderful change that had passed upon him, and the finding of him; and he rejoices himself at his conversion, in the exercise of that grace which he himself implanted, and in the performance of duty by his assistance: not that any new joy arises in God's heart at such a time; for he always rejoiced in the persons of his elect, as they were the objects of his love, as chosen in Christ, and given to him, and as interested in the covenant of grace; and he rejoiced in the accomplishment of their salvation, by his Son: but in conversion, there are new expressions of joy; he rejoices over them to do them good, and rejoices in the good he does them; and this is the open beginning of his joy, and but the beginning of it; for it will continue, it is not all over, not all expressed, but will be in the fullest manner hereafter, to all eternity: the returned son began to be merry, as he had good reason for it; as that he was come back from the far country, where a mighty famine had been: and from the citizen of that country, his fields, and swine; that he was come to his father, and his father's house, where was bread enough and to spare; an house well furnished with all suitable provisions; a family made up of saints, where ministers of the Gospel are stewards, and angels guards, and where Christ is Son, priest, and master; and that he was received here, and owned as a son; not only was one secretly, but was owned as such openly; and was not only called so by the servants, but by the father himself; and that after he had behaved so vilely, and in his own conscience knew he was unworthy of the relation; and that he was received immediately, as soon as ever he came, and that in the most tender manner; and was entertained in the most free, generous, and sumptuous way; though he went away from his father of himself, and had spent his substance in a scandalous manner; and was in a most filthy, ragged, and piteous condition; and that he should be clothed with the best robe, the robe of Christ's righteousness; and so had nothing to fear from law and justice; nor was he in any danger of wrath to come because of his sins; nor had he any reason to doubt of his right and admission to the heavenly glory; and that he had the ring of love on the hand of faith, and could believe his interest in it, which is better than life, and will continue for ever; and that his feet were shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; that he understood the Gospel, and was brought to a submission to Gospel ordinances, and had his conversation agreeably to it; and that the fatted calf was killed, and set before him to eat of, and feed upon: and now he began to live and fare sumptuously, and to have spiritual joy and pleasure, which he never knew before; and this was but the beginning of joy to him: spiritual joy is not all over at once, it continues and increases; nor is it full and perfect in this life, but in heaven it will be complete, and without interruption; the servants also, the ministers of the Gospel, began to be merry on this occasion; who express their joy at the conversion of sinners, because of the glory of Father, Son, and Spirit, concerned in it; because of the grace bestowed then on sinners themselves; and because the interest of Christ is strengthened, and his churches increased, and Satan's kingdom weakened; and because their own ministry is blessed; and which strengthens their hands and hearts, and encourages them to go on in their work: and this is but the beginning of their joy; for they continue to rejoice at the growth of grace in believers, and when they are in a thriving and flourishing condition; when they walk becoming the Gospel of Christ, and live in peace among themselves; and persevere in faith and holiness to the end; and these will be their joy and crown of rejoicing, at the coming of Christ Jesus.

Luke 15:25

Ver. 25. Now his elder son was in the field,.... By "the elder son" is meant, not angels, as has been observed on Lu 15:11 nor truly converted persons, of some standing in the church; for though these may be said to be elder than young converts, and are more solid and settled, yet they are not ignorant of spiritual mirth; nor of the Gospel sound; nor are they angry at the conversion of sinners; nor will they ever speak in such commendation of themselves; or say that they never had a kid, much less a fatted calf, as this elder brother does: nor the Jews in general, in distinction from the Gentiles, as has been remarked in the above place: the Scribes and Pharisees in particular are meant, in opposition to the publicans and sinners: now these are said to be "in the field"; in the world, which is comparable to an uncultivated field; being overrun with the briers and thorns of sin, and sinful men; where beasts of prey inhabit, and who are fitly signified by lions, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword; and out of which the garden of the church is taken and separated, and fenced by distinguishing grace: now this elder brother, the Scribe and Pharisee, notwithstanding all his sobriety and morality, was in a state of nature and unregeneracy, in the same condition he came into the world; and was under the influence of the god of the world; and was taken up with the things of the world, the honours, riches, and profits of it; and though he was in the Jewish church state, yet was in the field of the world; the ceremonies of that state, were the rudiments of the world; and the sanctuary in it, was a worldly sanctuary; and the chief men in it, were the princes of the world: and this elder son was in the field at work, working for life: to work is right, when men work from a principle of grace, in the name, faith, and strength of Christ, to the glory of God and religion, and their own and others good; and ascribe all they do to the grace of God, and acknowledge their own unworthiness; but to work, in order to obtain righteousness, life, and salvation, proceeds from wretched ignorance, and is an instance of the pride and vanity of human nature; and is not only a vain and fruitless attempt, but a piece of wickedness, it being a denial of Christ, as God's salvation: now while the younger son, the publicans and sinners, were received and entertained in the house and kingdom of God their Father, the elder son, the Scribe and Pharisee, were without in the field, labouring to obtain life by doing;

and as he came and drew nigh to the house. The Ethiopic version reads, "to the border of the city": he "came" out of the field, the world; not that he was come out from the world, and had left the company of the men of it, or parted with the sins and lusts of it; but he came from his labour, having done his day's work, and the task of duty he had set himself; and was now going for his hire, for what he imagined he had merited: and

drew nigh to the house; for he did not go in, Lu 15:28 he only made some advances to it, and took some steps towards entrance into it; namely, into a visible church; he came to hear the word, as the Scribes and Pharisees did; and to attend on ordinances, particularly at the administration of the ordinance of baptism, and seemed desirous of submitting to it in John's time; but never came to Christ in a spiritual way; nor entered into the kingdom of heaven, the Gospel dispensation; and did all that could be, to hinder others, especially publicans and sinners;

he heard music and dancing. The Syriac; Persic, and Ethiopic versions, leave out "dancing": the former only reads, "the voice of the singing of many", and the next, "the voice of singing"; and the last, "pipes and songs"; by "music" is meant not the instrumental music used in the Old Testament church; nor vocal singing in the new; but the preaching of the Gospel by the ministers of it, the servants, in Lu 15:22 setting forth the love of God, the righteousness of Christ, peace, pardon, and salvation by him; in which, as in music, there is a distinction of sounds, the voice of Christ in the Gospel, and the several doctrines of it, are distinctly pronounced, discerned, and understood: and there is also, as in music, an harmony and agreement; the Gospel does not give an uncertain sound, nor contradict itself; it is not yea and nay: and, like music, it is delightful and charming; it is a sound of love in all the three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit; of free grace, and rich mercy; of liberty, reconciliation, forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life: and as music, has a powerful and attractive virtue in it; so the Gospel is mighty and efficacious in the hand of the Spirit of God to quicken even dead sinners, to draw them to Christ, to allure, charm, and comfort them: "dancing" may design those expressions of joy, which are delivered by young converts at hearing the Gospel, as by the three thousand, in **Ac 2:41** by the inhabitants of Samaria, **Ac 8:6** and by the jailor and his household, Ac 16:34 and by many others: now all this the elder brother, the Scribes and Pharisees, "heard"; not so as to know the true meaning of it, as appears from the following verse; nor as to approve of it; or so as to feel the power, and enjoy the sweetness of it; nor as to practise what was heard; only externally hearing, they heard, but understood not, their eyes were blinded, and their hearts were hardened.

Luke 15:26

Ver. 26. And he called one of the servants,.... One of the ministers of the word, one of the disciples of Christ, as the Scribes and Pharisees sometimes did: choosing rather to speak to one of the disciples, than to Christ himself, when they were offended; see **Mr 2:16**

And asked what these things meant: for self-righteous persons, as these Scribes and Pharisees were, are ignorant of the truths of the Gospel; they do not understand them, nor conceive what is meant by them they cannot take in the doctrine of God's everlasting love, that it should be so early; be towards some, and not others; that it should be independent of men's works, both in the rise and continuance of it; that it should be exercised towards sinners, and yet be no licentious doctrine: and as much at a loss are they about the doctrine of election: as that it should be eternal, personal, discriminating, irrespective of works, and yet give no liberty to sin: they know nothing of the covenant of grace, nor have any other notion but of a covenant of works; and if of any other, yet a conditional one, made with them upon their conversion; or rather, one of their own making, and which depends on their good behaviour: they are ignorant of salvation by Christ; of justification by his righteousness; of peace and pardon by his blood; of the doctrine of regeneration, and of living by faith on Christ; and of eternal life as God's free gift; and so likewise of spiritual joy, and mirth: they are strangers to themselves, their lost state and condition, and a deliverance out of it; to the kingdom of God, or an internal work of grace, the fruits of which are peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; and to the person, offices, and grace of Christ; to justification and atonement by him; to the promises of the Gospel, and to that itself which is the joyful sound; all which produce spiritual joy, delight, and pleasure in sensible souls: the rejoicing of such persons is only in themselves, and in their own works and duties; but as for true solid spiritual joy, they intermeddle not with it, nor know they what it means.

Luke 15:27

Ver. 27. And he said unto him,.... The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, leave out the copulative "and", and the latter reads, "they said unto him"; the servants, one or other of them:

thy brother is come; for in the relation of a brother, the younger son stood to him; being of the same nature and species, of the same nation, and both sons by national adoption: who was "come" to his father, and to his father's house; not as a righteous and worthy person in himself, but as a sinner, a sensible and penitent one; as hungry, naked, and ready to perish; and as unworthy, in his own opinion, of the least mercy and favour, and especially to be called a son:

and thy father; who was so by creation, by national adoption, and by profession:

hath killed the fatted calf, by which Christ is meant:
See Gill on "Lu 15:23" and designs either the concern the Father had in the death of Christ; or rather, his orders to his ministering servants, to preach a crucified Christ, to the comfort of poor sinners; and in general, expresses the large and rich entertainment God makes for souls, when they are brought home to him by repentance: and the Persic version adds, "and hath made a feast"; the reason of which is given in the next clause:

because he hath received him safe and sound; or "in good health". This is left out in the Persic version, but rightly retained in all others: the word translated "received", signifies the recovery, or enjoyment of any thing before had, but since lost, and the taking it at the hands of another: the elect of God, signified by the younger son, were his in a peculiar sense, being chosen by him; but through the fall of Adam, and their own transgressions, were in some sense lost unto him; but in consequence of redemption by Christ, and through efficacious grace in calling, are found, received, and enjoyed again: and so the Ethiopic version reads it, "because he found him alive"; and so took him again, as he did, at the hands of his son: all the elect of God were put into the hands of Christ, as the surety of them; and being redeemed by his blood in the effectual calling, they are brought by him to the Father, and come to God by him: as they are also received by the Father from the hands of his Spirit, who convinces them of sin, causes them to believe in Christ, witnesses their adoption to them; in a view of which, they come to God, and are received by him; and even from their own hands too, for under the power of divine grace, they are made willing to give up themselves to the Lord, and do so; who kindly and graciously receives them into his arms; into his heart's love, and affection, into the open enjoyment of it; into his care and protection, into his family, and into communion with himself, and will afterwards receive them to glory: the case and condition in which he was received is,

safe and sound; there is but one word in the original; some translate it "safe", as the Arabic version; and others "sound", as the Syriac; and ours both: he was received "safe", though he had been in a far country, and in a mighty famine, and almost starved: God's elect fell in Adam, as others; their nature is corrupted by sin, and they are guilty of actual transgressions, which deserve death; yet they were preserved in Christ, and being redeemed by him, are safe; so that the law cannot lay hold on them, nor sin, nor any thing else condemn them, nor Satan destroy them: and he was received "sound"; in his right mind, being come to himself, and brought to true repentance for his sin; and willing to part with his own righteousness, and to be clothed with the best robe; and having his spiritual senses exercised, to discern between good and evil, and upon the person and grace of Christ; or he was received "sound", being in good health, and as opposed to being sick or diseased: sins are diseases, and as all men, so God's elect, are attended with them; but being made sensible of them, they come to Christ for healing; and they are perfectly cured by him; by his stripes and wounds, all their iniquities are forgiven; so that they have no reason to say any more, they are sick: and hence the Father receives them safe and sound; and which is matter of joy, and was the occasion of all this music, dancing, and feasting.

Luke 15:28

Ver. 28. And he was angry,.... Particularly that the fatted calf was killed, Lu 15:27 the preaching of a crucified Christ, and of free and full salvation by him, is highly displeasing and provoking to self-righteous persons; they are angry at it, that it should be free, that election to salvation should be of grace, that justification should be freely by the grace of God, and that pardon of sin should be according to the riches of God's grace, and salvation be by grace, and not by works; and that it should be discriminating, that God should appoint some, and not all unto salvation; that Christ should redeem some, and not all; and that all men are not called unto it, by his Spirit and grace; and that it should be full and complete, so as nothing can be added to it; and that it should be for sinners, and alone by Christ, and by him as crucified: it would be agreeable, was it taught that salvation was by Christ in a doctrinal way, by giving laws and rules to men, whereby to save themselves; or that Christ saves by example, and not by his sacrifice, in a way of satisfaction for sin. Now, though no grievous words were used, nor any thing said that might justly provoke, yet such was the pride of his heart, that he could not bear that his brother should be taken so much notice of, who had acted and lived so scandalously; and besides, his own character as a righteous person, was neglected by this doctrine; and his own righteousness laid aside, in the business of justification and salvation, which was intolerable by him:

and would not go in; into his father's house, nor to the feast, nor into the kingdom of heaven, or Gospel dispensation; the Scribes and Pharisees shut it up to themselves, and others; would neither go in themselves, nor suffer others; they did not believe Jesus to be the Messiah, nor did they receive, but reject him; nor did they give any credit to the doctrines, nor submit to the ordinances of that dispensation:

therefore came his father out; not in a way of wrath and judgment, but in the ministry of the word; for though the Jews rejected it, it was not at once taken away from them, but was continued time after time, and for some considerable time: the Jews of old had the ministry of the word, both by angels and men; God frequently went forth to them by his prophets, and at last by his Son; and though they were angry with him, and rejected him, yet still the ministry of the word, by the disciples of Christ, were continued a good while to them; which shows the condescending goodness and grace of God, and his patience and longsuffering towards them:

and entreated him; the Persic version reads, "and said unto him, why dost thou not go in?" this regards the external call by the ministry of the word, to the outward duties of religion, to means of grace; to give credit to the doctrines, and to attend the ordinances of the Gospel.

Luke 15:29

Ver. 29. And he answering, said to his father,.... Commending himself, and reflecting on his father:

lo, these many years do I serve thee; for though he was called a son, yet differed little from a servant; he was of a servile disposition, and under a spirit of bondage; he served his father, not in the Gospel, but in the law, moral and ceremonial; in the letter of it, and not in the newness of the Spirit; externally, and not internally; from fear, and not from love; with mercenary views, and not freely; with trust in, and dependence on his service, seeking justification and eternal life by it, and not with a view to the glory of God; and this he had done "many years"; from his youth upwards, as the Pharisee in Mt 19:20 whereas his younger brother had never served him, but his own lusts; and yet as soon as ever he was come home, before he could enter upon service, this entertainment was made for him, and which he therefore resented: moreover, he does not say I have served thee, but "I do"; denoting the continuance and constancy of his service; and intimating that his life had been, and was one continued series of obedience:

neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; which though true of the elect angels, can never be said of any of the sons of men; and which shows, that he had never been under a work of the Spirit of God, who convinces of sin; and had never seen himself in a true light, in the glass of that law, he pretended to serve God in; that he was a stranger to the plague of his own heart, and was a self-deceiver, and the truth of grace was not in him: he could not be a good man, for so to say, is contrary to the experience of all good men; to their groans, complaints, and confessions; to their prayers, for fresh application of pardoning grace; and to the observation of all wise and good men in all ages; and most fully proves him to be, a Pharisee:

and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends; some by a "kid", or "goat", as Theophylact, understand a persecutor, as Saul was of David, and Ahab of Elijah; and so means that God had not delivered up such an one into his hands; or took him away by death, that he might have some peace and rest, amidst his labours and service; and others understand this of the Jews, desiring Barabbas, a goat, and not Jesus, the Lamb of God; but his meaning seems to be, that he had never received any favour in proportion to the services he had done; and so charges his father with ingratitude.

Luke 15:30

Ver. 30. But as soon as this thy son was come,.... He will not own him in the relation of a brother, though the father had owned him in that of a son; and the offence he took was, that the fatted calf should be killed, or that a crucified Christ should be preached; that he should be preached at all, and much less that he should be preached to sinners; and still less that he should be preached so soon to them, as soon as ever they became sensible of their sin, as it was the will of his father it should be: for such are not to be sent away to cleanse themselves from sin by any thing they do, and then apply to Christ; or to heal themselves, and then come to him for a cure; or to get peace by doing so, and then come to him for rest; or to do any thing to fit themselves for him, for their case requires present help: now at this the self-righteous man is displeased. The elder brother would have had another method taken with this younger son: he would have had him soundly whipped with the rod of the law, for his former sins; and sent into the fields along with him to work out his salvation; and not to have a rag put upon him, or a shoe on his foot, or a morsel of bread given him, till he had earned them; but instead of this, to be received and entertained in the manner he was, and so soon, highly provoked him: for he thought such a conduct was unbecoming God, and his moral perfections; and what his brother was undeserving of; and opened a door to, licentiousness; and highly reflected on his services, as of no value and regard.

Which hath devoured thy living: given to his son; that part of his goods he had divided to him, Lu 15:12

with harlots; in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, in gluttony and debauchery:

thou hast killed for him the fatted calf; See Gill on "Lu 15:23"

Luke 15:31

Ver. 31. And he said to him, son,.... For so he was, as before observed, by creation, national adoption, and profession:

thou art ever with me; not in such a sense as Christ the Son of God was: nor can it design the gracious presence of God, or communion with him; for this man did not walk with God; and besides, this is more frequently expressed by God's being with his people, than by their being with him; nor are good men always with God, or God with them, in this sense; sometimes the phrase designs the saints being with God, or Christ, in heaven; but here it intends only attendance on public worship, in the place where the symbol of God's presence was, the temple; and the "ever" denotes the term of the legal dispensation, which in many branches of it, as circumcision, the passover, and other ordinances and statutes, is said to be for ever.

And all that I have is thine: which must be understood with a limitation; for it cannot mean, that he had all the perfections of God, as Christ the Son of God has; nor all spiritual blessings, as the adopted sons of God have; nor indeed any of them, but all the outward ordinances of the legal dispensation, which belonged to the Jews; particularly those that are enumerated in **Ro 9:4** as the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, the promises, their descent from the fathers, and the Messiah's descent from them; they had him in person among them, and his personal ministry, the word and ordinances of the Gospel; and had as much as they could have, or desire to have, in an external way.

Luke 15:32

Ver. 32. It was meet that we should make merry,.... Both father, son, and servants; See Gill on "Lu 15:23" see Gill on "Lu 15:24" and this elder brother also, because of the relation he stood in to him: and if he had had the same spiritual affection the apostle had for his brethren and kinsmen, according to the flesh, **Ro 9:3** and he would have rejoiced at the conversion and return of sinners by repentance:

and be glad; as his father was, and the angels in heaven be; see Lu 15:10

for this thy brother, though he would not own him as such,

was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found: see Gill on "Lu 15:24" and so the parable is concluded, the elder brother being silenced, and having nothing to say against such strong reasoning.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 16:1

Ver. 1. And he said also to his disciples,.... The Syriac version adds, "a parable", as the following is; and which is directed to the disciples, as those in the preceding chapter are to the Pharisees; and who also are designed in this; though it is particularly spoken to the disciples, because it might be of some use to them, with respect, to the stewardship they were in. The Persic and Ethiopic versions read, "Jesus", or "the Lord Jesus said": and which is to be understood, though not expressed; for the parable was delivered by him, and is as follows:

there was a certain rich man: by whom God is meant, who is rich in the perfections of his nature, in the works of his hands, in his government, and the administration of it, in providential goodness, and in the large revenues of glory due to him from his creatures; for all temporal riches are from him; and so are all the riches of mercy, grace, and glory:

which had a steward; by whom is designed, not all mankind; for though all men are, in a sense, stewards under God, and are entrusted with the good things of life, the gifts of nature, endowments of mind, health, strength of body, time, &c. yet all cannot be meant, because some are distinguished from this steward, Lu 16:5 nor are the disciples intended, though the parable is directed to them; and they were stewards of the mysteries and manifold grace of God; and one among them was an unfaithful one, and was turned out of his stewardship; but the character of an unjust man will not suit with them: and besides, this steward was of the children of this world,
Lu 16:8 but the Pharisees are meant: for these are taken notice of as gravelled at this parable, Lu 16:14 and to them agrees the character of the men of this world, who were worldly wise men; as also that of a steward; these are the tutors and governors mentioned in **Ga 4:2** who had the care of the house of Israel, the family of God, under the legal dispensation; and to whom were committed the oracles of God, the writings of Moses, and the prophets; and whose business it was to open and explain them to the people.

And the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods; put false glosses upon the Scriptures; fed the family with bad and unwholesome food, the traditions of the elders, called the leaven of the Pharisees: made havoc of the souls of men; and made the hearts of the righteous sad: and hardened sinners in their wicked ways: and fed themselves, and not the flock; and plundered persons of their temporal substance; of all which they were accused by Moses, in whom they trusted; by his law which they violated; and by their own consciences, which witnessed against them; and by the cries of those whom they abused, which came into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

Luke 16:2

Ver. 2. And he called him,.... By the prophets, sent one after another; by John the Baptist, by Christ himself, and by his apostles:

and said unto him, how is it that I hear this of thee? of thy corrupting the word; of thy covetousness, rapine, and theft; of thy adultery and idolatry, and sad violation of the law; see **Ro 2:21**

give an account of thy stewardship: what improvement is made of thy gifts; what care has been taken of my vineyard, the Jewish church; and where are the fruits that might be expected to have been received at your hands:

for thou mayest be no longer steward. This was foretold by the prophets, that God would write a "Loammi" upon the people of the Jews; that he would cut off three shepherds in one month, and particularly lay aside the idol shepherd, by whom the Pharisees may be meant, Zec 11:8 and by John the Baptist, who declared the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and it was just ready to be cut down, **Mt 3:10** and by Christ, that the kingdom of God should be taken from them, Mt 21:43 and by the apostles, who turned from them to the Gentiles, Ac 13:46.

Luke 16:3

Ver. 3. Then the steward said within himself,.... As the Scribes and Pharisees were wont to do, **Mt 3:9**

what shall I do? he does not say, what will become of me? I am undone, and what shall I do to be saved? or what shall I do for my Lord and Master I have so much injured? or what shall I do to make up matters with him? or what account shall I give? but what shall I do for a maintenance? how shall I live? what shall I do to please men, and gain their opinion and good will, and so be provided for by them? of this cast were the Pharisees, men pleasers, and self-seekers:

for my Lord taketh away from me the stewardship: the priesthood was changed, and there was a change also of the law; the ceremonial law was abrogated, and the ordinances of the former dispensation were shaken and removed; so that these men must of course turn out of their places and offices:

I cannot dig; or "plough", as the Arabic version renders it; or do any part of husbandry, particularly that which lies in manuring and cultivating the earth; not but that he was able to do it; but he could not tell how to submit to such a mean, as well as laborious way of life; for nothing was meaner among the Jews than husbandry: they have a saying, that eqrqh Nm htwxp twnmwa Kl Nya, "you have no trade", or business, "lesser", or meaner "than husbandry" {g}:

and to beg I am ashamed; for nothing could be more disagreeable, to one who had lived so well in his master's house, and in so much fulness and luxury, as the Scribes and Pharisees did. The Jews have a saying, that {h}

"want of necessaries, wtlavm bwj, "is better than begging": (and says one) I have tasted the bitterness of all things, and I have not found any thing more bitter "than begging:""

and which was literally true of the Jews, after the destruction of Jerusalem; when multitudes of them were condemned to work in the mines; and vast numbers were scattered about every where as vagabonds, begging their bread; both which were very irksome to that people: though both these phrases may be mystically understood: and "digging" may intend a laborious searching into the Scriptures, and a diligent performance of good works: neither of which the Pharisees much cared for, though they made large pretensions to both; nor did they dig deep to lay a good foundation whereon to build eternal life and happiness: nor could they attain to the law of righteousness by all their toil and labour, they would be thought to have taken: and for "begging", they were above that: read the Pharisee's prayer in
Lu 18:11 and you will not find one petition in it. To ask any thing at the throne of grace, in a way of mere grace and favour, and not merit: or to beg any thing at the hands of Christ, as life, righteousness, pardon, cleansing, healing, food, &c. they were ashamed of, and cared not for.

{g} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 63. 1. {h} Mischar Hapeninim apud Buxtorf. Florileg, Heb. p. 262.

Luke 16:4

Ver. 4. I am resolved what to do,.... Or "I know what to do"; I have a scheme in my head, and I am determined to execute it, which will provide for me, and secure me a maintenance:

that when I am put out of the stewardship; drove from Jerusalem, and from the temple and the synagogues:

they may receive me into their houses; either Jews or Gentiles, after their dispersion.

Luke 16:5

Ver. 5. So he called every one of his Lord's debtors,.... Either the Gentiles, who were greatly indebted to God, having sinned against him, and the law, and light of nature, at a great rate; into whose affections, houses, and palaces, the Jews found ways and means to introduce themselves; and, in process of time, got leave to have synagogues built, and their worship set up again: or else the Jews, their countrymen; since these were under those stewards, tutors, and governors, and were debtors to do the whole law; and had, by breaking the law, contracted large debts; and against whom the ceremonial law stood as an handwriting: these the steward called

unto him, and said unto the first, how much owest thou unto my Lord? and it is observable, that the debts of these men, of the first, lay in oil, and of the other in wheat; things much used in the ceremonial law, in the observance of which they had been, greatly deficient; see Ex 29:40

Luke 16:6

Ver. 6. And he said an hundred measures of oil,.... Or "baths of oil", the same quantity as in **Ezr 7:22** where Aben Ezra {i} calls them, twdm, "measures", as we do here; and Jarchi {k} observes, that they were, twxnm lwlbl, "to mingle with the meal, or flour offerings"; which illustrates the above observation, that they were for the temple service; and the bath was the measure of oil, as the ephah was of wheat {l}; and they were both of the same quantity, Eze 45:11. According to Godwin {m} it held four gallons and a half; so that a hundred of them contained four hundred and fifty gallons; though some make the measure much larger. Some say the "bath" held six gallons, one pottle, and half a pint; and others, seven gallons, two quarts, and half a pint; and others, nine gallons, and three quarts.

Take thy bill, or "writing"; which showed the bargain made for so many measures; and which acknowledged the receipt of them, and promised payment:

and sit down quickly; for his case required haste;

and write fifty; just half; that it might appear he had bought but fifty, and was accountable for no more.

{i} In Ezr. vii. 22. {k} In ib. {l} Kimchi in Ezek. xlv. 14. {m} Moses & Aaron, l. 6. c. 9.

Luke 16:7

Ver. 7. Then said he to another, and how much owest thou?.... To my Lord, as before:

and he said, an hundred measures of wheat, or "cors of wheat"; the same with "homers", Eze 45:14 the same quantity as in **Ezr 7:22** where, as here, they are called an hundred measures of wheat; and were, as Jarchi on the place observes, twxnml, "for the meal, or flour offerings": according to the above writer {n}, this measure held five bushels, and five gallons; so that the whole was five hundred, sixty bushels, and a half: some make the measure to hold eight bushels and a half; and others, fourteen bushels and a pottle, which greatly increases the quantity.

And he said unto him, take thy bill and write fourscore. The Persic version reads "seventy". Inasmuch now as oil and wheat were things expended in the observance of the ceremonial law, and these men's debts lay in them, it may have regard to the deficiency of the Jews in those things: wherefore by "the bill" may be meant the law; and which is sometimes called by the same name as here, gramma, the "writing", or "letter", **2Co 3:6** and is so called, not merely because it was written in letters; but because it is a mere letter, showing only what is to be done and avoided, without giving strength to perform, or pointing where it is to be had; and it is so, as obeyed by an unregenerate man; and as abstracted from the spirituality of it; and as weak, and without efficacy, to quicken, justify, or sanctify: and whereas the steward, the Scribes and Pharisees, ordered the debtors to write a lesser sum; this may regard the lessening, and even laying aside of many things in the law, after the destruction of the temple; as particularly the daily sacrifice, and other things; see **Dan 9:27** and the doctrine of the Pharisees was always a curtailing of the law, and making less of it than it was; as appears from the glosses they put upon it, refuted by our Lord in **Mt 5:1**. They compounded the matter with the people, as some men do now, and taught them, that an imperfect righteousness would do in the room of a perfect one: a doctrine very pleasing to men, and which never fails of gaining an access into the hearts and houses of carnal men; though very injurious to God, and to his divine perfections, particularly his justice and holiness; as the methods this steward took were unjust to his

Lord, though very agreeable to his debtors, and were well calculated to answer the end he proposed, an after provision for himself. I am much indebted to a learned writer {o}, whose name is in the margin, for several thoughts and hints in the explanation of this parable; and also of that of the rich man and Lazarus, in the latter part of this chapter.

{n} Moses & Aaron, l. 6. c. 9. {o} Teelnianni Specimen Explicat. Parabolarum.

Luke 16:8

Ver. 8. And the Lord commended the unjust steward,.... Not the Lord Jesus Christ, who delivered this parable, as the Syriac version seems to suggest, rendering it, "our Lord"; but the Lord of the steward, or "God", as the Ethiopic version reads: not that he commended him for the fact he did, or the injustice of it for this is contrary to his nature and perfections; but for his craft and cunning in providing himself a maintenance for time to come: for he is on that account branded as an "unjust steward", as he was, in wasting his Lord's goods; putting false glosses on the Scriptures; doing damage both to the souls and worldly estates of men: and in neglecting and despising lawful and honest ways of living, by digging or begging, asking favours at the hand of God, and doing good works; and in falsifying accounts; breaking the least of the commandments, and teaching men so to do; and in corrupting others, making proselytes twofold more the children of hell than himself; and in being liberal with another's property, to wrong objects, and for a wrong end. It was not therefore because he had done justly to his Lord, or right to others, that he is commended; but

became he had done wisely for himself: the wit, and not the goodness of the man is commended; which, in the language and sense of the Jews, may be thus expressed {p}:

"because a man, wmuel hbwj hvwe, "does good" for himself with "mammon" which is not his own."

For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light: by "the children of this world" may be meant the Israelites, who belonged to the Jewish nation and church, called the "world", and "this world", 1Co 10:11 especially the princes of it, the ecclesiastical doctors and rulers: and who also were the men of this present world; in general they were such who

were, as they were born into the world; in their sins, in the pollution, and under the guilt of them; were carnal, in the flesh, or unregenerate, and in darkness and blindness: they were such as were not only in the world, but of it; they belonged to it, having never been called out of it; and were under the influence of the God of it; and were taken with the things of it, its riches, honours, and pleasures; and had their portion in it, and were of worldly spirits; all which agrees with the Scribes and Pharisees; see Ps 17:14 and Aben Ezra on it, who has the very phrase here used: amled
synya, a "man of the world", is sometimes {q} distinguished from a scholar, or a wise man; but amle ynb, "the children of the world", as they frequently intend the inhabitants of the world {r}, are sometimes distinguished from ytad amle Nb, "a son of the world to come" {s}; and from "the children of faith" {t}, the same as "the children of light" here; by whom are meant the children of the Gospel dispensation; or persons enlightened by the Spirit and grace of God, to see the sinfulness of sin, and their wretched state my nature; the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them before God; the way of life, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; who see that the several parts of salvation, and the whole, are of grace; have some light into the Scriptures of truth, and doctrines of the Gospel; and some glimpse of heaven, and the unseen glories of another world, though attended with much darkness in the present state: and who shall enjoy the light of glory. Now, the men of the world, or carnal men, are, generally speaking, wiser than these; not in things spiritual, but in things natural, in the affairs of life, in worldly matters. The phrase seems to answer to twdlwt, "generations" used in **Ge 6:9** "these are the generations of Noah", &c. and "the generations of Jacob"; by which are meant, not the genealogies of them, but their affairs; what befell them in life: as so the Jewish writers {u} explain the phrase by twrwqh, "the things which happened" unto them in this world, in the course of their pilgrimage: or they are wise, eiv thn genean thn eautwn, "for their own generation": for the temporal good of their posterity, than saints are for the spiritual good of theirs: or they are wiser for the time that is to come in this life, than good men are concerning themselves for the time to come in the other world: or they are wiser, and more prudent in disposing of their worldly substance for their own secular good, and that of their offspring, than men of spiritual light and knowledge are, in disposing of their worldly substance for the glory of God, the interest of Christ, the honour of religion, their own spiritual good, and that of their posterity.

{p} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 121. 1. {q} T. Bab Bava Netzia, fol. 27. 2. {r} Zohar in Exod. fol. 26. 2. & 58. 3, 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 99. 3. & 101. 2. & 102. 4. {s} Zohar in Exod. fol. 59. 4. {t} Zohar in Num. fol. 50. 4. {u} Aben

Ezra in Gen. vi. 9. & xxxvii. 2. Sol. Urbin Obel Moed, fol. 85. 1.

Luke 16:9

Ver. 9. And I say unto you,.... These are the words of Christ, as are also the latter part of the preceding verse, accommodating and applying the parable to his disciples, and for their instruction:

make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness: by "mammon" are designed riches, wealth, and substance;
See Gill on "Mt 6:24" and is called "mammon of unrighteousness", because such wealth is often unrighteously detained, and is not made use of to right and good purposes, by the owners of it; or because, generally speaking, it is possessed by unrighteous men; and, for the most part, used in an unrighteous manner, in luxury, pride and intemperance, and is the root, instrument, and means of such unrighteousness: or it maybe rendered "mammon of hurt", or "hurtful mammon"; as it often is to those who are over anxious and desirous of it, or other disuse or misuse of it: or, as best of all, "mammon of falsehood", or "deceitful mammon"; so in the Targum {w}, frequent mention is made of rqvd Nwmm, "mammon of falsity"; and stands opposed to "true riches" in Lu 16:10 for worldly riches are very empty and fallacious; wherefore deceitfulness is ascribed to them; and they are called uncertain riches, which are not to be depended upon.
Mt 13:22 unless it should be rather thought that it is so called, because gotten in an unrighteous way; as it was by Zacchaeus, and might be by Matthew, one of the disciples, Christ now speaks to, and the publicans and sinners, who were lately become his followers, and whom he advises, as the highest piece of wisdom and prudence, to dispose of in such a manner, as of it to "make" themselves "friends"; not God, Father, Son, and Spirit. These indeed are friends to the saints, but they are not made so by money; reconciliation and redemption are not procured this way; nor is the favour of the judge to be got by such means; the only means of reconciliation, are the blood and death of Christ; though indeed acts of beneficence, rightly performed, are well pleasing to God: nor are the angels meant, who are very friendly to all good men; nor rich men, to whom riches are not to be given, Pr 22:16 but rather riches themselves, which, if not rightly used, and so made friends of, will cry, and be a witness against the owners of them, **Jas 5:1** though it may be the poor saints are intended; who by their prayers are capable of doing either a great deal of hurt, or a great deal of good; and it is the interest of rich men to make them their friends:

that when ye fail: of money; or "that fails", as the Ethiopic version reads; or rather, when ye leave that, that is, when ye die; so in Jer 42:22 "know certainly that ye shall die"; the Septuagint renders it, ekleiqete, "ye shall fall by the sword", &c.

they may receive you into everlasting habitations: the mansions of glory, which are many, and of an eternal duration: this is to be understood of their being received thither, not by the poor, to whom they have been benefactors; for though these may now pray for their reception to glory when they die, and will hereafter rejoice at their reception thither; yet they themselves will not be receivers of them, or their introducers into the everlasting tents, or tabernacles: nor are the angels intended, who carry the souls of the righteous into Abraham's bosom, and will gather the elect together at the last day; for not they, but God and Christ, receive the saints to glory: the words may be rendered impersonally, "you may be received"; in a way of welldoing, though not for it; mention is made of the "everlasting tabernacles", in

"Their glory also will I take unto me, and give these the everlasting tabernacles, which I had prepared for them." (2 Esdras 2:11)

and so the phrase may be rendered here, as opposed to the earthly and perishable tabernacles of the body **2Co 5:1**

{w} Targum in Job xxvii. 8. & in Isa v. 23. & xxxiii. 15. & in Ezek. xxii. 27. & in Hos. v. 11.

Luke 16:10

Ver. 10. He that is faithful in that which is least,.... In quantity and quality, especially the latter; in that which is of little value and worth, at least when compared with other things:

is faithful also in much: in matters of greater consequence and importance: the sense of the proverb is, that, generally speaking, a man that acts a faithful part in a small trust committed to him, does so likewise in a much larger; and being tried, and found faithful in things of less moment, he is intrusted with things of greater importance; though this is not always the case: for sometimes a man may behave with great integrity in lesser matters, on purpose that he might gain greater confidence, which, when he has obtained, he abuses in the vilest manner; but because it is usually otherwise, our Lord uses the common proverb; and of like sense is the following;

and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much: that man that acts the unfaithful part in a small matter, and of little worth, generally does the same, if a greater trust is committed to him.

Luke 16:11

Ver. 11. If therefore ye have not been faithful,.... This is the application of the above proverbial expressions, and seems to be directed to the disciples of Christ, though not without a view to the covetous Scribes and Pharisees, who were in hearing of it, and were disturbed at it, Lu 16:14 and the meaning is, that whereas some of them might have been unfaithful, and have acted the unjust part of gathering of riches, as Matthew, and other publicans, that were now become the followers of Christ; if therefore they should be unfaithful

in the unrighteous mammon; in the disposing of it to improper uses, which was either unrighteously gotten, and therefore called, as it sometimes was, evrd Nwmm, "mammon of ungodliness", or "ungodly mammon" {x}; or, which was fallacious, deceitful, vain, and transitory:

who will commit to your trust the true riches; or mammon? that is, how should you expect to be intrusted with the riches of grace, as the blessings and promises of the covenant of grace, the graces of the Spirit of God, which truly enrich persons, and are solid and durable? or the riches of glory, the better and more enduring substance in heaven, signified by a kingdom, and an inheritance that fadeth not away? so the Jews call the good things of another world, and say {y}, that

"all the good things of this world are not twytma twbwj, "true good things", in comparison of the good things of the world to come."

And they use the same distinction with respect to "mammon", as here:

"the holy, blessed God, they say {z}, gives him, tma lv
Nwmm, "mammon of truth", or true mammon; and he makes it rqv, "false", or deceitful:"

or rather the rich treasure of the Gospel is meant, called a treasure in earthen vessels, and the unsearchable riches of Christ; and is comparable to, and of more worth than gold, silver, and precious stones. And so the Syriac version renders it, "who will trust you with the truth?" with the truth of the Gospel.

{x} Targum in Hab. ii. 9. {y} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 23. 2. {z} Shemot Rabba, sect. 31. fol. 134. 4.

Luke 16:12

Ver. 12. And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's,.... Which is not a man's own, but what is committed to him by another; Myrxa Nwmmb, "with the mammon of others {a}", to speak in the language of the Jews; and of mammon, our Lord is speaking, and here of another man's, of which they were only stewards, as he in the preceding parable was: hence we read {b} of
Nwmm yrmwv, "keepers of mammon", who were intrusted with another's substance; and such are here supposed, which, if unfaithful in,

who shall give you that which is your own? that is, should you unjustly detain, or make an ill use of another man's substance lodged in your hands, how can you expect but that you will be dealt with in like manner by others, who will not pay you yours, they have in their possession, but convert it to their own use? A like distinction of another's and a man's own, may be observed among the Jews:

"there are (say they {c},) four sorts of men in respect of giving alms; he that would give, but would not have others give, his eye is evil, Myrxa lvb, "in that which is other men's" (i.e. as the commentator observes {d}, lest the goods of others should be increased, and they get a good name); he that would that others should give, but he will not give himself, his eye is evil, wlvb, "in that which is his own"; he that gives, and would have others give, he is a "good man"; he that neither gives, nor would have others give, he is an "ungodly man";"

see Ro 5:7. Interpreters generally understand by "that which is another man's", in the first clause, the things of this world, which men are possessed of, because these are not of themselves, but from another, from God; and they are but stewards, rather than proprietors of them; and they are for the good of others, and not for themselves; and are not lasting, but in a little while will pass from them to others: and by "that which is your own", they understand the good things of grace and glory, which, when once bestowed on man, are his own property, and for his own use, and will never be alienated from him, but will always abide with him: but if he is unfaithful in the former, how should he expect the latter to be given to him?

{a} Jarchi in Pirke Abot, c. 5, sect. 13. {b} T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 53. 1. {c} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 13. {d} Jarchi in ib.

Luke 16:13

Ver. 13. No servant can serve two masters,....
See Gill on "Mt 6:24".

Luke 16:14

Ver. 14. And the Pharisees also who were covetous,.... Or lovers of money, the love of which is the root of all evil; and that they were, is evident from their devouring widows' houses, under a pretence of making long prayers for them, Mt 23:14

heard all these things; as well as the disciples, being in company with them, Lu 15:2 even the parable concerning the unjust steward, and the application of it; and the directions given about using the things of this world, and the distributing of them to the poor, and showing a greater concern for riches of an higher nature:

and they derided him: lift up their nose, or drew it out to him, as the word signifies, in a sneering way; they rejected and despised what he said about their injustice, in their stewardship; the calling of them to an account for it, and the turning of them out of it; and concerning the true use of worldly riches, and the contempt of them; they looked upon themselves safe and secure in the good opinion of the people, and happy in the enjoyment of worldly things; and looked upon him as a weak man, to talk in the manner he did.

Luke 16:15

Ver. 15. And he said unto them,.... That is, Jesus said unto them, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it: "ye are they which justify yourselves before men": from the sins of injustice, unfaithfulness, covetousness, and all others; and would be thought, and appear to be righteous; but it is only in the sight of men, who can only see the outside of things, and judge thereby:

but God knoweth your hearts; and what is in them, the deceitfulness, hypocrisy, covetousness, and cruelty of them, which are hid from the eyes of men:

for that which is highly esteemed among men; or what is high in the account and esteem of men, as the outward appearance of these men for morality, religion, and holiness; their zeal for the ceremonies of the law, and the traditions of the elders:

is abomination in the sight of God; who knew full well from what principles, and with what views they acted, to gain popular applause, and amass riches to themselves, without any concern for the glory of God, and the good of men: see Isa 65:5.

Luke 16:16

Ver. 16. The law and the prophets were until John,.... Till the time that John the Baptist began his ministry; for till then, the law and the prophets, with the Hagiographa, or holy writings, for into these three parts the Jews divided the books of the Old Testament, were the only writings they had; and which contained the whole of the revelation granted to them; and which they wrested, and put false glosses on; and therefore it was no wonder that they derided Christ, and despised his ministry: and whereas spiritual things were promised in these writings, under the notion of temporal ones; which they not understanding, might imagine the doctrine of Christ, concerning the contempt of worldly riches, was contrary to: and since they valued themselves on having the law and the prophets, Christ observes, that

since that time, the kingdom of God is preached; the Gospel, and the mysteries of relating to the kingdom of the Messiah, his person, office, and grace; and to the kingdom of grace, which lies not in outward, but in inward and spiritual things; and to the kingdom of heaven, or glory hereafter; and which is a superior dispensation to that of the law and the prophets, and sets things in a clearer, plainer, and better light:

and every man presseth into it; the Gospel dispensation, the kingdom of the

Messiah; "that he may enter into it", as the Syriac and Persic versions add; which the Scribes and Pharisees did all they could to hinder; see Mt 23:13 large multitudes crowded the ministry of John, of Christ, and of his apostles; the people flocked in great numbers to hear the word, and seemed disposed to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; they pressed on one another to hear it, and through many difficulties, discouragements, and obstacles, the Pharisees threw in their way; there was scarce a man but seemed very desirous of attending upon the preaching of it, and pressed hard for it; and with much force and violence, with great eagerness and endeavour broke his way to it; though a different sense is given by others reading the words, and "every one suffers violence to himself for it", as the Arabic version; or "is oppressed for it", as the Ethiopic; that is, suffers reproach, contradiction, and persecution, for the sake of hearing it.

Luke 16:17

Ver. 17. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass,.... This is said by Christ, lest it should be thought by his saying, that the law and the prophets were until John, that they were no longer, nor of any more use; but were now abrogated and laid aside; whereas heaven and earth might sooner pass away, and the whole frame of nature be dissolved:

than one tittle of the law to fail; which, and the prophets, in all the precepts, promises, types, figures, prophecies, &c. thereof, had their full accomplishment in the person, miracles, obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ; see **Mt 5:18**.

Luke 16:18

Ver. 18. Whosoever putteth away his wife,.... For any other cause than for adultery, as the Jews used to do upon every trifling occasion, and for every little disgust: by which instance our Lord shows, how the Jews abused and depraved the law, and as much as in them lay, caused it to fail; and how he, on the other hand, was so far from destroying and making it of none effect, that he maintained the purity and spirituality of it; putting them in mind of what he had formerly said, and of many other things of the like kind along with it; how that if a man divorces his wife, for any thing else but the defiling his bed,

and marrieth another, committeth adultery: with her that he marries: because his marriage with the former still continues, and cannot be made void by, such a divorce:

and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband; the phrase "from her husband", is omitted in the Syriac and Persic versions:

committeth adultery; with her that he marries, because notwithstanding her husband's divorce of her, and his after marriage with her, she still remains his lawful and proper wife;
See Gill on "Mt 5:32". The Ethiopic version reads this last clause, quite different from all others, thus, "and whosoever puts away her husband, and joins to another, commits adultery", agreeably to
See Gill on "Mr 10:12".

Luke 16:19

Ver. 19. There was a certain rich man,.... In Beza's most ancient copy, and in another manuscript of his it is read by way of preface, "he said also another parable": which shows, that this is not a history of matter of fact, or an historical account of two such persons, as the "rich" man and the beggar, who had lately lived at Jerusalem; though the Papists pretend, to this day, to point out the very spot of ground in Jerusalem, where this rich man's house stood: nor is it to be understood parabolically of any particular rich man, or prince; as Saul the first king of Israel; or Herod, who now was reigning, and was clothed in purple, and lived in a sumptuous manner: nor of rich men in general, though it greatly describes the characters of such, at least of many of them; who only take care of their bodies, and neglect their souls; adorn and pamper them, live in pleasure, and grow wanton, and have no regard to the poor saints; and when they die go to hell; for their riches will not profit them in a day of wrath, nor deliver from it, or be regarded by the Judge, any more than hills and mountains will hide them from his face: but by the rich man are meant, the Jews in general; for that this man is represented, and to be considered as a Jew, is evident from Abraham being his father, and his calling him so, and Abraham again calling him his son, Lu 16:24 of which relation the Jews much boasted and gloried in; and from his brethren having Moses and the prophets, Lu 16:29 which were peculiar to the Jewish people; and from that invincible and incurable infidelity in them, that they would not believe, though one rose from the dead, Lu 16:31 as the Jews would not believe in Christ though he himself rose from the dead, which was the sign he gave them of his being the Messiah: and the general design of the parable, is to expose the wickedness and unbelief of the Jews, and to show their danger and misery, for their contempt and rejection of the Messiah; and particularly the Pharisees are designed, who being covetous, had derided Christ for what he had before said; and, who though high in the esteem of men, were an abomination to God, Lu 16:14. These more especially boasted of Abraham being their father; and of their being the disciples of Moses, and trusted in him, and in his law; and thought they should have eternal life through having and reading the books of Moses and the prophets: these may be called "a man", because this was the name by which the Jews style themselves, in distinction from the Gentiles, whom they compare to beasts; See Gill on "Mt 15:26" and this they ground on a passage in Eze 34:31 "and ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men": upon which their note is {e},

"ye are called, Mda, "men", but the nations of the earth are not called men."

And they may be called a "certain" man, a famous man, a man of note, as the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, thought themselves to be; and therefore coveted the chief places in the synagogues, and at feasts, and loved salutations and greetings in market places, and to be called of men Rabbi, and master: as also a "rich man"; for the Jews in general were a wealthy people, lived in a very fruitful country, and were greatly indulged with the riches of providential goodness; and particularly the Pharisees, many of whom were of the great sanhedrim, and rulers of synagogues, and elders of the people; and who by various methods, amassed to themselves great riches, and even devoured widows' houses; see **Lu 6:24** and they were also rich in outward means and ordinances, having the oracles of God, his word, worship, and service; and as to their spiritual and eternal estate, in their own esteem; though they were not truly rich in grace, not in faith, nor in spiritual knowledge, nor even in good works, of which they so much boasted; but in appearance, and in their own conceit, they were rich in the knowledge of the law, and in righteousness, which they imagined was perfect, and so stood in need of nothing; no, not of repentance, and especially of Christ, or of any thing from him:

which was clothed in purple and fine linen; or "byssus", which is said to {f} grow on a tree, in height equal to a poplar, and in leaves like a willow, and was brought out of India into Egypt, and much used there, as it also was among the Jews: hence we often read {g} of auwb or Uwbd Nyvwbl "garments of byssus", or fine linen: the Jews in general dressed well; their common apparel were fine linen and silk; see Eze 16:10 and so the Arabic version here renders it, "silk and purple"; and the Persic version, "silks and bombycines": and the priests particularly, were arrayed in such a habit; the robe of the ephod, and also its curious girdle, were of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen, and at the hem of it were pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, Ex 28:6. And as for the Pharisees, they loved to go in long robes, and to make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, which were fringes of blue, joined unto them; and which may figuratively express the fine outside show of holiness and righteousness, they made;

and fared sumptuously every day. The Jews in common lived well, being in a land that flowed with milk and honey; see Eze 16:13 and especially the priests, who offered up lambs every day, besides other offerings, of which they had their part; as also the Pharisees, who were often at feasts, where they loved the chief places: and this may signify the easy and jocund life they lived; knowing no sorrow upon spiritual accounts, having no sense of sin, nor sight of the spirituality of the law, nor view of danger; but at perfect ease, and not emptied from vessel to vessel.

{e} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 114. 2. & Kimchi in loc. {f} Philostrat. Vit. Appollon. l. 2. c. 9. {g} Targum in Gen. xli. 42. in 2 Chron. v. 12. & in Ezek. xliv. 17.

Luke 16:20

Ver. 20. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus,.... By whom is designed, not any particular beggar in the times of Christ, that went by this name; though there were such persons in Israel, and in the times of our Lord; as blind Bartimaeus, and others: nor David, in the times of Saul, who was poor and needy; and who sometimes wanted bread, and at a certain time went to Abimelech for some: nor the godly poor in common, though the heirs of the heavenly kingdom are, generally speaking, the poor of this world; these receive Christ and his Gospel, and have their evil things here, and their good things hereafter; they are now slighted and neglected by men, but shall hereafter have a place in Abraham's bosom, and be for ever with the Lord: nor are the Gentiles intended; though they may be said to be poor and helpless, as they were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, and without hope and God in the world; and were despised and rejected by the Jews, and not suffered to come into their temple, and were called and treated as dogs; though, as the Syrophenician woman pleaded, the dogs might eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table; and who, upon the breaking down of the middle wall of partition, were called by grace, and drawn to Christ, and were blessed with faithful Abraham, and made to sit down with him in the kingdom of heaven: but our Lord Jesus Christ himself is here meant; as appears from the cause and occasion of this parable, which was the derision of Christ by the covetous Pharisees, who, though high in the esteem of men, were an abomination to God; and from the scope and design of it, which is to represent the mean and despicable condition of Christ in this world, whilst the Pharisees, his enemies, lived in great pomp and splendour; and the exaltation of Christ hereafter, when they would be in the utmost distress; and also the infidelity of that people, who continued in their unbelief, notwithstanding the resurrection of Christ from the dead: the name Lazarus well agrees with him. The Syriac version calls him "Loozar", as if it signified one that was helpless, that had no help, but wanted it, and so a fit name for a beggar; and well suits with Christ, who looked, and there was none to help, Isa 63:5 nor did he receive any help from men; though rather, the word is the contraction of Eleazar, and so the Ethiopic version reads it here; and it is easy to observe, that he who is called R. Eleazar in the Babylonian Talmud, is in the Jerusalem called, times without number, rzel br, R. Lazar {h}; and R. Liezer, is put for R. Eliezer: it is a rule given by one of the Jewish writers {i}, that

"in the Jerusalem Talmud, wherever R. Eleazar is written without an "aleph", R. Lazar ben Azariah is intended."

And Christ may very well be called by this name; since this was the name of one of his types, Eleazer the son of Aaron, and one of his ancestors, who is mentioned in his genealogy, **Mt 1:15** and especially as the name signifies, that the Lord was his helper: see
Ex 18:4. Help was promised him by God, and he expected it, and firmly believed he should have it, and accordingly he had it: God did help him in a day of salvation: and which was no indication of weakness in him, who is the mighty God, and mighty to save; but of the Father's regard to him as man, and mediator; and of the concern that each of the divine persons had for, and in man's salvation: and on account of his circumstances of life, he might be called ptwcov, a "poor man", as he is in **2Co 8:9** and frequently in prophecy; see Ps 34:6 **Zec 9:9** and though by assuming human nature, he did not cease to be God, or to lose the riches of his divine nature and perfections, yet his divine perfections, and the glory of them, were much hid and covered in his state of humiliation; and he was much the reverse of many of them in his human nature; in which he was exposed to much outward poverty and meanness: he was born of poor parents; had no liberal education; was brought up to a trade: had not a foot of ground to call his own, nor where to lay his head: and lived upon the ministrations of others to him; and when he died, had nothing to

bequeath his mother, but left her to the care of a disciple: and he is further described, by his posture and situation,

which was laid at his gate; that is, at the "rich man's", as is expressed in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions: this was the place where beggars stood, or were laid, and asked alms; hence is that rule with the Jews {k}, and in many other places the following phrase;

"if a man dies and leaves sons and daughters---if he leaves but a small substance, the daughters shall be taken care of, and the sons, Myxtph le wlavy, "shall beg at the gates.""

This denotes the rejection of Christ by the Jews; he came to them, and they received him not; he had no entrance into their hearts, and was admitted but into few of their houses; they put those that confessed him out of their synagogues; and caused him himself to depart out of some of their cities; they delivered him up unto the Gentiles that were without; and at last led him without the gate of Jerusalem, where he suffered:

full of sores; so Nahum Gamzu {l} is said to have his whole body, Nyxv alm, "full of ulcers": sometimes the Jewish phrase, which answers to the word here used, is Nyxv hkwm, "one plagued with ulcers" {m}; and this by the commentators {n}, is explained of a "leprous" person; so one of the names of the Messiah is with the Jews {o}, arwwyx, which signifies "leprous", in proof of which, they produce Isa 53:4. "Surely he hath borne our griefs", &c. By these "sores" may be meant, sins; see Ps 38:5. Christ was holy and righteous in himself, in his nature, life, and conversation; he was without both original, and actual sins, yet he was in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was reproached and calumniated by men as a sinner; and had really and actually all the sins of his people on him, by imputation; and was made even sin itself, for them; so that in this sense he might be said to be full of them, though in himself he was free from them: they may also intend the temptations of Satan, those fiery darts which were flung at him, and by which he suffered; as also the reproaches and persecutions of men, which attended him more or less, from the cradle to the cross; together with all his other sorrows and sufferings, being scourged, buffeted, and beaten, and wounded for our sins, and bruised for our transgressions; of which wounds and bruises he might be said to be full.

{h} T. Hieros. Biccurim, fol. 63. 3, 4. & 64. 1. & 65. 3, 4. & Sheviith, fol. 36. 3. & passim. {i} Juchasin, fol. 81. 1. {k} Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 9. sect. 1. & T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 140. 2. Piske Tosaph. in Cetubot, art. 138, 372. {l} T.

Bab. Taanith, fol. 21. 1. {m} Misn. Cetubot, c. 3. sect. 5. & 7. 10. {n} Maimon. & Bartenora in lb. {o} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.

Luke 16:21

Ver. 21. And desiring to be fed with the crumbs,.... The offal food, broken bread, fragments of meat: that food which falls from the knife, or plate, in eating, and from thence on the ground; and literally understood, may express the low condition Christ was in, in his human nature: he assumed a true body, like to ours, and partook of the same flesh and blood with us, and was liable to the same infirmities as ours, which are sinless; and among the rest, was subject to hunger and thirst, and was obliged to the ministration of others for a subsistence: and it may also express his contentment in such a condition; he never murmured at the providence of God, but was entirely, resigned to his will; he did not desire to live in fulness and affluence, but avoided and shunned every step that led unto it; nor did he envy the plenty of others, and was fully satisfied with his meanness; nor did he ever work a miracle for the sake of feeding himself. Moreover, the words being understood mystically, may design the elect of God among the Jews, who, like crumbs, were few in number, a seed, a remnant, according to the election of grace; there were but few among them that were chosen of God, and effectually called by his grace; and but a little flock to whom he gave the kingdom; and a small number, who entered in at the strait gate, and were saved; and these few were very mean and despicable for their outward poverty; for the poor had the Gospel preached to them, and they received it, when the rich, and the rulers of the people, rejected it: and they were like crumbs their small degree of worldly wisdom and knowledge, being babes, simple, and foolish, who followed Christ, while the learned, wise, and prudent despised him; and for their sinfulness and vileness, being, generally speaking, notorious sinners, publicans and harlots; and of these it may be said what follows,

which fell from the rich man's table; being originally of the Jews, but separated from them by the grace of God, and rejected by them with scorn and contempt. These Christ "desired"; see **So 7:10** his desire was towards them from everlasting, when he asked them of his Father, and they were given to him; and it was not only after their persons, but after their salvation, and that both in eternity and in time; and which he signified by various words and actions; and it is towards them, while in a state of unregeneracy, that they may be converted, and believe in him; and when they are called, he delights in the grace he puts in them, and in the righteousness he puts upon them; he takes

pleasure in their company; he desires them for his habitation; he stands at the door and knocks for admission to them; and nothing is he more earnestly solicitous for, and eager after, than their being with him in glory to all eternity; and his end in all, "is to be fed" or "satisfied with them"; see Isa 53:11 he came into the world to gather these scattered crumbs and fragments together; it was his meat and drink, to work out their salvation; and it will be his highest joy and pleasure to present them to his Father, and himself, complete and perfect, and introduce them into his kingdom and glory: he will be fully satisfied in them, and they in him, when they shall awake in his likeness. Then will all Christ's desires, prayers, and intercessions, have their full accomplishment. The Vulgate Latin adds, "and no man gave to him"; which seems to be transcribed from
Lu 15:16 and is not supported by any copy or version.

Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores: by the dogs are meant not the Jews, though they are sometimes so called, and especially the Scribes and Pharisees, Ps 22:16 for these made his sores and wounds, or were the authors of his sorrows and sufferings; but rather the Gentiles, who were so called by the Jews; See Gill on "Mt 15:26" because these creatures were unclean by the law, and had in the greatest contempt by the Jews; and for their barbarity, malice, and cruelty,
De 23:18 as the Gentiles were by the Jews esteemed unclean and unfit, either for civil or religious conversation; and were treated as aliens by them; and were indeed in their Heathenish state, barbarous and inhuman, and lived in malice, hateful, and hating one another: these, some of them came to Christ in person, as the centurion, and Syrophenician woman, many of the Samaritans, who, with the Jews, were all one as Heathens, and several Grecians at the feast; and many of them also came to him by faith, through the ministry of his servants, under the influence of divine grace, and that according to various prophecies in the Old Testament, concerning the calling and gathering of the Gentiles to him: these embraced a crucified Christ; and fed upon the slain Lamb of God; eat his flesh, and drank his blood; stretched forth the hand of faith, and thrust it into his bleeding wounds; and lived by faith on him, who was wounded and bruised for their sins, and whose blood was shed for the remission of them.

Luke 16:22

Ver. 22. And it came to pass that the beggar died,.... The death of Christ was not a casual thing, a fortuitous event; it was agreed unto, and settled in the covenant of grace; it was spoken of by the prophets of the Old Testament; it was typified by the sacrifices of the law, and other things; it was foretold by Christ himself, and was the end of his coming into this world, wherein the great love, both of him and of his Father, is expressed; and is the main article of the Christian faith; so that this came to pass according to the decrees of God, the counsel, and covenant of peace, the will of Christ, and his predictions, and as the accomplishment of the law, and prophets: it was not a natural, but violent death which Christ died; and yet it was both voluntary and necessary; it was but once, and is of an eternal efficacy, and is a sacrifice acceptable to God; it was not for himself, or any sin of his, who knew none, nor for the angels, and their redemption, whose nature he did not assume; but for men, and for their sins. Christ died not merely as an example to them, or only to confirm his doctrines; but as a substitute, in the room and stead of his people; to atone for their sins, and satisfy divine justice; to procure the pardon of them in a way of justice; to take them away, and utterly abolish them; to bring in an everlasting righteousness; to obtain eternal redemption, and bring such nigh to God who were afar off, and that men might live through him now, and have eternal life by him hereafter:

and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: by Abraham's bosom is meant heaven, a phrase well known to the Jews, by which they commonly expressed the happiness of the future state: of Abraham's happy state they had no doubt; and when they spake of the happiness of another's, they sometimes signified it by going to Abraham; as when the mother of the seven sons, slain by Caesar, saw her youngest going to be sacrificed {p}

"she fell upon him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and said unto him, my son, Mkyba Mhrba lua Kl, "go to Abraham, your father", and tell him, thus saith my mother, &c."

and sometimes, as here, by being in his bosom. So it is said {q}, that Eliezer his servant (Abraham's, the same name with Lazarus) wqyxb hnwm, "is laid in his bosom": and which may refer to the account in the Talmud {r}, that when R. Benaah, the painter of caves, came to the cave of Abraham, he found Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, hymq yaqd, "standing before him". And it is also said {s} of Rabbi, when he died, Mhrba lv wqyxb bvwy Mwyh, "this day he sits in the bosom of Abraham"; for as it was usual with them to represent the joys of heaven by a feast, so the partaking of them, by sitting down at a table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; see **Mt 8:11** and as their manner at meals was by lying along on couches at eating; he that lay next another might be said to lie, or lean, in his bosom: hence Abraham's bosom

came to signify the near and intimate enjoyment of happiness with him in the other world. The ascension of Christ is expressed by a being "carried up into heaven",
Lu 24:51 and here he is entered, and has been received, and will be retained, until the time of the restitution of all things; here he is glorified in human nature, sits at the right hand of God, and appears in his presence, on the behalf of his people; and indeed, the ends of his going there, were to receive gifts for them, to be their advocate and intercessor, to take possession of heaven in their name, and prepare that for them, and them for that; and hither "he was carried by angels": these were the chariots in which he rode; and these the guard that attended him, when he was seen, looked upon, and gazed at by them with adoration, faith, and wonder; which shows the ministration of angels to him, and seems to set forth the glory and magnificence in which he ascended; and this agrees with the notions of the Jews, that when good men die, their souls are immediately received by angels, and taken under their care, and carried to heaven. So one of their paraphrasts {t} having mentioned the garden of Eden, which is but another name for heaven with them, adds,

"into which no man can enter but the righteous, whose souls are "carried" thither, aykalm dyb, "in the hand", or "by the means" of angels."

And elsewhere they say {u},

"with the Shekinah come three ministering angels to receive the soul of a righteous man."

Particularly it is said of Moses, at the time of his death {w}, that

"the holy blessed God descended from the highest heavens, to take the soul of Moses, and three ministering angels with him."

And sometimes they say {x}, not only three angels, but three companies of angels attend at such a time: their words are these;

"when a righteous man departs out of the world, three companies of ministering angels meet him; one says to him, "come in peace"; and another says, "walking in his uprightness" and the other says, "he shall enter into peace", &c."

No mention is made in this parable of the burial of this man, nor any words used expressive of it, or that in the least hint it. The reason is, because Christ lay so short a time in the grave, and he was not left there, nor did he see corruption; but in a very little while was raised from the dead, and delivered from the power of the grave; when, after some stay on earth, he was attended by angels to the highest heavens: for this is to be understood, not of his soul being had to paradise immediately upon his separation from the body; but of his ascension to heaven after his resurrection, when he was escorted by angels thither.

The rich man also died. This may be understood both of the natural death of the Scribes and Pharisees; who, though they were dignified persons, were as gods, yet were mortal, and died like men; see Ps 82:6 compared with Joh 10:34 and they died in their sins, in their unbelief of the Messiah, and so were damned; in their impenitence and hardness of heart, for as they thought they needed no repentance, they were not called unto it; and in the sin against the Holy Ghost, blaspheming the miracles of Christ done by him, and which was a sin unto death; and under the power and guilt of all their other sins, and so were lost and perished. And it may also be understood of the political and ecclesiastical death of the Jewish people; which lay in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and of the temple, and in the abolition of the temple worship, and of the whole ceremonial law; a "Lo-ammi" was written upon their church state, and the covenant between God and them was broken; the Gospel was removed from them, which was as death, as the return of it, and their call by it, will be as life from the dead; as well as their place and nation, their civil power and authority were taken away from them by the Romans: and a death of afflictions, by captivity and calamities, of every kind, have attended them ever since. And it is to be observed, that Lazarus died before the rich man, as Christ died before the destruction of the Jewish polity and church state: the city and sanctuary were not destroyed, nor the daily sacrifice made to cease, nor the consummation, and that determined, poured upon the desolate, until some time after the Messiah was cut off, according to the prophecy in **Da 7:26**. Moreover, no mention is made of the rich man being carried by angels, as Lazarus was; and if he was, he was carried, not by the good, but by the evil angels, and not into Abraham's bosom, but to hell. So the Jews {y} say,

"if a soul is worthy, how many holy troops, or companies, are ready to join it, and bring it up into paradise? but if not worthy, how many strange troops are ready to bring it in the way of hell? these are the troops of the destroying angels."

However, this is said of him, as is not of Lazarus, and was buried: as wicked men are, when sometimes the saints are not; see **Ec 8:10**. The Scribes and Pharisees, who were so diligent to build and garnish the sepulchres of the prophets, among their other instances of pride and vanity, took care, no doubt, to provide and erect stately monuments for themselves: and who were buried in great pomp and splendour. Though this may respect their church state, service, and ceremonies, which received their death blow at the crucifixion of Christ, but remained for some time unburied, it being with difficulty that these things were got under the feet of the church; and may also refer to the political state of the Jews, who, as a nation, are represented as in their graves, where they are to this day, and will be until they shall be turned unto the Lord, when they shall be brought out of their graves, and shall live and return to their own land, Eze 37:12. The Vulgate Latin adds, "in hell"; but this belongs to the following verse.

{p} Echa Rabbati, fol. 49. 4. {q} In Sepher Emanah, c. 1. p. 20. {r} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 58. 1. {s} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 72. 2. Juchasin, fol. 75. 2. {t} Targum in Cant. iv. 12. {u} Midrash Haneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 65. 1. {w} Debarim Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 245. 4. {x} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 104. 1. {y} Zohar in Exod. fol. 39. 3.

Luke 16:23

Ver. 23. And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments,.... Which may design the place of torment, and the miserable state the Scribes and Pharisees, as all wicked men, enter immediately into upon death, **Ps 9:17** who in their lifetime were blind, and are called blind guides, blind watchmen, blind leaders of the blind, and who were given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart; but in hell their eyes are opened, and they see their mistakes about the Messiah, and find themselves in torments, under dreadful gnawings, and remorse of conscience; and having a terrible sensation of divine wrath, their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched: or this may regard the vengeance of God on the Jews, at the destruction of Jerusalem; when a fire was kindled against their land, and burned to the lowest hell; and consumed the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains; and the whole land became brimstone, salt, and burning; and they were rooted out of it in anger, wrath, and great indignation; see De 29:23 or rather, the dreadful calamities which came upon them in the times of Adrian at Bither; when their false Messiah Bar Cochab was taken and slain, and such multitudes of them were destroyed in the most miserable manner {z}, when that people, who before had their eyes darkened, and a spirit of slumber and stupidity fallen upon them, in those calamities began to be under some convictions:

and seeth Abraham afar off: the covenant of circumcision given to him, and to them his natural seed, now of no use to them; their descent from him, of which they boasted, and in which they trusted, now of no avail; and him in the kingdom of heaven, and themselves thrust out; see Lu 13:28.

And Lazarus in his bosom; they now found the Messiah was come, and was gone to heaven, whither they could not come, **Joh 7:33**. The Jews are convinced that the Messiah is born, though not revealed; and they sometimes confess, that he was born the same day Jerusalem was destroyed; and sometimes they say, he sits at the gates of Rome among the lepers, and at other times, that he is in the walks of paradise {a}. This is said in agreement with the notions of the Jews, that wicked men will see the righteous in happiness, and themselves in torment; by which the latter will be aggravated, to which the allusion is; for they say {b},

"the gates of paradise are fixed over against the gates of hell, so that they can see the righteous in rest, and themselves in distress."

{z} Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. col. 372. {a} Synagog. Jud. c. 50. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. Aben Ezra in Cant. vii. 5. T. Hieros Beracot, fol. 5. 1. {b} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 125. 3.

Luke 16:24

Ver. 24. And he cried and said, father Abraham,.... The Jews used to call Abraham their father, and were proud of their descent from him, **Mt 3:9** and so persons are after death represented by them, as speaking to, and discoursing with him; as in the passage cited in the note See Gill on "Lu 16:22" to which the following may be added {c};

"says R. Jonathan, from whence does it appear that the dead discourse with each other? it is said, De 34:4 "And the Lord said unto him, this is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying", &c. what is the meaning of the word "saying?" the holy blessed God said to Moses, "go say to Abraham", &c."

And here the Jews, in their distress, are represented as applying to him, saying, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus; which seems to have respect to the mercy promised to Abraham, the covenant made with him, and the oath swore unto him, to send the Messiah, **Lu 1:70** and which now, too late, these wretched Jews plead, the Messiah being sent already:

that he may dip the tip of his finger in water; in allusion to the washings and purifications among the Jews, and the sprinkling of blood by the finger of the high priest; which were typical of cleansing, pardon, comfort, and refreshment, by the grace and blood of Christ:

and cool my tongue; which had spoken so many scurrilous and blasphemous things of Christ; saying that he was a sinner, a glutton, and a winebibber, a Samaritan, and had a devil; that he cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils; and that he was a seditious person, and guilty of blasphemy: so the Jews represent persons in hell, desirous of cooling water, and as sometimes favoured with it, and sometimes not: they say {d}, he that reads "Keriat Shema, (i.e. hear, O Israel", &c.) and very accurately examines the letters of it, Nynnum, "they cool hell for him", as it is said,
Ps 68:14. And elsewhere {e}, they speak of a disciple, or good man, that was seen after death amidst gardens, and orchards, and fountains of water; and of a publican, or wicked man, seen standing by the bank of a river, seeking yjm alw aym yjmm, "to come to the water, but could not come at it". So Mahomet {f} has a passage that is somewhat like to this text;

"the inhabitants of hell fire, shall call to the inhabitants of paradise, saying, pour upon us some water, or of those refreshments God hath bestowed on you."

This man could not so much as get a drop of water to cool his tongue, not the least refreshment, nor mitigation of the anguish of his conscience, for the sins of his tongue:

for I am tormented in this flame; in the destruction of Jerusalem, and calamities at Bither, and other afflictions; together with the wrath of God poured into the conscience, and the bitter remorses of that for speaking against the Messiah; and which are still greater in hell, where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.

{c} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 18. 2. {d} Ib. fol. 15. 2. {e} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 23. 3. & Chagiga, fol, 77. 4. {f} Koran, c. 7. p. 121. (sura 7:50)

Luke 16:25

Ver. 25. But Abraham said, son,.... He calls him "son", not in a spiritual sense; he was not one of Abraham's spiritual seed, that trod in the steps of his faith; but because he was so according to the flesh; and in return to his calling him father: good men have not always good children, nor is any trust to be put in birth and parentage:

remember, that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things; temporal good things; a land flowing with milk and honey; all the outward blessings of life that could be wished for, the Jews had, whilst they were in their own land; and also ecclesiastical good things, as the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, the fathers, and the Messiah according to the flesh, even all external privileges and ordinances, **Ro 9:4**.

And likewise Lazarus evil things; Christ was surrounded with the infirmities of human nature, he assumed; was attended with much outward meanness and poverty; was loaded with calumnies and reproaches; and followed with the wrath, hatred, and persecution of men; and suffered many evil things, as buffetings, scourging, spitting, and cruel mockings, and at last death itself:

but now he is comforted; see Ps 16:9 compared with **Ac 2:25**. Christ being raised from the dead, and set in human nature at the right hand of God, is comforted with the presence of God, which for a while he was deprived of, when on the cross; and is delighted with the glory that it put upon him as man; and with pleasure sees the travail of his soul continually, his elect and redeemed ones, called and gathered by the grace of God, who are his jewels, his portion, and goodly heritage:

and thou art tormented; as were many of the Jews, his implacable enemies and persecutors in hell, and others in captivity, bondage, and distress.

Luke 16:26

Ver. 26. And besides all this,.... The different circumstances of each, both past and present, which should be observed and considered:

between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; as this may regard the state of the Pharisees after death, it intends not the natural distance between heaven and hell; though there may be an allusion to the notions of the Jews concerning that, who on those words in **Ec 7:14**. "God hath set the one over against the other", say {f},

"this is hell and paradise, what space is there between them? an hand's breadth; R. Jochanan says a wall, but the Rabbans say, they are both of them even, so that they may look out of one into another."

Which passage is cited a little differently {g}, thus;

"wherefore did the holy blessed God create hell and paradise? that they might be one against another; what space is there between them? R. Jochanan says, a wall, and R. Acha says an hand's breadth: but the Rabbans say, two fingers."

And elsewhere it {h} is said,

"know that hell and paradise are near to one another, and one house separates between them; and paradise is on the north east side---and hell on the north west."

Mahomet seems to have borrowed this notion from them, who says {i},

"between the blessed and the damned, there shall be a vail; and men shall stand on "Al Araf", (the name of the wall or partition, that shall separate paradise from hell,) who shall know every one of them by their mouths."

But not this natural space, be it what it will, but the immutable decree of God is intended here, which has unalterably fixed the state of the damned, and of the blessed:

so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence; not that those in heaven can desire to go to those in hell; though those in hell, may wish to be in heaven; but the sense is, that by this irrevocable decree of God, the saints in heaven are eternally happy, and the wicked in hell eternally miserable: and this also agrees with the notions of the Jews {k}, who represent it impossible: for a man, after he has descended into hell, to come up from thence any more: but as this may regard the Jews state of captivity and affliction, since the destruction of their city and temple, upon, and for their rejection of the Messiah; it may denote the impossibility of Christ's coming again upon the same errand he came on before, to be a Saviour of sinners, and a sacrifice for sin; and of the Jews believing in him, so long as they lie under the spirit of slumber, and are given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart.

{f} Midrash Kohelet, fol 76. 1. {g} Nishmat Chayim Orat. 1. sect. 12. fol. 31. 1. {h} Raziel, fol. 15. 1. {i} Koran, c. 7. p. 120. {k} Caphtor, fol. 70. 2.

Luke 16:27

Ver. 27. Then he said, I pray thee therefore father,.... The Cambridge, copy of Beza's, and the Ethiopic version read, "father Abraham"; finding he could have no redress of his misery, nor any relief for himself, he applies for others:

that thou wouldst send him to my father's house; the house of Israel and Jacob, the surviving Jews: and this agrees also with a notion of theirs, that the dead seek for mercy for them {l}. The Persic and Ethiopic versions read, "that thou wouldst send Lazarus", &c. whom the one calls Gazarus, and the other Eleazar.

{l} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 16. 1.

Luke 16:28

Ver. 28. For I have five brethren,.... Meaning his brethren and countrymen, according to the flesh; who when he was alive, stood in such a relation to him; said to be "five", in allusion it may be to the children of Israel coming out of Egypt, Myvmx, "by fives", or five in a rank, Ex 13:18 as a learned man {m} conjectures, to whom I am beholden for several hints, in the explanation of this parable; and certain it is, that these five brethren were Jews, since they had the writings of Moses and the prophets with them, Lu 16:29. Wherefore I shall venture to propose another conjecture, though it may be liable to exception, as all conjectures usually are: it is plain that there were "six" brethren in all; let it be observed then, that the Jewish nation were usually divided into "three" parts, "priests, Levites, and Israelites"; of these three the great sanhedrim usually consisted {n}; and these read the law every sabbath day; first a priest, then a Levite, and then "five Israelites" {o}; (let that number also be remarked;) now these were again divided into "three" sects, "Pharisees, Sadducees", and "Essenes". The former of these are represented in this parable; this I only propose, I lay no stress on it: it may be, that the twice five, or ten tribes of Israel, which were not known where they were, nor are they to this day, may be designed by a "synechdoche", of a part for the whole; whose return the Jews are yet expecting, and for whose welfare they are greatly concerned.

That he may testify unto them: that is, preach unto them, as the word is used in **Ac 2:40**. Christ, when here on earth, did testify to that people of their sins, showed them the heinousness of them, inveighed against them, and reproved for them; and of their righteousness, and showed the hypocrisy, deficiency, and insufficiency of it to justify them; of himself as the Messiah; of truth in general; and of their ruin, temporal and eternal; but he had now finished his testimony, and which, though faithful, was not heard nor received by them; the reason of this request is,

lest they also come into this place of torment; as hell is, and which these brethren of his, he left behind, were deserving of, and in danger of coming into; and his concern for them did not arise from any regard to Christ, and the enlargement of his interest; nor from any love to his testimony, the Gospel; nor from any real notion or desire of converting grace for his brethren; nor from true love to them; but from a selfish principle, lest his own torments should be aggravated by their coming: this, as it may regard the Jews in their affliction, and if the ten tribes should be meant by the five brethren, may design the very passionate concern the Jews had, and still have for them, who yet, to this day, hope for the return of them; see Manasseh ben Israel's book, called, "Spes Israelis".

{m} Teelmannus. {n} Maimon Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 2. {o} Ib. Hilchot Tephilla, c. 12. sect. 16.

Luke 16:29

Ver. 29. Abraham said unto him..... In reply to this his request:

they have Moses and the prophets; that is, their writings; which shows this man, and his five brethren, to be Jews; for to them were the oracles of God committed; and these had the writings of Moses and the prophets read to them every sabbath day; and is true, whether the contemporaries and immediate successors of the Pharisees are meant, or the ten tribes: and also shows, that one view of the parable, is to establish the authority of these writings; see Lu 16:16 and that it is a peculiar privilege to have them; and that they ought to be attended to and regarded;

let them hear them; for they testified concerning Christ, and concerning the sins of the Jews, and the calamities, both temporal and eternal, that should come upon them; and which, testimony was sufficient to leave them without excuse: and indeed, the word of God, read, explained, and heard, is the ordinary means of conversion, or of bringing men to faith and repentance.

Luke 16:30

Ver. 30. And he said, nay, father Abraham,.... He contradicts his father Abraham, or at least desires it might not be so; this way he suggests, was not so right, and would not succeed; for he knew his brethren were a rebellious, and stiffnecked people, and would not hear Moses and the prophets, notwithstanding all their outward boast of them, and pretensions of regard to them:

but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent; but alas! repentance is not of man's will, but a gift of God's grace; nor could these men repent, because in a judicial way their eyes were shut, their ears were stopped, and their hearts were hardened; and though Christ came in person to them, and preached, as never man did, with power and authority, and confirmed his doctrine with miracles, yet they repented not, nor did they when he arose from the dead.

Luke 16:31

Ver. 31. And he said unto him..... That is, Abraham said unto him, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions express it:

if they hear not Moses and the prophets; as they did not, nor regarded what they said of Christ, but disbelieved both him and them:

neither will they be persuaded: or brought to repent and believe;

though one rose from the dead; as Christ did; whose resurrection, the truth of it they endeavoured to baffle, stifle, and suppress: this was the sign Christ gave them, of the truth of his Messiahship; and yet they repented not of what they had done to him, that they might believe in him; but remained still in their impenitence and infidelity, and so died. This shows the regard that ought to be had to the written word, as read, or preached; and that it is a sad sign of a desperate condition, when men reject divine revelation. Beza's ancient copy adds, "and should go unto them".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 17:1

Ver. 1. Then said he unto his disciples,.... In the Alexandrian copy, and in "three" of Beza's exemplars it is read, "his disciples"; and so read the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; that is, Jesus said to his disciples what follows, as the Syriac and Persic versions express, and the latter reads, he said "again". About the time that he delivered the above parable concerning the rich man and Lazarus, he repeated to his disciples what he had before said to them on another occasion, Mt 18:7

it is impossible but that offences will come; considering the decree of God, the malice of Satan, the wickedness of men, the corruption both of their principles and practices. The Ethiopic version renders it, "temptation will come"; that which will be trying to the faith of the saints, and a stumblingblock to weak minds, as reproach and persecution, errors, and heresies, and the evil lives of professors:

but woe [unto him] through whom they come;
See Gill on "Mt 18:7"

Luke 17:2

Ver. 2. It were better for him that a millstone,....
See Gill on "Mt 18:6" and
See Gill on "Mr 9:42".

Luke 17:3

Ver. 3. Take heed to yourselves..... Or to one another, that ye neither give, nor take offence. Take heed to your spirits, to your doctrines, walk, and conversation, that you give no offence to any, that you are not stumbled by what you shall see in, and meet with from others:

if thy brother trespass against thee; See Gill on "Mt 18:15"

rebuke him; privately, and proceed according to the rules there directed to; lay his sin before him; endeavour not only to convince him of the fact, but of the evil of it; how contrary to the will of God; how unbecoming the Gospel of Christ, and the profession he makes; how hurtful to himself, as well as injurious to his brother; and how such evils give the enemy occasion to reproach the saints, to speak evil of the ways of God, and blaspheme the name and doctrines of Christ, and harden sinners in their sins, as well as stumble weak Christians, and sadden the hearts of the righteous.

And if he repent; if he is made sensible of his evil, and is truly sorry for it, and ingenuously acknowledges it:

forgive him; the injury committed against a man's self; and pray to God for him, for an application of his pardoning grace and mercy to him; and comfort him with the hope of forgiveness with God, by the gracious promises and declarations of pardon made to such persons; drop all resentment and anger, and behave towards him with all sweetness of temper, and affability, and respect: and this is to be done immediately, as soon as a man repents: and so say the Jews {p};

"says R. Chanina bar Papa, whoever commits a thing, and repents of it, they forgive him directly; as it is said, **Mal 3:5** "and fear not me": lo, they that fear me, forgive immediately:"

such were reckoned good men, men fearing God.

{p} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 5. 1.

Luke 17:4

Ver. 4. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day,.... For good men are frequently apt to fall into sin, and offend both God and man; see Pr 24:16 "and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent"; as often as he sins, and appears to be truly sensible of it, and humble for it, and makes acknowledgments of it; and not only barely in words professes his concern for it, but there is reason to believe that he is heartily grieved for it, and to hope that he will behave better for the future:

thou shalt forgive him; this seems to be occasioned by Peter's putting such a question to Christ, how often a brother might sin against him, and he forgive him; see Mt 18:21. The Jews plead for great tenderness and readiness to forgive penitents, when they ask for forgiveness; which they insist upon should be done: they say {q},

"it is forbidden an injured person to be cruel, and not forgive; this is not the way of the seed of Israel: but when he that has done the injury asks of him, and prays him once and again, and he knows that he has returned from his sin, and hath repented of his evil, he ought to forgive him; and whoever makes haste to forgive, is praiseworthy."

But then, they say {r},

"if he brings all the rams of Nebaioth that are in the world, he is not to have pardon, unless he asks it of him."

And they seem also to have set times for it, as well as restrain the frequent repetition of it: they observe {s};

"if a man returns by repentance, in the intermediate time, (i.e. as the gloss explains it, between the beginning of the year, or New Year's Day, and the day of atonement,) they pardon him; but if he does not return in the intermediate time, though he brings all the rams of Nebaioth in the world, they do not pardon him."

A man that was always forgiving, was reckoned by them an extraordinary man: it is said {t} of Mar Zutra bar Nachman, that he was Mwy lkb lxwm, "forgiving every day"; but yet they do not seem to care to carry it to so great a length, and to repeat it so often as our Lord directs; they allow a man to forgive three times, but not a fourth; See Gill on "Mt 18:22".

{q} Maimon. Hilchot Chobel Umezik, c. 5. sect. 10. {r} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 92. 1. {s} T. Bab. Rosh Hashama, fol. 17. 2. {t} Juchasin, fol. 90. 2.

Luke 17:5

Ver. 5. And the apostles said unto the Lord,.... Either on account of what was now said by Christ concerning offences, and forgiving injuries; being

conscious to themselves of their own weakness to withstand temptations; and fearful lest they should be stumbled and offended with what they should meet with; or that they should give offence to others: and being also sensible of what spirits they were of, and of the difficulties of conquering them, and mastering the resentment of their minds, when injured and provoked; and also the necessity of divine assistance, of having fresh supplies of grace, and of having their graces, and particularly faith, strengthened, and drawn into a lively exercise; or on account of their not being able to cast out a devil from one that was possessed,
Mt 17:19 when words, to the same purpose, were spoken by Christ, as in the following verse; on occasion of one or other of these, though more likely the former, the apostles addressed Christ in this manner,

increase our faith; both the faith of working miracles, and the grace of believing in him: by which, as they express their sense of the weakness, and imperfection of their faith; and their great desire to have it increased, which might be for their comfort, and his glory; so they acknowledge his divine power, and that he is the author and finisher of faith; and that as the beginning, so the increase of it is from him: wherefore faith is not of a man's self, or the produce of man's freewill and power, but is the gift of God; and even where it is, it is not in man to increase it, or add to it, or to draw it forth into exercise; this also is the operation of God. And if the apostles had need to put up such a petition to Christ, much more reason have other men.

Luke 17:6

Ver. 6. And the Lord said,.... In answer to the disciples. The Syriac version leaves out the word "Lord": and the Persic version, in the room of it reads, "Jesus":

if ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed;
See Gill on "Mt 17:20"

ye might say unto this sycamine tree; which was near at hand; for in Galilee, where Christ now was, such trees grew, especially in lower Galilee: hence those words {u};

"from Caphar-Hananiah, and upwards, all the land which does not bear Nymqv, "sycamines", is upper Galilee, and from Caphar-Hananiah, and downwards, all which does bear "sycamines", is lower Galilee."

This, by Maimonides {w}, is said to be a wild fig tree; but the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, the "mulberry tree": and that the sycamine and mulberry tree are the same, Beza shows from Dioscorides, Athenaeus, and Galen; though whether it is the same with the sycamore in Lu 19:4 is not certain. The first of these writers makes them to be the same; and the last asserts they are different, and so they should seem by their different names.

Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you: for such a tree to be plucked up by the root at a word speaking, is very wonderful and miraculous, and beyond the power of nature; and much more for it to remove into the sea, and plant itself there, where trees grow not; and to believe this should be done, and such a word of command obeyed, one should think required very great faith; and yet, if it was but as a grain of mustard seed, which is very small, it might be done. The design is to show, what great things are done by faith, and what an increase of it they should have.

{u} Misna Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 2. {w} In Misna Demai, c. 1. sect. 1. & in Bava Bathra, c. 2. sect. 11.

Luke 17:7

Ver. 7. But which of you having a servant ploughing,.... In order to keep the disciples humble in the performance of such miraculous works; and that they might not imagine they could have any thing at the hands of God by merit; and to excite them to go on from one duty to another; and never think they have done, or done enough, or more than what is their duty, Christ delivers the following parable.

Which of you having a servant ploughing, or feeding cattle; or "sheep", as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; or a "ploughman", or a "shepherd", as the Ethiopic version; which are both servile works, and done in the field: not that the disciples had any such servants under them, though the words are directed to them, for they had left all, and followed Christ; nor were they brought up to husbandry, but most of them in the fishing trade; Christ only puts this for instance, and supposes such a case:

will say unto him by and by; or straightway, immediately, directly, when he is come from the field; and has done ploughing, and feeding his cattle, sheep, or cows, or whatever they are; as soon as ever he comes home; or "first", as the Persic version; the first thing he shall say to him, upon his return from thence,

go; to the other side of the room, and to the table there ready spread, and furnished; or "go up", as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it; go up to the upper room where they used to dine or sup; see Lu 22:12 or "come in", as the Persic version renders it; and which some learned men observe, is the sense of the Greek word here used; come into the house,

and sit down to meat? or fall, and lie down on the couch, as was the custom in those countries at eating.

Luke 17:8

Ver. 8. And will not rather say to him,.... Or, "will he not say to him?" it is very likely, it is more agreeable to the language of a master, and the condition of a servant, that he should say to him,

make ready wherewith I may sup: by dressing the food, spreading the table, and putting the food on it; for it was the business of servants to prepare, as at the passover, See Gill on "Mt 26:17" so at ordinary suppers:

and gird thyself and serve me; by giving him drink, or whatsoever he called for: and as they used to wear long garments in those countries, servants girded them up about their loins, that they might be fit for service, expedite in it, and perform it more readily, and with greater ease and dispatch:

till I have eaten and drunken; finished his meal:

and afterward thou shalt eat and drink: the, Persic and Ethiopic versions read in the imperative, "then eat thou and drink". If he was an Hebrew servant, he ate and drank the same as his master did: for so one of the Jewish canons runs {x};

"every Hebrew servant, or handmaid, their master is obliged to make them equal to himself "in food and in drink", in clothing, and in dwelling, as it is said, De 15:16 "because he is well with thee": wherefore, thou shalt not eat fine bread, and he eat coarse bread, nor drink old wine and he drink new wine, &c."

And even a Canaanitish servant was to be provided with proper food and drink: they say indeed {y},

"it is lawful to cause a Canaanitish servant to serve with rigour: but though the law is such, the property of mercy, and the ways of wisdom are, that a man should be merciful, and not make his yoke heavy on his servant, nor oppress him; but cause him to "eat and drink" of all sorts of food and drink; and the former wise men used to give their servants of all sorts of food that they themselves ate of;"

which was using them as they did their Hebrew servants: yea, it is added;

"and they gave their beasts, and their servants, food, before they ate their own meal;"

but this was not commonly done: it does not appear to have been the practice in Christ's time; nor was it necessary.

{x} Maimon. Hilch. Abadim, c. 1. sect. 9. Vid. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 22. 1.
{y} Maimon. ib. c. 9. sect. 8.

Luke 17:9

Ver. 9. Doth he thank that servant,.... As if he had done him a favour, and what he was not obliged to;

because he did the things that were commanded him? for, as a servant, he ought to do them, and in so doing does but his duty: he may indeed be commended for it, but not thanked:

I trow not; or "I think not"; it do not seem so to me, as if he would, or, as though it was proper and necessary he should. The Ethiopic version leaves out this last clause.

Luke 17:10

Ver. 10. So likewise ye,.... This is the accommodation and application of the parable to the disciples of Christ, who whether ministers or private believers, are as servants, and should be as laborious as the ploughman, and the shepherd; and as their condition is, so their conduct should be like theirs: the employment of the ministers of the word lies in reading, prayer, meditation, and study; in preaching the word, and administering the ordinances; and in performing other duties of their office: and every private believer has business to do, which lies in the exercise of grace, as the work of faith, the labour of love and patience, of hope: and in the discharge of duty with regard to themselves, in their families, the church, and the world; and these servants should be continually employed; and when one work is done, another is to be taken in hand: saints should be always believing, hoping, waiting, loving, and doing one good work or another; as preaching or praying, reading, hearing, and doing acts of benevolence and charity; and God and Christ are to be served by them in the first place, and then themselves: but some that would be called the servants of Christ, mind their own bellies, and not the service of Christ at all; others in the service of Christ, seek nothing but themselves; others are for the serving themselves first, and then Christ; but the true servants of Christ, serve him in the first place, and seek first his righteousness, and his kingdom, and the honour of it, believing that all other things shall be added to them: and when these have done all that are commanded them, they are not to think their service thank worthy: as for instance, if the service be preaching the word, a man so employed ought to be thankful to God, that has bestowed ministerial gifts upon him, and makes his labours useful, and uses him as an instrument, to do much good to the souls of men, and for his glory, and has put such an honour upon him; but he is not to expect thanks from God, for his most diligent and faithful performance of his work, or imagine that he merits any thing at his hand thereby: or if the business be hearing the word, a man should be thankful to God, for the word, ordinances, and ministers, for liberty of waiting upon God in such a way; for health of body, and inclination of mind, for such service; and for all the good, profit, and advantage, he gains hereby; but he is not to think that he lays God under any obligation to him by so doing, or deserves thanks, or a favour from him on account of it: or if the employment be prayer, a man should be greatly thankful to the God of all grace, that there is a throne of grace for him to come to; and for a mediator, who is the way of access to God; and for the assistance of the Spirit in prayer; and for all the blessings which are given, as an answer of prayer; but he is never to entertain such a thought, that God is obliged to him for his prayers, or should thank him for them: or if the work be doing of good with worldly substance, such should be thankful to God for their substance he has given them, and for hearts to make use of it; but ought not to conclude, that they hereby merit his favour, or that this is any gain to him: but on the other hand, Christ directs his disciples, saying,

when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you; as preaching, or hearing, or reading, or praying, and every other act of divine and religious worship; or all acts of justice and benevolence among men; every duty both for matter and manner, as it should be, according to the will of God, from right principles, and to right ends, and by the assistance of the Spirit and grace of God:

say we are unprofitable servants; not in such sense as unregenerate men are, who are disobedient, and to every good work reprobate and unfit, **Ro 3:12** or as the slothful servant, who did not what his Lord commanded, Mt 25:30. Nor is this the sense, that they are unprofitable to men; for they may be, and are very useful and serviceable to men, and to the saints; but that they are so to God, by whose grace and strength they are what they are, and do what they do; and can give nothing to him but what is his own, and his due; and so can lay him under no obligation to them, nor merit any thing from him; no, not even thanks, and much less heaven and eternal life. The Persic version, quite contrary to the sense of the words reads, "we are pure or clean servants, for we have done", &c. and the Ethiopic version leaves out the word "unprofitable", and reads "we are servants"; we acknowledge ourselves to be servants:

we have done that which is our duty to do; wherefore, as diligence is highly proper, and reasonable in doing the work of the Lord, humility is necessary, that a man may not arrogate that to himself, which do not belong to him; or boast of his performances; or place any dependence on them: or have his expectations raised on account of them; since when he has done the most and best, he has done but what he should, and what he was obliged to, and in that is greatly deficient: a saying somewhat like this, is used by R. Jochanan ben Zaccai {z};

"if thou hast learned the law much, do not ascribe the good to thyself; for, for this wast thou created."

{z} Pirke Abot. c. 2. sect. 8.

Luke 17:11

Ver. 11. And it came to pass as he went to Jerusalem,.... That is, Jesus, as the

Persic version expresses it; though the Ethiopic version reads in the plural, "they going to Jerusalem passed", &c. that is, the disciples, or Christ with his disciples; who was now going thither to eat his last passover, and suffer and die for his people:

that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee; or "between Samaria and Galilee"; as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; he steered his course through the borders of both these countries; and as he passed, Samaria was on his right hand, and Galilee on the left.

Luke 17:12

Ver. 12. And as he entered into a certain village,.... Whether in Samaria or Galilee, is not certain; perhaps it bordered on both, since there were both Jews and Samaritans in it, as appears by what follows; and since Christ was passing between both places:

there met ten men that were lepers; who either were confined to this place, this village, for they might not be in the larger cities, and walled towns; See Gill on "Mt 8:2" or else having heard that Jesus of Nazareth was going to such a place, got together, and met him as he entered in it, in hope of being cured by him:

which stood afar off; from Christ, by reason of their uncleanness, as they were obliged to by the law, in Le 13:46.

Luke 17:13

Ver. 13. And they lifted up their voices,.... Together, and cried aloud, being at a distance, that they might be heard; as well as to express their vehement desire, and great importunity to be cleansed; see **Jud 9:7**.

And said, Jesus, Master; or "Rabbi, Jesus", thou great Master in Israel; who art a teacher come from God, and who dost surprising miracles, and art able to cure us:

have mercy on us; and cleanse us from our leprosy; we believe thou art able, if thou wilt; show compassion to us, miserable objects, as they were; their faith was the same with that of the other leper, in **Mt 8:2**.

Luke 17:14

Ver. 14. And when he saw [them], he said unto them,.... When upon their loud cry he looked up, and towards them, and saw what a condition they were in, his compassion moved towards them, and he ordered them to do as follows;

go show yourselves unto the priests. The Ethiopic version reads in the singular number, "to the priest", as in **Mt 8:4** whose business it was to inspect into this matter, to see whether a person was healed, or not; and if he was to, pronounce him clean, when a gift was offered according to the law, in Le 14:2. So careful was Christ that the ceremonial law, which was as yet in force, might be strictly observed: though these ten lepers could not be viewed and examined by the priest together, but one after another; for so is the tradition of the Jews {a},

"two leprosies are not looked upon together, whether they be in one man, or in two men; but he views one, and either shuts him up, or declares or dismisses him, and then goes to a second:"

And it came to pass that as they went, they were cleansed; before they came to the priests, whilst they were in the way, they at once found themselves entirely healed of their disease; as Christ very likely gave them reason to believe they should; whereby his power was seen in it; and it was a clear case, that it was owing to him, and not the priests, that they had their cleansing. On the nature of the disease of leprosy, and of the likeness there is between that and sin, and of the agreement between the cleansing of a leper, and the cleansing of a sinner by the blood of Christ, See Gill on "Lu 5:12". Here it may be observed, that as these lepers had a cure while they were in the way of their duty, going, as Christ ordered them; so generally speaking, it is in the way of means, in an attendance on ordinances, that souls receive a spiritual cure from Christ: the man at Bethesda's pool waited long, and had healing at last; it is good to watch at Wisdom's gates, and wait at the posts of her door; faith in Christ, whereby the heart is purified, comes by hearing the word of God.

{a} Misn. Negaim, c. 3. sect. 1.

Luke 17:15

Ver. 15. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed.... When he felt perfect soundness in his body, and perceived that he was restored to his health, and saw with his eyes that the leprosy was gone from him, which must be visible enough:

turned back; either immediately, before he went to the priests; or afterwards, came back to Jesus, when he bad been with them:

and with a loud voice glorified God; Jesus Christ, who is truly God, and whose proper divinity might be seen in this miracle; see **2Ki 5:7** or God the Father, through Christ, and for his sake, by ascribing his cure to his power, and by returning thanks for it, and acknowledging with gratitude, Christ to be the author of it; which he did, with as loud a voice, as he cried to him for mercy; that all might know the miracle that was wrought, and join in giving glory to Christ: and it was but one of them that did so; gratitude is a rare thing, it is found but in few; unthankfulness cleaves to most persons; it is the general character of men to be unthankful and unholy; multitudes, even all men, share in the providential goodness of God, yet few take notice of, and are thankful for it; God is therefore said to be good, to the unthankful and to the evil, **Lu 6:35**. Few there are who are of Jacob's spirit, that judge themselves unworthy of the least of mercies, and are heartily thankful for every favour: and this the leper did, when he was sensible that he was healed; no man will seek after a cure, till he sees, or is sensible of his sickness and his wound; and when he does, he will inquire after, and make use of the proper means of healing; and when he has got a cure, he is, or at least ought to be, thankful for it: and so it is in spiritual things, the whole need not a physician, or see no need of the physician, Christ; but those who are sick, and sensible of the sickness of sin, do; and when they perceive that their diseases are healed, and their sins forgiven, then they call upon their souls, and all within them, to bless the Lord, who has done this for them: and it becomes such who are cured of the leprosy of sin, to glorify God; not only with their mouths, by bringing their offering and sacrifice of praise to him, as the leper by the law was obliged to bring his offering, at the time of his cleansing; but by deeds also, with their bodies, and with their spirits; by a holy, humble, and spiritual conversation before men, signified by the leper's washing himself, and clothes, and shaving off all his hair; and by attending on the word and ordinances, by a professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ, signified by the blood being put upon the tip of the right ear of the leper, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot,
Le 14:14.

Luke 17:16

Ver. 16. And he fell down on his face at his feet,.... For being cleansed, he might draw nigh unto Jesus; and which he did, with the most profound respect unto him, and reverence of him; and having a deep sense of the favour he had received from him, prostrated himself in this manner before him:

giving him thanks; who had shown compassion to him, had exerted his power on him, and had favoured him with such a singular mercy, as restoring him to health:

and he was a Samaritan; this is particularly remarked by the evangelist, because the Samaritans were reckoned by the Jews, to be ignorant and irreligious persons, and no better than Heathens; and yet this man behaved as a religious good man, who had a sense of his mercy, knew his duty, and his obligations, and performed them; when the other nine, who very likely were all Jews, acted a very stupid and ungrateful part.

Luke 17:17

Ver. 17. And Jesus answering, said,.... After the Samaritan had paid his respects to him, and made his acknowledgments in this grateful way:

were there not ten cleansed? so many applied for a cure, and so many had it:

but where are the nine? or nine of them; here was one, but where were the rest? they went and showed themselves to the priests, and then returned to their several places of abode, and took no notice of their physician and Saviour, to make any returns to him. They are many, that are cleansed by the blood of Christ; his blood was shed for many, for the remission of sins; and by his righteousness, he justifies many; at least there are many who profess themselves to be cleansed by him, and yet there are but few that glorify him, by keeping close to the rule of his word, by giving up themselves to the churches of Christ, and by walking with them in the ordinances of the Gospel: Christ's flock, which is separated from the world, and walks in Gospel order, within the inclosures of it, is but a little flock; they are but a few names in Sardis, who have not defiled themselves, with corruptions in doctrine and discipline; and these few are often such, who have been the worst of men, the vilest of sinners, from whom it has been least expected, they should glorify Christ: publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven, the Gospel church state, embrace its doctrines, and submit to its ordinances, when the

Scribes and Pharisees, self-righteous persons, do not: ingratitude is a crime many are guilty of, and it is highly resented by Christ; instances of gratitude are few, but as one in ten; now and then a single Samaritan, a stranger, one that has been a vile sinner, comes and acknowledges the grace of Christ in cleansing him; comes to the ministers of Christ, and to the churches, and tells them what God has done for his soul: but where are the rest, the many others, who have received spiritual advantages, and never come to relate them, and express by words and deeds, thankfulness for them?

Luke 17:18

Ver. 18. There are not found that returned,.... Or it do not appear, that any have returned:

to give glory to God; for inasmuch as they did not return to give thanks to Christ, and acknowledge him the author of their cure and cleansing they did not give glory to God:

save this stranger; for so the Samaritans were reckoned by the Jews, even as the Gentile, aliens from the commonwealth, of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise. Christ speaks in the language and dialect of the nation, and yet we find sometimes, that,
ytwk, "a Cuthite", or a Samaritan, is distinguished from,
yrkn, "a stranger", Or a Gentile: they might set up their beasts in the inns of the Samaritans, but not in the inns of "strangers"; and a man might let out his bath to a Samaritan, but not to a "stranger" {b}; but this must be understood of them in times past, before they were found out to be idolaters; when, as Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel says {c}, they were as Israelites in all things, and kept the law and the precepts of it, and even more exactly than the Israelites themselves did {d}; but afterwards a Samaritan was reckoned a Gentile, and so he was in the times of Christ; and therefore he calls a Samaritan a stranger: that tradition of the Jews, requires some notice and consideration {e}; all are defiled

"with leprosies, except Myrknh, "strangers", and the proselyte of the gate."

And yet here is a stranger among the Jews, and reckoned unclean, on account of leprosy, and sent with them to show himself to the priest.

{b} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 15. 2. & 21. 2. {c} T. Hieros Shekalim, fol. 46. 2.

{d} Maimon. in Misn. Beracot, c. 8. sect. 8. & Bartenora in ib. c. 7. sect. 1. {e} Misn. Negaim, c. 3. sect. 1. Maimon. Tumaot Tzaraot, c. 9. sect. 1.

Luke 17:19

Ver. 19. And he said unto him, arise,.... For, as yet, he lay at his feet upon his face, adoring and praising him; nor did he attempt to rise till Jesus bid him: adding,

go thy way; to thine own country, town, or city, and to thy friends and relations, and about thy business:

thy faith hath made thee whole: or "saved thee", in soul, as well as body; that is, Christ, the object of faith, had saved him; for his salvation is ascribed to his faith, not as the efficient cause of it, but as that was wrought in him, and drawn forth from him, and exercised by him, in receiving this blessing from Christ, the author of it, even both corporeal and spiritual salvation.

Luke 17:20

Ver. 20. And when he was demanded of the Pharisees,.... Or "asked" by them; who expected the Messiah, and that when he was come he would set up a temporal kingdom, and deliver them from the Roman yoke; when they should enjoy great liberty, peace, and prosperity; so that they might put the following question to Christ in a serious manner, agreeably to these expectations: or it may be occasioned by the frequent mention that had been made of the kingdom of God by John, and Christ, and his disciples in their ministry, and so be put in a way of derision; or, as most of their questions were, with a view to ensnare or puzzle:

when the kingdom of God should come; either the kingdom that God had promised, or the kingdom of the Messiah, who is truly God, that had been so often spoken of by John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles. The Ethiopic version reads, "the kingdom of heaven", which is the same with the kingdom of God; for these phrases are promiscuously used. This question they need not have asked, had they carefully attended to the writings of the Old Testament they had in their hands; and had they diligently observed the signs of the times, in which they lived; and had they seriously regarded the ministry and miracles of Christ among them; from these things, they might have concluded, not only that the time was at hand, when the kingdom of God should be set up, but that it was already come: they might have observed, that not only the harbinger of the Messiah was come, who was John the Baptist; but that the Messiah himself was among them, by the many wonderful things which he wrought among them, and by the many Scripture prophecies which were fulfilled in him; they might have seen that the sceptre was manifestly departing from Judah; that all power and authority were falling into the hands of the Romans; and that only a mere shadow and appearance of it were among them; they might have known, by calculation, that the time fixed in Daniel's prophecy, for the coming of the Messiah, was now up, and therefore he must be come; and they had very good reason to believe that Jesus was he.

He answered them and said, the kingdom of God cometh not with observation; or so as to be observed by the eye, or to be distinguished when it comes as the kingdoms of this world, by outward pomp and splendour, by temporal riches, external honours, and worldly power and grandeur; though it so far came with observation, that had they had eyes to see, they might have observed that it was come, by what they saw done by Christ, particularly the power that he showed in the dispossessing devils out of the bodies of men; see
Mt 12:28. The Syriac version reads, "with observations"; and some understand the words of the observances of the ceremonies of the law, of days, months, and years, and the difference of meats, and the like, which the kingdom of God is not in, and which were to cease upon its coming; but the former sense is best.

Luke 17:21

Ver. 21. Neither shall they say,.... Or shall it be said by any, making their observations, and pointing to this, or that place:

lo here, or lo there; in this, or that place, country or city, the kingdom of God is set up; the throne of the Messiah is there; and there are the "regalia", or ensigns of his regal power; no such thing will fall under the observations of man, not but that this would be said, and was said by some persons, as it is suggested it should,
Lu 17:23 and it appears from Mt 24:26 that some would say he was in such a wilderness, and others, that he was in some private retirement in a house, or that he was in such a town or city; as particularly it was said in Adrian's time, that he was in a place called Bither, where Bar Cochab set up himself for the Messiah: but the sense of the words is, that no such thing ought to be said; and

if it was said, it would not be true; nor should it be credited: and the Cambridge copy of Beza's adds, "believe not"; as in Mt 24:26

for behold the kingdom of God is within you: in the elect of God among the Jews, in their hearts; it being of a spiritual nature, and lying in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; in the dispossession of Satan, the strong man armed; in the putting down of the old man, sin, with its deceitful lusts, from the throne; and in setting up a principle of grace, as a governing one; and so escapes the observation of natural men, and cannot be pointed at as here, or there: hence it appears, that the work of grace is an internal thing; it is wrought in the hearts of men; it has its seat in the inward parts, and is therefore called the inner, and the hidden man: it does not lie in words, in an outward profession of religion: it is oil in the vessel of the heart, and is distinct from the lamp of a visible profession; it does not lie in external works and duties, but it is an inward principle of holiness in the soul, or spirit of man, produced there by the Spirit of God, and is therefore called by his name, **Joh 3:6** and it also appears to be a very glorious thing, since it is signified by a kingdom: it is a rich treasure; it is gold tried in the fire, which makes rich; it is an estate, that good part, and portion, which can never be taken away; it is preferable to the greatest portion on earth men can enjoy; even the largest and richest kingdom in the world is not to be compared with it; it is a kingdom which cannot be moved; and as it is glorious in itself, it makes such glorious who are partakers of it: "the king's daughter is all glorious within", Ps 45:13 and it is high in the esteem of God; it is the hidden man of the heart, but it is in his sight; it is in his view, and is in his sight of great price: it is likewise evident from hence, that it has great power and authority in the soul; it has the government in it; it reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life; and by it, Christ, as king of saints, dwells and reigns in his people. Now this is not to be understood of the Scribes and Pharisees, as if they had any such internal principle in them, who were as painted sepulchres, and had nothing but rottenness and corruption in them: but the sense is, that there were some of the people of the Jews, of whom the Pharisees were a part, who had been powerfully wrought upon under the ministry of John, Christ, and his apostles; and were so many instances of efficacious grace, and of the kingdom of God, and of his Gospel coming with power to them. Though the words may be rendered,

the kingdom of God is among you; and the meaning be, that the king Messiah was already come, and was among them, and his kingdom was already set up, of which the miracles of Christ were a full proof; and if they could not discern these signs of the times, and evident appearances of the kingdom of God among them, they would never be able to make any observation of it, hereafter, or elsewhere.

Luke 17:22

Ver. 22. And he said unto his disciples,.... Who also were expecting a worldly kingdom, and external honours, and temporal emoluments, and riches; and therefore to take off their minds from these things, and that they might not have their expectations raised this way, but, on the other hand, look for afflictions and persecutions, he observes to them,

the days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the son of man; xyvmh twmy, "the days of the Messiah", a phrase frequently used in Jewish writings; that is, when they should be glad to enjoy one such a day in the personal presence of Christ, as they now did; and instead of looking forward for happy days, in a temporal sense, they would look back upon the days they have enjoyed with Christ, when he was in person among them, and wish they had one of those days again; when besides his corporeal presence, and spiritual communion with him, and the advantage of his ministry and miracles, they bad much outward peace and comfort: whereas in those days nothing but afflictions and persecutions abode them, wherever they went; so that by these words Christ would have them to understand, that they were not to expect better times, but worse, and that they would be glad of one of the days they now had, and in vain wish for it:

and ye shall not see [it], or enjoy it. Moreover, days and opportunities of public worship, of praying to the Lord, of singing his praise, of hearing his word, and of attending on his ordinances, may be called days of the son of man, or Lord's days; see **Re 1:10** even the first days of weeks, on which days the apostles, and primitive churches, met together for religious worship: and these may very well be called days of the son of man, since, on those days, he first appeared to his disciples, after his resurrection, Joh 20:19 and on the same days his disciples and followers met together to preach in his name, to hear his Gospel, and to commemorate his sufferings and death, Ac 20:7 and still continue to do so; and seeing he often meets with his people at such seasons and opportunities, fills them with his Spirit, communicates his grace, and indulges them with fellowship with himself, which make those days desirable ones: but sometimes so violent has been the persecution of the saints, that they have not been able, for a long time, to enjoy one of those days openly, and with freedom, though greatly desired by them; which may be considered as a fulfilment, at least in part, of this prediction of our Lord's: and therefore, whenever this is the case, it should not be thought strange; it is no other than what Christ has foretold should be: and it may teach us to prize, make use of, and improve such days and opportunities, whilst we have them, we know not how soon our teachers may be removed into corners, when we shall wish in vain for them; and seasons of hearing them, as is here suggested: sad it is to know the worth of Gospel opportunities, by the want of them!

Luke 17:23

Ver. 23. And they shall say unto you, see here, or see there,.... That is, there is Christ; and in two of Beza's exemplars, the word Christ is added as in Mt 24:23 from whence it seems to be transcribed: and the sense is, it shall be said by one or another; Christ is in such a place, or he is in such a place, and he will quickly appear, and deliver the people of the Jews out of all their distresses and calamities by the Romans,

Go not after them nor follow [them]: the last clause, "nor follow them", is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions; the meaning is, give no credit to them; as if Christ was come again in person, and was in such a place, do not go along with them, where they direct, as into the desert, or into the secret chambers; for to follow them will be very dangerous, of bad consequence, as well as vain and fruitless; see **Ac 5:36**.

Luke 17:24

Ver. 24. For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one [part] under heaven,.... The Syriac version reads, "out of heaven", and the Arabic version, "in heaven"; which is the seat of lightning, and from whence it arises:

and shineth unto the other part under heaven; enlightens the earth, which is under the heaven: though the sense of the words, as they lie in the original text, seems to be, that as the lightning lightens at one end of the heavens, and shines to the other; which is done at once, in a moment, in a twinkling of the eye, and to which agrees the Ethiopic version;

so shall also the son of man be in his day: which is not to be understood of the swift progress of the Gospel, after his resurrection and ascension, and the pouring forth of his Spirit; but of his sudden coming, first to take vengeance on the Jewish nation for their rejection of him, and then at the last day, to judge both quick and dead. By his day, is meant his kingdom and glory, or his appearance with power, and great glory: Thus we read {f} for Solomon, wtevb, "in his hour", that is, in his glory, in the time of his kingdom, when he was in his greatest magnificence.

{f} Misna Bava Metzia, c. 7. sect. 1. & Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. Vid. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 15. 4. & 16. 1.

Luke 17:25

Ver. 25. But first must he suffer many things,.... By cruel mockings, spitting, buffeting, scourging, and, at last, death itself; all which must be, and were before his day came, or he entered into his glory, or came in it:

and be rejected of this generation; as the Messiah, and be treated with the utmost scorn and contempt, and in the most base and ignominious manner: being put to the death of the cross, and hanged upon the accursed tree: all which were necessary, "must" be; on account of the purposes and decrees of God; the covenant engagements of Christ; the predictions of the prophets of the Old Testament, and his own; and the salvation of his people.

Luke 17:26

Ver. 26. And as it was in the days of Noe,.... Whilst he was building the ark, and before he went into it; for this respects the days of Noah before the flood, and not after it; for he lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years, **Ge 9:28**

so shall it be also in the days of the son of man; some time before, and at his coming in power, and great glory, to destroy the Jews, their nation, city, and temple; and as then, so it will be when he shall come in person, at the last day, to destroy the world: the times of Noah's flood, of Jerusalem's destruction, and of the end of the world, bear a great resemblance to each other: and when the son of man comes in either of these senses, then will the kingdom of God come; or then will it appear that the Messiah is come, and has took to himself his great power, and reigns.

Luke 17:27

Ver. 27. They did eat, they drank,.... That is, the inhabitants of the old world ate and drank, not merely in a common way, with moderation, and for the support and comfort of life, which is not blameworthy, nor inconsistent with religious exercises; but they lived in an extravagant and luxurious manner; they indulged their sensual appetites, and put away the evil day far from them, that Noah told them of:

they married wives, they were given in marriage; not as should have been done by professors of religion among themselves; but the sons of God, or professors of the true religion, the posterity of Seth took them wives of the daughters of men, of the wicked, of the seed of Cain; and very likely gave their daughters in marriage to the sons of men; see **Ge 6:2** and so they went on in a secure manner, notwithstanding all the remonstrances, warnings, and threatenings of God, by his servant:

until the day that Noe entered into the ark; which he had built by divine direction, for the saving of himself and family, and the creatures that were with him, from the waters of the flood; and this was in the six hundredth year of his life, in the second month, the month of October, and in the seventeenth day of that month; **Ge 7:11**

and the flood came and destroyed them all; all the inhabitants of the earth, every living substance, men, cattle, creeping things, and fowls of the heaven; all but Noah, and his wife, and his three sons, and their wives, and the creatures that were with him in the ark: the flood came not of itself, or by chance, or through the influence, or by the concurrence of second causes merely; though these were used, ordered, and directed by the first cause of all things; but it came by the power of God, according to his will; he brought it on the world of the ungodly; see **2Pe 2:5** The mode of expression is Jewish; it is said of Cain, who is supposed by the Jews to have lived till the flood, wpjvw lwbmab, "the flood came", and washed him away {g}.

{g} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 32. fol. 27. 2. & Shemot Rabba, sect. 31. fol. 134. 4.

Luke 17:28

Ver. 28. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot,.... When he lived in Sodom, and before, and at the time of the destruction of that city with other neighbouring ones:

they did eat, they drank; See Gill on "Lu 17:27", and
Eze 16:49. This is to be understood of the inhabitants of Sodom, and the other cities that perished with it:

they bought, they sold: they traded among themselves, and with their neighbours; and, as it appears from the text referred to, they had no regard to the poor and needy; they made no conscience of defrauding and oppressing them:

they planted; vineyards, and fruit trees; living in a very fruitful soil, like the garden of God, Ge 13:10

they builded; houses for themselves and posterity; and thus, as a Jewish writer {h} observes of them, in agreement with our Lord's design in all this, being filled with the increase of the earth, they lived in security, peace, and tranquillity.

{h} Pirke Eliezer, c. 25.

Luke 17:29

Ver. 29. But the same day Lot went out of Sodom,.... Being plucked and brought from thence by the angels early in the morning; and a fine morning it was; the sun was risen, and shone out upon the earth, as Lot got into Zoar, Ge 19:15. "The Jews" {i} say it was the sixteenth day of Nisan:

it rained fire and brimstone from heaven; the Syriac version reads, "the Lord rained"; so it is said in Ge 19:24 "the Lord rained from the Lord"; Jehovah the Son, rained from Jehovah the Father; or the word of the Lord, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem render it; and which is no inconsiderable proof of the deity of Christ: and the Persic version here reads, "God rained"; and so this amazing shower of fire and brimstone, and which was a violent storm of thunder and lightning, is ascribed to God in
See Gill on "2Pe 2:6". The Hebrew word, tyrpg, used in
Ge 19:24 though it is rendered in the Targum of Jonathan,
atyrbk, and by the Septuagint, yeion; both which words signify "sulphur", or brimstone; and which last word is used here, following the Greek version; yet it is observed, by some learned men, that it rather signifies "pitch", or "rosin",

which proceeds from some sort of trees; and indeed, by its derivation, it seems to signify something belonging to or that comes out of the wood of Gopher, of which the ark was made, **Ge 6:14** which some think to be the pine tree, from whence comes pitch: and this, though it comes from the inside of a tree, may as well be said to be rained from heaven, as brimstone, which is taken out of the bowels of the earth: and the rather, since pitch is sometimes fluid; and especially it being combustible, may be joined with fire, as well as sulphur, or brimstone; though a shower of neither, can be accounted for in an ordinary way, but must be extraordinary and miraculous: the destruction of this city, with others, by fire from heaven, and the lake Asphaltites, being a bituminous and sulphureous one, into which the tract of land they stood upon was converted, are confirmed by the testimonies of Heathen writers; as Tacitus {k}, Solinus {l}, Strabo {m}, Justin {n}, and Pliny {o}; as well as by Josephus {p}, and Philo the Jew {q}.

And destroyed them all; all the inhabitants of Sodom, and all of Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim; and which was an ensample of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the land of Judea. De 29:23 and of the burning of the world, and of the perdition of the wicked in hell, **2Pe 2:6**.

{i} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 50. fol. 45. 3. {k} Hist. l. 5. {l} Polyhistor. c. 48. {m} Geograph. l. 16. {n} Histor. l. 36. c. 3. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 16. {p} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 11. sect. 4. & de Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 21. {q} De Vita Mosis, l. 2. p. 662.

Luke 17:30

Ver. 30. Even thus shall it be in the day when the son of man is revealed. In his power, when he comes to avenge himself on the Jews; and when he is revealed from heaven in flaming fire, at the last day. As in the days of Noah and Lot, men lived in great carnality and security, thoughtless and fearless of danger, so were the Jews before the destruction of their city and temple, buoying themselves up with deliverance to the last; and such will be the times of indolence and supineness, before the coming of the day of the Lord to judgment: and as the destruction of the old world, and men of Sodom, and the adjacent parts, was sudden and unexpected, so was the destruction of Jerusalem, and so will be the burning of the world; that day will come, as a thief in the night: and as in the above calamities, there was a remnant saved, who were taken care of; as Noah and his family in tim ark, and as Lot, and his wife and daughters were snatched out of Sodom, when the rest were destroyed; so when the Christians removed from Jerusalem, and went to Pella, being directed by a divine oracle, then came on the siege of Jerusalem {r}; and when all the elect will be gathered in, and brought to faith and repentance, then shall the earth, and the works in it be burnt up: and as these judgments were universal, so was that upon the people of the Jews: and such will be the general desolation in the last day.

{r} Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 5.

Luke 17:31

Ver. 31. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop,.... Either for diversion or devotion, when he shall hear that the Roman armies are approaching to Jerusalem, to besiege it:

and his stuff in the house; or "his vessels", his goods and furniture; or his utensils, and instruments of trade and business:

let him not come down; the inner way of the house, from the top:

to take it away; with him in his flight, but let him descend by the steps, or ladder, on the outside of the house, and make his escape directly to Pella, or the mountains:

and he that is in the field; at work, and has laid down his clothes in some certain part of the field, or at home:

let him likewise not return back; to fetch them, but make the best of his way as he is; See Gill on "Mt 24:17" and
See Gill on "Mt 24:18".

Luke 17:32

Ver. 32. Remember Lot's wife. Whose name by the Jews, is said to be Adith, as some {s}; or Irith, as others {t}: and who, they also say, was a native of Sodom; and that the reason of her looking, was either to see what would be the end of her father's house and family {u}; or as others {w}, because her heart yearned after her daughters, and she looked back to see if they followed her; upon which she became a pillar of salt, Ge 19:26 They say {x}, that her bones were burnt with the brimstone, and along with which was salt, into which she was turned, according to De 29:23. They often speak of tymwro xlm, "salt of Sodom" {y}; where the gloss says, it is thick and hard, as a stone; and to which they sometimes {z} ascribe this virtue, that it blinds the eyes: and there is a sort of salt, which they call {a} Galilaean salt, of like hardness; and Pliny {b} speaks of salt in the Indies, which they cut out, as stones out of quarries; and that, at Carthis, a town in Arabia, is salt with which they build houses and walls: of a very durable nature it is certain, was this pillar of "salt", Lot's wife became; for Josephus reports {c}, that he saw this pillar of salt in his time; and Irenaeus asserts {d}, that it was in being when he lived; and modern writers, as Burchardus and Adrichomius, speak of it as still existing; and the Jerusalem "paraphrast" on Ge 19:26 says it shall endure till the time the resurrection comes, in which the dead shall live: the reason of her becoming a pillar of salt, the Jews say, is, that she sinned by salt, and so was punished by salt; and which is differently related, and in a very fanciful way: one writer {f} reports, that when the angels came, Lot said to her, give me a little salt for these travellers; she replied to him, truly this is a bad custom, which thou bringest to be used in this place; and elsewhere {g} it is said, that upon their coming, she went to all her neighbours, and said to them, give me some salt, for we have travellers; but her intention was, that the men of the city might know them: but leaving those things, our Lord's design in these words, is to instruct his followers by this instance, not to look back in their flight, or to turn back to their houses, to save their goods, when the desolation of Jerusalem was coming on, lest they should suffer in it; and to warn all professors of religion, in all ages, against looking back to things that are behind, or turning their backs on him, in a time of distress and persecution; since such are not fit for the kingdom of God; and in these God has no delight and pleasure.

{s} Pirke Eliezer, c. 25. {t} Baal Hatturim in Gen. xix. 26. {u} Targum Jon. & Hieros. in ib. {w} Pirke Eliezer ib. {x} Aben Ezra in Gen. xix. 26. {y} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 20. 2. & Menachot, fol. 21. 1. {z} Bartenora in Misna Erubin, c. 1. sect. 10. {a} T. Bab Kiddushin, fol. 62. 1. {b} Nat. Hist. l. 31. c. 7. {c} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 12. {d} Adv. Haeres. l. 4. c. 51. {f} Jarchi in Gen. xix. 26. {g} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 51. fol. 46. 1.

Luke 17:33

Ver. 33. Whosoever shall seek to save his life,.... By fleeing to some strong hold, or by continuing in the metropolis, and strongest city in the nation, Jerusalem:

shall lose it: there he will be in the greatest danger:

and whosoever shall lose his life; or expose it to danger, by fleeing to the mountains, or going to Pella, a small town beyond Jordan, of no strength, and where there might be thought no security;

shall preserve it; he shall be safe; See Gill on "Mt 16:25".

Luke 17:34

Ver. 34. I tell you, in that night,.... Of affliction and calamity, that shall be upon the Jewish nation, and which is before called that day, Lu 17:31 and therefore is not to be understood literally of the night:

there shall be two [men] in one bed; this is said agreeably to the time, the night before mentioned, that being the time to be in bed, at rest and asleep; for they that sleep, sleep in the night; and still suggests the security the people of the Jews would be in, at the time of their destruction. The word "men" is not in the text, it is only, "there shall be two in one bed"; and may as well be understood of a man and his wife, since it is not so usual for two men to lie in one bed; and this the rather more strongly expresses the distinguishing providence of God in saving one, and suffering the other to be taken and lost: the words may be rendered, "there shall be two upon one couch": that is, sitting together at supper, which was also in the night season: it was the custom of the ancients to sit upon beds, or couches, at meals; and they had a bed, or couch, which held two persons only, and was called Biclinium {h}: and so this likewise intimates, that the destruction of the Jews would be at a time when they were thoughtless of it, and were eating and drinking, as in the days of Noah and of Lot, Lu 17:27.

The one shall be taken; by the Roman soldiers:

and the other shall be left; being, by one providence or another preserved; which is mentioned, to show the distinction God will make in his providence, and to encourage believers to trust in it.

{h} Vid. Alstorph. de Lectis Veter. c. 15. p. 90, 91.

Luke 17:35

Ver. 35. Two [women] shall be grinding together,.... In Mt 24:41 it is added, "in the mill"; in the house where the mill was, and at one and the same mill; and so the Ethiopic version here, "two shall grind in one mill": and it was common for two women to grind at one hand mill; and though the word "women" is not in the text, it is rightly put into the translation; since the word used is of the feminine gender, and since grinding was the business of women; and so the Persic version here supplies it, as we do; See Gill on "Mt 24:42".

The one shall be taken and the other left; the Roman soldiers entering the mill, will lay hold on the one, and carry her away with them, and leave the other; and for which no other reason can be given, but the sovereign will and providence of God, which should overrule and dispose the minds of these men, to act in such a manner.

Luke 17:36

Ver. 36. Two men shall be in the field,.... At work there, tilling the ground, or sowing the seed in it, or reaping the corn; which of them soever was the work of the field, at the time of Jerusalem's destruction:

the one shall be taken, and the other left: the circumstances attending these several, instances show, that they cannot be considered as expressive of the use and effect of the preaching of the Gospel, that being the savour of life unto life to some, and the savour of death unto death to others, some being effectually called by it, and others being left to die in their sins; since these men and women are said to be either in a bed asleep, or on a couch feasting, or grinding in a mill, or at work in the field, and so not in proper places, and at leisure to hear the Gospel preached. The whole verse is left out in the Ethiopic version, and in some Greek copies; though it is in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, and in the Complutensian edition, and in some ancient copies, as Beza observes.

Luke 17:37

Ver. 37. And they answered and said unto him, where, Lord?.... That is, either the Pharisees put this question to Christ, who demanded of him when the kingdom of God would come, Lu 17:20 or rather the disciples, to whom Christ

more especially directed his discourse,
Lu 17:22 who hearing of the distinction that would be made of persons in these dismal times, ask where it should be; not where the persons would be left, but whither the others would be taken, and by whom: and he said unto them,

wheresoever the body is; the carcass of the Jewish nation, as at Jerusalem chiefly, and in whatsoever place:

thither will the eagles be gathered together; the Roman army, whose ensign was the eagle; these will come, seize upon them, and take them and devour them, as they did: the Persic version renders it, "vultures"; See Gill on "Mt 24:28". These words can by no means be understood of sinners fleeing to Christ for eternal life and salvation; nor of the gathering of saints to him, at the last day; for how fitly soever such persons may be compared to "eagles", the word "body", or "carcass", as in Mt 24:28 and which is so read in some copies here, is not so suitable to Christ; and especially at his glorious appearing; and besides, the words are an answer to a question, where such persons would be, who would be taken and destroyed, when others would be left, or preserved; and manifestly refer to the body, or carcass of the Jewish people at Jerusalem, and other fortified places; where they should think themselves safe, but should not be so, the Roman armies gathering about them, and seizing them as their prey: it is yet a more strange interpretation, which is proposed by a very learned man {i}; that by the "eagle" is meant, Christ; and by "the body", or "carcass", the church in the times of antichrist; and by "gathering" to it, the coming of Christ: for though Christ may be said to bear and carry his people, as the eagle bears and carries its young upon its wings, which he observes from
Ex 19:4 yet not a single eagle, but "eagles", in the plural number, are here mentioned; which shows, that not a single person, as Christ, but many are here intended, even legions of Roman soldiers: nor can the church of Christ be compared to a dead and filthy carcass, in the worst of times, even in the times of antichrist; for however forlorn, distressed, and afflicted her condition is, she is kept alive, and in some measure pure from antichristian pollutions; and is represented by a woman, to whom two wings of a great eagle are given (wherefore she should rather be designed by the eagles) to fly with into the wilderness, where she is preserved and nourished for a time, and times, and half a time,
Re 12:14. Nor is Christ's coming ever expressed by the gathering of him to his people; but on the other hand, they are always said to be gathered unto him; see **2Th 2:1**.

{i} Teelmaunus.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 18:1

Ver. 1. And he spoke a parable unto them,.... To his own disciples, as the Ethiopic version reads, in order to encourage them to prayer, with perseverance in it; since such sore times of trial and affliction were coming upon the Jews, of which he had spoken in the preceding chapter; and such times more especially call for prayer; see Ps 50:15

[to this end], that men ought always to pray. This is opposed to them, who pray not at all, or have left off prayer before God, or who pray only in distress; and suggests, that a man should pray as often as he has an opportunity; should be constant and assiduous at the throne of grace, and continue putting up his requests to God, though he does not presently return an answer:

and not to faint; by reason of afflictions, temptations, desertions, and delays in answering prayer; and prayer itself is an admirable antidote against fainting under afflictive providences: it is with the Jews an affirmative precept that a man should pray,
Mwy lkb, "every day" {k}; it was usual with them to pray three times a day; see Ps 55:17 there is no set time fixed by Christ; men should be always praying. This is not to be understood, that a man should be always actually engaged in the work of prayer; that he should be continually either in his closet, in private devotion to God, or attending exercises of more public prayer, with the saints; for there are other religious exercises to be performed, besides prayer; and besides, there are many civil affairs of life, it is every man's indispensable duty to regard: nor does our Lord mean in the least to break in upon, or interrupt the natural and civil duties of life; but his meaning is, that a man should persevere in prayer, and not leave off, or be dejected, because he has not an immediate answer; and this is clear from the following case.

{k} Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 1. sect. 1.

Luke 18:2

Ver. 2. Saying, there was in a city a judge,.... In every city in the land of Israel, there was a sanhedrim, or court of judicature; in Jerusalem was the great sanhedrim, consisting of seventy one; and in every city where there were an hundred and twenty men, or more, there was a lesser sanhedrim, consisting of twenty three; and in a city in which there were not an hundred and twenty men, were three judges; for there was no sanhedrim, or court of judicature, that consisted of less than three {l}: but

"although there is no judicature less than three, Nwrl dxal rtwm, "it is lawful for one to judge", according to the law, as it is said, Le 19:15 "In righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour"; but according to the words of the Scribes, (only,) when there are three, and two that judge, their judgment is no judgment: one who is publicly approved or authorized, or who has taken a licence from the sanhedrim, it is lawful for him to judge alone, but it is not accounted a judicature; and though it is lawful, it is the command of the wise men, that he set others with him; for lo, they say, do not judge alone, for there is none that judgeth alone, but one {m}."

It may be, this judge was, hxmwm, an authorized and approved one; however, we have instances of single judges, or of persons that have judged alone, at least by the consent of parties.

"R. Abhu was sitting judge, in a synagogue in Caesarea, by himself, his disciples said to him, did not Rabbi so teach us, do not judge alone? he replied to them, when ye see me sit judge by myself, and ye come to me, as those that have taken upon themselves (or agreed to be judged by me); for the tradition is, of things in which they do not take upon them; but if they take upon them, (or agree to be judged,) one may judge, though alone {n}."

And again, elsewhere {o};

"if he is publicly authorized or approved, he judges, though alone; says R. Nachman, as I judge pecuniary causes alone; and so says R. Chijah, as I judge pecuniary judgments alone. --Mar Zutra, the son of R. Nachman, judged a cause, and erred; he came to R. Joseph, who said to him, if they have received thee upon them (agreed to be judged by thee) thou needst not finish; but if not, go and finish."

The qualifications of one to be a judge, even of the bench of three, were these {p};

"wisdom, meekness (or modesty), and fear, (i.e. of God,) and hatred of mammon, (or money,) love of truth, and to have the love of men, and to be masters of a good name (or to be of good report)."

But the judge in the text, came greatly short of these qualifications: his character follows,

which feared not God, neither regarded man; and therefore, according to the canon, was disqualified from being a judge, since he was destitute of the fear of God; and seeing he regarded not men, he could neither have any love to men, nor any share in the affections of men, and such an one is very unfit to be a judge, for he cannot be thought to have any regard to his conscience, or his credit, and so not to justice and equity. The former of these characters, is what belongs to every man in a state of unregeneracy; there is no true fear of God before the eyes, or in the heart of any unconverted man; wherever it is, it is put there by the grace of God: this is one of the first things which appears in conversion, and shows itself in an hatred of sin, and in the performance of duties; and is increased by the discoveries of the grace and goodness of God; but the want of this is more visible in some than in others: some, though they have not the grace of fear, yet are under some awe of the Divine Being, and pay a regard to the word of God; and what through the force of education, and the dictates of a natural conscience, dare not go such lengths in sin, as some do: but there are others, who even say there is no God, and at least live as if there was none; they endeavour to work themselves, and others, into a disbelief of the being of God; and set their mouths against heaven, deny his providence, and despise his word; stretch out their hands, and strengthen themselves against the Almighty; and in a fearless manner, run upon the thick bosses of his bucklers; they declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not, yea, glory in it; they promise themselves impunity, and laugh at a future judgment; and of such a cast was this judge, and therefore a very improper person for such an office; for civil magistrates, and rulers of every sort, ought to be just, ruling in the fear of God: and as for the other part of his character, it is not to be wondered at; for such that fear not God, will have little regard to men; no otherwise, or further, than they are obliged to it: indeed, judges ought not to regard men in judgment; that is, to respect the persons of men, and through affection, or flattery, or bribes, wrest judgment: but this is not the sense of the phrase here, since this agrees not with the other part of the character, and since he is called an unjust judge; but the meaning is, that he had no regard to the laws of men, any more than the laws of God; but made his own will the rule of his actions, and had no regard to doing justice between man and man; nor did he care what any man said of him; he had no concern about his reputation and character, having none to lose.

{l} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 3, 4. {m} lb. c. 2. sect. 10, 11. {n} T. Hieros, Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 1. {o} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 5. 1. {p} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 7.

Luke 18:3

Ver. 3. And there was a widow in that city,.... Poor and helpless, and none among men to counsel, direct, and assist her, and take her part: now as in the accommodation of this parable, the elect of God answer to this widow; such an one is rather pitched upon to represent the helpless, desolate, and forlorn condition they are in among men in this world, though they are espoused to one husband, Christ; and especially to signify the state and condition of God's elect among the Jews in those sad times, before the destruction of Jerusalem, this parable has respect unto. Christ is the bridegroom of his church and people; he is their husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and they are espoused as a chaste virgin to him; and whilst he was here on earth, his disciples, who were the children of the bridegroom, could not fast and mourn, for which they had no reason; but upon the death of Christ, when he was removed from them, they had great sorrow of heart; they were left like widows and orphans; hence those words of Christ, Joh 14:18 and were persecuted by the Jews in their own land; and wherever they went, they stirred up the Gentiles against them; and so things continued till near the destruction of Jerusalem; during which time many a request was made to God, the judge of the widows and fatherless, to the following purport:

and she came unto him, saying, avenge me of my adversary; or do me justice in the cause depending between me, and him that has wronged me; hear the cause, and do right; vindicate, and deliver me. Many are the adversaries of God's people, as the sins and corruptions of their own hearts, Satan, and his angels, wicked oppressors, and persecutors; the last seem, in the mystical sense, to be designed here: it is lawful to pray for vengeance on them; it is right to apply to God, and leave it with him, to whom it belongs; and it has been the suit and cry of the best of men; see **Re 6:9**. It does not become the people of God to avenge themselves, even when it is in the power of their hands; nor should they desire it for their own sakes, so much as for the glory of God; they should ask it, not to gratify a revengeful spirit in them, but for the honour or divine justice; and this should be always with submission to the will of God, leaving it to his own time and way, to whom vengeance belongs, and who has said it is mine, and I will repay it; as he certainly will sooner or later:

the purity of his nature, his abhorrence of sin, and sinful men, and his love to his own people engage him to it.

Luke 18:4

Ver. 4. And he would not for a while,.... He would give no ear to her cries, nor take her cause in hand, nor right her wrongs, and clear her of her adversary:

but afterward he said within himself; as he was considering the matter in his own mind, and reflecting on this woman's case and the frequent application she had made to him:

though I fear not God, nor regard man; a monster in iniquity he was, to say so of himself; for though the character belongs to many, there are few that are so impudent in sin, as to take it to themselves, and glory in it.

Luke 18:5

Ver. 5. Yet because this widow troubleth me,.... By often knocking at his door, by loud cries and earnest entreaties, with strong arguments, and floods of tears, and could not easily be removed from his presence, or got out of his house:

I will avenge her; I will hear her cause, do her justice, and deliver her from her troublesome adversary:

lest by her continual coming she weary me: so that it was not from a conscience of duty in him, as a judge, or from a commiseration of the poor widow's case; but from a selfish end, for his own ease, in perfect agreement to his character, that his house might not be disturbed, and his ears stunned with her noise and cry, and he was pestered with her company day after day. The character of this judge, his reasoning with himself upon it, his principles from which he acted, and the ends he had in view, are wholly to be left out in the accommodation of this parable; and no farther to be considered than as the argument from the lesser to the greater may be strengthened by them; the intention of the parable being only to show the force, efficacy, and usefulness of importunity in prayer, as appears by the application of it, by our Lord, in the verses following.

Luke 18:6

Ver. 6. And the Lord said,.... The Lord Jesus Christ, who delivered out this parable to his disciples:

hear what the unjust judge saith; and take encouragement from hence to be frequent and importunate in prayer with God; for if such a cruel, merciless, and unjust judge is to be wrought upon by importunity to do justice, who has no principle to influence him, how much more will not God, who is a just judge, the judge of widows, and of the oppressed, a God of great mercy and compassion, who delights in the prayers of his people, knows their cases, and is able to help them, and who has an interest in them, and they in him? how much more will not he regard their importunate requests, and arise, and save them much such like reasoning this is used by the Jews:

"says R. Simeon ben Chelphetha, an impudent man overcomes a good man, or a modest man, (by his importunity,) how much more the goodness of the world itself {q}?"

that is, how much more will a man, by his continual prayer, prevail with God, who is goodness itself? And they have another saying {r}, that agrees with this:

"says R. Nachman, impudence (i.e. importunity) even against God is profitable."

The application of this parable follows:

{q} T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 65. 2. {r} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 105. 1.

Luke 18:7

Ver. 7. And shall not God avenge his own elect,.... Who are a select number, a special people, whom he has loved with an everlasting love, so as of his own sovereign good will and pleasure to choose in his Son Jesus Christ unto everlasting life and salvation, through certain ways and means of his own appointing, hence they are peculiarly his: and these he will avenge and vindicate, right their wrongs, do them justice, and deliver them from their adversaries, and take vengeance on them; as may be concluded from his hatred of sin, his justice, and his holiness, from his promises, and from his power, and from the efficacy of prayer, and the regard he has to it: for it follows,

which cry unto him day and night; whose prayers he always hears; whose tears he puts up in his bottle; and whose importunity must surely be thought to have more regard with him, than that of the poor widow with the unjust judge:

though he bear long with them? either with their adversaries, their oppressors, and persecutors, who are vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, whom he endures with much longsuffering, till the sufferings of his people are accomplished, and the iniquities of these men are full; or rather with the elect, for the words may be rendered, "and is longsuffering towards them": delays his coming, and the execution of vengeance, as on the Jewish nation, so upon the whole world of the ungodly, till his elect are gathered in from among them; see **2Pe 3:9**.

Luke 18:8

Ver. 8. I tell you that he will avenge them speedily,.... As he did in a few years after the death of Christ, when God's elect among the Jews were singled out, and gathered in from them, and were delivered from their persecutors, and saved from temporal ruin and destruction, whilst the Roman army made sad havoc of their enemies; and so will he do in the end of the world.

Nevertheless, when the son of man cometh; either to destroy Jerusalem, or to judge the world:

shall he find faith on the earth? either in the land of Judea, the believers being removed from thence, and scattered among the Gentiles, and not a man, at least in Jerusalem, that had any faith in Jesus, as the Messiah; or in the world at the last day: there will then be little of the doctrine of faith, and less of the grace of faith, and still less of the exercise of faith, particularly in prayer, and especially about the coming of Christ; it will be little thought of, and expected, or faith little exercised about it. With this agree some expressions in the Jewish writings {s}:

"Says R. Jose, the holy, blessed God, will not be revealed to Israel, but in the time, atwnmyhm xktva ald, "that faith is not found among them.""

And elsewhere {t}, speaking of the times of the Messiah, and of a star that shall then appear, it is said "when that star shall be seen in the world at that time mighty wars shall be stirred up in the world, on all the four sides, xktvy al atwnmyhmw, "and faith will not be found" among them."

They seem to regard the first coming of the Messiah: and which was true with respect to the majority of their nation; and the same holds good with regard to his second coming; in the apocrypha it says:

"Nevertheless as coming the tokens, behold, the days shall come, that they which dwell upon earth shall be taken in a great number, and the way of truth shall be hidden, and the land shall be barren of faith." (2 Esdras 5:1)

{s} Zohar in Gen. fol. 118. 1. {t} Ib. in Num. fol. 86. 1.

Luke 18:9

Ver. 9. And he spake this parable unto certain,.... Or with respect to certain men; having a view to them, in order to expose their pride, vanity, arrogance, and self confidence:

which trusted in themselves that they were righteous; or, as if they were righteous; or because they were so in their own eyes, and in the esteem of others: the ground of their trust and confidence were themselves, their hearts, and the supposed goodness of them, their outward holiness, their moral behaviour, their duties, and good works, their almsdeeds, and religious exercises, their ceremonial observances, and fleshly privileges; on account of which they thought themselves very righteous persons, such as could not fail of being accepted with God, and justified in his sight; whereas there are none righteous in, and of themselves, no, not one. All the descendants of Adam, as such, are sinners, destitute of a righteousness, and filled with all unrighteousness, and are enemies to true righteousness: no man is naturally righteous, nor is he capable of making himself so, by any thing he can do: none are righteous by their obedience to the law of works, for that is imperfect, and cannot justify before God, in whose sight no flesh living can be justified on this account, however righteous they may appear before men, or may be in their own eyes: for this is contrary to God's way of making men righteous, and would disannul the death of Christ, and encourage boasting in men. Such trust and confidence must be very vain, and arise from ignorance; from ignorance of God, of the perfection of his justice, and of the nature of his righteous law; and of themselves, of the impurity of their hearts, and the imperfection of their obedience. These were of the "pharisaical" sort, and of which complexion were the generality of the Jews; and many of these were now standing by Christ, and within the hearing of this parable, and for whose sake it was delivered:

and despised others; or, "every man", as the Syriac and Persic versions read; all the rest of mankind, all but themselves; they made nothing of them, had them in no account; treated them as persons unworthy of the regard of God, and not fit to stand near them, or to be named with them.

Luke 18:10

Ver. 10. Two men went up into the temple to pray, Which is called an house of prayer, Isa 56:7 the Jews had a mighty notion of praying in a place of religious worship, as in the temple, or in a synagogue; imagining that their prayers were more acceptable to God, and sooner heard by him in such a place than in private:

"the prayers of the congregation, they say {u}, are heard always; and though there are sinners among them, the holy; blessed God, does not despise the prayer of many; wherefore, a man ought to join himself with the congregation, and not pray alone, whenever he can pray with that: and let a man go always, morning and evening, to the synagogue; for there is no prayer heard at all times but in the synagogue; and whoever has a synagogue in his city, and does not pray in it with the congregation, is called an ill neighbour. ---A divinity school is greater than a synagogue; and the great wise men, though they had many synagogues in their cities, did not pray but where they studied in the law."

And they say {w}, that

"he that prays (in the synagogue) is as if he offered a pure offering. ---Says R. Abhu, in the name of R. Abhu, "seek the Lard where he may be found"; where is he to be found? in the synagogues, and in the schools."

These two men had, doubtless, both of them a notion of the sanctity of the place, and acted according to the prevailing sense of the people. They went up hither, not by consultation, agreement, and appointment; for they were of a different cast from each other; but so it happened. Had they went by consent, there was a rule for them {x}:

"two men that go to a synagogue to pray, and one has finished his prayer before his neighbour, if he stays for him, his reward is double; and if he does not stay for him, his prayer is not heard."

And they had rules also for the manner of their going to, and from the place of prayer: when they went thither, they were to go nimbly, in haste, and even run; but when they came back, they were to go very slowly and gently {y}.

"The commandment (they say {z}) is to run to a synagogue; for it is said, **Ho 6:3** "we shall know, we shall follow on to know the Lord": but when a man comes out of the synagogue, let him not take large steps; but let him walk, little by little, or take short steps."

How far these rules were complied with by these men, is of no great moment to know; who they were follows:

the one a Pharisee; one of those that trusted in themselves, as righteous, and despised all others, especially publicans and sinners; of these See Gill on "Mt 3:7". This was the strictest sect among the Jews; they were men that prayed, and fasted much, and were great sticklers for the ceremonies of the law, and the traditions of the elders, and did all they did to be seen of men:

and the other a publican; a gatherer of the Roman tax, though by nation a Jew; and therefore such were had in great contempt by the Jews in general; nor would they eat and drink and converse with them; See Gill on "Mt 9:10" and See Gill on "Mt 9:11"

{u} Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 8. sect. 1, 3. Piske Harosh Beracot, c. 1. art. 7. {w} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 8. 4. {x} Piske Harosh, ib. {y} Piske Harosh, & T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 9. 1. {z} Maimon. ib. sect. 2.

Luke 18:11

Ver. 11. The Pharisee stood,.... Standing was a praying posture;
See Gill on "Mt 6:5" nor is this observed, as if it was something amiss: but the sense is, either that he stood in some place of eminence, that he might be seen of others; or he stood in a set, fixed posture, in a very grave and solemn manner, showing great devotion and seriousness; or he stood with great boldness and confidence:

and prayed thus with himself; the phrase, "with himself", may be read either with the word "stood", as it is in the Syriac version; and then the sense is that he stood alone, apart from the publican, at a distance from him, as despising him; and lest he should be polluted by him; see Isa 65:4 or with the word "prayed", and does not design internal prayer, which was what the Pharisees did not use; for all they did was to be seen, and heard of men: but the meaning is, that he prayed only with respect to himself; he was wholly intent upon himself; his own self, and the commendation of himself, were the subject of his prayer: his whole dependence in it was on himself; and he was only seeking by it his own glory: he had no regard to the people of God, to aid the saints, nor did he put up one petition for them; nor had he any respect to Christ, the mediator, through whom access is had to God, and acceptance with him; nor to the Holy Spirit for his assistance; and though he addressed himself to God, yet in praise of himself, saying,

God I thank thee: there is no petition in this prayer of his for pardoning grace and mercy; nor larger measures of grace; nor for strength to perform duties, and to hold on to the end; nor for any favour whatever; nor is there any confession of sin in it. So that it scarce deserves the name of a prayer, for in it is only a thanksgiving: indeed, thanksgiving in prayer is right; and had he been a man that had received the grace of God, it would have been right in him to have given thanks to God for it, by which he was made to differ from others: nor would he have been blameworthy, had he thanked God for the good things which he had received from him, or which by his assistance he had done; but nothing of this kind is said by him: he thanks God, in order to exalt himself, and places his righteousness in his own works, and treats all other men in a censorious and disdainful manner; thanking God, or rather blessing himself, saying,

that I am not as other men are; and yet he was as other men, and no better: he was a sinner in Adam, as other men; and a sinner by nature, as others are; and had the same iniquities and corruptions in his heart, as others; and had no more goodness in him than other men, and as far from true real righteousness. Perhaps he means the Gentiles, whom the Jews looked upon as sinners, and the worst of men; and yet they were in no wise better than the Gentiles, as to their state and condition by nature: it was usual to call the Gentiles Myrxa, "other men"; which phrase is sometimes explained by "the nations of the world" {a}; and sometimes by the "Cuthites", or "Samaritans" {b}; See Gill on "Lu 5:29". ---He goes on, extortioners, unjust, adulterers; and yet all these characters belonged to the men of sect: the Pharisees were oppressors of the poor, devoured widows' houses, and extorted money from them, under a pretence of long prayers: they are aptly represented by the unjust steward, in Lu 16:1 and they were au unclean, unchaste, and an adulterous generation of men, Mt 12:39

or even as this publican; pointing to him at some distance, with great scorn and disdain. This was his prayer, or thanksgiving. It may gratify the curiosity of some to have some other prayers of the Pharisees; and it may be worth while to compare them with this, between which there will appear a pretty deal of likeness.

"R. Nechunia ben Hakkana used to pray, when he went into the school, and when he came out, a short prayer: they said unto him, what is the goodness (or the excellency) of this prayer? he replied to them, when I go in, I pray, that no offence might come by means of me; and when I go out, "I give thanks" for my portion: when I go in, this is what I say, let it be thy good pleasure before thee, O Lord, my God, the God of my fathers, that I may not be angry with my colleagues, nor my colleagues be angry with me; that I may not pronounce that which is pure defiled, and that which is defiled, pure; that I may not forbid that which is lawful, nor pronounce lawful that which is forbidden; and that I may not be found ashamed in this world, and in the world to come: and when I come out, this is what I say; I confess before thee, (or I thank thee) O Lord God, and the God of my fathers, that thou hast given me my portion among those that sit in the schools, and synagogues, and hast not given me my portion in the theatres and shows: for I labour, and they labour; I watch, and they watch; I labour to inherit paradise, and they labour for the pit of corruption {c}."

And these two prayers the Jews were obliged to recite at their going in, and coming out of the synagogue.

"It is a tradition of R. Juda, saying, three things a man ought to say every day; blessed be thou, ywg ynve alv, "that thou hast not made me a Gentile"; blessed art thou, that thou hast not made me an unlearned man (or one that is vain and foolish, uncivil and uncultivated); blessed art thou, that hast not made me a woman {d}."

In their prayer books {e}, these thanksgivings stand thus:

"blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, that thou hast made me an Israelite; (in some books it is, as before, that thou hast not made me a Gentile;) blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, that thou hast not made me a servant; blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, that thou hast not made me a woman:"

when the women, instead of this last, say:

"blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who has made me as he pleases."

And very agreeable to one of these benedictions does the Ethiopic version render the prayer of the Pharisee here; "I thank thee, O Lord that thou hast not made me as other men".

{a} Gloss. in T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 111. 2. {b} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 52. 2. {c} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 7. 4. Vid. Misna Beracot, c. 4. sect. 2. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {d} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 13. 2. {e} Seder Tephillot, ed. Basil. fol. 2. 2. ed. Amst. fol. 4. 1.

Luke 18:12

Ver. 12. I fast twice in the week,.... Not "on the sabbath", as the words may be literally rendered, and as they are in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; for the sabbath was not a fasting, but a feasting day with the Jews; for they were obliged to eat three meals, or feasts, on a sabbath day, one in the morning, another at evening, and another at the time of the meat offering: even the poorest man in Israel, who was maintained by alms, was obliged to keep these three feasts {f}. It was forbidden a man to fast, until the sixth hour, on a sabbath day; that is, till noon {g}: wherefore, it is a great mistake in Justin {h} and Suetonius {i}, that the sabbath was kept by the Jews as a fast. But the word is rightly rendered, "in the week"; the whole seven days, or week, were by the Jews commonly called the sabbath; hence, tbvb dxa, "the first of the sabbath", and the second of the sabbath, and the third of the sabbath {k}; that is, the first, second, and third days of the week. Now the two days in the week on which they fasted were Monday and Thursday, the second and fifth days; on which days the law of Moses, and the book of Esther were read, by the order of Ezra {l}; and fasts for the congregation were appointed on those days {m}; and so a private person, or a single man, as in this instance, took upon him, or chose to fast on the same {n}: the reason of this is, by some, said to be, because Moses went up to Mount Sinai on a Thursday, and came down on a

Monday {o}. But though these men fasted so often, they took care not to hurt themselves; for they allowed themselves to eat in the night till break of day. It is asked {p},

"how long may a man eat and drink, i.e. on a fast day? until the pillar of the morning ascends (day breaks); these are the words of Rabbi (Judah): R. Eliezer ben Simeon says, until cock crowing."

So that they had not so much reason to boast of these performances: he adds,

I give tithes of all that I possess; not only of what was tithable by the law of Moses, as the produce of his ground; and by the traditions of the elders, as the herbs in his garden,
Mt 23:23 but of every thing he had, which was not required by either of them; upon which he thought himself a very righteous person, and more than a common man: it is asked {q},

"who is a plebeian? (one of the people of the earth, or the common people) whoever does not eat his common food with purity with hands washed; these are the words of R. Meir; but the wise men say, whoever does not tithe his fruit."

This man would not be thought to be such an one.

{f} Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 30. sect. 9. {g} T. Hieros. Nedarim, fol. 40. 4. {h} L. 36. c. 2. {i} Octav. Aug. c. 76. {k} Maimon. Hilch. Mechosre Caphara, c. 2. sect, 8. {l} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 82. 1. Megilla, 31. 1, 2. {m} Maimon. Hilchot Taaniot, c. 1. sect. 5. {n} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 12. 1. {o} Godwin Moses & Aaron, l. 1. c. 10. Vid. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 1. {p} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 12. 1. {q} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 61. 1.

Luke 18:13

Ver. 13. And the publican standing afar off,.... Not at the outermost porch, or at the door: for

"a man might not fix his place at the door of the synagogue, but, qyxry, "he must go afar off", the space of two doors, and then pray {r};"

it may be in the court of the Gentiles, when the Pharisee was in the court of the

Israelites; at least he was afar off from him: and indeed, those who came to humble themselves before the Lord, and confess their sins, were obliged to stand at the distance of four cubits one from another, that one might not hear the prayers and confessions of the other {s}: and it might be, that this poor man might stand at a greater distance than was required, that he might not displease the Pharisee, who, he knew, would resent it, should he stand near him; or rather this was done, to testify the sense he had of his state and condition, and of his unworthiness; as that he was afar off from God, and unworthy to draw nigh unto him, and deserved to be kept at a distance from him for ever. So it is said {t} of the Israelites, that they trembled at Mount Sinai, and "stood afar off",
Mtwntwne twrwhl, "to show their humility": and under a work of the law, and under such a like dispensation was this publican; and therefore

would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven: and which, as it was an humble posture he stood in, agrees with the rules the Jews give {u};

"the order (or posture) of the body, how is it? when a man stands in prayer he ought to set his feet one by the side of the other, and fix his eyes, hjml, "below", as if he looked to the earth; and his heart must be open above, as if he stood in the heavens; and lay his hands upon his heart, putting the right hand over the left; and must stand as a servant before his master, with trembling, and fear, and dread, and may not put his hands upon his loins."

And agreeably to this, it is elsewhere {w} said,

"he that prays, ought to fix his eyes below, and his heart above."

And the Jews used to look downward, or shut their eyes, for the sake of attention in prayer; and it was even forbidden them to open their eyes to look upon the wall {x}. This showed in the publican, that the guilt of his sins lay heavy on him; that he could not look up; that shame filled him with blushing; that sorrow caused his countenance to fall; and that fear of divine wrath, and displeasure, possessed him; and that he looked upon himself as unworthy of the smiles of heaven,

but smote upon his breast: pointing at the fountain of his sin; expressing by this action, his sorrow, and repentance for it; and an aversion and abhorrence of himself on account of it, joined with indignation and revenge; and he did this to arouse and stir up all the powers and faculties of his soul, to call upon God. The Persic version renders it, "he fell on his knees, and beat the earth with his head"; taking a sort of revenge on himself for sin:

saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. This is his prayer; a short, but a very full one, and greatly different from that of the Pharisee: in which is a confession that he was a sinner; a sinner in Adam, who had derived a sinful nature from him, being conceived and born in sin; and a sinner by practice, having committed many actual transgressions, attended with aggravating circumstances; a guilty and filthy sinner, a notorious one, deserving of the wrath of God, and the lowest hell: he speaks of himself, as if he was the only sinner in the world; at least, as if there was none like him: and there is in this prayer also a petition; and the object it is put up to, is "God", against whom he had sinned; with whom there is mercy and forgiveness; and who only can forgive sin; and who has promised that he will: and has proclaimed his name, a God, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; and has given instances of his forgiving grace and mercy; and therefore the publican was right in addressing him by confession: the petition he makes to him is, to be "merciful", or "propitious" to him; that is, to show mercy to him, through the propitiary sacrifice of the Messiah, which was typified by the sacrifices under the law: the first thing a sensible sinner wants, is an application of pardoning grace and mercy; and forgiveness springs from mercy; and because the mercy of God is free and abundant, therefore pardon is so: but this is not to be expected from an absolute God, or God out of Christ. God is only propitious in Christ: hence it may be observed, that God pardons none but those to whom he is propitious in his Son; and that he forgives sin upon the foot of a reconciliation, and satisfaction made to his law, and justice, and so pardon is an act of justice, as well as of mercy; and that there is no pardoning mercy but through Christ. The Arabic version renders it, "spare me, because I am a sinner"; see Ps 25:11.

{r} Piske Harosh Beracot, c. 1. art. 7. Vid. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 9. 1. {s} Jarchi & Bartenora in Pirke Abot. c. 5. sect. 5. {t} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 80. 1. {u} Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 5. sect. 4. & Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 19. {w} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 105. 2. {x} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 25. 3.

Luke 18:14

Ver. 14. I tell you that this man,.... The publican that so freely owned himself to be a sinner, and by his carriage acknowledged he was unworthy of any favour; and who was treated with so much contempt by the Pharisee:

went down to his house; from the temple which was built on a mountain,

justified, [rather] than the other: accounted as a righteous person in the sight of God; justified from all his sins, and accepted by him, when the other was abhorred and neglected. The Syriac and Persic versions, and so Beza's most ancient copy, read, "than the Pharisee", who had such an high opinion of himself, and despised others: not that the Pharisee was justified at all, when the publican really was; but the sense is, that if judgment had been to have been made, and sentence passed according to the then conduct and behaviour of both parties, the publican had greatly the advantage, in the sight of God; an humble demeanour being well pleasing and acceptable to him, when pride, and arrogance, boasting of, and trusting in a man's own righteousness, are abhorred by him;

for every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted. This was a proverbial expression, often mentioned by Christ on different occasions, and frequently used by the Jews; See Gill on "Mt 23:12" to which may be added the following passages;

"whoever is of a haughty spirit, at last shall be made low {y}."

And again,

"whosoever humbleth himself, the holy blessed God will lift him up {z}."

{y} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 5. 1. {z} Zohar in Lev. fol. 39. 1.

Luke 18:15

Ver. 15. And they brought unto him also infants,.... As well as grown persons, that were sick, to be healed by him:

that he would touch them; in order, as some learned men think, to cure them of diseases that attended them; for one of the ways by which Christ healed persons, was by touching them; nor do we read of his touching in common for any other purpose, or of persons desiring him to touch them, or theirs, but for this end; in Mt 19:13 it is read, "that he should put his hands on them"; and so the Arabic and Persic versions here read, in order to pray over them, and bless them: but neither in one place, nor the other, is any mention of their baptism, or of their being brought for such a purpose; nor can it be concluded from hence;

but when [his] disciples saw [it], they rebuked them; the persons that brought the infants; See Gill on "Mt 19:13".

Luke 18:16

Ver. 16. But Jesus called them unto him,.... Not the disciples, as the Ethiopic version reads, nor the persons that brought the children, but the children themselves; for the antecedent to the relative auta, "them", can be no other; which shows, that these infants were not new born babes, or children at the breast, but such as were more grown up, since they were capable of being called to, and of coming to Christ:

and said; that is, to the disciples; so the Persic version expresses it:

suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;
See Gill on "Mt 19:14"

for of such is the kingdom of God; or "of heaven", as the Syriac version reads, and as in Mt 19:14 that is, the kingdom of God belongs to such, "who are as these"; or, "like to these": as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render the words; (see Gill on "Mt 19:14".)

Luke 18:17

Ver. 17. Verily I say unto you,...., Christ takes an occasion from hence to teach his disciples humility, and guard them against pride and vanity:

whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God; the King Messiah, the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, even the whole Gospel dispensation;

as a little child; without prejudice, pride, ambition, and vanity, with meekness, and humility:

shall in no wise enter therein; a very unfit and improper person to be a professor of the Gospel; or to be admitted to Gospel ordinances: or be a member of a Gospel church; or be reckoned a subject of the Messiah's kingdom, which is of a spiritual nature; and as he has not a meetness for, and a right unto the kingdom of glory, he shall never see it, and enjoy it.

Luke 18:18

Ver. 18. And a certain ruler asked him,.... A young man,
Mt 19:20 a ruler among the Jews, a civil magistrate, and a very rich man; he ran after Jesus, and overtook him in the way, as he was going towards Jericho,
Mr 10:17

saying, good master; "Rabbi"; or doctor,

what shall I do to inherit eternal life?
See Gill on "Mt 19:16".

Luke 18:19

Ver. 19. And Jesus said unto him,.... In answer to his question, beginning with the character he gave him:

why callest thou me good? it being unusual to address men, even their Rabbins, under such a title:

none is good, save one, [that is], God: or "but God alone"; as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it; or, "but the one God", as read the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions;
See Gill on "Mt 19:17".

Luke 18:20

Ver. 20. Thou knowest the commandments,.... The ten commandments given to Moses, and delivered to people; and which they were careful to teach their children; though five are only here mentioned, and not in the order in which they stand: suggesting hereby that these must be kept, or the law must he fulfilled, and satisfaction made for the violation of it, or there can be no inheriting eternal life. The five commandments mentioned are, the seventh, sixth, eighth, ninth, and fifth:

do not commit adultery; do not kill; do not steal; do not bear false witness; honour father and thy mother;
See Gill on "Mt 19:17" and
See Gill on "Mr 10:19".

Luke 18:21

Ver. 21. And he said,.... That is, the ruler said to him, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions add; "to Jesus", as the Persic version expresses it;

all these have I kept from my youth up; See Gill on "Mt 19:20" where it is added, what lack I yet?

Luke 18:22

Ver. 22. Now when Jesus heard these things,.... That he had kept all these commandments, and that ever since he was a child, and to that very time:

he said unto him, yet lackest thou one thing; not but that he lacked many other things, and even every thing: for he had performed no one thing as it should be: but Christ said, partly in answer to his pert question, "what lack I yet?" and partly by an ironical concession, granting he had kept them all, as he had said, yet one thing was wanting; and chiefly with a view to mortify his pride and vanity:

sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me;
See Gill on "Mt 19:21".

Luke 18:23

Ver. 23. And when he heard this,.... That one thing was wanting, and what that was, which was to part with all his worldly substance, and follow Christ;

he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich;
See Gill on "Mt 19:22".

Luke 18:24

Ver. 24. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful,.... As he might, by his looks and gestures; and perceived that he was determined not to part with his possessions, and follow him:

he said to his disciples, how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! embrace the Gospel, and submit to the ordinances of it; deny themselves, part with their worldly substance for the cause of Christ, and interest of religion. Riches, which should be a reason for, are often a bar unto a profession of Christ, and his Gospel. This is delivered as an affirmation, or by way of assertion, See Gill on "Mt 19:23".

Luke 18:25

Ver. 25. For it is easier for a camel,.... These words were spoken to the disciples again, and were a second address to them, after they had shown astonishment at the former;
See Gill on "Mt 19:24" and
See Gill on "Mr 10:24".

Luke 18:26

Ver. 26. And they that heard it, said, who then can be saved?] These were the disciples of Christ, who so said; see Mt 19:25.

Luke 18:27

Ver. 27. And he said,.... That is, Jesus, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions express it:

the things which are impossible with men, are possible with God;
See Gill on "Mt 19:26".

Luke 18:28

Ver. 28. Then Peter said,.... "To him", as the Syriac and Arabic versions add;

that is, to the Lord Jesus, as the Ethiopic version expresses it; who was always the most forward to speak on any occasion: he observing what was required of the young man, and how unwilling he was to comply with it, and the difficulty in every rich man's way of entrance into the kingdom of God, spoke as follows;

lo, we have left all: the Arabic version reads, "all ours"; all we had, our friends, trades, and worldly substance;

and followed thee: in Mt 19:27 it is added, "what shall we have therefore"; referring to the promise of Christ, to the young man, that should he sell all he had, and give it to the poor, he should have treasure in heaven; See Gill on "Mt 19:27".

Luke 18:29

Ver. 29. And he said unto them,.... To his disciples, as the Ethiopic version reads; though the Syriac and Persic versions read, "and Jesus said to him"; that is, to Peter; he particularly replied to him:

verily I say unto you, there is no man: not only you shall have peculiar honour done you, as to sit on thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel; but there is not a single person of a more private character,

that hath left house, or "houses", as read the Syriac and Persic versions;

or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake: that is, for Christ's sake, and for the sake of his Gospel, as the other evangelists have it; and which teaches us how to understand the kingdom of God here, and elsewhere.

Luke 18:30

Ver. 30. Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time,.... Not more houses, parents, brethren, &c. but that which is abundantly preferable to them; such comfort, peace, satisfaction, and pleasure, as are not to be found in such enjoyments:

and in the world to come life everlasting; which was what the young man was desirous of inheriting, Lu 18:18.

Luke 18:31

Ver. 31. Then he took unto him the twelve,.... His twelve disciples, as the Ethiopic version expresses it; he took them aside from the rest of the company, as they were travelling on the road, and privately delivered to them, what follows; see Mt 20:17

and said unto them, behold, we go up to Jerusalem; to the feast of the passover, which was drawing near, and the last Christ was to eat with his disciples, the time of his sufferings, and death, being now at hand; and of which he thought fit to give his disciples notice: and therefore he called them aside, and in a private manner, told them,

that all things that are written by the prophets, concerning the son of man, shall be accomplished; particularly, **Ps 2:1**
Ps 22:6 for to these the following things have respect.

Luke 18:32

Ver. 32. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles,.... As he was by the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, to Pilate, the Roman governor, and by him to the soldiers:

and shall be mocked; as he was by the latter, when they crowned him with thorns, arrayed him in a purple robe, and put a reed into his hand, and bowed the knee to him, saying, hail king of the Jews; and likewise by the Jews when he hung upon the cross:

and spitefully entreated. The Syriac and Persic versions leave out this clause here, and read it the next verse. It may regard the injuries done him, the abuses and affronts he received, both by words and blows:

and spitted on; as he was both by officers in the high priest's palace, and by the Roman soldiers in Pilate's hall; see Isa 50:6.

Luke 18:33

Ver. 33. And they shall scourge him,.... As he was by Pilate's order, before he was crucified:

and put him to death; a shameful, and a painful one, the death of the cross:

and the third day he shall rise again; as he accordingly did.

Luke 18:34

Ver. 34. And they understood none of these things,.... "Not one of them", as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; every article of his sufferings and death were unintelligible by them; they knew not how to understand him in any one point: or how to reconcile these things to the notions they had entertained of the temporal grandeur, and glory, of the Messiah, and his kingdom; and which shows their great ignorance of the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning these things.

And this saying, or "thing"; for it answers to the Hebrew word rbd, which signifies any affair, or matter, as well as a word, or saying: and so here, the whole of this affair

was hid from them; unless it should have a peculiar regard to that part of it, which expresses his resurrection from the dead; see **Mr 9:10** or the delivery of him to the Gentiles, **Lu 9:44**

neither knew they the things which were spoken; the meaning of them. The Ethiopic version leaves out this, and puts the former clause, by way of question, "and he said unto them, and is this saying hid from you?"

Luke 18:35

Ver. 35. And it came to pass that as he was come nigh unto Jericho,.... Which lay in his way to Jerusalem;

a certain blind man sat by the way side begging: this was not blind Bartimaeus, nor his companion, for they were cured by Christ as he went out of Jericho; but this man before he came to it; for we afterwards read of his entrance into, and passing through Jericho, Lu 19:1 though much the same things are related in this account, as in that of the other two blind men; See Gill on "Mt 20:30".

Luke 18:36

Ver. 36. And hearing the multitude pass by,.... Their "voice", as the Syriac version expresses it; the noise of their feet, and especially of their tongues;

he asked what it meant? what was the meaning of this concourse of people, and of this clamorous noise; or, as the Syriac version reads, "who it should be?" what person of note was passing by, that there was such a multitude after him? to which the answer best agrees.

Luke 18:37

Ver. 37. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. Some of the company answered him, that Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, so much talked of, and said to be the Messiah, who was become so famous for his doctrines and miracles, for healing diseases, and dispossessing devils, was just "then" passing by; and this occasioned the noise and clamour.

Luke 18:38

Ver. 38. And he cried, saying, Jesus thou son of David,.... Believing him, at once, to be the Messiah; whence he calls him the son of David, which was a character and title of the Messiah, well known to the Jews; See Gill on "Mt 1:1" and therefore immediately called out unto him, being willing to take that opportunity as he passed, and whilst he was within hearing, to make his suit to him for his sight:

saying, have mercy on me: a poor, blind, and miserable creature, and restore me to my sight, which will be an act of singular mercy, and goodness, and will always be gratefully owned as such.

Luke 18:39

Ver. 39. And they that went before,.... In the company that preceded Christ; for he, as yet, was not come right over against the blind man:

rebuked him that he should hold his peace; being not well pleased that he should call him the son of David, which was acknowledging him to be the Messiah; or that he might not be troublesome to Christ, and retard his journey:

but he cried so much the more, thou son of David, have mercy on me; he neither dropped the character of Christ, nor his request to him; but called out more loudly, and with greater vehemence, earnestness, and importunity: so persons sensible of their need of Christ, and of his worth, excellency, and ability, are not to be discouraged from an application to him, by whatsoever they meet with from men, or devils.

Luke 18:40

Ver. 40. And Jesus stood,.... He stood still; he made a full stop, and went no further, when, it is very likely, he was just over against him:

and commanded him to be brought unto him; either by the disciples, or by some of the multitude:

and when he was come near he asked him; the following question.

Luke 18:41

Ver. 41. Saying, what wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?.... Is it alms thou askest? or is it thy sight thou wouldst have restored?

and he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight; this he chose, this was his request, and what he cried so vehemently for; and which he believed Christ, the son of David, was able to do for him.

Luke 18:42

Ver. 42. And Jesus said unto him, receive thy sight,.... Be it to thee as thou desirest, look up and see: thus by a word speaking, and power going along with it, without making use of any means, he fulfilled his desire.

Thy faith hath saved thee; or has obtained salvation for thee, a temporal salvation; and it may be also a spiritual and an eternal one: for that is the concern faith has in salvation; it is the means of obtaining and enjoying it: Christ, the object of faith, is the author of it.

Luke 18:43

Ver. 43. And immediately he received his sight,.... As soon as ever the word was gone out of Christ's mouth, virtue went forth from him, and cured the man of his blindness; his eyes were at once opened, and he saw as other men;

and followed him; his kind benefactor, with a grateful sense of his goodness, with strong affection for him, and faith in him;

glorifying God, who had sent such a Saviour to him; who had wrought such a wonderful miracle for him: for he was sensible that none but God could do this.

And all the people, when they saw [it]; what was done, how that the man they just before saw was blind, and begging by the way side, now had his sight restored to him, in an instant, and was following Jesus, in the crowd, along with them:

gave praise unto God; or, as Beza's most ancient copy reads, "glory"; they ascribed the glory to God, and praised his name, that he had raised up the Messiah among them; of which this was a clear proof, inasmuch as the eyes of the blind were opened, according to
Isa 35:5.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 19:1

Ver. 1. And [Jesus] entered, and passed through Jericho. Though the word "Jesus" is not in the original text it is rightly supplied in our version; as it is also in the Syriac, Persic, Ethiopic versions; for of him the words are manifestly spoken: after he had healed the blind man he met with near to Jericho, he entered into it, but made no stay in it, passed through it at once without stopping, though a very populous city; but here he had no work, either to perform miracles, or to convert sinners; though both, before he entered, and after he passed through it.

Luke 19:2

Ver. 2. And behold [there was] a man named Zacchaeus,.... Or yakz, "Zaccai", a name in use among the Jews; see Ezr 2:9. We often read of yakz ybr, "Rabbi Zaccai", or "Zacchaeus" {a}, and very frequently of R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, a famous doctor that lived in the times of Christ, and even till after the destruction of Jerusalem. The Jews also make mention of one R. Zaccai, a prince of the seed of David the king, in later times {b}. So that this man, as appears by his name, was a Jew, though some have thought him to have been a Gentile {c}, perhaps because of his employment: but it does not follow from thence; for there were Jews that were publicans, as Levi, or Matthew, afterwards one of Christ's disciples; and also in Jewish writings, mention is made, as of yrkn okwm, "a stranger", or "a Gentile publican" {d}, so likewise of larvy okwm, "an Israelite publican" {e}; and such an one was Zacchaeus, as follows:

which was chief among the publicans; the head of them in that place, to whom the rest brought the tax, tribute, or toll; he was the receiver general of the tax: at the toll booths, at bridges, for people's going over the water, there was lwdg okwm, "the greater publican", and Nwjq okwm, "the lesser publican" {f}, who was deputy to the other. What sort of tax Zacchaeus was concerned in collecting, is not certain; however, he was a principal man in this employ, and had got great riches by it.

And he was rich; was a person of figure among the publicans, and of substance, which he had gained in his post. And though the instances of rich men being called by grace are few, yet there have been some; and the rather this circumstance is mentioned, because it had been observed in the preceding chapter, how difficult, but not impossible, as this instance proves, it was for rich men to enter into the kingdom of God.

{a} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 27. 2. & Yebamot, fol. 77. 2. Nazir, fol. 38. 1. & Nidda, fol. 41. 2. & Juchasin, fol. 90. 2. {b} R. Benjamin Itinerar. p. 61, 94. {c} Tertull. contr. Marcion. l. 4. c. 37. {d} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 113. 1. {e} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 10. sect. 1. {f} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 78. 2.

Luke 19:3

Ver. 3. And he sought to see Jesus who he was,.... What sort of a person he was for complexion, stature, and age: having heard much of him, he was very desirous of indulging his curiosity with a sight of him; having, as yet, nothing else that induced him to desire to see him: his desire to see Jesus was not of the same kind with the kings and prophets, Mt 13:16 but rather like that of Herod, Lu 23:8

and could not for the press; the multitude of people that were flocking to meet Jesus, or who came before him, or were about him; for one part of the multitude went before him, and the other followed after him; so that he was in the crowd, and therefore could not easily be seen;

because he was little of stature. The Syriac and Persic versions read, "because Zacchaeus was little of stature", lest it should be thought that this is said of Jesus; for the reason why Zacchaeus could not see him for the crowd, was not because Christ was little of stature, and was hid among them, but because Zacchaeus was little of stature, and could not see over their heads.

Luke 19:4

Ver. 4. And he ran before,.... Jesus, and the company that was with him; so very desirous was he of seeing him:

and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: which sort of trees were very common about Jericho: hence we read of, hmqv lv
twrwq, "beams of sycamore" in Jericho, which those that were strong took up in their arms, and the owners stood and devoted them to God {g}; and among the things which the men of Jericho did, this was one, that they permitted the branches of trees devoted to sacred uses, and of the "charub" tree, and of the "sycamore", to be cut down and used {h}. This sort of trees used to grow in plains and valleys, as appears from some passages of Scripture, 1Ki 10:27 and from Jewish writings {i}; and certain it is, that Jericho was in such a situation. Josephus {k} says, it was seated in a plain; and Strabo says {l}, that Jericho is a plain surrounded with mountains; to which agrees the account that {m} Justin gives of it. There is a valley, which is enclosed by mountains on all sides, as with a wall, like a castle; the space of the place is two hundred acres, and it is called Jericho. Hence we read of the plains and valley of Jericho in Scripture, De 34:3 so that it is very probable sycamore trees grew there in

great plenty; though the place was more famous for palm trees: hence it is called the city of the palm trees,
De 24:3 which the Targumist, in both places, interprets, the city of Jericho: to which agree the accounts given of it by Pliny {n}, Strabo {o}, and Justin {p}, who all affirm, that it abounded with palm trees; and the latter says also with balsam trees, from the sweet smell of which it might have its name: so the Jews say {q}, the ointment of balsam is called the ointment of our land, because it grows in Jericho, and because of the smell of it, it is called Jericho; though some think it has its name from the plain, being in the form of a half moon; the moon, in the Hebrew language, being called xry {r}. This tree seems to have been without the city: and indeed, according to the Jewish canon, it ought to be, which runs thus {s};

"they set a tree at a distance from a city, twenty and five cubits, but a "charub tree", and "sycamore", fifty cubits."

The reason of the greater distance of the latter is, as one of their commentators says {t}, because their branches were large; and this is the reason why Zacchaeus went up into one of these trees, because it was large and able to bear him, and tall, from whence he could have a full view of Christ:

for he was to pass that [way]; or rather, "pass by that"; for the word "way" is not in the text; and the sense is, he was to pass by that tree; or "under" it, as the Arabic version renders it. The tree stood by the road side, in which Jesus came, for which reason Zacchaeus made choice of it, as fit for his purpose.

{g} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 57. 1. & Juchashin, fol. 69. 1. {h} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 71. 1. & Pesachim, fol. 56. 1. {i} Misn. Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 2. {k} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 27. {l} Geograph. l. 16. {m} Hist. l. 36. c. 3. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 14. {o} Ut supra. (Geograph. l. 16.) {p} Ib. {q} Gloss. in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 43. 1. {r} Vid. Masium in Josh. c. 2. p. 37. {s} Misna Bava Bathra, c. 2. sect. 7. {t} Bartenora in ib.

Luke 19:5

Ver. 5. And when Jesus came to the place,.... Where the tree stood, in which Zacchaeus was. Christ knows where his people are, and where to find them, where they commonly dwell, or where at any time they are, he being God omniscient: besides, the bounds of their habitations are fixed by the determination and appointment of God, and were foreknown by Christ, who, before the world began, was "rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth", where he knew his saints would dwell, who are "the sons of men", with whom his delights were; and he knows where they are, when the time is come to call them: he knew Zacchaeus was in the sycamore tree, as he saw Nathanael under the fig tree, before Philip called him, **Joh 1:48** and Christ comes to the very place where his people are, either in person, as here; and so he came to Galilee, and to the sea there, and walked by it, and on the very spot, where he knew he should meet with Peter, and Andrew, and James, and John, whom he called to follow him, **Mt 4:13**. He came to his own city Capernaum, and to the place of receipt of custom near unto it, where Matthew was, and called him, **Mt 9:1** and he came to Samaria, and to Jacob's well, where he knew the woman of Samaria would be at such a time, in order to call her: or, though he comes not in person to others, where they are, yet by his word, and by his Spirit; and he comes to them before they come to him; and is found of them, and finds them, who sought him not; and is made manifest to them, who asked not for him; and in this he acts the part of the good shepherd, that leaves the ninety nine in the wilderness, and goes after that which is lost till he finds it; and agreeably to his character as a Saviour, and to the end of his coming into the world, which was to call sinners to repentance, and to seek, and save that which is lost, Lu 19:10.

He looked up and saw him; he knew him, he being one of those the Father had given to him, and he had loved and undertook for, and was come into the world to seek, and to save, and now, at this time, was come hither to call by his grace. He had seen him before in the glass of his Father's purposes and decrees, he being chosen in him to grace and glory, and being a vessel of mercy, afore prepared for glory: he had seen him when he was brought into the bond of the covenant; and passed under the rod of him, that telleth all the covenant ones, as they were put into it, and given to him the Mediator of it: he had seen him among them that were lost in Adam, whom he came to recover out of the ruins of their fall in him; and now he saw him in his state of nature and unregeneracy; he saw him in his blood, and said unto him, live: this look was a look of love, grace, and mercy; he looked upon him, and loved him, and was gracious to him, and had compassion on him; and it was a distinguishing look, he looked on him, and not on others. There was a great crowd both before and behind him, and all about him; but he looked not on these, but he looked up to Zacchaeus.

And he said unto him, Zacchaeus; he knew him, and could call him by his name, as he did Saul, when he called him, and revealed himself to him. His name was written in the Lamb's book of life, and so must be known to Christ, who was present at the making of that book, and was concerned in setting down the names in it, and has it in his keeping: he was one of the sheep the Father had given him, he came to lay down his life for, and of whom he had such perfect knowledge, as to call them by name, as he does all the chosen and redeemed ones; see Isa 43:1. It must be very surprising to Zacchaeus to hear Christ call him by his name, who was an utter stranger to him, and whom he had never seen before; and it is a very considerable instance of the omniscience of Christ, as well as of the great condescension and affectionate regard he has to his own, and the familiar way in which he uses them.

Make haste, and come down; from the tree. The dangerous estate and condition of a sinner requires haste; it is like that of Lot in Sodom, when it was just going to be destroyed; and like that of the manslayer, when pursued by the avenger of blood; both whom it became to escape for their lives, and flee for refuge as fast as they could: and so it became Zacchaeus to come down with all speed to Christ, who was come hither to call and save him; and the enjoyment of Christ, and his grace, calls for haste; see Joh 11:28. Such who come to Christ must quit all their exalted thoughts of themselves, of their riches, fulness, and self-sufficiency, and come to him as poor and needy, for such only he fills with his good things; and of their health and soundness, and come to him the great physician, as sick and diseased; and of their purity and goodness, holiness and righteousness, and come to him as sinners: but it must be mighty grace to cast down imaginations, and high things, that exalt themselves against Christ, and the knowledge of him, and to humble a proud sinner, and bring him to the feet of Jesus.

For this day I must abide at thy house; for a little while; not so much for the sake of refreshment for himself, and his disciples, as for the good of Zacchaeus; to make known the great salvation to him, and to bestow his grace upon him, and converse with him in a spiritual way.

Luke 19:6

Ver. 6. And he made haste,.... Such power went along with the words of Christ, that they immediately reached his heart, awakened his conscience, affected his mind, and drew his soul to Christ, and knit him to him, that be made all imaginable haste to be with him. So souls sensible of their dangerous state and condition by nature, and apprehensive of impending ruin and destruction, and having some intimation of safety and happiness in Christ, and being filled with love to him, and a liking of him flee with all haste to him for refuge, for righteousness, peace, pardon, life, and salvation:

and came down; from the tree he had climbed, merely to indulge his curiosity, little thinking that he should be called by name by him; that he should have him a guest at his house, and have such a knowledge of him, and familiar acquaintance with him: so souls, when called by Christ, and made sensible of their need of him, and the worth there is in him, quit their former post and place, part with their carnal lusts and sinful companions, and renounce their own righteousness and works, and come as sinners, humble and lowly, and venture upon Christ:

and received him joyfully; not only into his house, but into his arms and heart: Christ was a welcome guest to him, as he is to every sensible sinner, who by faith receives him, as the Father's free gift; as the alone Saviour and Redeemer; as the great Mediator, in all his offices, of prophet, priest, and king; and in every relation and character he bears; and embraces his doctrines, and submits to his ordinances, and that with, the greatest joy; as there is reason for it, since with him, he receives the free and full forgiveness of his sins, a justifying righteousness, an abundance of grace, and a right unto, and meetness for heaven.

Luke 19:7

Ver. 7. And when they saw it,.... The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, "when they all saw this"; that is, as the Persic version, rather paraphrasing than translating, says, "the men and the multitude that were with him"; the "pharisaical" sort, the priests and Levites, of which there were great numbers in Jericho;
See Gill on "Lu 10:31".

They all murmured; as the Scribes and Pharisees did, at his eating with publicans and sinners, Lu 15:2.

Saying, that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner; a notorious one, an abandoned profligate creature; one of the worst of sinners, as being a publican, and the chief of them; who had amassed vast riches to himself, by extortion and oppression; and they thought it was not agreeable to the character of an holy man, and a venerable prophet, which Christ bore, to go into such a man's house, eat at his table; and have familiar conversation with him; see **Mt 9:10**.

Luke 19:8

Ver. 8. And Zacchaeus stood,.... Before Christ, in respect to him, and reverence of him; and in the presence of others, to make a public confession before them, and that they might all hear it, when come to his own house:

and said unto the Lord; that is, to "Jesus", as the Syriac and Persic versions, and some copies read; he addressed himself to Christ, and made his confession to him, as the Israelite, when he brought the basket of the firstfruits to the priest, confessed before the Lord his God, De 26:4. And the rather Zacchaeus directed his speech to Christ, being, as he was now convinced, the discerner of the thoughts, and intents of the heart; who knew the genuineness of his repentance, that it was hearty and real; and the sincerity of his expressions and resolutions, and upon what principles he acted, and proposed to do as follows:

behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give unto the poor; not to make satisfaction for the sins he had committed, but to testify his sense of them, and his repentance for them, and as willing to do good with what he had gotten; which shows, that the disposition of his mind was altered, and of a covetous oppressor, he was become tender, kind, and liberal. According to an order made by the Jews in Usha, a man might not give away more than a fifth part of his estate, unless in some extraordinary cases {u}; and we read of one, that gave a "third" part of his goods to the poor {w}; and of another, that gave, as here, half of his mammon, or wealth {x}; and another, half of his food to the poor {y}; and of another, that gave away all his goods to them {z}; see 1Co 13:3; to give a tenth part, was reckoned a medium {a}:

and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation; or by extorting any thing from him on any pretence, by making an unjust demand upon him; or in any oppressive way, by defrauding and tricking, and by doing him any injury, in any form or manner:

I restore him fourfold: the same that was done in case of sheep stealing, Ex 22:1 but in such a case as this, the law only required the principal, with the fifth part added to it; see **Le 6:5** but Zacchaeus proposes as much as in the case of theft, and which was rarely used. The Jews {b} say,

"that the manner of paying double, was more used than the manner of paying fourfold, or fivefold; for the manner of paying double was used, both in things animate and inanimate; but the manner of paying fourfold and fivefold, was used but with respect to an ox, and a sheep only."

This was done by Zacchaeus, to show the truth and reality of his repentance; for with that nation,

"the repentance of shepherds, and of collectors, and of "publicans", is said {c} to be very difficult:"

the reason given by the gloss is, because they rob many, and do not know who to return to.

{u} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 50. 1. & Maimon. in Misn. Peah, c. 1, sect 1. {w} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 44. 1. {x} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 67. 2. {y} Juchasin, fol. 105. 2. {z} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 2. {a} Maimon. Hilch. Mattanot Anayim, c. 7. sect. 5. {b} Misna Bava Kama, c. 7. sect. 1. {c} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 94. 2.

Luke 19:9

Ver. 9. And Jesus said unto him,.... The Persic version reads, "Jesus said to the multitude, and to his disciples"; to which well enough agree the following words:

this day is salvation come to this house: to the master of it, and it may be to others in it; the Arabic version reads, "to the inhabitants of this house". The Persic version reads, "great salvation"; by which may be meant, the Gospel, as in **Heb 2:3** so called, because it brings the account of salvation by Christ, which is not discoverable by the light of nature, nor made known by the law of Moses; but the Gospel publishes and proclaims it; the ministers of it show unto men the way of salvation, and direct them, and encourage to go to Christ for it; likewise the Gospel is the means of bringing near this salvation, and of applying it to them; and when it comes with the demonstration of the Spirit, it is the power of God unto salvation: and this might be truly said to come to Zacchaeus's house; inasmuch as Christ the great preacher of it, and by whom it first began to be spoken, and was spoken by him, as it never was by any one besides, was now in his house, preaching it; the sum and substance of which lie in the words delivered by him in the following verse; and the Gospel came to him to purpose, and was effectual: sometimes it comes to a people, city, town, or family, and it is rejected, and becomes of no effect; but here it came to Zacchaeus, and into him; and wrought effectually in him, as his words in the preceding verse declare: moreover, the blessing of salvation itself, which is wrought out by Christ, and published in the Gospel, was brought home to him; he was not only made sensible that he stood in need of salvation, but this was brought near unto him, and set before him, and applied to him; he had not only hopes of it, but faith of interest in it; it was made known unto him, that Christ was his salvation; and it was revealed and applied to the rest of the family, as well as to him: sometimes the Lord takes one of a city, and two of a family; and sometimes whole families, as Lydia's and the jailor's, and here Zacchaeus's, as seems probable; for by his house may be meant, his family: though this may be understood of Christ, the author of salvation; who came into his house in a literal sense, as well as in a spiritual sense; and was made known to Zacchaeus, as his Saviour and Redeemer. The Alexandrian copy reads, "in this house": it follows,

forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham. These words are to be considered, either as a reason, or evidence, of salvation being come to his house; and therefore cannot be understood of him as a son of Abraham, by natural descent: he was indeed a Jew, as appears by his name, and by his knowledge of the Jewish law, concerning restoration; and which may be confirmed by the silence of the Pharisees, who murmured at Christ's going along with him; who, had he been a Gentile, would not have failed to have mentioned it; but then, though this might be a reason justifying Christ in going to his house, who did not exceed the bounds of his office, as the minister of the circumcision, and as sent, and that only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; yet this could be no reason of spiritual salvation coming to him, which was not confined to Abraham's natural seed, nor was it necessary to them, more than others, and much less general; and indeed, very few of them then in being, partook of it; for though salvation was of them, and Christ the Saviour came unto them, yet they rejected him, and died in their sins: nor is this a reason of salvation coming to his family; for though by virtue of the covenant of circumcision made with Abraham and his natural seed, there were many outward privileges bestowed upon them, yet spiritual salvation was not ensured by it to them; and with regard to that, natural descent from Abraham, and circumcision, were of no avail: but this is to be understood of him, as a son of Abraham in a spiritual sense, he being now a believer in Christ, and so one that walked in the steps of the faith of Abraham; and this was an evidence of his interest in salvation by Christ, the blessing with which he was blessed, with faithful Abraham: and also his being a son of Abraham, which is no other than to be a child of the promise, **Ro 9:8** or in other words, one of God's elect, a chosen vessel of salvation, was a reason why Christ, the author of salvation, came to him, why the Gospel of salvation was made known to him, and why the blessing of salvation was applied to him. The Jews use this phrase, not only of one whose natural descent is from Abraham, but whose knowledge in divine things is considerable: so when R. Eliezer ben Arach taught the Mercava, (the mystery of Ezekiel's visions),

"R. Jochanan ben Zaccai stood and kissed his head, and said, blessed art thou, O God of Israel, that has given
Mhrbal Nb, "a son to Abraham", who has knowledge to understand, and to search out, and to explain the work of Mercava {d}."

For Abraham is said {e} to be a father in this sort of knowledge, for which reason, this man was genealogized a son of Abraham.

{d} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 2. {e} Caphtor, fol. 69. 1.

Luke 19:10

Ver. 10. For the son of man,.... Meaning himself, who was truly man, and the Messiah, and which was one of his names in the Old Testament:

is come: from heaven, into this world, being sent by the Father, and with the full consent and good will of his own:

to seek and save that which was lost: as all his elect were in Adam, and by their own actual transgressions; and are considered as such, whilst in a state of unregeneracy: and particularly the lost sheep of the house of Israel are meant, one of which Zacchaeus was; and so the words are a reason of Christ's looking him up, and calling him by his grace, and making a discovery of himself, and an application of salvation to him; see Mt 18:11.

Luke 19:11

Ver. 11. And as they heard these things,.... What Zacchaeus said to Christ, and what Christ said to Zacchaeus; particularly, that salvation, or the Saviour was then come to his house, and that he was come to save lost persons:

he added, and spake a parable; that is, as the Syriac version renders it, "he added a parable to the word", or to what he had said:

because he was nigh to Jerusalem: within ten "parsas", or large miles; for at such a distance was Jerusalem from Jericho {f}, where Christ now was, according to the Jewish writers; but according to Josephus {g}, it was a hundred and fifty furlongs, which must be eighteen or twenty miles, and this may be said to be nigh; and not long after this, we hear of Christ at the Mount of Olives, which was about a mile from Jerusalem, Lu 19:29.

And because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear: or be revealed, or made manifest: the phrase is Jewish; so **So 2:12** "the time of the singing of birds is come", is interpreted {h}, the time that the "kingdom of heaven",
hlgtv, "shall be revealed", is come, and elsewhere {i},

"say to the cities of the house of Judah, Nwkhlad atwklm
taylnta, "the kingdom of your God is revealed;""

meaning in both places, as here, the kingdom of the Messiah: what induced the disciples of Christ, or the multitude, or both, to imagine that the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, which they were expecting, would quickly be set up, might be what he had said to Zacchaeus, that salvation was that day come to his house, he being a son of Abraham; which they understanding of a temporal salvation, took it as a hint, that the outward prosperity of the seed of Abraham was at hand; as also what he had said, concerning his coming to seek and save that which is lost; which they were willing to interpret, of the civil state of Judea, and that he was come to restore its lost liberties and privileges; and partly, because he was now not a great way from Jerusalem, and was on his journey thither, in order to make his entrance in a very public manner; which was the metropolis of their nation, and the ancient seat of their kings, David, Solomon, and others: now the scope and design of the following parable, is to refute the notion of a temporal kingdom, and its near approach; by showing, that his kingdom lay a great way off, and was not of this world; and that his servants and disciples had a great deal of business to transact for him, and must not think of pomp and grandeur, but of labour and service; and that the Jews were so far from receiving any advantages by his kingdom, that they would not submit to his government, and would be treated as enemies, and utterly destroyed; even their nation, city, and temple.

{f} Bartenora in Misn. Tamid, c. 3, sect. 8. {g} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 27. {h} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4. {i} Targum in Isa. xl. 9.

Luke 19:12

Ver. 12. He said therefore,.... The following parable, with the above said design and view:

a certain nobleman; the son of a great family, as the Syriac version renders it; of noble descent, of an illustrious extract; by whom is meant Jesus Christ, who was a "man", as he agreed to be, and was prophesied of as such; and who frequently appeared in an human form before his incarnation; and was now actually become man, though not a mere man: and he may truly be said to be "noble"; not only as the word may signify, as it sometimes does, a person of great authority and power, and of great generosity and goodness, but one of a noble birth; for Christ, as man, descended from the kings of the house of Judah, and was the son of David; and from the Jewish fathers and ancestors of the greatest renown, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and he may be so called as man, because of the union of the human nature to the Son of God; or because of his divine relation, as the Son of God: this illustrious person,

went into a far country; by which, heaven is meant; so called, not only because of its distance from the earth, but in comparison of the earth, as a place of pilgrimage; and because that it is out of sight, and the views which are had of it, are very distant ones: hither Christ went at his ascension; he came from heaven at his incarnation, by the assumption of human nature; he stayed here awhile, till he had done his work he came about, and then went up to heaven; where he is received, and from whence he is expected again: the end of his going there is,

to receive for himself a kingdom: by which is intended, not the kingdom of nature and providence; for that he had, and did not receive from another; it was his of right, and by nature; nor the kingdom of grace, set up in the hearts of his people, and which was already within many of them; nor the kingdom of glory, prepared for them from the foundation of the world; though into this he entered at his ascension, and took possession of it for himself and them: but a more visible display of his mediatorial kingdom, he received from his Father; and which, upon his ascension, became more manifest, by the dispossessing of Satan, and casting him out of the Gentile world; by converting large numbers of his people, both among Jews and Gentiles; and by ruling in their hearts, subduing their enemies, and protecting and defending them; and by thus reigning till he has gathered them all in, either in Judea, or in the whole world, and then he will come again:

and return; either to destroy the Jews; the doing of which fully proved he had received his kingdom, was vested with power and authority, and was made, or declared Lord and Christ; or at the end of the world, to judge both quick and dead: and this is said, to show that his personal glorious kingdom on earth, or his kingdom in its greatest glory here, will not be till he comes a second time; and to engage diligence in his servants in the mean while; and to keep up the faith, hope, and expectation of his coming again.

Luke 19:13

Ver. 13. And he called his ten servants,.... By whom are meant, not all mankind; for though these are all his servants of right, yet not in fact; nor the elect of God, who are called by grace; for though these are the servants of Christ, and are peculiarly his, yet all that received the pound were not such, for one of them was a wicked man; but the ministers of the Gospel, who are eminently, and in a special manner, the servants of the most high God: but as for the number "ten", this cannot regard the apostles, for they were twelve; and though they are sometimes called the eleven, after the apostasy and death of Judas, yet not the ten; and besides, there was another chose in his room; but this number being a large and perfect one, a round number, it is sometimes made use of as a certain number, for an uncertain one; see Mt 25:1. The call of these by their Lord, is not to be understood of the call of them by his grace, but of a call of them to the office and work of the ministry:

and delivered them ten pounds; every one a pound: the hnm, "Maneh", or pound of the Hebrews, if of gold, which contained an hundred drachmas, was of the value of our money, "seventy five pounds"; if of silver, the old "Maneh", or pound, which contained sixty shekels, Eze 45:12 amounted to "seven pounds ten shillings"; but the "Maneh", or pound, mentioned in the Misna {k}, and which was in use in our Lord's time, contained an hundred pence, and was of the value of our money, "three pounds two shillings and six pence": and by these pounds are designed, not special grace; for they intend not any thing wrought in these servants, but something delivered to them, and what might be taken away again, which cannot be said of special grace; and besides, it is certain, that one of these servants that had the pound, was destitute of that: but gifts are meant, and these not merely natural, or the gifts of providence, as health, riches, wisdom, &c. nor only the outward means of grace, as the word and ordinances, but ministerial gifts, which are the greatest in the church, and are therefore signified by pounds; and are what may be improved or neglected, and be lost or taken away; and for which those that have them, are accountable: but though each of these servants are represented, as having every man a pound delivered to him, this must not be understood, as if the gifts of ministers were equal and alike, any more than the inequality of their rewards proves degrees in glory; for which sometimes this parable is produced:

and said unto him, occupy; negotiate, or trade, that is, with the pounds; make use of the ministerial gifts, exercise them, lay them out, and trade with them: the ministry is a trade and merchandise, to be carried on, not in the name of the ministers of Christ, nor on their own stock, nor for themselves, but for Christ, and for the good of souls; which shows, that they must not be slothful, but laborious and diligent:

till I come: which suggests the certainty of Christ's coming, the continuance of the Gospel ministry to that time; and that there is no rest nor ease for Christ's ministers, but a continued series of labour and service, until then; when, for their encouragement, they shall receive their reward.

{k} Peah, c. 8. sect. 5. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Luke 19:14

Ver. 14. But his citizens hated him,.... Not those who are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; whose citizenship is in heaven, and who are seeking the better country, and heavenly city; but the Jews, who were his own people and nation, among whom he was born, to whom he was sent and came, and had an undoubted right to the government of them: these hated him with a mortal hatred, as appeared by their traducing his person in the most opprobrious manner; vilifying his doctrine as false; ascribing his miracles to a diabolical influence; and by persecuting his disciples and followers:

and sent a message after him; this seems to have respect to their outrage against the disciples of Christ, after his ascension; when they not only mocked them, as on the day of Pentecost, but laid hold on them, and put them in hold, even in the common prison, and persecuted them from place to place; and so virtually,

saying, we will not have this man to reign over us: they would neither receive his Gospel, nor submit to his ordinances; but put them away from them, and judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life: and this is the language of every graceless soul; and is to be observed in their opposition to, and neglect of the truths of Christ, and his divine institutions; which are a yoke they do not care to take upon them, though so mild and easy, and are cords which they cast away from them.

Luke 19:15

Ver. 15. And it came to pass that when he was returned,.... Which return was either in power to Jerusalem, in the destruction of that city; or which will be in person to this earth, at the end of the world; and will be local and visible, and in great glory, attended with the holy angels, and with all the saints: the time is fixed and certain, though unknown, and will be sudden and unexpected; but will not be till after the Gospel has had a general spread all over the world, and the Jews are converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in, and then will Christ come:

having received the kingdom; not only having been set down at the right hand of God, and crowned with glory and honour, and received gifts for men, which he bestowed on them; and which proved him to be Lord and Christ; all which was done at his ascension, after which his kingdom came, or he returned in power and glory, to take vengeance on the Jews; but also having received the kingdom of glory for all his saints, and particularly having received the kingdom of priests, or all the elect of God, these being all called by grace, and gathered to him, as they will every one of them before his second coming; when this kingdom will be delivered to the Father complete and perfect; and this will a reckoning time, as follows:

then he commanded those servants to be called, to whom he had given the money. The servants are the ministers of the word, who must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; and give an account of themselves to God, the Judge of all; and of their gifts and talents, and ministrations, and the souls under their care: the persons who are "commanded" to call them are the angels, and who shall be employed in gathering all the elect together; the thing that will be inquired about, and must be accounted for, is the "money" given them; that is, the Gospel they are intrusted with, and the gifts to preach it bestowed on them: the end of this summons is,

that he might know how much every man had gained by trading; not but that Christ, who is the omniscient God, the searcher of the heart, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of it, knows full well the use that is made of every man's gift, and the benefits and advantages arising from it, both for his own glory, and the good of souls; but these summons will be given, this account taken, and inquiry made, that these things which are known to him, might be made manifest to all, and every man have praise of God; whose will it is that he should have it, and sloth and negligence be justly punished.

Luke 19:16

Ver. 16. Then came the first,.... Who were set in the first place in the church, the apostles of Christ, and who had the greatest gifts, and laboured more abundantly, and were eminently useful; such an one was the Apostle Paul:

saying, Lord; acknowledging the sovereignty and dominion of Christ over them, owning they were accountable to him, and that he had a right to inquire, what use they had made of their gifts, and what advantages these had produced;

thy pound hath gained ten pounds; it had been increased tenfold; or it has turned to a tenfold account, in the conversion of sinners, in the edification of the saints, and in the advancement of the kingdom, and interest of Christ. This servant owns, that the gifts he had were Christ's; he calls them, "thy pound"; and therefore did not glory in them as his own attainments, or, as if he had received them not; and ascribes the great increase, not to himself, but to the pound itself; to the gifts of Christ, as they were his, and as used by his grace and strength, and as blessed, and owned by him, to these purposes.

Luke 19:17

Ver. 17. And he said unto him, well, thou good servant,.... Signifying he had well done, and had approved himself to be an honest, diligent, and laborious servant; who, having the grace of God, which made him a good man, and gifts and abilities, which made him a good minister of Christ, he made a good use them, freely communicated the good things of the Gospel, and being employed in a good work, he performed it well:

because thou hast been faithful in a very little; had preached the pure Gospel of Christ, and the whole of it, and sought not to please men, but the Lord only; not his own glory, but Christ's; abode by him and his interest, notwithstanding all reproaches and persecutions, and so acted a faithful part to Christ: "in a very little"; not that the Gospel is in itself little, or of small account; it is a treasure in earthen vessels; and contains the unsearchable riches of Christ: nor are gifts to preach it little things; they are instances of rich and amazing grace; but they are little, or, rather, the use and exercise of them are little, in comparison of the glory and happiness such faithful servants shall enjoy: from whence it appears, that since there is no proportion between what they do, and what they shall have, that therefore it is not of merit but of grace; and which is expressed in the following clause:

have thou authority over ten cities; which is to be understood, not in a literal sense, as if the apostles should have the jurisdiction over so many cities, or churches in so many cities among the Gentiles, after the destruction of Jerusalem, which were planted by their means and ministry; for nothing of this kind appears in the word of God: and much less after the second coming of Christ, shall faithful ministers of the word have power over so many cities, literally taken; for both in the kingdom state and in the ultimate glory, there will be but one beloved city, the holy city, the new Jerusalem: nor is any thing in particular, in a metaphorical sense, intended; only, in general, that the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of it, will be given unto them; and they shall reign with Christ on earth a thousand years; and shall also have a crown of glory, life, and righteousness bestowed on them, and shall sit on the throne with Christ; and besides all this, the persons they have been instrumental to, will be their joy, and crown of rejoicing. A learned writer {l} explains these ten cities, by the ten horns of the dragon, and beast in Re 12:3 by which are meant ten kings, or kingdoms, Re 17:12. These indeed will be overcome by Christ, and they that are with him, and will hate the Romish antichrist, and destroy him; so that, it seems, there will be revolutions in these kingdoms; and large conversions to the faith of Christ, which seems to be what this writer means by authority over them.

{l} Teelmanni Specimen Explic. Parabol. p. 51.

Luke 19:18

Ver. 18. And the second came,.... He who was next, though less useful, yet equally diligent and active:

saying, Lord; acknowledging also the power and authority of Christ over him:

thy pound hath gained five pounds; is increased fivefold, or is turned to a fivefold account, to the interest of Christ, and good of immortal souls: the usefulness of the ministers of the Gospel is not alike; as they have gifts different one from another, so their improvements are different, and their labours, though faithful, do not turn to the same account,

Luke 19:19

Ver. 19. And he said likewise to him,.... He commended him as a good and faithful servant, though this is not expressed; and added,

be thou over five cities; which does not denote any inequality of glory in Christ's ministers, who will all shine as the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever; at least, there will be no inequality in the ultimate state of happiness, when all the saints shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, whatever there may be in the kingdom state, or in Christ's personal reign with his saints on earth. The above learned writer would have this passage compared with
Isa 19:18.

Luke 19:20

Ver. 20. And another came,.... Who was one of the servants; had a gift, but did not use, and improve it, nor did it turn to any account:

saying, Lord; owning also the lordship and dominion of Christ, as all will confess at the last day, even those who have no interest in him, and cannot call him their Lord;

behold, [here is] thy pound; he owns his gifts were the Lord's, and that he had received them from him, and now returns them:

which I have kept; he had kept that which was committed to him, and that even till his Lord came; he had not lost it, though it was not increased, or was of any advantage to Christ, or the souls of men, it being neglected by him; for it was

laid up in a napkin: the Greek word, here used for a napkin, is adopted by the Jews into their language, and is used for a veil and for a linen cloth: this puts me in mind of what the Jews call,
rdwo Nynq "possession by a napkin", or linen cloth: their custom is this; when they buy, or sell any thing, to use a piece of cloth they call "sudar", the word in

the text, which the contractors lay hold upon, whereby they ratify and confirm the bargain {m}: but this man made no use of his "sudar", or napkin, in buying and selling; he traded not at all; he wrapped up his money in it, and both lay useless; his gift lay dormant and unexercised, which was given him to profit withal.

{m} Elias in Tisbbi in voce Nynq.

Luke 19:21

Ver. 21. For I feared thee,.... Not with a right fear, with a fear of his goodness, who had bestowed such an excellent gift on him; for this would have taught him to have departed from evil, and have put him on doing his master's will, and making use of his gift to his glory: his fear was not of the right kind, and was ill grounded, as appears by what follows:

because thou art an austere man; cruel and uncompassionate to his servants, and hard to be pleased; than which nothing is more false, since it is evident, that Christ is compassionate both to the bodies and souls of men; is a merciful high priest, and is one that has compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way, and cannot but be touched with the feeling of his people's infirmities; and is mild and gentle in his whole deportment, and in all his administrations:

thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow; suggesting, that he was covetous of that which did not belong to him, and withheld what was due to his servants, and rigorously exacted service that could not be performed; a most iniquitous charge, since none so liberal as he, giving gifts, grace and glory, freely; imposing no grievous commands on men; his yoke being easy, and his burden light; never sending a man to a warfare at his own charge; but always giving grace and strength proportionable to the service he calls to, and rewarding his servants in a most bountiful manner, infinitely beyond their deserts.

Luke 19:22

Ver. 22. And he saith unto him,.... By way of reply to his vile slander, and unrighteous charge;

out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant; as he might be justly called: he was not only a wicked man, as all men are, even enemies by wicked works, and lie in wickedness; and a wicked professor of religion, as there be some; but a wicked minister, and that not on account of his bad principles, and sinful life and conversation, but for his sloth and negligence, and the wrong thoughts he entertained of, and the false charges he brought against Christ; and Christ turns his own argument upon him, and by his own words condemns him:

thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow; not allowing this, but supposing it was as he said; then Christ argues as follows, for his conviction.

Luke 19:23

Ver. 23. Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank,.... Or "on the table", at which the bankers sat, and received and delivered money on interest. The Complutensian edition reads, "to the tablers", or "bankers": had Christ been such a person as he represents him, he ought to have been the more diligent, and made the greater use of his gifts, since he knew that he would, in a rigid manner, as he suggests, demand an account of them:

that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? not that Christ approves of usury in an unlawful way, by extortion, but reproves hereby the sloth of this man, and exposes his folly and wickedness upon his own principles.

Luke 19:24

Ver. 24. And he said unto them that stood by,.... The angels, it may be; though this may not be strictly taken, as if any persons, angels, or men, will be employed in what follows, only that it will be done, or may be expected:

take from him the pound; which shows, that it was not special grace, for that is a good part that shall never be taken away, but gifts which may be taken away from men, or they from them:

and give it to him that hath ten pounds; not that, strictly speaking, the gifts of some men are taken from them and bestowed on others; but the design of the expression is to show, that to diligent and laborious ministers, there is an increase of gifts; their knowledge enlarges, and their light shines more and more to the perfect day, and they become more useful; and they appear brighter, and more illustrious, through the sloth of others, or when compared with indolent, negligent, and useless ministers.

Luke 19:25

Ver. 25. And they said unto him,.... The bystanders;

Lord, he hath ten pounds; which they say either through envy, at his superior gifts, and usefulness; for it is generally the lot of the most eminent and useful servants of Christ to be envied by others; or in surprise, as wondering at the conduct of Christ in giving more to such, who had so much already. The Ethiopic version reads the words by way of interrogation, "hath he not ten pounds?" is not that enough? why should he have more? This verse is left out in Beza's most ancient copy. However, it is rightly put into a parenthesis in our version; for the following verse is strictly connected with Lu 19:24 and contains a reason of what is there ordered.

Luke 19:26

Ver. 26. For I say unto you,.... And it may be depended on as truth, and what will be found matter of fact:

that unto every one that hath, shall be given; greater and larger gifts, fitting him for greater usefulness: he that has gifts, and makes use of them, increases in them; they enlarge with their use, and become brighter, and he more useful. The Vulgate Latin version adds, "and he shall abound, or shall have abundance", as in
Mt 25:29

and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him: that is, that which he seemed to have, or thought he had, as in **Lu 8:18** for from him that has really nothing, nothing can be taken away: though the sense may be, that he that does not use the talent, or exercise the gift bestowed on him, but lays it up in a napkin, which is all one as if he had it not, even the gift itself shall be taken away from him; and as others receive no benefit by it, he shall receive no honour from it; See Gill on "Mt 13:12" and

See Gill on "Mt 25:29".

Luke 19:27

Ver. 27. But those mine enemies,.... Meaning particularly the Jews, who were enemies to the person of Christ, and hated and rejected him, as the King Messiah; and rebelled against him, and would not submit to his government; and were enemies to his people, and were exceeding mad against them, and persecuted them; and to his Gospel, and the distinguishing truths of it, and to his ordinances, which they rejected against themselves:

which would not that I should reign over them; see Lu 19:14

bring hither, and slay [them] before me; which had its accomplishment in the destruction of Jerusalem, when multitudes of them were slain with the sword, both with their own, and with their enemies; and to this the parable has a special respect, and of which Christ more largely discourses in this chapter; see Lu 19:41 though it is true of all natural men, that they are enemies to Christ; and so of all negligent and slothful professors, and ministers of the word, who, when Christ shall come a second time, of which his coming to destroy the Jewish nation was an emblem and pledge, will be punished with everlasting destruction by him; and then all other enemies will be slain and destroyed, sin, Satan, the world, and death: of the first of these the Jews say {n},

"in the time to come the holy, blessed God, will bring forth the evil imagination (or corruption of nature),
wjxwvw, "and slay it before" the righteous, and the wicked."

{n} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 52. 1.

Luke 19:28

Ver. 28. And when he had thus spoken,.... When he had delivered the above parable, in order to remove the prejudices of his disciples, and the multitude, concerning a temporal kingdom, and to give them true notions of his own kingdom, and the case of the Jewish nation:

he went before; his disciples: he was the foremost of them in the journey; he proceeded at the head of them, with great cheerfulness and eagerness:

ascending up to Jerusalem; through the lower lands of Judea, to the city of Jerusalem, which was built on higher ground; where he was to eat his last passover, and suffer, and die, in the room, and stead, of his people; and this shows how willing, and greatly desirous he was to finish the work of redemption he came about.

Luke 19:29

Ver. 29. And it came to pass when he was come nigh,.... The other evangelists, Matthew and Mark, add "unto Jerusalem"; but this Luke designs afterwards, Lu 19:37 and therefore here means, as is expressed, that he was come nigh

to Bethphage and Bethany; two tracts of land which reached from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem; so that when he was there, he was nigh unto the city:

at the mount, called [the Mount] of Olives; or "Elaion", as the Ethiopic version, which retains the Greek word for it; and which has its name from the great number of olive trees that grew upon it:

he sent two of his disciples; their names are not mentioned by any of the evangelists, but it is very probable they were Peter and John; of the places here mentioned; See Gill on "Mt 21:1".

Luke 19:30

Ver. 30. Saying, go ye into the village over against [you],.... What village this was, is not said by any of the evangelists; it seems to be either Bethany, or Nob; and rather the latter, since the village of Bethany was fifteen furlongs, or near two miles from Jerusalem, Joh 11:18 and therefore must have been passed by Christ; whereas the tract called Bethany, at the Mount of Olives where Christ now was, was but a sabbath day's journey, or about a mile, Lu 24:50 compared with **Ac 1:12**.
See Gill on "Mt 21:2"

in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied: in
Mt 21:2 it is said, an ass, and a colt with her; which agrees with the prophecy in **Zec 9:9** and which, no doubt, was matter of fact: nor does Mark and Luke

contradict it, though they do not express it:

whereon yet never man sat, loose him, and bring [him] hither; for it seems that Christ stayed at the above place, until the disciples went and fetched it.

Luke 19:31

Ver. 31. And if any man ask you, why do ye loose [him]?.... As our Lord, being God omniscient, knew this question would be asked by the owners, and therefore prepares his disciples with an answer to it:

thus shall ye say unto him, because the Lord hath need of him. The Syriac and Persic versions read "our Lord", yours, and ours; probably the owners of the colt might be such as knew the Lord Jesus Christ, and by this way of speaking of him, knew, at once, who was meant, and so made no scruple of sending him, as Christ told them they would not, and so they found it; See Gill on "Mt 21: 3" and
See Gill on "Mr 9:3"

Luke 19:32

Ver. 32. And they that were sent went their way,.... The two disciples that were sent by Christ, were obedient to him, and went, as he directed them, and did as he ordered them;

and found, even as he had said unto them. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, and so some copies, add, "the colt standing"; that is, in the place, and manner which he had described to them;
See Gill on "Mr 9:4".

Luke 19:33

Ver. 33. And as they were loosing the colt,.... In order to bring it away, as Christ bid them:

the owners thereof said unto them, why loose ye the colt? Mark takes notice of this, but does not tell us who they were, only that they were persons that stood there; but this evangelist informs us who they were: and it seems by this, that

there were more owners of the colt than one, which might have made the taking away of the colt the more difficult; since, though one might agree to it, another might not; but Christ, who is God, and has the hearts of all men in his hands, could, as he did, dispose the minds of these men to let the colt go freely, and quietly, with his disciples;
See Gill on "Mr 11:5".

Luke 19:34

Ver. 34. And they said, the Lord hath need of him. Or, our Lord, as the above versions in verse 31 (Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic). They used the words Christ directed them to, and it had the effect he said it would; for the owners both let them go, and the colt with them directly; See Gill on "Mt 21:6" and
See Gill on "Mr 11:6".

Luke 19:35

Ver. 35. And they brought him to Jesus,.... That is, the colt:

and they cast their garments upon the colt; that is, the disciples, who brought him to Jesus; the Persic version here, as in Mt 21:7 renders it very wrongly, "Jesus put his own garment on its back, and sat on it"; it follows,

and they set Jesus thereon; in order to ride upon him, as he did to Jerusalem.

Luke 19:36

Ver. 36. And as he went,.... Riding on the colt towards Jerusalem:

they spread their clothes in the way; not the disciples, for they had put their garments upon the colt; but the multitude, which either came with him from Jericho, and other parts, or that met him from Jerusalem, or both; see Mt 21:8 and so the Persic version here; "men put off their clothes and cast them in the way, that he might pass over then"; See Gill on "Mt 21:8".

Luke 19:37

Ver. 37. And when he was come nigh,.... To the city of Jerusalem, and which was then in sight,

even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives; being come to the foot of that mount, which lay to the east of Jerusalem, and was about five furlongs from it, or a little more than half a mile {o}:

the whole multitude of the disciples: not only the twelve, but the large company that followed Christ out of Galilee, and were joined by more in Judea, as they came along, some going before him, and others behind him. The Arabic and Persic versions divide these words, and read, "the multitude, and the disciples"; not only the apostles, but the whole body of the people that were with Christ:

began to rejoice, and praise God, with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen; calling to mind the many miracles he had wrought in Galilee, at Cana, Capernaum, and other places, and now, as he passed through Judea, particularly about Jericho, where he had restored sight to two or three blind men; and especially the miracle he had lately wrought at Bethany, in raising Lazarus from the dead; from all which they might strongly conclude, that he must be the Messiah; and being filled with joy and gladness, at the remembrance of these things, and with thankfulness to God, that he had raised up the glorious Saviour and Redeemer, they lifted up their voices together, and exerted them to the uttermost, and made the air ring with their shouts, and acclamations of praise to God, on this occasion.

{o} Joseph. Antiqu l. 20. c. 6.

Luke 19:38

Ver. 38. Saying, blessed be the King,.... The King Messiah, the King of Israel, the son of David, the Christ of God; so the Ethiopic version adds, "blessed be the King of Israel"; they sung their "Hosannas" to him, as the other evangelists say:

that cometh in the name of the Lord; See Gill on "Mt 21:9"

peace in heaven; all heavenly peace and prosperity attend him; or let peace be made with God in heaven, by the Prince of Peace on earth, for sinful men:

and glory in the highest; glory be given to God for peace, life, and salvation by his son; and that in the highest heavens, by the angels there, as well as by men on earth, and in the highest notes and strains.

Luke 19:39

Ver. 39. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude,.... Who had placed themselves there, to watch and observe what was said, and done, that they might have something to reproach Christ with, expose him for, or bring as a charge against him:

said unto him, master, rebuke thy disciples: not being able to bear such high encomiums of Jesus, and such open and public declarations of his being the Messiah; and would insinuate, that it was blasphemy in them to say what they did, and pride and vanity in him to allow of it; and that the consequence might be sedition, and tumult; and therefore it became him to check such a disorderly, noisy, evil, and dangerous practice.

Luke 19:40

Ver. 40. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you,.... As a truth, which may be depended on, and you may be assured of; this he spake with great earnestness, fervour, and courage:

that if these should hold their peace; be silent, and not sing the praises of God, and ascribe glory to him, and profess the Messiah, and make this public acknowledgment of him:

the stones would immediately cry out; either against them, or in a declaration of the Messiah: by which expression our Lord means, that it was impossible it should be otherwise; it would be intolerable if it was not; and rather than it should not be, God, who is able out of stones to raise up children to Abraham, would make the stones speak, or turn stones into men, who should rise up and praise the Lord, and confess the Messiah; hereby commending his disciples, and tacitly reflecting upon the Pharisees, for their stupidity; and also giving a hint of the conversion of the Gentiles, who might be compared to stones, especially in the opinion of the Jews.

Luke 19:41

Ver. 41. And when he was come near, he beheld city,.... Of Jerusalem; being now nearer, and in a situation to take a full view of it, he lift up his eyes, and looking wistfully on it, and beholding the grandeur and magnificence of it, the number of the houses, and the stately structures in it, and knowing what calamities, in a few years, would come upon it; with which being affected, as man, he looked upon it,

and wept over it; touched with a tender concern for it, his natural passions moved, and tears fell plentifully from his eyes. This must be understood of Christ merely as man, and is a proof of the truth of his human nature, which had all the natural properties, and even the infirmities of it; and as affected with the temporal ruin of Jerusalem, and as concerned for its temporal welfare; and is not to be improved either against his proper deity, or the doctrines of distinguishing grace, relating to the spiritual and eternal salvation of God's elect; things that are foreign from the sense of this passage: some ancient Christians, and orthodox too, thinking that this was not so agreeable to Christ, but reflected some weakness and dishonour upon him, expunged this clause concerning his weeping; but we have another instance besides this; see Joh 11:35 and even the Jews themselves cannot think this to be unsuitable to the Messiah, when they represent the Shekinah, and God himself weeping over the destruction of the temple {p}; and it is particularly {q} said by them of the Messiah, that he shall weep over the wicked among the Jews, according to Isa 53:5 and they encourage persons to mourn over Jerusalem: they say {r} whoever does any business on the ninth of Ab, (the day that city was destroyed,) and does not mourn over Jerusalem, shall not see its joy; but whoever does mourn over it, shall see its joy, according to Isa 66:10 {s}.

{p} Zohar in Gen. fol. 114. 4. & in Exod. fol. 76. 1. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 3. 2. Prafat Echa Rabbati, fol. 89. 4. {q} Zohar in Exod. fol. 85. 2. {r} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 30. 2. {s} T. Bab Bathra, fol. 60. 2. & Caphtor, fol. 118. 2.

Luke 19:42

Ver. 42. Saying, if thou hadst, known, even thou,.... As well as other cities; or who hast been so long a flourishing city, the metropolis of the nation, the seat of the ancient kings of Judah; yea, the city of the great God, the place of divine worship, whither the tribes came up, time after time, to serve the Lord; a city so highly honoured of God and man: or, who hast despised the messages of the servants of God, mocked and misused the prophets in time past, beat one, killed another, and stoned another: if such a city, after all this, had but known its true interest,

at least in this thy day; the day of thy visitation, the last day thou art to have, though it is so late:

the things [which belong] unto thy peace; meaning, not peace with God, and the things belonging, or conducing to that, which are not men's works of righteousness, nor tears of repentance, nor even faith itself, but the obedience and righteousness, the blood, sacrifice and death of Christ; nor spiritual peace, or internal peace of conscience, which comes in a Gospel way, through believing, in a course of obedience, and all from Christ, the peacemaker, and peace giver; nor eternal peace hereafter, which the grace of God gives a meetness for, and the righteousness of Christ a right unto; the knowledge of all which is not natural to men, or to be obtained of themselves, but is the gift of God's grace, and the operation of his Spirit: but supposing such a peace, and such things relating to it, were intended, nothing more can be inferred from hence, than that if the Jews had known these things, they had been happy; and since they had the means of knowing them, they were, of all men, inexcusable; and that Christ, as man, and one of their nation, and as a minister of the circumcision, had a passionate concern for their welfare: but not that these Jews, or any men, can of themselves, and without the unfrustrable grace of God working upon their hearts, and enlightening their understanding, know these things; or that Christ acted any insincere part in wishing for these things for them, as man, and a minister of the word, when he knew, as God, it was not consistent with the will of God that they should have them; since Christ, as man, sometimes earnestly prayed for that, which he, as God, knew could not be, as in the case of his own sufferings and death; nor is this irreconcilable to his dying intentionally only for those who are actually saved: but after all, these words are, only spoken of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of that city, and not of all mankind, and regard only their temporal peace and welfare, whose destruction Christ knew was near at hand; and of which he afterwards speaks in the following verses:

but now they are hid from thine eyes; their eyes were blinded; they were given up to a judicial blindness, and hardness of heart; a spirit of slumber and stupidity had seized them; they could not discern the signs of the times and so disbelieved Jesus as the Messiah, and rejected him as such; whom, had they received only in a notional way, though they had not believed in him spiritually, to the saving of their souls, they would have been secured from outward calamities, and would have enjoyed peace and prosperity, and the things belonging to it our Lord speaks of. Christ alludes to the name of Jerusalem, which signifies the vision of peace; or they shall see peace; but her name and case now did not agree. His wish is the same the Psalmist encourages in Ps 122:6 which, in the Septuagint version, is rendered, "pray for the things" that belong "to the peace Jerusalem".

Luke 19:43

Ver. 43. For the days shall come upon thee,.... Suddenly, and very quickly, as they did within forty years after this:

that thine enemies; the Romans, and such the Jews took them to be, and might easily understand who our Lord meant:

shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side: which was not only verified in the Roman armies closely besieging them; but particularly in this, as Josephus relates {t} that Titus built a wall about the city, of thirty nine furlongs long, and thirteen forts in it which reached ten furlongs, and all done in three days time; by which means they were pent up, starved, and famished, and reduced to inexpressible distress.

{t} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 8.

Luke 19:44

Ver. 44. And shall lay thee even with the ground,.... Beat down all the houses in it, the stately edifices, and even the temple itself; See Gill on "Mt 24:2"

and thy children within thee; that is, the inhabitants of the place should be slain with the sword of the enemy, and so fall to the ground, and lie upon it;

and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon anther; such a consummate, and entire desolation shall be made, as was foretold by Daniel, **Da 9:27**

because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation; in which the dayspring from on high had visited them with his personal presence, preaching among them, and working miracles; and yet they knew him not, but despised and rejected him; yea, after that they had put him to death, and he was risen again, he ordered his disciples to begin their ministry, and preach the Gospel, at Jerusalem; and they continued for some time only preaching to them, or at least rarely elsewhere, till they put away the Gospel from them. The time of the ministry of John the Baptist, of Christ, and his apostles in Judea, was the time of Jerusalem's visitation in a way of mercy; which not being taken notice of, and observed, brought another kind of visitation upon them, even in a way of wrath and vengeance. The Jews pretend to assign other causes of Jerusalem's destruction; but the true cause was their rejection of Jesus, as the Messiah.

"Says Abai, Jerusalem was not destroyed, but because they profaned the sabbath, as it is said, Eze 22:26 "and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths", &c. Says R. Abhu, Jerusalem was not destroyed, but because they ceased reading the "Shema (hear, O Israel", &c.) morning and evening, as it is said, **Isa 5:11** woe to them that rise up early", &c. Says Rab. Hamenuna, Jerusalem was not destroyed, but because there ceased in it the children of the school of Rabban, (children were not put to school,) as it is said **Jer 6:11** "I will pour it out upon the children", &c. Says Ula, Jerusalem was not destroyed, but because there was no shame among them, as it is said, **Jer 6:15** "were they ashamed", &c. Says R. Isaac, Jerusalem was not destroyed, but because small and great were put upon a level, as it is said, Isa 24:2 "as with the people, so with the priest", &c. Says R. Amram, the son of R. Simeon bar Aba, R. Chanina said, Jerusalem was not destroyed, but because they did not reprove one another, as it is said, **La 1:6** "her princes are become like harts", &c. Says R. Judah, Jerusalem was not destroyed, but because they despised the disciples of the wise men, as it is said; 2Ch 36:16 but they mocked the messengers of God", &c. {u}."

Thus they shifted off the true cause of their ruin, and ascribed it to other things.

{u} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 119. 2.

Luke 19:45

Ver. 45. And he went into the temple,.... Being come into the city, he alighted from the colt he rode on, and having committed it to the care of a proper person to return it to the owner, he went up directly to the temple, of which he was the Lord and proprietor, and where he had some work to do the few days he had to live.

And began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; that traded in sheep, and oxen, and doves; see **Joh 2:15**. The Ethiopic version adds here, as there, "and overthrew, the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves".

Luke 19:46

Ver. 46. Saying unto them, it is written,.... In Isa 56:7

my house is the house of prayer; built and devoted for that service:

but ye have made it a den of thieves; which clause is not written in the above prophecy, but are the words of Christ referring to **Jer 7:11**. The Ethiopic version adds, "and robbers"; and the Persic version adds, "and a place of cut-purses";
See Gill on "Mt 21:13".

Luke 19:47

Ver. 47. And he taught daily in the temple,.... Every day till the passover came, and only in the day; for at night he went out of the city to Bethany, or to the Mount of Olives: some of his discourses in the temple, the parables he delivered, and his disputations with the doctors, are recorded in Mt 21:27:

but the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the chief of the people; or "the elders of the people", as the Syriac version renders it; that is, the whole sanhedrim:

sought to destroy him; met and consulted together how to get him into their hands, and what charges to bring against him, in order to put him to death.

Luke 19:48

Ver. 48. And could not find what they might do,.... The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and so Beza's most ancient copy, add, "to him"; they could not find an opportunity of seizing him, nor any advantage against him; they knew not what steps to take, nor how to bring about their wicked design of destroying him.

For all the people were very attentive to hear him; there were great crowds always about him, that hung upon him, as the word rendered "attentive" signifies; they heard him with great eagerness and diligence, and were ready to catch every word that dropped from his lips; and were exceedingly taken with him, having never heard any man speak like him: wherefore having so many followers, and being so high in the opinion and affection of the people, the sanhedrim were at a loss what method to make use of to gain their point; and they feared the people, should they seize him publicly, lest they should rise and rescue him, and cause a tumult and disturbance.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 20:1

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, that on one of those days,.... According to the account of the Evangelist Mark, it must be the second day, or two days after his public entrance into Jerusalem; for on the evening of the day he made his entry, he went out to Bethany with his disciples; the next morning, as he returned from thence, he cursed the barren fig tree; and when he came to the temple cast out the buyers and sellers; at evening he went out again, either to Bethany, or the Mount of Olives; and the next morning, as he and his disciples returned, the fig tree was observed to be dried up; and when they were come to Jerusalem, as he was walking in the temple, he was attacked by the sanhedrim, and had the following discourse with them:

as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the Gospel; for he taught them by preaching that, and which he did most clearly, faithfully, and publicly, being abundantly anointed and qualified for it, and sent to do it.

The chief priests, and the Scribes, came upon him, with the elders. The whole sanhedrim being purposely convened together, came upon him in a body; and it may be suddenly, and at an unawares, and came open mouthed against him, and attacked him with great warmth and vehemency.

Luke 20:2

Ver. 2. And spoke unto him, saying, tell us by what authority doest thou these things?.... The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "this thing"; as if the sanhedrim only referred to his preaching the Gospel, which is mentioned in the preceding verse, and was what he was about when they came to him: but the Persic version reads, "all these things"; not only preaching, but working miracles; and particularly driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, which especially affected them, they losing their rents thereby:

or who is he that gave thee this authority? God or man?
See Gill on "Mt 21:23".

Luke 20:3

Ver. 3. And he answered and said unto them,.... That is, Jesus replied to them, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions express it:

I will also ask you one thing, and answer me; when he also promised, that if they would give him an answer to his question, he would satisfy them in the point they interrogated him about: and as this was a prudent decline to avoid the snare they laid for him, so it was not an impertinent reply to them; since it led on to a proper answer to their question, as appears by the case proposed;
See Gill on "Mt 21:24".

Luke 20:4

Ver. 4. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?] This was a new ordinance, and John must have his authority for administering it either from God, or from men; and Christ is desirous to know from which he derived it in their opinion; suggesting, that by the same authority John, his forerunner, came baptizing, he himself came preaching and working miracles;
See Gill on "Mt 21:25".

Luke 20:5

Ver. 5. And they reasoned with themselves,.... Or "they thought with themselves", as the Syriac version; or "within themselves", as the Vulgate Latin, though they did not express it; or "one with another", as the Arabic version; they took counsel together, and debated the matter among themselves, and reasoned after this manner:

saying, if we shall say from heaven; which was what, in their own consciences, they believed to be true,

he will say, why then believed ye him not? in what he said concerning the Messiah; which if they had, as they should, there would have been no reason for such a question they had put;
See Gill on "Mt 21:25".

Luke 20:6

Ver. 6. But and if we say of men,..... Which they had a good will to, against the dictates of their own consciences:

all the people will stone us; meaning the common people, that were then in the temple about Christ, hearing him preach; who would be so enraged at such an answer, that without any regard to their character and office, they would rise and stone them. The Ethiopic version adds, "whom we fear"; see Mt 21:26 for it seems that they had not so behaved as to have the good will and esteem of the people, at least they did not pin their faith on their sleeve:

for they be persuaded that John was a prophet; they were fully assured of it; and the sentiments and authority of the chief priests could have no weight and influence upon them to weaken their faith in this point; the evidence was so strong, and their faith so firm and sure.

Luke 20:7

Ver. 7 And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was. Whether from heaven, or of men; in this, no doubt, they told an untruth: but they chose rather to sacrifice their consciences than their interest, and pretend ignorance rather than profess the truth, when they saw they should be put to confusion, or be exposed to the resentments of the people.

Luke 20:8

Ver. 8. And Jesus said unto them,.... Since they would not give him a direct answer to his question:

neither tell I you by what authority I do these things; nor was there any need of it; they might easily perceive by what he had said, from whence he professed to have received his authority, from God, and not men; See Gill on "Mt 21:27".

Luke 20:9

Ver. 9. Then began he to speak to the people this parable,.... According to the other evangelists it seems to be spoken to the chief priests, Scribes, and elders; and certain it is, that they looked upon themselves as struck at in it; it might be spoken to both. Christ having silenced the sanhedrim, turned himself to the people, and delivered the parable of the vineyard to them, though his principal view was to the priests:

a certain man planted a vineyard; the people of the Jews are designed by the vineyard, and the "certain man", or "householder", as Matthew calls him, Mt 21:28 is the Lord of hosts; and the planting of it is to be understood of his bringing and settling the people Israel in the land of Canaan. Luke omits certain things which the other evangelists relate, as setting an hedge about it, digging a winepress, and building a tower in it; and the Persic version here adds, "and planted trees, and set a wall about it"; all which express the care that was taken to cultivate and protect it; and signify the various blessings and privileges the Jew's enjoyed under the former dispensation; Gill on "Mt 21:33" and
See Gill on "Mr 12:1".

and let it forth to husbandmen; put the people of the Jews under the care not only of civil magistrates, but of ecclesiastical governors, who were to dress this vine, or instruct these people in matters of religion, that they might be fruitful in good works:

and went into a far country for a long time; for a long time it was, from the times of Moses and Joshua, when the first settlement, both of the civil and ecclesiastical state of the Jews, was made, to the time of Christ; it was fourteen or fifteen hundred years; see the notes, as above.

Luke 20:10

Ver. 10. And at the season,.... Or "when it the time of fruit", as the Ethiopic version renders it, agreeably to

See Gill on "Mt 21:34":

he sent a servant to the husbandmen; or servants, as in Mt 21:34; the prophets of the Lord, his messengers, whom he sent to them, to exhort them to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, as follows:

that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard; that is, that they, bringing forth good fruit in their lives and conversations, whereby it might appear that they were trees of righteousness, and the planting of the Lord; he, or they observing them, might give an account of them to the Lord, to the glory of his name:

but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty; the Jews not only mocked these messengers of the Lord, and despised their words, but misused them, 2Ch 36:15 they beat them with their fists, smote them on the cheek, and scourged them with scourges; so that they had no account to give of their fruitfulness in good works, but the contrary; See Gill on "Mt 21:35" and See Gill on "Mr 12:3".

Luke 20:11

Ver. 11. And again he sent another servant,.... Or set of prophets in after times, and yet before the Babylonish captivity:

and they beat him also; as they had done the other; they continued in their malpractices, yea increased in them:

and entreated him shamefully; putting him to open shame, using him in a very ignominious and shameful manner, which it was a shame to relate, and which was shameful for them to do:

and sent him away empty; as they had done the other.

Luke 20:12

Ver. 12. And again he sent the third,.... Perhaps after the return of the Jews from captivity, and between that time and the coming of Christ, in which interval many good men were used in a very inhuman manner, Heb 11:37

and they wounded him also; by casting stones at him; see
Mr 12:4

and cast him out; of the vineyard.

Luke 20:13

Ver. 13. Then said the Lord of the vineyard,.... Who planted it, and let it out to husbandmen, and expected fruit from it, and sent his servants from time to time for it:

what shall I do? or what can be done more than has been done? **Isa 5:4** who else can be sent that is likely to do any good with such an ungrateful and unfruitful people?

I will send my beloved Son; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who lay in his bosom, was the darling of his soul, and the delight of his heart; him he determined to send, and him he did send to the lost sheep of the house of Israel:

it may be they will reverence him, when they see him: it might be thought after the manner of men, that considering the greatness of his person, as the Son of God, the nature of his office, as the Redeemer and Saviour of men, the doctrines which he preached, the miracles which he wrought, and the holiness and harmlessness of his conversation, and the great good he did both to the bodies and souls of men, that he would have been had in great esteem and veneration with the men, to whom he was sent, and among whom he conversed: but, alas! when they saw him, they saw no beauty, comeliness, and excellency in him, and nothing on account of which he should be desired by them.

Luke 20:14

Ver. 14. But when the husbandmen saw him,.... In human nature, heard him preach, and observed the miracles done by him:

they reasoned among themselves; as the Scribes and Pharisees, and elders of the people often did:

saying, this is the heir; the heir of God, being his Son; and so the Ethiopic version; "this Son is his heir", or the heir of the vineyard; being, by appointment, heir of all things, and by his descent from David heir to the kingdom of Israel;

come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. The Arabic and Persic versions render it, "and his inheritance shall be ours": the nation, city, temple, and all the emoluments and benefits thereof. The word "come" is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Gothic and Vulgate Latin versions.

Luke 20:15

Ver. 15. So they cast him out of the vineyard,.... Rejected him as the Messiah, even denied that he was of the Jewish nation; said he was a Samaritan, and delivered him to the Gentiles that were without, and were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; and at last had him without their city, and put him to death, as follows:

and killed him; the Prince of life, the Lord of glory, and heir of all things; see **Ac 2:23**

what therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them? the husbandmen, the chief priests, elders, Scribes, and Pharisees; at whose solicitations the life of his Son, and heir, was taken away; by which he must be greatly provoked and incensed.

Luke 20:16

Ver. 16. He shall come and destroy these husbandmen,.... Which had its accomplishment at the destruction of Jerusalem: according to the other evangelists, these words are the answer of the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, to the above questions put to them by Christ, after he had delivered the parable; but here they seem to be the words of Christ, who also said the same, and confirmed what they had observed, and could not but own, that it was just and right, and what might be expected, with what follows:

and shall give the vineyard to others; the land of Judea to the Romans in particular, and the church state, with the Gospel and ordinances of it, to the Gentiles in general, sometimes called "others"; See Gill on "Lu 5:29" and

See Gill on "Lu 18:11".

and when they heard it, they said, God forbid; though they were their own words, yet repeated and confirmed by Christ, and perceiving that they were the persons intended, deprecate the fulfilment of them; at least so far as they understood they related to the killing of the Messiah, and to the destruction of their nation, city, and temple.

Luke 20:17

Ver. 17. And he beheld them,.... Looked very earnestly and wistly at them, speaking as it were by his looks, signifying, that verily so it would be, as he had said; that they would reject the Messiah, and put him to death, and bring utter ruin upon themselves, and deprive their posterity of many advantages and privileges:

and said, what is this then that is written; that is, what else is the meaning of such a Scripture? is not the sense of that perfectly agreeable to what has been said, that the Messiah shall be rejected by the principal men among the Jews in church and state, and yet he shall be exalted, who will then take vengeance on them?

the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? The passage is in Ps 118:22.
See Gill on "Mt 21:42".

Luke 20:18

Ver. 18. Whosoever shall fall on that stone, shall be broken,.... Not who shall fall upon Christ by faith, and build upon him as the foundation stone, for such shall be saved; but that stumble at him, and are offended with him, and fall by unbelief and hardness of heart; such do themselves much hurt and mischief and expose themselves to danger and ruin; they bid very fair for destruction:

but on whomsoever it shall fall; as it did with its full weight upon the Jews at their destruction, and as it will upon all Christless sinners at the last day:

it will grind him to powder; the ruin of such will be unavoidable, and there will be no recovery;

See Gill on "Mt 21:44".

Luke 20:19

Ver. 19. And the chief priests, and the Scribes, that same hour,.... As soon as he had delivered the above parable, together with that of the two sons:

sought to lay hands on him; they had a good will to it, being exceedingly gravelled with the question he put to them concerning John's baptism, which confounded them, and put them to silence; and with the parables he delivered, in which they were so manifestly pointed at:

and they feared the people; lest they should rise and stone them, as in Lu 20:6 or rescue him out of their hands;

for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them: and that they were the husbandmen that had used the servants of God so ill, and would put to death the son of God, the Messiah; and who would at length be destroyed themselves, and the kingdom of God be taken from them, though they seem to detest and deprecate it, saying in Lu 20:16 God forbid; that we should kill the heir, or that we should be destroyed, and the vineyard given to others: these things grievously nettled them, and exasperated them against him; but they knew not how to help themselves at present.

Luke 20:20

Ver. 20. And they watched him,.... What he said, and what he did, and where he went, that they might take an advantage against him, or know where he was, to send to him, as they should think fit, and take the best opportunity of so doing. The Syriac and Persic versions leave out this clause:

and sent forth spies which should feign themselves just men: of virtue and religion, conscientious men, that would do nothing but what was just and right, and were desirous of being exactly informed of the truth of things, that they might act right in every punctilio:

that might take hold of his words; improve them, and form a charge upon them, of sedition and treason:

that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor; the Roman governor, and by him be put to death. These men were some of them the disciples of the Pharisees, and others were Herodians; see Mt 22:16.

Luke 20:21

Ver. 21. And they asked him, saying, master,.... Rabbi, or doctor; hoping, by this flattering title, and the flattering words used by them, to work him up to an openness and freedom of conversation with them:

we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly; rightly dividest the word of God, and deliverest out sound doctrine according to it: and this he certainly did, though they spoke these words hypocritically, not believing what they themselves said; at least, they did not care that others should believe this of him:

neither acceptest thou the person of any. The Persic version very wrongly renders it, "and lookest not upon the countenance, and heart of any one whomsoever"; for though Christ did not look upon the countenances of men, and judge according to the outward appearance, nor regard men on account of outward circumstances, as riches, honours, learning, &c. yet he looked upon the heart, and knew what was in it, and respected sincerity and uprightness wherever he found it, and which were wanting in these men:

but teachest the way of God truly; the way of worshipping God, and of enjoying him, both in this world, and in that to come;
See Gill on "Mt 22:16".

Luke 20:22

Ver. 22. Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?] The Syriac and Persic versions here, as in the other evangelists, render it, "head money". The phrase, "for us", is here added, and on it lies the emphasis, and stress of the question; for the doubt pretended, was not whether it was lawful for the Romans to pay tribute to Caesar, but whether it was lawful for them who were Jews, were Abraham's seed, and, as they boasted, were never in bondage, but were the Lord's free people, to pay tribute to an Heathen emperor, or no.

Luke 20:23

Ver. 23. But he perceived their craftiness,.... Knowing what was in them, and being a discerner of the thoughts and intents of their hearts, he clearly saw that their view was either, that they might have a charge against him to the Roman governor, should he declare against payment of tribute; or that they might expose him to the people of the Jews, should he assert the lawfulness of it:

and said unto them, why tempt ye me? with this ensnaring question.

Luke 20:24

Ver. 24. Show me a penny,.... A Roman denarius, value seven pence halfpenny of our money. The Persic version adds, "they showed it, he asked of them"; and the Ethiopic version, "and they brought it, and he said unto them", as follows;

whose image and superscription hath it? for the penny had an head upon it, with something written, as the name of the emperor, whose image it was, his titles, the date of the coin, or some motto on it:

they answered and said, Caesar's; very likely Tiberius Caesar's, who was at that time emperor of Rome; See Gill on "Mt 22:20" and
See Gill on "Mt 22:21".

Luke 20:25

Ver. 25. And he said unto them, render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's,.... The Arabic version renders it, "give to the king what is the king's"; the tribute that was due to him; since they were under his government, and were protected by him, and traded with his money; the currency of which among them was an acknowledgment of him as their sovereign:

and unto God the things which be God's; which relate to his worship, honour, interest, and kingdom; See Gill on "Mt 22:21".

Luke 20:26

Ver. 26. And they could not take hold of his words before the people,.... Which was what they wanted; that if he had dropped any seditious and treasonable expressions against the government, they might be witnesses against him; or if he had not vindicated the liberties of the people, and the rights of the Jewish nation, these might be exasperated against him, and leave him:

and they marvelled at his answer; which was so formed, as to give them no handle against him either way:

and held their peace; they were silenced, and had nothing to say to him, nor against him, but left him, and went their way.

Luke 20:27

Ver. 27 Then came to him certain of the Sadducees,.... That is, "to Jesus", as the Persic version expresses it; and it was the same day, as Matthew says, on which the disciples of the Pharisees, and the Herodians, had been with him, putting the question about tribute to him: Mt 22:16

which deny that there is any resurrection; that is, of the dead; that there ever was any instance of it, or ever will be: this was the distinguishing tenet of that sect; see Ac 23:8

and they asked him, the following question, after they had put a case to him.

Luke 20:28

Ver. 28. Saying, master, Moses wrote unto us,.... In
De 25:5 where the substance of what follows is contained, though not in express words:

if any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother; the meaning of which is, that if a man died without issue, and left a wife behind him, his next brother, if unmarried, was to marry his wife, and the first child born of her, was to be reckoned the deceased's, and to inherit his estate;
See Gill on "Mt 22:24".

Luke 20:29

Ver. 29. There were therefore seven brethren,.... In the place where these Sadducees dwelt; or, however, that were known by them; at least they supposed such a case, and it might be fact:

and the first took a wife, and died without children; son or daughter, and so had none to keep up his name, and to possess his inheritance.

Luke 20:30

Ver. 30. And the second took her to wife,.... As he was obliged by the above law, or pluck off the shoe:

and he died childless: as his eldest brother before him.

Luke 20:31

Ver. 31. And the third took her,.... To wife, by virtue of the same law:

and in like manner the seven also; the other four, one after another, when all seven married her:

and they left no children, and died; or they died, leaving no children behind them.

Luke 20:32

Ver. 32. Last of all the woman died also. Having had no children by either of her seven husbands.

Luke 20:33

Ver. 33. Therefore in the resurrection,.... At the time of the resurrection of the dead, in that state, supposing there will be such an one, which they denied;

whose wife of them is she? the first, or the last, or any of the intermediate ones?

for seven had her to wife; and she had no child by either of them; so that their claim seems to be alike; this they thought unanswerable, and sufficient to set aside the notion of a resurrection.

Luke 20:34

Ver. 34. And Jesus answering, said unto them,.... After he had observed that their error arose from ignorance of the Scriptures, and the power of God:

the children of this world marry, and are given in marriage that is, such who live in this world, in the present mortal and imperfect state, being mortal men, and die, and leave their estates and possessions: these marry, and have wives given them in marriage; and it is very right, and fit, that so it should be, in order to keep up a succession of men, and that they may have heirs to enjoy their substance when they are gone.

Luke 20:35

Ver. 35. But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world,.... The world to come, eternal life and happiness; not by their own works and merits, but through the blood, sacrifice, and righteousness of the Messiah;

and the resurrection from the dead; that is, the first resurrection, the resurrection unto life, which only the dead in Christ will enjoy; otherwise all will be raised: but some to the resurrection of damnation:

these neither marry, nor are given in marriage; there will be no need of any such practice, for the reasons that follow.

Luke 20:36

Ver. 36. Neither can they die any more,.... Therefore there will be no need of marrying to procreate children, to keep up a succession of men, any more than there is among the angels:

for they are equal unto the angels; in spirituality, purity and immortality; See

Gill on "Mt 22:30"

and are the children of God: as they are now by adopting grace; but, as yet, it does not appear as it will then, what they are and will be:

being the children of the resurrection; as Christ was declared to be the son of God by his resurrection, so will they appear to be the children of God by their resurrection to eternal life; for though others will rise, yet not to everlasting life, and thus appearing to be children of God, they will also be heirs of God, and enjoy the inheritance, which they will always live to possess in their persons; and therefore the case being different with them from the children of the world, they will not marry, nor be given in marriage, as they are.

Luke 20:37

Ver. 37. Now that the dead are raised,.... Or that there will be a resurrection of the dead, this is a proof of it:

even Moses showed at the bush: when the Lord appeared to him out of it, and he saw it burning with fire, and not consumed; when the Lord called to him out of it by the following name, as he has recorded it in **Ex 3:6**. Hence it is said,

when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; for though the Lord called himself so, yet Moses likewise calls him by these names, when he gives an account of this affair, and when he went from him to the children Israel; See Gill on "Mt 22:32".

Luke 20:38

Ver. 38. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living,....
See Gill on "Mt 22:32"

for all live unto him. The Persic version, reads, "all these live unto him"; namely, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for though they are dead to men, they are not to God; their souls live with him, and their bodies will be raised by him: he reckons of them, as if they were now alive, for he quickens the dead, and calls things that are not, as though they were; and this is the case of all the saints that are dead, as well as of those patriarchs. The Ethiopic reads, "all live with him"; as the souls of all departed saints do; the Arabic version reads, all live in him; so all do now, Ac 17:28.

Luke 20:39

Ver. 39. Then certain of the Scribes, answering said,.... Who believed the doctrine of the resurrection, which the Sadducees denied, and so were pleased with our Lord's reasoning on this subject:

master, thou hast well said; thou hast spoken in a beautiful manner, reasoned finely upon this head, and set this matter in a fair and clear light; See Gill on "Mr 12:28"

Luke 20:40

Ver. 40. And after that, they durst not ask him any question at all. Neither the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, nor Herodians.

Luke 20:41

Ver. 41. And he said unto them,.... The Ethiopic version reads, "to the Pharisees"; and so it appears, that it was to them he spoke, from Mt 22:41

how say they? The Syriac version reads, "how say the Scribes?" as in Mr 12:35 and the Persic version, how say the wise men, the doctors in Israel,

that Christ is David's son? that which nothing was more common among the Jews.

Luke 20:42

Ver. 42. And David himself saith in the book Psalms,.... In
Ps 110:1

the Lord said to my Lord, sit thou on my right hand; which words were delivered by David, as inspired by the Spirit of God; and contain a speech of God the Father to his son Jesus Christ, upon his ascension to heaven, after his sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead; when he was bid to sit down in human nature, at the right hand of God, in token of having done his work on earth to full satisfaction; and in the relation of which David calls Christ his Lord; and is the reason of their being mentioned.

Luke 20:43

Ver. 43. Until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Which words are a continuation of the citation out of the above Psalm
Ps 110:1; and for the application of these words, with the preceding, to the Messiah, See Gill on "Mt 22:44".

Luke 20:44

Ver. 44. David therefore called him Lord,.... Or, "my Lord", as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; or, "his Lord", as the Arabic version. This is the inference from the words before cited
Ps 110:1, upon which the following question is asked,

how is he then his son? how can these things be reconciled? in what sense can he be both his Lord and son?
See Gill on "Mt 22:45".

Luke 20:45

Ver. 45. Then in the audience of all the people,.... Whilst they were about him, and hearing him, and for their sakes too;

he said unto his disciples; yea, he spake to the multitude, as well as to the disciples, as appears from Mt 23:1.

Luke 20:46

Ver. 46. Beware of the Scribes,.... And also of the Pharisees; for they are joined together in Matthew:

which desire to walk in long robes: the rule for the length of a scholar's garment was this {a};

"his flesh must not appear under his garments, as the light linen garments, and the like, they make in Egypt; nor must his garments be drawn upon the ground, as the garments of proud men, but must reach to his heel, and his glove must reach the top of his fingers."

According to this rule, the garments of the doctors were to be so long as to cover the whole body, even down to their heels, but were not to be any longer; and by this it appears their garments were very long; but they did not always go by this rule; some had their garments so long as to have a train after them; See Gill on "Mt 23:5"

and love greetings in the markets; or in courts of judicature; they loved to be saluted with the titles of Rabbi, Master, and the like:

and the highest seats in the synagogues; which were next to the place where the book of the law was read and expounded, and where they might be seen by the people:

and the chief rooms at feasts; the uppermost;
See Gill on "Mt 23:6" and
See Gill on "Mt 23:7".

{a} Maimon Hilch. Dayot, c. 5. sect. 9. Vid. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 57. 2. & Gloss. in ib.

Luke 20:47

Ver. 47. Which devour widows' houses,.... As the characters of them, in the preceding verse, expose their pride, this shows their avarice; they were very voracious and cruel; they did not spare widows, but devoured their substance:

and for a show make long prayers; to cover their wickedness, pretending great devotion and religion;

the same shall receive greater damnation: than openly profane sinners; doing such wickedness under a cloak of religion, will aggravate their condemnation; See Gill on "Mt 23:14".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 21:1

Ver. 1. And he looked up,.... As Christ sat over against the treasury, looking upon the ground, he lift up his eyes; for the treasury was not in an high place, or above Christ, who was right against it. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions leave out this clause.

And saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury;
See Gill on "Mr 12:41".

Luke 21:2

Ver. 2. And he saw also a certain poor widow,.... Whom he took particular notice of above all the rest: the poor, and the widow, are regarded by him, and are his care; nor are their mean services, done in faith, and from a principle of love, despised by him, but preferred to the greater services of others, where faith and love are wanting:

casting in thither two mites; the value of a farthing. The Persic version renders it, "two bottoms of yarn";
See Gill on "Mr 12:42":

Luke 21:3

Ver. 3. And he said,.... To his disciples, as the Ethiopic version adds; these he called to him, upon this occasion, as appears from Mr 12:43

of a truth I say unto you, that this poor woman hath cast in more than they all: than all the rich men; not in quantity, but in proportion to her ability; See Gill on "Mr 12:43".

Luke 21:4

Ver. 4. For all these have of their abundance,.... Which they had remaining; the same Hebrew word rty signifying to remain, and to abound: they had large possessions, and gave in much, and yet had a great deal left; out of which they cast in unto the offerings of God; or "gifts of God": not as gifts unto him; or among the gifts of God; but into the treasury where the gifts, and freewill offerings were put; the same with the "Corban", in Mt 27:6 and so the Syriac version here renders it, "the house of the offering of God": and it is expressed in the plural; because there were several chests, in which these gifts were put, for various uses; See Gill on "Mr 12:41"

but she of her penury hath cast in all the living she had;
See Gill on "Mr 12:44".

Luke 21:5

Ver. 5. And as some spake of the temple,.... These were the disciples; Mark says, one of them; but it seems there were more than one; one might begin the discourse, and others join him:

how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts;
See Gill on "Mt 24:1".

he said; what follows. This was as he went out of the temple.

Luke 21:6

Ver. 6. As for these things which ye behold,.... Some, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, read these words by way of interrogation; "are these the things which ye behold?" do ye look upon these with wonder and delight?

the days will come; and they are hastening on; a little while, a few years more:

in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down; See Gill on "Mt 24:2".

Luke 21:7

Ver. 7. And they asked him,.... That is, his disciples, when they were come to the Mount of Olives, and as he sat upon that,
Mt 24:3

saying, master, but when shall these things be? when the temple shall be destroyed; and one stone shall not be left upon another;

and what sign [will there be] when these things shall come to pass? which shows that this refers to the destruction of the temple, and so the signs following; See Gill on "Mt 24:3".

Luke 21:8

Ver. 8. And he said, take heed that ye be not deceived,.... With false Christs, and false prophets:

for many shall come in my name; making use of his name, taking it to them; not that they would pretend they were sent by him, but that they were he himself:

saying, I am [Christ]; so the Syriac and Persic versions supply as we do:

and the time draweth near; not that such will come, but when come, they will say, that the time of the deliverance of the Jewish nation from the Roman yoke is at hand:

go ye not therefore after them; do not be their disciples, or follow them where they would lead you; for nothing but destruction will be the consequence of it.

Luke 21:9

Ver. 9. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions,.... Or seditions and tumults; "wars" may design the wars of the Romans, against the Jews; and the "commotions", or seditions, the internal troubles among themselves:

be not terrified; as if the destruction of the nation, city, and temple, would be at once:

for these things must first come to pass, but the end is not by and by; or "immediately". The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions leave out this last word, and read, as in See Gill on "Mt 24:6".

Luke 21:10

Ver. 10. Then said he unto them, nation shall rise,....
See Gill on "Mt 24:7".

Luke 21:11

Ver. 11. And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines and pestilences,.... See Gill on "Mt 24:7".

and fearful sights; or "terrible things"; whether heard, or seen, as dreadful thunderings, and lightnings; and a voice heard in the temple, saying, let us go hence; and an idiot that went about several years together, saying, woe to the people, woe to the city, &c. a flame was seen in the temple, and the doors of it opened of themselves:

and great signs shall there be from heaven; as comets and blazing stars, a flaming sword, or a comet like one, hanging over Jerusalem, and armies in the air engaged against each other {b}. The Syriac version adds, "and great winters there shall be"; that is, very long and cold; and so the Persic version, "and winter, and cold, shall be protracted".

{b} Vid. Joseph. de Bello Jud, l. 6. c. 5.

Luke 21:12

Ver. 12. But before all these,.... Before all these things come to pass:

they shall lay their hands on you; as the high priest, the priests, and the captain of the temple did upon the apostles, **Ac 4:1**

and persecute you; as upon the death of Stephen, **Ac 8:1**

delivering you up to the synagogues; to be scourged there; or to the courts of judicature, the consistories of the Jews, their great sanhedrim; before these the apostles were brought, **Ac 4:6**

and into prisons; as were all the apostles together, and Peter at another time separately, **Ac 4:3**

being brought before kings and rulers, for my name's sake; for being called by his name, and calling upon it; for professing, and preaching his Gospel; See Gill on "Mt 10:18".

Luke 21:13

Ver. 13. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. By this means they would have an opportunity of leaving their testimony for Christ before kings and rulers; and what they should meet with from them, would be a means of strengthening and confirming them in the truths of the Gospel; and be a proof and evidence to them of the certainty of the above things Christ had said should be accomplished; as well as be for a testimony against the rulers and governors, Jews, and Gentiles, before whom they should be convened; see Mt 10:18.

Luke 21:14

Ver. 14. Settle it therefore in your hearts,.... Resolve on this in your minds, and let it be a rule never to be departed from:

not to meditate before what you shall answer; not to sit down, and study a form of words, and scheme of things, what to reply to the ensnaring questions, that may be thought would be asked, by kings and rulers, or any of the judges before whom they should be brought; it being natural for persons, especially of a low life, to be timorous and fearful, to appear before such great personages, and to be thoughtful and solicitous what to say to any question that may be asked them; See Gill on "Mt 10:19".

Luke 21:15

Ver. 15. For I will give you a mouth,.... A faculty of speaking, a freedom of expression, a door of utterance, a good degree of elocution, to speak properly, pertinently and freely to any point:

and wisdom; to answer with great propriety, and in the most prudent manner, to any difficult and ensnaring question; and to furnish with such knowledge of the Gospel, and with such gifts and abilities to preach and defend it, that they should be able to give a clear and distinct account of it, and prove every point in it, by the most strong and convincing arguments, and vindicate it against all objections:

which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist. This was remarkably fulfilled in Peter, and John, and in Stephen, **Ac 4:13**. The first word, "gainsay", is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions.

Luke 21:16

Ver. 16. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren,.... See Gill on "Mt 10:21"

and kinsfolks, and friends. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions add, "your", to each of these relations, as your parents, &c.

and some of you shall they cause to be put to death; as Stephen was stoned to death, and James, the brother of John, Herod killed with the sword, **Ac 7:58** and indeed all of them were put to death, except John, before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Luke 21:17

Ver. 17. And ye shall be hated of all men,....
See Gill on "Mt 10:22".
See Gill on "Mt 24:9".

Luke 21:18

Ver. 18. But there shall not art hair of your head perish. That is, without the will of God, as in Mt 10:29 or not one shall perish, but what shall be restored again: or the sense is, that though they should be betrayed by their friends, and hated, and persecuted, and imprisoned by their enemies, yet they should be no losers in the main; all things should work together for their good; and though even they should be put to death, yet that would be to their advantage, since instead of a temporal, troublesome life, they should enjoy an eternal and happy one: for this cannot be understood of entire preservation from all corporeal damages and hurt; seeing it is, before declared, that they should be put into prisons, and some of them put to death; nor of their preservation at the destruction of Jerusalem, for none of them was living at that time, but the Apostle John, and he was not in those parts.

Luke 21:19

Ver. 19. In your patience, possess ye your souls. By patiently bearing all afflictions, reproaches, indignities, and persecutions, enjoy yourselves; let nothing disturb or distress you; possess that peace and joy in your souls, which the world cannot take away; see **Ro 5:3**. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "ye shall possess": and the sense may be this; by patient continuance, or by perseverance in the ways of God, and the truths of Christ unto the end, ye shall be saved; shall find your lives, and enjoy your souls, as in Mt 10:22.

Luke 21:20

Ver. 20. And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies,.... The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions read, "with an army"; that is, with the Roman army, as it was by the army which Titus Vespasian brought against it, and besieged it with:

then know that the desolation thereof is nigh; signifying, that there would be no deliverance to be expected, as when the Assyrian army under Rabshakeh appeared against it; but that whenever the Roman army besieged it, its destruction might be looked upon as inevitable; nor was the siege raised until it was destroyed, which was about four years after.

Luke 21:21

Ver. 21. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains,.... See Gill on "Mt 24:16".

And let them which are in the midst of it; either of Judea, as the preceding clause seems to direct the sense; or in Jerusalem, and which indeed was in the midst of Judea; and this sense is favoured by the Persic version, which renders it, "within the city"; let them go out of it, as the Christians did to Pella, Mount

Libanus, and other places:

and let not them that are in the countries; either foreign countries, or in towns and villages;

enter thereinto: either into Judea, or into Jerusalem; contrary to this advice, they came from all countries to the feast of the passover at Jerusalem, and were there shut up by the siege and destroyed {c}.

{c} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 17.

Luke 21:22

Ver. 22. For these be the days of vengeance,.... Of God's vengeance on the Jewish nation, for their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah;

that all things which are written may be fulfilled; as in Moses and the prophets; see De 28:20

Luke 21:23

Ver. 23. But woe unto them that are with-child,....
See Gill on "Mt 24:19".

For there shall be great distress in the land; of Judea. The Greek word anagkh, here used, properly signifies "necessity", but here intends afflictions and distress; in which sense it is often used by the Septuagint, as in Ps 107:6 and it is also by the Targumists adopted into their language, and used in the same sense {d}: and indeed, the distress was very great, and such a time of tribulation, as was never known since the beginning of the world, nor never will be the like; what with the enemy without, and their seditions and divisions within, the robberies, murders, and famine, which prevailed and abounded, their miseries are not to be expressed:

and wrath upon this people; of the Jews; even the wrath of God, as well as of man, which came upon them to the uttermost; and their own historian observes, that God, who had condemned the people, turned every way of salvation to their destruction {e}.

{d} Vid. Targum in Gen xxii. 14. & xxxviii. 25. & Targum Sheni in Esth. v. 1.
{e} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 15.

Luke 21:24

Ver. 24. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword,.... Or "mouth of the sword", an Hebraism; see the Septuagint in **Jud 1:8**. The number of those that perished by the famine and sword, were eleven hundred thousand {f}:

and shall be led away captive unto all nations; when the city was taken, the most beautiful of the young men were kept for the triumph; and those that were above seventeen years of age, were sent bound into Egypt, to labour in the mines; many were distributed through the provinces, to be destroyed in the theatres, by the sword or beasts; and those that were under seventeen years of age, were led captive to be sold; and the number of these only, were ninety-seven thousand {g}:

and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles; the Romans, who ploughed up the city and temple, and laid them level with the ground; and which spot has been ever since inhabited by such as were not Jews, as Turks and Papists: and so it will be,

until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; that is, till the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in; until the Gospel is preached all over the world, and all God's elect are gathered in out of all nations; and then the Jews will be converted, and return to their own land, and rebuild and inhabit Jerusalem; but till that time, it will be as it has been, and still is possessed by Gentiles. The word "Gentiles", is left out in one of Beza's exemplars, and so it is likewise in the Persic version.

{f} Joseph. de Belio Jud. l. 7. c. 49. & Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 7. {g} Ib.

Luke 21:25

Ver. 25. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon,.... They shall be darkened, and suffer very strange and surprising eclipses:

and in the stars; they shall fall from heaven, as in Mt 24:29 and so the Ethiopic version reads here: all which, as it may be understood in a literal sense, so it may likewise in figurative and mystical one, and be interpreted of the changes there should be in the Jewish state; See Gill on "Mt 24:29". So the Jewish writers {h} interpret the sun, the light, the moon, and stars, in Ec 12:2. By the "sun" they understand the kingdom of the house of David; by "the light", the law; by "the moon", the sanhedrim; and by the stars, the Rabbins; and the same seem to be designed by the stars here:

and upon the earth distress of nations; upon the land of Israel; in the several nations and countries belonging to it; as Galilee of the nations, Judea, and the region beyond Jordan, shall be in great distress:

with perplexity; of mind, not knowing what to do, which way to go, or step to take; the Syriac version, instead of it, reads "clapping, or pressing of the hands"; which is done by persons, when in an agony and great distress:

the sea and the waves roaring; which design some unusual and extraordinary storms and tempests, and inundations in the sea of Galilee, or Tiberias, which would be so very terrible, as to cause great uneasiness, distress, and perplexity; and so some versions render it, "because of the sea", &c.

{h} In Prefat. Echa Rabbati, fol. 38. 4. Jarchi in Eccles. xii. 2.

Luke 21:26

Ver. 26. Men's hearts failing them for fear,.... Of what these signs in the heaven, earth, and sea portend:

and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; on the land of Judea:

for the powers of heaven shall be shaken;
See Gill on "Mt 24:29".

Luke 21:27

Ver. 27. And then shall they see the son of man,....
See Gill on "Mt 24:30".

Luke 21:28

Ver. 28. And when these things begin to come to pass,.... When the first of these signs appears, or any one of them:

then look up and lift up your heads; be cheerful and pleasant; do not hang down your heads as bulrushes, but erect them, and put on a cheerful countenance, and look upwards, from whence your help comes; and look out wistfully and intently, for your salvation and deliverance:

for your redemption draweth nigh; not the redemption of their souls from sin, Satan, the law, the world, death, and hell; for that was to be obtained, and was obtained, before any of these signs took place; nor the redemption of their bodies at the last day, in the resurrection, called the day of redemption; for this respects something that was to be, in the present age and generation; see Lu 21:32 but the deliverance of the apostles and other Christians, from the persecutions of the Jews, which were very violent, and held till these times, and then they were freed from them: or by redemption is meant, the Redeemer, the son of man, who shall now come in power and glory, to destroy the Jews, and deliver his people; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "for he draws nigh who shall save you".

Luke 21:29

Ver. 29. And he spake to them a parable,.... That is, to his disciples:

behold the fig tree, and all the trees; that, or any other tree;
See Gill on "Mt 24:32".

Luke 21:30

Ver. 30. When they now shoot forth,.... Their buds, branches, and leaves; the Vulgate Latin adds, "of themselves":

ye see and know of your own selves; without any hint, or direction from others, the case is so plain and obvious; the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "of them"; the trees, by their putting forth their buds and leaves; the Persic and Ethiopic versions leave out the clause "of yourselves"; and none of the Oriental versions lead the word see:

the summer is now nigh at hand: see Mt 24:32.

Luke 21:31

Ver. 31. So likewise when ye see these things come to pass,.... The signs before mentioned, in Lu 21:8.

Know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand: a more visible and glorious display of the kingdom of the Messiah, in the destruction of his enemies, the Jews; see **Mr 9:1**.

Luke 21:32

Ver. 32. Verily I say unto you, this generation,....
See Gill on "Mt 24:34".
See Gill on "Mt 24:35". All the Oriental versions read here as there, "all these things"; before related.

Luke 21:33

Ver. 33. See Gill on "Lu 21:32".

Luke 21:34

Ver. 34. And take heed to yourselves,.... To your souls and bodies, to your lives and conversations; be upon your watch and guard:

lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness; with excessive eating and drinking; for these, as they oppress and burden the stomach, and disorder the body, so they stupefy the senses, and make the mind dull and heavy, and unfit for spiritual and religious exercises; such as reading, meditation, and prayer:

and cares of this life; concealing food and clothing, what you shall eat or drink, or wherewith ye shall be clothed; all such anxious and worldly cares, being that to the soul, as intemperance is to the body; for there is such a thing as being inebriated with the world, as well as with wine:

and so that day come upon you unawares; the day of Jerusalem's destruction; and this suggests, that such would be the carnality and security of some persons, and so they would be surprised with ruin at once; see Lu 17:26.

Luke 21:35

Ver. 35. For as a snare shall it come,.... In which a bird is suddenly taken, and cannot get out again; the Persic version renders it, "as lightning and the splendour of the sun"; which break out at once, and enlighten the whole earth; so the destruction of the Jewish nation should be sudden and unavoidable, and universal; for it should come

on all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth: or land of Judea; and so it was, for not only Jerusalem, but all Judea, and Galilee, suffered in this desolation.

Luke 21:36

Ver. 36. Watch ye therefore, and pray always,.... Watch against every sin, snare, and temptation; particularly, against the above things, surfeiting, drunkenness, and worldly cares; pray continually, for fresh supplies of grace:

that ye may be counted worthy; not for watchfulness and prayer, but through the grace and goodness of God:

to escape all these things that shall come to pass; the dreadful miseries and distress, that shall come upon the Jews:

and to stand before the Son of man; with intrepidity, confidence, and pleasure; and meet him at his coming in this way, with joy and comfort; and likewise at death, and at judgment; see **1Jo 2:28**.

Luke 21:37

Ver. 37. And in the day time he was teaching in the temple,.... That is, Jesus, as the Persic version expresses it; his constant method every day, till the feast of passover came, was to go up to the temple, and there openly and freely preach the Gospel to the people, who resorted thither in great numbers, for that purpose:

and at night he went out; of the temple, and out of the city:

and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives; very likely to pray, both for himself and for his disciples, his time with them being short.

Luke 21:38

Ver. 38. And all the people came early in the morning,.... Not all the people in Jerusalem, every inhabitant of the city; this word "all", is often to be taken with a restriction, and here it designs a large number; the Persic version renders it, "vast multitudes": these, some out of curiosity, and others from a real love to him, and his ministry, rose betimes, and came early,

to him in the temple, to hear him; which is said, in commendation of Christ's hearers, and is worthy of imitation; as the former verse is a commendation of the preacher, in his constancy and diligence in his work, and following it with his prayers.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 22:1

Ver. 1. Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh,.... Which lasted seven days; during which the Jews eat their bread without leaven, in commemoration of the haste in which they went out of Egypt; being such, that they had not time to leaven their dough, but took it with their kneadingtroughs along with them, as it was; and as figurative of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, with which the Gospel feast is to be kept; see Ex 12:34.

Which is called the passover; because the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites, when he slew all the firstborn in Egypt; now the time of this feast drew near, when the conspiracy was formed against the life of Christ: Matthew and Mark are more precise, and suggest, that it was two days before the passover; see
Mt 26:2.

Luke 22:2

Ver. 2. And the chief priests and Scribes,.... Matthew adds, "and the elders of the people"; which made up the great sanhedrim and council of the nation; these met together, not in their usual place the temple, but at the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest; see Mt 24:3.

And sought how they might kill him; that is, "Jesus", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; they had determined before, upon the advice of Caiaphas, to put him to death, and very likely had fixed what kind of death he should die; see Joh 11:49 and now they consult together, of the manner of bringing it about, and at what time; and the majority were not for doing it on a feast day, when there was a great concourse of people, but with more privacy:

for they feared the people: which were now in great multitudes with him, who came along with him, from Galilee, and other parts; and had hosanna'd him into the city, and still abode with him, and their numbers were increasing; and the sanhedrim were aware, that at the passover there would be still a greater company of people from all parts of the land; and they might conclude, that he would have a large number of his friends come out of Galilee, where he had been for the most part teaching, and working miracles; and they were afraid, should they lay hold on him publicly, the people would rise and stone them; at least would rescue him out of their hands, and disappoint them of their designs.

Luke 22:3

Ver. 3. Then entered Satan into Judas,.... At the same time that the sanhedrim were sitting, and consulting about the death of Christ, Satan, or the adversary, as the word signifies, the devil, who is the enemy of the Messiah, the woman's seed, entered into Judas; not corporeally, as he did into those that were possessed by him; but he entered "into his heart", as the Ethiopic version renders it; he put it into his heart to betray him, as it is said in Joh 13:2 he stirred up, and worked upon the corruptions of his heart; suggested evil things to his mind, and baited his temptations agreeable to his malice and covetousness: and this man was

surnamed Iscariot; to distinguish him from another apostle of the same name; concerning this his surname, See Gill on "Mt 10:4",

See Gill on "Joh 13:2".

Being of the number of the twelve; apostles, or disciples of Jesus, as the Persic version reads, and which is an aggravation of his sin: now this being two days before the passover, shows, that the sop which Judas took, after which the devil entered into him, Joh 13:27 could not be the passover sop, but was the sop he ate at the supper in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, so long before it.

Luke 22:4

Ver. 4. And he went his way,.... From Christ, and the rest of the apostles, out of Bethany; and when it was night, about two miles from Jerusalem, whither he went directly:

and communed with the chief priests and captains; that is, of the temple, as in Lu 22:52 and so the Persic version reads, "the militia of the temple"; and the Syriac version renders it, "the captains of the militia of the temple"; instead of captains, the Ethiopic version, reads "Scribes", and so does the Arabic, and which, adds, "and the soldiers"; but these captains were not Roman officers, or soldiers, but ecclesiastical persons, who presided in the temple, and were heads and governors, over bodies of men employed there, of which sort were the following {i}:

"there were fifteen, Nynwmm, presidents, or governors in the sanctuary, and so they were appointed for ever over each of these fifteen things, one governor; and they are these: one was over the times, or solemn seasons; the second, over the shutting of the gates: the third, over those that kept watch; the fourth, over the singers; the fifth, over the cymbal, with the rest of the singing instruments; the sixth, over the lots; the seventh over the nests (of doves); the eighth, over the seals, or tickets; the ninth, over the drink offerings; the tenth, over the sick (priests); the eleventh, over the waters; the twelfth, over the business of the shewbread; the thirteenth, over the business of the incense; the fourteenth, over the business of the vail; and the fifteenth, over the business of the priests' garments; and every one of these governors had under him "abundance of men", that so they might prepare the business they presided over."

These seem rather to be meant, than the watch in the temple; which, though kept in several places, there was but one single person that presided over it; as appears from the above account, and from what follows; and who was called the man of the mountain of the house, or the governor of the temple {k}:

"in three places the priests kept watch in the sanctuary, in the house of Abtines, and in the house of Nitzotz, and in the house of Moked, and the Levites in twenty and one places--the man of the mountain of the house, went round every ward with torches burning before him, and every one that was not standing, he said unto him, peace be on thee; and if he found he was asleep, he struck him with his staff, and had power to burn his garments."

Whence it does not appear to me, that there were heads or captains over every ward, as Dr. Lightfoot suggests, but one over them all; perhaps these captains may be the same with the governors of the temple, as in 1 Esdras:

And Helkias, Zacharias, and Syelus, the governors of the temple, gave to the priests for the passover two thousand and six hundred sheep, and three hundred calves. (1 Esdras 1:8)

Did very carefully oversee the holy works, assisting the ancients of the Jews and governors of the temple. (1 Esdras 7:2)

But be these who they will, Judas it seems was informed where, and upon what they were met together, and he went to them, and conversed with them:

how he might betray him unto them; in the most secret manner, and with, the least noise and disturbance.

{i} Maimon. Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 1, 2. Misu. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1, 2. {k} Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2.

Luke 22:5

Ver. 5. And they were glad,.... For nothing could be more opportune and agreeable to them, than that one of his disciples should meet them at this juncture, and offer to put him into their hands in the most private manner;

and covenanted to give him money. The Ethiopic version read, "thirty pieces of silver"; which was the sum they agreed to give him, and he accepted of; see Mt 26:15.

Luke 22:6

Ver. 6. And he promised,.... He undertook to deliver him into their hands; he laid himself under obligation to do it; he faithfully promised he would. The Arabic version renders it, he gave thanks; for the money he received, being well pleased he had made such a bargain; and so the word here used sometimes signifies; and indeed commonly either to confess; or to give thanks, in which latter sense it is used, in Mt 11:25 but here rather it is to be understood in the sense of promising:

and sought opportunity; the two days following before the passover:

to betray him unto them in the absence of the people: when they were gone from him, and he was alone; but found no opportunity of doing it this way, which they had agreed upon with him, and he had promised, until the night of the passover, when he was alone in the garden with his disciples.

Luke 22:7

Ver. 7. Then came the day of unleavened bread,.... The first of them, the fourteenth day of the month Nisan:

when the passover must be killed; that is, the passover lamb, as the Persic version renders it; and which, according to the law in Ex 12:6 was to be done between the two evenings; See Gill on "Mt 26:17".

Luke 22:8

Ver. 8. And he sent Peter and John,.... That is, Jesus sent them, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions express it; these were two favourite disciples of Christ, and were now sent by him from Bethany to Jerusalem:

saying, go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat; it together; so servants used to be sent, to go and prepare the passover for their masters; See Gill on "Mt 26:17".

Luke 22:9

Ver. 9. And they said unto him, where wilt thou that we prepare?] Meaning, not in what village, town, or city, for it was a fixed and determined thing, that the passover should be eaten at Jerusalem, and nowhere else; see De 16:2, but in what house in Jerusalem?

Luke 22:10

Ver. 10. And he said unto them, behold,.... Giving them a sign, whereby they should know the very house, where he would keep the passover:

when ye are entered into the city; that is, the city of Jerusalem; for Christ and his disciples were now at Bethany, from whence he sent Peter and John thither, where only the passover was to be killed and eaten:

there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; the Persic version adds, "upon his back"; for which he had been to some well, or fountain in the city, in order to mix with wine at the passover:

follow him into the house where he entereth in; so that it seems they were to return, and go after him into the house, where he went with his pitcher of water; this was a trial of the faith and obedience of the disciples, and, as the sequel shows, a proof of the omniscience and deity of Christ.

Luke 22:11

Ver. 11. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house,.... The master of it; for the man bearing the pitcher of water seems to be a servant only:

the master saith unto thee: by these his two disciples, Peter and John; it looks as if the word "master", as peculiar to Christ, and by way of eminency belonging to him, Mt 23:10 was well known to those who believed, and were followers of him, as the man of this house might be; see Joh 11:28. The Syriac and Persic versions read, "our master saith", and leave out the other phrase, to thee:

where is the guest chamber; or dining room: the word properly signifies an inn, or place to wait at; so called, from travellers unloosing their burdens there, either from themselves, or their beasts; the Arabic version renders it, "the place of my rest": a place for refreshment and feasting:

where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? who were a sufficient number to eat the passover lamb by themselves;
See Gill on "Mt 26:18".

Luke 22:12

Ver. 12. And he shall show you a large upper room furnished,.... With all things necessary, to eat and drink out of, at the passover;

there make ready. The Ethiopic version adds, "for us", as in Mr 14:15. The Persic version renders it, "there prepare a place"; but this was prepared already; the words design the preparation of the passover, and every thing proper for it.

Luke 22:13

Ver. 13. And they went,.... From Bethany to Jerusalem:

and found as he had said unto them; they met the man with the pitcher of water, and by following him, found the house Christ meant to keep the passover at; they told the master of it, what Christ ordered them, who immediately showed them a very convenient room, as he had described to them:

and they made ready the passover; provided a lamb, and got it killed and dressed, and prepared every thing necessary for the keeping of the feast, according to divine appointment; See Gill on "Mt 26:19".

Luke 22:14

Ver. 14. And when the hour was come,.... When it was evening, the last of the two evenings, when it was dark, at least after six o'clock; See Gill on "Mt 26:20".

he sat down; or lay along on a couch, as was the custom; see the note, as before:

and the twelve apostles with him; for Judas, after he had made his bargain with the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, came and took his place with the rest of the apostles, both to cover his sin, and to watch the best opportunity of betraying his master.

Luke 22:15

Ver. 15. And he said unto them,.... The twelve apostles, as they were eating the passover, it being usual to talk and converse much at such a time; See Gill on "Mt 26:21".

With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; not for the sake of eating; for though he was traduced as a glutton, and did often eat and drink in a free and familiar way, both at the tables of Pharisees, and of publicans and sinners; yet he was not a man given to appetite; witness his fast of forty days and forty nights, and his great negligence of himself, which sometimes obliged his disciples to pray him to eat; see **Joh 4:31**. Indeed, according to the Jewish canons, it was not judged proper that a man should eat much on the day before the passover, that he might be hungry, and eat the passover, Nwbatb, "with desire" {l}, or with an appetite. Our Lord may allude to this; but this was not the thing he meant; nor merely does he say this on account of the passover, as it was God's ordinance; though as he was made under the law, and that was in his heart, he had a great regard to it, and a delight in it, which he had shown in his frequent and constant attendance on it from his youth: but though he had kept many passovers, yet of none of them did he say what he does of this, which was his fourth passover from his entrance on his public ministry, and his last: two reasons are suggested in the text why he so greatly desired to eat this passover; the one is, because he should eat it "with" his disciples; an emphasis lies on the phrase, "with you", to whom, and not so much to the passover, and the eating of that, was his desire; as it is to all his people: it was so from everlasting, when he desired them as his spouse and bride; and in time, when he became incarnate, suffered, died, and gave himself for them: his desire is towards them whilst in unregeneracy, that they may be converted; and to them when converted, notwithstanding all their backslidings and revoltings. His desire is to their persons, and the comeliness and beauty of them, which he himself has put upon them; and to their graces, and the exercise of them, with which he is ravished; and to their company and communion with them, which he chooses and delights in: and his desire is towards their being with him to all eternity, and which he delighted in the fore views of from eternity; and is the joy set before him, and which carried him through his sufferings and death; and is the amount and accomplishment of all his prayers and intercession: and the other reason of this his strong desire in the text is, that this was the last passover, and that his sufferings and death were just at hand, and which he longed to have over; not that he desired these sufferings, for the sake of them, which could not be agreeable to, and desirable by his human nature; but because of the effects of them; since hereby justice would be satisfied, the law would be fulfilled, sin atoned for, and the salvation of his elect obtained; for whom he bore the strongest affection, and whom he loved with a love of complacency, and whose salvation he most earnestly desired, and even sufferings for the sake of it.

{l} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Pesachim, c. 10. sect. 1.

Luke 22:16

Ver. 16. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof,.... Of the passover, and which now, with the rest of the ceremonial law, was to be abolished:

until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God; signifying, not that he should eat of it in the kingdom of God, where it would be fulfilled; seeing the passover was never more to take place, neither in the Gospel dispensation, nor in the heavenly glory; both which may be meant by the kingdom of God; but that he should never eat more of it in this ceremonial way, since it would have its accomplishment in each of those states: and it has been already fulfilled under the Gospel dispensation, which is often meant by the kingdom of God; in himself, who is the passover sacrificed for us, **1Co 5:7** for the passover lamb was a type of Christ, and he is the sum and substance of that shadow, and the fulfilling end of that type; it had its accomplishment in him; of which See Gill on "1Co 5:7" and it will also be fulfilled in the kingdom of heaven, or eternal glory, when there will be a perfect deliverance of the saints from sin, Satan, and the world; which the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt was typical of, commemorated in the passover; and therefore then will be sung the song of Moses, and the Lamb; and then will Christ, and his true followers, eat and drink together in his Father's kingdom, and spend an endless eternity in never fading joys and pleasures.

Luke 22:17

Ver. 17. And he took the cup and gave thanks,.... There were four cups of wine drank at the passover, which the poorest man in Israel was obliged to drink; and over each of which a blessing was pronounced {m}: and this was one of them, and seems to be the first; for the passover was begun by mixing a cup of wine, and blessing it, or giving thanks over it {n}; and which was usually done in the following manner {o}:

"blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, the King of the world, who hast created "the fruit of the vine": blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who hath chosen us above all people, and hath exalted us above every tongue, and hath sanctified us by his commandments; and thou hast given unto us, O Lord our God, in love, the stated festivals for joy, and the feasts and seasons for rejoicing; this day of the feast of unleavened bread, this time of our freedom, a holy convocation, in remembrance of the going out of Egypt; for thou hast chosen us, and thou hast sanctified us, above all people; and the feasts of thine holiness with joy and rejoicing thou hast made us to inherit: blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast sanctified Israel, and the seasons: blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who hath kept us alive, and preserved us, and hast brought us to this time."

After this every one drank of his cup, and put it on the table: accordingly it follows,

and said, take this and divide it among yourselves; that is, every one drink of it.

{m} Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c. 7. sect. 9, 10. {n} Ib. c. 8. sect. 1. {o} Haggada Shel Pesach. fol. 241. 1, 2. ed. Basil. p. 3, 4. ed. Rittangel.

Luke 22:18

Ver. 18. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine,.... That is, wine; see the blessing at the passover cup in the notes on the preceding verse:

until the kingdom of God shall come; with power, as in **Mr 9:1** in the resurrection of Christ from the dead; in his exaltation and session at God's right hand; in the pouring forth of the Spirit on the apostles; in the conversion of great multitudes, both in Judea, and in the Gentile world; in the destruction of the Jews; in the latter day glory; and in the ultimate state of happiness and bliss in the world to come. The Ethiopic version reads, "until I drink it new in the kingdom of God"; as in Mr 14:25.

Luke 22:19

Ver. 19. And he took bread and gave thanks,.... Or blessed it, as in Mt 26:26. Here begins the account of the Lord's supper after the passover was eaten;

and brake it, and gave unto them; the disciples, as is expressed in Mt 26:26

saying, this is my body;
See Gill on "Mt 26:26"

which is given for you; or will be given for you, as an offering for sin in your room and stead; and accordingly it was given into the hands of men, and of justice, and unto death. The phrase denotes the substitution and sacrifice of Christ in the room of his people, and the voluntariness of it; and is only mentioned by Luke in this account: the Apostle Paul writes, which is broken for you, 1Co 11:24 alluding to the breaking of the bread in the ordinance, and as expressing the bruises, wounds, sufferings, and death of Christ: the Ethiopic version here adds, "for the redemption of many".

This do in remembrance of me; that is, eat this bread in remembrance of my love to you, and in commemoration of my body being offered up for you. Observe this ordinance in the manner I now institute it, in time to come, in memory of what I am about to do for you; for this direction does not only regard the present time and action, but is intended as a rule to be observed by the churches of Christ in all ages, to his second coming: and it is to be observed, that the Lord's supper is not a reiteration, but a commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ. This phrase is only mentioned by Luke here, and by the Apostle Paul, who adds it also at the drinking of the cup, 1Co 11:24. The Persic version here reads, "do this perpetually in remembrance of me".

Luke 22:20

Ver. 20. Likewise also the cup after supper,.... Both after the passover, and the Lord's supper; that is, he took the cup after they had eaten the bread, and gave

thanks over it, and gave it to his disciples, bidding them drink of it, as in Mt 26:27,
See Gill on "Mt 26:27":

saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you. The Ethiopic version reads, "for many"; as in Mt 26:28 where it is added, "for the remission of sins"; See Gill on "Mt 26:28".

Luke 22:21

Ver. 21. But behold the hand of him that betrayeth me,.... By the "hand" is meant, not figuratively the counsel, contrivance, and conspiracy of Judas to betray him, as the word is used in 2Sa 14:19 but literally the hand of Judas, which was then dipping in the dish with Christ, Mt 26:23 and it follows here, is

with me on the table; and is an aggravation of his sin, that one that sat with him at his table, ate bread with him, and dipped his morsel in the same dish, should be the betrayer of him, according to the prophecy in Ps 41:9 as well as describes and points at the person that should do this action, even one of his disciples; for which disciples, he had just now said, his body is given, and his blood is shed. The phrase, "with me", is left out in the Syriac and Persic versions. From Luke's account it appears most clearly, that Judas was not only at the passover, but at the Lord's supper, since this was said when both were over.

Luke 22:22

Ver. 22. And truly the son of man goeth,.... That is, dies, which is going the way of all the earth, Jos 23:14

as it was determined; in the counsels and purposes of God, and agreed to by Christ in the covenant of grace; see **Ac 2:23** the death of Christ, the manner of it, and the means by which it was brought about, were all predetermined by God; yet this did not, in the least, excuse the sin of those concerned in it, nor exempt them from punishment:

but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed; who not only came to an untimely end, and died an infamous death by his own hands, but went to his own place, the place of everlasting torments allotted him: wherefore in Mt 26:24 it is added, "it had been good for that man if he had not been born"; See Gill on "Mt 26:24".

Luke 22:23

Ver. 23. And they began to inquire among themselves,.... Two days before, at the supper in Bethany, when the same thing was hinted to them, they looked at one another, Joh 13:22 as persons in the utmost surprise and consternation, not being able, for a while, either to speak to Christ, or one another; but now they inquired among themselves, and of Christ likewise, Mt 26:21

which of them it was that should do this thing; so barbarous, shocking, and horrible.

Luke 22:24

Ver. 24. And there was also a strife among them,.... The Persic version reads, "at a certain time there was a contention among the apostles"; and some think, that this refers to the time when the mother of Zebedee's two sons asked the favour of Christ, to set one of them at his right hand, and the other at his left, in his kingdom; which greatly incensed the other disciples, and occasioned a dispute about precedence; when our Lord interposed, and used much the same arguments as here; and which, it is thought, Luke here inserts out of the proper place. The Ethiopic version renders it, "then his disciples disputed among themselves"; pinning it down to this very time: and what might give occasion to the present dispute, may be what Christ had said concerning the kingdom of God,
Lu 22:16 which they understanding of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, and fancying, by his words, that it was near at hand, began to strive among themselves who should be the greatest in it; or it might be brought on by their inquiry among themselves, who should betray him, which might lead them on each one to throw off the imputation from himself, and to commend himself as a steady follower of Jesus, and to express his hopes of being his chief favourite, and principal minister in his kingdom: for the strife was,

which of them should be accounted the greatest; by Christ; or that should be so in his kingdom. Perhaps the contention might be chiefly between Peter, James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, and who were the favourite disciples of

Christ; and Peter might urge his seniority, and what Christ had said to him, Mt 16:18 and the rather, since it is certain Satan was now busy about him; wherefore Christ calls him by name, and singles him out among the rest, Lu 22:31.

Luke 22:25

Ver. 25. And he said unto them,.... The disciples; that is, Jesus said to them, as the Syriac and Persic versions express:

the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; by which our Lord would dissuade his disciples from seeking to introduce a superiority over one another, since this was the practice of the Heathens, of the men of the world, of ignorant Gentiles; whereas Christ's kingdom was a spiritual kingdom, and not of this world, and therefore, not to be managed in such a way.

And they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors; either by themselves, or by their court flatterers, to cover their ambition, tyranny, and cruelty. Two of the King's of Egypt were called by the name Euergetes {p}; the word that is here used, and translated "benefactors"; and it was commonly given to other kings, princes, and men in power: so Cyrus was called by the Armenians; Antigonus by the Greeks; and Phylacus among the Persians: the same name was given to Mithridates king of Pontus, to Titus Aelius Hadrianus, to Menander, to Marcus Aurelius Severus, and to Cato Uticensis, and others {q}.

{p} Alex. ab. Alexandro Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 2. {q} Vid. Cuper. Inscript. & Marmora. p. 283, 284.

Luke 22:26

Ver. 26. But ye shall not be so,....
See Gill on "Mt 20:26"

but he that is greatest among you; in age or gifts, or would be thought to be the greatest, who is most ambitious of grandeur and authority, which perhaps might be Peter's case, who was the oldest man:

let him be as the younger; as John, the beloved disciple, who was the youngest of them; and be as modest, and as humble as he, and reckon himself as in his place, and condescend to men of low estates, and esteem each other, even the youngest, better than himself. So the phrase, aryezkyh abrkyh {r}, "both greater and lesser", is used of the elder and younger.

And he that is chief; that is, a spiritual ruler and governor in the church of God, as all the disciples were:

as he that doth serve; for the apostles and ministers of the word, though they are over others in the Lord, and have the rule over them, yet they are servants for Jesus' sake, and so ought to reckon themselves; See Gill on "Mt 20:27".

{r} Targum in 2 Chron. xxxi. 15.

Luke 22:27

Ver. 27. For whether is greater,.... Christ appeals to themselves, and puts a case that is plain and obvious to any one, who is the greater, and more honourable person;

he that sitteth at meat; that sits, or lies down at table, and another waits on him:

or he that serveth? that stands behind, observes orders, and ministers to those that sit down:

is not he that sitteth at meat? you, and every one must own, that he is the greatest, and most honourable person:

but I am among you as he that serveth; Christ took upon him the form of a servant, and instead of being ministered unto, ministered to others; and had very lately, but two days before, gird himself, and took a basin and a towel, and washed and wiped the feet of his disciples: now our Lord, by his own example throughout the whole of his conduct among them, as well as by such a single action, would dissuade from their ambitious views of superiority over each other, and learn of him who was meek and lowly, and by love serve one another.

Luke 22:28

Ver. 28. Ye are they which have continued with me,.... From the beginning of his ministry, to that very time, they abode by him, and never departed from him, when others withdrew and walked no more with him:

in my temptations: not in the wilderness by Satan; for they were not with him then, not being as yet called to be his disciples and followers: but in his afflictions, by the reproaches, and cavils, and ensnaring questions of the Scribes and Pharisees, and their attempts upon him to take away his life by stoning, &c. which were trials and temptations to him. So the Ethiopic version renders it, "in my affliction": now, since they had stood their ground, and firmly adhered to him in all his trials, he would have them still continue with him, and in his interest, though they should not have that temporal glory and grandeur they expected; but, on the contrary, fresh troubles and exercises, reproach, persecution, and death itself; and, for their encouragement, he promises both pleasure and honour, though of another sort, than what they were seeking after.

Luke 22:29

Ver. 29. And I appoint unto you a kingdom,.... Not a temporal one, but a spiritual one; and either intends that they should have in the government of the church, peculiar to them, as apostles, they being set in the first, and highest place, and office, in the church; and have the keys of the kingdom of heaven, or the Gospel dispensation, and church state, committed to them, whereby they should open the door of faith to men, both to Jews and Gentiles; and have the power of binding and loosing, or of pronouncing things to be lawful or unlawful to be retained and used, and even of remitting sins in a ministerial and declarative way; and not only of rebuking and reproving for sin with authority, but even of inflicting corporeal punishment on delinquents, and that in a very severe way, as in the cases of Ananias and Sapphira, Elymas the sorcerer, the incestuous person at Corinth, and Hymenaeus and Philetus: or the kingdom of grace, which they had in common with all the saints, which lies not in outward things, but in righteousness, peace, and joy, and which can never be moved, or taken away; by virtue of which Christ reigns in the hearts of his people, and they are kings, and priests to God, and have power, as princes, with God and men, and overcome, and reign over their own lusts, and the world and Satan: or that kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom, which shall be given to the saints of the Most High, **Da 7:27** in the latter day glory and kingdom state of Christ on earth, when the saints shall reign with him; or the kingdom of glory prepared from the foundation of the world; a gift of our heavenly Father's, which the saints are called unto, made meet for, and have a right unto, in Christ, and are heirs of, and into which he will introduce them at the last day: and indeed, all these senses may be taken into the account of this text:

as my Father hath appointed unto me; a kingdom, not of nature and providence, which he has in right of nature, being of the same essence, and having the same perfections with his Father; and in right of creation, all being made by him; for this is not given, or appointed to him; nor is he accountable for it to any, since he receives it not from any: but his mediatorial kingdom, which is given him, and which he will deliver up the account of to his Father another day; see **Da 7:14** which took place here on earth in the days of his flesh; though it was not of this world, nor came with observation, or with worldly pomp and splendour; and became more visible upon his resurrection from the dead, his exaltation at the right hand of God, the effusion of the Spirit, the great conversions among men, and the destruction of the Jewish nation. This kingdom takes in the whole Gospel dispensation, reaching from the times of Christ being in the flesh, to his second coming; and comprehends all the elect of God, who are a kingdom of priests, or a royal priesthood, in whose hearts Christ reigns by his Spirit, and grace; it includes the whole visible Gospel church state on earth, which is God's holy hill of Sion, over which he has set Christ, as king, and which he governs by laws of his own enacting, and by governors appointed under him, among whom he will reign; first more spiritually in the latter day, when the Gospel shall be spread all over the world, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and next personally with all his saints together, for the space of a thousand years; and last of all triumphantly to all eternity, in the ultimate glory and kingdom of his Father.

Luke 22:30

Ver. 30. That ye may eat, and drink, at my table, in my kingdom,.... In the Gospel dispensation, or Gospel church state, in which Christ has a table, called the table of the Lord, 1Co 10:21 which is the Lord's supper, and is a table well furnished with the best of provisions, his flesh and blood, of which believers may eat and drink with a hearty welcome; Christ himself being present to sup with them: and in his personal reign on earth, where will be the marriage supper of the Lamb, to which all the saints will be called; and will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and be regaled with joys and pleasures not to be expressed: and in the ultimate glory, when the Lamb shall feed them, and shall lead them to fountains of water; and they shall never hunger nor thirst more, but shall have fulness of joy, and be satiated with pleasures that will never fade nor end:

and sit on thrones; expressive of the great honour and dignity they were raised to, both in this, and the other world, from a low and mean estate, being before as beggars on the dunghill, now among princes, and on thrones, even on the same throne with Christ; see **1Sa 2:8**

judging the twelve tribes of Israel; doctrinally and ministerially; accusing the Jews, and arraigning them for the crucifixion of Christ; passing sentence upon them, and condemning them, and declaring that they should be damned for their disbelief and rejection of him; See Gill on "Mt 19:28".

Luke 22:31

Ver. 31. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon,.... Peter is particularly, and by name, spoken to, either because he might be a principal person in the debate and contention about superiority, mentioned in the context; or because he was chiefly to suffer in the following temptation of Satan; or because he was generally the mouth of the rest of the apostles; and he is addressed, not by the name of Peter, the name Christ gave him, when he first called him, signifying his future solidity, firmness, and steadfastness; because in this instance, he would not give any proof of it; but by his former name, Simon, and which is repeated, partly to show the earnestness of Christ in the delivery of what follows, and partly to express his affectionate concern for him; so the Jews observe {s} concerning God's calling, "Moses, Moses", **Ex 3:4** that hbx Nwvl lwpk, "the doubling of the word", is expressive "of love", and finding grace and favour; even as it is said, "Abraham, Abraham", Ge 22:11 or it may be to excite attention to what Christ was about to say. Though the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read the first of these, "to Simon", thus: Jesus said to Simon,

Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you; not only Peter, but all the apostles; for the word umav, "you", is plural: Satan, the enemy of the woman's seed, the accuser of the brethren, the wicked one, and the tempter, desired, asked leave of God, for he can do nothing without permission; that he might have these disciples under his power, and in his hand; just as he got leave to have the goods, and even the body of Job in his hand, and fain would have had his life, and soul too, could he have obtained it; and he would have the lives and souls of others; for he goes about, seeking to devour whom he may; and he had now an evil eye upon the apostles, and wanted an opportunity to gratify his malice and envy: his end in desiring to have them in his power was,

that he may sift you as wheat; not to separate the chaff from the wheat, but to make them look like all chaff, by covering the wheat of grace with the chaff of sin and corruption; or to destroy the wheat, was it possible; or to toss them to and fro as wheat is in a sieve; that is, to afflict and distress them; see **Am 9:9** by scattering them both from Christ, and one another; by filling them with doubts about Jesus being the Messiah and Redeemer: and by frightening them with the fears of enemies and of death, which end he obtained; see Mt 26:56.

{s} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 38. 4. Jarchi in Gen. xxii. 11. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 217. 1.

Luke 22:32

Ver. 32. But I have prayed for thee,.... Christ prayed for all the apostles; but particularly for Peter, because he was in the greatest danger: whether the prayer Christ refers to was that in Joh 17:1 in which are many passages relating to the preservation, sanctification, final perseverance and glorification of the apostles, as well as of other saints, as in Joh 17:9 and so these words might be spoken a little after that prayer was ended, which was about this same time; or whether it was any other, and only mental, and not vocal, is not certain: however, the petition was,

that thy faith fail not; Satan in his temptations strikes principally at the faith of God's people; that being a grace which gives much glory to God, and in the exercise of which believers have much peace, joy, and comfort; both which he envies and grudges; and it is also a shield which keeps off, and quenches his fiery darts, and is a piece of armour he is sadly harassed with, and therefore endeavours all he can to weaken and destroy it, or wrest it out of their hands: but though, through the power of sin, and the force of temptation, it may fail as to some degree of the steadfastness of it, as to the acting and exercise of it, and as to the sense believers may have of it; yet never as to its principle, it being an irrevocable gift of God's grace; a work of his almighty power; a solid and substantial grace, even the substance of things hoped for; an immortal and incorruptible seed, and of which Christ is the author and finisher; and to nothing more is its security owing, than to the prayers of Christ, which are always heard, and to his powerful mediation, and prevalent intercession; Christ is the advocate of his people; he prays that they might have faith, and then he prays, that it may not fail; and it shall not, notwithstanding all the opposition of hell, and earth, unto it:

and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren: Peter was now a converted man, and had been for some years; but whereas he would fall by temptation into a very great sin of denying his Lord, and which was attended with such circumstances as made him look like an unconverted, and an unregenerate man; his recovery by the fresh exercise of faith in Christ, and repentance for his sins, is called conversion: and which was not his own act, but owing to the power and efficacy of divine grace; see Jer 31:18. Some versions render it in the imperative, "in time, convert, turn, or return, and strengthen thy brethren"; as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions: as he afterwards did: for whereas all the disciples forsook Christ, and fled, some one way, and some another, Peter, after his recovery, got them together again, and returned with them to Jerusalem; when they with him assembled together, till the third day Christ was risen: he strengthened their faith in the Messiah, and put them upon filling up the place of Judas, by choosing another apostle; and on the day of "Pentecost" preached a most excellent sermon, which as it was made useful for the conversion of three thousand sinners, was, doubtless, a means of confirming the minds of the disciples; and he has left two exceeding useful epistles for the strengthening of his brethren in all ages of time; the design of which is to establish the saints in faith and holiness, that they may not be drawn aside, and fall from the steadfastness of their faith, either by the lusts of the flesh, or by the persecutions of men, or by the error of the wicked.

Luke 22:33

Ver. 33. And he said unto him,.... That is, Simon, or Simeon, said unto him, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it; he made a reply to Jesus, saying, as one fearless of danger, and confident in himself:

I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death; he suggests, that he was not afraid of Satan, nor of his temptations, of being sifted, shaken, and tossed by him: he was not to be frightened out of his faith by him, or to be scared with a prison, and death itself; he was ready for both; and they were welcome, come when they would; and rather than part from, or deny his Lord, he was then prepared to go with him, at once, to either of them. The phrase, to go, is not in the Syriac version.

Luke 22:34

Ver. 34. And he said,.... "To him", as all the Oriental versions add; to Peter, as what is said shows; that is, Jesus said to him, as the Syriac and Persic versions express:

I tell thee, Peter; who knew him, and his heart, better than he did himself, as well as knew what was to come, and what would befall him; and therefore declares it, as he does with the greatest assurance and certainty, and which might be depended on, and accordingly came to pass:

the cock shall not crow this day; in this night, as in Mr 14:30 or this night, as in Mt 26:34 for it was now night; a natural day includes both night and day; a like way of speaking, see in **Lu 2:8**

before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me; as he did, Lu 22:57.
See Gill on "Mt 26:34".

Luke 22:35

Ver. 35. And he said unto them,.... To the disciples, as the Persic version reads; not to Peter only, but to them all:

when I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes; without the necessaries of life, without proper accommodations for a journey, without provisions, or money, to buy any with: so aneu balantiou, "without a purse", is, by the Scholiast on Aristophanes {t}, interpreted by aneu arguriou kai dapanhv, "without money and expense": Christ here refers to his mission of them in Mt 10:5

lacked ye any thing? any of the common blessings of life, food to eat, or raiment to wear?

and they said, nothing; they lacked nothing at all; wherever they came, they had friendly accommodations; they were provided with every thing necessary for them; they had both food and raiment, and good lodgings in every place; the houses and hearts of men were opened by Christ to receive them, though they were sent out by him so empty and destitute.

{t} In Avibus, p. 548.

Luke 22:36

Ver. 36. Then said he unto them,.... That is, Jesus said unto them, as the Persic version expresses it:

but now he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise his scrip; signifying hereby, that from this time forward, immediately after his departure from them, after his death, resurrection, and ascension, when they should be sent into all the world to preach the Gospel, it would be otherwise with them than before; that they should be reduced to great penury and distress, should neither have food, nor money to buy any with; and that they should suffer hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and have no certain dwellingplace, as was their case; see **1Co 4:11** and that they would not be received, and entertained in the manner they had been; and therefore it would be advisable, if they had any provisions, to take them with them in their scrips; or if they had any money, to carry it with them in their purses; for glad would they be to provide themselves with necessaries at any rate:

and he that hath no sword; the word "sword" is not in this clause, but in the next; it is only in the original, "he that hath not"; which, at first sight; looks as if the sense was, he that hath not a purse, or a scrip, to sell, and buy a sword with, let him sell his garment, and buy one: but, as De Dieu observes, the phrase, "he that hath not", is the same with "he that has nothing"; who is a poor man, and has no money to buy a sword with, let him part with his garment, which rich men, who had money, had no need to do; though the Syriac, Persic, and Arabic versions put the word sword, in both clauses;

he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy a sword; that is, if he could get one no other way. Christ here uses the common dialect of the nation, as Dr. Lightfoot observes. So on the feast of dedication of the temple,

"if a man had not any thing to eat, but what he had by alms, he must beg, or wtwok rkwm, "sell his garment", and take oil, and lamps, and light them {u}."

These words of Christ are not to be understood literally, that he would have his disciples furnish themselves with swords at any rate, since he would never have said, as he afterwards does, that two were sufficient; which could not be enough for eleven men; or have forbid Peter the use of one, as he did in a very little time after this: but his meaning is, that wherever they came, and a door was opened for the preaching of the Gospel, they would have many adversaries, and these powerful, and would be used with great violence, and be followed with rage and persecution; so that they might seem to stand in need of swords to defend them: the phrase is expressive of the danger they would be exposed to, and of their need of protection; and therefore it was wrong in them to be disputing and quarrelling about superiority, or looking out for, and expecting temporal pomp and grandeur, when this would be their forlorn, destitute, and afflicted condition; and they would quickly see the affliction and distress begin in himself. In "seven" ancient copies of Beza's, it is read in the future tense, "he shall take, he shall sell, he shall buy".

{u} Maimon. Hilch. Megilla Uchanucha, c. 4. sect. 12.

Luke 22:37

Ver. 37. For I say unto you, that this that is written,.... In
Isa 53:12

must yet be accomplished; it having not been as yet; at least not so perfectly fulfilled:

and he was reckoned among the transgressors. The Syriac and Arabic versions read in the first person, "and I shall be reckoned", &c. and so the Persic version, "that I may be numbered", &c. and the Ethiopic renders it, "and the Lord Jesus is numbered with sinners"; neither right: for the words are a proper citation from Isa 53:12 which, as the whole prophecy belongs to the Messiah, was fulfilled in Jesus; who, though he was no transgressor, yet being in the likeness of sinful flesh, and dwelling among, and conversing with sinners, was traduced as one, and was joined with Barabbas, a murderer, a thief, and a robber, and put up with him for the people to choose which of the two they would have released; and was at last crucified between two thieves; and more than this, being in the legal place, and stead of his people, and having their sins laid upon him, and imputed to him, he was made and accounted, by imputation, not only a sinner, but sin itself; and as such, was considered in the eye of the law, and by the justice of God, and was treated accordingly; See Gill on "Mr 15:28"

for the things concerning me have an end. The Syriac version renders it, "all of them"; or "the whole of it", as the Ethiopic version; all that were concerning him; all the counsels, purposes, and decrees of God, relating to his sufferings and death; to the manner in which his death was brought about, by one of his disciples betraying him; to the several indignities he should be used with, by Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Jews, and Roman soldiers; and to his death itself; all which were by the determinate counsel, and foreknowledge of God, and now were about to have, and quickly had their fulfilling end; as also all his own covenant engagements and agreements he entered into with his Father, to bear the sins of many, to make his soul an offering for sin, to be numbered with transgressors, and pour out his soul unto death; and likewise all the types and shadows of the law, all sacrifices in general, and the daily sacrifice in particular, with the passover, brazen serpent, and other things, even the whole law, both moral and ceremonial, had their full and final accomplishment in him; together with all the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to this matter, particularly **Ge 3:15**.

Luke 22:38

Ver. 38. And they said, Lord, behold here are two swords,.... That is, the disciples said so, as the Persic version expresses it; for they understood Christ's words literally; and two swords being among them, and which they might bring with them from Galilee, to defend themselves from thieves, and robbers, which infested the roads between that country and Jerusalem; and one of these, as appears afterwards, belonged to Peter; they mention them with a desire of knowing they were sufficient, or whether they must provide themselves with more:

and he said unto them, it is enough; or, "they are sufficient", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it; which must be understood either ironically; yes, two swords, to be sure, are sufficient for eleven men, and against many and powerful enemies: or his meaning is, they were sufficient to answer his purpose, and be an emblem of what he designed by the sword: or this was a short way of speaking, suggesting their stupidity and ignorance: it is enough, it is very well, I perceive you do not understand my meaning, and I shall say no more at present.

Luke 22:39

Ver. 39. And he came out,.... That is, "Christ", as the Persic version; or the

"Lord Jesus", as the Ethiopic version expresses; he came out of the guestchamber, or upper room, and out of the house where he had been keeping the passover with his disciples; and he came out of the city of Jerusalem, to begin his sorrows and sufferings without the camp, where he was to end them:

and went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives. This had been his practice and custom for several nights past, as appears from Lu 21:37. Hence Judas knew the place he now went to, and could direct the soldiers and officers where to go, and apprehend him; and this shows the willingness of Christ to be taken, in order to suffer and die; otherwise he would have gone to another place, and not this. The Ethiopic version adds, "to pray", as he did; and, as very likely he was used; for he would sometimes continue a whole night in prayer on a mountain; see **Lu 6:12**

and his disciples also followed him; eleven of them, for Judas was now gone to the chief priests to inform them where Christ was going, that they might seize him: but the other disciples followed him, which was so ordered, that they might be witnesses of his sorrows and agonies in the garden, and of his being betrayed by Judas, and apprehended by the Jews; though upon this they forsook him and fled.

Luke 22:40

Ver. 40. And when he was at the place,.... In the garden, at Gethsemane, which was at the foot of the Mount of Olives;

he said unto them; to the disciples, as the Persic version reads;

pray that ye enter not into temptation. This, according to the Evangelists Matthew and Mark, was said to them after he had prayed the first time, and returned to the disciples, and found them sleeping; See Gill on "Mt 26:41".

Luke 22:41

Ver. 41. And he was withdrawn from them,.... That is, from the three disciples, Peter, James, and John, whom he took along with him, leaving the rest at some further distance; and from these he removed,

about a stone's cast; fifty, or sixty feet from the place where they were:

and kneeled down and prayed; the following prayer.

Luke 22:42

Ver. 42. Saying, Father, if thou be willing,.... If it be consistent with thy will of saving sinners, and which thou hast declared to me, and I have undertook to perform: the other evangelists say, "if it be possible"; See Gill on "Mt 26:39"

remove this cup from me; meaning, either his present sorrows and distress, or his approaching sufferings and death, which he had in view, or both:

nevertheless not my will; as man, for Christ had an human will distinct from, though not contrary to his divine will:

but thine be done; which Christ undertook, and came into this world to do; and it was his meat and drink to do it, and was the same with his own will, as the Son of God; See Gill on "Mt 26:39", and
See Gill on "Mt 26:42".

Luke 22:43

Ver. 43. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven,.... Whether this was Michael the archangel, as some have conjectured, or Gabriel, or what particular angel, is not for us to know, nor is it of any importance: it is certain, it was a good angel: "an angel of God", as the Ethiopic version reads; since he came from heaven, and was one of the angels of heaven, sent by God on this occasion; and it is clear also, that he was in a visible form, and was seen by Christ, since he is said to appear to him:

strengthening him; under his present distress, against the terrors of Satan, and the fears of death, by assuring him of the divine favour, as man, and of the fulfilment of the promises to him to stand by him, assist, strengthen, and carry him through what was before him; and by observing to him the glory and honour he should be crowned with, after his sufferings and death, find the complete salvation of his people, which would be obtained hereby, and which was the joy set before him; and which animated him, as man, to bear the cross, and despise the shame with a brave and heroic Spirit. Now, though God the Father could have strengthened the human nature of Christ, without making use of an angel; and Christ could have strengthened it himself, by his divine nature, to which it was united; but the human nature was to be brought into so low a condition, and to be left to itself, as to stand in need of the assistance of an angel: and this shows not only the ministration of angels to Christ, as man, but that he was at this present time made a little lower than the angels, who was the Creator and Lord of them; as he afterwards more apparently was, through the sufferings of death.

Luke 22:44

Ver. 44. And being in an agony,.... Or in a conflict, and combat; that is, with thee devil, who now appeared visibly to him, in an horrible form: after his temptations in the wilderness Satan left him for a season, till another opportunity should offer; and now it did; now the prince of this world came to him; see **Lu 4:13** and attacked him in a garden, where the first onset on human nature was made: and now began the battle between the two combatants, the serpent, and the seed of the woman; which issued in the destruction of Satan, and thee recovery of mankind. The Arabic version leaves out this clause; and the Syriac version renders it, "being in fear"; and to the same purpose are the Persic and Ethiopic versions; that is, of death; and must be understood of a sinless fear of death in his human nature, to which death, being a dissolution of it, must be disagreeable; though not death, barely considered, was the cause of this fear, distress, and agony he was in; but as it was to be inflicted on him for the sins of his people, which he bore, and as it was the curse of the law, and the effect of divine wrath and displeasure:

he prayed more earnestly; repeating the words he had said before with great eagerness and importunity, with intenseness of mind, and fervour of Spirit, with strong crying, and tears to him that was able to save him from death, **Heb 5:7**

and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. This account of Christ's bloody sweat is only given by Luke, who being a physician, as is thought, more diligently recorded things which belonged to his profession to take cognizance of; nor should it be any objection to the truth and credibility of this fact, that it is not mentioned by the other evangelists, since it is no unusual thing with them for one to record that which is omitted by another; nor that this is wanting in some Greek and Latin copies, as Jerom {w} and Hilary {x} observe; since it was expunged, as is supposed, either by some orthodox persons, who weakly thought it might seem to favour the Arians, who denied that Christ was of the same impassible nature with the Father; or rather by the Armenians, or by a set of men called "Aphthartodocetae", who asserted the human nature of Christ to be incorruptible: but certain it is, that it is in the most ancient and approved copies, and in all the Oriental versions, and therefore to be retained; to which may be added, that it is taken notice of, not to mention others, by those two early writers, Justin Martyr {y}, and Irenaeus {z}; nor should its being so strange and unusual a sweat at all discredit the history of it, since there have been instances of this kind arising from various causes; and if there had been none, since the case of our Lord was singular, it ought to be credited. This bloody sweat did not arise from a cachexy, or ill state of body, which has sometimes been the cause of it, as Aristotle observes, who says {a}, that the blood sometimes becomes sanious, and so serous, insomuch that some have been covered with a "bloody sweat": and in another place he says {b}, that through an ill habit of body it has happened to some, that they have sweat a bloody excrement. Bartholinus produces instances in plagues and fevers {c}; but nothing of this kind appears in Christ, whose body was hale and robust, free from distempers and diseases, as it was proper it should, in order to do the work, and endure the sufferings he did; nor did it arise from any external heat, or a fatiguing journey. The above writer {d} a relates, from Actuarius, a story of a young man that had little globes of blood upon his skin, by sweat, through the heat of the sun, and a laborious journey. Christ's walk from Jerusalem to the garden was but a short one; and it was in the night when he had this sweat, and a cold night too; see Joh 18:18, it rather arose from the agony in which he was, before related: persons in an agony, or fit of trembling, sweat much, as Aristotle observes {e}; but to sweat blood is unusual. This might be occasioned by his vehement striving and wrestling with God in prayer, since the account follows immediately upon that; and might be owing to his strong cries, to the intenseness and fervour of his mind, and the commotion of the animal spirits, which was now very great, as some have thought; or, as others, to the fear of death, as it was set before him in so dreadful a view, and attended with such horrible circumstances. Thuanus {f}, a very grave and credible historian, reports of a governor of a certain garrison, who being, by a stratagem, decoyed from thence, and taken captive, and threatened with an ignominious death, was so affected with it, that he sweat a "bloody sweat" all over his body. And the same author {g} relates of a young man of Florence, who being, by the order of Pope Sixtus the Fifth, condemned, as he was led along to be executed, through the vehemence of his grief discharged blood instead of sweat, all over his body: and Maldonate, upon this passage, reports, that he had heard it from some who saw, or knew it, that at Paris, a man, robust, and in good health, hearing that a capital sentence was pronounced upon him, was, at once, all over in a bloody sweat: which instances show, that grief, surprise, and fear, have sometimes had such an effect on men; but it was not mere fear of death, and trouble of mind, concerning that, which thus wrought on our Lord, but the sense he had of the sins of his people, which were imputed to him, and the curse of the righteous law of God, which he endured, and especially the wrath of God, which was let into his soul: though some have thought this was owing to the conflict Christ had with the old serpent the devil; who, as before observed, now appeared to him in a frightful forth: and very remarkable is the passage which Dr. Lightfoot, and others, have cited from Diodorus Siculus, who reports of a certain country, that there are serpents in it, by whose bites are procured very painful deaths; and that grievous pains seize the person bitten, and also "a flow of sweat like blood". And other writers {h} make mention of a kind of asp, or serpent, called "Haemorrhois"; which, when it bites a man, causes him to sweat blood: and such a bloody sweat it should seem was occasioned by the bite of the old serpent Satan, now nibbling at Christ's heel, which was to be bruised by him: but of all the reasons and causes of this uncommon sweat, that of Clotzius is the most strange, that it should arise from the angels comforting and strengthening him, and from the cheerfulness and fortitude of his mind. This writer observes, that as fear and sorrow congeal the blood, alacrity and fortitude move it; and being moved, heat it, and drive it to the outward parts, and open a way for it through the pores: and this he thinks may be confirmed from the fruit and effect of Christ's prayer, which was very earnest, and was heard, as is said in **Heb 5:7** when he was delivered from fear; which deliverance produced joy, and this joy issued in the bloody sweat. Some think the words do not necessarily imply, that this sweat was blood, or that there was blood in it; only that his sweat, as it came out of his body, and fell on the ground, was so large, and thick, and viscous, that it looked like drops, or clots of blood; but the case rather seems to be this, that the pores of Christ's body were so opened, that along with sweat came out blood, which flowed from him very largely; and as it fell on the ground, he being fallen on his face to the earth, it was so congealed by the cold in the night season, that it became really, as the word signifies, clots of blood upon the earth. The Persic version, different from all others, reads, "his tears, like blood, fell by drops upon the ground". This agony, and bloody sweat of Christ, prove the truth of his human nature; the sweat shows that he had a true and real body, as other men; the anxiety of his mind, that he had a reasonable soul capable of grief and sorrow, as human souls are; and they also prove his being made sin and a curse for us, and his sustaining our sins, and the wrath of God: nor could it be at all unsuitable to him, and unworthy of him, to sweat in this manner, whose blood was to be shed for the sins of his people, and who came by blood and water, and from whom both were to flow; signifying, that both sanctification and justification are from him.

{w} Advers. Pelag. l. 2. fol. 96. F. {x} De Trinitate, l. 10. p. 155. {y} Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 331. {z} Adv. Haeres. l. 3. c. 32. {a} De Hist. Animal. l. 3. c. 19. {b} De Part. Animal. l. 3. c. 5. {c} De Cruce Hypomnem. 4. p. 185, 186. {d} lb. p. 184. {e} Problem, sect. 2. c. 26, 31. {f} Hist. sui Temporis, par. 1. l. 8. p. 804, 805. {g} lb. par. 4. l. 82. p. 69. {h} Solin, Polyhistor, c. 40, Isidor. Hispalens. Etymolog. l. 12. c. 4.

Luke 22:45

Ver. 45. And when he rose from prayer,.... The Syriac version reads, "from his prayer", having finished it; and the Persic and Ethiopic versions read, "from the place of prayer", or where he prayed:

and was come to his disciples; to the three, which he had left about the distance of a stone's cast:

he found them sleeping for sorrow; on his account; for he had signified unto them, how exceeding sorrowful he was; and they might perceive by his looks and gestures, the anxiety and distress of mind he was in, which must needs affect them; and besides, he had given them some intimations of his being to be betrayed by one of them, and of his sufferings and death, and speedy departure from them; and because of these things, sorrow had filled their hearts, and this had induced heaviness and sleep upon them; See Gill on "Mt 26:40".

Luke 22:46

Ver. 46. And said unto them, why sleep ye?.... The Arabic version prefaces this with these words, "and he awaked them"; and then rebuked them for sleeping, adding,

rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation; together with words recorded in Mt 26:45.

Luke 22:47

Ver. 47. And while he yet spake,.... The above words to his disciples,

behold a multitude. The Persic version adds, "of Jews, with arrows, swords, and spears"; but the multitude consisted partly of Roman soldiers, and partly of the officers of the chief priests:

and he that was called Judas: and sometimes Iscariot, to distinguish him from another Judas, who also was of the number of the apostles:

one of the twelve; disciples of Christ, whom he had chosen, called, and ordained:

went before them; as their guide, to show them where Jesus was, and to point him out unto them; see **Ac 1:16**

and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him; that being the signal he had given them, by which they should know him. The Syriac version here adds, "for this sign he had given to them, whomsoever I shall kiss, the same is he": and so likewise the Persic and Ethiopic versions, adding also this, "lay hold upon him"; but the whole seems to be transcribed from Mt 26:48.

Luke 22:48

Ver. 48. But Jesus said unto him, Judas,.... Calling him by his name, that he might know he knew him, and to aggravate his sin; what, Judas, my apostle, my friend, my familiar friend, in whom I trusted, or with whom I trusted all my worldly affairs,

betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss! who assumed human nature for the good of mankind, who is the Messiah spoken of by the prophets, under the character of the son of man, and who is holy, harmless, and never did any mortal man any hurt or injury; and what, betray such an one into the hands of his most implacable adversaries, and in such an hypocritical and deceitful way! all which Christ said, to show he was no stranger to what he was about to do.

Luke 22:49

Ver. 49. When they which were about him,.... That is, the eleven disciples that were about Christ, and with him in the garden:

saw what would follow; that their Lord and master was about to be betrayed by Judas, and would be seized, and carried away by the multitude, that were with him:

they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? or "swords", as the Syriac and Persic versions read; with the two swords which they had along with them. This they said, not being thoroughly acquainted with the mind of Christ in this matter, whether they should use the temporal sword or not; and might choose to show this forwardness to stand by him, and defend him, remembering how lately they had said, that though they died with him, they would not deny him: and might, no doubt, be thoroughly exasperated and provoked to see Judas at the head of such a mob, with swords and staves, and burned with true zeal for their Lord and master; and might be the more spirited up to this, by observing, that the men fell backwards to the ground, upon Christ's saying that he was the person they sought; at least their dependence was upon the exertion of his almighty power; for they could never otherwise imagine that eleven men, with two swords only, would be able to defend him, and rescue him out of the hands of such a multitude.

Luke 22:50

Ver. 50. And one of them smote the servant of the high priest,.... The person that drew his sword, and performed this daring action, not waiting for an answer from Christ, was Peter, and the high priest's servant, that he smote, was Malchus; both which we learn from Joh 18:10

and cut off his right ear; he aimed, no doubt, at his head, but missing his blow, took off his right ear. It is very likely, that this servant was very busy and forward to lay hold on Christ, and showed much virulence, and great malignity; and therefore Peter singled him out, and levelled his blow at him.

Luke 22:51

Ver. 51. And Jesus answered and said,.... Not to the question of the disciples, but either to Peter, who had done this rash action; and so the Persic and Ethiopic versions add, "to him"; or else to the multitude,

suffer ye thus far; or to them both, to Peter to stop his hand, to proceed no further, but put up his sword; and so the Arabic version reads, "refrain thyself"; and to the multitude to be easy, and not revenge the affront that was given them: and in order to pacify them, "he went to the wounded man", as the Persic version inserts,

and he touched his ear and healed him; which shows, that though the human nature of Christ was in a very low condition, yet he still retained the power of doing miracles; and also his great humanity, by which example be confirmed his precept of doing good to enemies; and likewise hereby gave full proof of his willingness to be apprehended by them; for otherwise, he that wrought such a miracle as this, could easily have delivered himself out of their hands; and one would have thought this would have put a stop to them, and have convinced them of the truth of his being a divine person, and the Messiah.

Luke 22:52

Ver. 52. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests,.... After he had wrought this miracle, and had quieted the mob, and restrained them from falling upon the apostles, and cutting them to pieces, which in all likelihood they would otherwise have done; he addressed himself to "the chief priests", who were members of the Jewish sanhedrim, and

the captains of the temple;
See Gill on "Lu 22:4".

And the elders which were come to him; which came along with Judas and the multitude, in order to see things done to their mind, and to animate both Judas and the soldiers and their officers, by their presence, lest they should come without him, as they had before done, **Joh 7:45**.

Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves?
See Gill on "Mt 26:55".

Luke 22:53

Ver. 53. When I was daily with you in the temple,.... As he had been for some days past, teaching the people, and disputing with them, the chief priests, &c.

ye stretched forth no hands against me; to lay hold upon him, and kill him; the reason was, because his time was not come, and they had no licence or permission to hurt him, or any power given them against him from above:

but this is your hour; the time was now come for the betraying of him by Judas; for the seizing and apprehending him by the Roman soldiers and officers; and for the delivery of him into the hands of the "chief" priests and elders; and for them to insult, mock, buffet, scourge him, and spit upon him: and for the crucifixion of him, and putting him to death: the hour fixed for this was now come; it was now, and not before, and therefore they could not lay hold on him, and do to him what they listed, but now they might; yet this was but an hour, a short time that they had to triumph over him, in Caiaphas's palace, and Pilate's hall, upon the cross, and in the grave; for on the third day he arose again, notwithstanding all the precautions they took, and is ascended to heaven, and is received there, and is out of their reach: and since then, it has been his hour to take vengeance on them; on their nation, city, and temple, for their disbelief, rejection, and ill usage of him; and it will be likewise his hour at the day of judgment, when they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn; and hide their faces from him, and call to the mountains to cover them, and when they will be punished with everlasting destruction from his presence: he adds,

and the power of darkness. The Persic version reads, "the power of your darkness"; that is, either the power granted to them, who were darkness itself, born and brought up in darkness; were walking in darkness, and in the ignorance of their minds; and did works of darkness, and shunned the light, because their deeds were evil; and for which reason they now chose the night, to execute their black designs upon Christ: or rather, the power of the prince of darkness is here meant; that power which he usurped, and was now permitted him to exercise against Christ: and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "the power of the lord of darkness"; who was, once an angel of light, but now full of darkness, and who darkens the minds of men, and for whom blackness of darkness is reserved: the Jews were used to call the evil angels by this name; for so they say {i},

"the destroying angels are called, hlpaw Kvx, "darkness, and thick darkness"."

The sense of the whole passage is, that now was the time come, that Christ should be delivered up into the hands of wicked men and devils; that the former should have him in their power, and triumph over him for a season; and that hell was now let loose, and all the infernal powers were about him, throwing their poisoned arrows and fiery darts at him; all which Christ endured, to deliver his people from the present evil world, from the wrath of God, the curses of the law, and from the power of darkness.

{i} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 37. 2.

Luke 22:54

Ver. 54. Then took they him, and led him,.... The band of soldiers, the captain, and the officers of the Jews, laid hold on Jesus, and bound him, Joh 18:12 and led him out of the garden; notwithstanding the miracle he had wrought, and the humanity he had shown in healing the servant's ear; and notwithstanding his moving address to the chiefs of them; and indeed, this was a confirmation of his last words; for by this it appeared, that now was their time, and power was given to them, as the emissaries of Satan, to act against him:

and brought him into the high priest's house; where the sanhedrim were assembled; but this was not in the temple where they used to sit: it is true, indeed, that the chamber in the temple, called the chamber "Parhedrin", or "Palhedrin", was, hryd tyb, "the dwelling house" of the high priest, seven days before the day of atonement {k}; and this was also called the "chamber of the counsellors" {l}; so that had the time of year agreed, it might have been thought that this was the place that Jesus was led to; but here the high priest did not usually dwell, and it is manifestly distinguished from his own house: for it is said {m},

"seven days before the day of atonement, they separate, or remove the high priest, wtybm, "from his house", to the chamber of "Palhedrin";"

See Gill on "Mt 26:3".

And Peter followed afar off;
See Gill on "Mt 26:58".

{k} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 10. 1. Maimon. Hilch, Mezuza, c. 6. sect. 6. {l} T. Bab, Yoma, fol. 8. 2. {m} Misna Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1.

Luke 22:55

Ver. 55. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall,.... It being cold in the night time, though it was at the passover, and the beginning of harvest, the servants and officers of the high priest made a fire in the middle of the hall, whilst Jesus was examining before the sanhedrim, at the other end of it:

and were sat down together; about it, as the Syriac version adds, to warm themselves:

Peter sat down among them; for the same purpose, and as if he was one of them; and which he might do, not only to warm himself, but to prevent his being taken notice of, and suspected; as he might have been, had he been loitering about.

Luke 22:56

Ver. 56. But a certain maid beheld him,.... Looked upon him, and took notice of him, and observed his countenance and gesture: as he sat by the fire; or light; See Gill on "Mr 14:54". And both by the light of the fire, and other lights, which were doubtless in the hall, she discovered something in him, which made her look at him again with some earnestness;

and earnestly looked upon him, and said, this man was also with him; that fellow, that vile and contemptible wretch, now examining before the high priest; thus in a contemptuous manner, as was the custom and style of that nation, she disdained to mention the name of Jesus; though the Persic version here expresses it; and her sense was, that Peter was one of that clan, a disciple of his, and was only come hither as a spy.

Luke 22:57

Ver. 57. And he denied him, saying, woman, I know him not. Startled at the maid's positive assertion, and knowing not how to clear himself any other way, roundly, and at once, denied that Jesus was his master; or that he was a disciple of his; or that he knew any thing of him, or had any acquaintance with him: and thus he that had said he would die with him, rather than deny him, is frighten at a servant maid, and denies him upon the first attack upon him.

Luke 22:58

Ver. 58. And after a little while,.... A quarter, or half an hour after, within an hour at least:

another saw him; not another maid, but another man, as appears from the answer; though the Syriac and Persic versions leave out the word man, it may be because Matthew and Mark represent the person, on account of whose words Peter denied Christ a second time, to be another maid; but then it is to be observed, that that maid did not speak directly to Peter, as this person did, but to those that were present, or that stood by: and one of these taking the hint from her, looked at him, and said,

thou art also of them; of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth; thou belongest to that company; thou art certainly one of his followers;

and Peter said, man, I am not. This was after he had been out into the porch, and had mused upon it, and was come in again, but had not courage enough to withstand the temptation, and especially now, being attacked by a man; and so a second time denies that Christ was his master, or that he was a disciple of his.

Luke 22:59

Ver. 59. And about the space of one hour after,.... After the first assault, or rather after the second:

another confidently affirmed; who was one of them that stood by the fireside, and heard what had passed; and not only so, but was a kinsman to him, whose ear Peter had cut off, and who had seen him in the garden with Christ, and therefore with all assurance asserted it, as a matter of fact, as an unquestionable truth, and beyond all doubt:

saying of a truth, this fellow also was with him; a disciple and follower of Jesus, and was with him when he was apprehended; I saw him there, and it may be depended on as a truth; and then added this reason,

for he is a Galilean; you may be assured of this yourselves, his speech betrays him; you may know him by his language, and which confirms my assertion.

Luke 22:60

Ver. 60. And Peter said, man, I know not what thou sayest,.... Suggesting, that he was so far from being a follower of Jesus, or a disciple of his, and from having any personal acquaintance with him, that he did not know what he was talking of, or at least could not understand what he meant by this harangue, or by talking after this manner about him; and then began to curse and swear, and wish the most dreadful things to befall him, if he knew any thing of Jesus of Nazareth:

and immediately while he yet spake: in this shocking manner, with his mouth full of oaths, curses, and imprecations:

the cock crew; the second time, Mr 14:72.

Luke 22:61

Ver. 61. And the Lord turned,.... Himself, his back being to Peter, whilst he was examining before the high priest; but he knew full well what was doing, what had been said to Peter, and how often he had denied him:

and looked upon Peter; with his bodily eyes, with great earnestness, expressing in his looks concern and pity for him; for it was a look, not of wrath and resentment, but of love and mercy, and power went along with it; it was not only a signal to Peter, to put him in remembrance of what he had said, but it was a melting look to him, and a means of convincing and humbling him, and of bringing him to repentance:

and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, before the cock crow, thou shall deny me thrice;
See Gill on "Mt 26:75".

Luke 22:62

Ver. 62. And Peter went out and wept bitterly.
See Gill on "Mt 26:75".

Luke 22:63

Ver. 63. And the men that held Jesus,.... Whilst he was before the sanhedrim; and were either the Roman soldiers, or the servants of the high priest, who kept hold of him all the while, lest he should get away; though there was no reason for it; his time was come, nor would he escape out of their hands, though he could easily have rescued himself:

mocked him; insulted him, and gave him very opprobrious language, and used him in a very scurrilous way, and even spit upon him;

and smote him. This clause is left out in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions; the word used, signifies plucking off the skin; they pinched him, and tore off his flesh with their nails; they plucked the hairs of his beard, and the skin of his cheeks along with them, and so fulfilled Isa 50:6.

Luke 22:64

Ver. 64. And when they had blindfolded him,.... Or put a veil, or linen cloth over his eyes, as children do at play, to make themselves some sport with him:

they struck him on the face; on that part of it which was not covered, either with their hands, or with rods:

and asked him, saying, prophesy, who is it that smote thee? hereby deriding his prophetic office, and using such language as children do at blindman's buff; See Gill on "Mt 26:68".

Luke 22:65

Ver. 65. And many other things blasphemously spake they,.... As denying and ridiculing his deity, and divine sonship; mocking at, and burlesquing his offices, of prophet, priest, and king; asserting him to be a mere man, and a very wicked one; a profane sinner, a glutton, and a winebibber; a sabbath breaker, a blasphemer, and a seditious person; and one that had a devil, or dealt with familiar spirits: and thus spake they

against him; his person, office, and character.

Luke 22:66

Ver. 66. And as soon as it was day,....
See Gill on "Mt 27:1".

The elders of the people; or "the presbytery of the people", that were chosen from among the people to sit in the sanhedrim; the Israelites, as distinct from priests and Levites, and the doctors:

and the chief priests and the Scribes came together; which made up the great sanhedrim, or council of the nation:

and led him into their council; or sanhedrim, the place where the sanhedrim sat, which was in the temple, and in the chamber called
tyzgh tkvl, "the paved stone chamber" {n}; here they usually met, and so the Persic version renders it, "where their congregation was daily there".

{n} Misna Saobedrin, c. 10. sect. 2. & Middot, c. 5. sect. 3.

Luke 22:67

Ver. 67. Saying, art thou the Christ,.... The Messiah, promised and prophesied of by Moses, and all the prophets, and long expected by us: "tell us". The Ethiopic version adds, openly; tell us frankly, freely, plainly, as in Joh 10:24.

And he said unto them, if I tell you, you will not believe. The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "will not believe me"; neither what he said, nor that he was the Messiah; they were determined not to believe in him, and receive him as such; their unbelief was wilful, obstinate, and invincible: they were proof against all arguments, evidence, and demonstration itself.

Luke 22:68

Ver. 68. And if I also ask you,.... Or enter into a discourse on this subject, and require an answer to the arguments, proving me to be the Messiah, or desire to know what objections can be made thereunto:

you will not answer me: fairly and directly, or go into a serious and sober conversation on this head: nor let me "go"; or dismiss me, though I should appear to be the Messiah, or ever so free from the charge of blasphemy and sedition; you are resolved, right or wrong, to detain me in bonds, and take away my life; so that it signifies nothing saying any thing to you.

Luke 22:69

Ver. 69. Hereafter shall the son of man,.... Meaning himself, who was truly man, and then in a low and mean form, and thought by the Jews to be a mere man; though this character was known by them to belong to the Messiah, especially what follows; as that he should

sit on the right hand of the power of God: as he did after his resurrection, and ascension, and which was manifest by the destruction of their nation, city, and temple; See Gill on "Mt 27:64".

Luke 22:70

Ver. 70. Then said they all,.... The whole sanhedrim, with one voice, being greedy to lay hold on, and improve these words, that they might have something to lay to his charge:

art thou the Son of God? for they knew that the Messiah, or the son of man, that was to sit at the right hand of God, and come in the clouds of heaven, was the Son of God:

and he said unto them, ye say that I am; or rather the words may be rendered, "ye say it", and ye say right; it is the very truth: "for I am"; that is, "the Son of God", as the Ethiopic version here adds; which sense agrees with Mr 14:62 and the following words seem to require this sense and version.

Luke 22:71

Ver. 71. And they said,.... That is, the council, as the Persic version reads; some of the members of the sanhedrim, or the whole body of them:

what need we any further witness? or give any further trouble in getting witnesses, and hearing them:

for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth: his blasphemy, and what amounts to a sufficient charge of that kind; upon which they all pronounced him worthy of death, and determined to deliver him into the hands of Pilate the Roman governor, in order to pass sentence on him, and put him to death.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 23:1

Ver. 1. And the whole multitude of them,.... Of the chief priests, Scribes, and elders; the whole of the sanhedrim, excepting Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea, having in their court condemned Christ to death:

arose; from the council chamber, where they sat in judgment upon him:

and led him unto Pilate, the Roman governor, and into the praetorium, or judgment hall, where causes were tried by him; hither they brought Jesus, having bound him as a prisoner and a malefactor, that their sentence might be confirmed by civil authority, and that he might be put to the death of the cross, which was a Roman punishment.

Luke 23:2

Ver. 2. And they began to accuse him,.... After they found that Pilate would not receive him as a malefactor upon their word, and delivery of him to him as such; but insisted on knowing what they had to charge him with, and what accusation they had to bring against him:

saying, we have found this fellow perverting the nation; the nation of the Jews. Three of Beza's copies read, "our nation"; and so do the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and it is to be understood, either of his perverting the nation from the true doctrine of Moses and the prophets; by spreading among them new notions, and false principles of religion; whereby he was a troubler of God's Israel, as Ahab charged Elijah, 1Ki 18:17 where the Septuagint use the same word as here; and so is a charge of heresy, or innovation in religion against Christ: and thus Jesus stands charged in their writings {o}; on those words in Ps 91:10. "Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling", they have this note;

"that thou mayest not have a son, or a disciple, that corrupts his food publicly (i.e. his doctrine, who departs from the true doctrine and worship, to heresy and idolatry, and propagates the same), yruwnh wvy Nwgk, "as Jesus the Nazarene"."

Which last clause, in some later editions of the Talmud, is left out: or it may be understood of his perverting the nation in their politics, and so is a charge of sedition against him, as follows;

forbidding to give tribute to Caesar; than which, nothing was more false; see Mt 22:21 nor does what is after alleged, support this charge:

saying, that he himself is Christ, a King; or Christ the King, or the King Christ; that is, he whom the Jews so frequently in their writings call xyvmh Klm, "the King Messiah", for so he might be, and was, without any hurt to Caesar's dignity, or revenue; for though he was a king, yet not an earthly one; and though he had a kingdom, yet not of this world: indeed they would insinuate by this, that he set himself up as an earthly king, in opposition to Caesar, to draw off the people from him, and their allegiance and duty to him; and so the Jews say of Jesus of Nazareth, that he was put to death, and had no mercy shown him, because he was twklml bwrq, "near to the kingdom" {p}. The whole of this charge was untrue; he was so far from perverting the nation with false doctrine and worship, that he taught the true doctrine, and right way of worship, and refuted the false glosses of the Pharisees, and opposed the vain traditions of the elders, by which both were corrupted; and so far was he from any seditious principles and practices, or doing any injury to Tiberius Caesar, the then reigning emperor, that he taught the people to give Caesar the things that were Caesar's, and he himself paid the tribute money; and when the people would have took him by force, and have made him a king, he avoided it by getting out of the way, **Joh 6:15**.

{o} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 103. 1. & Beracot, fol, 17. 2. {p} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

Luke 23:3

Ver. 3. And Pilate asked him, saying,.... Observing that it was said, he had given himself out to be a king; for as for what regarded religion, he took no notice of it; he put this question to him,

art thou the King of the Jews? that their prophecies speak of, and they have expected;

and he answered him and said, thou sayest it; that is, thou sayest well; it is as thou sayest, I am the King of the Jews;
See Gill on "Mt 27:11" though he did not leave this without an explanation; without informing him what sort of a king he was, and what kind of a kingdom he had; see Joh 18:36 which made Pilate perfectly easy, and desirous to release him, as appears by what follows.

Luke 23:4

Ver. 4. Then said Pilate to the Chief priests, and to the people,.... Both to the sanhedrim, and to the mob that were gathered together about the governor's palace on this occasion; and who were standing without the judgment hall, into which they would not enter, lest they should be defiled, and be unfit to eat the passover: wherefore Pilate came out to them; and this was the second time of his coming out to them, when he said the following words,
Joh 18:28.

I find no fault in this man; no cause, or reason, why any punishment should be inflicted on him, and especially he be put to death; no crime that can be fastened on him, or accusation proved against him, or any thing that amounts to a charge of sedition: the man is an harmless and innocent man, that has done nothing against Caesar, or the government, and good of the nation; and therefore is not worthy of death, or of stripes, but should be discharged. This was Pilate's sense.

Luke 23:5

Ver. 5. And they were the more fierce,.... Or urgent to have him put to death; so the Hebrew word qzx is rendered in Ex 12:33 which answers to that here used. "They cried out", as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read; they were more clamorous and noisy; they cried out louder, and exerted themselves with great fury and violence, and added strength to their clamour, and increased their charges:

saying, he stirreth up the people; to sedition and rebellion:

teaching throughout all Jewry; or "Judea"; not in one, or a few places only, but every where:

beginning from Galilee; where indeed our Lord did begin his ministry, and where he chiefly taught; see **Mt 4:12** and which they rather chose to mention, because that the Galilaeans were reckoned a seditious people, and had been drawn into rebellion, and had suffered for it; see **Ac 5:37**

to this place; the city of Jerusalem, the metropolis of the nation; suggesting, that he taught seditious principles not only in Galilee, but all the way from thence throughout Judea, and even in their chief city, and had drawn many disciples after him every where; so that it was a notorious case, as well as of great consequence, and much danger, and ought not to be trifled with.

Luke 23:6

Ver. 6. When Pilate heard of Galilee,.... "The name of Galilee", as the Syriac and Persic versions read when that was mentioned,

he asked; the Ethiopic version says, the "Galilaeans"; some of which might be present, being come to the feast of the passover, and were very proper persons to inquire of:

whether the man were a Galilean; so Jesus was reputed to be: for though he was born at Bethlehem of Judah, he was brought up at Nazareth in Galilee, where he spent the greater part of his private life, and his public ministry was chiefly exercised in those parts; hence the Jews thought, that he came out of Galilee, and was a Galilean, **Joh 7:41** and so he used to be called by Julian the apostate; and it seems, that the answer returned to Pilate was, that he was a Galilean; and so the Persic version adds, and they said, yes; for it follows,

Luke 23:7

Ver. 7. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction,.... The country which was under his power, and he had the government of; for Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, **Lu 3:1**. This was Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the great, and the same that beheaded John the Baptist; wherefore as soon as Pilate found that Jesus was one of his province, immediately he sent him to Herod: to be examined, and to have his cause tried before him: and this he did partly, that he might be rid of this troublesome business; and partly that he might show to Herod what a regard he had to his jurisdiction, and power; and that he was unwilling to break in upon it, or usurp that to himself, which did not belong to him: the way from Pilate's hall, to the place where Herod was, is computed, by Adrichomius, to be about three hundred and fifty steps:

who himself was also at Jerusalem at that time; or "in those days"; the days of the passover; for Herod being born a Jew, and the son of a proselyte, was come to Jerusalem, at this time, to keep the feast of the passover.

Luke 23:8

Ver. 8. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad,.... For though he had been brought up in his country, and had so frequently preached, and wrought miracles there, he had never seen him before; and to have a sight of him, was a great indulgence to his curiosity:

for he was desirous to see him of a long season; perhaps ever since he had heard of his fame, and had entertained a notion that Christ was John the Baptist risen from the dead, whom he had beheaded; and therefore was desirous of seeing him, that he might know whether he was John or not:

because he had heard many things of him; concerning his doctrine, and miracles, and especially the latter; how that he cast out devils, and healed all manner of diseases, and even raised the dead to life:

and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him; which would have still more gratified his curiosity, and have been the subject of further inquiry and conversation.

Luke 23:9

Ver. 9. Then he questioned with him in many words,.... Or talked very much to him, inquiring who he was, whether John the Baptist, or no; whether it was true that he had wrought such miracles he had heard of, and how he wrought them, and by what power he performed them, and how he came by it; and used many arguments to persuade him to work a miracle at that time:

but he answered him nothing; would not give him one word in return to his many words, nor work any miracle in his presence; he answered him neither by words nor deeds; he would not indulge his curiosity, though he might have obtained his liberty by it.

Luke 23:10

Ver. 10. And the chief priests and Scribes,.... The sanhedrim that followed him from Pilate's hall, to Herod's palace; fearing, lest Herod should be disposed to let him go, should he gratify him by working a miracle:

stood; before Herod; so witnesses, and accusers, used to do;
See Gill on "Mr 14:57"

and vehemently accused him; of the same things they had accused him before Pilate, with great bitterness and constancy, increasing, and aggravating the charges against him.

Luke 23:11

Ver. 11. And Herod, with his men of war,.... Or his soldiers, his bodyguards that attended his person, who came with him from Galilee, and were both for his security and service, and for his pomp and magnificence:

set him at nought; made nothing of him; had him in no account; treated him as a silly, and contemptible creature, that could not do any thing that was reported of him; nor able to say any thing for himself; but took him to be a mere fool and idiot; and so they used him:

and mocked him; as a king, and made sport and pastime with him:

and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe. The Vulgate Latin renders it, "a white robe"; a token of his innocence, though not so designed by them, but rather by way of derision, as a symbol of his simplicity and folly. The Syriac version renders it, "scarlet"; and the Arabic and Persic versions, "red". It is very likely that it was an old worn-out robe of one of the officers, or soldiers, which they put on him; in contempt of his being a king, as the Roman soldiers afterwards did, upon the same account:

and sent him again to Pilate; uncondemned, not knowing what to make of him, or the charge against him, and he might be unwilling to have any hand in his death, not having forgotten the case of John the Baptist; and therefore remits him to Pilate, to do as he thought fit with him.

Luke 23:12

Ver. 12. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together,.... For it pleased Herod, that Pilate should show such a regard to his authority and power, as to send one that belonged to his jurisdiction to take cognizance of his case; and especially as it was a person that was much talked of, and he had long wanted to see; and Pilate, on the other hand, was pleased with Herod, that though he was one that was under his jurisdiction, and so had a right of trying the cause, and either absolve or condemn, yet chose not to use this his power, but referred the case to the Roman governor:

for before they were at enmity between themselves; it may be on account of the Galilaeans, the subjects of Herod, whom Pilate had slain, whilst they were sacrificing at Jerusalem, Lu 13:1, which Herod might resent, as an infringement upon his authority and power; for had they been ever so deserving of punishment, it ought to have been left to him, to have inflicted it, and not the governor of Judea, who had nothing to do with them: but now matters were made up by this step of Pilate's, in sending Christ to him, supposed to be a Galilean, and so of Herod's jurisdiction; which was tacitly acknowledging his former conduct to be wrong, and showed a regard to Herod's authority: and thus they were reconciled together, and agreed in their contemptuous usage, and ill-treatment of Christ, and so fulfilled **Ps 2:1**.

Luke 23:13

Ver. 13. And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests,.... That is, after Herod had sent back Christ unto him, he then summoned the chief priests together, to consider what should be done to him: and with them also,

the rulers and the people; both the civil and ecclesiastical rulers, and the chief among the people, who had been forward in accusing Jesus, and seeking his death: the latter of these is not read in the Persic version; and both are joined together in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, and read thus; by the former, "the princes, or chiefs of the people": and by the latter, "the judges of the people": in a word, he convened the whole sanhedrim, which consisted of the chief priests, Scribes, and elders of the people.

Luke 23:14

Ver. 14. Said unto them, ye have brought this man unto me,.... Pointing to Jesus, who stood before him;

as one that perverteth the people; from their religion, and laws, and allegiance to Caesar. The Syriac and Persic versions read, "your people"; of the same nation with them, and that were under their care and jurisdiction; at least in an ecclesiastical way:

and behold, I having examined him before you; not only privately, and alone, between themselves in the judgment hall, Joh 18:33 but openly in the presence of them, when he brought forth Jesus to them, and heard their charges, and urged him to answer to them,
Mt 27:11

have found no fault in this man; cannot perceive any charge proved against him, or any crime he is guilty of, for which punishment should be inflicted on him; or at least, that he should be put to death:

touching, or with regard to

those things, whereof ye accuse him. The Syriac and Persic versions read, "all those things"; intimating, that he had carefully looked into, and examined every thing, and had omitted nothing, and that all their accusations, and charges, put together, did not make it appear that he was guilty of a single crime.

Luke 23:15

Ver. 15. No, nor yet Herod,.... Who was a Jew, and better versed in their religious affairs, and understood the nature of such charges, and the amount of them, and what was sufficient proof in such cases; and who had also examined Jesus, and that in their presence, and had heard all that they had to accuse him with, and yet found no fault in him of any such kind, as to condemn him to death for it:

for I sent you to him; along with Jesus, to make your allegations against him good before him; or, "I sent him to him", as the Syriac version reads; that is, Jesus to him, as the Persic version expresses, he being of his country, and belonging to his jurisdiction; or, "he sent him back to us"; as the Arabic version reads, and three of Beza's copies: that is, Herod, after he had examined Jesus, and found no fault in him, sent him again to us; not being able to make out any crime against him, or to pass any judgment on the matter, for it follows;

and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him; or "by him": the sense is, either that it appeared to Herod, that Christ had done nothing that deserved death; or that nothing was done to him by Herod, which showed that he thought he was worthy of it; since he passed no sentence on him, nor ordered him to be scourged, nor delivered him into the hands of an executioner, or to be imprisoned until things could be cleared up.

Luke 23:16

Ver. 16. I will therefore chastise him,.... Give him some correction, as by scourging, or beating with rods: this he proposed, not because he thought him deserving of it, but in complaisance to the Jews; since it would look as if their charges were not altogether weak and groundless; and that Jesus was not entirely innocent: this would carry a show of guilt and punishment, and he hoped this might be thought sufficient, and so he should please them, and save Jesus from dying, which he much desired: and release him; from his bonds, and let him go.

Luke 23:17

Ver. 17. For of necessity he must release one,.... And therefore proposed to release Jesus

unto them at the feast; of passover, which now was; not that there was any law that obliged to it, but it having been customary with the Roman governor to do so, the people expected it; custom had made it necessary: and so the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it, "it was a custom to release", &c. not at each feast, or every feast, as the last of these versions read, only at the passover, as is expressed, Joh 18:39.

Luke 23:18

Ver. 18. And they cried out all at once,.... The chief priests, rulers, and people, not bearing to hear of a release of him, now they had got him in their hands; and enraged at the proposal, in a most clamorous way, cried out, as one man, immediately:

Saying, away with this man; to the cross; to Calvary, the place of execution; away with him out of the world; he is not fit to live:

and release unto us Barabbas; whose character is given in the next verse; See Gill on "Mt 27:16".

Luke 23:19

Ver. 19. Who, for a certain sedition made in the city,.... Of Jerusalem: he had made an insurrection in it, in opposition to the government, in order to have thrown off the yoke, and to have asserted and maintained their liberties, as a free people; or rather to have seized and plundered the properties of other people, since he is represented elsewhere as a robber:

and for murder; which had either been committed by himself, or his accomplices, in the insurrection; and for these things, sedition, and murder, he

was cast into prison; where he lay till this feast, in order to be executed.

Luke 23:20

Ver. 20. Pilate therefore willing to release Jesus,.... Being more and more convinced of his innocence; and still seeing more clearly into the wickedness, malice, and envy of his accusers; and having received a message from his wife:

spake again to them; putting it again to them, which he should release; asking them what he should do with Jesus; plainly signifying his mind, that he thought him innocent, and that it would be right to let him go. The Ethiopic version represents him, saying, "will ye that I save for you, or release to you the Lord Jesus?"

Luke 23:21

Ver. 21. But they cried, saying, crucify him, crucify him. They were fierce and furious, more noisy and clamorous, the more they perceived Pilate was for saving him; and they were more desirous to have him crucified, and more impatient until it was done, as the repetition of the word shows.

Luke 23:22

Ver. 22. And he said unto them the third time,.... After Christ had been sent back to him from Herod; for he had declared before he had sent him to him, that he found no fault in him, Joh 18:38.

Why, what evil hath he done? what capital crime has he committed? is he guilty of murder? or sedition? or blasphemy? or robbery, and theft? or any other enormous a crime?

I have found no cause of death in him; why he should be put to death at all; and much less to this shameful and painful death of the cross, which was the punishment of slaves, and of the vilest of men, which they were desirous of:

I will therefore chastise him, and let him go; this he said, not as if he was determined to do it, whether they liked it, or not; but as signifying what he willed, or chose, and hoped they would be contented with, that he should be scourged, or beaten, and dismissed, as he at first proposed.

Luke 23:23

Ver. 23. And they were instant with loud voices,.... They were urgent, and insisted upon his crucifixion, and pressed hard for it, and exerted their voices, and more loudly called:

requiring him, that he might be crucified: desiring it in the most importunate manner; signifying, that it must be, that nothing else would content them:

and the voices of them, and the chief priests, prevailed; upon Pilate to grant their request, contrary to the dictates of his own conscience, the conduct of Herod, and the message of his wife; the people being set on by the chief priests, and the chief priests joining with them, their numbers were so great, and their requests were pressed with so much force, and violence, and importunity, that Pilate could not withstand them.

Luke 23:24

Ver. 24. And Pilate gave sentence,.... Resolved, determined, and gave out:

that it should be as they required; that they should have their request, what they asked for; namely, that Jesus should be crucified, and Barabbas released.

Luke 23:25

Ver. 25. And he released unto them, him,.... Barabbas, who is not named, as being a detestable person, and unworthy to be named; and is therefore described by the infamous, though just character of him, as follows:

that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, as in Lu 23:19

whom they had desired; to be granted to them, and released; see **Ac 3:14**

but he delivered Jesus to their will; to do as they would with him, to mock, and scourge, and crucify him.

Luke 23:26

Ver. 26. And as they led him away,.... From Pilate's hall, and out of the city of Jerusalem, towards Calvary; which was done by the Jews and Roman soldiers, after they had stripped him of his own clothes, and put on him a scarlet coat, and had platted a crown of thorn, and put it on his head, and a reed in his hand, and bowed the knee, and mocked him, saluting him as King of the Jews; after they had finished their sport and pastime with him, and had put on him his own clothes again:

they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian; father of Alexander and Rufus, Mr 15:21,
See Gill on "Mt 27:32".

coming out of the country; either out of the country part of Judea, to the city of Jerusalem; or out of the field where he had been about rural business, and was now returning home, and perhaps knew nothing of the matter, what had been doing at Jerusalem:

and on him they laid the cross; on which Jesus was to be crucified, and which he was bearing himself; but finding that he was weak, and languid, and unable to carry it himself, and fearing, should he die by the way, they should be disappointed of glutting their malice, and seeing him in shame and agony on the cross, and of triumphing over him there; and being in haste for the execution of their malicious designs, they put the cross, at least one end of it, upon this man's shoulders:

that he might bear it after Jesus: either the whole of it, following Jesus; or only one end of it, Jesus going before with the other end on his shoulder; which seems to be the order in which it was carried between them.

Luke 23:27

Ver. 27. And there followed him a great company of people,.... Not only of the common people, but of the principal inhabitants of the city; for among these were the chief priests, Scribes, and elders: some went for one thing, and some another; some pitying, and others mocking at him, and all to see the melancholy sight, Lu 23:48 as is usual at executions: and what might make the crowd the greater, was the number of people in the city, which were come from all parts to the passover; as also the fame and character of the person, who was going to suffer:

and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him; not that these were the same with the preficae of the Romans, or the ihlemistriai of the Grecians; for though the Jews had their twnnwqm, or mourning women, who were hired to assist in mourning; by using mournful gestures, tones, and songs, see **Jer 9:17**, yet public mourning was not allowed for persons that were executed as malefactors; and therefore it is the more remarkable, that here, and in Lu 23:48 any public tokens of sorrow should be expressed: for,

"those that are executed by the sanhedrim, Nhyle Nylbatm
Nya, "they do not mourn for them"; but their near relations come and ask the peace of, or salute the witnesses, and they salute the judges, to show, that they have not any thing in their hearts against them, seeing they have passed a true

sentence; but though they do not use mourning, lo, they grieve for them; for there is no grief but in the heart {r}."

The reason why they did not mourn was, because their ignominy and death atoned for their crime {s}: but it seems, there was a difference between those that were put to death by the order of the Roman government, and those that were put to death by the sanhedrim:

"all that are put to death by the government, although they are executed by the order of the king, and the law gives power to slay them, lo, "they mourn for them"; and they do not restrain any thing from them, and their substance goes to the king, and they are buried in the sepulchres of their fathers; but all that are put to death by the sanhedrim, "they do not mourn for them"; but they grieve for them; for there is no grief but in the heart; and they are not buried with their fathers, till their flesh is consumed; and their substance goes to their heirs {t}."

And since Christ was condemned to death by the Roman governor, hence it may be public mourning was allowed of, and might be done without notice; but these still were not the mourning women, but persons that followed on their own accord: some expressed their concern and sorrow through a natural tenderness of spirit, and from a principle of humanity, being grieved that so useful and innocent a person, as Christ appeared to be, should be put to such a cruel and shameful death; and others from a spirit of gratitude, they, or their friends, having received cures from him, being healed by him of sicknesses, or dispossessed of devils; and others from a spiritual, as well as natural affection for him; among whom were his own mother and his mother's sister, and Mary Magdalene, and other women that followed him out of Galilee.

{r} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 13. sect. 6. Vid. Misu. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect 4. {s} Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. ib. {t} Maimon. Hilch. Ebel. c. 1. sect. 9.

Luke 23:28

Ver. 28. But Jesus turning unto them,.... These women being behind Christ, at the back of him; and he knowing who they were, and what they were doing, turns himself to them, and addressed them in the following manner: and said,

daughters of Jerusalem; or ye Jerusalem women; just as the inhabitants of Jerusalem are called daughters of Zion in **Isa 3:16** weep not for me; signifying, that they need not be under any concern on his account, for he was very willing to die; he desired nothing more; this was that he came into the world about; nor was he afraid to die; death was no king of terrors to him; he went to the cross with the greatest courage and intrepidity: besides, his sufferings, though he knew they would be very great and painful, yet that they would be soon over; nor could he be long held in the power of death, but would be raised again, and go to his Father, and be exalted at his right hand, and which should be matter of joy: to which might be added, that hereby his Father's counsels and covenant, purposes and promises, would have their accomplishment, the law would be fulfilled, justice satisfied, and all the perfections of God glorified, and the salvation of his chosen people effected; which, as it was the joy set before him, is a ground of rejoicing to believers: not that weeping on account of his sufferings and death was sinful; for he had offered prayers to God with cries and tears himself on this head; nor that it was altogether unreasonable, stupid, and preposterous; but Christ's meaning is, that when things were rightly considered, there would be great reason to assuage their grief, on this account, and rather express it on another;

but weep for yourselves, and for your children; not themselves personally, but their nation and posterity; and either for sin, their own, and others; the sins of professors, and of the profane; particularly the sin of crucifying him, which would be more injurious to that people than to him, and do them more hurt than him, since they had imprecated his blood upon them, and their children; or rather, and chiefly on account of those distresses and calamities, that would come upon them, in a short time, for their rejection and crucifixion of him; on account of which he himself had wept over Jerusalem, and its inhabitants, Lu 19:41.

Luke 23:29

Ver. 29. For behold the days are coming,.... The time is hastening on; yet a little while, a few years more, and such times of distress will be:

in the which they shall say; or it shall be commonly said; it will be in every one's mouth:

blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck; that is, happy wilt those persons be who have no children, to be starved to death, for want of bread; or to be killed with the sword before their eyes, which must greatly enhance their own miseries. Dr. Hammond thinks, that one passage particularly is referred to, related by Josephus; that when Titus had so closely encompassed the city with a wall, that there was no coming out for provisions, upon which a sore famine commenced, so that they fed on dung and dirt, and shoes, and girdles, one rich and noble woman, whose name was Mary, the daughter of Eleazar, being stripped of all she had, by the seditious, killed her own child, and dressed it, and ate part of it; and the other part being found by the soldiers that broke in upon her, the news of this shocking fact was spread all over the city, and every one looked with horror upon it, and with the same compassion, as if they had done it themselves: and then might those words be said, "blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare", &c. who, though starving themselves, were under no temptation to do such a detestable action.

Luke 23:30

Ver. 30. Then shall they begin to say,.... The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, "then shall ye begin to say"; the tribulation being so great, as never was the like since the creation of the world, nor never will be to the end of it; and being so sore pressed with the sword and famine; with the enemy without, and divisions, robberies, and murders within; and their miseries being inexpressible, and intolerable, they will seek to go into the holes of the rocks, and caves of the earth, as is prophesied of them, **Isa 2:19** and as Josephus says, many of them did, when the city was taken; and, like those in Ho 10:8 will say, "to the mountains fall on us, and to the hills cover us"; will choose rather that the mountains and hills round about Jerusalem, should fall upon them, and they be buried under the ruins of them, than live in such terrible distress, or fall into the hands of their enemies! Compare with this **Re 6:15**.

Luke 23:31

Ver. 31. For if they do these things in a green tree,.... Or it may be rendered impersonally, "if these things are done in a green tree"; by which is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, who is often compared to a tree, as to a green fir tree, an apple tree, a vine, and is called the tree of life: and may be said to be a moist or green tree; because, as a green tree is full of juice, so is he of grace and goodness; as that is flourishing, so was he in the fame of his doctrine and miracles, in the spread of his Gospel, and in the increase of his kingdom and interest; and as that is fruitful and useful, so was he in preaching the Gospel, and healing diseases; and as that is not proper to be cut down, nor fit fuel for the fire, so he was not deserving of death, or to be used in the manner he was; the metaphor seems designed to express the righteousness and innocence of Christ; see Eze 20:47 who was pure in his nature, without sin in his life, harmless in his conversation, and did no hurt to any man's person or property: his enemies could find nothing, nor prove any thing against him; nor even the devil himself, but owned him to be the Holy One of God; and he was also declared innocent by his judge, the Roman governor: and yet, how many hard and grievous things were done unto him! He was persecuted in his infancy, and his life was sought for; he was despised and reproached by men all his days; he was apprehended as if he had been a thief, and was bound as a malefactor; and arraigned at the bar of men, as if he had been the greatest criminal on earth; he was mocked, buffeted, and spit upon in the palace of the high priest; be was scourged by Pilate, and misused by his soldiers, who arrayed him with a scarlet robe, put a crown of thorns on his head, and a reed in his hand, and in a mock way bowed the knee to him, and saluted him as King of the Jews; they crucified him between two thieves, and as he hung on the cross mocked him, and gave him gall and vinegar to drink. To which may be added, that he was forsaken by his God, and Father, and his wrath was poured out upon him, as he sustained the persons, and bore the sins of his people; the curse of the law was executed on him: and justice drew its sword, and sheathed it in him: and now if all these things were done to such an useful, holy, harmless, and innocent person, what shall be done in the dry? by whom wicked men are designed; who, as dry trees are without juice, so are they destitute of grace and righteousness, and all that is good, and bring forth no fruit, neither to God, nor themselves, nor others; but, like dead and withered trees, are dead in trespasses and sins, and full of all manner of sin, and rottenness, and impurity; and are deserving to be cut down, and are fit fuel for the fire of divine wrath and displeasure, both in this, and in the other world. The wicked Jews that rejected Christ, and crucified him, are particularly meant; and if such evil things were done by them to so just a person, what may not be expected will fall on them in retaliation for such usage? and if the Roman soldiers, under their encouragement acted such a part to Christ, who had never done them any injury, what will they not do to these men, when provoked by their insults and rebellions? and if such things were done to Christ by his Father, according to the requirement of the law, and the strictness of divine justice, when he was made sin for his people, though he knew none, nor committed any himself, what vengeance will fall on them, who must answer for their sins in their own persons? What devouring flames, and everlasting burnings, will such dry trees be exposed to, as being fit for them, and deserving of them? so the children of men are, by the Jews, in their writings, called, Myvby Myue, "dry trees" {u}; the Targumist on Eze 17:24 paraphrases the words thus;

"I have humbled the kingdom of the nations, which was strong as a green tree, and I have strengthened the kingdom of the house of Israel, which was weak as a dry tree."

It is a common proverb with the Jews {x};

"two dry sticks, or brands, and one green, the dry burn up the green:"

intimating, that a few righteous persons among wicked men suffer with them; but if righteous men suffer, how much more the wicked? see **1Pe 4:17**.

{u} Zohar in Lev. fol. 14. 2. {x} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1.

Luke 23:32

Ver. 32. And there were also two other malefactors,.... Not that Christ was one, though indeed he was looked upon and treated as one by the Jews; but as the words may be read, there were also two others that were malefactors; really such, two thieves, who had been guilty of theft and robbery, and were condemned to die: and these were led with him; for the greater ignominy and reproach of Christ, that it might be thought he was equally a malefactor, and as deserving of death as they:

to be put to death; the death of the cross, which was the death the Romans put slaves, thieves, and robbers, and the worst and basest of men to.

Luke 23:33

Ver. 33. And when they were come to the place which was called Calvary,.... Or Cranion, which signifies a skull; so called from the skulls of persons that lay about, who were executed. It is a tradition of the ancients {y}, that Adam was buried in this place where Christ was crucified, and that his skull lay here. It was usual to crucify on high places, and on mountains, such an one as this was {z}:

there they crucified him, and the malefactors; the two thieves;

one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and so fulfilled the prophecy in Isa 53:12.

{y} Cyprian de Resurrectione Christi, p. 479. Hieron. Tom. 1. fol. 42. Bar Bahluli apud Castell. Lex. Polyglott. col. 3466. {z} Lipsius de Cruce, l. 3. c. 13.

Luke 23:34

Ver. 34. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them,.... When he was crucified between the two thieves, and as he hung upon the cross, and while insulted and abused by all sorts of men, and put to the greatest pain and torture, he addressed himself to God his Father: the Arabic version reads, "my Father", who was so to him, not as he was man; for as such he had no father; but as he was God, being as a divine person, his beloved, and only begotten Son: and this he uses, whilst, as man, he is praying to him; partly to express his faith of relation to him; his confidence of being heard; and partly to set believers an example of praying, as he has directed, saying, "our Father", &c. and the petition put up by him is for forgiveness; which is with God, and with him only; and that for his enemies, his crucifiers: not for those who sinned the sin unto death, the sin against the Holy Ghost, who knowing him to be the Messiah, maliciously crucified him, for whom prayer is not to be made; but for those who were ignorantly concerned in it, as the next clause shows, even for his own elect, whom the Father had given him out of the world, which were among his crucifiers; for those, and not the world, he prays: and the fruit of this his prayer quickly appeared, in the conversion of three thousand of them under Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, next following, in six weeks time. Though such might be his affection, as man, in general, as to wish for, and desire, as such, was it consistent with the divine will, forgiveness for all of them; adding,

for they know not what they do, or "are doing", meaning, in crucifying him, which was the case of many of them, and of their rulers; they did not know that Jesus was the Messiah, nor the prophecies concerning him, nor the evil they were committing in putting him to death: not that their ignorance excused their sin; nor was it without sin; nor does Christ use it as a plea for pardon, or found his intercession upon it, which is always done upon his own propitiatory sacrifice; but this is mentioned as descriptive of the persons Christ prays for, and points out a branch of his priestly office he exercises, in having compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way;

and they parted his raiment, and cast lots: that is, upon his vesture, or seamless coat, and so fulfilled the prophecy in Ps 22:18.
See Gill on "Mt 27:35".
See Gill on "Joh 19:23".
See Gill on "Joh 19:24".

Luke 23:35

Ver. 35. And the people stood beholding,.... This dismal and affecting sight; insulting and reviling him, and wagging their heads at him, as did also those that passed by: and the rulers also with them derided him; the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, the members of the sanhedrim, whose characters should have restrained them from such an inhuman conduct. The phrase, "with them", is wanting in the Oriental versions, and in one of Beza's copies: saying,

he saved others; by healing their diseases, or raising them from the dead:

let him save himself; from death, by unnailing himself, and coming down from the cross; See Gill on "Mt 27:42"

if he be Christ; the Messiah, he and his followers give out he is; even the chosen of God, referring to Isa 42:1. The Arabic version reads, "the chosen Son of God", very wrongly; for Christ was not chosen to be the Son of God; he was so by nature; but he was chosen to be a servant, as the text cited shows, to be a Mediator between God and man, and the Saviour of his people.

Luke 23:36

Ver. 36. And the soldiers also mocked him,.... The Roman soldiers, to whom the execution was committed, who crucified him, and parted his garments, and stood at his cross watching; these joined in the insult, which is not to be wondered at. Coming to him and offering him vinegar; which was what was a part of their allowance, and was their drink; See Gill on "Joh 19:29".

Luke 23:37

Ver. 37. And saying, if thou be the King of the Jews,.... Or their Messiah, who was spoken of as a divine person; for otherwise he might have been their king, and not have been able to have done what is proposed:

save thyself: or deliver thyself from the cross.

Luke 23:38

Ver. 38. And a superscription also was written,.... Containing the crime he was charged with, and accused of;
See Gill on "Mt 27:37";
See Gill on "Joh 19:19";
See Gill on "Joh 19:20".

Luke 23:39

Ver. 39. And one of the malefactors, which were hanged,.... On the cross, one of the thieves crucified with Christ; the Oriental versions add, "with him"; according to the Evangelists Matthew and Mark, both of them reviled him, and threw the same things in his teeth as the priests, people, and soldiers did; which how it may be reconciled, See Gill on "Mt 27:44"

railed on him, saying, if thou be Christ, save thyself, and us; taking up the words of the rulers, and adding to them, perhaps, with a design to curry favour with them, hoping thereby to get a release; or, however, showing the wickedness and malice of his heart, which his sufferings and punishment, he now endured, could make no alteration in; see Re 16:9.

Luke 23:40

Ver. 40. But the other answering, rebuked him,.... That is, the other malefactor made answer to him, and reproved him for his baseness and wickedness:

saying, dost not thou fear God; or "neither dost thou fear God", any more than these priests, people, and soldiers, that are acting such a barbarous and inhuman part to a man in misery: and wilt thou do the same, and show that thou art an impious wretch, now thou art just going out of the world, and neither fears God, nor regards man, and art without compassion to a fellow sufferer, adding sin to sin,

seeing thou art in the same condemnation? undergoing the same sort of punishment, though not on the same account, which might be the reason why they suffered on the same day: for the Jews say {a}, they never judge (or condemn) two in one day, but one today, and the other tomorrow; but if they are in one transgression,

"txa htymw, "and one death", as an adulterer with an adulteress, they condemn them both in one day; but if the adulterer lies with a priest's daughter, seeing he is to be strangled, and she to be burnt, they do not execute them both in one day."

{a} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 14. sect. 10.

Luke 23:41

Ver. 41. And we indeed justly,.... For sins committed against the law; our sentence is just, we are righteously punished: which shows that he had a true sense of sin; for where that is, there will be not only an acknowledgment of the offence, but a vindication of the justice of God, should he proceed to deal according to the demerit of sin: for we receive the due reward of our deeds; though, according to the law of Moses, theft was not punishable with death, but with a restoration, either double, or fourfold, or fivefold, according to the nature of it; see Ex 22:1. It may be these men had committed murder along with the robbery:

but this man hath done nothing amiss; or absurd, unreasonable, wicked, and detestable: he did no injury to God, or man; wronged no man's person or property; did all things well; obeyed the law of God perfectly, and always did the things which were pleasing to God. Thus, from the mouth of one of the malefactors Christ suffered with, was he declared innocent; when the Jews designed, by crucifying him with them, to have led the people to have believed that he suffered for a crime equal, or superior to theirs.

Luke 23:42

Ver. 42. And he said unto Jesus, Lord,.... Acknowledging him to be the Messiah, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; the Lord of all, and especially

of his church and people, and his own Lord. So the Syriac and Persic versions read, "my Lord": however, he said this by the Spirit of God, who enlightened his understanding, and wrought faith in him to believe in Christ; see 1Co 12:3 "remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom"; or rather in thy kingdom, as in
Mt 16:28 for this man had not only faith in the kingdom of Christ, as being of a spiritual nature, and not of this world, and not coming with outward pomp and observation; in which respect his faith exceeded that of the apostles themselves, who were looking for, and expecting a temporal kingdom; and he not only was without all doubt, or scruple, about Christ's entering into his kingdom and glory after death, but he had knowledge of, and faith in his second coming, when his glorious kingdom should appear, or his kingdom appear in glory; and when he desired he might be remembered by him, have favour shown him, and he share in the glories and happiness of it. This was great faith indeed to be exercised on Christ at such a time as this, when he was under the greatest reproach and ignominy; while he was insulted and derided by all sorts of people; and when he was forsaken by his own apostles, and was suffering a shameful punishment, and now dying.

Luke 23:43

Ver. 43. And Jesus said unto him,.... Jesus immediately answered him, though he said not one word to the other that railed at him, or to the multitude that abused him; and promised him more than he asked for, and sooner than he expected.

Verily I say unto thee, today thou shall be with me in paradise;
Nde Ngb, "in the garden of Eden"; not the earthly paradise, nor the church militant, but the future place, and state of the happiness of the saints, even heaven, and eternal glory, which the Jews frequently call by this name; See Gill on "2Co 12:4" and is so called, because, as the earthly paradise, or Eden's garden, was of God's planting, so is the heavenly glory of his providing and preparing: as that was a place of delight and pleasure, so here are pleasures for evermore; as there was a river in it, which added to the delightfulness and advantage of it, so here runs the river of God's love, the streams whereof make glad the saints now, and will be a broad river to swim in to all eternity: as there were the tree of life, with a variety of other trees, both for delight and profit, so here, besides Christ, the tree of life, which stands in the midst of it, are an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect: and as the inhabitants of that garden were pure and innocent creatures, so into this

paradise shall nothing enter but what is righteous, pure, and holy: and whereas the principal enjoyment of man in Eden was conversation with God, and communion with him, the glory of the heavenly paradise will lie in fellowship with God, Father, Son, and Spirit, in beholding the face of God, and seeing him as he is: and this is the happiness promised by Christ to the penitent and believing thief, that he should be here; and not only so, but with him here, which is far better than being in this world, and than which nothing can be more desirable: and which, when enjoyed, will be for ever: and this he was to enter upon that very day; which shows, that Christ's soul did not descend into hell, locally and literally considered, or into the "Limbus Patrum", the Papists talk of, to fetch the souls of the patriarchs thence, but as soon as it was separated from the body was taken up into heaven; and also, that the souls of departed saints are immediately, upon their separation from the body, there; which was the case of this wonderful instance of the grace of God; and shows the swiftness of the soul, or the velocity of angels in conveying it thither immediately: and this agrees with the sense of the Jews, who say {b}, that

"the souls of the fathers, or patriarchs have rest, and in a moment, immediately enter into their separate places, or apartments, and not as the rest of the souls; of whom it is said, all the twelve months the soul ascends and descends, (goes to and fro,) but the souls of the fathers,
Ndrphb dym, "immediately, upon their separation", return to God that gave them."

Some would remove the stop, and place it after "today", and read the words thus, "I say unto thee today"; as if Christ only signified the time when he said this, and not when the thief should be with him in paradise; which, besides it being senseless, and impertinent, and only contrived to serve an hypothesis, is not agreeably to Christ's usual way of speaking, and contrary to all copies and versions. Moreover, in one of Beza's exemplars it is read, "I say unto thee, oti shmeron that today thou shalt be with me", &c. and so the Persic and Ethiopic versions seem to read, which destroys this silly criticism. And because this was a matter of great importance, and an instance of amazing grace, that so vile a sinner, one of the chief of sinners, should immediately enter into the kingdom of God, and enjoy uninterrupted, and everlasting communion with him and that it might not be a matter of doubt with him, or others, Christ, who is the "Amen", the faithful witness, and truth itself, prefaces it after this manner: "verily I say unto thee"; it is truth, it may be depended on. This instance of grace stands on record, not to cherish sloth, indolence, security and presumption, but to encourage faith and hope in sensible sinners, in their last moments, and prevent despair. The Papists pretend to know this man's name;

they say his name was Disma; and reckon him as a martyr, and have put him in the catalogue of saints, and fixed him on the "twenty fifth" of March.

(The story of the penitent thief has sometimes been considered the most surprising, the most suggestive, the most instructive incident in all the Gospel narrative. ... In the salvation of one of the thieves \@vital\@ \@theology finds one of its finest demonstrations.\@

\@Sacrementalism was refuted,\@ for the thief was saved without recourse to baptism, the Lord's Supper, church, ceremony, or good works.

\@The dogma of purgatory was refuted,\@ for this vile sinner was instantly transformed into a saint and made fit for paradise apart from his personal expiation of a single sin.

\@The teaching of universalism was refuted,\@ for only one was saved of all who might have been saved. Jesus did not say, "Today shall ye be with me in paradise", but "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

\@The notion of soul-sleep was refuted,\@ for the clear implication of the entire incident is that the redeemed thief would be in conscious fellowship with his Saviour in paradise even while his body disintegrated in some grave.

Too, it is doubtful whether any other gospel incident presents the plan of salvation more clearly or simply.--Dr. Charles R. Erdman)

{b} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 58. 4.

Luke 23:44

Ver. 44. And it was about the sixth hour,.... Or twelve o'clock at noon; and so the Ethiopic version, when it was noon;
See Gill on "Mt 27:45".

Luke 23:45

Ver. 45. And the sun was darkened,.... There was an eclipse of it, which was preternatural, it being now full moon, and lasted three hours, and so total, as to darken the whole earth; and now was the prophecy in **Am 8:9** literally fulfilled: and the vail of the temple was rent in the midst. The Persic version renders it, "the gate of the temple"; and so the Syriac version, "the face of the gate of the temple"; See Gill on "Mt 27:51".

Luke 23:46

Ver. 46. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice,.... A second time; for at the first loud cry, he uttered these words, "Eli, Eli, lama, sabachthani"; and at the second what follows; see Mt 27:46.
See Gill on "Mt 27:47".
See Gill on "Mt 27:48".
See Gill on "Mt 27:49".
See Gill on "Mt 27:50".

he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit; not the Holy Spirit, nor his divine nature, but his human soul: for that he had a reasonable soul, as well as a true body, is certain; from his having an human understanding, will, and affections, ascribed to him; and indeed, without this he would not have been a perfect man, nor like unto us; and could not have been tempted, bore sorrows and griefs, and endured the wrath of God; nor could he have been a Saviour of souls: now just as he was expiring, as he made his soul an offering for sin, and which he offered unto God, he committed it to his divine care and protection; and to enjoy his presence, during its separation from his body, using the words of the Psalmist in Ps 31:5 and this shows, that his spirit, or soul, belonged to God, the Father of spirits, and now returned to him that gave it; that it was immortal, and died not with the body, and was capable of existing in a separate state from it, and went immediately to heaven; all which is true of the souls of all believers in Christ; and what the dying head did, dying members may, and should, even commit their souls into the same hands: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost; breathed out his soul dismissed his spirit, laid down his life, freely and voluntarily, and which no man, or devil, otherwise could have taken away from him.

Luke 23:47

Ver. 47. Now when the centurion saw what was done,.... The eclipse of the sun, the darkness upon the land, the earthquake, the rocks rent, and Jesus expire in so uncommon a manner:

he glorified God; by confessing that Christ was the Son of God, and declaring him an innocent person:

saying, certainly, this was a righteous man; clear of the charges exhibited against him, and has suffered wrongfully; and this he concluded from those unusual appearances, and which he considered as tokens of divine resentment.

Luke 23:48

Ver. 48. And all the people that came together to that sight,.... To see the execution of Jesus; and some of them might be his inveterate enemies, and came to insult him, and did insult him; many of these, though not every individual of them:

beholding the things which were done; the eclipse, earthquake, &c.

smote their breasts; as conscious of guilt, and as fearing some dreadful judgment would fall upon them, and their nation, for this sin of crucifying Christ. The Persic version reads, "they went back, and kneeled down, and prostrated themselves to the ground"; as being in the utmost astonishment, confusion, fear, and dread:

and returned; to the city, and to their own houses, where they might more seriously, and with the greater composure of mind, reflect on these things.

Luke 23:49

Ver. 49. And all his acquaintance,.... That were related to him in a natural, or in a spiritual sense, or both, as his own mother, and beloved disciple John, who were both present, Joh 19:26 or those that were known unto him, and familiar with him, who attended on his ministry, and often conversed, and were intimately acquainted with him:

and the women that followed him from Galilee; among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Joses, and Salome the mother of Zebedee's children:

stood afar off; from the cross:

beholding these things; with wonder, as well as looking upon their dear suffering Lord, with aching hearts, and flowing eyes.

Luke 23:50

Ver. 50. And behold, there was a man named Joseph,....
See Gill on "Mt 27:57".

a counsellor; Mark says, he was an "honourable" one; he was either one of the council of the high priest, or a member of the great sanhedrim; See Gill on "Mr 15:43".

and he was a good man, and a just; he was kind and beneficent in his temper, and just, and righteous in his life and actions; a like character is given of Joseph the husband of Mary, the mother of our Lord, **Mt 1:19**.

Luke 23:51

Ver. 51. The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them,....
Though he was with the Jews, the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, in the high priest's palace, being one of that great council; yet he did not agree with them; nor was it his advice and counsel, that they should put Christ to death; he was against it, at least did not consent to it:

he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews;
See Gill on "Mt 27:57". This clause in the Syriac and Persic versions stands in the preceding verse, and follows after the mention of his name and office, and where it seems most natural;

who also himself waited for the kingdom of God;
See Gill on "Mr 15:43".

Luke 23:52

Ver. 52. This man went unto Pilate,.... Mark says, he went "boldly" to him; See Gill on "Mr 15:43".

and begged the body of Jesus; knowing he was dead; that he might bury it, as the Ethiopic version adds, and prevent its being inferred with the two malefactors, or abused by the mob.

Luke 23:53

Ver. 53. And he took it down,.... From the cross, with the help of others, having obtained leave of Pilate so to do;

and wrapped it in linen; as was the custom of the Jews in burying their dead; See Gill on "Mt 27:59".

and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone; cut out of a rock; See Gill on "Mt 27:60".

wherein never man before was laid; so that it could not be said it was another body, and not that of Christ's, that was raised from the dead. This circumstance, serves to confirm the truth of his resurrection.

Luke 23:54

Ver. 54. And that day was the preparation,.... Both for the sabbath, and for the "Chagigah", or grand festival, which they kept on the fifteenth day of the month, in a very pompous manner; so that the day following was an high day;

and the sabbath drew on, or "shone out"; which is so said, though it was evening, on account of the lights, which were every where, in every house, lighted up at this time, and which they were, by their traditions, obliged to: for so run their canons {c};

"three things a man is obliged to say in the midst of his house on the evening of the sabbath, when it is near dark, have ye tithed? have ye mixed? (i.e. the borders of the sabbath, the courts and food) rnh wqyldh, "light the lamp"."

This was what could by no means be dispensed with; for so they say {d},

"the lighting of the lamp on the sabbath is not in a man's power, (or at his liberty,) if he pleases he may light, and if not, he may not light.----But it is what he is obliged to, and every man and woman are bound to have in their houses a lamp lighted up on the sabbath; and though he has nothing to eat, he must beg, and get oil, and light a lamp; for this is included in the delight of the sabbath.----And he that lights, ought to light within the day, before the setting of the sun."

So that when these lamps were every where lighting, before the sun was set, and the sabbath properly come, it might be said to draw on, or to be shining forth. Besides, it was usual to call the evening of any day by the name of "light": thus it is said {e},

"rve ebral rwa, on the light (i.e. the night) of the fourteenth (of the month "Nisan"), they search for leaven, &c."

So that the evangelist might, very agreeably to the way of speaking with the Jews, say, that the sabbath was enlightening, or growing light, though the evening was coming on.

{c} Misn. Sabbat, c. 2. sect. 7. {d} Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 5. sect. 1, 3. {e} Misn. Pesachim, c. 1. sect. 1.

Luke 23:55

Ver. 55. And the women also which came with him from Galilee,....
See Gill on "Lu 23:49".

followed after; Joseph; and those that were with him, when they carried the body of Jesus, in order to inter it:

and beheld, the sepulchre; took notice of it, what an one it was, whereabout it stood in the garden, that they might know, and find it again:

and how his body was laid; in what position, form, and order; and observed that it was only wrapped in linen, and not anointed, or embalmed.

Luke 23:56

Ver. 56. And they returned,.... To the city, and to their own houses, or to some one of them;

and prepared spices and ointments; for the anointing, and embalming the body of Christ, called by the Jews the spices of the dead; see the note on Mr 16:1

and rested the sabbath day, according to the commandment, in Ex 20:8 not knowing as yet the abolition of it, with the rest of the ceremonial law; and therefore, though they had bought and prepared the spices and ointments, they did not carry them to the sepulchre to anoint the body with them, till the sabbath was over; for this was forbidden to be done on a sabbath day. It is asked {f},

"what is that thing that is lawful to be done to a living man, and is forbidden a dead man? It is said, hkyo hz, "this is anointing"."

Though elsewhere {g} this

"is allowed of; for so runs one of their traditions; they do all things necessary for the dead, (i.e. on a sabbath day,) Nyko, "they anoint", and wash him, only they may not move a limb of him."

But how he could be anointed, and washed, without a limb being moved, is not very easy to say, as his foot, or hand, or eye brows, which are the parts one of their commentators instances in {h}.

{f} T. Hieros. Sahbat. fol. 12. 2. {g} Misn. Sabbat. c. 23, sect. 5. {h} Bartenora in ib.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Luke 24:1

Ver. 1. Now upon the first day of the week,.... On which day it appears by what follows, Christ rose from the dead, and which was the third day from his death, and so verified the Scriptures, and his own predictions:

very early in the morning; just as light began to spring, the day to dawn, and break; the first appearance of the morning; when it first began to dawn;

when it was yet dark, as in Joh 20:1 and so read the Syriac and Persic versions here; and the Ethiopic version, "while it was yet night": this must be understood of the time when the women set out from the city, or suburbs; for by that time they got to the sepulchre it was at sunrise, Mr 16:2 and shows their great love, zeal, and devotion for Christ, and great courage and fearlessness to go out of the city at such a time, without any man with them, and to a grave:

they came unto the sepulchre, where Christ was laid; that is, the women who came with Christ from Galilee, and who had observed where, and how his body was interred:

bringing the spices which they had prepared; on the sabbath eve, to anoint the body, but were prevented by reason of the sabbath; see
Lu 23:56

and certain others with them; that is, other women; besides Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, and Salome, and other Galilean women, there were other Jerusalem women, or of Bethany, it may be, Mary, and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, and of the parts adjacent: this clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, and in one ancient copy of Beza's; but is retained in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions.

Luke 24:2

Ver. 2. And they found the stone rolled away the sepulchre. Which Joseph had laid there, security of the body, and in the sight of these women; and which gave them a concern, as they went along, seeing they were all women, who should roll away the stone for them,
Mr 16:3 but when they came to the sepulchre, to their great surprise, they found it rolled away, which was done by an angel,
Mt 28:2.

Luke 24:3

Ver. 3. And they entered in,.... To the sepulchre, being invited, encouraged, and led on by the angel that sat upon the stone; for the Jews' sepulchres were built large enough for persons to go into;
See Gill on "Mr 16:5"

and found not the body of the Lord Jesus; as they expected, having seen him put there, and had observed in what cave in the sepulchre, and in what form he was laid.

Luke 24:4

Ver. 4. And it came to pass as they were much perplexed thereabout,.... About the body of Christ, and its being gone, what should become of it, whither it was removed, and by what means, and by whom; whether by a friend, or foe, for they had no thought, nor expectation of a resurrection;

behold, two men stood by them in shining garments; who were angels in the form of men; and as these were the first witnesses of Christs resurrection, there were two of them; for by the mouth of two or three witnesses every thing is established. Matthew and Mark take notice but of one; but John makes mention of two, as here, seen by Mary Magdalene, though in a different posture; they were sitting, the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain; but when the rest of the women came, they were risen up, and stood close by them, on a sudden, at an unawares, being arrayed in white raiment, as white as snow, as a token of their purity and innocence, and as bringers of good tidings; and as joining in the triumph of their Lord's resurrection: their garments were bright and glittering like lightning, to set forth the glory and majesty of these celestial spirits, and that they might be known to be what they were.

Luke 24:5

Ver. 5. And as they were afraid,.... That is, the women were afraid of these angels; these bright appearances and majestic forms, as it was usual for good men and women to be, as appears from the cases of Zacharias, the Virgin Mary, and others:

and bowed down their faces to the earth, through great fear and reverence of these heavenly spirits, and as not being able to bear the lustre of their countenances and garments:

they said unto them, that is, the angels:

why seek ye the living among the dead? intimating, that Christ, though he had been dead, was now living, and not to be sought for in a sepulchre; a way of speaking, much like this, is used in a parable of R. Levi's, concerning Pharaoh's not finding the name of God among the gods of the nations, upon searching for it. Moses and Aaron said to Pharaoh,

"thou fool, is it usual for the dead to "seek" them among the living? Mytmh lua Myyxh amv, "or ever the living among the dead?" our God is living, these thou speakest of are dead {i}."

Nor is Christ to be found among dead sinners, or lifeless professors, but among living saints, and among the churches of the living God; nor is life to be found among the dead works of the law, or to be obtained by lifeless performances on the dead letter of the law.

{i} Shemot Rabba, sect. 5. fol. 95. 3.

Luke 24:6

Ver. 6. He is not here, but is risen,.... So in Mt 28:6 see the note there:

remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee; for these women that followed him from Galilee were along with the disciples when he said the following words to them; and which are recorded in Mt 17:22.

Luke 24:7

Ver. 7. Saying, the son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men,.... As Christ was, who is intended by the son of man, he being the son of David, and the son of Abraham, and the son of Adam, though he was the seed of the woman, and born of a virgin; he was truly man, and subject to the infirmities of men; for this is sometimes used as a diminutive expression, though a title of the Messiah in the Old Testament, and regards him in his state of humiliation. He was delivered into the hands of the band of men and officers by Judas, who came against him with swords and staves, as against a thief; and by the Jews to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, a very wicked man; and by him, to the will of the Jews, who, with wicked hands, took him, and slew him; and into the hands of the Roman soldiers, who crucified him, and who may more especially be meant by sinful men, the Gentiles; and especially Heathen soldiers, being reckoned by the Jews notorious sinners: to be among sinners, in the company of such sinful men, must needs be very disagreeable to the holy and harmless Lamb of God; but to be in their hands, and at their mercy, whose tender mercies are cruel, must be very afflicting:

and be crucified: which was a Roman death, and a very shameful, and painful one:

and the third day rise again; it is for the sake of this chiefly that the angels put the women in mind of this whole paragraph, which so fully confirms their testimony of his resurrection; and which the women might be assured of, upon calling to mind these words, which they themselves had heard from Christ's mouth; and it being now the third day since the death of Christ. The words declare, that all these things must be; that there was a necessity of them; partly on account of the decrees of God, by which it was determined they should be; and partly on account of the covenant engagements of Christ, in which he agreed unto them; and also, by reason of the prophecies of the Old Testament, which gave out, that thus it must be; yea, our Lord's own predictions made them necessary; and the law and justice of God required them; or otherwise, the salvation of God's people could not have been obtained.

Luke 24:8

Ver. 8. And they remembered his words. That is, the words of Christ, as the Persic version expresses it; which they had forgot, and it may be had never truly understood until now; and had now their memories refreshed with them by the angels, and their understandings opened by the Spirit of God. Saints are sometimes apt to forget even the gracious promises of God, they have understood and received comfort from; the word, or words, on which they have been caused to hope, until the Spirit of God, who is their best remembrancer, puts them in mind of them.

Luke 24:9

Ver. 9. And returned from the sepulchre,.... Quickly, immediately, as soon as ever the angel had done speaking to them; they fled from the sepulchre in great haste, as persons frightened and amazed, with fear and reverence, on account of the vision they saw, and with joy at what was told them; see Mt 28:8

and told all these things; as that the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre: and that they found not the body of Jesus in it; that they had seen a vision of angels, who had told them, that Christ was risen, and had put them in mind of some words of his spoken to the disciples in their hearing in Galilee:

unto the eleven, and to all the rest; of the disciples: not only to the eleven apostles, but the seventy disciples, and as many others as were assembled together, perhaps the hundred and twenty, **Ac 1:15**. The Persic version very wrongly reads, "to all the twelve"; for Judas was not now one of them, nor alive; and Matthias was not yet chosen.

Luke 24:10

Ver. 10. It was Mary Magdalene,.... Out of whom Christ had cast seven devils, who was a sincere penitent, a true believer in Christ, and an affectionate lover of him, and to whom he first appeared:

and Joanna; the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, one that had been a follower of Christ, and had ministered to him of her substance; see **Lu 8:2**

and Mary the mother of James; called the less; and also of Joses, and Simon, and Judas, the brethren, or kinsmen of Christ; this Mary, being the wife of Cleophas, or Alphaeus, said {k} to be the brother of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of our Lord:

and other women that were with them; as Salome, the mother of Zebedee's children, and others, that came from Galilee;
Mr 15:40.

which told these things unto the apostles; before observed.

{k} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 11. 32. & 4. 22.

Luke 24:11

Ver. 11. And their words seemed to them as idle tales,.... As fabulous things, as mere whims, and the fancies of their brains: "as a dream", according to the Persic version; or, "as a jest", as the Arabic version renders it. They looked upon them as mere deceptions and delusions, and not real things; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "these words"; what they related concerning what they saw, and heard, at the sepulchre:

and they believed them not: for they had no thought, nor expectation of Christ's rising from the dead; they did not know that he was to rise again, according to the Scriptures; nor did they understand him when he told them of his rising again; and had no faith in it, nor hope concerning it, and could give no credit to it, when it was told them; and the Arabic version reads, "they did not believe it"; the word or report which the women delivered to them.

Luke 24:12

Ver. 12. Then arose Peter,.... Who, though he did not believe the report made, yet listened to it, and was alarmed and aroused by it, and was willing to know the truth of it:

and ran unto the sepulchre; not alone, but with John, being in haste to be satisfied, how things were:

and stooping down;
See Gill on "Mr 16:5".
See Gill on "Joh 20:5".

he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves; in which the body of Jesus was wrapped; these lay by themselves, without the body, in one place; and the napkin about his head was wrapped together, and lay in another place by itself: so that it was a plain case, the body was not stolen, nor taken away; for neither friends, nor foes, would have taken the pains, or have lost so much time, as to have stripped the body, but would rather have carried off the clothes along with it. The Alexandrian copy leaves out the word mona, alone, or by themselves:

and departed; from the sepulchre to Jerusalem, to John's house there:

wondering in himself at that which was come to pass; that the body should not be there, and yet the clothes should remain; he could not tell what to make of it. As for a resurrection, he had no notion of that, and yet could not account for the removal of the body, either by friends or foes, and the clothes left behind.

Luke 24:13

Ver. 13. And behold two of them went that same day,.... Two of the disciples,

as the Persic version reads; not of the eleven apostles, for it is certain that one of them was not an apostle; but two of the seventy disciples, or of the society of the hundred and twenty that were together: one of these was Cleophas or Alphaeus, as appears from Lu 24:18 the other is, by some, thought to be Luke the Evangelist, as Theophylact on the place observes, who, out of modesty, mentions not his name; others have thought that Nathanael was the other person; and Dr. Lightfoot seems very confident, from
Lu 24:34 that the Apostle Peter was the other; but it is not certain who he was: however, this very remarkable affair happened, and therefore a "behold" is prefixed to it, on the "same day"; the first day of the week; the day on which Christ rose from the dead; and the third day from his death it was, see Lu 24:1 that these two disciples travelled:

to a village called Emmaus; whither they might go either to see their friends, or upon some secular affair, or to be retired from the noise of the city, and be secure from danger by their enemies; or it may be this was the place of Cleophas's abode, who, with the other disciple, was returning home after the celebration of the passover. The place whither they went is particularly mentioned, not because it was a place of note, but for the certainty of the fact. It was now but a village, having been burnt since the death of Herod the great, by the order of Varus, the Roman governors {l}; though it afterwards became a considerable city, if it is the same with Nicopolis, as Jerom asserts {m}; though that rather seems to be the Ammaus, or Chammath of Tiberias, since it was situated by the lake of Genesareth. However, it is certain, that Emmaus is reckoned, by Josephus {n}, one of their chief cities; and Jarchi, and Bartenora {o} say, it is the name of a city; and Pliny {p} calls it a toparchy, and says it was watered with fountains; which agrees with the account the Jews give of it {q}.

"R. Jochanan ben Zaccai had five disciples; all the time that he stood, or lived, they sat before him; when he departed, they went to Jabneh; and R. Eleazar ben Arach went to his wife, owamal, "at Emmaus", a place of pleasant waters, and a beautiful habitation."

It is mentioned, in company with Bethoron, and Lud, or Lydda: it is said {r},

"from Bethoron, to owama, "Emmaus", is the mountain; and from "Emmaus" to Lydda, the plain; and from Lydda to the sea, the valley."

Bethoron is mentioned as near Nicopolis, by Jerom; and perhaps is the same with Betholone in Pliny: in Emmaus was a market: at least there was a

butcher's market in it; hence we read of, owama lv
Mylja, "the shambles of Emmaus" {s}; mention is made of a place so called, as in:

"So they went forth with all their power, and came and pitched by Emmaus in the plain country." (1 Maccabees 3:40)

"So the camp removed, and pitched upon the south side of Emmaus." (1 Maccabees 3:57)

"Now when Judas heard thereof he himself removed, and the valiant men with him, that he might smite the king's army which was at Emmaus," (1 Maccabees 4:3)

Another Emmaus is here meant:

which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs; or seven miles and a half; for eight furlongs make a mile. Josephus {t} says the same, and confirms the account of the distance of this place from Jerusalem.

{l} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 17. c. 12. {m} Epitaph. Paul. fol. 59. B. Catalog. Script. Eccl. fol. 98. B. Tom. I. & in Dan. viii. 14. Tom. V. {n} Antiqu. I. 14. c. 18. {o} In Misn. Ceritot, c. 3. sect. 7. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 14. {q} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 74. 4. {r} T. Hieros. Sheviith, c. 9. fol. 38. 4. {s} Misn. Ceritot, c. 3. sect. 7. T. Bah, Cholin, fol. 91. 2. & Maccot, fol. 14. 1. {t} De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 27.

Luke 24:14

Ver. 14. And they talked together,.... As they went along, on their journey:

of all these things which had happened; concerning their dear Lord and master, Jesus Christ; how that he had been betrayed by Judas, one of his disciples; had been led bound, first to Annas, and then Caiaphas, the high priest, in whose palace he had been condemned to death; how that he was delivered by the chief priests and elders, to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of whom they requested, that he might be crucified: they very likely discoursed also, about the ignominious treatment he met with, both in the high priest's palace and: in Pilate's hall; and how at last he was crucified between two thieves, and was dead and buried; and particularly, they might be talking together of what they had heard that morning from the women, that had been at the sepulchre of Christ, and reported that he was risen.

Luke 24:15

Ver. 15. And it came to pass, that while they communed together,.... About the above said things:

and reasoned; with one another; about the truth and credibility of the late report:

Jesus himself drew near: the Persic version adds, "suddenly"; he came up at once to them, as if he had been a traveller on the road, and overtook them:

and went with them; joined himself in company to them, and travelled with them.

Luke 24:16

Ver. 16. But their eyes were holden, &c] The Ethiopic version adds, "and were covered"; and the Arabic version renders it, "now he had veiled their eyes", ascribing it to Christ; and the Persic version renders it, "and the eyes of the disciples were shut": to me it seems, that their eyes: were held downwards; or they kept looking upon the ground as they walked, which was a posture suitable to their melancholy spirits; and there might be a peculiar influence of divine power and providence, so disposing them, that they did not look up to Christ their new fellow traveller, who walked on with them: and this was so ordered, that they should not know him; that so they might not be surprised at once, as they would have been, had they looked at him, and discerned who he was; and that they might converse the more freely with him; and that he might convince them of their stupidity and unbelief, by proper arguments.

Luke 24:17

Ver. 17. And he said unto them,.... That is, "Jesus", as the Persic version, or "our Lord", as the Ethiopic version, expresses it:

what manner of communications are these, that ye have one to another, as ye walk? what is the subject of your discourse; what is it your conversation one with another turns upon in your journey?

and are sad? what melancholy story are you telling to one another, which causes such sadness of countenance, and dejection of mind? for Christ by their countenances and gestures, as the shaking of their heads, and lifting up and wringing of their hands, could easily discern as man, as well as know as God, that they were full of sorrow and heaviness, and which were occasioned and increased by what they were talking of.

Luke 24:18

Ver. 18. And one of them, whose name was Cleophas,.... Or Alphaeus, for it is the same name; he was one of the seventy disciples, and father of the Apostles James and Jude, and brother to Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of Christ, as before observed:

answering, said unto him, art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? The Persic version reads, "in these two days": the sense that whereas he appeared to come from Jerusalem, that if he was only a stranger and a sojourner, and not a stated inhabitant there, he could not be ignorant of what had been done there a few days past; or if he was, that he must be the only stranger, and the only man, that was so; for the facts referred to were so notorious, that every one must know them, inhabitant or stranger.

Luke 24:19

Ver. 19. And he said unto them, what things?.... Still appearing as if he was ignorant, and in order to, draw out of them a particular relation:

and they said unto him; both of them, or rather Cleophas, for himself and his companion:

concerning Jesus of Nazareth; that is, what had happened to him, who was commonly known by this name, and was called so by way of contempt: but

which was a prophet; not only a foreteller of things to come, as he foretold his sufferings, death, and resurrection, the troubles that should befall his disciples, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the world; but he was a preacher of the Gospel, an eminent one, a famous and extraordinary one, that prophet which Moses spake of should come; and who was mighty in deed and word: he was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, which he showed by the miracles he wrought; such as healing the sick, cleansing lepers, casting out devils, restoring sight to the blind, causing the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, and raising the dead to life; and in the doctrines he taught, which were with authority, and such as never man spake:

before God and all the people; he was sent and anointed by God as a prophet, and approved by him; who bore a testimony to him by a voice from heaven, declaring him to be his beloved Son; and the works he wrought, were done publicly before men, who glorified God on that account; and the doctrines he taught, were not taught in secret, but in the synagogues and in the temple, in the audience of all the people, and to their surprise and admiration.

Luke 24:20

Ver. 20. And how the chief priests and our rulers,.... Civil and ecclesiastic:

delivered him; to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor:

to be condemned to death; the death of the cross, by the said governor, having first seized him and examined him before their sanhedrim, and pronounced him guilty of death:

and have crucified him; for though Pilate passed the sentence, and the Roman soldiers executed it, yet these men are said to do it, because it was at their request, and through their instigation, that it was done; hence Peter charges the Jewish sanhedrim with it, **Ac 4:10**.

Luke 24:21

Ver. 21. But we trusted,.... "In him", as the Ethiopic version adds:

that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; they thought, hoped, and believed, that he was the Messiah, spoken of under the character of the Redeemer of Israel; and they had been in expectation of redemption by him, though only of a temporal kind, from the Roman yoke and bondage; but now they could not tell what to think of it, since he was dead; indeed they were not altogether without hope, since there was a report of his being raised from the dead; but what credit was to be given to that, they could not say: but certain it is, that he was the true Messiah, and promised Redeemer; and who was to redeem, and has redeemed the whole Israel of God; even all the elect of God, whether among Jews or Gentiles, from the servitude and damning power of sin, from the slavery of Satan, and the bondage of the law, and from every enemy; and that by his precious blood, his sufferings and death, the very things which were the occasion of these disciples' doubts about him, as the Redeemer: so the Jews say {u},

"that upon the death of the Messiah, the son of Joseph, all Israel shall flee to the deserts, and such as are of a doubtful heart shall turn to the nations of the world and say, "is this the redemption we have waited for", for the Messiah is slain?"

And besides all this, today is the third day, since these things were done; which is either mentioned, as an aggravation of the ignorance of the stranger, that these things should be done so lately, as within three days, and yet he should be ignorant of them, or not remember them, and need to be informed about them; or as a further reason of their doubting, that it was now the third day since the death of Jesus, and there was nothing certain of his resurrection, only the report of the women, which they could not depend upon; or else as a reason of their trusting, that he was the person that should redeem Israel; since this was the third day from his crucifixion; the day on which he said he should rise from the dead, and of which there was a report spread, not to be disproved, that he was that day actually risen: this day is greatly observed by the Jews {w}: they take notice that the Scriptures speak of several remarkable third days; and besides Ge 22:4 is cited a passage which refers to the resurrection of Christ on the third day; and they speak

"of the third day of the tribes, Ge 42:18 of the third day of the spies, **Jos 2:16** of the third day of the giving of the law, Ex 19:16 of the third day of Jonas, **Jon 1:17** (which was a type of the resurrection of the Messiah, Mt 12:40) of the third day of those that came up out of the captivity, **Ezr 8:15** of the third day of the resurrection of the dead, **Ho 6:2** and of the third day of Esther, **Es 5:1**."

{u} Abkath Rocel, l. 1. par. 1. sign. 7. p. 53. {w} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 56. fol. 49. 3.

Luke 24:22

Ver. 22. Yea, and certain women also of our company,.... Who came with them from Galilee, who were of the same religion, professed the same faith, and belonged to the same society and community; who they were, and their names, see Lu 24:10.

made us astonished; surprised us, with an account they brought, so that we could not, nor can we now tell, what to think or say of it; it is such an one, we know not how to believe, nor to disprove; it is we fear too good to be true, and should it be as they report, it is amazing indeed:

which were early at the sepulchre; of the person now mentioned, Jesus of Nazareth; even this very morning, by break of day, at least at sunrise, whither they went to anoint his body, thinking nothing at all about the resurrection of him.

Luke 24:23

Ver. 23. And when they found not his body,.... In the sepulchre, as they expected, and so could not do what they intended:

they came; they returned from the sepulchre with great haste, and in a very great fright, and came to the disciples, where they were assembled;

saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels. The Syriac and Persic versions add, "there"; at the sepulchre, for there were two of them at least, if not three; see Lu 24:4. They not only reported, that they could not find the body of Jesus, but also that they had seen some angels: or the sense may be, that they told them, that though they could not find the dead body of their Lord, yet they had seen him alive, as they did by the way, as they were returning, Mt 28:9 and also that a vision of angels had appeared to them:

which said that he was alive; see Lu 24:5. So that it was not a deception of their sight, they certainly saw both Christ and the angels; and were assured from their testimony, as well as by their own eyes and ears, that he was certainly risen: now, though this was so clear a point, and so well attested, the disciples knew not how to believe it; they were perplexed about it; they could neither receive it, nor discredit it; they hoped it might be so, but feared it was not.

Luke 24:24

Ver. 24. And certain of them which were with us,.... The apostles and brethren, who were together when the women came, and made the above report; particularly Peter, who is named, Lu 24:12 and John, who also was with him, as appears from Joh 20:2 these

went to the sepulchre; of Jesus, to satisfy themselves and their companions, as much as they could, about these things:

and found it even so as the women had said; that is, that the body of Jesus was not there, and that the linen clothes were laid by themselves:

but him they saw not; the Ethiopic version reads, "and him they found not": the women, as before observed, might report, that though they found not the body in the grave, yet they saw him alive by the way, but so did not the disciples; which made it look very strange, doubtful, and suspicious, that the women should see him, and not his apostles; they could not tell how to account for this, and this made them to be in suspense about the fact.

Luke 24:25

Ver. 25. Then he said unto them,.... That is, Jesus said unto them, as the Syriac and Persic versions read:

O fools; not in a natural sense, as if they were destitute of the common understanding of men; nor in a moral sense, as wicked men, and as they themselves had been in their unregenerate estate; nor in a way of anger and contempt, and with a design to provoke; wherefore Christ did not act contrary to his own rule, in **Mt 5:22** but because they were so void of understanding in the Scriptures, and were so very ignorant of them, and were so blind as to the knowledge of them; particularly those which concerned the sufferings and resurrection of the Messiah, being influenced by the popular prejudices of education: he therefore expresses himself with much warmth, concern, and surprise, that he should have been so long with them, and they so long under his doctrine and ministry; besides the advantages of having the Scriptures, and being conversant with them from their youth; and which they daily read, and had heard expounded, and yet were so very senseless and stupid:

and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; that is, upon these points, concerning the sufferings of Christ, and his resurrection from the dead; and indeed, they were very slow of heart to believe, not only what the women reported from the angels, but even those of their brethren, who had seen him after he was risen; for which Christ upbraids them, Mr 16:14. Yea, one of them declared after all, that he would not believe, unless he saw the print of the nails in his hands and feet, and put his hand into it, and thrust it into his side; wherefore Christ had good reason to treat them in this sharp manner, and charge them with folly and incredulity; the Jews ought not to object to the word "fools", as unbecoming Christ, since they frequently represent God as making use of it; as for instance, it is said, {x}

"the holy blessed God said to them, Myjwv, "O ye fools" that are in the world, whatsoever ye do, ye do for your own necessities. ---And a little after, "O ye fools" that are in the world, he that labours on the evening of the sabbath, shall eat on the sabbath day."

{x} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 2. 2. & 3. 1.

Luke 24:26

Ver. 26. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things,.... Mentioned in Lu 24:20 as to be delivered by the chief priests, to be condemned to death, and to be crucified: Christ suffered many things in his personal character, being traduced as a sinful and wicked man, and a friend and encourager of sinners; as a man of immoral principles and practices; as an idolater, a blasphemer, an impostor, a seditious person; as one that had had familiarity with the devil, and did his miracles by his assistance, with a load of other reproaches; and these he endured, to answer to the loss of the divine honour and glory, sustained by the sin of man; and to teach his people patience, under the loss of their good names, characters, and reputations: and he suffered much in his body, in the infirmities of it; which he assumed with it, being in all things like to his brethren, excepting sin; and in the pains which he endured, through buffeting and scourging before his crucifixion, and when he hung upon the cross: and he suffered greatly in his soul, partly from the temptations of Satan; and partly from the treatment of his own disciples, through the frowardness of their spirits; and especially his being betrayed by one, denied by another, and forsaken by them all, must greatly afflict his mind; but chiefly from his bearing the loathsome sins of men, the strokes of justice, and the wrath of God; and particularly, through his being forsaken by him: and of all these there was a necessity; he ought to have suffered these things, as he did; the counsels and purposes of God, the covenant transactions and agreement he himself entered into with his Father, the prophecies of the Old Testament, and his own predictions concerning these things, together with the salvation of his people, in a way consistent with the justice of God, and the honour of his law, made them necessary:

and to enter into his glory; which began at his resurrection from the dead, and is seen in his exaltation and session at the right hand of God; upon his ascension he was received up to glory, entered into it, took possession of it, and is crowned with it; and which will still be more manifest, when he shall come to judge the world in righteousness; when his saints also shall appear in glory with him, and shall be everlasting spectators of his glory; and indeed, his entrance into glory is not merely for himself, but in the name and behalf of them. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "and so, or thus to enter into his glory"; that is, by the way of sufferings, which is the way through which his saints enter the kingdom,
Ac 14:22. And by a view of the glory that was to follow them, and which he and his people were to enjoy together, was he animated to endure them cheerfully and patiently; and this he is entered into, possesses and enjoys, as the consequence and reward of his sufferings.

Luke 24:27

Ver. 27. And beginning at Moses,.... The writings of Moses, the book of Genesis particularly, **Ge 3:15** which is the first prophecy of him, and speaks of the bruising of his heel, or of the sufferings of death by him; and proceeding to open and explain the types concerning his bearing the cross, and the lifting him upon it, in the business of Isaac, and of the brazen serpent; and concerning the shedding of his blood, and the oblation of himself in the sacrifices of the law of Moses:

and all the prophets; as David, Isaiah, Daniel, and others, very likely the passages in Ps 22:1.

he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures in Moses, and the Prophets,

concerning himself; especially concerning these two points, his sufferings, and his glory, which the Spirit of Christ, in the Prophets, testified before hand: besides the above places referred to, concerning the sufferings of Christ, see the following, in reference to his resurrection and glory, Ps 16:10.

Luke 24:28

Ver. 28. And they drew nigh unto the village,.... Of Emmaus, before they were aware; their conversation was so very agreeable, that the way did not seem tedious, nor the time long:

whither they went: where they intended to go, when they set out; this was the end of their journey; wherefore this village was not some intermediate place between Jerusalem and Emmaus:

and he made as though he would have gone further; when they were come to Emmaus, and to the house where the two disciples intended to make their abode that night: whether it was a public house, or an house of one of their friends, or one of their own, it matters not; Christ stopped not, nor attempted to go in with them, but stepped a few steps onward, taking his leave of them. The Ethiopic version renders it, "he began to pass by them": which carried in it an appearance as if he intended to have travelled further; and in it there was no fraud, dissimulation, or collusion: he would have gone some little way further, doubtless, had they not detained him; and he intended to stay with them, provided they should ask him, as he did, though not all night, which he never designed: the whole of it is nothing else but a piece of modesty, civility, and prudence; for guile was never found in his mouth.

Luke 24:29

Ver. 29. But they constrained him,.... The Arabic version renders it, "they held him by force": but the meaning is not, that they laid hands on him, and held him in a forcible manner against his will; but they were very urgent and importunate with him, that he would stay with them; they would take no denial. The sense is better given in the Persic version, "the disciples with importunity said unto him"; they were so pressing with arguments, that he could not withstand them:

saying, abide with us; his conversation was so engaging, and his discourses were so heavenly and instructive, so sweet and delightful, so powerful and moving, that they could not bear to part with him, but were exceeding desirous of his continuance with them, even though he was a stranger to them. And as they had in view their own pleasure and profit, so they urge the necessity and advantage of his stay, with respect to himself:

for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent; it might be four or five o'clock in the afternoon:

and he went in to tarry with them; for a while, not all night. So earnest, importunate, and resolute was the church, when she had found Christ, that he would abide with her, **So 3:4**.

Luke 24:30

Ver. 30. And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them,.... When they were sat down at table with the provisions before them:

he took bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them; as if he was the master of the house, when he was both a guest, and a stranger, and as he used to do at common meals, when he ate with his disciples; and thus he did, when he fed five thousand at one time, and four at another, Mt 14:19 see the notes there.
See Gill on "Mt 14:19".
See Gill on "Mt 15:26". Whether only Christ, and the two disciples, sat down together, or whether others that belonged to the house sat down with them, is not certain: if they were only three, they were a proper company to bless the bread together; that is, one in the name of the rest, they joining with him: if there were but two, they blessed, or said grace for themselves separately; but if three, the rules were these, according to the Jews {y}:

"three that eat together, they are obliged to call a blessing (or for one) --and how do they call a blessing among three? one says, let us bless: if there are three besides himself, he says, bless ye. --Three that eat together have no power to divide;"

that is, to make a separate blessing, but are obliged to it conjunctly: thus here, being three at least, Christ blessed bread for them all.

{y} Misn. Betasot, c. 7. sect. 4, 3, 4.

Luke 24:31

Ver. 31. And their eyes were opened,.... Not that they were before shut, or closed up, but what before held them was removed, and what hindered their sight and knowledge was taken away; and perhaps these actions of his taking the bread, and blessing, and breaking, and giving it to them, might put them in mind of him, and cause them to look wistfully at him, when, what beclouded their sight being gone, and he appearing in his usual form, they perceived who he was:

and they knew him; to be their dear Lord and master, for whose death they had been sorrowing, and of redemption by him, and of whose resurrection they had been doubting:

and vanished out of their sight; not that he vanished as a spectre, or as smoke vanishes into air; but agility being a property of his risen body, he very suddenly, and swiftly, and in a moment, withdrew himself from them; for if he could withdraw himself from company in a very speedy manner before his resurrection, much more after; see **Lu 4:30**. The Syriac version renders it, "he was taken away from them"; as if some of the ministering angels were made use of to remove him at once; but this seems not necessary: the Arabic version renders it, "he was hidden from them"; that same power of his that held their eyes all the while they were travelling together, interposed some object between him and them, so that he could not be seen by them that very instant, even before he was gone out of the house.

Luke 24:32

Ver. 32. And they said one to another,.... After Christ was gone, being surprised at what happened, that they should not know him all that while; and that as soon as they did, he should disappear, or withdraw himself in this manner:

did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? concerning himself, his sufferings, death, and resurrection, which are in Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. The Scriptures are as a sealed book to men, learned and unlearned; and none so fit to open them as the lion of the tribe of Judah: he did open and explain them to these his disciples, as well as conversed with them about other things, as they travelled together; and his words came with such evidence, power, and sweetness, that they were ravished with them; their minds were irradiated with beams and rays of divine light; their hearts were warmed and glowed within them; they became fervent in spirit, and their affections were raised and fired; they found the word to be as burning fire within them; and they now knew somewhat what it was to be baptized with fire, which is Christ's peculiar office to administer; see Ps 39:3 they seem as it were not only to reflect on these things with wonder and pleasure, but also to charge themselves with want of thought, with inattention and stupidity; since they might have concluded from the uncommon evidence, force, and energy with which his words came to them, who he was, seeing no man could speak as he did, and with such effect as his words had.

Luke 24:33

Ver. 33. And they rose up the same hour,.... Though it was now evening, and the day was spent and gone; and notwithstanding what business they might have to do at Emmaus, about which they came, and even might not have made an end of eating, or sufficiently refreshed themselves; and though they had had a walk of sixty furlongs that afternoon, yet being big with this appearance of Christ to them, and in haste to impart the joyful news to their fellow disciples, they immediately rose up from table:

and returned to Jerusalem; the same night, from whence they had come that day:

and found the eleven gathered together; at a certain house known to these two, and who met together in the night season, for the sake of privacy, and for fear of the Jews, and who were now up, though it was late: these are called "eleven", because Judas was now gone from them, and dead; and this being their whole number, it is used, though every one might not be present, as particularly Thomas was not; see Joh 20:19

and them that were with them; the seventy disciples, and other believers, both men and women; see **Ac 1:15**.

Luke 24:34

Ver. 34. Saying,.... The following words; and which are not the words of the two disciples, but of the apostles, whom they found gathered together; and who, just as these two entered the room, said to one another, or rather to these two disciples, to whom at once, and as soon as ever they saw them, not being able to hold it in, they communicated the good news they had just heard, and which; perhaps, Peter had been just telling them:

the Lord is risen indeed; it is certainly matter of fact: for though the women were not credited, but their accounts were as idle tales, and, at most, only occasioned some thoughts and reflections, which they could not settle; yet now they were satisfied of the reality of his resurrection, and speak of it with the greatest assurance and joy:

and hath appeared unto Simon; he appeared to him first, before he did to any of the rest, though he had denied him in so shameful a manner: which is an instance of great grace and goodness: and he appeared to him, on purpose, no doubt, to comfort him under his distress; as well as being the oldest, disciple, and a man of figure and credit among them, his report would be believed. None of the writers of the New Testament take notice of this appearance besides, only the Apostle Paul, 1Co 15:5. It is certain that it was the same day Christ rose from the dead; and was after the women had seen him, and after Peter had, been at the sepulchre; and before the return of the two disciples from Emmaus, and before he showed himself to the rest of the apostles.

Luke 24:35

Ver. 35. And they told what things were done in the way,.... That is, when the eleven had done speaking, and had finished their report, which they did with great joy and pleasure; then "these two disciples", as the Persic version expresses it, to confirm them the more in the truth of Christ's resurrection, gave them a particular account, how, as they were travelling, Jesus joined himself to them, and entered into a conversation with them, and opened the Scriptures in a sweet and powerful manner to them; and yet their eyes were holden all the while, so that they did not perceive who he was:

and how he was known of them in breaking bread; that so it was, that whilst he was breaking bread, and giving it to them, and they were eating together, their eyes were opened, and they saw plainly who he was: now, though this was a common meal, and not the ordinance of the Lord's supper, yet since Christ made himself known to his disciples at an ordinary meal, may not his followers expect that he will make himself known to them, and grant them communion with him at his table? and which should be no small argument to engage believers to a constant attendance on it.

Luke 24:36

Ver. 36. And as they thus spake,.... While the two disciples, that came from Emmaus, were giving the above relation; just as they had finished it, and had scarcely done speaking:

Jesus himself stood in the midst of them; the apostles; who were assembled together in a certain house, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews; and it was on the evening of the same day Christ rose from the dead, and late at night; see Joh 20:19 and without hearing the doors opened, or the sound of the feet of Jesus, and without seeing him come in, and approach unto them, he, in a moment, at once, stood in the middle of them, as if he had immediately rose up out of the earth before them; and so the Persic version renders it, "Jesus rose up out the midst of them": by his power he opened the and secretly let himself in, and shut them again at once; and by the agility of his body moved so swiftly, that he was not discerned until he was among them, where he stood to be seen, and known by them; whereby he made that good in a corporeal sense, which he had promised in a spiritual sense, Mt 18:20 and was an emblem of his presence in his churches, and with his ministers, to the end of the world.

And saith unto them, peace be unto you; which was an usual form of salutation among the Jews; See Gill on "Joh 20:19". The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions add, "I am he, fear not"; but this clause is not in the Greek copies.

Luke 24:37

Ver. 37. But they were terrified and affrighted,.... At the sight of him, and at his sudden appearance among them, without being heard, or seen before, and the doors shut and bolted; they could not tell how to account for it, that it should be Jesus himself risen from the dead in his own body, though they had been just speaking of his resurrection, and had had a confirmation of it from the disciples that went to Emmaus:

and supposed that they had seen a spirit; that what they saw was a phantom, or apparition, or a spirit, that had assumed, and appeared in, the shape of Jesus, and was not he himself.

Luke 24:38

Ver. 38. And he said unto them, why are ye troubled,.... Who had more reason to rejoice, and be glad, as they were when they knew that it was Jesus:

and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? whether what they saw was Jesus, or an apparition, which gave them a great deal of trouble and uneasiness, and filled them with fright and terror; as it was, and is usual with persons when they fancy they see a spirit, or an apparition; see Mt 14:26.

Luke 24:39

Ver. 39. Behold my hands, and my feet,.... The Evangelist John adds, "and side"; that is, the prints of the nails and spear, in his hands, and feet, and side; and the wounds they made there, and the scars they left behind; by which they might be convinced he was not a spirit, and be assured of the truth of his resurrection, and that in the same numerical body in which he suffered; as well as that it might be observed by them how great was his love to them, to endure what he did for them.

Handle me and see; or know by feeling, as well as by sight; so that if the one was not sufficient, the other might confirm; sight might be deceived, but feeling could not: Apollonius Tyaneus, to them that did not know whether he was alive or dead, and who took him for a spirit, proposed himself to be touched, and handled, that they might be convinced {z}:

for a spirit hath not flesh and bones; nothing but appearance, or air at most; no solid substance to be felt and handled:

as ye see me have; or may perceive, both by sight and feeling.

{z} Philostratus de Vita Apollon. l. 8, c. 5.

Luke 24:40

Ver. 40. And when he had thus spoken,.... And put them into a method of satisfying themselves by their senses:

he showed them his hands and his feet; that is, he held them forth to be seen and handled by them, which no doubt they did; and which were the infallible proofs by which he showed himself alive to them after his passion; and by which they knew the truth of his incarnation, or that he assumed a true and real body, and of the resurrection of the same body; see **Ac 1:3**.

Luke 24:41

Ver. 41. And while they yet believed not for joy,.... Though they had been prepared for the belief of resurrection, by the report of the women, the relation of Simon Peter, and the account of the two disciples that came from Emmaus; yet such was the joy they were transported with, upon the evidence of it, the news was so good, and the favour and benefit so great, that they could scarcely believe their own senses of seeing and feeling:

and wondered; at the sight of their risen Lord, and at the power of God, which was seen herein: the thing was marvellous in their eyes, and was a wonderful confirmation of the truth of his deity, sonship, and Messiahship.

He said unto them, have ye any meat? not that he needed any, or was hungry and desirous of some to satisfy, or gratify his appetite, but to give them a further proof that he was not a spirit; and that he was risen from the dead in a true and real body, which was capable of eating and drinking.

Luke 24:42

Ver. 42. And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish,.... Which was left by them at supper, of which they had been eating; for being fishermen, most of them, this was agreeable food to them:

and of an honeycomb; not to eat with the fish, but after it.

Luke 24:43

Ver. 43. And he took it, and did eat before them. That is, he took both the fish, and the honeycomb, and ate of them before them, they looking on all the while; and which was a proof of his being truly risen from the dead, and not a spectre, or apparition, and which they failed not afterwards to make use of; see Ac 10:41. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, "he took the rest, or what remained, and gave it to them".

Luke 24:44

Ver. 44. And he said unto them, these are the words which I spake unto you,.... Or this is the substance of them, the sense and meaning of them; for what follows, we do not find any where expressed in so many words:

while I was yet with you; that is, whilst he was in his state of humiliation, whilst he dwelt among them, and had his abode with them; otherwise he was now with them, but not to continue with them; in a short time he was to ascend to his God, and their God, to his Father, and their Father:

that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me: concerning his sufferings, and death, and resurrection from the dead, spoken of in **Ge 3:15**
Ps 16:10 and in this he refers to what he had said to his disciples in Mt 16:21 and alludes to the usual distinction among the Jews of the books of the Old Testament into the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa; among which last stands the book of Psalms, and is put for the whole; a division often to be met with in both their Talmuds {a}, and other writings {b}.

{a} T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 47. 3. T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 15. 1. & 18. 2. & 21. 1. Roshhashana, fol. 32. 1. Taanith, fol. 8. 1. & 16. 1. & 20. 1. & 30. 1. Megilla, fol. 21. 2. & 24. 1. Bava Bathra, fol. 8. 1. & 13. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 1. {b} Zohar in Lev. fol. 39. 2.

Luke 24:45

Ver. 45. Then opened he their understanding,.... He not only opened their hearts, to attend to what he said, and the proofs he gave of his resurrection from the dead in a true body; but he removed the veil from the eyes of their minds, and gave them an understanding of the sacred writings, respecting this matter:

that they might understand the Scriptures; concerning his sufferings, death, and resurrection, which they were very ignorant of before, and which were as a sealed book unto them, Joh 20:9 though they had been from their infancy brought up to the reading of the Scriptures, and had had the advantage of Christ's ministry for some years; which shows the necessity of the special illumination of the Spirit, and the influence of his grace to remove the darkness of the mind, and give the true sense of the sacred writings.

Luke 24:46

Ver. 46. And he said unto them, thus it is written,.... In the above cited books of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms; not what after follows, in so many words, but the matter and substance thereof:

and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; it was necessary, both because of the decree and appointment of God, and because of the prophecies and predictions of the Old Testament; see Lu 24:25.

Luke 24:47

Ver. 47. And that repentance and remission of sins,.... Which are the sum of the Gospel ministry; see Ac 20:21 the doctrine of "repentance" is not of the law, which neither requires, nor admits of it, but of the Gospel. The Persic version calls it, "the Gospel of repentance"; a doctrine preached by John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles; and the thing itself is a blessing of the covenant, a gift of God's grace, and in the hands of Christ to bestow; and therefore the doctrine of it is published in his name, as well as remission of sins; which, though it springs from the free grace of God, is procured by the blood of Christ, and through him it is preached. These two are joined together, not because repentance is the cause of pardon; for repentance makes no satisfaction for sin, or atonement for it; nor does the law at all regard it: tears of repentance will not wash away sin; notwithstanding these, iniquity remains marked before God; Christ's tears themselves did not take away, nor atone for sin; his blood must be shed, and it was shed for the remission of it; and that is the only meritorious cause it. The Syriac version wrongly reads, "repentance for the remission of sins": the Jews {c} indeed have a notion that repentance atones for sin; but it is a very bad one, and has no countenance neither from the law of nature, nor the law of Moses: but these two are put together, because there is a connection between them, as there is between repentance, and life, and salvation: repentance issues in these things; and to whomsoever the grace of repentance is given, to them the forgiveness of sins is applied; nor need any truly repenting sinner despair of the pardon of his sin: and indeed, there is no true evangelical repentance without views, or at least hopes of pardoning grace, and mercy; for that is attended with faith in Christ, and is heightened by the discoveries of forgiving love: such who have the fullest view of the remission of their sins, have the clearest sense of sin, and have the most sorrow for it, and loath themselves on account of it, and are ashamed of it, and do most frankly confess it, and most thoroughly forsake it. And now it was necessary, according to Old Testament prophecies, that both these

should be preached in his name; in the name of the Messiah; by his authority, and as coming through him; since the remission of sin is by his blood; and he is exalted as a prince, and a Saviour, to give both repentance and forgiveness of sins to all the Israel of God, whether Jews or Gentiles; and therefore it is fitting and proper that these should be preached,

among all nations; of the world, where God's elect are; that so they may be brought hereby to repentance, and receive the forgiveness of their sins:

beginning at Jerusalem; from whence, according to the Old Testament, the word and doctrine of the Lord were to go forth, Ps 110:2 and is particularly mentioned, because the Gospel was to be first preached to the Jews, and be the power of God unto salvation to them; and because that in Jerusalem lived those who had been concerned in crucifying Christ, to whom repentance and forgiveness must be preached; and which would be a great encouragement to the vilest of sinners, to hope for mercy and forgiveness, since such received both.

{c} T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 7. 1.

Luke 24:48

Ver. 48. And ye are witnesses of these things. As they were witnesses of the truth of his humanity, having seen, and heard, and handled him, both before, and after his resurrection from the dead, and of all that he did, of all the miracles that he wrought in Jerusalem, Judea, and Galilee, and of his transfiguration on the mount; so likewise of his sorrows in the garden, and of his sufferings in the palace of the high priest, and in Pilate's hall, and on the cross; and of his death, which was the death of the cross; and also of his resurrection from the dead, in the same body, to whom he showed himself alive by many infallible proofs; by showing them the print of the nails in his hands and feet; by being handled by them; by eating and drinking in their presence; and by conversing with them for the space of forty days: and their business was also to testify the doctrine of repentance, and remission of sins, in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth, which they accordingly did; see **Ac 1:8**.

Luke 24:49

Ver. 49. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you,.... By which is meant the promise of the Spirit, called the promise of the Father, because he was promised by the Father to be sent, and poured on the saints in the times of the Messiah, Isa 44:3 and because Christ promised to pray the Father for him, and to send him from him; and that the Father should send him in his name, who would fit and qualify them for, and assist them in bearing a testimony for him; since he would teach them all things, lead them into all truth, take of the things of Christ, and show them to them, and bring to their remembrance all things they had seen and heard: and this promise of the Father was to be sent in a very short time, in ten days time, as accordingly it was; and might be very properly said to be sent "upon" them, since, when he was sent down, he sat upon them in the appearance of fire; and this being a marvellous thing, as well as of great moment and importance, it is introduced with a "behold", as a note both of admiration and attention.

But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem; for the space of ten days; here they were to continue during that time, and not depart thence; yea, they were to sit there, as the word used signifies: they were to sit still, and be silent; they were not to begin to preach; they were only to attend to prayer and Christian conversation, and to wait for the Spirit, the promise of the Father; and who also is designed in the following clause:

until ye be endued with power from on high; the Spirit of God is a spirit of might, and of power, as well as of knowledge, of understanding, of counsel, of love, and of a sound mind; whereby they were to be fortified, and inspired with courage and greatness of soul, so as to look their greatest adversaries in the face with boldness and intrepidity, and freely, and without fear, speak unto them; and whereby their ministrations would be succeeded to the conversion of many souls; and accordingly so it was: for after the Spirit was poured out upon them, they who before were timorous and fearful, came forth publicly, with undaunted courage, and resolution, and boldness, to the amazement of their adversaries; and their preaching was with the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; who may be said to be "from on high", since he descended from heaven upon them; and they may be said to be "endued", or "clothed" with him, since there was such an extra ordinary and plentiful effusion of his gifts and graces on them: and now they were to wait in Jerusalem for this, that in the place where the Spirit had been dishonoured and blasphemed, and the unpardonable sin against him had been committed by the Scribes and Pharisees, the might be in a most visible and signal manner honoured; and also, because the doctrine of the Lord was to go out of Zion, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. The Vulgate Latin version leaves out the word "Jerusalem", and reads only, "sit ye in the city until", &c. but then no other city can be designed.

Luke 24:50

Ver. 50. And he led them out as far as Bethany,.... Not the town of Bethany; could that be thought, it might be supposed that he led his disciples thither, to pay a visit to his dear friends there, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, before his ascension; but the town of Bethany was fifteen furlongs, or near two miles distance from Jerusalem, Joh 11:18 whereas the place from whence Christ ascended was but a sabbath day's journey from it, which was two thousand cubits, or about a mile, **Ac 1:12**. This Bethany, therefore, was a tract of land, so called from the town, which began at the Mount of Olives, where Bethphage ended; see Mr 11:1 and hither from Jerusalem Christ led his disciples, in order to ascend to heaven in their sight; and this was the spot of ground, where he began to ride in triumph to Jerusalem, and here he ascended in a triumphant manner to heaven; this was the place he frequently retired to for solemn, and solitary prayer, and where he had put up many a strong cry to God, and now from hence he ascended to him; this was the place whither he went after he had ate his last passover, where he was taken, and from whence he came to suffer and die for his people:

and he lift up his hands, and blessed them. The lifting up of his hands was not in order to put them upon his disciples; though the Ethiopic version adds, "and put them on"; nor was it used as a prayer gesture; nor was the blessing of them prayer wise, or by praying for a blessing on them; but as Aaron, his type, lift up his hands towards the people of Israel, and blessed them, when he had offered the offerings for them, **Le 9:22** so Christ, as the great high priest, having offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people, lift up his hands towards his apostles, and blessed them in an authoritative way, by bestowing blessings upon them: he blessed them with a larger measure of the Spirit; for though they were to wait some few days longer for the extraordinary effusion of the Spirit, yet, in the mean while, they received from him more of it than they had formerly had; for he breathed upon them, and said, receive the Holy Ghost, Joh 20:22. He blessed them with larger measures of grace, and with more spiritual light, and understanding into the Scriptures of truth, and with much inward peace of mind, and with the fresh discoveries of pardoning love; and which seemed necessary, since by their conduct towards him, one by denying him, and the rest by forsaking him, the peace of their minds was broken, and they needed a fresh application of forgiving grace. The form of blessing the people used by Aaron, and his sons, the priests, who were types of Christ, is recorded in **Nu 6:23** and though our Lord might not use the same form in blessing his disciples, yet it seems he used the same gesture, lifting up his hands, as they did. The Targumists say {d}, the blessing of the priests was done by stretching, or spreading out their hands; but other Jewish writers observe, it was by lifting them up: concerning which their rule is {e};

"in the province, the priests lift up their hands, as high as their shoulders, but in the sanctuary, above their heads, except the high priest, who did not lift up his hands above the plate of gold on his forehead."

The reason of this was, because the name Jehovah was written upon it, and it was not proper his hands should be lifted up above that. The account Maimonides {f} gives of this affair is;

"how is the lifting up of hands? in the borders, at the time the messenger of the congregation comes to service, when he has said, who ever will, &c. all the priests that stand in the synagogue, remove from their places, and go, and ascend the desk (or pulpit), and stand there with their faces to the temple, and their backs to the people, and their fingers closed within their hands, until the messenger of the congregation has finished the confession, or thanksgiving; and then they turn their faces to the people, and stretch out their fingers, and lift up their hands to their shoulders and begin to bless, and the messenger of the congregation pronounces them (the blessings) word by word, &c. How is the blessing of the priests in the sanctuary? the priests go up into the desk (or pulpit), after the priests have finished the morning daily service, and lift up their hands above, over their heads, except the high priest, who does not lift up his hands above the plate of gold, on his forehead; and one pronounces them (the blessings) word for word, as they do in the borders (in the country), &c."

And as our Lord used this gesture in blessing, it is very likely he complied with another rule, by expressing it in the Hebrew tongue; for the Jews say {g}, the blessing of the priests is not said in any place, but in the holy tongue.

{d} Targum Jon. in Num. vi. 23. & Targum in Cant. vii. 7. {e} Misn Sota, c. 7. sect. 6. Bemidbar Rabba sect. 11. fol. 203. 3. {f} Hilchot Tephilla, c. 14. sect. 3. 9. {g} Hilchot Tephilla, c. 14. sect. 11. Vid. Targum Jon. & Rabba, ut supra, & T. Bab. Sota, fol. 38. 1.

Luke 24:51

Ver. 51. And it came to pass, while he blessed them,.... Just as he was finishing the words, by which he expressed the blessings he bestowed on them:

he was parted from them; as Elijah was from Elisha: their spiritual and mystical union by him remained, which is indissoluble; nor was his gracious presence from them withdrawn; nor was this parting in anger and resentment, as he sometimes does withdraw from his people, on account of their sinful conduct, in a little wrath, for a moment, resenting their unbecoming carriage; but this parting was while he was blessing them, and was only in body; his heart was still with them; it was a withdrawing of his corporeal presence from them, and that but for a while; he will come again a second time from heaven, from whence the saints expect him, and then they will meet, and never part more: and carried up into heaven; by his divine power, as God, by virtue of which he ascended himself, he went up gradually, till he became invisible to his disciples; or through the agility of his human body; for the bodies of the saints, when raised, will be like the angels, swift and nimble, and capable of moving from place to place, and of ascending and descending; and much more the glorious body of Christ, according to which, theirs will be conformed; though neither of these deny the use of means, that might be made, as of a cloud, and of angels; for a cloud received him out of the sight of the apostles; and there were the twenty thousand chariots of God, even thousands of angels, which attended him, when he ascended on high, and in which he may be properly said to be carried up into heaven, Ac 1:9 where he was received with a welcome, by his Father, by all the glorified saints, and holy angels, and where he is placed in human nature, at the right hand of God; is crowned with glory, and honour, and exalted above all creatures, human or angelic; and where he will remain until the time of the restitution of all things, and then he will descend to judge the quick and dead. The Arabic and Ethiopic Versions read both these clauses actively, "he parted himself", or "he departed from them, and went up into heaven"; and so reads the Syriac version the last clause.

Luke 24:52

Ver. 52. And they worshipped him,.... Not with a civil worship, as he was sometimes worshipped by men, in the days of his flesh, who, though they took him for some extraordinary person, knew him not to be the Son of God; but with religious worship as God: for by his resurrection from the dead, Christ was declared to be the Son of God, and both by that, and by his going to his Father, his ascension to heaven, the disciples were more confirmed in his proper deity, and divine sonship; and therefore worshipped him as God; by calling upon his name, ascribing blessings and honour, and glory, to him; by making him the object of their reverence and fear; and by trusting in him; and by doing every religious act in his name, and which they ever after continued to do:

and returned to Jerusalem: as they were ordered, where they were to tarry and wait for the pouring down of the Spirit: and this they did

with great joy; for though their Lord was parted from them, and was gone to heaven, this did not cause sorrow, as did his death, but, on the contrary, joy, even great joy; partly because of the glory he was entered into, and possessed of; and partly on account of what he was gone to do for them; to appear in the presence of God for them, to make intercession for them, to take possession of heaven in their name, and to prepare a place for them, as well as to receive gifts for them; and now they return to Jerusalem with great cheerfulness, in full hope and expectation, yea, assurance of faith, that they should shortly receive the promise of the Father.

Luke 24:53

Ver. 53. And were continually in the temple,.... At the time of worship, at the hours of prayer, or of public service; and perhaps always privately in an upper room in it, where they, with others, met frequently, and continued, with one accord, in prayer and supplication; See Gill on "Ac 1:14", a practice worthy of imitation, whether in the public or private way:

praising, and blessing God; for his Son Jesus Christ, who had died for their sins, was risen again for their justification, and was now ascended into heaven, to be their advocate there; and for all spiritual bless his Gospel to every creature.

Amen; so let him be praised, and blessed by all the saints, for all that is contained in this Gospel. In a manuscript copy of Beza's, it is added,

"the Gospel according to Saint Luke was published fifteen years after the ascension of Christ;"

See Gill on the title of this Gospel "Lu 1:1".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN

The author of this Gospel is John, the son of Zebedee and Salome, the brother of James the greater; he outlived the rest of the disciples, and wrote this Gospel after the other evangelists; and in it many things are recorded, which are not in the other Gospels; as various discourses of Christ, and miracles done by him; several incidents in his life, and circumstances that attended his sufferings and death: the occasion of it is generally thought to be the errors of Ebion and Cerinthus, who denied the divinity of Christ, asserted he was a mere man, and that he did not exist before his incarnation; and the design of it is to confute them: and it is easy to observe, that he begins his Gospel with the divinity of Christ; asserts him to be God, and proves him to be truly and properly so, by the works of creation, which were wrought by him, as well as shows that he was really man. Clemens {a} calls this Gospel of John, pneumatikon euaggelion "a spiritual Gospel", as indeed it is; consisting of the spiritual discourses of our Lord, on various occasions, both at the beginning, and in the course of his ministry, and especially a little before his sufferings and death: and the same writer observes, that John, the last of the evangelists, considering that in the other Gospels were declared the things relating to the body of Christ, that is, to him, as he was after the flesh; to his genealogy and birth as man; to what was done to him, or by him, in his infancy; to his baptism, temptations, journeys, &c. at the request of his familiar friends, and moved by the Spirit of God, composed this Gospel. Moreover, it is observed by some {b}, that the other three evangelists only record what was done by Christ, in one year after John the Baptist was cast into prison, as appears from **Mt 4:12** wherefore John, at the entreaty of his friends, put these things into his Gospel, which were done or said by Christ, before John was cast into prison.

He was called very early by Christ, though young; and was with him throughout the whole of his ministry, and was an eye and ear witness of what he here relates, and his testimony is to be received; he was the beloved disciple, he leaned on the bosom of Jesus, and had great intimacy with him; and might be privy to some things, which others were not acquainted with; and though he was a Galilean, and an unlearned man, **Ac 4:13** yet being endowed with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, he was abundantly qualified to write this book: for what some ancient writers {c} say of him, that he was a priest, and wore a plate, that is, of gold upon his forehead, cannot be true, since he was not of the tribe of Levi; and besides, only the high priest wore that upon his mitre; unless they mean, as seems most likely, that he was a Christian bishop: perhaps the mistake may arise from John the Baptist, who was of the priestly order, and is called by some Jewish writers {d}, John the high priest. When and where this Gospel was written, is not certain; some say in {e} Asia, after he had wrote his Revelation in Patmos; and others say particularly, that it was wrote at Ephesus; the title of it in the Syriac version, signifies much, which runs thus;

"the holy Gospel, the preaching of John, which he spoke and published in Greek at Ephesus."

And to the same purpose is the title of it in the Persic version;

"the Gospel of John, one of the twelve apostles, which was spoken in the city of Ephesus, in the Greek Roman tongue."

{a} Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 14. {b} Ib. l. 3. c. 24. {c} Polycrates in ib. l. 3. c. 31. & l. 5. c. 24. & Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccles. fol. 96. sect. 55. {d} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2. {e} Hieron. Prolog. Evang. Joannis.

Ver. 1. In the beginning was the word,.... That this is said not of the written word, but of the essential word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is clear, from all that is said from hence, to **Joh 1:14** as that this word was in the beginning, was with God, and is God; from the creation of all things being ascribed to him, and his being said to be the life and light of men; from his coming into the world, and usage in it; from his bestowing the privilege of adoption on believers; and from his incarnation; and also there is a particular application of all this to Christ, **Joh 1:15**. And likewise from what this evangelist elsewhere says of him, when he calls him the word of life, and places him between the Father and the Holy Ghost; and speaks of the record of the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus, as the same thing; and represents him as a warrior and

conqueror, **1Jo 1:1**. Moreover this appears to be spoken of Christ, from what other inspired writers have said of him, under the same character; as the Evangelist Luke, **Lu 1:2**, the Apostle Paul,
Ac 20:32 and the Apostle Peter, **2Pe 3:5**. And who is called the word, not as man; for as man he was not in the beginning with God, but became so in the fulness of time; nor is the man God; besides, as such, he is a creature, and not the Creator, nor is he the life and light of men; moreover, he was the word, before he was man, and therefore not as such: nor can any part of the human nature be so called; not the flesh, for the word was made flesh; nor his human soul, for self-subsistence, deity, eternity, and the creation of all things, can never be ascribed to that; but he is the word as the Son of God, as is evident from what is here attributed to him, and from the word being said to be so, as in **Joh 1:14** and from those places, where the word is explained by the Son, compare **1Jo 5:5**. And is so called from his nature, being begotten of the Father; for as the word, whether silent or expressed, is the birth of the mind, the image of it, equal to it, and distinct from it; so Christ is the only begotten of the Father, the express image of his person, in all things equal to him, and a distinct person from him: and he may be so called, from some action, or actions, said of him, or ascribed to him; as that he spoke for, and on the behalf of the elect of God, in the eternal council and covenant of grace and peace; and spoke all things out of nothing, in creation; for with regard to those words so often mentioned in the history of the creation, and God said, may Jehovah the Son be called the word; also he was spoken of as the promised Messiah, throughout the whole Old Testament dispensation; and is the interpreter of his Father's mind, as he was in Eden's garden, as well as in the days of his flesh; and now speaks in heaven for the saints. The phrase,
yyd armym, "the word of the Lord", so frequently used by the Targumists, is well known: and it is to be observed, that the same things which John here says of the word, they say likewise, as will be observed on the several clauses; from whence it is more likely, that John should take this phrase, since the paraphrases of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel were written before his time, than that he should borrow it from the writings of Plato, or his followers, as some have thought; with whose philosophy, Ebion and Cerinthus are said to be acquainted; wherefore John, the more easily to gain upon them, uses this phrase, when that of the Son of God would have been disagreeable to them: that there is some likeness between the Evangelist John and Plato in their sentiments concerning the word, will not be denied. Amelius {f}, a Platonic philosopher, who lived after the times of John, manifestly refers to these words of his, in agreement with his master's doctrine: his words are these;

"and this was truly "Logos", or the word, by whom always existing, the things that are made, were made, as also Heraclitus thought; and who, likewise that Barbarian (meaning the Evangelist John) reckons was in the order and dignity of the beginning, constituted with God, and was God, by whom all things are entirely made; in whom, whatsoever is made, lives, and has life, and being; and who entered into bodies, and was clothed with flesh, and appeared a man; so notwithstanding, that he showed forth the majesty of his nature; and after his dissolution, he was again deified, and was God, as he was before he descended into a body, flesh and man."

In which words it is easy to observe plain traces of what the evangelist says in the first four verses, and in the fourteenth verse of this chapter; yet it is much more probable, that Plato had his notion of the Logos, or word, out of the writings of the Old Testament, than that John should take this phrase, or what he says concerning the word, from him; since it is a matter of fact not disputed, that Plato went into Egypt to get knowledge: not only Clemens Alexandrinus a Christian writer says, that he was a philosopher of the Hebrews {g}, and understood prophecy {h}, and stirred up the fire of the Hebrew philosophy {i}; but it is affirmed by Heathen writers, that he went into Egypt to learn of the priests {k}, and to understand the rites of the prophets {l}; and Aristobulus, a Jew, affirms {m}, he studied their law; and Numenius, a Pythagoric philosopher {n}, charges him with stealing what he wrote, concerning God and the world, out of the books of Moses; and used to say to him, what is Plato, but Moses "Atticising?" or Moses speaking Greek: and Eusebius {o}, an ancient Christian writer, points at the very places, from whence Plato took his hints: wherefore it is more probable, that the evangelist received this phrase of the word, as a divine person, from the Targums, where there is such frequent mention made of it; or however, there is a very great agreement between what he and these ancient writings of the Jews say of the word, as will be hereafter shown. Moreover, the phrase is frequently used in like manner, in the writings of Philo the Jew; from whence it is manifest, that the name was well known to the Jews, and may be the reason of the evangelist's using it. This word, he says, was in the beginning; by which is meant, not the Father of Christ; for he is never called the beginning, but the Son only; and was he, he must be such a beginning as is without one; nor can he be said to be so, with respect to the Son or Spirit, who are as eternal as himself; only with respect to the creatures, of whom he is the author and efficient cause: Christ is indeed in the Father, and the Father in him, but this cannot be meant here; nor is the beginning of the Gospel of Christ, by the preaching of John the Baptist, intended here: John's ministry was an evangelical one, and the Gospel was more clearly preached by him, and after him, by Christ and his apostles, than before; but it did not then begin; it was preached before by the angel to the shepherds, at the birth of Christ; and before that, by the prophets under the former dispensation, as by Isaiah, and others; it was preached before unto Abraham, and to our first parents, in the garden of Eden: nor did Christ begin to be, when John began to preach; for John's preaching and baptism were for the manifestation of him: yea, Christ existed as man, before John began to preach; and though he was born after him as man, yet as the Word and Son of God, he existed before John was born; he was in being in the times of the prophets, which were before John; and in the times of Moses, and before Abraham, and in the days of Noah: but by the beginning is here meant, the beginning of the world, or the creation of all things; and which is expressive of the eternity of Christ, he was in the beginning, as the Maker of all creatures, and therefore must be before them all: and it is to be observed, that it is said of him, that in the beginning he was; not made, as the heavens and earth, and the things in them were; nor was he merely in the purpose and predestination of God, but really existed as a divine person, as he did from all eternity; as appears from his being set up in office from everlasting; from all the elect being chosen in him, and given to him before the foundation of the world; from the covenant of grace, which is from eternity, being made with him; and from the blessings and promises of grace, being as early put into his hands; and from his nature as God, and his relation to his Father: so Philo the Jew often calls the Logos, or word, the eternal word, the most ancient word, and more ancient than any thing that is made {p}. The eternity of the Messiah is acknowledged by the ancient Jews: **Mic 5:2** is a full proof of it; which by them {q} is thus paraphrased;

"out of thee, before me, shall come forth the Messiah, that he may exercise dominion over Israel; whose name is said from eternity, from the days of old."

Jarchi upon it only mentions Ps 72:17 which is rendered by the Targum on the place, before the sun his name was prepared; it may be translated, "before the sun his name was Yinnon"; that is, the Son, namely the Son of God; and Aben Ezra interprets it, Nb arqy, "he shall be called the son"; and to this agrees what the Talmudisis say {r}, that the name of the Messiah was before the world was created; in proof of which they produce the same passage.

And the word was with God; not with men or angels; for he was before either of these; but with God, not essentially, but personally considered; with God his Father: not in the Socinian sense, that he was only known to him, and to no other before the ministry of John the Baptist; for he was known and spoken of by the angel Gabriel before; and was known to Mary and to Joseph; and to Zacharias and Elisabeth; to the shepherds, and to the wise men; to Simeon and Anna, who saw him in the temple; and to the prophets and patriarchs in all ages, from the beginning of the world: but this phrase denotes the existence of the word with the Father, his relation and nearness to him, his equality with him, and particularly the distinction of his person from him, as well as his eternal being with him; for he was always with him, and is, and ever will be; he was with him in the council and covenant of grace, and in the creation of the universe, and is with him in the providential government of the world; he was with him as the word and Son of God in heaven, whilst he as man, was here on earth; and he is now with him, and ever will be: and as John here speaks of the word, as a distinct person from God the Father, so do the Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases; Ps 110:1 "the Lord said to my Lord", is rendered, "the Lord said to his word"; where he is manifestly distinguished from Jehovah, that speaks to him; and in **Ho 1:7** the Lord promises to "have mercy on the house of Judah", and "save them by the Lord their God". The Targum is, "I will redeem them by the word of the Lord their God"; where the word of the Lord, who is spoken of as a Redeemer and Saviour, is distinguished from the Lord, who promises to save by him. This distinction of Jehovah and his word, may be observed in multitudes of places, in the Chaldee paraphrases, and in the writings of Philo the Jew; and this phrase, of "the word" being "with God", is in the Targums expressed by, Mdq Nm rmym, "the word from before the Lord", or "which is before the Lord": being always in his presence, and the angel of it; so Onkelos paraphrases Ge 31:22 "and the word from before the Lord, came to Laban", &c. and Ex 20:19 thus, "and let not the word from before the Lord speak with us, lest we die"; for so it is read in the King of Spain's Bible; and wisdom, which is the same with the word of God, is said to be by him, or with him, in **Pr 8:1** agreeably to which John here speaks. John makes use of the word God, rather than Father, because the word is commonly called the word of God, and because of what follows;

and the word was God; not made a God, as he is said here after to be made flesh; nor constituted or appointed a God, or a God by office; but truly and properly God, in the highest sense of the word, as appears from the names by which he is called; as Jehovah, God, our, your, their, and my God, God with us, the mighty God, God over all, the great God, the living God, the true God, and eternal life; and from his perfections, and the whole fulness of the Godhead that dwells in him, as independence, eternity, immutability, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence; and from his works of creation and providence, his miracles, the work of redemption, his forgiving sins, the resurrection of himself and others from the dead, and the administration of the last judgment; and from the worship given him, as prayer to him, faith in him, and the performance of baptism in his name: nor is it any objection to the proper deity of Christ, that the article is here wanting; since when the word is applied to the Father, it is not always used, and even in this chapter, **Joh 1:6** and which shows, that the word "God", is not the subject, but the predicate of this proposition, as we render it: so the Jews often use the word of the Lord for Jehovah, and call him God. Thus the words in Ge 28:20 are paraphrased by Onkelos;

"if "the word of the Lord" will be my help, and will keep me, &c. then "the word of the Lord" shall be, ahlal yl, "my God":"

again, Le 26:12 is paraphrased, by the Targum ascribed to Jonathan Ben Uzziel, thus;

"I will cause the glory of my Shekinah to dwell among you, and my word shall "be your God", the Redeemer;"

once more, De 26:17 is rendered by the Jerusalem Targum after this manner;

"ye have made "the word of the Lord" king over you this day, that he may be your God:"

and this is frequent with Philo the Jew, who says, the name of God is his word, and calls him, my Lord, the divine word; and affirms, that the most ancient word is God {s}.

{f} Apud Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 11. c. 19. {g} Stromat. l. 1. p. 274. {h} Ib. p. 303. {i} Ib. Paedagog. l. 2. c. 1. p. 150. {k} Valer. Maxim. l. 8. c. 7. {l} Apuleius de dogmate Platonis, l. 1. in principio. {m} Apud. Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 13. c. 12. {n} Hesych. Miles. de Philosophis. p. 50. {o} Prepar. Evangel. l. 11. c. 9. {p} De Leg. Alleg. l. 2. p. 93. de Plant. Noe, p. 217. de Migrat. Abraham, p. 389. de Profugis, p. 466. quis. rer. divin. Haeres. p. 509. {q} Targum Jon. in loc. {r} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 54. 1. & Nedarim, fol. 39. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 3. {s} De Allegor. l. 2. p. 99, 101. & de Somniis, p. 599.

John 1:2

Ver. 2. The same was in the beginning with God. This is a repetition of what is before said, and is made to show the importance of the truths before delivered; namely, the eternity of Christ, his distinct personality, and proper deity; and that the phrase, in the beginning, is to be joined to each of the above sentences;

and so proves, not only his eternal existence, but his eternal existence with the Father, and also his eternal deity; and is also made to carry on the thread of the discourse, concerning the word, and not God the Father; and to express, not only his co-existence in nature, but his co-operation in the works of creation next mentioned.

John 1:3

Ver. 3. All things were made by him,.... Which is a proof at once of all that is said before; as that he was in the beginning; and that he was with God the Father in the beginning; and that he was God; otherwise all things could not have been made by him, had either of these been untrue: which is to be understood, not of the new creation; for this would be a restraining "all" things to a "few" persons only; nor is it any where said, that all things are new made, but made; and it is false, that all were converted, that have been converted, by the ministry of Christ, as man: all men are not renewed, regenerated, nor reformed; and the greater part of those that were renewed, were renewed before Christ existed, as man; and therefore could not be renewed by him, as such: though indeed, could this sense be established, it would not answer the end for which it is coined; namely, to destroy the proof of Christ's deity, and of his existence before his incarnation; for in all ages, from the beginning of the world, some have been renewed; and the new creation is a work of God, and of almighty power, equally with the old; for who can create spiritual light, infuse a principle of spiritual life, take away the heart of stone, and give an heart of flesh, or produce faith, but God? Regeneration is denied to be of man, and is always ascribed to God; nor would Christ's being the author of the new creation, be any contradiction to his being the author of the old creation, which is intended here: by "all things", are meant the heaven, and all its created inhabitants, the airy, starry, and third heavens, and the earth, and all therein, the sea, and every thing that is in that; and the word, or Son of God, is the efficient cause of all these, not a bare instrument of the formation of them; for the preposition by does not always denote an instrument, but sometimes an efficient, as in **1Co 1:9** and so here, though not to the exclusion of the Father, and of the Spirit:

and without him was not any thing made that was made: in which may be observed the conjunct operation of the word, or Son, with the Father, and Spirit, in creation; and the extent of his concern in it to every thing that is made; for without him there was not one single thing in the whole compass of the creation made; and the limitation of it to things that are made; and so excludes the uncreated being, Father, Son, and Spirit; and sin also, which is not a principle made by God, and which has no efficient, but a deficient cause. So the Jews ascribe the creation of all things to the word. The Targumists attribute the creation of man, in particular, to the word of God: it is said in **Ge 1:27**. "God created man in his own image": the Jerusalem Targum of it is,

"and the word of the Lord created man in his likeness."

And **Ge 3:22** "and the Lord God said, behold the man is become as one of us", the same Targum paraphrases thus;

"and the word of the Lord God said, behold the man whom I have created, is the only one in the world."

Also in the same writings, the creation of all things in general is ascribed to the word: the passage in De 33:27 "the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms", is paraphrased by Onkelos,

"the eternal God is an habitation, by whose word the world was made."

In Isa 48:13 it is said, "mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth". The Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziah on it is,

"yea, by my word I have founded the earth:"

which agrees with what is said in Heb 11:3, and the same says Philo the Jew, who not only calls him the archetype, and exemplar of the world, but the power that made it: he often ascribes the creation of the heavens, and the earth unto him, and likewise the creation of man after whose image, he says, he was made {t}. The Ethiopic version adds, at the end of this verse, "and also that which is made is for himself".

{t} De Mundi Opificio, p. 4, 5, 31, 32. De Alleg. l. 1. p. 44. De Sacrificiis Abel & Cain, p. 131. De Profugis, p. 464. & de Monarch. p. 823.

John 1:4

Ver. 4. In him was life,.... The Persic version reads in the plural number, "lives". There was life in the word with respect to himself; a divine life, the same with the life of the Father and of the Spirit; and is in him, not by gift, nor by derivation or communication; but originally, and independently, and from all eternity: indeed he lived before his incarnation as Mediator, and Redeemer. Job knew him in his time, as his living Redeemer; but this regards him as the word and living God, and distinguishes him from the written word, and shows that he is not a mere idea in the divine mind, but a truly divine person: and there was life in Christ the word, with respect to others; the fountain of natural life is in him, he is the efficient cause, and preserver of it; whether vegetative, animal, or rational; and proves him to be truly God, and that he existed before his incarnation; since creatures, who have received such a life from him, did: and spiritual life was also in him; all his elect are dead in trespasses and sins, and cannot quicken themselves. Christ has procured life for them, and gives it to them, and implants it in them; a life of sanctification is from him; and a life of justification is upon him, and of faith is by him; all the comforts of a spiritual life, and all things appertaining to it, are from him, and he maintains, and preserves it. Eternal life is in him, and with him; not the purpose of it only, nor the promise of it barely, but the gift of it itself; which was granted in consequence of his asking it, and which he had by way of stipulation; and hence has a right and power to bestow it: now, this being in him proves him to be the true God, and shows us where life is to be had, and the safety and security of it:

and the life was the light of men; the life which was in, and by the word, was, with respect to men, a life of light, or a life attended with light: by which is meant, not a mere visive faculty, receptive of the sun's light, but rational knowledge and understanding; for when Christ, the word, breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul, he filled him with rational light and knowledge. Adam had a knowledge of God; of his being, and perfections; of the persons in the Trinity; of his relation to God, dependence on him, and obligation to him; of his mind and will; and knew what it was to have communion with him. He knew much of himself, and of all the creatures; this knowledge was natural and perfect in its kind, but loseable; and different from that which saints now have of God, through Christ, the Mediator; and since this natural light was from Christ, the word, as a Creator, he must be the eternal God. The Socinians are not willing to allow this sense, but say that Christ is the light of men, by preaching the heavenly doctrine, and by the example of his holy life; but hereby he did not enlighten every man that cometh into the world; the greatest part of men, before the preaching, and example of Christ, sat in darkness; and the greatest part of the Jews remained in darkness, notwithstanding his preaching, and example; and the patriarchs that were enlightened under the former dispensation, were not enlightened this way: it will be owned, that all spiritual and supernatural light, which any of the sons of men have had, since the fall, was from Christ, from whom they had their spiritual life; even all spiritual light in conversion, and all after degrees of light; through him they enjoyed the light of God's countenance, and had the light of joy and gladness here, and of glory hereafter.

John 1:5

Ver. 5. And the light shineth in darkness,.... Which, through sin, came upon the minds of men; who are naturally in the dark about the nature and perfections of God; about sin, and the consequences of it; about Christ, and salvation by him; about the Spirit of God, and his work upon the soul; and about the Scriptures of truth, and the doctrines of the Gospel. Man was created a knowing creature, but, not content with his knowledge, sins, and is banished from the presence of God, the fountain of light; which brought a darkness on him, and his posterity, and which is increased in them by personal iniquity, and in which Satan, the god of this world, has an hand; and sometimes they are left to judicial blindness, and which issues in worse darkness, if grace prevents not: now amidst this darkness there were some remains of the light of nature: with respect to the being of God, which shines in the works of creation and providence and to the worship of God, though very dimly; and to the knowledge of moral good and evil:

and the darkness comprehended it not; or "perceived it not"; as the Syriac version renders it. By the light of nature, and the remains of it, men could not come to any clear and distinct knowledge of the above things; and much less to any knowledge of the true way of salvation: unless, rather by the light should be meant, the light of the Messiah, or of the Gospel shining in the figures, types, and shadows of the law, and in the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament: and yet, such was the darkness upon the minds of men, that they could not very distinctly apprehend it, and much less fully comprehend it, so that there was need of a fresh and fuller revelation; an account of which follows;

John 1:6

Ver. 6. There was a man sent from God,.... John the Baptist: he was not the Logos, or word; nor was he an angel, but a man; yet an extraordinary one, in his conception of a barren woman, and in being born when both parents were stricken in years; and whilst he was in the womb, he leaped for joy at the salutation of Mary; and as soon as born was filled with the Holy Ghost; and when he was grown up, and appeared in public, it was in an uncommon manner: his dress and his diet were both out of the common way; and his temper and spirit were that of Elias the prophet; and as for his work and office, it was very peculiar; he was the forerunner of Christ, and the first administrator of the new ordinance of baptism, and the greatest of all the prophets: this person had his mission from God, both to preach and baptize:

whose name was John; the name given him by the angel before his conception, and by his mother Elisabeth, after her neighbours and cousins had given him another; and which was confirmed by his father Zacharias, when deaf and dumb: it signifies grace, or gracious; and a gracious man he was; he was very acceptable to his parents; a man that had the grace of God in him, and great gifts of grace bestowed on him; he was a preacher of the doctrines of grace; and his ministry was very grateful to many.

John 1:7

Ver. 7. The same came for a witness,.... The end of his being sent, and the design of his coming were,

to bear witness of the light: by which is meant, not the light of nature, or reason; nor the light of the Gospel: but Christ himself, the author of light, natural, spiritual, and eternal. This was one of the names of the Messiah with the Jews; of whom they say {u},
wmv aryhn, "light is his name"; as it is said in **Da 2:22** and the light dwelleth with him; on which they have {w} elsewhere this gloss, this is the King Messiah; and so they interpret Ps 43:3 of him {x}. Philo the Jew often speaks of the Logos, or word, as light, and calls him the intelligible light; the universal light, the most perfect light; represents him as full of divine light; and says, he is called the sun {y}. Now John came to bear a testimony to him, as he did; of which an account is given in this chapter, very largely, and elsewhere; as that he testified of his existence before his incarnation; of his being with the Father, and in his bosom: of his deity and divine sonship; of his being the Messiah; of the fulness of grace that was in him; of his incarnation and satisfaction; of his descent from heaven; and of his relation to his church, as in **Joh 1:15** the end of which witness was,

that all men through him might believe; that is, that the Jews, to whom he preached, might, through his testimony, believe that Jesus was the light, and true Messiah; for these words are to be taken in a limited sense, and not to be extended, to every individual of mankind; since millions were dead before John began his testimony, and multitudes then in being, and since, whom it never reached: nor can it design more than the Jews, to whom alone he bore witness of Christ; and the faith which he taught, and required by his testimony, was an assent unto him as the Messiah; though the preaching of the Gospel is a means of true spiritual faith in Christ; and doubtless it was so to many, as preached by John: it points out the object of faith, and encourages souls to believe in Christ; and hence, Gospel ministers are instruments by whom ethers believe; and faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; and then is it, considerable end of the Gospel ministry answered.

{u} Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. {w} Bereshit Rabba, fol. 1. 3. {x} Jarchi in ib. {y} De Maudi Opificio, p. 6. De Allegor. l. 2. p. 80. & de Somniis, p. 576, 578.

John 1:8

Ver. 8. He was not that light,.... He was a light; he was the forerunner of the sun of righteousness, the "phosphorus" of the Gospel day; he had great light in him; he knew that the Messiah was ready to come, and declared it; and upon his baptism he knew him personally, and signified him to others: he had great light into the person and work of Christ; and into the way of salvation by him, and remission of sins through him; into the doctrines of faith in Christ, and of evangelical repentance towards God; and into the abolition of the legal Mosaic and Jewish dispensation; and was an instrument of giving light to others; yea, he was a burning and shining light, in whose light the Jews rejoiced, at least for a season: but then he was not that light, the word and wisdom of God; that uncreated light that dwelt with him from all eternity; nor that which was the light of men, from the creation; nor that light, which was of old promised to the saints and patriarchs of the Old Testament, and shone in the ordinances and predictions of that state; nor that fountain and giver of light, of every sort, to men; not that light in which is no darkness, and always shines; not that true light, or sun of righteousness, the Messiah, or that lightens every man that comes into the world:

but was sent to bear witness of that light; which is repeated, to distinguish him from that light; to show what he was sent for, and that he acted according to his mission; and to express the honourableness to his work.

John 1:9

Ver. 9. That was the true light,.... Christ is that light, that famous and excellent light, the fountain of all light to all creatures; that gave light to the dark earth at first, and spoke light out of darkness; that light of all men in the earth, and of all the angels in heaven, and of all the saints below, and of all the glorified ones above: he is the true light, in distinction from typical lights; the "Urim" of the former dispensation; the candlestick, with the lamps of it; the pillar of fire which directed the Israelites by night in the wilderness; and from all the typical light there was in the institutions and sacrifices of the law; and in opposition to the law itself, which the Jews {z} magnify, and cry up as the light, saying, there is no light but the law; and in opposition to all false lights, as priests, diviners, and soothsayers among the Gentiles, Scribes, and Pharisees, and the learned Rabbins among the Jews, so much boasted of as the lights of the world; and to all false Christs and prophets that have risen, or shall rise, in the world.

Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world: the sense is, either that every man that is enlightened in a spiritual manner, is enlightened by him, which is true of Christ, as the Son of God, existing from the beginning; but not in the Socinian sense, as if they were enlightened by his human ministry and example; for the Old Testament saints were not enlightened by his preaching; and many were enlightened by the ministry of John the Baptist; and multitudes afterwards, through the ministry of the apostles; and very few, comparatively, were enlightened under the ministry of Christ; and none we read of, in this sense, enlightened by him, when, and as soon as they came into, the world: or, the meaning is, that he is that light which lighteth all sorts of men; which is true in, a spiritual sense: some connect the phrase, "that cometh into the world", not with "every man", but with the "true light"; and the Arabic version so reads, and joins it to the following verse; but this reading is not so natural and the order of the words requires the common reading; nor is the difficulty removed hereby; for still it is every man that is enlightened: it is best therefore to understand these words of the light of nature, and reason, which Christ, as the word, and Creator and light of men, gives to every man that is born into the world; and which serves to detect the Quakers' notion of the light within, which every man has, and is no other than the light of a natural conscience; and shows how much men, even natural men, are obliged to Christ, and how great a person he is, and how deserving of praise, honour, and glory. The phrase, "every man that cometh into the world", is Jewish, and often to be met with in Rabbinical writings, and signifies all men that are born into the world;

the instances are almost innumerable; take one or two: on those words in Job 25:3 on whom doth not his light arise? it is asked {a}, who is he that cometh,

"Mlwe yab lkm, "of all that come into the world"; and says, the sun hath not lightened me by day, nor hath the moon lightened me by night! thou enlightenest those above, and those below, and "all that come into the world"."

Again, God is introduced thus speaking {b}:

"I am the God, Mlwe yab lkl, "of all that come into the world"; and I have not united my name, but to the people of Israel."

Once more {c},

"Moses, our master, from the mouth of power, (i.e. God; see Mt 26:64.) commanded to oblige, Mlweh yab lk ta, "all that come into the world", to receive the commandments which were commanded the sons of Noah."

{z} T. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1. {a} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 31. fol. 171. 4. {b} Midrash Ruth, c. l. v. 1. fol. 27. 3. {c} Maimon. Hilch. Melakim. c. 8. sect. 10. Vid. Misn. Roshhashana, c. l. sect. 2. T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 25. 4. & 26. 3. Sepher Bahir apud Zohar in Gen. fol. 30. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 21. 2. & 22. 3. & 24. 3. & 27. 2. Caphter, fol. 56. 1. Jarchi in Exod. 15. 2.

John 1:10

Ver. 10. He was in the world,.... This is to be understood, not of his incarnation; for the word was denotes past existence in the world, even all the time past from the creation of the world; and the world intends the world in general, as opposed to Judea, and the people of the Jews in the next verse; besides, the incarnation of the word is spoken of in **Joh 1:14** as a new and distinct thing from this: but of his being in the world, when first made, and since, by his essence, by which he fills the whole world; and by his power, upholding and preserving it; and by his providence, ordering and managing all the affairs of it, and influencing and governing all things in it: he was in it as the light and life of it, giving natural life and light to creatures in it, and filling it, and them, with various blessings of goodness; and he was in the promise and type before, as well as after the Jews were distinguished from other nations, as his peculiar people; and he was frequently visible in the world, in an human form, before his incarnation, as in Eden's garden to our first parents, to Abraham, Jacob, Manoah, and his wife, and others.

And the world was made by him: so Philo the Jew often ascribes the making of the world to the Logos, or word, as before observed on **Joh 1:3** and this regards the whole universe, and all created beings in it, and therefore cannot design the new creation: besides, if all men in the world were anew created by Christ, they would know him; for a considerable branch of the new creation lies in knowledge; whereas, in the very next clause, it is asserted, that the world knew him not; and they would also love him, and obey him, which the generality of the world do not; they would appear to be in him, and so not be condemned by him, as multitudes will. To understand this of the old creation, best suits the context, and proves the deity of Christ, and his pre-existence, as the word, and Son of God, to his incarnation.

And the world knew him not; that is, the inhabitants of the world knew him not as their Creator: nor did they acknowledge the mercies they received from him; nor did they worship, serve, and obey him, or love and fear him; nor did they, the greater part of them, know him as the Messiah, Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer. There was, at first, a general knowledge of Christ throughout the world among all the sons of Adam, after the first promise of him, and which, for a while, continued; but this, in process of time, being neglected and slighted, it was forgot, and utterly lost, as to the greater part of mankind; for the Gentiles, for many hundreds of years, as they knew not the true God, so they were without Christ, without any notion of the Messiah; and this their ignorance, as it was first their sin, became their punishment.

John 1:11

Ver. 11. He came unto his own,.... Not all the world, who are his own by right of creation; for these, his own, are opposed to the world, and distinguished from them; and his coming to them designs some particular favour, which is not vouchsafed to all: nor yet are the elect of God intended; though they are Christ's own, in a very special sense; they are his by his own choice, by his Father's gift, by his own purchase, and through the conquest of his grace, and are the objects of his special love; and for their sake he came in the flesh, and to them he comes in a spiritual way, and to them will he appear a second time at the last day unto salvation: but they cannot be meant, because when he comes to them they receive him; whereas these did not, as the next clause affirms: but by his own are meant the whole body of the Jewish nation; so called, because they were chosen by the Lord above all people; had distinguishing favours bestowed upon them, as the adoption, the covenants, the promises, the giving of the law, and the service of God; and had the Shekinah, and the symbol of the divine presence in a remarkable manner among them; and the promise of the Messiah was in a particular manner made to them; and indeed, he was to be born of them, so that they were his kindred, his people, and his own nation: and this his coming to them is to be understood not of his incarnation; though when he came in the flesh, as he came of them, so he came to them, particularly being sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and was rejected by them as the Messiah; yet his incarnation is afterwards spoken of in **Joh 1:14** as a new and distinct thing from this; and to understand it of some coming of his before his incarnation, best suits with the context, and the design of the evangelist. Now Christ, the word, came to the Jews before his incarnation, not only in types, personal and real, and in promises and prophecies, and in the word and ordinances, but in person; as to Moses in the bush, and gave orders to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt: he came and redeemed them himself with a mighty hand, and a outstretched arm; in his love and pity he led them through the Red Sea as on dry ground; and through the wilderness in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night; and he appeared to them at Mount Sinai, who gave unto them the lively oracles of God:

and his own received him not; they did not believe in him, nor obey his voice; they rebelled against him, and tempted him often, particularly at Massah and Meribah; they provoked trim to anger, and vexed, and grieved his holy Spirit, as they afterwards slighted and despised his Gospel by the prophets. Of this nonreception of the word by the Jews, and their punishment for it, the Targumist on **Ho 9:17** thus speaks:

"my God will remove them far away, because, hyrmyml
wlybq al, "they receive not his word"; and they shall wander among the people."

And so they treated this same "Logos", or word of God, when he was made flesh, and dwelt among them. Somewhat remarkable is the following discourse of some Jews among themselves {e}:

"when the word of God comes, who is his messenger, we shall honour him. Says R. Saul, did not the prophets come, and we slew them, and shed their blood? (compare this with
Mt 23:30.) how therefore now, wrbdm lbqn, "shall we receive his word?" or wherefore shall we believe? Says R. Samuel, the Levite, to him, because he

will heal them, and deliver them from their destructions; and because of these signs we shall believe him, and honour him."

But they did not.

{e} Ben Arama in Gen. xlvii. 4. apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. Ver. l. 3. c. 5,

John 1:12

Ver. 12. But as many as received him,.... This is explained, in the latter part of the text, by believing in his name; for faith is a receiving him as the word, and Son of God, as the Messiah, Saviour, and Redeemer; a receiving grace out of his fulness, and every blessing from him, as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified; for though the generality rejected him, there were some few that received him:

to them gave he power to become the sons of God; as such were very early called, in distinction from the children of men, or of the world; see **Ge 6:2**. To be the sons of God is a very special favour, a great blessing, and high honour: saints indeed are not in so high a sense the sons of God as Christ is; nor in so low a sense as angels and men in common are; nor in such sense as civil magistrates; nor merely by profession of religion; much less by natural descent; but by adopting grace: and in this, Christ, the word, has a concern, as all the three divine persons have. The Father predestinated men to the adoption of children, secures this blessing for them in the covenant of his grace, and puts them among the children, and assigns them a goodly heritage: the Spirit, and who is therefore called the spirit of adoption, discovers and applies this blessing to them, and witnesses to their spirits that they are the children of God: and Christ, the word, or Son of God, not only espoused their persons, and in time assumed their nature, and by the redemption of them opened a way for their reception of the adoption of children; but actually bestows upon them the "power", as it is here called, of becoming the sons of God: by which is meant, not a power of free will to make themselves the sons of God, if they will make use of it; but it signifies the honour and dignity conferred on such persons: so Nonnus calls it, "the heavenly honour"; as indeed, what can be a greater? It is more honourable than to be a son or daughter of the greatest potentate on earth: and it is expressive of its being a privilege; for so it is an undeserved and distinguishing one, and is attended with many other privileges; for such are of God's household and family, and are provided for by him; have liberty of access unto him; are Christ's free men, and are heirs to an incorruptible inheritance. This is a privilege that excels all others, even justification and remission of sins; and is an everlasting one: and it also intends the open right which believers have unto this privilege, and their claim of it: hence it follows,

even to them that believe in his name; that is, in himself, in Christ, the word: the phrase is explanative of the former part of the verse, and is a descriptive and manifestative character of the sons of God; for though the elect of God, by virtue of electing grace, and the covenant of grace, are the children of God before faith; and were so considered in the gift of them to Christ, and when he came into the world to gather them together, and save them; and so, antecedent to the Spirit of God, being sent down into their hearts, to make this known to them; yet no man can know his adoption, nor enjoy the comfort of it, or claim his interest in it, until he believes.

John 1:13

Ver. 13. Which were born not of blood,.... Or bloods, in the plural number. The birth, here spoken of, is regeneration, expressed by a being born again, or from above; by a being quickened by the Spirit and grace of God; by Christ being formed in men; and by a partaking of the divine nature; and by being made new creatures, as all that believe in the name of Christ are; and which is the evidence of their being the sons of God: and now this is owing not to blood, or bloods; not to the blood of circumcision; or of the passover, which the Jews had an high opinion of, and ascribe life and salvation to, and to which notion this may be opposed: so their commentators {f} on Eze 16:6 where the word "live" is twice used, observe on the first "live", by the blood of the passover, on the second "live", by the blood of circumcision; but, alas! these contribute nothing to the life of the new creature: nor is regeneration owing to the blood of ancestors, to natural descent, as from Abraham, which the Jews valued themselves upon; for sin, and not grace, is conveyed by natural generation: all men are of one blood, and that is tainted with sin, and therefore can never have any influence on regeneration; no blood is to be valued, or any one upon it, but the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin.

Nor of the will of the flesh; man's free will, which is carnal and corrupt, is enmity to God, and impotent to every thing that is spiritually good: regeneration is ascribed to another will and power, even to the will and power of God, and denied of this:

nor of the will of man: of the best of men, as Abraham, David, and others;

who, though ever so willing and desirous, that their children, relations, friends, and servants, should be born again, be partakers of the grace of God, and live in his sight, yet cannot effect any thing of this kind: all that they can do is to pray for them, give advice, and bring them under the means of grace; but all is ineffectual without a divine energy. So with the Jews, vya, "a man", signifies a great man, in opposition to "Adam", or "Enosh", which signify a mean, weak, frail man; and our translators have observed this distinction, in **Isa 2:9** and the mean man (Adam) boweth down, and the great man (Ish) "humbleth himself": on which Jarchi has this note, "Adam boweth down", i.e. little men; "and a man humbleth himself", i.e. princes, and mighty men, men of power: and so Kimchi on **Ps 4:2**. "O ye sons of men", observes, that the Psalmist calls them the sons of men, with respect to the great men of Israel; for there were with Absalom the sons of great men. Though sometimes the Jews say {g}, Adam is greater than any of the names of men, as Geber, Enosh, Ish. But now our evangelist observes, let a man be ever so great, or good, or eminent, for gifts and grace, he cannot communicate grace to another, or to whom he will; none are born again of any such will:

but of God; of God, the Father of Christ, who begets to a lively hope; and of the Son, who quickens whom he will; and of the grace of the Spirit, to whom regeneration is generally ascribed.

{f} Jarchi & Kimchi in loc. Shemot Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 103. 2. & 104. 4. & Mattanot Cehuna in Vajikra Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 164. 2. Zohar in Lev. fol. 39. 2. {g} Zohar in Lev. fol. 20. 2.

John 1:14

Ver. 14. And the word was made flesh,.... The same word, of whom so many things are said in the preceding verses; and is no other than the Son of God, or second person in the Trinity; for neither the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, were made flesh, as is here said of the word, but the Son only: and "flesh" here signifies, not a part of the body, nor the whole body only, but the whole human nature, consisting of a true body, and a reasonable soul; and is so called, to denote the frailty of it, being encompassed with infirmities, though not sinful; and to show, that it was a real human nature, and not a phantom, or appearance, that he assumed: and when he is said to be "made" flesh, this was not done by the change of one nature into another, the divine into the human, or the word into a man; but by the assumption of the human nature, the word, taking it into personal union with himself; whereby the natures are not altered;

Christ remained what he was, and became what he was not; nor are they confounded, and blended together, and so make a third nature; nor are they separated, and divided, so as to constitute two persons, a divine person, and an human person; but are so united as to be but one person; and this is such an union, as can never be dissolved, and is the foundation of the virtue and efficacy of all Christ's works and actions, as Mediator:

and dwelt among us; or "tabernacled among us"; in allusion to the tabernacle, which was a type of Christ's human nature: the model of the tabernacle was of God, and not of man; it was coarse without, but full of holy things within; here God dwelt, granted his presence, and his glory was seen; here the sacrifices were brought, offered, and accepted. So the human nature of Christ was of God's pitching, and not man's; and though it looked mean without, the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in it, as well as a fulness of grace and truth; in the face of Christ the glory of God is seen, and through him, even the vail of his flesh, saints have access unto him, and enjoy his presence; and by him their spiritual sacrifices become acceptable to God: or this is observed, in allusion to the feast of tabernacles, when the Jews dwelt in booths, in remembrance of their manner of living in the wilderness: the feast of tabernacles was typical of Christ, and of his tabernacling in our nature. Solomon's temple, which was also a type of Christ, was dedicated at the time of that feast; and it seems probable, that our Lord was born at that time; for as he suffered at the time of the passover, which had respect unto him, and the pouring forth of the Spirit was on the very day of Pentecost, which that prefigured; so it is highly probable, that Christ was born at the time of the feast of tabernacles, which pointed out his dwelling among us; and is therefore very pertinently hinted at, when mention is here made of his incarnation. However, reference is manifestly had to the Shekinah, and the glory of it, in the tabernacle and temple; and almost the very word is here used. The Targumists sometimes speak of the Shekinah of the word dwelling among the Israelites: so Onkelos in Nu 11:20 where the Israelites are threatened with flesh, until they loath it; because, says the paraphrast,

"ye have loathed "the word of the Lord", whose Shekinah dwelleth among you."

Jonathan ben Uzziel, on the same place, expresses it thus;

"because ye have loathed the word of the Lord, the glory of whose Shekinah dwelleth among you."

And it follows here,

and we beheld his glory; the glory of his divine nature, which is essential to him, and underived, is equal to the Father's glory, is transcendent to all creatures, and is ineffable, and incomprehensible; some breakings forth of which there were in his incarnate state, and which were observed by the evangelist, and his companions; who, in various instances, saw plainly, that Christ was possessed of divine perfections, such as omniscience, and omnipotence; since he knew the thoughts of the heart, and could do the things he did: his Father declared him to be his beloved Son; and the miracles he wrought, and the doctrines he taught, manifested forth his glory; and not only there were some beams of his glory at his transfiguration, which were seen by the apostles, among which the Evangelist John was one, and to which he may have here a particular reference; but even at his apprehension, and death, and especially at his resurrection from the dead. The Jews speak of the glory of the Messiah to be seen in the world to come. They say {h},

"If a man is worthy of the world to come, (i.e. the times of the Messiah,) he shall "see the glory" of the King Messiah."

And of Moses, they say {i},

"there was (or will be) no generation like that in which he lived, until the generation in which the King Messiah comes, which shall "behold the glory" of the holy, blessed God, as he."

This our evangelist, and the other disciples of Christ have seen:

the glory, as of the only begotten of the Father; a glory becoming him, suitable to him as such; the very real glory of the Son of God; for the "as", here, is not a note of similitude, but of certainty, as in Mt 14:5 and the word is here called, "the only begotten of the Father"; which cannot be said of Christ, as man; for as such, he was not "begotten" at all: nor on the account of his resurrection from the dead; for so he could not be called the "only begotten", since there are others that have been, and millions that will be raised from the dead, besides him: nor by reason of adoption; for if adopted, then not begotten; these two are inconsistent; besides, he could not be called the only begotten, in this sense, because there are many adopted sons, even all the elect of God: nor by virtue of his office, as magistrates are called the sons of God; for then he would be so only in a figurative and metaphorical sense, and not properly; whereas he is called God's own Son, the Son of the same nature with him; and, as here, the only begotten of the Father, begotten by him in the same nature, in a way inconceivable and inexpressible by us:

full of grace and truth; that is, he dwelt among men, and appeared to have a fulness of each of these: for this clause is not to be joined with the glory of the only begotten, as if this was a branch of that; but regards him as incarnate, and in his office, as Mediator; who, as such, was full of "grace"; the Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit; of all the blessings of grace, of justifying, pardoning, adopting, sanctifying, and persevering grace; of all the promises of grace; of all light, life, strength, comfort, peace, and joy: and also of truth, of all Gospel truths; and as he had the truth, the sum, and substance of all the types and prophecies concerning him in him; and as he fulfilled all his own engagements, and his Father's promises; and as possessed of sincerity towards men, and faithfulness and integrity to God.

{h} Gloss. in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 58. 1. {i} Zohar in Lev. fol. 9. 4.

John 1:15

Ver. 15. John bare witness of him,.... Which was his office and business, for which purpose he was sent, **Joh 1:6**

and cried; this agrees with his work and office, according to the prophecy of him in Isa 40:3 and with the time of his ministry, the year of jubilee; and with the nature of his ministry, which was clear, open, and public; and performed with vigour, and in a powerful manner, with much assurance and certainty, with boldness and intrepidity, and with great zeal and fervency, and in an evangelical way; for it was such a cry as debased the creature, and exalted Christ:

this was he, of whom I spake; when he first entered upon his ministry and baptism, before he saw Christ, or baptized him; see **Mt 3:11**.

he that cometh after me; for Christ came into the world after John; he was born six months after him; he came after him to be baptized by him, and attended on his ministry; and came later into the public ministry than he did;

is preferred before me; by God, the Father, in setting him up as Mediator; constituting him the head of the church; causing a fulness of grace to dwell in him; appointing him the Saviour of his people; and ordaining him judge of quick and dead. And by the prophets, who spake much of him, and sparingly of John; and of him as the Messiah and Saviour, and of John only as his harbinger: and by John himself, who represents him as coming from above, and as above all; and himself as of the earth, earthly: and by all Gospel ministers, and every true believer; and good reason there is for it:

for he was before me; which cannot be meant of honour and dignity; for this is expressed before; and it would be proving one thing by the same: nor of his birth, as man; for John in that sense was before him, being born before him; besides, being born before another, is no proof of superior worth; others were born before John, whom he yet excelled: but of his eternal existence, as the word, and Son of God, who was before John, or any of the prophets; before Abraham, and Noah, and Adam, or any creature whatever: the Arabic and Persic versions read, "for he was more ancient than me"; being from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

John 1:16

Ver. 16. And of his fulness have all we received,.... These are the words not of John the Baptist; but of the evangelist carrying on his account of Christ, after he had inserted the testimony of the Baptist, in connection with **Joh 1:14** where he is said to be full of grace and truth; and which fulness is here intended; for the fulness of the Godhead in trim is incommunicable; and the fulness of his fitness, and ability for his office, as Mediator, was for himself; but his fulness of grace and truth is dispensatory, and is in him, on purpose to be communicated unto others: and "of it", the evangelist says, "have all we received"; not all mankind, though they all receive natural light and life from trim; nor merely all the prophets of the Old Testament, though they had their gifts and grace from him, who then was, as now, the head of the church; nor only all the apostles of Christ, though these may be principally intended; but all believers, who, though they have not all the same measure of grace, nor the same gifts, yet all have received something: nor is there any reason for discouragement, envy, or reproach. Faith is the hand which receives Christ, and grace from him; and the act of receiving, being expressed in the past tense, seems to regard first conversion, when faith is first wrought, and along with it abundance of grace is received; for a believer has nothing but what is given him, and what he has, is in a way of receiving; so that there is no room for boasting, but great reason for thankfulness, and much encouragement to apply to Christ for more grace, which is the thing received, as follows:

and grace for grace: according to the different senses of the preposition anti, different interpretations are given of this passage; as that signifies a substitution of a person, or thing, in the room of another, the sense is thought to be, the Gospel, instead of the law; or the grace of the present dispensation, instead of the grace of the former dispensation; grace, different from the former grace, as Nonnus expresses it. If it designs the original, and moving cause, the meaning is, grace is for the sake of grace; for there is no other cause of electing, justifying, pardoning, adopting, and regenerating grace, and even eternal life, but the grace, or free favour of God; and the one is the reason why the other is received: if it signifies the end, or final cause, then it is explained in this way; the disciples received the grace of apostleship, or gift, of grace, in order to preach the Gospel of the grace of God, and for the implanting and increasing grace in men; and grace also, in this life, is received, in order to the perfection of grace, or glory, in the other: if it denotes the measure and proportion of a thing, as one thing is answerable to another, then if may be interpreted after this manner; the saints receive grace from the fulness of Christ, according, or answerable to the grace that is in him; or according to the measure of the gift of Christ, and in proportion to the place, station, and office they bear in the church. Some think the phrase only designs the freeness of grace, and the free and liberal manner in which it is distributed, and received; along with which, I also think, the abundance of it, at first conversion, with all after supplies, is intended; and that grace for grace, is the same with grace upon grace, heaps of grace; and that the phraseology is the same with this Jewish one {k}, wbyj awhh le wbyj, "goodness upon that goodness", an additional goodness; so here, grace upon grace, an abundance of it, an addition to it, and an increase of it: so wdx le wdx {l}, joy upon joy, is an abundance of joy, a large measure of it; and "holiness upon holiness" {m}, abundance of it.

{k} Zohar in Exod. fol. 45. 1. {l} lb. in Lev. fol. 28. 1. & in Num. fol. 69. 2. & 71. 2. {m} lb. fol. 40. 3. & in Num. fol. 61. 1.

John 1:17

Ver. 17. For the law was given by Moses,.... Both moral and ceremonial. The moral law was given to Adam, in innocence, which having been broken, and almost lost out of the minds, and memories of men, was given by Moses, in a new edition of it in writing; and points out what is man's duty both to God and men; discovers sin, accuses of it, convicts of it, and condemns for it; nor could it give strength to perform its demands; nor does it give the least hint of forgiveness; nor will it admit of repentance: and hence is opposed to grace;

though it was a benefit to men, being in its own nature good and useful in its effects. The ceremonial law pointed out the pollution of human nature, the guilt and punishment of sin; was a type and shadow of deliverance by Christ, but could not give the grace it shadowed, and therefore is opposed both to grace and truth. Now both these were given by Moses to the people of the Jews, not as the maker, but the minister of them: it was God who appointed each of these laws, and ordained them in the hand of the mediator Moses, who received them from him, by the disposition of angels, and delivered them to the people of Israel; and a very high office this was he was put into, and a very great honour was conferred upon him; but Jesus Christ is a far greater person, and in an higher office:

but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ: by grace and truth, is meant the Gospel, in opposition to the law; which is called grace, because it is a declaration of the love, and grace, of God to men; it ascribes salvation, in all the parts of it, to the free grace and favour of God; and is the means of implanting and increasing grace in the hearts of men. And "truth", not only because it contains truth, and nothing but truth, it coming from the God of truth; and the substance of it being Christ, who is the truth; and being revealed, applied, and led into by the Spirit of truth; but because it is the truth of the types, and the substance of the shadows of the law: or these two may mean distinct things; grace may design all the blessings of grace which are in Christ, and come by him; and truth, the promises, and the fulfilment of them, which are all yea, and amen, in Christ: and when these are said to be by him, the meaning is, not that they are by him, as an instrument, but as the author of them; for Christ is the author of the Gospel, and the fulfiller of the promises, and the giver of all grace; which shows the superior excellency of Christ to Moses, and to all men, and even to angels also.

John 1:18

Ver. 18. No man hath seen God at any time,.... That is, God the Father, whose voice was never heard, nor his shape seen by angels or men; for though Jacob, Moses, the elders of Israel, Manoah, and his wife, are said to see God, and Job expected to see him with his bodily eyes, and the saints will see him as he is, in which will lie their great happiness; yet all seems to be understood of the second person, who frequently appeared to the Old Testament saints, in an human form, and will be seen by the saints in heaven, in his real human nature; or of God in and by him: for the essence of God is invisible, and not to be seen with the eyes of the body; nor indeed with the eyes of the understanding, so as to comprehend it; nor immediately, but through, and by certain means: God is seen in the works of creation and providence, in the promises, and in his ordinances; but above all, in Christ the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: this may chiefly intend here, man's not knowing any thing of God in a spiritual and saving way, but in and by Christ; since it follows,

the only begotten Son; the word that was with God in the beginning. The Jerusalem Targum on **Ge 3:22** says almost the same of the word of the Lord, as here, where it introduces him saying,

"the word of the Lord God said, lo, the man whom I created, the only one in my world, even as I am, ydyxy, "the only one", (or, as the word is sometimes rendered, "the only begotten",) in the highest heavens."

And to the same purpose the Targum of Jonathan, and also Jarchi, on the same place. The Syriac version here renders it, "the only begotten, God which is in the bosom of the Father"; clearly showing, that he is the only begotten, as he is God: the phrase,

which is in the bosom of the Father, denotes unity of nature, and essence, in the Father and Son; their distinct personality; strong love, and affection between them; the Son's acquaintance with his Father's secrets; his being at that time, as the Son of God, in the bosom of his Father, when here on earth, as the son of man; and which qualified him to make the declaration of him:

he hath declared him. The Persic and Ethiopic versions further add, "to us"; he has clearly and fully declared his nature, perfections, purposes, promises, counsels, covenant, word, and works; his thoughts and schemes of grace; his love and favour to the sons of men; his mind and will concerning the salvation of his people: he has made, and delivered a fuller revelation of these things, than ever was yet; and to which no other revelation in the present state of things will be added. Somewhat like this the Jews {n} say of the Messiah;

"there is none that can declare the name of his Father, and that knows him; but this is hid from the eyes of the multitude, until he comes, whdygyw, "and he shall declare him"."

He is come, and has declared him: so Philo speaks of the "Logos", or word, as the interpreter of the mind of God, and a teacher of men {o}.

{n} R. Moses Haddarsan in Psal. 85. 11. apud Galatin. de Arcan, Cathol. ver. l.

8. c. 2. {o} De nominum mutat. p. 1047.

John 1:19

Ver. 19. And this is the record of John,.... The evangelist proceeds to give a large, and full account of the testimony John the Baptist bore to Christ, which he had hinted at before, and had signified was his work, and office, and the end of his being sent.

When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, who art thou? The Jews that sent were the great sanhedrim that sat at Jerusalem, whose business it was to inquire into, examine, and try prophets, whether true or false {p}; and John appearing as a prophet, and being so esteemed by the people, they deputed messengers to him to interrogate him, and know who he was. The persons sent were very likely of their own body, since priests and Levites were in that council. For it is said {q},

"they do not constitute, or appoint in the sanhedrim but priests, Levites, and Israelites, who have their genealogies---and it is commanded, that there should be in the great sanhedrim priests and Levites, as it is said,
De 17:9 "and thou shalt come unto the priests, the Levites", &c. and if they are not to be found, though they are all Israelites, (not of the tribe of Levi,) it is right."

Such a sanhedrim is a lawful one; but priests and Levites, if such could be found, that had proper qualifications, were to be admitted in the first place. A message from so august an assembly, at so great a distance, (for Jordan was a day's journey distant from Jerusalem {r}; according to Josephus {s}, it was 210 furlongs, or 26 miles and a quarter,) and by the hands of persons of such character and figure, was doing John a great deal of honour, and serves to make his testimony of Christ the more public and remarkable; and it also shows what a noise John's ministry and baptism made among the Jews, that it even reached Jerusalem, and the great council of the nation; and likewise the question put to him, which by John's answer seems to intimate as if it was thought he was the Messiah, shows the opinion that was entertained of him, and even the sanhedrim might not be without thoughts this way: and the question they put by their messengers might not be, as some have thought, to ensnare John, nor out of disrespect to Jesus, who, as yet, was not made manifest; but might be in good earnest, having, from many circumstances, reason to think there might be something in the people's opinion of him; since, though the government was not wholly departed from Judah, yet they could not but observe it was going away apace, an Idumean having been upon the throne for some years, placed there by the Roman senate; and now the government was divided among his sons by the same order; Daniel's weeks they could not but see were just accomplishing; and besides, from the uncommon appearance John made, the austerity of his life; the doctrine of remission of sins he preached, and the new ordinance of baptism he administered, they might be ready to conclude he was the person.

{p} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 5. {q} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1, 2. {r} Misna Maaser Sheni, c. 5. sect. 2. Juchasin, fol. 65. 2. Jarchi in Isa. xxiv. 16. {s} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4.

John 1:20

Ver. 20. And he confessed, and denied not,.... He freely, and without any reserve, declared, and in the plainest and strongest terms professed to the messengers before all the people, that he was not the Messiah; nor did he retract his confession, or draw in his words again, or drop any thing that looked doubtful or suspicious;

but confessed, I am not the Christ: he stood to it, and insisted on it, that he was not that illustrious person; nor had they any reason to entertain such an opinion of him; nor would he have them do so; they might assure themselves he was not Christ.

John 1:21

Ver. 21. And they asked him, what then? art thou Elias?.... Elijah, the prophet; the Tishbite, as Nonnus in his paraphrase expresses it; who was translated, soul and body, to heaven: the Jews had a notion that that prophet would come in person a little before the coming of the Messiah; See Gill on "Mt 17:10" wherefore these messengers inquire, that since he had so fully satisfied them that he was not the Messiah, that he would as ingenuously answer to this question, if he was Elias, or not:

and he saith, I am not; that is, he was not Elijah the prophet that lived in Ahab's time, and was called the Tishbite; for John's answer is to the intention of their question, and their own meaning in it, and is no contradiction to what

Christ says of him, Mt 11:14 that he was the Elias that was to come; for he was the person meant by him in **Mal 4:5** though not in the sense the Jews understood it; nor is it any contradiction to what the angel said to Zacharias, **Lu 1:17** for he does not say that John should come in the body, but in the power and spirit of Elias; See Gill on "Mt 11:14".

Art thou that prophet? Jeremiah, whom some of the Jews {t} have thought to be the prophet Moses spoke of, in De 18:15 and expected that he would appear about the times of the Messiah; see Mt 16:14 or any one of the ancient prophets risen from the dead, which they also had a notion of, **Lu 9:8** or, as it may be rendered, "art thou a prophet?" for prophecy had long ceased with them:

and he answered, no; he was not Jeremiah, nor any one of the old prophets risen from the dead, nor a prophet in the sense they meant: he was not like one of the prophets of the Old Testament; he was a prophet, and more than a prophet, as Christ says, Mt 11:9 yet not such a prophet as they were; his prophesying lay not so much in predicting future events, as in pointing out Christ, and preaching the doctrine of the remission of sins by him.

{t} Baal Hatturim in Deut. xviii. 15. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 127. 4. & 143. 4. Siphre in Jarchi in Jer. i. 5.

John 1:22

Ver. 22. Then said they unto him, who art thou?.... Since, as yet, he had only answered in negatives, who he was not, that he was not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet; they desire he would give them a positive account who he was:

that we may give answer to them that sent us; that their labour might not be in vain; that they might not come so far for nothing, without knowing who he was; and that they might be capable of giving an account of him to the sanhedrim:

what sayest thou of thyself? they insisted on it, that he would openly, and honestly declare who he was, and what was his office and business; that from his own mouth, and not from the opinion and conjectures of others, they might represent him in a true light to those who had deputed them on this errand.

John 1:23

Ver. 23. And he said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness,.... These words are cited by the other evangelists, and applied to John the Baptist; but then they are only to be considered as their citation, and as an application of them to him by them: but here they are used by John himself, who both expresses them, and interprets them of himself; and in which he was undoubtedly under the infallible direction of the blessed Spirit; and which confirms the sense of the evangelists, who apply the words to him. The Jews give a different interpretation of the words; though one of their celebrated commentators {u} owns, that the comforts spoken of in the preceding verses are what will be in the days of the King Messiah: one of them {w} interprets, "the voice", of the Holy Ghost; and so far it may be true, as John was filled with the Holy Ghost, and he spake by him in his ministry: and another {x}, of the resurrection of the dead, or the voice that will be heard then, which will be the voice of the archangel: though another of {y} them better explains it by, Myrvbmh Mh, "they are they that bring glad tidings", or good news; such are Gospel preachers; only it should have been in the singular number: for the text speaks but of one voice; of one person crying; and of John the Baptist, who brought the good news, and glad tidings, that the Messiah was coming, yea, that he was already come, and that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. The Hebrew writers generally understand the passage, of the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, and of removing all obstructions in their way to Jerusalem; to which sense the Targum on the place inclines, which paraphrases it thus;

"the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare the way before the people of the Lord, make in the plain, paths before the congregation of our God:"

but not the people of the Lord, but the Lord himself, and not the congregation of God, but God himself is intended; whose ways were to be prepared, and made plain, even the King Messiah; which was to be done, and was done by his forerunner John the Baptist, who, with great modesty, expresses himself in the language of this Scripture, as being a prophecy of him: he was a "voice", but not a mere voice; nor was his ministry a mere voice of words, as the law was, but it was the sweet voice of the Gospel, proclaiming the coming of the Messiah; encouraging men to believe in him; calling them to evangelical repentance, and publishing remission of sins in the name of Christ, and pointing him out as the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world:

this voice was "crying"; it was not a still small voice, it was a very loud one; John lifted up his voice like a trumpet; he delivered himself with great zeal and fervency; and it was "in the wilderness" where this voice was heard, in the wilderness of Judea, as in **Mt 3:1** where Jesus came preaching; the Ethiopic version renders the words, "I am the voice of one that goes about in the wilderness"; that is, in the several towns and villages which were in the wilderness, to whom John went and preached the Gospel: the Persic version reads, "I am the voice and cry which cometh out of the wilderness"; referring to the place where he was before he entered on his public ministry, and from whence he came; for he was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel, **Lu 1:80**. The words this voice cried were,

make straight the way of the Lord; he called upon persons to reform their ways, and walk in the way of the Lord, to repent of their sins, believe in Christ, and submit to the ordinance of baptism: the Ethiopic version reads, "the way of God"; and such was the person he came to prepare the way for, even the Son of God, and who is truly and properly God,

as said the prophet Esaias, in Isa 40:3.

{u} Kimchi in Isa. xl. 1. {w} Jarchi in Isa xl. 3. {x} Zohar in Gen. fol. 70. 4. {y} Aben Ezra in Isa. ib.

John 1:24

Ver. 24. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. Who were the straitest sect of religion among the Jews; were very zealous of the traditions of the elders, and professed an expectation of the Messiah; and were famous in the nation for their knowledge and learning, as well as for their devotion and sanctity: and many of them were in the sanhedrim, as appears from **Joh 3:1**, See Gill on "Mt 3:7".

John 1:25

Ver. 25. And they asked him, and said unto him,.... They put a question, by saying to him,

why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? since he denied that he was the Messiah, or Elias that was to come before the Messiah, according to the expectation of the Jews, or that prophet, or a prophet, they demand by what authority he introduced a new rite and ordinance among them, which they had never been used to; for though there were divers washings or baptisms among them, enjoined by the law of Moses in certain cases, and others which obtained by tradition, as the immersion of themselves after they had been at market, and of cups, pots, brazen vessels, and tables, yet nothing of this kind that John administered: and as for the baptism of proselytes, it seems to be of a later date than this, and had no manner of likeness to it. The ordinance John administered was such, as they apprehended that no one ought to practise, unless he was the Messiah, or his forerunner, or some eminent prophet; they insist upon it therefore, that since he denied he was either of these, that he would show his credentials, and what commission he had from God to baptize; or they suggest he was liable to be called to an account by their sanhedrim, and be condemned as a false prophet, or an innovator in religious affairs. From hence it appears, that the Jews expected that baptism would be administered in the times of the Messiah, and his forerunner; but from whence they had this notion, it is not easy to say, whether from Zec 13:1 as Grotius, or from Eze 36:25 as Lightfoot; nor do they speak contemptibly of it, but rather consider it as a very solemn affair, to be performed only by great personages: and this may teach modern ones to think and speak more respectfully of this ordinance than they do, who have given themselves great liberties, and have treated it with much contempt and virulence; calling it by the names of uncleanness, abomination, filthy water, and a devoting of persons to Satan {z}: likewise, it is clear from hence, that they expected that this ordinance would be first administered by some person of very great note, either some very famous prophet, as Elias, whom they looked for before the coming of the Messiah, or else the Messiah himself, and not by a common teacher, or any ordinary person; wherefore this rite, as performed by John, could have no likeness with any thing that was in common use among them: besides, it was expressly done in the name of the Messiah, Ac 19:5 therefore they conclude he, or his forerunner, must be come; and that John must be one, or other of them, otherwise, why did he administer it? and it is also evident from hence, that no such practice had obtained before among them, or they would not have been alarmed at it, as they were; nor would they have troubled themselves to have sent after John, and inquire of him who he was, that should practise in this manner.

{z} Vet. Nizzachon, p. 56, 62, 64, 70, 74, 77, 148, 191, 193.

John 1:26

Ver. 26. John answered them, saying, I baptize with water,.... Or in water, so the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions render it. The sense of the answer is, that he indeed baptized persons in water, which was all that he could do, or pretended to do; and he owned, that this was a new rite, and that he was the administrator of a new ordinance; but he suggests, as may be supplied from **Mt 3:11** that there was one at hand, and even now among them, that should baptize, and so it is read in one of Stephens's copies here, in the Holy Ghost, and in fire; and it was by his authority, by a commission he had received from him, that he baptized in water; and that his speedy manifestation and appearance as the Messiah, which would be confirmed by his power of baptizing in the Holy Ghost, and by his ministry and miracles, would be a sufficient vindication of his conduct, and support him in his administration of water baptism:

but there standeth one among you; or "hath stood", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; referring, not to his being among them at twelve years of age, but a few days ago when he came to John to be baptized, and was baptized by him; for from **Joh 1:29** it is plain he was not now, or "today", as Nounus expresses it, standing in the midst of them. The Ethiopic version renders it, there is one about to stand among you, as he did the next day: though the meaning of the phrase may only be, that he was then in being, and dwelt somewhere among them, and not that he was personally present at that time:

whom ye know not; neither from whence he is, nor who he is, or what is his work and office; neither the dignity of his person, nor the end of his coming into the world, nor the nature of his business in it.

John 1:27

Ver. 27. He it is who coming after me,.... Both into the world, and into the ministry of the word; for John was before Christ, in both these respects, though greatly behind him in others, and therefore he adds,

is preferred before me: being not only of a more excellent nature, the Son of God, and of an higher extract, the Lord from heaven; but in an higher office, and having greater gifts, and the Spirit of God without measure on him; and also being more followed by the people; for John decreased, but he increased: or rather the words may be rendered, who was before me; being the eternal

Son of God, whose goings forth were of old, from everlasting; who was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; the firstborn, or first bringer forth of every creature; and therefore must be before all things, which are created by him;
See Gill on "Joh 1:15".

Whose shoes latchet I am not worthy to unloose; which was one of the meanest services done by a servant to his master;
See Gill on "Mt 3:11".

John 1:28

Ver. 28. These things were done in Bethabara,.... That is, this testimony was bore by John; and this discourse passed between him and the Pharisees, at the place here mentioned; which was a passage over Jordan, where much people walked to go on the other side,

beyond Jordan; and where also John was baptizing; which brought a great concourse of people together: so that this witness was bore in a very public manner, and before a large number; and it is to this that Christ refers, in **Joh 1:33** for this was so well known, that there was no hiding or denying it: the place where this conversation passed, is in the Vulgate Latin, and all the eastern versions; and in the Alexandrian copy, and many other copies, and so in Nonnus, called Bethany; but as De Dieu observes, Bethany was not beyond Jordan, nor in the wilderness of Judea, but near to Jerusalem, about two miles distant from it; nor was it situated by waters convenient for baptizing, unless they went to the brook Kidron, which indeed was not far from it; but it is clear from the history, that John was not so near Jerusalem; nor did that brook which might be forded over, continues the same learned author, seem fit and proper enough, `"mergendis baptizandorum corporibus", for plunging the bodies of those that were to be baptized'; wherefore he rightly concludes, that either this reading is an error, or there was another Bethany near Jordan: Bethabara signifies "the house of passage", and is thought to be the place where the Israelites passed over Jordan, to go into the land of Canaan, **Jos 3:16**. And which, as it must be a very convenient place for the administration of baptism by immersion, used by John, so it was very significant of the use of this ordinance; which is, as it were, the passage, or entrance, into the Gospel church state; for persons ought first to be baptized, and then be admitted into a Gospel church, according to the example of the primitive Christians, **Ac 2:41** but whether there was a place of this name, where the Israelites went over

Jordan, is not certain; and if there was, it does not seem so likely to be the place here designed, since that was right over against Jericho; whereas this seems to be rather further off, and over against Galilee: there were several passages of Jordan, Jud 12:5. There was a bridge over it, between the lake of Samochon and Gennesaret, now called Jacob's bridge, where Jacob is supposed to have wrestled with the angel, and to have met with his brother Esau; and there was another over it at Chainmath, near Tiberias, and in other places: and it might be at one of these passages, by which they went over into Galilee, that John pitched upon to continue preaching and baptizing at; partly because of the number of people that went over, to whom he had the opportunity of preaching; and partly, for the sake of baptizing those who became proper subjects of that ordinance through his ministry. Some have thought, that this place is the same with Bethbarah, in **Jud 7:24**, which was either in the tribe of Ephraim or of Manasseh, and not far from the parts where this place must be, but was on this side Jordan; and so Beza says the words should be rendered; and those who came to John at Jordan, are not said to pass over that river: others are of opinion, that Bethabara is the same with Betharabah, Jos 15:6, since this is called Bethabara by the Septuagint, in Jos 18:22. However, be it what place soever, and wheresoever, it was no doubt very proper for John's purpose; and therefore he chose it, and for a while continued at it: and here, says Jerom {a}

"to this day many of the brethren, that is, of the number of believers, desiring there to be born again, are baptized in the vital stream;"

such veneration had they for the place where John first baptized: Origen says {b}, that in his time it was said, that Bethabara was showed by the banks of Jordan, where they report John baptized.

{a} De Locis Hebraicis, fol. 89. L. {b} Comment in Joannemo, Tom. 8. p. 131.

John 1:29

Ver. 29. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him,.... Not to be baptized, for he had been baptized before by him. This seems to have been after Christ had been forty days in the wilderness, from whence he now returned, and came to attend on John's ministry; both to do honour to him, and that he might be made manifest by him; and this was the day after John had bore such a testimony concerning him, to the priests and Levites; and which Christ the omniscient God, knew full well, and therefore came at this season, when the minds of the people were prepared by John's testimony, to expect and receive him: one part of the work of Elias, which the Jews assign unto him, and the precise time of his doing it, exactly agree with this account of John the Baptist; they say {c}, that his work is

"to bring to them (the Israelites) the good news of the coming of the Redeemer; and this shall be, dxa Mwy, "one day", before the coming of the, Messiah; and this is that which is written, "behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord". **Mal 4:5**."

For John, the day before Christ Lord, came to him, had signified to the priests and Levites, that the Messiah was already come; and now on the day following, seeing him, pointed as with his finger to him,

and saith, behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world: he calls him a "lamb", either with respect to any lamb in common, for his harmlessness and innocence; for his meekness and humility; for his patience; and for his usefulness, both for food and clothing, in a spiritual sense; as well as for his being to be a sacrifice for the sins of his people: or else with respect to the lambs that were offered in sacrifice, under the legal dispensation; and that either to the passover lamb, or rather to the lambs of the daily sacrifice, that were offered morning and evening; since the account of them best agrees with what is said of this Lamb of God, who was slain in type, in the morning of the world, or from the foundation of the world; and actually in the evening of the world, or in the end of it; and who has a continued virtue to take away the sins of his people, from the beginning, to the end of the world; and their sins, both of the day and night, or which are committed every day: for as they are daily committed, there is need of the daily application of the blood and sacrifice of Christ, to remove them; or of continual looking unto him by faith, whose blood has a continual virtue, to cleanse from all sin: the Jewish doctors say {d}, that

"the morning daily sacrifice made atonement for the iniquities done in the night; and the evening sacrifice made atonement for the iniquities that were by day:"

and in various things they were typical of Christ, as that they were lambs of the first year, which may denote the weakness of the human nature of Christ, which had all the sinless infirmities of it; they, were also without spot, signifying the purity of Christ's human nature, who was holy and harmless, a lamb without spot and blemish; these were offered as a sacrifice, and for the children of Israel only, as Christ has given himself an offering and a sacrifice to God, both in soul and body, for the sins of the mystical Israel of God, the Israel whom God has chosen for himself, whether Jews or Gentiles; for Christ is the propitiation for the sins of both: and these were offered daily, morning and evening; and though Christ was but once offered, otherwise he must have often suffered; yet as he has by one offering put away sin for ever, so there is a perpetual virtue in his sacrifice to take it away, and there is a constant application of it for that purpose; to which may be added, that these lambs were offered with fine flour, oil and wine, for a sweet savour to the Lord; denoting the acceptableness of the sacrifice of Christ to his Father, to whom it is for a sweet smelling savour, **Eph 5:2**. And Christ is styled the Lamb "of God", in allusion to the same, whom the Cabalistic Jews {e} call the secret of the mystery, and anmxr yvbk, "the Lambs of God"; because God has a special property in him; he is his own Son; and because he is of his providing and appointing, as a sacrifice for sin, and is acceptable to him as such; and to distinguish him from all other lambs; and to give him the preference, since he does that which they could not do, "taketh away the sin of the world": by the "sin of the world", is not meant the sin, or sins of every individual person in the world; for some die in their sins, and their sins go before hand to judgment, and they go into everlasting punishment for them; which could not be, if Christ took them away: rather, the sin which is common to the whole world, namely: original sin; but then it must be observed, that this is not the only sin Christ takes away; for he also takes away actual sins; and the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read in the plural, "the sins of the world"; and also that this he takes away, only with respect the elect; wherefore they are the persons intended by the world, as in **Joh 6:33**, whose sin, or sins, Christ takes away: and a peculiar regard seems to be had to the elect among the Gentiles, who are called the world, in distinction from the Jews, as in **Joh 3:16**, and the rather, since the lambs of the daily sacrifice, to which the allusion is, were only offered for the sins of the Jews: but John here signifies, that the Lamb of God he pointed at, and which was the antitype of these lambs, not only took away the sins of God's people among the Jews, but the sins of such of them also as were among the Gentiles; and this seems to me to be the true sense of the passage. The phrase "taking away sin", signifies a taking it up, as Christ did; he took it voluntarily upon himself, and became responsible to divine justice for it; and also a bearing and carrying it, for taking it upon himself, he bore it in his own body on the tree, and carried it away, as the scape goat did under the law; and so likewise a taking it quite away: Christ has removed it as far as the east is from the west, out of sight, so as never to be seen any more; he has destroyed, abolished, and made an utter end of it: and this is expressed in the present tense, "taketh away": to denote the continued virtue of Christ's sacrifice to take away sin, and the constant efficacy of his blood to cleanse from it, and the daily application of it to the consciences of his people; and which is owing to the dignity of his person, as the Son of God; and to his continual and powerful mediation and intercession: this must be a great relief to minds afflicted with the continual ebullitions of sin, which is taken away by the Lamb of God, as fast as it rises; and who, for that purpose, are called to "behold", and wonder at, the love and grace of Christ, in taking up, bearing, and taking away sin; and to look to him by faith continually, for everlasting salvation; and love him, and give him the honour of it, and glorify him for it.

{c} R. Abraham ben David in Misn. Ediot, c. 8. sect. 7. {d} R. Menachem, fol. 115. apud Ainsworth, in Exod. xxix. 39. {e} Raya Mehimna, in Zohar in Lev. fol. 33. 2.

John 1:30

Ver. 30. This is he, of whom it is said,.... Either the day before, as in **Joh 1:27**, or some time before that, **Joh 1:15**, when he first began to baptize, even before Christ came to be baptized by him, and before he personally knew him; see **Mt 3:11**.

After me cometh a man; not a mere man, but the man God's fellow: and this is said, not because he was now a grown man, or to show the truth of his human nature; but seems to be a common Hebraism, and is all one as if it had been said, "after me cometh one", or a certain person: for the sense of this phrase, and what follows,
see Gill "Joh 1:15".

John 1:31

Ver. 31. And I knew him not,.... Ommasin, "by sight", as Nonnus paraphrases it; personally he had never seen him, nor had had any conversation and familiarity with him; for though they were related to each other, yet lived at such a distance, as not to know one another, or have a correspondence with each other: John was in the deserts, until the day of his showing unto Israel; and Christ dwelt with his parents at Nazareth, in a very mean and obscure manner, till he came from thence to Jordan to John, to be baptized by him; and which was the first interview they had: and this was so ordered by providence, as also this is said by John, lest it should be thought, that the testimony he bore to Jesus, and the high commendation he gave of him, arose from the relation between them; or from a confederacy and compact they had entered into:

but that he should be made manifest to Israel; who had been for many years hid in Galilee, an obscure part of the world: and though he had been known to Joseph and Mary, and to Zacharias and Elisabeth, and to Simeon and Anna; yet he was not made manifest to the people of Israel in common; nor did they know that the Messiah was come: but that he might be known:

therefore am I come baptizing with water; or in water, as before: for by administering this new ordinance, the people were naturally put upon inquiry after the Messiah, whether come, and where he was, since such a new rite was introduced; and besides, John, when he baptized any, he exhorted them to believe on him, which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus; and moreover, by Christ's coming to his baptism, he came to have a personal knowledge of him himself, and so was capable of pointing him out, and making him manifest to others, as he did.

John 1:32

Ver. 32. And John bare record,.... The same day that he said the above things, and at the same time:

saying, I saw the Spirit; that is, of God, as is said in **Mt 3:16** and which Nonnus here expresses; and the Ethiopic version reads, "the Holy Ghost",

descending from heaven like a dove; at the time of his baptism;
see Gill "Mt 3:16".

And it abode upon him; for some time; so long as that John had a full sight of it, and so was capable of giving a perfect account of it, and bearing a certain and distinct testimony to it.

John 1:33

Ver. 33. And I knew him not,.... That is, before he came to be baptized by him; when it was secretly suggested to him who he was, and the following signal was given him, to confirm him in it:

but he that sent me to baptize with water; or "in water"; that is, God; for John's mission was from God, as in **Joh 1:6**, and his baptism from heaven; he had a divine warrant and commission for what he did:

the same said unto me; either by an articulate voice, or by a divine impulse on his mind, or by the revelation of the Spirit:

upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him,
the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost; that is, the Messiah; See Gill on "Mt 3:11",
See Gill on "Mt 3:16".

John 1:34

Ver. 34. And I saw,.... The Spirit descending from heaven as a dove, and lighting upon Jesus, and remaining some time on him; this he saw with his bodily eyes:

and bore record; at the same time, before all the people that were with him, when he baptized Jesus:

that this is the Son of God; the natural, essential, and eternal Son of God; who being sent in the fulness of time, had assumed an human nature, in which he became subject to all ordinances, and had the Spirit without measure bestowed on him; and which was an evidence who he was, and of what he came about.

John 1:35

Ver. 35. Again, the next day after,.... The third day from the priests and Levites having been with John, to know who he was. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, leave out the word "again":

John stood, and two of his disciples; one of these was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, as appears from **Joh 1:40** and very likely the other was the Evangelist John, the writer of this Gospel, who always chooses to conceal himself. John the Baptist stood, and these disciples by him, in some certain place near Jordan, where he was preaching and baptizing.

John 1:36

Ver. 36. And looking upon Jesus as he walked,.... Either by them; or as he was going from them to his lodgings; it being toward the close of the day, when John had finished his work for that day, and the people were departing home: John fixed his eyes intently on Christ, with great pleasure and delight, and pointing at him,

he saith, behold the Lamb of God; as in **Joh 1:29**, where it is added, "which taketh away the sin of the world"; and which the Ethiopic version subjoins here.

John 1:37

Ver. 37. And the two disciples heard him speak,.... The above words, and took notice of them; faith in Christ came by hearing them; they reached their hearts, and they found their affections, and the desires of their souls, to be after Christ:

and they followed Jesus; left their master, and went after him, in order to get some acquaintance with him, and receive some instructions from him.

John 1:38

Ver. 38. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following,.... That is, "him", as the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions add: he saw by their walk, and by their countenances, that they were following him; and which he knew before he turned himself: he knew what John had said, and what an effect it had upon these disciples, and what was working in their hearts, and how desirous they were of coming up to him, and conversing with him; and therefore he turned himself, that they might have an opportunity of speaking to him; or rather, in order to speak to them first, as he did:

and saith unto them, what seek ye? This he said, not as ignorant of whom, and what they were seeking, and desirous; but to encourage them to speak to him, which, through fear and bashfulness, they might be backward to do; and therefore, he who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, but cherishes and encourages the first motions of grace, begins first with them, and treats them in a free and familiar manner; thereby to animate and engage them to use freedom with him, and which end was answered:

they said unto him, Rabbi; a title which now began to be in much use with the Jews, and which they gave to their celebrated doctors; and these disciples of John, observing how magnificently their master spoke of Jesus, in great reverence to him, addressed him under this character; See Gill on "Mt 23:7";

which is to say, being interpreted, master. These are the words of the evangelist, interpreting the word "Rabbi", and not of the disciples, and are left out in the Syriac and Persic versions, who, for "Rabbi", read "our master", or our "Rabbi"; being said by both the disciples, or by one in the name of both, putting the following question:

where dwellest thou? signifying, that that was not a proper place, in the public way, to enter into a conversation with him, and acquaint him with what they were desirous of; but should be glad to know where he lodged, that they might wait upon him there, either then, or on the morrow, or at any convenient time.

John 1:39

Ver. 39. He saith unto them, come and see,.... He gave them an invitation, to go along with him directly, and see with their own eyes, where he dwelt, and there and then converse with him, and at any other time; to which they had a hearty welcome:

they came and saw where he dwelt; they accepted of the invitation, and went along with him immediately, and saw, and took notice of the place where he had lodgings, that they might know it, and find it another time; which Dr. Lightfoot conjectures was at Capernaum, which is very probable; since that was his own city, where he paid tribute, where he frequently resorted, and was on the banks of Jordan, near the lake of Gennesaret; and these disciples were Galilaeans:

and abode with him that day; the remaining part of the day, which they spent in delightful conversation with him; by which they knew that he was the Messiah; at least they were better instructed in this matter, and more confirmed in it. The Arabic version renders it, "they remained with him that his own day"; and Dr. Lightfoot thinks the next day is meant, and that it was the sabbath day, which they kept with him in private devotion and conference:

for it was about the tenth hour; which, according to the Roman way of reckoning, must be ten o'clock in the morning; so that there was a considerable part of the day before them; but according to the Jewish way of reckoning, who reckon twelve hours to a day, it must be four o'clock in the afternoon, when there were but two hours to night: and this being; about the time when the lamb of the daily sacrifice of the evening was offered up, very seasonably did John point unto them, at this time, Christ the Lamb of God, the antitype of that sacrifice; for the daily evening sacrifice was slain at eight and a half, and was offered at nine and a half {f}, or between the ninth and tenth hours of the day. The Ethiopic version renders it, "they remained with him that day unto the tenth hour".

{f} Misn. Pesachim, c. 5. sect. 1.

John 1:40

Ver. 40. One of the two which heard John [speak],.... The above things, concerning Jesus being the Lamb of God:

and followed him; that is, Jesus, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; and the Persic version, Christ: and the Ethiopic version, "the Lord Jesus"; for not John, but Jesus they followed:

was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother: see **Mt 4:18** the other, as before observed, might be the writer of this Gospel.

John 1:41

Ver. 41. He first findeth his own brother Simon,.... Either before the other disciple, or before he found any other person: after he and the other disciple departed from Christ, being affected with the grace bestowed upon him, and his heart warm with the conversation he had had with him, and transported with joy at finding the Messiah, goes in all haste in search of his relations, friends, and acquaintance, to communicate what he had seen and heard, in order to bring them to the knowledge of the same; for such is the nature of grace, it is very communicative, and those that have it, are very desirous that all others should be partakers of it: and the first person he lighted on was Simon, who was afterwards called Peter, who was his own brother; not a brother-in-law, but his own brother, by father and mother's side, and so dear unto him by the ties of nature and blood:

and saith unto him; with all eagerness imaginable, and in a rapture of joy:

we have found the Messias; I, and a fellow disciple have had the Messiah, so often foretold by the prophets, and so long expected by our fathers, pointed out to us; and we have followed him, and have had conversation with him, and are well assured he is that illustrious person:

which is, being interpreted, the Christ; which, as in **Joh 1:38**, are the words of the evangelist, and not Andrew, and are therefore left out in the Syriac version; the word Messiah needing no interpretation in that language, and which was the language in which Andrew spoke. This name, Messiah, was well known among the Jews, for that who was promised, and they expected as a Saviour and Redeemer; though it is not very often mentioned in the books of the Old Testament, chiefly in the following places, **Ps 2:2**; but is very much used in the Chaldee paraphrases: Elias Levita {g} says, he found it in more than fifty verses; and Buxtorf {h} has added others to them, and the word appears in "seventy one" places, which he takes notice of, and are worthy of regard; for they show the sense of the ancient synagogue, concerning the passages of the Old Testament, respecting the Messiah: this Hebrew word is interpreted by the Greek word, "Christ"; and both signify "anointed", and well agree with the person to whom they belong, to which there is an allusion in **So 1:3**, "thy name is as ointment poured forth": he is so called, because he was anointed from everlasting, to be prophet, priest, and king; see **Ps 2:6** **Pr 8:22**, and he was anointed as man, with the oil of gladness, with the graces of the Spirit, without measure, Ps 45:7. And it is from him the saints receive the anointing, or grace in measure; and are from him called Christians, and are really anointed ones; see **1Jo 2:27**, hence it is a name precious to the saints, and savoury to them. These words were delivered by Andrew, in a very exulting strain, expressing great joy; as indeed what can be greater joy to a sensible soul, than to find Christ? which in a spiritual sense, is to have a clear sight of him by faith, to go unto him, and lay hold on him, as the only Saviour and Redeemer: who is to be found in the Scriptures of truth, which testify of him; in the promises of grace, which are full of him and in the Gospel, of which he is the sum and substance; and in the ordinances of it, where he shows himself; for he is not to be found by the light of nature, or by carnal reason, nor by the law of Moses, but by means of the Gospel, and the Spirit of God attending that, as a spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him: and happy are those souls that find Christ under his direction; for they find life, spiritual and eternal, in him; a justifying righteousness; free and full pardon of their sins; spiritual food for their souls; and peace, comfort, joy, and rest, and eternal glory: wherefore this must needs be matter of joy unto them, since such a finding is a rich one, a pearl of great price, riches durable and unsearchable; and which a man that has found, would not part with for all the world; but parts with all he has for it; and is what can never be lost again; and, particularly to two sorts of persons, finding Christ must give a peculiar pleasure, and an inexpressible joy; to such as are under a sense of sin and damnation, and to such who have been under desertion. The phrase of "finding" a person, twice used in this text, and hereafter in some following verses, is frequent in Talmudic and Rabbinic writings; as

"he went, brl hyxkva, "and found him with Rab" {i}."

{g} Prefat ad Methurgemen, & in voce xvm. {h} Lexicon Talmud p. 1268. {i} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 108. 1. Zohar in Lev. fol. 15. 3.

John 1:42

Ver. 42. And he brought him to Jesus,.... That is, Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus; he persuaded him to go along with him, and showed him where he was; which discovered great zeal for Christ, being desirous of, gaining souls unto him; and great affection to his brother, being heartily concerned that he might know Christ, as well as he; nor did he choose that he should take up with the bare account that he gave of him, but would have him go to him himself, that he might be personally acquainted with him, and instructed by him: and this also shows the readiness and willingness of Simon, to see and hear Christ himself, and not sit down contented with the bare relation his brother gave: no doubt he found his heart stirred up within him, and the desires of his soul going after Christ; and therefore he at once rose up and went with Andrew to him; and thus one person may be the means of bringing another to Christ: and it may be observed, that Peter was not the first of the apostles that was called by Christ, or first knew him; Andrew was before him, and the means of bringing him into an acquaintance with him; had it been the reverse, the Papists would have improved it in favour of Peter, as the prince of the apostles: this clause is omitted in the Persic version.

And when Jesus beheld him; as he was coming, or come to him: he had beheld him before in the glass of his Father's purposes and decrees; he had viewed him in his blood, and said unto him, live; and he now looked upon him with a look of love, of complacency, and delight:

he said, thou art Simon, the son of Jona; thy name is Simon, and thy father's name is Jona: he knew both their names, though he might have never seen their faces, nor heard of them: this he said to give Simon a testimony of his omniscience; and which, no doubt, must strike him at once. Simon, or Simeon, was a common name among the Jews, being the name of one of the twelve patriarchs;
See Gill on "Mt 10:2"; and so likewise was Jona, being the name of a prophet of theirs; See Gill on "Mt 16:17"; and inasmuch as the prophet Jonah was of Gathhepher in Zebulun, which was in Galilee;
See Gill on "Joh 7:52"; this might be a common name among the Galilaeans; so that there seems no reason why it should be thought to be the same with John, as the Ethiopic version reads it, and by way of interrogation, "art thou not Simon the son of John?"

Thou shall be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone; or Peter as it should rather be rendered; and as it is in the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions; and as "Cepha", or "Cephas", in the Syriac and Chaldee languages signifies a stone, or rock {k}, so does "Peter" in Greek: hence, the Syriac version here gives no interpretation of the word. Christ not only calls Simon by his present name, at first sight of him, but tells him what his future name should be; and which imports, not only that he should be a lively stone in the spiritual building, the church, but should have a considerable hand in that work, and abide firm and steadfast to Christ, and his interest, notwithstanding his fall; and continue constant and immoveable until death, as he did. The Jews also, in their writings, call him Simeon Kepha {l}.

{k} Vid. Targum in Psal. xl. 3. & Prov. xvii. 8. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 6. 1. & Gloss. in ib. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 63. 2. {l} Toldos Jesu, p. 20, 21, 22, 23.

John 1:43

Ver. 43. The day following,.... Not the day after John had pointed out Christ, as the Lamb of God, to two of his disciples; but the day after Simon had been with him, being brought by Andrew:

Jesus would go forth into Galilee; from whence he came to Jordan, to John, to be baptized by him; and which being done, and his temptations in the wilderness over, it was his will, resolution, and determination, to return to Galilee, the place of his education and conversation, till this time; and therefore chose to begin his ministry, and miracles, there, both to give honour to it, and to fulfil a prophecy in **Isa 9:1**; and besides this, he had doubtless another end in going thither: which was to call some other disciples that dwelt there:

and findeth Philip; as he was going to Galilee, or rather when in it; not by hap or chance; but knowing where he was, as the shepherd and bishop of souls, looked him up and found him out, and called him by his grace, and to be a disciple of his; See Gill on "Mt 10:3";

and saith unto him, follow me; leave thy friends, thy calling, and business, and become a disciple of mine: and such power went along with these words, that he at once left all, and followed Christ; as the other disciples, Peter, and Andrew, James, and John, and Matthew did, as is recorded of them, though not of this; but the following history makes it appear he did.

John 1:44

Ver. 44. Now Philip was of Bethsaida,.... A town on the lake of Gennesaret, afterwards made a city by Philip the tetrarch, and called Julias, after the name of Caesar's daughter {m}: it was a fishing town, and had its name from thence; and the disciples that were of it, were of this business:

the city of Andrew and Peter; or "Simon", as read the Syriac and Persic versions: three apostles were called out of this place, as mean, and wicked, as it was; see Mt 11:21; which was no small honour to it: it is a saying of the Jews {n}, that

"a man's place (his native place) does not honour him, but a man honours his place."

This was the case here.

{m} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 3. {n} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 21. 2.

John 1:45

Ver. 45. Philip findeth Nathanael,.... Who was of Cana of Galilee, Joh 21:2 and where, it is very likely, Philip found him; since we quickly read of Jesus, and his disciples being there. This man is thought, by some, to be the same with Bartholomew; and so he is called Bartholomew, in a Syriac dictionary {o}; and the rather, since he and Philip are always mentioned together in the account of the apostles, Mt 10:3. And certain it is, from the above mentioned place, that Nathanael was among the apostles after our Lord's resurrection; and it is highly probable was one of them? his name might be Nathanael bar Tholmai, the son of Tholmai, Ptolomy, or Tholomew. It is the same name with Nethaneel, and which is read Nathanael, as here, in:

"And of the sons of Phaisur; Elionas, Massias Israel, and Nathanael, and Ocidelus and Talsas." (1 Esdras 9:22)

and by the Septuagint on **1Ch 2:14**
Ne 12:36; and signifies one given of God; and is the same with Theodore in Greek, and Adeodatus in Latin; a doctor of this name, R. Nathaniel, is mentioned in the Jewish writings {p}:

and saith unto him, we have found him of whom Moses, in the law, and the prophets, did write. He does not say, that he, and Andrew, and Simon, had found the Messiah; though he designs him by this circumlocution; Nathanael being, as is generally thought, a person well versed in the law, and the prophets, and so would at once know who Philip meant: for Moses, in the law, or Pentateuch, in the five books written by him, frequently speaks of the Messiah as the seed of the woman, that should break the serpent's head; as the seed of Abraham, in whom all nations should be blessed; and as the Shiloh to whom the gathering of the people should be; and as the great prophet, like to himself, God would raise up among the children of Israel, to whom they were to hearken: and as for the prophets, they wrote of his birth of a virgin; of the place of his birth, Bethlehem; of his sufferings, and the glory, that should follow; of his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God; and of many things relating to his person, and office, and work. And Philip having given this general account of him, proceeds to name him particularly; and affirms him to be

Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph; that his name was Jesus, which signifies a saviour; and answers to the promises, and prophecies, and character of him in the Old Testament; that he was of Nazareth, a place not above three hours walk from Cana, as Adrichomius says, where Philip and Nathanael were: Nazareth was the place where Christ had lived almost all his days hitherto, and therefore is said to be of it; though Bethlehem was the place of his birth, which Philip might not as yet know; as Capernaum afterwards was his city, or the more usual place of his residence: and that he was the son of Joseph; this Philip says, according to the common opinion of people, for he was supposed to be the son of Joseph; he having married his mother Mary.

{o} Bar Bahlui apud Castell Lex. Polyglott. col. 2437. {p} Pirke Eliezer, c. 48.

John 1:46

Ver. 46. And Nathanael said unto him,.... Taking notice of, and laying hold on what Philip said, that he was of Nazareth, which at once stumbled, and prejudiced him against Jesus being the Messiah; knowing very well that Bethlehem was to be the place of his birth:

can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? The whole country of Galilee was had in contempt with the Jews; but Nazareth was so mean a place, that it seems it was even despised by its neighbours, by the Galilaeans themselves; for Nathanael was a Galilean, that said these words. It was so miserable a place that he could hardly think that any sort of good thing, even any worldly good thing, could come from thence; and it was so wicked, as appears from their murderous designs upon our Lord, that he thought no good man could arise from hence; and still less, any prophet, any person of great note; and still least of all, that that good thing, or person, the Messiah, should spring from it: so that his objection, and prejudice, proceeded not only upon the oracle in **Mic 5:2**, which points out Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah; but upon the wickedness, and meanness, and obscurity of Nazareth.

Philip saith unto him, come and see; who though he might not be master of this point, and knew not how to solve this difficulty, and remove this prejudice from Nathanael's mind, yet persuades him to go with him to Jesus; who, he doubted not, would give him full satisfaction in this, and all other points; and then it would most clearly appear to him, as it had done to him, that he was the true Messiah. The phrase, yzx at, "come, see", is often used in the book of Zohar {q}: so it is, and likewise, harw ab, "come and see", in the Talmudic writings {r}.

{q} In Gen. fol. 13. 1. & 14. 3. & 16. 1, 2. & in Exod. fol. 83. 4. & passim. {r} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 8. 1. & 23. 2. & 24. 1. Kiddushin, fol. 20. 1. & 33. 1. & Sota, fol. 5. 1, 2. & passim.

John 1:47

Ver. 47. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him,.... For notwithstanding his prejudices, he was a man of so much uprightness and honesty, that he thought Philip's request was very reasonable; and that it was but right, and fair, that he should see, and hear, and judge, for himself, whether the person Philip spoke of was the Messiah, or not; and therefore he came along with him; and as he was coming, Jesus saw him, who knew all that had passed between him and Philip:

and saith of him; to those that were standing by him, and in the hearing of Nathanael,

behold an Israelite indeed! a son of Israel, as the Syriac and Persic versions read; a true son of Jacob's; an honest, plain hearted man, like him; one that was an Israelite at heart; inwardly so; not one after the flesh only, but after the Spirit; see **Ro 2:28**; and which was a rare thing at that time; and therefore a note of admiration is prefixed to it; for all were not Israel, that were of Israel; and indeed but a very few then: and so,
larvy Nb, "a son of Israel", and rwmg larvy, "a perfect Israelite", are {s} said of such who have regard to the articles of the Jewish faith, though not even of the seed of Israel: it is added,

in whom there is no guile; not that he was without sin; nor is this said of him; nor was he in such sense without guile, as Christ himself was; but guile was not a governing sin in him: the course of his life, and conversation, was with great integrity, and uprightness, and without any prevailing hypocrisy and deceit, either to God, or men. This Christ said to show how much such a character is approved by him; and that he knew the secrets of men's hearts, and the inward frames of their minds.

{s} Addareth Eliahu apud Trigland de Sect. Karaeorum, c. 10. p. 175, 176.

John 1:48

Ver. 48. Nathanael saith unto him, whence knowest thou me?.... This he said as one surprised, that he, who was a stranger to him, should hit upon his general character, and describe the internal state and frame of his soul: this was more surprising to him, than if he had called him by his name Nathanael, as he did Simon; or had said what was the place, of his abode; Cana of Galilee; since this ordinarily was only to be observed, and learned, from a long and familiar acquaintance and conversation: by Nathanael's reply, it looks as if he had no doubt, or fears, about the character Christ gave him; but rather, that he believed it, as every good man must be conscious to himself of his own integrity; only it was amazing to him, how he should know it:

Jesus answered and said unto him; in order to satisfy him, how he could know this inward temper of his mind, and to give him some undeniable proofs of his omniscience, which he himself must acknowledge, being such as none but an all seeing eye could discover:

before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee; in which words Christ gives two instances of his omniscience; the one is, that he knew Philip had called him; he was privy to all that passed between them, though they were alone, and the conversation was had in the most private manner. Christ knew what an account Philip had given of him, and what objection Nathanael had made; and what an invitation Philip had given him to go along with him to Christ, and judge for himself; which is here meant by calling him, and with which he complied: and the other is, that he saw him under the fig tree before that: he was sitting under it, as men in those countries used to do; see **Mic 4:4**, where he might be reading the Scriptures, and meditating upon them; and if, as some observe, he was reading, and thinking upon Jacob's dream, concerning the ladder which reached from earth to heaven, and on which he saw the angels of God ascending and descending, the words of Christ in **Joh 1:51** must strike him with fresh surprise, and give him another convincing proof of his omniscience: or he might be praying here in secret, and so acted a different part from the generality, of religious men of that nation, who chose to pray in synagogues, and corners of the streets, that they might be seen; and likewise proved him to be what Christ had said of him, a true and rare Israelite, without guile and hypocrisy, which were so visible and prevailing among others. It was usual with the doctors to read, and study in the law, under fig trees, and sometimes, though rarely, to pray there. It is said {t},

"R. Jacob, and his companions, were "sitting", studying in the law, hnyat adx twxt, "under a certain fig tree"."

And the rule they give about praying, on, or under one, is thus {u}:

"he that prays on the top of an olive tree, or on the top of a "fig tree", or on any other trees, must come down, and "pray below"."

It is said of Nathanael, in the Syriac dictionary {x}; that his mother laid him under a fig tree, when the infants were slain, i.e. at Bethlehem; which, if it could be depended upon, must be to Nathanael a surprising and undeniable proof of the deity of Christ, and of his being the true Messiah; since, at that time, he was an infant of days himself, and was the person Herod was seeking to destroy, as the Messiah, and king of the Jews.

{t} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 3. Vid. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 16. 4. {u} Ib col. 1. & T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 1. {x} Bar Bahluli apud Castell. Lexic. Polyglott. col. 8437.

John 1:49

Ver. 49. Nathanael answered and saith unto him,.... Being fully convinced of his omniscience by these instances:

Rabbi; that is, master, as it is interpreted in **Joh 1:38**, and is not here, because it is there:

thou art the Son of God; not by creation, for this would be to say no more of him, than may be said of every man; nor by adoption, for in that sense Nathanael himself was a Son of God, and many others; nor on account of his wonderful incarnation, which, it is very likely, at this time Nathanael knew nothing of; nor by reason of his resurrection from the dead, which, as yet, was not, and still less might be known by this person; nor because of his office, as Mediator, for this is expressed in the next clause; but by nature, as being of the same essence, and possessed of the same perfections God is; and of which he was convinced by the instances he gave of his omniscience; for it was from hence, and no other consideration, that he concludes him to be the Son of God: wherefore this phrase must be understood of him, not as Mediator, but as a divine person; as the natural, essential, and eternal Son of God; and who is truly and properly God: he adds,

thou art the King of Israel; having in view, no doubt, the passage in **Ps 2:6**, where the characters of Son of God, and King of Zion, meet in the same person: not King of Israel, in a literal sense; though he was the son of David, and a descendant of his in a right line, and was of the royal line, and had a legal right to the throne of Israel; and Nathanael might have a view to this, being tinctured with the common national prejudice, that the Messiah would be a temporal prince: but his kingdom is not of this world; nor with observation; but is spiritual; and he is a King over Israel in a spiritual sense, even of saints, whether Jews or Gentiles: whom he conquers by his power, and rules in their hearts by his Spirit, and grace; and protects, and defends them from all their enemies.

John 1:50

Ver. 50. Jesus answered and said unto him,.... Not as reproving him for his faith, as if he was too credulous, and too easily gave into the belief of Christ, as the Son of God, and true Messiah, upon these single expressions of his; but as approving of it, and surprised at it:

because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? some read the words, not by way of interrogation, but as an assertion; "thou believest", or "hast believed", as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Persic versions:

thou shall see greater things than these; meaning that he should have larger discoveries of his person, nature, and perfections, and should see things done by him, much more surprising than any thing he had seen yet; referring to the miracles of raising the dead, casting out devils, and healing all manner of diseases.

John 1:51

Ver. 51. And he saith unto him, verily, verily, I say unto you,.... Not only to Nathanael, but to the rest of the disciples that were then with him; and to show himself to be the "Amen", and faithful witness, as well as more strongly to asseverate what he was about to say, he doubles the expression:

hereafter you shall see heaven open; either in a literal sense, as it had been at his baptism; or, in a mystical sense, that there should be a clearer manifestation of heavenly truths made by his ministry; and that the way into the holiest of all should be made more manifest; and a more familiar intercourse he opened between God and his people; and also between angels and saints:

and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man; or to the son of man, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it; meaning himself in human nature; the second Adam, and seed of the woman; and is expressive both of the truth, and infirmity of that nature. Reference may here be had to the ladder Jacob dreamed of, in Ge 28:12, which was a representation of Christ, in his person, as God-man; who, as God, was in heaven, whilst he, as man, was on earth; and in his office, as Mediator between God and man, making peace between them both; and in the ministration of angels to him in person, and to his body the church. And it is observable, that some of the Jewish writers {y} understand the ascent, and descent of the angels, in Ge 28:12, to be, not upon the ladder, but upon Jacob; which makes the phrase there still more agreeable to this; and so they render wyle, in Ge 28:13, not "above it", but "above him". Or the, sense is, that there would be immediately made such clearer discoveries of his person, and grace by his ministry, and such miracles would be wrought by him in confirmation of it, that it would look as if heaven was open, and the angels of God were continually going to and fro, and bringing fresh messages, and performing miraculous operations; as if the whole host of them were constantly employed in such services: and this the rather seems to be the sense, since the next account we have, is, of the beginning of Christ's miracles to manifest forth his glory in Cana of Galilee, where Nathanael lived; and since the word, rendered "hereafter", signifies, "from henceforward"; or, as the Persic version renders it, "from this hour"; though the word is left out in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions.

{y} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 68. fol. 61. 2. & sect. 69. fol. 61. 3, 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 2:1

Ver. 1. And the third day there was a marriage,.... Either from the second testimony bore by John the Baptist concerning Christ, and from the call of Simon Peter, which seem to be of the same date; see **Joh 1:35**, or from Christ's coming into Galilee; or from the conversation he had with Nathanael; from either of which the date is taken, it matters not; the first is as agreeable and plain, as any. There is much dispute, and many rules with the Jews about the times, and days of marriage:

"a virgin, (they say {z},) marries on the fourth day (of the week), and a widow on the fifth, because the sanhedrim sit in the cities twice in the week, on the second, and on the fifth days; so that if there is any dispute about virginity, he (the husband) may come betimes to the sanhedrim."

This was a law that obtained since the times of Ezra; for it is said {a},

"before the order of Ezra, a woman might be married on any day;"

but in after times, feast days, and sabbath days, were particularly excepted. One of their canons is {b}

"they do not marry women on a feast day, neither virgins, nor widows:"

The reason of it was, that they might not mix one joy with another; and lest a man should leave the joy of the feast, for the joy of his wife. The account Maimonides {c} gives of these several things is this;

"it is lawful to espouse on any common day, even on the ninth of Ab, whether in the day, or in the night; but they do not marry wives neither on the evening of the sabbath, nor on the first of the week: the decree is, lest the sabbath should be profaned by preparing the feast; for the bridegroom is employed about the feast: and there is no need to say, that it is unlawful to marry a wife on the sabbath day; and even on the common day of a feast they do not marry wives, as we have explained; because they do not mix one joy with another, as it is said in Ge 29:27, "fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also": but on the rest of the days it is lawful to marry a wife, any day a man pleases; for he must be employed in the marriage feast three days before the marriage. A place in which the sanhedrim do not sit, but on the second and fifth days only, a virgin is married on the fourth day; that if there is any objection to her virginity, he (her husband) may come betimes to the sanhedrim: and it is a custom of the wise men, that he that marries one that has been married, he may marry her on the fifth day, that so he may rejoice with her on the fifth day, and on the evening of the sabbath, (i.e. the sixth,) and on the sabbath day, and may go forth to his work on the first day."

But elsewhere it is said {d}, that

"now they are used to marry on the "sixth day of the week"."

Yea {e}, that

"it is lawful to marry, and to make the feast on the sabbath day."

But whether this marriage was of a virgin, or a widow, cannot be known; nor with certainty can it be said on what day of the week it was: if that day was a sabbath day on which the disciples abode with Christ, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, then it must be on the first day that Christ went into Galilee, and found Philip, and conversed with Nathanael; and if this third day is reckoned from John's second testimony, it must be on a Tuesday, the third day of the week; but if from Christ's going into Galilee, then it must be on a Wednesday, the fourth day of the week, the day fixed by the Jewish canon for the marriage of a virgin. This marriage was

in Cana of Galilee. The Syriac and Persic versions, read, in "Kotne, a city of Galilee"; and which, in the Jewish map, is called lylgb
anjq, "Katna" in "Galilee", and is placed in the tribe of Zebulun, which was in Galilee, and not far from Nazareth; and bids fair to be the same place with this; though it is more generally thought {f}, that Cana, in the tribe of Asher, mentioned in Jos 19:28, which was also in Galilee, is here meant; and is so called to distinguish it from another Kanah, in the tribe of Ephraim, Jos 16:8. Josephus {g} speaks of a town, or village, of Galilee, called Cana, which was a day's march from it to Tiberias, and seems to be the same place: and another Jewish writer {h} says,

"to me it appears that Cepher Chanania, is Copher Cana; or the village of Cans, as is clear in Misna Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 1. for there is the beginning of lower, Galilee,"

which also accords with this. Now in the case of marriage, there was some difference between Judea and Galilee, and certain rules were laid down relating thereunto: and it is said {i},

"there are three countries, for the celebration of marriages; Judea, the country beyond Jordan, and Galilee;"

that is, that were obliged to marry among themselves; so that if any one married a wife out of any of these countries, she was not obliged to go along with him from one country to another {k}: hence it follows,

"they do not bring them out from city to city, (i.e. oblige them to go with them from city to city,) nor from town to town; but in the same country they bring them out from city to city, and from town to town."

And it is elsewhere observed {l}, that

"in Judea, at first, they joined the bridegroom and bride together an hour before they went into the bride chamber, that so his heart might be lifted up in her; but in Galilee they did not do so: in Judea, at first, they appointed for them two companions, one for him, and another for her, that they might minister to, or wait on the bridegroom, and bride, when they went into the bride chamber; but in Galilee they did not do so: in Judea, at first, the companions slept in the house where the bridegroom and bride slept; but in Galilee they did not do so."

Next we have an account of the persons that were present at this marriage:

and the mother of Jesus was there; who seems to have been a principal person at this wedding, and was very officious; when wine was wanted, she signified it to her son, and ordered the servants to do whatever he bid them: and since she, and Jesus, and his brethren, were all here, it looks as if it was a relation of hers that was now married: and since these brethren were the kinsmen of Christ, Simon, Judas, and Joses, the sons of Cleophas or Alphaeus, whose wife was sister to the mother of our Lord; and since one of them, to distinguish him from Simon Peter, is called Simon the Canaanite, or an inhabitant of Cana, as some have thought; hence it is conjectured by Dr. Lightfoot, that Alphaeus had an house in Cana, and that his family dwelt there, and that it was for one of his family that this marriage feast was made; see **Joh 2:2**. Joseph, the husband of Mary, perhaps, was now dead, since no mention is made of him here, nor any where else, as alive, after Christ had entered on his public ministry.

{z} Misn. Cetubot, c. 1. sect. 1. {a} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 3. 1. {b} Misa. Moed Katon, c. 1. sect. 7. & T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 8. 2. & 18. 2. {c} Hachot Ishot, c. 10. sect. 14, 15. {d} Piske Toseph. Cetubot, art. 6. {e} Ib art. 28. {f} Jerom de Locis Hebraicis, fol. 90. B. {g} In vita sua. {h} Juchasin, fol. 57. 2. {i} Misn. Cetubot, c. 13. sect. 10. T. Hieros. Cetubot, fol. 36. 2. {k} Bartenora in ib. {l} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 12. 1.

John 2:2

Ver. 2. And both Jesus was called,.... Or invited, as being a relation, according to the flesh:

and his disciples, to the marriage; who were bidden, on his account; and they seem to be these, Andrew, and the other disciple, that followed Jesus, and Simon Peter, and Philip, and Nathanael, who was of this place; and accordingly they all went to it. Christ, and his five disciples, made six of the ten, which were always necessary to be present at, the benediction of bridegrooms: for so runs the canon {m};

"they do not bless the blessing of bridegrooms, but with ten principal and free men; and the bridegroom may be one of the number."

To attend a wedding, was reckoned, with the Jews, an act of beneficence and kindness {n}. Our Lord, being at this wedding, was acting like himself, and his general character, of being free, affable, and courteous; who accepted of every invitation, and refused not to be at any entertainment, made by who it would, or on whatever occasion: and particularly in this instance, it shows his humility in not disdaining his poor relations, but giving them his company at such a time; as also it was bearing a testimony to the institution of marriage, as honourable; and teaches us to rejoice with them that rejoice: and as this was, at the first of Christ's ministry and miracles, it is likely it might give the occasion of that calumny cast on him in Mt 11:19. The disciples of Christ followed the example of their master. According to the Jewish cations {o}, a disciple of a wise man might not partake of any feast, but what was according to the commandment, as the feast of espousals, and of marriage; and such a feast was this, which Christ and his disciples were at; and so not to be condemned for it, according to their own maxims.

{m} Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 10. sect. 5. Pirke Eliezer, c. 19. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 9. 3. {n} Maimon in Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1. {o} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 49. 1. & Maimon. Hilchot Deyot, c. 5. sect. 2.

John 2:3

Ver. 3. And when they wanted wine,.... Or wine was wanting; not through the intemperance of the guests, rather through the poverty of the family, who were not able to provide very largely; and it may be by reason of a larger number of guests than were expected; however, so it was ordered by Divine Providence, that there might be an opportunity for Christ to manifest forth his glory:

the mother of Jesus saith unto him, they have no wine; being concerned for the family, lest they should be put to shame and disgrace, and the entertainment should not proceed with becoming credit and honour; and knowing the power of Christ to help in this time of necessity, she modestly moves it to him, perhaps by a whisper, sitting next him; or, it may be, might call him out, and just drop the hint; being well persuaded of his power, as she might; not from any miracles wrought by him in her family for the support of it, when in distress; for as Christ wrought no miracle, in the time of his public ministry, for the support of himself, or his disciples, but for others, it is not likely he should do it for his family in private life; but from the wonderful things told her by the angel that brought the news of her conception, and by the shepherds, and by Simeon and Anna, which she had laid up in her heart; and from his being the Messiah, who, according to the general belief of the nation, was to work miracles; and particularly from the last words of the preceding chapter; See Gill on "Joh 1:50": for she might be present at the delivery of them; and therefore might hope that as this was the first opportunity that offered after, that he would display his power in supplying the family with wine in this time of exigence.

John 2:4

Ver. 4. Jesus saith unto her, woman,.... Calling her "woman", as it was no ways contrary to her being a virgin, **Ga 4:4**, so it was no mark of disrespect; it being an usual way of speaking with the Jews, when they showed the greatest respect to the person spoken to; and was used by our Lord when he addressed his mother with the greatest tenderness, and strongest affection, Joh 19:26. The Jews frequently object this passage to us Christians: one of their writers his objection in this manner {p}:

"they (the Christians) say, the mother of Jesus is never called a woman their law; but here her son himself calls her a man."

Another puts it thus {q}:

"it is their (the Christians) belief, that Mary, even after she brought forth Jesus, was a virgin; but if she was, as they say, why does not her son call her by the name of virgin? but he calls her a woman, which signifies one known by man, as appears from **Joh 2:4**."

To which may be replied, that the mother of Jesus is never called a woman in the New Testament, is not said by us Christians: it is certain she is so called, both here, and elsewhere; but then this is no contradiction to her being a virgin; one, and the same person, may be a virgin, and a woman: the Abraham's servant was sent to take for wife for his son Isaac, is called a woman, though a virgin that had never known any man, Ge 24:5. Besides, we do not think ourselves obliged to maintain the perpetual virginity of Mary, the mother of our Lord; it is enough that she was a virgin when she conceived, and when she brought forth her firstborn: and as the Jews endeavour to take an advantage of this against the character of Mary, the Papists are very solicitous about the manner in which these words are said, lest they should be thought to contain a reproof, which they cannot bear she should be judged worthy of; or suggest any thing to her dishonour, whom they magnify as equal to her son: but certain it is, that the following words,

what have I to do with thee? show resentment and reproof. Some render the words, "what is it to thee and me?" and give this as the sense; what concern is this of ours? what business have we with it? let them look to it, who are the principal in the feast, and have the management of it. The Jew {r} objects to this sense of the words, but gives a very weak reason for it:

"but I say, (says he,) who should be concerned but the master of the feast? and he was the master of the feast:"

whereas it is a clear case that he was one of the guests, one that was invited, **Joh 2:2**, and that there was a governor or ruler of the feast, who might be more properly called the master of it than Jesus, **Joh 2:8**. However, since Christ afterwards did concern himself in it, it looks as if this was not his meaning. Others render it to the sense we do, "what have I with thee?" as the Ethiopic version; or "what business hast thou with me?" as the Persic version; and is the same with, Klw yl hm, "what have I to do with thee?" used in 1Ki 17:18, where the Septuagint use the same phrase as here; and such a way of speaking is common with Jewish writers {s}: hereby signifying, that though, as man, and a son of hers, he had been subject to her, in which he had set an example of obedience to parents; yet, as God, he had a Father in heaven, whose business he came to do; and in that, and in his office, as Mediator, she had nothing to do with him; nor was he to be directed by her in that work; or to be told, or the least hint given when a miracle should be wrought, by him in confirmation of his mission and doctrine. Moreover, he adds,

mine hour is not yet come: meaning not the hour of his sufferings and death, in which sense he sometimes uses this phrase; as if the hint was, that it was not proper for him to work miracles as yet, lest it should provoke his enemies to seek his life before his time; but rather the time of his public ministry and miracles, which were to go together, and the one to be a proof of the other; though it seems to have a particular regard to the following miracle, the time of doing that was not yet come; the proper juncture, when all fit circumstances meeting together, it would be both the more useful, and the more illustrious: or his meaning is, that his time of doing miracles in public was not yet; and therefore, though he was willing to do this miracle, yet he chose to do it in the most private manner; so that only a few, and not the principal persons at the feast should know it: wherefore the reproof was not so much on the account of the motion itself, as the unseasonableness of it; and so his mother took it.

{p} Vet. Nizzachon, p. 222. {q} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 42. p. 433. {r} Vet. Nizzachon, p. 223. {s} Vid. Kimchi in Psal. ii. 12. Bechinat Olam, p. 70.

John 2:5

Ver. 5. His mother said unto the servants,.... She took the reproof in good part, and by the words he said, and the manner in which he spoke them, or by the looks he gave, and the gestures he might use, she hoped, and even believed, that the thing she moved for would be done; and therefore went immediately to the servants, and gave them the following instructions:

whatsoever he saith unto you, do [it]; punctually observe and obey his orders in every circumstance.

John 2:6

Ver. 6. And there were set six water pots of stone,.... To distinguish them from other vessels made of different matter: for the Jews had

"vessels made of dust, and the dung of beasts, Mynba ylk, "vessels of stone", vessels of earth, vessels made of shells, vessels of nitre, vessels made of the bones and skins of fishes {t}."

And as these vessels were very likely for washing of hands, such were used for that purpose: their rule is {u},

"they may put water for the hands in all sorts of vessels; in vessels of dung, in stone vessels, and in vessels of earth."

At a wedding were set vessels of various sizes to wash hands and feet in; there was one vessel called alkyvm, which the gloss says was a large pitcher, or basin, out of which the whole company washed their hands and their feet; and there was another called atlkyvm, which was a lesser and beautiful basin, which was set alone for the more honourable persons, as for the bride, and for any gentlewoman {w}; and such might be these six stone jars, or pots:

after the manner of the purifying of the Jews; or "for the purifying either Jews", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it; that is, for the washing of them, their hands and feet, and their vessels, pots, and cups, according to the traditions of the elders; see **Mr 7:2**;

containing two or three firkins apiece. The Ethiopic version reads, "some held two measures, and some three"; how large the "metreta", or "measure" was, which we render a "firkin", is not certain; it is most likely it answered to the "Hebrew bath", which was a common measure of liquids with the Jews, and held four gallons and a half, or more; See Gill on "Lu 16:6"; so that such of these vessels, that held two of these measures, contained nine gallons, and such as held three of them, thirteen gallons and a half; and six of these contained a large quantity of wine, one with another: and which makes the following miracle the greater; and shows the liberality of Christ the more, in providing for the following days of the feast, for a marriage was kept seven days {x}; and for the family, some time after it was over.

{t} Misn. Celim, c. 10. sect. 1. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {u} Misn. Yadaim, c. 1. sect. 2. {w} Gloss in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 77. 2. {x} Maimon. Hilchot Ishot, c. 10. sect. 12, 13.

John 2:7

Ver. 7. Jesus saith unto them,.... To the servants that waited at the feast,

fill the water pots with water. The Ethiopic version adds, "to their brims", as they did. Christ chose the water pots, and not the vessel, or vessels, or bottles, now empty, out of which they had drank their wine; that it might not be said that there was any left therein, which gave colour and flavour to the water: and he ordered them to be filled with water by the servants, that they might take notice, and be witnesses, that that, and nothing else, was put into them; and up to the brims, so that they could not he capable of having any other liquor infused into them:

and they filled them up to the brim; strictly observing the orders of Christ, and the instructions of his mother.

John 2:8

Ver. 8. And he saith unto them, draw out now,.... As soon as ever the vessels were filled with water, without any more delay, he ordered the servants to draw out of those larger, into lesser vessels; he does not say what, water or wine:

and bear unto the governor of the feast; who either had the ordering and management of the feast, and the command of the whole affair; hence the Ethiopic version calls him, "the master of the waiters", or servants: or he was the chief guest, as the word seems to import, who sat, or rather lay, on the chief couch at the table; and so a proper person to begin with, and put the cup round: or else he might be doctor or chaplain: for such an one was necessary at a marriage; since there were six or seven benedictions to be pronounced; and particularly a blessing was said over the cup of wine; for if there was any wine, a cup of it was brought, and he blessed over it first, and ordered every thing concerning the cup: and this made up seven blessings at such a time {y}; and therefore was a very fit person to bear the wine to first:

and they bore it; the servants having drawn out of the stone vessels, by cocks, into smaller ones, carried the liquor, as they were ordered, to the above person.

{y} Maimon. Hilchot Ishot, c. 10. sect. 3, 4.

John 2:9

Ver. 9. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water,.... The Persic version reads, "tasted of the wine", and adds, what is not in the text, "it was of a very grateful savour": but the sense is, he tasted of that which was before water, but now

was made wine; not in such sense as the Papists pretend that the bread and wine, in the Lord's supper, are transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ, by the consecration of the priest; after which they appear to have the same properties of bread and wine as before; but this water, that was turned into wine, ceased to be what it was before, and became what it was not: it had no more the properties, the colour, and taste of water, but of wine; of which the whole company were judges:

and knew not whence it was; from whence it came, where it was had, nor any thing of the miracle that was wrought, and therefore was a proper person to have it put into his hands first; since it cannot be thought he should say what he does in the following verse, from any compact with Christ, or in favour of him.

But the servants which drew the water knew; they knew from whence they had it, out of the water pots; and they knew that they filled them with water; and that that liquor, which the ruler of the feast had in his hands, and commended as most excellent wine, was drawn out of them; and that there was no juggle, nor deceit in the case: and, upon tasting of it,

the governor of the feast called the bridegroom to him; out of the place where he sat, and which might not be far from him.

John 2:10

Ver. 10. And saith unto him,.... The following words; expressing the common custom used at feasts:

every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; that is, it is usual with men, when they make entertainments, first to give the guests the best, the most generous, and strongest bodied wine; as being most suitable for them, and they being then better able to bear it, and it being most for the credit of the maker of the feast:

and when men have well drank; not to excess, but freely, so as that they are exhilarated; and their spirits cheerful, but their brains not intoxicated: so the word, as answering to the Hebrew word is
rkv, used by the Septuagint in Ge 43:34,

then that which is worse; not bad wine, but ton elassw, "that which is lesser"; a weaker bodied wine, that is lowered, and of less strength, and not so intoxicating, and which is fittest for the guests. So Martial {z} advises Sextilianus, after he had drank the tenth cup, not to drink the best wine, but to ask his host for wine of Laletania, which was a weaker and lower sort of wine.

[But] thou hast kept the good wine until now; which shows he knew nothing of the miracle wrought. And as the bridegroom here did, in the apprehension of the ruler of the feast, at this his marriage, so does the Lord, the husband of the church, in the marriage feast of the Gospel; and so he will do at the marriage supper of the lamb. The Gospel, which may be compared to wine for its purity, pleasant taste, and generous effects in reviving drooping spirits, refreshing weary persons, and comforting distressed minds, as also for its antiquity, was published before the coming of Christ, in the times of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets, but in a lower and weaker way; at sundry times, here a little, and there a little, by piecemeals, as it were; and in divers manners, by promises, prophecies, types, shadows, and sacrifices; and was attended with much darkness and bondage: but under the Gospel dispensation, which is compared to a marriage feast, it is more fully dispensed, more clearly published, and more freely ministered. The whole of it is delivered, and with open face beheld; and saints are made free by it; it is set in the strongest and clearest light; the best wine is reserved till now; God has provided some better thing for us, Heb 11:40. And so with respect to the future state of the saints, their best things are kept for them till last. They have many good things now; as the Gospel, Gospel ordinances, the blessings, and promises of grace, the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, presence of God, and communion with Christ, at least at times; all which are better than wine: but then there is an alloy to these; they are lowered by other things, as the corruptions of the heart, the temptations of Satan, the hidings of God's face, and a variety of afflictions; but they shall have their good and best things hereafter, and drink new wine in Christ's Father's kingdom, without any thing to lower and weaken it: they will have full joys, and never fading pleasures, and shall be without sin and sorrow; no more deserted, nor afflicted, and shall be out of the reach of Satan's temptations, and with Christ for evermore. Happy are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

{z} A Caupone tibi faex Laletana petatur Si plus quam decics, Sextiliane, bibis. L. 1. Ep. 25.

John 2:11

Ver. 11. This beginning of miracles,.... This miracle of turning water into wine, was the first miracle Christ ever wrought, either in public or private; for as for what miracles he is said to do in his infancy, there is no reason to give credit to them: and this he

did in Cana of Galilee; not that this was only the first he did in that place; he afterwards working another there, namely, the cure of a nobleman's son, **Joh**

4:46, but the first he did any where, and it was in this place; and which the Syriac and Persic versions again call Kotne of Galilee; See Gill on "Joh 2:1";

and manifested forth his glory; the glory of his deity and divine sonship, which was hid by his assumption of human nature, but broke forth and showed itself in his miraculous operations, and particularly in this:

and his disciples believed on him; the above five disciples; see **Joh 2:2**; whom he had called, and who were with him at this marriage, and were made acquainted with this miracle: and though they believed in him before, and had declared, and professed him to be the Messiah, Moses and the prophets spoke of, and the Son of God, and King of Israel; yet they were, by this miracle, more and more confirmed in the faith of these things: besides, others might be made his disciples at this time, and be hereby brought to believe in him.

John 2:12

Ver. 12. After this he went down to Capernaum,.... After he had been at Cana, and at the wedding there: after he had wrought the miracle of turning water into wine; and after he had manifested forth the glory of his deity thereby, and had confirmed the faith of his disciples, he departed from thence, and went lower into the country of Galilee, to Capernaum, a city near the sea of Tiberias; and which, from henceforward, he made the more usual place of his residence, and whither he frequently resorted, and therefore it is called his city, **Mt 9:1**. This refers not to the same journey recorded in **Mt 4:12**, for that was after John was cast into prison, whereas this was before; see **Joh 3:24**; the company that went with him, are as follow,

he, and his mother; who had been with him at Cana, and was a principal person at the wedding: and she now returning home, he accompanies her, to see her to her own habitation; or to settle her in Capernaum, whilst he went about discharging his public ministry.

And his brethren; or near kinsmen, according to the flesh, the sons of Alphaeus, or Cleophas, and Mary, sister to the mother of our Lord; whose names were James, Joses, Simon, and Judas, three of which afterwards became his apostles:

and his disciples: as many as he had yet called, which were Andrew, and the disciple that followed Jesus with him, and Simon Peter, and Philip, and

Nathanael,

and they continued there not many days; not because of the impenitence, unbelief, and wickedness of the place, but for the reason following.

John 2:13

Ver. 13. And the Jews' passover was at hand,.... That feast which was kept on the fourteenth day of Nisan, in commemoration of the Lord's passing over, and by the houses of the Israelites, when he slew the firstborn in Egypt: and it is called the Jews' passover, because they only were obliged to keep it: nor was it obligatory upon the Gentiles; and, besides, was now abolished when John wrote this Gospel, though still retained by the Jews. And moreover, John was now among the Gentiles, and for whose sake he penned this Gospel; and therefore so distinguishes this feast, which was typical of the Christian passover, or of Christ our passover that is sacrificed for us. This was the first "passover" after Christ's baptism, which is generally thought to have been about half a year before; though so much time cannot be made out from the scriptural account; for from his baptism, to his return out of the wilderness to John, were forty days; and from thence, to his coming to Cana, four or, five days more; and perhaps he might be seven days in Cana; for so long a wedding was usually kept; and his stay at Capernaum was but a few days; all which do not amount to above eight or nine weeks at most: the second passover after this, is, by some, thought to be the feast mentioned in **Joh 5:1**, and the third in **Joh 6:4**, and the fourth and last, at which he suffered, in Joh 18:28. The Evangelist John is the only writer that gives an account of the passovers after Christ entered on his public ministry; by which is known the duration of it, which is generally thought to be about three years and a half. "Three years and a half", the Jews say {a}, the Shekinah sat upon the Mount of Olives, expecting that the Israelites would repent, but they did not; and this seems to be the term of time for disciples to learn of their masters: it is said {b}, one came from Athens to Jerusalem, and he served "three years and a half" to learn the doctrine of wisdom, and he learned it not.

And Jesus went up to Jerusalem; not alone, but his disciples with him, as appears from **Joh 2:17**, to keep the passover as he had been wont to do, and as the law required; and he being under the law, as a son of Abraham, and the surety of his people, it became him to fulfil all righteousness, ceremonial, as well as moral, and which he strictly observed. He is said to go up to Jerusalem, because that stood on higher ground than the low lands of Galilee, and was the only place where the passover might be kept; see De 16:2.

{a} Praefat. Echa Rabbati, fol. 40. 4. {b} Echa Rabbati, fol. 44. 4.

John 2:14

Ver. 14. And found in the temple,.... Not in the holy place itself, nor in the court of the priests, where the sacrifices were offered, nor in the court of the women, nor in the court of the Israelites, where the people worshipped; but in the court of the Gentiles, or the outward court, even all that space of ground which was between the wall which divided the whole from common ground, and the buildings of the temple, and which was open to the air; for the whole sacred enclosure, or all within the wall, went by the name of the temple. Into this all strangers might come; and the passover now being at hand, here were

those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves: the oxen, or bullocks, were for the Chagigah, or feast kept on the second day of the passover; See Gill on "Joh 18:28"; and the sheep, or lambs, as the Persic version reads, for the passover supper; and the doves were for the offerings of the poorer sort of new mothers: with these they were supplied from the Mount of Olives. It is said {c},

"there were two cedar trees on the Mount of Olives, and under one of them were four shops of them that sold things for purification; and out of one of them they brought forty bushels of young doves every month: and out of them the Israelites had enough for the nests, or the offerings of turtle doves;"

See Gill on "Mt 21:12";

and the changers of money sitting: who changed foreign money into the current coin of the Jews, strangers coming, at this feast, from several parts of the world; and sometimes there was need of changing shekels into half shekels, which, at certain times, were paid for the ransom of Israelites; see the note on the place above mentioned.

{c} Echa Rabbati, fol. 52. 4.

John 2:15

Ver. 15. And when he had made a scourge of small cords,.... That is, Jesus, as the Persic version expresses it. This scourge might be made either of thongs cut out of the hides of beasts slain in sacrifice; or of the cords, with which the owners of the cattle had brought them to this place; or with which they had fastened them in it. And it seems to be made, and used, not so much for force and terror, as to intimate, that these persons, the violators of the holy place, deserved the scourge of divine wrath and punishment; as well as to show the miraculous power of Christ in driving such a number of men before him, with so small and insignificant a weapon; for the phrase is diminutive. The reason given by Dr. Lightfoot, and others, why Christ made use of a whip, or scourge, rather than a staff, is, because it was contrary to a Jewish canon {d} to go into the mountain of the house, or temple, with a staff in the hand; and yet the man of the mountain of the house, or the master of it, who used to go about every ward with torches burning before him, if he found a Levite asleep in his ward {e}, struck him wlqmb, with his staff, and had power to burn his clothes.

He drove them all out of the temple; that is, he drove out "the men", as the Persic version reads; the merchants, the sellers of oxen, sheep, and doves, and the money changers: "and the sheep, and the oxen" likewise; the Persic version adds, "doves"; but these are after mentioned:

and poured out the changers money; off of the tables, or out of the boxes, or dishes, or drawers, or purses, in which it was put:

and overthrew the tables; at which they sat, and on which they told their money.

{d} Misn. Beracot, c. 9. sect. 5. {e} Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 2.

John 2:16

Ver. 16. And said unto them that sold doves,.... For as these were kept in coups, or cages, they could not be drove, as the sheep and oxen, nor could they be let out, and fly, without the loss of the owners: and therefore Christ said to them,

take these things hence; not only the doves, but the pens, coups, or cages, in which they were, and both together:

make not my Father's house an house of merchandise; so he calls the temple, which was built as an house for God, and where he took up his residence;

where were the symbols of his presence; where his worship was kept, and sacrifices offered to him: and he asserts God, whose house this was, to be his Father, and himself to be his son, as none of the prophets that went before him did; and in such sense as neither men nor angels are; and which carries in it a reason why he was so much concerned for the honour of God, and so much resented the profanation of his house, because he was his Father. A like action with this, done by Christ at another time, is recorded in Mt 21:12. This was at the beginning of his ministry, that at the close of it, in which he expressed himself with more warmth and severity than here: here he only charges them with making his Father's house an house of merchandise, but there with making it a den of thieves; since they had not only slighted, and despised his first reproof, but had returned to their evil ways, and might grow more wicked and audacious. This instance of Christ now coming into the temple as a public minister, and which was the first time of his entrance into it, after he had taken this character, was a further accomplishment of **Mal 3:1**, for he now went into it, as the Lord and proprietor of it; and which this action of his in driving out the merchants, with their cattle, shows; and was a surprising instance of his divine power; and is equal to other miracles of his, that a single person, a stranger, one of no power and authority in the government, unassisted and unarmed, with only a scourge of small cords, should carry such awe and majesty with him, and inject such terror into, and drive such a number of men before him, who were selling things for religious uses, and were supported in it by the priests and sanhedrim of the nation.

John 2:17

Ver. 17. And his disciples remembered that it was written,.... In Ps 69:9, which Psalm belongs to the Messiah, as is manifest from the citations out of it in the New Testament, and the application of them to Christ, as in Joh 15:25, compared with Ps 69:4. Christ is represented in it, as suffering for the sins of his people; for he himself was innocent; and was hated without a cause; but having the sins of his people imputed to him, he made satisfaction for them, and so restored what he took not away. His sufferings are spoken of in it as very great; and from it we learn, that they are fitly called, by himself, a baptism, which he desired to be baptized with, Lu 12:50, since the waters are said to come into his soul, and he to be in deep waters, where the floods overflowed him; so that he was as one immersed in them: it is not only prophesied of him in it, that he should be the object of the scorn and contempt of the Jewish nation, and be rejected by them, and treated with the utmost indignity, and loaded with reproaches; but it foretold, that they should give him gall to eat, and vinegar to drink, which were literally fulfilled in him: and even the Jews themselves seem to be under some conviction, that the Psalm has respect to him; for Aben Ezra, a noted commentator of theirs, on the last words of the Psalm, has this note;

"the sense is, they and their children shall inherit it in the days of David, or in the days of the Messiah."

It appears from hence, that the disciples of Christ were acquainted with the sacred writings, and had diligently read them, and searched into them, and had made them their study; and upon this wonderful action of Christ, called to mind, and reflected upon the following passage of Scripture, which they judged very proper and pertinent to him:

the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. This passage, so far as it is cited, agrees exactly, word for word, with the original text in Ps 69:9, wherefore it is very strange that Surenhusius {f} should remark a difference, and give himself a good deal of trouble to reconcile it: he observes, that in the Hebrew text, it is read, hwhy tanq, "the zeal of the Lord", in the third person; whereas it is there, Ktyb tanq, "the zeal of thine house", as here, in the second person: indeed, the word yk, "for", is left out, as he remarks, there being no need of it in the citation; the evangelist only historically relating the accommodation of it to Christ, by the disciples; whereas in the original text, the words contain a reason of the reproach and shame which Christ endured, and was put to by the Jews on account of his zeal for the house, honour, and worship of God; and the latter part of the text is not produced at all, being not for the present purpose, though very applicable to Christ; and is cited, and applied to him by the apostle, in Ro 15:3. Such was Christ's regard to his Father's house, and which was typical of the church of God; and such his concern for his honour, ordinances, and worship, that when he saw the merchandise that was carried on in the temple, his zeal, which was a true and hearty affection for God, and was according to knowledge, was stirred up in him, and to such a degree, that it was like a consuming fire within him, that ate up his spirits; so that he could not forbear giving it vent, and expressing it in the manner he did, by driving those traders out of it. Phinehas and Elias were in their zeal, as well as other things, types of Christ; and in the Spirit and power of the latter he came; and Christ not only expressed a zeal for the house of God, the place of religious worship, but for the church and people of God, whose salvation he most earnestly desired, and most zealously pursued: he showed his strong, and affectionate regard to it, by his suretyship engagements for them, by his assumption of their nature, by his ardent desire to accomplish it, and by his voluntary and cheerful submission to death on account of it. And such was his zeal for it, that it eat him up, it inflamed his Spirit and affections, consumed his time and strength, and, at last, his life: and he also showed a zeal for the discipline of God's house, by his severe reflections on human traditions; by asserting the spirituality of worship; by commanding a strict regard to divine institutions; and by sharply inveighing against the sins of professors of religion: and he discovered a warm zeal for the truths of the Gospel, by a lively and powerful preaching of them; by his constancy and assiduity in it; by the many fatiguing journeys he took for that purpose; by the dangers he exposed himself to by it; and by the care he took to free the Gospel from prejudice and calumnies: and it becomes us, in imitation of our great master, to be zealous for his truths and ordinances, and for the discipline of his house, and not bear with either the erroneous principles, or the bad practices of wicked men.

{f} Biblos Katallages, p. 347.

John 2:18

Ver. 18. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him,.... They did not lay hands on him, or offer any violence to him; they did not, as the inhabitants of Nazareth did, thrust him out, and lead him to a precipice, to cast him down headlong; nor did they take up stones to stone him, as they afterwards did, when he asserted his deity: and it is surprising, that they did not rise up and destroy him at once, a single man, unarmed, and without assistance, having so highly provoked them; the restraint upon them must be his almighty power: nor do they deny what he suggested, that they had made his Father's house an house of merchandise; nor do they offer to vindicate their profanation of the temple, or object to the purging of it; only demand a proof of his right to do it: and which demand was made, not by the common people, or by the sellers of oxen, sheep, and doves, and the money changers, who were drove out, and had not spirit to rally again; but by the chief priests and elders, the sanhedrim of the nation, who had the care and government of the temple, and under whose authority the above persons acted; and whose gain and worldly interest were promoted hereby, as a like demand was afterwards made by the same persons; see Mt 21:23;

what sign shewest thou unto us, seeing thou dost these things? they argued, that either he did these things of himself, by his own authority, and then they must be deemed rash and unjustifiable; or he did it by the authority of others:

they knew it was not by theirs, who were the great council of the nation, from whom he should have had his instructions and orders, if he acted by human authority; and if he pretended to a divine authority, as they supposed he did, then they insisted upon a sign or miracle to be wrought, to prove that God was his Father, as he suggested; and that he was the proprietor and owner of the temple, and had a right to purge it, as he had done; see **1Co 1:22**.

John 2:19

Ver. 19. Jesus answered and said unto them,.... In a dark and enigmaticai way, though very properly and pertinently; since it was with respect to the temple, and his power over it, and right to purge it, that a sign was required of him:

destroy this temple; pointing, as it were, with his finger to his body; for of that he spake, as appears from **Joh 2:21**, the dissolution of which, by death he means, the separation of his soul from his body, though not of either from his divine person: and it is to be understood, not as a command, or a grant, or as an exhortation, and advice to them, to kill his body; but rather as a prophecy of what they would do; or as putting the case, that should they, as he knew they would, destroy his body, then says he, as a sign of having a power to do what I have done,

in three days I will raise it again; by which he would appear to be the Son of God, with power, that had power of laying down his life, and taking it up again; and is the very sign, namely, his resurrection from the dead on the third day, he gives the Jews, when they sought one of him at another time, and upon another occasion.

John 2:20

Ver. 20. Then said the Jews,.... Unto him, as read the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions:

forty and six years was this temple in building; which cannot be understood of the temple as built by Solomon, for that was but seven years in building, **1Ki 6:37**. But rather of the temple, as built by Zorobabel, commonly called the second temple, and might be more properly said to be "this temple"; the calculations of this made by learned men, are various and endless to recite. Daniel's seven weeks, or forty nine days, which are so many years, can have nothing to do with this account; since they regard not the building of the temple, but the city of Jerusalem; though from the second year of Cyrus, in which the temple began to be built, to the thirty second of Darius exclusive, were just forty six years; Cyrus reigning three years, Artaxerxes Ahasuerus fourteen years, and Artaxerxes Darius thirty two; but their account is more likely, which begins at the first of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who reigned forty years, and ends in the sixth year of Darius, his successor, in which year the temple was finished, **Ezr 6:15**. But to me it seems rather, that Herod's temple, or the temple as rebuilt, or repaired by Herod, is here meant; and which the Jews call, owdwrwh Nyynb, "the building of Herod" {g}; and say of it, that

"he who has not seen Herod's building, never saw a beautiful building."

And this, according to Josephus {h}, was begun in the "eighteenth" year of his reign, in the "thirty fifth" of which Christ was born, who was now "thirty" years of age: so that reckoning either the eighteenth year of Herod, or the thirtieth of Christ, the present year exclusively, just forty six years had run out, since the rebuilding or reparations were first begun; and which were not yet finished; for some years after this, the above writer observes {i}, the temple was finished, even in the times of Nero and Agrippa: and agreeably to this, the words may be rendered, "forty six years has this temple been building"; and which still adds more force to the following reasoning of the Jews:

and wilt thou rear it up in three days? the thing is impossible and impracticable; it is madness to the last degree, to talk at this rate: thus from the length of time which had run out from Herod's first beginning to repair and beautify the temple, till now, and yet not finished, they argue the absurdity of his pretending to raise up such a fabric, should it be demolished, in three days time; they understanding him either ignorantly or wilfully, to speak of the material temple, when his sense was otherwise, as appears from the words of the evangelist, in the next verse. The Jew {k} objects to this account, of the temple being forty six years in building; he observes, that

"according to the sense of the Nazarenes, this was the building of king Herod, that was in the time of Jesus; and the whole time of his reign were but seven and thirty years, as is manifest from the book of Joseph ben Gorion, c. 65. Besides, that which Herod built, was built in eight years, as is evident from the same author, c. 55, wherefore the number of forty six years, in the words of the writer, (the evangelist,) is, a palpable error."

To which may be replied, that admitting there is an error in this number, it is not the error of the evangelist, but of the Jews, whose words the evangelist relates; and supposing this was a mistake of theirs, either ignorantly or wilfully made, to aggravate the absurdity and impossibility of Christ's rebuilding the temple; and that even the evangelist knew it to be a mistake; yet he acts the most faithful and upright part, in repeating the words of the Jews, as they delivered them; and it lies upon the Jew to prove, that these words were not said by them, or that it is not credible that they should: that this was the building of Herod which is here referred to; and that he reigned but thirty seven years, will be granted; but this is no objection to its being forty six years in building, since in this account it is not said that it was forty six years in building by Herod; the sense is only, that such a number of years had passed, since it first began to be built by him: as for what Joseph ben Gorion says, of its being built by him in the space of eight years, it is not to be depended upon, since he is not the true Josephus, that wrote the history of the Jews, and is to be corrected by the genuine historian; and from what has been before observed, from the time which, according to the true Josephus, this building was begun, to this present year of Christ, when this discourse was had, were just forty six years; and admitting, that the main of the building was finished in eight years time, yet additions were continually made to it, so that it was not finished entirely, until many years after.

{g} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1. {h} Antiqu. Jud. l. 15. c. 14. {i} Antiqu. Jud. l. 20. c. 8. {k} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 43. p. 434.

John 2:21

Ver. 21. But he spoke of the temple of his body. Which was the antitype of the material temple; and might well be called so, since the bodies of the saints are called temples, **1Co 3:16** **2Co 6:16**; and the human nature of Christ is called a tabernacle, **Heb 8:2**; and he himself, in prophecy, is said to be vdqml, "for a sanctuary", or temple, **Isa 8:14**, and that because the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, the train of the divine perfections filled the temple of his human nature, **Col 2:9**. And because here, as in the temple, God grants his presence, and communes with his saints, accepts of their prayers and praises, and all their spiritual sacrifices through him; and who is the oracle, the true "Urim" and "Thummim", by whom he delivers his whole mind and will to his people.

John 2:22

Ver. 22. When therefore he was risen from the dead,.... Which was three years after this:

his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; either to the Jews, or to them the disciples; though the phrase "to them", is not in the Vulgate Latin, nor in any of the Oriental versions. The disciples themselves were very dull of understanding the doctrine of Christ's resurrection; and so they continued, notwithstanding he gave them afterwards very full hints of it, until that he was actually risen; and then they called to mind these words of his, with others that dropped from him upon the same subject:

and they believed the Scripture; that spoke of his resurrection, Ps 16:10, and on the third day, **Ho 6:2**.

And the word which Jesus had said; concerning his rising again the third day at this time, and at others, as in Mt 16:21; and they believed his word equally with the Scripture, it agreeing to it, and being founded on it.

John 2:23

Ver. 23. Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover,.... Whither he went, in order to keep it, that being at hand, and now come; see **Joh 2:13**;

in the feast day; either on the day the Chagigah was eaten, which was sometimes emphatically called "the feast", as in Nu 28:16, "and in the fourteenth day of the first month, is the passover of the Lord; and in the fifteenth day of this month, [is] the feast"; the passover lamb was eaten on the fourteenth day of the month "Nisan", and the "Chagigah" was on the fifteenth; in the former only a lamb was eaten, in the other, cattle out of the herds; hence mention is made, both of flocks and herds, for the keeping the passover, De 16:2. Jarchi's note upon the place is, that the herds were for the Chagigah, with which the Talmud {l} agrees; and Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases the words thus,

"and ye shall slay the passover before the Lord your God, between the evenings, and the sheep and oxen on the morrow, in that very day, for the joy of the feast;"

for it was observed with great joy and mirth: and the rather this is here meant, since the "Chagigah" is not only called "the feast", but this here is distinguished from the passover, as that is in the passage above cited, Nu 28:16. For the passover here, seems to be the general name for the whole seven days of the festival; and the feast to be the particular feast of the first day of it, which was the fifteenth; to which may be added, that on this day all the males made their appearance in court {m}; and so was a very proper time for Christ to work his miracles in, when there were so many spectators: though it may design the whole time of the feast, all the seven days of unleavened bread; during which time Christ was at Jerusalem, and wrought miracles, which had the following effect:

many believed in his name; that he was some great prophet, or the prophet, or the Messiah; they gave an historical assent unto him as such, at least for that time:

when they saw the miracles which he did; for as miracles, according to the prophecies of the Old Testament, were to be performed by the Messiah, such as giving sight to the blind, causing the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk, Isa 35:5; so they were expected by the ancient Jews, that they would be wrought by him, when he came; wherefore these Jews, seeing such like wonderful things wrought by Jesus, they concluded he must be the Messiah: though the modern ones, in order to shift off the evidence of Jesus being the Messiah, from his miracles, deny that miracles are the characteristic of the Messiah, or will be performed by him; at least, that there is no necessity of them to prove him to be the person. What miracles these were, which were now wrought by Christ, are not recorded by this, or any other evangelist; see Joh 20:30. However, being surprised at the marvellous things he did, and upon the evidence of these extraordinary works, there were many that concluded he must be come from God; among these it seems as if Nicodemus was one; see **Joh 3:2**; great part of these, at least some of them, were only nominal and temporary believers, who were not to be confided in as true disciples, and hearty followers of Christ; and who continued not long in the same mind and profession, as appears by what follows.

{l} Pesachim, fol. 70. 2. {m} Maimon. Hilch. Chagigah, c. 1. sect. 1.

John 2:24

Ver. 24. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them,.... The sense according to some of the ancients is, that he did not commit the whole of the Gospel to them; he did not make known to them all his mind and will; this he only did to the twelve apostles, his special disciples and friends; nor was the time come, that he would make known, or have made known, the things concerning his person, office, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead: but rather the meaning is, that he did not trust himself with these persons, who believed in him, on the basis of his miracles; he did not take them into the number of his associates; he did not admit them to intimacy with him; nor did he freely converse with them, or make any long stay among them; but soon withdrew himself from hence, and went into other parts of Judea, and into Galilee:

because he knew all men: good and bad: all openly profane sinners, and all their actions; not only their more public ones, but those that are done in the dark, and which are the most secretly devised, and levelled against the saints; and he so knew them, as to bring them into judgment: and all good men, true believers; he knows their persons, as they are his Father's choice, his gift of them to him, his own purchase, and as called by his grace; and so as to distinguish them at the last day, and give up the full account of every one of them to his Father: he knows the worst of them, the sin that dwells in them, their daily infirmities, their secret personal sins; their family sins, both of omission and commission; and their church sins, or which are committed in the house of God; and takes notice of them, so as to resent them, and chastise them for them; he knows the best of them, their graces, their faith, hope, love, patience, humility, self-denial, &c; he knows their good works, and all their weaknesses and their wants: and he knows all nominal professors, on what basis they take up their profession, and what trust they place in it; he can distinguish between grace and mere profession, and discern the secret lusts which such indulge, and the springs and progress of their apostasy: he knew all these men, that upon seeing his miracles, professed at this time to believe in him; he knew the hypocrisy and dissimulation of some of them; and he knew the notions they had of a temporal Messiah, and the temporal views they had in believing in him; and their design to set him up as a temporal prince, as some afterwards would have done: knew the flashy affections of others, who were like John's hearers, that were pleased for a while; he knew what sort of faith it was they believed in him with, that it would not hold long, nor they continue with him; for he knew not only all persons, but panta, "all things", as some copies read here; see Joh 21:17.

John 2:25

Ver. 25. And needed not that any should testify of man,.... Of this or the other man, that he was a good or a bad man; he needed no proofs to be made, or testimonies bore, or evidence given of men's characters and actions; he was of quick understanding, and could distinguish at once between a wicked man and a good man; and so had the characteristic which the Jews require of the Messiah; for they rejected Bar Cozba from being the Messiah, and slew him, because he could not smell, referring to Isa 11:3, or discern a bad man from a good man {n}; but this Jesus could do, without any external evidence:

for he knew what was in man; which none but the spirit of a man can know; his inward thoughts, the secrets of the heart; thus Christ knew the thoughts of the Scribes and Pharisees, **Mt 9:4**, being a discerner of the thoughts, and intents of the heart, **Heb 4:12**. This Apollonius Tyaneus, the ape of Christ, ascribed to himself {o}; but is what is peculiar to God; and Christ being God, knows all that is in man; that there is no good in him naturally, nothing but what comes from his Father, is imparted by himself, or implanted by his Spirit; he knows the wickedness there is in man, that his heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, and full of all manner of iniquities; he knows in what condition all the and faculties of the souls of men are; what their affections are set upon, on earthly or heavenly things; whether there is any light in their understandings, or not; whether their wills are subdued and resigned to the will of God, or not; whether their minds and consciences are defiled, or their hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience; in short, whether the internal good work of grace is begun upon their souls, or not; and he knows the secret springs of all actions, good and bad; all which prove his true and proper deity, and show him to be a suitable Saviour of sinners, and qualify him to be the Judge of the whole earth.

{n} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 2. {o} Philostrat. Vit. Apollonii, l. 1. c. 13.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 3:1

Ver. 1. There was a man of the Pharisees,.... The Syriac version adds, "there"; that is, at Jerusalem; and who was among those that believed in the name of Christ, upon seeing the miracles he did at the feast of the passover, in that place. This man was not a common and ordinary man, but a man of note and eminence, of dignity and figure; and who was of the sect of the Pharisees, which was the strictest sect for religion and holiness, among the Jews; and which, as corrupt as it was, was also the soundest; as having not only a regard to a Messiah, and to all the writings of the Old Testament, but also believed the doctrines of angels and spirits, and the resurrection of the dead, which the Sadducees denied; but yet they were implacable enemies of Christ; and therefore it is the more to be wondered at, that such an one should come to him, and desire a conversation with him:

named Nicodemus; frequent mention is made of Nwyrwg Nb Nwmydqn, "Nicodemon ben Gorion", the brother of Josephus ben Gorion {p}, the writer of the Wars and Antiquities of the Jews; and there are some things which make it probable, that he was the same with this Nicodemus; for the Nicodemon the Jews speak so much of, lived in this age; as appears, not only from his being the brother of Josephus, but also from his being contemporary with R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, who lived in this time, and until the destruction of the temple; since these two are said {q} to be together at a feast, made for the circumcision of a child. Moreover, he is represented as very rich, and is said to be one of the three rich men in Jerusalem {r}, and who was able to have maintained hnydm, a city ten years {s}; and they speak of his daughter, as exceeding rich: they say, that she had for her dowry a thousand thousand golden denarii, or pence; and that her bed was strewed with (i.e. the furniture of it cost) twelve thousand golden denarii; and that a Tyrian golden denarius was spent upon her every week, for a certain kind of soup {t}; and the wise men decreed her four hundred golden denarii, for a box of spices every day {u}; and it is elsewhere {w} said, five hundred: and this our Nicodemus was very rich, as appears from his liberality at the funeral of our Lord, Joh 19:39. Moreover, the Nicodemon of the Jews, is said to be a counsellor {x} in Jerusalem; and so was this, as seems evident from **Joh 7:32** and it may be further observed {y}, that the right name of Nicodemon, was Boni {z}; now Boni elsewhere {a}, is said to be one of the disciples of Jesus, as Nicodemus was secretly, and perhaps at, and after his death openly, as his associate Joseph of Arimathea was; to which may be added, the extreme poverty that his daughter is by them said to be reduced unto; for they report, that R. Jochanan ben Zaccai saw her gathering barley corns from under the horses' hoofs in Aco {b}; or as it is elsewhere said, out of the dung of the beasts of the Arabians; when she asked alms of him, and he inquired of her, what was become of her father's substance. Now to this low estate, the family of our Nicodemus might be reduced, through the persecution of the Christians by the Jews. The name is Greek, as at this time many Greek names were in use among the Jews, and signifies the same as Nicolas; but the Jews give an etymology of it, agreeably to the Hebrew language; and say, that he was so called, because the sun, hdqn, "shone out for his sake": the occasion and reason of it, they tell us, were this {c}; Nicodemon, upon want of water at one of the feasts, agreed with a certain man for twelve wells of water, to be returned on such a day, or pay twelve talents of silver; the day being come, the man demanded the water, or the money; Nicodemon went and prayed, and a plentiful rain fell, and filled the wells with water; but meeting the man, he insisted on it that the day was past, the sun being set, and therefore required the money; Nicodemon went and prayed again, and the sun shone out; and they add, that there are three persons for whom the sun hmdqn, "was prevented", detained, or hindered in its course, (a word nearer his name than the former,) Moses, and Joshua, and Nicodemon ben Gorion; for the two former they produce Scripture, and for the latter tradition: hence it is elsewhere said {d}, that as the sun stood still for Joshua, so it stood still for Moses, and for Nicodemon ben Gorion: but to proceed with the account of our Nicodemus, he was

a ruler of the Jews; not a civil magistrate; for the civil government was now in the hands of the Romans; but an ecclesiastical ruler; he was a member of the sanhedrim, which consisted of the doctors, or wise men, and priests, Levites, and elders of the people; and so was a dignified person, and as afterwards called, a master in Israel.

{p} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 1. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 19. 1. {q} Pirke Eliezer, c. 2. & Juchasin, fol. 23. 2. {r} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 56. 1. {s} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 75. 4. {t} Abot R. Nathan, c. 6. fol. 3. 2. {u} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 66. 2. {w} Echa Rabbati, fol. 49. 2. {x} Echa Rabbati, fol. 46. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 75. 1. {y} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 1. {z} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. {a} Echa Rabbati, fol. 49. 3. {b} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 66. 2. {c} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 1. {d} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 25. 1.

John 3:2

Ver. 2. The same came to Jesus by night,.... Through fear of the Jews, of being reproached or turned out of his place by them; or through shame, that such a doctor as he was, should be known to go to Jesus of Nazareth, to be instructed by him; or lest he should offend any of his brethren of the sanhedrim: though some things may be said in favour of this conduct of Nicodemus; for since Christ would not trust himself with those that believed in him upon seeing his miracles, **Joh 2:23**, among whom Nicodemus seems to be; or would not admit them into his company, and enter into a free conversation with him; it was necessary, that if he would have any discourse with him, that he should take this method; and if it was the same night, in which he had seen his miracles in the day, as is probable, he took the first opportunity he could, and which shows great readiness and respect; add to which, that it was very common with the Jewish doctors, to meet and converse together, and study the law in the night.

"R. Aba rose, aylyl twglpb, "in the middle of the night", and the rest of the companions, to study in the law {e}."

And it is often {f} said of R. Simeon ben Joehal, and Eleazar his son, that they sat in the night and laboured in the law; and it was reckoned very commendable so to do, and highly pleasing to God: it is said {g},

"whoever studies in the law in the night, the holy blessed God draws a thread of mercy upon him in the day:"

and likewise {h}, that

"every one that studies in the law in the night, the Shekinah is over against him."

But it seems, the Babylonian Jews did not study in the law in the night {i}: it might seem a needless question to ask, whether Nicodemus came alone, or not, were it not that according to the Jewish canon {k} a scholar might not go out in the night alone, because of suspicion:

and said unto him, Rabbi; a title which now greatly obtained among the Jewish doctors, and of which they were very fond;
See Gill on "Mt 23:7". It comes from a word, which signifies great and large; and was used by them, to suggest the large compass, and great plenty of knowledge they would be thought to have had; and best becomes and suits with our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are: salutations among the Jews, were forbidden in the night {l};

"says R. Jochanan, it is forbidden a man to salute his neighbour in the night, lest it should be a demon:"

but here was no such danger; nor was this salutation made in the street, and in the dark, which the canon seems to respect:

we know that thou art a teacher come from God; the Jews expected the Messiah as a teacher, which they might learn from many prophecies, as from **Isa 2:2**. Upon the first of which, and on that passage in it, "he will teach us of his ways", a noted commentator {m} of theirs has this remark;

"hrwmh, "the teacher", he is the King Messiah."

And the Targum on **Joe 2:23** paraphrases the words thus:

"O ye children of Zion, rejoice and be glad in the word of the Lord your God, for he will return Nwkplm ty, "your teacher" to you."

And Nicodemus acknowledges Jesus as such; and as one that did not come, or was sent by men, as their doctors were; nor did he come of himself, as false teachers did; but he came from God, and had his mission and commission from him: and this was a known case, a clear point, not only to himself, but to many of the Jews; and even to some of his brethren, the members of the sanhedrim; who upon hearing of, and seeing the miracles done by Christ, might meet and converse freely together about him; and give their sentiments of him; and might then agree pretty much in this at that time, that he was at least a prophet, and some extraordinary teacher, whom God had sent among them; and Nicodemus coming directly from them, repeats his own sense and theirs, supported by the following reason:

for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, [except] God be with him: referring to the miracles he had done at the passover in Jerusalem, very lately; see **Joh 2:23**. And which, though they are not particularly mentioned, may be concluded to be such, as the dispossessing of devils, the curing of all manner of diseases by a word, or touch, from what he at other times, and elsewhere did. Miracles were expected by the Jews, to be wrought by the Messiah, and many believed in Jesus on this account; see **Joh 6:14**; though the modern Jews deny it to be necessary, that miracles should be done by the Messiah {n}; but Nicodemus, and other Jews, thought otherwise, and considered the miracles of Christ as such, as could never be done by man, nor without the presence and power of God; and concluded that he was with God, and God with him, and was the true Immanuel, who is God with us.

{e} Zohar in Exod. fol. 84. 1. {f} Ib. fol. 8S. 2. in Lev. fol. 5. 3, 4. & 10. 1. & passim. {g} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 12. 2. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Talmud Tora, c. 3. sect. 13. {h} T. Bab. Tamid. foi. 32. 2. {i} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 9. 2. {k} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 91. 1. Piske Tosephot Pesach, art. 12. & Maimon. Hilch, Deyot. c. 5. sect. 9. {l} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 44. 1. & Megilla, fol. 3. 1. & Piske Tosephot Megilla, art. 4. & in Yebamot, art. 238. {m} R David Kimchi in loc. {n} Maimon. Hilch. Melacim, c. 11. sect. 3.

John 3:3

Ver. 3. Jesus answered and said unto him,.... Not to any express question put by Nicodemus; unless it can be thought, that a question of this kind might be asked, what is the kingdom of God, so much spoken of in thy ministry? and what is requisite to the seeing and enjoying of it? though not recorded by the evangelist; but rather to the words of Nicodemus, concluding from his miracles, that he was the Messiah; and that the kingdom of God was now approaching, or the world to come, the Jews so much speak of; and in which all Israel, according to their notion, were to have a part {o}; and which notion, our Lord in the following words, seems to oppose:

verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God; Nicodemus, according to the general sense of the nation, thought that when the Messiah came, and his kingdom was set up, they should all share in it, without any more ado; they being the descendants of Abraham, and having him for their father: but Christ assures him, that he must be "born again"; in distinction from, and opposition to his first birth by nature; in which he was vile, polluted, carnal, and corrupt, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, and was a transgressor from the womb, and by nature a child of wrath; and in opposition to, his descent from Abraham, or being born of him, and of his seed; for this would be of no avail to him in this case, nor give him any right to the privileges and ordinances of the kingdom of God, or the Gospel dispensation; see **Mt 3:9**; as also to birth by proselytism; for the Jews have a frequent saying {p}, that

"one that is made a proselyte, ymd dlwnv Nwjqk, "is like a child new born"."

Which they understand, not in a spiritual, but in a civil sense; such being free from all natural and civil relations, and from all obligations to parents, masters {q}, &c. And by this phrase our Lord signifies, that no man, either as a man, or as a son of Abraham, or as a proselyte to the Jewish religion, can have any true knowledge of, or right unto, the enjoyment of the kingdom of God, unless he is born again; or regenerated, and quickened by the Spirit of God; renewed in the spirit of his mind; has Christ formed in his heart; becomes a partaker of the divine nature; and in all respects a new creature; and an other in heart, in principle, in practice, and conversation; or unless he be "born from above", as the word is rendered in **Joh 3:31**; that is, by a supernatural power, having the heavenly image stamped on him; and being called with an heavenly calling, even with the high calling of God in Christ Jesus: if this is not the case, a man can have no true knowledge of the kingdom of the Messiah, which is not a temporal and carnal one; it is not of this world, nor does it come with observation; nor can he have any right to the ordinances of it, which are of a spiritual nature; and much less can he be thought to have any true notions, or to be possessed of the kingdom of grace, which lies in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; or to have either a meetness for, or a right unto the kingdom of glory: though by the following words it seems, that the word is rightly rendered "again", or a second time, as it is by Nounus.

{o} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1. {p} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 22. 1. 48. 2. 62. 1. & 97. 2. {q} Vid. Maimon. Issure Bia, c. 14. sect. 11. & Eduth, c. 13. sect. 2.

John 3:4

Ver. 4. Nicodemus saith unto him,.... Understanding him of a natural birth, to be repeated:

how can a man be born when he is old? as it seems by this, he himself now was:

can he enter the second time into his mothers womb, and be born? the Ethiopic version adds, "again"; and the Arabic version, "and then be born"; this he urges, as absurd, impracticable, and impossible; and which shows him to have been as yet a natural man, who could not receive nor discern spiritual things.

John 3:5

Ver. 5. Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee,.... Explaining somewhat more clearly, what he before said:

except a man be born of water and of the Spirit: these are, twnv twlm, "two words", which express the same thing, as Kimchi observes in many places in his commentaries, and signify the grace of the Spirit of God. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, "the Holy Spirit", and so Nonnus; and who doubtless is intended: by "water", is not meant material water, or baptismal water; for water baptism is never expressed by water only, without some additional word, which shows, that the ordinance of water baptism is intended: nor has baptism any regenerating influence in it; a person may be

baptized, as Simon Magus was, and yet not born again; and it is so far from having any such virtue, that a person ought to be born again, before he is admitted to that ordinance: and though submission to it is necessary, in order to a person's entrance into a Gospel church state; yet it is not necessary to the kingdom of heaven, or to eternal life and salvation: such a mistaken sense of this text, seems to have given the first birth and rise to infant baptism in the African churches; who taking the words in this bad sense, concluded their children must be baptized, or they could not be saved; whereas by "water" is meant, in a figurative and metaphorical sense, the grace of God, as it is elsewhere; see
Eze 36:25. Which is the moving cause of this new birth, and according to which God begets men again to, a lively hope, and that by which it is effected; for it is by the grace of God, and not by the power of man's free will, that any are regenerated, or made new creatures: and if Nicodemus was an officer in the temple, that took care to provide water at the feasts, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, and as it should seem Nicodemon ben Gorion was, by the story before related of him; See Gill on "Joh 3:1"; very pertinently does our Lord make mention of water, it being his own element: regeneration is sometimes ascribed to God the Father, as in **1Pe 1:3**, and sometimes to the Son, **1Jo 2:29** and here to the Spirit, as in **Tit 3:5**, who convinces of sin, sanctifies, renews, works faith, and every other grace; begins and carries on the work of grace, unto perfection;

he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; and unless a man has this work of his wrought on his soul, as he will never understand divine and spiritual things, so he can have no right to Gospel ordinances, or things appertaining to the kingdom of God; nor can he be thought to have passed from death to life, and to have entered into an open state of grace, and the kingdom of it; or that living and dying so, he shall ever enter into the kingdom of heaven; for unless a man is regenerated, he is not born heir apparent to it; and without internal holiness, shall not enter into it, enjoy it, or see God.

John 3:6

Ver. 6. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh,.... Man by his natural birth, and as he is born according to the flesh of his natural parents, is a mere natural man; that is, he is carnal and corrupt, and cannot discern spiritual things; nor can he, as such, enter into, and inherit the kingdom of God; see **1Co 2:14**. And therefore there is a necessity of his being born again, or of the grace of the Spirit, and of his becoming a spiritual man; and if he was to be, or could be born again of the flesh, or ever so many times enter into his mothers womb, and be born, was it possible, he would still be but a natural and a carnal man, and so unfit for the kingdom of God. By "flesh" here, is not meant the fleshy part of man, the body, as generated of another fleshy substance; for this is no other than what may be said of brutes; and besides, if this was the sense, "spirit", in the next clause, must mean the soul, whereas one soul is not generated from another: but by flesh is designed, the nature of man; not merely as weak and frail, but as unclean and corrupt, through sin; and which being propagated by natural generation from sinful men, cannot be otherwise; for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one", Job 14:4. And though the soul of man is of a spiritual nature, and remains a spirit, notwithstanding the pollution of sin; yet it being defiled with the flesh, and altogether under the power and influence of the lusts of the flesh, it may well be said to be carnal or fleshly: hence "flesh", as it stands opposed to spirit, signifies the corruption of nature, **Ga 5:17**; and such who are in a state of unregeneracy, are said to be after the flesh, and in the flesh, and even the mind itself is said to be carnal, **Ro 8:5**.

And that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit: a man that is regenerated by the Spirit of God, and the efficacy of his grace, is a spiritual man; he can discern and judge all things of a spiritual nature; he is a fit person to be admitted to spiritual ordinances and privileges; and appears to be in the spiritual kingdom of Christ; and has a right to the world of blessed spirits above; and when his body is raised a spiritual body, will be admitted in soul, body, and spirit, into the joy of his Lord. "Spirit" in the first part of this clause, signifies the Holy Spirit of God, the author of regeneration and sanctification; whence that work is called the sanctification of the Spirit, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, **1Pe 1:2**. And "spirit", in the latter part, intends the internal work of grace upon the soul, from whence a man is denominated a spiritual man; and as a child bears the same name with its parent, so this is called by the same, as the author and efficient cause of it: and besides, it is of a spiritual nature itself, and exerts itself in spiritual acts and exercises, and directs to, and engages in spiritual things; and has its seat also in the spirit, or soul of man.

John 3:7

Ver. 7. Marvel not that I said unto thee,...., For Nicodemus was quite astonished, at this doctrine of the new birth; it was altogether new to him, and unheard of by him; nor could he understand, nor conceive in what manner it could be:

ye must be born again; in "four" of Beza's copies, it is read "we"; but as Christ was not begotten in a carnal way, or descended not from Adam in the ordinary way of generation, he was not carnal and corrupt, nor in the least tainted with sin; and so stood in no need of regeneration; wherefore such a reading must be rejected. There is a necessity of the regeneration of those, who are the chosen of God, and the redeemed of the Lamb; and of them only can the words be understood; for as for others, they neither can, nor will, nor must be born again: but the people of God "must"; partly because it is the will of God; it is his purpose and resolution, that they shall be regenerated; he has chosen them, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto salvation by Christ: this is the way and method of saving sinners he has fixed upon, namely, not to save them by works of righteousness, but by grace, and according to abundant mercy, through the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost: and partly, because of the case and condition of men, which requires it; for whereas the chosen people of God, are predestinated to the adoption of children, and are taken into the family of God, and are heirs to an inheritance, it is necessary they should have a nature, temper, and disposition of mind, suitable to the inheritance they are to enjoy; which they have not in their natural estate, and which is conveyed to them in regeneration: besides, their carnal minds are enmity to God, and it is necessary that they should be friendly to him, which cannot be without regeneration; nor can they, till they are born again, please God, or do those things which are pleasing to him: to which may be added, which Christ has before suggested, and which shows the necessity of it, that without it, no man can either see, or enter into the kingdom of God. To take off the surprise of Nicodemus, our Lord instances in a common natural case, and to which this affair of regeneration may be compared, and by it illustrated.

John 3:8

Ver. 8. The wind bloweth where it listeth,.... For ought any mortal can say, or do to the contrary: and so the Spirit of God is a free agent in regeneration; he works how, and where, and when he pleases; he acts freely in the first operation of his grace on the heart, and in all after influences of it; as well as in the donation of his gifts to men, for different purposes; see 1Co 12:11; and this grace of the Spirit in regeneration, like the wind, is powerful and irresistible; it carries all before it; there is no withstanding it; it throws down Satan's strong holds, demolishes the fortifications of sin; the whole posse of hell, and the corruptions of a man's heart, are not a match for it; when the Spirit works, who can let?

and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; as the wind, though its sound is heard, and its force felt, it cannot be seen; nor is it known certainly, from whence it comes, and where are the treasures of it; from whence it begins, and where it ends; so is the grace of the Spirit of God in regeneration to a natural man; it is imperceptible, indiscernible, and unaccountable by him, **1Co 2:14**.

So is every one that is born of the Spirit: he is regenerated by grace, that is, as free and sovereign, as powerful and irresistible, and as secret and imperceptible, as the wind is: and seeing so ordinary a thing as the blowing of the wind is of such a nature, and so little to be accounted for; regeneration by the Spirit of God, who is comparable to the wind, and whose name so signifies, need not be thought so marvellous and astonishing, though the natural man discerns it not, and cannot account for it. The beauty and propriety of this simile will more appear by observing, that the same Hebrew word, xwr, is used both for the wind, and for the Spirit of God; it is used for the "wind", in **Ge 3:8**; and in other places, and for the Spirit of God, in **Ge 1:2**, and elsewhere: and so likewise the Greek word pneuma, is used for them both, for the wind in this place, and often for the Holy Ghost: and it may be observed, that the Holy Spirit, because of his powerful, comfortable, and quickening influences, is compared to the wind, especially to the south wind, in some passages of the Old Testament, which Christ might have in view, **So 4:16**. What our Lord here says, concerning the wind, is confirmed by all experience, and philosophical observations; the rise of winds, from whence they come, and whither they go, cannot be ascertained; the treasures of them are only with God, and known to him; see Ec 11:5.

John 3:9

Ver. 9. Nicodemus answered and said unto him,.... Remaining still as ignorant as ever, though Christ had explained the phrase "born again", at which he stumbled, by a being "born of water and of the Spirit", or of the grace of the Spirit of God; and had illustrated this by the free, powerful, and invisible blowing of the wind:

how can these things be? The Arabic version reads, "how can this be?" referring either to the last thing said, that a man's being born of the Spirit, is like the blowing of the wind; or to the explanation of the first expression, that a man should be born of water, and of the Spirit; or to the first assertion itself, that a man should be born again; which notwithstanding the explanation and illustration, seemed as impossible, and as impracticable as ever; or rather to them all, and so the Persic version reads, "how can all these things be?"

John 3:10

Ver. 10. Jesus answered and said unto him,.... Upbraiding him with his continued and invincible ignorance, which was aggravated by his dignified character:

art thou a master in Israel? or "of Israel", as all the Oriental versions render it, as it literally may be rendered he was one of the larvy ymkx, "wise men", or "doctors of Israel" {r}, so often mentioned by the Jews. One of the Jewish doctors was answered, by a boy, just in such language as is here used; who, not understanding the direction he gave him about the way into the city, said to him,
larvy lv Mkx awh hta, "art thou he, a doctor", or "master of Israel?" did not I say to thee so? &c. {s}. He was not a common teacher; not a teacher of babes, nor a teacher in their synagogues, or in their "Midrashim", or divinity schools, but in their great sanhedrim; and the article before the word used will admit it to be rendered, "that master", doctor, or teacher; that famous, and most excellent one, who was talked of all over Jerusalem and Judea, as a surpassing one: and now, though he was not only an Israelite, with whom were the laws, statutes, judgments, and oracles of God, the writings of Moses, and the prophets; but a teacher of Israelites, and in the highest class of teachers, and of the greatest fame among them, yet was he ignorant of the first and most important things in religion:

and knowest not these things? which were so plainly to be suggested in the sacred writings, with which he was; or ought to have been conversant: for the same things Christ had been speaking of, are there expressed by a circumcision of the heart; by a birth, a nation's being born at once; by sanctification; by the grace of God signified under the metaphor of water; and by quickening persons, comparable to dry bones, through the wind blowing, and breathing into them, De 30:6.

{r} Derech Eretz, fol. 18. 1. {s} Echa Rabbati, fol. 44. 4.

John 3:11

Ver. 11. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know,.... Meaning either himself, and John the Baptist his forerunner, who preached the same doctrine of regeneration, internal sanctification, and evangelical repentance, as well as outward reformation, as necessary to entrance into the kingdom of heaven, or the Gospel dispensation, he declared was just at hand; or his disciples with himself, who were now with him, and whom he had called to preach the same truths he himself did; or the prophets of the Old Testament, who agreed with him in these things; or the Father that was with him, and never left him alone, and the Holy Spirit that was upon him, by whom he was anointed to preach these things, and who spoke them in him; or else he may use the plural number of himself alone, as being one in authority, and speaking with it, as he sometimes did, **Mr 4:30**, and the rather this seems to be the sense, since he immediately, in the next verse, speaks in the singular number, "if I have told you earthly things", &c. Now Christ must needs thoroughly, and certainly know what he spoke, since he was not only the omniscient God, but, as Mediator, had all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him, and the spirit of wisdom and knowledge rested on him:

and testify that we have seen; and therefore ought to have been received as a credible witness, as he was a faithful one; since "seeing" and "knowing" are qualifications in a witness, **Le 5:1**; and though these were eminently in Christ, the generality of the Jews gave no credit to his testimony:

and ye received not our witness; which was an aggravation of their sin and unbelief; see **Joh 3:32**.

John 3:12

Ver. 12. If I have told you earthly things,.... Not that the doctrines he delivered were earthly ones; for he was not of the earth, but from heaven, and above all, and so spake not of the earth, but of heaven, **Joh 3:31**; and this doctrine of regeneration was an heavenly doctrine; and the thing itself required supernatural power, and grace from above: but either they were the more easy doctrines of the Gospel; or were delivered in a plain and easy style, and illustrated by similes taken from earthly things, as from human birth, from the water, and from the wind:

and ye believe not; i.e. those things; ye do not receive them, nor give credit to them; or "me", as the Ethiopic Version adds, who relate them on the best evidence, having fully known, and clearly seen them:

how shall ye believe; give credit to me, or receive my testimony:

if I tell you of heavenly things? of the more sublime doctrines of the Gospel, such as the descent of the Messiah from heaven; the union of the two natures, human and divine, in him; his being the only begotten Son of God; his crucifixion and death, signified by the lifting up of the serpent on a pole in the wilderness; and the wonderful love of God to the Gentile world in giving Christ to, and for them; and the salvation, and eternal happiness of all that believe in him, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; and these delivered in language suitable to them, without figures, or natural similes, which help the understanding, and convey ideas of things more easily to it.

John 3:13

Ver. 13. And no man hath ascended into heaven,.... Though Enoch and Elias had, yet not by their own power, nor in the sense our Lord designs; whose meaning is, that no man had, or could go up to heaven, to bring from thence the knowledge of divine and heavenly things; in which sense the phrase is used in De 30:12, and which may be illustrated by **Joh 1:18**; wherefore inasmuch as Nicodemus had acknowledged Christ to he a teacher come from God, our Lord, would have him know, that he was the only teacher of heavenly things, as being the only person that had been in heaven, and in the bosom of the Father; and therefore, if he, and the rest of the Jews, did not receive instructions from him, they must for ever remain ignorant; for there never had been, nor was, nor could be, any mere man that could go up to heaven, and learn the mysteries of God, and of the kingdom of heaven, and return and instruct men in them:

but he that came down from heaven; meaning himself, who is the Lord from heaven, and came from thence to do the will of God by preaching the Gospel, working miracles, obeying the law, and suffering death in the room of his people, and thereby obtaining eternal redemption for them. Not that he brought down from heaven with him, either the whole of his human nature, or a part of it; either an human soul, or an human body; nor did he descend locally, by change of place, he being God omnipresent, infinite and immense, but by assumption of the human nature into union with his divine person:

[even] the son of man which is in heaven; at the same time he was then on

earth: not that he was in heaven in his human nature, and as he was the son of man; but in his divine nature, as he was the Son of God; see **Joh 1:18**; though this is predicated of his person, as denominated from the human nature, which was proper to him only in his divine nature; for such is omnipresence, or to be in heaven and earth at the same time: just as on the other hand God is said to purchase the church with his blood, and the Lord of glory is said to be crucified, Ac 20:28, where those things are spoken of Christ, as denominated from his divine nature, which were proper only to his human nature; and is what divines call a communication of idioms or properties; and which will serve as a key to open all such passages of Scripture: and now as a proof of our Lord's having been in heaven, and of his being a teacher come from God, and such an one as never was, or can be, he opens and explains a type respecting himself, in the following verse.

John 3:14

Ver. 14. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,.... The history referred to is in Nu 21:8. There is, in many things, an agreement between this serpent, and Jesus Christ: as in the matter of it, it was a brazen serpent; it was made not of gold, nor of silver, but of brass, the meaner metal, and was a very unlikely means, of itself, to heal the Israelites; and might be despised by many: this may denote the meanness of Christ in his human nature, in his birth and parentage, and place of education and converse; and especially in his crucifixion and death; and which, to an eye of carnal sense and reason, seemed a very improbable means of saving sinners; and therefore were to some a stumbling block, and to others foolishness: though on the other hand, as brass is a shining metal, and might be chose for the serpent in the wilderness to be made of, that by the lustre of it the eyes of the Israelites might be attracted and directed to it, who were at the greatest distance in the camp; so it may be expressive of the glory of Christ, as the only begotten of the Father, and who is the brightness of his Father's glory; and which is the great attractive, motive, and inducement to engage souls to look unto him, and believe in him, Isa 45:22; and whereas brass is both a strong and durable metal, it may signify the strength of Christ, who is the mighty God, and mighty to save; and his duration, as a Saviour, being the same today, yesterday, and for ever: likewise, the comparison between the serpent Moses lifted up, and Christ, may be observed in the form of it. The brazen serpent had the form of a serpent, but not the poison and venomous nature of one; so Christ was sent, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was found in fashion as a man, as a sinful man, but was without sin, and was perfectly holy; and yet being in this form, was made both sin and a curse, that he might redeem his people both from sin, and from the curse of the law, by dying a death which denominated him accursed, of which the serpent was, an emblem: besides, this serpent was a fiery one; at least it looked like one of the fiery serpents, being of brass, which shone as though it burned in a furnace; and may be an emblem both of Christ's Father's wrath, which was poured out like fire upon him, and of his love to his people, which was like burning fire, the coals whereof gave a most vehement flame. Moreover, this serpent Moses made, and was ordered to make, was but "one", though the fiery serpents, with which the Israelites were bitten, were many; so there is but one Mediator between God and man; but one Saviour, in whom alone is salvation, and in no other, even Jesus Christ. To which may be added the "situation" in which this serpent was put: it was set by Moses on a pole; it was lifted up on high, that every one in the camp of Israel might see it; and may point out the ascension of Christ into heaven, and his exaltation at God's right hand there, as some think; or his being set up in the ministry of the word, and held forth and exalted there as the only Saviour of lost sinners; or rather his crucifixion, which is sometimes expressed by a lifting up, **Joh 8:28**. Once more, there is an agreement in the effect that followed upon the lifting up of the serpent; and which was the design of it, viz. the healing of such Israelites as were bitten by the fiery serpents, who looked to this: for as the Israelites were bitten by fiery serpents, with the poison of which they were infected, and were in danger of death, and to many of them their bitings were mortal; so men are poisoned with the venom of the old serpent the devil, by which they are subjected to a corporeal death, and are brought under a spiritual, or moral death, and are liable to an eternal one: and as these bitings were such as Moses could not cure; so the wounds of sin, through the old serpent, are such as cannot be healed by the law, moral or ceremonial, or by obedience to either; and as they were the Israelites who were convinced of their sin, and acknowledged it, and had a cure by looking to the brazen serpent; so such whom the Spirit of God convinces of sin, and to whom he gives the seeing eye of faith, these, through seeing, the Son, and looking to Jesus, as crucified and slain, receive healing by his stripes and wounds: and as those, who were ever so much bit and poisoned by the fiery serpents, or were at ever so great a distance from the pole, or had the weakest eye, yet if they could but discern the serpent on the pole, though it only appeared as a shining piece of brass, had a cure; so the greatest of sinners, and who are afar off from God, and all that is good, and who have faith but as a grain of mustard seed, or but glimmering view of Christ, of his glory, fulness, and suitableness, shall be saved by him. To add no more, this was done "in the wilderness": which may signify this world, Christ's coming into it, his crucifixion in it, and his going without the camp, bearing our reproach, or suffering without the gates of Jerusalem. It is certain, that the Jews had a notion that the brazen serpent was symbolical and figurative: Philo the Jew makes it to be a symbol of fortitude and temperance {t}; and the author of the apocryphal book of Wisdom {u}, calls it "a sign of salvation". They thought there was something mysterious in it: hence they say {w},

"in four places it is said, "make thee", &c. In three places it is explained, viz. **Ge 6:14**, and one is not explained, Nu 21:8, "make thee a fiery serpent", vryp al, is not explained."

And elsewhere {x} they ask,

"and could the serpent kill, or make alive? But at the time that Israel looked up, and served with their hearts their Father which is in heaven, they were healed; but if not, they were brought low."

So that the look was not merely to the brazen serpent, but to God in heaven; yea, to the word of God, his essential Logos, as say the Targumists on Nu 21:9. The Jerusalem Targum paraphrases the words thus:

"and Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a high place, and whoever was bitten by the serpents, and lift up his face, in prayer, to his Father which is in heaven, and looked upon the serpent of brass, lived."

And Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases them thus:

"and Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a high place; and it was, when a serpent had bitten any man, and he looked to the serpent of brass, "and directed his heart", yyd armym Mwvl, "to the name of the word of the Lord", he lived."

And this healing they understand not only of bodily healing, but of the healing of the soul: for they observe {y}, that

"as soon as they said, "we have sinned", immediately their iniquity was expiated; and they had the good news brought them "of the healing of the soul", as it is written, "make thee a seraph"; and he does not say a serpent; and this is it: "and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live", vpnh tawpr, "through the healing of the soul":"

yea, they compare the Messiah to a serpent; for so the Targum on

Isa 14:29 paraphrases that passage:

"the Messiah shall come forth from Jesse's children's children; and his works shall be among you as a "flying serpent"."

And who else can be designed by the "other serpent of life" {z}, and the "holy serpent" {a} they speak of, in opposition to the evil serpent that seduced Eve? And it is well known, that vxn, "a serpent", and xyvm, "Messiah", are numerically, or by gematry, the same; a way of interpretation, and explanation, often in use with the Jews. Now, as this serpent was lifted up on a pole on high, that every one that was bitten with the fiery serpent might look to it, and be healed;

even so must the son of man be lifted up; upon the cross, and die: the crucifixion and death of Christ were necessary, and must be, because of the decrees and purposes of God, by which he was foreordained thereunto, and by which determinate counsel he was delivered, taken, crucified, and slain; and because of his own engagements as a surety, laying himself under obligations in the council and covenant of peace, to suffer, and die, in the room of his people; and because of the prophecies in the Old Testament, and his own predictions, that so it should be; as also, that the antitype might answer the type; and particularly, that he might be a suitable object of faith for wounded sinners, sensible of sin, to look unto.

{t} De Agricult. p. 202. & Allegor. l. 3. p. 1101, 1102, 1103, 1104. {u} C. 16. v. 6. {w} T. Hieros. Roshhashanah, fol. 59. 1. {x} Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 3. sect. 3. {y} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 123. 2. {z} Zohar in Gen fol. 36. 2. {a} Tikkune Zohar in Jetzira, p. 134.

John 3:15

Ver. 15. That whosoever believeth in him,.... Whether Jew or Gentile, a greater, or a lesser sinner, and of whatsoever state and condition, age or sex; and though ever so weak a believer, provided his faith, is of the right kind: not an historical or temporary one, a mere assent to the truth of things respecting his person, office, and work; but such a faith, by which a soul sees a glory, fulness, and suitableness in him as a Saviour; goes to him, ventures on him, commits itself to him, lays hold on him, and receives him, leans and relies upon him, and trusts in him, and lives upon him; and which is the faith of God's elect; a gift of his grace, and the operation of his Spirit; and which works by love, and is attended with the fruits of righteousness: now the end of Christ's crucifixion and death is, that such an one

should not perish; though he is in a lost and perishing condition in Adam, and by nature, and sees himself to be so, and comes to Christ as such; and though his frames and comforts are perishing, and he sometimes fears he shall be utterly lost; and though he is subject to slips and falls, and great spiritual decays; and shall perish as to the outward man by death; yet he shall never perish eternally, or be punished with everlasting destruction, as the wicked will:

but have eternal life; not by his works, but as the gift of God: and which he that truly believes; has already in the covenant of grace, in Christ his head, in faith and hope; and has the earnest and pledge of it, the Spirit of God; and the beginning of it, which is the knowledge of God in Christ; and shall hereafter possess it fully, and in person, to all eternity: even a life of perfect holiness and knowledge; a life of never ending pleasure; a life free from all the sorrows, distresses, and imperfections of this; and which will always continue.

John 3:16

Ver. 16. For God so loved the world,.... The Persic version reads "men": but not every man in the world is here meant, or all the individuals of human nature; for all are not the objects of God's special love, which is here designed, as appears from the instance and evidence of it, the gift of his Son: nor is Christ God's gift to every one; for to whomsoever he gives his Son, he gives all things freely with him; which is not the case of every man. Nor is human nature here intended, in opposition to, and distinction from, the angelic nature; for though God has showed a regard to fallen men, and not to fallen angels, and has provided a Saviour for the one, and not for the other; and Christ has assumed the nature of men, and not angels; yet not for the sake of all men, but the spiritual seed of Abraham; and besides, it will not be easily proved, that human nature is ever called the world: nor is the whole body of the chosen ones, as consisting of Jews and Gentiles, here designed; for though these are called the world, **Joh 6:33**; and are the objects of God's special love, and to them Christ is given, and they are brought to believe in him, and shall never perish, but shall be saved with an everlasting salvation; yet rather the Gentiles particularly, and God's elect among them, are meant; who are often called "the world", and "the whole world", and "the nations of the world", as distinct from the Jews; see Ro 11:12, compared with **Mt 6:32**. The Jews had the same distinction we have now, the church and the world; the former they took to themselves, and the latter they gave to all the nations around: hence we often meet with this distinction, Israel, and the nations of the world; on those words,

""let them bring forth their witness", that they may be justified, Isa 43:9 (say {b} the doctors) these are Israel; "or let them hear and say it is truth", these are "the nations of the world"."

And again {c},

"the holy, blessed God said to Israel, when I judge Israel, I do not judge them as "the nations of the world":"

and so in a multitude of places: and it should be observed, that our Lord was now discoursing with a Jewish Rabbi, and that he is opposing a commonly received notion of theirs, that when the Messiah came, the Gentiles should have no benefit or advantage by him, only the Israelites; so far should they be from it, that, according to their sense, the most dreadful judgments, calamities, and curses, should befall them; yea, hell and eternal damnation.

"There is a place (they say {d},) the name of which is "Hadrach", **Zec 9:1**. This is the King Messiah, who is, Krw
dx, "sharp and tender"; sharp to "the nations", and tender to "Israel"."

And so of the "sun of righteousness", in **Mal 4:2**, they say {e},

"there is healing for the Israelites in it: but the idolatrous nations shall be burnt by it."

And that {f}

"there is mercy for Israel, but judgment for the rest of the nations."

And on those words in Isa 21:12, "the morning cometh", and also the night, they observe {g},

"the morning is for the righteous, and the night for the wicked; the morning is for Israel, and the night for "the nations of the world"."

And again {h},

"in the time to come, (the times of the Messiah,) the holy, blessed God will bring "darkness" upon "the nations", and will enlighten Israel, as it is said, Isa 60:2."

Once more {i},

"in the time to come, the holy, blessed God will bring the nations of the world, and will cast them into the midst of hell under the Israelites, as it is said, Isa 43:3."

To which may be added that denunciation of theirs {k}

"woe to the nations of the world, who perish, and they know not that they perish: in the time that the sanctuary was standing, the altar atoned for them; but now who shall atone for them?"

Now, in opposition to such a notion, our Lord addresses this Jew; and it is as if he had said, you Rabbins say, that when the Messiah comes, only the Israelites, the peculiar favourites of God, shall share in the blessings that come by, and with him; and that the Gentiles shall reap no advantage by him, being hated of God, and rejected of him: but I tell you, God has so loved the Gentiles, as well as the Jews,

that he gave his only begotten Son; to, and for them, as well as for the Jews; to be a covenant of the people, the Gentiles, the Saviour of them, and a sacrifice for them; a gift which is a sufficient evidence of his love to them; it being a large and comprehensive one, an irreversible and unspeakable one; no other than his own Son by nature, of the same essence, perfections, and glory with him; begotten by him in a way inconceivable and expressible by mortals; and his only begotten one; the object of his love and delight, and in whom he is ever well pleased; and yet, such is his love to the Gentiles, as well as Jews, that he has given him, in human nature, up, into the hands of men, and of justice, and to death itself:

that whosoever believeth in him, whether Jew or Gentile,

should not perish, but have everlasting life;
See Gill on "Joh 3:15".

{b} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 2. 1. {c} Ib. fol. 4. 1. Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2. & Bereshit Rabba, fol. 11. 3. {d} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 24. 1. Jarchi

& Kimchi in Zech. ix. 1. {e} Zohar in Gen. fol. 112. 2. {f} Zohar in Exod. fol. 15. 1, 2. {g} T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 64. 1. {h} Shemot Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 99. 4. {i} Ib sect. 11. fol. 98. 3. {k} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 55. 2.

John 3:17

Ver. 17. For God sent not his Son into the world,.... God did send his Son into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh, being made of a woman, and made under the law; and which is an instance of his great love, and not of any disrespect to his Son, or of any inequality between them: but then this was not

to condemn the world; even any part of it, or any in it: not the Gentiles, as the Jews thought he would; for though God had suffered them to walk in their own ways, and had winked at, or overlooked the times of their ignorance, and had sent no prophet unto them, nor made any revelation of his will, or any discovery of his special grace unto them; yet he sent his Son now, not to destroy them for their idolatry, and wickedness, but to be the Saviour of them: nor the Jews; for as impenitent and unbelieving, and as wicked as they were, he did not accuse them to the Father, nor judge and condemn them; he was to come again in power and great glory, when he would take vengeance on them, and cause wrath to come upon them to the uttermost, for their disbelief and rejection of him; but this was not his business now: nor the wicked of the world in general; to judge, and condemn them, will be his work, when he comes a second time, in the day God has appointed to judge the world in righteousness.

But the end of his mission, and first coming is,

that the world through him might be saved; even the world of the elect in general, whom God determined to save, and has chosen, to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ, and has appointed Christ to be the salvation of; and who being sent, came into the world to seek and save them; and his chosen people among the Gentiles in particular: wherefore he is said to be God's salvation to the ends of the earth: and all the ends of the earth are called upon to look unto him, and be saved by him, Isa 49:6.

John 3:18

Ver. 18. He that believeth on him is not condemned,.... Whether Jew or

Gentile, because a believer is openly in Christ; and there is no condemnation to those that are in him: and though the sentence of death passed upon all in Adam, and judgment came upon all men to condemnation in him; yet this sentence being executed on Christ, the surety of his people, who has been condemned to death, and has suffered it in their stead, his death is a security to them from all condemnation: and they are delivered by him from the curse and condemnation of the law: and having in conversion openly passed from death to life, they shall never enter into condemnation; and this is the happy case of every one that believes in Christ:

but he that believeth not is condemned already. The Persic version renders it, "from the beginning"; he remains under the sentence of condemnation passed in Adam upon him; the law accuses him, and pronounces him guilty before God; he is under the curse of it, and it is a ministration of condemnation and death to him; nor has he any thing to secure him from its charge, curse, and condemnation: this must be understood of one that is a final unbeliever, or that lives, and dies, in a state of impenitence, and unbelief:

because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God; whom God has sent to be the Saviour of lost sinners, and to deliver them from wrath to come; and there is no other name but his, whereby men can be saved; so that such that do not believe in him, must be damned.

John 3:19

Ver. 19. And this is the condemnation,.... Of him that believes not in Christ; that is, this is the matter and cause of his condemnation, and by which it is aggravated, and appears to be just:

that light is come into the world: by which is meant, not natural or corporeal light; though natural darkness is, by some, preferred to this, being more convenient for their evil works; as by thieves, murderers, and adulterers: nor is the light of nature designed, with which every man is enlightened that comes into the world; which, though but a dim light, might be of more use, and service, than it is; and is often rejected, and rebelled against, by wicked men, and which will be the condemnation of the Heathen world: but rather the light of divine revelation, both in the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; especially the latter is here intended; and which, though so great a favour to fallen men, is despised, and denied by the sons of darkness: though it may be best of all to understand it of Christ himself, the light of the world, and who is come a light into it; see **Joh 8:12**, who may be called "light", because he has set revelation in its clearest and fullest light; he has declared the whole mind, and will of God concerning the affair of divine worship, and the business of salvation: grace, and truth, are come by him; the doctrines of grace, and the truths of the Gospel, are most clearly brought to light by him; the types, and shadows of the law are removed; and the promises, and the prophecies of the Old Testament, are most largely expounded by him, and most perfectly fulfilled in him: and besides; he is the author and giver of the light of grace, by which men see themselves to be what they are, lost and undone sinners; and see him to be the only able, willing, suitable, sufficient, and complete Saviour: and he it is that now gives the saints the glimpse of glory they have, and will be the light of the new Jerusalem, and the everlasting light of his people hereafter. He, by his incarnation, may be said to "come into the world" in general, which was made by him, as God; and as he was in it, as man; though he was not known by it as the God-man, Mediator, and Messiah: and particularly he came into the Jewish world, where he was born, brought up, conversed, lived, and died; and into the Gentile world, by the ministry of his apostles, whom he; sent into all the world, to preach the Gospel to every creature, and spread the glorious light of it in every place:

and men loved darkness rather than light: the Jews, the greater part of them, preferred the darkness of the ceremonial law, and the Mosaic dispensation, and even the traditions of their elders, before the clear Gospel revelation made by Christ Jesus; and the Gentiles also, for the most part, chose rather to continue in their Heathenish ignorance, and idolatry, and to walk in their own ways, and in the vanity of their minds, than to embrace Christ, and his Gospel, and submit to his ordinances, and appointments; and the generality of men, to this day, love their natural darkness, and choose to walk in it, and to have fellowship with the works of darkness, and delight in the company of the children of darkness, rather than follow Christ, the light of the world; receive his Gospel, and walk in his ways, in fellowship with his saints: the reason of all this is,

because their deeds were evil; which they chose not to relinquish; and Christ, his Gospel and ordinances are contrary to them; for the doctrine of the grace of God, which has appeared, and shone out in great lustre, and splendour, in the world, teaches men to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts; and therefore it is hated, and rejected, by men.

John 3:20

Ver. 20. For every one that doth evil, hateth the light,.... Every man, the series of whose life and conversation is evil, hates Christ and his Gospel, cause they make manifest his evil deeds, convict him of them, and rebuke him for them:

neither cometh to the light; to hear Christ preach, or preached; to attend on the Gospel ministration and means of grace:

lest his deeds should be reproved; or discovered, and made manifest, and he be brought to shame, and laid under blame, and advised to part with them, which he cares not to do; see **Eph 5:11**.

John 3:21

Ver. 21. But he that doth truth,.... That which is true, right and good: "he whose work is just", as the Ethiopic version renders it; or, "he that does that which is right", so the Persic; that which is according to the will of God, and from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory:

cometh to the light; to Christ, and to his word, and ordinances:

that his deeds may be made manifest; being brought to the light, to the test, and standard, whether they, are right, or wrong; and that it may appear,

that they are wrought in God; or "by God"; by his assistance, and gracious influence, without which men can do nothing; for it is God that works in them both to will and to do: or, "according to God", as others render it; according to the will of God, both for matter and manner: or "for God", as the Ethiopic version renders it; for the glory of God, which ought to be the aim, and end of every action. The Persic version reads the whole thus, "that the work which is between God and him may be known"; that such deeds may be discovered, which are only known to God and himself.

John 3:22

Ver. 22. After these things,.... After Christ's coming to Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover, with his disciples, and driving the buyers and sellers from the temple, and doing the miracles he did there, upon which many believed on him; and after the long discourse he had with Nicodemus, concerning regeneration, and other things:

came Jesus and his disciples, into the land of Judea; or "into Judea the country", having been in Jerusalem, the city part or chief city in Judea; so that the country is distinguished from, and opposed to the city. And thus, a countryman, and a Jerusalemite, or citizen of Jerusalem, are distinguished {l};

"if, yntrqh, "a countryman", (one that lives in the country any where in the land of Israel out of Jerusalem {m},) receives a field, ymlvwrym, "from a man of Jerusalem", the second tithes belong to the Jerusalemite; but the wise men say, the countryman may bring them up, and eat them at Jerusalem."

Or, it may be, because that Jerusalem was part of it in the tribe of Benjamin, and the other in the tribe of Judah; therefore, when Christ, and his disciples, left Jerusalem, they might more properly be said to come into the land of Judea. Indeed, it is commonly said by the Jews {n}, that Jerusalem was not divided among the tribes, and that it did not belong to any tribe; and if so, then with greater propriety still might Christ be said to come into the land of Judea, when he departed from Jerusalem; unless it should be thought, that he went into Galilee, and after that came into the land of Judea; so Nonnus:

and there he tarried with them: with his disciples, as Nonnus; and with the inhabitants of those parts: he made a longer stay here than at Jerusalem, having more work to do here, and being more delighted with the plainness and simplicity of the country people; or "he conversed" with them, as the Syriac version renders it; he exercised, and employed himself among them, as the Greek word used signifies: he went about from village to village, doing good, healing diseases, and preaching the Gospel which was made useful to many:

and baptized; not he himself, but his disciples, by his orders, and in his name; see **Joh 4:2**; whereby he gave fresh countenance and sanction to the ordinance of water baptism, administering it to others, as well as submitting to it himself.

{l} Misn. Demai, c. 6. sect. 4. {m} Maimon. Bartenora in ib. {n} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 12. 1, & Megilla, fol. 26. 1.

John 3:23

Ver. 23. And John also was baptizing in Aenon,.... The Syriac and Persic versions call it "Ain", or "In you", the fountain of the dove; and the Arabic version reads it, the fountain of "Nun": and whether it was a town, or river, it seems to have its name from a fountain near it, or that itself was one, where was an abundance of water, as the text shows. There is a city of this name in the Septuagint version of Jos 15:61, and mention is made of Hazerenon in Nu 34:9, but neither of them seem to be the same with this; but be it where, and what it will, it was

near to Salim; and where that was, is as difficult to know as the other, some take it to be Shalem, a city of Shechem, mentioned in
Ge 33:18, but that is not the same name with this; and besides was in Samaria; and indeed is by some there thought not to be the proper name of any place. Others are of opinion, that it is the same with Shalim in **1Sa 9:4**, though it seems rather to be the place which Arias Montanus calls {o} "Salim juxta torrentem", Salim by the brook; and which he places in the tribe of Issachar: and might be so called, either because it was near this Aenon, and may be the brook, or river intended, by which it was; or because it was not far from the place where the two rivers, Jabbok and Jordan, met; and so the Jewish maps place near Jordan, in the tribe of Manasseh, bordering on the tribe of Issachar, a Shalem, and by it Ain-yon. And the Septuagint in Jos 19:22 mention "Salim by the sea", as in the tribe of Issachar. There is a passage in the Talmud {p}, which, whether it has any regard to this Aenon, and Salim, I leave to be considered:

"the wine of Ogedoth, why is it forbidden? because of the village Pegesh; and that of Borgetha, because of the Saracene palace; and of Ain-Cushith, because of the village Salem."

Nonnus here calls Aenon, a place of deep waters; and Salim he reads Salem; and so some copies. Aenon, where John baptized, according to Jerom {q}, was eight miles from Scythopolis, to the south, and was near Salim and Jordan; and he makes Salim to be at the same distance from Scythopolis. However, John was baptizing in these parts, at the same time that Christ was teaching and baptizing: he did not leave off on that account. This was the work he was sent to do, and which he continued in as long as he had his liberty; and be chose this place,

because there was much water there; or "many waters"; not little purling streams, and rivulets; but, as Nonnus renders it, abundance of water; or a multitude of it, as in the Arabic version; see **Re 1:15** and the Septuagint in Ps 78:16, and what was sufficient to immerse the whole body in, as Calvin, Aretius, Piscator, and Grotius, on the place, observe; and which was agreeable not only to: the practice of the Jews, who used dipping in their baptisms, and purifications, as Musculus and Lightfoot assert; but to John's method and practice elsewhere:

and they came, and were baptized. The Ethiopic version renders it, "they came to him", that is, to John, "and he baptized them"; as the Persic version adds, "there", in Aenon, near Salim, in the much water there: it may be understood of the people coming both to John and Christ, and of their being baptized by them; though it seems rather to be said of John; and so Nonnus paraphrases it.

{o} Antiqu. Jud. l. 2. c. 3. {p} T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 44. 4. {q} De locis Hebraicis fol. 89. C. & fol, 94. F.

John 3:24

Ver. 24. For John was not yet cast into prison. As he afterwards was by Herod, for the sake of Herodias, because he reproved Herod for taking her to be his wife, when she was wife to his brother Philip; see Mt 14:3; and this circumstance shows, that these things were done before that journey of Christ into Galilee, mentioned in **Mt 4:12**.

John 3:25

Ver. 25. Then there arose a question,.... A dispute, or controversy, occasioned by the baptism, of John and Christ:

between [some] of John's disciples, and the Jews. The Syriac and Persic versions read, "between one of John's disciples, and a certain Jew"; and Nonnus renders it, "with an Hebrew man"; and so the Alexandrian manuscript; many others read, "with a Jew": the contention between them was

about purifying; either about the ceremonial purifications, and ablutions commanded in the law of Moses; or concerning the various washings of persons, and vessels, according to the traditions of the elders, which the Jews in common were very tenacious of; and which they thought were brought into neglect, and contempt, by the baptism of John: and this seems to have been occasioned by the baptism of Christ; which the Jew might improve against the disciple of John, and urge, that since another, besides his master, had set up baptizing, who could tell which was most right and safest to follow? and therefore it would have been much better, if no such rite at all had been used by any, but that the purifications required by the law of Moses, and by their elders, had been strictly and solely attended to.

John 3:26

Ver. 26. And they came unto John,.... The Persic version reads, "he came unto John"; that disciple that had the controversy with the Jew about purifying, who not knowing well how to answer him, and which might be the case of more, applied to John:

and said unto him, Rabbi; or "master"; or, "our master"; as the Syriac and Persic versions read, which was a title of great respect, and reverence, and much in use in those times; See Gill on "Mt 23:7" see Gill on "Mt 23:8". The Arabic version joins this word to the following clause, and applies it to Christ, rendering it thus, "the master that was with thee beyond Jordan"; which is making them to speak more honourably of Christ than they intended; for though they speak very respectfully to John, yet with much disdain and neglect of Christ; not so much as mentioning his name, or using any term of honour or respect; only saying,

he that was with thee beyond Jordan; namely, at Bethabara; who came from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized by him, and who was baptized by him; and for some little time continued with him, and attended on his ministry; and as they thought, was a disciple of John's:

to whom thou bearest witness; that he was before him, and to be preferred unto him; and that he was the Lamb of God, and even the Son of God; suggesting, that by this testimony of his, Christ had gained all the credit and reputation he had; and that therefore he had done a wrong thing in enlarging so much in the praise and commendation of him:

behold the same baptizeth; takes upon him to administer the ordinance of baptism; at least gives orders to administer it; which John's disciples thought was the proper, and peculiar business of their master; and therefore speak of this as an intrusion into his office, and an entering into his province; and an assuming that which only belonged to him: and what gave still more uneasiness, and increased the complaint, was,

and all men come to him; that is, "many", as the Syriac and Persic versions render it, even more than came to John; see **Joh 4:1**. Large multitudes from all parts flocked to hear Christ preach, and great numbers were made disciples by him, and then baptized. That he should baptize, gave them great offence; and that he was so followed, raised their envy; and his being so near to John, might add to their uneasiness. It is a rule with the Jews, that

"it is not lawful for a disciple to teach the constitutions, or sentences of the law, before his master; but must be twelve miles distant from him, as the camp of Israel."

And they say, that

"a disciple that teaches before, or in the presence of his master, is guilty of death {r}."

{r} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 37. 3.

John 3:27

Ver. 27. John answered and said,.... The Syriac and Arabic versions add, "to them"; the answer being made to the disciples of John, who came to him with their complaint:

a man can receive nothing; the Syriac and Persic versions add, "of his own will": some understand this of Christ, as man, who did not take upon him the character of the Messiah, nor the office of a Mediator, nor the honour of it of himself; and who received the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, without measure, and had his success in his work from above: and indeed, it is true of both Christ, and John; for as Christ, so John received his office, and honour, as the harbinger and forerunner of Christ, and all his gifts qualifying for it, and his success in it, not of himself, but of God: and since therefore the superior office, and honour, and usefulness of the one above the other, were according to the sovereign will of God, there was no room for complaint, murmuring, and envy; but there ought to be contentment and pleasure in the wise disposition of things by God. Yea, this is true of every man, who has nothing of his own; and whatever he has in nature, providence and grace, is a gift to him; and all he enjoys is in a way of receiving: nor can he receive it,

except it be given him from heaven; from God who dwells there;
See Gill on "Mt 21:25"; who is the author and donor of every gift, temporal,

spiritual, and eternal; particularly he cannot perceive, and discern spiritual things, nor receive Gospel truths; as it appeared to John his disciples could not, unless spiritual light is given from above; and such a favour is bestowed, as to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: and therefore, for every office, whether of a superior, or inferior kind, and for every degree of honour, and for whatsoever blessing and gift, whether for soul or body, for time, or for eternity, men ought to be thankful, and not glory in them, as though they had not received them; nor is there any reason to murmur against God, or envy one another, as these disciples did.

John 3:28

Ver. 28. Ye yourselves bear me witness,.... In what they now said, and referred to, in describing Christ, as he to whom John bore witness; and he appeals to them for what he said in their presence, and before all the people in that testimony:

that I said I am not the Christ; see **Joh 1:19**; wherefore, if he, who is the Christ, is now come, and teaches, and baptizes, and has the greatest number of followers, it is not to be wondered at; and much less to be envied; but rather to be rejoiced at. For John, by repeating what he had before said, that he was not the Christ, suggests, that Jesus was; and therefore was superior to him in office, honour, and usefulness, who was only his harbinger and forerunner, as follows:

but I am sent before him; to prepare his way, to make straight his paths, to proclaim his coming, and kingdom, being at hand; and that the expectations of men may be raised, and they may be ready to receive him when come: and hereby the end of John's office, and ministry, had its accomplishment. The Ethiopic version adds, "to preach him".

John 3:29

Ver. 29. He that hath the bride,.... By whom particular persons seem here to be meant, who were called, converted, and brought to Christ, and were made his disciples, and baptized, and so were openly espoused unto him; though sometimes it designs a particular church of Christ, and even the whole general assembly, and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; all the elect of. God, whether among Jews, or Gentiles; see 2Co 11:2. These

Christ has in a conjugal relation; and he came, and comes to have them after this manner: he saw them in his Father's purposes, and decrees, in all the glory he meant to bring them to; and loved them, and desired them of his Father, as his spouse, who gave them to him, as such; and he betrothed them to himself for ever; and in time he sends his ministering servants with his Gospel, to engage and betroth them to him; and by the power of his grace, he makes them willing to give up themselves to him; which is the open espousal of them; and at the last day, when the number of the elect are completed, the marriage of the Lamb will be publicly solemnized, and a marriage supper will be made; and all that are called, and ready, will enter into the marriage chamber, and share in the joys, and pleasures of that day: thus by virtue of the Father's gift, Christ has them now as his own property, as his portion, his jewels, his bride, and wife; and by, and through his great love to them, he has them not only in his arms, from whence they can never be plucked; but in his heart, where they are set as a seal; and by virtue of this love, they are united to him, become one with him, are members of his body, flesh, and bones; and are one spirit with him, and nothing can be able to separate them; and he will have them all with, him to all eternity, to be where he is, and behold his glory: and now, he that has the bride in this sense,

is the bridegroom; and such is Christ; see **Mt 9:15**; and he acts, and behaves, as such; he loves the saints, as a bridegroom loves his bride, with a love prior to theirs; with a love of complacency and delight, which is single, chaste, and inviolable; free, and sovereign, wonderful, unchangeable, and from everlasting to everlasting: he sympathises with them in all their adversities, and afflictions; he nourishes, and cherishes them, and provides everything for them, for food, and clothing, for refreshment and protection; and interests them in all he has: and an amazing instance of grace this is, that such who are no better than others, children of wrath by nature; exceeding great sinners, guilty, and filthy; bankrupts, and beggars on the dunghill; and yet are taken into so near a relation to him; who is in the form of God, and equal to him, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, the Son of God, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells; the King of kings, and Lord of lords. And this being the case, John suggests, that by these persons following Christ, and giving up themselves to him, it appeared that he was the bridegroom; and to whom should they betake themselves but to him? Nor did it become him, or any other, to seek to draw them from him; nor should any envy his enjoyment of them, since they were his in so peculiar a sense, and in so near a relation:

but the friend of the bridegroom; meaning himself: and such is every true minister of the Gospel; he is a lover of Christ, a friend to his interest, and seeks by all means to promote it, and to bring souls unto him. The allusion is to a custom among the Jews, who, at their marriages, used to have persons both on the side of the bride, and of the bridegroom, as companions that attended each, and were called their friends; see Jud 14:20. Such an one is called by the Rabbins, Nybvwv; and this word is interpreted by bhwa, "a lover", or "friend", the same as here; and by wher, "his" (the bridegroom's) "friend" in the time of his marriage {s}. There were two of these, one for the bride, and another for the bridegroom; for so it is said {t}, formerly they appointed two Nynybvwv,

""friends", one for him (the bridegroom), and one for her (the bride), that they might minister to the bridegroom, and do all things at their entrance into the marriage chamber. --And formerly, these friends slept where the bridegroom and bride slept."

And so as John is here represented as the friend of Christ, the bridegroom of the church; the Jews speak of Moses as the friend of God, the bridegroom of the people of Israel. So one of their writers {u}, having delivered a parable concerning a certain king going into a far country, and leaving his espoused wife with his maid-servants, who raising an evil report on her, his friend tore in pieces the matrimonial contract, thus applies it:

"the king, this is the holy, blessed God; the maidens, these are the mixed multitude; and Nybvwvh, "the friend", this is Moses; and the spouse of the holy, blessed God is Israel."

The Jews say {w}, that Michael and Gabriel were the Nynbvwv, "bridal friends" to the first Adam.

Which standeth; the phrase may be seen in the above parable of the Jewish writer {x} referred to, hnybvwv dme, "his friend standeth": this was the posture of servants, and is fitly applied to John, who was the harbinger of Christ, and judged himself unworthy to bear his shoes; and well agrees with the ministers of the Gospel, who stand before Christ, wait upon him, and minister in his name, and are the servants of the churches for his sake:

and heareth him; hearkens to his words; observes, and obeys them; hears his voice, so as to understand it, and distinguish it from another's; and hears it with delight and pleasure, as every true friend of Christ does his Gospel, which is his voice, and is a joyful sound; and so

rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: such an one rejoices at the sight of his person, and in communion with him; he rejoices at the sound of his voice; and is delighted to hear him in the ministry of the word, calling to one, and to another, to come unto him, and causing them to believe in him, and give up themselves to him.

This my joy therefore is fulfilled; in Christ, he being come in person, and his voice heard in the land of Judea, and multitudes of souls flocking to him, who believing in him, were baptized; than which nothing could be a greater pleasure to John, or to any Gospel minister. This was the accomplishment and perfection of his joy, which carried it to its utmost height: this was what he wished for; and now he had the desire of his heart. It was usual for the friend of the bridegroom to carry provisions with him, and eat and drink with the bridegroom, and rejoice with him; and this rejoicing was mutual. Hence those words,

"give me ynybvwv, "my friend", that I may rejoice with him:"

the gloss upon it is,

"and eat at his marriage, even as he also rejoiced, and ate at my marriage {y}."

To this rejoicing the allusion is here.

{s} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect. 5. & Bartenora in ib. {t} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 12. 1. {u} Jarchi in Exod. xxxiv. 1. Vid. Shemot Rabba, sect. 46. fol. 142. 2. {w} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 8. 2. {x} Jarchi in ib. {y} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 144. 2. & 145. 1.

John 3:30

Ver. 30. He must increase,.... Not in stature of body, or in wisdom and understanding of mind, as man, he being come to maturity in these things already; but in fame, credit, and reputation among men; as he afterwards did in the land of Judea, by reason of his miracles and doctrines; and after that among the Gentiles, through the publication of his Gospel; and will more and more in the latter day, when he, and he alone, shall be exalted: and he must increase in the ministry of his word, which was published by him, and his disciples, throughout all the cities of Israel; and which, after his resurrection and ascension, grew and increased mightily, notwithstanding the opposition made unto it both by their civil and ecclesiastical rulers; and which, by the means of his apostles, was spread throughout the Gentile world, and will hereafter cover the earth, as the waters do the sea: and also in his kingdom and interest, which at first were very small, like a grain of mustard seed, or like a little stone cut out of the mountain without hands; but in process of time grew exceedingly, and will, ere long, till the face of the whole earth; for the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; and of the increase of it there shall be no end. And so likewise in the number of his followers, which at first were but few in Judea, but afterwards greatly increased, and especially among the Gentiles; and will be very numerous in the latter day glory, when the nation of the Jews will be born at once, and the fulness and forces of the Gentiles are brought in:

but I must decrease; as he did in his esteem among the people; see **Joh 5:3**; and in his work and office, which were now come to an end, Christ, whose forerunner he was, being come; and quickly after this he was put into prison, and there put to death.

John 3:31

Ver. 31. He that cometh from above,.... Meaning Christ; not that he brought his human nature with him from heaven, or that that is of a celestial nature; but he came from heaven in his divine person, not by change of place, he being God immense and infinite, but by assumption of human nature; which he took upon him, in order to do in it his Father's will, and the work of our salvation.

Is above all; above John, before whom he was preferred, for he was before him; above the prophets of the Old Testament, and even above Moses, the chief of them; yea, above all the angels in heaven, being God over all, blessed for ever: wherefore all glory is to be given him; no honour is to be envied him, or detracted from him.

He that is of the earth; as John was, and all mankind are, being descended from Adam, who was, made of the dust of the earth; and who dwell in houses of clay, and in earthly tabernacles, which are at last resolved into their original dust:

is earthly; of an earthly nature, frame, temper, and disposition; see **Joh 3:6**. Men naturally mind earthly things; and it is owing to the Spirit and grace of God, if they mind and savour spiritual things, or have their affections set on things above, or their conversation in heaven; and even such, at times, find that their souls cleave unto the dust, and are hankering after the things of the earth:

and speaketh of the earth; of earthly things, as in **Joh 3:12**; and indeed of heavenly things, in an earthly manner, in a low way, and by similes and comparisons taken from the things of the earth; not being able to speak of celestial things, as in their own nature, and in that sublime way the subject requires: but

he that cometh from heaven is above all; men and angels, in the dignity of his person; and all prophets and teachers, in the excellency of his doctrine, and manner of delivering it: and therefore it is not to be wondered at, that he should be followed as he is; but rather it should seem marvellous, that he has no more followers than he has; in the Apocrypha:

"For like as the ground is given unto the wood, and the sea to his floods: even so they that dwell upon the earth may understand nothing but that which is upon the earth: and he that dwelleth above the heavens may only understand the things that are above the height of the heavens." (2 Esdras 4:21)

John 3:32

Ver. 32. And what he hath seen and heard,.... Of the Father, of his mind and will, of his purposes and promises, of his love, grace, and mercy, in the council and covenant of peace, lying in his bosom, and being privy to all his secrets. The phrases express the clear and perfect knowledge Christ has of all truths and doctrines; he having all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him.

That he testifieth; fully, freely, and faithfully; withholds nothing, but declares the whole counsel of God; and is deservedly called the faithful witness, **Re 1:5**.

And no man receiveth his testimony; though it was the testimony of God, which is greater than that of man; yet few, and which were next to none at all, gave any heed or credit to it; few or none among the Jews, or among the disciples of John, or even among those that followed Christ. John, and his disciples, widely differed; they thought that all men came to Christ, and believed in him; and John thought few or none, in comparison of the numbers he could have wished, did: and indeed, no one person can receive the testimony of Christ, and believe in him, unless it be given him from above, by the grace of God: for the natural man receives not divine and spiritual things; see **Joh 3:11**.

John 3:33

Ver. 33. He that hath received his testimony,.... For there was here and there one that did, who believed in him as the Messiah, and embraced his Gospel, and submitted to his ordinances, and truly and sincerely followed him: and for the encouragement of such, it is said,

hath set to his seal that God is true; faithful in fulfilling the promises he has made concerning the Messiah, and his coming: he firmly believes that God is true to every word of his, and will make good every promise; and this he seals, ratifies, and confirms by his embracing the testimony of Christ; whereas, on the contrary, he that believes not makes God a liar, than which, nothing can be more reproachful to him, **1Jo 5:10**. The Jews have a saying {z} that "the seal of the blessed God is truth". The Arabic version renders it, "he is already sealed, because God is true"; and the Ethiopic version, "God hath sealed him, because he is true"; namely, with his holy Spirit; see **2Co 1:22**.

{z} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 1. & T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 64. 1. & Yoma, fol. 69. 2.

John 3:34

Ver. 34. For he whom God hath sent,.... Still meaning Christ, who was sent in human nature, in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the fulness of time; to be the Saviour of the world, of that which was lost, of the chief of sinners; and to preach the glad tidings of the Gospel, which is more especially here designed; and for which he was abundantly qualified by the Spirit of God, with which he was anointed:

speaketh the words of God; the words which God gave unto him; the doctrines of grace; the word of truth; the word of faith; the word of righteousness; the word of reconciliation; the words of salvation and eternal life; the whole mind and will of God; and whatever he spoke were as true as the oracles of God, and were such.

For God giveth not the Spirit by measure [unto him], as he did to the prophets of the Old Testament, and to the apostles of the New; and to the ordinary ministers of the word, who have gifts differing one from another; to one is given one gift of the Spirit; and to another, another gift, as the Spirit pleaseth; and to everyone is given grace, or gifts of grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, **Eph 4:7**. To which agrees what the Jews say {a} of the Holy Spirit, and his gifts.

"Says R. Joden bar R. Simeon, even the waters which descend from above are not given, but, hdmb, "in measure".--Says R. Acha, even the Holy Spirit, which dwells upon the prophets, does not dwell, but lqvmb, "in weight"."

But the Lord Jesus has every, gift of the Spirit, and the fulness of grace in him: he is anointed with the oil of gladness, with the Holy Ghost above his fellows; and has an immeasurable unction of the holy one; which, like the precious oil poured on Aaron, descends from him to the members of his body.

{a} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 157. 3.

John 3:35

Ver. 35. The Father loveth the Son,.... There is such a relation as that of Father and Son subsisting between the first and second persons in the Trinity; which is not by constitution and appointment: or arbitrary, arising from, and depending on the will of the first, but is natural and necessary; the second person being begotten by the first, and is of the same nature, and equally a divine person: and which relation is the foundation of the distinction of their persons; and which existed from all eternity, and co-existed with their being and essence; and is what no other stand in, angels or men, in such sense as the second person does; and is not to be conceived of, expressed and explained by us: and from this relation arises love; hence, the Son of the Father is his dear Son, the Son of his love; as he must needs be, since he is of the same nature, has the same perfections he has, and is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: and hence he continues to love him in every form and appearance of his; in every office he sustains; in every state and condition into which he comes: he delighted in him as his elect, as chosen and appointed by him to be the Saviour of his people; he took pleasure in him as the surety of them, and when he saw him engaging as such, and declaring it was his heart to do his will, and work out their salvation; he loved him when he appeared in human nature, the form of a servant; and in his state of humiliation, more than once he declared, by a voice from heaven, that he was his beloved Son, and particularly at his baptism: and indeed, as in that, so in every thing else, he always did the things that pleased him; he loved him when he laid down his life for the sheep: when he was bruised, and his soul made an offering for sin; he loved him when on the cross, and even when he hid his face from him; when lay in the grave he left him not, nor would he suffer him to see corruption; he raised him front the dead, and gave him glory; exalted him, and received him into heaven with a welcome, and placed him at his right hand; and now looks with pleasure upon him, upon his person, his sacrifice, blood, and righteousness: and this love is a love of complacency and delight, and is from everlasting to everlasting; the evidence of which lows,

and hath given all things into his hand; or "by his hand"; as the doctrines of the Gospel, the gifts of the Spirit, grace, and glory: or rather, "into his hand"; with which he, being the Son of God, a divine person, is fit to be entrusted, which otherwise he would not be: panta, "all", includes "all persons"; all the angels, the good angels which are chosen in him, and he is the head of; and by whom they are confirmed in the state they are: and who are at his command and beck, and minister to him and his. The evil angels, though they have broke away from God, and rebelled against him, yet are, in some sense, in the hands of Christ, and under his power: as appears by his dispossessing them from the bodies of men on earth, his spoiling them on the cross, and triumphing over them in his ascension to heaven, and by his binding Satan a thousand years. All men are given to him; the elect in a special sense, as his bride and spouse, as his children, and as his sheep; hence, he died for them, and effectually calls them, and brings them to himself; and they shall never perish, or be plucked out of his hands, but shall have eternal life. And wicked men are, in a sense, given to him; their wrath he restrains, and makes it to praise him; he rules then with a rod of iron, and breaks them in pieces as a potter's vessel. And "all things" also are given into his hands; all temporal things, the things of nature and providence; the light of nature, and all the gifts and attainments of it; all the good things of the world, and which are wisdom's left hand blessings; and Christ disposes of them to his people in mercy, and as covenant ones: all spiritual things are in his hands; all the gifts of the Spirit, and the fulness of all grace, sanctifying, justifying, pardoning, adopting, and persevering grace; all the promises and blessings of the covenant; the government of the church, and the judgment of the world; all power, both in heaven and in earth; the salvation of the elect, and their eternal inheritance, happiness, and glory. For all which, creature, angels or men, are fit, only the Son of God.

John 3:36

Ver. 36. He that believeth on the Son,.... Who is a proper object of faith and trust; which, if he was not truly and properly God, he would not be: and this is to be understood not of any sort of faith, a temporary, or an historical one; but of that which is the faith of God's elect, the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit; by which a man sees the Son, goes unto him, ventures and relies upon him, and commits himself to him, and expects life and salvation from him; and who shall not be ashamed and confounded; for such an one

hath everlasting life; he has it in Christ his head, in whom he believes; he has a right unto it through the justifying righteousness of Christ, and a meetness for it by his grace; he has it in faith and hope; he has the beginning of it in the knowledge of Christ, and communion with him; he has some foretastes of it in his present experience; and he has the earnest and pledge of it in his heart, even the blessed Spirit, who works him up for this selfsame thing:

and he that believeth not the Son; that does not believe Christ to be the Son of God, or Jesus to be the Messiah; or rejects him as the Saviour; who lives and dies in a state of impenitence and unbelief:

shall not see life; eternal life; he shall not enter into it, and enjoy it; he shall die the second death. Very remarkable are the following words of the Jews {b} concerning the Messiah, whom they call the latter Redeemer:

"whosoever believes in him "shall" live; but he that believes not in him shall go to the nations of the world, and they shall kill him."

But the wrath of God abideth on him; as the sentence of wrath, of condemnation, and death, and the curse of the law were pronounced upon him in Adam, as on all mankind, it continues, and will continue, and will never be reversed, but will be executed on him, he not being redeemed from it, as his final unbelief shows; and as he was by nature a child of wrath, as others, he remains such; and as the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, it comes upon the children of disobedience, and remains there; it hangs over their heads, and lights upon them, and they will be filled with a dreadful sense of it to all eternity. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "shall abide upon him"; so some copies.

{b} Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 4:1

Ver. 1. When therefore our Lord knew,.... Or Jesus, as some copies, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read; who is Lord of all, Lord of lords, the one and only Lord of saints: and who knew all things as God; every man, and what is in man; who would believe in him, and who not, and who would betray him; he knew his adversaries, what they thought, said, or did; what was told them, and how it operated in them; and what were the secret motions of their hearts, and their most private counsels and designs; for this is not merely to be understood of his knowledge as man, which he might have by private intelligence from others; though what is here said, might be true also in this sense:

how the Pharisees; the inveterate and implacable enemies of Christ, and particularly those that dwelt at Jerusalem, and were of the great sanhedrim, or council of the nation:

had heard; either by their spies, which they constantly kept about Christ; or by John s disciples, who, through envy, might apply to the sanhedrim, to put a stop to, or check upon the baptism and ministry of Christ; or by common fame:

that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John; see **Joh 3:26**. The method Christ took was, he first made men disciples, and then baptized them; and the same he directed his apostles to, saying, "go and teach", or "disciple all nations, baptizing them", &c. And this should be a rule of conduct to us, to baptize only such, who appear to have been made the disciples of Christ: now a disciple of Christ, is one that has learned of Christ, and has learned Christ; the way of life, righteousness, and salvation by him; who is a believer in him; who has seen a beauty, glory, fulness, and suitableness in him, as a Saviour; and is come to him, and has ventured on him, and trusted in him; and who has been taught to deny himself, sinful self, and righteous self; to part with his sins, and to renounce his own righteousness, and all dependence on it, for justification before God; and who has been made willing to leave and forsake all worldly things and advantages, and to bear all reproach, indignities, and persecutions, for Christ's sake: and such who are Christ's disciples in this sense, are the only proper persons to be baptized; these are they, that ought to put on this badge, and wear Christ's livery: nor can baptism be of any use to any others; for such only are baptized into him, and into his death, and partake of the saving benefits of it; for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin; and without it also, it is impossible to please God.

John 4:2

Ver. 2. Though Jesus himself baptized not,.... And therefore as Nonnus observes, it was a false report that was made to the Pharisees; at least in part, so far as concerns the act of baptizing: though it may be this is observed, not so much to show the falsehood of that report, as to correct what is said of Christ's baptizing; lest it should be understood, as if he baptized in his own person; whereas he did not, that not so, well comporting with his greatness and majesty: wherefore "the king did not baptize in water", as Nonnus expresses it, but left that for his disciples and servants to do; he had other and greater work to perform, as to preach the Gospel, and work miracles, heal diseases, cast out devils, &c. And besides, had another sort of baptism, of a more excellent nature to administer, namely, the baptism of the Spirit; and since water baptism is administered in his name, as well as in the name of the Father and of the Spirit, it does not seem that it would have been administered with that propriety by himself, in his own name; add to which, as is also observed by others, it might have occasioned contentions and disputes among the baptized, had some, been baptized by Christ, and others by his disciples; the one valuing themselves on that account, above the others. The Persic version indeed suggests, as if both Christ and his disciples baptized, rendering the words thus, "Jesus was not alone who baptized, but the disciples also baptized": whereas the truth of the matter is, that Christ did not baptize in water at all:

but his disciples; they baptized in his name, and by his orders, such who were first made disciples by him.

John 4:3

Ver. 3. He left Judaea,.... Where he had been for some time: at the feast of the passover he went up to Jerusalem, and after a short stay there, he came into the country part of Judea, where he tarried longer; and in both about the space of eight months; for it was now but four months to harvest, which began at the passover; see **Joh 2:13**. And now upon thee Pharisees being made acquainted with his success in these parts, he leaves them; not through fear of them, but because he would not irritate and provoke them, and stir up their malice and envy against him, which might put them upon measures to seek to take away his life; whereas his time was not yet come, and he had other work to do elsewhere:

and departed again into Galilee; where he had spent the greatest part of his time, in private life; from whence he came to Jordan unto John to be baptized by him; and after that went thither again, where he wrought his first miracle: and now having been in Judea some time, he removes to Galilee again; and of this journey of his thither, after the imprisonment of John, an account is given, in **Mt 4:12**. The Persic version leaves out the word "again", and so do the Alexandrian copy, and many copies; but is by others retained, and very justly.

John 4:4

Ver. 4. And he must needs go through Samaria. Not the city, but the country of Samaria; for the way to Galilee from Judea, lay through the midst of Samaria; nor was there any other way, without going a great way about; see **Lu 9:51**; and which is also confirmed by Josephus {c}: and this accounts for his going through Samaria, consistently with his forbidding his apostles going in the way of the Gentiles, or into any of the cities of the Samaritans; since here was a necessity for it, or otherwise he himself would not have gone, where he forbid his disciples; though the prohibition may be understood, not of barely going into a Samaritan city; for it was lawful for them, notwithstanding that, to go into one of them, as appears from **Joh 4:8**; but of going to preach there, Mt 10:5. And besides this necessity, there was another thing that lay upon him, and obliged him to take this tour, and that is, the calling and conversion of a certain woman, and other Samaritans, whom the Father had given to him, and he was to redeem by his blood; and the time of whose effectual calling was now come; and therefore he must needs go this way, and at this particular time. The Arabic and Persic versions represent it, as a purpose and determination in his mind to go this way.

{c} Antiqu. Jud. 50:20. c 5. & in vita sua, p. 1019.

John 4:5

Ver. 5. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar,.... Now called Neapolis {d}; the same with "Sichem", or "Shechem", as appears from its situation,

near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; see

Ge 33:18; and is either the same, only its termination is changed from "em" into "ar", as Achan into Achar, **1Ch 2:7**. Or it is a new name that was given it, and by which it went in the time of Christ; and might be so called, either from rkwo, "Socher", which signifies a grave; because here, Joseph and the rest of the patriarchs were buried, Jos 24:32. Or rather, it was a name of reproach, and so called, from rkv, "drunken"; since the Ephraimites, the posterity of Joseph, which dwelt in these parts, were infamous for the sin of drunkenness; see Isa 28:1. Hence "Sychar Sichem", is "drunken Sichem"; mention is made in the Talmud {e}, of a place called arkyo, "Sichra". The "parcel of ground", or of a "field", as in Ge 33:19, is in the Persic version, called "a vineyard"; and so Nonnus renders it, "a field planted with vines"; and which may serve to confirm the above conjecture, concerning "Sychar" being a nickname.

{d} Hieron. Epitaph. Paulae, Tom. I. fol. 59. & R. Benjamin Itin. p. 38. {e} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, foi. 42. 1. & 83. 1. & Cholin, fol. 94.

John 4:6

Ver. 6. Now Jacob's well was there,.... So called, either because it was dug by him; or because he and his family made use of it, when in those parts, as in **Joh 4:12**, though no mention is made of it elsewhere, unless any reference is had to it in the blessing of Joseph, to whom this place belonged, Ge 49:22, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, or in De 33:28, as Grotius suggests: in the Talmud {f} there is mention made, of rkwo Nye, "the fountain of Sochar"; and may not improperly be rendered, "the well of Sychar": but whether the same with this, is not certain; that appears to be a great way from Jerusalem, as this also was, even forty miles:

Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey; having travelled on foot, from Judea thither; and he having a body like to ours, subject to weariness, and which proves the truth and reality of it, was greatly fatigued; having very probably travelled all that morning, if not a day, or days before:

sat thus on the well; or by it; by the side of it, upon the brink of it, as Nonnus paraphrases it, upon the bare ground. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, leave out "thus"; and the Ethiopic version reads it, "there"; but it is rightly retained, and is emphatical; and signifies, that he sat like a weary person, glad to set himself down any where; and not caring how, or where, he sat to rest his weary limbs:

and it was about the sixth hour; about twelve o'clock at noon. The Ethiopic version adds by way of explanation, and "it was then noon"; and all the Oriental versions omit wsei, "about"; rendering it, "it was the sixth hour": and now Christ had been travelling all the morning, and it was a time of day to take some refreshment, which as yet he had not, the disciples being gone to buy food; and a time of day also, when the sun if out, and has any strength, beats with its greatest vehemence; and all which considered, it is no wonder that he should be weary, faint, and thirsty.

{f} T. Hieron. Shekalim, fol. 48. 4. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 82. 2. & Menachot, fol. 64. 2. & Gloss. in Sanhedrin, fol. 11. 2.

John 4:7

Ver. 7. There cometh a woman of Samaria,.... Or "out of Samaria"; not out of the city of Samaria, but out of the country of Samaria; out of Sychar, a city of Samaria: her coming was not by chance, but by the providence of God, and agreeably to his purpose, who orders all things according to the counsel of his will; and it is an amazing instance of grace, that a woman, a Samaritan woman, a lewd and infamous one, should be a chosen vessel of salvation, should be the object of divine favour, and be effectually called by the grace of God; when so many wise, learned, and religious men in Judea, were passed by; and not only so, but she was the happy means of conveying the knowledge of the Saviour to many of her neighbours: she came, indeed,

to draw water; for her present temporal use and service; she little thought of meeting at Jacob's well, with Christ the fountain of gardens, and well of living water; she came for natural water, having no notion of water in a spiritual sense: or of carrying back with her the water of life, even a well of it, springing up to everlasting life:

Jesus saith unto her, give me to drink; that is, water to drink, out of the pot or pitcher, she brought with her, for he was athirst; which is another proof of the truth of his human nature, and of his taking it, with the sinless infirmities of it: though indeed this request was made, to introduce a discourse with the woman, he having a more violent thirst, and a stronger desire, after the welfare of her immortal soul.

John 4:8

Ver. 8. For his disciples were gone away,.... This is related, not so much to give a reason why Christ asked the woman for water, because his disciples were not present, to minister to him; but rather to show, that Christ took the opportunity, in their absence, to converse with her; partly to avoid the scandal and offence they might take, at his conversation with her, being a Samaritan; as it appears to have been astonishing to them, when they found him talking with her, **Joh 4:27**. And partly, that he might not put the woman to shame and blushing before them all; he chooses to tell her of the sins of her former life, in a private way. The disciples were gone

unto the city: to the city Sychar, which was hard by; and their business there, was

to buy meat: for though it is said, in the following verse, that the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans; yet this is not to be understood in the strictest sense; for they had dealings with them in some respects, as will be seen hereafter; particularly their food, eatables, and drinkables, were lawful to be bought of them, and used: it is said by R. Juda bar Pazi, in the name of R. Ame {g},

"a roasted egg of the Cuthites (or Samaritans), lo, this is lawful: says R. Jacob bar Acha, in the name of R. Lazar, the boiled victuals of the Cuthites (Samaritans), lo, these are free; this he says concerning boiled food, because it is not their custom to put wine and vinegar into it,"

for these were forbidden: hence it is often said {h}, that

"the unleavened bread of the Cuthites (or Samaritans), is lawful, and that a man is allowed the use of it at the passover."

And there was a time when their wine was lawful; for one of their canons runs thus {i};

"he that buys wine of the Cuthites (Samaritans), says, the two logs that I shall separate, lo, they are first fruits, &c."

It is indeed said in one place, R. Eliezer {k}

"that, he that eats the bread of the Cuthites (or Samaritans), is as if he eat flesh; to when (who reported this) says (R. Akiba) be silent, I will not tell you what

R. Eliezer thinks concerning it."

Upon which the commentators serve {l}, that this is not to be understood strictly; cause he that eats bread of the Samaritans, does deserve stripes according to the law, but according to the constitutions of the wise men; but these, Christ and his disciples had no regard to.

{g} T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 44. 4. {h} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 10. 1. & Cholin, fol. 4. 1. & Kiddushin, fol. 76. 1. {i} Misn. Demai, c. 7. sect. 4. Vid. Bartenora in ib. {k} Misna Sheviith, c. 8. sect. 10. Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. {l} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. ib.

John 4:9

Ver. 9. Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him,.... In a scoffing, jeering way,

how is it, that thou being a Jew; which she might know, by his language and his dress:

askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? not that the waters of Samaria were unlawful for a Jew to drink of; for as

"the land of the Cuthites (or Samaritans), was pure, or clean, so, hytwqm, "their collections of water", and their habitations, and their ways were clean {m},"

and might be used; but because the Jews used no familiarity with the Samaritans, nor would they receive any courtesy or kindness from them, as follows:

for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans: some take these to be the words of the evangelist, commenting upon, and explaining the words of the woman; but they seem rather to be her own words, giving a reason why she returned such an answer; and which must be understood, not in the strictest sense, as if they had no dealings at all with them: indeed in some things they had no dealings with them, and at some certain times; hence that discourse of the Samaritans with a Jewish Rabbi {n}.

"The Cuthites (or Samaritans) inquired of R. Abhu, your fathers, Nyqptom wyh, "used to deal with us" (or minister to us, or supply us with necessaries), wherefore do not ye deal with us? (or take a supply from us;) he replied unto them, your fathers did not corrupt their works, you have corrupted your works."

They might not use their wine and vinegar, nor admit them to their tables; they say of a man {o},

"because the Cuthites (or Samaritans) ate at his table, it was the reason why his children went into captivity--and further add, that whoever invites a Cuthite (or Samaritan) into his house, and ministers to him, is the cause of captivity to his children."

And they forbid a man to enter into partnership with a Cuthite (or Samaritan {p}): and particularly,

"three days before the feasts of idolaters (for such they reckoned the Samaritans, as well as others), it is forbidden to have any commerce with them, to borrow of them, or lend to them {q} &c."

But then at other times, and in other respects, they had dealings with them; they might go into their cities and buy food of them, as the disciples did, **Joh 4:8**; they might send their wheat to a Samaritan miller, to be ground {r}; and as it appears from the above citations, their houses and habitations were clean, and might be lodged in, with which compare **Lu 9:52**; the poor of the Samaritans were maintained with the poor of Israel {s}; wherefore the sense is, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, that the Jews refused to receive the least favour or kindness at the hand of a Samaritan; and therefore the woman might justly wonder, that Christ should ask so small a favour of her, as a little water. The reason of this distance and aversion, was religion; and so the Ethiopic version, rather paraphrasing than translating, renders the words, "the Jews do not agree in religion, nor do they communicate with the Samaritans, nor mix together": and this was of long standing, and had been occasioned and increased by various incidents; for when the ten tribes revolted in Jeroboam's time, the calves were set up in Dan and Bethel, in order to draw off the people from worship at Jerusalem, which gave great umbrage to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; and when the ten tribes were carried away captive by the king of Assyria, he planted the cities of Samaria with colonies in their room, consisting of Heathenish and idolatrous persons, brought from Babylon, and other places; to whom he sent a priest, to instruct them in the manner of the God of the land; but with these instructions, they still retained their idols, and their idolatrous practices; see 2Ki 17:24, which must render them odious to the Jews: and these were the principal adversaries of the Jews, after their return from captivity; and discouraged them, and weakened their hands, in the building of the second temple: but what latest, and most of all had fixed this aversion and enmity, was this; Manasseh, brother to Jaddua the high priest, having married Sanballat's daughter, governor of Samaria, was for it removed from the priesthood; who applying to his father-in-law, he proposed building for him a temple on Mount Gerizim, and making him an high priest; for which he obtained leave of Alexander the Great, and accordingly built one, and made his son-in-law high priest; which drew a great many profligate Jews over to him, who mixing with the Samaritans, set up a worship, religion, and priesthood, in distinction from the Jews; and this was ever after a matter of contention and quarrel between these people, and the reason why they would have no dealings with them.

{m} T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 44. 4. {n} Ib. {o} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 104. 1. {p} T. Bab. Becorot, fol. 7. 2. Piske Toseph. ib. art. 4. & in Megilla, art 102. {q} Misna Avoda Zara, c. 1. sect. 1. {r} Misua Demai, c. 3. sect. 4. {s} Piske Tosephot Yoma, art. 63.

John 4:10

Ver. 10. Jesus answered and said unto her,.... In a very serious manner, in a different way from hers:

if thou knewest the gift of God; meaning, not the Holy Spirit with his gifts and graces, as some think, but himself; for the following clause is explanatory of it;

and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; and Christ is also spoken of in the Old Testament, as the gift of God, **Isa 9:6** and he had lately spoken of himself as such, **Joh 3:16** and he is, by way of eminency, "the gift of God"; which is comprehensive of all others, is exceeding large, and very suitable to the wants and cases of men; and is irrevocable, unchangeable, and unspeakable: for he is God's gift, as he is his own and only begotten Son; and he is given for a covenant to the people, with all the promises and blessings of it; and as an head, both of eminence and influence; and to be a Saviour of them, and a sacrifice for their sins; and as the bread of life, for them to feed and live upon; of which gift, men are naturally ignorant, as this woman was: they know not the dignity of his person; nor the nature and usefulness of his offices; nor the way of peace, righteousness, and salvation by him; nor do they see any amiableness, or loveliness in him; and whatever notional knowledge some natural men may have of him, they know him not spiritually and experimentally, or as the gift of God to them:

thou wouldst have asked of him; a favour and benefit; for such who truly know Christ, the worth and value of him, and their need of him, will apply to him for grace, as they have encouragement to do; since all grace is treasured up in him, and he gives it freely, and upbraideth not; and souls are invited to ask it of him, and take it freely; nor is it to be had anywhere else: but knowledge of Christ, is absolutely necessary, to asking anything of him; for till he is known, he will not be applied to; but when he is made known to any, in his fulness and suitableness, they will have recourse to him, and ask grace and mercy of him; and which is freely had: the Vulgate Latin very wrongly adds, "perhaps"; reading it, "perhaps thou wouldst have asked"; whereas our Lord's meaning is, that she would certainly have asked:

and he would have given thee living water; pardoning and justifying grace, every branch of sanctifying grace, and all the supplies of it; so called, because his grace quickens sinners dead in sin, and dead in law, and in, their own apprehensions; and causes them to live in themselves, and before God; and because it refreshes and comforts, revives and cheers, and is like rivers of water in a dry land; and because it maintains and supports spiritual life in their souls; and it ever abides, and continues, and springs up unto everlasting life: for the allusion is to spring water, that bubbles up in a fountain, and is ever running; for such water the Jews call "living water"; see Ge 26:19; where in the Hebrew text it is "living water"; which we, and also the Chaldee paraphrase, render "springing water". So living waters with them, are said to be always flowing, and never cease {t}.

{t} Bartenora in Misn. Negaim, c. 14. sect. 1.

John 4:11

Ver. 11. The woman saith unto him, Sir,.... Which was an usual, way in those countries, of addressing men, and especially strangers; and expresses no uncommon respect to Christ, of whose dignity and greatness she was, entirely ignorant; and at whom she was now scoffing; for so the following words are to be understood:

thou hast nothing to draw with; no pail, or bucket, or rope, to let it down with, as Nonnus adds; for it seems, there was no bucket, or vessel, fastened at the well for the common use, but everyone brought one with them, when they came to draw: though it is strange there was not one; since, according to common usage, and even of the Jews {u},

"a public well had, lwq, "a bucket", or pitcher; but a private well had no bucket:"

and the well is deep; that which is now called Jacob's well, is by some said to be forty cubits deep, and by others thirty five yards:

from whence then hast thou that living water? this she said in a sneering, scoffing manner: she reasoned with him, either that he must have it out of this well; but that could not be, since he had no vessel to draw with, and the well was so deep, that he could not come at the water without one; or he must have it from some neighbouring spring; upon which she scoffs at him in the following manner.

{u} T. Hieros. Erubin, fol. 20. 2.

John 4:12

Ver 12. Art thou greater than our father Jacob,.... A person of greater worth and character than he, who was content to drink of this water; or wiser and more knowing than he, who could find out no better fountain of water in all these parts? she calls Jacob the father of them, according to the common notion and boasting of these people, when it served their turn; otherwise they were not the descendants of Jacob; for after the ten tribes were carried away captive by the king of Assyria, he placed in their room, in the cities of Samaria, men from Babylon, Cuthah Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, Heathenish and idolatrous people; see 2Ki 17:24. And from these, the then Samaritans sprung; only upon Sanballat's building a temple on Mount Gerizzim, for Manasseh his son-in-law, when put away from the priesthood by the Jews, for his marriage of his daughter, several wicked persons of the like sort, came out of Judea, and joined themselves to the Samaritans: and such a mixed medley of people were they at this time, though they boasted of Jacob as their father, as this woman did; and so to this day, they draw their genealogy from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and particularly call Joseph their father, and say, from whence are we, but from the tribe of Joseph the just, from Ephraim {w}? as they formerly did {x};

"R. Meir saw a Samaritan, he said to him, from whence comest thou? (that is, from what family;) he answered, from the (tribe) of Joseph."

Which gave us the well; Jacob gave it indeed to Joseph and his posterity, along with the parcel of ground in which it was; see **Joh 4:5**; but not to this mixed company:

and drank thereof himself and his children, and his cattle; which shows both the goodness and plenty of the water: though our Lord had spoken of living water, this woman understood him of no other water, but spring water; called living water, from its motion, because it is continually springing up, bubbling, and ever running: so carnal persons, when they hear of spiritual things under earthly metaphors, think of nothing but carnal things; as Nicodemus, when Christ talked of being born again; and the Jews at Capernaum, when he discoursed concerning eating his flesh, and drinking his blood; for spiritual things are neither known nor received by the natural man.

{w} Epist. Samar. ad Scaliger. in Antiqu. Eccl. Oriental. p. 123, 124, 126. {x} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 94. fol. 82. 1.

John 4:13

Ver. 13. Jesus answered and said unto her,.... In a mild and gentle manner, patiently bearing all her scoffs and flouts, and continuing to instruct and inform her, concerning this living water, showing the preferableness of it to all others:

whosoever drinketh of this water; meaning in that well called Jacob's well, or any other common water:

shall thirst again; as this woman had often done, and would again, as she herself knew, **Joh 4:15**, and as Jesus did, who very likely afterwards drank of it, Joh 19:28. For though water allays heat, quenches thirst, and refreshes and revives the spirits for a while, yet in process of time, natural heat increases, and thirst returns, and there is a necessity of drinking water again.

John 4:14

Ver. 14. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him,.... Meaning, the Spirit and his grace; see **Joh 7:38**; and which he more than once speaks of, as his gift here, and in the context: of which, whoever truly partakes,

shall never thirst; either after sinful lusts and pleasures, and his former vicious way of living, which he now disrelishes: not but there are desires and lustings after carnal things in regenerate persons, as there were lustings in the Israelites, after the onions, garlic, and flesh pots in Egypt, when they were come out from thence; yet these are not so strong, prevalent, and predominant; they are checked and restrained by the grace of God; so that they do not hanker after sin as they did, nor drink up iniquity like water, or commit sin with greediness, as before: or else it means thirsting after the grace of God; thirsty persons are invited to take and drink of the water of life freely, and are pronounced blessed; and it is promised, that they shall be filled, or satisfied; yet not so in this life, that they shall never thirst or desire more; for as they need more grace, and it is promised them, they thirst after it, and desire it; and the more they taste and partake of it, the more they desire it: but the sense is, either as some read the words, "they shall not thirst for ever"; though they may for a time, and be in a distressed condition for want of a supply of it, yet they shall always; God will open rivers and fountains for them, and give drink to his people, his chosen; and the other state, they shall hunger and thirst no more; for the Lamb shall lead them to fountains of living waters: or rather, they shall never thirst, so as to be like the thirsty and parched earth, dried up, and have no moisture in them; for however this may seem sometimes to be their case, God will, and does, pour out water and floods upon them; yea, that grace which is infused into their souls, is an abundant and an abiding principle, which will preserve them from languishing, so as to perish:

but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water; which denotes the plenty of it; for the grace of God given at conversion is exceeding abundant, it superabounds all the aboundings of sin; it comes in large flows into the hearts of regenerate persons, and flows out of them, as rivers of living water: and which also abides, for it continues

springing up into everlasting life: it is a seed which remains, an immortal and never dying principle; it is inseparably connected with eternal life; it is the beginning of it, and it issues in it; whoever has grace, shall have glory; and whoever are called, sanctified, justified, and pardoned, shall be glorified: such is the nature, influence, and use of this living water, in Christ's gift: the words of the law are, in the Targum on **So 4:15** compared to a well of living water.

John 4:15

Ver. 15. The woman saith unto him, Sir,....
See Gill on "Joh 4:11";

give me this water, that I thirst not. The Syriac and Persic versions add, "again":

neither come hither; the Ethiopic version adds here, "again";

to draw. This she said also, in the same sneering and scoffing way, as her talking of not thirsting and coming thither to draw water, shows; and it is as if she had said, pray give me some of this fine water you talk of, that I may never thirst again; and so have no occasion to be at all this fatigue and trouble, to come daily to this well for water: though some think, that she now spoke seriously, having some little knowledge of what our Lord meant by living water, but with a mixture of much ignorance, and that she heartily desired it; but the reason she gives, shows the contrary.

John 4:16

Ver. 16. Jesus saith unto her,.... Observing that she continued an ignorant scoffer at him, and his words, determined to take another method with her; and convince her, that he was not a common and ordinary person she was conversing with, as she took him to be; and also what a sinner she was, and what a vicious course of life she had lived; so that she might see that she stood in need of him, as the gift of God, and Saviour of men; and of the grace he had been speaking of, under the notion of living water: saying to her,

go, call thy husband, and come hither; go directly from hence to the city of Sychar, and call thy husband, and come back hither along with him again: this Christ said, not to have him come to teach and instruct him, and as if he would more readily and easily understand him, and that he might be with her, a partaker of the same grace; but to bring on some further conversation, by which she would understand that he knew her state and condition, and what a course of life she now lived, and so bring her under a conviction of her sin and danger, and need of him and his grace.

John 4:17

Ver. 17. The woman answered and said, I have no husband,.... Which was a truth she would not have spoke at another time and place, or to any of her neighbours; but Christ being a stranger, and no odium incurring upon her by it; and this serving a purpose to excuse her going to call him, she declares the truth of the matter:

Jesus said unto her, thou hast well said, I have no husband; this is the truth, it is really fact, and is the true state of the case, between thee and him, who goes for thy husband.

John 4:18

Ver. 18. For thou hast had five husbands,.... Which she either had had lawfully, and had buried one after another; and which was no crime, and might be: the Sadducees propose a case to Christ, in which a woman is said to have had seven husbands successively, in a lawful manner, Mt 22:25. Or rather, she had had so many, and had been divorced from everyone of them, for adultery; for no other cause it should seem did the Samaritans divorce; seeing that they only received the law of Moses, and rejected, at least, many of the traditions of the elders; and since they are particularly said {y}

"not to be expert in the law of marriages and divorces:"

and the rather this may seem to be the case, as Dr. Lightfoot observes; since these husbands are mentioned, as well as he with whom she lived in an adulterous manner; and which suggests, that she had not lived honestly with them:

and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband; that is, not thy lawful husband, as the Persic version reads, and Nonnus paraphrases; being not married to him at all, though they cohabited as man and wife, when there was no such relation between them:

in that saidst thou truly; or that which is truth: thus Christ the omniscient God, who knew her full well, and the whole of her past infamous conversation, and her present lewd and wicked way of living, exposes all unto her.

{y} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol 76. 1.

John 4:19

Ver. 19. The woman saith unto him, Sir,.... With another countenance, and a different air and gesture, with another accent and tone of speech, dropping her scoffs and jeers:

I perceive that thou art a prophet; such an one as Samuel was, who could tell Saul what was in his heart, and that his father's asses were found, and where they were, **1Sa 9:19**; and as Elisha, whose heart went with his servant Gehazi, when Naaman turned to him to meet him, and give him presents; and who could tell, ere the king's messenger came to him, that the son of a murderer had sent to take away his head, **2Ki 5:26**. And such a prophet, that had such a spirit of discerning, this woman took Christ to be; and who indeed is greater than a prophet, and is the omniscient God; who knows all men's hearts, thoughts, words and actions, and needs not that any should testify of them to him; for he knows what is in them, and done by them; and can tell them all that ever they did, as he did this woman, **Joh 4:29**. Now in order either to shift off the discourse from this subject, which touched her to the quick; or else being truly sensible of her sin, and willing to reform, and for the future to worship God in the place and manner he had directed, she addressed Christ in the following words.

John 4:20

Ver. 20. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain,.... Mount Gerizim, which was just by, and within sight; so that the woman could point to it; it was so near to Shechem, or Sychar, that Jotham's voice was heard from the top of it thither, **Jud 9:6**. By the "fathers", this woman claims as theirs, are meant, not the immediate ancestors of the Samaritans, or those only of some few generations past; but the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose descendants they would be thought to be; and they improved every instance of their worshipping in these parts, in favour of this mountain, being a sacred place. And Abraham did indeed build an altar to the Lord, in the plain of Moreh, Ge 12:6 and which the Jews themselves {z} own, is the same with Sichem; but their tradition which Theophylact reports, that Isaac was offered upon the Mount of Gerizim, is entirely false: Jacob, it is true, came to Shalem, a city of Shechem; and upon this very spot of ground, the parcel of a field, he bought of the children of Hammor, and gave to his son Joseph, he built an

altar, and called it Elelohe-Israel,
Ge 33:18. And also upon this very mountain, the tribe of Joseph, with others stood, when they were come over Jordan, and blessed the people; all which circumstances, the Samaritans failed not to make use of in vindication of themselves, and their worship in this mountain; and which this woman might be acquainted with, and might refer unto: but as for any temple, or place of worship on this mount, there was none till of late years, even after the second temple was built. The occasion of it, as Josephus {a} relates, was this; Manasseh, brother to Jaddua the high priest, having married Nicasso, daughter of Sanballat, governor of Samaria, was on that account driven from the priesthood; he fled to his father-in-law, and related the case to him, expressing great love to his daughter, and yet a regard to his office; upon which Sanballat proposed to build him a temple on Mount Gerizim, for which he did not doubt of obtaining leave of Darius the Persian monarch, and make him an high priest. Darius being overcome by Alexander the Great, Sanballat made his court to him, and petitioned him for the building of this temple, who granted him his request; and accordingly he built one, and Manasseh became the high priest; and many of the profligate Jews, that had married strange wives, or violated the sabbath, or had eaten forbidden meat, came over and joined him. This temple, we are told {b}, was built about forty years after the second temple at Jerusalem: and stood two hundred years, and then was destroyed by Jochanan, the son of Simeon, the son of Mattathiah, who was called Hyrcanus, and so says Josephus {c}; it might now be rebuilt: however, this did not put a stop to worship in this place, about which there were great contentions, between the Jews and the Samaritans; of which we have some instances, in the writings of the former: it is said {d}, that

"R. Jonathan went to pray in Jerusalem, and passed by that mountain (the gloss says, Mount Gerizim), and a certain Samaritan saw him, and said to him, whither art thou going? he replied, that he was going to pray at Jerusalem; he said to him, is it not better for thee to pray in this blessed mountain, and not in that dunghill house? he replied, why is it blessed? he answered, because it was not overflowed by the waters of the flood; the thing was hid from the eyes of R. Jonathan, and he could not return an answer."

This story is told elsewhere {e}, with a little variation, and more plainly as to the place, thus;

"it happened to R. Jonathan, that he went to Neapolis, of the Cuthites, or Samaritans, (i.e. to Sichem, for Sichem is now called Naplous,) and he was riding upon an ass, and an herdsman with him; a certain, Samaritan joined himself to them: when they came to Mount Gerizim, the Samaritan said to R. Jonathan, how came it to pass that we are come to this holy mountain? R. Jonathan replied, whence comes it to be holy? the Samaritan answered him, because it was not hurt by the waters of the flood."

Much the same story is told of R. Ishmael bar R. Jose {f}. It is to be observed in this account, that the Samaritans call this mountain the holy mountain, they imagined there was something sacred in it; and the blessed mountain, or the mountain of blessing; no doubt, because the blessings were pronounced upon it; though a very poor reason is given by them in the above passages. And they not only urged the above instances of the worship or the patriarchs at, or about this place, which this woman refers to; but even falsified a passage in the Pentateuch, as is generally thought, in favour of this mount; for in De 27:4, instead of Mount Ebal, in the Samaritan Pentateuch Mount Gerizim is inserted. So stood the ease on one side of the question; on the other hand, the Jews pleaded for the temple at Jerusalem.

And ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship; that is, in the temple, there; who urged, and very rightly, that God had chosen that place to put his name, and fix his worship there; and had ordered them to come thither, and bring their offerings and sacrifices, and to keep their passover and other feasts; see De 12:5. This was built by Solomon, according to the command and direction of God, some hundreds of years before Mount Gerizim was made use of for religious worship; and they had not only these things to plead, but also the worship which was here given to God in this place before the temple was built upon it, which they failed not to do. So the Targumist on **2Ch 3:1** enlarges on this head;

"and Solomon began to build the sanctuary of the Lord in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, in the place where Abraham worshipped and prayed in the name of the Lord: anxlwp era
rta awh, "this place is the land of worship"; for there all generations worshipped before the Lord; and there Abraham offered up his son Isaac, for a burnt offering, and the word of the Lord delivered him, and a ram was appointed in his stead; there Jacob prayed when he fled from Esau his brother; there the angel of the Lord appeared to David, when he disposed the sacrifice in the place he bought of Ornan, in the floor of Ornan the Jebusite."

And since, now there were so many things to be said on each side of the question, this woman desires, that seeing Christ was a prophet, he would be pleased to give her his sense of the matter, and inform her which was the right place of worship.

{z} Misna Sota, c. 7. sect. 5. T. Bab. Sota, fol. 33. 2. {a} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 1. Vid. Juchasin, fol. 14. 2. {b} Juchasin, fol. 14. 2. & 15. 1. {c} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 17. {d} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 32. fol. 27. 4. & Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 16. 3. {e} Debarim Rabba, sect. 3. fol. 238. 2. {f} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 81. fol. 71. 1.

John 4:21

Ver. 21. Jesus saith unto her, woman, believe me,.... In what I am now going to say, since you own me to be a prophet:

the hour cometh; the time is at hand; it is very near; it is just coming:

when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem,
worship the Father; that is, God, whom the Jews, and so the Samaritans, knew under the character of the Father of all men, as the Creator and preserver of them; for not God as the Father of Christ, or of the saints by adopting grace, is here intended, which this ignorant woman at least had no knowledge of: and the reason of our Lord's speaking after this manner, signifying, that she need not trouble herself about the place of worship, was, partly, because in a little time Jerusalem, and the temple in it, would be destroyed, and not one stone left upon another; and that Samaria, and this mountain of Gerizim, with whatsoever edifice might be upon it, would be laid desolate, so that neither of them would continue long to be places of religious worship; and partly, because all distinction of places in religion would entirely cease; and one place would be as lawful, and as proper to worship in, as another; and men should lift up holy hands, and pray, and offer up spiritual sacrifices in every place, even from the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same, **Mal 1:11**.

John 4:22

Ver. 22. Ye worship ye know not what,.... However, as to her question, he more directly replies by condemning the Samaritans, and their ignorance in worship, and by approving the Jews; and so manifestly gives the preference to the Jews, not only with respect to the place, and object of worship, but with respect to knowledge and salvation. As for the Samaritans, he suggests, that they were ignorant, not only of the true object of worship, but knew not what they themselves worshipped; or, at least, were not agreed in it. The original inhabitants of those parts, from whence these Samaritans sprung, were idolatrous Heathens, placed by the king of Assyria in the room of the ten tribes he carried away captive; and these feared not the Lord, for they "knew not the manner of the God of the land": wherefore lions were sent among them which slew many of them; upon which the king of Assyria ordered a priest to be sent to instruct them: but notwithstanding this, they had everyone gods of their own, some one, and some another; and so served divers graven images, they and their children, and their children's children, to the time of the writer of the Book of Kings; see 2Ki 17:24. And though after Manasseh, and other Jews were come among them, and they had received the law of Moses, they might have some knowledge of the true God, yet they glorified him not as God; and though they might in words profess him, yet in works they denied him; and even after this they are very highly charged by the Jews with idolatrous practices on this mount. Sometimes they say {g} the Cuthites, or Samaritans, worshipped fire; and at other times, and which chiefly prevails with them, they assert {h}, that their wise men, upon searching, found that they worshipped the image of a dove on Mount Gerizim; and sometimes they say {i}, they worshipped the idols, the strange gods, or Teraphim, which Jacob hid under the oak in Sichem; which last, if true, may serve to illustrate these words of Christ, that they worshipped they knew not what, since they worshipped idols hid in the mount.

"R. Ishmael bar Jose, they say {k} went to Neapolis, (Sichem, called Naplous,) the Cuthites, or Samaritans came to him (to persuade him to worship with them in their mountain); he said unto them, I will show you that ye do not "worship at this mountain", but "the images which are hid under it"; for it is written, Ge 35:4; "and Jacob hid them" under the oak which was by Shechem."

And elsewhere {l} it is reported of the same Rabbi, that he went to Jerusalem to pray, as before related on **Joh 4:20**, and after what passed between him, and the Samaritan he met with at Mount Gerizim, before mentioned, he added;

"and said to him, I will tell you what ye are like, (ye are like) to a dog that lusts after carrion; so because ye know the idols are hid under it, (the mountain,) as it is written, Ge 35:4 and Jacob hid them, therefore ye lust after it: they said--this man knows that idols are hid here, and perhaps he will take them away; and they consulted together to kill him: he arose, and made his escape in the night."

But this was not the case of the Jews:

we know what we worship; Christ puts himself among them, for he was a Jew, as the woman took him to be; and, as man, was a worshipper of God; he feared, loved, and obeyed God; he trusted in him, and prayed unto him; though, as God, he was the object of worship himself: and the true worshippers among the Jews, of which sort Christ was, knew God, whom they worshipped, spiritually and savingly; and the generality of that people had right notions of the God of Israel, having the oracles, and service of God, and being instructed out of Moses, and the prophets:

for salvation is of the Jews; the promises of salvation, and of a Saviour, were made to them, when the Gentiles were strangers to them; the means of salvation, and of the knowledge of it, as the word, statutes, and ordinances, were enjoyed by them, when others were ignorant of them; and the Messiah, who is sometimes styled "Salvation", see Ge 49:18, was not only prophesied of in their books, and promised unto them, but came of them, as well as to them; and the number of the saved ones had been for many hundreds of years, and still was among them; the line of election ran among them, and few among the Gentiles were called and saved, as yet.

{g} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 5. 2. {h} Maimon. in Misn. Beracot, c. 8. sect. 8. & Bartenora in ib. c. 7. sect. 1. & in Nidda, c. 4. sect. 1. {i} Shalshelet Hakkabala, fol. 15. 2. {k} T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 44. 4. {l} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 81. fol. 71. 1.

John 4:23

Ver. 23. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers,.... The worshippers of the true God, and who worship in a right manner, whether Jews or Samaritans, or of whatsoever nation:

shall worship the Father; the one true God, the Father of spirits, and of all flesh living:

in spirit; in opposition to all carnal conceptions of him, as if he was a corporeal being, or circumscribed in some certain place, dwelling in temples made with hands, or was to be worshipped with men's hands; and in distinction from the carnal worship of the Jews, which lay greatly in the observation of carnal ordinances: and this shows they should not worship with their bodies only, for bodily exercise profiteth little; but with their souls or spirits, with their whole hearts engaged therein; and by, and under the influence and assistance of the

Spirit of God, without whom men cannot perform worship, neither prayer, praise, preaching, or hearing, aright:

and in truth; in opposition to hypocrisy, with true hearts, in the singleness, sincerity, and integrity of their souls; and in distinction from Jewish ceremonies, which were only shadows, and had not the truth and substance of things in them; and according to the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation; and in Christ, who is the truth, the true tabernacle, in, and through whom accent is had to God, prayer is made to him, and every part of religious worship with acceptance: so Enoch is said, ajvwqb xlp, "to worship in truth", before the Lord, in the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, in **Ge 5:24**. And it may be that the worship of all the three persons in the Godhead, as more distinctly performed under the Gospel dispensation, is here intended: for the words may be thus read, "shall worship the Father, with the Spirit", and with the truth; so the preposition en, is rendered in **Eph 6:2**; and elsewhere; and then the sense is, they shall "worship the Father"; the first person in the Trinity, who is the Father of Christ, his only begotten Son, and together and equally with him "the Spirit"; the holy Spirit, as the Ethiopic version reads; and Nonnus calls it the divine Spirit: and the rather he may be thought to be intended, since it follows in **Joh 4:24**, "the Spirit is God"; for so the words lie in the Greek text; and are so rendered in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; and therefore is the proper object of religious worship, whose temples the saints are, with whom they have communion, to whom they pray, and in whose name they are baptized: and also together "with the truth"; with Christ the way, the truth, and the life; who is the true God, and eternal life; and who is equally to be worshipped as the Father and Spirit, as he is by the angels in heaven, and by the saints on earth; who pray unto him, trust in him, and are also baptized in his name, as in the name of the other two persons: and the rather this may be thought to be the sense, since Christ is speaking, not of the manner, but of the object of worship, in the preceding verse:

for the Father seeketh such to worship him; it being agreeable to him to be worshipped in the manner, as above related; and his desire is, that the Son and Spirit should be honoured equally as himself; and such worshippers he has found, having made them such, both among the Jews and Gentiles; and such only are acceptable to him; see **Php 3:3**.

John 4:24

Ver. 24. God is a spirit,.... Or "the Spirit is God"; a divine person, possessed of all divine perfections, as appears from his names, works, and worship ascribed unto him; See Gill on "Joh 4:23"; though the Arabic and Persic versions, and others, read as we do, "God is a spirit"; that is, God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: for taking the words in this light, not one of the persons is to be understood exclusive of the other; for this description, or definition, agrees with each of them, and they are all the object of worship, and to be worshipped in a true and spiritual manner. God is a spirit, and not a body, or a corporeal substance: the nature and essence of God is like a spirit, simple and uncompounded, not made up of parts; nor is it divisible; nor does it admit of any change and alteration. God, as a spirit, is immaterial, immortal, invisible, and an intelligent, willing, and active being; but differs from other spirits, in that he is not created, but an immense and infinite spirit, and an eternal one, which has neither beginning nor end: he is therefore a spirit by way of eminency, as well as effectively, he being the author and former of all spirits: whatever excellence is in them, must be ascribed to God in the highest manner; and whatever is imperfect in them, must be removed from him:

and they that worship him; worship is due to him on account of his nature and perfections, both internal and external; with both the bodies and souls of men; and both private and public; in the closet, in the family, and in the church of God; as prayer, praise, attendance on the word and ordinances:

must worship him in spirit and in truth; in the true and spiritual manner before described, which is suitable to his nature, and agreeably to his will.

John 4:25

Ver. 25. The woman saith unto him,.... Not knowing well what to say to these things Christ had been discoursing about, as the place, object, and manner of worship; and being undetermined in her judgment of them, by what he had said, was willing to refer them to the Messiah's coming; of which she, and the Samaritans, had some knowledge,

I know that Messias cometh which is called Christ: the last clause, "which is called Christ", are not the words of the woman explaining the Hebrew word Messiah; for as, on the one hand, she did not understand Greek, so, on the other, she could not think that the person she was conversing with, who she knew was a Jew, needed that word to be explained to him; but they are the words of the evangelist, interpreting the Hebrew word "Messiah", by the Greek word "Christ", in which language he wrote: hence this clause is left out in the

Syriac version, as unnecessary to a Syriac reader, not needing the word to be explained to him. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions, and some copies, read in the plural number, "we know that Messias cometh"; the knowledge of the coming of the Messiah was not peculiar to this woman, but was common to all the Samaritans; for as they received the five books of Moses, they might learn from thence, that a divine and excellent person was to come, who is called the seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head; Shiloh, to whom the gathering of the people should be; and a prophet like unto Moses: and though the word "Messiah" is not found in those books, yet, as it was usual with the Jews to call the same person by this name, they might easily take it from them, and make use of it; and they not only knew that there was a Messiah to come, and expected him, but that he was coming, just ready to come; and this they might conclude, not only from the general expectation of the Jewish nation about this time, but from Ge 49:10. And it is certain, that the Samaritans to this day do expect a Messiah, though they know not his name, unless it be bhvh; the meaning of which they do not understand {m} to me it seems to be an abbreviation of abhvh, or abh rva awh, "he that is to come"; by which circumlocution the Jews understand the Messiah; see Mt 11:3; and to which this Samaritan woman seems to have some respect:

when he is come he will tell us all things; the whole mind and will of God; all things relating to the worship of God, and to the salvation of men. This the Samaritans might conclude from his general character as a prophet, like unto Moses, to whom men were to hearken, De 18:15, and from a common prevailing notion among the Jews, that the times of the Messiah would be times of great knowledge, founded on several prophecies, as **Isa 2:3**, and which they sometimes express in the following manner {n}:

"in the days of the Messiah, even the little children in the world shall find out the hidden things of wisdom, and know in it the ends and computations (of times), and at that time he shall be made manifest unto all."

And again {o},

"says R. Judah, the holy blessed God will reveal the deep mysteries of the law in the times of the King Messiah; for "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord", &c. and it is written, "they shall not teach every man his brother", &c."

And elsewhere {p},

"the whole world shall be filled with the words of the Messiah, and with the words of the law, and with the words of the commandments; and these things shall extend to the isles afar off; to many people, the uncircumcised in heart, and the uncircumcised in flesh; and they shall deal in the secrets of the law.--And there shall be no business in the world, but to know the Lord only; wherefore the Israelites shall be exceeding wise, and know secret things, and comprehend the knowledge of their Creator, as much as is possible for a man to do, as it is said, "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord", &c."

Accordingly, the Messiah is come, who lay in the bosom of the Father, and has made known all things to his disciples, he hath heard of him; he has declared him to them, his love, grace, and mercy. God has spoken all he has to say that appertains to his own worship, and the salvation of the children of men by his Son Jesus Christ.

{m} 1 Epist. Samar. ad Scaliger, in Antiq. Eccl. Oriental, p. 125. {n} Zohar in Gen. fol, 74. 1. {o} Zohar in Lev. x. 1. {p} Maimon. Hilch. Melachim, c. 11. sect. 4. & 12. 5.

John 4:26

Ver. 26. Jesus saith unto her,.... Upon her making mention of the Messiah, of his coming, and of his work, he took the opportunity of making himself known unto her:

I that speak unto thee am [he]; the Messiah; see Isa 52:6. This is a wonderful instance of the grace of Christ to this woman, that he should make himself known in so clear and plain a manner, to so mean a person, and so infamous a creature as she had been: we never find that he ever made so clear a discovery of himself, in such express terms, to any, as to her, unless it were to his immediate disciples; and these he would sometimes charge not to tell who he was.

John 4:27

Ver. 27. And upon this came his disciples,.... Just as he was saying the above words, and making himself known in this full manner, his disciples, who had been into the city to buy food, came up to them:

and marvelled that he talked with the woman; or with a woman; for, according to the Jewish canons, it was not judged decent, right, and proper, nor indeed lawful, to enter into a conversation, or hold any long discourse with a woman. Their rule is this,

"do not multiply discourse with a woman, with his wife they say, much less with his neighbour's wife: hence the wise men say, at whatsoever time a man multiplies discourse with a woman, he is the cause of evil to himself, and ceases from the words of the law, and at last shall go down into hell {q}."

And especially this was thought to be very unseemly in any public place, as in an inn, or in the street: hence that direction {r},

"let not a man talk with a woman in the streets, even with his wife; and there is no need to say with another man's wife."

And particularly it was thought very unbecoming a religious man, a doctor, or scholar, or a disciple of a wise man so to do. This is one of the six things which are a reproach to a scholar, "to talk with a woman in the street" {s}. And it is even said {t},

"let him not talk with a woman in the street, though she is his wife, or his sister, or his daughter."

And besides, the disciples might marvel, not only that he talked with a woman, but that he should talk with that woman, who was a Samaritan; since the Jews had no familiar conversation with Samaritans, men or women: and the woman was as much astonished that Christ should have anything to say to her, and especially to ask a favour of her; for though they might, and did converse in a way of trade and business, yet did they not multiply discourse, or enter into a free conversation with one another: and it may be, that the disciples might overhear what he said to the woman, just as they came up; so that their astonishment was not merely at his talking with a woman, and with a Samaritan woman, but at what he said unto her, that he should so plainly tell her that he was the Messiah, when he so strictly charged them to tell no man.

Yet no man said; no, not Peter, as Nonnus observes, who was bold and forward to put and ask questions: "what seekest thou?" or inquirest of her about? is it food, or drink, or what? "or why talkest thou with her?" when it is not customary, seemly, and lawful. It may be considered, whether or no these two questions may not relate separately, the one to the woman, the other to Christ; as, the first,

what seekest thou? to the woman; and the sense be, that no man said to her, what do you want with our master? what are you inquiring about of him? what would you have of him? or what do you seek for from him? and the latter,

why talkest thou with her? peculiarly to Christ. The Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, and Beza's ancient copy indeed read, "no man said to him"; which confines both the questions to Christ. Now this shows the reverence the disciples had for Christ, and the great opinion they entertained of him, that whatever he did was well, and wisely done, though it might seem strange to them, and they could not account for it: however, they did not think that he, who was their Lord and master, was accountable to them for what he did; and they doubted not but he had good reasons for his conduct.

{q} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 5. Abot R, Nathan, c. 7. fol. 3. 3. & Derech Eretz, fol. 17. 3. {r} Bemidbar Rabba, sect 10. fol. 200. 2. {s} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 43. 2. {t} Maimon. Hilch. Dayot, c. 5. sect. 7.

John 4:28

Ver. 28. The woman then left her water pot,.... Her pail, or bucket, she brought with her to the well to draw water in: this she left, either for Christ and his disciples to make use of; or rather through forgetfulness, her mind being greatly impressed, and her thoughts much taken up with what Christ had said to her, and she being in haste to acquaint others with it: so the disciples left their nets, their business, their friends, and all for Christ; and so the saints are brought to quit their earthly and worldly things for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel. The Ethiopic version renders it, "she left her disputation": she left off discoursing with Christ upon the disciples coming to him.

And went her way into the city: the city of Sychar, to inform her friends, relations, and neighbours what she had met with: so Andrew and Philip, when they had found Christ themselves, acquaint others with it, and bring them to him; so Levi, the publican, being called himself by Christ, makes a feast for Christ, and invites many publicans and sinners to sit down with him, that they might know him as well as himself; so the Apostle Paul, when converted, expresses a great concern for his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh; and such is the nature of true grace, that those that have it would have others partakers of it likewise:

and saith to the men. The Ethiopic version adds, "of her house"; no doubt the men of the place in general are meant; not only those of her family, but the inhabitants of the city. The Syriac version leaves out the words, "to the men". The Jews will not allow the Cuthites, or Samaritans, to be called "men"; this they peculiarly ascribe to priests, Levites, and Israelites {u}.

{u} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 61. 1. & Tosephot in ib.

John 4:29

Ver. 29. Come, see a man,.... An uncommon, an extraordinary man, a prophet, and, who himself says, he is the Messiah, who is now at Jacob's well; come, go along with me, and see him and converse with him, and judge for yourselves, who, and what he is: she does not say, "go and see"; for she proposed to go along with them herself, that she might have more conversation with him, and knowledge of him, and grace from him: so such that have tasted that the Lord is gracious, desire more grace from him, and communion with him.

Which told me all things that ever I did; the more remarkable things that had been done by her in the whole series of her life and conversation; referring more especially to the account he had given her of her having had five husbands, and what the man was she now lived with; when no doubt, all the transactions of her life were laid before her, and she had, at once, a view of all her iniquities; when her sins stared her in the face, and her conscience was filled with guilt and remorse, and her soul with shame and confusion; and so it is when Christ, by his Spirit, convinces of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment:

is not this the Christ? that was to come, has been promised and prophesied of, and we have expected, who is of quick understanding, and even God omniscient; surely this must be he, as he himself says he is.

John 4:30

Ver. 30. Then they went out of the city,.... "The men", as the Syriac version expresses it; the inhabitants of Sychar left their business, and came out of the city:

and came unto him; to Christ, to see him, and converse with him, that they might know who he was: for though the woman had been a woman of ill fame, yet such was the account that she gave of Christ, and such power went along with her words, that what with the strangeness of the relation, and the curiosity with which they were led, and chiefly through the efficacy of divine grace, at least in many of them, they were moved to regard what she said, and to follow her directions and solicitations.

John 4:31

Ver. 31. In the mean while,.... Whilst the woman was gone into the city, and had acquainted the inhabitants, that such a wonderful person was at Jacob's well, and invited them to come and see him:

his disciples prayed him, saying, master, eat; for they perceived a disinclination in him to food; and they knew that he was weary with his journey, and that it was the time of day, and high time, that he had had some food; and therefore out of great respect to him, and in concern for his health and welfare, they entreated him that he would take some food: so far was Christ from indulging his sensual appetite; and so little reason had the Scribes and Pharisees to traduce him as a wine bibber and glutton.

John 4:32

Ver. 32. But he said unto them,.... That is, "Jesus", as the Persic, or the Lord Jesus, as the Ethiopic versions express it:

I have meat to eat that ye know not of: meaning the conversion of the Samaritan woman, and of other Samaritans, who were flocking in great numbers to him, which he knew, though his disciples did not; and the harvest of souls he had a prospect of, see **Joh 4:35**, was as meat unto him, delightful and refreshing; and his mind and thoughts were so taken up with these things, that he had no inclination to any corporeal food.

John 4:33

Ver. 33. Therefore said the disciples one to another,.... Privately, among themselves, though in his hearing; at least he knew what they said by answer;

hath any man; or anyone, any angel from heaven, or any of the inhabitants of the city, or any man or woman, or this woman they had found him talking with:

brought him [ought] to eat? for they thought of nothing else but bodily food; just as when he cautioned them against the leaven of the Sadducees and Pharisees, they imagined he said it, because they had taken no bread; whereas he meant the doctrine of these persons: so dull of understanding spiritual things were the disciples themselves, that it is not so much to be wondered at that the Samaritan woman, whilst in her carnal state, when Christ spoke of living water, should understand him of material water, or spring water.

John 4:34

Ver. 34. Jesus saith unto them,.... His disciples:

my meat is to do the will of him that sent me. The Ethiopic version reads, "of my Father that sent me", and who is undoubtedly intended. Now as food is pleasant, and delightful, and refreshing to the body of man, so doing the will of God was as delightful and refreshing to the soul of Christ: he took as much pleasure in it, as an hungry man does in eating and drinking. One part of the will of God was to assume human nature; this he had done, and with delight and pleasure: another part of it was to fulfil the law; and this was in his heart, and was his delight, and he was now doing it: and another branch of it was to suffer and die, in the room and stead of his people; and as disagreeable as this was in itself to the human nature, yet he cheerfully agreed to it; and was sometimes, as it were, impatient till it was accomplished; and he voluntarily became obedient to it: no man could, with greater eagerness, fall to eating, when hungry, than Christ went about his Father's will and work, even that which was most ungrateful to him, as man.

And to finish his work; one part of which was to preach the Gospel, and for, which he was anointed and sent; and which he did with great assiduity and constancy: and another part of it was the conversion of sinners by it, whom he was sent to call, and with whom he delighted to be; and was the work he was now about, and took the pleasure in, the text expresses: and beside these miracles were works his Father gave him to finish; such as healing diseases, and dispossessing of devils, and which he went about doing continually, with great delight: but the chief, work of all is, that of redemption and salvation of his chosen ones: this was a work his Father called him to, and sent him into this world to perform, which he gave unto him, and Christ accepted of, and agreed to do; and though it was a very toilsome and laborious one, there being a righteous law to be fulfilled, justice to be satisfied, the sins of all his people to bear, as well as the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, and numerous enemies to grapple with, and an accursed death to undergo; yet with pleasure he performed this: for the joy of his Father's will, accomplishing his counsels and covenant, and his own engagements, and procuring the salvation of his people, he endured the cross patiently, and despised the shame of it. The whole of the and work of God was done by him, just as the Lord commanded it; exactly, according to the pattern given him, with all faithfulness and integrity; with the most consummate wisdom and prudence; with all application, diligence, and constancy, and so as to finish it, and that without the help of any other; and in such a manner that nothing can be added to it to make it more perfect, or that it can be undone again by men or devils: and that the doing and finishing of this were his meat, or as delightful and refreshing to him as meat is to the body, appears from his ready and cheerful engaging in it in eternity; from his early and industrious entrance on it in time; from his constancy in it, when he had begun, insomuch that nothing could deter him from it; nor did he sink and fail under it, nor left it till he had finished it.

John 4:35

Ver. 35. Say not ye, there are yet four months,.... Our Lord had been in Jerusalem and Judea, about eight months from the last passover, and there remained four more to the next passover:

and then cometh harvest? barley harvest, which began at that time. Now as the passover was in the middle of the month Nisan, which was about the latter end of our March; reckoning four months back from thence shows, that it was about the latter end of our November, or beginning of December, that Christ was in Samaria, and at Jacob's well. Some think, that this does not refer to the then present time, as if there were so many months from thence to the next harvest, but to a common way of speaking, that there were four months from seed time to harvest; during which time there was a comfortable hope, and longing expectation of it: but this will, by no means, agree either with the wheat or barley harvest. The wheat was sown before this time, and the barley a good while after.

"Half Tisri, Marcheshvan, and half Cisleu, were, erz, seed time {w}"

The earliest they sowed their wheat was in Tisri, which answers to our September and October; i.e. to half one, and half the other. The month of Marcheshvan, which answers to October and November, was the principal month for sowing it {x}: hence that paraphrase on
Ec 11:2:

"give a good part of thy seed to thy field in Tisri, and do not refrain from sowing even in Cisleu."

As for the barley, that was sown in the months of Shebet and Adar, and usually in the latter {y}; the former of which answers to January and February, and the latter to February and March. And we read {z} of their sowing seventy days before the passover, which was within six weeks of the beginning of barley harvest.

Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields: pointing to the lands which lay near the city of Sychar:

for they are white already to harvest; alluding to the corn fields, which, when ripe, and near harvest, look white: hence we read {a} of
Nblh hdv, "the white field": which the Jews say is a field sown with wheat or barley, and so called to distinguish it from a field planted with trees; though it may be rather, that it is so called from its white look when ripe. So the three Targums paraphrase
Ge 49:12:

"his hills (his valleys, or fields, as Onkelos) Nrwwxy, "are white" with corn, and flocks of sheep."

Christ here speaks not literally; for the fields could not be white at such a distance from harvest; but spiritually, of a harvest of souls; and has regard to the large number of Samaritans that were just now coming out of the city, and were within sight, and covered the adjacent fields: and these he calls upon his disciples to lift up their eyes and behold; and suggests to them, that it was not a time for eating and drinking, but for working, since here was such a number of souls to be gathered in: and thus as from corporeal food he proceeded to treat of spiritual food; so from a literal harvest he goes on to speak of a spiritual one, and encourages his disciples to labour in it, by the following arguments.

{w} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 106. 2. {x} Gloss in T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 16. 1. {y} Gloss in Bava Metzia & in Roshhashana ib. {z} Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 2. {a} Misn. Sheviith, c. 2. sect. 1. & Moed Katon, c. 1. sect. 4.

John 4:36

Ver. 36. And he that reapeth receiveth wages,.... Angels are sometimes called reapers, and so are ministers of the Gospel here. The works and ministry of the apostles are here expressed by "reaping": for as in reaping, when the corn is ripe, the sickle is put in, and the corn is cut down, and laid to the ground, and then bound in sheaves, and gathered into the barn; so when things are ripe in providence, and God's set time is come to convert any of his people, he makes use of his ministers for the cutting them down, laying low the loftiness and haughtiness of man, stripping him of all his goodliness, and taking him off of a dependence on his own righteousness and works, and for the gathering them into his churches, which is done with a great deal of joy and pleasure: and such as are so employed, and in this way made useful, shall "receive wages", shall not only be taken care of in providence, and have a sufficient and comfortable maintenance, the labourer being worthy of his hire; but shall have pleasure, delight, and satisfaction in their work, that being blessed for the good of souls, and the glory of Christ, and they having the presence God in it; and also shall hereafter receive the crown of righteousness, when they have finished their course, and shall shine like the stars for ever and ever.

And gathereth fruit unto life eternal: by fruit are meant sinners converted and turned from the error of their ways which are the fruit of a Gospel ministry, of the efficacy and power of divine grace accompanying it; see Joh 15:16; and these are gathered, by the preaching of the Gospel, out from among the rest of mankind, unto Christ, the Shiloh, or peace maker, and into his churches, and remain, abide, and persevere to the end; that grace, which is implanted in their souls, being a well of living water, springing up to everlasting life; so that they are at last gathered into Christ's garner, into heaven, where they shall live with him for ever:

that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together. The sowers are the prophets of the Old Testament, who sowed that seed in the prophecies, which sprung up in Gospel times, and laid the foundation therein of the great success of the apostles of Christ in preaching the word; for they so clearly described the Messiah, and pointed out Christ, his offices, and his work, in so distinct a manner, that when he was come he was readily known, and cheerfully embraced; they greatly facilitated the work of the apostles, who had nothing to do but to preach Christ, as come in the flesh: and hence they reaped and gathered a vast harvest of souls every where. John the Baptist also was one that sowed; he prepared the way of the Lord, and made straight his paths: and our Lord himself was a sower, that went forth to sow, and who sowed good seed in the field; all which succeeded well, and were ripening apace for a general harvest, which began on the day of Pentecost, after our Lord's ascension to heaven. This was in Judea; and in the Gentile world there was a sowing in providence, which contributed to make the work of the disciples more easy there, and to bring on, in time, a large harvest. The books of the Old Testament were translated into the Greek language; and the Jews were scattered in the several parts of the world; and the Greek tongue, in which the New Testament was to be written, was every where generally spoken; and these providences were ripening apace to bring on a great work there. And now, as before observed, the apostles were the reapers; they were remarkably successful in the gathering in of souls, even more than the prophets, than John the Baptist, or Christ himself; never was such a harvest of souls, either in Judea, or in the Gentile world, before or since; of which the conversion of these Samaritans was a pledge or earnest. Now when the whole harvest is gathered in, at the end of the world, all these will rejoice together, the "patriarchs" and prophets, the forerunner of Christ, and Christ himself, and all his apostles and ministers; the different parts they have had in this work all concurring and agreeing together, and issuing in the glory of God, and the good of souls.

John 4:37

Ver. 37. And herein is that saying true,.... This verifies that proverbial expression so much in use, and which may be applied to different persons and cases:

one soweth, and another reapeth; the prophets sowed, and the apostles reaped.

John 4:38

Ver. 38. I sent you to reap,.... To preach the Gospel, and gather in souls by your ministry; referring to the mission of them in
Mt 10:6;

that whereon ye bestowed no labour; being sent to the Jews, who had the writings of the prophets, and were versed in them; and had learned from them that the Messiah was to come, and were now in general expectation of him; so that they had nothing more to do, than to declare to those persons who were cultivated by the prophets, and were like to ground tilled and manured, that the Messiah was come, and the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

Other men laboured; the prophets, and John the Baptist:

and ye are entered into their labours; to finish the work they had begun, and which was almost done to their hands.

John 4:39

Ver. 39. And many of the Samaritans of that city,.... Of Sychar, which was a city of Samaria;

believed on him; that he was the true Messiah he had told the woman he was; and she put it to them whether he was or not: before they saw him, or had any conversation with him themselves, they believed in him; see Joh 20:29;

for the saying of the woman which testified, he told me all that ever I did: the account she gave was so plain, and honest, and disinterested, that they could not but give credit to it; and since the person was an utter stranger to her, and yet had laid before her the whole series of her past life and conversation, they concluded he could be no other than the Messiah, who should tell all things; and being of quick understanding or smell, was able to disclose the secrets of men.

John 4:40

Ver. 40. So when the Samaritans were come unto him,.... The Ethiopic version reads, all the Samaritans; they came to him at Jacob's well, upon the woman's solicitations, and the account she gave of this extraordinary person: and after they had conversed with him, and heard him themselves, they were taken with his divine discourses, and being thoroughly persuaded that he was the Messiah,

they besought him that he would tarry with them; they were not like the

Gergesenes, who besought him to depart out of their coasts as soon he was in them: but these men were delighted with his company; and notwithstanding his being a Jew, desired a conversation with him, and entreated that he would go along with them to their city, and stay with them:

and he abode there two days; he went with them to Sychar. He would not deny their request, lest they should be discouraged; and yet would not make any long stay with them, that he might give no umbrage to the Jews; though it is very likely from this short stay in Samaria, they afterwards reproached him as a Samaritan, **Joh 8:48**. Our Lord's direction to his disciples not to enter into any of the cities of the Samaritans, was not a rule to himself, or binding upon him, and was only a rule to them "pro tempore".

John 4:41

Ver. 41. And many more believed,.... The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions add, "on him": when he was come into the city, and had preached to the inhabitants in general, a larger multitude than before believed in him as the Messiah, and professed him, and became followers of him.

Because of his own word; which came to them, not in word only, but in power, and was the power of God unto salvation to them; and was received by them, not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and it wrought effectually in them, and was an hammer to break their rocky hearts in pieces, and to bring them into subjection to himself, his Gospel and ordinances: whether his word or doctrine was accompanied with miracles is not certain; this shows, that their faith in him was founded on his own word, which fell with great weight upon them. It seems to have an emphasis laid upon it, his own word, in distinction from the woman's saying.

John 4:42

Ver. 42. And said unto the woman,.... Who, it appears, kept hearing Christ, attending on him, and conversing with him; for having tasted of his grace, she could not leave him:

now we believe, not because of thy saying; not on account of that only: it should seem that these were the same persons that believed upon her word before they went out of the city; and who, when come to Christ, invited him into it; and now, having heard his excellent discourses, were confirmed in the faith of him:

for we have heard him ourselves; not only externally with their bodily ears, but internally, having ears given them to hear, so as to understand what he said; to mix it with faith, and receive it in love; to feel the power of it in their hearts, and taste the sweetness of it, and be nourished by it; and so as to distinguish his voice from another's, as Christ's true sheep are capable of.

And know that this is indeed the Christ; the true Messiah, and not a false one; the Messiah spoken of by Moses, whose books the Samaritans received, as the seed of the woman, the Shiloh, and prophet, like to Moses; the Christ of God, who is anointed to be prophet, priest, and King. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the word "Christ", and only read what follows,

the Saviour of the world: they knew him to be the Saviour, he who was spoken of as such; for his work to bruise the serpent's head implies it, and his name Shiloh imports as much: and besides, he is called by Jacob God's salvation, Ge 49:18. God appointed him as a Saviour; he sent him, and he came as such, and is become the author of salvation; and his name is called Jesus, on this account: and a great Saviour he is; both able, and willing; and he is suitable to the case of sinners; and is a complete, and an only one: and these Samaritans knew him to be "the Saviour of the world"; not of every individual person in it, for all are not saved by him; nor of the Jewish world, for many of them died in their sins; but of the Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews; see **Joh 3:16**; even of all God's elect, whether among Jews or Gentiles; of all that believe in him, of whatsoever nation, and in whatsoever state and condition: so that their knowledge of him, and faith in him, were beyond that of the Jews, who looked upon the Messiah only as a Saviour of their nation; and that the Gentiles would have no manner of benefit and advantage by him: though the Jews {b} do call the angel in Ex 23:20 amled aqwrp, "the Saviour", or "Redeemer of" the world. And this the Samaritans might know from the writings of Moses, as from Ge 22:18 their present knowledge of Christ was not a mere notional, speculative, and general one, but was special, spiritual, and saving, which they had from the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ; they approved of him as their Saviour; they trusted in him as such; they had an experimental acquaintance with him, and practically owned him; and which they attained to by hearing him.

{b} Zohar in Gen. fol. 124. 4.

John 4:43

Ver. 43. Now after two days he departed thence,.... When he had stayed two days at Sychar conversing with, and discoursing to the Samaritans, which were the means of the conversion of many of them; he departed out of that country, and passed on his way:

and went into Galilee; as he first intended; see **Joh 4:3**.

John 4:44

Ver. 44. For Jesus himself testified,.... Mt 13:57;

that a prophet hath no honour in his own country: all the Oriental versions read, "in his own city"; that is, Nazareth: for these words must not be understood as a reason why Christ left Judea, and went into Galilee, because he had no honour in Judea, in which was Bethlehem, the place of his nativity; but are a reason why, when he came into Galilee, he did not go to Nazareth, his own city, where he was educated, and had been brought up, and had lived the greatest part of his life, because they treated him with great disrespect and contempt; See Gill on "Mt 13:57".

John 4:45

Ver. 45. Then when he was come into Galilee,.... That part of it in which Cana lay, as appears by what follows:

the Galilaeans received him; willingly, readily, and cheerfully, with much delight and pleasure, and with marks of great esteem and respect: they received him into their houses, and entertained him, and provided for him and his disciples:

having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover; the miracles he wrought there, see **Joh 2:23**;

for they also went unto the feast; as well as Jesus and his disciples: they kept the feast of the passover, and went yearly to Jerusalem on that account: so Josephus speaks of the Galilaeans going to the Jewish festivals at Jerusalem, when he says {c};

"it was the custom, or usual with the Galilaeans, when they went to the holy city at the festivals, to go through the country of the Samaritans;"

which was the way that Christ now came from thence to them.

{c} Antiqu. Jud. l. 20. c. 5.

John 4:46

Ver. 46. So Jesus came again unto Cana of Galilee,.... Where he had been once before; see **Joh 2:1**. The Syriac version here, as there, calls it "Kotne" of Galilee; and the Persic version, "Catneh" of Galilee:

where he made the water wine; see **Joh 2:9**;

there was a certain nobleman; the Vulgate Latin renders it, "a petty king"; the Arabic version, and Nonnus, call him, "a royal man"; and the Syriac version renders it, "a king's servant"; with which agrees the Ethiopic, calling him "a minister, a steward, the king's domestic". The Persic version makes it to be his name, reading it, "there was a great man, whose name was Abdolmelic", which signifies a king's servant: from the whole he seems to be one that belonged to the palace of Herod Antipas, and was one of his courtiers; who, though he was but tetrarch of Galilee, yet is sometimes called a king, **Mr 6:14**;

whose son was sick at Capernaum; some versions, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic, read the phrase, "in Capernaum", with the former clause, "there was a nobleman in Capernaum": and others, as we do with this; and both may be true; for he might be an inhabitant of Capernaum, and his house be there where his son lay sick. Some think this nobleman was either Chuza, Herod's steward, **Lu 8:3**, or Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod, Ac 13:1.

John 4:47

Ver. 47. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea,.... For the fame of Christ, for his doctrine and miracles, was spread every where; so that it was known, and talked of, in most places, where he was, and what course he was steering: and this nobleman understanding that he had left Judea, and was come

into Galilee; and having inquired in what parts of Galilee he was,

he went unto him; though it was many miles from Capernaum, where Jesus was, at least a day's journey; since, when the servants met their master, the child had been healed at one o'clock the day before; see **Joh 4:52**. Some reckon it about fifteen miles, but one would think it should be more:

and besought him, that he would come down; for Capernaum, though it was built on a hill, lay lower down in the country of Galilee than Cana did, near the sea of Tiberias: a like way of speaking is used in **Joh 2:12**;

and heal his son. The nobleman believed that Christ had power to do it, by what he had heard concerning him, but thought his corporeal presence was absolutely necessary to it:

for he was at the point of death; or "would die": he was very near it; there was no likelihood of his recovery; the physicians had given him over; and when he left him, he seemed to be near his death, and must die for any human help that could be obtained, or natural means that could be used.

John 4:48

Ver. 48. Then said Jesus unto him,.... With some degree of roughness in his speech, and severity in his countenance, in a way of reproof for his unbelief, as if he could not heal his son without going down to Capernaum along with him:

except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe. This was the cast of the Jews every where, both in Judea and Galilee; they required signs and miracles to be wrought, in confirmation of Christ's being the Messiah, and which indeed was but right; and Christ did perform them for that purpose: but their sin of unbelief lay in this, that they wanted still more and more signs; they could not be contented with what they had seen, but required more, being sluggish and backward to believe. Our Lord seems to say this chiefly for the sake of the Galilaeans, that were about him; who, though they might be acquainted with his former miracles, when among them, of turning water into wine, and had seen his wondrous works at the feast at Jerusalem, yet were very desirous of seeing more, and perhaps very pressing for this cure.

John 4:49

Ver. 49. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir,.... Notwithstanding this reproof, and seeming denial, he presses him again, and addressing him in a handsome and courteous manner, importunately entreats him, saying:

come down ere my son die; here was faith with a mixture of unbelief; he believed that Christ was able to heal his son, but he still thought that his going down with him was necessary; that he must be corporeally present, and must lay his hands on him, or touch him, or speak, and command the distemper off, or something of this kind, and which must be done before he died; for otherwise, should he die first, all hope was then gone; he had no notion of Christ being able to raise him from the dead.

John 4:50

Ver. 50. Jesus saith unto him, go thy way,.... Return home in peace, be not over much troubled and distressed about this matter; leave it with me, I will take care of it; all will be well: so the Persic version reads, "be not anxious, and go thy way"; do not be solicitous for my presence, or urge me to go with thee; depart alone, there is no necessity for my being upon the spot:

thy son liveth; he is now recovered of his disease, and is well, and in perfect health, and lives, and will live:

and the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken to him; such power went along with the words of Christ, as not only cured the son at that distance, who lay at the point of death, but also the father of his unbelief; and he no more insisted on his going down with him, but firmly believed that his son was alive, and well, as Christ had said he was:

and he went his way; he took his leave of Christ, and set out for Capernaum; very probably, not the same day, it being now in the afternoon of the day; but the next morning, as it should seem from what follows.

John 4:51

Ver. 51. And as he was now going down,.... From Cana to Capernaum, the day after he had been with Christ:

his servants met him, and told [him], saying, thy son liveth; as soon as this cure was wrought, though it was not known in the family how, and by whom it was done, immediately some of the servants were dispatched to carry the news to their master, that his sorrow might be removed; and he give himself no further trouble in seeking for a cure: these meeting him on the road, with an air of pleasure, at once address him with the joyful news, that his son was thoroughly recovered of his disorder, and was alive, and well; news which he was acquainted with, and believed before; though it must give him an additional, pleasure to have it confirmed.

John 4:52

Ver. 52. Then inquired he of them the hour,.... He did not at all hesitate about the truth of it, or was in any surprise upon it; but that he might compare things together, he asked the exact time,

when he began to amend; or grow better; for he seemed to think, that his recovery might be gradual, and not all at once, as it was:

and they said unto him, yesterday at the seventh hour; which was one o'clock in the afternoon:

the fever left him; entirely at once, so that he was perfectly well immediately.

John 4:53

Ver. 53. So the father knew that it was at the same hour,.... Precisely;

in that which Jesus said to him, thy son liveth: he had observed what time of day it was, in which he conversed with Jesus; and particularly, when he told him his son was alive and well, and when he took his leave of him; and by comparing the account of his servants, with that, found that things entirely agreed, and that the cure was wrought exactly at the time, that Jesus spoke the words:

and himself believed, and his whole house; when he came home, he related the whole affair to his family, and he and they all believed, that Jesus was the

Messiah, and became his disciples and followers: if this nobleman was Chuza, Herod's steward, we have an account of his wife, whose name was Joanna, that she followed Christ, and ministered to him of her substance, with other women, **Lu 8:3**. There is a story, told by the Jews, and which seems somewhat like to this {d};

"it is reported concerning R. Chanina ben Dosa, that when he prayed for the sick, he used to say, yx hz, "this liveth", and this dies; it was said to him, whence knowest thou this? he replied, if my prayer be ready in my mouth, I know that he is accepted (of God, i.e. the sick man for whom he prayed); but if not, I know that he will be snatched away (by the disease):"

upon which the Gemarists give the following relation {e};

"it happened that the son of Rabban Gamaliel (the Apostle Paul's master) was sick, he sent two disciples to R. Chanina ben Dosa, to ask mercy for him; when he saw them, he went up to a chamber, and sought mercy for him; and when he came down, he said unto them, hmx wtulxv wkl, "go your way, for the fever has left him"; they said unto him, art thou a prophet? he replied, I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet; but so I have received, that if my prayer is ready in my mouth, I know that he is accepted; and if not, I know that he shall be snatched away; and they sat and wrote and observed "the very hour"; and when they came to Rabban Gamaliel, he said unto them, this service ye have not been wanting in, nor abounded in; but so the thing was, that in that hour the fever left him, and he asked of us water to drink."

Which story perhaps is told, to vie with this miracle of Christ, and to obscure the glory of it.

{d} Misn. Beracot, c. 5. sect. 5. {e} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2.

John 4:54

Ver. 54. This [is] again the second miracle [that] Jesus did,.... That is, in that place, in Cana of Galilee; for otherwise, in Jerusalem and Judea, he had done many miracles, between the former and this; see **Joh 2:23**; and so the following words explain it:

when he was come out of Judea into Galilee; this was the first he wrought, after his coming out of Judea into Galilee, this time, and was the second that he wrought in Cana of Galilee; see **Joh 2:11**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 5:1

Ver. 1. After this there was a feast of the Jews,.... After Christ had been in Samaria, which was four months ago, **Joh 4:35**, and had been in Galilee for that time, and had cured the nobleman's son, and had done other mighty works, the time came on for one of the three festivals of the Jews; either the feast of Pentecost, as some think; or as others, the feast of tabernacles; or rather, the feast of the passover, so called, in **Joh 4:45** since John is very particular, in giving an account of the several passovers, in Christ's ministry:

and Jesus went up to Jerusalem; according to the law of God, which obliged all the males to appear there at that time; and to show his compliance with it, and obedience to it, whom it became to fulfil all righteousness; and this he did also, that he might have an opportunity of discoursing, and doing his miracles before all the people, which came at this time, from the several parts of the land.

John 5:2

Ver. 2. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep [market],.... The word "market" is not in the text, and of such a market, no account is given in the Scripture, nor in the Jewish writings; and besides, in our Lord's time, sheep and oxen were sold in the temple; rather therefore this signifies, the sheep gate, of which mention is made, in **Ne 3:1**, through which the sheep were brought into the city, to the temple.

A pool. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, "there is at Jerusalem a sheep pool"; and so it is interpreted in the Arabic version, and Jerom calls it the "cattle pool" {f}. The Targumist on Jer 31:39 speaks of a pool called hlge hkyrb, "the calf", or "heifer pool", as Dr. Lightfoot renders it; though the translations of it, both in the London Polyglott, and in the king of Spain's Bible, interpret it "the round pool". This pool of Bethesda, is thought by some, to be the same which the Jews call the great pool in Jerusalem; they say {g},

"between Hebron and Jerusalem, is the fountain Etham, from whence the waters come by way of pipes, unto the great pool, which is in Jerusalem."

And R. Benjamin {h} speaks of a pool, which is to be seen to this day, where the ancients slew their sacrifices, and all the Jews write their names on the wall: and some think it was so called, because the sheep that were offered in sacrifice, were there washed; which must be either before, or after they were slain; not before, for it was not required that what was to be slain for sacrifice should be washed first; and afterwards, only the entrails of a beast were washed; and for this there was a particular place in the temple, called Nyxydmh tkvl "the washing room"; where, they say {i}, they washed the inwards of the holy sacrifices. This pool here, therefore, seems rather, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, to have been a bath for unclean persons; and having this miraculous virtue hereafter spoken of, diseased persons only, at certain times, had recourse to it. The Syriac and Persic versions call it, "a place of a baptistery"; and both leave out the clause, "by the sheep market", or "gate": it is not easy to say where and what it was:

which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda; which signifies, according to the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, "an house of mercy", or "grace", or "goodness"; because many miserable objects here received mercy, and a cure. Hegesippus {k} speaks of a Bethesda, which Cestius the Roman general entered into, and burnt; and which, according to him, seems to be without Jerusalem, and so not the place here spoken of; and besides, this is called a pool, though the buildings about it doubtless went by the same name. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read Bethsaida, very wrongly; and it is called by Tertullian {l} the pool of Bethsaida. The Hebrew tongue here mentioned is rhnh rbe lv btk, "the language of those beyond the river" {m}, i.e. the river Euphrates; which is the Chaldee language, as distinct from the Assyrian language, which is called the holy and blessed language; the former is what the Cuthites, or Samaritans used; the latter, that in which the book of the law was written {n}.

Having five porches; or cloistered walks, which were very convenient for the diseased, which lay here for a cure, so Nonnus: Athanasius {o} speaks of the pool itself, as in being, though the buildings round about lay in ruins in his time; and {p} Daviler observes, there are still remaining five arches of the "portico", and part of the basin. Now this place may be an emblem of the means of grace, the ministry of the word, and ordinances: the house of God, where the Gospel is preached, may be called a Bethesda, an house of mercy; since here the free, sovereign, rich, and abundant grace and mercy of God, through Christ, is proclaimed, as the ground and foundation of a sinner's hope;

the mercy of God, as it is displayed in the covenant of grace, in the mission of Christ, and redemption by him, in regeneration, and in the forgiveness of sin, and indeed, in the whole of salvation, from first to last, is here held forth for the relief of distressed minds: and this Bethesda being a pool, some of the ancients have thought, it was an emblem of, and prefigured the ordinance of baptism; and that the miraculous virtue in it, was put into it, to give honour and credit to that ordinance, shortly to be administered: but as that is not the means of regeneration and conversion, or of a cure or cleansing, but pre-requires them; rather it might be a symbol of the fountain of Christ's blood, opened for polluted sinners to wash in, and which cleanses from all sin, and cures all diseases; and this is opened in the house of mercy, and by the ministry of the word: or rather, best of all, the Gospel itself, and the ministration of it, mass be signified; which is sometimes compared to waters, and a fountain of them; see **Isa 4:1** **Joe 3:18**; and whereas this pool was in Jerusalem, and that so often designs the church of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, it may fitly represent the ministry of the word there: and it being near the sheep-market, or gate, or a sheep-pool, may not be without its significancy; and may lead us to observe, that near where Christ's sheep are, which the Father has given him, and he has died for, and must bring in, he fixes his word and ordinances, in order to gather them in: and inasmuch as there were five porches, or cloistered walks, leading unto, or adjoining to this place, it has been thought by some of the ancients, that the law, as lying in the five books of Moses, may be intended by them; for under the law, and under a work of it, men are, before they come into the light and liberty, and comfort of the Gospel; and as the people which lay in these porches, received no cure there, so there are no relief, peace, joy, life, and salvation, by the law of works.

{f} De Locis Hebraicis, p. 89. L. Tom. III. {g} Cippi Hebraici, p. 10. {h} Itinerar. p. 43. {i} Misn. Middot, c. 5. sect. 2. Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 5. sect. 17. {k} De Excidio, l. 2. c. 15. {l} Adv. Judaeos, c. 13. {m} De Semente, p. 345. Tom. I. {n} In Chambers' Dictionary, in the word "Piscina". {o} Vid. Gloss. in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 115. 1. Megilla, fol. 18. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 2. {p} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Yadaim, c. 4. sect. 5. Vid. Gloss. in T. Bab. Megillia, fol. 8. 2.

John 5:3

Ver. 3. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk,.... Sick and weak persons; who were an emblem of men under the law of works, and in a state of unregeneracy; who are enfeebled by sin, and are impotent and unable to do anything of themselves; as to keep the law of God, to which they have neither will nor power, and to atone for the transgressions of it; nor to redeem themselves from the curse of the law or to begin and carry on a work of grace upon their souls; or to do anything that is spiritually good; no, not to think a good thought, or to do a good action, as is required:

of blind; these also may represent men a state of nature, who are ignorant of, and blind to everything that is spiritual; as to the true knowledge of God in Christ, the way of salvation by him, the plague of their own hearts, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; to the Spirit of God, and his work upon the soul; and to the truths of the Gospel, in the power of them:

halt, or "lame"; this word sometimes is used of persons in suspense about religious things, hesitating concerning them, halting between two opinions; and sometimes designs the infirmities of the saints, and their faulterings in religious exercises; and here maybe expressive in a figurative way, of the incapacity natural men, to go or walk of themselves; as to come to Christ for grace and life, which no man can do, except the Father draw him; or to walk by faith in him: it is added,

withered; one limb or another of them dried up: their arms or legs were withered, and their sinews shrunk, and were without radical moisture, or the free use of the animal spirits; and may point out carnal persons, such as are sensual, not having the Spirit, destitute of the grace of God, without faith, hope, love, knowledge, and the fear of God; without God, Christ, and the Spirit; and in a lifeless, helpless, hopeless, and perishing condition:

waiting for the moving of the water; hereafter mentioned: and so it is in providence, and a wonderful thing it is, that the hearts of so many unregenerate persons should be inclined to attend upon the outward means of grace, and should be waiting at Wisdom's gates, and watching at the posts of her door.

John 5:4

Ver. 4. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool,.... This angel is not to be understood of a messenger sent from the sanhedrim, or by the priests, as Dr. Hammond thinks; who has a strange conceit, that this pool was used for the washing of the entrails of the sacrifices; and which at the passover being very numerous, the water in it mixed with the blood of the entrails, was possessed of an healing virtue; and which being stirred by a messenger sent from the sanhedrim for that purpose, whoever went in directly received a cure: but this angel was "an angel of the Lord", as the Vulgate Latin, and two of Beza's copies read; and so the Ethiopic version reads, "an angel of God"; who either in a visible form came down from heaven, and went into the pool, the Ethiopic version very wrongly renders it, "was washed in the pool"; or it was concluded by the people, from the unusual agitation of the water, and the miraculous virtue which ensued upon it, that an angel did descend into it; and this was not at all times, but at a certain time; either once a year, as Tertullian thought, at the time of the feast of the passover, or every sabbath, as this was now the sabbath day; or it may be there was no fixed period for it, but at some times and seasons in the year so it was, which kept the people continually waiting for it:

and troubled the water; agitated and moved it to and fro, caused it to swell and rise, to bubble and boil up, and to roll about, and be as in a ferment. The Jews have a notion of spirits troubling waters; they speak of a certain fountain where a spirit resided, and an evil spirit attempted to come in his room; upon which a contest arose, and they saw ayymd ayybwbre, "the waters troubled", and think drops of blood upon them {q}: the Syriac {r} writers have a tradition, that

"because the body of Isaiah the prophet was hid in Siloah, therefore an angel descended and moved the waters."

Whosoever then first after the troubling of the waters stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had; from whence it seems, that only one person at a season received a cure, by going in first into the water, so Tertullian thought {s}: the Jews ascribe an healing virtue to the well of Miriam; they say,

"a certain ulcerous person went to dip himself in the sea of Tiberias, and it happened at that time, that the well of Miriam flowed, and he washed, yotyaw, and was healed {t}."

Now this angel may represent a minister of the Gospel, for such are called angels, **Re 1:20**; being called of God, and sent by him, with messages of grace to the sons of men; and the preaching of the Gospel by such, may be aptly signified by the troubling of the waters, as it is by the shaking of heaven, earth, and sea; see **Hag 2:6**, compared with Heb 12:25; especially when attended with the Spirit of God, who moved upon the face of the waters in the first creation; and who, in and by the ministry of the word, troubles the minds of men, and whilst the prophet prophesies, causes a shaking among the dry bones, which is done at certain seasons; for as there are certain seasons for the preaching of the Gospel, so there is more especially a fixed, settled, and appointed one, for the conversion of God's elect; who are called according to purpose, and at the time the Lord has appointed: and whoever now, upon the preaching of the Gospel, are enabled to step forth and come to Christ, and believe in him, are cured of all their soul maladies and diseases, be they what they will; all their inquiries are pardoned, their persons justified, and they are saved in Christ, with an everlasting salvation: and as this cure was not owing to any natural virtue in the water, nor even to the angels troubling it, but to a supernatural power; so the conversion of a sinner is owing to ministers, and to the word and ordinances as administered by them, but to the superior power of the grace of God; and which is exerted in his time, and on whom he pleases.

{q} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 24. fol. 165. 2. {r} Vid. Hackspan. Interpr. Errabund. sect. 20. {s} De Baptismo, c. 5. {t} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 71. 4.

John 5:5

Ver. 5. And a certain man was there,.... At Bethesda's pool, in one of the five porches, or cloisters, that belonged to it:

which had an infirmity thirty and eight years; what his infirmity was, is not said; he was one of the weak, or impotent folk, for so he is called, **Joh 5:7**. Some think his distemper was the palsy, and though he had had this infirmity so many years, it is not certain that he had waited so long in this place for a cure; though it may be, for that he had attended some time, is clear from **Joh 5:7**. Nor indeed can it be known how long there had been such a preternatural motion in this pool, and such a miraculous virtue in the water; some have thought, that it began at the repairing of the sheep gate by Eliashib, in Nehemiah's time; so Tremellius and Junius, on **Ne 3:1**; and others have thought, that it had been some few years before the birth of Christ, and about the time that this man was first taken with his disorder. Tertullian says {u}, that there was in Judea a medicinal lake, before Christ's time; and that the pool of Bethsaida (it should be Bethesda) was useful in curing the diseases of the Israelites; but ceased from yielding any benefit, when the name of the Lord was blasphemed by them, through their rage and fury, and continuance in it {w}; but in what year it began, and the precise time it ceased, he says not. The Persic version here adds, "and was reduced to such a state that he could not move".

{u} De Anima, c. 50. {w} Adv. Judaeos, c. 13.

John 5:6

Ver. 6. When Jesus saw him lie,.... In such a helpless condition:

and knew that he had been now a long time, [in that case], or "in his disease", as the Ethiopic version supplies; even seven years before Christ was born; which is a proof of his omniscience: the words may be literally rendered, as they are in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, "that he had had much time"; or as the Arabic version, "that he had had many years"; that is had lived many years, and was now an old man; he had his disorder eight and thirty years, and which seems from **Joh 5:14** to have arisen from some sin of his, from a vicious course of living, perhaps intemperance; so that he might be a middle aged man, when this distemper first seized him, and therefore must be now stricken in years:

he saith unto him, wilt thou be made whole? which question is put, not as if it was a doubt, whether he was desirous of it, or not; for to what purpose did he lie and wait there else? but partly to raise in the man an expectation of a cure, and attention in the people to it: and it may be his sense and meaning is, wilt thou be made whole on this day, which was the sabbath; or hast thou faith that thou shall be made whole in this way, or by me?

John 5:7

Ver. 7. The impotent man answered him, Sir,.... Which was a common and courteous way of speaking, much in use with the Jews, especially to strangers. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, "yea Lord", which is a direct answer to the question:

I have no man; the Ethiopic version reads, "men"; he had no servant, so Nonnus, or servants, to wait upon him, and take him up in their arms, and carry him into the pool; he was a poor man, and such God is pleased to choose and call by his grace:

when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; that is, as soon as it is troubled by the angel, to put him in first before any other; for it was the first man only that had a cure this way:

but while I am coming; in a slow way, by the help of his crutches, or in the best manner he could:

another steppeth down before me; not so much disordered, or more active and nimble: so among those that wait on the ministry of the word, some are sooner in Christ, or earlier called by his grace, than others; some lie here a long time, and see one and another come to Christ, believe in him, profess his name, and are received into the church; and they still left, in an uncalled and unconverted estate.

John 5:8

Ver. 8. Jesus saith to him, rise,.... From thy bed, or couch, on which he lay in one of the porches: and

take up thy bed and walk; these words were spoken by the same power, as those to Lazarus, which called him out of his grave; as appears from the effect they had upon the man, who was in himself impotent, weak, and helpless.

John 5:9

Ver. 9. And immediately the man was made whole,.... As soon as ever the words were spoken by Christ, such power went with them, as restored the man to perfect health; and he finding himself to be quite well, rose up directly:

and took up his bed and walked; which may be expressive of a sinner's rising from the bed of sin, and taking up the cross, or carrying the body of sin and death with him; and walking by faith in Christ, as he has received him:

and on the same day was the sabbath; which is remarked, for the sake of what follows.

John 5:10

Ver. 10. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured,.... When they saw him, either at the place, or as he walked through the streets, with his bed on his back:

it is the sabbath day: do not you know it? surely you forget yourself, or you would never be guilty of such an action as this;

it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. It was forbid by the law, to carry any burden on the sabbath day; see Ne 13:15; for

"carrying out and bringing in anything, from one place to another, is said {x} to be work, and one of the principal works;"

and therefore forbid by the law, which says, "thou shall not do any work"; and one of the traditions of the elders is this {y},

"whoever carries anything out (i.e. on the sabbath day), whether in his right hand, or in his left, in his bosom, or wpytk le, "on his shoulder", is guilty; for so carried the Kohathites."

And particularly it is said {z}, that

"he that rolls up a bed of the brasiers or tinkers (i.e. on the sabbath day) is bound to a sin offering."

Which was a fold up bed, such as tinkers, and those that went from city to city to work, had; and who carried their beds with them, as the gloss observes; and were so far from being lawful to be carried by them, on the sabbath, that they might not fold them up.

{x} Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 12. sect. 6. {y} Misn. Sabbat, c. 10. sect. 3. {z} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 47. 1. & 138. 1.

John 5:11

Ver. 11. He answered them,.... That is, the impotent man, who was now made whole, replied to the Jews:

he that made me whole, the same said unto me, take up thy bed and walk; intimating, that he that had such divine power, as to make him whole, had power to dispense with the sabbath, and such an action on it; and that his word was warrant and authority sufficient, to support him in what he did; for he that had wrought this cure for him, he concluded must be from God; was at least a great prophet, and to be hearkened to and obeyed, in one thing as well as another.

John 5:12

Ver. 12. Then asked they him,.... Suspecting who had made him whole, and gave him this order:

what man is that which said unto thee, take up thy bed and walk? they take no notice of the cure, being unwilling to give any glory to Christ, and still less to spread it; but chose rather that it should be obscured, hid, and unobserved; but they laid hold on that, which they thought might be improved to his reproach and scandal; and they call him a man, as supposing him to be a mere man, and a wicked man too, for giving orders to transgress a tradition of the elders, though no mere man could work such a cure as this was. And so the Jews since, though they cannot find fault with the cure, which they put an "if" upon, yet are highly displeased with the order, to take up his bed and carry it:

"if (say they {a}) he wrought a cure, lo, that is good, but why did he bid him take up his bed?"

the answer may be, to show that he was cured.

{a} Vet. Nizzachon, p. 207.

John 5:13

Ver. 13. And he that was healed, wist not who he was,.... He had never seen, and perhaps had never heard of Christ before, and so knew him not; and besides, Christ gave him no opportunity of conversing with him, or so much as to ask him who he was:

for Jesus had conveyed himself away; had slipped away, as soon as ever he had wrought the miracle:

a multitude being in [that] place; or "from the multitude that were in [that] place"; not that he hid himself among them, and there remained undiscovered; but he passed through them, and went his way to the temple, where he found the man he had healed, as in the following verse.

John 5:14

Ver. 14. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple,.... Perhaps on the same day; for as soon as he had been at home, and laid down his bed, it is very likely he went directly to the temple, there to show himself, attend the worship of the place, and return thanks to God for the great mercy bestowed on him:

and said unto him, behold thou art made whole; cured of the disease that had attended him so many years; and a wonderful cure it was; well may a "behold" be prefixed; though this is here not only a note of admiration, but of attention, to what he was about to say to him: sin is a disease, which is original, natural, and hereditary to men; it is an epidemical one, all are affected with it, and all the powers and faculties of the soul; and it is a nauseous and loathsome one; and what is mortal and incurable in itself, and only to be cured by the great physician, Jesus Christ: God's elect are attended with it as others, and being made sensible thereof, they come to Christ for a cure, and receive one, as this man did, to whom he said,

sin no more; intimating, that as all diseases of the body spring from sin, so had his; and that the time past of his life should suffice, for a course of sinning; and that the mercy he had received, laid him under an obligation to guard against it, to which there would still be a proneness in him; nor did our Lord imagine, that he could hereafter live without sin, but that he should not indulge himself in it, and give up himself unto it, and live in it: so all the diseases of the soul arise from sin; and when a person is converted, he ought not to walk as others do, or he himself has done; and though there is a propensity to sin and backslide from God after conversion, yet the grace of God teaches men to deny sin, and to live righteously; and though it cannot be thought that they should be, and act without sin, yet it becomes them not to live in sin, or go on in a course of it, as heretofore:

lest a worse thing come unto thee; for God could send a worse disease, or a sorer affliction, than he had yet done; an heavier punishment, either in this world, or that to come: and apply this to a good man, a converted man, one called by grace and cured by Christ, and a worse thing through sin may come unto him than a bodily disorder, namely, the hidings of God's face; for as his presence is life, his absence is death, to such persons; and as for such who only make a profession of religion, and are externally reformed only, such, if they sin and fall away, their latter end is worse than the beginning.

John 5:15

Ver. 15. The man departed,.... From Christ, and from the temple, not through displeasure, or as resenting what was said to him, but as highly delighted that he had found his kind benefactor and physician; and went either to Bethesda, where the miracle was wrought, and where a multitude of people were, and where he might expect to find some of the persons that had questioned him about carrying his bed, and who it was that bid him do it; or rather to the sanhedrim; see **Joh 5:33** compared with **Joh 1:19**;

and told the Jews; the members of that great council, the chief priests, "scribes", and elders, whose business it was to judge of a prophet, and of anyone that should set up for the Messiah:

that it was Jesus; of Nazareth, of whom so much talk was about his doctrines and miracles, and who was thought to be the Messiah:

which had made him whole; this he did, not out of any ill will to Christ, with any bad design upon him, to impeach and accuse him as a violator of the sabbath, for what he had said and done to him; for this would have been most ungrateful, and even barbarous, brutish, and diabolical; but with a good intention, that Jesus might have the glory of the cure, and that others of his fellow creatures in distress might know where, and from whom to have relief; and chiefly that the sanhedrim might be induced hereby to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, and to declare and patronize him as such: and that his end was good, is clear from this, that he does not say it was Jesus that bid him take up his bed and walk, which was what the Jews cavilled at, not caring to hear of the cure; but that made him whole: he observes the miracle to them with a grateful spirit, to the honour of his physician, and that he might be thought to be what he really was.

John 5:16

Ver. 16. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus,.... With their tongues, reproaching and reviling him, as a sabbath breaker, a destroyer of the law, and a sinful wicked man:

and sought to slay him; either in a violent way, by setting the zealots, a sort of ruffians under the pretence of religion, upon him; or rather in a judicial way, summoning him before the sanhedrim, in order to condemn him to death for the breach of the sabbath, which by the law of Moses was punishable with death:

because he had done these things on the sabbath day; because he had cured the man of his disease, under which he had laboured eight and thirty years, and had ordered him to take up his bed, and walk home with it on his back on the sabbath day. This drew upon him their resentment to such a degree, that they not only persecuted him with their tongues, but sought to take away his life. Nothing would satisfy them but his blood.

John 5:17

Ver. 17. But Jesus answered them,.... Being convened before them, and charged by them with the violation of the sabbath, he vindicated himself in the following manner, saying;

my Father worketh hitherto: he who is my Father, not by creation, or adoption, but by nature, though he ended all his work on the seventh day, and rested from what he had done; yet he did not cease from working at all, but has continued to work ever since, on sabbath days, as well as on other days; in upholding and governing the world, in continuing the species of beings, and all creatures in their being; in providing for them, and in dispensing the bounties of his providence to them; in causing his sun to shine, and showers of rain to descend on the earth; and in taking care of, and protecting even the meanest of his creatures: and much more men; and still more his own people:

and I work; or "also I work"; as the Syriac and Arabic version reads; i.e. in conjunction with him, as a co-efficient cause in the works of providence, in the government of the world, in upholding all things in it, in bearing up the pillars of the earth, in holding things together, and sustaining all creatures: or I also work in imitation of him, in doing good both to the bodies and souls of men on the sabbath day, being the Lord of it: I do but what my Father does, and therefore, as he is not to be blamed for his works on that day, as none will say he is, no more am I. So Philo the Jew says {b},

"God never ceases to work; but as it is the property of fire to burn, and of snow to cool, so of God to work."

And what most men call fortune, he calls the divine Logos, or word, to whom he ascribes all the affairs of providence {c}.

{b} Leg. Ailegor. l. 1. p. 41. {c} Quod Deus sit Immutab. p. 318.

John 5:18

Ver. 18. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him,.... They were the more desirous to take away his life, and were more bent and resolute upon it, and studied all ways and means how to bring it about;

because he had not only broken the sabbath; as they imagined; for he had not really broken it: and if they had known what that means, that God will have mercy, and not sacrifice, they would have been convinced that he had not broke it by this act of mercy to a poor distressed object:

but said also that God was his Father; his own Father, his proper Father, his Father by nature, and that he was his own Son by nature; and this they gathered from his calling him "my Father", and assuming a co-operation with him in his divine works:

making himself to be equal with God; to be of the same nature, and have the same perfections, and do the same works; for by saying that God was his Father, and so that he was the Son of God, a phrase, which, with them, signified a divine person, as they might learn from **Ps 2:7**, and by ascribing the same operations to himself, as to his Father, they rightly understood him, that he asserted his equality with him; for had he intended no more, and had they imagined that he intended no more by calling God his Father, than that he was so by creation, as he is to all men, or by adoption, as he was to the Jews, they would not have been so angry with him; for the phrase, in this sense, they used themselves: but they understood him otherwise, as asserting his proper deity, and perfect equality with the Father; and therefore to the charge of sabbath breaking, add that of blasphemy, and on account of both, sought to put him to death; for according to their canons, both the sabbath breaker, and the blasphemer, were to be stoned {d}.

{d} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 4.

John 5:19

Ver. 19. Then answered Jesus, and said unto them,.... They charged him with blasphemy for calling God his Father, and making himself equal to him: and his answer is so far from denying the thing, or observing any mistake, or misrepresentation of his words, that he allows the whole, and vindicates himself in so saying:

verily verily, I say unto you; nothing is more certain; it may be depended on as truth; I who am truth itself, the "Amen", and faithful witness, aver it with the greatest assurance:

the Son can do nothing of himself; or he does do nothing of himself, nor will he do anything of himself; that is, he neither does, nor will, nor can do anything alone or separate from his Father, or in which he is not concerned; not anything without his knowledge and consent, or contrary to his will: he does everything in conjunction with him; with the same power, having the same will, being of the same nature, and equal to each other: for these words do not design any weakness in the Son, or want of power in him to do anything of himself; that is, by his own power: for he has by his word of power spoke all things out of nothing, and by the same upholds all things; he has himself bore the sins of his people, and by himself purged them away, and has raised himself from the dead; but they express his perfection; that he does nothing, and can do nothing of himself, in opposition to his Father, and in contradiction to his will: as Satan speaks of his own, and evil men alienated from God, act of themselves, and do that which is contrary to the nature and will of God; but the Son cannot do so, being of the same nature with God, and therefore never acts separate from him, or contrary to him, but always co-operates and acts with him, and therefore never to be blamed for what he does. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it, "the Son cannot do anything of his own will"; so Nonnus; as separate from, or contrary to his Father's will, but always in agreement with it, they being one in nature, and so in will and work. He does nothing therefore

but what he seeth the Father do; not that he sees the Father actually do a work, and then he does one after him, as the creation of the world, the assumption of human nature, and redemption of man, or any particular miracle, as if upon observing one done, he did the like; but that he being brought up with him, and lying in his bosom, was privy to the whole plan of his works, and saw in his nature and infinite mind, and in his vast counsels, purposes, and designs, all that he was doing, or would do, and so did the same, or acted agreeably to them; and which still shows and proves their unity of nature, and perfect equality, since there was nothing in the Father's mind but was known to the Son, seen, and observed, and acted up to by him: so Philo the Jew {e} says of the

"Father's most ancient Son, whom he otherwise calls the firstborn; that being begotten, he imitates the Father, and seeing, or looking to his exemplars and archetypes, forms species;"

that is, being conversant with the original and eternal ideas of things in the divine mind, acts according to them, which he could not do if he was not of the same nature with, and equal to his Father. Moreover, the Son sees what the Father does by co-operating with him, and so does no other than what he sees the Father do, in conjunction with him: to which may be added, that the phrase shows, that the Son does nothing but in wisdom, and with knowledge; and that as the Father, so he does all things after the counsel of his will:

for whatsoever things he doth, these also doth the Son likewise; the Son does the selfsame works as the Father does, such as the works of creation and providence, the government both of the church, and of the world; and he does these things in like manner, with the same power, and by the same authority, his Father does, and which proves him to be equal with him; the very thing the Jews understood him to have asserted, and which they charged him with: and this he strongly maintained. The Syriac version reads, "for the things which the Father does, the same also does the Son"; and the Persic version, "whatsoever God has done, the Son also does like unto it".

{e} De Confus. Ling. p. 329.

John 5:20

Ver. 20. For the Father loveth the Son,.... As being his Son, his image, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; as being of the same nature, and having the same perfections, and so equal to him; See Gill on "Joh 3:35";

and showeth him all things that himself doth; not as if he was ignorant of them, since he lies in the bosom of his Father, is the wisdom of God, is the omniscient God, that knows all things; not only all things in men, but all things in God, even the deep things of God: but this is said of the Father, as consulting with him, communicating his designs to him, as his equal; doing nothing without him, as he never did in the works of nature, or of grace: he drew the plan of peace, reconciliation, and salvation in him; he made the worlds by him; and he does nothing in the government of the world without him; and indeed he shows him all things he does, by doing all things; and by him he shows himself, and his works, to men:

and he will show him greater works than these, or he will do greater works by him than these: either than the works of creation; namely, the redemption of the elect, the justification of their persons by his righteousness, and pardon of their sins through his blood, and the regeneration and conversion of them by his Spirit and grace; either of which is a greater work than the making of the world: or greater than he has done under the Old Testament dispensation; than the redeeming of Israel out of Egypt, leading them through the wilderness, and settling them in the land of Canaan; giving them the law, the statutes, and ordinances of God, and working miracles among them: for the redemption of God's people, by Christ, from sin, Satan, the world, the law, death, and hell, the publishing of the Gospel, the effusion of the Spirit, and setting up of the Gospel dispensation, are greater works than these; and more and greater miracles were wrought by Christ than by Moses, or any prophet under the former dispensation. Though rather the sense is, that greater miracles would be shown, and done by Christ, than these he had now done, in curing a man of his disorder, who had had it eight and thirty years, and bidding him take up his bed and walk; such as raising Jairus's daughter to life, when dead, and the widow of Naim's son, when he was carrying to the grave, and Lazarus, when he had been dead four days:

that ye may marvel; this was not properly the end of these greater works shown to, and done by Christ, which were to prove his divine sonship, his proper deity, his true Messiahship, to confirm the faith of his followers in him, and for the glory of God; but this eventually followed upon them: some wondered at them, and believed in him; and others were amazed at them, and confounded by them.

John 5:21

Ver. 21. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them,.... Which may be understood either spiritually of raising dead sinners from the death of sin, to a life of grace and holiness; and the rather, because it is expressed in the present tense "raiseth", and not "hath raised"; or naturally of raising those that are dead in a corporeal sense, and quickening them, as the widow of Sarepta's son by Elijah, and the Shunamite's son by Elisha:

even so the Son quickeneth whom he will; both in a spiritual sense, being the resurrection and the life, or the author of the resurrection from a moral death to a spiritual life, whose voice, in the Gospel, the dead in sin hear, and live; and in a natural sense, as in the above instances of Jairus's daughter, the widow of Naim's son, and Lazarus; and in the general resurrection, when at his voice, and word of power, all that are in their graves shall come forth, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting damnation; and all this as he wills: he quickens, in a spiritual sense, whom he pleases, even as many as the Father has given him; and he will raise up to everlasting life, at the last day, whom he pleases, even as many as were made his care and charge, whom he has redeemed by his blood; and called by his grace. Now as the quickening of the dead is an act of almighty power, and this being exercised by the Son in a sovereign way, as is by his Father, it shows his proper deity, and full equality with the Father. The resurrection of the dead is here expressed by "quickening", as it frequently is by the Jews, who often speak of Mytmh tyyht, "the quickening the dead", for the resurrection; so the Targumist on **Zec 3:8**, "in the quickening of the dead", Knyxa, "I will quicken thee"; see the Jerusalem Targum on
Ge 29:26.

John 5:22

Ver. 22. For the Father judgeth no man,.... That is, without the Son; which is another proof of their equality: for that he does judge is certain; he is the Judge of the whole earth; he is God that judgeth in the earth, or governs the world with his Son, who works together in the affairs of providence: he judged and condemned the old world, but not without his Son, who by his Spirit, or in his divine nature, went and preached to the spirits now in prison, then disobedient in the times of Noah; he judged and condemned Sodom and Gomorrah, but not without the Son; for Jehovah the Son rained, from Jehovah the Father, fire and brimstone upon those cities, and consumed them; he judged the people of Israel, and often chastised them for their sins, but not without his Son; the angel of his presence that went before them; he judges all men, and justifies and acquits whom he pleases, but not without his Son; but through his justifying righteousness, which he imputes to them; in doing which he appears to he a just judge, and to do right; and he will judge the world in righteousness at the last day by his Son, whom he has ordained; so as the Son does nothing without the Father, the Father does nothing without the Son, which shows perfect equality. The Jews had an officer in their sanhedrim, whom they called Ab Beth Din, or "the father of the house of judgment", to whom belonged the trying of causes, and of judging and determining them. Hence the Targumist on **So 7:4** says,

"anyd tyb baw, "and the father of the house of judgment", who judgeth thy judgments, or determines thy causes, is mighty over thy people, &c."

Whether there may not be some allusion here to this officer, I leave to be considered:

but hath committed all judgment to the Son; as the judgment, or government of his church and people, especially under the Gospel dispensation; and which he exercises by giving ordinances peculiar to it, such as baptism and the Lord's supper; and by enacting laws, and prescribing rules for the discipline of his house, over which he is as a Son; and by appointing proper officers under him, over his churches, to administer these ordinances, and see that these laws are put in execution, which he qualifies them for, by bestowing proper gifts upon them: and he exercises this judgment, by protecting and defending his people from all their enemies, so that they well safely under his government: as also the general judgment of the world at the last day, is committed to him; which affair will be managed by Christ, the Son of God, when he comes a second time; he will then raise the dead, that everyone may receive for the things done in his body, whether good or evil; he will gather all nations before him, and all shall stand before his judgment seat, both great and small; he will separate one from another, the sheep from the goats, and set the one on his right hand, and the other on his left; he will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, and show himself to be the searcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children of men, and will pass a most righteous and decisive sentence upon all: now for such a trust, and such a work as this, whether the particular government of the church, or the general judgment of the world, he would not be fit, was he not God equal with the Father; the thing he had suggested, and which he supports and maintains in this vindication of himself.

John 5:23

Ver. 23. That all men should honour the Son,.... This is the end of all judgment, and the exercise of all authority, and power being committed to him; namely, that he might have the honour given him by men that is due unto him:

even as they honour the Father; that the same honour and glory may be given to the one, as to the other, which must never have been done was he not equal with him, since he gives not his glory to another, Isa 42:8. Indeed, all men do not honour the Father as they should; the Gentiles, who had some knowledge of God, glorified him not as God; and the Jews, who had an external revelation of the one, true, and living God, which other nations had not, yet were greatly deficient in honouring him, which made him complaining say, "if then I be a father, where is mine honour?" **Mal 1:6**. And Christians, who are favoured with a clearer revelation still of the Father of Christ, are much wanting in giving him his due glory; but in common he is honoured, though in an imperfect manner; nor is there so much danger of his losing his honour, as of the Son's losing his; the reason is this, though the Son is in the form of God, and equal with him, yet by taking upon him the form of a servant, by becoming man, he has veiled the glory of his divine person, and made himself of no reputation; and by reason of this was reckoned by many, or most, as a mere man: wherefore, by agreement, that judgment, power, and authority, which equally belonged to the Father, and the Son, the exercise of it is put visibly and openly into the Son's hands, that he might have his due honour and glory from all men, whether they will or not: from true believers in him he has it willingly, by their ascribing deity to him, by putting their trust in him, by attributing the whole of their salvation to him, and the glory of it, and by worshipping him: and he will be honoured by all men at the last day; they will be obliged to do it; for all judgment being committed to him, and he being Judge of all, every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord, to his own glory, and to the glory of God the Father; see Isa 45:23.

He that honoureth not the Son; that denies his divine sonship, or his proper deity; that detracts from the dignity of his person or office; that shows no regard to him in point of salvation, or of obedience:

honoureth not the Father which hath sent him; they are so the same in nature and perfections, in power, will, affections, and operations; and their interests and honours are so involved together, that whatever dishonour is done to one, reflects on the other: and indeed, whatever is done in a way of disrespect to the Son, as incarnate, and in his office capacity, highly reflects on his Father, that sent him in the fulness of time, in human nature, to obtain eternal redemption for his people, according to a rule often expressed by the Jews, "a man's messenger is as himself";
See Gill on "Mt 10:40".

John 5:24

Ver. 24. Verily verily, I say unto you,.... Who am the Amen, the true and faithful witness:

he that heareth my word; by which is meant the Gospel, and is so called, both because it is spoken by Christ, and first began to be spoken by him; and because he is spoken of in it; his person, office, and work, peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation by him, being the sum and substance of it: and by "hearing" it is meant, not a bare external hearing it; for so it may be heard, and not understood; and it may be understood in a notional and speculative way, and yet the consequences hereafter mentioned may not follow: but an internal hearing it is here designed, so as to understand it spiritually, or to have an experimental knowledge of it; so as to approve of it, love, and like it; to distinguish it from that which is not his doctrine, and to feel the power of it on the heart, and yield the obedience of faith unto it: for faith in Christ himself, the sum and substance of the word of the Gospel, is hereby expressed; to which is joined faith in God his Father, they being equally the object of it; and which is introduced as a further proof of the equality in nature which is between them; see
Joh 14:1;

and believeth on him that sent me; he does not say that believes on me, which might have been expected from him; but that believes on him that sent me, that is, on the Father; for as he that rejects Christ, and receives not his words, rejects and receives not him that sent him; so he that hears Christ's words, and receives him, and believes in him, receives and believes in him that sent him; and the same effects and consequences follow upon the one as on the other, upon hearing the word of Christ, as upon believing on the Father of Christ; and which is no inconsiderable proof of their perfect equality: for such a person that hears the one, and believes on the other,

hath everlasting life; not only in the purpose of God, and in the covenant of his grace, and in the hands of Christ, and in faith and hope; but he has a right unto it, and a claim of it, according to the declaration of the Gospel; and besides, has the principle of it in himself, the grace of God, which springs up into, is the beginning of, and issues in eternal life; he has also a meetness for it, and has the pledge and earnest of it, the Spirit of God, and shall certainly enjoy it:

and shall not come into condemnation; neither for original sin, though judgment has passed upon all men unto condemnation for it; nor for actual sins and transgressions: for though everyone deserves condemnation, yet were there as many sentences of condemnation issued out as sins committed, not one of them could be executed on such who are in Christ Jesus, as he that believes in him is openly and manifestatively in him: the reason is, because the death of Christ is a security against all condemnation; and whoever believes in him shall not be condemned, but saved; and though he may come into judgment, yet not into condemnation: he shall stand in judgment, and be acquitted by the righteousness of Christ, which he, by faith, receives as his justifying righteousness.

But is passed from death unto life; both from a moral death to a spiritual life, being quickened, who before was dead in trespasses and sins; and from under a sentence of condemnation, and eternal death, which as a descendant of Adam, and according to the tenor of the law of works, he was subject to, to an open state of justification, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace; the righteousness of Christ being revealed to him, and received by faith, and the sentence of justification passed upon his conscience by the Spirit; so that he who before, in his own apprehension, was a dead man in a law sense, is now alive to God, and secure from the second death, and being hurt by it.

John 5:25

Ver. 25. Verily, verily, I say unto you,.... With the same asseveration as before, and for the further illustration and confirmation of the same thing, occasioned by the last clause of the preceding verse, as well as improving upon the argument in **Joh 5:21** for his equality with the Father, which he is still pursuing:

the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live; which may be understood either of a corporeal resurrection, and of some particular instances of it, which should shortly be; and of some persons who would be in the state of the dead, and to whom the voice of Christ would be attended with such power as to cause them to hear and live; as did Jairus's daughter upon his saying "Talitha Cumi", damsel arise, and the widow of Naim's son upon his saying, young man arise, and Lazarus, upon his calling to him, Lazarus come forth; and which is a full proof of his being equal to God that quickens the dead: or rather this is to be understood of a spiritual resurrection, and the rather, because this sense best agrees with the foregoing verse; and a corporeal resurrection is expressed in somewhat different words, and seems to be distinguished from this in **Joh 5:28**. And besides, the hour, or time of the resurrection of the above particular persons, was not strictly come; nor could they, with propriety, be said to be dead; to which may be added, that the phrase, "they that hear shall live", and none but them, best agrees with this sense: so then by the "dead" are meant such who are dead in trespasses and sins; who are separated from God, alienated from the life of God, and in whom the image of God is defaced; who are dead in all the powers and faculties of their souls, to that which is spiritually good; and are without spiritual breath, sense, feeling, and motion. And by "the voice" of Christ is intended his Gospel, which is a voice of love, grace, and mercy, of life and liberty, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him; and which being attended with his power, is the means of quickening dead sinners; who may be said to hear it, when it comes not in word only, but in power, and works effectually in them; and is spirit and life, and the power of God unto salvation to them; when they receive it, understand, believe, and obey it: and such persons "shall live"; comfortably, pleasantly, and delightfully, a life of faith on Christ, a life of communion with him, and shall live eternally with him hereafter.

John 5:26

Ver. 26. For as the Father hath life in himself,.... Is the living God, the fountain of life, and is the author of life to all living creatures; or rather has eternal life in his mind, his heart, his counsel, and his covenant, and in his hands, for all his chosen ones, which seems to he the peculiar sense here:

so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; he hath not only made the purpose of it in him, and given the promise of it to him; but even eternal life itself, he has put into his hands, and secured it in him for them, **1Jo 5:11**, to give it to as many as he has given him: and he does give it to all his sheep, so that not one of them shall perish; which shows that he and his Father are one, though not in person, yet as in affection, will and power, so in nature and essence. The Son has life in himself, essentially, originally, and inderivatively as the Father has, being equally the living God, the fountain of life, and donor of it, as he; and therefore this is not a life which he gives, or communicates to him; but eternal life is what the one gives, and the other receives, according to the economy of salvation settled between them: and hence it is, that all that hear Christ's voice spiritually shall live eternally; for these words are a reason of the former, and confirm the truth of them, as well as show the equality of the Son with the Father, in that he is equal to such a trust, as to have eternal life committed to him.

John 5:27

Ver. 27. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also,.... Both in his church and kingdom, in the present state of things, and at the last day, when all shall stand before his judgment seat: and that

because he is the son of man; truly and properly man; because though he was in the form of God, and equal to him, yet became man, and was in the form of a servant: and so reads the Ethiopic version, "because the Son of God is the son of man"; and therefore the authority of executing judgment, according to the council and covenant of peace, is committed to him; or that men might have a visible judge, or be judged by one in their own nature: agreeably the Persic version renders it, "because the Son himself is he who judges the sons of men"; or rather because he is that son of man spoken of in prophecy, especially in **Da 7:13**; by whom is meant the Messiah, as the Jews themselves allow {f}, and who was not a mere man, but the man God's fellow; and so being omniscient and omnipotent, was equal to such a work, which otherwise he would not have been; See Gill on "Joh 5:22". The Syriac version joins this clause to the beginning of **Joh 5:28**, and reads it thus, "because he is the son of man, marvel not at this"; let this be no obstruction to your faith of his quickening the dead, and having authority to execute judgment on all; since, though the son of man, he is not a mere man, but God over all, as what is next ascribed to him manifestly shows.

{f} Zohar in Gen. fol. 85. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 13. fol. 209. 4. Jarchi & Saadiah Gaon in Dan. vii. 13. & R. Jeshuah in Aben Ezra in ib.

John 5:28

Ver. 28. Marvel not at this,.... Either at the cure of the man that had been diseased thirty and eight years, as some think; or at the Son of God being also the son of man, as the Syriac version suggests; or rather at the dead hearing the voice of the Son of God, and living upon it; and at his having authority to execute judgment upon all, to govern and defend his own church and people, and in the last day acquit them, and to take vengeance on his and their enemies, both now and hereafter:

for the hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice. This respects the general resurrection; for there will be a resurrection both of the just and unjust, of all that are in their graves; and though all that are dead are not in graves, or interred in the earth, as some are in the sea; yet, because the greater part are in graves, this phrase is chosen to express the universality of the resurrection: and this is also a proof of the resurrection of the same body; for what else are in the graves but bodies? and what else can come forth from them but the same bodies? and the time is hastening on when these bodies shall be quickened, and hear the voice of the Son of God; which whether the same with the voice of the archangel in **1Th 4:16**; and whether an articulate voice, or a violent clap of thunder, which is the voice of God, or only the exertion of Christ's mighty power is intended, is not easy to determine, and may be needless to inquire. Certain it is, that this voice of Christ will be attended with almighty power, as the effect following upon it will show. The Jews observe {g}, that

"there are three things which do not come into the world but "by voices"; there is the voice of a living creature, as it is written, **Ge 3:16**, "in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children", and as it is written, Ge 30:22, "and God hearkened to her"; and there is the voice of rains, as it is written, 1Ki 18:41, "for there is a voice of abundance of rain", and it is written, Ps 29:3, "the voice of the Lord is upon the waters"; and Mytmh tyyht lwq, "there is the voice of the resurrection of the dead", as it is written, Isa 40:3, "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness";"

but that was the voice of John the Baptist. It will be the voice of the Son of God that will quicken and raise the dead.

{g} Zohar in Gen. fol. 70. 4.

John 5:29

Ver. 29. And shall come forth,.... Out of their graves, as Lazarus came forth from his at the word of command, and as the bodies of the saints did after the resurrection of Christ, when their graves were opened:

they that have done good; which none of Adam's posterity naturally do, or can do of themselves: such are designed here who believe in Christ, which to do is the work of God, and the greatest and best of worlds; and without which it is impossible to please God in any; and indeed, whatever is not of faith is sin, and cannot be a good work: a good work is that which is done according to the will of God, from love to him, in faith, and with a view to his glory; and those that do such works shall come forth

unto the resurrection of life; that is, unto everlasting life, glory, and happiness; this is the first and better resurrection; and those that have part in it, over them the second death shall have no power. All shall rise to life, to an immortal life, so as never to die more; yet only good men shall rise to enjoy an happy and glorious life; which will lie in communion with God, angels, and saints, and in conformity to Christ, and in the everlasting vision of him:

and they that have done evil; who give up themselves to work wickedness; whose continual employment, and the business, series, and course of whose lives it is to commit sin; who are slaves unto it, and vassals of it, and are properly workers of iniquity; otherwise there is no man but what does that which is evil, and that daily: these shall come forth

unto the resurrection of damnation; that is, to everlasting damnation, shame, and reproach; they shall be condemned by the Judge of the whole earth, and shall be pronounced cursed; and shall be ordered to go into everlasting fire, and shall go into everlasting punishment; which will be a punishment both of loss and sense: they will lose, or be deprived of, the presence of God, and feel his wrath in their consciences. All will rise, but with a difference; the dead in Christ will rise first, in the morning of the resurrection, in the beginning of the thousand years, and therefore are here mentioned first; the rest the wicked, will not rise until the evening of that day, till the thousand years are ended, and therefore are spoken of last. The former will rise by virtue of union to Christ, the other by his power, and both at hearing his voice; the saints will rise with bodies glorious, powerful, and spiritual; and wicked men, though with bodies immortal, yet vile, and dishonourable: the one will rise to a life of joy and happiness that will last for ever, and which will be properly life; the other, though they will rise and live for ever, yet in misery and woe, and which will be the second, or eternal death; see a like distinction in Da 12:2, to which there seems to be some, reference here. And he at whose voice all this shall be, must be equal to God.

John 5:30

Ver. 30. I can of mine own self do nothing,.... This is the conclusion of the matter, the winding up of the several arguments concerning the Son's equality to the Father, and the application of the whole to Christ. He had before been chiefly speaking of the Son, in relation to the Father, as if he was a third person; but now he applies what he had said of the Son to himself: and it is as if he had said, I am the Son that can do nothing separate from the Father, and contrary to his will, but do all things in conjunction with him; who sees all that he does, by being in him, and co-operating with him, and do the selfsame. I am the Son to whom the Father shows, and by whom he does, all he does; and to whom he will show, and by whom he will do, as a co-efficient with him, greater works than what, as yet, he has done: I am the Son that quickens whom he pleases, and to whom all judgment is committed, and have the same honour the Father has: I am he that quickens dead sinners now, and will raise all the dead at the last day; and have authority to execute judgment on all mankind: and,

as I hear, I judge; not as he hears men, or, according to the evidence men will give one of another; for it is denied of him, that he will proceed in judgment in this manner, Isa 11:3, but as he hears his Father; for being in his bosom, and one with him, as he sees, and knows all he does, his whole plan of operations, and acts according to them; so he hears, knows, and is perfectly acquainted with all his counsels, purposes, and rules of judgment, and never deviates from them. Hearing here signifies perfect knowledge, and understanding of a cause; and so it is used in the Jewish writings, in matters of difficulty, that come before a court of judicature {h}:

"there were three courts of judicature; one that sat at the gate of the mountain of the house; and one that sat at the gate of the court; and another that sat in the paved chamber: they go (first) to that which is at the gate of the mountain of the house, and say, so have I expounded, and so have the companions expounded; so have I taught, and so have the companions (or colleagues) taught: wemv
Ma, "if they hear", they say; (i.e. as one of their commentators explains it {i}, if they know the law, and hear, or understand the sense of the law; in such a case they declare what they know;) if not, they go to them that are at the gate of the court, and say (as before).--And, "if they hear", they tell them; but if not, they go to the great sanhedrim in the paved chamber, from whence goes forth the law to all Israel."

Christ was now before the great sanhedrim, and speaks to them in their own language, and as a superior judge to them:

and my judgment is just; in the administration of the affairs of his church, which are done in the strictest justice; just and true are all his ways, as King of saints; and in the execution of the last judgment, which will be in righteousness and truth; the judgment he passes must be right, since it is according to that perfect knowledge he has of his Father's will, which is an infallible rule of judgment:

because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me; that is, he did not seek to gratify his own will, as distinct from his Father's, or in opposition to it; for he had no private end to answer, or separate interest, or advantage to pursue; and seeing therefore he acted according to his Father's will, and not his own, as contrary to that; his judgment must be just, and the sentence he passes right; since the will of God is indisputably such. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, the Alexandrian copy, and two of Beza's copies, leave out the word "father", without altering or hurting the sense at all.

{h} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 2. {i} Maimon. in ib.

John 5:31

Ver. 31. If I bear witness of myself,.... Which was not allowed any man to do; nor indeed is it proper that a man should be a witness in his own cause: and, according to the Jewish canons, a man might not be a witness for his wife, because she was reckoned as himself.

"An husband is not to be believed in bearing witness for his wife, that had been carried captive, that she is not defiled, wmuel dyem Mda Nyav, "for no man witness of himself" {k}."

So likewise they say {l},

"a city that is subdued by an army, all the priestesses (or priests' daughters) that are found in it are rejected (from the priesthood, as defiled); but if they have witnesses, whether a servant, or an handmaid, lo, they are to be believed; but no man is to be believed for himself: says R. Zechariah ben Hakatzah, by this habitation (swearing by the temple) her hand was not removed from my hand, from the time the Gentiles entered Jerusalem, till they went out: they replied to him, "no man bears witness of himself"."

Christ reasons here upon their own principles, and according to their sense of things, that should he bear witness of himself; then, says he,

my witness is not true, Nman al, not to be believed, or admitted as an authentic testimony: and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "is not credible"; not valid in law, or in such a court of judicature in which Christ now was; for, as according to the Jewish law, no man was admitted a witness for himself, so neither was anything established by a single testimony, but by the mouth of two or three witnesses, De 19:15. Christ's meaning is, that his testimony alone, his single witness, how true soever it was, would stand for nothing in their court; and therefore he would not insist upon it, but drop it; for "true" here, is not opposed to that which is "false", but to that which is not valid in law. Christ's testimony was true in itself; nor could it be any other, it coming from him, who is truth itself, the "Amen", and faithful witness; but being considered as an human testimony, and in his own cause, was not to be admitted as sufficient; and this he allows. From arguments, proving his equality with the Father, he passes to testimonies; and without ranking use of his own, he had enough to produce, and which were valid and authentic, and are as follow.

{k} Maimon. Issure Bia, c. 18. sect. 19. {l} Misn. Cetubot, c. 2. sect. 9. T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 27. 2. Juchasin, fol. 56. 1.

John 5:32

Ver. 32. There is another that beareth witness of me,.... Meaning not his Father, who is another, and a distinct person, from him, as the Spirit is another comforter; and both distinct testifiers from him, as well as of him. This is indeed the sense of some interpreters; but the Father is particularly mentioned in **Joh 5:37**; and the thread of the discourse, and the climax, or gradation, here used, show, that it is to be understood of "another man", as Nonnus paraphrases it; of John the Baptist, who is spoken of by name in the next verse, as a witness; and then a greater than he, the works of Christ, and then the Father:

and I know that the witness, which he witnesseth of me, is true; for John was now alive, though in prison, and continued to bear a testimony to Christ; and therefore he speaks of him as now bearing witness of him, and abiding by that which he had bore; and Christ knew not only that what he testified of him was true in itself, but that his testimony was a valid and authentic testimony, with the generality of the Jews; who held John to be a prophet, and looked upon him as a man of great probity and integrity, and whose word was to be taken: nor indeed could the sanhedrim, before whom Christ now was, object to his character, nor to him as a witness; nor ought they, since they themselves had so judged of him, as appears by their message to him, which Christ next fails not to take notice of.

John 5:33

Ver. 33. Ye sent unto John,.... The sanhedrim at Jerusalem made a deputation of priests and Levites to him, to know who he was, whether the Messiah, or Elias, or that prophet, **Joh 1:19**. Now had they not looked upon him, from what they knew of him, or from the character they had of him, as a faithful witness, they would never have shown him so much respect, and have been at so much pains, and charge, as to send such a body of men so far unto him, as from Jerusalem to beyond Jordan; which circumstance our Lord improves in favour of this evidence he produces:

and he bare witness unto the truth; to Christ, who is the truth itself; and to the truth of his person, and office; to his dignity, and eternity, as being before him, though coming after him; and to his divine sonship, the thing now in debate, declaring, that he was the Son of God; and to his office, as Mediator, pointing to him as the Lamb of God, who, by his blood, and sacrifice, takes away the sins of men. The Ethiopic version reads by way of interrogation, "did not you send unto John?" &c.

John 5:34

Ver. 34. But I receive not testimony from man,.... He stood in no need of an human testimony, nor did he rest the truth of his deity and divine sonship thereon: he had other and greater testimonies to produce; as he needed not that any man should testify of man to him, he had no need that any man should testify of him; and if the testimony of men was received, as this of John could not well be objected to, the testimony of God is greater, and which he had; and therefore should not have mentioned John's for his own sake:

but these things I say, that ye might be saved; that is, he produced this testimony of John, who was a person of so great a character among them, that they might be induced by it to believe in him as the Messiah; and so be saved from that ruin and destruction, that would come upon their nation, city, and temple, for their rejection and disbelief of him.

John 5:35

Ver. 35. He was a burning and a shining light,.... He was not that light, the famous light, the Messiah, the sun of righteousness; yet he was the "phosphorus", the forerunner of that light, and was himself a very great one: he had much light himself into the person and office of the Messiah; in the doctrines of faith in Christ, and repentance towards God; in the Gospel dispensation, and in the abolition of the Mosaic economy; and gave great light to others, in the business of salvation, and remission of sins, and was the means of guiding the feet of many in the way of peace. His light of pure doctrine, and of an holy and exemplary conversation, shone very visibly, and brightly before men; and he burned with strong love and affection for Christ, and the souls of men; and with flaming zeal for the honour of God, and true religion, and against all sin and profaneness, which he was a faithful reprover of, and for which he lost his life. It was common with the Jews to call their doctors, who were famous for their knowledge, and holiness of life, lights, burning lights, and shining lights; or in words which amount to the same. So R. Simeon ben Jochai is often called in the book of Zohar, avydq anyuwb, "the holy light"; and particularly it is said of him {m},

"R. Simeon, qyldad agrvd anyuwbk, is as "the lamp of light which burns above", and "burns" below; and by the light which burns below all the children of the world are enlightened: woe to the world, when the light below ascends to the light above."

So R. Abhu is called arwhnd anyuwb, "the lamp of light" {n}: and it is {o} said of Shuah, Judah's father-in-law, that he was artad anyuwb, "the light of the place"; that is, where he lived. The gloss on the place says, he was a man of note in the city, and enlightened their eyes; and it is very frequent with them still, when they are praising any of their doctors, to say of him, he was lwdgh rwamh, "a great light", who enlightened the eyes of Israel, and in whose light the people walked {p}; so among the philosophers, Xenophon, and Plato, are called duo lumina {q}, "two lights"; See Gill on "Mt 5:14";

and ye were willing for a season, or "for an hour",

to rejoice in his light; or "to glory in it", or "boast of" it, as the Syriac and

Persic versions render it. When John first appeared among them, they were fond, and even proud of him; they gloried in him, that a man of such uncommon endowments, and of such exemplary holiness, was raised up among them; and hoped that he was the Messiah, or Elias, that was to come before him; and pleased themselves, that times of great outward honour and prosperity were hastening: wherefore they flocked about him, and many of the Pharisees and Sadducees attended his ministry, and would have been baptized by him; but when they found that he was not the Messiah, nor Elias, nor that prophet, but bore a testimony to Jesus of Nazareth, that he was the Messiah; and ran counter to their notions of a temporal kingdom, and of birth privileges, and their own righteousness; and threatened them with ruin, and destruction, both in this world, and that which is to come, in case of their impenitence and unbelief; they grew sick of him, and said he had a devil, and rejected the counsel of God he declared, and despised his baptism. Such was their fickleness and inconstancy, which Christ here tacitly charges them with. They were like the stony ground hearers, and like some of the Apostle Paul's admirers among the Galatians, who at first could have plucked out their eyes for him, but afterwards became his enemies for telling them the truth.

{m} Zohar in Exod. fol. 79. 1. {n} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 17. 1. {o} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 85. fol. 74. 4. & Mattanot Cehunah in ib. {p} Vid. R. David Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 38. 1. 41. 1. 44. 2. 45. 1. 46. 2. & 47. 1. {q} A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 14. c. 3.

John 5:36

Ver. 36. But I have greater witness than that of John,.... The Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions read, "greater than John", but wrongly; for the testimonies of Christ's works, and of his Father, are not compared with John himself, but with his testimony; and the sense is, that Christ had a greater witness than the witness of John; and so it is expressed in the Persic version: and his meaning is, that he had no need to insist upon John's testimony; he had other, and greater witnesses to produce:

for the works which the Father hath given me to finish; such as the preaching of the Gospel, the fulfilling of the law, and the redemption of his people; all which were appointed by his Father, and given him to do, and which he completely finished. The whole Gospel came, and was published by Jesus Christ, and the law was entirely fulfilled by him; and the work of man's salvation was finished by him, and these bear witness to the truth of his deity, and divine sonship; for none but the Son of God could have done these things. The Ethiopic version reads in the singular number, "this work which my Father hath given me", &c. and if it was a single work that is referred to, the work of redemption bids fair to be it. But, these works include not only what Christ did on earth, in his state of humiliation, but what he has done since, and will do; which his Father has given him to finish, and he has finished, or will finish them; such as the resurrection of himself from the dead, the effusion of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, the spreading and succeeding his Gospel in the world, the conversion of his redeemed ones, the gathering in the fulness of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Jews, the destruction of antichrist, the resurrection of all the dead, and the judgment of the whole world. Though more especially his miracles are here intended, and which, and not his mediatorial works, were demonstrations and proofs to men of his divine sonship; see Mt 14:33;

the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me; and that he was in the Father, and the Father in him; or that they were one in nature, and equal in power and glory,
Joh 10:30.

John 5:37

Ver. 37. And the Father himself, which hath sent me,.... Not only the works he gave him to do, and which he did, but he himself in person:

hath borne witness of me; not only in the writings of Moses, and the prophecies of the Old Testament, but by an audible articulate voice from heaven, at the time of Christ's baptism, **Mt 3:17**; which was a full testimony of the sonship of Christ, and of the Father's well pleasure in him; and which was repeated at his transfiguration on the mount, Mt 17:5; and the sonship of Christ is the grand thing which the three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, testify of, **1Jo 5:7**;

ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape; for the voices that were heard, and the forms that were seen under the Old Testament dispensation, from the first of this kind in Eden's garden, to the incarnation of Christ, which are ascribed to God, or to a divine person, were either by the ministry of angels, or they were voices uttered by the Son of God, or forms assumed by him, who often appeared in an human form, as a prelude of his incarnation; so that it was unusual, and wonderful, and remarkable, that the

Father should bear a testimony to the sonship of Christ by a voice from heaven; and which therefore ought to be attended to, and received as a sufficient and valid testimony.

John 5:38

Ver. 38. And ye have not his word abiding in you,.... Which some understand of Christ himself, the Logos, or word: who, though he was now with them, being made flesh, and dwelling among them, yet would not long continue with them: though rather this designs the written word, or the Scriptures of truth; and especially that part of them, which contains prophecies concerning the Messiah, which did not dwell in them richly, nor they dwell in their meditation on them, as was requisite. Or rather, it may intend that word of God expressed in the testimony he bore to the sonship of Christ at his baptism, by a voice from heaven, which made no lasting impression upon the minds and hearts of the Jews that heard it; as appears by what follows:

for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not; meaning himself; for if they had had either a due regard to the sacred oracles, or to that voice from heaven at his baptism, they would have received and embraced him as the Messiah, and sent of God, and not have disbelieved and rejected him, as now they did.

John 5:39

Ver. 39. Search the Scriptures,.... The writings of Moses, and the prophets, which were of divine inspiration and authority, and are often appealed unto by Christ, and his apostles, for the truth of what they delivered; and were the standard of faith, and the test of doctrines; and therefore to be searched diligently into, for finding divine knowledge and improvement in it, and for the trial of doctrines. The words may be rendered in the indicative, as an assertion, "ye do search the Scriptures": the Jews had the sacred oracles committed to them, and these they read, not only their kings, princes, and judges, but the common people, who brought up their children to the reading of them, and instructed them in them: and besides this, these writings were read, and expounded publicly in their synagogues every sabbath day; and at this time especially these records were examined, and particularly those of them which respected the Messiah, since there was now a general expectation of him: and certain it is, that the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, or the sanhedrim, were very much versed in the Scriptures, and could readily refer to those which concerned the Messiah; see an instance of this in **Mt 2:4**;

for in them ye think ye have eternal life; not the doctrine of eternal life, nor the promises of it, nor the way to it; though all these are contained in them, and pointed out by them: for though life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel, and the promise of eternal life belongs to the covenant of grace, and the way of life and righteousness by Christ is manifested without the law, and not by it; yet there is much of the Gospel, and an exhibition of the covenant of grace, and its promises, and Christ, the way of life, is directed to typically by the tree of life, and the brazen serpent, and other things in those writings. But the meaning here is, that they imagined, by having these writings in their hands, and by their reading them, and hearing them expounded every sabbath day, they should obtain and inherit everlasting life: hence they call {r} the law eternal life, and say {s} concerning the reading of it, that

"he that begins to read in the book of the law is obliged to bless after this manner: blessed be he that has chosen us above all nations, and hath given us his law.--And he that finishes blesses after him in this manner: blessed is he who hath given us his law, the law of truth, and has planted "eternal life" in the midst of us."

This was an opinion of theirs: so the Persic version reads, "for such is your opinion"; and though this was a very vain one, yet it shows what a very high opinion they had of the Scriptures: and now to these our Lord appeals as witnesses for him, and against which they could not object, upon their own principles:

and they are they which testify of me; as they do of his proper deity and divine sonship, calling him Jehovah, God, the mighty God, and the Son of God; and of his offices as prophet, priest, and King; and of his incarnation of a virgin; and of the tribe, family, and place of his birth; of the miracles which he should work; of the treatment he should meet with from men; of his sufferings and death; of the circumstances leading on to them, and attending them; as his riding on an ass into Jerusalem, the betraying him by one of his familiar acquaintance, the selling him for thirty pieces of silver, the spitting upon, and scourging him, giving him gall for his meat, and vinegar for his drink, and parting his garments, and casting lots for his vesture, and the crucifixion of him, and that between two thieves; and of his burial, resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, and of his future coming to judgment.

{r} Zohar in Gen. fol. 100. 3. {s} Maimon. in Misn. Megilla, c. 4. sect. 1.

John 5:40

Ver. 40. And ye will not come to me,.... Which is to be understood, not of a corporeal coming to him; for many of the Jews did come to him in this sense; some for one thing, and some for another; some for the loaves, that they might eat and be filled; some to see his miracles, and others to partake of the benefit of them; some to hear him preach, and others to catch and cavil at what they could: nor is bare coming to hear Christ preached, or an outward attendance on, and submission to his ordinances, such a coming to him as is here designed; for with these eternal life is not connected: bodily exercise profiteth not in this way; but a spiritual coming to Christ, or a coming to him by faith is here meant; in which sense the phrase is frequently used in this Gospel, especially in the next chapter; see **Joh 6:35**; and those who come aright to Christ, come to him as the alone, able, suitable, and sufficient Saviour; and in themselves as sinners, and ready to perish; and as such they are received by him with a welcome: but these men did not see themselves as such; nor did they see any need they had of coming to Christ; for they thought they had eternal life elsewhere: and such were their ignorance of themselves and Christ; and such their prejudices against him; and such the depravity, perverseness, and stubbornness of their wills, that they had no inclination, desire, and will to come to Christ, any more than power; which is an argument against, and not for the free will of man, unless it be to that which is evil: and this perverseness of their wills to come to Christ, when revealed in the external ministry of the word, was blameworthy in them, since this was not owing to any decree of God, but to the corruption and vitiosity of nature; which being blameworthy in them, that which follows upon it must be so too; and it was the greater aggravation of their sin, that they had the Scriptures which testified of Christ, and pointed at him as the way of life, and yet would not come to him for it:

that ye might have life; that is, eternal life, as is expressed in the foregoing verse, and is so read here in Beza's old copy, in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions. This is in Christ, not only the purpose and promise of it, but that itself: he has the disposal of it, gives the right unto it, and a meetness for it, with all the comforts arising from it, and all the promises and blessings relating to it; and all that come to Christ by faith may, and shall have it: this is the will of the Father, the end of his giving of Christ, and of his mission and coming into the world, and is inseparably connected with believing in him.

John 5:41

Ver. 41. I receive not honour from men. Not but that honour from men was due to Christ; and it becomes all men to honour him, as they do the Father; and he does receive honour and glory, and blessing from his saints, by their praying to him, praising him, believing in him, and serving him; but his sense is, that in asserting his equality with the Father, and in producing the testimonies he did, in proof of it, his view was not to obtain honour and applause among men, but to vindicate himself, and glorify his Father: nor did he say what he had just now said, about men's coming to him, with any such intention, to gather a party to him, to set up himself as a temporal king, in great pomp and splendour, and receive worldly homage and honour from men, as his subjects; for his kingdom was not of this world, and coming and subjection to him were things of a spiritual nature.

John 5:42

Ver. 42. But I know you,.... Being the omniscient God, he knew not only their persons, but their hearts, the thoughts of their hearts; what was in them, and what was wanting in them: particularly,

that ye have not the love of God in you; and which is not in any man's heart naturally; for the carnal mind is enmity to God; and men, by nature, are haters of him, and enemies in their minds to him, till this grace, which is a fruit of the Spirit, is implanted in them, in regeneration: love to God, is one of the weightier matters of the law, the Jews passed over; without which, all the actions of men signify nothing: this they made great pretensions to, and would have had it thought, that it was from love to God, that they sought to kill Jesus, for his violation of the sabbath, and making himself equal with God; but it was not from a delight in the sabbath, or from love to the Lord of it, but out of ill will to Christ, that they expressed such dissembled piety and false zeal: they were lovers of themselves, and not God; they were covetous men, and loved the world, and the things in it, which is inconsistent with the love of the Father; and besides, if they had loved him, they would have loved him that was begotten of him, and not sought to have killed him.

John 5:43

Ver. 43. I am come in my Father's name,.... Power and authority; by his consent, with his will, and according to a covenant with him: Christ came not of himself, of his own accord, by a separate power and will of his own, but was called, and sent, and came by mutual agree meat; and brought his credentials with him, doing the works and miracles which his Father gave him to finish:

and ye receive me not; notwithstanding this they rejected him as the Messiah, and would not receive him as such; yea, traduced him as an impostor, and a deceiver:

if another shall come in his own name; which some understand of Simon Magus, others of antichrist; rather the false Christs are intended, of whom our Lord speaks, in Mt 24:24, who would rise up of themselves, and not be able to give any proof of their mission; or do anything which might entitle them to the character of the Messiah, or Christ, a name they would take to themselves: and so the Ethiopic version reads, "if another shall come in my name"; saying he is Christ, or the Messiah:

him ye will receive; as thousands of them did receive Barchocab, the false Christ, who rose up some years after in Adrian's time; and even some of their greatest Rabbins, as particularly the famous R. Akiba, who was his armour bearer: and it is easy to observe, that though they were so backward to receive, and so much prejudiced against the true Messiah, they were always forward enough to embrace a false one: and indeed to follow any, that set up himself for a temporal deliverer of them; as the instances of Theudas, and Judas of Galilee, with others, show; see **Ac 5:36**. And the true reason why they rejected Christ was, because he did not appear in outward pomp and glory, nor set up a temporal kingdom, or give out that he would deliver them from the Roman yoke.

John 5:44

Ver. 44. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another?.... As the Scribes and Pharisees did, who were ambitious of honour and respect from one another, as well as from the common people; doing all they did to be seen of men, and to gain applause among them: choosing the uppermost rooms at feasts, and chief places in the synagogues, and delighting in the pompous title of Rabbi, Rabbi; and were in expectation of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, when they hoped to be advanced to places of great honour and profit;

and all this was an hinderance to them from believing in Christ, who appeared in such an abject form, and made so mean a figure; whose doctrine was so unsuitable to their carnal minds, and whose followers were so poor and contemptible; and besides it was made a law among them, that those who professed him to be the Messiah, should be cast out of the synagogue: hence many who were convinced that he was the Messiah, durst not confess him, lest they should lose their honour and respect among men, which they preferred to the praise of God:

and seek not the honour that cometh from God only; or "from the only God", as the Vulgate Latin; or "from the one God", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it: the honour that comes from him is, that of being born of him; of being a son or daughter of his, having that new name, which is better than that of sons and daughters of the greatest princes on earth; of being made all glorious within, and clothed with gold of Ophir, with raiment of needlework, with the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation; of being translated into the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and made kings and priests unto God by him; of being set on the same throne with Christ, having on a crown of life and righteousness, and enjoying a kingdom and glory; being heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; which honour all the saints have, or shall have, and which these men cared not for.

John 5:45

Ver. 45. Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father,.... To God the Father, as the Ethiopic version reads. The Syriac and Persic versions read by way of interrogation, "do ye think that I will?" &c. Christ is no accuser of men; no, not of the worst of men; see **Joh 8:10**; he came not into the world to bring charges against men and condemn them, but to save them; to be an accuser is not agreeable to his characters of a Surety, a Saviour, an Advocate, and Judge: there were enough to accuse these persons of; as their perverseness and stubbornness, in not coming to Christ for life; their want of love to God; their rejection of him, though he came in his Father's name; their reception of another, that should come in his own name; their taking honour one of another, and not seeking the true spiritual and eternal honour, which God gives; but though he hints these things to them, he would not have them think that he accused them of them to the Father: the Jews have a notion, that when the Messiah comes, there will be accusations lodged against their doctors and wise men {t}.

"R. Zeira says, that R. Jeremiah bar Aba said, that in the generation in which the son of David shall come, there will be Mymkx ydymltb ayrwgwjq, "accusations against the disciples of the wise men"."

And one of their writers {u} thus interprets, Da 12:1:

"and at that time "shall Michael stand up"; he shall be as silent as a dumb man, when he shall see the holy blessed God contending with him, and saying, how shall I destroy a nation so great as this, for the sake of Israel? "and there shall be a time of trouble" in the family above, and there shall be "accusations" against the disciples of the wise men."

However, there was no need for Christ to accuse them; for as it follows,

there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust; by whom is meant, not Moses personally; for when on earth, he was a mediator between God and the people of Israel, and an intercessor for them; and since he has been in heaven, as the dead know not any thing, he knew nothing of their affairs; and when he was on the mount with Christ, his discourse with him turned upon another subject: but either the writings of Moses, as in Lu 16:29; or the doctrine of Moses, as 1Co 10:2; or rather the law of Moses, Mt 22:24. And in this the Jews trusted; they rested in it, and made their boast of it; and expected eternal life and salvation on account of their having it, and through their hearing it read every sabbath day, and by their obedience to it: and now sin being a transgression of the law, this same law brings charges against them, and accuses them of the breach of the several precepts of it, and pronounces them guilty before God; it curses and passes a sentence of condemnation on them, and according to it, will they perish eternally, without an interest in Christ; for their own righteousness by the law of works, will be of no avail to them; the law in which they trust for life, will rise up in judgment, and be a swift witness against them: so the Jews sometimes speak of the law, as witnessing against the people of Israel {w}.

{t} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 112. 2. {u} Jarchi in Dan xii. 1. Vid. Abkath Rocel, par. 2. p. 265. {w} Prefat. Echa Rabbati, fol. 40. 1.

John 5:46

Ver. 46. For had ye believed Moses,.... The doctrine of Moses, and what he says in his writings:

ye would have believed me; for there is an agreement between Moses and Christ; Christ is the end of the law of Moses, and in him is the accomplishment of his writings:

for he wrote of me; in the books written by him, Christ is spoken of, as the seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head; as the seed of Abraham, in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed; as the Shiloh, to whom the gathering of the people should be; and as that prophet, who should be like unto himself, to whom the people of Israel should hearken; and he wrote many things typically of Christ; and indeed, the whole Mosaic economy was typical of Christ, as the epistle to the Hebrews shows: and therefore disbelieving Christ, was disbelieving Moses; who therefore would be an accuser of them, and a witness against them.

John 5:47

Ver. 47. But if ye believe not his writings,.... They believed them to be his writings, and that they were the word of God, and yet did not believe the things contained in them, respecting Christ; or did not see, and could not believe that they belonged unto, and were applicable to Jesus of Nazareth; and therefore it could not be supposed they would give credit to him, or his words:

how shall ye believe my words? not that Moses was greater than Christ, or rather to be credited than he; Moses indeed was faithful, but Christ was worthy of more honour and credit than he was; Moses was but a servant, but Christ was a son in his own house: but this is said with respect to the Jews, with whom Moses was in great veneration and esteem; and it was more likely they should regard what he should say, than what Jesus of Nazareth should, whom they despised.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 6:1

Ver. 1. After these things,.... After Christ's curing the man at Bethesda's pool, and the vindication of himself for doing it or the sabbath day, and for asserting his equality with God; near a year after these things: for these were done at the feast of the passover, and now it was near another; and what is related here, was after the death of John the Baptist, and when the disciples had returned from preaching in the several cities and towns, where Christ afterwards went, and had given an account of their success; see Mt 14:12. Quickly after the passover was ended, Christ departed from Jerusalem, and went into Galilee, and preached in the several cities and towns in those parts, and wrought many miracles: and after these things, in process of time,

Jesus went over the sea of Galilee; the same with the lake of Gennesaret, **Lu 5:1**;

which is [the sea] of Tiberias; and is frequently so called by the Jewish writers {x}, who often make mention of lv hmy hyrbj, "the sea of Tiberias"; and by other writers, it is called the lake of Tiberias {y}; Pliny, who calls it the lake of Genesara {z}, says,

"it was sixteen miles long, and six broad, and was beset with very pleasant towns; on the east were Julias and Hippo, and on the south Tarichea, by which name some call the lake, and on the west Tiberias, wholesome for the hot waters."

And these are the waters which the Jews call ayrbjd Nyowmyd, or, ymx, the hot baths of Tiberias {a}; and from the city of Tiberias built by Herod, and called so in honour of Tiberius Caesar, the sea took its name.

{x} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 81. 2. & Bava Bathra, fol. 74. 2. Becorot, fol. 55. 1. Megilla, fol. 5. 2. & 6. 1. Moed. Katon, fol. 18. 2. & T. Hieros. Kilaim, fol. 32. 3. & Erubin, fol. 25. 2. {y} Solin, c. 48. Pausan. l. 5. p. 298. {z} Lib. 5. c. 15. {a} T. Hieros. Peah, fol 21. 2. & Sheviith, fol. 38. 4. Kiddushin, fol. 61. 1. R. Benj. Itinerar. p. 53.

John 6:2

Ver. 2. And a great multitude followed him,.... From several cities and towns in Galilee, where he had been preaching and working miracles:

because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased; so that it was not for the sake of his doctrine, or for the good of their souls, they followed him; but either to gratify their curiosity in seeing his miracles, or to be healed in their bodies, as others had been.

John 6:3

Ver. 3. And Jesus went up into a mountain,.... In a desert place near Bethsaida, Lu 9:10;

and there he sat with his disciples; partly for security from the cruelty of Herod, having just heard of the beheading of John; and partly for privacy, that he might have some conversation alone with his disciples, upon their return from off their journey; as also for the sake of rest and refreshment; and according to the custom of the Jewish doctors, which now prevailed, See Gill on "Mt 5:1", he sat with his disciples, in order to teach and instruct them.

John 6:4

Ver. 4. And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. This was the third passover, since our Lord's baptism, and entrance on his public ministry; see Joh 2:13. Whether Christ went up to this feast is not certain; some think he did not; but from what is said in Joh 7:1, it looks as if he did: how nigh it was to the feast, cannot well be said. Thirty days before the feast, they began to talk about it; and especially in the last fifteen days, they made preparations for it, as being at hand {b}; and if there was now so long time to it, there was time enough for Jesus to go to it.

{b} T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 6. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Shekalim, c. 3. sect. 1.

John 6:5

Ver. 5. When Jesus then lift up [his] eyes,.... Being before engaged in close conversation with his disciples, and looking wistly and intently on them, whilst he was discoursing with them:

and saw a great company come unto him; who came on foot, over the bridge at Chammath, from Capernaum, and other cities of Galilee:

he saith unto Philip; he directed his discourse to him particularly, because he was of Bethsaida, near to which place Christ now was, and therefore might be best able to answer the following question:

whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? This, according to the other evangelists, must be said after Christ came from the mountain, and the people were come to him, and he had received them kindly, and had instructed them about the kingdom of God, and had healed the diseased among them, and expressed great compassion for them; and after the disciples had desired him to dismiss them, that they might go to the adjacent towns, and provide food for themselves; which Christ would not admit of and declared it unnecessary, and then put this question, with the following view.

John 6:6

Ver. 6. And this he said to prove him,.... Or "tempting him", trying his faith, and not only his, but the rest of the disciples; not as ignorant of it himself, but in order to discover it to him and them, and to prepare them for the following miracle; and that it might appear the more illustrious and marvellous:

for he himself knew what he would do; Christ had determined to work a miracle, and feed the large number of people that were with him, with that small provision they had among them; and being God omniscient, he knew that he was able to do it, and that he was determined to do it, and it would be done; but he was willing first to try the faith of his apostles.

John 6:7

Ver. 7. Philip answered him,.... Very quick and short, and in a carnal and unbelieving way:

two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them. Two hundred pence, or "Roman denarii", which may be here meant, amount to six pounds five shillings of our money; and this sum is mentioned, because it might be the whole stock that was in the bag, or that Christ and his disciples had; or because this was a round sum, much in use among the Jews; See Gill on "Mr 6:37". Or this may be said by Philip, to show how impracticable it was to provide for such a company; that supposing they had two hundred pence to lay out in this way; though where should they have that, he suggests? yet if they had it, as much bread as that would purchase would not be sufficient:

that everyone of them might take a little; it would be so far from giving them a meal, or proper refreshment, that everyone could not have a small bit to taste of, or in the least to stay or blunt his appetite: a penny, with the Jews, would buy as much bread as would serve ten men; so that two hundred pence would buy bread enough for two thousand men; but here were three thousand more, besides women and children, who could not have been provided for with such a sum of money.

John 6:8

Ver. 8. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother,.... Who also, and his brother Peter, were of Bethsaida, as well as Philip, and was a disciple of Christ's; he hearing what Christ said to Philip, and what answer he returned,

saith unto him; to Christ, with but little more faith than Philip, if any.

John 6:9

Ver. 9. There is a lad here,.... Who either belonged to Christ and his disciples, and was employed to carry their provisions for them; which, if so, shows how meanly Christ and his disciples lived; or he belonged to some in the multitude; or rather he came here to sell what he had got:

which hath five barley loaves. The land of Canaan was a land of barley, as well as wheat, **De 8:8**; this sort of grain grew there in plenty, and was in much use; the Jews had a barley harvest, **Ru 1:22**, which was at the time of the passover; for on the second day after the passover, the sheaf of the first fruits was waved before the Lord, which was of barley; hence the Targumist on the place just cited, paraphrases it thus;

"they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of the passover, and on the day the children of Israel began to reap the sheaf of the wave offering, which was of barley."

And it was now about the time of the passover, as appears from **Joh 6:4**, and had it been quite the time, and the barley sheaf had been waved, it might have been thought that these loaves were made of the new barley; but though barley was in use for bread among the Jews, as is evident, from the mention that is made of barley loaves and cakes, **2Ki 4:42**; yet it was bread of the coarsest sort, and what the meaner sort of people ate; see **Eze 4:12**. Yea, barley was used for food for horses and dromedaries, **1Ki 4:28**; and since therefore these loaves were, if not designed for the use of Christ and his twelve apostles, yet for some of his followers, and which they all ate of; it is an instance of the meanness and poverty of them: but however, they had better bread than this, even the bread of life, which is afterwards largely treated of in this chapter, which some of them at least ate of; and as our countryman Mr. Dod used to say,

"brown bread and the Gospel are good fare:"

and it may be further observed, that the number of these loaves were but few; there were but "five" of them, for "five thousand" persons; and these do not seem to be very large ones, since one lad was able to carry them; and indeed, these loaves were no other than cakes, in which form they used to be made:

and two small fishes; there were but "two", and these "small"; it is amazing, that five thousand persons should everyone have something of them, and enough: these fishes seem to be what the Jews {c} call
ynynwm, and which the gloss interprets "small fishes": and by the word which is used of them, they seem to be salted, or pickled fishes, and such it is very probable these were; Nonnus calls them,
icyuav optaleouv, "fishes which were broiled", or perhaps dried in the sun; see Lu 24:42.

But what are they among so many? everyone cannot possibly have a taste, much less any refreshment, still less a meal.

{c} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 60. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 49. 1.

John 6:10

Ver. 10. Jesus said, make the men sit down,.... The Syriac version reads, "all the men"; and the Persic version, "all the people"; men, women, and children: Christ, without reproving his disciples for their unbelief, ordered them directly to place the people upon the ground, and seat them in rows by hundreds and by fifties, in a rank and company, as persons about to take a meal:

now there was much grass in the place; at the bottom of the mountain; and it was green, as one of the evangelists observes, it being the spring of the year, and was very commodious to sit down upon:

so the men sat down, in number about five thousand; besides women and children, Mt 14:21, so that there was but one loaf for more than a thousand persons.

John 6:11

Ver. 11. And Jesus took the loaves,.... Into his hands, as also the fishes, in order to feed the multitude with them:

and when he had given thanks; for them, and blessed them, or implored a blessing on them, that they might be nourishing to the bodies of men, as was his usual manner, and which is an example to us;

he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were sat down. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, only read, "he distributed to them that were sat down": but it was not by his own hands, but by the means of the disciples, who received from him, and gave it to them; so that the sense is the same;

and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would; that is, they had as much, both of the bread and of the fishes, distributed to them, and which they took and ate, as they chose: in some printed copies it is read, "as much as he would", and so the Persic version; that is, as much as Jesus would; but the former is the true reading, and makes the miracle more illustrious.

John 6:12

Ver. 12. When they were filled,.... Had not only eaten, but had made a full meal, and were thoroughly satisfied, having eaten as much as they could, or chose to eat:

he said unto his disciples, gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost; this he said, partly that the truth, reality, and greatness of the miracle might be clearly discerned; and partly, to teach frugality, that, in the midst of abundance, care be taken that nothing be lost of the good things which God gives; and which may be useful to other persons, or at another time.

John 6:13

Ver. 13. Therefore they gathered [them] together,.... The several broken bits of bread, which lay about upon the grass, which the people had left, after they had been sufficiently refreshed:

and filled twelve baskets; every disciple had a basket filled:

with the fragments of the five barley loaves; and it may be of the fishes also:

which remained over and above unto them that had eaten; such a marvellous increase was there, through the power of Christ going along with them; insomuch that they multiplied to such a degree, either in the hands of the distributors, or of the eaters.

John 6:14

Ver. 14. Then those men,.... The five thousand men, who had been fed with the loaves and fishes:

when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did; in feeding so many of them, with so small a quantity of food; in multiplying the provision in such a prodigious manner, that after they had eaten to the full, so many baskets of fragments were taken up:

said, this is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world; meaning that prophet, that Moses spoke of, in De 18:15; for the ancient Jews understood this passage of the Messiah, though the modern ones apply it to others; See Gill on "Ac 3:22". And these men concluded that Jesus was that prophet, or the true Messiah, from the miracle he wrought; in which he appeared, not only to be like to Moses, but greater than he.

John 6:15

Ver. 15. When Jesus therefore perceived,.... As being the omniscient God, who knew their hearts, and the secret thoughts and purposes of them; or, as man, understood by their words and gestures:

that they would come and take him by force, and make him a king; that they had "determined", as the Arabic version renders it; or "had it in their mind", as the Persic; to gather about him as one man, and seize him in a violent manner, whether he would or not; and proclaim him the King Messiah; place him at the head of them, to deliver the nation from the Roman yoke, and set up a temporal kingdom, in which they might hope for great secular advantages: and they might the rather be induced to take such a step, since, by this miracle, they could not doubt of his being able to support such an army of men, and to succeed in the enterprise; for he that could do this, what was it he could not do? but,

he departed again into a mountain, himself alone; he left the company directly, upon this resolution of theirs, and even took not his disciples with him, who were in the same way of thinking about a temporal kingdom, as the people, and might encourage them in this undertaking: the mountain Christ went into, very probably was the same he went up to before; the reasons of his departure, were to prevent the attempt; to show that his kingdom was not of this world; to teach his followers to forsake the honours and riches of this world, for his sake; and to let them know, that those who sought only for a temporal redeemer, were unworthy of his presence: and also he went away alone, for the sake of secret retirement, and private prayer; and it may be chiefly, that he prayed that God would open the minds of these men, and particularly the disciples; that they might be convinced of their mistaken notions of him as a temporal prince: some copies add, "and he prayed there"; the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Persic versions leave out the word "again"; and the latter, contrary to all others, renders it, "Christ departed from the mountain alone".

John 6:16

Ver. 16. And when even was [now] come,.... The last of the evenings, when night was coming on; for the first of the evenings took place before they sat down to eat, when the above miracle was wrought; see Mt 14:15.

His disciples went down unto the sea; of Galilee, or Tiberias, to the sea side; and this was by the order, and even constraint of Christ, who would have them go before him, that he might be clear of the multitude, and have an opportunity for solitary prayer,
See Gill on "Mt 14:22" see Gill on "Mr 6:45".

John 6:17

Ver. 17. And entered into a ship,.... In which they came, and was waiting for them; or into another:

and went over the sea towards Capernaum; steered their course from Bethsaida, where they took shipping over the sea of Galilee; at least over one part of it, a creek or bay of it, as they intended, towards the city of Capernaum, which lay over against Bethsaida:

and it was now dark; quite night, which made their voyage more uncomfortable, especially as it afterwards was tempestuous: but the worst of all was,

and Jesus was not come to them; as they expected, and therefore were obliged to set sail and go without him.

John 6:18

Ver. 18. And the sea arose,.... Swelled, and was tumultuous and raging; the waves mounted up, and tossed the ship to and fro:

by reason of a great wind that blew; which agitated the waters of the sea, and lifted up the waves; which storm seems to have arose after they had set sail, and were got into the midst of the sea.

John 6:19

Ver. 19. So when they had rowed,.... For the wind being contrary, they could not make use of their sails, but betook themselves to their oars, and by that means got

about five and twenty, or thirty furlongs; which were three or four miles, or little more than a league; no further had they got, though they had been rowing from the time it was dark, to the fourth watch, which was after three o'clock in the morning; all this while they had been tossed in the sea;

they saw Jesus walking on the sea;
See Gill on "Mt 14:25",
See Gill on "Mt 14:26",

See Gill on "Mt 14:29".

And drawing nigh unto the ship; though Mark says, he "would have passed by them", **Mr 6:48**; that is, he seemed as if he would, but his intention was to come to them, and save them from perishing, as he did:

and they were afraid; that he was a spirit, some nocturnal apparition, or demon, in an human form; See Gill on "Mt 14:26".

John 6:20

Ver. 20. But he saith to them, it is I, be not afraid.
See Gill on "Mt 14:27".

John 6:21

Ver. 21. Then they willingly received him into the ship,.... When they knew who he was; and especially he was the more welcome, as they were in distress; and he able, as they well knew, to help them:

and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went; which was done, as Nonnus observes, by a divine motion; for not only the wind ceased, but another miracle was wrought; the ship was in an instant at the place whither they intended to go.

John 6:22

Ver. 22. The day following,.... The day after that, in which the miracle of feeding live thousand men with five loaves and two fishes was done: the morning after the disciples had had such a bad voyage:

when the people which stood on the other side of the sea; from that in which the disciples now were, being landed at Capernaum; that is, they stood on that side, or shore, where they took shipping, near Bethsaida and Tiberias: here, after they were dismissed by Christ, they stood all night, waiting for boats to carry them over; or rather, knowing that Christ was not gone with his disciples, they continued, hoping to meet with him in the morning, and enjoy some more advantage by him: for they saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone; from whence they concluded, that since there was only that boat, and Jesus did not go into it, but that the disciples went off without him, that he must be therefore somewhere on shore, and not far off, and they hoped to find him in the morning; wherefore it was very surprising to them, when they found him at Capernaum, when, and how he got there.

John 6:23

Ver. 23. Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias,.... A city by the sea side, built by Herod, and called so in honour of Tiberius Caesar; though the Jews give a different etymology of it; they say, it is the same with Rakkath, Jos 19:35, and that it was a fortified place from the days of Joshua, and that on one side, htmwx hmy, "the sea was its wall" {d}: and so Jonathan the Targumist on **De 3:17** says, that Tiberias was near the sea of salt: this place became famous for many of the wise men that lived here; here was a famous university, and here the Misna and Jerusalem Talmud were written; and here the sanhedrim sat, after it removed from Jerusalem:

nigh unto the place where they did eat bread; where the day before they had been fed in so miraculous a manner: the meaning is, either that Tiberias was near to the place where the miracle was wrought, or the boats from Tiberias came near that place, and both were true: so that these men that were waiting by the sea side, had an opportunity of going over in these boats in quest of Christ, to whom they were now become greatly attached, by feeding them in so wonderful a manner:

after that the Lord had given thanks; which clause is added to show, that the multiplication of the bread, and the refreshment the men had by it, were owing to the power of Christ, and his blessing it; though this is wanting in Beza's most ancient copy, and in some others.

{d} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 5. 2. & Hieros. Megilla, fol. 70. 1.

John 6:24

Ver. 24. When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there,.... At the sea side, at the usual place of taking boat; and having reason to think he was not on that side of the lake, but was gone from thence:

neither his disciples; when they found that there were neither of them there, but both were gone, and considering that it was to no purpose for them to stay there:

they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus; they might observe, that the disciples steered their course towards this place; and they knew that was a place of general resort with Christ and his disciples; therefore they took boat and came directly thither, and sought for him in the synagogue, it being on a day in which the people used to go thither; and where Christ, as often as he had opportunity, attended.

John 6:25

Ver. 25. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea,.... At Capernaum, and in the synagogue there; see **Joh 6:59**.

They said unto him, Rabbi; or "master", a name now much in use with the Jewish doctors, and by which they delighted to be called; and these men being convinced by the miracle, that Christ was that prophet that should come, honour him with this title, saying,

when camest thou hither? since he did not go with his disciples, and there was no other boat that went off the night before, but that in which they went; and they came over in the first that came out that morning, and he did not come in any of them; and therefore it was amazing to them, both when and how he came, since they could not devise how he should get there by shipping, and also how he should so soon get there on foot.

John 6:26

Ver. 26. Jesus answered them and said,.... Not by replying to their question, or giving a direct answer to that, which he could have done, by telling them that he walked upon the water, and found his disciples in great distress, and delivered them, and came early that morning with them to the land of Gennesaret, and so to Capernaum: but not willing to gratify their curiosity; and knowing from what principles, and with what views they sought after him, and followed him; and willing to let them know that he knew them, being the searcher of hearts, and to reprove them for them, thus addressed them:

verily, verily, I say unto you; this is a certain truth, and was full well known to Christ, and what their own consciences must attest:

ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles; of feeding so large a number with so small a quantity of food, and of healing them that needed it, **Lu 9:11**. Not but that they did regard the miracles of Christ, and concluded from thence he must be that prophet that was to come, and were for taking him by force, and proclaiming him king; but then they had a greater respect to their own worldly interest, and their carnal appetites, than to these, as follows:

but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled; they regarded their own bellies more than the honour and glory of Christ, and even than the good of their immortal souls, and the spiritual and eternal salvation of them: and it is to be feared that this is the case of too many who make a profession of religion; their view being their own worldly advantages, and not the spiritual and everlasting good of their souls, and the real interest of a Redeemer: hence the following advice.

John 6:27

Ver. 27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth,.... Meaning either food for the body, which is perishing; its virtue is perishing; man cannot live by it alone, nor does it last long; its substance is perishing; it is received into the stomach, and there digested; it goes into the belly, and is cast out into the draught; and that which it supports, for a while, is perishing; and both the one, and the other, shall be destroyed; even meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: now, though it becomes men to work for their bread, to provide it for themselves and families; yet they should not be anxiously solicitous about it, or labour only for that, and prefer it to spiritual food: or else food for the mind is meant, and that either in a sensual way, as sinful lust and pleasures, the honours of this world, and the riches of it; which are sweet morsels, though bread of deceit, to carnal minds, and which they labour hard for: or, in a religious way, as superstition, will worship, external works of righteousness, in order to please God, and obtain eternal life and salvation; which to labour for in such a way, is to spend money for that which is not bread, and labour for that which profiteth not; and in each of these ways were these Jews labouring for perishing food, from which Christ dissuades them:

but for that which endureth unto everlasting life; either the grace of Christ, which, as meat, is quickening and refreshing, strengthening and supporting, and which causes nourishment and growth, and by virtue of which work is done; and this springs up unto everlasting life, and is inseparably connected with it; and particularly the blessings of grace, such as sanctification, adoption, pardon, and justification: or the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, which are refreshing, and strengthening, and by which the saints are nourished up unto everlasting life; or rather the flesh of Christ eaten, in a spiritual sense, by faith, of which Christ so largely discourses in the following part of the chapter:

which the son of man shall give unto you; meaning either everlasting life, which is in Christ's gift, and is a free grace gift of his; or else the meat which endures unto it: for though it is to be laboured for, not so as to prepare it, or to purchase it, but by asking for it in prayer, and by attending on ordinances, and exercising faith on Christ; yet it is his gift, and he gives it freely; grace, and the blessings of it, are freely given by him, and so are the Gospel and its ordinances; and also his own flesh, which is first given by him, by way of sacrifice, in the room and stead of his people, and for the life of them, **Joh 6:51**; and then it is given unto them to feed upon spiritually by faith, and which is here designed:

for him hath God the Father sealed; designated and appointed to be the Saviour, and Redeemer of his people, and has sent, authorized, and commissioned him as such; and has made him known, and approved of him, by the descent of the Spirit on him, and by a voice from heaven, declaring him his beloved Son; and has confirmed him to be the Messiah by the miraculous works he gave him to finish; for all which several uses seals are, as to distinguish one thing from another, to render anything authentic, to point it out, or to confirm it.

John 6:28

Ver. 28. Then said they unto him,.... Understanding by what he said, that they must labour and work, though not for perishing food, yet for durable food; and as they imagined, in order to obtain eternal life by working:

what shall we do that we might work the works of God? Such as are agreeable to his will, are acceptable to him, and well pleasing in his sight: they seem to intimate, as if they desired to know whether there were any other works of this kind, than what Moses had directed them to, or than they had done; and if there were, they suggest they would gladly do them; for this was the general cast and complexion of this people; they were seeking for righteousness, and life not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law.

John 6:29

Ver. 29. Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God,.... The main and principal one, and which is well pleasing in his sight; and without which it is impossible to please him; and without which no work whatever is a good work; and this is of the operation of God, which he himself works in men; it is not of themselves, it is the pure gift of God:

that ye believe on him whom he hath sent; there are other works which are well pleasing to God, when rightly performed, but faith is the chief work, and others are only acceptable when done in the faith of Christ. This, as a principle, is purely God's work; as it is an act, or as it is exercised under the influence of divine grace, it is man's act: "that ye believe"; the object of it is Christ, as sent by the Father, as the Mediator between God and men, as appointed by him to be the Saviour and Redeemer; and believing in Christ, is believing in God that sent him. The Jews reduce all the six hundred and thirteen precepts of the law, for so many they say there are, to this one, "the just shall live by his faith", **Hab 2:4**. {e}

{e} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 23. 2. & 24. 1.

John 6:30

Ver. 30. They said therefore unto him,.... Seeing he proposed believing in him as the grand work of God to be done, and what is most acceptable in his sight:

what sign showest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? The people of the Jews were always requiring signs and wonders, and when they had one and another shown them, they still sought for more, and were never satisfied; see Mt 12:39. These men had lately seen various signs and miracles of Christ, as healing the sick, and feeding live thousand of them, and more, with five loaves, and two fishes; and though, for the time present, these had some influence upon them, and they were ready to believe he was that prophet; yet now, at least some of them, begin to retract, and signify, that unless some other, and greater signs were shown, they should not believe in him as the Messiah:

what dost thou work? more than others, or Moses. They seem to make light of the miracle of the loaves, or at least require some greater sign and miracle, to engage their belief in him as the Messiah; and as they were lovers of their bellies, and expected dainties in the times of the Messiah, they seem to move for, and desire miracles of that kind to be wrought; and which sense the following words confirm.

John 6:31

Ver. 31. Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness,.... Which was a sort of food prepared by angels in the air, and rained down from thence about the tents of the Israelites; it was a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground; it was like a coriander seed, and the colour of it was the colour of bdellium: it was so called, either from hnm, "to prepare", because it was prepared, and got ready for the Israelites; or from the first words that were spoken upon sight of it, wh Nm, "what is it?" for they knew not what it was: and this the Jewish fathers fed upon all the while they were in the wilderness, till they came to Canaan's land, and they only; it was food peculiar to them: "our fathers did eat"; and so the Jews {f} observe on those words in Ex 16:35:

""and the children of Israel did eat manna forty years"; the children of Israel, arxa alw, "not another". And the children of Israel saw, and said, what is it? and not the rest of the mixed multitude."

Now these Jews object this miracle to Christ, and intimate, that he indeed had fed five thousand of them with barley loaves, and fishes, for one meal; but their fathers, in the times of Moses, to the number of six hundred thousand, and more, were fed, and that with manna, very sweet and delightful food, and for the space of forty years; even all the white they were in the wilderness: and therefore, unless he wrought as great a miracle, or a greater than this, and that of the like kind, they should not think fit to relinquish Moses, and follow him; and in proof of what they said, they produce Scripture,

as it is written in Ps 78:24, or rather in Ex 16:15; and perhaps both places may be respected:

he gave them bread from heaven to eat; they leave out the word Lord, being willing it should be understood of Moses, to whom they ascribed it, as appears from the following words of Christ, who denies that Moses gave it; and add the phrase "from heaven", to set forth the excellent nature of it, which is taken from Ex 16:4, where the manna, as here, is called "bread from heaven".

{f} Zohar in Exod. fol. 75. 2.

John 6:32

Ver. 32. Then Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you,.... It is truth, and may be depended on, whether it will be believed or not:

Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; in which Christ denies that that bread, or manna, did come from heaven; that is, from the highest heavens, only from the air, and was not such celestial bread he after speaks of, and which came down from the heaven of heavens: and moreover, he denies that Moses gave them that bread; it was the Lord that gave them it, as is expressly said in the passage referred to, in the above citation. Moses had no hand in it; he did not so much as pray for it, much less procure it, or prepare it: it was promised and prepared by God, and rained by him, and who directed to the gathering and use of it. This stands opposed to a notion of the Jews, that the manna was given by means of Moses, for his sake, and on account of his merits: for they say {g},

"there arose up three good providers, or pastors for Israel, and they are these, Moses, and Aaron, and Miriam; and three good gifts were given by their means, and they are these, the well, the cloud, and the manna; the well by the merits of Miriam; the pillar of cloud by the merits of Aaron; hvm twkzb Nm, "the manna, by the merits of Moses"."

This our Lord denies; and affirms,

but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven: he not only gave the manna to the Jewish fathers, and not Moses; but he also gives that bread which the manna was typical of, by which he means himself; who may be compared to bread, because of the original of it, or the matter of it, of which it is made, wheat, he is called a corn of wheat, Joh 12:24; and from its preparation for food, being threshed, and winnowed, and ground, and kneaded, and baked; all which may express the sufferings and death of Christ, by which he becomes fit food for faith; and from its being the main part of human sustenance, and from its nourishing and strengthening nature, and from its being a means of maintaining and supporting life: and he may be called the "true" bread, because he is the truth and substance of the types of him; the unleavened bread, eaten at the passover, was typical of him, as he was free from sin in nature and life; and from all error in doctrine; and so was the showbread a type of his intercession, and set forth the continuance of it, its efficacy and acceptance, of which the priests only shared; and so were the meat offerings in the sacrifices, which were offered up day by day: and particularly the manna, the bread from heaven, the Jews were now speaking of: Christ was the truth of that type; that was but shadowy bread, Christ is the true bread, or the antitype of it in its name; whether it be derived from "manah", to prepare, Christ being the bread of life, and salvation of God, prepared in the council and covenant of grace, and by his sufferings and death before the face of all people; or from the words "man hu", what is it? Christ being as little known by carnal men, as the manna was at first to the Israelites: and in its nature, kind, form, and quality; it was round in form, which might be expressive of the perfections of Christ, and particularly his eternity, being without beginning or end; it was white in colour, which may denote the purity and innocence of him; it was sweet in taste, as he, his fruits, his word, and ordinances, are to them that are born again; it was small in quantity, which may set forth the meanness of Christ in his state of humiliation: it was also typical of Christ in its usefulness; it was sufficient to supply a, great multitude, and that for many years, as the fulness of grace in Christ is sufficient for the whole family in heaven, and in earth, in time, and to all eternity; the Israelites all shared in it, and had all an equal portion of it; so all the people of God have an interest in Christ, and equally participate of the blessings of his grace, and shall enjoy the same eternal life and glory by him: one has neither more nor less than another; Christ is all in all, and made alike all things to them: and he may be called the bread "from heaven"; because he came from thence, not by change of place, but by assumption of nature, even from the highest heavens, the third heaven, from whence the manna came not: he is the Lord from heaven, and is such bread as has a virtue and tendency in it to nourish men for heaven, and is truly of a heavenly nature: and this is Christ's Father's gift, and is of pure grace, without any consideration of works and merits in men. Philo the Jew says {h}, the heavenly food of the soul, which is called "manna", the divine word distributes alike to all that ask.

{g} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 9. 1. Seder Olam Rabba, p. 28. {h} Quis rer. divin. haeres. p. 507.

John 6:33

Ver. 33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven,.... In the way and manner just now mentioned: and which clearly points out Christ himself, who may be called "the bread of God"; to distinguish him from common bread, and to show the excellency of him, and that he is of God's providing and giving, and which he would have his children feed upon:

and giveth life unto the world; a spiritual life, which he is the author, supporter, and maintainer of; and eternal life, which he gives a right unto and meetness for, and nourishes up unto; and this not to a few only, or to the Israelites only, but to the Gentiles also, and even to the whole world of God's elect: not indeed to every individual in the world, for all are not quickened now, not shall inherit eternal life hereafter; but to all the people of God, in all parts of the world, and in all ages of time; of such extensive virtue and efficacy is Christ, the bread of God, in which he appears greatly superior to that manna the Jews instance in.

John 6:34

Ver. 34. Then said they unto him,.... At least some of them:

Lord, evermore give us this bread; that is so divine and heavenly, and has such a quickening virtue in it: these words are said by them either seriously, and to be understood of bread for their bodies, of which they imagined Christ was speaking; and so sprung from ignorance of his sense; and from sensuality in them who followed him for the loaves; and from a covetous disposition, being desirous of being supplied with such excellent food without charge; and from idleness, to save labour and pains in working for it; and from a vain desire of the continuance of this earthly life, being willing to live for ever, and therefore would have this bread evermore; and from a gross opinion of plenty and delicacy of corporeal food in the times of the Messiah; See Gill on "Lu 14:15"; or else these words are spoken ironically, by way of derision, as if there was no such bread; and if there was, that Christ could not give it. However, the words may be improved, when considered as a petition coming from, and suitable to, a sensible and enlightened soul: for such who are sensible of their famishing condition by nature, and of their need of Christ, the bread of life, and whose taste is changed, and have tasted how good this bread is, will earnestly desire always to be supplied with it, and to live upon it; for nothing is more grateful to them, and more nourishing and satisfying to their souls; they are never weary of it; it is always new and delightful to them, and they always stand in need of it, and wait in the use of means and ordinances for it; and this has always an abiding, lasting, virtue in it, to feed their souls, and nourish them up to everlasting life. Josephus {i} says of the "manna", which was a type of this bread, that there was such a divine quality in it, that whoever tasted of it needed nothing else: and the Jews also say {k}, that

"in the manna were all kinds of tastes, and everyone of the Israelites tasted all that he desired; for so it is written in **De 2:7**, "these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee, thou hast lacked nothing", or "not wanted anything"; what is anything? when he desired to eat anything, and said with his mouth, O that I had fat to eat, immediately there was in his mouth the taste of fat.--Young men tasted the taste of bread, old men the taste of honey, and children the taste of oil."

Yea, they say {l},

"whoever desired flesh, he tasted it, and whoever desired fish, he tasted it, and whoever desired fowl, chicken, pheasant, or pea hen, so he tasted whatever he desired."

And to this agrees what is said in the apocryphal book of Wisdom, 16:20,21:

"Thou feddest thine own people with angels' food, and didst send them from heaven bread, prepared without their labour, able to content every man's delight, and agreeing to every taste; for thy sustenance (or manna) declared thy sweetness unto thy children, and serving to the appetite of the eater, tempered itself to every man's liking."

All which must be understood of that pleasure, satisfaction, and contentment which they had in it; for it was a very uncommon case to eat it, and live upon it as their common food for forty years together: and no doubt but that there was something remarkable in suiting it to their appetites, or giving them appetites suitable to that, to feed upon it, and relish it for so long a time: twice indeed in that length of time we read they complained of it, saying, that they had nothing but this manna before their eyes, and their souls loathed it as light bread, Nu 11:6, and lusted after the flesh, and the fish they had eaten in Egypt. And so it is with some professors of Christ, and his Gospel; for there is a mixed multitude among them, as there was among the Israelites, who disrelish the preaching of Christ, and the truths of the Gospel respecting his person, blood, and righteousness, and salvation by him; they cannot bear to have these things frequently inculcated and insisted upon; their souls are ready to loath them as light bread, and want to have something else set before them, more suitable to their carnal appetites: but to such who are true believers in Christ, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, Christ, the true manna, and bread of God, is all things to them; nor do they desire any other: they taste everything that is delightful, and find everything that is nourishing in him.

{i} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 1. sect. 6. {k} Shemot Rabba, sect. 25. fol. 108. 4. {l} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 188. 1.

John 6:35

Ver. 35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life,.... Christ is so called, because he gives life to dead sinners: men in a state of nature are dead in trespasses and sins; and whatever they feed upon tends to death; Christ, the true bread, only gives life, which is conveyed by the word, and made effectual by the Spirit: and because he supports and maintains the life he gives; it is not in the power of a believer to support the spiritual life he has; nor can he live on anything short of Christ; and there is enough in Christ for him to live upon: and because he quickens, and makes the saints lively in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, and renews their spiritual strength, and secures for them eternal life.

He that cometh to me shall never hunger; not corporeally to hear him preach, or preached, or merely to his ordinances, to baptism, or the Lord's table; but so as to believe in him, feed, and live upon him, as the next clause explains it:

and he that believeth on me shall never thirst; and which is owing, not to the power and will of man, but to divine teachings, and the powerful drawings of the efficacious grace of God; see **Joh 6:44**. Now of such it is said, that they shall never hunger and thirst; which is true of them in this life, though not to be understood as there were no sinful desires in them; much less, that there are no spiritual hungerings and thirstings after they are come to Christ; but that they shall not desire any other food but Christ; they shall be satisfied with him; nor shall they hereafter be in a starving and famishing condition, or want any good thing: and in the other world there will be no desires after that which is sinful, nor indeed after outward ordinances, in order to enjoy communion with God in them, as now, for they will then be needless; nor shall they have any uneasy desires after Christ, and his grace, and the enjoyment of him, since he will be all in all to them.

John 6:36

Ver. 36. But I said unto you,.... The substance of what follows in **Joh 6:26** though the Persic and Ethiopic versions render it, "I say unto you"; and so refers not to anything before said, but to what he was about to say:

that ye also have seen me, and believe not; that is, they had not only seen him in person, which many kings, prophets, and righteous men had desired, but not enjoyed, yet nevertheless believed; but they had seen his miracles, and had shared in the advantages of them, being healed, and fed corporeally by him, and yet believed not in him as the spiritual Saviour and Redeemer of their souls; nor did they come to him in a spiritual way, for eternal life and salvation.

John 6:37

Ver. 37. All that the Father giveth me,.... The "all" design not the apostles only, who were given to Christ as such; for these did not all, in a spiritual manner, come to him, and believe in him; one of them was a devil, and the son of perdition; much less every individual of mankind: these are, in some sense, given to Christ to subserve some ends of his mediatorial kingdom, and are subject to his power and control, but do not come to him, and believe in him: but the whole body of the elect are here meant, who, when they were chosen by God the Father, were given and put into the hands of Christ, as his seed, his spouse, his sheep, his portion, and inheritance, and to be saved by him with an everlasting salvation; which is an instance of love and care on the Father's part, to give them to Christ; and of grace and condescension in him to receive them, and take the care of them; and of distinguishing goodness to them: and though Christ here expresses this act of his Father's in the present tense, "giveth", perhaps to signify the continuance and unchangeableness of it; yet he delivers it in the past tense, in **Joh 6:39**, "hath given"; and so all the Oriental versions render it here. And it certainly respects an act of God, antecedent to coming to Christ, and believing in him, which is a fruit and effect of electing love, as is clear from what follows:

shall come unto me; such who are given to Christ in eternal election, and in the everlasting covenant of grace, shall, and do, in time, come to Christ, and believe in him to the saving of their souls; which is not to be ascribed to, any power and will in them, but to the power and grace of God. It is not here said, that such who are given to Christ have a "power" to come to him, or "may" come if they will, but they shall come; efficacious grace will bring them to Christ, as poor perishing sinners, to venture on him for life and salvation:

and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out; such who come to Christ in a spiritual manner, and are brought to believe in him truly and really, he not only receives kindly, but keeps and preserves them by his power, and will not cast them out, or thrust them from him into perdition: the words are very strongly and emphatically expressed in the original, "I will not, not, or never, never, cast out without"; or cast out of doors. Christ will never cast them out of his affections; nor out of his arms; nor out of that family that is named of him; nor out of, and from his church, which is his body, and of which they are members; nor out of a state of justification and salvation; and therefore they shall never perish, but have everlasting life. The three glorious doctrines of grace, of eternal election, efficacious grace in conversion, and the final perseverance of the saints, are clearly contained in these words.

John 6:38

Ver. 38. For I came down from heaven,.... by change of place, or local motion; for Christ is the immense, infinite, and omnipresent God, and cannot be said properly to move from place to place; for he fills all places, even heaven and earth, with his presence, and was in heaven as the Son of God, at the same time he was here on earth as the son of man: wherefore this must be understood in a manner becoming his proper deity, his divine sonship, and personality: this descent was by the assumption of the human nature into union with his divine person, which was an instance of amazing grace and condescension. The Jew {m} objects to this, and says,

"if this respects the descent of the soul, the soul of every man descended from thence; but if it respects the body, the rest of the evangelists contradict his words, particularly Luke, when he says, **Lu 2:7** that his mother brought him forth at Bethlehem."

But this descent regards neither his soul nor body, but his divine person, which always was in heaven, and not any local descent of that; but, as before observed, an assumption of human nature, which he took of the virgin on earth; and so there is no contradiction between the evangelists; nor is descent from heaven unsuitable to Christ as a divine person, since it is ascribed to God, Ge 11:7; and if God may be said to go down from heaven by some display of his power, and intimation of his presence, Christ may be said to descend from heaven by that marvellous work of his, taking upon him our nature, and walking up and down on earth in the form of a servant; and which was done with this view, as he says,

not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me; that is, not to do his own will, as separate from his Father's, and much less as contrary to it; otherwise he did come to do his own will, which, as God, was the same with his Father's, he being one with him in nature, and so in power and will; and though his will, as man, was distinct from his Father's, yet not repugnant, but resigned unto it: and this will he came to do, was to preach the Gospel, fulfil the law, work miracles, and obtain the eternal redemption and salvation of his people. What the above Jewish writer {n} objects to this part of the text is of very little moment: whose words are;

"moreover, what he says, "not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me", shows, that he that sent, is not one and the same with him that is sent, seeing the will of him that is sent, is not as the will of him that sends."

It is readily granted that they are not one and the same person; they are two distinct persons, which sending, and being sent, do clearly show; but then they are one in nature, though distinct in person, and they agree in will and work. Christ came not to do any will of his own different from that of his Father's; nor do these words imply a difference of wills in them, much less a contrariety in them, but rather the sameness of them.

{m} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 44. p. 434. {n} R. Chizzuk Emmuna, par. 2. c. 44. p. 434.

John 6:39

Ver. 39. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me,.... This explains both who he was that sent him; the Father of him, and of his people; whose sending of him does not suppose any change of place, or inequality between them, or disrespect unto him, or compulsion of him, but agreement between them, and love to the persons on whose account he was sent; and also what is the will he came to do, and is what was declared by him to Christ, when he gave the elect to him: for this expresses his secret will in the council and covenant of grace, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing; that is, that of all the elect which were given to Christ by his Father, in eternal election, he should not lose anyone of them, not the meanest among them, nor anything of theirs, their grace, or glory, or anything belonging to them, either to their souls or bodies, and particularly the latter;

but should raise it up again at the last day; even every part of their bodies, and every dust belonging to them; their bodies being given to Christ, and redeemed by his blood, as well as their souls: so the Jews {o}, speaking of the resurrection, and making mention of that passage in Nu 23:10, "who shall count the dust of Jacob?" add,

"and he (i.e. God) shall order it all, Mwlk dybaty alw, "and not anything shall be lost", but all shall rise again; for, lo, it is said, Da 12:2, "and many of them that sleep in the dust", &c."

{o} Zohar in Exod. fol. 43. 4.

John 6:40

Ver. 40. And this is the will of him that sent me,.... The Vulgate Latin adds, "of my Father"; and all the Oriental versions read only, "and this is the will of my Father"; this is his declared, his revealed will in the Gospel, which the sons of men are made acquainted with, as the other was his secret will, which was only known to the Son till he discovered it.

That everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him; who so sees him as to believe in him; for this is not to be understood of a corporeal sight of Christ, or of a mere speculative knowledge of him, or historical faith in him; for it is not so to see him, as merely to believe what he is, the Son of God, the Messiah and Saviour of the world, or what he says, but to trust in him for righteousness, life, and happiness. Men are by nature blind, their eyes are shut to all that is spiritually good; it is the Spirit of God that opens blind eyes, and illuminates the understanding: and in his light men see not only themselves, their sin, and want of righteousness, and their lost state and condition, but Christ, and a beauty, glory, and excellency in him, ability and willingness to save, a suitableness in him for them, and a fulness of all grace; they see righteousness, peace, pardon, cleansing, wisdom, strength, grace, life, and salvation, and go out of themselves to him for all: and such a sight, though it may be but glimmering, is saving, and is self-abasing, soul rejoicing, surprising, and transforming; is attended with certainty, reality, and evidence, and is a foretaste of glory; for it is the will of God, and not man, of a gracious Father, of an unchangeable and eternal being, whose will cannot be resisted, and made void, that such

may have everlasting life; which will be a life of glory, and will consist in possessing glory both in soul and body; in beholding glory, the glory of one another, the glory of angels, the glory of divine truths, and mysterious providences, the glory of the divine perfections, and of the Lord Jesus Christ; and it will be a life of perfection, of perfect knowledge, holiness, obedience, love, peace, and joy; a life free from all the miseries and inconveniences of this, both in a natural and spiritual sense; a life of pleasure, and which will last for ever: to which Christ adds,

and I will raise him up at the last day; Christ will be the efficient cause, as well as he is the exemplar, the earnest, and first fruits of the resurrection of the dead; he will indeed raise all the dead by his power, but the saints particularly, by virtue of union to him, as the members of his body, and in the first place; and the very same shall rise, and with the same numerical body, that were given to him, and believe in him: and this will be at the last of the last days, at the end of all things; and is mentioned to show, that length of time will not hinder the resurrection of the dead, and in opposition to a Jewish notion, that the resurrection of the dead would be at the Messiah's coming: it will be at his second coming, but was not to be at his first; there was indeed then a resurrection of some particular persons, but not a general one of all the saints: that the Jews expect the resurrection of the dead when the Messiah comes, appears from their Targums, Talmuds, and other writers; so the Targumist on Ho 14:8:

"They shall be gathered from their captivity, they shall sit under the shadow of their Messiah, "and the dead shall live", and good shall be multiplied in the land."

And in the Talmud {p} it is said,

"the holy blessed God will quicken the righteous, and they shall not return to their dust."

The gloss upon it is,

"the holy blessed God will quicken them "in the days of" the Messiah."

And so the land of the living is said to be,

"the land, whose dead live first in the days of the Messiah {q}."

And hence R. Jeremiah desired to he buried with his clothes and shoes on, and staff in his hand, that when the Messiah came, he might be ready {r} with which agree others of the more modern writers; so Kimchi on Isa 66:5.

"They shall live at the resurrection of the dead, in the days of the Messiah."

And the same writer on Jer 23:20 observes it is said,

""ye" shall consider, and not "they" shall consider; which intimates the "resurrection of the dead in the days of the Messiah"."

And says Aben Ezra on Da 12:2:

"The righteous which die in captivity shall live, when the Redeemer comes;"

though some of their writers differ in this point, and will not allow the days of the Messiah, and the resurrection of the dead, to be one and the same {s}.

{p} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 1. {q} T. Hieros. Kilaim, fol. 32. 3. {r} T. Hieros. Kilaim, foi. 32. 3. col. 2. {s} Zohar in Gen. fol. 82. 4.

John 6:41

Ver. 41. The Jews then murmured at him,.... When they found that he spoke of himself as the true bread, the bread of God, and bread of life, and as descending from heaven: and which was to be fed upon in a spiritual manner by faith, which they were ignorant of, and had no desire unto: and thus being disappointed of the delicious corporeal food they expected, they grew uneasy, and displeased,

because he said I am the bread which came down from heaven; for though, as yet, he had not said this in so many words, and in this direct form, as afterwards, in **Joh 6:51**; yet he had said what amounted to it, and which might be easily gathered from **Joh 6:35** The Vulgate Latin reads, "I am the living bread"; and the Persic version, "I am the bread of life". And this last renders the first clause "mocked at him".

John 6:42

Ver. 42. And they said, is not this Jesus the son of Joseph?.... From murmuring they go to mocking and scoffing at his parentage and descent, and object this to his coming down from heaven; and intend by it to upbraid him with the meanness of his birth, being the son of Joseph, a poor carpenter; and suggest, that it was great arrogance in him to claim an heavenly original, and to ascribe such things to himself, that he was the bread of God, and the bread of life, and came from heaven:

whose father and mother we know? for Capernaum and Nazareth were not at a great distance from each other; so that Joseph and Mary might be personally known by the inhabitants of Capernaum, and they might be intimately acquainted with them.

How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? they could not tell how to reconcile these things, not knowing either his miraculous conception and incarnation, nor his divine sonship; otherwise his being made of a woman, or born of a virgin on earth, is consistent with his being the Lord from heaven.

John 6:43

Ver. 43. Jesus therefore answered and said unto them,.... Either overhearing what they said, or knowing, as God, their secret murmurs, and private cavils among themselves, thus addressed them,

murmur not among yourselves: meaning neither about his descent from heaven, nor about coming to him, and believing in him; for it follows,

John 6:44

Ver. 44. No man can come to me,.... That is, by faith, as in **Joh 6:35**; for otherwise they could corporeally come to him, but not spiritually; because they had neither power nor will of themselves; being dead in trespasses and sins, and impotent to everything that is spiritual: and whilst men are in a state of unregeneracy, blindness, and darkness, they see no need of coming to Christ, nor anything in him worth coming for; they are prejudiced against him, and their hearts are set on other things; and besides, coming to Christ and believing in Christ being the same thing, it is certain faith is not of a man's self, it is the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit; and therefore efficacious grace must be exerted to enable a soul to come to Christ; which is expressed in the following words,

except the Father which hath sent me, draw him: which is not to be understood of moral persuasion, or a being persuaded and prevailed upon to come to Christ by the consideration of the mighty works which God had done to justify that he was the true Messiah, but of the internal and powerful influence of the grace of God; for this act of drawing is something distinct from, and superior to, both doctrine and miracles. The Capernaites had heard the doctrine of Christ, which was taught with authority, and had seen his miracles, which were full proofs of his being the Messiah, and yet believed not, but murmured at his person and parentage. This gave occasion to Christ to observe to them, that something more than these was necessary to their coming to him, or savingly believing in him; even the powerful and efficacious grace of the Father in drawing: and if it be considered what men in conversion are drawn off "from" and "to", from their beloved lusts and darling righteousness; to look unto, and rely upon Christ alone for salvation; from that which was before so very agreeable, to that which, previous to this work, was so very disagreeable; to what else can this be ascribed, but to unfrustrable and insuperable grace? but though this act of drawing is an act of power, yet not of force; God in drawing of unwilling, makes willing in the day of his power: he enlightens the understanding, bends the will, gives an heart of flesh, sweetly allures by the power of his grace, and engages the soul to come to Christ, and give up itself to him; he draws with the bands of love. Drawing, though it supposes power and influence, yet not always coaction and force: music draws the ear, love the heart, and pleasure the mind. "Trahit sua quemque voluptas", says the poet. The Jews have a saying {t}, that the proselytes, in the days of the Messiah, shall be all of them, Myrwrg
Myrg, "proselytes drawn": that is, such as shall freely and voluntarily become proselytes, as those who are drawn by the Father are.

And I will raise him at the last day; See Gill on "Joh 6:40"; compare with this verse **Joh 6:40**.

{t} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. & 24. 1.

John 6:45

Ver. 45. It is written in the prophets,.... In the book of the prophets, as the Ethiopic version renders it: the Jews divided the books of the Old Testament into three parts, the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa; now in that division which was called the Prophets, are the following words: or in one of the prophets, namely, in Isa 54:13; so the Syriac version reads, "in the prophet"; though some think reference is had to more prophets, and more passages than one, as besides the above mentioned, Jer 31:34 **Mic 4:2**;

and they shall be all taught of God; by his Spirit to know themselves, and Jesus Christ; that is, all that are ordained to eternal life; all that are given to Christ, and are chosen in him; all the children of Zion, and who are the children of God; these are all, sooner or later, in a special manner, taught of God: and which does not intend mere external instructions, and objective teachings by the ministry of the word, for many are so taught, who never come to Christ; but special teachings, such as are attended with the energy of divine grace, and the power of the Spirit of God, who guides into all truth, savingly and spiritually: for this is to be understood of their being taught in the Gospel of Christ, and not in the law, as the Targum paraphrases it,

"all thy children shall learn in the law of the Lord."

And that this prophecy refers to Gospel times, is clear from the citation and application of the first verse of it, to the church in the times of the apostles, **Ga 4:27**. The Jews themselves acknowledge the prophecy belongs to the times of the Messiah, to which they expressly apply {u} the words in Isa 54:5, "thy Maker is thy husband", &c. And one of their modern commentators allows {w}, that this very passage, "all thy children shall be taught of God", refers, dytel, "to the time to come"; that is, to the times of the Messiah: in this citation, those words, "thy children", are left out, to show that the words are not to be restrained to the people of the Jews, as they might seem by that clause, and to whom the Jews would limit them: for so they say {x},

"they are truly taught of God from whom prophecy comes, which does not to all the world, but to Israel only, of whom it is written, "and all thy children are taught of God"."

But our Lord, by these words, instructs us, and would have us observe, that all that the Father hath given him, whether Jews or Gentiles, of whom he had been speaking in the preceding verses, should be taught of God; and so taught, as to be drawn and brought to him, and believe in him, and have everlasting life: wherefore he infers from hence, that every man, whether a Jew or a Gentile, that is taught of God, will come to him in a spiritual way, and trust in him for eternal life and happiness, as follows:

every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me; everyone that has heard the voice of the Father's love, grace, and mercy in the Gospel, and has learned of him the way of peace, life, and salvation by Christ, under the influence of his grace, comes unto Christ; being encouraged by the declarations and promises of grace he has heard and learned, and ventures his soul on Christ, and commits it to him; trusting and relying on his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, for justification, pardon, atonement, acceptance with God, and eternal life.

{u} Shemot Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 102. 4. {w} Kimichi in loc. {x} Zohar in Exod. fol. 70. 1.

John 6:46

Ver. 46. Not that any man hath seen the Father,.... This is said, lest it should be thought from the above words, that our Lord meant that men should be so taught of God, as that they should visibly see the Father, and vocally hear his voice, and be personally instructed by him; for his voice is not heard, nor his shape seen; see **Joh 1:18**;

save he which is of God; who is begotten of him, and of the same nature and perfections with him, though a distinct person from him, and who was always with him, and lay in his bosom:

he hath seen the Father; has perfect knowledge of him, personal communion with him; has seen the perfections and glory of his person, and the thoughts, purposes, and counsels of his heart, his whole mind, and will, and all the grace, goodness, and mercy which is in him, and has declared it; see **Joh 1:18**.

John 6:47

Ver. 47. Verily, verily, I say unto you,.... This is a certain truth, and to be depended on:

he that believeth on me hath everlasting life; not only he may have it, as in **Joh 6:40**, and shall have it, but he has it; he has it in Christ, his head and representative; he has it in the covenant of grace; he has it in faith and hope; he has a right unto it, and a meetness for it; he has the earnest of it, the grace and Spirit of God; and he has the beginning and foretastes of it in his soul, and shall certainly enjoy it.

John 6:48

Ver. 48. I am that bread of life. See Gill on "Joh 6:35".

John 6:49

Ver. 49. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness,.... All the while they were in the wilderness, for the space of forty years, till they came to the borders of the land of Canaan; this was their only food on which they lived, during their travels through the wilderness. It is observable, that Christ says, not "our fathers", but "your fathers"; for though Christ, as concerning the flesh, came of these fathers, yet in every sense they were rather theirs than his; because regard may be had to such of them more especially who ate the manna as common food, and not as spiritual meat, as typical of the Messiah, as others did; and whom these, their offspring, did very much resemble. Though perhaps the reason of the use of this phrase may be, because the Jews themselves had used it in **Joh 6:31**, and Christ takes it up from them.

And are dead. This food, though it supported them in life for a while, could not preserve them from a corporeal death, and still less from an eternal one: for some of them not only died the first, but the second death.

John 6:50

Ver. 50. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven,.... Namely, that of which he had spoken **Joh 6:32**, meaning himself:

that a man may eat thereof, and not die; for this heavenly bread is soul quickening, soul strengthening, and soul satisfying food; nor can there be any want where this is: eating of it is not to be understood corporeally, as these Capernaites took it; nor sacramentally, as if it was confined to the ordinance of the Lord's supper, which was not, as yet, instituted; but more largely of eating and feeding upon Christ spiritually by faith: he is, by the believer, to be fed upon wholly, and only; all of him, and none but him, and that daily; for there is the same need of daily bread for our souls, as for our bodies; and also largely and freely, as such may do; and likewise joyfully, with gladness and singleness of heart: such as are Christ's beloved, and his friends, "may" eat; they have liberty, a hearty welcome to eat; and so have everyone that have a will, an inclination, a desire to eat; and all overcomers, whom Christ makes more than conquerors, **So 5:1** **Re 2:7**; which liberty is owing to Christ's gracious invitation, and to his and the Father's free gift; and to the openness and ease of access of all sensible sinners to him: and the consequence and effect of such eating is, that it secures from dying, not from a corporeal death, to which men are appointed, and saints themselves are subject; though it is indeed abolished by Christ as a penal evil; nor shall his people continue under the power of it, but shall rise again to everlasting life: but then they are, through eating this bread, secured from a spiritual death; for though there may be a decline, as to the exercise of grace, and a want of liveliness, and they may fear they are ready to die, and conclude they are free among the dead, and that their strength and hope are perished; yet he that lives and believes in Christ, the resurrection, and the life, shall never die; and such are also secure from an eternal death, on them the second death shall have no power, nor shall they ever be hurt by it.

John 6:51

Ver. 51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven,.... This is the same with what is said in **Joh 6:33**, which is true of Christ, as he has life in him; and is the author and giver of life to others; and is of an heavenly original, and came from heaven to give life to men: and such is the virtue of this living and heavenly bread, that

if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; not a natural, but a spiritual life; a life of sanctification, which is begun here, and will be perfected hereafter; and a life of glory, which will never end:

and the bread that I will give is my flesh; or "body", as all the Oriental versions render it. Here our Lord explains more clearly and fully what he means, under the notion of bread; and which shows, that by bread he did not design merely his doctrine, but his flesh, his human nature; though not as abstracted from his deity, but as in union with it:

which I will give for the life of the world; and which he did by the offering up of his body, and making his soul, or giving himself an offering, a propitiatory sacrifice for sin; which was done in the most free and voluntary manner, in the room and stead of his people, to procure eternal life for them, even for the whole world of his elect; whether among Jews or Gentiles; particularly the latter are here meant, in opposition to a notion of the Jews, that the world, or the Gentiles, would receive no benefit by the Messiah when he came; See Gill on "Joh 3:16".

John 6:52

Ver. 52. The Jews therefore strove among themselves,.... Fell to cavilling and disputing one among another; some understanding Christ, and others not; some being for him, and vindicated what he said; and others being against him, and who were the majority, objected,

saying how can this man give us his flesh to eat? which is to be understood, not physically, but as morally impossible and unlawful; since, with the Jews, it was not lawful to eat the flesh of any creature alive, and much less the flesh of man; for the Jews understood Christ of a corporeal eating of his flesh, being strangers to a figurative or spiritual eating of it by faith, in which sense he meant it.

John 6:53

Ver. 53. Then Jesus said unto them,.... The Jews, who were litigating this point among themselves:

verily, verily, I say unto you; or you may assure yourselves of the truth of what follows,

except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you: by "the son of man", Christ means himself; under which title he often speaks of himself; because it was a title of the Messiah under the Old Testament; and was expressive of the truth of his human nature, though as attended with weakness and infirmities. The "flesh" and "blood" of Christ do not design those distinct parts of his body; much less as separate from each other; nor the whole body of Christ, but his whole human nature; or Christ, as having united a perfect human nature to him, in order to shed his blood for the remission of sin, and to offer up his soul and body a sacrifice for it: and the eating of these is not to be understood of a corporeal eating of them, as the Capernaites understood them; and since them the Papists, who affirm, that the bread and wine in the Lord's supper are transubstantiated into the very body and blood of Christ, and so eaten: but this is not to be understood of eating and drinking in the Lord's supper, which, as yet, was not instituted; and some, without participating of this, have spiritual life in them now, and will enjoy eternal life hereafter; and all that partake of that ordinance have not the one, nor shall have the other: and besides, having a principle of spiritual life in the soul, is previously necessary to a right eating of the supper of the Lord. These words, understood in this sense, once introduced infants to the Lord's supper; as misinterpretation of **Joh 3:5** brought in the baptism of them. But the words design a spiritual eating of Christ by faith. To eat the flesh, and drink the blood of Christ, is to believe that Christ is come in the flesh, and is truly and really man; that his flesh is given for the life of his people, and his blood is shed for their sins, and this with some view and application to themselves: it is to partake of, and enjoy the several blessings of grace procured by him, such as redemption, pardon, peace, justification, &c. and such a feeding upon him as is attended with growth in grace, and in the knowledge of him, and is daily to be repeated, as our corporeal food is, otherwise persons have no life in them: without this there, is no evidence of life in them; not such live as feed on sinful pleasures, or on their own righteousness; only such that believe in Christ are living souls; and without this there is nothing to support life; everything else that a man eats tends to death; but this is what will maintain and preserve a spiritual life; and without this there is no just expectation of eternal life; but where there is this, there is good reason to expect it, and such shall enjoy it: some copies and versions read, "ye shall not have life in you"; eternal life. Now, though the acts of eating and drinking do not give the right to eternal life, but the flesh, blood, and righteousness of Christ, which faith lays hold, and feeds upon; yet it is by faith the right is claimed; and between these acts of faith, and eternal life, there is an inseparable connection.

John 6:54

Ver. 54. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood,.... Spiritually by faith, as explained in the preceding verse:

hath eternal life; the principle of spiritual life, which is evidently implanted in him, as appears from his eating and drinking; and is a durable and lasting principle: grace is an incorruptible seed; every part of it is abiding and permanent; and it is itself the beginning, pledge, and earnest of everlasting life, and is inseparably connected with it: moreover, such have eternal life itself, not only in Christ their head, but in themselves: they have a right unto it, and a meetness for it: and may be assured of it, as if they were personally possessed of it, from their election to it; the security of it in Christ; from the grace they have received, which is the beginning of glory; and the earnest of it in themselves:

and I will raise him up at the last day; to enjoy it in soul and body; See Gill on "Joh 6:39",
See Gill on "Joh 6:40".

John 6:55

Ver. 55. For my flesh is meat indeed,.... Not in a corporeal, but in a spiritual sense; and the same is said of his blood:

and my blood is drink indeed, &c. that is, they are both "truly" meat and drink, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions render it; or are "true" meat and drink, as the Arabic version: in opposition to what was typical meat and drink; as the manna in the wilderness, the water out of the rock, the flesh and wine at the passover, the meat and drink offerings under the law, or any other meats and drinks under that dispensation; and which, though not when Christ said these words, yet now are abolished, being unprofitable, and not to be fed upon. Moreover, these phrases may denote the reality, substance, and solidity of that spiritual food believers have in Christ, in opposition to the imaginary food of sensual sinners, who feed on ashes and bread of deceit; and to that of self-righteous persons, who spend their labour and money for, and live upon that which is not bread, even upon their works of righteousness; and to the superficial tastes of hypocrites and formal professors; and to the charge of enthusiasm; and even to the outward elements of bread, and wine, in the Lord's supper, since instituted; and as it may be attended upon by persons destitute of the grace of God. And these words may also be expressive of the virtue, efficacy, and excellency of this food, it being soul quickening, nourishing, strengthening, satisfying, and delightful food, as well as spiritual and savoury; not to carnal persons, or outward professors, but to new born babes, and true believers; and which, by them, may be had, and to the full, and that in due season, even every day, and is what will abide for ever.

John 6:56

Ver. 56. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood,.... In the sense above given; See Gill on "Joh 6:53";

dwelleth in me, and I in him. There is a mutual indwelling of Christ, and believers; Christ is the habitation, or dwelling place of his people: there is a secret dwelling in Christ; so the elect of God dwelt in the heart, and in the hands, and arms of Christ from everlasting; and as members in their head in election grace; and representatively in him, as the Mediator of the covenant; and they secretly and safely dwelt in him, when all mankind fell in Adam; and when he was on the cross, in the grave, and now he is in heaven; all which is owing to his own love, his Father's gift, and to secret union to him. But there is an open dwelling in him in time, which is here meant: God's elect, as in their natural state, are without Christ, and lie open to the law and justice of God; the Spirit of God convinces them of this state, and directs them to flee to Christ, as a city of refuge; when they find him a stronghold, a place of defence, and a proper dwelling for them, where they resolve to abide, and do abide; and where they dwell safely, peaceably, comfortably, and pleasantly; and from which dwelling place they will never be turned out. Likewise, the saints are the habitation or dwelling place of Christ; he dwells not in their heads and to tongues, but in their hearts, and by faith; which is here expressed, by eating his flesh, and drinking his blood; and which, though it is not the cause of Christ's dwelling here, yet is the means or instrument by which men receive him into their hearts, and retain him, and have communion with him; for he dwells in believers, not in such sense as he dwells in the world, by his omnipresence, and power; or in the human nature, by hypostatical union to it; but by his Spirit, and by faith, which is an instance of wonderful condescending grace, and is owing to union to him, and is expressive of communion with him, and is what will continue for ever.

John 6:57

Ver. 57. As the living Father hath sent me,.... Into the world, to be the Saviour of it; not by local motion, but by assumption of human nature; and not against his will, or as having superiority over him; but by joint consent and agreement: the first person in the Godhead is here styled, "the living Father"; not because he is the Father of spirits, of angels, and the souls of men; and the Father of all men by creation, and of saints by adoption; and the Father, or author of all mercies, spiritual and temporal; but because he is the Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ; and this character is peculiar to him: he is indeed the living God, and has life in himself, and is the fountain of life to others; but not in distinction from, and to the exclusion of the Son, or Spirit; but then none but he is the living Father, who ever did, and ever will, live as the Father of Christ:

and I live by the Father; which is to be understood of Christ, not as God, but as Mediator, and as man. As Mediator he was set up by his Father, as the head of life to the elect; and was intrusted by him with a fulness of life for them; and was sent to open the way of life unto them, and bestow it on them. As man, he had his human life from God, and was preserved and upheld in it by him; and he laid it down at his command, and at his death committed his soul or spirit to him; and which was restored unto him, and is continued with him. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, "for the Father", or "because of him"; and may design either that near union and conjunction of Christ with him, by virtue of which they live the same life; or else his living to the glory and honour of his Father, as he did, and does:

so he that eateth me; in a spiritual sense, by faith. The phrase of eating the Messiah was a familiar one, and well known to the Jews; though these Capernaites cavilled at it, and called it an hard saying.

"Says Rab, the Israelites shall "eat" the years of the Messiah: (the gloss on it is, the fulness which the Israelites shall have in those days:) says R. Joseph, it is certainly so; but who shall "eat him?" shall Chellek and Billek (two judges in Sodom) hl ylka, "eat him?" contrary to the words of R. Hillell, who says, Israel shall have no Messiah, for whwlka, "they ate him" in the days of Hezekiah {y};"

that is, they enjoyed him then; for he thought that Hezekiah was the Messiah; but that was the doctor's mistake. The Messiah now was, and to be enjoyed and eaten by faith in a spiritual sense, and everyone that does so,

even he shall live by me: such have their life from Christ; he is their food, on which they lived; and by him they are continued, upheld, and preserved in their spiritual life, and are by him brought to the life of glory: or they live "for", or "because of" him, as the above versions render it; they derive their life from him, and because he lives, they live also; and they live to his glory, and will do so to all eternity.

{y} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. & 99. 1.

John 6:58

Ver. 58. This is that bread which came down from heaven,.... That true bread, the bread of God, the bread of life, living bread; meaning himself, as in **Joh 6:32**;

not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: this is bread of a quite different nature from that; that was only typical bread, this true; that was the bread of angels, but this is the bread of God; that came but from the air, this from the third heaven; that men ate of, and died; but whoever eats of this, lives for ever; see **Joh 6:49**; as follows:

he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever;
See Gill on "Joh 6:51".

John 6:59

Ver. 59. These things said he in the synagogue,.... Openly and publicly, in the place of divine worship, where the Jews resorted for that purpose:

as he taught in Capernaum; his own city, and where there was a synagogue, into which he often went and taught his doctrines, and wrought miracles; see **Mt 3:13**.

John 6:60

Ver. 60. Many therefore of his disciples,.... Not of the twelve, nor of the seventy, but of the multitude of the disciples, who followed him from place to place, attended on his ministry, and might be baptized in his name; see **Joh 4:1**;

when they had heard [this]; that his flesh and blood were truly and really meat and drink, and that none had life in them, or should have eternal life, but such as eat and drink the same:

said, this is an hard saying; or it is to be objected to; so ayvq, "an hard thing", the word here used in the Syriac version, and yle
awh hvq, "it is to me a hard thing", are phrases used to express an objection in

the Talmudic writings, where they are often met with: or it is difficult to be understood and received; so hvqh rbdh, "an hard saying", or "an hard cause", is a cause difficult to be tried and determined, Ex 18:26, and is used of that which seems incredible and absurd, and is surprising and unaccountable: so it is said {z}, that

"it happened to a certain woman, that she came before R. Abika: she said to him, I have seen a spot; he said to her, perhaps there is a wound in thee; she answered him, yes, and it is healed; he replied, perhaps it may be opened, and the blood brought out; she answered him, yes; and he pronounced her clean. R. Abika saw his disciples look upon one another; and he said unto them, hvq rbdh hm, "is this an hard saying with you?""

is it a difficult thing with you? does it seem absurd to you? or are you surprised at it? anything difficult, or which seems irreconcilable, is so called: so the slaying the passover between the two evenings is called by Aben Ezra, in Ex 12:6, hvq hlm, "an hard saying". In like sense the phrase is used here; and the allusion may be to food that is hard of digestion, since Christ had been speaking of himself under the metaphors of bread and meat. As some of the doctrines of Christ are comparable to milk, which is easy of digestion; others are like to strong meat, which belongs to those of full age, and cannot be digested by children, by babes in Christ, and much less be received, ate, and digested, with ease and pleasure, by carnal minds; who therefore say, as these Capernaites did,

who can hear it? this saying, or doctrine, concerning eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Christ; or "him" Christ, who delivered this doctrine: such preaching, and such a preacher, are intolerable; there is no hearing, nor bearing them: hence we afterwards read, that these withdrew from the ministry of Christ, **Joh 6:66**.

{z} Misn. Nidda, c. 8, sect. 3.

John 6:61

Ver. 61. When Jesus knew in himself,.... And of himself, without any intelligence from others, or hearing what was said, being the omniscient God:

that his disciples murmured at it; at the doctrine he had delivered, looking upon it as absurd, incredible, and contrary to sense and reason:

he said unto them, does this offend you? or trouble you? cannot you get over this? cannot you understand it? or account for it? if not, how will you be able to digest some other things, or reconcile them to your minds, which are less known, and more unexpected, and will appear at first sight more surprising?

John 6:62

Ver. 62. [What] and if ye shall see the son of man,.... Meaning himself then in a state of humiliation, and was taken for a mere man, though the true Messiah, and Son of God:

ascend up where he was before? for Christ was, he existed before his incarnation, and he was in heaven before; not in his human nature, but as the word and Son of God: and he intimates, that when he had done his work, and the will of his Father, for which he came down from heaven, by the assumption of the human nature, he should ascend up thither again; and which would be seen, as it was, by his apostles; and which would prove that he came down from heaven, as he had asserted; see **Eph 4:9**; and that his flesh and blood were not to be eaten in a corporeal sense; in which sense they understood him: and he hereby suggests, that if it was difficult to receive, and hard to be understood, and was surprising and incredible, that he should come down from heaven, as bread, to be eat and fed upon; it would be much more so to them to be told, that he who was in so mean and lowly a form, should ascend up into heaven.

John 6:63

Ver. 63. It is the Spirit that quickeneth,.... It is the spirit of man that quickens him; or which being breathed into him, he becomes a living soul; for the body, without the spirit, is dead; it is a lifeless lump: and it is the Spirit of God that quickens dead sinners, by entering into them as the spirit of life, and causing them to live: and it is spiritual eating, or eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Christ in a spiritual sense, which quickens, refreshes, and comforts the minds of believers; it is that by, and on which they live, and by which their spiritual strength is renewed: unless, by spirit, is meant the divine nature of Christ, by which he was quickened and raised from the dead, and ascended up into heaven, and was declared to be the Son of God with power:

the flesh profiteth nothing; the human nature of Christ, though profitable, as in union with the Son of God, to be given for the life of his people, and to be an offering, and a sacrifice for their sins, yet not as alone, or as abstracted from the divine nature; nor would his flesh and blood, corporeally eaten, could, or should it be done, be of any avail to eternal life; nor is any other flesh, literally understood, profitable of itself for life; for man lives not by bread, or meat, or flesh alone, but by the word and blessing of God upon it, and along with it; nor flesh, in a figurative sense, as creature acts and performances, self-righteousness, obedience to the ceremonial law, carnal descent, and birth privileges:

the words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life; the doctrines which Christ had then been delivering concerning himself, his flesh and blood, being spiritually understood, are the means of quickening souls. The Gospel, and the truths of it, which are the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, are the means of conveying the Spirit of God, as a spirit of illumination and sanctification, into the hearts of men, and of quickening sinners dead in trespasses and sins: the Gospel is the Spirit that giveth life, and is the savour of life unto life, when it comes not in word only, or in the bare ministry of it, but with the energy of the Holy Ghost, and the power of divine grace.

John 6:64

Ver. 64. But there are some of you that believe not,.... Notwithstanding the ministry they sat under, and the words they heard; for though they professed to believe in Jesus, as the Messiah, yet they did not truly believe in him; their faith was not a living faith, or of a spiritual kind, but a mere historical and temporary one, and was feigned and hypocritical:

for Jesus knew from the beginning; of his ministry, and of their profession of him, being God omniscient, and the searcher of hearts:

who they were that believed not; i.e. in him, as the Arabic version reads: notwithstanding their following him, and professing to believe in him, and the great outward respect and esteem they showed to him, he could see through all those masks they put on, and knew they had no true faith of him in them; and the same knowledge he has of every professor of his name: he knows whether their faith is of the right kind or not; whether they have obtained the like precious faith with God's elect; or whether their profession is only a verbal one. In some copies it is read, "who they were that believed"; who were true believers, as well as who were hypocrites.

And who should betray him: he not only knew how it was with the multitude of the disciples that professed love to him, and faith in him; but he also particularly knew the case of the twelve apostles, and that one of them should betray him, and who he was. This was determined in the decrees of God, and was foretold in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and was predicted by Christ; and the person was pointed at by him before it was done.

John 6:65

Ver. 65. And he said, therefore said I unto you,.... Referring to **Joh 6:44**, where the substance of what is here said, is there delivered; though the Ethiopic version reads, therefore I say unto you, what follows:

that no man can come to me, except it be given him of my Father; which is the same, as to be drawn by the Father; for faith in Christ is the gift of God, and coming to him, is owing to efficacious grace, and is not the produce of man's power and freewill;
See Gill on "Joh 6:44".

John 6:66

Ver. 66. From that [time] many of his disciples went back,.... Not any of the twelve apostles, for they are distinguished from these in the next verse; nor any of the seventy disciples, for their names were written in heaven, and could not apostatize totally and finally, as these did; but some of the multitude of the disciples, who followed Christ, heard him, and professed to believe in him, and were baptized in his name, but were not true disciples, only nominal ones: they had never heard and learned of the Father, otherwise they would have known what it was to come to Christ, as the Father's gift, and under the drawings of his grace; and would not have been offended at the words of our Lord, just now spoken by him, concerning that sort of coming to him: but from the time he spoke those words; "because of this word", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it; they withdrew themselves from his ministry, they dropped their profession of faith in him, and relinquished him as a Saviour and Redeemer: for finding that he would not be made king, nor set up for a temporal redeemer; and talking of himself as the bread of life, and of coming

to him, in a sense they did not understand; they turned their backs on him; and as the words may be literally read, "returned to the things that were behind"; to the world, and to their old companions, to Satan and their own hearts lusts; like the dog to its vomit, and the swine to its wallowing in the mire: their true picture is drawn, in the parable of the unclean spirit going out of the man, and returning,
Mt 12:43. And they returned to their quondam teachers, the Scribes and Pharisees, and to the law of works, and to seek for righteousness by it; setting up their own righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of Christ; and thus to look back and draw back, is a sad case indeed:

and walked no more with him; never returned to him more, or went with him from place to place as before: never more attended on his ministry, or had any intimacy and fellowship with him: and so it commonly is with apostates from the profession of Christ; they seldom or ever return, or are recovered; it is difficult, if not impossible, which is sometimes the case, to renew them again to repentance.

John 6:67

Ver. 67. Then said Jesus unto the twelve,.... "To his own twelve", as the Persic version reads; that is, to his twelve apostles, whom he had chosen to that office: Christ takes no notice of those that went away from him, he showed no concern about them; he knew what they were, that the truth of grace was not in them, and that they did not belong to him, and therefore was not uneasy about their departure; but turns himself to his apostles, whom he dearly loved, and in a very tender manner thus said to them,

will ye also go away? this he said, not as ignorant of what they were, or of what they would do in this case; he knew full well their faith in him, their love to him, and esteem of him, and close attachment to him, at least in eleven of then; nor did he say this, as having any fears or jealousies concerning them, by observing any thing in their countenances or gestures, which looked like a departure from him; but it was said out of a tender regard and strong affection for them: and it is as if he should have said, as for these men that have walked with me for some time, and have now turned their backs upon me, it gives me no concern; but should you, my dear friends and companions, go also, it would give me, as man, real pain and great uneasiness: or he might say this to show, that as they were not pressed into his service, but willingly followed him, and became his disciples, being made a willing people by him, in the day of his power on them; so they willingly continued with him, and abode by him; as also to strengthen their faith in him, and cause them the more to cleave to him, with full purpose of heart, when others left him; as well as to draw out from them expressions of their regard for him, and faith in him, which end was answered.

John 6:68

Ver. 68. Then Simon Peter answered him,.... Who was strong in the faith of Christ, and full of zeal for him, and love to him; and who was the mouth of the apostles, and always forward to speak out of the abundance and sincerity of his heart, in their name; believing, that they all of them, for he had now no suspicion of Judas, no more than of the rest, had the same faith in Christ, love to him, and esteem of him, as he himself had; wherefore out of a good opinion of them, and love to Christ, he thus addressed him:

Lord; or "my Lord"; as the Syriac version renders it; which was either a title of respect, and the same with "Sir" with us; or else, as acknowledging the dominion and authority of Christ, as Lord of all, and especially of the saints, and as claiming his interest in him; and which carries in it a reason, why he should abide by him:

to whom shall we go? as a teacher, whose ministry we can attend upon, to greater profit and advantage? not to the Scribes and Pharisees, whose leaven, or doctrine, Christ had bid them beware of; who taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and were blind leaders of the blind; nor to John the Baptist, who had declared he was not the Messiah; but had pointed him out to them in his person, as the son of God; and in his office as the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of men; and perhaps, he might not be now living; and if he was, he would have encouraged them not to follow him, but abide with their master; so that there was no other, that was "better", as Nonnus expresses it, that they could go unto; and therefore it would be folly and madness in them to leave him: and as it was with Peter and the rest of the disciples, so it is with all sensible sinners, and true believers, who see there is no other to go to for life and salvation, but Christ; not to the law of Moses, which accuses, curses, and condemns, and by which there is neither life nor righteousness; nor to any creature, or creature performance, for there is a curse on him that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm; nor to their own righteousness, which is impure and imperfect, and cannot justify before God, nor answer for them in a time to come; nor to their tears of repentance, which will not satisfy the law, atone for sins, or wash them away; nor to carnal descent, birth privileges, a religious education, sobriety, and civility, to trust to which, is to have confidence in the flesh, which will be of no avail; nor to ceremonial services, or moral duties, or even evangelical ordinances, neither of which can take away sin. There is no other Saviour, but Christ, to look to; no other Mediator between God and man, to make use of; no other physician of value, for diseased and sin sick souls to apply unto; no other fountain but his blood, for polluted souls to wash in, and be cleansed; no other city of refuge, or strong hold, for souls sensible of danger, to flee unto and be safe; no other to come to as the bread of life, where hungry souls may be fed; no other place of rest, for those that are weary and heavy laden; nor is there any other, where there is plenty of all grace, and security from every enemy, as in him: and therefore, to whom can they have recourse, but unto him? and that for the following reason,

thou hast the words of eternal life: meaning, either the promises of eternal life, which were made before the world began, and were put into Christ's hands, for his people, and are yea and amen in him; or the doctrines of eternal life; for so the Gospel, and the truths of it, are called, **Ac 5:20**; and that because the Gospel brings life and immortality to light, gives an account of eternal life; of the nature of it, that it is a glorious life, a life free from all the sorrows of the present one; a life of pleasure, and of perfect knowledge and holiness, and which will last for ever: and because it points out the way to it, that it is not by the works of the law, but by the grace of God; that it is his free gift, through Christ; and that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, or the true way to eternal life: and because it is a means of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving true believers, and of nourishing them up unto everlasting life: or this phrase may design the power and authority which Christ has, to dispose of, and dispense eternal life; for he has the firing itself in his hands, and a power to give it to as many as the father has given him; and to them he does give it: and each of these senses carry in them a reason why souls should go to Christ, and to him only, for life and salvation.

John 6:69

Ver. 69. And we believe and are sure,.... Or know of a certainty: they believed upon the first call of them by Christ, and their following of him, that he was the true Messiah; and they came to an assurance of it, by the miracles he wrought, and by the doctrines which he taught; their faith, how weak soever it might be at first, rose up to a full assurance of faith, and of understanding; there was a reality and a certainty in it, as there is in all true faith, with respect to the object, though not always with respect to interest in it; which was the case here, as appears by what follows:

that thou art that Christ; or Messiah, that was promised by God of old, spoken of by the prophets, and expected by the Jews; that anointed prophet Moses had spoken of, that should arise out of Israel, like unto him that anointed priest, who, according to the oath of God, was to be priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek; and that anointed King, whom God has set over his holy hill of Zion:

the son of the living God; this they knew, and were sure of, both by John's testimony, and by the father's voice from heaven; which three of them heard, at Christ's transfiguration on the mount: God the father is called "the living God"; though the Vulgate Latin version leaves out the word "living"; not to distinguish him from his son; for he also is the living God; and is so called, **Heb 3:12**, but to distinguish him from the idols of the Gentiles, who have no life nor breath in them: and Christ is called the son of the living God, as he is a divine person, as he is truly God; and to show that he has the same life his father has; being a partaker of the same nature, and divine perfections: and this is another reason why sensible souls will go to Christ, and no other; because he is the Messiah, the Saviour, and Redeemer, and an able one; and because he is God, and there is none else.

John 6:70

Ver. 70. Jesus answered them,.... The disciples, taking Peter's answer to his question, as delivered in the name of them all, and as expressing their mind and sense:

have not I chosen you twelve; not to grace and glory, to holiness and happiness; though this was true of eleven of them, but to be apostles:

and one of you is a devil? or like to one, is a deceiver, a liar, and a murderer, as the devil is from the beginning; all which Judas was, and appeared to be, in the betraying of his master. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, "is Satan"; which name, if given to Peter, as it once was on a certain occasion, Mt 16:23, might very well be given to Judas; who, notwithstanding his profession of faith in Christ, was in the hands and kingdom of Satan, and under his influence and power: and this our Lord said, partly that they might not too much presume upon their faith and love, and steady attachment, and be over confident of their standing; and partly, to prepare them for the apostasy of one from among them.

John 6:71

Ver. 71. He spake of Judas Iscariot, [the son] of Simon,.... These are the words of the evangelist, pointing out the person Christ intended, lest any other should be suspected:

for he it was that should betray him: as it was determined and foretold, and which Christ knew full well, and therefore said the above words:

being one of the twelve; apostles, whom Christ had chosen, and which was an aggravation of his crime.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 7:1

Ver. 1. After these things Jesus walked in Galilee,.... That is, after he had fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, near Bethsaida; and had had that long discourse with the Jews at Capernaum, concerning himself, as the bread of life, and about eating his flesh, and drinking his blood; and had been up to the feast of the passover at Jerusalem, said to be nigh, when he went over the sea of Galilee, **Joh 6:4**; otherwise the above places were in Galilee: but the case seems to be this, that after he had been at Capernaum, he went to Jerusalem, to keep the passover; and finding that the Jews still sought to take away his life, he returned to Galilee, and "walked" there; he did not sit still, or lie at home, and live an inactive indolent life, but went about from place to place, preaching the Gospel, and healing diseases; he walked, and walked about; but not as the enemy of souls, seeking to do all mischief, but to do all good, to the bodies and souls of men:

for he would not walk in Jewry; in the land of Judea, where he had been, and tarried, and made disciples; but being rejected and ill treated, he left them; which was a prelude of the Gospel being taken from them, and carried to another people; which afterwards took place, in the times of the apostles: his reason for it was,

because the Jews sought to kill him; for healing a man on the sabbath day, and for asserting his equality with God: not that he was afraid to die, but his time was not come; and he had work to do for the glory of God, and the good of men; and therefore it was both just and prudent to withdraw and preserve his life; for like reasons he advised his disciples, when persecuted in one city, to flee to another: and very lawful and advisable it is for good men, when their lives are in danger, to make use of proper means to preserve them, for further usefulness in the cause of God, and for the benefit of men.

John 7:2

Ver. 2. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. Which began on the fifteenth day of the month Tisri, which answers to part of our September; when the Jews erected tents or booths, in which they dwelt, and ate their meals during this festival; and which was done, in commemoration of the Israelites dwelling in booths in the wilderness; and was typical of Christ's tabernacling in human nature; and an emblem of the saints dwelling in the earthly houses and tabernacles of their bodies, in this their wilderness and pilgrimage state. Some assign other reasons of this feast, as that it was appointed in commemoration of the divine command, for building the tabernacle; and others, that it was instituted in memory of the protection of the people of Israel under the cloud, as they travelled through the wilderness; by which they were preserved, as in a tent or booth; and to this inclines the Targum of Onkelos, on Le 23:43, which paraphrases the words thus, "That your generations may know, that in the shadow of the clouds, I caused the children of Israel to dwell, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt": and one of the Jewish commentators {a} suggests, that the reason why the first place the Israelites pitched at, when they came out of Egypt, was called Succoth, which signifies "tents", or "tabernacles", is, because there they were covered with the clouds of glory: but the true reason of this feast is that which is first given, as is clear from Le 23:43, and because they were obliged to dwell in tents, as soon as they came out of Egypt, therefore the first place they encamped at, was called "Succoth", or tabernacles,
Ex 12:37. This feast was not kept at the time of year the people came out of Egypt; for that was at the time of the passover; but was put off, as it seems, to a colder season of the year; and which was not so convenient for dwelling in booths; lest it should be thought they observed this feast for the sake of pleasure and recreation, under the shade of these bowers; which, as appears from **Ne 8:15**, were made of olive, pine, myrtle, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees; and were fixed, some on the roofs of their houses, others in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God; and others in the

streets: an account of the sacrifices offered at this feast, is given in Nu 29:13, in which may be observed, that on the first day thirteen young bullocks were offered; on the second, twelve; on the third, eleven; on the fourth, ten; on the fifth, nine; on the sixth, eight; and on the seventh, seven; and on the eighth, but one. The Jews, in their Misna, have a treatise called "Succa", or the "Tabernacle", in which they treat of this feast; and which contains various traditions, concerning their booths, their manner of living in them, and other rites and usages observed by them, during this festival: they are very particular about the measure and form, and covering of their booths; a booth might not be higher than twenty cubits, nor lower than ten hands' breadth; and its breadth might not be less than seven hands' breadth by seven; but it might he carried out as wide as they pleased {b}, provided it had three sides: they might not cover their booths with anything, but what grew out of the earth, or was rooted up from thence; nor with anything that received uncleanness, or was of an ill smell, or anything that was fallen and faded {c}: into these booths they brought their best goods, their best bedding, and all their drinking vessels, &c. and left their houses empty; for here was their fixed dwelling; they only occasionally went into their houses {d}; for here they were obliged to dwell day and night, and eat all their meals, during the seven days of the feast; and however, it was reckoned praiseworthy, and he was accounted the most religious, who ate nothing out of his booth {e}; they were indeed excused when it was rainy weather, but as soon as the rain was over, they were obliged to return again {f} and besides, their dwelling and sleeping, and eating and drinking, in their booths, there were various other rites which were performed by them; as particularly, the carrying of palm tree branches in their hands, or what they call the "Lulab"; which was made up of branches of palm tree, myrtle, and willow, bound up together in a bundle, which was carried in the right hand, and a pome citron in the left; and as they carried them, they waved them three times towards the several quarters of the world; and every day they went about the altar once, with these in their hands, saying the words in Ps 118:25: "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord, O Lord I beseech thee, send now prosperity": and on the seventh day, they went about the altar seven times {g}: also there were great illuminations in the temple; at the going out of the first day of the feast, they went down to the court of the women; they made a great preparation (i.e. as Bartenora explains it, they set benches round it, and set the women above, and the men below); and there were golden candlesticks there, and at the head of them four golden basins, and four ladders to every candlestick; and four young priests had four pitchers of oil, that held a hundred and twenty logs, which they put into each basin; and of the old breeches and girdles of the priests, they made wicks, and with them lighted them; and there was not a court in Jerusalem, which was not lighted with that light; and

religious men, and men of good works, danced before them, with lighted torches in their hands, singing songs and hymns of praise {h}; and this continued the six nights following {i}: there was also, on everyone of these days, another custom observed; which was that of fetching water from the pool of Siloah, and pouring it with wine upon the altar, which was attended with great rejoicing; of which, see Gill "Joh 7:37": to which may be added, the music that was used during the performance of these rites; at the illumination in the court of the women, there were harps, psalteries, cymbals, and other instruments of music, playing all the while; and two priests with trumpets, who sounded, when they had the signal; and on every day, as they brought water from Siloah to the altar, they sounded with trumpets, and shouted; the great "Hallel", or hymn, was sung all the eight days, and the pipe was blown, sometimes five days, and sometimes six {k}; and even on all the eight days; and the whole was a feast of rejoicing, according to
Le 23:40.

{a} Baal Hatturim in Numb. xxxiii. 5. {b} Misn. Succa, c. 1. sect. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Succa, c. 4. sect. 1. {c} Misn. Succa, sect. 4, 5, 6. Maimon. ib. c. 5. sect. 1, 2, &c. {d} Maimon. ib. c. 6. sect. 5. {e} Misn. ib. c. 2. sect. 5, 6. Maimon. ib. sect. 6, 7. {f} Maimon. ib. sect. 10. {g} Misn. ib. c. 4. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Maimon. Hilch. Lulab, c. 7. sect. 5, 6, 9, 23. {h} Misn. Succa, c. 5. sect 2, 3, 4. {i} Maimon. ib. c. 8. sect. 12. {k} Misn. ib. c. 4. sect. 8, 9. & c. 5. 1, 4, 5. & Eracin, c. 2. sect. 3.

John 7:3

Ver. 3 His brethren therefore said unto him,.... That is, the brethren of Jesus, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it; who were not James and Joses, and Simon and Judas, the sons of Alphaeus, the brother of Joseph, the husband of Mary, so called, Mt 13:55, for some of these were of the number of the twelve; and all of them believers in Christ; whereas these his brethren were not. The Jew {l} therefore is mistaken, who supposed the above persons are here intended; and objects this their unbelief to Jesus, as if they knew him too well to give him any credit; whereas they did believe in him, and abode by him to the last; and some of them, if not all, suffered death for his sake. They therefore are to be understood of some distant relations of Mary or Joseph, that dwelt at Nazareth, or Capernaum, or in some of those parts; and the feast of tabernacles being at hand, they put him upon going up to it, being willing to be rid of him: saying, depart hence: which is the language of carnal men, who desire not the company of Christ, nor the knowledge of his ways; and like the Gergesenes, who preferred their swine to Christ, and desired him to depart out of their coasts:

and go into Judea; among his most inveterate enemies, who sought to take away his life; and which doubtless they knew; which showed a quite different regard to him, from that of his true disciples,
Joh 11:7, for which they give some plausible reasons:

that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest: meaning not his twelve disciples, who were now with him, but the disciples he had made, and baptized in Judea, **Joh 4:1**. Or his disciples in the several parts of the land, who would all be at Jerusalem, at the feast of tabernacles; and so, should he go, would have an opportunity of seeing his miracles, and thereby be the more confirmed in the faith of him,

{l} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 45. p. 434, 435.

John 7:4

Ver. 4. For there is no man that doeth anything in secret,.... For so they reckoned his doing miracles in such a corner of the land, and in so obscure a place as Galilee:

and he himself seeketh to be known openly; suggesting hereby, that Christ was an ambitious person, and sought popular applause, and honour and glory from men, when nothing was more foreign from him; see **Joh 5:41**.

If thou do these things; for they question whether the miracles he wrought were real; and suspected that they were deceptions of the sight, and delusions; or at least they questioned their being done by him; and rather thought that they were done by diabolical influence, by Beelzebub the prince of devils: but if they were real ones, they advise him, saying,

shew thyself to the world; or do these openly, and in the presence of the great men of the world; the princes of it, the rulers of the people, the chief priests and sanhedrim; and before all the males of Israel; who at this feast would come up from all parts of the land, and are for their multitude called the world: the reason of this their advice was, that if his miracles were real, and he was the person he would be thought to be, the doing of them before such, would gain him great credit and esteem; and if not, he might be detected by such numbers, and by men of such penetration as were among them.

John 7:5

Ver. 5. For neither did his brethren believe in him. At first they might take to him, and embrace him as the Messiah, and expect he would set up a temporal kingdom; in which they might hope, on account of their relation to him, according to the flesh to enjoy great honours and privileges; but finding that he was not inclined to anything of that nature, and talked in a quite different way, they grew sick of him, and rejected him, as the Messiah; so, little regard is to be had, or confidence placed, in carnal descent from, or alliance to the best of men; as to Abraham, or any other true believer, if they have not the same grace, or the same faith as such have; and which comes not by blood, or natural generation, but by the free favour of God; for it matters not, if men have known Christ, or have been allied to him after the flesh, unless they are new creatures in him; they may be the one, and not the other; even the carnal brethren of Christ, and yet not believers in him; and it is only such who are so in a spiritual sense, that are regarded by him, Mt 12:49.

John 7:6

Ver. 6. Then Jesus said unto them,.... In answer to their solicitations and arguments used with him, to go up to the feast:

my time is not yet come; meaning, not the time of his death, or of his exaltation and glorification, or of the showing of himself forth unto the world; though all this was true; but of his going up to this feast; as appears from **Joh 7:8**;

but your time is always ready; intimating, they might go at any time; their lives were not in any danger, as his was, and had nothing to consult about the preservation of them; it was all one to them when they went up, whether before the feast, that they might be ready for it, or at the beginning, middle, or end of it, as to any notice that would be taken of them, unless they should be guilty of an omission of their duty; but not on any other account; which was not his case.

John 7:7

Ver. 7. The world cannot hate you,.... Because they were of the world, belonged to it; they were like unto it, and every like loves its like; and they were the world's own, and therefore instead of being hated, were loved by it; and they walked according to the course of it; and wicked men not only take pleasure in sin, but in them that do it:

but me it hateth; though without a cause; that is, without a just cause, or reason; a cause there was, and it follows:

because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil; even those works of it, which were reckoned good works; Christ bore his testimony of these, that they were evil; being done either not according to the command of God, but the traditions of the elders; or not from a right principle, as of faith and love, nor to a right end, as the glory of God; but only to be seen of men: and very severely did he inveigh against the pride, covetousness, hypocrisy, and uncleanness of the Scribes and Pharisees: and so he continued to do, and this drew upon him their hatred and ill will.

John 7:8

Ver. 8. Go we up unto this feast,.... Suggesting, that he would not have them stay for him, or hinder themselves on his account: he encourages them to go up, and observe this festival; for the ceremonial law was not yet abolished; and though they were carnal men, and did not understand what it typified: and so unregenerate persons ought to attend on the outward means, as the hearing of the word, &c. though they do not understand it; it may be God may make use of it, for the enlightening of their minds; and blessed are they that wait at Wisdom's gates, and there find Christ, and life and salvation by him:

I go not up yet unto this feast; this clause, in one of Beza's copies, is wholly left out; and in some, the word "this" is not read; and in others it is read, "I go not up unto this feast"; leaving out the word "yet"; and so read the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; and the Persic version only, "I do not go up"; which occasioned Porphyry, that great enemy of Christianity, to reproach Christ, as guilty of inconstancy, or of an untruth, since he afterwards did go up: but in almost all the ancient copies the word is read; and so it is by Chrysostom and Nonnus; and to the same sense the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "I do not go up now to this feast"; that is, just at that very time, that very day or hour: which is entirely consistent with what is afterwards said,

for my time is not yet full come; not to die, or to be glorified, but to go up to the feast.

John 7:9

Ver. 9. When he had said these words unto them,.... Had exhorted them to go up to the feast, and told them that he should not go yet, and the reason of it:

he abode [still] in Galilee; and went not up with his brethren, nor at all at present; showing hereby a firmness and resolution of mind, not using lightness of speech; and his words being not yea, and nay, but all of a piece, and by which he abode.

John 7:10

Ver. 10. But when his brethren were gone up,.... To the feast, as all the Oriental versions read, from the next clause:

then went he also up unto the feast; the Ethiopic version reads, "he went up that day"; which is very likely, and no ways contrary to what is said, in **Joh 7:14**; for though he did not go up to the temple to teach, till the middle of the feast, he might be up at the feast sooner: and according to the law, it was necessary that he should be there on the first and second days, and keep the Chagigah, and make his appearance in the court; though there was a provision made for such that failed, the canon runs thus {m};

"he that does not make his festival sacrifice, on the first good day of the feast, may make it throughout the whole feast, and on the last good day of the feast; and if the feast passes, and he has not made the festival sacrifice, he is not obliged to a compensation; and of this it is said, **Ec 1:15**: "That which is crooked cannot be made straight"; &c."

But however, whatever day he went on, he went up

not openly, but as it were in secret: as he was made under the law, and came to fulfil all righteousness, it was necessary that he should observe every precept, and fulfil the whole law: and therefore he went up to this feast; yet in the most private manner, that he might escape those who would lie in wait for him, and sought to kill him: and this he did, not through fear of death, but because his hour was not yet come; this was not the feast he was to suffer at, but the passover following; which when near at hand, he went up to it, and entered Jerusalem in the most public manner.

{m} Misn. Chagiga, c. 1. sect. 6. Maimon. Hilch. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 4, 5, 6, 7.

John 7:11

Ver. 11. Then the Jews sought him at the feast,.... Some to take him and kill him, and others to hear his doctrine, and see his miracles: for all expected him at the feast, knowing it was always his custom, as it was his duty, as an Israelite, to attend at it:

and said, where is he? not naming his name; either through contempt, which might be the case of the far greater part; or through fear of the Jews; or because that he was so well known.

John 7:12

Ver. 12. And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him,.... There was a general whisper, and a private controversy and contention among the people about him, upon inquiry being made after him:

for some said he is a good man; a man of a good principle, of a good life and conversation; and who is good, kind, and beneficent, both to the bodies and souls of men; preaches good doctrine, and does many good things:

others said: nay, or denied him to be a good man:

but he deceiveth the people; drawing them off from the law of Moses, teaching them to break the sabbath, setting himself up for the Messiah, and asserting himself to be the son of God.

John 7:13

Ver. 13. Howbeit, no man spoke openly of him,.... So loud as to be overheard, at least by many, but in a secret and whispering way; or did not speak with freedom, or all their mind, what they really thought of him, nor with courage and boldness:

for fear the Jews; for fear of being mobbed by them, or up and prosecuted, or turned out of the synagogue; for a law was made, that whoever confessed him, should be so used; and this deterred persons from expressing the true sentiments of their minds about him.

John 7:14

Ver. 14. Now about the midst of the feast,.... About the fourth day of it, for it lasted eight days; this might be on the sabbath day, which sometimes was gxh Kwtb, "in the middle of the feast" {n}; and the rather, since it follows,

Jesus went up into the temple; as the Lord and proprietor of it, and as was his usual method; he had for some reasons kept himself retired till now, and now he appeared publicly:

and taught the people his doctrine; he expounded the Scriptures, gave the true sense of them, and instructed the people out of them.

{n} Misa. Succa, c. 5. sect. 5.

John 7:15

Ver. 15. And the Jews marvelled,.... Both at the matter, and manner of his doctrine; it was such, as never man spake; his words were so gracious, and there were such truth and evidence in them, and they were delivered with such power and authority, that they were astonished at them:

saying, how knoweth this man letters? or "the Scriptures", as the Arabic and Persic versions render it; which are called "holy letters", **2Ti 3:15**; according to which, the sense is, that they were surprised at his knowledge of the Scriptures, that he should be conversant with them, and be able to interpret them, and give the sense and meaning of them, in so full and clear a manner, as he did: or else the sense is, how came this man to be such a learned man? whence has he this wisdom, and all this learning which he shows? as in Mt

13:54. So a learned man is in Isa 29:11, said to be one that rpoh edwy, epistamenov grammata, "knows letters", as the Septuagint there translate the Hebrew text; but how Christ should know them, or be a learned man,

having never learned, was surprising to them: that is, he had not had a liberal education, but was brought up to a trade; he was not trained up at the feet of any of their Rabbins, in any of their universities, or schools of learning; and in which they were certainly right. Modern Jews pretend to say he had a master, whom they sometimes call Elchanan {o}, but most commonly they make him to be R. Joshua ben Perachiah {p}: with whom they say, he fled into Alexandria in Egypt, for fear of Jannai the king: and one of their writers {q}, on this account, charges the evangelist with a falsehood: but who are we to believe, the Jews who lived at the same time with Jesus, and knew his education and manner of life, or those that have lived ages since?

{o} Toldos Jesu, p. 5. {p} Juchasin, fol. 159. 1. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1, fol. 21. 1. & 24. {q} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 46. p. 435.

John 7:16

Ver. 16. Jesus answered them and said,.... Having heard them express their surprise, and state their objection:

my doctrine is not mine: it was his, as he was God; as such, he was the author of it, it was from him, by the revelation of him; and it was of him, or he was the subject of it, as Mediator; it respected his person as God-man, his offices, as prophet, priest, and King, and his grace, righteousness; and salvation; and it was his, as preached by him as man; it came by him, and first began to be spoken by him; and was so spoken by him, as it never was before, or since: but it was not human; it was not acquired by him, as man; he did not learn it of man; he needed no human teachings; he increased in wisdom without them, from his infancy: they said right, in saying he had never learned; the spirit of wisdom and knowledge rested on high, and the treasures of them were hid in him; nor was it a device or invention of his, as man; it was not from himself as such, but it was from heaven, from his Father: wherefore he adds,

but his that sent me; thereby intimating, that it was of God, and was communicated to him by his Father; from whom he received it, and from whom he had a commission to preach it; so that his doctrine was that wisdom which comes from above, and is pure and peaceable, divine and heavenly, and ought to be received by men.

John 7:17

Ver. 17. If any man will do his will,.... Meaning, not one that perfectly fulfils the law, which is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; for there is no man that does this, or can do it; nor is it so said here, "if any man do his will", but "if any man will do" it; that is, is desirous of doing it; who has it wrought in him both to will and do, of the good pleasure of God, by his grace and Spirit; with whom to will is present, though, he has not power to perform, and so is a spiritual man; and who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, which is one branch of the will of God; and who depends upon the Spirit and grace of God, and acts from a principle of love to God, and in the exercise of faith on Christ:

he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or [whether] I speak of myself; not a man of mere natural knowledge and learning, or a man of theory and speculation, is a judge of doctrine; but he that leans not to his own understanding, and implores the assistance of the Divine Spirit, and who is for reducing doctrine into practice: he knows by the efficacy of the doctrine upon his heart, and the influence it has on his life and conversation; by its coming not in word only, but in power; and by its working effectually in him, whether it is divine or human, of God or of man.

John 7:18

Ver. 18. He that speaketh of himself,..... What he himself has devised, and is a scheme of his own; for which he has no divine warrant and commission:

seeketh his own glory; honour and applause from men; as did the Scribes and Pharisees, who taught for doctrines the commandments of men, the traditions of the elders, their own glosses upon the law, and their own decisions and determinations: and as did the false teachers, who had nothing else in view but themselves, their worldly interest, or vain glory; these suited their doctrines to the minds and lusts of men, in order to gain their point:

but he that seeketh his glory that sent him; that gave him in commission what he should say and speak, and his only; as did Christ, and so his apostles after him:

the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him; he is an upright and faithful man, and what he says is truth; he brings true doctrine along with him, and there is no fraud or imposture in him; nor any insincerity "in his heart", as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; nor any dishonesty in his conduct; he is no cheat or deceiver; was he, he would seek his own glory and interest; but as he appears to be a man of no design, his doctrine is to be depended on and received; and such was Christ.

John 7:19

Ver. 19. Did not Moses give you the law,.... After Christ had vindicated himself and his doctrine, he proceeds to reprove the Jews for their breaking the law, which contained the will of God: by which it appeared, that they were no proper judges of his doctrine, though they cavilled at it: the question he puts could not be denied by them; for though, properly speaking, God was the lawgiver, yet inasmuch as it was delivered by Moses, it is ascribed to him, and said to come by him; and it was put into his hands, to be delivered by him, peculiarly to the people of Israel; and being given to the Jewish fathers, not only for themselves, but for their posterity in ages to come, is said to be given to the then present generation; and may be understood, either of the whole system of laws, moral, ceremonial, and, judicial, belonging to that people; or else of the particular law, concerning the keeping of the sabbath, which was a peculiar law of Moses, and proper to the children of Israel only:

and [yet] none of you keepeth the law; though they boasted of it as a singular privilege, and rested in it, and their obedience to it for life and salvation, yet daily broke it in various instances, in thought, word, or deed; yea, those that sat in Moses's chair, and taught it, did not observe and do what they taught; nor could the most holy and righteous man among them perfectly keep it: and many of them, who were most forward to censure others, for the violation of it, paid the least regard to it; and particularly to the law of the sabbath, which both priests and people transgressed, in one point or another, every sabbath day: wherefore our Lord reasons with them,

why go ye about to kill me? an harmless and innocent man, who never injured you in your persons and properties; and which is a proof of their not keeping that body of laws Moses gave them, since "thou shalt not kill" is one of them: though rather this may refer to the law of the sabbath, and the sense he, that since Moses had given them the law of the sabbath, and they did not keep it themselves, why should they seek to take away his life, for what they pretended was a breach of it? for our Lord here, as appears by what follows, refers to what they sought to do, above a year and a half ago, and still continued to seek after; namely, to kill him, because he had healed a man on the sabbath day, **Joh 5:16**.

John 7:20

Ver. 20. The people answered and said,.... These seem to be the country people, who came from Galilee and other parts, who knew nothing of the designs of the Jerusalem Jews upon him; nor were they his downright enemies at least, but rather seemed to favour him, and were on his side, though greatly provoked to hear him talk after this manner:

thou hast a devil; or art possessed with one; thou talkest like one of the demoniacs, like a madman, one beside thyself; whom the devil has so much power over, and has so deprived of thy senses, that thou knowest not what thou sayest:

who goeth about to kill thee? no man; for they could not believe that any man, or body of men, would be so wicked, as to attempt to take away the life of so harmless a person, and who did so much good both to the bodies and souls of men.

John 7:21

Ver. 21. Jesus answered and said unto them,.... Taking no notice of their passion, reproach, and blasphemy; but proceeding upon the thing he had in view, and which he was determined to reassume, and vindicate himself in;

I have done one work; that is, on the sabbath day; meaning, his cure of the man that had had a disorder eight and thirty years, who lay at Bethesda's pool; which single action, they charged with being a breach of the sabbath, he mentions with a view to their many, and daily violations of it:

and ye all marvel; at it, as a thing unheard of, as a most shocking piece of iniquity, as an intolerable evil; wondering that any man should have the front, to bid another take up his bed and walk, on the sabbath day: they did not marvel at the miracle that was wrought; but were amazed, offended, and disturbed, at its being done on the sabbath day.

John 7:22

Ver. 22. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision,.... The command of circumcision, which he renewed and established, Le 12:3;

(not because, or that it is of Moses; originally, or that he was the first giver of it, for it was enjoined before his time; this is a correction of what is before said, giving a more accurate account of the rise of circumcision:

but of the fathers); Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom it was enjoined by God, and who practised it before the times of Moses; so that this command was in force before him, and obligatory upon the descendants of Abraham, before he delivered it; and would have been, if he had never mentioned it; though the Jews say {r},

"we do not circumcise because Abraham our father, on whom be peace, circumcised himself and his household, but because the holy blessed God commanded us by Moses, that we should be circumcised, as Abraham our father was circumcised."

But no doubt it would have been binding on them, if Moses had said nothing about it; the command to Abraham is so express, for the circumcision of his male offspring, Ge 17:10; however, it being both of Moses and of the fathers, laid a very great obligation on the Jews to observe it:

and ye on the sabbath day, circumcise a man; a male child, as they did, when the eighth day fell on a sabbath day; for the law of circumcision was before the law of the sabbath, and therefore was not to be made void by it, nor was it made void by it; and so much is intimated by our Lord's observing, that it was not of Moses, but of the fathers; and this is the reason which the Karaite Jews give for circumcision on the sabbath day: for {s}

"say they, because it is a former command, from the time of Abraham our father, on whom be peace, before the giving of the law of the sabbath, tbvb Mylm wyh, "they circumcise on the sabbath day", and when the command of the sabbath afterwards took place, it was not possible it should disannul circumcision on the sabbath day; and for the same reason, they also allow the sacrifice of the passover to be done on the sabbath day, because it is a command which went before the command of the sabbath."

And this was also the sense and practice of the other Jews: thus citing the law of Moses in Le 12:3. "And in the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised", by way of gloss upon it add, tbvb wlypaw, "and even on the sabbath day" {t}; and on the same text another writer observes {u}, that by Gematry, every day is fit for circumcision. R. Jose says {w},

"they do all things necessary to circumcision, on the sabbath day."

R. Abika says {x},

"all work that can be done on the evening of the sabbath, does not drive away the sabbath; but circumcision, which cannot be done on the evening of the sabbath, drives away the sabbath: they do all things necessary to circumcision; they circumcise, and make bare, and suck, and put (on the wound) a plaster and cummin; and which, if not bruised on the evening of the sabbath, they may chew with their teeth."

Also it is allowed of {y}, to

"wash the infant on the third day of circumcision, which happens to be on the sabbath."

Moreover, a case is put after this manner {z};

"if a man has two infants, one to be circumcised after the sabbath, and the other to be "circumcised on the sabbath", and forgets, and circumcises that, that was to be after the sabbath, on the sabbath, he is guilty of sin; if one is to be circumcised in the evening of the sabbath, and the other on the sabbath, and he forgets, and circumcises that which should be on the evening of the sabbath, on the sabbath, R. Eliezer pronounces him guilty, but R, Joshua absolves him."

And we have an instance {a} of

"R. Sheshana, the son of R. Samuel bar Abdimo, that when he was to be circumcised, it was the sabbath day, and they forgot the razor; and they inquired of R. Meni and R. Isaac ben Eleazar, and it was drove off to another day."

From all which it appears, that circumcision on the sabbath day, was a common practice, and which confirms the assertion of Christ.

{r} Maimon. in Misn. Cholin, c. 7. sect. 6. {s} R. Eliaha in Adderet apud Trigland. de Sect. Karaeorum, c. 9. p. 134. {t} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 132. 1. Mitzvot Tora, pr. Affirm. 28. {u} Baal Hatturim in Lev. xii. 3. {w} Misna Sabbat, c. 18. sect. 3. {x} Misna Sabbat, c. 19. sect. 1, 2. T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 69. 2. Maimon. Hilchot Milah, c. 2. sect. 6, 7. {y} Ib. sect. 3. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 70. 3. Maimon. ib. sect. 6. {z} Ib. sect. 4. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 19. 2. {a} Juchasin, fol. 105. 2.

John 7:23

Ver. 23. If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision,.... As it was certain in many instances he did:

that the law of Moses might not be broken; either the law concerning circumcision, which confirmed the law given to Abraham, and required it should be on the eighth day, let it fall when it would, even on a sabbath day; and therefore on that day, male children received circumcision, that that law might be kept, and not be broken: or else the law concerning the sabbath; and the sense be, if circumcision was administered on the sabbath day, "without breaking the law of Moses", as some render the words, which commanded the observation of the sabbath,

are ye angry at me; and pursue me with so much wrath and bitterness,

because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? or "a man that was whole, sound on the sabbath day"; who was wholly, or all over disordered, every limb of whom shook with the palsy: or as some think the sense is, he was made every whit whole, both in soul and body; and then the argument is, if it was, no breach of the sabbath to make a wound, and lay a plaster on it, as in circumcision; it would be no violation of it, nor ought any to be offended with it, that Christ should heal a diseased man, who was so in every part of his body, and restore health to his soul likewise and nothing is more common with the Jews than to say, the danger of life, and vpn xwqyp, "the preservation of the soul", or life, drive away the sabbath {b}.

{b} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 132. 1.

John 7:24

Ver. 24. Judge not according to the appearance,.... Or through respect of persons, and so as to please men, the Scribes and Pharisees; who had condemned the action of Christ, in curing the diseased man on the sabbath day, and sought to kill him for it:

but judge righteous judgment; give your sense and judgment of things, according to the truth and evidence of them; and do not find fault with that, which you yourselves allow of, and which Moses and his law, and your own practices, justify.

John 7:25

Ver. 25. Then said some of them of Jerusalem,.... Who were inhabitants of Jerusalem, and so are distinguished from the people, **Joh 7:20**, who came up out of the country to the feast; so Jose ben Jochanan is called Mylvwry vya, "a man of Jerusalem" {c}; that is, an inhabitant of it: now these men living in the city, knew more of the temper and disposition, the designs and attempts, of the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, to take away the life of Christ; and therefore say,

is not this he whom they seek to kill? they knew that they had formed a design to kill him, ever since the passover before the last; when he wrought the miracle referred to in the text, and that they had been ever since plotting against his life, and were now at this feast seeking an opportunity to lay hold on him and kill him.

{c} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 4, 5.

John 7:26

Ver. 26. But lo, he speaketh boldly,.... And with great freedom, and openly and publicly in the temple, as if he had a licence from the chief priests for so doing:

and they say nothing to him; do not contradict him, or forbid him speaking; he goes on without control; though he takes great liberty in charging the Jews with an intention to kill him, in arguing from their practices in vindication of himself, and in suggesting that they judged in favour of men, and not according to the truth of things.

Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? have they changed their minds concerning him, and so their conduct towards him? are they convinced, and do they know by plain demonstrations, and full proof, that he is really the Messiah that has been promised of old, and long expected?

John 7:27

Ver. 27. Howbeit, we know this man whence he is,.... They signify, that if the rulers had altered their minds, and had gone into the belief of Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah, they should not follow them in it, for this reason; because they knew from whence he came; meaning not so much the place of his birth, which they supposed was Galilee, and Nazareth in Galilee, in which they were mistaken, as the manner of his birth, which they could account for: they pretended to know his extract, that he was the son of Joseph and Mary, that he was begotten in wedlock, and was born as other persons are; there was no difficulty with them in accounting for his coming into the world, no more than any other ordinary person; his descent from Joseph and Mary was well known to them, and to be accounted for in a rational way, and therefore concluded he could not be the Messiah:

but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is; they knew the place from whence he was to come; so the chief priests and Scribes did, **Mt 2:4**; and so did these Jews, **Joh 7:42**. They knew he would come from Bethlehem, and they knew that he would come out of the seed of David; but then he was to be born of a virgin, according to **Isa 7:14**, and such a coming into the world was not to be known, reasoned upon, and accounted for: wherefore since Jesus, according to the notion of these men, came into the world in the common and ordinary way, they thought they had an invincible argument against his being the Messiah; and therefore, let their rulers do what they would, for their parts, they were determined to reject him: and because it could not be known from whence the Messiah should come; hence the ancient Jews used to call him the seed which comes from another place; not from the place from whence seed ordinarily comes, from the loins of men, but from some other place they knew not where: their words are very remarkable on that passage in **Ge 4:25**: "and she called his name Seth, for God hath appointed me another seed", &c. This observation is made by R. Tanchuma, in the name of R. Samuel {d}; says he, "she has respect to that seed, which is he that comes, rha Mwqmm, "from another place", and what is this? this is the King Messiah."

And elsewhere {e}, the same Rabbi observes on those words in Ge 19:32: "that we may preserve seed of our father": it is not written, "that we may preserve a son of our father", but "that we may preserve seed of our father"; that seed which is he that comes from "another place"; and what is this? this is the King Messiah. The modern Jews {f} endeavour to explain away the sense of this phrase, "another seed", as if it regarded strange seed; and that the sense of the expression is only, that the Messiah should spring from the family of Moab, and from Ruth the Moabitess: nor is their sense what Aquinas {g} at tributes to the Jewish Rabbins,

"that the more noble part of that mass, of which Adam was made, remained untouched (by sin), and was afterwards transfused into Seth; and so through all descending from him, unto Joakim, or Eliakim, or Heli, the father of the virgin, out of which the body of the blessed Virgin was made:"

which is no other than a Popish device, fathered upon the Jews, and made for the sake of the, Virgin Mary, rather than for the sake of Christ. But their meaning is, that Christ should not be gotten of man, or come into the world in the ordinary way of generation, but should be born of a virgin; and so it could not be known, and accounted for from whence he was, or from whence that seed was of which he was made. The angel gives the best account of this in **Lu 1:35**: a body was prepared for Christ by the Lord; it was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost; his birth of a virgin was miraculous; it is beyond the comprehension of men, and cannot explained by any mortal; from whence he is it cannot be said; no man can be pointed to as his father; all that can be said is, he was made of a woman, a virgin.

{d} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 20. 4. Midrash Ruth, fol. 36. 1. {e} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 51. fol. 46. 1. Midrash Ruth, fol. 35. 4. {f} Mattanot Cehunah & Jade Moseh in ib. {g} In 3 sent distinct. 3. art. 2.

John 7:28

Ver. 28. Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught,.... Overhearing the reasonings of these men, however, knowing what they said; so the Persic version adds, "having secretly known this"; exalted his voice as he was teaching in the temple, and in the midst of his discourse, publicly before all the people, in the temple, spoke out with a loud voice, that all might hear:

saying, ye both know me, and ye know whence I am; some, as the Ethiopic version, read these words by way of interrogation, "do ye both know me, and do ye know from whence I am?" no; you do not. Or they may be considered as an ironical concession; yes, you know me, and you know whence I am; you know me to be Jesus of Nazareth, but you are wrong, I am not of Nazareth; you suppose I come, from Galilee, but that is your ignorance; you take me to be the real son of Joseph, to be begotten by him on Mary, but that is your mistake: such is your knowledge of me: you know me indeed who I am, and from whence I come.

And I am not come of myself; into this world, by incarnation, or the assumption of human nature, to work out the salvation of men; the Father called him to it, and he agreeing to do it, was in the fulness of time sent about it; this was not a device of his own, or an honour he took to himself; he was not alone in it; it was a mutual agreement between him and his Father, in consequence of which he was sent and came.

But he that sent me is true; to the covenant he made with Christ, and to the promises he made to the fathers of the Old Testament, concerning the mission of his Son; and he is true to be believed, in the testimonies he gave of him, particularly by a voice from heaven, declaring him his beloved Son.

Whom ye know not; so that notwithstanding all their boasted knowledge of him, they knew not his Father, from whence he came, and by whom he was sent; and notwithstanding also their boasted knowledge of the one, only, true, and living God, see **Ro 2:17**; yet they knew him not in a spiritual sense; they knew him not in Christ, nor as the Father of Christ; they knew neither the Father nor the Son: and this their ignorance of both was the reason of their hatred of Christ, and of his followers, Joh 15:21.

John 7:29

Ver. 29. But I know him,.... His nature and perfections, his purposes and promises, his council and covenant, his mind and will; and indeed none knows him but he, and those to whom he pleases to reveal him; and there is good reason why he should have intimate and perfect knowledge of him:

for I am from him; being the only begotten of him, and as such lay in his bosom, and knew him, and his whole heart, and was privy to all of him, and that that is within him;

and he hath sent me; in an office capacity to redeem his people. This is the original descent of Christ, which the Jews knew not, though they pretended to know him, and whence he was.

John 7:30

Ver. 30. Then they sought to take him,.... By force, and carry him before the sanhedrim, in order to be tried and condemned as a blasphemer, being enraged to hear him claim a descent from God, whom they took to be a mere man, the son of Joseph the carpenter:

but no man laid hands on him; though they had a good will to it, they had no power to do it, being restrained by the, secret providence of God from it, and awed by the majesty of Christ, which showed itself in his looks and words; and perhaps also they might be afraid of the people, lest they should rise in his favour; and so every man being fearful of being the first that should seize him, no man did: however, so it was ordered by divine providence, that he should not be apprehended at, this time,

because his hour was not yet come; to suffer and die, to depart out of this world, and go to the Father: there was a precise time fixed for this in the council and covenant of God, by mutual compact, called "due time"; as his coming into the world is called "the fulness of time"; nor could he die before that time, and therefore no man was suffered to lay hands on him, whatever good will he had to it. And there is a time for every man's death, nor can any man die before that time, or live beyond it; see **Ec 3:2**; and this is the sense of the ancient Jews; for they say {h},

"a man before his years, or his time, does not die;"

that is, before he comes to the years appointed for him: and they ask {i},

"who is there that goes before his time? i.e. dies before his time?"

And it is said {k} of a certain person who was in his house, and hynmz ajm, "his time was come"; and he died without sickness: though it must be owned some of them were otherwise minded, and say {l}, that death, by the hand of heaven, or God, shortens a man's years; and that there are some reasons for which righteous men depart out of this world before their time is come; and particularly of Enoch they say, God took him before his time was come {m}.

{h} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 114. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 85. 1. {i} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 4. 2. {k} Zohar in Exod. fol. 71. 4. {l} Piske Tosephot. Sabbat, art. 113. {m} Zohar in Exod. fol. 4. 4.

John 7:31

Ver. 31. And many of the people believed on him,.... Whilst some were displeased at his doctrine, others were induced by his miracles to believe on him, as an extraordinary person, if not the Messiah; and these were the common people, especially those that came out of the country; for the city Jews, and above all the rulers, were very averse to him: and it is easy to observe, that faith in Christ, and true religion, spread and flourish most among the meaner sort of people.

And said, when Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this [man] hath done? referring not so much to the miracles many of them might have seen done by him in other parts of Judea, and in Galilee; nor only to those he had done in the preceding feasts at Jerusalem, but to those that were done by him now, though not recorded by the evangelist. The Jews expected many miracles to be wrought by the Messiah when he came, and they had good reason for it from Isa 35:5. To these Christ sends John the Baptist, and the Jews, for proofs of his being the Messiah, Mt 11:4; and by these he was approved of God as such, **Ac 2:23**. And it is certain that the ancient Jews expected miracles in the days of the Messiah.

"Says R. Simeon to Eleazar his son, Eleazar, at the time that the King Messiah is raised up, how many "signs and other wonders" will be done in the world? a little after, from that day all the signs, and "wonders", and "mighty works", which the holy blessed God did in Egypt, he will do to the Israelites, as it is said, **Mic 7:15**, "according to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt, will I show unto him marvellous things" {n}."

So the Targumist on Isa 53:8 paraphrases thus,

"from afflictions and punishment he will deliver our captivity, and "the wonderful things" which shall be done for us in his days, who can tell?"

It is true indeed that the modern Jews have laid aside such expectations, and pretend they were not looked for formerly. Maimonides says {o},

"let it not enter into thy heart, that the King Messiah hath need to do signs and wonders (as that he shall renew things in the world, or raise the dead, and the like; these are things which fools speak of); the thing is not so."

And he instances in Ben Coziba, who set up for the Messiah, of whom R. Akiba, and the rest of the wise men of that age, did not require a sign or miracle: yet this same writer elsewhere says {p}, that

"all nations shall make peace with the Messiah, and serve him, because of his great righteousness, and the miracles which shall be done by him."

{n} Zohar in Exod. fol. 3. 4. & 4. 2. {o} Hilchot Melakim, c. 11. sect. 3. {p} In Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1.

John 7:32

Ver. 32. The Pharisees heard that the people murmured,.... Or whispered, privately talked among themselves:

such things concerning him; as that surely he must be the Messiah, since such wonderful things were done by him, and might also express some uneasiness and surprise, that the rulers did not receive him as such:

and the Pharisees, and the chief priests, sent officers to take him: and bring him before the sanhedrim, by them to be condemned, and so a stop be put to the people's receiving him, and believing in him as the Messiah; fearing, that should things go on at this rate, their principles and practices would be rejected, and their persons and authority be brought into contempt.

John 7:33

Ver. 33. Then said Jesus unto them,.... To the officers that were sent to take him, and other unbelieving Jews that were about him:

yet a little while am I with you; no longer than till the next passover, which was but about half a year at most: this he might say, partly to quicken the attention of the people to him, to make the best use and improvement of his ministry whilst they had it, since in a little time he would be removed from them; and partly to suggest to the officers that were sent to take him, that they, and their masters, need not have given themselves that trouble, for in a short time he should be gone from them, and till that time he should continue in spite of them.

And [then] I go unto him that sent me; still confirming his mission from God, expressing his death by going, and as being voluntary, and signifying his glory and happiness after it.

John 7:34

Ver. 34. Ye shall seek me,.... That is, the Messiah, who he was; meaning, that after his departure they should be in great distress, and be very much on the inquiry after, and solicitous for the coming of the Messiah, to be a Redeemer and Deliverer of them out of their troubles:

and shall not find [me]; no Messiah will appear, no Saviour will be sent, no Redeemer will come to relieve them; they shall inquire, and look for one in vain, as they did.

And where I am, [thither] ye cannot come; intimating hereby, that not only their temporal estate and condition would be very distressed and miserable, but also their eternal estate; since they should not be able to come where he would be in his human nature, and where he now was as a divine person, namely, in heaven.

John 7:35

Ver. 35. Then said the Jews among themselves,.... That is, the unbelieving, scoffing Jews; it may be the officers, at least some of them, that were sent to take him:

whither will he go that we shall not find him? what distant, or obscure part of the world will he betake himself to, and there hide himself, that so he cannot be found?

will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles? or Greeks; and so may design the Jews, who were scattered abroad in the times of the Grecian monarchy, under the successors of Alexander, and particularly Antiochus, in distinction from the Babylonish dispersion; or the strangers scattered through Pontus Galatia, &c. to whom Peter writes, **1Pe 1:1**. The Arabic version renders it, "the sect of the Greeks" by which the Hellenistic Jews seem to be meant: or the Jews in general, wherever, and by whomsoever scattered, who might be thought to be more ignorant than the Jews in Judea, and therefore more easily to be imposed upon: hence, in a flouting manner, they inquire, whether he will go to those when he is rejected by them. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "will he go into the countries, or country of the Gentiles"; into Heathen countries, not to the Jews there, but to the Gentiles themselves:

and teach the Gentiles? suggesting, that he was more fit to be a teacher of them, than of the Jews, and might meet with more encouragement and success among them, who would not be able to detect him.

John 7:36

Ver. 36. What [manner] of saying is this that he said,.... It is not easy to be understood; and if that is not meant, which is suggested, what should he mean by saying,

ye shall seek me, and shall not find me, and where I am, thither ye cannot come? repeating the words of Christ just now expressed by him.

John 7:37

Ver. 37. In the last day, that great day of the feast,.... That is, of tabernacles, as appears from **Joh 7:2**, which was usually called
gx, "the feast", in distinction from the passover and Pentecost {q}; and the eighth day of it was called Nwrxah lgrh, "the last day of the feast" {r}, as here: and it was a "great day", being, as is said in Le 23:36, an holy convocation, a solemn assembly, in which no servile work was done, and in which an offering was made by fire unto the Lord. According to the traditions of the Jews, fewer sacrifices were offered on this day than on the rest; for on the first day they offered thirteen bullocks, and lessened one every day; so that on the seventh, day, there was but seven offered, and on the eighth day but one, when the

priests returned to their lots, as at other feasts {s}; but notwithstanding the Jews make out this to be the greater day for them, since the seventy bullocks offered on the other seven days, were for the seventy nations of the world; but the one bullock, on the eighth day, was peculiarly for the people of Israel {t}: and besides, they observe, that there were several things peculiar on this day, as different from the rest; as the casting of lots, the benediction by itself, a feast by itself, an offering by itself, a song by itself, and a blessing by itself {u}: and on this day they had also the ceremony of drawing and pouring water, attended with the usual rejoicings as on other days; the account of which is this {w}:

"the pouring out of water was after this manner; a golden pot, which held three logs, was tilled out of Siloah, and when they came to the water gate, they blew (their trumpets) and shouted, and blew; (then a priest) went up by the ascent of the altar, and turned to the left hand, (where) were two silver basins--that on the west side was filled with water, and that on the east with wine; he poured the basin of water into that of wine, and that of wine into that of water."

At which time there were great rejoicing, piping, and dancing, by the most religious and sober people among the Jews; insomuch that it is said {x}, that

"he that never saw the rejoicing of the place of drawing of water, never saw any rejoicing in his life."

And this ceremony, they say {y}, is a tradition of Moses from Mount Sinai, and refers to some secret and mysterious things; yea, they plainly say, that it has respect to the pouring forth of the Holy Ghost {z}.

"Says R. Joshua ben Levi, why is its name called the place of drawing water? because, from thence vdwqh xwr Mybawv, "they draw the Holy Ghost", as it is said, "and ye shall draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation", Isa 12:3."

Moreover, it was on this day they prayed for the rains for the year ensuing: it is asked {a},

"from what time do they make mention of the powers of the rains (which descend by the power of God)? R. Eliezer says, from the first good day of the feast (of tabernacles); R. Joshua says, from the last good day of the feast.--They do not pray for the rains, but near the rains;"

that is, the time of rains; and which, one of their commentators says {b}, is the eighth day of the feast of tabernacles; for from the feast of tabernacles, thenceforward is the time of rains. The Jews have a notion, that at this feast the rains of the ensuing year were fixed: hence they say {c}, that

"at the feast of tabernacles judgment is made concerning the waters;"

or a decree or determination is made concerning them by God. Upon which the Gemara {d} has these words,

"wherefore does the law say pour out water on the feast of tabernacles? Says the holy blessed God, pour out water before me, that the rains of the year may be blessed unto you."

Now when all these things are considered, it will easily be seen with what pertinency our Lord expresses himself on this day, with respect to the effusion of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, as follows:

Jesus stood and cried; he now stood up, whereas at other times he used to sit, and spoke with a loud voice, both to show his fervour and earnestness, and that all might hear:

saying, if any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. This is to be understood not of a natural thirst, though the allusion is to it, which is very painful and distressing; as the instances of the Israelites in the wilderness, Samson after he had slain the Philistines, and our Lord upon the cross, show; much less a sinful thirst, a thirst after the riches, honours, and pleasures of this life; but a spiritual thirst, or a thirst after spiritual things, after salvation by Christ, and a view of interest in it, free and full pardon of sin through him, justification by his righteousness, a greater degree of knowledge of him, more communion with him, and conformity to him, and after the sincere milk of the word, and the breasts of Gospel ordinances: and such that thirst after these things, and eagerly desire them, and are in pain and uneasiness without them, as a man is, who has a violent thirst upon him, are such as are regenerated and quickened by the Spirit of God, and are made sensible of themselves, and of their state and condition by nature. Now these Christ invites to come unto him, not to Moses and his law, moral or ceremonial, and to obedience to them, and works of righteousness done by them, to any creature, or creature acts; for these are cisterns without water, where no true peace, joy, righteousness, and salvation are to be had; but to himself, who is the fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, and who is as rivers of water in a dry land, to thirsty souls:

and when come to him, which is by believing in him, they are encouraged to drink; that is, to take of the water of life freely, or to take of his grace freely; salvation by him is of free grace, and the pardon of sin is according to the riches of grace, and justification is freely by his grace, and so all other blessings; and of this they may drink abundantly, or they may partake of it largely: there is a fulness of grace in Christ, and there is an abundance of it communicated to his people; it is exceeding abundant; it flows, and overflows, and may be drank of to satisfaction, till their souls are as a watered garden, and they are satisfied with the goodness of the Lord.

{q} Shirshashirim Rabba, fol. 5. 3. & 7. 3. {r} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 7. sect. 6. & Maimon. in ib. {s} Bartenora in Misn. Succa, c. 5. sect. 6. {t} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 55. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 231. 1. {u} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 48. 1. {w} Misn. Succa, c. 4. sect. 9. {x} Misn. Succa, c. 5. sect. 1, 4. {y} T. Zebachim, fol. 110. 2. Maimon. in Misn. Succa, c. 4. sect. 9. & Hilthot Tamidin, c. 10. sect. 6. {z} T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 55. 1. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 70. fol. 62. 3. & Midrash Ruth, fol. 32. 2. Caphtor, fol. 52. 1. {a} Misn. Taanith, c. 1. sect. 1, 2. {b} Bartenora, in ib. {c} Misn. Roshhashana, c. 1. sect. 2. {d} T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 16. 1.

John 7:38

Ver. 38. He that believeth on me,.... Which explains what is meant by coming to Christ, and drinking; for these acts are no other than for a man to go out of himself to Christ, and live by faith on him, and his grace. To which what follows is a great encouragement;

as the Scripture hath said: some refer these words to the preceding clause concerning believing in Christ, which the writings of the Old Testament speak of, as in De 18:15, and the sense is, that he that believes on Christ, the object of faith the Scripture points at, and in him, as that directs and requires; that believes in him as the mighty God, and as the prophet, priest, and King, and as the only foundation of the church, and lives by faith upon him, as just men do, then

out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, though rather they belong to what follows; and do not design any particular place of Scripture; for no such one is to be found, where the following passage is expressed in so many words; but all those Scriptures which speak of grace, under the metaphors of water, and abundance of water, as rivers and floods of water, and of the effusion of the Holy Spirit, under such figurative expressions, such as Isa 41:17. Hence the Syriac version reads in the plural number, "as the Scriptures hath said"; referring to more than one: "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"; the grace of the Spirit of God is signified by water, because it is of a cleansing and purifying nature, as faith and hope are, having to do with the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin; and because it fructifies and causes the saints, as trees of righteousness, to grow, and bring forth fruit; and especially because it is cooling to those who are scorched with the heat of a fiery law, and very refreshing to thirsty souls: and it is called "living" water, because by it dead sinners are quickened, drooping saints are revived, and comforted; spiritual life in them is maintained and supported, and it springs up to, and issues in eternal life: and it is expressed by "rivers" of living water, because of the abundance of it in regeneration, justification, and pardon; it is grace for grace, abundance of grace believers receive from Christ; and from him, in whom those large measures of grace are, they "flow out" again, even "out of his belly": from within him, out of his heart, the seat of it, by his lips, both in prayer to God, and in conversation with the saints, to whom he communicates his rich experiences of grace, to their comfort, and the glory of God: for grace is of a diffusive and communicative nature; out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh: and also it flows out by his life and conversation, which is sober, righteous, and godly; and this the grace of God teaches and influences: and this grace, as it is permanent and lasting itself, even perpetual, and always abiding; so it continues to flow, and to show itself in its acts and effects, in one way or another. The Jews ought not to find fault with Christ's using such expressions, mystically understood, since they, comparing Moses and the Messiah together, say,

"as the first Redeemer caused a well to spring up, so the last Redeemer shall cause waters to spring up, according to **Joe 3:18** {e}."

{e} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 63. 2.

John 7:39

Ver. 39. But this spake he of the Spirit,.... These are the words of the evangelist, explaining the figurative expressions of Christ; showing, that by rivers of living water, he meant the Spirit in his gifts and graces; and which is the plain sense of the passages referred to by him, particularly Isa 44:3, and which, as before observed, the Jews supposed were intimated by their drawing and pouring water at the feast of tabernacles.

Which they that believe on him should receive; the apostles, and others, that had believed in Christ, and had received the Spirit, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification; as a spirit of illumination and conversion; as a spirit of faith and adoption; but on the day of Pentecost they were to receive a larger, even an extraordinary measure of his gifts and grace, to qualify them for greater work and service:

for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given]; the word "given" is not in the original text; but is very properly supplied, as it is in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions. The Arabic version renders it, "for the Holy Ghost was not yet come"; he was; he was in being as a divine person, equal with the Father and Son, so he was from everlasting; and he had been bestowed in his grace upon the Old Testament saints, and rested in his gifts upon the prophets of that dispensation; but, as the Jews themselves confess {f},

"after the death of the latter prophets, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi, the Holy Ghost removed from Israel."

And they expressly say, be was not there in the time of the second temple. Maimonides says {g},

"they made the Urim and Thummim in the second temple, to complete the eight garments (of the priests) though they did not inquire by them; and why did they not inquire by them? because the Holy Ghost was not there; and every priest that does not speak by the Holy Ghost, and the Shekinah, does not dwell upon him, they do not inquire by him."

They observe {h} there were five things in the first temple which were not in the second, and they are these,

"the ark with the mercy seat, and cherubim, the fire (from heaven), and the Shekinah, vdwqh xwrw, "and the Holy Ghost", and the Urim and Thummim."

Now, though he had removed, he was to return again; but as yet the time was not come, at least for the more plentiful donation of him: the reason of which was,

because that Jesus was not yet glorified; he had not as yet gone through his state of humiliation; he had not yet suffered, and died, and rose again, and ascended, and sat down at the right hand of God; for the Holy Spirit was to come upon his departure, and in consequence of his sufferings and death, and being made sin, and a curse for his people; and through his mediation and intercession, and upon his exaltation at the Father's right hand; when being made, and declared Lord and Christ, this should be notified by the effusion of his Spirit; see **Ac 2:33**.

{f} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 9. 2. Sota, fol. 48. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 11. 1. {g} Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 10. sect. 10. Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 73. 2. {h} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21. 2. Vid. Jarchi & Kimchi in Hagg. i. 8.

John 7:40

Ver. 40. Many of the people therefore,.... Of the common people, and it may be chiefly those that came out of the country:

when they heard this saying; or discourse of Christ, on the last and great day of the feast, relating to the large measure of grace, and the effusion of the Spirit on him, that believed:

said, of a truth this is the prophet; spoken of in De 18:15, which some understood not of the Messiah, but of some extraordinary prophet distinct from him, who should come before him, or about the same time; or they imagined he was one of the old prophets raised from the dead, whom they also expected about the times of the Messiah: or their sense might only be, that he was a prophet, which was true, though not all the truth; they had some knowledge, though but small; and they spake of him, though but as children in understanding.

John 7:41

Ver. 41. Others said, this is the Christ,.... The true Messiah, which they concluded, not only from the miracles, **Joh 7:31**, but from his speaking of rivers of living water flowing from him that believes in him; for the same prophecy that speaks of miracles to be performed in the times of the Messiah, speaks also of waters breaking out in the wilderness, and streams in the desert, of the parched ground becoming a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water, Isa 35:5.

But some said, shall Christ come out of Galilee? as they supposed Jesus did;

and because he was educated at Nazareth, and Capernaum was his city, and he chiefly conversed, preached, and wrought his miracles in these parts, they concluded that he was born there; and therefore object this to his being the true Messiah. For if they did not mean this, according to their own accounts, the Messiah was to be in Galilee, and to be first revealed there; for they affirm {i} this in so many words, that lylgd aerab axyvm aklm ylgty, "the King Messiah shall be revealed in the land of Galilee"; accordingly Jesus, the true Messiah, as he was brought up in Galilee, though not born there, so he first preached there, and there wrought his first miracle; here he chiefly was, unless at the public feasts; and here he manifested himself to his disciples after his resurrection.

{i} Zohar in Gen. fol. 74. 3. & in Exod. fol. 3. 3. & 4. 1.

John 7:42

Ver. 42. Hath not the Scripture said,.... These objectors were those who were accounted the more wise and knowing; who were conversant with the Scriptures, and pretended at least to a large knowledge of them:

that Christ cometh out of the seed of David; that he should be a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots; that he should be one out of David's loins, and of the fruit of his body, referring to Isa 11:1, which was very true, and what was commonly known, and expected among the Jews, that the Messiah should be David's son, as Jesus of Nazareth was, Ac 13:23;

and out of the town of Bethlehem where David was? where his parents lived, and he was born; and, according to Jerom {k}, he was buried here. The account he gives of this city, where he himself for some time lived,

"is Bethlehem, the city of David, in the lot of the tribe of Judah, in which our Lord and Saviour was born, is six miles from Aelia, (i.e. Jerusalem) to the south, by the way which leads to Hebron, where also is showed the sepulchre of Jesse and David."

In which may be observed likewise the exact distance of this place from Jerusalem; which, according to Josephus {l}, at least as he is generally understood, was but twenty furlongs: and, according to Justin {m}, thirty five: but that this is the true distance, is clear from the old Jerusalem Itinerary {n}, and which agrees with Jerom about the sepulchre of David; for not far from it

is the monument of Ezekiel, Asaph, Job, Jesse, David, and Solomon: however, it is certain that David was born here, and therefore it is called his city; and from hence the Messiah was to come; and here Jesus, the true Messiah, was born, and which the Jews themselves own;
See Gill on "Mt 2:1",
See Gill on "Lu 2:4"; and in vain it is for them to expect the Messiah from thence, where none of their nation live, nor have lived, for many hundreds of years; being particularly forbid by Adrian, after he had subdued them, living in or near Jerusalem, and also Bethlehem. Tertullian {o} refers to this when he thus argues with them, and very justly, and strongly;

"if he is not yet born, who, it is said, shall come forth a ruler out of Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah, he must come (says he) out of the tribe of Judah and from Bethlehem; but we now observe, that no one of the stock of Israel remains in Bethlehem, because it is forbidden that anyone of the Jews should continue on the border of that country--how shall the governor be born in Judea, come forth from Bethlehem, as the divine books of the Prophets declare, when there is none of Israel left there at this day, of whose lineage Christ can be born?--how shall he come out of Bethlehem, when there is none in Bethlehem of the stock of Israel?"

And the passage they had in view, is **Mic 5:2**. Now these very things they object to Jesus being the Messiah, were what were fulfilled in him, and proved him to be the person; for his supposed father, and real mother Mary, were of the house and lineage of David; and though he was conceived at Nazareth, and brought up there, yet by a remarkable providence, which brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, he was born there, **Lu 2:4**.

{k} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 89. E. {l} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 4. {m} Apolog. 2. p. 75. {n} In Reland. Palestina illustrata, l. 2. c. 4. p. 416. Vid. c. 9. p. 445. & l. 3. p. 645. {o} Adv. Judaeos, c. 13. p. 224, 225.

John 7:43

Ver. 43. So there was a division among the people concerning him. Some, though they did not go so far as to believe him to be the Messiah, yet took him to be a prophet, and a very extraordinary one; others made no difficulty to assert him to be the Christ; and others objected to it on account of the country from whence he came, and so fulfilled the words of Christ, Lu 12:51.

John 7:44

Ver. 44. And some of them would have taken him,.... Some of the latter sort, who did not believe he was the Messiah; who were the most averse to him, and hot and furious against him; these were for seizing him at once in a violent manner, and for carrying him before the sanhedrim, as an impostor and blasphemer to be examined and tried, and judged by them, to whom it belonged to judge and determine concerning such persons:

but no man laid hands on him; though they had a good will to it, no man had power to do it; they were held back and restrained by the providence of God; and were diverted from it upon one consideration or another; either fearing the people, or being awed by the majesty of Christ's countenance, or words; the true reason of which was, that which is before given, that his hour was not yet come.

John 7:45

Ver. 45. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees,.... Who were assembled together in council, as the great sanhedrim of the nation; who were sitting and expecting Jesus to be brought before them. The same officers they sent to take him, **Joh 7:32**, returned to them without him; for though they were sent on that errand which they intended to have performed, yet they were not on the side of those who were for seizing him by force, nor of those who objected to his being the Messiah; but rather took part with those who affirmed he was the Messiah; or at least looked upon him to be some extraordinary prophet:

and they said unto them; that is, the chief priests and Pharisees said to the officers; the Syriac version reads, "the priests said unto them":

why have ye not brought him? They mention not the name of Jesus by way of contempt, and knowing that the officers would easily understand them; though the Persic version expresses it, reading the words thus, "why have ye not brought Jesus?" seeing them returned without him, they were transported with rage and fury, and fell upon them in a fierce and furious manner, for disobeying their orders, who had sat there waiting some time: and hoping, and not doubting, but they should have him in their hands, whose blood they were thirsting after: wherefore it was a great disappointment to them, and much enraged them to see them come without him.

John 7:46

Ver. 46. The officers answered,.... Very honestly and uprightly, making use of no shifts and excuses; as that they could not find him, or could not come at him, because of the multitude about him, or that they were afraid of the people, lest they should rise upon them, and stone them, and rescue Jesus; which would have carried a show of probability, and have brought them off; but they tell the naked truth,

never man spake like this man; not Moses, the spokesman of the people of Israel; nor David, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet Psalmist of Israel; nor Solomon, the wisest of men; nor that sublime and evangelical prophet Isaiah; nor any of the other prophets; nor John Baptist his forerunner, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: never man spoke words for matter like him; such gracious words, or words, and doctrines of grace, which so fully express the grace of God, and are so grateful to men; such as free justification by his righteousness, full pardon by his blood, peace and reconciliation by his sacrifice, the liberty captives from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law, and spiritual and eternal salvation by him: never man spoke such words of truth, as he who is full of truth, and truth itself did: or such words of wisdom, who is the wisdom of God, on whom the spirit of wisdom rested, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; nor such wholesome and salutary words, which nourish up unto eternal life. Nor did ever any speak words for form and manner, as he did; words so apt and pertinent, with such propriety, beauty, and gracefulness, with such majesty and authority, and with such power and efficacy; which at once charmed the ear, affected the heart; carried evidence and conviction with them, enlightened the understanding, and fastened attention to them; which was the case with these men, so that they had not power to execute their commission. He delivered such excellent things, and in such a charming manner, they could not find in their hearts to use any violence towards him; or be the means of bringing him into any trouble or danger. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, "never man spake as this man speaks".

John 7:47

Ver. 47. Then answered them the Pharisees, are ye also deceived?] As well as the common people; you that have been so long in our service, and should know better; or who, at least, should have taken the sense of your superiors, and should have waited to have had their opinion and judgment of him, and been determined by that, and not so hastily have joined with a deluded set of people. It was the common character of Christ, and his apostles, and so of all his faithful ministers in all succeeding ages, that they were deceivers, and the people that followed them deceived, a parcel of poor deluded creatures, carried aside by their teachers; when, on the other hand, they are the deceived ones, who live in sin, and indulge themselves in it; or who trust in themselves that they are righteous; who think they are something, when they are nothing; who imagine, that touching the righteousness of the law, they are blameless, are free from sin, and need no repentance; who follow the traditions and commandments of men: whereas these cannot be deceived, who follow Christ, the way, the truth, and the life, and his faithful ministers, who show unto men the way of salvation.

John 7:48

Ver. 48. Have any of the rulers,.... In the sanhedrim, or of the synagogues; or the civil magistrates, the noble, rich, and wealthy:

or of the Pharisees, believed on him; men famous for wisdom, learning, and holiness. It must be owned, there were but very few of this sort, and perhaps not an instance of this kind had as yet occurred to them; there was Nicodemus, who is mentioned in the context, who was both a ruler and a Pharisee; and Joseph of Arimathea, a rich counsellor; but they neither of them openly showed themselves to be the disciples of Christ till his death: and besides these, there were some women, as Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, Susanna, and some other women, who ministered to him of their substance; but the far greater part of his followers were poor and illiterate: and this has been the common case of those that have believed in Jesus, for the most part, ever since, and therefore should not be a stumbling to any. God is pleased to hide the great things of the Gospel from the wise and prudent, the rich and noble, and preach and reveal them to the poor and foolish: nor is a doctrine a whit the truer for being espoused by the rich, and wise men of this world, but rather to be suspected on that account.

John 7:49

Ver. 49. But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. With great contempt they style the followers of Jesus "this people"; the common people, the dregs of them, the refuse of the earth; and whom they call, Urah Me, "the people of the earth", in distinction from the wise men, and their disciples: and when they speak the best of them, their account is this {p};

"one of the people of the earth is one that has moral excellencies, but not intellectual ones; that is, there is in him common civility, but the law is not in him;"

as here, "who knoweth not the law": they always reckon them very ignorant. Says one {q} of their writers,

"they that are without knowledge are the multitude."

And elsewhere it is said {r},

"the old men of the people of the earth, when they grow old their knowledge is disturbed (or is lost), as it is said,
Job 12:20, but so it is not with the old men of the law, when they grow old, their knowledge rests upon them, as it is said, Job 12:12, "with the ancient is wisdom"."

Upon which one of the commentators {s} has this gloss;

"these are the disciples of the wise men; for the people of the earth, what wisdom is there in them?"

By the "law" here, is meant either the written law of Moses, which the Pharisees boasted of, and of their knowledge of it, as having the key of knowledge to open it; as understanding the true sense, and capable of giving a right interpretation of it, to the people; though they themselves were wretchedly ignorant of it, as appears by their false glosses on it, refuted by our Lord in **Mt 5:17**; or else the oral law is here intended, which they pretended was given by word of mouth to Moses, and handed down to posterity from one to another; and this lay among the doctors: they tell us {t}, that Moses received it at Sinai, and delivered it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the men of the great synagogue (Ezra's), the last of which was Simeon the just: Antigonus, a man of Socho, received it from him; and Jose ben Joezer, and Jose ben Jochanan, received it from him; and Joshua ben Perachia, (whom they sometimes say was the master of Jesus of Nazareth,) and Nittai the Arbelite, received it from them; by whom it was delivered to Judah ben Tabia, and Simeon ben Shetach; and from them it was received by Shemaiah, and Abtalion, who delivered it to Hillell, and Shammai; who, or whose scholars, were, at this time, when these words were spoken, the present possessors of it, and taught it their disciples in their schools: and thus it was handed down from one to another, until the times of R. Judah, who collected the whole of the traditions of the elders together, and published it under the title of the Misna; and then, as Maimonides says {u}, it was revealed to all Israel; whereas before it was but in a few hands, who instructed others in it; but as for the common people, they knew little of it, especially of the nice distinctions and decisions of it; and these people were always had in great contempt by the wise men: they would not receive a testimony from them, nor give one for them, nor deliver a secret to them, nor proclaim anything of theirs that was lost, nor walk with them in the way, nor make a guardian of any of them {w}. The people of the earth were not reckoned holy or religious {x}, but generally profane and wicked; that they were abandoned to sin, rejected of God, and to be cast off by men; yea, they will not allow that they shall rise again at the last day, unless it be for the sake of some wise men they are allied unto, or have done some service for. They say {y}

"whoever ministers in the light of the law, the light of the law will quicken him; but whoever does not minister in the light of the law, the light of the law will not quicken him--though it is possible for such an one to cleave to the Shekinah--for everyone that marries his daughter to a scholar of a wise man, or makes merchandise for the disciples of the wise men, and they receive any advantage from his goods, this brings on him what is written, as if he cleaved to the Shekinah."

Thus we see in what contempt the common people were with the learned doctors, and what an opinion these men had of the followers of Christ; though, in truth, they were not so ignorant of the law as themselves: they knew the spirituality of it, that it reached to the thoughts of the heart, as well as to external actions; they knew what it required, and their own impotence to answer its demands; they knew the wrath, terror, and curses of it, and that Christ only was the fulfilling end of it, for righteousness to those that believed in him: and they were far from being cursed persons: they were blessed with all spiritual blessings: with the pardon of their sins, and the justification of their persons; with grace and peace in their souls, and would be introduced as the blessed of the Father into his kingdom and glory.

{p} Maimon. in Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 5. & c. 5. sect. 7. {q} Abarbinel in proph. post. fol. 473. {r} Misn. Kenim, c. 3. sect. 6. Vid. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 152. 1. {s} Bartenora in Misn. ib. {t} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1-12. {u} Praefat. ad Yad Hazaka. {w} Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. col. 1626. {x} Ib. Florileg. Heb. p. 276. {y} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 111. 2.

John 7:50

Ver. 50. Nicodemus saith unto them,.... To the Jewish sanhedrim, who were running down Christ, and his followers, in great wrath and fury:

he that came to Jesus by night; see **Joh 3:1**;

being one of them; a member of the sanhedrim.

John 7:51

Ver. 51. Doth our law judge any man,.... Or condemn any man; or can any man be lawfully condemned:

before it hear him: what he has to say for himself; is this the usual process in our courts? or is this a legal one to condemn a man unheard?

and know what he doth? what his crimes are. This he said, having a secret respect for Christ, though he had not courage enough openly to appear for him.

John 7:52

Ver. 52. They answered and said unto him,.... Being displeased with him, and as reproaching him, though they could not deny, or refute what he said:

art thou also of Galilee? a follower of Jesus of Galilee, whom, by way of contempt, they called the Galilean, and his followers Galilaeans, as Julian the apostate after them did; for otherwise they knew that Nicodemus was not of the country of Galilee;

search and look; into the histories of former times, and especially the Scriptures:

for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet; but this is false, for Jonah the prophet was of Gathhepher, which was in the tribe of Zebulun, which tribe was in Galilee; see 2Ki 14:25. And the Jews {z} themselves say, that Jonah, the son of Amittai, was, Nwlwbzm, of "Zebulun", and that his father was of Zebulun, and his mother was of Asher {a}; both which tribes were in Galilee: and if no prophet had, as yet, arose from thence, it did not follow that no one should arise: besides, there is a prophecy in which it was foretold, that a prophet, and even the Messiah, the great light, should arise in Galilee; see **Isa 9:1**; and they themselves say, that the Messiah should be revealed in Galilee;
See Gill on "Joh 7:41".

{z} T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 55. 1, {a} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 85. 4.

John 7:53

Ver. 53. And every man went unto his own house. The officers not bringing Jesus with them, and the sanhedrim being posed with Nicodemus, broke up without doing any business, and every member of it went home: this we may suppose was about the time of the evening sacrifice: for

"the great sanhedrim sat from the time of the morning daily sacrifice, to the time of the evening daily sacrifice {b}:"

and it is said {c}, that

"after the evening daily sacrifice, the sanhedrim went,
Mtybl, "to their own houses";"

as they now did, and not to their booths, the feast of tabernacles being now over.

{b} Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect. 1. {c} Piske Tosephot Sanhedrin, art. 35.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 8:1

Ver. 1. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives. Which lay eastward of Jerusalem, about a mile from it; hither Christ went on the evening of the last day of the feast of tabernacles; partly to decline the danger, and avoid the snares the Jews might lay for him in the night season; having been disappointed and confounded in the daytime; and it may be for the sake of recreation and diversion, to sup with his dear friends Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, who lived at Bethany, not far from this mount; and chiefly for private prayer to God, on account of himself as man, and for his disciples, and for the spread of his Gospel, and for the enlargement of his interest; this being his common and usual method, Lu 21:37.

John 8:2

Ver. 2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple,.... Which shows his diligence, constancy, and assiduity, in his ministerial work, as well as his courage and intrepidity; being fearless of his enemies, though careful to give them no advantage against him, before his time:

and all the people came unto him; which also commends the industry and diligence of his hearers, who were forward to hear him, and were early at the temple for that purpose, and that in great numbers:

and he sat down and taught them; he sat, as his manner was;
See Gill on "Mt 5:1"; and taught them as one having authority, and such doctrine, and in such a manner, as never man did; with all plainness, boldness, and freedom.

John 8:3

Ver. 3. And the Scribes and Pharisees,.... The members of the sanhedrim, who had been so miserably disappointed the day before, were no less diligent and industrious in their wicked way, seeking all opportunities, and taking all advantages against Christ; and fancying they had got something whereby to ensnare him, and bring him into disgrace or danger, they pursue it; and

brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; who, as some conjecture, might have been taken in it the day before, in one of their booths; being drawn into it through intemperance and carnal mirth, which at this feast they greatly indulged themselves in; which shows, that they were far from drawing the Holy Ghost at this time upon them; that on the contrary, they fell into the hands, and under the power of the unclean spirit: who this woman was, is not material to know; what is pretended to be taken out of the annals of the Spanish Jews, is no doubt a fable; that she was the wife of one Manasseh of Jerusalem, an old man, whose name was Susanna {d}:

and when they had set her in the midst; of the company, as the Persic version reads, to be seen by all the people. This history of the woman taken in adultery, is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in other ancient copies; nor is it in Nonnus, Chrysostom, and Theophylact; nor in any of the editions of the Syriac version, until it was restored by De Dieu, from a copy of Archbishop Usher's; but was in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, and in the Harmonies of Tatian and Ammonius; the former of which lived about the year 160, and so within 60 years, or thereabouts, of the death of the Evangelist John, and the other about the year 230; it was also in Stephens's sixteen ancient Greek copies, and in all Beza's seventeen, excepting one; nor need the authenticness of it be doubted of; Eusebius {e} says, it is in the Gospel according to the Hebrews; nor should its authority be called in question.

{d} Vid. Selden. Uxor Hebr. l. 3. c. 11. p. 377. {e} Hist. Ecless. l. 3. c. 39.

John 8:4

Ver. 4. They say unto him, Master,.... They applied to him in a handsome and respectful manner, the better to cover their ill design:

this woman was taken in adultery; by two persons at least, who could be witnesses of it; otherwise the accusation was not legal; see De 19:15; though in the case of a wife suspected of adultery, they admitted a single witness as valid {f}:

in the very act; or "in the theft itself", for adultery is a theft; it is an unlawful use of another's property; see this word used in the same sense, in Heliodor, l. 1. sect. 11.

{f} Maimon. Hilchot Eduth, c. 5. sect. 2.

John 8:5

Ver. 5. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should, be stoned,.... Not in Le 20:10; for though according to the law there, an adulteress, one that was a married woman, and so an adulterer, that was a married man, were to be put to death; yet the death was not stoning, but strangling; for it is a rule with the Jews {g}, that where death is simply mentioned (without restraining it to any particular kind) strangling is intended, and which rule they apply to this law: and accordingly in their Misna, or oral law, one that lies with another man's wife, is reckoned among those that are to be strangled {h}: Kimchi indeed says {i}, that adulteresses, according to the law, are to be stoned with stones; but then this must be understood of such as are betrothed, but not married; and such a person, Moses has commanded in the law, to be stoned, De 22:23. And with this agree the traditions of the Jews {k};

"a daughter of Israel must be stoned, who is hawvn alw
howra, "betrothed, but not married"."

And such an one we must believe this woman was; she was betrothed to a man, but not married to him, and therefore to be stoned: the Jews {l} have also a saying, that

"if all adulterers were punished with stoning, according to the law, the stones would be consumed; but they would not be consumed;"

adultery was so common with that people:

but what sayest thou? dost thou agree with Moses, or not?

{g} Maimon. Hilchot Issure Bia, c. 1. sect. 6. {h} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 1. {i} In Ezek. xvi. 40. {k} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 51. 2. {l} Apud Castell. Lex. Polyglott, col. 2180.

John 8:6

Ver. 6. This they said, tempting him,.... For they brought this woman, and exposed her in this manner, not because of their abhorrence and detestation of the sin; nor did they put the above question to Christ, out of their great respect to the law of Moses; which in many instances, and so in this, they in a great measure made void, by their traditions; for they say, that for such an offence as adultery, they did not put to death, nor beat, unless there was a previous admonition; the use of which was, to distinguish between presumptuous sins, and wilful ones {m}; but if there was no admonition, and the woman, even a married woman, if she confessed the crime, all her punishment was to have her dowry taken from her, or to go away without it {n}: now these masters say nothing about the admonition, nor do they put the question, whether this woman was to be dealt with according to their traditions, or according to the law of Moses? but what was the sense of Christ, whether Moses's law was to be attended to, or whether he would propose another rule to go by? and their view in this was,

that they might have to accuse him; that should he agree with Moses, then they would accuse him to the Roman governor, for taking upon him to condemn a person to death, which belonged to him to do; or they would charge him with severity, and acting inconsistently with himself, who received such sort of sinners, and ate with them; and had declared, that publicans and harlots would enter into the kingdom of heaven, when the Scribes and Pharisees would not; and if he should disagree with Moses, then they would traduce him among the people, as an enemy to Moses and his law, and as a patron of the most scandalous enormities:

but Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground; some think {o} he wrote in legible characters the sins of the woman's accusers; and the learned Wagenseil {p} makes mention of an ancient Greek manuscript he had seen, in which were the following words, "the sins of everyone of them": Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, that this action of Christ tallies with, and has some reference to, the action of the priest at the trial of the suspected wife; who took of the dust of the floor of the tabernacle, and infused it in the bitter waters for her to drink; but it is most likely, that Christ on purpose put himself into this posture, as if he was busy about something else, and did not attend to what they said; and hereby cast some contempt upon them, as if they and their question were unworthy of his notice: and this sense is confirmed by what follows,

[as though he heard them not]; though this clause is not in many copies, nor in the Vulgate Latin, nor in any of the Oriental versions, but is in five of Beza's copies, and in the Complutensian edition.

(See Jer 17:13, "they that depart from me shall be wriiten in the earth". It could be that Christ was writing their names in the earth, thus fulfulling this prophecy in Jeremiah. They knew the Old Testament and this passage, and were convicted in their hearts. Editor.)

{m} Maimon. ib. sect. 3. {n} Misn. Sota, c. 1. sect. 5. {o} Hieron. adv. Pelagianos, l. 2. fol. 96. H. Tom. II. {p} In Misn. Sota, c. 1. sect. 5.

John 8:7

Ver. 7. So when they continued asking him,.... For observing that he put himself in such a posture, they concluded that they had puzzled and perplexed him, and that he knew not what to say; and therefore they were more urgent for a speedy answer, hoping they should get an advantage of him; and that they should be able to expose him, and that his confusion would appear to all the people:

he lift up himself and said unto them; having raised up himself, he looked wistly at them, and returned them this wise answer to, their confusion:

he that is without sin among you; meaning, not that was entirely free from sin, in heart, in lip, and life; for there is no such person; the most holy man in life is not, in such sense, free from sin; but that was without any notorious sin, or was not guilty of some scandalous sin, and particularly this of adultery; which was in this age a prevailing sin, and even among their doctors; hence our Lord calls that generation an adulterous one, Mt 12:39; and which was literally true of them; with this compare **Ro 2:22**. Adultery increased to such a degree in this age, that they were obliged to leave off the trial of suspected wives, because their husbands were generally guilty this way; and the waters would have no effect, if the husband was criminal also: so the Jews say {q},

"when adulterers increased, the bitter waters ceased; and Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai (who was now living) caused them to cease."

In vindication of which, he cited the passage in **Ho 4:14**; and this agrees with their own account of the times of the Messiah, and the signs thereof, among which stands this {r};

"in the age in which the son of David comes, the house of assembly (the gloss interprets it the place where the disciples of the wise men meet to learn the law) shall become, twnwzl, "a brothel house"."

And that this sin so greatly prevailed, our Lord well knew; and perhaps none of those Scribes and Pharisees were free from it, in one shape or another; and therefore bids him that was,

let him first cast a stone at her; alluding to the law in De 17:7, which required the hands of the witnesses to be upon a person first, to put him to death; and as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, referring to their own sense and opinion, in trying a wife suspected of adultery; that if the husband was guilty the same way, the waters would have no effect: by this answer of our Lord, he at once wrought himself out of the dilemma, they thought to distress him with; for though he passed no sentence upon the woman, and so took not upon him the judiciary power, with which they could accuse him to the Roman governor, yet he manifestly appeared to agree with Moses, that such an one deserved to be stoned; wherefore they could not charge him with being contrary to Moses; and by putting him that was without sin, to cast the first stone at her, he showed himself merciful to the woman, and to them, to be the searcher of hearts.

{q} Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 9. {r} Misn. ib c. 9. sect. 15. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1.

John 8:8

Ver. 8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. As before, having said enough to confound them; and yet unwilling to pursue the matter any further, or publicly expose them in any other way; and that they might have an opportunity of withdrawing themselves without any further notice of his, he took this method.

John 8:9

Ver. 9. And they which heard it,.... Not all, not the disciples of Christ, nor the multitude, but the Scribes and Pharisees:

being convicted by their own conscience; that they were not without sin, nor free from this; they had a beam in their own eye, who were so forward to observe the mote in another's; and oftentimes so it is, that those who are most forward to reprove, and bear hardest on others for their sins, are as culpable in another way, if not in the same; when sin lies at the door, and conscience is awakened and open, it is as good as a thousand witnesses; and lets in, and owns the sin which lies heavy, and makes sad work; and fills with anguish, confusion, and shame, as it did these men: who

went out one by one; from the temple, in as private a manner, and as unobserved as they could:

beginning at the eldest: who might have been most culpable, or however soonest took the hint; being more wise and sagacious:

unto the last; this is wanting in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions, and in two of Beza's copies, and the Basil edition:

and Jesus was left alone; not by his disciples, nor the multitude, but his antagonists, who came to tempt and ensnare him: for it follows,

and the woman standing in the midst; that is, of the company as before.

John 8:10

Ver. 10. When Jesus had lift himself up,.... From the earth, towards which he stooped, and on which he had been writing:

and saw none but the woman; that is, none of those that had brought her there, and had accused her to him:

he said unto her, woman, where are those thine accusers? the Syriac and Arabic versions read only, "where are these?" these men, that brought thee here, and charged thee with this crime:

hath no man condemned thee? has no one offered to do unto thee what I proposed? what, not one that could take up a stone, and cast at thee? was there not one of them free from this sin? could no man take upon him to execute this sentence?

John 8:11

Ver. 11. She saith, no man, Lord,.... No man said a word to me, or lift up his hand against me, or moved a stone at me:

and Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee; Christ came not into the world to act the part of a civil magistrate, and therefore refused to arbitrate a case, or be concerned in dividing an inheritance between two brethren, Lu 12:13. Nor did he come into the world to condemn it, but that the world, through him, might be saved, **Joh 3:17**; nor would he pass any other sentence on this woman, than what he had done; nor would he inflict any punishment on her himself; but suitably and agreeably to his office; as a prophet, he declares against her sin, calls her to repentance, and bids her

go and sin no more; lest as he said to the man he cured at Bethesda's pool, a worse thing should come unto her. Wherefore the Jew {s} has no reason to object to this conduct of Christ, as if he acted contrary to the law, in De 13:5. "Thou shalt put the evil away from the midst of thee"; and also to the sanctions of all civil laws among men, which order the removal of evil, by putting delinquents to death; and he observes, that those that believe in him, do not follow him in this, but put adulterers and adulteresses to death; and that indeed, should his example and instructions take place, all courts of judicature must cease, and order be subverted among men: but it should be observed, that our Lord manifested a regard, even to the law of Moses, when he bid this woman's accusers that were without sin, to cast the first stone at her; though as for the law in De 13:5, that respects a false prophet, and not an adulterer or an adulteress; nor do the civil laws of all nations require death in the case of adultery; and did they, Christ here, neither by his words nor actions, contradicts and sets aside any such laws of God or man; he left this fact to be inquired into, examined, and judged, and sentence passed by proper persons, whose business it was: as for himself, his office was not that of a civil magistrate, but of a Saviour and Redeemer; and suitably to that he acted in this case; he did not connive at the sin, he reproved for it; nor did he deny that she ought to suffer according to the law of Moses, but rather suggests she ought; but as this was not his province, he did not take upon him to pronounce any sentence of condemnation on her; but called her to repentance, and, as the merciful and compassionate Saviour, gave her reason to hope pardon and eternal life.

{s} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 47. p. 435, 436.

John 8:12

Ver. 12. Then spake Jesus again unto them,.... Syriac fragment of Bishop Usher's, published by De Dieu, prefaces this verse thus, "when they were gathered together", Jesus said, &c. that is, the Scribes and Pharisees, who went out and returned again; or some others of them, who came after this, to whom Christ addressed himself thus:

I am the light of the world; which he might say, on occasion of the rising sun, which was now up, and might shine brightly in their faces; see **Joh 8:2**; which is Mlweh rwa, "the light of the world", as Aben Ezra in Ps 19:8 rightly calls it: thus on occasion of the water in Jacob's well, he discoursed of living water; and upon the Jews at Capernaum mentioning the manna, he treated at large concerning himself as the bread of life: and he might also make use of this character, and apply it to himself, with a view to some passages in the Old Testament, which speak of him under the metaphor of the sun, as Ps 84:11, and represent him as the light; and the Jews {t} themselves say, that light is one of the names of the Messiah; and God himself is called by them, the light of the world {u}: and likewise he may have regard to those pompous titles and characters, which the Jewish doctors assumed arrogantly to themselves, and oppose himself to them; for they not only called Moses their master, Mlweh rwa, "the light of the world" {w}, and also the law of Moses {x}, but their Rabbins and doctors;

See Gill on "Mt 5:14". By the world here is meant, not the whole world, and all the individuals of it; for though Christ, as the Creator of all things, is the light of men, and does lighten every individual man with the light of nature and reason, yet not in a spiritual and saving manner, as is here intended; nor the whole body of the elect of God, though they are sometimes called the world, being the better part of it, and are made light in the Lord, in a special sense; nor the Jews only, and the chosen of God, among them, though Christ was a great light to many of them, that sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death; but the Gentiles are here designed, who were usually called by the Jews, the world; See Gill on "Joh 3:16". And these were in gross darkness before the coming of Christ, about the Divine Being, concerning the object, nature, and manner of worship; the Scriptures, the law, and Gospel; the Messiah, and his office and work; the Spirit of God, and his operations of grace; the resurrection of the dead, and a future state; now Christ came to be a light of the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel: our Lord seems to have respect to the prophecy of him, in Isa 42:6, as well as alludes to the sun in the firmament; whose light is diffused to all the nations of the earth, and not confined to one spot of land only: but since Christ was the minister of the circumcision, and was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, it may be asked, how could he be the light of the Gentiles? to which it may be replied, that he was so by his apostles, who were sent by him with the light of the Gospel, into all the world; and by his Spirit, who enlightens the minds of men, who were darkness itself, with the light of Christ: for he is not only the author and giver of the light of nature to all men, but also of the light of grace to all his chosen ones, Gentiles as well as Jews; who, in his light, see light; see themselves lost and undone, and him to be the only willing, able, suitable, and complete Saviour; and behold wondrous things in the doctrines of the Gospel, and have some glimpse of glory; and he is likewise the author of all the light of glory the saints enjoy in the other world; the Lamb is the light of that state; he is their everlasting light, and their glory; and happy are they who are his followers now:

he that followeth me; not corporeally, but spiritually, by faith; for as believing is expressed by coming to Christ, so by following after him: compare with this, Joh 12:46; and with love and affection to him, the desires of the soul being unto him, and to the remembrance of him; and in the exercise of every grace and discharge of every duty, in imitation of him; and through a variety of sufferings and tribulations, pressing after him as the guide, captain, and forerunner: and such

shall not walk in darkness; in the darkness of unregeneracy, not knowing what they are, and where they are, and whither they are going; for such know they are in the light; and though they were blind, now they see; they know in whom they have believed, and that they are in Christ, in the covenant of grace, and in the love of God, and are going to heaven and eternal happiness; such shall not walk in the darkness of unbelief; but walk by faith on Christ; nor in the darkness of error, but in the truth of the Gospel, and as becomes it; and though they may sometimes walk without the light of God's countenance, yet light shall arise to them; and such "shall not go into darkness", as the Ethiopic version renders the words, into outer darkness, or the darkness of eternal death:

but shall have the light of life; the grace of God abiding in them now; which as it is a well of living water, springing up to eternal life, so it is a shining light, which increases to the perfect day: as darkness and death, so light and life go together; grace, which is enlightening, is also quickening and comforting, and issues in eternal light and life; a light that will never be extinguished, and a life that will continue for ever, with never fading joys and pleasures; see Job 33:30.

{t} Bereshit Rabba, fol. 1. 3. Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. & Jarchi in Psal xliii. 3. {u} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 217. 2. {w} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 114. 3. {x} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1.

John 8:13

Ver. 13. The Pharisees therefore said unto him,.... On account of his declaring himself the light of the world: these were either the same who went out of the temple, filled with remorse of conscience, and were now returned, and bearing him a grudge, came to take some advantage against him, if they could; or they were others of the same complexion, sent by them, to make their observations on him:

thou bearest record of thyself. The Ethiopic version renders it, "dost thou thyself?" which does not seem so decent and comely; see
Pr 27:2; though it does not follow, that what a man says of himself is not truth, as these suggest:

thy record is not true; for John testified of himself, that he was not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet; but the voice of one crying in the wilderness; and this testimony he bore of himself, at the importunity of the Jews themselves, **Joh 1:19**; and his testimony was true; so was that which Christ bore of himself; but their sense rather seems to be, that it was not firm and authentic, and would not pass in any court of judicature, since no man can be a witness in his own cause.

John 8:14

Ver. 14. Jesus answered and said unto them,.... In vindication of himself, and his testimony:

though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true; which seems contradictory to what he says, in **Joh 5:31**, and may be reconciled thus; there he speaks of himself as man, and in the opinion of the Jews, who took him to be a mere man; and also as alone, and separate from his Father, as the context shows; therefore his single testimony, and especially concerning himself, could not be admitted as authentic among men; but here he speaks of himself as a divine person, and in conjunction with his Father, with whom he was equal; and therefore his testimony ought to be looked upon, and received as firm and good, giving this as a reason for it:

for I know whence I came, and whither I go; that he was truly the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, and had his mission and commission from him into this world; and which, as he knew himself, he was able to make known, and make appear to others, by his credentials, the doctrines taught, and the miracles wrought by him; which proved him to be what he said he was, the light of the world; and he knew that when he had done his work he came about, he should go to his God and Father, and take his place at his right hand:

but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go; they took him to be the son of Joseph, and that he came out of Galilee; in which they were mistaken; and when he talked of going away, they did not understand him, nor know whither he was going; they ask if he was going to the dispersed among the Gentiles, to teach them? and at another time, whether he would kill himself? they knew not, that through a train of sufferings and death, he must, and would enter into his glory: the Persic version inserts another clause without any foundation; "but ye know not from whence ye come, and whither ye go", and then follows the former; there might be a truth in this, they did not know their true original, that they were from beneath; nor whither they were going, to what dismal abode, when they expected to enter, and enjoy the kingdom of heaven.

John 8:15

Ver. 15. Ye judge after the flesh,.... According to their carnal affections and prejudices; taking the Messiah to be a temporal prince, and his kingdom to be of this world, they judged that Jesus could not be he; they looked upon him as a mere man, and seeing him in much outward meanness, in his human nature, they judged of him according to this outward appearance: or "ye" that are "after the flesh judge"; to which sense the Persic version agrees, "for ye are carnal"; and so judged as carnal men, who are very improper persons to judge of spiritual things:

I judge no man; in the same way, after the flesh, or in a carnal manner, nor according to outward appearances, according to the sight of the eyes, or the hearing of the ears: Christ did not take upon him to judge and determine in civil affairs, or in things pertaining to a court of judicature among men; this was not his province; an instance of this there is in the context, in not condemning the woman brought to him; nor did he judge the persons and states of men, or proceed to pass any sentence of condemnation on them; he came not to condemn, but save the world; this was not his business now; otherwise, all judgment is committed to him, and which he will exercise another day.

John 8:16

Ver. 16. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true,.... Because he saw not as man did, nor looked unto, and judged according to the outward appearance of things; but looked into the heart, and knew what was in it, being the searcher and trier of it; to whom all things are naked and open, and therefore cannot be deceived or imposed upon; his judgment must be sure and infallible:

for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me; he was not separate from the Father, or at a distance from him, when he was here on earth; he was in his bosom, and in heaven, as the Son of God, when as the son of man, he was below; nor was he alone in his testimony and judgment, the Father joined with him therein: and which is a further proof of the truth of his testimony, and the certainty of his judgment.

John 8:17

Ver. 17. It is also written in your law,.... The law of Moses, which was given unto them, and they boasted of; the passage referred to is in De 19:15; see also De 17:6; where though what follows is not to be found in so many words, yet the sense is there expressed:

that the testimony of two men is true: concerning which the Jewish writers say {y},

"they used not to determine any judiciary matter by the mouth of one witness, neither pecuniary causes, nor causes of life and death, as it is said, De 17:6. It is asked {z} in their oral law, if the testimony of two men stand, why does the Scripture particularly mention three? (for no other reason) but to compare or equal three with two, that as three convict two of a falsehood, two may also convict three."

On which one of their commentators {a} has this observation, taking notice of De 19:18, which speaks of a single witness;

"Mar (a doctor) says, wherever it is said a "witness", it is to be understood of two, unless the Scripture particularly specifies one."

In the case of a wife suspected of adultery, and in the business of striking off the neck of the heifer in case of murder, they admitted of one witness {b}.

{y} Maimon. Hilchot Eduth. c. 5. sect. 1. {z} Misn. Maccot. c. 1. sect. 7. {a} Bartenora in ib. {b} Maimon. Hilchot Eduth, ib. sect. 2.

John 8:18

Ver. 18. I am one that bear witness of myself,.... As he does of his sonship, in **1Jo 5:7**.

And the Father that sent me, beareth witness of me; as he did, by the descent of the Spirit upon him at his baptism, and by a voice from heaven, both at that time, and at his transfiguration, and by the miracles which he wrought; and particularly he bore testimony of him, long before, in prophecy, that he was the light of the world he now said he was, Isa 42:6; so that here were two testifiers, his Father and himself; which show them to be two distinct divine persons, and equal to each other: and now if the testimony of two men is true, firm, and authentic, and to be depended upon and received, then much more the testimony of two divine persons; see **1Jo 5:9**.

John 8:19

Ver. 19. Then said they unto him, where is thy Father?.... The Persic version adds, "show [him] unto us": produce this witness boasted of, let us see him; this they said in a sneering, taunting, and insulting manner; where is thy Father? what! he is in Galilee; fetch him from thence; it is Joseph the carpenter you mean; a goodly witness indeed!

Jesus answered, ye neither know me nor my Father; if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; they did not know the divine original of Christ, that he was the Son of God, and that God was his Father; they greatly boasted of their knowledge of God, but they knew him not; their ignorance of Christ showed it: the knowledge of both go together, and which is life eternal; nor can any truly know the one, without the other: and where the one is known, the other will be also; Christ is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person: so that he that has seen the one, must know the other; and indeed, no one can know the Father, but he to whom the Son reveals him: this was a severe mortification to these men of knowledge.

John 8:20

Ver. 20. These words spake Jesus in the treasury,.... The place where the thirteen chests stood, into which the people put their voluntary contributions

for the sacrifices, and service of the temple: the Ethiopic version renders it, "at the alms chest";
See Gill on "Mr 12:41". The design of this observation of the evangelist, is to suggest to us, that it was in a very public place, in the temple, openiy, that Christ delivered the above words:

as he taught in the temple; where the Jews resorted, where his ministry was public, and he spake freely, and without reserve; in a very bold manner, with intrepidity, and without fear of man:

and no man laid hands on him; though they had sought to do it the day before; had sent officers to take him; and they themselves had a good will to it; and yet they were so awed and over ruled by one means, or one account or another, that no man did it; the reason was,

for his hour was not yet come; the time appointed for his sufferings and death.

John 8:21

Ver. 21. Then said Jesus again unto them,.... It may be, immediately after he had said the above words; or rather some time after, it may be on the same day:

I go my way; meaning, the way of all flesh, or that he should die: the way of speaking shows, that his death was certain, a determined thing; which must be, and yet was voluntary: he was not driven, nor forced, but went freely; this being the path, the way, through which he must enter into his kingdom and glory:

and ye shall seek me; that is, shall seek the Messiah, as their deliverer and Saviour, when in distress; and whom he calls himself, because he was the true Messiah, and the only Saviour and Redeemer of his people, in a spiritual sense; otherwise they would not, nor did they seek Jesus of Nazareth:

and shall die in your sins; or "in your sin"; so it is in the Greek text, and in the Vulgate Latin, and Persic versions: meaning, in their sin of unbelief, and rejection of him the true Messiah: the sense is, that in the midst of their calamities, which should come upon them, for their sin against him, they should in vain seek for the Messiah, as a temporal deliverer of them; for their nation, city, and temple, and they therein should utterly perish, for their iniquity; and their ruin would not only be temporal, but eternal: since it follows,

whither I, go ye cannot come, signifying, that whereas he was going to his Father, to heaven and glory; to enjoy eternal happiness at his Father's right hand, in the human nature; they should never come there, but whilst many sat down in the kingdom of heaven, with their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who should come from afar, they would be shut out, and not suffered to enter in.

John 8:22

Ver. 22. Then said the Jews, will he kill himself?.... Which was not only a wicked, but a foolish consequence, drawn from his words: for it by no means followed, because he was going away, and whither they could not come, that therefore he must destroy himself; this seems to be what they would have been glad he would have done, and suggested the thought that he might do it, in which they imitated Satan, **Mt 4:6**, under whose influence they now apparently were, and hoped that he would, which would at once extricate them out of their difficulties on his account:

because he sayeth, whither I go ye cannot come: this is no reason at all; for had Christ's meaning been, as they blasphemously intimate, they might have destroyed themselves too, and have gone after him.

John 8:23

Ver. 23. And he said unto them,.... Upon this wicked remark of theirs, and query on his words:

ye are from beneath: not only of the earth, earthy, and so spoke of the earth, and as carnal men; but even of hell, they were the children of the devil; they breathed his Spirit, spoke his language, and did his lusts, as in **Joh 8:44**.

I am from above; not with respect to his human body, which he did not bring with him from heaven, that was formed below, in the Virgin's womb; otherwise he would not have been the seed of the woman, the son of Abraham, David, and Mary: but either with regard to his divine nature and person, he was of God, the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, who then lay in his bosom, and was in heaven above at that time; or to his mission, which was from heaven.

Ye are of this world; they were, as they were born into the world, sinful, carnal, and corrupt; they were in it, and belonged to it, had never been chosen, or called out of it; they had their conversation according to the course of it, and conformed to its evil customs and manners; they were under the influence of the God of the world, and were taken with the sinful and sensual lasts thereof; they were men of worldly spirits; they minded earth, and earthly things, and had their portion in this world, and might be truly called the men of it.

I am not of this world; he was in it, but not of it; he was come into it to save the chief of sinners, but he did not belong to it, nor did he conform to it; for though he conversed with sinners, ate with them, and received them, being called to repentance by him; yet he was separate from them, and did not as they did: nor did he pursue the pleasures, honours, and riches of this world, being all his days a man of sorrows, and despised of men; and though Lord of all, had not where to lay his head.

John 8:24

Ver. 24. I said therefore unto you,.... Because they were from beneath, and of the world, and discovered an earthly, worldly, carnal, yea, devilish disposition, in their conduct towards him:

that ye shall die in your sins; this he had said in **Joh 8:21**, and now repeats it, and confirms it by the following reason:

for if believe not that I am he; the everlasting and unchangeable I am, the true God, God over all, blessed for ever; the eternal Son of God, God manifest in the flesh, really made flesh, and become incarnate; the true Messiah, the only Saviour of sinners; the one and only Mediator between God and man; the Head of the church, prophet, priest, and King, and the Judge of quick and dead; as also the light of the world he had declared himself to be: these are things that are necessary to be believed concerning Christ; indeed, carnal and unregenerate men may believe all these things; the devils themselves do, and tremble at them; but then they, and so unconverted men, have no faith in them, with an application of them to themselves: true faith in Christ deals not with him in a general way, but in a special regard to a man's self; it is a seeing of Christ for a man's self; it is not an implicit faith, or a believing him to be what he is, merely upon report, but upon sight; it is a going out of the soul to Christ, a renouncing its own righteousness, and a trusting in him alone for life and salvation; it is with the heart, and from it, and is unfeigned; it works by love to Christ, and his people, and is attended with the fruits of righteousness, and a cheerful obedience to the commands and ordinances of Christ. Though perhaps no more than a general faith is here intended, for want of which, and their rejection of Jesus, as the Messiah, the Jews suffered temporal ruin; and had they but believed that Jesus was the Son of God, and true Messiah, they had been saved from that temporal destruction which came upon their nation, city, and temple; but not believing this in a general and notional, way, they perished, as is here threatened:

ye shall die in your sins; in which they were, being defiled with them, guilty before God for them, under the power of them, and liable to punishment for them; and so they remained, and did remain, and were yet in their sins, even until death, when they died in them, and for them, not only a corporeal, but an eternal death: for dying in their sins, these would be found upon them, and they would be charged with them, and must be answerable for them, and consequently endure the punishment of them, which is the second death. Dying in sin, and dying in Christ, are two widely different things. They that die in faith, die in Christ: they that die in unbelief, die in sin; and this is a dreadful dying; see Jos 22:20, where the Targum paraphrases it, "and he, one man", (or alone,) hybwxb
twm al, "did not die in his sins".

John 8:25

Ver. 25. Then said they unto him, who art thou?.... That talks at this rate, and threatens with death, in case of unbelief; this they said with an haughty air, and in a scornful manner:

and Jesus saith unto them, even [the same] that I said unto you from the beginning; meaning, either of this discourse, as that he was the light of the world, and which he continued to assert; or of his being had before the sanhedrim, when he affirmed that God was his Father, and by many strong arguments proved his divine sonship; or of his ministry, when by miracles, as well as doctrines, he made it to appear that he was he that was to come, the true Messiah; or who spake from the beginning to Moses, saying, I am that I am, hath sent thee, and to the church, and Jewish fathers in the wilderness; and who is that word that was from the beginning with God; and who is called the beginning, the first cause of all things, and of the creation of God; and some think this is intended here.

John 8:26

Ver. 26. I have many things to say, and to judge of you,.... Being God omniscient, he knew their persons and actions, their lives and conversations, and all their sins and transgressions, which he could justly have complained of, and charged them with, and proved against them, and judged and condemned them for; but this was not his present business, he came not to judge and condemn, but to save: wherefore he waved these things, and took no notice of them, leaving them to his Father, who would call them to an account, and punish them for them:

but he that sent me is true; as to his promises concerning the mission of his Son, to be the Saviour of sinners; so to his threatenings, to bring down vengeance on those that disbelieve him, and reject him:

and I speak to the world, or "in the world",

those things which I have heard of him; as concerning his love, grace, and mercy to those that should believe in him, so of the destruction of the despisers and rejecters of him; which things he spoke not in secret, in a corner, but publicly and openly, before all the world, to Jews and Gentiles, and to as many as were in the treasury, in the temple at this time; see Joh 18:20.

John 8:27

Ver. 27. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. That sent him, and who was true and faithful to all he had said, whether in a way of promise, or threatening; such was their stupidity, that they did not know that he meant God the Father by him that sent him, so deriving his mission and doctrine from him; their hearts were made fat, and hardened, and their eyes were blinded. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "they did not know that he said, God was his Father"; and so Beza's most ancient copy, and another exemplar of his.

John 8:28

Ver. 28. Then said Jesus unto them,.... Upbraiding them with their ignorance, and giving them a sign, as well as pointing out the time when they either, by good or sad experience, should have knowledge of him:

when ye have lift up the son of man; meaning himself, who was to be lifted up upon the cross, as the serpent was upon the pole, in the wilderness; and which signified the manner of death he should die, the death of the cross; and suggested, that what the Jews designed for his reproach, shame, and abasement, would be the way and means of his rise and exaltation; and this lifting him up, or crucifying him, he ascribes to them, because they would deliver him to Pontius Pilate to be condemned, and stir up the people to ask, and be importunate themselves for his crucifixion:

then shall ye know that I am [he]; the Son of God, and true Messiah, as the centurion, and those that were with him, did, when they observed the earthquake; and the things that were done at his death; and after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the pouring forth of his Spirit, many of the Jews had not only a notional, but a true and spiritual knowledge of Jesus, as the Messiah; and upon the destruction of their temple, city, and nation, and their disappointment by false Christs, they doubtless many of them must, and did know, that the true Messiah was come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he:

and that I do nothing of myself; See Gill on "Joh 5:19";

but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things; this he says not as lessening himself, or making himself inferior to the Father, but to show the excellency of his doctrine, and to assert the original, authority, and divinity of it; suggesting that it was not an human doctrine, or a device of man's, or his own, as man, but was divine, and from God; see **Joh 7:16**.

John 8:29

Ver. 29. And he that sent me is with me,.... By virtue of that near union there is between them, they being one in nature, essence, power, and glory, and by the gracious, powerful, comfortable, assisting, and strengthening presence of his Father, which he vouchsafed to him as man, and Mediator;

the Father hath not left me alone; Christ, as the word, was with the Father from all eternity, and, as the Son of God, was in heaven, and in the bosom of the Father, when he, as the son of man, was here on earth; for though he came forth from the Father into this world, by assumption of the human nature, yet the Father was always with him, and he with the Father, through the unity of the divine nature; nor did he withhold his supporting and assisting presence from him as man; nor did he withdraw, at least he had not yet withdrawn his gracious and comfortable presence from him, though he afterwards did, when upon the cross: compare with this Joh 16:32;

for I do always those things that please him; by submitting to Gospel ordinances, as to baptism, at which the Father declared his well pleasedness in him; and by complying with the ordinances of the ceremonial law, which were typical of him; and by perfectly obeying the precepts of the moral law, and bearing the penalty of it; or by suffering and dying in the room and stead of his people; all which were the will of God, and well pleasing to him.

John 8:30

Ver. 30. As he spake these words,.... Concerning his being lifted up, or his crucifixion, and the knowledge the Jews should then have of him; of the excellency and divinity of his doctrine, of his mission from the Father, and of the Father's presence with him, and of his always doing the things that are pleasing in his sight; which were spoken by him with majesty and authority, and came with power:

many believed on him: as the Son of God, and true Messiah: faith came by hearing; Christ's hearers were of different sorts; some understood him not, and disbelieved, and rejected him; others had their eyes, and their hearts opened, and received him, and his words.

John 8:31

Ver. 31. Then said Jesus to those Jews that believed on him,.... For he knew instantly who they were, and when they believed on him; and therefore he immediately turned himself to them, and thus addressed them;

if ye continue in my word; meaning the Gospel, called his, because he was both the author, and preacher, and sum, and substance of it: and to continue in it, is having cordially received it, to abide by it, and hold it fast, and not to be moved from it, by the temptations of Satan; the cunning of those that lie in wait to deceive; nor by the revilings and persecutions, the frowns and flatteries of men: and when men continue thus steadfast in it, and faithful to it, it is an evidence that it has come with power, and has a place in their hearts, and that they are the true followers of Christ:

then are ye my disciples indeed; there are two sorts of disciples of Christ; some are only nominal, and merely in profession such; and these sometimes draw back from him, discontinue in his word, and go out from among his people; which shows that they never were of them, nor are the true disciples of Jesus; for the genuine disciples of Christ continue in his Gospel, hold fast to him, the head, and remain with his people; which to do to the end, is an evidence, of their being disciples indeed.

John 8:32

Ver. 32. And ye shall know the truth,.... Either the truth of the Gospel, the truth as it is in Jesus; meaning, that they should have a larger knowledge of it, while others are ever learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth; but the spirit of truth should lead them into all truth, and cause them to grow and increase in Gospel light and knowledge; or Jesus himself, who is the way, the truth, and the life; and the sense is, that they should know more of him, of the dignity of his person, of the nature and usefulness of his offices; of the efficacy of his blood, the excellency of his righteousness, and the fulness of his grace, and that for themselves:

and the truth shall make you free; from ignorance and error, and the prejudices of education, under which the whole nation laboured, and from the thraldom of the law.

John 8:33

Ver. 33. They answered him,.... Not the believing Jews, whom he peculiarly addressed, but the unbelieving Jews, who were present, and heard these things:

we be Abraham's seed; this the Jews always valued themselves upon, and reckoned themselves, on this account, upon a level with the nobles and the princes of the earth.

"Says R. Akiba {c}, even the poor of Israel are to be considered as if they were Nyrwx ynb, "noblemen", that are fallen from their substance, because they are the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;"

and were never in bondage to any man; which is a very great falsehood, for it was declared to Abraham himself, that his seed should serve in a land not theirs, and be afflicted four hundred years, as they were; and as the preface to the law which the Jews gloried in shows, which says, that the Lord their God brought them out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; and they were frequently overcome by their neighbours, the Moabites, Ammonites, and Philistines, and reduced to servitude under them, until delivered by one judge, or another: and not to take notice of their seventy years' captivity in Babylon, they were at this very time under the Roman yoke, and paid tribute to Caesar; and yet such was the pride of their hearts, they would not be thought to be in bondage; and therefore, with an haughty air, add,

how sayest thou, ye shall be made free? when they thought themselves, and would fain have been thought by others, to have been free already, and so to stand in no need of being made free.

{c} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6. & T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 86. 1. & 91. 1.

John 8:34

Ver. 34. Jesus answered them, verily verily I say unto you,.... Taking no notice of their civil liberty, to which he could easily have replied to their confusion and silence, he observes to them their moral servitude and bondage, and in the strongest manner affirms, that

whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin; which must be understood, not of one that commits a single act of sin, though ever so gross, as did Noah, Lot, David, Peter, and others, who yet were not the servants of sin; or of such who sin through ignorance, weakness of the flesh, and the power of Satan's temptations, and especially who commit sin with reluctance, the spirit lusting against it; nor indeed of any regenerate persons, though they are not without sin; nor do they live without the commission of it, in thought, word, or deed; and though they fall into it, they do not continue and live in it, but rise up out of it, through the grace of God, and by true repentance; and so are not to be reckoned the servants of sin, or to be of the devil. But this is to be understood of such whose bias and bent of their minds are to sin; who give up themselves unto it, and sell themselves to work wickedness; who make sin their trade, business, and employment, and are properly workers of it, and take delight and pleasure in it: these, whatever liberty, they promise themselves, are the servants of corruption; they are under the government of sin, that has dominion over them; and they obey it in the lusts thereof, and are drudges and slaves unto it, and will have no other wages at last but death, even eternal death, if grace prevent not; see **Ro 6:16**.

John 8:35

Ver. 35. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever,.... The servant of God, and of Christ, does, but not the servant of sin: there may be servants of sin in the house or church of God here below; and such were these Jews Christ is speaking to; but such shall not abide there for ever: some that get into this house are quickly discerned, as Simon Magus was, and are soon removed; and others that may stay longer, are sometimes suffered to fall into some foul sin, or into some gross error and heresy, for which they are cast out of the house or church of God, according to the rules of God's word; others make parties, draw disciples after them, and separate themselves, and go out of their own accord, to serve their own purposes: and others, when persecution and tribulation arise because of the word, they are offended and gone; this is the fan with which Christ sometimes winnows his floor, and removes the chaff; and those that continue longest, even to the end of their days, or of the world, or the second coming of Christ, as the foolish virgins, will then be discerned and separated; for the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; they shall not enter into the house above, into the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, which is Christ's Father's house: none but sons are brought to glory; these are the only heirs of salvation; others will be bid to depart, as workers of iniquity, as the servants of sin; even such who have made a profession of religion, and have been, and have had a standing in the house of God below. The allusion is to the case of servants in common; and, in a literal sense, it is true both of good and bad servants: good servants do not always continue in their master's house; even an Hebrew servant, that loved his master, and would not go out free at the end of his servitude; and who, after having his ear bored, is said to serve him for ever, Ex 21:6; yet that "for ever" was but until the year of jubilee, whether near or remote, as the Jewish commentators {d} in general explain it; nay, if his master died before that time, he went out free: he was not obliged to serve his son or heirs; and so say the Misnic doctors {e}:

"one that is bored is obtained by boring, and he possesses himself (or becomes free) by the year of jubilee, and by the death of his master."

And to this agrees what Maimonides {f} says;

"he that has served six years, and will not go out, lo, this is bored, and he serves until the year of jubilee, or until his master dies; and although he leaves a son, he that is bored does not serve the son; which may be learned from the letter of the words, "he shall serve him", not his son, "for ever", until the jubilee: from whence it appears, that he that is bored does not possess himself (or is free) but by the jubilee, and by the death of his master."

And one of their writers {g} observes, that the word rendered, "shall serve him", is by Gematry, and not his son. And among the Romans, good servants were oftentimes made free, and bad ones were turned out, and put into a work house, to grind corn in mills, a sort of bridewell; and such evil servants may more especially be respected, since Christ is speaking of servants of sin:

but the Son abideth ever: the Son of God, the only begotten Son of God the Lord Jesus Christ will always continue as a Son in his own house, as the Lord and proprietor of it; and as an high priest over it, having an unchangeable priesthood; and as he that takes care of it, provides for it, and manages all the affairs thereof, the family in heaven and in earth being named of him. And as he, so all the adopted sons of God shall continue, being pillars in this house, that shall never go out: such are no more servants, nor foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and being sons, are heirs and shall never be cast out, as the bondwoman and her son have been: but these being the children of the free, shall for ever enjoy the inheritance they are adopted to; once sons, always so; the relation ever continues; they will ever remain in the family, and being entitled to the heavenly estate, shall ever possess it.

{d} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, & ben Gersom in Exod. xxi. 6. {e} Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 1. {f} Hilchot Abadim, c. 3. sect. 6, 7. {g} Baal Hatturim in Exod. xxi. 6.

John 8:36

Ver. 36. If the Son therefore shall make you free,.... Alluding to the custom of adoption by the sons or brethren in the family, which obtained in Greece, called adelfoyesia, "the adoption of brethren", as Grotius, and others have observed; or rather to a custom among the Romans, of a son's making free after his Father's death, such as were born slaves in his house. Such a case as this is supposed {h};

"a man having a son or a daughter by his maidservant, that which is born of her, since of a servant, is without doubt a servant: wherefore if he (the son) should say, this is my natural brother or my natural sister; for since my father had children by his maidservant, "whom he did not make free"; and he dying the law has made me lord of these, egw toutouv eleuyerwsa, "I have made these free", because of their natural kindred."

This is allowed to be a just and good reason of manumission. Now this answers very much to the case in hand. Men are home born slaves; the chosen people of God are such by nature; they are born in sin, and are the servants of it; Christ the Son makes them free; and then they are no more foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. This suggests, that true freedom is by Jesus Christ, the Son of God; see **Ga 5:1**. He it is that makes the saints free from sin; not from the being of it in this life, but from the bondage and servitude of it, from its power and dominion, and from its guilt and liableness to punishment for it, by procuring the pardon of their sins through his blood, and justifying their persons by his righteousness: he also makes them free, or delivers them from the captivity of Satan, by ransoming them out of his hands, taking the prey from the mighty, binding the strong man armed, and delivering them from him, and from the power of darkness, and putting them into his own kingdom; he does not indeed free them altogether from his temptations, but he preserves them by his power from being hurt and destroyed by him: he likewise makes his people free from the law, not only the ceremonial law, which is abolished by him, but from the moral law; not from obedience to it, as it is in his hands, and a rule of walk and conversation to them, but as in the hands of Moses, and as a covenant of works, and from the rigorous exaction of it, and from seeking justification and life by it, and from its curse and condemnation: and he gives them freedom of access to God, as their Father, through his blood and by his Spirit; and admits them to all the privileges and immunities of the church below; and gives them a right to, faith in, and an expectation of the glorious liberty of the children of God hereafter; and such are truly Christ's freemen:

ye shall be free indeed; this is true freedom; what the Jews boasted of, supposing what they said was right, was but a shadow of freedom in comparison of this; and that liberty which sinful men promise themselves in sin, is all deceit; there is no true, solid, substantial freedom but what is by Christ, the Son of God. Even that freedom which the children of God had under the legal dispensation, was a servitude, in comparison of that which the saints enjoy by Christ under the Gospel dispensation; though they were sons and heirs, yet being in bondage, differed nothing from servants, being under tutors and governors, in bondage under the elements of the world, and under the influence of a spirit of bondage unto fear; see **Ga 4:1**; but such that have received the spirit of adoption from Christ, they are really free: they have not only the name of children, and of freemen, but they are truly such, and wholly so; perhaps there may be some reference had to such sort of persons among the Jews, who were partly servants, and partly free: so it is said {i},

"dbe wyuxv ym, "he who is half a servant", or partly a servant, and partly free, shall serve his master one day, and himself another."

And such an one, as the commentators {k} say, is one who is a servant of two partners, and is made free by one of them; or who has paid half his price to his master (for his freedom), but the other half is still due: and of one in such circumstances it is said {l}, that

"he that is partly a servant, and partly free, may not eat of his master's (lamb at the passover):"

but now those who are made free by Christ the Son of God, they are not in part only, but are wholly free, and have a right to all the privileges of his house, to the supper of the Lord, and to every other immunity.

{h} Theophili Antecensor. Institut. Imperat. Justinian. l. 1. tit. 6. sect. 5. p. 38. {i} Misn. Gittin, c. 4. sect. 5. & Ediot, c. 1. sect. 13. {k} Maimonides, Jarchi, & Bartenora in ib. {l} Misn. Pesachim, c. 8. sect. 1.

John 8:37

Ver. 37. I know that ye are Abraham's seed,.... In answer to the other part of the Jews' objection to Christ, and in favour of themselves, Christ owns that they were the natural seed of Abraham; for truth must be allowed to an adversary. But then this hindered not but they might be, as they were, in moral bondage to sin, and a generation of vipers, as those of them who came to John's baptism were; and might not be the sons of God, for not because they were the natural seed of Abraham, were they all the adopted sons of God; and might be cast out of the house of God, as Ishmael was cast out of Abraham's, though he was his natural seed. And what follows proves them to be under the power, and in the servitude of sin, and that they were the seed of the serpent that was to bruise the heel of the woman's seed, or put the Messiah to death, though they were the natural seed of Abraham:

but ye seek to kill me; which none but such who are under the governing power of sin, are slaves unto it, and the vassals of the devil, would ever do: the reason of which is,

because my word hath no place in you; their hearts were barred and bolted against it, with ignorance, enmity, and unbelief; it had no entrance into them; it did not come with power to their hearts, nor work effectually in them; it had no place at all in them, much less a dwelling; had it had one, it would have produced another effect in them, even love to Christ; which the doctrine of Christ, wherever it comes with power, and takes place in the soul, brings along with it; but where it does not, as here, hatred and indignation, envy and malice, more or less, show themselves. This clause is differently rendered, and so admits of different senses. The Vulgate Latin renders it, "my word does not take in you"; it did not take place in them, nor did it take with them; they could not receive it; in which sense the word is used in Mt 19:11; for the natural man cannot receive the doctrines of Christ; they are not suited to his taste: they are disagreeable to him. The Syriac version renders it, "ye are not sufficient for my word", to take it in; they were not capable of it; they could not understand it; it requires divine illumination, and a spiritual discerning, which they had not: the Persic version is, "ye are not worthy of my words"; of having the Gospel preached to them, and continued with them; they contradicting and blaspheming it, and rejecting the author of it; see Ac 13:45. The Ethiopic version renders it, "my word does not remain with you"; and to the same purpose the Arabic version, "my word is not firm in you"; as soon as it was heard by them, it was caught away from them by Satan, whose children they were; it made no lasting impressions on them, but was like water spilt upon the ground: it may be rendered, "my word does not enter into you"; it did not make its way and penetrate into their hearts; for though, when attended with the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, it is quick and powerful, and sharper than a twoedged sword, and enters into the conscience, and penetrates to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and lays open the secret thoughts and intents of the heart; yet of itself is an insufficient means of conversion; it cannot make its own way; there must be an exertion of powerful and efficacious grace; which shows the hardness and obstinacy of the heart of man.

John 8:38

Ver. 38. I speak that which I have seen with my Father,.... This is an aggravation of the sin of the Jews, in seeking to kill Christ, on account of his doctrine, since it was not his own, but his Father's; was not merely human, but divine; was what he the only begotten Son, that lay in the bosom of his Father, had seen in his heart, in his purposes, and decrees, in his council, and covenant, and so was clear, complete, certain, and to be depended on:

and ye do that which ye have seen with your father; meaning the devil, whom, though they had not scan with their eyes, nor any of his personal actions; yet acted so much under his influence, and according to his will, as if they had close and intimate consultation with him, and took their plan of operation from him, and had him continually before them, as their example and pattern, to copy after. The Ethiopic version reads, "what ye have heard"; and so it is read in three of Beza's copies, and in three of Stephens's.

John 8:39

Ver. 39. They answered and said unto him,.... On account of his making mention of a father, whose works they did, and whom they imitated:

Abraham is our father; meaning their only one, nor had they any other:

Jesus saith unto them, if ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham; for who should children imitate but their parents? Abraham was a merciful, charitable, and hospitable man, as well as a man of strict justice and integrity; he feared God, believed in him, and was ready to receive every message and revelation which came from him; and they are his genuine children and offspring, who walk in the steps of his faith, charity, justice, and piety: and this is a rule which the Jews themselves give {m}, whereby the seed of Abraham may be known:

"whoever is merciful to the creature (man), it is evident that he is of the seed of Abraham, our father; but whoever has not mercy on the creature, it is a clear case that he is not of the seed of Abraham our father."

And if this is a sure rule of judging, these men could not be the seed of Abraham, who were a merciless, barbarous, and cruel generation. Another of their writers {n} has this observation, agreeably to the way of reasoning Christ uses;

"a disciple is to be judged of according to his manners; he that walks in the ways of the Lord, he is of the disciples of Abraham, our father, seeing he is used to his manners, and learns of his works; but the disciple who is corrupt in his manners, though he is of the children of Israel, lo, he is not of the "disciples of Abraham", seeing he is not accustomed to his manners."

Whence it appears, that they say these things not to distinguish themselves from other people who claimed a descent from Abraham, as the Ishmaelites or Saracens did; as did also the Spartans or Lacedemonians; for so writes Areus their king, to Onias the high priest of the Jews,

"it is found in writing, that the Lacedemonians and Jews are brethren, and that they are of the stock of Abraham," (1 Maccab. 12:20,21)

But to distinguish those who were religious and virtuous among the Jews themselves, from those that were not; and so our Lord means not to deny, that the Jews, though they were evil men, were the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh; but that they were not so in a spiritual sense, they did not tread in his steps, or do the works he did. The Persic version reads in the singular number, "ye would do the work of Abraham"; and if any particular work is designed, it is most likely to be the work of faith, since it was that which Abraham was famous for; and the doing of which denominated men, even Gentiles, the children of Abraham, and which the Jews were wanting in, they disbelieving and rejecting the Messiah.

{m} T. Bab. Betza, fol. 82. 2. {n} Abarbinel Naehaleth Abot, fol. 183. 1.

John 8:40

Ver. 40. But now ye seek to kill me,.... A temper and disposition very foreign from that of Abraham's:

a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God; to seek to kill a man is a very great crime, and punishable with death; to kill an innocent one, that had done no sin, who was pure, holy, harmless, and inoffensive to God and man, was an aggravation of the iniquity; and to kill a prophet, and one more than a prophet, who brought a revelation from God himself, and declared the whole truth of the Gospel, and particularly that of his divine, eternal sonship, which incensed them against him, and put them upon seeking to take away his life, still increased the sin.

This did not Abraham: the sense is not, that Abraham did not tell the truth he had heard of God; for he did instruct, and command his children after him, to walk in the ways of the Lord, which he had learned from him; but that Abraham did not reject any truth that was revealed unto him, and much less seek to take away the life of any person that brought it to him; and indeed not the life of any man that deserved not to die: and our Lord suggests, that if he had been on the spot now, he would not have done as these his posterity did, since he saw his day by faith, and rejoiced in the foresight of it, **Joh 8:56**. The Jew {o} makes an objection from these words against the deity of Christ;

"you see (says he) that Jesus declares concerning himself that he is not God, but man; and so says Paul concerning him, **Ro 5:15**; and so Jesus, in many places, calls himself the son of man: for do we find in any place that he calls himself God, as the Nazarenes believe."

To which may be replied, that Jesus does not declare in these words, nor in any other place, that he is not God; he says no such thing; he only observes, that he was a man, as he really was: nor is his being man any contradiction to his being God; for he is both God and man; and so those that believe in him affirm: and though Christ does not in express terms call himself God, yet he owned himself to be the Son of God, Mr 14:61, and said such things of himself, as manifestly declared him to be God; and upon account of which the Jews concluded, that he not only made himself equal with God, but that he made himself God, **Joh 5:17**. Besides, he suffered himself to be called God by a disciple of his, which he would never have done, had he not been really and truly God, Joh 20:28; yea, he seems to call himself so, when being tempted by Satan, he observed to him what is written, "thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God", **Mt 4:7**. The reason why he so often calls himself the son of man is, because it was more suitable to him in his state of humiliation; and indeed, there was no need for him to assert his deity in express words, since his works and miracles most clearly proved that he was God: and as for the Apostle Paul, though he sometimes speaks of him as a man, he also says of him, that he is God over all, blessed for ever; and calls him the great God, and our Saviour, and God manifest in the flesh, **Ro 9:5**.

{o} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 48. p. 436. & par. 1. c. 10. p. 118.

John 8:41

Ver. 41. Ye do the deeds of your father,.... Not Abraham, but the devil.

Then said they unto him, we be not born of fornication: meaning either literally, that they were not a brood of bastards, children of whoredom, illegitimately begotten in unlawful copulation, or wedlock; or figuratively, that they were not the children of idolaters, idolatry being called fornication in Scripture; but that they were the holy seed of Israel, and children of the prophets, who had retained the pure word, and the true worship of God, though in all this they might have been contradicted and refuted; to which they add,

we have one Father, [even] God; Israel being called by God his Son, and firstborn to them belonged the adoption, in a national sense, and of this they boasted; though few of them were the children of God by special adoption, or God their Father by regenerating grace.

John 8:42

Ver. 42. Jesus said unto them, if God were your Father,.... By adoption; and this was discovered by the grace of regeneration; or in other words, if they had been born of God,

ye would love me; for in regeneration love to Christ is always implanted: it is a fruit of the Spirit, which always comes along with the superabounding grace of God in conversion; whoever are begotten again, according to abundant mercy, love an unseen Jesus; and where there is no love to Christ, there can be no regeneration: such persons are not born again; nor is God their Father, at least manifestatively:

for I proceeded forth; and came from God; the former of these phrases is observed by many learned men to be used by the Septuagint, of a proper natural birth, as in Ge 15:4; and here designs the eternal generation of Christ, as the Son of God, being the only begotten of the Father, and the Son of the Father in truth and love; and the other is to be understood of his mission from him, as Mediator:

neither came I of myself; or did not take the office to himself, without being called unto it, and invested with it, by his Father:

but he sent me; not by force, or against the will of Christ, or by change of place, but by assumption of nature; he sent him at the time agreed upon, in human nature, to obtain eternal redemption for his people: and upon both these accounts Christ is to be loved by all regenerate persons, or who have God for their Father; both on account of his being the Son of God, of the same nature and essence with him, see **1Jo 5:1**; and on account of his mission into this world, as Mediator, since he was sent, and came to be the Saviour of lost sinners.

John 8:43

Ver. 43. Why do ye not understand my speech?.... Language, idiom, dialect, and form of speaking, in a figurative way; for they did not know what he meant by liberty, and bondage, and by having another father than Abraham, or by his own procession and coming forth from God:

[even] because ye cannot hear my word; as they had no spiritual discerning and understanding of the doctrine of Christ, which showed them to be carnal, and natural men, and not regenerate ones, and the children of God; so they had an aversion to it, and could not bear to hear it.

John 8:44

Ver. 44. Ye are of your father the devil,.... Not of his substance, but by imitation and example; and as being under his authority and influence, his instructions and directions, and ready to follow after him, and obey his commands; the word "your" is rightly supplied, and is in some copies:

and the lusts of your father ye will do; the Syriac and Persic versions read in the singular number, "the lust", or "desire of your father"; by which may be particularly meant, his eager desire after the death of Christ, which he showed at different times; he instigated Herod to seek to destroy his life in his infancy, and when he was just entering on his public ministry, he tempted him to destroy himself; and often stirred up the Scribes and Pharisees, to stone him or kill him, some other way; and at last put it into the heart of one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, to betray him: this looks as if though the devil had a notion of the salvation of men by Christ, yet that he thought, as some erroneous men have also done, that it was only by his doctrine and example, and therefore he was in haste to get him out of the world, that he might not be useful, or any more so that way; and not by the shedding of his blood, the sacrifice of himself, or by his sufferings and death, in the room of sinners; or otherwise it is scarcely credible, that he would have sought his death so earnestly: now this selfsame lust and insatiable desire after the death of Christ prevailed in the Jews; and they were resolute and bent upon fulfilling it at any rate, nor could anything divert them from it; this is the thing Christ is speaking of in the context, and is what fully proved the devil to be their father, and them to be his children:

he was a murderer from the beginning; he was not only spoken of from the beginning, as he that should bruise the Messiah's heel, or should compass his death, but he was actually a murderer of Adam and Eve, and of all their posterity, by tempting them to sin, which brought death and ruin upon them; and who quickly after that instigated Cain to slay his brother; and has had, more or less, a concern in all murders committed since; and has been in all ages, and still is, a murderer of the souls of men; and therefore is rightly called Abaddon, and Apollyon, which signify the destroyer: the phrase, "from the beginning", does not intend the beginning of his own creation; for he was created a holy creature, was in the truth, though he abode not in it; and was in an happy state, though he lost it: nor strictly the beginning of time, or of the creation of the world, which were some days at least before the fall of man, when the devil commenced a murderer; but it being very near it, therefore this phrase is made use of: the Syriac version renders it, "from Bereshith", which is the first word in the Hebrew Bible, and is frequently used by the Jewish Rabbins for the six days of the creation; and if Adam fell, as some think, the same day he was created, it might be properly said that the devil was a murderer from thence. Philo {p} speaks of Eve's serpent, as anyrwpou fonwnta, "a murderer of man"; applying to this purpose the text before referred to, **Ge 3:15**;

and abode not in the truth; neither in the integrity, innocence, and holiness, in which he was created; nor in veracity, or as a creature of veracity, but spake lies, and formed one, by which he deceived Eve, saying, "ye shall not surely die", **Ge 3:4**, when God had said they should, **Ge 2:17**; nor in the truth of the Gospel, which was at least in part made known unto him; particularly that the Son of God should become man, and in that nature be the head of angels and men: this he and his associates, in the pride of their hearts, not bearing that the human nature should be exalted above that of theirs, left their first estate, broke off their allegiance to God, and turned rebels against him:

because there is no truth in him; not that this is a reason why he continued not in the truth, for there was originally truth in him; though he abode not in it; but a reason, showing there was none in him now, since he was fallen from it, and abode not in it; there is no truth in him, that is natural and genuine, and essential to him; and if at any time he speaks it, it is not from his heart, but because he is forced to it, or has an evil design in it:

when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; that is genuine and natural, of his own devising, willing, and approving:

for he is a liar, and the father of it; he was a liar, as early as he was a murderer, or rather earlier; it was with a lie he deceived, and so murdered our first parents, and he has continued so ever since; he was the first author of a lie; the first lie that ever was told, was told by him; he was the first inventor of one; he was the first of that trade; in this sense the word "father" is used, **Ge 4:20**; so the serpent is by the Cabalistic Jews {q} called, the lip of lie, or the lying lip.

{p} De Agricultura, p. 203. {q} Lex. Cabalist. p. 724.

John 8:45

Ver. 45. And because I tell you the truth,.... And no lie, the whole truth of the Gospel, and particularly the truth of his divine sonship:

ye believe me not; to such an infatuation and judicial blindness were they give up, to disbelieve him, because he told the truth, and to believe a lie, that they might be damned; which showed them to be the children of the devil, and under his power and influence.

John 8:46

Ver. 46. Which of you convinceth me of sin?.... Of any immorality in life, or of any imposture, corruption, or deceit in doctrine. There were many of them that were forward enough to charge him with both scandalous sins, and false doctrines; but none of them all could prove anything against him, so as to convict him according to law: they called him a wine bibber, and a glutton; gave out they knew he was a sinner; charged him with blasphemy and sedition; sought to bring proof of it, but failed in their attempt:

and if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? since as no sin in life, so no corruption in doctrine, could be proved against him, what he said must be truth; and therefore it was a most unreasonable thing in them, and showed invincible obstinacy, not to believe him.

John 8:47

Ver. 47. He that is of God,.... Who is born, not of blood, by carnal descent from any person, or of the carnal will, or by the power of freewill, or of the will of the best man in the world; but of God, according to his abundant mercy, of his own will, by the power of his grace; and so has God to be his Father: such an one

heareth God's words; the doctrines of the Gospel, which have God for their author, being of his ordaining, sending, and publishing; and his grace for the matter of them, displayed in election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal salvation, and his glory for the end: now a regenerate man has eyes to see into the glory, loveliness, excellency, suitableness, and usefulness of these things; and he has ears to hear, and a heart to understand them, which others have not; and therefore hears them with pleasure, receives them in the love of them, cordially embraces them by faith, and distinguishes them from the words of man; and puts such of them in practice, as requires it:

ye therefore hear [them] not, because ye are not of God; because God was not their Father, or they were not born of him, as they boasted; therefore they had not eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor hearts to understand: and it may as fairly be inferred, that because they did not hear the words of God, therefore they were not of God; for these two necessarily imply each other; it looks very dark on such persons, who neither hear the doctrines of the Gospel externally nor internally.

John 8:48

Ver. 48. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him,.... Being incensed to the last degree, that he should say they were of their father the devil, and not of God; and that he spoke the truth, and no one could convince him of sin:

say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan? it seems they had said so before, though it is not recorded; and now they thought themselves justified in it, since he treated them, the true sons of Abraham, in such a manner; and the rather, since he had been lately among the Samaritans, and had in a parable spoken in favour of a Samaritan: they meant by this expression, that he was an irreligious man, and one that had no regard to the law of Moses; or at least played fast and loose with religion and the law, and was for any thing, as times served: the Jews had a very ill opinion of the Samaritans, on these accounts and to call a man a Samaritan, was all one as to call him an heretic, an idolater, or an excommunicated person; for such were the Samaritans with the Jews; they charged them with corrupting the Scriptures, and with worshipping idols, which were hid in Mount Gerizim; and they give us a dreadful account of their being anathematized by Ezra, Zorobabel, and Joshua; who, they say {r},

"gathered the whole congregation into the temple, and brought in three hundred priests, and three hundred children, and three hundred trumpets, and three hundred books of the law, in their hands; they blew the trumpets, and the Levites sung, and they anathematized the Samaritans, by the inexplicable name of God, and by the writing on tables, and with the anathema of the house of judgment, above and below; (saying,) let not any Israelite for ever eat of the fruit, or of the least morsel of a Samaritan; hence they say, whoso eateth the flesh of a Samaritan, it is all one as if he ate swine's flesh; also let not a Samaritan be made a proselyte, nor have a part in the resurrection of the dead; as it is said, "You have nothing to do with to build an house unto our God", **Ezr 4:3**, neither in this world, nor in the world to come: moreover, also let him have no part in Jerusalem; as it is said, "But you have no portion, nor, right, nor memorial in Jerusalem", **Ne 2:20**; and they sent this anathema to the Israelites that were in Babylon, and they added thereunto, curse upon curse moreover, king Cyrus added an everlasting anathema to it, as it is said, "And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there, destroy", &c. **Ezr 6:12**."

And hence, because the Samaritans were had in such abhorrence by the Jews, they would not ask a blessing over food in company with them {s}, nor say Amen after they had asked one {t}; nor indeed, after the better sort of them had asked, unless the whole blessing was distinctly heard {u}, that so they might be sure there was no heresy in it; by all which it appears, how opprobrious this name was, and what a sad character was fixed upon a man that bore it;
see Gill "Joh 4:9"; and as Christ was called by the Jews a Samaritan, they having no name more hateful and reproachful to call him by, so the Christians are still in their writings called Cuthites, or Samaritans; and it is indeed with them a general name for all Gentiles and idolaters, or whom they esteem such:

and hast a devil; familiarity and converse with one; by which means they imagined he knew their thoughts, and their actions, and by his assistance performed his miracles; or they took him for a lunatic, or a madman; whose lunacy and madness proceeded from the devil, with whom he was possessed: and this rather seems to be the sense, since in **Joh 8:52** the Jews say they knew he had a devil, which they concluded from his saying, that such that observed his words, and kept them, should never die; which they considered as the words of a man out of his senses, seeing all men, even the best of men die, they not understanding his meaning; whereas they could not gather from hence, that he dealt with familiar spirits; and what still confirms this sense is, that these two are joined together in
Joh 10:20, "he hath a devil, and is mad", and such as were demoniacs, men possessed with devils, were either mad, or lunatic, and melancholy; see **Mt 8:28**, compared with **Mr 9:17**. To which may be added, that it was a prevailing notion with the Jews, that madness and melancholy were owing to evil spirits, which had the predominancy over men: and seeing Christ was thought to be besides himself by his friends and relations, **Mr 3:21**, it need not be wondered at, that his enemies should fix such a character on him; nor was this an unusual one to be given to good men; the prophets and spiritual men of the Old Testament were accounted madmen, **2Ki 9:11**. And since our Lord was used in this abusive manner, it need not seem strange, that his followers should be treated in the same way; as the Apostle Paul and his companions in the ministry were, Ac 26:24; see
Joh 10:20.

{r} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. {s} Bartenora in Misn. Beracot, c. 7. sect. 1. {t} Elias in Tishbi in voce twk. {u} Misn. Beracot, c. 8. sect. 8. & Maimon. & Bartonera in ib.

John 8:49

Ver. 49. Jesus answered, I have not a devil,.... He takes no notice of the first charge and scandalous character, that he was a Samaritan; it being so notorious to all the Jews, that he was not; but was, as they supposed, a Galilean, and of Nazareth; and besides, this was a term of reproach, which they gave to any man, that they had no good opinion of; just as we call a man a Turk, or a Jew; not meaning that he is in fact such an one, but behaves like one: to the other Christ replies, that he had not a devil, had no conversation with one, nor was he possessed or assisted by him, or was mad, and acted the part of a madman: in proof of which he observes, but I honour my Father; by ascribing his doctrine and miracles to him, by doing his will, seeking his glory, and speaking well of him; all which he would not, had he been in confederacy with the devil; for no man can be familiar with him, or be assisted by him, and honour God; nor could a man out of his senses do all this:

and ye do dishonour me: by such wicked charges, and scandalous imputations: and Jews, who deny Jesus to be the Messiah, and treat him in this opprobrious manner, are not the only persons that dishonour Christ; there are many that are called by his name, who greatly dishonour him; some by their bad principles, and others by their evil practices: such highly reflect upon him, who deny his proper deity, and eternal sonship; who assert, that he is only God by office, and did not exist before his incarnation; who despise and reject his righteousness, submit not to it, but establish their own; who account his blood as common and useless, and speak disrespectfully of his sacrifice and satisfaction; and who consider his sufferings and death only as an example to men, and for the confirmation of his doctrine, but not as in the room and stead of his people, to answer and satisfy divine justice for them: and others they dishonour him, though they talk much of him, and pretend to faith in him, and love to him, and hope of eternal life by him, through their scandalous lives and conversations; dishonour his name and Gospel; give the enemy an occasion to reproach and blaspheme, and by reason of them, the ways and truths of Christ are evil spoken of.

John 8:50

Ver. 50. I seek not mine own glory,.... In his doctrine, or in his miracles; which showed that he was no impostor, but a true, faithful, and upright person; and though he was so very much reproached and abused, he was not over solicitous of his own character, and of retrieving his honour, and of securing glory from man; he knew that Wisdom was justified of her children, and he committed himself to God that judgeth righteously, who would take care of his glory, and vindicate him from all the unjust charges and insults of men:

there is one that seeketh and judgeth; meaning God his Father, who had his glory at heart; who had glorified him on the mount, and would glorify him again, when he should raise him from the dead, and spread his Gospel in all the world; and when he would judge the nation of the Jews, and bring wrath upon them, upon their nation, city and temple, for their contempt and rejection of him.

John 8:51

Ver. 51. Verily, verily, I say unto you,.... This is truth, and may be depended upon, as coming from the "Amen", and faithful witness:

if a man keep my saying; or doctrine, receives the Gospel in the love of it, obeys it from his heart, and cordially embraces and firmly believes it; and retains and holds it fast, having a spiritual and comfortable experience of the doctrines of Christ, and yielding a cheerful and ready obedience to his commands and ordinances, in faith and love:

he shall never see death; the second death, eternal death, which is an everlasting separation of a man, body and soul, from God: this death shall have no power on such a person, he shall never be hurt by it; and though he dies a corporeal death, that shall not be a curse, a penal evil to him; nor shall he always lie under the power of it, but shall rise again, and live in soul and body, for ever with the Lord: seeing and tasting death, as in **Joh 8:52**, are Hebraisms expressive of dying.

John 8:52

Ver. 52. Then said the Jews unto him,.... Upon these last words that he spake, giving assurance, that whoever kept his saying, should not die:

now we know that thou hast a devil; they thought and said so before, but now they were assured, that he must be under diabolical influence, must be possessed with the devil, and mad, and out of his senses; for they thought no man in his senses would ever talk at this rate:

Abraham is dead, and the prophets; that is, they are dead also, as the Ethiopic version adds; see **Zec 1:5**;

and thou sayest, if a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death: Abraham and the prophets were so far from pretending by their doctrine to communicate life and secure men from death, that they could not keep themselves from dying; and therefore it must be diabolical madness and frenzy to assert anything of this kind.

John 8:53

Ver. 53. Art thou greater than our father Abraham?.... So the woman of Samaria said, concerning Jacob, **Joh 4:12**. The Jews had a mighty opinion of their ancestors, especially of Abraham; and yet they allow the Messiah to be greater than he, as Jesus truly was: so one of their ancient commentators {w} on those words of Isa 52:13 thus paraphrases them,

""Behold my servant shall deal prudently", this is the King Messiah; "he shall be exalted" above Abraham, as it is written, Ge 14:22, "and extolled" above Moses, as it is written, Nu 11:12, and he shall be higher than the ministering angels, as it is written, **Eze 1:26**, for he shall be twba Nm lwdg, "greater than the fathers"."

They add here, of Abraham,

which is dead; he was a great and good man, and yet dead:

and the prophets are dead; though they truly kept, and faithfully delivered the word of God:

whom makest thou thyself? who art a poor carpenter's son, a Galilean, a Nazarene, and yet makest thyself greater than Abraham, or any of the prophets; yea, makest thyself to be God, to promise security from death, and an everlasting continuance of life upon keeping thy word.

{w} Tachuma apud Huls. p. 321.

John 8:54

Ver. 54. Jesus answered, if I honour myself, my honour is nothing,.... It is empty and vain, and will not continue; see 2Co 10:18;

it is my Father that honoureth me: by a voice from heaven, both at his baptism, and transfiguration, declaring him to be his beloved Son, and by the works and miracles he did by him; as he afterwards also honoured him by raising him from the dead, and setting him at his own right hand, by pouring forth his Spirit on his disciples, and succeeding his Gospel in every place:

of whom ye say that he is your God; your covenant God and Father, being the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; of this the Jews boasted. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and all the Oriental versions read, "our God".

John 8:55

Ver. 55. Yet ye have not known him,.... Not as the Father of Christ, nor as in Christ, whom to know is life eternal: they had no spiritual knowledge of him, nor communion with him; nor did they know truly his mind and will, nor how to worship and serve him as they ought:

but I know him; his nature and perfections, being of the same nature, and having the same perfections with him; and his whole mind and will lying in his bosom: nor did, or does any know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom he is pleased to reveal him:

and if I should say, I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you. Our Lord still intimates, that they were of their father the devil, and imitated him not only as a murderer, but as a liar: this is quite contrary to the character they give of themselves, for they say {x}, that an Israelite will not tell a lie.

But I know him, and keep his saying: do his will, and always the things that please him, observe his law, preach his Gospel, fulfil all righteousness, and work out the salvation of men, which were the will and work of his Father he came to do.

{x} Maimon. in Misn. Pesachim, c. 8. sect. 6.

John 8:56

Ver. 56. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day,.... Or "he was desirous to see my day", as the Syriac and Arabic versions rightly render the word; or "very desirous", as the Persic version: and indeed, this was what many kings and prophets, and righteous men, were desirous of, even of seeing the Messiah and his day: we often read of xyvmh twmy, "the days of the Messiah": and the Jews, in their Talmud {y}, dispute much about them, how long they will be; one says forty years, another seventy, another three ages: it is the opinion of some, that they shall be according to the number of the days of the year, three hundred and sixty five years; some say seven thousand years, and others as many as have been from the beginning of the world; and others, as many as from Noah; but we know the day of Christ better, and how long he was here on earth; and whose whole time here is called his day; this Abraham had a very great desire to see:

and he saw [it] and was glad; he saw it with an eye of faith, he saw it in the promise, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and when it was promised him he should have a son, which was the beginning of the fulfilment of the other, he laughed, and therefore his son was called Isaac, to which some reference is here made; he saw him in the birth of his son Isaac and rejoiced, and therefore called his name Isaac, that is, "laughter": he saw also Christ and his day, his sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead, in a figure; in the binding of Isaac, in the sacrifice of the ram, and in the receiving of Isaac, as from the dead; and he not only saw the Messiah in his type Melchizedek, and who some think was the Son of God himself, but he saw the second person, the promised Messiah, in an human form, Ge 18:2; and all this was matter of joy and gladness to him. This brings to mind what the Jews say at the rejoicing at the law, when the book of the law is brought out {z}

"Abraham rejoiced with the rejoicing of the law, he that cometh shall come, the branch with the joy of the law; Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, rejoiced with the joy of the law; he that cometh shall come, the branch with the joy of the law."

{y} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1. {z} Seder Tephillot, fol. 309. 1. Ed. Basil.

John 8:57

Ver. 57. Then said the Jews unto him, thou art not yet fifty years old,.... One copy reads forty, but he was not that; no, not much more than thirty; not above two or three and thirty years old: the reason of their fixing on this age of fifty might be, because Christ might look like such an one, being a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs, as well as of great gravity; or they might be free in allowing him as many years, as could be thought he should be of, and gain their point; for what were fifty years, when Abraham had been dead above two thousand? and therefore he could never see Abraham, nor Abraham see him; moreover, this age of fifty, is often spoken of by the Jews, and much observed; at the age of fifty, a man is fit to give counsel, they say {a}; hence the Levites were dismissed from service at that age, it being more proper for them then to give advice, than to bear burdens; a Methurgeman, or an interpreter in a congregation, was not chosen under fifty years of age {b}; and if a man died before he was fifty, this was called the death of cutting off {c}; a violent death, a death inflicted by God, as a punishment; Christ lived not to that age, he was now many years short of it:

and hast thou seen Abraham? if he had not, Abraham had seen him, in the sense before given, and in which Christ asserted it, and it is to be understood.

{a} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21. {b} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 1. Juchasin, fol. 44. 2. {c} T. Hieros. Biccurim, fol. 64. 3. T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 28. 1. Macsecheth Semachot, c. 3. sect. 9. Kimchi in Isa. xxxviii. 10.

John 8:58

Ver. 58. Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you,.... Whether it will be believed or not, it is certainly fact:

before Abraham was, I am; which is to be understood, not of his being in the purpose and decree of God, foreordained to sufferings, and to glory; for so all the elect of God may be said to be before Abraham, being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world: or that Christ was man, before Abraham became the father of many nations; that is, before the calling of the Gentiles; for nothing is said in the text about his being the father of many nations; it is a bold and impudent addition to it: and besides, Abraham was made the father of many nations, as Ishmaelites, Israelites, Hagarenes, &c. long before the incarnation of Christ; yea, he was so from the very promise in Ge 17:5, which so runs, "a father of many nations have I made thee"; so that this appears a false sense of the text, which is to be understood of the deity, eternity, and immutability of Christ, and refers to the passage in **Ex 3:14**. "I am that I am--I am hath sent me unto you", the true Jehovah; and so Christ was before Abraham was in being, the everlasting I am, the eternal God, which is, and was, and is to come: he appeared in an human form to our first parents before Abraham was, and was manifested as the Mediator, Saviour, and living Redeemer, to whom all the patriarchs before Abraham looked, and by whom they were saved: he was concerned in the creation of all things out of nothing, as the efficient cause thereof; he was set up from everlasting as Mediator; and the covenant of grace was made with him, and the blessings and promises of it were put into his hands before the world began; the eternal election of men to everlasting life was made in him before the foundation of the world; and he had a glory with his Father before the world was; yea, from all eternity he was the Son of God, of the same nature with him, and equal to him; and his being of the same nature proves his eternity, as well as deity, that he is from everlasting to everlasting God; and is what he ever was, and will be what he now is: he is immutable, the same today, yesterday, and for ever; in his nature, love, grace, and fulness, he is the invariable and unchangeable I am.

John 8:59

Ver. 59. Then they took up stones to cast at him,.... Supposing that he had spoken blasphemy; for they well understood that he, by so saying, made himself to be the eternal God, the unchangeable Jehovah. Should it be asked how they came by their stones in the temple? it may be replied, the temple was still building, **Joh 2:20**, and stones, or pieces of stones, might lie about, with which they furnished themselves, in order to have destroyed Christ: and this they attempted, though it was on the sabbath day, as appears from **Joh 9:1**; and with them, tbvb hlyqo, "stoning on the sabbath day" {d} was allowed in some cases.

But Jesus hid himself, not in any corner of the temple, or behind a pillar; but he withdrew himself from them directly, and made himself invisible to them, by holding their eyes, or casting a mist before them, that they could not see him:

and went out of the temple; by one of the gates of it:

going through the midst of them; not of the persons that took up stones to stone him; but the rest of the people, who were there in great multitudes to hear his doctrine, and see his miracles: and so passed by, and escaped out of their hands; the last words, going through the midst of them,

and so passed by, are not in Beza's most ancient copy, and in the Vulgate Latin version.

{d} T. Hieros. Yom Tob, fol. 63. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 9:1

Ver. 1. And as [Jesus] passed by,.... The word "Jesus" is not in the Greek text, but is rightly supplied by us, as it is in the Vulgate Latin, and as the word "Christ" is in the Persic version; for of his passing from the temple, and by the multitude that were there, and on his way to the place he designed to make to, is this said, as appears from the close of the preceding chapter; though some think this is to be understood of his passing by at another time and place, since the preceding fact of the woman's being taken in adultery, and the discourse of our Lord with the Jews, were quickly after the feast of tabernacles; whereas the following ones, both in this, and the next chapter, seem to be at the feast of dedication, Joh 10:22, which was some months after: but it may be, that the parable of the sheep, though it runs in connection with what is said in this chapter, might be delivered then; or what follows, Joh 10:22, might be said at the feast of dedication, when the parable, and what is related here, might be delivered before, seeing there is so very strict a connection between this, and the preceding chapter; and the Ethiopic version is very express, rendering it, "and departing from thence"; that is, from the temple, at that time when the Jews took up stones to stone him:

he saw a man which was blind from his birth; which man was an emblem of God's elect in a state of nature, who being conceived in sin, are transgressors from the womb, and so are alienated from the life of God through their ignorance and blindness: they are blind as to any true and spiritual knowledge of God in Christ; as to any true sight of sin, or sense of their own estate and condition; and with respect to Christ, and the way of peace, righteousness, and salvation by him; and as to the Spirit, and the operations of his grace, and with regard to the Scriptures, and the doctrines of the Gospel: and as Christ saw this man first, and not the man him, for he was blind, so Christ first looks upon his chosen ones with an eye of love and mercy, as he passes by them, and both enlightens and quickens them,
Eze 16:6. He saw Matthew the publican first, as he passed along, and called him from the receipt of custom to be a follower of him, **Mt 9:10**.

John 9:2

Ver. 2. And his disciples asked him,.... It may be that some of the twelve apostles, or others of his disciples, might put the following question to him on sight of this blind man, who by some means or another knew was born blind:

saying, master, who did man, or his parents, that he was born blind? the first of these questions, whether the man himself had sinned before he was born, which might be the occasion of his blindness, proceeds not upon the doctrine of original sin, though the Jews then believed that; See Gill on "Ro 5:12"; since that was common to all men, and therefore could not admit of such a question; but either upon the notion of transmigration of souls into other bodies; and so the disciples might ask whether this man had sinned in a pre-existent state when in another body, which was the reason of this blindness, or of his being put into a blind body. This notion, Josephus says {a}, was embraced by the Pharisees; though, according to him, it seems, that they only understood it of the souls of good men; and if so, this could lay no foundation for such a question, unless these disciples had given into the Pythagorean notion of a transmigration of all souls, which was to be known by defects, as blindness, &c. {b}; or else this question proceeded upon a principle received by the Jews, that an infant might do that which was faulty and criminal, and actually sin in the womb; of which Dr. Lightfoot has given instances: the second question proceeds upon the methods which sometimes God has taken with men, by visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children; or, as the above learned writer observes, upon a notion the Jews had, that a child might suffer for what the mother did whilst it was in the womb; or on another, which prevailed among them, that there should be neither merit nor demerit in the days of the Messiah; that is, that neither the good deeds, nor bad deeds of their parents, should be imputed to their children, neither the one to their advantage, nor the other to their disadvantage: and therefore since he the Messiah was come, they ask, how this blindness should come to pass? what should be the reason of it?

{a} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 8. sect. 14. {b} Sallust. de Diis, c. 20.

John 9:3

Ver. 3. Jesus answered, neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents,.... Not but that both were guilty of original sin, and had committed actual transgressions; but Christ's answer is to be considered agreeable to the design of the question; and the sense is, that it was not any sin that either of them had committed, whilst he was in the womb, or previous to his birth, that was the cause of this blindness; otherwise, all such irregularities and afflictions arise from sin, and the fall of man, as does that spiritual blindness with which all mankind are attended:

but that the works of God should be manifest in him; that is, that Christ might have an opportunity of working a miracle in the cure of him, whereby it might appear that he is truly and properly God, the Son of God, and the Messiah; and so spiritual blindness, which has followed the fall of man, takes place in the elect of God in common with others, that the power of divine grace might be displayed in bringing them out of darkness into marvellous light.

John 9:4

Ver. 4. I must work the works of him that sent me,.... This shows, that the works of God, that were to be manifest, were to be done by Christ: many were the works which the Father gave him to do, and which he undertook to perform; and therefore there was a necessity of doing them, as principally the work of redemption, by fulfilling the law, and satisfying justice: and besides this, there were the preaching of the Gospel, and doing of miracles, and among these was this of giving sight to the blind, see Isa 35:5, both in a natural and spiritual sense: and with a view to this he speaks of the works he mast do,

while it is day; while the day of life lasts, for in the grave there is no work nor device:

the night cometh when no man can work; meaning the night of death, and of the grave, and suggesting his own death hereby, that he had but a little time to be in this world, and therefore would make the best use of it, to do the will and work of his Father that sent him; and which should be a pattern to us. This life is but short, it is but as the length of a day; a great deal of business is to be done; and death is hastening on, which will put a period to all working.

John 9:5

Ver. 5. As long as I am in the world,.... Which had been now two or three and thirty years; but was not to be much longer.

I am the light of the world; See Gill on "Joh 8:12". Though doubtless he said this with some view to the cure he was about to perform, it being agreeable to his character and work, while he was in the world.

John 9:6

Ver. 6. And when he had thus spoken,.... In answer to the disciples' question, and declaring his own work and office in the world, and the necessity he was under of performing it:

he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle; the Misnic doctors speak {c} of qwrn jyj, "clay that is spitted", or "spittle clay", which their commentators say {d} was a weak, thin clay, like spittle or water; but this here was properly spittle clay, or clay made of spittle, for want of water; or it may be rather, through choice Christ spat upon the dust of the earth, and worked it together into a consistence, like clay:

and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay; however, spittle, especially fasting spittle, might be thought proper in some disorder of the eyes, to be used, as it was by the Jews;
See Gill on "Joh 9:16"; yet clay was a most unlikely means of restoring sight to a man that was born blind, which might be thought rather a means of making a man blind that could see. This may be an emblem of the word of God, the eye salve of the Gospel; which is a very unlikely means in the opinion of a natural man, who counts it foolishness, of enlightening and saving sinners; and yet by this foolishness of preaching God does save those that believe.

{c} Misn. Mikvaot, c. 7. sect. 1. {d} Jarchi, Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

John 9:7

Ver. 7. And said unto him, go wash in the Pool of Siloam,.... A fountain of this name is called Siloah, **Isa 8:6**, and according to the Jewish writers, sometimes Gihon {e}; and this, they say {f}, was without Jerusalem, though near unto it: hither the Jews went at the feast of tabernacles {g}, and drew water with great rejoicing, and brought it, and poured it on the altar; the waters thereof also the priests drank for digestion, when they had eaten too much flesh {h}; and this was likewise made use of to wash in, in case of uncleanness. It is said {i} of Benaiah, one of David's worthies, that

"one day he set his foot upon a dead toad, and he went down to Siloah, and broke the pieces of hail, (or ice congealed together,) and dipped himself."

This fountain was to the south west of Jerusalem; and was, as Josephus says, sweet and large {k}; and from it were two watercourses, upper and lower, 2Ch 32:30, which ran into two pools; the one was called the Pool of Siloam, which may be the same that Josephus {l} calls the Pool of Solomon, and is here meant, and which was situated on the south of the wall of Sion, towards the east; and the other was called the Pool of Shelah, and which, in **Ne 3:15**, is called in our translation, and in some others, the Pool of Siloah. Now both the fountain, and the pool, were without the city; and yet we read of a Siloah in the midst of the city {m}. This blind man was sent, not to wash himself all over, but only his face or eyes; and so the Arabic and Persic versions read, "wash thy face"; the clay from it: this may be emblematical of the grace of the Spirit, sometimes signified by water and washing, which accompanying the word, makes it effectual to the salvation of souls:

which is by interpretation sent. This interpretation of the word Siloam does not determine which of the pools is meant, the upper or lower, "Siloah" or "Shelah", since they both come from the word xlv, which signifies to "send"; but by the flexion of the word, the upper pool "Siloah" seems plainly intended, which was not so forenamed, as Nonus suggests, from the sending this man thither, but rather from the sending forth its waters, which flowed softly and gently for the supply of the city of Jerusalem, Some think Christ gave this interpretation of it with a view to himself, as the sent of God, the true Messiah: but the words seem not to be the words of Christ, but of the evangelist, who interprets this word; wherefore they are left out in the Syriac and Persic versions, where such an interpretation was needless.

He went his way therefore and washed, and came seeing: he did as he was commanded; he was obedient to the directions and orders of Christ, though they seemed so unlikely to answer the end; and yet that was brought about through the divine power of Christ, which appeared the more in making use of such unlikely means.

{e} Targum, Jarchi, Kimchi, & Solomon ben Melech in 1 Kings i. 39. {f} Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Succa, c. 4. sect. 9. {g} Misn. Succa, c. 4. sect. 9. {h} Abot R. Nathan, c. 35. fol. 8. 3. {i} Targum in 1 Chron. xi. 22. {k} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 1. {l} Ib. l. 6. c. 6. vel. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 1. {m} T. Hieros. Chagigah, fol. 76. 1.

John 9:8

Ver. 8. The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him,.... For it seems the blind man was not a stranger, one that came out of the country to the city to beg; but a native of Jerusalem, that had long lived in a certain neighbourhood in it, and was well known to be what he was;

that he was blind; the Alexandrian copy, and one of Beza's exemplars, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "that he was a beggar"; to which agree the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions: wherefore they

said, is this not he that sat and begged? they particularly remark his begging posture; he was not laid all along, as the lame man in **Ac 3:2**; nor did he go from door to door, as others were used to do, but he sat in some certain place, as blind men generally did; see
Mt 20:30.

John 9:9

Ver. 9. Some said, this is he,.... It is the same man that was blind, and begged:

others [said]; in one of Beza's copies it is added "no", and so read the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; though they owned and said,

he is like him. This discourse of the neighbours concerning the blind man restored to sight, resembles the talk that generally is among relations, acquaintance, and neighbours, when anyone belonging to them is called by grace, and converted, saying, what is come to such an one? is he mad or melancholy? he is not the man he was: he is scarcely the same; is it he, or another? what is the matter with him?

[but] he said, I am [he]; and so put an end to the dispute between them, by his frank acknowledgment that he was the blind man, and the beggar they before knew as such: so persons enlightened by the Spirit of God, and effectually called by his grace, are very free and ready to acknowledge what they were before conversion, what poor, blind, and miserable, and contemptible creatures they were: Matthew owns himself to have been a publican; and Paul confesses he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an injurious person, and the chief of sinners.

John 9:10

Ver. 10. Therefore said they unto him,.... When the case was clear, and it was out of question that he was the man:

how were thine eyes opened? or made to see: they might well ask this question, since such a thing was never known before, that one born blind received his sight; and as great a miracle it is in grace, and as great a mystery to a natural man, how one should be born again, or be spiritually enlightened.

John 9:11

Ver. 11. He answered and said, a man that is called Jesus,.... Whom he had as yet little knowledge of, only by some means or another he had learned his name;

made clay and anointed mine eyes, &c. See Gill on "Joh 9:6",
See Gill on "Joh 9:7".

John 9:12

Ver. 12. Then they said unto him, where is he?.... For Christ had withdrawn himself and was gone; whether on account of the Jews, who he knew would be irritated by this miracle, or whether to avoid all popular applause and glory, which he sought not, is not certain; it may be on both accounts: this question, however, was put, not out of good will to Christ, but that they might apprehend him, and bring him before the sanhedrim, for doing work on the sabbath day; and such enmity there is in carnal men, at the conversion of sinners, their acquaintance, instead of rejoicing at it:

he said I know not; for when he returned from the pool, Jesus was gone: and so it sometimes is, that when Christ has wrought a good work of grace upon the heart, he withdraws himself for a while, and the converted sinner knows not where he is.

John 9:13

Ver. 13. They brought to the Pharisees,.... That is, to the sanhedrim, which chiefly consisted of Pharisees; and so Nonnus calls them the priests and chief priests:

him that was aforetime blind; to be examined by them. And something like this is the method used by carnal relations and friends, who when they have any belonging to them under a work of grace, have them to their learned doctors of a different religion, to talk to them, and dissuade them from the ways of truth and godliness.

John 9:14

Ver. 14. And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay,.... Which was reckoned a violation of the sabbath, **Joh 9:16**, and was one reason why they had the man to the Pharisees to be examined, and why they were desirous of knowing where Jesus was:

and opened his eyes; by putting on the clay, and sending him to wash in the Pool of Siloam: nor did the miracle, nor the good done to the man, excuse with them, what they thought a breach of the sabbath.

John 9:15

Ver. 15. Then again the Pharisees asked him,.... Not that they had put any question of this kind to him before; but they also, as well as the neighbours, inquired of him,

how he had received his sight; from whom, and by what means:

he said unto them, he put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed and do see. This account agrees with the matter of fact, and with that he gave to his neighbours: he did not vary as to the truth of the relation, but this is somewhat more concise and short; and it is reasonable to suppose, that the Pharisees had talked much with him before, which made it less necessary to be more particular; for he makes no mention of the name of Jesus, nor of his making the clay, and the manner of it, nor of the Pool of Siloam, or his orders to go there and wash; See Gill on "Joh 9:6",
See Gill on "Joh 9:7".

John 9:16

Ver. 16. Wherefore said some of the Pharisees,.... Or sanhedrim, for they were not all of one mind, as appears by what follows:

this man is not of God; meaning not the blind man, but Jesus; and their sense is, he is not sent of God, he does not come from him to do his will and work, nor does he seek his glory, nor is he on his side, or for his interest;

because he keepeth not the sabbath day: this they concluded from his making clay of spittle, and spreading it on the blind man's eyes, which was contrary to the traditions of their elders: one of whose rules and canons is {n}, that

"it is forbidden to put fasting spittle even on the eyelid on a sabbath day."

An eye salve, or a plaster for the eye, if it was put on for pleasure, was lawful, but not for healing {o}: but if it was put on, on the evening of the sabbath, it might continue on the sabbath day {p}.

Others said, how can a man that is a sinner, or a sabbath breaker,

do such miracles? as curing a man born blind, the like of which was never heard: those that reasoned after this manner may be supposed to be Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

And there was a division among them; even in the sanhedrim, they could not agree about the character of the person that had done this miracle.

{n} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 14. 4. & Avoda Zara, fol. 40. 4. & T. Bab. Sabbat, fol 108. 2. & Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 21. sect. 25. {o} Piske Tosephot Sabbat, art. 67. {p} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 3, 4. Maimon. ib.

John 9:17

Ver. 17. They say unto the blind man again,.... After they had discoursed among themselves, and could not agree about the author of the miracle, they turn to him that had been blind, who is called the blind man, because he had been so, and ask him his sentiments of him:

what sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? the question seems, at first sight, as if it was, whether Jesus had opened his eyes or not; but by the answer it appears, that it required his thoughts of him, "who hath opened thine eyes", as the Vulgate Latin and Persic versions read; or "seeing", or "because he hath opened thine eyes", as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions:

he said, he is a prophet; the Syriac and Persic versions read, "I say he is a prophet"; or, "he is certainly a prophet", as the Arabic version. The Jews were wont to conclude a man's being a prophet from miracles wrought by him; see **Joh 6:14**; though it does not appear that he believed him, as yet, to be that prophet, or the Messiah, that was to come; see **Joh 9:36**.

John 9:18

Ver. 18. But the Jews did not believe concerning him,.... Not Jesus, but the blind man;

that he had been blind, and received his sight; they imagine there was a fraud in the case, that it was collusion between Jesus and this man; that he was a man who had never been blind, but only had given out that he was, and pretended he had now received his sight from Jesus, on purpose to spread his fame, and induce people to believe he was the Messiah; and in this imagination they endeavoured to strengthen themselves and others:

until they called the parents of him that had received his sight; they sent messengers to them, and summoned them before them, that they might examine them about this matter, hoping, they might get something out of them, which might detect the supposed fraud, and bring Jesus under disgrace.

John 9:19

Ver. 19. And they asked them, saying, is this your son,.... The first question they put was, whether the man that stood before them, pointing to him, was their son or not; whether they knew him by any marks to be their son, and would own him as such: had they answered to this in the negative, they would have got an advantage against him, and would have convicted him of a lie, since he had given out that he was the son of such parents; and proving such a lie upon him, would at once have brought the whole affair into suspicion at least: they add,

who ye say was born blind; this contains a second question, whether, if this was their son, he was born blind or not; and if he was not born blind, though he had been blind, it would have greatly lessened the miracle: and besides, they would have put other questions upon this, whether his blindness was real, and by what means it came. Next follows a third question,

how then doth he now see? By what means has he received his sight? They might hope, that if he was their son, and was really born blind, that he had his sight some other way than by Jesus; or they might object this to his being born, blind, as being a thing impossible, or at least not credible that he should ever see, was that the case.

John 9:20

Ver. 20. His parents answered them, and said,.... What follows, which contains distinct answers to the several questions: and to the first they reply very freely, and with great confidence,

we know that this is our son; for though his receiving his sight made a considerable alteration in him, yet his features were the same; and there might be some marks in his body, which they were acquainted with, by which they knew assuredly he was their son: and if even the neighbours, though they disagreed about him, yet some of them knew him to be the same person that had been blind and begged, then much more his parents; and even those who said it was not he, yet they owned he was like him: and with respect to the second question they answer,

and that he was born blind: this they were ready to attest, and did attest.

John 9:21

Ver. 21. But by what means he now seeth we know not,.... As to the third question they could say nothing to it, they were not present when the cure was wrought, and knew nothing of the matter, but what they had heard from their son, or from others, or both:

or who hath opened his eyes we know not; they had heard it was Jesus, and their son had doubtless told them it was he; but since they could say nothing of their own personal knowledge, they choose not to say anything of him:

he is of age; at man's estate, as, with the Jews, one was, who was at the age of thirteen years, if he could produce the signs of puberty: and such an one was allowed a witness in any case, but not under this age; nor if he was arrived to it, if the above signs could not be produced {q}. This man very likely was much older, as may be thought from the whole of his conduct, his pertinent answers, and just reasoning: wherefore his parents direct the sanhedrim to him for an answer to their third question,

ask him, he shall speak for himself; or "of himself", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions render it: their sense is, he is capable of giving an account of himself in this matter, and he will do it, and let him do it; put the question to him, and a proper answer will be returned; and so they left the affair to be issued in this way.

{q} Maimon. Hilchot Eduth, c. 9. sect. 7.

John 9:22

Ver. 22. These words spake his parents,.... these were the answers they returned to the three questions put to them: and the reason why they answered in the manner they did to the third, was,

because they feared the Jews; the Jewish sanhedrim, otherwise they were Jews themselves:

for the Jews had agreed already; the sanhedrim had made a decree, either at this time, upon this account, or some time before,

that if any man did confess that he was Christ; that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah,

he should be put out of the synagogue; which was not that sort of excommunication which they called ywdn, "Niddui", a separation from civil society for the space of four cubits, and which held but thirty days, if the person repented; if he did not, it was continued to sixty days; and after that, in case of non-repentance, to ninety days; and if no amendment, then they proceeded to another excommunication called Mrx, "Cherem", or atmv, "Shammatha", whereby such were anathematized, and cut off from the whole body of the Jewish church and people, called sometimes the synagogue and congregation of Israel {r}; and this struck great terror in the minds of the people; and this was what intimidated the parents of the blind man, being what

is intended here. Though these are sometimes put one for another, and signify the same thing; and he that was under the former of those censures, is said to be rwbyu Nm
ldbwm, "separated from the congregation" {s}, a phrase by which the word here used may be very well rendered: but in some things there was a difference between them; the one was without cursing, the other with; he that was under "Niddui", might teach others the traditions, and they might teach him; he might hire workmen, and be hired himself: but he that was under "Cherem" might neither teach others, nor they teach him; but he might teach himself, that he might not forget his learning; and he might neither hire, nor be hired; and they did not trade with him, nor did they employ him in any business, unless in very little, just to keep him alive {t}; yea, the goods which he was possessed of, were confiscated, and which they conclude should be done from {u} Ezr 10:8, which may be compared with this passage; so that this greatly and chiefly affected them in the affairs of civil life, and which made it so terrible: for I do not find that they were obliged to abstain from the temple, or temple worship, or from the synagogue, and the worship of it, and which is the mistake of some learned men: it is certain, they might go into places of worship, though with some difference from others; for it is said {w}, that

"all that go into the temple, go in, in the right hand way, and go round, and come out in the left, except such an one to whom anything has befallen him, and he goes about to the left; (and when asked) why dost thou go to the left? (he answers) because I am a mourner; (to whom it is replied) he that dwells in this house comfort thee: (or)
hdwnm ynav, "because I am excommunicated"; (to whom they say) he that dwells in this house put it into thy heart (that thou mayest hearken to the words of thy friends, as it is afterwards explained) and they may receive thee."

And it is elsewhere said {x}, that

"Solomon, when he built the temple, made two gates, the one for bridegrooms, and the other for mourners and excommunicated persons; and the Israelites, when they went in on sabbath days, or feast days, sat between these two gates; and when anyone came in by the gate of the bridegrooms, they knew he was a bridegroom, and said unto him, he that dwells in this house make thee cheerful with sons and daughters: and when anyone came in at the gate of mourners, and his upper lip covered, they knew that he was a mourner, and said unto him, he that dwells in this house comfort thee: and when anyone came in at the gate of mourners, and his upper lip was not covered, they knew
hdwnm hyhv, "that he was excommunicated"; and said unto him, he that

dwells in this house comfort thee, and put it into thy heart to hearken to thy friends."

And it is afterwards also said in the same place, that when the temple was destroyed, it was decreed that such persons should come into synagogues and schools; but then they were not reckoned as members of the Jewish church, but as persons cut off from the people of Israel, and scarce allowed to be of their commonwealth. And it may be further observed, that excommunication with the Jews was not only on religious accounts, but on civil accounts; on account of money, or when a man would not pay his debts, according to the decree of the sanhedrim {y}. The twenty four reasons of excommunication, given by Maimonides {z}, chiefly respect contempt of the sanhedrim, and of the wise men, and breach of the traditions of the elders; sometimes they excommunicated for immorality, particularly the Essenes, as Josephus relates, who says {a}, that such who are taken in grievous sins, they cast them out of their order; and he that is so dealt with commonly dies a miserable death; for being bound by oaths and customs, he cannot eat the food of others, and so starves. The same is reported {b} by R. Abraham Zachuth: and sometimes excommunication was for Epicurism, or heresy, and such they reckoned the belief of Jesus of Nazareth, as the Messiah, on account of which this decree was made, and which continued with them; for not only this blind man was cast out of the synagogue by virtue of it, but our Lord tells his disciples, that they should be so treated by the Jews after his death; and we find it remained in force and practice many hundreds of years afterwards. Athanasius {c} relates of a Jew, that lived in Berytus, a city in Syria, between Tyre and Sidon, that an image of Christ being found in his house by another Jew, though unknown to him; and this being discovered to the chief priests and elders of the Jews, they cast him out of the synagogue. Sometimes this sentence was pronounced by word of mouth, and sometimes it was delivered in writing: the form of one is given us by Buxtorf {d}, out of an ancient Hebrew manuscript; and a dreadful shocking one it is; and is as follows:

"according to the mind of the Lord of lords, let such an one, the son of such an one, be in "Cherem", or anathematized, in both houses of judgment, of those above, and those below; and with the anathema of the saints on high, with the anathema of the "Seraphim" and "Ophanim", and with the anathema of the whole congregation, great and small; let great and real stripes be upon him, and many and violent diseases; and let his house be an habitation of dragons; and let his star be dark in the clouds; and let him be for indignation, wrath, and anger; and let his carcass be for beasts and serpents; and let those that rise up against him, and his enemies, rejoice over him; and let his silver and his gold be given to others; and let all his children be exposed at the gate of his enemies, and at his day may others be amazed; and let him be cursed from the mouth of Addiriron and Actariel, (names of angels, as are those that follow,) and from the mouth of Sandalphon and Hadraniel, and from the mouth of Ansisiel and Pathchiel, and from the mouth of Seraphiel and Zaganzael, and from the mouth of Michael and Gabriel, and from the mouth of Raphael and Meshartiel; and let him be anathematized from the mouth of Tzabtzabib, and from tile mouth of Habhabib, he is Jehovah the Great, and from the mouth of the seventy names of the great king, and from the side of Tzortak the great chancellor; and let him be swallowed up as Korah and his company, with terror, and with trembling; let his soul go out; let the reproof of the Lord kill him; and let him be strangled as Ahithophel in his counsel; and let his leprosy be as the leprosy of Gehazi; and let there be no raising him up from his fall; and in the sepulchres of Israel let not his grave be; and let his wife be given to another; and let others bow upon her at his death: in this anathema, let such an one, the son of such an one be, and let this be his inheritance; but upon me, and upon all Israel, may God extend his peace and his blessing. Amen."

And if he would, he might add these verses in De 29:19: "and it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate, him unto evil, out of all the tribes of Israel, according, to all the curses of the covenant, that are written in this book of the law". There were many rites and ceremonies, which in process of time were used, when such a sentence was pronounced, as blowing of horns and trumpets, and lighting of candles, and putting them out: hence, trumpets are reckoned {d} a among the instruments of judges. It is said {e} of R. Judah, that being affronted by a certain person, he resented the injury, and brought out the trumpets and excommunicated him: and they tell us {f}, that Barak anathematized Meroz, whom they take to be some great person, with four hundred trumpets: and they also say {g}, that four hundred trumpets were brought out, and they excommunicated Jesus of Nazareth; though these words are left out in some editions of the Talmud. Now this was done in order to inject terror both into those that were guilty, and also into the whole congregation of the people, that they might hear and fear; for the "Cherem", or that sort of excommunication which goes by that name, was done publicly before the whole synagogue, all the heads and elders of the church being gathered together; and then candles were lighted, and as soon as the form of the curse was finished, they were put out, as a sign that the excommunicated person was unworthy of the heavenly light {h}. Very likely the Papists took their horrible custom from hence of cursing with bell, book, and candle.

{r} Vid. Maimon. Talmud Tora, c. 7. sect. 6. Buxtorf. Lex. Rab. col. 1303. & Epist. Heb. Institut. p. 57. {s} Maimon. Hilchod Talmud Tora, c. 7. sect. 4. {t} Ib. sect. 5. {u} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 16. 1. {w} Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 2. {x} Pirke Eiiezer, c. 17. {y} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 16. 1. & Gloss in ib. {z} Hilchot Talmud Tora, c. 6. sect. 14. {a} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 8. sect. 8. {b} Juchasin, fol. 139. 2. {c} Oper. ejus, Tom. 2. p. 12, 17. Ed. Commelin. {d} Lex Rab. col. 828. {d} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol 7. 2. {e} T. Bab. Kiddushin, c. 4. in Beth Israel, fol. 57. 1. {f} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 16. 1. & Shebuot, fol. 36. 1. {g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 107. 2. Ed. Venet. {h} Buxtorf. Epist. Heb. Institut. c. 6. p. 56.

John 9:23

Ver. 23. Therefore said his parents, he is of age,....
See Gill on "Joh 9:21".

John 9:24

Ver. 24. Then again called they the man that was blind,.... That had been blind. After they had examined his parents, and could get nothing from them for their purpose, they try a second time what they could do with the son:

and said unto him, give God the praise; a phrase used when confession of sin was required; see **Jos 7:19**; and this may be the meaning of it here; confess this fraud and imposture before the omniscient God, the searcher of hearts, and in so doing glorify that perfection of his. One and the same word, hdy, signifies both to confess the truth of anything, as a sinful action, Pr 28:13, and to give thanks and praise to God for any mercy and blessing, Ps 45:17. Some take this to be the form of an oath, and that the Pharisees adjured the than by the living God, that he would tell the truth, and discover the cheat and collusion used in this affair of receiving his sight; and thought hereby to have deterred him from speaking of this benefit he had received from Christ, especially in such a manner as to reflect any honour upon the author of it. Or the sense may be, if this really is matter of fact, that thou wast born blind, and hast received thy sight by the means of this man, give all the glory of it to God, to whom alone it is due, and not to him. God sometimes works by wicked instruments, when the glory of what is done ought not to be ascribed to them, but to him.

We know that this man is a sinner; this they concluded from his breaking the sabbath, as they supposed; though they also aspersed his character, and accused him of other things, yet falsely; see Mt 11:19; nor could they prove one single instance of sin in him, though they express themselves here with so much assurance.

John 9:25

Ver. 25. He answered and said,.... That is, the man who had been blind, who takes no notice of the confession they pressed him to, which is what he could not do; there being no collusion in this case, he only replies to the reproachful character they had given of his benefactor.

Whether he be a sinner or not, I know not: or "if he is a sinner I know not", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, suggesting that he did not know he was a sinner; he could not charge him with being one; nor could he join with them in saying he was a sinner; nor did he think and believe he was: however, he was sure he had done a good thing to him, and in that he was no sinner; and what proof they had of his being one he could not tell: and be that as it will, adds he,

one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see; as if he should say, whatever charges you bring against the person that has done me this favour, which I am not able to answer to, you cannot reason me out of this; this I am sure of, that once I had no eyes to see with, and now I have, and that by the means of this man you reproach. And so it is with persons enlightened in a spiritual sense, whatever things they may be ignorant of, though they may not know the exact time of their conversion, nor have so much Gospel light and knowledge as others, or be so capable of expressing themselves, or giving such a distinct and orderly account of the work of God upon them as some can, nor dispute with an adversary for the truths of the Gospel, or have that faith of assurance, and discoveries of God's love, and the application of such great and precious promises as others have; yet this they know, that they were once blind, as to the knowledge of spiritual things, as to a saving knowledge of God in Christ, as to a true sight and sense of themselves, their sins and lost estate, as to the way of righteousness and salvation by Christ, or the work of the Spirit of God upon their souls, or as to any true and spiritual discerning of the

Scriptures, and the doctrines of grace in them: but now they are comfortably assured, they see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the plague of their own hearts, the insufficiency of their righteousness to justify them before God, and the beauty, fulness, suitableness, and ability of Christ as a Saviour; and that their salvation is, and must be of free grace; and that they see the truths of the Gospel in another light than they did before, and have some glimpse of eternal glory and happiness, in the hope of which they rejoice.

John 9:26

Ver. 26. Then said they to him again,.... Finding they could not bring him to deny the fact, or cause him to entertain an ill opinion of him that did it, they examine him again about the manner of it:

what did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? These questions they had put before, **Joh 9:15**, and propose them again, in hope he would vary in the account, which they would not fail of improving against him; or that it would appear that he had not been really blind, at least from his birth; or that Christ made use of some unlawful means, as magic art, which they were always ready to charge him with, and to impute his miracles to a diabolical familiarity and influence; and they would have been glad to have had something to support such a calumny.

John 9:27

Ver. 27. He answered them, I have told you already,..... As he had, **Joh 9:15**,

and ye did not hear; the Vulgate Latin version reads, and ye have heard; and so some copies of Stephens's; that is, an account had been given of the manner how his eyes were opened, and they had heard the account with their bodily ears, though not with the ears of their minds; and therefore, according to most copies and versions, it is read, "ye did not hear"; did not regard it, or give credit to it; and so the Persic version renders it, "and ye have not believed"; they would not believe the man had been blind, until they sent for his parents; much less would they believe the account of his cure:

wherefore would ye hear it again? once is sufficient, especially since the former account has been disregarded and discredited: their view could not be their own information but to baffle and confound the man, if they could. The

Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions leave out the word "again", and only read, "wherefore would ye hear?" what end can you have in it? of what avail would it be? or what purpose can be answered by it?

will ye also be his disciples? as many whom you call ignorant and accursed people are, and as I myself desire to be. This he might say either in an ironical and sarcastic way; or else seriously, suggesting, that if they were willing to examine into this fact, with upright views and sincere intentions, that should it appear to be a true miracle, they would become the disciples and followers of Jesus, then he would, with all his heart, relate the account to them over and over again, or as often as they pleased.

John 9:28

Ver. 28. Then they reviled him,.... Called him an impertinent, saucy, impudent fellow, for talking in this pert manner to them, the great sanhedrim of the nation; or, as the Vulgate Latin version reads, they cursed him; they thundered out their anathemas against him, and pronounced him an execrable and an accursed fellow:

and said, thou art his disciple; for they looked upon it a reproach and scandal to be called a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth; though there is nothing more honourable than to be a follower of him the Lamb whithersoever he goes: wherefore these Jews threw off what they thought a term of reproach from themselves to the blind man; and perhaps they might say this to ensnare him, hoping that he would own himself to be a disciple of Jesus, and profess him to be the Christ, that they might, according to their own act, excommunicate him. The Vulgate Latin, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, "be thou his disciple"; if thou wilt, we despise the character; far be it from us that we should be followers of him:

but we are Moses's disciples. Thus they preferred Moses to Christ, and chose to be the disciples of Moses the servant, rather than of Christ the Son; though indeed they were not the genuine disciples of Moses; for if they had, they would have been the disciples of Christ, and believers in him, since Moses wrote and testified of him: they might indeed be so far the disciples of Moses, or of his law, since they sought for righteousness and justification by obedience to his law. This was a phrase in use among the Jews: so the Targumist {i} on **Nu 3:2** says,

"these are the names of they sons of Aaron the priests,
hvmd aydymlt, "the disciples of Moses", the master of the Israelites;"

particularly the Pharisees, as here, claimed this title to themselves: for it is said {k},

"all the seven days (before the day of atonement) they delivered to him (the high priest) two of the disciples of the wise men, to instruct him in the service (of that day), who were, hvm lv wydymltm, "of the disciples of Moses", in opposition to the Sadducees:"

from whence it appears, that these disciples of Moses were of the sect of the Pharisees, who assumed this character as peculiar to themselves; sometimes they call themselves the disciples of Abraham, though the description they give of such, by no means belongs to them; See Gill on "Joh 8:39". They say {l},

"whoever has three things in him, is Mhrba lv wydymltm, "of the disciples of Abraham" our father, and who has three other things is of the disciples of Balaam the wicked: he that has a good eye, (beneficence, or temperance, or contentment,) a lowly spirit, and an humble soul, he is of "the disciples of Abraham" our father; but he that has evil eye, and a proud spirit, and a large soul (lustful or covetous), is of the disciples of Balaam."

This last character best agrees with those very persons, who would be thought to be the disciples of Abraham and of Moses.

{i} Jonathan ben Uzziel in ib. {k} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 4. 1. {l} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 19.

John 9:29

Ver. 29. We know that God spoke to Moses,.... Out of the bush, and told him who he was, and sent him to deliver the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, and spoke the ten words, or law unto him, and by him delivered them to the children of Israel, and to whom he spake face to face, as a man does to his friend, and mouth to mouth, and not in dark sayings; they mean, they knew that Moses had his mission, commission, and credentials from God:

but as for this fellow; so they contemptuously called the Lord Jesus Christ, we know not from whence he is; contradicting what others of them had said, **Joh 7:27**. They imagined they knew the country from whence he came, which they supposed to be Galilee, and the place where he was born, which they concluded was Nazareth; though in both they were in the wrong; and they knew his parents, Joseph and Mary, and his brethren and sisters; but as to his divine filiation, they knew nothing of it; nor would they own his mission, commission, and credentials to be from heaven; and pretended they had no reason to conclude they were.

John 9:30

Ver. 30. The man answered and said unto them,.... Very appropriately and pertinently,

why herein is a marvellous thing; strange and unaccountable,

that ye know not from whence he is; that you learned doctors, men of sagacity and penetration, should not be able to discern that this man is of God, is a prophet sent by him, and that there should be any doubt from whence he comes, or from whom he has his commission:

and [yet] he hath opened mine eyes; which was so clearly and plainly the work of the Messiah, and to be done by him when he came,
Isa 35:4.

John 9:31

Ver. 31. Now we know that God heareth not sinners,.... All mankind are sinners, even God's elect; yea, such who are truly gracious and righteous persons; for there is no man without sin; and God hears such who cry unto him day and night; such Christ came to save; for such he died; and these he calls to repentance; and every penitent sinner God hears: but by "sinners" are meant notorious sinners, such in whom sin reigns, who live in sin, and particularly impostors. The man takes up the word the Jews had made use of, and applied to Christ, **Joh 9:24**, and suggests, that had Jesus been a sinner, that is, an impostor, God would not have heard him, or have assisted him in doing a miracle, to support an imposture, or cover and encourage a fraud; but that he was heard and assisted, was a plain case: whereas not only they, the learned doctors of the nation, but such an illiterate man as himself knew, that notoriously wicked men, cheats, and deceivers, were not heard of God; and this was known from the Scripture, and all experience; see Ps 66:18. The Persic and Ethiopic versions read, "I know, that God", &c.

but if any man be a worshipper of God; fears the Lord, and worships him in spirit and in truth, both with internal and external worship:

and doth his will; for it is not everyone that Lord, or draws nigh to God with his mouth, and honours him with his lips, that is a true and sincere worshipper of him; but he that does his will in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to his glory: and

him he heareth; for he is nigh to all that call upon him in truth; and such an one the man intimates Jesus must be, since it was out of all dispute that God had heard him, and had bore a testimony to him.

John 9:32

Ver. 32. Since the world began,.... ek tou aiwnov, "from eternity", or never: the phrase answers to Mlwem, frequently used by the Jews {m}, for never; and so the Arabic version renders it, "it was never heard", &c. since time was:

was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind; as not any physician by any natural means, or art, so not any prophet in a miraculous way, no not Moses himself; among all the miracles he wrought, which the Jews say {n} were seventy six, and which were two more than were wrought by all the prophets put together, this is not to be found in the list of them, nor in the catalogue of miracles done by others. Elisha indeed prayed to God to restore sight to an army smitten with blindness; but then they were persons who saw before, and were not blind from their birth. Wherefore it must follow, that Jesus, the author of this miracle, must be greater than any of the prophets, even than Moses himself, and has a greater confirmation of his mission from God, than either he or they had: and as this was a miracle in nature, it is no less a miracle in grace, that one born in the blindness and darkness of sin, ignorance, and infidelity, should have the eyes of his understanding opened, to behold divine and spiritual things.

{m} Abot R. Nathan, c. 35. fol. 8. 2. Maimon. Mechira, c. 20. sect. 8. & Shelchim & Shotaphim, c. 10. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4. & passim. {n} Menasseh ben

Israel, Conciliat. in Deut. Quaest. 11. p. 240.

John 9:33

Ver. 33. If this man were not of God,.... If he had not his mission, commission, and credentials from God; if he had not been sent by him, and had not authority from him, and was not assisted by him, as man, or God was not with him,

he could do nothing; or "not do these things", as the Syriac version reads; that is, such miraculous works; or, as the Persic version, "he could not do this miracle": open the eyes of a man born blind. His doing this is a full proof that he is of God, and comes from him.

John 9:34

Ver. 34. They answered and said unto him,.... Being nettled, and stung at what he said, and not able to confute his reasoning; and it is amazing that a man that could never read the Scriptures, who had had no education, was not only blind, but a beggar from his youth, should be able to reason in so strong and nervous a manner, and should have that boldness and presence of mind, and freedom of speech before the whole sanhedrim. Certainly it was God that gave him a mouth and wisdom which these learned doctors could not resist, and therefore they reply in the following manner,

thou wast altogether born in sins; meaning not in original sin, as all mankind are, for this might have been retorted on themselves; but having imbibed the Pythagorean notion of a transmigration of souls into other bodies, and of sinning in a pre-existent state, or a notion of infants sinning actually in the womb, and so punished with blindness, lameness, or some deformity or another for it, they reproach this man, calling him vile miscreant, saying, thou vile, sinful creature, who came into the world covered with sin, with the visible marks of having sinned, either in another body, or in the womb before birth, and therefore wast born blind:

and dost thou teach us, holy, wise, and learned men! which breathes out the true pharisaical spirit they were possessed of, and which appeared in their ancestors before them; see Isa 65:5.

And they cast him out; not merely out of the place where the sanhedrim sat, or out of the temple; this would have been no great matter, nor have made any great noise in the city, or have been taken notice of by Christ, or moved his compassion towards him; nor merely out of any particular synagogue, or was the excommunication called "Niddui", which was a separation for thirty days, and for the space of four cubits only; but was what they call "Cherem", which was a cutting him off from the whole congregation of Israel;
See Gill on "Joh 9:22"; an anathematizing him, and a devoting him to ruin and destruction: and now in part was fulfilled, Isa 66:5, for this was done in pretence of zeal, for the honour and glory of God; and Christ appeared to the joy and comfort of this man, and to the shame and confusion of those that cast him out, as the following verses show.

John 9:35

Ver. 35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out,.... this being perhaps the first instance, of putting in execution the act they had made, **Joh 9:22**, and was a stretching of that act; which only threatened with an ejection, in case any should confess Jesus to be the Messiah; which this man had not done as yet, only had said he was a prophet, and that he was of God; it made a very great noise in the city, and the report of it was soon spread over it; and it became the talk of everyone, and so Jesus, as man, came to hear of it; though he, as God, knew it the very instant it was done, and needed not any to make report of it to him:

and when he had found him: not by chance, meeting him at an unawares, but seeking him; and knowing where he was, went to the very place, and found him in this piteous condition, abandoned by all mankind: this is an emblem of Christ's seeking after his chosen ones, both in redemption, and in the effectual calling, who are like sheep going astray, and never come to, and lay hold on Christ, till he comes first, seeks after, and apprehends them: he sends his ministers and his Gospel after them, where they are, and his Spirit into their hearts; yea, he comes himself, and enters there, and dwells in them by faith: he knows where they are, as he did Matthew the publican, Zacchaeus, and the woman of Samaria; and even though they are at the ends of the earth; and he goes and looks them up, and finds them; and he finds them in a deplorable condition, in a desert, in a waste howling wilderness, hopeless and helpless, poor and miserable, and blind and naked; in a pit wherein is no water; in the mire and clay of sin; in the paw of Satan, and under the power of darkness.

He said unto him, dost thou believe on the Son of God? the Persic version adds, "who hath healed thee": this supposes that there was a Son of God, or a divine person known by the Jews under this character, and that the expected Messiah would appear as such; and that, as such, he is the object of faith, and therefore, as such, must be God, since a creature, though ever so much dignified, or with whatsoever office invested, is not the object of faith, trust, and confidence, with respect to everlasting life and happiness: and it may be observed, that whenever Christ finds any of his people, he brings them to believe in him as the Son of God for righteousness and life: he himself is the author of faith in them, as well as the object of it; and no doubt power went along with these words, creating faith in this man: this was a most proper and pertinent question put to him in his present case, and suggests, that if he believed in the Son of God, it was no matter in what situation he was among men: since he would then appear to be a Son of God himself by adopting grace, and so an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ; would receive the remission of his sins, openly justified in the court of conscience, as well of God, and be everlastingly saved: and this question is put by Christ, not as though he was ignorant, whether he believed in him or not; for he knew from the beginning, who would, and who would not believe in him: he that knew whether Peter loved him or not, knew whether this man believed in him or not; but this he said to draw forth the principle of faith, which was wrought in him, into act and exercise, and to direct it to its proper object. And this effect it had, as appears by what follows.

John 9:36

Ver. 36. He answered and said,.... That is, "he that was healed", as the Syriac version reads:

who is the Lord that I might believe in him? which shows, that though he knew there was a Messiah expected, and he believed in him as to come, yet he knew not that he was already come, nor the particular person in human nature, who was the Messiah, and the Son of God; even though he had been cured of his blindness by him, and had vindicated him, and pleaded for him before the sanhedrim, and had also suffered for him; which makes it appear, that Christ does many and great things for his people before they know him: nor does their interest in him, in his favour, and in the blessings of his grace, depend upon their knowledge of him, and faith in him; as likewise, that a man may plead for Christ, and suffer much for him, and yet be ignorant of him: however, there were in this man desires of knowing Christ; he was not like those in Job 21:14; and there was a readiness in him to believe on him, as soon as he was pointed out to him; not that there is any natural disposition in men to believe, or any readiness in themselves to it, or that it is of themselves; nothing of this nature was in this man; but he having, by the power and grace of Christ, the principle of faith implanted in his heart, what he wanted was to be directed to the proper object of it, as he is in **Joh 9:37**.

John 9:37

Ver. 37. And Jesus said unto him,.... Giving him the tokens by which he might know him: thou hast both seen him; not that he had seen him before now, with his bodily eyes; for he was blind when Christ anointed him, and sent him to Siloam to wash; nor when he came back, since Jesus was gone, and he knew not where he was; but he had seen him, that is, he had perceived and felt the power of him in restoring him to sight; and now he had seen him bodily, and did at this present time: but as this was not sufficient to distinguish him from other persons in company, he adds,

and it is he that talketh with thee; in like manner he made himself known to the woman of Samaria, **Joh 4:26**.

John 9:38

Ver. 38. And he said, Lord, I believe,.... He immediately found faith in his soul, and that in exercise, moving towards, and acting upon Christ, as the Son of God, and true Messiah, for everlasting life and salvation; and as soon as he did perceive it, he made an open and hearty profession of it:

and he worshipped him: as God, with religious worship and adoration, not only trusting in him, but ascribing honour, glory, and blessing to him, which are due to God only, and not a creature.

John 9:39

Ver. 39. And Jesus said, for judgment I am come into this world,.... The Syriac version reads, "for the judgment of this world I am come"; and with which agrees the Ethiopic version, "for the judgment of the world I am come into the world"; and the Arabic and Persic versions still more expressly, "to judge this world", or "the world, am I come"; which seems contrary to what Christ elsewhere says, **Joh 3:17**. Nor is the sense of the words that Christ came by the judgment of God, or the order of divine providence, or to administer justice in the government of the world, in a providential way, or to distinguish his own people from others, though all these are true; but either to fulfil the purpose and decree of God in revealing truth to some, and hiding it from others; or in a way of judgment to inflict judicial blindness on some, whilst in a way of mercy he illuminated others. So Nonnus interprets it of krima yisson, a twofold "judgment", which is different the one from the other.

That they which see not, might see; meaning, not so much corporeally as spiritually, since in the opposite clause corporeal blindness can have no place; for though Christ restored bodily sight to many, he never took it away from any person. The sense is, that Christ came as a light into the world, that those who are in the darkness of sin, ignorance, and unbelief, and who are sensible of the same, and desire spiritual illuminations, as this man did, might see what they are by nature, what need they stand in of him, and what fulness of grace, life, righteousness, and salvation, there is in him for them.

And that they which see might be made blind; that such who are wise and knowing in their own conceit, who fancy themselves to have great light and knowledge, to have the key of knowledge, and to have the true understanding of divine things, and to be guides of the blind, such as the Scribes and Pharisees, might be given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart, so as to shut their eyes, and harden their hearts against the Gospel, and the truths of it, and which was in judgment to them: such different effects Christ and his Gospel have, as to illuminate and soften some, and blind and harden others; just as some creatures, as bats and owls, are blinded by the sun, whilst others see clearly by the light of it; and as that also has these different effects to soften the wax, and harden the clay; see **Isa 6:9**.

John 9:40

Ver. 40. And some of the Pharisees which were with him,.... Who had followed him, and were watching him, and observing what he said and did, in order to take all advantages, and every opportunity against him, they could,

heard these words, and said unto him, are we blind also? they perceived he pointed at them, and therefore with indignation ask this question, taking it as a great affront unto them, to put such wise, learned, and knowing men as they in company with the ignorant and unlearned common people; see Isa 42:19.

John 9:41

Ver. 41. Jesus said unto them, if ye were blind,.... And sensible of it, and knew yourselves to be blind, and were desirous of light and knowledge,

ye would have no sin: or your sin would not be so aggravated; it would not be imputed to you; it would be pardoned and taken away from you: for the sense cannot be, that their blindness would not have been criminal, or they should have no sin in them, or any done by them; only, that had this been barely their case, there would have been some hope of them, that their sin might be forgiven, and put away, and be no more; see **1Ti 1:13**;

but now ye say we see; they thought themselves to be wise and knowing, and stood in no need of any illumination from him, but were obstinate and hardened in their infidelity, and wilfully opposed and shut their eyes against all the light and evidence of truth:

therefore your sin remaineth; untaken away, yea, immoveable, or unpardonable; the guilt of it abode upon them; nor was there any hope of its being removed from them; owning that they saw, and yet believed not: sinning wilfully against light and knowledge in rejecting Jesus, as the Messiah, they sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is never forgiven. And so the Ethiopic version renders it, "your error shall not be forgiven you"; see Mt 12:32.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 10:1

Ver. 1. Verily, verily, I say unto you,.... To the Scribes and Pharisees, who had taken it ill that they should be thought to be blind; and who had cast out the man that Christ had cured of blindness, for speaking in favour of him; and who had traduced Christ as an impostor, and a deceiver, and set up themselves to be the shepherds of the flock, and the guides and rulers of the people; all which occasion the following parable; the design of which is to show, that Christ is the true and only shepherd, who was appointed, called, and sent of God, whose the sheep are, whose voice they hear, and know, and whom they follow; and that they, the Scribes and Pharisees, were thieves and robbers, and not shepherds of the flock; who were not sent of God, nor did they come in at the right door, but in another way, and usurped a domination, which did not belong to them.

He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold: the sheepfold, with the Jews, was called ryd; and this, as their writers say {o}, was an enclosure sometimes in the manner of a building, and made of stone, and sometimes was fenced with reeds, and in it was a large door, at which the shepherd went in and out, when he led in, or brought out the sheep. At tithing, which was done in the sheepfold, they made a little door, so that two lambs could not come out together; and to this enclosure is the allusion here; and by the "sheepfold" is meant the church of God; see Joh 10:16; and a good fold it is, Eze 34:14. The church may be compared to a sheepfold, because it is separated from the world: it is where the people of God, and sheep of Christ are gathered together; where there is a strict union between them; have society with each other; keep one another warm and comfortable; and where they are fed and nourished, and are preserved; and where they lie down and have rest; and which, like a sheepfold, will be taken down, and not always continue in the form it now is: and by "the door" into it, is meant Christ himself, as appears from Joh 10:7; faith in him, a profession of him, and authority from him. Now he that does not come into the church of God, whether as a member of it, or officer in it, at this door,

but climbeth up some other way; by hypocrisy and deceit: or, like the prophets of old, who ran and were not sent; prophesied when they were not spoken to, but took their place and post by usurpation:

the same is a thief and a robber; steals into the church, or into an office in it, and robs God or Christ of their power and authority; and such were the Scribes and Pharisees: the Persic version renders the words, "whoever does not introduce the sheep through the door of the sheepfold, know that that man is a thief and a robber"; which these men were so far from doing, that they would not suffer those that were entering to go in, Mt 23:13. The difference between a thief and a robber, with the Jews, was, that the former took away a man's property privately, and the latter openly {p}.

{o} Maimon & Bartenora in Misn. Becorot, c. 9. sect. 7. {p} Maimon. Hilchot Genuba, c. 1. sect. 3.

John 10:2

Ver. 2. But he that entereth in by the door,.... With a divine commission, and by a divine authority, who comes not of himself, but is sent; does not take the honour to himself, or thrust in himself, and assume an office to himself, but is called unto it, and invested in it, he

is the shepherd of the sheep; by whom Christ means himself, as is evident from Joh 10:11, whose the sheep are, and who takes care of them, and feeds them, as a shepherd does his flock; and which holds true of any under shepherd, having his mission and commission, and deriving his authority from Christ.

John 10:3

Ver. 3. To him the porter openeth,.... There is nothing in the explanation of this parable given by Christ, that directs to the sense of this clause; the allusion cannot be, as some have thought, to great men, who have porters at their gates, to open them, and let in persons that come and knock; since the parable is concerning the sheepfold, and the shepherd, and the sheep that go into it; and therefore must refer to one that at least, at certain times, stood by the door of the sheepfold, and had the care of it, and opened it upon proper occasions: by whom is designed not Michael the Archangel, nor the Virgin Mary, nor Peter, the supposed doorkeeper of heaven, as say the Papists, nor Moses, as others, who wrote of Christ; nor does it seem so well to understand it of the ministers of the Gospel, who preach Jesus Christ, and open the door of faith, or set open the door of the Gospel, whereby Christ comes into the souls of men, and they come to him; though this is a sense not to be despised; but rather this intends God the Father, from whom Christ, as man and Mediator, derives his authority, and by whom he is let into, and invested with his office, as the shepherd of the sheep; or else the Holy Spirit, who opens the everlasting floors of the hearts of men, of Christ's sheep, and lets him in unto them.

And the sheep hear his voice; not the porter's; though they do hear the voice of Christ's ministers, and of God the Father, and of the Holy Ghost; but the shepherd's, even the voice of Christ; and which is no other than the Gospel, which is a voice of love, grace, and mercy; which proclaims peace, pardon, liberty, life, righteousness, and salvation; and which is a soul quickening, alluring, delighting, refreshing, and comforting voice: this the people of Christ are made to hear, not only externally, but internally; so as to understand it, delight in it, and distinguish it from another: and these are called "sheep", and that before conversion; not because they have the agreeable properties of sheep; nor because predisposed unto, and unprejudiced against the Gospel of Christ, for they are the reverse of these; nor can some things be said of them before, as after conversion, as that they hear the voice of Christ, and follow him; nor merely by anticipation, but by reason of electing grace, and because given to Christ the great shepherd, under this character, to be kept and fed by him. And they are so called after conversion, because they are harmless and inoffensive in their lives and conversations; and yet are exposed to the malice, cruelty, and butchery of men; and are meek and patient under sufferings; and are clean, social, and profitable.

And he calleth his own sheep by name; the Ethiopic version adds, "and loves them". These are Christ's own, by the Father's gift of them to him, by the purchase of his own blood, and by the power of his grace upon them; who looks them up, and finds them out, and brings them home, and takes care of them as his own, and feeds them as a shepherd his flock: these he may be said to "call by name", in allusion to the eastern shepherds, who gave names to their sheep, as the Europeans do to their horses, and other creatures, and who could sit and call them by their names: this is expressive not only of Christ's call of his people by powerful and special grace, but of the exact and distinct knowledge he has of them, and the notice he takes of them, as well as of the affection he has for them; see
Isa 43:1.

And leadeth them out; from the world's goats, among whom they lay, and from the folds of sin, and the barren pastures of Mount Sinai, and their own righteousness, on which they were feeding, and out of themselves, and from off all dependence on anything of their own; and he leads unto himself, and the fulness of his grace, and to his blood and righteousness, and into his Father's presence and communion with him, and in the way of righteousness and truth, and into the green pastures of the word and ordinances, beside the still waters of his sovereign love and grace.

John 10:4

Ver. 4. And when he putteth forth his own sheep,.... The Ethiopic version reads, "when he leads them all out"; in order to bring them into proper pastures:

he goeth before them; in allusion to the eastern shepherds, who when they put out their flocks, did not, as ours do, drive them before them, and follow after them, at least not always, but went before them: so Christ, the great shepherd, goes before his flock, not only to provide for them, but by way of example to them; in many instances he is an ensample to the flock, as under shepherds, according to the measure of grace received, should be: he has left them an example in many respects, that they should tread in his steps:

and the sheep follow him; in the exercise of the graces of humility, love, patience, self-denial, and resignation of will to the will of God; and in the discharge of duty, walking, in some measure, as he walked.

For they know his voice; in the Gospel, which directs and encourages them to exercise grace in him, and to walk in the path of duty: this they know by the majesty and authority of it; and by the power with which it comes to their souls; and by its speaking of him, and leading to him; and by the evenness, harmony, and consistency of it. The Persic version renders the whole thus; "when he calls and leads out the sheep, they go before him, and their lambs after them, for they know his voice".

John 10:5

Ver. 5. And a stranger will they not follow,.... One that knows not Christ, is not sent by him, and who does not preach him:

but will flee from him; shun him and his ministry, as not only disagreeable, but dangerous:

for they know not the voice of strangers: they do not approve of their doctrine, nor take any delight in it, or receive any profit from it. The Persic version, as before, reads, "neither will the lambs ever go after strange sheep, and if they see [them], they will flee [from them]".

John 10:6

Ver. 6. This parable spake Jesus unto them,.... To the Pharisees, who were with him, **Joh 9:40**;

but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them; the things spoken by him being delivered in a parabolical way, though in lively figures, and in terms plain and easy to be understood; yet what through the blindness of their minds, and the hardness of their hearts, and their prejudices in favour of themselves, and against Christ, they did not understand what were meant by them; see Mt 13:13.

John 10:7

Ver. 7. Then said Jesus unto them again,.... By way of explanation of the above parable, since they did not understand it:

verily, verily, I say unto you; this is certainly truth, and what may be depended on as such, whether it will be believed or not:

I am the door of the sheep; and of none but them; not of goats, dogs, or swine; none but sheep enter at this door; and all the sheep do sooner or later: Christ is the door to them, by which they enter into a visible church state, and are let into a participation of the ordinances of it, as baptism and the Lord's supper: no man comes into a church, at the right door, or in a right way, or has a right to partake of Gospel ordinances, but he that truly believes in Christ, and makes a profession of faith in him: Christ is the door of the under shepherds of the sheep; none are fit to be pastors of churches, but who first enter into a Gospel church at this door, and are qualified, and called, and sent forth by Christ: he is the door of the sheep, by which they are let into the presence of his Father, and have communion with him, and partake of all the blessings of grace; it is through him that sanctifying, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace, are conveyed unto them, and they brought into the enjoyment of them; it is through him they have all their peace, joy, and comfort, and deliverance from, and victory over all their enemies; through him they have heirship, and a right unto eternal life, and that itself; for he is the door into heaven itself, through which they shall have an abundant entrance into it: and he is the only door into each of these; there is no coming to God the Father but by, and through him; nor to a participation of the blessings of the covenant, nor rightly into a Gospel church state, and to the ordinances of it, nor into heaven at last, but in at this door: and this is a door of faith and hope, and an open one, for all sensible sinners, for all the sheep of Christ, to enter in at; though it is a strait gate, the number being few that enter in at it; and those that do, though they are certainly, yet but scarcely saved; for it is through many tribulations and afflictions that they enter.

John 10:8

Ver. 8. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers,.... This must be understood with some restrictions, not of every individual person, nor of every individual prophet or shepherd; not of Moses, nor of the prophets of the Lord, nor of John the Baptist, who came immediately before Christ, was his harbinger, and prepared his way; but of those prophets who came, and were not sent of God, and so did not come in by the door; of the shepherds of Israel, who fed themselves, and not the flock, but lorded it over God's heritage; and of such, as Theudas, and Judas the Galilean, who boasted that they were some great persons, but were only thieves and robbers; and particularly of the three shepherds cut off in one month, Zec 11:8, supposed to be the three sects among the Jews, and the leaders of them, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, especially the former; who were wolves in sheep's clothing, usurped a power that did not belong to them, robbed God of his authority, and glory; and, in a literal sense, plundered men of their substance, and devoured widows' houses, as well as destroyed their souls. The phrase, "before me", is wanting in seven of Beza's exemplars, and in several others; and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions:

but the sheep did not hear them; the elect of God, some of which there were in all ages, though their number is comparatively few, did not attend to the false prophets, and false teachers, and idol shepherds; did not receive their doctrines, nor follow their practices; for it is not possible that these should be finally and totally deceived, or carried away with the error of the wicked.

John 10:9

Ver. 9. I am the door,.... Of the sheep, as before, see Joh 10:7. The Ethiopic version reads, "I am the true door of the sheep"; which is repeated for further confirmation, and for the sake of introducing what follows:

by me if any man enter in; into the sheepfold, the church,

he shall be saved; not that being in a church, and having submitted to ordinances, will save any, but entering into these, at the right door, or through faith in Christ, such will be saved, according to
Mr 16:16; such shall be saved from sin, the dominion of it, the guilt and condemning power of it, and at last from the being of it; and from the law, its curse and condemnation, and from wrath to come, and from every evil, and

every enemy; such are, and for ever shall be, in a safe state, being in Christ, and in his hands, out of which none can pluck them:

and shall go in and out; in allusion to the sheep going in and out of the fold: not that those who come in at the right door, shall go out of the church, or from among the saints again; but this phrase rather denotes the exercises of faith in going unto Christ, and acting upon him, and in coming forth in the outward confession of him, and the performance of good works; or in going unto him, and dealing with his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and coming out of themselves, and all dependence on their own righteousness; or it may regard the conversation of the saints in the church, their attendance on ordinances, their safety there, their free and open communion one with another, and with Christ, in whose name and strength they do all they do, coming in and out at this door:

and find pasture; green and good pasture; pasture for their souls; the words of faith, and good doctrine; the wholesome words of Christ Jesus; the ordinances, the breasts of consolation; yea, Christ himself, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed: the Persic version renders it, "and shall a pastor", or "shepherd"; see **Jer 3:15**.

John 10:10

Ver. 10. The thief cometh not but for to steal,.... That is his first and principal view; to steal, is to invade, seize, and carry away another's property. Such teachers that come not in by the right door, or with a divine commission, seek to deceive, and carry away the sheep of Christ from him, though they are not able to do it; and to steal away their hearts from him, as Absalom stole the hearts of the people from their rightful lord and sovereign, David his father; and to subject them to themselves, that they might lord it over them, and make a property of them, as the Pharisees did, who, under a pretence of long prayers, devoured widows' houses.

And to kill and to destroy; either the souls of men by their false doctrines, which eat as doth a cancer, and poison the minds of men, and slay the souls that should not die, subverting the faith of nominal professors, though they cannot destroy any of the true sheep of Christ; or the bodies of the saints, by their oppression, tyranny, and persecution, who are killed all the day long for the sake of Christ, and are accounted as sheep for the slaughter, by these men, they thinking that by so doing they do God good service.

I am come that they might have life; that the sheep might have life, or the elect of God might have life, both spiritual and eternal; who, as the rest of mankind, are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and liable in themselves to an eternal death: Christ came into this world in human nature, to give his flesh, his body, his whole human nature, soul and body, for the life of these persons, or that they might live spiritually here, and eternally hereafter; and so the Arabic version renders it, "that they might have eternal life"; Nonnus calls it, "a life to come"; which is in Christ, and the gift of God through him; and which he gives to all his sheep, and has a power to give to as many as the Father has given him:

and that they might have [it] more abundantly; or, as the Syriac version reads, "something more abundant"; that is, than life; meaning not merely than the life of wicked men, whose blessings are curses to them; or than their own life, only in the present state of things; or than long life promised under the law to the observers of it; but even than the life Adam had in innocence, which was but a natural and moral, not a spiritual life, or that life which is hid with Christ in God; and also than that which angels live in heaven, which is the life of servants, and not of sons: or else the sense is, that Christ came that his people might have eternal life, with more abundant evidence of it than was under the former dispensation, and have stronger faith in it, and a more lively hope of it: or, as the words may be rendered, "and that they might have an abundance": besides life, might have an abundance of grace from Christ, all spiritual blessings in him now, and all fulness of joy, glory, and happiness hereafter.

John 10:11

Ver. 11. I am the good shepherd,.... A shepherd of his Father's appointing, calling, and sending, to whom the care of all his sheep, or chosen ones, was committed; who was set up as a shepherd over them by him, and was entrusted with them; and who being called, undertook to feed them; and being promised, was sent unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and under the character of a shepherd, died for them, and rose again, and is accountable to his Father for everyone of them; the shepherd, the great and chief shepherd, the famous one, so often spoken and prophesied of, Ge 49:24. And discharging his office aright, he is the good shepherd; as appears in his providing good pasture, and a good fold for his sheep; in protecting them from their enemies; in healing all their diseases; in restoring their souls when strayed from him; in watching over them in the night seasons, lest any hurt them; in searching for them, when they have been driven, or scattered in the dark and cloudy day; in caring for them, so that he lose none of them; and in nothing more than in what follows,

the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep: not only exposes it to danger, as David did his, for the sake of his father's flock, but gives it away freely and voluntarily, for the sake of the sheep; in their room and stead, as a ransom for them, that they may be delivered from death, and might have eternal life: the Ethiopic version renders it, "the good shepherd gives his life for the redemption of his sheep"; so Nonnus paraphrases it, the "ransom price of his own sheep": this belongs to Christ's priestly office, and with the Jews priests were sometimes shepherds hence we read {q} of Mynhk Myewr, "shepherds that were priests". Philo the Jew speaks {r} of God as a shepherd and king; and of his setting his word, his firstborn Son, over the holy flock, to take care of it: and a good shepherd is thus described by the {s} Jews;

"as bwj hewr, "a good shepherd", delivers the flock from the wolf, and from the lions, (see Joh 10:12) so he that leads Israel, if he is good, delivers them from the idolatrous nations, and from judgment below and above, and leads them to the life of the world to come, or eternal life; (see Joh 10:10)."

Which description agrees with Christ, the good shepherd; and so the Lord is said to be bwj hewr, "the good shepherd", and merciful, and there is none like him {t}.

{q} Misn. Becorot, c. 5. sect. 4. {r} De Agricultura, p. 195. & de nom. mutat. p. 1062. {s} Zohar in Exod. fol. 9. 3. {t} Aben Ezra in Psal. xxiii. 3. & Kimchi in Psal. xxiii. 2.

John 10:12

Ver. 12. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd,.... That is, who is not the owner of the sheep, though he keeps them, yet only for reward: by whom are meant, not the faithful ministers of the word, who live upon the Gospel, as Christ has ordained, and who are worthy of their reward, and are not to be called hirelings by way of reproach; since they teach not for hire and reward, but for the good of souls, and the interest of the Redeemer; but such who seek only their gain, from their quarter, and mind their own things, and not the things of Jesus Christ:

whose own the sheep are not; who have neither a propriety in them, nor an hearty affection for them, and so care not what becomes of them: such an one "seeth the wolf coming"; by whom may be meant, either Satan; so the Jews compare Israel to a flock of sheep, and Satan, they say, bazh awh, "he is the wolf" {u}; or any false prophet, or teacher, who are ravenous wolves; though sometimes in sheep's clothing; or any tyrant, oppressor, or persecutor of the saints:

and leaveth the sheep; as the idol shepherd, against whom a woe is pronounced, Zec 11:17.

And fleeth; not being willing to bear any reproach or persecution, for the sake of Christ; not such a keeper of the flock as David, who went after the lion and the bear, and when they rose up against him, did not flee, but caught them by the beard and slew them; nor like the Apostle Paul, who fought with beasts at Ephesus, and would turn his back on none, nor give place, no, not for an hour, that truth might continue;

and the wolf catcheth them; some of them:

and scattereth the sheep; the rest; so are the sheep of Christ and his churches sometimes scattered, by persecution raised against them; see **Ac 8:1**. The Jews have a rule concerning such an hireling shepherd {w}, which is this;

"a shepherd that feeds his flock, and leaves it, and goes to the city, and a wolf comes and ravines, and the lion comes and tears in pieces, he is free; but if he leaves by it his staff and his scrip, he is guilty."

Which Maimonides thus {x} expresses and explains;

"a shepherd who can deliver that which is torn, and that which is carried captive, with other shepherds, and with staves, and does not call the other shepherds, nor bring the staves to deliver them, he is guilty: one that keeps freely, and one that keeps for hire; he that keeps freely, calls the shepherds, and brings the staves freely; and if he does not find them, he is not guilty; but he that keeps for hire, is obliged to hire shepherds and staves, in order to deliver them."

{u} Caphtor, fol. 58. 1. {w} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 41. 1. & 93. 2. & 106. 1. {x} Hilchot Shechirut c. 3. sect. 6.

John 10:13

Ver. 13. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling,.... And has no propriety in the sheep; had he, he would abide by them, and defend them; but because he has not, he will not expose himself to any danger, but leaves them:

and careth not for the sheep; what becomes of them, providing only for his own safety. Abarbinel {y} has a note on Isa 40:11 which may serve to illustrate this passage:

""he shall feed his flock like a shepherd"; not as he that feeds the flock of others, for the hire they give him, but as a shepherd that feeds his own flock; who has compassion more abundantly on it, because it is his own flock; and therefore he saith, "behold his reward is with him", for he does not seek a reward from another; "and his work is before him"; for he feeds what is his own, and therefore his eyes and his heart are there."

Which is not the case of the hireling; he does not care for them, he has not their good at heart; but the good shepherd has, such an one as Christ is.

{y} Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 20. 4.

John 10:14

Ver. 14. I am the good shepherd,.... See Gill on "Joh 10:11".

And know my [sheep]; so as to call them all by their names: Christ has an universal, special, distinct, and exact knowledge of all his sheep, as they are the choice of his Father, as his Father's gift to him; and as his own purchase; he bears an affectionate love to them, and takes special care of them; indulges them with intimate communion with himself; and owns and acknowledges them as his, both here and hereafter:

and I am known of mine; not in a general way, as devils and external professors may know him, but with a special, spiritual, and saving knowledge: Christ's own approve of him, as their shepherd and their Saviour, and desire no other; they love him above all, in the sincerity of their souls, and with a love as strong as death; they trust in him as their shepherd, believing they shall not want; and appropriate him to themselves, as their own; and care for him, his cause and interest, his Gospel, ordinances, and ministers; and are not ashamed to own him as theirs, in the most public manner.

John 10:15

Ver. 15. As the Father knoweth me,.... These words, with what follow, are in connection with Joh 10:14; and the sense is, that the mutual knowledge of Christ, and his sheep, is like that which his Father and he have of each other. The Father knows Christ as his own Son, and loves him as such, in the most strong and affectionate manner; and has entrusted him with the persons, grace, and glory, of all his people:

even so know I the Father; or rather, "and I know the Father"; as he needs must, since he lay in his bosom, and still does, and knows his nature, perfections, purposes, and his whole mind and will; and loves him most ardently, which he has shown by his coming down from heaven, to do his will; and trusts in him for the accomplishment of everything he promised unto him:

and I lay down my life for the sheep; which proves him to be the good shepherd, Joh 10:11. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "for my sheep"; which were his, by the Father's gift, and for no other has he laid down his life. The Ethiopic version, as before, renders it, or rather explains it, "I lay down my life for the redemption of my sheep".

John 10:16

Ver. 16. And other sheep I have,.... Not distinct from those for whom he laid down his life, but from those who were under the Old Testament dispensation, and who heard not the thieves and robbers that were before Christ, Joh 10:8; others besides the lost sheep of the house of Israel, or the elect among the Jews, to whom Christ was sent; and by whom are meant the chosen of God among the Gentiles, who were sheep, though not called and folded, for the reasons given: See Gill on "Joh 10:3". These, though uncalled, belonged to Christ; he had an interest in them, they were given him by his Father; he had them in his hands, and upon his heart; his eye was upon them, and they were under his notice, inspection, and care:

which are not of this fold, of the Jewish nation and church, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise; were as sheep going astray, and were scattered about in the several parts of the world; and were to be redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation:

them also I must bring; out of the wilderness of the world, from among the men of it, their former sinful compassions, from the folds of sin and Satan, and the pastures of their own righteousness; to himself, and into his Father's presence, to his house and ordinances, to a good fold and green pastures, and at last to his heavenly kingdom and glory: and there was a necessity of doing all this, partly on account of his Father's will and pleasure, his purposes and decrees, who had resolved upon it; and partly on account of his own engagements, who had obliged himself to do it; as well as because of the case and condition of these sheep, who otherwise must have eternally perished:

and they shall hear my voice; in the Gospel, not only externally, but internally; which is owing to his powerful and efficacious grace, who quickens them, and causes them to hear and live; unstops their deaf ears, and gives them ears to hear; and opens their hearts, to attend to his word, and gives them an understanding of it. The Arabic version reads this in connection with the preceding clause, thus, "and I must bring them also to hear my voice"; as well as the rest of the sheep among the Jews, and therefore the Gospel was sent among them:

and there shall be one fold, [and] one shepherd; one church state, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles; the middle wall of partition being broke down, these two coalesce in one, become one new man, and members of one and the same body; for though there may be several visible Gospel churches, yet there is but one kind of church state, and one general assembly and church of the firstborn, one family to which they all belong; for what reasons a church is comparable to a fold, See Gill on "Joh 10:1". And over this fold, or flock, there is but one shepherd, Jesus Christ; who is the rightful proprietor, and whose own the sheep are; and who knows how to feed them, and does take care of them; though there are many under shepherds, whom he employs in feeding them; in the original text the copulative "and" is wanting, and the words stand thus, "one fold, one shepherd"; which not only expresses a peculiar elegance, but answers the proverb delivered in the same form; and to which agree the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, which render them, "and there", or "they shall be one fold of one shepherd"; or one flock which belongs to one shepherd only; see Eze 34:23.

John 10:17

Ver. 17. Therefore doth my Father love me,.... Christ was the object of his Father's love from all eternity, and was loved by him on various accounts; first and chiefly, as his own Son, of the same nature with him, equal to him; and also as Mediator, engaging for, and on the behalf of his chosen people; and likewise as he was clothed with their nature, and even in his state of humiliation; and not only as subject to his ordinances, and obedient to his will, and doing what was pleasing in his sight, but likewise as suffering in their room and stead, and he loved him on this account; the bruising of him was a pleasure to him, not for the sake of that itself, but because hereby his counsels and decrees were accomplished, his covenant fulfilled, and the salvation of his people obtained: hence it follows here,

because I lay down my life; that is, for the sheep; to ransom them from sin and Satan, the law, its curse and condemnation, and from death and hell, wrath, ruin and destruction: and the laying down his life on this account, was not only well pleasing to his Father, but likewise was done, with the following view; or at least this was the event of it,

that I might take it again; as he did, by raising himself from the dead, by which he was declared to be the Son of God; and to have made full satisfaction to divine justice, for the sins of his people, and therefore rose again for their, justification; and to be the victorious conqueror over death, having now abolished it, and having in his hands the keys of it, the power over that, and the grave: and which life he took up again, by his divine power, and as the surety of his people, to use it for their good; by ascending to his God and theirs, entering into heaven as their forerunner, appearing in the presence of God for them, as their advocate, and ever living to make intercession for them.

John 10:18

Ver. 18. No man taketh it from me,.... It was indeed taken away at the instigation of the Jews, and by the order of Pilate, and by means of the Roman soldiers, who crucified him; and the former of these are often charged with slaying him, and killing him, the Prince of life; and it is expressly said, "his life is taken from the earth", **Ac 8:33**; and yet no man could, nor did take it away, without his Father's will, and determinate counsel and knowledge, by which he was delivered up into the hands of the above persons, and by which they did to him what they did, or otherwise they could have had no power over him; nor could any man, nor did any man, take away his life from him, without his own consent; he voluntarily surrendered himself, or he could never have been taken; he went freely to the cross, or he could never have been led there; he suffered himself to be nailed to the accursed tree, and when he hung on it, he could easily have disengaged himself, and come down; and when they had him there, they could not have taken away his life, had he not of himself given up the ghost, and breathed out his life and soul:

but I lay it down of myself; of my own will, or of my own accord, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it; which was done with the greatest patience and meekness, resolution, courage and magnanimity; and with a full will, and with the greatest cheerfulness and alacrity; and that as a ransom for his people, and that they might live through him:

I have power to lay it down; this was not his life as God, but as man; and was so his own, as it was not his Father's, and was entirely at his own dispose; for it was the life of that individual human nature, which was united to his divine person; and so in a sense his, as it was not either the Father's or the Spirit's; and was so his own, as ours are not, which are from God, and dependent on him, and entirely to be disposed of by him, and not by ourselves: but Christ, the Prince of life, had a power of laying down his life of his own accord, as a ransom price for his sheep:

and I have power to take it again; as he was the Son of God, and truly God, and as the surety of his people; having satisfied law and justice, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and for the ends mentioned in note, See Gill on "Joh 10:17":

this commandment have I received of my Father; which may respect both branches of his power, but is not the foundation of it, but the reason of is exercising it; because it was so agreeable to his Father's will, which is the same with his own, as he is the Son of God, and one with his Father, and equal to him; and what he delights in as Mediator, in which capacity he is considered as a servant; and in which he cheerfully became obedient, even unto death, to his Father's command, or in compliance with his will: the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions read, "because this commandment have I received of my Father": this is a reason why he so readily exerted his power, both in laying down his life, and taking it again, because it was his Father's command and will, and which he received from him, with the utmost pleasure; his and his Father's love, good will, gracious ends and views towards the elect, herein being the same.

John 10:19

Ver. 19. There was a division therefore again among the Jews,.... As there had been before; see **Joh 7:12**.

For these sayings; concerning his being the good shepherd, and laying down his life for the sheep, and having both a power to lay it down, and take it up again.

John 10:20

Ver. 20. And many of them said, he hath a devil, and is mad,.... It was a notion of the Jews, that madness or distraction was from the devil, and therefore these two are here joined together, having a devil, and being mad: there is a spirit which they call Tazazith, and which, they say {z}, is an evil spirit that takes away the understanding of men; and under the influence of such a "demon", the Jews thought Christ to be: and therefore say,

why hear ye him? he is a lunatic, he is distracted, he is a madman; how can you bear to hear such ranting blasphemous stuff, which no man in his, senses would ever utter? nor is anything he says to be regarded, since he is not in his right mind; but is under the power and influence of some evil spirit, which instills these wild and frantic notions into him, and puts him upon venting them; but surely no sober man will ever heed to them.

{z} R. David Kimchi, Sepher Shorash rad. Nzt.

John 10:21

Ver. 21. Others said, these are not the words of him that hath a devil,.... No madman or demoniac, one possessed of a devil, and under the influence of Satan, would ever talk in so divine a manner, and speak such words of truth and soberness: these were, some of the wiser sort, and were well disposed to Christ, who reasoned thus, and they were but few: whereas those that charged him with madness and distraction were many, as in the preceding verse;

can a devil open the eyes of the blind? referring to the late instance, of Christ's curing a man that was blind from his birth; if it was in the power of a devil to do such an action, which it is not, yet it is not in his nature, it is not usual with him to do any good; but to do all the hurt he can, both to the bodies and souls of men: in one of Beza's copies it is read, "can one that has a devil open the eyes of the blind?" so the Persic version, can a "demoniac", &c.? which reading suits best with what is before said; and then the sense is, can a madman, one that is a lunatic, one possessed with the devil, either talk in the manner this man does, or do such wonderful actions as he has done, particularly cure a man that was born blind?

John 10:22

Ver. 22. And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication,.... That is, of the temple; not as built by Solomon, as Nonnus in his paraphrase suggests; or as rebuilt by Zerubabel, for there were no annual feasts appointed in commemoration of either of these; and besides, they were neither of them in the winter time; the dedication of Solomon's temple was in autumn, at the feast of tabernacles, about September, **1Ki 8:2**; and the dedication of the house in Zorobabel's time, was in the spring, about February, **Ezr 6:15**; but this was the feast of dedication, appointed by Judas Maccabaeus and his brethren, on account of the purging the temple, and renewing the altar, after the profanation of them by Antiochus; which feast lasted eight days, and began on the twenty fifth of the month Cisleu, which answers to part of our December; see the Apocrypha:

"52 Now on the five and twentieth day of the ninth month, which is called the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and eighth year, they rose up betimes in the morning, 56 And so they kept the dedication of the altar eight days and offered burnt offerings with gladness, and sacrificed the sacrifice of deliverance and praise. 59 Moreover Judas and his brethren with the whole congregation of Israel ordained, that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Casleu, with mirth and gladness." (1 Maccabees 4)

"5 Now upon the same day that the strangers profaned the temple, on the very same day it was cleansed again, even the five and twentieth day of the same month, which is Casleu. 8 They ordained also by a common statute and decree, That every year those days should be kept of the whole nation of the Jews." (2 Maccabees 10:8)

with which the Jewish writers agree {a}: the account Maimonides gives {b} of it is this;

"when the Israelites prevailed over their enemies and destroyed them, it was on the twenty fifth of the month Chisleu; and they went into the temple and could not find any pure oil in the sanctuary, but one vial; and it was not enough to light but one day only, and they lighted lamps of it for eight days, until the olives were squeezed, and they brought forth pure oil: wherefore the wise men of that generation ordered, that those eight days beginning at the twenty fifth of Chisleu, should be days of rejoicing and praise, and they lighted lamps at the doors of their houses; every night of these eight nights, to show and make known the miracle; and these days are called
hkwnx "the dedication"; and they are forbidden mourning and fasting, as the days of "purim"; and the lighting of the lamps on them, is a commandment from the Scribes, as is the reading of the book of Esther. How many lamps do they light at the feast of the dedication? the order is, that every house should light one lamp, whether the men of the house be many, or whether there is but one man in it; but he that honours the command, lights up lamps according to the number of the men of the house, a lamp for everyone, whether men or women; and he that honours it more, lights up a lamp for every man the first night, and adds as he goes, every night a lamp; for instance, if there be ten men in the house, the first night he lights up ten lamps, and on the second night twenty, and on the third night thirty; until he comes to the eighth night, when he lights up fourscore lamps."

Wherefore, as Josephus says {c}, this feast was called fwta, "lights"; though he seems to assign another reason of its name, because that prosperity and happiness appeared to them beyond hope, and unexpected: and though this was only an order of Judas and his brethren, and the congregation of Israel, yet the Jews observe it as religiously, as if it was the appointment of God himself, and they do not spare to call it so; for in the service of this feast, they have these words {d};

"blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who hath sanctified us by his commandments, and hath "commanded" us to light the lamp of the dedication; blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who did wonders for our fathers on those days, at this time; blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who has kept us alive, and preserved us, and brought us to this time; these lamps we light, because of the wonders and marvellous things, and salvations, and wars, thou hast wrought for our fathers on those days at this time, by the hand of thine holy priests.--These lamps are holy, we have no power to use them, but only to behold them, so as to confess and praise thy great name, for thy miracles, and for thy wonders, and for thy salvations."

And though this feast is said to be at Jerusalem, yet it was not confined there, as were the other feasts of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, for this might be kept in any part of the land: mention is made of the feast of dedication at Lydda {e}, and in other countries; Maimonides {f} says

"it is a common custom in all our cities in Spain, that all the men of the house light up a lamp the first night, and add as they go along, a lamp every night, till he lights up on the eighth night eight lamps, whether the men of the house be many, or there be but one man."

Some have been of opinion, that this feast of dedication was on the account of the victory Judith gained over Holophernes, by cutting off his head; or however, that the commemoration of that victory was a part of this festival: in the Vulgate Latin edition of Judith 16:31 it is said,

"the day of the festivity of this victory is received by the Hebrews into the number of holy days; and is kept by the Jews from that time, to the present day."

And Sigonius {g} asserts, that it is celebrated by the Jews on the twenty fifth day of the month Chisleu; which is the same day the feast began, that was instituted by Judas Maccabaeus, on the above account; and certain it is, that the Jews do make mention of that fact of hers, in the service for the first sabbath of this feast {h}; and some of their writers would have this fact to be in the times of the Maccabees, though as one of their chronologers {i} observes, it appears from the history of Judith, to have been in the times of Nebuchadnezzar; and there are some that say it was in the times of Cambyses, son of Cyrus, king of Persia, and was two or three hundred years before the miracle of the dedication: but he serves, that the wise men of that age agreed to comprehend the memorial of that wonderful event, with the miracle of the dedication: and so R. Leo Modena {k} says,

"they have a tradition, that in ordaining this feast to be kept, they had an eve also upon that famous exploit performed by Judith upon Holophernes; although many are of opinion, that this happened not at this time of the year; and that they make a commemoration of that piece of gallantry of hers now, because she was of the stock of the Maccabees."

But that cannot be, since she must be some hundreds of years before them; wherefore others make mention of another Judith, a daughter of one of the Maccabees, who performed a like exploit upon Nicanor, a general of Demetrius's army: to which R. Gedaliah has respect, when he says {l},

"the wise men agreed to comprehend together in the joy of the feast of dedication, the affair of Judith, seeing there was another Judith, from her that killed Holophernes, a daughter of the Maccabees."

But it is not clear that there was any such woman, nor that Nicanor was slain by one; and besides, he was killed on the thirteenth of Adar, and that day was ordained to be kept yearly on that account, in the Apocrypha:

"43 So the thirteenth day of the month Adar the hosts joined battle: but Nicanor's host was discomfited, and he himself was first slain in the battle. 49 Moreover they ordained to keep yearly this day, being the thirteenth of Adar." (1 Maccabees 7)

"And they ordained all with a common decree in no case to let that day pass without solemnity, but to celebrate the thirtieth day of the twelfth month, which in the Syrian tongue is called Adar, the day before Mardocheus' day." (2 Maccabees 15:36)

and the month of Adar answers to part of February.

And it was winter; for the month Chisleu answers to our November and December; so that the twenty fifth of that month might be about the tenth of December, and the Jews reckon part of that month winter, and it must be the part in which this feast was; they say {m},

"half Chisleu, Tebeth, and half Shebet, are Prwx, "winter":"

so that the evangelist might with propriety say, according to the sense of the Jewish nation, that it was winter; though it was but just entered, even not more than ten days: the reason why this is observed, may be for what follows.

{a} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 22. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 137. 2. {b} Hilchot Megilla Uchanucha, c. 3. sect. 2, 3. & 4. 1, 2. Vid. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 21. 2. {c} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 7. sect. 7. {d} Seder Tephillot, fol. 234. 1, 2. Ed. Amsterd. {e} T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 18. 2. {f} Hilchot Chanuca, c. 4. sect. 3. {g} De Repub. Heb. l. 3. c. 17. {h} Seder Tephillot, fol. 133. 2. {i} Ganz

Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 22. 1. {k} History of the Rites, &c. of the Jews, c. 9. {l} Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 17. 2. {m} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 34. fol. 30. 2. T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 106. 2.

John 10:23

Ver. 23. And Jesus walked in the temple,.... To keep himself warm, and to secure him the better from the inclemency of the weather:

in Solomon's porch; which was covered over, and the outside of it was enclosed with a wall, which made it very convenient for such a purpose: this was on the outside of the temple eastward, and was a very magnificent structure: the account Josephus {n} gives of it is this;

"there was a porch without the temple, overlooking a deep valley, supported by walls of four hundred cubits, made of four square stone, very white; the length of each stone was twenty cubits, and the breadth six; the work of king Solomon, who first founded the whole temple."

Now, though this was not the porch that was built by Solomon, yet as it was built on the same spot, and in imitation of it, it bore his name; mention is made of it in **Ac 3:11**.

{n} Antiqu. l. 20. c. 8. sect. 7.

John 10:24

Ver. 24. Then came the Jews round about him,.... Who might be walking there on the same account, and seeing Jesus, took this opportunity, and got about him in great numbers, and hemmed him in; having a design upon him to ensnare him, if possible:

and said unto him, how long dost thou make us doubt? or as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions literally render it, "how long dost thou take away our soul?" that is, deprive us of the knowledge of thee; Nonnus renders it, "wherefore dost thou steal away our minds with words?" so Jacob when he went away privately, without the knowledge of Laban, is said to steal away the heart of Laban, as it is in the Hebrew text, in Ge 31:20 {o}. In like manner the Jews charge Christ with taking away their soul, or stealing away their heart, or hiding himself from them; not telling them plainly, who he was: therefore say they,

if thou be the Christ, tell us plainly; freely, boldly, openly, in express words; this they said, not as desirous of knowing who he was, or for the sake of information, but in order to ensnare him; that should he say he was not the Christ, as they might hope he would, for fear of them, now they had got him by himself, hemmed him in, it would then lessen his credit among the people; and should he say he was the Messiah, they would have whereof to accuse him to the Roman governor, as an enemy to Caesar, as one that set up for king of the Jews.

{o} See De Dieu in loc.

John 10:25

Ver. 25. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not,.... He had often said, what amounted to it, in his ministry and doctrine; as that God was his Father, and he was the light of the world, and the good shepherd, and the like; but they gave no heed nor credit to his words, even though he told them, that unless they believed he was such a person, they should die in their sins:

the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me; such as healing the sick, dispossessing devils, cleansing lepers, giving sight to the blind, causing the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk, and raising the dead to life; suggesting, that besides his words, his doctrine and ministry, they had his miracles before them, which plainly showed who he was; so that they need not have been in any doubt of mind, or suspense about him; nor had they any reason to complain of his hiding himself from them, or depriving them of the knowledge of him.

John 10:26

Ver. 26. But ye believe not,.... In me, as the Messiah:

because ye are not of my sheep; they were not among the sheep given him by his Father, were they, they would have come to him; that is, have believed in him, according to **Joh 6:37**, they were not the chosen of God, predestinated unto eternal life; for as many as are ordained of God to eternal happiness, do

believe in God's own time,
Ac 13:48; but these not being the elect of God, had not the faith of God's elect. Christ, as the omniscient God, knew this, that they were not the chosen of God; for he was present, when the names of God's elect were written in the book of life; had they been his sheep, he must have known them, for he knows all the sheep, and calls them by name; had they been given him by the Father, he must have known it, and would have owned them as such; but so it was not, and therefore they were left to hardness and unbelief:

as I said unto you: which seems to refer to what follows, since he had said before, that the sheep bear the voice of the shepherd, and follow him, and that he knows them, Joh 10:4. This clause is omitted in the Vulgate Latin version, and in Nonnus, but is in the Greek copies, and Oriental versions.

John 10:27

Ver. 27. My sheep hear my voice,.... The voice of Christ in his Gospel, both externally and internally; See Gill on "Joh 10:4",
See Gill on "Joh 10:16"; and since therefore these Jews did not, it was a plain case they were not of his sheep:

and I know them; See Gill on "Joh 10:14"; but Christ knew not these as the elect of God, or as the Father's gift to him, and therefore they could not be his sheep:

and they follow me; both in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty, and whithersoever he the good shepherd leads them; See Gill on "Joh 10:3", See Gill on "Joh 10:4". But now, whereas these Jews did not follow Christ, but turned their backs on him, and rejected him, it was notorious that they were none of his sheep; but both happy and safe are those persons, that are the sheep of Christ, as appears from what is next said of them.

John 10:28

Ver. 28. And I give unto them eternal life,.... Christ gives eternal life to his sheep, or people now; he gives them a spiritual life, or a life of grace, which issues in eternal life; he gives them himself, who is the true God and eternal life, and whoever has him has life; he gives them the knowledge of himself, which is life eternal; and he gives them his righteousness, which is their justification of life, or what entitles them to eternal life; and he gives them the foretastes of it, in faith and hope, in the enjoyment of himself, and the discoveries of his love; he gives them the earnest and pledge of it, his own Spirit; and they have this life in him as their representative, and it is hid with him in God, and is safe and secure for them; and he will actually give it to them in their own persons, to be for ever enjoyed by them; and because of the certainty of it, he is said to do it now: this is a pure gift, it is of grace, and not of works; and it is in the gift of Christ as Mediator, who has power to give it to as many as the Father has given him:

and they shall never perish; though they were lost in Adam, and in a perishing condition in themselves, during their state of unregeneracy; in which condition they see themselves to be, when convinced by the Spirit of God; and come as persons ready to perish to Christ, as a Saviour, resolving, that if they perish, they will perish at his feet: and though after conversion, they are subject to many falls and spiritual declensions, and lose their peace, joy, and comfort, and imagine their strength and hope are perished, or at least fear they shall one day perish through one sin, or snare, or temptation or another, yet they shall never perish in such sense as the wicked will; they will not be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power:

neither shall any pluck them out of my hand; Christ's sheep are in his hands, being put there by God the Father, both as an instance of his love to Christ, and them; and this was done from all eternity, even when they were chosen in him; so that they were in the hands of Christ, before they were in the loins of Adam; and were preserved in him, notwithstanding Adam's fall, and through the ruins of it. To be in the hands of Christ, is to be high in his esteem and favour; the saints are a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of their God; they are a signet on his right hand that shall never be plucked off; they are engraven on the palms of his hands: to be in the hands of Christ, is to be in his possession, and at his dispose, as all the elect of God are; and to be under his guidance, care, and protection, as they be; they are fed according to the integrity of his heart, and guided by the skilfulness of his hands; they are always under his care and watchful eye, who protects them from all their enemies, and hides them in the hollow of his hand: hence, because they are so, they are called "the sheep of his hand", Ps 95:7. And none shall ever pluck them from thence; no man can do it, not any false teacher can remove them from Christ, by all the art and cunning he is master of; nor any violent persecutor, by all the force and power he can use; nor can any sin, or snare, or temptation, draw them out of Christ's hands; nor any adversity whatever separate them from him: they must be safe, and always abide there, who are in the hands of Christ; for his hands have laid the foundations of the heavens and the earth, they grasp the whole universe, and hold all things together; and who then can pluck any out of these hands? Moreover, Christ, as Mediator, has all power in heaven and earth; and even as man, he is the man of God's right hand, made strong for himself.

John 10:29

Ver. 29. My Father which gave [them] me,.... So the sheep came to be Christ's, and to be in his hand; the Father gave them to him, put them into his hands, and made them his care and charge:

is greater than all; than all gods, than all beings, than all creatures, angels and men, and than all the enemies of his people; this must be allowed: the Vulgate Latin version, and so some of the ancients read, "what my Father gave to me, is greater than all"; meaning, that the church given to him, and built on him, is stronger than all its enemies:

and none is able to pluck [them] out of my Father's hand; so that these sheep have a double security; they are in the hands of Christ, and they are in the hands of the Father of Christ; wherefore could it be thought, which ought not to be, that they could be plucked out of Christ's hands, yet it can never be imagined, that any can pluck them out of the hands of God the Father; and there is no more reason to think that they can be plucked out of the hands of the one, than there is that they can be plucked out of the hands of the other, as is clear from what follows in Joh 10:30; see the Apocrypha:

"But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them." (Wisdom 3:1)

John 10:30

Ver. 30. I and [my] Father are one. Not in person, for the Father must be a distinct person from the Son, and the Son a distinct person from the Father; and which is further manifest, from the use of the verb plural, "I and [my] Father", esmen, "we are one"; that is, in nature and essence, and perfections, particularly in power; since Christ is speaking of the impossibility of plucking any of the sheep, out of his own and his Father's hands; giving this as a reason for it, their unity of nature, and equality of power; so that it must be as impracticable to pluck them out of his hands, as out of his Father's, because he is equal with God the Father, and the one God with him. The Jew {p} objects, that

"if the sense of this expression is, that the Father and the Son are one, as the Nazarenes understand and believe it, it will be found that Jesus himself destroys this saying, as it is written in Mr 13:32, for saith Jesus, "that day and that hour, there is knoweth, not the angels, nor the Son, but the Father only"; lo, these words show, that the Father and the Son are not one, since the Son does not know what the Father knows."

But it should be observed, that Christ is both the Son of God, and the son of man, as the Christians believe; as he is the Son of God, he lay in the bosom of his Father, and was privy to all his secrets, to all his thoughts, purposes, and designs; and as such, he knew the day and hour of judgment, being God omniscient; and in this respect is one with the Father, having the same perfections of power, knowledge, &c. but then as the son of man, he is not of the same nature, and has not the same knowledge; his knowledge of things was derived, communicated, and not infinite; and did not reach to all things at once, but was capable of being increased, as it was: and it is with regard to him as the son of man, that Jesus speaks of himself in Mr 13:32; whereas he is here treating of his divine sonship, and almighty power; wherefore considered in the relation of the Son of God, and as possessed of the same perfections with God, he and his Father are one; though as man, he is different from him, and knew not some things he did: so that there is no contradiction between the words of Christ in one place, and in the other; nor is he chargeable with any blasphemy against God, or any arrogance in himself, by assuming deity to himself; nor deserving of punishment, even to be deprived of human life, as the Jew suggests; nor is what he produces from a Socinian writer, of any moment, that these words do not necessarily suppose, that the Father and the Son are of the same essence; since it may be said of two men, that they are one, end yet are not the same man, but one is one man, and the other another; for we do not say they are one and the same person, which does not follow from their being of one and the same nature, but that they are one God, and two distinct persons.

{p} Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 50. p. 438, 439.

John 10:31

Ver. 31. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. As they had done before, See Gill on "Joh 8:59";

John 10:32

Ver. 32. Jesus answered them, many good works,.... Such as healing the sick, and all manner of diseases; dispossessing devils, cleansing lepers, giving sight to the blind, causing the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, and the lame to walk; which were not only works of power, but of mercy and beneficence; and therefore are called good works, as well as they were great and miraculous ones:

have I showed you from my Father; which Christ did in the name, and by the command and authority of the Father; who gave him them to do, and did them by him; and which were evident and notorious, and were done so openly and publicly, that they could not be denied:

for which of these works do ye stone me? suggesting, that his public life had been a continued series of such kind actions to the sons of men, and it could be for nothing else surely, that they took up stones to stone him; wherefore the part they acted, was a most ungrateful, cruel, and barbarous one.

John 10:33

Ver. 33. The Jews answered him, saying,.... As follows;

for a good work we stone thee not: they could not deny, that he had done many good works; this was too barefaced to be contradicted; yet they cared not to own them; and though they industriously concealed their resentment at them, yet they were very much gravelled and made uneasy by them, but chose to give another reason for their stoning him:

but for blasphemy; which required death by stoning, according to Le 24:16, and according to the Jews' oral law {q}:

and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God; which they concluded very rightly, from his saying, Joh 10:30, that God was his Father, and that he and his Father were one; that is, in nature and essence, and therefore he must be God; but then this was no blasphemy, but a real truth, as is hereafter made to appear; nor is there any contradiction between his being man, and being God; he is truly and really man, but then he is not a mere man, as the Jews suggested; but is truly God, as well as man, and is both God and man in one person, the divine and human nature being united in him, of which they were ignorant: two mistakes they seem to be guilty of in this account; one that Christ was a mere man, the other that he made himself God, or assumed deity to himself, which did not belong to him, and therefore must be guilty of blasphemy; neither of which were true: the phrase is used by the Jews, of others who have taken upon them the name and title of God; as of Hiram king of Tyre, of whom they say, hwla wmue hvev, "that he made himself God" {r}; the same they say of Nebuchadnezzar; and the modern Jews still continue the same charge against Jesus, as their ancestors did, and express it in the same language, and say of him, that he was a man, and set himself up for God {s}.

{q} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 4. {r} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 96. fol. 83. 4. & Tzeror Hammor, fol. 134. 4. {s} Aben Ezra in Gen. xxvii. 39. & Abarbinel Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 5. 1.

John 10:34

Ver. 34. Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law,.... In the law which was given unto them, of which they boasted, and pretended to understand, and interpret, even in Ps 82:6; for the law includes not only the Pentateuch, but all the books of the Old Testament: it is an observation of one of the Jewish doctors {t}, that

"with the wise men of blessed memory, it is found in many places that the word law comprehends the Prophets and the Hagiographa."

Among which last stands the book of Psalms; and this may be confirmed by a passage out of the Talmud {u}; it is asked,

"from whence does the resurrection of the dead appear,
hrwth Nm, "out of the law?""

It is answered,

"as it is said in Ps 84:4: "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will still praise thee, Selah; they do praise thee", it is not said, but "they will praise thee"; from hence is a proof of the resurrection of the dead, "out of the law"."

The same question is again put, and then Isa 52:8 is cited, and the like observation made upon it. Moreover, this is a way of speaking used by the Jews, when they introduce another citing a passage of Scripture thus {w}, Mktrwtb bytk alh, "is it not written in your law", **De 4:9**, "only take heed to thyself", &c. so here the Scripture follows,

I said, ye are gods? which is spoken to civil magistrates, so called, because of their authority and power; and because they do, in some sort, represent the divine majesty, in the government of nations and kingdoms. Many of the Jewish writers, by "gods", understand "the angels". The Targum paraphrases the words thus:

"I said ye are accounted as angels, as the angels on high, all of you;"

and to this sense some of their commentators interpret it. Jarchi's gloss is, ye are gods; that is, angels; for when I gave the law to you, it was on this account, that the angel of death might not any more rule over you: the note of Aben Ezra is, "and the children of the Most High": as angels; and the sense is, your soul is as the soul of angels: hence the {x} Jew charges Christ with seeking refuge in words, that will not profit, or be any help to him, when he cites these words, showing that magistrates are called gods, when the sense is only, that they are like to the angels in respect of their souls: but let it be observed, that it is not said, "ye are as gods", as in **Ge 3:5**, but "ye are gods"; not like unto them only, but are in some sense gods; and besides, to say that they are like to angels, with respect to their souls, which come from above, is to say no more of the judges of the earth, than what may be said of every man: to which may be added, that this objector himself owns, that judges are called Myhla, "gods", as in Ex 22:9; the cause of both parties shall come before Myhla, "the judges"; and that even the word is used in this sense in this very psalm, from whence these words are cited, Ps 82:1, "he judgeth among" Myhla, "the gods"; and both Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret this text itself in the same way, and observe, that judges are called gods, when they judge truly and aright: all which is sufficient to justify our Lord in the citation of this passage, and the use he makes of it.

{t} R. Azarias in Meor Enayim, c. 7. fol. 47. 1. {u} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2. {w} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 32. 2. {x} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 51. p. 440, 441.

John 10:35

Ver. 35. If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came,.... The Syriac version reads, "because the word of God came to them"; either the divine "Logos", the essential word, the Son of God, who appeared to Moses, and made him a God to Pharaoh, and who appointed rulers and magistrates among the Jews; and who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, from whom all receive their power and dominion: this sense is favoured by the Ethiopic version, which renders it, "if he called them gods to whom God appeared, the word of God was with them": or else the commission from God, authorizing them to act in the capacity of rulers and governors, is here meant; or rather the word of God, which, in the passage of Scripture cited, calls them so, as it certainly does:

and the Scripture cannot be broken; or be made null and void; whatever that says is true, there is no contradicting it, or objecting to it: it is a Jewish way of speaking, much used in the Talmud {y}; when one doctor has produced an argument, or instance, in any point of debate, another says, Krpyml akya, "it may be broken"; or objected to, in such and such a manner, and be refuted: but the Scripture cannot be broken, that is not to be objected to, there can be no confutation of that.

{y} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 4. 1. & Becorot, fol. 32. 1. & passim.

John 10:36

Ver. 36. Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified,.... Not by making his human nature pure and holy, and free from all sin, and by bestowing the holy Spirit on him without measure, though both true; but these were upon, or after his mission into the world; whereas sanctification here, designs something previous to that, and respects the eternal separation of him to his office, as Mediator, in the counsel, purposes, and decrees of God, and in the covenant of his grace, being pre-ordained thereunto, before the foundation of the world; which supposes his eternal existence as a divine person, and tacitly proves his true and proper deity:

and sent into the world; in human nature, to obtain eternal redemption and salvation his people: to save them from sin, Satan, the world, law, hell and death, which none but God could do:

thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God; for what he had said in Joh 10:30 is equivalent to it; and in it he was rightly understood by the Jews, and what he here and afterwards says confirms it: the argument is what the Jews call rmwxw lq, "from the lesser to the greater", and stands thus; that if mere frail mortal men, and some of them wicked men, being made rulers and judges in the earth are called gods, by God himself, to whom the word of God came in time, and constituted them gods, or governors, but for a time; and this is a fact stands recorded in Scripture, which cannot be denied or disproved, then surely it cannot be blasphemy in Christ, to assert himself to be the Son of God, who existed as a divine person from all eternity; and was so early set apart to the office of prophet, priest, and king; and in the fulness of time was sent into this world, to be the author of eternal salvation to the sons of men.

John 10:37

Ver. 37. If I do not the works of my Father,.... Not only what the Father had given him to finish, and which he wrought by him as man, but such as were as great as the Father had done, and were equal to them; and which could not be done by any, but by the Father, or by one that is equal with him:

believe me not: Christ appeals to his miracles as proofs of his deity, sonship, and Messiahship, and desires no other credit than what they demand; see Mt 11:3.

John 10:38

Ver. 38. But if I do,.... Works, which none but God can do:

though ye believe not me; what Christ said in his doctrine and ministry, though they paid no regard to that, and did not receive his testimony, on the credit of him the testifier, as they ought to have done:

believe the works; not only that they are true and real, and not imaginary and delusory; but for the sake of them believe the above assertion, that Christ is the Son of God, he and his Father being one; or take such notice of these works and miracles, consider the nature, evidence, and importance of them, and the divine power that attends them, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him; or "in the Father", as one of Beza's exemplars; the Vulgate Latin, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, or "in my Father", as read the Syriac and Arabic versions; that they are one in nature, distinct in person, equal in power, and have a mutual inhabitation and communion in the divine essence; all which is manifest, by doing the same works, and which are out of the reach and power of any mere creature.

John 10:39

Ver. 39. Therefore they sought again to take him,.... Not to take away his life by stoning him, as before, in the manner the furious zealots did, and was the part they were about to act just now; but to lay hold upon him and bring him before the sanhedrim, as they had done in **Joh 5:18**: he being so far from clearing himself from the charge of blasphemy, they had brought against him, that in their opinion he had greatly strengthened it; and they thought they had now sufficient proof and evidence to convict him as a blasphemer, in their high court of judicature; and therefore attempted to lay hands on him, and bring him thither:

but he escaped out of their hands; either by withdrawing from them in some private way; or by open force, exerting his power, and obliging them on every side to fall back, and give way to him; or by rendering himself invisible to them; and this he did, not through fear of death, but because his time was not yet come, and he had other work to do, before he suffered and died.

John 10:40

Ver. 40. And went away again beyond Jordan,.... Where he had been before; and whither he went; not merely for the security of his person, much less to indulge himself in ease, but to preach the Gospel, work miracles, and bring many souls to believe on him, as did: and he went

into the place where John at first baptized; that is, Bethabara, where he baptized before he was at Aenon, near Salim, **Joh 1:28**, and was the place where Christ himself was baptized, and where John bore such a testimony of him:

and there he abode; how long is not certain, perhaps till he went to Bethany, on account of raising Lazarus from the dead.

John 10:41

Ver. 41. And many resorted to him,.... From all the parts adjacent, having heard of his being there, and of the fame of him; and many of them doubtless personally knew him; these came to him, some very likely to be healed by him, others to see his person and miracles, and others to hear him preach:

and said, John did no miracle; though it was now three years ago, yet the name, ministry, and baptism of John, were fresh in the memory of men in those parts; and what they say one to another, was not to lessen the character of John, but to exalt Jesus Christ, and to give a reason why they should receive and embrace him; for if John, who did no miracle, who only taught and baptized, and directed men to the Messiah, was justly reckoned a very great person, and his doctrine was received, and his baptism was submitted to, then much more should this illustrious person be attended to; who, besides his divine doctrine, did such great and amazing miracles; to which they add, though John did no miracle to confirm his mission, ministry, and baptism,

but all things that John spake of this man, were true; as that he was greater than he, was the Lamb of God, yea, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, and true Messiah, who should baptize men with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

John 10:42

Ver. 42. And many believed on him there., Through the doctrine he preached, the miracles he wrought, and through comparing these things with what John had said of him: this shows the reason of Christ's leaving Jerusalem, and coming into these parts; there were others that were to believe in his name: the word "there", is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 11:1

Ver. 1. Now a certain man was sick,.... Very likely of a fever; Nonnus calls it a morbid fire, a hot and burning disease:

[named] Lazarus of Bethany; for his name, which the Ethiopic version reads "Eleazar", and the Persic version "Gazarus",
See Gill on "Lu 16:24"; and for the place Bethany, See Gill on "Mt 21:1",
See Gill on "Mt 21:17".

The town of Mary and her sister Martha; where they were both born, as well as Lazarus, or at least where they dwelt; of the former, some account is, given in the next verse, and of the latter,
See Gill on "Lu 10:38".

John 11:2

Ver. 2. It was [that] Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment,.... Not the woman in **Lu 7:37**, as some have thought, whose name is not mentioned, and which history is not related by John at all: but Mary in Joh 12:3, who is both mentioned by name, and along with Lazarus her brother, and with whom all the circumstances of the affair suit; and though the fact was not yet done, yet John writing many years after it was done, and when it was well known, proleptically, and in a parenthesis, takes notice of it here:

and wiped his feet with her hair; instead of a napkin, after she had anointed them with oil; See Gill on "Lu 7:37",
See Gill on "Joh 12:3".

Whose brother Lazarus was sick; this is observed, to show how well they were all acquainted with Christ, and affected to him.

John 11:3

Ver. 3. Therefore his sisters sent unto him,.... Both the sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, sent to Jesus; they did not go themselves, being women, and the place where Jesus was, was at some distance; and besides, it was necessary they should abide at home, to attend their brother in his sickness, and therefore they sent a messenger, or messengers to Christ,

saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick; for it seems that Lazarus was in a very singular manner loved by Christ, as man, as John the beloved disciple was; and this is the rather put into the message by the sisters, to engage Jesus to come to his assistance; and they were very right in applying to Christ in this time of need, who is the physician, both of the bodies and souls of men; and are greatly to be commended both for their modesty and piety, in not prescribing to Christ what should be done in this case: and it may be further observed, that such who are the peculiar objects of Christ's love, are attended in this life with bodily sickness, disorders, and diseases, which are sent unto them, not in a way of vindictive wrath, but in love, and as fatherly chastisements; which, as they are designed, so they are overruled for their good; and are to be considered, not as instances of wrath, but as tokens of love.

John 11:4

Ver. 4. When Jesus heard that,.... That his friend Lazarus was sick,

he said; either to his disciples, or to the messenger or messengers that brought the account to him, and that on purpose to yield some relief to the afflicted family when it should be reported to them:

this sickness is not unto death; it was to issue in death, but not in death which was to continue, or under which Lazarus was to continue till the general resurrection; for though he should die, yet he should be so quickly restored again to life, that it scarcely deserved the name of death. The Jews distinguish between sickness and sickness; there are some that are sick, the greater part of whom are, Myyxl, "for life"; and there are others that are "sick", the greater part of whom are, htyml, "for death" {z}, or are sick unto death, whose sickness issues in death; but this of Lazarus's was not to be unto death, at least not finally:

but for the glory of God; of his power and goodness in raising him again:

that the Son of God might be glorified thereby; that is, that his glory, as the Son of God, might be made manifest in the resurrection of him from the dead; see **Joh 2:11**.

{z} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 71. 2.

John 11:5

Ver. 5. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. Not only with an everlasting love, a love of complacency and delight, an unchangeable one, and which never varies, nor will ever end, with which he loves all his people alike; but with a very great human affection, and which was very singular and peculiar to them: these were the intimate friends, and familiar acquaintance of Christ, whom he often visited, at whose house he frequently was when in those parts; they were very hospitable to him; they kindly received him into their houses, and generously entertained him, and which he returned in love to them: hence Nonnus paraphrases the words,

"Jesus loved the women, filoxeinouv, "who were lovers of hospitality", by the law of kindness."

John 11:6

Ver. 6. When he had heard therefore that he was sick,.... Though Christ had heard that Lazarus was sick, and by such good hands, a message being sent him by his sisters, to acquaint him with it; and though he had such a very great love for him, and the whole family, yet he did not go directly to him, and to his assistance:

but he abode two days still in the same place where he was; at Bethabara, beyond Jordan; this he did to try the faith and patience of the sisters of Lazarus, and that the miracle of raising him from the dead might be the more manifest, and his own glory might be the more illustrious, and yet equal, if not greater tenderness and love be shown to his friends.

John 11:7

Ver. 7. Then after that,.... The next day, the third day after he had heard of Lazarus's sickness:

saith he to [his] disciples, let us go into Judea again; for the country beyond Jordan was distinguished from Judea;
See Gill on "Mt 4:25".

John 11:8

Ver. 8. [His] disciples said unto him, master,.... Addressing him very reverently, and with great concern for his safety, as well as their own:

the Jews of late, or but now,

sought to stone thee; as they had attempted to do twice in a very little time; see **Joh 8:59**;

and goest thou thither again? where there are so many enemies; and so much danger, and but little hope of doing much good; whereas here he was among his friends, and in safety, and very useful.

John 11:9

Ver. 9. Jesus answered, are there not twelve hours in the day?.... So the Jews reckoned, and so they commonly say {a}, Mwyh ywh twev hrve Mytv, "twelve hours are a day", or a day consists of twelve hours, which they divided into four parts, each part consisting of three hours this was a matter well known, and Christ puts the question as such, it being what might be easily answered, and at once assented to:

if any man walk in the day: within any of the twelve hours, even in the last of them,

he stumbleth not, at any stone or stumbling block in the way,

because he seeth the light of this world; the sun in the horizon not being as yet set, by the light of which he sees what is before him, and avoids it; See Gill on "Joh 8:12". So our Lord intimates, that as yet it was day with him, his time of life was not expired; and so, as yet, it was a time of walking and working; nor did he fear any danger he was exposed to, or any snares that were laid for him, since he could not be hurt by any, nor his life taken from him before his time.

{a} T. Bab Sanhedrin, fol. 88. 2. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. Vid. Philo. de Somniis, p. 1143.

John 11:10

Ver. 10. But if a man walk in the night,.... After the sun is set, and there is no light in the air and heavens to direct him:

he stumbleth; at everything that lies in the way,

because there is no light in him; there being none from above communicated to him. So our Lord suggests, that when the time of his death was come, he should then fall a prey into the hands of his enemies, but till then he should walk safe and secure; nor had he anything to fear from them, and therefore could go into Judea again, with intrepidity and unconcern.

John 11:11

Ver. 11. These things said he,.... In answer to his disciples, and made a pause.

And after that he saith unto them, our friend Lazarus sleepeth; meaning, that he was dead; in which sense the word is often used in the Old Testament, and in the common dialect of the Jews, and frequently in their writings; and especially it is so used of good men: and it is an observation of theirs {b}, that

"it is usual to say of the righteous, that there is no death in them, hnyv ala, "but sleep";"

See Gill on "Mt 9:24",
See Gill on "1Co 15:18",
See Gill on "1Co 15:20",
See Gill on "1Th 4:13",
See Gill on "1Th 4:14";

but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep; that is, to raise him from the dead, for, the resurrection of the dead is expressed by awaking; see Ps 17:15; which for Christ to do, was as easy as to awake a man out of natural sleep: these words respecting Lazarus's sleeping and awaking, express both the omniscience and omnipotence of Christ; his omniscience, that he should know that Lazarus was dead; when at such a distance from him; and his omnipotence, that he could raise him from the dead; and yet his great modesty to signify it in, such covert language, though not difficult to be understood.

{b} Gloss in T. Hieros. Celaim in En Yaacob, fol. 4. 4.

John 11:12

Ver. 12. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep,.... Soundly, quietly, and comfortably, and takes rest in it:

he shall do well; or "be saved" from the disease; he will be delivered from it; he will recover out of it; it is a sign the distemper is leaving him, and he is growing better, and will be restored to his health again: the Ethiopic version renders it by many words, "he will be well", and "will awake", and "will live". Sound sleep is a sign of health. This they said to, put off their master from going into Judea, fearing the danger he would be exposed unto.

John 11:13

Ver. 13. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death,.... Under the figurative phrase of sleeping:

but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep; in a literal and natural sense.

John 11:14

Ver. 14. Then said Jesus unto them plainly,.... Without a figure, when he perceived they did not understand him, and yet it was a very easy and usual metaphor which he had made use of; but such was the present stupidity of their minds, that they did not take in his meaning: wherefore, without reproaching them with it, he said to them in so many words,

Lazarus is dead. The Persic version reads, "Lazarus is dead indeed", as he really was.

John 11:15

Ver. 15. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there,.... At Bethany, before he died, or when he died; because he might have been prevailed upon through the solicitations of his dear friends, Mary and Martha, and through tender affection to Lazarus, to have prevented his death, by rebuking the distemper, and restoring him to health, or to have raised him immediately as soon as he was dead; and in either case the miracle would not have been so illustrious, nor have been such a means of confirming the faith of his disciples, as now it would be:

to the intent ye may believe; more strongly, that he was the Son of God, and true Messiah:

nevertheless, let us go unto him; to Lazarus, to the grave where he lies: the Syriac version reads, "let us go there"; to Bethany, where he lived, and died, and now lay interred.

John 11:16

Ver. 16. Then said Thomas, who is called Didymous,.... The former was his Hebrew name, and the latter his Greek name, and both signify a twin; and perhaps he may be so called because he was one:

the same said unto his fellow disciples; the other eleven; though the Ethiopic version reads, "to the next of the disciples"; as if he addressed himself only to one of them, to him that was nearest to him:

let us also go, that we may die with him; either with Lazarus, as some think, or rather with Christ; for he, and the rest of the disciples, imagined that Christ, by returning to Judea, would be in great danger of losing his life; yea, by this expression they seem to be positive in it, that it was a matter out of question with them, that he would die, should be venture there again: and therefore Thomas stirs up his fellow disciples to go along with him, and die altogether; signifying, that they should have but little comfort when he was taken from them: but both Thomas, and the rest, were differently minded, when Christ was apprehended, for they all forsook him and fled, and provided for their own safety, and left him to die alone, Mt 26:56.

John 11:17

Ver. 17. Then when Jesus came,.... The Alexandrian copy, and all the Oriental versions add, "to Bethany"; though it seems by what follows, that he was not come to the town itself, but near it; and it looks as if it was not far from Lazarus's grave; and it was usual to bury without the city; and here he had intelligence of his, Lazarus's, death, and how long he had been dead:

for he found he had lain in the grave four days already; it is very likely that he died the same day that Mary and Martha sent to Christ to acquaint him with his sickness, and the same day he was buried; for the Jews used to bury the same day a person died, and so they do now: and after Christ had this account, he stayed two days where he was, and on the third day, he proposed to his disciples to go into Judea; and very probably on that, or on the next day, which was the fourth, they set out and came to Bethany; See Gill on "Joh 11:39".

John 11:18

Ver. 18. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem,.... Which was a reason why them were so many of the Jews come there to condole the two sisters upon the death of their brother; and by this means the following miracle became more known there: it was

about fifteen furlongs off; that is, about two miles, for seven furlongs and a half made a Jewish mile, as appears from one of their canons {c}, which runs thus:

"they do not spread nets for doves, except it be distant from an habitable place, oyr Myvlv, "thirty furlongs";"

which the commentators say {d} are "four miles": and still more expressly it is said {e}, that

"between Jerusalem and Zuck, (the place where the scape goat was had,) there were ten tents, and ninety furlongs, lym lkl huxmw hebv "seven and a half to every mile"."

Hence a furlong was called one seventh and a half of a mile {f}, which was 266 cubits, and two thirds of one.

{c} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 7. sect. 7. {d} Maimon. Jarchi, & Bartenora in ib. {e} Misn. Yoma, c. 6. sect. 4. {f} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 33. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Rotzeach, c. 13. sect. 6.

John 11:19

Ver. 19. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary,.... Or "to those that

were about Martha and Mary"; in order to have access to them, they came to them, and to the rest of the family; though the phrase may design them only, as the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions read: these Jews, as appears from the context,
Joh 11:18, came from Jerusalem, and might be some of the principal inhabitants; and it may be concluded, that these persons, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, were people of note and figure; and indeed all the accounts of them here, and elsewhere, show the same; see Lu 10:38. The end of their coming to them was

to comfort them concerning their brother; by reason of his death, as was usual with the Jews to do, after the dead was buried; for they did not allow of it before: hence that saying {g} of R. Simeon ben Eleazar,

"do not comfort him (thy friend) in the time his dead lies before him."

The first office of this kind was done when they returned from the grave; for it is said {h}, when they return

"from the grave they make rows round about the mourner,
wmxnl, "to comfort him", and they make him to sit, and they stand, and there never were less than ten in a row."

It was an ancient custom for the mourners to stand in their place in a row, and all the people passed by, and every man as he came to the mourner comforted him, and passed on {i}. But besides these consolations, there were others administered at their own houses, which were usually done the first week, for it is said {k},

"the mourner the first week does not go out of the door of his house; the second he goes out, but does not sit, or continue in his place; the third he continues in his place, but does not speak; the fourth, lo, he is as every other man. R. Judah says, there is no need to say, the first week he does not go out of the door of his house, for behold, all come to his house, wmxnl, "to comfort him"."

And is was on the third day more particularly on which these consolatory visits were paid {l}:

"on the first day he (the mourner) did not wear his phylacteries; on the second, he put them on; on the third day, others come to comfort him."

This rule the Jews here seem to have observed, since Lazarus had been dead four days; and they were come from Jerusalem hither to comfort his sisters on account of his death. The whole of this ceremony is thus related by Maimonides {m},

"how do they comfort mourners? after they have buried the dead, the mourners gather together, and stand on the side of the grave; and all that accompany the dead stand round about them, one row within another: and there is no row less than ten; and the mourners are not of the number; the mourners stand on the left hand of the comforters; and all the comforters go to the mourners, one by one, and say to them, Mymvh Nm wmxwnt, "may ye be comforted from heaven": after that the mourner goes to his house, and every day of the seven days of mourning, men come to comfort him; whether new faces come, or do not, the mourner sits down at the head, (or in the chief place,) and no comforters may sit but upon the floor, as it is said, **Job 2:13**, "and they sat with him on the ground": nor may they say any thing until the mourner has opened his mouth first, as it is said, **Job 2:13**, "and none spake a word unto him": and it is written afterwards, **Job 3:1**, "so opened Job his mouth", &c. and Eliphaz answered, **Job 4:1**, and when he nods with his head, the comforters may not sit with him any longer, that they may not trouble him more than is necessary. If a man dies, and there are no mourners to be comforted, ten worthy men go and sit in his place all the seven days of mourning; and the rest of the people gather to them; and if there are not ten fixed every day, ten of the rest of the people gather together, and sit in his place:"

for this business of comforting mourners was reckoned an act of great piety and mercy {n}; and these Jews here might come, not so much out of respect to the dead, or to his sisters, as because it was thought to be a meritorious act.

{g} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 18. {h} Gloss in Cetubot, fol. 8. 2. & in Beracot, fol. 16. 2. {i} Gloss in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 1. {k} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 23. 1. {l} Massech. Semachot, c. 6. fol. 14. 3. {m} Hilch. Ebel, c. 13. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4. {n} Maimon. in Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1.

John 11:20

Ver. 20. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming,.... Which she might hear of, either by a messenger sent by Christ to her, to acquaint her of it; or rather by some of the people of the town, who knew him, and ran and told her of it; and she being an active person, and stirring about house, might receive the report unknown to her sister, as it seems she did; and as soon as she had the hint, without staying to communicate it to her sister,

went and met him; either through her great affection to him, and eager desire of seeing him; or to consult his safety, and let him know what number of Jews were in their house, that he might consider whether it would be safe for him to be at their house or not.

But Mary sat [still] in the house; not out of disrespect to Jesus, or through want of affection to him, or through any indifference and sloth, but because she knew not that Jesus was coming; see
Joh 11:28.

John 11:21

Ver. 21. When said Martha unto Jesus,.... When she was come to him,

Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died: which expresses much faith, but with a mixture of weakness, as if the presence of Christ was necessary for the working a cure; whereas he could as well have restored her brother to health absent, as present, had it been his will, as he did the centurion's servant, and the nobleman's son of Capernaum.

John 11:22

Ver. 22. But I know that even now,.... At this distance of time, though her brother had been in the grave four days:

whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give [it] thee; whether Martha had such a clear notion of the deity of Christ, as yet, as she afterwards had, is not so certain: however, she was persuaded that he had great interest with God, and that whatever he desired of him was granted to him; and though she does not mention the resurrection of her brother, yet it seems to be what she had in view.

John 11:23

Ver. 23. Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again. Christ knew what she meant, and accordingly gave her an answer, and yet in such general terms, that she could not tell whether his meaning was, that he should rise now, or at the general resurrection.

John 11:24

Ver. 24. Martha saith unto him,.... Being desirous of knowing the sense and meaning of Christ, as well as to express her own faith;

I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection, at the last day. The Jews were divided about the doctrine of the resurrection, the Sadducees denied it, the Pharisees asserted it; and on this latter side was Martha; she believed there would be a resurrection of the dead; that this would be at the last day, or at the end of the world; and that her brother would rise at that general resurrection: wherefore, if Christ meant no more than that, this was what she always believed. The Syriac version renders it, "in the consolation at the last day"; and so the time of the resurrection is, by the Jews, called "the days of consolation" {o}. And good reason there is for it in those who shall have part in the first resurrection, or come forth to the resurrection of life; their bodies will rise glorious, powerful, spiritual, and incorruptible, fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ; they will no more be attended with infirmities, disorders, and diseases; they will feel no more pain, nor die any more; being reunited to their souls they will meet the Lord in the air, and in the judgment they will stand at his right hand; they will enter into his joy, and be for ever with him; with their bodily eyes they will behold Christ, and see him for themselves, and not another; they will meet their spiritual friends and acquaintance, and enjoy their company for ever; they will have uninterrupted communion with angels and saints, and with God, Father, Son, and Spirit; their consolation will be inconceivable and inexpressible.

{o} Targum Jon. in Gen i. 21. & in Hos. vi. 2.

John 11:25

Ver. 25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life,.... Signifying, that he was able of himself to raise men from death to life, without asking it of his Father; and that he could do it now, as well as at the general resurrection; at which time Christ will be the efficient cause of it; and which will display both his omniscience and his omnipotence; as his resurrection is the earnest and pledge, and will be the model and exemplar of it. This is true of Christ, with regard to a spiritual resurrection, from a death of sin, to a life of grace; he is concerned both in the life itself, and in the resurrection to it: he is the meritorious and procuring cause of it; he died for his people, that they, being dead to sin, might live unto God, and unto righteousness: he is the author of it; he says unto them, when dead in sin, live; he speaks life into them: he commands it in them, and by his Spirit breathes into them the breath of spiritual life, and implants the principle of it in their souls; and he supports and maintains it by giving himself to them as the bread of life to feed upon, and by supplying them with grace continually; yea, he himself is their life; he lives in them, and their life is hid with him. It is owing to his resurrection, that they are begotten again to a lively hope, or are quickened, that has a virtual influence upon it; and it is not only the cause, but the exemplar of it. Saints, as they are planted together in the likeness of his death, so in the likeness of his resurrection: to which may be added, that it is his voice in the Gospel, attended with an almighty power, which is the means of quickening them, which they hear, and so live; and it is his image that is stamped upon them; and by his Spirit they are made to live, and to walk in newness of life.

He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: believers in Christ die as well as others, though death is not a penal evil to them; its curse is removed, its sting is taken away, being satisfied for by Christ, and so becomes a blessing and privilege to them, and is desirable by them; but though they die, they shall live again; their dust is under the peculiar care of Christ; and they shall rise by virtue of union to him, and shall rise, first in the morning of the resurrection, and with peculiar privileges, or to the resurrection of life, and with the peculiar properties of incorruption, power, glory, and spirituality. So likewise such that have been dead in sin, and dead in law, under a sentence of condemnation, as all mankind are in Adam, and being in a natural and sinful estate, and as the chosen of God themselves are; yet being brought to believe in Christ, that is, to see the excellency and suitableness of him as a Saviour, and the necessity of salvation by him; to go out of themselves to him, disclaiming their own righteousness; venture their souls upon him, give up themselves to him, trust in him, and depend upon him for eternal life and salvation; these live spiritually; they appear to have a principle of life in them; they breathe after spiritual things; they see the Son of God, and behold his glory; they handle the word of life; they speak the language of Canaan, and walk by faith on Christ, as they have received him; they live a life of sanctification and justification; they are manifestly in Christ, and have him, an interest in him, and so must have life; they live comfortably; they live by faith on Christ, and his righteousness, and have communion with him here, and expect to have, and shall have eternal life hereafter.

John 11:26

Ver. 26. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me,..... Whoever will be found alive at Christ's second coming, and is a believer in him,

shall never die, but shall be changed, and shall be for ever with Christ; and such as shall be raised to life by him, shall never die any more, not even a bodily death, and much less an eternal one, or the second death: and though believers die a corporeal death as others do, yet their souls live, and live in happiness, whilst their bodies are under the power of death; nor shall they always continue so, but being raised, shall become immortal, and die no more. So living believers in Christ shall never die more a spiritual death; they are passed from death to life, and shall never return to death more; their spiritual life cannot be lost; grace in them is an immortal seed, a well of living water springing up into everlasting life: grace may be very low in its exercise, and may seem to be ready to die; they may be in lifeless frames, and without the comforts of a spiritual life, and be under the hidings of God's face, which is as death unto them, and may reckon themselves as free among the dead; yet the principle of life will never be extinct in them; nor shall they die the second death, which lies in an eternal separation from God, and in an everlasting sense of his wrath; that shall have no power on them, nor shall they be in the least hurt by it; for they are ordained to eternal life, and have the promise of it; they are united to Christ, and their life is secured in him; and he has redeemed them from death; and they have the Spirit of life dwelling in them, as the pledge and earnest of eternal glory.

Believest thou this? the whole of this concerning the power of Christ, and privilege of believers; every tittle of it is to be believed. And as with respect to a corporeal resurrection, so with regard to a spiritual one; that men by nature are dead in sins; that Christ is the author of the resurrection from such a state, to a spiritual life; that this life is only by Christ, and can never be lost: this is a doctrine to be believed; it is the doctrine of the Scriptures; it is according to godliness; it makes for the comfort of the people of God, and glorifies the divine perfections.

John 11:27

Ver. 27. She saith unto him, yea, Lord,.... That is, she firmly believed all that he said concerning himself, and the happiness of those that believed in him: and for the confirmation of it adds,

I believe: or "I have believed", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; that is, long ago, ever since she knew him:

that thou art the Christ the Son of God, which should come into the world; that he was the true Messiah, and the proper and natural Son of God, of the same nature with God, equal to him, having the same perfections with him; and who was long promised, much prophesied of, and greatly expected to come into the world; and was now come into the world by the assumption of human nature, to work out salvation for his people, and therefore, since she believed all this of him, she must believe that he was able to raise the dead to life, and to secure those that believe in him from dying eternally.

John 11:28

Ver. 28. And when she had so said,.... Had expressed her faith in Christ in such terms, as the apostles themselves did, Mt 16:16 **Joh 1:49**.

She went her way; from Christ, being ordered by him to go to her sister Mary, and fetch her to him:

and called Mary her sister secretly; either beckoned her to come to her, or whispered her in the ear privately, as Nonnus paraphrases it, that the Jews, who were enemies to Christ, might not hear:

saying, the master is come; near the town; is not a great way off: she might use the phrase, "the master", for greater privacy, that should she be overheard, it would not be who she meant; and because it was an usual appellation by which Christ was called in that family, and by which he was well known; and was expressive of honour to him, and subjection in them as his disciples:

and calleth for thee; to come to him; Christ asked after her, desired to see her, and ordered her to come to him; which was an instance of his respect for her.

John 11:29

Ver. 29. As soon as she heard that,.... That Christ was come, and inquired for her, and wanted to see her:

she arose quickly, and came unto him; having an equal affection for him as her sister Martha; and which she showed, by leaving her comforters at once, and by making the haste she did, to another and better comforter: both Martha and Mary, out of their great love to Christ, break through the rule for mourners mentioned in note,
See Gill on "Joh 11:19", of not going out of the door of the house the first week of mourning.

John 11:30

Ver. 30. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town,.... Of Bethany, but stayed without, being nearer to Lazarus's grave, which he intended to go to, in order to raise him to life, it being usual to bury the without the towns and cities; See Gill on "Mt 8:28",
See Gill on "Lu 7:12".

but was in that place where Martha met him; here he stopped, and here he continued: the Persic version reads, "but was sitting in the same place", &c. waiting for the coming of Mary along with Martha; judging this to be a more suitable place to converse together in, than their own house, which was thronged with Jews; and especially he chose it for the reason above given.

John 11:31

Ver. 31. The Jews then which were with her in the house,.... Who came from Jerusalem to visit this afflicted family, and continued in the house with them

and comforted her; which was the end of their coming, Joh 11:19. This they endeavoured to do, though they did not succeed:

when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her; they did not know what Martha whispered to her, but observed that she rose off her seat in great haste, and went out of the house at once; and therefore they went after to see where she went, and to persuade her to return;

saying, within themselves; "thinking", as all the Oriental versions seem to read,

she goeth unto the grave to weep there: the Jews were wont to go to the graves on different accounts; one was to see whether the persons were dead or not: for so it is said {p},

"they go to the graves and visit until three days."

It happened that they visited one, and he lived five and twenty years, and after that died: and another was on a religious account; such went to the graves of the prophets, wise men, and righteous, and prostrated themselves upon them, to pray with weeping and supplication, and seek mercy for themselves, and for their brethren, expressing their faith in the resurrection {q}. Dr. Pocock {r} has given a large form of prayer used by them at such times, from Solomon bar Nathan; and is as follows:

"let it be the will of the Lord our God, our Creator, our Holy One, the Holy One of Jacob, who hath created all the children of his covenant in judgment, and causes them to die in judgment, and will raise them again to the life of the world to come, who knows the number of them all; that he would hasten to awake our master and doctor, (such an one,) that holy, (or that righteous, or that wise doctor,) whose body dwells in this sepulchre, whose bones rest in the midst of these stones; and that he would quicken him with that eternal life which no death follows; with that life which swallows up all death, and which wipes away all tears, and takes away all reproach; together with all those who are written unto life in Jerusalem; with the seven shepherds, and eight principal men, who are spoken of in **Mic 5:5**, and give him a part with them that understand, and with them that justify many, who will be like the stars for ever and ever; and the whole residue of the people of the Lord, the house of Israel, who keep the covenant of our God, and do his pleasure, may the Lord our God shake all these out of their dust, and let their lot, and our lot, be in life, in everlasting life, that in it he may establish all, both great and small, according to what is written, Ps 72:16: "there shall be an handful of corn", &c. and confirm the assurance he gave by Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos, Isa 26:19: "thy dead men shall live", &c. and as he promised to Daniel, a man of desires,
Da 12:13: "but go thou thy way till the end be", &c. and as he promised to all the congregations of Israel, by his servant Ezekiel, the son of Buzi the priest, Eze 37:12: "therefore prophesy and say to them", &c. that the saints may rejoice with glory, and sing upon their beds, and that the righteous may rejoice,

and exult before God, and be glad in his salvation, and say in that day, "behold this is our God, we have waited for him", &c. Isa 25:9; and we will bless the Lord from this time forth, and for ever, Hallelujah."

A shorter one, which is in their liturgies, and is used as they pass by the sepulchres of the Israelites, is this:

"blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who has formed you in judgment, and has quickened you in judgment, and has fed you in judgment, and knows the number of all of you, and he will quicken you, and restore you; blessed art thou, O Lord, that quickens the dead."

But sometimes they went only to vent their grief, and lament the loss of their deceased friends, which the Jews imagined was the case of Mary. And such a custom as this is used by the Turks, whose women on Friday, which is their day of worship, go before sun rising to the graves of the deceased, which are without the city, where they mourn over the death of their friends, and sprinkle their monuments with water and flowers; and even such as are not at the funeral or interment of the dead, after some days, will go to the graves, and make their lamentations there, and inquire of the dead the reason of their departure, and, as it were, expostulate with them, and to their lamentations add oblations of loaves, cheeses, eggs, and flesh {s}. The Persians also visit the sepulchres of their principal "Imams", or prelates {t}; and the Jews were wont to visit the graves of their great men, in honour to them; yea, the disciples of the wise men used to meet there to study the law, thereby showing respect, and doing honour to the deceased. It is said of Hezekiah, 2Ch 32:33: "that all Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, did him honour at his death"; from whence say the Talmudists {u} we learn, that they fixed a sitting or a school at his grave; the gloss is, a session (or school) of the wise men to study in the law there. So says Maimonides {w}, when a king dies they make a sitting at his grave seven days, as it is said, 2Ch 32:33: "they did him honour at his death"; that is, they made a sitting at his grave.

{p} Massech. Semachot, c. 8. fol. 15. 1. {q} Cippi Heb. p. 3, 4. {r} Misc. not. in port. Maimon. p. 224. {s} Gejer de Ebraeor. Luctu, c. 6. sect. 26. {t} Reland de Relig. Mohammed. l. 1. p. 72. {u} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 16. 2. {w} Hilchot Ebel. c. 14. sect. 25.

John 11:32

Ver. 32. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was,.... Where Martha met him, and where she left him. Travellers tell us, that close by a well, about a stone's cast out of the town of Bethany, is showed the place where Martha met our Lord when he came to raise Lazarus, and where Mary, being called also, met him; but this is not to be depended on, nor is it of any moment to know it. It is blessed meeting Christ any where; and where he is preached, and his ordinances administered, let it be in what place it will, there may the presence of Christ be expected; and it is an encouragement to go there where others have met with him: Martha had been here before, and had had some conversation with Christ to her great satisfaction, and she goes and calls her sister, that she might enjoy the same: so souls that have met with Jesus under such a ministry, in such a place, invite others to go thither also; and often it is that this is a means, in providence, of finding Christ, and enjoying communion with him.

And saw him, she fell down at his feet; in great respect to him, and reverence of him, worshipping him as her Lord and God.

Saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died; which were the same words Martha uttered upon her first meeting Jesus, Joh 11:21; and it is very likely that they had often expressed themselves in such language one to another, saying to each other, if our Lord Jesus had been but here, our dear brother Lazarus would not have died.

John 11:33

Ver. 33. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping,.... At his feet, who, for sorrow and grief of heart, could say no more to him; but having expressed these words, burst out into floods of tears:

and the Jews also weeping, which came with her; either through sympathy with her, or hypocritically:

he groaned in the spirit; in his human soul; and which shows, that he had a real human soul, subject to passions, though sinless ones. The word signifies an inward motion of the mind, through indignation and anger; and it may be partly at the weakness of Mary's faith, and at her immoderate sorrow; and partly at the hypocrisy of the Jews: or else this inward groaning was through grief, sympathizing with Mary, and her friends, his human soul being touched with a fellow feeling of their griefs and sorrows:

and was troubled; or troubled himself; threw himself into some forms and gestures of sorrow, and mourning, as lifting up his eyes, wringing his hands, and changing the form of his countenance.

John 11:34

Ver. 34. And said, where have ye laid him?.... This he might say as man, though he, as the omniscient God, knew where he was laid; and that it might appear there was no juggle and contrivance between him, and the relations of the deceased; and to raise some expectation of what he intended to do; and to draw the Jews thither, that they might be witnesses of the miracle he was about to work.

They say unto him; That is, Martha and Mary,

Lord, come and see; it being but a little way off.

John 11:35

Ver. 35. Jesus wept. As he was going along to the grave, see Joh 11:28; as he was meditating upon the state of his friend Lazarus, the distress his two sisters were in, and the greater damnation that would befall the Jews then present, who, notwithstanding the miracle, would not believe in him. This shows him to be truly and really man, subject to like passions, only without sin.

John 11:36

Ver. 36. Then said the Jews, behold, how he loved him!] Lazarus; for they supposed that these tears were shed purely on his account; and by all circumstances they could not but judge, that they proceeded from an hearty and sincere affection to him; and it was amazing to them, that his love to him should be so strong, when he was no relation, only, as they imagined, a common friend. Christ's love to all his people, even when they are dead in trespasses and sins, is wonderful, and passes knowledge. And it is amazing indeed, if it be considered who the lover is, the eternal Son of God, who is God over all, blessed for ever, the Creator of all things, the King of kings, and Lord of lords: and also, who they are that are loved by him, not only creatures, but sinful ones, exceeding mean and abject; the base things of this world, bankrupts, beggars, yea, comparable to the beasts that perish; who had nothing external, nor internal, to recommend them to him, and engage his affections; yea, everything to give him an aversion to them, and render them odious in his sight, being enemies in their minds by wicked works, and children of wrath, as others: and likewise, if it be considered what he has done for these, in which his love appears to them; as before time, in espousing their persons, becoming their surety, engaging in covenant with his Father for them, agreeing to all he proposed, taking the care of their persons, and of all blessings and promises, grace and glory for them; and in time here on earth, by assuming their nature, fulfilling the law for them, dying in their room and stead, paying their debts, procuring all blessings for them, peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal redemption; and now in heaven, by preparing a place for them, being their intercessor and advocate there, supplying their wants, frequently visiting them, and indulging them with communion with himself, preserving them safe to his kingdom and glory, into which he will introduce them, presenting them to his Father with exceeding joy; all which are marvellous acts of love and grace: to which may be added, the consideration of the nature of his love, that it should be from everlasting, before these persons were born; that it should be a love of complacency and delight in them; that it should be free, and unmerited, without any reason, or motive on their part; that it should be distinguishing, that they, and not others, should be the objects of it; and that it should continue unchangeably the same, notwithstanding their manifold transgressions, and provocations; wherefore it may be justly said, behold, how he loved them!

John 11:37

Ver. 37. And some of them said,.... Who were averse to him, and bore him a secret grudge, and were willing to put the worst construction on every action of his:

could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind; as it is said, at least pretended, that he did, **Joh 9:6**, for this must be understood as calling the miracle into question, and as a sneer upon it, and not as taking it for granted that so it was; and even supposing that, it is mentioned to his reproach, since if so, he might

have caused that, even this man should not died: for either the above cure was a sham, or, if it was a real thing, he who did that could have prevented

Lazarus's death; and if he could, and would not, where is his friendship? and what must be thought of all this show of affection to him? and what are these tears, but crocodile ones? but this reasoning, as specious as it may seem, was very fallacious; for he that cured the man born blind could raise Lazarus from the dead, which he intended; and therefore did not prevent his death, that he might still give more joy to the family, bring more glory to God, and himself, and more shame and confusion to his enemies.

John 11:38

Ver. 38. Jesus therefore groaning in himself,.... Not only through grief, just coming up to the grave, where his dear friend lay, but through an holy anger and indignation at the malice and wickedness of the Jews;

cometh to the grave of Lazarus,

it was a cave; either a natural one, such as were in rocks and mountains, of which sort there were many in Judea, and near Jerusalem being a rocky and mountainous country, of which Josephus {x} makes mention; where thieves and robbers sheltered themselves, and could not easily be come at and where persons in danger fled to for safety, and hid themselves; and the reason why such places were chose to bury in, was because here the bodies were safe from beasts of prey: or this was an artificial cave made out of a rock, in form of one, as was the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea; and it was the common custom of the Jews to make caves and bury in; yea, they were obliged to it by their traditions: thus says Maimonides {y},

"he that sells a place to his friend to make in it a grave or that receives from his friend a place to make in it a grave, hrem hvwe, "must make a cave", and open in it eight graves, three on one side and three on another, and two over against the entrance "into the cave": the measure of "the cave" is four cubits by six, and every grave is four cubits long, and six hands broad, and seven high; and there is a space between every grave, on the sides a cubit and a half, and between the two in the middle two cubits."

And elsewhere {z} he observes, that

"they dig twrem, "caves" in the earth, and make a grave in the side "of the cave", and bury him (the dead) in it."

And such caves for burying the dead, were at and near the Mount of Olives; and near the same must be this cave where Lazarus was buried; for Bethany was not far from thence: so in the Cippi Hebraici we read {a}, that at the bottom of the Mount (of Olives) is a very great "cave", said to be Haggai the prophet's; and in it are many caves.--And near it is the grave of Zachariah the prophet, in a "cave" shut up; and frequent mention is made there of caves in which persons were buried; See Gill on "Mt 23:29"; perhaps the custom of burying in them might take its rise from the cave of Machpelah, which Abraham, their father, bought for a buryingplace for his dead. The sepulchre of Lazarus is pretended {b} to be shown to travellers to this day, over which is built a chapel of marble, very decent, and comely, and stands close by a church built in honour of Martha and Mary, the two sisters of Lazarus, in the place where their house stood; but certain it is, that the grave of Lazarus was out of the town:

and a stone lay upon it. Our version is not so accurate, nor so agreeable to the form of graves with the Jews, nor to this of Lazarus's; their graves were not as ours, dug in the earth and open above, so as to have a stone laid over them, for they often were, as this, caves in rocks, either natural, or hewn out of them by art; and there was a door at the side of them, by which there was an entrance into them; and at this door a stone was laid it would be better rendered here, and "a stone was laid to it"; not "upon it", for it had no opening above, but to it, at the side of it; and accordingly the Syriac and Persic versions read, "a stone was laid at the door of it"; and the Arabic version, "and there was a great stone at the door of it", as was at the door of Christ's sepulchre. In the Jewish sepulchres there was rux, "a court" {c} which was before the entrance into the cave; this was four square; it was six cubits long, and six broad; and here the bearers put down the corpse, and from hence it was carried into the cave, at which there was an entrance, sometimes called hremh yp, "the mouth of the cave" {d}; and sometimes, rbqh xtp, "the door of the grave" {e}; of its form, measure, and place, there is no express mention in the Jewish writings: it is thought to be about a cubit's breadth, and was on the side of the cave; so that at it, it might be looked into; and at the mouth of the cave was a stone put to stop it up, which was called llwg, from its being rolled there; though that with which the mouth of the cave was shut up, was not always a stone, nor made of stone; Maimonides {f} says, it was made of stone, or wood, or the like matter; and so in the Misna {g} it is said,

"rbql llwg, "the covering for a grave", (or that with which it is stopped up,) if it be made of a piece of timber, whether it stands, or whether it inclines to the side, does not defile, but over against the door only;"

See Gill on "Mt 27:60".

{x} Antiqu. l. 14. c. 15. sect. 5. {y} Hilchot Mecira, c. 21. sect. 6. {z} Hilchot Ebel, c. 4. sect. 4. {a} P. 27, 29. Ed. Hottinger. {b} ltinerar. Bunting. p. 364. {c} Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 6. sect. 8. {d} Misn. ib. {e} Maimon. R. Samson, & Bartenora in Misn. Ohalot, c. 15. sect. 8. {f} In Misn. Ohalot, c. 2. sect. 4. {g} Ib c. 15, sect. 8.

John 11:39

Ver. 39. Jesus said, take ye away the stone,.... This was said either to the Jews, or rather to the servants that came along with Martha and Mary; and this he ordered, not to facilitate the resurrection, or merely in order to make way for Lazarus: he that could command him to come forth, could have commanded away the stone, but he chose to have it removed this way, that the corpse might be seen, and even smelt; and that it might be manifest, there was no fallacy, nor any intrigue between him, and the sisters of the deceased in this matter: this order was contrary to a rule of the Jews, which forbid the opening of a grave after it was stopped up {h}; but a greater than the fathers of the traditions was here, even he who has the keys of hell, or the grave, and can open, or order it to be opened, when he pleases:

Martha the sister of him that was dead: that is, of Lazarus, as the Persic version expresses it, calling him, "Gazarus",

saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh; or smells; not that she perceived this upon their moving the stone, but she concluded it from the time he had been dead, and had lain in the grave, in which dead bodies usually putrefy and smell: whether she said this out of respect to her brother, being unwilling he should be exposed to the view of persons, in such a state of corruption, she knew he must now be; or whether out of respect to Christ, lest he should be disordered with the offensive smell, is not certain: however, it seems as if she had no notion that Christ was about to raise her brother from the dead; and that the stone was commanded to be removed for that purpose, not merely for a sight of the dead, but that the dead might be seen to come forth alive: she imagined that Christ only wanted to have the stone removed, that he might have a sight of his deceased friend, which she thought would be very disagreeable and nauseous; so soon had she forgot what Christ had said to her, and lost that little exercise she had of faith and hope, with respect to the resurrection of her brother. Frames of soul, and acts of grace, are very changeable, and uncertain things; and especially when carnal reasoning is indulged.

For he hath been [dead] four days; he had been so long in the grave, Joh 11:17. The word "dead" is not in the text; he might have been dead longer; though the Jews usually buried on the same day a person died: however, the sense is here, he had been so long in the grave; and so the Persic version renders it, "for it is the fourth day that he has been in the grave"; in the original text it is, "he is one of four days"; so many days he had been in the house appointed for all living; so long he had been removed from the sight of men, and had been in another world, and had begun another era, and four days had passed in it; he was so many days old according to that: so that his countenance was changed, he was not fit to be seen, nor approached unto; nor was there any hope of his returning to life. The Jews {i} say, that

"for three days the soul goes to the grave, thinking the body may return; but when it sees the figure of the face changed, it goes away, and leaves it, as it is said,
Job 14:22."

So of Jonah's being three days and three nights in the whale's belly, they say {k},

"these are the three days a man is in the grave, and his bowels burst; and after three days that defilement is turned upon his face."

Hence, they do not allow anyone to bear witness of one that is dead or killed, that he is such an one, after three days, because then his countenance is changed {l}, and he cannot be well known.

{h} Apud Buxtorf Lex. Rab. col. 437. {i} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 100. fol. 88. 2. & T. Hieros. Moed Katon, fol. 82. 2. {k} Zohar in Exod. fol. 78. 2. {l} Misn. Yebamot, c. 16. sect. 3. & Maimon. Jarchi, & Bartenora in ib. & Maimon. Hilchot Gerushim, c. 13. sect. 21. T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 120. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

John 11:40

Ver. 40. Jesus saith unto her, said I not unto thee,.... Not in so many words, but what might be concluded from what he said; yea, the following express words might be delivered by Christ, in his conversation with Martha, though they are not before recorded by the evangelist:

that if thou wouldst believe thou shouldest see the glory of God; a glorious work of God, wherein the glory of his power and goodness would be displayed, and the Son of God be glorified, or should see such a miracle wrought, which should engage her to glorify God; and on account of which, she would see just reason to do it, and would be concerned in it: and when it would appear that the sickness and death of her brother, which had given her and her sister so much distress and uneasiness, were for the glory of God, and the honour of Christ; see Joh 11:4. Moreover, to "see the glory of God", is to see Christ, who is the brightness of his father's glory; and though she had a sight of him now, and before this time, with her bodily eyes, and also with the eyes of her understanding, and knew that he was the Son of God, and the true Messiah; yet it is suggested, that upon a fresh and strong exercise of faith on Christ, with respect to the resurrection of her brother, and by means of that, she should have a clearer view of his glory, as the only begotten of the Father; for as he was declared to be the Son of God, by his own resurrection from the dead afterwards, so he was more fully manifested to be that glorious and divine person, by his raising others from the dead, than by any other miracle; and to be indulged with such a sight of him, is a very high favour; see Ps 63:2; and such who have their faith most in exercise, see much of the glory of God, both in the face of Christ, and in his providences, and the performance of his promises.

John 11:41

Ver. 41. Then they took away the stone,.... "From the door of the sepulchre", as the Arabic version adds;

from the place where the dead was laid: this clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions:

and Jesus lift up his eyes; to heaven; this is a praying gesture, as in Joh 17:1,

and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me; which cannot refer to the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead, or to any assistance given him in performing that miracle, because that as yet was not done; and when it was done, was done by his own power, as all the circumstances of it show; but it relates to everything in which he had before heard him, and was a foundation for him, as man, to believe he still would, in whatever was to come; and particularly to the present opportunity of showing his power in so remarkable a manner, and before so many witnesses.

John 11:42

Ver. 42. And I knew that thou hearest me always,.... Which was not only a support to the faith of Christ, as man, but is also to his people, whose advocate, intercessor, and mediator he is.

But because of the people which stand by, I said [it]; that he was heard, and always heard by God; and, therefore must have great interest in his affection, and knowledge of his will; yea, their wills must be the same:

that they may believe that thou hast sent me: for if he had not sent him, he would never have heard him in anything, and much less in everything; wherefore this was a full proof, and clear evidence of his divine mission.

John 11:43

Ver. 43. And when he had thus spoken,.... To God his Father, in the presence and hearing of the people;

he cried with a loud voice; not on account of the dead, but for the sake of those around him, that all might hear and observe; and chiefly to show his majesty, power and authority, and that what he did was open and above board, and not done by any secret, superstitious, and magical whisper; and as an emblem of the voice and power of his Gospel in quickening dead sinners, and of the voice of the arcangel and trumpet of God, at the general resurrection;

Lazarus come forth; he calls him by his name, not only as being his friend, and known by him, but to distinguish him from any other corpse that might lie interred in the same cave; and he bids him come forth out of the cave, he being quickened and raised immediately by the power which went forth from Christ as soon as ever he lifted up his voice; which showed him to be truly and properly God, and to have an absolute dominion over death and the grave.

John 11:44

Ver. 44. And he that was dead came forth,.... That is, he who had been dead, being now made alive, and raised up, and set on his feet, came out of the cave:

bound hand and foot with grave clothes; not that his hands were bound together, and much less his hands and feet together, with any bands or lists of cloth; but his whole body, as Nonnus expresses it, was bound with grave clothes from head to foot, according to the manner of the eastern countries, Jews, Egyptians, and others, who used to wrap up their dead in many folds of linen cloth, as infants are wrapped in swaddling bands: and their manner was to let down their arms and hands close by their sides, and wind up altogether from head to foot: so that there was another miracle besides that of raising him from the dead; that in such a situation, in which he could have no natural use of his hands and feet, he should rise up, stand on his feet, walk, and come forth thus bound, out of the cave:

and his face was bound about with a napkin; the use of which was not only to tie up the chin and jaws, but to hide the grim and ghastly looks of a dead corpse; and one of the same price and value was used by rich and poor: for it is said {m},

"the wise men introduced a custom of using rdwo, "a napkin", (the very word here used, which Nonnus says is Syriac,) of the same value, not exceeding a penny, that he might not be ashamed who had not one so good as another; and they cover the faces of the dead, that they might not shame the poor, whose faces were black with famine."

For it seems {n},

"formerly they used to uncover the faces of the rich, and cover the faces of the poor, because their faces were black through want, and the poor were ashamed; wherefore they ordered, that they should cover the faces of all, for the honour of the poor."

Jesus saith unto them; to the servants that stood by:

loose him, and let him go; unwind the linen rolls about him, and set his hands and feet at liberty, and let him go to his own house.

{m} Maimon. Hilchot Ebel, c. 4. sect. 1, {n} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 27. 1.

John 11:45

Ver. 45. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary,.... To her house, to comfort her, and that came along with her to the grave:

and had seen the things which Jesus did; in raising the dead body of Lazarus, and causing him to walk, though bound in grave clothes:

believed on him; that he was the true Messiah: such an effect the miracle had on them; so that it was a happy day for them, that they came from Jerusalem to Bethany to pay this visit.

John 11:46

Ver. 46. But some of them went their way to the Pharisees,.... At Jerusalem, who were members of the sanhedrim; so far were some of them from receiving any advantage by this miracle, that they were the more hardened, and filled with malice and envy to Christ, and made the best of their way to acquaint his most inveterate enemies:

and told them what things Jesus had done; at Bethany; not to soften their minds, and bring them to entertain a good opinion of him, but to irritate them, and put them upon schemes to destroy him; thus even miracles, as well as the doctrines of the Gospel, are to some the savour of death unto death, whilst to others the savour of life unto life.

John 11:47

Ver. 47. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council,.... They convened the sanhedrim, the great council of the nation together, of which they were some of the principal members:

and said, what do we? that is, why is nothing done? why are we so dilatory? why do we sit still, and do nothing? or what is to be done? this now lies before us, this is to be considered and deliberated on:

for this man doth many miracles; this is owned, and could not be denied by them; and should have been a reason why they should have acknowledged him to have been the Messiah, and embraced him; whereas they used it as a reason, why they should think of, and concert some measures, to hinder and put a stop to the belief of him as such.

John 11:48

Ver. 48. If we let him thus alone,.... Going about from place to place, teaching the people, and doing such miracles:

all men will believe on him; the whole nation will receive him as the Messiah, and proclaim him their king, and yield a cheerful obedience to all his commands:

the Romans will come; against us, with their powerful armies; interpreting the setting him up as Messiah, to be an instance of rebellion against Caesar, and his government:

and take away both our place and nation; that is, will destroy the temple, their holy place, the place of their religion and worship; and their city, the place of their habitation, and lay waste their country; and take away from them that little share of power and government they had, and strip them both of their civil and religious privileges: the Persic version renders it, "they will take away our place, and make a decree against our religion".

John 11:49

Ver. 49. And one of them, [named] Caiaphas,....
See Gill on "Mt 26:3",
See Gill on "Lu 3:2",
See Gill on "Joh 18:13".

being the high priest that same year; the high priesthood originally was not annual, but for life; but towards the close of the second temple, it came into the hands of the king, to appoint who would to be high priest {o}; and it became venal; it was purchased with money; insomuch that they changed the priesthood once a twelve month, and every year a new high priest was made {p} now this man being in such an high office, and a man of no conscience, and of bad principles, being a Sadducee, as seems from **Ac 4:6**, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and was unconcerned about a future state; and having no restraint upon him, in a bold, haughty, and blustering manner,

said unto them, ye know nothing at all; ye are a parcel of ignorant and stupid creatures, mere fools and idiots, to sit disputing and arguing, pro and con about such a fellow as this; what is to be done is obvious enough, and that is to take away this man's life, without any more ado; it matters not what he is, nor what he does; these are things that are not to be considered, they are out of the question; would you save the nation, destroy the man; things are come to this crisis, that either his life must go, or the nation perish; and which is most expedient, requires no time to debate about.

{o} Misn. Yebamot, c. 6. sect. 4. {p} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2. Juchasin, fol. 139. 1.

John 11:50

Ver. 50. Nor consider that it is expedient for us,.... Priests, Levites, Pharisees, the sanhedrim, and ecclesiastical rulers of the people; who, as Caiaphas apprehended, must suffer in their characters and revenues, must quit their honourable and gainful posts and places, if Jesus went on and succeeded at this rate: wherefore it was most expedient and advantageous for them, which was the main thing to be considered in such a council, so he thought it was,

that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not; he proceeded entirely upon this political principle, that a public good ought to be preferred to a private one; that it was no matter what the man was, whether innocent or not; common prudence, and the public safety of the nation, required him to fall a sacrifice, rather than the Romans should be exasperated and provoked to such a degree, as to threaten the utter ruin and destruction of the whole nation.

John 11:51

Ver. 51. And this spake he not of himself,.... Not of his own devising and dictating, but by the Spirit of God; as a wicked man sometimes may, and as Balaam did; the Spirit of God dictated the words unto him, and put them into his mouth; nor did he use them in the sense, in which the Holy Ghost designed them:

but being high priest that year; by his office he was the oracle of God, and was so esteemed by the people, and therefore a proper person to be made use of in this way; and especially being high priest that year, in which the priesthood was to be changed, and vision and prophecy to be sealed up:

he prophesied; though he did not know he did, as did Pharaoh, Ex 10:28, and the people of the Jews, Mt 27:25.

That Jesus should die for that nation; these words, with what follows in the next verse, are the words of the evangelist, interpreting the prophecy of Caiaphas, according to the sense of the Holy Ghost that Jesus should die, which was contrary to a notion the Jews had imbibed, concerning the Messiah; see Joh 12:34. But Jesus the true Messiah must die; this was determined in the counsel of God, agreed to by Christ in the covenant of grace, foretold by the prophets from the beginning of the world, typified by sacrifices and other things, under the former dispensation, predicted by Christ himself, and accordingly came to pass; and upon the above accounts was necessary, as well as for the salvation of his people, who otherwise must have perished; and yet was free and voluntary in him, and a strong expression, and a demonstrative proof of his love to them: and not only this prophecy declared, that Jesus should die, but that he should die for that nation, for the nation of the Jews; not for every individual in it, for all of them were not saved by him; some received him not; they rejected him as the Messiah, Saviour, and Redeemer, and died in their sins; but for all the elect of God among them, the sheep of the house of Israel, to whom he was sent, and whom he came to seek and save; and whom he blessed, by turning them away from their iniquities, and by taking away their iniquities from them: and moreover, this prophecy suggests, that Jesus was to die, not merely as a martyr, to confirm with his blood the doctrine he preached, nor only as an example of courage, meekness, patience, and love, but for, or in the room and stead of his people, as their surety; giving his life a ransom and himself a sacrifice to the justice of God, for them; there by fulfilling the law and satisfying it, and appeasing the wrath of God on their account.

John 11:52

Ver. 52. And not for that nation only,.... For though Christ, as prophet, was sent to the Jews only, and was the minister of the circumcision, yet as a priest he did not die for them only, but for the Gentiles also; even for the whole mystical Israel of God all the world over, whether among Jews or Gentiles; see

1Jo 2:2.

But that also he should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad; by which may be meant, not only the elect of God among the Jews, who were scattered amidst the nations of the world, for whom Christ died, and to whom the Gospel was in the first place sent, and who were gathered together into a Gospel church state; see **Joh 7:35**; but rather the elect of God among the Gentiles, called "the children of God", in opposition to a notion of the Jews, who took this character to themselves, on account of their national adoption, and denied it to the Gentiles, reckoning them no other than as dogs; and because they were the children of God by special adoption, in divine, predestination, and in the covenant of grace; and were so considered, when given to Christ, who looked upon them as in this relation, when he assumed their nature, and died in their room and stead; and not merely because they would hereafter appear to be the children of God in regeneration, and by faith in Christ Jesus, and have the witnessings of the Spirit that they were so; and much less because they had a fitness and disposition to be the children of God, since they were by nature as others, children of wrath: and these are said to be "scattered abroad", both from God, as they were by the fall, and by their own transgressions; which separated between God and them, and set them at a distance from him; for in their nature head, and nature state, they are afar off from him, and from one another; which may regard not only distance of place, being scattered about in the several parts of the world, but their disagreement in mind and judgment, in religion and manners; every one pursuing his own way, going astray like lost sheep: now Christ died for them, in order to bring them nigh to God, to the one true and living God; and to gather them together under one head, himself, their common head; by whom they were represented in his crucifixion, burial, and resurrection; and to make them one body, and bring them into one fold, into one church state here, and at last to one place, to heaven, there to be for ever with him; and so the Persic version renders it, "that he might gather them into one place": and in this, the red heifer was a type of Christ; whose blood was sprinkled directly before the tabernacle of the congregation, and without the camp; and which was done, as a Jewish writer says {q},

"to call to mind the design of the heifer, which was to bring Myqxwrmh, "those that were afar off", from the camp of the Shekinah, to be near unto it."

{q} Abarbinel in Lev. xix. 3, 4.

John 11:53

Ver. 53. Then from that day forth,.... Caiaphas's reasoning appeared so good, and his advice so agreeable, that it was at once, and generally assented to, except by one or two, as Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea; that ever after this,

they took counsel together; at certain times, and that very often, and agreed in their counsel,

for to put him to death; this they resolved upon, before there was any legal process, before any crime was charged upon him, or any proof given, or he was heard what he had to say for himself; so highly approved of was Caiaphas's motion, to put him to death, right or wrong, whether he was innocent or not; that they had nothing to do, but to consult of ways and means of getting him into their hands, and of taking away his life in a manner, as would he most for their own credit among the people, and to his shame and disgrace, and at the most proper and suitable time.

John 11:54

Ver. 54. Jesus therefore,.... Knowing the resolution the sanhedrim had taken to put him to death, and the schemes they were forming to apprehend him:

walked no more openly among the Jews; at, or near Jerusalem; he did not teach in their streets, nor work miracles, nor appear in public company:

but went thence, from Bethany:

unto a country near to the wilderness: whether this was the wilderness of Judea, where John came preaching, and near to which our Lord was before he came to Bethany, or the wilderness of Bethaven, Jos 18:12, is not certain:

into a city called Ephraim; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, call it Ephren, and so some copies; it seems to be the same with the Ephraim of the Misnic and Talmudic doctors; concerning which they say {r},

"Micmas and Mezonicha are the first for fine flour, and the next to them is Ephraim in the valley."

For it seems there were two Ephraims, one in the valley, and another in the mount {s} it was a place very fruitful for wheat; hence that saying of Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of Egypt, to Moses {t};

"do you bring straw to Ephraim?"

which was a proverbial expression, the same with ours of carrying coals to Newcastle: they seeing Moses do signs and wonders, supposed he did them by enchantment; and the sense of their proverb is, do you bring enchantments into Egypt, where there are so many already? This Ephraim, the Jews say {u}, is the same with that in
2Ch 13:19, and as there Bethel is mentioned with it, it seems to have been in the tribe of Benjamin: and it may be observed, that Josephus {w} speaks of an Ephraim, along with Bethel likewise; so that they all seem to mean the same place; and according to the same writer, it was but a little city, and it may be an obscure one, for which reason Christ withdrew to it. Epiphanius {x} makes mention of the wilderness of Bethel and Ephraim, through which he travelled, accompanied by a Jew, as he came up from Jericho to the hill country; and is very likely the same wilderness which is here spoken of; and by some called Quarentana, and placed by the river Chereth, in the tribe of Benjamin, north east of Jerusalem; and the same writer elsewhere calls {y} Ephraim, the city of the wilderness: according to Jerom {z}, it was twenty miles from Aelia, or Jerusalem; though according to Eusebius, it was but eight miles, which is thought to be the truest account; and by them both is said to be a very large village, and in which they may not differ from Josephus; for it might be a large village, and yet a little city. Jerom {a} takes notice of a place called Aphra, in the tribe of Benjamin, which he says at that time was called the village Effrem, and was five miles from Bethel eastward; and of another called Aphraim, a city in the tribe of Issachar, which in his time went by the name of the village Affarea, six miles from the legion, northward; the former agrees best with this Ephraim.

And there continued with his disciples; spending his time in private conversation with them, teaching and instructing them in things concerning the kingdom of God, his time with them being now but short.

{r} Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 1. {s} Barlenora in ib. {t} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 85. 1. Gloss. in ib. Tzcror Hammor, fol. 170. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 86. fol. 75. 4. {u} Yom. Tob. in Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 1. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 83. 2. {w} De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 9. sect. 9. {x} Adv. Haeres. l. 1. Tom. II. Haeres. 30. {y} Ib. Haeres. 29. {z} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 91. A.

{a} lb. fol. 88. H. I.

John 11:55

Ver. 55. And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand,.... Which was the fourth passover from Christ's entrance on his public ministry, and the last he ate with his disciples; when he, by being sacrificed for his people, put an end to that, and all other ceremonial observances:

and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem, before the passover: not only from the country where Ephraim was, but from all other countries in Judea and Galilee: all the males were obliged to go up to Jerusalem, at the time of the passover, where it was only kept; but many went before that time, for the reason following:

to purify themselves; we read in 2Ch 30:18 of many that had not cleansed themselves, and yet ate the passover; for whom Hezekiah prayed, that they might be pardoned, which shows that they had done amiss: upon which place, Jarchi has this observation; that

"Judah (the men of Judah) were all clean, because they were near to Jerusalem, and could purify and sanctify themselves, and return to Jerusalem; but many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and Issachar, and Zabulon, could not do so."

And this seems to be the case of these people, they were country people, that lived at a distance, and not having purified themselves from several uncleannesses, came up before the time, that they might cleanse themselves, and be ready at the time: in several cases purification was required; as with new mothers, menstruous and profluvious persons, and such that had touched a dead body, or any creeping thing, and in other cases; and which by reason of distance, might be neglected; wherefore it was necessary they should come up before the time of the passover, to fit themselves for it: the rule about defiled persons eating the passover, is this {b};

"if the congregation is polluted, or the greatest part of it, or the priests are unclean, and the congregation pure, it is kept in uncleanness; but if the lesser part of the congregation is defiled, the pure keep the first passover, and the unclean the second."

This, their commentators say {c}, is to be understood of uncleanness, by touching the dead, which required seven days of purification; and it is very probable that this was the case of these persons, since it was about so many days before the passover, that they came up; see Joh 12:1. The account Maimonides {d} gives of this matter is this;

"who is a defiled person, that is put off to the second passover? everyone who cannot eat the passover, on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan, because of his uncleanness; as profluvious men and women, menstruous and new mothers, and the husbands of menstruous women; but he that toucheth the dead carcass of a beast, or a creeping thing, and the like, on the fourteenth, lo, he dips, and they slay for him (the passover) after he has dipped; and in the evening, when his sun is set, he eats the passover; he that is defiled by touching the dead, whose seventh day happens to be on the fourteenth, though he dips and is sprinkled on, and lo, he is fit to eat the holy things at evening, yet they do not kill for him, but he is put off to the second passover; as it is said, **Nu 9:6**. "And there were certain men who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day"; by tradition it is learned, that it was their seventh day, and therefore they asked if it should be killed for them, and they should eat at evening? and it was declared to them, that they should not kill for them: of what is this to be understood? when he is polluted with a defilement by the dead, which Nazarites shave for; but if he is polluted with other defilements by the dead, which the Nazarites do not shave for, they kill for him on his seventh day, after he has dipped, and is sprinkled upon; and when his sun is set, he eats his passover; a profluvious person, who sees two appearances, and reckons seven days, and dips on the seventh, they kill for him, and he eats at evening.--They do not kill for a menstruous woman on her seventh day, for lo, she does not dip till the eighth night, and she is not fit to eat holy things until the ninth night."

These, with many other cases there instanced, may serve to illustrate this passage.

{b} Misn. Pesachim, c. 7. sect. 6. Vid. Maimon. Korban Pesach. c. 7. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. & Biah Hamikdash, c. 4. sect. 10-18. {c} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. ib. {d} Hilchot Korban Pesach. c. 6. sect. 1, 2, 3.

John 11:56

Ver. 56. Then sought they for Jesus,.... That is, the country people; some on one account, and some on another; some out of curiosity to see his person, others to see his miracles, and others to hear his doctrine; and some, it may be, to take him, and deliver him up to the sanhedrim, who had issued out a proclamation to that purpose, and doubtless offered a reward:

and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple; whither they came to purify themselves, according to the law of the sanctuary:

what think ye, that he will not come to the feast? it was a matter of dispute with them, whether Christ would come or not, to the feast; some might be of opinion that he would not, at least they very much questioned it, since the sanhedrim had published such an order for the discovery of him; and since upon it he was gone from Bethany, farther into the country; though others might be differently minded, and believe he would come, since all the males of Israel were obliged to appear at that feast, and it was his duty; and they could not persuade themselves that he would neglect his duty, for fear of the Jews.

John 11:57

Ver. 57. Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees,.... Who were of the sanhedrim:

had given a commandment; or published an edict, a decree of the senate:

that if any man knew where he were, he should show [it], that they might take him; and this made it a doubtful point with some, whether he would come to the feast or not; and was the reason why others sought for him, and inquired after him, that they might discover him to the chief priests and Pharisees, and have the promised reward.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 12:1

Ver. 1. Then Jesus, six days before the passover,.... Or "before the six days of the passover"; not as designing the days of that feast, for they were seven; but as reckoning so many days back from it, that is, before the sixth day from the ensuing passover: if there were six complete days between this and the passover, as this way of speaking seems to imply; then this must be the day before the Jewish sabbath, and this is more likely, than that Christ should travel on the sabbath day: but if this was the sixth day before it, it was their sabbath day, and so at the going out of it in the evening, a supper was made for him, which with the Jews on that night, was a plentiful one; for they remembered the sabbath in its going out, as well as in its coming in {e}, and this was to prevent grief at the going out of it: so some days before the passover, the lamb was separated from the flock, and kept up till the fourteenth day, Ex 12:3 particularly it may be observed, that seven days before the day of atonement, the high priest was separated from his own house, and had to the chamber Palhedrin {f}; and much such a space of time there was, between the day of the great atonement by Christ, and his unction by Mary; which is said to be against the day of his burial, which being the same day with his sufferings, was the great day of atonement: at this time Jesus

came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead; the last clause is left out in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions:

whom he raised from the dead; that is, "Jesus", as the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions express; and the Ethiopic version adds, "in Bethany". This was the town of Lazarus; here he lived, and here he died, and here he was raised from the dead; and here he continued and dwelt, after his resurrection; and hither Christ came to see him, and the rest of the family, though he knew he exposed himself to danger in so doing.

{e} Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat. c. 29. sect. 1. 11, 12, 29. {f} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1.

John 12:2

Ver. 2. There they made him a supper,.... At Bethany, in the house of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary; by whose order, and at whose charge it was prepared for him; and not in the house of Simon the leper, which was four days after this, Mt 26:2.

And Martha served; who was always a busy, active, and stirring woman; and this she did, to testify her love to Christ, and great respect for him; otherwise, as she was a person of substance, she had servants enough to wait at table:

but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him; and ate, and drank, and conversed; by which it appeared, that he was really risen from the dead, and was in a good state of health.

John 12:3

Ver. 3. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard very costly,.... Worth three hundred pence, according to Judas's estimation of it. This Mary was the other sister of Lazarus; See Gill on "Mt 26:7",
See Gill on "Mr 14:3", concerning the nature and value of this ointment:

and anointed the feet of Jesus; as he lay upon the bed or couch, at supper:

and wiped his feet with her hair; See Gill on "Lu 7:38".

And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment; see **So 1:3**; ointment of spikenard was very odoriferous: this may be an emblem of the sweet savour of Christ, in the ministration of the Gospel, throughout the whole world.

John 12:4

Ver. 4. Then saith one of his disciples,.... Who had no true love for his master, was an hypocrite, and a covetous person:

Judas Iscariot; so called, to distinguish him from another Judas, an apostle; See Gill on "Mt 10:4".

Simon's [son]; this is omitted in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; See Gill on "Joh 13:2";

which should betray him; and so he did; this was pre-determined by God, foretold in prophecy, and foreknown by Christ; and is observed here, to show the temper and character of the man.

John 12:5

Ver. 5. Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence,.... Meaning Roman pence, one of which is, of the value of our money, seven pence halfpenny; so that three hundred pence amount to nine pounds seven shillings and six pence:

and given to the poor? this was his pretence, and with which he covered himself; his uneasiness was, because it was not sold, and the money put into his hands, as appears by what follows.

John 12:6

Ver. 6. This he said, not that he cared for the poor,.... He had no affection for them, and was unconcerned about them, and took no care of them to feed and clothe them; he was no ways solicitous for their support, refreshment, and more comfortable living:

but because he was a thief; to his master, and purloined the money he was intrusted with by him, and put it to his own use:

and had the bag, and bare what put therein; the word rendered a "bag", is adopted by the Rabbinical Jews, into their language; and is sometimes read "Gloskema", and at other times "Dloskema", and is used by them for different things; sometimes {g} for a bier, or coffin, in which the dead was buried, which sense can have no place here; sometimes for a chest, or coffer {h}; and so the Septuagint use the Greek word, in 2Ch 24:8, for the chest into which the people put their collection; and it may be so interpreted here, and so Nonnus renders it; it may signify the chest or coffer, which Judas had the care of, the keys of which were in his hands, and whatever were to be put into it, he bore, or carried thither: and it is also used by the Jewish writers, for a purse {i}; it is asked,

"what is "Dloskema?" says Rabbah bar Samuel, ybod aqylj, "the purse of old men";"

or such as ancient men use; and this is the signification of it here: it may be the same with the "Loculi" of the Romans, and so the Vulgate Latin renders it here; which were different from a chest, or coffer, being moveable, and to be carried about, and which were carried by servants, as well as the purse {k}. Judas had the purse, into which was put whatsoever was ministered to Christ, for the common supply of him and his disciples, and for the relief of the poor.

{g} Targum Jon. & Jerus. in Gen. l. 26. T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 24. 2. & Massech. Semacot, c. 3. sect. 2. {h} Misn. Meila, c. 6. sect. 1. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 26. 2. {i} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 28. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 20. 2. {k} Vid. Pignorium de Servis, p. 327, 328.

John 12:7

Ver. 7. Then said Jesus, let her alone,.... Do not disturb her in what she does, or hinder her, or blame her for it:

against the day of my burial hath she kept this; this ointment, which she now poured on Christ; it was usual to embalm the dead with ointments and spices: Christ suggests, that the time of his death and burial were nigh, and that this woman had kept this ointment till now, for such a purpose; and whereas she would not be able to make use of it at the time of his interment, she had embalmed his body with it now, beforehand; though without any knowledge of his death, or any such intention and design in her, but the Holy Ghost so directing her: for this is not to be understood of her keeping any part of it till that time, which it does not appear she did.

John 12:8

Ver. 8. For the poor always ye have with you,.... And so would not want opportunities of showing a regard to them, which Christ always recommended; nor does he here in the least discourage an industrious and affectionate concern for them: the words seem to be a sort of prophecy, that there would be always poor persons in the churches of Christ, to be taken care of and provided for; See Gill on "Mt 26:11"; and yet the Jews suppose cases, in which the collectors of alms may have no poor to distribute to, and direct what they shall do in such cases {l}:

but me ye have not always; meaning, with respect to his corporeal presence, which would be quickly withdrawn from them, when there would be no more an opportunity of showing him personal respect, in such a way.

{l} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 13. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 38. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 8. 2.

John 12:9

Ver. 9. Much of the people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there,.... That is, many of the Jews that dwelt at Jerusalem, knew that Jesus was at Bethany; for it being but two miles from Jerusalem, the report of his being come soon reached thither:

and they came from Jerusalem to Bethany,

not for Jesus' sake only; to see him, and hear him, and observe what he said and did:

but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead; that is, whom Jesus had raised from the dead, as the Alexandrian copy, and the Ethiopic version express it; for it equally excited their curiosity, to see the person that had been dead, and was raised from the dead, as to see him who raised him: and it is very likely before they had no opportunity of seeing him; it may be he did not appear publicly before, but kept himself retired; but now Jesus being come, he showed himself openly; which the Jerusalem Jews being informed of, induced them to come to see both the one and the other.

John 12:10

Ver. 10. But the chief priests,.... With the rest of the sanhedrim:

consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; as well as Jesus, and that for no other crime, but because he was raised from the dead by him; which shows what consciences these men had, and how horribly wicked they were; that they stopped at nothing, whereby they might satisfy their malice and envy, and secure their worldly interests and advantages.

John 12:11

Ver. 11. Because that by reason of him,.... Of the miracle which was wrought upon him, in raising him from the dead, of which he was a living and an abiding witness:

many of the Jews went away; not from Jerusalem only, but from the chief priests and Pharisees, and the rest of the Jews, that combined against Christ; they withdrew themselves from their party, and deserted them:

and believed on Jesus; as the Messiah; so that they found their interest was decreasing and weakening every day, and that those on the side of Christ were increasing; and this they could not bear, and therefore consulted to take away the life of Lazarus, as well as Jesus; who they imagined, as long as he lived, would be a means of inducing persons to believe in Jesus as the Messiah: whereas if he was dead, the fact would be forgotten, or be more easily denied.

John 12:12

Ver. 12. On the next day, much people that were come to the feast,.... Of the passover; and they were much people indeed, that came yearly to this feast, from all parts of the nation; for all the males in Israel, were obliged to appear at this time; and though the women were not obliged, yet multitudes of them came, and the fame of Jesus might bring the more; add to which, that there was now a general expectation of the Messiah's coming, which brought the Jews from all parts of the world, to Jerusalem; so that this might be called indeed, Nykwem xop, "a crowded passover": and though the following account is a stretching it too far, yet it may serve to illustrate this matter:

"would you desire to know what multitudes were at Jerusalem of the priests, you may know, as it is written, **1Ki 8:63**, and the tradition is, that an ox was offered for twenty four, and a sheep for eleven.--King Agrippa sought to know what was the number of the multitude, which were in Jerusalem; he said to the priests, lay by for me one kidney of every passover lamb; they laid by for him six hundred thousand pair of kidneys, double the number of those that came out of Egypt: and there is never a passover lamb, but there are more than ten numbered for it {m}, &c."

Now the day following the supper at Bethany, and which seems to be the first day of the week, this multitude of people,

when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem; from Bethany, which was soon known, it being so near.

{m} Echa Rabbati, fol. 42. 3, 4.

John 12:13

Ver. 13. Took branches of palm trees,.... The Ethiopic version adds, "and young shoots from Jerusalem"; these grew in great plenty, on one part of the Mount of Olives, that next to Bethany, from whence that town had its name; for it signifies the house of dates, the fruit of the palm tree; See Gill on "Mt

21:17". And as that tree was a sign of joy and victory, they carried branches of it in their hands, as they met the King Messiah, who was about to make his public entrance into Jerusalem, in triumph; and where by his sufferings and death, he should gain the victory over sin, Satan, the world, and death; and lay a solid foundation for joy and peace, to all that believe in him: the Jews say {n},

"if a man takes Nyyab, (the very Greek word here used,) palm tree branches in his hands, we know that he is victorious."

The Persic version reads, "branches of olives".

And went forth to meet him, and cried; when they came up to him, and as he passed by them:

Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord; See Gill on "Mt 21:9".

{n} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 30. fol. 170. 3.

John 12:14

Ver. 14. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass,.... Which he sent his disciples for, to a neighbouring village, and they brought to him:

sat thereon, as it is written; in **Zec 9:9** though some part of the words seems to be taken out of Isa 62:11;
See Gill on "Mt 21:5"; and so Nonnus paraphrases it here, "that it might be fulfilled which Esaias said".

John 12:15

Ver. 15. Fear not, daughter of Zion,.... But rejoice; see **Zec 9:9** and See Gill on "Mt 21:5".

John 12:16

Ver. 16. These things understood not his disciples at the first,.... Or "at that time", as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; or "on that day", as the Ethiopic version; they did not then know the sense of that prophecy, nor that the things which were now doing were a fulfilling of it:

but when Jesus was glorified; was raised front the dead, and ascended to heaven, and was set down at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honour; and when having received the promise of the Father, the Holy Ghost, and his gifts, he poured them forth in a very plenteous and extraordinary manner upon them; whereby their minds were greatly illuminated, and they had a very distinct knowledge of the Scriptures of the Old Testament; and saw clearly how they severally had their accomplishment in Christ:

then remembered they that these things were written of him; in the prophecies of the Old Testament;

and [that] they had done these things unto him; both the disciples and the multitude, or that these things were done to him; such as bringing the ass to him, laying their clothes on it, and setting him upon it, attending him with shoutings and hosannas to the city of Jerusalem, &c.

John 12:17

Ver. 17. The people therefore that was with him,.... The Jews, that came from Jerusalem to Bethany, to comfort the two sisters of Lazarus upon his death, who believed in Christ; and others of the town of Bethany, who with them were along with Christ:

when he called Lazarus out of his grave; saying, Lazarus, come forth:

and raised him from the dead; to life:

bare record: to the Jews at Jerusalem, and to the people that came out of the several countries, of the truth of that fact; declaring, that they were eye and ear witnesses of the whole, and that it was a truth that might be depended on.

John 12:18

Ver. 18. For this cause the people also met him,.... This was a principal reason, among others, which induced them to set out in the manner they did, with palm tree branches in their hands, and accost him as the king of Israel, when they met him, and hosanna'd him into the city:

for that they heard that he had done this miracle; the witnesses were so many, and the proofs they gave so strong, that they firmly believed it: and this being a most amazing miracle, and which exceeded even any of the same kind; Jairus's daughter was but just dead, and the widow of Nain's son was not buried, when they were raised, but Lazarus had been dead and buried four days; it made a very strong impression upon the minds of the people, and engaged their attention to him, and belief in him.

John 12:19

Ver. 19. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves,.... Either when assembled in their own private houses, or in the sanhedrim; or as they stood together in the streets, seeing Jesus pass by in such pomp, and such a multitude with him:

perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, "we prevail nothing", so Nonnus; the sense is the same; suggesting, that all their wise schemes and crafty councils signified nothing; the commands they enjoined the people not to follow him, or to apprehend him, or to show them where he was, were disregarded; their threatenings to put out of the synagogue such as should confess him, were taken no notice of; their promises of reward were slighted; their examples were not followed; and all their artifice and cunning, backed with power and authority, did not succeed:

behold, the world is gone after him; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "the whole world", and so Nonnus; the Persic version, "all the people"; that is, a very great number of people; for they could not mean, that all the inhabitants of the world, or every individual of mankind were followers of him, and became his disciples, nor even all in their own land; they themselves, with multitudes more of the same complexion, were an exception to this: but they speak in the common dialect of that nation, of which take two or three instances;

"it happened to a certain high priest, that he went out of the sanctuary, hyrtb amle ylwk ylza wwhw, "and the whole world went after him"; and when they saw Shemaiah and Abtalion, they left him, and went after them {o}."

And again {p},

"R. Aba proclaimed, whoever seeks riches, and whoever seeks the way of life in the world to come, let him come and study in the law, and amle ylwk, "the whole world" will gather together to him."

Once more {q},

"Jonathan said to David, 1Sa 23:17: "Thou shall be king over Israel, and I will be next to thee"; what is the meaning of this? perhaps Jonathan the son of Saul saw
amle, "the world" draw after David."

This shows the sense of those phrases, "the world", and "the whole world", when used in the article of redemption by Jesus Christ;
See Gill on "1Jo 2:2".

{o} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 71. 2. {p} Zohar in Gen. fol. 60. 4. {q} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 85. 1.

John 12:20

Ver. 20. And there were certain Greeks,.... "Hellenes", so called, from Hellen, a king of that name, as Pliny says {r} These were not Graecizing Jews, or Jews that dwelt in Greece, and spoke the Greek language; for they were called not Hellenes, but Hellenists; but these were, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it, Gentiles; and were either mere Gentiles, and yet devout and religious men, who were allowed to offer sacrifice, and to worship, in the court of the Gentiles; or they were proselytes, either of righteousness, and so were circumcised, and had a right to eat of the passover, as well as to worship at it; or of the gate, and so being uncircumcised, might not eat of the passover, yet might worship at it; which latter seems to be the case, by what follows: for these were

among them, that came up to worship at the feast; of the passover, which was near at hand: these were among those, that went forth to meet Jesus, and that attended him to Jerusalem, who were come up out of the country to this feast; and these came along with them to worship at it, to offer their sacrifices, and join in prayer, though they might not eat of the passover.

{r} Nat. His. l. 4. c. 7.

John 12:21

Ver. 21. The same came therefore to Philip,.... Who might know him; they might have been some of his neighbours formerly, for that Philip's parents, though Jews, dwelt among Greeks, seems probable, from the name given to him, which is a Greek one; some have thought, that these Greeks were Syrophoenicians, who dwelt upon the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and were not far off from Galilee, and from Bethsaida, the native place of Philip, and is therefore mentioned as follows:

which was of Bethsaida of Galilee; See Gill on "Joh 1:44". This place may be interpreted, "the house of hunting", or "of fishing"; for it is not easy to say which it has its name from, since adyu, "saida", signifies both hunting and fishing: and seeing it was in or near the tribe of Naphtali, where was plenty of deer, and a wilderness was near it, where might be wild beasts, it might be so called from hunting: and as it was situated near the lake of Gennesaret, it might have its name from the fishing trade used in it; for Peter and Andrew, who were of it, were both fishermen: but it is yet more difficult to determine, whether this is the same with, or different from the Bethsaida Josephus {s} speaks of, as rebuilt by Philip, and called by him Julius, after the name of Caesar's daughter, as I have observed in
See Gill on "Lu 9:10",
See Gill on "Joh 1:44"; since this was in Galilee, of which Herod Antipas was tetrarch, and where Philip could have no power to rebuild places, and change their names; and besides, the city, which he repaired, and called Julian, according to Josephus {t} was in lower Gaulonitis, and therefore must be different, unless that, or any part of it, can be thought to be the same with Galilee: wherefore the learned Reland {u} thinks, that there were two Bethsaidas, and which seems very probable; and it is likely, that this is here purposely called Bethsaida of Galilee, to distinguish it from the other, which, by some persons, might still be called Bethsaida, though it had got a new name. Moreover, this Bethsaida is mentioned in other places along with Capernaum and Chorazin, Mt 11:21, which were in Galilee. And Epiphanius says {w}, that Bethsaida and Capernaum were not far distant one from another: and according to Jerom {x}, Chorazin was but two miles from Capernaum; and who elsewhere says {y}, that Capernaum, Tiberias, Bethsaida, and Chorazin, were situated on the shore of the lake of Gennesaret. It is said to be fifty six miles from Jerusalem:

and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus; that is, they entreated him, that he would introduce them into the company of Jesus; they wanted to be admitted into his presence, to have some discourse and conversation with him; and what might make them the more desirous of it, was the miracle he had lately wrought in raising Lazarus from the dead; as also the uncommon manner of his entering into Jerusalem, which they saw; and which shows, that it was not a bare sight of his person they meant, but the enjoyment of his company, for a while; and this favour they ask of Philip, with great respect to him, and in a very polite way, and yet with great sincerity, and strong affection, and earnest importunity; and was a pledge and presage of the future conversion of the Gentiles, when the Jews would be rejected. And it may be observed, that sensible sinners are very desirous of having a spiritual sight of Christ, of the glories of his person, and the fulness of his grace, and to see their interest in him, and to have communion and fellowship with him: he is all in all to them; no object so delightful, and satisfying to them as he is; and they never see him, but they receive something from him, and are made more like unto him.

{s} Antiqu. l. 18. c. 2. sect. 1. Ed. Hudson. {t} De Bello. Jud. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 1. {u} Palestina Illustrata, l. 3. p. 654, 655. {w} Contra Haeres. l. 2. Haeres. 51. {x} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 90. 6. {y} Comment. in Esaiam, c. 9. 1.

John 12:22

Ver. 22. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew,.... The request the Greeks made to him, and this he did, that he might have his advice in this matter; and that not only because he might be a senior man as well as apostle, but because he was of the same town, and might know these men as well as Philip:

and again, Andrew and Philip told Jesus; after they had consulted together, whether it was proper or not, to move this thing to their master; since he had forbid them going in the way of the Gentiles, they agreed to acquaint him with it, that he might do his pleasure.

John 12:23

Ver. 23. And Jesus answered them,.... Not directly and particularly; he did not in plain terms signify what was his will, whether these Greeks should be admitted or not; and yet expressed himself in such a manner as shows he was not averse to it, but was pleased with it, and takes notice of it, as an evidence of the near approach of his glorification:

saying, the hour is come, that the son of man should be glorified; by rising from the dead, ascending to heaven, sitting at the right hand of God, and from thence pouring forth the Spirit upon his disciples, who should go and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, as well as Jews; and which would issue in the conversion of many of them, and so in his glory, of which the coming of these Greeks was an earnest. But he intimates, in the next verse, that he must first die.

John 12:24

Ver. 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you,.... This is a certain truth in nature, Christ was about to assert; and what he signifies by it would be a certain fact, and which he mentions, that his death might not be a stumbling block to his disciples, or any objection to his glorification; but was rather to be considered as a means of it, and necessary in order to it:

except a corn of wheat fall into the ground; or is sown in the earth; for sowing with the Jews is expressed by the falling of the seed into the earth; See Gill on "Mt 13:4"; and is a very fit phrase to set forth the death of Christ by, who fell a sacrifice to justice by the hands of men:

and die; or is corrupted, and putrefies; and which is done in three days time in moist land, but is longer in dry ground ere it perishes {z}: and a corn of wheat is almost the only seed, that being cast into the earth, does die; and therefore is very aptly used by Christ:

it abideth alone; a mere single corn as it is:

but if it die; if it wastes, consumes, and rots, as it does, being cast into the earth, in the time before mentioned:

it bringeth forth much fruit; it shoots out, and rises above ground, and appears in blade, and stalk, and ear, and produces many corns or grains of wheat; all which our Lord intends should be accommodated to himself, and to his death, and the fruits of it. He compares himself to a corn of wheat; to wheat, for the choiceness and excellency of it above all other grain, he being the chiefest among ten thousand, angels or men; and for the purity and cleanness of it, he being, even in his human nature, pure, and free from sin; and for its fruitfulness, he being fruitful in himself, and the cause of all fruitfulness in his people; and for its usefulness for food, he being the bread of life, and the finest of the wheat: and whereas the wheat must be threshed, and ground, and sifted, and kneaded, and baked, before it is fit for food; all this may express the sufferings and death of Christ, in order to be proper food for the faith of his people: and Christ here compares himself to a single corn of wheat, because he was of little account among men, and but little or nothing was expected by them from him; and chiefly because he was alone in the salvation of his people. The death of Christ is signified by the falling of the corn of wheat into the ground, and dying, and shows that Christ's death was not accidental, but designed; it was determined in the counsels and purposes of God, and intended for his glory and the redemption of men; even as wheat falls out of the hands of the sower, not casually, but on purpose, that it may die and spring up again, and produce an increase: and also, that the death of Christ was voluntary, both on his Father's part, and on his own; and was real, and not in appearance only, and yet was but for a short time; as the corn of wheat that dies, soon revives again, and is quickly above ground, so Christ, though he really died, did not long continue under the power of death, but rose again the third day, and now lives for ever. Moreover, Christ intimates by this simile, that if he had not died, he should have been alone; not without his Father, and the blessed Spirit; nor without the holy and elect angels, but without any of the sons of men, who all fell and died in Adam; and had not Christ died, none of them would have lived; none of them could have been justified; nor could their sins have been expiated; nor would any of them have been regenerated: Christ must have been without them in heaven; wherefore he chose rather to die for them, that they might be for ever with him, than be alone in the human nature. And he further observes hereby, that his death would be productive of much fruit; which may be understood both of a large harvest of souls, that should be saved, among Jews, and Gentiles, and especially the latter; and of the blessings of grace, as redemption, justification, peace, pardon, and eternal life, that should follow upon it.

{z} Rabbenu Samson & Bartenora in Misn. Celaim, c. 2. sect. 3.

John 12:25

Ver. 25. He that loveth his life shall lose it,.... The sense is, that whoever is so in love with this present temporal life, as to be anxiously careful of it, and takes all precautions to secure it; and rather than to expose it to any danger, chooses to deny the faith of Christ, and desert his cause and interest; as such an one shall not long enjoy this life, so he shall come short of an eternal one:

and he that hateth his life in this world: on the other hand, whoever seems careless about it, and not to consult the safety of it, but is unconcerned about it; yea, as if he was throwing it away, as of no great moment and significancy, rather than do anything to preserve it, which would be scandalous to himself, and be dishonourable to his Lord and master; he

shall keep it unto life eternal: he shall be preserved in his temporal life, in a remarkable manner, until he has done the will and work of God, notwithstanding all attempts upon it; and he shall appear to have that spiritual life, which is the beginning and pledge of, and which springs up unto, and issues in eternal life; and that he shall enjoy in the world to come. This Christ said to let his disciples and followers know, that they must suffer and die, as well as he, though not on the same account, and for the self-same reasons; and that their sufferings and death in his cause, and for his Gospel, would turn to their advantage.

John 12:26

Ver. 26. If any man serve, me,.... Or is willing to be a servant of Christ, and to be esteemed as such;

let him follow me; as in the exercise of the graces of love, humility, patience, self-denial, and resignation of will to the will of God, and in the discharge of every duty, walking as he walked, so in a way of suffering; for as the master, so the servants, as the head, so the members, through many tribulations, must enter the kingdom; to which he encourages by the following things:

and where I am; in heaven, as he now was, as the Son of God; or "where I shall be", as the Syriac and Persic versions render it, even as man, in the human nature, when raised from the dead:

there shall also my servant be; when he has done his work, and the place is prepared for him, and he for that, and where he shall ever abide; and as a further encouragement, he adds,

if any man serve me, him will [my] Father honour; by accepting his service, affording him his gracious presence here, and by giving him eternal glory hereafter, to which he has called him.

John 12:27

Ver. 27. Now is my soul troubled,.... At the hardness and unbelief of the Jews, and the rejection of them, when the Gentiles would be called, and converted, by which he would be glorified: and at the conduct and carriage of his disciples to him, he had a foreknowledge of; at the betraying of him by one, and the denial of him by another, and the flight of them all from him; and at the devil, and the furious and violent attack he knew he would make upon him, though he had obliged him to leave him, when he assaulted him before, and knew he could find nothing in him now, and that as God, he was able to destroy him; but this was to be done by him, as man, and by lying too: he was in his human soul troubled at the thoughts of his death, though it was his Father's will, and he had agreed to it, and was for the salvation of his people, his heart was so much set upon; yet it was terrible to the human nature, and especially as attended with the wrath of God; at the apprehensions of which, his soul was exceedingly troubled; not as about to fall on him on his own personal account, but as being the surety of his people, and as having their sins upon him to satisfy angry and injured justice for:

and what shall I say? this question he puts, as being in the utmost distress, and difficulty, as if he knew not what to say; and yet not as advising with his disciples, what was to be said or done in his case; but is rather used to introduce another question, as the following words may be formed: shall I say,

father, save me from this hour? as requesting his Father, that he might be strengthened under his sufferings and death, and carried through them, and out of them; or rather as deprecating them, desiring the cup might pass from him, as he afterwards did; and then the sense is, shall I put up such a petition to my Father, to save me from sorrows, sufferings, and death? no, I will not: the human nature through frailty might prompt him to it, and he be just going to do it, when he corrects himself, saying;

but for this cause came I unto this hour: this hour or time of sorrow and suffering was appointed for him; it was fixed in the covenant of grace, and Christ had agreed to it; he was sent into this world, and he came into it, on account of this hour; and was preserved hitherto for this purpose; and was now come to Jerusalem, and was there at this instant, for that very reason, namely, to suffer and die. And since this was the case, he would not put up such a petition to his Father, but the following one.

John 12:28

Ver 28. Father, glorify thy name,.... The perfections of his nature, particularly his justice and holiness, meaning in himself; by his sufferings and death; intimating hereby, that his Father's glory was what he had in view, and that the securing of that would give him an infinite pleasure amidst all his sorrows. The Arabic version, and Nonnus, read "glorify thy Son", as in Joh 17:1, and the Ethiopic version takes in both, "glorify thy name, and thy Son": and indeed, what glorifies the one, glorifies the other; see
Joh 13:31.

Then came there a voice from heaven; as at his baptism and transfiguration, and which came from the Father, and was an articulate one, and what the Jews call "Bath Kol", or "the daughter of the voice":

[saying], I have both, glorified [it]; meaning in the incarnation, ministry, obedience and miracles of Christ; and particularly in that late one in raising Lazarus from the dead:

and will glorify [it] again; by supporting him under, and carrying him through his sufferings and death, and by raising him from the dead, and setting him at his own right hand.

John 12:29

Ver. 29. The people therefore that stood by and heard [it],.... Some more confusedly, who were farthest off; others more distinctly, who were nearer: the first of these,

said that it thundered; as it used to do when "Bath Kol" was heard, which, as the Jews say {a},

"is a voice that comes out of heaven proceeding from the midst of another voice,"

as thunder; wherefore some took this for thunder, and others for the voice of an angel out of the thunder:

others said, an angel spoke to him; these being nearer, perceived it was an articulate voice, which expressed certain distinct words, which they thought were delivered by an angel; for the Jews had a mighty notion of the discourse and conversation of angels with men, which their doctors pretended to understand; particularly R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, a Rabbi, who was living at this time, had learned their speech, and was well versed in it {b}.

{a} Piske Tosephot in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, art. 30. {b} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 28. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 134. 1.

John 12:30

Ver. 30. Jesus answered and said,.... To the people that stood by, and were disputing among themselves about what they heard, whether it was thunder, or the voice of an angel:

this voice came not because of me; at least not only and chiefly; it was not so much in answer to his prayer, or in order to comfort him under the apprehensions he had of his sufferings and death, or to assure him of his future glorification, though all this was true:

but for your sakes; to convince them that he was the Messiah, and engage them to believe in him, or to leave them without excuse; since not only miracles were wrought before their eyes, but with their ears they heard God speaking to him, and which is the rule that they themselves prescribe; for according to them, no man is to be hearkened to, though he should do as many signs and wonders as Moses, the son of Amram, unless they hear with their ears, that the Lord speaks to him as he did to Moses {c}.

{c} R. Mosis Kotsensis praefat. ad Mitzvot Tora, pr. Affirm.

John 12:31

Ver. 31. Now is the judgment of this world,.... That is, in a very short time will be the judgment either of the Jewish world, when that shall be reproved, convinced, and condemned for their sin of rejecting Christ, and crucifying him, by the Spirit, in the ministration of the Gospel; and they still continuing in their impenitence and unbelief, in process of time wrath will come upon them, upon their nation, city, and temple, to the uttermost; or of the Gentile world, when there shall be a discrimination, and separation made in it, of the chosen of God, who shall be called by special grace, and with the converted and believing Jews, shall form a Gospel church state, separate from the world of the ungodly; or of the world of God's elect among Jews and Gentiles, whose cause, being undertook by Christ, he will now vindicate it, and redeem them from sin and Satan, who have usurped a power and dominion over them: hence it follows,

now shall the prince of this world be cast out. The phrase, Mlweh rv, "the prince of the world", is much used by Jewish writers {d}, by whom an angel is meant; and they seem to design the angel of death, which is the devil: and it is certain, that he is here intended, and is so called, not because he has any legal power and authority over the world; but because he has usurped a dominion over it, and has great power and efficacy in the hearts of the children of disobedience, who yield a voluntary subjection to him, as if he was their proper lord and sovereign: now the time was at hand, when he should be cast out of the empire of the world he had assumed, and out of the temples of the Gentiles, and out of the hearts of God's elect among them.

{d} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 16. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1. & Cholin, fol. 60. 1.

John 12:32

Ver. 32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth,.... The death of Christ is here signified by his being "lifted up from the earth", in allusion to the lifting up of the brazen serpent on the pole; and shows, that his death would not be natural, but violent, and would be public, and not private; and fitly expresses his mediation between God, and men, being lifted up between the heavens and the earth; and points out the death of the cross, as is intimated in the next verse: and the "if" here does not suppose that his death, and the manner of it, were uncertain, for it was determined by God, agreed to by himself, predicted in the Scriptures, signified by types, and foretold by himself, and was necessary for the salvation of his people; but it designs the time of his drawing persons to himself, which is afterwards expressed, and may be rendered, "when I am lifted up", as it is by the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions: now when this will be, Christ says,

I will draw all men to me; which is not to be understood of the concourse of people about him, when on the cross, some for him, and others against him,

some to bewail him, and others to reproach him; but rather of the gathering of the elect to him, and in him, as their head and representative, when he was crucified for them; or of the collection of them, through the ministry of the apostles, and of their being brought to believe on him for eternal life and salvation: and this drawing of them to him, in consequence of his death, supposes distance from him, want of power, and will, to came to him, and the efficacious grace of God to bring them, though without any force and compulsion; and this is to be understood not of every individual of human nature; for all are not drawn to Christ, or enabled to come to him, and believe in him. There were many of the Jews who would not, and did not come to him for life; and who instead of being drawn to him in this sense, when lifted up on the cross, vilified and reproached him; moreover, in the preceding verse, "a world" is spoken of, whose judgment, or condemnation, was now come; and besides, there was at this time a multitude of souls in hell, who could not, nor never will be, drawn to Christ; and a greater number still there will be at the last day, who, instead of drawing to him in this gracious way and manner, will be bid to depart from him, as having been workers of iniquity. Christ died indeed for all men who are drawn unto him; but this is not true of all men, that are, were, or shall be in the world. Add to this, that the word "men" is not in the text, it is only pantav, "all": Beza's most ancient copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read panta, "all things"; and by "all" are meant, all the elect of God, all the children of God, "that were scattered abroad"; the Persic version reads, "I will draw my friends to me"; it designs some of all sorts of men, of every state, condition, age, sex, and nation, Gentiles as well as Jews, and especially the former; which agrees with the ancient prophecy, Ge 49:10, and with the context, and the occasion of the words, which was the desire of the Greeks, that were come to the feast, to see Jesus; and which was a specimen of the large numbers of them, that should be drawn to Christ, through the preaching of the Gospel, after his death: the Jews say, that in the time to come, or in the days of the Messiah, all the proselytes shall be Myrwrg, "drawn", shall freely become proselytes {e}. The allusion here, is to the setting up of a standard or ensign, to gather persons together. Christ's cross is the standard, his love is the banner, and he himself is the ensign, which draw souls to himself, and engage them to enlist themselves under him, and become his volunteers in the day his power; see
Isa 11:10.

{e} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 24. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

John 12:33

Ver. 33. This he said,.... These are the words of the evangelist, interpreting the design of Christ in the above words, thereby

signifying what death he should die; the phrase of being lifted up from the earth, not only signified his death, but the kind, or manner of it, that it should be by crucifixion; a person crucified being stretched forth upon a cross, and that erected, was lifted up between earth and heaven.

John 12:34

Ver. 34. The people answered him,.... Not the Greeks, but the Jews, and these not such as were friends to Christ, but cavillers at him:

we have heard out of the law; not the five books of Moses, but the Prophets, and Hagiographa; even all the books of the Old Testament are called the law; See Gill on "Joh 10:34";

that Christ abideth for ever; referring to those places which speak of the perpetuity of his priesthood and the everlasting duration of his kingdom, Ps 110:4, in which last text express mention is made of the son of man, and that and the first may be more especially respected; from whence it appears, that these passages were understood of the Messiah by the ancient Jews: they knew he was designed in Ps 110:4. He is David's Lord that was bid to sit at the right hand of Jehovah, after he was raised from the dead, and had ascended on high; whose Gospel went forth with power, and whose people, by it, were made willing to submit to him, to his righteousness, and the sceptre of his kingdom; and who also is a priest for ever; and which is appealed to as a proof of the nature, kind, and duration of Christ's priesthood, **Heb 5:6**; and so it may be observed it is expressly applied to him by Jewish writers: in **Zec 4:14** it is said "these are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth"; of which this interpretation is given {f}.

"These are Aaron and the Messiah; and it would not be known which of them is (most) beloved, but that he says,
Ps 110:4, "the Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever"; from whence it is manifest that the Messiah is more beloved than Aaron the righteous priest."

And so another of them {g}, speaking of Melchizedek, says, "this is that which is written Ps 110:4, "the Lord hath sworn", &c. who is this? this is he that is just, and having salvation, the King Messiah, as it is said, **Zec 9:9**."

So the 45th Psalm is understood by them of the Messiah; the King, in Ps 45:1, is by Ben Melech, said to be the King Messiah; Ps 45:2 is thus paraphrased by the Targum,

"thy beauty, O King Messiah, is more excellent than the children of men."

And Aben Ezra observes, that this Psalm is either concerning David, or the Messiah his son, whose name is David, Eze 37:25 {h}; and the passage in Ps 72:17 is frequently interpreted of the Messiah and his name, and is brought as a proof of the antiquity of it {i}; and Ps 89:36 is also applied to him; and as for **Da 7:13**, that is by many, both ancient and modern Jews, explained of the Messiah {k} and since then they understood these passages of him, it is easy to observe from whence they took this notion that the Messiah should abide for ever; but then they should have observed out of the same law, or Holy Scriptures, that the Messiah was to be stricken and cut off, was to be brought to the dust of death, and to pour out his soul unto death; all which is consistent with his abiding for ever, in his person and office; for though according to the said writings, he was to die and be buried, yet he was not to see corruption; he was to rise again, ascend on high, sit at the right hand of God, and rule till all his enemies became his footstool; his sufferings were to be in the way, and in order to his entrance into the glory that should always abide. The Jews have entertained a notion that Messiah the son of David shall not die, and they lay down this as a rule, that if anyone sets up for a Messiah, and does not prosper, but is slain, it is a plain case he is not the Messiah; so all the wise men at first thought that Ben Coziba was the Messiah, but when he was slain it was known to them that he was not {l}. And upon this principle these Jews confront the Messiahship of Jesus, saying,

and how sayest thou, the son of man must be lifted up? for it seems Christ used the phrase the son of man in his discourse, though John has not recorded it; he attending to his sense, and not to his express words. The Jews rightly understood him, that by the son of man he meant the Messiah, and by his being lifted up, his death; but they did not understand, how the Messiah could die, and yet abide for ever; and therefore since he intended himself by the son of man, they concluded he talked very inconsistent with the Scriptures, and with the character he assumed, and ask very pertly, who is this son of man? is there any other son of man besides the Messiah? and can the son of man, that is the Messiah, be lifted up, or die, who is to abide for ever? and if thou art to be lifted up, or die, thou art not the Messiah or Daniel's son of man, whose kingdom is everlasting: but how come the Jews themselves to say, that the days of the Messiah, according to some, are but forty years, according to others seventy, according to others, three hundred and sixty five {m}? yea, they say, he shall be as other men, marry, have children, and then die {n}. And how comes it to pass that Messiah ben Joseph shall be slain {o}? the truth of the matter is this, they having lost the true sense of the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and observing some that seem to differ, and which they know not how to reconcile, have fancied two Messiahs, the one that will be much distressed and be overcome and be slain; the other, who will be potent and victorious.

{f} Abot R. Nathan, c. 34. {g} R. Moses Hadarsan in Galatin. de cath. ver. l. 10. c. 6. {h} Vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 49. 2. {i} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 54. 1. Nedarim, fol. 39. 2. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 1, 2. Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 32. {k} Zohar in Gen. fol. 85. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 13. fol. 209. 4. Jarchi & Sandiah Gaon in Dan. vii. 13. & R. Jeshua in Aben Ezra in ib. {l} Maimon Hilchot Melacim, c. 11. sect. 3, 4. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 86. 2. {m} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1. {n} Maimon. in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1. {o} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 52. 1.

John 12:35

Ver. 35. Then Jesus said unto them,.... Not directly answering to their questions, but suggests to them their ignorance and stupidity, amidst so much light, that was about them:

yet a little while is the light with you: meaning either himself, the light of the world, **Joh 8:12**, who was to be but a very little while longer with them, a few days more, and he was to go away from them by death, and be seen and heard no more by them: or the Gospel, which, though that was to continue somewhat longer, it being, after Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, to be preached to the Jews, both in Judea, and in other parts of the world; yet that would be but for a little while, as the event has shown; for the Jews rejecting the Gospel, and putting it away from them, the apostles, as they were ordered, turned to the Gentiles,
Ac 13:46;

walk while ye have the light: that is, as it is explained in Joh 12:36, "believe ye in the light": which the Persic version adds here, and leaves out there: and the sense is, believe in the Messiah, and in his Gospel; embrace him and that, and walk on in him, and worthy of him and of his Gospel, as children of the light:

lest darkness come upon you; suddenly, at an unawares; either a greater degree of the darkness of ignorance and unbelief; even a judicial blindness and stupidity, which did seize on that people, and continues upon them to this day; or the darkness of afflictions, calamities, and distress, and which have come upon them to the uttermost, to the destruction of their temple, city, and nation; or else a worse darkness, even blackness of darkness, outer darkness in hell, where are weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

For he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth; he cannot see his way, nor the stumbling blocks that lie in it, and the dangers he is exposed unto; nor does he know where it leads, and what is the end of it; and just so it is with a man in a state of unregeneracy, and more especially under judicial blindness: he is not aware of the pits and snares that lie in his way, or of the dark mountains on which he stumbles; and though destruction and misery are in his ways, he knows not that he is going thereunto.

John 12:36

Ver. 36. While ye have light, believe in the light,.... Receive the Messiah, and credit the Gospel revelation; this is an explanation of the exhortation in the preceding verse:

that ye may be the children of the light; that is, that they might appear to be such who are enlightened persons; and such are truly so, who are made light in the Lord, or who are enlightened by the Spirit of God to see their own sinfulness, impotency, and unrighteousness, and their need of Christ, and his righteousness and strength, and of salvation by him; and who are made meet, by the grace of God, to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; and which is made manifest by believing in Christ, and walking on in him, as they have received him, and by walking honestly, as in the daytime, and circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, for such walk as children of the light.

These things spake Jesus, and departed; from those Jews, as being unworthy of any further conversation with him; and from Jerusalem, very likely to Bethany, whither he frequently retired, especially at night, during the few days before the passover:

and did hide himself from them: for his safety, for he knew that they were irritated by what he said, and would seek to lay hold upon him, and deliver him to the sanhedrim; and whereas his hour was not yet fully come, there were a few more sands in the glass to run, he provided for his security, by absconding from them; and this was an emblem of his wholly removing from them, and leaving them, and their house, desolate; and it is very likely that from this time forward they saw him no more as ministering the word unto them; and also of his taking his Gospel from them in a little time, and of his hiding the things of it from them, which respected himself, and salvation by him.

John 12:37

Ver. 37. But though he had done so many miracles before them,.... Openly, and in the presence of them; meaning those miracles which were done at Jerusalem, as those which brought Nicodemus to him, and to an acknowledgment of him as a teacher sent from God; and particularly the cure of the lame man at Bethesda's pool, the giving sight to the man that was born blind, by anointing his eyes with clay, and sending him to wash in the Pool of Siloam, and the raising Lazarus from the dead at Bethany, which was within two miles of Jerusalem, in the presence of many of them who were come there to comfort Martha and Mary. Yet

they believed not on him; the miracles done by Christ before their eyes, which they could not deny, nor disprove, and were so many, and so great, were aggravations of their unbelief; and such indeed is the nature of that sin, and so deeply rooted is it, that the most powerful means, and mighty works, will not bring a person to believe in Christ, without the powerful and efficacious grace of God.

John 12:38

Ver. 38. That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled,.... For though this was not the end of these men in disbelieving Christ, that the words of Isaiah might be fulfilled, yet hereby they were eventually fulfilled; and though the predictions of the prophet had no such influence on the wills of these men, as to lay upon them a coactive necessity, or force them to do, or to answer to the things foretold; yet they were to have, and had an infallible event or completion, otherwise the foreknowledge of God, and the authority of the prophetic writings, could not be maintained:

which he spake in Isa 53:1;

Lord, who hath believed our report? which words the prophet delivered by way of complaint to God the Father; not so much with respect to his own time, and the men of it, as to the times of Christ, and his apostles, whom he represents; for the whole chapter is a prophecy of the Messiah, and suggests, that in those times there would be but few that would believe the report made in the ministry of the Gospel, concerning the Messiah, his person, office, and grace; though so true in itself, and so much confirmed by miracles, and mighty deeds; the reason of which, he intimates, would be his outward mean appearance in the world; and which, it is certain, was the true reason, God denying the influence of his powerful and special grace, as follows:

and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? meaning either the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, and which was bid from the wise and prudent; or the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is the power of God, by whom he made the heavens and the earth, and upholds them in their being, and by whom he has redeemed and saved his people; and who was not revealed neither to them in the ministry of the word, nor in them the hope of glory: or the Holy Spirit is meant, the finger of God, by whom these surprising miracles were done; and yet he did not exert himself in these persons, in the special operations of his grace; or the powerful and efficacious grace of God itself is designed, which was not put forth, and did not attend the report of the Gospel, and therefore it was not believed.

John 12:39

Ver. 39. Therefore they could not believe,.... God had determined to leave them to the blindness and hardness of their hearts, and to deny them his grace, which only could cure them of it, and enable them to believe: he had foretold this in prophecy, and they were manifestly the persons spoken of; and therefore considering the decrees of God, the predictions of the prophet, and the hardness of their hearts, they were left unto, it was morally impossible they should believe, because that Esaias said again, in **Isa 6:9**.

John 12:40

Ver. 40. He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart,.... It is of no great moment, whether the he, who is said to blind and harden, be God or Christ, or whether the words be rendered, "it hath blinded", &c. that is, malice or wickedness; or whether they be read impersonally, "their eyes are blinded", &c. since God or Christ blind and harden not by any positive act, but by leaving and giving men up to the blindness and hardness of their hearts, and denying them the grace which could only cure them, and which they are not obliged to give; and which was the case of these Jews, so as never to be converted, or be turned even by external repentance and reformation, that they might be healed in a national way, and be preserved from national ruin, as it follows,

that they should not see with their eyes,....
See Gill on "Mt 13:14",
See Gill on "Mt 13:15". The Syriac and Persic versions read, "they have blinded their eyes", &c.

John 12:41

Ver. 41. These things said Esaias,.... Concerning the blinding and hardening of the Jews:

when he saw his glory, and spake of him; when he saw, in a visionary way, the glory of the Messiah in the temple, and the angels covering their faces with their wings at the sight of him; and when he spake of him as the King, the Lord of hosts, whom he had seen, **Isa 6:1**, from whence it is clear that he had respect to the Jews in the times of the Messiah. The prophet says in **Isa 6:1** that he "saw the Lord": the Targumist renders it, "I saw", yyd arqy ta, "the glory of Jehovah"; and in **Isa 6:5** he says, "mine eyes have seen the King", Jehovah, Zebaot, the Lord of hosts; which the Chaldee paraphrase renders, "mine eyes have seen", rqy ta, "the glory" of the Shekinah, the King of the world, the Lord of hosts. Agreeably to which our Lord says here, that he saw his glory, the glory of his majesty, the glory of his divine nature, the train of his divine perfections, filling the temple of the human nature; and he spoke of him as the true Jehovah, the Lord of hosts; and which therefore is a very clear and strong proof of the proper divinity of Christ. And it may be observed from hence, that such persons who have a true, spiritual, and saving sight of Christ, of the glory of his person, and the fulness of his grace, cannot but be speaking of him to others, either in private, or in public, as Isaiah here did, and as the church in **So 5:10**; and as the apostles of Christ, **Joh 1:1**; and indeed, should they hold their peace, the stones would cry out; such must, and will speak of his glory in his temple, Ps 29:9.

John 12:42

Ver. 42. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also,.... These were the members of the Jewish sanhedrim, as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and others:

many believed on him; that he was the Messiah, though they did not believe in him in a spiritual and saving manner, as their Redeemer and Saviour, only in their minds, being convicted by his miracles, gave an assent unto him, as the promised Messiah. The two persons just mentioned may be thought truly to have believed in Christ; but the many here spoken of seem to have had only an historical faith in him, as appears by what follows:

but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him; as they ought to have done, and as they would have done, if their faith had been right; for where with the heart men believe in Christ to righteousness, there, with the mouth, confession is made to salvation; and between a non-confession of Christ, and a denying him, is no medium; and Christ interprets the one to be the same with the other; see Ro 10:9; and this they did not do, because of the Pharisees, who were the inveterate and implacable enemies of Christ, and were the prevailing party in the sanhedrim: wherefore these chief rulers, though many, were afraid of them,

lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they had made a decree in the sanhedrim, that whoever confessed that Jesus was the Messiah, should be cast out; and they had put it into execution upon the man born blind, whose eyes Christ opened, for speaking in favour of his benefactor; and this had struck terror in the minds, not only of the common people; but of the chief rulers themselves; for it was looked upon as a very dreadful thing to be put out of the synagogue;
See Gill on "Joh 9:22".

John 12:43

Ver. 43. For they loved the praise of men,.... To be in the esteem of men, to have their applause, and receive honour from them:

more than the praise of God; than either to receive honour from him, and be praised by him, or to praise and glorify him. By confessing Christ they knew they should run the risk of losing their places of honour and profit, and of falling under the disgrace and contempt of men; and therefore they chose rather not to confess Christ, than by so doing to glorify God, and please him, and be praised by him, as all the faithful professors of Christ will be at the last day; for then every such an one will have praise of God, and it will be said, well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.

John 12:44

Ver. 44. Jesus cried and said,.... Upon this occasion, on account of the prevailing hardness and unbelief of the Jewish nation, and the non-confession of him by those who did believe him to be the Messiah. He cried with a loud voice, that he might be heard, and his audience left inexcusable; it denotes the concern of his mind, the vehemence of his spirit, and that openness and freedom in which he discharged his ministry, by showing the nature, excellency, and usefulness of believing in him, and the dangerous consequences of unbelief:

he that believeth on me, believeth not on me; which is not to be understood simply and absolutely, for this would be a contradiction in terms: they that believe in Christ, do believe in him, and they do right to believe in him; Christ is the object of faith; he is proposed as such in the Gospel; and it is his Father's will, and his own advice, that his people should believe in him: but then those that truly believe in him, do not believe in him as a mere man, but as God, as the Son of God; and not as separate from, or to the exclusion of his Father: nor do they believe in him as a new, or another God, but as the one God with the Father, and the Spirit; for he and his Father are one: nor do they believe in him "only"; and so the Arabic version reads; but in God the Father also: nor does their faith rest in him, but it proceeds through him, as the Mediator unto God; see **1Pe 1:21**. Besides, he is here to be considered in his office capacity, as being sent of God; and he that believes on him as the sent of God, does not so much believe on him, as on the sender of him, as follows:

but on him that sent me; just as whatever honour or dishonour are done to an ambassador, sent by an earthly king to a foreign court, are not so much done to the ambassador that is sent, as to the king that sends him; for what is done to him, is all one as if it was personally done to his prince: so he that despises Christ, despises him that sent him; and he that receives Christ, receives him that sent him; and he that believes on Christ, believes on him that sent him; see Lu 10:16.

John 12:45

Ver. 45. And he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me. Not with bodily eyes, for there were many that saw Christ, who never saw the Father: they saw Christ as a mere man, and were offended at the meanness of his outward appearance; they saw nothing divine in him, nor the glory of the Father through him; but with the eyes of the understanding, whoever saw or perceived the glory of Christ in his miracles, saw the glory of God in them also, for the Father that dwelt in him did the works, **Joh 2:11**, and whoever truly sees Christ with an eye of faith, sees his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, as the brightness of his Father's glory, as having the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him, the same perfections as in the Father; so that he that hath seen the one, hath seen the other also, Joh 14:9.

John 12:46

Ver. 46. I am come a light into the world,.... And even as the light of it, being the sun of righteousness, that was to arise, and now was risen, to enlighten men with the light of the living; see **Joh 3:19**;

that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness; God's elect themselves, whilst in a state of unregeneracy and unbelief, are in darkness; when Christ shines in upon them, and infuses the light of faith into them, they are no longer in darkness; the darkness is past, at least in a great measure, and the true light shines; in which they see light, see glory and grace of Christ, and the invisible realities of another world: nor do they continue in the darkness of sin, ignorance, and unbelief; but walk in the light of truth, faith, and holiness, until the perfect day comes, when all the shadows of remaining darkness will flee away.

John 12:47

Ver. 47. And if any man hear my words and believe not,.... Men may hear the Gospel of Christ, and not understand it; and they may understand it literally and grammatically, though not spiritually and experimentally, and not believe it; not so much as give credit or an assent to the truth of it, but reject and deny it; for though faith comes by hearing to some, it does not come to all: some receive no profit by hearing it, because it is not mixed with faith by them. The Alexandrian copy, and all the Oriental versions, and also Nonnus, read the last clause thus, "and keep [them] not"; or does not observe them, is negligent of them, and shows no regard, and yields not the obedience of faith to them; the sense is the same.

I judge him not; I do not accuse him to the Father, nor do I condemn him, nor shall I take vengeance on him for so doing; meaning, that he should do none of these things now, though hereafter he will be a swift witness against him, and will convict and condemn him, and pass sentence on him, and execute it:

for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. Christ, at his first coming, came not under the character of a judge, but a Saviour; wherefore suitable to his character, and the end of his coming, he would not accuse, condemn, or judge any man, even the greatest unbelievers in him, and despisers of him, but would leave them to another day, when righteous judgment shall take place.

John 12:48

Ver. 48. He that rejecteth me,.... As the Messiah, with abhorrence and contempt, as many among the Jews did, who would not have him to reign over them, but sought to put him to death:

and receiveth not my words; the doctrines of the Gospel, but disbelieves them, and denies them to be true, looking upon them as the doctrines of a mere man, and an impostor:

hath one that judgeth him; let not such an one think that he shall escape righteous judgment; though Christ does not judge him now, there is one that judges him, yea, even now; and declares, that he that believeth not shall be damned, and that he is condemned already:

the word that I have spoken unto you, the same shall judge him in the last day; according to the different dispensations wicked men are under in this world, will be the rule of their judgment hereafter: such who are only under the law of nature, will be judged according to that, that will accuse them, convict them, and condemn them: such who have been under the law of Moses, or the written law, will be arraigned, proved, and pronounced guilty, and punished by, and according to that law; and such who have been under the Gospel dispensation, and have been favoured with the revelation of the Gospel, but have condemned and denied it, that will judge them at the last day. The judge will act by its present declaration, and according to that proceed, as it stands in Mr 16:16. It will rise up in judgment against such persons, and be an aggravation of their condemnation.

John 12:49

Ver. 49. For I have not spoken of myself,.... As man, or as separate from his Father; his doctrine was not human, but divine, and therefore a rejection of it cannot escape notice at the future judgment:

but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak; Christ, as man, had his mission, and commission, and his instructions from his Father to preach the Gospel unto men; he was anointed for it by the Holy Ghost; he was enjoined the preaching of it by his Father, and the several doctrines he published were delivered him by him; see **Joh 8:28**.

John 12:50

Ver. 50. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting,.... By "his commandment" is not meant the law; that indeed is often styled the commandment; and it is the commandment of God; and many excellent things are said of it; and among the rest it is called "life", De 30:15, but not everlasting life: it only promised a continuation of natural life to man, on condition of obedience to it; more than this it did not promise to Adam, in innocence; and what it promised to the obedient Israelites, was only a prolongation of natural life in the land which God gave unto them: but it neither promises, nor gives spiritual life to the fallen sons of Adam; it leaves men as it finds them, dead in trespasses and sins; and cannot communicate either a life of sanctification, or of justification to them; nor does it so much as give them any hopes of life, or show where it is to be had; nor is everlasting life to be obtained by the works of it: justification is not by the works of the law; nor salvation by works of righteousness done by men; and consequently eternal life is never to be attained unto by obedience to the commands of the law: it is so far from being in this sense life everlasting, that it is the ministration of condemnation and death. But the Gospel is here meant, and is called a commandment; not that it has the nature of a law, or consists of precepts, as the law does; but because it is by the commandment of the everlasting God published by Christ, and his apostles. Christ, as appears from the preceding verse, had a commandment from his Father, what he should say and speak; now, not the doctrine he delivered was the commandment itself, but it was a commandment of the Father that he should deliver that doctrine; besides, the word "commandment" sometimes signifies no other than a doctrine, as in Ps 19:8; and the sense is, that the doctrine of the Gospel, which Christ had in commission from the Father to preach, is life everlasting; and is so called, because it is a means of quickening sinners with a spiritual life, which issues in an eternal one; it is the savour of life unto life, and the Spirit which giveth life, and is the ministration of it; and it is a means of implanting the graces of the Spirit of God in the heart, which sprung up unto everlasting life; and of bringing souls to the knowledge of Christ, which is the beginning, pledge, and earnest of eternal life: and besides all this, it gives an account of the nature of eternal life; it directs the way unto it, which is by Christ, and describes the persons who shall enjoy it; showing, that their title to it is the righteousness of Christ, and their meetness for it the regenerating grace of the Spirit; and that all that believe in Christ shall have it:

whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me so I speak; and no otherwise, and therefore ought to be received, and not rejected. This is to be understood not of what Christ spoke in common conversation, but in the ministry of the word, even of the doctrines of the Gospel, which were given him by his Father, and which he knew were agreeable to his mind and will, and to his council and covenant, and to everything done and agreed therein, to which he was privy: these he delivered as he received them, and both as to matter and manner, as it was his Father's will and pleasure he should: he preached the righteousness of God, and hid it not; he declared his faithfulness, and his salvation, and concealed not his lovingkindness and truth, Ps 40:9. Now, though it is a sufficient ground of faith to receive and believe the doctrines of the Gospel, because Christ has spoken them, who is truth itself; yet it is a further confirmation of them, that they are what his Father, the God of truth, said unto him: and his delivering them as he had them from him, is an instance of his faithfulness to him that sent him; and should be imitated by his ministers, who ought to declare the whole counsel of God, and keep back nothing they have received from Christ, and which may be profitable to the souls of men.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 13:1

Ver. 1. Now before the feast of the passover,.... This feast was instituted as a memorial of the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and was an eminent type of Christ; and this passover was what Christ had greatly desired, it being his last, and when he was to express his great love to his people, mentioned here, by dying for them. It was two days before this feast, so the Persic version reads this text, at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, that the things recorded in this chapter were transacted; see
Mt 26:2;

when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world to the Father. The death of Christ is here signified by a departing out of this world, a way of speaking frequently used by the Jews as expressive of death; See Gill on "Php 1:23". Much such a phrase is made use of concerning Moses, of whom it is said {p}, that the fourth song that was sung in the world, was sung by him

"when "his time was come", amle Nm rjpml, "to depart out of the world";"

an easy and familiar form of speech to express death by, as if it was only a removing front one place to another. The place from whence Christ was about to remove is called "this world": this present world, into which he was come to save sinners, and in which he then was, and where he had already met with very ill usage, and barbarous treatment, and was to meet with more: where he was going is said to be "to the Father", in whose bosom he lay, by whom he was sent, from whom he came; to his God and Father, and the God and Father of all his people, to take his place in their nature at his right hand. A time or hour was fixed for this; for as there was a set time, called "the fulness of time", agreed upon for his coming into the world, so there was for his going out of it: and now this "his hour was come"; the time was now up, or at least very near at hand; and he "knew" it, being God omniscient, which gave him no uneasiness: nor did it in the least alienate his affections from his people: for having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end. The objects of his love are described by his property in them, "his own"; by whom are meant, not all mankind, who are his by creation; nor the Jews, who were his nation and countrymen according to the flesh; nor the twelve apostles only, whom he had chosen; but all the elect of God, who are his own, by his choice of them, by the Father's gift of them to him, by the purchase he made of them with his blood, and by his effectual call of them by his grace: these are also described by their condition and situation, "which were in the world"; which is not said to distinguish them from the saints that were in heaven, or to express their former state of unregeneracy, but their present situation in this vain and evil world, which is no objection to Christ's love to them; for though whilst in this world they carry about with them a body of sin and death, are liable to many snares and temptations, and are involved in the troubles, and exposed to the hatred of the world, yet are, and always will be, the objects of the love and care of Christ. The acts of his love to them are expressed both in time past, and to come: "having loved" them; so he did from everlasting, with a love of complacency and delight, which he showed as early by espousing their persons to himself, by undertaking their cause, by taking the charge of their persons, and the care of both their grace and glory, and in time by assuming their nature; and having done all this, "he loved them to the end": and which he showed by dying for them; and continues to show by interceding for them in heaven, by supplying them with all grace, and by preserving them from a final and total falling away; and he will at last introduce them into his kingdom and glory, when they shall be for ever with him; and so that love to them continues not only to the end of his own life, nor barely to the end of theirs, but to the end of the world, and for ever; and so eiv telov, signifies, and is rendered "continually", Lu 18:5, and in the Septuagint on **Ps 9:6** answers to xunl, which signifies "for ever"; and is so translated here by the Ethiopic version.

{p} Targum in Cant. i. 1, 7. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 96. fol. 84. 1. & Debarim Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 245. 2.

John 13:2

Ver. 2. And supper being ended,.... Or rather "supper being", or it "being supper time", for it was not ended; not the paschal supper, nor the Lord's supper, but the supper in Simon's house at Bethany, two days before the passover. There is no mention made in this whole chapter of the passover supper, or of any of its rites: the washing of the disciples' feet was a peculiar action of our Lord's, and had no manner of regard to any usage among the

Jews at such a time; nor was it ever usual with them, at the passover, to wash the feet of those that ate of it; there is not the least trace of any such custom in any of their writings: besides, it is said in so many words, in Joh 13:1, that this was "before the feast of the passover"; and by comparing it with Mt 26:2, it appears to be two days before it; and so much time seems necessary to be allowed, for Judas to do what he did after this supper, in which he was first instigated to it: and that the feast of the passover was yet to come, when this supper was ended, and Judas had taken the sop, and was bid to do quickly what he did, is manifest from the sense the disciples put upon those words of Christ, who thought he ordered him to get the necessaries for the feast, Joh 13:29, which can be understood of no other than the feast of the passover, which was at hand, and for which many things were to be got ready; to which may be added, that Satan's entering into Judas, and putting it into his heart to betray his master, and his covenanting with the high priests to do it for such a sum, were before the passover supper, as is clear from Lu 22:1. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that Judas could meet that night, after the supper, with the chief priests, captains, and all the council, the great sanhedrim, who could not be together; since by the law of the passover, every head of a family was to be with his respective family: and if this could be supposed, yet there seems to be some time between this agreement, and the execution of it, in which he sought for a proper opportunity, Mt 26:16. Nor can it be thought there was time enough to do all he did, as to covenant with the chief priests, form his scheme for apprehending Christ, and get such a number of men together for that purpose, between the supper, and the time of night in which Christ was betrayed. Besides, certain it is, that Christ and his disciples arose from the place where he ate his supper, and went from thence elsewhere, Joh 14:31, which cannot be understood very well of any other departure than his going from Bethany to Jerusalem, and not of his going from Jerusalem to the garden, which is afterwards spoken of as a distinct thing, Joh 18:1. And to say no more, there is not in this chapter the least hint of the institution of the Lord's supper, which all the other evangelists make mention of, when they relate the last passover of our Lord. The reader may be more fully satisfied of the truth of this by consulting Dr. Lightfoot on Mt 26:6.

The devil having now put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; the person Satan influenced and acted upon, for his purpose, was Judas iscariot, Simon's son: whether this was Simon the Pharisee, or Simon the leper, in whose house Christ and his disciples were, or who he was, is not certain: was there any reason to think it might be Simon the tanner that was the father of Judas, or that either he or his father were tanners, I would venture to add one conjecture more to what has been made on Mt 10:4, concerning

Judas's surname, Iscariot, as that it may come from "Iscortia", which signifies a tanner's coat: for so it is said in the {q} Talmud,

"what is ayjrwqoya, "Iscortia?" says Rabba bar Chanah, it is alud anwtyk, "a tanner's coat":"

a sort of a leathern garment, as the gloss says, which tanners put over their clothes. However, this man was an apostle of Christ's whom Satan tempted to betray him; so that we see that the highest office, and greatest gifts, cannot secure men from the temptations of Satan: the manner in which he tempted him was, he "put", or "cast [it] into his heart"; it was a dart, and a fiery one, he threw into him, into his very heart; which shows the access Satan has into, and the influence he has upon the minds of men: his end in this temptation was to work upon him "to betray" Christ, his Lord and master, who had chosen him to be an apostle of his, and had invested him with this high office, into the hands of his enemies, in order to be put to death. This was an affair determined by God, known by Christ, and which he foretold to his disciples; yet all this did not in the least excuse the malice of Satan, and the wickedness of Judas: it was an action devilish indeed, and which, one would think, could never have entered into his heart, had not the devil put it there; and this was at supper time, whilst they were at table together, that this thought was darted into his mind; which is mentioned to show, that no place and company can preserve persons from the evil suggestions of the devil, and to aggravate the sin of Judas, who when, and while he was eating bread with Christ, first thought of, and determined to lift up his heel against him: moreover, it was when the ointment was poured on the head of Christ, and whilst Judas was fretting at it, that Satan took the opportunity of his choler and wrath, to stir him up to so vile an action. This account is prefaced to Christ's washing the feet of his disciples, to show the great composure of mind Christ was in, though he knew what was doing; and his wonderful condescension in washing the feet of so vile a creature, into whose heart Satan had already put it to betray him; and also his care of, and love to the rest of the disciples, when Satan had got possession of one of them.

{q} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 55. 2. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Celim. c. 16. sect. 4. & Oholot, c. 8. sect. 1.

John 13:3

Ver. 3. Jesus knowing that the Father,.... These words express the sense Christ had of his own greatness and dignity as Mediator:

had given all things into his hands; all the persons of the elect, all blessings both of grace and glory for them, and power and authority over all other persons and things, to make them subservient to his purposes:

and that he was come from God; had his mission and commission, as man, from God; did not come of himself, but he sent him:

and went to God; or was going to him in a very little time, to sit at his right hand, to have a name above every name, and to have angels, authorities, and powers subject to him; which, as it shows his high esteem with his Father, and his exalted character as Mediator, so it greatly illustrates his wonderful humility, that in the view, and under a sense and consideration of all this, he should condescend to wash the feet of his disciples; of which an account is given in the following verses.

John 13:4

Ver. 4. He riseth from supper,.... In the midst of the entertainment, and which no doubt was considerable, his mind being intent on something else; and it being his meat and drink to do his Father's will, he rises and leaves his disciples sitting to finish their meal; and whilst they were murmuring at the waste of the ointment poured on his head, and were filled with indignation at it, as they all of them were, see Mt 26:8; he rises up to wash their feet; amazing patience and humility!

And laid aside his garments; not all his garments, only his upper ones, that he might better dispatch the business he was going about; and which was an emblem of his laying aside, as it were for a while, his glory and dignity as the Son of God, and of his appearing in the form of a servant.

And took a towel; or "linen cloth", lention, the same with tyjnwl in the Jerusalem Talmud {r}:

and girded himself; with the towel, or linen cloth, which served both for a girdle, and after he had washed his disciples' feet, to wipe them with. This was a servile habit; so servants used to stand at the feet of their masters, girt about with a linen cloth {s}; and shows, that the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

{r} Sabbat, fol. 3. 1. & 12. 1. {s} Suetonius in Caligula, c. 26.

John 13:5

Ver. 5. After that be poureth water into a bason,.... This also was a servile work, and what properly belonged to servants to do; see **Joh 2:5**. The bason to wash the feet in, called by the Jews Mylgr
tbyre, was fixed by their doctors to hold, "from two logs to nine kabs" {t}; not "from two logs to ten", as Dr. Lightfoot has rendered the passage referred to. A "kab" held about a quart of our measure, and a "log" was the fourth part of a "kab".

And began to wash the disciples feet. This custom of washing the feet was not used by the Jews at their passover, nor at their private entertainments, or common meals, but at the reception of strangers or travellers, which were just come off of a journey, whereby they had contracted dirt and filth, and was a servile work, never performed by superiors to their inferiors, but by inferiors to superiors; as by the wife to the husband, by the son to the father, and by the servant to his master; and was an instance of great humility in any others, as in Abigail, who said to David, "let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord",
1Sa 25:41, upon which place some Jewish Rabbins {u} have this note:

"this she said, hwneh du le, "by way of humility", to show, that it would have been sufficient to her, if she became a wife to one of the servants of David, and washed his feet, as was the custom of a wife to her husband."

But what a surprising instance of humility and condescension is this, that Christ, the Lord and master, should wash the feet of his disciples, when it was their proper work and business to have washed his? Though Dr. Lightfoot says, he does not remember that this was expected from the disciple toward his master, unless included in that rule, "that the disciple is to honour his master, more than his father"; whereas it was a fixed point {w} with the Jews,

"that all works which a servant does to his master, a disciple does to his master, except unloosing his shoe."

Since therefore it was the work of a servant to wash his master's feet, a disciple was obliged to do this to his master likewise:

and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded; as he began he went through with his work; and having washed their feet, he wipes them clean; which may design the purity of the lives and conversations of the saints in general, and of the ministers of the Gospel in particular, whose feet are beautiful when shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, and their conversations are as become the Gospel they preach; both which they have from Christ.

{t} Misn. Yadaim, c. 4. sect. 1. Vid. Misn. Celim, c. 20. sect. 2. {u} R. Levi ben Gersom & R. Samuel Laniado in I Sam. xxv. 41. Vid. T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 96. 1. & Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 21. sect. 7. {w} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 96. 1.

John 13:6

Ver. 6. Then cometh he to Simon Peter,.... After having washed the feet of some of the disciples, as is thought by some interpreters, and particularly the feet of Judas, without any repulse; though others are of opinion that he began with Peter, who modestly, and out of reverence to him, refuses to be washed by him:

and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet! he speaks as one surprised and astonished that Christ should offer to do any such thing to him; that he, who was the Son of the living God, should wash the feet of such a sinful man as he was; that those hands, with which he had wrought such miracles, as the opening the eyes of the blind, cleansing lepers, and raising the dead, should be employed in washing his defiled feet, the meaner and inferior parts of his body; this he thought was greatly below his dignity and character, and too much to be done by him to such a worthless creature as he was.

John 13:7

Ver. 7. Jesus answered and said unto him,.... Christ replies,

what I do, thou knowest not now: Peter knew that he was about to wash his feet, and the rest of his disciples, but he did not know the meaning and mystery of it, what Christ designed by it, and what instruction they were to receive from it, but thou shalt know hereafter; as he did, when he had performed this service, and explained it to him. This may teach us, under dark providences, the meaning of which is not yet known by us, to wait the Lord's own time, to make things clear and plain to us, and in the mean time patiently submit to the divine will.

John 13:8

Ver. 8. Peter saith unto him, thou shall never wash my feet,.... Before he had behaved with modesty, but now with obstinacy and perverseness; and though these expressions might arise from great reverence to Christ, yet they were wrong and rashly spoken. Peter ought to have been satisfied with Christ's reply, and have submitted, since though he then did not know the reason of such surprising conduct, he should hereafter. In order therefore to bring him to a compliance,

Jesus answered him, if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me; he does not say, if I wash not thy feet, but thee, meaning not with water, but with his blood, and by his Spirit; for Christ uses the word wash here, not literally, but in a mystical and figurative sense, and takes an occasion, as he sometimes does, from things natural, to discourse of things spiritual: moreover, he does not say, thou hast no part "in" me, but thou hast no part "with" me, that is, no fellowship and communion with me; see **2Co 6:14**; and it is as if he should say, Peter, if I had not washed thee with the washing of regeneration by my Spirit, and if I should not shed my blood for thee, and wash thee in it from thy sins, sad would be thy case; thou couldest have no communion with me in this world, nor any part and portion with me in the heavenly inheritance hereafter. Hence it may be observed, that unless a man is washed by Christ, he can have no part with him in this, or the other world. God's elect have a part, an interest in Christ through eternal, electing, and covenant grace, and in consequence of this are washed by Christ both with his blood, and with the washing of regeneration: and this is done in order that they may have a part with Christ, spiritual fellowship with him now, and possess with him the undefiled inheritance, when time shall be no more.

John 13:9

Ver. 9. Simon Peter saith unto him,.... Being convinced of his mistake in not submitting to Christ, fearing he should he deprived of communion with him, than which nothing was more desirable to him, or more highly esteemed of by him, says,

Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head; which shows the sense he had of the general pollution of his nature, and the need he stood in particularly of having his feet, hands, and head washed both as a minister, and a believer. By his "feet" may be meant, either the grace of faith, which is the foot of the soul, by which it goes to Christ, and walks on in him, and was not without its imperfections; or the affections of the mind, which are that to the soul, as feet are to the body; and when they move right, move heavenward, Godward, and Christward; but sometimes they are inordinate, and cleave to the things of this world: or the outward life and conversation is meant, which is attended with daily infirmities; and each of these need washing in the blood of Christ. His "hands" may design all his actions, works, services, duties, and performances, the hand being the instrument of action; and not only the hands of wicked men, but even of saints, need washing, their best righteousnesses being as filthy rags. By his "head" may be meant doctrines and principles imbibed in the mind, and expressed by the lips, which were not free from mistake and pollution, and needed purging and cleansing; for the disciples were not as yet clear from the prejudices of the Jewish nation, especially relating to the nature of the Messiah's kingdom.

John 13:10

Ver. 10. Jesus saith to him, he that is washed,.... Not he that is baptized; for every such person is not wholly clean, but he who is regenerated by the Spirit of God, or rather, who is washed in the blood of Christ: such an one "is clean every whit"; is all over clean; not that he has no sin in him, nor commits any; but as he is washed in the blood of Christ, and justified by his righteousness, he is wholly and entirely clean in the sight of God; for he is justified from all things he could not be justified from by the law of Moses; all his sins are pardoned, and he is perfectly righteous before God; and so is perfectly clean through the word or sentence of justification and absolution pronounced on him, which must be understood in a forensic or law sense. And such an one

needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; the feet of his life and conversation, which are continually gathering dirt, and need daily washing in the blood of Christ; and therefore recourse must be constantly had to that fountain to wash in, for sin and for uncleanness. The allusion is either to persons washed all over in a bath, who have no need to wash again, unless their feet, which may contract some soil in coming out of it; or to travellers, who have often need to wash their feet, though no other part, and such is the case of the children of God in this life; or rather to the priests, who having bathed themselves in the morning, needed not to wash again all the day, except their hands and feet, on certain occasions {x}.

And ye are clean, but not all; which shows, that justifying and regenerating grace are common to all the true disciples of Christ; they are equally born again, alike justified, and are as clean one as an other in the sight of God; not only Peter, but all the apostles, were clean, excepting one; there was one of them, Judas, who was not clean; and therefore he says, but not all: whence it may be observed, that among the purest societies, there are some unclean persons; there was a Judas, an unclean person among the pure disciples of Christ; there are chaff and tares among his wheat, goats among his sheep, and foolish virgins along with the wise ones.

{x} Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 3.

John 13:11

Ver. 11. For he knew who should betray him,.... That is, Jesus, as Beza's ancient copy, and the Syriac and Persic versions read. This he knew from the beginning; not only from the beginning of his ministry, when he chose his twelve apostles, but from the beginning of time, yea, from everlasting; this being fixed by the determinate counsel of God, which he, as the omniscient God, was privy to: he knew what preparations were making, and how things were then working, in order to bring it about; he knew that Satan had already put it into Judas's heart, and that he had consented to it;

therefore, said he, ye are not all clean: he does not mention his name, though he could have done so, it not being as yet proper to make so full a discovery of him, before the matter was ripe for execution; and also to put all the disciples upon examination of themselves.

John 13:12

Ver. 12. So after he had washed their feet,.... Not Peter's only, but the rest of the disciples also: some have thought, that he washed only the feet of some of them, and not all; but it seems, by this expression, that he performed this service to each of them: and when he had gone through it with everyone of them:

and had taken his garments, and put them on,

and was sat down again; at the table with his disciples, supper not being yet ended; when having done his work as a servant, he reassumes the air and authority of Lord and master, and begins to teach and instruct, into the design and use of what he had been doing, which he introduces by putting this question;

he said unto them, know ye what I have done to you? They knew the outward action he had done to them, that he had washed their feet; but, as yet, they did not know the mystery of it, Christ's design in it, and what he would have them learn from it.

John 13:13

Ver. 13. Ye call me Master and Lord,.... ybr, and rm, "Master" and "Lord", were dignified titles among the Jews, which they frequently {y} gave to their doctors and men of learning, and are often to be met with in their writings: hence the disciples called Christ by these names, not out of flattery, but reverence of him, and esteem for him; nor are they blamed, but commended for it:

and ye say well, for so I am; though he had acted the part of a servant in such a surprising manner, by washing their feet; yet he had not dropped and lost, but still maintains his place and authority as a "Master" to teach and instruct them, and as a "Lord" to rule and govern them.

{y} Vid. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 3. 1. Derech Erets, c. 6. fol. 18. 2.

John 13:14

Ver. 14. If I then your Lord and Master,.... Christ argues from these titles and characters, which his disciples rightly gave him, and from what he had done to them, though he stood in such a superior relation to them, to their duty one towards another; that since, says he, I have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet: by which he does not mean barely, that they should perform this single action; but as this was an instance of humility and condescension, and doing a good office to strangers and travellers, and was afterwards an expression of love to the saints, see **1Ti 5:10**, so he would teach them hereby, to behave in a spirit of humility and condescension to one another, to do every kind and good office, and by love to serve one another in all things.

John 13:15

Ver. 15. For I have given you an example,.... Christ is an example to his people, in many things; not in his miraculous performances and mediatorial work, but in the exercise of grace, of meekness, humility, love, patience, and the like; and in the discharge of duty, in submission to ordinances, and in attending on them; and in the several duties, both to them that are without, and to them that are within; and also in his sufferings and death; not that he died merely as an example, but likewise in the room and stead of his people; but here he is spoken of, as an example, in a particular instance:

that ye should do as I have done to you; wash one another's feet, as he had washed theirs; which is not to be understood literally and singly of this action, as though this was an ordinance binding upon all persons, in all places, and to be attended to at certain stated times, as has been the practice of some: it was so understood by the church at Milain, and there practised; and this custom was continued and defended by St. Ambrose, even though not received by the church of Rome; in some places the bishop used to wash the feet of those that were baptized, which in process of time being thought sufficient, instead of baptism, was forbidden by the council at Eliberis. In imitation of this, the pope every year, on Thursday in the passion week, washes the feet of twelve men; and it is an anniversary ceremony performed by the kings of England and France, to wash the feet of twelve poor people, in commemoration of this action of Christ's: but our Lord is not to be understood literally, nor of anything that was to be done once a year, but of what was daily and constantly to be practised; and which was to be done not by one only, to all the rest, but what they were mutually to do; what they were to do to one another; for the thing signified, reaches to, and is obligatory upon all Christians. Our Lord's meaning is, that as he had, by this action, given them an example of humility, condescension, and love; so they should exercise these graces, and perform such kind offices to one another, and to all their fellow Christians.

John 13:16

Ver. 16. Verily, verily, I say unto you,.... This is a strong way of asseveration, and is used when anything of moment and importance, and worthy of attention and observation is delivered.

The servant is not greater than his Lord; it is enough that he be as his Lord, which was a common phrase among the Jews;
See Gill on "Mt 10:24",
See Gill on "Mt 10:25"; and as it is there made use of, to inform the disciples they must expect persecution, and to encourage them to bear it with patience; here it is designed to engage to humility; for if a master condescends to perform such an action, much more may a servant:

neither he that is sent, is greater than he that sent him. This is also a way of speaking in use among the Jews;

"R. Meir says, {z} who is greatest, he that keeps, or he that is kept? from what is written in Ps 91:11, he that is kept, is greater than he that keeps: says R. Judah, which is greatest, he that carries, or he that is carried? from what is written in Ps 91:12, he that is carried, is greater than he that carries: says R. Simeon, from what is written, in **Isa 6:8**, xltvmh Nm lwdg xlvmh ywh, "he that sends, is greater than he that is sent"."

Which is the very phrase here used by Christ; and his meaning is this, that if it was not below him, who had chose and called, and sent them forth as his apostles, to wash their feet, they who were sent by him, should not disdain to wash one another's.

{z} Bereshit Rabba, fol. 68. 1.

John 13:17

Ver. 17. If ye know these things,.... The duties they owed to him, and one another; those kind offices of love and respect to each other; the humility, condescension, and brotherly love, which ought to be in them, and of which he had given them an example:

happy are ye if ye do them; for the bare theory, or a mere speculative knowledge of these things, is not sufficient; not he that knows and does not, but he that knows and does his master's will, is blessed; he is blessed with communion with his Lord, and shall hereafter enter into his joy, with "well done good and faithful servant". There is an happiness "in" doing well, and which follows "on" it, though not "for" it, in a way of merit; on the other hand, persons who know and do not, are very unhappy; the Jews have a saying {a},

"twvel alv dmlhv, "he that learns but not to do", it would have been better for him, if he had never been created; and says R. Jochanan, he that learns but not to do, it would have been better for him if his secundine had been turned upon his face, and he had never come into the world."

{a} Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 2.

John 13:18

Ver. 18. I speak not of you all. What he had before said on the one hand, "ye are not all clean", Joh 13:11, for one of them was not; and on the other hand, when he put an "if" upon, or seemed to doubt of their knowing and doing these things, Joh 13:17; or what he was about to say concerning his being betrayed, this he did not speak of them all:

I know whom I have chosen; not to apostleship, for they were all chosen to that, Judas as well as the rest, but to grace and glory, to everlasting salvation and happiness; of these he was well assured, that they were all clean, pure, and spotless, in the sight of God; were truly regenerated by the Spirit of God, and had an experimental and practical knowledge of the things he recommended by his example, and would be the happy persons he spake of;

but he observes, so it is, and will come to pass, that there is one of you which will betray me:

that the Scripture may be fulfilled: Ps 41:9, as it literally {b} was in Judas's betraying Christ. The passage is by many interpreted either of Ahithophel, or of some other counsellor of Absalom's, or of Absalom himself; and is applied to their conduct, with respect to David, at the time of their rebellion against him; and which is thought to be typical of the treatment Christ met with from an apostle of his: but we do not find that, at the time of that rebellion, David was sick, or had any disease upon him, from whence they might hope for his death; it does not seem, as though it could be literally understood of David at all, and of the behaviour of any of his servants; but most properly of David's son, the Messiah, Jesus, with whom everything in the psalm agrees; and particularly this verse, which so plainly describes Judas, and expresses his base ingratitude, hypocrisy, and malice: the former part of the text is not cited, "yea, mine own familiar friend", or "the man of my peace, in whom I trusted"; though it fully agrees with him, he being admitted to great familiarity with Christ, and lived peaceably with him; and who was intrusted by him with the bag, into which the money was put, which was ministered, either for the sustenance of him and his apostles, or for the use of the poor: but our Lord thought fit to cite no more of it than what follows, that being sufficiently descriptive of him; and especially at this present time, when he was at table with his Lord.

He that eateth bread with me, hath lift up his heel against me; he sat down with him at table frequently, and ate bread with him; and was doing so, when Satan put it into his heart to betray him; which is strongly expressed, by "lifting up" his "heel against him"; and sets forth the ingratitude, wickedness, and cruelty of him; who, like an unruly horse, that has thrown his rider, spurns at him, to destroy him; and also the insidious manner in which he did it; he supplanted, he tripped him, as wrestlers do, in order to cast him down to the ground, and then trample upon him, and triumph over him: he first bram, "laid snares for him", as Jarchi explains the phrase used in the "psalm", and then lydgh, "he magnified his heel", he behaved proudly and haughtily to him.

{b} See my Book of the Prophecies of the Messiah, &c. p. 168, &c.

John 13:19

Ver. 19. Now I tell you before it come,.... That is, gave them notice of this before hand, that one of them should betray him:

that when it is come to pass; and they had seen it fulfilled exactly to a tittle, and according to this Scripture:

ye may believe that I am he: the Lord God omniscient, who knows and declares things before they come to pass, just as they do come to pass, which none but the eternal God can do; and that he was the Saviour and Redeemer, the Messiah spoken of and promised, the very person prophesied of, in Psalm 41. For that whole "psalm" is applicable to Jesus Christ, the true Messiah; in Ps 41:1, the happiness of such is declared, who "consider the poor"; the

Messiah, in his low estate of humiliation, who became poor for the sake of his people; in Ps 41:5, his enemies are represented as wishing for his death; their hypocrisy, perfidy, and vile designs upon his life, are aptly described in Ps 41:6, which they executed by suborning false witnesses, bringing a wrong charge, leylb rbd, "a wicked accusation against him", Ps 41:8, which succeeded, to the taking away of his life; and then they are introduced as triumphing over him, lying dead in the grave, whom they believed would never rise more; but in this they were mistaken, for he was raised up again; for which he prays, Ps 41:10, that he might requite them, as he did, by destroying their city, temple, and nation; and the whole is concluded with thankfulness to God, for raising and exalting him, and setting him before his face for ever, Ps 41:11. There is but one passage in it, which has any difficulty in applying it to Christ, and that is, Ps 41:4, where he is spoken of as having sinned against the Lord; but the words may be rendered thus, "heal my soul", i.e. deliver me out of my sorrows and afflictions, Kl
ytajh yk, "because I have made an offering for sin unto thee"; and well agrees with Christ, who was to make, and has made his soul an offering for sin.

John 13:20

Ver. 20. Verily, verily, I say unto you,.... You may assure yourselves of the truth of what I am going to say, and which I say for your comfort and encouragement:

he that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me; I have sent you in my name to preach the Gospel; you are my ambassadors, and you will be honourably received by many; and which I shall regard and take notice of, and esteem, as though they had received me; even as my Father has sent me into this world, as a Saviour and Redeemer, a prophet, priest, and King; and as many as have received me, are looked upon by my Father, as having received him: in short, such as cordially receive and embrace the ministers of the Gospel, receive Christ, in whose name they come, and whom they preach; and such who receive Christ, as preached and held forth in the everlasting Gospel, receive the Father of Christ; and partake of his love, grace, and kindness, shown forth in the mission and gift of Christ to them: Christ, as Mediator, represented his Father that sent him; and the ministers of Christ represent him; so that what is done to them, either in a way of reception or rejection, he takes as done to himself: it is a common saying among the Jews {c}, wtwmk Mda lv
wxwlvv, "that the messenger of a man is as himself".

{c} T Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2. Kiddushin, fol. 41. 9. & 42. 1. & 43. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 96. 1.

John 13:21

Ver. 21. When Jesus had thus said,.... Having spoken of the mission of his disciples by him, of their reception among men, and the notice that would be taken of it by him:

he was troubled in spirit; in his soul, which shows him to be truly and really man, and to have an human soul, which some have denied; and that to be of like passions with ours, only without sin: he was troubled, not at what he had said, but at what he was about to say concerning the betrayer; and that not so much on his own account, because of the danger, the sorrows, and sufferings he should be exposed to, as on account of the horrible blackness of the crime, and the vengeance that would fall upon the criminal; and being thus inwardly distressed at this affair,

he testified and said: he spake out openly and plainly, what he had before secretly intimated, and that with the greatest certainty:

verily, verily, I say unto you; it is truth, it may be believed, however unexpected and strange it may seem to be:

that one of you shall betray me; to the chief priests and elders, in order to be put to death.

John 13:22

Ver. 22. Then the disciples looked one to another,.... As persons surprised and astonished, and as scarce crediting what was said; not having had the least suspicion of anyone among them, that could be guilty of such an action; and expressing by their looks their detestation of, and indignation at so horrible an iniquity; or they looked one to another, to observe if they could, whether the countenance of anyone would discover who the person was:

doubting of whom he spake; not being able to conceive and imagine, who the person was he had in view; from whence it appears, that Judas, to this time, had behaved outwardly as well as any of the other disciples; he had given no occasion, by his conduct, to suspect him more than any other: upon this broad intimation, or rather strong protestation which Christ made, that one of them should betray him, their eyes were not turned to him directly and particularly, but to one another.

John 13:23

Ver. 23. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom,.... Not pressing upon that part of Christ's body, which would have been irreverent in John, and troublesome to Christ; but leaning at table upon his bed or couch, on which he lay; and which was next to, and just before Christ; so that he was very near unto, and seemed to lie in the bosom of Christ; as such are said to do, who sit next at table to another. The posture of the Jews at table, was either "sitting" or "lying", and a difference they make between these two;

"if, say they {d}, Nybvwy wyh, "they sat" to eat everyone asked a blessing for himself; but if wbyoh, "they lay down", one asked a blessing for them all."

This lying down was not on their backs, nor on their right side, but on their left; for they say {e}, that

"lying down on the back, is not called hbyoh, "lying down"; and lying on the right side, is not called lying down."

And the reason given is {f}, because they have need of the right hand to eat with; but as they elsewhere {g} observe,

"they used to eat lying along, leaning on the left side, their feet to the ground, and every man on a single couch."

Would you know the order in which they, lay, take the account as they have given it {h};

"when there were but two couches, the principal person lay first, and the second to him above him; and when there were three, the principal person lay in the middle, the second to him above him, and the third below him; and if he would talk with him, he raised himself upright, and sitting upright he talked with him; that is, as the gloss explains it, if the principal person was desirous to talk with him that was second to him, he must raise himself up from his lying down, and sit upright; for all the white he is leaning, he cannot talk with him, because he that is second to him, is behind the head of the principal person, and the face of the principal person is turned to the other side; and it is better for the second to sit below him, that he may hear his words, whilst he is leaning."

The form in which Christ and his disciples sat or lay at table, we may conceive was this {i}; a table was placed in the middle and as many beds or couches round it, as there were persons; Christ the principal and most worthy person lay first, with his head toward the table, his face somewhat turned from it, leaning on his left elbow upon the couch; in this posture lay Jesus, upon the first couch; in the same posture lay John, in the next to him, and just before him; the hinder part of his head being towards, and near the breast and bosom of Jesus; whence he is said to lean upon it: now to lie next to the principal person, was a very great honour, as well as a mark of great affection; and for John to lie next to Jesus, and as it were to lean on his bosom, showed how much he was respected and honoured by him; and therefore John modestly conceals his name, and only says,

one of his disciples whom Jesus loved; Christ, as the Son of God, and surety of his people, loved his true disciples, as he does all his elect, alike; not one more than the other; but as man, he had a particular affection for this disciple, and therefore admitted him near his person, and was very familiar with him.

{d} Misn. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 6. {e} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 108. 1. {f} Gloss in ib. {g} Gloss in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 46. 2. & Bartenora in Misn. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 6. {h} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 46. 2. {i} Vid. Alstorphium delectis veterum, p. 109, 110.

John 13:24

Ver. 24. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him,.... Peter perhaps lay at a distance from Christ, or in some such position, that he could not whisper to him himself; and besides, knew that John might use more freedom, as he was admitted to more familiarity with him; and being at some distance also from him, he beckoned to him; which was usually done at meals, when they could not, by reason of their posture, discourse together: this being the case, gwxmb hyl ywxm, "they made signs", by nodding to one another {k}; that is, as the gloss explains it, they pointed with their hands and fingers, and by nodding or beckoning; such a method Peter took, signifying his desire, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake: which he did not out of mere curiosity, but from an honest intention and pure zeal, that he, with the rest, might show their abhorrence of such a person, and avoid him; and do all that lay in their power to hinder him from putting his designs into execution, and that the innocent might be free from all suspicion.

{k} T. Bab. Beracot ib.

John 13:25

Ver. 25. He then lying on Jesus' breast,.... Being on the couch just before Jesus, with his back to him, he bends backwards, and falling on Jesus' breast, whispers in his ear:

and saith unto him, Lord, who is it? using his interest in Christ, and making thus free with him, in compliance with Peter's request; and was no doubt desirous himself of knowing who the person was.

John 13:26

Ver. 26. Jesus answered, he it is,.... Jesus replied, by whispering; for had he spoken out, the rest could not have been so ignorant, as they still continued, after the sign was given: Christ, I say, whispered to John, and told him by what sign he might know the person, and that it was he,

to whom, says he,

I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. This was not the passover sop, which was dipped into a sauce made of various things, called by the Jews towrx; for this was not the "paschal" supper, but a common supper at a private house, two days before the feast of the passover; but this sop, or rather crust of bread, which whether dipped into a liquid, or only a piece of dry bread, which Christ dipped his hand into the dish for, and took, as some think, is not very material, was a piece of common bread, which Christ took up, without regard to any custom, or ceremony used at any feasts, and gave it to the betrayer, as a sign by which John might know him:

and when he, had dipped the sop; either into some sort of broth, or any other liquid, or had dipped his hand into the dish for it:

he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon; so called, to distinguish him from another apostle, whose name was Judas, and was then present.

John 13:27

Ver. 27. And after the sop, Satan entered into him,.... After he had taken and eaten the sop, or crust of bread, by which he was pointed out to be the betrayer, "Satan entered into him"; possessed his body, and filled his mind, and stirred him up more eagerly to pursue with rigour his wicked design. The Jews have a saying {l}, that

"no man commits a transgression, until twjv xwr wb onkn, "a spirit of madness enters into him"."

Such an evil spirit entered into Judas, which pushed him on to commit this horrid iniquity:

then said Jesus to him, that thou doest, do quickly; this he said, not as approving his wicked design, and exhorting him to it as a laudable action, but rather as deriding him, having nothing to care about, or fear from him; or as upbraiding him with his perfidy and wickedness, and signifying that he should take no methods to prevent him, though he fully knew what was in his heart to do; and it seems also to express the willingness of Christ, and his eager and hearty desire to suffer and die for his people, in order to obtain salvation for them.

{l} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 3. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 112. 1. & 117. 3.

John 13:28

Ver. 28. Now no man at the table,.... Not one of those who lay upon the couches at the table, excepting John, to whom the signal was given:

knew for what intent he spake this unto him; and perhaps he might not know the meaning of his last words, that he spoke concerning the act of betraying him; nor did not imagine that the thing was so near and so speedily to be done, as it was.

John 13:29

Ver. 29. For some of them thought,.... This was the thought of some of the disciples, it may be of all of them but John;

because Judas had the bag: which was for the common supply of Christ and his disciples, and for the relief of the poor;
See Gill on "Joh 12:6".

That Jesus had said unto him, buy those things that we have need of against the feast; the feast of the passover, which was to be two days after; and shows, that this was not the passover which Christ now ate with his disciples:

or that he should give something to the poor; for whom Christ cared, and had a hearty concern, and for whom Judas had very little, notwithstanding his high pretensions.

John 13:30

Ver. 30. He then having, received the sop,.... As soon as ever he received it, he

went immediately out; fearing lest an entire discovery should be made, and he be prevented accomplishing his design; or being more violently stirred up to it by, Satan, who after the sop entered into him, he directly went from Bethany to Jerusalem, to the chief priests, there, in order to consult and agree upon the delivery of him into their hands:

and it was night; this circumstance is added, to show how eagerly he was bent upon it; that though it was night, it did not hinder or discourage him from setting out on his journey to Jerusalem; and as this was a work of darkness, the night was the fittest time for it, and was a proper emblem of the blackness of the crime he was going to perpetrate.

John 13:31

Ver. 31. Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said,.... Christ and his true disciples being together alone, he used a greater freedom of conversation with them, and entered into some discourse about his sufferings and death; with a view to give them some instructions about their future conduct and behaviour, and in order to support them under the loss of his presence; and tells them in the first place, that

now is the son of man glorified: by "the son of man", he means himself; a phrase he often uses, when speaking of himself; this was a title the Messiah went by in prophecy; was true in fact of Jesus, who was the son of Abraham, and the son of David, and expresses the truth of his humanity; and he the rather chooses to use it now, because he is speaking of a glorification, which he in his divine nature was incapable of, and which regards either time past, present, or to come: the meaning may be, either that he had been already glorified by his doctrines and miracles; or that he was now glorified, by discovering the traitor, before he made one single overt act towards betraying him; or that in a very short time he should be glorified, meaning at his death; see Joh 17:1. But how was he then glorified, when it was an accursed one, and attended with so much ignominy and reproach? he was then glorified by his Father, who supported him in it, and carried him through it; so as that he conquered all his enemies, and obtained eternal salvation for his people: moreover, the death of Christ was not only his way to glory, but was attended with many wonderful and surprising events; as the darkness, the earthquake, the rending of the rocks, and vails of the temple, and the like; and it was also glorious in the eyes of his Father, because hereby his purposes were accomplished, his covenant transactions brought about, his law and justice were satisfied, and the salvation of his people finished:

and God is glorified in him. The glory of God was great, in the salvation of his elect by the death of Christ; for hereby his wisdom and power, his truth and faithfulness, his justice and holiness, as well as his love, grace, and mercy, were glorified.

John 13:32

Ver. 32. If God be glorified in him,.... Seeing this is a certain truth, is indisputably matter of fact, that all the perfections of God are glorified in Christ, by his sufferings and death:

God shall also glorify him in himself; either "with himself"; with his own glory, which was promised to Christ, and which he had before the world was, and for which he prays, Joh 17:5, or by himself: by his own power, in raising him from the dead, setting him at his own right hand, and crowning him with glory and honour:

and shall straightway glorify him; this he will do very quickly, he will not leave him in the grave, nor suffer him to see corruption; he will raise him again the third day, and give him glory.

John 13:33

Ver. 33. Little children, yet a little while I am with you,.... Christ having removed the scandal of his death, by observing, that both he and his Father would be glorified by it, begins more freely to open his mind to his disciples, and acquaint them with it; whom he addresses in the most kind, tender, and affectionate manner, "little children", expressing the relation which subsisted between them, of which he was not unmindful; his great affection for them, his consideration of their weakness, and sympathy with them on that account; who were very ill able to bear his departure, which he now thought high time to acquaint them with, that it would be very shortly: it was but a little while he was to be with them, a few days more; the time of his departure was at hand, his hour was as it were come, and the last sands were dropping:

ye shall seek me; as persons in distress, under great concern, not knowing what to do, or where to go:

and as I said unto the Jews, **Joh 7:33**;

whither I go ye cannot come, so now I say unto you; but with this difference, whereas the unbelieving Jews, who died in their sins, could never come whither he went, these his disciples, though they could not come now, yet they should hereafter, all of them, as well as Peter, Joh 13:36.

John 13:34

Ver. 34. A new commandment I give unto you,.... As parents, when they take their leave of their children, in their dying moments, give them proper instructions and orders, and lay their dying injunctions on them, so Christ taking his leave of his disciples, gives them his; which were, that they

love one another: as brethren in the same family, children of the same Father, and fellow disciples with each other; by keeping and agreeing together, praying one for another, bearing one another's burdens, forbearing and forgiving one another, admonishing each other, and building up one another in faith and holiness: and this he calls "a new commandment"; that is, a very excellent one; as a "new name", and a "new song", denote excellent ones; or it is so called, because it is set forth by Christ, in a new edition of it, and newly and more clearly explained, than before; and being enforced with a new argument and pattern, never used before,

as I have loved you; and to be observed in a new manner, not "in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit": besides, though this commandment, as to the matter of it, is the same with that of Moses, Le 19:18; yet it takes in more, and "new" objects; since by "neighbour" there, seems to be meant "the children of their people", the Jews; and so they understood it only of their countrymen, and of proselytes at furthest, whereas this reaches to any "other" person; see Ro 13:8; and as the measure, as well as the motive is new, for it is not now "as thy self", but "as I have loved you", the Jew has no reason to object as he does {m}, to its being called a "new commandment": and its being "new", carries in it a reason or argument, why it should be observed, as does also the following clause;

as I have loved you, that ye also love one another; than which, nothing can, or should, more strongly engage to it: as Christ has loved his people freely, notwithstanding all their unworthiness and ungratefulness, so should they love one another, though there may be many things in them observable, which are disagreeable; as Christ loves all his children without any distinction, so should they love one another, whether poor or rich, weaker or stronger, lesser or greater believers; and as Christ loves them not in word only, but in deed and in truth, so should they love one another with a pure heart fervently, and by love serve one another.

{m} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, l. 2. c. 54. p. 444.

John 13:35

Ver. 35. By this shall all men know,.... Not only by this you yourselves will know that ye have passed from death to life, that the true work of grace is begun upon your hearts; nor only by this will you know one another to be Christians; but by this all men, even the men of the world will know, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another: and own and acknowledge it, as Tertullian {n} says the very Heathens did in his time; who would say, when they saw the Christians pass along the streets, and meet and express their affection to each other, "see how they love one another": would to God the same was as observable now. The distinguishing badge and character of a disciple of Christ, is not any outward garb, or any austerities of life, by which the disciples of John and of the Pharisees were known; nor were the ordinary nor extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, bestowed upon the disciples of Christ, what distinguished them as such; since those who were not truly his disciples, had these bestowed on them; but love to one another, brotherly love was the distinguishing character, and this is another reason or argument enforcing a regard unto it.

{n} Apolog. c. 39.

John 13:36

Ver. 36. Simon Peter said unto him,.... One might have expected that Peter would have taken some notice of what Christ said last, about love to one another; but he passes over it, and takes no manner of notice of it; which did not arise from inattention to it, or from any dislike of it, or disaffection to it; for it appears from his whole conduct and writings, that he had the utmost regard for it; he very frequently presses it, and most fervently practised it; but having observed some words which dropped from Christ's lips, "whither I go ye cannot come", Joh 13:33; his mind was intent upon them, was uneasy about them, and very much wanted to know the meaning of them; and as soon as Christ had done speaking, took the opportunity to put the question:

Lord, whither goest thou? imagining he was going to some distant place in the country, and which was difficult of access; whereby he betrayed his weakness and ignorance, as the Jews did, **Joh 6:25**.

Jesus answered him, whither I go thou canst not follow me now; which words imply, that Christ was going somewhere in a little time; he was going to the garden to surrender himself up into the hands of his enemies, and hither Peter could, and did follow him, and therefore is not here meant; he was going to die for his people, in order to take away the sting of death and the curse of the law, and work out salvation for them; he was going to his Father in heaven, to receive gifts for men, and to send the Comforter; to open the way to heaven, take possession of it, and prepare it for his saints; to plead the cause, and transact the business of his dear children; and to receive a kingdom for himself, and return: now hither, as yet, Peter could not follow him; for his time of suffering death was not yet come; Christ had some other work for him to do first; he must open the door of faith to the Gentiles, and preach the Gospel to them:

but thou shall follow me afterwards; when thy time is come, and thou hast done the work allotted for thee, thou shalt follow me by dying for me; and thou shall follow me into my kingdom and glory, and be for ever with me: all the saints shall follow Christ to heaven, who is their forerunner for them entered; and as sure as he is there, so sure shall they be also; the counsels of God are unalterable, the covenant of grace is firm and sure, the blood of Christ can never be spilled in vain, his prayers and preparations cannot be fruitless, nor the work of the Spirit be ever lost; wherefore not one of those who are given to Christ, and come to him, and follow him here, but shall follow him hereafter.

John 13:37

Ver. 37. Peter said unto him,.... Not understanding Christ's answer, and being dissatisfied with it, inquires:

Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? is the place inaccessible? are the difficulties in the way to it insuperable? the roughness of the road, or the dangers of it, will not discourage me; I am ready to go through the greatest dangers and difficulties, to follow thee: yea,

I will lay down my life for thy sake; whatever enemies I should meet with in, following thee, would not dismay me; I would readily hazard my life, and cheerfully lay it down in defence of thee.

John 13:38

Ver. 38. Jesus answered him, wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake,.... Christ speaks these words as questioning, not Peter's sincerity, but his strength; or as deriding him, or rather pitying him; as if he should say, thou poor vain self-sufficient man, thou dost not know what thou talkest of:

verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice; not that Peter should deny him three times, before the cock crowed once; for certain it is, that Peter denied Christ but once, before the cock crew, Mr 14:68; but the meaning is, that before the cock had, lone crowing, or within the time of cock crowing, he should deny him thrice: whence it follows, that there is no necessity of concluding from hence, that this night was the passover night, and the night in which Judas betrayed Christ, and Peter denied him, but was two nights before; and therefore it is not said here, as by the other evangelists, "this day", or "this night", or "this day, even this night thou shalt deny me"; only in general before the cock crow, or within the time of cock crowing: so that it appears, that Peter twice expressed his confidence, in laying down his life for Christ; once at the supper in Simon's house at Bethany, two days before the "passover", and again at the passover supper in Jerusalem; and as often Christ rebuked his confidence by this expression, only varying it as the different times required, and therein gave a full proof of his omniscience.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 14:1

Ver. 1. Let not your heart be troubled,.... In some copies this verse begins thus, and he said to his disciples; and certain it is, that these words are addressed to them in general, Peter being only the person our Lord was discoursing with in the latter part of the preceding chapter; but turning, as it were, from him, he directs his speech to them all. There were many things which must needs lie heavy upon, and greatly depress the minds of the disciples; most of all the loss of Christ's bodily presence, his speedy departure from them, of which he had given them notice in the preceding chapter; also the manner in which he should be removed from them, and the circumstances that should attend the same, as that he should be betrayed by one of them, and denied by another; likewise the poor and uncomfortable situation they were likely to be left in, without any sight or hope of that temporal kingdom being erected, which they had been in expectation of; and also the issue and consequence of all this, that they would be exposed to the hatred and persecutions of men. Now in the multitude of these thoughts within them, Christ comforts them, bids them be of good heart, and exhorts them to all exercise of faith on God, and on himself, as the best way to be rid of heart troubles, and to have peace:

ye believe in God, believe also in me; which words may be read and interpreted different ways: either thus, "ye believe in God, and ye believe in me"; and so are both propositions alike, and express God and Christ to be equally the object of their faith; and since therefore they had so good a foundation for their faith and confidence, they had no reason to be uneasy: or thus, "believe in God, and believe in me"; and so both are exhortations to exercise faith alike on them both, as being the best antidote they could make use of against heart troubles: or thus, "believe in God, and ye believe in me"; and so the former is an exhortation, the latter a proposition: and the sense is, put your trust in God, and you will also trust in me, for I am of the same nature and essence with him; I and my Father are one; so that if you believe in one, you must believe in the other: or thus, and so our translators render them, "ye believe in God, believe also in me"; and so the former is a proposition, or an assertion, and the latter is an exhortation grounded upon it: you have believed in God as faithful and true in all his promises, though yon have not seen him; believe in me also, though I am going from you, and shall be absent for a while; this you may be assured of, that whatever I have said shall be accomplished. The words considered either way are a full proof of the true deity of Christ, since he is represented as equally the object of faith with God the Father, and lay a foundation for solid peace and comfort in a view of afflictions and persecutions in the world.

John 14:2

Ver. 2. In my Father's house are many mansions,.... This he says to draw off their minds from an earthly kingdom to an heavenly one; to point out the place to them whither he was going, and to support them with the views and hopes of glory under all their troubles. By his "Father's house" is meant heaven; see **2Co 5:1**; which is of his Father's building, where he has, and will have all his family. This Christ says partly to reconcile the minds of his disciples to his departure from them, and partly to strengthen their hope of following him thither; since it was his Father's, and their Father's house whither he was going, and in which "are many mansions"; abiding or dwelling places; mansions of love, peace, joy, and rest, which always remain: and there are "many" of them, which does not design different degrees of glory; for since the saints are all loved with the same love, bought with the same price, justified with the same righteousness, and are equally the sons of God, their glory will be the same. But, it denotes fulness and sufficiency of room for all his people; for the many ordained to eternal life, for whom Christ gave his life a ransom, and whose blood is shed for the remission of their sins, whose sins he bore, and whom he justifies by his knowledge; who receive him by faith, and are the many sons he will bring to glory. And this is said for the comfort of the disciples who might be assured from hence, that there would be room not only for himself and Peter, whom he had promised should follow him hereafter, but for them all. Very agreeable to this way of speaking are many things in the Jewish writings:

"says R. Isaack {o}, how many Nyrwdm le Nyrwdm, "mansions upon mansions", are there for the righteous in that world? and the uppermost mansion of them all is the love of their Lord."

Moreover, they say {p}, that

"in the world to come every righteous man shall have rwdm, "a mansion", to himself."

Sometimes they {q} speak of "seven mansions" (a number of perfection) being prepared for the righteous in the other world, though entirely ignorant of the person by whom these mansions are prepared: who here says,

if it were not so, I, would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. This expresses the certainty of it, that his Father had a house, and in it were many mansions, room enough for all his people, or he would have informed them otherwise, who must needs know the truth of these things, since he came from thence; and who never deceives with vain hopes of glory; and whatever he says is truth, and to be depended on; everything he here delivers; both what he said before, and also what follows: "I go to prepare a place for you"; heaven is a kingdom prepared by the Father for his saints, from the foundation of the world; and again, by the presence and intercession of Christ, who is gone before, and is as a forerunner entered into it, and has took possession of it in the name of his people; and by his own appearance there for them with his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, he is, as it were, fitting up these mansions for their reception, whilst they are by his Spirit and grace fitting and preparing for the enjoyment of them.

{o} Zohar in Deut. fol. 113. 1. {p} Praefat ad Sepher Raziel, fol. 2. 1. Nishmat Chayim, fol. 26. 2. & 27. 1. {q} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 1. Nishmat Chayim, fol. 32. 2. Midrash Tillim in Galatin. l. 12. c. 6.

John 14:3

Ver. 3. And if I go and prepare a place for you,.... Seeing I am going to prepare, and will prepare a place for you, of the truth of which you may be fully assured:

I will come again; either by death or in person a second time, here on earth:

and receive you unto myself; I will take you up with me to heaven; I will receive you into glory;

that where I am there you may be also: and behold my glory, and be for ever with me, and never part more.

John 14:4

Ver. 4. And whither I go ye know,.... They might have known, at least, whither he was going, since he had spoke of his Father's house, and of his going to prepare a place for them there, and doubtless had some knowledge thereof, though very confused and imperfect:

and the way ye know: this also they might have known from some expressions of his, that the way to his Father's house lay through sufferings and death, in which way they also were to follow him to his kingdom and glory. Though these words may be with an interrogation, "and whither I go do ye know? and the way do ye know?" which best agrees with Thomas's answer, and removes all appearance of contradiction between Christ's words and his.

John 14:5

Ver. 5. Thomas saith unto him, Lord,.... Who was one of his apostles, and here betrays his ignorance, as elsewhere his unbelief; and not only speaks for himself, but for the rest of the apostles, of whom he judged by himself; and who, it may be, might understand things better than himself, though their knowledge at present was but small:

we know not whither thou goest; though he had but just told them of his Father's house, and of his going to prepare a place for them:

and how can we know the way? for if we do not know the place, it is not reasonable to think we should know the way to it. Thomas seemed to have no other notion than that Christ was talking of some particular place in Judea, whither he was going, and of the road to it.

John 14:6

Ver. 6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way,.... Our Lord takes the opportunity of this discourse about the place he was going to, and the way unto it, more fully to instruct his disciples concerning himself, saying, "I am the way"; Christ is not merely the way, as he goes before his people as an example; or merely as a prophet, pointing out unto them by his doctrine the way of salvation; but he is the way of salvation itself by his obedience and sacrifice; nor is there any other; he is the way of his Father's appointing, and which is entirely agreeable to the perfections of God, and suitable to the case and condition of sinners; he is the way to all the blessings of the covenant of grace; and he is the right way into a Gospel church state here; no one comes rightly into a church of Christ but by faith in him; and he is the way to heaven: he is entered into it himself by his own blood, and has opened the way to it through himself for his people: he adds,

the truth he is not only true, but truth itself: this may regard his person and character; he is the true God, and eternal life; truly and really man; as a prophet he taught the way of God in truth; as a priest, he is a faithful, as well as a merciful one, true and faithful to him that appointed him; and as a King, just and true are all his ways and administrations: he is the sum and substance of all the truths of the Gospel; they are all full of him, and centre in him; and he is the truth of all the types and shadows, promises and prophecies of the Old Testament; they have all their accomplishment in him; and he is the true way, in opposition to all false ones of man's devising. And this phrase seems to be opposed to a notion of the Jews, that the law was the true way of life, and who confined truth to the law. They have a saying {r}, that tma wtrwtw hvm, "Moses and his law are the truth"; this they make Korah and his company say in hell. That the law of Moses was truth, is certain; but it is too strong an expression to say of Moses himself, that he was truth; but well agrees with Christ, by whom grace and truth came in opposition to Moses, by whom came the law: but when they say {s}, hrwt ala tma Nya, "there is no truth but the law", they do not speak truth. More truly do they speak, when, in answer to that question, tma hm, "what is truth?" it is said, that he is the living God, and King of the world {t}, characters that well agree with Christ.

And the life: Christ is the author and giver of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; or he is the way of life, or "the living way"; in opposition to the law, which was so far from being the way of life, that it was the ministration of condemnation and death: he always, and ever will be the way; all in this way live, none ever die; and it is a way that leads to eternal life: and to conclude all the epithets in one sentence, Christ is the true way to eternal life It is added by way of explanation of him, as the way,

no man cometh unto the Father but by me; Christ is the only way of access unto the Father; there is no coming to God as an absolute God, not upon the foot of the covenant of works, nor without a Mediator; and the only Mediator between God and man is Christ: he introduces and presents the persons and services of his people to his Father, and gives them acceptance with him.

{r} T. Bab. Bava Bathra. fol. 74. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 223. 2. {s} Hieros. Roshhashanah, fol. 59. 1. Praefat. Echa Rabbati, fol. 36. 2. {t} Ib. Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 1.

John 14:7

Ver. 7. If ye had known me,.... Christ having made mention of his Father's house, and of himself, as the way thither, and the way of access to the Father, was willing to inform his disciples better concerning him before his departure from them, which he introduces, saying: "if ye had known me"; that is, more fully and perfectly; for that they knew Christ to be the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, and true Messiah, is certain, though they were not so thoroughly acquainted, as afterwards, with his person, power, and office:

ye should have known my Father also; for the knowledge of the Father, and of Christ, go together; he that sees the one, sees the other; he that believes in the one, believes in the other; and the knowledge of both is necessary to eternal life; and as a person increases in the knowledge of the one, so of the other. The disciples had some knowledge of them both, but what was very small and obscure, in comparison of what they afterwards had:

and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him; some read these words, "henceforwards ye shall know him, and see him"; that is, in a very short time, when the Spirit is poured down from on high upon you, and you have received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, you shall then have an enlarged knowledge both of me and my Father. Others render them, as an exhortation, "henceforward know ye him"; acknowledge the Father in all that I have done, believing that you see the Father in me, and in all my works; though they are rather to be considered as an assertion, declaring, that they then had some knowledge of the Father; "and now ye know him, and", or "because ye have seen him"; in me, who am "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person".

John 14:8

Ver. 8. Philip saith to him, Lord,.... Another of his disciples addresses him in a reverend and becoming manner, as Thomas before had done, calling him Lord, and saying to him, "show us the Father, and it sufficeth us": he speaks in the name of them all, seems to own their ignorance of the Father, and expresses their desire of seeing him:

shew us the Father; it was a corporeal sight of him he asked for; such a sight of the glory of God as Moses desired, and the elders of Israel had at Mount Sinai; and signifies, that if this could be obtained, it would give them full satisfaction:

and it sufficeth us; we shall be no more uneasy at thy departure from us; we shall have no doubt about thy Father's house, and the many mansions in it; or of thyself, as the way unto it, and of our everlasting abode with thee in it; we shall sit down easy and contented, and trouble time no more with questions about this matter.

John 14:9

Ver. 9. Jesus saith unto him, have I been so long time with you,.... Conversing familiarly with you, instructing you by my ministry, and performing so many miraculous works among you, for so long a time; see **Heb 5:11**;

and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? Surely you cannot be so ignorant as this comes to; as you have seen me with your bodily eyes, as a man, you must, know that I am God by the doctrines I have taught you, and the miracles I have wrought among you: and

he that hath seen me; not with the eyes of his body, but with the eyes of his understanding; he that has beheld the perfections of the Godhead in me:

hath seen the Father; the perfections which are in him also; for the same that are in me are in him, and the same that are in him are in me: I am the very image of him, and am possessed of the same nature, attributes, and glory, that he is; so that he that sees the one, sees the other:

and how sayest thou then show us the Father? such a request is a needless one, and betrays great weakness and ignorance.

John 14:10

Ver. 10. Believest thou not that I am in the Father?.... This surely is, as it must needs be, and ought to be, an article of your faith, "that I am in the Father",

and the Father in me; phrases which are expressive of the sameness of nature in the Father and the Son; of the Son's perfect equality with the Father, since the Son is as much in the Father, as the Father is in the Son; and also of the personal distinction there is between them; for nothing with propriety can be said to be in itself. The Father must be distinct from the Son who is in him, and the Son must be distinct from the Father, in whom he is; the Father and Son, though of one and the same nature, cannot be one, and the same person:

the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself. The doctrines which I preach among you are a proof of what I assert, and to them I appeal; for these are not of myself, as man,

but the Father that dwelleth in me; and so prove that I am truly God, of the same nature with my Father; that he is in me, and I in him; since they are such as none but the only begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, could ever have declared and made known unto you; Likewise, the works which I do, as man, I do not of myself; but

he doth the works: for so this passage must be understood and supplied, in which Christ proceeds to another argument, taken from his works, proving the Father to be in him, and that he is in the Father, which, is enlarged on in Joh 14:11.

John 14:11

Ver. 11. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me,.... Take my word for the truth of this; you may assure yourselves that nothing is more certain; but if you will not believe upon my saying so, either believe for the sake of the doctrines I have preached unto you, which are such as never any mere man spoke, and which have been delivered in such a manner, and with such authority, as never were by man. Some copies read, by way of interrogation, and so the Ethiopic version; and the Vulgate Latin version reads, "believe ye not?"

or else believe me for the very work's sake: meaning his miraculous works, such as raising the dead, cleansing the lepers, causing the deaf to hear, and giving sight to the blind; and which were such as none but a divine person could ever perform.

John 14:12

Ver. 12. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me,.... Having mentioned his miracles as proofs of his deity, he assures his disciples, in order to comfort them under the loss of his bodily presence, that they should do the same, and greater works; for we are not to understand these words of everyone that believes in Christ, of every private believer in him, but only of the apostles, and each of them, that were true believers in him: to whom he says,

the works that I do shall he do also; he shall raise the dead, heal all manner of diseases, and cast out devils; things which Christ gave his apostles power to do, when he first gave them a commission to preach the Gospel, and when he renewed and enlarged it: and which they did perform, not in their own name, and by their own power, but in the name, and by the power of Christ:

and greater works than these shall he do; meaning, not greater in nature and kind, but more in number; for the apostles, in a long series of time, and course of years, went about preaching the Gospel, not in Judea only, but in all the world; "God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost", **Heb 2:4**, wherever they went: though perhaps by these greater works may be meant the many instances of conversion, which the apostles were instrumental in, and which were more in number than those which were under our Lord's personal ministry: besides, the conversion of a sinner is a greater work than any of the miracles of raising the dead, &c. for this includes in it all miracles: here we may see a sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, quickened; one born blind made to see; one who was deaf to the threatenings of the law, and to the charming voice of the Gospel, made to hear, so as to live; and one that had the spreading leprosy of sin all over him, cleansed from it by the blood of the Lamb yea, though a miracle in nature is an instance and proof of divine power, yet the conversion of a sinner, which is a miracle in grace, is not only an instance of the power of God, and of the greatness of it, but of the exceeding greatness of it: and the rather one may be induced to give in to this sense of the passage, since it is added, as a reason, because I go to my Father; and upon my ascension the Spirit will be given, to you, which shall not only enable you to perform miracles, as proofs of your apostleship, and the doctrine you preach, but which shall powerfully attend the Gospel to the conversion of multitudes of souls.

John 14:13

Ver. 13. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name,.... Whether it be for assistance in preaching of the Gospel; or for the performance of miraculous operations in confirmation of it; or for success to attend it; or for any blessings whatsoever, whether for themselves or others:

that will I do; he does not say, that he would be a Mediator between God, and them, an advocate with the Father for them, and would intercede, and use his interest with him that it might be done, which would have been saying much, and all which he does; but he declares he will do it himself, which is a proof of his deity, and an instance of his omnipotence:

that the Father may be glorified in the Son. This may be referred either to the petition, which must be made with this view, that the Father may be glorified by, or in the Son, in whose name it is put up, and for whose sake it is made; or to Christ's promise to do it; who in doing it, seeks not his own glory, at least not singly; but as the good of his people, so the glory of his heavenly Father.

John 14:14

Ver. 14. If ye shall ask anything,.... These words are much, the same with the former, and have been thought, by some, to have crept into the text from the margin; though they seem rather to be repeated by Christ, the more to strengthen and confirm the faith of his disciples in this matter; that whatsoever they asked

in my name, either calling upon it, he being equally the object of prayer with the Father, or making mention of it, pleading the merits of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; whatever was according to the will of God, was for his glory, and their real good, he would do it for them, as well when absent from them, as present with them.

John 14:15

Ver. 15. If ye love me,.... Not that Christ doubted of the love of his disciples to him; but he argues from it to their observance of his precepts, seeing ye do love me; as all do who are born again, who have had any spiritual sight of him, of his glory, suitableness, and fulness; who believe in him, and have received from him; who have had his love shed abroad in their hearts, having enjoyed communion with him, and know the relation he stands in to them; these love him above all others, and all of him, and that belong to him, unfeignedly, and in the sincerity of their souls, as did the disciples; and since they professed to love, and did love him, as they ought to do, he exhorts them, saying,

keep my commandments: Christ is Lord over his people, as he is the Creator and Redeemer of them, and as he is an head and husband to them, and as such he has a right to issue out his commands, and enjoin a regard unto them; and these are peculiarly "his", as distinct from, though not in opposition to, or to the exclusion of, his Father's commands; such as the new commandment of loving one another, and the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper, which are to be observed and kept as Christ has ordered them, constantly, in faith, and with a view to his glory.

John 14:16

Ver. 16. And I will pray the Father,...., Here Christ speaks as Mediator, and promises his disciples, that he would intercede for them with the Father; which is designed as an encouragement to them to ask for what they want, in his name, and to comfort their hearts, which were troubled at the news of his departure from them;

and he shall give you another Comforter. This is no inconsiderable proof of a trinity of persons in the Godhead; here is the Father prayed unto, the Son in human nature praying, and the Holy Ghost the Comforter prayed for; who is the gift of the Father, through the prevalent mediation of the Son, and is another "Comforter"; distinct from the Messiah, to whom reference is here had! One of the names of the Messiah, with the Jews, is Mxnm {u}, "a Comforter"; such an one Jesus had been to his disciples; and now he was about to leave them, and for their support under their sorrows, he promises to use his interest with his Father, that he would give them another Comforter, meaning the Spirit, who performs this his work and office, by taking of the things of

Christ, and showing them to his people; by shedding abroad the love of the Father, and of the Son, into their hearts; by opening and applying the precious promises of the Gospel to them; by being a spirit of adoption in them; and by abiding with them as the seal, earnest, and pledge of their future glory; and with this view Christ promises to pray for him,

that he may abide with you for ever: not a few years only, as I have done, but as long as you live; and with all those that shall succeed you in the work of the ministry, and with the church, and all true believers unto the end of the world: this is a proof of the saints' final perseverance. When we consider these words, in connection with the preceding exhortation, to keep the commands of Christ, and as an encouragement so to do, it brings to mind a saying of R. Eliezer ben Jacob {w};

"he that does one commandment gets for himself dxa jylqrp,
ena paraklhton, the very word here used, "one advocate", or "comforter"; and he that transgresses one command, gets for himself one accuser."

But though the word signifies both an advocate and a comforter, the latter seems to be the meaning of it here, as being more suited to the disconsolate condition of the disciples.

{u} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 5. 1. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. {w} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 11.

John 14:17

Ver. 17. Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive,.... These words explain who is meant by the Comforter, "even the Spirit of truth"; the true Spirit of God, the dictator of the Scriptures of truth, who leads men into the truths of the Gospel, confirms them in them, and gives boldness and freedom to own, and confess them before men:

whom the world cannot receive; the men of the world, who are as they came into the world, carnal and natural men, can neither receive the Spirit nor the things of the Spirit, the truths and doctrines of the Gospel; they can neither receive them into their understandings, nor into their affections; and indeed, because they cannot understand them, therefore they do not love them, but despise and hate them:

because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; the world, and the men of it, can neither see him with their bodily eyes, because he is a "spirit"; nor know him with their understandings, because he is the "Spirit of truth", which they are ignorant of, for want of a spiritual discerning.

But ye know him; as a spirit of illumination, regeneration, and conversion:

for he dwelleth with you; he is an inhabitant in your hearts, he has taken up his residence in you as his temples:

and shall be in you; as a Comforter, when I am gone from you; and as a spirit of truth to guide you into all truth, to stand by you, and assist you in preaching it, and to enable you to bear a faithful and glorious testimony for it.

John 14:18

Ver. 18. I will not leave you comfortless,.... Gr. "orphans", or "fatherless". Christ stands in the relation of a Father to his people, and they are his children, his spiritual seed and offspring; and so the disciples might fear, that as Christ was going from them, they should be left as children without a father, in a very desolate and comfortless, condition: to support them against these fears, Christ promises that he would not leave them thus, at least not long:

I will come to you; in a very short time, as he did; for on the third day he rose again from the dead, and appeared to them, which filled them with great joy. So among the Jews, disciples, and the world too, are represented as fatherless, when their doctors and wise men are removed by death. Says R. Aba, {x} and so sometimes others, concerning R. Simeon ben Jochai,

"woe to the world when thou shall go out of it, woe to the generation that shall be in the world when thou shall remove from them, Nymty Nwratvyw, "and they shall be left fatherless by thee"."

And in another place {y};

"afterwards R. Akiba went out and cried, and his eyes flowed with water, and he said, woe Rabbi, woe Rabbi, for the world is left, Mwty, "fatherless by thee"."

{x} Zohar in Num fol. 96. 3. & in Lev. fol. 42. 3. & in Exod. fol. 10. 3. & 28.

3. {y} Midrash Hannealam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 65. 4.

John 14:19

Ver. 19. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more,.... The men of the world now see me with their bodily eyes, which is all the sight they have of me; and this they will be deprived of in a very little time; they will see me no more until the time that I shall come in the clouds of heaven to judge the world; and then every eye shall see me:

but ye see me; ye see me now, and shall see me after my resurrection, as they did; for then he appeared alive and conversed with them for forty days; and when he ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God, they saw him by faith crowned with glory and honour; and will see him as he is when he comes a second time to take them to himself in glory.

Because I live, ye shall believe also: Christ lives as God, as man, and as Mediator: as God, he lives the same life his Father does, partaking of the same nature, and possessing the same perfections; so he lived from everlasting, and will live to everlasting; as man, he lived first a private, and then a public life, attended with meanness, reproaches, sorrows, and sufferings; a life which was filled up with acts of devotion and piety to God, and with doing good to the bodies and souls of men; he lived in all obedience to the law of God, and at last endured the penalty of that law, in the room and stead of his people; when his life was taken away for a while, and then taken up by him again; and now, as man, he lives, and lives for evermore. As Mediator, he has his life from the Father, which is dependent upon him, by whom he was set up in an office capacity from everlasting; and as such will live to everlasting, to see the travail of his soul, the fruit of his sufferings, to make intercession for his people, and to rule until all enemies are made his footstool. And his people "live also", which is to be understood, not of the preservation of his disciples from dying with him, when he died; for then it should rather have been said, "because I die, ye shall live": nor of the continuance of their natural life in this world; for the saints are not to live always here; nor do they desire it, nor is it proper they should; death is for their advantage; it is a blessing to them. Though these words may be understood of a corporeal life, which they shall live after the resurrection; for though they die, they shall live again, and never die more; they shall not only live and reign with Christ a thousand years, but to all eternity. They also live a spiritual life now; a life of grace and holiness from Christ; a life of faith on him, and sometimes of communion with him, and desire to live to his honour and glory; and shall hereafter live an eternal life of perfection and pleasure, with Father, Son, and Spirit, for evermore. Now between these two lives, the life of Christ, and his people, there is a close connection; the one is dependent on the other, and secured by the other: "because I live, ye shall live also"; the spiritual life of a believer is from Christ, and is maintained by him; the same which is in the head, is in the members; yea, it is not so much they that live, as Christ that lives in them, and therefore their life can never be lost; it is bound up in the bundle of life with Christ, and is hid safe and secure with him in God, and so out of the reach both of men and devils. The corporeal life of the saints after death, in the resurrection morn, springs from, and is secured by the life of Christ: his resurrection from the dead is the pattern and pledge of theirs; he undertook to raise them from the dead, and will do it; as sure as his dead body is raised and lives, so sure shall theirs; their bodies, as well as their souls, are united to Christ; and by virtue of this union, which death does not, and cannot dissolve, they shall be raised and live again. They are in Christ whilst they are dead; and because they are "the dead in Christ", they shall "rise first". Their eternal life is in the hands of Christ, and when he, who is the true God, and their eternal life, shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory.

John 14:20

Ver 20. At that day ye shall know,.... The things they should know, or the objects of knowledge are,

that I [am] in my Father; in his bosom, in union with him, partaker of the same nature, perfections, and glory with him, and equal to him:

and you in me: that they were in union with him as the branches in the vine, and as the members are in the head, and how they were loved in him, chosen in him, righteous in him, risen with him, and made to sit together in heavenly places in him:

and I in you; formed in their hearts, living in them, dwelling in them, as in his temples, and filling them with grace and glory. The knowledge of these things promised, designs a more clear and distinct knowledge of them; something of them was known already, but not so perfectly as should be hereafter; and this does not suppose that these unions between the Father and Christ, and between Christ and his people, shall then begin to be; for as the union between the Father and the Son is as eternal as themselves; so the union between Christ and his people, as he is the head and representative of them, is as early as his investiture with the office of a Mediator, and his suretyship engagements for them, which were from eternity; and are the ground, and foundation of his being in them, and they in him in the effectual calling; nor does it suggest that they shall begin to be known; only that they shall be known in a more perfect manner: the time when this will be, is "at that day": meaning either when he should "live" in the body again, be raised from the dead, when he should he declared to be the Son of God with power, when it would appear, that he had the same power with the Father, by raising himself from the dead, and when he would rise as a public head representing them, for their justification, and they should see themselves justified and discharged in him; or the day of "Pentecost", when "the Spirit of truth", he promises to pray for, should come to them in an extraordinary manner, and lead them into the knowledge of these things; or the last day, the resurrection morn, when, by virtue of union to Christ, the saints shall rise and "live" with him for ever, and shall have a perfect knowledge of these several unions; see Joh 17:21.

John 14:21

Ver. 21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them,.... He that has not merely the external revelation of them in the Bible; but has them written on his heart, by the finger of the Spirit of God, and keeps them under the influence of grace and strength received from him:

he it is that loveth me: others may talk of loving Christ, but this is the man that truly does love him; for his observance of Christ's commands is a proof and evidence that he loves him not in word only, but in deed and in truth: and to encourage souls to love and obedience, Christ adds,

he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father; not that love to is the cause, condition, or motive of the Father's love to his people; nor does his love to them begin when they begin to love Christ; but this expression denotes some further and greater manifestation of the Father's love to such persons, and shows how grateful to the Father are love and obedience to the Son:

and I will love him; which must be understood in the same manner; Christ does not begin to love his people when they begin to love, and obey him; their love and obedience to him, spring from his love to them; which love of his towards them was from everlasting: but this phrase signs a clearer discovery of his love to them, which passeth knowledge; and some fresh mark and token of his affection for them; and which is explained in the next clause:

and will manifest myself to him; not in a visible way, or in a corporeal form, as he did to his disciples after his resurrection; but in a spiritual manner, as when he makes himself known to his people in ordinances, and favours them with communion with him, and they see his beauty, his fulness, his grace and righteousness, his power, and his glory.

John 14:22

Ver. 22. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot,.... This was Judas Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus, the same with Jude the apostle, the author of the epistle which bears his name; and is said to be "not Iscariot", to distinguish him from the betrayer. The question put by him, Lord,

how is it, ti gegonen, which answers to ad yam, or yah yam, or whm, with the Talmudists, "what is this thou sayest"; what is the meaning of it? how can it be? or what is the reason of it,

that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world? arises either from ignorance of what Christ was speaking, imagining he meant a spectre, or some apparition of himself after his death, which should be visible to his disciples, and not to others; and how this could be, he wanted to know; or from that national prejudice which Judas and the rest of the apostles had given into, of a temporal kingdom of the Messiah, the glory of which should be visible to all the world; and therefore he wonders that he should talk of the manifestation of himself, only to some, or from an honest hearty desire that the glory of Christ might not be confined to a few only; but that the whole world might see it, and be filled with it: or rather from his modesty, and the sense he had of his own unworthiness, and of the rest of the apostles, to have such a peculiar manifestation of Christ to them, when they were no more deserving of it than others: the question is put by him with admiration and astonishment; and as not being able to give, or think of any other reason of such a procedure, but the amazing grace of Christ, his free favour and sovereign will and pleasure.

John 14:23

Ver. 23. Jesus answered and said unto him,.... This answer is returned, and these words are spoken, for the further confirmation and explanation of what was before said:

if a man love me, he will keep my words; by his "words" are meant not his doctrines, but his ordinances; the same with his commandments, Joh 14:21, which he has said, ordered, and commanded to be observed, and which are observed by such who truly love him, and that from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory: and for the encouragement of such persons as before, he says,

and my Father will love him: which is to be understood not of the love of the Father, as in his own heart, which is not taken up in time, but was in him from all eternity; nor of the first discovery of it to his people, but of greater manifestations of it to them, and a quicker sense of it in their hearts, and also of some other effects of it, to be enjoyed by them in an higher manner; such as larger measures of grace, more communion with him here, and eternal honour and glory hereafter:

and we will come unto him: I who am now going away, and my Father to whom I am going, and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, I have promised to pray for: hence a proof of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, of a trinity of persons, of there being neither more nor fewer than three; since neither more nor less can be collected from the context; and of their distinct personality, or it could not be said with any propriety, "we" each of us "will come unto him"; not locally and visibly, but spiritually, by affording our gracious and comfortable presence, the continuance of which is promised next:

and make our abode with him; which denotes habitation; for the saints are the dwelling places or temples of the living God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and the constancy and perpetuity of their residence in them, not as a wayfaring man, but always, though this may not be always discerned by believers; and is a wonderful instance of the grace and condescension of God to dwell on earth with sinful men; and a far greater one it is, than if the most mighty potentate on earth should take up his abode in a poor despicable cottage with the meanest of his subjects.

John 14:24

Ver. 24. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings,.... These words may have respect both to external professors of religion, who being destitute of true love to Christ, though they outwardly observe his ordinances and commands;

yet inasmuch as this does not spring from a principle of love to him, and is done only to be seen of men, or to obtain life for themselves, may be said, not to keep his words or commands, because they do not keep them aright; and to the profane world, who, as they have no affection to Christ, pay no regard to any orders or ordinances of his: and they may be considered as having in them a reason or argument, justifying the conduct of Christ, in manifesting himself to his disciples, and not unto the world; as the following words give a reason why the Father takes so much notice of, comes and makes his abode with such as keep the words of Christ:

and, or "for"

the word which you hear, is not mine, but the Father's which sent me: that is, it is not only mine, but my Father's also: it is not mine as man; it is not a scheme of things of my own devising; it is not from earth, but from heaven; my Father has a concern in it, and therefore regards such who hear, receive, and keep it: and this is said by him partly to engage a greater regard and attention to his word, his truths, and ordinances, by his disciples; and to expose and aggravate the sin of those who despised and rejected them; since it was not barely casting contempt on him, but on his Father likewise.

John 14:25

Ver. 25. These things have I spoken unto you,.... Concerning his Father, and his Father's house, and the way to both; concerning his being in the father, and the Father in him; concerning keeping his commandments, and the advantages and benefits following upon it:

being, says he,

[yet] present with you; which is a strong intimation that in a little time he should not be present with them; and that whilst he was present with them, he was desirous of saying such things to them in a brief compendious manner, as they were able to bear; which might be of future use and instruction to them.

John 14:26

Ver. 26. But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost,.... Before spoken of, Joh 14:16, for whom Christ promised to pray the Father that he might be given

to them. The word used there, as here, signifies an "advocate", and is so rendered, **1Jo 2:1**, a patron, one that pleads and defends, the cause of another, before kings and princes; so the Jewish writers {z} use the word jylqrp, the same with
paraklhtov, here, and give this as the sense of it: and which agrees well enough with the work and office of the Spirit of God, who has promised to the apostles to speak in them and for them, when they should be brought before kings and governors for Christ's sake; and would so thoroughly plead his cause and theirs, as to convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgment; and who acts the part of an intercessor, or advocate, for private believers, in prayer to the King of kings: but inasmuch as it also signifies a "comforter", and this being agreeably to the present condition of the apostles, as before observed; it may be most proper to retain that sense of it here, who is explained to be the Holy Ghost; which is a more clear and explicit account of him than before, and very distinctly points out the third person in the Trinity, who is in his nature holy, equally with the Father and Son, and the author of holiness in all the saints:

whom the Father will send in my name. The mission of the Spirit is here ascribed to the Father, but not to the exclusion of the Son, who is also said to send him, Joh 15:26, which was not so proper to be mentioned here, because he speaks of his being sent, "in his name"; that is, at his request, through his mediation and intercession, in his room and stead, acting, the same part, and bearing the same flame of an advocate or comforter, and for the glory and honour of his name: which act of sending does not suppose any local motion, which cannot agree with an infinite and immense spirit; nor inferiority in him to the other two persons, since he who is sent by Christ, and in his name, is also the sender of Christ; but it denotes the joint consent and agreement of Father, Son, and Spirit, in this affair:

he shall teach you all things: this is the proper work and business of the Spirit, to teach, interpret, and explain all things which Christ had said to them; to make them more plain and easy to their understandings; to instruct them in all things necessary to salvation, and to be known by them, that they might teach them others:

and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you; which through inattention, or want of understanding in them, had slipped their minds, and were forgotten by them. This accounts for it, how the evangelists some years after the death of Christ; at different times and places, and without consulting each other, could commit to writing the life, actions, sayings, and sermons of Christ, with all the minute circumstances attending them.

{z} Maimon. & Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 11.

John 14:27

Ver. 27. Peace I leave with you,.... Christ being about to die and leave his disciples, makes his last will and testament, and as the best legacy he could leave them, bequeaths peace unto them;

my peace I give unto you: he left the Gospel of peace with them, to be preached by them to all the world; which is a declaration and publication of peace made by his blood; is a means of reconciling the minds of men to God and Christ, to the truths, ordinances, and people of Christ; of relieving and giving peace to distressed minds; and which shows the way to eternal peace: and as Christ had kept his disciples in peace one with another, so he left them in peace; and left orders with them to maintain it one among another: but what seems chiefly designed here, is peace with God, which Christ is the sole author of; he was appointed in the council and covenant of peace to effect it; he became incarnate with that view, and did procure it by his sufferings and death; and as it was published by angels, when he came into the world, he left it, and gave it to his disciples when he was going out of it: or else that peace of conscience is meant, which follows upon the former, which arises from the sprinklings of the blood of Christ, and from a comfortable view, by faith, of an interest in his justifying righteousness, and is enjoyed in a way of believing, and commonly in the use of ordinances "leaving" it supposes that Christ was about to leave his disciples, but would not leave them comfortless; he leaves a Comforter with them, and bequeaths peace unto them as his last legacy: "giving" it, shows that it is not to be acquired by any thing that man can do, but is a pure free grace gift of Christ; and which being given as his legacy, is irrevocable; for the allusion is to the making of a will or testament when persons are about to die: though some have thought it refers to the custom of wishing peace, health, and prosperity, among the Jews; but Christ does not say "peace be to you"; which was the more usual form of salutation among them, and which was used by them when they met, and not at parting; especially we have no instance of such a form as here used, by dying persons taking their leaves of their relations and friends. It must indeed be owned that the phrase, "to give peace", is with them the same as to salute, or wish health and prosperity. Take two or three of their rules as instances of it;

"whoever knows his friend, that he is used Mwlv wl Ntyl {a}, "to give him peace"; he shall prevent him with peace (i.e. salute him first), as it is said, "seek peace and pursue it"; but if he "gives" it to him, and he does not return it, he shall be called a robber."

Again,

"{b} a man may not go into the house of a stranger, on his feast day, Mwlv wl Ntyl, "to give peace unto him" (or salute him); if he finds him in the street, he may give it to him with a low voice, and his head hanging down;"

once {c} more,

"a man Mwlv Nty al, "not give peace to", or salute his master, nor return peace to him in the way that they give it to friends, and they return it to one another."

Likewise it must be owned, that when they saluted persons of distinction, such as princes, nobles, and doctors, they repeated the word "peace" {d}, though never to any strangers; however, certain it is, that it was another sort of peace which Christ left, and gave to his disciples, than what the Jews were wont to give, or wish to one another;

not as the world giveth, give I you. The peace Christ gives is true, solid, and substantial; the peace the world, the men, and things of it give, is a false one; and whilst they cry, "peace, peace, sudden destruction is at hand": the peace of the world is at best but an external one, but the peace Christ is the giver of, is internal; the peace the world affords is a very transient, unstable, and short lived one, but the peace of Christ is lasting and durable; the peace of the world will not support under the troubles of it, but the peace which Christ gives, cheerfully carries his people through all the difficulties and exercises of this life: and as these differ in kind, so likewise in the manner of giving, and in the persons to whom they are given; the world gives peace in words only, Christ in deed; the world gives feignedly, Christ heartily; the world gives it for its own advantage, Christ for his people's sake; the world gives its peace to the men of it, to the ungodly, none to the godly, whom it hates; Christ gives his; not to the wicked, for there is no peace to them, but to the saints, the excellent in the earth. Wherefore says Christ,

let not your heart be troubled; at my departure from you, since I leave such a peace with you:

neither let it be afraid: at the dangers you may be exposed unto, and the trouble you may be exercised with; for in the midst of them all, "in me ye shall have peace", Joh 16:33.

{a} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 6. 2. {b} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 62. 1. Maimon. Obede Cochabim, c. 10. sect. 5. {c} Maimon. Talmud Tora, c. 5. sect. 5. {d} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 62. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Melacim. c. 10. sect. 12.

John 14:28

Ver. 28. Ye have heard how I said unto you,.... Christ had not only told his disciples that he should depart from them in a little time, but also that he should return again to them, and comfort them with his presence, and receive them to himself, to be with him in his Father's house for ever: and this he again suggests,

I go away, and come again unto you; so that they had not so much reason to be troubled and afraid, as they were: had he only said to them that he should go away, without giving any hint of his coming again, they might well have been uneasy; what made the friends of the Apostle Paul so sorrowful at his departure, was most of all, because he had signified to them they should see his face no more; but Christ assured his disciples that in a little time they should see him again, to their unspeakable joy and comfort:

if ye loved me, adds he,

ye would rejoice; not but that the disciples did truly love Christ, and their concern for the loss of his bodily presence is a proof of it; nor was their love unknown to him, nor does he call it in question, only corrects it, or rather uses means to increase it, to draw it forth aright, that it might move and run in a proper channel; they loved him, and therefore were unwilling to part with him, but this was not a pure expression of love to him, it showed too much a regard to themselves, than to the object loved; whereas had they considered things aright, since it was to his greater advantage to remove, they should rather have discovered a willingness to it, and have rejoiced at it; this would have shown pure love and unbiased affection to him: two reasons our Lord gives why they should have rejoiced at his departure; one is,

because, says he,

I said, I go unto the Father; who was not only his, but their Father also; at whose right hand he was to sit, an honour which no mere creature ever had; where he was to be glorified and exalted above all created beings; and besides, his glorification would secure and bring on theirs; as sure as he lived in glory, so sure should they; yea, they should immediately sit down in heavenly places in him, as their head and representative, and therefore had good reason to rejoice at his going away: the other is,

for my Father is greater than I: not with respect to the divine nature, which is common to them both, and in which they are both one; and the Son is equal to the Father, having the self-same essence, perfections, and glory: nor with respect to personality, the Son is equally a divine person, as the Father is, though the one is usually called the first, the other the second person; yet this priority is not of nature, which is the same in both; nor of time, for the one did not exist before the other; nor of causality, for the Father is not the cause of the Son's existence; nor of dignity, for the one has not any excellency which is wanting in the other; but of order and manner of operation: these words are to be understood, either with regard to the human nature, in which he was going to the Father, this was prepared for him by the Father, and strengthened and supported by him, and in which he was made a little lower than the angels, and consequently must be in it inferior to his Father; or with regard to his office as Mediator, in which he was the Father's servant, was set up and sent forth by him, acted under him, and in obedience to him, and was now returning to give an account of his work and service; or rather with regard to his present state, which was a state of humiliation: he was attended with many griefs and sorrows, and exposed to many enemies, and about to undergo an accursed death; whereas his Father was in the most perfect happiness and glory, and so in this sense "greater". That is, more blessed and glorious than he; for this is not a comparison of natures, or of persons, but of states and conditions: now he was going to the Father to partake of the same happiness and glory with him, to be glorified with himself, with the same glory he had with him before the foundation of the world; wherefore on this account, his disciples ought to have rejoiced, and not have mourned.

John 14:29

Ver. 29. And now I have told you before it came to pass,.... This is a strong proof of his true and proper deity, for none but the omniscient God can tell of things before they come to pass; this is peculiar to him, and distinguishes him from the gods of the Gentiles; see Isa 41:22;

that when it is come to pass, ye might believe: that is, that when he was removed from them, and gone to his Father, they might then believe that he was truly God, the Son of God, the promised Messiah; and that he was then in glory, and at the right hand of God.

John 14:30

Ver. 30. Hereafter I will not talk much with you,.... Meaning before his death; for after his resurrection he talked much with them, about the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; being seen of them and conversing with them, for the space of forty days; not much, he says, chiefly what is delivered in the two next chapters: the design of this was, to observe to them that his time of departure was near at hand, and to quicken their attention to what he did say to them; since they could not expect to hear him long, or much more from him; he would be otherwise engaged;

for the prince of this world cometh: by "the prince of this world", is meant the devil; why he is so called, See Gill on "Joh 12:31"; the reason why Christ chooses to use this circumlocution, rather than to say Satan or the devil cometh, is partly to point out what a powerful adversary he had, and was about to engage with, and partly to observe to his disciples, what they must expect from the world, even hatred and persecution; since Satan was the prince of it, and had such powerful influence over the minds of the men of it. When it is said that he cometh, it is to be understood of his coming to Christ, though it is not expressed, and that with an intent agreeably to his character, as a thief, to kill and to destroy; and not of his coming merely by Judas, into whom he had already entered, and had put it into his heart to betray him; and by the armed soldiers, who would accompany him to apprehend him; and by the chief priests, rulers, and people of the Jews, who with united voices would cry, Crucify him, Crucify him; nor only invisibly by his angels, his principalities and powers, he was now employing in different ways, to bring about his purposes; but of his coming himself personally, and visibly: as he visibly appeared to Christ in the wilderness, tempting him, where he left him for a season; so this season or opportunity being come, he takes it, and visibly appears to him in the garden, where a sharp agony and combat was between them; what success he had in this conflict, is next mentioned;

and hath nothing in me; or as some copies read it, "shall find nothing in me"; or as others, "hath nothing to find in me"; Christ had no sin in him, which can

be said of none but him. The Jews say {e}, that Samuel, by whom they mean the devil, when he wrestled with Jacob, Nwe wb aum alv, "could not find any iniquity in him", he had committed; but this is only true of Jacob's antitype: for though his emissaries sought diligently for it, they could find none in him; though he had sin upon him, he had none in him; the sins of his people were imputed to him, but he had no sin inherent in him; hence, though he the Messiah was "cut off", according to **Da 9:26**, "but not for himself"; which by the Septuagint is rendered kai krima
ouk estin en autw, "but there is no judgment" or "condemnation in him", i.e. no cause of condemnation; which agrees with what is here said: though the accuser of men sought to have something against him, to accuse him of, he could find none; some pretences indeed were made, and charges brought, but could not be made good, insomuch that the judge himself said, "I find in him no fault at all",
Joh 18:38: so that the devil had no power over him, no rightful power, nor any but what he had by permission, nor indeed did he prevail over him; for though according to the first prophecy of the Messiah, Satan bruised the heel of Christ; yet Christ bruised his head, destroyed him and his works, spoiled him, and his principalities and powers; whence it appears that the death of Christ was not owing to any sin of his own, for he had none, nor could any be found in him; nor to the superior power of the devil over him; he submitted to death, not through the power of Satan over him, and complied with all the circumstances leading to it, not out of fear of him, but in love to his Father, and obedience to his command; as is clear from the following verse.

{e} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 44. 2.

John 14:31

Ver. 31. But that the world may know,.... Not the wicked and unbelieving world, but the world of God's elect, such as are brought to believe in Christ:

that I love the Father; Christ must needs love the Father, as being of the same nature and essence with him, and as standing in the relation of a son to him; he loved all that the Father loves, and approved of all his purposes, counsels, and determinations, concerning himself and the salvation of his people; and therefore he voluntarily laid down his life for them:

and as the Father gave me commandment, so I do: as a son is obedient to a father, so was Christ in all things obedient to the commands of his heavenly

Father, in preaching the Gospel, obeying the law, and suffering death; all which he did and suffered, as the Father gave commandment to him, as man and Mediator: and that it might fully appear how much he loved his Father, and agreed with him in all his designs of grace; how much his will was resigned to his, and what respect he paid to whatever he said or ordered; he said to his disciples,

arise, let us go hence: not from the passover, or the supper, for the passover was not as yet, and the Lord's supper was not instituted; nor in order to go to Mount Olivet, or to the garden, where Judas and his armed men would be to meet him, and lay hold on him, as is generally thought; but from Bethany, where he and his disciples now were, in order to go to Jerusalem and keep the passover, institute the supper, and then surrender himself into the hands of his enemies, and die for the sins of his people; for between this and the sermon in the following chapters, was the Lord's supper celebrated; when Christ having mentioned the fruit of the vine, he should drink new with his disciples in his Father's kingdom, he very pertinently enters upon the discourse concerning the vine and branches, with which the next chapter begins: the phrase is Jewish; so R. Jose and R. Chiyah say to one another as they sat, Khynw Mwq, "arise, and let us go hence" {f}.

{f} Zohar in Exod. fol. 74. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 15:1

Ver. 1. I am the true vine,.... The fruit of which he had been just speaking of at supper with his disciples; and then informs them, that he himself is the vine from whence that fruit must be expected, which should be partook of by them in his Father's kingdom; for though Christ may be compared to a vine for its tenderness, weakness, and being subject to cuttings and prunings; all which may express his outward meanness in his birth, parentage, and education, Which exposed him to the contempt of men; the weakness of the human nature in itself, his being encompassed with the infirmities of his people, and his sufferings and death for their sakes; yet he is rather called so with respect to his fruitfulness: for as the vine is a fruitful tree, brings forth and bears fruit in clusters, so Christ, as man and Mediator, is full of grace and truth, of all spiritual blessings, and exceeding great and precious promises; from him come the wine of divine love, of Gospel truths and Gospel ordinances, the various blessings of grace, and the joys of heaven, which are the best wine reserved by

him till last: Christ is the "true" vine; not that he is really and literally so, without a figure; but he is, as the Syriac renders it, arrvd atpn, "the vine of truth". Just as Israel is called a noble vine, wholly a right seed, tma erz, "a seed of truth", **Jer 2:21**; right genuine seed; or, as the Septuagint render it, "a vine", bringing forth fruit, pasan
alhyinhn, "wholly true"; to which the allusion may be here. Christ is the noble vine, the most excellent of vines, wholly a right seed, in opposition to, and distinction from, the wild and unfruitful, or degenerate plant of a strange vine: to him agree all the properties of a right and real vine; he really and truly communicates life, sap, juice, nourishment, and fruitfulness to the several branches which are in him. The metaphor Christ makes use of was well known to the Jews; for not only the Jewish church is often compared to a vine, but the Messiah too, according to them: thus the Targumist explains the phrase in Ps 80:15, "the branch thou madest strong for thyself", of the King Messiah: and indeed, by comparing it with
Ps 80:17 it seems to be the true sense of the passage {g}. The Cabalistic doctors say {h}, that the Shekinah is called, Npg, "a vine"; see Ge 49:11; where the Jews observe {i}, the King Messiah is so called. The Jews {k} say, there was a golden vine that stood over the gate of the temple, and it was set upon props; and whoever offered a leaf, or a grape, or a cluster, (that is, a piece of gold to the temple, in the form of either of these,) bought it, and hung it upon it. And of this vine also Josephus {l} makes mention, as being in Herod's temple; of which he says, that it was over the doors (of the temple), under the edges of the wall, having clusters hanging down from it on high, which filled spectators with wonder as for the size of it, so for the art with which it was made. And elsewhere he says {m}, the inward door in the porch was all covered with gold, and the whole wall about it; and it had over it golden vines, from whence hung clusters as big as the stature of a man: now whether our Lord may refer to this, being near the temple, and in view of it, and point to it, and call himself the true vine, in distinction from it, which was only the representation of one; or whether he might take occasion, from the sight of a real vine, to compare himself to one, nay be considered; since it was usual with Christ, upon sight or mention of natural things, to take the opportunity of treating of spiritual ones: though it may be rather this discourse of the vine and branches might be occasioned by his speaking of the fruit of the vine, at the time he ate the passover, and instituted the ordinance of the supper.

And my Father is the husbandman; or vinedresser. So God is called by Philo the Jew {n}, gewrgov agayov, "a good husbandman"; and the same the Targumist says of the word of the Lord {o}, "and my word shall be unto them, abj arkak, "as a good husbandman"."

Now Christ says this of his Father, both with respect to himself the vine, and with respect to the branches that were in him: he was the husbandman to him; he planted the vine of his human nature, and filled it with all the graces of the Spirit; he supported it, upheld it, and made it strong for himself, for the purposes of his grace, and for his own glory; and took infinite delight in it, being to him a pleasant plant, a plant of renown. The concern this husbandman has with the branches, is expressed in the following verse.

{g} Vid. R. Mosem Hadersan in Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. verit, l. 8. c. 4. {h} Zohar in Exod. fol. 70. 2. & Cabala denudata, par. 1. p. 241. {i} Zohar in Gen fol. 127. 3. {k} Misn. Middot, c. 3. sect. 8. T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 90. 2. & Tamid, fol. 29. 1, 2. {l} Antiqu. l. 15. c. 11. sect. 3. {m} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 4. {n} Leg. Allegor. l. 1. p. 48. {o} Targum in Hos. 11. 4.

John 15:2

Ver. 2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit,.... There are two sorts of branches in Christ the vine; the one sort are such who have only an historical faith in him, believe but for a time, and are removed; they are such who only profess to believe in him, as Simon Magus did; are in him by profession only; they submit to outward ordinances, become church members, and so are reckoned to be in Christ, being in a church state, as the churches of Judea and Thessalonica, and others, are said, in general, to he in Christ; though it is not to be thought that every individual person in these churches were truly and savingly in him. These branches are unfruitful ones; what fruit they seemed to have, withers away, and proves not to be genuine fruit; what fruit they bring forth is to themselves, and not to the glory of God, being none of the fruits of his Spirit and grace: and such branches the husbandman

taketh away; removes them from that sort of being which they had in Christ. By some means or another he discovers them to the saints to be what they are; sometimes he suffers persecution to arise because of the word, and these men are quickly offended, and depart of their own accord; or they fall into erroneous principles, and set up for themselves, and separate from the churches of Christ; or they become guilty of scandalous enormities, and so are removed from their fellowship by excommunication; or if neither of these should be the case, but these tares should grow together with the wheat till the harvest, the angels will be sent forth, who will gather out of the kingdom of

God all that offend and do iniquity, and cast them into a furnace of fire, as branches withered, and fit to be burnt.

And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. These are the other sort of branches, who are truly and savingly in Christ; such as are rooted in him; to whom he is the green fir tree, from whom all their fruit is found; who are filled by him with all the fruits of his Spirit, grace, and righteousness. These are purged or pruned, chiefly by afflictions and temptations, which are as needful for their growth and fruitfulness, as the pruning and cutting of the vines are for theirs; and though these are sometimes sharp, and never joyous, but grievous, yet they are attended with the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and so the end of bringing forth more fruit is answered; for it is not enough that a believer exercise grace, and perform good works for the present, but these must remain; or he must be constant herein, and still bring forth fruit, and add one virtue to another, that it may appear he is not barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ, in whom he is implanted. These different acts of the vinedresser "taking away" some branches, and "purging" others, are expressed by the Misnic doctors {p} by hlwoyp, and hdwryz. The former, the commentators {q} say, signifies to cut off the branches that are withered and perished, and are good for nothing; and the latter signifies the pruning of the vine when it has a superfluity of branches, or these extend themselves too far; when some are left, and others taken off.

{p} Misn. Sheviith, c, 2. sect. 3. {q} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

John 15:3

Ver. 3. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.. These words being inserted in the discourse concerning the vine and branches, and the pruning and purging them to make them fruitful, are thought, by the learned Dr. Lightfoot, to be an allusion to the law in Le 19:23; by which the fruit of trees, for the first three years, were accounted uncircumcised or unclean, and in the fourth year fit for use; concerning which the Talmudists have a whole tract, called hlre, "Orla"; the apostles having enjoyed the ministry of Christ, and been his disciples about such a time. Though the "now" seems to refer to the removal and taking away of that withered and unfruitful branch, Judas. Christ, in Joh 13:10, had told his disciples, that they "were clean, but not all", because the betrayer was among them; but he being discovered by Christ, and ordered by him to be gone, went out from among them about his wicked design; and now Christ could say of them all, that they were clean: which may be understood of their regeneration and sanctification, in which their hearts were sprinkled with clean water; were washed with the washing of regeneration; had their hearts purified by faith in the blood of Christ, and had pure principles of grace formed in their souls; of all which the Gospel of Christ was the instrumental means: or of their justification by the righteousness of Christ, by which they were justified from all sin; and were all fair, and without spot; which was through the Gospel of Christ revealing his righteousness to them, or through the sentence of justification he, by his Spirit, passed upon their consciences.

John 15:4

Ver. 4. Abide in me, and I in you,.... The former of these is an exhortation to continue in the exercise of faith and love upon Christ, holding to him the head, cleaving to him with full purpose of heart, and so deriving life, grace, strength, and nourishment from him; the latter is a promise encouraging to the former; for as Christ is formed in the hearts of his people, he continues there as the living principle of all grace. And so,

as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me; which strongly expresses the necessity of abiding in Christ by fresh repeated acts of faith: and it is easy to observe, that when believers depart from Christ, though it be but partially, and for a time, for they cannot finally and totally depart from him, in what a poor, withered, fruitless condition they are, both in their frames and duties.

John 15:5

Ver. 5. I am the vine, ye are the branches,.... Christ here repeats what he said of himself, "the vine", for the sake of the application of "the branches" to his disciples: which expresses their sameness of nature with Christ; their strict and close union to him; and the communication of life and grace, holiness and fruitfulness, of support and strength, and of perseverance in grace and holiness to the end from him:

he that abideth in me, and I in him; which is the case of all that are once in Christ, and he in them:

the same bringeth forth much fruit; in the exercise of grace, and performance of good works; and continues to do so as long as he lives, not by virtue of his own free will, power, and strength, but by grace continually received from Christ:

for without me ye can do nothing; nothing that is spiritually good; no, not anything at all, be it little or great, easy or difficult to be performed; cannot think a good thought, speak a good word, or do a good action; can neither begin one, nor, when it is begun, perfect it. Nothing is to be done "without Christ"; without his Spirit, grace, strength, and presence; or as "separate from" him. Were it possible for the branches that are truly in him, to be removed from him, they could bring forth no fruits of good works, any more than a branch separated from the vine can bring forth grapes; so that all the fruitfulness of a believer is to be ascribed to Christ, and his grace, and not to the free will and power of man.

John 15:6

Ver. 6. If a man abide not in me,.... Christ does not say, "if ye abide not in me"; he would not suppose this of his true disciples; Judas now being removed, to whom he may have some respect in this verse; though it may be applied to anyone who has made a profession of Christ, and denies the truths of the Gospel, neglects the ordinances of it, or walks unworthy of his profession: of whom the following things may be truly said,

he is cast forth as a branch; that is unfruitful, and is therefore taken away from the vine, and cast forth out of the vineyard. This signifies the ejection of worthless and fruitless professors out of the churches; for such who are either unsound in their principles, or are remiss and negligent in their attendance on the worship of God, with the church, or are loose and vain in their lives and conversations, are to be removed from communion with the people of God.

And is withered. Some versions, as the Arabic, Syriac, and Persic, read this as an epithet of the word "branch", thus; "the branch that is withered"; expressing the condition the branch is in before it is cast forth out of the vineyard, and the reason of its being cast forth: but others read it as a new and distinct predicate of the branch, showing the case it is in, immediately upon its being cast forth: it may be cut off, and cast out with its leaves upon it, though without fruit; but as soon as ever it is ejected, it withers away. So mere external professors of religion, when they are cast out, of the communion of the church, presently the leaf of profession, which once seemed green, decays, loses its verdure, and that seeming fruit which grew upon them shrinks to nothing, and they become "trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit", **Jude 1:12**: their show of life, zeal, religion, and holiness, disappears, and all their external gifts, light, knowledge, and understanding, even in a speculative way, vanish:

and men gather them; or, as some copies have it, auto, "it", which best agrees with the word "branch". This was a common thing, when branches were thrown out of a vineyard, for men to come and gather them up for an use hereafter mentioned. So when unworthy members are put out of a church of Christ, the men of the world gather them into their society: or they are taken into the congregations of false teachers, who being sensual, and without the Spirit, separate themselves; or it may be read impersonally, "they are gathered", or "it is gathered": so wicked men, and Christless professors, will be gathered by the angels at the last day, and severed by them from the righteous, whom they will place at Christ's left hand to receive their awful doom:

and cast them, or "it",

into the fire, and they are burned, or "it is burned"; for nothing else is such a branch good for; see Eze 15:2. This may respect either the gnawings of conscience, that distress of mind, if not despair, that fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which attend apostates in this life; or their being cast into the everlasting burnings of hell fire by angels at the last day, as will be the case of every unfruitful tree, of the chaff and tares.

John 15:7

Ver. 7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you,.... Abiding in Christ is here explained by his words or doctrines abiding in his disciples; by which are meant his Gospel, and the truths of it. This abides when it comes in power, and becomes the engrafted word; and may be said to do so, when such, in whose hearts it has a place, and has taken deep root, continue to have a relish and savour of it, a true and hearty affection for it, esteeming it above their necessary food; when they hold fast the profession of it, stand fast in it, steadfastly abide by it, and constantly attend on it; all which is a considerable evidence that they do, yea, there is a promise that they "shall continue in the Son and in the Father", **1Jo 2:24**; The blessing and privilege that such shall enjoy is,

ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you; or, as some copies read it, "it shall be given you": but this must be understood not of temporal things, as riches, honours, profits, pleasures, or whatever even the carnal mind of a believer himself may sometimes desire; but of things spiritual, and with such limitations and restrictions as these; whatever is according to the will of God, for the Spirit of God himself asks for no other for the saints; whatever is for the glory of God, and for their own spiritual profit and edification; and whatever is agreeably to the words and doctrines of Christ, which abide in them. Every thing of this kind they ask in faith, and with a submission to the divine will, they may expect to receive.

John 15:8

Ver. 8. Herein is my Father glorified,.... This does not so much refer to what goes before, concerning the disciples abiding in Christ, and he and his words abiding in them, and doing for them whatever they ask, though by all this God is glorified; as to what follows, the fruitfulness of the disciples:

that ye bear much fruit; of doctrine, grace, and good works, which show them to be trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, and the work of his hands; wherein the glory of his power, grace, and mercy, is greatly displayed. All the fruits of righteousness, with which they were filled by Christ, were by him to the praise and glory of God; yea, by the fruitfulness of grace, and of life and conversation, by the lively exercise of grace, and conscientious discharge of duty, as well by light of doctrine, and usefulness in the ministration of the Gospel, the disciples and servants of Christ not only glorify God themselves, but are the means of others glorifying him. It follows,

so shall ye be my disciples; or "disciples to me"; to my honour and glory also, as well as to my Father's; not that their fruitfulness made them the disciples of Christ, but made them appear to be so, or made them honourable ones. Just as good fruit does not make the tree good; the tree is first good, and therefore it brings forth good fruit; but shows it to be good: as by continuing in his word, abiding by his Gospel they appeared to be "disciples indeed", **Joh 8:31**, really and truly such; and as by loving one another, so by other fruits of righteousness, other men, all men know that they are the disciples of Christ.

John 15:9

Ver. 9. As the Father hath loved me,.... As his own Son, and as Mediator, from everlasting; and in time, in his state of humiliation, throughout the course of his obedience, and under all his sufferings; which he testified more than once by a voice from heaven; which he showed by concealing nothing from him as Mediator, by giving all things into his hands, by showing him all that he himself did, by appointing him the Saviour of the body, and making him the head of the church, by exalting him at his right hand, and ordaining him to be judge of quick and dead.

So have I loved you: Christ loves his as his spouse and bride, as his dear children, as members of his body, as branches in him the vine, as believers in him, and followers of him; which he has shown by espousing both their persons and cause, by assuming their nature, by suffering and dying in their room and stead, and making all suitable provision for them, both for time and eternity. And there is a likeness between the Father's love to him, and his love to his disciples and followers: as his Father loved him from everlasting, so did he love them; as his Father loved him with a love of complacency and delight, so did he, and so does he love them; and as his Father loved him with a special and peculiar affection, with an unchangeable, invariable, constant love, which will last for ever, in like manner does Christ love his people; and with this he enforces the following exhortation.

Continue ye in my love: meaning either in his love to them, which, as he always continues in it without any variableness or shadow of turning, so he would have them continue in believing their interest in it, prizing and valuing it, in imitating and remembering it; or else in their love to him, to his person, to his people, to his Gospel, to his ordinances, ways, and worship, which he knew was liable to wax cold, though it could not be lost.

John 15:10

Ver. 10. If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love,.... Not that their continuance in the heart's love and affection of Christ depended upon their observation of his commands; for as the keeping of them is not the cause or reason of the saints having an interest in the love of Christ, so it is not the cause or reason of their abiding in it; but to such that observe the commandments of Christ he will continue to make further discoveries of his love, and let them see more clearly and largely what a value he has for them, and how much he loves them: or the sense is, that by keeping the commandments of Christ, his disciples and followers show that they love him, and continue in their affection to him:

even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. The commandments of the Father kept by Christ were not only the precepts of the moral law, and the rites of the ceremonial one, which he strictly observed; but the preaching of the Gospel, and submitting to the ordinances of it, doing of miracles, and laying down his life for his people; in performing which, as his Father testified his approbation of them, and how strongly he was affected to him, what an abiding he had in his love; so Christ hereby showed his constant and continued love to his Father; and which was done by him, that the world, as well as his disciples, might know how much he loved him; see Joh 14:31.

John 15:11

Ver. 11. These things have I spoken unto you,.... Concerning the vine and branches, his abiding in them, and they in him, their fruitfulness from him, and perseverance in him, his love to them, and theirs to him:

that my joy might remain in you; meaning either that joy with which he joyed in and over them, as united to him, and which is of the same nature as the joy of the bridegroom over the bride, and which will always remain and continue the same; or rather that joy which he is the author, object, ground, and matter of, for there is always reason to rejoice in him, even in the most afflictive circumstances of life:

and that your joy might be full; that grace of joy which is implanted in the soul, by the Spirit of God in regeneration, and arises from, and is increased by discoveries of the person, grace, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and is "full of glory", **1Pe 1:8**; upon a clear sight of him in this life, and will be entirely full, completely perfected in the other world, when he will be seen as he is,

John 15:12

Ver. 12. This is my commandment, that ye love one another,.... Christ had been before speaking of his commandments; and he mentions this as the principal one, and to which all the rest may be reduced; for as the precepts of the second table of the moral law may be briefly comprehended in this one duty, love to our neighbour, so all the duties of Christianity, relative to one another, are reducible to this, by love to serve each other. This was the commandment which lay uppermost on Christ's heart, and which he knew, if attended to, the rest could not fail of being observed. The argument by which, and the manner in which, he presses it, is as before:

as I have loved you; than which nothing can be more strong and forcible; see Joh 13:34.

John 15:13

Ver. 13. Greater love hath no man than this,.... By these words our Lord shows, how far love to another should extend, even to the laying down of our lives for the brethren; which is the highest instance of love among men;

that a man lay down his life for his friends; and in which believers, should not come short of them; and also his great love to his people, and explains what he had just said, "as I have loved you", Joh 13:34; which in a little time would be seen, by his laying down his life for them: for he not only came down from heaven, and laid aside his glory and royal majesty, but he laid down his life; not his gold and silver, and the riches of this world, which were all his, but his life; than which, nothing is dearer to a man, is himself, his all: and besides, Christ's life was not a common one, it was not the life of an innocent person only, or the life of a mere man, but of a man in union with the Son of God; it was the Lord of glory and Prince of life, who was crucified, and slain; a life that was entirely at his own dispose; it had never been forfeited by sin, nor could it have been forced away from him by men or devils; it was laid down of and by himself, freely and voluntarily; and that "for", in the room, and instead of his people, as a ransom for them; he being their surety and substitute, and standing in their legal place and stead, he took their sins upon him, bore the curse of the law, sustained his Father's wrath, and all the punishment due to sin; and so suffered death, the death of the cross; the just, in the room and stead of the unjust; the persons for whom be laid down his life, are described as "his friends"; not that they were originally so; being enemies and enmity itself to God, when he laid down his life for them, and reconciled them; they were not such as had carried themselves friendly, or had shown any love and affection to him, but all the reverse: but they are so called, because he had chosen them for his friends; he had pitched upon them, and resolved to make them so; and by dying for them, reconciled them who were enemies; and in consequence of this, by his Spirit and grace, of enemies makes them friends; so that his love in dying for his people, is greater than any instance of love among men: he laid down his life for his enemies, without any sinister selfish views, and that freely and voluntarily; whereas among men, when one man has laid down his life for others, either they have been very deserving, or he has been forced to it, or it has been done with the view of popular applause and vain glory.

John 15:14

Ver. 14. Ye are my friends,.... This is an application of the foregoing passage, and more, clearly explains it. The character of "friends", is applied to the disciples of Christ; and belongs, not only to his apostles, but to all that love him, believe in him, and obey him; to whom he has showed himself friendly, by laying down his life for them: for this clearly shows, that Christ had respect in the former words, to his own laying down his life for his people, in consequence of his great love to them; whereby he has made them friends, and who appear to be so by their cheerful obedience to him:

if ye do whatsoever I command you; not that their doing of the commandments of Christ interested them in his favour; or made them his friends; or was the reason and motive of his laying down his life for them, and showing himself in such a friendly manner to them: but the sense is, that by observing his commands from a principle of love, they would make it appear that they were his friends, being influenced by his grace, and constrained by a sense of his love in dying for them, to act such a part.

John 15:15

Ver. 15. Henceforth I call you not servants,.... As they and the rest of the people of God had been, under the legal dispensation; for though they were children, yet differed nothing from servants; and were very much influenced and impressed with a servile spirit, a spirit of bondage unto fear, being kept under tutors and governors by a severe discipline; but now Christ being come in the flesh, and being about to lay down his life, and make reconciliation for them, henceforward he would not use, treat, or account them as servants:

for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; designs to do, or is about to do; he is not made privy to all his counsels and purposes; these are only opened to him as necessity requires; which was pretty much the case of the Old Testament church, who, comparatively speaking, were used as servants; and had not the knowledge of the mysteries of grace, and of the counsels of

God, as they are now laid open under the Gospel dispensation:

but I have called you friends; that is, accounted, reckoned of them, used them as his friends and familiar acquaintance; whom he told all his mind unto, and would go on to treat them as such; by leading them more and more, as they were able to bear it, into the designs of his grace, and the doctrines of his Gospel: just as Abraham was called the friend of God, and proved to be so, by his not concealing from him the thing he was about to do:

for all things I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you; not all that he knew as the omniscient God, for there was no necessity that all such things should be made known to them; but all things which he had delivered to him as man and Mediator, by his Father, respecting the salvation of men; all things which he himself was to do and suffer, in order to obtain eternal redemption; and the whole of the Gospel, as to the essential and substantial parts of it, they were to preach; for otherwise, there were some things which as yet they were not able to bear, and were reserved to another time, to be made known unto them by his Spirit.

John 15:16

Ver. 16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,.... Not but that they had made choice of him as their Lord and Master, Saviour and Redeemer; but not first, he was before hand with them; he chose them, before they chose him; so that his choice of them was entirely free, did not arise from any character, motive, or condition in them: the allusion is to a custom of the Jews, the reverse of which Christ acted; with whom it was usual for disciples to choose their own masters, and not masters their disciples: hence that advice of R. Joshuah ben Perachiah, said {r} to be the master of Jesus of Nazareth,

"br Kl hve {s}, "make", provide, or chose "thyself a master", and get thyself a companion."

Those words in **So 2:16**; "my beloved is mine, and I am his", are thus paraphrased by the Jews {t};

"he hath chosen me, and I have chosen him:"

which is not amiss, provided the latter choice is thought to be by virtue, and in consequence of the former; if not, our Lord directly opposes the words and sense. This may be understood both of election to salvation, and of choice to the office of apostleship; in both which Christ was first, or chose them before they chose him, that good part, which shall never be taken away; for as they were chosen in him, so by him, before the foundation of the world; being as early loved by him, as by his Father; and in consequence thereof, were chosen by him, for his people and peculiar treasure; he first chose and called them to be his disciples and apostles, to follow him, preach his Gospel, and become fishers of men; and clothed them with full power and authority to exercise their high office:

and ordained you; which may design either ordination to eternal life, or apostleship, before the world began; as Jeremiah was ordained to be a prophet, before he was born; or else the investiture of them with that office, and with all gifts and graces necessary for the discharge of it; for when he called and sent forth his disciples to preach the Gospel, he is said to "ordain" them, **Mr 3:14**; and the rather this may be meant here, because the former is designed by his choosing them; or he set them, or planted them in himself, a fruitful soil, that they might shoot up and bear much fruit, as it follows:

that ye should go and bring forth fruit; go first into Judea, and then into all the world; and brings forth the fruits of righteousness and holiness in themselves, and be the happy means of the conversion, and so of bringing in a large harvest of souls to Jesus Christ:

and that your fruit should remain; as it has done; for they not only persevered themselves in faith and holiness, in preaching the Gospel, and living according to it, but the persons whose conversion they were instruments of, continued steadfastly in their doctrine, and in the fellowship of the saints; and the Gospel which was preached by them, has remained, though not always in the same place, yet in the world ever since:

that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. This is added, to encourage their perseverance in the work he chose and called them to, which would be attended with many difficulties and discouragements; wherefore as they would stand in need of divine assistance, they might assure themselves of it; for be it what it would they should ask of his Father, making mention of his name and righteousness; whether for a sufficiency of gifts and grace in the discharge of their duty; or for success in it; or for the confirmation of the truths delivered by them; or for liberty and boldness to speak in vindication of themselves, when called to it before kings and governors, it should be given them.

{r} Ganz Tzemach David, fol. 24. 2. {s} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 6. {t} Zohar in Exod. fol. 9. 1.

John 15:17

Ver. 17. These things I command you,.... The doctrines which Christ spake, as one having authority, concerning the vine and branches; his love to his disciples, in laying down his life for them, and in accounting and using them as friends, and not servants; in choosing, ordaining, and sending them forth, for the ends above mentioned; these were delivered by him with this view, to promote brotherly love among them: that ye love one another; this lay much upon his heart, he often mentions it; this is the third time it is expressed by him, in these his last discourses; and indeed, since he had declared such strong love and affection for them, it was but right and proper they should love one another; nor does anything more tend to increase mutual love among the saints, than the consideration of their common interest in the unchangeable love of their Lord.

John 15:18

Ver. 18. If the world hate you,.... After our Lord had signified how much he loved his disciples and what great things he had done for them, he faithfully acquaints them with the world's hatred of them, and what they must expect to meet with from that quarter, and says many things to fortify their minds against it; his words do not imply any doubt about it, but he rather takes it for granted, as a thing out of question; "if", or "seeing the world hate you"; they had had some experience of it already, and might look for more, when their master was gone from them: wherefore, he, in order to engage their patience under it, says,

ye know that it hated me before it hated you; which words are an appeal of Christ to his apostles, for the usage he had met with from the wicked and unbelieving world of the Jews; how they had expressed their hatred, not only by words, calling him a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a sinner, a Samaritan, a madman, one that had a devil, yea, Beelzebub himself, but by deeds; taking up stones to stone him more than once, leading him to the brow of an hill, in order to cast him down headlong, consulting by various means to take away his life, as Herod did in his very infancy; which was done, before they showed so much hatred to his disciples; and perhaps reference may be had to the original enmity between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, mentioned **Ge 3:15**; as well as to these instances. Moreover, the words prwton umwn, rendered "before you", may be translated "the first" or "chief of you", your Lord and head; and denotes the dignity, excellency, and superiority of Christ; wherefore it is suggested, that if he, who was so much before them in personal worth and greatness, was hated by the world, they should not think it hard, or any strange thing, that this should be their case.

John 15:19

Ver. 19. If ye were of the world,.... Belonged to the world, were of the same spirit and principles with it, and pursued the same practices:

the world would love its own; for every like loves its like; the men of the world love each other's persons, company, and conversation:

but because ye are not of the world: once they were, being born into it, brought up in it, had their conversation among the men of it, were themselves men of carnal, worldly, principles and practices; but being called by Christ, and becoming his disciples, they were no more of it; and as he was not of the world, so they were not of it, though they were in it. The Jews distinguish the disciples of the wise men, from amled yvnya, "the men of the world" {u}, pretending that they were not; but this is a character that only belongs to the disciples of Christ, in consequence of their being called by him out of it:

but I have chosen you out of the world: which designs not the eternal election of them, but the separation of them from the rest of the world in the effectual calling, and the designation of them to his work and service:

therefore the world hateth you; and since it was upon that account, they had no reason to be uneasy, but rather to rejoice; seeing this was an evidence of their not belonging to the world, and of being chosen and called by Christ out of it.

{u} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 80. 2.

John 15:20

Ver. 20. Remember the word that I said unto you,.... For their further consolation under the hatred of the world, he puts them in mind of a saying of his, which he had lately used, Joh 13:16; to teach them humility, self-denial, and brotherly love, and elsewhere, as in Mt 10:24; for the same purpose as here; namely, to engage them patiently to bear the hatred of men, and all indignities and insults from them, for his name's sake:

the servant is not greater than the Lord: nor so great, and consequently not more, nor so: much deserving of respect, or to be treated in a better manner; suggesting, that Christ was their Lord and master, as he was, and they were his servants; and therefore were not greater than him, but much inferior to him, and could not expect better usage from men than he had:

if they have persecuted me; as they did, both by words and deeds, as before observed:

they will persecute you; and so they did in like manner, and from place to place:

if they have kept my saying; which is either ironically spoken, or designs that insidious malicious observation of Christ's words, made by the Jews, with an intent to catch and lay hold on something to improve against him:

they will keep yours also; that is, either they will attend to your doctrines, or they will make the same spiteful remarks, and put the same evil constructions on your words as on mine.

John 15:21

Ver. 21. But all these things will they do unto you,.... Christ here signifies, that all the hatred and persecutions raised against his people by the world, would not be on their own account, for any evil actions done by them; they would not suffer as thieves, murderers, and evildoers, but as Christians; or as he says,

for my name's sake: because they were called by his name, and called upon his name; because they professed his name, and confessed him to be the Messiah and Redeemer; because they loved his name Jesus, a Saviour, believed in his name, and hoped in him for eternal life; and also preached him, and in his name salvation, and encouraged others to believe in him; and therefore they had no reason to be ashamed, but rather to rejoice; as they afterwards did, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name: besides, this malice and hatred of theirs arose from ignorance of the Father of Christ:

because they know not him that sent me; they did not know that Jesus was the Christ, and sent of God; they did not acknowledge him to be so, or the Father to be the sender of him; and because Christ and his disciples asserted this, therefore they were the objects of their hatred.

John 15:22

Ver. 22. If I had not come and spoken unto them,.... The ignorance of the Jews is represented as inexcusable, since Christ was come, and had preached unto them; if he had not come and told them that he was the Messiah, they might have pleaded an excuse for their ignorance of him, and his mission, and of the Father that sent him: but inasmuch as he was come in the flesh, and came to them his own; and came also a light into the world, carrying along with him evidence, conviction, and demonstration, of his being the Messiah; speaking such words as never man did; preaching with such authority as the Scribes and Pharisees did not; declaring in plain terms he was the Christ of God, and that if they did not believe him to be so, they would die in their sins; they could have no pretext to make for their ignorance and disbelief: if all this had not been done,

they had not had sin; or been guilty of the sin of unbelief, in the rejection of the Messiah; not that they would have been without sin in any sense, or without any kind of sin, but without this particular sin; at least they would have excused and wiped themselves clean, and would have looked like innocent and sinless persons, under all their ignorance and unbelief:

but now they have no cloak for their sin; they could not say, had he come to us, and told us that he was the Messiah, and given evidence of his being sent by the Father, we would have believed him, and received him as the Messiah; for he did do this, and so cut off all excuses and pretences from them.

John 15:23

Ver. 23. He that hateth me, hateth my Father also. The hatred the world bears to the followers of Christ, is interpretatively hatred to Christ himself; and hatred to Christ himself, is no other than hatred to his Father; and indeed, all the hatred that is shown by the men of the world to Christ, to his Gospel, and to his faithful ministers and followers, originally arises from that enmity, that is naturally in the heart of every unregenerate man against God: now since not only Christ, but the Father also, is hated by the world, the children of God and disciples of Christ may sit easier under all the resentment, frowns, and malice of the world.

John 15:24

Ver. 24. If I had not done among them the works,.... This is another, and a new argument, evincing the inexcusableness of their ignorance, and infidelity, and sin, taken from the works that Christ did; such as healing the sick, raising the dead, giving sight to the blind, causing the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, and the lame to walk, cleansing lepers, and casting out devils; which were clear proofs, and full demonstrations of his deity, and of his being the true Messiah:

and which none other man did; in his own name, and by his own power; and which none of the men of God ever did; as Moses, Elijah, Elisha, or others; and particularly that of giving sight to one that was born blind: now if these works had not been done among them, openly, visibly, and publicly,

they had not had sin; or so much sin; or their sin of unbelief would not have been so great, or attended with such aggravating circumstances; or they would not have been guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, as many of them were; who saw his works and miracles, and were convicted in their own consciences that he was the Messiah, and yet rejected him, against all the light and evidence which the Spirit of God gave by them, and by whom Christ wrought his miracles:

but now have they both seen; the works which were done, and the Messiah, whose mission from the Father they proved;

and hated both me and my Father; for their rejection of him as the Messiah, notwithstanding the doctrines he taught, and the miracles he wrought, plainly arose from obstinacy, malice, and inveterate hatred against Christ, and against the Father that sent him.

John 15:25

Ver. 25. But this cometh to pass,.... This hatred against Christ, and which is pointed at his people for his sake, and reaches to the Father also on his account, is suffered to be, and therefore should be patiently borne:

that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law: either in Ps 35:19, or rather in Ps 69:4; which is a psalm of Christ, as appears by citations out of it in the New Testament, or references to it; see **Joh 2:17**. The whole Scripture is sometimes called the law, as here; for not the law of Moses is meant, or the five books of Moses, but the writings of the Old Testament; which the Jews had in their hands, to them being committed the oracles of God; and sometimes are so called, when the book of Psalms is particularly referred to as now; see Joh 10:34; the words cited are,

they hated me without a cause; without any reason for it, Christ having given them no provocation, or just cause of offence, anger, or hatred. This sin of hating without a cause, is represented by the Jews as a very heinous one, and as the reason of the destruction of the second temple; under which they observe, that men studied in the law, and in the commandments, and in doing of good; and therefore ask why it was destroyed? the answer is, because there was under it,
Mnx tanv, "hatred without a cause": to teach us, that hatred without a cause is equal to the three (capital) transgressions, idolatry, adultery, and murder, for which they say the first temple was destroyed {w}. This is a tacit acknowledgment that the sin here mentioned was a reigning one, or that it much abounded in the time of Christ.

{w} T. Bab, Yoma, fol. 9. 2. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 38. 3.

John 15:26

Ver. 26. But when the Comforter is come,.... Or advocate, the Spirit of God; who was to be, and has been an advocate for Christ, against the world, and for his people, against all their enemies; and who as he was to reprove, and did reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, in favour of Christ, so he was to assist his people, and plead their cause, and help them, in vindication of themselves, before the princes of the earth, as he did: and who also was to act, and has acted the part of a "comforter" to them, under all the hatred and violence they have met with from the world; by taking and applying the things of Christ to them; by shedding the love of God in them; by applying the promises of the Gospel to them; by witnessing their adoption, and sealing them up to the day of redemption:

whom I will send unto you from the Father; visibly, as on the day of Pentecost, in cloven tongues as of fire; and invisibly into their hearts, by the secret influence of his light and grace; which mission, as it suggests no inferiority in the spirit, either to the Father or the Son; since the same spirit with the Father, was the sender of Christ; so it is expressive of the equal deity of Christ, and his joint power and authority with the Father:

even the Spirit of truth; who is the true Spirit, truth itself; yea, the true God, with the Father and Son; the Spirit of him who is truth; the dictator of the Scriptures of truth; who leads his people into all truth; and is the Spirit of truth, as he is a witness or testifier of Christ, hereafter promised:

which proceedeth from the Father; Christ is not content to describe him by his work and office, as, an, advocate and comforter, and as the Spirit of truth: and from his mission by him from the Father; all which shows his usefulness and authority; but also from his nature and essence, which is the same with the Father's; and from his peculiar personal and distinctive character, expressed by his proceeding from the Father; and which is mentioned, as what is distinct from his mission by Christ, from the Father before spoken of; and designs no other, than the eternal, ineffable, and continued act of his procession, from the Father and the Son; in which he partakes of the same nature with them, and which personally distinguishes him from them. The ancient Jews {x} spoke of him just in the same language; "the Spirit of God", in **Ge 1:2**; they say is the Holy Spirit, Myhlam
qypnd, "which proceedeth from God": very pertinently does Christ take notice of this his character here, when he was about to speak of him as his testifier:

he shall testify of me: of his deity and sonship, of his incarnation, of his being the Messiah, of his sufferings and death, of his resurrection and ascension, of his exaltation at the right hand of God, and of his ordination to be the Judge of quick and dead; all which he bore testimony to, by the gifts bestowed upon the apostles, and the great grace that was upon them all; by the signs, wonders, and divers miracles, by which the Gospel of Christ was confirmed; and by the power, influence, and success, which attended the preaching of it every where. Thus he testified of Christ, against the blaspheming Jews, and persecuting Gentiles, to the reproof and confusion of them; and he testified of him to the apostles, and all true believers, to their great joy and comfort, and to the support of them, under all the malice and hatred of the world.

{x} Zohar in Gen. fol. 1. 4.

John 15:27

Ver. 27. And ye shall also bear witness,.... That is, of Christ; of all the things he did in Jerusalem, and in the land of the Jews; being eyewitnesses, and ministers, or servants of the word, who constantly attended upon him; of all the good he did to the bodies and souls of men; of the various miracles he wrought, and of the several doctrines which were taught by him: what they saw with their eyes, heard with their ears, and with their hands handled of the word of life, that they could declare, and did declare, and bore a faithful testimony to; they were to be, and were witnesses of his sufferings and death, of his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven; they were a company of select men, chosen before of God, for this purpose; they were the most proper to be concerned herein, having been for a considerable time his intimates and associates:

because ye have been with me from the beginning; from the beginning of his ministry; for as soon as he entered on his public work, he called them to be followers of him; and who continued with him to the end, and therefore were the most capable of bearing a testimony concerning his person, doctrines, and works; of all he did and suffered, from first to last.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 16:1

Ver. 1. These things have I spoken unto you,.... Concerning the world's hatred and persecution of them, and the little regard they would show to their doctrine: these things Christ thought, proper to give them notice of before hand, that expecting them, they might be prepared for them, and be fortified against them;

that, says he,

ye should not be offended: his view in speaking of them, was not to discourage them, but to prevent their stumbling at them, and falling by them. Hardships coming upon persons at unawares, bear the harder upon their spirits, and they are more apt to take offence at them and be impatient under them, which is prevented by previous intimation: had Christ said nothing of these things that should befall his disciples, they might have surprised them, and have been a stumbling to them; and might have tempted them to have relinquished their profession of him, and dropped their ministerial work; whereas being apprized of them before hand, they were not so shocking to them. This shows the tender concern of Christ for his disciples, how careful he was to remove, every occasion of stumbling, or what might be matter of offence to them; and may teach us to act in such like manner towards one another, in this, or any other case.

John 16:2

Ver. 2. They shall put you out of the synagogues,.... The Jews had made a law already, that he that confessed that Jesus was the Messiah, should be cast out of their synagogues; and they had put it in execution upon the blind man Christ restored to sight, for his profession of faith in him; which struck such a terror upon the people, that even many of the chief rulers who believed that Jesus was the true Messiah, durst not confess him, because of this law; for it was what they could not bear the thoughts of, to be deemed and treated as heretics and apostates, and the vilest of wretches: for this putting out of the synagogue, was not the lesser excommunication, which was called ywdn "Niddui", and was a "separation" from a particular synagogue for a while; but the greater excommunication, either by Mrx, "Cherem", or atmv, "Shammatha"; when a person was cut out from the whole body of the Jewish church, called often the synagogue, or congregation of the people; and was devoted and consigned to utter destruction, which was the height of their ecclesiastical power, their rage and malice could carry them to; and this the apostles were to expect; nay, not only this, but to have their lives taken away by ruffians, under a pretence of zeal for the service of God, and interest of religion:

yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service. For this is not to be understood of their being delivered up into the hands of civil magistrates, and of their being tried, judged, condemned, and put to death by their orders, but of their being murdered by a set of men called "zealots"; who, in imitation of Phinehas, as they pretended, took upon them, whenever they found any person guilty of a capital crime, as idolatry, blasphemy, &c. or what they judged so, to fall upon him at once, and without any more ado kill him; nor were they accountable to any court of judicature for such an action, and which was reckoned laudable and praiseworthy: in this way, and by the hands of such miscreants, Stephen the protomartyr lost his life; for though they had him before a council, and suborned witnesses against him, yet when in his own defence he said what these "zealots" interpreted blasphemy, they ran upon him at once, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him to death; and without any leave or authority from the sanhedrim, as appears: and these men were accounted good men, zealous, Mwqm lv wtanq {y} "with a zeal for God", his honour and glory; and valued themselves much upon such butcheries and inhumanity, and thought, as our Lord here says, that they "did God service"; or as the Syriac renders it, brqm anbrwqd, "offered a sacrifice to God", and so the Arabic and Ethiopic: and indeed this is a rule the Jews {z}, and which they form upon the instance and example of Phinehas;

"that whoever sheds the blood of wicked men, (and such they reckoned the apostles and followers of Christ to be,)
Nbrq byrqh wlak, "it is all one as if he offered a sacrifice";"

they looked upon this to be a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God: so the Apostle Paul, in his unregenerate state, thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Christ: and that he was doing God service, when he prosecuted the church, and gave his voice with these ruffians, to put the saints to death.

{y} Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 9. sect. 6. {z} Bemidbar Rabbit, Parash, 21. fol. 229. 3.

John 16:3

Ver. 3. And these things will they do unto you,.... Christ here opens the true spring and source of the furious zeal of the Jews, against the apostles, in putting them out of their synagogues, and taking away their lives; it was pure wilful ignorance of the Father and himself;

because they have not known the Father nor me; though they boasted of their knowledge of God; yet they knew him not as the Father and sender of Christ, at least they would not own him as such: nor Jesus as the true Messiah, and sent of the Father, to redeem and save his people from their sins; and since they neither knew the Father, nor Christ, it is no wonder they did not know, own, and acknowledge, the disciples of Christ, but used them in the ill manner they did; their zeal was not according to knowledge, it was a blind and misguided one: and this is mentioned, not to extenuate or excuse their sin, though it shows they were not out of the reach of mercy, because they, as the apostle says of himself, "did it ignorantly in unbelief", **1Ti 1:13**; but as an argument with the disciples to bear their ill usage with patience, and to pity them and pray for them.

John 16:4

Ver. 4. But these things have I told you,.... Christ enlarged on this disagreeable subject, and was the more particular in enumerating the evils his apostles were to endure for his name's sake:

that when the time shall come; some copies read it, "their time"; so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic render it; that is, the time when wicked men will be suffered to vent all their rage and malice:

ye may remember that I told you of them; which might serve greatly to confirm them in the faith of him as the omniscient God, and the true Messiah, and encourage them to depend on his veracity and faithfulness in his promises; that since the evil things which he spoke of came upon them, so they might hope, believe, and expect, that all the good things he had assured them of, should be accomplished; and also to engage them to bear their sufferings with the greater patience, since they were appointed by God, and foretold by their Lord and master.

And these things, adds Christ,

I said not unto you at the beginning; when he first called them to be followers of him; for though when he ordained them, and sent them forth to preach the Gospel in the cities of Judea, which was some time after he had called them by his grace, he did acquaint them with some of the troubles and exercises they should meet with; as that they should be hated by all men, persecuted from city to city, beat in the synagogues, delivered up to councils, and brought before kings and governors; see Mt 10:17; yet he did not so fully and distinctly speak of these things, as here and at this time: his reason for such a conduct was this,

because, says he,

I was with you: wherefore he never spoke so fully and distinctly of their troubles, because he was with them, and took them upon himself; and indeed, whilst he was with them, the rage and malice of the Jews were not so much against his disciples, as himself; nor did he for the same reason speak so largely of the Comforter, and of the comforts they should receive from him, because as they had not the exercises they should afterwards have, so they had him to be their comforter.

John 16:5

Ver. 5. But now I go my way to him that sent me,.... These words seem to belong to Joh 16:4, and to contain a reason why Christ spoke of the trials and afflictions of his disciples now, because he was going away from them to his Father; when as they would be at the head of his affairs in this world, so they would the more become the butt of the rage of men:

and none of you asketh me, whither goest thou? Peter indeed asked the question, Joh 13:36; but his meaning was, what part of the country he was going to? what private and inaccessible place he was about to betake himself to? he had no notion of his going out of the world, or to heaven to his Father, and therefore inquired nothing about it; and when Christ had suggested to his disciples, that he was going to his Father's house, to prepare mansions for them, they did not seem to understand him, Joh 14:2. Nor did they ask what he meant by his Father's house, or what those mansions were he was going to prepare; and what the glory was he was going to possess for himself and them; they ask neither about the place he was going to, nor the way to it, nor the happiness to be enjoyed there.

John 16:6

Ver. 6. But because I have said these things to you,.... Of being hated and persecuted by the Jews, of being put out of their synagogues, and of losing of their lives; and particularly of his departure from them, or the loss of his bodily presence:

sorrow hath filled your heart; sorrow for his absence so possessed their minds, seized on all the powers and faculties of their souls, and engrossed all their thoughts, that it never entered into the heart of any of them, to inquire about the place he was going to, or the state he should enter upon; which had they had any right notions of, would have greatly contributed to have abated their sorrow, quieted their minds, made them easy under, and reconciled them unto, his departure from them.

John 16:7

Ver. 7. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth,.... Christ was truth itself, and could say nothing else; but he makes use of this way of speaking, to raise the attention of his disciples, and to engage their belief of what he was about to say, and of which they were not easily persuaded; which was, that however overwhelmed they were with grief and sorrow, because of his going away from them, a greater truth he could not tell them, than that this would be to their real good and advantage:

it is expedient for you that I go away; Christ's death here, as in many other places in these discourses of his, is signified by going away, a departure, taking a sort of a journey, such an one as indeed is common to all mankind; death is the way of all the earth, and which Christ took by agreement with his Father; a dark way is the valley of the shadow of death, and so it was to Christ, who went away in the dark, under the hidings of his Father's face; it is a man's going to his long home, and a long journey it is, till he returns in the resurrection morn; though it was a short one to Christ, who rose again the third day. The phrase supposes the place and persons he went from, this world and his disciples; and the place and persons he went unto, the grave, heaven, his Father, the blessed Spirit, angels, and glorified saints; and is expressive of the voluntariness of his death; he was not fetched, or thrust, and forced away, but he went away of himself; and is a very easy and familiar way of expressing death by, and greatly takes off the dread and terror of it; it is only moving from one place to another, as from one house, city, or country, to another; and shows, that it is not an annihilation of a man, either in body or soul, only a translating of him from one place and state to another. Now the death of Christ was expedient, not only for himself, which he does not mention; he being concerned more for the happiness of his people than of himself; but for his disciples and all believers; for hereby a great many evils were prevented falling upon them, which otherwise would; as the heavy strokes of divine justice, the curses and condemnation of the law, the wrath and vengeance of God, and eternal death, ruin, and destruction; as well as many good things were hereby obtained for them; as the redemption of their souls from sin, law, hell, and death; peace; reconciliation, and atonement; the full and free forgiveness of all their sins, an everlasting righteousness, and eternal life. Moreover, Christ's going away was expedient for his people; since he went to open the way for them into the holiest of all, by his blood; to take possession of heaven in their name and stead; to prepare mansions of glory for them; to appear in the presence of God for them; to be their advocate, and make intercession for all good things for them; to transact all their business between God them; to take care of their affairs; to present their petitions; to remove all charges and accusations; and to ask for, and see applied every blessing of grace unto them. The particular instanced in, in the text, of the expediency of it, is the mission and coming of the Spirit:

for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him to you. The Spirit of God in some sense had come, before the death of Christ; he had appeared in the creation of all things out of nothing, as a joint Creator with the Father and Son; he was come as a spirit of prophecy upon the inspired writers, and others; the Old Testament saints had received him as a spirit of faith; he had been given to Christ as man, without measure, and the disciples had been partakers of his gifts and graces; but he was not come in so peculiar a manner as he afterwards did; as the promise of the Father, the glorifier of Christ, the comforter of his people, the spirit of truth, and the reprover of the world: there are reasons to be given, why the Spirit of God should not come in such a manner before, as after the death of Christ. The order of the three divine persons in the Trinity, and in the economy of man's salvation, required such a method to be observed; that the Father should first, and for a while, be more especially manifested; next the Son, and then the Spirit: besides, our Lord has given a reason himself, why the Spirit "was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified", **Joh 7:39**; And the coming of the Spirit as a comforter, and the spirit of truth, was to be through the intercession, and by the mission of Christ; and therefore it was proper he should go away first, in order to send him; add to all this, that if Christ had not gone away or died, there would have been nothing for the Spirit to have done; no blood to sprinkle; no righteousness to reveal and bring near; no salvation to apply; or any of the things of Christ, and blessings of grace, to have taken and shown; all which are owing to the death of Christ, and which show the expediency of it: the expediency of Christ's death for the mission of the Spirit to his disciples, is very conspicuous; for hereby they were comforted and supported under a variety of troubles; were led into all truth, and so furnished for their ministerial work; and were made abundantly successful in it, that being attended with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

John 16:8

Ver. 8. And when he is come,.... The coming of the Spirit here, chiefly designs his descent upon the apostles, at the day of "Pentecost": as the things ascribed to him, and which were then done by him, clearly show; though it may also include his coming along with, and by the ministration of the Gospel, into the hearts of his people at conversion, in all after ages of time:

he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: by "the world" is principally meant, the Jews; the world among whom Christ personally was, who knew him not, disbelieved him, rejected him as the Messiah, hated and persecuted him, even unto death; though not to the exclusion of the Gentiles, the whole world that lies in wickedness; since both joined, and were concerned in these things, and reproved of them; which "reproving", as it may respect different persons, may intend both such reproofs and convictions, as are not attended with conversion, and issue in salvation; and such as are powerful, spiritual, and to saving purposes: the several things the Spirit of God is said to reprove of, being repeated in the following verses, with reasons or specifications annexed to them, will be there considered.

John 16:9

Ver. 9. Of sin, because they believe not on me. The "sin" here primarily intended, is that of the Jews, in disbelieving, rejecting, and crucifying Christ; and which the Spirit of God, by Peter, charged upon them on the day of "Pentecost", and fully proved against them; gave such clear evidence, and wrought such strong convictions of in their minds and consciences, that being pricked to the heart, they cried out, "what shall we do?" **Ac 2:23**; though as this passage may be applied to the ordinary work of the Spirit of God upon the souls of men, through the ministry of the word; so it may take in convictions of sin of all sorts, as of original and actual sins, and particularly the sin of unbelief: for the Spirit of God convinces of the sinfulness and corruption of nature, the wickedness and plague of a man's heart, the sin that dwells in him; how that has overspread all the powers and faculties of his soul, rendered both him and his services unacceptable to God, loathsome in his sight, and himself hopeless and helpless, and deserving of his wrath and displeasure: he also convinces of actual sins and transgressions, showing that they are breaches of the law of God, and are committed against God himself; that they are deserving of death, even eternal death; that the wrath of God is revealed against them, and for them comes upon the children of disobedience; and that there is no atonement for them, or cleansing from them, but by the blood of Christ: he likewise convinces of the sin of unbelief, here particularly mentioned: showing the evil nature and consequences of it, to persons enjoying a Gospel revelation; that such who disbelieve the Messiah, shall die in their sins; that whoever believes not in him shall be damned; and that faith in Christ is necessary to salvation, and that without it there is none.

John 16:10

Ver. 10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father,.... The "righteousness" here spoken of, does, in the first sense of the word, design the personal righteousness of Christ. The Jews had traduced him as a wicked man, said he was a sinner himself, and a friend of publicans and sinners; that he was guilty of blasphemy and sedition, maintained a familiarity with Satan, yea, that he had a devil: now the Spirit of God, by the mouth of Peter, on the day of "Pentecost", proved, to the conviction of the Jews, that all this was slander; that Christ was an innocent, holy, and righteous person, and a man approved of God among them, as they themselves must be conscious of, **Ac 2:22**; of all which, his going to the Father, and being received by him, were a full proof and demonstration. The effusion of the Spirit in that extraordinary manner upon the disciples, showed that he was gone to the Father, and had received from him the promise of the Holy Ghost, which he then shed abroad; and his going to the Father, and being set down by him at his right hand, made it clear that he came from him, and was no impostor; that he had acted the faithful and upright part, and was free from all the charges the Jews had laid against, him. Moreover, this may also be very well understood of the mediatorial righteousness of Christ, which he, as the surety and Saviour of his people, was to work out and bring in for them, in obedience to the law of God; which required holiness of nature, perfection of obedience, and bearing its penalty, death; all which were complied with by Christ, and so the whole righteousness of the law was fulfilled by him; and which is imputed by God as the justifying righteousness of all that believe in Jesus; and the proof of his having wrought out this, lies in his going to the Father; for as this was the work he came about, the will of his Father he came to do, had he not done it, it is reasonable to think he would never have met with such a welcome from him: besides, the donation of the Spirit, in consequence of its being wrought out, most clearly demonstrates it: likewise in the ordinary work of the Spirit of God upon the souls of his people, he always convinces them of the necessity of a righteousness to justify them before God, to render them acceptable in his sight, and to give them a right to the heavenly glory; for to admit them without a righteousness, or any unrighteous persons there, would be contrary to the justice of God, disagreeable to his pure and holy nature, and destructive of the comfort and happiness of the saints. He, the Spirit of God, convinces men of the insufficiency of their own righteousness for such purposes; that they have no righteousness that deserves the name of one, and that what they have will not justify them before God, and entitle them to heaven: and this he does, by showing them the corruption of their nature, their daily sins and infirmities, in thought, word, and deed; the purity of the divine perfections, and the spirituality and extensiveness of the law of God; which when a man is thoroughly apprized of, he can never hope for and expect justification before God by his own righteousness: hence the Spirit of God proceeds to convince men of the glory, excellency, fulness, and suitableness of the righteousness of Christ; which he does, by revealing it to them in the Gospel, setting it before them, and working faith in them to lay hold upon it; when they desire to be found in Christ, not having on their own, but his righteousness; which convictions appear by the mean thoughts they have of their own righteousness, by hungering after Christ's, by disclaiming all but his, by their constant mention of it, dependence on it, and satisfaction in it; and thus to convince of it, is the peculiar work of the Spirit, since naturally men are fond of their own righteousness, are ignorant of Christ's, and set against it. It is added,

and ye see me no more; not but that the disciples were to see Christ, and did see him after his resurrection, and will with the rest of the saints see him at his second coming: but the meaning is, that they should see him no more, in a mean and despicable condition on earth, in a state of humiliation, in the form of a servant, he having faithfully performed the whole work he came about, and particularly that of righteousness, he came to bring in.

John 16:11

Ver. 11. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. This is to be understood of the judiciary power and authority of Christ, who has "all judgment" committed to him by the Father, as Mediator; has all power in heaven and in earth; and as he is appointed, so he is a very fit person to judge the world at the last day. Now this being disputed and disbelieved by the Jews, the Holy Ghost, in the ministry of Peter, most clearly demonstrated to their full conviction, that he was raised from the dead, set upon his throne, and was made, or declared, Lord and Christ, **Ac 2:24**; of which the pouring forth of the Holy Ghost was an evidence; and the instance in the text proving it, and which is a very considerable one, is the judgment, or condemnation and destruction of Satan, the prince of the world; for Christ, by his death, has destroyed him and his works; has spoiled his principalities and powers; and by his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, has carried him and them captive, triumphing over them; and, through the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, and the power of it attending their ministry, Satan was judged, condemned, and cast out of the Heathen world, their temples, and the souls of men; the prey was taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered: but as this may refer to the ordinary work of the Spirit in conviction and conversion, it may be differently applied; for he convinces of various things, which come under this name: he convinces of the wrong judgment which men in a state of nature form of God, whom they take to be such an one as themselves; of a crucified Christ, whom they esteem foolishness; of the doctrines of Christ, which they judge to be absurd and irrational; of the people of Christ, whom they reckon the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things; of the ways and, ordinances of Christ, which are thought to be grievous, unpleasant, and unprofitable; and of themselves, and their own state and condition, which they fancy to be good, and they in a fair way for heaven: he also convinces them of the excellency, truth, power, and usefulness of the Gospel, which is called "judgment", Isa 42:1, so as to understand it truly, believe it cordially, receive it in the love of it, and feel the power of it: he convinces them of a future judgment; of the reality and certainty of it; that it will be universal, reach to all persons and things; that it will be carried on in the most righteous manner, and there will be no escaping it, of which the judgment and condemnation of Satan is a standing proof: and he moreover convinces of judgment or damnation; that men are under a sentence of condemnation in Adam; that they are liable to eternal damnation in themselves; that except they believe in Christ they will be damned, as sure as the prince of this world is.

John 16:12

Ver. 12. I have yet many things to say unto you,.... Not with respect to the main doctrines of the Gospel, for everything of this kind he had made known unto them, Joh 15:15; but what regarded the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, the abrogation of the Mosaic economy, and settling the Gospel church state, which were to come to pass after the death and resurrection of Christ, and the sending of the Spirit:

but ye cannot bear them now; because of their prejudices in favour of their own nation, the law of Moses, and the ceremonies of it, and the setting up of a temporal kingdom.

John 16:13

Ver. 13. Howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come,.... Of this character of the Spirit, see Joh 14:17. His coming, as before, intends more especially his descent on the apostles at Pentecost; though what is here said of him is true of his office, and of his operations on other persons, and at other times:

he will guide you into all truth; necessary to be known, useful to men, profitable to the churches, even the whole counsel of God; what relates to worship, the nature, form, and spirituality of it, as well as doctrine. He is as a guide, he goes before, leads the way, removes obstructions, opens the understanding, makes things plain and clear, teaches to profit, and leads in the way men should go, without turning to the right hand or left, which, without such a guide, they would be apt to do. The Jews {y} have a notion of the Holy Ghost being a guide into all wisdom and knowledge.

"R. Phinehas says, the Holy Spirit rested upon Joseph from his youth to the day of his death, and "guided him into all wisdom", as a shepherd leads his flock, according to
Ps 80:1;"

For he shall not speak of himself: as Christ, the Son, spoke not of himself in opposition to the Father, so the Spirit speaks not of himself in opposition either to the Father, or the Son, but in perfect agreement with both; being, as of the same nature and essence, power and glory, so of the same mind, understanding, and will; and as they agreed and wrought jointly and harmoniously, in the works of nature and providence, so in the economy of grace and salvation.

But whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; as Christ himself did, Joh 15:15; and they are such things as ear has not heard besides; what were secretly transacted in the council and covenant of peace, and agreed upon by all the three persons; things which concern the salvation of men, the Gospel church state, another world, and the glory of all the divine persons:

and he will show you things to come; which would come to pass after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; things relating to the state and settlement of the Gospel church, the partition wall being broken down, the law of commandments contained in ordinances abolished, and a new face of things appearing in the kingdom and interest of Christ, in consequence of the Spirit being sent forth, and poured down: or this may respect the spirit of prophecy in the apostles, who showed to them many things to come in after ages; as the rise of the man of sin, the great departure from the faith, and decline of the power of godliness in the last days, the calling of the Jews, the destruction of antichrist, the burning of the world, and the making of new heavens and new earth; and, in short, what would be the state of the church of Christ, and religion, in all the several periods of time, quite down to the coming of Christ, when dead saints shall be raised, and living ones changed, as is declared throughout the book of Revelation.

{y} Pirke Eliezer, c. 39.

John 16:14

Ver. 14. He shall glorify me,.... In the ministration of the Gospel, which is "the ministration of the Spirit", **2Co 3:8**; and asserts Christ to be God over all, to have all that the Father hath, to be possessed of all divine perfections, to have the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him; ascribes the same works and worship to him as to, the Father; and, as in a glass, holds him forth to be beheld as the brightness of his glory, and his glory to be seen in it, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth: it declares him to be the only Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners, that justification is solely by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice; and which ministration the Spirit makes effectual to the bringing of many souls to Christ to believe in him, profess his name, and expect life and salvation from him, by all which he is glorified. Moreover, the Spirit of God glorifies Christ in the experience of the saints, by leading them to him for righteousness, peace, and pardon, for grace, and fresh supplies of it, for wisdom and strength, for food and rest, for life and happiness; and by enabling them to live by faith on him, on whom he has encouraged them to venture, and to whom they have committed their all; and by instructing them to glory in him, as their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and by ascribing the glory of their salvation to him, and by making continual application to him, under his direction and influence; by leaning on him, and expecting every good thing from him both for time and eternity. The particular instance in which he glorifies Christ, follows,

for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you; which is to be understood not of gifts Christ received from his Father, and which he gives to men by his Spirit; nor of internal grace, as faith, love, &c. which the Spirit from Christ works in the hearts of men; but either of the doctrines of the Gospel, the deep things of God and Christ, which the Spirit searches, and reveals in the ministration of the word. The Gospel is a sort of a "Kabala", though of a different kind from the oral law of the Jews. Christ received it from the Father, the Spirit received it from Christ, the apostles received it from the Spirit, and the churches of Christ from them in succeeding generations: or this may be understood of the blessings of grace held forth in the Gospel, such as justification, pardon, adoption, &c. which are in Christ; and which the Spirit from Christ takes and shows to the saints, and witnesses their special and particular interest in, and so comforts them, and glorifies Christ.

John 16:15

Ver. 15. All things that the Father hath are mine,.... Though it is true that the same divine nature the Father is possessed of, the Son is; and the same divine perfections belong to the one, as to the other; and the Son shares in the same glory and felicity the Father does; so that in the utmost extent of the phrase, all that the Father hath are his; yet since Christ is speaking of things received of him by the Spirit, and shown unto his people, it rather seems that the blessings of grace, which the Father has in store for his chosen ones, and the doctrines of grace, those deep things of his, are here more especially meant; which to reveal and apply, is the peculiar work of the Spirit; and in these Christ is equally concerned with the Father:

therefore, said I, he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you; he does not mention the things of the Father, only his own; nor was there any necessity for it, because whatever is his, is the Father's, and whatever the Father has is his: they are jointly concerned in every thing relating to the salvation, benefit, comfort, and happiness of the saints; so that when the Spirit of God takes of the things of the one, he takes of the things of the other, and discovers, and applies them.

John 16:16

Ver. 16. A little while and ye shall not see me,.... Meaning, that he should be quickly taken from them by death. And in a very little time after this, having put up a prayer for them, recorded in the next chapter, he went into the garden, where he was met by Judas with his band of men, who laid hold on him, bound him, and led him first to Annas, then to Caiaphas, and from him to Pilate, when all the disciples forsook him and fled, and saw him no more in this mortal state, except Peter and John. He took his trial, was soon condemned, and crucified, and laid in the dark tomb, and silent grave, where, for a while, he was out of sight.

And again, a little while and ye shall see me; referring either to his rising again the third day from his death, as was prophesied of, **Ho 6:2**; and was typified by Jonah's lying three days and three nights in the whale's belly, when he appeared to, and was seen by his disciples, to their great joy; or else to the short time in which he was to be, and was seen by them; namely, forty days between his resurrection and ascension; a longer stay it was not necessary he should make, for he had other work to do, for himself and them:

because I go to the Father; to give an account of the work he had finished on earth; to carry in his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; to present himself to his Father on behalf of his people; to appear in the presence of God for them; to be their advocate, plead their cause, and make intercession for them, and take possession of heaven in their name; to take his place at the right hand of God in their nature; to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return.

John 16:17

Ver. 17. Then said some of his disciples among themselves,.... It may be, some of them might better understand the meaning of Christ than others, or they might all be ignorant of it; for before the effusion of the Spirit on them, they were attended with a great deal of ignorance; and what through their being overwhelmed at this time with sorrow, and what with their national sentiments they retained about a temporal kingdom, they understood very little of what Christ said to them concerning his death, the nature, use, and end of it. Wherefore some might make the motion first, and inquire,

what is this that he saith unto us, a little while and ye shall not see me? they knew not what he meant by it, though he had so often and so clearly spoken of his death unto them: and as ignorant were they what he should design by saying,

and again a little while and ye shall see me; though he had expressly told them, in so many words, some time ago, that whereas he should die, he should rise again the third day: and as much at a loss were they to guess what he should intend by the reason he gives,

and because I go to the Father; though he had often mentioned it already, and as what might be matter of joy unto them.

John 16:18

Ver. 18. They said therefore,.... One, and all of them; the inquiry became universal;

what is this that he saith, a little while? it seems as if this phrase was the most intricate and perplexing to them; for whatever conceptions they might have of not seeing, and seeing him again, as expressive of his going from them, and returning to them, yet had no notion at all what he should mean by "a little while": and therefore add,

we cannot tell what he saith: they knew his words, but not his meaning.

John 16:19

Ver. 19. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him,.... This is a proof of Christ's deity, that he is the omniscient God who knows all things, what is in man, even the secrets of the heart; for he not only knew the whisperings of the disciples, and their inquiries among themselves about the sense of his words, but also their secret desires to ask him concerning it:

and said unto them, do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, a little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me? which he said before they could put the question to him, they being bashful, and backward, through fear or shame; and which not only confirms what is before observed of his omniscience, but also shows his readiness to open his mind and meaning, and explain himself to his disciples, as he does in the following words.

John 16:20

Ver. 20. Verily, verily, I say unto you,.... A strong asseveration, a way of speaking often used by him, when he solemnly affirms any thing, and would assure of the truth of it, as here:

that ye shall weep and lament; meaning at his death, when he should be removed from them, so that they should not see him; when they should be filled with inward grief on account thereof, and express it by mournful gestures, and a doleful voice; and which was fulfilled in them, Mr 16:10; and how pensive the two disciples were that were going to Emmaus, it is easy to observe from the account given of them;

but the world shall rejoice; the unbelieving Jews; and not only the common people, but the chief priests, with the Scribes and elders, mocked at him, insulted him, and triumphed over him when on the cross, being glad at heart they had got him there; imagining now, that it was all over, the day was their own, and they should be no more disturbed by Christ and his followers:

and ye shall be sorrowful; Christ repeats it again, and uses a variety of words to express the greatness of their sorrow, and the many ways in which they would signify it:

but your sorrow shall be turned into joy; as it was, when he was raised from the dead, which was so wonderful and surprising to them, that for joy they could scarce believe their own eyes; it being a mercy unexpected, though they had been told of it, and too great for them to enjoy; yea, that very thing which was the occasion of their sorrow, became the foundation of their joy; namely, the death of Christ, salvation, and all the benefits and blessings of grace coming to them in this way.

John 16:21

Ver. 21. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow,.... As was said she should have, **Ge 3:16**; This is God's ordination and appointment for sin:

because her hour is come; is at hand; the fixed time in nature is up, and there is no avoiding it:

but as soon as she is delivered of the child; for though the sorrow is great, yet there is a deliverance, and she is saved in child bearing: when

she remembereth no more the anguish; the sharp pains she has endured in her travail;

for joy that a man is born into the world. Much such a way of speaking is used by the Jews {z}, who observe,

"if a woman brings forth a male child, all is forgot, and she repents (i.e. of her impatience, or any unbecoming expression in the time of labour), rkzh txmvb, "for the joy of a man child"."

And our Lord seems to have respect to a prevailing notion among them, as well as many others, of the felicity of male children: it is a common saying with them {a},

"blessed is he whose children are males, and woe to him whose children are females:"

for they say {b},

"when Mlweb rkz abv, "that a man child comes into the world", peace comes into the world."

Now our Lord, by this instance, illustrates the sorrow his disciples should have by his departure, and the joy that they should be possessed of upon his return to them; that as the pains of a woman in travail are very sharp and severe, and the distress of her mind, about the issue of things respecting herself and offspring, is very great, so would be the grief and trouble of the disciples on account of the death of their Lord and master: but as when a woman is safely delivered of a man child, she is so filled with joy, that her sorrow is remembered no more so should it be with them, when Christ should appear to them; all their trouble, concern, anxiety of mind, and fears, that attended them, would all vanish away, and they be distressed with them no more.

{z} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 98. 2. {a} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 65. 1. Kiddushin, fol. 82. 2. Bava Bathra, fol. 16. 2. Sanhedrin, fol. 100. 2. {b} T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 31. 2.

John 16:22

Ver. 22. And ye now therefore have sorrow,.... This is the application of the preceding case. As it is with a woman in travail, when her hour is come, so it was now with them, and would be when Christ was removed from them; and as it is with every believer, when Christ is absent: for though there are many things that cause sorrow now, as sin, Satan, and afflictive dispensations of providence, yet nothing more sensibly touches believers to the quick, and gives them more uneasiness, than when Christ is out of sight: the reasons are, because he is so nearly related to them, being their everlasting Father, kind husband, loving brother, and faithful friend; and because they are so strongly affected to him, there is none like him in their esteem in heaven and in earth: he is the person whom their souls love; he is the very life of their souls; his favour, his gracious presence is life to them, and his absence is as death; nor can they be easy, but are restless, and upon the inquiry after him, until he returns to them, which he does in his own time; and therefore this sorrow is but now, for the present, it is not perpetual.

But I will see you again; as he did see his disciples upon his resurrection once and again, for the space of forty days, at certain times, by intervals: and so, in a spiritual sense, he comes and sees his people, makes them a visit, manifests himself unto them, and abides with them: they are always under his omniscient eye; he always sees them as God; and they are always under his eye of love, grace, and mercy, as Mediator: but this means such a seeing of them, as that they see him as well as he sees them; and is expressive of a delightful intercourse between Christ and them, than which nothing is more desirable:

and your heart shall rejoice: as did the hearts of the disciples, when they saw Christ risen from the dead; and as the hearts of believers do, when Christ so looks upon them that they can view him with an eye of faith; such a sight is a heart rejoicing one. To see the glory and beauty of Christ's person, the fulness and suitableness of him as a Saviour; to have an appropriating view of him as such; or to see him so as to have sensible communion with him, must needs fill the heart of a believer with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: such a sight of Christ will rejoice the heart under a sense of sin, the pollution and guilt of it, when tempted by Satan, or under God's afflicting hand, and even in the view of death and eternity.

And your joy no man taketh from you. The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment, and the joy of the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, was a short lived one, on account of Christ's death; for Jesus was soon raised from the dead, and the apostles were filled with the Spirit, and went forth boldly preaching in the name of Christ, to the great grief of these men. But the joy of the disciples was durable; their risen Lord would never die more; the blessings of grace, such as redemption, pardon, righteousness, and atonement, would, and do ever remain as the foundation of solid joy: nor could a stranger intermeddle with it; oudeiv, "not one", either man or devil could take it away, not by all the reproaches they could cast upon them, or persecutions they could follow them with: and so, though a believer's joy may be damped by sin, and Satan, and the world, it may not be always in lively exercise; yet the matter of it always remains in Christ, and the principle of it in themselves can never be destroyed, but will issue in everlasting joy in another world.

John 16:23

Ver. 23. In that day ye shall ask me nothing,.... Meaning, not the whole Gospel dispensation, so often called, in prophetic language, "that day"; and is, in the New Testament, opposed to the night of Jewish and Gentile darkness; and, in comparison of the former dispensation, is a time of great spiritual light and knowledge: nor the latter part of that day, when there will be no night of darkness and desertion, of error and security, of affliction and persecution, with the church; when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord; when all the children of God shall be taught of him, and there will be no need to say, know the Lord, for all shall know him, from the least to the greatest: nor the day of judgment, which, by way of emphasis, is so frequently called "that day": nor the state of ultimate happiness, the everlasting day of glory; when all imperfections shall be done away, when saints will know, as they are known, and see Jesus as he is, and need not ask any questions about him: but the time when Christ, and his apostles, should meet again, and see each other's faces with joy and pleasure, is meant; and the time following thereon, especially the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured down upon them, and, according to his promise, came to them, taught them all things, and led them into all truth. This asking is not to be understood of asking in prayer; for it appears, by what follows, that they should ask in his name then, and he encourages to it; but of asking him questions, and that not of any sort; for it is certain, that, within this time, they did ask many things. Peter asked what John, the beloved disciple, should do; and they all asked him, a little before his ascension, whether he would, at that time, restore again the kingdom to Israel; but it is to be restrained to such things they had been, or were, desirous of asking him; such as, whither goest thou? show us the Father? how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? and more especially these last questions, they greatly desired to put to him, what is this, "a little while and ye shall not see me?" and what is this, "a little while and ye shall see me?" and what is the meaning of these words, "because I go to the Father?" Joh 16:17. Now our Lord intimates, that at this time all these things would be so clear and evident to them, that they should ask him no questions about them. But he adds,

verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Asking here signifies prayer, and a different word is here used than before. The object of prayer is the Father, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, who were both separately, or in conjunction with the Father, prayed unto after this; see **Ac 7:59**. The medium of access to the Father is the name of Christ; he is the Mediator between God and man, the way of access unto him; whatever is asked, is to be asked on account of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and then there is no doubt of success; whatever is asked will be given; his blood within the vail speaks loud for every blessing; his righteousness, God is always pleased with; his sacrifice is a sweet smelling savour: his mediation is powerful; and his name is always prevalent.

John 16:24

Ver. 24. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name,.... Not that they had never prayed as yet; for they had desired him to teach them to pray, which he did: they had prayed to him particularly for an increase of faith, and for many other things; but either they had only asked him, he being present with them, and not the Father; or if they had asked the Father anything, yet not in the name of Christ: they had made no mention of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, nor any use of his mediation; things they had not as yet such clear knowledge of; or they had not asked as yet any extraordinary thing, as they afterwards did; see **Ac 4:29**;

ask, and ye shall receive; that is, in my name, and whatever ye ask for, ye shall have it, to fit you for your work, to carry you through it, and to give you success in it: see **Mt 7:7**;

that your joy may be full; go cheerfully through your work, find much pleasure in it, and with great satisfaction see the Gospel spread, souls converted, Satan's kingdom weakened, and the interest of your Redeemer thrive and flourish; than which nothing can more contribute to complete the joy of the ministers of Christ.

John 16:25

Ver. 25. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs,.... Concerning his Father, and his Father's house, and the many mansions in it, of his going to prepare a place for them there, and of the way unto it, all which they seemed not to understand; of the nature of communion with him and his Father, and of the manifestation of them to them, so as not unto the world, which they could not account for; of their union to him under the simile of the vine and its branches; and of his departure from them, and return unto them; and of the sorrow that should follow upon the one, and the joy that should attend the other, set forth in the case of a woman in travail, having sorrow, and being joyful when delivered. All which, one would think, were plain and easy to be understood; but such was the then present state and case of the disciples, that these all seemed as proverbs, parables, and dark sayings, which they did not clearly understand: wherefore our Lord says,

but the time cometh; meaning either the time of his appearing unto them, after his resurrection, or the day of Pentecost:

when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show plainly of the Father; by pouring forth his Spirit upon them, who should not only take of his things, but of his Father's also, and show them unto them clearly and plainly; so as that they should have a clear understanding of them, as they were capable of; of the perfections of his nature, his distinct personality, his being the Father of Christ, and of all the elect in him; of his everlasting love to their persons; of his choice of them in Christ; of his covenant with them in him; of his mind and will concerning them, and his gracious designs towards them; of his Father's house, and the way to it; and of the nature, design, and usefulness of his going to him; of the distinction between speaking in parables and dark sayings, and speaking plainly, openly, and apparently; see Nu 12:8.

John 16:26

Ver. 26. At that day ye shall ask in my name,.... For when the Spirit was poured upon them, they not only received his extraordinary gifts, and had a larger measure of his grace bestowed upon them; but were also blessed with him, as a spirit of grace and supplication, in a more remarkable manner than ever they had been before: they then better understood the throne of grace, and the advantages of it; had greater enlargements and assistances at it; and were better acquainted with the mediation of Christ, and the necessity of making use of his name, blood, and righteousness, in all their petitions and requests.

And I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you. This Christ had promised before, Joh 14:16; nor was there any occasion to repeat it now, of which they might be strongly assured: besides, at that day the Spirit would be given to them by virtue of his intercession; so that there would be no need of praying to the Father for them on that account. This is said, not as if the intercession of Christ for his people would then cease; for he is always their advocate with the Father, and ever lives to make intercession for them; though it may not be carried on in the same manner, by prayer, as when he was here on earth, his personal appearance, and the presentation of his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness, being sufficient; but to declare the disposition and readiness of his Father to hear them, and grant unto them whatsoever they should ask of him in his name.

John 16:27

Ver. 27. For the Father himself loveth you,.... The Father loved them as well, and as much as the Son did, and of himself too, without any merit or motive in them: he loved them from everlasting, and had given proofs of it in time, in the gift of his Son to them, and for them; and in calling them by his grace; and therefore being thus strongly affected to them, they might depend upon a ready and speedy answer from him, as might be best for his glory, and their good.

Because ye have loved me; not that their love to Christ was the cause of the Father's love to them; but, on the contrary, the Father's love to them was the cause of their love to Christ; and therefore as the cause is known by its effect, they might be assured of the Father's love to them by their love to Christ; for if the Father had not loved them, they had never loved God, nor Christ; but since they did love Christ, it was a clear case the Father loved them: and this their love is joined with faith;

and have believed that I came out from God; being sent by him, and am no impostor, but the true Messiah that was to come: faith in Christ, and love to him, go together; where the one is, there is the other; faith works by love; they are both the gifts of God's grace, and the fruits and effects of his everlasting love; and those who are possessed of them may be firmly persuaded of their interest therein.

John 16:28

Ver. 28. I came forth from the Father,.... This is the sum of what the apostle believed, and Christ, in these discourses of his, had been speaking of. This his coming forth from the Father is to be understood, not of his eternal filiation; nor of his coming forth in a way of grace towards his own people in the council and covenant of grace and peace; nor of his constitution, as Mediator, from everlasting; but of his coming in the flesh in the fulness of time: which supposes that he was, that he existed as a divine person before; that he was with the Father before; that he came forth from him with his knowledge, mind, and will; he came not of himself, but he sent him; and yet he came willingly, was not forced, or did not come against his will: and this does not suppose any local motion, or change of place, but only intends an assumption of the human nature into unity with his divine person, who fills heaven and earth with his presence; nor any separation from his Father, with whom he was, and in whose bosom he lay when he was made flesh, and dwelt among men; nor any absence from heaven, for he was there when on earth.

And am come into the world; where he was before, as the Creator and upholder of it, by his immensity and powerful presence; this designs his coming and manifestation in the flesh, which in general was to do the whole will of God, which he in council and covenant agreed to do, and for which he came down from heaven; and in particular to preach the Gospel, call sinners to repentance, give life and light to many, and to fulfil the law, by obeying its precepts, and bearing its penalty, and both to do and suffer in the room and stead of his people, and to save lost sinners, even the chief of them.

Again, I leave the world; not that he relinquished the sustaining and government of it, as God, nor the care of his people in it, as Mediator, for whom he retains the same love as ever, and will not leave them fatherless and comfortless; nor was he leaving it as never to return more; for he will descend, in like manner he ascended, and will come a second time and judge the world in righteousness: but he was about to depart from it by death, having done the work and business for which he came about.

And go to the Father; to give an account of his work unto him, as his righteous servant, being faithful to him that had appointed him; and to transact the affairs of his people; to appear in the presence of God for them; to present their petitions, be their advocate, make intercession for them, take possession of heaven in their name, and prepare it for them; to take his place at the right hand of God in human nature, and to be glorified with the glory promised him before the world was.

John 16:29

Ver. 29. His disciples said unto him,.... Upon the above discourse of Christ, such rays and beams of light darted into the minds of the apostles, and things stood so clear in their view, and they so well understood what Christ had said, that they declare, lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb: what he had said before, were to them like proverbial, or parabolical expressions, not easy to be understood; they were like enigmas, riddles, and dark sayings, the meaning of which they could not apprehend; but now they observe, with admiration, that what he delivered was plain, and intelligible; which was not so much owing to Christ's different way of speaking now, from what it was before, as to their former dulness of hearing, and now having some further degree of light given unto them.

John 16:30

Ver. 30. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things,.... Not only all men, but all things, even the secrets of men's hearts, of which the apostles had now a convincing proof; for whereas Christ had delivered some expressions, Joh 16:16; which they did not understand, and were desirous to ask him the meaning of, Joh 16:19; which he knowing, being God omniscient, prevents their putting the question to him, and enters upon a discourse, in which he so clearly explained what they wanted to be informed of, without their asking him, that they were fully assured that he must know all things;

and, as they add,

needest not that any man should ask thee: the meaning is, that should Christ deliver anything not so intelligible to any of his audience, and they were desirous of knowing the sense of it, there would be no need of putting the question in form to him, since he is privy to the first motion of desire rising up in the mind; and can, and will, if he thinks fit, explain himself on such an head, to the satisfaction of the person, without ever asking him; at least there is no need of putting the question to make him acquainted with his desire, this being before known unto him. By this we believe that thou camest forth from God; was the true Messiah, and had his mission and commission from God, as such; doubtless they believed this before, but this instance of Christ's omniscience was a strengthening proof of it. So Nathanael, by Christ's saying to him, that before Philip called him, and when he was under the fig tree, he saw him when he thought no eye did but an omniscient one; it laid him under such full convictions of him, as at once to acknowledge him the Son of God, the King of Israel. This is one of the signs and characters of the Messiah with the Jews, that he should have a discerning spirit of men and things, according to Isa 11:3 {c}.

{c} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 2.

John 16:31

Ver. 31. Jesus answered them, do ye now believe?] Not as calling their faith in question; or as denying they had any; or as despising it for the smallness of it; but as reproving them for their security, vain confidence and boasting, as if their faith was so very strong that it would never be moved; and perhaps for the lateness of it too: the words may be read affirmatively, without an interrogation, "ye do believe now"; they are in the Syriac and Arabic versions read imperatively, "believe ye now". Though the "now" is left out by the former, which is not to be spared, for the emphasis lies on it; and a regard seems to be had both to time past and to come. The words carry in them a tacit reproof, that they believed no sooner, or were not before this time more established in their faith, when he had been so long with them, and they had heard so many discourses from him, and had seen so many miracles wrought by him: however, it was not too late, and they would do well to go on believing; but it is suggested to them they would meet with something that would try their faith: and it is as if Christ had said, ye believe in me now, while I am with you, and all things go according to your mind; but what will you do anon, when I shall be taken from you, be apprehended by mine enemies, be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, be crucified, die, and be laid in the grave? will ye believe then? one of you will betray me, another deny me, and all will forsake me, and some express their doubts about me.

John 16:32

Ver. 32. Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come,.... The time is at hand, yea, it may, in a sense, be said to be already come, it was within an hour: and indeed the following prayer might be delivered in less than an hour's time; when he went immediately into the garden, and was apprehended; or at least in a very little while it would come to pass,

that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own; to his own friends, relations, and acquaintance; to his own house and home; to his own country, Galilee, whither they all went, and to their trade of fishing again; see Joh 21:3; and so was fulfilled the prophecy in Zec 13:7;

and shall leave me alone; as they did in the hands of his enemies; for they all forsook him and fled, some one way, some another; though one or two of them, Peter and John, followed him at a distance; and all came together again, but not to Christ, until his resurrection from the dead.

And yet I am, not alone; he was not alone at this time; and his meaning is, that he should not be alone then when they should be scattered from him:

because the Father is with me; not only as the Son of God, by virtue of union to him, and as one with him; but as Mediator, in consequence of his promise to uphold him, and assist him in his human nature; and though he withdrew his gracious and comforting presence from him, he bearing the sins, and standing in the room and stead of his people, yet not his powerful and supporting presence.

John 16:33

Ver. 33. These things I have spoken unto you,.... As this is the conclusion of our Lord's sermons to his disciples, these words may well enough be thought to have regard to all that he had said in general; as concerning his departure from them; his going to prepare a place for them; his union to them, and their communion with him; and the various persecutions and afflictions they should endure for his sake; and the many blessings both of grace and glory they should enjoy; and particularly what he had said in the context, concerning their forsaking him, which supposed tribulation, and would be a prelude of what they were afterwards to have in the world; and concerning the presence of his Father with him, and which they might also expect to have:

that in me ye might have peace; not in the world, in which they were to have tribulation: there is no true, solid peace, to be enjoyed in the world, and the things of it; the world can neither give it, nor take it away; nor have the men of it any knowledge and understanding of it; and much less enjoy it: nor in themselves; spiritual peace does not arise from any duties, services, and performances of men; no, not from an attendance on the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; nor even from the graces of the Spirit; for though peace may be enjoyed herein, and hereby, and through these, as means; yet does not come from them, but from Christ, in whose strength alone all duties are performed aright; who is the sum and substance of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, and the object of all grace: it is in him, and in him only, in his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, which speak peace, pardon, and atonement, that a soul finds any true, solid peace, rest, comfort, and joy; and here he may, and does find it, in opposition to the cry of sin, law, and justice, for wrath, ruin, hell, and damnation. There is a peace by Christ, which he has made for his people by the blood of his cross; and there is a peace in him, which is enjoyed through faith's looking to his blood for pardon, to his righteousness for justification, to his sacrifice for atonement and satisfaction; and by having communion with him, and discoveries of his love, and by seeing safety and security in him.

In the world ye shall have tribulation; this is certain from this declaration of Christ, who is the omniscient God, and truth itself; from the instance and example of Christ, who was all his life a man of sorrows; from the conformity of the members to the head; from the divine appointment that has so determined it; from the natural enmity of the world to the saints; from the experience of the people of God in all ages; from the usefulness of tribulation to try the graces, and bring about the temporal, spiritual, and eternal good of believers: and though they have tribulation in the world, yet not by way of punishment for sin, but as fatherly corrections and chastenings for their good, that they may not be condemned with the world; and it is only in this present world they have it; as soon as they have done with the world, they will have done with tribulation:

but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world; it is very observable how the phrase, "in the world ye shall have tribulation", stands, and is encompassed, before, with these words, "that in me ye might have peace", and behind, with these, "be of good cheer", &c. Believers, of all men, notwithstanding their tribulations, have reason to be of good cheer, since their sins are forgiven, the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts, their redemption draws nigh, and they have hopes of glory; and particularly, because as Christ here says, for their encouragement under all their tribulations in the world, "I have overcome the world": Satan, the god and prince of the world, with all his principalities and powers, which Christ has led captive, ransomed his people from, and delivers them from the power of; and all that is in the world, the lusts and sins of it, their damning power by the sacrifice of himself, and their governing power by his Spirit and grace; and the men of the world with all their rage and fury, whom he has trodden down in his anger, restrains by his power, and causes the remainder of their wrath to praise him; in all which conquests he makes his people share, and even makes them more than conquerors, through himself: so that they have nothing to fear from the world; nor any reason to be cast down by the tribulation they meet with in it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 17:1

Ver. 1. These words spake Jesus,.... Referring to his sermons and discourses, his words of comfort, advice, direction, and instruction, delivered in the three preceding chapters:

and lift up his eyes to heaven; the seat of the divine majesty, the throne of his Father. This is a prayer gesture. It is said {c} of R. Tanchuma, that Mymvl wynp hybgh, "he lift up his face to heaven", and said before the holy blessed God, Lord of the world, &c. and this is expressive of the ardency and affection of the mind of Christ, and of his confidence of the divine favour: it shows that his mind was filled with devotion and faith, and was devoid of shame and fear, and was possessed of great freedom, boldness, and intrepidity:

and said, Father; or "my Father", as the Syriac, Arabic and Persic versions read; and no doubt but he used the word Abba, which signifies "my Father", thereby claiming his interest in him, and relation to him:

the hour is come; to depart out of the world, to suffer and die for his people, which was agreed upon between him and his Father from all eternity; and it was welcome to him, on account of the salvation of his people, and therefore he spoke with an air of pleasure and satisfaction; and it would be quickly over, was but an hour, as it were, though a time of great trouble, distress and darkness, and so a fit time for prayer:

glorify thy Son; as man and Mediator; for as God, he needed no glory, nor could any be added to him: but it designs some breakings forth of glory upon him at his death; by supporting him under all the sorrows and sufferings of it; and in carrying him through it; so that he conquered all his people's enemies, and his own, sin, Satan, the world, and death, and obtained eternal redemption for them: and at his resurrection; by not suffering him to remain so long in the grave, as to see corruption; and by raising him at the exact time that was foretold by the prophets and himself; and by sending an angel to roll away the stone; and by raising some of the saints along with him; and by putting such a glory on his body, as that it is the pattern and exemplar of the saints' resurrection: and at his ascension to heaven, when he led captivity captive; and at his session at the right hand of God, above all principalities and powers; and through the effusion of the Spirit upon his disciples, and the divine power that attended his Gospel, to make it effectual to great multitudes, both to Jews and

Gentiles; by all which he was glorified, pursuant to this petition of his; in which his end is,

that thy Son also may glorify thee; as he had done throughout the whole of his life and conversation, and by his ministry and miracles; so now at his sufferings and death, through the salvation of his chosen ones, in which the wisdom, grace, justice, holiness, power, and faithfulness of God are greatly glorified; and in the after discharge of other branches of his mediatorial office, in making intercession for his people, in the ministry of his word and ordinances, by his servants, attended with his holy Spirit, and by the administration of his kingly office.

{c} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 34. fol. 174. 4.

John 17:2

Ver. 2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh,.... All men, in distinction from angels; and these as fallen, as weak, frail, sinful, and mortal creatures; men of every nation, Jew or Gentile, and of every character, elect or non-elect: not but that he has also a power over angels; nor is his power over men limited to their "flesh" or bodies, but reaches to their spirits or souls also: which power is a governing, disposing, and judicial one; he rules them with a sceptre of righteousness, he disposes of them in providence as he pleases, and will judge them at the last day: and this is a power that is "given" him by his Father, and is not that original power over all things he has as God, and the Creator of them, which is natural, essential, and underived; but is a derived and delegated power, which he has as Mediator, as subservient to the ends and designs of his office: and as God glorified him as such, by giving him this power; so he glorifies him again, by acknowledging it, and by using it for the end for which it is given:

that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him; eternal life is a gift, and not owing to the merits of men; indeed there is no merit in men's works, no, not in the best; for these are previously due to God, cannot be profitable to him, if done aright, are not done in the creature's strength, but through the grace of God, and bear no proportion to eternal life; which is in Christ's gift: not only the promise of it is in him, but that itself; it is put into his hands, and he came into this world, that his people might have it; he has procured it, and has removed what lay in the way of their enjoyment of it; he has a right to bestow it, and their right unto it comes by him, through his blood and righteousness: the persons on whom he confers this gift, are not all men, but such as the Father in the everlasting covenant has given to him, as his people and portion, his spouse and children, his jewels and his treasure, to be saved and enjoyed by him; whom he has chosen and preserved in him, and made his care and charge; to these, and every one of these, Christ gives this great blessing; nor shalt any of them come short of it; and it is for the sake of this, that all creatures and things, all power in heaven and in earth, are given to him.

John 17:3

Ver. 3. And this is life eternal,.... That is, the beginning and pledge of it, the way unto it, and means of it, and what will certainly issue in it:

that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. The knowledge of God here spoken of, is not the knowledge of him by the light of nature, and works of creation; for a man may know God in this sense, and not know him in Christ, nor anything of Christ; yea, may know God and profess him in words, and in works deny him, as the Heathens did; nor is eternal life known hereby, nor connected with it: nor is it such a knowledge of God as is to be obtained by the law of Moses, in which God is represented as a righteous and incensed Being; nor is there in it any discovery of God, as a God of love, grace, and mercy in Christ; nor any revelation of a Mediator, Saviour and Redeemer; nor can it either show, or give to persons eternal life; and yet what is here said of the knowledge of God and Christ, the Jews say of the law {d},

"one man said to his friend, let us dash them against that wall and kill them, because they have left abh Mlwe yyx, "eternal life"; (the gloss upon it is, hrwt, "the law";) and employ themselves in a temporary life, the gloss says of this world, which is merchandise."

More truly does Philo the Jew say {e}, that

"fleeing to the Divine Being, "is eternal life"; and running front him is death."

But this is to be understood of an evangelic knowledge of God, as the God and Father of Christ, as the God of all grace, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin, and of Christ Mediator; not a general, notional, and speculative knowledge; but a practical and experimental one; a knowledge of approbation and appropriation; a fiducial one, whereby a soul believes in Christ, and trusts in his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice for salvation; and which, though imperfect, is progressive. The Arians and Unitarians urge this text, against the true and proper deity of our Lord Jesus, and his equality with the Father, but without success; since the Father is called the only true God, in opposition to the many false gods of the Heathens, but not to the exclusion of the Son or Spirit; for Christ is also styled the one Lord, and only Lord God, but not to the exclusion of the Father; yea the true God and eternal life; was he not, he would never, as here, join himself with the only true God; and besides, eternal life is made to depend as much upon the knowledge of him, as of the Father. The reason of this different mode of expression, is owing to the character of Christ as Mediator, who is said to be sent by the only true God, about the business of man's salvation. Nor is it of any moment what the Jew {f} objects, that Jesus here confesses, that the true God is only one God; nor does he call himself God, only the Messiah sent by God; and that the Apostle Paul also asserts the unity of God, **1Ti 1:17**; and therefore Jesus cannot be God: for Christ and his Father, the only true God, are one; and that he is the one true God with his Father, he tacitly suggests here by joining himself with him; and what the Apostle Paul says of the one and only wise God, may as well be understood of Christ, the Son of God, as of the Father; since all the characters in the text agree with him, and of him he had been speaking in the context.

{d} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 21. 1. {e} De profugis, p. 461. {f} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 55. p. 445.

John 17:4

Ver. 4. I have glorified thee on the earth,.... This is made use of as a reason and argument, why the Father should glorify him: Christ glorified his Father personally, as he held forth and expressed the glory of his person; and verbally, by ascribing, on all occasions, praise and glory to him; and really, or by deeds, and that by various ways: as in and by his ministry; by asserting he had his mission, qualifications, and doctrine, from him as a prophet; his principal work was to declare his Father's mind and will, his love and grace; nor did he seek his own, but his Father's glory: and by his miracles: for though these were proofs of his deity and Messiahship, and displays of his own glory; yet the glory of his Father, especially of his power, was eminently seen in them, for he referred them to him; and these were often the means of men's glorifying the God of Israel: and by his whole life and conversation, which was entirely according to the will of God; and every action of it was directed to his glory; particularly he glorified him by his early regard to his will, and the business he sent him about; by his zeal for his Father's house; and by the exercise of the various graces of faith, hope, and love upon him: and as by his life, so at his death, even all the while he was "on the earth"; where God had been dishonoured by the sin of men; where Christ now was debased in human nature, and even that was for the glory of God; and this is said in distinction from heaven, where God is glorified by the angels, and where Christ would shortly be glorified in his human nature:

I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; by "the work" is meant obedience to the will of God; the destruction of all spiritual enemies, as sin, Satan, the world, and death; and the redemption and salvation of his people, which was "given" him to do: he did not take it upon himself, but being called to it he readily accepted of it; it was appointed, and cut out for him, in the council and covenant of grace; he was thoroughly acquainted with it; and though it was difficult, it was pleasant and delightful to him; nor did he leave it till he could say it is "finished"; as it was by himself alone, without the help of man; and is so complete that nothing can be added to it; and so firmly done, that it cannot be unravelled by men and devils: he speaks of it as done, because the time was come to finish it, and he was sure of the accomplishment of it.

John 17:5

Ver. 5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self,.... Not with his perfections, these he had, they dwelt bodily in him; or with his nature, in which he was one with him; but as Mediator, with his glorious presence in heaven, by setting him at his right hand, and crowning him with glory and honour. The Jews have a notion that God will give to the King Messiah, hlem lv dwbkh Nm, "of the supreme glory" {g}: the glory Christ prays for is, as he says,

the glory which I had with thee before the world was; the same phrase with Mlwel, or Mlweh Mdwq, used by the Jews {h}. This is not to be understood of the glory of the human nature of Christ, abstractly considered; for that is no person of itself, but what is taken up into personal union with the Son of God; and therefore cannot be intended by this personal character I; nor did it exist from eternity; it was indeed written in God's book of predestination, even all its members, when as yet there were none of them in actual being; it was set up in God's thoughts and counsel, as the pattern and exemplar of human nature; it had a federal union with the Son of God, or a covenant subsistence with him;

and in the Old Testament Christ was often spoken of as man, because of his frequent appearances in an human form, and because of the certainty of his incarnation; but he did not really and actually exist as man, until he took flesh of the virgin; for Christ, as man, is the seed of the woman, the son of David, Abraham, and Adam; he is called the last and second Adam, and was not as man before the first: the Old Testament speaks of his incarnation as future, nor is it possible that a creature can exist before time; for as soon as a creature exists, time begins, which is nothing else than the measure of a creature's duration; nor was the human nature of Christ with the Father from eternity; nor had it a glory before the world began, neither in whole, nor in part: nor is the glory of the divine nature abstractly considered here meant; this glory indeed Christ had from everlasting; he had it with his Father, in common with him, being in union to him; and it is true that it was in some measure veiled and covered in his state of humiliation; for though there were some breakings forth of it in that state, these were seen but by a few; wherefore he is thought by some, to pray here for the manifestation of this glory; but this glory was essential to him, was his natural right, and not to be prayed for, and which he then had as much as ever, and of which there could be no suspension: but this designs the glory of him as Godman, and Mediator; he was not only predestinated to be a Mediator, but was really set up as such from everlasting, and had a mediatorial fulness of grace put into his hands, and had the honour and glory of that office given unto him by the other two persons; and now that he might appear to be what he was, to be made, that is, made manifest that he was both Lord and Christ, he here prays; which was to be done, upon his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, by the pouring down of the Holy Ghost.

{g} Midrash Tillim in Psal. 20 apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. Ver. l. 3. c. 9.
{h} Gloss in T. Bab Pesachim, fol. 54. 1.

John 17:6

Ver. 6. I have manifested thy name,.... Not the "Nomen Tetragrammaton", the name of four letters, the name "Jehovah", and which the Jews call "Shemhamphorash", and say is ineffable, and to be pronounced by Adonai; who also speak of other names, and say {i},

"truly the former wise men had holy names, which they received from the prophets, as the name of "seventy two" letters, and the name of "forty two" letters, and the name of "twelve" letters, and many other holy names; and by which they could do new signs and wonders in the world; but they did not make use of them, only in case of necessity, as in a time of persecution and distress."

The name of twelve letters, Galatinus {k} pretends, is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the words for which in the Hebrew language consist of twelve letters; and that of forty two letters he makes to be this, the Father God, the Son God, the Holy Ghost God, yet there are not three Gods, but one God; or thus, the Father God, the Son God, the Holy Ghost God, three in one, one in three; the Hebrew words for which contain forty two letters; but the authorities by which he would support all this are insufficient. However, it is none of these names, nor any other scriptural ones, that are here meant; but either God himself, or the perfections of his nature, or his will of command, or rather his Gospel; unless Christ himself, or his name Jesus, God by the angel gave him, and in whose name there is salvation, and no other can be thought to be meant; and which, as it was manifested to his disciples, so it is to all whom God has chosen and given to Christ:

unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; which is to be understood, not merely of their being given to him as apostles, nor of their being given and brought to him in the effectual calling only, but of an eternal act of God's in election, and in the covenant of grace; when these persons were given to Christ as his spouse, his spiritual seed and offspring, the sheep of his pasture, and his portion and inheritance, to be saved and preserved by him; which as it is an instance of love and care on God's part to give, and of grace and condescension on Christ's to receive, so of distinguishing goodness, to the persons given; since not all the world, but some of it, share in this favour:

thine they were, and thou gavest them me; the persons given were not the Father's merely by creation; for so others are his also; nor would they be peculiarly his, for they are the son's likewise in this sense; but they are his by electing grace, which is the peculiar act of the Father in Christ, and is unto salvation by him, through the sanctification of the Spirit; these are chosen to be his peculiar people, and given to Christ as such:

and they have kept thy word; the Gospel, not only in their memories, but in their hearts; and having publicly professed it, they defended it valiantly against the enemies of it, and kept it pure and incorrupt; this shows that the Gospel is meant by the name of God manifested to these persons.

{i} Shaare ora, fol. 1. 3. {k} De Arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 2. c. 11, 12.

John 17:7

Ver. 7. Now they have known,.... The Syriac version reads it tedy, "I have known"; and so the Persic and Gothic versions, contrary to most copies and other versions, which read, as we render, "they have known", that is, the disciples and apostles of Christ:

that all things whatsoever thou hast given me; all temporal things, the world and the fulness of it; all power in heaven, and in earth, or a power of disposing of all things for his own service, as Mediator; all spiritual things, the covenant of grace, with all its blessings and promises, the Spirit of God, with all his, gifts and graces, a fulness of all grace for his people, yea, eternal life and glory; and everything relating to his mediatorial office and character, power to perform miracles, knowledge and wisdom to preach the Gospel, strength to procure the salvation of his people; every thing to qualify him for the government of church and the judgment of the world:

are of thee; owing to his good will and pleasure, by his appointment and constitution, as an instance of love to him, and that he might, as man, and Mediator, be honoured, and in all things have the pre-eminence, and all for the good of his chosen ones: now the knowledge of this by his disciples, must greatly confirm the mission of Christ, render him very suitable to them, cause them to entertain a greater esteem for him, lead them into some admiring views of the grace of God, in giving so much into Christ's hands for them, and engage them the more cheerfully to obey his commands.

John 17:8

Ver. 8. For I have given unto them the words,.... Not commands, but doctrines; and these not the doctrines of men; nor any of the divers and strange doctrines; but what are called in Scripture the doctrine of God, of Christ, of the apostles, are agreeably to the Scriptures, and according to godliness; and are styled the word of truth, of faith, of righteousness, of peace and reconciliation, of life and salvation, and of the Gospel; and which Christ gave to his disciples, and gifts along with them to preach them, and abilities to help them:

which thou gavest me; for the words and doctrines which Christ, as the great prophet in Israel spoke, were not his own, but his Father's; and these were given him to speak and deliver to others, and in which he was faithful; so Jonathan ben Uzziel {l} paraphrases the text in De 18:18; concerning that prophet, the Messiah, God would raise up, after this manner;

"a prophet will I raise up unto them from among their brethren, in whom the Holy Spirit shall be, like unto thee; ymgtp Ntyaw, "and I will give the words", of my prophecy into his mouth, and he shall speak with them all that I have commanded."

And so the Messiah Jesus did:

and they have received them; willingly and gladly, with reverence and meekness, with love, and thankfulness; so as to understand them and believe them, and so as to be affectionately and closely attached to them:

and have known surely that I came out from thee; which is meant, not of his eternal filiation, but of his constitution and commission, as Mediator by his Father: of which they had certain knowledge, full assurance of faith, and sincerely owned and confessed being fully persuaded he was the true Messiah, and no impostor:

and they have believed that thou didst send me; into this world, to seek and to save lost sinners, to redeem all the chosen ones, and perform everything necessary to their salvation.

{l} Targum Jon. in Deut. xviii. 18.

John 17:9

Ver. 9. I pray for them,.... This is to be understood of Christ, not as God; for as such he is the object of prayer; nor need he pray to any other; nor is there any superior to him under that consideration to pray unto; but as man and Mediator: nor is his praying any argument against his deity; nor proof of inferiority to his Father with respect to his divine nature; since it is not in that, but in his human, nature, that he prayed; though this may be ascribed to his whole person as Godman; hence he had the greatest qualifications and abilities for this work, and his prayers were always heard: praying, as attributed to Christ, must be restrained to his state of humiliation; prayer is never spoken of Christ but whilst he was here on earth; his intercession in heaven is never expressed by prayer; and the saints when they come thither, will have done praying, Christ whilst on earth, was an excellent pattern of prayer; of private and solitary prayer; of social prayer; for and with his disciples; of frequent and fervent prayer; of submission to the will of God in prayer; and of praying even for enemies: the persons he is here said to pray for are his apostles; which shows their danger and their wants, his care over them, and concern for them, and his love unto them:

I pray not for the world; the inhabitants of it, the carnal unbelieving part of the world, which lie in sin, and will be condemned; as he died not for them, so he prayed not for them; for whom he is the propitiation, he is an advocate; and for whom he died, he makes intercession; and for no other in a spiritual saving way:

but for them which thou hast given me; out of the world, as distinct from them, to be saved with an everlasting salvation by him; and to be preserved safe to his kingdom and glory; for these he prays, for the conversion of them, the application of pardon to them, their final perseverance and eternal glory:

for they are thine; not merely by creation, and as the care of his providence, but by eternal election, and special grace in calling; which is a reason why Christ prayed for them, and an argument why the Father should, and would regard his prayers.

John 17:10

Ver. 10. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine,.... Christ is speaking not of things but of persons; otherwise all the perfections of his nature as God, and all the works he did, and doctrines he taught as man, were of his Father; as all the perfections of his Father, his nature, his names, his works, his worship, were his; the same that belongs to the one belongs to the other: but persons are here meant, and these the elect of God, particularly the apostles, who were his and his Father's; belonged to them both by election, covenant transactions, redemption, and efficacious grace in conversion; which mutual interest arises from an union in nature, an agreement in covenant, and a conjunction in operation:

and I am glorified in them: or by them, they ascribing all divine perfections, works and worship to him; attributing the whole of their salvation to him, and giving him all the glory of it; believing in him; walking worthy of him, in their lives and conversations; suffering patiently and cheerfully for his sake; and abiding by his Gospel and ordinances; and he will be glorified by them, and in them hereafter, and that to all eternity.

John 17:11

Ver. 11. And now I am no more in the world,.... In the earth; which is no contradiction to his resurrection from the dead, and stay with his disciples for a while; nor to his return to judge the world at the last day; nor to his reigning on earth with his saints a thousand years; since it will not be the world as it now is, but it will be a new earth, renewed, purified and refined, and clear of the wicked inhabitants of it; and in which will only dwell righteous persons: besides, Christ was to be, and will be no more in the world, in such circumstances, and doing such work as he then was: the meaning is, that whereas he had been in the world, and had done, or as good as done the work he came about, he was now just going out of it; it was but a very little while he had to stay in it; nor should he continue long with his disciples when he rose from the dead; and whereas his bodily presence had been a guard unto them, a protection of them, and he had bore the heat and burden of the day for them, and had took all reproaches and persecutions upon himself, now he was going from them:

but these are in the world; and will continue for some time, they having much work to do, and be exposed to the evils, snares and temptations of it; where they were hated, and were liable to great hardships, afflictions and persecutions; which shows that Christ was not so intent on his own glory, as to neglect the good of his people, and to be unconcerned for them:

and I come to thee; signifying his death; the deposition of his soul into his Father's hands; his ascension in soul and body to him; his entrance into heaven, and session at the right hand of God; and therefore had nothing to ask for on his own account: but his disciples he was parting with lay near his heart, and therefore he prays;

holy Father, keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me: the person prayed unto is God the Father, the Father of Christ, and of his people; a very proper relation to consider God in and under in prayer to him: since it must give freedom, boldness, and hope of success: the epithet "holy" is exceeding suitable, as it perfectly agrees with him who is essentially so; and since it was holiness and an increase of it Christ prays for; and that there his disciples might be kept from the evil of sin: the persons prayed for are those that were given to Christ in election, and in the covenant, to be kept by him, and therefore he is the more solicitous for their preservation: his request is, that his Father would keep them from the evil of the world; from sinking under temptations and afflictions; faithful to him and to his Gospel, and in unity among themselves; and that "through" or "in" his own name; in it, in the doctrine of the Gospel, and in the worship of God, and profession of him; "through" it, through himself, as a wall of fire about them, and by his power through faith unto salvation:

that they may be one as we are; in nature, will, affection and understanding; which must be understood not of equality, but of likeness; and designs not their union to Christ, but to one another; abiding together, cleaving to each other, standing fast in one Spirit, having the same designs, and the interest of a Redeemer in view, and at heart.

John 17:12

Ver. 12. While I was with them in the world,.... This does not imply that Christ was not in the world now, for he was; but signifies that he was just going out of it; and that his continuance in it was very short: nor that he was, and would be no longer with his disciples; for this is to be understood of his bodily, not of his spiritual presence; in which respect Christ is with his people whilst they are on earth, and they are with him when he is in heaven:

I kept them in thy name; by his Father's authority and power, in his doctrine:

those that thou gavest me I have kept; that is, those that were given him to be his apostles;

and none of them is lost; these he kept close to himself, and from the evil of the world, and from temporal and eternal ruin:

but the son of perdition; Judas, a child of Satan, whose name is Apollyon the destroyer, who was now about to betray his Lord and master; and was one that was appointed to eternal ruin and destruction, of which he was justly deserving; and which is no instance of the apostasy of saints, since though he was given to Christ as an apostle, yet not in eternal election, to be saved by him:

that the Scripture might be fulfilled; this respects either Christ's keeping of his people, and their final perseverance, whereby the Scriptures that speak of it are fulfilled; or rather the destruction of Judas, whereby such passages as speak of that, have their accomplishment, particularly Ps 109:8; Some have thought that this only refers to the general sense of the Scriptures, both the law and prophets; that some are chosen to everlasting life, and others are appointed to wrath; that some are saved, and others lost; some sons of God, and others sons of perdition; but it rather seems to regard some particular passage or passages of Scripture relating to Judas, his character, condition and end, and which are very manifestly pointed at, in the psalm referred to;

"As for the servants whom I have given thee, there shall not one of them perish; for I will require them from among thy number." (2 Esdras 2:26)

John 17:13

Ver. 13. And now come I to thee,.... As in Joh 17:11, which he repeats as a very great happiness to himself, and with much pleasure and joy, but not without concern for those he was parting from:

and these things I speak in the world; which he had expressed in this prayer concerning the nature of eternal life, and his power to give it to all the Father had given him; concerning the work of redemption finished by him, and the glory due unto him on that account; concerning his chosen ones, particularly the apostles, and the mutual interest he and his Father had in them; and what he had done for them, in revealing the Gospel to them, keeping them by the powerful influence of his grace, and the great concern he had for their future preservation: and these things he took notice of in his prayer, whilst he was in the world, before he took his leave of them;

that, says he,

they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves: either the joy which Christ had in them, which was of an early date, is still continued towards them, and will be more fully expressed, when they shall all be brought safe home to glory, and be for ever with him; or else the joy of which Christ is the author and object, which comes from him, and centres in him: saints rejoice in the person of Christ; in the greatness and dignity of his person, as God over all; hence they know that what he did and suffered answered the purpose, that he must have great interest in heaven, and they must be safe in his hands; and in the fitness of it, to be a Mediator, he being God and man in one person; and in the fulness of it, which is all theirs, it is with delight they view it, with joy they receive from it, and believe they shall not want; and in the beauty of it, he being fairer than the children of men. The offices Christ bears as prophet, priest, and King, the relations he stands in as father, husband, brother and friend; his Gospel and communion with him, the blessings of grace in him, as peace, pardon, righteousness and salvation, lay a foundation for solid joy in them that believe; as do also his death, resurrection, exaltation and intercession. This joy in him is a grace of the Spirit, and is attended with faith in Christ; it should be constant, but is frequently interrupted; though the ground and foundation of it is always the same; it is therefore at present imperfect, but may be increased; it is unknown to the world, and inexpressible by the saints; and may be said to be "fulfilled" in them, when it abounds in them more and more; when they are full of it, and that is full of glory, and which will be fulfilled in glory.

John 17:14

Ver. 14. I have given them thy word,.... The Gospel, and a commission and abilities to preach it, and which is a reason of what follows, namely, the world's hatred of them; because this word is not of men, nor agreeably to carnal reason; it magnifies the grace of God, and destroys boasting in men; it is against the carnal interest, worldly views and lusts of men:

and the world hath hated them; the inhabitants of the world, worldly men, such as are what they were when they first came into the world; are under the influence of the god of the world, and led by the spirit of it, and are wholly taken up with the things thereof: the unbelieving Jews are chiefly designed, who bore an implacable hatred to Christ and his apostles; and the same fate do the faithful ministers of Christ and his members share, in all ages and places, more or less: the men of the world gnash their teeth at them, secretly plot against them, and inwardly curse them; rejoice at any evil that befalls them; greedily catch at anything to reproach them; stick not to say all manner of evil of them, and to do all manner of evil to them:

because they are not of the world; they were of the world by their natural birth, and had their conversation with the men of it, whilst in a state of unregeneracy; but now they were called out of it, and were guided and led by another spirit; and were separate from the world in their lives and conversations, and which brought the hatred of the world upon them; inasmuch as they had been of them, but now had left them, and professed they did not belong to them; and because their religious lives put a distinguishing mark on them, and reproved and condemned them:

even as I am not of the world; not that Christ and his people are alike in their original; they are of the earth earthly, he is the Lord from heaven; nor are they so perfect in their walk and conversation in the world, and separation from it as he; yet there is some likeness between him and them, and some conformity in them to him, which makes the world hate them.

John 17:15

Ver. 15. I pray not that thou shouldest take theft of the world,.... Either in an unusual manner, by a translation, as Enoch and Elijah were; or by death in its common form, before their time, and purely to be rid of afflictions: this he prayed not for; for he had much work for them to do, by preaching the Gospel, for the conversion of sinners and comfort of saints; and it was for his interest they should live longer; and it would make most for his glory, and be best for his chosen people and churches:

but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil; either of sin, which is an evil and bitter thing, being committed against a good God, and a righteous law, and brings ruin and destruction upon men; from this the apostles were kept, and all the saints are; not from indwelling sin, nor from the commission of sin, but from the dominion of it, and from falling into it and by it, so as to perish eternally: or from the evil of the world; not from afflictions in it; nor from the reproach and persecution of it; but from its wickedness and lusts, and from the evil men of it: or from Satan the evil one, who is eminently, originally, and immutably so; not from being tempted by him, but from sinking under his temptations, and from being devoured by him. Christ's praying for this, after this manner, shows that evil is very abhorrent, pernicious and powerful; the danger saints are in by it; their incapacity to keep themselves from it; and that the Lord alone is the keeper of his people; but does not suggest that Christ has dropped the charge of them, or is unequal to it; but by so doing he expresses his great love to them, how dear they are to him, and what care he takes of them, and what concern he has for them.

John 17:16

Ver. 16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. These words are repeated from Joh 17:14, where they are given as a reason of the world's hatred to them; and here, as showing that they are exposed to the evil of it; and in both are used as an argument with his Father, that he would take notice of them, and preserve them.

John 17:17

Ver. 17. Sanctify them through thy truth,.... The Syriac version introduces this petition, with the appellation aba, "Abba, Father": and the sanctification prayed for regards the apostles, either as ministers of the word, and may intend their separation for their work and office; for which though they were sanctified or separated from their mother's womb, and by Christ when he sent them forth, yet were to have a fresh commission and unction after our Lord's resurrection, and upon his ascension to heaven; and also their qualification for it, with the truth of grace and doctrine, with holiness of heart and life, and with a preservation in the truth, by being kept faithful to it: or it may also regard them as Christians and believers, and intend a greater degree of the sanctification of the Spirit, which is imperfect in this life; for though sanctification in Christ is perfect, and so it is in the saints, as to parts, yet not as to degrees; which appears from the imperfection of faith, hope, love, and knowledge, from indwelling sin, being in the best of saints, from their necessities, from their disclaiming perfection, and their desires after it. Sanctification is a progressive work, which is carried on gradually; as is clear from the characters of regenerate ones, who are first newborn babes, then young men, and afterwards fathers in Christ; from the similes, by which it is expressed as seed which opens and grows up by degrees, and light which shines more and more unto the perfect day from exhortations to a concern for the growth of it, and prayers for it: and it is indeed continually carrying on, as may be concluded from the hand in which it is; and the progress and finishing of this work, as well as the beginning of it, are entirely the Lord's; and the way and means in which this is done, are by or through the truth of the Gospel:

thy word is truth; it is "peculiarly" so, as the Arabic version reads it. The Gospel is here meant, and is so called on account of its original, it comes from the God of truth; and because of the concern which Christ, who is the truth, has in it, he being the author, preacher, and sum and substance of it; and because the Spirit of truth has dictated it, leads into it, qualifies men to preach it, and makes it effectual: and because it contains all truth necessary to salvation, and nothing but truth, and particularly that eminent truth, salvation alone by Christ; and because it is opposed to the law, which is but a shadow, of which the good things in the Gospel are the substance: now this is the means both of the beginning, and increasing, and carrying on the work of sanctification in the hearts of God's people, as well as of an experimental knowledge of it; and an increase of that knowledge does more and more qualify the ministers of it for their ministerial work and service, which seems here chiefly designed.

John 17:18

Ver. 18. As thou hast sent me into the world,.... Which does not suppose inequality of nature, nor change of place, nor any force upon him, nor disrespect unto him, or a state of separation from his Father; but that he was before he was sent; that he was a person, a divine distinct person from his Father; and designs the manifestation of him in human nature; and shows, that as Mediator, he had a divine warrant and authority, and was no impostor: what he was sent into the world to do, was in general the will of God; particularly to preach the Gospel, and chiefly and more especially to work out the salvation of his people:

even so have I also sent them into the world; to preach the Gospel likewise: he had already sent them forth on this errand, and in a little time they were to receive a new and enlarged commission for this service; which mission of them to such work, implies great honour put upon them, authority in them, and qualifications with them; and hence success attended them: the place into which they were sent is, "the world"; first the Jewish and then the Gentile world, and every part of it; out of which he would not have them taken; and where they were sure to meet with reproach and persecution; and where God's elect lay, who were to be converted through their ministry; for the work they were sent thither for, was to open blind eyes, turn men from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sin, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified: now though there is not an equality between the mission of Christ by his Father, and of the apostles by him, yet there is a likeness; there is an agreement in their original, both are divine and of authority; in the place they were sent, the world; and in their work to declare the mind and will of God: all which carries in it a strong argument with his Father to regard these persons; for inasmuch as they were in a world that hated them, they needed divine power and protection; and being in a wicked world they needed sanctification and preservation; and having such work to do, they therefore needed divine assistance, and fresh supplies of grace.

John 17:19

Ver. 19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself,.... Which is to be understood, not of his making himself holy; for he never was a sinner, and so stood in no need of sanctification: he was made like unto us, yet without sin; he looked like a sinner, but was not one; he was traduced, charged, and treated as such, but was perfectly holy, and free from all sin; he was essentially and infinitely holy as God; and as man, he was holy in his conception and birth; he was filled with the Holy Ghost, and was holy in his life and in his death: rather this may be meant of his being separated, and set apart for his office as Mediator, which, though done by the Father, and is ascribed unto him, Joh 10:36; yet may also be attributed to himself; since he voluntarily devoted himself to this work, and cheerfully accepted of it: though it seems best to understand it of his offering himself a sacrifice for, and in the room and stead of his people, in allusion to the offerings under the law, the sacrificing of which is expressed by sanctifying, Ex 13:2; and because his sacrifice was an Holy One: what he sanctified or offered was "himself": not his divine, but human nature, his body and his soul; and these as in union with his divine person; which gives his sacrifice the preference to all others, and is the true reason of its virtue and efficacy; and this is expressive of his great love. He himself is also the sanctifier or offerer, which shows him to be a priest, and that he had a power over his own life, and that he sacrificed it voluntarily; and this he is said to do at that present time, because the time was very near that he was to be offered up, and his present prayer and intercession were a part of his priestly office. This he did not for his own sake, nor for the sake of angels, nor for all men, but for his disciples, as distinct from the world; and not for the apostles only, but for all that the Father had given to him; and that as their substitute and surety, in their room and stead:

that they also might be sanctified through the truth; that is, have all their sins expiated, and they be cleansed from all the guilt and filth of them, through Christ himself and his sacrifice, who is the truth; or "in truth"; as it may be rendered, really and truly, in opposition to the legal sacrifices which atoned for sin, not really, only typically; or through the. Gospel of truth, bringing the good news of atonement by the blood and sacrifice of Christ, and which the Spirit of God seals to the conscience with comfort and joy.

John 17:20

Ver. 20. Neither pray I for these alone,.... Meaning his immediate apostles and disciples, for whose preservation and sanctification he had been particularly praying in Joh 17:19; and now, that it might not be thought that these were his only favourites, and the only persons he had a regard for, and to whom his intercession and sacrifice were confined; he adds,

but for them also which shall believe in me through their word: Christ is the object of true faith; which faith is not a mere assent of the mind to any truth concerning Christ, as that he is the Son of God, the Messiah and Saviour of the world; but it is a spiritual sight of him, of the necessity, fitness, and suitableness of him as a Saviour, a going forth unto him, laying hold on him, and depending upon him for life and salvation; of which the preaching of the Gospel is the instrumental means: it is indeed a gift of God, and a fruit of electing grace, and which is secured by it; hence our Lord knew that there would be a number, in all successive generations, that would believe in him, through the ministry of the word; and for these persons, and their conversion, and the success of the Gospel, to the good of their souls, he prays.

John 17:21

Ver. 21. That they all may be one,.... Among themselves. This may regard their unity in faith, and in the knowledge of Christ; for there is but one faith which all truly experienced souls agree in: they are converted by the same Spirit, and have the same work of grace wrought in them; and though they have not the same degree of light, and measure of spiritual knowledge, yet they agree in the main point of the Gospel, salvation alone by the Lord Jesus Christ; and such an agreement in the doctrine of faith, and the grand articles of it, respecting the person and offices of Christ, is absolutely necessary to their comfortably walking together in church fellowship, and the more honourable carrying on the worship of God together; and which will be more manifest in the latter day, when saints shall see eye to eye: likewise an unity in affection may be here designed, a being knit together in love to each other; which is the bond of perfectness, the evidence of regeneration, the badge of the Christian profession, the beauty of church communion, and the barrier and security from the common enemy; and without which, social worship and mutual service will be either neglected or coldly performed. Moreover, this petition may have respect to the gathering together all the saints at the last day, as one body united together in faith and love; as one general assembly and church of the firstborn; as one fold of which Christ is the head, Saviour, and shepherd:

as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee. There is a mutual in being of the Father and the Son, who are one in nature and essence, in power and will, and in understanding and affection; which union, though it infinitely transcends any kind of union among men, or that can be conceived of by men, yet is the exemplar of the saints' union one with another, and to the divine persons; and which must be understood not of an equality, but a likeness:

that they also may be one in us: there is an union of all the elect to God and Christ, which is already complete, and not to be prayed for; they are all loved by God with an everlasting love, by which they are inseparably one with him; they are all chosen in Christ, as members in their head, and are federally united to him, as their Mediator, surety, and representative; in consequence of which he has assumed their nature, stood in their place and stead, and brought them nigh to God. There is a manifestation of union in conversion, when persons openly appear to be in Christ; and as a fruit and effect of everlasting love, are with loving kindness drawn unto him; and which will be more gloriously seen, when all the elect shall be brought in, and God shall be all in all, and is what Christ here prays for:

that the world may believe that thou hast sent me; either the rest of God's chosen people in the world, not yet called; or rather the wicked and reprobate part of the world, particularly Jews and Deists: they shall see the concord and agreement of the saints in doctrine, worship, and affection in the latter day; and when all the elect shall be gathered together, and not only their union to each other, but to the divine persons, shall clearly appear; they will then believe, ant be obliged to own, that Jesus is the true Messiah, was sent of God, and is no imposter.

John 17:22

Ver. 22. And the glory which thou gavest me,.... Not the glory of his deity; this is the same with his Father, what he has in right of nature, and not by gift; nor can it be communicated to creatures; this would be to make them one in the Godhead, as the three are one, which is not the design of the expression in the close of the verse: nor his mediatorial glory, which he had with the Father before the world began; this indeed was given him by the Father, but is not given to the saints: nor the glory, of working miracles; which glory Christ had, and which, as man, he had from the Father, and in which his own glory was manifested; this he gave to his disciples; but all that are his have not had it, and some have had it who are none of his: rather the Gospel is meant, which is glorious in its author, matter and subject, in its doctrines, in the blessing: grace it reveals, and promises it contains, and in the efficacy and usefulness of it to the souls of men. This was given to Christ, and he gave it to his disciples:

I have given them; as he did the words that were given to him,
Joh 17:8,

that they may be one, even as we are one; for the Gospel was given to the apostles, and still is to the ministers of it, to bring men to the unity of the faith, for the perfecting of the saints, and the edifying of the body of Christ: or else the fulness both of grace and glory, which is in Christ's hands for his people, is here designed. This is one considerable branch of the glory of Christ, as Mediator, to be full of grace and truth; this was given him by the Father, and is what he communicates to his; even the Spirit, and all sorts of grace, and every supply of it; and which greatly contributes to the union of the saints among themselves: yea, eternal happiness is often signified by glory; and this is given to Christ; he has it in his hands to give to others; and he does give it, a view of it, a right unto it, a meetness for it, a pledge of it, some foretastes of it, and a kind of a possession of it; for the saints have it already, at least in him; and he will give them the actual enjoyment of it, and this in order to their consummate and perfect union together, as a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

John 17:23

Ver. 23. I in them,.... Christ is in his saints; not as he is in all the world, being the omnipresent God; or as he is in every man, communicating the light of nature as Creator; or as he is in the human nature, which is united to his divine person; or circumscriptively to the exclusion of him elsewhere; for he is in heaven, his blood is within the veil, and his righteousness without us: but he is in them, in a gracious manner, in regeneration; when he is revealed to them, formed in them, enters into them, takes possession of them, communicates his grace, grants fellowship with himself, and dwells in them; not only by his Spirit and grace, but in person, as the head in the members, as the master of the house, and the King of them; which is an instance of condescending grace, and is peculiar to God's elect: hence all their holiness and fruitfulness; nor shall they ever perish; their bodies shall rise from the dead, and being reunited to their souls, Christ will be in them in a glorious manner to all eternity:

and thou in me; the Father is in Christ, not only by union of nature, nor merely in him, as Mediator, in a way of grace; but as he will show himself in and through him in glory for evermore, and is what is here prayed for:

that they may be made perfect in one; this regards not their justification, which is already perfect; nor their sanctification, which will be; but either perfection in glory, when they will be perfect in knowledge, in holiness, in peace, joy and love: or rather the perfection of their numbers is meant, when the whole election of grace will be completed in regeneration, sanctification, and glorification:

and that the world may know that thou hast sent me: as before;
See Gill on "Joh 17:21";

and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. The Oriental versions, the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic, all read the words thus, "and I have loved them, as thou hast loved me"; contrary to all the Greek copies, and other versions, which read as we do. The Father loved Christ as his own Son, and as Mediator; so he loved him when he assumed human nature, and became obedient to his will both in doing and suffering; when his Father left him, and poured out his wrath upon him, and when he laid down his life for the sheep. The instances of his love to him as Mediator are, his putting all things into his hands, showing him all that he does, and concealing nothing from him, and appointing him the only Saviour, the head of the church, and Judge of the world. The nature of this love is, that it is from eternity; is a love of complacency and delight; it is special and peculiar, unchangeable and inseparable, and will last for ever: now God has loved his people, as he has loved his Son; he loves them not merely as creatures, as the descendants of Adam, or as considered in themselves, but as in Christ. The instances of his love to them are, his choosing them in Christ; making a covenant with them in him; the mission of him into this world, to obtain salvation for them; the quickening and calling of them by his grace; the care he takes of them afterwards in supplying their wants, supporting them under temptations, delivering them out of afflictions, and causing all things to work together for their good; to all which add the provisions he makes for them, both for time and eternity. The nature of this love is such as that he bears to Christ; it is from everlasting; a love of the utmost delight and pleasure; it is special and peculiar, unchangeable, and will continue for ever: there is not the same reason for his loving them as his Son; and this as must not be thought to denote equality, but similitude and order.

John 17:24

Ver. 24. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me,.... Not all the world, but a select number; not apostles only, nor as such; nor believers, or as such, for as such they were not given to Christ; nor as considered in the effectual calling; but as the elect of God, and by that eternal act of his grace; when they were given to Christ as his children, as his spouse, as his church, as the sheep of his hand, as his portion, and to be preserved by him; which is known by their calling and conversion: the form in which these words are delivered, is not so much by way of entreaty, as demand; they are a declaration of Christ's will, in which he insists on it as his right, upon the foot of his purchase, and those covenant transactions which passed between him and his Father, on the behalf of those that were given to him: that they

be with me where I am; not where he was then, unless it may be meant of him as the omnipresent God, and as such then in heaven; though he rather designs where he should be as man, after his resurrection, and where the souls of saints are after death; and where they will be, soul and body, when raised again; and which is desirable both to Christ, and to his people; this was the joy that was set before him, and what they comfort one another with, that they shall be for ever with him:

that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; not the simple abstract glory of his deity; which, as it was not given to him, is not to be seen by them; but his glory as Mediator: this was seen, though imperfectly by some, in the days of his flesh; and in the glass of the Gospel, a believer now has some views of it, and by faith sees, knows, and is assured that Christ is glorified in heaven; but hereafter the saints in their own persons, and with their own eyes, shall see him as he is, and appear in glory with him; which sight of his glory will be near, and not at a distance, appropriating and assimilating, rejoicing, satisfying, and for ever:

for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world; this is mentioned both as a reason why such a glory was given him, because of his Father's early love to him as Mediator; and as an argument why he might expect to be heard and answered, because of the interest he had in his affections, which had been strongly towards him, even from everlasting; and because the persons he asks, or rather demands these things for, shared in the same ancient love.

John 17:25

Ver. 25. O righteous Father,.... God is righteous in all the divine persons: the Father is righteous, the Son is righteous, and the Holy Spirit is righteous: he is so in his nature; righteousness is a perfection of it; he is so in all his purposes and promises; in all his ways and works of providence and grace; in predestination, redemption, justification, pardon of sin, and eternal glory. Christ makes use of this epithet, as containing a reason why he might justly expect that all his petitions and claims, on behalf of himself and people, would be regarded:

the world hath not known thee; the unbelieving Jews, and idolatrous Gentiles, wicked men, one or another, know not God: as not the Father, so neither the Son, nor Spirit; though deity may be known by them, or that there is a God, yet they know not God in Christ, nor as the Father of Christ, or as their Father in him, nor what it is to have communion with him; nor do they know any of the things of God in a spiritual way; which shows the darkness and blindness of men by nature, the necessity of a divine illumination, and the miserable state of men without one:

but I have known thee; his nature, perfections and glory, his secret thoughts, purposes and designs, his covenant, promises and blessings, his love, grace and good will to his people, his whole mind and will; as he needs must, since he was one with him, and lay in his bosom;

and these have known that thou hast sent me; meaning his disciples and apostles, whom he distinguishes from the world; these knew the Father that sent him, and that he was sent by the Father; they knew the love of the Father in sending of him, the manner in which he was sent, and the end, man's redemption, for which he was sent; and acknowledged all this, and which laid them under an obligation to trust in him, love him, and magnify his grace; and is used by Christ as an argument with the Father to be concerned for them.

John 17:26

Ver. 26. And I have declared unto them thy name,.... Himself, his nature, his perfections, especially of grace and mercy, his mind and will, his Gospel; See Gill on "Joh 17:6". A very fit person Christ was to make this declaration, since he was with him from all eternity, and was in his bosom; the Father did all in him, and his name is in him; and he is the faithful witness; nor is anything of God to be known savingly, but in and through Christ; the apostles are here particularly meant, though the same is true with respect to all that are given to Christ, who are his children and brethren, to whom he also declares the name of God:

and will declare it; more fully to them after his resurrection, during his forty days' stay with them, and upon his ascension, when he poured down his Spirit in such a plentiful and extraordinary manner upon them; and will declare it to others besides them in the Gentile world; and still more in the latter day glory, and to all believers more and more:

that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them; that is, that a sense of that love with which God loves his Son, as Mediator, might be in them and abide in them, and which is the rather mentioned because they are loved by the Father with the same love, and share all the blessed consequences of it, the knowledge and sense of which they come at, through Christ's declaring his Father's name unto them; and which they will have a greater sense of, and will be swallowed up in it in heaven to all eternity:

and I in them; dwelling in them, taking up his residence in them; not only by his Spirit and grace here, but by his glorious presence with them hereafter; when they shall be brought to his Father's house, behold his glory, and be for ever with him.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 18:1

Ver. 1. When Jesus had spoken these words,.... Referring either to his discourses in Joh 14:1, in which he acquaints his disciples with his approaching death; comforts them under the sorrowful apprehension of his departure from them; gives them many excellent promises for their relief, and very wholesome advice how to conduct themselves; lets them know what should befall them, and that things, however distressing for the present, would have a joyful issue: or else to his prayer in the preceding chapter, in which he had been very importunate with his Father, both for himself and his disciples; or to both of these, which is highly probable:

he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron; the same with "Kidron" in 2Sa 15:23; and elsewhere: it had its name, not from cedars, for not cedars but olives chiefly grew upon the mount, which was near it; and besides the name is not Greek, but Hebrew, though the Arabic version renders it, "the

brook" zra la, "of Cedar": it had its name either from the darkness of the valley in which it ran, being between high mountains, and having gardens in it, and set with trees; or from the blackness of the water through the soil that ran into it, being a kind of a common sewer, into which the Jews cast everything that was unclean and defiling; see 2Ch 29:16. Particularly there was a canal which led from the altar in the temple to it, by which the blood and soil of the sacrifices were carried into it {m}. This brook was but about three feet over from bank to bank, and in the summer time was quite dry, and might be walked over dry shod; and is therefore by Josephus sometimes called the brook of Kidron {n}, and sometimes the valley of Kidron {o}: in this valley were corn fields; for hither the sanhedrim sent their messengers to reap the sheaf of the firstfruits, which always was to be brought from a place near to Jerusalem {p}; and it is very likely that willows grew by the brook, from whence they might fetch their willow branches at the feast of tabernacles; for the Jews say {q}, there is a place below Jerusalem called Motza, (in the Gemara it is said to be Klamia or Colonia,) whither they went down and gathered willow branches; it seems to be the valley of Kidron, which lay on the east of Jerusalem, between that and the Mount of Olives {r}; it had fields and gardens adjoining to it; see 2Ki 23:4. So we read of a garden here, into which Christ immediately went, when he passed over this brook. The blood, the filth and soil of it, which so discoloured the water, as to give it the name of the Black Brook, used to be sold to the gardeners to dung their gardens with {s}. It was an emblem of this world, and the darkness and filthiness of it, and of the exercises and troubles of the people of God in it, which lie in the way to the heavenly paradise and Mount of Zion, through which Christ himself went, drinking "of the brook in the way",
Ps 110:7; and through which also all his disciples and followers enter into the kingdom of heaven: it may also be a figure of the dark valley of the shadow of death, through which Christ and all his members pass to the heavenly glory. And I see not why this black and unclean brook may not be a representation of the pollutions and defilements of sin; which being laid on Christ when he passed over it, made him so heavy and sore amazed in the human nature, as to desire the cup might pass from him. Once more let it be observed, that it was the brook David passed over when he fled from his son Absalom; in this David was a type of Christ, as in other things: Absalom represented the people of the Jews, who rejected the Messiah, and rebelled against him; Ahithophel, Judas, who betrayed him; and the people that went with David over it, the disciples of our Lord; only there was this difference; there was a father fleeing from a son, here a son going to meet his father's wrath; David and his people wept when they went over this brook, but so did not Christ and his disciples; the sorrowful scene to them both began afterwards in the garden. This black brook and dark

valley, and it being very late at night when it was passed over, all add to that dark dispensation, that hour of darkness, which now came upon our Lord; yet he went forth over it of his own accord, willingly and cheerfully; not being forced or compelled by any; and his disciples with him, not to be partners of his sufferings, but to be witnesses of them, and to receive some knowledge and instruction from what they should see and hear:

where was a garden into which he entered; and his disciples: there were no orchards nor gardens within the city of Jerusalem, but rose gardens, which were from the times of the prophets {t}; all others were without; and this was a very proper place for gardens, where so much dung was near at hand. Whether this garden belonged to one of Christ's friends, is not certain; but since he often resorted hither, no doubt it was with the leave, and by the consent of the proprietor of it. However, so it was, that as the first Adam's disobedience was committed in a garden, the second. Adam's obedience to death for sin, began here; and as the sentence of death, on account of sin, was passed in a garden, it began to be executed in one.

{m} Misn. Middot, c. 3. sect. 2. Meila, c. 3. sect. 3. & Bartenora in ib. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Zebachim, c. 8. 7. & Temura, c. 7. sect. 6. {n} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 1. sect. 5. {o} Ib. l. 9. c. 7. sect. 3. & de Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2. & c. 6. sect. 1. {p} Misna Menachot, c. 10. sect. 2, 3. {q} Misna Succa, c. 4. sect. 5. {r} Jerom de locis Hebraicis, fol. 92. C. {s} Misn. Yoma, c. 5. sect 6. Maimon. Meila, c. 2. sect. 11. {t} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 82. 2. Abot. R. Nathan, c. 35. Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 7. sect. 14. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Torn praecept. Aff. 164.

John 18:2

Ver. 2. And Judas also which betrayed him, knew the place,.... This character is given of Judas, to distinguish him from another disciple of the same name; and though as yet he had not betrayed him, yet it was determined he should, and Christ knew it, and he was now about to do it: and it is observed, that Judas was as well acquainted with the place of Christ's resort, and knew the garden he frequently retired to, as the rest of the disciples; to show that Christ did not go there to hide and secure himself from him, but to meet him, and that he might have an opportunity of finding him with the greater case:

for Jesus often times resorted thither with his disciples; when at Jerusalem at any of the feasts, and at this festival; partly for refreshment and rest after he had been preaching in the temple, and partly for prayer, and also for private conversation with his disciples.

John 18:3

Ver. 3. Judas then having received a band of men,.... From the captain of this band, who in Joh 18:12; is called a "Chiliarch", that is, a commander of a thousand men, one might conclude there were so many in this band; but it seems, that such an officer might have two bands under his command; and if this was, the case, there were at least five hundred men in this company; a large number indeed, to take an unarmed person; and yet, as if this was not sufficient, it is added,

and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees; servants that belong to each of these, and who seem to be a considerable number also; for these are said to be "a great multitude"; Mt 26:47; nay, not only so, but the chief priests, captains of the temple, and elders of the people, were themselves among them, Lu 22:52; to see that the men did their work, and did not return without him; as these officers, when sent by them once before, did:

cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons: onp, which is no other than the Greek word here used for a lantern, the Jews tell us {u}, was an earthen vessel, in which a candle was put and covered, that the wind might not put it out, and it had holes in the sides of it, through which light was let out; their dypl, or "lamp", here rendered "torch", they say {w}, was also an earthen vessel in the form of a reed, at the top of which was a proper receptacle, in which they burnt old rags dipped in oil: now though it was full moon, being the time of the passover, they brought these along with them to discover him by the light of, and find him out with them, if he should hide himself among the trees, or in any of the more shady places in the garden; and they took warlike instruments, as swords, spears, and staves, as if they had a thief or a murderer to apprehend, or a little army of men to encounter with; whereas there were only Christ, and his eleven disciples; and these in no condition, nor had any design, to defend themselves in an hostile manner.

{u} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Celim, c. 2. sect. 4. {w} Ib. in sect. 8.

John 18:4

Ver. 4. Jesus therefore knowing all things,.... As being the omniscient God, so his knowledge reaches to all persons and things, without any limitation, and restriction; though here it has a regard to all the things,

that should come upon him; even all the sufferings he should endure, which were all determined by God; agreed to by him, in the covenant of grace; predicted in the Old Testament, and foretold by himself: he knew all the circumstances that would attend his sufferings, as that he should be betrayed by Judas; be forsaken by the rest of his disciples; that the Jews would give him gall and vinegar in his thirst; and the soldiers part his garments among them: he knew the time of his sufferings; and that it was now at hand; and that Judas and his company were not far off: and therefore, went forth out of the garden, or at least from that part of it where he was, and his disciples with him: this was done to show his willingness to suffer; he

went forth of his own accord; he did not hide himself in the garden, as the first Adam did: he did not stay till those that sought his life came up to him: he went forth, not to make his escape from them, but to meet them, and make himself known unto them;

and said unto them; whom seek ye? this question was put, not out of ignorance; for he knew full well who they were seeking after: nor with a design to deceive them, and make his escape; but to show that he was not afraid of them, and that they could not have known him, nor have taken him, had he not made himself known; and offered himself to them; and which makes it appear, that he was willingly apprehended by them, and voluntarily suffered.

John 18:5

Ver. 5. They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth,.... Their answer is not, "thee"; for they knew him not, their eyes were holden, or struck with dimness, or blindness, as the men of Sodom were; or they that answered might be such, who never personally knew him: nor do they say "Christ", for they rejected and denied him as the Messiah; nor do they call him that deceiver, or seditious person, as they sometimes did, being willing to cover their malicious views and intentions; but Jesus of Nazareth, a name by which he was commonly known, being taken from his education and conversation in that place; though this was sometimes given him in a contemptuous way:

Jesus saith unto them, I am [he]; or "I am", respecting his name Jehovah, averring himself to be the Christ, and owning himself under the name they were pleased to call him by; which shows how willing he was to be taken by them, and may teach us not to be ashamed of him, or of any nickname we may bear for his sake:

and Judas also which betrayed him stood with them; this circumstance is recorded to show, that Judas at first did not know him any more than the rest; so that he might easily have passed them if he had pleased; and that Judas did not stand with them as an idle spectator; he came with them to betray him, and was looking out for him; though when he spake he knew him not: it also expresses the different company Judas was in; a little while ago, he was at supper with Christ, and the other disciples, and now he is at the head of a band of soldiers, and others, to betray him; and also his continuance in his iniquity and wicked resolutions and agreement; as yet he had no remorse of conscience, or sense of his sin: and it seems to be mentioned also with this view, to inform us, that he fell to the ground with the rest; which is related in Joh 18:6. The Jew {x} asserts, that there is a disagreement between the Evangelist John and the rest of the evangelists in this account: he observes, that when Judas came with his armed men to take Jesus, Jesus went out to meet them, and asked them, saying, whom Seek ye? they say Jesus of Nazareth; to whom he replies, I am he; and then Judas, that betrayed him, stood with them: but Matthew, in his Gospel, Mt 26:47, and Mark, Mr 14:43; and Luke, Lu 22:47; relate, that Judas gave a sign to the soldiers, when they came to take Jesus, saying, him whom I shall kiss, lay hold on, and they did so. But here is no contradiction, John does not deny that Judas gave a sign to the soldiers; though he omits it, it being so particularly observed by the other evangelists, and only relates what is not taken notice of by them, and which no ways contradicts what they have asserted: the force of the objection seems to lie here; that, according to the other evangelists, Judas, as soon as he came into the garden, made up to Christ, and gave the signal by which he might be known, whereas he is here said to stand with the soldiers and officers; and that seeing such a signal was given, he must be, and was known by it, whereas he is here represented as if he was not known by them until he had made himself known to them; and that as soon as Judas had given the sign, they immediately seized him, whereas, according to this account, they did not, until some words had passed between Christ and them, and they first fell to the ground. In answer to which it may be said, that admitting that Judas did make up to Christ as soon as he entered the garden, and gave the signal to the soldiers, he might upon that immediately retire, and place himself among the multitude; either to give further directions and instructions to them, or that they might defend him from Jesus, should there be any occasion for it: and though it should be allowed that the signal was given by Judas before this, it might not be discerned by the soldiers, either not being near enough to observe it; or, as some think, being stricken with blindness, for a time, as the Sodomites were; or even supposing it was seen, and they knew by it which was Jesus, it is still a fuller proof of the courage and intrepidity of Christ to go forth, and present himself to them, and put the questions he did, and confirm unto them the truth of it, that he was Jesus whom they sought: to which may be added, that it does not appear that Christ was immediately seized by the soldiers, upon the signal given them by Judas, without some intervening words and actions; for though the signal and the seizure lie very near together in the accounts of Matthew and Mark; yet Luke relates many things between them, as the question of the disciples, whether they should smite with the sword; Peter's cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant; Christ's rebuking him, and touching the servant's ear, and healing it; and some discourse which passed between him, and the chief priests, captains, and elders. All which agree with the account the Evangelist John here gives.

{x} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 56. p. 445, 446.

John 18:6

Ver. 6. As soon then as he had said unto them I am he,.... Immediately upon his speaking these words, which were delivered with so much majesty and authority, and were attended with such a divine power:

they went backward, and fell to the ground; they were confounded, surprised, and intimidated, and seemed as if they would have chose rather to have fled from him, than to have apprehended him; and as they retired and went backward, they fainted away, as it were, either at the majesty of his looks, or at the power of his words, or both, so that they became like ad men, falling to the ground. Sometimes the majesty of a man's person, or his fame for some remarkable things done by him, or the innocence and uprightness of his cause, have had such an influence upon his enemies, that they have not been able to execute upon him what they intended. It is reported of Caius Maxius that being reduced to the utmost misery, and shut up in a private house at Minturnae, (a town in Italy,) an executioner was sent to kill him; and though he was an old man, and unarmed, and in the most miserable condition, yet the executioner having drawn his sword, could not attempt to use it; but, as the historian {y} says, being struck with blindness at the glory of the man, ran away astonished and trembling. Now, besides the above things, in their highest perfection, there was in our Lord something more than human; he was God as well as man, and he displayed his divine majesty, glory, and power. This was done, not to make his escape from them; but to give proof of his deity, and a specimen of his power at the great day; and to let them know, that if he had not thought fit to have surrendered himself voluntarily to them, though he was an unarmed person, they, with all their men and arms, could never have laid hold on him; and to show them, that he could as easily have struck them dead, as to cause them to fall to the ground: and sometimes striking a person dead immediately, is expressed by this phrase of striking to the ground; and is ascribed to God, who does it by the ministry of angels: says R. Simeon ben Shetach {z}, to some persons at variance,

"let the master of thoughts come, (i.e. the blessed God,) and take vengeance on you; immediately Gabriel came, eqrqb
Njbhw, "and smote them to the ground"; and they died immediately."

The like is elsewhere said {a},

"if thou transgresseth thy father's command, immediately comes Gabriel, and "smites to the ground"."

{y} Valerius Maxim. l. 2. c. 5. {z} F. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 2. {a} Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 91. 2.

John 18:7

Ver. 7. Then asked he them again, whom seek ye?.... This supposes them to be risen up again and on their feet; no hurt being done to them; for Christ always did good, and not hurt, to the bodies of men; he never disabled any, or took away life, or limb: he only did this to show his power, and not to do them any real damage; and the same divine person that struck them down, suffered them to rise, and gave them power and strength to get up; which showed his great clemency and goodness: but they, on the contrary, persisted in their wicked intentions, and were still seeking after him; a plain proof of that judicial hardness of heart, under which they were; and that even miracles wrought will not bring hardened sinners to repentance without powerful and efficacious grace. When Christ, as fearless of them, and to show that this action he had no design to make his escape them, though he could easily have done it, and that he was willing to be apprehended by them, puts the question a second time, and asks them who they were seeking for. Something like this Josephus {b} reports concerning Elisha the prophet, though not repeated as here, nor attended with the like effect: he relates that Elisha having requested of God that he would smite his enemies with blindness, and that being granted he went into the midst of them, and asked them, tina epizhtountev hlyon, "whom do ye come to seek?" they say Elisha the prophet: he promised them to deliver him to them, if they would follow him into the city, where he was; and so they being blinded by God, both in their sight and in their mind, followed the prophet.

They said Jesus of Nazareth; having recovered their spirits, and being hardened in desperate malice and wickedness, impudently make this reply to him; nor would they, notwithstanding this instance of his power, own him to be the Messiah; but still contemptuously style him Jesus of Nazareth.

{b} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 4. sect. 3.

John 18:8

Ver. 8. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he,.... This he said, upbraiding them with their stupidity; signifying he was ready to deliver himself up into their hands; and which he did with intrepidity and calmness, only on this condition, with this proviso for his disciples;

if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: Christ was about to suffer for them, and therefore it was not just that they should suffer too; nor was it proper that they should suffer with him, lest their sufferings should be thought to be a part of the price of redemption. Besides, their suffering time was not come, and they had other work to do: this shows the love of Christ to his disciples, and his care of them, and also his power, and that he could have saved himself as well as them. Moreover, these words may be considered as an emblem and pledge of the acquittance and discharge of God's elect, through the suretyship engagements, and performances of Christ, who drew near to God on their account, substituted himself in their room, and undertook for them in the council and covenant of peace, and laid himself under obligation to pay their debts, to satisfy for their sins, to bring in an everlasting righteousness, to keep and preserve them in this world, and to make them happy in another. Accordingly, in the fulness of time he was made under the law, and stood in their place and stead, and was taken, suffered, died, and rose again. Now, as there was a discharge and acquittance of them from eternity, a non-imputation of sin to them, and a secret letting of them go upon the suretyship engagements of Christ, and in virtue thereof, a passing by, and over, the sins of the Old Testament saints so there was an open acquittance and discharge of them all upon the apprehension, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ; complete deliverance from wrath and condemnation being obtained, and a full title to eternal glory made. Moreover, these words may be considered not only and merely as spoken to the Jews, but as addressed to the law and justice of God; or however, as having some respect to them, while directed to the others; for justice finding the sins of all the elect upon Christ, on whom the Father had laid them, and Christ had took them upon himself, was seeking for, and about to demand satisfaction of him for them; and he being under the law, and coming into the world to fulfil it, in the room and stead of his people, was about to bear the curse of it; wherefore seeing this was the case, he insists upon it, that they who were convicted of the law as transgressors, and held under it as condemned criminals and malefactors, and who were liable, as considered in themselves, to be seized upon by the justice of God, and to have the sentence of condemnation and death executed upon them, might be discharged and let go; and accordingly, upon the satisfaction made by Christ, this is the case: Christ's people are no longer under the law, as a ministration of condemnation and death, nor liable to suffer the vindictive wrath of God; they are become free from the curses of a righteous law, and are let go by divine justice, and will never suffer the strokes of it, neither in this world nor in that to come; there is no demand to be made upon them, either by the law or justice of God; there is no wrath or punishment will be inflicted on them, either here or hereafter; and they may, and shall go their way into everlasting life, when time shall be no more with them, neither law nor justice having anything to say to the contrary.

John 18:9

Ver. 9. That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake,....
Joh 17:12;

of them which thou gavest me have I lost none; which though it has a peculiar respect to the apostles, is true of all the elect of God; who are given to Christ, and shall none of them be lost, neither their souls nor bodies; for Christ's charge of them reaches to both: both were given to him, both are redeemed by him, and both shall be saved in him with an everlasting salvation: he saves their souls from an eternal death, and will raise their bodies from a corporeal one; wherefore that his care of his disciples, with respect to their bodies as well as souls, with respect to their temporal lives as well as eternal happiness, might be seen; he made this agreement with the Jews that came to take him, or rather laid this injunction on them, to dismiss them; and which it is very remarkable they did; they laid hands on none of them, even though Peter drew his sword and struck off the ear of one of them: and which is a very considerable instance of the power which Christ had over the spirits of these men, to restrain them; and so a proof of his proper deity, as well as of the care of Christ for the preservation of his apostles, whilst he was here on earth; for to that time only the words cited have a respect; in which Christ speaks of his keeping them whilst he was with them, and uses this as an argument with his Father to keep them, now he was removing from them: wherefore their losing their lives afterwards for his sake, as they all did excepting the Apostle John, is no contradiction to this expression of his; and besides, they were preserved by the power of God so long, until they had done the work which was appointed them to do, and for which they were given him, and chosen by him to be his apostles, and for which they were better furnished after his resurrection and ascension; for had they been, apprehended by the Jews at this time, in all probability, according to an human view of things, such was their weakness, they would have fallen most foully and shamefully, as the instance of Peter, the strongest of them, shows; and therefore to prevent such a temptation and to preserve them, our Lord took this method to deliver them out of the hands of the Jews; the saving clause, "but the son of perdition", is here left out, because Judas, who is designed by that character, was now openly declared to be what he was; he was no longer among the disciples; he was separated from them, and had betrayed his master, and was not of the number of those Christ insisted upon might be let go.

John 18:10

Ver. 10. Then Simon Peter having a sword,.... Girt about him, which he either wore in common, or particularly at the feast, as the Galilaeans are said to do, to preserve them from thieves and wild beasts by the way; or was one of the two the disciples had with them in the garden; or what Peter purposely furnished himself with to defend his master, taking a hint from what was said by him, Lu 22:36;

drew it; before Christ could give an answer to the question put by his disciples, whether they should smite or not, Lu 22:49; being encouraged thereunto by what Christ said, Lu 22:38; or by what he had just done in, striking the man to the ground; and being provoked by that servant's going to lay hold on Christ, and who it is probable was more forward and busy than any of the rest; for it appears from the other evangelists, that Peter did this, though he is not mentioned by name by any of the rest, just as they were seizing and apprehending Christ:

and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear; he doubtless struck at his head, and intended to have cleaved him down, but missed his aim, and took off his ear: the person is particularly described, that he was a servant, and the servant of the high priest, and he is mentioned also by name;

and the servant's name was Malchus; that if the truth of this relation was called in question, it might easily be looked into and examined, when it would appear that it was perfectly right. All the evangelists give an account of this action of Peter's, but none of them mention his name but this evangelist; perhaps the reason might be, that Peter was alive when the other evangelists wrote, and therefore it was not safe to say who it was that did it, lest he who was the minister of the circumcision, and dwelt among the Jews, should be persecuted for it, or their minds should be prejudiced against him on that account; but John writing his Gospel many years after his death, the reason for the concealment of his name no longer subsisted: nor indeed is the name of the high priest's servant mentioned by any other of the evangelists: John had, or however he writes, a more exact and particular account of this matter. This was a name frequent with the Syrians, Phoenicians, and Hebrews. Jerom {c} wrote the life of one Malchus, a monk or Eremite, who was by nation a Syrian; and Porphyry, that great enemy of Christianity, who was by birth a Tyrian, his original name was Malchus, as was his father's; and "which", in the Syrian, and his country dialect, as he himself {d} and others {e} say, signifies a "king". Josephus {f} speaks of one Cleodemus, whose name was Malchus, that wrote a history of the Hebrews. And some Jewish Rabbins were of this name; hence we read of Kwlm br, "R. Maluc" {g}, and of wyklm br, "R. Malcio" {h}; the name is the same with Malluch,
Ne 10:4.

{c} Tom. I. fol. 87. {d} Porphyr. vita in Plotin. c. 17. {e} Eunapius in vita Porphyr. p. 16. {f} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 15. {g} T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 53. 3. & Bab. Bathra, fol. 16. 1. {h} T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 52. 1.

John 18:11

Ver. 11. Then said Jesus unto Peter,.... By way of rebuke, and to prevent his repeating the blow, and that further mischief might not ensue; for such a bold imprudent action risked the lives of all the disciples, who, in all probability, would have fallen a sacrifice to the fury and resentment of these men, had not Christ interposed in this prudent manner; who, also, Luke says, touched the servant's ear and healed him, Lu 22:51, which no doubt tended greatly to conciliate their minds, and make them easy:

put up thy sword into the sheath: Peter was not a proper person to bear the sword, and use it; it was a very daring attack, and a dangerous one, and was very unnecessary; since Christ could have defended himself, had he thought fit, without Peter's drawing his sword; and besides, for a word speaking, he could have had of his Father more than twelve legions of angels; and it was also contrary to the nature of his kingdom, which was not of this world, nor to be supported and defended in any such manner; and was, moreover, as much as in Peter lay, an hinderance of his sufferings, and of the execution of his Father's will and decree; wherefore he adds,

the cup which my Father hath given me: by the cup is meant, the wrath of God, and punishment due to sin, endured by Christ in his sufferings, and is said to be given him by his Father; because he called him to these sufferings, they were appointed and determined by him; yea, he was even ordered, and commanded by his Father, to drink of this cup; justice mixed it up, and put it into his hands; and he took it as coming from his Father, who delighted in seeing him drink it up, as the stately of his people; and a dreadful one it was, a cup of trembling and astonishment, of curse, and not of blessing, of wrath and fury: the allusion seems to be to the master of the family, who appointed, and gave to everyone their cup:

shall I not drink it? which expresses his, willingness to do it, his eager desire after it, his delight in it, and displeasure at Peter's attempt to hinder him; he being now perfectly reconciled in his human nature to drink it, though it was so bitter a potion: he found it was impossible, considering the decree of God, his own agreement, and the salvation of his people, that it should be otherwise; and besides, it was his Father's will and pleasure, he considered it as coming from him; and therefore cheerfully accepted it, and was, resolved to drink it up, and that nothing should hinder him. The Persic version reads it, "I will not give it to another to drink"; Peter, by this rash action, seeming as if he would have the cup out of Christ's hands, and have drank it himself; which, as it could not be, nor would Christ suffer it, so if he had, it would have been of no advantage to the salvation of his people.

John 18:12

Ver. 12 Then the band, and the captain, and the officers of the Jews,.... Which Judas received, and which came along with him, Joh 18:3. When Jesus had rebuked Peter, and healed the servant's ear, and showed such a willingness to surrender himself to them;

they took Jesus and bound him. This they did, partly for safety and security, he having several times escaped from them; and partly for contempt, and by way of reproach, using him as they would do the vilest of malefactors: and this was submitted to by Christ, that his people might be loosed from the cords of sin, be delivered from the captivity of Satan, and be freed from the bondage of the law; hereby the types of him were fulfilled, as the binding of Isaac, when his father was going to offer him up, and the binding of the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar: who that has read the ceremonies of the sheaf of the firstfruits, but must call them to mind, upon reading this account of the apprehension and binding of Christ, and leading him to the high priest? This sheaf was fetched from places the nearest to Jerusalem, particularly from the fields of Kidron: the manner was this {i}:

"the messengers of the sanhedrim went out (from Jerusalem) on the evening of the feast day (the sixteenth of Nisan, and over the brook Kidron to the adjacent fields), and bound the standing corn in bundles, that it might be the easier reaped; and all the neighbouring cities gathered together there, that it might be reaped in great pomp; and when it was dark, one (of the reapers) says to them, is the sun set? they say, yes; and again, is the sun set? they say, yes: with this sickle (shall I reap?) they say, yes; again, with this sickle (shall I reap?) they say, yes; in this basket (shall I put it?) they say, yes; again, in this basket (shall I put it?) they say, yes; if on the sabbath day he says to them, is this sabbath day? they say, yes; again, is this sabbath day? they say, yes; (it was sabbath day this year;) Shall I reap? they say to him reap, shall I reap? they say to him reap; three times upon everything; then they reap it, and put it into the baskets, and, bring it to the court, where they dry it at the fire."

Whoever reads this, will easily observe a likeness: the messengers of the great sanhedrim go to the fields of Kidron, in the evening, with their sickles and baskets; bind the standing corn; questions and answers pass between them and the people before they reap; and when they have done, they bring the sheaf in their basket to the court, to be dried at the fire. So the officers of the high priest, with others, pass over the brook Kidron, with lanterns, torches, and weapons; in the night go into a garden; there apprehend Jesus; questions and answers pass between them there; then they lay hold on him, bind him, and bring him to the high, priest.

{i} Misn. Menachot, c. 10. sect. 2, 3, 4.

John 18:13

Ver. 13. And led him away to Annas first,.... Who is elsewhere mentioned with Caiaphas as an high priest also, **Lu 3:2**. He was the "sagan" of the high priest; he and Caiaphas seem to have had the high priesthood alternately; and either now, because his house lay first in the way, or rather, because he was a man of age, learning, and experience, as these men usually were, that they might supply the deficiencies of the high priests, who were sometimes very weak and unlearned men {k}; therefore they first lead him to him, to have his advice how to proceed, and to take him along with them to his son-in-law, where the great council was convened, and that he might use his interest and authority, in taking proper measures, in order to put Jesus to death; and especially they led him to him, for the reason here assigned;

for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas; so that he was, it is very probable, the older man: and being related to him, had an interest in him; and to whom such a sight was equally pleasing as to the high priest himself, or any of the council:

which was the high priest that same year; for the high priesthood was not for life, but was often changed, being bought and sold for money; See Gill on "Lu 3:2"; so that this clause is very properly added, though Caiaphas held it longer, or, at least, had it more years than one; for Caiaphas was high priest when John began to preach, **Lu 3:2**; but he now succeeded Simeon ben Camhith, who was priest the year before; as was Eleazar the son of Ananus, the year before that; and before him Ishmael ben Phabi, who were all three successively put into the priesthood by Valerius Gratus, the Roman governor; as was also Caiaphas this year, and whose name was Joseph.

{k} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 3, 6.

John 18:14

Ver. 14. Now Caiaphas was he which gave council to the Jews,.... The chief

priests and Pharisees, who met in council about Jesus,
Joh 11:47, the counsel he gave was,

that it was expedient that one man should die for the people; and which advice was given out of ill will and malice to Christ, and to prevent, as he thought, the people of the Jews being destroyed by the Romans; though the words have a very good sense which he did not understand. The people Christ was to die for, was not all the, people of the world, nor only the people of the Jews, nor all of them; but all the elect of God, whom God has chosen for his special and peculiar people, and has given to Christ as such: these Christ were to die for, and did, not merely as a martyr, to confirm his doctrine to them, or as an example to teach them meekness, patience, and courage, but in the room and stead of them, as a surety for them; and it was expedient that he should, in such sense, die for them, because of his suretyship engagements, that he might make satisfaction to the law and justice of God, and procure the salvation of his people, and send forth the Spirit to make application of it to them.

John 18:15

Ver. 15. And Simon Peter followed Jesus,.... It is certain, he first fled with the rest, and forsook him, as they all did, notwithstanding his resolution to abide by him; however, he was very desirous to know what would become of Jesus, and what would be the issue of things; with this view he followed him, and not to deny him; though that was the consequence. Other evangelists say he followed him afar off, at a distance, Mt 26:58; which showed some fear; and yet to follow him at all discovered love and zeal. To follow Christ is a property of his sheep, and is highly commendable, especially to follow him in sufferings; a greater character a person cannot well have, than to be a follower of Jesus, in the exercise of grace, in the discharge of duty, and in bearing the cross; and yet it does not appear that Peter did well in following Christ now; for Christ had cautioned him of his over confidence, had hinted to him that he should deny him, and had dismissed him, and took his leave of him, and the rest, on whose discharge he insisted, when he was apprehended, Joh 18:8;

And so did another disciple, and that disciple was known unto the high priest. This is thought to be the Apostle John, because he frequently speaks of himself, without mentioning his name; and these two, Peter and John, were generally together; and certain it is, that John was present at the cross at the time of Christ's crucifixion; and who is supposed to be known to the high priest, by carrying fish to his house, and selling it to him; so Nonnus says, he was known from his fishing trade: but it is not probable that he was known, or could be known by the high priest, so as to have any intimacy with him; nor is it likely that he, being a Galilaean, would venture in; he was discoverable by his speech, and would have been in equal danger with Peter; rather it was some one of the disciples of Christ, who had not openly professed him; one of the chief rulers that believed in him, but, for fear of the Pharisees, had not confessed him; it may be Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea, or the man at whose house Christ had eaten the passover. In the Syriac version he is called one of the other disciples; not of the twelve, but others. However, through his knowledge of the high priest, he

went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest; not Annas, but Caiaphas; for Christ was now brought from Annas's house to Caiaphas's, where the Scribes and elders were assembled together.

John 18:16

Ver. 16. But Peter stood at the door without,.... It being difficult to get in; and perhaps he might be fearful too of going in, lest he should be known; however, he waited, if he could hear or see anything, and for a proper opportunity of entrance: it would have been well if he had took the hint of providence, access not being easy, and have gone his way; for he was now at the door of temptation: it would have been best for him, if he had kept without; and indeed at a greater distance; but his curiosity had led him thus far, and he hoped for an opportunity of getting nearer, which offered in the following manner:

then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest; seeing Peter through the window, by the light of the moon, for it was full moon; and knowing him, who he was, concluded he had a mind to come in, and hear and see what he could, steps out,

and spake unto her that kept the door; which might be thought more properly the business of menservants; but these being employed in apprehending and guarding Jesus, the maid, servants might be obliged to take this post. The Ethiopic version, in the next verse, calls her the doorkeeper's daughter; her father might be the porter, and he being busy, she supplied his place. Though there is no need of these conjectures, since it was usual with other nations, and it might be with the Jews, for women to be doorkeepers, as Pignorius {l} has shown out of Plautus, Petronius, Pausanias, and others. However, the other disciple, who was a man of figure and authority, and was known by the servants of the family, ordered her to open the door, and let Peter in; who accordingly did:

and brought in Peter; into the hall, where Jesus was, under the examination of the high priest.

{l} De Servis, p. 454, 455.

John 18:17

Ver. 17. Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter,.... She being relieved, either by her father, if porter, or by a fellow servant, had the opportunity of coming into the hall, where Peter was, and was curious to observe him, who he should be, that that person of note should order him to be admitted, when an affair of so much privacy and importance was transacting; and either by Peter's language, or the trouble that appeared in his countenance, or fancying: she had seen him in the temple, or in some part of the city in company With Jesus, addresses him after this manner:

art not thou also one of this man's disciples? She speaks of Christ in the vulgar dialect of the Jews, calling him "this man"; not only esteeming him a mere man, but a worthless man; and knowing he had disciples, challenges him as one of them; when he, all in flight and surprise, not expecting such a question to be put to him, without any further thought, rashly and suddenly

he saith I am not: he never denied that Christ was God or the Son of God, or that he was come in the flesh, or that he was the Messiah and Saviour of sinners; but either that he did not know what the maid said, or the person she spoke of; or, as here, that he was one of his disciples; which was a very great untruth: and many are the aggravations of his fall; which came to pass as soon as ever he was entered almost; and that by the means of a maid, a servant maid, a very inferior one; and at first perhaps they were alone; and the question put to him might not be in a virulent way, nor proceed from malice, but commiseration of him; and yet he had not resolution enough to own himself a disciple of Jesus; which he might have done, and in all likelihood might have gone safe off directly: but he that had so much confidence as to say, though all men deny thee, yet will not I; and had so much courage, as, in the face of a band of soldiers, to draw his sword, and smite one of the high priest's servants, but a few hours before, has not spirit enough in him to own his master before a servant maid!

John 18:18

Ver. 18. And the servants and officers stood there,.... In a certain part of the hall, the middle of it; the Vulgate Latin reads, "by the coals": it follows,

who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold; though it was the passover, and harvest near. Dr. Lightfoot has observed from our countryman Biddulph, who was at Jerusalem at this time of the year, that though in the daytime it was as hot as with us at Midsummer, yet such very great dews fell as made it very cold, especially in the night; and from one of the Jewish canons {m}, that the year was not intercalated, (which when done was chiefly on account of the passover,) neither for snow nor frost; which, as he justly remarks, supposes there might be frost and snow at the time of the passover. The same is observed in the Talmud {n}, where the gloss upon it is,

"that they might not desist, on that account, from coming to the passover."

The sense is, that whereas sometimes snow fell about the time of the passover; which might be thought to be an hinderance to some from coming to it; this never was a reason that came into consideration with the sanhedrim, or prevailed upon them to intercalate a month, that so the passover might not fall at a time of year when there was usually snow. The passover was always in the spring of the year, when nights are commonly cold, as they are generally observed to be at the vernal equinox: this night might be remarkably cold; which seems to be suggested by the Persic version, which reads, "for it was cold that night"; and the Ethiopic version, "for the cold of that night was great"; and adds what is neither in the text, nor true, "for the country was cold". The Arabic version, as it should seem, very wrongly renders it, "for it was winter"; since the passover was never kept in the winter season, but always in the spring, in the month Nisan: the winter season, with the Jews, were half the month of Chisleu, all Tebeth, and half Shebet {o}; though this is to be observed in favour of that version, that the Jews distinguish their winter into two parts; the one they call Prwx, which, as the gloss says, is the strength of winter, the coldest part of it, and which lasts the time before mentioned; and the other they call rwq, which is the end of winter, and when the cold is not so strong; and half Nisan is taken into this; for they say that half Shebat, all Adar, and half Nisan, are reckoned to this part of winter: so that, according to this account, the fourteenth of Nisan, which was the day on which the passover was killed; or at least the fifteenth, which was now begun, was the last day of winter, and so just secures the credit of the above version.

And they warmed themselves, and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself: he was cold both inwardly and outwardly; and being so, he gets into bad company; and it may be with a view that he might not be suspected, but be taken for one of their own sort, as one who had the same ill opinion of Jesus they had; and by the light of the fire he is again discovered and challenged, which makes way for a second denial.

{m} Maimon. Hilch. Kiddush Chodesh, c. 4. sect. 6. {n} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 11. 1. {o} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 106. 2.

John 18:19

Ver. 19. The high priest then asked Jesus,.... Being now brought from Annas to Caiaphas, who was the high priest and mouth of the sanhedrim, and to whom it appertained to hear and try a cause relating to doctrine. And what he did was by putting questions to him, instead of opening the charge against him, and calling for witnesses to support it. The person he interrogated was a greater high priest than himself; was that prophet Moses spoke of, to whom the Jews were to hearken, and no other than the Son of God, and King of Israel; who, when at twelve years of age, asked the doctors questions, and answered theirs, to their great astonishment. He first inquires

of his disciples, not so much who they were, and what they were, and how many they were, and where they were now, as for what purpose he gathered them together; whether it was not with some seditious views to overturn the present government, and set up himself as a temporal prince; and this he did, that he might be able to send him, with a charge against him, to the Roman governor: he did not ask for his disciples to come and speak on his behalf, if they had anything to say for him, which, by their canons {p}, was allowed and encouraged:

"if any of the disciples (of the person accused) says, I have a crime to lay to his charge, they silence him; but if one of the disciples says, I have something to say in his favour, they bring him up, and place him between them; nor does he go down from thence all the day; and if there is anything in what he says, wl Nyemwv, "they hearken to him"."

The Jews indeed pretend {q} that after Jesus was found guilty, a herald went before him forty days declaring his crime, and signifying, that if anyone knew anything worthy in him, to come and declare it; but none were found: but this is all lies and falsehood, to cover their wickedness; no disciple of his was allowed to speak for him. The high priest next asked Jesus

of his doctrine; not for the sake of information and instruction, nor to see whether it was according to the Scriptures; but if it was a new doctrine, and his own, and whether it tended to idolatry or blasphemy, and whether it was factious and seditious, that so they might have wherewith to accuse him; for though they had got his person, they were at a loss for an accusation; and yet this self-same man that put these questions, and was fishing for something against him, had before given counsel to put him to death, right or wrong: all this was doing, and these questions were put to Jesus, whilst Peter was denying him.

{p} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 40. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 8. {q} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

John 18:20

Ver. 20. Jesus answered him,.... Not to the first of these questions, concerning his disciples; not because they had all now forsaken him, and one was denying him; nor because he would not betray them; nor because he would suffer alone; but because if his doctrine was good; it could not be blameworthy to have disciples, and to teach them: and the charge of sedition, blasphemy, and idolatry, they wanted to fasten on him, would sufficiently appear to be groundless by the doctrine he preached; and as to that he answers not directly what he taught, but declares the manner in which he delivered it, and which was such, that they that heard him could not be strangers to it.

I spake openly to the world; with all plainness, freedom, and boldness, without any reserve or ambiguity; and that not to a few persons only, to his own particular disciples, but to all the people of the Jews, who crowded in great numbers to hear him; insomuch that it was said by his enemies, that the world was gone after him.

I ever taught in the synagogue; the Arabic, "the synagogues"; the places of public worship in all parts of the nation, where the Jews met to pray, and read, and hear the word:

and in the temple; at Jerusalem, whenever he was in that city;

whither the Jews always resort; for prayer, and to offer sacrifice, and particularly at the three grand festivals of the year, the passover, Pentecost, and feast of tabernacles, when all the males from all parts appeared before the Lord. Accordingly, the Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, "whither all the Jews resort"; and so read the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions.

And in secret have I said nothing; not but that our Lord taught in other places than what are here mentioned, as on mountains, in deserts, by the sea shore, and in private houses, yet generally to great multitudes; and though he sometimes conversed alone, and in secret with his disciples, yet what he taught them was either an explanation of what he had said in public, or was perfectly agreeable to it.

John 18:21

Ver. 21. Why askest thou me?.... He seems surprised at the high priest's conduct, that he should put such questions to him, who stood bound before him; was brought there as a criminal, and was the defendant, and not obliged to accuse himself; nor could it be thought, that whatever evidence or testimony he should give, would have much weight with the persons before whom he stood.

Ask them which heard me, what I said unto them; he appeals to his hearers, many of whom were then present; and these his enemies, even his worst enemies, so clear was his case, so free was his doctrine from sedition and blasphemy, so innocent was he in the whole of his deportment and conduct, that he even submits to have his case issued and determined by what his hearers should say of him; and these not his friends, but his enemies; see Isa 50:8;

behold, they, or these,

know what I have said; pointing at some persons present, perhaps the very officers who had been sent to take him before, but returned without him, declaring that never man spake like him.

John 18:22

Ver. 22. And when he had thus spoken,.... What was so right and reasonable, in so becoming a manner, without heat or passion:

one of the officers which stood by; it may be one of those who had been sent to him and had been a hearer of him, whom Jesus might look wistfully at, or point unto, when he said the above words, at which he might be provoked: and therefore

stroke Jesus with the palm of his hand; or gave him a rap with a rod, or smote him with a staff, as some think, is the sense of the phrase; though the Syriac, agreeably to our version, reads it, he smote him, yhwewl le, "upon his cheek"; gave him, what we commonly call, a slap on the face; and which is always esteemed a very great affront, and was a piece of rudeness and insolence to the last degree in this man:

saying, answerest thou the high priest so? This he said, as well as gave the blow, either out of flattery to the high priest, or to clear himself from being a favourer of Christ; which, by what had been said, he might think would be suspected: some have thought this was Malchus, whose ear Christ had healed; if so, he was guilty of great ingratitude.

John 18:23

Ver. 23. Jesus answered him,.... For the high priest took no notice of him, nor any of the sanhedrim, though the action was so insolent and indecent, both as to the manner in which it was done, and the person, an officer, by whom it was done; and considering the circumstances of it, in the palace of the high priest, in his presence, and before so grand a council, and whilst a cause was trying; and it was a barbarous, as well as an impious action, considering the person to whom it was done. Wherefore Jesus replies to him, without making use of his divine power as the Son of God, or discovering any warmth of spirit, and heat of passion, as a man, mildly and rationally argues with him;

if I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: meaning, either if he had, to his knowledge, delivered any wicked doctrine in the course of his ministry, or had at that time said any evil thing of the high priest, or any other person, he desires that he would make it to appear, and give proper proof and evidence of it:

but if well, why smitest thou me? If he had said nothing contrary to truth, reason, and good manners, then he ought not to be used and treated in such an injurious way. And moreover, the officer ought to have been corrected by the Council, and have been made to pay the two hundred "zuzim", or pence, the line for such an affront, according to the Jewish canon, or more, according to the dignity of the person abused {r}.

{r} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6.

John 18:24

Ver. 24. Now Annas had sent him bound,.... As he found him, when the captain, band, and officers brought him to him; who having pleased himself with so agreeable a sight, and had asked him some few questions, and perhaps insulted him, sent him away in this manner,

unto Caiaphas the high priest: his son-in-law, as the more proper person to be examined before; and especially as the grand council was sitting at his house. This was done before Peter's first denial of Christ; which, it is plain, was in the palace of the high priest, and not in Annas's house; though there seems no reason on this account to place these words at the end of the 13th verse, as they are by some, since they manifestly refer to time past, and do not at all obscure or hinder the true order of the history, as standing here.

John 18:25

Ver. 25. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself,.... This is repeated from Joh 18:18 to connect the history, and carry on the thread of the account of Peter's denial of Christ, which is interrupted by inserting the examination of Christ before the high priest, which was made at the same time. Peter stood among, and continued with the servants and officers of the high priest, warming himself by a fire they had made, it being a cold night; and this proved of bad consequence to him. The company and conversation of wicked men should be abstained from; no good is got thereby; continuance among such is very dangerous; men are too often more concerned for their bodies than their souls; Satan baits his temptations for the fleshly and sensitive part; and that which is thought to be for good, is the occasion of hurt.

They said therefore unto him; the servants and officers, among whom he stood warming himself, having observed what the maid had said to him:

art thou not also one of his disciples? suspecting that he was, though he had denied it, and therefore press him to give a direct answer: they might observe his countenance to fall, when the maid put the question to him; there might be something in his dress, and especially in his speech, which increased the suspicion:

but he denied it, and said, I am not; a second time. This denial of his being a disciple of Christ, as before, did not arise from a sense of his unworthiness to be one; nor from diffidence and distrust of a right to such a character; but from the fear of men; and being ashamed of Christ, he denies that which was his great mercy, privilege, and glory.

John 18:26

Ver. 26. One of the servants of the high priest,.... Hearing him so stiffly deny that he was a disciple of Jesus, when he had great reason to believe he was:

being his kinsman, whose ear Peter cut off; a near relation of Malchus, to whom Peter had done this injury; and who was present at the same time, and no doubt took particular notice of him; and the more, because of what he had done to his kinsman:

saith unto him, did not I see thee in the garden with him? as if he should have said, I saw thee with my own eyes along with Jesus, this very night in the garden, beyond Kidron, where he was apprehended, how canst thou deny it? and wilt thou stand in it so confidently, that thou art not one of his disciples?

John 18:27

Ver. 27. Peter then denied again,.... A third time, as the Ethiopic version renders it; and that, according to other evangelists, with cursing and swearing; for now he was more affrighted than before, lest should he be taken up, and it be proved upon him, that he was the person that cut off Malchus's ear, he should be sentenced to a fine, or it may be some capital punishment. The fine for plucking a man's ears, and which some understand of plucking them off, was four hundred "zuzim" {s}, or, pence; which, as they answer to Roman pence, amount to twelve pounds ten shillings; a sum of money Peter perhaps could not have raised, without great difficulty: and therefore, that it might be believed he was not a disciple of Christ, so not the man; he swears in a profane manner, and imprecates the judgments of God upon him:

and immediately the cock crew; the second time; which was a signal by which he might call to remembrance, what Christ had said to him; that before the cock crowed twice, he should deny him thrice,
Mr 14:72. It was now early in the morning, about three o'clock, or somewhat after.

{s} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8, sect. 6. Vid. L'Empereur in ib.

John 18:28

Ver. 28. Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas,.... When Peter had denied him, one of the officers had smote him, the high priest had examined him, and they thought they had enough, out of his own mouth, to condemn him; they, the chief priests, elders, Scribes, and the whole multitude, led him bound as he was, from Caiaphas's house,

unto the hall of judgment; or the "praetorium"; the place where the Roman governor, who was now Pontius Pilate, used to hear and try causes in; the Romans now having matters and causes relating to life and death, in their hands:

and it was early; the morning indeed was come; but it was as soon as it was day; they had been all night in taking and examining Jesus, and consulting what to do with him; and as soon as they could expect the governor to be up, they hurry him away to him, eagerly thirsting after his blood, and fearing lest he should be rescued out of their hands:

and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; that is, the Jews, only the band of Roman soldiers went in; the reason of this was, because it was the house of a Gentile, and with them, Myamj Mw'keh twrwdm, "the dwelling houses of Gentiles", or idolaters, "are unclean" {t}; yea, if they were the houses of Israelites, and Gentiles were admitted to dwell in them, they were defiled, and all that were in them; for so they say {u},

"if the collectors for the government enter into a house to dwell in, all in the house are defiled."

They did not think it lawful to rent out a house in Judea to an Heathen {w}, or to assist in building a Basilica for them; which they explain to be a palace, in which judges sit to judge men {x}: hence the reason of their caution, and which they were the more observant of,

that they might eat the passover; pure and undefiled; not the passover lamb, for that they had eaten the night before; but the "Chagigah", or feast on the fifteenth day of the month. Many Christian writers, both ancient and modern, have concluded from hence, that Christ did not keep his last passover, at the same time the Jews did; and many things are said to illustrate this matter, and justify our Lord in it: some observe the distinction of a sacrificial, and commemorative passover; the sacrificial passover is that, in which the lamb was slain, and was fixed to a certain time and place, and there was no altering it; the commemorative passover is that, in which no lamb is slain and eaten, only a commemoration made of the deliverance of the people of Israel out of Egypt; such as is now kept by the Jews, being out of their own land, where sacrifice with them is not lawful; and this it is supposed our Lord kept, and not the former: but it does not appear that there was such a commemorative passover kept by the Jews, in our Lord's time, and whilst the temple stood: and supposing there was such an one allowed, and appointed for those that were at a distance from Jerusalem, and could not come up thither, (which was not the case of Christ and his disciples,) it is reasonable to conclude, that it was to be kept, and was kept at the time the sacrificial passover was, in the room of which it was substituted, as it is by the Jews to this day; so that this will by no means clear the matter, nor solve the difficulty; besides it is very manifest, that the passover our Lord kept was sacrificial; and such an one the disciples proposed to get ready for him, and did, of which he and they are said to eat: "and the first day of unleavened bread, when they KILLED the passover, his disciples said to him, where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayest EAT the passover?" Mr 14:12 and again, "then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover MUST be KILLED", Lu 22:7. "They made ready the passover", Lu 22:13 "and he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him", Lu 22:14 "and he said unto them, with desire I have desired to eat this passover", Lu 22:15. Others suggest, that this difference of observing the passover by Christ and the Jews arose from fixing the beginning of the month, and so accordingly the feasts in it, by the fasiv, or appearance of the moon; and that our Lord went according to the true appearance of it, and the Jews according to a false account: but of this, as a fact, there is no proof; besides, though the feasts were regulated and fixed according to the appearance of the moon, yet this was not left to the arbitrary will, pleasure, and judgment of particular persons, to determine as they should think proper; but the sanhedrim, or chief council of the nation sat, at a proper time, to hear and examine witnesses about the appearance of the moon; and accordingly determined, and none might fix but them {y}; and as this was doubtless the case at this time, it is not very reasonable to think, that Christ would differ from them: besides, it was either a clear case, or a doubtful one; if the former, then there would be no room nor reason to keep another day; and if it was the latter, then two days were observed, that they might be sure they were right {z}; but then both were kept by all the Jews: and that the time of this passover was well known, is clear from various circumstances; such and such facts were done, so many days before it; six days before it, Jesus came to Bethany, Joh 12:1 and two days before it, he was in the same place, Mt 26:2 and says to his disciples, "ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover", &c. Others taking it for granted, that Christ kept the passover a day before the usual and precise time, defend it, by observing the despotic and legislative power of Christ, who had a right to dispense with the time of this feast, and could at his pleasure anticipate it, because the betraying of him and his death were so near at hand: that he had such a power will not be disputed; but that he should use it in this way, does not seem necessary, on account of his death, seeing none but the living were obliged to it; nor so consistent with his wisdom, since hereby the mouths of his enemies would be opened against him, for acting not agreeably to the law of God: moreover, when it is considered that the passover, according to the Jews, was always kept wdewmb, "in its set time" {a}, and was not put off on the account of the sabbath, or anything else, to another day; and that though when it was put off for particular persons, on account of uncleanness, to another month, yet still it was to be kept on the fourteenth day at even, in that month, **Nu 9:10** it will not easily be received that Christ observed it a day before the time: besides, the passover lamb was not killed in a private house, but in the temple, in the court of it, and that always on the fourteenth of Nisan, after noon: so says Maimonides {b},

"it is an affirmative command to slay the passover on the fourteenth of the month Nisan, after the middle of the day. The passover is not slain but in the court, as the rest of the holy things; even in the time that altars were lawful, they did not offer the passover on a private altar; and whoever offers the passover on a private altar, is to be beaten; as it is said, "thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee", De 16:5."

And seeing therefore a passover lamb was not to be killed at home, but in the

court of the priests, in the temple, it does not seem probable, that a single lamb should be suffered to be killed there, for Christ and his disciples, on a day not observed by the Jews, contrary to the sense of the sanhedrim, and of the whole nation: add to this, that the sacred text is express for it, that it was at the exact time of this feast, when it was come according to general computation, that the disciples moved to Christ to prepare the passover for him, and did, and they with him kept it: the account Matthew gives is very full; "now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread"; that is, when that was come in its proper time and course, "the disciples came to Jesus"; saying unto him, where wilt "thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?" He bids them go to the city to such a man, and say, "I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples, and the disciples did as Jesus had appointed, and they made ready the passover; now when the even was come", the time of eating the passover, according to the law of God, "he sat down with the twelve, and as they did eat", &c.
Mt 26:17 and Mark is still more particular, who says, "and the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover"; that is, when the Jews killed the passover, on the very day the lamb was slain, and eaten by them; and then follows much the same account as before,
Mr 14:12 and Luke yet more clearly expresses it, "then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed"; according to the law of God, and the common usage of the people of the Jews; yea, he not only observes, that Christ kept the usual day, but the very hour, the precise time of eating it; for he says, "and when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him", Lu 22:7. Nor is there anything in this text, that is an objection to Christ and the Jews keeping the passover at the same time; since by the passover here is meant, the "Chagigah", or feast kept on the fifteenth day of the month, as it is sometimes called: in De 16:2 it is said, "thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God, of the flock and the herd": now the passover of the herd, can never mean the passover lamb, but the passover "Chagigah"; and so the Jewish commentators explain it; "of the herd", says Jarchi, thou shalt sacrifice for the "Chagigah"; and says Aben Ezra, for the peace offerings; so Josiah the king is said to give for the passovers three thousand bullocks, and the priests three hundred oxen, and the Levites five hundred oxen, 2Ch 35:7 which Jarchi interprets of the peace offerings of the "Chagigah", there called passovers; and so in 1 Esdres 1:7-9 mention is made of three thousand calves, besides lambs, that Josias gave for the passover; and three hundred by some other persons, and seven hundred by others: the passage in Deuteronomy, is explained of the "Chagigah", in both Talmuds {c}, and in other writings {d}; so besides the passover lamb, we read of sacrifices slain, xop Mwvl, "in the name of" the passover, or on account of

it {e}; and particularly of the calf and the young bullock, slain for the sake of the passover {f}: and now this is the passover which these men were to eat that day, and therefore were careful not to defile themselves, that so they might not be unfit for it; otherwise had it been the passover lamb in the evening, they might have washed themselves in the evening, according to the rules of Mwy lwbj, or "the daily washing", and been clean enough to have eat it: besides, it may be observed, that all the seven days were called the passover; and he that ate the unleavened bread, is said by eating that, to eat the passover; and thus they invite their guests daily to eat the bread, saying {g},

"everyone that is hungry, let him come and eat all that he needs, xopyw, "and keep the passover"."

It is easy to observe the consciences of these men, who were always wont to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel; they scruple going into the judgment hall, which belonged to an Heathen governor, and where was a large number of Heathen soldiers; but they could go along with these into the garden to apprehend Christ, and spend a whole night in consulting to shed innocent blood: no wonder that God should be weary of their sacrifices and ceremonious performances, when, trusting to these, they had no regard to moral precepts: however, this may be teaching to us, in what manner we should keep the feast, and eat of the true passover, Christ; not with malice and wickedness, as these Jews ate theirs, but with sincerity and truth: besides, a sanhedrim, when they had condemned anyone to death, were forbidden to eat anything all that day {h}; and so whilst scrupling one thing, they broke through another.

{t} Misn. Oholot, c. 18. sect. 7. {u} Maimon. Mishcab & Mosheb, c. 12. sect. 12. {w} Misn. Avoda Zara, c. 1. sect. 8. {x} Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. sect. 7. {y} Maimon. Kiddush Hachodesh, c. 2. sect. 7, 8. {z} Ib. c. 5. sect. 6, 7, 8. {a} Maimon. in Misn. Pesachim, c. 7. sect. 4. & Bartenora in ib. c. 5. sect. 4. {b} Hilchot Korban Pesacb. c. 1. sect. 1, 3. {c} T. Hieros. Pesacb. fol. 33. 1. T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 70. 2. {d} Maimon. Korban Pesach. c. 10. sect. 12. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 349. {e} Misn. Pesachim, c. 6. sect. 5. {f} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 3. 1. {g} Haggadah Shel Pesach. p. 4. Ed. Rittangel. {h} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 63. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 13. sect. 4.

John 18:29

Ver. 29. Pilate then went out unto them,.... Either into the street, or rather into the place called the pavement, and in Hebrew Gabbatha; see Joh 19:13 the place where the Jewish sanhedrim used to sit; wherefore in complaisance to them, since they would not come into his court of judicature, he condescends to go into one of theirs, which showed great civility and humanity in him:

and said, what accusation bring ye against this man? meaning, what offence had he committed? what crime had they to charge him with? what did they accuse him of? and what proof had they to support their charge? His view was, to have the matter stated, the cause opened, and evidence given; that the accused being face to face with the accusers, might answer for himself; and he, as a judge, be capable of judging between them: all which were very commendable in him, and agreeably to the Roman laws; and have an appearance of equity, justice, and impartiality.

John 18:30

Ver. 30. They answered and said unto him,.... Offended at the question put to them, and filled with indignation that they should be so interrogated, with an air of haughtiness and insolence reply to him:

if he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee; insinuating, that he was guilty of some very wicked action; not merely of a breach of some of their laws peculiar to them; for then they would have tried and judged him according to them, and not have brought him before him; but they suggest, that he was guilty of some crimes recognizable by Caesar's court; and which they did not care to mention expressly, lest they should not succeed, not having it may be as yet, their witnesses ready; and hoped he would have took their own word for it, without any further proof, they being men of such rank and dignity, and of so much knowledge, learning, and religion; and therefore took it ill of him, that he should ask such persons as they were, so famous for their prudence, integrity, and sanctity, such a question: however, they own themselves to be the betrayers and deliverers up of our Lord, which Christ had before foretold, and which Stephen afterwards charged them with.

John 18:31

Ver. 31. Then said Pilate unto them,.... Either ironically, knowing that they did not, or it was not in their power, to judge in capital causes; or seriously, and with some indignation, abhorring such a method of procedure they would have had him gone into, to condemn a man without knowing his crime, and having evidence of it:

take ye him, and judge him according to your law; this he said, as choosing to understand them in no other sense, than that he had broken some peculiar law of theirs, though they had otherwise suggested; and as giving them liberty to take him away to one of their courts, and proceed against him as their law directed, and inflict some lesser punishment on him than death, such as scourging, &c. which they still had a power to do, and did make use of:

the Jews therefore said unto him, it is not lawful for us to put any man to death; thereby insinuating, that he was guilty of a crime, which deserved death, and which they could not inflict; not that they were of such tender consciences, that they could not put him to death, or that they had no law to punish him with death, provided he was guilty; but because judgments in capital cases had ceased among them; nor did they try causes relating to life and death, the date of which they often make to be forty years before the destruction of the temple {i}; and which was much about, or a little before the time these words were spoken: not that this power was taken away wholly from them by the Romans; though since their subjection to the empire, they had not that full and free exercise of it as before; but through the great increase of iniquity, particularly murder, which caused such frequent executions, that they were weary of them {k}; and through the negligence and indolence of the Jewish sanhedrim, and their removal from the room Gazith, where they only judged capital causes {l}: as for the stoning of Stephen, and the putting of some to death against whom Saul gave his voice, these were the outrages of the zealots, and were not according to a formal process in any court of judicature. Two executions are mentioned in their Talmud; the one is of a priest's daughter that was burnt for a harlot {m}, and the other of the stoning of Ben Stada in Lydda {n}; the one, according to them, seems to be before, the other after the destruction of the temple; but these dates are not certain, nor to be depended upon: for since the destruction of their city and temple, and their being carried captive into other lands, it is certain that the power of life and death has been wholly taken from them; by which it appears, that the sceptre is removed from Judah, and a lawgiver from between his feet; and this they own almost in the same words as here expressed; for they say {o} of a certain man worthy of death,

"why dost thou scourge him? he replies, because he lay with a beast; they say to him, hast thou any witnesses? he answers, yes; Elijah came in the form of a man, and witnessed; they say, if it be so, he deserves to die; to which he answers, "from the day we have been carried captive out of our land, ljqml atwvr Nl tyl, we have no power to put to death"."

But at this time, their power was not entirely gone; but the true reason of their saying these words is, that they might wholly give up Christ to the Roman power, and throw off the reproach of his death from themselves; and particularly they were desirous he should die the reproachful and painful death of the cross, which was a Roman punishment: had they took him and judged him according to their law, which must have been as a false prophet, or for blasphemy or idolatry, the death they must have condemned him to, would have been stoning; but it was crucifixion they were set upon; and therefore deliver him up as a traitor, and a seditious person, in order thereunto.

{i} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 15. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 41. 1. T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 1. & 24. 2. Juchasin, fol. 51. 1. Moses Kotsensis pr. affirm. 99. {k} T. Bab. Avoda Zara fol. 8. 2. Juchasin, fol. 21. 1. {l} Gloss. in T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 8, 2. {m} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 24. 2. {n} Ib. fol. 25. 4. {o} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 58. 1.

John 18:32

Ver. 32. That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled,.... That he should be delivered by the Jews to the Gentiles, to crucify him; and that he should be lifted up from the earth, and as the serpent upon the pole:

which he spake, signifying what death he should die;
Mt 20:19 and which was brought about this way, by the providence of God conducting this whole affair; and was cheerfully submitted to by Christ, in great love to his people, to redeem them from the curse of the law, being hereby made a curse for them.

John 18:33

Ver. 33. Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again,.... Where he went at first, but the Jews refusing to come in thither to him, he came out to them; and now they speaking out more plainly, that he was guilty of a crime deserving of death; as that he set up himself as a king, in opposition to Caesar, and taught the people not to pay tribute to him; he goes into the "praetorium" again, and called Jesus; beckoned, or sent for him; or ordered him to come in thither to him, that he might alone, and the more freely, converse with him; which Jesus did, paying no regard to the superstitious observances of the Jews:

and said unto him, art thou the king of the Jews? This he might say, from a rumour that was generally spread, that there was such a person to come, and was born; and by many it was thought, that Jesus was he; and particularly from the charge of the Jews against him, which though not here expressed, is elsewhere; see Lu 23:2. Wherefore Pilate was the more solicitous about the matter, on account of Caesar, and lest he should be charged with dilatoriness and negligence in this affair: some read these words not by way of question, but affirmation, "thou art the king of the Jews"; which method he might make use of, the more easily to get it out of him, whether he was or not: and to this reading, Christ's answer in the next verse seems best to agree.

John 18:34

Ver. 34. Jesus answered him, sayest thou this thing of thyself,.... That he was the king of the Jews: Christ's meaning is, whether he asserted this from the sentiments of his own mind; or moved the question from anything he himself had observed, which might give him just ground to suspect that he had, or intended to set up himself as the king of that nation:

or did others tell it thee of me? Whether the Jews had not intimated some such thing to him, out of malice and ill will? not but that Christ full well knew where the truth of this lay; but he was desirous of convincing Pilate of his weakness, if he so judged of himself, and of his imprudence and hastiness, if he took up this from others; and also to expose the baseness and wickedness of the Jews, to charge him with this, when they themselves would have made him a temporal king, and he refused; and when he had not only paid tribute himself to Caesar, but had exhorted them to do the like.

John 18:35

Ver. 35. Pilate answered, am I a Jew?.... This he said, in a sort of derision and contempt; who was not a Jew, neither by birth, nor by religion, and so had never imbibed any notions of their King Messiah, nor read anything about him; and knew nothing of his distinguishing characters and properties, by which he was described, and might be known; and therefore it remained, that what he had said, though not expressed, was not of himself, of his own knowledge or observation, but arose from some intimations and suggestions the Jews had given him:

thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me; that is, the men of his nation, his countrymen the Jews, who best understood their own laws and books of prophecy; and what expectations they had formed from thence, concerning their king, and his kingdom; and the principal of the priesthood, who were accounted men of the greatest learning, piety, and integrity, they had brought him bound before him; they had entered a charge against him, and had delivered him up into his hands, as an enemy to Caesar, and a traitor to his government:

what hast thou done? as an occasion of such treatment, and as the foundation of such a charge; surely there must be something in it, or men of such character would never impeach a man altogether innocent, and one of their own country too!

John 18:36

Ver. 36. Jesus answered, my kingdom is not of this world,.... By saying which, he tacitly owns he was a king: as such he was set up, and anointed by his Father from everlasting; was prophesied of in the Old Testament; declared by the angel, both when he brought the news of his conception, and of his birth; was owned by many, who knew him to be so in the days of his flesh; and since his resurrection, ascension, and session at God's right hand, more manifestly appears to be one: he also hereby declares, that he had a kingdom; by which he means, not his natural and universal kingdom, as God, and the Creator and Governor of all things; but his mediatorial kingdom, administered both in the days of his flesh, and after his resurrection; which includes the whole Gospel dispensation, Christ's visible church state on earth, and the whole election of grace; it takes in that which will be at the close of time, in the latter day, which will be more spiritual, and in which Christ will reign before his ancients gloriously; and also the kingdom of God, or of heaven, even the ultimate glory: the whole of which is not of this world; the subjects of Christ's kingdom are not of the world, they are chosen and called out of it; the kingdom itself does not appear in worldly pomp and splendour, nor is it supported by worldly force, nor administered by worldly laws; nor does it so much regard the outward, as the inward estates of men; it promises no worldly emoluments, or temporal rewards. Christ does not say it is not "in" this world, but it is not of it; and therefore will not fail, when this world does, and the kingdoms thereof. Every thing that is carnal, sensual, and worldly, must be removed from our conceptions of Christ's kingdom, here or hereafter: and to this agrees what some Jewish writers say of the Messiah, and his affairs;

"the Messiah (they say {o}) is separated from the world, because he is absolutely intellectual; but the world is corporeal; how then should the Messiah be in this world, when the world is corporeal, and ymvg al yhla awh xyvmh
Nyne, "the business of the Messiah is divine, and not corporeal?""

And since this was the case, Caesar, or any civil government, had no reason to be uneasy on account of his being a king, and having a kingdom; since his kingdom and interests did not in the least break in upon, or injure any others: and that this was the nature of his kingdom, he proves by the following reason;

if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews: if Christ's kingdom had been a worldly one, set up on worldly views, and governed with worldly policy, and was to answer some worldly ends, Christ would have had servants enough among the Jews, who would have declared for him, and took up arms in his favour against the Romans; his own disciples would not have suffered him to have been betrayed into the hands of the Jews by Judas; nor would he have hindered them from attempting his rescue, as he did Peter; nor would they suffer him now to be delivered by Pilate into their hands, to put him to death; since they had such a Prince at the head of them, who, was he to make use of his power, was able to drive all the Roman forces before them out of the nation, and oblige a general submission among the Jews, to the sceptre of his kingdom:

but now is my kingdom not from hence; it does not rise out of, nor proceed upon, nor is it supported by worldly principles, wherefore none of the above methods are made use of.

{o} R. Juda Bezaleel Nizeach Israel, fol. 48.

John 18:37

Ver. 37. Pilate therefore said unto him,.... Upon this free and full declaration of Christ, concerning his kingly office, and the nature of his kingdom:

art thou a king then? or thou art a king then: for, from his having a kingdom, it might be very justly inferred that he was a king:

Jesus answered, thou sayest that I am a king; and which was very rightly said; and Christ by these words owns and confesses, that he was one: adding,

to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. The end of Christ's being born, which was of a virgin, in a very miraculous manner, and of his coming into the world, which was by the assumption of human nature, among many other things, was to bear testimony to truth in general; to the whole Gospel, the word of truth, and every branch of it, which he brought with him, constantly preached in life, and confirmed by his death; and particularly to this truth, that he was a King, and had a kingdom in a spiritual sense:

everyone that is of the truth; that is of God, belongs to the sheep of Christ, knows the truth as it is in Jesus, and is on the side of truth, and stands by it:

heareth my voice; the voice of his Gospel; and that not only externally, but internally; so as to approve of it, rejoice at it, and distinguish it; and the voice of his commands, so as cheerfully to obey them from a principle of love to him.

John 18:38

Ver. 38. Pilate saith unto him, what is truth?.... That is, in general, or that which Christ then particularly spoke of: many things might be observed in answer to this question, as that there is the truth and faithfulness of God in his word and promises; the truth of grace in the hearts of his people; Jesus Christ himself is truth, he is true God, and true man; the truth of all covenant transactions, of all types, promises, and prophecies; whatever he said and taught was truth, and the truth of all doctrine comes from him. The Gospel is truth in general; it comes from the God of truth; lies in the Scriptures of truth; Christ, who is truth itself, is the substance of it; the Spirit of truth has an hand in it, leads into it, and makes it effectual; the whole of it is true, and every particular doctrine of it; as the manifestation of the Son of God in human nature, his coming into the world to save the chief of sinners, justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, atonement by his sacrifice, the resurrection of the dead, &c. The same question is put in the Talmud {p}, tma hm, "what is truth?" and it is answered, that he is the living God, and the King of the World: we do not find that our Lord gave any answer to this question, which might be put in a scornful, jeering way; nor did Pilate wait for one; for when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews: as soon as he had put the question about truth, having no great inclination to hear what Christ would say to it; nor did he put it for information sake, or as having any opinion of Christ, and that he was able to answer it; he directly goes out of the judgment hall, taking Jesus along with him, and addresses the Jews after this manner:

and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all; and indeed how should he? there was no sin in his nature, nor guile in his lips, nor any iniquity in his life; the devil himself could find none in him. This confession is both to the shame of Pilate and the Jews; to the reproach of Pilate, that after this he should condemn him; and of the Jews, that after such a fair and full declaration from the judge, they should insist upon his crucifixion; it shows, however, that he died not for any sin of his own, but for the sins of others.

{p} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 1.

John 18:39

Ver. 39. But ye have a custom,.... Not a law, either of God or man's, but a custom; and which was not originally observed at the feast of the passover, and perhaps was not of any long standing; but what the Roman governors, by the order of Caesar, or of their own pleasure, had introduced to ingratiate themselves into the affections of the people; and being repeated once and again, was now looked for:

that I should release unto you one at the passover; which was at this time; and more than one it seems it was not customary, to release:

will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? who they had said called himself so, and was so accounted by others, and which Pilate says, in a sneering, sarcastic way; though he was heartily willing to release him, and was in hopes they would have agreed to it, since nothing could be proved against him; however, he proposes it to them, and leaves it to their option.

John 18:40

Ver. 40. Then cried they all again,.... For it seems that Pilate had made this proposal once before, and that this was the second time, though not mentioned;

yet some copies, and the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the word "again": they all, priests and people, in a very clamorous manner, cried out as one man, with one united voice, all at once;

saying, not this man, but Barabbas; now Barabbas was a robber; who was an emblem of God's elect in a state of nature, released and set free when Christ was condemned. These, as he, many of them at least, are notorious sinners, the chief of sinners, robbers and murderers; who have robbed God of his glory, and destroyed themselves; are prisoners, concluded in sin and unbelief, and shut up in the law, and in a pit, wherein is no water, in their natural state; and were, as this man, worthy of death, and by nature children of wrath; and yet children of God by adopting grace, as his name Bar Abba signifies, "the son of the father": these, though such criminals, and so deserving of punishment, were let go free, when Christ was taken, condemned, and died; and which was according to the wise and secret counsel of Jehovah, and is a large discovery of divine grace; and what lays those who are released under the greatest obligations to live to him, who suffered for them, in their room and stead.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 19:1

Ver. 1. Then Pilate therefore took Jesus,.... Finding that the Jews would not agree to his release, but that Barabbas was the person they chose, and being very desirous, if possible, to save his life, thought of this method: he ordered Jesus to be taken by the proper officers,

and scourged him; that is, commanded him to be scourged by them; which was done by having him to a certain place, where being stripped naked, and fastened to a pillar, he was severely whipped: and this he did, hoping the Jews would be satisfied therewith, and agree to his release; but though he did this with such a view, yet it was a very unjust action in him to scourge a man that he himself could find no fault in: however, it was what was foretold by Christ himself, and was an emblem of those strokes and scourges of divine justice he endured, as the surety of his people, in his soul, in their stead; and his being scourged, though innocent, shows, that it was not for his own, but the sins of others; and expresses the vile nature of sin, the strictness of justice, and the grace, condescension, and patience of Christ: and this may teach us not to think it strange that any of the saints should endure scourgings, in a literal sense; and to bear patiently the scourgings and chastisements of our heavenly Father, and not to fear the overflowing scourge or wrath of God, since Christ has bore this in our room.

John 19:2

Ver. 2. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns,.... This was an emblem of his being surrounded by wicked men, sons of Belial, comparable to thorns, whilst he hung suffering on the cross; and of the sins of his people compassing him about, which were as thorns, very grievous to him; and of his various troubles in life, and of his being made a curse for us at death; thorns being the produce of the curse upon the earth.

And put it on his head: not only by way of derision, as mocking at his character, the King of the Jews, but in order to afflict and distress him.

And they put on him a purple robe: Matthew calls it a scarlet robe; and the Arabic and Persic versions here, "a red" one: it very probably was one of the soldiers' coats, which are usually red: this was still in derision of him as a king, and was an emblem of his being clothed with our purple and scarlet sins, and of the bloody sufferings of his human nature for them, and through which we come to have a purple covering, or to be justified by his blood, and even to be made truly kings, as well as priests, unto God.

John 19:3

Ver. 3. And said, hail, King of the Jews!.... Some copies before this clause read, "and they came unto him"; and so read the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, Coptic, and Ethiopic versions; that is, they came and prostrated themselves before him; bowed the knee unto him, and addressed him in a mock way, as if he was an earthly monarch just come to his crown, and whom they wished long to live; thus mocking at his kingly office, and despising him under that character, as many do now: some will not have him to reign over them, but reject him as King; and others, though in words they own him to be King, yet disregard his commands, and act no better part than these scoffing soldiers did:

and they smote him with their hands: upon his cheeks, as the Syriac version reads it. These, and many other affronts they gave him; in all which they were indulged by Pilate, and was a pleasing scene to the wicked Jews, whose relentless hearts were not in the least moved hereby, though Pilate hoped they would; and which was his view in allowing the soldiers to use such incivilities and indecencies to him.

John 19:4

Ver. 4. Pilate therefore went forth again,.... When all this was done to Jesus, Pilate went again out of the judgment hall, or however from the place where Jesus had been scourged, and ill used in the manner he was: he went a little before him unto the Jews that stood without,

and saith unto them, behold I bring him forth unto you; that is, he had ordered him to be brought forth by the soldiers, and they were just bringing him in the sad miserable condition in which he was, that the Jews might see, with their own eyes, how he had been used:

that ye may know that I find no fault in him; for by seeing what was done to him, how severely he had been scourged, and in what derision and contempt he had been had, and what barbarity had been exercised on him, they might know and believe, that if Pilate did all this, or allowed of it to be done to a man whom he judged innocent, purely to gratify the Jews; that had he found anything in him worthy of death, he would not have stopped here, but would have ordered the execution of him; of this they might assure themselves by his present conduct. Pilate, by his own confession, in treating, or suffering to be treated in so cruel and ignominious a manner, one that he himself could find no fault in, or cause of accusation against, was guilty of great injustice.

John 19:5

Ver. 5. Then came Jesus forth,.... Out of the judgment hall, or place where he had been scourged, as soon as Pilate had said these words:

wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe; with his temples scratched and torn with the thorny crown, and the blood running down from thence, and his face and eyes swollen with the blows he had received from their closed fists, and all besmeared with his own blood, and the soldiers' spittle; his body appearing to be almost of the same colour with the purple or scarlet robe, through the stripes and lashes he had received, when that was thrown back.

And Pilate saith unto them, behold the man; not their king, that would have provoked them; though he did say so afterwards, when he found he could not prevail upon them to agree to his release; but the man, to move their compassion; signifying, that he was a man as they were, and that they ought to use him as such, and treat him with humanity and pity; and that he was a poor despicable man, as the condition he was in showed; and that it was a weak thing in them to fear anything with respect to any change of, or influence in, civil government from one that made such a figure; and therefore should be satisfied with what had been done to him, and dismiss him.

John 19:6

Ver. 6. When the chief priests therefore, and officers, saw him,.... In this piteous condition, in his mock dress, and having on him all the marks of cruel usage, enough to have moved an heart of stone: and though they were the principal men of the priesthood, and who made great pretensions to religion and piety, and the officers were their servants and attendants, and all of them used to sacred employments; which might have been thought would have at least influenced them to the exercise of humanity and compassion to fellow creatures; yet instead of being affected with this sight, and wrought upon by it, to have agreed to his release, as Pilate hoped,

they cried out, saying, Crucify him, Crucify him; which was done in a very noisy and clamorous way; and the repetition of their request shows their malignity, vehemence, and impatience; and remarkable it is, that they should call for, and desire that kind of death the Scriptures had pointed out, that the Messiah should die, and which was predicted by Christ himself.

Pilate saith unto them, take ye him, and crucify him, for I find no fault in him. This was not leave to do it, as appears from the reason he gives, in which the innocence of Christ is again asserted; nor did the Jews take it in this light, as is evident from their reply; and it is clear, that after this Pilate thought he had a power either to release or crucify him; and he did afterwards seek to release him; and the Jews made a fresh request to crucify him; upon which he was delivered to be crucified: but this was said in a way of indignation, and as abhorring the action; and is an ironical concession, and a bitter sarcasm upon them, that men that professed so much religion and sanctity, could be guilty of such iniquity, as to desire the death of one that no fault could be found in; and therefore, if such were their consciences, for his part, he desired to have no concern in so unrighteous an action; but if they would, they must even do it themselves.

John 19:7

Ver. 7. The Jews answered him,.... Finding they could make nothing of the charge of sedition against him, and that Pilate could not be prevailed upon to condemn him to death upon that score, they try another method, and charge him with blasphemy; which, if the other had succeeded, they would have concealed; because this, if proved, according to their law, would not have brought on him the kind of death they were desirous of:

we have a law; meaning the law of Moses, which they had received by his hands from God:

and by our law he ought to die; referring either to the law concerning blasphemy in general, or concerning the false prophet, or to the having and asserting of other gods, and enticing to the worship of them; in either of which cases death by stoning was enjoined:

because he made himself the Son of God; the natural and essential Son of God; not by adoption, or on account of his incarnation and mediatorial office; but as being one with the Father, of the same nature with him, and equal to him in all his perfections and glory. This he had often asserted in his ministry, or what was equivalent to it, and which they so understood; and indeed had said that very morning, before the high priest in his palace, what amounted thereunto, and which he so interpreted; upon which he rent his garments, and charged him with blasphemy: for that God has a son, is denied by the Jews, since Jesus asserted himself to be so, though formerly believed by them; nor was it now denied that there was a Son of God, or that he was expected; but the blasphemy with them was, that Jesus set up himself to be he: but now it is vehemently opposed by them, that God has a son; so from **Ec 4:8** they endeavour to prove {q}, that God has neither a brother, Nb alw, "nor a son"; but, "hear, O Israel, they observe, the Lord our God is one Lord". And elsewhere {r},

""there is one"; this is the holy blessed God; "and not a second"; for he has no partner or equal in his world; "yea, he hath neither child nor brother"; he hath no brother, nor hath he a son; but the holy blessed God loves Israel, and calls them his children, and his brethren."

All which is opposed to the Christian doctrine, relating to the sonship of Christ. The conduct of these men, at this time, deserves notice, as their craft in imposing on Pilate's ignorance of their laws; and the little regard that they themselves had to them, in calling for crucifixion instead of stoning; and their inconsistency with themselves, pretending before it was not lawful for them to put any man to death; and now they have a law, and by that law, in their judgment, he ought to die.

{q} Debarim Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 237. 3. {r} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 70. 1.

John 19:8

Ver. 8. When Pilate therefore heard that saying,.... That Jesus had asserted himself to be the Son of God, and that the Jews had a law to put such a person to death that was guilty of such blasphemy:

he was the more afraid; he was afraid to put him to death, or to consent to it before; partly on account of his wife's message to him, and partly upon a conviction of the innocence of Christ, in his own conscience: and now he was more afraid, since here was a charge brought against him he did not well understand the meaning of; and a law of theirs pretended to be violated hereby, which should he pay no regard to, might occasion a tumult, since they were already become very clamorous and noisy; and he might be the more uneasy, test the thing they charged him with asserting, should be really fact; that he was one of the gods come down in the likeness of man; or that he was some demi-god at least, or so nearly related to deity, that it might be dangerous for him to have anything to do with him this way: and in this suspicion he might be strengthened, partly from the writings of the Heathens, which speak of such sort of beings; and partly from the miracles he might have heard were performed by Jesus; and also by calling to mind what he had lately said to him, that his kingdom was not of this world, and that he was come into it to bear witness to the truth.

John 19:9

Ver. 9. And went again into the judgment hall,.... From whence he came out, taking Jesus along with him, in order to interrogate him alone upon this head:

and saith unto Jesus, whence art thou? meaning not of what country he was, for he knew he was of the nation of the Jews; nor in what place he was born, whether at Bethlehem or at Nazareth, for this was no concern of his; but from whence he sprung, who were his ancestors, and whether his descent was from the gods, or from men; and if from the former, from which of them; for as Pilate was an Heathen, he must be supposed to speak as such:

but Jesus gave him no answer; for his question was frivolous, and deserved none; and besides, he was not worthy of one, who had used him so ill, when he knew, in his own conscience, that he was innocent; nor was he capable of taking in an answer, or able to judge whether it was right or wrong; and since Christ was come to die for the salvation of his people, it was not proper he should say anything that might be a means of hindering it.

John 19:10

Ver. 10. Then saith Pilate unto him,.... Being angry with him, resenting his silence, and looking upon it as a contempt of him;

speakest thou not unto me? he wondered that he stood in no fear of him, who was the Roman governor, his judge; who had the power of life and death; and that he should make no answer to him, who was in so much dignity, and in so high and exalted a station.

Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? proudly boasting of his authority to do one or the other. The sudden change of the man from fear, to vain and proud boasting, is to be observed; just now he was afraid of the divine power of Christ, lest he should have any divinity in him; and now he boasts and brags of his own power, and menaces and threatens with his authority to punish with death, even the death of tho cross; in which he discovers his wickedness, as a magistrate, to endeavour to terrify one that he himself believed to be innocent: and besides, his assertion is false; for he had no power, neither from God nor man, to crucify innocent men, and release criminals: and moreover, he himself must be self-condemned, who had a power, as he says, of releasing him, and yet did not do it, though he had once and again declared he found no fault in him.

John 19:11

Ver. 11. Jesus answered,.... With great intrepidity and courage, with freedom and boldness, as being not at all dismayed with his threatenings, or affected with his proud boasts, and in order to expose the vanity of them:

thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: meaning, not from the Jewish sanhedrim, whose court of judicature was in the temple, which was higher than the other part of the city; nor from the Roman emperor, or senate of Rome, the higher powers; by whom Pilate was made governor of Judea, and a judge in all causes relating to life and death; but reference is had to the place from whence he came, and to the decree and council of God above, and the agreement between the eternal three in heaven. Christ speaks of a power he had against him, that is, of taking away his life; he had no lawful power to do it at all; nor any power, right or wrong, had it not been given him by God: and which is to be ascribed, not merely to the general providence of God, without which nothing is done in this world; but to the determinate counsel of God, relating to this particular action of the crucifying of Christ; otherwise Christ, as God, could have struck Pilate his judge with death immediately, and without so doing could as easily have escaped out of his hands, as he had sometimes done out of the hands of the Jews; and, as man and Mediator, he could have prayed to his Father for, and have had, more than twelve legions of angels, which would soon have rescued him: but this was not to be; power was given to Pilate from heaven against him; not for any evil he himself had committed, or merely to gratify the envy and malice of the Jews, but for the salvation of God's elect, and for the glorifying of the divine perfections: and to this the Jews themselves agree in general,

"that all the things of this world depend on above; and when they agree above first, (they say {s},) they agree below; and that there is no power below, until that alyel
atwnjlwv byhyytad, "power is given from above"; and the whole of that depends on this:"

therefore he that delivered me unto thee, hath the greater sin;
Klyd Nm, "than thine", as the Syriac version adds; and to the same purpose the Persic. Pilate had been guilty of sin already in scourging Christ, and suffering the Roman soldiers to abuse him; and would be guilty of a greater in delivering him up to be crucified, who he knew was innocent: but the sin of Judas in delivering him into the hands of the chief priests and elders, and of the chief priest and elders and people of the Jews, in delivering him to Pilate to crucify him, according to the Roman manner, were greater, inasmuch as theirs proceeded from malice and envy, and was done against greater light and knowledge; for by his works, miracles, and ministry, as well as by their own prophecies, they might, or must have known, that he was the Messiah, and Son of God: and it is to be observed, that as there is a difference in sin, and that all

sins are not equal, the circumstances of things making an alteration; so that God's decree concerning the delivery of his Son into the hands of sinful men, does not excuse the sin of the betrayers of him.

{s} Zohar in Gen. fol. 99. 1.

John 19:12

Ver. 12. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him,.... From the time that Christ spoke the above words; or, as the Syriac version renders it, adh lwjm, "because of this", or on account of the words he had spoken; to which agree the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: he sought by all means, and studied every way to bring the Jews to agree to his release: his reasons were, because of the consciousness of guilt, and the danger of contracting more; the sense he might have of a Divine Being, to whom he was accountable for the exercise of his power; his suspicion that Jesus was the Son of God, or that he was more than a man; for he perceived that power went along with his words, by the effect they had on him: but though he sought to release him, he did not do it, nor use the power he boasted he had; the reason in himself was, he was desirous, that the Jews would concur with him; the secret one in providence was, God would not have it so; and yet things must be carried to this pitch, that it might appear that Christ suffered not for his own sins, but ours, and that he suffered willingly:

but the Jews cried out, saying, if thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend. These were the chief priests, Scribes, and elders of the people, more especially, and by whom, the common people were stirred up to request his crucifixion: these still made a greater outcry, and in a more clamorous way urged, that should he be released, Pilate would show but little regard to Caesar, by whom he was raised to this dignity; who had put him into this trust; whom he represented, and in whose name he acted. This was a piece of craftiness in them, for nothing could more nearly affect Pilate, than an insinuation of want of friendship and fidelity to Tiberius, who was then Caesar, or emperor; and also, it was an instance of great hypocrisy in them, to pretend a regard to Caesar, when they scrupled paying tribute to him, and would have been glad, at any rate, to have been free from his yoke and government; and is a very spiteful hint, and carries in it a sort of threatening to Pilate, as if they would bring a charge against him to Caesar, should he let Jesus go with his life, whom they in a contemptuous manner call "this man": adding, whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Caesar; returning to their former charge of sedition, finding that that of blasphemy had not its effect: their reasoning is very fallacious, and mere sophistry; for though it might be allowed that whoever set up himself as a temporal king in any of Caesar's dominions, must be an enemy of his, a rebel against him; and such a declaration might be truly interpreted as high treason; yet Christ did not give out that he was such a king, but, on the contrary, that his kingdom was not of this world, and therefore did not assume to himself any part of Caesar's dominions and government; and though the Jews would have took him by force, and made him a king, he refused it, and got out of their hands.

John 19:13

Ver. 13. When Pilate therefore heard that saying,.... Of the Jews, that a freeing of Jesus would show an unfriendliness to Caesar; and gave very broad hints that they would accuse him to Caesar of treachery and unfaithfulness, in letting go a man, that made pretensions to be a king in his territories; and knowing well the jealousies and suspicions of Tiberius, and fearing lest it would turn to his own disrepute and disadvantage, immediately

he brought Jesus forth out of the judgment hall, the place where he had been examined in; not to declare his innocence, nor to move their pity, nor to release him, but to pass sentence on him.

And he sat down in the judgment seat: for that purpose. He had sat but little all this while, but was continually going in and out to examine Jesus, and converse with the Jews; but he now takes his place, and sits down as a judge, in order to give the finishing stroke to this affair; and where he sat down, was

in the place that is called the pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. This place, in the Greek tongue, was called "Lithostrotos"; or "the pavement of stones", as the Syriac version renders it: it is thought to be the room "Gazith", in which the sanhedrim sat in the temple when they tried capital causes {t}; and it was so called, because it was paved with smooth, square, hewn stones:

"it was in the north part; half of it was holy, and half of it common; and it had two doors, one for that part which was holy, and another for that which was common; and in that half which was common the sanhedrim sat {u}."

So that into this part of it, and by this door, Pilate, though a Gentile, might enter. This place, in the language of the Jews, who at this time spoke Syriac, was "Gabbatha", front its height, as it should seem; though the Syriac and Persic versions read "Gaphiphtha", which signifies a fence, or an enclosure. Mention is made in the Talmud {w} of the upper "Gab" in the mountain of the house; but whether the same with this "Gabbaths", and whether this is the same with the chamber "Gazith", is not certain. The Septuagint use the same word as John here does, and call by the same name the pavement of the temple on which the Israelites felt and worshipped God, **2Ch 7:3**.

{t} Gloss. in T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 8. 2. {u} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 25. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Beth Habbechira, c. 5. sect. 17. Bartenora in Misn. Middot, c. 5. sect. 3. {w} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 115. 1.

John 19:14

Ver. 14. And it was the preparation of the passover,.... So the Jews {x} say, that Jesus suffered on the eve of the passover; and the author of the blasphemous account of his life says {y}, it was the eve both of the passover and the sabbath; which account so far agrees with the evangelic history; but then this preparation of the passover was not of the passover lamb, for that had been prepared and eaten the night before. Nor do I find that there was any particular day which was called "the preparation of the passover" in such sense, and much less that this day was the day before the eating of the passover. According to the law in Ex 12:3 the lamb for the passover was to be separated from the rest of the flock on the tenth day of the month, and to be kept up till the fourteenth; but this is never called the preparation of the passover; and was it so called, it cannot be intended here; the preparing and making ready the passover the evangelists speak of, were on the same day it was eaten, and design the getting ready a place to eat it in, and things convenient for that purpose, and the killing the lamb, and dressing it, and the like, Mt 26:17 there is what the Jews call xoph owrp, which was a space of fifteen days before the passover, and began at the middle of the thirty days before the feast, in which they used to ask questions, and explain the traditions concerning the passover {z}: but this is never called the preparation of the passover: and on the night of the fourteenth month they sought diligently, in every hole and corner of their houses, for leavened bread, in order to remove it {a}; but this also never went by any such name: wherefore, if any respect is had to the preparation for the passover, it must either design the preparation of the "Chagigah", which was a grand festival, commonly kept on the fifteenth day, and which was sometimes called the passover; or else the preparation for

the whole feast all the remaining days of it; See Gill on "Joh 18:28" but it seems best of all to understand it only of the preparation for the sabbath, which, because it was in the passover week, is called the passover preparation day: and it may be observed, that it is sometimes only called "the day of the preparation", and "the preparation",
Mt 27:62 and sometimes the "Jews' preparation day", Joh 19:42 and it is explained by the Evangelist
Mr 15:42. "It was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath"; on which they both prepared themselves for the sabbath, and food to eat on that day; and this being the time of the passover likewise, the preparation was the greater: and therefore to distinguish this preparation day for the sabbath, from others, it is called the passover preparation; nor have I observed that any other day is called the preparation but that before the sabbath: the Jews dispute about preparing food for the sabbath on a feast day, as this was; they seem to forbid it, but afterwards soften their words, and allow it with some provisos: their canon runs thus {b};

"a feast day which falls on the eve of the sabbath, a man may not boil (anything) at the beginning of the feast day for the sabbath; but he may boil for the feast day; and if there is any left, it may be left for the sabbath; and he may make a boiling on the eve of a feast day, and depend on it for the sabbath: the house of Shamtoni say two boilings; and the house of Hillell say one boiling."

Bartenora on the passage observes, that some say the reason of this boiling on the evening of a feast day, is for the honour of the sabbath; for because from the evening of the feast day, the sabbath is remembered, that which is best is chosen for the sabbath, that the sabbath may not be forgotten through the business of the feast day. The account Maimonides {c} gives of this matter is,

"on a common day they "prepare" for the sabbath, and on a common day they prepare for a feast day; but they do not prepare on a feast day for the sabbath, nor is the sabbath, hnykm, "a preparation" for a feast day."

This seems to be contrary to the practice of the Jews in the time of Christ, as related by the evangelists, understanding by the preparation they speak of, a preparation of food for the sabbath; but what he afterwards says {d} makes some allowance for it:

"a feast day, which happens to be on the eve of the sabbath, (Friday,) they neither bake nor boil, on a feast day what is eaten on the morrow, on the sabbath; and this prohibition is from the words of the Scribes, (not from the word of God,) that a man should not boil any thing on a feast day for a common day, and much less for the sabbath; but if he makes a boiling (or prepares food) on the evening of a feast day on which he depends and boils and bakes on a feast day for the sabbath, lo, this is lawful; and that on which he depends is called the mingling of food."

And this food, so called, was a small portion of food prepared on a feast for the sabbath, though not less than the quantity of an olive, whether for one man or a thousand {e}; by virtue of which, they depending on it for the sabbath, they might prepare whatever they would, after having asked a blessing over it, and saying {f},

"by this mixture it is free for me to bake and boil on a feast day what is for the morrow, the sabbath; and if a man prepares for others, he must say for me, and for such an one, and such an one; or for the men of the city, and then all of them may bake and boil on a feast day for the sabbath."

And about the sixth hour; to which agrees the account in Mt 27:45, Lu 23:44 but Mr 15:25 says that "it was the third hour, and they crucified him"; and Beza says, he found it so written in one copy; and so read Peter of Alexandria, Beza's ancient copy, and some others, and Nonnus: but the copies in general agree in, and confirm the common reading, and which is differently accounted for; some by the different computations of the Jews and Romans; others by observing that the day was divided into four parts, each part containing three hours, and were called the third, the sixth, the ninth, and the twelfth hours; and not only that time, when one of these hours came, was called by that name, but also from that all the space of the three hours, till the next came, was called by the name of the former: for instance, all the space from nine o'clock till twelve was called "the third hour"; and all from twelve till three in the afternoon "the sixth hour": hence the time of Christ's crucifixion being supposed to be somewhat before, but yet near our twelve of the clock, it may be truly here said that it was about the sixth hour; and as truly by Mark the third hour; that space, which was called by the name of the third hour, being not yet passed, though it drew toward an end. This way go Godwin and Hammond, whose words I have expressed, and bids fair for the true solution of the difficulty: though it should be observed, that Mark agrees with the other evangelists about the darkness which was at the sixth hour, the time of Christ's crucifixion, Mr 15:33 and it is to be remarked, that he does not say that it was the third hour "when" they crucified him, or that they crucified him at the third hour; but it was the third hour, "and" they crucified him, as Dr. Lightfoot observes. It was the time of day when they should have been at the daily sacrifice, and preparing for the solemnity of that day particularly, which was their Chagigah, or grand feast; but instead of this they were prosecuting his crucifixion, which they brought about by the sixth hour. And about this time Pilate said, and did the following things:

and he saith unto the Jews, behold your king; whom some of your people, it seems, have owned for their king, and you charge as setting up himself as one; see what a figure he makes; does he look like a king? this he said, in order to move upon their affections, that, if possible, they might agree to release him, and to shame them out of putting such a poor despicable creature to death; and as upbraiding them for their folly, in fearing anything from so mean and contemptible a man.

{x} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. & 67. 1. {y} Toldos Jesu, p. 18. {z} Misn. Shekalim, c. 3. sect. 1. & Bartenora in ib. T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 6. 1. {a} Misn. Pesachim, c. 1. sect. 1, 2, 3. {b} Misn. Betza, c. 2. sect. 1. {c} Hilchot Yom Tob. c. 1. sect. 19. {d} Ib. c. 6. sect. 1. {e} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Betza, c. 2. sect. 1. {f} Maimon. Hilchot Yom Tob, c. 6. sect. 8.

John 19:15

Ver. 15. But they cried out, Away with him,.... As a person hateful and loathsome to them, the sight of whom they could not bear; and this they said with great indignation and wrath, and with great vehemency, earnestness and importunacy, in a very clamorous way; repeating the words

away with him: they were impatient until he was ordered away for execution; and nothing would satisfy them but the crucifixion of him; and therefore they say,

crucify him; which is also repeated in the Syriac version; for this was what they thirsted after, and were so intent upon; this cry was made by the chief priests:

Pilate saith unto them, shall I crucify your King? This he said either seriously or jeeringly, and it may be with a view to draw out of them their sentiments concerning Caesar, as well as him; however it had this effect;

the chief priests answered, we have no king but Caesar; whereby they denied God to be their king, though they used to say, and still say in their prayers; "we have no king but God" {g}: they rejected the government of the King Messiah, and tacitly confessed that the sceptre was departed from Judah; and what they now said, came quickly upon them, and still continues; for according to prophecy, **Ho 3:4** they have been many days and years "without a king": and this they said in spite to Jesus, and not in respect to Caesar, whose government they would have been glad to have had an opportunity to shake off. They could name no one as king but Jesus, or Caesar; the former they rejected, and were obliged to own the latter: it is a poor observation of the Jew {h} upon this passage, that it

"shows that before the crucifixion of Jesus, the Roman Caesars ruled over Israel; and that this Caesar was Tiberius, who had set Pilate over Jerusalem, as is clear from **Lu 3:1**. Wherefore here is an answer to the objection of the Nazarenes, who say that the Jews, for the sin of crucifying Jesus, lost their kingdom."

To which may be replied, that this is not said by any of the writers of the New Testament, that the kingdom of the Jews was taken away from them for their sin of crucifying Jesus; and therefore this is no contradiction to anything said by them; this is only the assertion of some private persons, upon whom it lies to defend themselves; and what is asserted, is defensible, nor do the words of the text militate against it: for though before the crucifixion of Christ the Jews were tributary to the Roman Caesars, and Roman governors were sent to preside among them; yet the government was not utterly taken from them, or their kingdom lost; they indeed feared this would be the case, should Jesus succeed and prosper, as he did, saying, "the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation", Joh 11:48, which shows, that as yet this was not done; though for their disbelief and rejection of the Messiah, their destruction was hastening on apace; and after the crucifixion of him, all power was taken from them; the government was seized upon by the Romans entirely, and at last utterly destroyed; besides, the Jews did not own Caesar to be their king, though they said this now to serve a turn; and after this they had kings of the race of Herod over them, though placed there by the Roman emperor or senate.

{g} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 25. 2. Seder Tephillot, fol. 46. 2. Ed. Basil. fol. 71. 2. Ed. Amsterd. {h} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 57. p. 446.

John 19:16

Ver. 16. Then delivered he him therefore,.... Perceiving he could not by any means work upon them, and that nothing would satisfy them but his death; he therefore passed sentence on him, and gave him up to their will,

unto them to be crucified; as they requested, and which was done in a judicial way, and all by divine appointment, according to the counsel and foreknowledge of God:

and they took Jesus and led him away; directly from the judgment hall, out of the city to the place of execution, whither he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, without opening his mouth against God or man; but behaved with the utmost patience, meekness, and resignation.

John 19:17

Ver. 17. And he bearing his cross,.... Which was usual for malefactors to do, as Lipsius {i} shows out of Artemidorus, and Plutarch; the former says,

"the cross is like to death, and he that is to be fixed to it, first bears it;"

and the latter says,

"and everyone of the malefactors that are punished in body, "carries out his own cross"."

So Christ, when he first went out to be crucified, carried his cross himself, until the Jews, meeting with Simon the Cyrenian, obliged him to bear it after him; that is, one part of it; for still Christ continued to bear a part himself: of this Isaac was a type, in carrying the wood on his shoulders for the burnt offering; and this showed that Christ was made sin, and a curse for us, and that our sins, and the punishment which belonged to us, were laid on him, and bore by him; and in this he has left us an example to go forth without the camp, bearing his reproach:

went forth in a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha: and signifies a man's skull: it seems, that as they executed malefactors here, so they buried them here; and in process of time, their bones being dug up to make room for others, their skulls, with other bones, lay up and down in this place; from whence it had its name in the Syriac dialect, which the Jews then usually spake: here some say Adam's skull was found, and that it had its name from thence. This was an ancient tradition, as has been

observed in the notes on See Gill on "Mt 27:33", and
See Gill on "Lu 23:33" the Syriac writers have it {k}, who say,

"when Noah went out of the ark there was made a distribution of the bones of Adam; to Shem, his head was given, and the place in which he was buried is called "Karkaphta": where likewise Christ was crucified;"

which word signifies a skull, as Golgotha does: and so likewise the Arabic writers {l}; who affirm that Shem said these words to Melchizedek,

"Noah commanded that thou shouldst take the body of Adam, and bury it in the middle of the earth; therefore let us go, I and thou, and bury it; wherefore Shem and Melchizedek went to take the body of Adam, and the angel of the Lord appeared to them and went before them, till they came to the place Calvary, where they buried him, as the angel of the Lord commanded them:"

the same also had the ancient fathers of the Christian church; Cyprian {m} says, that it is a tradition of the ancients, that Adam was buried in Calvary under the place where the cross of Christ was fixed; and Jerom makes mention of it more than once; so Paula and Eustochium, in an epistle supposed to be dictated by him, or in which he was assisting, say {n}, in this city, meaning Jerusalem, yea in this place, Adam is said to dwell, and to die; from whence the place where our Lord was crucified is called Calvary, because there the skull of the ancient man was buried: and in another place he himself says {o}, that he heard one disputing in the church and explaining, **Eph 5:14** of Adam buried in Calvary, where the Lord was crucified, and therefore was so called. Ambrose {p} also takes notice of it; the place of the cross, says he, is either in the midst of the land, that it might be conspicuous to all, or over the grave of Adam, as the Hebrews dispute: others say that the hill itself was in the form of a man's skull, and therefore was so called; it was situated, as Jerom says {q}, on the north of Mount Zion, and is thought by some to be the same with the hill Gareb, in Jer 31:39. It was usual to crucify on high hills, so Polycrates was crucified upon the highest top of Mount Mycale {r}.

{i} De Cruce, l. 2. c. 5. p. 76. {k} Bar Bahluli apud Castel. Lexic. Polyglot. col. 3466. {l} Elmacinus, p. 13. Patricides, p. 12. apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 257. {m} De Resurrectione Christi, p. 479. {n} Epist. Marcellae, fol. 42. L. Tom. I. {o} Comment. in Eph. v. 14. {p} Comment. in Luc. xx. 33. {q} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 92. F. {r} Valer. Maxim. l. 6. c. ult.

John 19:18

Ver. 18. Where they crucified him,.... Namely, at Golgotha, the same with Calvary; and so had what they were so desirous of:

and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst: these other two men were thieves, as the other evangelists declare; among whom Christ was placed, being numbered and reckoned among transgressors: he was no transgressor of the law of God himself, but he was accounted as such by men, and was treated as if he had been one by the justice of God; he, as a surety, standing in the legal place, and stead of his people; hence he died in their room, and for their sins: this shows the low estate of Christ, the strictness of justice, the wisdom of God in salvation, and the grace and love of the Redeemer; who condescended to everything, and every circumstance, though ever so reproachful, which were necessary for the redemption of his people, and the glory of the divine perfections, and for the fulfilment of purposes, promises, and predictions.

John 19:19

Ver. 19. And Pilate wrote a title,.... Luke calls it a superscription, Mark, the superscription of his accusation, and Matthew, the accusation itself; it contained the substance of the charge against him, and was written upon a table or board, and nailed to the cross, as Nonnus suggests; to this is the allusion, **Col 2:14**. The form of it was drawn up by Pilate, his judge, who ordered it to be transcribed upon a proper instrument, and placed over him:

and put it on the cross; not with his own hands, but by his servants, who did it at his command; for others are said to do it, Mt 27:37. It was put upon "the top of the cross", as the Persic version reads it; "over him", or "over his head", as the other evangelists say; and may denote the rise of his kingdom, which is from above, the visibility of it, and the enlargement of it, through the cross:

and the writing was; the words written in the title were,

Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews: Jesus was his name, by which he was commonly called and known, and signifies a Saviour, as he is of all the elect of God; whom he saves from all their sins, by bearing them in his own body on the cross, and of whom he is the able and willing, the perfect and complete, the only and everlasting Saviour: he is said to be of Nazareth; this was the place of which he was an inhabitant; here Joseph and Mary lived before his conception; here he was conceived, though born in Bethlehem; where he did not abide long, but constantly in this place, till he was about thirty years of age; this title was sometimes given him as a term of reproach, though not always: "the King of the Jews"; which both expresses his accusation, and asserts him to be so.

John 19:20

Ver. 20. This title then read many of the Jews,.... Who were in great numbers, at the place of execution, rejoicing at his crucifixion, and insulting him as he hung on the cross:

for the place where Jesus was crucified, was nigh unto the city; Golgotha, the place of Christ's crucifixion, was not more than two furlongs, or a quarter of a mile from the city of Jerusalem: so that multitudes were continually going from thence to see this sight; the city also being then very full of people, by reason of the feast of the passover; to which may be added, that the cross stood by the wayside, where persons were continually passing to and fro, as appears from Mt 27:39 and where it was usual to erect crosses to make public examples or malefactors, and to deter others from committing the like crimes: so Alexander, the emperor, ordered an eunuch to be crucified by the wayside, in which his servants used commonly to go to his suburb {s} or country house: Cicero says {t} the Mamertines, according to their own usage and custom, crucified behind the city, in the Pompeian way; and Quinctilian observes {u}, as often as we crucify criminals, the most noted ways are chosen, where most may behold, and most may be moved with fear: and now Christ being crucified by a public road side, the inscription on the cross was doubtless read by more than otherwise it would:

and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin; that it might be read by all, Jews, Greeks, and Romans; and to show that he is the Saviour of some of all nations; and that he is King over all. These words were written in Hebrew letters in the Syriac dialect, which was used by the Jews, and is called the Hebrew language, Joh 19:13 and in which it is most likely Pilate should write these words, or order them to be written; and which, according to the Syriac version we now have, were thus put, aydwhyd aklm ayrun ewvy; in Greek the words stood as in the original text, thus, Ihsouv o Nazwraiov o basileuv twn Ioudaiwn: and in the Latin tongue, as may be supposed, after this manner, "Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judaeorum". These three languages may be very well thought to be understood by Pilate; at least so much of them as to qualify him to write such an inscription as this. The Latin tongue was his mother tongue, which he must be supposed well to understand; and the Greek tongue was very much used by the Romans, since their conquest of the Grecian monarchy; and the emperors' edicts were generally published in Greek, which it was therefore necessary for Pilate to understand; and as he was a governor of Judea, and had been so for some time, he must have acquired some knowledge of the Hebrew language; and these being the principal languages in the world, he chose to write this title in them, that persons coming from all quarters might be able to read it, and understand it in some one of them.

{s} Lipsius de Crucc, l. 3. c. 13. p. 158. {t} Orat. 10. in Veriem. l. 5. p. 604. {u} Declamat. 275.

John 19:21

Ver. 21. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate,.... Who were not only informed of this inscription, but might read it themselves, for they were present at the crucifying of Christ, and mocked at him as he hung on the tree; these, when they read the title, were greatly offended at it, partly because it was doing too great an honour to Jesus to call him the King of the Jews: and partly because it fixed a public brand of infamy upon their nation, that a king of theirs should be crucified: wherefore they went to Pilate and addressed him, saying,

write not the King of the Jews: because they did not own him for their king, which this title seemed to suggest, nor had he in their opinion any right to such a character; wherefore they desired that in the room of these words he would be pleased to put the following,

but that he said, I am King of the Jews; that so he might be thought to be a seditious person and a traitor; one that laid claim to the temporal crown and kingdom of Israel, and one that suffered justly for attempts of that kind.

John 19:22

Ver. 22. Pilate answered, what I have written I have written,.... He seems to say this, as one angry and displeased with them; either because they would not consent to release Jesus, which he was desirous of, but pressed him so very hard to crucify him; or at their insolence, in directing him in what form to put the superscription, which he determines shall stand unaltered, as he had wrote it. This he said, either because he could not alter it after it was written, for it is said {w}, that

"a proconsul's table is his sentence, which being once read, not one letter can either be increased or diminished; but as it is recited, so it is related in the instrument of the province;"

or if he could have altered it, he was not suffered by God to do it; but was so directed, and over ruled by divine providence, as to write, so to persist in, and abide by what he had wrote inviolably; which is the sense of his words. Dr. Lightfoot has given several instances out of the Talmud, showing that this is a common way of speaking with the Rabbins; and that words thus doubled signify that what is spoken of stands good, and is irrevocable: so a widow taking any of the moveable goods of her husband deceased for her maintenance, it is said {x}, hopt hoptv hm, "what she takes, she takes"; that is, she may lawfully do it, and retain it: it continues in her hands, and cannot be taken away from her; and so the gloss explains it, "they do not take it from her"; and in the same way Maimonides {y} interprets it: so of a man that binds himself to offer an oblation one way, and he offers it another way, aybh aybhv hm, "what he has offered, he has offered {z}"; what he has offered is right, it stands good, and is not to be rejected: and again, among the rites used by a deceased brother's wife, towards him that refuses to marry her, if one thing is done before the other, it matters not, ywve ywvev hm, "what is done, is done {a}"; and is not to be undone, or done over again in another way; it stands firm and good, and not to be objected to: and the same writer observes, that this is a sort of prophecy of Pilate, and which should continue, and for ever obtain, that the Jews should have no other King Messiah than Jesus of Nazareth; nor have they had any other; all that have risen up have proved false Messiahs; nor will they have any other; nor indeed any king, until they seek the Lord their God, and David their king, **Ho 3:5** that is, the son of David, as they will do in the latter day; when they shall be converted, and when they shall own him as their king, their ancestors at this time were ashamed of.

{w} Apulei Florid. c. 9. {x} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 96. 1. {y} Hilchot Ishot, c. 18. sect. 10. {z} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 3. 1. {a} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 106. 2.

John 19:23

Ver. 23. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus,.... The crucifixion of Christ was at the request and solicitation of the Jews, was ordered by the Roman governor, and performed by the Roman soldiers; the sinful men into whose hands Christ was to be delivered:

took his garments; which they had stripped his body of, crucifying him naked; as what properly belonged to them, it being usual then, as now, for executioners to have the clothes of the persons they put to death; these were his inner garments:

and made four parts, to every soldier a part; for it seems there were four of them concerned in his execution, and who were set to watch him:

and also his coat; or upper garment;

now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout: in such an one the Jews say {b} Moses ministered: and of this sort and make was the robe of the high priest, said to be of "woven work",
Ex 28:32 upon which Jarchi remarks, jxmb alw, "and not with a needle"; it was all woven, and without any seam: and so the Jews say {c} in general of the garments of the priests:

"the garments of the priests are not made of needlework, but of woven work; as it is said, Ex 28:32. Abai says, it is not necessary (i.e. the use of the needle) but for their sleeves; according to the tradition, the sleeve of the garments of the priests is woven by itself, and is joined to the garment, and reaches to the palm of the hand."

So that this was an entire woven garment from top to bottom, excepting the sleeves, which were wove separately and sewed to it; of this kind also was his coat, which Jacob Iehudah Leon says {d},

"was a stately woollen coat of a sky colour, wholly woven, all of one piece, without seam, without sleeves;"

such a garment Christ our great High Priest wore, which had no seam in it, but was a curious piece of texture from top to bottom. The very learned Braunius {e} says, he has seen such garments in Holland, and has given fine cuts of them, and also of the frame in which they are wrought. What authority Nonnus had to call this coat a black one, or others for saying it was the work of the

Virgin Mary, I know not.

{b} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 11. 2. Gloss in ib. {c} T. Bab. Yoma, c. 7. foi. 72. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 16. {d} Relation of Memorable Things in the Tabernacle, &c. c. 5. p. 23. {e} De vestitu Sacerdot. Heb. l. 1. c. 16. p. 346, 360, 361.

John 19:24

Ver. 24. They said therefore among themselves,.... When they saw what a curious piece of work it was, and that it was pity to divide it into parts: and besides, that it would have been rendered entirely useless thereby: they moved it to each other, saying,

let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be, that the Scripture might be fulfilled: not that they knew anything of the Scripture, or had any intention of fulfilling it hereby, but they were so directed by the providence of God, to take such a step; whereby was literally accomplished the passage in Ps 22:18

which saith, they parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. The whole psalm is to be understood of the Messiah, not of David, as some do {f}; many passages in it cannot be applied to him, such as speak of the dislocation of his bones, the piercing of his hands and feet, and this of parting his garments, and casting lots for his vesture: all which had their literal accomplishment in Jesus: nor can it be understood of Esther, as it is by some Jewish {g} interpreters; there is not one word in it that agrees with her, and particularly, not the clause here cited; and there are some things in it which are manifestly spoken of a man, and not of a woman, as Ps 22:8 nor can the whole body of the Jewish nation, or the congregation of Israel be intended, as others say {h}; since it is clear, that a single person is spoken of throughout the psalm, and who is distinguished from others, from his brethren, from the congregation, from the seed of Jacob and Israel,
Ps 22:22 and indeed, no other than the Messiah can be meant; he is pointed at in the very title of it, Aijeleth Shahar, which words, in what way soever they are rendered, agree with him: if by "the morning daily sacrifice", as they are by the Targum; he is the Lamb of God, who continually takes away the sins of the world; and very fitly is he so called in the title of a psalm, which speaks so much of his sufferings and death, which were a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of his people: or by the morning star, as others {i} interpret them; Christ is the bright and morning star, the day spring from on high, the sun of

righteousness, and light of the world: or by "the morning help", as by the Septuagint; Christ had early help from God in the morning of his infancy, when Herod sought his life, and in the day of salvation of his people; and early in the morning was he raised from the dead, and had glory given him: or by "the morning hind", which seems best of all, to which he may be compared, as to a roe or hart, in **So 2:9** for his love and loveliness, and for his swiftness and readiness in appearing for the salvation of his people; and for his being hunted by Herod in the morning of his days; and being encompassed by those dogs, the Scribes and Pharisees, Judas and the band of soldiers; see Ps 22:16. The first words of the psalm were spoken by Jesus the true Messiah, when he hung upon the cross, and are truly applied to himself; his reproaches and sufferings endured by him there, are particularly and exactly described in it, and agree with no other; the benefits which the people of God were to enjoy, in consequence of his sufferings, and the conversion of the Gentiles spoken of in it, which is peculiar to the days of the Messiah, show to whom it belongs. The Jews "themselves" are obliged to interpret some parts of it concerning him; they sometimes say {k}, that by Aijeleth Shahar is meant the Shekinah, a name that well suits with the Messiah Jesus, who tabernacled in our nature; the Ps 22:26 is applied by Jarchi to the time of the redemption, and the days of the Messiah; so that upon the whole, this passage is rightly cited with respect to the Messiah, and is truly said to be fulfilled by this circumstance, of the soldiers doing with his garments as they did:

these things therefore the soldiers did; because they were before determined and predicted that they should be done: and therefore they were disposed and directed by a superior influence, in perfect agreement with the freedom of their wills to do these things. The whole of this account may be spiritually applied. The Scriptures are the garments of Christ; or, as a prince of Anhalt said, the swaddling clothes in which the infant of Bethlehem was wrapped; these exhibit and show forth Christ in his glory, and by which he is known and bore witness to, and are pure and incorrupt, fragrant, and savory. Heretics are the soldiers that rend and tear the Scriptures in pieces, part them, add unto them, or detract from them; who corrupt, pervert, wrest, and misapply them; but truth is the seamless coat; it is all of a piece, is of God, there is nothing human in it; though it may be played with, betrayed, sold, or denied, it cannot be destroyed, but is, and will be preserved by divine providence: or the human nature of Christ is the vesture, with which his divine person was as it were covered, was put on and off, and on again as a garment; is of God, and not man; is pure and spotless; and though his soul and body were parted asunder for a while, this could never be parted from his divine person: or else the righteousness of Christ may be signified by this robe, which is often compared to one, because it is put on the saints, and they are clothed with it: it covers, keeps warm, protects, beautifies, and adorns them; this is seamless, and all of a piece, and has nothing of men's works and services tacked unto it; is enjoyed by a divine lot by some men, and not all, and even such as have been sinful and ungodly; it is pure, perfect and will last for ever.

{f} R. R. in Kimchi in Psal. 22. {g} R. R. in Jarchi in Psal. 22. {h} Kimchi & Ben Meleeh in ib. {i} Vid. Kimchi & Abendana in ib. {k} Zohar in Lev. fol. 5. 4. & Imre Bina in ib.

John 19:25

Ver. 25. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus,.... So near as not only to see him, but to hear him speak:

his mother; the mother of Jesus, Mary; which showed her affection to Christ, and her constancy in abiding by him to the last; though it must be a cutting sight, and now was fulfilled Simeon's prophecy, **Lu 2:35** to see her son in such agonies and sorrow, and jeered and insulted by the worst of men; and though she herself was exposed to danger, and liable to be abused by the outrageous multitude; and it also showed that she stood in need, as others, of a crucified Saviour; so far was she from being a co-partner with him in making satisfaction for sin, as the Papists wickedly say:

and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas. The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions distinguish Mary the wife of Cleophas from his mother's sister, by placing the copulative and between them, and so make two persons; whereas one and the same is intended, and who was the sister of Mary, the mother of Christ; not her own sister, for it is not likely that two sisters should be of the same name; but her husband Joseph's sister, and so her's; or else Cleophas was Joseph's brother, as Eusebius from Hegesippus says {k}: and who was also not the daughter of Cleophas, as the Arabic version has here supplied it; much less the mother of him; but his wife, as is rightly put in our translation: for, according to the other evangelists, she was the mother of James and Joses, and who were the sons of Cleophas or Alphaeus; which are not the names of two persons, nor two names of one and the same person, but one and the same name differently pronounced; his true name in Hebrew was yplx, or yaplx, or yplyx, "Chelphi", or "Chelphai", or "Chilphi", a name frequently to be met with in Talmudic and Rabbinic writings; and so a Jewish writer {l} observes, that aplya awhw aplyx, "Chilpha is the same as Ilpha"; and in Greek may be pronounced either Cleophas, or Alphaeus, as it is both ways: ignorance of this has led interpreters to form different conjectures, as that either the husband of this Mary had two names; or that she was twice married to two different persons, once to Alphaeus, and after his death to Cleophas; or that Cleophas was her father, and Alphaeus her husband; for neither of which is there any foundation. She was no doubt a believer in Christ, and came and stood by his cross; not merely to keep her sister company, but out of affection to Jesus, and to testify her faith in him:

and Mary Magdalene; out of whom he had cast seven devils, and who had been a true penitent, a real believer in him, an hearty lover of him, was zealously attached to him, and followed him to the last. Three Marys are here mentioned as together; and it is observable, that the greater part of those that are taken notice of, as following Christ to the cross, and standing by it, were women, the weaker, and timorous sex, when all his disciples forsook him and fled; and none of them attended at the cross, as we read of, excepting John; no, not even Peter, who boasted so much of his attachment to him. These good women standing by the cross of Christ, may teach us to do, as they did, look upon a crucified Christ, view his sorrows, and his sufferings, and our sins laid upon him, and borne and taken away by him; we should look unto him for pardon, cleansing, and justification, and, in short, for the whole of salvation: we should also weep, as they did, whilst we look on him; shed even tears of affection for, and sympathy with him; of humiliation for sin, and of joy for a Saviour: and likewise should abide by him as they did, by his persons, offices, and grace; by the doctrine of the cross, continuing steadfastly in it; and by the ordinances of Christ, constantly attending on them, and that notwithstanding all reproaches and sufferings we may undergo.

{k} Emseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 11. {l} Juchasin, fol. 92. 1.

John 19:26

Ver. 26. When Jesus therefore saw his mother,.... Standing near him, within the reach of his voice, as well as sight, he took notice of her, and showed a concern for her temporal, as well as for her eternal good:

and the disciple standing by; either by his cross, his mother, or both:

whom he loved: meaning John, the writer of this Gospel, who for modesty's sake often describes himself in this manner; he being distinguished by Christ from the rest, by some peculiar marks of affection as man; though as God, and as the Redeemer, he loved his disciples alike, as he does all his true and faithful followers:

he saith unto his mother, woman, behold thy son; meaning not himself, but the disciple, who was her son, not by nature, nor adoption; but who would show himself as a son, by his filial affection for, care of, honour and respect unto her. Christ calls her not mother, but woman; not out of disrespect to her, or as ashamed of her; but partly that he might not raise, or add strength to her passions, by a tenderness of speaking; and partly to conceal her from the mob, and lest she should be exposed to their rude insults; as also to let her know that all natural relation was now ceasing between them; though this is a title he sometimes used to give her before.

John 19:27

Ver. 27. Then saith he to the disciple,.... The same disciple John:

behold thy mother; take care of her, and provide for her, as if she was thine own mother: this shows the meanness of Christ, who had nothing to leave her, though Lord of all; it is very probable that Joseph was dead, and Mary now a widow; and whereas Christ had taken care of her, and maintained her hitherto, he now, in his dying moments, commits her to the care of this disciple; which is an instance of his humanity, and of his regard to every duty; and this in particular, of honouring parents, and providing for them in distress, and old age:

and hour that disciple took her to his own home: or house; so the Septuagint render wtyb, "to his house", by eiv ta idia, in **Es 6:12** the phrase here used, and in Joh 16:32. Some say she lived with John at Jerusalem, and there died; and others say, that she died in the twelfth year after the resurrection of Christ, being 59 years of age, and was buried by John in the garden of Gethsemane: where his house was is not certain, whether at Jerusalem or in Galilee, nor how long she lived with him; but this is not to be doubted, that he took care of her, and provided for her, as if she was his own mother; and his doing this forthwith shows his great regard to Christ, his readiness and cheerfulness to comply with his orders and directions, and his unfeigned love unto him.

John 19:28

Ver. 28. After this,.... After he had committed his mother to the care of John, which was about the sixth hour, before the darkness came over the land: and three hours after this was the following circumstance, which was not without the previous knowledge of Christ:

Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished; or just upon being accomplished, were as good as finished; and as they were to be, would be in a very short time; even all things relating to his sufferings, and the circumstances of them, which were afore appointed by God, and foretold in prophecy, and of which he had perfect knowledge:

that the Scripture might be fulfilled: might appear to have its accomplishment, which predicted the great drought and thirst that should be on him, Ps 22:15 and that his enemies at such a time would give him vinegar to drink, Ps 69:21

saith, I thirst; which was literally true of him, and may be also understood spiritually of his great thirst and eager desire after the salvation of his people.

John 19:29

Ver. 29. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar,.... In a place near at hand, as Nonnus observes; not on purpose, for the sake of them that were crucified, either to refresh their spirits, or stop a too great effusion of blood, that they might continue the longer in their misery; but for the use of the soldiers who crucified Christ, vinegar being part of the allowance of Roman soldiers {m}, and what they used to drink: sometimes it was mixed with water; which mixed liquor they called "Posca" {n}, and was what even their generals sometimes used; as Scipio, Metellus, Trajan, Adrian, and others: vinegar was also used by the Jews for drink, as appears from **Ru 2:14** and "dip thy morsel in the vinegar", which Boaz's reapers had with them in the field; "because of heat", as the commentators say {o}; that being good to cool, and to extinguish thirst; for which reason the soldiers here offer it to Christ; though the Chaldee paraphrase of the above place makes it to be a kind of sauce or pap boiled in vinegar; and such an "Embamma" made of vinegar the Romans had, in which they dipped their food {p}; but this here seems to be pure vinegar, and to be different from that which the other evangelists speak of, which was mingled with gall, or was sour wine with myrrh, Mt 27:34. Vinegar indeed is good to revive the spirits, and hyssop, which is after mentioned, is an herb of a sweet smell; and if the reed, which the other evangelists make mention of, was the sweet calamus, as some have thought, they were all of them things of a refreshing nature: vinegar was also used for stopping blood {q}, when it flowed from wounds in a large quantity; and of the same use were sponges; hence Tertullian {r} mentions "spongias retiariorum", the sponges of the fencers, which they had with them to stop any effusion of blood that should be made in their exercises; but then it can hardly be thought that these things should be in common prepared at crucifixions for such ends, on purpose to linger out a miserable life a little longer, which would be shocking barbarity; and especially such a provision would never be, made at this time, on such an account, since the Jews sabbath drew nigh, and they were in haste to have the executions over before that came on, that the bodies might not remain on the cross on that day; for which reason they would do nothing, at this time, however, to prolong the lives of the malefactors; wherefore it is most reasonable, that this vessel of vinegar was not set for any such purpose, but was for the use of the soldiers; and therefore this being at hand when Christ signified his thirst, they offered some of it in the following manner:

and they filled a sponge with vinegar; it being the nature of a sponge (which Nonnus here calls blasthma ylasshv, "a branch of the sea", because it grows there) to swallow up anything that is liquid, and which may be again squeezed and sucked out of it; hence the Jews say {s} of it, Nyqvm elbv gwpo, "the sponge which swallows up liquids"; and used it for such a purpose; "and put it upon hyssop"; meaning not the juice of hyssop, into which some have thought the sponge with vinegar was put, but the herb, and a stalk of it: the other evangelists say, it was put "upon a reed"; meaning either that the sponge with the hyssop were put about a reed, and so given him; or rather it was a stalk of hyssop, which was like a reed or cane; and in this country of Judea grew very large, sufficient for such a purpose. The hyssop with the Jews was not reckoned among herbs, but trees; see **1Ki 4:33** and they speak {t} of hyssop which they gather Myuel, "for wood"; the stalks of which therefore must be of some size; yea, they call {u} a stalk which has a top to it, hnq, "a reed", or cane; which observation seems to reconcile the other evangelists with this: and they distinguish their hyssop which was right for use from that which had an epithet joined to it; as, Roman hyssop, Grecian hyssop, wild and bastard hyssop {w}: and some writers {x} observe even of our common hyssop, that it has sometimes stalks of nine inches long, or longer, and hard and woody, nay, even a foot and a half; with one of which a man with his arms stretched out might possibly reach the mouth of a person on a cross: how high crosses usually were is not certain, nor was there any fixed measure for them; sometimes they were higher, and sometimes lower; the cross or gallows made by Haman for Mordecai was very high indeed, and the mouth of a person could not have been reached with an hyssop stalk; but such an one might, as was erected for Saul's sons, whose bodies on it could be reached by the beasts of the field, 2Sa 21:10 and so low was the cross on which Blandina the martyr suffered, as the church at Lyons relates {y}, when on the cross she was exposed to beasts of prey, and became food for them: so that there is no need to suppose any fault in the text, and that instead of "hyssop" it should be read "hyssos"; which was a kind of javelin the Romans call "Pilum", about five or six foot long, which, it is supposed, one of the soldiers might have, and on it put the hyssop with the sponge and vinegar; but this conjecture is not supported by any copy, or ancient version; the Syriac version, which is a very ancient one, reads "hyssop". The Arabic and Persic versions render it, "a reed", as in the other evangelists; and the Ethiopic version has both, "they filled a sponge with vinegar, and it was set round with hyssop, and they bound it upon a reed"; and so some have thought that a bunch of hyssop was stuck round about the sponge of vinegar, which was fastened to the top of a reed; and the words will bear to be rendered; "setting it about with hyssop": this they might have out of the gardens, which were near this place, or it might grow upon the mountain itself; for we are told {z}, it grew in great plenty upon the mountains about Jerusalem, and that its branches were almost a cubit long. Josephus {a} makes mention of a village beyond Jordan called Bethezob, which, as he says, signifies the house of hyssop; perhaps so called from the large quantity of hyssop that grew near it:

and put it to his mouth; whether Christ drank of it or no is not certain; it seems by what follows as if he did; at least he took it, being offered to him: the Jews themselves say {b}, that Jesus said, give me a little water to drink, and they gave him qzx Umwx, "sharp vinegar"; which so far confirms the evangelic history.

{m} Julian. Imperator. Epist. 27. p. 161. Vid. Lydium de re militari, l. 6. c. 7. p. 245. {n} Salmuth. in Panciroll. rerum memorab. par. 1. Tit. 53. p. 274. {o} Jarchi & Aben Ezra in loc. {p} Salmuth. ib. par. 2. Tit. 2. p. 83. {q} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 31. c. 11. {r} De Spectaculis, c. 25. {s} Maimon. in Misn. Sabbat, c. 21. sect. 3. Misn. Celim, c. 9. sect. 4. {t} Misn. Parah, c. 11. sect. 8. Maimon. Hilch. Parah Adumah, c. 11. sect. 7. {u} Gloss. in T. Bab. Succa, fol. 13. 1. {w} Misn. Parah, c. 11. sect. 7. Negaim, c. 14. 6. T. Bab. Succa, fol. 13. 1. & Cholin, fol. 62. 2. {x} Dodonaeus, l. 4. c. 19. {y} Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 1. p. 161. Vid. Lipsium de Cruce, l. 3. c. 11. {z} Arabes Lexicograph. apud de Dieu in loc. {a} De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 4. {b} Toklos Jesu, p. 17.

John 19:30

Ver. 30. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar,.... Of the Roman soldiers, who offered it to him, either by way of reproach, or to quench his thirst; and he drank of it, as is very likely:

he said, it is finished; that is, the whole will of God; as that he should be incarnate, be exposed to shame and reproach, and suffer much, and die; the whole work his Father gave him to do, which was to preach the Gospel, work miracles, and obtain eternal salvation for his people, all which were now done, or as good as done; the whole righteousness of the law was fulfilled, an holy nature assumed, perfect obedience yielded to it, and the penalty of death endured; hence a perfect righteousness was finished agreeably to the law, which was magnified and made honourable by it, and redemption from its curse and condemnation secured; sin was made an end of, full atonement and satisfaction for it were given; complete pardon procured, peace made, and redemption from all iniquity obtained; all enemies were conquered; all types, promises, and prophecies were fulfilled, and his own course of life ended: the reason of his saying so was, because all this was near being done, just upon finishing, and was as good as done; and was sure and certain, and so complete, that nothing need, or could be added to it; and it was done entirely without the help of man, and cannot be undone; all which since has more clearly appeared by Christ's resurrection from the dead, his entrance into heaven, his session at God's right hand, the declaration of the Gospel, and the application of salvation to particular persons:

and he bowed his head; as one dying, and freely submitting to his Father's will, and the stroke of death:

and gave up the ghost; his spirit or soul into the hands of his Father; freely laying down that precious life of his which no man could take away from him.

John 19:31

Ver. 31. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation,.... That is, either of the passover, as in Joh 19:14 which was the Chagigah or grand festival in which they offered their peace offerings and slew their oxen, and feasted together in great mirth and jollity; or of the sabbath, the evening of it, or day before it, as in Mr 15:42

that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day; which was now drawing near: according to the Jewish law, De 21:22 the body of one that was hanged on a tree was not to remain all night, but to be taken down that day and buried; though this was not always observed; see 2Sa 21:9. What was the usage of the Jews at this time is not certain; according to the Roman laws, such bodies hung until they were putrefied, or eaten by birds of prey; wherefore that their land might not be defiled, and especially their sabbath, by their remaining on the cross, they desire to have them taken down:

for that sabbath day was an high day; it was not only a sabbath, and a sabbath in the passover week, but it was the day in which all the people appeared and presented themselves before the Lord in the temple, and the sheaf of the first fruits was offered up; all which solemnities meeting together made it a very celebrated day: it is in the original text, "it was the great day of the sabbath"; which is the language of the Talmudists, and who say {d},

"lwdgh tbv arqn "is called the great sabbath", on account of the miracle or sign of the passover;"

and in the Jewish Liturgy {e} there is a collect for the "great sabbath": hence the Jews pretending a great concern lest that day should be polluted, though they made no conscience of shedding innocent blood,

besought Pilate that their legs might be broken; which was the manner of the Jews {f}, partly to hasten death, since, according to their law, the body was to betaken down before night; and partly that it might be a clear point that the person was rightly executed; for this was not the Roman custom, with whom breaking of the legs, or rather thighs, was a distinct punishment, and was done by laying a man's legs or thighs upon an anvil, and striking them with an hammer {g}; which could not be the case here; this seems to have been done by striking the legs of those that were crucified, which were fastened to the cross, with a bar of iron, or some such instrument. Nonnus suggests that their legs were cut off with a saw or sword; but the former seems more reasonable:

and that they might be taken away; which it seems the Jews had not power to do, but must be done by the Roman soldiers, or by leave at least from the Roman governor; and therefore they make their request to him.

{d} Piske Tosephot Sabbat, art. 314. {e} Seder Tephillot, fol. 183. 2. &c. Ed. Basil. {f} Lactantii Divin. Institut. l. 4. c. 26. {g} Lipsius de Cruce, l. 2. c. 14. p. 110, 114.

John 19:32

Ver. 32. Then came the soldiers,.... Pilate having granted the Jews what they desired; either the soldiers that crucified Christ, and the others with him, and watched their bodies, being ordered by Pilate, went from the place where they sat; or a fresh company, which were sent for this purpose, came from the city:

and brake the legs of the first; they came unto, which whether it was he that was crucified on his right hand, and was the penitent believer in him, as some have thought, is not certain:

and of the other which was crucified with him; who, if the former is true, must be he that reviled him; and was this their position, it was a lively emblem of the last day, when the sheep shall stand at the right, and the goats on the left hand of Christ.

John 19:33

Ver. 33. But when they came to Jesus,.... Whom they passed by before, and now returned to; this they did not out of tenderness to him, but that he might be the longer in his torture, and whom they reserved till last, that they might use him with the greater cruelty and barbarity:

and saw that he was dead already; as they might, from the bowing down of his head, the ghastliness of his countenance, the falling of his jaws, and other signs:

they brake not his legs; there being no occasion for it, nor would it have answered any end, were they ever so spiteful and malicious against him; though the true reason was, and which restrained them from it, divine providence would not suffer them to do it.

John 19:34

Ver. 34. But one of the soldiers,.... Whose name some pretend to say was Longinns, and so called from the spear with which he pierced Christ:

with a spear pierced his side; his left side, where the heart lies; though the painters make this wound on the right, and the Arabic version of Erpenius, as cited by Dr. Lightfoot, adds the word "right" to make the miracle the greater: this the soldier did, partly out of spite to Christ, and partly to know whether he was really dead; and which was so ordered by divine providence, that it might beyond all doubt appear that he really died, and was not taken down alive from the cross; so that there might be no room to call in question the truth of his resurrection, when he should appear alive again:

and forthwith came there out blood and water; this is accounted for in a natural way by the piercing of the "pericardium", which contains a small quantity of water about the heart, and which being pierced, a person, if alive, must inevitably die; but it seems rather to be something supernatural, from the asseverations the evangelist makes. This water and blood some make to signify baptism and the Lord's supper, which are both of Christ's appointing, and spring from him, and refer to his sufferings and death; rather they signify the blessings of sanctification and justification, the grace of the one being represented by water, as it frequently is in the Old and New Testament, and the other by blood, and both from Christ: that Christ was the antitype of the rock in the wilderness, the apostle assures us, in 1Co 10:4 and if the Jews are to be believed, he was so in this instance; Jonathan ben Uzziel, in his Targum on Nu 20:11 says that

"Moses smote the rock twice, at the first time amda tpyja, "blood dropped out": and at the second time abundance of waters flowed out."

The same is affirmed by others {h} elsewhere in much the same words and order.

{h} Shemot Rabba, sect. 3. fol. 94. 1. Zohar in Num. fol. 102. 4.

John 19:35

Ver. 35. And he that saw it, bare record,.... Meaning himself, John the evangelist, the writer of this Gospel, who, in his great modesty, frequently conceals himself, under one circumlocution or another; he was an eyewitness of this fact, not only of the piercing of his side with a spear, but of the blood and water flowing out of it; which he saw with his eyes, and bore record of to others, and by this writing; and was ready to attest it in any form it should be desired:

and his record is true; though it is not mentioned by any of the other evangelists, none of them but himself being present at that time:

and he knoweth that he saith true; meaning either God or Christ, who knew all things; and so it is a sort of appeal to God or Christ, for the truth of what he affirmed, as some think; or rather himself, who was fully assured that he was under no deception, and was far from telling an untruth; having seen the thing done with his eyes, and being led into the mystery of it by the Divine Spirit; see **1Jo 5:6** wherefore he could, and did declare it with the strongest asseverations:

that ye might believe; the truth of the fact, and in Christ, both for the expiation of the guilt of sin, and cleansing from the filth of it; both for sanctifying and justifying grace, which the water and the blood were an emblem of.

John 19:36

Ver. 36. For these things were done,.... The not breaking his bones and piercing his side, and that not by chance, and without design; but,

that the Scripture should be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken; referring either to Ps 34:20 he keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken; which if to be understood of the righteous in general, had a very particular and remarkable accomplishment in Christ; though a certain single person seems to be designed; nor is it true in fact of every righteous man, some of whom have had their bones broken; and such a sense would lead to despair in case of broken bones; for whereas such a calamity befalls them, as well as wicked men, under such an affliction, they might be greatly distressed, and from hence be ready to conclude, that they are not righteous persons, and are not under the care and protection of God, or otherwise this promise would be made good: nor have the words any respect to the resurrection of the dead, as if the sense of it was, that none of the bones of the righteous shall be finally broken; and though they may be broken by men, and in their sight, yet the Lord will raise them again, and restore them whole and perfect at the general resurrection; for this will be true of the wicked, as well as of the righteous: and much less is the meaning of the words, one of his bones shall not be broken, namely, the bone "luz", the Jews speak of; which, they say {i}, remains uncorrupted in the grave, and is so hard that it cannot be softened by water, nor burnt in the fire, nor ground in the mill, nor broke with an hammer; by and from which God will raise the whole body at the last day: but the words are to be understood of Christ, he is the poor man that is particularly pointed at in Ps 34:6 who, was poor in his state of humiliation, and who cried unto the Lord, and he heard him, and saved him; and he is the righteous one, whose afflictions were many, and out of which the Lord delivered him, Ps 34:19 whose providential care of him was very particular and remarkable; he kept his bones from being broken, when others were; and by this incident this passage had its literal fulfilment in him: or else it may refer to the passover lamb, a type of Christ, **1Co 5:7** a bone of which was not to be broken, Ex 12:46. The former of these passages is a command, in the second person, to the Israelites, concerning the paschal lamb, "neither shall ye break a bone thereof"; and the latter is delivered in the third person, "nor shall they break any bone of it"; which may be rendered impersonally, "a bone of it, or of him, shall not be broken; or a bone shall not be broken in him"; and so the Syriac and Persic versions read the words here; and in some copies it is, "a bone shall not be broken from him"; and so read the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; and he that violated this precept, according to the traditions of the Jews, was to be beaten. Maimonides {k} says,

"he that breaks a bone in a pure passover, lo, he is to be beaten, as it is said, "and a bone ye shall not break in it": and so it is said of the second passover, "and a bone ye shall not break in it"; but a passover which comes with uncleanness, if a man breaks a bone in it, he is not to be beaten: from the literal sense it may be learned, that a bone is not to be broken, whether in a pure or defiled passover: one that breaks a bone on the night of the fifteenth, or that breaks a bone in it within the day, or that breaks one after many days, lo, he is to be beaten; wherefore they burn the bones of the passover in general, with what is left of its flesh, that they may not come to damage: none are guilty but for the breaking of a bone on which there is flesh of the quantity of an olive, or in which there is marrow; but a bone in which there is no marrow, and on which there is no flesh of the quantity of an olive, a man is not guilty for breaking it; and if there is flesh upon it of such a quantity, and he breaks the bone in the place where there is no flesh, he is guilty, although the place which he breaks is quite bare of its flesh: he that breaks after (another) has broken, is to be beaten."

And with these rules agree the following canons {l},

"the bones and sinews, and what is left, they burn on the sixteenth day, but if that falls on the sabbath, they burn them on the seventeenth, because these do not drive away the sabbath or a feast day."

And so it fell out this year in which Christ suffered, for the sixteenth was the sabbath day: again,

"he that breaks a bone in a pure passover, lo, he is to be beaten with forty stripes; but he that leaves anything in a pure one, and breaks in an impure one, is not to be beaten with forty stripes;"

yea, they say {m}, though

"it was a little kid and tender, and whose bones are tender, they may not eat them; for this is breaking of the bone, and if he eats he is to be beaten, for it is the same thing whether a hard or a tender bone be broken."

Now in this as in many other respects the paschal lamb was a type of Christ, whose bones were none of them to be broken, to show that his life was not taken away by men, but was laid down freely by himself; and also the unbroken strength of Christ under the weight of sin, the curse of the law, and wrath of God, and conflict with Satan, when he obtained eternal redemption for us: and also this was on account of his resurrection from the dead, which was to be in a few days; though had his bones been broken he could easily have restored them, but it was the will of God it should be otherwise. Moreover, as none of the bones of his natural body were to be broken, so none that are members of him in a spiritual sense, who are bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, shall ever be lost.

{i} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 28. fol. 23. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 18. fol. 159. 3. Zohar in Gen. fol. 51. 1. & 82. 1. {k} Hilchot Korban Pesach. c. 10. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4. {l} Misn. Pesachim, c. 7. sect. 10, 11. {m} Maimon. Korban Pesach. c. 10. sect. 9.

John 19:37

Ver. 37. And again another Scripture saith,.... Zec 12:10 which as the former is referred to on account of the not breaking of his bones, this is cited as fulfilled by the piercing of his side:

they shall look on him whom they pierced; in the Hebrew text it is, "upon me whom they have pierced"; the reason of this difference is, because Christ, who is Jehovah, is there speaking prophetically of himself, here the evangelist cites it as fulfilled in him, that is, that part of it which regards the piercing of him; for that of the Jews looking upon him and mourning is yet to be fulfilled, and will be at the time of their conversion in the latter day, and at the day of judgment. And as the piercing of the Messiah has been literally fulfilled in Jesus, there is reason to believe, though the Jews are to this day hardened against him, that that part of the prophecy which concerns their looking to him, and mourning for him on account of his being pierced by them, will also, in God's own time, be fulfilled. Nor is it any objection to the application of this prophecy to our Lord Jesus, that not the Jews, but the Roman soldiers pierced him, since what one does by another, he may be said to do himself: though it was a Roman soldier that pierced the side of Christ, the Jews might desire and urge him to do it; and however, they agreed to it, and were well pleased with it; and just so Christ is said to be crucified and slain by them; though this was done by the above soldiers, because they prevailed upon Pilate to pass the sentence of death upon him, and to deliver him to the soldiers to be crucified. From the citation of this passage it appears, that the writers of the New Testament did not always follow the Greek version of the Old Testament, which here renders the words very differently, and very wrongly; but John cites them according to the Hebrew text, even which we now have, and which is an instance of the truth, purity, and integrity of the present Hebrew books of the Old Testament. The Jewish doctors {n} themselves own that these words respect the Messiah, though they pretend that Messiah ben Joseph is meant, who shall be slain in the wars of Gog and Magog; for since their disappointment, and the blindness and hardness of heart which have followed it, they feign two Messiahs as expected by them; one Messiah ben David, who they suppose will be prosperous and victorious; and the other Messiah ben Joseph, who will suffer much, and at last be killed.

{n} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 52. 1. & ex codem R. Sol. Jarchi, R. David Kimchi, R. Aben Ezra, & R. Sol. ben Melech. in Zech. xii. 10.

John 19:38

Ver. 38. And after this,.... That is, after Jesus had given up the ghost, when it was a clear case that he was dead; as it was before the soldiers came to break the legs of the crucified, and before one of them pierced the side of Jesus with his spear, though that confirmed it: but it seems to be before these last things were done, and yet after the death of Christ, that Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate, and desired leave to take down the body of Jesus. This Joseph was a counsellor, one of the Jewish sanhedrim; though he did not give his consent to the counsel of the court concerning Jesus: he is here described by the place of his birth, Arimathea. This place has been generally thought to be the same with Ramah or Ramathaim Zophim, the birth place of Samuel the prophet; and so I have taken it to be in the note See Gill on "Mt 27:57" but there seems to be some reason to doubt about it, since Ramathaim Zophim was in Mount Ephraim, or in the mountainous parts of that tribe, **1Sa 1:1** whereas Arimathea is called a city of the Jews, Lu 23:51. But if it was in the tribe of Ephraim, it would rather, as Reland {o} observes, be called a city of the Samaritans, to whom that part of the country belonged; besides, as the same learned writer shows from **Jud 4:5** the mountainous parts of Ephraim were about Bethel, to the north of Jerusalem; whereas Arimathea is mentioned along with Lydda, which lay to the west of it, as it is by Jerom, and others: that ancient writer says {p}, that not far from Lydda, now called Diospolis, famous for the raising of Dorcas from the dead, and the healing of Aeneas, is Arimathia, the little village of Joseph, who buried the Lord; though he makes this elsewhere {q} to be the same with Ramathaim Zophim: his words are, Armatha Zophim, the city of Elkanah and Samuel, is in the region of Thamna by Diospolis, (or Lydda,) from whence was Joseph, who, in the Gospels, is said to be of Arimathia; and so in Josephus {r}, and in the Apocrypha:

"Wherefore we have ratified unto them the borders of Judea, with the three governments of Apherema and Lydda and Ramathem, that are added unto Judea from the country of Samaria, and all things appertaining unto them, for all such as do sacrifice in Jerusalem, instead of the payments which the king received of them yearly aforetime out of the fruits of the earth and of trees." (1 Maccabees 11:34)

Lydda and Ramatha, or, as in the latter, Ramathem, are mentioned together, as added unto Judea from the country of Samaria; which last clause, "from the country of Samaria", seems to bid fair for a reconciliation of this matter, that those two are one and the same place: and as the birth place of Samuel the prophet is called, by the Septuagint, Armathaim, as has been observed see Gill "Mt 27:57" so it is likewise called, atmr, "Ramatha", by the Targumist on **Ho 5:8** as it is also by Josephus {s}. The city of this name, near Lydda, is now called Ramola, and is about thirty six or thirty seven miles from Jerusalem. The Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions render it, "who was of Rama". Some take this Joseph to be the same with Joseph ben Gorion, the brother of Nicodemus ben Gorion, and who is supposed to be the same Nicodemus mentioned in the next verse. The character the Jews {t} give of Joseph ben Gorion is, that he was a priest, and of the richest and most noble of the priests in Jerusalem; that he was a very wise, just, and upright man; and that three or four years before the destruction of Jerusalem, he was about sixty seven years of age.

Being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews; not one of the twelve, but a private hearer, who had sometimes secretly attended on the ministry of Christ, loved him, and believed in him as the Messiah, but had not courage enough to confess him, and declare for him, for fear of being put out of the synagogue and sanhedrim: but now being inspired with zeal and courage, "went in boldly", as Mark says,

and besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: from off the cross, that it might not be any more insulted by his enemies, and might not be thrown with the other bodies into the place where the bodies of malefactors were cast, but that it might be decently interred. This Pilate, the Roman governor, had the disposal of, and to him Joseph applies for it; which was a great instance of his affection for Christ, and was a declaring openly for him, and must unavoidably expose him to the malice and resentment of the Jews:

and Pilate gave him leave; having first inquired of the centurion, whether he was dead; of which being satisfied, he readily granted it; not only in complaisance to Joseph, who was a man of note and figure, but on account of the innocence of Jesus, of which he was convinced, and therefore was very willing he should have an honourable burial:

he came therefore; to the cross, with proper servants with him,

and took the body of Jesus; down from the cross, and carried it away. The Alexandrian copy, different from all others, and in language uncommon, reads, "the body of God".

{o} Palestina Ilustrata, l. 3. p. 581. {p} Epitaph Paulae, fol. 59. A. {q} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 88. K. {r} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 4. soot. 9. {s} Ib. l. 5. c. 10. sect. 2. {t} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol 25. 1. & 27. 1.

John 19:39

Ver. 39. And there came also Nicodemus,.... To the cross, at the same time as Joseph did; who, whether they were brethren, as some conjecture, and met here by consent, since one prepared one thing, and another, for the interment of Christ, is not certain. This Nicodemus is thought to be the same with

Nicodemus ben Gorion, the Talmudists speaks of, who, they say {u}, was one of the three rich men in Jerusalem; as this appears to be a rich man, from the large quantity of myrrh and aloes he brought with him, and which must be very costly. Moreover, they say {w}, that he had another name, which was Boni; and they themselves observe {x}, that Boni was one of the disciples of Jesus, as this Nicodemus was, though a secret one, as Joseph: this is he

which at the first came to Jesus by night; who, when Christ first entered on his ministry, or when he first came unto him, came to him by night to discourse with him about his Messiahship, doctrine, and miracles, **Joh 3:1** for being one of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, and a Rabbi or master in Israel, he was ashamed or afraid to converse publicly with him; however, he went away a disciple; and though he did not openly profess him, he loved him, and believed in him, and now being dead showed his respect to him:

and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight: not himself, but by his servants. This mixture of myrrh and aloes together, and which was a very large quantity, and exceeding costly, was not designed the embalming of his body, and preserving it from putrefaction; for he was not embalmed, though myrrh and cassia and other odours were used in embalming {y}; but for perfuming it, and in honour and respect unto him: it was sweet smelling myrrh, and an aromatic spice called "aloe" he brought, and not the common aloe. Nonnus calls it the "Indian aloe", which was of a sweet odour; for which reason it was brought. These are both reckoned with the chief spices, **So 4:14**. Myrrh was one of the principal spices in the anointing oil and holy perfume, Ex 30:23. It is a kind of gum or resin called "stacte", that issues either by incision, or of its own accord, out of the body or branches of a tree of this name, which grows in Arabia and Egypt; and being of an agreeable smell, was used at funerals: hence those words of Martial {z} "---& olentem funera myrrham"; and so Nazianzen, speaking of his brother Caesarius, says {a},

"he lies dead, friendless, desolate, miserable, smurnhv
olighv hxiwmenov, "favoured with a little myrrh"."

And so the aloe was used to perfume, and to give a good scent, **Pr 7:17** and Christ's garments are said to smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, Ps 45:8. Some have thought, that this was a mixture of the juice of myrrh, and of the juice of the aloe plant, and was a liquid into which the body of Christ was put: but this will not so well agree with the winding of the body in linen, with these in the next verse, where they are called spices. A Jew {b} objects to this relation of the evangelist as unworthy of belief: he affirms, that this was enough for two hundred dead bodies, and that it could not be carried with less than the strength of a mule, and therefore not by Nicodemus. In answer to which, it is observed by Bishop Kidder {c}, that we having nothing but the Jew's own word for it, that this was enough for two hundred bodies, and a load for a mule; and that it should be told what was the weight of the litra, or pound, mentioned by the evangelist, ere the force of the objection can be seen; and that it is a thing well known, that among the Jews the bodies of great men were buried with a great quantity of spices: it is said of Asa, that "they buried him in his own sepulchre which he had made for himself, in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours, and divers kinds of spices", 2Ch 16:14. To which may be added, what is before observed, that this was not brought by Nicodemus himself, but by his servants; and what they did by his orders, and he coming along with them, he may be said to do. Just as Joseph is said to take down the body of Jesus from the cross, wind it in linen, and carry it to his sepulchre, and there bury it; this being done by his servants, at his orders, or they at least assisting in it; and as Pilate is said to put the title he wrote upon the cross, though it was done by others, at his command.

{u} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 56. 1. {w} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 1. {x} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. {y} Herodotus in Euterpe, c. 86. {z} L. 11. Epigr. 35. {a} Epist. 18. p. 78l. Tom. I. {b} Jacob Aben Amram, porta veritatis No. 1040. apud Kidder, Demonstration of the Messiah, part 3. p. 65, 66. Ed. fol. {c} Ib.

John 19:40

Ver. 40. Then took they the body of Jesus,.... It being taken down from the cross, and carried to the designed place of interment; they, Joseph and Nicodemus, either themselves, or by their servants, took the body;

and wound it in linen clothes; or "swathed", or "wrapped it in linen"; rolled it about the body many times, as was the custom of the eastern nations to do; this was what Joseph prepared:

with the spices; which they either wrapped up with the linen, or strowed over the body when it was wound up; these Nicodemus brought;

as the manner of the Jews is to bury; both was usual with them; both to wind up the dead in linen; hence R. Jonathan, alluding to this custom, when R. Isai was taken, and others would have delivered him, said, wnydob tmh Krky, "let the dead be wrapped in his own linen {d}"; and also to bury them with spices;

hence we read of "the spices of the dead" in a Jewish canon {e}:

"they do not say a blessing over a lamp, nor over the spices of idolaters; nor over a lamp, nor over Mytm lv
Mymvbh, "the spices of the dead":"

the use of which, Bartenora on the place says, was to drive away an ungrateful smell. The wrapping up the body of Christ in a fine linen cloth, was a token of his purity and innocence; and significative of that pure and spotless righteousness he had now brought in: the strewing it with spices may denote the fragrancy of Christ's death to Jehovah the Father, in whose sight it was precious, and whose sacrifice to him is of a sweet smelling savour; and also to all sensible sinners, to whom a crucified Christ is precious; since by his death sin is expiated, the law fulfilled, justice satisfied, reconciliation made, security from condemnation obtained, and death is abolished.

{d} T. Hieros. Ternmot, fol. 46. 2. {e} Misn. Beracot. c. 8. sect. 6.

John 19:41

Ver. 41. Now in the place where he was crucified,.... Which takes in all that spot of ground that lay on that side of the city where he was crucified; or near to the place of his crucifixion, for it was not a garden in which he was crucified:

there was a garden; all gardens, except rose gardens, were without the city, as has been observed, See Gill on "Joh 18:1". This, it seems, belonged to Joseph: rich men used to have their gardens without the city for their convenience and pleasure:

and in the garden a new sepulchre; they might not bury within the city. Some chose to make their sepulchres in their gardens, to put them in mind of their mortality, when they took their walks there; so R. Dustai, R. Janhal, and R. Nehurai, were buried, odrpb, "in a garden", or orchard {f}; and so were Manasseh and Amon, kings of Judah, 2Ki 21:18. Here Joseph had one, hewn out in a rock, for himself and family, and was newly made. The Jews distinguish between an old, and a new sepulchre; they say {g},

"vdx rbq, "a new sepulchre" may be measured and sold, and divided, but an old one might not be measured, nor sold, nor divided."

Wherein was never man yet laid; this is not improperly, nor impertinently added, though the evangelist had before said, that it was a new sepulchre; for that it might be, and yet bodies have been lain in it; for according to the Jewish canons {h},

"there is as a new sepulchre, which is an old one; and there is an old one, which is as a new one; an old sepulchre, in which lie ten dead bodies, which are not in the power of the owners, vdx rbqk hzyrh, "lo, this is as a new sepulchre"."

Now Christ was laid in such an one, where no man had been laid, that it might appear certainly that it was he, and not another, that was risen from the dead.

{f} Jechus haabot, p. 43. Ed. Hottinger. {g} Massech. Sernacot, c. 24. fol. 16. 3. {h} Ib.

John 19:42

Ver. 42. There laid they Jesus therefore,.... Because it was a new sepulchre, and no man had been ever laid there before; and some other reasons are added:

because of the Jews' preparation day; either for the Chagigah, or the sabbath, which was just at hand; the Persic version reads, "the night of the sabbath": for this reason, they could not dig a grave purposely for him; for it was forbidden on feast days; and therefore they put him into a tomb ready made: the canon runs {i},

"they may not dig pits, twrbqw, "nor graves", on a solemn feast day."

The former of these, the commentators say {k}, are graves dug in the earth, and the latter edifices built over graves; and for the same reason, because it was such a day, they did not take his body to any of their houses, and embalm and anoint it, as they otherwise would have done; but this being a solemn day, and the sabbath drawing on apace, they hastened the interment, and took the most opportune place that offered:

for the sepulchre was nigh at hand; some say about an hundred and eight feet from the cross, and others an hundred and thirty feet, though some say but fifty or sixty, at furthest it was not far off.

{i} Misn. Moed Katon, c. 1. sect. 6. {k} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

John 20:1

Ver. 1. The first day of the week,.... On the sixth day of the week, towards the close of it, Christ was interred; he lay in the grave all the seventh day, and on the first day of the week rose from the dead: so the women, after they had observed where the body was laid, went home and prepared spices and ointments, to anoint it; but the sabbath coming on, they were prevented; on which they rested, according to the Jewish law: but as soon as it was over,

cometh Mary Magdalene; not alone, but other women with her; who had attended Christ at the cross, observed where he was buried, and had prepared spices to anoint him, and now came for that purpose; for not merely to see the sepulchre, and weep at the grave, did she with the rest come, but to perform this piece of funeral service:

early, when it was yet dark; as it was when she set out, the day just began to dawn; though by that time she got to the sepulchre, the sun was rising:

unto the sepulchre; where she saw the body of Jesus laid by Joseph, in a tomb of his, and in his garden; by whose leave, it is probable, being asked over night, she with her companions were admitted:

and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre: which Joseph rolled there, and the Pharisees sealed and set a watch to observe it. This was removed by an angel; for though Christ himself could easily have done it, it was proper it should be done by a messenger from heaven, by the order of divine justice, who had laid him as a prisoner there. Mary's coming so early to the grave, shows her great love and affection to Christ, her zeal, courage, and diligence, in manifesting her respect unto him: and oftentimes so it is, that the greatest sinners, when converted, are most eminent for grace, particularly faith, love, and humility; and are most diligent in the discharge of duty.

John 20:2

Ver. 2. Then she runneth and cometh to Simon Peter,.... That is, after she had not only seen that the stone was took away, but had looked into the sepulchre, and saw that the body of Christ was removed; for otherwise she could not have said, that it was took away out of it: upon which she made all the haste she could to Peter; who, where he was she knew; and she was particularly bid by the angel she saw in the sepulchre, to go to him:

and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved; John the writer of this Gospel; for these two were together, as they usually were; nor were they alone, for the rest of the disciples were with them:

and saith unto them, they have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. The Oriental versions, the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic, read, "I know not where they have laid him"; who they were that had taken the body of Christ away, whether friends or enemies, she could not say; nor did she, or any of the women that were with her, know where it was put; whether in some other grave, or was exposed to the insults of men, or to birds and beasts of prey; whether it was laid in a more suitable and convenient place, or in a scandalous one; and whether this removal was for his greater honour, or reproach; to know this, gave her great concern and uneasiness, as she knew it must the disciples also: so Christ, in a spiritual sense, may be removed from his people for a time, and they know not where he is; sometimes he removes himself, to chastise them for their former carriage, to try and exercise their grace, to inflame their love to him, and sharpen their desires after him, and to endear his presence to them the more, when they enjoy it again; sometimes he is taken away from them by preachers, when they leave him out of their discourses; and by their own sins and transgressions, which separate between him and them, with respect to communion; and who, for a time, may not know where to find him: and for the direction of such it may be observed, that he is to be found in the ministration of his word and ordinances in his churches.

John 20:3

Ver. 3. Peter therefore went forth,.... Out of the house where he was, upon hearing the account Mary gave:

and that other disciple; John, the Evangelist and Apostle; the rest of the disciples staying at home and continuing together, waiting to hear what account these two would bring:

and came to the sepulchre; to see with their own eyes what was done, and whether things were as Mary had related; and to make a more particular inquiry into, and examination of them.

John 20:4

Ver. 4. So they ran both together,.... At first setting out, and for a while; not content to walk, they ran, being eagerly desirous to know the truth of things:

and that other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre; John was a younger man than Peter, and so more nimble, and swift of foot, and got to the sepulchre before him; and besides, had not that concern of mind to retard him, Peter might have; as, supposing Christ was risen, and he should see him, how he should be able to look him in the face, whom he had so shamefully denied.

John 20:5

Ver. 5. And he stooping down and looking in,.... That is, John; when he came to the sepulchre, stooped down to look into it, and see what he could see; he only went into the court, or stood upon the floor, where the bearers used to set down the bier, before they put the corpse into one of the graves in the sepulchre, which were four cubits lower; See Gill on "Mr 16:5". Hence he was obliged to stoop down, ere he could see anything within: when he

saw the linen clothes lying; in which the body had been wrapped, but that itself not there:

yet went he not in; to the sepulchre itself, but waited in the court or porch, till Peter came; and perhaps might be timorous and fearful of going into such a place alone; the Arabic version reads it, "he dared not go in".

John 20:6

Ver. 6. Then cometh Simon Peter following him,.... In a very little time after him:

and went into the sepulchre; itself, though not without first stooping down, as

John did; see Lu 24:12.

And seeth the linen clothes lie; as John did; and as by the mouth of two or three witnesses everything is confirmed, so was this; both saw the linen in which the body was wrapped, but that was gone; and which was a sign that the body was not stolen away, otherwise the linen would not have been left; and besides, it would have taken up some time, and given a good deal of trouble, to have unwrapped the body, when it is considered how many foldings the Jews used to wind up their corpse in.

John 20:7

Ver. 7. And the napkin that was about his head,.... The word soudarion, rendered "napkin", is thought to be originally Latin, and signifies an handkerchief, with which the sweat is wiped off the face, and so it is used in Ac 19:12 but Nonnus says it is a common word with the Syrians, and the word ardwo is used in the Syriac version; and which he renders, kefalhv zwsthra, "the girdle, or binding of the head", for with this the head and face of the dead person were bound; see Joh 11:44. Now Peter, by going into the sepulchre, and looking about him, and examining things more strictly and narrowly, observed that which neither he nor John had taken notice of, when only stooping they looked in: and that is, that this head binder, or napkin, was

not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself: and was plainly the effect of thought, care, and composure; and clearly showed, that the body was not taken away in a hurry, or by thieves, since everything lay in such order and decency; and which was done, either by our Lord himself, or by the angels.

John 20:8

Ver. 8. Then went in also the other disciple,.... John, being animated by the example of Peter, went down into the sepulchre likewise; whither Peter also might beckon, or call him, to be witness with him of the order and situation in which things lay:

which came first to the sepulchre; yet went last into it; so it was, that the first was last, and the last first:

and he saw; the linen clothes lie in one place, and the napkin folded up in order, lying by itself in another:

and believed; that the body was not there, but either was taken away, or was raised from the dead; but whether as yet he believed the latter is doubtful, by what follows; unless what follows is considered as an illustration, especially of the faith of John, that he should believe the resurrection of Christ, though till now he did not know nor understand the Scriptures that spake of it.

John 20:9

Ver. 9. For as yet they knew not the Scripture,.... Meaning not some particular passage of Scripture, but the writings of the Old Testament in general, and the various places in it, which spoke of the resurrection of Christ, either in a way of type, or prophecy; such as Ge 22:3 and though our Lord had often referred to some of them, at least as in Mt 12:40 yet such was the dulness of the disciples, or such their prejudices in favour of the Messiah being to continue, and set up a temporal kingdom, that even John, who leaned on his breast, and Peter, who was so inquisitive and desirous of knowing our Lord's meaning in everything, did not understand the sense of his words, nor of those places of Scripture he had reference to:

that he must rise again from the dead: so it was determined, thus it was predicted, and the justification and salvation of God's elect required it; and yet they knew not the thing, nor the necessity and importance of it.

John 20:10

Ver. 10. Then the disciples,.... Peter and John, after they had seen and examined things, and satisfied themselves as much as they could:

went away again unto their own home; or "to themselves", as in the original text, and so the Vulgate Latin reads it; not that the meaning is, that they had been out of their minds, and proper exercise of them, and now came to themselves; but they returned to their own company, to the rest of the disciples they left at home, who were as themselves. The Syriac renders it, Nwhtkwdl, "to their own place", and so the Arabic and Persic versions; the place from whence they came, and where the rest were assembled together, to pray, converse, and consult together, what was to be done at this juncture.

John 20:11

Ver. 11. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre,.... She returned from the city to the sepulchre again, following Peter and John thither, who continued here when they departed, being willing to get some tidings of her Lord, if possible. The word "without", is omitted by the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions, but is in the Greek copies; and is properly put by the evangelist, when rightly understood; for the meaning is not, that she stood without the sepulchre, taken in its full extent; for she stood, ruxb, "in the court", where the bearers set down the corpse, in order to carry it into the cave, or vault; she stood without the innermost part of the sepulchre, but not without side the sepulchre itself; as appears from her stooping and looking into it:

weeping; that the body of her dear Lord was taken away, and she was prevented of showing that respect unto it she designed; and not knowing in whose hands it was, but fearing it would be insulted and abused by wicked men, her heart was ready to break with sorrow:

and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre; to see if she could see him, if she and the disciples were not mistaken, being loath to go without finding him: so it is in a spiritual sense, the absence of Christ is cause of great distress and sorrow to gracious souls; because of the excellency of his person, the near and dear relations he stands in to them and on account of the nature of his presence and company, which is preferable to everything in this world; nor can such souls, when they have lost sight of Christ, sit down contented; but will seek after him in the Scriptures, under the ministry of the word, and at the ordinances of the Gospel, where a crucified, buried, risen Jesus is exhibited.

John 20:12

Ver. 12. And seeth two angels in white,.... Matthew and Mark speak but of one, but Luke of two, as here; whom he calls men, because they appeared in an human form, and in shining garments, or white apparel; and which appearance is entirely agreeable to the received notion of the Jews, that as evil angels or devils are clothed in black, so good angels, or ministering spirits, Mynbl yvwbl, "are clothed in white" {l}, expressive of their spotless purity and innocence:

sitting the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain; in what position the body of Christ was laid, whether from west to east, as some, or from north to south, as others, is not certain; since the Jews observed no rule in this matter, as appears from the form of their sepulchres, and the disposition of the graves in them; some lying one way, and some another, in the same vault; See Gill on "Lu 24:12".

{l} Gloss. in T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 72. 1.

John 20:13

Ver. 13. And they say unto her, woman, why weepest thou?.... Signifying, that she had no reason to weep, but to rejoice and be glad; since, though the body of her Lord was not there, yet he was risen from the dead, and was alive. This they said, partly to rebuke her for her grief, and to comfort her under it: Beza's ancient copy adds here, as in Joh 20:15 "whom seekest thou?" and so does the Ethiopic version: "she saith unto them"; without any concern of mind about what they were, and as if they had been of the human kind; for her grief made her fearless, and she cared not who she opened the case to, so that she could get any relief, and any tidings of her Lord:

because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him; and which she thought was reason sufficient for her weeping; could she but have known, that if he was taken away, it was by his friends, and was well used, and she could have had the opportunity of paying her last respects to him, it would have been a satisfaction; but nothing short of this could dry up her tears.

John 20:14

Ver. 14. And when she had thus said,.... As soon as the words were out of her mouth, before she could have an answer from the angels:

she turned herself back; perceiving, either by the looks and gesture of one of the angels, or by hearing a noise, that somebody was behind her:

and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus; she saw a person, but did not know who he was, by reason of the form of his appearance, the difference of his clothes, and not expecting to see him alive; or through modesty, she might not look wistfully at him; and besides, her eyes were filled with tears, and swollen with weeping; so that she could not see clearly; and her eyes might be holden also, as the disciples were, that as yet she might not know him: so sometimes, in a spiritual sense, Christ is with, and near his people, and they know it not: Christ, as God, is omnipresent; he is every where, and in all places; the spiritual presence of Christ, is more or less, in some way or another, always in all his churches, and among his dear people; but the sight of him is not always alike to them, nor does he appear to them always in the same form; sometimes against them, at least in their apprehensions, nor always in a manner agreeably to their expectations; nor is his grace always discovered in the same way, nor has it the same effect.

John 20:15

Ver. 15. Jesus saith unto her, woman, why weepest thou,.... The same question he puts to her, as was put by the angels: adding,

whom seekest thou? for she was not only weeping for the loss of him, but was inquiring after him, if anyone saw him removed from thence, and where he was carried:

she supposing him to be the gardener; that had the care of the garden, in which the sepulchre was; for not the owner of the garden, who was Joseph, but the keeper of it is meant; she could not imagine that Joseph should be there so early in the morning, but might reasonably think the gardener was:

saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away; she addresses him, though she took him to be but the gardener, in a very civil and courteous manner; which was rightly judged, especially since she had a favour to ask of him: she does not mention the name of her Lord, but imagined he knew who she meant, being so lately buried there; and suggests, that perhaps it might not have been so agreeable to the gardener to have his body lie there, and therefore had removed it; and would he but be so kind as to let her know where he was put, she, with the assistance of her friends close by, would take him away with them: so in a spiritual sense, a truly gracious soul is willing to do anything, and to be at any trouble, so that it may but enjoy Christ; it dearly loves him, as this good woman did; it early, and earnestly, and with its whole heart, seeks after him, as she did; and absence of him, or loss of his presence for a while, sharpens the desire after him, and makes his presence the more welcome.

John 20:16

Ver. 16. Jesus saith unto her, Mary,.... He might alter the tone of his voice, and speak unto her as he used to do, calling her by her name in his usual manner: so Christ has personal knowledge of all his people, and can call them by name; he knows them, and makes himself known to them, before they can know him; and though he may absent himself from them for a while, yet not always:

she turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master; it seems, as if she had dropped her conversation with the supposed gardener at once, and scarce waited for an answer from him, but turns herself to the angels again, if she could hear any tidings from them; acting like a person in the utmost distress, hurry and confusion; looking this way and that way, to this or the other person: and now upon Christ's speaking to her, in this plain, familiar manner, she turns herself again; when fully knowing him, she addresses him with the greatest faith and affection, reverence and humility; calling him her Lord and master, and throws herself at his feet: thus when Christ is pleased to manifest himself to his people, there goes a power along with his word, making himself known; and a word from Christ, attended with divine power, will give a soul a turn to him from the most excellent creatures, even angels; and when Christ is known, he will be acknowledged with all love, humility, and obedience. The word Rabboni, is of the Chaldee and Syriac form, and signifies "my Lord, or master"; and is commonly applied to one that has a despotic power over another; though all the Oriental versions say, that she spoke to him in Hebrew. The Syriac and Ethiopic, "Rabboni", but the Arabic and Persic, "Rabbi". The titles of Rab, Rabbi, and Rabban, are frequent with the Jewish doctors; who say {m}, that Rabbi is greater than Rab, and Rabban is greater than Rabbi; and a man's own name greater than Rabban: but the word in the form here used Rabbon, I do not remember ever to have observed applied to any of the doctors; but is frequently used of the Divine Being, who, in their prayers, is often addressed in this manner, Mlwe lv wnwbr "Lord of the world" {n}. I conjecture therefore, that Mary used this word, as expressive of her faith in his power and Godhead, seeing him alive from the dead; though it might be a name she was used to call him by before, being convinced from what he had done to her, and by the miracles she had observed performed by him on others, of his proper deity; as the poor blind man expresses his faith in the power of Christ to cure him, by addressing him in the same language, using the same word, Mr 10:51.

{m} Halichot Olam Tract. 1. c. 3. p. 25. {n} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1. Abot R. Nathan, c. 9. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 6. 4.

John 20:17

Ver. 17. Jesus saith unto her, touch me not,.... Not that his body was an aerial one, or a mere "phantom", which could not be touched; the prohibition itself shows the contrary; and besides, Christ's body was afterwards presented to Thomas, to be touched by him, and to be handled by all the disciples; and his feet were held by the women, which is what Mary would have now done: upon the discovery of him, she threw herself at his feet, and was going to embrace and kiss them, to testify her affection and joy, when she is forbid; not as unworthy of the favour, because she sought him among the dead, for which the angels reproved her and the rest; but either because he was not to be conversed with, as before his death, his body being raised immortal and glorious; or rather, because he had an errand to send her on to his disciples, which required haste; nor need she stay now to show her respect to him, since she would have opportunity enough to do that, before his ascension; which though it was to be quickly, yet not directly and immediately; and this seems to be the sense of our Lord's reason:

for I am not yet ascended to my Father; nor shall I immediately go to him; I shall make some stay upon earth; as he did, forty days before his ascension; when he intimates, she might see him again, and familiarly converse with him; at present he would have her stay no longer with him:

but go to my brethren; this he says, to show that their carriage to him, being denied by one of them, and forsaken by them all, and the glory he was raised unto, as all this made no alteration in their relation to him, so neither in his affection to them: Mary was a very proper person to be sent unto them, since she had lately been with them, and knew where they were all assembled together:

and say unto them; as from himself, representing him as it were:

I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God; God was his Father, not by creation, as he is to angels, and the souls of men, and therefore is called the Father of spirits; nor by adoption, as he is to the saints; nor with respect to the incarnation of Christ, for, as man, he had no father; or with regard to his office as Mediator, for as such he was a servant, and not a Son; but he was his Father by nature, or with regard to his divine person, being begotten of him, and so his own proper Son, and he his own proper Father; which hold forth the natural and eternal sonship of Christ, his equality with him, and distinction from him: and God was the Father of his disciples by adopting grace, in virtue of the covenant of grace made with Christ, and through their spiritual relation to him, as the natural and eternal Son of God: God the Father is the God of Christ as man, who prepared, formed, anointed, supported, and glorified his human nature; and in which nature, he prayed to him as his God, believed in him, loved and obeyed him as such; wherefore the Jew {o} very wrongly infers from hence, that he is not God, because the God of Israel was his God; since this is spoken of him as he is man: and he was the God of his disciples, in and by the covenant of grace made with Christ, as their head and representative; so that their interest in God, as their covenant God and Father, was founded upon his being the God and Father of Christ, and their relation to, and concern with him; and which therefore must be firm and lasting, and will hold as long as God is the God and Father of Christ: this was good news to be brought to his disciples; which, as it carried the strongest marks of affection, and expressions of nearness of relation; and implied, that he was now risen from the dead; so it signified, that he should ascend to God, who stood in the same relation to them, as to him; when he should use all his interest and influence on their behalf, whilst they were on earth; and when the proper time was come for a remove, that they might be with him, and with his God and Father and theirs, where they would be to all eternity.

{o} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 58. p. 446.

John 20:18

Ver. 18. Mary Magdalene came,.... Directly and immediately, being ready and willing to obey the commends of her Lord, with the utmost cheerfulness; and glad to go on such an errand, and carry such news to his disciples, even though her private interest and personal affection might have inclined her to desire to stay with Christ:

and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord; not only that he was risen from the dead, and she had been told so by the angels, but she had seen him herself, and was an eyewitness of his resurrection, and which she firmly believed; this she said, not only with all the marks of pleasure, joy and transport, but with an air of assurance and confidence:

and that he had spoken these things unto her; as that he called them brethren, and bid her go unto them, and acquaint them, that as he was risen, he should in a short time ascend to his Father and theirs, to his God and theirs; all which she faithfully related to them.

John 20:19

Ver 19. Then the same day at evening,.... The same day Christ rose from the dead, and appeared to Mary; at the evening of that day, after he had been with the two disciples to Emmaus, about eight miles from Jerusalem, and they had returned again to the rest; and after there had been such a bustle all day in Jerusalem, about the body of Jesus; the soldiers that watched the sepulchre, giving out, by the direction of the elders, that the disciples of Christ had stolen away the body, while they slept:

being the first day of the week; as is said in Joh 20:1 and here repeated, to prevent any mistake; and that it might be clear what day it was the disciples were assembled together, and Christ appeared to them:

when the doors were shut; the doors of the house where they were, which it is plain was in Jerusalem, Lu 24:33 but whether it was the house where Christ and his disciples ate the passover together, or whether it was John's home or house, to which he took the mother of Christ, since he and Peter, and the rest, seem to be afterwards together in one place, is not certain: however, the doors were shut; which is not merely expressive of the time of night, when this was usually done; but signifies that they were really locked and bolted, and barred, for which a reason is given as follows:

where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews; after their scattering abroad upon the taking of Christ, and after his crucifixion was over; and especially after the report of his body being took away, they gathered together, and made fast the doors of the place, lest the Jews should come in upon them, and surprise them; for they might fear, that since they had took away their master's life, theirs must go next; and especially since it was rumoured abroad that they had stole away his body, they might be under the greater fear, that search would be made after them, and they be apprehended and brought into trouble on that account:

came Jesus and stood in the midst of them; on a sudden, at once, and when they had no thought or fear of anyone's coming upon them, without some previous notice; but he being the Almighty God, did, by his omnipotent power, cause the bars and bolts, and doors, in the most secret and unobserved manner, to give way to him, and let him in at once among them: when as a presage and pledge of the accomplishment of his promise to be with, and in the midst of his, when met together, either in private or public, he stood and presented himself in the midst of them: and to let them know at once he was no enemy,

he saith unto them, peace be unto you: Mkl Mwlv, "peace be unto you", is an usual form of salutation among the Jews; see Ge 43:23 expressive of all prosperity in soul and body, inward and outward, spiritual and temporal; and here may have a special regard to that peace he said he gave unto them, and left with them, upon his departure from them; and which he had obtained by the blood of his cross, and now preached unto them.

John 20:20

Ver. 20. And when he had so said,.... The above salutation, in the most kind, tender, and affectionate manner: and to put them out of all pain, and that they might know certainly who he was,

he showed them his hands and his side; his hands, which had been pierced with the nails, the marks of which were then to be seen; and which they all knew must be the case, since he was crucified; and his side, which was pierced with a spear, and which left a wide open wound, and which John, who was among them, was an eyewitness of. These he showed, partly to convince them that he was not a spirit, or an apparition, which at first sight they took him to be, from his sudden appearance among them, the doors being locked and barred; and partly to assure them of the truth of his resurrection, and in the same body, as well as to lead them into a view of his great love his suffering the death of the cross for them; and also to observe to them from whence that peace and happiness sprung he had just now saluted them with. It is needless to inquire, whether these marks in his hands, feet, and side, still continue; he was raised with them, that he might show them, for the reasons above given; and should they be thought to continue till all the effects of his death are wrought, since he appears in the midst of the throne and elders, a lamb, as it had been slain, and till his second coming, when they that pierced his hands and feet, and side, shall look and mourn, it is not very unreasonable:

then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord; for by these marks in his

hands and feet, and side, they were fully convinced, and entirely satisfied, that it was he; and that he was risen from the dead; and who now appeared to them, than which a more delightful sight could not be enjoyed by them; whereby was fulfilled, what he had foretold and promised, Joh 16:22. So a spiritual sight of Christ is always rejoicing to a disciple of his; that is, one that has learned of Christ, and learned Christ, who has believed in him, and is enabled to deny sinful, righteous, civil, worldly, and natural self, for Christ; and is made willing to take up the cross, bear it, and follow after him: a sight of Christ as God and man, of his personal beauties and excellencies, of his fulness and suitableness, as a Saviour and Redeemer, and so as to have sensible communion with him, is exceeding delightful to such an one; especially when under a sense of sin, when accused or tempted by Satan, or when Christ has been long absent, or when under affliction, and on a death bed; for Christ is a believer's all; he stands in all relations to him; and such a soul never sees Christ aright, but it receives something from him, his leaning on his breast; and who being so near his person, and allowed to use a liberty with him, everyone did not take, at the motion of Peter, asked our Lord at supper, who the person was he meant that should betray him; all this is said as descriptive of the disciple here spoken of, which leaves it without any doubt, that it was the Apostle John; and who, from
Joh 21:2 appears to be one of this company, and is further confirmed at Joh 21:24.

John 20:21

Ver. 21. Then said Jesus to them again,.... The words he said before:

peace be unto you; which he repeated, to put them out of their fright, by reason of which they returned him no answer; and to raise and engage their attention to what he was about to say; and to pacify their consciences, distressed with a sense of their conduct towards him; and with a view to the Gospel of peace, he was now going to send them to preach:

as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you; Christ's mission of his disciples, supposes power in him, honour done to them, authority put upon them, qualifications given them, and hence success attended them; what they were sent to do, was to preach the Gospel, convert sinners, build up saints, plant churches, and administer ordinances. The pattern of their mission, is the mission of Christ by his Father, which was into this world, to do his will, preach the Gospel, work miracles, and obtain eternal redemption for his people; and which mission does not suppose inferiority in his divine person, nor change of place, but harmony and agreement between the Father and Son: the likeness of these missions lies in these things; their authority is both divine; they are both sent into the same place, the world; and in much the same condition, mean, despicable, hated and persecuted; and in part for the same end, to preach the Gospel, and work miracles, for the confirmation of it; but not to obtain redemption, that being a work done solely by Christ; in which he has no partner, and to whom the glory must be only ascribed.

John 20:22

Ver. 22. And when he had said this,.... That is, declared he sent them forth in like manner as his Father sent him:

he breathed on them; in allusion to God's breathing the breath of life into man, at his creation; or rather, to the Spirit himself, who is the breath of God, and proceeds from him, as from the Father; and who breathes both upon persons in regeneration, and in qualifying for ministerial service, at the instance and influence of Christ: and such an opinion the Jews have of the Spirit of the Messiah, who say {p}, that

"the Spirit went from between the wings of the cherubim,
hybvnw, "and breathed upon him" (Menasseh) by the decree, or order of the word of the Lord."

And saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost; meaning not the grace of the Holy Ghost in regeneration, which they had received already; but the gifts of the Spirit, to qualify them for the work he now sent them to do, and which were not now actually bestowed; but this breathing on them, and the words that attended it, were a symbol, pledge, and confirmation, of what they were to receive on the day of Pentecost: hence it appears, that it is the Spirit of God, who, by his gifts and grace, makes and qualifies men to be ministers of the Gospel; and our Lord by this action, and these words, gives a very considerable proof of his deity: the Papists show their impudence and wickedness, in imitating Christ by their insufflations, or breathing on men; pretending thereby to convey the Holy Spirit to them.

{p} Targum in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13.

John 20:23

Ver. 23. Whose soever sins ye remit,.... God only can forgive sins, and Christ being God, has a power to do so likewise; but he never communicated any such power to his apostles; nor did they ever assume any such power to themselves, or pretend to exercise it; it is the mark of antichrist, to attempt anything of the kind; who, in so doing, usurps the divine prerogative, places himself in his seat, and shows himself as if he was God: but this is to be understood only in a doctrinal, or ministerial way, by preaching the full and free remission of sins, through the blood of Christ, according to the riches of God's grace, to such as repent of their sins, and believe in Christ; declaring, that all such persons as do so repent and believe, all their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake: and accordingly,

they are remitted unto them; in agreement with Christ's own words, in his declaration and commission to his disciples; see Mr 16:16. On the other hand he signifies, that

whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained: that is, that whatsoever sins ye declare are not forgiven, they are not forgiven; which is the case of all final unbelievers, and impenitent sinners; who dying without repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel declaration, shall be damned, and are damned; for God stands by, and will stand by and confirm the Gospel of his Son, faithfully preached by his ministering servants; and all the world will sooner or later be convinced of the validity, truth, and certainty, of the declarations on each of these heads, made by them.

John 20:24

Ver. 24. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus,.... The person here spoken of, is described by his Hebrew name Thomas, and his Greek one Didymus, which both signify a twin; and perhaps he was one. It was common with the Jews to have two names, a Jewish and a Gentile one; by the one they went in the land of Israel, and by the other when without the land {q}; nay, they often went by one name in Judea, and by another in Galilee {r}; where Thomas might go by the name of Didymus with the Greeks, that might live with the Jews in some of those parts: he is also said to be "one of the twelve" apostles, which was their number at first, though Judas now was gone off from them, and therefore are sometimes only called the "eleven"; but this having been their complement, it is still retained; but what is observed of him to his disadvantage and discredit is, that he

was not with them when Jesus came: Beza's ancient copy reads, "he was not there with them"; and so read the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions; he either had not returned to the rest after their scattering one from another upon the apprehending of Christ; or did not choose to assemble with the rest, for fear of the Jews; or was taken up with some business and affair of life; however, he was not with the rest of the disciples, when they were assembled together, and Jesus appeared among them: as it is of good consequence to attend the assemblies of Christ's disciples and followers, so it is of bad consequence to neglect or forsake them: it is frequently to good purpose that persons attend them; here God comes and blesses his people, Jesus grants his presence, the graces of the Spirit are increased, and drawn forth into exercise; souls that have lost sight of Christ find him, disconsolate ones are comforted, weak ones strengthened, and hungry ones fed: on the other hand, not to attend is of bad consequence; neglect of assembling together exposes to many snares and temptations; brings on a spiritual leanness; leads to an indifference and lukewarmness: issues in a low degree of grace, and a non-exercise of it, and in a loss of Christ's presence.

{q} T. Hieros. Gittin, fol. 43. 2. {r} T. Hieros. Gittin, fol. 45. 3.

John 20:25

Ver. 25. The other disciples therefore said unto him,.... Some time in the same week, as they had opportunity of seeing him, with great joy, and full assurance of faith in Christ's resurrection:

we have seen the Lord; they had not only the testimony of the women, and the declaration of the angels, but they saw him with their own eyes, and beheld even the very prints of the nails in his hands and feet, and of the spear in his side, and therefore could not be mistaken and imposed upon: a spiritual sight of Christ is a blessing often enjoyed by attending the assembly of the saints to see Christ, is the desire of every gracious soul; this is the end of their meeting together for social worship; the word and ordinances have a tendency in them to lead souls to a sight of him; and it may be expected, because it is promised; and whenever it is enjoyed, it is very delightful; and a soul that meets with Christ in an ordinance, cannot but speak of it to others; and which he does with joy and pleasure, in an exulting, and even in a kind of a boasting manner; and that for the encouragement of others to attend likewise:

but he said unto them, except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. That nails were used in the crucifixion of Christ, is certain from this place, though nowhere else mentioned; whereby the prophecy of him in Ps 22:16 was fulfilled; for these were not always used in this kind of death. The bodies of men were sometimes fastened to the cross with cords, and not nails {s}. How many were used, whether three, as some, or four, as others, or more, as were sometimes used {t}, is not certain, nor material to know. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions read, "the place of the nails"; that is, the place where the nails were drove. Thomas knew that Christ was fastened to the cross with nails, and that his side was pierced with a spear; which he, though not present, might have had from John, who was an eyewitness thereof; but though they had all seen him alive, he will not trust to their testimony; nay, he was determined not to believe his own eyes; unless he put his finger into, as well as saw, the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side, as well as beheld the wound made by the spear, he is resolved not to believe. And his sin of unbelief is the more aggravated, inasmuch as this disciple was present at the raising of Lazarus from the dead by Christ, and had heard Christ himself say, that he should rise from the dead the third day. We may learn from hence how great is the sin of unbelief; that the best of men are subject to it; and that though this was over ruled by divine providence to bring out another proof Christ's resurrection, yet this did not excuse the sin of Thomas: and it may be observed, that as Thomas would not believe without seeing the marks of the nails and spear in Christ's flesh; so many will not believe, unless they find such and such marks in themselves, which often prove very ensnaring and distressing. Just such an unbeliever as Thomas was, the Jews make Moses to be, when Israel sinned: they say,

"he did not believe that Israel had sinned, but said, Nymam
ynya hawr ynya Ma, "if I do not see, I will not believe" {u}."

{s} Vid. Lipsium de Cruce, l. 2. c. 8. p. 87. {t} Ib. c. 9. p. 91. {u} Shemot Rabba, sect. 46. fol. 142. 2.

John 20:26

Ver. 26. And after eight days,.... That is, after another week, the same day a week later, which taking in the day in which Christ rose and appeared to Mary

Magdalene, and his disciples, and the day in which he now appeared to the disciples with Thomas, made eight days; a like way of speaking see in **Lu 9:28** compared with Mt 17:1. And Dr. Hammond has proved from Josephus {w}, that the Jews used to express a week by eight days.

Again, his disciples were within; within doors, in some private house; probably the same as before, in some part of the city of Jerusalem:

and Thomas with them: which shows their harmony and agreement, their frequency and constancy in meeting together, and their Christian forbearance with Thomas, notwithstanding his unbelief; whom they looked upon as a good man, and retained in their company, hoping by one means or other he would be convinced: and it also shows Thomas's regard to them, and affection for them, by meeting with them, though he had not the same faith in the resurrection of Christ:

then came Jesus; when the disciples, with Thomas, were together; so making good his promise to meet with his people when they meet; and thereby putting an honour upon, and giving encouragement to with the saints: if it should be asked, why did not Christ come sooner? it may be replied, that the reason, on his part, was, it was his will and pleasure to come at this time, and not before; Christ has his set times to himself, when he will appear and manifest himself to his people: on Thomas's part the reasons might be, partly to rebuke him for his sin, and that the strength of his unbelief might appear the more, and that some desire might be stirred up in him to see Christ, if he was risen. And on the part of the disciples, because they did not meet together sooner; and for the further trial of their faith, whether it would continue or not, Thomas obstinately persisting in his unbelief:

the doors being shut; as before, and for the same reason, for fear of the Jews, as well as for the privacy of their devotion and conversation:

and stood in the midst; having in the same powerful manner as before caused the doors, locks, and bars to give way, when at once he appeared in the midst of them all, not to Thomas alone, but to all the eleven; and this the rather, because the disciples had bore a testimony to Christ's resurrection, and which he meant now to confirm; and to rebuke Thomas publicly, who had sinned before them all:

and said, peace be unto you; which he had said before, and now, saluting Thomas in like manner as he did the rest, notwithstanding his unbelief.

{w} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9.

John 20:27

Ver. 27. Then saith he to Thomas,.... For whose sake he chiefly came, and whom he at once singled out from the rest, and called by name in the most friendly manner, without upbraiding or reproaching him for not believing the testimony that had been given him:

reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thine hand and thrust it into my side; that is, make use of every way by seeing, feeling, and examining the scars in my hands, and the hole in my side, and satisfy thyself in the manner thou hast desired; which shows the omniscience of Christ, who knew what had passed between him and the other disciples, and the very words Thomas had expressed himself in; also his great humility and condescension in submitting himself to be examined in the very manner he had fixed; and likewise the reality of his resurrection:

and be not faithless, but believing; in which words Christ dissuades him from unbelief, which is very evil in its own nature, and in its effects; it is the root of all evil; it unfits for duty, and renders the word unprofitable, and leads men off from Christ; and is the more aggravated in the people of God, by the instances, declarations, and promises of grace, and discoveries of love made unto them: and he also encourages him to believe. The exercise of the grace of faith is well pleasing to Christ; it gives glory to him, and makes for the soul's comfort; and a word from Christ, his power going along with it, will enable men to believe, as it did Thomas; which appears by what follows.

John 20:28

Ver. 28. And Thomas answered and said unto him,.... Without examining his hands and side, and as astonished at his condescension and grace, and ashamed of his unbelief:

my Lord and my God; he owns him to be Lord, as he was both by creation and redemption; and God, of which he was fully assured from his omniscience, which he had given a full proof of, and from the power that went along with his words to his heart, and from a full conviction he now had of his resurrection from the dead. He asserts his interest in him as his Lord and his God; which denotes his subjection to him, his affection for him, and faith in him; so the divine word is called in Philo the Jew, kuriov mou, "my Lord" {x}.

{x} Lib. Allegor. l. 2. p. 101.

John 20:29

Ver. 29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas,.... The word Thomas is omitted in the Alexandrian copy, and in Beza's ancient copy, and in some others, and in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions.

Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; which carries in it a tacit and gentle reproof for his unbelief, and suggests, that if he had not seen, he would not have believed; but is not so harsh as if that had been expressed; and which the Jews were wont to do in a severe manner {y}.

"One said to R. Jochanan, expound Rabbi; for it is beautiful for thee to expound: for as thou sayest, so I see: he replied to him, Raka, tnmah al tyar al almla, "if thou seest not, thou wilt not believe"."

Christ here allows that Thomas had believed, that he was risen from the dead, and that he was his Lord and God; and though his faith was late and slow, it was sure and certain, and was appropriating; it was a faith of interest, though upon sight, and not on hearing, or the report of the other disciples: now faith on sight may be in persons who have no true spiritual faith; as in some that saw both the person and miracles of Christ on earth, and in others who will see him come in the clouds of heaven; and it has been in others who have truly believed in Christ, as the apostles of the Lamb: but yet, though it may be, as in many it has been, right, yet not so commendable as that without it. From hence may be observed, that Christ allows of the epithets and titles given him by Thomas, and therefore must be Lord and God; and approves of Thomas's faith, and therefore that must be right; though he prefers faith without personal sight of him to it, in the next clause.

Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. The author of the apocryphal book of 2 Esdras 1:37 says of

"the people to come, whose little ones rejoice in gladness", in the person of the Almighty Lord, "though they have not seen me with bodily eyes, yet in spirit they believe the thing that I say". It seems as if there were some at this time in the city of Jerusalem, who firmly believed that Christ was risen from the dead, upon the testimony of others, though they had not seen him themselves. Faith without sight, in other respects, may be considered as opposed to the beatific vision in heaven; and as destitute of sensible communion with God; and as giving credit to doctrines and things above carnal sense and reason; such as the doctrines of the Trinity, the sonship of Christ, his incarnation, and the union of the two natures in him, and the resurrection of the dead; and as believing whatever is said in the word of God, upon the credit of his testimony; and which has for its objects things past, as what were done in eternity, in the council and covenant of grace; the works of creation and providence in time, the birth, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ; and also things present, Christ, and the blessings of grace, and things to come, the invisible glories of the other world. Now such are happy that have true faith in these things, for they enjoy many blessings now, as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, adoption, freedom of access to God, and security from condemnation; they have spiritual peace, joy, and comfort in their souls, and shall at last be saved with an everlasting salvation.

{y} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 100. 1.

John 20:30

Ver. 30. And many other signs truly did Jesus,.... Besides these wonderful appearances to his disciples once and again, when the doors were shut about them: and which signs refer not to what was done before, but after his resurrection; and which he did,

in the presence of his disciples; for he appeared to, and conversed with no other but them after his resurrection:

which are not written in this book; of John's Gospel; though they may be elsewhere; such as his appearing to the two disciples going to Emmaus, and to the eleven on a mountain in Galilee, and to five hundred brethren at once, which other inspired writers speak of: and many there are which he did; which are not particularly written in this, nor in any other book; for he was seen of his disciples forty days, and showed himself alive, by many infallible proofs; all of which are not recorded.

John 20:31

Ver. 31. But these are written,..... The several ends of recording what is written in this book, in proof of Christ's resurrection, are as follow: one is,

that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; that Jesus, who was diminutively called Jesus, the son of Mary, the son of Joseph, the carpenter's son, Jesus of Nazareth, and of Galilee, was the Christ, or true Messiah; which signifies anointed, and takes in all his offices of prophet, priest, and King, to which he was anointed; and is an article of faith of the greatest importance; and is to be believed through the signs proving his resurrection, who, according to the Scriptures, was to rise again; and which, by the signs here recorded, it appears he is risen indeed, and therefore must be the true Messiah of the prophets, and also "the Son of God"; which was a known title of the Messiah among the Jews; and is not a name of office, but of nature and relation to God, and designs Christ in his divine nature, or as a divine person; and is an article of great moment, and well attested, by God, by angels, and men; and receives a further confirmation by the resurrection of Christ, who is thereby declared to be the Son of God with power; and with this view did this evangelist write the signs, proving it, herein to be found. And his other end in recording them, is,

and that believing ye might have life through his name: believers have their spiritual and eternal life through Christ; their life of grace, of justification on him, of sanctification from him, and communion with him; the support and maintenance of their spiritual life, and all the comforts of it: and also their life of glory, or eternal life, they have through, or in his name; it lies in his person, it comes to them through him as the procuring cause of it; it is for his sake bestowed upon them, yea, it is in his hands to give it, and who does give it to all that believe: not that believing is the cause of their enjoyment of this life, or is their title to it, which is the name, person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; but faith is the way and means in which they enjoy it; and therefore these signs are written by the evangelist for the encouragement of this faith in Christ, which is of such use in the enjoyment of life, in, through, and from him. Beza's ancient copy, two of Stephens's, the Coptic, Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, "eternal life".

John 21:1

Ver. 1. After these things,.... The resurrection of Christ from the dead, his appearance to Mary Magdalene, and twice to his disciples; once when Thomas was absent, and at another time when he was present:

Jesus showed himself again to the disciples, a third time, as in Joh 21:14 though not to them all; seven are only mentioned, as together, when he appeared to them:

at the sea of Tiberias; the same with the sea of Galilee; see **Joh 6:1** for after the second appearance of Christ to his disciples, they went from Jerusalem to Galilee, by the order of Christ, who appointed to meet them there, Mt 28:10

and on this way showed he himself; the manner in which he made his appearance, and the persons to whom, are as follow.

John 21:2

Ver. 2. There were together,.... In one place, in one house, in some town, or city of Galilee, not far from the sea of Tiberias; nor, as very likely, far from the mountain where Christ had promised to meet them. Simon Peter, who though he had denied his Lord, dearly loved him, and truly believed in him, kept with the rest of his disciples, and was waiting for another interview with him:

and Thomas, called Didymus; who, though for a while an unbeliever with respect to the resurrection of Christ, was now fully assured of it, and, for the future, was unwilling to lose any opportunity of meeting with his risen Lord.

And Nathanael of Cana in Galilee; an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile. Dr. Lightfoot thinks he is the same with Bartholomew, and so one of the eleven. The Syriac version reads it, "Cotne", and the Persic, Catneh of Galilee; no doubt the same place is meant, where Jesus turned water into wine, of which Nathanael was an inhabitant:

and the sons of Zebedee; who were James, whom Herod killed with the sword, and John, the writer of this Gospel:

and two other of his disciples; who are thought to be Andrew and Philip; which is very likely, since they were both of Bethsaida, **Joh 1:44** a city in

Galilee, and not far from the sea of Tiberias. Andrew is particularly mentioned by Nonnus: so that here were seven of them in all; four of them, according to this account, being wanting; who must be James the less, the brother of our Lord, Judas called Lebbaeus, and surnamed Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite, or Zealot, and Matthew the publican.

John 21:3

Ver. 3. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing,.... Which was his business before his conversion; and now having nothing to do, and his Lord and master having, as yet, no service for him in the ministry of the word, until the Spirit was poured down in an extraordinary manner, which was given to be expected, in the mean while he was inclined to, and resolved upon taking up his former employment; partly that he might not live an idle life, and partly to obtain a livelihood, which was now to be sought after in another manner, since the death of Christ; and these inclinations and resolutions of his he signifies to the rest of the disciples, who agreed with him:

they say unto him, we also go with thee; that is, a fishing; for it seems to have been the business and employment of them all formerly: the place they went to was the sea of Tiberias, as appears from
Joh 21:1 a place free for any to fish at. This is said to be one of the ten traditions which Joshua delivered to the children of Israel, when he divided the land among them {z}:

"that any man should be free to catch fish in the waters (or sea) of Tiberias; and he might fish with an hook only; but he might not spread a net, or place a ship there, except the children of the tribe to whom that sea belonged in their division."

But now these disciples, or the greater part of them at least, belonging to the tribe and division in which the sea was, had a right to carry a ship or boat thither, and make use of a net, as they did. Besides, there was another reason for fishing here, because there were no unclean fish; for the Jews say {a}, that

"in a place of running water no clean fish goes along with unclean fish, and lo, the sea of Tiberias is Nh Nyklhm
Mymh Nwgk, "as running waters"."

They went forth: from the house, town, or city where they were, whether

Capernaum, or Bethsaida, or Tiberias itself:

and entered into a ship immediately; which was either one of their own, that belonged to some one of them before their call; which though they had left, had reserved their right and claim unto; see **Lu 5:3** or which they hired for their present purpose: the word immediately is not in the Vulgate Latin, nor in the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, nor in Beza's ancient copy:

and that night they caught nothing. They went out in the evening of the day, and fished all night, that being a proper time for such business, and the most likely to succeed in, but caught no fish, or very little: and so it is sometimes with Gospel ministers, who are fishers of men, though they take every opportunity, and the most proper methods to gain souls to Christ, yet sometimes do not succeed; which makes things look dark and gloomy in their apprehensions.

{z} Maimon. Hilch. Nezike Maramon, c. 5. sect. 3. Vid. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 81. 1. {a} T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 42. 1.

John 21:4

Ver. 4. But when the morning was now come,.... The day began to dawn, and light to appear, very early in the morning; for Christ visits his right early, and is a present help to them in their time of trouble.

Jesus stood on the shore: on firm ground, whilst his disciples were beating about in the waves, and toiling to no purpose. So Christ, risen from the dead, is glorified, is in heaven; but not unmindful of his people amidst all their afflictions in this world:

but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus; though he was so near them that they could hear what he said; but it not being broad daylight they could not distinctly discern him, or their eyes might be held that they could not know him. So Christ is sometimes near his people, and they know it not.

John 21:5

Ver. 5. Then Jesus saith unto them, children,.... And still they knew him not, though he used this endearing and familiar appellation, and which they had been wont to hear from him; and he had called them by a little before his departure from them, Joh 13:33 and which he uses here as expressive of his tender affection for them, their relation to him, and that he might be known by them:

have ye any meat? that is, as the Syriac renders it, oelml Mdm, "anything to eat"; meaning fish that they had caught; and whether they had got a sufficient quantity to make a meal of for him and them.

They answered him no; they had got nothing at all; or at least what they had was far from being enough to make a breakfast of; for so a meal early in a morning may be most properly called, though it is afterwards called dining. Christ's children, true believers, are sometimes without spiritual food; there is always indeed enough in Christ, and he has an heart to give it; but either through prevailing iniquity they feed on something else, or do not go to him for food, or go elsewhere; but he will not suffer them to starve; for as he has made provisions for them in the ministry of the word and ordinances; and he himself is the bread of life; if they do not ask him for food, he will ask them whether they have any; will kindly invite them to the provisions he himself makes; will bid them welcome, and bless them to them.

John 21:6

Ver. 6. And he said unto them,.... Willing to make himself known by a miracle, since they knew him not by his person, nor voice:

cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find; that is, a large multitude of fish, as they did. The ship was an emblem of the church in its present afflicted state; the right side of it points to the elect, and where they are to be found in this world; the casting of the net signifies the preaching of the Gospel; the promise of finding fish, the assurance Christ gives of the success of his word, which he owns and blesses for the conversion of elect sinners:

they cast therefore; the net, willing to try what success they might have at the instance of this person, whom they knew not. The Ethiopic version reads the passage thus, "and they said unto him, we have laboured all night, and have found nothing, but at thy word we will let down"; which seems to be taken out of **Lu 5:5**. However, they obeyed his orders and directions, as the faithful ministers of the Gospel do, and should, and, succeeded.

And now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. The Syriac adds, "which it held"; being in number, as in Joh 21:11 an hundred and fifty, and three great fishes; which was an emblem and presage of that large number of souls both among the Jews and Gentiles, which they should be instrumental in bringing to Christ, through the preaching of the Gospel.

John 21:7

Ver. 7. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved,.... Which was John the Evangelist and Apostle, the writer of this Gospel:

saith unto Peter, it is the Lord; which two disciples were very intimate with each other, and communicated their thoughts freely to one another. John knew that it was the Lord, either by some special revelation, or from the multitude of fishes which were taken, and which showed a divine hand and power to be concerned. So faithful ministers of the Gospel know when Christ is with them, by his power attending their ministrations to the conversion of souls. The Cambridge copy of Beza's reads, "our Lord"; as do the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions; and it is reasonable to think, John speaking to a fellow disciple, who had equal interest in him with himself, might so say.

Now when Simon heard that it was the Lord; faith came by hearing, he was immediately convinced, and thoroughly satisfied, having received the hint upon a reflection on the surprising capture of the fishes, that it must be the Lord:

he girt his fisher's coat unto him. The Greek word ependuthv, here used, is manifestly the tdnwpa of the Hebrews; and which, the Jewish writers say {b}, was a strait garment, which a man put on next his flesh to dry up the sweat; and a very proper one for Peter, who had been toiling all night, and very fit for him to swim in; and, by what follows, appears to be put on him next his flesh: for he was naked; for to suppose him entirely naked, whilst fishing, being only in company with men, and those parts of nature having a covering, which always require one, was not at all indecent and unbecoming:

and did cast himself into the sea; the Syriac adds, "that he might come to Christ"; and the Persic, "and he came to Christ"; showing his great love and eagerness to be with him; and, as fearless of danger, risks all to be with Christ; his love being such, that many waters could not quench, nor floods drown.

{b} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Sabbat, c. 10. sect. 3.

John 21:8

Ver. 8. And the other disciples came in a little ship,.... The same that they were fishing in, in which they came to Christ as soon as they could, not choosing to expose themselves, as Peter did; nor was it proper that they should leave the ship, and, as it was, might have hands few enough to bring ship and net, so full of fish, safe to shore; and the rather, they did not think fit to do as he did,

for they were not far from land, but, as it were, two hundred cubits; which was about an hundred yards:

dragging the net with fishes: towing the net full of fishes all along in the water, till they came to land; an emblem of laborious Gospel ministers, who being once embarked in the work of the ministry, continue in it to the end, notwithstanding all toil, labour, and difficulties that attend them; and will at last bring the souls with them they have been made useful to, with great satisfaction and joy, to their dear Lord and master.

John 21:9

Ver. 9. As soon then as they were come to land,.... As soon as they were come out of the ship, and safe on shore, not only Peter, but all the rest of the disciples:

they saw a fire of coals there: on the shore, to their great surprise:

and fish laid there; which could not be any that they had taken, for, as yet, the net was not drawn up, and the fish took out:

and bread; not upon the coals baking, but hard by, being ready prepared to eat with the fish, when sufficiently broiled. This was all of Christ's preparing, and a considerable proof of his deity; and a confirmation of that provision he will make for his ministering servants, whilst they are about his work, and in this world; and a representation of that spiritual and eternal refreshment they shall have with him in heaven to all eternity, when they have done their work.

John 21:10

Ver. 10. Jesus saith unto them,.... The disciples:

bring of the fish which ye have now caught: for they might have caught some before, though so few and small, as scarcely to be reckoned any; nor were they bid to bring all they had taken, only some of them, to add to these Christ had prepared for them on land; they being both indeed of a miraculous production, and the effects of his divine power. Christ's view in ordering to bring some of them, and put to those that lay upon the coals, was partly that they might have enough to make a meal of for them all; and also, that they might have a more perfect knowledge of the miracle wrought, by seeing the number and largeness of the fishes, and by bringing the net full of them to shore unbroken; and may be an emblem of the bringing of souls to Christ by the ministry of the word, thereby adding to those that are already gathered.

John 21:11

Ver. 11. Simon Peter went up,.... Either to the sea, that being higher than the land, or to the ship which lay by the shore: he went aboard it, and

drew the net to land full of great fishes; not alone, but others of the disciples with him; though he only is mentioned, being the leading person in this affair; an emblem of the whole number of God's elect being brought safe to shore, to Christ, and to heaven, through various tribulations and afflictions in the world, fitly signified by the waves of the sea. What mystery there may be in the number, I know not. The conjecture of Grotius, that it is a figure of the proselytes in the days of David and Solomon, seems to be without foundation; since they were not only so many thousands, but six hundred over. And as little to be regarded is the thought of others, that the larger number, one hundred, regards the converted among the Gentiles, and the lesser those among the Jews; much better is the observation of others, that it may design a collection, out of all sorts of people, to Christ, and his church.

And for all there were so many; in number, and these so large and big, and the weight of them so great. The Syriac reads arqwy hlk
anhb, "with all this weight", or "burden", and so the Persic; but the Arabic, "with such a number"; both ideas of number and weight are to be preserved, to make what follows the more observable:

yet was not the net broken; which must be ascribed to the divine power of Christ; and is an emblem of the power of God attending the Gospel to the regeneration, conversion, and salvation of his people, and of the great usefulness of it, however mean and despicable it may be in the eyes of men, and of its permanence and duration, until all the elect of God are gathered in by it.

John 21:12

Ver. 12. Jesus saith unto them, come and dine,.... One would think it should rather have been said, come and take a breakfast than a dinner, since it was so early in the morning: but Grotius has observed, out of Homer, that ariston, is used for food taken in a morning; so that it may signify here, not what we properly call dining, but eating a morning's meal; and may be an emblem of that spiritual refreshment believers enjoy with Christ in his house and ordinances now, and of those everlasting pleasures they will partake with him in the resurrection morn: and it is to be observed, that he does not say go and dine, but come and dine; that is, along with himself: he does not send his disciples elsewhere for food, but invites them to come to him, to hear his word, which is food for faith, to wait in his house, where plenty of provision is made, and to attend on his ordinances, and in all to feed upon himself, and to feed with him; to all which they are heartily welcome.

And none of the disciples durst ask him, who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord: to ask such a question was altogether unnecessary, and would have been impertinent, and they might justly have been upbraided and rebuked for it: it would have looked like insolence, or unbelief, or both, and that greatly aggravated, when it was so clear a case that it was the Lord; who might be known by his voice and person, especially when they came near to him, and also by the miracles which he wrought: so at the last day, when every eye shall see him coming in the clouds of heaven, none will ask who he is; all will know him.

John 21:13

Ver. 13. Jesus then cometh and taketh bread,.... After they had taken the fish out of the net, and all was prepared for the meal, and the disciples were set down to eat, Christ came and took his place as the master of the feast, and head of the family; and taking up the bread, as was his usual method, he asked a blessing over it, and gave thanks for it. Beza's ancient copy, and one of Stephens's read, "and having given thanks he gave", &c. which is agreeably to his usual practice at meals.

And giveth them, and fish likewise; he distributed both bread and fish to his disciples. So, in a spiritual sense, he provides plentifully for his people; gives them to eat of the hidden manna, and tree of life, and leads to fountains of living waters; encourages them to eat and drink freely, what is of his own preparing, and at his own expense provided for them.

John 21:14

Ver. 14. This is now the third time,.... Or day of Christ's appearance to his disciples: he appeared to them first on the same day he rose, and then a second time eight days after, or that day a week later, and now at the sea of Tiberias; for within this compass of time he had made more appearances than three, though to particular persons, and not to such a number of the disciples as at these three times:

that Jesus showed himself to his disciples after that he was risen from the dead: and thus, as by the mouth of two or three witnesses, everything is established; so by these three principal appearances of Christ to his disciples, his resurrection from the dead was confirmed.

John 21:15

Ver. 15. So when they had dined,.... The Persic version adds,

Jesus turned his face to Simon Peter; he did not interrupt them whilst they were eating; but when they had comfortably refreshed themselves, he looked at Peter, and singled him out from the rest, and directed his discourse to him; and saith unto Simon Peter,

Simon, son of Jonas; not John, as the Vulgate Latin, and Nonnus, and some copies read; for this answers not to the Hebrew word Jochanan, but Jonah, the same name with the prophet. Some have observed, that Christ spoke to him particularly by his original name, and not by that which he himself had given him, with a view to his strong faith, as Cephas, or Peter; but it should be known that Christ calls him by this name of Simon bar Jonah, when he made

the most ample profession of his faith in him, and was pronounced blessed by him,
Mt 16:16

lovest thou me more than these? meaning, not than the fishes he had caught, nor the net and boat, or any worldly enjoyment, nor than he loved the disciples; but the question is, whether he loved Christ more than the rest of the disciples loved him: the reason of which was, because he had some time ago declared, though all the disciples were offended at Christ, and should deny him, he would not; and had just now thrown himself into the sea to come to him first, as if he loved him more than they did: which question is put, not out of ignorance, or as if Christ knew not whether he loved him or not, and what was the degree of his affection to him; but because the exercise of this grace, and the expressions of it, are very grateful to him; and that Peter also might have an opportunity of expressing it before others, who had so publicly denied him:

he saith unto him, yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee: not in word and tongue, but in deed and in truth; in sincerity, and without dissimulation, fervently and superlatively; for the truth of which he appeals to Christ himself; for he was so conscious to himself of the reality of his love, and the sincerity of his affection, that he chooses to make Christ himself judge of it, rather than say any more of it himself; though he modestly declines saying that he loved him more than the rest of the disciples did, having had an experience of his vanity and self-confidence. He was sure he loved Christ heartily; but whether he loved him more than the rest did, he chose not to say:

he saith unto him, feed my lambs; the younger and more tender part of the flock, weak believers, Christ's little children, newborn babes, the day of small things, which are not to be despised, the bruised reed that is not to be broken, and the smoking flax that is not to be quenched; but who are to be nourished, comforted, and strengthened, by feeding them with the milk of the Gospel, and by administering to them the ordinances and breasts of consolation. These Christ has an interest in, and therefore calls them "my lambs", being given him by the Father, and purchased by his blood, and for whom he has a tender concern and affection; and nothing he looks upon as a firmer and clearer proof and evidence of love to him, than to feed these lambs of his, and take care of them.

John 21:16

Ver. 16. He saith unto him again the second time,.... Willing to have the expressions of his love repeated and confirmed;

Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? he leaves out the words, "more than these", though Nonnus expresses them; he saw Peter's heart, and observed the modesty of his answer, and would not urge him any more in that comparative way, only required a repetition of his sincere and hearty love to him:

he saith unto him, yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee; expressing himself in the same language as before; and it is, as if he should say, Lord, what can I say more? I can say no more than I have done, and by that I abide:

he saith unto him, feed my sheep; both the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and his other sheep among the Gentiles, whom the Father had given him, and he had paid a price for, and must be brought in; these being called, he would have fed with the word and ordinances, with the bread of life, and water of life, not lorded over, and fleeced, and much less worried and destroyed; every instance of care and love shown to these, he takes as a mark of affection and respect to himself.

John 21:17

Ver. 17. He saith unto him the third time,.... That by these three testimonies, out of his mouth, the thing might be established, and be out of all doubt:

Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? is it so indeed that thou lovest me? is thy love really so hearty and sincere as thou savest? may it be depended upon?

Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, lovest thou me? because it put him in mind of his having denied his Lord three times; the remembrance of which cut him to the heart and it added to his grief, that his love, which he knew was unfeigned, notwithstanding his conduct, should seem to be suspected:

and he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee; he appeals with great warmth and earnestness to him, as the omniscient God, and the searcher of all hearts, who knows all persons and things, and the secret thoughts, dispositions, and affections of men's minds, for the truth of his love to him; for though he knew the treachery of his own heart, and durst not trust to it; and therefore chose not to be determined by his own assertions, and was well aware that the sincerity of his love might be called in question by fellow Christians, because of his late conduct; but as everything was naked and open to his Lord, with whom he had to do, he lodges and leaves the appeal with him: so every soul that truly loves Christ, whatever Satan, the world, professors, or their own hearts under unbelieving frames, may suggest to the contrary, can appeal to Christ, as the trier of the reins of the children of men, that he it is whom their souls love; and though their love may be greatly tried, and they themselves be sorely tempted by Satan, and suffered to fall greatly; yet their love to Christ can never be lost; the fervency of it may be abated, the exercise of it may be very languid, but the principle itself always remains, as it did in Peter:

Jesus saith unto him, feed my sheep. It may be observed from the repetition of this phrase following upon Peter's declaration of his love to Christ, that such only are proper persons to feed the lambs and sheep of Christ, who truly and sincerely love him: and in doing which they show their love to him: and who indeed would be concerned in this service, but such? since the work is so laborious, the conduct of those to whom they minister oftentimes is so disagreeable, the reproach they meet with from the world, and the opposition made unto them by Satan, and all the powers of darkness: it is true indeed, there are some that take upon them this work, and pretend to do it, who do not love Christ; but then they are such who feed themselves, and not the flock; and who feed the world's goats, and not Christ's lambs and sheep, and in time of danger leave the flock; only the true lovers of Christ faithfully perform this service, and abide in it by preaching the pure Gospel of Christ, by administering his ordinances, in their right manner, and by directing souls in all to Christ, the heavenly manna, and bread of life. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that by the threefold repetition of the order to feed Christ's lambs and sheep, is meant the threefold object of Peter's ministry; the Jews in their own land, the Gentiles, and the Israelites of the ten tribes, that were in Babylon.

John 21:18

Ver. 18. Verily, verily, I say unto thee,.... A way of speaking often used by Christ, when about to deliver anything of considerable moment, partly to raise the attention, and partly for the more strong asseveration of what is spoken; and may have reference both to what went before, confirming Peter's declaration of his love, which would be demonstrated by dying for him, and the testimony of his omniscience, by foretelling his death, and the kind of it;

and to what follows after, which contains an account of Peter in his younger years, and a prophecy of what should befall him in old age:

when thou wast young; not that he was old now, and capable he was of doing, and he did do but just now, what our Lord ascribes to his younger years:

thou girdest thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldst; that is, he could put on his clothes himself, and gird them about him with a girdle, as was the custom of the eastern nations, who usually wore long garments; and as he, a little before, had girt his fisher's coat about him, and walked where he pleased; denoting the liberty of his will in things natural and civil, which every man is possessed of, though not in things spiritual, without the grace of God; and also his power of doing what was most grateful to him, without being hindered by, or obliged to ask the leave of others:

but when thou shalt be old; implying, that he should live to a good old age, and be continued to be useful and serviceable in the cause of Christ, in preaching his Gospel, and feeding his lambs and sheep, as he did; for he lived to the times of Nero {c}, under whom he suffered, about forty years after this:

thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee. This refers not so much to an inability through old age to gird himself, and therefore should stretch forth his hands, that another might with more ease do it for him, and which would be the reverse of his former and present case; for the word gird is used in another sense than before, and signifies the binding of him as, a prisoner with cords, or chains; so "girding", with the Jews, is the same as hryoahw hryvqh, "tying and binding" {d}: but either to the stretching out of his hands upon the cross, when he should be girt and bound to that; for persons were sometimes fastened to the cross with cords, and not always with nails {e}: or, as others think, to his carrying of his cross on his shoulders, with his hands stretched out and bound to the piece of wood which went across; though his being girded or bound may as well be thought to follow the former, as this: indeed, what is added best suits with the latter,

and carry thee whither thou wouldst not; to a painful, cruel, shameful, and accursed death, the death of the cross; not that Peter in spirit would be unwilling to die for Christ, nor was he; but it signifies, that he should die a death disagreeable to the flesh.

{c} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 25. {d} R. David Kimchi, Sepher Shorash. rad. rgx {e} Lipsius de Cruce, l. 2. c. 8. Bartholinus de Cruce, p. 57. 112.

John 21:19

Ver. 19. This spake he,.... These are the words of the evangelist, explaining the meaning of Christ in like manner, as in Joh 12:33

signifying by what death he should glorify God; for by the above words Christ not only intimated that Peter should die, not a natural, but a violent death, or that he should die a martyr in his cause, but the very kind of death he should die, namely, by crucifixion; and that Peter was crucified at Rome, ecclesiastical history confirms {f}, when Christ was magnified, and God was glorified by his zeal and courage, faith and patience, constancy and perseverance to the end:

and when he had spoken this: concerning the usage and treatment he should meet with, the sufferings he should undergo, and death he should die for his sake, for the present trial of him:

he saith unto him, follow me: which may be understood literally, Jesus now rising up, and ordering him to come after him; and yet as a sign of his following him, in a spiritual sense, exercising every grace upon him, discharging every duty towards him, faithfully and constantly performing his work and office, as an apostle and preacher of the Gospel, in which he had now reinstated and confirmed him, and patiently bearing and suffering all kind of reproach, persecution, and death, for his name's sake.

{f} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c 25.

John 21:20

Ver. 20. Then Peter turning about,.... After he was risen, and was following Christ:

seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following also; by whom is designed John the Evangelist, and writer of this Gospel; who hearing Christ bid Peter follow him, rose up likewise, and went after him, in token of his willingness to serve him, and suffer for him too:

which also leaned on his breast at supper; at the "paschal supper", as the Persic version here reads it: "and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?" This disciple had a peculiar share in the love of Christ, as man, and was admitted to great nearness and freedom with him, signified by his leaning on his breast; and who being so near his person, and allowed to use a liberty with him, everyone did not take, at the motion of Peter, asked our Lord at supper, who the person was he meant that should betray him; all this is said as descriptive of the disciple here spoken of, which leaves it without any doubt, that it was the Apostle John; and who, from Joh 21:2 appears to be one of this company, and is further confirmed at Joh 21:24.

John 21:21

Ver. 21. Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus,.... Peter took a great deal of notice of John, and very likely understood, that he meant by his rising up and following Christ, to signify his readiness for service and suffering in the cause of Christ: and therefore says,

Lord, and what shall this man do? The phrase in the original is very short and concise, "Lord, and this what?" The Arabic version renders it, "and this, of what mind is he?" it looks as if he was of the same mind with me to follow thee; but it is better rendered by us, "what shall this man do?" in what work and service shall he be employed, who seems as willing as I am to serve thee? or it may be rendered thus, "and what shall this man suffer?" shall he suffer at all? and if he shall, what kind of death shall he undergo? what will become of him? what will be his end? how will it fare with him? this he said, partly out of curiosity, and partly out of concern for him, they two being associates and intimates, who had a strong affection for each other.

John 21:22

Ver. 22. Jesus saith unto him,.... Christ vouchsafes an answer to Peter, but not a very clear one, nor such an one as he wished for, and not without a rebuke to him:

if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? meaning, that if it was his pleasure that he should live, not till his second coming to judge the quick and dead at the last day, but till he should come in his power and take vengeance on the Jewish nation, in the destruction of their city and temple by the Romans, and in dispersing them through the nations of the world; till which time John did live, and many years after; and was the only one of the disciples that lived till that time, and who did not die a violent death; what was that to Peter? it was no concern of his. The question was too curious, improper, and impertinent; it became him to attend only to what concerned himself, and he was bid to do:

follow thou me; whence it may be observed, that it becomes the saints to mind their duty in following Christ, and not concern themselves in things that do not belong to them. Christ is to be followed by his people as their leader and commander; as the shepherd of the flock; as a guide in the way, and the forerunner that is gone before; as the light of the world; as the pattern and example of the saints, and as their Lord and master; and that in the exercise of every grace, as humility and meekness, love, zeal, patience, and resignation to the will of God; and also in the discharge of duty, both with respect to moral life and conversation, and instituted worship, as attendance on public service, and submission to ordinances; and likewise in enduring sufferings patiently and cheerfully for his sake. Saints are under obligation to follow Christ; it is their interest so to do; it is honourable, safe, comfortable, and pleasant, and ends in happiness here and hereafter.

John 21:23

Ver. 23. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren,.... It not being rightly understood by some one or more of the disciples present: it was divulged with a wrong sense annexed to it among other persons; who, though not of the eleven, yet were followers of Christ, children of God, that belonged to the same family, and were, in a spiritual relation, brethren to each other, and to the apostles:

that that disciple should not die; but should remain till the second coming of Christ, and be found among them that shall be then alive, and be changed. And such a notion not only was among the ancients; but Beza, in his notes on this text, tells us of a strolling wicked fellow, that gave out that he was the Apostle John; and was encouraged by some, particularly Postellus, a Sorbonic doctor, but was afterwards burnt at Tholouse.

Yet Jesus said not unto him he shall not die, but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? These are the words of John himself, the disciple spoken of, who gives a true and just account of Christ's words, freeing them from the false sense that was put upon them; which shows his ingenuous disposition, his integrity and love of truth; being unwilling that such an error should obtain among the disciples, and pass in the world for truth.

John 21:24

Ver. 24. This is the disciple which testifieth of these things,.... Recorded in this chapter concerning the appearance of Christ to his disciples at the sea of Tiberias, and what were done by him in their presence, what passed between them; particularly the conversation he had with Peter, both concerning himself, and the disciple John: and also, of all things that are written in this whole Gospel. These are testified to be true by this very disciple John, concerning whom the above report went upon a mistaken sense of Christ's words, and who himself

wrote these things; all that is contained in this book, as well as the particulars relating to this conversation of Christ with Peter:

and we know that his testimony is true. The testimony of one that was an eye and ear-witness, as John was, of all that he testified and wrote, must be known, owned, and allowed by all to be true, firm, and unquestionable; and therefore the apostle speaks in the plural number, as being not only his own sense, but the sense of all men. Though some take this to be the attestation of the Ephesian church, or of the bishops of the Asiatic churches, who put John upon writing this Gospel; of which they give their judgment and testimony, as believing it to be a true and faithful narrative.

John 21:25

Ver. 25. And there are also many other things which Jesus did,.... Which refer not to his doctrines and discourses, his sermons and prayers, and the conversation he had with his disciples, and others, on different accounts; but to the signs, and wonders, and miraculous operations, which were done by him, that are neither recorded in this, nor in any of the evangelists:

the which, if they should be written everyone; with all the particular circumstances relating to them:

I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. The Arabic version renders it, "the things written in the books"; and the Syriac, "that the world would not be sufficient for the books that should be written"; and so the Persic, which adds, "and the Scribes of the world would fail, or be deficient"; there would not be Scribes enough in the world to write them; nor could they be read by men, if they were written; the world would be overloaded with them; and therefore the Holy Ghost has not thought fit to lay such a burden on men they could not bear, as to read such numbers of volumes; but has reduced them into a brief compendium, which may be read with ease, delight, and pleasure; and which is abundantly sufficient to attest the truth of Christ's incarnation, miracles, doctrines, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand, &c. and of the whole of Christianity, and all that appertains to it, or whatever is necessary to be known, for the salvation of men: for this cannot be understood of the carnal and unbelieving part of the world, not receiving and bearing what would be contained in such volumes, were they written; for they are not able to receive and bear what is now written, but reject and despise it as foolishness. Some understand this as an hyperbolical expression; but the sense above given, may be admitted without an hyperbole; though an hyperbole may very well be allowed of; nor, taken literally, will it appear greater than some others used in Scripture; as when the posterity of Abraham are said to be as numerous as the stars of the sky; and especially when said to be as the sand by the sea shore, innumerable, Heb 11:12 and when Capernaum is said to be exalted unto heaven, or to reach unto it, Mt 11:23 and particularly the Jews have no reason to object, as one of them does {g}, to such a way of speaking, whose writings abound in hyperbolical expressions, and in some like to this; as when one of their Rabbins says {h},

"if all the seas were ink, and the bulrushes pens, and the heavens and the earth volumes, and all the children of men Scribes, hrwt bwtkl Nyqypom Nya, "they would not be sufficient to write the law", which have learned, &c."

and it is commonly said {i} by them, if this, or that, or the other thing was done, lboml amle lyky al, "the world would not be able to bear them". And a later writer {k} of theirs, speaking of the different interpretations given by some of their Rabbins of a certain passage, says, they are so many, that an ass is not able to carry their books. And the intention of this expression, supposing it hyperbolical, is to show, that but a few of the wonderful things done by Christ were recorded by the evangelist, in comparison of the many which he every day did, in all places where he came; for he was continually going about doing good, and healing all manner of diseases; but these that were written are sufficient to prove him to be the true Messiah, and to require faith in him as such. To all which the evangelist sets his "Amen", as attesting and confirming the truth of all he had written; and which may be depended upon, and assented to, as truth, by all that read this Gospel. The Alexandrian copy, and Beza's Cambridge copy, have not the word "Amen"; nor have the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions. In some copies the following words are added,

"the Gospel according to John was given out thirty two years after the ascension of Christ;"

which would fall on the year of Christ 66, and so before the destruction of Jerusalem; which is contrary to the common opinion of learned men, some placing it in the year 97, others in the year 99.

(John starts his Gospel by stating: "All things were made by him". If one were to attempt to even summarise the works of creation, there is no way the world could contain the resulting volumes! Editor.)

{g} Jacob Aben ben Amram, porta veritatis, No. 1094. apud Kidder, Demonstration of the Messiah, par. 3. p. 67. Ed. fol. {h} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 4. 2. {i} Zohar in Exod. fol. 106. 4. & in Lev. fol. 26. 2. & 49. 3. & in Num. fol. 52. 2. & 59. 3. & 63. 3. & 64. 4. & 82. 3, 4. {k} R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 79. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO ACTS

This book, in some copies, is called, "The Acts of the holy Apostles". It contains an history of the ministry and miracles of the apostles of Christ, and is a sort of a journal of their actions, from whence it takes its name. It begins at the ascension of Christ, and reaches to the imprisonment of the Apostle Paul at Rome; and is a history of upwards of thirty years: it gives an account of the first Gospel church at Jerusalem, and of the progress of the Gospel there, and in Judea, by the means of all the apostles, and particularly Peter, the minister of the circumcision, and who also first opened the door of faith to the Gentiles: it shows how the Gospel went forth from Jerusalem, and was spread in the Gentile world, especially by the Apostle Paul, whose companion Luke was, that was the writer of this book; for that it was written by him is very evident from the beginning of it, it being dedicated to the same person his Gospel is, and of which he makes mention; and in the Complutensian edition the book is called, "The Acts of the Apostles of Saint Luke the Evangelist"; and so the title of it in the Syriac version is, "the Book of the Acts: that is, the history of the blessed apostles, which my Lord Luke the Evangelist collected for the saints". It was by him written in the Greek language; and we are told {a}, that there was a version of it into the Hebrew language, and which was laid up in the library of the Jews at Tiberias; and is cited by R. Azarias {b} under the name of twlweph, "the Acts": of the authority of this book there has been no doubt, among the ancients, only Cerinthus the heretic endeavoured to discredit it; and it was not received by another sort of heretics called Severiani, from Severus, a disciple of Tatian {c}. It is a most excellent and useful work, showing the first planting of Christianity, and of Christian churches, both among the Jews and Gentiles; the spread and progress of the Gospel in several parts of the world; what sufferings the apostles endured for the sake of it; and with what patience and courage they bore them; and what success attended them; and is a standing proof and confirmation of the Christian religion.

{a} Epiphan. Contr. Haeres. l. 1. Haeres. 30. {b} Meor Enayim, p. 167. {c} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 29.

Ver. 1. The former treatise have I made,.... Meaning the Gospel written by him the Evangelist Luke, for from that he makes a transition to this, beginning here where he there left off; namely, at the ascension of Christ; see Lu 24:51.

O Theophilus; See Gill on "Lu 1:3"

of all that Jesus began both to do and teach. This is a summary of his former treatise, his Gospel, which gave an account of what Christ began to do, and did; not of the common and private actions of his life; or of what was done, either in public, or private, throughout the whole of his life; for excepting that of his disputing with the doctors at twelve years of age, no account is given by him of what he did, till he was about thirty years of age; but of his extraordinary actions, of the miracles he wrought; and these not all, and everyone of them; but many of them, and which were sufficient to prove him the Messiah; and particularly of all things he did relating to the salvation of his people; of the whole of his obedience; of his compliance with the ceremonial law; of his submission to baptism; of his holy life and conversation, and entire conformity to the law; of his sufferings and death, how that thereby he made full atonement for sin, brought in an everlasting righteousness, and obtained eternal redemption for his people: and not only Luke, in his Gospel, gave an account of these his actions, but also of many of his excellent discourses, his parables, and his sermons, whether delivered to the people in common, or to his own disciples: and now, as this was the subject of his former book, he intended in this latter to treat, as he does, of what the apostles of Christ began to do and teach.

Acts 1:2

Ver. 2. Until the day in which he was taken up,.... That is, into heaven. The historian suggests, that his former treatise took in the main and principal things Jesus did and taught, until such time that he ascended to heaven:

after that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles, whom he had chosen: our Lord having chosen twelve of his own free grace and goodness, and not according to their worth and merit, to be his apostles, a little before his ascension to heaven, gave them more express and explicit commands and orders where they should go, into all the world, to all nations; and what they should preach, the whole Gospel, salvation by faith in him, and particularly repentance and remission of sins; and what ordinances they should require believers to attend to; and how they themselves should conduct and behave in their work: the phrase, "through the Holy Ghost", may either be read in connection with "had given commandments", as the Vulgate and Arabic versions read, and as we do; and the sense be, that these commands which Christ gave to his apostles, were not merely his orders, as man, but were what the Holy Ghost was equally concerned in with him, and were from him as God, and so carried a divine authority with them; and at the same time that he gave them to them, he breathed into them the Holy Ghost, whereby they had a more clear view of his doctrines and ordinances, and were more qualified to minister them; and besides, had an intimation given them, that they might expect still greater gifts of the Holy Ghost: or it may be read with the latter clause, "whom he had chosen"; as in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; and then the meaning is, that just before his being taken up to heaven, he gave some special orders and directions to his apostles, whom he had chosen to that office through the Holy Ghost, and not through human affection in him, or according to any desert of theirs; but as under the influence of the Holy Spirit, with which, as man, he was anointed without measure; and whose gifts and graces he communicated to his disciples, to fit them for the service to which they were appointed: or with the apostles; they being sent by the Holy Ghost, as well as by Christ.

Acts 1:3

Ver. 3. To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion,.... That is, after his sufferings and death; for that he suffered many things, and at last death itself, is certain from the acknowledgment of the Jews themselves, who own, that they put him to death on the passover eve {d}; as well as from the accounts of the evangelists; and from the soldiers not breaking his legs, when the rest that were crucified with him were broken, because he was already dead; and from his "ricardium" being pierced with a spear, from whence blood and water sprung, after which it was impossible he should be alive; and from the testimony of the centurion who watched him, to whom Pilate sent to know if he was dead, and how long he had been dead; and from his being buried, and lying in the grave so long as he did: and yet after, and not withstanding this, "he showed himself alive"; he raised himself from the dead, and hereby declared himself to be the Son of God with power, which cannot be said of others; there were others that were alive after death, but not by their own power; as the widow of Sarepta's son, the daughter of Jairus, Lazarus, and the widow of Nain's son; but these did not "show themselves alive", as Christ did, who appeared often to his apostles: for after he had first appeared to Mary Magdalene, he showed himself to the two disciples going to Emmaus; then to ten of them, Thomas being absent; after that to them all, Thomas being present, when he convinced him of the truth of his resurrection; after that he appeared to seven of the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and then to all the apostles; and to five hundred brethren at once on a mountain in Galilee; and once to James alone, and to them all again when he was parted from them and went up to heaven; and so they must be proper and sufficient witnesses of his resurrection: and this evidence of his being alive, he gave to them, by many infallible proofs; or by many signs and tokens, and which were most sure and unquestionable arguments of his being alive; as his eating and drinking with them, walking and talking with them in a free and familiar manner, showing them his hands and his feet, and side, that they might see the scars which the nails and spear had made; and which were not only a proof that he was risen again, but risen again in the same body in which he suffered; and that they might feel and handle him, and know that he was not a spirit, a phantom, a mere apparition, but was really risen and alive: being seen of them forty days; not that he was seen by them for forty days together continually, but at certain times, within the space of forty days; for between his first and last appearance, many others intervening, such a length of time run out; so that it was not a single and sudden appearance that surprised them; but there were many of them, and a distance between them, and this for a considerable term of time; hence they had opportunity of reflecting upon these appearances, and of satisfying themselves of the truth of things. This number of "forty days" is a remarkable one in Scripture. The flood was forty days upon the earth; and so long Moses was in the mount with God; such a number of days the spies were searching the land of Canaan; so many days Goliath presented himself to the armies of Israel; and so long a time Elijah went in the strength of the meat the angel provided for him; and for such a length of time the prophet Ezekiel was to bear the iniquity of the house of Judah; and such a term of time was given out by Jonah for the destruction of Nineveh; and so many days Christ fasted, and was tempted in the wilderness. The Jews pretend {e}, that forty days before Jesus was put to death he was led forth, and a crier went before him, declaring, that whoever would, had liberty to testify to his innocence if they could, but no man appeared for him: but this is false; the truth of the matter is, that for forty days after his resurrection he showed himself to his disciples, and by proving the truth of his resurrection, he proved his own innocence and uprightness. If the testimony of Rabbenu Hakadosh, as cited by Galatinus, could be depended on, the Jews had a notion of this forty days' conversation of the Messiah with his disciples, after his resurrection; who say {f},

"the Messiah, after his resurrection, shall converse with the righteous, and they shall hear his precepts "forty days", answerable to those forty days in which he shall be in the wilderness to afflict his soul, before they shall kill him; and these being finished, he shall ascend to heaven, and sit at the right hand of God, as it is said, Ps 110:1."

But this seems rather to be the pious fraud of some Christian, than the words of a Jew: however, they do say {g}, that

"the days of the Messiah are "forty days", as it is said, Ps 95:10 "forty years long was I grieved"; or, as they interpret it, "shall I be grieved with this generation":"

intimating, that the generation of the Messiah, and of the wilderness, would be much alike, and equally grieving to God, and reckoning a day for a year, as the Lord did with that generation, Nu 14:33. These forty days Christ was with his disciples, may be an emblem of the forty years which were to run out from his death, to his coming again to take vengeance on the Jewish nation; for so long time was there from thence to the destruction of Jerusalem. And Christ was not only seen of the disciples at certain seasons during this space of time, but he was also heard by them: for it follows,

and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; the kingdom of the Messiah, the Gospel dispensation; concerning the doctrines of the Gospel they were to preach, and the ordinances of it they were to administer; concerning the church of God, the nature, order, and officers of it, and the laws and rules by which it should be governed; concerning the kingdom of grace, what it consists of, and wherein it lies; and of the kingdom of glory, of meetness for it, his own grace, and of the right unto it, his own justifying righteousness: some of these things they might have before but very little knowledge of; and may be these are the things he had to say to them, and which, till now, they could not bear; and being no more to be with them in person, he instructs them in them.

{d} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. {e} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. {f} Gale Razeya apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 8. c. 23. {g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1.

Acts 1:4

Ver. 4. And being assembled together with them,.... At their last meeting at Bethany, or Mount Olivet, which was by appointment: some render the words, as the Vulgate Latin, "and eating with them"; which was one of the proofs he gave of his being alive; and so the Syriac version renders it, "and when he had ate bread with them", and the Ethiopic version, "and dining with them", which he might do more than once; see Joh 21:12 this was the last time, when he

commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem; which does not necessarily infer, that they were then at Jerusalem; for they might be, and they seem rather to be at Bethany, or on the Mount of Olives, from whence they afterwards returned to Jerusalem; and from thence they had orders not to depart, where the blood of Christ had been shed, and where were his greatest enemies, and where the disciples might have no inclination to have gone, and much less to abide, but so it must be, partly for the glorifying of Christ by the effusion of his Spirit on the apostles in the place where he had suffered the most reproach; and partly because the Gospel, the word of the Lord, was to go out of this place, according to the prophecy in **Isa 2:3** as also because a Gospel church was to be fixed there, and a very large number of souls to be converted, and added to it: wherefore they were bid to go thither, and not stir from thence,

but wait for the promise of the Father; that is, the pouring forth of the Spirit, which God the Father of Christ; and of his people, had promised should be in the last days, **Joe 2:28** and which Christ had promised his disciples from the

Father, Joh 14:16.

which, saith he, ye have heard of me; or "by", or "out of my mouth", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, and Beza's most ancient copy read; referring to the above passages, or to what follows: and which he the rather mentions, to assure them of its accomplishment, since it was both a promise of the Father, all whose promises are yea and amen; and he had also told them of it, neither of whose words could possibly fall to the ground.

Acts 1:5

Ver. 5. For John truly baptized with water,.... Or "in water", as he himself says, **Mt 3:11** John's baptism was water baptism, an immersion of persons in water: he was the first administrator of it, and therefore is here mentioned by name; and his, and the baptism of the Spirit, are opposed; for there were others, as the disciples of Christ, that baptized in water as well as John: and these words are not to be understood of the words of the Lord, by the mouth of John, which the disciples heard, for they were not then called when John spoke the words in **Mt 3:11** nor indeed are they the same with these; but these are the words of Christ himself, and which the apostles heard from his own mouth, as is clear from Ac 11:16 though they are not recorded by any of the evangelists; and these are not the only words which Luke repeats, that the evangelists are silent about; see
Ac 20:35

but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost; that is, by himself; for it is Christ's prerogative to baptize with the Spirit, as John foretold of him, and it designs such an extraordinary and plentiful donation of the gifts of the Spirit, as may be expressed by a baptism; in which the apostles, on the day of "Pentecost", were, as it were, to be immersed, and with them covered; as Cyril of Jerusalem {h} observes,

"as he, o endunwn en toiv udasi, "who is plunged in water, and baptized", is encompassed by the water on every side, so are they that are wholly baptized by the Spirit."

Not many days hence; within ten days, for this was on the fortieth day from his death, which was at the passover, these words were said; and on the fiftieth day from thence was the feast of Pentecost, when this had its fulfilment.

{h} Cateches. 17. sect. 8. p. 247.

Acts 1:6

Ver. 6. When they therefore were come together,.... That is, Christ, and his eleven apostles; for not the hundred and twenty disciples hereafter mentioned, nor the five hundred brethren Christ appeared to at once, are here intended, but the apostles, as appears from **Ac 1:2**

they asked of him, saying, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? The kingdom had been for some time taken away from the Jews, Judea was reduced to a Roman province, and was now actually under the power of a Roman governor. And the nation in general was in great expectation, that upon the Messiah's coming they should be delivered from the yoke of the Romans, and that the son of David would be king over them. The disciples of Christ had imbibed the same notions, and were in the same expectation of a temporal kingdom to be set up by their master, as is evident from Mt 20:21 and though his sufferings and death had greatly damped their spirits, and almost destroyed their hopes, see Lu 24:21 yet his resurrection from the dead, and his discoursing with them about the kingdom of God, and ordering them to wait at Jerusalem, the metropolis of that nation, for some thing extraordinary, revived their hopes, and emboldened them to put this question to him: and this general expectation of the Jews is expressed by them in the same language as here;

"the days of the Messiah will be the time when larvyl twklmh bwvtv, "the kingdom shall return", or "be restored to Israel"; and they shall return to the land of Israel, and that king shall be exceeding great, and the house of his kingdom shall be in Zion, and his name shall be magnified, and his fame shall fill the Gentiles more than King Solomon; all nations shall be at peace with him, and all lands shall serve him, because of his great righteousness, and the wonderful things which shall be done by him; and whoever rises up against him God will destroy, and he shall deliver him into his hands; and all the passages of Scripture testify of his and our prosperity with him; and there shall be no difference in anything from what it is now, only "the kingdom shall return to Israel" {i}."

{i} Maimon. in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1.

Acts 1:7

Ver. 7. And he said unto them,.... To his disciples,

it is not for you to know the times or the seasons; meaning, not the times that are past from Adam to Christ; as how long the world stood; when the flood came; when Sodom and Gomorrha were burned to ashes; when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, and the law was given to them; when the kingdom of Israel began, and when the Jews were carried captive, and when they returned; when the sceptre departed from Judah, and Daniel's weeks had an end: or the particular seasons of the year, and the times for planting, ploughing, sowing, reaping, &c. but when should be the time, the day, and hour of the coming of the son of man, when he shall set up his kingdom in a more glorious manner, and the kingdoms of this world shall become his; or when the kingdom shall be restored to Israel. This, by the Jews, is said to be one of the seven things hid from men {k}:

"seven things are hid from the children of men, and these are they; the day of death, and the day of consolation, and the depth of judgment, and a man knows not what is in the heart of his neighbour, nor with what he shall be rewarded, and "when the kingdom of the house of David shall return", and when the kingdom of Persia shall fall."

Which the Father hath put in his own power; and not in the power of a creature, no, not of the angels; see Mt 24:36 wherefore it is vain and sinful, as well as fruitless, to indulge a curious inquiry into these things, or into the times and seasons of what is future; as of the time of a man's death, of the end of the world, of the second coming of Christ; only those things should be looked into which God has revealed, and put into the power of man to know by diligent search and inquiry. Says R. Simeon {l},

"flesh and blood, (i.e. man), which knows not wyegrw wyte, "its times and its moments", (and so the Vulgate Latin renders the words here), ought to add a void space to the blessed God, who knows the times and moments."

{k} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 54. 2. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 65. fol. 57. 4. {l} Apud R. Sol. Jarchi in Gen. ii. 2.

Acts 1:8

Ver. 8. But ye shall receive power,.... From on high, with which they were to be endured, Lu 24:49 meaning the power of the Holy Ghost, strength from him to preach the Gospel, and work miracles in confirmation of it, and courage and greatness of mind, amidst all reproaches and persecutions, to face and oppose their enemies, profess the name of Christ, abide by his truths and ordinances, make their way through all opposition and difficulties, and spread the Gospel all over the world; for intend of enjoying worldly ease, honour, wealth, and riches, they were looking for, our Lord gives them to understand that they must expect labour, service, afflictions, and trials, which would require power and strength, and which they should have:

after that the Holy Ghost shall come upon you; from above, from heaven, as he did, and sat upon them in the form of cloven tongues, and of fire; upon which they were filled with knowledge and zeal, with strength and courage, and with all gifts and abilities necessary for their work:

and ye shall be witnesses unto me; of the person of Christ, of his deity and sonship, of his incarnation, his ministry, and his miracles, of his suffering and death, of his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to heaven. This was to be their work, and what belong to them, and not to enquire about a temporal kingdom, and the setting up of that, and the times and seasons of it; their business was to testify of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that followed, and to preach a crucified Jesus, as the only Saviour of lost sinners: and this

both in Jerusalem, the "metropolis" of the nation, and there, in the first place, where such dwelt who had been concerned in the crucifixion of Christ, many of whom were to be called by grace, and converted through their ministry:

and in all Judea; that part of the land of Israel which was distinct from Samaria and Galilee, and from beyond Jordan; where churches were to be planted, as afterwards they were; see **Ac 9:31**.

And in Samaria; where Christ had before forbid his disciples to go; but now their commission is enlarged, and they are sent there; and here Philip went upon the persecution raised against the church at Jerusalem, and preached Christ with great success, to the conversion of many; and hither Peter and John went to lay their hands on them, and confirm them; see **Ac 8:5**

and unto the uttermost part of the earth; throughout the whole world, whither the sound of the apostles, and their words went, Ro 10:18.

Acts 1:9

Ver. 9. And when he had spoken these things,.... That the times and seasons were not to be known by them, but to be kept a secret by the Father: that they should tarry at Jerusalem, and in a few days be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and receive such power, abilities, strength, and courage thereby, as to bear a noble testimony for Christ, not only there, but in all the world; and when he had given them a fresh commission, and told them where they should go, what they should preach, and what miracles they should perform, and blessed them.

While they be held; all the Oriental versions, add, "him"; that is Christ, while they looked wistly at him, being attentive to what he said to them, so that they were not asleep; nor did Christ become invisible to them, or disappear before his ascension, but was visible to them in it; hence they were eyewitnesses of it:

he was taken up. Luke in his Gospel says, "carried up": very likely by angels, since these not only attended him in his ascension, but are the chariots of the Lord, in which he went up to heaven; see
Ps 68:17 nor is this at all inconsistent with his proper deity, or that divine power he had of elevating himself, which he could do without the assistance of others; but this makes for the glory of his majesty.

And a cloud received him out of their sight; which was done partly for the same purpose, to add to the grandeur and magnificence of Christ's ascension; and partly to check the curiosity of the disciples, and prevent their gazing any more at him: and it may be that this, cloud was no other than a number of angels that appeared in this form; just as Elijah was taken up to heaven by angels, who appeared in the form of horses and chariots of fire; and the rather this may be the sense here, since it is certain, that there was a large number of angels which attended Christ at his ascension; and by whom he was then seen, Ps 68:17 whereas, if these are not intended by the cloud, no more than two are here taken notice of, and these not as going along with Christ, but staying behind to converse with his disciples; to which may be added, that Christ was "received" by this cloud which descended to meet him, and joining him, escorted him to heaven: at least it may be thought, if it was a real cloud, that there was a multitude of angels in it, which accompanied him to the heavenly regions; for it can hardly be thought that a multitude of the heavenly host should descend at his birth, and sing glory to God upon his coming into this world; and not as large a number attend him with shouts and acclamations, at his going out of it, when he had done his work he came about, and was ascending to his God and Father, to take his place at his right hand on his throne; see Ps 47:5. The Ethiopic version adds, "and he ascended to heaven".

Acts 1:10

Ver. 10. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven,.... For though he was taken out of their sight by the cloud, they kept looking upwards, and after him, if they could see him again, or any more of him:

as he went up; they looked up to heaven after him, as he went up from the earth, before the cloud took him out of their sight; and still they continued looking, as the cloud carried him up, until it was out of the reach of their sight, being willing to see the last of him in this way:

behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; that is, two angels in the form of men; it being usual with them to appear in human form: these on a sudden appeared and stood on the earth just by them; though the Ethiopic version renders it, "they stood above them", as if they were in the air over their heads; and they appeared in white apparel, as the angel at the sepulchre in Mt 28:2 which was a symbol both of their purity and holiness, and of their lustre and glory. The Ethiopic version renders it, "they were clothed with lightning"; they appeared in such a dazzling form, that it looked as if they were covered with lightning; as the angel that appeared at Christ's resurrection, his countenance is said to be as lightning; which must at once fix the attention of the disciples to them, and strike them with surprise: hence a "behold" is prefixed to this: and hereby they knew that they were not common and ordinary men, or mere men, but angels in such a form.

Acts 1:11

Ver. 11. Which also said, ye men of Galilee,.... And which was said by them, not to reproach them with their country, but partly to let them know that they knew them, who they were, and from whence they came; and partly to observe the rich and distinguishing grace of God in choosing such mean and contemptible persons to be the apostles of Christ, and eyewitnesses of his majesty:

why stand ye gazing up into heaven? reproving them for their curiosity in looking after Christ with their bodily eyes, who was no more in common to be seen this way, but with an eye of faith; and for their desire after his corporeal presence, which they were not to look for; and as if they expected he would return again immediately, whereas his return will not be till the end of the world: and besides, they were not to remain on that spot, or stand gazing there; they were to go to Jerusalem, and abide there, as Christ had ordered, till they should receive the Holy Spirit in an extraordinary way; and then they were to preach a crucified Christ, and declare that he was risen from the dead, and was gone to heaven, and was ordained to be the Judge of quick and dead.

This same Jesus; and not another; the same in person, in body and soul:

which is taken up from you into heaven; who was taken up in a cloud out of their sight, and received into heaven, where he will be till the times of the restitution of all things; and which might be matter of grief to them, because of the loss of his bodily presence; though it should have been rather joyful to them, since he was gone to the Father, and as their forerunner, to prepare a place, and make intercession for them:

shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven; he shall come in the same flesh, in the same human nature; he shall come in the clouds of heaven, and shall be attended with his mighty angels, as he now was; he shall descend himself in person, as he now ascended in person; and as he went up with a shout, and with the sound of a trumpet, see Ps 47:5 so he shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; and, it may be, he shall descend upon the very spot from whence he ascended; see
Zec 14:4 and it is a notion of the Jews, that the resurrection of the Israelites will be there: they say {m}, that

"when the dead shall live, the Mount of Olives shall be cleaved asunder, and all the dead of Israel shall come out from under it; yea, even the righteous which die in captivity shall pass through a subterranean cavern, and come out from under the Mount of Olives."

{m} Targum in Cant. viii. 5.

Acts 1:12

Ver. 12. Then returned they unto Jerusalem,.... With great joy, after the angels had told them that he should come again in like manner:

from the mount called Olivet; which was on the east side of Jerusalem, a mountain Christ much frequented, and from whence he ascended to heaven. This is the hill which in 1Ki 11:7 is said to be "before Jerusalem"; and accordingly Jarchi interprets it of the Mount of Olives; and in Zec 14:4 it is expressly said to be "before Jerusalem on the east"; hence, when our Lord sat upon it, he is said to be over against the temple, Mr 13:3. It has its name from the multitude of olive trees which grew upon it: it is by the Jewish writers sometimes called Mytyzh rh, "the Mount of Olives" {n}, as in Zec 14:4 and sometimes hxvmh rh {o}, and axvm rwj {p}, "the Mount of Oil"; i.e. of olive oil, which was made out of the olives that grew upon it. It is said, that in an old edition of the Latin version of this text it is called "the Mountain of Three Lights"; and this reason is given for it, because on the west side it was enlightened in the night by the continual fire of the altar in the temple; and on the east side it had the first beams of the sun before the city was enlightened with them; and it produced plenty of olives, by which the light is maintained in the lamps. Josephus {q} relates, that in the earthquake in the times of Uzziah, half part of this mountain, which was to the west, was divided from it, and was rolled four furlongs to the eastern part of it, so that the ways and king's gardens were stopped up.

Which, is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. The Syriac version renders it, "about seven furlongs", or near a mile; though Josephus {r} writes, that the Mount of Olives was but five furlongs from Jerusalem: perhaps this may be a mistake in the present copies of Josephus, since Chrysostom on this place cites this passage of Josephus, and reads seven furlongs; which exactly agrees with the Syriac version. A sabbath day's journey, according to the Jews, was two thousand cubits from any city or town, and which they often called, tbv Mwxt, "the bound of the sabbath" {s}; and which they collect partly from Nu 35:4 which they understand thus {t}:

"a thousand cubits are the suburbs (of the city), and two thousand cubits the bounds of the sabbath."

And these were so many middling paces; for so they say {u},

"a walk of two thousand middling paces, this is the bound of the sabbath."

And that this was the proper space they also gather from **Jos 3:4** it being the distance between the ark and the people when they marched; and though this was not fixed by the law, yet being a tradition of the elders, was strictly observed by them: so when Ruth desired to become a proselytess, the Targumist on **Ru 1:16** introduces Naomi thus speaking to her;

"says Naomi, we are commanded to keep the sabbaths, and the good days, (or feasts,) and not to walk above "two thousand cubits";"

i.e. on those days; for to go further was reckoned a profanation of them: so it is said {w},

"the sabbath day is profaned with the hands by work, and with the feet by walking more than "two thousand cubits"."

Yea, this was punishable with beatings {x}:

"a man might go on the sabbath without the city two thousand cubits on every side--but if he went beyond two thousand cubits, they beat him with the beating of rebels,"

or in the same manner a rebellious son was beaten. Nay, not only they might not go out of a city or town where they were, further than this, but from whatsoever place they happened to be, as appears by these following rules {y};

"if anyone falls asleep in the way (or on the road), and he does not know that it was dark (and so that the sabbath is begun), he has two thousand cubits (allowed him) on every side.--Whoever is on a journey, and it is dark, and he knows a tree, or a hedge, and says, let my sabbath (or sabbatical seat) be under it, he says nothing; but if he says, let my sabbath be at the root of it, then he may go from the place of his feet, and to the root of it, two thousand cubits, and from the root of it to his house two thousand cubits; by which means he may go four thousand cubits after it is dark. But if he does not know (any), and is not expert in walking, and says, let my sabbath be in my place, (i.e. in which he stands,) then from his place he has two thousand cubits on every side."

Hence, in some copies it is here inserted, "such being the distance that the Jews could walk"; that is, were allowed to walk by their canons. They call two thousand cubits a mile {z}; and if the Mount of Olives was seven furlongs from Jerusalem, it was pretty near a mile; but if but five furlongs, it was little more than half a mile: perhaps the true distance might be six furlongs, since Josephus says {a}, the tenth legion was ordered to encamp six furlongs from Jerusalem, at the Mount of Olives, which was over against the city to the east; agreeably to which Epiphanius {b}, who had been a Jew, and was born in

Palestine, says,

"it was not lawful to go on the sabbath day beyond six furlongs,"

which were three quarters of a mile.

{n} Prefat. Echa Rabbati, fol. 40. 4. Jarchi in 1 Kings xi. 7. {o} Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 6. Echa Rabbati, fol. 52. 4. Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 2. sect. 4. {p} Targum in Cant. viii. 5. {q} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 4. {r} Antiqu. l. 20. c. 7. sect. 6. {s} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 75. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 27. & 28. & Origin. Philocal. p. 14. {t} Misna Sota, c. 5. sect 3. {u} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 42. 1. Maimon. Hilch, Sabbat, c. 27, sect. 4. {w} Zohar in Exod. fol. 27. 1. & 83. 2. {x} Maimon. Hiichot Sabbat, c. 97. sect. 1, 2. {y} Misna Erubin, c. 4. sect. 5, 7, 8. {z} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 178. 4. {a} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 3. {b} Centra Haeres. l. 2. Haeres. 66.

Acts 1:13

Ver. 13 And when they were come in,.... "Into it", as the Arabic version reads; that is, into the city of Jerusalem, and into some house in that city; but what house it was is needless to inquire, since it cannot be known. Some think it was the house of John the Evangelist, whither he had taken Mary the mother of our Lord, Joh 19:27 which is not improbable: others, that it was the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where the disciples met for prayer when Peter was put into prison, Ac 12:12 others, that it was the house of Simon the leper; but his house was not at Jerusalem, but in Bethany, Mt 26:6. Some have thought it was the house of Nicodemus, or of Joseph of Arimathea; but after all it seems most likely, that it was not any private house, but the temple into which the disciples immediately went, and where they continued; see Lu 24:52 and **Ac 2:46**.

they went up into an upper room; which, if in a private house, they might choose for retirement and secrecy; and might be the same in which they had eaten the passover; and so a Syriac scholiast, in manuscript, on the place, says it was the same. It was usual to meet in upper rooms for devotion and religious conversation;
See Gill on "Mr 2:4" though this upper room might be one of the chambers in the temple; for not only from the scriptural account of the temple, there were chambers round about it, and upper chambers; see **1Ki 6:5** and one of these is called the chamber of Gemariah, in which Baruch read the prophecies of

Jeremiah, Jer 36:10 but also from the Jewish writings, in which frequent mention is made of the chamber Palhedrin, where the high priest was brought seven days before the day of atonement {c}; and the chamber of the counsellors {d}; and the chamber Gazith, where the sanhedrim sat; and the chamber of the house of Abtines {e}; and the chamber of wood; and the chamber of the lepers; and the chamber of the house of oil {f}; and the chamber of salt; and the chamber of Parvah; and the chamber of them that wash, besides others {g}. And into a chamber, or upper room in the temple they might be let by Joses Barnabas, a Levite, one of their own company, **Ac 4:36** who might have the care of it, for they are said to be continually in the temple, Lu 24:53.

Where abode both Peter, and James, and John. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "Peter, and John, and James"; and so the Alexandrian copy. These were the three favourite disciples of Christ, and are often mentioned together, as here first;

and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions put Matthew before Bartholomew.

James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas, the brother of James; all the Oriental versions read, "Judas the son of James": of the names of the apostles, See Gill on "Mt 10:2",
See Gill on "Mt 10:3",
See Gill on "Mt 10:4". They are all here mentioned but Judas the betrayer, who was dead, to show, that though one had disbelieved the resurrection of Christ, another had denied him, and all of them had forsook him, and fled; yet they were got together again, and were firm and steadfast in the faith of Christ, waiting for the pouring forth of the Spirit.

{c} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1. {d} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2. {e} Ib. fol. 19. 1.
{f} Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 5. {g} Ib. c. 5. sect. 2, 3.

Acts 1:14

Ver. 14. These all continued, with one accord, in prayer and supplication,.... For the promise of the Spirit Christ had given them reason to expect; and that they might be preserved from their enemies, and kept faithful to their Lord; and be abundantly qualified for the preaching of the Gospel, and succeeded in it; and that their hearts might be comforted, and knit together in love: and they were unanimous in their requests, and so were under the promise of being heard; and in this work they were constant, and assiduous, and followed it with importunity. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions leave out the last clause, "and supplication"; and so likewise the Alexandrian copy: "with the women"; that followed Christ from Galilee, and were at his cross, and at his grave; among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Salome the wife of Zebedee. Some render the words, "with their wives"; the wives of the apostles; and as many as had wives, no doubt but they were with them; and it was necessary they should be, that they might be strengthened and confirmed in the faith of Christ. Beza's most ancient copy adds, "and children";

and Mary the mother of Jesus. This is the last we hear of her; how long she lived after this, is not certain: her continuance with the apostles of Christ shows her religion and piety, and was both for the increase of her faith, and spiritual comfort:

and with his brethren; See Gill on "Mt 13:55".

Acts 1:15

Ver. 15. And in those days Peter stood up,.... That is, in one of the days after Christ's ascension, and before the day of Pentecost, whilst the disciples were waiting for the promise of the Spirit. The Ethiopic version reads, "on that day"; as if it was the same day they came first into Jerusalem, and went into the upper room; and which is likely enough; for no time was to be lost in choosing one in the room of Judas; when Peter, not only as a forward person, and who had been used to be the first mover and actor in any affair; but as willing to show his zeal for Christ, whom he had so lately denied, and as being the senior man in company, as well as the minister of the circumcision, rises, and stands up, as persons used to do, when about to make an oration, and in respect and reverence to the persons addressed:

in the midst of the disciples; not only the other ten, but the whole hundred and twenty. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, "in the midst of the brethren", and so reads the Vulgate Latin version; and the Ethiopic version, "in the midst of his own brethren";

and he said what is expressed in the following verses, which before the historian relates, he inserts in a parenthesis this clause, the number of the names; that is, of persons; see Re 11:13. Some copies read, "of the men", and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; who

together, all put together in one sum, or as meeting together in one and the same place, or as agreeing in the same faith and judgment, so the Arabic version, "and there was there a company whose names and wills agreed in this same opinion"; they were all in one place, and of the same mind; and the sum of them

were about an hundred and twenty; among whom were the eleven apostles, and seventy disciples, which made eighty one; so that there were thirty nine persons more in this company: not that it is to be thought that these were all that were in Jerusalem that believed in Christ; but these were the number of the persons that met and embodied together in a church state, and who not only gave themselves to the Lord, but to one another, by the will of God; and their names being taken and registered, the historian calls the account of them, the number of the names, and not persons; though he means persons. This was a number pretty famous among the Jews; the sanhedrim of Ezra, called the men of the great synagogue, consisted of an "hundred and twenty elders"; the last of which was Simeon the just, and he comprehended the hundred and twenty {h}. And such a number was requisite for a sanhedrim in any place; it is asked,

"how many must there be in a city, that it may be fit for a sanhedrim? "an hundred and twenty"; R. Nehemiah says two hundred and thirty {i}:"

but the decision is according to the former: hence they say {k}, that

"they fix in every city in Israel, where there is an "hundred and twenty", or more, a lesser sanhedrim.---A city in which there is not an hundred and twenty, they place three judges, for there is no sanhedrim less than three."

{h} Juchasin, fol. 13. 2. Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1. Elias Levit. prefat. 3. ad Sepher Masoret. {i} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 6. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in. ib. & T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 17. 2. {k} Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 3, 4.

Acts 1:16

Ver. 16. Men and brethren,.... Which is said not so much by Peter to express his modesty, and humility, and his brotherly love; or on account of the spiritual relation that subsisted between him and the persons he speaks to, as it was a common form used in addresses; see **Ac 7:2** it should seem, that the women, were not reckoned into the number of the hundred and twenty here addressed; and the Syriac version calls that number, "the number of men", unless they are supposed to be included in them:

this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled; or "must needs be fulfilled": referring either to Ps 41:9 or rather to the passages after cited out of Ps 69:25. There was a necessity of the fulfilling of it, consistent with the prescience of God, his counsel, and decree, and the veracity of the Scripture; which necessity does not at all excuse the sin of Judas, who acted freely from the wickedness of his own heart, and not from any force that this laid upon him: and the apostle might observe this also, to make the minds of the disciples easy, under this awful providence, since it was no other than what was predicted: and

which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before; even many hundreds of years before the event; and which shows the omniscience, and so the deity of the Holy Ghost, and the divine authority of David's Psalms; as well as the honour that was put upon him to be the instrument by which the Holy Ghost speaks, and to be his amanuensis: the particular referred to, is, "concerning" Judas; who is sometimes called Iscariot, to distinguish him from another apostle of the same name; and what is hereafter said sufficiently does that; or

concerning that Judas, as the Syriac version renders it:

which was a guide to them that took Jesus; to the band of soldiers and officers, who came with swords and staves, as to take a thief, or a robber; before these Judas went and showed them, not only the place where he was, but gave them a sign by which they should know him, and also advice to take him and hold him fast, and lead him away safely; so that he was not only a guide as to the way, but was a director, and conductor, and manager of the whole affair. And it may be observed, that though Peter did not conceal, but declares the sin of Judas; yet not in a rough manner, aggravating it, but with much softness and tenderness; though with no design to lessen it, as appears by what follows, and which may be instructive to us in speaking of other men's sins.

Acts 1:17

Ver. 17. For he was numbered with us,.... He was chosen an apostle with: the rest, and was ordained into that office when they were, and was always reckoned one of the twelve, and stands in the catalogue when they are mentioned:

and had obtained part of this ministry; by lot, as the word signifies; the providence of God so ordering it, according to his eternal purpose and decree, that he was not only called an apostle, and enrolled among them, but he really had a part in that ministry; he preached, and baptized, and wrought miracles; and besides all this, carried the bag, was the treasurer, and a sort of a steward in Christ's family, and provided for it.

Acts 1:18

Ver. 18. Now this man purchased a field,.... This verse, with the following, seem to be the words of Luke the historian, which should be read in a parenthesis; for there was no need to have acquainted the disciples with the manner of Judas's death, which was so well known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; nor would Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it, be mentioned with that propriety by Peter, when he, and those he spoke of, were upon the spot; nor could there be any necessity of his explaining a word in their own tongue, which they understood, and that in a language unknown unto them; nor does it seem likely, that in so short a time as five or six weeks, the field should have obtained the name of "Aceldama", and be commonly known by it. The Ethiopic version calls this field, "a vineyard"; and so it might be, and yet the potter's field too. It is somewhat difficult, that Judas should be said to purchase it, when Matthew says the chief priests bought it, Mt 27:7. Both are true; Judas having received his money of the chief priests two days ago, might not only intend to purchase, but might really strike a bargain with the potter for his field; but repenting of his sin, instead of carrying the money to make good the agreement, went and threw it to the chief priests, and then hanged himself; when they, by a secret providence, might be directed to make a purchase of the same field with his money; or he may be said to purchase it, because it was purchased with his money. The Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions render it, "he possessed" it; not in person, unless he was buried there, as he might be; and so all that he got by his wretched bargain, was only so much ground as to be buried in; or the sense may be, "he caused it to be possessed"; by returning the money which the chief priests used this way;

with the reward of his iniquity; that is, with the thirty pieces of silver, given him as a reward for that vile action of his betraying of his Lord and master: so the reward of divination, or what Balsam got by soothsaying, which was an iniquitous and wicked practice, is called, "the wages of unrighteousness", **2Pe 2:15**

and falling headlong he burst in the midst; either falling from the gallows, or tree on which he hanged himself, the rope breaking, upon a stone, or stump, his belly was broke, and burst; or falling from the air, whither he was violently snatched up by Satan, who was in him, and by whom he was thrown down to the earth, and who went out of him by a rupture made in his belly; or being in deep melancholy, he was strangled with the squinancy, and fell down on his face to the ground, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it,

and burst asunder: and all his bowels gushed out; through the rupture that was made. So we read of a man that fell from the roof of a house, hynyyem qypnw hyork hyeqp, "and his belly burst, and his bowels came out" {l}. And this was the miserable end of Judas. The death of Arius, as related by Athanasius {m}, from Macarius the presbyter, who was present, was much after the same manner; who reports, that having swore to the orthodox faith, and being about to be introduced into the church at Constantinople, after the prayer of Alexander, the bishop of it, he went out to the seat, to ease nature; when he, on a sudden, fell down headlong, and burst in the middle, and immediately expired: and Epiphanius {n} compares his exit with this of Judas, who observes, that he went out in the night to the vault, as before related, and burst asunder, as Judas of old did; and came to his end in a filthy and unclean place. Ruffinus says {o}, that as he sat, his entrails, and all his bowels, came from him into the vault; and so he died in such a place, a death worthy of his blasphemous and corrupt mind. As to the seeming difference between the Evangelist Matthew and the Apostle Peter, it may be reconciled by either of the ways before mentioned;
See Gill on "Mt 27:5" though it seems most likely, that Judas not being able to bear the torments of his mind, he hanged himself, as Achitophel did, and was not strangled by the devil, or by any disease; and that he fell down from the tree on which he hung, either the rope breaking, or the tree falling; and so the things happened to him which are recorded: or he might fall from hence, either through a violent strong wind which blew him down; or through the rushing of wild beasts against the gallows, on which he hung; or by the devil himself, who might throw him down from hence after he had dispatched himself, as some have conjectured: or, which seems best of all, he might be cast down from hence by men, either of themselves, or by the order of the civil

magistrates, not enduring such a sight, that one that had destroyed himself should hang long there; and which, according to the law, was not to be admitted; and these not taking him down, in a gentle manner, but using some violence, or cutting the rope, the body fell, and burst asunder, as is here said: and it should be observed, that the Evangelist Matthew speaks of the death of Judas, in which he himself was concerned; and the Apostle Peter reports what befell his carcass after his death, and in which others were concerned. The Vulgate Latin renders it, and being hanged, he burst in the middle; as if this happened to him upon the gallows, without falling.

{l} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 56. 2. {m} Epist. ad. Scrapion, Vol. I. p. 523. {n} Contra Haeres. l. 2. Haeres. 68. {o} L. 1. c. 13.

Acts 1:19

Ver. 19. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem,.... As that he betrayed Jesus of Nazareth into the hands of the chief priests, for thirty pieces of silver; that this was the reward of his iniquity; and that with this a field was purchased for the burying of strangers in; and that he died in such a miserable way: there was scarce an inhabitant in Jerusalem but knew all this,

insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue; or "in their own dialect", the "Jerusalem dialect", Which was now Chaldee, or Syriac; and such is the word that follows, "Aceldama; that is to say, the field of blood": because it was bought with the price of Christ's blood: and if, as some say, Judas hanged him self here, or was thrown headlong here by Satan, and that this was the place where his bowels gushed out; then it may be likewise so called, because it was sprinkled with his blood. It is called in the Alexandrian copy "Acheldamach"; and often by Jerom {p} "Acheldemach", but very wrongly; for not "Demach", but "Dema", in the Syriac and Chaldee dialect, signifies "blood"; which Peter calls the dialect of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, being now spoken by them, in distinction from the Galilean dialect used by him; which, it is plain, was different from the Jerusalem dialect by what is said, Mr 14:70. This field, as it is reported by some, was by the appointment of the Empress Helena compassed about with four walls, in the manner of a tower, upon the top of which are seven distinct doors, like windows, by which the dead bodies of Christians are let down into it; and that it is fifty feet wide, and seventy two long: it stands not far from the valley of Himom, and is upon the south side of Mount Zion, where, as Jerom says {q}, it was showed in his time. Masius {r} affirms, there was a very high mountain near Jerusalem, called Mount

Aceldema, from the adjacent field, which was bought with the price of Christ's blood, to bury strangers in.

{p} Comment. in Psal. 108. fol. 73. D. & de locis Hebraicis, fol. 89. C. & 95. H. & de Nominibus Hebraicis, fol. 105. H. {q} De locis Hebraicis, ib. {r} Comment. in Josuam, p. 283.

Acts 1:20

Ver. 20. For it is written in the book of Psalms,.... In Ps 69:25. These are the words of Peter, citing the Scripture he had said must be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by David, had spoke concerning Judas:

let his habitation be desolate. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, "his city"; meaning, perhaps, the city of Jerusalem; and which afterwards did become desolate, and was utterly destroyed:

and let no man dwell therein; in his habitation. The psalm, out of which these words are cited, is a psalm concerning the Messiah, and there are many passages cited out of it in the New Testament, and applied to him, or referred unto; see **Joh 2:17** compared with Ps 69:4 and what the psalmist says of the enemies of the Messiah in general, is applied by the apostle to Judas in particular. In the Hebrew text, in Ps 69:25 the words are in the plural number, "let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents"; and refer to all the enemies of Christ, the chief priests, elders of the people, Scribes and Pharisees, who covenanted with Judas to give him so much money to betray Christ into their hands; and who delivered him to the Roman governor, by whom, at their instigation, he was crucified; and particularly may well be thought to include Judas, who betrayed him to them; and therefore are very fitly interpreted of him: though not to be understood to the exclusion of the others, whose house was to be left desolate, and was left desolate, as our Lord predicted, Mt 23:38. The first word in the Hebrew text rendered "habitation", signifies a very magnificent dwelling; it is sometimes translated a "castle", Ge 25:16 and sometimes a "palace", Cant. 8:9, Eze 25:4 and it is interpreted by Nwmra, "a palace", here, by several Jewish writers {s}; and so may intend the dwelling places of the richer sort of Christ's enemies, as the palaces of the high priest, and of the prince, or president of the sanhedrim, and the stately houses of the members of it, of the chief priests and elders of the people, and of the Scribes and Pharisees; all which became desolate at the destruction of Jerusalem: the other word, rendered "tents", may design the cottages of the meaner sort of people, who, with united voices, cried aloud for the crucifixion of Christ; and which also shared the same fate when Jerusalem was destroyed: now inasmuch as Judas was of the meaner sort, the apostle here makes use of a word which signifies but a poor and mean habitation, though it is sometimes used of grander ones, and which seems to answer to the latter; for as there are two words in the original text expressive of habitation, he might choose which he would, and did choose that which was most pertinent in the application of the passage to Judas. However, a Jew has no reason to find fault with this version, since the Targum renders both words by "habitation", thus;

let their habitation be desolate, and in their habitations let no one dwell: where Judas's habitation was is not certain; but that he might have one as well as the Apostle John, is not at all improbable, and from hence seems evident:

and his bishopric let another take; which passage stands in Ps 109:8 and is fitly applied to Judas, and was verified in him, who not only died a violent and infamous death, by which he was in consequence stripped of his office, as a bishop, or overseer; but another was to be put into it, invested with it, and exercise it; and therefore very pertinently does Peter produce it, his intention being to move the disciples to choose another in his room. These words are produced by the apostle, as if they were to be found in the same place with the preceding; whereas they stand in another psalm, as has been observed: and this is no unusual thing with the writers of the New Testament, to put several passages of Scripture together, as if they were in one place, when they are to be sought for in different places; an instance of this, among many, that might be mentioned, is in **Ro 3:10** and this is a very common way of citing Scripture with the Jews. Surenhusius {t} has given a variety of instances, in proof of this, out of their writings, as in the margin {u}, which the learned reader may consult and compare at leisure. The psalm, out of which this passage is cited, is not to be understood of David literally, and of what he met with from his enemies, and of his imprecations upon them, either Doeg the Edomite, as Kimchi interprets it, or Ahithophel, as others, but of the Messiah, with whom the whole agrees; against whom the mouth of the wicked Jews, and particularly of the deceitful Pharisees, were opened; and against whom the false witnesses spoke with lying tongues; and who, all of them, compassed him with words of hatred to take away his life, and acted a most ungenerous and ungrateful part; opposed him without a cause, and became his enemies for his love showed to them, both to soul and body, preaching the Gospel, and healing diseases, Ps 109:2. The poverty and distress he submitted to; the griefs and sorrows which he bore; the fatigues he underwent at his examination; and the weakness of body he was then reduced to, as well as the reproach cast upon him on the cross, when his enemies shook their heads at him, are in a very lively manner described, Ps 109:22 and whereas one of his enemies particularly is singled out from the rest, what is said concerning him, by way of imprecation, suits with Judas, and had its accomplishment in him, Ps 109:6 who had a wicked man set over him, as over the rest of the Jews, Pilate, the Roman governor, a very wicked man; and at whose right hand Satan stood, as one of his council, as Aben Ezra interprets it, and put it into his heart to betray his master, and prompted him to it, and then accused him of it, and brought him to black despair for it; and who, when this affair was brought home to his own conscience, and there arraigned for it, was convicted and self-condemned, as he also will be at the general judgment; and as he found no place of mercy then, whatever prayers or entreaties he might make, so neither will he hereafter: his days were but few, being cut off in the prime of them, as may be concluded from the many years which some of his fellow apostles lived after him; and his bishopric, or office, as an apostle, was taken by another, even by Matthias, who was chosen in his room, of which we have an account in the following part of this chapter; for this is to be understood neither of his money, nor of his wife, nor of his own soul committed to his trust, as some of the Jewish writers {w} explain it; but of his apostleship, with which he was invested by Christ. The word signifies an oversight, care, or charge; and so the Hebrew word hdwqp is rendered in **Nu 3:32** and designs any office, as the office of the priests and Levites in the house of God; see **Nu 4:16**. Jarchi interprets it here by wtlwdg, "his greatness", or "dignity"; and explains it by the Spanish word "provostia", an office of honour and authority, as this of being an apostle of Christ was; than which, a greater external dignity could not be enjoyed in the church of God, in which he has set first apostles, 1Co 12:28. That this psalm refers to Judas Iscariot, and to his affair, was so clear a point with the ancients, that they used to call it the Iscariotic Psalm. I lay no stress upon the observation some have made, that thirty curses are contained in it, the number of the pieces of silver for which he betrayed his master, since this may be thought to be too curious.

{s} Kimchi & Sol. ben Melech in Psal. 69. 25. R. Nathan. Concordant. {t} Biblos Katallages, p. 45, 46. {u} T. Bab Roshhoshana, fol. 4. 2. Beracot, fol. 13. 1. Sabbat, fol. 20. 1. Maccot, fol. 13. 2. & 16. 1. Tanchuma, fol. 17. 1, 4. & 25. 1, 4. {w} Aben Ezra, Kimchi, & Sol. ben Melech in loc.

Acts 1:21

Ver. 21. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us,.... Seeing there was such an imprecation, which carried in it the nature of a prophecy, that another should take the bishopric of Judas, or be made an apostle in his room, it was absolutely necessary that one should be immediately chosen to that office; and this is the force of the illative particle, wherefore; and it was highly proper that this choice should be of one among the men, and not the women; whom it did not become to bear any office, and exercise any authority in the church; hence it is said, "of these men", to the exclusion of women: and it was exceeding right, and a very good notion, that the choice should be of one from among themselves, and who was known unto them; with whose abilities, integrity, wisdom, and holy conversation, they were acquainted: and therefore it is added, "which have companied with us"; one of our own company, and not a stranger; with whom we have familiarly conversed, and whose character is well known to us: a rule which ought to be attended to, in the choice of inferior officers, as pastors and deacons; who ought to be of the body and community, among whom they are chosen to an office; and their qualifications for it be well known, and that for some time past, as follows:

all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us; that is, ever since Christ called them to be his disciples and followers; and conversed with them, and discharged his office among them, governed, directed, taught, and instructed them; for it was not proper that a novice, a new plant, or one that was lately become a disciple, should be put into such an office; and the same holds good in proportion in other offices; men called to office should be of some standing, as well as of superior gifts.

Acts 1:22

Ver. 22. Beginning from the baptism of John,.... Not from the time trial John first administered the ordinance of baptism; for Christ was not so soon made known, or had followers; but from the time of the administration of it by John, to Christ, when he was made known to Israel; and quickly upon this, he called his disciples, and entered on his public ministry: now Peter moves, that one who had been so early a follower of Christ, who had heard his excellent discourses, and seen his miracles, and who had steadfastly and constantly adhered to him, might be chosen in the room of Judas; one whose faith in Christ, love to him, and firmness of mind to abide by him, had been sufficiently tried and proved; who had continued with Christ and his apostles, from the beginning of his ministry, to that time: or as Peter adds,

unto the same day that he was taken up from us; by angels, and received by a cloud, and carried up to heaven; or "he ascended from us", as the Ethiopic version renders it; or "lifted up himself from us", as the Arabic version; for as he raised himself from the dead by his own power, by the same he could raise himself up from earth to heaven; the sense is, to the time of his ascension to heaven, whether by himself, or by the ministry of angels:

must one be ordained; there was a necessity of this, partly on the account of the above prophecy, and partly to keep up the number of the twelve apostles, Christ had thought fit to pitch upon; answering to the twelve tribes of Israel, and to the twelve gates, and twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem: and this choice or ordination was moved to be made, and was made, not by the other eleven apostles, but by the whole company of an hundred and twenty; for these are the persons addressed by the apostle, and to whom he said, as the Arabic version renders it, "one of these men ye must choose": and if the choice and ordination of such an extraordinary officer was made by the whole community, then much more ought the choice and ordination of inferior officers be by them: the end of this choice was,

to be a witness with us of his resurrection; the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which supposes his incarnation and life, and so his obedience, ministry, and miracles in it; and also his sufferings and death, with all the benefits and advantages thereof; and is particularly mentioned, because it not only supposes and includes the above things, but is the principal article, basis, and foundation of the Christian religion; and the sign which Christ gave to the Jews, of the truth of his being the Messiah; and was what the disciples were chosen to be witnesses of; and a principal part of their ministry was to testify it to men: and since this was their work and business, it was necessary that one should be chosen, and joined with them, who had been with them, and with Jesus, from the beginning, to the time of his ascension; and who was an eyewitness of his resurrection, that he might join with the apostles in their testimony.

Acts 1:23

Ver. 23. And they appointed two,.... The motion made by Peter was attended to by the whole company; they approved of it, and accordingly proposed two persons by name; one of which was to be chosen, not by the apostles, but by the whole assembly. The Arabic version reads, "he appointed two", as if Peter singly did this: contrary to all copies, and other versions, and to the context; which shows, that the whole body of the people were concerned in this affair, who prayed and gave forth their lots and suffrages: the persons nominated were,

Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. The former of these has three names; in one ancient copy of Beza's he is called Joses; and by some thought to be the same with Joses, surnamed Barnabas, in **Ac 4:36** partly because in one copy, and in the Syriac version there, that Joses is called Joseph; and partly, because of the nearness in sound between Barsabas and Barnabas: hence the Ethiopic version here reads, "Joseph, who was called Barnabas", and so Beza's most ancient copy; but though Joses is here meant for Jose, or Joses is, with the Jews, an abbreviation of Joseph; yet not Joses the Levite, who was of the country of Cyprus, but Joses of Galilee, the son of Alphaeus and Mary; and who had two brothers, James and Jude, already apostles; see Mt 13:55. Moreover, though the two names, Barnabas and Barsabas, differ little in sound, yet much in sense: the former is interpreted "the son of consolation", **Ac 4:36** but the latter signifies much the same with Bathsheba; as that may be interpreted "the daughter", this "the son of an oath"; or as others, "a son of wisdom"; and by others, "the son of fulness"; I should choose to take it to be the same name with
abo rb, and interpret it, "the son of an old man"; as Alphaeus might be, when Joses, or Joseph was born, and he be the younger brother of James and Jude; as for his surname Justus, this was a name not only in use among the Grecians and Romans, especially the latter, but among the Jews: hence we often read of Rabbi ajowy, "Justa", and sometimes, yjowy, "Justi", and at other times, yajowy "Justai" {x} whether he had this surname from his being a very just man, as Aristides was called Aristides the just; and so Simeon the high priest, the last of Ezra's great synagogue, was called Simeon the just {y}; and so James the brother of this Joseph, or Joses, was called by the Jews {z}; and it may be, that he himself might have his name from the patriarch Joseph, who used to be called by them, Joseph, qyduh, "the just" {a}: for Matthias, his name is Jewish, and he was no doubt a Jew; hence we read aytm ybr, "Rabbi Matthia ben Charash" {b}; his name signifying the same as Nathanael does, namely, the gift of God, made Dr. Lightfoot conjecture they might be the same; but this agrees not with another conjecture that learned man, who elsewhere thinks, that Bartholomew and Nathanael were the same; and if so, he must have been an apostle already; Clemens of Alexandria was of opinion, that this Matthias was Zacchaeus {c}.

{x} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 12. 3. & Trumot. fol. 48. 1. & Erubin, fol. 19. 3. & 23. 3. T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 99. 1. & Juchasin, fol. 95. 2. & 96. 1. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 17. 4. {y} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 2. {z} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 23. {a} Zohar in Exod. fol. 104. 1. {b} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 61.

2. & Juchasin, fol. 108. 1. {c} Stromat, l. 4. p. 488.

Acts 1:24

Ver. 24. And they prayed and said,.... Having proposed the above two persons, and not well knowing which to pitch upon, they being both very agreeable and fit for such service; they chose not to determine the affair without seeking to God for direction; a method to be taken in all cases, and especially in matters of importance: and the substance of their petition, though perhaps not in just the same words, was,

thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men; which is a character peculiar to the one only living, and true God; for none knows the hearts of men, but God, who is the Maker of them; and he knows all the thoughts, counsels, and purposes of them, and the good or bad that is in them:

shew whether of these two thou hast chosen; being desirous of having their choice directed by the choice God had made, in his eternal mind; and which they desired might be signified and pointed out to them, in some way or another, that they might be certain of the mind and will of God, and act according to it.

Acts 1:25

Ver. 25. That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship,.... Of the ministry of the apostles, or of the apostolical ministration; which lay in preaching the Gospel, administering ordinances, planting churches, and working miracles; and which part, lot, or inheritance, Judas had; see **Ac 1:17**.

And from which Judas by transgression fell; by betraying his Lord, whose apostle he was, he was turned out of his office, and had no longer part in the apostolical ministry:

that he might go to his own place; which may be understood of Judas, and of his going to hell, as the just punishment of his sin; which is commonly so called by the Jews, who often explain this phrase, "his place", by hell; as when it is said of Laban, Ge 31:55 that he "returned to his place", it intimates, say they {d}, that he returned to his place, which was prepared for him in hell; and so likewise when it is said of Balaam, Nu 24:25 that he "returned to his place", they observe {e}, that

"he did not return from his evil way, but returned to his place; and so intimates by saying, to his place, that which was prepared for him in hell, as the Rabbins of blessed memory say {f}; "they came everyone from his own place", **Job 2:11** a man from his house, a man from his country it is not written, but a man from his place, which was prepared for him in hell; and because they came to show mercy to Job, they were delivered from hell, and became worthy of the world to come; and so here, and "he returned to his place", Mnyhgb wl Nkwmh, "which was prepared for him in hell"."

And another of their writers {g}, on the same passage, has this remark, and he returned to his place, and he does not say,

"he went on his way, for he was driven out of his way, and went down to hell."

And agreeably to what is said of Job's friends, the Targumist on **Job 2:11** paraphrases the words thus;

"and there came a man, or everyone from his place, and by this merit they were delivered from the place, prepared for them in hell."

And which place the same Targumist on **Job 8:4** calls Nwhydrm rta, "the place of their rebellion"; that is, procured by it: and so Judas's own place was what he had merited by his sin, and was righteously appointed for him; and though it was not peculiar to him, but common to all impenitent sinners, yet very proper for him, as a betrayer; for it is a settled point with the Jews {h}, that

"he that betrays an Israelite into the hands of the Gentiles (so Judas betrayed his master), whether in his body, or in his substance, has no part in the world to come."

This clause is by some understood not of Judas, but of Matthias, or of him that was to come in the room of Judas; and by "his own place" it is thought is meant, the "part of the ministry and apostleship", in the former clause, and which the Alexandrian copy reads, "the place of this ministry", he was to take; and now Judas by his iniquity falling from it, made way for another, for Matthias to go to his own place, which God had in his counsel and purposes designed for him; or "into his place", as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; that is, into the place of Judas, to take his place among the apostles, in his room and stead: the Alexandrian copy reads, "into that righteous place".

{d} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 43. 2. {e} Ib. fol. 127. 1. {f} Vid. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 74. 3. {g} Baal Hatturim in Numb. xxiv. 25. {h} Maimon. Hilchot Chobel, &c. c. 8. sect. 9.

Acts 1:26

Ver. 26. And they gave forth their lots,.... Or "gave forth lots for them", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; for Joseph and Matthias; some for one, and some for another; and which were cast into a man's lap, or into a vessel, and was no other than balloting for them; and so he that had the majority upon casting them up, when taken out, was declared the person chosen; or "they cast their lots"; that is, into an urn, or vessel; which lots had the names of the two persons on them; and into another vessel, as is thought, were put two other lots; the one had the name of "apostle" upon it, and the other nothing; and these being taken out by persons appointed for that purpose, the lot with Matthias's name on it, was taken out against that which had the name of apostle on it, upon which he was declared to be the apostle: it may be that this was done in the same manner, as the goats on the day of atonement had lots cast on them, Le 16:8 which the Jews say was thus performed: there was a vessel which they call "Kalphi", set in the court, into which two lots, which were made of wood, or stone, or metal, were put; the one had written on it, for Jehovah, and on the other was written, "for the scapegoat"; the two goats being, the one at the right hand of the priest, and the other at the left; the priest shook the vessel, and with his two hands took out the two lots, and laid the lots on the two goats; the right on that which was at his right hand, and the left on that which was at his left {i}; and so the goat which had the lot put upon him, on which was written, "for the Lord", was killed; and that which had the other lot, on which was written, for the scapegoat, was presented alive; so the lot here is said to fall upon Matthias: or the lots being cast into the vessel, as above related, these two drew them out themselves; and Matthias taking out that which had the word apostle on it, the lot fell on him: the manner of Moses's choosing the seventy elders, is said to be this {k}:

"Moses took seventy two papers, and on seventy of them he wrote, Nqz, "an elder"; and upon two, qlx, "a part"; and he chose six out of every tribe, and there were seventy two; he said unto them, take your papers out of the vessel; he into whose hand came up "an elder" (i.e. the paper on which it was so written) he was sanctified (or set apart to the office); and he, in whose hand came up "a part" (the paper that had that on it), to him he said, the Lord does not delight in thee."

And the lot fell upon Matthias; that is, either he had the largest number for him, their minds being so disposed by the providence of God; and it may be, contrary to the first thoughts and general sense of the body; since Joseph is mentioned first, and was a man of great character, and of many names and titles; but God, who knows the hearts: of men, and can turn them as he pleases, and to whom they sought for direction, inclined their minds to vote for the latter; or it was so ordered by divine providence, that in the casting or drawing the lots, the lot of the apostleship should fall on him:

and he was numbered with the eleven apostles; either chosen by the common suffrages of the people, as the word used signifies; or rather, he took his place among the apostles; he was registered among them, and ever after was reckoned one of them; Beza's ancient copy reads, "with the twelve apostles", their number being now complete.

{i} Maimon. Hilchot Yom Hacippurim, c. 3. sect. 1, 2, 3. Misn. Yoma, c. 4. 1. & Bartenora in ib. {k} Jarchi in Numb. xi. 26. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 218. 3.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 2:1

Ver. 1. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come,.... Or "was come", was begun and entered upon; for it was not over, or ended, it being but the third hour of the day, or nine of the clock in the morning, when Peter began his sermon; see **Ac 2:15**. The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "when the days of Pentecost were fulfilled"; not that there were more days than one, kept at this festival; for though the feasts of passover and tabernacles were observed each of them seven days, according to the law, and eight days according to the Scribes, yet the feast of Pentecost was kept but one day; and hence it is often said by the Jews, that Atzereth, which is one of the names they call this feast by, is but one day {l}; in the captivity they kept two days {m}, as they did for the beginning of the year, because of the uncertainty of calculations; but the sense is, when the whole fifty days from the passover to this time were fully come, or fulfilled, when the fiftieth day from thence, which was properly the day of Pentecost, was come: on the second day of the passover, on the sixteenth of Nisan, the sheaf of the first fruits was offered up; after which, and not before, it was lawful to reap the corn, Le 23:10 from this time the Jews reckoned their feast of weeks, or seven weeks, or fifty days; see Ex 34:22 which measured out the time of their harvest. Now the last of these fifty days was the day of Pentecost, on which day was offered the two wave loaves, as a thanksgiving that their harvest was ended. Josephus calls {n} this feast by the same name that Luke here does; and says {o}, the Jews so call it, from the number of the days, that is fifty; and so R. Sol Jarchi {p} calls this day, Myvymx Mwy, "the fiftieth day": on this day, the Jews say {q}, the law was given; and observe {r}, that

"from the day that Israel went out of Egypt, unto the day that the law was given, were fifty days."

And on this day, and which was the first day of the week, the Spirit was poured forth upon the disciples; the Gospel began to be preached to all nations, and a harvest of souls was gathered in:

they were all with one accord in one place; in two ancient copies of Beza's, and in some others it is read, "all the apostles"; Matthias, and the eleven, with whom he was numbered, who are last spoken of, in **Ac 1:26**. Though this need not be restrained to the twelve apostles, but may be understood of the hundred and twenty, on whom, as well as on the apostles, the Holy Ghost might be poured forth, that so they might speak with tongues; since among these were many ministers of the Gospel, as the seventy disciples, and it may be more; and that his extraordinary gifts should be bestowed on others, is but what was afterwards done; see **Ac 8:17** and though there were so many of them together, they were very unanimous and peaceable; there were no jars nor contentions among them; they were of the same mind and judgment in faith and practice, and of one heart and soul, and had a cordial affection for one another; and were all in one place, which seems to be the temple; see **Ac 2:46**. And indeed, no other place or house could hold so many as came to hear them, of which number three thousand were converted.

{l} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 65. 1. Gloss. in. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 100. fol. 88. 2. {m} T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 10. 1. {n} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 10. sect. 6. {o} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 3. sect. 1. {p} In Lev. xxiii. 15. {q} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 68. 2. {r} Zohar in Exod. fol. 34. 4. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 9. 4.

Acts 2:2

Ver. 2. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven,.... Which is expressive of the original of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, which come from above, from heaven, from the Father of lights; and of the freeness of them, being unmerited; and so come suddenly, at an unawares, being unthought of, undesired, and unexpected, and so certainly undeserved; and may be a symbol of the sound of the Gospel, which from hence was to go forth into all the earth; and may likewise express the rise of that, and the freeness of the grace of God in it, and its sudden spread throughout the world:

as of a rushing mighty wind; it was not a wind, but like one; and the noise it made, was like the rushing noise of a strong and boisterous wind, that carries all before it: the Spirit of God is sometimes compared to the wind, because of the freeness of his operations; as that blows where it listeth, so he works when and where, and on whom he pleases; and also because of the power and efficacy of his grace, which is mighty and irresistible, and works with great energy upon the minds of men; and as the wind is secret and invisible, so the operations of the Spirit are in a manner secret and imperceptible unto men: this may likewise be applied to the Gospel, when it comes with the Holy Ghost, and with power; it makes its way into the heart, and throws down the strong holds of sin and Satan; there it works effectually, though secretly, and is the power of God to salvation:

and it filled all the house where they were sitting; which was the temple, or the upper room or chamber in it, where they were assembled; so in the Ethiopic confession of faith {s} it is said,

"the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles, in the upper room of Zion;"

this may be a symbol of the Gospel filling the whole world.

{s} Vid. Ludolph. not. in Claud. reg. Ethiop. Confess. p. 13.

Acts 2:3

Ver. 3. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire,.... An emblem of the various tongues and languages, in which they were to preach the Gospel; these appearances were like flames of fire parted, and these parted flames looked like tongues; so, a flame of fire is with, the Jews called, va Nwvl, "a tongue of fire", **Isa 5:24** hence the Apostle James compares a tongue to fire, **Jas 3:6** this was the baptism with fire, John the Baptist speaks of, See Gill on "Mt 3:11"; and the Jews say {t},

"the holy blessed God baptizeth with fire, and the wise shall understand."

Through this baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, the apostles became more knowing, and had a greater understanding of the mysteries of the Gospel, and were more qualified to preach it to people of all nations and languages. The Holy Spirit, in his gifts and graces, is compared to fire, because of its purity, light, and heat, as well as consuming nature; the Spirit sanctifies, and makes men pure and holy, purges from the dross of sin, error and superstition; and enlightens the minds of men, and gives them knowledge of divine and spiritual things; and fills them with zeal and fervour for the glory of God and Christ, and the good of his church and interest, and for the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel; as well as fortifies them against their enemies, whom he consumes, according to **Zec 2:5** a passage of Scripture the Jews make use of in an uncommon sense; for they say {u}, that as

"Jerusalem was destroyed by fire, "by fire it shall be built again"; as it is said, **Zec 2:5** "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about"."

The pouring forth of the Spirit upon the apostles, in this form of cloven tongues, as of fire, was indeed the means of rebuilding Jerusalem, in a spiritual sense; or of founding the Gospel church state in the world:

and it sat upon each of them; the fire, or the Holy Ghost in the appearance of fire. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "and they sat upon each of them"; and so Beza's most ancient copy; that is, the cloven tongues sat on them; either one upon one of them and another upon another, or many upon each of them: where they sat, whether on their lips, or on their heads, it not certain, probably on the latter; nor how long they sat; however, their sitting upon them may denote the continuance of the gifts and graces of the Spirit with them. These cloven tongues cannot but bring to mind the division and confusion of the tongues or languages at Babel; which gave rise to different nations, and different religions; but these divided tongues gave rise to the spreading of the Gospel, and settling the true religion among the nations of the world. The Jews {w} seem to have respect to this account, when they tell us of

"lights from above, that came forth and dwelt in the synagogues, Nwhyvyrb, "on the heads" of those that prayed, and the lights Nyglptm, "were divided" upon their heads."

{t} R. Menachem in Lev. viii. apud Ainsworth in Gen. xvii. 12. {u} T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 65. 3. Seder Tepillot, fol. 23. 2. Ed. Basil. {w} Zohar in Num. fol. 79. 2.

Acts 2:4

Ver. 4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,.... With the gifts of the Holy Spirit; they had received the Spirit before, as a Spirit of grace, and were endowed with great gifts; but now they had great plenty of them, a large abundance; they were like vessels filled to the brim; they were as it were covered with them; there was an overflow of them upon them; and now it was, that they were baptized with him; See Gill on "Ac 1:5". Not only the twelve apostles, but the seventy disciples; and it may be all the hundred and twenty, that were together, even women as well as men: **Ac 2:17**.

And began to speak with other tongues; besides, and different from that in which they were born and brought up, and usually spake; they spake divers languages, one spoke one language, and another, another; and the same person spoke with various tongues, sometimes one language, and sometimes another. These are the new tongues, Christ told them they should speak with, Mr 16:17 such as they had never heard, learned, nor known before:

as the Spirit gave them utterance; they did not utter anything of themselves, and what came into their minds, things of little or no importance; nor in a confused and disorderly manner; but they were wise and weighty sentences they delivered, as the word signifies; even the wonderful works of God, **Ac 2:11** the great doctrines of the Gospel; and though in different languages, yet in a very orderly and distinct manner, so as to be heard and understood by the people. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, "as the Holy Spirit", &c.

Acts 2:5

Ver. 5. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews,.... The Ethiopic version adds, "proselytes"; but they were not all such, as appears from the following account of them; many, and it seems the most of them were of Jewish extract and descent, and others were proselytes to the Jewish religion: these were not natives of Jerusalem, but such as were born in other countries, **Ac 2:8** but were come to Jerusalem, either to learn the Hebrew language, which was necessary to their reading and understanding the books of Moses, and the prophets written in it; or for an increase of spiritual knowledge and piety; or, as is generally thought, to keep the feast of Pentecost; or rather, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, they were come hither in great numbers from all parts, in expectation of the Messiah and his kingdom; the time being up, according to Daniel's weeks, and other prophecies, that he should appear: and these were

devout men; men of religion and piety, of faith and holiness; and as the Syriac version renders it, "who feared God"; for in these worst of times, among this wicked generation of men, there were some who had the fear of God before their eyes, and on their hearts; and these were collected from different quarters, to be witnesses of this amazing dispensation: for they came

out of every nation under heaven; that is, wherever the Jews were dispersed; being the descendants of those that were carried captive at different times, and into different places; as by Salmanezer, Nebuchadnezzar, Ptolomy Lagus, Antiochus, and in other lesser dispersions.

Acts 2:6

Ver. 6. Now when this was noised abroad,.... Or "when this voice was made"; referring either to the sound, as of a mighty rushing wind, which came from heaven; and might not only be heard by those in the house, into which it came, but by the inhabitants of the city, as it came down from heaven; so the Arabic version renders it, "when the aforesaid sound was made": or else to the apostles' voice, and their speaking with divers tongues; which being heard by some, was told to others, and a rumour of it being made through the city,

the multitude came together; to the house, or temple, where the disciples were; and this multitude did not consist only of the devout Jews, before mentioned; but of others who scoffed and mocked at the apostles, and who had been concerned in the crucifying of Christ:

and were confounded; or "confused"; they ran and came together in a disorderly and tumultuous manner; the whole city was in an uproar, the assembly on this occasion was a perfect mob; their numbers were so large, that they were ready to thrust each other down, and trample one another under foot: the Vulgate Latin adds, "in mind"; they did not know what to think of things, they were so astonished at what they heard, that they were scarcely themselves; they were as persons stupid and senseless; being filled partly with shame and confusion, and partly with wonder and amazement, that these illiterate men, the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, and whose disciples they had in so much contempt, should have such extraordinary gifts bestowed on them:

because that every man heard them speak in his own language; which shows, what has been before observed, that one spake in one language, and another in another language; or the same person sometimes spoke one language, and sometimes another; so that in course, all languages were spoken by them; whence it appears, that it was not one language only which was spoken by the apostles, which men of different languages heard and understood, as if it was their own; for then the miracle must have been in the hearers, and not in the speakers; and the cloven tongues, as of fire, should rather have sat on them, than on the disciples; and these men be said to be filled with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, rather than they.

Acts 2:7

Ver. 7. And they were all amazed, and marvelled,.... They were struck with surprise, they were as it were out of themselves, like persons in an ecstasy, not knowing what could be the cause or meaning of this:

saying one to another; the phrase "one to another", is left out in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, and so it is in the Alexandrian copy:

behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? rude, unpolished, and unlearned men; who had never been brought up in any school of learning, and had never learned any language but their mother tongue; and that they pronounced with an ill grace, and in a very odd manner; and which made the thing the more astonishing to them. The apostles were inhabitants of Galilee, and so very likely were the greatest part of those that were with them: hence the Christians afterwards, by way of contempt, were called Galilaeans; as they are by Julian {x} the apostate, and others {y}.

{x} Opera, par. 1. Fragment. p. 557. & par. 2. Ep. 49. p. 203, 204. {y} Arrian. Epictet. l. 4. c. 7.

Acts 2:8

Ver. 8. And how hear we every man in our own tongue,.... Them speaking, as the Ethiopic version reads; that is, we everyone of us hear one or another, speak in the same language,

wherein we were born; our native language; for though these men were Jews by descent, yet were born and brought up in other countries, which language they spake; and not the Hebrew, or Syriac, or Chaldee.

Acts 2:9

Ver. 9. Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites,.... These are the words of the men continued, and not of the historian, as appears from **Ac 2:10** and so the Arabic version reads, "of us Persians, Parthians, and Medes"; that is, we hear them speak in the language of everyone of us: the order in this version is inverted, otherwise the same persons are intended; for the Elamites and Persians are the same: by the Parthians are meant, Jews that were born in Parthia, and had dwelt there, and who spoke the language of that country; and that there were Jews, in those parts, is clear from Josephus {z}, who speaks of them together with the Jews of other nations. Many of the Parthian Jews were afterwards converted to the Christian faith; to whom the Apostle John is thought, by some, to have written his first epistle; and which, by some of the ancients, is called the epistle to the Parthians. The kingdom of Parthia, according to Pliny {a}, Ptolomy {b}, and Solinus {c}, had Media on the west, Hyrcania on the north, Aria, or Ariana, on the east, and the desert of Carmania on the south; the metropolis of it was Hecatompylos, so called from the hundred gates that belonged to it; and which, it is thought, stood on the same spot of ground that Ispahan does now, the seat of the Sophies of Persia. And by the Medes are intended the Jews that were natives of Media: so called from "Madai", one of the sons of Japhet, Ge 10:2 and this, according to Ptolomy {d}, has on the north the Hyrcanian, or Gasptan sea, on the west Armenia Major and Assyria, and on the east Hyrcania and Parthia, and on the south Parthia. The Elamites are so called, from Elam the son of Shem, Ge 10:22 and these, according to Josephus {e}, were the founders of the Persians, or from whom they sprung; and so we find Elam and Media, and the kings of Elam, and the kings of the Medes, mentioned together in Scripture, Isa 21:2. And certain it is, that Elam was at least a part of the empire of Persia, in Daniel's time; for Shushan, where the kings of Persia then kept their palace, was in the province of Elam, **Da 8:2** and it is evident, that hither the Jews were carried captive, Isa 11:11. So that there might be some remaining in those parts, that were their descendants; and from hence also were people brought by Asnapper, into the cities of Samaria, to supply the room of those who were carried captive, and are called Elamites,

Ezr 4:9 And that there were Elamite Jews, may be concluded from the writings of the Jews; for so they say {f}, that

"the Hagiographa, or holy writings, which were written in the Coptic, Median, Hebrew, tymlye, "Elamite", and Greek tongues; though they did not read in them (on the sabbath day in time of service) they delivered them from the fire,"

when in danger of being burned: so the Megilla, or book of Esther, might not be read in the Coptic, Hebrew, Elamite, Median, and Greek languages; but it might be read in Coptic to Coptites, in Hebrew to Hebrews, Mymlyel tymlye, in "Elamite" to the "Elamites", and in Greek to the Greeks {g}; and such sort of Jews as the Elamite ones, were these in the text: the Syriac version reads Elanites; and so R. Benjamin in his Itinerary {h}, makes mention of a country called,
hynla, "Alania", and of a people called, Nala, "Alan"; and whom he speaks of in company with Babylon, Persia, Choresan, Sheba, and Mesopotamia; and may intend the same people as here: now these Parthian, Median, and Elamite Jews were such who descended from the captives of the ten tribes, carried away by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, whom he placed in Halah and Habor, and in the cities of the Medes, 2Ki 17:6. But besides these, there were also at Jerusalem, at this time, those who are next mentioned:

and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia; who came not quite so far off as the former: Mesopotamia is the same with what is called in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, Aram Naharaim, or Syria between the two rivers; that is, Tigris and Euphrates; the former was on the east of it, and the latter on the west, and Babylon was on the south, and Caucasus on the north; and so the Greek word Mesopotamia signifies a place between two rivers; see Ge 24:10. And the Jews have adopted it into their own language, calling it,
aymjwpom, "Mesopotamia" {i}; and the same name obtains with other writers {k}, and it has since been called Azania and Halopin; it belonged to that part of Assyria, called Chaldea; and these Mesopotamian Jews were the remains of those who were carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and though the Chaldean, or Syriac language was now spoken by the Jews, yet in a different manner than it was in Chaldea and Syria: and there were also the dwellers in Judea; by which is meant, that part of the land of Israel, which was distinct from Galilee, and where they used a different dialect from the Galilean Jews; and there were others, who were born, and had lived in Cappadocia. This was a country in Asia, in which were many famous cities; as Archalais, where Claudius Caesar put a Roman colony; and Neo Caesarea (the birth place of

Gregory Thaumaturgus); and Melita, built by Semiramis; and Mazaca {l}, which was the chief city; and so called from Meshech, the son of Japhet, since called Caesarea. The inhabitants of this country, Herodotus says {m},

"were by the Greeks called Syrians, and they were Syrians; and before the Persians had the government, they were subject to the Medea, and then to Cyrus."

And by Pliny {n} they are called, Leucosyrians. This country, according to Ptolomy {o}, had Galatia, and part of Pamphylia on the west, and on the south Cilicia, and part of Syria, and on the east Armenia the great, and on the north, part of the Euxine Pontus; it is now called Amasia, or Almasin: here were many Jews scattered abroad, some of which were afterwards believers in Christ, to whom Peter sent his epistles, **1Pe 1:1**. It had its former name from the river Cappadox, which, as Pliny {p} says, divided the Galatians and Leucosyrians, and this indeed is the reason of its name; in the Syriac language it is called, Kdpq, "Capdac", which comes from dpq; which signifies to "cut off", or "divide", as this river did the above people from one another; and hence the country was called Cappadocia, and the inhabitants Cappadocians: in the Jewish writings it is called, ayqjwpq, Capotakia; and which Maimonides {q} says, is the same with Caphtor; and in the Arabic language, is called Tamiati; and so Caphtor is rendered Cappadocia, and the Caphtorim Cappadocians, in the Targums of Onkelos, Jonathan, and Jerusalem, in Ge 10:14 and so in the Septuagint version of **De 2:23**. This country was near the land of Israel, and in it dwelt many Jews; they had schools of learning here, and had traditions peculiarly relating to it: as for instance,

"if a man married a wife in the land of Israel, and divorced her in Cappadocia, he must give her (her dowry) of the money of the land of Israel; and if he marries a wife in Cappadocia, and divorces her in the land of Israel, he may give her of the money of the land of Israel; Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel says, he must give her of the money of Cappadocia {r};"

for it seems the Cappadocian money was larger, and weighed more than that in the land of Israel: however,

"if a man marries a wife in Cappadocia, and divorces her in Cappadocia, he must give her of the money of Cappadocia."

And so R. Akiba speaks {s} of one, that he saw shipwrecked at sea; and when, says he, I came to the province of Cappadocia, he came and sat, and judged before me in the constitutions and traditions of the elders: from whence it is manifest, that here were people of the Jewish nation that dwelt in this country, and so at this time. As also in Pontus; hence the first epistle of Peter is sometimes called the epistle to the Pontians; that is, to the Jews of Pontus, then become Christians; Pontus was a country in lesser Asia, and according to Ptolomy {t}, it had on the west the mouth of Pontus, and the Thracian Bosphorus, and part of Propontis, on the north, part of the Euxine sea, and on the south the country which is properly called Asia, and on the east Galatia by Paphlagonia; it was the birth place of Marcion the heretic, of which Tertullian gives a most dismal account {u}: Asia here intends, neither Asia the greater, nor the less, but Asia properly so called; which had Lycia and Phrygia on the east, the Aegean shores on the west, the Egyptian sea on the south, and Paphlagonia on the north {w}; in which were Ephesus the chief city, and Smyrna and Pergamus, and where were many Jews; these might be the remains of those that were carried captive, and dispersed by Ptolomy Lagus; those who dwelt in the three last places spoke the Greek language.

{z} Prooem. ad Lib. de Bello Jud. sect. 2. & l. 2. c. 16. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 15, 25. {b} Geograph. l. 6. c. 5. {c} Polyhistor. c. 69. {d} Geograph. l. 6. c. 2. {e} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4. {f} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 115. 1. {g} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 18. 1. {h} P. 73. {i} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 30. fol. 25. 1. & sect. 44. fol. 38. 3. {k} Plin. l. 5. c. 12, 26. & 6. 26, 27. Ptolom. l. 5. c. 18. {l} Solin. Polyhistor. c. 57. {m} L. 1. c. 72. {n} L. 6. c. 3. {o} L. 5. c. 6. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 3. {q} In Misn. Cetubot, c. 13. sect. 11. & Bartenora in ib. {r} Misn. Cetubot, c. 13. sect. 11. T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 110, 2. {s} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 121. 1. {t} L. 5. c. 1. {u} Adv. Marcion. l. 1. c. 1. {w} Solinus, ib. c. 53.

Acts 2:10

Ver. 10. Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt,.... Phrygia was a country in Asia, and had part of Galatia on the north, Lycaonia, Pisidia, and Mygdonia on the south, and on the east Cappadocia {x}; here the Apostle Paul afterwards travelled, and strengthened the Christians; see Ac 16:6. Pamphylia, now called Setilia, is another country in Asia, formerly called Mopsopia {y}; which had on the west Lycia, and part of Asia, on the north Galatia, on the east Cilicia, and part of Cappadocia, and on the south the sea of Pamphylia {z}, of which mention is made in Ac 27:5. The chief city in it was Perga, where was a temple of Diana {a}, and here the Apostle Paul also was; see Ac 13:13. Others of these sojourning Jews lived in Egypt, which was a large country in Africa; which had on the east the deserts of Arabia, on the west Libya, on the south

Ethiopia, and on the north the Mediterranean sea; hither many Jews were carried captive by Ptolomy Lagus, and these spoke the Egyptian language:

and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene; there were others at Jerusalem, which came from hence, The Arabic version reads this clause, "and in the parts of Africa, which is our country"; and Pliny says {b}, the Greeks call Africa, Libya. The Jews say {c}, Libya in Egypt; and for proselytes from Libya, they wait three generations; that is, before they receive them: Cyrene, or Cyreniaca, which is no other than upper Libya, is called by Pliny {d}, the Pentapolitan country, from the five cities in it; Berenice, Arsinoe, Ptolemais, Apollonia, and Cyrene: to these are added,

and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes; that is, as the Syriac version renders it, "those that came from Rome"; to which the Arabic agrees: they were natives and inhabitants of the city of Rome, though now they were at Jerusalem; and some of these were Jews by birth, and lineal descent, though born at Rome; and others were such as were proselytes of righteousness, who were originally Gentiles, but were now circumcised, and had embraced the Jewish religion; concerning such, See Gill on "Mt 23:15". These doubtless spoke in the Roman, or Latin tongue.

{x} Plin. l. 5. c. 32. {y} Ib. c. 27. {z} Ptolom. l. 5. c. 5. {a} Plin. l. 5. c. 27. Ptolom, ib. &. Mela, l. 1. c. 14. {b} Plin. l. 5. in principio. {c} T. Hieros. Kilaim, fol. 31. 3. & Sabbat, fol. 7. 2. {d} L. 5. c. 5.

Acts 2:11

Ver. 11. Cretes and Arabians,.... The former are either the same with the Cretians, **Tit 1:12** the inhabitants of the island of Crete, Ac 27:7 now called Candia or Candy, which has on the north the Aegean sea, on the south the Libyan or African sea, on the west the Adriatic sea, and on the east the Carpathian sea. In it were an hundred cities; the most famous of which were, Gnosos, Cortyna, Lyctos, Lycastos, Holopixos, Phaestos, Cydon, Manethusa, Dyctynna {e}, and others; these spoke the Greek language; yet not the Attic, for the Cretian and Attic speech are distinguished {f}: or else, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, these were the same with the Cherethim or Cherethites, in Eze 25:16 whom the Septuagint interpreters call Cretes, as here; since these are mentioned with the Philistines, to whose land Arabia joined; the inhabitants of which are next mentioned here. There were three Arabias; Arabia Petraea, which had on the west part of Egypt, and on the north Judea, and part of Syria, on the south the Red sea, and on the east Arabia Felix. The second was called Arabia Deserta, and had on the north part of Mesopotamia, and on the east Babylonia, on the south Arabia Felix, and on the west, part of Syria and Arabia Petraea. The third was called Arabia Felix, and had on the north the south sides of Petraea and Arabia Deserta, and the more southern part of the Persian gulf, on the west the gulf of Arabia, and on the south the Red sea, and on the east, part of the Persian gulf {g}; and here dwelt Jews who spoke the Arabic language. Now these Jews, of different nations, declared concerning the apostles, saying,

we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God; not the works of creation and providence, though these are great and wonderful; but of redemption, pardon, atonement, justification, and salvation, by the Messiah, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and also of his resurrection from the dead; things which struck them with amazement, and the more, that such illiterate persons should have such knowledge of them, and should be able to speak of them in such a clear, distinct, and powerful manner; and still the more, that they should speak of them in their several tongues in which they were born, and to which they were used, and which the apostles had never learned: and this they heard with their own ears, and were fully satisfied that they did speak divers languages.

{e} Mela, l. 2. c. 14. Vid. Solin. c. 16. & Plin. l. 4. c. 12. {f} Laert. in. vit. Epimenidis. {g} Ptolom. Geograph. l. 5. c. 17, & 19. & l. 6. c. 7.

Acts 2:12

Ver. 12. And they were all amazed,.... That is, all these devout men, Jews and proselytes, which came from other nations before mentioned:

and were in doubt; not whether the apostles spoke in various languages, nor about the sense of their words; for they not only heard them with their ears, and were assured of the facts, but they seem also to understand what was said, since they call the things delivered, the great or wonderful things of God; but they were at a loss in their minds what should be the cause of this, or the reason of such a dispensation,

saying, one to another, what meaneth this? from whence is it? what is the design of it? or what the end to be answered by it? or what will follow upon it? surely something considerable.

Acts 2:13

Ver. 13. Others mocking, said,.... These were the native inhabitants of Jerusalem, the common people; and it may be also the Scribes and Pharisees, who did not understand the languages in which the apostles spake, and therefore derided them both by words and gestures:

these men are full of new wine; the Syriac, version adds, "and are drunk"; a very foolish and impertinent cavil this; there was, at this time of the year, no new wine, just pressed, or in the fat; and if there had been any, and they were full of it, it could never have furnished them with a faculty of speaking with many tongues; men generally lose their tongues by intemperance. They were indeed filled with wine, but not with wine, the juice of the grape, either new or old; but with spiritual wine, with the gifts of the Spirit of God, by which they spake with divers tongues. They might hope this insinuation, that they were drunk with wine, would take and be received, since it was a feasting time, the feast of Pentecost; though, as Peter afterwards observes; it was too early in the day to imagine this to be their case.

Acts 2:14

Ver. 14. But Peter standing up with the eleven,.... Apostles; their number being now complete, Matthias being chosen in the room of Judas. These all at once rose up, as abhorring the fact they were charged with, and to show the falsehood of it, and to vindicate themselves; when Peter, as their mouth, stood "in the midst" of them, as the Ethiopic version reads, with great courage, boldness, and intrepidity of mind: and "lift up his voice"; that he might be heard by the whole multitude, that was gathered together, as well as to show his zeal and fervour of spirit, and fortitude of mind; for being endued with the Spirit from on high, he was fearless of men, who but a little while ago was frightened by a servant maid.

And said unto them, ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem; which shows that they were the natives and citizens of Jerusalem that mocked and scoffed; for to these the apostle addresses himself.

Be this known unto you, and hearken to my words; as follows.

Acts 2:15

Ver. 15. For these are not drunken,.... Meaning not only the eleven apostles, but the rest of the hundred and twenty, on whom also the Spirit was poured forth, and who were endowed with his extraordinary gifts:

as ye suppose; and had given out that they were: and this shows the sense of being filled with new wine; that they meant that they were really drunk, and which they believed, or at least would have had others believe it; the unreasonableness of which supposition and suggestion the apostle argues from the time of day:

seeing it is but the third hour of the day; or nine of the clock in the morning: for till this time it was not usual with the Jews, if men of any sobriety or religion, so much as to taste anything: the rules are these {h},

"it is forbidden a man to taste anything, or do any work after break of day, until he has prayed the morning prayer."

Now

"the morning prayer, the precept concerning it is, that a man should begin to pray as soon as the sun shines out; and its time is until the end of the fourth hour, which is the third part of the day {i}."

So that a man might not taste anything, either of eatables or drinkables, until the fourth hour, or ten o'clock in the morning: hence it is said {k}, that

"after they offered the daily sacrifice they ate bread,
Nyev ebra Nmzb, "at the time of four hours":"

or on the fourth hour, and sooner than this it was not lawful to eat, even ever so little; and whoever did, was not reckoned fit to be conversed with.

"Says R. Isaac {l}, whoever eats a green or herb before the fourth hour, it is forbidden to converse with him; and the same says, it is unlawful to eat a raw herb before the fourth hour. Amemar, and Mar Zutra, and Rab Ashe were sitting, and they brought before them a raw herb before the fourth hour. Amemar and Rab Ashe ate, and Mar Zutra did not eat: they said to him, what is thy meaning? (he replied) that R. Isaac said, whoever eats a herb before the fourth hour, it is forbidden to converse with him."

The time for taking food by persons of different characters, is thus expressed by them:

"the first hour is the time of eating for the Lydians, the second for thieves, the third for heirs, the fourth for labourers, the fifth for every man; is it not so? Saith R. Papa, the fourth is the time of repast for every man; but (the truth is) the fourth is the time of eating for every man, the fifth for labourers, and the sixth for the disciples of the wise men {m}."

Hence that advice {n},

""at the fourth hour", go into a cook's shop, (or tavern,) if thou seest a man drinking wine, and holding the cup in his hands, and slumbering, inquire about him, if he is one of the wise doctors, &c."

The "gloss" upon it is,

"at the fourth hour, for that is the time of eating, when all go into the shops (or taverns) to eat."

Now whereas they that are drunken are drunken in the night, and not in the day, and much less so soon in the day, when it was not usual, at least with religious men, to have tasted anything by this time; and whereas the apostles, and their company, were sober and religious men, and had never done thing to forfeit their character, it was unreasonable to suppose anything of this kind in them.

{h} Maimon. Hilch, Tophilla, c. 6. sect. 4. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 28. 2. {i} lb. c. 3. sect. 1. Vid. T. Beracot, fol. 26. 2. {k} Targum in Eccl. x. 17. {l} T. Bab. Betacot, fol. 44. 2. {m} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 10. 1. {n} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 83. 2.

Acts 2:16

Ver. 16. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. This affair, which is a matter of wonder and amazement with some, and of speculation with others, and of ridicule and contempt with the most, not the effect of wine, but the fulfilment of a prophecy in Joe 2:28 and is that effusion of the Spirit there foretold; and this prophecy is by the Jews themselves allowed to belong to the world to come, or to the times of the Messiah. Some of their commentators {o} say, that it refers dytel, "to time to come"; by which they frequently mean the times of the Messiah; and another says {p} expressly, that they belong xyvmh tymyl, "to the days of the Messiah"; and in one of their Midrashes {q} it is observed, that

"the holy blessed God says in this world they prophesy single, (particular persons,) but "in the world to come" all "Israel" shall become prophets, as it is said, **Joe 2:28** "and it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men", &c. So expounds R. Tanchums with R. Aba."

{o} Jarchi in Joel ii. 28. & R. Jeshuah in Aben Ezra in loc. {p} R. David Kimchi in loc. {q} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 219. 2.

Acts 2:17

Ver. 17. And it shall come to pass in the last days,.... In Joel it is, "afterwards"; instead of which Peter puts, "in the last days"; the sense is the same: and so R. David Kimchi, a celebrated commentator with the Jews, observes, that "afterwards" is the same "as in the last days", and which design the times of the Messiah; for according to a rule given by the same writer on **Isa 2:2** wherever the last days are mentioned, the days of the Messiah are intended.

Saith God, or "the Lord", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read. This clause is added by Peter, and is not in Joel; and very rightly, since what follow are the words of God speaking in his own person:

I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; not "upon every animal", as the Ethiopic version renders it: this is extending the sense too far, as the interpretation the above named Jewish writer gives, limits it too much, restraining it to the people of Israel. It being a maxim with them, that the Shekinah does not dwell but in the land of Israel; and also that prophecy, or a spirit of prophecy, does not dwell on any but in the holy land {r}. For though as it regards the first times of the Gospel, it may chiefly respect some persons among the Jews, yet not to the exclusion of the Gentiles; and it designs all sorts of persons of every age, sex, state, and condition, as the distribution afterwards shows. Jarchi's note upon it is, "upon everyone whose heart is made as tender as flesh; as for example, "and I will give an heart of flesh", Eze 36:26."

By the Spirit is meant the gifts of the Spirit, the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, of understanding the mysteries of the Gospel, of explaining the Scriptures, and of speaking with tongues; and by the pouring of it out, is intended the abundance and great plenty of the gifts and graces of the Spirit bestowed; but yet not all of him, or all his gifts and grace in the large extent of them: therefore it is said, not "my Spirit", but "of my Spirit", or "out of it"; as out of an unfathomable, immeasurable, and inexhaustible fountain and fulness:

and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy: or foretell things to come, as Agabus, and the four daughters of Philip the Evangelist, Ac 21:9

and your young men shall see visions; as Ananias, **Ac 9:10**, and Peter, Ac 10:17 and Paul when a young man, Ac 22:17 and John, the youngest of the apostles, **Re 1:10** though he was in years, when he saw the visions in the Revelations:

and your old men shall dream dreams; or shall have night visions, as Paul at Troas, Ac 16:9 and in his voyage when at sea, Ac 27:23. The order of the words is inverted, this last clause stands first in Joel; perhaps the change is made, because the apostles were young men, on whom the Spirit was poured; and the thing was the more wonderful that so it should be, than if they had been old men.

{r} Zohar in Gen. fol. 118. 4. & 128. 4.

Acts 2:18

Ver. 18. And on my servants, and on my handmaidens,.... In Joel it is only the servants and the handmaids; and which Kimchi interprets of strangers that should stand in the land of Israel, and serve the Israelites. But these phrases do not seem so much to describe the civil state and condition of those persons, as their religious character, being such as were brought, by the power of divine grace, to yield a cheerful obedience to the will of God; though it may also regard the former, and show, that with God there is no distinction and difference of bond or free, of rich or poor; contrary to a maxim of the Jews {s}, that the Shekinah does not dwell but upon a wise man, a mighty man, and a rich man.

I will pour out, in those days, of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy; see the note on the preceding verse, from whence this clause, "and they shall prophesy", is repeated; for it is not in the text in Joel; which is done to point at the end and effect of the Spirit being poured down upon them.

{s} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 92. 1.

Acts 2:19

Ver. 19. And I will show wonders in heaven above,.... The word above is not in Joel, nor in the Syriac version here, as neither the word "beneath", in the next clause. This may refer either to the appearance of angels, and of an extraordinary star at the birth of Christ; or rather to comets and blazing stars, and particularly to that comet which, in the form of a flaming sword, hung over Jerusalem, and the forms of armies in the heavens engaged together, which were seen before, and portended the destruction of that city {t}:

and signs in the earth beneath; meaning either the miracles done by Christ, and his apostles, on earth; or those surprising events in Judea and in Jerusalem, a flame was seen in the temple, the doors of it opened of themselves, and a voice was heard in it, saying, let us go hence; and an idiot went about several years together, saying, woe to the people, woe to the city, &c.

blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: by blood is meant not the blood of Christ, either his bloody sweat in the garden, or what he shed on the cross, but the blood of the Jews, shed in war, and in internal seditions and murders: and by "fire" is designed not the Holy Ghost, who now appeared in cloven tongues, as of fire, but the conflagration of the city and temple of Jerusalem, and of many other towns and villages. And by "vapours of smoke"; or, as in the Hebrew text, "pillars of smoke", ascending in upright columns, like palm trees, are intended literally, the vast quantities of smoke that would arise from such burnings; so that the very heavens would be clouded and darkened with them, and sun and moon appear in the following form.

{t} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 3.

Acts 2:20

Ver. 20. The sun shall be turned into darkness,.... As at the death of Christ, by a total eclipse of it:

and the moon into blood; as at the opening of the sixth seal, **Re 6:12**

before that great and notable day of the Lord come; when he shall come in power and great glory, as he did in a few years after this, to take vengeance on the Jews, and destroy their nation, city, and temple; in which there was a display of his greatness, and power, and which was awful and "terrible" to them, as in Joel it is called;
See Gill on "Mt 24:29".

Acts 2:21

Ver. 21. And it shall come to pass,.... Even at that time, when these signs shall appear, and the destruction is hastening on, that

whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord; shall believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with the heart, and shall confess him with the mouth, and shall worship him in Spirit and in truth, and submit to all his ordinances and commands; for invocation of the Lord includes the whole of worship, internal and external:

shall be saved; or delivered from that temporal destruction which came upon the Jews, as the Christians were by removing from Jerusalem to Pella, as they were directed {u}; and shall be saved with a spiritual and everlasting salvation by Jesus Christ;
See Gill on "Ro 10:13".

{u} Vid. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 5.

Acts 2:22

Ver. 22. Ye men of Israel hear these words,.... The Arabic version prefaces this passage with these words, "in those days Peter stood and said unto the people"; as if it was not on the same day, and the following oration was a new one, and not a continued discourse with the former; whereas it was delivered at the same time, and is in connection with what goes before. Only the apostle having finished the vindication of his brethren, and the whole society, and set that matter in a clear light; and being willing to take this opportunity of preaching Christ to the Jews, addresses them under another character in a new form of words, though to the same sense as in **Ac 2:14** in order to soften their minds, and raise their attention, and proceeds to describe the person, the subject of his following discourse:

Jesus of Nazareth; first by his name Jesus, which the angel gave him before his birth; and that for this reason, because he is the Saviour of his people from their sins, and which his name signifies; and next by the place, not where he was born, for that was Bethlehem, but where he was educated and brought up, and where he lived the greatest part of his life, Nazareth, a city in Galilee; whence he was so called, generally by way of contempt, and not so much to distinguish him from any of the same name:

a man approved of God; he was truly and really a man, who in his incarnation assumed a true body, and a reasonable soul; but he was not a mere man, and much less a common and ordinary man: he was the famous son of man the Scriptures speak of; the man of God's right hand, the man his fellow, a great, mighty, and wonderful man: "approved by God"; or shown, declared, and demonstrated by him, to be sent by him in human nature, to be the true Messiah and Saviour of the world, who was the chosen of God, loved and honoured by him, whom he sealed, and bore a testimony to; and that not privately, but openly and publicly:

among you; in the face of all the people in Jerusalem, and in the temple, and at the time of public feasts:

by miracles, and wonders, and signs; by dispossessing devils, cleansing lepers, restoring sight to the blind, causing the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk, and by raising the dead:

which God did by him in the midst of you; not but that he did the miracles himself, as and the Son of God; but as he was man, God did them, by his human nature, as the instrument: the meaning is, that his miracles were wrought by a divine power, and not by a diabolical influence, by Beelzebub the prince of devils, as the Pharisees blasphemously said of him; and these were done, not in a corner, but in the midst of them:

as ye yourselves also know; for they must be sensible and convicted in their own consciences, not only that these things were done by him, but that they could not be done by him, unless God was with him, or he was from God; and so were testimonies both of the divine approbation of him, and of his deity and

Messiahship.

Acts 2:23

Ver. 23. Him being delivered,.... By himself, according to his own will, for he gave, or delivered himself for his people; and by his Father, who spared him not, but delivered him up for us all; and by Judas, one of his disciples, who, for a sum of money, delivered him into the hands of the Jews; and by them he was delivered up to Pilate, the Roman governor; and by him back again to the Jews, and to the soldiers, to crucify him: and all this

by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; God not only foreknew that it would be, but determined that it should be, who does all things after the counsel of his own will; and this for the salvation of his people, and for the glorifying of his divine perfections: though this fixed resolution, settled purpose, and wise determination of God, did not in the least excuse the sin of Judas in betraying him, or of Pilate in condemning him, or of the Jews in crucifying him; nor did it at all infringe the liberty of their wills in acting, who did what they did, not by force, but voluntarily:

ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; they took him in the garden, and bound him, and had him first before the high priest, then before Pilate, the Roman governor, and cried out with one voice, in a most vehement manner, for the crucifying of him, which, at their importunity, was granted, though no fault was found in him; and therefore are justly charged with slaying, or murdering him.

Acts 2:24

Ver. 24. Whom God raised up,.... From the dead; for though his life was taken away by men, he was raised to life again by God the Father, to whom the resurrection of Christ is generally ascribed, though not to the exclusion of Christ himself, and the blessed Spirit; and this being what the apostles were witnesses of, and the Jews endeavoured to stifle as much as they could, it being the sign Christ gave them of the truth of his Messiahship; and this being also a fundamental article of the Christian religion, the apostle enlarges upon it:

having loosed the pains of death; this may be understood either of what Christ had done for his people by dying for them; he had abolished death; he had took away its sting, and delivered them from the curse of it, having fulfilled the law, satisfied justice, and made full atonement for their sin; so that though they die, death is not a penal evil to them, nor shall they always continue under the power of it: or of what God did in raising Christ from the dead; he delivered him from the power of death, by which he was held in the grave, and which is expressed by a word which signifies pains and sorrows, even those of a woman in travail; which though he felt not now, he had gone through them; his low state in the grave was the effect of them; and these are said to be loosed when he was raised up, he being so entirely delivered from them, as that they should never come upon him more: and it is to be observed, that the same word in the Hebrew language, and so in the Chaldee and Syriac, in which Peter might speak, signifies both cords and sorrows; and we often read in Talmudic and Rabbinic {w} writings, of xyvm lv wlbx, "the sorrows", or "pains" of the Messiah. The death which Christ died, being the death of the cross, was a very painful one: he endured great pains in his body, smote with rods, and buffeted with the hands of men; by being scourged and whipped, and having a crown of thorns platted on his head; but the pains of the cross were still greater, his body being stretched out upon it, and fastened to it by nails drove through his hands and feet, and then reared up, and jogged in the earth, where he hung upon it in extreme agony, till he expired: and these pains he endured, not through want of love to him in his Father, who, as he does not willingly grieve and afflict the children of men, so neither would he his own Son; nor was it on account of any sin of his, for he knew none, nor did he commit any; but he was wounded, and bruised, and endured these sorrows and pains for the sins of his people: as he was their surety, it was necessary he should die, because the wages of sin is death, and the justice and veracity of God required it; and it was proper he should die the painful death of the cross, because of the types and prophecies of it, and chiefly that he might appear to be made a curse for his people: though more must be meant here than the pains he endured in the moment and article of death, since they ceased at death, and he was then freed from them; whereas the text speaks of a loosing him from them at his resurrection, which supposes that they continued on him until that time; wherefore these pains of death also signify the power and dominion death had over him, and continued to have over him in the grave; with the cords of which he was bound and held, till he was loosed by raising him from the dead. Dr. Goodwin is of opinion, that these words are to be understood, not of the resurrection of Christ's body from the pains and power of death, but at least chiefly of the recovery and revival of his soul from those spiritual agonies which attended him, and from which he was loosed and delivered before his death; and the rather, because as before observed, at death the pains of it are gone, the bitterness of it is over, and nothing is felt in the grave; besides, the word here used signifies the pains of a woman in travail, **1Th 5:3** and seems best to agree with those inward sufferings of Christ, which are called "the travail of his soul", Isa 53:11 and which, like the pangs of a woman in labour, came upon him gradually: four or five days before his death he said, "now is my soul troubled", Joh 12:27. The night in which he was betrayed, when he came into the garden, he began to be sorrowful, and heavy, and sore amazed; and at length he breaks out, and says, "my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death", Mt 26:37 and after some time his pains increase, and being in agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, Lu 22:44 but the sharpest pains were yet to come, and which he endured when on the cross, being forsaken by his God and Father, Mt 27:46 and which arose partly from the sins of his people, the filth and guilt of them laid upon him, which must be very distressing to his pure and holy mind; and from the wrath of God, and curse of the law, which he sustained as the punishment for them; and it was necessary he should bear the whole punishment due to sin, the punishment of sense, or feel the wrath of God, and the strokes of divine justice, and the punishment of loss, or be deprived of the divine presence; and these sorrows of soul may be well called the pains or sorrows of death, because they were unto death, and issued in it; a corporeal death followed upon them; and when he was in the garden, and on the cross, it might be truly said, "the sorrows of death compassed him about", Ps 18:4 but from these he was loosed just before his death, when he said, "it is finished"; the darkness was over; the light of God's countenance broke out upon him; he heard his cry, and helped him in the acceptable time, in the day of salvation; his anger, as a judge, was turned away from him, justice being entirely satisfied; and therefore it was not possible he should be held any longer with these cords and sorrows of death; for he being an infinite person, was able to bear all the wrath of God at once, which was due to sin, and therefore did not bring on him an eternal death as on the wicked, he sustaining and satisfying for all at once; and, like another Samson, broke asunder these cords like threads, and was loosed from them. But after all, though these are very great truths; yet, according to the order in which these words lie, being placed after the account of the crucifixion and death of Christ, they seem rather to respect the resurrection of his body, and the loosing it from the power and dominion of death; and in such sense as never to return to it, or any more feel the pains of it. One of Stephen's copies reads, "the pains of Hades", or the invisible state; and the Vulgate Latin version, "the pains of hell"; as in Ps 18:5 where the grave is meant; and the Syriac version, lwavd hylbx, "the pains", or "cords of the grave": the word "cords", or "bands", best agrees with the word "loosing"; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "the bands of death".

Because it was not possible he should be holden of it: of death, and under the power of it; partly, because of the power and dignity of his person, as the Son of God, he being still the Prince of life, and who by dying abolished death, and him that had the power of it; and partly, because as the surety of his people, he had made full satisfaction for sin, and had brought in an everlasting righteousness, and therefore ought in justice to be discharged, and detained a prisoner no longer; as also because of the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning his resurrection, which must be fulfilled, as follows.

{w} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. Alkath Rocel, l. 1. p. 1. & passim.

Acts 2:25

Ver. 25. For David speaketh concerning him,.... The Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, in Ps 16:8. The whole psalm belongs to the Messiah, and everything concerning the person in it agrees with him; such as his trust in God, Ps 16:1 as he was man and Mediator; his very great regard to the saints, and delight in them, Ps 16:2 his disregard to others who were hastening after another God, or another Saviour, whose sacrifices, as an high priest, he would not offer up, nor make intercession for them, Ps 16:4 his exceeding great satisfaction in having the God of Israel for his portion, and in having his lot cast among his peculiar people, who were a delightful inheritance to him, Ps 16:5 his thankfulness for advice and direction in the time of his sorrows and sufferings; and his dependence on the almighty power of God to support and protect him, Ps 16:7 and the joy and comfort he was filled with in the view of his resurrection from the dead, and his enjoyment of the heavenly glory, Ps 16:9,

I foresaw the Lord always before my face; Christ always had Jehovah in view throughout the whole of his life; and in his last moments he had respect unto the glory of his perfections, as the ultimate end of his obedience and sufferings; and to his purposes, council, and covenant, which were to be accomplished by him; and to his will and command in preaching the Gospel, working miracles, going about to do good, in obeying the precept, and bearing the penalty of the law; as well as to his promises, and his power to assist, support, and preserve him, as man and Mediator:

for he is on my right hand; which expresses his nearness to him, his presence with him, his readiness to assist him, and his protection of him; as if he was his second that stood by him, to take his part, and, if need be, to take up his cause, and defend him from his enemies; see Ps 109:31

that I should not be moved; from his station, place, and duty; from the cause he was engaged in, so as to relinquish it; or with the fear of men, or fury of devils, or wrath of God, whilst he was doing and suffering, according to the will of God.

Acts 2:26

Ver. 26. Therefore did my heart rejoice,.... Because that he had always the truth, faithfulness, and power of God in his view, and the presence and protection of God with him; and which are sufficient to make the hearts of his people, as well as of him, to rejoice:

and my tongue was glad: in the Hebrew text it is, "my glory"; and so the Syriac version renders it here; which Kimchi explains of the soul, because that is the glory of the body; but our apostle rightly interprets it of the tongue, which is so called, Ps 30:12 and
Ps 57:8 and Ps 108:1 because it is both the glory of man, for that being endowed with the faculty of speaking, gives him a glory above the brute creatures; and because it is that by which he glorifies God, by ascribing greatness to him, speaking of his marvellous works, and singing his praises, as Christ did, in the great congregation, among his apostles, a little before his death.

Moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope, or "safely"; meaning, that his body should lie quietly in the grave, as in its resting place from all toil and labour, pains and sorrows, and be secure from worms, or any corruption. Or this may be understood of his person being in a quiet, firm, and full hope of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal life and glory.

Acts 2:27

Ver. 27. Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,.... This is an apostrophe, or an address to his Father, who he believed would not leave his soul, as separate from his body, in Hades, in the invisible world of souls, in the place where the souls of departed saints are, but would quickly return it to its body, and reunite them; or else, that he would not leave his dead body, for so vpn sometimes signifies; see Le 19:28 in the grave; which is no unusual sense of lwav; see Ge 42:38 that is, so long as to be corrupted and putrefy, as the next clause shows:

neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. The character of an "Holy One" well agrees with Christ, both as God, or with respect to his divine nature, holiness being a perfection in it, and in which he is glorious; and as man, he being holy in his nature, harmless in his life and conversation: all his doctrines were pure and holy, and so were all his works; and all his administrations in the discharge of every of his office; and he is the efficient cause and lain of all the holiness of his people; they are sanctified in him, and by him, and have all their sanctification from him. The word may be rendered, "thy merciful", or "bountiful one"; and such Christ is, a merciful, as well as faithful high priest; and who has shown great compassion both to the bodies and souls of men, and has been very beneficent and liberal in the distributions of his grace and goodness. Now, though he died, and was laid in the grave, and buried, yet God would not suffer him to lie there so long as to be corrupted and putrefied, which is the sense of seeing corruption: and so the Jews themselves explain the last clause of the preceding verse, in connection with this, "my flesh shall rest in hope", that no worm or maggot should have power over it, or corrupt it.

"Seven fathers (they say {x}) dwell in eternal glory, and there is no helwtw hmr, "worm or maggot", rules over them; and these are they, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and Aaron, and Amram their father; and there are that say also David, as it is said, Ps 16:1, "therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth, my flesh also shall rest in hope"."

And which sense also is mentioned by one of their commentators of note {y}, who thus paraphrases the words:

"whilst I am alive it shall rest safely, for thou wilt deliver me from all hurt; and in the mystical sense, or according to the Midrash, after death; intimating, that no maggot or worm should have power over him;"

which was not true of David, but is of the Messiah.

{x} Massecheth Derech Eretz Zuta, c. 1. fol. 19. 1. {y} Kimchi in Psal. xvi. 9.

Acts 2:28

Ver. 28. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life,.... That is, thou hast raised me from the dead. When God raised Christ from the dead, he showed him, or made him to know experimentally the way of life, or the way of the resurrection from death to life; and this path of life, or of the resurrection to an immortal and eternal life, was first shown to Christ, who is the first fruits of them that slept, and the first begotten from the dead.

Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance; or glorious presence, in which is fulness of joy; which Christ, as man, is in, and fully possessed of, being exalted at the right hand of God, and crowned with glory and honour, and has all the joy that was set before him in his sufferings and death.

Acts 2:29

Ver. 29. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you,.... The apostle calls the Jews, brethren, whom he before only styled men of Judea, and men of Israel, because they were his brethren according to the flesh, as many of them afterwards were in a spiritual relation; and the rather he adds this affectionate appellation to soften their minds, and prepare them to receive the account he was about to give of David, and of his prophecy of the Messiah, and his resurrection; in which he used much freedom of speech, consistent with truth, good sense, and strong reasoning; which he thought might be allowed to take, and they would not be displeased at, in discoursing to them

of the patriarch David; who was a "head of the fathers", as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; a prince of the tribes of Israel; one of the greatest kings the tribes of Israel ever had; and therefore this name well becomes him; though it is more commonly given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the heads of the twelve tribes:

that he is both dead, and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day; it is a plain case, and a certain matter of fact, which nobody disputes or denies, that David really died, and was laid in the grave, and that his monument, or tomb, was still extant, so that he was not risen from the dead; and therefore the above citation could not respect him, but another, even the Messiah, and had been literally fulfilled in Jesus. The Jews say {z}, that David died on the day of Pentecost; which was the very day on which Peter was now preaching; he was buried in Jerusalem, and his sepulchral monument was in being when Peter said these words. And Josephus relates {a}, that the sepulchre of David was opened by Hyrcanus, who took out of it three thousand talents; and that it was afterwards opened by Herod {b}: which, if true, may serve to render credible what Peter says concerning its continuance to that day. Though it may be questioned whether any such treasure was ever in it, or taken out of it; and still less credible is the account which R. Benjamin {c} gives of two men in his time, who, under the wall of Zion, found a cave, which led them to a large palace built on pillars of marble, and covered with gold and silver; and within it was a table, and a golden sceptre, and a crown of gold; and this, says the author, was the sepulchre of David, king of Israel.

{z} T. Hieros. Chagiga, fol. 78. 1. {a} De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 5. & Antiqu. l. 7. c. 15. sect. 3. {b} Ib. l. 16. c. 7. sect. 1. {c} Itinerar. p. 45, 46.

Acts 2:30

Ver. 30. Therefore being a prophet,.... Who could foretell things to come, as he did many things concerning the sufferings and death of Christ, and the circumstances attending it, concerning his resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God. So the title of his "Psalms", in the Syriac version, runs thus; the "Book of the Psalms of David, King and Prophet": and in the Arabic version, "the First Book of the Psalms of David the Prophet, King of the Children of Israel". Though the Jews {d} will not allow him, nor Solomon, nor Daniel, to be strictly and properly prophets, they make a difference between prophecy, and the Holy Spirit. They own, that the book of Psalms was written under the influence of the Holy Spirit, but not by prophecy; and therefore they place it among the Hagiographa, or holy writings, but not among the Prophets: though after all, Kimchi allows David to be a prophet, since he is called a man of God; for he says this name is not said of any but aybn le, "of a prophet" {e}; and Peter is right in calling him so:

and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him; as he did in Ps 132:11.

that of the fruit of his loins; of one that should be of his seed, that should spring from him, even the Virgin Mary, who was of the house and lineage of David:

according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ; would send him forth, according to the human nature; for this phrase respects not his resurrection from the dead, but his incarnation or exhibition in the flesh, as in **Ac 3:26**. This clause is wanting in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and in the Alexandrian copy, and should be read in a parenthesis; since it is not in the text in Ps 132:11.

to sit on his throne; on the throne of David his father;
See Gill on "Lu 1:32".

{d} Maimon. More Nevochim, par. 2. c. 45. Vid. Procop. Gazaeum in Reg. l. 2. c. 23. sect. 2. {e} Kimchi Praefat. ad Psalm.

Acts 2:31

Ver. 31. He seeing this before,.... Or by a spirit of prophecy foreseeing it, that according to God's promise and oath, the Messiah would be raised up, and spring from his seed; and also by the same Spirit foresaw that he would suffer and die, and be laid in the grave, the pit of corruption:

spake of the resurrection of Christ; from the dead, to the sense of the following words, in Ps 16:10.

that his soul was not left in hell: neither his separate soul in Hades, nor his body in the grave;

neither his flesh did see corruption; or his body, or his "carcass", as the Syriac version renders it, did not lie so long in the grave as to rot and putrefy.

Acts 2:32

Ver. 32. This Jesus hath God raised up,.... That is, from the dead,

whereof we are all witnesses; namely, of his resurrection, they having seen him, and heard him, and ate, and drank, and conversed with him since his resurrection; and which was true, not of the twelve apostles only, but of the whole company: or "we are all his witnesses"; either of God, who raised Christ from the dead; or of Christ who was raised by him; and indeed, they bore testimony to the whole of this, to Christ, and to his resurrection, and to its being done by God the Father.

Acts 2:33

Ver. 33. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted,.... After his resurrection he ascended to heaven, and was exalted in human nature; "to the right hand of God", as the Ethiopic version; and the Arabic version used by De Dieu read; an honour that never was conferred on any creature, angels or men, besides: or he was exalted and raised to the high honour and dignity of a Prince and Saviour, of Lord, Head, and King, so as to have a name, dominion, and authority over all, by the mighty power of God, which is sometimes called his right hand; see Ps 118:15.

and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost; which the Father had promised to pour forth in the last days, Isa 44:3 and which Christ had promised to send from the Father, Joh 14:16 and which, upon his ascension and exaltation, he received as Mediator from him; see Ps 68:18 compared with **Eph 4:8**

he hath shed forth this; this Holy Spirit, or promised Spirit, these gifts of his; and so the Syriac version renders it, "he hath shed forth this gift"; which expresses both the plenty and abundance of the gifts bestowed, and the liberality of Christ in the donation of them: it is added,

which ye now see and hear; meaning the cloven tongues, as of fire, which they saw sitting on the disciples, and the various languages which they heard them speak. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, leave out the word "now": and the Syriac, in the room of it, reads, "behold".

Acts 2:34

Ver. 34. For David is not ascended into the heavens,.... In his body, that being still in the grave, in his sepulchre, which remained to that day, though in his soul he was ascended to heaven; his Spirit had returned to God that gave it, and was among the spirits of just men made perfect: but he saith himself, in Ps 110:1 "the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand";
See Gill on "Mt 22:44".

Acts 2:35

Ver. 35. Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

See Gill on "Mt 22:44".

Acts 2:36

Ver. 36. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly,.... "With certain knowledge", as the Arabic version renders it; with full assurance of it: this is a case that is plain and clear, a matter of fact that may be depended on; which all the people of Israel, called "the house of Israel", a phrase frequently used of that people in the Old Testament, which every individual of that body of men might be assured of:

that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ; that is, that God the Father had not only constituted and appointed Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah, the Lord of lords, and King of kings, and had invested him with that office, power, and authority, but he had made him manifest to be so by the Holy Spirit which he had received, and now poured forth the same, and not another; even him whom they had rejected with so much contempt; whom they had treated in such a scornful and brutish manner; had spit upon, buffeted, and scourged, and at last crucified; and yet, now, even he had all power in heaven, and in earth, given him, and was exalted above every name; that in his name every knee should bow. The phrase of "making a Messiah", or "Christ", is used in the Talmudic writings {f}.

"The holy blessed God sought to make Hezekiah the Messiah, or Christ, and Sennacherib Gog and Magog; the property or attribute of justice said before the holy blessed God, Lord of the world, and what was David, the king of Israel, who said so many songs and hymns before thee, and thou didst not make him Christ? Hezekiah, for whom thou hast done all these wonders, and he hath not said a song before thee, wilt thou make him the Messiah, or Christ? wherefore his mouth was shut up; and the earth opened, and said a song before him; Lord of the world, I have said a song before thee, for this righteous one, xyvm whvew, and he made him Messiah, or Christ."

{f} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1.

Acts 2:37

Ver. 37. Now when they heard this,.... Or "him", as the Arabic version; that is, Peter speaking these things, describing the character of Jesus of Nazareth;

opening the prophecies concerning him; asserting his resurrection from the dead, and exaltation at the right hand of God; ascribing this wonderful affair, of speaking with divers tongues, to his effusion of the Spirit; and charging them home with the iniquity of crucifying him:

they were pricked in their hearts; the word of God entered into them, and was as a sharp sword in them, which cut and laid open their hearts, and the sin and wickedness of them; they saw themselves guilty of the crime laid to their charge, and were filled with remorse of conscience for it; they felt pain at their hearts, and much uneasiness, and were seized with horror and trembling; they were wounded in their spirits, being hewn and cut down by the prophets and apostles of the Lord, and slain by the words of his mouth; they were as dead men in their own apprehension; and indeed, a prick, a cut, or wound in the heart is mortal:

and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? the persons they before mocked at, they are glad to advise with, what should be done in this their sad and wretched case; what they should do to obtain the favour of God, the forgiveness of their sins, and everlasting salvation. Convinced, awakened sinners, are generally at first upon a covenant of works; are for doing something to atone for their past crimes, to set themselves right in the sight of God, to ingratiate themselves into his favour, and procure the pardon of their sins, and the inheritance of eternal life. And they seem also to be at a loss about the way of salvation, what is to be done to attain it, or how, and by what means it is to be come at; and are almost ready to despair of it, their sin appearing in so dreadful a light, and attended with such aggravating circumstances. Beza's ancient copy reads, "some of them said to Peter", &c. not all that heard, but those that were pricked to the heart.

Acts 2:38

Ver. 38. Then Peter said unto them,.... Being the mouth of the apostles, and being ready to give advice, and speak a word of comfort to their distressed minds:

repent: change your minds, entertain other thoughts, and a different opinion of Jesus of Nazareth, than you have done; consider him, and believe in him, as the true Messiah and Saviour of the world; look upon him, not any more as an impostor, and a blasphemer, but as sent of God, and the only Redeemer of Israel; change your voice and way of speaking of him, and your conduct towards his disciples and followers; a change of mind will produce a change of actions in life and conversation: bring forth fruits meet for repentance; and make an open and hearty profession of repentance for this your sin. And this the apostle said, to distinguish between a legal and an evangelical repentance; the former is expressed in their being pricked to the heart, on which they were not to depend; the latter he was desirous they might have, and show forth; which springs from the love of God, is attended with views, or at least hopes of pardoning grace and mercy, and with faith in Christ Jesus: it lies in a true sight and sense of sin, under the illuminations and convictions of the Spirit of God; in a sorrow for it, after a godly sort, and because it is committed against a God of love, grace, and mercy, and it shows itself in loathing sin, and in shame for it, in an ingenuous acknowledgement of it, and in forsaking it: and this is moreover urged, to show the necessity of it, as to salvation, for such that God would not have perish, he will have come to repentance; so to their admission to the ordinance of baptism, to which repentance is a pre-requisite; and to which the apostle next advises:

and be baptized everyone of you; that repents and believes; that is, in water, in which John administered the ordinance of baptism; in which Christ himself was baptized, and in which the apostles of Christ administered it; in this Philip baptized the eunuch; and in this were the persons baptized that were converted in Cornelius's house; and it is distinguished from the baptism of the Spirit, or with fire, the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit mentioned in the last clause of this verse; and which ordinance of water baptism was administered by immersion, as the places, Jordan and Aenon, where John performed it, and the instances of it particularly in Christ, and in the eunuch, and the end of it, which is to represent the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, as well as the primary signification of the word, show. And this is to be done,

in the name of Jesus Christ; not to the exclusion of the Father, and of the Spirit, in whose name also this ordinance is to be administered, Mt 28:19 but the name of Jesus Christ is particularly mentioned, because of these Jews, who had before rejected and denied him as the Messiah; but now, upon their repentance and faith, they are to be baptized in his name, by his authority, according to his command; professing their faith in him, devoting themselves to him, and calling on his name. The end for which this was to be submitted to, is,

for the remission of sins; not that forgiveness of sin could be procured either by repentance, or by baptism; for this is only obtained by the blood of Christ; but the apostle advises these awakened, sensible, repenting, and believing souls, to submit to baptism, that by it their faith might be led to Christ, who suffered and died for their sins, who left them buried in his grave, and who rose again for their justification from them; all which is, in a most lively manner, represented in the ordinance of baptism by immersion: the encouragement to it follows,

and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: not the grace of the Spirit, as a regenerator and sanctifier; for that they had already; and is necessary, as previous to baptism; unless it should mean confirmation of that grace, and stability in it, as it appears from **Ac 2:42** they afterwards had; but rather the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, particularly the gift of speaking with tongues, which Christ had received from the Father, and had now shed on his apostles; see Ac 19:5.

Acts 2:39

Ver. 39 For the promise is unto you,.... Either of the Messiah, and salvation by him, which was particularly given forth to the people of the Jews; or of the remission of sins, which was a branch of the covenant made with the house of Israel, in a spiritual sense, even the whole household of God; or of the pouring forth of the Spirit: and this promise was not only to them, but to theirs, even to as many of them as belonged to the election of grace; and whom the Lord their God would effectually call by his grace, as the last and limiting clause of the text, and which is to be connected with every part of it, shows:

and to your children: this is the rather mentioned, because these awakened, and converted souls, were not only in great concern about themselves, for their sin of crucifying Christ, but were in great distress about their children, on whom they had imprecated the guilt of Christ's blood, as upon themselves; the thought of which cut them to the heart, and made their hearts bleed, within them: wherefore to relieve them, and administer comfort to them in this their distress, the apostle informs them, that the promise of Christ, and of his grace, was not only to them, who were now called, but it was also to their children; to as many of them as the Lord God should call; and who are the children of the promise, which all the children of the flesh were not, **Ro 9:6** and to these the promise should be applied, notwithstanding this dreadful imprecation of theirs:

and to all that are afar off; either in place, as those that were dispersed, among the several nations of the world; and so carried in it a comfortable aspect on the multitude of Jews, that were of every nation under heaven; or in time, who should live in ages to come; or else the Gentiles are intended, who were afar off from God and Christ, and the way of life and salvation by him; see **Eph 2:12** even as many as the Lord our God shall call: not externally only, by the ministry of the word, but internally, by his grace and Spirit; with that calling, which is according to the purpose and grace of God, and is inseparably connected with eternal glory; the promise is to all such, and is made good to all such, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, fathers, or children, greater or lesser sinners. The Syriac version reads, "whom God himself shall call".

Acts 2:40

Ver. 40. And with many other words did he testify and exhort,.... For Luke does not give the sermons of the apostles at length, but a compendium, or specimen of them, and some of the more remarkable things in them; and which, it seems, lay partly in testifying concerning Christ, his person, office, grace, righteousness, and salvation; and against sins and errors, and false doctrine; and in "exhorting" to the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty; or in comforting distressed minds: for the word used signifies to comfort as well as to exhort; though it seems to have the latter sense here, since it follows:

saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation: meaning, the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, and elders of the people, chiefly, who were a perverse generation of men; and upon whom, for their impenitence and unbelief, for their rejection of the Messiah, and their evil treatment of him, wrath and ruin would come upon them, to the uttermost, very quickly; wherefore the apostle exhorts to separate from them, and not partake of their sins, lest they should also of their plagues; but come out from among them, and so, in a temporal sense, save themselves from the destruction that would quickly come on their nation, city, and temple; and so the Arabic version renders it, "escape from this rough generation".

Acts 2:41

Ver. 41. Then they that gladly received his word,.... The Syriac version adds, "and believed"; what Peter said concerning repentance and baptism, and especially concerning remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; and concerning the promise of Christ, and salvation by him, of the pardon of sin, and of the Holy Spirit; which doctrine they received with great joy and gladness, it being suitable to their case; and very "readily", and "willingly", as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; for they were now made a willing people in the day of God's power, and now that promise, or prophecy, in Ps 110:3 had a remarkable accomplishment; these converts were the dew of Christ's youth, as well as instances of his powerful and efficacious grace: not all that heard this sermon of Peter's received his doctrine in this manner, only some; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions render the words, "and some of them readily received", &c. which shows the distinguishing grace of God in this instance. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the word "gladly", which should not be omitted: and as soon as they had received the word, and were comforted by it, they

were baptized; in water, by immersion, for which there was great conveniency in Jerusalem, and in the temple, where the apostles now were: in the city of Jerusalem, in private houses, they had their baths for purifications, by immersion, as in the case of menstruous, gonorrhoeas, and other defilements, by touching unclean persons, and things, which were very frequent; so that a digger of cisterns, for such uses, and others, was a business in Jerusalem.

"Says Simeon Sicana {g}, who was a digger of cisterns, ditches, and caves, in Jerusalem, to R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, I am as great a man as thou art; he made answer to him, why? (or your reason for it;) he replied to him, because I am employed in the necessary affairs of many, (or of the public,) as you are; for says he, if a man comes to you for judgment, or to ask a question, you say to him, drink out of this cistern, whose waters are pure, and cold; or, if a woman asks thee concerning her monstrous, you say to her, ylbj, dip in this cistern, whose waters purify."

And in the temple there was an apartment, called hlybj tyb, "the dipping place", or "room", where the high priest dipped himself on the day of atonement {h}: and besides, there were ten lavers of brass, made by Solomon; and every laver held forty baths of water, and each was four cubits broad and long, sufficient for immersion of the whole body of a man; and to these Herbanus {i} the Jew seems to have respect, when he says, that in the outer part of Solomon's temple, there were
louthrhv, "lavers", in every side, (or all around,) which were free, or open, for the use of all; to which, he thinks, the prophet Isaiah has respect, in **Isa 1:16**. Those were for the priests, both to wash their hands and feet at, and also to wash the burnt offerings; see
Ex 30:18 {k}: and who were likewise obliged, very often, to bathe, or dip their whole bodies in water; for if a priest went out of the temple for a little while to speak with a friend,

hlybj Nwej, "he was obliged to dipping": and if he nodded, he was obliged to wash his hands and his feet; but if he slept, he was obliged to dip himself; yea, a man might not go into the court, or to service, even though he was clean, lbwj awhv de, "until he dip himself" {l}. Add to this, that there was the molten sea also for the priests to wash in, **2Ch 4:6** which was done by immersion; on which one of the Jewish commentators {m} has these words:

"the sea was tlybjl, "for the dipping" of the priests; for in the midst of it, they dipped themselves from their uncleanness; but in the Jerusalem Talmud {n} there is an objection, is it not a vessel? as if it was said, how can they "dip" in it, for is it not a vessel? and there is no "dipping" in vessels: R. Joshua ben Levi replied, a pipe of water was laid to it from the fountain of Etam, and the feet of the oxen, (which were under the molten sea,) were open at the pomegranates; so that it was as if it was from under the earth, and the waters came to it, and entered, and ascended, by the way of the feet of the oxen, which were open beneath them, and bored."

The reason of the objection is, because bathing, or dipping for purification, was not made in vessels, but in gatherings, or pools of water upon the ground; and which objection is removed, by observing, that a pipe was laid from the fountain of Etam, which supplied it with spring, or running water; so that the molten sea, and the lavers, were looked upon all one as pools of water, or springs of water, and as fit for immersion. This sea was ten cubits from brim to brim, and five cubits high, and held two thousand baths, **1Ki 7:23**. Yea, three thousand, as in **2Ch 6:5** and every laver held forty baths, **1Ki 7:38** and every bath held four gallons and a half, and between seven and eight gallons of wine measure. And it may be observed, that there were also in Jerusalem the pool of Bethesda, into which persons went down at certain times, **Joh 5:1** and the pool of Siloam, where persons bathed, and dipped themselves, on certain occasions; See Gill "Joh 9:7". So that there were conveniences enough for baptism by immersion in this place: and the same day there were added; unto them, or to the church, as in **Ac 2:47** the whole company of the hundred and twenty disciples; the Arabic version supplies, "among the believers": the number of those, that were added to them, were about three thousand souls; or persons, men, and women; and their number is no objection to their being baptized by immersion. As for convenient places to baptize in, there were enough, as we have seen already; and there were administrators sufficient for this work: had there been no more than the twelve apostles, it was but two hundred and fifty men apiece; and there were twelve separate places in the temple, where they might be baptizing at the same time; there were the ten lavers, the molten sea, and the dipping room, so that the work was not so very heavy nor difficult; but besides, there were seventy disciples, who, as they were preachers of the word, were administrators of this ordinance; and supposing them all employed, as they might be, at the same time, either in the temple, or at the pools in Jerusalem, or at the baths, and cisterns, in private houses; they would not have more than six or seven and thirty persons apiece to baptize; and there was time enough in the day for it; it was but the third hour, or nine o'clock in the morning, when Peter began his sermon; and allowing an hour for that, there were eight hours more in the day, according to the Jewish reckoning of twelve hours in a day; so that the business might be done without any hurry, or great fatigue; and indeed, the objection, as to time, would equally lie against sprinkling, or pouring, as dipping; at least the difference is very inconsiderable; for the same form of words must be pronounced in administering the ordinance by the one, as by the other; and a person being ready, is very near as soon dipped into water, as water can be taken, and sprinkled, or poured on the face. Besides, after all, though these persons were added to the church the same day, it does not necessarily follow from the text, that they were all baptized in one day; the words do not oblige us to such a sense: I own, I am of opinion, that they were all baptized in one day; and that on the same day they were baptized, they were joined to the church; and that day was the day of Pentecost, the day on which the law was given on Mount Sinai, and on which now the Gospel was published to men of all nations under the heavens; the day on which the firstfruits were offered to the Lord, and on which now the firstfruits of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ were brought in to him. Let the order be observed, they were first baptized, and then added to the church.

{g} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 70. 3. {h} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 16. 1. & 19. & Maimon. Beth. Habbechira, c. 5. sect. 11. 17. {i} Disput. Gregantii, p. 131. {k} Vid. Jarchi & Kimchi in 1 Kings vii. 38. & Ralbag in 2 Chron. iv. 5. {l} T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 40. 2. Misna Yoma, c. 3. sect. 3. {m} R. David Kimchi. {n} lb. Yoma, fol. 41. 1.

Acts 2:42

Ver. 42. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine,.... And which is the same with the doctrine of Christ, of which he is the author, preacher, and subject; the substance of which is peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him: this the apostles received from Christ, and constantly taught in their ministry; for which reason, it is called theirs; and this these young converts had embraced gladly; and were not only believers of it, but persevering believers;

they were constant hearers of it; they continually attended on the ministry of the apostles, and held fast the form of sound words they had received from them; and stood fast in the faith of the Gospel, notwithstanding all the reproach cast upon it, and the afflictions they endured for it:

and fellowship; with the apostles and other saints, in spiritual conversation with them, in private, and in communion with them at the Lord's table in public: and so the Vulgate Latin reads this clause, in connection with the next, thus, "in the communication of breaking of bread"; to which agrees the Syriac version, and "they communicated in prayer, and in breaking of the eucharist"; though it seems better to understand this of a distinct branch of fellowship, or communication, and may rather intend liberality and beneficence, in which sense it is used, Ro 15:26 and so expresses their constant contributions towards the support of the apostles, as ministers of the word and of the poor members of the church; a duty which, in both its branches, is incumbent on those who have it in their power to perform, and which these first Christians were remarkable for:

and in breaking of bread; or "of the eucharist": as the Syriac version renders it, which was an usual name with the ancients for the Lord's supper; and which seems to be intended here, and not eating common bread, or a common meal; seeing it is here mentioned with religious exercises: and though the Jews used to begin their meals with breaking of bread, yet the whole repast, or meal, is never by them called by that name; and for what reason these saints should be commended for keeping their common meals, cannot be said, unless to show their sociableness, agreement, and brotherly love in eating together; and which is not hinted at here, but in **Ac 2:46** where it is mentioned as something distinct from this: it seems rather therefore to design, that they were constant at the Lord's table, kept their places there, and duly attended whenever the ordinance was administered:

and in prayers: not only in their closets, and in their families, but in the church; in the public prayers of the church, they observed all opportunities of this kind, and gladly embraced them.

Acts 2:43

Ver. 43 And fear came upon every soul,.... Upon every inhabitant of Jerusalem, at least upon a great many of them; and upon all, or the greater part of them that saw, and heard these things; that heard the apostles speak with divers tongues, and Peter preach in the awful manner he did, and saw so many thousands at once embrace the Gospel of Christ, and profess his name, when it now, by reason of his crucifixion but a few weeks ago, lay under the greatest reproach and scandal; and such a number baptized in water; and also because of the miracles done by the apostles, after mentioned. The Ethiopic version is very odd, "and all animals feared the apostles": as if the very brute creatures stood in awe of them:

and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles: the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions add, "in Jerusalem"; such as casting out devils, healing the sick, causing the lame to walk, &c. which were promised by Christ should be done by them; and which were necessary for the confirmation of the Gospel, and of the apostles' mission to preach it. The Vulgate Latin version adds another clause, much like the first part of the text, "and great fear was upon all": and the Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, "in Jerusalem, there was great fear upon all."

Acts 2:44

Ver. 44. And all that believed were together,.... Not in one place, for no one house could hold them all, their number was now so large; but they "agreed together", as the Arabic version renders it: all these believers were of one mind and judgment, as to doctrines, they agreed in their sentiments and principles of religion; and they were of one heart and soul, were cordially affected to each other, and mutually were assisting to one another in temporals, as well as in spirituals:

and had all things common: that is, their worldly goods, their possessions and estates; no man called anything peculiarly his own; and whatever he had, his brother was welcome to, and might as freely take, and use it, as if it was his own.

Acts 2:45

Ver. 45. And sold their possessions and goods..... Their houses and lands, their fields and vineyards, their goods, moveable or immoveable:

and parted them to all men; that were of their society, not to others:

as every man had need: the rich sold their estates, and divided them among the poor, or gave them such a portion thereof as their present exigencies required. This was done by Jews, and by Jews only; who, when they embraced the Gospel of Christ, were informed that the destruction of their city, and nation, was at hand; and therefore they sold their estates before hand, and put them to this use; which was necessary to be done, both for the support of the Gospel in Judea, and for the carrying and spreading of it among the Gentiles: but is not to be drawn into a precedent, or an example in after times; nor is ever any such thing proposed to the Christian churches, or exhorted to by any of the apostles.

Acts 2:46

Ver. 46. And they continued daily with one accord in the temple,.... Every day they went up to the temple, at the time of prayer, or whenever any religious service was to be performed; this was their constant practice, and in this they agreed:

and breaking bread from house to house; either administering the Lord's supper in private houses, as the Jews kept their passover, sometimes administering it at one house, and sometimes at another; or because their number was so large, that one house could not hold them, they divided themselves into lesser bodies; and some met, and had the ordinance administered to them in one house, and some in another: or this may be understood of their common meals, which they ate together at one another's houses in great love and friendship; for

they did eat their meat with gladness; with great thankfulness to the God of their mercies for their daily food, acknowledging that all came from him, and that they were undeserving of it, and with much cheerfulness and affability one among another, without murmuring and repining at their lot, or envying each other, or grudging what each other partook of:

and singleness of heart; without deceit and hypocrisy; either in their thanksgivings to God, or in their welcome and entertainment of each other; and with great sincerity, openness, and frankness before God, and one another. The Syriac version joins this clause with the beginning of the next verse, "with singleness of heart, praising God".

Acts 2:47

Ver. 47. Praising God,.... Not only for their temporal mercies and enjoyments of life, which they partook of in so delightful and comfortable a manner; but for their spiritual mercies, that the Lord had been pleased to call them by his grace, and reveal Christ to them, and pardon them who had been such vile sinners, give them a name, and a place in his house, and favour them with the ordinances of it, and such agreeable and delightful company as the saints were, they had fellowship with:

having favour with all the people; they not only behaved with such true and sincere love towards one another in their church state, but with so much wisdom, courteousness, and affability towards them that were without, and walked so becoming the profession they made, that they gained the good will of the generality of the people:

and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved: partly by the conversation of these young converts, and chiefly by the ministry of the word, many souls were won and gained to Christ, were wrought upon, and converted, whose hearts the Lord inclined to give up themselves to the church, and walk with them in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord; and these were such whom God had chosen to salvation by Jesus Christ, and whom he had redeemed by his precious blood, and who were now regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God, and so should certainly be saved; which is not always the case of persons added to churches, many of whom have not the root of the matter in them, and so fall away; but is of those who are added by the Lord, for there is a difference between being added by the Lord, and being added by men.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 3:1

Ver. 1. Now Peter and John went up together into the temple,.... These two disciples were intimate companions, and great lovers of each other; they were often together: they are thought, by some, to have been together in the high priest's palace at the trial of Christ; and they ran together to his sepulchre, Joh 18:15 and they now went together to the temple, not to attend the daily sacrifice, which was now abolished by the sacrifice of Christ, but to attend to the duty of prayer, which was still in force, and that they might have an opportunity of preaching Christ, where there was a number of people together:

at the hour of prayer; being the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon. This was one of their hours of prayer; it was customary with the Jews to pray three times a day, **Da 6:10** which, according to the Psalmist in Ps 55:17 were evening, morning, and at noon; to which seems to answer the three times that are taken notice of by Luke in this history: that in the morning was at the third hour, as in **Ac 2:15** or nine o'clock in the morning; that at noon was at the sixth hour, as in Ac 10:9 or twelve o'clock at noon; and that in the evening at the ninth hour, as here, or three o'clock in the afternoon. Not that these were times of divine appointment. The Jews {o} themselves say,

"there is no number of prayers from the law, and there is no repetition of this or that prayer from the law, and there is no ewbq Nmz, "fixed time" for prayer from the law."

But according to the traditions of the elders,

"the morning prayer was to the end of the fourth hour, which is the third part of the day--the prayer of the "Minchah", (or evening prayer,) they fixed the time of it to answer to the evening daily sacrifice; and because the daily sacrifice was offered up every day from the ninth hour and a half, they ordered the time of it to be from the ninth hour and a half, and it is called the lesser "Minchah"; and because in the evening of the passover, which falls upon the evening of the sabbath, they slay the daily sacrifice at the sixth hour and a half, they say, that he that prays after the sixth hour and a half is excused; and after this time is come, the time to which he is obliged is come, and this is called the great "Minchah"---lo, you learn, that the time of the great "Minchah" is from the sixth hour and a half, to the ninth hour and a half; and the time of the lesser "Minchah" is from the ninth hour and a half, until there remains of the day an hour and a quarter; and it is lawful to pray it until the sun sets."

So that it was at the time of the lesser "Minchah" that Peter and John went up to the temple; which seems to be not on the same day of Pentecost, but on some day, or days after; it may be the sabbath following, when there was a great number of people got together.

{o} Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 1. sect. 1. Ib. c. 3. sect. 1, 2, 4. Vid. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 26. 2.

Acts 3:2

Ver. 2. And a certain man, lame from his mother's womb,.... He was born so; his lameness came not through any disease or fall, or any external hurt, but from a defect in nature, in one of his limbs, or more; which made the after miracle the more extraordinary: and he was so lame that he

was carried; he could not walk of himself, or go, being led, but they were obliged to carry him:

whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple; it had been a common usage, it may be, for years past, to bring him every day, at prayer time, and lay him at the gate of the temple where the people went in; hence he was well known by the people, and to have been of a long time lame, even ever since he was born; so that there could be no imposture in this case: and it was at the gate of the temple he lay,

which is called beautiful; which some think was the gate Shushan, which was the eastern gate of the mountain of the house, or the outmost wall, and was so called, because Shushan, the metropolis of Persia, was pourtrayed upon it {q}, which made it look very beautiful. The reason commonly given by the Jewish commentators {r} why this was done, is this; when the Jews returned from captivity, the king of Persia commanded that they should make a figure of the palace of Shushan upon one of the gates of the temple, that they might fear the king, and not rebel against him; and accordingly they drew one upon the eastern gate: but some say {s}, that the children of the captivity did this (upon their return) that they might remember the wonder of Purim, (their deliverance from Haman,) which was done in Shushan; moreover, it might be so called from the word Shushan, which signifies joy and gladness: but this does not bid so fair to be the gate here meant, since it was lower than all the rest; for as the eastern wall was lower than the rest of the walls, that when the high priest burnt the red heifer on the top of Mount Olivet, he might see the gate of the temple at the time of the sprinkling of the blood; so the gate itself was four cubits lower than the others {t}, and therefore could not look so grand and beautiful as the rest. Indeed, concerning this eastern gate of the mountain of the house, it is said {u}, that

"in the time when the sanctuary stood, when they prayed on the mountain of the house, they went in by the way of the eastern gate."

And as this was now the hour of prayer, and the people were going to the temple to pray, whose entrance was at the east gate; here it might be thought, in all probability, was laid the lame man: though it seems rather to be the eastern gate of the court of the women, which was made of Corinthian brass, and looked brighter than gold itself; of which Josephus {w} thus speaks:

"nine of the gates were covered all over with gold and silver, likewise the side posts and lintels; but there was one, without the temple, of Corinthian brass, which in dignity greatly exceeded the silver and golden ones."

And since at this gate was the greatest frequency of persons, both men and women entering here; it is most likely, that here lay the lame man a begging: this is thought, by some, to be the higher gate of the house of the Lord; said to be built by Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, 2Ki 15:35 upon which text, a Jewish commentator of great note {x} has this remark,

"observe it is said of Jotham, that he built it, because he made a building on it, lwdgw dbkn "more glorious and great" than it had been:"

and this is also called the new gate of the house of the Lord, Jer 26:10 and which both the Targum and Kimchi on the place say is the eastern gate.

To ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who going to religious exercises, might be thought to be more disposed to acts of liberality and charity: and besides, these were known to be Jews, of whom only alms were to be asked and taken; for so run their canons {y},

"it is forbidden to take alms of Gentiles publicly, except a man cannot live by the alms of Israelites; and if a king, or a prince of the Gentiles, should send money to an Israelite for alms, he must not return it, because of the peace of the kingdom, but must take it of him, and give it to the poor of the Gentiles secretly, that the king may not hear."

{q} Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 3. {r} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. ib. {s} Vid. Juchasin, fol. 65. 2. {t} Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 4. Maimon. Hilchot Beth Habechirah, c. 6. sect. 5. {u} Gloss. in T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 15. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 15. {w} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 3. {x} Abarbinel in loc. {y} Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. Affirm. 162.

Acts 3:3

Ver. 3. Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple,.... Just as they were entering through the gate at which he lay, he looked at them; and though they were strangers to him, he concluded they were Israelites by their going into the temple at that time:

asked an alms; of them; prayed them to give him something for his relief and support.

Acts 3:4

Ver. 4. And Peter fastening his eyes upon him,.... Or looking very wistly and intently at him, being, no doubt, under some uncommon impulse of the Spirit of God to take notice of him, and cure him of his disease:

with John; who was also under a like impulse at the same time; and who was equally concerned in this cure, as appears by the notice the man, when healed, took of the one, as well as the other; and by Peter's declaration, **Ac 3:11** as also by the following words:

said, look on us; which was said to raise his attention to them, to put him upon observing what manner of men they were, and how unlikely to perform the following cure, and to take notice of the manner in which it would be done. The Jews speak of a supernatural cure effected in such a manner, using such words; and which perhaps is told, with a view to lessen the glory of this {z}.

"Elias appeared to one in the likeness of R. Chiyah Rabbah; he said to him, how does my Lord do? he replied to him, a certain tooth distresses me; he said to him, yl ymx, "look on me"; and he looked on him, and put his finger on it, and he was well."

{z} T. Hieros. Cetubot, fol. 35. 1.

Acts 3:5

Ver. 5. And he gave heed unto them,.... Or "he looked at them", as the Syriac version renders it, as they bid him: he was not only attentive to them in his mind, but he directed his eyes towards them, and looked wistly at them. This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version.

Expecting to receive something of them; not a cure for his lameness, which he little thought of, but some money, as an alms.

Acts 3:6

Ver. 6. Then Peter said, silver and gold have I none,.... The Ethiopic version reads, "we have none"; and so it reads the next clause in the first person plural; that is, they had no money either of gold or silver coin; they had none about them, nor any of their own perhaps any where; none but what was brought to them, and put into their hands as a common stock for the whole church, or the poor of it: nor indeed might any money be carried in a purse into the temple; See Gill on "Mt 10:9",
See Gill on "Mr 11:16" though doubtless they might carry it in their hands, or otherwise, for the offerings, or for the poor, or this man would not have lain here for alms.

But such as I have, give I thee; meaning the gift of healing; not that he communicated that to him, but exercised the gift upon him, by curing him of his lameness; and which was much preferable to large quantities of gold and silver, had he had them to give unto him:

in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth: signifying, that it was by the command of Christ he said what follows; and by his power he wrought the cure which commenced upon it; even by the authority and virtue of him, who was treated with so much contempt by the Jews, and had lately been crucified by them: in his name he bid him

rise up and walk; without making use of any medicines, or applying anything to him; but believing that power would go along with the words, and strength would be communicated to him, by him in whose name he spoke, he said these words: and herein lies the difference between the miracles wrought by Christ, and by his disciples; those that were done by him were done in his own name, and by his own power; those that were performed by his disciples, were done in the name of Christ, and by his power alone; and the Jews themselves own, that the disciples performed cures wvy hymvb, "in the name of Jesus" {a}.

{a} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 14. 4. & Avoda Zara, fol. 40. 4.

Acts 3:7

Ver. 7. And he took him by the right hand,.... In imitation of Christ, whom he had often seen using the same action on such occasions:

and lift him up; believing he was cured, and that it might be manifest. The word him is expressed in the Alexandrian copy, and in some others, and in the Oriental versions, which is a supplement in our translation:

and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength; where, it seems, his lameness lay. The Vulgate Latin renders it, his bases and soles, which may include his legs and thighs, as well as feet; and the Syriac version, "his feet and soles"; and the Arabic version, "his soles, and the muscles adjoining to his heels"; and the Ethiopic version furthest off of all, "he was strengthened in his feet, and in his loins"; his disorder might be of the paralytic kind.

Acts 3:8

Ver. 8. And he leaping up,.... From off the bed or couch, or ground on which he lay:

stood and walked; stood firm and strong upon his feet, and walked about; by which it was abundantly manifest to himself and others, that he had a perfect cure. The Ethiopic version is a very ridiculous one, "and he went with them catching fishes"; as if upon this, before they went into the temple, he and the apostles went a fishing together, which has not the least foundation in the text:

and entered with them into the temple; to join with them in divine worship, to acknowledge the goodness of God to him, and to show respect to the instruments he made use of in his cure:

and leaping; for joy of the mercy, and that it might appear to all that he was thoroughly cured of his lameness: and thus the prophecy in Isa 35:6 "then shall the lame man leap as an hart", was literally fulfilled:

and praising God; and not the apostles; for he knew that this was owing to the power of God, and could never have been done by man; though he might not be ungrateful to the instruments.

Acts 3:9

Ver. 9. And all the people,.... That were in the temple, saw him walking; who before lay on a couch, or on the ground, and was so lame, that he was obliged to be carried;

and praising God; for this miraculous cure. The Arabic version renders it, "saw him walking to praise God": that is, entering into the temple with the apostles, in order to offer up the sacrifice of praise to God there.

Acts 3:10

Ver. 10. And they knew it was he that sat for alms,.... The Syriac version renders it, "they knew him to be that beggar that sat daily and asked alms". As he was daily brought thither, and had, for many years, it is very likely, sat there to ask alms of the people as they went into the temple; he was well known by them, and they had but just now passed him, and observed him in the same condition he had for a long time been, and knew him to be the same. It was a clear and indisputable point with them.

At the beautiful gate of the temple See Gill on "Ac 3:2".

And they were all filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him; that he should have a cure so suddenly, and in such an extraordinary manner; they wondered at the power of God, which was seen in it, and that he should make use of such mean and contemptible persons as the apostles were.

Acts 3:11

Ver. 11. And as the lame man which was healed,.... This is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and in the Alexandrian copy, which only read, and as he

held Peter and John; by their clothes or arms, either through fear, lest his lameness should return on their leaving him; or rather out of affection to them for the favour he had received, and therefore hung about them, and was loath to part with them; unless it was to make them known, and point them out as the authors of his cure, that they might be taken notice of by others, and the miracle be ascribed unto them:

all the people ran together unto them; to the man that was healed, and to Peter and John, when they saw him standing, walking, and leaping, and clinging about the apostles; who were

in the porch that is called Solomon's; See Gill on "Joh 10:23"

greatly wondering; at the man that was cured; at the cure that was wrought upon him; and still more at the persons who did it, and the manner in which it was done.

Acts 3:12

Ver. 12. And when Peter saw it,.... That the people ran to them, and looked wistly upon them, and wondered at what was done:

he answered unto the people, ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? either at this man, who was cured of his lameness, or at the cure itself:

or why look ye so earnestly on us; suggesting, that they ought to look to God, and observe his divine power, and to the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they had crucified, whose apostles they were, and in whose name, and by whose power they had wrought this miracle; which shows that they were not self-seeking and vain glorious men, but discovers great sincerity and integrity, much love to Christ, and great regard to his honour, and to the glory of God:

as though by our own power and holiness we had made this man to walk? as if it was any natural power of theirs; or for any merit of theirs, because of their strict religion and piety; or "laudable conversation", as the Arabic version; because they were mightier in themselves and holier than others, that they had such a faculty of curing lame persons; all which they utterly reject, and place it to a right account in the next verse. Instead of "holiness", the Syriac version reads "authority"; and to the same, or like sense, the Vulgate Latin, which seems most agreeable.

Acts 3:13

Ver. 13. The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob,.... These titles and epithets of God, which are used in the Old Testament, **Ex 3:6** the apostle chooses to retain, partly to distinguish him from the gods of the Gentiles, and partly to show his regard to the God of Israel, the one, only true, and living God; and that, though he and his fellow apostles were preachers of Christ, yet they were not setters forth of another, or a strange God, but believed in the same God their forefathers did, and to whom they ascribe the glory of this miracle:

the God hath glorified his Son Jesus; by raising him from the dead, setting him at his own right hand, and giving him the gifts of the Spirit for men; which he having bestowed on the apostles, by virtue of this they wrought this miracle, which was a means of setting forth the glory of Christ, and of putting men upon glorifying him, or ascribing honour and glory to him. And in order to awaken their minds, to convict them of their sin, ingratitude, and folly, the apostle adds,

whom ye delivered up; to Pilate, the Roman governor; having first seized him as a thief, bound him as a malefactor, and arraigned, and condemned him to death in the high priest's palace as a blasphemer:

and denied him in the presence of Pilate; or "to", or "against the face of Pilate"; contrary to his sense of things, who more than once called him the King of the Jews, and wrote this as the superscription over him, when they denied him to be their King Messiah, and the Son of God, saying, they had no king but Caesar:

when he was determined to let him go; or release him; that is, "when he judged it right that he should be released", as the Syriac version renders it; for he never came to a point, to a resolution to let him go; though he thought it was but just and equitable that he should be dismissed, being, in his apprehension, an innocent man; and therefore pressed it on the people to agree to release him, to which he was himself strongly inclined.

Acts 3:14

Ver. 14. But ye denied the Holy One, and the just,.... Who is "holy" both in his divine and human nature, and the fountain of holiness to his people; see Ps 16:10 and who is "just" or "righteous", both in his person, and in the discharge of his office, and has wrought a righteousness for his people, which is imputed to them. These characters may have a particular regard to the purity of Christ, as man, and to the innocence of his life, and the harmlessness of his actions, in opposition to the unjust charges of his enemies, and the base treatment he met with from them who denied him to be the Christ, the Redeemer and Saviour:

and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; when it was put to their choice, who they would have released, Christ or Barabbas; they requested it as a favour, and desired they might be gratified in having Barabbas, a thief, and a robber, who, with others, had raised an insurrection, and committed murder in it, released, and Christ crucified. They desired an act of grace for him, and a sentence of condemnation to a most shameful and painful death on Christ.

Acts 3:15

Ver. 15. And killed the Prince of life,.... Or author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; who not only is the living God, and has life in himself; and as man, had such a power over his own life, as no man ever had; but he is the author of a spiritual resurrection from the death of sin, to a life of grace, and has procured eternal life for his people, and gives it to them. Now this Lord of life and glory they crucified. His death is laid to them because it was at their request, and through their instigation, and at their earnest solicitations, that Pilate condemned him, and delivered, him to his soldiers to crucify him.

Whom God hath raised from the dead; notwithstanding all their spite and malice; so that they had not their whole will, and all their end, not being able to retain him under the power of death, and under the shame and reproach of the cross; and this the apostle the rather mentions, as being the reason why such gifts, and such power were bestowed on them to do the miracles they did.

Whereof we are witnesses; either of Christ, for it may be rendered, "whose witnesses we are"; they testifying of his person, office, grace, and righteousness; or of the resurrection of Christ, of which they were eyewitnesses; and of which they had the fullest proof, and were capable of bearing a sufficient testimony, and for which they were chosen and appointed.

Acts 3:16

Ver. 16. And his name, through faith in his name,.... That is, the name of Christ, or the power of Christ, through the faith of the apostles in him, while they made use of his name, and said, "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth", &c. **Ac 3:6** or Christ, through the faith of the lame man in him; and when his name was used in this manner by the apostles; not that either their faith, or his, had any causal influence on the cure, but was the way and means in which they, glorifying Christ, he was pleased to effect this cure:

hath made this man strong; who was before exceeding weak; strengthened the parts that were infirm, his feet and ankles, and consolidated them, so that he could use them, and walk with them:

whom ye see and know; they knew him before, when he was lame, and now knew him to be the same man, and whom they saw now perfectly well; so that they could be appealed to that there was no fraud or imposture in the case:

yea, the faith which is by him; by Christ, of which he is the object, and the author, and finisher: this is repeated out of affection to Christ, and a passionate concern for the glory of his name; or because that faith, in one clause, may regard the faith of the apostles, and in the other, the faith of the man that was cured:

hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all: he had perfect soundness both in body and mind; though the former may chiefly be designed, it being that which was only visible to these persons; and which was done, not in a corner, but publicly, before them all, at the gate of the temple, where the multitude passed to and fro.

Acts 3:17

Ver. 17. And now, brethren,.... He calls them brethren, because they were so according to the flesh; and to testify his cordial love and affection for them.

I wot, or "I know",

that through ignorance ye did it; delivered up Jesus into the hands of Pilate; denied him to be the Messiah before him; preferred a murderer to him, and put him to death.

As did also your rulers; the members of the sanhedrim, some of them; see **1Co 2:8** for others of them knew him to be the Messiah, to be sent of God, by the miracles he did, and yet blasphemously ascribed them to Satan; and so sinning against light and knowledge, in such a malicious manner, sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, to which ignorance is here opposed; and which did not excuse from sin: nor was it itself without sin; nor is it opposed to any sin, but to this now mentioned.

Acts 3:18

Ver. 18. But those things which God before had showed,.... In the Scriptures of the Old Testament, concerning the betraying of the Messiah, and his sufferings and death, with the various causes, concomitants, and circumstances of them:

by the mouths of all his prophets; which were since the world began; some pointing out one thing or circumstance, and some another:

that Christ should suffer. The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "that his Christ should suffer"; but then they leave out the word "his" in the preceding clause, which they put into this; and this entire clause is omitted in the Alexandrian copy:

he hath so fulfilled; in the manner he has, so exactly, so perfectly agreeable to the predictions of them, and yet were unknown to the persons by whom they were fulfilled. So wisely and surprisingly are things ordered and overruled by the wise providence of God, who is a God of knowledge, and by whom all actions are weighed.

Acts 3:19

Ver. 19. Repent ye therefore,.... The Ethiopic version adds, "and be baptized", See Gill on "Ac 2:38",

and be converted. The apostle's sense is, repent of the sin of crucifying Christ, which is what he had been charging them with, and turn unto him, and acknowledge him as the Messiah; receive his doctrines, and submit to his ordinances; externally reform in life and conversation, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, such as will show it to be true and genuine:

that your sins may be blotted out; or forgiven, see Ps 51:9. Not that repentance and reformation procure the pardon of sin, or are the causes of it, for forgiveness is entirely owing to the free grace of God, and blood of Christ; but inasmuch as that is only manifested and applied to repenting and converted sinners; and who are encouraged to repent, and turn to the Lord from the promise of pardon; it is incumbent on them, and is their interest so to do, that they may have a discovery of the remission of their sins by the blood of Christ. Though no other repentance and conversion may be here meant than an external one; and the blotting out of sin, and forgiveness of it, may intend no other than the removing a present calamity, or the averting a threatened judgment, or the deliverance of persons from national ruin, Ex 32:32. These Jews had crucified the Lord of glory, and for this sin were threatened with miserable destruction; the apostle therefore exhorteth them to repentance for it, and to a conversion to the Messiah, that so when ruin should come upon their nation, they might be delivered from the general calamity; when it would be terrible times to the unbelieving and impenitent Jews, but times of refreshment, ease, peace, and rest from persecution, to the believers, as is next expressed.

When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; or "that the times of refreshing may come", as the Syriac version; either seasons of spiritual refreshment, joy, and peace, through the great and precious promises of the Gospel, and by the application of the blood and righteousness of Christ, to such penitent and converted sinners; which refreshment and comfort come from the Lord, and are accompanied with his gracious presence: or else seasons of rest, and deliverance from the violent heat of persecution; which was the case of the saints at the destruction of Jerusalem; they were not only saved from that ruin, but delivered from the wrath of their most implacable enemies. The Ethiopic version renders it, "and the day of mercy shall come from the presence of the Lord", repenting sinners find mercy; and a discovery of pardon is a time of mercy; and when God grants this, he affords his presence. The Jews call the world to come a time of refreshment; and say {b},

"better is one hour xwr trwq lv, "of refreshment", in the world to come, than the whole life of this world."

{b} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 17.

Acts 3:20

Ver. 20. And he shall send Jesus Christ,.... Or "that he may send Jesus Christ", as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it: not in person, for this regards neither his first, nor his second coming, both which might be terrible to the awakened Jews; the former, because he had been sent, and was come, and was gone again; and therefore might fear there was no hope for them, who had denied him, and crucified him; the latter, because they might conclude he would be sent, and come to take vengeance on them, when they should look upon him whom they had pierced with horror and trembling; but here it regards his being sent, and his coming in the ministration of the word, and by his Spirit, to the comfort of their souls:

which before was preached unto you; in the writings of the Old Testament, in the books of Moses, and of the Prophets, **Ac 3:22** or, as it is read in the Alexandrian copy, and in other copies, and in the Complutensian edition, and in the Syriac and Arabic versions, who was "predetermined" or "prepared for you"; that is, in the purposes, council, and covenant of God. The Ethiopic version reads, "whom he before anointed"; to be prophet, priest, and King; and from each of these considerations much comfort might be drawn by sensible sinners.

Acts 3:21

Ver. 21. Whom the heaven must receive,.... Hold and retain in his human nature; and which does not at all hinder or confront his mission, and coming to his people, in the mean while, in a spiritual way and manner, to their joy and comfort: or, "who must receive heaven"; the kingdom, and glory, and reign there:

until the times of the restitution of all things: not of all created beings to their original estate, which there is no reason to believe ever will be; or of the churches of Christ to purity of doctrine, discipline, and conversation, which is to be hoped for, and will be in the spiritual reign of Christ; but of the accomplishment of all promises and prophecies concerning the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Jews, and so the gathering in all the elect of God; and concerning all the glorious things spoken of the church of Christ in the latter day; which sense is confirmed by what follows:

which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began: ever since the world was, God has had more or less holy men, set apart and sanctified by him, and on whom he bestowed the spirit of prophecy; and by the mouth of everyone of these he has spoken one thing or another concerning his church and people, and the filling up of the number of them, or the gathering of them all in; and till this is done, Christ will remain in heaven and reign there: and this sense is further confirmed by the Syriac and Arabic versions, the former rendering the words, "until the filling or fulfilling of the times of all things"; and the latter, "until the times which will confirm the perfection of all the words which God hath spoken", &c. and from the sense of the word used, which some lexicographers explain by teleiwsiv, "perfection" or "fulfilling".

Acts 3:22

Ver. 22. For Moses truly said unto the fathers,.... The Jewish fathers, the Israelites in the times of Moses. The Ethiopic version reads, "our fathers". This phrase, "unto the fathers", is left out in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, and in the Alexandrian copy: the passages referred to are in De 18:15

a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you: which is not to be understood of a succession of prophets, as some of the Jewish writers {c} think; for the Jews never had a constant succession of prophets, and those they had, were not like to Moses: but of a single prophet, and so the Targums or Onkelos and Jonathan understood it; but not to be applied to Joshua, as some {d}, or to Jeremiah {e} as others, or to David {f}; but to the Messiah, and which is the Lord Jesus Christ, who answers to all the characters: he was a prophet in every sense, who brought a revelation of the divine will, taught the way, and explained the Scriptures of truth perfectly, and foretold things to come; he was raised up by the Lord God of Israel, and was anointed by his Spirit, and sent by him, and that to the people of the Jews, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; he was the minister of the circumcision:

of your brethren; in the Hebrew text in De 18:15 it is also said, "out of the midst of thee"; but as these phrases are synonymous, the apostle here only retains one of them, which suggests that this prophet, the Messiah, should be of Jewish extract; as Jesus was, of the seed of David, and a son of Abraham:

like unto me; that is, to Moses, who is, the person speaking, between whom and Christ there is an agreement; the law was given by Moses, and the Gospel came by Christ; Moses was a mediator between God and the people of Israel, and Christ is the Mediator between God and men; Moses, under God, was an instrument of redeeming the people of Israel out of Egypt, and Christ, he is the Redeemer of his people from sin, Satan, and the law, and all their enemies: the Jews {g} have a common saying,

"as was the first Redeemer, so shall be the last Redeemer;"

and they moreover observe {h}, that,

"as Israel was redeemed in the month Nisan, so they shall be redeemed in the month Nisan;"

in the future redemption by the Messiah: let the Jews abide by this; the Messiah Jesus suffered in the month Nisan, and obtained eternal redemption for his people: one of their {i} writers has a notion, that when the Messiah comes, there will be the same disposition of the constellations, as when Moses brought the people out of Egypt, and gave them the law; and that the conjunction will be of Jupiter and Saturn, in the constellation Pisces: there was likewise between Moses and Christ, an agreement in the miracles they wrought, and in other things:

him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you: all his doctrines are to be believed, embraced, and professed; and all his commands are to be obeyed, and all his ordinances submitted to; and this is hearing, or hearkening, to him in all things, delivered or enjoined by him.

{c} Jarchi in Deut. xviii. 15. {d} Aben Ezra in loc. {e} R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 127. 4. & 143. 4. Baal Hatturim in Deut. xviii. 15. {f} Herban. disp. cum Gregeut. p. 13. {g} Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 202. 2. Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 63. 2. {h} T. Bab. Roshhasbana, fol. 11, 1. 2. {i} R. Abraham ben R. Chija apud Wolfii Hebr. Bibliothec. p. 51,

Acts 3:23

Ver. 23. And it shall come to pass, that every soul,.... Every person, man or woman:

which will not hear that prophet; neither believe what he says, nor do what he commands; or as it is in De 18:19 "will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name": for he that hears not him, hearkens not to God, in whose name he speaks, and whose word he delivers,

shall be destroyed from among the people; in the Hebrew text it is, "I will require it of him"; the Hebrew word, wmem, there used, by having different points, may be rendered "of him", or "from his people", which seems to be the reason of this difference: and requiring often intends punishment, or a cutting off; or as Aben Ezra explains it here, "death by the hand of heaven;"

that is, immediate destruction from God; and so Maimonides says {k}, he that transgresses the words of that prophet, is guilty of death by the hand of heaven; and which was remarkably fulfilled in the Jewish nation, for their rejection of Jesus as the true Messiah, and that prophet.

{k} Yesod Hattora, c. 9. sect. 4.

Acts 3:24

Ver. 24. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel,.... Who was, as the Jews call him, Myaybn lv Nbr, "the master of the prophets" {l}; and they say, that Samuel the prophet is Nwvarh aybnh, "the first prophet" in the chain of the Kabbala {m}; and therefore is here particularly mentioned, as at the head of the prophets, and next to Moses; there being but very few prophets between him and Moses, when there were many after him; and in his days, the schools of the prophets were set up: now not only Moses spoke of Christ, but all the prophets from the time of Samuel; in the books that bear his name, stands a famous prophecy concerning Christ, **2Sa 7:13**.

And those that follow after; in order, as David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, &c.

and as many as have spoken; anything by way of prophecy:

have likewise foretold of these days; of the days of the Messiah, of his person, office, incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, the pouring down of the Spirit, the times of refreshing, the Gospel dispensation, the conversion of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, and the gathering in all the elect of God.

{l} T Hieros. Chagiga, fol. 77. 1. {m} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 9. 1. Vid. Kimchi in Psal. xcix. 6.

Acts 3:25

Ver. 25. Ye are the children of the prophets,.... Of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are called prophets, Ps 105:15 being lineally and naturally descended from them; to them belonged the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, and the promises of him; they were heirs of them;

and of the covenant which God made with our fathers; so the phrase tyrb ynb, "children of the covenant", is used by the Jews, as peculiar to themselves; See Gill on "Ro 9:8" and so Nyyrwa rb, "a son of the law" {n}, is also used by them in a like sense; the law, the covenant, and the promises, externally belonging to them:

saying unto Abraham, Ge 22:18

and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed; meaning the Messiah, that sprung from him, and is called the son of Abraham; in whom, not only all Abraham's spiritual seed among the Jews, or the elect of God in that nation, and who were truly the children of Abraham, and of the promise, but even all the chosen of God among the Gentiles, in every nation, and of every kindred and family among them, are blessed in Christ, with all spiritual blessings; with peace, pardon, righteousness, redemption, and salvation: for this is not a form of blessing the Gentiles would use, when they blessed themselves, or others; saying, God bless thee, as he blessed Abraham's seed; for no one instance can be produced, when the Gentiles ever used such a form of blessing as this; but a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles by the Messiah, and of their being blessed in him; see **Ga 3:16** and though this sense is departed from by modern Jews, it was what the ancient synagogue gave into {o}.

{n} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 62. 1. {o} Sepher Chasidim, sect. 961. apud Allix, Judgment of the Jewish Church, p 57.

Acts 3:26

Ver. 26. Unto you first, God having raised his Son Jesus,.... Which may be understood, either of the incarnation of Christ, and his exhibition in the flesh; which is sometimes expressed by raising him up, and is no other than the mission, or manifestation of him in human nature, as in **Lu 1:69**. Or of the resurrection of him from the dead, and the exaltation of him at the right hand of God:

sent him to bless you; in person, according to the former sense; for he was indeed sent only to the people of Israel, and to them he preached; many of whom were blessed with converting grace under his ministry; but according to the latter sense, and which seems most agreeable, he was sent in the ministry of the word, and came by his Spirit, first to the Jews, among whom the Gospel was first preached for a while, and was blessed to the conversion of many thousands among them, both in Judea, and in the nations of the world, where they were dispersed:

in turning away everyone of you from his iniquities; in this the blessing lay, and is rightly in our version ascribed to Christ, and to the power of his grace, in the ministration of the Gospel and not to themselves, as in many other versions; as the Syriac version, "if ye convert yourselves, and turn from your evils"; making it both their own act, and the condition of their being blessed; and the Arabic version likewise, "so that everyone of you departs from his wickedness"; but that work is Christ's, and this is the blessing of grace he himself bestows, and is a fruit of redemption by his blood, **Tit 2:14**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 4:1

Ver. 1. And as they spake unto the people,.... For though only mention is made of Peter's preaching in the preceding chapter, yet doubtless John preached as well as he; either in turn, or to a part of the people at some distance: and this shows their diligence, faithfulness, and integrity, in the ministration of the word; and it is recorded to their honour, that whilst they were about their master's business, and discharging the duty of their office,

the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them; by agreement, with great violence, and at unawares: the "priests" might be those who kept the watch in the temple; for

"in three places the priests kept watch, in the house of the sanctuary; in the house of Abtines, in the house of Nitsots, and in the house of Moked, and the Levites in one and twenty places {p}."

And it now being eventide, they might be about to take their stands; "and the captain of the temple" might be he, whom they call,
tyb rh vya, "the man of the mountain of the house"; who was rv, a ruler, or governor, and hnwmm, a president over all the wards {q}; he is sometimes called rmvm var, "the head of the ward" {r}; and of him it is said {s},

"the man of the mountain of the house goes his round through every ward, with burning torches before him; and every ward that does not stand (is not on his feet), the man of the mountain of the house, says to him, peace be to thee; and if he observes that he is asleep, he strikes him with his staff, and he has power to burn his garments."

The Vulgate Latin and the Oriental versions read in the plural number, as in See Gill on "Lu 22:4",
See Gill on "Lu 22:52". The Sadducees were a sect among the Jews, that denied the resurrection of the dead; of their rise, name, and tenets, See Gill on "Mt 3:7".

{p} Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 1. {q} Bartenora & Yom Tob in ib. sect. 2. {r} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 6. fol. 186. 3. {s} Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 2.

Acts 4:2

Ver. 2. Being grieved that they taught the people,.... Any doctrine, and especially that which follows, and which particularly gave uneasiness to the Sadducees, they were exceedingly distressed by it; it pained them to the very heart, and they were filled with wrath and indignation:

and preached through, or in Jesus, the resurrection of the dead; they not only preached the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead in general, but gave an instance and proof of it in the resurrection of Christ, affirming that he was risen from the dead; and they also preached up the resurrection of the dead in his name, and asserted, that he would be the author of it, and it would be erected by his power: so that their doctrine was equally disagreeable to the Pharisees and Sadducees; to the Sadducees, who denied that there was, or would be any resurrection of the dead; and to the Pharisees, who though they believed it, yet were highly offended that it should be said, that Jesus was risen from the dead; and that the general resurrection of the dead should be attributed to him.

Acts 4:3

Ver. 3. And they laid hands on them,.... The Arabic version renders it, "on both"; on Peter and John; seized them by force, and drew them out of the temple:

and put them in hold unto the next day; not in the common public prison, as in Ac 5:18 but they put them into the hands, and under the care and custody of a set of men, to keep and guard them; that they might not go away, until they had an opportunity of bringing them before the sanhedrim, to be examined and punished by them:

for it was now eventide; it was at the ninth hour, or about three o'clock in the afternoon, when Peter and John went up to the temple, where they healed the lame man; after which, both of them preached to the people; so that it must now be evening; at least, as the Syriac version renders it, "the evening was near", or was drawing on.

Acts 4:4

Ver. 4. Howbeit, many of them which heard the word,.... The doctrine of the Gospel, preached by Peter and John:

believed; the report of it, and in Christ, as risen from the dead, which was the sum and substance of it: and this they did, notwithstanding the opposition made by the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducces, and the violence they used to the apostles; for though they kept their persons in hold, they could not stop the free course of the word, which ran and was glorified:

and the number of the men was about five thousand; or "was five thousand", as the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions read; that is the number, not of the hearers, but "of them that believed", was so many; and so read the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: there were so many persons converted at this time; for this number does not include the three thousand that were converted under the first sermon, but regards those who now became true believers, and were added to the church; so that there were now eight thousand persons added to it; a great increase indeed! now had Christ the dew of his youth, and now were these fishermen fishers of men indeed: that our Lord's feeding five thousand men with five barley loaves and two fishes, should have any regard to the conversion of these five thousand men, is but a conceit.

Acts 4:5

Ver. 5. And it came to pass on the morrow,.... The disciples being kept in custody all night:

that their rulers, and elders, and Scribes; that is, their ecclesiastical rulers; the chief priests, who, with the Scribes, and elders of the people, made up the great council at Jerusalem, consisting of seventy one persons, so they are called in Mt 26:3.

Acts 4:6

Ver. 6. And Annas the high priest,.... So called, either because he had been an high priest, though he was not now, but Caiaphas his son-in-law; or because he was the Sagan of the high priest, and had all the other priests under his government; and is mentioned first, because he was father-in-law to Caiaphas; See Gill on "Lu 3:2" he could not be called so, because he was ayvn, "prince", or president of the council; for not he, but Gamaliel, was president at this time. And

Caiaphas; who was properly high priest, and continued so for three years after the death of Christ:

and John; who is thought by Dr. Lightfoot to be the same with Jochanan, or John ben Zaccai; a famous Jewish Rabbi, who lived at this time, and until, and after the destruction of Jerusalem: this Rabbi was Nhk, "a priest" {t}, as this John was, of the kindred of the high priest; he lived also at Jerusalem; for it is said of him {u}, that he sat in the shadow of the temple, and expounded all the whole day; and a very remarkable story is told of him, which happened just about this time {w}; which is, that

"forty years before the destruction of the temple--the doors of the temple opened of themselves, when Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai reproved them, saying, O temple, temple, wherefore dost thou fright thyself? I know thee, that thine end shall be, to be destroyed; for so prophesied of thee Zechariah, the son of Iddo, Zec 11:1. "Open thy doors, O Lebanon", &c."

The chief objection to him, as that learned writer observes, is, that he lived and died a Pharisee, whereas this John seems to have been a Sadducee; see **Ac 5:17**. This puts me in mind of John the high priest, who ministered in the high priesthood fourscore years, and at last became a Sadducee {x}: Beza's ancient copy reads "Jonathan: and Alexander"; whose surname was Lysimachus, and had the title of "Alabarcha"; he was a very rich man {y}: after Alexander the great had been at Jerusalem, this name became frequent among the Jews; and it is said {z} to be promised him, and was fulfilled, that every son that was born to the priests that year he entered Jerusalem, should be called Alexander; and therefore it is no wonder to hear of an Alexander among the kindred of the high priest; frequent mention is made of yrdnokla ybr, "Rabbi Alexander", in the Jewish writings {a}:

and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest; by whose means they were become members of the sanhedrim:

were gathered together at Jerusalem; where the great council only sat, until the destruction of it; it seems by this, that some of the members of it lived in the country; it may be in some of the villages adjacent, where they might be easily and quickly sent for, upon any occasion, as they very likely now were; the Syriac version leaves out the words "at Jerusalem".

{t} Juchasin, fol. 20. 2. {u} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 26. 1. {w} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39. 2. & Hieros. Yoma, fol. 43. 3. {x} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 29. 1. {y} Joseph Antiqu. l. 20. c. 4. sect. 2. {z} Juchasin, fol. 14. 1. & 159. 1. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 18. 2. {a} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 53. 2. Chagiga, fol. 5. 1. Megilla, fol. 17. 2. Nedarim, fol. 41. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. & passim.

Acts 4:7

Ver. 7. And when they had set them in the midst,.... Of the assembly, as the Ethiopic version adds; in the middle of the sanhedrim, which sat in a semicircular form; or as the Jews express it, as the half of a round corn floor, or as a half moon, and not in a perfect circle; because it was necessary that the contending parties, and the witnesses, might go in and speak before them all {b}; so that those that were set before them, were placed in the middle of them: and here Peter and John were set; so the Arabic version renders it, "when they set both": they sent for them out of the hold, or custody, where they had been all night, and ordered them to be brought before them, to be examined about their doctrine and practice:

they asked, by what power, or by what name have ye done this? they inquired of them, whether it was by a natural, or by a divine, or by a diabolical power, that they had wrought the cure upon the lame man? whether it was by the use of medicine, or by the help of magic art, and the assistance of the devil, which they were very ready to charge Christ and his disciples with? or whether they pretended to a divine and supernatural aid? and also what name they had made use of, and by whose authority they acted?

{b} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 3. & Bartenora in ib.

Acts 4:8

Ver. 8. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost,.... At that very instant, having received a fresh measure of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, besides what he had poured forth upon him at the day of Pentecost; so that he had great courage and presence of mind, and freedom of speech, as Christ had promised his disciples they should have, when they were brought before governors and magistrates, Mt 10:18. The case was much altered with Peter, he who but a little while ago was frightened by a servant maid, now stands before the Jewish sanhedrim, with undaunted courage and resolution:

and said unto them, ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel; he addresses them in a very handsome manner, and gives them their proper titles as magistrates; which ought to be done by men and Christians; honour should be given, to whom honour is due: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and some copies, add "hear", which seems very necessary; he called for audience, or desired to be heard a few words, in the defence of himself and fellow apostle, and in answer to their questions.

Acts 4:9

Ver. 9. If we this day be examined of the good deed,.... Or "seeing" we are; for it was not a matter of doubt, but a clear case, that they were brought into court, and were passing under an examination, about the cure of the lame man; which the apostle rightly calls a

good deed, it being done in faith, and to the glory of God, and for the good of the man; and hereby tacitly suggests, that they were dealt very hardly with, to be seized and kept in custody, and be called in question, for doing an action so beneficent and kind, as this was, which was

done to the impotent man; who could not help himself, nor get his bread any other way, than by begging:

by what means he is made whole; restored to perfect health, and the proper use of his limbs; that is, by what power, and in what name this was done; the answer is ready, and it is as follows.

Acts 4:10

Ver. 10. Be it known unto you all,.... The members of the sanhedrim:

and to all the people of Israel; who might hear of this affair; for the apostle was not ashamed of what he had done, nor of the person in whose name he had done it:

that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth; by calling, on that name, and by making use of it, and by the power and authority of Jesus Christ, who by way of contempt was called the

Nazarene: whom ye crucified; for though Pilate delivered him to be crucified, and the Roman soldiers did crucify him, yet this was at the request and instigation of the chief priests, Scribes, and elders; and therefore it is ascribed to them, who were bent upon his death; and no other would satisfy them, but the shameful and painful death of the cross:

whom God raised from the dead; of which the apostles were witnesses, having seen him and conversed with him after his resurrection; and this was the doctrine they were sent to publish, and for which they were apprehended and detained in custody; but this did not deter them from preaching it, no, not before the sanhedrim; which was an instance of great courage and faithfulness: and this is the rather mentioned; to show, that it was not by the name of one that was dead, but of one that was alive, that this cure was performed; as well as to observe to them, that their efforts against Christ were vain and fruitless:

even by him doth this man stand here before you whole; from whence it appears, as well as from **Ac 4:18** that the man that was healed, was now present: and either he was laid hold on, and detained in custody with the apostles, in hope to discover fraud if they could; or hearing that the apostles were before the sanhedrim, and examining on his account, might come of himself, in order to attest and prove the matter of fact, and to vindicate them.

Acts 4:11

Ver. 11. This is the stone,.... That is, this Jesus of Nazareth, by whose name the lame man was made whole, is that stone spoken of in
Ps 118:22 by whom is meant the true Messiah, comparable to a stone, for his strength and duration, and usefulness, as a foundation and corner stone, in the spiritual building of the church; and yet notwithstanding is the stone

which was set at nought of you builders: the priests, elders, and Scribes; who were fond of being called builders, but made miserable work of it; despising and rejecting the stone of Israel, and instead of him as a foundation, built themselves, and others, on the traditions of the elders, and their own righteousness: but though Christ was rejected by them, both in person and in doctrine, and was ignominiously treated, and at last put to death, yet he was raised from the dead, and exalted at the right hand of God; and is the stone,

which is become the head of the corner; or the chief corner stone, that adorns, strengthens, knits, and keeps together, the whole building; in which Jews and Gentiles, saints in all ages and places, even all the elect of God, are united together;
See Gill on "Mt 21:42".

Acts 4:12

Ver. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other,.... Meaning not corporeal healing, but spiritual and eternal salvation; the Syriac version renders it, neither is there anqrwp, "redemption in any other": Christ is the only Saviour and Redeemer, who was promised and prophesied of as such; who has saved and redeemed his people from the law, sin, and Satan; nor is salvation to be sought and hoped for from any other; not in a man's self, nor in any other creature, angels or men; not in and by his own works, and legal righteousness; not by obedience to the law of Moses, moral or ceremonial; nor by the light of nature, much less by an observance of the traditions of the elders:

for there is none other name; thing or person, be it ever so great, or whatever show of power and strength, of holiness and religion, it makes; as the name of kings, princes, and the great men in the world; or of ministers and preachers in the church; or even of Christians and believers, which may be only a name to live; none but the name of Jesus, his person, blood, and righteousness:

under heaven: throughout the whole earth, in all the nations and kingdoms of it; nor even in heaven itself, among all the mighty angels there, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; none but the Father and the Spirit, who are one with Christ: there is none but he

given among men; and he has been freely given by his Father, as an instance of his matchless love to the world; and also freely given by himself, to be a sacrifice for the sins of his people; and is freely preached among men, as the only Saviour of them; for there is no other,

whereby we must be saved: God resolved in his purposes and decrees, in his council and covenant, upon the salvation of his chosen people; and he appointed his Son to be the salvation of them, and determined he would save them by him, and by no other, and in no other way; wherefore, whoever are saved, must be saved by him, see **Ho 1:7** the Arabic version adds, "unless by him only".

Acts 4:13

Ver. 13. Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John,.... With what courage and intrepidity they stood before them, the presence of mind they had, and the freedom of speech they used, as the word properly signifies: they observed their elocution, the justness of their diction, the propriety of their language, and the strength and nervousness of their reasoning; as well as their great resolution, constancy, and firmness of mind; not being afraid to profess the name of Christ, or to charge them with the murder of him; and that they seemed to be determined to abide by him, at all events; to assert him to be the true Messiah, though rejected by the Jewish builders; and that he was risen from the dead; and not only to ascribe unto him the miracle now wrought, but the salvation of men; and to declare, that there was none in any other but him: the Syriac version renders it, "when they heard the word of Simeon and John, which they spoke openly": and freely, without any reserve: they answered readily to the question, that it was by the name of Jesus of Nazareth that they had done this miracle; they dealt freely with the Jewish sanhedrim, and told them in so many words, that they were the crucifiers of Christ, and the rejecters of that stone, which God had made the head of the corner, and that there was no salvation for them in any other: it appears from hence, that John spoke as well as Peter, though his words are not recorded:

and perceived that they were unlearned ignorant men; not by what they now said, but by what they heard and understood of them before: they were informed that they were "unlearned" men, or who did not understand letters; not but that they had learned their mother tongue, and could read the Scriptures; but they had not had a liberal education; they had not been brought up at the feet of any of the doctors, in any of the schools and universities of the Jews; they were not trained up in, and conversant with, the nice distinctions, subtle argumentations, and decisions of the learned doctors, in the interpretation of the law of Moses, and the traditions of the elders: and understood that they were also "ignorant" men, idiwtai, "idiots", or private men; for men might be unlearned, and yet not be such; it seems the high priests themselves were sometimes unlearned men: hence, on the day of atonement,

"they used to read before him, in the order of the day, and say to him, Lord high priest, read thou with thine own mouth; perhaps thou hast forgot, or it may be, tdml al, "thou hast not learned" {c}."

The Jews have adopted the word here used into their language; and express by it, sometimes a man that is mean, abject, and contemptible: thus instead of "children of base men", or "without a name", the Targumist on Job 30:8 reads, Nyjwydh ynb, "the children of idiots", or "private men": and in the Targum on 1Sa 18:23 it is used for one lightly esteemed, and comparable to a flea: it sometimes designs persons in a private life, though men of learning and knowledge, in distinction from those that are in office; so we read {d}, that

"three kings, and four twjwydh, "private" persons, have no part in the world to come; the three kings are Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh; the four "idiots", or private men, are Balaam, Doeg, Ahithophel, and Gehazi."

And so a bench of idiots, or private men, is distinguished from a bench of authorized and approved judges {e}; and sometimes the word is used of such, as are distinguished from doctors, or wise men; so when it is said {f},

"the command of plucking off the shoe, is done before three judges, and though the three are "idiots";"

the note of Maimonides upon it is,

"not wise men, but that know how to read the language,"

the Hebrew language: and such were the disciples, in every sense of the word; they were mean and abject, poor fishermen, men of no name and figure, that were in no office, and exalted station of life, nor versed in Jewish learning, but common private men: so that

they marvelled; the sanheddrim were astonished to hear them talk with so much fluency and pertinence:

and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus; looking wistly upon them, they knew them again, and remembered that; they were persons that were the disciples of Jesus, and whom they had seen in company with him; not in the high priest's palace, when Jesus was arraigned, examined, and condemned there; though Peter, and some think John was there at that time, yet not to be observed and taken notice of by the sanhedrim; but in the temple where Jesus taught, and where the chief priests, Scribes, and elders came, and disputed with him about his authority, and cavilled at him, Mt 21:15.

{c} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 3. {d} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 2. {e} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 32. 11. {f} Misn. Yebamot, c. 12. sect. 1.

Acts 4:14

Ver. 14. And beholding the man which was healed,.... Who either was taken into custody, and brought before the sanhedrim, along with the apostles; or rather, who came here of his own accord to be witness for them: for he was

standing with them; in company with them, and close by them, and on their side; and so they could, and did point and appeal unto him, who was ready to justify, that it was not by the use of medicine, or of magic art, or in the name of Satan or Beelzebub, but by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, that his cure was wrought:

they could say nothing against it; they could not gainsay the fact, for the man was before them, perfectly well, whom they personally knew, by his lying so long at the gate of the temple; they knew that he had been lame from his mother's womb, who was now above forty years of age; and they could say nothing against the manner of his cure, who was present to attest it; nor could they say anything against them; the apostles, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; they could not blame them for doing it, it being a good deed, nor charge them with fraud and imposture.

Acts 4:15

Ver. 15. But when they had commanded them,.... That is, when the sanhedrim had ordered the apostles; or "commanded that both", as the Arabic version reads, both Peter and John; and, it may be, the man that was healed too:

to go aside out of the council; or place where the council, or sanhedrim sat; which, whether it was in the chamber "Gazith", in the temple where they used to sit {g}, or in the shops, or in the city, whither they removed, is not certain. We are told {h}, that

"the sanhedrim removed from the chamber Gazith, to the shops, and from the shops to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem to Jabneh;"

that is, after the destruction of the city. And the first remove was much about this time; for it is said {i}, that

"forty years before the destruction of the temple, the sanhedrim removed, and sat in the shops."

Not in the shops where things were sold for the use of the temple, but in a court adjoining to them, which took its name from them.

They conferred among themselves; what was proper to be done, the apostles being withdrawn.

{g} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 2. & Middot. c. 5. sect. 3. {h} T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 31. 1. {i} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 8. 2.

Acts 4:16

Ver. 16. Saying, what shall we do to these men?.... Whether they should punish them by scourging them, or detain them longer in custody, or commit them to prison, or dismiss them:

for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them: they were convicted that a miracle was wrought; that it was a clear case, a well known thing, of which there was no room to doubt, and that it was done by the apostles; but this was not all the difficulty, had it been a thing only within their knowledge, and which they could have concealed, it would have given them no uneasiness; but, as they observe,

it is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem: for the man having been so long lame, and had lain so long at the temple, where all the inhabitants frequently went, he was known and took notice of by them; and his cure being wrought so openly, and in such a miraculous way, it was the common talk of the city: so that there was no smothering it:

and we cannot deny it; the fact is so certain and evident; nor hide it, as the Ethiopic version renders it, it being so notorious and public.

Acts 4:17

Ver. 17. But that it spread no further among the people,.... Meaning not in Jerusalem; for the fame of this miracle was spread among all the inhabitants of that city; but in other parts of the nation:

let us straitly threaten them; or "in threatening threaten them"; that is, severely threaten them with imprisonment, or with the scourging of forty stripes save one, or with death itself.

That they speak henceforth to no man in this name; which through indignation and contempt they do not mention, but mean the name of Jesus: and their sense is, that the apostles, from this time forward, should not teach, or preach the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, or any other doctrine of the Gospel, in the name of Jesus, to any man, Jew or Gentile; or perform any miracle in his name, or call upon his name, and make use of it, for the healing of any person, or doing any miraculous work. The Ethiopic version is a very odd one, and quite contrary to the sense of the sanhedrim, "that they should not speak any more but in the name of the man Jesus".

Acts 4:18

Ver. 18. And they called them,.... From the apartment where they were; or ordered their servants to call them in to them:

and commanded them not to speak at all; either privately or publicly, in the ministry of the word, or in working of miracles, in the city, or in the country:

nor teach in the name of Jesus; any doctrine whatever; or "the name of Jesus", as the Arabic version reads; that is, the doctrine of Jesus, that which respects his person, his carnation, his offices, his sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead.

Acts 4:19

Ver. 19. But Peter and John answered and said unto them,.... With great boldness and courage, and without any fear of man, but in the true fear of God

whether it be right in the sight of God; who is omniscient, and sees, and knows all things, all the actions of men, and the springs of them; who is holy, just, and true, and sits and judges among the gods, that which is right:

to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye: it is not denied that magistrates are to be hearkened to, and obeyed: but not more than God, or in things that are contrary to his nature, will, law, honour, and glory: whatever is agreeable to the law and will of God, commanded by magistrates, should be attended to, and cheerfully obeyed; but what is not should be disregarded, whatever follows upon it: and this was so just and reasonable, that the apostles appeal to the sanhedrim, or council itself, to determine.

Acts 4:20

Ver. 20. For we cannot but speak,.... It was not physically, but morally impossible; or it was not lawful, and therefore they would not speak any other, and they could not avoid speaking, say they,

the things which we have seen and heard; as the miracles and doctrines of Christ, his resurrection from the dead, of which they were eye and ear witnesses. This shows their great fidelity and integrity, their inviolable attachment to Christ, and their fearlessness of the displeasure and wrath of men.

Acts 4:21

Ver. 21. So when they had further threatened them,.... Either repeated the same, as before; or added some more severe ones, to terrify them, if possible; not being able to answer their arguments, or invalidate their reasoning:

they let them go; they did not acquit them as innocent persons, but dismissed them from custody:

finding nothing how they might punish them; not being able, though they sought most diligently for it, to fix anything upon them, which might be a cause, or occasion, or pretence of inflicting any punishment upon them:

because of the people: they would not have stuck at the injustice of it, or have been under any concern about offending God; but they were afraid of the people, of losing their credit among them, and lest they should rise up against them, and on the side of the apostles:

for all men glorified God for that which was done; they saw the hand of God in it, and ascribed it to his mercy, goodness, and power, and gave him the glory of it; and therefore to punish the instruments of so great and good a work, would have been esteemed barbarous and wicked, and would have been highly resented by them; since, on the contrary, they judged them worthy of great honour and respect.

Acts 4:22

Ver. 22. For the man was above forty years old,.... So that the miracle was the greater, that a man born lame, and who had been so above forty years, should have a cure; and he was the more known to the people, and his testimony met with more credit:

on whom this miracle of healing was showed; both for the good of men, for the glory of God, and for the confirmation of the Gospel of Christ.

Acts 4:23

Ver. 23. And being let go,.... Or dismissed from custody, by the order of the sanhedrim:

they went to their own company; or "to their own men", as the Ethiopic version reads; or "to their own brethren", as the Syriac; either to the other ten apostles; or to the hundred and twenty, who first met together; or the whole multitude of them that believed, **Ac 4:32** the eight thousand that had been added to them, the whole church. Saints love to be together, and delight in the company of each other; and especially when they have anything to communicate, that may be for their mutual good, or for the honour of God:

and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them; what commands and injunctions they had lain upon them, and what threatenings they had given them, and, no doubt likewise, what answers they had returned to them.

Acts 4:24

Ver. 24. And when they heard that,.... The whole of the report the apostles made; and which they heard with patience, and without making any unworthy reflections upon the sanhedrim; and being, on the one hand, not over much terrified, and cast down, and, on the other hand, not sluggish, careless, and secure; they betake themselves, not to plots, conspiracies, and seditions; nor to arms to defend and avenge themselves, though their numbers were large; but to prayer, that they might not be deterred by threatenings, from speaking boldly the word of the Lord:

they lift up their voice to God with one accord; being inspired by the Holy Ghost, they not only agreed in the matter of their petitions, which agreement is of great avail with God; for whatever two or more agree in to ask of God, shall be given to them; but also in the very words which were vocally expressed by them, and that in a very loud and sonorous way, to signify the vehemency and ardour of their minds and affections:

and said, Lord, thou art God; or, as in one of Beza's copies, "Lord our God"; or, as in the Ethiopic version, "Lord, thou art our God"; addressing God, the Father of Christ, as appears from **Ac 4:27** as their own God, their covenant God and Father in Christ, from whom they might hope for help, and in whom they might expect safety, and every supply of grace:

which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; and which is a full proof of the omnipotence of God; an attribute of singular use to the saints in distressed circumstances; for what is it he cannot do, who made all things that are? and what is it he will not do for his saints, for the accomplishment of his purposes, the making good of his covenant and promises, the fulfilment of prophecies; the good of his people, and the glory of his name?

Acts 4:25

Ver. 25. Who by the mouth of thy servant David has said,.... In **Ps 2:1** from whence we learn, that that psalm, though it is without a title, and does not bear David's name, yet is one of his and so Kimchi says, that David composed it at the beginning of his reign; though Aben Ezra thinks, that it was composed by one of the singers for him, on the day he was anointed; yet he afterwards seems to doubt of it, and on **Ps 2:7** says, they are the words of David, or the words of the singer. And certain it is, that in the apostles' time this psalm was reckoned to be David's by the Jews in common; and therefore they speak of it as such: and it was the sense of the ancient doctors of the synagogue, that this psalm is to be understood of the Messiah. Jarchi says, our Rabbins expound the business (of this psalm) concerning the King Messiah; and Kimchi observes, that there are some that interpret this psalm of Gog and Magog {k}, and the Messiah, or anointed, that is the King Messiah; though one of these writers was of opinion, that it is best to understand it of David himself; and Aben Ezra says, that it was composed either for David, or for the Messiah, and to understand it of the Messiah, the thing is more clear. The verses **Ps 2:7** are particularly applied to the Messiah in some of their most ancient writings {l}, and also in modern ones {m}, as is **Ps 2:2** to Messiah ben Joseph {n}: and indeed the whole psalm belongs to the Messiah, as appears from the express mention of him, and the vain attempts of the kings of the earth against him; from the decree and resolution of God to make and declare him king of Zion, notwithstanding their utmost efforts; from his having the Gentiles for his inheritance, which is true of no other; and especially from that reverence, adoration, and worship, which were to be given to him, and that trust and confidence to be placed in him, which can by no means agree with David, nor with any mere creature. The Syriac version reads, "who in the Holy Ghost, by the mouth", &c. and so read Beza's most ancient copy, and five other manuscripts of his; and the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, read, "who in the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of our father David", &c. and the Alexandrian copy, but does not seem to be a genuine reading; since the Jews were not used to call David, but Abraham, their father; nor is it, with propriety, expressed, that God the Father said in, or by the Spirit, what follows,

why did the Heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? that is, the Gentiles, and the people of the Jews, Pilate, and his council, with the Roman soldiers, and the Jewish sanhedrim, with the common people; who raged against Christ, seized him in a furious manner, led him as a malefactor, and hurried him from bar to bar, in a tumultuous way, and with great noise and clamour urged the crucifixion of him; nor did their rage cease until they had put him to death: yet it was a vain thing in them to imagine he should be held under the power of death; or that this would put a stop to the spread of his doctrine, and the enlargement of his kingdom and interest; since he rose from the dead, as a triumphant conqueror, over all his enemies, and pouring forth his Spirit, in an extraordinary way, he spread his Gospel, and his glory throughout the earth.

{k} Vid. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol 3. 2. {l} Zohar in Numb. fol. 82. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 44. fol. 38. 4. & T. Bab. Succa, fol. 52. 1. {m} Maimon. in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1. Abarbinel Mashmiah, Jeshua, fol. 37. 4. & 38. 1. {n} Pirke Eliezer, c. 19.

Acts 4:26

Ver. 26. The kings of the earth stood up,.... Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, sometimes called a king, **Mr 6:14** and Pilate the Roman governor, who represented his master Caesar; these stood, or rose up in an hostile manner, and set themselves against, and opposed themselves to the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth:

and the rulers were gathered together; the Jewish rulers, Annas, Caiaphas, and the rest of the members of the sanhedrim, who met together more than once; and particularly at the high priest's palace, to consult how they should take Jesus and put him to death; and who also gathered together at the same place, when he was taken, to arraign, examine, and condemn him. And this opposition, and these conspiracies and consultations, were

against the Lord: Jehovah, the Father of Christ, who sent him, and anointed him; so that what was done against Christ, was done against the Lord, their views and designs, their interest and glory, being the same:

and against his Christ; or anointed one, who was anointed by him, with the Holy Ghost, from his birth, and at his baptism, to be prophet, priest, and King.

Acts 4:27

Ver. 27. For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus,.... This is the interpretation of the above passages in **Ps 2:1** and the application of them to Jesus; who is called the "child" of God, because the human nature of Christ was taken into union with the second person, who is the Son of God: unless the word should rather be rendered "servant", as it is in **Ac 4:25** and which is a character that belongs to Christ, and is often given him as Mediator, who, as such, is God's righteous servant; and he is called "holy", because he was so in his conception and birth, and in his life and conversation, being free both from original sin, and actual transgression; and which is an aggravation of the sin and guilt of these men, that they should rise up, and gather together against him; and yet it was a clear case, a notorious fact, a certain truth, that could not be denied: and for the further aggravation of their crime, as well as for the sake of explaining the phrase "his, Christ", it is added,

whom thou hast anointed; with the oil of gladness, above his fellows. Christ was, in some sense, anointed to be prophet, priest, and King, from eternity, being so early set up as Mediator, or called unto, and invested with that office; see **Pr 8:22** and he was anointed in time, both at his incarnation and baptism, having the Spirit without measure given unto him, which is that anointing, that teacheth all things.

Both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. This Herod was Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the great, and who beheaded John the Baptist; and Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea, at the time of Christ's death; the Gentiles were those of Pilate's council, and the Roman soldiers;

and the people of Israel, were the Jews, both the rulers, and the common people; the Syriac version renders it, "the synagogue of Israel": and these, though they were of different nations, and of different interests, yea enemies to one another, as the Jews and Gentiles in general were; and as were Herod and Pontius Pilate in particular; yet all gathered, consented, and agreed together to mock, scourge, and crucify this innocent and holy person. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions add, "in this city"; and so the above copies of Beza's, and others; meaning, in the city of Jerusalem, where the apostles now were, and where the above persons met together, and from whence a prophet could only perish. The Alexandrian copy reads, "in this thy city": which was called the city of God, and the holy city; and yet in this was this wicked convention, and all this wickedness done.

Acts 4:28

Ver. 28. For to do whatsoever thy hand,.... It was not the end of their gathering together against Christ, or it was not their intention and design, to fulfil the purposes and decrees of God, but to fulfil their own lusts, and satiate their rage and malice against him; but it was so in the event, according to the wise disposal of providence, that by their gathering together, by their consultations and conspiracies, they brought about what God in his everlasting council had decreed. By "the hand" of the Lord here is not meant, the grace and favour of God; or the power and providence of God; or his word of precept, his revealed will; but his secret will, the counsel of his will, the hidden purpose of his heart, the wise consultation of his mind, which is formed according to his infinite wisdom: so in 2Sa 14:19 it is said, "is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?" that is, the head of Joab, the wise counsel of Joab; and so the Jewish writers interpret it, wtue, "his counsel" {o}: and so the word is explained here immediately; for it follows,

and thy counsel determined before to be done: God's decrees are from eternity; there is nothing comes to pass in time but what he has beforetime determined should be done, either by effecting it himself, or doing it by others, or suffering it to be done, as in the case here. Whatever was done to Christ, either by Jews or Gentiles, by Herod or Pontius Pilate, was according to the secret will of God, the covenant he made with Christ, and the council of peace that was between them both: what they wickedly did, God designed for good, and hereby brought about the redemption and salvation of his people: this neither makes God the author of sin, nor excuses the sinful actions of men, or infringes the liberty of their wills in acting.

{o} Kimchi in loc. & R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 36. 2.

Acts 4:29

Ver. 29. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings,.... Meaning not with his eye of omniscience, which he could not but do; but that he would so take notice of them, as in his providence to rebuke them for them, or restrain them, or make them fearless of them:

and grant unto thy servants; the apostles, and all the ministers of the word, who are the servants of the most high God, and who serve him in the Gospel of his

Son, with great cheerfulness and faithfulness:

that with all boldness they may speak thy word; and not their own, or another's; the Gospel, which is God's speech, or a word, a message of grace and mercy from him to sinful creatures. The request of the whole church is, that the ministers of the word might not be intimidated by the menaces of the sanhedrim; but go on to declare it with all freedom of expression, with all boldness, courage, and intrepidity of mind, and all openness and faithfulness, and in the most public manner. And such a petition shows, that as it is gift of God to speak his word, or preach his Gospel, so it also is, to speak it freely, boldly, and faithfully, as it should be spoken.

Acts 4:30

Ver. 30. By stretching forth thine hand to heal,.... That is, by exerting his power in healing sicknesses, diseases, and lameness, as in the above instance, by the hands of the apostles; which, as it would be contrary to the schemes of the Jewish sanhedrim, and would confirm the doctrines of the Gospel; so it would animate the preachers of the word to preach it with more readiness, cheerfulness, and firmness of mind;

and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus; as had been done already, and by whose name particularly the lame man at the temple had received a cure, and in whose name the sanhedrim had forbid the apostles to preach, or to make use of it, in doing any other miracle.

Acts 4:31

Ver. 31. And when they had prayed,.... Either while they were praying, or as soon as they had done; for sometimes, as here, prayer is immediately heard, and an answer is returned, whilst the saints are speaking, or as soon as prayer is ended:

the place was shaken where they were assembled together; which, whether it was a private house, or the temple, is not certain: the latter seems more probable, because their number was so great, that no private house could hold them; and since this was the place where they used to assemble; this was now shaken with a rushing mighty wind, as on the day of Pentecost, and was a symbol of the divine presence, and a token that their prayers were heard, and an emblem of the shaking of the world by the ministry of the apostles:

and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost; with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, even with extraordinary ones, such as speaking with divers tongues, as before on the day of Pentecost; see **Ac 2:4** and this was the case not only of the apostles, but of the other ministers of the word, and it may be of the whole church:

and they spoke the word of God with all boldness; that is, the apostles, and preachers of the Gospel, spoke it with great freedom, and without fear, not only privately, in their community, but publicly, in the temple: this was what was particularly prayed for, and in which they had a remarkable answer.

Acts 4:32

Ver. 32. And the multitude of them that believed,.... The Gospel, and in Christ, the substance of it; and a multitude they were, for they were now about eight thousand persons. And though their number was so great, they

were of one heart and of one soul; there was an entire consent and agreement in doctrine, in matters of faith they were all of one mind and judgment, and there was a perfect harmony in their practice, they all performed the same duties, and observed the same commands and ordinances; and all pursued the same interest, and had the same ends and views; and there was a strict union of their affections to each other; their souls were knit to one another; so that there was, but as it were, one soul in this large body of Christians. Aristotle, being asked what a friend was, answered, one soul dwelling in two bodies {p}: and so the Jews say, it is fit and proper that lovers or friends should be dxa vyak dxa blb, "of one heart, as one man" {q}; and such friends and hearty lovers were these.

Neither said any of them, that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; though he had a peculiar right unto them, yet he did not claim that right, nor insist on it, nor so much as speak of it, nor make use of his substance as if it was his own, reserving it for himself, or even disposing of it himself; but exposed it to the free use of the whole body, to enjoy it equally with himself:

but they had all things common; which was what they were not obliged to, but it was a free and voluntary action of their own, and so is not binding on others; nor indeed is their practice to be imitated, in the direct manner in which they did it, for their case was peculiar. They were not only every day liable to persecutions and to have their possessions seized, and their goods confiscated; but they also knew, that in process of time, Jerusalem would be destroyed, and they could not tell how soon; and therefore judged it right to sell off their possessions, and throw the money into one common stock, for their mutual support, and for the carrying on the common cause of Christ.

{p} Diog. Laert. in vit. Aristot. l, 5. 313. {q} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 21. 3. & 162. 4.

Acts 4:33

Ver. 33. And with great power,.... Either in a very powerful way, with great fervency of spirit, and ardour of mind, and uncommon zeal; or with great efficacy on the souls of men; or with many miracles, and powerful operations in healing the sick, casting out devils, &c.

gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; which they were chosen to be witnesses, and were eyewitnesses of; and which is a fundamental article of the Gospel, and was what the Sadducees were particularly disturbed at, and on account of which they forbade them to preach any more in Christ's name.

And great grace was upon them all; not only upon the apostles and ministers, but upon the whole church: and which may be understood either of the large gifts of the Spirit of God, which were poured out upon them, and plentifully bestowed on them; or of the gracious protection of God over them, preserving them from the rage and malice of men; or of that grace and favour which they had among thee people in common; or of that charity, liberality and beneficence, which were among them, which sense is confirmed by what follows; though it may be all these senses may be taken in.

Acts 4:34

Ver. 34. Neither was there any among them that lacked,.... Bread to eat, or clothes to wear, or any of the necessaries of life; which shows their great charity, and gives a reason why they were in so much favour with the people, because they took so much care of their poor; and this flowed from the grace of God bestowed upon them:

for as many as were possessors of lands and houses; or "vineyards", as the Ethiopic version reads, whether in Jerusalem or elsewhere;

sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold; whether lands, houses, or vineyards.

Acts 4:35

Ver. 35. And laid them down at the apostles' feet,.... Showing great veneration and respect to the apostles, and a sort of neglect and contempt of their worldly substance; and signifying that they entirely delivered them to the apostles, and subjected them to their disposal:

and distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need; though they had all things in common, yet there was an order observed; a man might not go to the common stock and take out of it what he would; but as all was committed to the care of the apostles, and was in their power; the distribution was made by them, to every man, to the original proprietors, as well as to others, and that not as much as a man would have, or he might crave; but as much as he needed, for the present, of which the apostles were the judges.

Acts 4:36

Ver. 36. And Joses,.... The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read "Joseph", and so do Beza's most ancient copy, and two of his manuscripts, and the Alexandrian copy, and others; for "Jose", or "Joses", is only an abbreviation or contraction of "Joseph"; though according to others it is the same with "Josiah": there is one of this name, who was the sort of Alphaeus, and brother to two of the apostles, James and Jude, Mt 13:55 and another called "Joses Barsabas"; and it may be to distinguish the one from the other this is called "Joses Barnabas"; for so it follows,

who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas: his name before his conversion was "Joses", or "Joseph", or "Josiah"; and afterwards, or at least after he came to be acquainted with the apostles, and to be in their company, they called him "Barnabas", The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "who was of the apostles"; and so Barnabas is spoken of as if he was an apostle, **1Co 9:5** which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation; or "of exhortation"; from the excellent gift and talent he had at exhorting; see Ac 11:23 and from the use he was of for the comforting of distressed minds; for abn, "Naba, to prophesy", includes both exhortation and comfort; and he having the gift of prophecy or preaching the Gospel, was called abnrb, "Barnabas", a son of comfort, or a comforter, or an exhorter: and so Jerom {r} interprets it, "the son of a prophet". Drusius conjectures that his right name was amxn rb, "Bar Nachama", and by contraction "Barnama", and with a Greek termination "Barnamas"; which properly signifies, in the Chaldee and Syriac languages, "the son of consolation", as it is here interpreted; and he observes, that the letters "M" and "B" are sometimes used one for an other: thus one and the same man is called "Berodach" and "Merodach", 2Ki 20:12 and the same river is called "Abana", **2Ki 5:12** and in the margent "Amana"; but others think he had his name from the same word that Noah had his, and which signifies rest and comfort, as appears from the reason of his name. "This same shall comfort us", &c. And so the name of this man in the Chaldee or Syriac language was aba xn rb, which may be literally rendered "the son of the fathers' rest", or "comfort". And this man is said to be

a Levite; of the tribe of Levi, and of the priestly race:

and of the country of Cyprus; or "by birth", or "nation, a Cyprian"; for though he was a Jew, as is clear from his being of the tribe of Levi, and was born of Jewish parents, yet in Cyprus, and so was a native of that place. The Ethiopic version renders it, "of the city of Cyprus"; but Cyprus was not a city, but a country; wherefore the Syriac version renders it, "of the place, or country of Cyprus", as we do: it was an island in the further part of the Mediterranean sea; it had its name from the plant Cyprus, and is now by the Turks called "Kibris". According to Pliny {s}, it lay to the east and west of Cilicia, and was opposite Syria, and was formerly the seat of nine kingdoms; its circumference was three hundred and seventy miles, and had been called by various names; as Acamantis, Cerastis, Aspella, Amathusia, Macaria, Crypton, and Colinia; in it were fifteen towns or cities, which were Paphos, Palsepaphos, Curias, Citium, Corineum, Salamis, Amethus, Lapethos, Solce, Tamaseus, Epidarum, Chytri, Arsinoe, Carpasium, and Golgi. According to the same writer {t}, it was by an earthquake divided from Syria; and that part of it which lay to the east from Syria, is said to be less than a hundred miles distant from it. And according to Mela {u}, its chief cities were Salamis and Paphos, mentioned in Ac 13:5. And according to Ptolomy {w}, it had on the west Pamphylia, on the south the Egyptian and Syrian seas, and on the east the Syrian sea, and on the north the straits of Cilicia: it was inhabited by people of various nations, and, among the rest, by Jews; and R. Benjamin makes mention of Jewish Rubbans in Cyprus, in his time {x}.

{r} De Nominibus Hebraicis, fol. 105. I. {s} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 31. {t} Ib. l. 2. c. 88. {u} De Orbis Situ, l. 2. p. 66. {w} Geograph. l. 5. c. 14. {x} Itinerar. p. 30.

Acts 4:37

Ver. 37. Having land, sold it,.... Whether this was in Cyprus, or in Judea, is not certain; nor how he came by it, whether he had bought it, as the priests and Levites might, and as Jeremiah, who was of the priests, bought a field at Anathoth, Jer 32:9 or, whether it was his wife's dowry; for the Levites had nothing by inheritance: they had forty two cities, and the six cities of refuge to dwell in, and the field of the suburbs of these cities; which field or land was never to be sold, but to be a perpetual possession, Le 25:34 but now the ceremonial law was abolished, and this precept was not attended to, if the land was of this sort. Moreover, the Jewish doctors interpret the above law otherwise; and understand it only of changing, and not of selling, which they allow of; one of their canons runs thus {y},

"the priests and Levites, Myrkwm, "sell" always, and redeem always, as it is said, Le 25:32, "the Levites may redeem at any time"."

Upon which canon, one of their commentators {z} says,

"they sell always; and not as an Israelite, who cannot sell less than two years before the jubilee;--but these "sell" even near the jubilee; "and they redeem always": if they sell houses in walled towns, they are not confirmed at the end of the year, as the houses in the walled towns of Israelites; and if "they sell fields", it is not necessary that they should remain in the hands of the buyer two years, but they may redeem them immediately, if they will."

And another of them {a} has this observation,

"all agree that the Levites may not change a city, or suburb, or field, which are theirs, because it is said, Le 25:34 "but the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold"; and the wise men of blessed memory say, the meaning of it is, it shall not be changed, for they do not change anything from what it was before."

And agreeably to this is what Maimonides {b} elsewhere says,

"they do not make in the cities of the Levites a city a suburb, or a suburb a city, or a suburb a field, or a field a suburb, as it is said, Le 25:34 "but the field of the suburbs of their cities shall not be sold"; from report (or tradition) we learn, that that is said, "shall not be sold", means, shall not be changed; but the field, suburbs, and city, everyone of these three shall be as they are for ever. Priests and Levites who "sell" a field, of the fields of their cities, or an house of any of the houses of their walled towns, do not redeem according to this order (i.e. as the other Israelites), but "they sell fields"; and even near to the jubilee, and redeem them immediately."

So that if this land of Barnabas lay in Judea, as is most likely, it might be sold, and much more, if in Cyprus. But, be it what and where it will, he sold it:

and brought the money; from Cyprus or Judea, or that part of the land of Canaan where it lay, and where he had sold it:

and laid it at the apostles' feet; perhaps he might be the first person that did so, and set an example which was universally followed; however, he is particularly mentioned, being a man of note among the apostles, and of great usefulness in after times, and of whom frequent mention is made in other places.

{y} Misn. Eracin, c. 9. sect. 8. {z} Bartenora in Misn. Eracin. {a} Mainton. in ib. {b} Hilchot Shemitta Veyobel, c. 13. sect. 4, 5, 7.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 5:1

Ver. 1. But a certain man named Ananias,.... A name common among the Jews, the same with Hananiah, Jer 28:1 it signifies not the humility of the Lord, or the affliction of the Lord, or the answer of the Lord, as say some, as if it was derived from hne; but the grace of the Lord, or the Lord's gracious one, coming from Nnx: there is no dependence on names; though this man's name signified one that was in the grace and favour of God; he was not so, but a graceless person, as appears by what follows. It is very likely he was a minister of the word, since the account of him follows upon that of Barnabas, and is opposed to it; it may be he was one of the hundred and twenty, on whom the Holy Ghost fell on the day of Pentecost; and yet, though he had great gifts, had no grace. This shows there are hypocrites among men of the greatest names and characters, and in the purest churches; this first and pure church, which, in the preceding chapter, has such large encomiums, was not free from them:

with Sapphira his wife; whether this is the same name with "Shiphrah", **Ex 1:15** or "Zipporah", **Ex 2:21** both which are by the Septuagint called "Sephora", or whether another, and may signify "beautiful", is not very material. Jerom {c} says, in the Syriac language this name signifies "beautiful"; though he first gives other explanations of it, as "narrantem, literatam, sive librariam", as though it was derived from the Hebrew word rpo. The precious stone called sapphire seems to come from the same root as this, and to be so called because of its beautiful azure colour. The name "Sappho", which was the name of a famous poetess, the inventress of a kind of verse called "Sapphic" verse, is said to be the diminutive of this name "Sapphira". Drusius observes, it may be read arypu, "Tzephira"; which comes near to "Zipporah", and among other things signifies a "she goat"; and it was usual to give women names taken from such creatures. So "Rachel", a "sheep", and "Tabitha", or "Dorcas", a "doe". But whatever her name or person were, her actions were disagreeable:

sold a possession; which was their own. So the Arabic and Syriac versions read, "their own field", or "farm"; find the Ethiopic version, "their own vineyard": it might be his wife's dowry or jointure, and so her consent was necessary; or they might be jointly concerned in this sale, to show not only their concord and harmony among themselves; but that they agreed in their devotion and religious actions, and that being both filled with zeal for God, and love to the brethren, sold their estate to support the common cause.

{c} De Nominibus Hebraicis, fol. 106. C.

Acts 5:2

Ver. 2. And kept back part of the price,.... At which the possession was sold; he reserved it for his own use, after he had given out that he sold it for the service of the church:

his wife also being privy to it; to this private reserve:

and brought a certain part; whether the greater part, or an equal part, half of it, or a lesser part; some little part of it, so the phrase seems to signify, is not certain:

and laid it at the apostles' feet; as the rest did, thereby to make a show of charity, and cover the deceit.

Acts 5:3

Ver. 3. But Peter said, Ananias,.... Peter, by divine revelation, or by a spirit of discerning, such as Elisha had, who knew what his servant Gehazi had done, knowing what a reserve Ananias had made, calls him by his name, and says to him,

why hath Satan filled thine heart? or emboldened thee, given thee so much spirit and courage to act in such an impudent and audacious manner; so the phrase is used in **Es 7:5** see the Septuagint there, and often in Talmudic writings.

"Says R. Joshua, I never ybl ynalm, "filled my heart"; or my heart never filled me to say to a man, go and take the change of these three things, &c. {d}."

And says another Rabbi {e},

"though I say so, ybl ynalm al, "I never filled my heart", or my heart never filled me to transgress the words of the companions;"

that is, I never durst do so. And again {f}, it being observed, that Isaiah should say, "hear, O heavens!" it is said,

"who, or what is this, who wbl walm, "hath filled his heart", or whose heart has filled him to call to the heavens to hear."

But this instance of Ananias was such, that none but Satan could have put him upon, or emboldened him to have done; who from hence appeared to have the power over him, and to have possessed him, to have great access to him, even to his heart, and great influence upon it, so as to prompt him

to lie to the Holy Ghost; who was in the apostles, and by whom they were acted, and to whom he had given a discerning of spirits; so that it was a daring action, and downright madness, to go about to deceive them: or he pretended he had an impulse from the Spirit of God to sell his estate, and give the whole price of it to the apostles, and yet kept back part of it; which was acting contrary to that Spirit he pretended to be influenced by.

And to keep back part of the price of the land: that is, he lied against the Holy Ghost, by keeping back part of the price the land was sold for; when he had declared he sold it with this view, to give the whole for charitable uses, and affirmed that what he brought was the whole.

{d} T. Hieros. Maaserot, fol. 48. 4. {e} Sabbat, fol. 14. 3. {f} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 160. 1. Vid. Shaare ora, fol. 2. 1.

Acts 5:4

Ver. 4. Whiles it remained, was it not thine own,.... Before it was sold, it was his own proper estate; he had the sole propriety in it, and could have kept it, or disposed of it as he pleased: he was not obliged to sell it, he might have kept it as his own property; for selling of possessions at this time was a voluntary thing; it was what no man was forced to; it was a pure act of liberality, and what was not enjoined by the apostles; every man was left to his liberty.

And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? that is, the price for which it was sold: before he had declared that he sold it, in order to give the whole of it to the church, had brought it to the apostles as the whole; it was in his own power to dispose of, as he pleased, whether to give the whole, or a part of it, or it. He might have kept it all if he had thought fit, or have given what portion he pleased.

Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? for though Satan had an hand in it, and greatly solicited him to it, and spirited him up to do it, yet in conjunction with his own heart; and perhaps it began there, which Satan helped forward. It was not so of Satan as to excuse the wickedness of his heart. It was owing partly to the sin of covetousness, which reigned in him, and partly to a desire of vain glory, and being thought a very religious man, that he acted such a part, and was so notoriously guilty of lying and hypocrisy.

Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God; that is, not to men only, for he had lied to the apostles; but to God also, to the Holy Ghost, who is truly and properly God, of which this passage is a full proof; and it was owing to his omniscience, which is a peculiar attribute of deity, that this wicked man, and this fraud of his, were discovered.

Acts 5:5

Ver. 5. And Ananias hearing these words,.... Of Peter's; by which he found his sin was detected, and by which he was convicted of it: and which set forth the evil nature of it, with its aggravated circumstances; and such power went along with them, and they cut so deep, as that immediately

he fell down and gave up the ghost; which is an instance of what the Jews call death by the hand of heaven: and this was done either by an angel; or rather by an extraordinary gift bestowed on Peter, being such an one as the Apostle Paul had, and used, when he smote Elymas the sorcerer with blindness, and delivered the incestuous person, and Alexander and Hymeneus to Satan.

And great fear came upon all them that heard these things; both upon the members of the church, and so was of service to make them careful of their words and actions, and cautious and circumspect in their lives and conversations; and upon those that were without, and might be a means of making them fearful of speaking against them, or mocking at them, or of joining themselves to them, without being thoroughly satistied that they should, and had a right, and were meet for it.

Acts 5:6

Ver. 6. And the young men arose,.... The younger brethren of the church, who were robust, and strong, and fit for the following service: these rose up from their seats at once, not willing that such an awful spectacle should lie long before them:

and wound him up; in linen clothes, as was the manner of the Jews:

and carried him out: of the house where they were, and out of the city; for the burying places of the Jews were without the city:

and buried him; which was all done in a very short time, as appears by what follows.

Acts 5:7

Ver. 7. And it was about the space of three hours after,.... The death of Ananias. So much time was taken up in burying of him; and in less time it could not well be, since the burying places of the Jews were without the city, as before observed: and if they were as distant from other cities, as they were from the cities of the Levites, they were, as Dr. Lightfoot shows from Maimonides {g}, above a mile and half off: though there is a Jewish canon which runs thus {h};

"they put carcasses, graves, and tanners, fifty cubits from a city."

So that to go thither, open the grave, inter the dead, and return, must take up so much time; and so much time his wife had to reflect upon what she and her husband had done, but seems not to have had any thought about it, at least not any remorse of conscience for it:

when his wife, not knowing what was done; she knew that her husband kept back part of the price of the land, and how much it was, and what he brought to the apostles; but she did not know that the fraud was detected, nor what followed; as that her husband was immediately struck dead, and was carried out and buried; which it is pretty much she should not in this time, when the thing was awful and shocking, the news of which must fly apace all over the city: but it looks as if the company of the saints was not broke up all this while, and that no one went out to carry it abroad, but the young men that went to bury him. Sapphira therefore, being ignorant of the whole affair,

came in; to the temple or house where the apostles were, expecting to see her husband among the apostles, and chief men, in great honour and esteem for what he had done; and that he would be on equal foot with Barnabas and others, who had sold all they had, and brought the whole price of their possessions into the common stock.

{g} Shemitta Veyobel, c. 13. sect. 2. {h} Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 2. sect. 9.

Acts 5:8

Ver. 8. And Peter answered unto her,.... Who might be inquiring for her husband; though such a way of speaking was common with the Jews, when nothing goes before to which the answer is made; of which there are frequent instances in the sacred writings:

tell me whether ye sold the land for so much; naming the sum of money which Ananias had brought; though the historian does not mention it. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, "tell me, O woman", &c. not calling her by her name, as he did her husband, **Ac 5:3**

yea, she said for so much; just that sum, and no more.

Acts 5:9

Ver. 9. Then Peter said unto her, how is it that ye have agreed together,.... For husband and wife to agree together in what is good, in things civil, honest, and lawful, and in religious matters, is very commendable; but to agree in a fraud, in a lie, is very dreadful:

to tempt the Spirit of the Lord; to try whether the apostles had the Spirit of the Lord, or not; and whether the Spirit of the Lord that was in them was omniscient and omnipotent, would take any notice of it, and inflict punishment for it:

behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door; which Peter knew either by hearing the sound of their feet, as Ahijah the prophet heard the sound of the feet of Jeroboam's wife, as she came in at the door, 1Ki 14:6 or by the same spirit as Elisha knew that Gehazi ran after Naaman, and received money and garments from him, **2Ki 5:26** and shall carry thee out; of this house dead, and bury thee, as they have thy husband.

Acts 5:10

Ver. 10. Then fell she down straightway at his feet,.... In like manner, and by the same hand of God as her husband before:

and yielded up the ghost; died directly:

and the young men came in and found her dead; the young men who had been to inter her husband came into the house at that instant, and found her dead upon the floor, at the feet of the Apostle Peter:

and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband; as it was usual with the Jews to do. So they say {i}, that in the cave of Machpelah were buried Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah.

{i} Cippi Hebraici, p. 4. T. Bab. Sota, fol. 13. 1.

Acts 5:11

Ver. 11. And great fear came upon all the church,.... Which was still more increased by this instance of Sapphira's death:

and upon as many as heard these things; who were not of the church;
See Gill on "Ac 5:5".

Acts 5:12

Ver. 12. And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought,.... That is, by their means, or by them as instruments, or through the imposition of their hands on persons, many miraculous and wonderful cures, as well as other extraordinary actions, were performed:

among the people; the common people, who attended in great numbers on their ministry, when the chief men and rulers of the nation despised them.

And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch; which is to be understood not of the whole church, nor of the hundred and twenty disciples, but of the twelve apostles, who met in this place to preach the Gospel to the people; and they were agreed in their doctrine and practice, and were united in their affections to one another. Of Solomon's porch, See Gill on "Joh 10:23". These words, with what follow to the 15th verse, are to be read in a parenthesis.

Acts 5:13

Ver. 13. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them,.... By the rest are meant, either those that were without the church, and those either the profane and persecuting sort, who durst not come nigh the apostles to touch them, or say one word to them, for fear of being struck dead; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "and then there was no more any man that durst restrain them", or go about to hinder them from preaching: or the better sort, such who attended on the word, and were either real believers or hypocrites, who durst not, one nor the other, join themselves to them, because of what happened to Ananias and Sapphira; which not only deterred hypocrites from coming into the church, but also kept off such who were really converted persons; but this sense seems to be contradicted in the following verse. Rather therefore by them are meant those within the church, and not only the private members of it, but the ministers of the word, of which number Ananias might have been; these, the rest of them, durst not come nigh the apostles, or familiarly converse with them, much less put themselves upon an equal foot with them, but with great reverence of them kept their distance from them:

but the people magnified them; both the ministers of the word, as Barnabas and others, who showed such a respect to the apostles, they having extraordinary gifts, and extraordinary things also being done by them, and especially the twelve apostles; these the people in general spoke well of, praised and cried up as marvellous men, because of what was done by them.

Acts 5:14

Ver. 14. And believers were the more added to the Lord,.... That is, to the church, as in **Ac 2:47** over which Christ was Lord and head; for they were added to the Lord before, by believing in him, when they gave up themselves to him, to be saved by him; and now to the apostles, and the church by the will of God; and this case of Ananias and Sapphira was so far from hindering persons from coming into the church, that there were greater additions made to it than before, even of such as were true believers in Christ. The Ethiopic version reads, "and many were added who believed in our Lord"; the Arabic version, "they that believed in the Lord increased"; the Syriac version, "and they more increased who believed in the Lord"; and so the Vulgate Latin version, "but the multitude of them that believe in the Lord were the more increased"; all of them reading the phrase, "the Lord", not in construction with the word "added", but with "believers: multitudes both of men and women"; the weaker sex were not intimidated any more than the men, such power went along with the word, and such grace was bestowed upon them. This church must now be prodigiously numerous, for before these additions, eight thousand had been added to the hundred and twenty; such success the Gospel had, and such progress it made in the hands of such mean and contemptible persons, notwithstanding the opposition of the chief men of the nation to it.

Acts 5:15

Ver. 15. Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets,.... These words are to be read in connection with the former part of the twelfth verse. Such miraculous cures being wrought by the apostles, the people who had sick persons in their houses, hearing of it brought them out; either "into the streets", as we render it, and as the Alexandrian copy reads; or "in every street" in Jerusalem, waiting for the apostles as they came, to receive a cure from them:

and laid them on beds and couches; for the better conveniency of carrying them to the apostles, or for their lying upon them until they came by that way:

that at the least, the shadow of Peter passing by, might overshadow some of them. The Vulgate Latin version adds, "and be delivered from their infirmities"; but this is not supported by any copy, nor is it in any other version. Peter is only mentioned because he was most known, he being the chief speaker and actor. Who these were that fancied there was such a virtue in Peter's shadow, and whether any were cured by it, is not certain. However, it is a vain thing in the Papists to conclude from hence the primacy of Peter, the worshipping of images, and that the Pope is Peter's shadow, and has his power.

Acts 5:16

Ver. 16. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about,.... The fame of the apostles' miracles spread in the cities round about Jerusalem; those that were at some distance as well as near, and large numbers of people came from thence,

unto Jerusalem; where the apostles were: the Syriac version adds, "unto them", that is, to the apostles; and the Arabic version, "with them"; along with those of the city of Jerusalem, who brought out their infirm persons into the streets to be cured:

bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits; with devils, by whom they were not only possessed, but greatly harassed and afflicted: sometimes tearing and convulsing them, and sometimes throwing them on the ground, and bruising them; or into fire and water, of which there are some instances in the evangelists:

and they were healed everyone; none went without a cure, which served greatly to confirm the Gospel preached by the apostles, and to irritate and provoke their enemies, as appears by what follows.

Acts 5:17

Ver. 17. Then the high priest rose up,.... Annas, or rather Caiaphas; See Gill on "Ac 4:6" he having heard what miracles were wrought by the apostles, and what additions were made to them, rose up from his seat and went out of the sanhedrim, in great haste, and in much wrath and passion:

and all they that were with him; in council, that were of his kindred or his party, as John and Alexander, and others, **Ac 4:6**

which is the sect of the Sadducees; who denied the resurrection of the dead; which doctrine the apostles preached; and this made the high priest and his party very uneasy; whence it seems that the then high priest was a Sadducee, and also the sanhedrim at that time, and which was sometimes the case. Great care indeed was taken of an high priest, that he should not be a Sadducee; on the eve of the day of atonement they always swore the high priest, lest he should be a Sadducee, that he would make no innovation in what was ordered him; and particularly that he would not put the incense upon the fire without, and then carry it in a censor into the most holy place, as the Sadducees understood {k}, Le 16:3. But notwithstanding all their care, sometimes they had a Sadducee for an high priest; we read of one John, an high priest, who ministered in that office fourscore years, and at last became a Sadducee {l}. And sometimes a sanhedrim consisted only of Sadducees: hence we read of yqwde lv Nyd
tyb, "a sanhedrim of Sadducees" {m}; and such an one was this; and therefore it is not to be wondered at what follows,

and they were filled with indignation; or "zeal", for Sadducism; and which was a blind zeal, and not according to knowledge: or "with envy" at the apostles for the miracles done by them, and because of the success that attended them; fearing lest, should they go on at this rate, their religion and authority would come to nothing. Sadducism now seemed greatly to prevail among men in power; and the Jews say {n},

"the son of David will not come until the whole government is turned to the opinion of the Sadducees."

{k} Misna Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {l} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 29. 1. Juchasin, fol. 16. 2. {m} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 52. 2. {n} Ib. fol. 97. 1.

Acts 5:18

Ver. 18. And laid their hands on the apostles,.... That is, laid hold on them, and took them, and carried them away; at least their servants did so, by their orders:

and put them in the common prison; where malefactors were put; and this both for greater security, and for greater disgrace.

Acts 5:19

Ver. 19. But the angel of the Lord,.... Or "of God", as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, whether Michael, as some have thought, or Gabriel, or what particular angel, is not material to know. However, it was a good angel, an elect angel, one of those ministering spirits sent by God to minister to the heirs of promise; one of those angels that excel in strength, as appears by what he did: for he

by night opened the prison doors; where the apostles were put, and which had more doors than one, and these strong and close shut, and guarded by keepers; but were easily opened by the angel. It was very likely at, or towards the evening, when the apostles were taken, and therefore they were committed to prison, there to lie all night, till next morning, when the sanhedrim would meet together to consult what to do with them:

and brought them forth; out of the prison, leading them out at the doors he had opened for them:

and said; the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, "to them"; that is, to the apostles, as follows.

Acts 5:20

Ver. 20. Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people,.... They were not delivered out of prison, in order to go and secure themselves from danger; but to go about the work they were called to, to preach the Gospel "in the temple", the place of worship; and a proper place to meet with persons to preach to, being a public place, whither the Jews always resorted; and there they were to stand, and continue with courage and intrepidity, not fearing the reproach and wrath of men, seeing they had both Christ and truth on their side; and there declare it "to the people", the common people, the multitude, even all that came to hear: the Gospel is to be preached to all; the Spirit of God makes it effectual to some, and others are rendered inexcusable: the substance of what they were to speak follows,

all the words of this life; all the doctrines of the Gospel; none of them are to be dropped or concealed, but to be spoken out, fully, freely, and faithfully, with all boldness and constancy; though they cannot be comprehended by reason, and are rejected by learned men, and the majority of the people; though charged with novelty and licentiousness, and attended with reproach and persecution: and these may be called, "the words of life", even of eternal life, as in **Joh 6:68** because they show the nature of it, and point out the way unto it; not by the law, and obedience to that, but by Christ and his righteousness; and are the means of quickening dead sinners, of reviving drooping saints, and of nourishing them up unto eternal life: and also the words of "this" life; not of this present frail, mortal, and sinful life; but of life by Christ, which is begun to be enjoyed now, and will be perfectly enjoyed hereafter: and particularly the doctrine of the resurrection unto life may be intended; in opposition to the Sadducees, who denied it, and were the men that, being filled with indignation against them for preaching it, had seized them, and put them into prison; and being now delivered from prison, they are bid to go and preach this same doctrine again, in the most public manner: though some think there is an hypallage in the words; and so the Syriac version renders them, "all these words of life"; and the Ethiopic version, "this word of life"; meaning the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, they had in commission to preach, and for which they were reproached and persecuted.

Acts 5:21

Ver. 21. And when they heard that,.... Or "his word", as the Arabic version supplies; that is, the word of the angel, the orders enjoined them by him, to go to the temple, and there preach the Gospel; this clause is left out in the Syriac version:

they entered into the temple early in the morning; they were obedient to the command of the angel, believing him to be a messenger of God, who declared his will, which they readily complied with, and were indeed eager of doing it; and therefore early in the morning, as soon as ever the temple doors were opened, and there were any people got together, they went in:

and taught; as the Ethiopic version adds, "the people, this word of life"; the doctrine or doctrines of the Gospel which the angel had bid them teach:

but the high priest came, and they that were with him: as before, to the place where the sanhedrim used to meet; either the chamber Gazith, or the shops, or some other place in Jerusalem;
See Gill on "Ac 4:15".

and called the council together; the sanhedrim, consisting of seventy one, which usually met at the time of the morning daily sacrifice; perhaps on this occasion they might be called together sooner, and everyone of them summoned to attend; for otherwise it was not necessary that every particular member should be present, but when there was any business of importance which required it, they were all gathered together {o}:

and all the senate of the children of Israel; or the elders, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, the rest of the elders of the city, besides those of the great sanhedrim. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that the two other sanhedrim, or courts of judicature in Jerusalem, which consisted of twenty three persons apiece, are designed; and who, as he rightly observes from Maimonides {p}, sat the one in the gate of the court, the other in the gate of the mountain of the house; so that all the courts in Jerusalem were called together at this time; and if they all met, they made up a hundred and seventeen men:

and sent to the prison to have them brought; that is, "the apostles", as the Syriac version reads. The sense is, that the high priest, and those that were with him at the same time that they convened all the courts of judicature in Jerusalem together, sent their officers to the prison, to fetch the apostles; or else the sanhedrim, and senate of Israel being met, they ordered their officers to go to the common jail, and bring the apostles before them, to be examined, tried, and judged by them.

{o} Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1, 2. {p} Maimon. Hilchot

Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 2.

Acts 5:22

Ver. 22. But when the officers came,.... The Arabic version adds, "to it"; that is, to the prison;

and found them not in the prison. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "the prison being opened they found them not"; when they came to the prison, they opened the doors of it, or the keepers for them; for though the angel had opened them for the apostles, yet he shut them again, as he brought them out; for these men found the doors shut, as the following verse shows, and who upon opening them and searching the prison, for the apostles, could find none of them in it; wherefore they returned; the Arabic version reads, "to them"; to the sanhedrim:

and told; that is, them, as both the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read.

Acts 5:23

Ver. 23. Saying, the prison truly found we shut with all safety,.... Locked, barred and bolted;

and the keepers standing without before the doors; both inner and outer in their proper places, diligently discharging their office:

but when we had opened we found no man within; that is, none of the apostles, for there might be other prisoners in it, who were not released by this means.

Acts 5:24

Ver. 24. Now when the high priest,.... Or "the priests", as it is read in most copies; the Complutensian edition reads, "the high priest"; and he is certainly designed, since he is distinguished from the chief priests after mentioned: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, leave out this word; as does also the Alexandrian copy:

and the captain of the temple; the same versions read in the plural number; See

Gill on "Lu 22:4",
See Gill on "Lu 22:52",
See Gill on "Ac 4:1".

and the chief priests heard these things; which the officers related, that the prison doors were shut and sure, and the keepers upon their watch, and yet the apostles gone:

they doubted of them, whereunto this would grow; they did not doubt of the truth of the things their officers told them, but they were amazed at them, and hesitated in their minds about them, and were anxiously thoughtful; what this would, or should be, or how this should be done; that the prison doors should be shut, and yet the prisoners gone; they were in suspense and anxiety of mind, what to impute it to; whether to a divine and supernatural power, or to magic art; and were uneasy in their minds what would be the issue of so strange and surprising an event.

Acts 5:25

Ver. 25. Then came one and told them, saying,.... Who this man was, is of no consequence to know; it can hardly be thought that he was one of the number of the disciples, or a member of the church, or a professor of the Christian religion; but rather an enemy, and one that sought his own interest, and to obtain the favour and affection of the chief priests and elders, and therefore very officiously came to them, and reported as follows:

behold, the men whom ye put in prison, last night,

are standing in the temple; openly and publicly, and without fear;

and teaching the people; in the name of Jesus, which the sanhedrim had forbid them to do.

Acts 5:26

Ver. 26. Then went the captain with the offcers,.... That is, the captain of the temple, who had the command of it; he went thither attended with the officers and servants of the chief priests, the same that had been sent to the prison, to fetch the apostles:

and brought them without violence; they did not lay hold upon them, and drag them away in a violent manner; but gave them good words, and allured them, and entreated them to go along with them, and perhaps promised them, that no hurt should come to them, and that they should have full liberty to speak for themselves; the Ethiopic version renders it, "they brought them, behaving themselves mildly towards them"; they used no forcible, but gentle methods; they did not seize them in a violent way, and bind them, and carry them away by force:

for they feared the people; who had them in great esteem, because of the miracles done by them, and the benefit they received from them, both for their souls and bodies:

lest they should have been stoned; by the populace, who had they used them in a severe and cruel manner, would have risen upon them, and stoned them to death; the Ethiopic version renders it, "because they feared the people, they did not stone them"; as if the captain of the temple, and the officers would have stoned the apostles, but that they were afraid of the people.

Acts 5:27

Ver. 27. And when they had brought them,.... From the temple, to the place where the sanhedrim sat, which, by this, seems to have been not in the room Gazith, nor in the shops, which were both in the temple, but in some part of the city of Jerusalem:

they set them before the council; whereby was fulfilled what Christ had foretold, Mt 10:17 "they will deliver you up to the councils"; they placed them before the whole sanhedrim; in the midst of it,
See Gill on "Ac 4:7"; and as the Ethiopic version here reads:

and the high priest asked them; though he was not president of the council, but Gamaliel, after mentioned; yet being in so high an office, and a principal member of the council, took upon him the examination of the apostles.

Acts 5:28

Ver. 28. Saying, did not we straitly command you,.... Or give you strict orders, with severe threatenings,

that you should not teach in this name? the Ethiopic version reads, "in the name of Jesus"; which is what is meant, but was not expressed by the sanhedrim; see **Ac 4:17**

and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine; they disregarded the council, and its orders, its commands and threatenings, and preached the doctrines of the Gospel; and particularly that concerning the resurrection of Christ, and through him the resurrection of all the dead; and with such success, that great part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem received it; at least there were great numbers in all parts of the city which attended to it, and embraced it: and this they represent as a novel doctrine, devised by the apostles, and peculiarly theirs; and which Moses, and the prophets, were strangers to:

and intend to bring this man's blood upon us; by charging us with the murder of him, and representing us as guilty of shedding innocent blood, and so stirring up the people, and the Romans against us, to take vengeance on us for it: this, as if they should say, seems to be the intention and design of your ministry, particularly in asserting, that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, is now risen from the dead, and was a holy, innocent, and righteous person, as his resurrection shows; and therefore, as we have been guilty in shedding his blood, the punishment of it will, one day or other, be inflicted on us; as it accordingly was, and as they themselves imprecated in Mt 27:25. It is to be observed, that they do not mention the name of Jesus, only by way of contempt, call him "this man", as it is usual with the Jews to do, when they speak of him. So a commentator {q} on Ge 27:39 says of some,

"they believed in a man whom they set up for God; and Rome believed, in the days of Constantine, who renewed all that religion, and put upon his banner the form awhh vyah, "of that man":"

and so another of their writers {r} uses the phrase several times in a few words. Judah ben Tabai fled to Alexandria,

"that they might not make him president, and in the way, with one disciple; as it happened to Joshua ben Perachiah, with vyah wtwa, "that man"; and ye may receive it for a truth, that "that man" was his disciple--and the truth is, that "that man" was born in the fourth year of the kingdom of Jannai the Second."

So an heretic is said to be one that confesses "that man"; and heretics are the disciples of "that man", who turned to evil the words of the living God {s}. Thus blasphemously and contemptuously do they speak of Christ.

{q} Aben Ezra, Vid. ib. in Dan. xi. 14. {r} Juchasin, fol. 16. 2. {s} Migdal Oz & Hagehot Maimoniot. in Maimon. Teshuba, c. 3. sect. 7.

Acts 5:29

Ver. 29. Then Peter, and the other apostles, answered and said,.... Peter began, as the mouth of the apostles, being the eldest man, and very bold and zealous; and the rest followed, or joined, with him in what he said:

we ought to obey God rather than men; this is said in answer to the charge of disobedience to the orders and commands of the council: men, civil magistrates, and ecclesiastical rulers, are to be obeyed in things which are not repugnant to the will of God; but in things that are, God is to be obeyed, and not men. God had commanded by an angel, that the apostles should go to the temple, and there preach the doctrines of the Gospel; the sanhedrim had forbid them to speak and teach in the name of Christ; who were now to be obeyed? God, and not men: from whence it appears that the apostles were to be justified in disregarding the council, and neglecting its orders; and which is no ways contrary to that obedience and submission, that is to be yielded to those that are in authority, in things civil and lawful.

Acts 5:30

Ver. 30. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus,.... Not from the dead, though this was true; but called him to the work and office of a Saviour, inverted him with that office, and sent him to perform that work; so that this refers rather to the incarnation of Christ, in consequence of the ancient council and covenant of grace: and this the apostles attribute to God the Father, under the character of "the God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob", as in **Ac 3:13**, to show that they did not bring in and worship any strange God; nor introduce any novel doctrine; or speak of any other Saviour or Redeemer, than he whom the God of their fathers had appointed, and who was made known to them, whom they looked for and believed in, and were justified and saved by:

whom ye slew and hanged on a tree; this is said in defence of themselves, being charged that they intended to bring this man's blood upon them; they therefore insist upon it that they had slain Jesus whom God raised up, inasmuch as they had condemned him to death in their sanhedrim, and had urged and importuned Pilate to crucify him, and had imprecated his blood upon them and on their children; and were not content to put him to any kind of death, but insisted on his being crucified, or hanged on a tree; that is, stretched out upon the cross, which was both a painful and shameful death, to which they were manifestly accessary, and therefore justly charged with it.

Acts 5:31

Ver. 31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand,.... Not at his right hand, though he is exalted to it, and is set down at it, but with, or by his right hand; that is, by his power: for being by him raised from the dead, he was exalted to the highest heavens, and placed in human nature at the right hand of God, on the same throne with him, crowned with glory and honour; and having a name above every name, and all power and authority both in heaven and in earth given him,

to be a Prince and a Saviour: being made and declared both Lord and Christ, Lord of lords, and Prince of the kings of tHe earth, the Prince of life and peace, the Head of the church, and over all things for the sake of it, and the Saviour of his body the church, of all the elect of God; not with a temporal, but a spiritual and eternal salvation, of which he is become the author by his obedience, sufferings, and death; and is an able and willing, a suitable and an only Saviour: and some of the branches of his power and grace are

for to give repentance to Israel; to the Israel whom God has chosen for himself, and Christ has redeemed by his blood, and whom the Spirit calls by his grace: these being sinners, as well as others, stand in need of repentance; and whereas this is not in any man's power, but is the free gift of God's grace; for though he should give men time and space to repent, and afford them the means of it, yet if he does not give them grace to repent, they never will, such is the hardness of man's heart; Christ is appointed to give this grace to the chosen ones, which he does by sending his Spirit to convince of sin, and to take away the stony heart, and give an heart of flesh:

and forgiveness of sins; free and full forgiveness of all sins; which being obtained by his blood, is applied by his Spirit to all that truly repent of them; for these two always go together; where he gives the one, he also gives the other: the manifestations and applications of pardoning grace are only made to repenting sinners; and there are none that truly, and in an evangelical way, repent of sin, but who have some views, or, at least, hopes of pardoning grace; and none ever mourn more over sin, than those that see it in the glass of forgiving love.

Acts 5:32

Ver. 32. And we are his witnesses of these things,.... Of the incarnation of Christ, of his crucifixion and death, of his resurrection from the dead, of his exaltation by the right hand of God, and of his offices as a Prince and a Saviour, and of the influences of his grace, in giving repentance and remission of sins to his people; and even to many of the Jews, who had been his crucifiers, and who were now converted under the ministry of the apostles:

and so is also the Holy Ghost; in his descent upon the apostles, through the miraculous gifts bestowed upon them, and the wonderful works done by them, and the mighty power accompanying their ministry to the conversion of sinners:

whom God hath given to them that obey him; that hearken to his Gospel, and believe in Christ, even to all private Christians, as well as ministers of the word; if not in his extraordinary gifts, yet in the ordinary measures of his grace.

Acts 5:33

Ver. 33. When they heard that,.... This defence of the apostles, in which they still insisted upon it, that they had been the crucifiers of Christ, and yet that he was raised from the dead, and exalted in heaven, and was a spiritual Saviour of men:

they were cut; to the heart, as if they had been cut asunder with a saw; the Ethiopic version renders it, "they were angry", and "gnashed with their teeth", as if a saw was drawn to and fro; they were filled with rage and madness:

and took counsel to slay them; not in a legal and judicial way, but in a private manner, or by force; stirring up the zealots to rise up against them, and dispatch them at once, as blasphemers and heretics.

Acts 5:34

Ver. 34. Then stood there up one in the council,.... Or "in the sanhedrim", which the high priest had called together; this phrase is left out in the Syriac version: yet certain it is, that the great council was now assembled, and the disciples were now before them, and this man, who was one of the members of it, stood up in it; for it seems to have been the custom, that though they usually sat, yet when anyone had anything to say, or made a speech, he rose up from his seat.

A Pharisee named Gamaliel; he is described by his sect of religion, a Pharisee; of which, See Gill on "Mt 3:7" and by his name Gamaliel: he was the son of Rabban Simeon, the son of Hillell the great; which Simeon is, by some, thought to be the same that took Christ into his arms, **Lu 2:25** and this Gamaliel was also the master of the Apostle Paul, Ac 22:3. This was a very ancient name in Israel; the prince of the children of Manasseh, that offered at the dedication of the tabernacle, was of this name, **Nu 7:54** and perhaps this man might be of the same tribe. He is further described by his profession,

a doctor of law; he was one of the Misnic doctors, one of the fathers of tradition, that received the oral law from those before him, and handed it down to others; and was the five and thirtieth of this sort, as the Jews say {t}, from the giving of the law at Mount Sinai; or, as others {u}, the thirty first:

had in reputation among all the people; and therefore his advice was the more likely to take place, without giving offence, or exposing to danger, seeing he was highly esteemed, not only in the sanhedrim, but among the common people; and that not only because he was a Pharisee, and a very strict one, the glory of that sect, insomuch that it is said {w}, that

"when he died, the glory of the law ceased, and purity and pharisaism died;"

but because of his years, dignity, and place also; he is called commonly Gamaliel, Nqzh, "the elder", because he lived to a great age {x}. He died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem {y}, and was had in veneration to the last. It is said of him {z}, that

"he ordered, before his death, that they should carry him to his grave in linen; for before this time they used to carry out the dead in silk; and this was more grievous to his relations than his death itself;"

because they thought he was not interred honourably enough. And it is also reported, that Onkelos, the proselyte, at his death, burnt as much for him in goods and spices, as came to seventy Tyrian pounds {a}. He was also commonly called by the name of Rabban, which was a more honourable title than that of Rabbi or Rab; and his father Simeon was the first that had it {b}; and he was now president of the sanhedrim: and hence he used that authority which is expressed in the next words,

and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; he ordered the apostles to be put out of the sanhedrim for a little while, that they might not hear what he had to say, and take encouragement from it; and that he might more freely speak his mind without giving them any countenance. The Alexandrian copy reads, "the men", instead of "the apostles"; and so the Vulgate Latin version.

{t} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2. {u} Juchasin, fol. 20. 1. {w} Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. {x} Juchasin, fol. 53. 1. {y} Ganz. ut supra. (Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2.) {z} Ib. {a} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 11. 1. {b} Ganz. ib. col. 1.

Acts 5:35

Ver. 35. And said unto them, ye men of Israel,.... This he said after the apostles were put out, when the council was by themselves; and he addressed them as "men of Israel"; not as distinct from the priests and Levites in the council, but because they were all of the stock of Israel; for this council did not consist of Israelites only, as distinct from priests and Levites, as appears from **Ac 5:21**. A sanhedrim commonly consisted of each of these; though if only of Israelites it was a lawful one. Maimonides says {c},

"they did not use to appoint any in the sanhedrim, but priests, Levites, and Israelites, that were genealogized and fit to be married into the priesthood---and that it was a command, that in the great sanhedrim there should be priests and Levites; as it is said, "thou shalt go to the priests and Levites"; but if they are not found, if they are all Israelites, lo, this is lawful,"

or a proper sanhedrim. His speech to them follows,

take heed to yourselves; consider well, do not act a rash and precipitant part; do not give way to passion and wrath, and hastily lay hands on these men, and destroy them; lest ye bring yourselves into disgrace and danger, and bring upon yourselves the ill-will and resentment of men, and the wrath of God: take time to consider of the matter, and deliberately consult

what ye intend to do as touching these men; what punishment to inflict upon them, whether imprisonment, scourging, or death; do nothing rashly.

{c} Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1. 2.

Acts 5:36

Ver. 36. For before these days rose up Theudas,..... There is one of this name Josephus {d} speaks of, who set up for a prophet, and drew a large number of people after him; pretending, that if they would follow him to the river Jordan, and take their goods along with them, he would but give the word, and the waters would divide and leave them passage to go over dryfoot; but Cuspius Fadus, who then had the administration of Judea, sent out some troops of horse, before they were aware, and killed many of them, and took divers others, and brought them in triumph to Jerusalem, with the head of Theudas. This account agrees with this instance of Gamaliel, only differs in chronology; since, according to Gamaliel's account, this case of Theudas was some time ago, and must have been before now, or he could not have mentioned it; whereas the story Josephus relates, as being in the times of Cuspius Fadus, was several years after this. Some think Josephus is mistaken in his chronology, and then all is right. Others, that another Theudas is intended; who, as Origen says {e}, was before the birth of Christ, since he was before Judas of Galilee, who rose up in the days of the taxing, at which time Christ was born: and the phrase, before these days, seems to design a good while ago. This name was in use among the Jews, and is either the same with hdwt, "Thuda", or "Thoda", so the Syriac version reads; one of the disciples of Christ was so called by the Jews {f}, whose name was Thaddeus: or with owdwt, "Thudus"; one of this name, said {g} to be a man of Rome, is frequently mentioned in the Talmud; and another also that was a physician {h}; but both different from this "Theodas". The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, Theodas; and some take it to be a contraction of Theodotus, Theodorus, or Theodosius. Just as Theucharis is put for Theocharis, and Theudosia for Theodosia: but it seems rather to be an Hebrew name; and so Jerom {i} took it to be, who renders it "praise": but who the man was is not certain; however, he rose up, as Gamaliel says, and made an insurrection, boasting himself to be some body, or "some great one", as the Alexandrian copy, and three of Beza's copies read, and two of Stephens's, and the Complutensian cdition; and as read also the Syriac and Arabic versions; just as Simon Magus did afterwards, **Ac 8:9** and so Josephus's Theudas gave out, that he was a prophet, and promised great things to the people, as to divide the waters of Jordan for them, by a word speaking and lead them through it as on dry land:

to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves; who believing what he said, put themselves under his command, and set him at the head of them:

who was slain: so Josephus's Theudas had his head cut off by the troops of Cuspius Fadus, the Roman governor:

and as many as obeyed him were scattered and brought to nought; some killed, and others taken; and so the faction was quelled, and came to nothing. This instance Gamaliel produces, to show that impostors and seditious persons, such as the apostles were thought to be, seldom succeeded, but generally failed in their attempts, and were blasted; and with the same view he mentions the following one.

{d} Antiqu. l. 20. c. 4. sect. 1. Vid. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 11. {e} Contr. Cels. l. 1. p. 44. {f} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. {g} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 19. 1. & Pesachim, fol. 53. 1, 2. & Betza, fol. 23. 1. & T. Hieros. Pesachim. fol. 34. 1. & Yom Tob. fol. 61. 3. & Juchasin, fol. 105. 2. {h} T. Bab. Nazir, fol. 52. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol 33. 1. & 93. 1. & Beracot, fol. 28. 2. {i} De Nominibus Hebraicis, fol. 106. D.

Acts 5:37

Ver. 37. After this man rose up, Judas of Galilee,.... Of whom Josephus thus says {k}:

"there was a man of Galilee, by name Judas, who led his countrymen into rebellion, declaring it an evil, should they suffer tribute to be paid to the Romans, and introduce mortal rulers after God."

And not unlike this is what another Jewish writer says {l} of Judas the Galilean, and his party:

"these were the cause of the Jews rebelling against the Romans, for they said, it was not fit that any should rule over men but God alone; and that no one should be called Lord, but the blessed God."

And this insurrection was "in the days of the taxing"; which was made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria; and the reason of it was, because he and his party would not pay that tax, for the reasons suggested in the above citations: and this is what Josephus refers to, when he says {m},

"Cyrenius came to Syria, sent from Caesar as judge of the nation, and appraiser of their estates; upon which Judas, the Gaulonite, (the same with Judas of Galilee,) rebelled, and Saddochus with him; saying, that this appraisment brought nothing else but servitude upon them; and therefore exhorted the nation to vindicate their liberty."

And his exhortations and arguments prevailed with the people: wherefore it follows here,

and drew away much people after him; perhaps a much larger number than Theudas did, since they are not expressly mentioned how many they were:

he also perished; being killed in the insurrection, or taken and put to death by the Romans. So Origen says {n}, that he was punished, and his doctrine was destroyed, and remained only among a few contemptible persons:

and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed; were forced to fly, some one way, and some another, and could make nothing of it: and as this instance was after the other before mentioned; and was so early as under the government of Cyrenius, and at the time of the taxing under him; it shows that Theudas could not be the Theudas of Josephus, unless the words should be rendered as see choose to do, "besides this man rose up Judas", &c. And others observe, that "after him", is the same as "before him"; and which, however, at first hearing, may seem very absurd, yet is justified by instances, as being a very proper way of speaking, seeing, when an account proceeds from the last as nearest, the first must be last, and the last first. Some, in order to reconcile this passage, think, that there is a transposition in the words of Luke, and that they should be read thus, "for before those days rose up Judas of Galilee", &c. and then, "after this man rose up Theudas", &c. so making Judas of Galilee more ancient than Theudas, as he must be, if he is the same Theudas Josephus speaks of: but still it is a difficulty how he could be the same, when that fact of his, the above historian speaks of, was seven, or eight, or ten, and, as some say, twelve years after this speech of Gamaliel's. To remove this, it is proposed, that what is said concerning Theudas is to be put into a parenthesis, and to be considered not as the words of Gamaliel saying them in the sanhedrim, but as the words of Luke the historian, who wrote after this fact was done; and because of the agreement of it with that of Judas, mentioned by Gamaliel, he inserts it; here, and joins it with it {o}. And yet, after all, it looks as if it was another Theudas that is here spoken of, who was before Judas; and that he that Josephus speaks of, might be, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, one of his posterity, who was of, the same name, and trod in his steps, and. was guilty of sedition as his ancestor was, and as the sons of Judas were, mentioned by the same historian in the same place.

{k} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 8. sect. 1. {l} Juchasin, fol. 139. 1. {m} Antiqu. l. 18. c. 1. sect. 1. Vid. l. 20. c. 4. sect. 2. {n} L. 1. contr. Cels. p. 44. {o} Vid. Vales. Not. in Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 11. & Capelli Spicileg. in loc.

Acts 5:38

Ver. 38. And now I say unto you,.... This is the sum of my advice upon the observation of these and other instances:

refrain from these men, and let them alone; keep your hands off of them, do not attempt to take away their lives, but dismiss them quietly, nor go about to hinder them, in what they are concerned:

for if this counsel, or this work be of men; if the doctrine these men preach is an human device; or this business they are engaged in is only an human affair, projected by men, and carried on upon selfish principles, and worldly views, seeking only themselves, and their secular interests, and not the glory of God:

it will come to nought; as did the designs of Theudas and Judas.

Acts 5:39

Ver. 39. But if it be of God,.... If it is according to the counsel of his will; if it is a scheme of his forming, and a work to which he has called these men, and they proceed in it on good principles, and with a view to the honour and glory of God:

ye cannot overthrow it; it will proceed and get ground, and stand, maugre all the opposition of hell and earth; therefore do nothing to them, or hinder them from going on. Some copies read, "ye cannot overthrow them"; and add, "neither you, nor kings, nor tyrants; wherefore refrain from these men"; so Beza's Cambridge copy.

Lest haply ye be found even to fight against God; which to do is downright madness, and which no man in his senses can expect to succeed in. There are some sayings of the Jewish doctors which seem to agree with these reasonings of Gamaliel {p}.

"Says R. Jochanan the shoemaker, every congregation, which is for the name of heaven (or God) at length shall be established, but that which is not for the glory of God shall not be established in the end."

Which one of the commentators {q} interprets in words still nearer to Gamaliel's language, thus:

"it shall be that that counsel which is for God shall stand and prosper, but that which is not for God shall cease."

And in another place it is said {r},

"all contention (or dispute) which is for God, at length shall be established, but that which is not for God shall not in the end be established: what is contention that is for God? the contention of Hillell and Shammai, (two famous doctors among the Jews,) but that which is not for God is the contention of Korah, and his whole company."

Some have thought from this advice of Gamaliel, that he was a Christian, or greatly inclined to Christianity; but when it is considered what respect was shown him at his death by the Jews, before observed on **Ac 5:34** it will appear that he died a Pharisee; and especially it cannot be thought he had any favourable sentiments of the Christians, since a little before his death he ordered a prayer to be made against them. Maimonides says {s}, that

"in the days of Rabban Gamaliel, the Epicureans (so the Amsterdam edition reads, but former editions read Mynym, "heretics", by whom are meant Christians) increased in Israel; and they distressed the Israelites, and seduced them to turn aside from God; and when he saw that this was greater than all the necessities of the children of men, he stood up, and his council or sanhedrim, and composed another prayer, in which there was a request to God to destroy the Epicureans,"

or heretics, meaning the Christians: and though this prayer is sometimes ascribed to Samuel the little, yet it was composed by him at the hint and instigation of Gamaliel; for so it is said {t}, R. Gamaliel said to the wise men,

"is there no man that knows how to compose a prayer for the Sadducees? (R. Asher reads "heretics";) Samuel the little stood up and composed one."

And it is also said {u}, that

"Samuel the little composed, Nynym tkrb, "the prayer for the heretics", before, or in the presence of Gamaliel the elder."

He made it when he was present, assisting, dictating, directing, and approving. The prayer was this {w},

"let there be no hope for apostates, and may all heretics perish in a moment, and all the enemies of thy people be quickly cut off: root out the kingdom of pride, and break, destroy, and subdue them in haste in our days."

In some forms it is added,

"blessed art thou, O Lord, that breakest the wicked in pieces, and humblest the proud."

Upon the whole, Gamaliel does not seem to have been a Christian, or to have favoured the Christian religion; but he was, as he is said, **Ac 5:34** to be, a Pharisee: and this council, or sanhedrim, were, for the greater part of them, Sadducees, as seems from **Ac 5:17** who, as the Jews say, were wicked and base men, men of very ill manners, whereas the Pharisees were Mynmxr, "merciful men" {x}; and such an one was Gamaliel: he was a religious man in his way; a man of humanity, a mild and moderate man, that had compassion and pity for his fellow creatures; and could not give in to any schemes of cruelty and persecution, which the Sadducees were forward to; and upon these principles he acted, and upon these he gave this advice.

{p} Pirke Abot, c. 4 sect 11. {q} Jarchi in ib. {r} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 17. {s} Hilchot Tephilla, c. 2. sect. 1. {t} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 28. 2. {u} Juchasin, fol.

21. 1. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2. {w} Apud Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. col. 2442. & Alting Shilo, l. 4. c. 26. p. 325. {x} Juchasin, fol. 139. 1.

Acts 5:40

Ver. 40. And to him they agreed,.... They were convinced and persuaded by his reasonings, approved of his advice, and agreed to follow it:

and when they had called the apostles; into the council again, having sent their servants for them, or ordered them to be brought in:

and beaten them; or scourged and whipped them with forty stripes save one, whereby was fulfilled what Christ had foretold, Mt 10:17

they commanded they should not speak in the name of Jesus; as they had strictly commanded them before, **Ac 4:18**. Perhaps both in this, as well as in bearing the apostles, they did not closely attend to Gamaliel's counsel, who advised them to keep their hands off of them, and not hinder them, but let them alone in what they were about: but this might be thought by them not to their reputation, nor sufficiently asserting their authority, to dismiss them, without saying or doing anything to them:

and let them go; from the council to their own company: they released them, and loosed them from their bonds; they set them at liberty, and let them go where they would; and so far they followed Gamaliel's advice.

Acts 5:41

Ver. 41. And they departed from the presence of the council,.... Having been threatened and beaten by them:

rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name; Beza's ancient copy, and others; the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions read, "for the name of Jesus"; in which name they were forbid to speak, and for speaking in it they were beaten; the Alexandrian copy, and the Syriac version read, "for the name": that is, for God, for the glory of God, and in the cause of God; Mvh, "the name", is often used in Jewish writings for God: the shame they suffered for him was by being scourged with forty stripes save one; which was reckoned an infamous and ignominious punishment, and which was inflicted on persons guilty of very scandalous crimes {y}: but this gave the innocent minds of the apostles no uneasiness; they accounted it an honour conferred on them to be called to suffering for the sake of God and Christ, and in so good a cause; they did what Christ exhorted them to, **Mt 5:11** which shows they had much of the presence of God, and large measures of grace communicated to them, by which they were supported; and thus cheerfully bore all indignity and reproach, for the name of Christ, which was exceeding dear and precious to them.

{y} Misn. Maccot, c. 3. sect. 1-10.

Acts 5:42

Ver. 42. And daily in the temple, and in every house,.... Every day, with great constancy and assiduity, both publicly and privately; in the temple, the place of public worship, where the Jews resorted on that account; and in each of their private houses, as often as they had opportunity:

they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ, that he is the Son of God, truly and properly God, the only Saviour of sinners: they preached up the dignity of his person, the grace of his incarnation, the obedience of his life, the benefits of his sufferings and death; they preached his resurrection from the dead, and the resurrection of the dead through him; they declared his ascension to heaven, his session at the right hand of God, and intercession for his people; they preached peace and pardon by his blood, atonement of sin by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and complete redemption and salvation by him. And this they did without ceasing, not regarding the orders and threats of the sanhedrim; they waxed bolder and bolder in the ministry of the word, and were more constant and assiduous in it; their reproaches and persecutions increased their zeal for Christ, and his cause.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 6:1

Ver. 1. And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied,.... From an hundred and twenty to three thousand more, from thence to five thousand more, and after that a multitude of men and women were added, and still they were increasing; see **Ac 1:15** **Ac 2:41**. This increase of the disciples agrees with what Maimonides says {z}, before observed, that "in the days of Gamaliel, Mynym wbr, "the heretics were multiplied in Israel"."

The word "disciples" was a common name to all Christians, to all that believed in Christ, and was the name they went by, before they were called Christians, Ac 11:26

there arose a murmuring of the Grecians, or Hellenists, against the Hebrews; by the Hebrews are meant the Jews that dwelt in Judea, and were the inhabitants of that country, and chiefly of Jerusalem, who spoke the Hebrew, or rather the Syriac language; and by the Grecians, or Hellenists, are meant, not the Greeks that were proselyted to the Jewish religion, though there might be some few among them; but Jews who were born, and had dwelt, in some parts of Greece, and spoke the Greek language, and used the Septuagint version of the Bible; between these two a murmuring arose, a complaint was made by one against the other: so that, as it appears from the instance of Ananias and Sapphira, that this first and pure Gospel church was not free from hypocrites; it is also manifest, that though they were at first so united and harmonious in their affections and judgments, yet they were not always clear of feuds, animosities, and contentions; Satan bestirred himself, and got footing among them, as he commonly does where the Gospel is preached, and there is an increase of it: the reason of this uneasiness was,

because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration; that is, they had not that distributed which was necessary for them, nor so much as the Hebrew widows; they complained of partiality, as if because the Hebrew widows were the natives of the country, and might be nearly related to many of the community, that therefore they were more regarded and better supplied every day, than their widows were, whose husbands had dwelt in foreign lands, and were not so well known, and had fewer acquaintance and relations; for it seems the ministration or distribution was made every day: and such a practice obtained among the Jews in common, who used to collect every day for the poor, and give it daily to them. Maimonides {a} speaks of it in this manner;

"they appoint collectors, who receive "every day", from every court, a piece of bread, or any sort of food, or fruit, or money, from whomsoever that offers freely for the time; and they divide that which is collected, "in the evening", among the poor, and they give to every poor person of it "his daily sustenance"; and this is called
ywxmt, "Tamchui", or "the alms dish"."

And from hence the apostles might take up this custom, and follow it. The Ethiopic version renders it, "because they saw their widows minister", or "employed daily"; as if the complaint was, that their widows were too much made use of, and obliged to more frequent and to harder service in taking care of the poor, the sick, and helpless, than the other widows were, who had not their share of labour with them, but lived more at ease. Though others rather think the murmur was, because the Grecian widows were not taken into the number, and employed in taking care of the poor, as the Hebrew widows were; but the sense first given, of not having so good a share in the distribution, seems to be the best.

{z} Hilchot Tephilla, c. 2. sect. 1. {a} Hilchot Mattanot Annayim, c. 9. sect. 2.

Acts 6:2

Ver. 2. Then the twelve,.... The twelve apostles, as the Syriac version reads; for their number was now complete, Matthias being chosen in the room of Judas: these being informed of the murmur there was between the two sorts of believers, the Hebrew and thc Hellenistic Jews,

called the multitude of the disciples unto them; either the hundred and twenty, the original members of the church, which first formed it, and on whom the Holy Ghost descended on the day of Pentecost; or rather the whole body of the church: for what the apostles had to say concerned them all; and they all had an equal right to chose their officers, that should minister unto them; and when they were convened together, they addressed them after this manner:

and said, it is not reason; or "it is not pleasing", neither to God, nor to us; so the Arabic version reads, "this does not please us"; nor could it be pleasing to the church itself:

that we should leave the word of God the study of the word, meditation upon it, and preaching it: not that they did relinquish either of these; but they were sometimes obliged to omit them, or not so frequently attend them; the care of the poor taking up more of their time, than the work of the ministry, or preaching of the Gospel would admit of; and therefore thought it not so right and proper, or so acceptable a thing to God and man, that they should in the least neglect a work of so great importance to the souls of men, and cause it to give way to that which only regarded their bodies:

and serve tables; the tables of the poor, collect for them, inspect into their several cases, and circumstances, and distribute accordingly to them; which required a good deal of time, care, thought, and circumspection, especially in such a church, where the numbers were so large. From hence we learn what is the business of deacons, who were afterwards appointed to take this part of the apostles' work off of their hands, and attend to it; which is to serve tables: the table of the Lord, by providing the bread and wine for it; receiving both from the minister, when blessed, and distributing them to the members; and collecting from them for the poor, and the defraying the charge; and observing what members are missing at the ordinance, whom they are to admonish; and if their admonitions are not regarded, to report it to the church: and they are likewise to serve the minister's table, by taking care that he has a sufficient competency for his support; and it belongs to them to stir up the members of the church to their duty in communicating to him; and what they receive of them, they are to apply to his use: and also, they are to serve the poor's table; to whom they are to distribute of the church's stock, with all impartiality, simplicity, cheerfulness, and sympathy.

Acts 6:3

Ver. 3. Wherefore brethren look ye out among you,.... Or "choose out among you", as the Syriac version adds, and as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it; which shows that this sort of officers, deacons, must be members of the church, and of the same church to which they are ordained deacons; and that they must be chosen to that office by the whole community, or by the common suffrages and votes of the people. So the {b} Jews

"did not appoint onrp, (which may be rendered) "an overseer of the poor", in a congregation, without consulting the congregation;"

which officer seems pretty much to answer to a deacon.

Seven men, of honest report; why the number seven is fixed upon, perhaps no other solid reason is to be given, but that that number was judged sufficient for the care of the poor in that church, and at that time; nor is it obligatory on other churches to have just so many, neither more nor fewer; for such officers are to be chosen as the church requires: perhaps some regard might be had to ryeh ybwj
hebv, "the seven good men of the {c} city" among the Jews, who had great

authority in their synagogues, and who had power to sell them, when old and useless; and who seem, according to Maimonides {d}, to be the elders of the people. It is necessary that this sort of officers in the church should be men "of honest report"; that have a good testimony both from within the church and without, of their honesty and fidelity; since they are intrusted with the church's stock, and have the care of many devolved upon them: so the collectors of alms among the Jews were to be men Mynmanw Myewdy, "known and faithful" {e}; men of known probity and integrity: and, besides this good and honest report they were to have from others, they were also to be men

full of the Holy Ghost, of wisdom; they were to be men, not only that had the Spirit of God in them, but who were eminent for their rich experiences of grace; and who had superior gifts of the Spirit, whereby they were capable both of defending the truth against opposers, and of speaking a word of exhortation to duty, or of comfort under distress, or of reproof to members, as circumstances required; and it may be at this time when the church consisted of some of all nations, as seems from **Ac 2:9** it might be necessary that they should have the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, especially that of speaking with divers tongues, that they might be able to converse with persons of different languages: and "wisdom" is highly requisite in them, that they may be good economists of the church's stock, and dispose of it in the most prudent manner: and conduct themselves agreeably to the different tempers and spirits of men they have to do with, and especially in composing differences among members.

Whom we may appoint over this business; assign or make over that part of their office to them, which hitherto they had exercised, and install them into it, and invest them with it.

{b} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 55. 1. {c} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 26. 2. & 27. 1. {d} In Misu. Megilla, c. 3. sect. 2. {e} Maimon. Hilchot Mattanot Anayim, c. 9. sect. 1.

Acts 6:4

Ver. 4. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer,.... Both in private for themselves, and the church; and in the houses and families of the saints, with the sick and distressed;. and in public, in the temple, or in whatsoever place they met for public worship:

and to the ministry of the word; the preaching of the Gospel, to which prayer is absolutely prerequisite, and with which it is always to be joined. These two, prayer and preaching, are the principal employment of a Gospel minister, and are what he ought to be concerned in, not only now and then, but what he should give himself up unto wholly, that his profiting might appear; and what he should be continually exercised and employed in: and if parting with that branch of the ministerial function, the care of the secular affairs of the church, and of the poor of it, was necessary in the apostles, that they might be more at leisure to attend to the more important and useful duties of prayer and preaching; it therefore seems necessary that those who are called to labour in the word and doctrine, if possible, should be exempt from all worldly business and employment; that of the ministry being sufficient to engross all a man's time and thoughts.

Acts 6:5

Ver. 5. And the saying pleased the whole multitude,.... The speech the apostles made took with them; all things they proposed were universally approved of; the whole body of the church came into it at once unanimously; they all judged it highly reasonable, that the apostles should be eased of the burden in taking care of the poor, and that it should be transferred to some other persons, and they fixed on the following:

and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost; he was a man eminent for his faith in Christ, and his faithfulness to him, and in everything he was concerned, and for his courage and boldness in the cause of Christ and for other gifts and graces of the Spirit, with which he was filled; he was, it is very likely, the most eminent person of all the seven, and is therefore named first; he is afterwards taken notice of, and was the first that suffered martyrdom for Christ, with which he was crowned, answerable to his name, which signifies a crown:

and Philip; who was also an evangelist, and had four daughters that prophesied; and perhaps is the same that went down to Samaria, and preached Christ there with great success, and after that baptized the Ethiopian eunuch;

and Prochorus; of this and the rest, no other mention is made in the sacred writings. He is said by some to be a nephew of Stephen's, and first bishop of Nicomedia; but these are things not certain; and as for the life of the Apostle John, said to be written by him, it is a spurious and fabulous piece.

And Nicanor; of this man we have no other certain account; for that he suffered martyrdom with "Stephen" is not to be depended on. It is a Grecian name; there is one of this name who was a general in Demetrius's army, who was sent by him against the Jews,

"Then the king sent Nicanor, one of his honourable princes, a man that bare deadly hate unto Israel, with commandment to destroy the people." (1Mac 7:26)

and there was a gate of the temple, which was called the gate, of Nicanor:

and Timon; he is said to be afterwards bishop of Bersea; though others make him bishop, of Bostra; but with what truth cannot be asserted:

and Parmenus; of him no other account is given, than in the Roman martyrology, which is not to be depended upon, that he suffered martyrdom under Trajan:

and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch; who was first a Greek or Gentile, and then became a Jew, a proselyte of righteousness, and then a Christian, and now made a deacon. Some think, that from this man sprung the sect of the Nicolaitanes, spoken of in the Revelations; though others think, that that wicked set of men only covered themselves with his name, or that they abused some words of his, and perverted the right meaning of them; though was it certain he did turn out a wicked man, it is not to be wondered at, that since there was a devil among the twelve apostles, there should be a hypocrite and a vicious man among the first seven deacons. It is observable, that the names of all these deacons are Greek names; from whence, it seems, that they were of the Grecian or Hellenistic Jews; so that the church thought fit to chose men out of that part of them which made the complaint, in order to make them easy; which is an instance of prudence and condescension, and shows of what excellent spirits they were of.

Acts 6:6

Ver. 6. Whom they set before the apostles,.... They did not barely nominate and propose them to them, but they brought them into their presence, and placed them before them, as the persons whom they had chosen, in order to be ordained by them.

And when they had prayed; for these seven men set before them, that they might appear to be richly qualified for this office, and might honourably and faithfully discharge it, to the peace of themselves, the advantage of the church, and the glory of God:

they laid their hands on them; that is, they ordained them, they installed them into their office, and invested them with it, using the rite or ceremony of laying on of hands, which was used by the apostles for the conferring of gifts, and in benedictions, and at the ordination of officers; and seems to be borrowed from the Jews, who used, it at the creation of doctors among them, and at the promotion of them to that dignity; and which they call hkymo, or ordination by imposition of hands; though that rite was not looked upon to be essentially necessary: for so they say {f},

"ordination or promotion to doctorship is not necessarily done, dyb, "by the hand", as Moses did to Joshua, but even
rwbydb, "by word" only; it was enough to say, I ordain thee, or be thou ordained or promoted."

{f} Juchasin, fol. 60. 1.

Acts 6:7

Ver. 7. And the word of God increased,.... This stratagem of Satan did not succeed to divide the church, but issued in the better decorum and discipline of it, and in the spread and success of the Gospel; God thus making all things to work together for good;

and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; where Christ was crucified, the apostles were scourged, and treated with the utmost contempt, the sanhedrim and rulers of the Jews dwelt, who used all their power and craft to crush the Gospel, and hinder the progress of it, but in vain, there the word increased; which it may be said to do, when saints are edified by it, and sinners are converted under it; and in this last sense it is chiefly to be understood here: the instances of conversion were very numerous; how large must this church now be!

and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith; that is, to the Gospel, which contains things to be believed, articles of faith; proposes Christ the great object of faith; and is the means of producing faith, and which is of no profit, unless it is mixed with faith: and to obey this is cordially to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel, and cheerfully to submit to the ordinances of it. And that the priests, and a large number of them, should do this, is very marvellous; since they were the most inveterate enemies of the Gospel, and persecutors of the saints; but what is it that efficacious grace cannot do? the Syriac version instead of "priests" reads "Jews", but unsupported by any copy.

Acts 6:8

Ver. 8. And Stephen, full of faith and power,.... The historian proceeds to give a narrative of Stephen particularly, the first of the seven deacons; of his faith and miracles, of his elocution and wisdom, of his courage and intrepidity, of his constancy, and of his suffering martyrdom. He is said to be full of faith, as before, **Ac 6:5** the Alexandrian copy, and four of Beza's copies read, "full of grace"; and so do the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; the Ethiopic version reads, "full of the grace of God": he had an uncommon share of it; it was exceeding abundant in him; he had a sufficiency of it for the service and sufferings he was called to: and he was full of power to preach the Gospel, and teach it the people, which he did with authority; to defend it, and oppose the adversaries of it; to bear reproach and indignities for it, and even death itself; and to do miraculous works for the confirmation of it, as follows:

did great wonders and miracles among the people; openly before them, such as speaking with divers tongues, healing diseases, casting out devils, &c.

Acts 6:9

Ver. 9. Then there arose certain of the synagogue,.... Being filled with indignation at the doctrine of Stephen, and with envy at his miracles, they rose up in great wrath, and warmly opposed him: and they be longed to that synagogue

which is called the synagogue of the libertines; or free men: it is a Roman name, and signifies the sons of free men; and these were either the sons of such Jews, who of servants, or slaves, had been made Myrrxwvm, "free men"; or rather such Jews whose parents were born free, or had obtained their freedom at Rome, or in some free city under the Roman government, as Paul at Tarsus; since it is not so easy to account for it, that there should be a peculiar synagogue for the former, whereas there might be for the latter, seeing they could not speak the language of the native Jews. The Arabic version reads, "of the Corinthians", as if they were the Jews from Corinth: and some have thought the word "Libertines" to be the name of a nation or people, as well as the names that follow; and some think it designs the Lybians or Lybistines in Africa; but neither of these is likely:

and Cyrenians: natives of the city or country of Cyrene, from whence were many Jews; see **Ac 2:10** such as Simon the Cyrenian, the father of Alexander, and Rufus, who carried the cross of Christ after him, Mr 15:21 these, with those that follow, either belonged to the same synagogue with the Libertines, or rather they severally had distinct synagogues: and this will not seem strange, when it is said {g}, that there were in Jerusalem four hundred and eighty synagogues; though it is elsewhere said {h} four hundred and sixty:

and Alexandrians; for that there were a peculiar synagogue of these at Jerusalem is certain; for there is express mention made of it in Jewish writings {i}.

"It happened to R. Eleazar bar Tzadok, that he bought tonkh tyb Myyrdnokla lv "the synagogue of the Alexandrians", which was at Jerusalem, and he did with it whatever he pleased."

And that they should have a synagogue at Jerusalem need not be wondered at, when there was such an intercourse and correspondence between Jerusalem and Alexandria: it is said {k},

"the house of Garmu were expert in making of the shewbread, and they would not teach it; the wise men sent and fetched workmen from Alexandria in Egypt, and they knew how to bake as well as they.----The house or family of Abtines were expert in the business of the incense, and they would not teach it; the wise men sent and fetched workmen from Alexandria in Egypt, and they knew how to mix the spices as well as they."

Again it is said {l},

"there was a brass cymbal in the sanctuary, and it was cracked, and the wise men sent and brought workmen from Alexandria in Egypt, and they mended it---and there was a mortar in which they beat spices, and it was cracked, and the wise men sent and fetched workmen from Alexandria, and they mended it."

Hence many of them doubtless settled here, and had a synagogue of their own:

and of them of Cilicia; the metropolis of which country was Tarsus, Ac 21:39. I make no doubt of it, that Saul of Tarsus was among them, or belonged to this synagogue, and was one of the fierce disputants with Stephen; at least violently opposed him, since he afterwards held the clothes of those that stoned him; we read {m} of
Myyorj lv tonkh tyb, which I should be tempted to render, the "synagogue of the Tarsians", the same with the Cilicians here; but that it is elsewhere said {n}, that

"it happened to the synagogue of the Tursians, which was at Jerusalem, that they sold it to R. Eliezer, and he did all his business in it."

Where the gloss explains the word "Tursians" by "brass founders"; and it seems to design the same synagogue with that of the Alexandrians, who may be so called, because many of them wrought in brass, as appears from a citation above. There was a synagogue of these Tarsians at Lud, or Lydda {o}: it is added, and of Asia; that is, the less; which joined to Cilicia, and in which were great numbers of Jews; see Ac 21:27 this clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy: at Jerusalem, there were synagogues for the Jews of different nations; as here in London, are places of worship for protestants of several countries; as French, Dutch, Germans, Danes, Swedes, &c. Now several persons out of these synagogues, met together in a body,

disputing with Stephen; about the doctrine he preached, and the miracles he wrought, and by what authority he did these things.

{g} T. Hieros, Megilla. fol. 73. 4. Echa Rabbati, fol. 52. 1. {h} T. Hieros, Cetubot. fol. 35. 3. {i} Juchasin, fol. 26. 2. e Talmud. Hieros. Megilla, fol. 73. 4. {k} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 38. 1. & Hieros. Yoma, fol. 41. 1. {l} T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 10. 2. {m} T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 47. 1. {n} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 26. 1. {o} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 35. fol. 175. 3.

Acts 6:10

Ver. 10. And they were not able to resist the wisdom,.... In Beza's most ancient copy, and in another manuscript it is added, "which was in him"; that divine wisdom, which the Spirit of wisdom gave him; they were not a match for him with respect to the knowledge of divine things; they could not answer the wise arguments he made use of, fetched out of the Scriptures of truth, in which he was well versed, and had a large knowledge of:

and the Spirit by which he spake; that is, the Holy Spirit, as the above exemplars of Beza, and the Ethiopic version read; the meaning is, they could not resist the Holy Spirit, by which Stephen spake, so as to overcome him, or put Stephen to silence, or confute him; otherwise they did resist him, or oppose themselves to him, but in vain, and without success; for they always resisted the Holy Ghost in Christ and in his apostles, as their fathers before them resisted him in the prophets, as Stephen observes to them, **Ac 7:51** hereby was fulfilled what our Lord promised to his disciples, Mt 10:19.

Acts 6:11

Ver. 11. Then they suborned men,.... Hired false witnesses, which seems to have been commonly done by the Jews; so they did in the case of Christ:

which said, we have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God; that is, against the law of Moses, and so against God, who gave the law to Moses, as appears from **Ac 6:13** the blasphemous words seem to be, with respect to the ceremonial law, and the abrogation of it, which Stephen might insist upon, and they charged with blasphemy; see **Ac 6:14**.

Acts 6:12

Ver. 12. And they stirred up the people,.... The common people, who were easily wrought upon, and soon incensed and provoked, when at any time it was suggested to them that the rituals and ceremonies of the law of Moses were treated with any neglect or contempt; see
Ac 21:27.

And the elders and the Scribes; who belonged to the sanhedrim, to whom they reported these things, as persons, under whose cognizance they properly came:

and came upon him; at an unawares, and in an hostile way:

and caught him; seized him with violence:

and brought him to the council; the great sanhedrim, then sitting at Jerusalem, to whom it belonged to judge of blasphemy.

Acts 6:13

Ver. 13. And set up false witnesses,.... Having hired them, they brought them and set them before the sanhedrim, to bear witness against Stephen:

which said, this man; meaning Stephen, who was now before the council, at whom they pointed, and whose name, through contempt, they would not mention:

ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place; either the city of Jerusalem, which is sometimes called the holy city, and which was foretold by the angel to Daniel, and by Christ, that it should be destroyed, and which Stephen might speak of; or rather the temple, so the Ethiopic version; in a part of which, or in a place contiguous to it, the sanhedrim might now be sitting:

and the law; the ceremonial law: the sense is, that Stephen was continually telling the people, that in a little time their temple would be destroyed, and an end be put to temple worship, and to all the rituals and ceremonies of the law of Moses; the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions leave out the word "blasphemous"; and so do the Alexandrian copy, and Beza's most ancient one; but as Beza observes, it is certain, or at least it is most likely, that it was not omitted by the false witnesses; though speaking against the temple and the law was sufficient to make good a charge of blasphemy.

Acts 6:14

Ver. 14. For we have heard him say,.... The Ethiopic version adds, "besides"; but rather these words are a reason, giving evidence to, and supporting the general charge:

that this Jesus of Nazareth; Stephen spoke of, and whom they so called by way of contempt:

shall destroy this place; meaning the temple, as the Ethiopic version renders it; and is the same charge, the false witnesses at Christ's examination brought against him:

and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us; that is, the rites, ceremonies, institutions, and appointments of the Mosaic dispensation; and yet this is no other, than what the Jews themselves say will be done, in the times of the Messiah; for they assert {p}, that

"awbl dytel, "in time to come" (i.e. in the days of the Messiah) all sacrifices shall cease, but the sacrifice of thanksgiving."

{p} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 153. 1. & sect. 27. fol. 168. 4.

Acts 6:15

Ver. 15. And all that sat in the council,.... The whole sanhedrim,

looking steadfastly on him; to observe whether his countenance altered, his tongue stammered, or he trembled in any part of his body, neither of which appeared; but on the contrary, they

saw his face, as if it had been the face of an angel. The Ethiopic version adds, "of God"; there was such a calmness and serenity in it, which showed his innocence and unconsciousness of guilt; and such a beauty and glory upon it, that he looked as lovely and amiable as the angels of God, who when they appeared to men, it was in very glorious and splendid forms: his face might shine as Moses's did, when he came down from the mount; or in some degree as Christ's did at his transfiguration; and this might, as it ought to have been, taken as an acquittance of him by God, from the charge of blasphemy, either against God or Moses: the Jews {q} say of Phinehas, that when the Holy Ghost was upon him, his face burned or shone like lamps, and Stephen was now full of the Holy Ghost, Ac 6:5.

{q} Ceseph. Misna in Maimon. Hilch. Teshuba, c. 9. & Vajikra Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 146. 1. & sect. 21. fol. 163. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 7:1

Ver. 1. Then said the high priest,.... The Ethiopic version adds, "to him"; that is, to Stephen; for to him he addressed himself: or he "asked him", as the Syriac version renders it; he put the following question to him:

are these things so? is it true what they say, that thou hast spoken blasphemous words against the temple, and the law, and hast said that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy the one, and change the other? what hast thou to say for thyself, and in thine own defence? this high priest was either Annas, or rather Caiaphas; See Gill on "Ac 4:6".

Acts 7:2

Ver. 2. And he said,.... Stephen replied, in answer to the high priest's question, and addressed himself to the whole sanhedrim, saying:

men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; to the following oration and defence; he calls them men, brethren, by an usual Hebraism, that is, "brethren"; and that, because they were of the same nation; for it was common with the Jews to call those of their own country and religion, brethren; and he calls them "fathers", because of their age and dignity, being the great council of the nation, and chosen out of the senior and wiser part of the people:

the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham; he calls God "the God of glory", because he is glorious in himself, in all his persons, perfections, and works, and is to be glorified by his people; and his glory is to be sought by all his creatures, and to be the end of all their actions; and the rather he makes use of this epithet of him, to remove the calumny against him, that he had spoke blasphemous things against God; and because God appeared in a glorious manner to Abraham, either in a vision, or by an angel, or in some glorious form, or another; and it is observable, that when the Jews speak of Abraham's deliverance out of the fiery furnace, for so they interpret Ur of the Chaldees, they give to God much such a title; they say {r}

""the King of glory" stretched out his right hand, and delivered him out of the fiery furnace, according to
Ge 15:7."

Stephen uses a like epithet; and he calls Abraham "our father", he being a Jew, and according to the common usage of the nation: and this appearance of God to Abraham was "when he was in Mesopotamia"; a country that lay between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates, from whence it had its name; and is the same with Aram Naharaim, the Scriptures speak of; See Gill on "Ac 2:9". Of this appearance of God to Abraham, mentioned by Stephen, the Scriptures are silent; but the Jewish writers seem to hint at it, when they say {s},

"thus said the holy blessed God to Abraham, as thou hast enlightened for me Mesopotamia and its companions, come and give light before me in the land of Israel."

And again, mentioning those words in Isa 41:8 "the seed of Abraham my friend, whom I have taken from the ends of the earth"; add by way of explanation, from Mesopotamia and its companions {t}: and this was

before he dwelt in Charan; or Haran; see Ge 11:31 where the Septuagint call it "Charan", as here; and by Herodish {u} it is called karrai, where Antoninus was killed; and by Pliny {w}, "Carra"; and by Ptolomy {x}, "Carroe"; it was famous for the slaughter of M. Crassus, by the Parthians {y}. R. Benjamin gives this account of it in his time {z};

"in two days I came to ancient Haran, and in it were about twenty Jews, and there was as it were a synagogue of Ezra; but in the place where was the house of Abraham our father, there was no building upon it; but the Ishmaelites (or Mahometans) honour that place, and come thither to pray."

Stephanus {a} says it was a city of Mesopotamia, so called from "Carra", a river in Syria.

{r} Pirke Eliezer, c. 26. {s} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 30. fol. 25. 1 {t} lb. sect. 44. fol. 38. 3. {u} L. 4. sect. 24. {w} L. 5. c. 24. {x} L. 5. c. 18. {y} ----Miserando funere Crassus Assyrias Latio maculavit sanguine Carrhas. Lucan. Pharsal. l. 1. v. 105. {z} Itinerar. p. 60. {a} De Urbibus.

Acts 7:3

Ver. 3. And said unto him,.... Not the words in Ge 12:1 for they were said in Haran, these in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt there, and besides, these are different from them; no mention is here made of getting out from his father's house, as there; because his father's house sent along with him, or rather he with them from Mesopotamia to Haran:

get thee out of thy country; from Ur of the Chaldees, where he was born:

and from thy kindred; his relations that lived in the same place, who did not go along with him:

and come into the land which I shall show thee; not telling him the place whither he was to go; wherefore when he had his first call, and first set out, he knew not whither he went; see Heb 11:8. This was an emblem of the calling of the saints out of the world, from their former course of life, and from among their old companions and friends, to follow Christ whithersoever he is pleased to lead them; and who at last will bring them safe to the land afar off, the better and heavenly country.

Acts 7:4

Ver. 4. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans,.... The same with Mesopotamia; so Pliny says {b}, that

"because of Babylon the head of the Chaldean nation---the other part of Mesopotamia and Assyria is called Babylonia."

And he places Babylon in Mesopotamia; it was out of Ur, in the land of the Chaldeans particularly, that Abraham came, upon his first call:

and dwelt in Charan: according to the Jewish writers {c}, he dwelt here five years:

and from thence, when his father was dead; who died in Haran, as is said in Ge 11:32 and that it was after the death of Terah his father, that Abraham went from thence, is manifest from Ge 11:31 and yet a Jew {d} has the impudence to charge Stephen with a mistake, and to affirm, that Abraham went from Haran, whilst his father was yet living; proceeding upon a false hypothesis, that Terah begat Abraham when he was seventy years of age: but Philo the Jew is expressly with Stephen in this circumstance; he says {e},

"I think no man versed in the laws can be ignorant, that Abraham, when he first went out of the land of Chaldea, dwelt in Charan; teleuthsantov te autw tou patrov ekenyi "but his father dying there", he removed from thence:"

and so says Stephen:

he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell; the land of Canaan; see Ge 12:5 or "he removed himself", as the Ethiopic version renders it; or rather

"God removed him", as the Syriac version reads, and so one copy in the Bodleian library; for it was by the order and assistance, and under the direction and protection of God, that he came into that land: after the words

wherein ye now dwell, Beza's ancient copy adds, "and our fathers that were before us".

{b} De Urbibus, l. 6. c. 26. {c} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 1. p. 2. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 5. 2. {d} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 61. p. 448. {e} De Migratione Abrahami, p. 415.

Acts 7:5

Ver. 5. And he gave him none inheritance in it,.... To be personally enjoyed by him; and which was a great trial to Abraham's faith, to be brought out of his country, and into another land, and which was promised to him and his; and yet, as not the whole, so not a single part of it was given him to possess:

no, not so much as to set his foot on: so that when Sarah his wife died, he was obliged to buy a piece of ground for a burying place to bury her in: and which could not be said to be given him by the Lord, for he bought it with his money:

yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child; which was another exercise of Abraham's faith, that he should have a whole country promised him and his seed, and yet had no seed given him; see Ge 12:7.

Acts 7:6

Ver. 6. And God spake on this wise,.... The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "and God spake to him", and so does one of Beza's copies; and the Ethiopic version reads it both ways, God "said thus to Abraham", as in Ge 15:13.

That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; or "be a stranger in a land not theirs"; first in the land of Canaan, and then in Egypt, which were possessed by other persons, the natives of them:

and that they should bring them into bondage; that is, the inhabitants of the lands, and particularly Egypt, should bring the seed of Abraham into bondage, as they did; and very hard bondage it was, at least some part of it:

and entreat them evil four hundred years; which must be reckoned not from the time of their going down into Egypt, which to their coming up out of it were but two hundred and ten years, but from the birth of Isaac: which was as soon as Abraham had the promised seed, and may be reckoned after this manner; from the birth of Isaac to the birth of Jacob, sixty years, Ge 25:26 and from thence to the coming of Jacob into Egypt, one hundred and thirty years, Ge 47:9 and from thence to the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt, two hundrd and ten years; which in all make up four hundred years; for the sojourning and evil entreating of Abraham's seed are not to be confined to the land of Egypt, but belong to other lands, where they were within this time, though that land is more especially intended; and so the Septuagint version renders the text in Ex 12:40. "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, which they (and some copies add, and their fathers) sojourned in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, were four hundred and thirty years": and this text is differently read in the Talmuds, in one of them thus {f}; "and the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt", twurah lkbw, "and in all the lands, were four hundred and thirty years"; and in the other of them thus {g}, "and the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt", twura ravbw, "and in the rest of the lands, were four hundred years"; upon which latter the gloss has these words;

"from the time that the decree of the captivity was made between them to the birth of Isaac, were thirty years; and from the birth of Isaac, until the Israelites went out of Egypt, were four hundred years; take out of them the sixty of Isaac, and the one hundred and thirty that Jacob had lived when he went down into Egypt, and there remain two hundred and ten; and so is the decree, that "thy seed shall be a stranger in a land not theirs", Ge 15:13 and it is not said in Egypt, but in a land not theirs; and when Isaac was born, Abraham was a sojourner in the land of the Philistines; and from thence, till they went out of Egypt, it will be found that Isaac and his seed who were the seed of Abraham, were strangers: and the thirty years before that are not numbered in the decree;"

See Gill on "Ga 3:17".

{f} T. Hieros, Megilla, fol. 71. 4. {g} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 9. 1. Vid. Aben Ezra, in Exod. xii. 40.

Acts 7:7

Ver. 7. And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage,.... At the end of the four hundred years, and which was the Egyptian nation:

I will judge, said God; that is, condemn and punish them, as he did, by inflicting the ten plagues upon them:

and after that they shall come forth; out of the land of Egypt, and their hard bondage there; and which was brought about by the judgments executed upon the Egyptians:

and serve me in this place; in the land of Canaan; though these words are not to be found in Ge 15:13 what comes nearest them is in **Ex 3:12**. "Ye shall serve God upon this mountain"; meaning Mount Horeb, where Moses then was, and from whence the law was afterwards given.

Acts 7:8

Ver. 8. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision,.... Or the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign or token, Ge 17:11. Stephen speaks here in the language of the Jews, who are wont to speak of circumcision after this manner; hence in the Jewish liturgy, there is a collect, hlym tyrbl, "for the covenant of circumcision" {h}; and so it is said {i},

"when Joseph died, they made void the "covenant of circumcision":"

and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; according to the express command in Ge 17:12

and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs; the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel.

{h} Seder Tephillot, fol. 197. 1. Ed. Basil. Vid. Kimchi in Mal. iii. 1. {i} Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 90. 1.

Acts 7:9

Ver. 9. And the patriarchs, moved with envy,.... See Ge 37:11 the sons of

Jacob and brethren of Joseph were filled with envy, and enraged at him, because of the evil report of them he brought to his father; and because he had a greater share in his father's love than they had; and because of his dreams, which signified that he should have the dominion over them, and they should be obliged to yield obedience to him: wherefore they

sold Joseph into Egypt; they sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver, who were going down to Egypt, and who carried him thither with them: these twenty pieces of silver, the Jews say, the ten brethren of Joseph divided among themselves; everyone took two shekels, and bought shoes for his feet; to which they apply the passage in **Am 2:6** "they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes" {k}: and they suggest, that the redemption of the firstborn among the Israelites on account of the selling of Joseph; they say {l},

"because they sold the firstborn of Rachel for twenty pieces of silver, let everyone redeem his son, his firstborn, with twenty pieces of silver; says R. Phinehas, in the name of R. Levi, because they sold the firstborn of Rachel for twenty pieces of silver, and there fell to each of them a piece of coined money (the value of half a shekel), therefore let everyone pay his shekel coined."

They also affirm {m}, that the selling of Joseph was not expiated by the tribes, until they were dead, according to Isa 22:14 and that on the account of it, there was a famine in the land of Israel seven years. There seems to be some likeness between the treatment of Joseph and Jesus Christ, which Stephen may have some respect unto; as Joseph was sold by his brethren for twenty of silver, so Christ was sold by one of his disciples, that ate bread with him, for thirty pieces of silver; and as it was through envy the brethren of Joseph used him in this manner, so it was through envy that the Jews delivered Jesus Christ to Pontius Pilate, to be condemned to death: of this selling of Joseph into Egypt, Justin the historian speaks {n}; his words are,

"Joseph was the youngest of his brethren, whose excellent wit his brethren fearing, secretly took him and sold him to strange merchants, by whom he was carried into Egypt."

And then follow other things concerning him, some true and some false; Stephen here adds,

but God was with him; see Ge 39:2 he was with him, and prospered him in Potiphar's house; he was with him, and kept him from the temptations of his mistress; he was with him in prison, and supported and comforted him, and at length delivered him from it, and promoted him as follows; and caused all the evil that befell him to work for good to him and his father's family.

{k} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. {l} T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 46. 4. {m} Pirke Eliezer, ib. {n} L. 36. c. 2.

Acts 7:10

Ver. 10. And delivered him out of all his afflictions,.... From the evil designs of his mistress, and from all the miseries of a prison:

and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; so Justin in the place above cited says, that Joseph was very dear to the king; but not through his knowledge of magic arts, as he suggests, but on account of the wisdom which God gave him; for when he is said to have favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, the meaning is, that he was highly esteemed of by him, because of the wisdom he saw in him; and both the favour he had with him, and the wisdom he had in himself, were from the Lord; and in a very humble and modest manner does he speak of himself, in Ge 41:16 which Onkelos the Targumist paraphrases thus:

""not from my wisdom", but from the Lord, shall the peace of Pharaoh be answered;"

the name of this Pharaoh was Misphragmuthosis; by the Jews he is called Rian ben Walid {o}:

and he made him governor over Egypt: a deputy governor under him; for Pharaoh kept the throne, and in it was greater than Joseph, and had the other ensigns of royalty, and Joseph rode in the second chariot to him:

and all his house; see Ge 41:40 as he had the affairs of the kingdom committed to him, so likewise the domestic affairs of Pharaoh, he was steward of his household.

{o} Juchasin, fol. 135. 2.

Acts 7:11

Ver. 11. Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt, and Canaan,.... This dearth, or famine, is said to be in all lands, Ge 41:54 though only Egypt and Canaan are mentioned here, because the history is concerned with no other. The Jewish writers {p} speak of three lands particularly, which were affected with it, Phenicia, Arabia, and Palestine; and this famine in the land of Israel, they say {q}, which lasted seven years, was on account of the selling of Joseph into Egypt, as before observed. The Heathen writers make mention of this famine, particularly Justin {r}, who speaking of Joseph says, that he foresaw many years before the barrenness of the fields; and all Egypt would have perished with famine, had not the king, through his advice, ordered by an edict, that corn should be laid up for many years: this was the fifth of the ten famines, the Jews say have been, or shall be in the world {s}:

and great affliction; meaning the famine, which was very severe, and lasted a long time, even seven years: want of eating is called
ywnye, "affliction", by the Jews {t}; by which they mean fasting, which is a voluntary want of eating, or abstinence from it; and if that is an affliction, then much more want of food, or abstinence through necessity; compare **1Ti 5:10**.

And our fathers found not sustenance; Jacob and his family could not get sufficient provision for them in the land of Canaan, where they then were, but were obliged to go to Egypt for it.

{p} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 90. fol. 78. 1. {q} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. {r} Ex Trogo, l. 36. c. 2. {s} Targum in Ruth i. 1. {t} Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora pr. Affirm. 32.

Acts 7:12

Ver. 12. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt,.... Not then growing, or gathering in there, or that was of that year's produce; for the famine was strong in the land of Egypt, as well as in Canaan; but was what had been laid up, and preserved in the seven years of plenty, by the order and care of Joseph; which by some means or another, Jacob had heard of; see Ge 42:1 the Jews suggest {u}, that it was by divine revelation:

he sent out our fathers first; the first time, or the first year of the famine; or he sent them first, he laid his commands on them, or they had not gone; these were the ten sons of Jacob, and brethren of Joseph, who were sent the first time, for Benjamin stayed with his father: see Ge 42:3.

{u} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 91. fol. 78. 1, 2.

Acts 7:13

Ver. 13. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren,.... That is, when the brethren of Joseph went a second time down to Egypt for corn, Joseph made himself known unto them, Ge 45:1.

And Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh; for though it was known before that he was an Hebrew, see Ge 39:17 yet it was not known of what family he was, who was his father, or his brethren, but now it was known, Ge 45:16.

Acts 7:14

Ver. 14. Then sent Joseph,.... Gifts and presents to his father, and wagons, to fetch down him and his family into Egypt, Ge 45:21.

and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls; which seems to disagree with the account of Moses, who says, that "all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten", Ge 46:27. But there is no contradiction; Moses and Stephen are speaking of different things; Moses speaks of the seed of Jacob, which came out of his loins, who came into Egypt, and so excludes his sons' wives; Stephen speaks of Jacob and all his kindred, among whom his sons' wives must be reckoned, whom Joseph called to him: according to Moses's account, the persons that came with Jacob into Egypt, who came out of his loins, and so exclusive of his sons' wives, were threescore and six; to which if we add Jacob himself, and Joseph who was before in Egypt, and who might be truly said to come into it, and his two sons that were born there, who came thither in his loins, as others in the account may be said to do, who were not yet born, when Jacob went down, the total number is threescore and ten, Ge 46:26 out of which take the six following persons, Jacob, who was called by Joseph into Egypt, besides the threescore and fifteen souls, and Joseph and his two sons then in Egypt, who could not be said to be called by him, and Hezron and Hamul, the sons of Pharez not yet born, and this will reduce Moses's number to sixty four; to which sixty four, if you add the eleven wives of Jacob's sons, who were certainly part of the kindred called and invited into Egypt, Ge 45:10 it will make up completely threescore and fifteen persons: or the persons called by Joseph maybe reckoned thus; his eleven brethren and sister Dinah, fifty two brother's children, to which add his brethren's eleven wives, and the amount is threescore and fifteen: so that the Jew {w} has no reason to charge Stephen with an error, as he does; nor was there any need to alter and corrupt the Septuagint version of Ge 45:27 to make it agree with Stephen's account; or to add five names in it, in **Ac 7:20** as Machir, Galaad, Sutalaam, Taam, and Edom, to make up the number seventy five: and it may be observed, that the number is not altered in the version of De 10:22 which agrees with the Hebrew for seventy persons.

{w} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 63. p. 450.

Acts 7:15

Ver. 15. So Jacob went down into Egypt,.... At the invitation of his son Joseph:

and died, he, and our fathers; both Jacob and his twelve sons died in Egypt, though we have no account of the death of any of them, but Jacob and Joseph, particularly; only in general, that Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation, Ge 49:33 **Ex 1:6** the Syriac version adds "there", that is, in Egypt.

Acts 7:16

Ver. 16. And were carried over into Sichem,.... The Syriac version reads in the singular number, "and he was translated into Sichem, and laid", &c. as if this was said of Jacob only, whereas he is not spoken of at all, only the fathers, the twelve patriarchs; for Jacob, though he was carried out of Egypt, he was not buried in Sichem, but in the cave of Machpelah, Ge 50:13. But Joseph and the rest of the patriarchs, who died in Egypt, when the children of Israel came out from thence, they brought their bones along with them, and buried them in Sichem: of the burial of Joseph there, there is no doubt, since it is expressly affirmed in Jos 24:32 and that the rest of the patriarchs were buried there, and not in Hebron, as Josephus asserts {x}, may be concluded from hence; because in the cave of Machpelah at Hebron, there are never mentioned more in Jewish writers {y}, than these four couple; Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah; from whence, they say, Hebron was called Kirjath Arba, the city of four; as also, because it is the general consent of the

Jews; and if they had not agreed in it, or said nothing about it, the thing is natural to suppose, that the children of Israel brought the bones of all the patriarchs out of Egypt, along with Joseph's {z}; and since they buried the bones of Joseph in Sichem, it is most reasonable to believe, that the rest were buried there likewise; though it must be owned, that there is an entire silence about them, even when the sepulchre of Joseph is taken notice of: so R. Benjamin speaking of the Samaritans says {a},

"among them is the sepulchre of Joseph the righteous, the son of Jacob our father, on whom be peace, as it is said, Jos 24:32."

And says another of their writers {b},

"from Sichem about a sabbath day's journey, in a village, called Belata, there Joseph the just was buried;"

but of the rest, no mention is made:

and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sichem; the last clause, the father "of Sichem", is left out in the Syriac version; and the Alexandrian copy reads it, "in Sichem"; as if it was the name of a place, and not of a man: the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "the son of Sichem"; whereas it is certain, that Sichem was the son of Emmor, or Hamor, Ge 33:19 unless it can be thought there were two Sichems, one that was the father of Emmor, and another that was his son: but the great difficulty is, how the sepulchre in which the fathers were laid at Sichem, can be said to be bought by Abraham of the sons of Emmor, when what Abraham bought was the field and cave of Machpelah; and that not of the sons of Emmor, but of the sons of Heth, and of Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hitrite, Ge 23:16. Whereas the parcel of ground in Sichem, bought of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sichem, was bought by Jacob, Ge 33:19. Various things are suggested, to reconcile this; some think the word Abraham is an interpolation, and that it should be read, which he (Jacob) bought; but to support this, no copy can be produced: others observe, that it may be read, which he bought for Abraham; that is, which Jacob bought for Abraham and his seed, as a pledge of the inheritance of the whole land, promised unto him; others think that by Abraham is meant a son of Abraham, that is, Jacob; as children are sometimes called by their father's name; as the Messiah is called David, and the like; but what best seems to remove the difficulty is, that the words refer to both places and purchases; to the field of Machpelah bought by Abraham, and to the parcel of field is Sichem bought by Jacob, of the sons of

Emmor; for the words with the repetition of the phrase, "in the sepulchre", may be read thus; "and were laid in the sepulchre, that Abraham bought for a sum of money", and in the sepulchre (bought by Jacob) "of the sons of Emmor", the father of Sichem; or the words may be rendered thus, "they were carried over into Sichem, and laid in the sepulchre which Abraham bought for a sum of money, besides" that "of the sons of Emmor", the father "of Sichem"; namely, which Jacob bought, and in which Joseph was laid, Ge 33:19. And this agrees with Stephen's account and design, in the preceding verse; he observes, that Jacob died in Egypt, and all the twelve patriarchs; and here he tells us how they were disposed of, and where they were buried, both Jacob and his sons; they were removed from Egypt, and brought into the land of Canaan; Jacob, he was laid in the cave of Machpelah, in the sepulchre Abraham bought of the children of Heth; and Joseph and his brethren, they were laid in the sepulchre at Sichem, which Jacob bought of the sons of Emmor: upon the whole, the charge of several errors brought by the {c} Jew against Stephen appears to be groundless; the sum this sepulchre was bought for was an hundred pieces of money, Ge 33:19.

{x} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 8. sect. 2. {y} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 13. 1. Cippi Heb. p. 4. R. Benjamin. Itinerar. p. 48, 49. {z} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 13. Bava Kama, fol. 92. 1. Maccot fol. 11. 1. & Gloss. in ib. Bereshit, fol. 89. 1. Sepher Jasher apud Gaulmin. not. in Vita Mosis, l. 2. c. 2. p. 287. {a} ltinerar. p. 39. {b} Cippi Heb. p. 34. {c} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 63. p. 450, 451.

Acts 7:17

Ver. 17. But when the time of the promise drew nigh,.... That is, the time of the four hundred years; when God promised to deliver the seed of Abraham out of their affliction and servitude, and bring them into the land of Canaan to inherit it:

which God had sworn to Abraham; in Ge 15:13 for though there is no express mention made of an oath, yet there is a most solemn affirmation, which is equivalent to one; the Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read,

which God promised unto Abraham; the people grew and multiplied in Egypt; see **Ex 1:7** insomuch, that though their number were but threescore and ten when they went down to Egypt, and though various methods were taken to destroy them, and lessen their numbers, yet in little more than two hundred years, their number was increased to six hundred thousand, and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men, besides old men, women, and children, and besides two and twenty thousand Levites, **Nu 1:46**. And it seems, that they multiplied the more towards the time when the promise of deliverance drew nigh to be accomplished, and even when they were the most afflicted, **Ex 1:12**.

Acts 7:18

Ver. 18. Till another king arose,.... In, or over Egypt, as the Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read; in **Ex 1:8** it is a new king; the Jewish writers are divided about him, whether he was a different king from the former; or only so called, because he made new edicts {d}:

"Rab and Samuel, one says a new one absolutely: and the other says, because his decrees were renewed; he that says a new one absolutely, (thinks so) because it is written a new one; and he who says, because his decrees are renewed (or he makes new decrees, he thinks so) from hence, because it is not written, and he died, and there reigned; and (it makes) for him that says, because his decrees are renewed, what is written, "who knew not Joseph"; what is the meaning of that, "who knew not Joseph?" that he was like one who knew not Joseph at all."

The Septuagint version of **Ex 1:8** renders it "another" king, as does Stephen here; another king from the Pharaoh of Joseph: the name of this was Ramesses Miamun; and one of the treasure cities built for him seems to be called after his name, Raamses, **Ex 1:11**. The Jews call him Talma {e} and by Theophilus of Antioch {f} he is called Tethmosis; and by Artapanus {g}, Palmanotha: "which knew not Joseph"; nor what great things he had done, to the advantage of the Egyptian nation; he was acquainted with the history of him, and of his worthy deeds, and therefore had no regard to his people, as the other Pharaoh had Josephus {h} says, the kingdom was translated to another family; which might be the reason why he was not known, nor his friends taken notice of: Aben Ezra says, he was not of the seed royal; wherefore it is written, "and there arose"; he the kingdom, and had not a just right and title so that being a stranger, it is no wonder that he should not know Joseph; Jarchi's note is,

"he made himself as if he did not know him"

he dissembled, he pretended ignorance of him, because he would show no respect unto his people. Beza's ancient copy, and another in the Bodleian library, read, "which remembered not Joseph".

{d} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 53. 1. & Sota, fol. 11. 1. {e} Juchasin, fol. 135. 2. {f} Ad Autolycum, l. 3. p. 130. {g} Apud Euseb. de prep. Evangel. l. 9. c. 27. {h} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 1.

Acts 7:19

Ver. 19. The same dealt subtilly with our kindred,.... See **Ex 1:10** he took crafty, and yet cruel methods, to diminish the children of Israel, and to humble them; weakening their strength by labour, that they might not be able to beget children; ordering the Hebrew midwives to kill all the males that were born; and charging all his people to drown such male children that should escape the hands of the midwives;

and evil entreated our fathers; keeping them to hard labour, in mortar and brick, and all rural service; in which he made them to serve with rigour, and thereby made their lives bitter to them; employing them in building cities, pyramids, walls, and towers; making ditches, throwing up trenches, cutting watercourses, and turning rivers, with other things; which he added, setting taskmasters over them, to afflict them with burdens:

so that they cast out their young children, or "by making their children cast outs": or as the Arabic version renders it, "by making that their children should be cast out": that is, by ordering his people to expose them to ruin, and to cast them in the rivers; and so the Syriac version, "and he commanded that their children be cast out"; for this refers to Pharaoh, and his orders to his officers and people, to cast out the male children of the Israelites; and not to the parents of the children, which our version and the Vulgate Latin incline to: for though Moses's mother, after she had hid him three months, put him into an ark of bulrushes, and laid him among the flags by the river's side, yet that was in order to save his life: whereas the end of the casting out of these young children was as follows,

to the end they might not live: for this has not respect unto the parents of the children, that they might not increase or multiply their offspring, but to the young children, that they being cast into the waters, might perish, and not live and become men; the Ethiopic version is rather a paraphrase, "and he commanded that they should kill every male that was born".

Acts 7:20

Ver. 20. In which time Moses was born,.... The word Moses, is differently written in the New Testament; sometimes Moses, as here, sometimes Mo-yses, as in **Ac 7:35** sometimes Mo-yseus, as in Ac 15:1 and sometimes Moseus, as in **Ro 5:14**. He had his name from the Hebrew word, hvm, which signifies "to draw", Ps 18:16 according to the reason of it given by Pharaoh's daughter,

she called his name Moses; and she said, because I drew him out of the water, **Ex 2:10** Though Josephus {i}, Philo {k}, and others {l}, make it to be an Egyptian name; the former of which serves, that the Egyptians call water "Mo", and "yses", such who are saved from water; wherefore compounding the name of both, they gave it to him: though according to Aben Ezra {m}, his name in the Egyptian language was Monios; his words are these,

"the name of Moses is interpreted out of the Egyptian language into the Hebrew language, for his name in the Egyptian language was Monios; and so it is written in a book of agriculture, translated out of the Egyptian language into the Arabic, and also in the books of some Greek writers."

Moses had many names, as a Jewish chronologer observes {n};

"Pharaoh's daughter called his name Moses; his father called him Chabar, or Heber; his mother called him Jekuthiel; and his sister called him Jether (perhaps Jared, since this was one of his names); and his brethren called him Abizanoah; and Kohath called him Abi Socos; and the Israelites called him Shemaiah ben Nathaneel, and sometimes Tobiah, sometimes Shemaiah, and sometimes Sopher; but the Egyptians called him Monios."

For "Mo", in the Egyptian language, signifies "water", and "Ni" is "out"; and so both together signify, "out of the water", which agrees with the Hebrew etymology of his name. Now he was born at the time that orders were given by Pharaoh to cast all the male children of the Israelites into the rivers, to drown them; Moses was born, whose parents were Amram and Jochebed, of the tribe of Levi; he was born, according to the Jews {o}, on the seventh day of Adar, or February:

and was exceeding fair; or "fair to God"; divinely fair and beautiful; and so

Pharaoh's daughter, acccording to Josephus, said to her father, that she had brought up a child that was morfh yeion {p} "in form divine": and so the Jews say {q}, that his form was as an angel of God; or he was fair in the sight of God, as the Ethiopic version; the Syriac version renders it, "he was dear to God"; and the Vulgate Latin version, grateful to God; was well-pleasing to him, in whom he delighted, having designed to do great things by him: or "fair by God": he had a peculiar beauty put upon him by God; partly to engage his parents the more to seek the preservation of him; and partly to engage the affection of Pharaoh's daughter to him, when she should see him. Justin the historian {r} makes mention of his extraordinary beauty, for which he was praised; but very wrongly makes him to be the son of Joseph; and the account Josephus gives of it, is very remarkable {s};

"as to beauty, says he, no man could be so out of love with it, as to see the goodly form of Moses, and not be amazed; it happened to many who met him, as he was carried along the way, that they would turn back at the sight of the child, and neglect their business, to indulge themselves with the sight of him; for such was the loveliness of the child, that it detained those that saw him."

The Arabic version renders it, he "was consecrated by a vow to God"; but of this we have no account: the Jews say {t}, that

"the Spirit of God came upon Miriam, and she prophesied; saying, behold a son shall be born to my father and to my mother at this time, who shall save Israel out of the hand of the Egyptians--and it is further said, that at the time of his birth, the whole house was filled with a great light, as the light of the sun and moon;"

upon which they had raised expectations of him: though this phrase, "fair to God", may be only an Hebraism, just as Niniveh is said to be a city "great to God", i.e. exceeding great, **Jon 3:3** it being usual with the Jews to join the word God to an adjective, to express the superlative degree; and so it is rightly rendered here, "exceeding fair: and nourished up in his father's house three months"; so long he was hid by his mother there, which was a great instance of her faith; see **Ex 2:2**. The reason why he was kept no longer there was, because as the Jews say {u}, the three months after Jochebed was delivered of a son, the thing was known in the house of Pharaoh, wherefore she could hide him no longer.

{i} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9, sect. 6. {k} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 605. {l} Clement. Alexandrin. Stromat, l. 1. p. 343. {m} Comment. in Exod. ii. 10. {n}

Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 2. Vid. Targum in 1 Chron. iv. 18 Vajikra Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 146. 3. {o} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 38. 1. Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 91. 2. Targum Jon in Deut. xxxiii. 5. {p} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 7. {q} Pirke Eliezer, c. 48. {r} L. 36. c. 2. {s} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 6. Vid. Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 91. 3. {t} Heb. Chronicon Mosis, fol. 3. 1. Jarchi in Exod. ii. 2. Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 91. 1. {u} Ib. col. 2.

Acts 7:21

Ver. 21. And when he was cast out,.... Into the river, or by the river, as some copies read; the Syriac version adds, by his own people; by his father and mother and sister; who might be all concerned in it, and were privy to it; and which was done after this manner; his mother perceiving she could keep him no longer, made an ark of bulrushes, daubed with slime and pitch, into which she put him; and then laid it in the flags, by the river's side, and set his sister Miriam at a proper distance, to observe what would be done to him, Ex 2:3.

Pharaoh's daughter took him up; her name, according to Josephus {w}, was "Thermuthis"; she is commonly, by the Jews {x}, called "Bithiah"; and by Artapanus in Eusebius {y}, she is called "Merrhis". This princess coming down to the river to wash, as she and her maidens were walking by the river side, spied the ark in which the child was laid, among the flags, and ordered one of her maids to go and fetch it; and which being done by her orders, is attributed to her; and opening the ark, she was struck at once with the loveliness of the babe, and being filled with compassion to it, which wept, she took him,

and nourished him for her own son: not that she took him to the king's palace, and brought him up there, but the case was this; Miriam the sister of Moses, observing what was done, and perceiving the inclination of Pharaoh's daughter to take care of the child, offered to call an Hebrew nurse, to nurse the child for her; to which she agreed, and accordingly went and fetched her own and the child's mother, who took it upon wages, and nursed it for her; and when it was grown, brought it to her, who adopted it for her son, Ex 2:5. According to Josephus {z}, and some other Jewish writers {a}, so it was, that when the child was taken out of the ark, the breast was offered it by several Egyptian women, one after another, and it refused to suck of either of them; and Miriam being present, as if she was only a bystander and common spectator, moved that an Hebrew woman might be sent for; which the princess approving of, she went and called her mother, whose breast the child very readily sucked; and at the request of the princess she took and nourished it for her: according to Philo the Jew {b}, this princess was the king's only daughter, who had been a long time married, but had had no children, of which she was very desirous; and especially of a son, that might succeed in the kingdom, that so the crown might not pass into another family; and then relating how she came with her maidens to the river, and found the child; and how that the sister of it, by her orders, fetched an Hebrew nurse to her, which was the mother of the child, who agreed to nurse it for her; he suggests that from that time she gave out she was with child and feigned a big belly, that so the child might be thought to be gnhsiov all' mh upobolimaiov "genuine, and not counterfeit": but according to Josephus {c}, she adopted him for her son, having no legitimate offspring, and brought him to her father, and told him how she had taken him out of the river, and had nourished him; (Josephus uses the same word as here;) and that she counted of him to make him her son, and the successor of his kingdom; upon which Pharaoh took the child into his arms, and embraced him, and put his crown upon him; which Moses rolling off, cast to the ground, and trampled upon it with his feet: other Jewish writers say {d}, that he took the crown from off the king's head, and put it on his own; upon which, the magicians that were present, and particularly Balaam, addressed the king, and put him in mind of a dream and prophecy concerning the kingdom being taken from him, and moved that the child might be put to death; upon which his daughter snatched it up, and saved it, the king not being forward to have it destroyed: and they also tell this story as a means of saving it, that Jethro who was sitting by, or Gabriel in the form of one of the king's princes, suggested that the action of the child was not to be regarded, since it had no knowledge of what it did; and as a proof of it, proposed that there might be brought in a dish, a coal of fire, and a piece of gold, or a precious stone; and that if he put out his hand and laid hold on the piece of gold, or precious stone, then it would appear that he had knowledge, and deserved death; but if he took the coal, it would be a plain case that he was ignorant, and should be free: the thing took with the king and his nobles, and trial was made, and as the child put out his hand to lay hold on the piece of gold or precious stone, the angel Gabriel pushed it away, and he took the coal, and put it to his lips, and to the end of his tongue; which was the cause of his being slow of speech, and of a slow tongue: by comparing Philo's account with this text, one would be tempted to think that Pharaoh's daughter did really give out, that Moses was her own son; and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews seems to confirm this, Heb 11:24 who says, "that Moses denied to be called, or that he was the son of Pharaoh's daughter"; as the words may be rendered.

{w} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 5, 7. & l0, 12. {x} Targum in 1 Chron. iv. 18.

Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 91. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 146. 3. & Pirke Eliezer, c. 48. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 13. 1. & Derech Eretz Zuta, c. 1. fol. 19. 1. & Chronicon Mosis, fol. 4. l. {y} De prepar. Evangel l. 9. c. 27. {z} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 5. {a} Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 91. 3. Heb. Chronicon Mosis, fol. 4. 1. Jarchi in Exod. ii. 7. {b} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 604, 605. {c} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 7. {d} Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 91. 3. Chronicoa Mosis, fol. 4. 2. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 2.

Acts 7:22

Ver. 22. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, &c,] Which was reckoned very considerable: **1Ki 4:30** Philo the Jew says {e} that he learned arithmetic, geometry, and every branch of music, the hieroglyphics, the Assyrian language, and the Chaldean knowledge of the heavens, and the mathematics; yet was not a magician, or skilled in unlawful arts, as Justin suggests {f}:

and was mighty in words; he had a command of language, and a large flow of words, and could speak properly and pertinently upon any subject; for though he was slow of speech, and of tongue, and might have somewhat of a stammering in speaking, yet he might have a just diction, a masculine style, and a powerful eloquence, and the matter he delivered might be very great and striking:

and in deeds; or in "his deeds", as the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read: he was a man of great abilities, and fit for business both in the cabinet and in the field. Josephus {g} relates an expedition of his against the Ethiopians, whilst he was in Pharaoh's court, in which he obtained victory over them, when the Egyptians had been greatly oppressed by them; in which his prudence and fortitude were highly commended.

{e} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 859. Clement. Alex. Strom. l. 1. p. 343. {f} L. 36. c. 2. {g} Antiqu l. 2. c. 10. sect. 1. 2. 3.

Acts 7:23

Ver. 23. And when he was full forty years old,.... This Stephen had from tradition, and not from Scripture, which is silent about the age of Moses at this time, and only says, "it came to pass in those days when Moses was grown", Ex 2:11 but that he was at this time at such an age, is the general sense of the Jews. Upon the above mentioned passage they have this note {h}

"twenty years old was Moses at that time; and there are that say, that he was forty years old. And {i} elsewhere still more particularly; Moses was "forty" years in the palace of Pharaoh, forty years in Midian, (the Amsterdam edition reads,
rbdmb, "in the wilderness", wrongly,) and he served Israel forty years."

Indeed, the fabulous history of his life makes him to be but fifteen years of age at this time {k}; but Stephen's account is undoubtedly right, and which is confirmed by the above testimonies.

It came into his heart; by the Spirit of God, under a more than ordinary impulse of which he now was:

to visit his brethren, the children of Israel; whom he knew to be his brethren, partly from the common report in Pharaoh's court concerning him, and partly from the mark of circumcision in his flesh, and chiefly from divine revelation: for some years he had lived a courtly and military life, and had took no notice of the Israelites in their oppressions; but now the Lord laid it upon his heart to visit them, and observe how things were with them; and though he could not use any public and open authority, yet Philo the Jew says {l}, that he exhorted the officers to use mildness and moderation with them, and comforted and encouraged the Israelites to bear their burdens with patience and constancy, and not sink under them; suggesting, that things would take another turn, and would change for the better in time.

{h} Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 91. 3. {i} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 100, fol. 88. 4. {k} Chronicon Mosis, fol. 5. 2. {l} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 608, 609.

Acts 7:24

Ver. 24. And seeing one of them suffer wrong,.... Beza's Cambridge copy, and one of Stephens's, and one in the Bodleian library add, "of his own kindred": and so Ex 2:11 he is said to be "one of his brethren"; which Aben Ezra explains, wtxpvmm, "of his family", one of the tribe of Levi; and so another Jewish writer {m} is very particular, and says,

"Moses went out to the camp of the Israelites, and saw an Egyptian smite one of the sons of Kohath, who was of his brethren of the tribe of Levi, as it is said, **Ex 2:11**."

This man, according to some of the Jewish writers {n}, was the husband of Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, Le 24:11 but, according to others, it was Dathan {o}: the cause and manner of his suffering wrong was this, as they report {p}; one of the taskmasters having set his eyes upon his wife, who was a beautiful woman, came early one morning, and got him out of his house to work, and then went into his wife, and lay with her; which when the man understood, he made some disturbance about it, for which he caused him to serve in very hard bondage, and beat him severely; who flying to Moses for protection,

he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed; he took his part, and screened him from the insults and blows of the officer, and avenged his cause:

and smote the Egyptian; and killed him: it is commonly said by the Jews {q}, that he killed him by the sword of his mouth, by making use of the word Jehovah; though others {r} say, he smote him with his fist, which is more likely; or rather with his sword; the Ethiopic version adds, "and buried him in the sand". Beza's ancient copy, and one of Stephens's, add, "and he hid him in the sand", as it is in **Ex 2:12** and which the Jews understand not literally of any sand pit, into which he might cast him, and cover him; or of the sand of the sea, near which he was, and which does not appear; but mystically of the people of Israel, comparable to the sand of the sea, among whom he hid him. So in one of their Midrashes {s} it is observed on these words,

"and "he hid him in the sand"; though there were none there but the Israelites---who are like to sand: he said unto them, ye are like the sand; take this man here and put him there, and his voice is not heard; so this thing will be hid among you, and not heard. And so you find that the thing was not heard but by the means of the Hebrews, as it is said, "and he went out on the second day, and two men of the Hebrews", &c."

And another of their {t} writers, says, that when Moses saw the Egyptian smiting the Hebrew,

"he began to curse him, and took the sword of his lips, and killed him, and hid him in the camp of the Israelites, as it is said, **Ex 2:12** not in the sand, but among the Israelites: hence it is said, "the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea", **Ho 1:10**."

To which may be added what one of their chronologers {u} affirms, that

"Moses slew the Egyptian with the ineffable name of God, and hid him among the children of Israel, who are like to sand."

This Egyptian is said, by Jarchi, to be one of the taskmasters who was appointed over the officers of Israel, who, from the cockcrowing, kept them to their work, which is very probable.

{m} Pirke Eliezer, c. 48. {n} Jarchi in Exod. ii. 12. {o} Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 91. 4. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 2. {p} Shemot Rabba, & Shalshalet, ib. & Chronicon Mosis, fol. 5. 2. & Jarchi in Exod. ii. 12. {q} Pirke Eliezer, c. 48. Shalshalet, ib. Clement. Alex. Strom. l. 1. p. 344. {r} Shemot Rabba, ib. {s} Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 9l. 4. {t} Pirke Eliezer, c. 48. {u} R. Gedaliah, Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 2.

Acts 7:25

Ver. 25. For he supposed his brethren would have understood him,.... From his being an Hebrew in such high life; from his wonderful birth, and miraculous preservation in his infancy, and education in Pharaoh's court; and from the promise of God that he would visit them and save them:

how that God by his hand would deliver them: wherefore he was the more emboldened to kill the Egyptian, believing that his brethren would make no advantage of it against him; but look upon it as a beginning and pledge of their deliverance by him:

but they understood not; or "him not", as the Ethiopic version reads; they did not understand that he was to be their deliverer, or that this action of his was a token of it.

Acts 7:26

Ver. 26. And the next day he showed himself to them, as they strove,.... To two men of the Hebrews, who were quarrelling and contending with one another: these are said by the Jews {w} to be Dathan and Abiram; who were disputing and litigating the point, and were very warm, and at high words. The occasion of their contention is {x} said to be this,

"the Hebrew man (that had been abused) went to his house to divorce his wife, who was defiled, but she fled and told the affair to Abiram her brother: and on the morrow, Moses returned a second time to the Hebrew camp, and found Dathan and Abiram contending about the divorce."

Though some think this is prophetically said, because they afterwards contended and divided in the business of Korah {y} Moses came up to them, and let them know who he was; and this was the day after he had killed the Egyptian. So Stephen explains the "second day" in **Ex 2:13** and to this agrees what a Jewish writer {z} says, that in the morning, Moses returned a second time to the camp of the Hebrews:

and would have set them at one again; persuaded them to peace and concord, composed their difference, reconciled them, and made them good friends:

saying, sirs, ye are brethren; as Abraham said to Lot, when there was a strife between their herdsmen, Ge 13:8 and if these two were Dathan and Abiram, they were brethren in the strictest sense, Nu 16:1

why do ye wrong one to another? by abusing each other, calling ill names, or striking one another; or by lifting up the hand to strike, as Jonathan the Targumist says Dathan did against Abiram.

{w} Shalshalet, ib. {x} Targum Jon. Jarchi, & Baal Hattuim in Exod. ii. 13. Shemot Rabba, Shalshalet & Pirke Eliezer, ut supra. {y} Shemot Rabba, ib. & Yade Mose & Mattanot Cehunah in ib. {z} Shelsheleth, ib.

Acts 7:27

Ver. 27. But he that did his neighbour wrong,.... Who seems to be the same person whom Moses had defended the day before; and, according to the Jews, must be Dathan {a}: the same

thrust him away; from them, when he went to part them, and persuade them to be good friends:

saying, who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? which was very ungrateful, if he was the man he had delivered the day before; and very impertinent, since he did not take upon him to rule and judge, but only to exhort and persuade to peace and brotherly love: the language suits with the spirit of Dathan or Abiram; Nu 16:3 This is thought to be said to him by way of contempt of him, as being a very young man: the words are thus commented on in one of the ancient commentaries of the Jews {b},

"R. Judah says, Moses was twenty years of age at that time: wherefore it was said to him, thou art not yet fit to be a prince and a judge over us, seeing one of forty years of age is a man of understanding. And R. Nehemiah says, he was forty years of age; See Gill on "Ac 7:23" and it was said to him, truly thou art a man, but thou art not fit to be a prince and a judge over us: and the Rabbans say, he said to him, art thou not the son of Jochebed, though they call thee the son of Bithiah? and dost thou seek to be a prince and a judge over us? it is known concerning thee what thou didst to the Egyptian."

{a} Targum Jon. in Exod. ii. 14. Debarim Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 237. 1. {b} Shemot Rabba, ib.

Acts 7:28

Ver. 28. Wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?] That is, is it thy will? dost thou design to kill me? or, as in **Ex 2:14** "intendest" thou to kill me? In the Hebrew text it is, "wilt thou kill me, dost thou say?" that is, as Aben Ezra rightly interprets it, dost thou say so "in thine heart?" which is a much better observation than that of Jarchi's;

"from hence we learn, says he, that he slew him by the ineffable name:"

though this is the sense of some of their ancient doctors {c};

""to kill me dost thou say?" it is not said, "dost thou seek?" but "dost thou say?" from whence you may learn, that the ineffable name was made mention of over the Egyptian, and he slew him."

The word "yesterday" is added by Stephen, but with great truth and propriety, and is in the Septuagint version of **Ex 2:14**. The "as" here does not intend the manner of killing, whether by the fist or sword, or by pronouncing the word Jehovah, as Jarchi thinks, but killing itself, by whatsoever way; and the words were very spitefully said, on purpose to publish the thing, and to expose Moses to danger of life, as it did.

{c} Shemot Rabba, ib.

Acts 7:29

Ver. 29. Then fled Moses at this saying,.... For hereby the thing was known to Pharaoh, being presently carried to court, who sought to kill him for it, **Ex 2:15** The Jews have a very fabulous story, that Moses was taken up upon it, and put in prison, and delivered into the hands of an executioner to be put to death; but that God wrought a miracle for him; he made his neck as hard as a pillar of marble, and the sword turned upon the neck of the executioner, and he died; and God sent Michael, the prince, in the likeness of the executioner, who took Moses by the hand, and led him out of Egypt, and left him at the borders of it, the distance of three days' journey {c} but the truth of the matter is, as Stephen relates, he fled directly, as soon as he heard the above words, for he knew his life was in the utmost danger:

and was a stranger in the land of Madian; which, as Josephus says {d}, lay near the Red sea, and took its name from one of the sons of Abraham by Keturah. Philo the Jew {e} says, it was on the borders of Arabia; and according to Jerom {f}, it was near Arnon and Areopolis, the ruins of which only were shown in his days; here he sojourned many years with Jethro the priest of that place:

where he begat two sons; whose names were Gershom and Eliezer, having married Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, Ex 18:2.

{c} Shalshaleth Hakabala, fol. 5. 2. & Chronicon Mosis, fol. 6. 1. {d} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 11. sect. 1. {e} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 609. {f} De locis Hebr. fol. 93. B.

Acts 7:30

Ver. 30. And when forty years were expired,.... "Forty other years" the Arabic version reads; for so long the Jews {g} say Moses kept Jethro's flock, and so many years he lived in Midian; and so the Syriac version, "when then he had filled up forty years"; which agrees exactly with the account of the Jewish writers observed on **Ac 7:23** who say, that he was forty years in Pharaoh's court, and forty years in Midian; so that he was now, as they {h} elsewhere justly observe, fourscore years of age:

there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai; the same with Horeb, **Ex 3:1** where it is said, "Moses came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb"; where he saw the sight of the burning bush, and out of which the angel appeared to him: and Stephen is to be justified in calling it Mount Sinai; the account which Jerom {i} gives of it is this;

"Horeb is the Mount of God in the land of Midian, by Mount Sinai, above Arabia, in the desert, to which is joined the mountain and desert of the Saracenes, called Pharan: but to me it seems, that the same mountain was called by two names, sometimes Sinai, and sometimes Horeb;"

and in which he was right. Some think the same mountain had two tops, and one went by one name, and the other by another; or one side of the mountain was called Horeb, from its being dry and desolate; and the other Sinai, from the bushes and brambles which grew upon it. So Nynyo, "Sinin", in the Misna {k}, signifies the thin barks of bramble bushes; and the bush hereafter mentioned, in the Hebrew language, is called hno, "Seneh"; from whence, with the Jews, it is said to have its name.

"Says {l} R. Eliezer, from the day the heavens and the earth were created, the name of this mountain was called Horeb; but after the holy blessed God appeared to Moses out of the midst of the bush, from the name of the bush "(Seneh)", Horeb was called Sinai."

Some say the stones of this mountain, when broken, had the resemblance of bramble bushes {m} in them. Add to this, that Josephus {n} calls this mountain by the same name as Stephen does, when he is reciting the same history. Moses, he says,

"led the flock to the Sinaean mountain, as it is called: this is the highest mountain in that country, and best for pasture, abounding in good herbage; and because it was commonly believed the Divine Being dwelt there, it was not before fed upon, the shepherds not daring to go up to it."

Here Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law; for to such a life did he condescend, who for forty years had been brought up in the court of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Here appeared to him

an angel of the Lord, and who was no other than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as appears from **Ac 7:32** and was the second person in the Trinity, the Son of God, the angel of the divine presence, and of the covenant, an uncreated angel. And this is the sense of many of the Jewish writers, who interpret it of the angel the Redeemer, the God of Bethel {o}; though Jonathan the paraphrast seems to understand it of a created angel, whose name he calls Zagnugael {p}, and some say it was Michael, and some Gabriel {q}.

In a flame of fire in a bush; and which yet was not consumed by it. This bush was a bramble bush, or thorn; so Aben Ezra {r} says it was a kind of thorn, and observes, that in the Ishmaelitish or Turkish language, the word signifies a kind of dry thorn; and so Philo the Jew says {s}, it was a thorny plant, and very weak; and therefore it was the more wonderful, that it should be on fire, and not consumed. Josephus {t} affirms, that neither its verdure, nor its flowers were hurt, nor any of its fruitful branches consumed, though the flame was exceeding fierce. The Jerusalem Targum of **Ex 3:2** is,

"and he saw and beheld the bush burned with fire, and the bush byjrm: "became green"; or, as Buxtorf renders it, "emitted a moisture", and was not burnt."

This sight, the Arabic writers {u} say, Moses saw at noon day. Artapanus {w}, an ancient writer, makes mention of this burning, but takes no notice of the bush; yea, denies that there was anything woody in the place, and represents it only as a stream of fire issuing out of the earth: his words are,

"as he (Moses) was praying, suddenly fire broke out of the earth, and burned, when there was nothing woody, nor any matter fit for burning in the place."

But Philo better describes it; speaking of the bush, he says {x},

"no one bringing fire to it, suddenly it burned, and was all in a flame from the root to the top, as if it was from a flowing fountain, and remained whole and unhurt, as if it was no fuel for the fire, but was nourished by it."

The Jews allegorize this vision different ways: sometimes they say {y},

"the fire designs the Israelites, who are compared to fire, as it is said, **Ob 1:18** "the house of Jacob shall be a fire"; and the bush denotes the nations of the world, which are compared to thorns and thistles; so shall the Israelites be among the people, their fire shall not consume the people, who are like to thorns and briers; nor shall the nations of the world extinguish their flame, which is the words of the law: but in the world to come, the fire of the Israelites shall consume all people, who are compared to thorns and thistles, according to Isa 33:12'

But it is much better observed in the same place;

"the bush pricks, afflicts, and gives pain, why does he (the Lord) dwell in affliction and anguish? because he saw the Israelites in great affliction, he also dwelt with them in affliction, as it is said, Isa 63:9 "in all their affliction he was afflicted""

And very appropriately is it remarked by Philo {z};

"the burning bush (says he) is a symbol of the oppressed, the flaming fire, of the oppressors; and whereas that which was burning was not burnt, it shows, that they that are oppressed shall not perish by those who attempt it; and that their attempt shall be in vain, and they shall escape safe."

And so Aben Ezra has this note on **Ex 3:2**.

"the enemy is compared to fire, and Israel to the bush, wherefore it was not burnt:"

this may be very well considered as an emblem of the state of the Jewish people in fiery trials, and very severe afflictions; who were like a bush for the number of its twigs and branches, they being many, and for its weakness and liableness to be consumed by fire, and yet wonderfully preserved by the power and presence of God among them.

{g} Pirke Eliezer, c. 40. {h} Sepher Cosri, fol. 38. 1. & Moses Kotsensis praefat ad Mitzvot Tora. {i} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 92. E. {k} Misn. Celim, c. 10. sect. 6. {l} Pirke Eliezer, c. 41. Aben Ezra in Exod. iii. 2. {m} R. Moses Narbonensis apud Drusii Preterita in loc. Vid. Hilleri Onomasticum, p. 523. {n} Antiqu l. 2. c. 12. sect. 1. {o} R. Menachem in Ainsworth in Exod. iii. 2. {p} Targum Jon. in ib. {q} Shemot Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 92. 4. {r} Comment. in Exod. iii. 2. {s} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 612, 613. {t} In loc. supra citat. {u} Patricides, p. 26. Elmacinus, p. 47. apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 415. {w} Apud Euseb. Evangel. praepar. l. 9. c. 27. p. 434. {x} Ut supra. (De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 612, 613.) {y} Pirke Eliezer, c. 40. Vid. Shemot Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 92. 4. {z} Ut supra. (De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 612, 613.)

Acts 7:31

Ver. 31. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight,.... To see a bush on fire was no extraordinary thing; but to see a bush on fire, and yet not consumed by it, which was the case here, was wonderful indeed: and that an angel of the Lord, or the Lord himself, should appear in it, made it still more amazing; though, as yet, this was not observed by Moses, only the former; and which struck him with wonder, and excited his curiosity:

and as he drew near to behold it; to take a more exact view of it, and satisfy himself with the truth of it, and, if it was possible, to find out the reason why it was not burnt:

the voice of the Lord came unto him; to his ears, out of the bush, and expressed the following words.

Acts 7:32

Ver. 32. Saying, I am the God of thy fathers,.... Who made a covenant with them, promised the land of Canaan to them, and to their posterity, and to bring the children of Israel out of their servitude and bondage, and into the possession of the promised land:

the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; words which our Lord makes use of to prove the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, since God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, See Gill on "Mt 22:32"

Then Moses trembled; this Stephen had by tradition; in which way also the author of the epistle to the Hebrews had the account of his trembling and quaking at the same mount, when the law was given, Heb 12:21

and durst not behold; either "the sight" of the burning bush, and curiously consider and inquire into that, as the Syriac version reads; or him, as the Ethiopic version; that is, God, and which is expressed in **Ex 3:6**

Acts 7:33

Ver. 33. Then said the Lord to him,.... To Moses, who through curiosity had made too near an approach:

put off thy shoes from thy feet; in token of humility, obedience, and reverence:

for the place where thou standest is holy ground; not really, but relatively, on account of the divine presence in it, and only so long as that continued.

Acts 7:34

Ver. 34. I have seen, I have see the affliction of my people, &c] The repetition of the phrase denotes the certainty of it, the exquisite and exact knowledge the Lord took of the affliction of his people, and how much his heart was affected with it:

which is in Egypt; from whence Moses had fled and had left them, he being now in the land of Midian, which was the place of his sojourning: and

I have heard their groaning; under their various oppressions and burdens, and by reason of the cruel usage of their taskmasters:

and am come down to deliver them; not by local motion, or change of place, God being omnipresent, who fills all places at all times; but by the effects of his grace and power.

And now come, I will send thee into Egypt; to Pharaoh, the king of it, **Ex 3:10** to require of him to let the children of Israel go, and to deliver them out of their bondage.

Acts 7:35

Ver. 35. This Moses, whom they refused,.... That is, the Israelites; the Ethiopic version reads, "his kinsmen denied"; those of his own nation, and even of his family: "saying, who made thee a ruler and a judge?" as Dathan, or whoever said the words in **Ac 7:27**.

the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer; or "a redeemer"; so the Jews often call Moses, saying {z}

"as was the first redeemer, so shall be the last Redeemer."

He was an eminent type of the Messiah; and the redemption of the people of Israel out of the Egyptian bondage, by him, was emblematical of redemption from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law by Jesus Christ; and as Moses had his mission and commission from God, so had Jesus Christ, as Mediator; and as Moses was despised by his brethren, and yet made the ruler and deliverer of them, so, though Jesus was set at nought by the Jews, yet he was made both Lord and Christ, and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour. Moses was sent "by the hands of the angel, which appeared to him in the bush"; and who was the second person in the Godhead; the Father sent him by the Son, not as an instrument, but as having the power and authority over him, to govern, direct, and assist him. The Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "with the hand of the angel"; he sent Moses along with him to be used by him as an instrument in his hand, to deliver the people of Israel; nor does this at all contradict what the Jews say {a} at the time of the passover:

"and the Lord hath brought us out of Egypt, Kalm ydy le al, "not by the hands of an angel", nor by the hands of a seraph, nor by the hands of a messenger, but the holy blessed God, by his own glory, by himself;"

for he did not deliver them by a created angel, but by an uncreated one.

{z} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 202. 2. Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 63. 2. {a} Haggada Shel Pesach. p. 13. Ed. Rittangel.

Acts 7:36

Ver. 36. He brought them out,.... Of Egypt, and delivered them from all their oppressions in it:

after that he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt; by turning his rod into a serpent, and by his rod swallowing up the rods of the Egyptians, and by the ten plagues, which were inflicted on Pharaoh, and his people, for not letting the children of Israel go:

and in the Red sea; by dividing the waters of it, so that the people of Israel went through it as on dry ground, which Pharaoh and his army attempting to do, were drowned. This sea is called the Red sea, not from the natural colour of the water, which is the same with that of other seas; nor from the appearance of it through the rays of the sun upon it, or the shade of the red mountains near it; but from Erythrus, to whom it formerly belonged, and whose name signifies red; and is no other than Esau, whose name was Edom, which signifies the same; it lay near his country: it is called in the Hebrew tongue the sea of Suph, from the weeds that grew in it; and so it is in the Syriac version here:

and in the wilderness forty years; where wonders were wrought for the people in providing food for them, and in preserving them from their enemies, when at last they were brought out of it into Canaan's land, by Joshua. This exactly agrees with what has been before observed on **Ac 7:23** from the Jewish writings, that Moses was forty years in Pharaoh's court, forty years in Midian, and forty years in the wilderness.

Acts 7:37

Ver. 37. This is that Moses which said unto the children of Israel,.... What is recorded in De 18:15.

a prophet, &c.
See Gill on "Ac 3:22".

Acts 7:38

Ver. 38. This is he that was in the church in the wilderness,.... Which must be understood of the children of Israel, who were the then church of God, whom he had chosen and separated from the rest of the world, to be a peculiar people to himself, to whom were given the word and ordinances, the service of God, and the promises; and God always had, and will have a church, though that is sometimes in the wilderness; which has been the case under the Gospel dispensation, as well as before; Re 12:6 and it was a peculiar honour to Moses, that he was in this church, though it was in the wilderness; even a greater honour than to be in Pharaoh's court. This has a particular respect to the time when all Israel were encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai, when Moses was not only in the midst of them, and at the head of them; but was

with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sina: this is the same angel as before, in **Ac 7:30** and refers either to his speaking to him then, saying, I am the God of thy fathers, &c. which was at Mount Sinai; or rather to the time when the law was given on that mount; and it may be to both; it is true of each, though it, may more especially regard the latter; for it was the angel of the divine presence, the second person in the Trinity, the word of God, that bid Moses come up into the mount; and who spake all the ten words to him; and who is described in so grand and august a manner in De 33:2

and with our fathers; the Jewish ancestors, who came out of Egypt under Moses, with whom he was as their deliverer and ruler, their guide and governor:

who received the lively oracles to give unto us; he received from the angel which spake to him the law, to deliver to the children of Israel; which is called "the oracles", because it came from God, and contained his mind and will, and was a sure and infallible declaration of it; and "lively" ones, because delivered "viva voce", with an articulate voice, and in audible sounds, and because it is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions render it, "the words of life": not that the law gives life, or points out the way of life and salvation to sinful men; it is to them all the reverse; it is the killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death: it is indeed a rule of life, or of walk and conversation to men, and it promises life in case of perfect obedience, Le 18:5 but this is impracticable by fallen men, and therefore there is no life nor righteousness by the law. Though these lively oracles may be considered in a larger extent, as including all the promises of God respecting the Messiah, delivered to Moses, and all the rites and ordinances of the ceremonial law, which pointed out Christ, as the way of life, righteousness, and salvation, from whence they may very well take this name.

Acts 7:39

Ver. 39. To whom our fathers would not obey,.... But often murmured against him, and were disobedient to him, and to the oracles he delivered to them, and so to God, whose oracles they were:

but thrust him from them; as one of the two Hebrews did, when he interposed to make up the difference between them; and which was an emblem and presage of what that people would afterwards do; **Ac 7:27**

and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt; they wished themselves there again, they lusted after the fish, the cucumbers, the melons, leeks, onions, and garlic there; and went so far as to move for a captain, and even to appoint one to lead them back thither again.

Acts 7:40

Ver. 40. Saying unto Aaron, make us gods to go before us,.... This is a proof of their disobedience to the law of Moses, and of their rejection of him, and of the inclination of their hearts to the idolatry of the Egyptians; which shows the gross stupidity, as well as ingratitude of this people, to think that gods could be made; and that those that are made could go before them, be guides unto them, and protectors of them; when they have eyes, but see not, and hands, but handle not, and feet, but walk not:

for as for this Moses; whom they speak of with great contempt, and in a very irreverent way:

which brought us out of the land of Egypt; which they mention not with gratitude, but as reflecting upon him for doing it:

we wot not what is become of him; they thought he was dead, according to the Targum of Jonathan on Ex 32:1 they concluded he was consumed with fire on the mount which flamed with fire. {b} The following story is told by the Jews;

"when Moses went up on high, he said to the Israelites, at the end of forty days, at the beginning of the sixth hour I will come; at the end of forty days came Satan, and disturbed the world; he said to them, where is Moses your master? they answered him, he is gone up on high: he said to them, the sixth hour is come; they took no notice of him; he is dead (says he); they had no regard to him; he showed them the likeness of his bier; then they said to Aaron, "as for this man Moses", &c."

{b} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 89. 1. Vid. Jarchi & Baal Hatturim in Exod. xxxii. 1.

Acts 7:41

Ver. 41. And they made a calf in those days,.... Whilst Moses was in the mount; this was done in imitation of the Egyptian idol Apis or Serapis, which was an ox or a bullock; and it was made of the golden earnings of the people, which were melted down, and cast into the form of a calf, and graved by Aaron with a graving tool, Ex 32:2 And so the Syriac version here reads in the singular number, "and he made them a calf"; this was a most shameful and scandalous piece of idolatry. The Jews themselves are so sensible of the horribleness of it, and of the guilt of it, and of the reproach that lies on them for it, that it is common for them to say {c},

"there is not a generation, or an age, in which there is not an ounce of the sin of the calf."

Or, as elsewhere {d} expressed,

"no punishment befalls thee, O Israel, in "which there is not an ounce of the sin of the calf"."

And offered sacrifice unto the idol; an altar was built, and proclamation made, that the next day would be the feast of the Lord; and accordingly early in the morning the people rose, and offered both burnt offerings and peace offerings, Ex 32:5 and rejoiceth in the works of their own hands; for so the calf was; and which rejoicing they showed by eating, and drinking, and singing, and dancing.

{c} T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 68. 3. {d} Vid. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 102. 1.

Acts 7:42

Ver. 42. Then God turned,.... Away from them, withdrew his presence, and his favours from them:

and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; not angels, but the sun, moon, and stars; for since they liked not to retain the knowledge and worship of the true God, who made the heavens, and the earth, God in righteous judgment, in a judicial way, gave them up to a reprobate mind, to commit all the idolatry of the Gentiles, as a punishment of their former sin in making and worshipping the calf:

as it is written in the book of the prophets; of the twelve lesser prophets, which were all in one book; and which, as the Jews say {e}, were put together, that a book of them might not be lost through the smallness of it; among which Amos stands, a passage in whose prophecy is here referred to; namely, in **Am 5:25** "O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness"; no; they offered to devils, and not to God, De 32:17 and though there were some few sacrifices offered up; yet since they were not frequently offered, nor freely, and with all the heart, and with faith, and without hypocrisy, they were looked upon by God as if they were not offered at all.

{e} Kimchi praefat. ad Hoseam.

Acts 7:43

Ver. 43. Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch,.... Sometimes called Molech, and sometimes Milcorn; it was the god of the Ammonites, and the same with Baal: the one signifies king, and the other lord; and was, no doubt, the same with the Apis or Serapis of the Egyptians, and the calf of the Israelites. Frequent mention is made of giving seed to Molech, and causing the children to pass through fire to him. The account the Jews give of this image, and of the barbarous worship of it, is this {f}:

"though all idolatrous places were in Jerusalem, Molech was without Jerusalem; and it was made an hollow image, placed within seven chancels or chapels; and whoever offered fine flour, they opened to him the first; if turtle doves or two young pigeons, they opened the second; if a lamb, they opened the third; if a ram, they opened the fourth; if a calf, they opened the fifth; if an ox, they opened the sixth; but whoever offered his son, they opened the seventh: his face was a calf's, and his hands were stretched out, as a man opens his hands to receive any thing from his friend; and they make him hot with fire, and the priests take the infant and put it into the hands of Molech, and the infant expires: and wherefore is it called Topher and Hinnom? Tophet, because they make a noise with drums, that its father may not hear the voice of the child, and have compassion on it, and return to it; and Hinnom, because the child roars, and the voice of its roaring ascends."

Others give a milder account of this matter, and say, that the service was after this manner {g}; that

"the father delivered his son to the priests, who made two large fires, and caused the son to pass on his feet between the two fires,"

so that it was only a sort of a lustration or purification by fire; but the former account, which makes the child to be sacrificed, and put to death, seems best to agree with the scriptural one. Now this idol was included in chancels or chapels, as in the account given, or in shrines, in tabernacles, or portable temples, which might be taken up and carried; and such an one is here mentioned: by which is meant, not the tabernacle of the Lord made by Bezaleel; as if the sense was, that the idolatrous Israelites, though not openly, yet secretly, and in their hearts worshipped Moloch, as if he was included in the tabernacle; so that to take it up means no other, than in the heart to worship, and to consider him as if he had been shut up and carried in that tabernacle; nor is it to be thought that they publicly took up, and carried a tabernacle, in which was the image of Moloch, during their forty years' travels in the wilderness; for whatever they might do the few days they worshipped the golden calf, which is possible, it cannot be received, that Moses, who was so severe against idolatry, would ever have connived at such a practice: this therefore must have reference to after times, when they sacrificed their children to him, and took up and carried his image in little shrines and tabernacles.

And the star of your god Remphan. The Alexandrian copy reads "Raiphan"; some copies read "Raphan"; and so the Arabic version; others "Rephan"; the Syriac version reads "Rephon"; and the Ethiopic version "Rephom". Giants, with the Hebrews, were called "Rephaim"; and so Moloch, who is here meant, is called "Rephan", and with an epenthesis "Remphan", because of his gigantic form; which some have concluded from the massy crown on his head, which, with the precious stones, weighed a talent of gold, which David took from thence, 2Sa 12:30 for not the then reigning king of the Ammonites, but Molech, or Milchom, their idol, is meant: this is generally thought to be the same with Chiun in Amos; but it does not stand in a place to answer to that; besides, that should not be left untranslated, it not being a proper name of an idol, but signifies a type or form; and the whole may be rendered thus, "but ye have borne the tabernacle of your king, and the type, or form of your images, the star of your god"; which version agrees with Stephens's, who, from the Septuagint, adds the name of this their king, and their god Rephan, or Remphan. Drusius conjectures, that this is a fault of the Scribes writing Rephan for Cephan, or that the Septuagint interpreters mistook the letter k for r, and instead of Cevan read Revan; and Chiun is indeed, by Kimchi and Aben Ezra {h}, said to be the same with Chevan, which, in the Ishmaelitish and Persian languages, signifies Saturn; and so does Rephan in the Egyptian language: and it is further to be observed, that the Egyptians had a king called Remphis, the same with Apis; and this may be the reason why the Septuagint interpreters, who interpreted for Ptolomy, king of Egypt, put Rephan, which Stephen calls Remphan, instead of Chiun, which they were better acquainted with, since they both signify the same deity, and the same star; and which also was the star of the Israelites, called by them yatbv, because supposed to have the government of the sabbath day, and therefore fitly called the "star of your god". Upon the whole, Moloch, Chiun, Rephan, or Remphan, and Remphis, all are the same with the Serapis of the Egyptians, and the calf of the Israelites; and which idolatry was introduced on account of Joseph, who interpreted the dream of Pharaoh's kine, and provided for the Egyptians in the years of plenty against the years of famine, and was worshipped under the ox with a bushel on his head;

figures which ye made to worship them; in Amos it is said, "which you made for yourselves": meaning both the image and the tabernacle in which it was, which they made for their own use, to worship their deity in and by:

and I will carry you beyond Babylon; in Amos it is beyond Damascus, and so some copies read here, which was in Babylon; and explains the sense of the prophet more fully, that they should not only be carried for their idolatry beyond Damascus, and into the furthermost parts of Babylon, but beyond it, even into the cities of the Medea, Halah, and Habor, by the river Gozan; and here is no contradiction: how far beyond Damascus, the prophet does not say; and if they were carried beyond Babylon, they must be carried beyond Damascus, and so the words of the prophet were fulfilled; and Stephen living after the fulfilment of the prophecy, by which it appeared that they were carried into Media, could say how far they were carried; wherefore the Jew {i} has no reason to cavil at Stephen, as if he misrepresented the words of the prophet, and related things otherwise than they were; and so Kimchi interprets it, far beyond Damascus; and particularly mentions Halah and Habor, cities in Media, where the ten tribes were carried.

{f} R. David Kimchi in 2 Kings xxiii. 10. {g} Jarchi & Ben Melech in Lev. xviii. 23. Kimchi in Sepher Shorash. rad. Klm. {h} In Amos v. 25. {i} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 64. p. 451.

Acts 7:44

Ver. 44. Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness,.... The Ethiopic version adds, "of Sinai"; there it was that the tabernacle was first ordered to be built, and there it was built, and set up; which was a sort of a portable temple, in which Jehovah took up his residence, and which was carried from place to place: of it, and its several parts and furniture, there is a large account in Ex 25:1. It is sometimes called Ohel Moed, or "the tabernacle of the congregation", because there the people of Israel gathered together, and God met with them; and sometimes "the tabernacle of the testimony", or "witness", as here; Ex 38:21 **Nu 1:50** because the law, called the tables of the testimony, and the testimony, it being a testification or declaration of the will of God, was put into an ark; which for that reason is called the ark of the testimony; and which ark was placed in the tabernacle; and hence that took the same name too. The Jewish writers say {k}, it is so called,

"because it was a testimony that the Shekinah dwelt in Israel";

or as another {l} expresses it,

"it was a testimony to Israel that God had pardoned them concerning the affair of the calf, for, lo, his Shekinah dwelt among them."

This tabernacle, in which was the testimony of the will of God, what he would have done, and how he would be worshipped, and which was a token of his presence, was among the Jewish fathers whilst they were in the wilderness; and is mentioned as an aggravation of their sin, that they should now, or afterwards, take up and carry the tabernacle of Moloch. The Alexandrian copy reads, "your fathers"; the sense is the same.

As he had appointed; that is, as God appointed, ordered, and commanded:

speaking unto Moses, Ex 25:40

that he should make it according to the fashion he had seen; when in the Mount with God; **Heb 8:5** for it was not a bare account of the tabernacle, and its vessels, which he hearing, might form an idea of in his mind; but there was a visible form represented to his eye, a pattern, exemplar, or archetype of the whole, according to which everything was to be made; which teaches us, that everything in matters of worship ought to be according to the rule which God has given, from which we should never swerve in the least.

{k} Baal Hatturim in Exod. xxxiii. 21. {l} Jarchi in ib.

Acts 7:45

Ver. 45. Which also our fathers that came after,.... Who came after those that died in the wilderness, and never saw nor entered into the land of Canaan; the children of that generation whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, who sprung from them, came up in their room, and succeeded them:

brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles; that is, they having received the tabernacle from their fathers, brought it into the land of Canaan, which was possessed by the Gentiles, when they entered into it with Joshua their leader, and captain, at the head of them; who is here called Jesus, as he is in **Heb 4:8** for Joshua and Jesus are the same name, and signify a saviour; for such an one Joshua was to the people of Israel; and was an eminent type of Jesus Christ, the captain of our salvation, in his bringing many sons to glory:

whom God drove out before the face of our fathers; the Gentiles, who before possessed the land of Canaan, were drove out by God before the Israelites, to make way for their settlement there; for to whom can the success of those victories over the Canaanites be ascribed, which the Israelites under Joshua obtained, but to God? The language on the "Tingitane", or Hercules's pillars, said to be set up by some of these Canaanites, agrees with this, on which they inscribed these words;

"we are they who fled from the face of Joshua the robber, the son of Nave,"

or Nun:

unto the days of David; this clause must not be read in connection with the words immediately preceding, as if the sense was, that the inhabitants of Canaan were drove out of their land unto the times of David, and then returned and resettled, as in the Ethiopic version; but with the beginning of the verse, and the meaning is, that the tabernacle which the Israelites received from their fathers, and brought into the land of Canaan with them, was there unto the times of David.

Acts 7:46

Ver. 46. Who found favour before God,.... That is, David, who had an interest in the free favour and love of God, was chosen of God, a man after his own heart, and raised up to do his will; and who had the grace of God implanted in him, and was acceptable, and well pleasing to God through Christ; the same is said of Noah, **Ge 6:8**

and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob; from whom the Israelites descended: David having a deep sense of the love of God to him, and the grace of God wrought in his heart, was exceeding desirous of finding a place for the building of an house, or fixed habitation for God; for there was a tabernacle already, which had been from the time of Moses, and which the children of Israel brought with them into Canaan, and was moved from place to place; sometimes it was at Gilgal, sometimes at Shiloh, and then it was at Nob, and Gibeah, and at length it was brought by David into his own city; but he wanted to build a settled and stable house for the Lord, of which there was a hint given that the Lord would choose a place to put his name in, De 16:2 but it seems, where that was to be was not known; and therefore David very anxiously sought after it; the reference is had to Ps 132:3 where David determines not to go to his house, nor up to his bed, nor give sleep, to his eyes, nor slumber to his eyelids, till he had found out a place for the habitation of the God of Jacob.

Acts 7:47

Ver. 47. But Solomon built him an house. Though David was so set upon it, and made such large provisions for it, he was not to be the man that should build it, he having been greatly concerned in wars, and in the effusion of blood; but Solomon his son, who enjoyed much peace, was the person designed for this work, and who did accomplish it; of which there is a large account in the **1Ki 6:1**.

Acts 7:48

Ver. 48. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands,.... Such an one as Solomon's was; he did indeed dwell in his temple, but he was not confined to it, nor included in it, or circumscribed by it; and so much Solomon himself suggests, when he expresses his wonder at his dwelling on earth, seeing the heaven of heavens could not contain him, and still less the house which he had built, **1Ki 8:27**, Nwyle, "the most High", is one of the names of God, Ge 14:18 the Apostle Paul says the same of God as Stephen does here; Ac 17:24 "as saith the prophet"; the prophet Isaiah, Isa 66:1.

Acts 7:49

Ver. 49. Heaven is my throne,.... There is the seat of the divine Majesty; there his glory is most conspicuous; there he keeps his court, that is his palace; and there are his attendants, the angels; and from thence are the administrations of his regal power and government, over the whole world:

and earth is my footstool; which is under his feet, is subject to him, and at his dispose, and which he makes use of at his pleasure: these things are not to be literally understood, but are images and figures, representing the majesty, sovereignty, and immensity of God; who is the maker of all things, the governor of the universe, and is above all places, and not to be contained in any:

what house will ye build me? saith the Lord; or where can any be built for him, since he already takes up the heaven and the earth? what house can be built by men, or with hands, that can hold him, or is fit for him to dwell in?

or what is the place of my rest? not in any house made with hands, but in the church among his saints, who are the temples of the living God; and this is his rest for ever, and here will he dwell, because he has chosen and desired them, and built them up for an habitation for himself, Ps 132:13

Acts 7:50

Ver. 50. Hath not my hand made all these things? The heaven, and the earth, and all that is in them; the Arabic version renders it, "all these creatures"; and therefore what can be made for God? or what house built for him? in Isaiah the words are read without an interrogation, and affirm that his hand had made all these things, and therefore nothing could be made for him suitable to him, by the hands of men.

Acts 7:51

Ver. 51. Ye stiffnecked,.... Or "hard necked", the same with Prwe hvq, which is a character frequently given of this people, Ex 32:9 and elsewhere, and is expressive of their obstinacy, stubbornness and refractoriness; who would not submit their necks to the yoke of God's law, and be obedient to his commands:

and uncircumcised in heart and ears; for though they had the mark of circumcision in their flesh, of which they boasted; yet they had not the true circumcision of the heart; their hearts were not circumcised to fear and love the Lord, nor their ears to hear the word of the Lord and the Gospel of Christ; so that notwithstanding their confidence in carnal privileges, they were uncircumcised persons:

ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; the resistance made by these persons was not to the Spirit of God in them, of which they were destitute, but to the Spirit of God in his ministers, in his apostles, and particularly in Stephen; nor to any internal operation of his grace, but to the external ministry of the word, and to all that objective light, knowledge, evidence, and conviction that it gave of Jesus's being the Messiah: and such who resist Christ's ministers, resist him, and such who resist him, may be said to resist his Holy Spirit; and the word here used signifies a rushing against, and falling upon, in a rude and hostile way, and fitly expresses their ill treatment of Christ and his ministers, by falling upon them and putting them to death: which is the resistance here designed, as appears by the following verse: so that this passage is no proof of the resistance of the Holy Spirit, and the operations of his grace in conversion, when he is in men, and acts with a purpose and will to convert them; since it does not appear that he was in these persons, and was acting in them, with a design to convert them; and if he was, it wilt be difficult to prove that they so resisted, and continued to resist, as that they were not hereafter converted; since it is certain that one of them, Saul, was really and truly converted, and how many more we know not. Though it will be allowed, that the Holy Ghost in the operations of his grace upon the heart in conversion may be resisted, that is, opposed; but not so as to be overcome or be hindered in, or be obliged to cease from, the work of conversion, insomuch that may come to nothing:

as your fathers did, so do ye; or as "your fathers were, so are ye"; as they were stiffnecked, self-willed, obstinate, and inflexible, so are ye; as they were uncircumcised in heart and ears, so are ye; and as they resisted the Spirit of God in his prophets, so do ye resist him in the apostles and ministers of the Gospel.

Acts 7:52

Ver. 52. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?.... Either by reviling and speaking all manner of evil of them, **Mt 5:11** or by killing them, Mt 23:31 and they have slain them; as Isaiah, Zachariah, and others:

which showed before of the coming of the just one; of Jesus the Messiah, whose character in the prophecies of the Old Testament is righteous servant, righteous branch, just, and having salvation; and whom Stephen styles so partly on account of the holiness of his nature, and the innocence and harmlessness of his life; and partly because he is the author of righteousness, and the end of the law for it to all that believe; of whose coming in the flesh all the prophets more or less spoke: and this being good news, and glad tidings, made the sin of the Jewish fathers the greater, in putting them to death, as the innocent character of Christ was an aggravation of the Jews' sin, in murdering of him, as it follows:

of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers; Judas, one of their nation, betrayed him into the hands of the chief priests and elders; and they betrayed, or delivered him into the hands of Pontius Pilate to be condemned to death, which they greatly importuned, and would not be satisfied without; and therefore are rightly called the murderers, as well as the betrayers of him.

Acts 7:53

Ver. 53. Who have received the law, by the disposition of angels,.... Who attended the angel that spake to Moses on Mount Sinai, **Ac 7:38** who is the head of all principality and power, and whom he might make use of in giving the law to Moses: hence the law is said to be ordained by angels, in the hand of a Mediator, and is called the word spoken by angels, **Ga 3:19** and certain it is, that there were great numbers of angels on Mount Sinai, when the law was given, De 33:2 And so the Jews say {m}, that

"when the holy blessed God descended on Mount Sinai, there came down with him many companies of angels, Michael and his company, and Gabriel and his company"

Indeed they often say {n},

"the law was not given to the ministering angels:"

their meaning is, it was not given to them to observe and keep, because there are some things in it, which do not concern angels; but then it might be given to them to deliver to Moses, who gave it to the Israelites, and so may be said to receive it by the ministration of angels, through the hands of Moses. And now the law being given and received in so grand a manner, was an aggravation of the sin of the Jews in violating it, as it follows:

and have not kept it; but broke it in innumerable instances, and scarce kept it in any; for no man can keep it perfectly.

{m} Debarim Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 237. 3. {n} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 25. 2. Yoma. fol. 30. 1. Kiddushin, fol. 54. 1.

Acts 7:54

Ver. 54. When they heard these things,.... How that Abraham, the father of them, was called before he was circumcised, or the law was given to Moses, or the temple was built, which they were so bigoted to, and charged with speaking blasphemously of; and how that Joseph and Moses were very ill treated by the Jewish fathers, which seemed to resemble the usage Christ and his apostles met with from them; and how their ancestors behaved in the wilderness when they had received the law, and what idolatry they fell into there, and in after times; and how that though there was a temple built by Solomon, yet the Lord was not confined to it, nor would he dwell in it always; and especially when they heard him calling them a stiffnecked people, and uncircumcised in heart and ears; saying, that they persecuted and slew the prophets, and were the betrayers and murderers of an innocent person; and notwithstanding all their zeal for the law, and even though it was ministered to them by angels, yet they did not observe it themselves:

they were cut to the heart; as if they had been sawn asunder; they were filled with anguish, with great pain and uneasiness; they were full of wrath and madness, and could neither bear themselves nor him:

and they gnashed on him with their teeth: being enraged at him, and full of fury and indignation against him.

Acts 7:55

Ver. 55. But he being full of the Holy Ghost,.... That is, Stephen, as Beza's ancient copy, and some others express it; and so the Ethiopic version; the Syriac version reads, "full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost", as in **Ac 6:5** and so some copies; being under the influences of the Spirit of God, and filled with his divine comforts, and strong in the faith of Jesus Christ, and having a holy boldness, courage, and intrepidity of mind; instead of being discouraged and dejected, of being cast down in his spirits, and looking down upon the ground, he

looked up steadfastly to heaven; where he desired to be, and hoped and believed he should be; and from whence he knew his help came, and which he might now implore, as well as forgiveness for his enemies.

And saw the glory of God; not the essential glory of God, but some extraordinary light and brightness, which was a token and representation of him:

and Jesus standing on the right hand of God; of that glory which was a Symbol of him: Jesus being risen from the dead, and ascended on high, was set at the right hand of God, in human nature, and so was visible to the corporeal eye of Stephen; whose visual faculty was so extraordinarily enlarged and assisted, as to reach the body of Christ in the third heavens; where he was seen by him standing, to denote his readiness to assist him, and his indignation at his enemies.

Acts 7:56

Ver. 56. And said, behold, I see the heavens opened,.... As they were at the baptism of Christ, See Gill on "Mt 3:16":

and the son of man standing at the right hand of God; he calls Jesus "the son of man"; a name by which he often called himself in his state of humiliation; and that though he was now glorified, it being the name of the Messiah in Ps 80:17 as was well known to the Jews; and this Stephen said to show that God was on his side, and to let them know what honour was done him, what divine supports and comforts he had, and that he was an eyewitness of Jesus, and of his being alive, and in glory.

Acts 7:57

Ver. 57. Then they cried out with a loud voice,.... These were not the sanhedrim, but the common people; the Ethiopic version reads, "the Jews cried out"; which, they did, in a very clamorous way, either through rage and madness, or in a show of zeal against blasphemy; and cried out, either to God to avenge the blasphemy, or rather to the sanhedrim to pass a sentence on him, or, it may be, to excite one another to rise up at once, and kill him, as they did:

and stopped their ears; with their fingers, pretending they could not bear the blasphemy that was uttered. This was their usual method; hence they say, {o}

"if a man hears anything that is indecent, (or not fit to be heard,) let him put his fingers in his ears hence the whole ear is hard, and the tip of it soft, that when he hears anything that is not becoming, he may bend the tip of the ear within it."

By either of these ways these men might stop their ears; either by putting in their fingers, or by turning the tip of the ear inward.

And ran upon him with one accord; without any leave of the sanhedrim, or waiting for their determination, in the manner the zealots did; See Gill on "Mt 10:4" See Gill on "Joh 16:2".

{o} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 5. 1. 2.

Acts 7:58

Ver. 58. And cast him out of the city,.... Of Jerusalem; for the place of stoning was without the city. The process, when regular, according to the sentence of the court, was after this manner {p};

"judgment being finished, (or the trial over,) they brought him out (the person condemned) to stone him; the place of stoning was without the sanhedrim, as it is said, Le 24:14 "bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp", when he was ten cubits distant from the place of stoning, they order him to confess and when four cubits from it, they take off his garments--the place of stoning was twice a man's height."

And elsewhere {q} it is said, that the place of stoning was without three camps (the camp of the Shekinah, the camp of the Levites, and the camp of the Israelites): upon which the gloss has these words;

"the court is the camp of the Shekinah, and the mountain of the house the camp of the Levites, and every city the camp of the Israelites; and in the sanhedrim in every city, the place of stoning was without the city like to Jerusalem."

And these men, though transported with rage and fury, yet were so far mindful of rule, as to have him out of the city before they stoned him:

and they stoned him; which was done after this manner, when in form {r}:

"the wise men say, a man was stoned naked, but not a woman; and there was a place four cubits from the house of stoning, where they plucked off his clothes, only they covered his nakedness before. The place of stoning was two men's heights, and there he went up with his hands bound, and one of the witnesses thrust him on his loins, that he might fall upon the earth; and if he died not at that push, the witnesses lifted up a stone, which lay there, the weight of two men, and one cast it with all his strength upon him; and if he died not, he was stoned by all Israel."

And the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul; for the witnesses, according to the above account, were first concerned in the stoning; and this was agreeably to the rule in De 17:7 and which they seem to have observed amidst all their hurry and fury: and that they might perform their work with more ease and expedition, they plucked off their upper garments, and committed them to the care of Saul of Tarsus; who was now at Jerusalem, and belonged to the synagogue of the Cilicians, that disputed with Stephen, and suborned false witnesses against him. He is called a young man; not that he was properly a youth, for he must be thirty years of age, or more; since about thirty years after this he calls himself Paul the aged, **Phm 1:9** when he must be at least sixty years of age, if not more; besides, Ananias calls him a "man", **Ac 9:13** nor would the high priests have given letters to a mere youth, investing him with so much power and authority as they did; but he is so called, because he was in the prime of his days, hale, strong, and active. The learned Alting has taken a great deal of pains to show, that this Saul, who was afterwards Paul the apostle, is the same with Samuel the little, who is frequently mentioned in the Talmud; he living at this time, and being a disciple of Rabban Gamaliel, and a bitter enemy of the heretics, or Christians; and who, at the instigation of his master, composed a prayer against them; and his name and character agreeing with him: but it is not likely that the Jews would have retained so high an opinion of him to the last, had he been the same person: for they say {s},

"that as the elders were sitting in Jabneh, Bath Kol came forth, and said, there is one among you fit to have the Holy Ghost, or the Shekinah, dwell upon him; and they set their eyes on Samuel the little; and when he died, they said, ah the holy, ah the meek disciple of Hillell!"

{p} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4. {q} T. Bab Sanhedrin, fol. 42. 2. {r} Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. Affirm. 99. Vid. Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4. & Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 15. sect. 1. {s} Shilo, l. 4. c. 26, 27, 28.

Acts 7:59

Ver. 59. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God,.... As he was praying, and putting up the following petition;

and saying, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit; from whence we learn, that the spirit or soul of man sleeps not, nor dies with the body, but remains after death; that Jesus Christ is a fit person to commit and commend the care of the soul unto immediately upon its separation; and that he must be truly and properly God; not only because he is equal to such a charge, which none but God is, but because divine worship and adoration are here given him. This is so glaring a proof of prayer being made unto him, that some Socinians, perceiving the force of it, would read the word Jesus in the genitive case, thus; "Lord of Jesus receive my Spirit": as if the prayer was made to the Father of Christ, when it is Jesus he saw standing at the right hand of God, whom he invokes, and who is so frequently called Lord Jesus; whereas the Father is never called the Lord of Jesus; and besides, these words are used in like manner in the vocative case, in Re 22:20 to which may be added, that the Syriac version reads, "our Lord Jesus"; and the Ethiopic version, "my Lord Jesus".

Acts 7:60

Ver. 60. And he kneeled down,.... It seems as if he stood before while they were stoning him, and while he was commending his soul to Christ, but now he kneeled down; prayer may be performed either kneeling or standing:

and cried with a loud voice; not only to show that he was in good spirits, and not afraid to die, but chiefly to express his vehement and affectionate desire to have the following petition granted:

Lord, lay not this sin to their charge: do not impute it to them, or place it to their account; let it not rise and stand in judgment against them, or they be condemned for it; grant them forgiveness for it, and for every other sin: there is a great deal of likeness between Christ and this first martyr of his at their deaths; Christ committed his Spirit into the hands of his Father, and Stephen commits his into the hands of Christ; both prayed for forgiveness for their enemies; and both cried with a loud voice before they expired; for so it follows here,

and when he had said this, he fell asleep; or died; for death, especially the death of the saints, or dying in Jesus, is expressed by sleep. This way of speaking is common with the Jews, who say {t}, that Rabbi such an one Kymd, "slept"; i.e. "died"; and this they say is a pure and honourable way of speaking with respect to an holy body, whose death is no other than as it were a sleep: and elsewhere {u} it is said, that one saw such an one Mnmnm, "sleeping"; the gloss upon it is, oowg, "expiring": See Gill on "Joh 11:11", See Gill on "1Th 4:13". The Vulgate Latin version adds, "in the Lord."

{t} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 11. 1. T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 23. 2. Avoda Zara, fol. 42. 3. & Horayot, fol. 483. {u} Bereshit Rabba. sect. 91. fol. 79. 3. & Mattanot Cehuna in ib. T. Bab. Moed. Katon, fol. 28. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 8:1

Ver. 1. And Saul was consenting unto his death,.... This clause, in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic and Ethiopic versions, stands at the close of the preceding chapter, and which seems to be its proper place; and so it does in the Alexandrian copy: that Saul consented to the death of Stephen, and approved of that barbarous action, is evident from his taking care of the clothes of the witnesses that stoned him; but the word here used signifies not a bare consent only, but a consent with pleasure and delight; he was well pleased with it, it rejoiced his very heart; he joined with others in it, with the utmost pleasure and satisfaction; this, and what is before said concerning his having the clothes of the witnesses laid at his feet, as well as what follows, about his persecuting the saints, are, the rather mentioned, because this violent persecutor was afterwards converted, and became an eminent preacher of the Gospel; and these accounts serve to set off and illustrate the grace of God, which was abundant towards him.

And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem: it began "on that day", as the words may be rendered, on which Stephen was stoned. As soon as they had put him to death, these bloodthirsty wretches were the more greedy after the blood of others; and being now in great numbers, and filled with rage and fury, fell upon the members of the church wherever they met them, and killed them; for that more, besides Stephen, were put to death, seems plain from Ac 26:10 and, according to some accounts, though they cannot be depended on, two thousand persons suffered at this time: and if this was the case, it might be called a great persecution:

and they were all scattered abroad; not all the members of the church, nor perhaps any of the private ones; for we afterwards read of devout then that carried Stephen to his grave; and of the church being made havoc of by Saul; and of men and women being haled out of their houses, and committed to prison by him; but all the preachers of the word, except the apostles; for they that were scattered, went about preaching the word, **Ac 8:4** They seem to be the seventy disciples, and other ministers of the word, on whom the Holy Ghost fell at the day of Pentecost, or was since bestowed; among who were Philip, who went to Samaria; and Ananias, who was at Damascus; and others that went as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch: and particularly they are said to be dispersed

throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria; where their ministry was so greatly blessed, to the conversion of souls, that there were quickly many churches planted and formed in these parts, as appears from **Ac 9:31** so that this persecution was for the furtherance and spread of the Gospel: that upon this dispersion any of them came into France and England, or into any other parts of Europe, is not probable; since the particular places they went to are mentioned; and since they preached to Jew only: and this scattering by reason of the persecution, was of all the preachers,

except the apostles; the twelve apostles, who stayed at Jerusalem to take care of the church; to encourage the members of it to suffer cheerfully for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; and to animate them to abide by him: and this was not only an instance of courage and constancy in them, and of the divine protection and preservation of them, in the midst of their enemies; but also of the timidity of their adversaries, who might be afraid to meddle with them; remembering what miraculous works were performed by them, and how they had been delivered out of prison, and especially the case of Ananias and Sapphira, who were struck dead by Peter. Beza's ancient copy adds, "who remained in Jerusalem".

Acts 8:2

Ver. 2. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial,.... These men were not Jewish proselytes, but members of the Christian church; who were eminent for their religion and piety, and who had courage enough, amidst this persecution, to show a respect to the dead body of this holy martyr; which they took from under the stones, washed it, and wound it up in linen clothes, and put it into a coffin, or on a bier: they did everything preparatory to the funeral, which, is chiefly designed by the word here used, rather than the carrying of him out to his grave; though this also they did, and buried him: and to bear a corpse and follow it to the grave, and bury it, were with the Jews {x} reckoned among acts of kindness, mercy, and piety, and which would not fail of a reward; they have a saying {y}, that

"he that mourns, they shall mourn for him; and he that buries, they shalt bury him and he that lifts up (his voice in weeping lamentation), they shall lift up for him; he that accompanies (a dead corpse), they shall accompany him; he that "carries", they shall carry him;"

as these devout men did, who would not suffer Stephen to be buried in the common burying place of malefactors, but interred him elsewhere, in a more decent manner: but whether they had leave from the sanhedrim so to do, or whether they did this of themselves, is not certain; if the latter, which seems most likely, it is an instance of great boldness and resolution, and especially at this time; for

"they did not bury one that was stoned in the sepulchres of his fathers, but there were two burying places appointed by the sanhedrim, one for those that are stoned and burnt, and another for those that are slain with the sword and strangled {z}."

So that, they acted contrary to the Jewish canon, as they also did in what follows:

and made great lamentation over him; though they did not sorrow as those without hope, yet they did not put on a stoical apathy; but as men sensible of the loss the church of Christ had sustained, by the death of a person so eminent for his gifts and grace, they mourned over him in a becoming manner: in this they went contrary to the Jewish rule, which forbids lamentation for those that died as malefactors, and runs thus {a}

"they do not mourn, but they grieve; for grief is only in the heart;"

their reason for this was, as the commentators say {b}, because they thought that

"their disgrace was an atonement for their sin:"

but these devout men knew that Stephen needed no such atonement, and that his sins were atoned for another way: otherwise the Jews looked upon mourning for the dead to be to the honour of him; hence they say {c}, that mourning

"is the glory of the dead--whoever is backward to the mourning of a wise man shall not prolong his days; and whoever is sluggish in mourning for a good man, ought to be buried alive; and whoever causes tears to descend for a good man, lo, his reward is reserved for him with the holy blessed God."

{x} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Peah, c. 1. sect. 1. {y} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 72. 1. & Moed Katon, fol. 28. 2. {z} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 5. {a} Misn. Sanhedrin, sect. 6. {b} Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. {c} Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 12. sect. 1, 2.

Acts 8:3

Ver. 3. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church,.... Did evil to the saints, destroyed them that called upon the name of Christ, **Ac 9:13** and persecuted and wasted the church of God, as he himself says, **Gal 1:13** and now did Benjamin, of which tribe Saul was, ravine as a wolf, Ge 49:27

Entering into every house; where the saints dwelt:

and haling men and women: in a violent manner, without any regard to age or sex:

committed them to prison; delivered them up into the hands of the chief priests and magistrates, in order to be committed and sent to prison; this he himself confesses, Ac 22:4.

Acts 8:4

Ver. 4. Therefore they that were scattered abroad,.... By reason of the persecution in Jerusalem: the seventy disciples, and other ministers of the word; or the hundred and twenty, excepting the apostles,

went every where; or went through the countries of Judea and Samaria, as far as Phenice, Cyrus, and Antioch:

preaching the word; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions add, "of God", and so some copies; the Gospel, which is the word of God, and not man; which was not of men, nor received from men, but came from God, and by the revelation of Christ; and which was good news and glad tidings, of peace, pardon, righteousness and salvation, by Jesus Christ.

Acts 8:5

Ver. 5. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria,.... The city which was formerly called Samaria, but now Sebaste; it had been destroyed by Hyrcanus, and was rebuilt by Herod; and called by him, in honour of Augustus, by the name of Sebaste {d}; and so R. Benjamin says {e}, that

"from Luz he came in a day to Sebaste, Nwrmwv ayh, "this is Samaria"; where yet may be discerned the palace of Ahab king of Israel-----and from thence are two "parsas" to Neapolis, this is Sichem."

Which last place, Sichem, is by Josephus said to be the "metropolis" of Samaria; and is thought by Dr. Lightfoot to be the city Philip went to, and where our Lord had before been, and preached to the conversion of many persons: this place lay lower than Jerusalem, and therefore Philip is said to go down to it; and who was not Philip the apostle, but Philip the deacon, for the apostles abode at Jerusalem; and beside, though this Philip preached the Gospel, and baptized, and wrought miracles, yet did not lay on hands, in order that persons might receive the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost; this was peculiar to the apostles, and therefore Peter and John came down for this purpose, when they heard of the success of Philip's ministry: the subject matter of which follows:

and preached Christ unto them; that Christ was come in the flesh, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, and that he was the Son of God, and the alone Saviour of men; who by his obedience, sufferings, and death, had wrought righteousness, procured peace and pardon, and obtained eternal redemption for his people; and was risen again, and ascended into heaven, and was set down at the right hand of God, where he ever lived to make intercession, and would come again a second time to judge both quick and dead.

{d} Joseph de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 7. & c. 21. sect. 2. Plin. l. 5. c. 13. {e} Itinerar. p. 38.

Acts 8:6

Ver. 6. And the people with one accord,.... The inhabitants of the city of Samaria, as one man, came to hear the word:

and gave heed to those things which Philip spake; they listened to them, took notice of them, gave their ascent to them, believed and embraced them; being induced thereunto, not only upon the evidence by which these things came, but by reason of the miracles which he wrought, for the confirmation of them: for it follows,

hearing and seeing the miracles which he did; and which are particularly mentioned in the next verse.

Acts 8:7

Ver. 7. For unclean spirits,.... Devils, so called because they were unclean themselves, defiled others, add delighted in impure persons and places; See Gill on "Mt 10:1"

crying with loud voice; showing their unwillingness to remove, and the irresistibleness of divine power they could not withstand:

came out of many that were possessed with them; who had for a long time dwelt in them, and had greatly afflicted them:

and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed; by Philip, in the name of Christ, through a word speaking, or by touching them, without making use of any means or medicines.

Acts 8:8

Ver. 8. And there was great joy in that city. Both on a spiritual account, for the good of their souls, through the preaching of Christ and his Gospel to them; and on a temporal account; for the good of their bodies, or their friends, being dispossessed of devils, and healed of their diseases.

Acts 8:9

Ver. 9. But there was a certain man called Simon,.... Who, as Justin Martyr {f} says, was a Samaritan, and of a village called Gitton; and so a Jewish writer {g} calls him Simeon, ynwrmvh, "the Samaritan", a wizard: here is a

but upon this new church, the success of the Gospel in this place, and the joy that was there; a man of great wickedness and sophistry plays the hypocrite, feigns himself a believer, and gets in among them; See Gill on "Ac 5:1",

which beforetime in the same city used sorcery; who before Philip came thither, practised magic arts; wherefore he is commonly called "Simon Magus", for he was a magician, who had learned diabolical arts, and used enchantments and divinations, as Balaam and the magicians of Egypt did:

and bewitched the people of Samaria; or rather astonished them, with the strange feats he performed; which were so unheard of and unaccountable, that they were thrown into an ecstasy and rapture; and were as it were out of themselves, through wonder and admiration, at the amazing things that were done by him:

giving out that himself was some great one; a divine person, or an extraordinary prophet, and it may be the Messiah; since the Samaritans expected the Messiah, as appears from **Joh 4:25** and which the Syriac version seems to incline to, which renders the words thus, "and he said, I am that great one"; that great person, whom Moses spake of as the seed of the "woman", under the name of Shiloh, and the character of a prophet.

{f} Apolog. 2. p. 69. {g} Juchasin, fol. 242. 2.

Acts 8:10

Ver. 10. To whom they all gave heed,.... Were not only attentive to the strange things he did, and to the wonderful things he gave out concerning himself; but they believed what he said and did as real things, and were obedient to him: and that

from the least to the greatest; which does not so much respect age, though the Ethiopic version renders it, "from the younger of them to the eldest of them", as state and condition; persons of every rank and quality, high and low, rich and poor, magistrates and subjects, from the meanest to the greatest of them; and so the Syriac version renders it, "both great", or "noble, and mean"; he drew the attention, and commanded the regard, both of princes and peasants, of the learned and unlearned, of the great men, and of the common people, who one and all wondered at him, and applauded him:

saying, this man is the great power of God; or as the Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "this is the power of God which is called great"; they took him for the supreme Deity, or as Justin Martyr {h} expresses it, they accounted him the first, or chief God, or they looked upon him to be the Messiah, "the great power of God": as the Syriac version renders it; and who should be great, and called the Son of the Highest, **Lu 1:32**.

{h} Ut supra. (Apolg. 2. p. 69.)

Acts 8:11

Ver. 11. To him they had regard,.... Which is repeated from the foregoing verse, for the sake of what follows:

because that of a long time he had bewitched them with sorceries; or because he had, it may be for many years, astonished them with his magic arts, and the pranks he played in the use of them.

Acts 8:12

Ver. 12. But when they believed Philip,.... Though they had been carried away so long with this deceiver, and had been so much attached unto him, and held in admiration of him; yet when Philip came and preached Christ unto them, such was the power that attended his ministry, and such the efficacy of divine grace that was exerted, that they not only gave heed unto him, but believed what he said:

preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God; concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, the Gospel dispensation, the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel; and concerning the kingdom of grace, which is spiritual and internal, and which lies not in external things, as meat and drink, but in righteousness, peace, and joy; and concerning the kingdom of glory, the meetness for it, which lies in regenerating grace, and the right unto it, which is the righteousness of Christ:

and the name of Jesus Christ; concerning the person of Christ, as the Son of God: and the offices of Christ, as prophet, priest, and King; and the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, for pardon, justification, and atonement: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read this clause, "in the name of Jesus Christ": and connect it with the following words,

they were baptized, both men and women: that is, when, they heard Philip preach the Gospel, and believed in Christ, the sum and substance of it, and made a profession of faith, they were of each sex, both men and women, baptized by immersion, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Acts 8:13

Ver. 13. Then Simon himself believed also,.... With an historical and temporary faith, as that Jesus was the Messiah, &c. or at least he pretended, to believe this, and professed that he did believe, what others did, and Philip preached:

and when he was baptized; upon profession of his faith, which he so artfully made, that Philip could not discover his hypocrisy: but taking him to be a sincere believer, admitted him to baptism: after which,

he continued with Philip; kept close to him, and got into a familiar acquaintance with him; and constantly attended on his ministry, as if he had been a sincere disciple and follower of Christ:

and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done; he was as much amazed at the miraculous performances of Philip, as the inhabitants of Samaria had been at his, which he could observe were real things; and this increased his wonder, and threw him into an ecstasy, that he was scarce himself: whereas he knew that what he did were only sham performances, and legerdemain tricks.

Acts 8:14

Ver. 14. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem,.... Not that there were some at Jerusalem, and some elsewhere; for they all tarried at Jerusalem, when the rest of the ministers of the word were scattered abroad; though it is possible, that by this time, some of them might have departed from hence; but it seems more probable, that they were as yet all here: these

heard that Samaria had received the word of God; that is, they heard that the Samaritans, who only received the five books of Moses, and that not the Hebrew, but their own copy of them, now received not only the whole Bible, but the Gospel of Christ, as preached by Philip; which they might hear by a letter, or messengers sent from Philip to them, to acquaint them with the success of the Gospel; or from some persons, who had been in those parts: upon which

they sent unto them Peter and John: who were not only fellow apostles, but very familiar and intimate companions; these they sent to confirm the doctrine of Philip, and establish the young converts in it, and to form them into a Gospel church state, and ordain ministers over them.

Acts 8:15

Ver. 15. Who when they were come down,.... To the city of Samaria, where Philip was, and these converts dwelt:

prayed for them; for some of them, unto God:

that they might receive the Holy Ghost; the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, as to be able to speak with tongues, to prophesy and work miracles: they might pray for them all, that they might have a larger measure of grace, and more spiritual light and knowledge; and that they might be established in the doctrines of the Gospel, and hold fast the profession of their faith unto the end; but it can hardly be thought that they should pray for them all, both men and women, that they might have the above extraordinary gifts, which were not necessary to them all: and that these are meant by the Holy Ghost is clear from what follows, since he was not yet fallen on any of them, which cannot be understood in any other sense; and seeing it was something visible, which Simon could discern, and therefore cannot mean internal grace, and an increase of that.

Acts 8:16

Ver. 16. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them,.... They had received him as a spirit of illumination and sanctification, and as, a spirit of conversion and faith; they had been regenerated, enlightened, and sanctified by him; and were converted by him, and brought to believe in Christ, and live, by faith upon him; they were baptized believers, and no more; as yet, none of them had gifts qualifying them for the ministry; and still less could any of them speak with tongues, or prophesy, or work miracles; the Holy Ghost had not yet descended on them for such purposes:

only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus: all as yet appeared in them was, that they were believers in Christ, and had been baptized in his name, upon a profession of their faith; and more than this they had been called to, or qualified for: the word "only", does not respect the form of baptism, as if they had been baptized only in the name of Christ; whereas they were doubtless baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; but refers to baptism itself, which was the only ordinance as yet administered to them.

Acts 8:17

Ver. 17. Then laid they their hands on them,.... The Ethiopic version adds, "who had been baptized"; but not upon all of them, men and women, only on some they were directed unto by the Spirit of God; whom he had designed, and now would qualify for the work of the ministry, that so this new church, might be supplied with proper officers, pastors, and teachers, to feed them with knowledge and with understanding, and who might not only have ministerial gifts to qualify them for preaching the Gospel, but extraordinary ones, which would serve for the confirmation of it; and for this purpose the apostles, "both" of them, as the Arabic version reads, laid their hands on them: for it will not seem probable, that they laid their hands upon the women, on such an account; and it will hardly be received, that they should lay their hands on Simon Magus, otherwise he would have received the Holy Ghost too; so that it seems a plain case, that imposition of hands was not used to them all:

and they received the Holy Ghost; that is, they received the gifts of the Holy Ghost; so that they could prophesy and speak with tongues, and heal diseases, and do other wonderful works: and since now these effects have ceased, the rite and ceremony which was peculiar to the apostles as such, it should seem should cease likewise.

Acts 8:18

Ver. 18. And when Simon saw,.... Whence it appears, that the Holy Ghost, or his gifts, which were received by imposition of hands, were something visible and discernible; and so something external, and not internal; otherwise they would have been out of Simon's reach, and would not have fallen under his notice; but he saw,

that through laying on of the apostles' hands, the Holy Ghost was given: he saw, that upon this men began to prophesy, and to speak with divers tongues they had never learned, and to work miracles, cure men of their diseases, and the like: and when he observed this,

he offered them money; to purchase such a power of conferring the like gifts, on whomsoever he should lay his hands: hence buying and selling spiritual things, or what relate thereunto, are commonly called "simony": a vice which has greatly prevailed in the church of Rome, and among its popes; and who therefore may be more properly called the successors of Simon Magus, than of Simon Peter.

Acts 8:19

Ver. 19. Saying, give me also this power,.... He does not ask them to lay their hands on him, that he might receive the Holy Ghost, and have these gifts to exercise himself, but that he might have the power of conferring them on others:

that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost; in which he discovered his ambition and avarice: his ambition, that he might be above Philip; who though he had these gifts, yet had not a power to lay on hands, and thereby convey them unto others; he perceived that this was purely apostolical;

and indeed, what he requested was more than what the apostles could do; for though upon their prayers, and through the imposition of their hands, the gifts of the Spirit were bestowed upon men; yet they never could, nor did give a power to others, to do as they did; and his avarice prompted him to this, that he might make gain of it; not by doing miracles himself, but by conveying a power to others to do them.

Acts 8:20

Ver. 20. But Peter said to him,.... With great abhorrence and indignation, resenting and detesting his proposal:

thy money perish with thee; or "go into destruction with thee"; signifying, that he would not touch his money, or have anything to do with that or him either, in any such way: the words do not so much design an imprecation on his person, as an abhorrence of his sin; and rather show what his sin deserved than what he desired might be; for the apostle did not simply wish his damnation, since he afterwards exhorts him to repentance, and to pray for forgiveness; but threatens, and even predicts what would be his case, should he live and die in such a state, in which he appeared to be:

because thou hast thought that the gift of God; the Holy Ghost, and his extraordinary gifts, which are freely given, when and to whom the Lord himself pleases:

may be purchased with money; he appears to have a wrong notion of the Spirit of God and his gifts, and of the grace of in bestowing them; as well as a wicked design of purchasing them with money, in order to sell them again; so that it was a sullying and lessening of the grace of God, as well as seeking himself, his own ambition, and filthy lucre: and let such observe how near they come to his sin, who seek to obtain the grace of justification, and the free gift of eternal life, by their own works.

Acts 8:21

Ver. 21. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter,.... Or business of the gift of the Holy Ghost; signifying, that as he had not the grace of the Spirit of God implanted in him, so he should not have any of the gifts of the Spirit bestowed on him; and much less a power of communicating them to others, through laying on of hands: or "in this word"; the word of the Gospel, preached by the apostles; and in any of the blessings published in it, as the forgiveness of sins, a justifying righteousness, and eternal life; and so the Syraic version renders it, "in this faith"; neither in the grace of faith, nor in the doctrine of faith: it seems to answer to a way of speaking frequently used among the Jews, that such and such persons, qlh Mhl Nya, "have no part or lot", in the world to come {i}. The Ethiopic version reads, "because of this thy word"; because for his money, he had desired to have a power of bestowing the Holy Ghost on persons, through the imposition of his hands; which showed he had no share in the grace of God, and would have no part in eternal life, thus living and dying:

for thy heart is not right in the sight of God; he had not a clean heart, nor a right spirit created in him; he had not true principles of grace wrought in him; his heart was full of covetousness, ambition, and hypocrisy; he had no good designs, ends, and aims, in what he said and did; in his profession of faith, in his baptism, in his attendance on Philip's ministry, and in his request for the above power, of conferring the Holy Ghost: his view was not the spread and confirmation of the Gospel, or the enlargement of the kingdom and interest of Christ, and the glory of God, but his own applause and worldly interest; and therefore, however he might be thought of by men, to be a good and disinterested man, he was otherwise in the sight of God, who is the searcher of the heart, and the trier of the reins of the children of men.

{i} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1.

Acts 8:22

Ver. 22. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness,.... For a great piece of wickedness it was, to offer money for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and to imagine, that could be purchased with money; and what made the wickedness still greater was, the evil design he had in this, to advance himself in opposition to Christ and his apostles, as he afterwards did; and when the apostle puts him upon repentance, his view is to show the heinousness of his crime, the need he stood in of repentance, and that without it, his case must be miserable:

and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee; though he was in a state of nature, the apostle exhorts him to the duty of prayer; for prayer is a natural duty, and binding upon all men, though none but a spiritual man can perform it in a spiritual way: and though this sin of Simon's was a very heinous one, and came very near unto, and looked very much like the sin against the Holy Ghost, yet it was not the unpardonable one; it might be pardoned by the grace of God, and through the blood of Christ; and therefore Peter, who wished his salvation and not his damnation, put him upon prayer for it; which was possible, though difficult, but not certain: the apostle says not this, as doubting; if it was a case wholly to be despaired of, then he would not have directed him to the means; and yet the wickedness was so horribly great, and he in such a wretched hardened state, that there was no great hope or expectation of his repentance, and so of the application of pardon to him: however, this advice was not given ironically: Peter was too grave and serious to speak sarcastically, or break a jest upon a man in such circumstances; whom no doubt he heartily pitied, though he abhorred his sin: the Syriac version renders it, "the deceit of thine heart": and the Ethiopic version, "the evil thought of thine heart"; and such it was.

Acts 8:23

Ver. 23. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness,.... Alluding to De 29:18 with which compare Heb 12:15 and signifying, that he was in a state of nature and unregeneracy; under the power and dominion of covetousness, ambition, and hypocrisy; and in a way pernicious to himself, infectious to others, and ungrateful to God, and to good men; and that instead of the root of the matter, the truth of grace being in him, there was nothing in him but the bitter root of sin; which bore gall and wormwood, and everything that was nauseous and disagreeable:

and in the bond of iniquity; referring to **Pr 5:22** and suggesting, that he was held fast bound in the bonds of sin, and with the cords of iniquity, or was entirely under the government of his lusts: the preposition eiv, which we render "in", may retain here, as is by some observed, its proper sense of "for", or "into"; and have the same signification it has in **Heb 1:5** "I will be to him for a father", or "a father", and "he shall be to me for a son", or "a son": and then the sense of Peter is, I plainly perceive and clearly see by thy words and actions, that thou art nothing else but a lump of bitter gall, and a bundle of sin and wickedness.

Acts 8:24

Ver. 24. Then answered Simon, and said,.... Whose conscience might be touched, and smote with what Peter had said; and he might be terrified with the wrath of God, and filled with fear of his judgment coming upon him for his wickedness, and might now stand trembling before the apostles: and if this was not his case, he was a most hardened and audacious wretch; and his following words must be understood in a different sense, from what they might seem to have, when they came out of his mouth:

pray ye to the Lord for me; the Arabic version reads, "pray ye two"; the words are addressed both to Peter and John; for though Peter only spake to him, yet John joined with him, and assented to what he said, and approved of it; and which he might signify either by word or gesture; wherefore Simon desires both of them, that they would pray to the Lord for him; but whether he was serious, and in good earnest in this, is a question; since there is no reason to believe he truly repented, from the accounts given of him by ancient writers; who always represent him as an opposer of the apostles and their doctrine, as the father of all heresies, as a blasphemous wretch; who gave out that he was the Father in Samaria, the Son in Judea, and the Holy Ghost in other places; and as a very lewd and wicked man, who carried about with him a whore, whose name was Helena; whom he called the mother of the universe, and gave out the angels were made by her, and the world by them; with many other errors, blasphemies, and impieties: so that it should rather seem, that though Peter was serious in his advice to Simon, yet he was not so in his request to him; but in a sarcastic sneering way, desired his prayers for him; suggesting, that he was not in any pain about what he had said: and if he was in earnest, he did not take Peter's advice to pray for himself; nor did he declare any repentance for his sin; and his desire that the apostles would pray for him, might not be from any sense he had of the evil of his sin, but from a slavish fear of the evil, or mischief, that was like to come upon him for his sin, as appears by what follows:

that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me; as that his money should perish with him, and he with that; or that he should go into destruction; that everlasting destruction and ruin would be his portion; and that he should have no part nor lot in eternal life, unless he repented, and his sin was pardoned: and this confirms what has been before observed, that John assented to what Peter spoke, or said the same, or such like things to Simon as he did.

Acts 8:25

Ver. 25. And they, when they had testified, &c. That is, Simeon (or Peter) and John, as the Syriac version expresses it; when they had bore their testimony to, and by it confirmed the Gospel as preached by Philip, and had established the young converts in it, and against the errors of Simon Magus:

and preached the word of the Lord; or of "God", as read the Alexandrian copy, and the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; when they had preached the Gospel in the city of Samaria, the same as Philip had preached before; whereby it appeared, that there was an harmony and agreement between them:

returned to Jerusalem; to the rest of the apostles there, to give them an account, how they found things at Samaria; what they had done, and what they had met with: and upon their return, whilst on their journey, they stopped at several places, which lay in their way;

and preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans; their first commission in Mt 10:5 being now cancelled, and a new one given them to preach the Gospel to every creature; and being appointed witnesses for Christ in Samaria, as well as in Jerusalem and Judea; **Ac 1:8**.

Acts 8:26

Ver. 26. And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip,.... To inquire who this angel was, whether Michael or Gabriel, or the tutelar angel of Ethiopia, or of the eunuch, or of Philip, is too curious; it was one of the ministering spirits sent forth by Christ, to serve a gracious purpose of his, and for the good of one of the heirs of salvation:

saying, arise; at once, make haste and speed, and quick dispatch; the phrase denotes readiness, alacrity, and expedition:

and go toward the south; the southern point from the city of Samaria, where Philip now was; or to the south of Jerusalem: the parts of Gaza, Lydda, Jamnia, Joppa, &c. were called the "south": hence often mention is made of such a Rabbi and such a Rabbi, that he was amwrd, "of the south" {k}; so R. Joshua, who was of Lydda, is said to be of the south {l}. The Ethiopic version renders it at "noon time", and so the Arabic of De Dieu; as if it respected not the place whither he was to go, but the time when he was to go; and that it might be about the middle of the day, the following narrative seems to confirm:

unto the way which goes down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert: this place is sometimes called Azzah, and sometimes Gaza, which is owing to the different pronunciation of the first letter of it; it was first inhabited by the Avim, or Hivites, who being destroyed by the Caphtorim, they dwelt in their stead, **De 2:23**. It fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah, but could not be held by it, because of the giants which remained in it; and was, as Jerom says {m}, a famous city of Palestine in his day; and was formerly the border of the Canaanites towards Egypt; and the way to Egypt lay through it, in which the eunuch was travelling: the way from Jerusalem to this place lay through Bethlehem, as the above ancient writer observes, on Jer 31:15 where he says

"some of the Jews interpret this place thus; that Jerusalem being taken by Vespasian, through this way (Bethlehem and Ephratah, of which he is speaking) to Gaza and Alexandria, a vast number of captives were led to Rome."

And as the same writer elsewhere says {n}, Bethlehem was six miles from Aella (or Jerusalem) to the south, in the way which leads to Hebron; and it is commonly believed that the way to Gaza was through Hebron, and is the way in which they go to it now; and to a hill near this place Samson, carried the gates of Gaza, Jud 16:1 And this also was to the south of Jerusalem, and two and twenty miles from it {o}: and it is also said by the same author {p}, that there is a village called Bethzur, and in his time Bethhoron, in the way from Jerusalem to Hebron, about twenty miles from the former, at which there was a fountain, where it was reported the eunuch was baptized by Philip. There was it seems another way from Jerusalem to Gaza, through Diospolis, or Eleutheropolis, and so to Ascalon, and from thence to Gaza {q}: and this was the road the eunuch went, if their conjecture is right, that he was baptized in the river Eleutherus; but which way he went is not certain, nor where he was baptized. The situation of Gaza was, according to Arrianus {r}, as follows:

"Gaza is distant from the sea at least twenty furlongs (two miles and a half), and the access unto it is sandy and deep, and the sea near the city is all muddy. Gaza was a great city, and was built on high ground, and encompassed with a strong wall: it was the last of those cities inhabited, as you go from Phoenicia into Egypt,
epi th arch thv erhmou "at the beginning of the desert"."

Which last words seem to furnish out a reason why it is here called Gaza, "which is desert"; because it was situated where the desert began: though this clause is differently understood; some apply it to Gaza; as if the sense was "Gaza the desert", to distinguish old Gaza which was destroyed by Alexander the great, and as Strabo says {s}, "remained desert", from new Gaza, built at some distance from it: Jerom has {t} this distinction of old and new Gaza; there is scarce any appearance, he says, of the foundations of the ancient city; and that which is now seen is built in another place; and an unknown Greek writer makes express mention of new Gaza, which is the city itself; and speaks of another Gaza at some distance, which he calls Gaza, h erhmov, "the desert" {u}: but the haven, which was seven furlongs distant from Gaza, was not called new Gaza till Julian's time: it was first called Majuma, and afterwards Constantia, by Constantine; either from his son Constantius, or his sister Constantia, it having embraced the Christian religion {w}: wherefore, as Beza observes, no regard could be had to this distinction in the times of Luke; and though it was besieged by Alexander and taken, yet it did not become a desolate place; it had its walls, gates, and fortifications afterwards; and was after this taken by Ptolomy, and then by Alexander Janneeus; it was repaired by Gabinius, and given to Herod by Augustus {x}: so that it could not be said to be desert, in the times of Philip and the eunuch, with respect to its inhabitants and fortifications: it seems rather therefore to be so called, for the above reason, because situated at the beginning of the desert; and the whole space between the parts of Egypt next the Nile, and Palestina, is called "the desert", both by Arrianus {y} and Josephus {z}: others apply this epithet to the way, and read it as do the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, "to the way of the desert which goes from Jerusalem"; meaning the wilderness, which lay in the way from Jerusalem to Gaza. This place was distant from Jerusalem about seventy five miles; for from Jerusalem to Ascalon was, as Josephus {a} says, five hundred and twenty furlongs, which make sixty five miles; and from Ascalon to Gaza were ten miles, as our countryman Mr. Sandes Says {b}; though according to the Itinerary of Antoninus {c}, the distance was sixteen miles. The Talmudists make mention of this place, they represent it as a very pleasant place to dwell in; they say {d}, Gaza is hpy hywyn, "a beautiful habitation"; they speak of three famous markets, and one of them was the market of Gaza {e}; and very near to this city there was a beast market {f}; and to which may be added, though it may not serve to strengthen the reason of its name being called Gaza the desert, there was a place on the border of the city, which was named atrygo atbrwx, "the desert of the leper" {g}: there were also brooks about the parts of Gaza and Azotus {h}; in one of which, if the eunuch was near Gaza, to which he was going, he might be baptized; since it is uncertain whereabout Philip met him, and where the place of water was, in which the ordinance of baptism was administered to him. This city is now called Gazera, or Gazara, and is inhabited by Greeks, Turks, and Arabians.

{k} T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 53. 4. {l} Ib. Challa, fol. 57. 2. {m} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 91. K. {n} Ib. fol. 89. E. {o} Ib. fol. 87. E. {p} Fol. 89. G. {q} Vid. Reland. Palestina Illustrata, l. 2. p. 407. & l. 3. p. 646, 659. {r} De Expeditione Alexandri, l. 2. {s} Geograph. l. 16. {t} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 91. K. {u} Apud Reland. ib. l. 2. p. 509. {w} Euseb. de Vita Constantin. l. 4. c. 38. Sozomen. Hist. l. 5. c. 3. {x} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 13. c. 13. sect. 3. & 14. 5. &. 15. 7. {y} Ut supra. (De Expeditione Alexandri, l. 2.) {z} De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 5. sect. 3. {a} Ib. l. 3. c. 2. sect. 1. {b} Travels, p. 151. {c} Apud Reland. ib. l. 2. p. 419. {d} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 37. 3. {e} Ib. Avoda Zara, fol. 39. 4. {f} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 11. 2. {g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 71. 1. {h} Aristeas de 70 Interpret. p. 41.

Acts 8:27

Ver. 27. And he arose and went,.... As soon as he had his orders, he immediately obeyed them; he made no dispute about the matter, though he was directed only part of his way, and had no account of what he went about, or was to do;

and behold, a man of Ethiopia; or "a man, an Ethiopian"; an Hebraism, such as "a man a Jew", **Zec 8:23** wherefore his being called a man, is no contradiction to his being an eunuch; for the word "man" does not regard his sex, but with the other the country of which he was; and it is the same as if he had only been called an Ethiopian, which signifies one of a black countenance; for Ethiopia was not so called from Ethiops, the son of Vulcan, who is said to reign over it, but from the colour of its inhabitants;
Jer 13:23. This country in the Hebrew language is called Cush, and the people of it Cushites, from Cush the son of Ham, Ge 10:6 And so Josephus says {i}, that the Ethiopians over whom he (Cush) reigned, are now by themselves, and by all in Asia, called Chuseans; and so likewise the inhabitants of upper Ethiopia, or the Abyssines, are to this day called Cussinns, by the Portuguese. Geographers make mention of two Ethiopias, one in Africa, divided into upper and lower, and which is here meant; and the other in Asia and a part of Arabia, and which is the Ethiopia spoken of in the Old Testament: a note of admiration is prefixed, to observe to us what was remarkable in providence that just at this time, and in this way, such a man should be travelling; and what was still a greater wonder of grace, that such an one should be the object of God's peculiar favour, and should be chosen and called, have the Gospel preached to him, and be admitted to an ordinance of it; whereby some prophecies began to

have their accomplishment in part, Ps 68:31

An eunuch of great authority; he might be one that was literally so, it being common for eastern princes and great men to have such persons as guards over their wives, to preserve their chastity; and so hereby was a fulfilment in part of Isa 56:3 though this word is used to denote a person in office: so Potiphar is called
oyro, an eunuch, though he had a wife, and which we rightly render an officer; and the Chaldee paraphrase renders it, abr, "a prince", or great man, Ge 39:1. So Balaam is said {k} to be one of the king's eunuchs, and yet Jannes and Jambres are said to be his sons; and the word Dynastes here used, which we translate "of great authority", may be considered as explanative of the word eunuch; to teach us, that this word was not expressive of his case, but a title of office: it is reported of this eunuch, that after his conversion he preached the Gospel to the inhabitants of Zeylan and Arabia Felix, and in the island of Traprobane in the Red sea, and at last suffered martyrdom {l}: this great person said to be

under Candace queen of the Ethiopians; that is, of those Ethiopians who inhabited the island of Meroe; for Candace, or Candaoce, as Pliny {m} reads it, was a common name of the queens of that island, as Pharaoh was of the Egyptian kings, and Caesar of the Roman emperors: the word Candace signifies a governor of children, that is, servants; it is derived from the Ethiopic word ynq, "Kani", which signifies to govern; and from qd, "Dak, a child", or servant; and the king of the Abyssines is to this day called Prestar Chan, or Kan, a prince of servants, who is commonly and corruptly called Prester John; and Chan, or Kan, is a well known name for an emperor or governor in the eastern countries as with the Tartars and Persians, witness the late famous Kouli Kan. Some say {n}, her proper name was Judith, others Lacasa {o}, and others Hendake, or Indich; which, as Ludolphus {p} observes, is no other than Candace; though this last name Indich, according to Zaga Zabo, an ambassador of the king of the Ethiopians, was the name of the eunuch himself; his words, as reported by Damianus a Goes {q}, are these;

"we, almost before all other Christians, received baptism from the eunuch of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, whose name was Indich:"

who had the charge of all her treasure; was her lord treasurer; which shows, that he was not an eunuch to her on account of chastity, but an high officer in her kingdom: the word Gaza here used, signifies in the Persian language treasure, or treasury {r}. The Ethiopic version takes it for the name of a place, and renders it, "and he was governor of the city of Gaza", but very wrongly: "and had come to Jerusalem for to worship"; hence he seems to have been either a Jew by birth, or rather a proselyte to the Jewish religion; and had been at Jerusalem at one of their annual feasts, the passover, "pentecost", or tabernacles, to worship the God of Israel, whom he believed to be the only true God.

{i} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 2. {k} Heb. Chron. Mosis, fol. 4. 2. & 6. 2. {l} Fabricii Lux Evangelii, p. 115, 708. {m} Hist. Nat. l. 6. c. 29. Vid. Alexand. ab Alex. l. 1. c. 2. {n} Godignus de rebus Abysainis, p. 117. apud Castel. Lex Polyglott. col. 4003. {o} Mariani Reatini Catalog. Reg. Aethiop. in De Dieu in loc. {p} Hist. Ethiop. l. 3. c. 2. {q} In De Dieu in loc. {r} Mela, v. 1. p. 22. Alex. ab Alex. l. 2. c. 2.

Acts 8:28

Ver. 28. Was returning,.... From Jerusalem, having finished the parts of divine worship he came to perform; and it is remarkable, that though he must doubtless have heard of Jesus of Nazareth, and what had passed in Jerusalem lately, and of his apostles, yet heard them not; or however, was not converted by them, nor believed in Jesus; his conversion being ordered to be at another time, in another place, and by another instrument:

and sitting in his chariot: as was the manner of princes and great persons:

read Esaias the Prophet; the Book of the Prophecies of Isaiah the Prophet; and in **Lu 4:17** it is called the "Book of the Prophet Esaias"; and in the note there, See Gill on "Lu 4:17, I have observed, that the prophets, especially the larger ones, were sometimes in separate and distinct books, and so might be the prophecy of Isaiah; and such an one was delivered to Christ, in the synagogue of Nazareth; and such an one the eunuch might have, and be reading in it: hence we read {s}, that Daniel should say to the Israelites, who came to discourse with him about the prophecies of Jeremiah, bring me, says he, hyevy dpo, "the Book of Isaiah"; he began to read, and went on till he came to this verse, "the burden of the desert of the sea", &c.
Isa 21:1 and both the Arabic and Ethiopic versions here read, "the Book of the Prophet Isaiah." See Gill on "Lu 4:17". Some think the eunuch might be reading over some passages of Scripture in this prophet, which he had heard expounded at Jerusalem, to refresh his memory with what he had heard. This prophet is a very evangelical one, and very delightful and profitable to read:

many things are prophesied by him concerning the Messiah, and particularly in the chapter in which the eunuch was reading; and this being a time when there was great expectation of the Messiah, such passages might be read and expounded in their synagogues, which concerned him: however, the eunuch improved his time, as he was travelling in a religious way, which was very commendable; and as this was the occasion and opportunity which the Holy Ghost took to bring on his conversion, it may serve greatly to recommend the reading of the Scriptures.

{s} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 33. 1.

Acts 8:29

Ver. 29. Then the Spirit said unto Philip,.... Not the angel, a ministering Spirit, as in **Ac 8:26** but the Holy Spirit, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, the same with the Spirit of the Lord, **Ac 8:39** who spoke unto him, either by an articulative voice, such as was the Bath Kol among the Jews; or inwardly, by a secret impulse upon him, he directed him, saying:

go near, and join thyself to this chariot; he bid him make up to the chariot, he saw driving on the road at such a distance, and follow it, and attend it closely; and not leave it, till an opportunity of conversing with the person in it offered.

Acts 8:30

Ver. 30. And Philip ran thither to him,.... Being very ready to obey the divine order, and hoping he might be an instrument of doing some good, which might issue in the glory of God, and the welfare of men:

and heard him read the prophet Esaias; that is, "the Book of Isaiah the Prophet"; as before; and so the Ethiopic and Arabic versions read here, as there: he read it out, with a clear and distinct voice, so that Philip could hear him; and this he did, partly through reverence to the word of God, and partly to fix his attention to it the more, that he might the better understand and remember it, and also for delight and pleasure: it is very likely, that it was the Book of Isaiah in the Hebrew tongue in which he was reading, and which language he might understand, though he might be at a loss about the sense of the prophet:

and said, understandest thou what thou readest? meaning not the language, but the sense; for overhearing him, he perceived it was a prophecy in Isaiah he was reading; which was not so easy to be understood as laws and precepts are, which command this, and forbid that; whereas prophecies were more abstruse, and regarded things to come.

Acts 8:31

Ver. 31. And he said, how can I, except some man should guide me?.... Which shows that he was of an excellent spirit and temper; since instead of answering in a haughty and disdainful manner, as great men are too apt to do; and instead of charging Philip with, impertinence and insolence, in interrupting him whilst reading, and putting such a question to him, he expresses himself with great and uncommon modesty; with a sense and confession of his ignorance and incapacity and of the necessity and usefulness of the instructions of men, appointed of God to open and explain the Scriptures: and though he wanted such a guide, and could have been glad of one, yet he was willing to use all diligence himself in reading, that he, might, if possible, come at some knowledge of the truth; which was very commendable in him; and no doubt but the spirit he was in was much owing to his reading the word, and to the Spirit of God disposing his mind in this manner:

and he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him; which is an instance of his great humanity and courteousness, and of his meekness and condescension, as well as of his vehement thirst after the knowledge of the Scriptures; he concluding, or at least hoping by Philip's question, and by the air and look of the man, that he was one that might be useful to him this way.

Acts 8:32

Ver. 32. The place of the Scripture which he read was this,.... Or the paragraph or section of Scripture; that part of it in which he was reading was Isa 53:7 which shows, that by this time the Scriptures were divided into sections, chapters, and verses; whereas the Jews say the whole law at first was but one verse {t}.

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before the shearer. The metaphors of sheep and lamb express the innocence, meekness, and patience of Christ in his sufferings and death; and his being like these when led to the slaughter, and dumb before the shearer, show his willingness to suffer and die for his people, and to become a sacrifice for their sins. The allusion is to the sheep led either by the butcher to the slaughter house, or by the priest to the altar, and to the lamb of a year old being silent while it is shearing; and both denote the voluntariness of Christ in his sufferings, the stripping him of his good name, credit, and reputation among men, and of all worldly substance, though Lord of all, and even of the common blessings of nature, as of meat, drink, and raiment, and the light of the sun; and particularly the stripping him of his clothes, when his raiment was parted, and lots cast on his vesture, is very aptly signified by the shearing of the lamb, all which he took very patiently; and his being led forth to be crucified, when he was offered up as a sacrifice on the cross, very fitly answers to the sheep being led to the slaughter, without showing any reluctance. It was a custom with the Heathens to offer no creature in sacrifice, that struggled as it was led, or made an opposition, or showed any reluctance: it is remarkable, that there was nothing of this kind to be observed in Christ, who gave himself an offering, and a sacrifice; the reasons of which were, because of the great love he bore to his people: and because of the good and advantage that would come to them thereby: he was content to be poor, that they might be rich; to be made sin, that they might be made righteousness; to become a curse, that the blessings of the covenant might come upon them; to be stripped of all things, that they might enjoy all: and because no other sacrifice could atone for their sins; and because it was his Father's will, which always involves his own.

So opened he not his mouth: in defence of himself, when such false things were laid to his charge, and which he could have so easily refuted, and yet answered to nothing, to the astonishment of his judge; the reason was, because he had the sins of his people on him, for which he was willing to suffer; and therefore declined self-vindication, lest he should hinder the judicial process against him; nor did he open his mouth against his enemies by way of threatening or complaint, when they spat on him, blindfolded, and buffeted him, and bid him prophesy who smote him; and when the chief priests, Scribes, the common people, and thieves mocked at him, and reviled him on the cross, he opened not his lips unto them, nor against them, only for them, saying, Father, forgive them; nor did he open his mouth against the justice of God, as bearing hard upon him; neither did he complain of the strictness of its demands, abating him nothing; nor of the severity and weight of its strokes, not sparing him at all; nor did he say one word against his people, whose sins brought all his sorrows and sufferings on him, but made intercession for the transgressors, whose sins he bore.

{t} Eliae Levit. praefat. 3. ad Sepher Hammasoreth.

Acts 8:33

Ver. 33. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away,.... The humiliation, or low estate of Christ, lay in his assumption of human nature, with the weaknesses and imperfections of it; in the meanness of his parentage and education; in the sorrows he endured from his cradle to his cross; in his last conflict with Satan in the garden; in his being apprehended, bound, scourged, and condemned, both by the sanhedrim, and the Roman governor; and in being enclosed with the assembly of the wicked soldiers, who put on him their own clothes, and a crown of thorns on his head, and a reed in his hand, and then in a mock manner bowed to him as king of the Jews; and last of all in his obedience to death, even the death of the cross, and in his being laid in the grave. Now in this his low estate, "his judgment was taken away"; in the text in Isa 53:8 the words are, "he was taken from prison and from judgment"; which some understand of his sufferings, and render the words thus, "by an assembly, and by judgment he was taken away"; that is, by the Jewish sanhedrim, and by the judgment or sentence of Pontius Pilate, his life was taken away: and others interpret it of his resurrection from the dead, when he was taken or delivered from the prison of the grave, and could not be held any longer by the cords and pains of death; and from the judgment or condemnation under which he lay, being justified in the Spirit, when he was raised from the dead. The words, as here cited, differ from the original text; which have caused some to think, that there was a different reading of these words, which the Septuagint followed, and Luke after them. Dr. Pocock {u} has proposed a translation of the Hebrew text, as agreeable to this citation, without supposing a various reading, thus, "because of affliction, even from judgment he is taken; or when he was humbled, he was taken from judgment"; it being all one whether he was taken from judgment condemnation, and punishment, as at his resurrection, or whether his punishment was taken from him: though the sense of the words, as they are here cited, rather seems to be this; when he was taken and bound by the Jews, and detained by them a prisoner, and arraigned before the high priest, and at Pilate's bar, and false witnesses suborned, which was his time of humiliation and affliction; when he was reproached, blasphemed, buffeted, and spit, upon, justice was not done him, right did not take place, but was removed from him, and he was treated in a most unjust and unrighteous manner:

and who shall declare his generation? not his divine or human generation; nor the sorrows of his life; or the duration of his life since his resurrection; nor the numbers of his spiritual seed and offspring; senses put upon the words they will by no means bear; but the generation or age in which Christ lived, which for its wickedness among themselves, and their barbarity to him, and ill usage of him, cannot be sufficiently described and declared; and a great deal of it they themselves own; See Gill on "Mt 10:36" See Gill on "Mt 12:39"

for his life is taken from the earth, not in a common, but in a judicial way; in the most cruel, barbarous, and unjust manner, in a violent way; though not without his Father's will, and his own consent; and though his life was taken from the earth, he now lives in heaven, and that for evermore.

{u} Not. Miscell. c. 4. p. 72.

Acts 8:34

Ver. 34. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said,.... After he had read the passage out, and Philip had put the question to him, whether he understood it; and after he had taken him up into his chariot to sit with him, and instruct him:

I pray thee, of whom speakest the prophet this? being desirous of knowing who was the subject of this famous prophecy: which to know was very useful and edifying, and was not a matter of mere indifference and speculation, but of great moment and concern. A like way of speaking, in order to know the sense of a passage, is used by the Jews {w}: thus upon reading Pr 31:2, it is asked,

"of whom does Solomon say this Scripture? he does not say it but of his father David."

Does he speak

of himself or of some other man? which is very properly and pertinently put; since there might be some appearance of its application to Isaiah, who suffered under Manasseh; and it might be applied to different persons, as it has been since by the Jews; as to Josiah, Jeremiah in particular, and to the people of Israel in general, though very wrongly: Josiah could never be intended, as one of their noted commentators {x} expounds the paragraph; since it was not the sins of the people that were the cause of his death, but his own, and his vanity in meddling with what he had nothing to do with, and had no real call unto; nor can it be said of him that he did no violence, or that he bore the sins of others, and died for them, and made his soul an offering for sin; nor were his days prolonged; nor did the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hand: nor is the passage applicable to Jeremiah, as another of their writers {y} would have it; he was not free from sin; nor was he wounded for the sins of his people; nor did he undergo his sufferings with patience; nor had he a large number of disciples; nor was he extolled and exalted, as this person is said to be: much less, as others {z} say, is the whole body of the people of Israel in captivity intended; since one single individual as spoken of throughout the whole; and is manifestly distinguished from the people of Israel, whose sins and sorrows he was to bear, and for whose transgressions he was to be stricken and wounded. In all which they go contrary to their Targum {a}, Talmud {b}, and other ancient writings {c}, which interpret many things in this section or paragraph of the Messiah {d}: however, as it might be differently understood, or difficult to be understood, the eunuch very appropriately puts this question.

{w} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 10. 1. {x} Abarbinel in Isa. liii. {y} Sandiah Gaon in Aben Ezra in ib. {z} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, & Kimchi in ib. {a} In Isa. lii. 13. and liii. 10. {b} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. {c} Zohar in Exod. fol. 85. 2. Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2. {d} See my Book of the Prophecies of the Messiah, p. 161. &c.

Acts 8:35

Ver. 35. Then Philip opened his mouth,.... With freedom and boldness, and spoke clearly and distinctly, and expounded the passage to him. This is a phrase frequently used in Jewish writings, especially in the book of Zohar {e}, when they give an account of this or the other Rabbi interpreting any place of Scripture; as for instance, R. Eleazar xtp, "opened", and said, "my sabbaths you shall keep", &c. Again, R. Aba xtp, "opened", and said, "and Manoah said unto his wife", &c. Once more, "R. Simeon opened", and said, "the heavens declare the glory of God", &c. and

began at the same Scripture: "the fifty third of Isaiah": and preached unto him Jesus of Nazareth; how that he was the true Messiah, and the person there designed, and that very rightly; for the Jews themselves, the ancient ones, have interpreted several passages in that chapter of the Messiah, as has been before observed; he showed him how that he was born of a virgin, made under the law, and yielded perfect obedience to it in his life; and that he suffered and died for the sins of his people, and made satisfaction for them, and brought in an everlasting righteousness to justify them before God, and had obtained eternal redemption for them; that he was risen from the dead, was ascended into heaven, and now sat at the right hand of God, and ever lived to make intercession for transgressors; and would come a second time to judge both quick and dead; and in the mean while had left rules for the gathering, and forming, and governing his churches; and had appointed persons to preach his Gospel, and to administer the ordinances of baptism, and the supper of the Lord, which were to continue till his second coming.

{e} In Gen. fol. 5. 3. 4. & 6. 1. 3. & 7. 1. 2. 3. & 8. 1. 2. 3. & passim.

Acts 8:36

Ver. 36. And as they went on their way,.... In the road from Jerusalem to Gaza; Philip preaching, and the eunuch hearing, and conversing in a religious and spiritual way together; and Beza says in one exemplar it is added, "conferring one with another"; about the person and office of Christ, the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; as appears by what follows, both by the eunuch's request to be admitted to baptism, and his confession of faith:

they came unto a certain water; which some say was at Bethhoron, in the tribe of Judah or Benjamin; and others think it was the river Eleutherus; the former is more likely; concerning which Jerom {f} gives this account:

"Bethzur in the tribe of Judah, or Benjamin, and now called Bethhoron, is a village as we go from Aella (or Jerusalem) to Hebron, twenty miles from it; near which is a fountain, springing up at the bottom of a mountain, and is swallowed up in the same ground in which it is produced; and the Acts of the Apostles relate, that the eunuch of queen Candace was baptized here by Philip."

This place was about two miles from Hebron; since that, according to the same writer {g}, was twenty two miles from Jerusalem. Borchardus {h} seems to place it further off from Hebron:

"from Hebron are three "leucas", or six miles, northward, declining a little to the west, to Nehel Escol, that is, "the brook of the cluster", from whence the spies carried the cluster of grapes; to the left of this valley, for the space of a mile, or half a leuca, runs a river, in which Philip baptized the, eunuch of queen Candace, not far from Sicelech."

And, according to Jerom {i}, Escol lay in the way from Bethzur to Hebron.

This account of the historian sets aside that weak piece of criticism on Ac# 8:38 used by some persons; as if when Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, no more is meant, than that they went to the water side, or descended to the bank and brink of the river; seeing, here it is said, they came to a certain place of water; they came to the river itself, or the river side, and after this went down into it.

And the eunuch said, see here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? This question shows, that he had some knowledge of the ordinance of baptism, which he had received from the ministry and conversation of Philip; and that he had some desire after it, as regenerate persons have, after divine things, after Christ, his word, and ordinances; and that he was willing to take the first opportunity of submitting to it, but was jealous lest he should not be qualified for it; and therefore modestly proposes the affair to Philip, and desires to be examined and judged by him: and it also suggests, that there are some things which might be a just bar to this ordinance, as want of grace, and a disorderly life and conversation, which were the hindrances to the Pharisees and Sadducees, who came to John's baptism; and these are sufficient ones, even though persons may be born in a Christian land, and of believing parents, and have had a good education; yea, though they may have much notional light and speculative knowledge: but where the good work of grace is begun, and when a soul is spiritually enlightened, and has evangelical repentance for sin, and true faith in Christ, and sincere love to him, nothing should hinder: not any thing on his side; not a sense of his own unworthiness, which will never be otherwise, but rather increase; nor the corruptions of his heart and nature, which will always remain, as long as he is in the body; nor fears of falling away, since there cannot be more danger after baptism than before, and Christ is the same who is always able to keep from it; nor the reproaches of the world, which should be esteemed above riches; and more especially, since to be ashamed of Christ, his word, or ordinances, is highly resented by him; nor the opposition of relations and friends, who, though they are to be regarded and listened to in civil matters, yet should have no sway in religious ones to move from the cause of Christ; nor any difficulty in the ordinance itself, since it is but water baptism, and not a bloody one, such as Christ was baptized with, and some of his followers have been called unto: nor should anything hinder on the side of the administrator, when the above is the case; as not being circumcised, but Gentiles, as in the times of the apostles, Ac 10:47 so not the former life and conversation of the person, though it has been ever so wicked, as the instances of the crucifiers of Christ, of the jailor, of Saul the persecutor, and many of the Corinthians, show; nor the weakness of grace; the day of small things is not to be despised, nor a bruised reed to be broken, or smoking flax to be quenched: agreeably to this the Ethiopic version renders it, "who doth hinder", &c.

{f} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 89. 6. {g} Ib. fol. 87. E. {h} Decscript. Terrae Sanct. c. 9. {i} Epitaph. Paulae, fol, 59. 6. H.

Acts 8:37

Ver. 37. And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest,.... Intimating, that if he did not believe, he had no right to that ordinance; though he was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, a serious and devout man, and was employed in a religious way, when Philip came up to him, and was very desirous of being instructed in the knowledge of divine things; and yet notwithstanding all this, he had no right to the ordinance of baptism, unless he had faith in Christ, and made a profession of it; nor would Philip administer it to him without it; from whence it appears, that faith in Christ, and a profession of it, are necessary prerequisites to baptism: and this faith should not be a mere historical and temporary faith, nor a feigned one, but a believing in Christ with the heart unto righteousness; or such a faith by which a soul relinquishes its own righteousness, and looks and goes unto Christ for righteousness, life, and salvation, and rests and relies upon him for them; and it should be a believing in him with the whole heart, which does not design a strong faith, or a full assurance of faith, but an hearty, sincere, and unfeigned one, though it may be but weak, and very imperfect. And that this is necessary to baptism is manifest, because without this it is impossible to please God; nor can submission and obedience to it be acceptable to him: nor indeed can the ordinance be grateful and pleasing to unbelievers; for though it is a command that is not grievous, and a yoke that is easy, yet it is only so to them that believe; nor can any other see to the end of this ordinance, or behold the burial, and resurrection of Christ represented by it, or be baptized into his death, and partake of the benefits of it; and besides, whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God: which though a short, is a very comprehensive summary of the articles of faith respecting the person, offices, and grace of Christ; as that he is a divine person, truly and properly God, the only begotten of the Father, of the same nature with him, and equal to him; that he existed from all eternity, as a divine person with him, and distinct from him; and that he is the Christ, the anointed of God, to be prophet, priest, and King; and is Jesus, the only Saviour of lost sinners, in whom he trusted and depended alone for righteousness, life, and salvation.

This whole verse is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in five of Beza's copies, and in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; but stands in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, and in the Complutensian edition; and, as Beza observes, ought by no means to be expunged, since it contains so clear a confession of faith required of persons to be baptized, which was used in the truly apostolic times.

Acts 8:38

Ver. 38. And he commanded the chariot to stand still,.... That is, the eunuch ordered his chariot driver to stop; for to him it better agrees to give this order than to Philip; though otherwise the words are so placed, that it would be difficult to say who gave the command.

And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him: upon which Calvin has this note;

"hence we see what was the manner of baptizing with the ancients, for they plunged the whole body into water."

And indeed, other mode had been practised then, as sprinkling or pouring of water, there would have been no necessity of their going out of the chariot, and much less of their going down into the water; and as for change of apparel, it cannot be reasonably thought that so great a man should take so long a journey without it. In like manner the Jewish ablutions and purifications, which were performed by immersion, and therefore called baptisms, **Heb 9:10** are spoken of in the same sort of language as here: so a profluvious person, and a woman that had lain in, were obliged lwbjl hdryv, "to go down and dip" {k}.

"It is a tradition of the Rabbins {l}, that he that sees any nocturnal pollution on the day of atonement,
lbwjw drwy, "goes down and dips himself".--And so all that are obliged to dipping, dip according to their custom on the day of atonement; the profluvious person, man or woman, the leprous person, man or woman, the husband of a menstruous woman, and one defiled with the dead, dip according to their custom on the day of atonement."

{k} T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 42. 1. & 43. 1. {l} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 88. 1.

Acts 8:39

Ver. 39. And when they were come up out of the water,.... Which is another circumstance, showing that baptism was then performed by immersion; with this compare **Mt 3:16** and so it is said of the high priest, when he washed himself on the day of atonement,
hle lbjw dry, "he went down and dipped, and came up" {m}; and so any other person that was obliged to dipping on any account,
hlew lbjw dry, "went down and dipped, and came up" {n}. And again it is said {o}, it happened to a servant maid of Rabbi,
htlew hlbjv, "that she dipped herself and came up".

The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; as soon as the ordinance was over; so that the eunuch had no opportunity of rewarding him for his instructions and labour; and this might be done on purpose to show that he had no mercenary end in joining himself to his chariot; and this sudden rapture and disappearance might be a confirmation to the eunuch that this whole affair was of God. The Spirit of the Lord took up Philip, just as he is said to lift up Ezekiel, between earth and heaven, **Eze 8:3** and carried him above the earth as far as Azotus. The Alexandrian copy, and one of Beza's, and some others, read the words thus, "the holy Spirit fall upon the eunuch, but the angel of the Lord caught away Philip"; the same angel, it may be, that bid him go toward the south:

that the eunuch saw him no more; neither at that time, nor perhaps ever after; for one went one way, and another way:

and he went on his way; towards Ethiopia; and, as the Ethiopic version reads, "into his own country"; which is one reason why he saw Philip no more: however, he went thither

rejoicing, as he had great reason to do; being blessed with the saving knowledge of Christ, and true faith in the Son of God, and admitted to the holy ordinance of baptism; having first received the baptism of the Spirit, or having the grace of the Spirit bestowed on him, and implanted in him: and, according to some copies just now mentioned, after his baptism the Spirit fell on him in an extraordinary manner, and that without imposition of hands; so that, upon the whole, he had great reason to rejoice.

{m} Misna Yoma, c. 3. sect. 4. 6. & 7. sect. 3. 4. {n} T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 13. 1. {o} T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 66. 2.

Acts 8:40

Ver. 40. But Philip was found at Azotus,.... The same with the Ashdod of the Philistines, famous for the temple of Dagon, **1Sa 5:1** where the Septuagint call it Azotus, as here: and so it is called in the Apocrypha:

"Howbeit all the hindmost of them were slain with the sword: for they pursued them unto Gazera, and unto the plains of Idumea, and Azotus, and Jamnia, so that there were slain of them upon a three thousand men." (1Mac 4:15)

"Whereof when Apollonius heard, he took three thousand horsemen, with a great host of footmen, and went to Azotus as one that journeyed, and therewithal drew him forth into the plain. because he had a great number of horsemen, in whom he put his trust." (1Mac 10:77)

"But Jonathan set fire on Azotus, and the cities round about it, and took their spoils; and the temple of Dagon, with them that were fled into it, he burned with fire." (1Mac 10:84)

"And when he came near to Azotus, they shewed him the temple of Dagon that was burnt, and Azotus and the suburbs thereof that were destroyed, and the bodies that were cast abroad and them that he had burnt in the battle; for they had made heaps of them by the way where he should pass." (1Mac 11:4)

where mention is made of Beth Dagon, and the idol's temple in it; and by Herodotus {p}, Pliny {q}, and Ptolomy {r}; and it is now called Palmis, according to R. Benjamin {s}; it was about fifty four miles from Jerusalem, and two hundred and seventy furlongs, Or four and thirty miles {t} from Gaza:

and passing through; or, as he passed along through that and other places:

he preached in all the cities; that lay in his way; which shows his zeal and diligence:

till he came to Caesarea; not Caesarea Philippi, Mt 16:13 but that which was before called Strato's tower, and was rebuilt by Herod, and called Caesarea, in honour of Augustus Caesar {u}; and not by Caesar himself, as R. Benjamin says {w}: it was six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles from Jerusalem {x}, This place was famous for Jewish Rabbins, and their schools of learning;

frequent mention is made of Nyroyqd Nynbr, "the Rabbins of Caesarea" {y}; here Philip seems to have stopped, and stayed awhile.

{p} L. 2. c. 157. {q} L. 5. c. 13. {r} L. 5. c. 16. {s} Itinerar. p. 51. {t} Diodor. Sicul. l. 19. c. 95. {u} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 7. sect. 8. & c. 21. sect. 5. 7. {w} Itinerar. p. 37. {x} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 5. & Antiqu. l. 13. c. 19. {y} T. Hieros. Challa, fol. 57. 2. & passim.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 9:1

Ver. 1. And Saul yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter,.... The historian having given an account of the dispersion of all the preachers of the Gospel at Jerusalem, excepting the apostles, and of their success in other parts, especially of Philip's, returns to the history of Saul; who, not satisfied with the murder of Stephen, and with the havoc he made of the church at Jerusalem, haling them out of their houses to prison, continued not only to threaten them with confiscation of goods and imprisonment, but with death itself. The phrase here used is an Hebraism; so in Ps 27:12 omx xpy, "one that breathes out violence", or cruelty; and this shows the inward disposition of his mind, the rage, wrath, malice, envy, and blood thirstiness he was full of; and is observed to illustrate the riches of divine grace in his conversion. And wonderful it is, that that same mouth which breathed out destruction and death to the followers of Christ, should afterwards publish and proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God; that he whose mouth was full of cursing and bitterness, should hereafter, and so very quickly, come forth in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. And this rage of his, who now ravened as a wolf, as was foretold of Benjamin, of which tribe he was, was against the lambs of Christ, and the sheep of his fold:

against the disciples of the Lord; not against wicked men, murderers, and thieves, and other evildoers, but against the harmless and innocent followers of Jesus, and which was an aggravation of his cruelty: and being thus heated, and full of wrath,

he went unto the high priest; Annas or Caiaphas, who, notwithstanding the Jews were under the Roman government, had great authority to punish persons with stripes and death itself, who acted contrary to their law.

Acts 9:2

Ver. 2. And desired of him letters to Damascus,.... Damascus was the head or metropolis of Syria, **Isa 7:8** And so Pliny {z} calls it Damascus of Syria: it was a very ancient city; it was in the times of Abraham; his servant Eliezer is said to be of it, Ge 15:2 and some say it was built by him the said Eliezer; though Josephus {a} makes Uz, a grandson of Shem, to be the founder of it; whose surname is conjectured, by some, to be Dimshak, seeing that and Uz differ not in sense: and Justin says {b}, it had its name from Damascus, the king of it, in honour of whom the Syrians made a temple of the sepulchre of his wife Arathis, and her a goddess; after Damascus, he says, Azelus, then Azores, Abraham, and Israel were kings of it. Some think it has its name from blood, and that it signifies a "sack" or bag, or, as Jerom explains, a cup of blood {c}, or one that drinks blood; who says, it is a true tradition, that the field in which Abel was killed by Cain, was in Damascus {d}: but it seems rather to be so called from the redness of the earth about it; for some very good writers affirm, that the earth in the fields of Damascus is like wax tinged with red lead; so if it be read Dammesek, as it commonly is, in the Arabic language, "Damma" signifies to tinge, and "Meshko" is used for "red earth"; or if "Dummesek", as it is in 2Ki 16:10, "Daumo", in the same language, is "permanent", what always abides, and "Meshko", as before, "red earth", and so "Dummesek" is never failing red earth; or if it be Darmesek", as in 1Ch 18:5 the same with Darmsuk", it may be observed, that the Syrians call red earth "Doro sumoko": so that, upon the whole, this seems to be the best etymology of the word {e}, and the rise of the name of this famous city, which Justin calls the most noble city of Syria. It is said {f} to be an hundred and sixty miles from Jerusalem. Here might be many Christians before, and others might flee hither upon this persecution; and Saul, not content with driving them from their native place, persecuted them, as he himself says, to strange cities: and that he might do this with safety to himself, and with the greater force and cruelty to them, he got letters from the high priest, and sanhedrim, at Jerusalem; either recommending him to the Jews at Damascus, and exhorting them to assist him in what he came about; or empowering him to act under his authority, or both: and these were directed to be delivered

to the synagogues; to the rulers of them; for the Jews being numerous in this place, they had more synagogues than one. Josephus says {g}, that under Nero the inhabitants of Damascus killed ten thousand Jews in their own city: and Benjamin Tudelensis {h} in his time says, there were about three thousand Jews (Pharisees), besides two hundred Karaites (or Scripturarians), and four hundred Samaritans, who lived in peace together. Now to these synagogues, and the chief men of them, was Saul recommended for assistance and direction,

that if he found any of this way; of thinking; that were of this sect of religion, and either professed to believe, or preach, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah:

whether they were men or women; without any fear of one, or mercy to the other:

he might bring them bound to Jerusalem; to be examined and punished by the sanhedrim there, as they should think fit; and for this purpose he must take with him a considerable number of men; and that he had men with him is certain from **Ac 9:7**.

{z} L. 36. c. 8. {a} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 5. {b} Ex Trogo, l. 36. c. 2. {c} De Nominibus Hebraicis, fol. 97. F. & 101. K. {d} Comment. in Ezek. xxvii. 18. {e} Vid. Hiller. Onomasticum, p. 114, 115, 419, 793. {f} Bunting's Itinerar. p. 394. {g} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 20. sect. 2. {h} Itinerar. p. 56, 57.

Acts 9:3

Ver. 3. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus,.... Some say it was a mile from Damascus: though, no mention is made of his obtaining letters from the high priest, only of his desiring them; yet there is no doubt but they were granted him; the design of the historian, under a divine direction, being to give an account of the temper and disposition of Saul; and he having got them, set out on his journey in high spirits, and proceeded on with the same wicked intentions, till he came near the city; where he designed to open and show his commission, and execute his wrathful purposes; but he is not suffered to go into the city with such a Spirit:

and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; which exceeded the light and brightness of the sun, for it was at midday, Ac 26:13 and so the Ethiopic version here inserts this clause, "and it was noon time"; which circumstance shows that the light was very extraordinary; and it was an emblem of that inward and spiritual light which was now quickly communicated to him, light being the first thing in the new, as in the old creation; and of that Gospel light he was hereafter to spread in the world.

Acts 9:4

Ver. 4. And he fell to the earth,.... Not being able to bear the light, and still less the divine glory and majesty which he perceived was present; and therefore, in great confusion, amazement, and fear, he fell with his face to the ground, and lay there prostrate and so did also those that were with him, Ac 26:14

and heard a voice, saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? this voice was the real voice of Christ in his human nature, and who visibly and in person appeared, and was seen by the apostle;
Ac 26:16 the language he spoke in was the Hebrew tongue, and he calls him by his Hebrew name Saul, and which is doubled to denote vehemency and affection; See Gill on "Lu 22:31" he knew him as one of his sheep, though straying, and calls him by name, and expostulates with him, wherefore he should persecute him in his members as he did; for the union between Christ and his people is so close, that what is done to them is done to him. There seems to be a considerable emphasis on the word "me"; "me", who have been they surety from everlasting; "me", who hath loved thee and given myself for thee; "me", who have shed my blood, laid down my life, and died for thee; "me", who am now at my Father's right hand, interceding for thee, that grace might be bestowed upon thee, the set time being now come.

Acts 9:5

Ver. 5. And he said, who art thou, Lord?.... For he knew not whether it was God, or an angel, or who it was that spake to him; he knew not Christ by his form or voice, as Stephen did, when he saw him standing at the right hand of God; he was in a state of ignorance, and knew neither the person, nor voice of Christ, and yet his heart was so far softened and wrought upon, that he was desirous of knowing who he was;

and the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. The Alexandrian copy, and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, "read Jesus of Nazareth"; and one of Beza's copies, and another of Stephens', as in Ac 22:8 whose name thou art doing many things against, and whose people thou art destroying:

it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks; or "to resist me", as the Arabic version renders it; and which is the sense of the phrase; it is a proverbial expression, taken from beasts that are goaded, who kick against the goads or pricks, and hurt themselves the more thereby; and Christ uses it, suggesting hereby, that should Saul go on to persecute him and his people, to oppose his Gospel, and the strong evidence of it, in doctrine and miracles, and notwithstanding the present remonstrances made in such an extraordinary manner; he would find himself in the issue greatly hurt by it, and could not rationally expect to succeed against so powerful a person. This clause in the Syriac version is placed at the end of the fourth verse.

Acts 9:6

Ver. 6. And he trembling and astonished,.... At the light and voice, and appearance of Christ, and especially at the words last spoken; he was now pricked to the heart, and filled with a sense of sin, and loaded with guilt, and had dreadful apprehensions of his state and condition, on account of his past wickedness, and the present course of sin he was in: so persons under first convictions "tremble" at the sight of their sins, which rise up like so many ghosts, and stare them in the face, and load their consciences with guilt; at the swarms of corruptions they see in their carts, which appear to them an habitation of devils, a hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird; at the curses of a righteous law which threatens with damnation and death; at the future judgment, and the apprehensions of divine wrath; and at the voice and word of God, which strikes terror, cuts them to the heart, and like an hammer breaks the rock in pieces: and they are "astonished" at their own wickedness and vileness, which they had no conception of before; at the sparing mercy and forbearance of God, who has continued them in being, and not sent them to hell, to be among devils and damned spirits; at the light around by which they see their sins, the plague of their own hearts, the insufficiency of their own righteousness, their lost state by nature, and need of salvation by Christ; and at the doctrines of the Gospel, so far as they have light into them; and at the person of Christ, and at his Father's love and his in procuring salvation for them:

said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? he was willing to do any thing he should him to, whereby he might make satisfaction for the injury he had done him, and by which he might be saved; for he was still upon the covenant of works, as persons under first convictions commonly are:

and the Lord said unto him; this, with all that goes before in this verse, is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and Syriac version: "arise and go into the city"; that is, of Damascus, as the Ethiopic version reads:

and it shall be told thee what thou must do; what was appointed for him to do, Ac 22:10 and there it was told him both what he should do and suffer for Christ, but not to obtain salvation; and this was done internally by the Spirit of God, who instructed him in the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, and externally by Ananias: in two of Beza's copies, and in the Syriac version, it is read, "there shall it be told thee", &c.

Acts 9:7

Ver. 7. And the men which journeyed with him,.... Out of respect to him, to keep him company; or rather to assist him in his designs:

stood speechless: astonished and amazed, they had not power to speak one word, nor to rise from the ground, and move one step forward; they were as if they were thunderstruck, and fastened to the earth; for this standing is not opposed to their being fallen to the earth, but to their going forward, and only expresses the surprise and stupidity that had seized them:

hearing a voice, but seeing no man; that is, they heard the voice of Saul, saying, who art thou? and what wilt thou have me to do? but saw nobody that he spoke to, which surprised them; for it is certain they did not hear the voice of Christ, that spake to him, Ac 22:9 or if they heard the voice of Christ, it was only the sound of his voice, but did not understand what he said; but the former seems rather to be the sense, and the best way of reconciling the two passages.

Acts 9:8

Ver. 8. And Saul arose from the earth,.... As he was bid by Christ, **Ac 9:6**

and when his eyes were opened he saw no man; neither Christ, who appeared to him from heaven, whom he had before seen, nor even any of his companions, nor indeed any object: the Syriac version renders it, "he saw nothing"; not anything at all; and the Ethiopic version, "he could not see": when he opened his eye lids, he perceived his sight was gone, and this showed it to be real blindness; and which was an emblem of the ignorance and blindness he had been in:

but they led him by the hand; the men that were with him, perceiving that he could not guide himself, took him by the hand, and led him on his journey;

and brought him into Damascus; and now was fulfilled, at least in part, the prophecy in **Zec 9:1**.

Acts 9:9

Ver. 9. And he was three days without sight,.... Without bodily sight; for otherwise all this while his spiritual sight was increasing, and Christ was giving him by his Spirit a full view of himself, his state and case, and where his salvation was; and a clear insight into the doctrines of the Gospel, which he is said to have by the revelation of Christ, whereby he was fitted for the immediate preaching of it:

and neither did eat nor drink; having no regard unto, or time for either; being filled with grief and sorrow, and true repentance for sin, and taken up in prayer to God, and employed in attending to, and receiving the doctrines of grace, he was afterwards to publish.

Acts 9:10

Ver. 10. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus,.... Who perhaps came hither upon the persecution at Jerusalem, or rather might have lived here some time; **Ac 9:13** that he was more than a private or ordinary disciple of Christ seems manifest, from his being sent to Saul on such an, important affair; from his putting his hands upon him, upon which he was filled with the Holy Ghost; and from his baptizing him: some think he was one of the seventy disciples; some say he was a deacon; but it is certain he was not one of the first seven; others affirm he was a presbyter, and some report that he was afterwards bishop of Damascus, and died a martyr there; but these are things not to be depended on:

named Ananias; a Jewish name, the same with Hananiah, **Da 1:6** there was an high priest of this name, Ac 23:2 and it was a name in much use among the Jews; frequent mention is made in the Misnic and Talmudic writings of R. Hananiah, or Ananias:

and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias; by "the Lord", is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, as is evident from **Ac 9:17** who appeared to Ananias in a vision;

the Arabic version adds, "by night"; perhaps in a dream, as the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph the husband of Mary, and called him by his name Ananias, to which he answered:

and he said, behold, I am here, Lord; in like manner as Samuel did, when a child, when the Lord called to him; showing his readiness to hearken to his voice, to do his will, and obey his orders, be they what they would.

Acts 9:11

Ver. 11. And the Lord said unto him, arise,.... Quickly, directly, immediately, from off thy bed; the case required haste and dispatch:

and go into the street which is called Straight; a street in the city of Damascus so called; the streets of cities were called by different names, to distinguish them as ours now are. So in Jerusalem there was the street of the house of God, which led to the temple, Ezr 10:9 and the upper street, in which idolatrous Gentiles, and such as were fullers by trade, dwelt {i}; and the street of the butchers; and the street of the wool staplers {k}: and this street in Damascus might be called "Straight"; because it might be a long straight street, without any windings and turnings, which might go through the city. Whether or no this was one of the streets which Benhadad allowed Ahab to make in Damascus, 1Ki 20:34 cannot be said;

and inquire in the house of Judas; which was in that street: who this Judas was is not certain, that he was a Jew appears by his name, but whether a believing, or an unbelieving Jew, is not known; however, he was Saul's host, and if this was the house he was recommended to from Jerusalem, or designed to go to when he set out from thence, it is very probable he was an unbeliever; but if it was an house he pitched on after his conversion, it is likely this Judas was a believer, and whether the same with Judas surnamed Barsabas may be considered, who is mentioned in Ac 15:22 however, at this man's house Ananias was to inquire

for one called Saul of Tarsus; or Saul "by name the Tarsian". So it is said {l} of Bigthan and Teresh, **Es 6:2** that they were
Myyorj ynv, "two Tarsians", perhaps citizens of Tarsus, as Saul was. Tarsus was a city in Cilicia, and which Solinus {m} calls the mother of cities, and is the same with the Tarshish of the Old Testament; here Saul was born, and of it he was a citizen; Ac 21:39 and therefore is here called Saul of Tarsus, or Saul

the Tarsian:

for behold he prayeth: so as he had never prayed before; now he prayed with the Spirit, and with the understanding, from a feeling sense of his wants, for spiritual blessings, such as he had no knowledge of, nor desire after before. God has no stillborn children; as soon as any are quickened by his grace, they cry unto him; prayer is the breath of a regenerate man, and shows him to be alive. He who before was breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ, now breathes after communion with Christ and them. This is said, no doubt, to encourage Ananias to go to him. The Syriac and Arabic versions place this clause at the beginning of the next verse, "for behold, whilst he prayed he saw", &c. the Ethiopic version has it not.

{i} Misn. Shekalim, c. 8. sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {k} Misn. Eruvim, c. 10. sect. 9. {l} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 7. 1. & 13. 2. & Targum in Esther ii. 21. {m} Polyhistor, c. 51.

Acts 9:12

Ver. 12. And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias,.... Some read this verse in a parenthesis, and take them to be the words of Luke the historian; but it is rather a continuation of the words of Christ, telling Ananias, for his greater encouragement to go to Saul, that he had seen him in a vision, and had knowledge both of his person, and of his name, and of what he was to do to him; for in the vision or dream, he had been represented to him as

coming in; to the house, and into the room where he was:

and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight; without which he had been three days, and which he did receive upon Ananias's putting his hands on him.

Acts 9:13

Ver. 13. Then Ananias answered, Lord,.... Though Ananias knew that it was the Lord that spoke, and acknowledged his power and dominion, and expressed his readiness to obey his commands; yet there was a timidity in him, and which was the more inexcusable, that it should appear after the Lord had told him of the vision which Saul had had of him; and yet still he was fearful of putting himself into his hands, who had been so violent a persecutor; and therefore obliquely excuses himself, by observing what Saul had done at Jerusalem, and the powers he came with to Damascus:

I have heard by many of this man; which shows that Ananias had been at Damascus some time, and was not an eyewitness of the havoc Saul made of the church, only had the account of it from others; and these many who fled to Damascus upon the persecution, which Saul was at the head of; and being so, was particularly spoken of, and his name was well known, and was become infamous for his cruelty and barbarity;

how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem; by entering into their houses with violence, haling men and women from thence, committing them to prison, and persecuting them unto death. Believers in Christ are called his "saints", because separated by his grace for his service, and sanctified by his Spirit, and to whom he is made sanctification; and because they live holy lives and conversations; all which is an aggravation of the evil done them, and which will be avenged by Christ in his own time.

Acts 9:14

Ver. 14. And here he hath authority from the chief priests,.... His fury and madness against the saints did not stop at Jerusalem, but he had received a commission from the sanhedrim to go to Damascus, where he now was:

to bind all that call on thy name; to take up all such persons and put them in bonds, and carry them bound to Jerusalem, whom he should find either praying to Christ, as God, as the first Christians used to do, and which is no inconsiderable proof of the deity of Christ; or professing the name of Christ, or were called by it.

Acts 9:15

Ver. 15. But the Lord said unto him, go thy way,.... The Syriac version reads, "arise, go thy way"; make no delay, nor any excuse, there is no reason for it; nothing is to be feared from him:

for he is a chosen vessel unto me; a choice and excellent one, full of the heavenly treasure of the Gospel, full of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and so very fit and richly qualified for the use and service of Christ; and was htdmx ylk, "a vessel of desire", or a desirable one, as the Jews speak {n}: or he was, to render the words literally, "a vessel of election"; both an instrument gathering in the election, or the elect of God, through the preaching of the Gospel; and was himself chosen of God, both to grace and glory, a vessel of mercy, and of honour prepared for glory; and was separated, predestinated, and appointed to the Gospel of God, to preach it among the Gentiles; which sense is confirmed by what follows:

to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel; by "the name" of Christ is meant his Gospel, which is a declaration of his person, perfections, glories, and excellencies, of his offices, grace, righteousness, and salvation; and to "bear" it, is to preach it, to carry it about, spread abroad, and propagate it; in allusion either to the prophets of old, whose prophecies are often called a "burden", which they bore and carried to the several nations to whom they were sent; or to the Levites bearing the tabernacle of the Lord, and its vessels, "be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord", Isa 52:11. Upon which Aben Ezra has this note,

"they are the Israelites, hrwth yavwn, "that bear the law";"

but Saul was a chosen vessel to bear the Gospel; or to the sower of seed, Ps 126:6 "before the Gentiles", or nations of the world; and he was an apostle, and teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity; the Gospel of the uncircumcision was particularly committed to him: and before "kings", as he did before Agrippa, king of the Jews, and before Nero, emperor of Rome; and his bonds for the Gospel, and so the Gospel through his bonds became manifest in all the palace, or court of Caesar. And before

the children of Israel; the Jews, to whom he first preached it; but when they put it away he turned to the Gentiles, and afterwards, before the Jews, he bore a testimony for it.

{n} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 6. 1.

Acts 9:16

Ver. 16. For I will show him,.... In vision, and by prophecy, either now, or hereafter; or by facts, as they come upon him:

how great things he must suffer for my name's sake; such as weariness, pain, and watchings, hunger, thirst, fastings, cold, and nakedness, perils on various accounts, and from different quarters, stripes, scourges, imprisonment, shipwreck, stoning, and death, of which he himself gives a detail, 2Co 11:23 so that Ananias had no reason to be afraid to go to him, and converse with him, and do unto him as he was directed.

Acts 9:17

Ver. 17. And Ananias went his way,.... He arose from off his bed or seat, where he was, went out of his house, and on the way to the place where Saul was; he had nothing more to say, his objections were answered; there was no room to excuse himself, nor did he now desire it, but quietly yields, and cheerfully obeys:

and entered into the house; or "that house", the house of Judas, where Saul was, and whither Ananias was directed, **Ac 9:11**

and putting his hands on him; on Saul, in the same form Saul had seen him, in vision, doing it: and which was done, either as a prayer gesture; or for the healing of him, the restoring him to his sight; or that he might receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost; and it may be on all these accounts: and

said, brother Saul; he calls him "brother", not because he was of the same nation, but because he was now of the same faith; because he was a regenerate person, and belonged to the family of God, and was of the same household of faith: and this he said, not upon what he had received from Saul's own mouth, for he addressed him in this manner as soon as he came to him; but upon what the Lord had said concerning him; though it was indeed common with the Jewish doctors to salute one another with this name.

"When R. Jose ben Kisma was sick, R. Chanina ben Tradion went to visit him; he said unto him, Chanina, yxa yxa "my brother, my brother", &c. {o}."

So Shemaiah called Abtalion his brother {p}. And in like manner R. Eleazar ben Azariah saluted R. Ishmael {q}. And R. Joshua speaks of R. Tarphon in the same language {r}:

the Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest; that is, who appeared to Saul as he was in the way to Damascus; not that Jesus was in the way, for he was in heaven, and appeared from thence to Saul, who was in the way: and he mentions Jesus by name, and this appearance of his, partly to assure him of his mission from him; for otherwise he could have known nothing of his appearance to him; and partly to show the love of Christ to him, and though he had persecuted him in so violent a manner, he had a compassionate regard for him; as also to encourage and comfort him, who had been trembling, and astonished at what he had heard from Jesus. This same glorious person, adds he,

hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight; his bodily sight, which he had been without three days, by the imposition of hands:

and be filled with the Holy Ghost; with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, such as speaking with divers tongues, healing diseases, and the like; for as for the graces of the Spirit, and even Gospel light and knowledge, and gifts for preaching it, he had received these already.

{o} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 18. 1. Vid. fol. 27. 2. {p} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 35. 2. {q} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 11. 1. {r} Misn. Yadaim, c. 4. sect. 3.

Acts 9:18

Ver. 18. And immediately there fell from his eyes, as it had been scales,.... Which were little thin skins or films, like the scales of fishes, which were formed from the defluxions that fell from his brain, through the excessive light that shone around him, and the surprise he was thrown into by it: these, as soon as Ananias put his hands upon him, dropped off; which were an emblem and representation of the scales of ignorance, of himself, of sin, of righteousness, of the law, of the Gospel, and of Jesus as the Messiah; and of unbelief in him, and of pride, malice, and envy, and of superstition and bigotry, and of error and false doctrine, which, upon his being enlightened by the Spirit of God, fell from him:

and he received sight forthwith; his corporeal sight, which was an emblem of that spiritual sight he had also received: the word "forthwith", or "immediately", is not in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, but seems necessary; and indeed, if it was not expressed, it would be understood; for as soon as the scales fell from his eyes, he must receive his sight: the Ethiopic version places it after the word "baptized", in the next clause:

and arose, and was baptized; that is, after Ananias had appointed it to him, as his duty, had pressed him to it, and called upon him to submit to it without delay, Ac 22:16 And this shows that baptism was performed by immersion; for had it been done in any other way, either by pouring or sprinkling a little water, Saul might have kept his seat, and water might have been brought to him, and so the ordinance might have been performed; but he arose and went, either to a bath that might be in Judas's house, fit for such a purpose; for the Jews had their baths to bathe their whole bodies in on certain occasions; or he went to some certain place of water without doors, convenient for the administration of baptism, where it was administered by Ananias unto him. And this also may suggest to us, that only enlightened persons are the proper objects of this ordinance; such as have the scales of darkness, ignorance, and unbelief removed from them, and have a spiritual sight and sense of divine things: hence the ancients used to call baptism by the name of fwtismov, "illumination", and baptized persons "enlightened" ones.

Acts 9:19

Ver. 19. And when he had received meat,.... Which was set before him when he had received his sight, and after he was baptized, of which he had not tasted for three days:

he was strengthened; in body, being before very weak and feeble; not so much through fatigue of his journey, as through the fear and surprise the appearance of Christ to him, and his words, threw him into; as also through his fasting so long, and his continuance and constancy in prayer all this while, and the attention he gave to the divine instructions which were communicated to him, internally and externally:

then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus; who came from Jerusalem upon the persecution raised against them there; with these Saul continued some few days after his conversion and baptism, for quickly after he went into Arabia, as appears from **Gal 1:17**. These disciples, with the new converts afterwards, it is highly probable, formed a church state in Damascus; Ananias is said to be the bishop or pastor of it, and which remained in several ages. In the catalogue of the council of Nice, which was held in the beginning of the "fourth" century, Damascus is mentioned as the seat of a church; in the "fifth" century a bishop of Damascus was in the council at Ephesus; and in the same century it was reckoned a metropolitan church in Asia; in the seventh century it appears there was a church in this place; and even in the "eighth" century, though the Arabians ravaged in those parts, yet still a church continued here for some time, till Ulid, the prince of the Saracens, took away the temple from the Christians of this place, and dedicated it to Mahomet; after which we hear no more of the church at Damascus {s}.

{s} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. & c. 7. p. 417. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 3. & c. 16. p. 514.

Acts 9:20

Ver. 20. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues,.... The Syriac version adds, "of the Jews"; that is, which were in Damascus, Ac 9:2 from whence it appears, that he was immediately, as soon as converted, qualified for the work of preaching the Gospel: nor did he confer with flesh and blood, or stand disputing and debating with himself and carnal reason, what was best for him to do; but as soon as he knew Christ himself, he preached him to others, and whom he always made the subject of his ministry; and particularly,

that he is the Son of God; the only begotten of the Father, the eternal Son of God, truly and properly God, of the same nature and essence with God his Father, and equal to him. His design was to assert and maintain the dignity of his person, which is the foundation of his office, as Mediator, and of all the wonderful things he performed: had he meant no more than that he was the Messiah, the sense would only be, that he preached that Christ was the Christ; but the meaning is, that he preached that Jesus of Nazareth, the true Messiah, was not a mere man, but a divine person, even the Son of God: he set out in his ministry, with the principal and most fundamental article of the Christian religion, that which Christ asserted, and for which he suffered, and which all the apostles, and first Christians believed. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read "Jesus", instead of "Christ".

Acts 9:21

Ver. 21. But all that heard him were amazed,.... Not the disciples that believed in Christ, but the unbelievers, as appears from their words:

and said, is not this he that destroyed them that called on this name in Jerusalem? they do not express the name of Christ, out of malice and ill will;

which shows who they were that said these words, and were astonished to hear Saul preaching in this name, and proving him to be the Son of God, and the true Messiah; when it was but a little while ago he consented to the death of Stephen, made havoc of the church, wasted and destroyed it as much as was in his power, and persecuted unto death such as called upon the name of Christ, or were called by his name, he could find in Jerusalem: nor did this satisfy him, for it follows,

and came hither, that is, to Damascus,

for that intent, that he might bring them bound to the chief priests: whom he should find professing or invocating the name of Christ, or bearing it; now to see and hear him preach this same name, was surprising to them.

Acts 9:22

Ver. 22. But Saul increased the more in strength,.... Not of body, but of mind; his gifts and graces, and spiritual light and knowledge increased; his abilities were greater; his fortitude of mind, boldness, and freedom of speech, every day increased: he got more, and new, and fresh arguments, by which he himself was confirmed, and he confirmed others in the truths of Christ. Some copies read, "he was more strengthened in the word"; either in the word of God, having a clearer understanding, and being more confirmed in the truth of it; or in speech, being more ready and powerful in speaking it.

And confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus; confuted them, and put them to silence, so that they had nothing to say for themselves, or against the truth:

proving that this is very Christ; by joining and knitting passages of Scripture in the Old Testament together, by producing and citing express testimonies from thence, and by comparing the prophecies and the characters of the Messiah in them, with Jesus of Nazareth, he proved to a demonstration that he must be the Messiah.

Acts 9:23

Ver. 23. And after that many days were fulfilled,.... This phrase is used by the Septuagint on **Ex 2:11** for a considerable length of time, for many years. The

Jewish writers observe {t}, that the phrase, "many days", signify at least three days; for by "days", in the plural number, two must be designed, and many signifies a third, or that one at least is added to them; but here it signifies three years, as it also does, 1Ki 18:1 where it is said, "and it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year"; and such a space of time is designed by the many days here; for when the apostle had stayed a little while at Damascus, and preached Christ in the synagogues, he went into Arabia, where he continued about three years, and then returned to Damascus, where what is related happened to him; **Ga 1:17**.

the Jews took counsel to kill him; being filled with indignation at him, that he had changed his religion, and from a persecutor was become a preacher of the Gospel; this they had meditated some time, and now upon his return to Damascus attempted to put their counsel into execution.

{t} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Zavim, c. 1. sect. 1.

Acts 9:24

Ver. 24. But their laying await was known of Saul,.... Either by divine revelation, or by some friends, who had got knowledge of it, and gave him information, as in Ac 23:16 and they watched the gates night and day to kill him; that is, the Jews, together with the governor of the city, and the garrison of soldiers in it. These all watched at the several gates of the city, night and day, that Saul might not make his escape, and that they might take him, and put him to death.

Acts 9:25

Ver. 25. Then the disciples took him by night,.... The Alexandrian copy reads, "his disciples"; the disciples of Saul, such as he had been instrumental in making at Damascus: but it is not usual for the saints to be called in Scripture the disciples of any man; therefore the common reading is best, and designs the disciples and followers of Christ; who being concerned for the preservation of so valuable a life, took Saul in the night season,

and let him down by the wall in a basket. Damascus was a walled city; hence we read of the wall of Damascus, Jer 49:27. And the house where Saul was, and which very likely was one of the disciples, was built upon the wall, as the house of Rahab was upon the town wall of Jericho; and as she let down the spies from thence by a cord through the window, **Jos 2:15** so the disciples let down Saul in a basket with cords through the window of the house, as appears from 2Co 11:33. See Gill on "2Co 11:33": no doubt, the disciples were directed by the overruling providence of God, in order to preserve the life of the apostle, who had much work to do for Christ in several parts of the world, and therefore must not fall into the hands of his enemies and die, his time not being yet come; and this shows, that it is lawful to make use of all prudent means and proper methods to prevent the designs of wicked men, and escape out of their hands, and preserve life when in danger; by which means Saul escaped their hands.

Acts 9:26

Ver. 26. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem,.... After he had escaped out of Damascus, in the manner before related, and which was three years after his conversion:

he assayed to join himself to the disciples; not to the private members of the church, or ordinary disciples, as distinct from the apostles, but to the whole society, as consisting of apostles and private Christians; for his chief view in going to Jerusalem was to see Peter; and the Ethiopic version reads, "to the apostles": the sense is, that he tried either to get into a free and familiar conversation with them, or to become one of their body, and a member of the church. He did not return to the high priest from whom he had received letters to Damascus, to give him an account of the execution of his commission, or what use he had made of the letters he gave him, but to the disciples, against whom he had breathed out threatenings and slaughter. Grace had made a strange alteration in him; those whom he hated, and was exceeding mad against, he now loves; they are the excellent ones in the earth in whom is all his delight; and whom he persecuted to strange cities, he now courts their company, and attempts to get among them; accounting it his greatest honour and happiness to be one of their society. It is the duty and interest of every gracious soul to join himself to a church of Christ, which consists of the disciples of Christ, as the church at Jerusalem did; of such who have learned Christ, and the way of life and salvation by him; who have believed in him, and have been taught to deny themselves for his sake, and to take up the cross and follow him, in the way of his ordinances and appointments; and to be "joined" to a church, is to become an open subject of Christ's kingdom, a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, one of the family of God, and a member of the body of Christ visibly. The phrase is expressive of that strict union there is between the saints in church relation, and of that close and intimate communion they have with each other, and shows that their incorporation together is by mutual consent and agreement. And a great privilege it is to be in such a relation, having the grace of God; for such have the best of company, and the most refreshing ordinances; are in the greatest safety, being under the watch and care of ministers and members, of angels, and of God himself; and shall never be disfranchised, or become foreigners and strangers; they may expect the presence of God, fresh supplies of his grace, and even life for evermore, and need fear no enemy. That which qualifies for church membership, is not natural descent from religious parents, nor a religious education, nor mere morality and civility, nor even a constant attendance on the word of God, but faith in Christ Jesus, and a profession of it; and according to the order of the Gospel it is necessary that baptism in water should go before it; and these qualifications the apostle had.

But they were all afraid of him; knowing him to have been such an enemy to Christ, and so violent a persecutor of his church in times past:

and believed not that he was a disciple; or a true follower of Christ, but only pretended to be one, having some wicked design upon them in attempting to get among them: the reason of their not knowing anything of his conversion might be, because not only of the distance between Damascus and Jerusalem, and the continuance of the persecution in the latter place, which might occasion few comers to and fro of the Christians; but because the apostle, soon after his conversion, went to Arabia, where he had been all this while. Hence it appears, that the primitive churches were very careful in the admission of persons into fellowship with them; as they could not bear them in their communion who were evil, so they would not admit any among them but such as they looked upon to be the true disciples of Christ: and this is a method worthy of imitation; and such persons who, before a profession of religion, have been either very scandalous in their lives and conversations, or notorious enemies to Christ and his Gospel, ought to be thoroughly examined into, and full satisfaction obtained concerning them, ere they be received into the bosom of the church.

Acts 9:27

Ver. 27. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles,.... To Peter and James, the brother of our Lord, for no other apostles did he see at this time, **Gal 1:18**. It is probable that Barnabas had been at Damascus, and had there related to him, the whole account of Saul's conversion and entrance on the ministry, which he gives a particular relation of, as follows:

and declared unto them, how he had seen the Lord in the way; he told the apostles, Peter and James, how that Christ had appeared to him in person, as he was on his way to Damascus:

and that he had spoken to him; and expostulated with him about his persecution of him in his members, and bid him go into the city, where it should be told him what he should do:

and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus; that he had used great freedom of speech, and had shown courage and greatness of mind in preaching Christ at Damascus, both as soon as he was converted, and now upon his return thither. Hence it is manifest, that previous to admission into a church of Christ, and in order to satisfy the members of it, and gain their assent to such an admission, there ought to be a declaration made of the work of grace upon the souls of such, who propose to be joined to it; as how the Lord has met with them, and shown them the evil of their ways, and given them repentance unto life; and how they have had a sight of him by faith, and have looked to Christ and believed in him for the salvation of their souls; and how they have embraced the doctrines of the Gospel, and have found much sweetness and comfort in them; and that from a principle of love to him, and faith in him, and with a view to his glory, they are willing to submit to his ordinances, and to walk in holy fellowship with his people; and such an account of Saul being given by Barnabas, who had had it from him; and this being, no doubt, declared and attested by Saul himself, he was received into fellowship with the disciples: hence it follows,

Acts 9:28

Ver. 28. And be was with them,.... Peter and James, and the rest of the disciples; he lived with them, conversed with them, and joined with them in all religious exercises; which is signified by his

coming in and going out at Jerusalem; no one of the apostles or disciples forbidding or hindering him.

Acts 9:29

Ver. 29. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus,.... He spoke the Gospel of Christ boldly, as it ought to be spoken; he spoke it openly, publicly, freely, and faithfully, not fearing the faces or revilings of any: the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions add, "to the Gentiles"; but this is not in any of the Greek copies: and disputed against the Grecians; or Hellenists, that is, the Hellenistical Jews; by whom are meant, not Greeks proselyted to the Jewish religion, but Jews who had been born and brought up in Greece, or at least had learned the Greek language, and used the Greek Bible; and so the Syriac version renders it, "he disputed with the Jews that knew Greek"; perhaps the same persons, of the synagogue of the Libertines, Alexandrians, Cyrenians, and of Cilicia and Asia, who disputed with Stephen, with whom he had before joined, **Ac 6:9**

but they went about to slay him; he being an over match for them; and they not being able to resist him, but being confuted, and confounded, and put to silence, they were filled with indignation; and since they could not conquer him by arguments, they were for slaying him with the sword.

Acts 9:30

Ver. 30. Which when the brethren knew,.... When the members of the church heard of it, by some means or another:

they brought him down to Caesarea; not that which was before called Strato's tower, the same as in **Ac 8:40** but Caesarea Philippi, mentioned in Mt 16:13 the Syriac version adds, "by night", and some copies, "and sent him forth to Tarsus"; a city of Cilicia, his own native place, where he might be more safe, and also useful among his friends and acquaintance; **Ga 1:21**.

Acts 9:31

Ver. 31. Then had the churches rest,.... Meaning not spiritual rest in Christ; this they had before, even in tribulation, but rest from persecution; not so much because of the conversion of Saul, the great persecutor of them, for his conversion had been three years before; but rather because of his removal to other parts, the sight of whose person, and especially his ministry, had afresh stirred up the Jews to wrath and fury. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read in the singular number, "the church": but the several countries hereafter mentioned shows that more are designed: for it follows,

throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria; for by means of the dispersion, on account of persecution, the Gospel was preached in these several places, and churches gathered, and which shared in the persecution until this time, when they began to have rest; **Ga 1:22** **1Th 2:14** and were edified; or built up on the foundation Christ, and their most holy faith, through the ministry of the word and ordinances, and their mutual love and holy conversation; and had an increase of members, and of grace, and of spiritual knowledge:

and walking in the fear of the Lord; which was always before their eyes, and upon their hearts, continuing in religious exercises, and in the discharge of every duty, both to God and man. Not in a slavish fear of the wrath of the Lord, and of damnation for sin committed against him; for this is not consistent with their characters, as Gospel churches, made of persons who had received not the spirit of bondage to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, nor with their edification in faith and holiness; for "he that feareth is not made perfect in love"; **1Jo 4:18** which edifies; nor with the comforts of the Holy Ghost, they are afterwards said to walk in: but in a godly fear, which has the Lord for its author, is not of a man's self, but of the grace of God, and is encouraged and increased by the discoveries of his grace and goodness: and which has the Lord for its object, whose name is holy and reverend, and is to be feared by all his saints: it shows itself in an hatred of sin; in a departure from it; in a carefulness not to offend the Lord; in withholding nothing from him, though ever so dear and valuable, he calls for; and in attending to all the parts of divine worship: and walking in it denotes a continuance in it, a constant progression in all the acts of internal and external worship, which are both included in the fear of the Lord; and it requires strength, and supposes pleasure and freedom. It is said of Enoch, that "he walked with God"; which the Targum of Onkelos paraphrases, "he walked in the fear of the Lord", **Ge 5:22** the same phrase which is here used.

And in the comfort of the Holy Ghost: which he communicated by shedding abroad the love of God in them, taking the things of Christ, and showing them to them, applying covenant blessings and Gospel promises to their souls, owning the word and ordinances, and making them useful to them, thereby leading them into fellowship with the Father, and with the Son. In all which he acts the part of a Comforter, and answers to the character he bears, and the office he is in: the love of God, which he directs into, and sheds abroad in the heart, refreshes and revives the Spirit of God's people; it influences and encourages every grace that is wrought in them; and makes them easy and comfortable under all providences, even the most afflicting ones: the things of Christ he takes and shows unto them are his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; which being applied, and interest in them shown, produce abundance of peace, joy, and comfort: the promises of the covenant, and of the Gospel, he opens and applies, being such as hold forth the blessings of grace unto them; and being exceeding great, and precious, and suitable to their cases; and being absolute and unconditional, immutable, and sure, afford them much pleasure and satisfaction: and the word and ordinances being attended with the Holy Ghost, and much assurance, are breasts of consolation to them: and "walking" in those comforts which he administers, by such means, denotes a continuance of them, a long enjoyment of them, which is not very common; for, generally speaking, these comforts last but for a small time; and also it intimates much delight and pleasure in them, Ps 94:19 and so "were multiplied"; both in their gifts and graces, and in the number of converts added to them.

Acts 9:32

Ver. 32. And it came to pass, as Peter passed through all quarters,.... The Arabic version reads, "all the foresaid places", as Judea, Galilee, and Samaria; through which he took a tour, in order to visit the new churches here planted, fix pastors over them, and confirm the Gospel by miracles, which they had received:

he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda: a city which lay on the west of Jerusalem, and is said {u} to be a day's Journey from it; and a day's journey were ten parsas, or forty miles {w}: it was but thirty two miles from Jerusalem, and was a place famous for Jewish doctors; for which reason it is frequently mentioned in the Talmudic writings, under the name of Lod or Lud. Mention is made of R. Simlai, who was of Lydda {x}, and of the chambers of Beth Nithzah, and of Arum in Lydda {y} where the doctors disputed; there was a school here, of which R. Akiba was president {z} here also the sanhedrim sometimes sat, since we are told that Ben Sutda was tried and stoned at Lud or Lydda {a}; and here likewise they intercalated the year {b}, it being in Judea: this place was situated in a plain; so says Jerom {c},

"they that dwell in Sephela, that is, in the plain, Lydda and Emmaus, which design Diospolls and Nicopolis, shall possess the Philistines."

And with this agrees the account the Talmudists {d} give of it,

"the country of Judea was divided into three parts, the hill country, the plain, and the valley; from Bethhoron to Emmaus was the hill country; from Emmaus to Lydda was the plain or champaign country; and from Lydda to the sea, the valley."

Hence also we read {e} of dwl tlpv, "the plain of Lydda": and now Peter coming from Jerusalem, and the hill country of Judea, into this plain and champaign country, is properly said to come down to the saints there. So Quadratus in Josephus {f} is said to come up from Lydda to Jerusalem. This place was near the Mediterranean sea; and was in Jerom's time called Diospolis {g}, and in the time of R. Benjamin {h} Seguras; it is the same with Lod in **Ezr 2:33** The builder of it was Shamed the son of Elpaal, **1Ch 8:12**. It was in the times of Josephus {i} a village, yet not inferior to a city for greatness. It is now called S. Georgia. And here it seems some saints or Christians dwelt, whom Peter, among the rest, visited; and which is mentioned for the sake of the miracle he there wrought, next related. And these saints at Lydda very likely were converted under Philip's ministry, as he passed from Azotus to Caesarea, **Ac 8:40** and, it may be, were in a church state, or, however, were afterwards. Zenas the lawyer, the Apostle Paul speaks of in **Tit 3:13** is said to be bishop of Diospolis, or Lydda; in the beginning of the fourth century Aetius was bishop of this place, who assisted in the council of Nice; and in the same century, anno 331, Dionysius, another bishop of this place, was present at a council at Constantinople; and in the fifth century Photinus wrote himself bishop of Lydda, in the Chalcedon council, anno 451 {k}.

{u} Misn. Maasersheni, c. 5. sect. 2. T. Bab. Betza, fol. 5. 1. & Roshhashana, fol. 31. 2. & Juchasin, fol. 37. 1. {w} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 93. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {x} Juchasin, fol. 105. 1. {y} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 40. 2. T. Hieros. Pesachim, fol. 30. 2. {z} Misn. Roshhashana, c. 1. sect. 6. {a} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 25. 4. {b} Ib. fol. 18. 3. {c} In Obad. 1. 19. {d} T. Hicros. Sheviith, fol. 38. 4. {e} Misn. Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 2. {f} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 8. {g} Epitaph. Paulae, fol. 59. A. {h} ltinerar. p. 52. {i} Antiqu. l. 20. c. 5. sect. 2. {k} Reland. Palestina Illustrata, 1. 3. p. 878, 879. Vid. Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 2.

Acts 9:33

Ver. 33. And there he found a certain man,.... In a house in that city, into which he entered:

named Aeneas; which is a Gentile name, and so might the person be; though there is mention made of this name among the Jews. We read of one R. Samuel Bar, ayyna "Aenea, or Aeneas" {l}; but it was more common among the Greeks. Aeneas the Trojan is well known in history, who, after the destruction of Troy, went into Italy, and settled there; and from him the Trojans are sometimes called Aeneadae. The name comes from the Greek word ainw, "ainoo", which signifies "to praise"; and Aeneas is one "worthy of praise": though Jerom {m} takes it to be an Hebrew name, which he interprets "one that answers", or a "poor man", or "misery"; as if it came from the Hebrew word hne, "anah", which signifies "to answer, or to afflict".

Which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy; so that the distemper was grown stubborn, and thought incurable; nor perhaps had he, or his friends, any hope of his ever being restored to health again.

{l} T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 6. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 73. 3. {m} De Nominibus Hebraicis, fol. 105. H.

Acts 9:34

Ver. 34. And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, &c. He called him by his name, which he might without divine revelation know, though he was a stranger to him, by the people of the house, where he was:

Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; Peter knew, by some secret impulse upon his mind, that Christ would cure this man by him as an instrument at this time, and therefore said these words; not as a prayer, as some render them, "may Jesus Christ heal thee", though was it so, it was a prayer of faith; but as a promise that he would, or rather as a declaration of the then present exertion of his power to heal him; which he ascribes not to himself, but to Christ, in whose name, and by whose power the apostles wrought all their miracles; **Ac 3:12** "arise, and make thy bed"; which would be a full demonstration that he was perfectly whole:

and he arose immediately; and also, no doubt, made his bed, as the man at Bethesda's pool was bid by Christ, to take up his bed and carry it, as a proof of his soundness.

Acts 9:35

Ver. 35. And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron,.... Saron, which is here joined to Lydda, is the name of a fruitful country on the borders of the Mediterranean sea, between Joppa and Caesarea, beginning at Lydda. There were two countries in the land of Israel called Saron, as Jerom observes {n}; there was one between Mount Tabor, and the lake of Tiberias; and there was another which reached from Caesarea of Palestine, to the town of Joppa; the former was inhabited by the Gadites, and was beyond Jordan, **1Ch 5:16** the other was on this side Jordan, near Lydda. And this is what is here meant; and of which the same writer elsewhere says {o}, the whole country by Joppa and Lydda is called Saron, in which are large and fruitful fields; and on Isa 65:10 which the Vulgate Latin renders, "and the plains shall be for folds of flocks", he observes, that "Sharon", in the Hebrew text, is put for plains or champaign country; and adds, all the country about Lydda, Joppa, and Jamnia, is fit to feed flocks: and agreeably to this, in Jewish writings, the calves of Sharon {p} are spoken of as the best; and the word is by the commentators of the Misna interpreted {q} by rvym "a plain", or champaign country; for this was not the name of a single town or city, but of a country, bordering on Lydda, and the above mentioned places; in which were several towns and villages, and the inhabitants of those that were nearest Lydda are here designed. It was such a fruitful and delightful country, that the Targum on **So 2:1** has rendered it by the garden of Eden: it had its name either from rwv, "Shur", which signifies to behold afar off, from the fine and large prospect that might be taken on it; or from rv "Shar", which signifies the navel, because it was a valley or plain surrounded on every side with mountains and hills: it abounded in flowers and fruits; hence mention is made of the rose of Sharon, **So 2:1** and in vines; hence we frequently read of the wine of Saron {r}, and which was so very good, that they mixed two parts of water with one of wine {s}. It was a country, the Jews say {t}, whose earth was not fit to make bricks of; and therefore houses made of them did not stand long, but needed repairing often in seven years: hence the high priest, on the day of atonement, used to pray for the Saronites, that their houses might not become their graves {u}. Now when the inhabitants of this place, as well as of Lydda,

saw him; that is, Aeneas, made whole, who had been ill of a palsy, and had kept his bed eight years, they were so impressed with it, that it issued in their conversion:

and turned to the Lord: they believed in Christ, embraced his Gospel preached by Peter, professed faith in him, and submitted to his ordinances; being turned by powerful efficacious grace, they turned their feet to keep his testimonies.

{n} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 94. M. {o} Comment. in Isa. xxxiii. 9. {p} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 10. sect. 9. {q} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 6. sect. 2. {r} Misn. Nidda, c. 2. sect. 7. {s} T. Bab Sabbat, fol. 77. 1. {t} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sota, fol. 43. 1. {u} T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 23. 1. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 161. 4.

Acts 9:36

Ver. 36. Now there was at Joppa,.... The same with Japho, Jos 19:46 a sea port town in the tribe of Dan, said by some historians {w} to be a very ancient one, even before the flood. It is now called Jaffa, and its name, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies beauty: some say it had its name from Jope, the daughter of Aeolus, the wife of Cepheus, the founder of it; and others derive it from the name of Japhet, because it looks towards Europe, which is inhabited by the sons of Japhet. It was built upon a hill, as Pliny {x} says; and so high, as Strabo {y} reports, that Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea, might be seen from thence, which was distant from it forty miles; as may be concluded from what Jerom, {z} says, who lived at Bethlehem many years: his words are; from Joppa, to our little village Bethlehem, are forty six miles; now Bethlehem was six miles distant from Jerusalem, to the south of it, and Joppa was to the west of it. The place is well known by Jonah's taking ship there, and going for Tarshish, when he was cast into the sea, and devoured by a fish; from whence the Ionian sea might have its name: and this was the occasion of the fable of Andromeda being exposed to a fish of a prodigious size at this place; the bones of which, Pliny {a} relates, were brought to Rome from hence, being forty foot long; and, the stones, to which she was bound, Jerom {b} says, were shown in his time on this shore: and here also, the inhabitants report, may be seen some stones in the sea, on which Peter stood and fished, when he dwelt in this place.

A certain disciple, called Tabitha; this was a woman's name, the masculine name was Tabi. R. Gamaliel had a manservant of this name {c}, and also a maidservant, whose name was Tabitha {d}; yea, every maidservant of his was called mother Tabitha, and every manservant father Tabi {e}:

which by interpretation is called Dorcas; which signifies a roe in the Greek language, as Tabitha does in the Syriac:

this woman was full of good works; was constantly employed in doing good; her works were both many and good:

and alms deeds which she did; she was very kind and beneficent to the poor; she wrought with her hands much for their sakes, as appears by what follows.

{w} Mela, l. 1. Solin. Polyhistor. c. 47. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 13. {x} Nat. Hist. ib. {y} Geograph. l. 16. {z} Epist. ad Dardanum, Tom. 3, fol. 23. K. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 5. {b} Comment. in Jonam, c. 1. v. 3. {c} Misn. Beracot, c. 2. sect. 7. {d} T. Hieros. Nidda, fol. 49. 4. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 160. 4. {e} Massecheth Semachot, c. 1. sect. 13.

Acts 9:37

Ver. 37. And it came to pass in those days,.... While Peter was in those parts, and particularly at Lydda, which was near:

that she was sick and died; fell ill with some disorder, and died of it:

whom, when they had washed; as was the manner of the Jews; and this they did, even though it was on a sabbath day: for so their canon runs {f},

"they do all the necessaries for the dead (on the sabbath), they anoint him, Nyxydmw, "and they wash him";"

yet that of Maimonides deserves some notice {g};

"it is forbidden to anoint part of the body, as the whole body; but if it is to remove filth, it is lawful; and so it is forbidden to wash part of the body with hot water, but with cold water they may wash his face, his hands, and his feet, but not the whole body."

This custom still continues, and their usual method is to wash the body with hot water, in which they put dried roses and camomile flowers: likewise, they take an egg, and beat it up in wine, and therewith anoint the head; and this washing and anointing are done by some at the house before the corpse is carried out (as here); but in some places, especially where there is a large number of Jews, all this is done in the burying places; where they have a little house, whither they carry the corpse, and put it on a table, and there wash it; and after washing, put, it into a coffin, and inter it {h}: and this has been the custom of other nations, if not of all nations: the custom with the Turks is this {i}; the body being laid upon a board, and covered with a linen cloth, one of the ecclesiastical elders washes it with hot water and soap, another being present to hand the water; but they do not suffer others to look on: the body is thrice washed; and the third time they mingle camphire with it; and being washed, it is put into a coffin. And Ludolphus {k} reports of the Abyssines, that their bodies being well washed and perfumed, they wrap them up in garments, and then are put upon a bier, and buried. And this was the practice both of the ancient Grecians and Romans, that as soon as ever anyone was dead, the body was immediately washed and anointed. Thus Creon is said to fetch Jocaste to wash her dead son; and Antigone requests of Creon, that she might wash her brother {l}. It has been the custom of some countries to wash their dead bodies in rivers: and some people, in the northern parts, have chose, for this reason, to have their burying places near the banks of rivers, that their dead bodies might be washed in running water: and the Indians, which live at a distance from the river Ganges, will go fifteen or twenty days journey thither, to wash their corpse in it, though then putrefied, and then burn them; yea, they take their sick alive when they think they will die, and put them up to their middle in rivers, that they may die in pure and clear water; and they enjoin a very severe penance on those who omit to bring such as are near death, to a river to be washed {m}:

they laid her in an upper chamber. The Ethiopic version reads quite the reverse; "they put her in the lower part of the house": which is not likely. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures that this upper chamber might be the common meeting place of the saints; and that they put her here, that if Peter should work a miracle all might be spectators of it; and certain it is, that the Jewish doctors used to meet in upper rooms, and confer together; See Gill on "Mr 2:4", and such there were in Lydda; See Gill on "Ac 1:13" and such there were in Lydda; **Ac 9:32**.

{f} Misn. Sabbat, c. 23. sect. 5. {g} Hilch. Ebel, c. 5. sect. 4. {h} Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 49. p. 699, 700. Leo Modena's History of the Rites, &c. of the Jews, par. 5. c. 8. {i} Bobovius de Visitat. Aegrot. p. 18. Georgievitz de Turc. Moribus, p. 36. {k} Hist. Ethiop. l. 3. c. 6. {l} Vid. Kirchmannum de Funeribus Roman. l. 1. c. 7. {m} Sperling de Baptismo Ethnicorum, c. 4. p. 26, 27.

Acts 9:38

Ver. 38. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa,.... Some say it was six miles distant, but it must be eight; since from Jerusalem to Joppa were forty miles, and from Jerusalem to Lydda thirty two, and therefore it must be eight miles from thence to Joppa:

and the disciples had heard that Peter was there; and also no doubt that he had healed Aeneas of his palsy, and which might induce them to do as follows:

they sent unto him two men; very likely of their own company or church; for it is certain here were disciples or believers in Christ, and very likely were formed into a church state; these seem to be converts under Philip's ministry, who when he went from Azotus, preached in all the cities, and so in Joppa, till he came to Caesarea, **Ac 8:40** though we read nothing in ecclesiastical history of this church at Joppa, until the fifth century, when it appears there was a church in that place {n}; and in the same century we read of Fidus bishop of Joppa, that was present in the synod held at Ephesus, anno 431 and in the sixth century of Elias bishop of the same place, in the council at Jerusalem, anno 536 {o} and in the same century a bishop of the church here assisted in the synod of Rome and Constantinople {p}.

desiring him, that he would not delay to come to them; they entreated he would not refuse to come, and think it too great a burden on him, or make any difficulty about it, or show any aversion to it; but that he would with all readiness and cheerfulness, and without delay immediately come unto them; for the case they wanted him for required speed and haste.

{n} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 2. {o} Reland. Palestina Illustrata, l. 3. p. 867. {p} Magdeburg. ib. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 3.

Acts 9:39

Ver. 39. Then Peter arose and went with them,.... After the messengers had delivered their message, and made their request to Peter in the name of the brethren, he at once agreed to go with them, and accordingly did; whether he went to restore Dorcas to life, whose death the messengers had informed him of, and whether this was the view of the brethren with respect to that, is not certain. However, he might go with them on other accounts, as to comfort them under the loss of so valuable and useful a person, and to strengthen and establish them in the faith, and to exhort and animate them to the discharge of their duty.

When he was come; that is, to Joppa, and to Dorcas's house there:

they brought him into the upper chamber; where the corpse of Dorcas lay:

and all the widows stood by him weeping; these were poor widows, to whom Dorcas had been very liberal and beneficent, who stood about the apostle lamenting the death of their benefactress, and by their tears expressing their desire of her return to life, if it could be:

and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them; the Vulgate, Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "which Dorcas made for them"; and the Syriac version renders it, "which Tabitha gave unto them, while she was alive"; which last clause aptly explains, "while she was with them"; for now she was not, with respect to her better part, her immortal soul: the coats and garments were the inner and upper ones, wore in these countries; and it seems that she did not buy these garments, and give them unto them, but that she made them up herself for them, or at least wrought with them in making of them; which shows her diligence and industry, as also her humility, as well as her beneficence: and these the widows produced, and are shown as proofs of the same; which was expressive of gratitude in them, and was done with a design to move Peter to be concerned for restoring so useful a life.

Acts 9:40

Ver. 40. But Peter put them all forth,.... As he had seen his Lord and Master do, when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead, **Lu 8:54**

and kneeled down and prayed; it may be, as yet, he had not the mind of God in this matter, and therefore betook himself to prayer, in which he chose to be private and alone:

and turning him to the body; the corpse of Dorcas, after he had prayed, and was well assured that the power of Christ would be exerted in raising of it:

said, Tabitha, arise; which words were spoken in the name and faith of Christ, and were all one as, if Christ himself had spoken them; for to his power, and not to the apostles, is the following miracle to be ascribed: and she opened her eyes; which, upon her death, had been closed by her friends; and perhaps the napkin was not yet bound about her face: or if it was, she must remove it ere she could open her eyes and see Peter:

and when she saw Peter; whom she might know:

she sat up; upon the bed or bier on which she lay.

Acts 9:41

Ver. 41. And he gave her his hand, and lift her up,.... Off of the bed or bier where she was:

and when he had called the saints and widows; the disciples, brethren and sisters, who were come together on this occasion, as well as the poor widows she had been kind to; the Ethiopic version reads without a copulative, "the holy widows"; and so might these widows be, even such as are described in **1Ti 5:10**

presented her alive; as Christ did the widow's son of Naam to her, **Lu 7:15** and which no doubt was matter of great joy as well as astonishment to all the saints, and especially to the poor widows.

Acts 9:42

Ver. 42. And it was known throughout all Joppa,.... The report of such a miracle, and wrought upon a person of note, was soon spread all over the place, which was very large, for it was a city, as it is called, Ac 11:5, and it had, as Josephus {q} says, villages and little towns or cities round about it; all which might go by the name of Joppa, and throughout which the fame of this miracle might pass:

and many believed in the Lord; in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom Peter preached, and the saints in Joppa professed, and in whose name, and by whose power, this miracle was done.

{q} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 4.

Acts 9:43

Ver. 43. And it came to pass,.... Or so it was;

that he tarried many days in Joppa; conversing with the saints, confirming the disciples, and preaching the Gospel, to the conversion of sinners; and his abode

was with one Simon a tanner; it seems as if persons of this trade used to dwell in towns near the sea, as fit for their business; so we read of some at Sidon, a city on the sea coast, as Joppa was;

"it happened at Sidon that a certain yorwb, "tanner", (the same word here used, adopted into the Hebrew language,) died, and he had a brother a tanner, &c. {r}"

where the Gemara {s} distinguishes between a great tanner and a little tanner; the latter, the gloss says, is one that is poor and has but few skins: which of these Simon was, cannot be said. This business was very contemptible with the Jews; they say {t},

"woe to him whose trade is a tanner:"

and further observe {u} that they never make one a king, nor a high priest: but their doctors many of them were of as mean trades, as shoemakers, skinners, &c. See Gill on "Mr 6:3" and Simon the Athenian philosopher was skutotomov "a leather cutter" {w}; and according to the Ethiopic version, this our Simon was a shoemaker; with him Peter chose to abide, and not with Dorcas.

{r} Misn. Cetubot, c. 7. sect. 10. {s} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 77. 1. {t} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 82. 2. & Bava Bathra, fol. 16. 2. {u} Kiddush, fol. 82. 1. {w} Laert. in Vit. Simon

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 10:1

Ver. 1. There was a certain man in Caesarea,.... This was the Caesarea formerly called Strato's tower, not Caesarea Philippi; for the former, and not the latter, lay near Joppa:

called Cornelius; which was a Roman name, and he himself was a Roman or an Italian:

a centurion of the band called the Italian band; which consisted of soldiers collected out of Italy, from whence the band took its name, in which Cornelius was a centurion, having a hundred men under him, as the name of his office signifies.

Acts 10:2

Ver. 2. A devout man,.... A truly religious person, who had forsaken the Roman idolatry and superstition, in which he was brought up:

and one that feared God: the one only living and true God, the God of Israel; he had the fear of God wrought in his heart, which is a part of the covenant of grace, a blessing of it, and the beginning of wisdom; he was truly a gracious man, a converted person, and who from an internal principle worshipped God externally:

with all his house; he brought up his family in a religious way, as every good man should; and which was very remarkable in a Gentile, a soldier, and an officer:

which gave much alms to the people; to the Jews that dwelt at Caesarea, and therefore was of good report among them, and much beloved by them, Ac 10:22 he had regard to both tables of the law, both to the worship of God, and the love of the neighbour: and prayed to God always; every day, at the usual times of prayer; prayed privately in his closet, and with his family, as well as attended public service of this kind.

Acts 10:3

Ver. 3. He saw in a vision evidently,.... He was not in a dream, or in a trance, but he was thoroughly awake, and his eyes open, and was himself; it was not in the night, but in clear day:

about the ninth hour of the day; or three o'clock in the afternoon, which was the hour of prayer, **Ac 3:1** in which exercise he was now engaged, Ac 10:30 at this time he saw an angel of God coming to him; into the room where he was at prayer:

and saying unto him, Cornelius; he called him by his name, to let him know that he knew him, as angels are very knowing spirits; and to express his affection and friendship to him, and that he was a messenger, not of bad, but of good news to him; as well as to engage his attention to him; for he might be so intent at his devotion, that had he not called him by name, he would not have minded him.

Acts 10:4

Ver. 4. And when he looked on him, he was afraid,.... What with the brightness of his clothing, Ac 10:30 and the lustre of his countenance, and the majestic form in which he appeared, he perceived there was something uncommon and divine in this vision, and therefore was filled with awe and reverence, yea, with something of a panic fear; as it was usual, even with good persons, as the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament, Zacharias, the Virgin Mary, and others; from a sense of the greatness of the divine majesty, which they supposed to be near, or this to be an emblem of it, and from a notion that, at the sight of God, they should die.

And said, what is it, Lord what is the matter? what is to be said or done? What is the reason of this unusual appearance? Some of the Latin copies, and the Ethiopic version, read, "who art thou, Lord?" but by the angel's answer, not this, but the former was the question: for it follows,

and he said unto him, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God; that is, the prayers which he had put up in faith, for himself and family, and the charitable actions he had performed from a principle of love, were like sacrifices upon the altar, which ascended to God with acceptance; so these sacrifices of prayer and beneficence came up with acceptance from off that altar which sanctities the gift, or were acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ; these were taken notice of, approved by God, and remembered by him, and the fruits and effects he was shortly to enjoy; for that Cornelius was a believer, need not be questioned; since he was not only a devout and religious person, but one that feared God, which includes the whole of religion, internal and external; and so faith in Christ, without which he could not pray aright: there is no doubt of it, but he had read the prophecies of the Old Testament, attended the synagogues of the Jews, and believed in the Messiah to come, though he did not know that he was come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he;

so that his faith was of the same kind with that of the saints before the coming of Christ; and in this faith he did all the good works he did, which became acceptable to God through Christ, and without which it is impossible to please him.

Acts 10:5

Ver. 5. And now send men to Joppa,.... Which lay near to Caesarea;

and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: the angel was not sent to instruct Cornelius himself, but to direct him to an apostle of Christ, and minister of the Gospel, who should do it; for not angels, but men, are employed in the ministry of the word, which is the ordinary means of spiritual knowledge, and of increasing it. So the eunuch was instructed by Philip, and Saul by Ananias; which shows the excellency and usefulness of the Gospel ministry and ministers, and what dignity is put upon them, what use should be made of them, and in what esteem they should be had.

Acts 10:6

Ver. 6. He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, &c] Simon the tanner was his host; this man very probably was a good man, and one that lodged strangers; of his trade, See Gill on "Ac 9:43"

whose house is by the sea side; Joppa was a sea port, **2Ch 2:16** **Jon 1:3** hence we read of wpyd amy, "the sea of Joppa" {x}; and also of wpy lv hnyml, "the port of Joppa" {y}; now Simon's house was in the outer part of the city, and by the sea side, as well for convenience for his business, as because such trades might not be exercised within a city; being nauseous and disagreeable, because of their skins and manner of dressing them, and the dead carcasses from whence they often took them off; hence that rule of the Jews {z},

"they place dead carcasses, graves, yqorwbh taw, "and a tanner's workshop", (in which he dresses his skins,) fifty cubits from the city; nor do they make a tanner's workshop, but at the eastern part of the city. R. Abika says, it may be made at every part excepting the west."

The reason of that, as given by the {a} commentators, is, because prayer was made towards the west, where the temple stood, and the divine presence was.

The Ethiopic version very wrongly renders it, "and the house of Cornelius is near the sea"; for not his, but Simon's is meant:

he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do; he was to tell him words, or to deliver doctrines to him, by which he and his family would be better instructed in the way of salvation, and arrive to a greater degree of knowledge of Christ, and faith in him, and be brought to a submission to his commands and ordinances; see
Ac 10:22, this clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in some others, and in the Syriac and Arabic versions.

{x} Ezra iii. 7. Targum in 2 Chron. ii. 16. {y} T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 41. 1. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 11. c. 4. sect. 1. & 13. 9. 1 Maccab. xiv. 5. 1. Esdr. v. 55. {z} Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 2. sect. 9. {a} Maimou. & Bartenora in ib.

Acts 10:7

Ver. 7. And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed,.... For when be had delivered his message, he either disappeared, or withdrew, and immediately Cornelius showed himself ready to obey the heavenly vision: for

he called two of his household servants; who were not of the band of soldiers under him, but were servants in his family, and such as feared God with him;

and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually: besides his household servants, there were soldiers that continually attended him, and among these there was one at least that was a devout and religious man; and him he called out from among the rest, and to him with the two household servants he communicated the vision: these three persons being religious, were very proper ones to be informed of this matter, and to be sent on the errand they were; and three might be particularly pitched upon, being a sufficient number to attest to Peter what they had from the mouth of their master, for by the mouth of two or three witnesses is everything established; and partly for the honour of Peter, and to show a proper respect to him, he would not send a single person, who could have told the story, and done the errand as well as three, but this would not have looked respectful enough.

Acts 10:8

Ver. 8. And when he had declared all these things unto them,.... Which he had heard and seen in the vision, and of which he gave them a particular account; partly to engage them the more cheerfully to go on the errand, and partly that they might be able to give a distinct relation of it to Peter, that so he might be moved the more to comply with the request, and come along with them:

he sent them to Joppa; perhaps not that evening, since it was at the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon, when Cornelius had the vision; and some time must be taken up in discourse with the angel, and afterwards in sending for his servants, and relating the affair to them, and giving them their proper instructions. So that it may be they did not set out till early the next morning, as seems from the following verse.

Acts 10:9

Ver. 9. On the morrow, as they went on their journey,.... From Caesarea to Joppa; Joppa is said to be six and thirty miles distant from Caesarea; so far Caesarea was from Lydda, but it seems to be further from Joppa; for according to Josephus {b}, from Joppa to Antipatris were a hundred and fifty furlongs, which are almost nineteen miles, and from thence to Caesarea were twenty six miles; unless there was a nearer way by the sea shore, as there was a way by that from Caesarea to Joppa, of which the above author makes mention {c}; wherefore they must either have set out the evening before, or early that morning, to get to Joppa by the sixth hour, or twelve o'clock at noon; as it seems they did, by what follows:

and drew nigh unto the city; that is, of Joppa, were but a little way distant from it:

Peter went up upon the housetop to pray; the roofs of houses in Judea were flat, and persons might walk upon them, and hither they often retired for devotion and recreation; See Gill on "Mt 10:27",
See Gill on "Mt 24:17", it was on the former count, namely for prayer, that Peter went up thither, and that he might, be private and alone, and undisturbed in the discharge of that duty. This being at a tanner's house, though not in his shop, brings to mind a canon of the Jews {d},

"a man may not enter into a bath, nor into a tanner's shop, near the Minchah,"

or time of prayer. Now this was about the sixth hour or twelve o'clock at noon, when Peter went up to pray; at which time the messengers from Cornelius were near the city of Joppa; this was another time of prayer used by the Jews, and is what they call the great Minchah, which began at the sixth hour and an half, and so was as is here said, about the sixth hour See Gill on "Ac 3:1"

{b} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 13. {c} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 14. {d} Misn. Sabbat, c. 1. sect. 2.

Acts 10:10

Ver. 10. And he became very hungry,.... It being in the middle of the day, when it was usual to eat; and perhaps he had ate nothing that day, for those were reckoned the most religious persons, who eat nothing before the Minchah:

and would have eaten; though the Jews say {e}, a man ought not to eat near the Minchah, not even the least, lest he should continue at it, and so neglect his prayers:

but while they made ready, while Simon's family were getting dinner ready, preparing the food for it:

he fell into a trance; or an ecstasy, or an ecstasy fell upon him; it was what was supernatural, and came from above, and did not arise from any natural cause in him; he was as it were out of the body, and entirely in the spirit; all the bodily organs and senses were shut up, and all sensible objects removed from him; and he was wholly intent on what was proposed to him in the vision, which filled him with wonder and astonishment.

{e} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Sabbat. ib.

Acts 10:11

Ver. 11. And saw heaven opened,.... Not literally, as at the baptism of Christ, and the stoning of Stephen; but in a visionary way, and which was an emblem of the opening and revealing the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles, which in other ages was not made known, as it now and afterwards was:

and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet: which seems to represent the church of God, whose original is from heaven, and consists of persons born from above, who have their conversation in heaven, and were designed for it; and especially as under the Gospel dispensation, which Peter had a vision of in this emblematic way; the doctrines and ordinances of which are from heaven: and which may be compared to a linen sheet for its purity and holiness; through the blood and righteousness of Christ, and the grace of his Spirit, and with respect to its discipline and conversation; and so to a great one for its largeness; for though the number of its members, when compared with the world, are few, yet in themselves are a number which no man can number; and though it was but small at first, yet the Gospel being carried among the Gentiles it increased, and in the last times will be large:

knit at the four corners; which may denote the preaching of the Gospel, and the spread of it, and the planting of churches by it in the four parts of the world; and also the church being knit to Christ, and the members of it one to another:

and let down to the earth; for Peter to see it, and where it was to continue for a while, even to the second coming of Christ, and when the whole church of the firstborn will be let down to earth again; see Re 21:2.

Acts 10:12

Ver. 12. Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth,.... Not as if they were painted upon it, and these were only pictures and representations of them made on the linen sheet; but as if they really add actually were upon it alive; since Peter is afterwards called upon to kill and eat: and these design four-footed beasts of every kind, that are tame, as distinct from the wild ones, after mentioned, as horses, camels, oxen, sheep, hogs, dogs, &c.

and wild beasts; lions, tigers, panthers, bears, &c. This clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions:

and creeping things; the above copy and versions here add, "of the earth", which they omit in the first clause; these intend serpents, snakes, worms, &c:

and fowls of the air; birds of all sorts: now the whole of this signifies, that the church of Christ, under the Gospel dispensation, consists of all sorts of persons, of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, the one being reckoned clean, the other unclean; of men of all sorts of tempers and dispositions, comparable to wild or tame beasts; and of all sorts of sinners, who before conversion have been greater or lesser sinners; as well as denotes that the distinction of food under the ceremonial law was now ceased. This is not designed to represent that there are good and bad in Gospel churches, as there certainly are and much less that immoral persons are to be received and retained there; but that those who have been of the blackest character, if called by grace, should be admitted into them; and chiefly to show that Gentiles reckoned unclean, when converted, are not to be rejected.

Acts 10:13

Ver. 13. And there came a voice to him,.... Formed by an angel, or rather by Christ himself:

rise, Peter, kill and eat; he might be on his knees when he fell into this trance, being at prayer, and therefore is bid to rise; and he is called by name, the more to encourage him to do as he was ordered; and he is bid to kill and eat of all the creatures without distinction, which were represented to him in the sheet; and the design of this was to teach him, that both the distinction between clean and unclean creatures in the law was now abolished, and men might lawfully eat of whatsoever they pleased; and that he might and should without any difference converse with all sorts of men, Jews and Gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised, and preach the Gospel to one as to another, and maintain a church communion and fellowship with all equally alike.

Acts 10:14

Ver. 14. But Peter said, not so, Lord,.... God forbid I should do this, so contrary to the law of God, and to my own practice, throughout the whole course of my life:

for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean; in a ceremonial sense, which was in common use with Gentiles, but unclean by the law of Moses: this shows that Peter as yet closely adhered to the ceremonial law, nor did he know that it was abolished by Christ; and notwithstanding the commission given to him and the rest of the apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature, and the extraordinary gifts of speaking with divers tongues for that purpose, bestowed on them at the day of Pentecost; yet he and they remained greatly strangers to the calling of the Gentiles, and the admitting of them to a civil and religious conversation with them; the knowledge of every truth was not at once communicated to them, but gradually, as it pressed the Lord to enlighten their minds.

Acts 10:15

Ver. 15. And the voice spake unto him again the second time,.... The following words,

what God hath cleansed; that is, hath pronounced clean and lawful to be used, as he now had all sorts of food, Mt 15:11.

[that] call not thou common; or pronounce it to be unholy or unclean, and unlawful to be used: and the same holds good of men, as well as things; for as hereby the Lord instructed Peter, that there was nothing of itself common, or unclean, and unfit for use; so that no man, not any Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, or be he who he would, was common or unclean, and his company to be avoided as such. Distinctions both of men and meats were now to be laid aside; and the Jews themselves own, that what is now unclean, will be clean in the time to come, or the times of the Messiah; they say {f},

"every beast which is unclean in this world, the holy blessed God htwa rhjm, cleanses it, in the time to come, (the times of the Messiah,) as they were at first clean to the sons of Noah **Ge 9:3**, wherefore, as the herb was clean to all, and as the beasts were clean to the sons of Noah; so also in the time to come he will loose what he has bound, or forbidden."

And particularly they observe, that a swine is call ryzh from rzh, "to return", because the Lord will return it unto Israel. {g}

{f} R. Moses Haddarsan in Galatin. l. 11. c. 12. & Bereshit Rabba in Pugio Fidei, c. 12. sect. 1. {g} Abarbinel Rosh Amana, c. 12. fol. 18. 2.

Acts 10:16

Ver. 16. This was done thrice,.... That is, either the voice spoke the same words three times, or the sheet was let down three times; and it may be both; it may be, that every time the voice was spoke, the sheet was let down: this was done, not with respect to any mystical meaning in the number three, but for the confirmation of Peter, that he might be the more firmly assured of the truth of the things represented unto him:

and the vessel was received up again into heaven; to denote, that when the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, whether Jews or Gentiles, are all gathered in, by the preaching of the Gospel to them, they will be taken up to heaven, their original and native place, and be for ever with the Lord; as well as to certify to Peter, that what was now shown him on earth, concerning the taking away the distinction of men and meats, was ratified in heaven.

Acts 10:17

Ver. 17. Now while Peter doubted in himself,.... For notwithstanding what he had heard and seen, he had not at once a full knowledge of this matter. Beza's most ancient copy reads, "as he was in himself, he doubted"; that is, when he came to himself, for he was before, as it were, out of himself, and was in a trance, or ecstasy; and now being come to himself, and reflecting on what he had seen and heard, he had some doubts and hesitations in his mind:

what this vision which he had seen should mean; what the vessel or sheet should signify, what should be meant by the four-footed beasts, &c. why he should be called to arise, and kill, and eat such creatures, and what should be designed by God's cleansing them; and while he was revolving these things in his mind, and at some uncertainty about them, something providentially happened, which was a key unto, and opened the whole vision clearly to him:

behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius, had made inquiry for Simon's house; they were come to Joppa, and, according to the direction given them, had inquired and found out the house of Simon the tanner, where Peter was:

and stood before the gate; of the house; perhaps knocking at it, in order to bring out somebody within to them, of whom they might inquire for Peter.

Acts 10:18

Ver. 18. And called, and asked,.... That is, they called to the people of the house, Simon's family; and in a civil and courteous manner asked them, whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter; which they said to distinguish him from Simon the master of the house, and as Cornelius was directed, and they were instructed by him: concerning him they inquired, whether he

were lodged there; the Ethiopic version adds, without any foundation for it, "and the place where they called at was Peter's lodging room".

Acts 10:19

Ver. 19 While Peter thought on the vision,.... Which greatly amused him, affected his mind, and employed his thoughts what should be the meaning and design of it:

the Spirit said unto him; the holy Spirit of God, either by an articulate voice, or by making an impulse on his mind;

behold, three men seek thee; the Arabic version leaves out the word "three": the Spirit of God is omniscient, and knows all things; if the deep things of God, then much more man, and the things of man.

Acts 10:20

Ver. 20. Arise, therefore, and get thee down,.... From the top of the house where he was:

and go with them; the three men, to Caesarea

doubting nothing; whether it is right or wrong, lawful or unlawful, to go with them, because not Jews, but uncircumcised Gentiles, laying aside all such Jewish scruples:

for I have sent them: the Spirit of God is said to do what Cornelius did at his instigation and direction, signified by an angel he sent to him, Ac 10:5.

Acts 10:21

Ver. 21. Then Peter went down to the men,.... The Ethiopic version adds, "from the third floor"; to the place where the men were: the following clause, which were sent unto him from Cornelius, is not in Beza's most ancient copy, nor in the Alexandrian copy, nor in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions:

and said, behold, I am he whom ye seek; without being called by any of the family he came down, and without being informed in that way who the men were inquiring for; it being suggested to him by the Spirit of God, he declared himself to be the person they were seeking after: and put this question to them,

what is the cause wherefore ye are come? for that was not intimated to him by the Spirit; it was only told him there were three men seeking him, and he was bid to go with them, without any scruple or hesitation; but what they came for, or he was to go with them about, was not suggested.

Acts 10:22

Ver. 22. And they said, Cornelius, the centurion,.... A certain person, by name Cornelius, a Roman or Italian, as his name shows, and by office a "centurion", that was over an hundred soldiers: a just man; before God, and in his sight, through the imputation of Christ's righteousness to him; and who was a new man, created in righteousness and true holiness; and lived soberly, righteously, and godly, and did justice between man and man; and so was just in the sight of men, which was very rare in a Gentile, and in a soldier:

and one that feareth God; the true God, the God of Israel, and worshipped him, both internally and externally; for both sorts of worship are included in the fear of God:

and of good report among all the nation of the Jews; that knew any thing of him, especially at Caesarea, where many Jews, and even many of their most celebrated doctors lived: and this is the rather observed, to induce Peter, a Jew, to go along with them to him, since his character was so very good, and he was in so much credit and esteem with the people; for he must be something extraordinary to have their good word, who had such an abhorrence of uncircumcised Gentiles in general: this man, they add,

was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house; they intimate hereby, that he did not send for him of himself, he was not led to it by any fancy of his own, or any curiosity in him; nor should he have presumed to

have used such freedom with Peter, but that he had some instructions from God himself, who had sent an holy angel to him, and had ordered him to send men to Joppa, and fetch Peter from thence to his house, for the end next mentioned:
and to hear words of thee: the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it: that being taught by the one, he and his might submit to the other.

Acts 10:23

Ver. 23. Then called he them in,.... Into Simon's house; not "into his own house", as the Ethiopic version adds; as yet they stood without, before the gate of the house; he took them in, no doubt, with the leave of Simon, his host, and set provisions before them, and lodged them that night:

and in the morning Peter went away with them; the next morning he set out with them towards Caesarea:

and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him; there were six of them, as appears from Ac 11:12 these went with him, not only to bear him company, and out of respect to him; but to be witnesses of what might be seen, heard, said, or done, and for Peter, should there be any occasion for it, as there afterwards was.

Acts 10:24

Ver. 24. And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea,.... So that they were one day, and part of another, on their journey:

and Cornelius waited for them; he had an eager desire to hear the word from Peter's mouth; and was longing and looking for the coming of him, with the men he sent for him; and he and his family were in a waiting posture, and ready to hear the word, when the apostle of Christ should come: it would be well if this was always the case of the hearers of the word, to assemble before their ministers come; and be waiting for them, and in full expectation of them, and ready to receive them, and the words of grace which drop from their lips:

and had called together his kinsmen and near friends; or necessary ones: not only his relations according to the flesh, which might be in the Italian band, but his most familiar acquaintance, with whom he was in the strictest friendship; who may be called "necessary", as they are both by the Greeks and Romans, because they are often necessary for assistance and counsel: this shows the true grace of God in him, which wherever it is, puts a man on seeking after the spiritual and eternal welfare of all with whom he is concerned, and especially his relatives and friends.

Acts 10:25

Ver. 25. And as Peter was coming in,.... Not into the city of Caesarea, for his entrance there is mentioned before, but into the house of Cornelius:

Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet; to testify his great affection for him, and reverence of him:

and worshipped [him]; not with a religious adoration, or with worship due to God; for that would have been contrary to his character as a devout man, and one that feared God; but with civil worship and respect, in which he might exceed just bounds, and therefore is reproved by Peter: nor could he take him for an angel of God, or for one sent immediately from heaven to him; for he had been informed who he was, and what he was, and from whence he came, and what he was to do.

Acts 10:26

Ver. 26. But Peter took him up,.... As he lay at his feet, and lifted him up and set him on his legs:

saying, stand up; and continue in this posture:

I myself also am a man; a mortal man, a man of like passions with others, no better than others by nature: and it was by grace, and not any merit of his own, that he was a believer in Christ, and an apostle of his; and therefore he chose not to have any distinguishing homage and respect paid to him, and especially in any excessive and extravagant way; which though not designed, might carry in it a suggestion, as if he was more than a man.

Acts 10:27

Ver. 27. And as he talked with him,.... About the excessive respect he showed him, and his own infirmity and frailty, and unworthiness, as a creature:

he went in; to Cornelius's house, at the door, and through the porch, to some interior room and apartment in it:

and found many that were come together; besides his family, many of his relations and intimate friends, whom he had got together on this occasion, that they might receive some advantage, as well as himself.

Acts 10:28

Ver. 28. And he said unto them,.... The whole company that were met together, who were chiefly, if not altogether Gentiles:

ye know that it is an unlawful thing; what is forbidden by the law of Moses, **De 7:2** and by the traditions of the elders, which carry the matter further than the law did, and made it very criminal:

for a man that is a Jew, to keep company with, or come unto one of another nation; besides entering into covenants and marriages with them, which were forbidden by the law, though they allowed of trade and commerce with the Gentiles, yet not any familiar conversation with them; it was prohibited to eat and drink any sort of liquor with them in their houses {h}, nor might they walk with them in the streets, or on the road; says Maimonides {i},

"it is forbidden a Jew to unite himself to Gentiles, because they are suspected of shedding blood, and he may not join himself with them in the way; if he meets a Gentile in the way, he causes him to turn to the right hand; if they ascend by an ascent, or descend by a descent, the Israelite may not be below, and the Gentile above: but the Israelite must be above, and the Gentile below, lest he should fall upon him and kill him; and he may not go even with (or along side by him) lest he break his skull."

It is said {k} of some Rabbins, that they saw a certain man coming;

"says R. Chiyah, let us be gone, perhaps this man is an idolatrous Gentile, or one of the people of the earth, and it is forbidden to join with him in the way."

They looked upon the houses of Gentiles unclean, and therefore would not enter into them: See Gill on "Joh 18:28".

yea they say {l}, that:

"the court of a stranger (or Gentile) is as the habitation of a beast."

Such an aversion was there in that people to all civil society with Gentiles: and so Apoltonius says of them {m}, that

"they not only departed from the Romans, but from all men, living a separate life from others; nor did they communicate at table with others; neither in things sacred, nor in any ceremonies;"

and this was well known to Jews and Gentiles:

but God hath showed me; partly by the vision he had seen, and partly by discourse with the men that came from Cornelius to him; and by comparing the vision and their message to him together, he saw that he was not obliged to abide by the customs and laws of the Jews: but was showed, as he says,

that I should not call any man common or unclean; that is, in a ceremonial sense; for otherwise, all by nature are morally unclean; and none are pure, but such who are washed in the blood of Christ, and are justified by his righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit: he saw there was now no difference between Jew and Gentile; that the one was not clean because of his circumcision, nor the other unclean on account of his uncircumcision, or to be avoided for that reason; that the Gospel was to be preached to all; and that every believer of whatsoever nation, was acceptable to God, and ought to be regarded by his ministers and people.

{h} Mitzvot Tora, pr neg. 143. {i} Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 12. sect. 7. {k} Zohar in Exod. fol. 21. 1. {l} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 62. 2. {m} Philostrat. Vita Apollon. l. 5. c. 11.

Acts 10:29

Ver. 29. Therefore came I unto you, without gainsaying,.... Readily and cheerfully, without objecting to it, or saying one word against it, or making any excuse to put it off:

as soon as I was sent for: he immediately consented to go, as soon as ever the messengers from Cornelius acquainted him with their message, being previously directed so to do by the Spirit of God; though he did not set out with them till the next day, it being more suitable and convenient:

I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? this he said, not as ignorant of the true cause, for he had inquired of the messengers, who had informed him of the reason of it; but he was willing to have it from the mouth of Cornelius himself; not only for further confirmation's sake, but for order sake, to lead him on regularly to what he had to say.

Acts 10:30

Ver. 30. And Cornelius said,.... The Syriac version adds, "to him", to the apostle; the following he said, in a very submissive and humble manner:

four days ago I was fasting unto this hour; in the Greek text it is, "from the fourth day unto this hour I was fasting": which looks as if he had been fasting four days, and was still fasting at that hour; though the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the phrase "I was fasting": but the sense which our version and others give is the truest; that four days ago, or reckoning four days back, Cornelius was fasting on that day, until such time in that day as now it was in this present day; and which perhaps might be the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon: the account of days exactly agrees; as soon as Cornelius had had the vision, he sends men to Joppa, which was one day; on the morrow they came to Joppa, which makes two days; Peter lodged them all night there, and the next day set out on the journey with them, so you have three days; and the day after that, which was the fourth, he entered into Caesarea, and came to Cornelius's house, where he now was:

and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house; which was one of the stated times of prayer; See Gill on "Ac 3:1".

And behold a man stood before me in bright clothing; or "in a white garment", as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read: which was an emblem of the excellency, glory, and purity of the angel, and of the divine majesty in him: he calls him a man, because he appeared in the form of one, as angels used to do.

Acts 10:31

Ver. 31. And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard,.... What he was now particularly making to God, as well as others he had before put up to him:

and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God;
See Gill on "Ac 10:4".

Acts 10:32

Ver. 32. Send therefore to Joppa,.... See Gill on "Ac 10:5",
See Gill on "Ac 10:6".

who when he cometh shall speak unto thee, is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, but agrees with Ac 10:6.

Acts 10:33

Ver. 33. Immediately therefore I sent unto thee,.... This he said, to show his obedience to the heavenly vision, and his faith in it; and to remove from himself any suspicion of pride, vanity, and imperiousness: he did not send for the apostle of himself, but by a divine order; which as soon as he had, he executed; for the very same hour, he called his servants and gave them their instructions, and sent them away:

and thou hast well done, that thou art come; a phrase expressive of benignity and goodness in Peter, and of thankfulness to him for his coming; it was not only doing that which was right in the sight of God, but was kind in him, and acceptable to Cornelius and his house:

now therefore are we all here present before God; the searcher of hearts, the omniscient God, who knew the sincerity of their intentions in meeting together, and the eagerness of their souls, and their fervent desire to hear the word: it is a sort of an appeal to God, for the truth of all this: in Beza's most ancient copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, it is read "before thee"; before the apostle: to hear all things that are commanded thee of God; or "of the Lord", as the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin versions read; that is, of the Lord Jesus Christ; and designs all things, both with respect to doctrine and practice, which Christ had commanded his apostles to teach:

and particularly, what he had ordered Peter to instruct Cornelius and his friends in.

Acts 10:34

Ver. 34. Then Peter opened his mouth,.... See Gill on "Ac 8:35"

And said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; which is to be understood, not of the substances of men, but of the outward state and condition, circumstances and qualities of men; he respects the proper persons of men themselves, but not because of their outward appearances; he does not prefer or despise men, because of their being of this or the other nation, as Jews or Gentiles; or because they are circumcised, or not circumcised; or because they are high or low, rich or poor, free or bound, or the like: the true sense here is, that God valued no man the more, because he was a Jew and circumcised, nor anyone the less, because he was a Gentile and uncircumcised; and this the apostle found to be a most certain truth, of which he was fully persuaded; partly by the vision which he himself saw, and partly by that which Cornelius had, and which the more confirmed him in this matter: these words do not at all militate against the doctrines of personal election and reprobation; and indeed, those acts in God, are not according to the outward state and condition of men, or any circumstances that attend them, or any qualities they have, internal or external; but entirely proceed from the sovereign will of God; See Gill on "Ro 2:11"

Acts 10:35

Ver. 35. But in every nation,.... In any Gentile nation in the Roman empire, and in any part, even in Scythia, or in the most uncultivated parts of the universe, as well as in Judea:

he that feareth him; God, not with a slavish fear, or with the fear of punishment to be inflicted by him, with a fear of hell and damnation, with which Cain, Pharaoh, Judas, and even the devils themselves have feared him; nor with an hypocritical fear; but with a godly filial fear; which is a new covenant blessing, springs from the love of God, is a grace implanted in the soul and regeneration, and includes all true religion, both external and internal; and faith among the rest, without which it is impossible to please God, or do works of righteousness acceptable in his sight, as it follows:

and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him; that is, he who from such principles, as the fear of the Lord; love to him, and faith in Christ, does works of righteousness, particularly alms, as Cornelius did, and which the Jews often call hqdu, "righteousness";
See Gill on "Mt 6:1", such an one is acceptable, or well pleasing to God, let him be of what nation he will: it should be observed, that though God accepts of such who fear him, and work righteousness from a right principle, and to a right end, without any regard to their being circumcised, or not circumcised, or to their being of this or the other nation, yet their fear of him, and working righteousness, are not the ground of their acceptance; but are to be considered as descriptive of the persons, who are accepted by him in Christ; for there is no acceptance of persons or services, but in Christ Jesus: the Jews themselves say, that

"the godly of the nations of the world shall have their part and portion in the world to come. {n}"

{n} Maimon. apud Shebet Juda. Ed. Gent. p. 282.

Acts 10:36

Ver. 36. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel,.... Now the apostle enters on his sermon or discourse, of which the above were only a preface, or an introduction; and his sense is, that the doctrine which he was now about to preach to them, was the doctrine of the Gospel; which it pleased God, of his infinite wisdom and rich grace, to send first to the people of the Jews, by the ministry of the apostles: this word is sometimes called the word of God, of which he is the author; and the word of Christ, of which he is the sum and substance; and the word of salvation, salvation by Christ alone being the principal part of it; and the word of righteousness, because therein is the righteousness of Christ revealed, from faith to faith; and the word of faith itself, because it is the means by which faith comes; and the word of truth, because it contains nothing but truth; and sometimes, the word of reconciliation, because it publishes peace and reconciliation by Christ, as is hereafter signified: this word God is said to send; which shows that it comes from him, and is of a divine original, and therefore ought to be received, not as the word of man, but as: the word of God; and it may be said to be "sent", because the apostles were sent with it by Christ; who ordained them, and sent them forth to preach it in the several cities of Judea; and which shows that

Christ is God, who sent this word by them, and so the text is a proof of his deity; and this was sent to the children of Israel and to them only at first; the apostles were forbidden going in the way of the Gentiles, or entering into any of the cities of the Samaritans; and though their commission was now enlarged, and they might go to the Gentiles, as yet they had not done it, only published the Gospel to the Jews: the substance of which was,

preaching peace by Jesus Christ: that word preached, or the apostles in the ministry of it preached; or rather God, who sent the word by them, preached through them the doctrine of peace and reconciliation, by the blood of Christ; and this being so principal a doctrine of the Gospel, the whole is called from it, the Gospel of peace, and the word of reconciliation: by "peace" here is meant, not peace with the creatures of the earth, the beasts of the field, which, through the sin of men, are become troublesome to them; nor peace with men, which is desirable, and to be sought after, and to a good man the Lord makes his enemies to be at peace with him; nor peace with the saints, which ought by all means to be maintained, and which should rule in the hearts of God's people, and to which the Gospel calls them; but peace with God, which was broken by the sin of man, which filled his mind with enmity to God; and now he is incapable of restoring it, and reconciling himself to God; he has neither disposition, nor ability to perform it; but Christ is the sole author of it: a council of peace was held, in which the scheme of it was drawn; a covenant of peace was entered into, between the Father and the Son; Christ was provided, promised, and prophesied of, as the peace maker; he came into the world for this purpose; the chastisement of our peace was laid on him, and he procured it by his obedience, sufferings; and death: and this is what the Gospel publishes; not peace made by men, by their repentance, humiliation, and works of righteousness; but made by Christ, the Prince of peace, by his blood and sacrifice: and not as to be made by him, or any other, but as already made; being not only a plan drawn, but executed, a finished work; and that not conditionally, if men will repent, believe, and obey, but absolutely, as a thing done, and not dependent on any condition required of man; and a wonderful blessing this is, being made on honourable terms, and so lasting, and bringing with it a train of other blessings; and this being an article in the Gospel, makes that to be good news, and glad tidings indeed: and these doctrines of peace with God by the blood of Christ, and reconciliation for sin by his sacrifice, were to be preached to them that were afar off, and to them that are nigh, both to the Jews and Gentiles; to strengthen which observation, the following clause put into a parenthesis is added,

he is Lord of all: of the whole world, and all things in it; of all the nations of the world, Gentiles as well as Jews, and particularly of God's elect among them both; and therefore he will have the Gospel preached to one, as to another; **Eph 2:17**.

Acts 10:37

Ver. 37. The word [I say] you know,.... By common fame and report, which had for some years past been published by John, Christ, and his apostles, in Judea and Galilee; especially some parts of it, or points in it, such as the apostle hereafter mentions must have reached their ears:

Which was published throughout all Judea; by Christ, his twelve apostles, and seventy disciples; who were sent out by him into all places, where he himself would come:

and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; that is, after John had began to preach the ordinance of water baptism, and to administer it; which were done, to set the Jews inquiring after the Messiah, and to make him manifest in Israel; upon which the word of the Gospel quickly began to be preached by Christ and his apostles, and that in Galilee; for here Christ began to preach himself, and here he called his apostles, and sent them forth to preach it.

Acts 10:38

Ver. 38. How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth,.... And so declared him to be the Messiah, that was promised to the Jews, and expected by them; the anointed prophet, priest, and King; who because his parents lived at Nazareth, and he was educated there, and there he chiefly preached and wrought his miracles, he was by way of contempt called Jesus of Nazareth: and him God anointed, with

the Holy Ghost and with power; with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, without measure; signified by the descent of the Spirit, as a dove upon him at his baptism, and is what in Ps 45:7 is called, "the oil of gladness". The person anointed is elsewhere represented as a divine person; as God, and the Son of God, **Ps 2:6** but here under his most contemptible character, by which he was known among men, because it was in his human nature, that he was anointed; and this anointing belongs to him, as considered in his office capacity; from whence he is called the Christ, or anointed of God. The anointer of him is God, which must be understood of God the Father, who is the God of Christ, and the same that anoints his people, **2Co 1:21** and none but God can anoint with the Holy Ghost; and he it is, with whom Christ is here said to be anointed; who is compared to oil, in allusion to the anointing oil under the former dispensation, used for the anointing of persons, prophets, priests, and kings, and of the tabernacle, and the vessels of it; to the oil that was poured on Aaron's head, which ran down to the skirts of his garments, emblematical of the Spirit poured on Christ, the head, and which from him descends to all the members of his body; and to common oil, both for ornament and refreshment: "power" is added, which is but another name for the Holy Spirit, Lu 24:49. And one particular branch of the extraordinary and immeasurable gifts of the Spirit, bestowed on him as man, was a power of doing miracles: for it follows,

who went about; the land of Judea and all Galilee; which shows laboriousness, diligence, and delight:

doing good; both to the bodies and souls of men; to the latter, by preaching the Gospel to them; and to the former, by curing all their diseases, of whatsoever sort: he did what none of Adam's sons could do, for there is none of them that does good, no not one, **Ro 3:10** he was good himself, essentially and naturally good, and therefore he did good, and he did nothing but good: he knew no sin, he did none, nor could any be found in him; and he always did good, that which was according to the will of God, and well pleasing in his sight; and without him no good is done, even by his own people; they have all the grace and strength from him, by which they perform the good things they do: he is the reverse of Satan, who goes about doing all the mischief he can; and he is to be imitated by his followers, who, as they have opportunity, should do good to all men, especially to the household of faith.

And healing all that were oppressed of the devil; both in body, as "lunatics, epileptics, and demoniacs"; and in soul, such as were led captive by him:

for God was with him; as his Son, essentially, through union to him; and as man, from his cradle to his cross, supporting and assisting him, and with his gracious presence comforting him; and by various instances, showing that he came from heaven, and had a divine mission and commission; which had he not, he would never have been encouraged and assisted as he was, as man, and could never have done the things he did: the Ethiopic version very wrongly reads, "for God was with them"; **Joh 3:2**

Acts 10:39

Ver. 39. And we are witnesses of all things,.... That is, Peter, and the rest of the apostles, were witnesses, even eyewitnesses, of Christ's going about from place to place, and of the good he did every where, and of the miracles which he wrought; and even of every thing

which he did both in the land of the Jews; which takes in not only Judea, but Galilee, and beyond Jordan;

and in Jerusalem; the metropolis of Judea:

whom they slew and hanged on a tree; whom the Jews put to death; for since it was by their instigation, and at their request, it is ascribed to them; and who not content with any death, desired he might be crucified, or hanged on a tree; partly because of the pain and torture of it, and partly because of the shame and ignominy that attended it; as well as to throw off the scandal of his death from themselves to the Romans, crucifixion being a Roman punishment.

Acts 10:40

Ver. 40. Him God raised up the third day,.... According to the Scriptures, particularly **Ho 6:2**. The resurrection, of Christ, though it is sometimes ascribed to himself, as God, whereby he was declared to be the Son of God, yet generally to God the Father, as here:

and showed him openly; in a glorious body, and yet numerically the same he before lived and suffered in, so as to be heard, seen, and handled; by which full proof was given of the truth of his resurrection, in which he appeared to be the conqueror over death and the grave.

Acts 10:41

Ver. 41. Not to all the people,.... Of the Jews, who crucified him; nor to the whole body of the Christians, though at one time to a large number, even five hundred brethren at once:

but unto witnesses chosen before of God; by Christ himself, who is God:

even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead; namely, to the apostles, with whom he familiarly conversed by times, for the space of forty days after his resurrection; and Beza's most ancient copy; and the Ethiopic version here add, "forty days"; and particularly he did sometimes eat and drink with them;
Lu 24:42 and though drinking is not mentioned, it is included in eating, as in **Lu 7:36** wherefore there is no need to connect the last clause, "after he rose from the dead", with the latter part of the preceding verse, as some do, on that account.

Acts 10:42

Ver. 42. And he commanded us, to preach unto the people,.... Not only of the Jews, but of the Gentiles; to all nations, to the whole world, and every creature; for the apostle seems to refer to the commission given to him, and the rest of the apostles, after Christ's resurrection, Mt 28:19.

And to testify that it is he which was ordained of God, to be the Judge of quick and dead: the preaching of the Gospel is a testification of Christ, or a bearing a testimony for him; and among the rest to this truth, that he was from all eternity in the council and covenant of grace; appointed by God to have all power in heaven and in earth; and not only to judge and govern his church and people on earth, but to be the Judge of all men at the last day, of such who will be found alive at his coming, and of those that are dead; who will be raised again, and stand before his judgment seat, to receive their proper sentence; and though this is not expressed in the commission given the apostles, yet is implied therein; Mt 28:18 That there will be a general judgment at the last day is certain, from the reason of things; from the relation of creatures to God as their Creator, to whom they are accountable for their conduct and actions; from the justice of God, which requires it, which does not take place in the present state of things; and it has a testimony in the consciences of men, which the most daring of infidels, at times, show by the fears they are possessed of about it; and it is abundantly clear from revelation, from the writings of the Old and New Testament; from whence it appears that it is future, it is yet to come; that it is certain, being appointed by God, though the time to men is uncertain; that it will be universal, and reach to all men, righteous and wicked, quick and dead, and to all actions, good and bad, open and secret; and that it will be a righteous one, and be administered according to the strictest rules of justice and equity; and that it is an eternal one; not that it will be ever carrying on, but will issue in the determination of the states of men to all eternity: now Christ he is appointed to do this work, he was ordained to unto it in the purposes of God from everlasting; this was settled in the covenant between them; and for the execution of which, he has all power and authority given him as Mediator: and for it he is every way qualified: he is of great and infinite majesty, being the mighty God; of great sagacity and wisdom, having, as Mediator, the spirit of wisdom and knowledge upon him, whereby he is of quick understanding and discernment; and he is of great faithfulness and integrity, and will judge not after the sight of his eyes, and the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness and equity, and will do the thing that is right; and especially, inasmuch as he is omniscient, and knows the secrets of all hearts, and so capable of bringing every work into judgment, with every secret thing; and also omnipotent, and so able to raise the dead, summon all nations before him, separate the wicked and the righteous, and not only denounce the proper sentences upon them, but execute them.

Acts 10:43

Ver. 43. To him give all the prophets witness,.... As David, Ps 32:1 **Da 9:9**

that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive the remission of sins; the meaning is, that whoever believes in Christ with a right and true faith, with the heart, he shall receive, not as what his faith procures or deserves, but as a gift of God's grace, the free and full forgiveness of his sins, through Christ; through the effusion of his blood, and the virtue of his sacrifice. Christ was set forth in the purposes of God, in the types, figures, and sacrifices of the law, and in the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament, as he that should obtain the remission of sins by his blood, without which there is no remission; he came in the fulness of time, and shed his blood for this purpose, and accordingly it is procured by it; and this is published in the everlasting Gospel, that whoever believes in Christ, not with an historical or temporary faith, or in profession only, but with the faith of God's elect, which is the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit, which works by love, and makes Christ precious, shall receive it as a free gift; for it is not to be purchased by money, nor obtained by works of righteousness, nor procured by repentance, or by anything done by the creature, but is according to the riches of divine grace and mercy: through the name of Christ: through the blood of Christ, which was shed for it; through the power of Christ, as God, who is able to forgive it; and through the hands of Christ, as Mediator, who is exalted to bestow it; and for the sake of Christ, and his mediation, whose blood calls aloud for it; and whoever looks by faith to him for it, shall have it, of whatsoever sex, state, or condition they be, of whatsoever people or nation, and how great sinners soever they have been, and whether they are weak or strong believers. Some copies read, "through his blood".

Acts 10:44

Ver. 44. While Peter yet spake these words,.... As he was thus discoursing concerning Christ, his person, his miracles, his death and resurrection, and the efficacy of his blood for pardon, before he had done speaking,

the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. This is not to be understood of the operations of the Spirit of God upon the souls of men, under the ministry of the word; though true it is, that the Spirit of God attends the preaching of thee Gospel, and not only qualifies men for it, and assists them in it, but makes it effectual to many that hear it: hearers of the word lie in the way of the gracious operations of the Spirit; and the gifts and graces of the Spirit are given to persons, or the Spirit falls upon them under such means: which may denote the original of the grace of the Spirit, it falls down from above, from heaven; the freeness of it, it is bestowed on whom he pleases, under the same ministry; the suddenness of it, it comes at once, unthought of, and undesired, as well as undeserved; the power and efficacy of it, it falls with weight, it melts the heart, and converts the sinner; and the plenty of it, it falls in abundance, it is exceeding abundant with faith and love; and the permanency of it, it continues where it falls, and is a well of living water springing up unto everlasting life: and also the invisibility of it unto others. But this is not here intended, at least it is not only designed; for though the Spirit of God, in the operations of his grace, might fall upon them that heard the word, whereby they were regenerated, converted, and sanctified, and so became proper subjects for baptism; yet also the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit came upon them, as they were hearing; not upon the men, the believing Jews, that came along with Peter; but upon Cornelius and his family, and upon all his relations and friends, who came together to hear the word at his invitation, and now were hearing it; and as they were, the Holy Ghost, in his miraculous gifts of speaking with divers tongues, fell upon them in a visible form, as upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost; for that it was in the same way seems probable from Ac 11:15. These extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were necessary at the first preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, for the confirmation of it: as well as for the further confirmation of Peter, that he was right in so doing; as also for the sake of the believing Jews he brought along with him.

Acts 10:45

Ver. 45. And they of the circumcision which believed,.... Or "of the Jews that believed", as the Ethiopic version renders it; the circumcised Jews who believed in Jesus Christ:

were astonished, as many as came with Peter; who were six brethren, as appears from Ac 11:12 these were amazed,

because that on the Gentiles also was poured out of the gift of the Holy Ghost; which they before thought was peculiar to the Jews; and this was according to their former notions, and the sentiments of the whole nation, that the Shekinah does not dwell without the land, and only in the land of Israel {o}; yea, they sometimes say, only upon the families in Israel, whose genealogies are clear {p}: the same they say of prophecy {q}, which is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and was one of those which were now bestowed. They own, that before the giving of the law, the Holy Ghost was among the Gentiles, but from that time ceased to be among them {r}: hence even these believing Jews wonder at the pouring it forth upon them; which they needed not, had they known that the legal dispensation was now at an end, and the Gospel dispensation had taken place; in which it had been foretold the Spirit should be poured forth on the dry ground of the Gentiles.

{o} Zohar in Gen. fol. 118. 4. & in Exod. fol. 2. 3. & 70. 2. Maimon. Kiddush Hachodesh, c. 4. sect. 12. & Jarchi in Jonah i. 3. {p} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 70. 2. {q} Zohar in Gen. fol. 128. 4. {r} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 21. p. 59.

Acts 10:46

Ver. 46. For they heard them speak with tongues,.... With divers tongues, which they had never learned, and before did not understand: and magnify God; they spoke of the wonderful works of God in these languages, as the apostles did at Pentecost, **Ac 2:11** they spoke greatly in the praise of God, and gave thanks for his rich grace and mercy bestowed on them:

then answered Peter; as follows.

Acts 10:47

Ver. 47. Can any man forbid water,.... The use of his river, or bath, or what conveniency he may have for baptizing persons: which shows, that it required a place of some quantity of water, sufficient for baptism by immersion, otherwise it would not be in the power of any man to hinder them having a little water, to be sprinkled or poured on the face: unless rather by water should be meant baptism itself; and then the sense is, who can forbid these persons the ordinance of baptism, or deny the administration of it to them? for such who have the Spirit of Christ, are openly Christ's, and therefore have a right to his ordinances; such, being enlightened by him, are able to see to the end of the ordinance; and to such only can it be of use, and they only can please God in it: nor should it be forbidden them; this is to withstand God, act contrary to the commission of Christ, and resist the Holy Ghost; no, not though Gentiles: converted Gentiles, have as good a right as any to this ordinance; descent from Abraham gives no right to it; there is no difference among men under the Gospel dispensation; Christ's commission reaches both to Jews and Gentiles; and there is but one baptism for both.

That these should not be baptized; though they are uncircumcised Gentiles:

which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we; the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; though, no doubt also, they had received the Spirit, as a spirit of illumination and conviction, as a spirit of regeneration, sanctification, and conversion, and as a spirit of faith and adoption, and as a witness, earnest, and pledge of future glory: and receiving him supposes, that they were without him before, and that he is a gift of God's free grace unto them; and which is no other than the baptism of the Spirit, and is a necessary pre-requisite to water baptism; and they that have the one, are right subjects of the other; nor ought it to be denied them. From hence it appears that water baptism is an ordinance of Christ, to be continued under the Gospel dispensation; it was not only what was practised in the times of John and of Christ, but what was practised by the apostles after the ascension of Christ, in compliance with the commission he gave, which could have respect to no other baptism; since the apostles were not capable of baptizing with any other, not with the baptism of the Spirit: and it is certain from hence, and by other instances, that they did baptize in water; and from the apostle's question it seems, that it must be by immersion in water, as before observed; and from what follows it is clear, that such who are partakers of the Holy Spirit and his grace, are the proper subjects of it.

Acts 10:48

Ver. 48. And he commanded them to be baptized,.... By some of the six brethren that came with him from Joppa, who might all of them, at least some of them, be ministers of the Gospel: and this he ordered to be done

in the name of the Lord; that is, of the Lord Jesus Christ, though not to the exclusion of the Father, and of the Spirit: perhaps the phrase, "in the name of the Lord", may stand connected with the word commanded; and the sense be, that in the name of the Lord, and by authority from him, he ordered them to be baptized:

then prayed they him to tarry certain days; partly to express their gratitude to him for the favour they had received through him as an instrument, and partly that they might be more instructed and established by him. And these baptized persons very likely laid the foundation of a Gospel church state in this place, which we find to continue in succeeding ages; in the "second" century Theophilus presided over it; and in the "third" century Origen and Pamphilus, were presbyters of it; and in the same age, succeeding one another, Theoctistus, Domnus, and Theotecnus were bishops of it; and in the beginning of the "fourth" century, Eusebius the famous ecclesiastical historian was bishop of this church, after him Acacius; in the fifth century Gelasius the successor of Eunomius bore the same office in it; and in the "sixth" century the bishop of this place was present in the fifth synod at Constantinople; and in the "seventh" century it appears there was a church in this place: in which century the Arabians, after they had besieged this city seven years, took it, and killed seven thousand persons in it; and since it has been in the hands of the Turks; and this seems to have put an end to the ecclesiastical state of this place, as Christian {s}.

{s} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 2. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 1. c. 7. p. 109. c. 10. p. 153. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 2. c. 3. p. 19.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 11:1

Ver. 1. And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea,.... The rest of the twelve apostles, and the private members of the churches that were in Judea, for there were in it now more churches than that at Jerusalem, **Ac 9:31** heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God; as well as Samaria, **Ac 8:14** the news by some means or other were quickly brought to them, and no doubt but they also heard that they had received the Holy Ghost, his extraordinary gifts, as well as his special grace, though no mention is made of them.

Acts 11:2

Ver. 2. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem,.... From Caesarea, after he had stayed some certain days in Cornelius's house; so a journey from Caesarea to Jerusalem is called an ascending from the one to the other, Ac 25:1 because Jerusalem stood on higher ground, as well as was the metropolis of the country; and this was a journey of six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles, for so far, according to Josephus {t}, was Caesarea distant from Jerusalem:

they that were of the circumcision, which phrase designs not only the circumcised Jews that believed in Christ, for such were all they of the church at Jerusalem, or at least proselytes that had been circumcised, for as yet there were no uncircumcised Gentiles among them; but those of them, who were most strenuous for circumcision, and made it not only a bar of church communion, but even of civil conversation:

these contended with him; litigated the point, disputed the matter with him, complained against him, and quarrelled with him. Epiphanius says {u}, that Cerinthus, that arch-heretic, was at the head of this contention.

{t} De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 5. {u} Contr. Haeres. l. 1. Haeres. 28.

Acts 11:3

Ver. 3. Saying, thou wentest into men uncircumcised,.... Into the houses of such, and lodged with them, and familiarly conversed with them:

and didst eat with them; which, according to the traditions of the Jews, were unlawful; See Gill on "Ac 10:28" they say nothing about his preaching to them, and baptizing them, because these were so manifestly agreeable to the commission of Christ, in Mt 28:19 and yet how these could be without the other, is not easy to say.

Acts 11:4

Ver. 4. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning,.... Of the vision at Joppa;

and expounded it by order unto them; or related every particular, in a very methodical and orderly manner: he did not insist upon his authority as an apostle, and much less pretended to a primacy to the rest of the apostles; but submitted to have his case heard, examined, and judged of by the body of the brethren.

Acts 11:5

Ver. 5. I was in the city of Joppa,.... And so it is called by Josephus {w}, and in the Apocrypha:

"And he pitched his tents against Joppa: but; they of Joppa shut him out of the city, because Apollonius had a garrison there." (1 Maccabees 10:75)

"The men of Joppa also did such an ungodly deed: they prayed the Jews that dwelt among them to go with their wives and children into the boats which they had prepared, as though they had meant them no hurt." (2 Maccabees 12:3)

here he was praying in an house of Simon the tanner, upon the top of it, and about the sixth hour of the day, or twelve o'clock at noon, which was one of the times of prayer with the Jews; See Gill on "Ac 10:9",

and in a trance I saw a vision; with the eyes of his understanding; for the organs of his body were quite senseless and useless, which was as follows:

a certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet; a vessel which looked like a great sheet,

let down from heaven by four corners; to the earth, which four corners were knit, and perhaps were held and let down by angels, and in this visionary way were seen by Peter, though not expressed:

and it came even to me; descended upon the housetop where Peter was praying; and which was necessary, that he might see what was upon it, and receive instruction from it; and that it was very near him is evident from what is after said to him, when he was bid to arise, and kill and eat what was upon it; and therefore it could not be hanging in the air, but must be let down upon the very spot where he was.

{w} Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 2.

Acts 11:6

Ver. 6. Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes,.... Not of his body, but of his mind; for this was only in vision presented to him, when he was as Paul was, not knowing whether in the body or out of it:

I considered: being intent upon this object, he considered in his mind what it was, and what it should mean; it being something strange and unusual; which came down from heaven, and out of it, and came so close and near to him, that it engrossed all his thoughts, and was the subject of deep meditation:

and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air; not pourtrayed upon the sheet, but standing or walking upon it; the Syriac Version leaves out, "the wild beasts"; and the Ethiopic versions, "the creeping things"; but both are in the Greek copies, and in other versions.

Acts 11:7

Ver. 7. And I heard a voice saying unto me,.... As he apprehended in his mind; and this voice he heard in the same sense and manner, as the Apostle Paul heard when in a trance, Ac 22:17.

arise, Peter, slay and eat; that is, get up and slay some of these creatures upon the sheet, and dress them and eat them.

Acts 11:8

Ver. 8. But I said, not so, Lord,.... For he took the voice he heard to be the voice of the Lord, and yet he was not obedient to the heavenly vision, and even though he was an hungry; which shows what a strict observer he was of the ceremonies of the law, and how much he was prejudiced in favour of them:

for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth; he had not suffered anything to come within his lips; he had not even tasted, and much less ate anything that was forbidden by the ceremonial law, so strictly had he observed it.

Acts 11:9

Ver. 9. But the voice answered me again from heaven,.... From whence the former voice came, and was the voice of the Lord, or of an angel of the Lord, and which answered him again, or

a second time; not that it said to him a second time kill and eat, but what follows;

what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common; that is, had declared to be clean and fit for use, and did not defile, and could not defile the man into whose mouth it entered, and therefore ought not to be pronounced unclean, and of a defiling nature; this Jesus Christ did, who is God over all blessed for ever, and by whose death an end was put to the ceremonial law, and the distinctions of meats by it; Mt 15:11.

Acts 11:10

Ver. 10. And this was done three times,.... That is, the voice from heaven answered three times, and encouraged Peter to kill and eat; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "and he likewise said unto me the third time"; the words as before:

and all were drawn up again into heaven; the sheet with all the creatures upon it, by the same hands that let it down; the Syriac version renders it, "and all betook themselves to heaven"; as if it all went up to heaven of itself; and the Ethiopic version, "and the whole returned again to heaven"; See Gill on "Ac 10:16".

Acts 11:11

Ver. 11. And behold, immediately,.... The moment the vision was over;

there were three men already come unto the house where I was; they stood before the gate, as in Ac 10:17 and as the Syriac and Ethiopic here have it, and were inquiring for Peter, whether he lodged there; and these men were

sent from Caesarea unto me; the Syriac version adds, "by Cornelius": now this incident being just at the close of the above vision, served greatly to explain it to the apostle, and encouraged him to do what he had done; and besides which, he had also the express order of the Spirit, for his going with them to Cornelius's house, as follows.

Acts 11:12

Ver. 12. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting,....
See Gill on "Ac 10:20",

moreover, these six brethren accompanied me; it seems by this, that the six brethren that went along with Peter from Joppa to Caesarea, came also with him from thence to Jerusalem, and were now present, whom he points to; so that it looks as if Peter was aware, that he should be called to an account for his conduct, when he should come to Jerusalem; and therefore brought these six brethren with him, to be witnesses for him, of what they had seen and heard, which was a very wise and prudential step:

and we entered into the man's house; the house of Cornelius, for entering into whose house they were contending with him, and where he entered not alone, but the six brethren with him; the Ethiopic version wrongly reads "three".

Acts 11:13

Ver. 13. And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house,.... The clause, "in his house", is very appropriately put; for since an angel had entered into his house, it could not be criminal in Peter, and the six brethren, to follow him. In one place he is called a man, and in another place an angel; see Ac 10:3, because, though he was an angel, yet he appeared in the form of a man, as it was usual for angels to do; but whether Cornelius knew that he was an angel, is not certain, since he calls him a man; and not he, but Luke the historian, and Peter, who repeats the account of the vision, call him an angel; however, he looked upon him as an extraordinary person, as sent to him from God, and therefore obeyed the heavenly vision. The Ethiopic version reads, "an angel of God; which stood and said unto him, send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter"; See Gill on "Ac 10:5".

Acts 11:14

Ver. 14. Who shall tell thee words,.... Preach doctrines, such as relate to the person and office of Christ, to peace and pardon, and righteousness and salvation by him; such as Peter did preach, as appears by his discourse in the preceding chapter:

whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved; that is, which would be a means of instructing him and his family in the right and true way of salvation; for the Gospel only points out the way of salvation, and is only effectual to it, when it is accompanied with, the power of God: multitudes hear it, and yet are not saved by and those to whom it comes not in word only, but in power, are saved only by Christ, who is revealed in it, as God's way of salvation; it is not bare hearing the word and attending on ordinances that will save any, only such who believe in Christ with the heart, who is the sum and substance of the Gospel, are saved; and still less are any saved by the faith of others; the house or family of Cornelius were not saved by his believing in Christ; but the words of faith and sound doctrine being preached to them, as to him, and faith coming thereby to one as to another, they were saved in one and the same way, namely, through faith in Christ Jesus.

Acts 11:15

Ver. 15. And as I began to speak,...., That is, whilst he was speaking; the word "begin" with Luke, both, in his Gospel and in this history, is used not to denote the time or order of any action, but the thing itself; as in **Lu 4:21** for otherwise it was towards the close, and not at the beginning of his discourse, that what follows happened:

the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning; of our ministry, since the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; meaning on the day of Pentecost, and that the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and those that were with him, in a like visible form, and in the same kind of gifts, as speaking with tongues, as on them.

Acts 11:16

Ver. 16. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said,.... Just before his ascension, **Ac 1:5**.

John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost; as they were on the day of Pentecost, and as now Cornelius and his family were; and since they had the greater baptism, the baptism of the Spirit, the lesser baptism of water could not be denied them.

Acts 11:17

Ver. 17. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift,.... Of the Spirit, of speaking with divers tongues:

as he did unto us; the apostles: who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ: which clause stands either connected with "us" the apostles, and so is descriptive of them who first believed in Christ, and became followers of him; or with "them" the Gentiles, as the Syriac version renders it, "if therefore God gave that gift equally to these Gentiles which believed on our Lord Jesus Christ, as unto us"; for it seems most likely, that faith in Christ came by hearing Peter's discourse, before the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit fell upon them:

what was I that I could withstand God? or hinder the baptism of these persons in water, whom God baptized with the Holy Ghost, and who believed in Christ Jesus: from whence it appears that the Spirit of God is a gift, which he bestows on whomsoever he pleases, without any desert of man's, and that both in his extraordinary operations, and in the common influences of his grace; for it is equally the gift of God to believe in Christ, which is a grace of the Spirit, as it was to speak with divers tongues; and these, though they did not always go together, yet here they did, as on the apostles, so on Cornelius and his house: and hence they became qualified for the ordinance of baptism; not by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, but by his special grace; the extraordinary gifts were partly to confirm the Gospel preached unto them by Peter; and partly to assure him that he was right in going in to the Gentiles, and preaching to them; and to encourage him to baptize these persons who appeared to have also the grace of the Spirit, and to have believed in Christ; as well as to fit them, at least some of them, for public work and service: and now faith in Christ being a pre-requisite to baptism, and it being the will of Christ, and what he gave in commission to his disciples to baptize such as believed in him, and these being apparently such; to have refused to administer baptism to them, would have been acting contrary to the commission of Christ, a withstanding the will of God, and opposing the grace of the Spirit of God.

Acts 11:18

Ver. 18. When they heard these things,.... Peter's vision at Joppa, and Cornelius's at Caesarea, and the wonderful pouring forth of the Spirit upon these Gentiles under Peter's sermon:

they held their peace; and ceased contending and disputing with Peter, or blaming him for his conduct; for otherwise they were not silent, but made use of their tongues:

and glorified God; praised his name, adored his rich grace, and gave him the glory of all the wonderful things related to them:

saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. The phrase "unto life", is left out in the Ethiopic version, which only reads, "God hath also given to the Gentiles that they should repent"; but it ought not to be omitted, being in the Greek copies in general, and of considerable moment, rightly understood; the Arabic version directs to a wrong sense of it, "perhaps God hath given also to the Gentiles repentance, that they may live by it"; the word "perhaps", is very wrongly put instead of "then", which affirms that God had given them repentance, whereas this makes a doubt of it; and upon a supposition of it, the version ascribes too much to it; for it is not by repentance that men live spiritually, but by faith in Christ Jesus; nor do they obtain eternal life by it, but by Christ; though true repentance is an evidence of spiritual life, and it begins with it, for as soon as ever God quickens a sinner, he shows him the evil of sin, and gives him repentance for it: "repentance" here designs the grace of evangelical repentance, which is attended with faith in Christ, as it was in these Gentiles, and with views of pardon in Christ, and which springs from the love of God, and this is "unto life"; is a repentance from dead works, and is attended with a life of faith, and issues in eternal life: and it is also a "grant" from God; it is not in the power of man's free will, who though he may have time and means, yet if he has not grace given him to repent, he never will; his heart is hard and obdurate, and no means will do without an almighty power; not the most severe judgments, nor the greatest mercies, nor the most powerful ministry; it is a pure gift of God's free grace, and a blessing of the covenant of grace: and this being given to Gentiles, shows that the covenant of grace belongs to them, as well as to the Jews; and discovers a false opinion of the Jews, that the Gentiles should not be saved; and answers the design of the Gospel being sent among them, whereby the doctrines both of repentance and remission are preached unto them; and opens the glorious mystery of the calling of them, and may encourage sinners of the Gentiles to hope for this grace, and apply to Christ for it, who is exalted to give it.

Acts 11:19

Ver. 19. Now they which were scattered abroad,.... These were not the apostles, but the other ministers of the word; see **Ac 8:1** who were dispersed

upon the persecution that arose about Stephen; his preaching and miracles, his oration in defence of himself, and his death: these

travelled as far as Phenice; a country near to Syria and Galilee; its chief towns and cities were Tripolis, Botrys, Biblus, Berytus, Tyre, Sidon, Ecdippa, Ptolemais, and Dora. It was famous, as Pliny says {x}, for the invention of letters, and of the constellations, and of naval and warlike arts. It was a maritime country, reaching from Orthosia (now called Tortosa) to Pelusium, or from Sidon to the borders of Egypt: it is the same with Old Canaan, and was so called, and had its name from Canaan; who, according to Sanchuniathon {y}, also had the name of Phoenix, from whom this country was called Phoenice, or Phoenicia. Some think the name is the same with qnep, "Pahanah", or qne twap, "Peoth Anak", the corners of the Anakites; it being the tract of land which the children of Anak, or the giants inhabited, when drove out of Hebron by Caleb, Jos 15:13. Others say, it had its name from the palm trees, with which it abounded; and here, it seems, dwelt some of God's elect, who being made righteous, flourished like the palm trees;

and Cyprus and Antioch; the former of these was an island, lying between the shores of Syria and Cilicia: it had Syria on the east, Pamphilia on the west, and Phoenice on the south, and Cilicia on the north; See Gill on "Ac 4:36" and the latter was a city of Syria, built by Seleucus, king of Egypt, and called Antiochia, after his father's name Antiochus. The account Josephus gives {z} of it is, that it is the metropolis of Syria, and that for its greatness, and other happy acquirements, it has, without doubt, the third place among the cities in the Roman empire; meaning, that it was the next to Rome and Alexandria: and elsewhere {a} he calls it the palace or royal seat of the Syrians; and the Jews, when they speak of a great city, and would describe one, instance in Antioch, a great city, say they {b}, as Antioch; with them, it is the same as Hemath the great, spoken of in **Am 6:2** on which words Jerom has this note:

"Hemath the great is what is now called Antioch; and it is called the great, to distinguish it from the lesser Hemath, which is called Epiphania"

And so the Jerusalem Targum on Ge 10:18 renders the Hamathite, "Antioch": and the Targum of Jonathan on Nu 13:21 renders Hamath by "Antioch". Here many Jews dwelt, to whom the ministers of the word preached the Gospel only at first. Josephus {c} speaks of many in this place, and gives reasons for it:

"the nation of the Jews, he says, was much spread throughout the whole world, and great part of Syria, because near, was mixed with them, especially there were many in Antioch; partly because of the greatness of the city, and chiefly because of the liberty of dwelling there, granted them by the successors of Antiochus; for Antiochus, called Epiphanes, having wasted Jerusalem, robbed the temple; but those that reigned after him, whatsoever among the things devoted to sacred use were of brass, they returned to the Jews in Antioch, to be laid up in their synagogue; and they granted to them equally to partake of the city with the Greeks; and many of the Grecians they brought over to their religion, and made them, in some sort, a part of themselves."

Here the Jews also had schools and taught: it is said {d} R. Samlai taught in Antioch; and here also was a sanhedrim. It is often said {e}, that Nebuchadnezzar came and sat down at Daphne of Antioch, and the great sanhedrim went out to meet him. Now Antioch was formerly called Epidaphne, because it was near a fountain of that name; and in the Targumists on Nu 34:11 Daphne answers to Riblah, which was in the land of Hamath, 2Ki 23:33 and Riblah, Jerom {f} says, is what is now called Antioch of Syria: and that you may know, says he, that Riblah signifies this city, which is now the most noble in Coele Syria, it follows, over against the fountain, (in Numbers it is, "on the east side of Ain",) which, it is clear, signifies Daphne, out of which fountain the above said city enjoys abundance of water. And so Josephus calls Antioch {g}, Antiochia which is by Daphne of Syria; and in:

"Which when Onias knew of a surety, he reproved him, and withdrew himself into a sanctuary at Daphne, that lieth by Antiochia." (2 Maccabees 4:33)

Daphne is said to be by Antioch. Some make it to be two hundred and eighty miles from Jerusalem. So far they went who were scattered abroad at Stephen's death, and carried the Gospel to this and other places, in which there was a manifest appearance of divine Providence, and of rich grace.

Preaching the word to none but to the Jews only, which dwelt in those parts; so little was the commission of Christ, to preach the Gospel to all nations, understood, though it was so plain; or so it was ordered in providence, that as it was to be first preached to them, so it should be only for a while, till the elect of God of that generation were brought in, and until the rest put it away from them, and so were left without excuse.

{x} L. 5. c. 12. {y} Apud Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 2. p. 39. {z} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 2. sect. 4. {a} Antiqu. l. 17. c. 5. sect. 7. {b} T. Hieros. Erubin, fol. 22. 4. {c} De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 3. sect. 3. {d} T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 64. 4. {e} T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 50. 2. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 161. 1. Prefat. Eccha Rabbati. fol. 41. 1. {f} Comment. in Ezek. xlvii. fol. 261. C. {g} Antiqu. l. 17. c. 2. sect. 3.

Acts 11:20

Ver. 20. And some of them were men of Cyprus,.... That is, some of the preachers, that were scattered abroad, were Jews born at Cyprus: such was Barnabas particularly, **Ac 4:36** though he was not among these, as appears from Ac 11:22 "and Cyrene"; such were Simon that carried the cross after Christ, and his sons Alexander and Rufus, Mr 15:21 and others that heard the apostles speak with tongues on the day of Pentecost, **Ac 2:10**

which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians; or Hellenist Jews, who were born and brought up in Greece, and spoke the Greek language; though the Alexandrian copy, and the Syriac version, read "Greeks", as if they were native Greeks, and properly Gentiles, to whom these ministers spoke the word of the Lord; but the former seems most likely.

Preaching the Lord Jesus; the dignity of his person, as the Son of God; what he did and suffered to obtain salvation for lost sinners; his resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, and intercession; the virtue of his blood for peace and pardon of his sacrifice for atonement of sin, and of his righteousness for justification.

Acts 11:21

Ver. 21. And the hand of the Lord was with them,.... Not only his hand of providence, which brought them thither, and protected them; and his hand of love, grace and mercy, which was upon them, and supplied them with gifts and grace, and everything necessary for them; and his hand of wisdom, which guided and directed them; but his hand of power, the same with the arm of the Lord, which when revealed, and made bare, the report of the Gospel is believed: but if that is not put forth, or efficacious grace is not exerted, no work is done, none are brought to believe, or are converted; ministers labour in vain, and spend their strength for nought: but this was not the case here, it was otherwise with these preachers; though they had travelled many miles, and were come into strange places, they were not left of God, nor without success, the power of God attended their ministry; so that the Gospel preached by them came not in word only, but in power, and it was the power of God unto salvation: hence it follows,

and a great number believed; not the Gospel only, but in Christ preached in it, Ac 11:20 which was not owing to the force of moral persuasion in the ministers, nor to the power of free will in the people, but to the hand or power of the Lord; for the work of faith is not a work of man's will, but of God's almighty power and grace; and when that is displayed, multitudes believe in Christ for righteousness and life: and turned to the Lord; and obeyed his commands; see Ps 119:59 as a fruit, effect, and consequence of believing in Christ; for not first conversion is here intended, which is not man's work, but God's, and in which God is the agent, and man is passive; but obedience to the ordinances of Christ, as the fruit of faith, is meant.

Acts 11:22

Ver. 22. Then tidings of these things,.... Of the spread of the Gospel in several parts, and the success of it in the conversion of sinners, especially at Antioch:

came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem; these tidings were brought to the apostles and brethren there, by messengers which the ministers of the word sent unto them to let them know what success they met with; notwithstanding the persecution raised against the church of Jerusalem at the death of Stephen, and the havoc that was made of the members of it, and the dispersion of others, yet it still continued a church, and so it did for ages after: there are reckoned fifteen bishops of it unto the times of Trajan, and the destruction of the city by him, when the Jews were no longer suffered to live in it; and they are these, James the brother of our Lord, Simeon, Justus, Zacchaeus, Tobias, Benjamin, John, Matthias, Philip, Seneca, Justus, Levi, Ephres, Joseph, and Judas; and these are said {h} to be all originally Hebrews: but after the destruction of the city by Trajan, and the Jews were forbid inhabiting it, the church consisted of Gentiles only; and of them bishops were constituted over it, and were as follow: Marcus, Cassianus, Publius, Maximus, Julianus, Gaianus, Symmachus, Caius, another Julianus, Capito, another Maximus, Antoninus, Valens, Dolychianus, Narcissus, Aelius, Germanio, Gordius, and another Narcissus; all these governed this church in the "second" century: and in the "third" century, the bishops of this church were Alexander, Mazabanes, Labdas, and Hermon, who was the last before the Dioclesian persecution: in the "fourth" century, Macarins, Maximus, and Cyril, presided over it; and these were succeeded in the "fifth" century by Joannes Nepos, Prayllius, Juvenalis, Anastasius, and Martyrius; in this age also Lucian and Hesychius were presbyters of this church. In the "sixth" century, the names of the bishops of this church were Salustius, Helias, Johannes, Petrus, Macarius, Eustochius, Johannes, Neamus, and Isicius: in the "seventh" century were Thomas, Johannes, Neannus, Isaac, Zacharias, and Sophronius, who was the last bishop of Jerusalem before the utter and last devastation of it by the Saracens {i}; since which time the city has underwent various fates, being sometimes in the hands of the Christians, and at other times possessed by the Turks, in whose power it now is.

And they sent forth Barnabas; who was himself an Hellenist, and of the country of Cyprus, and so very fit to be sent to the Grecians or Hellenists at Antioch, who had received the Gospel to confirm them in it: for his orders were,

that he should go as far as Antioch which is said to be about fifteen or sixteen days journey from Jerusalem: the phrase, "that he should go", is not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

{h} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 5. {i} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 2. c. 2. p. 2. & c. 9. p. 126. cent. 3. c. 10. p. 146. 148. cent. 4. c. 10. p. 503. c. 5. cent. 10. p. 540. cent. 6. c. 10. p. 335. cent. 7. c. 10. p. 251.

Acts 11:23

Ver. 23. Who when he came, and had seen the grace of God,.... The many instances of the powerful and efficacious grace of God in regeneration and conversion; the great goodness, love, and favour of God in enlightening, quickening, and converting so many souls; and the wonderful gifts of the Spirit bestowed upon many of them, fitting them for public use and service:

was glad; rejoiced at heart, and gave glory to God, as every good man will, at the success of the gospel in the conversion of sinners, let it be by what instrument or means it will, and at the gifts and grace bestowed on them:

and exhorted them all; in whom he saw the grace of God implanted, who had received the doctrine of the grace of God, and had gifts of grace qualifying them for usefulness, in some nation or another:

that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord; that is, with a fixed resolution in the grace and strength of Christ, they would hold to his person, exercising grace upon him, abide by his truths and ordinances, keep close to his people, adhere to his cause and interest, and hold on and out unto the end. The Arabic version takes "the purpose of heart" to be meant of Barnabas, and reads the words thus, "and he exhorted them according to the usual firmness of his heart, that they would continue in the faith of the Lord"; in the doctrine and grace of faith in Christ.

Acts 11:24

Ver. 24. For he was a good man,.... He had the grace of God wrought in his soul, and did good works; he was very kind, and generous, and charitable; he sold what land he had, and gave the money to the apostles, for the use of the community, **Ac 4:37**

and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith; he was full of the several graces of the Spirit, and particularly of faith; and he was full of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and of the faith of miracles; he was full of the doctrine of faith, and of spiritual gifts for the preaching of it: the same character is given of Stephen, **Ac 6:5**

and much people was added unto the Lord; by the means of Barnabas, through his ministry, and the exercise of those gifts he was full of; so the Arabic version, "and he drew a large multitude to the Lord".

Acts 11:25

Ver. 25. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus,.... "In Cilicia" to seek Saul; who had been sent thither by the brethren that he might escape the rage of the Grecians, who sought to slay him, **Ac 9:29**.

Acts 11:26

Ver. 26. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch,.... That he might be useful in directing, and assisting in settling this new and numerous church; in the establishing the members of it, and in putting them into Gospel order, and in a method to secure and maintain peace, especially as they might consist both of Jews and Gentiles; and none so proper to be concerned in such a work as the apostle of the Gentiles.

And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church; preaching the Gospel, and administering the ordinances to them, during that time, at proper seasons. For here being a number of converts, they were embodied together in a church state, very probably by the direction and assistance of Barnabas, who was sent to them from the church at Jerusalem, and in which he might be assisted by Saul: the first bishop, or pastor of this church, was Evodius, as Ignatius observes unto them {k}; Remember Evodius, your worthy and blessed pastor, who was first ordained over you by the apostles; and Ignatius himself was the next, of whom Origen speaking, says {l}, that he was the second bishop of Antioch after Peter, who in persecution fought with beasts at Rome; next to him was Heron, after him Cornelius, then, Eros; to whom succeeded Theophilus, who wrote three books to Autolycus, in vindication of the Christian religion, which are now extant, in the times of the emperor Aurelius Verus, about the year of Christ 171. He was succeeded by Maximinus {m} about the year 179, under Marcus Antoninus; and after him was Serapion, about the tenth year of the emperor Commodus, and of Christ 192; and about the year 214, Asclepiades succeeded in his room; next to him was Philetus, in the year 220, and then Zebennus in the year 231; next succeeded Babylas, the famous martyr, who suffered under Decius, and then followed Demetrianus, or Demetrius, about the year 255; and after him was the famous heretic Samosatenus, who was excommunicated from this church for his blasphemy against the Son of God; and Domnus, the son of Demetriauus, was put into his room, about the year 270; after him was Timaeus, in the year

274; and then Cyrillus, about the year 283: and these were the bishops or pastors of this church in the three first centuries {n}.

And taught much people; besides the church, and with success, as to enlighten, convince, convert, comfort, and establish:

and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch; before they were called among themselves, the disciples, brethren, believers, the church, &c. and by others the Nazarenes, and Galilaeans: whether this name of Christians, which comes from Christ, and signifies anointed ones, was given by their enemies, or their friends, by others, or themselves, is not certain, though it is most likely the latter; and it may be they hit upon this general appellation, upon the union of the Jews and Gentiles in one Gospel church state, and so happily buried the distinction of Jews and Gentiles, or those of the circumcision that believed, and those of the uncircumcision. Luke is particular in relating the affairs of this church, he being himself a native of this place. John of Antioch {o} gives an account of this matter in these words;

"at the beginning of the reign of Claudius Caesar, ten years after Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, was ascended up into heaven, Evodus, the first after the Apostle Peter, being chosen bishop of Antioch, the great city of Syria, became a patriarch, and under him they were called Christians: for this same bishop, Evodus, conferring with them, put this name upon them, whereas before the Christians were called Nazarenes and Galilaeans."

Epiphanius says {p}, the disciples were called Jessaeans before they took the name of Christians first at Antioch: they were called Jessaeans, says he, I think, because of Jesse, seeing David was of Jesse, and Mary of David: and so the Scripture was fulfilled, in which the Lord says to David, of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne, &c.--Or else, they were called Jessaeans from the name of Jesus our Lord; and refers the reader to a book of Philo's, written by him, concerning the Jessaeans, whom Epiphanitius takes to be Christians; but those that Philo {q} treats of were not Jessaeans, but Essaeans, and seem to be the same with the Essenes, who were not Christians, but a sect of the Jews. Nor do we ever find that the Christians were called by this name.

{k} Epist ad Antiochenos, p. 86. {l} Homil. 6. in Luc. fol. 96. 1. {m} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 20, 24. {n} Ib. l. 5. c 22. & 1. 6. c. 39, 44, 46. & l. 7. c. 14, 27, 32. {o} Apud Gregory's Notes, &c. p. 155. {p} Contra Haeres. l. 1. Haeres. 29. {q} Quod omnis probus liber, p. 876. De vita contemplativa, p. 889.

Acts 11:27

Ver. 27. And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch., That is, some time in that year that Saul and Barnabas were at Antioch, there came from Jerusalem thither some Christian prophets; for such there were in the Christian church, who had not only a gift of expounding the more mysterious prophecies of the Old Testament, but also of foretelling things to come; see Ac 13:1.

Acts 11:28

Ver. 28. And there stood up one of them named Agabus,....] The same name with Hagaba in **Ne 7:48** and with Hagabah, or Hagab in **Ezr 2:45** and which the Septuagint there call Agaba and Agab. The name signifies a "grasshopper", Le 11:22 or "a locust", **2Ch 7:13**. In a book that goes under the name of Jerom {r}, it is interpreted, "a messenger of tribulation"; respecting, it may be, not the true signification of the word, as the things which Agabus predicted, as the general dearth here, and the binding of the Apostle Paul, Ac 21:10. And the same writer observes, that this interpretation is a violent, or a forced one. Some take it to be the same with bge, "Agab", which signifies "to love"; and so may be the same with the Greek name "Agapetus", which may be interpreted "beloved". This Agabus is said to be one of the seventy disciples that Christ sent forth: he seems to have been an itinerant prophet, who went from place to place delivering out his prophecies; we hear of him again at Caesarea, in Ac 21:10. Some say he was a native of Antioch; but this does not follow from his being here, any more than that he was a native of Caesarea from his being there also; it seems most likely that he was a native of Judea, and perhaps of Jerusalem, since in both places he is said to come from thence: it is reported that he died at Antioch; and he is placed in the Roman martyrology on the third of February.

And signified by the Spirit; not by the position of the stars, or by any natural causes, or by mere conjecture, but by the Spirit of God:

that there should be great dearth throughout all the world; not only throughout all the land of Judea, but at least throughout the whole Roman empire; see **Lu 2:1** since other writers speak of it in other parts: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar; in the second year of his reign, as Dion Cassius {s}, the Roman historian, says: and {t} Eusebius seems to speak of it, as in the beginning of his reign; for he says, Caius, who scarce reigned four years, Claudius the emperor succeeded, in whose time a famine afflicted the whole world; for this some writers, different from our religion, have made mention of in their histories: though he elsewhere affirms {u}, that it was in the fourth year of his reign; both may be true, it might last so long: and indeed, according to what this writer {w} cites from Josephus, it must be after this time that the famine raged in Judea; for having observed the defeat of Theudas by Cuspius Fadus, the Roman governor, he observes, that at the same time a very great famine happened in Judea: now Fadus was sent into Judea, after the death of king Agrippa, towards the end of the fourth year of Claudius; so that it must be in the fifth or sixth year of Claudius that this famine was {x}. The Magdeburgensian Centuriators say {y}, it was about the ninth and tenth years of Claudius that this famine raged in Greece, Rome, and other parts of the world. Suetonius {z} makes mention of it, and ascribes it to a constant sterility or barrenness: and that it particularly affected Judea appears from hence, that Helena, queen of the Adiabeni, was at this time at Jerusalem, who sent for, and brought corn out of Egypt, and distributed it to the poor {a}; of which Josephus {b} gives this account:

"her coming was very seasonable to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for a famine at that time much afflicted their city, and many perished through want of food. Helena, the queen, sent of her own people some to Alexandria, who bought a great quantity of corn, and some to Cyprus, who brought loads of dry figs; who, as soon they came back, distributed the food to the needy.--And her son Izates, hearing of the famine, sent much money to the chief men of Jerusalem."

The Misnic doctors {c} speak of various gifts which Helena, and her son Monbaz, as they call him, gave to the Jews for the use of the temple, but make no mention of this bounty; though they represent the son as very liberal to the poor, and giving all his goods unto them {d}.

{r} De nominibus Hebraicis, fol. 101. H. {s} L. 60. {t} Eccl. Hist. 1. 2. c. 8. {u} In Chronicon. {w} Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 11, 12. {x} Vales. not. in Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 11, 12. {y} Cent. 1. l. 2. c. 13. p. 501. {z} In Vit. Claud. c. 18. & Victor. Aurel. de Caesaribus in Claud. {a} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 12. {b} Antiqu. l. 20. c. 2. sect. 6. {c} Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 10. {d} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 2.

Acts 11:29

Ver. 29. Then the disciples,.... That were at Antioch, every man according to his ability; whether rich or poor, master or servant, everyone according to the substance he was possessed of; whether more or less, which was a good rule to go by:

determined to send relief to the brethren which dwelt in Judea; either because that Agabus might have suggested, that the famine would be the severest in those parts; or because that the Christians there had parted with their substance already, in the support of one another, and for the spread of the Gospel in other parts; and therefore the Christians at Antioch, in gratitude to them for having received the Gospel, and Gospel ministers from them, resolved to help them with their temporal things, when in distress.

Acts 11:30

Ver. 30. Which they also did,.... They not only determined, but they put their resolutions into execution, and acted according to a rule which the apostle recommends, **2Co 8:11**

and sent it to the elders; to the apostles; for though there were deacons there, yet they chose to send it to them, that they might put it into proper hands to distribute to the necessitous: and this collection they sent

by the hands of Saul and Barnabas; of this journey to Jerusalem, Paul makes no mention in **Ga 1:17**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 12:1

Ver. 1. Now about that time,.... That the famine was in Judea, and Saul and Barnabas were sent thither with what the church at Antioch had collected.

Herod the king; not Herod the great that slew the infants at Bethlehem, nor Herod Antipas that beheaded John, but Herod Agrippa; and so the Syriac version adds here, "who is surnamed Agrippa"; he was a grandson of Herod the great, and the son of Aristobulus: this prince

stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church; Beza's ancient copy adds, "in Judea": it seems to be the church at Jerusalem; perhaps some of the principal members of them; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, the rulers of the house of God. It is scarcely credible that he should lay hands on any of them himself in person; but it is very likely he encouraged his soldiers, or his servants, to abuse them, reproach them, strike and buffet them, as they met with them in the streets; or when at worship, might disturb them, and break them up.

Acts 12:2

Ver. 2. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. This was James, the son of Zebedee, whom our Lord told, that he should be baptized with the baptism he was baptized with, Mt 20:22 meaning the baptism of martyrdom; and he was the first martyr among the apostles: the death he was put to was one of the four capital punishments among the Jews, and was reckoned by them the most disgraceful of them all, and was inflicted upon deceivers of the people; and such an one James was thought to be {e}.

{e} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 1, 3. & 11. 4.

Acts 12:3

Ver. 3. And because he saw it pleased the Jews,.... That is, as Beza's ancient copy adds, "his stretching out his hands upon the faithful"; this pleased the Jews, a bloodthirsty generation of men, who had killed the prophets, and the Lord Jesus, and who were now greedy after the death of the apostles: it may easily be seen from what principle and spirit Herod acted; it was not out of regard to the Jewish religion, rites, and ceremonies, but to ingratiate himself into the affections of the people:

he proceeded further to take Peter also; a principal apostle, and who was well known, and against whom the Jews had doubtless a particular antipathy, and would have been glad to have been rid of him; this Herod was, sensible of, and therefore to please them, ordered him to be taken up:

then were the days of unleavened bread; or the feast of the passover.

Acts 12:4

Ver. 4. When he had apprehended him,.... When his officers he sent to take him had brought him:

he put him in prison; in the common prison, very likely where he had been once before, **Ac 5:18**

and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; each quaternion consisted of four soldiers, so that they were in all sixteen; and so the Syriac version renders it, "and delivered him to sixteen soldiers": how the Ethiopic version should make "seventeen" of them is pretty strange: these perhaps might take their turns to watch him by four at a time, two to whom he was chained, and two others to keep the doors; or all the sixteen together, being posted in one place or another for greater security: and it may be, that the reason of all this caution, and strong guard, might be, because it was remembered that he, and the rest of the apostles, when committed to the same prison some years ago, were delivered out of it:

intending after Easter, or the passover,

to bring him forth to the people; to insult and abuse him, and to put him to what death they should desire.

Acts 12:5

Ver. 5. Peter therefore was kept in prison,.... Till the feast of the passover was at an end:

but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him; this was not done by them as a body together, but either by them in several bands at different places, or by some of the principal of the church at some one certain place, and where they might frequently change companies, and keep on a continual incessant prayer for days together; and whereas it is very likely it might be at the beginning of the passover, when Peter was taken up, and it was now at the close of it, when he was delivered, the church might be engaged by companies alternately, a whole week together, in prayer, on this occasion.

Acts 12:6

Ver. 6. And when Herod would have brought him forth,.... The next morning; so he had determined not to dismiss him, but to expose him to the people, and to put him to such a death they should choose:

the same night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers; fearless of death, being in a good cause, and having nothing to ruffle and disturb his mind; and though he was in a prison, and in such company, God gave him, his beloved, sleep:

bound with two chains; one on one hand, and one on the other, each of which were fastened to the soldiers; that on his right hand was fastened to the left hand of the soldier, that was on that side; and that on his left hand to the right hand of the soldier, on the other side him; such security was made, that he might not get away from them; to which is added,

and the keepers before the door kept the prison; or watched it, that nobody went in, or came out.

Acts 12:7

Ver. 7. And behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him,.... Suddenly and at once, and stood by him; this was one of the ministering spirits sent forth by Christ, to minister to a servant of his:

and a light shined in the prison; the Syriac version renders it, "in the whole house"; and the word that is used does signify an habitation, or a dwelling house properly, but is used also by the Greek writers {f} for a prison: this was an uncommon light produced by the angel, partly as an emblem of the presence, majesty, and power of God, who was present, to work a great deliverance; and partly for the use of Peter, that when being awaked he might see to rise and walk by:

and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up; he touched him on that side which lay uppermost, or punched him on it, in order to awake him, and raise him out of his sleep:

saying arise up quickly; without delay, make haste:

and his chains fell off from his hands; from both his hands, and were left with the soldiers, between whom he slept; which must be ascribed to an almighty power, which caused them to drop off.

{f} Vid Harpocratian Lex. p. 212.

Acts 12:8

Ver. 8. And the angel said unto him, gird thyself,.... He slept in his inner garment loose about him; wherefore the angel bids him gird it up with his girdle, and prepare to walk out after him:

and bind on thy sandals; which were a sort of shoes that covered only the soles of the feet, and were fastened to the leg, with strings:

and so he did; he did not ask any question, or the reason of these orders; he did not dispute the matter, but at once obeyed:

and he saith unto him, cast thy garment about thee; meaning his upper garment, or cloak, which lay by him:

and follow me; suggesting hereby, that he should take care of him, and show him his way, and bring him safe out of the prison.

Acts 12:9

Ver. 9. And he went out and followed him,.... He came out from between the two soldiers, and out of that apartment in the prison, in which he was, and followed the angel where he led him:

and wist not that it was true that was done by the angel; not that he thought the angel was a mere apparition, and all this that was done was a delusion; but he did not know whether this was matter of fact, or whether it was, not represented to him in a visionary way, as what could be, or would be done:

but thought he saw a vision; imagined he was in a dream or a trance, and only saw these things in a vision, and that they were not really done, the whole was so amazing and astonishing.

Acts 12:10

Ver. 10. When they were past the first and the second ward,.... Or watch, which were set within the prison, and might be some of the quaternions of soldiers to whom Peter was delivered; two of them were with him, and others might be placed at these two wards for further security; and these circumstances make the deliverance the more wonderful and remarkable; the watch must either be asleep, or their eyes were holden, or the angel and Peter passed by so swiftly that they were unobserved:

they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city: which was not one of the gates of the city, as if the prison was without the walls of it; but was the great and strong gate of the prison, which for the security of the prisoners was made of iron, and this gate led directly into the city of Jerusalem:

which opened to them of his own accord; as the gates of the temple are said to do {g}, forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem: this was done by a divine power; and because no human creature had any hand in it, it is said to be done of its own accord:

and they went out. The Cambridge copy of Beza's adds, "they went down seven steps"; that is, from the prison into the city:

and passed on through one street; what street this was is not certain; there were several streets in Jerusalem: See Gill on "Ac 9:11" and forthwith the angel departed from him: he being now safe and out of danger, he left him to himself, to betake himself to what house he should think fit.

{g} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39. 2.

Acts 12:11

Ver. 11. And when Peter was come to himself.... For upon his being awaked out of sleep, what with the uncommon light, which shone around him, and with the appearance of the angel, and the chains dropping from his hands, and his surprising escape through the several wards, together with the iron gate opening of itself, he was so filled with amazement, that he was not himself; he could scarcely tell whether he was in the body or not, and whether he was in a dream or a trance, or whether he saw a vision or not; but upon the angel's leaving him he came to himself, the amazement wore off, and he found himself thoroughly awake, and perfectly in his senses, and that the deliverance was real: and then, he said, now know I of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel; this was a thanksgiving to God, and an acknowledgment, that the deliverance, though it was by the ministry an angel, yet was owing to the goodness and power of God; it was God that sent his angel, and the salvation was of the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in the eyes of Peter, and gratefully owned by him:

and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod; who intended that morning to have brought him forth, and sacrificed him to the will of the people:

and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews; not only the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but the body of the Jewish nation, who were now at Jerusalem, on account of the passover; and who before they departed into their several cities and towns, expected to have had Peter brought forth, and put to death before them; but now both Herod and they were disappointed.

Acts 12:12

Ver. 12. And when he had considered the thing,.... The whole of the salvation wrought for him; or rather, where he should go, to what house he should betake himself; ere he was aware,

he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark. This good woman seems to be a widow, no mention being made of her husband, and was sister to Barnabas, **Col 4:10**. She is described by a son she had, whose name was John Mark, because of the frequent mention made of him hereafter; her house being large, and her heart as large as her house, the saints met here, and were welcome, and where they were at this time, though so late:

where many were gathered together, praying; the Ethiopic version adds, "for him"; and there were some in other places, for one place could not hold them all; see Ac 12:17 they held out to the end in prayer; this was their last effort in this way, and in this they were no doubt exceeding vehement and importunate, and they succeeded; so true is that observation in **Jas 5:16**.

Acts 12:13

Ver. 13. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, &c. The lesser door in the great gate, or the door of the porch through which they entered into the

house. So the Jews distinguish between
xtp, "the door", and rev, "the gate"; see Jud 18:16 where the Septuagint use the same words as here. Kimchi {h} says,

"xtp, "the door" is what is of the gate, without the folding doors; for all is called rev, "the gate", whether within or without, with the folding doors, and the outward threshold, as that is joined to the side posts and lintel."

The door was kept shut, for fear of the Jews, lest they should be disturbed: here Peter stood and knocked:

a damsel came to hearken; hearing a knocking, she came out to the door, and listened, to try if she could know who it was, a friend or a foe, before she opened; or she came "to answer", as the Syriac version renders it, to know who was there, and what he or she wanted, and to give an answer. And the damsel was

named Rhoda, which signifies a rose in the Greek language: so the Jewish women often had their names, in the Hebrew tongue, from flowers and trees, as Susanna from a lily, or rose: and which, perhaps, was the Hebrew name of this damsel; and Esther was called Hadassah, from the myrtle tree.

{h} Sepher Shorash. rad. xtp

Acts 12:14

Ver. 14. And when she knew Peter's voice,.... often heard him preach and converse in the family:

she opened not the gate for gladness, filled with joy to hear his voice, and that he was delivered from prison, and in haste to carry the welcome news to the company within, stayed not to open the gate, and let Peter in:

but ran in and told how Peter stood before the gate: she went into the house in a great hurry, and related to them within, that Peter was at the door without.

Acts 12:15

Ver. 15. And they said unto her, thou art mad, &c. "Or art thou not mad?" as the Ethiopic version, and two of Beza's exemplars read, and some others: they thought the girl must be out of her senses; they looked upon the thing impossible; for though they were praying for him, and praying in faith, yet they might have no expectation of a deliverance; but were praying that they might be supported under such a trial, and that it might be sanctified to them; and for Peter, that he might be strengthened and made steadfast, and kept faithful to the last; and bear, by his sufferings and death, a glorious and honourable testimony for Christ:

but she constantly affirmed that it was even so; she asserted it over and over, and was positive in it; nothing they could say could put her off of it; she was sure of it; which when they observed, they could not tell what to say to it, but as follows: then said they,

it is his angel; not his tutelar or guardian angel, everyone having, as some think, a particular angel to attend him; whereas sometimes one angel attends many persons, and sometimes many angels encamp about, and are a guard to a single saint; nor did they think it was an angel sent to give notice of his death, as some persons, by one means or another, have had previous notices of the death of their friends; but rather, that it was an angel in Peter's shape, who had something to communicate: and this agrees with the notions of the Jews, who think that angels do assume the shapes of men on certain occasions: so they say {i}, when Moses was in danger in Pharaoh's court, God sent Michael, the prince of the host of heaven, "in the shape of an executioner"; who brought him at once out of Egypt, and set him at the border of it, the distance of three days journey: Bar Kaphra says {k}, an angel descended hvm twmdb, "in the likeness of Moses", and caused him to flee, and they thought the angel had been Moses: and so it is elsewhere said {l}, that an angel descended "in the likeness of Solomon", sitting upon his throne: there are some who think, that the sense of the brethren praying for Peter, was not that it was an angel, a celestial spirit, but a messenger sent by Peter from the prison on some errand: who represented him, or mentioning his name, the damsel took him for Peter himself. Beza's ancient copy reads, "then said they unto her, perhaps it is his angel", and so the Syriac version.

{i} Chronicon Mosis, fol. 6. 1. {k} Debarim Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 237. 1. {l} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 64. 4.

Acts 12:16

Ver. 16. But Peter continued knocking,.... That they might come to him, and let him in; beginning to be impatient, and being very desirous of seeing his friends, as well as being in danger of being taken up, and had to prison again, should any of his enemies come by, who knew him:

and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished: they could hardly believe their own eyes; it was amazing to them, how it should be, that he should be delivered out of prison, when they knew there was such a strong guard about him.

Acts 12:17

Ver. 17. But he beckoning unto them with the hand,.... This is what the Jews call hzymr, "an hint" {m}, which is a beckoning, or making signs, either with the head or hand: and this was now made, to hold their peace; to be silent, and not clamorous in their expressions of joy and wonder, lest it should alarm the neighbourhood, and the consequence be bad both to him and them; as also that he might have an opportunity of relating the whole affair to them; which he did, after he had entered into the house; which though not expressed is understood, and is added in Beza's ancient copy, and in the Syriac version:

and he went in; that is, into the house: and declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of prison: how he had sent his angel to him in prison, what a light shone about him, how his chains fell from his hands, and how the angel conducted him through the several wards, till they came to the iron gate, which opened of itself; and how when he had brought him into the public streets, he left him; he ascribes this wonderful deliverance not to the angel, but to the Lord himself:

and he said, go show these things to James; the son of Alphaeus, sometimes called the brother of our Lord; for James the son of Zebedee, the brother of John, Herod had lately killed with the sword, Ac 12:2 and this other James very likely succeeded him as pastor of the church at Jerusalem, or at least had the superintendency of affairs there:

and to the brethren; the rest of the apostles, and even all the members; whom he would have acquainted with these things, which he knew would be matter of joy unto them, and a means of strengthening them in the ways of the Lord:

and he departed, and went into another place; to Rome, say the Papists, but without any foundation; if he went out of the city, and to any distant place for more safety, very likely he went to Antioch; but the words do not necessarily oblige us to conclude, that he went out of the city at that time, only that he went from Mary's house; "and went", as the Ethiopic version reads, "to another house": where another company of saints might be assembled, and where he might be more private and secure.

{m} Bartenora in Misn. Gittin, c. 5. sect. 7.

Acts 12:18

Ver. 18. Now as soon as it was day,.... When it was morning; as soon as there was any light in the prison, by which the guards could discern one another and their prisoners:

there was no small stir among the soldiers: the two between whom Peter slept, and the rest of the quaternions that were employed in the wards to keep watch; who were now all in an uproar, and in the utmost concern and fright:

what was become of Peter; whether he was in any other part of the prison, by what means he could escape, and whither he was gone.

Acts 12:19

Ver. 19. And when Herod had sought for him and found him not,.... Neither in the prison, nor in any part of the city:

he examined the keepers; of the prison, and those that were upon the watch, whether they had not been accessary to his escape:

and commanded that they should be put to death: or brought forth, not before a judge to be tried and judged, because they had been examined by Herod already; but either that they should be carried and laid in bonds, or be led forth to suffer punishment; and so our version directs, and which is confirmed by the Syriac; and the Greeks say {n}, that apagwgh is a kind of punishment:

and he went down from Judea to Caesarea; not Peter, but Herod:

and there abode; of this journey of Agrippa's to Caesarea, Josephus makes mention {o}; this place was distant from Jerusalem six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles {p}.

{n} Harpocratian. Lex. p. 32. {o} Antiqu. l. 19. c. 2. sect. 2. {p} De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 5.

Acts 12:20

Ver. 20. And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon,.... Two cities on the sea coast, in the land of Phoenicia; with the inhabitants of which Herod was so enraged, that though he had not declared war against them, yet he had meditated it in his mind, and intended to do it at a proper time: what gave him this offence is not certain; that it should be for entertaining and concealing of Peter, when he made his escape, is without any foundation; and nothing but this following on that account, could ever occasion such a thought:

but they came with one accord to him; the ambassadors from both cities united in an address to him, and joined in ways and means to reconcile him to them:

and having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend; not merely by arguments, entreaties, and good works, but very likely by gifts, by making presents to him: persons in such an office had usually very great interest in the princes they served {q}, as Blastus doubtless had with Herod; Commodus the emperor did every thing at the instances of his chamberlains, and so other princes; for these officers had access when others could not, the king's bedchamber next to sacred; and therefore the Tyrians and Sidonians privately applied to him first:

desired peace; either of Herod himself, to whom, by the means of Blastus, they were introduced; and in their address to him, entreated he would forgive the offence, and be at peace with them; or else of Blastus, whom by some means or another they made their friend; and therefore entreated of him, that he would use his interest with the king, and procure peace for them: and this sense the Arabic version inclines to, which renders the words thus, "and they prayed him that he would take care of reconciliation and peace"; though the former seems to be the true sense: "because their country was nourished by the king's country". These cities were seaports, and the inhabitants of them were much concerned in sending ships to sea, and in merchandise; and it was in Judea and Galilee, which were under Herod's jurisdiction, where they vented

the goods they imported, and from whence they were supplied with wheat, honey, and oil, both for their own use, and perhaps to export abroad; see **1Ki 5:1**
Eze 27:3, &c. And it looks as if Herod had forbid all commerce with them, which if it had been continued, would have been the ruin of them.

{q} Vid. Pignorium de servis, p. 480, 481. Popmam de operis Servorum, p. 33. & Alstorph. de Lectis veterum, c. 12. p. 63.

Acts 12:21

Ver. 21. And upon a set day,.... Either on some feast day of divine appointment, as a feast day was by the Jews called dewm, "a stated day"; or on some day appointed by Herod, for the receiving of the ambassadors of Tyre and Sidon, and of hearing their petitions; or as Josephus {r} says, it was on the second day of the sports and plays, instituted by him in honour of Caesar:

Herod, arrayed in royal apparel; the same Jewish historian in the same place says, that this his apparel was all of silver, and of a wonderful contexture; and that going in this very early in the morning into the theatre, the silver shone so with the rays of the rising sun, that it struck the spectators with terror and admiration:

sat upon his throne; and very likely with the other ensigns of royalty, as a crown on his head, and a sceptre in his hand:

and made an oration unto them; either unto the ambassadors from Tyre and Sidon, or rather unto the common people, the multitude that were gathered together in the theatre, where the above historian says he was.

{r} Antiqu. l. 19, c. 8. sect 2.

Acts 12:22

Ver. 22. And the people gave a shout,.... At the end of the oration; these were flatterers, as Josephus says in the place before referred to, who cried out one from another, saluting him as God; saying, be merciful to us, hitherto we have revered thee as a man, henceforward we confess thee somewhat more excellent than mortal nature: and so it follows here, saying it is the voice of a God, and not of a man; the Vulgate Latin version reads, "the voices of God and not men"; and the Ethiopic version, "the city shouted in, or with the voice of God", with the voice of man; as if this referred to the acclamation of the people, and not the speech of the king; very wrongly.

Acts 12:23

Ver. 23. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him,.... With a disease after mentioned; this angel, according to Josephus, appeared in the form of an owl; for he says, that a little after (the shout of the people) the king looked up, and saw an owl sitting upon a rope over his head; whom he immediately understood to be an angel, or messenger of evil things to him, as it had been before of good things; for it seems by the same historian {s}, that when he was bound by the order of Caligula, he saw an owl sitting on that tree, on which he leaned; when a certain German predicted, that things would in a short time be changed with him, and he should be advanced to great honour; but remember, says he, whenever you see that bird again, you will die within five days. Eusebius {t}, out of Josephus, makes no mention of the owl, but relates it thus; that a little after (the oration and the salutation of the people) the king looked up, and saw an angel sitting over his head, whom he immediately understood to be the cause of evil things to him, as he had formerly been of good: the reason of the angel's smiting him was,

because he gave not glory to God; or as the Jewish historian says, because he reproved not the flatterers, nor rejected their impious flattery, but tacitly took that to himself, which belonged to God:

and he was eaten of worms: Beza's most ancient copy adds, "while he was alive"; Josephus only makes mention of pains in his belly, but these were occasioned by the gnawing of the worms: this was accounted by the Jews a very accursed death; they say {u}, that the spies which brought an ill report on the good land, died this death: their account is this, that

"their tongues swelled and fell upon their navels, and worms came out of their tongues and went into their navels, and out of their navels they went into their tongues,"

of this death died many tyrants, oppressors, and persecutors! as Antiochus, "So that the worms rose up out of the body of this wicked man, and whiles he lived in sorrow and pain, his flesh fell away, and the filthiness of his smell was noisome to all his army." (2 Maccabees 9:9)

and Herod the great, the grandfather of this, according to Josephus {w}; and Maximianus Galerius, according to Eusebius {x}, and many others:

and gave up the ghost: not directly, but five days after, as Josephus relates, in the fifty fourth year of his age, and when he had reigned seven years; but before he died, and as soon as he was smitten, he turned to his friends and said, I your God am obliged to depart this life, and now fate reproves the lying words you have just now spoke of me; and I who was called immortal by you, am led away to die, with more, as related by Josephus: by such a token as this, a man was discovered to be a murderer with the Jews; for so they say {y}, that

"out of the beheaded heifer went a vast number of worms, and went to the place where the murderer was, and ascended upon him, and then the sanhedrim laid hold on him and condemned him."

{s} Ib. l. 18. c. 7. sect. 7. {t} Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 10. {u} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 35. 1. {w} Antiqu. l. 17. c. 6. sect. 5. {x} Hist. Eccl. l. 8. c. 16. {y} Targum Jon. in Deut. xxi. 8.

Acts 12:24

Ver. 24. But the word of God grew and multiplied. The number of those who were converted by it, and embraced and professed it, increased; otherwise the word is the same, whether the professors of it be more or fewer; and this it did, notwithstanding the persecution raised against it by Herod whilst he was living; and after his death, it still gained more ground, met with less opposition, and was more freely professed.

Acts 12:25

Ver. 25. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem,.... Two of Beza's exemplars, the Complutensian edition and the Syriac version, add, "unto Antioch"; and certain it is, that from thence they were sent, and thither they returned, for we find them there in the beginning of the next chapter:

when they had fulfilled their ministry; which was the carrying the relief, or the money collected by the Christians at Antioch, for the brethren in Judea, on account of the famine that was there:

and took with them John, whose surname was Mark: the son of Mary, at whose house the disciples were met together, and praying; and where Peter first went, after he was delivered from prison, Ac 12:12 him they brought with them from Jerusalem to Antioch, being a kinsman of Barnabas; and a man of promising gifts and usefulness, and judged to be a fit companion with them in their travels, for the spread of the Gospel.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 13:1

Ver. 1. Now there were in the church that was at Antioch,.... This was Antioch in Syria, where was a Gospel church, and where the disciples were first called Christians; from whence Saul and Barnabas had been sent to Jerusalem, with a supply for the poor saints there, in a time of famine, and from whence they were now returned: and here were

certain prophets and teachers; who were both prophets and teachers, though these are sometimes distinguished; who had both a gift of foretelling things to come, as Agabus and others, and of explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of teaching the people evangelic truths; these, at least some of them, came from Jerusalem hither, Ac 11:27.

As Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger; the former of these was a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, who sold his land and brought the money to the apostles; and who was first sent hither by the church at Jerusalem, upon hearing that many in this place believed, and turned to the Lord, **Ac 4:36** but of the latter no mention is made elsewhere; by his first name he appears to be a Jew, who by the Romans was called Niger; very likely from the blackness of his complexion, for that word signifies "black": and so the Ethiopic version interprets it:

and Lucius of Cyrene; who very probably was one of the synagogue of the Cyrenians, and seems manifestly to be one of the men of Cyrene, that went abroad upon the persecution raised at the death of Stephen, **Ac 6:9** he is said to be bishop of Cyrene; some take him to be the same Lucius mentioned in Ro 16:21 and others think he is the same with Luke the Evangelist:

and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch: or his foster brother. The Syriac version calls him Manail, and one of Stephens's copies Manael, and the Ethiopic version Manache, and renders what is said of him, "the son of king Herod's nurse"; which accounts for their being brought up, nourished, and suckled together: the name seems to be the same with Menachem, or Menahem, a name frequent with the Jews; there was one of this name, who was very intimate with Herod the great, and was in his service, though before he was vice president of the sanhedrim: the account that is given of him is this {z}:

"Hillell and Shammai received from them (i.e. from Shemaia and Abtalion, who were presidents before them), but at first there were Hillell and Menahem, but Menahem went out, dlmh tdwbel, "into the service of the king", with fourscore men clad in gold---Menahem was a very wise man, and a sort of a prophet, who delivered out many prophecies; and he told Herod when he was little, that he should reign; and after he was king, he sent for him, and he told him again, that he should reign more than thirty years, and he reigned thirty seven years, and he gave him great riches."

Of this Menahem, and of his going into the king's service, mention is made elsewhere {a}: now though this Menahem cannot be the same with Manaen here, yet this Manaen, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, might be the son of him, and called after his name; who might be brought up with the son of Herod the great, here called the tetrarch; and who was Herod Antipas, the same that beheaded John the Baptist: and Saul; who afterwards was called Paul.

{z} Juchasin, fol. 19. 1. {a} Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect. 2. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. & T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 16. 2.

Acts 13:2

Ver. 2. As they ministered to the Lord,.... That is, the five prophets and teachers before mentioned; and whose ministry lay in preaching the Gospel, teaching the people the doctrines of it, and expounding prophecies, and also in prayer; to which latter the Syriac version restrains their ministry, rendering it, "as they prayed to God"; but the phrase seems to be more extensive: "and fasted"; which the Jews were much used to, and the believing ones had not yet left it off; their custom was to fast on Mondays and Thursdays: See Gill on "Lu 18:12". Whether it was on one of those days, that these men were ministering and fasting, is not certain; but this we may be sure of, it was not on the Jewish sabbath, for on that day they never fasted; very likely that this was a fast appointed and fixed among themselves, on some particular occasion; it may be on account of the famine, which was at this time, Ac 11:28.

The Holy Ghost said; either with an articulate voice, or by an internal impulse, upon the minds of three of the prophets:

separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them; the work which the Holy Ghost had appointed, and called them to before this, was to go and preach the Gospel among the Gentiles, distinct from the Jews, of which we read in the latter part of this chapter; and now he would have them be separated from their brethren, as Aaron and his sons were from theirs, and be sent forth from hence directly, upon that work: this shows the Spirit to be a person, since speaking and commanding in an authoritative way, and calling to a work, are ascribed unto him; and that he is a divine person, and truly God, and equal with God, since calling to a sacred office is attributed to him; and a separation to it is ordered for himself, for his service, honour, and glory; he does not say separate them to the Lord, or to God, but to me.

Acts 13:3

Ver. 3. And when they had fasted and prayed,.... Not when they had done fasting and praying, at the time the Holy Ghost made an impulse on their minds, to separate two of their brethren to a work they were appointed to; but at another time, which was fixed for that purpose; when they fasted and prayed, not for direction, who they were to set apart and send; for the persons were before pointed out to them, but that they might have every needful gift and qualification for the work, and be succeeded in it:

and laid their hands on them; not as ordaining them, for this was not an ordination; the Apostle Paul particularly was not ordained an apostle by man, but by Jesus Christ; who personally appeared to him, and made and ordained him his minister and apostle; and much less by men inferior to himself, as Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen were; but this was a gesture and ceremony used among the Jews, when they wished any blessing or happiness to attend any persons; and so these prophets, when they separated Paul and Barnabas from their company, and were parting from them, put their hands on them, and wished them all prosperity and success: could this be thought to be an ordination, as it cannot, since both of them were stated and authorized ministers of the word, and one of them an apostle long before this; there might seem some likeness between it and the Jewish ordination of elders, which was done by three {b}, as here were Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen; but then this was not done without the land of Israel, as here, nor by imposition of hands {c}: now when they had thus prayed for them, and wished them well, they sent them away; to do the work they were called unto; not in an authoritative way, but in a friendly manner they parted with them, and bid them farewell.

{b} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 3. {c} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. & Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 2, 3.

Acts 13:4

Ver. 4. So they being sent forth of the Holy Ghost,.... This is said, lest it should be thought they were sent by men; it was the Holy Ghost that moved the prophets at Antioch to separate them from them, and to send them away; and who inclined their minds to go, and directed them what course to steer: and accordingly they

departed to Seleucia; which was a city of Syria, called by Pliny, Seleucia Pieria {d}; it had its name from Seleucus Nicanor, king of Egypt, who was the builder of it: it was not far from Antioch, it is said to be twenty four miles from it; it is the first city of Syria from Cilicia, and was situated at the mouth of the river Orontes; wherefore Saul and Barnabas made no stay here; and it seems that their coming hither was only in order to take shipping for the island of Cyprus; for Seleucia was upon the sea coast, as appears from:

"King Ptolemee therefore, having gotten the dominion of the cities by the sea unto Seleucia upon the sea coast, imagined wicked counsels against Alexander." (1 Maccabees 11:8)

and was the proper place to set sail from to Cyprus. So we read of Apollonius Tyaneus and his companions {e}, that

"they went down to the sea by Seleucia, where having got a ship, "they sailed to Cyprus:" and so it follows here,"

and from thence they sailed to Cyprus; an island in the Mediterranean sea, the native country of Barnabas, **Ac 4:36**
See Gill on "Ac 4:36"

{d} L. 5. c. 12, 21. {e} Philostrat. Vita Apollon. l. 3. c. 16.

Acts 13:5

Ver. 5. And when they were at Salamis,.... A chief city of Cyprus; and so Herodotus {f} calls it Salamis of Cyprus; and in this island it is placed by Pliny {g} and Ptolomy {h}: it was built by Teucer, the son of Telamon, after his return from the Trojan war; and so called by him, from his native country Salamine, in Greece, as is generally agreed by historians {i}: it was the birth place of the famous philosopher Solon, who is from thence called Salaminius; he died in the island of Cyprus, in the eightieth year of his age; and before he died, gave orders to carry his bones to Salamis, and being reduced to ashes, to scatter them throughout the province {k}: it was also claimed by the Cyprians, as the birth place of Homer, and is said {l} to be prophesied of that it should be; it was afterwards called Constantia, and now Famagusta, and is in the hands of the Turks; of it Jerom {m} thus writes:

"Salamis, a city in the island of Cyprus, now called Constantia, which, in the time of the Emperor Trajan, the Jews destroyed, having killed all the inhabitants of it:"

which shows what a multitude of Jews dwelt in this island, and even in this place; hence, in this verse, mention is afterwards made of synagogues of Jews in it, where the apostles preached, and which was the reason of their coming hither. This place, with the whole island, was taken from the Venetians by Mustapha, general to Selimus the Second, emperor of the Turks, in the year 1571, after a siege of eleven months; which, when he was possessed of, contrary to the agreement made, he put all the Christians to death; and having cut off the ears and nose of Bragadinus, the governor of it, took off his skin alive {n}. Epiphanius, an ancient writer of the fourth century, famous for his books against heresies, was bishop of this place {o}, when it was called Constantia, from Constantins Augustus, the emperor; and before him, we read of Gelasius, bishop of this place, who was in the council of Nice; there was a church here in the fifth century; and mention is made of a presbyter of it, in the sixth century, present at the fifth council at Constantinople; and in the seventh century, a bishop of this church was in the sixth council of Constantinople; and in the Nicene synod, in the "eighth" century, John, bishop of this place, assisted {p}:

they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; the Jews being in great numbers in these parts, to them the apostles first preached, though they were sent unto the Gentiles; and this they continued to do, till the Jews put away the Gospel, which made their way more clear and open to the Gentiles:

and they had also John to their minister: this was John Mark, whom they brought with them from Jerusalem, Ac 12:12 who waited upon them, and provided for them the necessaries of life; for this is not to be understood of the ministry of the word, which is peculiarly ascribed to them, or of his being an assistant to them in it; nor can it be understood of his being the minister in any of the synagogues for them, to bring out the book of the law, and direct public service, where it cannot be thought he should have any such office and authority; but of his ministering in civil and secular things to the apostles, or to the poor by their orders.

{f} L. 4. c. 162. {g} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 31. {h} Geograph. l. 5. c. 14. {i} Vellei Patercul. Hist. l. 1. in initio, Isocratis Evagoras, p. 375. Vid. Horat. Carmin. l. 1. ode 7. {k} Laert. Vit. Philosoph. l. 1. p. 30, 41. {l} Pausanias, l. 10. p. 656. {m} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. I. {n} Petav. Rational. Temp. par. 1. l. 9. c. 12. p. 507. {o} Epitaph. Paulae, fol. 58. K & Vita Hilarion. fol 82. M. {p} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 5. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 5. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 6.

Acts 13:6

Ver. 6. And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos,.... The Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "the whole isle"; for through the midst of the whole island they must go, to go from Salarnis to Paphos; for Salamis was on the east, and Paphos on the west of the islands {q}: it had its name from the Phoenician word, twap tap, "peathpaoth", "the corner of corners"; because both old and new Paphos were situated in the extreme part of the island; and not from Paphus, the son of Pygmalion, by any ivory statue which he had made, whom Venus, at his request, according to the fables of the Heathens, turned into a woman: some say {r}, that Cinyras, a king of the Assyrians, coming into Cyprus, built Paphos; but Pausanias {s} affirms, that Agapenor, who came hither after the Trojan war, was the builder of this place, and also of the temple of Venus in it, for which it was famous {t}; and in a certain area of which, Pliny {u} says it never rained; and from this place, Venus was called Paphia: according to Chrysostom, it was the metropolis of Cyprus; and it is indeed mentioned by Pliny {w}, first of the fifteen cities that were in it; and seems at this time to have been the seat of the Roman deputy Paulus Sergius, afterwards spoken of: concerning this place Jerom says {x},

"Paphus, a city on the sea coast, in the island of Cyprus, formerly famous for the sacred rites of Venus, and the verses of the poets; which fell by frequent earthquakes, and now only shows, by its ruins, what it formerly was:"

so Seneca {y} says, "quotiens in se Paphus corruit?", "how often has Paphus fell within itself?" that is, by earthquakes: the ruins of many goodly churches and buildings are to be seen in it; and the walls of a strong, and almost impregnable tower, situated upon a hill in the middle of the city, supposed to be the habitation of Sergius Paulus; there is also shown, under a certain church, a prison divided into seven rooms, where they say Paul and Barnabas were imprisoned, for preaching the Gospel; what remains of it, is now called Bapho: here

they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus, or the son of Jesus; Jesus was a name frequent among the Jews, and is the same with Joshua, and was in use long before our Saviour's time; there was Jesus the son of Sirach, the author of Ecclesiasticus, and who had a grandfather of the same name, the Syriac version here calls him "Barsuma", which some render "the son of a name"; that is, a man of note, a famous person, of great renown; others, "the son of a swelling", or "the son of ulcers"; he professing to be a physician, and to cure them, with which they make the name of Barjesus to agree, deriving it from a root, which signifies to heal: Jerom {z} pronounces this name Barieu, and observes, that some corruptly read it Barjesu; and he makes it to signify an evil man, or one in evil; and Drusius says, he found the name barihou, "Barjeou", in some papers of his; and a very learned man {a} of later years says, it is the same with Bar-Jehu, the son of Jehu; and affirms, that the Greek word is barihouv, "Barjeus", which others wrongly turn into "Bar-jesus"; the Magdeburgensian Centuriators call him, "Elymas Barjehu"; the reason Beda gives, why it should be so read, and not Bar-jesus, is because that a magician was unworthy to be called the son of Jesus, the Saviour, when he was a child of the devil; but the Greek copies agree in Barjesus; his name shows him to be a Jew, as he is here called: and he was one of those false prophets our Lord said should arise, and deceive many; he pretended to foretell things to come, and practised sorcery, and was given to magic arts.

{q} Ptolom. Geograph. l. 5. c. 14. {r} Apollodorus de deorum orig. l. 3. p. 193.

{s} Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 461. {t} Philostrat. Vita Apollonii, l. 3. c. 16. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 96. {w} Ib. l. 5. c. 31. {x} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. F. & Vita Hilarion, fol. 86. C. {y} Ep. 91. {z} De nominibus Hebraicis, fol 105. 1. {a} Hileri Onomasticum Sacrum, p. 760.

Acts 13:7

Ver. 7. Which was with the deputy of the country, &c. Or the Roman governor of the island; who very likely dwelt at Paphos, it being a principal, if not the principal city in the island, since Pliny mentions it first of all the cities in it, as before observed: and with this governor, or proconsul, as the word signifies, or rather praetor, Bar-jesus was: either he lived with him, making great pretensions to knowledge and learning, which the governor might be a favourer of, or in quality of a physician; the Ethiopic version adds, "and he was a servant of the governor"; or he might be only with him occasionally and accidentally, just at that time, though the former seems most likely: and the name of this deputy was Sergius Paulus; the name of Paulus was common among the Romans; Pliny the younger speaks {b} of one Passienus Paulus, a famous Roman knight, and very learned, who wrote elegies; and Trajan {c}, in an epistle to him, makes mention of Paulus the proconsul; and Pliny the older, among his authors from whom he compiled his history, cites one of this very name, Sergius Paulus {d}. The island of Cyprus was at this time in the hands of the Romans, and this man was the governor of it; it was first inhabited by some of the sons of Japhet; Josephus {e} assigns it to Cittim: Cittim, he says,

"had the island Chetima, which now is called Cyprus; and from it all the islands, and most places about the sea, are called Chethim by the Hebrews; and as a proof of what I say, (adds he,) one of the cities in Cyprus still retains the name; for it is called Citium by those who have made it Greek, and not much differing from the name Chethimus."

After the Trojan war, it came into the hands of the Grecians; and continued with them from the times of Teucer, until Evagoras and his son Nicocles; and then it fell into the hands of the Romans, and through them to the kings of Egypt; and after them became a Roman colony, in the following manner: Clodius Pulcher condemned Cyprus to the Roman people, to possess which Cato being sent, Ptolomy the king of the island, having cast his money into the sea, prevented the ignominy of it by a voluntary death, Anno U. C. 698 {f}. The Roman historian says {g}, Cyprus being conquered, the glory of it was not assigned to any, seeing it was made a province by the decree of the senate, by the means of Cato, through the death of the king, which he brought upon himself; and from that time, as Strabo says {h}, it became a praetorian province, and was now governed by a praetor, though he is called a deputy, or proconsul; the reason of which Dr. Hammond thinks was, because that P. Lentulus, Ap. Claudius, and M. Cicero, being proconsuls of Cilicia, had the administration of Cyprus also granted to them by the senate; hence afterwards the governors of Cyprus were called proconsuls, or deputies. This same Greek word here used, is adopted by the Jewish Rabbins into their language; hence we read of ajwpyjna anyupatov, "the deputy", or "proconsul" of Caesarea {i}; which is explained by a governor, and a judge {k} or a third from the king {l}; and it is refined in the Syriac version: this deputy is said to be a "prudent man". The Arabic version seems to distinguish Paul the prudent man, from Sergius the deputy, or tribune, as it calls him; reading the words thus, "who was by Sergius the tribune, with Paul a prudent man"; but Sergius and Paulus undoubtedly design one and the same man, who was prudent: he is said to be "a prudent man", in the management of his affairs, as a governor; and might be very learned, ingenious, and an understanding man; a man of great sagacity and penetration, who very likely saw through the vain pretensions, and impostures of Bar-jesus, and was desirous to expose him in a public manner; or at least might conclude he would be discovered and exposed by those good men, who were come into the city; and what follows seems to be mentioned as an instance of his prudence:

who called for Barnabas and Saul; sent messengers to them, to desire them to come to him; Barnabas is mentioned first, though the inferior person, because he was a native of the country, and might be best known:

and desired to hear the word of God; whether this was at first from mere curiosity, or from any political view, or from a true desire of knowing the way of life and salvation, which might be wrought in his soul by the Spirit of God, is not certain; though the latter seems most likely, since it issued in his conversion.

{b} L. 6. ep. 15. p. 139. {c} Ib. l. 10. ep. 68. p. 267. {d} Elenchos Hist. ex autoribus, l. 2. & 1. 18. {e} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1. {f} Petav. Rationar. Temp. par. 1. l. 4. c. 18. p. 191. {g} Velleius Paterculus, l. 2. {h} Geograph. l. 14. p. 471. {i} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 9. 1. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 66. 3. & 82. 2. {k} Arnch apud Mattanot Cehuna in Midrash ib. {l} David de Pomis Lex, Heb. fol. 9. 2.

Acts 13:8

Ver. 8. But Elymas the sorcerer, for so is his name by interpretation,.... Not that Magus a sorcerer is by interpretation Elymas; as if Luke was interpreting the Persic word "Magus", which is sometimes used in a good sense, for a wise man, as in **Mt 2:1** by an Arabic word "Elim", which signifies knowing; but "Elymas" is the interpretation of his name "Bar-jesus"; which as that signifies the son of salvation, or of healing, so this, as De Dieu observes, may be derived from Mlx, "Chalam", which signifies "to heal", or to be sound and in health. Junius thinks the name comes from the Arabic word Mala, which signifies "to mutter", as wizards and sorcerers, and such sort of men used to do; and though he rejects the opinion of Tremellius, taking it for an Hebrew name, and to be the same with Uemyla "Elimaatz", which signifies "divine counsel"; yet this, or what is near to it, is embraced by a late learned man {m} who observes, that Elymas is in Hebrew, Uemla, "Elmahatz"; the interpretation of which is, God's counsel, or the counsel of God; the name of a man, Maaz, is read in **1Ch 2:27** and that it is the same with Elymoteros, as Olympas is the same with Olympiodorus; and he further observes, that Barjeus, as Jerom or Origen say it was anciently read, and not Bar-jesus, is the same with Uwey rb, "Barjeutz", or Barjeus, the "son of counsel", and so agrees with Elymas: now he

withstood them: Saul and Barnabas, just as Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of Egypt, withstood Moses: he did all he could to prevent their coming into the governor's house, and them from preaching to him, and him from hearing of them; and especially from giving heed to, and embracing the doctrines preached by them; which he opposed and argued against, with all the cunning and sophistry he was master of:

seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith; the doctrine of faith, from hearing and receiving it; and when he had received it, he endeavoured to set him against it, and cause him to deny and reject it with abhorrence; the Ethiopic version calls him "the king", as in the former verse "the prince".

{m} Hilleri Onomasticum Sacrum, p. 803.

Acts 13:9

Ver. 9. Then Saul (who also is called Paul),.... He was called by both these names; as he was a Jew by birth, his parents called him Saul, that was his

Jewish name, and by which he went among the Jews; and as he was a citizen of a Roman city, Tarsus in Cilicia, he went among the Romans, or Gentiles, by the name of Paul, a Roman name; and it was usual with the Jews to be called after this manner, that is, to have one name among themselves, and another among the Gentiles: it is a rule with them {n}, that

"the Israelites out of the land, their names are as the names of the Gentiles;"

yea, their names differed in Judea and Galilee; a woman went by one name in Judea, and another in Galilee {o}: and it is observable, that Luke calls the apostle by his Jewish name Saul, whilst he was among the Jews, and only preached among them; but now he is got among the Gentiles, and was about to appear openly to be their apostle, he all along hereafter calls him by his Gentile name Paul: though some think his name was changed upon his conversion, as it was usual with Jewish penitents to do; when a man repented of his sin, he changed his name (says Maimonides) {p},

"as if he should say, I am another, and not the man that did those (evil) works."

So when Maachah, Asa's mother, or rather grandmother, was converted, or became right, she changed her name into Michaihu, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah; that her former name might not be remembered, lest it should be a reproach unto her {q}: though others think, that the apostle was so called, from Sergius Paulus the deputy, whose conversion he was the instrument of; and whose family might choose to call him so, because of the nearness in sound between the two names: others think he had his name Paul, or Paulus, from the smallness of his stature and voice, to which he seems to have some respect, in 2Co 10:10 and there is one Samuel the little, which the Jewish doctors often speak of, and who by some is taken to be the same with the Apostle Paul. This name is by Jerom, or Origen {r}, interpreted "wonderful", as if it came from the Hebrew word alp "pala"; and others derive it from lep, "paul", which signifies to work; and a laborious worker the apostle was, and a workman also which needed not to be ashamed; but since it is certain that Saul was his Hebrew name, it is most likely that this was a Gentile one, and not of Hebrew derivation: the first account of these names, and the reason of them, seems to be the best: now of him it is said,

that he was filled with the Holy Ghost; which does not design the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost in general, with which he was always filled, and thereby qualified for his work as an apostle; but in particular, that he had by the Spirit, not only a discerning of the wickedness of this man, but of the will of God, to make him at this time a public example of divine wrath and vengeance, for his opposition to the Gospel: wherefore he

set his eyes on him; very earnestly, thereby expressing an abhorrence of him, and indignation against him, and as it were threatening him with some sore judgment to fall upon him.

{n} T. Hieros. Gittin, fol. 43. 2. {o} Ib. fol. 45. 3. {p} Hilchot Teshuva, c. 2. sect 4. {q} Targum in 2 Chron 15. 16. {r} De nominibus Hebraicis, fol. 106. H.

Acts 13:10

Ver. 10. And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief,.... Which may have regard both to his general character as a sorcerer, and a false prophet; in acting up to which he used much deceit and cunning among the people, and did much mischief to them; to which there was a promptness and readiness in him, as the word used signifies; and also to the sophistry he used, and the mischief he endeavoured to do in seeking to turn the deputy from the faith. The minds of carnal men are vain and empty, and destitute of all that is good, and full of all that is evil: their character is,

filled with all unrighteousness, **Ro 1:29**. They have many of them a great deal of wit, but it is wicked wit, and they employ it in an evil and mischievous way, both to the hurt of themselves and others; they are like the old serpent, whose seed they are, who was more subtle than any beast of the field; they are wiser in their generation than the children of light; they are wise to do evil, though they have no knowledge of what is spiritually good; they are able to form very cunning and artful schemes, to commit sin, and do mischief; for all their craft and subtlety are used in such a way; nor can they sleep, or be easy in their minds, unless they are doing mischief.

Thou child of the devil; perhaps alluding to his name, that instead of Bar-Jesus, the son of a saviour, he should have been called Bar-Satan, the son of Satan, or Ben-Belial, a son of Belial. The phrase Njv rwkb, "the firstborn of Satan", is used by the Jews, sometimes in a good sense, for one that is acute, sharp, and subtle, and that abides by his doctrine, and does his work {s}: but here a child of the devil is used in an ill sense, for being like him in wicked cunning and subtlety; in like sense as the other phrase was used by Polycarp, whom Marcion the heretic met, and said unto him, know us; to whom Polycarp replied, I know thee, the firstborn of Satan {t}: thou enemy of all righteousness; a wicked man is an enemy to all righteousness in every branch of it, in whatsoever light it may be considered: he is an enemy, yea, enmity itself against God the righteous being, and who is the fountain of all righteousness; he is an enemy to Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the Lord our righteousness; he is an enemy to that righteousness which he has wrought out; he is an enemy to all righteous persons, and hates their holy and righteous conversation; he is an enemy to the law, and cannot be subject to it, which is the rule of righteousness; and he is an enemy to the Gospel, which reveals the righteousness of God from faith to faith, and teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly; in short he is an enemy to all righteousness, moral and evangelical.

Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? the doctrines and ordinances of Christ, in which he has directed his people to walk; which this man, through his sophistry and wickedness, in which he was industrious and indefatigable, endeavoured to render intricate and obscure, when they were plain, and straight, and easy. "For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them", Ho 14:9 they are right, and it is becoming such to walk in them; they are plain to them that have a true knowledge of them, even wayfaring men, though fools shall not err in them; they are entirely consistent with the righteousness and holiness of God, and lead right on to eternal glory and happiness. Christ himself is the true way to eternal life, which is plainly pointed, and clearly directed to in the word of God, and by the ministers of the Gospel, who show unto men the way of salvation; the path of truth is fully described, and such things said of it as are very inviting to walk in it; and good men cannot but choose and delight to walk in it, when led into it by the Spirit of truth: Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths of peace; even all the paths of duty and worship, the ways of righteousness and holiness; but wicked men seek to pervert these ways, to give a false account of them, to set them in a wrong light, and represent them not only as rough and troublesome, but as dangerous, and leading to ruin; and do all they can to hinder persons from entering into them, and to cause those to stumble who are in them; nor will they cease acting this wicked part; they are continually at work to make the ways of Christ odious, to set people against them, to discourage from walking in them by their opposition to them, the false glosses they put upon them, and by their scoffs and jeers at those that walk in them, and by their violent persecutions of them, when it is in their power.

{s} T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 3. 1. & T. Rab. Yebamot, fol. 16, 1. & Juchasin, fol. 14. 1. & 55. 1. {t} Irenaeus adv. Haeres. l. 3. c. 3.

Acts 13:11

Ver. 11. And now behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee,.... That is, the power of God was just ready to be exerted on him in a way of punishment, by striking him with blindness:

and thou shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a season: so blind as not to see the sun, when it shined ever so brightly: this punishment seems to be but for a time; and some say that Elymas repented, and had his sight restored to him; and after that he returned to his sorcery, and again greatly opposed Barnabas in the island of Cyprus:

and immediately there fell on him a mist and darkness; as soon as ever the apostle had said the above words, a dark mist fell upon his eyes, which began the blindness, and issued in a total one:

and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand; he groped about the room, if he could find, and lay hold on some person to lead him: for he was quickly stone blind, so that he could not guide himself, as the men of Sodom were, when smitten with blindness by the angel; wherefore, though they groped about for the door of the house till they were weary, they could not find it, Ge 19:11 of which the Jews say, as here, that it was Mvh tam hkm, "a stroke from God" {u}. Blind men need one to hold them by the hand, and lead them, as Samson, Jud 16:26 and Saul, **Ac 9:8**. The striking this man with blindness is an instance of the power the apostles were endued with, for the punishing of offenders: so Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for telling a lie: and the incestuous person was delivered to Satan to undergo a corporeal punishment for his incest; as Hymenaeus and Alexander were for their blasphemy, **Ac 5:5**.

{u} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 20. 3.

Acts 13:12

Ver. 12. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done,.... That Elymas was struck with blindness immediately, and that the hand of God was manifestly in it, and there was no juggle nor magic art in the case; it was a plain fact, which was certain and visible:

he believed; in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the apostle preached:

being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord: both at what was contained in it: for there are many astonishing things in the doctrine of faith; as the birth of Christ of a virgin; the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his person; salvation through his crucifixion and death, and the resurrection of the dead, with others: and also at the miracles which attended this doctrine, and confirmed it; though the Alexandrian copy reads the words thus, "being astonished, he believed in the doctrine of the Lord"; which affords a very easy and natural sense, as that being filled with admiration at the striking of Elymas with blindness, he was induced to believe the doctrine of Christ, preached by Paul and Barnabas, and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "he wondered, and believed in our Lord": and Beza's ancient copy, and others read, "he wondered and believed in God". This deputy we hear no more of afterwards; there is no reason to believe that he quitted his government of this island; though some pretend to say that he did, and followed the Apostle Paul, and went with him into Spain; and that he was left by him at Narbonne in Languedoc in France, and became bishop of that place; which office he held till his death. And though we read of no more converted at this time in Paphos, yet it is highly probable there were others, and that a foundation of a Gospel church state was laid in this place, even though Heathenism still continued. The temple of Venus remained in this place in the "second" century; and in the "fourth" century Venus was worshipped here; yet in the beginning of the "fourth" century, in the council of Nice, Cyril, bishop of Paphos, was present; and in the "fifth" century, a bishop of this place was at the synod of Chalcedon: and in the "eighth" century, Michael, bishop of Taphos, was in the Nycene synod {w}. Jerom {x} makes mention of Hilarion, an eminent servant of Christ, who was for some time at Paphos, in the fourth century, and of the many miraculous cures he wrought here; but of the church here, or of any number of believers in Christ, he takes no notice, only of one Hesychius, a disciple; though it is certain there must be a church at this time, as before observed.

{w} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 2. c. 15. p. 193. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 5. c. 15. p. 865. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 6. {x} Vita Hilarion. fol. 86. C.

Acts 13:13

Ver. 13. Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos,.... Which was upon the sea coast: so Jerom {y} says, that Paphos was "urbs maritima", a city on the sea coast of the island of Cyprus; it was on the western part of the island, to the west of which lay the sea of Pamphylia, over which the apostle, and his company, sailed to the place next mentioned, which was in Pamphylia; and so Apollonius Tyaneus {z}, having got a ship at Seleucia, is said to sail to Paphos in Cyprus; and from hence the apostle, and those that were with him, set sail; and as the Syriac version renders it, "went by sea", or "through the sea"; that is, of Pamphylia; of which mention is made in Ac 27:5.

They came to Perga in Pamphylia which country was before called Mopsopia; See Gill on "Ac 2:10" which now, with Cilicia, is called Caramania; and among the cities and towns in it, both Pliny {a} and Ptolomy {b} make mention of Perga; where was a famous temple of Diana, whence she was sometimes called Pergea {c}; and every year a great feast was kept here in honour of her: it was the birth place of Apollonius, a very famous geometrician, who wrote eight books of conic sections, four of which are now extant {d}; and who, from his native place, is called Apollonius Pergaeus {e}. It was situated between two great rivers, Oestros and Catarctes {f}; and since grp, "Parag", in the eastern languages, signifies "to delight", perhaps it might be so called from its delightful situation. Hilleras {g} observes, Pargi (or rather Perage), as is the word in the Syriac version of Mt 23:37 with the Syrians signifies the young of birds, as of hens and doves; and so do Pargiia, Pargiot, and Perigin, with the Jewish Rabbins {h}; which writer seems to suggest, that this place was so called from the multitude of fowls that were about it.

And John departing from them returned to Jerusalem; that is, John Mark, whom Paul and Barnabas took with them, and who was a minister to them: but what was the reason of his departure, whether for the sake of seeing his mother at Jerusalem; or because he did not like, but grew weary of the travels, labours, and fatigues of the apostle, and his company; or did not choose to go among the Gentiles, is not certain: however, his departure was resented by Paul; and it laid a foundation for a sharp contention between him and Barnabas, who was uncle to this John Mark, Ac 15:38 from whence it appears that it was not at Paphos in Cyprus, but at Perga in Pamphilia, that he left them, by which the mistake of some interpreters on this text must be corrected.

{y} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. F. {z} Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 3. c. 16. {a} Nat. Hist, l. 5. c. 27. {b} Geograph. l. 5. c. 5. {c} Pompon. Mela, l. 1. c. 14. {d} Vid. Fabricii Bibliothec. Graec. l. 3. c. 22. sect. 17, 18, 19. {e} Vitruvius de Architectura, l. 1. c. 1. {f} Mela, ut supra. (Pompon. Mela, l. 1. c. 14.) {g} Onomasticum Sacrum, p. 906. {h} T. Bab Beracot, fol. 39. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 24. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 17, fol. 14. 2. Midrash Echa Rabbati, fol. 43. 1.

Acts 13:14

Ver. 14. But when they departed from Perga,.... Where they seemed not to make any long stay; nor is there any account of what they did there; though it is certain here was a church of Christ in after times, and very likely planted by the apostles; for after this Paul and Barnabas preached the word in this place, Ac 14:25 and no doubt with success. In the third century there were martyrs of this church at Perga, which suffered under the Emperor Decius; and in the, fourth century, we read of a famous church in this place, over which Jovinian was bishop or pastor; and in the "fifth" century there was a church here, whose bishop is mentioned in the catalogue of bishops who assisted in the first council at Ephesus; and, in the same century, the church of this place was the metropolitan church of Pamphilia; and, in the "sixth" century, one Epiphanius was bishop of Perga; and, in the "seventh" century, it is spoken of as the metropolitan of Pamphilia; and, in the "eighth" century, we read of Sisinnius as bishop of it {i}; so far down can we trace Christianity in this city.

They came to Antioch in Pisidia; so called to distinguish it from Antioch of Syria, from whence they were sent, Ac 13:1 and so this place is called Antioch of Pisidia by Ptolomy {k}; and also from another Antioch in Mygdania, before called Nisibis, as Pliny {l} observes, and which is the Antioch in the Apocrypha:

"Afterward departed he in all haste, and returned unto Antiochia, where he found Philip to be master of the city: so he fought against him, and took the city by force." (1 Maccabees 6:63)

"Heard that Philip, who was left over the affairs in Antioch, was desperately bent, confounded, intreated the Jews, submitted himself, and sware to all equal conditions, agreed with them, and offered sacrifice, honoured the temple, and dealt kindly with the place," (2 Maccabees 13:23)

concerning which Josephus {m} has these words; Nisibis is the name of the country, and in it formerly the Macedonians built Antioch, which they called Mygdonia. Pisidia was a province of Asia; it had Pamphilia on the north, Lycaonia on the east, and Phrygia Pacatiana on the west; and it is mentioned together with Phrygia, Lycaonia, and Pamphilia by Pliny {n}: and this Antioch in it, is, by the same writer, called Caesarea {o}: his words are, the Pisidians have their seat upon the top (of the valley) formerly called Solymi, whose colony is Caesarea, the same with Antioch. This is the Antioch to which Paul and Barnabas came, when they went from Perga, where were many Jews, and who had a synagogue in it: we read before, in **Ac 2:9** of devout Jews that came to Jerusalem, whose native places were Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphilia, to which Pisidia was near: wherefore it follows, and

went into the synagogue on the sabbath day; for though the ceremonial law was abrogated by the death of Christ, it still was observed by the Jews, who had their synagogues open on that day for religious service; wherefore Paul and Barnabas took the opportunity of going in when they were assembled together, in order to preach Christ to them, not having a convenient time on other days:

and sat down: on one of the seats in the synagogue; either as hearers of the law and prophets, which were read every sabbath day in the synagogues; or else to teach the word, expound the Scriptures, and preach the Gospel of Christ, it being usual to sit when this was done; See Gill on "Mt 5:1" and both were true, for they heard a part of the law and prophets read, according to the custom of the Jews; see the following verse, and Ac 15:21 and they also gave a word of exhortation to the people.

{i} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3, 418. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 7. p. 3, 112, cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4. {k} L. 5. c. 4. {l} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 13. {m} Antiqu. l. 20. c. 3. sect. 3. {n} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 32. & l. 6. c. 34. & Solin Polyhistor. c. 53. & 57. {o} Plin. ib. l. 5. c. 27.

Acts 13:15

Ver. 15. And after the reading of the law and the prophets,.... Which was done every sabbath day, Ac 15:21 The five books of Moses, which are meant by the law, were divided into sections: Genesis was divided into twelve, Exodus into eleven, Leviticus into ten, Numbers into ten, and Deuteronomy into ten, which in all make fifty three sections: and so by reading one on each sabbath, and two on one day, they read through the whole law in the course of a year, and which they finished at the close of the feast of tabernacles; and that day was called hrwt txmv "the rejoicing of the law"; it was a day of rejoicing, that the law was read through. Some make fifty four sections, and then two of them must be read together, on two sabbath days, to finish the whole in the year. In some synagogues the section was divided into three parts, and so they finished the law in three years; but this custom was less common {p}. The custom of reading the law, the Jews say, was one hundred and seventy years before the time of Jesus Christ; though some say the division of the law, into sections, was made by Ezra; and others refer it to Moses himself: it is certain it obtained in the times of Christ and his apostles, as did also the reading of the prophets, and which was introduced in this way, and upon this account. When Antiochus Epiphanes burnt the book of the law, and forbad the reading of it, the Jews in the room of it selected some passages out of the prophets, which they thought came nearest in words and sense to the sections of the law, and read them in their stead; and when the law was restored again, they still continued the reading of the prophetic sections; and the section for the day was called hrjph, "the dismission", because usually the people were dismissed upon it, unless anyone stood up, and preached or expounded the word of God unto the people: hence the following message and address to the apostles,

the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them; that is, those who were the principal men in the synagogue, the ruler of it, together with the elders; for there was but one ruler in a synagogue;
See Gill on "Mt 9:18" though there were more elders; and so the Syriac version here renders it, "the elders of the synagogue"; but it may be asked, why should they send to the apostles? how did they know that they were teachers, being strangers? this they might conclude from their outward appearance, their gravity and solidity; for as for habit or dress there was no distinction; or from their sitting down when they came into the synagogue, which was the custom of teachers; or they might have had some knowledge of them, and conversation with them, before they came into the synagogue; for it cannot be reasonably thought that they admitted anyone, whether they knew him or not, to teach in their synagogues:

saying, ye men and brethren: which was the common style of the Jews, they used in addresses, and especially to their own countrymen, as they might perceive Paul and Barnabas were; see **Ac 2:29**.

if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on; the sense is, if they were prepared to preach, or had anything upon their minds to say to the people; or if they had, as it is in the original text, "any word of exhortation or comfort" in them, as they had indeed a rich treasure in their earthen vessels, they had leave and liberty to speak it to the people. "A word of exhortation" designs any doctrine that might be for instruction and comfort, and this was agreeably to the practice of the Jews. For it is said {q}

"on the sabbath day, hvrd Nyvrwd, "they preach a sermon", or expound to housekeepers (or masters of families), who are employed in business all the days of the week; and in the midst of the sermon they teach them the traditions, concerning what is forbidden, and what is lawful; and it is better for them to hear than to read in the Hagiographa;"

which books they did not read publicly, as is said in the same place, only the law and the prophets; with the latter of which they dismissed the people, unless a sermon was preached; and which, when done, was chiefly for the sake of the common people, men and women: and it is said {r}, that

"the women, and the people of the earth (or the common people), come to hear the sermon, and the preachers ought to draw out their hearts;"

speak out their whole mind, and deliver all they know that may be instructive and profitable.

{p} Maimon. Hilchot Tephilla, c. 13. sect. 1. Benjamin Itinerar. p. 114, 115.
{q} Gloss. in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 115. 1. {r} Ib. fol. 30. 2.

Acts 13:16

Ver. 16. Then Paul stood up,.... Not so much that he might be heard; or merely out of reverence and respect to the rulers, and the people; but to show that he accepted the invitation; as also in order to take his proper place in the synagogue, and sit down and teach, as was their custom:

and beckoning with his hand; to the people to be silent, and attend to what he had to say:

said, men of Israel; by whom are meant the proper Jews, the natural descendants of Jacob, whose name was Israel; this was accounted a very honourable character, and was a common form of address; see **Ac 2:22**

and ye that fear God; not as distinguishing some among the Israelites from the rest, as if there were some of them that did not fear God; for by these are meant, not Jews by birth, but proselytes, devout and religious men from among the Gentiles; who were proselyted to the Jewish religion, and attended with them in their synagogues on religious worship; and that there were such in this synagogue, is certain from Ac 13:43 and we find that sometimes the Jews distinguish the proselytes from the Israelites by this very character {s}: it is said, Ps 128:1

"blessed is everyone that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways; he does not say blessed are the Israelites, blessed are the priests, blessed are the Levites, but blessed is everyone that feareth the Lord; Myrgh wla "these are the proselytes, for they fear the Lord"--of what proselyte is it "said blessed?" of the proselyte who is a proselyte of righteousness, and not of the Cuthites, of whom it is written, 2Ki 17:33 but of a proselyte who fears the Lord, and walks in his ways;"

so Ps 22:23 are interpreted by many Jewish writers {t}. Now to both these sort of persons, both to the proper Jews, and to the proselytes of righteousness, the apostle addresses himself, and desires they would give audience to what he had to say; which is as follows.

{s} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 190. 4. {t} Midrash Tillim, Jarchi, & Aben Ezra, in loc.

Acts 13:17

Ver. 17. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers,.... Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed after them, to be a peculiar people to himself; wherefore he is often, as here, styled their God, and whom he distinguished and blessed with many blessings, civil and religious, above all people upon the face of the earth. The apostle seems particularly to address himself to the Gentiles, the inhabitants of Antioch, and the proselytes of righteousness, now in the synagogue, Ac 13:42 and, as it were, with his finger pointed to the native Jews present, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, a part of the people whose God the Lord was:

and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt as they did for many years, and as the Lord foretold to Abraham they should, Ge 15:13 This refers either to the great honour and dignity Joseph was advanced unto, and to the favours and privileges bestowed on Jacob and his family at the first of their sojourning in that land; or to the great increase of their posterity towards the close of it, even when they were the most oppressed and afflicted.

And with an high arm he brought them out of it out of the land of Egypt, and out of their oppression in it; which was owing to, and was a wonderful display of his mighty power and great strength here expressed by an "high arm" for nothing short of that could have wrought deliverance for them.

Acts 13:18

Ver. 18. And about the time of forty years,.... From their coming out of Egypt, to their entrance into the land of Canaan:

suffered he their manners in the wilderness; which were very perverse and provoking; as their murmuring for water, their rebellion against Moses and Aaron, their idolatry and the ill report brought on the good land by their spies; and yet the Lord fed them, and led them, and kept them as the apple of his eye: some think the true reading is etrofoforhsen, "he bore", or "fed them", as a nurse bears and feeds her children; and so the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, "he nourished them"; rained manna, and gave them quails from heaven, and furnished a table for them in the wilderness: and indeed, though there were instances of God's patience and forbearance with them, yet certain it is, that as he was tempted and proved by them, so he was grieved with them during the forty years in the wilderness; and often let fall his vengeance upon them, by cutting off great numbers of them; and even the carcasses of all that generation that came out of Egypt fell in the wilderness; nor did any of them enter into the land of Cannan, but Joshua and Caleb.

Acts 13:19

Ver. 19. And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan,.... The Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, and Girgashites; and the name of seven nations is what they are usually called by in Jewish writings; and though they were not utterly destroyed, or everyone of them put to death, or driven out, for some remained to be thorns in the sides of the Israelites; yet they were so wasted and conquered, that they could never recover any more: he divided their land to them; every tribe had its portion of it assigned, by lot; see Jos 14:1.

Acts 13:20

Ver. 20. And after that he gave unto them judges,.... As Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Samson, and Eli:

about the space of four hundred and fifty years; not that from the division of the land of Canaan among the tribes, to Samuel the prophet, was such a space of years; for from the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt, to the year that Solomon began to build the temple, were but four hundred and fourscore years, **1Ki 6:1** and out of these must be taken the forty years the children of Israel were in the wilderness, and seven years in subduing the land of Canaan, before the division of it, which reduce this number to four hundred and thirty and three; and from hence must be deducted the time of Samuel's judging Israel, the reigns of Saul and David, and three years of Solomon's, which reduced the years of the judges to less than four hundred years; and according to some, the years of the judges were three hundred and fifty seven; and according to others, three hundred and thirty nine, and both fall short of the space of years here assigned. The Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read this clause in connection with the preceding words, "he divided their land unto them, about the space of four hundred years, and after that he gave unto them judges"; agreeably hereunto the Ethiopic version renders it, "and after four hundred and fifty years, he set over them governors, &c". So that this account respects not the time of the judges, or how long they were, but refers to all that goes before, and measures out the space of time from God's choice of the Jewish fathers, to the division of the land of Canaan: and reckoning from the birth of Isaac, when the choice took place, and in whom Abraham's seed was called, there was much about such a number of years; for from the birth of Isaac to the birth of Jacob, were sixty years; from thence to his going down into Egypt, an hundred and thirty years; and from thence to the Israelites coming out of Egypt, two hundred and ten years; and from thence to their entrance into the land of Canaan, forty years; and from that time to the division of the land, seven years, which in all make four hundred and forty seven years: so that, according to this account, there were three years wanting of the sum in the text; hence the apostle might with great propriety say, that it was about the space of so many years. It follows,

until Samuel the prophet; the meaning of which, is not that there was such a space of time as before mentioned, from the distribution of the land of Canaan until the times of Samuel the prophet, during which space judges were given; but that after that term of time was expired, God gave them judges, or raised up one after another, until Samuel the prophet, who was the last of them: of his character as a prophet, See Gill on "Ac 3:24" and which is a title frequently given him by Jewish writers {u}.

{u} Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 4. sect. 3.

Acts 13:21

Ver. 21. And afterward they desired a king,.... **1Sa 8:5** which the Jews {w} say, was in the tenth year of Samuel; that is, of his government over Israel, or of his judging them:

and God gave unto them Saul; whose name signifies one that is asked; he was

the son of Cis; so the Septuagint read and pronounce the word "Kish", the name of Saul's father, **1Sa 9:1** a man of the tribe of Benjamin; not of Judah, from whence the sceptre was not to depart till Shiloh came; the business of their asking a king being resented by God, he gives them their first king of another tribe:

by the space of forty years. The Jews are very much divided about the years of Saul's reign, some allow him but two years {x}, and others three, one year that he reigned with Samuel, and two by himself {y}, which they conclude from 1Sa 13:1 but others {z} think this too short a time for the things done by him, the wars he fought with many nations, and his persecution of David from place to place; wherefore others {a} allow him, some seventeen, and others twenty years; but our apostle ascribes forty years to him, which must be understood both of him and Samuel; with which Josephus {b} agrees, who says that he reigned eighteen years, during Samuel's life, and twenty two years after his death, which make the space of forty years fixed by the apostle; though the clause, "by the space of forty years", may be read in construction with the latter end of the preceding verse, until Samuel the prophet; who, the Jews {c} own, judged so many years: wherefore the apostle is not to be charged with an error, as he is by a Jewish {d} objector; who observes, that from the beginning of Saul's kingdom, or from the time that he was anointed by Samuel the prophet, until the kingdom was renewed to him by all Israel, was one year, and then Saul chose three thousand men out of Israel after that he reigned two years by the consent of all Israel, until he sinned in the business of the Amalekites, and then he was accounted as a dead man, and the years of his reign were not numbered; at which time David was anointed, who must be about twenty years of age, 1Sa 16:18 and yet when he came to the kingdom after the death of Saul, he was but thirty years of age, **2Sa 5:4** from whence he thinks it follows that Saul reigned but ten years: in all which he is guilty of several mistakes, and advances things he cannot prove; it was not after Saul had reigned one year, but after he had reigned two years, that he chose three thousand men out of Israel, as is expressly said, 1Sa 13:1 and that he had reigned but two years when he sinned in the case of the Amalekites, wants proof; nor is it evident that David was twenty years of age when he was anointed, for it was after his unction that he is said to be a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, 1Sa 16:18 nor indeed can it be said in what year of Saul's reign he was anointed; so that nothing can be concluded from the age David was at when he began to reign, concerning the years of the reign of Saul his predecessor; and even according to this man's own reckoning, he must reign thirteen years, one before the consent of all Israel, two after, and before his sin about the Amalekites, and ten from the time of David's unction: but that Saul must reign more years than these, and even as many as the apostle assigns to him, may be concluded, not only from his wars with many nations, and his long persecution of David before observed; but from the number of high priests which were in his time, and who were no less than three, Ahiah, Abimelech, and Abiathar, 1Sa 14:3 and from his being a young man when he began to reign, **1Sa 9:2** and yet at the end of his reign, or at his death, he had a son, Ishbosheth, that was forty years of age, **2Sa 2:10**.

{w} T. Bab. Nazir, fol. 5. 1. & Temura, fol. 14. 2. {x} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 37. Juchasin, fol. 11. 1. Kabbala, R. Abraham, &c. {y} T. Bab. Temura, fol. 15. 1. {z} R. Levi ben Gersom & R. Isaiah in I Sam. xiii. 1. {a} Shalsheleth Hakabala, fol. 8. 1. {b} Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 9. {c} Midrash Tillim apud Broughton's Works, p. 599. Vid. Viccarsium, in Psal xcix. 6. {d} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 67. p. 453, 454.

Acts 13:22

Ver. 22. And when he had removed him,.... Either by death, or rejected him from being king while he was living; 1Sa 15:23

he raised up unto them David to be their king; who was of the tribe of Judah, and who was raised from a very mean condition, from keeping of sheep, to sit upon the throne of Israel:

to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David; a type of the Messiah; he chose him to be king, sent Samuel to anoint him, and at length set him on the throne: the apostle adds, as a further account of him,

the son of Jesse; who lived at Bethlehem, where the Messiah was to be born, and who was a person of no great note and figure in Israel; and this is mentioned as an illustration of the distinguishing goodness of God to David. It

follows,

a man after mine own heart; on whom the heart of God was set, and who had an interest in his heart's love, and to whom he was exceeding grateful and acceptable; God took great delight and pleasure in him, in the general course of his life, and in his principles, aims, and designs; he was as he would have him to be:

which shall fulfil all my will; in governing the people, subduing their enemies, settling the order of divine worship and service, and preparing things for the building of the temple; and who also had a regard to all the commandments of God, and walked in them, though he was not without his sins and infirmities: now these words are not to be found together in anyone passage, as they might be thought to be from the manner in which they are produced, they being cited as a testimony delivered by the Lord, saying these concerning David; but where? the first part of them, "I have found David", is expressed in Ps 89:20 and yet the passage there seems to have respect to David's antitype; and to be understood not literally of David, but mystically and typically of Christ, David's son, with whom the whole psalm agrees; rather therefore this is implied in 1Sa 13:14 where also the next words, "a man after mine own heart", are to be met with; where it is thus expressed, though not by the Lord, but by Samuel; "the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart"; and as he sought one, so he found one, which was his servant David; but then what follows, is not recorded there nor any where else, in express terms, concerning David, "which shall fulfil all my will"; what comes nearest to them, are the words of the Lord to Cyrus, Isa 44:28 "and shall perform all my pleasure"; and Cocceius is of opinion, that the above words are taken from hence by the apostle, and applied to David, because of his concern in the building of the temple; his heart was set upon it, and he made great preparations for it according to the will of God, and did fulfil all it was the pleasure of God he should, respecting this affair; upon the whole, the apostle seems not to have any reference to anyone particular passage of Scripture, bearing a testimony to David's character, but to what is to be collected from them in general, as a divine testimony in favour of him.

Acts 13:23

Ver. 23. Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise,.... In **2Sa 7:12** raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus; even Jesus of Nazareth, whose name signifies a Saviour, who is the son of David, according to the flesh; the word

"Jesus" is left out in some copies, and so it is in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, which only read, "salvation" or "redemption"; the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read, "he hath brought forth unto Israel", &c. the sense is, that as God had promised that the Messiah should spring out of David's loins, so in the fulness of time he had sent him, or caused him to come by the assumption of human nature, or by taking flesh of a virgin, who was of the house and lineage of David; and who was sent, and came first to the people of Israel, though they for the most part slighted and rejected him; however, he was raised up for the mystical Israel of God, all the elect, whether Jews or Gentiles; and that to be the Saviour of them, from sin, Satan, and the law, and every enemy, with a spiritual and eternal salvation, and that both of body and soul; and a very able, willing, and suitable Saviour he is, as well as a perfect and complete one. This Saviour, Jehovah, in his infinite wisdom, found, and in his purposes appointed him to be his salvation, and in his covenant provided and settled him as such; and in the prophecies of the Old Testament spoke of him as the Saviour and Redeemer of his people; and in the fulness of time sent him, and raised him up of David's seed, according to his promise to him. The first promise of a Saviour was made to our first parents, under the character of the seed of the woman; he was next promised to Abraham, that he should be of his seed; and then to Judah, that he should be of his tribe; and after that to David, that he should be of his family; and all this has been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, the true Messiah, who is sometimes called David and David's son. Now it was for the sake of this, that the apostle begins with the choice of the Jewish fathers, and relates so many favours bestowed upon the people of Israel; his view was to lead on to observe this special mercy promised them, and now fulfilled, on which he intended to enlarge in his discourse, as follows.

Acts 13:24

Ver. 24. When John had first preached before his coming,.... Or, "before the face of his entrance"; that is, on his public ministry; for John did not preach before the coming of Christ in the flesh, being born but half a year before him; but before he came forth and was manifest to Israel; before he entered upon his work and office, as a prophet and teacher of the people: and this points out the business of John the Baptist, who was the forerunner of Christ, and went before his face to prepare his way, who gave notice of his coming, and bore testimony to him; and whose testimony the apostle here produces, as being what the Jews could not well reject and deny, he being of so much probity and integrity, and so great a prophet, as he was accounted by all the people; and whom he prepared for the reception of the Messiah, by first preaching;

the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel: he not only administered the ordinance of baptism, but he preached the doctrine of it, opened the nature and design of it, and required repentance and fruits meet for it, in those who came to have it administered to them: for which reason it is called the baptism of repentance; and this he did publicly before all the people, when the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, came unto him; see **Mr 1:4**.

Acts 13:25

Ver. 25. And as John fulfilled his course,.... Or race, the work of the ministry he was called to; as he was preaching and baptizing, which were the race set before him to run, and in which he ran well; he made full proof of his ministry. The life of every Christian is a race, and especially of a minister of the Gospel, and which requires strength, courage, agility, patience, and perseverance; this world is the place in which they run; and this is only the running time; in heaven they will sit down on the throne with Christ; the way in which they run, is the way of their duty, the way of God's commandments; the mark they have in view, which they keep their eye on, and to which they direct their course, is Christ; and glory is the incorruptible crown they run for, and which, when they have finished their course, will be given them by the chief shepherd and righteous judge; see **2Ti 4:7** and this is to be understood, not of the end of John's race, or ministry, but rather of the beginning of it; for it was then, he said,

whom think ye that I am? I am not he; that is the Messiah. The apostle seems to refer to **Joh 1:19** when the Jews asked him who he was, and he freely declared he was not the Christ; there the question is put by them to him, here by him to them; doubtless the questions were put by both; however the sense is the same, that he was not the Messiah, but he bore testimony to him that was:

but behold there cometh one after me; meaning Jesus, who was the Messiah, and who when John spoke these words, was coming after him from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized by him, and who in a little while after that came forth in the public ministry of the word: John was to come forth first, and then Jesus after him, because he was the harbinger of the Messiah, whose coming he was to proclaim and prepare men for, and whose person he was to point out; for though he is said to be after him, he was not in any sense inferior to him: John was born into the world before Christ, as man, was born, yet he as the eternal Son of God was before John, was from the beginning, even from eternity; John entered on the office of his ministry before him, but Christ was not below him; as not in the dignity of his person, so neither in the nature and excellency of his office; and John takes care to secure the honour and glory of Christ, and to prevent any low opinion that might be entertained of him from what he had said, by adding,

whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose; suggesting hereby, that he was unworthy to be his servant, to perform the meanest part of service for him that could be thought of; so far was he from assuming any preference to him on account of his being before him, as his forerunner; see **Mt 3:11**.
See Gill on "Mt 3:11".
See Gill on "Joh 1:27".

Acts 13:26

Ver. 26. Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham,.... This address is made to them in the synagogue, who were Jews by birth, and in a form very grateful and pleasing; he calls them "men", perhaps not only from the common nature of mankind in them, but because they took this name peculiarly to themselves, and denied it to the nations of the world; and which they gather from
Eze 34:31 and he styles them "brethren", because they were his countrymen; and "children of the stock of Abraham", with respect to their lineage and descent, and of which they gloried:

and whosoever among you feareth God; these were the proselytes among them; See Gill on "Ac 13:16"

to you is the word of this salvation sent; meaning either the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the essential and eternal "Logos", or word of God, and whom the Syriac and Ethiopic versions here style, "the word of life", as in **1Jo 1:1** who is the author of salvation, and who was in the first place sent unto the Jews; or rather the Gospel, which gives an account of the author of spiritual and eternal salvation, of his person, and of his manner of obtaining it, and of the nature of salvation, and who the persons are to whom it belongs. The Gospel is not a proposal of terms, by complying with which men may be saved, as faith, repentance, and good works, which are not terms of salvation, but either blessings, parts or fruits of it; but it is a declaration of salvation itself, as being a thing done by Christ; it declares him to be the alone able, willing, and all sufficient Saviour, and the salvation he has wrought out to be a great one, complete, spiritual, and everlasting; and that those that believe in him shall be saved with it. It is the word preaching salvation by him, showing, that he has wrought out an everlasting righteousness for the justification of his people; hence it is sometimes called the word of righteousness; and that he has made peace and reconciliation by the blood of his cross, for which reason it is styled the word of reconciliation; and that eternal life is in him, and by him, and therefore it is called the word of life: for the salvation it publishes includes all the blessings of grace, and everlasting glory, and happiness; it is the means of applying the salvation it declares; the Spirit of God comes by it, who, whilst it is preaching, falls upon, and conveys himself into the hearts of men: regeneration is ascribed to the word of truth; faith comes by hearing; and sanctification is promoted and increased by it, as an instrument; and after men believe in it, they are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise; all which shows what a wonderful blessing the Gospel is: and this was now sent not to the Jews only, though to them in the first place, but to the Gentiles also; the Alexandrian copy, in the two last clauses, instead of "you", reads "us".

Acts 13:27

Ver. 27. For they that dwelt at Jerusalem, and their rulers,.... The inhabitants of that city, and the great sanhedrim which sat there: because they knew him not; that is, either Jesus the Saviour, whom God had raised of the seed of David, and to whom John bore witness; and which must be understood, not of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and members of the sanhedrim; for though some were ignorant, yet there were others that knew that Jesus was the Messiah, and notwithstanding rejected him; but the apostle chooses to take no notice of these, because he would not irritate and provoke, but rather of others, that were really ignorant of Christ: or else this may be understood of the Gospel, the word of salvation, that the Jews knew not "that"; and so the Syriac version renders it; and to which agrees the Ethiopic version, which reads thus, "they knew not this word of the prophets", joining the word of salvation, and what follows, together:

nor yet the voices of the prophets: "or the writings of the prophets", as the Syriac version, and some copies read; their prophecies concerning the Messiah, particularly in Ps 22:1 which are read every sabbath day;
See Gill on "Ac 13:15"

they have fulfilled them; the word, of the prophets:

in condemning him; Jesus Christ, for these prophets testified, in the places referred to, of the sufferings and death of Christ, to which he was condemned by them.

Acts 13:28

Ver. 28. And though they found no cause of death in him,.... That is, no crime that deserved death; they sought for such, but could find none; they suborned false witnesses, who brought charges against him, but could not support them; wherefore Pilate, his judge, several times declared his innocence, and would have discharged him:

yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain; they were urgent and importunate with him, that he would order him to be put to death; the power of life and death being then in the hands of the Romans; the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "that they might slay him"; and the Arabic version, "that he might slay him"; and the Ethiopic version renders the whole quite contrary to the sense, "and they gave power to Pilate to hang him"; whereas the power of putting him to death was in Pilate, and not in them: and therefore they were pressing upon him, that he would order his execution, notwithstanding his innocence.

Acts 13:29

Ver. 29. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him,.... When they had vilified and reproached him in the most opprobrious manner; buffeted and scourged him, and pierced his hands and his feet, by nailing him to the cross; when they had crucified him between two thieves, and parted his raiment and cast lots on his vesture; when they had pierced his side, and it was sufficiently evident that his life was taken from the earth; all which were written of him in the Psalms and Prophets:

they took him down from the tree; the cross, on which he was crucified: it may be rendered impersonally, "he was taken down from the tree"; for not the same persons that desired he might be slain, and fulfilled all that was written of him, took him down, but others; though they were some of the rulers, as Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, yet such as did not consent to his death:

and laid him in a sepulchre; in a new one, in which never man lay; a sepulchre which Joseph had hewed out of a rock for himself, and which was both sealed and guarded.

Acts 13:30

Ver. 30. But God raised him from the dead. Though his life was taken away by man, and it was a clear case that he was certainly dead, and he was taken down from the cross as such, and buried; yet he could not be held with the cords of death, but God the Father raised him from the dead by his power. The Vulgate Latin version adds, "the third day".

Acts 13:31

Ver. 31. And he was seen many days,.... Forty days, at certain times,

of them which came up with him from Galilee; which though true of several women who followed him from Galilee, and to whom he appeared after his resurrection, as Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Salome the mother of Zebedee's children, and others; yet is chiefly to be understood of the apostles of Christ, who were Galilaeans, and came with Christ from that country to Jerusalem, when he came thither to suffer and die:

who are his witnesses unto the people; not only of his resurrection, though of that chiefly, but of all that he did and suffered in Galilee and Judea.

Acts 13:32

Ver. 32. And we declare unto you glad tidings,.... The whole of the Gospel, concerning the incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the benefits arising from thence, as peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation; all which are good news and glad tidings to sensible sinners; and which are declared and published by the ministers of the Gospel, according to the commission given them, as here by Paul and Barnabas:

how that the promise which was made unto the fathers; not barely and solely that which respects the resurrection of Christ, but the mission of him, the exhibition of him in human nature, his incarnation, his work and business he was to do, namely, to obtain salvation for his people; it chiefly regards the promise of his coming into the world to do the will of God, which promise was made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah, Ge 22:18.

Acts 13:33

Ver. 33. God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children,.... The natural descendants of them, as Paul and Barnabas, and the Jews in the synagogue, were:

in that he hath raised up Jesus again; which may not be understood of his resurrection from the dead, since the promise made, and now fulfilled, has not a single respect to that; but of his being raised up, and sent forth into the world, to be a Saviour and Redeemer, and to sit upon the throne of David, as in **Ac 2:30** of which raising of him up to regal dignity, mention is made in **Ps 2:1**, **Ps 6:1** which is produced as a testimony of it; and the rather this seems to be the sense, since the article of the resurrection of the dead is spoken of in the next verse, as distinct from this; and other passages of Scripture are produced, as speaking of it; though admitting that Christ's resurrection from the dead is here intended, as the Alexandrian copy reads, what follows is very applicable to it, without any detriment to the doctrine of Christ's eternal generation and sonship, as will be hereafter made to appear:

as it is written in the second psalm: Beza's most ancient copy, and other very ancient copies, read, "in the first psalm"; for the first and second psalms seem to have been reckoned by the ancient Jews but one psalm, or one section; for so they say {d}

""blessed is the man", &c. and "why do the Heathen rage", &c. ayh hvrp adx, are one "parasha", or section: and they further observe {e}, that "every section that was dear to David, he began it with "blessed", and ended it with "blessed"; he began with "blessed", as it is written, **Ps 1:1** "blessed is the man", &c. and he ended it with "blessed", as it is written, **Ps 2:12** "blessed are all they that put their "trust in him":" though it is elsewhere said {f}, "blessed is the man", &c. (**Ps 1:1**) "and why do the heathen rage", &c. (**Ps 2:1**) are two sections; and "to the chief musician on Muth Labben", (**Ps 9:1**) and "why standest thou afar off", &c. (#Ps 10:1-18) are two sections."

And Kimchi calls {g} this psalm, as the generality of copies here do, saying, "this psalm is ynvh rwmzmh, "the second psalm.""

And that this psalm belongs to the Messiah, is evident from the mention made of him in **Ps 2:2** from the mad counsel, and vain attempts of the kings of the earth against him, **Ps 2:1**. God's decree and resolution to make and declare him King of Zion, notwithstanding all their efforts upon him, **Ps 2:4** from his asking and having the Gentiles, and uttermost parts of the earth for his inheritance, which is true of no other, **Ps 2:8** and especially from that reverence, worship, and adoration, which are to be given to him, and that trust and confidence to be placed in him, **Ps 2:10** which can by no means agree with David, nor with any mere creature whatever; and as for **Ps 2:7** which is here cited, what is said in that is inapplicable even to angels, **Heb 1:5** and much more to David, or any mere man. The whole psalm was, by the ancient Jews, interpreted of the Messiah, as is confessed by some of their later doctors. R. David Kimchi says {h},

"there are that interpret it of Gog and Magog, and the Messiah, he is the King Messiah; and so the Rabbins of blessed memory interpret it."

And Jarchi confesses the same, and is somewhat more open in giving his reason for interpreting it otherwise.

"Our Rabbins (says he) expound this affair concerning the King Messiah; but according to its literal sense, and for an answer to the heretics (or Christians), it is right to explain it concerning David himself."

he clause, "and for an answer to the heretics", is left out in later editions, but was in the more ancient ones; it being so open and barefaced, that the Jews did not choose to let it stand. Aben Ezra is in a doubt whether to interpret the psalm of David, or of the Messiah; though he thinks the former is best; and particularly this seventh verse is, by several of their ancient writers, applied to the Messiah; in one of their writings, esteemed very ancient, are these words {i};

"from thence shall come forth, in that day, the Messiah of David; and this is the mystery of, "I will declare the decree, the Lord said unto me, thou art my Son", &c."

And this is the sense of R. Ame {k}, a famous ancient doctor of theirs: upon mention of those words in Jer 31:22 "the Lord hath created a new thing", &c.

"says R. Hone, in the name of R. Ame, this is the King Messiah, as it is said, **Ps 2:7** "this day have I begotten thee"."

And in like manner in the Talmud {l}, it is understood of the Messiah, where are these expressions;

"the Rabbins teach, that Messiah, the son of David, who shall be revealed in haste in our days, the holy blessed God said unto him, ask anything of me, and I will give it thee, as it is said, **Ps 2:7** "I will declare the decree, &c. this day have I begotten thee"."

And that this was the sense of the Jews in the times of the apostle, need not be doubted, since the apostle cites these words before a Jewish assembly, in one of their synagogues, and applies them to the Messiah, without any hesitation, or any further reasoning upon it, as being a thing generally agreed on, and out of doubt; wherefore the Jew {m} has no reason to charge the apostle with an error in citing a passage in this psalm, and applying it to Christ, since their ancient doctors have allowed, that it belongs to him, and even the very passage which the apostle produces; which passage Maimonides {n} himself applies to the Messiah. This objector would have it, that David spoke the whole psalm by the Holy Spirit concerning himself, and that he calls himself the Lord's anointed; and that being anointed by the will of the Lord, what was against his kingdom, was against the Lord himself; and that he is called the Son of God, because he attended to the worship of God; and that the begetting of him refers to the time of his unction by Samuel; and that it can by no means agree with Jesus of Nazareth, who never ruled in any place, but others ruled over him, when they condemned him to death as the meanest of the people; and who himself says, that he came not to be ministered unto, Mt 20:28 especially he thinks those words, "ask of me, and I will give the Heathen", &c. greatly militate against the application of the psalm to Jesus; for if he is God, what need has he to ask of another? But since the Jewish doctors themselves have applied this psalm to the Messiah, the apostle ought not to be blamed for making such an application; and there are many things which cannot be applied to David himself; for whatever may be said of his anointing, begetting, and sonship, the uttermost parts of the earth were never given for his possession; and much less can he be the son the kings of the earth are called upon to kiss and worship, or he be the object of trust and confidence; and though Jesus in the days of his humiliation was not ministered unto, but ministered to others, and ruled not over others, but submitted to the death of the cross; he has since been made and declared Lord of all, and his kingdom has taken place in the nations of the world, and ere long all the kingdoms of it will become his; and though he is God, it is no ways inconsistent with him, as man and Mediator, to ask anything of his Father, and especially what has been agreed between them shall be given: the words cited by the apostle are, "thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee"; in Beza's ancient copy, the verse following these words is added, "ask of me", &c. The words are to be understood of the eternal filiation of Christ, and are produced, to set forth the greatness and dignity of his person; whom God had raised and sent forth in human nature, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of his people: though should they be applied to the resurrection of Christ from the dead, it will no ways prejudice the doctrine of Christ's proper and natural sonship, as being the only begotten of the Father; since the resurrection of Christ is not the cause of his sonship, or the reason why he is called the Son of God, but a manifestation of it; Christ was the Son of God, before his resurrection from the dead; he was declared to be so by a voice from heaven, was believed on by his disciples as such, and confessed by others, both men and devils: besides, if his resurrection was the cause of his sonship, he must beget himself, which is absurd, for he was himself concerned in his resurrection from the dead; more over, his sonship would not be proper, but figurative and metaphorical, whereas he is God's own, or proper son; besides, on this account he could not be called God's only begotten Son, because there are others that have been, and millions that will be raised from the dead besides him: but the reason why these words are applied to the resurrection of Christ, allowing them to be so, is not because he was then begotten as the Son of God, but because he was then manifested to be the eternally begotten Son of God; things are said to be, when they are only manifested to be; so Christ is said to be that day begotten, because he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead", **Ro 1:4** Hence these words are applicable to any time or thing wherein Christ is manifested to be the only begotten Son of God, and accordingly are applied to different times and things; see **Heb 1:3**.

{d} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 9. 2. {e} Ib. fol. 10. 1. {f} Piske Tosephot in T. Bab. Megilla, art. 34. {g} In Psal. ii. 1. {h} In Psal. ii. 12. Vid. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. {i} Zohar in Numb. fol. 82. 2. {k} In Abarbinel. Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 37. 2. {l} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 52. 1. {m} R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 68. p. 454, &c. {n} In Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1.

Acts 13:34

Ver. 34. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead,.... This, as it is differently expressed from the raising him up, spoken of in the preceding verse, so seems to be a distinct article from it, and is supported by other passages of Scripture: the apostle having shown that God had fulfilled his promise to the fathers, concerning the raising up, or sending the Messiah into the world, who is no other than the eternal Son of God, proceeds to prove his resurrection from the dead, as man, which was in such sort, as

now no more to return to corruption; so as not to die any more, and be laid in the grave, and there corrupted; as was the case of those who were raised from the dead by the prophets, under the Old Testament, or by Christ himself, before his death and resurrection; for these were raised to a mortal life, and died again, and were buried, and saw corruption; but Christ was raised up from the dead, never to die more, but to live forever, having in his hands the keys of hell and death, and being the triumphant conqueror over death and the grave; in proof of which some passages are produced out of the Old Testament, as follow: "he said on this wise"; that is, God said so, or after this manner, Isa 55:3 "I will give you the sure mercies of David"; that is, of the Messiah; by which are meant the blessings of the sure and well ordered covenant of grace, which the Messiah by his sufferings and death was to ratify and secure for all his people: now had he only died, and not been raised from the dead, these blessings had not been ratified and made sure unto them; therefore, when God promises his people, that he will give them the sure mercies of David, or the Messiah, he promises that the Messiah shall not only die to procure mercies and blessings for them, but that he shall rise again from the dead, to make them sure unto them; so that these words are pertinently produced in proof of Christ's resurrection. David is a name frequently given to the Messiah, as in Jer 30:9 David being an eminent type of Christ, and the Messiah being a son of his; and who must be meant here; and which is owned by several Jewish commentators {o} of the best note; and which appears from his being called a witness to the people, a leader and a commander of them, in the next verse: the blessings of the covenant are fitly called "mercies", because they spring from the grace and mercy of God, and wonderfully display it, and are in mercy to his people; and these are the mercies of David, or of Christ, because the covenant being made with him, these blessings were put into his hands for them, and come through his blood to them; and hence they are said to be "sure" ones; they are in safe hands; Christ, who is intrusted with them, faithfully distributes them: but then, as by his death he has made way for the communication of them, consistent with the justice of God; so he must rise again, and live for ever, to distribute them, or see that there is an application of them made to the persons for whom they are designed: besides, it is one of the sure mercies promised to David, to the Messiah himself, that though he died, and was laid in the grave, he should not continue there, but rise again, as the next testimony most clearly shows.

{o} Aben Ezra & Kimchi in Isa. lv. 3. Abarbinel. Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 26. 1.

Acts 13:35

Ver. 35. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm,.... Ps 16:10 or "in another place", as the Syriac version supplies; or "in another section", as the Arabic version; or "elsewhere", as Beza's most ancient copy, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read:

thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption; which cannot be understood of David: the term "Holy One", is not so applicable to him, who was a man subject to infirmities; at least not in such sense as to Christ, who was holy in his nature, and without sin in his life and conversation; besides, David was laid in his grave, and saw corruption, as the apostle afterwards proves: the former part of this passage is not cited, "thou wilt not leave my soul in hell"; which was not absolutely necessary to be mentioned, it being clearly implied in what is produced; for if he should not be suffered to see corruption, then he could not be left in the grave: moreover, the apostle cites that which he intended to reason upon, as he afterwards does, and by it makes it manifestly appear that the words do not belong to David, but the Messiah, and are a clear and pertinent proof of his resurrection from the dead. The Jew {p} objects to the apostle's version of these words, rendering txv, by "corruption", whereas he says it signifies a "pit"; but it ought to be observed, that the word in its first proper, and literal sense, signifies "corruption"; and a pit or grave is only called by this name, because dead bodies, or carcasses, are therein corrupted; and instances may be given, wherein the word cannot be understood in another sense than in that of corruption, as in Le 22:25.
See Gill on "Ac 2:27".

{p} R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 69. p. 456.

Acts 13:36

Ver. 36 For David, after he had served his own generation,.... Or the men of that age and generation in which he lived, the subjects of his kingdom; by governing them with wholesome laws, protecting them in their rights and properties, defending them against their enemies, and regulating and promoting the worship of God among them:

by the will of God; this clause may be read in connection with the preceding words, as it is in the Syriac version thus, "after he had in his own age served the will of God"; acted according to it, fulfilled it, and did what the Lord declared to him, or he knew to be the will of God; or with the following words, as in the Vulgate Latin version, "by the will of God fell on sleep", or died; and then the sense is, that after he had done the work of his generation, which was appointed and cut out for him, he died by the decree and counsel of God, which has set bounds to man's life, and has fixed the time of his death; no man dies before, or lives longer than the time it is the will of God he should. David lived according to the will of God's command, and he died by the will of his decree. Death is expressed by falling asleep; a way of speaking very common with the eastern nations, and which represents it in an easy and familiar manner: it is not an annihilation of men; the dead are only fallen asleep, and will wake again in the resurrection; till which time the grave is their restingplace, and out of which the saints will rise fresh and cheerful; and yet, as a time of sleep is a time of inactivity, so no work is done in the grave; and therefore whatever we find to do, should be done in life. It is a long sleep; David has been many hundred years, even thousands, in it; and there will be no awaking out of it till Christ comes again: but this is to be understood of the body only, which only is capable of sleeping the sleep of death, and not of the soul, which dies not with the body, nor continues with it in the grave in a state of insensibility and inactivity, but immediately returns to God; and being happy, is employed in the vision of God, and Christ, in the fellowship of saints and angels, and in the work of praise and thanksgiving: thus, though David is fallen asleep in his body, he is present in spirit with the Lord; and that sweet psalmist of Israel is singing the songs of God in a much better manner than when here on earth. Blessed are they that sleep in Jesus, for they not only sleep quietly and safely, but shall surely rise again, for God will bring them with him; Christ is the first fruits of them, and they shall awake in his likeness. It is further said of David, "and was laid unto his fathers", or was buried; his sepulchre is said to be in Mount Zion {q}, where the kings of the house of David were buried; and his sepulchre Peter says in **Ac 2:29** remained till his time.

And saw corruption; his body putrefied in the grave, became the repast of worms, and was reduced to rottenness and dust; and therefore the words could not be spoken of him cited from Ps 16:10.

{q} Cippi Hebr. p. 24.

Acts 13:37

Ver. 37. But he whom God raised again,.... The Vulgate Latin version adds, "from the dead"; meaning the Lord Jesus Christ, who was raised from the dead by God the Father: and

saw no corruption; he did not lie so long in the grave as to corrupt and putrefy, but was raised from the dead the third day; wherefore the passage, before cited, is very applicable to him, and is a clear proof that the Messiah was to rise from the dead, as Jesus did.

Acts 13:38

Ver. 38. Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren,.... The apostle having discoursed concerning the incarnation of Christ, his death and resurrection, proceeds to take notice of some particular benefits and blessings of grace arising from thence, which are published and made known to the sons of men in the everlasting Gospel, as were now to the Jews by Paul and Barnabas; such as forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ, and justification by his righteousness; the former of them is mentioned in this verse, the latter in the next:

that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; forgiveness of sins, which is sometimes expressed by a non-imputation of them, a non-remembrance of them, a covering and putting them away, and a blotting them out, is an act of free grace and mercy, and yet is through the blood of Christ; through that believers have it; Christ is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour to give it, having by his blood procured it; and this is a principal doctrine of the Gospel, which is published in his name, and which the light of nature and law of Moses know nothing of, and cannot ascertain; the prophets bear testimony to this truth, that everyone that believes in Christ shall receive the remission of sins, of all his sins. That there is a God is known by the light of nature, and that sin is an offence unto him; but by it is not known in what way offended Deity is appeased; nor does it, nor can it assure any that God will forgive sin on any account whatever; not on account of mercy in him, nor on account of good works, or of repentance in them; God, as the God of nature, does not forgive sin, but as the God of grace: and though the law of Moses declares what is good, and gives knowledge of evil, yet admits not of repentance as a satisfaction for sin committed; nor does it represent God as merciful, but as just, and so accuses, condemns, and kills: the doctrine of forgiveness is a pure doctrine of the Gospel; and when it is preached aright, it is preached through Christ, not through the works of the law, not through repentance, nor through faith, nor through the absolute mercy of God, but through Christ, through the blood of Christ, which was shed to obtain it in a way consistent with the justice of God; and through his hands it is given. When Christ is called a "man", it must not be thought that he is a mere man; he is God as well as man; had he been a mere man, forgiveness of sin could not have been by his blood, or through his name, or for his sake; it is because he is God, truly and properly God, that there is a virtue in his blood to take away sin, and cleanse from it; see **1Jo 1:7** Besides, the word "man" is not in the original text, it is only "through this is preached to you"; that is, through this glorious and divine person, who, though he died as man, and was buried, yet saw no corruption, and is now raised from the dead, and is at the right hand of God. Some copies read dia touto, because of this, or for this reason; seeing he is raised from the dead, therefore the doctrine of the remission of sins is preached; for if he had died, and had not risen again, there could have been no pardon by his blood, nor justification by his righteousness; see **Ro 4:25**.

Acts 13:39

Ver. 39. And by him all that believe are justified from all things,.... Christ, as God, is not only the justifier of his people, who pronounces them righteous in the sight of God; but his righteousness imputed to them is the matter of their justification, or that by which they are justified; and not the works of the law, or obedience to the Gospel, or internal holiness, either in whole or in part, or the grace of faith, but the object of it, Christ, and his righteousness: and justification by this is complete and perfect; it is from all sin, original and actual, secret and open, greater or lesser sins; sins of presumption and ignorance, of omission or commission; from all things the law can charge with, as breaches of it; from all things which the justice of God can demand satisfaction for; and from all things that Satan, or a man's own conscience, can justly accuse him of. And those that believe in Christ with the heart unto righteousness, are openly and manifestly justified in their own consciences, and can claim their interest in it, and have the comfort of it, as well as they were before secretly justified in the mind of God, and in their head and representative Jesus Christ. And from all sin these are justified of God, as Beza's ancient copy reads, "for it is God that justifies", **Ro 8:33** against whom men have sinned, and whose law they have violated, and whose justice they have affronted, by reason of which they are liable to condemnation; but God justifies them, by imputing the righteousness of his Son to them, in which he views them as without fault, unblamable and irreprovable; and though all men are not justified, yet many are; even all the seed of Israel, all the elect of God, everyone that believes in Christ, as all do who are ordained to eternal life; Christ's righteousness is imputed and applied to all these, and therefore they shall never enter into condemnation, but shall be acquitted and discharged from all things,

from which, it is added,

ye could not be justified by the law of Moses; that is, by the works of the law, or by obedience to it, because such obedience is imperfect; and therefore the law cannot justify, discharge, and acquit upon it, but instead thereof, must curse and condemn; as it does everyone, that does not do all things commanded in the law, and in the manner that requires; besides, if righteousness was hereby, the grace of God in justification would be frustrated, the death of Christ would be rendered null and void, and boasting would not be excluded; all which are contrary to the scheme of the Gospel. It may be observed, that pardon of sin and justification are two distinct blessings, or the apostle must be guilty of a great tautology; since having spoken of forgiveness of sin in the preceding verse, he speaks of justification in this, as another blessing enjoyed by and through Christ, and published in the Gospel, styled therefore the word and ministration of righteousness. And indeed they are distinct; in pardon the man is considered as a sinner, in justification as a righteous man; pardon takes away his sin, justification gives him a righteousness; pardon frees from punishment, but justification besides that gives him a title to eternal life; to pardon, the blood of Christ is sufficient; but to justification are required the holiness of Christ's nature, the perfect obedience of his life, as well as his suffering of death; moreover, justification passed on Christ as the head and representative of his people, but not pardon; he may be said to be justified, but not pardoned: these two blessings make a considerable figure in the ministry of the word.

Acts 13:40

Ver. 40. Beware therefore,.... Of rejecting the Gospel, and those excellent truths of it; since forgiveness of sin and a justifying righteousness are said to be had in no other way, but in and through Christ; take heed therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the Prophets: some think that the apostle refers to two places in the Prophets, which he puts together, and therefore uses the plural number; the one in Isa 28:14 from whence the character of the persons is taken, "ye despisers", or scornful men, who are addressed; and the other in **Hab 1:5** where is to be found what is said to them; but rather the latter place is what is only referred to, and is said to be, "in the Prophets", that is, in one of the prophets; See Gill on "Joh 6:45" or in the book of the Prophets, the lesser prophets, which were together in one book, among which Habakkuk stands; the Ethiopic version reads in the singular number, "lest should come upon you the word of the prophet, saying", as follows.

Acts 13:41

Ver. 41. Behold, ye despisers,.... In **Hab 1:5** from whence these words are taken: we render it with others, "behold ye among the Heathen"; as if the word Mywgb, was compounded of b "in", and Mywg, "nations" or "Heathens"; and so reads the Chaldee paraphrase, "look among the people"; but the Septuagint version renders it, "behold, ye despisers"; which the apostle is thought to follow; wherefore some have imagined a different reading, and that the Septuagint, instead of Mywgb reads Mydgwb, the singular of which is used in **Hab 2:5** and there rendered a "despiser" in the same version: but it should be observed, that the Septuagint is not the only version that so renders the word; for the Syriac version renders it, "behold, ye impudent"; and the Arabic version, "behold, ye negligent"; and Dr. Pocock {r} has shown that this word comes from the root agb which though not to be found in the Bible, yet in the Arabic language, among other things, signifies to behave proudly, or insolently, and so is very properly rendered "despisers", without supposing any different reading or corruption in the text: and as in Habakkuk the proud and haughty Jews are there spoke to, who neglected and despised the law; this is accommodated by the apostle to the Jews in his time, who were very much disposed to despise the Gospel, as they generally did. It follows, "and wonder, and perish"; or disappear, or change countenance, through shame for their sins, and amazement at the judgments of God upon them:

for I work a work in your days, which you shall in no wise believe though a man declare it unto you; which, in Habakkuk, refers to the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; and here it is suggested, by the citation and application of it, that in a short time a like work would be done in their days; the city and temple of Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Romans, which when told to the Jews in foreign parts, as here in Pisidia, would not be believed by them, though it should be told them by men of probity and credit.

{r} Not. Misc. in Porta Mosis, c. 3. p. 31, 32. &c.

Acts 13:42

Ver. 42. And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue,.... The time of worship there being over; or being offended at the apostle's discourse concerning Jesus: the words will bear to be rendered, "when they were gone out of the synagogue of the Jews"; and the sense be, when Paul and Barnabas were come out from thence, Paul having finished his discourse: the word "Jews", and the phrase, "out of the synagogue", are left out in Beza's ancient copy, and in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; and so may be interpreted either of the Jews, or of Paul and Barnabas; the Ethiopic version leaves out the whole clause: "the Gentiles besought that these words might be spoken unto them the next sabbath"; that is, the proselytes from among the Gentiles, who attended on the synagogue of the Jews, and who stayed behind when the Jews were gone out, being exceedingly delighted with the apostle's doctrine, most earnestly entreated that the same subject might be insisted upon the next sabbath: or, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, the words may be rendered, "they besought the Gentiles"; that is, the apostles, when they saw the Jews go out, being offended, addressed the Gentiles, and entreated them to come the next sabbath day, and patiently hear these doctrines: though in the above copies and versions there is no mention made of the Gentiles, any more than of the Jews; so that this may be understood either of the rulers of the synagogue, who first invited them to speak a word of exhortation to the people, or of the whole body, Jews and proselytes, who, when they were departing, entreated they might hear them again the next sabbath; about which "next sabbath", there is some difficulty; the words may be rendered, "between the sabbath", and so may regard what we call weekdays, or working days; and which the Jews call Myytnbv Mymy, "the intermediate days", or the days between one sabbath and another {s}; and on some one of these days it was desired that the apostles would give them another discourse on the same subject; and it may be particularly, that either Monday or Thursday, the second or fifth day of the week, might be pitched upon; since on these days the Jews met together in the synagogue, and read the law, according to the order of Ezra, that they might not be three days without the law {t}; and these were the days on which they fasted, Lu 18:12. Others choose to render the words, "on the sabbath day after"; and so the Syriac version renders it, "on the other sabbath"; and the Ethiopic version, "the sabbath following"; and so the Vulgate Latin, with which ours, and others agree; and to this reading and sense, Ac 13:44 greatly inclines; though they might meet together on one of the days between, when being so delighted with what they heard, and of which they so much talked, that the next sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear: but what pleases me best, and which, I think, has never been observed by any, is, that there was one sabbath in the year which was called Mytnb tbv; which may be rendered by to metaxu sabbaton, "the sabbath between", or the intermediate sabbath; and this sabbath was on one of the ten days before the day of atonement; and was so called, because it was between the first of Tisri, which answers to part of our September, and was the beginning of the year, and the tenth of the same month, which was the day of atonement; and was a sabbath very much taken notice of by the Jews {u}: and now this might be the sabbath following, and so all agrees; and a reason may be given for the different phrases in this verse, and Ac 13:44 and if so, this also points out the time of the year that Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch in Pisidia, and when that remarkable period began, that the apostles turned from the Jews, and preached to the Gentiles.

{s} T. Hieros. Gittin, fol. 49. 1. & Bab. Ceritot, fol. 16. 1, 2. & 17. 1. {t} T. Hieros. Megilla, fol. 75. 1. & Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 32. 1. {u} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 85. 4. & 86. 1, 2.

Acts 13:43

Ver. 43. Now when the congregation was broken up,.... Or "the synagogue"; not the place, but the people that met in it; when they were "dismissed", as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it; either in a disorderly manner, through the offence the Jews took at Paul's preaching; or if in an orderly way, this was done by
Nmgrwth, "the interpreter"; so it is said {w}, that

"R. Hotzpith the interpreter dismissed the people."

Many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who were converted by this sermon, and believed in Christ, and cordially embraced the doctrines of the Gospel, that had been preached. Piscator thinks that the word "religious" does not belong to the text, but some way or other crept into it, since it supposes some proselytes not to be religious; whereas, though all religious persons were not proselytes, at least proselytes of righteousness, yet all proselytes were religious persons; but it is retained in all copies and versions:

who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God; meaning, not that the Jews and proselytes spoke to Paul and Barnabas, and entreated and persuaded them to persevere in preaching the doctrine of the grace of God, notwithstanding the offence some might take at it, and the ill usage they might meet with on account of it; but that Paul and Barnabas took notice of them, and by their following them, and by the conversation they had with them, found that the word had reached their hearts, and that they had embraced the doctrine of the Gospel; wherefore they spoke a word of exhortation to them, beseeching them to continue in it, it springing from the grace of God, and being a declaration of it; and particularly in those special doctrines of grace, which had been insisted on, namely, remission of sins, and free justification by the blood of Christ; for it is more likely, and was more necessary, that these should be exhorted by the apostles, and not the apostles by them.

{w} T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 67. 4.

Acts 13:44

Ver. 44. And the next sabbath day,.... The same which is before called the "sabbath between", which was between the first and tenth of Tisri, or between the beginning of the year, and the day of atonement:

came almost the whole city together. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions leave out the word "almost", and read, the whole city came together; some out of curiosity, having heard much said of these men and their doctrines, others to cavil and quarrel, and others from a true affection to the Gospel, and an earnest desire of knowing more of it, and of receiving more advantage from it: though the end in all was,

to hear the word of God; or "of the Lord", as the Alexandrian copy; that is, the doctrine of the Gospel, which comes from God, and, concerns the Lord Jesus Christ, his person, offices, grace, and righteousness.

Acts 13:45

Ver. 45. But when the Jews saw the multitudes,.... The vast number of people, the inhabitants of the city, the Gentiles, that were assembled together to hear the word. This must be understood of the unbelieving Jews, who came with no good design:

they were filled with envy; at the Gentiles, that they should have the word equally preached to them, as to themselves, to whom the oracles of God were committed; or at the popularity of the apostles, that such numbers should follow them; and they might fear many converts might be made by them, from among them:

and spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul; concerning Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah, which they denied; and concerning free justification by his righteousness, which they affirmed to be by the works of the law: and they went on

contradicting and blaspheming; publicly opposing him, and speaking evil of him, and of his doctrines; and not only so, but belching out their blasphemies against the Lord Jesus Christ. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the word "contradicting", as redundant, it having been before said, that "they spoke against", or "contradicted" what Paul delivered; though it may not be superfluous, but express their continuance in their contradiction and opposition; and which was attended with, and issued in blasphemy: such a spirit of reproach and blasphemy is with the Jews a sign of the Messiah's coming;

"says R. Jannai {x}, when you see generation after generation reproaching and blaspheming, look for the feet of the Messiah, according to Ps 89:51."

This they have been doing one age after another, even for many ages; and therefore, according to one of their own signs, the Messiah must be come.

{x} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4.

Acts 13:46

Ver. 46. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold,.... They were not at all daunted at the opposition they met with, but rather grew more courageous, and used great liberty of speech, and spoke out freely, plainly, and openly: and said,

it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; as it was by Christ and his apostles, whilst he was on earth; and though, after his resurrection, the commission to his apostles ran, to preach the Gospel to all nations, yet they were ordered to begin at Jerusalem, and preach to the Jews first; and this they hitherto strictly observed:

but seeing ye put it from you; with loathing, indignation, and contempt:

and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life; no man is worthy of everlasting life, on account of anything done by him, for it is the free gift of God; and all who are sensible of themselves, and of the just demerit of sin, conclude themselves unworthy to inherit eternal life; but this was not the case of these Jews, nor is it the sense here: but the meaning is, that the Jews, by this act of theirs in rejecting the Gospel, did as it were pass sentence upon themselves, and determine against themselves that they ought not to be saved, since they despised the means of salvation; or that they were not worthy to have the Gospel preached to them any more, which may be called eternal life, because it is brought to light by it, and revealed in it; and because it points out the way unto it, as well as gives some account of it:

lo, we turn to the Gentiles; to preach the Gospel to them only, or chiefly; now the words of Christ began to be fulfilled, Mt 21:43.

Acts 13:47

Ver. 47. For so hath the Lord commanded us,.... For though Christ in his first commission restrained his disciples from going into the Gentiles, and preaching to them, yet when he enlarged their commission after his resurrection, he bid them go into all nations, and preach the Gospel to every creature; and told them, that they should be his witnesses to the uttermost part of the earth; see
Mt 28:19 unless this should rather be thought to refer to what follows:

saying; or "as it is written", as the Syriac version supplies; or "because so saith the Scripture", as the Ethiopic version, namely in
Isa 49:6.

I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles; to enlighten the Gentiles that sit in darkness, by the preaching of the Gospel to them, and the Spirit of God attending it: this supposes the Gentiles to have been in darkness; as they were about divine things, before the times of the Gospel: they had no true knowledge of God himself; for though they knew there was a God, they did not know, at least but few of them, that there was but one God; and none of them knew anything of him as in Christ; they had not a revelation of his will, they were without the written law, and were strangers to the true manner of worshipping the divine Being; they knew nothing at all of the Messiah, and of his righteousness and salvation by him; nor of the Spirit of God, and the operations of his grace, nor of the resurrection of the dead, and were very ignorant of a future state: it was therefore an unspeakable mercy to them, that Christ was appointed to be a light to them; not in a way of nature, as he is that light which lightens every man that comes into the world; but in a way of grace, through the ministration of the Gospel, and by the special illuminations of the divine Spirit; whereby they see there is a righteous judge, and that there will be a righteous judgment; and that sin is exceeding sinful, and cannot be atoned for by them, and therefore they are in themselves miserable and undone; and they further see, that pardon and righteousness are only by Christ, and that salvation is alone in him. The words are spoken by God the Father to his Son, and express the eternal decree of God, and the designation of Christ to be the light of his people; the mission of him in time as the light of the world, and the exhibition of him in the Gospel, for the illumination of men by his Spirit and grace. In the Hebrew text it is, "I will give thee", &c. for all this springs from the free grace of God; Christ in all respects is the gift of God, as he is the head of the church, and the Saviour of the body, so as he is the light of men; and it is necessary that he should be light, in order to be salvation, as follows; for though men may go to hell in the dark, yet not to heaven; the way of the wicked is darkness, but the path of just is shining light: those whom God rives, he enlightens with the light of life:

that thou shouldest be for salvation to the ends of the earth; impetratively as the author of it, and applicatively by means of the Gospel, which publishes salvation by Christ; and is the power of God unto salvation, to Gentiles as well as Jews, even to all that believe, in what part of the world soever they live: thus what was decreed and resolved on by God the Father, and was declared by him to his Son, is applied to his ministers and ambassadors, who represented him; so that what they did, he may be said to do; and who by them was to go, and did go to the Gentiles, and enlighten them with the light of the Gospel, and became salvation to them; so that this prophecy is produced by the apostles, to vindicate their conduct, as well as to show the agreement between the command of Jesus Christ to his disciples, and the decree of God the Father; as also to illustrate and confirm the particular order, which the Apostle Paul had, to go to the Gentiles, and to which he may have a regard here; see Ac 26:17. In the Hebrew text it is, "my salvation": provided, promised, and sent by God, the Saviour of his people.

Acts 13:48

Ver. 48. And when the Gentiles heard this,.... That it was the will of God, and the command of Christ, that the Gospel should be preached to them; by whom are to be understood the Pisidians, the inhabitants of Antioch, who had never been proselytes to the Jewish religion:

they were glad; not that the Jews were likely to have the Gospel taken away from them, and be utterly deprived of it, but that it was to be preached to them:

and glorified the word of the Lord; not the Lord Jesus Christ, the essential word of the Lord, whom they might not as yet have such a distinct knowledge of; but rather God himself, for his word, particularly his word of command, Ac 13:47 as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; or the sense is, they spake well of the Gospel, and gave glory to God, or the Lord, who had sent it among them: Beza's most ancient copy reads, they "received the word of the Lord", which seems to be a more agreeable reading; to glorify the word of the Lord, is an unusual phrase:

and as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed; faith is not the cause, or condition of the decree of eternal life, but a means fixed in it, and is a fruit and effect of it, and what certainly follows upon it, as in these persons: some would have the words rendered, "as many as were disposed unto eternal life believed"; which is not countenanced by the ancient versions. The Arabic renders it as we do, and the Syriac thus, "as many as were put, or appointed unto eternal life"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "as many as were pre-ordained". Moreover, the phrase of being "disposed unto", or "for eternal life", is a very unusual, if not a very improper, and an inaccurate one; men are said to be disposed to an habit, or to an act, as to vice or virtue, but not to reward or punishment, as to heaven or hell; nor does it appear that these Gentiles had any good dispositions to eternal life, antecedent to their believing; for though they are said, Ac 13:42 to entreat the apostles to preach the same things to them the next sabbath, yet the words as there observed, according to their natural order, may be rendered "they", i.e. the apostles, "besought the Gentiles"; and in some copies and versions, the "Gentiles" are not mentioned at all: and as for their being "glad", and "glorifying the word of the Lord", it is not evident that this was before their believing; and if it was, such things have been found in persons, who have had no true, real, and inward dispositions to spiritual things, as in many of our Lord's hearers; besides, admitting that there are, in some, good dispositions to eternal life, previous to faith, and that desiring eternal life, and seeking after it, be accounted such, yet these may be where faith does not follow; as in the young rich ruler, that came to Christ with such an inquiry, and went away sorrowful: as many therefore as are so disposed, do not always believe, faith does not always follow such dispositions; and after all, one would have thought that the Jews themselves, who were externally religious, and were looking for the Messiah, and especially the devout and able women, were more disposed unto eternal life, than the ignorant and idolatrous Gentiles; and yet the latter believed, and the former did not: it follows then, that their faith did not arise from previous dispositions to eternal life, but was the fruit and effect of divine ordination unto it; and the word here used, in various places in this book, signifies determination and appointment, and not disposition of mind; see Ac 15:2 The phrase is the same with that used by the Jews, Mlwe yyxl wnqtad, "who are ordained to eternal life" {y}; and yyxl bytkd lk amle, "everyone that is written to eternal life"; {z} i.e. in the book of life; and designs no other than predestination or election, which is God's act, and is an eternal one; is sovereign, irrespective, and unconditional; relates to particular persons, and is sure and certain in its effect: it is an ordination, not to an office, nor to the means of grace, but to grace and glory itself; to a life of grace which is eternal, and to a life of glory which is for ever; and which is a pure gift of God, is in the hands of Christ, and to which his righteousness gives a title: and ordination to it shows it to be a blessing of an early date; and the great love of God to the persons ordained to it; and the certainty of enjoying it.

{y} Zohar in Exod. fol. 43. 4. {z} Targum in Isa. iv. 3. Vid Abkath Rocel, p. 5.

Acts 13:49

Ver. 49. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. That is, of Pisidia, in which Antioch was; not by the Apostles Paul and Barnabas, who seem to go directly to Iconium, after they were expelled the city and suburbs of Antioch; but by some of those who were converted under their ministry, and had gifts bestowed on them, qualifying them to preach the Gospel to others, which they did with success. There were no doubt several churches planted in this country, and particularly there was one at Antioch, of which these new converts were the beginning, and which continued: in the "fourth" century, this church was a patriarchate, for it is said, under Valentinian and Theodosius, Optimus obtained the patriarchate of Antioch in Pisidia; in the "fifth" century, it was the metropolitan of Pisidia; in this age, mention is made of several bishops of this place; Candidianus, bishop of Antioch in Pisidia, was present at two synods, one at Constantinople against Eutyches, and another at Ephesus; Dionysius, bishop of the same place, assisted in the synod at Chalcedon, and Pergamius at that which was at Constantinople, under the Emperor Theodosius, and at another at Chalcedon, under the Emperor Marcianus: there were also in this century, bishops of other churches in Pisidia; as Severus, bishop of Sozopolis in Pisidia, who was present in the council at Ephesus, against Nestorius; and Olympius, bishop of Mount Hem in Pisidia, who was at the Chalcedon council; and Paulinus bishop of Apamea, Eortius bishop of Nicopolis, and Alexander bishop of Seleucia, and Longinus bishop of Talbondana, all in Pisidia: in the "sixth" century, there were churches in Pisidia embracing the truth of Christ; Bacchus was bishop of Antioch, and John of another place, who both were in the fifth synod at Constantinople: in the "seventh" century, we read of the church at Antioch, as the metropolitan of Pisidia, and of a bishop of it in the sixth council at Constantinople: in the eighth "century", Gregory, bishop of this place, condemned in a synod the worship of images, but afterwards recanted; and in the same century, this city was taken by the Turks, and spoiled {a}; and after this, we read no more of its church state.

{a} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 7. p. 418. & c. 10. p. 588. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 8. c. 10. p. 366. & c. 16. p. 515.

Acts 13:50

Ver. 50. But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women,.... These seem not to be Jewish women; could they be thought to be such, they might easily be concluded to be of the sect of the Pharisees, which was the strictest and most devout sect among the Jews; for there were women Pharisees, as well as men; so we read of
hvwrp hva, "a woman Pharisee" {b}; but these were Gentile women, proselyted to the Jewish religion, and were in their way very religious and devout, and were also "honourable": the word used signifies, not only that they were of a comely form, of a decent habit, and of good manners, as it is by some interpreted; but that they were persons of figure and distinction, of good families; the Syriac version renders it "rich", whose husbands were the

principal men of the city; wherefore the Jews applied to these women, and stirred up them to work upon their husbands, who seem to be those next mentioned:

and the chief men of the city; the magistrates and officers in it:

and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas; raised the mob, and set them upon them:

and expelled them out of their coasts; drove them out of their city and suburbs.

{b} Misn. Sota, c. 3. sect. 4.

Acts 13:51

Ver. 51. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them,.... As Christ directed his apostles to do; See Gill on "Mt 10:14".

And came unto Iconium, a city in Lycaonia; here it is placed both by Ptolomy {c} and Strabo {d}; Pliny says {e}, that

"there was a tetrarchy granted out of Lycaonia, on that part which borders on Galatia, consisting of fourteen cities, the most celebrated city being Iconium."

It was called by the Syrians ane qyh, "Ik-ona", which signifies "the bosom of sheep"; the country round about it being famous for feeding great numbers of sheep; and here afterwards was a church of Christ, a bosom for his sheep; it is now in the hands of the Turks, and is called "Conia", or "Cogne".

{c} Geograph. l. 5. c. 6. {d} Ib. l. 12. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 27.

Acts 13:52

Ver. 52. And the disciples were filled with joy,.... Meaning either the "apostles", as the Ethiopic version renders it, Paul and Barnabas; who rejoiced, both at the success they had met with, and because they were counted worthy to suffer reproach and persecution for the sake of Christ and his Gospel: or rather the disciples at Antioch, and other parts of Pisidia, the new converts; who were filled with joy at the Gospel being preached unto them, and at the constancy and courage of the apostles in suffering for it:

and with the Holy Ghost; which, with the former, designs the same thing as spiritual joy, or joy in the Holy Ghost; or else the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which they had both for their own comfort, and the advantage of others.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 14:1

Ver. 1. And it came to pass in Iconium,.... When the apostles were got thither, and as soon as they were there; at least the first opportunity they had:

that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews; which was in Iconium; hither Paul and Barnabas went together, in like manner as they had done at Antioch:

and so spoke; such words, and doctrines of grace, with so much power, authority, and demonstration of the Spirit, with so much plainness, clearness, and evidence, as well as with so much boldness and courage:

that a great multitude, both of the Jews, and also of the Greeks, believed: the doctrines they preached, and in Christ the sum and substance of them; and these were not a few, but a great multitude; and not of one sort, of the Jews only, who expected the Messiah, but of the Greeks, or Gentiles also, who never heard of any; for by Greeks here are meant, not Jews born in Greece, speaking the Greek tongue, and using the Greek Bible, for these were called Hellenists, and not Greeks, but Heathens. These converts laid the foundation of a Gospel church state in this place; for that there was a church here, is certain from Ac 14:21 In the "first" century, Sosipater is said to be bishop, or pastor of this church, and also Tertius, who are both reckoned among the "seventy" disciples of Christ;
See Gill on "Lu 10:1". In the "third" century, Celsus was bishop of this church; and in the same century, several synods were held here, about the error of Novatus; and in the same century, Nicomes bishop of this place, assisted at the council at Antioch, which condemned the heresy of Samosatenus {f}: in the "fourth" century there was a church in this place, and Amphilochius was bishop of it, of whom Jerom {g} makes mention; and who read to him a book, concerning the deity and worship of the holy Spirit: in the "fifth" century, it was the metropolitan church of Lycaonia, and Valerianus and Onesiphorus presided over it: in the "sixth" century, a bishop of this church was present at

the fifth Roman council under Symmachus: in the "seventh" century, it bore the character of metropolitan, and a bishop of it assisted at the sixth council at Constantinople, whose name was Paul: in the "eighth" century, Leo was bishop of it, who was present at the synod of Nice {h}; and after this we hear no more of it, the place falling into the hands of the Turks, who are now possessed of it: here, according to the Roman martyrology, Tryphena and Tryphosa, mentioned in
Ro 16:12 heard the Apostle Paul preach; and here the famous virgin and martyr, Thecla, was converted.

{f} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 19. & l. 7. c. 28, 30. {g} Catalog. Script. Eccles. fol. 102. H. {h} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 5. c. 7. p. 418. c. 10. p. 596. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 112. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

Acts 14:2

Ver. 2. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles,.... That part of the Jews, which continued in unbelief, and rejected the doctrine of the apostles, concerning Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah; these stirred up the Gentiles, who had no knowledge of, nor faith in this matter:

and made their minds evil affected against the brethren; either in general against all those that embraced the Gospel of Christ; who being of the same faith and family, having the same God to be their Father, and equally related to, and interested in Christ Jesus, are called brethren; or in particular against the Apostles Paul and Barnabas, by representing them as seditious persons, and of bad designs.

Acts 14:3

Ver. 3. Long time therefore abode they,.... At Iconium, undaunted and not discouraged, at the treatment they met with: but continued,

speaking boldly in the Lord; using great freedom of speech, and showing great courage and intrepidity of mind; speaking out, without fear, the doctrines of the Gospel, in the name of the Lord, and depending upon strength, assistance, and support, from him:

which gave testimony unto the word of his grace; the Gospel, so called, because it is a publication of the grace and favour of God to the sons of men; in the choice of some of them to everlasting life, in the mission of his Son to redeem them, in the justification of them by his righteousness, and in the forgiveness of them through his blood, in the regeneration of them by his Spirit, in adopting them into his family, and making them heirs of eternal life; and because it is a means of implanting his grace in their souls; to this he bore witness, by giving it success, notwithstanding the opposition made against it, and by miracles wrought in confirmation of it, as follows:

and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands; such as healing the sick, curing the lame, casting out devils; and the like, whereby a testimony was given to the truth of the doctrine they preached: and it may be observed, that these miraculous works were not wrought by the power of the apostles, but by the power of God; they were only instruments by whom they were done; it was owing to a grant from the Lord, and to his power, that they were performed.

Acts 14:4

Ver. 4. But the multitude of the city was divided,.... In their sentiments, about the apostles, their doctrines, and miracles; some approving them, others condemning their doctrines as false, and their miracles as delusions:

and part held with the Jews; that did not believe, but rejected the apostles, despised their doctrines, and disparaged their miracles:

and part with the apostles; these were the Jews and Greeks, that believed; which divisions in families, towns, and cities, though the common consequence of the preaching of the Gospel, are not owing to any fault in that, but to the depravity and corruption of human nature; and are what our Lord declared was, and foretold would be the case, Lu 12:51.

Acts 14:5

Ver. 5. And when there was an assault made,.... Or a strong bias and inclination were in the minds,

both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews, with their rulers; who encouraged them in it:

to use them despitefully, and to stone them; not only to give them reproachful language, but to smite, buffet, and scourge them, and to stone them for blasphemy, which was a punishment among the Jews for such causes.

Acts 14:6

Ver. 6. They were ware of it,.... They understood it, were apprised of it, and well weighed it, and considered it in their minds, and what was best to be done at this juncture:

and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia; according to the orders and command of Christ, Mt 10:23 not so much to save their lives, as to spread the Gospel in other parts. Lycaonia was a province in the lesser Asia, near Phrygia, separated from it by the mountains; on the east it bordered on Galatia, and had on the west Pamphylia and Pisidia, and on the south Cilicia, unto Mount Taurus. Some say it had its name from Lycaon, the son of Pelasgus; others, seeing it was not a Greek colony, chose to fetch the name of the country from the Syrians, who used to call their neighbour's country Leikonia, or in the Greek pronunciation Lycaonia; that is, the country of Iconium, which city was the metropolis of Lycaonia {i}: Lystra is by Ptolomy {k} placed in Isauria, and so Derbe is said by Strabo {l} to be upon the coast of Isauria; wherefore the words may be read thus, as they are in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, "and they fled to the cities of Lycaonia, and to Lystra, and to Derbe"; by which reading, they are not necessarily made the cities of Lycaoma: according to Jerom {m}, they were both cities of Lycaonia. Lystra is the same with hrtvel, "Lehesthera"; which, in the Hebrew and Syriac languages, signifies "a flock of sheep", or "a city of flocks"; it being a place that abounded with sheep, as the country of Lycaonia in general did {n}. Derbe was sometimes called "Delbia", which, in the language of the Lycaonians, signifies a "juniper tree"; and Delub, and Dulbe, with the Targumist {o} and Talmudists {p}, signify a chesnut tree; and with the Arabians, "Dulb" is a plane tree, or poplar; it seems as if it had its name from one or other of those trees, which might grow in large quantities near it:

and unto the region that lieth round about; the said cities.

{i} Vid. Hiller. Onomasticum Sacrum, p. 870. {k} Geograph. l. 5. c. 4. {l} Ib. l. 12. {m} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. A. D. {n} Vid. Hiller. ib. p. 870, 871. {o} Targum Onkelos in Gen. xxx. 37. {p} T. Hieros. Cetubot, fol. 31. 4. T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 23. 1. & Succa, fol. 32. 2.

Acts 14:7

Ver. 7. And there they preached the Gospel. They did not sit still, nor hide themselves in these places; but, as in others, they preached the Gospel, the good news and glad tidings of the incarnation of Christ, of redemption, peace, and pardon, through his blood, justification by his righteousness, and spiritual and eternal salvation through him: in Beza's most ancient copy, and in one of Stephens's, these words are added, and which Bede also says were in the Greek copies in his time, "and the whole multitude were moved at their doctrines, and Paul and Barnabas continued at Lystra"; which agrees with what follows. It is very likely that many were converted in each of these cities, and in the adjacent country, and that churches were raised in these places; this seems manifest, from
Ac 14:20 Artemas, of whom mention is made in **Tit 3:12** and is said to be one of the seventy disciples, is reported to be bishop of Lystra; See Gill on "Lu 10:1", though we meet with nothing in ecclesiastical history, concerning the churches in either of these places, until the "sixth" century; when in the fifth Roman synod under Symmachus, there were present the bishops of Lystra and Derbe, as also of Iconium and Larandas, which were likewise cities in Lycaonia {q}.

{q} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4.

Acts 14:8

Ver. 8. And there sat a certain man at Lystra,.... Where the apostle was preaching; and perhaps he sat there to beg, where there was a great concourse of people, and which might be in the open street: this man was

impotent in his feet; so weak, as not to be able to walk, and even to stand on them, and therefore is said to sit:

being a cripple from his mother's womb; he was born lame, as was the man cured by Peter, **Ac 3:2**

who never had walked; these circumstances are mentioned, to show that his case was incurable by any human art, and to illustrate the following miracle.

Acts 14:9

Ver. 9. The same heard Paul speak,.... That is, preach the Gospel; he was one of his hearers, and faith came to hint by hearing; the Arabic version adds, "he cried unto him"; that is, to Paul, whom he heard:

who steadfastly beholding him; not the lame man beholding Paul, but Paul beholding the lame man, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions both express it, as also Beza's ancient copy and others; so Peter looked on the man he cured, **Ac 3:4**.

And perceiving that he had faith to be healed; as he might by his looks, his gestures, his attention in hearing, and it may be by somewhat that he said, as well as by revelation, or a spirit of discerning, which he had.

Acts 14:10

Ver. 10. Said with a loud voice,.... Not only that the man, but that all might hear and attend to the miracle about to be wrought:

stand upright on thy feet; in five of Beza's manuscripts, and in other copies, and in the Complutensian edition, and in the Syriac version, this clause is introduced with these words, "I say unto thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ"; which is much such a form that Peter used, **Ac 3:6** whereby the virtue of the miracle is ascribed to Christ, and not assumed by the apostle:

and he leaped and walked; he sprung up directly from his seat, and leaped about for joy, and walked as well as any other man could.

Acts 14:11

Ver. 11. And when the people saw what Paul had done,.... In curing the lame man in so marvellous a manner, and concluding it to be a divine work, and what a mere creature could never perform:

they lift up their voices; not in indignation and wrath, but as persons astonished:

saying in the speech of Lycaonia; by which it should seem that Lystra was a city of Lycaonia, since the Lycaonian language was spoken in it; the Arabic version reads, "in their own tongue"; and the Syriac version, "in the dialect of the country"; very likely a dialect of the Greek tongue;

the gods are come down to us in the likeness of men; they had a notion of deity, though a very wrong one; they thought there were more gods than one, and they imagined heaven to be the habitation of the gods; and that they sometimes descended on earth in human shape, as they supposed they now did.

Acts 14:12

Ver. 12. And they called Barnabas Jupiter,.... The supreme God; it may be because that Barnabas was the oldest man, of the tallest stature, and largest bulk, and made the best figure; whereas Paul was younger, of a low stature, and mean appearance:

and Paul Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker; Mercury was the god of eloquence, and the messenger of the gods, and the interpreter of their will {r}; Paul being chiefly concerned in preaching and speaking to the people, they called him by the name of this God: the Jews had a doctor in their schools, whom they called
Myrbdmh vad, "the chief of the speakers" {s}.

{r} Vid Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 17, 19. {s} Juchasin, fol. 45. 2. & 46. 1.

Acts 14:13

Ver. 13. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city,.... Not that the priest was before the city, but Jupiter; and the phrase denotes either his presidency over the city, and so the Arabic version renders it, "who was the chief god of their city"; or the place where his image stood, which was out of the city, and so may be said to be before it; accordingly the Syriac version renders it, "who was without the city"; he who officiated as priest to him:

brought oxen and garlands unto the gates; either "of the city", as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions add, where was the statue of Jupiter; or else, and which is most likely, he brought them to the gates of the house, where Paul and Barnabas were; and to this sense the Syriac version renders it, "to the door of the dwelling place where they abode": what the oxen were brought for is easy to conceive, had it not been expressed; but for what should garlands or crowns be brought? These were used in sacrifices, for different purposes; sometimes they crowned the gods {t}, to whom they sacrificed, and these might be brought to be put upon the heads of Paul and Barnabas; and sometimes the priests wore them {u}, and which seems to be in imitation of the mitre, wore by the high priest among the Jews; and sometimes even those who came to sacrifice, and implore the assistance of their deities, wore them {w}; likewise the altars on which they offered sacrifice were crowned with these garlands {x}; and the sacrifices themselves, and which last seems to be the case here: the garlands were brought to be put upon the oxen; and these were for the most part made of cypress; sometimes of the pine tree, and sometimes of other leaves and flowers, such as were peculiar to the gods {y}: and there was something like this among the Jews, at the offerings of their first fruits, which were done in this manner {z};

"they that were nearest (to Jerusalem) brought green figs and grapes; and they that were more remote brought dried figs and raisins; and an ox went before them, whose horns were covered with gold, tyz lv trjew, "and a crown of olives" on his head; a pipe sounded before them, till they came near to Jerusalem, and then they sent some before them, who "crowned" their first fruits."

And would have done sacrifice with the people; that is, the priest and the people with him, would have offered sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, as to two deities; and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions add, "to them"; to both the apostles, with which agrees the Arabic version.

{t} Baruch vi. 9. Justin. Apolog. 2. p. 57. Tertull. de Corona, c. 10. Alex. ab. Alex. Gen. dier. l. 4. c. 17. {u} Tertull. de Idolatria, c. 18. Alex. ab. Alex. ib. Paschalius de Coronis. l. 4. c. 13. {w} Paschal. ib. {x} Ovid de Tristibus, l. 3. eleg. 13. {y} Paschal. ib. c. 16. {z} Misn. Biccurim, c. 3. sect. 3.

Acts 14:14

Ver. 14. Which when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of,.... As they quickly did, such a multitude being about the doors of the house, where they were: it may be observed, that Barnabas is here called an apostle, as in Ac 14:4 and is placed before Paul, not as being greater than he, but because of the opinion these Heathens had of him: they rent their clothes; as the Jews did, and were obliged to do, when they heard any blasphemy; See Gill on "Mt 26:65".

And ran in among the people; in great haste, showing great concern of mind, and much indignation and resentment, at what they were about to do:

crying out; aloud, and with great vehemence, that all might hear, and to express the greater dislike of the action.

Acts 14:15

Ver. 15. And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things?.... That is, bring these oxen and garlands, and attempt to offer sacrifice; this they said, not as arguing with them calmly and mildly, but with a mixture of indignation, heat, and zeal, as displeased with, and detesting and abhorring what they were about to do:

we also are men of like passions with you; men, and not gods; of the same human nature, and that as corrupted, alike sinful men, and need a sacrifice better than these; frail mortal men, subject to frailty, imperfection, afflictions, troubles, diseases, and death itself; and so very improper objects of worship:

and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities; from these deities, Jupiter and Mercury, and the rest of them; which were vain, useless, and unprofitable, and could do their votaries no manner of service; and from the worshipping of them, which were so many acts of vanity, folly, and weakness, yea, of sin and wickedness: the apostles were so far from being these gods, that their business was to show men the sin and folly of adhering to them; and to persuade them to relinquish the worship of them, and turn

to the living God; who has life in himself, and is the fountain of life to others; whereas these deities were dead men, and the lifeless images of them; who neither lived themselves, nor could give life to others, or do them any service of any kind: but the living God is he,

which hath made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein; which comprehends all created beings, the whole universe, and all that is in it, angels, men, beasts, fowls, fish, and whatever exists; and therefore is only deserving of religious worship.

Acts 14:16

Ver. 16. Who in times past,.... For many hundred years past; even ever since God chose and separated the people of Israel from the rest of the nations, to be a peculiar people to himself: from that time he

suffered all nations to walk in their own ways; of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry; which they devised, and chose, and delighted in: not that he gave them any licence to walk in these ways, without being chargeable with sin, or with impunity; but he left them to themselves, to the dim light and law of nature, and gave them no written law, nor any external revelation of his mind and will; nor did he send any prophets or ministers of his unto them, to show them the evil of their ways, and turn them from them, and direct them to the true God, and the right way of worshipping him; but left them to take their own methods, and pursue the imagination of their own hearts: but the apostle suggests, that the case was now altered, and God had sent them and other ministers of his, among all nations of the world, to protest against their superstition and idolatry; and to reclaim them from their evil ways, and to direct them to the true and living God, and his worship, and to preach salvation by his Son Jesus Christ.

Acts 14:17

Ver. 17. Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness,.... Of his kindness and goodness to them, during this long interval and period of time; for they had not the written law, yet they were not destitute of the law of nature; and had, besides, many instances of providential goodness, by which they might have known God: and should have been thankful to him, and glorified him as God, and not have worshipped the idols of their own hands; the goodness of God should have led them to repentance, and not have been abused to so many wicked purposes as it had been:

in that he did good; in a providential way, to persons very undeserving of it, of which some particular instances follow:

and gave us rain from heaven, which none of the gods of the Gentiles could, do, Jer 14:22. So Mymvg xtpm, "the key of rains", is by the Jews {a} said to be one of the keys which God has in his own hands, and which he does not commit to any other: and a wonderful blessing is this to mankind, and which God gives to the just and to the unjust, and did give to the ignorant and idolatrous Gentiles. Beza's most ancient copy, and four other ancient copies of his, and some others, read "you", instead of "us"; which reading seems most agreeable:

and fruitful seasons; spring, summer, harvest, and autumn, at which several times, different fruits of the earth appear:

filling our hearts with food and gladness; giving a sufficiency of food, and even an abundance of it, and that for pleasure and delight, as well as for support and refreshment: the Syriac version reads, "their hearts"; some copies read, "your hearts".

{a} Targum Jerus. in Gen. xxx. 22. & Jon. in Deut. xxviii. 12.

Acts 14:18

Ver. 18. And with these sayings,.... Concerning themselves, and concerning the living God, his creation of all things, and his providential goodness:

scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them; so resolute were they upon it, that it was with great difficulty that they persuaded them from it: in four of Beza's manuscripts, and in some other copies, it is added, "but everyone went to his own house", &c.

Acts 14:19

Ver. 19. And there came thither certain Jews,.... Either just at the same time, or however whilst the apostles were in this city: in four manuscripts of Beza's, and in some other copies, it is read, "as they abode there, and taught, there came", &c. These Jews were inveterate enemies of the apostles, and seemed to have followed them from place to place, on purpose to oppose them, and to stir up the people against them, and to hinder the success of their ministry all they could: for these came

from Antioch; not Antioch in Syria, but in Pisidia: where they had contradicted and blasphemed the word of God, and was the reason why the apostles turned to the Gentiles, Ac 13:45.

And Iconium: where also the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles against the apostles, and both of them made an assault upon them, to use them ill, Ac

14:2

who persuaded the people; in the above manuscripts of Beza's, and in some other copies, are these words,

"and they disputing confidently, persuaded the people to depart from them, saying, that they said nothing true, but in all things lied;"

which though they may not be considered as the text, are a good gloss upon it: they persuaded the people not to hearken to them, told them that they were deceivers and jugglers, and instead of having honours conferred upon them, they ought to be severely punished; and to these Jews they hearkened, as appears by what follows:

and having stoned Paul; even the same persons that just before were for sacrificing to him as a god; which shows the fickleness and inconstancy of the populace, and how little they are to be depended on; for they were the Gentiles that stoned Paul, at the instigation of the Jews; though the latter might probably join with them in it: a like instance we have in the conduct of the Jews towards Christ, who cried "Hosanna" to him one day, and on another, very quickly after, with great importunity say, Crucify him, Crucify him; of this stoning, the apostle makes mention, 2Co 11:25 When they had stoned him,

they drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead; which is an addition to their barbarity and inhumanity; for they not only stoned him until he was dead, as they supposed, but they dragged his body through the streets of their city, in contempt of him, and indignation against him, and cast him out of it, where they left him as unworthy of a burial.

Acts 14:20

Ver. 20. Howbeit as the disciples stood round about him,.... Weeping over him, and lamenting for him, and it may be praying to God, that he would restore him to life: however, they got about him, in order to take care of him, and provide for his interment: these were the young converts at Lystra, who, under the ministry of the apostles, were now brought to the faith of Christ; unless it can be thought, that they were such who followed them from other places, and attended them in their travels; but the former seems most probable, and which shows their affection to their spiritual Father, and their constancy in the faith of Christ, notwithstanding this ill treatment of his servant:

he rose up and came into the city; which was no less than a miracle, and was no doubt the effect of the mighty power of God, put forth upon him; for though he was not really dead, yet he was left as such, and thought to be so by both friends and foes: and when it is considered what wounds and bruises he must receive by stoning, and his being dragged through the streets of the city, and left in such a miserable condition without it, that he should at once rise up in the midst of the disciples, and walk into the city as one in perfect health and strength, has something extraordinary and miraculous in it; and it shows great resolution, courage, and strength of mind, to go into the same city again, where he had been so ill used; though he did not choose to continue there, nor were the inhabitants worthy of such a favour:

and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe; where they had been before, and had preached the Gospel, and whither they fled from Iconium, when in great danger, Ac 14:6.

Acts 14:21

Ver. 21. And when they had preached the Gospel to that city,.... To the inhabitants of it, as they did in every place where they came, even the pure Gospel of Christ, the good news, and glad tidings of life and salvation by him:

and had taught many; or made them disciples, their ministry being blessed to bring many to the faith of Christ:

they returned again to Lystra; where Paul had been stoned:

and to Iconium; where both Jews and Gentiles, and the magistrates of the city, had attempted to use them ill, and to stone them:

and Antioch; that is, in Pisidia, as before; where a persecution was raised against them, and from the coasts of which place they were expelled; so fearless were they of danger, and so zealous to promote the interest of Christ, and the good of souls.

Acts 14:22

Ver. 22. Confirming the souls of the disciples,.... Not wicked men in their wickedness, nor self-righteous persons in an opinion of their own righteousness, as sufficient for justification, both being contrary to the nature and tendency of the ministry of the word; the Gospel being a doctrine according to godliness, and a revelation of the righteousness of Christ; but the disciples and followers of Jesus, whom they had already made in those places, these they confirmed in the doctrines of the Gospel, and fortified them against the contradictions and blasphemies of the Jews, and the reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions they met with, by which they might be staggered: they did not confirm the bodies of these disciples, and the health of them, which is the business of the physician to confirm; nor their estates and civil property, to secure and defend which belongs to the civil magistrate; but their souls, their more noble and valuable part, their hearts, which are apt to be unstable; the frames of their hearts, which are precarious, and so as not to be too much depressed when disagreeable, or be too much elated when agreeable, placing too much trust and confidence in them; and also the graces of the Spirit in their hearts, as to act and exercise, as faith, hope, and love; and likewise their judgments and understandings in the truths of the Gospel, in what relates to the love of God; the covenant of grace, the person of Christ, and their interest in them:

and exhorting them to continue in the faith: in the exercise of the grace of faith, and in the doctrine of faith, and in the profession of both, whatever they might meet with on the account thereof, and which they were to expect:

and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God either into a Gospel church state, which is sometimes so called, there being much trouble often attending an entrance into it, both from within, from the corruption and unbelief of the heart, and from without, from the temptations of Satan, and from the revilings and insults of men, and even from friends and relations; or into the heavenly glory, the way to that lying through many tribulations; and which, though a rough, is a right way: so it "must" be, there is a necessity of it, partly on account of the decrees of God, who has appointed afflictions for his people, and them to afflictions; and partly on account of the predictions of Christ, who foretold his disciples, that in the world they should have tribulation; as also, that there might be a conformity to him, that as he the head must, and did suffer many things, and enter into his glory, so must they his members: as well as likewise for the trial and exercise of the several graces of the Spirit, and to make the saints meet for heaven, and to make that the sweeter to them.

Acts 14:23

Ver. 23. And when they had ordained them elders in every church,.... As soon as ever any number of disciples were made, or souls were converted to Christ in any place, they were at once formed, by the apostles, into a church state; and as the gifts, as well as the grace of the Holy Ghost, attended the ministry of the word, so among those that were converted, there were some that were honoured with ministerial gifts, qualifying them to preach the Gospel, and take upon them the care of the churches: these the apostles directed the churches to look out from among themselves, as in the case of deacons, an inferior office, who by joint suffrages declared their choice of them by the stretching out, or lifting up of their hands, as the word here used signifies, and not the imposition of them; and the apostles presiding in this affair, they were installed into the office of bishops, elders, or pastors over them; which expresses the great regard the apostles had to the order, as well as to the doctrine of the Gospel, and the concern they had for the welfare of souls converted under their ministry, by making a provision for them when they were gone.

And had prayed with fasting; for the elders ordained, that they might have a larger measure of gifts, and might be kept faithful to the trust committed to them, and be succeeded in their ministry; and for the members of the church, that they might abide by the truths of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, and walk worthy of it in their conversations, and behave aright in their church state, both to their elders, and to one another, and that they might persevere to the end:

they commended them to the Lord; both the elders and the churches, to be blessed by him with fresh supplies of grace, to be kept by his power, and to be preserved by him safe to his kingdom and glory. The Lord Jesus Christ seems to be intended by "the Lord", to whom the apostles commended them; and who is every way qualified, and fully able to answer such a commendation; see Ac 20:32 on whom they believed; meaning Christ, whom they received by faith, in whom they trusted, and on whom they believed with the heart for righteousness, life, and salvation: this was true, both of the apostles, who commended the elders and churches to the Lord, and was the reason why they commended them to him, because they believed on him themselves; and of the churches and elders commended, who could be commended to none better than to him, on whom they had believed.

Acts 14:24

Ver. 24. And after they had passed throughout Pisidia,.... The country where Antioch, the last place mentioned, was; see Ac 13:14 they came to Pamphylia; See Gill on "Ac 13:13" See Gill on "Ac 2:10"

Acts 14:25

Ver. 25. And when they had preached the word in Perga,.... A city in Pamphylia, Ac 13:13. The Alexandrian copy, and others, and three manuscripts of Beza's, read, "the word of the Lord"; as do the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions: they went down into "Attalia"; not Italia or Italy, as some Latin copies, and as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; but a city in Pamphylia, bordering on the sea, as Ptolomy writes {b}; as this place did, as appears by what follows. So Jerom says {c}, that Attalia is a city of Pamphylia, on the sea coast; it was formerly the metropolis of it: it is now in the hands of the Turks, and is called Sattalia; near it is a bay, called Golfo di Sattalia, where there is a considerable mart for the whole country: it is famous for tapestry, which is made in it: it had its name from Attalus, king of Pergamus, the first founder of it. Beza's ancient copy here adds, "preaching the Gospel to them"; to the inhabitants of Attalia, and doubtless with success, though no mention is made of it here, nor elsewhere, nor of any church in this place; nor do we read of any in ecclesiastical history until the "sixth" century, when Dionysius, bishop of Attalia, is said to be present in the fifth synod at Rome {d}; unless Attalia, called a city of Lycia, can be thought to be the same with this, of which another Dionysius was bishop in the fifth century; and assisted at the council of Chalcedon {e}.

{b} Geograh. l. 5, c. 5. {c} De locis Hebraicis. fol. 95. K. {d} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. {e} Ib. cent. 5. c. 10. p. 589.

Acts 14:26

Ver. 26. And thence sailed to Antioch,.... In Syria,

from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God; by the prophets: from this place they first set out on their travels; here they were separated by the order of the Holy Ghost to the work of the ministry, and by them they were sent forth, after they had in prayer commended them to God, and to his grace to assist them, and succeed them, as well as to fit them for the work which they fulfilled; that is, for the work of the ministry, for the preaching of the Gospel in several places; and which they had now gone through, and finished with great integrity and faithfulness, and with much success, though through many afflictions and persecutions.

Acts 14:27

Ver. 27. And when they were come,.... To Antioch:

and had gathered the church together: which was in that place, and who came together at their request; for as they were sent out by them, they judged it proper to call them together; and give them an account of the issue of their work they were recommended by them to the grace of God to fulfil: and being come together at their usual place of meeting,

they rehearsed all that God had done with them; and by them, as instruments; what grace and strength he had given them to preach the Gospel; what numbers of souls were everywhere converted by it; what miracles were wrought by them for the confirmation of it; and what persecutions and sufferings they had endured for the sake of it; and what deliverances were vouchsafed unto them:

and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles; the phrase, "the door of faith", seems to be Jewish; it is to be met with in Jewish writings: it is said {f},

"there are two women found in the world, that express the praise of God, so as all the men of the world have not; and who are they? Deborah and Hannah: Hannah, according to **1Sa 2:2** "there is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beside thee" and all proclaim that she
amlel atwnmyhmd axtp txtp, "opens the door of faith to the world", as Ac 14:8 "he raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghill, lo, the door of faith; to set them among princes", lo, the faith that is above."

The sense here seems to be, that God had given an opportunity to the apostles to preach the doctrine of faith unto the Gentiles, and the Gentiles had had an opportunity of hearing and embracing it; God had opened the mouths of his ministers to preach to them, and he had opened their hearts to attend unto it, and receive it; for it may be understood of his giving of them the grace of faith, by which they received Christ, and his Gospel, into their hearts: so a like phrase is used by the Targumist on Jer 33:6 who paraphrases the words thus;

"behold, I will bring unto them healing and redemption, and I will heal them, and I will reveal, or "open to them",
abwyt ert, "the door of repentance";"

that is, I will give them repentance: so here, when God is said to open the door of faith to the Gentiles, the sense is, that he had given the grace of faith to them, which came by hearing the word of the Gospel, which he sent them; and gave them encouragement to believe in Christ; so the phrase a door of hope is used in **Ho 2:15**.

{f} Zohar in Lev. fol. 8. 3. & in Deut. fol. 109. 4. Vid. ib. in Gen. fol. 60. 2. & 68. 2. Vid. Raziel, fol. 39. 2.

Acts 14:28

Ver. 28. And there they abode long time with the disciples. That is, Paul and Barnabas continued a considerable time at Antioch with the believers there, before they set out on another journey; and what might detain them the longer, might be the disputes they had with some "judaizing" Christians, concerning the observation of the law; of which, and the issue of them, an account is given in the next chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 15:1

Ver. 1. And certain men which came down from Judea,.... To Antioch; they were not sent by the apostles, they came down of "themselves"; who they were, is not certain; that they were "judaizing" Christians, and teachers among them, is plain from the following account: according to Epiphanius {g} they were Cerinthus, and some of his followers: these

taught the brethren; the Gentile converts at Antioch, who are styled "brethren", though they were Gentiles, because they were regenerated by the grace of God, and were of the same faith with the believing Jews, and in the same church state with them at Antioch: and said, except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses; or custom of Moses, which had been used from the time of Abraham, and was revived and reinforced by Moses; wherefore the Syriac version renders it, "the law of Moses"; See Gill on "Joh 7:19"

ye cannot be saved; these men were not only for retaining circumcision, which was now abolished, but they made it necessary to salvation; which was carrying the matter further than even the unbelieving Jews themselves did, at least some of them: for though indeed it is a notion with them, that no circumcised persons go to hell, but are all saved; and some of them say, that God rejects uncircumcised persons, and brings them down to hell {h}; yet others of them speak of the godly among the nations of the world, and of the proselytes of the gate, who keep the seven precepts of Noah, as persons that shall be saved; so Ananias the Jew, preceptor to King Izates, when he signified his great desire to be circumcised, in order to put him off of it, told him, that if he was determined to follow the customs of the Jews, he might worship God without circumcision, which was more peculiar to the Jews than to be circumcised {i}.

{g} Contra Haeres. l. 1. Haeres. 28. {h} Shemot Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 104. 4. {i} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 20. c. 2. sect. 5.

Acts 15:2

Ver. 2. When therefore Paul and Barnabas,.... Who were the ministers of the uncircumcision, and were just returned from preaching the Gospel among the Gentiles, with success, and were advocates for them, being witnesses of the grace that was bestowed on them, and therefore opposed the sentiments of these men:

and had no small dissension and disputation with them; which was attended with much heat and sharpness, and continued some time, and occasioned much disturbance and uneasiness; nor could the affair be decided and issued: wherefore

they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them; that is, the members of the church at Antioch, taking this matter into consideration, and finding that the difference could not be composed, for the peace of the church, wisely came to a resolution, and made an order, that Paul and Barnabas, with others, as Titus, who went with Paul at this time, as appears from Ga 2:1 and some others of the brethren, and it may be also certain, on, the other side of the question; that these

should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders, about this question; concerning circumcision, and the necessity of it to salvation, that they might have the sense of James, and Peter, and John, who particularly were at Jerusalem at this time, as appears from Ac 15:7 and other apostles that might be there; and also of other ministers of the word, who are called elders. And the church of Jerusalem being the most ancient church, and several of the apostles residing here, who had seen Christ in the flesh, and had received their mission and commission from him, and had been extraordinarily endowed with the Holy Ghost; and here being many other preachers of the Gospel, and there being in a multitude of counsellors safety, the church at Antioch judged it advisable to send to them for counsel and direction; and it becomes churches to assist each other in this way.

Acts 15:3

Ver. 3. And being brought on their way by the church,.... That is, either being accompanied by some of the brethren of the church some part of the way, out of respect unto them, or being provided by them with things necessary for their journey; see **Tit 3:13**

they passed through Phenice and Samaria; which both lay between Syria and Judea; in the former of which places those that were scattered upon the death of Stephen had preached, and a great number were converted and believed in Christ who were Jews, Ac 11:19 and in the latter Philip the evangelist had preached with much success, **Ac 8:5** as therefore their way to Jerusalem lay through these places, they called upon the brethren as they passed;

declaring the conversion of the Gentiles; in the several places where they had been, as in Syria, Pisidia, Pamphylia, and Lycaonia, how by their ministry they were turned from darkness to light, from Satan unto God, from their superstition and idolatry to the worship of the true God, and to faith in Christ Jesus:

and they caused great joy unto all the brethren; the believing Jews in those parts, who being truly believers in Christ, rejoiced at the spread of his Gospel, and the increase of his interest, even among the Gentiles; for if angels rejoice, much more should saints rejoice at the conversion of sinners, let them be who or where they will; and where there is true grace, there will be joy when this is the case. There were churches in each of these places, of which "the brethren" here mentioned were members, and which continued for many ages afterwards: the foundation of the churches in Phenice was first laid by the converts made by them, who were scattered abroad through the persecution at the death of Stephen, Ac 11:19. Quartus, mentioned in Ro 16:23 is said to be bishop of Berytus in this country. In the "second" century there were churches at Tyre and Ptolemais, two cities in Phoenicia; Cassius was bishop of the one, and Clarus of the other {k}: in the "third" century several Phoenician bishops suffered martyrdom, as Tyrannio, bishop of the church of Tyre, Zenobius, presbyter of that at Sidon, and Sylvanus, bishop of Emisa {l}: in the "fourth" century, at the beginning of it, there were present, at the council of Nice, the bishops of Ptolemais, Damascus, Tripolis, Paneas, and Emisa; as they were also at a synod held at Jerusalem in the same century, on account of the Arians, and at another at Antioch on the same account: in the fifth century there were churches in Phoenicia reformed by Chrysostom, by whose means also the temples of the idols were destroyed, and many were converted in these countries; and in this age lived several persons of note here, as Antiochus bishop of Ptolemais, Eustathius bishop of Berytus, Paulus bishop of Emisa, Pompeianus and Uranius of the same place, and Damianus bishop of Sidon, and other Phoenician bishops, who assisted at the council of Chalcedon; as Olympius bishop of Atrapolis, Theodorus bishop of Tripoils, Joseph bishop of Heliopolis, Valerius bishop of Laodicea, Thomas bishop of Euroma, and Theonas bishop of Enria or Enaria, all in Phoenicia: in the sixth century, mention is made of the bishops of Ptolemais, Tyre, Sidon, and Berytus, in the acts of the synod at Rome and Constantinople; and though Phoenicia was seized upon, and wasted by the Arabians and Persians, in the seventh century; yet we read, in the eighth century, of Adeodatus, a bishop of Berytus, who baptized many converted Jews {m}. As for Samaria, our Lord himself preached and converted many persons there; and after his resurrection he gave his apostles a commission and directions to go there; and here Philip preached with great success. Nicolaus, the deacon, is said to be the first bishop of Samaria; and though in after ages Heathenism very much prevailed in those parts; yet there were Christians and churches, more or less, for several centuries; even in the sixth century there was a bishop of Neapolis in Samaria, killed with the sword, and some presbyters who were taken and fried in a pan, with the remains of some martyrs, by the Samaritan Jews {n}.

{k} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 25. {l} Ib. l. 8. c. 13. {m} Madgeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 2. c. 9. p. 350, 390, 404. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3, 12, 13. c. 10. p. 550, 551. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 7. c. 3. p. 17. c. 16. p. 365. cent 8. c. 2. p.

3. {n} Ib. cent. 6. c. 3. p. 22.

Acts 15:4

Ver. 4. And when they were come to Jerusalem,.... Paul and Barnabas, and the rest that came from Antioch with them:

they were received of the church; that is, that was at Jerusalem, in a very kind and respectful manner; they were received into their houses, and accommodated with everything convenient for them:

and of the apostles; particularly James, and Cephas, and John, who gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, in token of their approbation of them, affection for them, and agreement with them:

and elders: the other ministers of the Gospel who preached in that place:

and they declared all things that God had done with them: just as they did to the church at Antioch, when they returned from their travels, See Gill on "Ac 14:27", the Arabic version here adds, as there, "and that God had opened to the Gentiles the door of faith."

Acts 15:5

Ver. 5. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees,.... Which was the strictest sect of religion among the Jews:

which believed; that Jesus was the Messiah, and professed their faith in him, and were members of the church, though they still retained many of their pharisaical tenets, and are therefore said to be of that sect: these rose up in opposition to Paul and Barnabas, as they were relating their success among the Gentiles, and giving an account of the difference that had happened at Antioch, and their own sense of that matter:

saying, that it was needful to circumcise them: the Gentiles that believed:

and to command them to keep the law of Moses; both moral and ceremonial; the observance of which they reckoned was absolutely necessary to salvation. Some think these are not the words of Luke, relating what happened at

Jerusalem, when Paul and Barnabas gave in their account of things to the apostles and elders; but that they are a continuation of their account, how that in the controversy raised at Antioch, certain Pharisees that came thither from Judea, rose up and asserted the necessity of the, Gentiles being circumcised, and of their keeping the law of Moses in order to their being saved; which is favoured by the Syriac version, especially by the Latin interpreter of it, who supplies the words thus, "but say they" (i.e. Paul and Barnabas) "there arose men", &c.

Acts 15:6

Ver. 6. And the apostles and elders came together,.... And also the brethren, or private members of the church, even the whole church, as appears from Ac 15:22. Whether all the apostles were here present, is not certain; Peter, James, and John were; but who else, cannot be said: these met together

for to consider of this matter; to hear what was to be said on both sides of the question, and then to judge what advice was proper to be given to the Gentiles.

Acts 15:7

Ver. 7. And when there had been much disputing,.... Pro and con upon this subject; many had spoken; and much had been said, and a great deal of time had been taken up about the thing in controversy:

Peter rose up; not only out of respect to this venerable assembly, but to signify that he had something to say; and he stood up that he might be the better heard. Beza's ancient copy reads, "rose up in spirit";

and said unto them, men and brethren: an usual form of address with the Jews; **Ac 7:2**

ye know how that a good while ago; or "from ancient days"; or "from the beginning", as the Ethiopic version renders it; from the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel, after the ascension of Christ; quickly after the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost: it is thought, by some, to be ten or eleven, and, by others, to be twenty years ago, or thereabout:

God made choice among us; the apostles; the Alexandrian copy reads, "among you"; the sense is the same, for Peter must be supposed as directing his discourse chiefly to the apostles:

that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe; referring to the case of Cornelius, and his family: and his sense is, that some years ago it pleased God, in his providence, to single him out from the rest of the apostles, and in a very extraordinary manner to call him to go to Caesarea, and preach the gospel to Cornelius, and those that were in his house, that hearing they might believe in Christ.

Acts 15:8

Ver. 8. And God which knoweth the hearts,.... Of all men; he being omniscient, the searcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children of men, knew with what sincerity Cornelius sent for Peter; and with what vehement desire and longing expectation he and his family and friends waited for his coming; and with what earnestness, diligence, and affection they attended to what he said:

bore them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; God bore a testimony, and showed his well pleasedness in the whole of this affair, by bestowing upon them not only the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Spirit; but his extraordinary gifts, such as speaking with divers tongues, even in like manner as these were bestowed on the apostles themselves, on the day of Pentecost, though they were uncircumcised persons; for the drift of Peter's oration is to show, that circumcision was not necessary to salvation.

Acts 15:9

Ver. 9. And put no difference between us and them,.... Neither in the extraordinary gifts, nor special grace, of the Spirit; giving them the same graces of faith, hope, and love, admitting to the same privileges and immunities of the house of God, and giving them a right and title to the same inheritance of the saints in light, though the one were circumcised, and the other were not. God puts no difference as to matters of religion under the Gospel dispensation between Jews and Gentiles, neither on account of Abraham's seed, or of circumcision, or of the ceremonial law, or of national adoption; nor would he have any made with respect to conversation, civil or religious; all which Peter knew full well: nor has he made any difference in his eternal choice of persons to eternal salvation, on any of the above accounts, having ordained Gentiles to eternal life as Jews, who in consequence of it believe in Christ; nor in redemption, Christ having redeemed by his blood men out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; nor in the effectual calling, for they that were called in the first times of the Gospel, were not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, to whom the Gospel was alike sent, and made effectual to saving purposes: these shared in the same blessings of pardon, justification, and adoption; their sins were forgiven through the same blood, their persons were justified by the same righteousness, and they were taken into the same family, and were no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God; having the same access to God, being built on the same foundation, enjoying the same privileges, and having the same hope of eternal glory.

Purifying their hearts by faith; which was done by implanting faith in them, and leading that faith to the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, original and actual, with which men are defiled; for faith has not this efficacy in itself, but as it has to do with the blood of Jesus: and this spiritual purification being what answered to circumcision, made that unnecessary; for this is the circumcision of the heart, of which the other was only typical. The hearts of men are filthy, and need purifying; they are originally polluted with sin; this is the case of all men; and this defilement reaches to all the members of the body, and the faculties of the soul; and especially the heart is the seat of this impurity, which God only can cleanse: he promises to do it, and does do it; and he only can do it, men cannot; for though, they are exhorted to it, in order to make them sensible of their pollution, and their need of cleansing, that they may apply where it is to be had, yet it is not in their power to effect it; to make a clean heart is a creation work, which is peculiar to God: the heart cannot be purified, neither by ceremonial ablutions, nor by works of moral righteousness, nor by humiliations and tears, nor by submission to Gospel ordinances, as water baptism, but only by the grace of God, and the blood of Christ; which the Spirit of God sprinkles upon the heart, and which faith looks to and deals with, and so it is freed from an evil conscience; and this blessing the believing Gentiles enjoyed in common with the believing Jews.

Acts 15:10

Ver. 10. Now therefore why tempt ye God,.... By hesitating about this matter, by disputing upon this point, and by seeking for further proof and evidence of the will of God in this affair; when it is so plain a case, that it has been his will that the Gospel should be preached to Gentiles, without obliging them to circumcision; that he has given his Spirit both in his extraordinary gifts, and special grace, to uncircumcised persons; particularly he has bestowed faith in Christ upon them, whereby they have been led to the blood of Christ, typified in circumcision, and are thereby purged from all their filth and pollution, and so are the true circumcision: wherefore it is no other than tempting God, a manifest opposition to him, and what must give him offence, to debate about a point so clear; and especially to attempt

to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear. It is common with the Jews to call the law a yoke; frequent mention is made of aydyqp ryn and twum lwe, "the yoke of the commandments" {o}, and hrwth lwe, "the yoke of the law" {p}: and by it here is meant, not circumcision only and barely, for that the Jewish fathers had been able to bear, and had bore it; nor the whole ceremonial law only, which consisted of a multitude of commands and ordinances very heavy and hard; but even the whole moral law, which circumcision obliged those who submitted to it to keep it perfectly; see **Ga 5:3**, which neither the apostles, nor their fathers, were ever able to do, nor any mere man whatever; and therefore this yoke was intolerable and insupportable, and not to be put upon the necks of the Gentile believers; who here are called disciples, being taught the doctrine of the Gospel, and the way of salvation; which was not by circumcision, nor by any works of the law, but by the grace of Christ, as in the following verse.

{o} Targum in Cant. i. 10. & in Lam. iii. 27. Misn. Beracot, c. 2. sect. 2. {p} Echa Rabbati, fol. 56. 3. Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 5. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 39. 3.

Acts 15:11

Ver. 11. But we believe,.... Who are circumcised; the Arabic version adds, "and are sure"; for what follows is a sure and certain article of faith:

that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; not through circumcision, or by any works of the law, moral or ceremonial; but through the grace of Christ undertaking for them, assuming their nature, and dying in their room and stead; through his redeeming, justifying, and pardoning grace: salvation is by Christ; Jehovah the Father appointed him to be his salvation; he sent him, and he came to save sinners; and he has obtained salvation for them; and it is in him, and in no other: and this salvation is by "the grace" of Christ; it was grace moved him to engage in this work before the world began; it was good will to men that caused him to come down from heaven, and appear on earth in the form of a servant; it was pure love that influenced him to lay down his life for them; through the grace in his heart he did all this for them; and it is the fulness of grace in his hands, out of which they receive abundance, whereby they are entitled to, and are made meet for eternal glory:

we shall be saved, even as they; either as the disciples, the Gentile converts, who without circumcision, and the works of the law, were saved by the pure grace and love of Christ, in dying for them, and on which they alone depended for salvation; or else as the Jewish fathers were, for they were justified, pardoned, accepted, and saved in the same way, as the saints under the New Testament are: they could not keep the law perfectly, nor was there then, nor now, salvation by it, only by the grace of Christ; and in that way, and that only, Old and New Testament believers, Jews and Gentiles, whether circumcised or uncircumcised, are saved. The Gentiles were not saved by the light of nature, nor the Jews by the law of Moses; the one were not lost for want of circumcision, nor the other saved by it; the only way of salvation to both, and under all dispensations, is the Lord Jesus Christ; through whose sacrifice sin is atoned for, through whose blood it is pardoned, through whose righteousness men are justified before God, and are accepted with him; and through whom saints have communion with God; and by whom, and whose grace, and not by their own works, they shall be saved with an everlasting salvation, from sin, law, death, hell, and damnation: and the salvation of one and of another, even of all that are saved, Jews or Gentiles, is by grace; no one is deserving of it; they have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God; have done that which is abominable, and they themselves are abominable in the sight of God; they have destroyed, and cannot help themselves; nor have they anyone good thing but what they have received from the Lord, and therefore ought to ascribe all to his grace; it is by that they are what they are, have what they have, and do what they do. Salvation, in all its parts and branches, is owing to grace; and so it is with respect to all persons that are saved; some are not saved by their works, and others by the grace of Christ, but they are all saved by grace; and none have any room to boast of themselves against others.

Acts 15:12

Ver. 12. Then all the multitude kept silence,.... Upon this oration of Peter's, there was a profound silence in the whole assembly, among all the brethren of the church, who were come together on this occasion; they were all satisfied with, and by their silence acquiesced in, what Peter said; and waited to hear what might be further said about this matter, by other persons in the assembly; and even those who were on the other side of the question, were confounded and nonplussed, and knew not what to say, and the more so, when they perceived that the rest of the apostles and elders were of the same mind; for Beza's most ancient copy introduces this clause thus; "then the elders agreeing to the things that were said by Peter, the whole multitude was silent": and this gave Paul and Barnabas an opportunity of being heard; who, perhaps, could not so well be heard before, for the clamour of the people against them, who might not have so good an opinion of them, and of their practices:

and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul; Barnabas is mentioned first, he being most known to the Jews, and of whom they might have the better opinion; and who probably gave the account of their proceedings and success among the Gentiles:

declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them; what wonders of grace were wrought in the conversion of multitudes of them, wherever they came; and what miracles in nature were wrought for the confirmation of the Gospel, such as the striking blind Elymas the sorcerer, at Paphos in Cyprus, and curing the cripple at Lystra; and which they ascribe not to themselves but to God, whose instruments they only were.

Acts 15:13

Ver. 13. And after they had held their peace,.... Meaning not the multitude, but Paul and Barnabas; when they had finished their account, and had done speaking:

James answered; or rose up, as the Syriac version reads, he stood up and began to speak. This was James the son of Alphaeus, one of the twelve apostles, sometimes called the brother of the Lord; for the other James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John, was dead, being killed by Herod, Ac 12:2 but this was the brother of Jude, and the same that wrote the epistle that bears his name: whether he was now bishop or pastor of the church at Jerusalem, is not certain; nor whether he was president in this council; the speeches made in it do not appear to be directed to him: he began his oration thus,

saying, men and brethren, hearken to me; the titles he uses, and the manner of desiring audience, were what were common with the Jews; see **Ac 2:14**.

Acts 15:14

Ver. 14. Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles,.... James begins with taking notice of Peter's speech, and agrees to it, and confirms it; for by Simeon is not meant, as some have thought, the Simeon that took Christ in his arms, **Lu 2:25** who had been dead long ago; but Simon Peter, who had spoken before. Simon and Simeon are one and the same name; the former is only a contraction of the latter in the Syriac language; Simeon was his pure Hebrew name, and James speaking to an assembly of Hebrews, uses it; and observes, that he had given a very clear and distinct narrative, how God at the first preaching of the Gospel, quickly after the day of Pentecost, was pleased to look upon the Gentiles, and show favour to them, and visit them in a way of grace and mercy, by sending the Gospel to them, and his Spirit to make it effectual: this was a gracious visit; he came and looked upon them, quickened them, and spoke comfortably to them, and bestowed special favours upon them; the set time for such a visit being come: the Arabic version renders it, "how God first promised"; referring to the promises concerning the calling of the Gentiles, which James afterwards confirms by citing a passage out of the prophets to the same purpose: the Syriac version, "how God began to choose out of the Gentiles": that is, by calling them by his grace; and the Ethiopic version, "how God first had mercy on the Gentiles"; who before had not obtained mercy:

to take out of them a people for his name; for himself, for his own glory, to call upon his name, and to be called by his name, to bear his name, and support his Gospel, cause and interest: the distinguishing grace of God may be seen herein; it was grace to visit them, to look upon them, when for many hundreds of years he had overlooked them, he had taken no notice of them; and it was distinguishing grace to take some out of them, to be a special and peculiar people to himself; to separate them from the rest by his powerful and efficacious grace, and form them into a church state, that they might show forth his praise and glorify him.

Acts 15:15

Ver. 15. And to this agree the words of the prophets,.... In several of the prophecies of the Old Testament, which plainly speak of the calling of the Gentiles; though James thought it sufficient to produce only one instead of many:

as it is written; in **Am 9:11** and this is agreeably to the Jewish way of citing Scriptures, as Surenhusius observes; so it is said {q}, in twenty four places the priests are called Levites, and this is one of them, Eze 44:15 where only one place is mentioned, instead of the twenty four.

{q} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 86, 2. & Beracot, fol. 4. 1, 2.

Acts 15:16

Ver. 16. After this I will return,.... That is, after the Lord had destroyed the sinful kingdom from off the face of the earth, and had sifted the house of Israel among all nations, and the sinners of his people were slain with the sword; after all this he promises to return and show favour to them: this is the sense of the prophet which James gives; for these words are not at length in Amos; there it is only said, "in that day"; upon which Jarchi's note is,

"after all these things shall have come upon them, that day shall come which is appointed for redemption;"

which well agrees with James here, and the manner in which he introduces this passage:

and will build again the tabernacle of David, that is fallen down: that is, as the Jewish {r} writers themselves interpret it, the kingdom of the house of David, though in a temporal sense, which was now in a most ruinous condition; the sceptre was departed from Judah; all; power and authority were falling off apace from the Jews, into the hands of the Romans; David's family were quite sunk, and almost gone, and had no share at all in the civil government; Jesus, who was descended from him, and was of the blood royal, and right heir to his throne, was born of a poor virgin; and his supposed father was a carpenter; and he himself the King of the Jews, was crucified by them; yet notwithstanding all this, David's tabernacle was to be rebuilt, and his kingdom to be restored by the Messiah, but in a spiritual way; for the tabernacle of David designs the spiritual kingdom or church of Christ, who is here called David, as in Eze 34:23 and of whom David was an eminent type: and the church may be called a tabernacle, being in the present state of things, as to its place, uncertain and moveable, though ere long it will be a tabernacle that will not be taken down, Isa 33:20 and Christ's tabernacle, being of his building, and where he dwells and keeps his court, as King of saints; see Isa 16:5 and which was in a fallen ruinous condition when he came on earth, through the corrupt principles of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the bigotry and superstition of the one, and the deism of the other; and through the great decay of spiritual worship and powerful godliness, and the bad lives of professors, and the small number of truly godly persons: the Jews {s} themselves refer this prophecy to the times of the Messiah, yea, one of the names by which they call the Messiah is taken from hence {t}: it is asked,

"who is Bar Naphli? it is replied, the Messiah; the Messiah is called Bar Naphli (the son fallen, or of the fallen); is it not written, "in that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen down?""

one of their own commentators {u} on this text, has this note,

"if we interpret this of the Messiah, the matter is clear:"

but then this must be understood in a spiritual sense, for Christ's kingdom is not a worldly one; the raising up and rebuilding of this tabernacle, must design the reviving of true religion, the doctrine and practice of it, the enlargement of the church of God, by the conversion both of Jews and Gentiles:

and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; which has been done by breaking down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, and letting in the latter into the Gospel church with the former, whereby it grows up to be an holy temple in the Lord; see Isa 54:2 and to this sense the Jews themselves {w} interpret it;

"the holy blessed God will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, as it is said, **Am 9:11** in that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David; for all the world shall be txa hdwga, "one bundle"; as it is said, **Zep 3:9**"

{r} Targum, Jarchi & Kimchi in loc. {s} Zohar in Gen. fol. 53. 2. & in Exod. fol. 4. 2. & 96. 2. {t} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 96. 2. {u} Aben Ezra in Amos ix. 11. {w} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 88. fol. 76. 4.

Acts 15:17

Ver. 17. That the residue of men might seek after the Lord,.... The rebuilder and proprietor of this tabernacle, and who dwells in it; that is, attend his worship, pray unto him, and seek unto him for life and salvation: in Amos these are called, "the remnant of Edom": and design the remnant according to the election of grace among the Gentiles; the Jews generally call all other nations, and especially the Roman empire, Edom:

and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called; for God is the God of the whole earth, of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews; and his Gospel was now spread among them, and many of them were converted and called Christians, and the children and people of God: the Jews {x} understand this of the people of Israel, who are called by the name of the Lord, or on whom his name is called; and some think the words are to be transposed {y} thus,

"that Israel on whom my name is called might possess the remnant of Edom, and all the people;"

and is true of their possessing or enjoying them in a Gospel church state:

saith the Lord, who doth all these things; raises up the tabernacle of David, revives the interest of religion, resettles the church, and increases it, calls and converts the Gentiles, causes them to seek after the Lord, and unites them in one church state with the Jews; the word "all" is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, and is not in Amos.

{x} Targum in Amos ix. 12. {y} Kimchi & Aben Ezra in ib.

Acts 15:18

Ver. 18. Known unto God are all his works,.... These are the words of James, and not of Amos; all the things which God does in the church and in the world, they were all foreknown and predetermined by him: from the beginning of the world; or from eternity; even all his works of creation, providence and grace: the Alexandrian copy, and Beza's most ancient copy, and the Vulgate Latin version, read in the singular number, "his work"; the work of the conversion of the Gentiles; this was fixed and resolved on by God in eternity; he knew it would be, because he had determined it should be; and accordingly he foretold it, and spoke of it in various periods of time before it came to pass; and therefore it should not be looked upon as some new and strange thing, that was never known, spoken or heard of: and this holds true of every other work of God, and agrees with what the Jews sometimes say {z}, that "every work which is renewed in the world, the holy blessed God has commanded (or ordered) it from the day the world was created."

{z} Zohar in Exod. fol. 78. 2. Vid. ib. in Lev. fol. 25. 4.

Acts 15:19

Ver. 19. Wherefore my sentence is,.... Opinion or judgment in this case, or what he reckoned most advisable to be done; for he did not impose his sense upon the whole body, but proposed it to them:

that we trouble not them; by obliging them to be circumcised, which would have been very afflicting and disturbing to them; not only because of the corporeal pain produced by circumcision, but because of the bondage their minds would be brought into, and they become subject to the whole law, and all its burdensome rites and ceremonies:

which from among the Gentiles are turned to God; the one true and living God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and from idols, and the worshipping of them.

Acts 15:20

Ver. 20. But that we write unto them,.... Or send an epistle to them, to this effect, concerning the following things:

that they abstain from pollutions of idols; that is, from eating things offered to idols; see Ac 15:29 for not idolatry, or the worshipping of idols itself, is here spoken of; for that was no indifferent thing; and besides, these converted Gentiles were turned from that, and there was no danger of their returning to it; but eating things sacrificed to idols was an indifferent thing; but yet inasmuch as it had a tendency to lead to idolatry, and gave offence to the Jewish believers in the churches, and was a stumbling block to weak minds, who by the example of stronger Christians, were led to eat them as sacrificed to an idol, and so their weak consciences were defiled, therefore it was very proper to abstain from them;

and from fornication; not spiritual fornication or idolatry, but fornication taken in a literal sense, for the carnal copulation of one single person with another, and which is commonly called simple fornication: the reason why this is put among, things indifferent is, not that it was so in itself, but because it was not thought to be criminal by the Gentiles, and was commonly used by them, and which must be offensive to the believing Jews, who were better acquainted with the will of God; this is omitted in the Ethiopic version:

and from things strangled; that is; from eating them, and design such as die of themselves, or are torn with beasts, or are not killed in a proper way, by letting out their blood; but their blood is stagnated or congealed in the veins: the Jews might not kill with a reaper's sickle, nor with a saw, nor with the teeth, or nail; because these Nyqnwx, "strangled" {a}: and what was not slain as it should be, was reckoned all one as what dies of itself; and whoever ate of either of these was to be beaten {b}; the law respecting these things was of the ceremonial kind, and peculiar to the Jews, and was not binding upon the Gentiles; for that which died of itself might be given to a stranger, and he might eat it, or it might be sold to an alien, De 14:21 this has been wanting in many copies, and it was not read by several of the ancient fathers:

and from blood: which is not to be understood of the blood of men and shedding of that, which is of a moral nature; but of the blood of beasts, and of eating of that. There were several laws about eating of blood, and which are different, and ought to be carefully distinguished. The first is in **Ge 9:4** "but flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood there of, shall you not eat"; which forbids the eating of flesh with the blood; but not the eating of flesh separately, nor the eating of blood separately, provided they were properly prepared and dressed, but the eating of them together without any preparation. As this was the first hint to man that we know of, that he might eat flesh, it was proper that the manner in which he should eat it, should be suggested to him; that he should not take the creature alive and eat it, or tear off any of its members and eat it whilst alive, or eat raw flesh; but should prepare it by roasting or boiling, or some way, in which it might become proper food: and it is the constant sense of the Jewish synagogue {c}, that this law is to be understood of the member of a living creature, torn from it, and eaten whilst alive; six commands, the Jews say, were given to the first man Adam, the first five forbid idolatry, blasphemy, shedding of blood, uncleanness, and theft, or robbery, and the sixth required judgment against offenders; to these were added, for the sons of Noah, a seventh, which forbid the eating of the member of a living creature, as it is said, **Ge 9:4** {d}. So that this law has nothing to do with eating of blood, simply considered, and no more forbids eating of it separately, than it does eating of flesh separately: in like manner is the law in De 12:23 to be understood, and is so interpreted by the Jewish writers {e}: another law is in Le 19:26 "ye shall not eat anything with the blood"; which according to our version, seems to be the same law with the former, but is not; for it is not said here, as before, b, "in", or "with", but le, "upon", "over", or "by" the blood. This is differently understood: some think the sense is, that no one should eat of the sacrifices, before the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar {f}; or until it stands or is congealed in the basons {g}; others, that it is a caution to judges, that they do not eat until they have finished judgment; for whoever judges or passes sentence after he has eat and drank, is as if he was guilty of blood {h}: another observes {i}, that next to this clause, it is said, "neither shall ye use enchantment"; meaning that they should not use enchantment by eating, in the way that murderers do, who eat bread over the slain, that the avengers of the slain may not take vengeance on them; this author smells something superstitious or diabolical in this matter; and indeed this is the case; the truth of the matter is, it refers to a practice among the Heathens, who fancied that blood was the food of the demons, to whom they sacrificed; and therefore when they sacrificed to them, they took the blood of the beast and put it into a vessel, and sat down by it, and round about it, and ate the flesh; imagining that whilst they ate the flesh, the demons eat the blood, and by this means friendship and familiarity were contracted between them; so that they hoped to receive some advantage from them, and be informed of things to come {k}. Hence, this law is placed with others against enchantments and observing times, to which may be added, Eze 33:25 "ye eat with the blood", or "over it", or "by" it; "and lift up your eyes to your idols": which is to be understood in the same light, and with these compare 1Sa 14:32. But besides these, there was a third law, which is frequently repeated, **Le 3:17** which absolutely forbids the eating of blood, as well as fat; the Jews except the blood of fishes, and locusts, and creeping things, and the blood of men, and the blood that is in eggs, and that which is squeezed out of flesh, or drops from it, which a man may eat and not be guilty of the breach of this law {l} the reason of this law was, because the blood, which is the life, was given in sacrifice for the life of men, to be an atonement for them; wherefore, to keep up a just reverence of the sacrifice, and to direct to the blood of the great sacrifice of the Messiah, blood was forbidden to be eaten, till that sacrifice was offered up; and then that blood itself was to be spiritually eaten by faith: and now if eating of blood in general was morally evil in itself, it would be a monstrous shocking thing in the Christian religion, that the blood of Christ is to be drank; though it be to be understood in a spiritual sense: the law against eating blood was very strictly enjoined the Jews, and severely punished; whoever ate of blood, but the quantity of an olive, if he ate it wilfully, was guilty of cutting off; if ignorantly, he was to bring a sin offering {m}: James knew that the breach of this law would give great offence to the Jews, and therefore for the peace of the church he moves that the Gentiles might be wrote to, to abstain from blood; and which was agreed to and done: and this was attended to with much strictness by the primitive Christians, who seemed to have observed this advice in the form of a law, and thought it criminal to eat blood; but in process of time it was neglected; and in Austin's time abstinence from blood was derided, as a ridiculous notion; and it is at least now high time that this, and everything else of a ceremonial kind, was dropped by Christians; though where the peace of the brethren is in danger, this, and everything of an indifferent nature should be abstained from: Beza's ancient copy adds, "and whatsoever they would not have done to themselves, do not unto others"; and so two of Stephens's: the Ethiopic version is, "whatsoever they hate should be done to themselves, let them not do to their brethren".

(God forbids his people from eating the blood of any animal. Blood carries both infections and toxins that might circulate in the animal's body. Therefore, by eating an animal's blood, one exposes himself needlessly to potential toxins and infections. The harmful effects of eating blood can be illustrated by tribes in Africa who consume large amounts of blood in their pagan culture. These people have developed the chronic diseases seen in our elderly while still teenagers. Their life span is approximately 30 years. Rex D. Russel, M.D. p. 229, "Proceedings of the 1992 Twin-Cities Creation Conference". Editor's note.)

{a} Misn. Cholin, c. 1. sect. 2. {b} Maimon. Hilchot Maacolot Assurot, c. 4. sect. 1. {c} Targum Jon Jarchi, Aben Ezra & Abendanae not. in Sol. ben Melec in loc. {d} Maimon. Hilchot Melacim, c. 9. sect. 1. {e} Jarchi and Baal Hatturim in loc. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 56. 2. & 59. 1. & Cholin, fol 102. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 95, 4. {f} Jarchi & Aben Ezra in loc. {g} Targum Jon. in loc. {h} Zohar in Exod. fol. 50. 3. Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 13. sect. 4. {i} Baal Hatturim in Lev. xix. 26. {k} Maimon. Morch Nevochim, par. 3. c. 46. Kimchi in I Sam. xiv. 32. & in Ezek. xxxiii. 25. {l} Misn. Ceritot, c. 5. sect. 1. Maimon. Maacolot Asurot, c. 6, sect. 1. Jarchi in Lev. xvii. 10. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. pag. 137. {m} Maimon. Maacolot Asurot, c. 6. sect.7

Acts 15:21

Ver. 21. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him,.... That is, for many years past, even from the times of Ezra, the law of Moses has been publicly expounded by them, whom the Jews call Derashim, preachers, or expounders, in every city where there was a synagogue; and every city belonging to the Jews, were obliged to build a synagogue, yea, they were obliged to do it where there were but ten Israelites {n}: this is given by James as a reason why the Gentiles should be wrote unto concerning the above things; because that they hearing the law read and expounded every week, would be ready to conclude that they were obliged to submit unto it, as to circumcision, and other things; unless they were told that they were free from it; only in order to maintain peace with their brethren the Jews, it would be necessary for them to abstain from the above things: and it may also carry in it a reason, why the Jews need not be wrote unto, and why they had no reason to complain for thus writing to the Gentiles; since they had the law read and explained to them every week, and there would be no attempt to make any alteration in that form of service:

being read in the synagogues every sabbath day;
See Gill on "Ac 13:15".

{n} Maimon. Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 1.

Acts 15:22

Ver. 22. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church,.... The opinion, judgment, and advice of James, being approved of by the whole body of the apostles, ministers, and brethren of the church assembled together on this occasion; they unanimously agreed,

to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; that is, they thought fit to choose some persons from among themselves, out of that assembly, or who were members of the church at Jerusalem; and send them to Antioch, where the difference began, along with Paul and Barnabas, to give an account of the sense of the apostles, elders, and brethren, about the affair in controversy, and what was their advice upon the whole: and the rather they took this step, to prevent all suspicion of Paul and Barnabas giving a partial account, or putting a wrong turn upon the sentiments of this assembly, they being parties concerned on one side, wherefore they thought fit to send some indifferent persons along with them, to confirm their narrative, and to compose differences among them, and to bring back an account of the state of the church:

namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas; See Gill on "Ac 1:23" and Silas, the same with Sylvanus:

chief men among the brethren, leading men among them, who went before them, were guides to them, in doctrine and discipline; for these were prophets or preachers, as appears from Ac 15:32 and these they pitched upon, partly out of respect to Paul and Barnabas, as being suitable companions for them, and partly out of respect to the church at Antioch, and chiefly because of their ability, and capacity, for such service they were sent upon.

Acts 15:23

Ver. 23. And wrote letters by them after this manner,.... Not that they made use of them as their amanuenses, to write their letters for them; but being written they put them into their hands, and sent them by them, and they were written in the following form:

the apostles, and elders, and brethren; which belonged to, or were members of the church at Jerusalem; they are severally set in their proper place and order: the apostles, Peter, and James, and John, and it may be some others first; for these God had set in the first place in the church; then the elders, or preachers of the Gospel, such as were Judas and Silas: and then the brethren, or private members of the church; who are called so, because they are of one family, and have one Father, and are partakers of the same grace and privileges: these,

send greeting; or their Christian salutation, wishing all peace and prosperity, both for soul and body, temporal, spiritual and eternal:

unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria and Cilicia; the brethren or members of the several churches in these parts, who were Gentiles, are particularly sent to; and not the brethren who were Jews; because they were especially concerned, and to them is the advice directed: Antioch is first mentioned, that being the place where the controversy began; but there being other churches in Syria, besides Antioch, in which were many Gentiles, and also in Cilicia, and particularly at Tarsus, Paul's native place, and where he had preached, **Ac 9:30** they are therefore mentioned, and being countries near to one another, it is very likely that the controversy had spread itself among them.

Acts 15:24

Ver. 24. Forasmuch as we have heard,.... By the report of Paul and Barnabas, who were sent by the church at Antioch to Jerusalem, to acquaint them with the state of their case:

that certain which went out from us; Ac 15:1

have troubled you with words, or doctrines:

subverting your souls; removing them from the doctrine of grace to another Gospel, and which deserved not the name of a Gospel; and was very destructive to their souls, at least to the peace and com fort of them: this shows what an opinion the apostles, and elders, and members of the church at Jerusalem had of these "judaizing" preachers, and their tenets; they looked upon them as troublers of God's Israel, and upon their doctrines as subversive of spiritual joy and comfort.

Saying, ye must be circumcised and keep the law; the ceremonial law; the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out this clause; See Gill on "Ac 15:1",
See Gill on "Ac 15:5".

to whom we gave no such commandment: it looks as if these "judaizing preachers" not only pretended to be sent out by the apostles, to preach; but that they had particularly this in their instructions from them, that they should insist upon it, that the Gentiles that were received into the churches, should be circumcised, and be obliged to keep the other parts of the ceremonial law, when they had no such orders from them.

Acts 15:25

Ver. 25. It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord,.... Or together; in one place, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it; see **Ac 2:1** though certain it is, that as they were in one place, so they were in one mind; and their unanimity was proper to be mentioned, in order to engage a regard to their advice:

to send men chosen unto you; men chosen for this purpose; namely, Judas and Silas:

with our beloved Barnabas and Paul; who are commended thus, partly to express their affection to them; and partly to observe the wisdom of the church at Antioch, in sending two such agreeable persons; and chiefly to testify their approbation of the doctrine and conduct of these two men.

Acts 15:26

Ver. 26. Men that have hazarded their lives,.... As at Antioch, in Pisidia, where a persecution was raised against them, and they were expelled out of the coasts of that place; and at Lystra, where Paul was stoned, and left for dead, Ac 13:50 and this they did, not for any sinister and selfish ends, for any worldly gain, or vain glory, and popular applause, but

for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; for the sake of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his interest, and kingdom in the world; and therefore were worthy of esteem, and ought to be regarded and attended to, and greatly to be preferred to false teachers; who only sought themselves, their worldly honour, and ease, and would sacrifice nothing, nor hazard anything, for the sake of Christ.

Acts 15:27

Ver. 27. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas,.... The chosen men before mentioned,

who shall also tell you the same things by mouth; as are written in these letters; which would both confirm and explain things unto them.

Acts 15:28

Ver. 28. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us,.... By various things they had reason doubtless to conclude, that they were under the influence and direction of the Holy Ghost in this affair; as by the spirit of prayer that was among them; by that power and energy with which many of them spoke on this occasion, and that so agreeable to the word of God; and by that unanimity with which they came into the advice given. With respect to the form here used, compare 1Ch 13:2 and the Targum on it, which renders the words thus;

"if it be beautiful before you, and acceptable before the Lord, let us send, &c."

It follows here,

to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; not that they were necessary to salvation, but necessary to secure the peace of the churches, and at least were necessary, at that present time; and therefore since it appeared to be necessary to enjoin them for the present, they hoped they would not refuse to bear them; and especially, since, though they must own they were burdens, and a part of the yoke of bondage, yet they were not many, nor very heavy, and for the future they should lay no other, nor more upon them; and what they did, was to prevent any other or greater burden to be laid; and so the Syriac version renders it, "lest any more, or greater burden should be laid upon you."

Acts 15:29

Ver. 29. That ye abstain from meats offered to idols,.... Which explains what is meant by pollutions of idols, Ac 15:20

and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication See Gill on "Ac 15:20"

In Beza's most ancient copy, and in three other manuscripts, and in the Complutensian edition, it follows, "and whatsoever ye would not have done to yourselves, that do ye not to another"; in like manner the Ethiopic version also reads, as in Ac 15:20 "from which if ye keep yourselves ye shall do well"; it will be doing a good thing, and make for the peace of the churches; in Beza's most ancient copy it is added, "born", or "moved by the Holy Ghost": being influenced and assisted by him in this, and every good work:

fare ye well; the Syriac version adds, "in our Lord".

Acts 15:30

Ver. 30. So when they were dismissed,.... That is, Paul and Barnabas, with Judas and Silas, by the apostles, elders, and church at Jerusalem:

they came to Antioch; or "came down to Antioch", as the Alexandrian copy,

the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions read, agreeably to
Ac 15:1

and when they had gathered the multitude together; the whole church, which consisted of many members; the company, or congregation of the faithful, as the Arabic version renders it: and as Paul and Barnabas were sent by the church at Antioch; and as the letter, which they, with Judas and Silas, brought from Jerusalem, was directed and sent to the brethren at Antioch, it was highly reasonable, and necessary, that they should be called together, and an account of the business they were sent upon be given them, and the letter be delivered to them, as it accordingly was:

they delivered the epistle; sent by the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem to them; this they put into the hands of some one or other of the brethren of the church, in order to be read.

Acts 15:31

Ver. 31. Which when they had read,.... That is, when the brethren of the church at Antioch had read the letter delivered to them; for not Paul and Barnabas, or Judas and Silas, who were sent with it, read it, but the brethren to whom it was sent, as was proper.

They rejoiced for the consolation, or "exhortation", as the word may be rendered, which was given them in the letter, to abstain from the above things, without being burdened with any other; and they rejoiced that there was such an agreement among the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem; and that their sentiments, and those of Paul and Barnabas, and other faithful ministers and saints at Antioch, were alike, and were opposed to the judaizing preachers and professors; and above all, they rejoiced that they were freed from the burdensome yoke of the law, and that the controversy which had been raised among them, was likely to be ended, and to issue so well.

Acts 15:32

Ver. 32. And Judas and Silas being also prophets themselves,.... As well as Paul and Barnabas, and others, that were at Antioch; see
Ac 13:1 and by prophets are meant, not only such who had the gift of foretelling things to come; though such there were, and these might have that

gift; but such who were able to explain the prophecies of the Old Testament, give the true sense of the Scriptures, and open them to the edification of others; wherefore having such gifts, they made use of them; Beza's ancient copy adds, "full of the Holy Ghost":

and exhorted the brethren with many words; which does not so much design the prolixity of their discourses, and the frequency of their ministrations, though they might preach both long and often; as the richness of the matter of them, as the Syriac version suggests, rendering it, "with a rich word"; with copiousness, fulness, and abundance of Gospel truths, with which they comforted the brethren, giving them many useful instructions and exhortations:

and confirmed them; in the doctrines of the Gospel, and particularly in their Christian liberty, and freedom from the law of Moses, in which the false teachers had endeavoured to stagger them.

Acts 15:33

Ver. 33. And after they had tarried there a space,.... How long is not certain; the Arabic version renders it "a year"; and it is probable enough, they might stay there so long, till things were thoroughly settled, which were thrown into great disorder and confusion, by the pleaders for circumcision:

they were let go in peace; that is, they were dismissed, and went away with the leave and consent of the church; who returned them thanks for the service and good offices they had done them, and wished them all peace, prosperity, and happiness, both in soul and body, and great success in their ministrations wherever they went: and as they were dismissed in peace, they left the church in perfect peace; an end being put to the controversy about circumcision, which was raised among them; and the members of the church being agreed in their sentiments, and heartily united in their affections to one another: and thus Judas and Silas were honourably dismissed

from the brethren, at Antioch,

to the Apostles, at Jerusalem; the Alexandrian copy, and Beza's ancient copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, read, "to them that sent them"; and so include, with the apostles, the elders, and brethren at Jerusalem, who wrote the letter to the church at Antioch, and sent it by them; and it was proper that they should return to them, and give them an account of the success of it, how it was received, and what good it had done.

Acts 15:34

Ver. 34. Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still,.... Though he had leave to go, and was actually dismissed with Judas; and doubtless intended to have gone with him, but for some reason or another he changed his mind, and thought fit to continue at Antioch some time longer: and the design of Providence in it seems to have been this; that he might be a companion with the Apostle Paul in his travels among the Gentiles, as he afterwards was, and was very useful to him. This verse is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Syriac and Arabic versions; the Ethiopic version reads, "and Paul proposed", or "determined to abide", as he did some little time longer, as appears from the following verse: the Vulgate Latin version here adds, and "Judas went alone to Jerusalem"; and so it is read in one of Beza's copies, and in one of Stephens's.

Acts 15:35

Ver. 35. Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch,.... As well as Silas: teaching and preaching the word of the Lord; the Gospel of Christ; not the word of men, but the word of the Lord, of which he is both the author and subject: this they preached in season, and out of season, with power, purity, plainness, and faithfulness.

And many others also; who either came along with them from Jerusalem, when they brought the letter from thence, or were here before; who came hither upon the persecution raised at the death of Stephen, Ac 11:19 or they were the prophets which afterwards came from Jerusalem thither, Ac 11:27 such as Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, Ac 13:1.

Acts 15:36

Ver. 36. And some days after,.... That Judas was gone to Jerusalem, and which they had spent in teaching and preaching the word of the Lord at Antioch:

Paul said to Barnabas, let us go again and visit our brethren in every city, where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do; by the "brethren in every city", the apostle means the believers in Syria, Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia; where he and Barnabas had preached the Gospel with success; where churches were planted and elders were ordained; of which an account is given in the two preceding chapters: and it may be observed, what an affection the apostle had for the young converts, and members of these churches; he calls them "brethren", they being partakers of the same grace, and of the same faith and family with himself, though they were not in the same office, nor had the same gifts; as also what care he took of them, and of those new planted churches: and which shows, that such are to be visited and looked after, and their cases inspected into; and inquiries should be made of them, how they do, how they go on; whether they continue in the faith, and grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ; and whether they are lively in the exercise of the graces of faith, hope, love, humility, &c. and diligent and fervent in the discharge of duty; and this is a work becoming the ministers of the Gospel; and the example of the apostle is worthy of imitation.

Acts 15:37

Ver. 37. And Barnabas determined,.... Or consulted, and contrived in his own mind, and purposed within himself; the Alexandrian copy, and two of Beza's, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "he would", or was willing; he had a mind, a very great desire,

to take with them John, whose surname was Mark; of whom see Ac 12:12 he being his sister's son, **Col 4:10** him they brought with them to Antioch, when they returned from Jerusalem thither, where they had been sent by the church at Antioch, with money for the relief of the poor saints; see Ac 11:29 and who seems to have come with them from Jerusalem again; for thither he went, when he parted from them at Pamphylia, Ac 13:13.

Acts 15:38

Ver. 38. But Paul thought not good to take him with them,.... He did not think him worthy, or a fit and proper person to go with them, as the word used seems to signify, and therefore he refused to take him: the Syriac version renders it, "but Paul would not take him with them"; and, the Ethiopic version is very expressive, though it renders it in softer language, "Paul prayed, or entreated Barnabas that he would leave Mark"; that is, behind them at Antioch: his reasons were as follow:

who departed from them from Pamphylia, See Gill on "Ac 13:13"; either through the fatigue of the journey, or fear of danger, or weariness in his work, or affection to his mother; or be it what it will, it seems in the apostle's opinion of the matter, he was very blameworthy, and on account of it very undeserving, at least at present, of being a companion of theirs in their travels:

and went not with them to the work; the Arabic version adds, "of preaching"; that is, the Gospel, in the several places whither they went, and to which the Holy Ghost had called them, and for which the church at Antioch had separated, and sent them forth; but in the midst of this John deserted them; and which the apostle resented, he having, as yet, not given any evidence of his sense of his evil, and of his repentance for it, to his satisfaction; though it seems as if he afterwards did, since in **Col 4:10** he speaks of him with great respect, as one of his fellow workers, and who had been a comfort to him.

Acts 15:39

Ver. 39. And the contention was so sharp between them,.... About this matter; Barnabas insisting on it, that John Mark should go with them, he being a relation of his; and in whose favour it might be urged, that his mother Mary was an excellent good woman, who had received the saints into her house, in a time of persecution; and that it should be considered, that this her son was but a young man, and could not be thought to have that courage, resolution, constancy, and solidity, as older professors and ministers; and that his crime was not very heinous, and should be overlooked. Paul, on the other hand, opposing his going with them, as a very unworthy person, because he had behaved so cowardly, and had shown such a coldness and indifference to the work of the ministry, and had so shamefully left them; and thus they disputed the point till there was a paroxysm between them, as is the word used: they were irritated and provoked by one another, and were so warmed and heated on both sides,

that they departed asunder one from another; thus as soon almost as peace was made in the church, a difference arises among the ministers of the word, who are men of like passions with others; and though it is not easy to say which was to blame most in this contention; perhaps there were faults on both sides, for the best men are not without their failings; yet this affair was overruled by the providence of God, for the spread of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his interest; for when these two great and good men parted from one another, they went to different places, preaching the word of God:

and so Barnabas took Mark and sailed unto Cyprus;
See Gill on "Ac 13:4".

Acts 15:40

Ver. 40. And Paul chose Silas,.... To be his companion and assistant; this being the design of the Holy Ghost in influencing his, mind to stay longer at Antioch, after he, with Judas, was dismissed by the church to go to Jerusalem, Ac 15:33

and departed; that is, from Antioch:

being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God;
See Gill on "Ac 13:26". The apostle having such a recommendation by the brethren of the church at Antioch, when he departed from them, and nothing of this kind being said with respect to Barnabas, have induced some to think, that the church took the part of the apostle against Barnabas, in the dispute between them; since the one went away saluted by them, and the other not.

Acts 15:41

Ver. 41. And he went through Syria and Cilicia,.... Antioch was the metropolis of the former, and Tarsus, the apostle's native place, was in the latter; and in both these countries he had been before, and had been the instrument of converting many souls, and of planting churches, which he now visited, as he proposed to Barnabas to do: for it follows,

confirming the churches; in the Gospel, and the truths and ordinances of it, he had before instructed them in: of the church at Antioch, See Gill on "Ac 11:26". And that there were also churches in Cilicia, is very manifest; and particularly there was one at Tarsus, the chief city in it. Herodian, of whom we read in Ro 16:11 and Jason, in Ac 17:5 who are reckoned among the seventy disciples, are said to be bishops or pastors of this church; See Gill on "Lu 10:1". In the "second" century there was a church in that city, to which Ignatius wrote an epistle, still extant {o}, in which he makes mention of Philo their deacon: in the "third" century Helenus presided over this church, and was present at a synod at Antioch, when Paulus Samosatenus was condemned for heresy {p}: in the "fourth" century mention is made of several churches in

Cilicia, and the bishops of them; there was a church at Apsis in Cilicia, Amphion was bishop of Epiphania, Theodorus of Mopsuestia, Cyriacus of Adanan, and Sylvanus of Tarsus, the metropolis; in which last place, in the beginning of this century, several martyrs suffered under Dioclesian, particularly Tharatus, Probus, and Andronicus: here the orthodox, in the times of Valens, would have convened a synod against the Arians, but were hindered by him; and in this century Diodorus, bishop of Tarsus, had the care of all the churches in Cilicia committed to him; in this age also we read of Antoninus, a presbyter of this church, afterwards made bishop of it: in the "fifth" century mention is made of the bishops of several churches in Cilicia, as of Mopsuesta, Irenopolis, Epiphania, Tarsus, Anazarbus, Sebaste, and others who were present at several councils held at different places in this century; in the "sixth" century, out of the cities of Cilicia, Jotapa, Pisidia, Pompeiopolis, Tarsus, Coricus, Anemurius, bishops are said to come to the synod at Rome and Constantinople: in the seventh century, Tarsus was the metropolitan church of Cilicia; and mention is made of the bishops of that and of other cities in this country, who assisted at the sixth council at Constantinople: in the "eighth" century, notice is taken of a Church at Sida in Cilicia {q}; so long the Christian name was in those parts. Beza's ancient copy adds, "delivering the commandments of the elders"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "bidding" them to keep the commandments of the apostles and elders; see Ac 16:4, namely; the decrees of the assembly at Jerusalem; which seems very agreeable, since the letters were directed and sent to the brethren of the Gentiles in Syria and Cilicia, as well as in Antioch; see Ac 15:23.

{o} Ignat. Epist. p. 73, 81. {p} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 7. c. 28. {q} Madgeburg. Hist. Eccl. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 2, 3. c. 3. p. 18. 22. 74. c. 7. p. 289. c. 9. p. 405, 481, c. 10. p. 570. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 585, 586. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 112. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 16:1

Ver. 1. Then came he to Derbe and Lystra,.... Which were cities of Lycaonia, Ac 14:6 after Paul had gone through Syria and Cilicia; in the last of these places, he had been stoned, and yet goes thither again; none of these things moved him from the preaching of the Gospel, and from the care of the churches, such zeal, courage, and intrepidity was he possessed of:

and behold a certain disciple was there: a converted person, a believer in

Christ, one that had learned to know and deny himself, and understood the way of salvation by Christ, and was a follower of him; whether the apostle was an instrument of his conversion, when he was before in these parts, is not certain, though probable, since he often calls him his son; nor is it so evident whether he was at Derbe or at Lystra, though the latter seems most likely, since a report was given of him by the brethren there, and at Iconium, when no mention is made of Derbe, in the following verse:

named Timotheus; or Timothy, the same person to whom afterwards the apostle wrote two epistles: it is a name much used among the Greeks, and his father was a Greek; one of this name, who was an historian among the Greeks, is frequently mentioned by Laertius {r}; and there was another of this name, the son of Conon, an Athenian general {s}; and another that was a captain or general of Antiochus,

"Afterward he passed over to the children of Ammon, where he found a mighty power, and much people, with Timotheus their captain." (1 Maccabees 5:6)

"Now Timotheus, whom the Jews had overcome before, when he had gathered a great multitude of foreign forces, and horses out of Asia not a few, came as though he would take Jewry by force of arms." (2 Maccabees 10:24)

the name signifies one that honoured God, or was honoured by God; both were true in this disciple of Christ:

the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess, and believed; his mother was a Jewish woman, but a believer in Christ, her name was Eunice, **2Ti 1:5**

but his father was a Greek; a Gentile, an uncircumcised one, and so he seems to have remained, by his sons not being circumcised.

{r} De Vit. Philosoph. l. 3. in Vit. Platon. & l. 4. Vit. Speusippi, & l. 5. Vit. Aristotel. {s} Aelian. Hist. Var. l. 2. c. 10, 18. & l. 3. c. 16, 47.

Acts 16:2

Ver. 2. Which was well reported of,.... Not the father of Timothy, but Timothy himself; to whose piety, virtue, and good conversation witness was borne, by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium; the members of the churches which were in these places, and which were not far from one another; and as it is necessary that ministers of the Gospel should have a good report of them that are without, so likewise of them that are within; and the testimony of the latter is preferable to that of the former.

Acts 16:3

Ver. 3. Him would Paul have to go forth with him,.... Perceiving that he was a young man, that not only had the grace of God, but very considerable gifts, and abilities for ministerial service; and having a good testimony of his agreeable life and conversation, the apostle was very desirous he should go along with him, and be his companion in his travels, and be an assistant to him in the work of the ministry; and accordingly he was, and is often spoken of in his epistles, as his fellowlabourer, and one that served with him in the Gospel of Christ, and who was very dear unto him:

and took and circumcised him; which may seem strange, when there had been so lately a controversy in the church at Antioch about circumcision, from whence the apostle was just come; and when this matter had been debated and determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, where he was present, and he was now carrying about their decrees: but it is to be observed, that the apostle used circumcision not as a duty of the law, as what that required, and in obedience to it, which he knew was abrogated; much less as necessary to salvation, which the judaizing preachers urged; but as an indifferent thing, and in order to gain a point, and secure some valuable end, as follows

because of the Jews which were in those quarters; not the believing ones, for he brought along with him the decrees of the apostles and elders to satisfy them, that circumcision was not necessary; but the unbelieving ones, who he knew would not suffer an uncircumcised person to teach in their synagogues, nor would they hear him out of them; wherefore having a mind to take Timothy with him to be assisting to him in the preaching of the Gospel, in point of prudence he thought it proper to circumcise him, that he might be received by them, and be the more acceptable to them; who would otherwise have taken such an offence at him, as not to have heard him: thus the apostle to the Jews became a Jew, that he might gain and save some, **1Co 9:20** for they knew all that his father was a Greek; and that therefore he was not circumcised; for a woman might not circumcise, because she was not a fit subject of circumcision herself {t}; though in case of necessity circumcision by women was allowed of {u}.

{t} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 27. 1. {u} Maimon. Hilchot. Mila, c. 2. sect. 1.

Acts 16:4

Ver. 4. And as they went through the cities,.... Of Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium, and others in Lycaonia, and in Phrygia and Galatia; the Arabic version reads, "they both"; that is, Paul and Barnabas:

they delivered them the decrees for to keep; they gave the churches, in these cities, the sentiments, and determinations to be observed and followed by them:

that were ordained of the apostles which were at Jerusalem; concerning the abstinence of the Gentiles from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication, Ac 15:20.

Acts 16:5

Ver. 5. And so were the churches established in the faith,.... Of Christ, both in the grace and doctrine of faith; and that both by the preaching of the Gospel by the apostle and his companions, and by the decrees of the elders delivered by him:

and increased in number daily; as well as in gifts and grace.

Acts 16:6

Ver. 6. Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia,....
See Gill on "Ac 2:10" To which may be added, that this country had its name either from the river Phryx, as Pliny {w} observes, or from the word Phrygios, which signifies "dry"; this being a very dry and sandy country: it was famous for marble stone; hence we read {x} of Phrygian Stone or marble, of which pillars and statues were made: according to Josephus {y}, the original of the Phrygians was Togarmah the son of Gomer, and grandson of Japheth, Ge 10:3, whom he calls Thygrammes, and his people from him, Thygrammeans, and who, adds he, as it seems by the Greeks, are called Phrygians. Herodotus {z}

reports, that the Phrygians (as the Macedonians say) were called Briges or Brygians, so long as they were Europeans, and dwelt with the Macedonians: but when they went into Asia, together with the country, they changed their names, into Phrygians: of one Philip a Phrygian, whom Antiochus left governor at Jerusalem, mention is made in:

"And he left governors to vex the nation: at Jerusalem, Philip, for his country a Phrygian, and for manners more barbarous than he that set him there;" (2 Maccabees 5:22)

here dwelt Jews, as appears from **Ac 2:10** and here the apostle preached and made converts.

And the region of Galatia: in Asia Minor: it had Cappadocia on the east, Bithynia on the west, Pamphylia on the south, and the Euxine sea on the north. The inhabitants of this country were originally Gauls, who under Brennus their captain, came out of some parts of France, and invaded Italy, and came to Rome, and took it all but the capitol; from whence being sallied out upon by the Romans at an unawares, they were obliged to retire; and from thence they sailed into Greece, and went into Asia, into this part of it where they settled, which was first called after them Gallo Graecia, and in process of time Galatia; though some say the Grecians called them Galatians from Gala, which signifies "milk", because of their milky colour: of the Galatians, mention is made in,

"And he told them of the battle that they had in Babylon with the Galatians, how they came but eight thousand in all to the business, with four thousand Macedonians, and that the Macedonians being perplexed, the eight thousand destroyed an hundred and twenty thousand because of the help that they had from heaven, and so received a great booty." (2 Maccabees 8:20)

here the Gospel was preached, and many believed; for we afterwards read of disciples both in this country and in Phrygia, Ac 18:23 and here were churches formed, and to whom the apostles preached, and delivered the decrees of the apostles and elders.

And were forbidden of the Holy Ghost; not by an articulate voice, but by a secret and powerful impulse upon their minds;

to preach the word in Asia: that is, in that country which was properly called Asia, or pro-consular Asia, otherwise Phrygia, and Galatia, were provinces in

Asia Minor. Beza's most ancient copy, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "the word of God": the reasons why it was prohibited to be preached here, at this time, cannot be said, and must be referred to the sovereign will of God; it seems, that at this instant, there were no chosen ones to be called by grace, and there was work for the apostle and his companions to do elsewhere, namely, in Macedonia.

{w} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 29. {x} Pausanias, l. 1. sive Attica, p. 32. {y} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1. {z} Polymnia, c. 73. Vid. Plin. l. 5. c. 32.

Acts 16:7

Ver. 7. After they were come to Mysia,.... Another country in Asia Minor. It is divided by Ptolomy {a} into two parts; superior Mysia is bounded by Dalmatia on the west, by Macedonia on the south, by part of Thrace on the east, and by part of the river Danube on the north; inferior Mysia is bounded on the west with part of the river Ciaber and the Danube, on the south with part of Thrace, on the north with the turn of the river Tyra, and on the east with the Euxine Pontus; but this was the European Mysia: the Mysia which seems here intended, was divided into the lesser Mysia by the Hellespont, and had Troas on the south; and into the greater Mysia by Olympus, which was bounded on the west with the lesser Mysia and Troas, on the east with Bithynia, and on the south with Asia, properly so called. By Pliny {b} it is called Aeolis, and so Jerom says {c}, it was in his times; sometimes it is called Abretta and Abrettina, and of later years Thya, or Thyria: some suggest it has its name of Mysia from Mysus, the brother of Car {d}, the father of the Carions; but according to the Talmudists, it had its name from Meshech, the son of Japheth, Ge 10:2 for they say {e} Meshech,
ayowm wz, "this is Mysia"; Pliny observes {f}, that there are some authors who assert that the Mysians, Brygians, and Thynnians came out of Europe, from whom they are called Mysians, Phrygians, and Bithynians, in Asia. The inhabitants of Mysia were very despicable; hence the proverb, "ultimus Mysorum", "the last of the Mysians" {g}, is used for a very mean and contemptible person. The apostle was willing to preach to the wise and unwise, and disdained not to carry the Gospel to the meanest part of mankind.

They assayed to go into Bithynia; another country in Asia Minor; it makes one province with Pontus, and has the same boundaries; Pontus being at the east, and Bithynia at the west: it was bounded on the north with the Euxine sea, on the east with Galatia, on the south with Asia properly so called, and on the west with the Propontis; according to Pliny {h} it was called Cronia, afterwards Thessalis, then Maliande, (perhaps Mariandyne), and Strymonis; and Herodotus {i} reports, that the Thracians going into Asia were called Bithynians, who were first called (as they say) Strymonians, inhabiting Strymon; according to Jerom {k}, it was formerly called Bebrycia, then Mygdonia, and Phrygia Major, and by the river Iera, or, as Pliny calls it, Hieras, is divided from Galatia; to which agrees Solinus {l} who says it was before Bebrycia, afterwards Migdonia, and now Bithynia, from Bithynus the king; the king; though others say, it was so called from Bithyne, a daughter of Jupiter;

but the Spirit suffered them not; the Alexandrian copy, and Beza's most ancient copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "the Spirit of Jesus": so that it was not an evil spirit, or Satan, that hindered them, who sometimes did; but they were under the direction and guidance of the divine Spirit, called, in the preceding verse, the Holy Ghost; however, the Gospel was preached here afterwards, and churches formed; of which
See Gill on "1Pe 1:1".

{a} Geograph. l. 3. c. 9, 10. {b} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 30. {c} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. E. {d} Herodotus, l. 1. c. 171. {e} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 10. 1. {f} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 32. {g} Ciceron. Orat. 24. pro. L. Flacco, p. 785. {h} Ib. {i} Polymnia, c. 75. {k} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 95. L. {l} Polyhistor. c. 54.

Acts 16:8

Ver. 8. And they passed by Mysia,.... Without stopping or staying there, though they came to it:

came down to Troas; either the country of Troas, as the Syriac version renders it; which, according to Solinus {m}, is bordered on the north part of Galatia, and was near to Lycaonia, Pisidia, and Mygdonia on the south, and to Lydia on the east, and to Mysia and Caria on the north: or rather the city of Troas, which Pliny says {n}, was formerly called Antigonia, now Alexandria, a colony of the Romans. Antigonus king of Asia called it Troas at first, because it was in the country, and near where Troy stood, but afterwards he called it, according to his own name, Antigonia; but Lysimachus king of Thrace having got this city into his hands, repaired it, and called it after the name of Alexander, Alexandria; and to distinguish it from Alexandria in Egypt, and other cities of the same name in other places, it was called Alexandria Troas.

{m} lb. c. 53. {n} Hist. Nat. l. 5. c. 30.

Acts 16:9

Ver. 9. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night,.... Either in a dream, or, it may be, when he was awake:

there stood a man of Macedonia; an angel in the form of a man; the Syriac version reads, "as a man of Macedonia", and who might appear in a Macedonian habit, or speak in the Macedonian language; or the apostle might conclude him to be so, from his making mention of Macedonia, as the place where he requested him to come, and assist:

and prayed him, saying, come over into Macedonia; Macedonia was a very large country in Europe; which formerly consisted, as Pliny {o} says, of a hundred and fifty people, or nations, and was called Emathia; it took its name of Macedonia from Macedo, a son of Jupiter, and of Thyd, a daughter of Deucalion: according to Ptolomy {p} it had on the north Dalmatia, superior Mysia and Thracia; on the west, the Ionian sea; on the south Epirus; and on the east, part of Thracia, and the gulfs of the Aegean sea. It had formerly other names besides Emathia and Macedonia, as Mygdonia and Edoma, and is now called Albania or Ronnelli. Troas, where the apostle now was, when he had this vision, was just by the Hellespont, over which he must go to Macedonia; and therefore the Macedonian prays him to "come over", adding,

and help us; by praying and preaching, to pull down the kingdom of Satan, to destroy superstition and idolatry, to enlighten the eyes of men, and turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, and save them from utter ruin and destruction. This shows what a miserable condition this country was in; and that God had some chosen people among them to gather in, whose time was now come; and of what use and service the angels, Christ's ministering spirits, are, who are helpful in weakening the kingdom of Satan, and advancing the interest of Christ, and in spreading his Gospel, and particularly in directing the ministers of it where to preach it; though it follows not from hence, that this angel presided over the whole country, and was their tutelar angel, as some think.

{o} Hist. Nat. l. 4. c. 10. {p} Geograph. l. 3. c. 13.

Acts 16:10

Ver. 10. And after he had seen the vision,.... And considered it, and related it to his companions: and when they had well weighed it, and the circumstances of it:

immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia; they determined upon it, and took all the proper methods, and made the necessary provisions for it. Here Luke, the writer of this history, first appears, saying, "we endeavoured"; whether he came with the apostle from Antioch, since he is commonly said to have been a physician of Antioch; or whether he met the apostle at Troas, since here is the first hint of him, is not certain:

assuredly gathering, that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them; they concluded from the vision with great certainty, that they had a manifest call from God to go into Macedonia, and preach the Gospel to the inhabitants of it, not doubting but that they should meet with success. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read "God", instead of "Lord".

Acts 16:11

Ver. 11. Therefore loosing from Troas,.... Or setting sail from thence, which, as before observed, was the Hellespont; which was a narrow sea that divided Asia from Europe, now called Stretto di Gallipoii, or Bracci di St. Georgio: and so Pliny {q} speaking of Troas says, it lies near the Hellespont; and Jerom {r} calls it a maritime city of Asia; and it further appears to be on the sea coast, by what is said in Ac 20:6, for from Philippi hither, the apostle and his company sailed in five days, and from hence they sailed to Assos, Ac 20:6

we came with a straight course to Samothracia; which was an island in the Aegean sea, or Archipelago: it was formerly called Dardania {s}, from Dardanus the, son of Jupiter by Electra, who fled hither from Italy, upon killing his brother Jasius; it had its name of Samothracia, from Thracia, near to which it was, and from the Samians who inhabited it; and it was called Samothracia to distinguish it from the island Samos in the Ionian sea; it is now called Samandrachi: Jerom {t} calls it an island in the gulf of Pagasa; of this island of Samothracia, Pliny says {u}, that it was free before Hebrus, was thirty two miles from Imbrus, twenty two and a half from Lemnus, thirty eight, from the shore of Thracia, and in circumference thirty two--and that it is fullest of good havens of any in those parts; and adds, that Callimachus calls it by its ancient name Dardania; it seems it was also called Leucosia, or Leucadia, because to spectators at a distance it looked white: according to {w} Herodotus the Pelasgi first inhabited Samothracia, who with the Athenians dwelt there, and from them the Samothracians received their sacred rites and mysteries; for this island was famous for the worship of the Cabiri, or chief deities of the Gentiles, particularly Ceres, Proserpina, Pluto, Mercury, and the two brothers Castor and Pollux, Neptune, and all the sea gods; insomuch that it was called "the holy island" {x}, and persons of other nations, and even of the greatest figure, were initiated into the mysteries of the Samothracians, which Pliny {y} calls the most holy; for speaking of Venus, Potho, and Phaeton, adds, who are worshipped with the most holy ceremonies of Samothracia. The apostle did not stay to preach the Gospel in this place, nor do we read of its being preached here by him at any other time, or by any other, nor of any church in this place in after ages in ecclesiastical history. The apostle and his companions are said to come hither, "with a straight course"; not only because they might have a fair gale, which brought them at once hither; but because when they were over the Hellespont, this island lay directly in their way, in a straight line to Macedonia:

and the next day to Neapolis; the Alexandrian copy reads, "the new city", as the word signifies; hence the Ethiopic version by way of interpretation renders it, "the next day we came to the new city, the name of which is Neapolis": according to Ptolomy, it was a sea port of Edonis, a part of Macedonia, and was upon the borders of Thrace; it is now called Christopoli; and was not Neapolis in Campania, nor Sychem in Samaria, which is so called, but was at a great distance from either of these. Pliny places it in Thracia, as he also does Edonis, and even Philippi {z}. Jerom calls {a} it a city of Caria, but wrongly: and though we have no account of the apostles preaching in this place, and of making converts, neither now nor at any other time; yet it appears even in after ages that here was a church in this place: in the "sixth" century the bishop of it was sent to the fifth Roman synod; and in the "seventh" century one Andreas was bishop of this place, who was in the sixth synod at Constantinople {b}.

{q} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 30. {r} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. K. {s} Pausanias Achaica, sive, l. 7. p. 403. Ptolom. Geograph. l. 3. c. 11. {t} Ib. fol. 96. I. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 12. {w} Euterpe, c. 51. {x} L. Attilius in Liv. Hist. l. 45. c. 5. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 5. {z} Ib. l. 4. c. 11, {a} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. F. {b} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccl cent. 6. c. 2. p. 7. cent. 7. c. 10. p. 258.

Acts 16:12

Ver. 12. And from thence to Philippi,.... This place is by Appianus called Datos, which was its original name; and by Diodorus Siculus, Crenidae {c}, from the fountains of water, which were many and wholesome, that were about it; and it had its name Philippi, from Philip king of Macedon, father of Alexander the great, who rebuilt it {d}: it is now vulgarly called Chrixopolis, that is, Chrysopolis, from the veins and mines of gold found about it; it was famous for a battle here fought between Augustus Caesar and Anthony on the one side, and Brutus and Cassius on the other, in which the latter were vanquished:

which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia; which is called Edonis, in which Ptolomy places it;

and a colony: that is, of the Romans; see Ac 16:37 and which Pliny {e} also calls a colony:

and we were in that city abiding many days; without doing anything, having no opportunity, or door opened to them to preach the Gospel; which must be a great trial of their faith, after Paul had seen such a vision, by which they were so strongly assured it was the will of God they should come and preach the Gospel here, and after they had travelled so far by sea and land; though some observe, that the word used signifies not only to abide, but to exercise themselves, by teaching and preaching the word, which it is supposed they did with success; and that the women they after met with by the river side, were such, at least some of them, who had been converted under their ministry; but the former seems to be the truest sense.

{c} Ptolom. Geograph. l. 3. c. 13. {d} Pausaniae Eliac. 2. l. 6. p. 352. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 11. {e} Ib.

Acts 16:13

Ver. 13. And on the sabbath,.... That is, as the Syriac version renders it, "on the sabbath day"; the Jewish sabbath, the seventh day of the week; though the words may be rendered, "on a certain day of the week" agreeably to Ac 20:7 where the first of the sabbath means the first day of the week; but be this as it will, on this day,

we went out of the city by a river side; perhaps the river Strymon, which was near; the Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read,

without the gate; and the Syriac version, "without the gates of the city"; all to the same sense: it looks as if there was no synagogue of the Jews in this place, or otherwise the apostle and his companions would have gone into that, according to their custom; and this the rather seems to be the case, since it is so particularly remarked, that at Thessalonica, the next place they stayed at there was one, Ac 17:1 and the reason might be, because that Philippi being a Roman colony, the Jews were not suffered to have one in it; wherefore Paul and his company, whether on the Jewish sabbath, or on any other day of the week, took a walk out of the city; either for the sake of a walk, or rather to converse together, and consider what was to be done, or to look out for an opportunity to preach the Gospel; and they came to a place,

where prayer was wont to be made; or as the words may be rendered, "where was thought to be a place of prayer"; a "proseucha", an oratory, or a place built and made use of for prayer; that is, as they walked along, they saw a place, which in their opinion looked like a religious house, or a place for prayer, and so made up to it, where they found some persons assembled together on that account: this sense is confirmed by several versions; the Vulgate Latin version reads, "where there seemed to be prayer", and so reads Beza's most ancient copy; and the Syriac version is very express, "for there was seen" atwlu tyb, "an house of prayer"; to which agrees the Arabic version, "we went out to a certain place, which was thought to be a place of prayer"; to which may be added the Ethiopic version, "and we thought there was prayer there"; and that the Jews had their oratories, or prayer houses, is certain;
See Gill on "Lu 6:12" and that these were without the cities, and in the fields, appears from a passage of Epiphanius {f}, who says,

"there were anciently places of prayer, both among the Jews, "without the city", and among the Samaritans, there was a place of prayer at Sichem, which is now called Neapolis, "without the city", in the field, about two stones distance, in form of a theatre, open to the air, and without covering, built by the Samaritans, who in all things imitated the Jews:"

and if these were commonly built by fountains and rivers, and as some think, in imitation of Isaac, who went out into the field, "to meditate"; which the

Chaldee paraphrase renders, "to pray"; and is also in the same place said to come, as the Jerusalem paraphrase renders it, arabl "to a well", or "fountain", Ge 24:62 then this clause may be rendered, "where it was usual for a prayer house to be": and then the sense is, there being no synagogue in the city, the apostle and those with him went out of it, to the river side, to look out for a prayer house; where such places were wont to be built, and they accordingly found one:

and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither; who seem to have been Jewish women, who met here to attend public prayer, there being no religious worship of the true God in the city; and among these worshippers of God was Lydia, hereafter mentioned; and worship not being begun, the apostle and his companions sat down among them, and entered into some religious conversation with them, and took the opportunity of preaching the Gospel, which was what they wanted, and were seeking after.

{f} Contr. Haeres. Tom. 2. l. 3. Haeres. 80.

Acts 16:14

Ver. 14. And a certain woman, named Lydia,.... Whether this woman was a Jewess or a Gentile, is not certain, her name will not determine; she might be called so from the country of Lydia, which was in Asia minor, and where was Thyatira, her native place; Horace makes frequent mention of one of this name {g} and it might be a Jewish name; we read of R. Simeon ben Lydia {h}; and as these seem to be Jewish women that met at this oratory, she might be one:

a seller of purple; either of purple silks, much wore in the eastern countries; or of the purple dye, which in,

"Then Judas returned to spoil the tents, where they got much gold, and silver, and blue silk, and purple of the sea, and great riches." (1 Maccabees 4:23)

is called "purple of the sea", or "sea purple"; it being the blood or juice of a turbinated shell fish, which the Jews call Nwzlx, "Chalson": this they speak of as a shellfish; hence those words {i},

"go and learn of the Chalson, for all the while it grows, its shell grows with it:"

and that purple was dyed with the blood of it, appears from the following instances; "the best fruits in the land", Ge 43:11 are interpreted {k}, the things that are the most famous in the world, as the Chalson, &c. with whose blood, as the gloss on the passage says, they dye purple: and the purple dyed with this was very valuable, and fetched a good price; the tribe of Zebulun is represented {l}, as complaining to God, that he had given to their brethren fields and vineyards, to them mountains and hills, to their brethren lands, and to them seas and rivers; to which it is replied, all will stand in need of thee, because of Chalson; as it is said, De 33:19 "They shall suck of the abundance of the seas"; the gloss upon it, interpreting the word Chalson, is, it comes out of the sea to the mountains, and with its blood they dye purple, which is sold at a very dear price. The text in De 33:19 is thus paraphrased by Jonathan the Targumist;

"at the shore of the sea they dwell (i.e. they of the tribe of Zebulun), and they delight themselves with (the fish) Tuny, and take Chalson, and with its blood dye purple the threads of their garments."

And so Maimonides says {m}, that they use this in dying the fringes on the borders of their garments; after they have scoured the wool, and the like, that it may take the dye, he says,

"they take of the blood of Chalson, which is a fish whose colour is like the colour of purple, and its blood is black like ink, and it is found in the salt sea,"

particularly about Tyre; so the husbandmen in Jer 52:16 are interpreted {n}, they that catch Chalson from the ladder of Tyre to Chippah, or the shore; the gloss explains it, those that squeeze and press the Chalson, to fetch out its blood: and with all this agree the modern accounts given of purple, as follow;

"purple was much esteemed among the ancients, especially the Tyrian purple; which underwent more dyes than the rest, and which was almost peculiar to emperors and kings, yet this purple did not exceed that now in use.--The ancient purple was tinged, or given with the blood or juice of a precious turbinated testaceous sea fish, called by the Greeks porfura, and by the Latins "purpura".--In the seas of the Spanish West Indies, about Nicoya, is found a shell fish, which perfectly resembles the ancient "purpura", and in all probability is the very same--these are gathered very plentifully in the spring, and by rubbing one against another, yield a kind of saliva, or thick glair, resembling soft wax; but the purple dye is in the throat of the fish, and the finest part in a little white vein--the chief riches of Nicoya consist in this fish; cloth of Segovia dyed with it, is sold for twenty crowns the ell.--In the

Philosoph. Transact., we have an account of a purple fish discovered in 1686, by Mr. W. Cole, on the coasts of Somersetshire, South Wales, &c, where it is found in great abundance.--The fish is a kind of "buccinum", a name given by the ancients to all fishes, whose shell bears any resemblance to a hunting horn; and it appears from Pliny, that part of the ancient purple was taken from this kind of shell fish. The Caribbee Islands have likewise their "purple" fish; it is called "burgan", being of the size of the end of the finger, and resembling our periwinkles; its shell is of a brownish azure, its flesh white, its intestines of a very bright red, the colour whereof appears through the body; and it is this that dyes that froth, which it casts when taken, and which is at first of a violet hue, bordering on blue; to oblige them to yield the greater quantity of froth, they lay them on a plate, and shake and beat them against one another, upon which the plate is immediately covered with the froth, which is received on a linen cloth, and becomes "purple", in proportion as it dries {o}."

It may be further observed, that the fringes which the Jews wore upon their garments, had on them a ribband of blue or purple, Nu 15:38, for the word there used, is by the Septuagint rendered "purple", in **Nu 4:7** and sometimes "hyacinth"; and the whole fringe was by the Jews called tlkt, "purple" :hence it is said {p},

"does not everyone that puts on the "purple" (i.e. the fringes on his garments) in Jerusalem, make men to wonder? and a little after, the former saints, or religious men, when they had wove in it (the garment) three parts, they put on it tlkt, "the purple"."

And there were persons who traded in these things, and were called tlkt yrkwm, "sellers of purple" {q}, as here; that is, for the Tzitzith, or fringes for the borders of the garments, on which the ribband of blue or purple was put, as the gloss explains it: the Jews were very curious about the colour, and the dying of it; that it should be a colour that would hold and not change; and that the ribband be dyed on purpose for that use. Maimonides gives rules for the dying of it {r}, and they were no less careful of whom they bought it; for they say, that "the purple" was not to be bought, but of an approved person, or one that was authorized for that purpose {s}; and a scruple is raised by one, whether he had done right or no, in buying it of the family of a doctor deceased {t}: now since Lydia might be a Jewess, or at least, as appears by what follows, was a proselytess of the Jewish religion, this might be her business to sell the purple for their fringes, and it may be the fringes themselves; and if this was her employment, she was thoroughly a religious person in their way, since we find, that tlkt yrkwm, "sellers of purple", were free from reading

"hear O Israel", &c. De 6:4 and "from prayer", and from the phylacteries, &c. for this reason, because he that is employed in the commandment (in any work for it) was free from the commandment {u};"

and yet she attended at the place and time of prayer:

of the city of Thyatira; which was in Lydia, or as others say in Mysia, which was in Asia Minor; Pliny {w} seems to place it in Ionia, by the river Lycus, and says it was formerly called Pelopia and Euhippa, and it was also called Semiramis; it had its name of Thyatira from Seleucus Nicanor, who being at war with Lysimachus near this place, and hearing he had a daughter born, called it Thygateira; though others say it was so called, because that when the Mysians were about to build a city, inquiring of the gods where they should build it, were told, that they should build it where a hart was struck, and appeared running; and dia to yuein, because of the sacrificing of the hart, they called it Thyateira. The Turks now call it "Ak hissar", the white camp. This was Lydia's native place, from which she was now at a great distance, being either wholly removed hither, or was here upon business; for Thyatira was in Asia, and Philippi, where she now was, was in Europe:

which worshipped God; the true God, the God of Israel, and not the gods of the Gentiles, among whom she was; which shows, that she was either a Jewish woman, who had knowledge of the one true and living God, or at least a proselytess of the Jewish religion:

heard us; not alone, but with other women; and at first only externally, and not so as to understand and receive what she heard, until the efficacious grace of God was exerted upon her, signified in the following clause:

whose heart the Lord opened; which was before shut and barred, with the bars of ignorance, hardness, and unbelief. The heart of a sinner before conversion, is like a house shut up, and wholly in darkness; whatever degree of natural or moral light is in it, there is none in spiritual things; it is empty of the grace of God, of the fear of him, and love to him; it is without proper inhabitants, without God, Christ, and the Spirit; and is the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, who delight in dark and desolate places; it is bolted and barred with unbelief, and walled up, and even petrified and hardened with sin, and is guarded and garrisoned by Satan, and its goods are kept in peace by him: and this had been the case of Lydia; but now the Lord opened her understanding, and put light into it, which was before darkness itself; as to spiritual things; by which she saw her wretched, sinful, and miserable state by nature, the insufficiency of all ways and means, and works, to justify and save her, and the necessity, suitableness, and fulness of grace and salvation by Christ; which was done by the same divine power, that at first created light in darkness: moreover, the Lord wrought upon her affections, and engaged them to divine and spiritual things; creating love in her soul to Christ, to his people, truths and ordinances; which was done by his almighty hand, taking away the stony heart, and giving an heart of flesh: he also removed the bar of unbelief, entered in himself, dispossessed Satan, and worked faith in her, to look to him, lay hold on him, and receive him, as her Saviour and Redeemer; making her willing in the day of his power, to be saved by him, and to serve him: it is a petition the Jews frequently make {x}, in their prayers to God, yabl xtptd, "that thou wouldst open my heart", in thy law; or as sometimes, open our hearts in the doctrine of thy law: not Lydia herself, nor the Apostle Paul, but the Lord opened her heart; Jehovah the Father, who commanded light out of darkness; Jehovah the Son, who has the key of the house of David; Jehovah the Spirit, who convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment:

that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul; concerning the person and offices of Christ, concerning his truths and ordinances, concerning free justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, and everlasting salvation by him; these things she hearkened unto in another manner than she had done; before she heard, but did not attend to what she heard; but faith coming by hearing, now she hears with the hearing of faith, and understands what she hears, and cordially receives and embraces it, and put into practice what she heard, submitting to the ordinance of Christ, as follows.

{g} Carm. l. 1. ode 8, 13, 25. & l. 3. ode 9. {h} Juchasin, fol. 105. 1. {i} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 18. 3. {k} Bereshit Rabbi, sect. 91. fol. 79. 4. & Mattanot Cehunah in ib. {l} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 6. 1. {m} Hilchot Tzitzith, c. 2. sect. 2. {n} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 26. 1. & 75. 1. {o} Chambers's Cyclopoedia in the word "Purple". {p} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 40. 1, 2. {q} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 50. 2. {r} Maimon. Hilchot Tzitzith. c. 2. sect. 1, 2, 3. {s} Ib. sect. 4. {t} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 39. 1. {u} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 26. 1. {w} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 29. {x} Zohar in Exod. fol. 83. 1. Raziel, fol. 45. 1. & 42. 1, 2. Shaare Zion, fol. 53. 2. & 65. 1. Seder Tephillot. Ed. Basil. fol 74. 2.

Acts 16:15

Ver. 15. And when she was baptized,.... In water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to the commission of Christ, by the apostle, or some one of his companions; by whom she was instructed into the nature and use of this ordinance; and very likely it was performed in that river, by the side of which the oratory stood, where they were assembled:

and her household; they were baptized also, being converted at the same time; these seem to be her menial servants, who came along with her from her native place upon business, and who attended on her; accordingly the Ethiopic version renders it, "and she was baptized with all her men"; and these were believers, and are called "the brethren", Ac 16:40 hence this passage will by no means serve the cause of infant baptism: whether Lydia was a maid, a wife, or widow, cannot be said; it looks, however, as if she had no husband now, since she is mentioned as a trader herself; and whether she had any children or not, is not certain, nor can it be concluded from this clause, for there are many households that have no children; and if she had young children, it is not likely she should bring them with her to such a distant place, whither she was come upon trade and business: the pleaders for infant baptism must prove that she had children; that these were her household, or part of her household here spoken of; and that they were baptized; or this instance will be of no service to their cause:

she besought us, saying, if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord; this she said, not as doubting whether they had so judged of her, but as supposing it, and taking it for granted, that they had; wherefore she reasons upon it, and argues from it; and the sense is this, that seeing the apostle and his company had judged her to be a believer in Christ, by admitting her to the ordinance of baptism; and she had shown her faithfulness to him, by submitting to it, according to his will; therefore she earnestly entreated them to take up their residence at her house, whilst at Philippi: saying,

come into my house, and abide there; her faith soon worked by love; and by the fruits of righteousness which followed upon it, it appeared to be true and genuine: and she constrained us; Paul and Silas, and Timothy and Luke, and whoever else were in company; she not only invited them, but obliged them to go with her; she would take no denial, and by her arguments, entreaties, and importunity, as it were forced them, and prevailed upon them to go with her.

Acts 16:16

Ver. 16. And it came to pass as we went to prayer,.... That is, to the house of prayer, or to the oratory, as they were in the way to it; for this is not to be understood of their just going to the act, or duty of prayer; for the damsel that now met them, is said to follow them, and to do so for many days, one after another; and it was by their going to the prayer house, that she knew what they were; and besides, the phrase of "going to prayer", as used by us, for the act or duty of prayer, is a mere Anglicism, and unknown to the eastern writers: now this their going to the oratory, was after they had been at Lydia's house, and had been entertained and refreshed there; whether this was on the same day that she was converted and baptized, is not certain: however, so it was, that

a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination, met us; in the Greek text it is, "the spirit of Python"; the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, "the spirit Python"; the same with Apollo, who was called Pythius, as was his oracle, from the people coming to him, punyanesyai, to inquire of him and consult with him, about difficult matters {y}; or rather from the Hebrew word
Ntp, which signifies a serpent; and so Apollo is said to have his name Pythius, from his killing the serpent Typhon, or Python {z}; hence the city of Delphos, where was the oracle of Apollo, was called Pytho {a}; the prophetess that sat upon the golden tripos, and delivered out the oracles, Pythia; and the feasts and plays instituted to the honour of Apollo, were called the Pythian feasts and plays, and the place of the oracle Pythium {b}: and so this maid, or the spirit in her, pretended to divine and foretell things to come; and the Arabic renders it, "an unclean spirit, foretelling future things": the Jews {c} make this spirit of Python, to be the same with Ob, which we render a familiar spirit, Le 20:27 and the Septuagint by "Engastrimythos", a ventriloquist, one that seemed to speak out of his belly, and pretended to predict future events; and most of the versions in the Polyglot Bible render it by "Python", the word here used: so the Jews say {d}, that a master of Ob (as the woman of Endor is called the mistress of Ob), Mwtyp hz, this is "Python": and so Jarchi on De 18:11 explains the word, and adds, that it is one that speaks out of his arm holes, as those sort of people did from several parts of their bodies, and even from their secret parts: the word signifies a bottle, and they were called masters or mistresses of the bottle; either because the place on which they sat, and from whence they gave forth their oracles, was in the form of one; or they made use of a bottle in their divinations; or as Schindler {e} observes, being possessed, they swelled and were inflated like bottles; and being interrogated, they gave forth answers out of their bellies, concerning things past, present, and to come: and this speaking out of their bellies might be done, without the possession of a real spirit, and much less was it from God, as Plutarch {f}, an Heathen

himself, observes;

"it is foolish and childish, to think that God, as the ventriloquists formerly called Eurycleans, and now Pythonists, should hide himself in the bodies of the prophets, using their mouths and voices as instruments to speak with, for this was done by turning their voices down their throats."

The first of this sort was one Eurycles, of whom Aristophanes {g} makes mention; and the Scholiast upon him says, that he was a ventriloquist, and was said by the Athenians to prophesy by a "demon" that was in him, when it was only an artificial way of speaking; Tertullian affirms he had seen such women that were ventriloquists, from whose secret parts a small voice was heard, as they sat and gave answers to things asked: Caelius Rhodiginus writes, that he often saw a woman a ventriloquist, at Rhodes, and in a city of Italy his own country; from whose secrets, he had often heard a very slender voice of an unclean spirit, but very intelligible, tell strangely of things past or present, but of things to come, for the most part uncertain, and also often vain and lying; and Wierus relates of one Peter Brabantius, who as often as he would, could speak from the lower part of his body, his mouth being open, but his lips not moved, whereby he deceived many by this cunning; and there was a man at court in King James the First's time here in England, who could act this imposture in a very lively manner {h}: but now whether the spirit that was in this maid was a cheat, an imposture of this kind, is not so easy to say; it seems by the dispossession that follows, that it was a real spirit that possessed her; though some think it was no other than a deluding, devilish, imposture:

which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: divining or prophesying; it seems she had many masters, who had a propriety in her, and shared the gain she brought; unless by them are meant her master and mistress: vast treasures were brought to the temple at Delphos, by persons that applied to the Pythian oracle there; and great quantities were got by particular persons, who pretended to such a spirit, by which they told fortunes, and what should befall people hereafter, or where their lost or stolen goods were, and such like things; and of such sort were the magical boys and servants Pignorius {i} makes mention of, out of Apuleius, Porphyry, and others, who either for gain or pleasure, performed many strange things.

{y} Phurnutus de natura deorum, p. 94. Vid. Schol. Aristoph. Plut. p. 6. & Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 17. {z} Homer. Hymn. in Apollo, v. 372, &c. {a} Pausan. l. 10. p. 619. {b} Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 2. {c} R. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 36, 38. {d} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 7. {e}

Lex. Pentaglott. col. 34. {f} De defectu oracul. p. 691. {g} Vespae, p. 502. {h} See Webster's Displaying of supposed Witchcraft, p. 122, 124. {i} De Servis, p. 355.

Acts 16:17

Ver. 17. The same followed Paul and us,.... Silas, Luke, and Timothy; the Arabic version reads, "the same followed Paul and Silas"; as they were going to the oratory:

and cried, saying, these men are the servants of the most high God; not of Python, or Apollo, as she and her masters were; or of any of the deities of the Gentiles; nor of sin, nor of Satan, nor of men, but of the one only true and living God, one of whose titles is
Nwyle, "Elion", the "Most High", Ge 14:22 and these men were his servants, not merely by right of creation, as all men are, or should be; nor only through the power of divine grace upon their souls, bringing them into a willing obedience to him, as all the saints are; but by office, being ministers of the word: wherefore it follows,

which show unto us the way of salvation; which is not by the works of men; for by them the justice of God cannot be satisfied, nor his law fulfilled; God has declared against this way of salvation; it would make void the death of Christ, and frustrate the design of God in it; which is to magnify his grace, and exclude boasting in man: to which may be added, that the best works of men being imperfect, and attended with much sin, would rather damn than save; wherefore it is sinful, dangerous, and vain, to attempt salvation in this way. The only way of salvation is by the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the law is fulfilled, satisfaction is made for sin, peace and pardon are procured, an everlasting righteousness is brought in, and through whom grace and glory are given: and this is a way of salvation, agreeable to all the perfections of God; in which the vilest sinner made sensible of his sins, and of his need of this, has no reason to despair; it is exceeding suitable to his case, and is a way in which none ever perish, that are directed to it: and now this way of salvation is only shown in the Gospel, by the ministers of it; not by the light of nature, for to men who only have that, it is foolishness; nor by the law of Moses, for to such who are under that, it is a stumbling block; nor by the carnal reason of men, it is not of men, nor after men, but by divine revelation: and therefore the natural man receives it not, it is hid from such; and therefore they project various ways of salvation, which are pleasing in their own eyes, but the end of them are the ways of death; the way to life and immortality, is only brought to light in the Gospel: whether she said this of her own accord, or was obliged to it by divine impulse; and whether it was through fear of Paul, and in flattery to him, or was with a good or bad design, is not easy to determine: however, certain it is, what she said was truth; and sometimes the devil himself, the father of lies, is obliged to speak it.

Acts 16:18

Ver. 18. And this she did many days,.... As the apostle and his company passed to and from the oratory, being for that time at Lydia's house; she followed them, and repeated the above words. This she was suffered to do, time after time; not that the apostle and his friends wanted such a testimony, or that it was of any use to them; but that the expulsion of the evil spirit might be more manliest, and more taken notice of:

but Paul being grieved; at the unhappy condition the maid was in, being possessed with such a spirit: and that the people were so imposed upon and deluded by it; and that it should be thought that there was any combination and agreement between that and him:

turned; himself to her, who was behind him, she following him, as is said in the preceding verse; this is left out in the Syriac version:

and said to the spirit; or to that spirit, as the same version renders it; to the spirit of Python, or Apollo, or of divination, that was in the maid; the Ethiopic version reads, "and he said", "in", or "by the Holy Spirit"; being under a more than ordinary influence and impulse of his; but not the spirit by which he spake, but the spirit to which he spake, is here meant:

I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her, and he came out the same hour; this is an instance of that power which Christ gave to his apostles to cast out devils in his name, Mt 10:1

Acts 16:19

Ver. 19. And when her masters saw,.... As they might by her sedateness and composure; she not being wild and frantic, and not having such motions and agitations she had whilst under the possession of the evil spirit:

that the hope of their gains was gone; the Syriac version adds, "out of her"; namely, the evil spirit which was the ground and foundation of all their hope of gains, they expected to acquire for themselves; that being gone, they had no more work to do, nor tricks to play, nor profit to expect from the maid: wherefore

they caught Paul and Silas; they being the chief speakers, and principally concerned in the ejection of the evil spirit; they laid hold on them, took them by the collar, or held them by their clothes,

and drew them into the market place: or rather into the court of judicature, as the word also signifies; there to accuse them, and to have them tried, condemned, and punished:

unto the rulers; the judges of the court, it may be the Decuriones; for in a Roman colony as Philippi was, they chose out every tenth man, that was of capacity and ability, to make and establish a public council, and who therefore were called by this name.

Acts 16:20

Ver. 20. And brought them to the magistrates,.... The same as before; wherefore the Syriac version omits them there, and reads them both together here, calling them the magistrates and chief men of the city; though the word here used, properly signifies military captains, captains of the Roman militia: but that they were the same with the Decuriones, or ten men before mentioned, appears from what Harpocratian says {k}, that every year were chosen "ten strathgoi, magistrates", the word here used:

saying, these men being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city; they call Paul and Silas Jews, either because they knew them to be so, or because they attended at the Jewish oratory, or place of worship; and it was common with the Romans to call the Christians Jews; they were generally included in the same name; and this name of the Jews was become very odious with the Romans; a little after this, Claudius commanded them, the Jews, to depart from Rome, Ac 18:2 they were commonly looked upon as a troublesome and seditious sort of people, and indeed this was the old charge that was fastened upon them, **Ezr 4:15**. So that it was enough to say that Paul and Silas were Jews, to prove them to be disturbers of the public peace: and it is to be observed, that their accusers make no mention of the dispossessing of the maid, who was their private property, and which was a private affair; but pretend a concern for the public welfare, and bring a charge of public disturbance and detriment, to which their malice and revenge prompted them, hoping in this way the better to succeed: the Arabic version reads, "these two men trouble our city, and they are both Jews".

{k} Lexicon, p. 274.

Acts 16:21

Ver. 21. And teach customs,.... The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read in the singular number, "custom or law"; referring to the doctrine of salvation by Christ, in whose name the spirit of divination was cast out of the maid, and whom they took for a new deity; and so concluded that the apostle and his company were introducing a new religious law or custom, the worship of another God:

which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans; for the city of Philippi was a Roman colony, and so the inhabitants of it called themselves Romans; or these men might be strictly such, who were transplanted hither; and with the Romans, it was not lawful to receive, observe, and worship, a new or strange deity, without the decree of the senate {l}.

{l} Tertull. Apolog. c. 5. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 2.

Acts 16:22

Ver. 22. And the multitude rose up together against them,.... The crowd of people that were gathered together in the court on this occasion; being no doubt spirited up by the proprietors of the maid, out of whom the spirit of divination was cast, and encouraged by the rulers, and being provoked at the hearing of unlawful customs being introduced among them;

and the magistrates rent off their clothes; not their own clothes, as did the high priest, Mr 14:63 but the clothes of Paul and Silas; and so reads the Arabic version, "and the rulers rent the garments of both of them"; which removes the ambiguity in the words; for at the whipping or beating of malefactors, they did not pluck off their garments, but rent and tore them off, and so whipped or beat them naked: this was the custom with the Jews {m}; it is asked,

"how did they whip anyone? his hands are bound to a pillar here and there, and the minister of the synagogue (or the executioner) takes hold of his clothes; and if they are rent, they are rent, and if they are ripped, they are ripped, (be it as it will,) until he has made his breast bare, &c."

And in like manner the Lectors, or executioners among the Romans, used to tear the garments of malefactors, when they beat them; this the magistrates themselves did here, unless they may be said to do it, because they ordered it to be done, as follows:

and commanded to beat them; that is, with rods: this was one of the three times the apostle was beat in this manner, 2Co 11:25 and of this shameful treatment at Philippi, he makes mention in **1Th 2:2**.

{m} Misn. Maccot, c. 3. sect. 12. & Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin c. 16. sect. 8.

Acts 16:23

Ver. 23. And when they had laid many stripes upon them,.... Even above measure, as in 2Co 11:35.

They cast them into prison; designing doubtless to inflict some greater punishment upon them, after they had further examined into their affairs:

charging the jailer to keep them safely; suggesting, that he must be answerable for them, should they escape, either through his favour or his negligence; and they might rather give this strict charge, because they perceived that they were uncommon men, possessed of a strange power, which they had exerted in the casting out of the evil spirit, which might come to their knowledge by some means or other; they might look upon them to be a sort of magicians, and therefore were to be narrowly watched, that they did not make use of their art to deliver themselves; however, they judged it necessary to use all the precautions they could, to secure them: some have thought this jailer to be the same with Stephanas, **1Co 1:16** but this is not certain, nor very probable.

Acts 16:24

Ver. 24. Who having received such a charge,.... So strict an one from the magistrates, was doubly careful and diligent:

thrust them into the inner prison: the innermost part of it, the lowest or furthest part of the prison; so that there were the more doors, bolts, and bars, to break open, and pass through, should they attempt to make their escape:

and made their feet fast in the stocks; or "wood", a wooden machine, in which the feet of prisoners were put for security, and which we call "the stocks"; some say it was such an one, in which the neck as well as the feet were put, and so might be the same with our "pillory".

Acts 16:25

Ver. 25. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, When others were asleep, and all things were still and quiet; See Gill on "Ps 119:62", and they prayed doubtless for themselves, for their deliverance in God's time and way, and for support under their present afflictions; and for supplies of grace, to enable them to bear with patience and cheerfulness, until an issue was put to them; and for their enemies, and, particularly it may be for the jailer, who had used them so ill; and for the churches of Christ, for all the saints, and for the spread and success of the Gospel:

and sang praises unto God; or "sang an hymn to God", very likely one of David's psalms, or hymns: for the book of Psalms is a book, of hymns, and several of the psalms are particularly called hymns; this showed not only that they were cheerful, notwithstanding the stripes that were laid upon them, and though their feet were made fast in the stocks, and they were in the innermost prison, in a most loathsome and uncomfortable condition; and though they might be in expectation of greater punishment, and of death itself; but also that they were thankful and glorified God, who had counted them worthy to suffer for his name's sake:

and the prisoners heard them; for it seems there were other prisoners besides them, and who were in the outer prison: and from hence it appears, that their prayer was not merely mental; nor was their singing praises only a making melody in their hearts, but were both vocal; and it might be chiefly for the sake of the prisoners, that they both prayed and praised in this manner, that they might hear and be converted; or at least be convicted of the goodness of the cause, for which the apostles suffered.

Acts 16:26

Ver. 26. And suddenly there was a great earthquake,.... An extraordinary and unusual one; which did not arise from natural causes, from wind being pent up in the earth, but from the prayers and praises of the saints, going up to heaven; when God was pleased to testify his presence and power this way; and the effects which followed upon this earthquake, show it to be a supernatural one:

so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; not the roof and walls only, as is common in earthquakes, but the very foundation also; and yet the edifice was not thrown down, as is usual when the foundation is shaken:

and immediately all the doors were opened; both of the outer and inner prisons, which is another unusual effect of earthquakes:

and everyone's bands were loosed; not only the bands of Paul and Silas, but of the rest of the prisoners; though the Arabic version reads, "all the fetters and bands of both were loosed", referring it only to Paul and Silas; this circumstance shows also, that the earthquake was miraculous, for when was it ever known that such an effect ever followed one?

Acts 16:27

Ver. 27. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep,.... Not so much by the loud voices of Paul and Silas, as by the uncommon motion of the earth, which so shook him, as thoroughly to awake him:

and seeing the prison doors open; which was the first thing in his fright he was looking after, and careful of, and which he might perceive, though it was midnight, and though as yet he had no light:

he drew out his sword; from its scabbard, which was girt about him; for it may be he had slept with his clothes on, and his sword girt to him; or if he had put on his clothes upon awaking, he had also girt himself with his sword:

and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled; especially Paul and Silas, concerning whom he had received such a strict charge from the magistrates; and he knew that according to law, he must suffer the same punishment that was designed for them; and therefore in fear of the magistrates, and what they would inflict upon him, he was just going to destroy himself.

Acts 16:28

Ver. 28. But Paul cried with a loud voice,.... Knowing by divine revelation, what the jailer was about to do; though being in the innermost prison, in a dark dungeon, he could not see him, unless it can be thought, that the opening of the doors had let in light sufficient; and it may be also, that he knew in the same way, what designs of grace God had towards this man and his family:

saying, do thyself no harm; which is an instance of great tenderness, humanity, and love, to one that had used him and his companion with so much severity and cruelty:

for we are all here; not only Paul and Silas, but the rest of the prisoners also; who either being so intent upon hearing the prayers and praises of the apostles, or so terrified with the earthquake, that they took no notice of their bands being loosed, and so never thought or attempted to make their escape; and as for Paul and Silas, all this happened to them, not for their deliverance in this way, as in the case of Peter, but to show the power of God, what he could do, and his presence with his servants.

Acts 16:29

Ver. 29. Then he called for a light,.... Or "lights"; he ordered his servants to bring in some candles; the Syriac version renders it, "he lighted a light for himself"; and the Ethiopic version, "he brought a light": whilst he was under the influence of Satan, and going about a work of darkness, namely, to destroy himself, he was in no concern for a light; but when he was delivered from the temptation and snare, he calls for light:

and sprang in; leaped in at once, in all haste, into the inner prison:

and came trembling; not as before, because of the prisoners and their escape; nor merely or so much on account of the earthquake, though the terror of that might not be as yet over; but chiefly through the horror of his conscience, and the dreadful sense he had of himself as a sinner, and of his lost state and condition by nature; the law had entered into his conscience, and had worked wrath there; the Spirit of God had convinced him of his sin and misery, and there was a fearful looking for of fiery indignation in him:

and fell down before Paul and Silas; not in a way of religious adoration, for they would never have admitted that; but in token of civil respect unto them, and of his great veneration for them, as was the manner of the eastern people; the Syriac version renders it, "he fell down at their feet", and so in Velesius's readings; at those feet, which he had before made fast in the stocks: a strange change and sudden alteration this! what is it that almighty power and efficacious grace cannot do?

Acts 16:30

Ver. 30. And brought them out,.... Of the inner prison, to some part of the prison that was more free and open:

and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? he treats them with great reverence now, and addresses them under a title and character of honour and respect; whom but a few hours ago he despised and abhorred, and perhaps knew no name bad enough for them; he now saw himself lost and perishing, and wanted their instructions, advice, and assistance; and as most persons under first awakenings are, so he was, upon the foot of works; thinking he must do something to procure his salvation, and desires to know what it was he must do, that he might set about it directly; and it may be he had heard what the damsel possessed with a spirit of divination had frequently said of Paul and Silas, that they were the servants of the most high God, and showed unto men the way of salvation, Ac 16:17 and therefore he desires that they would acquaint him with it: his language shows, he was in earnest, and expresses great eagerness, importunity, and haste.

Acts 16:31

Ver. 31. And they said, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,.... Not with a bare historical faith, as only to believe that he was the Son of God, and the Messiah, and that he was come in the flesh, and had suffered, and died, and rose again, and was now in heaven at the right hand of God, and would come again to judge both quick and dead, for there may be such a faith and no salvation; but so as to look unto him alone for life and salvation, to rely upon him, and trust in him; to commit himself, and the care of his immortal soul unto him, and to expect peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life from him; the answer is much the same our Lord returned to the Jews, when they asked, though not with the same affection and sincerity as this man, what they must do to work the works of God, **Joh 6:28**.

And thou shalt be saved; from sin, and all its miserable effects and consequences; from the curses of the law, from the power of Satan, from the evil of the world, from the wrath of God, hell and damnation: this is to be understood of a spiritual and eternal salvation; for it is said, after that the jailer was inquiring about it, being terrified in his conscience with a sense of sin and wrath; and between believing in Christ, and being saved with an everlasting salvation, there is a strict and inseparable connection, Mr 16:16 though not faith, but Christ is the cause and author of salvation; faith spies salvation in Christ, goes to him for it, receives it from him, and believes unto it:

and thy house; or family, provided they believe in Christ also, as they did, Ac 16:34 or otherwise there can be no salvation, for he that believeth not shall be damned.

Acts 16:32

Ver. 32. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord,.... That is, the Gospel; which comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, as the author of it; and is concerning him, as the subject matter of it, and is what was preached by himself when on earth; this is the word, which is called the word of salvation, the word of reconciliation and peace, the word of life, the word of righteousness, and the word of faith; because it publishes salvation by Christ, peace and reconciliation by his blood, life by his death, his righteousness for justification, and proposes him as the object of faith, and encourages souls to believe in him; and faith comes by it, and it contains things to be believed: and this word Paul and Silas spake to the jailer, and opened and explained it to him for his comfort, and for the encouragement of his faith in Christ:

and to all that were in his house; his whole family, who were all alarmed by the earthquake, and were got together into the prison; for it seems as if, after this, the jailer had them into his dwelling house, Ac 16:34. These appear to be adult persons, such as were capable of having the word of the Lord spoken to them, and of hearing it, so as to believe in it, and rejoice at it, for faith came to them by hearing.

Acts 16:33

Ver. 33. And he took them the same hour of the night,.... After they had done preaching to him, and to his family:

and washed their stripes; which were very many and heavy, and whereby they were covered with blood; and which by this time began to fester, and to produce corrupt matter; and all this in a pool, which Grotius supposes was within the bounds of the prison, he washed off from them: his faith worked by love, and showed itself in fruits of charity and righteousness, and in obedience to Christ, and submission to his ordinance, as follows:

and was baptized, he and all his, straightway; by immersion, that being the only way in which baptism was administered, or can be, so as to be called a baptism: and which might be administered, either in the pool, which Grotius supposes to have been in the prison; or in the river near the city, where the oratory was, Ac 16:13 and it is no unreasonable thought to suppose, that they might go out of the prison thither, and administer the ordinance, and return to the prison again before morning unobserved by any; and after that, enter into the jailer's house and be refreshed, as in the following verse; and as this instance does not at all help the cause of sprinkling, so neither the baptism of infants; for as the jailer's family were baptized as well as he, so they had the word of the Lord spoken to them as well as he, and believed as well as he, and rejoiced as he did; all which cannot be said of infants; and besides, it must be proved that he had infants in his house, and that these were taken out of their beds in the middle of the night, and baptized by Paul, ere the instance can be thought to be of any service to infant baptism.

Acts 16:34

Ver. 34. And when he had brought them into his house,.... After he and his family had been baptized, either in the pool in the prison, or in the river near the city of Philippi:

he set meat before them; he spread a table for them, with provisions to refresh them after all their fatigue; partly by stripes and imprisonment, partly by the exercises of prayer and praise, and also by the ministration of the word, and the administration of the ordinance of baptism to the jailer and his family:

and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house; he and his rejoiced at the good news, of peace and pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation, which the Gospel brought unto them; they rejoiced in Christ Jesus, in his person, offices, grace and righteousness; believing in him who is truly and properly God, they were filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; with a joy that always attends true faith, and which a stranger intermeddles not with; and they rejoiced that they were admitted to the ordinance of Christ, and were among his baptized followers; so the eunuch, after baptism, went on his way rejoicing, **Ac 8:39**.

Acts 16:35

Ver. 35. And when it was day,.... In one copy Beza says, these words are added,

"the magistrates came together in one place in the court, and remembering the earthquake that was made, they were afraid, and sent the sergeants;"

but they seem to be no other than a gloss, which crept into the text; however, it seems reasonable to suppose, that in the morning the magistrates met together, to consider what was further to be done with Paul and Silas; when upon cooler thoughts, they judged it best to be content with what punishment they had inflicted on them, and dismiss them; and if they had felt anything of the earthquake, or had heard of it in the prison, and of the converts that had been made there, they might be the more induced to let them go:

the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, let these men go; the Arabic version reads, "these two men"; that is, Paul and Silas: who these sergeants were, is not very certain; they seem to be so called in the Greek language, from their carrying rods, or little staves in their hands, and were a sort of apparitors; by these the magistrates sent orders, either by word of mouth, or in writing, to the jailer, to let Paul and Silas out of prison, and set them at liberty, to go where they would; the same power that shook the foundations of the prison, and loosed the bands of the prisoners, wrought upon the hearts of the magistrates, to let the apostles go free.

Acts 16:36

Ver. 36. And the keeper of the prison told this, saying to Paul,.... The Ethiopic version adds, "and to Silas"; this was the same person with the jailer, whom Paul had baptized; and indeed, the same word is here used, though a little differently rendered, who no doubt reported this message to Paul with great joy:

the magistrates have sent to let you go; they have sent an order to let you out of prison:

now therefore depart, and go in peace; which expresses the jailer's pleasure of mind, and joy of heart, in executing his orders; and his sincere and hearty wishes for peace and prosperity to go along with them wherever they went, who had been instrumental of so much good to him and his family.

Acts 16:37

Ver. 37. But Paul said unto them,.... The sergeants, who were present when the jailer reported to Paul the message they came with from the magistrates; though the Syriac version reads in the singular number, "Paul said to him", to the jailer:

they have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; what the magistrates ordered to be done to them, is reckoned all one as if they had done it themselves; and which was done "openly", before all the people, in the most public manner; to their great reproach, being put to open shame, as if they had been the most notorious malefactors living; when they were "uncondemned", had done nothing worthy of condemnation, being innocent and without fault, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render the word; nor was their cause heard, or they suffered to make any defence for themselves; and what was an aggravation of all this, that this was done in a Roman colony, and by Roman magistrates; and to persons that were Romans, at least one of them, Paul, who was of the city of Tarsus: for, according to the Porcian and Sempronian laws, a Roman citizen might neither be bound nor beaten {n}; but these magistrates, not content to beat Paul and Silas, without knowing the truth of their case, had cast them into prison as malefactors, and for further punishment:

and now do they thrust us out privily? nay, verily; or so it shall not be: this shows, that the apostle was acquainted with the Roman laws, as well as with the rites and customs of the Jews; and acted the wise and prudent, as well as the honest and harmless part; and this he did, not so much for the honour of the Roman name, as for the honour of the Christian name; for he considered, that should he and his companion go out of the prison in such a private manner, it might be taken for granted, that they had been guilty of some notorious offence, and had justly suffered the punishment of the law for it, which would have been a reproach to Christianity, and a scandal to the Gospel: wherefore the apostle refuses to go out in this manner, adding,

but let them come themselves, and fetch us out; that by so doing, they might own the illegality of their proceedings, and declare the innocence of the apostles.

{n} Cicero orat. 10. in Verrem, l. 5. p. 603. & orat. 18. pro Rabirio, p. 714.

Acts 16:38

Ver. 38. And the sergeants told these words unto the magistrates,.... They returned to them, and acquainted them with what the prisoners said:

and they feared when they heard that they were Romans; they were not concerned for the injury they had done them; nor for the injustice and cruelty they had been guilty of; nor did they fear the wrath of God, and a future judgment; but they were put into a panic, when they found the men they had so ill used were Romans; lest they should be called to an account by the Roman senate, and be found guilty, and have their places taken away from them, and their persons punished.

Acts 16:39

Ver. 39. And they came,.... To the prison in person, as Paul had insisted on they should:

and besought them; that they would put up the injury that had been done them, and quietly depart out of prison:

and brought them out; that is, out of prison; took them by the arms, and led them out, as they had put them in, which was what the apostle required:

and desired them to depart out of the city; lest there should be any further disturbance about them: in Beza's most ancient copy, and in another manuscript copy, this verse is read thus, and which more clearly explains the passage;

"and they came with many friends unto the prison, and desired them to go out, saying, we are not ignorant of your case, that you are righteous men; and bringing them out they besought them, saying, go out of this city, lest they (the people) should turn again upon you, crying against you;"

which looks as if they took along with them some persons, who were friends to the apostles as well as to them, to prevail upon them to depart quietly; and they excuse themselves by attributing what had passed to popular rage and fury, and pretend they consulted the safety of the apostles, by desiring them to go out of the city.

Acts 16:40

Ver. 40. And they went out of the prison,.... In a public manner, with great honour and reputation, at the request of the magistrates that put them there:

and entered into [the house] of Lydia; whom Paul had baptized, Ac 16:14. The word "house" is rightly supplied, for the sense is not, that they went into the country of Lydia, as some have been tempted to think; but they went to the woman Lydia, whose heart the Lord had opened, and was become a disciple and follower of Christ; they went to her house it being in the city of Philippi, where she now abode,

and when they had seen the brethren: the men of Lydia's house, her servants, who were converted, and had been baptized with her, and are therefore called brethren; and whomsoever else they might have been instrumental in the conversion of, who might meet them in Lydia's house: in Beza's above mentioned copy, it is here added, "they declared what the Lord had done for them"; they related the earthquake and the effects of it, and how they had been useful for the conversion of the jailer and his family, who had been baptized by them, and by what means they were released from prison; all which they ascribe to the Lord, who has all power, and the hearts of all in his hands: and thus,

they comforted them; with what God had done for them, or exhorted them: to cleave to the Lord, to continue in the faith, and abide by the truths and ordinances of the Gospel:

and departed; that is, out of the city of Philippi; this is wanting in the Syriac and Arabic versions here, but is placed in the beginning of the next chapter: and now these two families, Lydia's and the jailer's, laid the foundation of a Gospel church in this city of Philippi, and which continued for ages after; Erastus, of whom mention is made in Ac 19:22 is said to be bishop of this church, and it may be also Epaphroditus, for there were more bishops than one in this church in the apostle's time, **Php 1:1**, in the "second" century there was a church, to which Ignatius and Polycarp are said to send epistles; and there are epistles to the Philippians which go under their names, that are still extant: in the "third" century, Tertullian {o}, among other churches, makes mention of the church at Philippi, as sound in the faith; and in the "fourth" and "fifth" centuries we read of a church in this place; in the "seventh" century, when it went by the name of Chrysopolis, there was a church in it, and a bishop of it, who was present at the sixth council in Constantinople; there were Christians dwelling here in the "ninth" century {p}.

{o} De praescript. Heret. c. 36. {p} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 6. & cent. 5. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3, 5. cent. 9. c. 2. p. 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 17:1

Ver. 1. Now when they had passed through Amphipolls,.... A city of Macedonia, where it is placed by Pliny {q}; according to Ptolomy {r}, it was in that part of Macedonia, which is called Edonis, and was near Philippi, and lay in the way from thence to Thessalonica; Harpocratian {s} says, it was a city of Thrace, formerly called "the Nine Ways"; it was upon the borders of Thrace, and had its name Amphipolis from the river Strymon running on both sides of it, making it a peninsula; it was also called Crademna, and Anadraemum; it is now in the hands of the Turks, and by them called Empoli; this city was originally built by Cimon the Athenian, into which he sent ten thousand Athenians for a colony, as the writer of his life reports {t}. The apostle only passed through this place; it does not appear that he at all preached in it, or at any other time, nor do we read of it in ecclesiastical history, nor of the following place:

and Apollonia; this is also placed by Pliny {u} in Macedonia, and is said by him to have been formerly a colony of the Corinthians, and about seven miles from the sea; and by Ptolomy {w}, in that part of Macedonia called Mygdonia, and with him its name is Apollonia of Mygdonia; it was situated by the river Echedorus, and was famous for Augustus Caesar's learning Greek here, and is now called Ceres: there was another of this name in the region of Pentapolis, and was one of the five {x} cities in it; and another in Palestine mentioned by Pliny {y}, along with Caesarea; and by Josephus {z}, with Joppa, Jamnia, Azotus, &c. but this was near Thessalonica; it is said to be about twenty miles from it: here also the apostle did not stay to preach the Gospel, nor is there any mention made of it elsewhere in the Acts of the Apostles, and yet Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, is said to be bishop of Apollonia; See Gill on "Lu 10:1", but whether the same place with this, or whether fact, is not certain;

they came to Thessalonica; a free city of Macedonia {a}; it was formerly called Halis {b}, and sometimes Therme; it had its name of Thessalonica from the victory which Philip king of Macedon obtained over the Thessalians; and not from his daughter Thessalonica, the wife of Cassander, who also had her name from the same victory: in this place a sedition being raised, and some magistrates killed, Theodosius the Roman emperor suffered seven thousand men to be slain; and when he came to Milain, Ambrose bishop of that place having heard of it, would not suffer him to enter into the church and receive the Lord's supper, until he repented of his sin, and made public confession of it {c}. Thessalonica has been since the head of a new kingdom erected by Boniface marquis of Montferrat; it was for some time in the hands of the Venetians, but was taken from them by Amurath emperor of the Turks {d}. The Italians call it now Saloniki; it has been since inhabited by Christians, Turks, and Jews, and chiefly by the latter, their number, according to their own account, is fourteen thousand, and their synagogues fourscore. There always were many Jews in this place, and so there were when the apostle was here, for it follows;

where was a synagogue of the Jews; it seems as if there was none, neither in Philippi, nor in Amphipolis, nor in Apollonia: why these two last places should be passed through by the apostle, without making any stay at them, cannot be said; it is very likely he had, as in some other instances before, some particular directions from the Spirit of God, there being none of the chosen vessels of salvation to be called there, at least, at this time, when there were many at Thessalonica.

{q} Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 10. {r} Geograph. l. 3. c. 13. {s} Lexic. Decem. Orat. p. 20, 104. Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 8. {t} Cornelius Nepos in Vita Cimon. c. 2. {u} Nat. Hist. l. 3. c. 23. {w} Geograph. l. 8. c. 13. Vid. Plin. l. 4. c. 10. {x}

Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 5. {y} Ib. c. 13. {z} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 15. sect. 4. & de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 8, sect. 3. {a} Plin. l. 4. c. 10. {b} Ptolom. l. 3. c. 13. {c} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 82. {d} Petav. Rationar. Temp. par. 1. p. 462, 475.

Acts 17:2

Ver. 2. And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them,.... To the Jews in their synagogue; for though the Jews had put away the Gospel from them, and the apostle had turned to the Gentiles; yet he still retained a great affection for his countrymen the Jews, and as often as he had opportunity, attended their synagogues, in order to preach the Gospel to them;

and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures: that is, out of the Old Testament, concerning the Messiah, the characters of him, the work that he was to do, and how he was to suffer and die for the sins of men; and this he did three weeks running, going to their synagogue every sabbath day, when and where the Jews met for worship; and made use of books, which they allowed of, and of arguments they could not disprove.

Acts 17:3

Ver. 3. Opening,.... That is, the Scriptures of the Old Testament, explaining and expounding them, giving the true sense of them; so this word is frequently used in Jewish writings {e}, as that such a Rabbi xtp, "opened", such a Scripture:

and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; he set this matter in a clear light, and made it plain and manifest, from the writings of the Old Testament, that there was a necessity of the Messiah's suffering and rising from the dead; or otherwise these Scriptures would not have been fulfilled, which have said that so it must be; for these things were not only necessary on account of God's decrees, and the covenant transactions the Son of God entered into, and on the account of the salvation of his people; but because of the types, promises, and prophecies of the Old Testament: the Scriptures which the apostle opened and set before them, and reasoned upon, showing the necessity of these things, very likely were such as these, **Ge 3:15** Isa 53:1 with many others:

and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ; he showed that all the things which were spoken of Christ, or the Messiah, in those Scriptures, were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, who was the subject matter, the sum and substance of his ministry; and therefore he must be the Messiah, and the only Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners.

{e} Zohar passim.

Acts 17:4

Ver. 4. And some of them believed,.... That is, some of the Jews, power went along with the word, and faith came by it, and they believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah, and that what the apostle preached concerning him was the truth; and this they received in the love of it, and cordially embraced it, and made a profession of it:

and consorted with Paul and Silas; associated with them, and privately conversed with them, as well as publicly attended their ministry; for when souls are converted, they love to be in company with believers, and especially with the ministers of the Gospel, to hear their discourses, and learn from them the doctrines of grace:

and of the devout Greeks a great multitude; these were Gentiles who were proselytes to the Jewish religion; and these in greater numbers believed, and joined themselves to the apostles, and became followers of them, than there were of the Jews, who were the most averse to the Gospel, and were more hardened, and incredulous:

and of the chief women not a few; some of the wives of the principal men of the city were become proselytes to the Jews, and these attending synagogue worship, and hearing the discourses of Paul from time to time, were convinced and converted, and professed faith in Christ Jesus; and these converts laid the foundation of a Gospel church in Thessalonica, of which church Silvanus is said to be the first bishop; See Gill on "Lu 10:1". In the "second" century there were martyrs for Christ here; and to the inhabitants of this place, Antonintus Pius the emperor wrote in behalf of the Christians there, to give them no disturbance {f}: in the "third" century there was a church here; Tertullian {g} makes mention of it: in the "fourth" century {h} Theodosius the emperor was baptized at Thessalonica, by Acholius bishop of that place; who first asked him what faith he professed, to which he replied, that he embraced and professed that faith which the churches in Illyricum, who were not yet infected with the Arian heresy, namely the same which was of old delivered by the apostles, and afterwards confirmed at the synod at Nice; in this century Ireminus, Paulinus, and Alexander, were bishops of Thessalonica: in the "fifth" century it was a metropolitan of Macedonia, and Anysius was bishop of it, and so were Rufus and Anastasius: and that there was a church here in the "sixth" century is manifest from hence, that their bishops, for fear of the emperor Anastasius, agreed with Timothy bishop of Constantinople, whom the council at Chalcedon had anathematized; and in this age Pope Gregory, among others, wrote to Eusebius bishop of Thessalonica, that he would not receive any of a military habit into monasteries within three years: in the "seventh" century a bishop of this place assisted at the sixth council at Constantinople; and in the same age it was the seat of an archbishop: in the "eighth" century there was one Thomas bishop of this place, and also Theophilus, who was present at the Nicene synod; in the ninth century a bishop of Thessalonica was beaten with two hundred stripes, for being against image worship.

{f} Euseb. Eccles. Hist. l. 4. c. 26. {g} De Praescript. Heret. c. 36. {h} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccl. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 82. & c. 10. p. 659. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 6. c. 7. p. 418. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 7. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 5. c. 7. p. 115. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 7. cent. 9. c. 3. p. 15.

Acts 17:5

Ver. 5. But the Jews which believed not,.... The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions leave out the words, "which believed not"; but whether this character is expressed or not, it is certain that the unbelieving Jews are here intended:

moved with envy; at the success of the apostles, many of their own people and of their proselytes, and some of the better sort being converted by them: or "with zeal"; for what they called the glory of God, but it was not according to knowledge; it was a blind and ignorant zeal, a zeal for the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, and for the traditions of the elders:

took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort; or of the market folks, who sat and sold things in the market, and were generally of the meaner and vulgar sort, as the word may signify; or who stood idle in the market place, squandering away their time in an idle manner, not caring to work, and so were fit persons, and who could easily be gathered together, for such service as the unbelieving Jews employed them in; or they were a sort of officers and servants, that attended courts of judicature, and cited persons thither, and assisted in the business done there, and who were commonly men of profligate and abandoned lives:

and gathered a company, and set all the city in an uproar; they raised a mob, and made a clamour, which brought people out of their houses to inquire what was the matter, and so gave great disturbance and uneasiness to the inhabitants:

and assaulted the house of Jason: who by what follows appears to have been a disciple of Christ, a believer in him, and the host of the apostle and his companions, who being an inhabitant of Thessalonica, at least having a dwelling house there, received them into it. This Jason is said to be one of the seventy disciples, and afterwards bishop of Tarsus, but this is not certain; nor whether he was a Jew or a Greek, very probably the former: we read of Jason the brother of Onias the high priest, a Jew,

"But after the death of Seleucus, when Antiochus, called Epiphanes, took the kingdom, Jason the brother of Onias laboured underhand to be high priest," (2 Maccabees 4:7)

whose name was Jesus, the same with Joshua, but as Josephus {i} says, he called himself Jason; and so this man's Hebrew name might be Jesus or Joshua, and his Greek name Jason; and very likely he was a believer in Christ before the apostle came to Thessalonica, and it may be is the same who is spoken of in Ro 16:21.
See Gill on "Ro 16:21". Some of the ancients {k} make mention of a disputation between Jason, a Christian Hebrew, and Papiscus, an Alexandrian Jew, but there is no reason to believe that he is the Jason here spoken of:

and sought to bring them out to the people; they expected to have found Paul and Silas in Jason's house, where they lodged, and their intention was to have dragged them out and exposed them to popular fury, to be beaten or stoned by the people; and so the Arabic version reads, "requiring those two apostles, that they might set them before the people"; or put them into the hands of the mob, which they had gathered, to do as they would with them.

{i} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 5. sect. 1. {k} Origen. contr. celsum, 1. 4. p. 199. Cyprian. opera, p. 562. & Hieron. Quaest. in Gen. fol. 65. E. Tom. III.

Acts 17:6

Ver. 6. And when they found them not,.... In Jason's house, as they expected:

they drew Jason, and certain brethren: the Syriac version adds, "who were there": in Jason's house, who either came along with the apostle, and lodged with him there; or they were some of the inhabitants of Thessalonica, who were lately converted, and were come thither in order to have some Christian conversation; these with Jason the rabble seized on, and in a rude and violent manner dragged them out of the house, and had them,

unto the rulers of the city: the civil magistrates, the judges in courts of judicature, to which some of these belonged;

crying in a very noisy and clamorous way;

these that have turned the world upside down: the Syriac version reads, "the whole earth": the apostles, according to the cry of these men, had thrown the whole world into disorder, and had made disturbances in kingdoms and cities, wherever they came; and had made innovations in religion, and turned men from their old way of worship to another; these; say they,

are come hither also; to make the like disorders and disturbances, as elsewhere.

Acts 17:7

Ver. 7. Whom Jason hath received,.... Into his house in a private manner, and has entertained, contrary to law, which forbids men to receive and entertain persons of seditious principles, and practices, for this is mentioned as a charge against Jason:

and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar; both the apostle and those with him, and Jason, and the brethren, whom they now had set before the magistrates, who were all of the same sentiments and practices; and which were opposite to the decrees of the Roman emperor, and the Roman senate, who suffered none to be called a king but whom they pleased; whereas these men taught, saying,

that there is another king, one Jesus; but then though they said he was a king, yet not a temporal one, but one whose kingdom was spiritual, and not of this world; and therefore asserted nothing contrary to the decrees of Caesar, or what was in the least prejudicial to his worldly interest and glory.

Acts 17:8

Ver. 8. And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city,.... Fearing some revolution would be made, and some new king, or rather tyrant, would start up, and usurp a power over them; or that they should come under some suspicion or charge with the Roman government, and should be called to an account, for admitting such men and tenets among them; with such fears were they possessed,

when they heard these things; alleged against the apostle and his company.

Acts 17:9

Ver. 9. And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other,.... That is, received satisfaction from them, by the defence which they made for themselves, and the apostles, by the account that they gave of them and of their doctrines; whereby it plainly appeared to the full satisfaction of the magistrates, that their principles had no tendency to move sedition, or to alter the form of their government, or to do anything detrimental to Caesar, as was suggested: the Syriac, and Arabic versions render it, "took sureties"; of them for their good behaviour, and that they would be forthcoming, whenever called for:

they let them go; about their business, to their own houses, and company, and did not inflict any punishment upon them, or commit them to prison.

Acts 17:10

Ver. 10. And the brethren,.... The believers in Thessalonica, the young converts there, who were full of love and affection to their spiritual fathers:

immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea; another city in Macedonia: and so it is placed by Pliny {l} in the north part of it; and, according to Ptolomy {m} it was, in that part of Macedonia called Emathia, and was not far from Pella, the native place of Alexander the great. It is now called Veria; some say it was called Berea from Beraea, daughter of Beres, son of Macedo, by whom it is said to have been built; others from Pheron; and some think it has some agreement with the Syriac word Barja and Baraitha; since what is called Berytus, is Beroe with others: there was besides this another Beraea, a city of Syria, which Josephus {n} speaks of; and is mentioned by Pliny {o} along with Hierapolis and Chalcis, and very likely is the same that is spoken of in:

"But the King of kings moved Antiochus' mind against this wicked wretch, and Lysias informed the king that this man was the cause of all mischief, so that the king commanded to bring him unto Berea, and to put him to death, as the manner is in that place." (2 Maccabees 13:4)

Hither the brethren sent Paul and Silas, when it was night and dark, and they could pass unobserved, in order to preserve them from the fury of the mob.

Who coming thither; to Berea; that is, Paul and Silas:

went into the synagogue of the Jews; which was in that city; not being at all daunted or discouraged with what they had met with at Thessalonica.

{l} Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 10. {m} Geograph. l. 3. c. 13. {n} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 8. sect. 7. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 23, 26.

Acts 17:11

Ver. 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica,.... That is, the Jews at Berea were more noble than the Jews in Thessalonica, as the Syriac version expresses it; for the comparison is not between the native inhabitants of Berea and Thessalonica, but between the Jews that dwelt in these places: and the one being "more noble" than the other, does not refer to their birth, lineage, and descent, as in **1Co 1:26** few such were called; and besides, both sorts were Jews, and of the same descent; and as for the proselytes in both places, there were some of the chief and honourable women converted in each: but to their minds, dispositions, and manners; the one were more candid, and ingenuous, and open to conviction and susceptive of the word, than the other; and used the apostles with better manners, with more mildness and gentleness, willing to hear what they had to say, without contradicting and blaspheming, and to examine with patience and candour what they delivered. Not that there is in any man, nor was there in those men naturally a disposition to attend to, and regard the Gospel of Christ; for there is a natural enmity in the minds of men to it, and with them it is folly and nonsense; nor are there any previous dispositions in the minds of men qualifying them for the grace of God; nor is anything of this kind a reason why some, and not others, are called by grace, for all are children of wrath, and none better than others; but this more noble disposition of mind and conduct was owing to the grace of God bestowed upon them; and which showed itself in the following instance:

in that they received the word with all readiness; or "who received", &c. which is a character, not of the Thessalonian Jews, as some think; though it is true of them that they received the word with joy of the Holy Ghost, and not as the word of man, but as the word of God, it coming to them not in word only, but in power, **1Th 1:5** but of the Beran Jews, who exceeded them, who showed at once a readiness and eager desire to attend the Gospel, and embrace it. This is to be understood not of the essential word Christ; though as it is true of him, that he is the word, and he is said to be received, and that readily and willingly, so these Bereans did receive him by faith, they believed in him, and made a profession of him; nor of the written word, for that is designed by the Scriptures, which they searched daily, and by which they examined, tried, and judged of the word they received; but of the word spoken by the apostle, the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation: this they received into their understandings, not merely notionally, so as to give their assent to it; but spiritually and experimentally, so as to feel the power, and enjoy the comfort of it, their understandings being opened by the Spirit of God for this purpose; otherwise the Gospel is unknown unto, and rejected by the natural man: they received the love of the truth, or the word of truth into their affections, not with a mere carnal flashy affection, arising from a principle of self-love; but with a spiritual affection of the Holy Ghost, with real solid gladness, it bringing the good news of salvation by Christ to them who saw themselves miserable, and undone: they received it into their hearts, so that it had a place there, and worked effectually in them: they believed it, not with a mere historical faith, but from the heart obeyed this form of doctrine delivered to them; and this they did with all readiness, as an hungry man receives his food, and greedily feeds upon it, or as a man ready to perish receives and lays hold on anything that offers for his safety.

And searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so: they did not dispute with, and cavil at the apostle, as the Thessalonian Jews first did, Ac 17:2 nor did they receive the word, right or wrong, or with an implicit faith; but they immediately betook themselves to reading and searching the writings of the Old Testament, to see whether the things which the apostle preached, concerning the Messiah, his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead, were agreeable to them, or no; determining, if they were not, to reject them, but if they were, to embrace them, as they did; see **Joh 5:39** and this they did continually day after day. They were neither backward to hear and receive the word, nor slothful to examine it.

Acts 17:12

Ver. 12. Therefore many of them believed,.... What the apostle preached, and in Jesus of Nazareth, as the true Messiah, and professed their faith in him, upon finding, through reading and searching the Scriptures, that the characters of the Messiah agreed in him, and that what the apostle delivered were entirely consonant to those writings:

also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few; besides the Jews, there were Gentiles also, both men and women; who were proselytes to the Jewish religion, and who were persons of figure and credit, especially the women, who were also converted and believed in Christ. These converts were the beginning of a Gospel church state in this place, which continued many ages after. Timon, one of the first seven deacons of the church at Jerusalem, is said to be bishop of Berea; though, according to others, Onesimus, the servant of Philemon, was the first bishop of this church: even in the fifth century mention is made of Lucas, bishop of Berea, who was present in the synods of Chalcedon and Ephesus; yea, in the ninth century, there were Christians dwelling in this place {p}.

{p} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 5. c. 10. p. 666. cent. 9. c. 2. p. 4.

Acts 17:13

Ver. 13. But when the Jews of Thessalonica,.... The unbelieving Jews there,

had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea; which they came at, either by persons that came from thence to Thessalonica, or by letters sent them:

they came thither also; as the Jews from Antioch and Iconium came to Lystra on a like account, Ac 14:19

and stirred up the people; the common people, the natives of the place, against the apostles; suggesting that they were wicked men, and enemies to all laws, human or divine, civil or religious.

Acts 17:14

Ver. 14. And then immediately the brethren,.... That were at Berea, the new converts there:

sent away Paul, whom they knew the Jews mostly sought after, and were offended with:

to go as it were to the sea; the Aegean sea, or Archipelago, near to which Berea was: this seems to have been done, in order to make the people conclude that he intended to take shipping, and go into some other parts of the world, when the design was to go to Athens by foot, and so be safe from any lying in wait of his persecutors: the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and the Oriental versions read, "to go to the sea"; to the sea side, whither it seems he did go; and yet it looks as if he did not go by sea, but by land, to Athens:

but Silas and Timotheus abode there still; at Berea, to confirm and strengthen the young converts there made.

Acts 17:15

Ver. 15. And they that conducted Paul,.... From Berea to the sea side:

brought him unto Athens; a famous city in Attica, where both {q} Pliny and Ptolomy {r} place it, well known for the learning and wisdom of the ancient philosophers, who had their schools and universities in it; the former of these calls it a free city, and says, it needed no description nor commendation, its fame was so diffused everywhere. The account Jerom {s} gives of it is,

"Athens, a city in Achaia, dedicated to the studies of philosophy, which though but one, is always used to be called in the plural number; its haven, called the Piraeum, is described as fortified with seven walls."

The city itself stood about two miles from the sea; it had its name either from the Greek word hyonoh, which signifies the mind of God, as boasting of its divine knowledge; or rather from the word Nyta, "Athen", which may be interpreted "strangers", it being originally inhabited by the Pelasgi, who were a set of people that moved from place to place {t}; or because of the great multitude of strangers which flocked from all parts hither for learning, of whom mention is made in Ac 17:21. The inhabitants of it have been called by different names; when under the Pelasgi, as Herodotus {u} observes, they were called Cranai; when under King Cecrops, they went by the name of Cecropidae; when Erechtheus had the government, they changed their name into Athenians; from Ion, the son of Xythus, their general, they were called Ionians. This city has gone through different fates: it was burnt by Xerxes, about 480 years before Christ; some years after that it was taken by Lysander; and after that restored to its ancient liberty by Demetrius; after this the Romans were possessed of it; and now it is in the hands of the Turks, and goes by the name of Setines. In Beza's ancient copy it follows, "but he passed through Thessalia, for he was forbidden to preach the word to them"; for as he came from Berea to Athens, he must come through Thessalia; but he made no stay here, but passed through, being forbid to preach the Gospel here, as he had been before to preach it in Asia and Bithynia, Ac 16:6 nor have we any account anywhere else of the Gospel being preached in Thessaly; and in the second century, we read of Heathenism prevailing there, and of many gross acts of idolatry, particularly at Pella in Thessaly, a man was sacrificed to the gods: though in the beginning of the fourth century there were bishops out of Thessalia at the synod of Nice; and so there were at the synod at Sardica, about the middle of the same century: in the sixth century, Dion, bishop of Thebes in Thessalia, was in the first synod at Ephesus; and Constantinus, bishop of Demetrias, and Vigilantius of Larissa, both cities in Thessalia, were in another at the same place {w}.

And receiving a commandment; or "a letter from him" as one copy and the Syriac version read; that is, the brethren from Paul:

unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed; to Athens, where he now was: they departed; from Paul at Athens, and came back to Berea.

{q} Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 7. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 3. c. 15. {s} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 95. K. {t} Vid. Hiller. Onomasticum Sacrum, p. 678, 755. {u} Urania, c. 44. {w} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 2. c. 15. p. 193. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 5. & c. 9. p. 425. cent. 6. c. 10. p. 666.

Acts 17:16

Ver. 16. Now while Paul waited for them at Athens..... That is, for Silas and Timotheus:

his spirit was stirred in him; not only his soul was troubled and his heart was grieved, but he was exasperated and provoked to the last degree: he was in a paroxysm; his heart was hot within him; he had a burning fire in his bones, and was weary with forbearing, and could not stay; his zeal wanted vent, and he gave it:

when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry; or "full of idols", as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it. So Cicero says {x} that Athens was full of temples; and Xenophon {y} observes that they had double the feasts of other people; and Pausanias {z} affirms, that the Athenians far exceeded others in the worship of the gods, and care about religion; and he relates, that they had an altar for Mercy, another for Shame, another for Fame, and another for Desire, and expressed more religion to the gods than others did: they had an altar dedicated to twelve gods {a}; and because they would be sure of all, they erected one to an unknown god; in short, they had so many of them, that one {b} jestingly said to them, our country is so full of deities, that one may more easily find a god than a man: so that with all their learning and wisdom they knew not God, **1Co 1:21**.

{x} De responsis Aruspicum. {y} De Athen. Polit. {z} Attica, p. 29, 42. {a} Thucydides Bell. Peloponness. l. 6. {b} Petronius.

Acts 17:17

Ver. 17. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews,.... There being a synagogue of the Jews here, and there being many Jews settled in this place, hence we read in Jewish writings {c} of men going from Jerusalem to Athens, and from Athens to Jerusalem; and hence it may be accounted for, how many of the Athenian philosophers came to be acquainted with the books and sentiments of the Jews, from whom they borrowed may things; since there were so many that dwelt among them, and doubtless had for years past, as well as by their travels into Egypt: and a Jewish synagogue being here, the apostle went into it, according to his usual manner, and began with them, as he was wont to do, preaching the Gospel to the Jews first, and then unto the Gentiles: with them he disputed, not about idolatry, or the worship of many gods, to which they were not addicted; nor about the one true and living God, whom they knew and professed; but about the Son of God, about the Messiah, contending and proving that Jesus of Nazareth was he:

and with the devout persons; that is, with the Gentiles, who were proselytes to the Jewish religion, and worshipped the God of Israel with the Jews, in their synagogues, but knew nothing of Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation by him:

and in the market daily with them that met him; where there was a concourse of people; and where, after the apostle had been once or twice, the people came purposely to meet with him, and to hear his discourses, and reason with him about points in religion: the Syriac version renders it, "in the street"; and then the sense seems to be, that as he met persons in the street, day by day, as he walked along, he would stop and talk with them, about religious things, and about their idolatry, vanity, and superstition.

{c} Echa Rabbati, fol. 43. 3, 4. & 44. 1.

Acts 17:18

Ver. 18. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans,.... These were so called from Epicurus, the son of Neocles, who was born 342 years before Christ, and taught philosophy at Athens, in his garden; the principal tenets of which were, that the world was not made by any deity, or with any design, but came into its being and form, through a fortuitous concourse of atoms, of various sizes and magnitude, which met, and jumbled, and cemented together, and so formed the world; and that the world is not governed by the providence of God; for though he did not deny the being of God, yet he thought it below his notice, and beneath his majesty to concern himself with its affairs; and also, that the chief happiness of men lies in pleasure. His followers were called "Epicureans"; of which there have been two sorts; the one were called the strict or rigid "Epicureans", who placed all happiness in the pleasure of the mind, arising from the practice of moral virtue, and which is thought by some to be the true principle of "Epicureans"; the other were called the loose, or the remiss Epicureans, who understood their master in the gross sense, and placed all their happiness in the pleasure of the body, in brutal and sensual pleasure, in living a voluptuous life, in eating and drinking, &c. and this is the common notion imbibed of an Epicurean.

And of the Stoics: the author of this sect was Zeno, whose followers were so called from the Greek word "Stoa", which signifies a portico, or piazza, under which Zeno used to walk, and teach his philosophy, and where great numbers of disciples attended him, who from hence were called "Stoics": their chief tenets were, that there is but one God, and that the world was made by him, and is governed by fate; that happiness lies in virtue, and virtue has its own reward in itself; that all virtues are linked together, and all vices are equal; that a wise and good man is destitute of all passion, and uneasiness of mind, is always the same, and always joyful, and ever happy in the greatest torture, pain being no real evil; that the soul lives after the body, and that the world will be destroyed by fire. Now the philosophers of these two sects

encountered him; the Apostle Paul; they attacked him, and disputed with him upon some points, which were contrary to their philosophy:

and some said, what will this babbler say? this talking, prating fellow? though the word here used does not signify, as some have thought, a sower of words; as if they meant, that the apostle was a dealer is many words, a verbose man, and full of words, but not matter; but it properly signifies a gatherer of seeds; and the allusion is either to a set of idle people, that used to go to markets and fairs, and pick up seeds of corn, that were shook out of sacks, upon which they lived; and so the word came to be used for an idle good for nothing fellow, and for one that picked up tales and fables, and carried them about for a livelihood. So Demosthenes, in a way of reproach, called Aeschincs by this name; and such an one was the apostle reckoned: or the metaphor is taken from little birds, as the sparrow, &c. that pick up seeds, and live upon them, and are of no value and use. Harpocratian says {d}, there is a certain little bird, of the jay or jackdaw kind, which is called "Spermologos" (the word here used), from its picking up of seeds, of which Aristophanes makes mention; and that from this a base and contemptible man, and one that lives by others, is called by this name: from whence we may learn in what a contemptuous manner the apostle was used in this polite city, by these men of learning.

Other some, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods; other than those worshipped in the city of Athens: this was the charge which Melitus brought against Socrates;

"Socrates (says he {e}) has acted an unrighteous part; the gods, whom the city reckons such, he does not, introducing other and new gods."

Aelianus {f} represents him as censured by Aristophanes, as one that introduced xenav daimonav, "strange gods", though he neither knew them, nor honoured them. The reason why they thought the apostle was for bringing in other gods, than which nothing was more foreign from him, was,

because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection: the Syriac version reads, "and his resurrection"; that is, the resurrection of Christ; the Arabic version renders it, "the resurrection from the dead"; the general resurrection; both doubtless were preached by him, see Ac 17:32 Jesus they took for one strange and new God, they had never heard of before, and "Anastasis", or "the resurrection", for another; which need not be wondered at, when they had altars erected for Mercy, Fame, Shame, and Desire, See Gill on "Ac 17:16".

{d} Lexicon, p. 271, 272. {e} Laertius in Vita Socratis. {f} Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 13.

Acts 17:19

Ver. 19. And they took him,.... Not that they laid hands on him, and carried him away by violence, as a derider of their gods, and an introducer of new ones, in order to punish him; but they invited him to go with them, and they took him along with them in a friendly manner, and had him to a more convenient place for preaching and disputation, and where were many learned men to hear and judge of his doctrine; and this appears from their desire to hear what his doctrine was, and from his quiet departure, after he had ended his discourse:

and brought him unto Areopagus. The Arabic version seems to understand this of a person, rendering it, "and brought him to the most skilful, and the judge of the doctors"; to be heard and examined before him, about the doctrine he preached, who was most capable of judging concerning it; and this might be Dionysius, who is called the Areopagite, and was converted by the apostle, Ac 17:34. The Ethiopic version renders it, "they brought him to the house of their god"; to one of their idols' temple, the temple of Mars, which is not much amiss; for we are told {g}, that Areopagus was a street in Athens, in which was the temple of Mars, from whence it had its name; but the Syriac version renders it best of all, "they brought him to the house of judgment, or "court of judicature", which is called Areopagus"; and so it is called "Martium judicium", or Mars's "court of judicature", by Apuleius {h}, and "Martis curia", or the "court of Mars", by Juvenal {i}, for it was a court where causes were tried, and the most ancient one with the Athenians, being instituted by

Cerops, their first king; and is thought to be near as ancient, if not fully as ancient, yea, as more ancient than the sanhedrim, or the court of seventy elders, appointed by Moses among the Jews. It was called Areopagus, because Ares, or Mars, was the first that was judged there {k}. The case was this, Alcippe, the daughter of Mars, being ravished by Habirrhothius, the son of Neptune, and caught by Mars in the very fact, was killed by him; upon which Neptune arraigned Mars for the murder, and tried him in this place, by a jury of twelve deities, by whom he was acquitted {l}. Hither Paul was brought, not to be tried in a legal manner; for it does not appear that any charge was exhibited against him, or any legal process carried on, only an inquiry was made about his doctrine, and that only to gratify their curiosity:

saying, may we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? for they had never heard of Jesus, nor of salvation by him, nor of the resurrection of the dead; these were all new things to them, and therefore they were the more curious to ask after them, new things being what they were fond of: wherefore they call his doctrine new, not so much by way of reproach, as suggesting it to be a reason why they inquired after it, and why they desired him to give them some account of it; and that it should be a new doctrine with them, or if they reproached it with the charge of novelty, it need not be wondered at in them, when the Jews charged and reproached the doctrine of Christ in like manner, **Mr 1:27**.

{g} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 5. {h} Milesiarum 10. {i} Satyr. 5. {k} Pausaniae Attica, p. 52. {l} Apellodorus de deorum origine, l. 3, p. 193.

Acts 17:20

Ver. 20. For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears,.... Strange doctrines and strange deities, such as they had never heard of before:

we would know therefore what these things mean; they desire he would explain these things to them, and let them know the rise, and ground, and nature, and end, and design of them.

Acts 17:21

Ver. 21. For all the Athenians,.... The natives of Athens, who were born and lived there, and were inhabitants of the city, and free of it:

and strangers which were there; who came there from several parts of the world, to get wisdom and knowledge, to learn the several arts and sciences, and to attend the several sects of philosophers they made choice of:

spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing; that is, they did so for the most part; and this was the complexion and taste of the generality of them; and with this agrees what Demosthenes himself says of them {m},

"we, says he (for the truth shall be said), sit here,
ouden poiountev, "doing nothing"----inquiring in the court,
ei ti legetai newteron, "whether any new thing is said.""

The character of such persons is given, and they are described in a very lively manner by Theophrastus {n}. The Jewish doctors, at this time, were much of the same cast in their divinity schools; the usual question asked, when they met one another, was, vwdx hm, "what new thing" have you in the divinity school today {o}?

{m} Respons. ad Philippi Epistolam. {n} Ethic. character. p. 13. {o} T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 75. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 212. 4.

Acts 17:22

Ver. 22. Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill,.... Or of Areopagus, as it is better rendered in Ac 17:19 for it is the same place, and it is the same word that is here used: Paul stood in the midst of that court of judicature, amidst the Areopagites, the judges of that court, and the wise and learned philosophers of the different sects that were assembled together:

and said, ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious; or "more religious", than any other persons, in other places, which has been observed before on Ac 17:16 they had more gods, and more altars, and more festivals, and were more diligent and studious in the worship of the gods, than others. And this manner of addressing them, both as citizens of Athens, and as very religious persons, and who, as such, greatly exceeded all others, must greatly tend to engage their attention to him.

Acts 17:23

Ver. 23. For as I passed by,.... Or "through"; that is, through the city of Athens:

and beheld your devotions; not so much their acts of worship and religion, as the gods which they worshipped; in which sense this word is used in **2Th 2:4** and the altars which were erected to them, and the temples in which they were worshipped; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "the houses", and "places of your worship"; and the Ethiopic version, "your images", or "deities",

I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Pausanias {p} speaks in the plural number of altars of gods, that were named unknown, at Athens; and so says Apollonius Tyanaeus to Timasion {q} it is wisest to speak well of all the gods, especially at Athens, where there are altars to unknown gods: it may be, there were altars that had the inscription in the plural number; and there was one which Paul took particular notice of, in the singular number; or the above writers may speak of altars to unknown gods, because there might be many altars with this inscription: the whole of the inscription, according to Theophylact, was this;

"to the gods of Asia, Europe, and Lybia (or Africa), to the unknown and strange god;"

though Jerom {r} makes this to be in the plural number: certain it is, that Lucian {s} swears by the unknown god that was at Athens, and says, we finding the unknown god at Athens, and worshipping with hands stretched out towards heaven, gave thanks unto him: the reason why they erected an altar with such an inscription might be, for fear when they took in the gods of other nations, there might be some one which they knew not; wherefore, to omit none, they erect an altar to him; and which proves what the apostle says, that they were more religious and superstitious than others: or it may be they might have a regard to the God of the Jews, whose name Jehovah with them was not to be pronounced, and who, by the Gentiles, was called "Deus incertus" {t}; and here, in the Syriac version, it is rendered, "the hidden God", as the God of Israel is called, Isa 45:15 and that he is here designed seems manifest from what follows,

whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you; which could not be said by him of any other deity. God is an unknown God to those who have only the light of nature to guide them; for though it may be known by it that there is a God, and that there is but one, and somewhat of him may be discerned thereby; yet the nature of his essence, and the perfections of his nature, and the unity of his being, are very little, and not truly and commonly understood, and the persons in the Godhead not at all, and still less God in Christ, whom to know is life eternal: hence the Gentiles are described as such who know not God; wherefore, if he is worshipped by them at all, it must be ignorantly: and that they are ignorant worshippers of him, appears by worshipping others more than him, and besides him, or him in others, and these idols of gold, silver, brass, wood, and stone; and by their indecencies and inhumanity used in the performance of their worship: wherefore a revelation became necessary, by which men might be acquainted with the nature of the divine Being, and the true manner of worshipping him; in which a declaration is made of the nature and perfections of God, and of the persons in the Godhead, the object of worship; of the counsels, purposes, and decrees of God; of his covenant transactions with his Son respecting the salvation of his chosen people; of his love, grace, and mercy, displayed in the mission and gift of Christ to be the Saviour and Redeemer of them; of the glory of his attributes in their salvation; and of his whole mind and will, both with respect to doctrine and practice; and which every faithful minister of the Gospel, as the Apostle Paul, shuns not, according to his ability, truly and fully to declare.

{p} Attica, p. 2. {q} Philostrat. Vita Apollonii, l. 6. c. 2. {r} In Titum 1. 12. {s} In Dialog. Philopatris. {t} Lucan. Pharsalia, l. 2.

Acts 17:24

Ver. 24. God that made the world, and all things therein,.... In this account of the divine Being, as the Creator of the world, and all things in it, as the apostle agrees with Moses, and the rest of the sacred Scriptures; so he condemns both the notion of the Epicurean philosophers, who denied that the world was made by God, but said that it owed its being to a fortuitous concourse of atoms; and the notion of the Peripatetics, or Aristotelians, who asserted the eternity of the world; and some of both sects were doubtless present.

Seeing that he is the Lord of heaven and earth; as appears by his being the Creator of both; hence he supports them in their being, and governs all creatures in them by his providence.

Dwelleth not in temples made with hands; such as were the idol temples at Athens; nor in any other edifices built by man, so as to be there fixed and limited; no, not in the temple at Jerusalem: but he dwells in temples that are not made with hands, as in the temple of Christ's human nature, in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and in the hearts of his people, who are the temples of the Holy Ghost. This strikes at a notion of the Athenians, as if God was limited, and circumscribed, and included within the bounds of a shrine, or temple, though it is not at all contrary to his promises, or the hopes of his own people, of his presence in places appointed for divine worship, but is expressive of the infinity and immensity of God.

Acts 17:25

Ver. 25. Neither is worshipped with men's hands,.... Or "served" with them; or "ministered unto" by them, as the Syriac version renders it: and the sense is, that men by worshipping God do not give anything to him, that can be of any use or service to him; he, being God all sufficient, stands in need of nothing; for external worship is not here intended by worshipping with men's hands, in distinction from, and opposition to, internal worship, or to the worship of God with the heart; but that whether it be with the one or with the other, or both, nothing is given to God, as adding any thing to his essential glory and happiness:

as though he needed anything; for he does not, he is "El Shaddai", God all sufficient; nor can anything be given to him, he has not; or otherwise all perfection would not be in him: but that he cannot be indigent of anything, appears from hence,

seeing he giveth to all life and breath; or "the breath of life", as the Ethiopic version renders it; this God breathed into man at first, and he became a living soul; and every animate creature, everyone that has life and breath, have them from God; he gives them to them, and continues them:

and all things; that are enjoyed by them, and are necessary for their subsistence, and for the comfort of life, and for both their use and profit, and for their delight and pleasure; wherefore he that gives them all things, cannot want anything himself, nor receive anything at their hands. This clause is left out in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions.

Acts 17:26

Ver. 26. And hath made of one blood,.... That is, of one man's blood; the

Vulgate Latin version reads, "of one"; and the Arabic version of De Dieu reads, "of one man"; of Adam, the first parent of all mankind, and who had the blood of all men in his veins: hence the Jews {u} say,

"the first man was Mlwe lv wmd, "the blood of the world";"

and this by propagation has been derived from him, and communicated to all mankind. They also say {w}, that

"the reason why man was created alone (or there was but one man created) was, on account of families, that they might not be stirred up one against another;"

that is, strive and contend with one another about pre-eminence: and they add,

"that the righteous might not say we are the sons of the righteous, and ye are the sons of the wicked."

And it is a certain truth that follows upon this, that no man has any reason to vaunt over another, and boast of his blood and family; and as little reason have any to have any dependence upon their being the children of believers, or to distinguish themselves from others, and reject them as the children of unbelievers, when all belong to one family, and are of one man's blood, whether Adam or Noah: of whom are

all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; for from Adam sprung a race of men, which multiplied on the face of the earth, and peopled the world before the flood; these being destroyed by the flood, and Noah and his family saved, his descendants were scattered all over the earth, and repeopled it: and this is the original of all the nations of men, and of all the inhabitants of the earth; and stands opposed to the fabulous accounts of the Heathens, which the apostle might have in his view, that men at first grew up out of the earth, or after the flood were formed of stones, which Deucalion and Prometheus threw over their heads; and particularly the Athenians boasted that they sprung out of the earth, which Diogenes ridiculed as common with mice and worms. But the apostle ascribes all to one blood:

and hath determined the times before appointed; how long the world he has made shall continue; and the several distinct periods, ages, and generations, in which such and such men should live, such and such nations should exist, and such monarchies should be in being, as the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and

Roman, and how long they should subsist; as also the several seasons of the year, as seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night; and which are so bounded, and kept so distinct in their revolutions, as not to interfere with, and encroach upon each other; and likewise the several years, months, and days of every man's life; see **Job 7:1** to which may be added, the times of the law and Gospel; the time of Christ's birth and death; the time of the conversion of particular persons; and all their times of desertion, temptation, affliction, and comfort; the times of the church's sufferings, both under Rome Pagan and Rome Papal; of the holy city being trodden under foot, of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and of their being killed, and their bodies lying unburied, and of their resurrection and ascension to heaven, **Re 2:10**
Re 11:12 the time of antichrist's reign and ruin, Re 13:5 and of Christ's personal coming, and the day of judgment, **1Ti 6:15** and of his reign on earth for a thousand years, Rev 20:4. All these are appointed times, and determined by the Creator and Governor of the world:

and the bounds of their habitation; where men shall dwell, and how long they shall continue there the age or distinct period of time, in which every man was, or is to come into the world, is fixed and determined by God; nor can, nor does anyone come into the world sooner or later than that time; and also the particular country, city, town, and spot of ground where he shall dwell; and the term of time how long he shall dwell there, and then remove to another place, or be removed by death. And to this agrees the Ethiopic version, which renders the whole thus, "and hath appointed his times, and his years, how long they shall dwell"; see De 32:8 to which the apostle seems to refer.

{u} Caphtor, fol. 37. 2. {w} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 22. 2.

Acts 17:27

Ver. 27. That they should seek the Lord,.... Or "God", as the Alexandrian copy and others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read; their Creator, and kind Benefactor, and who has appointed their time of life, and their habitations for them; and this should engage them to seek to know him, who has done all this for them, and to fear and serve him, and to glorify his name:

if haply they might feel after him, and find him; which shows, that though it is possible for men, by a contemplation of the perfections of God, visible in the works of creation and providence, so to find God, as to know that there is one, and that there is but one God, who has made all things; and so as to be convinced of the vanity and falsehood of all other gods, and to see the folly, wickedness, and weakness of idolatrous worship; yet, at the same time, it very strongly intimates, how dim and obscure the light of nature is; since those, who have nothing else to direct them, are like persons in the dark, who "feel" and grope about after God, whom they cannot see; and after all their search and groping, there is only an "haply", a peradventure, a may be, that they find him:

though he be not far from everyone of us; not only by his omnipresence, and immensity, whereby he is everywhere; but by his power in supporting all in their being; and by his goodness in continually communicating the blessings of providence to them.

Acts 17:28

Ver. 28. For in him we live, and move, and have our being,.... The natural life which men live is from God; and they are supported in it by him; and from him they have all the comforts and blessings of life; and all motions, whether external or internal, of body or of mind, are of God, and none of them are without the concourse of his providence, and strength assistance from him; though the disorder and irregularity of these motions, whereby they become sinful, are of themselves, or of the devil; and their being, and the maintenance of it, and continuance in it, are all owing to the power and providence of God.

As certain also of your own poets have said; the Syriac version reads in the singular number, "as a certain one of your wise men has said"; but all others read in the plural; and some have thought, that the apostle refers to what goes before, that being an Iambic verse of some of the poets, as well as to what follows, which is a citation from Aratus {x} and whom the apostle might have called his own, as he was his countryman; for Aratus was a native of Solis, a city of Cilicia, not far from Tarsus yea, some say {y} he was of Tarsus, where the apostle was born: but Aratus being an Heathen, and the apostle speaking to Heathens, calls him one of them; and the rather, that what is cited might be the more regarded by them: though the expression is also {z} said to be in an hymn to Jove, written by Cleanthes, who taught at Athens; and so the apostle addressing the Athenians, might, with greater propriety, say, "as certain of your own poets say": it is also said to be in Aratus the astronomer, and in the poet Homer; so that the plural number may well be used. Which is, for we are also his offspring; the offspring of Jove, says Aratus; which the apostle applies to the true Jehovah, the Creator of all men, by whom, and after whose image, they are made, and so are truly his offspring; upon which the apostle argues as follows.

{x} In Phaenomenis, p. 1. {y} Vid. Fabricii Biblioth. Gr. l. 3. c. 18. p. 451. {z} Vid. Fabricii Biblioth. Gr. l. 3. c. 18. p. 453.

Acts 17:29

Ver. 29. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God,.... In the sense before given; for the apostle is not here speaking of himself, and other saints, as being the children of God, by adoption, and by regenerating grace, and faith in Christ Jesus, but as men in common with others, and with these Athenians:

we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device; for men themselves, who are the offspring of God, and made after his image, are not to be compared to graven images of gold, silver, and stone, but are vastly preferable to them, they being formed by their art, and the device of their minds; and much less then should God, the Creator of men, and from whom they spring, be likened to, or represented by, any such thing; for so to think of God, is to think very unworthily of him; for if to think thus of ourselves, who are descended from him, would be a debasing of us, then much more to think so of God, the Father of spirits, must be a depreciating of him; and which by no means ought to be done, and argues great stupidity: if living rational creatures are not to be equalled to, and compared with, senseless statues, much less God, the former of men and angels.

Acts 17:30

Ver. 30. And the times of this ignorance God winked at,.... Not that he approved of, or encouraged such blindness and folly, as appeared among the Gentiles, when they worshipped idols of gold, silver, and stone, taking them for deities; but rather the sense is, he despised this, and them for it, and was displeased and angry with them; and as an evidence of such contempt and indignation, he overlooked them, and took no notice of them, and gave them no revelation to direct them, nor prophets to instruct them, and left them to their stupidity and ignorance:

but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; that is, he hath given orders, that the doctrine of repentance, as well as remission of sins, should be preached to all nations, to Gentiles as well as Jews; and that it becomes them to repent of their idolatries, and turn from their idols, and worship the one, only, living and true God: and though for many hundreds of years God had neglected them, and sent no messengers, nor messages to them, to acquaint them with his will, and to show them their follies and mistakes; yet now he had sent his apostles unto them, to lay before them their sins, and call them to repentance; and to stir them up to this, the apostle informs them of the future judgment in the following verse. Repentance being represented as a command, does not suppose it to be in the power of men, or contradict evangelical repentance, being the free grace gift of God, but only shows the need men stand in of it, and how necessary and requisite it is; and when it is said to be a command to all, this does not destroy its being a special blessing of the covenant of grace to some; but points out the sad condition that all men are in as sinners, and that without repentance they must perish: and indeed, all men are obliged to natural repentance for sin, though to all men the grace of evangelical repentance is not given: the Jews {a} call repentance hbwvth twum, "the command of repentance", though they do not think it obligatory on men, as the other commands of the law. The law gives no encouragement to repentance, and shows no mercy on account of it; it is a branch of the Gospel ministry, and goes along with the doctrine of the remission of sins; and though in the Gospel, strictly taken, there is no command, yet being largely taken for the whole ministry of the word, it includes this, and everything else which Christ has commanded, and was taught by him and his apostles; Mt 28:20.

{a} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 157. 4.

Acts 17:31

Ver. 31. Because he hath appointed a day,.... The day of judgment is fixed by God in his eternal purposes, and is sure and certain, and will come, though it is not known by men or angels; and this is a reason why God will have the doctrine of repentance everywhere published, both to Jews and Gentiles, since all must come to judgment: and the day for it is appointed by him,

in the which he will judge the world in righteousness; the whole world will be judged, and every individual in it, good and bad, righteous and wicked; and this judgment will be a righteous one; it will proceed according to the strict rules of justice and equity, and upon the foot of the righteousness of Christ, as that has been received or rejected by men, or as men are clothed with, or are without that righteousness:

by that man whom he hath ordained; Beza's ancient copy reads, "the man Jesus": not that the apostle means that Christ is a mere man; for then he would not be fit to be a Judge of quick and dead, and to pass and execute the definitive sentence; which requires omniscience and omnipotence: but preaching to mere Heathens, he chose not at once to assert the deity of Christ, though he tacitly suggests it: but intended, by degrees, to open the glories of his nature and office to them, he being the person God had from all eternity ordained, and in time had signified, should have all judgment committed to him, and by whom the last judgment shall be managed and transacted:

whereof he hath given assurance to all men: or full proof, both of his being the Judge, and of his fitness to be one, and also of the righteousness, according to which he will judge:

in that he hath raised him from the dead; whereby he was declared to be the Son of God; and when all power in heaven and in earth was given to him; and which was done for the justification of all those for whose offences he was delivered: and this seems to be the reason why the apostle calls Christ the Judge a man, that he might have the opportunity of mentioning his resurrection from the dead.

Acts 17:32

Ver. 32. When they heard of the resurrection of the dead,.... Of a certain man that the apostle said God had raised from the dead, though they knew not who he was:

some mocked; at him, and at the doctrine he preached: these very likely were of the Epicurean sect, who disbelieved a future state; though, as Tertullian observes {b}, the doctrine of the resurrection was denied by every sect of the philosophers: it is a doctrine of pure revelation, and what the light of nature never taught men, and by which men being only guided, have declared against, and have treated it with the utmost ridicule and contempt. Pliny {c} reckons it, among childish fancies, and calls it vanity, and downright madness to believe it; as does also Caecilius in Minutius Felix {d}, and who even calls it a lie, and places it among old wives' fables; and Celsus in Origen {e} represents it as exceeding detestable, abominable, and impossible.

And others said, we will hear thee again of this matter; some think these were of the Stoic sect, who held a future state, and that the soul would live after the body, and had some notions which looked inclining to this doctrine: however, these thought there might be something in what the apostle said; they could not receive it readily, and yet could not deny it; they were willing to take time to consider of it; and were desirous of hearing him again upon that subject; in which they might be very open and upright; and this might not be a mere excuse to shift off any further hearing at that time, like that of Felix, in Ac 24:1.

{b} De praescript. Heret. c. 7. p. 232. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 55. {d} Octav. p. 10. {e} Contra Cals. l. 5. p. 240.

Acts 17:33

Ver. 33. So Paul departed from among them. As it was high time, when they fell to deriding and scoffing at him; for hereby they judged themselves unworthy of the Gospel ministry: the Ethiopic version adds, "from Athens"; but it does not appear that the apostle went directly out of the city; we read afterwards of his departing from Athens, Ac 18:1 but the sense is, that he went out of the Areopagus, from that court of judicature; and from among the judges of it, and the philosophers of every sect, that stood around him in it; they having no more to say to him, nor he to them. And this shows, that he was not brought to be tried and judged, in order to be punished, but only to be heard concerning his doctrine; of which, when they had heard enough, he departed quietly, no one molesting him, unless with scoffs and jeers.

Acts 17:34

Ver. 34. Howbeit, certain men clave unto him, and believed,.... There were some who were ordained to eternal life, to whom the Gospel came in power, and they received the love of the truth, and their hearts and affections were knit unto the apostle; and they followed him, and kept to him, and privately conversed with him, and believed his doctrine, and in Jesus Christ, whom he preached unto them; to these the Gospel was the savour of life unto life, when to the scoffers and mockers it was the savour of death unto death: and this is the fruit and effect of the Gospel ministry, wherever it comes:

among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite; a judge in the court of Areopagus: how many judges that court consisted of, is not certain, nor whether there was one who was superior to the rest; if there was such an one, Dionysius seems to have been he, since he is called the Areopagite. The business of this court was not only to try causes of murder, which seems to have been the original business of it; but by these judges the rights of the city were preserved and defended, war was proclaimed, and all law suits adjusted and decided; and they made it their business to look after idle and slothful persons, and inquire how they lived {f}: they always heard and judged causes in the night, in the dark, because they would only know facts, and not persons, lest they should be influenced by their afflictions, and be led wrong {g}; they were very famous in other nations for their wisdom and skill, and for their gravity and strict justice. Dolabella, proconsul of Asia, having a woman brought before him for poisoning her husband and son, which she confessed, and gave reasons for doing it, referred the matter to a council, who refused to pass sentence; upon which he sent the case to Athens, to the Areopagites, as to judges "more grave" and "more experienced" {h}: and hence these words of Julian the emperor {i},

"let an Areopagite be judge, and we will not be afraid of the judgment."

This Dionysius the Areopagite is said, by another Dionysius, bishop of the Corinthians, a very ancient writer {k}, to be the first bishop of the Athenians, which is more likely than that he should be a bishop in France. It is reported of him, that being at Heliopolis in Egypt, along with Apollophanes, a philosopher, at the time of Christ's sufferings, he should say concerning the unusual eclipse that then was, that "a God unknown, and clothed with flesh, suffered", on whose account the whole world was darkened; or, as, others affirm, he said, "either the God of nature suffers, or the frame of the world will be dissolved": it is also related of him that when he was converted by the apostle at Athens, he went to Clemens, bishop of Rome, and was sent by him with others into the west, to preach the Gospel; some of which went to Spain, and others to France, and that he steered his course to Paris, and there, with Rusticus and Eleutherius his "colleagues", suffered martyrdom {l}. The books ascribed unto him concerning the divine names, and ecclesiastical hierarchy, are spurious things, stuffed with foolish, absurd, and impious notions, and seem to have been written in the "fifth" century.

And a woman named Damaris; some of the ancients, and also some modern writers, take this woman to be the wife of Dionysius; but had she been his wife, she would have been doubtless called so; however, by the particular mention of her name, she seems to have been a person of some note and figure: the name is a diminutive from damar, Damar, which signifies a wife.

And others with them; with these two, as the Arabic version renders it; that is, with Dionysius and Damaris. These laid the foundation of a Gospel church at Athens. Dionysius, as before observed, was the first bishop, or pastor of it; it is also said that Narcissus, one of the seventy disciples, was bishop of this place; See Gill on "Lu 10:1". In the "second" century Publius was bishop of the church at Athens, who suffered martyrdom for Christ in the time of Hadrian; and was succeeded by Quadratus {m}, who was famous for a writing he presented to the said emperor, in favour of the churches in common, and the success of it, about the year 128; at the same time, Aristides, a famous philosopher and Christian, flourished in the church at Athens, who wrote an apology for the Christian religion; and also Jovius, a presbyter and martyr, and a disciple of Dionysius; likewise Athenagoras, a man of great learning and piety, who wrote also an apology for the Christians, and a treatise concerning the resurrection of the dead, which are still extant; the former was written to the emperors Antoninus and Commodus: in the "third" century mention is made of the church at Athens; and Origen {n} speaks very honourably of it, as meek and quiet, and desirous of approving itself to God. In the "fourth" century it appears that there were Christians there, since Maximus the emperor stirred up wicked men to molest and distress them; and there was a Christian school there, in which Bazil and Gregory Nazianzen were brought up. In the "fifth" century there was a church in this place; and in the "sixth", a Christian school, in which Boethius Patricius learned the liberal arts; and in the "seventh" century mention is made of a bishop of Athens, who was in the sixth council at Constantinople {o}: thus far this church state is to be traced.

{f} Alexander ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 13. & l. 4. c. 11. {g} Alexander ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 5. {h} A Gellii noctes Attica, l. 12. c. 7. {i} Orat. 2. p. 112. {k} Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 4. & l. 4. c. 23. {l} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 1. l. 2. c. 10. p. 491. {m} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 23. {n} Contra Cels. l. 3. p. 128. {o} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 2. c. 2. p. 4, 17. & c. 10. p. 151, 152, 153. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 4. c. 7. p. 287. & c. 10. p. 539. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 6. c. 7. p. 205. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 5.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 18:1

Ver. 1. After these things,.... The Arabic version renders it, "after these words, or discourses"; after the apostle's disputation with the philosophers, and his sermon in the Areopagus, the effects of which are before related:

Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; the metropolis of Achaia, or Peloponnesus. The city was formerly called Ephyra, from Ephyra {p}, the daughter of Oceanus, and had its name of Corinth from Corinthus, the son of Maratho, who repaired it when destroyed; or, as others say, from Corinthus the son of Pelops, others of Orestes, and others of Jupiter: though more probably it was so called from the multitudes of whores in this place, as if it was korai enya, "corai entha, here are girls, or whores"; for in the temple of Venus there were no less than a thousand whores provided, to be prostituted to all comers thither; See Gill on "2Co 12:21". It was situated between two great seas, the Aegean and Ionean; hence {q} Horace calls it Bimaris: it had a very strong tower, built on a high mount, called Acrocorinthus, from whence these two seas might be seen, and where was the fountain Pirene, sacred to the Muses: the city was about sixty furlongs, or seven miles and a half, from the shore {r}: it was a city that abounded in riches and luxury. Florus {s} calls it the head of Achaia, and the glory of Greece; and Cicero {t}, the light of all Greece: it was in time so much enlarged, and became so famous, that it was little inferior to Rome itself, on which account it grew proud and haughty; and using the Roman ambassadors with some degree of insolence, who were sent into Greece, on some certain occasion, first Metellus, and then Mummius, were sent against it, which latter took it, and burnt it; and the city then abounding with images and statues of gold, silver, and brass, were melted down together in the fire, and made what was afterwards called the Corinthian brass, which became so famous, and is often spoken of in history {u}: but Julius Caesar, moved with the commodious situation of the place, rebuilt it {w}, and it became a colony of the Romans, as Pliny {x} and Mela {y} both call it: and so it was at this time when the apostle was there. After this it came into the hands of the Venetians, from whom it was taken by Mahomet, the second son of Amurath, in the year 1458 {z}; but is now again in the hands of the Venetians; and that and the country about it are called the Morea. And as the Gospel was to be preached to the worst of sinners, among whom God's chosen ones lay, the apostle was directed to come hither; and it appears by the sequel, that God had much people here, even more than at Athens, among the wise and learned.

{p} Vellei Patercull Hist. Rom. l. 1. Pausanias, Corinthiaca, sive l. 2. p. 85.

{q} Carmin. l. 1. Ode 7. {r} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 4. {s} Hist. Rom. l. 2. c. 16. {t} Pro Lege Manilia Orat. 13. p. 636. {u} Florus, ib. {w} Pausauias, Corinthiaca, sive l. 2. p. 85, 89. {x} Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 4. {y} De Situ Orbis, l. 2. c. 10. {z} Petav. Rationar. Temp. par. 1. p. 476.

Acts 18:2

Ver. 2. And found a certain Jew named Aquila,.... This seems to have been his Roman name, which he had took, or was given him, while he was at Rome; very likely his Jewish name was dvn, "Nesher", which signifies an eagle, as "Aquila" does: unless it should rather be thought to be a Greek name; and as "Olympas" is from "Olympios", and "Nymphas" from Nymphios"; so "Akilas", as it in the Greek text, from Akylios", and this from akulov, "Akylos", which signifies an acorn. There was a Jewish proselyte of this name, who translated the Bible into Greek, who is called by the Jewish writers olyqe, "Akilas" {a}; and Eusebius {b} calls him
akulav o pontikov, or "Akylas" or "Aquila" of Pontus, as here, but cannot be the same; for one was a Jew, the other a Gentile, then a Christian, and afterwards a Jewish proselyte, and lived after the destruction of Jerusalem many years, even in the times of Adrian: nor is it the same name with Onkelos, the famous Chaldee paraphrast, as some have thought, and much less the same person; for though their age better agrees, yet neither their name, nor their nation; for Onkelos was only a proselyte, not a Jew, as this man was; and the agreement the names of these proselytes may be thought to have with this, does but confirm it to be a Roman name; and in a decree of Claudius the Roman emperor, mention is made of Akylas, or Aquila, a Roman governor of Alexandria {c}: and in the reign of Caius Caligula, there was a consul of Rome whose name was M. Aquila Julianus. This is said to be afterwards bishop of Heraclea; but that is not to be depended upon:

born in Pontus; a country in Asia; See Gill on "Ac 2:9" where many Jews lived; though he was born in an Heathen country, his parents were Jews:

lately come from Italy; a famous and well known country in Europe:
See Gill on "Heb 13:24".

with his wife Priscilla; she and her husband are both highly spoken of in Ro 16:3,
See Gill on "Ro 16:4":

because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome; of which edict Suetonius {d} makes mention, who says, that Claudius

"expelled the Jews from Rome, who were continually making tumults, being moved thereunto by one Chrestus,"

who is generally understood to be Christ; and it is thought that the reason of this edict was, that the Jews in Rome continually opposing and disputing with the Christians, about Jesus being the Messiah, Claudius, who was of a timorous disposition, was afraid of a tumult, and that it might issue in his detriment, and therefore banished all the Jews, with whom the Christians were involved; for by the Heathens they were all called Jews, the first Christians being Jews: though others say the reason was, that the Jews had contracted an acquaintance with Agrippina, the wife of Claudius, and had drawn her into Judaism: but be it as it will, such an edict was made, on account of which Aquila and Priscilla were obliged to leave Rome, and come to Corinth. It must be something that was very provoking to him, otherwise before he had shown much favour to the Jews; for he not only granted to the Jews at Alexandria, that they should continue in the observance of their laws and customs, but permitted the same to them in all parts of the empire, by a special decree, which runs thus {e};

"Tiberius Claudius Caesar, &c. decrees, seeing the Kings Agrippa and Herod, my dearest friends, have entreated me that I would suffer the Jews in every government under the Romans, to observe their laws as in Alexandria; I most willingly grant it, not only for the sake of gratifying those who ask it, but judging that those are worthy, for whom it is asked, because of their faithfulness and friendship to the Romans; especially accounting it most just that no Grecian city should be deprived of these rights, seeing they were kept for them by the divine Augustus; wherefore it is right also that the Jews throughout all our empire should observe the customs of their country without any hinderance, whom I now command that in love to us they would behave more moderately, and not despise the religion of other nations, but keep their own laws; and I will that governors of cities, and colonies, and freedoms, both in Italy and without, have this my edict transcribed, and also kings and princes by their ambassadors, and that it be put in such a place in less than thirty days, from whence it may be plainly read."

This Claudius was the "fifth" emperor of Rome; and this decree passed in the "ninth", or, as others, in the "eleventh" year of his reign, and about the year of Christ 51, or, as others, 54.

And came unto them: that is, the apostle, having found out Aquila and Priscilla, he came and visited them, and took up his lodging with them.

{a} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 28. 2. {b} Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 8. {c} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 19. c. 5. sect. 2. {d} In Vita. Cluadii, c. 25. {e} Joseph. ib. sect. 3.

Acts 18:3

Ver. 3. And because he was of the same craft, Art, occupation, or trade:

he abode with them; in the same house in which they were:

and wrought; with his own hands, to support himself, for he was a stranger in this place; and as yet here was no church to minister to him; and when there was, he would take nothing of them, that the false teachers, who rose up among them, might not make any handle of it against him, and to the prejudice of the Gospel; though otherwise he thought it his just due to receive a maintenance from the churches; and insisted upon it as an ordination of Christ. He learned a trade whilst among the Jews, with whom it was common for their greatest doctors to be brought up to some trade or another;
See Gill on "Mr 6:3".

for by their occupation they were tent makers; either for the soldiers, and which were made of sack cloth of hair, or of leather, and of the skins of various animals {f}, sewed together; hence the phrase, "sub pellibus", "under the skins", is used for to lie in tents {g}: or those tents they made, were canopies made of linen, and other things, which were erected in the summer season to shade and screen from the heat of the sun; though others take them for a sort of tapestry, or hangings, which they made for theatres, palaces, and stately rooms; and according to the Syriac version, they were horses' trappings which they made: perhaps they were of the same occupation with Menedemus the philosopher, who was skhnorrafov, "a sewer of tents" {h}.

{f} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 12. {g} Caesar. Comment. l. 5. de Bello Africano. p. 471. Liv. Hist. l. 5. in principio. {h} Laert. Vit. Philosoph. l. 2. p. 172.

Acts 18:4

Ver. 4. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath,.... In Corinth there was a synagogue of the Jews, in which they met together for worship on the seventh day of the week, which was their sabbath; and hither Paul went, and took the opportunity of reasoning with them out of the Scriptures, concerning Christ, his person, and offices, his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death, and about redemption and salvation by him: we may observe the diligence, industry, and indefatigableness of the apostle; on the sabbath day he went to the synagogue, and preached Christ to those who there attended; and on the weekdays he laboured with his own hands. Beza's most ancient copy, and the Vulgate Latin version add here, "interposing the name of the Lord Jesus"; frequently making mention of his name, or calling upon it, and doing miracles in it.

And persuaded the Jews and the Greeks; this was the effect of his reasoning, and the success that attended it; some, both of the Jews, who were so by birth, as well as religion, and of the Greeks, or Gentiles, who were Jewish proselytes, and attended synagogue worship, were convinced by his arguments, and were induced to believe the truth of his doctrine, and to embrace it; or at least he endeavoured to persuade them that they were lost sinners, and that there was salvation for them in Christ, and in him only.

Acts 18:5

Ver. 5. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia,.... Not from Berea in Macedonia, for from hence they came to the apostle while at Athens, and from whence he sent them, at least Timothy, to Thessalonica, to know the state of the saints there, as appears from **1Th 3:1** and from hence they now came to the apostle at Corinth: when

Paul was pressed in Spirit; either by the Holy Spirit, by which he was moved and stirred up to preach the Gospel more frequently, and more powerfully; for he had not always the same measure of the Spirit, or was not always under the same influence; or else in his own spirit, and so the Arabic version renders it, "grief beset the spirit of Paul"; his soul was filled with trouble and sorrow, when he observed the nonrepenitence and unbelief, the contradiction and blasphemy of the greater part of the Jews; and being filled with zeal for their welfare, he continued preaching Christ unto them. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, instead of "in spirit", read "in speech", or "in word"; and the sense is, not that he was straitened in his speech, and knew not what to say to the Jews, or had not freedom of speech with them; but he was instant in preaching to them, and preached the word more frequently and fervently, upon the coming of Silas and Timothy to his assistance:

and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ; he continued to produce more testimonies out of the writings of Moses, and the prophets, to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, or Messiah, prophesied of in those writings, and promised to the Jews, and whom they expected.

Acts 18:6

Ver. 6. And when they opposed themselves,.... To the truth, and contradicted themselves in many instances, and their own prophecies; or those books which they themselves allowed to be the oracles of God, and blasphemed both Christ, and the apostle, and the doctrine which he taught; and railed at him, and spoke evil of him, and used him in a very contumelious and reproachful manner, as they were used from contradicting to go to blaspheming; see Ac 13:45

he shook his raiment; his outer garment, and the dust off from it, as a testimony against them; see Mt 10:14

and said unto them, your blood be upon your heads; meaning, that they were the authors of their own ruin and destruction; that they could not impute it to any other, when it came upon them; and that they were left inexcusable, and must bear their own iniquities, and the punishment of them: this clause is wanting in the Syriac version.

I am clean; meaning from their blood; see Ac 20:26. The apostle seems to allude to Eze 33:4 signifying, that he had discharged his duty as a preacher, and so had delivered his own soul from their blood being required at his hands; and that it rested entirely on themselves, and they were answerable for all their impenitence, unbelief, and blasphemy:

from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles; in that city, and preach the Gospel to them, and no more enter into their synagogue, as it is very likely he afterwards never did; for though Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, was afterwards converted, yet his conversion seems to have been not in the synagogue, but in the house of Justus, which was hard by it. Compare with this

Ac 13:46.

Acts 18:7

Ver. 7. And he departed thence,..... Not from Corinth, but from the synagogue:

and entered into a certain man's house named Justus; he did not return to Aquila and Priscilla, because they were Jews, lest he should be thought not to abide by his words, that he would henceforth go to the Gentiles; wherefore as he came out of the synagogue, he turned into a house adjoining to it, which belonged to one Justus: in one copy of Beza's, and in some others, and in the Vulgate Latin version, he is called "Titus Justus"; and in the Arabic version, "Titus the son of Justus"; the Syriac version only reads "Titus": whether this is not the same Titus, who afterwards was a companion of the apostle, and to whom he wrote an epistle, may be inquired.

One that worshipped God; a Gentile, but a religious man, such an one as Cornelius: he might be a proselyte either of the gate, or of righteousness; though if he was the same with Titus, he could not be the latter, because he was not circumcised, **Ga 2:3** whose house joined hard to the synagogue; had this man been a Jew, his house might very well have been taken for the house which was
tonkh tybl Kwmo, "near to the synagogue", in which travellers were entertained, and ate, and drank, and lodged {i}; and that he was the person appointed to take care of them, and so a very suitable house for Paul, a stranger, to take up his lodging in. The Ethiopic version adds, very wrongly, taking it from the beginning of the next verse, "because he was the ruler of the synagogue"; as if Justus was the ruler of the synagogue; and this the reason why his house was so near; whereas not he, but Crispus, was the ruler, as follows.

{i} Vid. Maggid Misna in Maimon. Hilchot Sabbat, c. 29. sect. 3. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 10. 1. & in Bava Bathra, fol. 3. 2.

Acts 18:8

Ver. 8. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue,.... This was a Jewish name; frequent mention is made of R. Crispa in the Jewish writings {k} this person, either through hearing Paul before he departed from the synagogue, or when in Justus's house, which was hard by the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house: he believed the doctrine the apostle preached, concerning Jesus, and that he was the Messiah; and he believed in him for life and salvation, and made a profession of his faith in him, and so did all his family, upon which he was baptized by the apostle; see **1Co 1:14**

and many of the Corinthians hearing not "his faith", as the Arabic version adds; as if hearing of the faith of Crispus induced them to believe also; for the ruler of the Jewish synagogue had no such influence on the Gentile Corinthians, as these were: but these hearing the Gospel preached by the apostle, very likely in the house of Justus, to which they came,

believed; faith came by hearing; they believed the Gospel, and they believed in Christ, the sum and substance of it; and not with a bare historical faith, but with a spiritual and saving one, or such as is unto salvation, with their heart, and with their mouth made confession of it:

and were baptized; not by the apostle, for he baptized at Corinth none but Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanas, but by some of his companions, as Silas, or Timothy, or both: this is a plain instance of believers' baptism; first they heard the word of God; then they believed, this word coming with power to them; and upon their believing, they are baptized. These laid the foundation of a famous church in this place, which continued for many ages after; Silas, who is reckoned among the seventy disciples, is said to be the first bishop or pastor of it; See Gill on "Lu 10:1"; in the "second" century Primus was bishop of this church, with whom Egesippus as he went to Rome stayed some days, and was much refreshed with the orthodox faith of him, and the Corinthians; in the same century Dionysius presided over this church, who was not only very useful to the church under his care, but to many others {l}; in the same age, under Severus lived Bacchylus bishop of Corinth, who wrote a book concerning Easter in the name of all the bishops in Achaia {m}; in the third century Tertullian {n} makes mention of a church at Corinth; in the fourth century Epictetus was bishop of the said church, and was contemporary and familiar with Athanasius, to whom a letter is extant in the works of Athanasius {o}; in the "fifth" century there was a church at Corinth, and a bishop of it was in the synod at Chalcedon, and it was then a metropolitan church; in this age Peregrinus bishop of Corinth was in the first synod at Ephesus, held against Nestorius, and Erisistratus, a bishop also of the same church, was in another synod at the same place, and Peter bishop of Corinth was in the Chalcedon council; in the "sixth" century mention is made of a bishop of the Corinthians, in the fifth synod at Constantinople, and in the same century Gregory instructed John bishop of the Corinthians rightly to govern the Lord's flock, and exhorted all the Corinthian bishops to concord. In this age Adrianus also was bishop of Corinth, he flourished under Mauritius the emperor; as likewise did Anastasius archbishop of the Corinthians; and he being removed from his office, John succeeded him in it; in the "seventh" century there was a Corinthian bishop in the sixth council at Constantinople {p}; thus far this ancient church is to be traced in history.

{k} T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 2. 3. & 12. 2. & 18. 1. & passim. {l} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 22. & 23. {m} Hicronymi Catalog. Script. Ecclcs. sect. 54. fol. 96. D. {n} De Praescript. Heret. c. 36. {o} Tom. 1. p. 453. Ed. Commelin. {p} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 6. & c. 7. p. 418. & c. 10. p. 665. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 6. & c. 10. p. 349. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 5.

Acts 18:9

Ver. 9. Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision,.... On a certain night as he was asleep, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him in a dream, and spake after this manner to him:

be not afraid; it is very likely that after the baptism of Crispus and his family, and of many of the Corinthians, that both the Jews and the Gentiles were exasperated against the apostle; and his life might seem to be in danger, and he might be thinking of removing from hence for his preservation and safety; and might be advised to it by his friends, or at least that he should be incognito, and not be seen publicly: wherefore the Lord appears to him, and bids him not indulge any fears, or conceal himself and be silent,

but speak, and hold not thy peace; preach freely and boldly the Gospel without fear of men; the fear of men should not stop the mouths of Christ's ministers.

Acts 18:10

Ver. 10. For I am with thee,.... According to his promise, Mt 28:20 not only to assist in the ministry of the word, to give light into it, and liberty to preach it, and success in it, but to keep and preserve him from being hurt by men:

and no man shall set on thee; attack thee, or lay hands on thee:

to hurt thee; to do any injury to thy person, to thy body, in any part of it: wicked men cannot strike a blow, or do the least damage to a servant of Christ without his permission; he can tie their hands, and restrain their rage.

For I have much people in this city; this wicked and luxurious city; there were many here who were yet in their sins, in a state of unregeneracy, whom God had chosen to be his people, and had taken into his covenant as such; were given to Christ as his peculiar people, and whom he had redeemed with his precious blood: they were his people both by gift and purchase, before they were called by grace; and because of this his interest in them, he will have his Gospel continued for the gathering them in to himself; for Christ will lose none of his, all shall come unto him: from all which it appears, that Christ has a people who are related to him, and he has an interest in, before they are effectually called by grace; for this refers not to the many Corinthians who had heard and believed, and were baptized, but to some that had not, and were yet to be called; not the Jews in this city, Christ's own nation, nor all the inhabitants of it who were in some sense Christ's people, being made and supported in their beings by him, are intended; but a special people among the Gentiles, the same with the other sheep Christ speaks of, Joh 10:16 not yet of his fold; a people beloved of God, chosen in Christ, given to him, and with whom a covenant was made in him, for whom Christ undertook, in whose name he acted, and for whom he received blessings and promises, as well as took the care and charge of their persons; for the sake of these he assumed human nature, and suffered and died; towards these his heart always is; his eye is upon them, and he knows them, and where they are; and therefore he will look them up and find them out, and they shall be brought to believe in him, and shall not perish, but have everlasting life: and it may be further observed, that Christ has "many" such, though they are but comparatively few, yet in themselves they are a great number; yea, he has sometimes many of these in the worst of places, and among the vilest of men; and for the sake of these, in order to select and separate them from the rest, is the Gospel preached and continued. The ministers of it are sent here and there, where such persons are, and there they are continued till they are gathered in; yea, on this account both the Gospel and its preachers are continued in the world; and even the world itself, for the sake of these, till they are brought in, and then it will be destroyed; and it may be also remarked, that for the encouragement of Gospel ministers, Christ promises his presence and protection, and which was fulfilled in the Apostle Paul at Corinth; who though he stayed there a year and six months, none were suffered to do him any injury; and when an insurrection was made within that time, yet the apostle escaped, and quietly departed elsewhere.

Acts 18:11

Ver. 11. And he continued there,.... At Corinth, as the Syriac version, and some copies, read; he was obedient to the heavenly vision: in the Greek text it is, "he sat" there, answerable to the Hebrew word
bvy, which signifies to sit, continue and abide: he stayed there in all a year and six months; which was a long time for the apostle to stay in one place, and longer than he did anywhere, unless at Ephesus, where he continued two years, Ac 19:10 for as for his stay at Rome, that was by confinement: but here were many people to be called, and much work to do, a large church to be raised, and put in order; and this required time as well as care and labour:

teaching the word of God among them; he did not sit idle here, but preached the Gospel, which is the word of God, and not man, openly and publicly, among them all; and that frequently, in season and out of season, and with great boldness and faithfulness.

Acts 18:12

Ver. 12. And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia,.... This province, which was now become a Roman one, Pliny the younger {q} calls true and mere Greece; it went by the name of Aegialus {r}, and now it is called Livadia: it has on the north the country of Thessaly, and on the west the river Acheloo, or Aracheo, on the east the Aegean sea, and on the south Peloponnesus, or the Morea. Gallio, who was now deputy of it, was brother to L. Annaeus Seneca, the famous philosopher, who was preceptor to Nero; his name at first was M. Annaeus Novatus, but being adopted by L. Junius Gallio, he took the name of the family. According to his brother's account of him {s}, he was a very modest man, of a sweet disposition, and greatly beloved; and Statius {t} calls him Dulcem Gallionem, "the sweet Gallio", mild and gentle in his speech, as Quintilian says. Seneca {u} makes mention of him as being in Achaia; and whilst he was deputy there he had a fever, when as soon as it took him he went aboard a ship, crying, that it was not the disease of the body, but of the place.

The Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul; being provoked that so many of their people, as well as of the Gentiles, were converted by him to the Christian religion, and were baptized:

and brought him to the judgment seat; of Gallio, the deputy, to be tried and judged by him.

{q} L. 8. Ep. 24. {r} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 5. Pausanias, l. 7. p. 396. {s} Praefat. ad. l. 4. Nat. Quaest. {t} Sylvarum, l. 2. Sylv. 7. {u} Ep. 104.

Acts 18:13

Ver. 13. Saying, this fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. Meaning either to the law of the Romans, which forbad the bringing in of any new gods, without the leave of the senate;
See Gill on "Ac 16:21"; or rather to the law of Moses: the Arabic version reads, "our law"; though this was false, for Moses in his law wrote of Christ, and ordered the children of Israel to hearken to him.

Acts 18:14

Ver. 14. And when Paul was now about to open his mouth,.... In his own defence, and plead his own cause, and answer to the charge exhibited against him:

Gallio said unto the Jews, if it was matter of wrong; of injury to any man's person or property, as murder, theft, &c.

or wicked lewdness; as fraud, forgery, perjury, treason, &c.

O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: his sense is, that it would be according to right reason, and agreeably to his office as a judge, to admit them and their cause, and try it, and hear them patiently, and what was to be said on both sides of the question, what the charges were, and the proof of them, and what the defendant had to say for himself. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "O men Jews"; and so Beza's ancient copy.

Acts 18:15

Ver. 15. But if it be a question of words,.... "Or of the word", what the Jews called the word of God, which Gallio did not pretend to understand: "and names"; as the names of God, of Jesus, and of Christ, whether he is God, and the Messiah:

and of your law; concerning circumcision, whether these Christians, and the proselytes they make, are obliged unto it:

look ye to it; suggesting that this was a matter that lay before them, and they were the proper judges of, and might determine for themselves, since they had the free exercise of their religion, and a right of judging of everything that respected that within themselves, and for which they were best furnished, as having a more competent knowledge of them; as the Arabic version renders it, "and ye are more learned in these things"; and most conversant with them:

for I will be no judge of such matters; and it would be well if every civil magistrate would act the same part, and not meddle with religious affairs, any further than to preserve the public peace.

Acts 18:16

Ver. 16. And he drave them from the judgment seat. He would not hear, and try the cause; but dismissed them with threatening them, if ever they brought an affair of that kind to him any more.

Acts 18:17

Ver. 17. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes,.... These were not the Greeks or Gentiles that were devout persons, or converted to Christianity, and were on the side of Paul, and fell foul on Sosthenes, as being his chief accuser; for this is not agreeably to the spirit and character of such persons, but the profane and unconverted Greeks, who observing that Gallio sent the Jews away, with some resentment and contempt, were encouraged to fall upon the principal of them, and use him in a very ill manner; it is very likely that this person was afterwards converted, and is the same that is mentioned in **1Co 1:1**. The name is Greek, and there is one of this name mentioned among the executors of Plato's will {w}. This man was now

chief ruler of the synagogue; chosen in, very likely, upon Crispus becoming a Christian, and being baptized:

and beat him before the judgment seat; of Gallio; before he and his friends could get out of court:

and Gallio cared for none of these things; which might not be owing to any sluggishness in him, but to an ill opinion he had of the Jews, as being a turbulent and uneasy people, and therefore he connived at some of the insolencies of the people towards them; though it did not become him, as a magistrate, to act such a part, whose business it was to keep the public peace, to quell disorders, to protect men's persons, and property, and prevent abuse and mischief, and to correct and punish for it. The Arabic version renders it, "and no man made any account of Gallio"; they did not fear his resentment, he having drove the Jews from the judgment seat.

{w} Laert. l. 3. in Vita Platon.

Acts 18:18

Ver. 18. And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while,.... A year and a half, as in Ac 18:11 for this insurrection might follow immediately upon the vision the apostle had; and who by that was encouraged to continue in this city, notwithstanding the treatment he met with; he not doubting of the promise of God, and of his power and faithfulness to fulfil it, though this was a trial of his faith and constancy:

and then took his leave of the brethren; whom he had been instrumental in the conversion of, and had established and confirmed in the faith; and having now done his work in this place, at least for the time present, he takes his leave of them and departs:

and sailed thence into Syria; or towards Syria, for he took Ephesus by the way, which was in Asia, and stopped there a little while:

and with him Priscilla and Aquila; whom he had met with at Corinth, and with whom he had lodged and wrought at his trade, Ac 18:2

Having shorn his head in Cenchrea; which some understand not of Paul, but of Aquila, who is the last person spoken of; and the Ethiopic version reads in the plural number, referring this to both Priscilla and Aquila, "and they had shaved their heads, for they had a vow"; and so it was read in a manuscript of Baronius, and Bede observes, that it was read in like manner in some copies in his time; but the more authentic reading is in the singular number, and is more generally understood of the Apostle Paul; who being about to go into Judea, to the Jew became a Jew, that he might gain some: Cenchrea, where this was done, was a sea port belonging to the Corinthians, on the east of the Isthmus, as Lechea was on the west; according to Pliny {x}, there were two gulfs, or bays, to the Isthmus, the one he calls the Corinthian bay, and others the Crissean and Alcyonian bay, and Golfo de Petras; the other the Saronic bay, now called Golfo de Engia; Lechea was in the Corinthian bay, and Cenchrea in the Saronic bay; and both belonged to Corinth, and were the bounds of the Straights; the space between them was the Isthmus, which consisted of about five miles; and so Pausanias says {y}, the Isthmus of the Corinthians is washed on both sides by the sea; on one side at Cenchrea, and on the other at Lechea, and this makes the island a continent; and likewise Philo {z} giving an account of a voyage of Flaccus says, that passing over the Ionian gulf, he came to the sea (or shore) of Corinth ------- and going over the Isthmus from Lechea, to the opposite sea, he came down to Cenchrea, a seaport of the Corinthians; of which Apuleius {a} gives this account:

"this town is a most noble colony of the Corinthians, it is washed by the Aegean and Saronic sea, where there is a port, a most safe receptacle for ships, and very populous."

Hither the apostle came from Corinth to take shipping, and from hence he sailed to Syria, as before observed: it has its name either from millet, for "Cenchros" signifies "millet"; and "Cenchrias" is "bread made of millet"; or from the bird "Cenchris", which is a kind of hawk; See Gill on "Ro 16:1".

For he had a vow; this, some think, could not be the vow of the Nazarites, for then he should have stayed till he came to Jerusalem, and have shaved his head at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and cast the hair into the fire, under the pot in which the peace offerings were boiled {b}; though he that vowed in the country, was not obliged to this: others think it was such an one as the Jews in travelling used, that they would not shave till they came to such a place; and so the apostle had made a vow that he would shave at Cenchrea; and accordingly did; but this is not likely, that the apostle should make a vow upon so light an occasion: others that it refers to his going to Jerusalem, to keep the feast there, Ac 18:21 and so these think the words are a reason, not of his shaving of his head, but of his sailing to Syria; the first is most probable, that it was a Nazarite's vow; see
Ac 21:24.

{x} Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 4. {y} Corinthiaca sive, l. 2. p. 86. {z} In Flaccum, p.

987. {a} Metamorphos. l. 10. in fine. {b} Misn. Nazir, c. 6. sect. 8. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 10. fol. 201. 3.

Acts 18:19

Ver. 19. And he came to Ephesus,.... The metropolis of Asia; according to Pliny {c}, it had been called by many names; at the time of the Trojan war, Alopes, then Ortygia and Morges, also Smyrna Trachea, Samornion and Prelea, and which he calls the work of the Amazons: some say {d} it was called Ephesus, because Hercules permitted the Amazons to dwell in it, Ephesus in the Greek language signifying "permission"; Pausanias {e} denies, that the famous temple in it was built by them, but by Ephesus the son of Caystrus, and says that from him the city had its name; though others say it was built by Androclus, the son of Codrus, king of Athens, in the time of David king of Israel; and that having suffered by the sea, it was rebuilt by Lysimachus king of Thrace, who called it after his wife's name Arsinoe; but he being dead, it was called by its ancient name Ephesus: it is now a poor village in the hands of the Turks, and with them goes by the name of Aiasalik; though with others it still has the name of Epheso; the Syriac version reads, "they came"; not only Paul, but Aquila and Priscilla; and certain it is that they came with him thither, since it follows,

and left them there; unless this is to be understood of Cenchrea: this clause is not here read in the Syriac version, but is placed at the end of Ac 18:21, where it reads much better; as that he should leave them at Ephesus, when he departed from thence, than when he first came thither; unless the sense is, that he left them in some part of the city, whilst he went to the Jewish synagogue; since it follows,

but he himself entered into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews; concerning Jesus being the Messiah, and the abrogation of the law; and the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, and not by the deeds of the law: which were the principal things in debate, between him and the Jews: Beza's ancient copy reads, "and the sabbath following he left them there".

{c} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 29. {d} Heraclides de politiis, p. 456. {e} Achaica sive, l. 7. p. 399.

Acts 18:20

Ver. 20. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them,.... Either Aquila and Priscilla, whom he left here, for here they were, as is certain from Ac 18:24,26 or rather the Jews with whom he reasoned, who might be desirous of further conference with him, upon the subject they had disputed about; either in order to gain more knowledge, or in hopes of baffling and confounding him:

he consented not; for a reason afterwards given.

Acts 18:21

Ver. 21. But bade them farewell, saying,.... As follows:

I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem; which perhaps was the passover, since that often went by the name of the feast: the why he must by all means keep it, was not because it was obligatory upon him; nor did he always observe it, as appears from his long stay at Corinth, and other places; and besides, as a Christian, he had nothing to do with it; but either because of his vow, Ac 18:18 or because he knew he should have an opportunity of preaching the Gospel to great numbers; the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions omit this clause:

but I will return again unto you, if God will; he promises to return to them, but not peremptorily as knowing that he was altogether subject to the will of God, who disposes and orders all things according to his sovereign pleasure; see **Jas 4:15** and he sailed from Ephesus; which was near the Aegean sea: such was the situation of Ephesus, according to Apollonius {f}; who says, that it stood out to the sea, which encompassed the land on which it was built; so Pausanias {g} relates, that Lysimachus passing into Asia by shipping, took the kingdom of Antigonus from him, and built the city the Ephesians now inhabit near the sea; so Josephus {h} reports of Herod and Agrippa, that travelling by land to Phrygia Major, they came to Ephesus, and again, diepleusin, "they sailed from Ephesus" to Samos.

{f} Philostrat. Vita Apollonii, l. 8. c. 3. {g} Attica sive, l. 1. p. 16. {h} Antiqu. l. 16. c. 2. sect. 2.

Acts 18:22

Ver. 22. And when he had landed at Caesarea,.... This was Caesarea Stratonis, formerly called Strato's tower: it would have been nearest for the apostle to have landed at Joppa, in order to go to Jerusalem, but that haven was a dangerous one; this was the safest, and which therefore Herod had repaired at a vast expense, and in honour of Caesar had called it by this name: of the port at Caesarea, and what a convenient and commodious one, as it was made by Herod, Josephus {i} gives a particular account, and who often calls this place Caesarea, paraliov, "Caesarea by the sea" {k}; and in other Jewish {l} writings mention is made of this place as a sea port, and of Nyroyqd amyd atnwv, "the shore of the sea of Caesarea": Josephus {m} sometimes calls it the port Sebastus, or Augustus, it being, as before observed, made by Herod, and so called in honour of Augustus Caesar; and in another place {n}, Sebastus the port of Caesarea: according to Jerom {o}, or a writer under his name, this was neither Caesarea Philippi, which indeed it could not be, that being an inland town; nor Caesarea formerly called Strato's tower, but a third Caesarea, the metropolis of Cappadocia: in which he must be mistaken, seeing that was no sea port, and the apostle could not be said to land there; nor did it lie in the way to Jerusalem from Ephesus; but this city was in Phenice, and lay between Joppa and Dora; which cities were maritime ones, but very disagreeable havens, because of the vehement strong winds from Africa: which rolling up the sand out of the sea upon the shore, would not admit of a quiet station {p}; wherefore the apostle chose to land here, and not at either of the said ports;

and gone up; not to Caesarea, but to Jerusalem, from thence, which lay higher; and going to and from these places, is signified by a going up and down, **Ac 9:30**. Moreover, the apostle had told the Ephesians, that he must go and keep the feast in Jerusalem, as he undoubtedly did: and yet if this does not refer to his going up thither, it will not be easy to observe that he went thither at all before his return to Ephesus; and besides, to suppose him to go from Caesarea to Antioch, was all one as to go back to Ephesus; and so to go, as one observes, by the same place to Jerusalem, into which he promised, in his return from Jerusalem, to come again, if God would:

and saluted the church; at Jerusalem, the mother church:

he went down to Antioch; in Syria, from whence he first set out.

{i} Antiqu. l. 15. c. 9. sect. 6. & de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 21. sect. 5, 6, 7. {k} Ib. de Bello l. 1. c. 3. sect. 5. & l. 3. c. 8. sect. 1. & l. 7. c. 1. sect. 3. c. 2. sect. 1. {l} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 71. 4. & 82. 2. {m} Antiqu. l. 17. c. 5. sect. 1. {n}

De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 31. sect. 3. {o} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. A. {p} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 15. c. 9. sect. 6.

Acts 18:23

Ver. 23. And after he had spent some time there,.... At Antioch:

he departed; from thence:

and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples; that were in those parts, confirming them in the faith of Christ, and fortifying their minds against the temptations of Satan, and encouraging them to bear the reproaches and persecutions of men; which shows the affection, diligence, and industry of the apostle: it seems there were disciples in these countries of Galatia and Phrygia, which very likely were made by the apostle, when he passed trough those places, Ac 16:6 and who were the beginning of Gospel churches in these places, which continued for ages after: certain it is, there were churches in Galatia in the apostle's time, of whom he makes mention, and to whom he wrote, 1Co 16:1. According to the apostolical constitutions, Crescens, mentioned **2Ti 4:10** was appointed by the apostles bishop of the churches of Galatia; and particularly it is said, that he was bishop of Chalcedon in Galatia;
See Gill on "Lu 10:1" and in the "second" century, there was a church at Ancyra, which was disturbed by the heresy of Montanus, and was established by Apolinarius, who makes mention of the elders of this church {q}: in the "third" century there were churches in Galatia, which Stephen bishop of Rome threatened with excommunication, because they rebaptized heretics: in the beginning of the "fourth" century, there were bishops from hence, which assisted at the council of Nice, against Arius, and at the synod of Sardica, in the same century; and at the beginning of it, Clemens bishop of Ancyra, after he had taught twenty nine years, suffered much in the persecution of Dioclesian, first at Rome, then at Nicomedia, and at last was put to death by the sword; in this age also lived Basil, bishop of Ancyra, under Constantius; he first came to the bishopric of that place under Constantine, but being deprived of it for four years, was restored by Constantius in the council of Sardica; under the former he disputed against Photinus, as Epiphanius {r} relates; who makes mention of Anysius his deacon, and Eutyches and Theodulus his notaries; and the same writer {s} takes notice of several elders and officers of the same church in that age, as Photinus, Eustathius, another Photinus, and Sigerius, elders, Hyginus deacon, Heracides subdeacon, Elpidus reader, and

Cyriacus president of the church: in the "fifth" century, there were many churches in Galatia, yea, they are said to be innumerable; Leontius was bishop of Ancyra in the times of Arcadius and Honorius; and was succeeded by Theodotus, who was in the first Ephesine synod against Nestorius, as was also Eusebius bishop of the same church, at another synod in the same place; Anastasius was bishop of the said church, lived under the emperor Leo the first, and was at the synod of Constantinople; Meliphthongus, bishop of Juliopolis in the same country, assisted at several synods; Eusebius, bishop of Aspona in Galatia, was present in the first synod at Ephesus, against Nestorius; likewise Peter bishop of Gangrae, and Theoctistus bishop of Pessinus, both lived in the time of the two synods, the infamous one at Ephesus, and the other at Chalcedon: in the "sixth" century, there were bishops of Ancyra, Juliopolis, and other cities in Galatia, who were present at the Roman and Constantipolitan synod; in this age, under Anastasius the emperor, lived Dorotheus bishop of Ancyra: in the "seventh" century were present, at the sixth council at Constantinople, several bishops of the churches of Galatia; as of Sinope, Pessinus, Aspona, and others: in the "eighth" century, mention is made of Basil, bishop of the church at Ancyra, Nicodemus bishop of Didymi, Gregory bishop of Sinope: and even in the ninth century a garrison of Christians was placed in Ancyra, against the incursions of the Saracens {t}; so long the Christian name remained in those parts: and that there were also churches in Phrygia is as evident; Aristarchus, a companion of the apostle Paul, is said to be bishop of Apamea, which was a city in Phrygia; See Gill on "Lu 10:1" the second century, Papias, a disciple of the Apostle John, was bishop of Hierapolis in this country {u}; and in the same age there was a church at Philomelium in Phrygia, to which the church at Smyrna wrote a letter, still extant in Eusebius {w}, which gives an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp; likewise the church at Lyons, in France, sent a letter to the churches in Asia and Phrygia, giving an account of their martyrs, which is to be seen in the same writer {x}; in this century lived Apolinarius, bishop of Hierapolis, who opposed the Phrygian heresy of Montanus; and who makes mention of Zoticus, of the village of Comana, and Julianus of Apamea, both in Phrygia, as his fellow elders and bishops {y}: Dionysius, of Alexandria, speaks of a church, and of the brethren at Synnada, which was in Phrygia, in a letter of his to Philemon, a presbyter at Rome {z}; at Lampsacus in Phrygia, there were martyrs that suffered under Decius: in the third century, there was a church at Hierapolis, famous from the times of the apostles. Tertullian makes mention of the believers in Christ in Phrygia, in his time {a}: in the beginning of the "fourth" century under Dioclesian, a whole city in Phrygia of Christians was set on fire and burnt, men, women, and children, calling upon Christ the God of all {b}; and at the council of Nice, under Constantine, were present bishops of many churches in Phrygia; as Ilium, Synnada, Eucarpia, Hierapolis, and others; at Lampsacus, in this country, was held a memorable synod against Eudoxus and Acacius, the chief of the Arian faction: in the "fifth" century there were churches in Phrygia; Theodosius and Agapetus were bishops of Synnada in Phrygia Pacatiana; Marinianus, bishop of the same place, was present at the several synods in this century; Nunechius of Laodicea, Gennadius of Acmonii, Thomas and Olympius, both of Theodosiopolis, Lucianus of Ipsa, Albertus of Hierapolis, Eusebius of Doryleus, with many others, all in Phrygia, are made mention of in history: in the "sixth" century, several bishops of Phrygia, as of Philomelium, &c. were present at the synod held at Rome and Constantinople: in the "seventh" century, bishops of several churches in this country, as of Hierapolis, Synnada, &c. assisted at the sixth synod at Constantinople: in the eighth century were many churches here, whose bishops were present at the Nicene synod, as Basil, bishop of Pergamus, Nicetas of Ilium, John of Synnada, and others {c}.

{q} Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 16. {r} Contra Haeres. l. 3. Haeres. 71. {s} Ib. Haeres. 72. {t} Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. 7. p. 117. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. c. 9. p. 350, 425. c. 10. p. 550, 554. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 604, 605. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 5. c. 10. p. 341. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5. c. 10. p. 360. cent. 9. c. 2. p. 3. {u} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 36. {w} Ib. l. 4. c. 15. {x} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 1. {y} Ib. c. 16. {z} Ib. l. 7. c. 7. {a} Adv. Judaeos, c. 7. {b} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 8. c. 11. {c} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. c. 9. p. 48l. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 597. &c. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 366.

Acts 18:24

Ver. 24. And a certain Jew named Apollos,.... Who by some is thought to be the same with Apelles, Ro 16:10, his name is Greek, though he was a Jew, not only by religion, but by birth, being of a Jewish extract:

born at Alexandria; in Egypt, which was built by Alexander the great, from whence it had its name; it was the metropolis of Egypt, and the seat of the kings of it; great numbers of Jews were in this place; here lived Philo the famous Jew:

an eloquent man; in speech, as well as learned, wise, and "prudent", as the Ethiopic version renders it:

and mighty in the Scriptures; of the Old Testament, particularly in the prophecies of them concerning the Messiah; he had thoroughly read them, and carefully examined them, and could readily cite them; as well as had great knowledge of them, and was capable of explaining them; he was "skilful in the Scriptures", as the Syriac version renders it; or he "knew" them, as the Ethiopic; he had large acquaintance with them, and was well versed in them: it is a Jewish way of speaking; so Ahithophel is said to be hrwtb rwbg, "mighty in the law" {d}; the same is said of the sons of Reuben {e}: this man

came to Ephesus; after the departure of the Apostle Paul, and while Aquila and Priscilla were there; the reason of his coming hither was to preach the word, as he did.

{d} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 1. {e} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 60. 1.

Acts 18:25

Ver. 25. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord,.... Which John, whose baptism he only knew, came to prepare: the word here used signifies "catechised"; and suggests, that he was trained up by his parents in this way, who might have been the disciples of John, though afterwards removed from Judea to Alexandria; and that he only had been taught the rudiments of the Christian religion, or doctrine of the Gospel; here called the way of the Lord, or which directs and leads unto him, as the only Saviour, and is the path of faith and truth; or as some copies read, "the word of the Lord"; and which accounts for what is afterwards said of him:

and being fervent in the spirit; either in or by the Spirit of God, being made so by him, who is, compared to fire, and who, in the form of cloven tongues of fire, sat upon the disciples at the day of Pentecost, and upon others; among whom this Apollos is by some thought to be, though without any reason; however, he might be inspired with zeal by the Spirit of God: or "in his own spirit", as the Ethiopic version renders it; his soul was inflamed with zeal for the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the good of souls; his ministry was very affectionate, warm, and lively; see Ro 12:11 He spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord; or "of Jesus", as read the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; according to the measure of light and grace he had received, he spake out freely and fully, and taught the people with great industry, and with all the exactness he could, the things he knew concerning the person, offices, and grace of the Lord Jesus:

knowing only the baptism of John; which must be understood, not of the ordinance of baptism singly, as administered by John, but of the whole ministry of John; as of that ordinance, so of his doctrine concerning repentance and remission of sins; and concerning Christ that was to come, and concerning his being come, and who he was, whom John pointed at, and taught the people to believe in: but perhaps he might know very little, if anything, of the miracles of Christ, or of his death and resurrection from the dead, and the benefits and effects thereof; and of the pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, and the light and knowledge which were communicated thereby.

Acts 18:26

Ver. 26. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue,.... Of the Jews at Ephesus; using great freedom of speech, and showing much intrepidity and greatness of soul, and presence of mind; not fearing the faces of men, nor the revilings and contradictions of the Jews:

whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard; they attending at the synagogue, and having observed what he delivered, that there was some deficiency in it, though they took no notice of it publicly; partly on their own account, it not being proper, especially for Priscilla, to speak in public, nor was it allowed in the Jewish synagogues for a woman to speak there; and partly on his account, that they might not put him to the blush, and discourage him; and chiefly on account of the Gospel, that they might not lay any stumblingblocks in the way of that, and of young converts, and give an occasion to the adversary to make advantages: wherefore

they took him unto them; they took him aside when he came out of the synagogue, and privately conversed with him; they had him "to their own house"; as the Syriac version renders it;

and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly; these two doubtless had received a considerable measure of evangelical light and knowledge from the Apostle Paul, during the time of their conversation with him; and as they freely received from him, they freely imparted it to Apollos, with a good design to spread the truth of the Gospel, and to promote it and the interest of Christ in the world: and as on the one hand it was a good office, and a kind part in them, to communicate knowledge to him, so it was an instance of a good spirit, and of condescension in him, to be taught and instructed by them;

especially since one of them was a woman, and both mechanics, and made but a mean figure: and from hence it may be observed, that women of grace, knowledge, and experience, though they are not allowed to teach in public, yet they may, and ought to communicate in private, what they know of divine things, for the use of others.

Acts 18:27

Ver. 27. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, &c. The chief city of which was Corinth, and whither Apollos went, as appears from Ac 19:1. What disposed him to go thither, after he had received a greater degree of light and knowledge, was no doubt that he might communicate it, to the good of others, to which he was moved by the Holy Ghost, who had work for him to do there: according to Beza's most ancient copy, there were Corinthians sojourning in Ephesus, who when they had heard him (Apollos), besought him that he would go with them into their country; to which he agreeing, the Ephesians wrote to the disciples at Corinth to receive him, as follows:

the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; that is, the brethren at Ephesus, among whom Aquila was a principal one, wrote letters of recommendation to the brethren of the churches in Achaia, particularly at Corinth, not only that they would receive him into their houses, and hospitably entertain him as a Christian man, but admit him, and behave towards him as a preacher of the Gospel:

who when he was come; into Achaia, and to Corinth:

helped them much which had believed through grace; the phrase "through grace", is omitted in the Vulgate Latin version, but is in all the Greek copies, and may be connected either with the word "helped"; as the Syriac version, "he helped through grace"; and then the sense is, that Apollos, through the gifts of grace bestowed on him, or by the assistance of the grace of God, or both, greatly helped and contributed much to the advantage of the believers in those parts; as to the encouragement of their faith, and the increase of the joy of it; for the quickening, and comforting, and establishing them in the truths and doctrines of the Gospel, by his affectionate, fervent, and nervous way of preaching: or it may be connected with the word "believed", as it is in the Arabic version and in ours; and the meaning is, that he greatly assisted such who were already believers; and who became so, not of themselves, but through the grace of God; for faith is not of nature, nor the produce of man's free will, but is the gift of God's grace; it is a fruit of electing grace, an instance of distinguishing grace, it is owing to efficacious grace, and comes along with effectual calling grace, through the word preached, the means of grace; and is supported and maintained by the grace of God; the Ethiopic version renders it, "he preached much to them, who believed in the grace of God"; that is, in the Gospel, the doctrine of the grace of God, which they had received and professed; or in the love and favour of God, they were rooted and grounded in, and persuaded of.

Acts 18:28

Ver. 28. For he mightily convinced the Jews,.... His reasoning was so strong and nervous, his arguments so weighty and powerful, and the passages he produced out of the Old Testament so full and pertinent, that the Jews were not able to stand against him; they could not object to the texts of Scripture he urged, nor to the sense he gave of them, nor answer the arguments founded upon them; he was an overmatch for them; they were refuted by him over and over, and were confounded to the last degree:

and that publicly, in their synagogue, before all the people; which increased their shame and confusion; and was the means of spreading the Gospel, of bringing others to the faith of it, and of establishing them in it, who had already received it: showing by the Scriptures; of the Old Testament, which the Jews received and acknowledged as the word of God:

that Jesus was Christ; or that Christ, that Messiah, which these Scriptures spoke of, whom God had promised, and the church of God expected; and which was the main thing in controversy between the Jews and the Christians, as it still is.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 19:1

Ver. 1. And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth,.... Whither he came after the Apostle Paul, and where he watered what the apostle had planted, and where he became very famous and eminent; insomuch that he was set up, though not with his will, at the head of a party, in opposition to the chief of the apostles, Peter and Paul; see **1Co 1:12**.

Paul having passed through the upper coasts; that is, of Phrygia, Galatia, Pontus, Bithynia, Lydia, Lycaonia, and Paphlagonia;

came to Ephesus; into Ionia, of which Ephesus was the chief city, and lay near the sea; wherefore the other countries are called the upper coasts; hither he came, according to his promise in Ac 28:21

And finding certain disciples; such as believed in Christ, made a profession of him, and had been baptized in his name, for such were commonly called disciples: these do not seem to be persons, who were either converted by Paul, when he was at Ephesus before, or by Apollos, who had been there since, and was gone; but rather some who came hither from other parts, since the apostle was at this place; though indeed his stay at Ephesus before was so short, that they might be here, and he not hear of them, or meet with them.

Acts 19:2

Ver. 2. He said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost,.... Meaning, not the special regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost, for that is supposed in their being disciples and believers, but the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, for it follows,

since ye believed? that is, in Christ; which is taking it for granted, that they had received the special grace of the Spirit of God; for this believing is to be understood of true, spiritual, special faith in Christ:

and they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost; by which they could not mean the person of the Holy Ghost: for they must have known that there was such a divine person as the Holy Ghost, from the writings of the Old Testament, with which they were conversant: and from the ministry of John, into whose baptism they were baptized; who saw the Spirit of God descend on Jesus, and bore witness of it; and declared, that Christ who was to come after him, would baptize with the Holy Ghost: nor could they mean the special grace of the Spirit, which they themselves had received; but the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit of God, which they at present knew nothing of, and which were afterwards bestowed upon them: they knew that there were prophecies in the Old Testament, concerning the effusion of the Spirit in the last days, in the days of the Messiah; but they had not heard that these had had their accomplishment; they had heard nothing of the day of

Pentecost, and of the pouring out of the Spirit upon the apostles then, nor of any instance of this kind since; they did not know that the Holy Ghost was yet, **Joh 7:39** they knew he was promised, but not that he was given; the Ethiopic version, to avoid the difficulty of the text, renders it, "we have only heard that there was an Holy Ghost".

Acts 19:3

Ver. 3. And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized?.... The apostle takes it for granted that they were baptized, since they were not only believers, but disciples; such as not only believed with the heart, but had made a profession of their faith, and were followers of Christ; but asks unto what they were baptized; either in whose name they were baptized, since Christian baptism was administered in the name of the Spirit, as well as in the name of the Father and of the Son; or what attended or followed their baptism, seeing sometimes the Holy Ghost fell upon persons, either before baptism, or at it, or after it:

and they said, unto John's baptism; some think they had never been baptized at all with water baptism, only had received the doctrine preached by John, concerning repentance and remission of sins, and so were baptized unto him, professing the same doctrine he did, just as the Israelites were baptized into Moses; others think they were baptized, but very wrongly, being baptized in the name of John, and not in the name of Jesus Christ; and so, as it was not Christian baptism they had submitted to, it was right to baptize them again: but neither of these are probable, for it is not likely that they should receive John's doctrine, and not his baptism; that they should be his disciples and followers, and not attend to the more distinguishing branch of his ministry; and it is still more unlikely that they should be baptized in his name, who preached Jesus Christ to his followers, and pointed out to them the Lamb of God, and declared him to be greater than he; it seems rather that they were baptized, and that they were baptized in the name of Christ, as John's disciples were, as the apostle affirms in the following words.

Acts 19:4

Ver. 4. Then said Paul,.... In reply to their answer, understanding them that they were baptized by John, he takes it up, and gives an account of John's baptism: showing how agreeable it was, and that it was the same baptism with the baptism of Christ, being administered in his name:

John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance; which required repentance antecedent to it, and was a fruit and effect, and so an evidence of it:

saying unto the people; the people of the Jews, the common people, the multitude that attended on his ministry:

that they should believe on him, which should come after him, that is, on Jesus Christ; so that he preached faith in Christ, as well as repentance towards God; and made the one as well as the other a necessary prerequisite unto baptism; which shows, that his baptism and Christian baptism are the same.

Acts 19:5

Ver. 5. When they heard this,.... That is, the people to whom John preached, his hearers; when they heard of the Messiah, and that Jesus was he, and that it became them to believe in him:

they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; not the disciples that Paul found at Ephesus, but the hearers of John; for these are the words of the Apostle Paul, giving an account of John's baptism, and of the success of his ministry, showing, that his baptism was administered in the name of the Lord Jesus; and not the words of Luke the Evangelist, recording what followed upon his account of John's baptism; for then he would have made mention of the apostle's name, as he does in the next verse; and have said, when they heard this account, they were baptized by Paul in the name of the Lord Jesus: the historian reports two things, first what Paul said, which lies in Ac 19:4 then what he did, Ac 19:6 where he repeats his name, as was necessary; as that he laid his hands upon them, which was all that was needful to their receiving the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, having been already baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus: which sense is the more confirmed by the particles men and de, which answer to one another in verses 4 and 5, and show the words to be a continuation of the apostle's speech, and not the words of the historian, which begin in the next verse. Beza's ancient copy adds, "for the remission of sins".

Acts 19:6

Ver. 6. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them,.... They having been before baptized, not by him, but by John, or one of his disciples, in the name of the Lord Jesus; just as Peter and John laid their hands upon the believing Samaritans, who had been before baptized by Philip, **Ac 8:14** and the same extraordinary effects followed:

the Holy Ghost came on them; in his extraordinary gifts, whose special grace they had before an experience of:

and they spake with tongues; with other tongues, or in other languages, which they had never learned, or had been used to, as the disciples did at the day of "Pentecost": and prophesied; preached, having an extraordinary gift at once, of explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, and also foretold things to come.

Acts 19:7

Ver. 7. And all the men were about twelve. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, have not the word "about"; but affirm, that the men were twelve; and indeed the number being so small, the historian might be at a certainty about it: these seem to be the first materials of a Gospel church at Ephesus, which afterwards was very large and flourishing, and very likely were some of the elders of it.

Acts 19:8

Ver. 8. And he went into the synagogue,.... Of the Jews at Ephesus, for it seems to have been a private house, where he had met with the twelve baptized disciples, and had laid his hands on them; and these being Jews, as it seems most likely, by their having been baptized into John's baptism, the apostle went along with them to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his usual custom; having a very great desire, and an affectionate concern, for the welfare of his countrymen the Jews:

and spake boldly for the space of three months; that is, he used great freedom of speech, and showed much courage and intrepidity of mind, in preaching the Gospel at the synagogue every sabbath day as it returned, during this space of time; some manuscripts read, "three days":

disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God; the kingdom of the Messiah, the Gospel dispensation, the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, and the Gospel church state, often signified by the kingdom of God, and of heaven, in Scripture; and concerning the glory of a future state, the way and right unto it, and meetness for it; and these things he reasoned upon in such a strong and nervous manner, and made use of such powerful arguments, in proof and demonstration of them, as were very persuasive, and engaged many to believe them, and give their assent unto them.

Acts 19:9

Ver. 9. But when divers were hardened and believed not,.... For though some were affected with and convinced by the arguments the apostle used, others were but the more hardened and remained incredulous: for the Gospel, while it is the savour of life unto life to some, it is the savour of death unto death, to others; as the sun melts the wax, and hardens the clay:

but spake evil of the way before the multitude; the Syriac version and Beza's ancient copy read, "before the multitude of the Gentiles": the unbelieving Jews not only contradicted the Gospel preached by the apostle, but blasphemed it, and said all the evil things of it they could, and loaded it with reproaches, and charged it with all the bad consequences they could think of; and that publicly, before all the people, in order to prejudice them against it; for by "the way", is meant the doctrine of the Gospel, which the Vulgate Latin here reads, "the way of the Lord"; and so some copies; and two of Stephens's copies read, "the way of God", as does also the Syriac version; and the Arabic version, "the way of faith"; and the Ethiopic version, "the doctrine"; the doctrine, which shows the way of God's salvation by Jesus Christ:

he departed from them; the hardened, unbelieving, and blaspheming Jews, as being unworthy of the means of grace; he went out of their synagogue, and no more entered there: and separated the disciples; from them, the twelve disciples he had laid his hands on, and others who in this space of time, the space of three months, had been converted under his ministry; these he formed into a separate Gospel church state, as well as engaged them to quit the company and conversation of these blasphemers, and no more attend with them in their synagogue, that so they might not be infected and corrupted by them; a separation from such who contradict and blaspheme the truths and ordinances of the Gospel, is justifiable:

disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus: which was either built by him, and so went by his name, or which one of this name possessed, and made use of; for it seems to be the proper name of a man, and so the Syriac version renders it, "whose name was Tyrannus"; though by others it is taken to be an appellative, and to design some great person, who patronised the apostle, and in whose house he taught; the word "tyrant", being formerly used for a king, a prince, or nobleman; and so the Arabic version renders it, "in the dwelling house of one of the great men"; the chief of Asia, that were his friends, Ac 19:31 and so the Ethiopic version, "and he taught daily before the court and the governors": some copies read "Tyrannius"; mention is made of a philosopher whose name was "Tyrannion", who was so called, because he vexed and disturbed those that were brought up in the same school with him {f}; this man it seems was a schoolmaster; there was one of his name a bishop of Tyre, a martyr under Dioclesian; and another whose name was Tyrannus, bishop of Antioch {g}; Beza's ancient copy, and one of Stephens's, add, "from the fifth hour to the tenth"; as if he spent five hours in public teaching every day, and rest in his trade and devotion.

{f} Hesychius de Philosophis, p. 64. {g} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 7. c. 32. & l. 8. c. 13.

Acts 19:10

Ver. 10. And this continued by the space of two years,.... Reckoning from the end of the three months, which had been spent in teaching in the synagogue:

so that all they which dwelt in Asia; in the lesser Asia, called the proconsular Asia, of which Ephesus was the chief city:

heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks; these, as they came to Ephesus, whether on account of religion, the Asiatic Jews to their synagogue, and the Greeks or Gentiles to the famous temple of Diana, or on account of trade and business, or for the sake of seeing this place, had the opportunity of hearing the Apostle Paul preach, concerning the person, offices, and grace of Christ; and dispute and reason concerning the more abstruse and difficult points of the Christian religion, in the above school, for two years together; so that the word of the Lord went out from hence, and was spread in all the cities and towns in Asia.

Acts 19:11

Ver. 11. And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul. For the confirmation of the doctrine which he preached, and of his mission, as an apostle; and these were not any sort of miracles, common and vulgar ones, and much less things of chance, and what were merely accidental, as the word may signify; but they were rare and uncommon ones, and in which there was a visible display of the power of God; to whom as the efficient cause they are ascribed, the apostle being only an instrument God made use of.

Acts 19:12

Ver. 12. So that from his body were brought unto the sick,.... The Ethiopic version renders it, "from the extremity", or "border of his garment"; and the Syriac version, "from the garments which were upon his body"; were brought and put upon the sick; that is, of the clothes which the apostle wore, some of them were taken and carried to sick persons, and used by them: particularly "handkerchiefs" or "aprons"; the former were such as he might use to wipe his face with, and remove sweat, or any filth from the body; and the latter, what he might wear as a mechanic, when working at his trade:

and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them; who were afflicted and possessed with them; these were some of the special and uncommon miracles wrought by the hands of the apostle, and which were wrought in an uncommon way; and which most clearly showed that they were wrought by a divine power.

Acts 19:13

Ver. 13. Then certain of the vagabond Jews,.... Who strolled about from place to place, pretending to tell fortunes, cure diseases by charms, and dispossess devils by conjuration, and therefore are called as follows,

exorcists; such there were among the Jews, as Justin Martyr observes {h}, who adjured by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: these

took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus; they imitated the Apostle Paul, and attempted to do as he did, using the same: name; hoping to get money or applause, or both, in this way; and it may be observed, that there were some who really did cast out devils in the name of Christ, who did not belong to him, **Mt 7:22**

Saying, we adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth; that is, to come out the bodies of those men which they had possessed: and the Jews made use of the name of Jesus for healing diseases; for it is said of one {i}, that

"he swallowed something which almost choked him, and one came, and muttered to him in the name of Jesus ben Pandira, and he was well"

The Alexandrian copy, Beza's ancient one, and others, the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read, "I adjure you", &c.

{h} Dialog. cum Tryphon. p. 311. {i} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 14. 4. & Avoda Zara, fol. 40. 4.

Acts 19:14

Ver. 14. And there were seven sons of one Sceva a Jew,.... Who strolled about the country, and used exorcisms: and

chief of the priests; that were at Ephesus; not the high priest of the Jews, for he would have been at Jerusalem, and not at Ephesus; though indeed it does not necessarily follow from the words, that Sceva himself was there, only his seven sons: however, no such name appears in the catalogue of the Jewish high priests, nor is it reasonable to think, that seven sons of an high priest should follow such a vagabond course of life: Beza's ancient copy only calls him "a priest"; and the Alexandrian copy reads his name, Sceuta, and the Ethiopic version omits it; it is the same with hawko, and signifies a spectator, or observer; see the Targum on 2Sa 13:34.

which did so; adjured the devils in the name of Jesus, to come out; at least they did so in one case, as follows.

Acts 19:15

Ver. 15. And the evil spirit answered and said,.... The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, add, "to them"; to the seven sons of Sceva:

Jesus I know; to be the Son of God and Messiah, and own that he has power of dispossessing spirits, of which there were many instances in the days of his flesh:

and Paul I know; and own to be a servant of the most high God, by whom miracles of this kind have been wrought:

but who are ye? you are not the disciples of Jesus, nor the servants of God, but the children of the devil, and have no power over us, but on the other hand are subject to us.

Acts 19:16

Ver. 16. And the man in whom the evil spirit was,.... Being agitated by him:

leapt upon them; with great agility and force, and laid hold on them, and struggled with them, and beat and wounded them, and stripped them naked:

and overcame them, and prevailed against them; the Alexandrian copy, Beza's most ancient one, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "and overcame both"; as if only two of these seven sons had made this attempt, and were so used; though the Ethiopic version reads, "and overcame them all"; all the seven sons:

so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded; having their clothes tore off, and their bodies beat and bruised.

Acts 19:17

Ver. 17. And this was known to all the Jews,.... These men being Jews: and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus: for though it was done in a private house, yet there might be many spectators and witnesses, both Jews and Greeks, who spread this fact about the city, and who, were to be depended upon:

and fear fell on them all; on the enemies of Christ and his Gospel, so that others were deterred from making such an attempt for the future:

and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified; which had such power over evil spirits, and whose power they themselves acknowledged: this was done by them that believed in Christ, who thought and spake the more highly of him; and who more strongly believed in him, and so magnified him, and gave more glory to him; Christ is great in himself, and he is magnified and made great, when he is declared to be so, and is treated as such.

Acts 19:18

Ver. 18. And many that believed,.... In Jesus Christ, whose name was spoken of with great respect, and which spread fear in every person:

came; to the apostle:

and confessed; their sins; and acknowledged what a wicked life they had led:

and showed their deeds; their former evil deeds, which they had been guilty of; one copy reads, "their sins"; see **Mt 3:6**.

Acts 19:19

Ver. 19. Many also of them which used curious arts..... Magic arts, soothsaying, necromancy, conjuration, and the like, being convinced of the folly and wickedness of them:

brought their books together; by which they had learned these arts; Ephesus was famous for this sort of learning; here Apollonius Tyaneus, in the beginning of Nero's reign, opened a school and taught magic, and such like things: frequent mention is made of the Ephesian letters, which were no other than enchantments; and even Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians, is said to be a magician {k}:

and burned them before all men; to show their detestation of them, and the truth and genuineness of their repentance for their former sins; and that these books might not be a snare to them for the future, nor be made use of by others:

and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver; which is thought to answer to one thousand five hundred sixty two pounds and ten shillings of our money; reckoning a piece of silver, an Attic drachma; for such might be the silver pieces at Ephesus, a city of Greece, and which was of the value of our money seven pence halfpenny; but if Luke meant by pieces of silver, shekels, according to the Jewish way, See Gill on "Mt 26:15" then the sum is much larger, for a shekel was about two shillings and six pence of our money; so that fifty thousand pieces of silver, amount to six thousand two hundred and fifty pounds; a large sum indeed for magic books! some manuscripts read "gold" instead of "silver", which must greatly increase the value.

{k} Tatian. contr. Graecos, p. 147.

Acts 19:20

Ver. 20. So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed. Over conjuring books, conjurers themselves, yea, even the devils; the power of God going along with it, many were converted; which is meant by the increase of it, and were delivered from the power of darkness, out of the hands of Satan, and translated into the kingdom of Christ. Beza's ancient copy reads, the "faith" of God; and the Syriac version, "faith in God".

Acts 19:21

Ver. 21. After these things were ended,.... After that the apostle had disputed with the Jews in their synagogue, for the space of three months, and in the school of Tyrannus about two years; and after many souls had been converted at Ephesus, and were formed into a church state, and were established in the faith:

when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia: in the former of which were the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, and in the latter, Corinth; where the apostle had already been, and preached the Gospel with success, and had laid the foundation of a Gospel church state in each place; but was willing to visit them again, both to confirm them in the doctrines of the Gospel, and, if it was the will of God, that he might be the instrument of converting others, and adding them to them, as well as to make some collections among them, for the poor saints at Jerusalem: for through these places he intended

to go to Jerusalem; to visit the church there, and distribute to the poor what he had gathered, or should gather for them among the Gentile churches:

saying, after I have been there, I must also see Rome; the metropolis of the empire, and the glory of the whole world; and which to see was one of Austin's three wishes: but the apostle's desire was not so much to see the magnificence of the city, as the saints in it; and that he might impart some spiritual gift unto them, and have some fruit among them; and be a means of quickening and comforting them, and of gaining others to them; and it was the will of God that he should go there; and this he spake by a prophetic spirit, and as being under the impulse of the Spirit of God; see Ac 23:11.

Acts 19:22

Ver. 22. So he sent into Macedonia,.... To Philippi, or Thessalonica, or Berea, or some of the places there, to let them know of his coming, and to prepare for him:

two of them that ministered unto him; that were his assistants in preaching the Gospel:

Timotheus and Erastus; the former of these was a disciple he found at Lystra, and took along with him, and to whom he afterwards wrote two epistles; and the latter seems to be the same with him, who was chamberlain of the city of Corinth, and is said to abide there, Ro 16:23 The Ethiopic version, instead of Erastus, wrongly reads Aristarchus; whereas it is certain, he was not sent into Macedonia, but was with the apostle at Ephesus in the tumult, Ac 19:29.

But he himself stayed in Asia for a season; that is, at Ephesus, as the following narration shows.

Acts 19:23

Ver. 23. And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. The Syriac version reads, "the way of God"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "the way of the Lord": that is, the Christian religion, and the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, which the saints were directed to walk in; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "about this doctrine"; which mightily grew and prevailed, and which such numbers embraced; and how great the stir was about it, and from whence it arose, who began it, and what were the consequences of it, are hereafter related.

Acts 19:24

Ver. 24. For a certain man, named Demetrius, a silversmith,.... Who worked in silver, not in coining silver money, but in making silver vessels, in melting silver, and casting it into moulds, and forming it into different shapes; and particularly,

which made silver shrines for Diana; who Diana was,
See Gill on "Ac 19:27", these were not coins or medals of silver, struck by Demetrius, with the figure of the temple of Diana on them, nor images of Diana, as the Ethiopic version reads; but they were chaplets, or little temples made of silver, in imitation of the temple of Diana at Ephesus, with her image included in it; the words may be rendered, "silver temples": in some manuscripts it is added, "like little chests": which being sold to the people,

brought no small gain to the craftsmen: who were of the same trade with him; masters of the same business, who employed others under them, as appears by what follows.

Acts 19:25

Ver. 25. Whom he called together,.... That is, the craftsmen; "all his co-artificers", as the Syriac version reads, all the chief of the trade, the masters of it, as he himself was:

with the workmen of like occupation; who were employed by him, and the rest of the masters in the several branches of the business; as founders, engravers, polishers, &c. some might make the images, and others the temples, or shrines; some do one part and some another, so that abundance of persons might be employed in this business:

and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth; the workmen not only had a comfortable and sufficient livelihood, but the masters of the trade grew rich: such a demand had they for their goods, and so profitable was this craft to them: this was a very strong and moving argument, to influence the masters and workmen; it so nearly touched them, and their worldly interest, than which nothing sticks closer to carnal men. Demetrius's way of address was very moving and persuasive, but his method manifestly betrayed what was his greatest concern, not religion, but his own secular interest; that which he should have mentioned last, if at all, he begins with: self is the leading and governing principle in a natural man.

Acts 19:26

Ver. 26. Moreover, ye see and hear,.... Demetrius appeals to their senses of seeing and hearing; they saw what was done in their own city, and they had heard how things were elsewhere; they might believe what they saw with their eyes, and they had reason to depend upon the report which was brought to their ears:

that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people; by "all Asia" is meant Ionia, that part of Asia, of which Ephesus was the metropolis; from whence great multitudes came to Ephesus, and heard Paul in the school of Tyrannus, Ac 19:10 so that not only many in the city of Ephesus, but even in almost every city and town of Asia, had heard and received the Gospel preached by Paul; of whom Demetrius speaks very contemptibly, as if he was a worthless vagabond fellow, who had the art of persuading and deluding people; he prevailed upon them to believe in Christ whom he preached, and turned away much people from the worshipping of idols, to the living God:

saying, that they be no gods which are made with hands; such as was their Diana, and the images of her, which these workmen made; and consequently if his doctrine prevailed, as it had much already, their trade would be worth nothing, and their livelihood be lost, which was the grand thing they had in view; for one would think they could never believe themselves, that the images they made were really gods; but whether they did or not, certain it is, that the apostle's doctrine was true, that such could not be gods, and which agrees both with reason and revelation.

Acts 19:27

Ver. 27. So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought,.... Or "to come into reproof", as the words may be literally rendered, and as they are in the Vulgate Latin version; that is, if this notion prevails, that they are not gods, which are made with hands, this art and business of making shrines and images for Diana will be brought into contempt, and come to nothing; who will buy them, when once they believe there is no divinity in them? they will despise them, and the makers of them; yea, the latter will be in danger of being taken up, and charged, convicted, reproved and punished as idolaters, and blasphemers of deity; to which sense the Ethiopic version inclines, which renders it, "and not only for this thing we shall be in danger"; of being called to an account for making these shrines; our business will be put down, and we shall be treated with disgrace, if not with severity:

but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised; here religion is pretended, and a concern shown for that; partly on purpose to cover, as much as could be, the selfish and avaricious principles from which Demetrius acted; and partly the more to stir up the meaner and more ignorant sort of people, and irritate and provoke them, and set them against Paul and his doctrine, who generally speaking are the most bigoted. Diana is said to be the daughter of Jupiter, by Latona; she is often called the goddess of hunting, and is said to preside at births; the moon was worshipped by the Heathens under her name; she is here called the "great" goddess, for the Gentiles had their greater and their lesser gods, and she is reckoned among the former, which were in number twelve; Juno, Vesta, Minerva, Ceres, Diana, Venus, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Neptune, Vulcan, and Apollo: the temple of Diana at Ephesus is reckoned among the seven wonders of the world; it was about seven furlongs distant from the city {l}, and was 425 feet long, and 220 feet broad, and had in it 127 pillars, 60 feet high; it was built on marshy ground, that it might not be affected with earthquakes; and yet that such a pile of building might not stand upon a slippery and unstable foundation, coals and fleeces of wool were laid in the foundation and trodden in it, according to Pliny {m}, from whom this account is taken; who says it was two hundred and twenty years in building, and elsewhere he says it was four hundred years; the architect who first began it, he makes to be one Chersiphron; but it is commonly ascribed to the Amazons, and particularly to the Amazon Otrira, the wife of Mars; though Pausanias {n}, as he observes that the temple of Diana of the Ephesians was built before the Ionians came into these parts, so he denies that it was built by the Amazons, but affirms that the builders of it were Cresus, and Ephesus, the son of Caystrus. Solinus {o}, who calls it a fabric of the Amazons, says it was

"so magnificent, that Xerxes, when he burnt all the temples in Asia, spared this only; but (adds he) this clemency of Xerxes did not preserve the sacred temple from evil; for Herostratus set fire to this noble fabric with his own hands, for no other reason, as he confessed, than to get himself a name."

At which the Ephesians were so enraged, that they got an order published by the common council of Asia, throughout all the neighbouring kingdoms and nations, that his name should not be once mentioned {p}; which however, though it might be regarded for a while, was not always; for his name has since been both spoken of, and transmitted in writing to posterity. The above historian observes, that the temple at Ephesus was burnt, the same day in which Alexander was born at Pella; which occasioned Timaeus facetiously to say, as is related by Cicero {q}

"it is no wonder that the temple of Diana of the Ephesians should be burnt the same night that Alexander was born, seeing Diana, being desirous to be present at the delivery of Olympias, (the mother of Alexander,) was absent from her own house."

However, the inhabitants of Ephesus being very rich, and also willing to communicate to the charge of rebuilding this edifice, the women even bringing their gold, silver, and other precious ornaments, the work was set about, and a fabric was raised much more beautiful than the former; the name of the architect by whom it was rebuilt was Dinocrates; and so it continued, to this time the apostle was at Ephesus, a very fine and grand building, and commanded great attention, veneration, and respect from men; and which Demetrius suggests would fall into contempt, through the doctrine of the apostle, should he be suffered to go on:

and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth; by "her magnificence" is meant, her deity; which must be denied her, as well as her temple despised, if Paul's doctrine was true, and should obtain; so the Syriac version renders it, "the goddess herself"; and the Ethiopic version, "her divinity": what Demetrius says of her, that she was worshipped by all Asia, and the world, was fact; not only all Asia was concerned in building her temple at Ephesus, as many writers affirm {r}; but she was one of the highest class of deities, and received as such by the whole Gentile world; yea, Diana of the Ephesians, as distinguished from all other Dianas, was revered by all nations. There were temples of Diana of the Ephesians in other places, particularly at Corinth, as Pausanias relates; and who also affirms, that all the cities celebrate Diana of the Ephesians, and men in private honour her above other deities; the reasons are, the glory of the Amazons, from whom according to fame her image was, and because of the antiquity of the temple: three other things besides these, adds he, contribute to the glory of it; the magnificence of the temple, which exceeds whatever was done by man, and the splendour of the city of the Ephesians, and the renown of the deity in it {s}: here the silversmith suggests the catholicism and universality of their religion, in favour of it.

{l} Herodot. l. 1. c. 26. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 40. & l. 36. c. 14. {n} Achaica sive, 1. 7. p. 399. {o} Polyhistor. c. 53. {p} A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 2. c. 6. {q} De natura Deorum, l. 2. p. 1918. {r} Plin. l. 16. c. 40. & l. 36. c. 14. Alex. ab Alex. l. 6. c. 2. Ganz Chronolog. par. 2. fol. 9. 2. {s} Corinthiaca sive, l. 2. p. 88. & Messenica, sive, l. 4. p. 275.

Acts 19:28

Ver. 28. And when they heard these sayings,.... Both the masters and the workmen;

they were full of wrath; against Paul and his doctrine:

and cried out, saying, great is Diana of the Ephesians; this goddess is frequently called in Heathen writers, Diana of the Ephesians, or the Ephesian Diana, because of her famous temple at Ephesus; and to distinguish her from all other Dianas: Pausanias makes mention of sixty Dianas at least, and yet seems not to have taken notice of them all; all of them had different epithets, by which they were distinguished from one another; the images were in different shapes, and they were worshipped with different rites: what seems most of all to distinguish the Ephesian Diana from others, is her having many paps; hence she is called, "multi mammia"; so Minutius Felix observes {t}, that Diana is sometimes girt about on high as an huntress, and the Ephesian Diana is "mammis multis & uberibus extructa"; Just as the Isis of the Egyptians, which, Macrobius {u} says, signifies the earth; hence the whole body of the deity is covered with paps, because the whole universe is nourished by it: the priest of Diana of the Ephesians was an eunuch, and was obliged to abstain from all company; neither bathed, nor ate, nor drank with others, nor might he enter into the house of a private person; there was a feast kept every year in honour of her, at which young men in the flower of their age, and virgins well dressed, used to go to the temple in great pomp, keep the feast, and marry with each other. The temple was a sort of an asylum, as Heathen temples commonly were; and it had this particular privilege, that those that fled to it were freed from servitude {w}. This goddess is called "great", agreeably to her name, for, anyd, "Diana", signifies "great" and venerable; because of her birth, being the daughter of Jupiter; and because of her great service, she was supposed to be of in assisting at births; and because of her magnificent temple and worship; and because she was worshipped by great persons: and here greatness is ascribed unto her, and a loud cry made of it, to animate one another, to gather a mob together, and to incense them and stir them up against the apostle and his companion: in the Arabic version, instead of Diana, it is Venus, both here and elsewhere, but wrongly.

{t} In Octavia, p. 22. {u} Saturnal. l. 1. c. 20. {w} Pausauias in Arcadicis, sive, l. 8. p. 476. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 20. & l. 6. c. 2. & c. 12.

Acts 19:29

Ver. 29. And the whole city was filled with confusion,.... For the workmen that made the silver shrines very likely ran up and down in the city, crying out, great is Diana of the Ephesians, which brought the people out of their houses to inquire what was the matter; and the mob gathering and increasing, as they went along, threw the whole city into confusion and disorder:

and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia; the latter of these was of Thessalonica in Macedonia, as appears from
Ac 20:4 but of what place the former was, is not certain; however, being a Macedonian, he could not be the Gaius of Derbe, mentioned in the same place, nor the Gaius of Corinth, **1Co 1:14** but some third person. They are both Greek names; Aristarchus signifies the chief of princes, or the prince of chiefs; and Gaius is a name taken from the joy of parents, and is the same with the Roman name, Caius; they are both reckoned among the seventy disciples; the former is said to be bishop of Apamea in Phrygia, and the latter Bishop of Ephesus;
See Gill on "Lu 10:1"

Paul's companions in travel; whom he brought with him out of Macedonia, and who had been with him to Jerusalem and Antioch, and were now returned with him to Ephesus, where they had been with him for the space of two years, or more: it is very much that this mob had not seized on Paul himself: it may be Paul was within doors, and these were without in the streets, and so were laid hold upon and carried away in a most forcible and violent manner by them: who having got them,

they rushed with one accord into the theatre; where the public plays were acted in honour of the goddess Diana, and where, among other things, men were set to fight with wild beasts; and very likely the intention of the mob, in hurrying

Paul's companions thither, was to throw them to the wild beasts. A theatre is a spectacle or show, so called, because in them fights were shown, plays were acted, games exercised, and battles fought between men and men, and between men and beasts, and between beasts and beasts; concerning which, take the following account {x}:

"Theatre, among the ancients, is a public edifice for the exhibiting of scenic spectacles, or shows to the people--under the word theatre was comprehended not only the eminence, whereon the actors appeared, and the action passed, but also the whole area, or extent of the place common to the actors and spectators: in this sense the theatre was a building encompassed with porticos, and furnished with seats of stone, disposed in semicircles, and ascending gradually over one another, which encompassed a space called the "orchestra"; in the front whereof was the "proscenium" or "pulpitum", whereon the actors performed the "scena", a large front adorned with orders of architecture; behind which was "postscenium", or the place where the actors made themselves ready, retired, &c. so that the "scena", in its full extent, comprehended all the part belonging to the actors. In the Greek theatres, the "orchestra" made a part of the "scena"; but in the Roman theatres, none of the actors ever descended into the "orchestra", which was taken up by the seats of the senators."

For the better understanding the terms used, and the several parts of the theatre, let it be observed, that the "scena", according to others {y} was the place from whence the actors first went out; and it reached from one corner of the theatre to the other, and was threefold; "tragical", which was adorned in a royal manner with pillars and signs; "comical", which represented private buildings; and "satirical", which exhibited trees, caves, mountains, &c. Likewise, the "scena" was either "versile", when on a sudden the whole scene was turned by some machines; or "ductile", when by drawing away the boards the inward face of the scene appeared, or by drawing curtains. The "proscenium" was a place lower than the scene, in which the actors chiefly spoke and acted: the "postscenium" was a place in which these things were done, which could not be done fitly, and with decorum in the scenes: the "pulpitum" was a higher place in the "proscenium", in which those that recited stood: the "orchestra" was the last place, in which they danced, and near which the senators sat. Tarquinius Priscus was the first who introduced plays among the Romans; and the temple of Bacchus at Athens was the first theatre in the world, the remains of which are still to be seen. Of this theatre at Ephesus I have not met with any account; whether it was in the temple, or without, is not certain; very likely it might be a part of it, or adjoin unto it.

{x} Chamber's Cyclopaedia in the word "Theatre". {y} Nieupoort. Compend. Antiqu. Roman. p. 285, 286. Yid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Diet. l. 5. c. 16.

Acts 19:30

Ver. 30. And when Paul would have entered in unto the people,.... In the theatre, in order to have preached to the people, and to have removed their prejudices against him, and the Gospel preached by him, and to have shown them the error and evil of their idolatrous ways and worship, and to have reconciled them to him, and his friends, and to have persuaded them to do them no hurt; which shows the apostle's greatness of soul, his firmness, constancy, and intrepidity, and his great concern and affection for his companions, to risk his life in this manner: but

the disciples suffered him not; the believers, the members of the church at Ephesus would by no means agree to it, but dissuaded him from it; who hereby, on their part, showed great love to him, and what a value they had for him, and how much they esteemed the life of so great an apostle, and faithful preacher of the Gospel. The Ethiopic version renders it, "the apostles prohibited him"; but there were none of that office with him.

Acts 19:31

Ver. 31. And certain of the chief of Asia,.... Or the Asiarchs; these were not princes of Asia, rulers or governors of provinces, or cities, or civil magistrates; but priests who presided over the games and diversions at the theatre, and had the management and command of things there. Such an one was Philip the Asiarch, the church of Smyrna makes mention of in their account of the sufferings and martyrdom of Polycarp {z}, whom the people entreated that he would send out the lion to Polycarp; that is, out of the theatre which he had the command of; but he replied he could not do it, because he had finished the theatrical exercises: from whence it appears that he was the governor of the theatre, and had his title of Asiarch from thence, as these men had, wherefore this word should not be rendered, the "princes of Asia", as by the Vulgate Latin; nor the "chief of Asia", as by the Syriac and Arabic versions, and by ours, but rather the "Asian priests". The Ethiopic version not knowing who should be meant by them, only reads, "and some of Asia".

Which were his friends; they had a good opinion of the apostle, and a good liking of his doctrines, and wished well to his person, and were concerned for his safety; though they might not have been really converted, and truly disciples, as those in the preceding verse; for otherwise one would think they would have relinquished their office and place. These

sent unto him, messengers or letters,

desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre; they observed to him the danger he would expose himself to, and entreated he would show a greater regard to his life than to risk it in such a manner, a life might be so useful to many; and though they were the governors at the theatre, yet such was the rage and fury of the mob, that it was not in their power to restrain them from doing mischief, till such time as they were appeased.

{z} Apud Euseb. Eccl, Hist. l. 4. c. 15.

Acts 19:32

Ver. 32. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another,.... Not in the church at Ephesus among the disciples, and friends of the apostle, as if they were divided in their sentiments about his going into the theatre, some being for it, and others against it; but the people that were gathered together in the theatre, these were not agreed about the reason of this tumult, some said it was on account of one thing, and some another:

for the assembly was confused; the multitude of people that were gathered together were made up of different persons, of different employments and sentiments, and were in no manner of form or order:

and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together; there was a noise and a hubbub in the city; but what was the reason and meaning of it, they were ignorant of; they were got together into the theatre in great numbers, but what was to be done there they knew not. And this is too often the case in religious assemblies, that the majority, at least many, can give no account of the reason, end, and design of their assembling together.

Acts 19:33

Ver. 33. And they drew Alexander out of the multitude,.... Or "some of the multitude brought forth Alexander"; into the theatre, in order to kill him, by casting him to the wild beasts. Some think this is the same with Alexander the coppersmith, who apostatized upon this danger he was exposed to, and became a blasphemer, and a great enemy of the apostle, and did him much evil, **1Ti 1:20**. This man, though his name was a Greek name, yet was a Jew, as is expressed in Ac 19:34 and from the times of Alexander the great, who was at Jerusalem, this name became common among the Jews;
See Gill on "Ac 4:6".

The Jews putting him forward; being equally enemies to him, as being under a profession of Christianity, as the Heathens were; or as the Syriac version reads, "the people of the Jews", that were there, out of themselves, pitched upon him as a proper person to still the uproar; and they brought him out of the multitude, to a convenient place, where he might be heard; and they the rather were forward to this, that he might lay all the blame of this confusion and uproar upon Paul and his companions, whom the Jews had an aversion to, as well as the Gentiles:

and Alexander beckoned with the hand; for silence, that he might be heard:

and would have made his defence unto the people; which looks as if he was a Christian, or at least was charged with being one, and was in danger of his life on that account; and therefore was desirous of being heard, that he might make an apology for the Christians, or remove such an imputation from himself, if he was not.

Acts 19:34

Ver. 34. But when they knew that he was a Jew,.... And so equally an enemy to their idolatry, as Paul and his companions were, whether he was a Christian or not.

All with one voice about the space of two hours cried out; all that were in the theatre lift up their voices at once to prevent Alexander's apology, or at least its being heard; and which they continued about two hours, which was a long time to keep hallooing out,

great is Diana of the Ephesians; See Gill on "Ac 19:28".

Acts 19:35

Ver. 35. And when the town clerk had appeased the people,.... Caused them to cease their loud outcry, so as that he could be heard. This person seems to have been more than a "town clerk", as we render it; or a common "scribe", as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it; rather as the Syriac version, "a chief man of the city"; the Septuagint interpreters in **Ex 5:6** use the word for the Egyptian officers that were over the Israelites; and the Babylonians used to call the priest of {a} Isis by this name; and according to some learned men, this man's office was to register the conquerors' names, and their rewards in the theatre; and who was chosen into this office by the people, and was a man of some considerable authority, as it is very apparent by what follows that this man was:

he said, ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana? the word "Neocorus", translated "worshipper", signifies an officer in the temple, one that looked after it, beautified and adorned it; for "Neocorus" is from korew, which signifies to beautify {b}; though some etymologists would have the word to signify to sweep and clean, as if this officer was a sexton; rather, he answered to a churchwarden, and to this agrees the Syriac version; though this office belonged not to a single person, but to a city. Now to be a worshipper of Diana, was not peculiar to the city of Ephesus, as appears from Ac 19:27 but to be Neocorus, a sacrist to the goddess, was a favour granted to some cities, and accounted a great honour; some had it twice, some thrice, some four times:

and of the image which fell down from Jupiter; or "of Diopetes"; so the Palladium, or image of Pallas, was called, because it was supposed to fall down from heaven, which Diomedes and Ulysses are said to take away from Troy; and here it seems to be something distinct from the goddess Diana, and her image, and may design another deity worshipped along with her, and by them, since they make mention of more gods, Ac 19:26. The Vulgate Latin version takes it to be the same with Diana, reading the words in connection with the preceding, "and the offspring of Jupiter"; she being said to be his daughter by Latona, as before observed; and the Ethiopic version understands it of her image, rendering them thus, "and of that molten image which was sent from Jupiter the great god"; and more expressly the Syriac version, which reads, "and of her image which fell from heaven"; and so was not made with the hands of men, and could not be objected to on that account, or denied to be a deity; and this the people might be the rather induced to believe, since it had been in the temple before the memory of any man. The Arabic version, reading these words in connection with the beginning of the next verse, gives a very different sense, "but neither indeed they that fell from heaven contradict the faith of this thing"; as if it was to be understood of the fallen angels, of which it can hardly be thought Demetrius had any knowledge. This image, Pliny says {c}, it was doubted of what it was made; some said of the vine tree, others of ebony; but Athenagoras says, the old image of Diana of the Ephesians was made of olive {d}.

{a} Alex. ab Alex. l. 2. c. 8. {b} Scholiast. Aristoph ad Nubes, p. 125. col. 2. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 40. {d} Legatis pro Christianis, p. 17.

Acts 19:36

Ver. 36. Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against,.... This officer intimates, in order to quiet the mob, and make them easy, that these things were so certain, and well known, that nobody would pretend to contradict them, and therefore they must be mistaken in the men, whom they had hurried into the theatre; it was impossible that they, or any men, should be capable of saying any thing against the truth of these things: therefore

ye ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly; to these men, to their hurt, but sit down, and compose yourselves, and think again, and consider of this matter, and not go into any hasty measures, which may, in the issue, be prejudicial to yourselves.

Acts 19:37

Ver. 37. For ye have brought hither these men,.... The Arabic version reads, "these two men"; that is, Gaius and Aristarchus, whom they had brought by force into the theatre to fight with wild beasts:

which are neither robbers of churches; or "temples"; or, as the Arabic version renders it, "robbers of the vessels of the temple", sacrilegious persons; they have not stolen anything out of the temple of Diana, nor any other:

nor yet blasphemers of your goddess; they have not made mention of her name, much less said anything against her, at least this officer did not know that they had; and if he had, he did not stick to tell an officious lie to screen them, as did the Egyptian midwives in favour of the Hebrew women.

Acts 19:38

Ver. 38. Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him,.... Who were the ringleaders and encouragers of this tumult:

have a matter against any man; any accusation, or charge, any crime to accuse him of, and charge him with:

the law is open; or court days are kept; there are certain times fixed for the hearing and trying of causes, where and when such an affair should be regularly brought; and not use such disorderly methods, and throw a city into confusion, and break the peace as these men had done: the Syriac version renders it, "they are artificers"; that is, Demetrius and the craftsmen with him; they are tradesmen, and it does not belong to them, nor should they take upon themselves to judge and determine what is right or wrong:

and there are deputies; or "proconsuls"; the proconsul and his deputy, to whom such matters appertain, and who are judges in such cases, and to whom application should be made, and before whom such cases should be brought, and heard, and tried: the Syriac version reads in the singular number, "and there is a proconsul in the city"; a Roman governor and judge, whose province it is to determine such matters:

let them implead one another; let the plaintiff bring his accusation, and charge, and let the others defend themselves, and let things proceed in a due course of law, and so issue.

Acts 19:39

Ver. 39. But if ye inquire anything concerning other matters,.... Than what belongs to the craft and business of Demetrius, and the artificers:

it shall be determined in a lawful assembly; that is, called together according to law, and who have a right to hear, try, and judge causes, which such a confused lawless assembly as this in the theatre had not.

Acts 19:40

Ver. 40. For we are in danger of being called in question,.... Or are liable to be called to an account, reproved, and punished by the Roman proconsul, appointed over this city, or by the Roman emperor, or the Roman senate: for this day's uproar; it being capable of being interpreted as a riot, tumult, and sedition:

there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse: or no reason can be assigned, why such a number of people should gather together; none can be given that will justify it, or that can be alleged in favour of it.

Acts 19:41

Ver. 41. And when he had thus spoken,.... Or delivered this oration, made use of the above arguments, reasonings, and expostulations:

he dismissed the assembly; he ordered them to break up, and every one to return home in peace, and go about his own business; and thus Paul, and his companions, were delivered from an imminent danger they were exposed to.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 20:1

Ver. 1. And after the uproar was ceased,.... Which Demetrius, and the craftsmen, had raised at Ephesus, and which was put an end to by the speech of the town clerk, or register keeper of the theatre:

Paul called unto him the disciples; the members of the church at Ephesus, whom he convened, either at his own lodgings, or at their usual place of meeting:

and embraced them; or "saluted them"; that is, with a kiss, which was sometimes done at parting, as well as at meeting; see Ac 20:37 and so the Syriac version renders it, and "kissed" them, and so took his leave of them, and bid them farewell; the Alexandrian copy, and some other copies, and the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions before this clause insert, "and exhorted, or comforted" them; that is, exhorted them to continue steadfast in the faith, and hold fast the profession of it without wavering, and comforted them under all their tribulations, and in a view of what afflictions and persecutions they must expect to endure for the sake of Christ, with the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel:

and departed to go into Macedonia; to visit the churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, and to establish them in the faith of the Gospel: he did not choose to leave Ephesus till the tumult was over, partly on his own account, that he might not bring upon himself an imputation of fear and cowardice; and partly on the account of the church at Ephesus, that he might not leave them in distress, and add to it; but now it was over, he judged it proper to take his leave of them, and visit other churches, the care of which equally lay upon him.

Acts 20:2

Ver. 2. And when he had gone over those parts,.... Of Macedonia, and the cities in it before mentioned;

and had given them much exhortation; to abide by the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, and to walk worthy of it in their lives and conversations; and this exhortation he was frequently giving, as often as he had opportunity, improving his time much this way, and continued long at it: and, having pursued it to a sufficient length,

he came into Greece; or Hellas; which, according to Ptolomy {e} and Solinus, {f}, is properly true Greece; the former makes it to be the same with Achaia, where Corinth was; and the latter says it was in his time called Attica, where Athens was; so Pliny {g}, who also says, that Thessaly was so called: this Hellas included Macedonia, Epirus, Thessaly, Achaia, which is properly Greece, Peloponnesus, and the adjacent islands.

{e} Geograph. l. 3. c. 15. {f} Polyhist, c. 12. {g} Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 7.

Acts 20:3

Ver. 3. And there abode three months,.... In Greece:

and when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria; from some part of Greece, in order to go to Jerusalem; which the Jews in the parts of

Greece understanding, laid wait for him, either by sea or land, with an intention either to take the money from him, which he had collected in Macedonia, and in Greece, for the poor saints at Jerusalem, or to take away his life, or both; of which lying in wait for him, the apostle had some notice, either by divine revelation, or from somebody who was in the secret, or had got knowledge of it from such as were: upon which he

purposed to return through Macedonia; through which he came from Ephesus to Greece: this wicked design being made known to him, obliged him, in point of prudence, and both for his own safety, and the good of the churches, to alter his scheme, and steer his course another way, to the disappointment of his enemies; in which the wisdom of providence, the care of God over his ministers, and his concern for his churches manifestly appeared.

Acts 20:4

Ver. 4. And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea,.... This Sopater is thought to be the same with Sosipater in Ro 16:21 and in three of Beza's copies, and in as many of Stephens's, he is so called here; the Ethiopic version calls him Peter, a citizen of Berea; and the Arabic version Sopater of Aleppo. The Alexandrian copy, Beza's most ancient copy, and others, the Complutensian edition, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, Sopater of Pyrrhus, the Berean; that is, the son of Pyrrhus. He is reckoned among the seventy disciples, and is said to be bishop of Iconium;
See Gill on "Lu 10:1". This name was common among the Greeks; there was one of this name a native of Paphus, in the times of Alexander the great, a comical poet, and who also is sometimes called Sosipater, as this man was; there was another Sopater the sophist, who wrote the affairs of Alexander; and there was another of this name, who, among other things, collected much concerning painters and statuaries. The name signifies "a father saved". Pyrrhus is a Grecian name well known, being the name of a famous king of Greece who engaged in war with the Romans. This man went along with the apostle into Asia; and it seems, that of the persons here mentioned, he only accompanied him; for the verb is in the singular number, and the other six persons following did not go along with him, as Sopater did, but went before him to Troas, which was in Asia, and there waited for him; though the Syriac version reads in the plural number; but then it renders the words, "they went forth with him", as they might do from Greece, and yet not accompany him into Asia: the phrase into Asia is left out in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions.

And of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; the former of these is before said to be a Macedonian, Ac 19:29 and here he appears to be of Thessalonica, and his name is a Greek one; but Secundus is a Roman name, though he might be born at Thessalonica, or at least have lived there, and so be said to be of it. His name signifies "Second"; very likely was his father's second son, and therefore so called; though the name was used among the Grecians. We read of Secundus an Athenian, the master of Herod the sophist, who flourished under the emperor Adrian, there are sentences under his name still extant; and another called Secundus the grammarian, a friend of Poleman, a philosopher at Athens, who corrected his writings; so that this man might be a Grecian, and a native of Thessalonica; mention is made of him nowhere else.

And Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; the former of these is so called to distinguish him from Gaius the Macedonian in Ac 19:29 and the latter by being joined with him should be of the same place, as he might be; see Ac 16:1 though the Syriac version reads, "and Timotheus of Lystra"; and so does the Arabic version used by De Dieu; and this is mentioned with Derbe in the above cited place.

And of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus: of the former see **Eph 6:21** and of the latter see **2Ti 4:20**
Ac 21:29 where he is called an Ephesian, as they both are here in Beza's most ancient copy; Ephesus being the metropolis of Asia, strictly so called. These are both of them said to be among the seventy disciples: Trophimus, we are told, taught at Arles in France, and suffered martyrdom with the Apostle Paul; and that Tychicus was bishop of Chalcedon in Bithynia; and that another of the same name was bishop of Colophon; See Gill on "Lu 10:1". Trophimus signifies "nourished", and is a name to be found in a funeral inscription of the Romans {h}, though Greek, and in the fragments of the poet Menander: and Tychicus signifies "fortunate"; whether the same with Fortunatus in 1Co 16:17 may be inquired.

{h} Kirchman. de Funer. Roman. l. 3. c. 26. p. 525.

Acts 20:5

Ver. 5. These going before,.... The apostle into Asia, all but Sopater, who accompanied him:

tarried for us at Troas; a city in Asia Minor; see Ac 16:8 whither they went before hand a nearer way, to provide for the apostle, and where they waited for him, and for Sopater, and for Luke, the writer of this history, who appears from hence to be in company with the apostle, and for as many others as were along with him.

Acts 20:6

Ver. 6. And we sailed away from Philippi,.... Which was in Macedonia, from whence they came in a straight course by Samothracia, over the Hellespont, to Troas, where the above six persons were waiting for them: and they set sail

after the days of unleavened bread; or the passover; which is mentioned only to observe the time of year when this voyage was taken; and not to suggest to us that Paul and his company stayed at Philippi, and kept this feast there; for the passover was only kept at Jerusalem, and besides was now abolished, and not to be observed by Christians:

and came unto them to Troas in five days; not that they were five days sailing from Philippi to Troas; but either they were so long in all, from their first setting out into Asia, to their arrival at Troas; or rather, they came to Troas within five days after the above six persons had got thither; so that they waited at Troas but five days for the apostle, and those that accompanied him.

Where we abode seven days; by what follows they came into Troas on the Lord's day evening, or early on Monday morning, and stayed there till the next Lord's day, or first day of the week; for it follows,

Acts 20:7

Ver. 7. And upon the first day of the week,.... Or Lord's day, **Re 1:10** and which Justin Martyr calls Sunday; on which day, he says {i}, all, both in city and country, met in one place for religious worship; and on this day, it appears from hence, and from other places, that the apostles and primitive churches did meet together for religious exercises; see Joh 20:19 and so they did at Troas at this time, as follows:

when the disciples came together to break bread; not to eat a common meal, or to make a feast, or grand entertainment for the apostle and his company, before

they departed; but, as the Syriac version renders it, "to break the eucharist", by which the Lord's supper was called in the primitive times; or as the Arabic version, "to distribute the body of Christ", which is symbolically and emblematically held forth in the bread at the Lord's table. Now on the first day of the week, the disciples, or the members of the church at Troas, met together on this occasion, and the apostle, and those that were with him, assembled with them for the same purpose; the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "when we were come together"; Paul and his company, together with the church at Troas; for it is plain from hence that there was a church in this place, not only by disciples being here, but by the administration of the Lord's supper to them; and so there was in after ages. Who was the first pastor or bishop of this church, is not certain; perhaps Carpus, of whom mention is made in **2Ti 4:13** though he is said to be bishop of other places;
See Gill on "2Ti 4:13". In the "second" century, in the times of Ignatius, there were brethren at Troas, from whence he wrote his epistles to the churches at Smyrna, and Philadelphia, and who are saluted in them by the brethren at Troas {k}: in the third century, several martyrs suffered here, as Andreas, Paulus, Nicomachus, and Dionysia a virgin: in the "fifth" century, Pionius, bishop of Troas, was present at Constantinople at the condemnation of Eutyches, and afterwards he was in the council at Chalcedon; and even in the "eighth" century mention is made of Eustathius, bishop of Troas, in the Nicene council {l}.

Paul preached unto them; to the disciples that were gathered together, either before, or after, or at the time of breaking of bread; for this ordinance was not administered without some instructions about the nature, use, and design of it.

Ready to depart on the morrow; this seems to be mentioned as a reason for what follows,

continued his speech until midnight: since he was about to take his leave of them, and not knowing when he should see them again, or whether ever any more, he delivered a long discourse to them; which not only shows that he was full of matter, but that his affection for these saints, and his desire of doing them good, were very great, by imparting as much spiritual light and knowledge as he could unto them; and also his great zeal for the glory of God, and the interest of Christ, though he was to set forth on a journey the next morning.

{i} Apolog. 2. p. 98. {k} Ignatii Epist. p. 9. 46. Ed. Voss. {l} Magdeburg.

Hist. Eccles. cent. 3. c. 3. p. 11. cent. 5. c. 10. p. 603. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

Acts 20:8

Ver. 8. And there were many lights in the upper chamber,.... Which were lighted up, both for necessary uses, to see by, to read the word, and to administer the ordinance of the supper, and for the comfort and pleasure of the whole company, both preacher and hearers; as well as to remove all ground of suspicion, or occasion of reproach, as if it was a midnight society met for wicked practices: but this no ways countenances the use of lamps and wax candies in the daytime at divine worship, since this was in the night; of the upper chamber, in which it was usual to meet for religious exercises, see **Mr 2:4**, where they were gathered together; the Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, "where we were gathered together".

Acts 20:9

Ver. 9. And there sat in a window a certain young man,.... In the upper room, where he placed himself, either for air and refreshment, the chamber being suffocating, through the number of people, and of lights; or for want of room, the place being full:

named Eutychus; a Greek name, which signifies one of good fortune:

being fallen into a deep sleep; which may be accounted for without aggravating the case; as from his youth, he was a young man, and so more subject to sleep, and more easily overcome with it, than persons in years, by reason of the humours of the body which incline to it; and also from the length of service, and the lateness of the season of the night, all which contributed to bring on this deep sleep: it can hardly be thought that he purposely composed himself to sleep, for had he, he would never have chose so dangerous a place to sit in as a window, and that at so great an height from the ground; but this sleep seemed to come upon him at an unawares; what hand soever Satan might have in it, with a view to the young man's hurt, both as to soul and body, and to bring reproach and scandal upon the church, and the Gospel, it seems evident that the providence of God was in it, and which overruled it for a good end, even the greater confirmation of the Gospel, and very probably for the spiritual good of the young man.

And as Paul was long preaching he sunk down with sleep; being quite overcome, and bore down with it, not able to hold up his head, he either bowed down, or leaned backwards: and fell down from the third loft: or three story high, where the upper room was. It seems that he did not fall inward, for then he would have fallen no further than the floor of the upper room, but outward, out of the window into the street or yard; and this is the more evident from Paul's going down to him, mentioned in the next verse:

and was taken up dead; not only for dead, or as one dead, but he really was dead, as it is no wonder he should.

Acts 20:10

Ver. 10. And Paul went down,.... From the upper room, where they were assembled, into the court, yard, or street, where he fell; or into the lower room of the house, where he was brought when taken up. The apostle might see him fall, or he might be told of it, or he might have an intimation of it from the Spirit of God, by whom he might be impressed to go down, in order to work a miracle, for the confirmation of the Gospel he was preaching:

and fell on him, and embracing him; praying over him, as Elijah and Elisha did, 1Ki 17:21 and the like effect followed:

said, trouble not yourselves; which speech perhaps was addressed to the friends and relations of the young man; or to the disciples present, who were concerned at this accident, both for the young man's sake, and lest it should be improved to the disadvantage of the Gospel by the enemies of it,

For his life, or "soul"

is in him; it being returned upon the apostle's falling on him, and praying over him; or he said this as being fully assured that it would return, in like manner as Christ said concerning Jairus's daughter, **Lu 8:52**.

Acts 20:11

Ver. 11. When he therefore was come up again,.... Into the upper room, where he was before, and where the disciples were gathered together:

and had broken bread and eaten; administered the Lord's supper, and also eat for his bodily refreshment:

and talked a long while: about the ordinance and the doctrines of the Gospel, and spiritual experience, and such like divine things:

even till break of day; not knowing when to leave off:

so he departed; without taking any rest; though before he departed, what follows was done; it was at this time he left his cloak, books, and parchments here, **2Ti 4:13**.

Acts 20:12

Ver. 12. And they brought the young man alive,.... Up into the upper room, and presented him alive to the disciples:

and were not a little comforted; that is, the disciples, at the sight of the young man, who was taken up dead, not only for his sake, but chiefly because by this miracle the Gospel, which the apostle preached, and who was about to depart from them, was greatly confirmed to them.

Acts 20:13

Ver. 13. And we went before to ship,.... That is, Luke, the writer of this history, and the rest of the apostle's company, went before him to a ship, which lay at Troas, and went aboard it:

and sailed unto Assos; a city of Aeolia, or Mysia; and is said by Pliny to be the same with Apollonia; and which he places on the sea shore, where it is evident this Assos was. His words are {m},

"on the shore Antandros, formerly called Edonis, then Cimmeris and Assos, the same with Apollonia."

And in another place {n} he calls it Assos of Troas; and says of it, that about Assos of Troas a stone grows, by which all bodies are consumed, and is called "sarcophagus", (a flesh devourer,) of which he also makes mention elsewhere {o}, and observes, that in Assos of Troas the stone sarcophagus is cut in the pits, in which the bodies of the dead being put, are consumed within forty days, excepting their teeth: and with him Jerom {p} agrees, as to the name and situation of this place, who says that Assos is a maritime city of Asia, the same that is called Apollonia. It is represented by Strabo {q} as a place very much fortified by art, and very difficult of ascent on that part which lies to the sea; unless another Assos in Lycia is designed by him: if this was the situation of the Assos in the text, it seems to furnish us with a reason, from the nature of the place, why the apostle chose to go on foot thither. Pausanias {r} speaks of it as in Troas, and near Mount Ida. Sodamos of Assos in Troas, which lies near Ida, was the first of the Aeolians, who conquered in the Olympic race of the boys. In this place was born the famous philosopher Cleanthes, a disciple and successor of Zeno; hence he is called Cleanthes the Assian {s}. No mention is made of the Gospel being preached here, or of any church until the eighth century, when John, bishop of Assos, is said to be in the Nicene council {t}. Some exemplars read Thassos, as the Syriac and Arabic versions seem to have done:

there intending to take in Paul; who stayed behind, willing to have a little more Christian conversation with the saints at Troas.

For so had he appointed; that these should go before hand to Assos, and meet him there, and take him in:

minding himself to go afoot; from Troas to Assos, which were not very far off from one another; hence Assos is, by Pliny, called Assos of Troas; and by Pausanias, Assos, which is in Troas; that is, in the country of Troas, as before observed: what was his reason for going by foot thither, is not very evident; whether that he might have the opportunity of conversing with the disciples of Troas, who might accompany him thither; or whether that he might be alone, and have leisure for private meditation, and free converse with God.

{m} Nat. Hist, l. 5. c. 30. {n} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 96. {o} Ib. l. 36. c. 17. {p} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 95. K. {q} Geograph. l. 13. {r} Eliac. 2. sive l. 6. p. 351. {s} Laert. Vit. Philosoph. l. 7. p. 541. {t} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccl. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5.

Acts 20:14

Ver. 14. And when he met with us at Assos,.... According to appointment:

we took him in; to the ship, and so sailed on:

and came to Mitylene; a city in Lesbos {u}, an island in the Aegean sea, now Metelino: sometimes the island is so called, and is about seven miles and a half from the continent: of this city Vitruvius {w} says, that it was magnificently and elegantly built, but not prudently situated; for when the south wind blew, men were sick in it, and when the northwest wind blew they had coughs, and when the north wind blew, they were restored to health. Some say it had its name from Mitylene, the daughter of Macaria or Pelops; others from Myto, the son of Neptune and Mitylene; and others from Mityle, the builder of it. {x} Hillerus inquires, whether it may not be so called from the Chaldee word, anljm, "Matlana", used in the Targum on Job 40:13 which signifies "a bar", this city being as a bar to Lesbos, which shut it up. It was famous for being the native place of Pittacus, one of the seven wise men of Greece, a great philosopher and legislator, who, with others, conquered Melanchrus the tyrant of Lesbos, whom the inhabitants of Mitylene greatly honoured, and made him their governor; and a field, which they gave him, was called after his name Pittacius {y}: of this place was Theophanes, a famous historian, who wrote the history of Pompey the great, and was familiar with him, and honoured by him, as Cicero {z} relates: other persons of note are said to be of this place, as Alcaeus a lyric poet, and Diophanes a rhetorician. It does not appear that the apostle stayed and preached the Gospel here, or that any Gospel church was here by him raised; no mention is made of it in ecclesiastical history until late: in the "second" century Heathenism prevailed in the island, the Lesbians sacrificed a man to Dionysius. In the "fifth" century we read of a bishop of this island in the Chalcedon council: in the "sixth" century there was a bishop of Mitylene, in the fifth Roman synod: in the seventh century, Gregory, bishop of Mitylene, assisted in the sixth council at Constantinople, and Theodorus of the same place: in the eighth century Damianus, bishop of the same place, was present in the Nicene council {a}.

{u} Plin. l. 5. c. 31. Mela, l. 2. c. 14. {w} De Architectura, l. 1. c. 6. p. 27, {x} Onomasticum Sacrum, p. 887. {y} Laert, Vit. Philosoph. l. 1. p. 50. {z} Orat. 26. pro Archia, p. 814. {a} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 2. c. 15. p. 193. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 253, 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 6.

Acts 20:15

Ver. 15. And we sailed thence,.... From Mitylene:

and came the next day over against Chios; which, according to R. Benjamin Tudelensis {b}, was three days' sail from Mitylene; according to Pliny {c} it was sixty five miles from it, and is an island in the Icarian or Aegean sea, and lies between Lesbos and Samos, next mentioned; and has its name from the nymph Chione, so called from the exceeding whiteness of her skin, as snow: it was famous for marble; from hence came the best mastic, and good figs, and the wine called malmsey wine {d}. And of this place Jerom says {e}, Chios, an island before Bithynia, whose name in the Syriac language signifies "mastic", because that mastic grows there; some add, he called it "Chia" from Chione the nymph: the reason of its name, as Pausanias {f} relates, was this; Neptune coming into a desert island, had carnal knowledge of a nymph, and in the time of her travail, a snow fell from heaven on the ground; and from this Neptune called his son Chius, from whom the island has its name. Others {g} conjecture, that it was called from aywx, "Chivja", which signifies a serpent; this island having been very much terrified, as Aelianus {h} says, by the hisses of a serpent of a monstrous size, until it was consumed by fire. It was common to sail from Mitylene hither, and "vice versa": so we read {i} of Herod seeking Agrippa, he came to Chios, and from thence to Mitylene. We read nothing of the apostle's stay and preaching here, nor of any Gospel church here, till ages after: in the "fourth" century, Heathenism prevailed to such a degree in it, that Dionysius Omadius was worshipped here with human sacrifice; and yet, in the fifth century, a bishop of Chios was present in the council of Chalcedon; and in the "sixth" century another assisted in the fifth Roman synod; and in the "seventh" century there was a bishop of this place at the sixth synod at Constantinople; and in the "eighth" century, Leon, bishop of Chios, was in the Nicene {k} synod. It is now called Chio or Scio, by the Turks Saches, and is inhabited by Italian Genoese.

And the next day we arrived at Samos; another island in the Icarian sea, not a very fruitful one, unless for olives {l}; and for nothing more famous than for being the birth place of Pythagoras {m}, hence called the Samian, and of Melissus. It was ninety three miles distant from Chios {n}; and, according to R. Benjamin, two days sail from it {o}; but Paul sailed hither in a day. Of this place Jerom {p} thus writes; Samos, an island in the Aegean sea, in which, it is reported, earthen vessels were first made. Herodotus {q} speaks of three things for which it was famous, a very high mountain in it, a bulwark about the haven in the sea, and a temple the largest of all he ever saw. Some say it has its name from the height of it, Samos signifying an high place. Pausanias {r}, from Asius, a Samian, suggests, that it was so called from Samus, the son of Ancaeus and Samia; and observes, that the inhabitants of it affirm, that Juno was born here; and here was a famous temple, said to be dedicated to her by the Argonautes. One of the Sybils dwelt here, called from hence Samia, and Polycrates, a noted tyrant. Lycurgus, the famous lawgiver, died in this place, as did also Pherecydes, the Syrian {s}. It is now called Samo. The apostle stayed not here to preach the Gospel; nor do we read of its being preached here by any: idolatry greatly prevailed in this place in the "second" century; and so it did in the "fourth": though in the same we also read of some Christians here that suffered persecution; and so low as the "eighth" century, Heraclius, bishop of this place, was in the Nicene synod {t}.

And tarried at Trogyllium; which, according to Ptolomy {u}, was a promontory in the Icarian sea: it was about forty furlongs distant from Samos, according to Strabo {w}. It was a promontory of Mycale; and Trogilias, called also Trogilia, is mentioned with Mycale and Samos by Pliny {x}, as near to Miletus. It follows here, and the next day we came to Miletus; which was once the chief city of Ionia: it was famous for being the birth place of Thales, one of the seven wise men of Greece, and of Timotheus the musician, and of Anaximander, and Anaximenes, and the famous Democritus, philosophers {y}, and of Cadmus, the first inventor of prose {z}. Pliny says {a}, it was formerly called Lelegeis, Pityusa, and Anactoria; and it seems it had its name Miletus from Miletus, the son of Apollo, who is said to build it {b}; and Apollo himself is sometimes called Apollo Milesius, and who had a famous temple in this place {c}. Though rather it was so called from atlym "Milata", or "Melote", which signifies pure, white, fine, soft wool, for which this place was famous; which was used for carpets, but chiefly for cloth, which being dyed purple, was sent into divers parts: "Melote" in Greek signifies the same; it is used in Heb 11:37 and translated "sheepskin". Ptolomy {d} places this city in Caria, by the sea; and certain it is from this account, that it was a sea port: it is said to have four ports or havens, one of which would hold a fleet. Of it Jerom {e} says; Miletus, a maritime city in Asia, distant ten furlongs from the mouth of the river Maeander: by the apostle's sending from hence to Ephesus, for the elders of the church there to meet him at this place, as is afterwards related, and taking no notice of any brethren, elders, or church here, it looks as if there were none at this time: and in the "second" century, Gentilism was embraced at Miletus; and in the "fourth" century Licinius consulted the oracle of Apollo Didymaeus in this place, concerning the event of the war against Constantine; but in the "fifth" century we read of a church here, a bishop of this place being in the Chalcedon council; in the "seventh" century a bishop of this church assisted at the sixth council at Constantinople, whose name is said to be George; and in the "eighth" century Epiphanius, bishop of Miletus, was present in the Nicene council {f}.

{b} Itinerar. p. 29. {c} Plin. l. 5. c. 31. {d} Ib. l. 14. c. 7. {e} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. A. {f} Achaica, sive 1. 7. p. 404. {g} Hiller. Onomasticum Sacrum, p. 787. {h} De Animal. l. 16. c. 39. {i} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 16. c. 2. sect. 2. {k} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 4. c. 15. p. 865. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 6. {l} Apulei Florida, sect. 15. {m} Solin. c. 21. Laert. Vit. Philosoph. l. 8. p. 568. l. 9. p. 643. {n} Plin. l. 5. c. 31. {o} Itinerar. p. 30. {p} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. I. {q} Thalia, l. 3. c. 60. {r} Achaica, sive 1. 7. p. 402, 403. {s} Heraclides de Politiis, p. 432, 444. {t} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccl. cent. 2. c. 15. p. 193. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 19. c. 15. p. 865, 884. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 6. {u} Geograph. l. 5. c. 2. {w} Ib. l. 14. {x} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 29, 31. {y} Mela, l. 1. c. 17. Laert. Vit. Philosoph. l. 1. p. 15. l. 2. p. 88, 89. l. 9. p. 650. {z} Plin. l. 5. c. 29. Solin. c. 53. {a} Ib. {b} Apollodorus de Orig. Deor. l. 3. p. 130. {c} Alex. ab Alex. l. 6. c. 2. {d} Geograph. l. 5. c. 2. {e} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. F. {f} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 2. c. 15. p. 192. cent. 4. c. 15. p. 863. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

Acts 20:16

Ver. 16. For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus,.... That is, to sail by it, without calling at it, as he did, for it lay by the shore before he came to Miletus; but he chose not to stop there, fearing he should be detained by the brethren there:

because he would not spend the time in Asia; of which Ephesus was the metropolis:

for he hasted, if it were possible, for him to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost: which was near at hand; for it was but fifty days from the second day of the passover, which feast was over when he sailed from Philippi; and at Troas he stayed seven days, and he had been several days sailing already; see Ac 20:6. And his great desire to be at the feast of Pentecost was not in order to keep that feast, according to the usage of the Jews; but that he might have an opportunity of preaching the Gospel to a great number of Jews, out of all countries, whom he knew would come to that feast.

Acts 20:17

Ver. 17. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus,.... Which is said, by some, to be about four hundred furlongs from Miletus, and, by others, ten German miles.

And called the elders of the church; that is, at Ephesus; not the ancient members of the church, but the officers of it; the pastors, bishops, and overseers, as they are called, Ac 20:28 and are so styled from their office, and not their age. The twelve disciples the apostle found in this place, and the numerous converts made by him here, first composed this church, which doubtless was formed into Gospel order by himself; to which he afterwards wrote an epistle, when at a distance from them, called the Epistle to the Ephesians; and in the latter end of the first century, another epistle was sent from Jesus Christ himself, by the Apostle John, to this church, **Re 2:1** and which had an angel, pastor, or bishop over it; but who he was, is not certain; Caius, who is reckoned among the seventy disciples, is said to be bishop of it; See Gill on "Lu 10:1". Some say Timothy was the first bishop of this church, and after him Onesimus; but these accounts are uncertain, and not to be depended on: but certain it is, that the Apostle John dwelt here, and in the parts adjacent, unto his death, and was a superintendent and overseer in common of this church, and others near it; concerning whom Irenaeus {g}, a very ancient writer near his time, says, the church at Ephesus was founded by Paul; but John remained with them to the times of Trajan. In the "second" century Ignatius {h} wrote an epistle to this church, in which he speaks highly of it, saying, there was no heresy in it; and makes mention of Onesimus as bishop of it: in the "third" century there was a church in this place, and a very memorable affair happened here in the times of Decius; he having obliged all to sacrifice to the idols in the temple, seven persons, by name Maximianus, Malchus, Martinianus, Dionysius, Johannes, Serapion, and Constantine, were accused of Christianity, which they owned; but being soldiers, they had space given them to repent until the return of the emperor, who was going elsewhere: whilst he was gone they fled and hid themselves in the caves of Mount Caelius; upon the emperor's return they were inquired after, and found to be there; who, being provoked, ordered the mouth of the caverns to be shut up with stones, that they might be famished; and it is said, that what through fear and grief they fell asleep, and slept to a great age; some pretend to say to the times of Theodosius, and then awaked; and these are they that are called the seven sleepers: in the beginning of the "fourth" century there was a bishop of this church at the council of Nice: in the "fifth" century Ephesus was famous for a general synod, convened in it against Nestorius; and in this age we read of several bishops of this place: at the time of that synod, Memnon was bishop of it, and before him Antonius and Heraclides, and after him Basil, Bassianus, Stephen, and Paul: in the "sixth" century there was a bishop of this church present at the synod of Rome and Constantinople; and in the same age Ruffinus was bishop at Ephesus, who flourished under Mauritius the emperor: in the "seventh" century a bishop of this place assisted at the sixth council at Constantinople; in this century it was a metropolitan church, and Theodorus was archbishop of it: in the "eighth" century, one Theodosius presided over the church here; to which church the emperor Constantine gave a hundred pounds of gold {i}: so far down Christianity is to be traced in this place.

{g} Adv. Haeres. l. 3. c. 3. {h} Epist. p. 16, 17. {i} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 2. c. 12. p. 212. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 590. &c. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 342. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 111, 115. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

Acts 20:18

Ver. 18. And when they were come to him,.... That is, when the elders or pastors of the church at Ephesus were come to the apostle at Miletus:

he said unto them, ye know, from the first day I came into Asia; to Ephesus the chief city in it:

after what manner I have been with you at all seasons; what was his conduct, conversation, and constant manner of life; which the apostle takes notice of, not to commend himself, or to obtain applause of men; but either in vindication of himself, against those that were ready to charge and censure him; or to recommend the doctrine which he taught; and chiefly for the imitation of these elders, he had sent for, and convened in this place; and he appeals to themselves, as eyewitnesses of what he was going to say.

Acts 20:19

Ver. 19. Serving the Lord with all humility of mind,.... Meaning, in the ministration of the Gospel, being conscious to himself of his own weakness and insufficiency in himself for such service; no ways elated with those excellent and extraordinary gifts bestowed upon him; ascribing all his success to the power, grace, and Spirit of God; treating no man with contempt and disdain; nor lording it over God's heritage, or claiming a dominion over the faith of men; nor seeking honour nor riches for himself, nor even what he had a just right unto, a maintenance from the people; but laboured with his own hands, and to his own and the necessities of others:

and with many tears; at the obstinacy and unbelief of some, and at the distresses and afflictions of others, both corporeal and spiritual; as well as on account of the unbecoming walk of some professors:

and temptations which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: who were hardened against his ministrations, and believed not the Gospel preached by him, but spoke evil of it, and lay in wait to take away his life; by reason of which, his afflictions, which he calls temptations, because they were trials of his faith and patience, were very great.

Acts 20:20

Ver. 20. And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you,.... The Syriac version supplies, "to your souls"; to lead them into a true knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel, and to confirm them in the same, and to preserve them from errors in principle, and immoralities in practice, and to encourage the exercise of every grace, and to instruct them in every branch of duty; nothing of this kind, or which had this tendency, did the apostle dissemble, conceal, or drop, either through sloth and indolence, or through fear of men, or for the sake of reputation, wealth, and friends. The things the apostle may have chiefly in view are the truths of the Gospel, which are very profitable to the souls of men; such as relate to the knowledge of God, his being, perfections, and persons; as that there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit, which is profitable to be known, in order to understand the economy of salvation, in which each person has his distinct concern; and that both the Son and Spirit are equally God with the Father, which accounts for the virtue and efficacy of the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, and how safely he may be depended upon for salvation, and how equal the Holy Spirit is to his work and office; likewise such doctrines as relate to the sin of Adam and his posterity in him, to the imputation of the guilt of that sin unto them, and the derivation of a corrupt nature from him, and which respect the impurity and impotence of human nature; all which is profitable, since it accounts for the origin of moral evil, and many of the dispensations of providence in involving those that do not know the right hand from their left in public calamities; and since it shows the necessity of regenerating grace, tends to the humiliation of men, and makes for the magnifying the riches of God's grace: also such doctrines as express the grace of God in man's salvation as the doctrines of God's everlasting love, of election, redemption, justification, pardon, reconciliation, union to Christ, and final perseverance; all which are exceeding profitable, for the peace, comfort, and refreshment of the souls of God's people. Moreover, the ordinances of the Gospel, baptism, and the Lord's supper, which are the privileges of believers, and the means of their spiritual profit, may be included, together with all the duties of religion; which though not profitable by way of merit, yet contribute to the peace and pleasure of the mind; and none of these things did the apostle withhold from the elders and church at Ephesus, as his epistle to that church does abundantly show, in which, doctrines, ordinances, and duties are taken notice of: now to keep back these, is either to keep them back wholly, to say nothing of any of them, but in the room of them to deliver out morality and legal righteousness; or in part, to mix the truths of the Gospel with the doctrines of men, and not give out the sincere milk of the word; or to draw and fetch back what has been delivered through the fear of men, and in order to gain reputation and applause: but so did not the apostle, nor should any minister of the Gospel; and that for the reason in the words, because they are profitable; as also because they are the counsel of God; and because it is the will of Christ that nothing should be hid, but everything should be published, which he has signified to his servants; and this is enforced by his own example, who whatever he heard of his Father, he made known to his disciples; and for the ministers of Christ to do otherwise, would argue unfaithfulness in them both to Christ and to the souls of men:

but have showed you; all the doctrines of the Gospel, and pointed to every path of duty, and declared, as he says hereafter, the whole counsel of God:

and have taught you publicly; first in the Jewish synagogue, then in the school of Tyrannus, Ac 19:8 and in whatsoever place the church, when formed, might meet together for public worship; there the apostle taught them the truths of the Gospel openly, and without any reserve, before all the people, as Christ ordered his apostles to do, and as he himself did, Mt 10:27

and from house to house: as he visited the saints at their own houses, to know their personal cases, and the state of their souls, he instructed them privately and personally one by one; he taught the same publicly as privately, and privately as publicly: and took every opportunity of instilling Gospel truths into them, and of enriching them with a larger knowledge of them; which shows his affection and zeal, his laboriousness, industry, and indefatigableness in the ministry.

Acts 20:21

Ver. 21. Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks,.... To the Jews first in their synagogue, and then to both Jews and Greeks, or Gentiles, in the school of Tyrannus; opening and explaining to both the nature and use, urging and insisting upon, and proving by undeniable testimonies the necessity,

of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ: the former of these is not a legal repentance, but an evangelical one; which flows from a sense of the love of God, and an application of pardoning grace and mercy, and is always attended with hope, at least of interest in it, and as here with faith in Christ Jesus: it lies in a true sight and sense of sin, as exceeding sinful, being contrary to the nature and law of God, and a deformation of the image of God in man, as well as followed with dreadful and pernicious consequences; and in a godly sorrow for it, as it is committed against a God of infinite purity and holiness, and of love, grace, and mercy; and it shows itself in shame for sin, and blushing at it, and in an ingenious confession of it, and forsaking it: and the latter of these is not an historical faith, or an assent of the mind to whatsoever is true concerning the person, office, and grace of Christ; but is a spiritual act of the soul upon him; it is a looking and going out to him, a laying hold and leaning on him, and trusting in him, for grace, righteousness, peace, pardon, life, and salvation. Now these two were the sum of the apostle's ministry; this is a breviary or compendium of it; a form of sound words held fast and published by him: and as these two go together as doctrines in the ministry of the word, they go together as graces in the experience of the saints; where the one is, there the other is; they are wrought in the soul at one and the same time, by one and the same hand; the one is not before the other in order of time, however it may be in order of working, or as to visible observation; repentance is mentioned before faith, not that it precedes it, though it may be discerned in its outward acts before it; yet faith as to its inward exercise on Christ is full as early, if not earlier; souls first look to Christ by faith, and then they mourn in tears of evangelical repentance, Zec 12:10 though the order of the Gospel ministry is very fitly here expressed, which is first to lay before sinners the evil of sin, and their danger by it, in order to convince of it, and bring to repentance for it; and then to direct and encourage them to faith in Christ Jesus, as in the case of the jailer, Ac 16:29 and this is, generally speaking, the order and method in which the Holy Spirit proceeds; he is first a spirit of conviction and illumination, he shows to souls the exceeding sinfulness of sin, causes them to loath it and themselves for it, and humbles them under a sense of it; and then he is a spirit of faith, he reveals Christ unto them as God's way or salvation, and works faith in them to believe in him. Moreover, these two, repentance and faith, were the two parts of Christ's ministry, **Mr 1:15** and are what, he would have published and insisted on, in the preaching of the word, Lu 24:47 so that the ministry of the apostle was very conformable to the mind and will of Christ.

Acts 20:22

Ver. 22. And now behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem,.... Not in his own spirit, though the Ethiopic version reads, "in my spirit"; as if he was pressed and straitened, and troubled within himself, at what afflictions and bonds he was to endure at Jerusalem; for this is not consistent with what he says in Ac 20:24 nor is the sense, that he was bound in conscience and duty to go to Jerusalem, to carry the collections of the churches made for the poor saints there, which the Gentile churches importuned him to take upon him, and which he undertook, and promised to perform, and so was under obligation to do it; but rather that he was resolved and determined in his own mind, within himself, or he purposed in his spirit, as in Ac 19:21 to go to Jerusalem: but it is best to understand it of the Spirit of God; as that either the apostle, by the revelation of the Spirit of God, knew that when he came to Jerusalem he should be laid in bonds, and under a deep impression of that upon his mind, he went thither, as though he was bound already; or rather that he was under such a strong impulse of the Spirit of God, by which he was moved to such a vehement desire to go thither, that the bonds and afflictions he saw waited for him there, could not deter him, and all the entreaties of his friends could not dissuade him from it:

not knowing the things that shall befall me there; that is, the particular things he should suffer there, nor how they would issue with respect to life or death; and if the latter, whether he should suffer death, there or elsewhere; these things were not as yet revealed to him; he only in general knew, that bonds and afflictions would be his lot and portion, and which therefore he excepts in the next verse: after this it was revealed to him by Agabus a prophet, in the name, and under the influence of the Holy Ghost, that he should be apprehended at Jerusalem, and should be bound and delivered to the Gentiles; which was signified by the prophet's taking his girdle and binding his hands and feet with it, but still he knew not whether he should die there or not, though he was ready for it, Ac 21:10 afterwards when he was come to Jerusalem, and had been bound, and was in prison, the Lord himself appeared to him, and told him that he must bear witness at Rome, as he had testified of him at Jerusalem, Ac 23:11 so that he was not to suffer death there, only bonds and imprisonment.

Acts 20:23

Ver. 23. Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city,.... As he passed along, where there was a church, or any number of saints: in the churches of those times there were prophets who foretold things to come, and by these the Holy Ghost testified to the apostle, as he travelled along, and called upon the churches in every city, what would befall him when he came to Jerusalem; this sense the natural order of the words requires, unless there should be a transposition of them, thus, "save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me, or wait for me in every city"; that is, this in general was only made known to him by the Spirit of God, that wherever he came, affliction and persecution would attend him, and he must expect bonds and imprisonment; these were ready for him, and be must prepare for them, as he did: and therefore, whenever they came, he was not surprised at them, they were no other than what he looked for; but the other sense seems best, for such a transposition is not very easy, and, besides, can by no means be admitted, if the sense is, as the words are read in Beza's ancient copy, and in others, and in the Vulgate Latin version, "that bonds and afflictions abide me at Jerusalem"; however, since the Holy Ghost testified before hand of the afflictions and bonds of the apostle, whether in every city or in Jerusalem, or both; it is no inconsiderable proof of the proper deity of the Spirit of God, and is an instance of his affectionate regard to the apostle, to give him previous notice of these things.

Acts 20:24

Ver. 24. But none of these things move me,.... From the hope of the Gospel, nor from the ministry of the word, nor from his journey to Jerusalem; they did not shake his faith, nor inject fear into him, nor cause him to alter his purpose and design:

neither count I my life dear unto myself: life is a very valuable thing, no outward or temporal enjoyment can be dearer to a man than life; all that he has he will give for his life: this therefore must not be understood in an absolute sense, as if the apostle despised his life, and esteemed of it meanly, when it was the gift of God, and had been not only so eminently preserved in providence, but had been so useful in a way of grace to so many valuable purposes; but it must be taken in a comparative sense, with respect to Christ and his Gospel, and when it should be called for to be laid down for him; and that, in such circumstances, and under such considerations, he made no account of it at all, but preferred Christ and his Gospel to it: this sense appears by what follows,

so that I might finish my course with joy; the course and race of his life, ending it by suffering cheerfully and joyfully for Christ; or his Christian course and race, which began at his conversion, ending that with a joyful prospect of being with Christ in an endless eternity; or else the course of his ministry, sealing that with his blood, and rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ, and so he did finish his course, **2Ti 4:7**

and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus; which seems to be explanative of the former, or of what is meant by his course, namely his ministry, the ministry of the Gospel: Beza's ancient copy, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "the ministry of the word"; this he had received from Christ, both the Gospel which he ministered, and gifts qualifying him for it, and a mission and commission to minister it; and which he was desirous of fulfilling in such a manner, as to give up his account with joy to him from whom he had received it, and to whom he was accountable; namely,

to testify the Gospel of the grace of God; to profess and preach it, to bear a constant and public testimony to it at death, as in life, and faithfully to declare it, and assert it to the last; which he calls not only the "Gospel", or good news of salvation by Christ; but the Gospel "of the grace" of God: which brings the account of the free grace, love, and mercy of God, displayed in the scheme of salvation of the grace of God the Father, in pitching his love upon any of the sons of men; not because they were better and more deserving of his favour, than others, but because of his sovereign will and pleasure, who will be gracious to whom he will be gracious; and in choosing them in Christ unto salvation, before they had done good or evil, and without any consideration or foresight of, or motive from good works hereafter done by them; in drawing the scheme and model of their salvation in Christ, appointing him to be the author of it; and in making a covenant of grace with him, stored with all the blessings and promises of grace; and in sending him, in the fulness of time, to suffer and die for them, not sparing him, but delivering him up for them all, and giving all things freely with him; and in accepting the sacrifice, satisfaction, and righteousness of his Son on their account, as if done by themselves. It also gives an account of the grace of Christ in undertaking the salvation of men; in assuming their nature, and becoming mean and low in it; in dying for their sins; in his intercession for them at the right hand of God; and in the care he takes of them in this world, until he has brought them safe home to himself. Likewise it gives an account of the grace of the Spirit in regeneration and sanctification; in working faith in the hearts of men; in being a comforter to them, a witnesser of their adoption, the earnest of their inheritance, and the sealer of them unto the day of redemption. And the Gospel may be so called, because all the doctrines of it are doctrines of grace; it asserts election to be of grace, and not of works; and ascribes the justification of a sinner to the free grace of God, through the righteousness of Christ, imputed without works and received by faith, which faith is the gift of God, and it denies it to be of the deeds of the law; it represents the pardon of sin to be according to the riches of God's grace, though it is through the blood of Christ, and not owing to humiliation, repentance, confession, and new obedience, as causes of it; it attributes regeneration and conversion to the abundant mercy, the free favour of God, and to the efficacy of his grace, and not to the will of the flesh, or the will of man; and in a word, as the great doctrine of it is salvation, whence it is called the Gospel of salvation, it declares that the whole of salvation, from first to last, is all of grace. And it may also bear this name, because it is a means of conveying grace unto, and implanting it in the hearts of men; regenerating grace comes this way; God begets men by the word of truth, they are born again of incorruptible seed by it; the Spirit of God, as a spirit of sanctification, is received through it, and faith comes by hearing it; and both that and hope, and every other grace, are quickened, encouraged, and drawn forth into exercise by it; all which is, when it is attended with the Spirit of God and power: and this being the nature and use of the Gospel, made it so precious and valuable to the apostle, and made him so intent upon testifying it, and fulfilling the ministry of it, and to prefer it to life and everything in this world; and it cannot but be highly valued and greatly desired by all those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Beza's ancient copy, and some others, read, "to testify to Jews and Greeks the Gospel of the grace of God".

Acts 20:25

Ver. 25. And now behold,.... This is not only a note of asseveration, but of attention, stirring up to observe what is here asserted:

I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more; the sense is, that none of them should ever see him again, none of the churches of Asia, or the members of them; among whom he had been some years preaching the Gospel, the things concerning the Messiah, his kingdom and glory, and the meetness of the saints for, and their right unto the heavenly inheritance, prepared by God, and given by him to all that love him: Beza's ancient copy reads, "the kingdom of Jesus": this the apostle knew by divine revelation, by the same spirit in which he was going bound to Jerusalem, though he knew not whether he should die there or elsewhere; however, he knew, and was persuaded, he should visit these parts no more.

Acts 20:26

Ver. 26. Wherefore I take you to record this day,.... This is a solemn appeal to the elders of the church at Ephesus, who knew his doctrine and manner of life for a considerable time among them:

that I am pure from the blood of all men: or "of you all", as some copies, and the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; which seems most natural, since they could only bear a testimony for him with respect to themselves, and the people at Ephesus, where he had so behaved both in the faithful discharge of his ministry, and in his exemplary life and conversation; as that the ruin and destruction of no one of them could be laid to his charge, or any one perish for want of knowledge, or through any negligence of his; see Eze 33:6.

Acts 20:27

Ver. 27. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. By which is meant, not the purposes and decrees of God, latent in his own breast, these the apostle could not declare; but his revealed will in the Gospel, concerning the salvation of men by Jesus Christ, even the whole of the Gospel, every truth and doctrine of it, necessary to salvation, and to the peace, joy, and comfort of the saints; together with all the ordinances of it, and everything that had any tendency to promote the glory of God, and the good of souls; see **Lu 7:30** none of these things did the apostle withhold from the knowledge of the church at Ephesus, but freely imparted and communicated them to them; See Gill on "Ac 20:20".

Acts 20:28

Ver. 28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves,.... Since the blood of men may be required of those, who are negligent or partial in their office, and shun to declare the whole counsel of God: this exhortation is given them not merely as men, to take care of their bodily health, the outward concerns of life, and provide for themselves and families; nor merely as Christians, but as ministers of the Gospel; that they would take heed to their gifts, to use and improve them, and not neglect them; to their time, that they spend it aright, and not squander it away; and to their spirit, temper, and passions, that they are not governed by them; and to their lives and conversations, that they be exemplary to those who are under their care; and to their doctrine, that it be according to the Scriptures; that it be the doctrine of Christ, and the same with the apostles; that it be according to godliness, and that it tends to edification; that it be sound and incorrupt, pure and unmixed, and all of a piece and consistent with itself; and that they be not infected and carried away with errors and heresies:

and to all the flock; the church and all the members of it, which are compared to a flock of sheep, which are to be looked after and watched over by the ministers of the word, who are as shepherds to them, lest they should be infected, or any damage done them. The people of God are compared to sheep on many accounts; before conversion, for their going astray, when they are as lost sheep; after conversion, for their meek and inoffensive carriage and behaviour, and for their patience in bearing sufferings, to which they are exposed: and a church of Christ is compared to a flock of them, being in Gospel order, folded together and feeding in the same pasture, attending the word and ordinances, under the care of shepherds appointed by Christ the chief shepherd; whose business it is to take heed unto them, and care of them, to learn to know their state and condition, to watch over them, and to feed them with knowledge and with understanding, for which they are qualified by Christ; and they are to take heed unto everyone in the flock, the poor of the flock as well as others, the lambs as well as the sheep, and the sick and the diseased, the torn, and straying, and driven away, as well as the fat and the strong: and this flock, though a little flock, is a holy and beautiful one, a flock of men, and of the souls of men dear to God, to Christ and the blessed Spirit; and a special regard should be had unto them, and that for reasons following:

over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers; or "bishops"; this is said to the elders of the church, Ac 20:17 which shows that the office of an elder and a bishop is one and the same office; and this contains in it more than one argument why they should take heed to the flock; as because they are the overseers of it, who have the care and oversight of the flock, that is under their inspection, and is their proper province, and office; and this they were put into by the Holy Ghost, who gave them gifts to qualify them for it, and called, and inclined them to undertake it, as well as moved the people to make choice of them for this purpose; and since, therefore, this was an affair in which the Holy

Ghost was so much concerned, it became them very diligently to attend it:

to feed the church of God; with knowledge and understanding; and discharge the whole office of faithful shepherds to the flock, by feeding the flock and not themselves, strengthening the diseased, healing the sick, binding up the broken, bringing again that which was driven away, and seeking up that which was lost: and here is another argument suggested, to stir up to a diligent performance of this work; and that is, that this flock is the church of God, a set of men whom God has chosen for himself, and called by his grace out of the world, and separated for his own use and glory, and among whom he dwells; and therefore to be fed with the faithful word, with the finest of the wheat, and not with the chaff of human schemes, and with the wind of false doctrine, nor with anything that is vain, trifling, and deceitful; but with the solid doctrines of the Gospel, with the words of faith and good doctrine, with the wholesome words of Christ Jesus, which have in them milk for babes and meat for strong men, and with and by the ordinances of the Gospel, which are the green pastures they are to be guided into, and abide in; and in all they are to be directed to Christ, the sum of the word and ordinances, who is the bread of life, and food of faith; and that the church should be thus fed, is the will of Christ, who has appointed and ordered his ministers to feed his lambs and sheep, and has furnished them with what is necessary for this work; this is the design of the ministry of the Gospel, and the administration of ordinances; and the churches of Christ are placed where food may be had, where the word is faithfully preached, and the ordinances truly administered: some copies read, "the church of the Lord"; and others, and so the Complutensian edition, "the church of the Lord and God":

which he hath purchased with his own blood; which being the blood not only of a pure and innocent man, but of one that is truly and properly God as well as man, was a sufficient ransom price to redeem the church and people of God from sin, the law, its curse and condemnation: so that this is no inconsiderable proof of the true and proper deity of Christ; and contains a fresh argument, or reason, why the flock of God and "church of Christ", as the Syriac version reads; or "the church of the Lord and God", as in five of Beza's exemplars: or "of the Lord God", as the Arabic version, should be taken heed unto and fed; because it must needs be dear to God and Christ, and precious to them, since so great a price has been paid for it. The purchaser is God, Christ who is God over all, blessed for ever, not a creature; that could never have made such a purchase, it could not have purchased a single sheep or lamb in this flock, no man can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him, much less the whole flock; but Christ being God, was able to make such a purchase, and he has actually made it, and given a sufficient price for it; not to Satan, with whom these sheep were a prey, and from whom they are taken in virtue of the ransom given; but to God, from whom they strayed, against whom they sinned, and whose law they broke; and this price was not silver and gold, nor men, nor people: but Christ himself, his life and blood; and which were his "own", the human nature, the blood of which was shed, and its life given being in union with his divine person, and was in such sense his own, the property of the Son of God, as the life and blood of no mere man are theirs: and this purchase now being made in this way, and by such means, is a very proper one; it is not made without price, but with an invaluable one; and it is a legal purchase, a valuable consideration being given for it, perfectly equivalent to it; and therefore is a complete one, there is nothing wanting to make it more firm, it is a finished purchase; and it is a very peculiar one, it is a peculiar people that are purchased, called the purchased possession, **Eph 1:14** and a peculiar price which is paid for it; there is no other of the same kind, nor any thing like it, and it is made by a peculiar person, one that is God and man in one person.

Acts 20:29

Ver. 29. For I know this,.... By divine revelation:

that after my departing; either out of this world, or after his leaving them now, and proceeding on, his journey:

shall grievous wolves enter in among you; false teachers, comparable to wolves, for their craft and cunning, and for their greedy, covetous, and voracious dispositions; and who would be very grievous, troublesome, and even intolerable to them; these, he knew, would enter privily, at an unawares, into their churches, and set up themselves for preachers, without being called or sent:

not sparing the flock; fleecing it instead of feeding it, making merchandise of it, and like the Pharisees, under religious pretences, devour widows' houses, and drain the purses of men; and having as little compassion upon their souls, poisoning them with their errors and heresies, subverting their faith, and bringing them into swift ruin and destruction, as much as would in them lie.

Acts 20:30

Ver. 30. Also of your own selves shall men arise,.... Not only false teachers from abroad should come and enter among them, but some would spring up out of their own communities, such as had been admitted members of them, and of whom they had hoped well; such were Hymenseus, Philetus, Alexander, Hertoogenes, and Phygellus;

speaking perverse things; concerning God, and Christ, and the Gospel; distorted things, wresting the Scriptures to their own destruction, and that of others; things that are disagreeable to the word of God, and pernicious to the souls of men:

to draw away disciples after them; to rend away members from the churches, make schisms and divisions, form parties, set themselves at the head of them, and establish new sects, called after their own names; see **1Jo 2:19**.

Acts 20:31

Ver. 31. Therefore watch,.... Meaning both over themselves, and the flock; to prevent, if possible, false teachers entering in, and to nip the buds of heresy and schism, as soon as they appear, and to preserve themselves, and the church, from being carried away with the error of the wicked.

And remember that by the space of three years; reckoning from his first coming to Ephesus, unto this time, that he now called at Miletus; see Ac 18:19 and

I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears; that is, he was constantly and continually cautioning them against false teachers, and their doctrines, in the most tender and affectionate manner; shedding tears at the thoughts of what mischief would be done, and how many souls would be ruined by them; which gives a lively idea of the apostle, and his ministry, of his affection, zeal, and diligence, very worthy of the imitation of all the preachers of the Gospel. Several copies, and all the Oriental versions, read, "everyone of you".

Acts 20:32

Ver. 32. And now brethren,.... So the apostle calls the elders of the church at Ephesus; though they had not the same gifts, and were not in the same high office as he was, yet he puts himself upon a level with them, as if he and they were fellow elders, as Peter calls himself, **1Pe 5:1** which is an instance of the apostle's humility and affection:

I commend you to God; to God the Father; to his grace, to supply all their need; to his wisdom, to direct them in all their affairs; and to his power, to keep them from the sins and corruptions of the times, and from the errors and heresies now broaching, or to be broached.

And to the word of his grace: either the Gospel, before called the Gospel of the grace of God, Ac 20:24 This is sometimes called "the word", the word of faith, of truth, of righteousness, of reconciliation and salvation; and is "his" word, the word of God, and not of man; it comes from him, is concerning him, and is succeeded by him; and it is the word of "his grace", since it publishes his free grace and mercy in Christ Jesus, and declares salvation to, be wholly of the grace of God; to which this church is commended by the apostle as a rule of faith and practice, to attend unto, and abide by, and as a preservative from those errors and heresies which he had observed would spring up among them, and which would be for their instruction, comfort, and establishment: or else the Lord Jesus is intended, who is the eternal and essential word of God; who, as the word, inwardly conceived, is the image of the mind, equal to it, and yet distinct from it, so Christ is the image of the invisible God, equal to him, and yet a distinct person from him; and as the word expressed is the interpreter of the mind, so Christ the word, who was in the beginning with God, and lay in his bosom, has spoke all things from him, declared his mind, and explained his will: besides, he is the word who in the everlasting council and covenant spoke on the behalf of all his people, asked for every blessing for them, and engaged to be the surety of them; and is the word, who, in the beginning of time, spoke all things out of nothing; and now is the advocate, and speaks for the saints in heaven, as well as he has been the word spoken of by all the holy prophets from the beginning of the world: and he may be thought the rather to be designed, since the saints never commend themselves, or others, either in life, or in death, to any but to a divine person; nor is any but a divine person capable of taking the care and charge of the saints, and of making it good; nor will they trust any other; nor are the saints ever said to be committed or commended to the Gospel, but on the other hand, that is said to be committed to them: the written word is committed to the care and keeping of the saints, but not the saints to the care and keeping of that; nor does it appear so agreeable to put the written word upon a level with the divine Being; a commendation of the saints, equally to the written word, as to God himself, seems to be a lessening of the glory of the divine Being, and an ascribing too much to the word, but suits well with Christ the essential word: and who may be called the word of his grace, because the grace of God is greatly displayed in him; and because all fulness of grace dwells in him; and he is the author, donor, and object of all grace, and so a proper person to be commended to; and what follows is very applicable to him:

which is able to build you up: in faith and holiness, and on himself, the sure foundation; for though the Gospel is an instrument in the hands of the Spirit of God, in building up saints on their most holy faith, yet Christ is the master builder; it is he that builds the temple, the church, and every particular believer, and must bear the glory. The saints, though they are built on Christ the foundation, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, and so are safe; yet they stand in need of building up, or of edification; and a church may be said to be built up, or edified, when additions are made unto it of such as shall be saved; and particular members are built up, when additions are made to their grace, or they grow in the exercise of it; when their spiritual strength increases, when their understandings are more enlightened, their judgments better informed, and their memories filled with divine truths and Gospel doctrines; when they are more and more confirmed in the faith of Christ, both as a grace, and as a doctrine; and their wills are brought to a greater resignation to the will of God, as well as their afflictions are set upon things in heaven, and their souls are more seeking after them: and now this is what God is able to do, and does do; for except he builds, in vain do the builders build; he causes all grace to abound; and so does his word, his essential word; he is the author and finisher of faith, and gives both grace and glory, as it follows:

and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified: by the inheritance is meant the heavenly glory, which is a free grace gift and not obtained by the works of the law, or the industry of men. It is a distribution by lot, as the land of Canaan was, even by the lot of God's eternal purpose and decree: it is what belongs to children, to the children of God, and them only; and therefore bears this name, and comes unto them upon, and in consequence of the death of Christ the testator: it is his righteousness which entitles unto it; and it is the grace of God which makes meet for it; and the Spirit of God is the earnest of it: it is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens, and is an eternal one; it lies in light, and among the saints there. God is able to give it; it is a gift of his grace, of his sovereign will, which he gives to whom he pleases; it is an inheritance of his preparing and disposing, which he calls unto, makes meet for, and bestows: and Christ, the word of his grace, is able to give it; it is in his hands, not only the promise of it, but that itself; he is in possession of it, and it is in his power to give it;

and he does give it to all that the Father has given him, and who are here described from their sanctification; for this is only enjoyed by such, who are set apart by God the Father, whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ, and to whom he is made sanctification, and who are sanctified by the blessed Spirit. Now though the Gospel, the written word, may be as a map, which shows where this inheritance lies, and which is the way to it; yet it is Christ, the living word, who gives the right unto it, the meetness for it, the earnest of it, and will put into the possession of it.

Acts 20:33

Ver. 33. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. This the apostle says, not merely in vindication of himself, and his character, from all charge or suspicion of avarice; but chiefly for the instruction of these elders, and all others of the same office, not to indulge the sin of covetousness, which is very disagreeable, and ought not to be in a minister of the word; and it may be observed, that many things which the apostle says before of himself to those elders, is said not to commend himself, nor so much in his own vindication, as for their imitation; compare with this Nu 16:15 and to point out the character of false teachers that would come in, or spring up among them, who would make merchandise of them. Beza's ancient copy, and others, read, "the silver, &c. of none of you"; and so the Ethiopic version.

Acts 20:34

Ver. 34. Yea, you yourselves know,.... So far was the apostle from desiring to have other men's money, or to wear their apparel, or to eat their bread, that he could appeal to these elders for the truth of it, they having been eyewitnesses of it:

that these hands have ministered unto my necessities; meaning, that he had wrought with his hands, which he then held up, or stretched out, at tent making, along with Aquila and Priscilla, at Ephesus, as he had done before at Corinth, Ac 18:2 and therewith supplied himself with necessaries for food and clothing; for though he had a power, as a minister of the Gospel, to forbear working, and to insist upon a maintenance from the churches, yet in some cases, and in some places, he chose rather to forego that, lest he should either any ways hinder the progress of the Gospel at the first preaching of it, or be burdensome to the churches, or give the false teachers any handle against him; and he not only supported himself in this way, but assisted others also:

and to them that were with me; as Luke, Timothy, and others; see Ac 20:4.

Acts 20:35

Ver. 35. I have showed you all things,.... Both as to doctrine and practice, and had set them an example how to behave in every point, and particularly in this:

how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; the sense of which is, that they should labour with their hands as he did, and so support the weak; either such who were weak in body, and unable to work and help themselves, and therefore should be helped, assisted, relieved, and supported by the labours of others, that were able; or the weak in faith, and take nothing of them, lest they should think the preachers of the word sought only their own worldly advantage, and so they should be stumbled and fall from the truth:

and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus; which the apostle had either collected as the sense of some passages of his, such as **Lu 6:30**, &c. or which though not recorded in any of the Gospels, the apostle might have received from one or other of the twelve disciples, as what were frequently used by Christ in the days of his flesh; and which the apostle had inculcated among the Ephesians, and now puts them in mind of them, they being worthy of remembrance: how he said,

it is more blessed to give than to receive: it is more comfortable, honourable, pleasant, and profitable: the giver is in a more comfortable situation, having an abundance, at least a sufficiency, and something to spare; whereas the receiver is often in want and distress, and so uncomfortable: it is an honour to give; an honour is reflected upon the giver, both by the receiver, and others; when to receive is an instance of meanness, and carries in it, among men, some degree of dishonour: it is a pleasure to a liberal man to distribute to the necessities of others; and it cannot be grateful to a man to be in such circumstances, as make it necessary for him to receive from others, and be dependent on them; and great are the advantages and profit which a cheerful giver reaps, both in this world, and that to come: wherefore the conclusion which the apostle would have drawn from hence is, that it is much more eligible for a man to work with his own hands, and support himself, and assist others, than to receive at the hands of others.

Acts 20:36

Ver. 36. And when he had thus spoken,.... And finished his speech to the elders: he kneeled down: upon the floor, which was a prayer gesture, used by Christ, and others; for, it seems, the disuse of kneeling in prayer, between the passover and pentecost, which Tertullian {k}, and other writers, speak of, had not yet obtained, which was in memory of Christ's resurrection from the dead, for this was now the time: see Ac 20:6 and

prayed with them all: and no doubt for them all; the Syriac version renders it, "and he prayed, and all the men with him"; the apostle, and the elders, joined together in prayer.

{k} De Corona Militis, c. 3.

Acts 20:37

Ver. 37. And they all wept sore,.... At the thoughts of parting with such a faithful and affectionate friend and servant of Christ; and no doubt but their affections were greatly moved by his prayers for them, as well as by his discourse to them. Christians are not Stoics, religion does not take away and destroy the natural affections, but regulates and governs them, and directs to a right use of them:

and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him; as Esau fell on Jacob's neck and kissed him, Ge 33:4 and Joseph on his brother Benjamin's, and his father Jacob's, Ge 45:14. And it was usual with the eastern nations, particularly the Persians {l}, for friends and relations to kiss at parting, as well as at meeting; see **Ru 1:9**.

{l} Xenophon. Cyclopedia, l. 1. c. 20.

Acts 20:38

Ver. 38. Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake,.... In
Ac 20:25 it filled them with sorrow to part with him; but this was increased, and made almost intolerable by what he said,

that they should see his face no more: could they have hoped to have seen him again, it would have made their parting with him more easy; but to be told they should never see him more in this world, it cut them to the heart; which shows what a share the apostle had in their hearts and affections, and not without good reason: however, that they might have a sight of him as long as they could, they went along with him to see him take shipping, and to see the last of him.

And they accompanied him unto the ship: which lay at Miletus waiting for him.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 21:1

Ver. 1. And it came to pass, that after we had gotten from them,.... Which was with great difficulty, with many tears, and much wringing of hands: the word signifies that they were "plucked from" them; they clung about them, as husband and wife, and parents and children do; so strong were their affections; and their parting was like the parting of such near relations, or like the plucking of the flesh from the bones, or the drawing and separating one member from another; such is the cement of true Christian love:

and had launched; the vessel into the sea, from the port at Miletus:

we came with a straight course unto Coos; an island in the Aegean sea. Pomponius Mela {m} calls it Cos in Carlo; and so Pausanias {n} reckons it a city of the Carians and Lycians, mentioning it along with Rhodes. It was famous for being the birth place of Apelles the painter, and Hippocrates the physician. Pliny {o} places it in Caria, and calls it most noble, and says that it was fifteen miles distant from Halicarnassus, was a hundred miles in circumference, as many think, and was called Merope: and who elsewhere observes {p}, that it is reported that the silk worms are bred in this island, and that a sort of raiment called "bombycine" was first made here by Pamphila, the daughter of Latoius. And so Solinus {q} from Varro, testifies, that this island first gave a fine sort of clothing for the ornament of women: hence because silks or bombycines, from the silk worms, were first wove here by women, some think the island had its name, for hwqm, which signifies something spun, in
1Ki 10:28 it is by us translated "linen yarn"; but the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "from Coa". This island was taken by Hercules, and Eurypylus, the

king of it, was slain by him {r}. It is now in the hands of the Turks, by whom it is called Stancora; but by others Lango. When, and by whom the Gospel was first preached here, is not certain; it does not appear that the Apostle Paul stayed to preach it now: however, in the beginning of the "fourth" century there was a church here, and a bishop of it was present at the council of Nice; and in the "fifth" century, a bishop of the church here assisted in the council of Chalcedon; and in the "sixth" century, a bishop of the same place was in the fifth synod at Constantinople {s}. Hither Paul and his company came with a good wind, a prosperous gale, and nothing to hinder them; which perhaps is rather meant than a straight or direct line, in which they ran from Miletus to this place:

and the day following unto Rhodes, this is an island in Lycia, according to Mela {t}, and had in it these three cities, Lindos, Camitos, and Jalysos: it is said of it {u}, that the heavens are never so cloudy, but the sun is seen here in one part of the day, or another. R. Benjamin {w} makes this to be three days' sail from Samos; and says, he found four hundred Jews in it, and almost three hundred at Samos. It is asserted by several writers {x}, that this island was once covered with the sea, and in process of time appeared out of it, and became dry land. The account which Pliny {y} gives of it is, that

"it is most beautiful and free, and was in circumference a hundred and thirty miles; or, if Isidorus is rather to be credited, a hundred and three: the cities in it were Lindus, Camirus, Jalysus, now Rhodes: it is distant from Alexandria in Egypt five hundred seventy eight miles, as Isidorus reports; but according to Eratosthenes, four hundred sixty nine; and according to Mutianus, five hundred; and from Cyprus it was a hundred and sixty six;"

a place after mentioned, which the apostle left on the left hand, having sailed from Petara to Phoenicia. The same writer proceeds and adds,

"it was before called Ophiusa, Astria, Aethrea, Trinacria, Cotymbia, Paeessa, Atabyria, from the king of it, afterwards Macria and Oloessa."

Jerom {z} says of it, that

"it is the most noble of the islands Cyclades, and the first from the east, formerly called Ophiussa; in which was a city of the same name, famous for the brazen colossus, which was seventy cubits high: it was distant from the port of Asia twenty miles."

This statue, called the colossus of the sun, was one of the seven wonders of the world, according to Pliny {a}, and was made by Chares, a disciple of Lysippus, at the expense of King Demetrius: it was twelve years in making, and cost three hundred talents: it was seventy cubits high (as Jerom before says): it fell by an earthquake, after it had stood fifty or sixty years (some say 1360); and as it lay along it was a miracle, few men with their arms stretched out could embrace the thumb, and the fingers were bigger than most statues: and from this statue the Rhodians have been sometimes called Colossians; and some have fancied, that these are the persons the Apostle Paul wrote his epistle to under that name. This island, and the city in it, were called Rhodes, as some think, from roses, with which it might abound, or because of the beautifulness of the place; and others, that it had its name from
dwry "Jarod", which, in the Chaldee and Syriac languages, signifies a serpent; and so it was called Ophiusa from the multitude of serpents in it {b}; though others say it took its name from Rhodia, a fair and beautiful maid beloved by Apollo. This island, in the "seventh" century, about the year 653, was taken by Mauvia, king of the Saracens, who sold the colossus, which lay on the ground ever since the earthquake, to a merchant, who is said to load nine hundred camels with the brass of it: it afterwards came into the hands of the Christians, and in the year 1522 was taken by Solyman the Turk, after a siege of six months, being betrayed by Andreas Meralius, a Portuguese knight {c}. When the Gospel was first preached here, and a church state formed, cannot be said; but in the beginning of the "fourth" century there was a bishop of this place in the council of Nice; and in the "fifth" century there was a church here, and it was a metropolitan; and in the "sixth" century a bishop of this place was in the fifth Roman synod under Symmachus; and in the "seventh" century a bishop of Rhodes assisted in the sixth council at Constantinople; and in the same century it was taken by the Saracenes, as before observed, when the church here was the metropolitan of the Cyclades: and yet in the "eighth" century, Leo, bishop of this place, was in the Nicene synod; and even though in the ninth century it was grievously harassed by the Saracens, yet its church state was not quite destroyed {d}.

And from thence to Patara; Beza's ancient copy adds, "and Myra": see Ac 27:5 a city of Lycia: hence it is called by Herodotus {e}, and Pliny {f}, Patara of Lycia, and mentioned with Rhodes: it was famous for the temple of Apollo, which was in it, in which answers were given six months in the year, and were on equal credit with the oracle at Delphos {g}; the Arabic version here calls it Sparta. According to Pliny {h} it was first called Sataros. Some say it had its name Patara from Paturus, the son of Apollo; Ptolomy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, having enlarged it, called it after his sister's name, Arsinoe. How long the apostle stayed in this place is not known, nor whether he preached here, nor if he did, what success he had: in the "second" century, the statues of Jupiter and Apollo were in this, place: in the "fourth" century, there was a church here, and a bishop of it: and in the "sixth" century, a bishop of the church at Patara was in the fifth synod at Rome and Constantinople: and in the "eighth" century, Anastasius, bishop of this place, was in the Nicene synod {k}.

{m} Xenophon. Cyropaedia, l. 2. c. 14. {n} Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 526. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 31. {p} Ib. l. 11. c. 22, 23. {q} Polyhistor. c. 12. {r} Apollodorus de Orig. Deorum, l. 2. p. 112. {s} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 5, cent. 5. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 6. {t} De Situ Orbis, l. 2. c. 14. {u} Plin. l. 2. c. 62. Solin. c. 21. {w} Itinerar. p. 30. {x} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 87. Heraclides de Politiis, p. 456. Philo, quod mundus sit incorr. p. 959, 960. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 31. {z} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. G. {a} Nat. Hist. l. 34. c. 7. {b} Heraclides de Politiis, p. 456. ad Calcem Aelian. Vat. Hist. Vid. Hilleri Onomasticum Sacrum, p. 918. {c} Petav. Rationar. Temp. par. 1. l. 4. c. 5. p. 153. & l. 9. c. 11. p. 500. {d} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 5. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 6. c. 7. p. 418. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 4. c. 3. p. 20. c. 7. p. 112. c. 16. p. 369. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 9. c. 2. p. 4. c. 3. p. 13. {e} Clio, l. 1. c. 182. {f} L. 2. c. 108. & l. 6. c. 34. {g} Pansan. l. 9. p. 607. Mela, l. 1. c. 15. Alex. ab Alex. l. 6. c. 2. {h} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 27. {k} Madgeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 2. c. 15. p. 192. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4.

Acts 21:2

Ver. 2. And finding a ship sailing over unto Phoenicia,.... For it seems that the ship they went aboard at Assos, Ac 20:13 went no further, at least in the way the apostle was going, than Patara; but lighting on another ship, which was bound for Phoenicia, for the city of Tyre, which bordered on the land of Israel, and indeed originally belonged to Canaan; see Ac 11:19.

we went aboard; the said ship:

and set forth; on the voyage.

Acts 21:3

Ver. 3. Now when we had discovered Cyprus,.... An island, as the Syriac version here calls it, which lay between Syria and Cilicia;
See Gill on "Ac 4:36"; and was, according to R. Benjamin {l}, four days sail from Rhodes, before mentioned:

we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria; that part of it called Phoenicia:

and landed at Tyre; the chief city of Phoenicia, famous for navigation and commerce: it stood about four furlongs distant from the shore, and was joined to the continent by Alexander the great {m}. The account Jerom {n} gives of it is this,

"Tyre, the metropolis of Phoenicia, in the tribe of Nephthalim, is near twenty miles from Caesarea Philippi; this was formerly an island, but made continent land by Alexander:--its chief excellency lies in shell fish and purple."

It was a very ancient city, though it seems not so ancient as Sidon, from whence it was distant about two hundred furlongs. Herodotus {o} says, that in his time it had been inhabited two thousand three hundred years; Hiram was king of it in Solomon's time; yea, mention is made of it in Joshua's time, if the text in Jos 19:29 is rightly translated: some say it was built seventy six years before the destruction of Troy. It is to be distinguished into old Tyre, which was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and the island of Tyre, which was conquered by Alexander, and new Tyre annexed, by him to the continent. In the Hebrew language it is called rwu, "Tzur", or "Tzor", which signifies a "rock", being built on one; though some think it has its name from rwhu, "Tzehor", which signifies "brightness"; it is now called Sur or Suri, and is quite desolate, being only a receptacle of thieves and robbers: though R. Benjamin says, in his time, new Tyre was a very good city, and had a port within it, into which ships go between two towers; and that there were in it four hundred Jews, and some of them skilful in the Talmud; --who further observes, that if anyone ascended the walls of new Tyre, he might see Tyre the crowning city, Isa 23:8 which was a stone's cast from the new; but if a man would go in a boat on the sea, he might see towers, streets, and palaces in the bottom {p}:

for there the ship was to unlade her burden; which she had taken in, in the ports where she had been, but where is not certain; for that she had been at Ephesus, and took in her lading there, as Grotius thinks, does not appear; since this was not the ship the apostle and his company sailed in from Miletus, but which they went aboard at Patara, Ac 21:1.

{l} Itinerar. p. 30. {m} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19. Mela, l. 1. c. 12. {n} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. K. {o} Euterpe, l. 2. c. 44. {p} ltinerar. p. 35, 36.

Acts 21:4

Ver. 4. And finding disciples,.... At Tyre, for the Gospel had been preached in Phoenicia by the ministers of the word, who were scattered by the persecution raised at the death of Stephen; and here were brethren, such as had believed in Christ, embraced and professed his Gospel, and were baptized in his name; see Ac 11:19 and who also had extraordinary gifts, as appears by what follows; and there was no doubt a Gospel church founded in this place, though who presided over it in the first century, we have no account; in the "second" century there was a church here, and Cassius was bishop of it {q}; in the "third" century there were some martyrs in this place, who suffered under Dioclesian, and bore innumerable stripes with great courage and constancy, and after that fought with beasts, as bears, leopards, boars, and bulls, and at the same time Tyrannio, bishop of this church, also suffered martyrdom {r}; in the "fourth" century there was a synod at Tyre under Constantine, to which he wrote a letter {s}. There was a bishop of this church present at the council of Nice, in the times of the said emperor; in this age Paulinus and Dorotheus were bishops of Tyre; in the "fifth" century Irenaeus was bishop of Tyre, and then it was the metropolitan of Phoenicia; and in the "sixth" century, there was a bishop of the same church present at the fifth council of Rome and Constantinople {t}. Of the bishops of Tyre in the several centuries, the learned Reland {u} gives a more particular account; according to him, Cassius, bishop of this church, was in the synod held at Caesarea, about the year 198. Paulinus, another bishop of Tyre, was in another council held at the same place, in the year 318. Zeno subscribed in the council of Nice, in the year 325, the first among the bishops of Phoenicia; Vitalis was in the council at Sardica, in the year 347. Uranius subscribed in the council held at Seleucia by the Semiarians, in the year 359; another Zeno bishop of this church was present at the second council at Constantinople, in the year 381; and mention is made of Photius bishop of Tyre, in the acts of the Chalcedon council, held in the year 451, as is also Eusebius in the acts of the council at Constantinople, in the year 553:

we tarried there seven days; either waiting for a ship to proceed on further; or in choice, to enjoy the conversation of the disciples, which was very delightful, and to confirm them in the faith:

who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem; not that the Spirit of God in these persons contradicted his own impulse in the apostle, by which he was moved to go to Jerusalem, see Ac 20:22. The sense is, that these disciples, by the spirit of prophecy, knew that if the apostle went to Jerusalem, many evil things would befall him; wherefore of their own spirit, and out of love to him, they advise him not to go.

{q} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 25. {r} Ib. l. 8. c. 7, 12. {s} Ib. de Vita Constantin. l. 4. c. 41, 42. {t} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccl. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 2. c. 10. p. 553, 554. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 417. cent. 6. c. {u} Palestina Ilustrata, l. 3. p. 1054, 1055.

Acts 21:5

Ver. 5. And when we had accomplished those days,.... The seven days before mentioned:

we departed and went our way; from their quarters where they lodged, or from some one house of the disciples, where they met, and had conversed together:

and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city; that is, the disciples, even all of them that dwelt in that city, with their whole families, their wives and children, accompanied the apostle and those that were with him, through the streets of the city of Tyre, till they came out of it to the shore, where lay the ship they were to go aboard; and which was a mark of their affection and respect to the apostle, as well as a token of their public spirit, that they were not ashamed of Christ and his ministers, nor of their profession of the Gospel:

and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed; which was agreeably to the custom of the Jews, who had, as Tertullian observes {w}, their "orationes litterales", their prayers at the sea shore;
See Gill on "Ac 16:13".

{w} Ad nationes, l. 1. c. 13.

Acts 21:6

Ver. 6. And when we had taken our leave one of another,.... The Alexandrian copy reads, "having prayed, we saluted one another"; with a kiss, as in Ac 20:37 and so parted:

we took ship; or went aboard the ship,

and they returned home again; to their own houses, as the Syriac version renders it; for by "their own", as it is in the Greek text, cannot be meant their families, their wives, and children, for these were along with them, but their habitations; see Joh 16:32.

Acts 21:7

Ver. 7. And when we had finished our course from Tyre,.... Or sailed from thence,

we came to Ptolemais: the Syriac version calls it "Aco" or "Acu": and the Arabic version, "Aco"; and Ptolemais, according to Pliny {x} and Harpocratian {y}, was called Ace. Frequent mention is made of Aco in the Jewish writings, and which according to them was a sea port, for they speak of wked hlmn, "the port of Aco" {z}, and of wked ypyk, "the banks of Aco" {a}, or its rocks: it was upon the borders of the land of Israel, and in the tribe of Asher to the north of it; part of it they say was without the land, and part of it within {b}: according to R. Benjamin, it was one day's sail from Tyre, and who also says, it was upon the borders of Asher, and had a very spacious port {c}; it is said to be about two and thirty miles from Tyre; between that and Tyre, the shore was full of heaps of sand, from whence the sand that glass is made of was fetched; it is mentioned with Tyre, Sidon, and Galilee, in:

"And said, They of Ptolemais, and of Tyrus, and Sidon, and all Galilee of the Gentiles, are assembled together against us to consume us." (1 Maccabees 5:15)

it had the mountainous part of Galilee on the east, the ladder of Tyre on the north, and Mount Carmel on the south, and thus it is described by Josephus {d}:

"Ptolemais is a city of Galilee on the sea coast, built in a large champaign country, but is surrounded with mountains, on the east with the mountains of Galilee, sixty furlongs off; on the south with Carmel, distant a hundred and twenty furlongs; on the north with a very high mountain called the Climax, or ladder of the Tyrians, which is a hundred furlongs from it; two miles from the city runs a very small river called Beleus, near which is the sepulchre of Memnon, taking up the space of an hundred cubits, and is worthy of admiration; it is round and hollow (i.e. the river), casting up glassy sand, which ships in great numbers come and take up, and the place is filled up again."

The account Jerom {e} gives of it is,

"Ptolemais, a maritime city in Judea, near Mount Carmel, which was formerly called so from one Ptolomy;"

from Ptolomy king of Egypt: it was called Ace or Aco, from its being a city of merchandise; though some say it was so called from Hercules being healed of the bite of a serpent, by an herb which grew near the river Beleus. It is now called St. John de Acra or Acri:

and saluted the brethren; that were at Ptolemais or Aco; for the Gospel had been preached here with success; some had believed and professed it, and very likely were in a church state: for there was a church here in the "second" century, and Clarus was bishop of it; and in the beginning of the "fourth" century, there was a bishop present in the synod at Nice; and in the "fifth" century there was a church here; in the time of Arcadius, the Emperor Antiochus was bishop of Ptolemais, a very eloquent man, called therefore by some Chrysostom; in the "sixth" century there was a bishop of this church, who assisted at the synod held both at Rome and Constantinople {f}. The bishops of this church are reckoned up, as Reland {g} says, as he found them thus; Clarus, who was in the council at Caesarea, held in the year 198; Aeneas, who was in the council at Nice, in the year 325, and in another at Antioch, in the year 341; Nectabus, who subscribed in the first council at Constantinople, held in the year 381; Paulus, who was present in the Chalcedon council in the year 451: and Joannes, who was in the council at Jerusalem, in the year 536: and perhaps these brethren might be Jews, since those who first preached the Gospel in Phoenicia preached only to Jews; and certain it is that there were many in this place; we often read of Jewish doctors here, as R. Tanchum the son of R. Chaja a man of Caphar Aco {h}, and R. Simeon ben Judah a man of Caphar Aco {i}, and R. Aba of Aco {k}, and R. Judah ben Gamdah {l}; and in R. Benjamin's time, there were about two hundred Jews in this place {m}: these brethren Paul and his company visited, and saluted them;

and abode with them one day; conferring together about spiritual things, and employing their time, no doubt, in religious exercises.

{x} Ad nationes, l. 5. c. 19. {y} Lexic. Decem Orator. p. 12. {z} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 38. 1. {a} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 112. 1. {b} T. Hieros. Gittin, fol. 43. 3. Sheviith, fol. 35. 3. & Challa, fol. 60. 2. & Juchasin, fol. 71. 1. Misna Gittin, c. 1. sect. 2. {c} Itinerar. p. 36. {d} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 10. sect. 2. {e} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. 6. {f} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccles. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 2. c. 10. p. 550. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 3. {g} Palestina Illustrata, l. 3. p. 542. {h} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 7. 2. & Moed. Katon, fol. 16. 2. Yebamot, fol. 45. 1. {i} Juchasin, fol. 68. 2. & T. Bab. Sota, fol. 37. 2. {k} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 40. 1. Juchasin, fol. 71. 1. {l} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 43. 2. {m} Itinerar. p. 36.

Acts 21:8

Ver. 8. And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed,.... From Ptolemais, as Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Timotheus, Tychicus, Trophimus, and Luke, the writer of this history; see
Ac 20:4

and came unto Caesarea; not Caesarea Philippi, mentioned in
Mt 16:13 but that Caesarea which was formerly called Strato's tower, and was a very good sea port; see **Ac 8:40**.

and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist; not a writer of a Gospel, but a preacher of the Gospel, and perhaps not an ordinary one, but was one of those spoken of in **Eph 4:11** which was an office inferior to an apostle, and yet above an ordinary pastor and teacher; this man, very likely, was the same that taught in Samaria, and baptized the eunuch, and who after that settled at Caesarea; see **Ac 8:40**.

which was one of the seven; of the seven deacons of the church at Jerusalem, **Ac 6:5** and abode with him; so long as they continued at Caesarea.

Acts 21:9

Ver. 9. And the same man had four daughters,.... So that he was a married man, which may be observed against the Papists, who forbid marriage to ecclesiastics: and they were, virgins: not under any vow of virginity, but they had not as yet changed their state of life, and were pure and incorrupt:

which did prophesy; not explain and interpret Scripture, or preach in public assemblies; for these were not allowed women, neither in the Jewish synagogues, nor in Christian assemblies; but they were endowed with a gift of foretelling future events, as was promised such should have in Gospel times, **Joe 2:28**.

Acts 21:10

Ver. 10. And as we tarried there many days,.... How many days is not said, it could not be very many, if the apostle got to Jerusalem by Pentecost, as he desired, Ac 20:6

there came down from Judea a certain prophet named Agabus; of whom mention is made in Ac 11:28 who is there said to come from Jerusalem, to Antioch, and here from Judea to Caesarea; he had been many years going about from place to place prophesying, for between that and this account must be a space of about sixteen or seventeen years.

Acts 21:11

Ver. 11. And when he was come unto us,.... In Philip's house:

he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet; and so prophesied by types and symbols, and gestures, as the prophets of old did; as Isaiah in Isa 20:2 and Jeremiah in Jer 13:1, and Ezekiel in **Eze 4:1** and Hosea in **Ho 1:2**, some understand this of his binding Paul's hands and feet, but it seems rather to design his own:

and said, thus saith the Holy Ghost; who was in Agabus, and spoke by him, and foretold some things to come to pass; and which did come to pass, and is a proof of the foreknowledge, and so of the deity of the blessed Spirit:

so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this girdle; meaning Paul, and who accordingly was bound in like manner, a very little time after this; see Ac 21:33

and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles; the Romans, as they afterwards did.

Acts 21:12

Ver. 12. And when we heard these things,.... These prophecies, concerning the binding of the apostle by the Jews, and the delivery of him to the Romans, and saw the symbolical representations of these things:

both we; the companions of the apostle, Luke and the rest:

and they of that place; of Caesarea, Philip and his daughters, and the disciples that lived there:

besought him not to go up to Jerusalem; which was an instance of weakness in them, though an expression of their affection to the apostle; in the disciples of Caesarea it might arise from pure love to him, and a concern for his safety, and the continuance of his useful life; and in his companions it might be owing partly to their sincere love to him, and partly to the fear of danger which they themselves might conclude they should be exposed to; and this request was made with tears, as is evident from what follows.

Acts 21:13

Ver. 13. Then Paul answered, what mean ye to weep,.... For they were crying about him, both his companions and the disciples of Caesarea; which affected him, and gave him great uneasiness, even more than the prophecies of Agabus did:

and to break my heart? for though he was resolved to go to Jerusalem, and nothing could move him from it, his heart was firm as a rock; there was no shaking him, or making impressions upon him that way; yet their tears and importunity greatly afflicted him, and the more because he could by no means comply with their request:

for I am ready not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus; for as yet, he knew not but he should die there; it was revealed to him that he should be bound there, but it was not yet suggested to him where he should suffer death, whether there or elsewhere; and since he knew not but it might be there, he was ready for it; bonds were so far from distressing his mind, and deterring him from his intended journey, that death itself could not do it; which showed great intrepidity, courage, and firmness of mind.

Acts 21:14

Ver. 14. And when he would not be persuaded,.... But was determined to go to Jerusalem at all events:

we ceased; both from tears and arguments:

saying, the will of the Lord be done; which was right, and to which they ought to have submitted, and acquiesced in at first, without using any arguments to have dissuaded the apostle from going to Jerusalem; since they might have concluded from Agabus's prophecy, that it was the will of the Lord he should go thither, and be bound; and the revelation was made to him, not to deter him from it, and to take methods for his own safety, which his friends would have put him upon, but to acquaint him with the will of God, and make him still more certain of it, and to prepare for it, and this effect it had upon him. This will of the Lord, is not the will of the Lord revealed in his word, either respecting the salvation, sanctification, and final perseverance of the saints, which is always accomplished; "for who hath resisted his will", or can resist it, so as to frustrate his designs, or hinder these things taking place? or the duty which is to be performed by them, the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God, which every gracious soul desires may be perfectly done, even as it is done in heaven: but here the secret will of God relating to the events of providence is designed, and which is the rule of all the divine proceedings; and though it is unknown to men, until facts make it appear, it is ever fulfilled, and sometimes by persons who have no regard to the revealed will of God; and should be continually thought of; and everything that is determined, or attempted to be done, should be resolved upon, and undertaken in submission to it; and whilst it is performing should be patiently bore, even in things not so agreeable to the minds and wills of men: it becomes saints to be still and acquiesce in it, when things are not so well with them in spiritual affairs as to be wished for; and when their worldly circumstances are not so thriving and flourishing; yea, though they may be attended with much poverty and meanness, and be reduced to so low a condition as Job was; as also when they part with their near and dear friends and relations by death, and with the ministers of the Gospel, who have been their spiritual fathers, instructors, and comforters; and even when they are called to suffer in the severest manner, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel: not that they are to be indolent, unconcerned, and unaffected, with things of this nature; nor should they neglect the means of having things otherwise with them; but it becomes them to exercise patience, faith, and courage, under every dispensation of providence; as knowing that what is done by the Lord is done well and wisely, and is for the good of them; and when the people of God are helped, to act such a part, they are the most comfortable in themselves, and to all that are about them; such a spirit and disposition is very commendable, and what makes men like to Christ, who in the most disagreeable circumstances submitted his will to his Father's. Beza's ancient copy reads, "the will of God"; and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions.

Acts 21:15

Ver. 15. And after those days we took up our carriages,.... Or prepared themselves, both for their journey, and for whatever trials and exercises they were to meet with; they took up their bundles, which hitherto were brought by sea, and now put them upon beasts, going by land from Caesarea:

and went up to Jerusalem; which stood on higher ground, and was, as Josephus {n} says, six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles distant.

{n} De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 5.

Acts 21:16

Ver. 16. There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea,.... Members of the church at Caesarea; of the church here, See Gill on "Ac 10:48". To which may be added the account of the pastors or bishops of this church, as given by Reland {o}; Theophilus, who was in the council held at Caesarea, in the year 198; Agricola, who subscribed in the council at Ancyra, in the year 314; though some, he says, do not acknowledge this Agricola, but give the order of them after Theophilus thus; Theoctistus, Domnus, Theotecnus, Agapius, Eusebius; which last was in the council at Palestine, in the year 318, and in the council at Nice, in the year 325. Acacius succeeded him, and was in a little council at Seleucia, in the year 359, and in another at Antioch, in the year 363. Thalassius subscribed in the council at Constantinople, in the year 381. Eulogius, or perhaps Euzoius, was in the council at Diospolis, in the year 415. Glyco, bishop of this church, subscribed by Zozimus in the Chalcedon council, held in the year 451. Mention is made of Irenaeus, who presided over it in the acts of the same council; and Elias, another bishop of it, subscribed in the council at Jerusalem, in the year 536; and there is an account of John bishop of this church, in the acts of the council at Constantinople, in the year 553.

And brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus; the name of Mnason is Greek; there was one of this name among the disciples of Aristotle, who was of Phocea, or Phocis, a place in Greece {p}; and another called Mnaseas, which seems to be the same whom Ammonius {q} makes mention of; and we frequently read of Mnaseas, the name of an author in Greek writers, and Menestheus, in:

"Now when Apollonius the son of Menestheus was sent into Egypt for the coronation of king Ptolemeus Philometor, Antiochus, understanding him not to be well affected to his affairs, provided for his own safety: whereupon he came to Joppa, and from thence to Jerusalem:" (2 Maccabees 4:21)

all which are so called from remembrance, and signify one that has a memory, is mindful of, and remembers things; so Zachariah with the Jews, is a name that is taken from remembrance, as this: some copies read Jasson, for Mnason. This Mnason was an

old disciple; not of Aristotle, or of his sect of philosophers, or any other, but of Jesus Christ; probably he might have seen Christ in the flesh, and he is by some thought to be one of the seventy disciples; or at least he might be one of those who became disciples and followers of Christ; through the ministry of Paul and Barnabas in that island, Ac 13:4 though that seems scarcely long enough ago, being but fifteen years before this time, to denominate him an old disciple:

with whom we should lodge; when come to Jerusalem; for though he was of the island of Cyprus, as Barnabas was, **Ac 4:36**, yet he dwelt at Jerusalem; and if he was one of the seventy disciples, it should seem that he had not sold his house at Jerusalem, when others did; nor did all that had houses and land, nor were they obliged to do it; or he might have bought or hired one since; however, he had one at Jerusalem, and here the apostle and his company were fixed to lodge, during their stay there; and there was the more reason to provide for a lodging at this time, because of the feast of Pentecost, when the city was full of people: unless this is to be understood of any place by the way, where they should lodge; since Beza's ancient copy adds, "and coming to a certain village, we were with one Mnason".

{o} Palestina Illustrata, l. 3. p. 676, &c. {p} Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 3. c. 19. {q} peri omiown in voce Nereides.

Acts 21:17

Ver. 17. And when we were come to Jerusalem,.... That is, Paul and his companions, attended with the disciples of Caesarea, and Mnason the old disciple with them:

the brethren received us gladly; readily, willingly, and cheerfully; they did not treat them with an air of coldness and indifference, or look shy on them, or show any resentment to them, notwithstanding the various reports which had been brought them, concerning the ministry of the apostle among the Gentiles.

Acts 21:18

Ver. 18. And the day following,.... After they were come into Jerusalem:

Paul went in with us to James; not the son of Zebedee and brother of John, for he was killed by Herod some years ago; but James the son of Alphaeus, and brother of our Lord, who presided over this church; it seems there were no other apostles now at Jerusalem, but they were all dispersed abroad that were living, preaching the Gospel in the several parts of the world: Paul took the first opportunity Of paying a visit to James, very likely at his own house, to give him an account of his success among the Gentiles, and to know the state of the church at Jerusalem, and confer with him about what might be most proper and serviceable to promote the interest of Christ; and he took with him those who had been companions with him in his travels, partly to show respect to James, and partly to be witnesses of what he should relate unto him:

and all the elders were present: by whom are meant, not the ancient private members of the church, but the ministers of the word in this church: who hearing of the coming of the apostle, and of his visit to James, assembled together to see him, and converse with him.

Acts 21:19

Ver. 19. And when he had saluted them,.... James and the elders with him; which was either done by a kiss, as the Arabic version adds; or by asking of their health, and wishing a continuance of it, and all prosperity to attend them: the Ethiopic version reads,

they saluted him; and no doubt the salutations were reciprocal:

he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry; it is very likely that this account begins where that ends, which he had delivered in the presence of James, and others, some years ago, Ac 15:12 and takes in all his travels and ministry, and the success of it; not only in Syria, Cilicia, and Lycaonia, after he had set out from Antioch again, but in Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia; as at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and elsewhere: he declared, what multitudes of souls were converted, and what numbers of churches were planted; and this he ascribes not to himself, but to the power and grace of God, which had attended his ministry; he was only an instrument, God was the efficient, and ought to have the glory.

Acts 21:20

Ver. 20. And when they heard it,.... The narrative of the wonderful spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles, and the numerous conversions of them:

they glorified the Lord; or "God", as the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions read; as Paul ascribed all to God, so they give the glory of it to him, and in this they were both agreed:

and said unto him; perhaps James in the name of them all, and as their mouth:

thou seest, brother; for so he was to James, both as a believer, and a minister of the word, and as an apostle:

how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; there were many thousands converted at Jerusalem upon the first preaching of the Gospel, after Christ's ascension; see **Ac 2:41** and the number might be much increased since; though it may be, that reference is had not only to the number of the members of the church at Jerusalem, but to all the believing Jews in Judea, who were now come up to Jerusalem, to keep the feast of Pentecost; since it is in the Greek, "how many myriads there are", and one myriad contains ten thousand:

and they are all zealous of the law; of the law of Moses, of the ceremonial law, as Paul might see by their being at Jerusalem, to keep this feast; for though they believed in Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah, yet they had not light enough to see, that he was the sum and substance of all the ceremonies of the law, and that they all ended in him; and therefore were zealous in the observance of them, and could not bear to hear of their abrogation.

Acts 21:21

Ver. 21. And they are informed of thee,.... By persons that came from the several parts of the Gentile world, where the apostle had been preaching; and by letters which came from the Jews in those parts, who were no friends to the apostle's ministry:

that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses: or "apostatize from Moses"; that is, the law of Moses; that he taught the Gentiles not to regard the rituals of the law of Moses gave them no uneasiness; but that he should teach the Jews that were scattered among the Gentiles, and as many of them that believed in Christ, to disregard and drop the observance of them, who had been always brought up in them, this they could not bear; and that the apostle so taught, they had credible information: particularly,

saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children; though this does not appear; it is true the apostle taught that circumcision was abolished, and that it was nothing; yea, that to submit to it as necessary to salvation, was hurtful and pernicious; but as a thing indifferent, he allowed of it among weak brethren; and in condescension to their weakness, did administer it himself; in which he became a Jew to the Jew, that he might gain some:

neither to walk after the customs; either of the law of Moses, meaning other rites there enjoined, besides circumcision; or of their fathers, and their country, the traditions of the elders, which as yet they had not got clear of; the disuse of old customs is not easily brought about, or it is not easy to bring persons off of them.

Acts 21:22

Ver. 22. What is it therefore?.... Is it true or not? or what must be done in this case? what method must be taken to remove these objections, and reconcile the minds of the people? the multitude must needs come together; either the whole church at Jerusalem, or the great confluence of people, even of believing Jews, that were come from all parts thither; there is no hindering of their coming together, to see the apostle, and to hear what he has to say to the objections against him, and complaints of him;

for they will hear that thou art come: this can never be kept a secret, and as soon as they hear it, they will flock in great numbers; they will come open mouthed, and be loud in their complaints, and it will be difficult to pacify them; there is danger in the case, the consequence may be bad; and therefore something must be done, to remove the opinion they had formed of the apostle, and the prejudice they had entertained against him; and therefore what follows is advised to.

Acts 21:23

Ver. 23. Do therefore this that we say to thee,.... This is said not as commanding, but as advising; and not to what was a duty, and necessary to be done as such, but as a point of prudence:

we have four men which have a vow on them; that is, there were four men who were of the church at Jerusalem, believers in Christ, but weak ones, who were zealous of the law, and bigots to it, and who had voluntarily vowed a vow of the Nazarites; see **Nu 6:2**.

Acts 21:24

Ver. 24. Them take, and purify, thyself with them,.... That is, join thyself to them, make one of their number, and attend to the rules prescribed to a Nazarite, who is to be holy to the Lord; and in case of any ceremonial uncleanness, is to be cleansed, or purified in the manner directed, **Nu 6:5**.

And be at charges with them; join with them in the expense, for the offerings to be made at the end of the vows, or when the days of separation are fulfilled, **Nu 6:13**.

That they may shave their heads; according to the law in **Nu 6:18**. This was done in Myryznh tkvl, the chamber of the Nazarites {r}; for there the Nazarites boiled their peace offerings, and shaved their hair, and put it under the pot, in the fire that was under it: Maimonides says {s},

"if he shaved in the city it was excusable; but whether he shaved in the city or in the sanctuary, under the pot his hair must be cast; and he did not shave until the door of the court was opened, as it is said, "at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation", **Nu 6:18** not that he shaved over against the door, for that would be a contempt of the sanctuary."

Moreover, it may be observed, that a person who had not made a vow, or fulfilled a Nazariteship himself, which was the apostle's case, yet he might join in bearing the expenses of others, at the time of their shaving and cleansing: for so run the Jewish canons {t};

"he that says, upon me be the shaving of a Nazarite, he is bound to bring the offerings of shaving for purification, and he may offer them by the hand of what Nazarite he pleases; he that says, upon me be half the offerings of a Nazarite, or if he says, upon me be half the shaving of a Nazarite, he brings half the offerings by what Nazarite he will, and that Nazarite perfects his offerings out of that which is his."

That all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing; that there is no truth in them; that they are mere lies and calumnies; as they will easily judge by this single instance, in complying with the law concerning a Nazarite's vow:

but that thou thyself walkest orderly, and keepest the law; and therefore can never be thought to teach others to walk disorderly, or to neglect the law, the rites and customs of it.

{r} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 16. 1. {s} Hilchot Nezirut, c. 8. sect. 3. {t} Hilchot Nezirut, c. 8. sect. 18.

Acts 21:25

Ver. 25. As touching the Gentiles which believe,.... This is said, to show that the Jews were not offended with Paul, for not insisting upon the circumcision of the believing Gentiles, and their conformity to the ceremonial law; and to remove an objection that Paul might make, that should he comply with this advice, and the believing Gentiles should hear of it, it might be a stumblingblock and a snare to them; who by his example, might think themselves obliged to regard the law: Beza's ancient copy adds, "they have nothing to say to thee"; for as it follows,

we have written and concluded; some years ago, at a meeting of the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem, when Paul was present; and of which he reminds him, to prevent any objection of this kind; where it was unanimously agreed on and determined,

that they observe no such things; as circumcision, and other rites and customs of the law, and particularly the vow of the Nazarite, which Gentiles are free from: hence it is said {u},

"Gentiles have no Nazariteship;"

upon which one of the commentators says {w}, if a Gentile vows Nazariteship, the law of the Nazarite does not fall upon him, he is not obliged to it:

save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, &c. see Ac 15:19.

{u} Misna Nazir, c. 9. sect. 1. {w} Bartenora in Misn. Nazir, c. 9. sect. 1.

Acts 21:26

Ver. 26. Then Paul took the men,.... The four men that had the vow on them; he joined himself to them, and put himself in the same condition, and under a like vow: this he did, not as what he thought himself bound to do in obedience to the law, and much less as necessary to salvation; but to satisfy weak minds, and remove their prejudices, that he might gain them, and be useful to them; and in such a case he would very easily and readily condescend; but when such like things were insisted upon as points of duty, and especially when urged as necessary to salvation, no one more stiffly opposed them:

and the next day purifying himself with them; that is, not separating himself along with them, from what they were obliged by the vow of the Nazarite, as from drinking of wine and shaving, and from everything that was unclean by the law; for this was now done, but cleansing himself afterwards with them: he entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of the purification: the sense is, that when the days of separation were fulfilled, which the four men had vowed, as everyone might vow what time he pleased, he went to the priests in the temple, to signify it to them, that the time of their purification was expiring:

until that an offering should be offered for everyone of them; as the law directs in **Nu 6:13** when he proposed to pay the charges of it, or at least part of it.

Acts 21:27

Ver. 27. And when the seven days were almost ended,.... The Syriac version renders it, "when the seventh day was come"; from the time that Paul came to Jerusalem: some understand this of the seven weeks from the passover to Pentecost, and that it was when they were almost ended, and the day of Pentecost was at hand, for which Paul came up to Jerusalem; but rather, the seven days of purification of the Nazarites are meant:

the Jews which were of Asia; and it may be chiefly of Ephesus, the metropolis of Asia; who knew Paul there, and were his implacable enemies; for this is to be understood of the unbelieving Jews, who were come up to the feast of Pentecost:

when they saw him in the temple; where he was come to bring his offering, on account of his vow:

stirred up all the people; against the apostle; incensed them with stories about him, how that he was an opposer of Moses and his laws, and was now defiling the temple, by bringing in Heathens into it:

and laid hands on him; in a violent manner, and dragged him out of the temple.

Acts 21:28

Ver. 28. Crying out, men of Israel, help,.... The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "help us"; to hold Paul, on whom they had laid their hands, and to assist in beating him: but why such an outcry for help against a single man, and he but little of stature, and weak in body, and so easily held and overpowered? it may be they chose to engage others with them, to give the greater countenance to their actions, and for their own security and protection, should they be opposed or called to an account;

this is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people; the people of the Jews, saying that they were not the only people of God; that God was the God of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews; that God had chosen, and called, and saved some of the one, as well as of the other; that the Gentiles shared in the favour of God, and the blessings of the Messiah; that the Gospel was to be preached to them, and a people taken out of them for his glory; and that the people of the Jews would be rejected for their unbelief and impenitence, and in a little time utterly destroyed as a nation; which, and the like, these Asiatic Jews interpreted as speaking against them; whereas no man had a stronger natural affection for his countrymen, or a more eager and importunate desire for their spiritual and eternal welfare, than the apostle had;

and the law; the law of Moses, both moral and ceremonial; for they not only were displeased with him for asserting the abrogation of the latter, but traduced him as an enemy to the former; representing him as an Antinomian, because he denied justification to be by the works of the law, and asserted Christ to be the end of the law for righteousness; whereas he was so far from making void the law hereby, that he established it, and secured the rights and honours of it; yea, they went further, and represented him as a libertine, saying, let us do evil that good may come; but this was all calumny:

and this place: meaning the temple, in which they then were; the Alexandrian copy reads, "this holy place"; as it is expressed in a following clause; the reason of this charge was, because that he had taught, that the sacrifices of God were the sacrifices of prayer and of praise, and that these were to be offered up in every place; and that divine service and religious worship were not tied to the temple at Jerusalem, but that, agreeably to the doctrine of Christ, men might worship the Father anywhere, and lift up holy hands in every place; and perhaps he might have asserted, that the temple of Jerusalem would be destroyed in a short time, as Christ had predicted:

and further, brought Greeks also unto the temple, and hath polluted this holy place; that part of the temple, which they supposed Paul had brought Greeks or Gentiles into, could not be the most holy place, for into that only the high priest went, once a year; nor that part of the holy place called the court of the priests, for into that only priests went, and other Israelites were not admitted, unless on some particular occasions; as to lay hands on the sacrifice, for the slaying of it, or waving some part of it {x}; but it must be either the court of the Israelites, or the court of the women, into which Paul, with the four men that had the vow, entered; and as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, it was the latter; for in, the south east of this court was the Nazarite's chamber, in which they boiled their peace offerings, shaved their heads, and put the hair under the pot {y}: now though Gentiles might come into the mountain of the house, which was all the outmost circumambient space within the wall, which encompassed the whole area, yet they might not come into any of these courts, no, nor even into what they call the "Chel"; for they say, that the Chel is more holy than the mountain of the house, because no Gentile, or one defiled with the dead, enters there {z}; now the Chel was an enclosure before these courts, and at the entrance into it pillars were erected, and upon them were inscriptions in Greek and Latin, signifying that no strangers should enter into the holy place {a}.

{x} Misn. Celim, c. 1. sect. 8. {y} Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 5. {z} Misn. Celim, ib. {a} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 15. c. 14. sect. 5.

Acts 21:29

Ver. 29. For they had seen before with him in the city,.... Not of Ephesus, but of Jerusalem:

Trophimus an Ephesian; the same that is mentioned in Ac 20:4 whom these Jews of Asia, and who very probably were inhabitants of Ephesus, knew very well to be a Gentile:

whom they supposed Paul had brought into the temple; for seeing him walk with the apostle very familiarly through the streets of Jerusalem, they concluded from thence, that he took him with him into the temple, which was a very rash and ill grounded conclusion; and which shows the malignity and virulence of their minds, and how ready they were to make use of any opportunity, and take up any occasion against him, even a bare surmise, and which had no show of probability in it; for it can never be thought, that while Paul was using methods to remove the prejudices of the Jews against him, he should take such a step as this, to introduce a Gentile into the holy place, which he knew was unlawful, and would greatly irritate and provoke them.

Acts 21:30

Ver. 30. And all the city was moved, and the people ran together,.... The outcry in the temple reached the ears of some that were without, and these alarmed others; so that the report of a disturbance in the temple soon went through the whole city; and brought people out of their houses, who ran together in great numbers, to see what was the matter:

and they took Paul and drew him out of the temple; as unworthy to be in that holy place; and that it might not be defiled with his blood; for their intention was nothing less than to take away his life:

and forthwith the doors were shut; not of themselves, as if there was something miraculous in it, as some have thought, but by the door keepers, the Levites; and which might be done, partly to prevent Paul's returning into it for refuge at the horns of the altar, and partly to keep out the Gentiles from coming in, they were alarmed with.

Acts 21:31

Ver. 31. And as they went about to kill him,.... In the manner as zealots did, without bringing him before any court of judicature, without any charge, trial, and condemnation:

tidings came unto the chief captain of the band; the Roman band of soldiers, who were placed near the temple, to keep the peace of the city, and persons in order; and who were more especially needful, at such a time as the feast of Pentecost, when there was such a great concourse of people in the city, and indeed always were in arms at such times {b}; this chief captain was Claudius Lysias, as appears from Ac 23:26 to him the report of the disturbance was brought; or as it is in the Greek text, the "fame ascended" to him; who very likely might be in the tower of Antonia, which joined to the temple:

that all Jerusalem was in an uproar; or in confusion, and therefore it became him, as a Roman officer, to take care to quell it, lest it should issue in sedition and rebellion.

{b} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 1. & l. 5. c. 5. sect. 8.

Acts 21:32

Ver. 32. Who immediately took soldiers and centurions,.... A very large number of soldiers, for they are called an army, in Ac 23:27 with a sufficient number of officers called centurions, who were each of them over an hundred men, to command them, and put them in order:

and ran down unto them: from the tower to the temple, the outer part of it; perhaps the mountain of the house, where they had dragged Paul, and were beating him; hither the captain, with his officers and soldiers, came in great haste; all which shows his vigilance, prudence, and quick dispatch; and in which there was a remarkable appearance of divine providence in favour of the apostle, who otherwise in all likelihood would have quickly lost his life:

and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers; coming down upon them in great haste, with sword in hand:

they left beating of Paul; this beating was what the Jews call tydrm twkm, "the rebels' beating"; or beating, on account of rebellion and obstinacy; and differed from whipping or scourging, which was done by the order of the sanhedrim, and in measure with forty stripes save one; but this beating was without any order from a court of judicature, and was without measure and mercy: this was inflicted upon various offenders, particularly on such who received not admonitions given them, or transgressed by doing what was forbidden by the words of the wise men {c}; or if any defiled person entered into the court of the women; and such the people would fall upon at once, and beat them unmercifully with their fists, or with clubs and staves, and which often issued in death; so, for instance, when a priest ministered in his uncleanness, his brethren the priests did not bring him to the sanhedrim, but the young priests brought him without the court, and dashed his brains out with clubs {d}

{c} Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c, 18. sect. 5. {d} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 9. sect. 6.

Acts 21:33

Ver. 33. Then the chief captain came near,.... To the place where the Jews were beating Paul:

and took him the Arabic version adds, "from them"; he rescued him out of their hands, as he himself says, Ac 23:27.

And commanded him to be bound with two chains: partly to appease the people, and partly to secure Paul; who, he supposed, had been guilty of some misdemeanour, which had occasioned this tumult; these two chains were put, one on one arm, and the other on the other arm; and were fastened to two soldiers, who walked by him, having hold on those chains, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left; and thus Agabus's prophecy in Ac 21:11 was fulfilled:

and demanded who he was; or asked and inquired about him, who he was, of what nation he was, what was his character, business, and employment: this inquiry was made, either of the apostle himself, or of the people; and so the Arabic version renders it, "he inquired of them who he was"; also

and what he had done; what crime he had been guilty of, that they used him in such a manner.

Acts 21:34

Ver. 34. And some cried one thing, and some another, among the multitude,.... For though they agreed to beat him, and even to kill him, yet some of them knew not for what; being led by a blind zeal for Moses, the law and temple, or rather by fury and madness:

and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult; could not come at the truth of the matter, or any certain knowledge of it, not anything that could be depended upon, because of the noise of the people, and the different notes they were in:

he commanded him to be carried into the castle; of Antonio, formerly called Baris, of which Josephus {e} gives this account;

"on the north side (of the wall) was built a four square tower, well fortified and strong; this the kings and priests of the Asmonaean race, who were before Herod, built, and called it Baris; that there the priestly robe might be laid up by them, which the high priest only wore, when he was concerned in divine service:"

this tower King Herod made more strong, for the security and preservation of the temple; and called it Antonia, for the sake of Antony his friend, and the general of the Romans: the description of it, as given by Dr. Lightfoot {f}, which is collected by him out of Josephus and other writers, is this;

"upon the north side, and joining up to the western angle (but on the outside of the wall), stood the tower of Antonia, once the place where the high priests used to lay up their holy garments; but in after times a garrison of Roman soldiers, for the a wing of the temple: when it served for the former use, it was called Baris (it may be from rb, "ad extra", because it was an outer building), but when for the latter, it bare the name of Antonia; Herod the great having sumptuously repaired and called it after the name of the Roman prince Antony: it stood upon the north west point of Moriah, and was a very strong and a very large pile; so spacious a building with all its appurtenances, that it took up to two furlongs' compass; the rock it stood upon was fifty cubits high, and steep, and the building itself was forty cubits above it; it was four square, encompassed with a wall of three cubits high, which enclosed its courts, and had a turret at every corner, like the white tower at London; but that it was more spacious, and that the turrets were not all of an height; for those at the north east and north west corners were fifty cubits high, but those on the south east and south west were seventy cubits high, that they might fully overlook the temple: it had cloisters or walks about it, and baths and lodgings, and large rooms in it; so that it was at once like a castle, and like a palace. There was a passage out of it, into the north and west cloisters of the mountain of the house, and by that the Roman garrison soldiers went down at every festival of the Jews, to take care against tumults and seditions, in those great concourses of the people."

And it was by this passage that the chief captain, with the centurions and soldiers, came down so quickly and suddenly upon the Jews, while they were beating Paul in the temple; and this castle being on such an eminence as described, hence he with the soldiers is said to run down, Ac 21:32 And it was in this way that the apostle was led up to the castle.

{e} Antiqu. l. 15. c. 11. sect. 4. Vid. ib. l. 18. c. 5. sect. 3. & de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 3. c. 5. sect. 4. & c. 21. sect. 1. {f} The Temple described, c. 7. p. 1060.

Acts 21:35

Ver. 35. And when he came upon the stairs,.... Or steps, which led up to the castle; for it was built upon a very high place, as appears from the account of it in the preceding verse; to which agrees what Aristaeas {g} says of it in the following words;

"in order to have knowledge of all things, we went up to a castle adjoining to the city, which is situated in a very high place, fortified with very high towers, built with large stones, as we supposed for the preservation of the places about the temple, if there should be any lying in wait, or tumult, or enemies should enter; so that none might be able to make way in at the walls about the temple; for in the towers of the castle lay very sharp darts and various instruments, and the place was upon a very great eminence."

So it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people: the sense is, either that the crowd of the people was so great, and they so pressed upon Paul and the soldiers that conducted him, that he was even thrown upon them, and bore up by them; or else such was the rage of the people against him, that the soldiers were obliged to take him up in their arms, and carry him, in order to secure him from being tore in pieces by them.

{g} Hist. de 70 Interpret. p. 36. Ed. Oxon.

Acts 21:36

Ver. 36. For the multitude of the people followed after,.... The captain and the soldiers, who had taken away Paul from them, and were carrying him to the castle:

crying, away with him; or "take him away", that is, by death; or "lift him up", upon the cross, crucify him, crucify him, as they said concerning Christ.

Acts 21:37

Ver. 37. And as Paul was to be led into the castle,.... Just as he was got up to the top of the steps, or stairs, that led up to the castle, and was about to go into the door of it:

he said unto the chief captain, may I speak unto thee? the apostle was one that had had a good education, and was a man of address, and this his modest and respectful way of speaking to the chief captain shows; and the question he put to him, was in the Greek language: hence it follows, who said to him, canst thou speak Greek? or "dost thou know the Hellenistic language?" which the Jews who were born and lived in Greece spoke; hence such were called Hellenists; see **Ac 6:1** of this language we read in the Talmud {h};

"R. Levi bar Chajethah went to Caesarea, and heard them reading "Shema", (hear O Israel), &c. **De 6:4**
Nytoynwla in the Hellenistic language; he sought to hinder them; R. Rose heard of it, and was angry; and said, he that knows not to read in the Hebrew language, must he not read at all? yea, he may read in whatsoever language he understands."

The nearest to this language spoken by the Jews dispersed in Greece, must be the Greek language, in which Jews have written; as the books of the Old Testament translated by the "seventy" interpreters, who were Jews; and indeed it was this Bible which the Jews called Hellenists made use of; and the writings of Josephus, and Philo the Jew of Alexandria, and even the books of the New Testament, which are written by Jews; and Paul being a Jew of Tarsus, and so an Hellenist, could speak this language; as he did, when he disputed against the Hellenists, in **Ac 9:29**. This the chief captain said, either as wondering to hear him speak Greek, when he thought he had been a Jerusalem Jew, or rather an Egyptian, as in the next verse; or it may be he put this question to him, as choosing rather that he should speak in Greek, it being the language he might best understand himself, and was the least known to the people, who he might not care should hear what he had to say; since if he took him for the Egyptian, the Greek tongue was what was chiefly spoken by such.

{h} T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 21. 2.

Acts 21:38

Ver. 38. Art thou not that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar,.... Josephus speaks {i} of one that came out of Egypt to Jerusalem, and gave out that he was a prophet, and deceived the people, whom he persuaded to follow him to the Mount of Olives, where they should see the walls of the city fall at his command, and so through the ruins of it they might enter into the city; but Felix the Roman governor fell upon them, killed four hundred, and took two hundred prisoners, and the Egyptian fled: the account which he elsewhere {k} gives of him, and Eusebius {l} from him, is this; a certain

Egyptian false prophet did much more mischief to the Jews; for he being a magician, and having got himself to be believed as a prophet, came into the country (of Judea), and gathered together about thirty thousand persons, whom he had deceived: these he brought out of the wilderness to the Mount of Olives, from thence designing to take Jerusalem by force, and seize the Roman garrison, and take the government of the people but Felix prevented his design, meeting him with the Roman soldiers, assisted by all the people; so that when they engaged, the Egyptian fled with a few, and most of those that were with him were destroyed or taken: now it was some little time before this, that this affair happened; and by these accounts of Josephus, though the Egyptian was discomfited, yet he was not taken; he had made his escape, so that he might be yet in being; and therefore the captain could not tell but Paul might be he, who had privately got into the city, and was upon some bad designs:

and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? Josephus says, that he brought them out of the wilderness, or led them through it to the Mount of Olives, from thence to rush into Jerusalem, when the walls should fall down at his command; but he says, the number of men that he led out were about thirty thousand; it may be at first there were no more than four thousand, but afterwards were joined by others, and increased to thirty thousand; or among these thirty thousand, he had four thousand "murderers, or sicarii": so called from the little swords which they carried under their clothes, and with them killed men in the daytime, in the middle of the city, especially at the feasts, when they mingled themselves with the people {m}.

{i} Antiqu. l. 20. c. 7. sect. 6. {k} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 13. sect. 5. {l} Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 21. {m} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 13. sect. 3.

Acts 21:39

Ver. 39. But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus,.... And not that Egyptian; he was not of that country, much less that man; but a Jew, both by birth and religion; he was born of Jewish parents, and brought up in the Jewish religion; though his native place was Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, where it is placed by Pliny {n}, Ptolomy {o}, and Mela {p}; and is by some thought to be the same with the Tarshish of the Old Testament:

a citizen of no mean city; Pliny {q} calls it a free city, and Solinus {r} says it is the mother, or chief of cities, and Curtius {s} speaks of it as a very opulent one; which when Alexander drew near to with his army, the inhabitants of it set fire to, that he might not possess their riches; which he understanding, sent Parmenio to prevent it: through this city, as the same historian, in agreement with Pliny and others, observes, ran the river Cydnus; and it being summer time when Alexander was here, and very hot weather, and being covered with dust and sweat, he put off his clothes, and cast himself into the river to wash himself; but as soon as he was in, he was seized with such a numbness of his nerves, that had he not been immediately taken out by his soldiers, and for the extraordinary care of his physician, he had at once expired. Josephus {t} calls this city the most famous of the cities in Gallicia; and derives it, and the whole country, from Tarshish, the grandson of Japheth, Ge 10:4 his words are,

"Tharsus gave name to the Tharsians, for so Cilicia was formerly called, of which this is an evidence; for the most famous of the cities with them, and which is the metropolis, is called Tarsus; Theta being changed into Tau for appellation sake."

Though some say it was built by Perseus, the son of Jupiter and Danae, and called Tharsus, of the hyacinth stone, which is said to be found about it: others think it was so called, para to tersanyhnai, because the places of this country were first dried up after the flood: it was not only a city of stately buildings, as it was repaired by Sardanapalus, and increased after the times of Alexander; but there was a famous academy in it, which, for men of learning, exceeded Athens and Alexandria {u}; though these exceeded that in number of philosophers: here it is thought lived Aratus the poet, from whom the apostle cites a passage, in Ac 17:28 and of this place was the famous Chrysippus, who is called tarseuv, "a Tarsian" {w}, as the apostle is here. Hermogenes, a very celebrated rhetorician, some of whose works are still extant, came from hence {x}. Jerom {y} reports it as a tradition, that the parents of the Apostle Paul were of Giscalis, a town in Judea; which with the whole province being destroyed by the Romans, they removed to Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, whither Paul when a young man followed them; but certain it is, that the apostle was born there, as he himself says, in Ac 22:3. Ignatius, in {z} the "second" century, writing to the church at Tarsus, calls them citizens and disciples of Paul; citizens, because he was of this city; and disciples, because of the same faith with him; and very likely the first materials of the church in this place were converts of his; since it is evident that he went hither after he was a preacher; see **Ac 9:30**.

And I beseech thee suffer me to speak unto the people; first he desired to speak with the captain, and that was in order to obtain leave to speak to the people; and which he asks in a very handsome and submissive manner, and hopes to have his request granted him, since he was not the person he took him for, but was a Jew by birth, and a citizen of a very considerable Roman city; and was not a mean, sordid, vagabond creature, nor need he fear that he would sow any discord and sedition among the people.

{n} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 27. {o} Geograph. l. 5. c. 8. {p} De orbis situ, l. 1. c. 13. {q} Ib. ut supra. (Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 27.) {r} Polyhist. c. 51. {s} Hist. l. 3. c. 4. {t} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1. {u} Strabo, Geograph. l. 14. {w} Laert. Vit. Philosoph. l. 7. {x} Vid. Fabricii Bibl. Graec. l. 4. c. 31. sect. 4. 5. {y} Catalog. Script. Eccles. sect. 15. fol. 90. G. & Comment. in Philemon. ver. 23. Tom. 9. fol. 116. L. {z} Ep. ad Tarsenses, p. 75.

Acts 21:40

Ver. 40. And when he had given him licence,.... To speak to the people, which he could not well deny him, after he had so freely declared who he was, and in so courteous a manner addressed him, and asked leave of him:

Paul stood on the stairs; on the steps of the ascent to the castle, on the top of them:

and beckoned with the hand unto the people; to desire silence, which he might be able to do, notwithstanding his chains; for his being bound with a chain to a soldier, did not hinder the moving and lifting up of his hand:

and when there was made a great silence; either through the authority of the captain, who might command it, or through the desire of the people, to hear what he could say for himself:

he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue; which the people he spoke to best understood, and was his own mother tongue; the Alexandrian copy reads, "in his own dialect"; this was not pure Hebrew that was spoke in common in those times, but the Syro-Chaldean language:

saying; as in the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 22:1

Ver. 1. Men, brethren, and fathers,.... A common form of address used by the Jews; see **Ac 7:2** but that the apostle should introduce his speech to these people in this manner, after they had treated him so inhumanly, as to drag him out of the temple, and beat him so unmercifully, is remarkable, and worthy of observation, when they scarcely deserved the name of "men"; and yet he not only gives them this, but calls them "brethren", they being his countrymen and kinsmen according to the flesh; and fathers, there being some among them, who might be men in years, and even members of the sanhedrim, and elders of the people, that were now got among the crowd: this shows how ready the apostle was to put up with affronts, and to forgive injuries done him:

hear ye my defence, which I make now unto you; in opposition to the charges brought against him, of speaking ill of the people of the Jews, the law of Moses, and of the temple, and in order to clear himself of these imputations, and vindicate his character and conduct.

Acts 22:2

Ver. 2. And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them,.... See Gill on "Ac 21:40".

they kept the more silence; it being their mother tongue, and which they best understood; and which the captain and the Roman soldiers might not so well under stand; and chiefly because the Hellenistic language was not so agreeable to them, nor the Hellenistic Jews, who spoke the Greek language, and used the Greek version of the Bible; and such an one they took Paul to be, besides his being a Christian; wherefore when they heard him speak in the Hebrew tongue, it conciliated their minds more to him, at least engaged their attention the more to what he was about to say:

and he saith; the Syriac and Ethiopic versions add, "to them", as follows.

Acts 22:3

Ver. 3. I am verily a man which am a Jew,.... By birth, a thorough genuine one; an Hebrew of the Hebrews, both by father and mother side, both parents being Jews, and so a true descendant from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:

born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia; See Gill on "Ac 21:39".

yet brought up in this city; the city of Jerusalem; though Tarsus was the place of his birth, he had his education at Jerusalem:

at the feet of Gamaliel; of whom see **Ac 5:34** it was the custom of scholars among the Jews, to sit at the feet of their masters, when instructed by them; see De 33:3 hence that saying of Jose ben Joezer {a};

"let thy house be an house of resort for the wise men, and be thou dusting thyself, Mhylgr rpeb, "with the dust of their feet":"

which by one of their commentators {b} is interpreted two ways, either

"as if it was said that thou shouldst walk after them; for he that walks raises the dust with his feet, and he that goes after him is filled with the dust which he raises with his feet; or else that thou shouldst sit at their feet upon the ground, for so it was usual, that the master sat upon a bench, and the scholars sat at his feet upon the floor."

This latter sense is commonly understood, and adapted to the passage here, as illustrating it; though it may be, that the sense may only be this, that the apostle boarded in Gamaliel's house, ate at his table, and familiarly conversed with him; which he modestly expresses by being brought up at his feet, who was a man that was had in great reverence with the Jews; and this sense seems the rather to be the sense of the passage, since his learning is expressed in the next clause; and since; till after Gamaliel's time, it was not usual for scholars to sit when they learned; for the tradition is {c}, that

"from the times of Moses to Rabban Gamaliel, they (the scholars) did not learn the law but standing; after Rabban Gamaliel died, sickness came into the world, and they learned the law sitting; and hence it is said, that after Rabban Gamaliel died, the glory of the law ceased."

It follows,

[and] taught according to the perfect law of the fathers; not the law which the Jewish fathers received from Moses, though Paul was instructed in this, but in the oral law, the "Misna", or traditions of the elders, in which he greatly profited, and exceeded others, **Ga 1:14**.

And was zealous towards God; or "a zealot of God"; one of those who were called "Kanaim", or zealots; who in their great zeal for the glory of God, took away the lives of men, when they found them guilty of what they judged a capital crime; see Mt 10:4. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "zealous of the law"; both written and oral, the law of Moses, and the traditions of the fathers:

as ye all are this day; having a zeal for God, and the law, but not according to knowledge.

{a} Misn. Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 4. {b} Bartenora in Misn. Piske Abot, c. 1. sect. 4. {c} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 21. 1. Vid. Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15.

Acts 22:4

Ver. 4. And I persecuted this way unto the death,.... That is, the Christian religion, and the professors of it; whom the apostle breathed out threatenings and slaughter against, haled out of their houses, and committed to prison; consented to their death, as he did to Stephen's; and whenever it was put to the vote, whether they should die or not, he gave his voice against them; so that he was a most bitter enemy, and an implacable persecutor of them; which shows how very averse he was to this way, and how great his prejudices were against it; wherefore it must be a work of divine power, and there must be the singular hand of God in it, to reconcile him to it, and cause him to embrace and profess it:

binding and delivering into prisons, both men and women: see **Ac 8:3**.

Acts 22:5

Ver. 5. As also the high priest doth bear me witness,.... Either Annas, or Caiaphas, who was at that time high priest; and it should seem by this, that he was still in being; or else that the apostle had preserved his letter, written with his own hand, which he was able to produce at any time, as a testimony of the truth of what he had said, or was about to say; since he speaks of him (as now) bearing him witness, or as one that could:

and all the estate of the elders; the whole Jewish sanhedrim, for this character respects not men in years, but men in office, and such who were members of the high court of judicature in Jerusalem;

from whom also I received letters unto the brethren; some render it "against the brethren", as if the Christians were meant; whereas the apostle intends the Jews of the synagogue at Damascus, whom the apostle calls brethren; because they were of the same nation, and his kinsmen according to the flesh; and, at that time, of the same religion and principles with him; and this is put out of doubt, by the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, which render it, "the brethren that were at Damascus": and these letters were to recommend him to them, and to empower him to persecute the Christians, and to demand and require their assistance in it; the Ethiopic version calls them, "letters of power"; and it seems from hence, that these letters were received from the whole sanhedrim, as well as from the high priest, and were signed by both:

and went to Damascus to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished: with stripes, or with death, as they should be judged worthy; see **Ac 9:2**.

Acts 22:6

Ver. 6. And it came to pass, that as I made my journey,.... And had almost made an end of it:

and was come nigh unto Damascus; about a mile from it, as some say,

about noon; this circumstance is omitted in the account in **Ac 9:3** and is mentioned here, not so much to inform what time of day it was, that Saul came to Damascus, as to observe how extraordinary that light must be, which then appeared, as follows:

suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me; and not only about him, but those that were with him, Ac 26:13. This must be a great light indeed, to be distinguished at noon, and to be above the brightness of the sun, and to have such effect upon the apostle and his company as it had; **Ac 9:3**.

Acts 22:7

Ver. 7. And I fell unto the ground,.... And so did those that were with him, Ac 26:14.

And heard a voice, saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? See

Gill on "Ac 9:4".

Acts 22:8

Ver. 8. And I answered, who art thou, Lord?....
See Gill on "Ac 9:5".

Acts 22:9

Ver. 9. And they that were with me saw indeed the light,.... For it shone about them, as well as Saul:

and were afraid; the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, have not this clause; but it stands in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; the suddenness, greatness, and extraordinariness of the light surprised them, for it was even miraculous:

but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me: they heard the voice of Saul, but not the voice of Christ; at least they did not hear it so as to understand it; See Gill on "Ac 9:7".

Acts 22:10

Ver. 10. And I said, what shall I do, Lord?....
See Gill on "Ac 9:6".

Acts 22:11

Ver. 11. And when I could not see for the glory of that light,.... Which was above the brightness of the sun, and so dazzled his eyes, that he could not see his way into the city, some of his company took him by the hand, and led him: and

being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came unto Damascus but not with the same view he set out with: he took his journey thither, and pursued it, in order to persecute the saints there; but now he enters into it, to be informed by one of them what he must do for Christ, whom he had persecuted.

Acts 22:12

Ver. 12. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law,.... The Alexandrian copy, and Vulgate Latin version, read only, "a man according to the law"; one whose walk, life, and conversation, were agreeable to it: a strict observer of the law of Moses, both moral and ceremonial: he not only lived a holy life and conversation, according to the moral law, but he religiously and devoutly attended to the rituals of the ceremonial law; and this part of his character the apostle chose to mention, as what would recommend him to the notice of the Jews he now addressed: for though he was a disciple, a believer in Christ, yet as many of the believing Jews did, so he strictly observed the rituals of the law. The Ethiopic version adds, "who was of the apostles"; one of that number, and in that office, which is nowhere said that he was; and had he, it would not have been agreeable to the apostle's design to have mentioned it; and he is said to be one of the seventy disciples, and bishop or pastor of the church at Damascus; See Gill on "Lu 10:1". Of this Ananias, his name and character, See Gill on "Ac 9:10".

Having a good report of all the Jews that dwelt there: that is, at Damascus, as the Ethiopic version reads; and so do the Complutensian edition, the Alexandrian copy, and several other copies; for though he was a Christian, yet being not only a man of an unblemished life and conversation, but zealous and devout in the observance of the ceremonial law, was very much interested in the affections and esteem of the Jews.

Acts 22:13

Ver. 13. Came unto me,.... Being at the house of Judas, in that street of Damascus called Straight, **Ac 9:11** and stood; at the side of him, or by him, putting his hands on him:

and said unto me, brother Saul; See Gill on "Ac 9:17".

receive thy sight, "or look up",

and the same hour I looked up upon him; that is, immediately, directly: for so the phrase, "that same hour", is frequently used by the Jews: the words in Nu 16:21 "that I may consume them in a moment", are rendered by Onkelos, "that

I may consume them in an hour"; for an hour is used for a moment with them.

Acts 22:14

Ver. 14. And he said, the God of our fathers hath chosen thee,.... From all eternity, in his everlasting purposes and decrees; or "he hath taken thee into his hand"; in order to form, and fit, and qualify him for his service; and may design both his call by grace, and to apostleship. The apostle represents Ananias as speaking of God, as the God of the Jewish fathers, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to show that the Christian doctrine was not contrary to the faith of the one God of Israel; nor did it introduce any other, or any new deity. The ends of this choice or separation were,

that thou shouldest know his will; his revealed will, concerning the salvation of men by Jesus Christ, which is no other than the Gospel, of which the apostle had been entirely ignorant; for though he knew the will of God, as revealed in the law, or his will of command, yet not spiritually; and he was altogether a stranger, till now, to God's will, way, and method of saving sinners by Christ, of justifying them by his righteousness, and of pardoning their sins through his blood, and of giving them eternal life by him; and the knowledge of this he came at by the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in consequence of his being chosen and called:

and see that just One: Jesus Christ the righteous, who is both as he is God, and as he is man, and also as he is Mediator, having faithfully discharged his office, and performed his engagements; him the apostle saw, both with the eyes of his body, when he met him in the way, and called unto him, and with the eyes of his understanding beholding his beauty, fulness, and suitableness as a Saviour; the former of these was what many kings, prophets, and righteous men desired: and the latter is what is inseparably connected with eternal life and salvation.

And shouldest hear the voice of his mouth; both his human voice in articulate sounds, when he spoke to him in the Hebrew tongue, as in
Ac 22:7 and the voice of his Gospel, of which he appeared to make him a minister; which is a voice of love, grace, and mercy, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation, and is very powerful when accompanied by the Spirit, and is soul charming, alluring, and comforting.

Acts 22:15

Ver. 15. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men,.... Gentiles as well as Jews, an eye and an ear witness to them;

of what thou hast seen and heard; as that he saw him personally and alive, and so could witness to the truth of his resurrection; for after he had been seen by all the apostles, he was last of all seen of Paul; and also, that he heard him and received from him the Gospel, and a mission and commission to preach it; for what he preached he did not receive of man, nor was he taught it by any, but he had it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

Acts 22:16

Ver. 16. And now why tarriest thou?.... Though it might not be the apostle's case, yet it is often the case of many, to procrastinate and delay obedience to the commands of Christ, and particularly to the ordinance of baptism: the reasons of which delay are, the strength of their corruptions, and the weakness of their graces, which cause them to question whether they have any interest in Christ; as also fears of falling away, and so of dishonouring Christ, his Gospel, and ordinance: and in some the reproaches of men; and sometimes such a delay is made, waiting for more comfortable frames, or for a greater fitness; but no such delay, nor on such accounts, ought to be; for it is a command of Christ, and ought to be forthwith complied with, as soon as a man believes; and to obey it is a following of Christ, in which no time should be lost: and the consequences of a delay are very bad: it is a prevention of the glory of Christ, as well as shows ingratitude to him, and a bereaving of ourselves of that comfort, which might be hoped to be enjoyed; and it often induces a carelessness about the ordinance, and even a losing the sense of the duty:

arise, and be baptized; this shows that Ananias was a Christian, since he directs to an ordinance of Christ, and that he was a preacher of the word, and had a right to administer baptism; for that it was administered by him, though not in express terms yet seems to be naturally concluded from **Ac 9:18** as also this passage shows, that baptism was not administered by sprinkling, since Saul might have sat still, and have had some water brought to him, and sprinkled on him; but by immersion, seeing he is called upon to arise, and go to some place proper and convenient for the administration of it, according to the usage of John, and the apostles of Christ. "And wash away thy sins"; or "be washed from thy sins"; not that it is in the power of man to cleanse himself from his sins; the Ethiopian may as soon change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as a creature do this; nor is there any such efficacy in baptism as to remove the filth of sin; persons may submit unto it, and yet be as Simon Magus was, in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; but the ordinance of baptism, may be, and sometimes is, a means of leading the faith of God's children to the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin;

calling on the name of the Lord; the name of the Lord is not only to be used by the administrator of baptism in the performance of it; but it should be called upon by the person who submits to it, both before and at the administration of it, for the presence of Christ in it; and this invocation of the name of the Lord in baptism, signifies an exercise of faith in Christ at this time, a profession of him, and obedience to him.

Acts 22:17

Ver. 17. And it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem,.... Which was three years after his conversion; for he did not immediately return to Jerusalem, but went into Arabia; and when he returned to Damascus, which was three years after he came to Jerusalem; see **Ga 1:17**

even while I prayed in the temple; the temple was an house of prayer; hither persons resorted for that purpose; and as the apostle had been used to it, he continued this custom, and during the time of prayer he fell into an ecstasy:

I was in a trance: and knew not whether he was in the body, or out of the body: whether this was the time he refers to in 2Co 12:2 is not certain, though probable.

Acts 22:18

Ver. 18. And I saw him saying unto me,.... That is, the Lord Jesus Christ, that just One, whom he had seen in his way to Damascus, and whose voice he had heard, and whose name he had called upon at his baptism:

make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: not because his life was in danger, but because Christ had work for him to do elsewhere, which required haste; and that he might not continue here useless and unprofitable, as he would have been, had he staid;

for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me; Christ the omniscient God, and the searcher of the hearts, knew the hardness and unbelief of the Jews; and that they would continue therein, notwithstanding the ministry of the apostle; and that they would give no credit to any testimony of his, that he saw him, as he went to Damascus, and heard words from his mouth. The Ethiopic version renders it without the negative, "for they will receive thee, my witness concerning me"; as if Christ sent the apostle away in all haste from Jerusalem, lest he preaching there, the Jews should believe and be healed; compare with this Mt 13:14. Very likely this interpreter might be induced to leave out the negative, as thinking that the apostle's reasoning in the following words required such a sense and reading.

Acts 22:19

Ver. 19. And I said, Lord, they know, that I imprisoned,.... Men and women, that made a profession of the Christian religion, **Ac 8:3**

and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee; in Jerusalem there were many synagogues, and in these scourging and beating of offenders were used; See Gill on "Mt 10:17".

Acts 22:20

Ver. 20. And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed,.... Stephen was a martyr for Christ, both by confession with his mouth, and by the effusion of his blood; he was the proto-martyr, or "the first martyr" that suffered for Christ; and there are copies, as one of Stephens's, and the Complutensian edition, which so read in this place; his blood was shed by stoning:

I also was standing by; to see the inhuman action performed; nor was he an idle and indifferent spectator:

and consenting unto his death; being pleased and delighted with it, and rejoicing at it; see **Ac 8:1**.

and kept the raiment of them that slew him; the accusers of him, and witnesses against him, whose hands were first on him, and cast the first stones at him, and continued to stone him, until they killed him: these laid their garments at the feet of Saul, who looked after them, that nobody stole them, and run away with them, whilst they were stoning Stephen; which shows how disposed he was to that fact, and how much he approved of it: and these things he mentions to suggest that surely the Jews would receive his testimony, since they knew what a bitter enemy he had been to this way: and therefore might conclude, that he must have some very good and strong reasons, which had prevailed upon him to embrace this religion against all his prejudices, and so might be willing to hear them; and it also shows what an affection the apostle had for the Jews, and how much he desired their spiritual welfare, for which reason he chose to have stayed, and preached among them.

Acts 22:21

Ver. 21. And he said unto me, depart,.... At once from Jerusalem, and out of the land of Judea:

for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles; to the nations afar off, even as far as Illyricum, Pannonia, or Hungary, where the apostle went and preached, Ro 15:19 and so by a divine mission and commission he became the apostle of the Gentiles, and preached the Gospel among them with great success, to the conversion of many thousands of them, and to the planting of many churches in the midst of them.

Acts 22:22

Ver. 22. And they gave him audience unto this word..... The Ethiopic version reads, "and I heard him so speaking unto me"; as if it was to be understood of the apostle hearing Christ speaking to him concerning his mission to the Gentiles; whereas the words refer to the Jews attending quietly to the apostle, till he came to that part of his oration. They heard him patiently, and did not offer to molest him, or hinder his speaking, and being heard, till he came to mention his mission to the Gentiles: all the rest they either did not understand, or looked upon it as an idle tale, as the effect of madness and enthusiasm, at least as containing things they had nothing to do with; but when he came to speak of the Gentiles, and to pretend to a divine mission to them, this they could not bear; for nothing was more offensive, irritating, and provoking to them, than to hear of the calling of the Gentiles, whom they were for depriving of all blessings, and for engrossing all to themselves; see Ro 10:20.

and then lift up their voices; in a very loud and clamorous manner, as one man:

and said, away with such a fellow from the earth; take away his life from the earth: this they said either to the chief captain, to do it, or as encouraging one another to do it:

for it is not fit that he should live; he does not deserve to live, he is unworthy of life; it is not agreeable to the rules of justice that he should be spared; it is not convenient, and it may be of bad consequence should he be continued any longer; he may do a deal of mischief, and poison the minds of the people with bad notions, and therefore it is not expedient that he should live.

Acts 22:23

Ver. 23. And as they cried out,.... In this furious manner:

and cast off their clothes; either like madmen, that knew not what they did, or in order to stone him; see **Ac 7:57**.

and threw dust into the air either with their hands, or by striking the earth, and scraping it with their feet, through indignation and wrath, like persons possessed, or mad.

Acts 22:24

Ver. 24. The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle,.... Into the inside of it; for till now he was upon the top of the stairs, or steps, which led up to it; which might be done in order to save him from the rage of the people, and that he might privately examine him, and get the true state of his case, though he took a very wrong and unjustifiable method to do it in, as follows:

and bade that he should be examined by scourging; he gave a centurion, with some soldiers, orders to scourge and whip him, and to lay on stripes more and harder, until he should tell the whole truth of the matter, and confess the crime or crimes he was guilty of, which had so enraged the populace:

that he might know wherefore they cried so against him; for though he had rescued him out of their hands, when they would in all likelihood have beat him to death; and though he took him within the castle to secure him from their violence; yet he concluded he must be a bad man, and must have done something criminal; and therefore he takes this method to extort from him a confession of his crime, for which the people exclaimed against him with so much virulence.

Acts 22:25

Ver. 25. And as they bound him with thongs,.... To a pillar, in order to be scourged, according to the Roman manner {d}. Nor was the Jewish form of scourging much unlike, and perhaps might be now used, which was this; when they scourge anyone they bind both his hands to a pillar, here and there --and they do not strike him standing nor sitting, but inclining {e}; for the pillar to which he was bound was fixed in the ground, and so high as for a man to lean upon {f}; and some say it was two cubits, and others a cubit and a half high {g}: and the word here used signifies an extension, or distension; perhaps the stretching out of the arms to the pillar, and a bending forward of the whole body, which fitly expresses the stooping inclining posture of the person scourged, and was a very proper one for such a punishment: now as they were thus fastening him with thongs to the pillar, and putting him in this position,

Paul said unto the centurion that stood by; to see the soldiers execute the orders received from the chief captain:

is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? Though the apostle puts this by way of question, yet he knew full well what the Roman laws were in such cases; he did not put this through ignorance, or for information, but to let them know who he was, and to put them in mind of these laws, and of their duty; for, according to the Porcian law, Roman citizens were not to be beaten {h}. Hence, says {i} Cicero,

"it is a heinous sin to bind a Roman citizen, it is wickedness to beat him, it is next to parricide to kill him, and what shall I say to crucify him?"

And, according to the Valerian law, it was not lawful for magistrates to condemn a Roman without hearing the cause, and pleading in it; and such condemned persons might appeal to the populace {k}.

{d} Lipsius de Cruce, l. 2. c. 4. {e} Misna Maccot, c. 3. sect. 12, 13. {f} Bartenora in ib. {g} Yom Tob in ib. {h} Cicero pro Rabirio Orat. 18. {i} In

Verrem Orat. 10. {k} Pompon. Laetus de Legibus, p. 157.

Acts 22:26

Ver. 26. When the centurion heard that,.... The question put by Paul, which strongly suggested that he was a Roman:

he went and told the chief captain; what Paul had said: saying, take heed what thou dost; or "art about to do"; lest some bad consequences should follow; lest he should affront the Roman people and senate, and lose his place, if not incur some corporeal punishment:

for this man is a Roman; and it can never be answered to bind and beat a Roman.

Acts 22:27

Ver. 27. Then the chief captain came, and said unto him,.... To Paul:

tell me, art thou a Roman? he had told him before that he was a Jew of Tarsus, and which was true, and had said nothing of his being a Roman; wherefore the chief captain desires that he would tell him the whole truth of the matter, whether he was a Roman or not:

he said yea; that he was one.

Acts 22:28

Ver. 28. And the chief captain answered, with a great sum obtained I this freedom,.... For, it seems, he was not a Roman born, but very likely a Grecian, or Syrian, by his name Lysias; and as all things were now venal at Rome, the freedom of the city was to be bought with money, though a large sum was insisted on for it: this the chief captain said, as wondering that so mean a person, and who he understood was a Jew by birth, should be able to procure such a privilege, which cost him so much money:

and Paul said, but I was free born; being born at Tarsus; which, as Pliny says {l}, was a free city, and which had its freedom given it by Mark Antony, and which was before the birth of Paul; and therefore his parents being of this city, and free, he was born so.

{l} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 27.

Acts 22:29

Ver. 29. Then straightway they departed from him, which should have examined him,.... By scourging; namely, the soldiers, who under the inspection of the centurion, and by the order of the chief captain, were binding him with thongs to scourge him, and thereby extort from him his crime, which was the cause of all this disturbance; but hearing that he was a Roman, either of their own accord, or rather at the order of their officers, either the centurion or chief captain, or both, left binding him, and went their way:

and the chief captain also was afraid after he knew that he was a Roman; lest he should be called to an account for his conduct, and his commission should be taken from him: chiefly,

and because he had bound him; not only had commanded him to be bound with thongs to a pillar, in order to be scourged, but he had bound him with two chains, when first seized him; and, as before observed,
See Gill on "Ac 22:25"; it was a heinous crime to bind a Roman.

Acts 22:30

Ver. 30. On the morrow,.... The next day; so that Paul was kept in the castle all night: because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews; which, as yet, he could not come at, some saying one thing, and some another; and which he ought to have known before he had bound him, and ordered him to be scourged:

he loosed him from his bands not from his being bound with thongs to the pillar, that he had been loosed from before, but from the two chains with which he was bound, and held by two soldiers; see
Ac 21:33.

and commanded the chief priests, and all the council to appear, the whole Jewish sanhedrim, which was now very much under the direction and influence of the Romans: and this he the rather did, because, though he could not come at the certainty of the charge and accusation, he perceived it was a matter of religion, and so belonged to them to examine and judge of:

and brought Paul down; from the Castle of Antonia, into the temple, and to the place where the sanhedrim sat, which formerly was in the chamber Gazith, but of late years it had removed from place to place, and indeed from Jerusalem itself, and was now at Jabneh; only this was the time of Pentecost, and so the chief priests and sanhedrim were at Jerusalem on that account:

and set him before them; or "among them"; in the midst of them, to answer to what charges should be brought against him.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 23:1

Ver. 1. And Paul earnestly beholding the council,.... Fastening his eyes upon them, looking wistly and intently at them, and thereby discovering a modest cheerfulness, and a becoming boldness, confidence, and intrepidity, as being not conscious of any guilt, and well assured of the goodness of his cause:

said, men and brethren; see Ac 22:1.

I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day; not only from the time of his conversion, but throughout the whole of his life; for though, strictly speaking, there is no good conscience but what is awakened by the Spirit of God, and is unprincipled by his grace, and is purged from sin by the blood of Christ; in which sense he could only have a good conscience, since he believed in Christ; yet whereas in his state of unregeneracy, and even while he was a blasphemer, and persecutor, he did not act contrary to the dictates of his conscience, but according to them, in which his view was to the glory of God, and the honour of his law; he therefore says he lived before God, or unto God, in all good conscience, though an erroneous and mistaken one; he thought he ought to do what he did; and what he did, he did with a zeal for God though it was not according to knowledge: besides, the apostle has here respect to his outward moral conversation, which, before and after conversion, was very strict, and even blameless, at least unblemished before men; nobody could charge him with any notorious crime, though he did not live without sin in the sight of the omniscient God.

Acts 23:2

Ver. 2. And the high priest Ananias,.... This could not be the same with Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, but rather Ananus his son; though this is more generally thought to be Ananias the son of Nebedaeus, whom Josephus {m} speaks of. There is one R. Ananias, the sagan of the priests, often spoken of in the Jewish writings {n}, who lived about these times, and was killed at the destruction of Jerusalem; and in the times of King Agrippa, there was one Chanina, or Ananias the priest, who was a Sadducee {o}; and from the number of Sadducees in this sanhedrim, who very likely were the creatures of the high priest, one would be tempted to think he might be the same with this: who

commanded them that stood by him: that is, by Paul, who were nearest to him, some of the members of the sanhedrim; unless they should be thought to be some of the high priest's officers, or servants, as in
Joh 18:22 though if they were, one would think they would be so called: these he ordered

to smite him on the mouth: or give him a slap on the face, by way of contempt, and as if he had spoken what ought not to be said, and in order to silence him; the reason of which might be, either because Paul did not directly address him, and give him such flattering titles as he expected, or because he set out with such declarations of his innocence, and spotless behaviour, and with so much courage and boldness.

{m} Antiqu. l. 18. c. 2. sect. 1. & l. 20. c. 8. sect. 1. {n} Misna Shekalim, c. 4. sect. 4. & 6. 1. & Pesachim, c. 1. sect. 6. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 1. & 21. 2. & Juchasin, fol. 24. 2. {o} Juchasin, fol. 142. 2.

Acts 23:3

Ver. 3. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee,.... Which may be considered either as a prophecy of what would be, that God would smite him with some judgment here, or with death quickly, or with eternal damnation hereafter; taking up his own words, and suggesting that a retaliation would be made, and that the measure he meted, would be measured to him again; or else as an imprecation upon him; for the words may be rendered, "may God smite thee"; the future tense being often used by the Jews for the imperative, and that in this very phrase; for certain it is, that this is the form of an imprecation with

them: for it is said, if anyone should say,
Mwhla hkky, "may God smite", or "so may God smite"; this is hla, "a curse", written in the law {p}; though this instance of the apostle ought not to be drawn into example, any more than those of other saints, who might be under a direction of the Holy Ghost to deliver out such things, which would come to pass in righteous judgment: and if this was Ananias, the son of Nebedaeus, as is generally thought, it is remarkable, that five years after this, in the beginning of the wars of the Jews with the Romans, this Ananias, hiding himself under the ruins of a conduit, was discovered, and taken out, and killed {q}: and no doubt but he very fitly calls him

thou whited wall; or hypocrite, in like manner as Christ compares the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees to whited sepulchres, Mt 23:27.

for sittest thou to judge me after the law; the law of Moses, which was the rule of judgment in the sanhedrim, at least professed to be, and which was allowed of by the Romans, especially in matters relating to the Jewish religion:

and commandest me to be smitten contrary to law? which condemns no man before he is heard, and much less punishes him, **Joh 7:51** and which is contrary not only to the Jewish laws, but to the Roman laws, and all others founded upon the law of nature and reason.

{p} Misn. Shebuot, c. 4. sect. 13. & Maimon. in ib. {q} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 17. sect. 9.

Acts 23:4

Ver. 4. And they that stood by,.... The members of the sanhedrim that were next to the apostle; or the servants of the high priest, since they are said to stand, whereas those of that court sat: said,

revilest thou God's high priest? which seems to confirm that the apostle's words were not a bare prediction, but an imprecation, since they are charged with reproaching, reviling, and speaking evil of him; and the aggravation of which was not only that the person reviled was a priest, an high priest, but an high priest of God; though this could not have been proved, for there was now no high priest of God but Jesus Christ; the priesthood was changed and abrogated, and there were no more high priests among men of God's appointing and approving.

Acts 23:5

Ver. 5. Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest,.... Or I did not know that he was the high priest; and the sense is, that he did not really know him, either because he had been long absent from Jerusalem; and besides there were new high priests made, sometimes every year, and sometimes oftener, that it is no wonder he should not know him; or because he might not sit in his usual place; or chiefly because he was not, in his habit, an high priest; for the priests, both the high priest, and the common priests, only wore their priestly robes, when they ministered in their office, and at other times they wore other clothes, as laymen did, according to Eze 44:19 which the Targum paraphrases thus;

"when they (the priests) shall go out of the holy court into the outer court, to be mixed with the people, they shall put off their garments in which they ministered, and lay them up in the holy chamber, and shall clothe themselves with other garments, that they may not be mingled with the people, Nwhyvwblb, "in their garments"."

For as soon as they had performed their office, there were servants that attended them, who stripped them of their robes, and laid them up in chests which were in the temple {r} till they came to service again, and put them on common garments; for they might not appear among the common people in their priestly garments; which when they were off of them, they were, as Maimonides says {s}, Myrzk, "as strangers", or as laymen, like the rest of the people; for which reason Paul might not know Ananias to be the high priest: and this points to another sense of these words; for it was a rule with the Jews {t}, that

"at the time the priests' garments were upon them, their priesthood was upon them, but when their garments were not on them, Nhyle Mtnwhk Nya, "there was no priesthood upon them"; for lo, they were as strangers."

And then the sense is, Ananias not being in the discharge of his office, nor in his habit, the apostle did not know, or own him as an high priest, or consider him as in such a station; or rather, since the priesthood was changed, and there was no other high priest of God but Jesus Christ, he did not own him as one; had he, he should not have spoke to him in the manner he did. Moreover, if this was Ananias, the son of Nebedaeus, as is the opinion of many, he had no right to the office of the priesthood when he was first made an high priest; after which he was sent a prisoner to Rome; during which time several succeeded in the priesthood; and at this time not he, though he had got the management of affairs in his hands, was high priest, but Jesus the son of Gamaliel; so that the apostle's sense might be, he did not own or acknowledge him high priest. Some take the apostle's words in an ironical sense; he an high priest, I should not have known him to be an high priest, he looks and acts more like a furioso, a madman, an unjust judge, and a tyrant, than an high priest, who ought to behave in another guise manner. But what follows shows rather that the apostle spoke seriously, unless the words can be thought to be a citation made by Luke,

for it is written, in Ex 22:28 "thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people"; which the Jewish writers generally understand of the head of the great sanhedrim, as Ananias might be, or of a king {u}.

{r} Misna Tamid c. 5. sect. 3. & Bartenora in ib. {s} Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 10. sect. 4. {t} Maimon. Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 10. sect. 4. {u} Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 26. sect. 1. & Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Torn, pr. neg. 209.

Acts 23:6

Ver. 6. But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees,.... That is, that one part of the sanhedrim consisted of Sadducees, which was often the case; sometimes the high priest was of this sect, as Ananias probably was, and sometimes the greater part of the sanhedrim were Sadducees, and even sometimes the whole;
See Gill on "Ac 5:17", but this sanhedrim were only part of them Sadducees:

and the other Pharisees; of both these sects, See Gill on "Mt 3:7".

he cried out in the council; with a loud voice, that he might be heard by all:

men and brethren, I am a Pharisee; he was not only brought up in that sect from his youth, and lived according to it before his conversion, but he was still a Pharisee; wherefore he does not say, I "was", but I "am" a Pharisee; for whatever distinguished the Pharisee from the Sadducee, whether in principle, or in practice, and manner of living, which agreed with Christianity, the apostle still retained; as the belief of the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, and a future state, and strict holiness of life and conversation.

The son of a Pharisee; the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read in the plural number, "the son of Pharisees"; his father and his mother were both Pharisees; for there were women Pharisees {w}, as well as men; so that he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, as well as an Hebrew of the Hebrews; and this is said to show that he was by education of that sect.

Of the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am called in question; that is, either for the hope of the resurrection of the dead, Ac 24:15 or for professing the hope of eternal life, and happiness in a future state, and the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, when the soul and body will be reunited, and enjoy endless felicity together: not that these were the particular things now charged upon him, and for which he was now trying and judging; but that these were the ground and foundation of the hatred and persecution of him, because he preached the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and the resurrection of men through him, and that there was hope of eternal life and salvation by him. And in this the apostle showed the prudence and wisdom of the serpent, along with the innocence of the dove, hereby to divide the assembly, and free himself from them; and it was but just and right; for since they would not hear him about to make a fair and open defence of his cause, but ordered him to be smitten on the mouth, it was but justice to throw them into confusion, and save himself.

{w} Misna Sota, c. 3. sect. 4.

Acts 23:7

Ver. 7. And when he had so said,.... He stopped and made a pause:

and there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; about the things which he had spoken of, particularly the resurrection of the dead; and this was what the apostle intended, so that his end was answered by the speech he made:

and the multitude was divided; that is, the members of the sanhedrim were divided, some being on one side of the question, and some on the other; for this multitude cannot design the multitude of the common people, who were not convened together on this occasion.

Acts 23:8

Ver. 8. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection,.... Of the dead, being ignorant of the Scriptures, and the power of God; see Mt 22:23.

neither angel nor spirit; the Ethiopic version reads, "nor Holy Spirit": but the sense seems to be, that they did not believe any such species of beings as angels, nor indeed any spirits whatever, which were immaterial or immortal; for as for the spirit or soul of man, they took that to be only the temperament of the body, and that it died with it, and did not exist in any separate state after this life: for so Josephus {x} says, that they deny the permanence of the soul, and rewards and punishments in the invisible state. And, according to the Talmudic {y} writers, they denied that there was any other world than this:

but the Pharisees confess both; the resurrection of the dead, and that there are spirits, both angels and the souls of men, which are immortal. Josephus, in the place before referred to, says, that they hold that every soul is incorruptible or immortal; and that they held the resurrection of the dead, is manifest from the Talmud {z}, and other writings of theirs; the Syriac version renders it, "the Pharisees confess all these things"; to which agree the Arabic and Ethiopic versions.

{x} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 10. sect. 19. {y} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 54. 1. & Gloss. in ib. & Pirke Abot R. Nathan, c. 5. {z} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 90. 2.

Acts 23:9

Ver. 9. And there arose a great cry,.... Or noise, a loud clamour; they began to be very noisy, and to talk loud, and in high spirits, one against another:

and the Scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose; there were Scribes in the sanhedrim, and these were some of them on the side of the Sadducees, and some on the side of the Pharisees; though, generally speaking, they agreed with the latter, and are often in Scripture mentioned with them, and for them: however, that part in this sanhedrim that were on their side rose up from their seats,

and strove; that is, contended, disputed, and litigated the point with the

Sadducees:

saying, we find no evil in this man; why he should be hated, persecuted, and punished:

but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him; that is, if the Holy Spirit, as the Ethiopic version reads, has inspired him, or God by an angel has revealed anything to him, who has to say anything against it? This they said in agreement with their own principles, and more for the sake of establishing them, and in opposition to the Sadducees, than in favour of Paul:

let us not fight against God; as in **Ac 5:39**. These words are not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

Acts 23:10

Ver. 10. And when there arose a great dissension,.... When that was come to a very great height, hot words were spoken, and they were ready to come to blows, and there was like to be a riot and tumult among them:

the chief captain fearing lest Paul should be pulled in pieces of them; either of the Sadducees, whom he had greatly offended and provoked, or of both Sadducees and Pharisees, the one laying hold on him to preserve him from the fury of the other, and the other endeavouring to pluck him out of their hands; and the fears of the chief captain were not so much out of affection to Paul, but lest there should be an uproar, which might issue in sedition, and rebellion against the Roman government, of which the Roman officers were always jealous; and because that Paul was a Roman, and should he suffer him to be destroyed in an illegal manner, he must be accountable for it: wherefore he

commanded the soldiers to go down: either from the castle of Antonia, or from a superior part of the temple, where he with his guards were, to hear this cause before the sanhedrim, to that part where it sat, and Paul was: and

take him by force from among them; if they refused to deliver him up, to make use of their arms:

and bring him into the castle; of Antonia, where he was before.

Acts 23:11

Ver. 11. And the night following,.... The day in which Paul was brought before the sanhedrim, and pleaded his own cause before them, and had thrown them into confusion and division:

the Lord stood by him; the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in a vision to him, and stood very near him, by the side of him, by the bed or couch on which he might lie: and said,

be of good cheer, Paul; though he was now a prisoner in the castle; and though the high priest, and the Sadducees especially, were enraged against him; and though a plot was about to be formed to take away his life; for this exhortation seems to be designed to prepare him for further trials, and to prevent discouragement under them; which shows the great care of Christ over him, his concern for him, and love to him: the word Paul is not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; but the calling him by name seems to express not only singular knowledge of him, but greater familiarity and affection; it is in the Arabic version, and in other Greek copies:

for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem; not only in the Christian church, and before the Apostle James, and the elders, but in the Jewish sanhedrim, and before the high priest, Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, where and before whom, though not particularly recorded, he bore a testimony for Jesus, that he was the true Messiah; and that though he died, he was risen from the dead, and was at the right hand of God, and was the only Saviour of men:

so must thou bear witness also at Rome; as he had bore a public and faithful witness to the person, office, and grace of Christ at Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea; so it was necessary, by the decree of God, and for the glory of Christ, that he should bear a like testimony at Rome, the chief city in the whole world; hereby signifying, that he should not die at Jerusalem, and giving him a hint that he should appeal to Caesar, which he afterwards did.

Acts 23:12

Ver. 12. And when it was day,.... As soon as it was light, very early in the morning:

certain of the Jews banded together; these very likely were of the sect of the

Sadducees, who had been exceedingly irritated and provoked by what Paul had said the day before in the council; these therefore gathered together, entered into a conspiracy to take away Paul's life, and trailed in it, as one man:

and bound themselves under a curse; or "anathematized themselves"; the Hebrew word Mrx, which answers to "anathema", is sometimes used for an oath, hewbv ayh Mrx, "Cherem" or "anathema" is "an oath" {a}, a vow made to be punished with an anathema if not kept; so these men swore to it, bound themselves with an oath, or wished they might be an anathema, accursed of God, and cut off from his people; they imprecated the most dreadful evils upon themselves:

saying, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul: it was a common form of a vow or oath with the Jews {b},
lkwa alv, "that I will not eat"; sometimes they only vowed abstinence from particular things, and then others were lawful; as for instance, if one vowed that he would not eat boiled meat, he might eat roast, or that he would not eat flesh, he might eat broth, or that he would abstain from milk, then he might drink whey, {c}; but this oath and vow here were, that they would neither eat nor drink anything, till they had destroyed Paul: these were a set of zealots, who in imitation of Phinehas, and pretending the glory of God, took upon them to take away the lives of men, without any, judicial procedure, or the authority of the civil magistrate; of whom, See Gill on "Mt 10:4" it may be asked, what became of this vow? or how did they get clear of it, since they did not accomplish the fact? to which it may be answered, that it was a pretty easy thing to be freed from oaths and vows, among the Jews, whose doctors had a power to absolve men from them; and in such cases as this, and such a vow as this, might be loosed upon more accounts than one, as on account of keeping another law, the observing the sabbath and other festivals, when men were obliged to eat and drink: and thus it is said {d},

"if a man swears that he will not drink wine, or that he will not eat flesh, for so many days, then they say to him, if thou hadst known at the time of the oath, that the sabbath or a feast day were within these days, in which thou art obliged to eat flesh and drink wine, as it is said, Isa 58:13 "and call the sabbath a delight"; wouldst thou have swore at all? if he says no, they loose his oath:"

and likewise it might be loosed on account of life, which a man is bound to preserve: for so they likewise say {e},

"if a man vows that he will not eat anything, woe be to him if he eats, and woe be to him if he does not eat; if he eats he breaks his vow, if he does not eat he sins against his own soul, or life; what must he do? let him go to the wise men, wrdn ta wl wrytyw, "and they will loose his vow for him", as it is written, Pr 12:18 but the tongue of the wise is health;"

and no doubt but these men very easily got their vow loosed, since it was made on such a design.

{a} Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. {b} Misna Nedarim, c. 2. sect. 2, 3. {c} Ib. c. 6. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. {d} Maimon. in Misn. Nedarim, c. 9. sect. 6. {e} T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 40. 1.

Acts 23:13

Ver. 13. And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy. Who met together, formed this resolution, entered into this scheme, and bound themselves with this oath; the word rendered "conspiracy", signifies an agreement by oath; such a number of them banded together, that they might have strength sufficient to take Paul out of the hands of the soldiers, as he was conducted by them from the castle to the temple.

Acts 23:14

Ver. 14. And they came to the chief priests, and elders,.... Who were members of the sanhedrim, to acquaint them with their designs:

and said, we have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul: these chief priests and elders, had they acted according to the character they bore, on such an information, would have taken up those men, and punished them, at least would have dissuaded them from so vile an action; but they knew the men to whom they applied, and very likely they were all of them of the sect of the Sadducees, whom Paul had so much offended the day before; and therefore were pleased with what they had done, approved of their scheme, and readily fell in with the following proposal.

Acts 23:15

Ver. 15. Now therefore ye with the council,.... The whole sanhedrim; their sense is, that they would have the sanhedrim convened by the chief priests and elders, and being met together, then to

signify to the chief captain; or let him know that they were assembled together, upon the affair of Paul, and that they here desirous he might be brought before them:

that he bring him down unto you tomorrow; from the castle of Antonia to the place where the sanhedrim met; the word "tomorrow" is not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; and then it should seem that they desired him to be brought down forthwith, or otherwise they must propose to fast all that day, and so long on the morrow, till Paul was brought down; but that the common reading is right, appears from the chief captain's sending away Paul at the third hour of the night following, to prevent their designs on the morrow, Ac 23:23. The pretence formed for his being brought down is,

as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him; what he had done, which had occasioned this uproar, what it was he was charged with, and whether he was guilty or not:

and we, or ever he come near: where the sanhedrim sat;

are ready to kill him; lying in wait in some private place between the castle and the temple, from whence they intended to rush out at once upon him, and murder him; far enough both from the temple and the council, that both the one might not be defiled, though they did not greatly stick at that in those times, and that the other might not be charged with having any hand in his death.

Acts 23:16

Ver. 16. And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait,.... Paul might have a sister living in Jerusalem; or this her son might be there on account of his studies; he might be a pupil to one of the doctors, by which means he might come at this secret, that such a number of men were in ambush, in order to take away his uncle's life: wherefore having got intelligence of it,

he went and entered into the castle; the Alexandrian copy reads, "the synagogue"; but Paul was not there, but in the castle of Antonia; the Ethiopic version renders it, "the prison"; though it is plain that he was not very closely confined, it was easy to have access to him; the reason might be, not only because he was a Roman, but because he was uncondemned, nor was any charge proved against him:

and told Paul; what he had heard, that such a number of men had entered into a conspiracy to take away his life, and lay in wait for him; and this was an instance both of duty and affection to his uncle, and worthy of imitation, whether it proceeded from natural relation, or from religion, or both.

Acts 23:17

Ver. 17. Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him,.... For under this chief captain there must have been ten of them, if the company of which he was captain consisted of a thousand men, as his title chief captain or chiliarch imports; for a centurion was over an hundred men, as his title signifies; perhaps this might be the same, as in Ac 22:25

and said, bring this young man to the chief captain: which was a very prudential step, not to let the centurion into the secret, but to desire him to introduce the young man to the chief captain; for had he trusted the centurion with it, he might not have acquainted his officer with it, but have informed the liers in wait of it: now though the apostle was assured by Christ that he should not die at Jerusalem, but should bear witness of him at Rome, and though he did not distrust the truth of Christ's words, but most firmly believed them; yet he thought it his duty to make use of the means, which providence had put in his way, for his preservation and safety; the Ethiopic version reads, "bring this young man by night to the chief captain"; that so he might not be seen, and observed to have carried any intelligence to him:

for he hath a certain thing to tell him; which was of some moment and importance, and proper for him to know.

Acts 23:18

Ver. 18. So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain,.... Immediately, without any more to do, without curiously inquiring into the thing, or examining the young man about it; which showed him to be a man of a good disposition, and ready to do a kind office, even to a prisoner:

and said, Paul the prisoner called me to him; either vocally or by some gesture, beckoned him to him:

and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee; in which may be observed the apostle's manner of address to the centurion, on this occasion; it was by way of entreaty; he asked it as a favour of him, to introduce his nephew to the chief captain; and the honour and modesty of the centurion, he did not seek by any methods to get the secret out, either of Paul or the young man; but readily undertakes the affair, honourably performs it, acquaints the captain with the circumstances of it, tells him the young man had something to say to him, he could not tell what, and then departs.

Acts 23:19

Ver. 19. Then the chief captain took him by the hand,.... Some have thought that the reason of this was, that he expected that the young man had brought him a present in his hand, from Paul; but this is to represent him as a sordid mercenary man, which ought not to be said, without sufficient proof; rather this should be considered as an instance of civility and humanity, and what showed him to be a man of breeding and good manners; and might be done partly out of respect to Paul, and partly to encourage the young man to use freedom in the account he was about to give him:

and went with him aside privately; concluding by his coming from Paul, and perceiving by the account of the centurion, that he had a secret to communicate to him; wherefore it was acting a wise and prudent part to take him into a private room, and hear what he had to say:

and asked him, what is that thou hast to tell me? thereby giving the young man an opportunity, and encouraging him to relate the secret to him.

Acts 23:20

Ver. 20. And he said, the Jews have agreed to desire thee,.... By the Jews are meant, the Jewish sanhedrim, for the young man had not only intelligence of the conspiracy, and lying in wait of the forty men or more; but also of the agreement which the sanhedrim at the motion of these men were come into, to make the following request to the chief captain; which seems to confirm the above conjecture, that this young man might be a student under the president of the council, or one of the doctors, whereby he came at the knowledge of these things:

that thou wouldst bring down Paul tomorrow into the council, &c.
See Gill on "Ac 23:15".

Acts 23:21

Ver. 21. But do not thou yield unto them,.... Or be persuaded by them, to bring Paul down from the castle to the sanhedrim; this must not be imputed to the young man's pride and vanity, in taking upon him to give advice to the chief captain; but to his great affection for his uncle, which moved him to entreat, rather than to direct him, for which he gives a good reason:

for there lie in wait for him more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; See Gill on "Ac 23:12".
See Gill on "Ac 23:13".

and now are they ready; to execute their designs, being met together, and lying in ambush in some place, between the castle and the place where the sanhedrim met:

looking for a promise from thee; that when the sanhedrim should apply to him, he would promise them to bring Paul down according to their request; and for the making and performing of this promise, these men were waiting.

Acts 23:22

Ver. 22. So the chief captain then let the young man depart,.... After he had had the account from him, and was master of the whole affair:

and charged him, see thou tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me; which was prudently said; it was a right and wise thing to conceal this matter, that the men might go on with their designs, and an opportunity be taken to convey Paul away, before the time came fixed by them to execute them; for otherwise, should it have been known that their plot was discovered, they would have entered upon new measures.

Acts 23:23

Ver. 23. And he called to him two centurions,.... Who had each of them an hundred soldiers under them:

saying, make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea; which was formerly called Strato's tower, a sea port town, where Felix the Roman governor now was; it was six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles {f} from Jerusalem: these two hundred soldiers were foot soldiers, as appears by their being distinguished from horsemen in the next clause, and were just the number that the two centurions had the command of; the making of them ready, was their seeing to it, that they were properly clothed, and accoutred with arms and ammunition, and with sufficient provision for their journey:

and horsemen threescore and ten; the Ethiopic version reads, "a hundred"; but without support from any copy: "and spearmen two hundred"; who carried spears in their right hand; the word used signifies such who receive, lay hold on, or hold anything in their right hand: some think it designs such who were employed in the militia, to lay hold on guilty persons, and hold them; the Alexandrian copy reads, dexiobolouv, "those that cast with the right hand"; and so reads the Syriac version, to which the Arabic agrees, which renders it "darters"; such as carried darts in their hands, and did not shoot out of a bow, but cast darts with their hands: now these being got ready, were ordered to march,

at the third hour of the night; at nine o'clock at night, that they might go out unobserved, and before the petition from the sanhedrim was presented to him.

{f} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 5. Egesip de Excid. urb. l. 1. c. 7.

Acts 23:24

Ver. 24. And provide them beasts,.... Horses or mules; the Syriac version reads in the singular number, "a beast": and one being sufficient for Paul, here may be a change of number; the Arabic and Ethiopic versions leave out these words, but the following clause makes them necessary:

that they may set Paul on; on the beast, or on one of the beasts provided; if more than one were provided, they might be for his companions, to go along with him:

and bring him safe unto Felix the governor; this man, of a servant, was made a freed man by Claudius Caesar {g}, and by him appointed in the room of Cumanus governor of Judea {h}; he was the brother of Pallas, who had the chief management of affairs under the emperor; and this Felix married three persons successively, that were of royal families; hence Suetonius {i} calls him the husband of three queens; one of these was Drusilla, afterwards mentioned in Ac 24:24 who was sister to King Agrippa. Tacitus calls him Antonius Felix {k} which name he had from Antonia the mother of Claudius', whose servant he was; Josephus {l} calls him Claudius Felix, which name he took from the Emperor Claudius, who from so low and mean condition raised him to such honour and dignity; his name Felix signifies "happy": according to Tacitus {m}, when Felix was first sent into Judea, the government was divided between him and Cumanus; Felix had Samaria, and Cumanus the other part, which was called the nation of the Galilaeans; but Josephus takes no notice of any such division, he says {n}, that Cumanus was banished; and after that Felix was sent by Caesar, governor of Judea, of Galilee, Samaria, and Peraea; and so he seems to be governor of the whole country at this time; he was now at Caesarea, and it is plain that Judea was under his government, since Paul, a prisoner at Jerusalem, is sent down unto him; and in this his government he continued during the life of Claudius; and when Nero became emperor, and added four cities to the kingdom of Agrippa, he constituted Felix governor of the rest of Judea {o}; which character he bore till he thought fit to remove him, and put Festus in his room, of whom mention is made hereafter: after these words the following ones are added, in the Vulgate Latin version, "for he was afraid lest perhaps the Jews should take him by force and kill him, and afterwards he should bear the reproach, as if he had took money"; but they are not to be found in any Greek copies.

{g} Aurel. Victor. Epitome Imper. Rom. p. 324. Sueton. Vita Claudii, sect. 29. {h} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 8. {i} Ut supra. ({g}) {k} Hist. 1. 5. {l} Antiqu. l. 20. c. 6. sect. 1. {m} Hist. l. 12. & 21. {n} Antiqu. l. 20. c. 5. sect. 3. & c. 6. sect. 1. De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 7, 8. {o} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 13. sect. 2.

Acts 23:25

Ver. 25. And he wrote a letter after this manner. The chief captain wrote a letter to Felix the governor, the form and sum of which were as follow; this letter he sent by one of the centurions to him.

Acts 23:26

Ver. 26. Claudius Lysias, unto the most excellent Governor Felix,.... This is the inscription of the letter, and by it we learn the name of the chief captain, so often spoken of in this and the two preceding chapters, which was Claudius Lysias; the first of these names is a Roman one, and which he might take from the Emperor Claudius, for he was not a Roman born; and the latter seems to be a Greek name, and was his proper name, and, he himself very likely was a Greek, since he purchased his freedom with money; one of this name was Archon of Athens {p}; and another is reckoned by Cicero {q}, among the famous orators of Greece, and is often cited by Harpocratian {r}; one of Antiochus's noblemen, and who was of the blood royal, and acted as a general against the Jews, was of this name {s}.

"So he left Lysias, a nobleman, and one of the blood royal, to oversee the affairs of the king from the river Euphrates unto the borders of Egypt:" (1 Maccabees 3:32)

The chief captain calls Felix the governor

the most excellent, which was a title of honour that belonged to him as a governor; the same is given to Theophilus, Lu 1:3 sendeth greeting; or wishes all health and prosperity.

{p} Fabrieii Bibliograph. Antiqu. p. 213. {q} De Claris Orator. vel Brutus, c. 32. {r} Lex Decem Orator. {s} 1 Maccab. iii. 32.

Acts 23:27

Ver. 27. This man was taken by the Jews,.... Meaning Paul, who was presented by the centurions to the governor, and was in his presence when the letter was opened and read, and who was taken by the Jews in the temple, and from thence dragged out and beaten by them:

and should have been killed of them; and would have been killed, had it not been for the chief captain; he was very near being killed by them, he was nigh unto death:

then came I with an army and rescued him; he came with the Roman band, which he had the command of, perhaps a thousand soldiers; for such a number he should have under him by his title; with these he came upon the Jews on a sudden, as they were beating Paul, and took him out of their hands, and saved him:

having understood that he was a Roman; but this he did not know till afterwards, after he had bound him with two chains, and after he had ordered him to be bound with thongs, and examined by scourging; all which he covers and hides from the governor, and suggests that it was his great concern for the Roman name, and for a Roman citizen, which put him upon this enterprise.

Acts 23:28

Ver. 28. And when I would have known the cause,.... Or crime, he was guilty of:

wherefore they accused him: which they charged him with, and for which they beat him almost to death:

I brought him forth into their council; their court of judicature, the great sanhedrim.

Acts 23:29

Ver. 29. Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law,.... As about the resurrection of the dead, and a future state, which some in the council denied, and some asserted, which with this heathen man were idle and foolish questions; or about the defiling of the temple, and speaking contemptibly of the law of Moses, the people of the Jews, and the holy place, which was the cry of the populace against him, and were things the captain knew little of:

but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death, or of bonds: by the laws of the Romans; and yet he himself had bound him with two chains at the first taking of him, and afterwards ordered him to be bound with thongs, and scourged, of which he says nothing, being convinced of his error, and willing to hide it; however, he bears a full testimony to the innocence of the apostle.

Acts 23:30

Ver. 30. And when it was told me,.... As it was by Paul's sister's son,

how that the Jews laid wait for the man; had formed a conspiracy to take away his life, and laid a scheme in order to it, and at least intended, if they were not actually in ambush, to seize him as he should be brought from the castle to the sanhedrim:

I sent straightway to thee; the prisoner Paul, under a guard of soldiers; this he did directly, as soon as ever he heard of the design of the Jews; and he sent him to Felix, as being governor, to whom the judgment of this affair properly belonged, and who was best qualified for it, at least in the chief captain's account; and who doubtless consulted his own honour and safety, lest he should incur blame and disgrace, should a Roman have been slain through any neglect or want of care in him:

and gave commandment to his accusers also, to say before thee what they had against him; it is reasonable to conclude, that he said nothing of this to them, though he might have determined he would, till after Paul was sent away; otherwise the affair would have been discovered, which he desired might be concealed:

farewell; which is the conclusion of the epistle, and is a wish of health and happiness.

Acts 23:31

Ver. 31. Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul,.... Out of the castle, and put him upon a beast, as the chief captain had ordered the centurions, and they had directed the soldiers to do:

and brought him by night to Antipatris: they set out from Jerusalem at the third hour, or about nine o'clock at night, and travelled all night, and by break of day came to Antipatris; a city which lay in the road from Jerusalem to Caesarea: it was built by Herod the great, in the best soil of his kingdom, enriched with rivers and woods {t}; and was so called by him, in memory of his father

Antipater; it before went by the name of Chabar Zaba {u}, or Capharsaba; the Jewish writers place it in the utmost borders of the land of Judea {w}; hence that phrase so often used by them, from Gebath to Antipatris {x}, in like sense as from Dan to Beersheba, these two places being the utmost borders of the land; here it was that Simon the just, with some of the principal inhabitants of Jerusalem, met Alexander the great, who travelled all night, as these soldiers with Paul did, and came to Antipatris at sun rising {y}. It was forty two miles from Jerusalem. It was in the road from Judea to Galilee, as appears from the following canon of the Jews, concerning divorces {z};

"if a husband says to his wife, lo, this is thy divorce, if I do not come thirty days hence, and he goes from Judea to Galilee, and comes to Antipatris and returns, it becomes void:"

the way from Jerusalem to Caesarea lay through Nicopolis, Lydda, Antipatris, and Betthar; from Jerusalem to Nicopolis, according to the old Jerusalem Itinerary {a}, were twenty two miles; from thence to Lydda, ten miles; and from Lydda to Antipatris ten more (which make forty two miles, as before observed); and from Antipatris to Betthar ten miles, and from thence to Caesarea, sixteen more: so that when the apostle was at Antipatris, he had twenty six miles more to go to Caesarea; and hence it appears, that the length of the journey from Jerusalem to Caesarea was sixty eight miles; though Josephus {b} makes the distance to be six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles: and that the way from the one to the other lay through the places before mentioned, may be illustrated from what the same writer says, of some persons travelling from Caesarea to Jerusalem; so he relates {c}, concerning Quadratus governor of Syria, that from Tyre he came to Caesarea, from Caesarea to Lydda, and from Lydda to Jerusalem; and of Cestius the Roman general, he says {d}, that from Caesarea he came to Antipatris, and from Antipatris to Lydda, and from Lydda to Jerusalem, which clearly seems to be the same road the apostle went; and so Jerom {e}, in the account he gives of the journey of Paula, says, that she came to Caesarea, where she saw the house of Cornelius, the cottage of Philip, and the beds of the four virgin prophetesses; and from thence to Antipatris, a little town half pulled down, which Herod called after his father's name; and from thence to Lydda, now Diospolis, famous for the resurrection of Dorcas, and the healing of Aeneas. Antipatris is, by Ptolomy {f}, placed at the west of Jordan, and is mentioned along with Gaza, Lydda, and Emmaus; some take it to be the same with Capharsalama, mentioned in:

"Nicanor also, when he saw that his counsel was discovered, went out to fight against Judas beside Capharsalama:" (1 Maccabees 7:31) and others say, it is the same that is since called Assur or Arsuf, a town on the sea coast, which is not likely, since it does not appear that Antipatris was a maritime city. The apostle could not now stay to preach the Gospel in this place, nor do we elsewhere read or hear of a Gospel church state in it, until the "fifth" century; when it appears {g} there was a church here, and Polychronius was bishop of it, who was present at the council of Chalcedon, held in the year 451; and in the "eighth" century there were many Christians dwelt here, for in the year 744 there were many of them killed by the Arabians.

{t} Josephus De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 21. sect 9. {u} Ib. Antiqu. l. 13. c. 15. sect. 1. & l. 16. c. 5. sect. 2. {w} Bartenora in Misn. Gittin, c. 7. sect. 7. {x} T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 69. 2. & Megilia, fol. 70. 1. & T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 62. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 2. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 18. 2. & Juchasin, fol. 108. 1. & Jarchi in Eccl. xi. 6. {y} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 69. 1. {z} Misn. Gittin, c. 7. sect. 7. {a} Apud Reland. Palestina Illustrata, l. 2. c. 4. p. 417. {b} De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 5. {c} Ib. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 5, 6. {d} Ib. c. 19. sect. 1. {e} Epitaph. Paulae, fol. 59. A. {f} Geograph. l. 5. c. 16. {g} Vid. Reland. Palestina Ilustrata, l. 3. p. 569, 570.

Acts 23:32

Ver. 32. On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him,.... That is, the two hundred soldiers, and the two hundred spearmen, who were all on foot, left the seventy horsemen to conduct Paul to Caesarea; for being come to Antipatris, all danger from the Jews was over:

and returned to the castle; the castle Antonia in Jerusalem, from whence they set out.

Acts 23:33

Ver. 33. Who, when they came to Caesarea,.... The seventy horsemen:

and delivered the epistle to the governor; to Felix, governor of Judea, who was now at Caesarea; namely, the letter which Claudius Lysias, the chief captain, sent to him; the form and contents of which are before given:

these presented Paul also before him; concerning whom, and whose affairs, the letter was.

Acts 23:34

Ver. 34. And when the governor, had read the letter,.... Which he doubtless opened and read as soon as he had received it, not knowing what important business might be contained in it, or of what dangerous consequence a neglect of reading it might be; this showed care and diligence in him:

he asked of what province he was; since he perceived by the letter he was a Roman, and that he might know whether he was under his jurisdiction, and whether the hearing of his case belonged to him; and it should seem that it rather belonged to the governor of Syria; but that the crimes he was charged with were committed in Judea, particularly that of profaning the temple.

And when he understood that he was of Cilicia; which was a Roman province, in which Tarsus was, where Paul was born free;
Ac 21:39.

Acts 23:35

Ver. 35. I will hear thee, said he,.... The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "we will hear", which is a grand courtly way of speaking:

when thine accusers are come; which Lysias, in his letter, informed him that he had ordered them to come; which shows the governor to have some sense of justice and integrity, being desirous to hear both sides before he judged of the affair, though there was so much said in the chief captain's letter in favour of Paul's innocence, and against his enemies.

And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall; or palace: this was a place built by Herod the great at Caesarea, of whose magnificent buildings here Josephus gives a large account. For besides the famous haven or port which he made here, he adorned the place with splendid palaces, he built a theatre, and an amphitheatre, and a "forum" {h}, which was either a market place, or a court of judicature; and if the latter, perhaps the same that is here meant, in a part of which, or in a place adjoining to it, the apostle was put. Here he was kept by a guard of soldiers, but not in close confinement; he had much liberty, and his friends and acquaintance had leave to come to him; see

Ac 24:23. We read {i} of
Nyroyq lv yjyd, which some interpret "the chamber of the judges of Caesarea"; or the place where they sat in judgment, and may be the same that is here meant; though others interpret it a prison; and so it seems was this judgment hall of Herod's.

{h} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 21. sect. 5, 8. {i} Megillat Esther, fol. 85. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 24:1

Ver. 1. And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders,.... From Jerusalem to Caesarea: these five days are to be reckoned not from the seizing of Paul in the temple, but from his coming to Caesarea; the Alexandrian copy reads, "after some days", leaving it undetermined how many: the high priest, with the elders, the members of the sanhedrim, with "some" of them, as the same copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, came down hither; not merely as accusers, by the order of the chief captain, but willingly, and of their own accord, to vindicate themselves and their people, lest they should fall under the displeasure of the Roman governor, for encouraging tumults and riots: the high priest must be conscious to himself that he had acted in an illegal manner, in ordering Paul to be smitten on the mouth, in the midst of the council, in the presence of the chief captain; and if it had not been for the soldiers, Paul had been pulled to pieces in the council: and the elders knew what a hand they had in the conspiracy against his life; and they were sensible that this plot was discovered, and Paul was secretly conveyed away; and what the captain had wrote to the governor, they could not tell, and therefore made the more haste down to him, to set themselves right, and get Paul condemned:

and with a certain orator named Tertullus: this man, by his name, seems to have been a Roman; and because he might know the Roman, or the Greek language, or both, which the Jews did not so well understand, and was very well acquainted with all the forms in the Roman courts of judicature, as well as was an eloquent orator; therefore they pitched upon him, and took him down with them to open and plead their cause. The name Tertullus is a diminutive from Tertius, as Marullus from Marius, Lucullus from Lucius, and Catullus from Catius. The father of the wife of Titus, before he was emperor, was of this name {k}; and some say her name was Tertulla; and the grandmother of Vespasian, by his father's side, was of this name, under whom he was brought up {l}. This man's title, in the Greek text, is rhtwr, "Rhetor", a rhetorician; but though with the Latins an "orator" and a "rhetorician" are distinguished, an orator being one that pleads causes in courts, and a rhetorician a professor of rhetoric; yet, with the Greeks, the "Rhetor" is an orator; so Demosthenes was called; and so Cicero calls himself {m}.

Who informed the governor against Paul; brought in a bill of information against him, setting forth his crimes, and declaring themselves his accusers; they appeared in open court against him, and accused him; for this is not to be restrained to Tertullus, but is said of the high priest, and elders with him; for, the word is in the plural number, though the Syriac version reads in the singular, and seems to refer it to the high priest.

{k} Sueton. in Vita Titi, l. 11. c. 4. {l} Ib. Vita Vespasian. c. 2. {m} De Oratore, l. 3. p. 225.

Acts 24:2

Ver. 2. And when he was called forth,.... Not Tertullus the orator; for this is not to be understood of him, and of his being admitted to speak, as is thought by some, but the Apostle Paul; which is put out of doubt by the Vulgate Latin version, which reads, "and Paul being cited"; he was ordered to be brought out of custody into the court, to hear his indictment, and answer for himself:

Tertullus began to accuse him; to set forth his crimes, which he introduced with a flattering preface to Felix:

saying, seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence; very likely he might refer to his purging the country of robbers; he took Eleazar, the chief of them, who had infested the country for twenty years, and many others with him, whom he sent bound to Rome, and others of them he crucified; and whereas there arose up another set of men, under a pretence of religion, who led people into the wilderness, signifying, that God would show them some signs of liberty; these seemed, to Felix, to sow the seeds, and lay the foundation of division and defection, which showed his sagacity, and which Tertullus here calls "providence"; wherefore, foreseeing what would be the consequence of these things, if not timely prevented, he sent armed men, horse and foot, and destroyed great numbers of them; and particularly he put to flight the Egyptian false prophet, who had collected thirty thousand men together, and dispersed them {n}; and yet his government was attended with cruelty and avarice; witness the murder of Jonathan the high priest, by a sort of cut throats, who were connived at by him; particularly by the means of Dora his friend, whom he corrupted; and the pillaging of many of the inhabitants of Caesarea {o}: so that this was a piece of flattery, used by Tertullus, to catch his ear, and gain attention, and insinuate himself into his affections.

{n} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 20. c. 7. {o} De Bello, l. 2. c. 13. sect. 7.

Acts 24:3

Ver. 3. We accept it always, and in all places,.... The sense is, that the Jews observed with pleasure the provident care the governor took of their nation, and at all times spoke well of him; and wherever they came commended his conduct, and owned the favours they received from him, and the blessings they enjoyed under his government: and then giving him his title of honour,

most noble Felix; Tertullus adds, that this the Jews did

with all thankfulness; as sensible of the obligations they were under to him; but this was all a farce, mere artifice, and wretched flattery.

Acts 24:4

Ver. 4. Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee,.... Suggesting, that he could say a great deal more under this head, but, for brevity sake, should omit it; and because he would not tire his patience, and hinder business going forward:

I pray thee, that thou wouldst hear us of thy clemency a few words; he praises him for his humanity and good nature, and for his patience in hearing causes, and promises him great conciseness in the account he should give him; and entreats that, according to his wonted goodness, he would condescend to hear what he had to lay before him; all which was artfully said to engage attention to him.

Acts 24:5

Ver. 5. For we have found this man a pestilent fellow,.... Pointing to Paul, the prisoner at the bar; the word here used signifies the "pest" or "plague" itself; and it was usual with orators among the Romans, when they would represent a man as a very wicked man, as dangerous to the state, and unworthy to live in it, to call him the pest of the city, or of the country, or of the empire, as may be observed in several places in Cicero's Orations.

And a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world: sedition was severely punished by the Romans, being what they carefully watched and guarded against, and was what the Jews were supposed to be very prone unto; and Tertullus would suggest, that the several riots, and tumults, and seditions, fomented by the Jews, in the several parts of the Roman empire, here called the world, were occasioned by the apostle: the crime charged upon him is greatly aggravated, as that not only he was guilty of sedition, but that he was the mover of it, and that he stirred up all the Jews to it, and that in every part of the world, or empire, than which nothing was more false; the Jews often raised up a mob against him, but he never rioted them, and much less moved them against the Roman government: and to this charge he adds,

and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes; not Nazarites, as Calvin seems to understand the passage; for these were men of great repute among the Jews, and for Paul to be at the head of them would never be brought against him as a charge: but Nazarenes, that is, Christians, so called by way of contempt and reproach, from Jesus of Nazareth; which name and sect being contemptible among the Romans, as well as Jews, are here mentioned to make the apostle more odious.

Acts 24:6

Ver. 6. Who also hath gone about to profane the temple,.... By introducing a Greek into it; see Ac 21:28 which was only a supposition and conjecture of the Asiatic Jews, and was a false and groundless one:

whom we took; as they did in the temple, and dragged him out of it:

and would have judged according to our law; which was another untruth, for they had him not before any court of judicature; they brought no charge in form against him, nor did they examine his case, and inquire into the truth of things, or hear what he had to say, but fell upon him, and beat him; and if it had not been for the chief captain and his soldiers, would have destroyed him, so far were they from proceeding according to their law: it seems by Tertullus calling the law, "our law", that he was a Jewish proselyte; or else he speaks after the manner of lawyers, who call what is their clients, theirs.

Acts 24:7

Ver. 7. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us,.... Suddenly, and at unawares, immediately, and with great haste, before they could execute their designs; which were not to judge Paul according to law, but to kill him, in the manner the zealots did:

and with great violence took him away out of our hands; for he came with an army, and rescued him, Ac 23:27 Some copies add, "and sent him to thee"; and so the Syriac version reads.

Acts 24:8

Ver. 8. Commanding his accusers to come unto thee,.... But this was not done till after Paul had set forth his case before the people, upon the stairs leading to the castle: and after he had pleaded his own cause before the sanhedrim; and after the chief captain had had intelligence of the Jews lying in wait to kill him: Tertullus would insinuate that the captain was blameworthy, that he hindered a legal process against Paul; and that it was owing to him, that this trouble was given the governor, as well as the high priest and elders, who by his orders came down from Jerusalem to Caesarea; and that had it not been for him this affair might have been finished with more dispatch, and less trouble.

By examining of whom; not the accusers, but either the chief captain, as some think, or rather Paul:

thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse him; so impudent was Tertullus, and of such effrontery and assurance, that he feared not to say, that the governor, by examining Paul himself, would easily come to the knowledge of the things he was accused of, and plainly see that he was guilty of them; so that there would be no need of their attestations, or of producing witnesses against him.

Acts 24:9

Ver. 9. And the Jews also assented,.... That is, Ananias the high priest, and the elders that were with him, agreed to what Tertullus said, and confirmed the same.

Saying, that these things were so; that Paul was such a person, and was guilty of the crimes he had set forth; and that the chief captain had taken the steps, and done the things he had related.

Acts 24:10

Ver. 10. Then Paul, after the governor had beckoned unto him to speak,.... Tertullus having finished his account, Paul was silent to his charge and calumnies, until the governor beckoned with his hand or head, or made some sign to him to speak for himself; which he might not do, until leave was given him; and then he

answered as follows:

forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation; some say he was in the thirteenth, others in the tenth year of his government; some copies read a "just judge"; but this does not so well agree with the character of Felix;
See Gill on "Ac 24:27".

I do the more cheerfully answer for myself; since if he had been such a mover of sedition everywhere, he must in this course of years have known or heard something of it; and seeing also he could be no stranger to the temper of the Jews, that they were given to envy, revenge, lying, and perjury, and therefore would not easily believe all they said, or rashly take their part, but rather would pity the apostle, who had fallen into such hands, and do him justice.

Acts 24:11

Ver. 11. Because that thou mayest understand,.... By what Paul now asserted, and by the witnesses which he could produce to certify the truth of it:

that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship; that is, from the time that he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, to the present time, in which he stood before Felix, pleading his own cause; which may be reckoned, thus, he came in one day from Caesarea to Jerusalem, Ac 21:16 the next day he visited James and the elders, Ac 21:18 on the third day he purified himself in the temple, Ac 21:26 where he was taken and used ill by the Jews; on the fourth day, he was brought before the sanhedrim, and defended himself, Ac 22:30 on the fifth day forty Jews conspire to take away his life, Ac 23:11, on the sixth day he came to Caesarea, being sent there by Lysias, Ac 23:32 and five days after this, which make eleven, Ananias, and the elders, with Tertullus, came down to accuse him; and this day was the twelfth, on which his trial came on. And of these twelve days he was a prisoner nine, and therefore could not have done so much mischief, and stirred up so much sedition as was insinuated; and in opposition to the charge of profaning the temple, he observes that he came up to Jerusalem to "worship"; namely, at the feast of Pentecost.

Acts 24:12

Ver. 12. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man,.... Either about civil or religious affairs: not that it was criminal to dispute in the temple; it was a common thing for the doctors to dispute about matters of religion, in the porches, and courts, and chambers of the temple, as it may be observed they often did with Christ; but the apostle mentions this to show, that he was so far from moving sedition among the people of the Jews, that he never so much as entered into any conversation with them, upon any subject whatever: true indeed, he was in the temple, and was found there, but not disputing with any, but purifying himself according to the law of Moses:

neither raising up the people; stirring them up to sedition, and tumult, to rebel against the Roman government:

neither in the synagogues; where there were the greatest concourse of people, and the best opportunity of sowing seditious principles, and of which there were many in the city of Jerusalem. The Jews say {p} there were four hundred and sixty synagogues in Jerusalem; some say {q} four hundred and eighty:

nor in the city; of Jerusalem, in any of the public streets or markets, where there were any number of people collected together; the apostle mentions the most noted and public places, where any thing of this kind might most reasonably be thought to be done.

{p} T. Hieros. Cetubot, fol. 35. 3. {q} Ib. Megilla, fol. 73. 4.

Acts 24:13

Ver. 13. Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me. As that he was a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition, and a profaner of the temple these things they could not set forth in any clear light, and bring testimonies, or give demonstration of; they could not make them appear to be true, which it lay upon them to do, or otherwise in course he ought be acquitted: this was challenging and defying them to make good their assertions.

Acts 24:14

Ver. 14. But this I confess unto thee,.... What was truth he was not ashamed of, but ready to own, and bear his testimony for, whatever was the consequence of it:

that after the way which they call heresy; referring to the charge of his being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, Ac 24:5 and meaning by the way the Christian religion, or the doctrines of Christianity, which the Jews called heresy; and as early as this were the Christians, by them, called heretics: so we read {r} of
Mynymh tkrb, "a prayer against the heretics", which Samuel (the little) composed before, or in the presence of R. Gamaliel the elder, he approving of it; which R. Gamaliel was Paul's master; and some have thought, that Samuel the little, the composer of this prayer, was Saul himself; so that he knew very well that the Christian doctrine was called heresy, and the Christians heretics, for he had called them so himself in the time of his unregeneracy; but now he was not ashamed to profess that way, and walk in it, and according to it worship God, as follows:

so worship I the God of my fathers; even Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, suggesting, that by embracing Christianity, he had not denied, and gone off from the worship of the one, only, living, and true God, the God of Israel; and that there was an entire agreement between the saints of the Old Testament, and the Christians of the New, in the object of worship; the Vulgate Latin version reads, "so serve I the Father, and my God"; that is, God the Father, who is the Father of Christ, and the God and Father of believers in him:

believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets; which the Sadducees did not; and strictly adhering to these, and not to the traditions of the elders, as did the Scribes and Pharisees; so that since he believed whatever was contained in the sacred writings, he could not be charged justly with heresy; and as he believed, so he taught nothing but what was agreeably to the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

{r} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 25. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 28. 2. & 29. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 2. sect. 1.

Acts 24:15

Ver. 15. And have hope towards God,.... Of an interest in him, and of enjoying eternal life and happiness with him in a future state:

which they themselves also allow; that is, some of the Jews, not the Sadducees, for they denied what is afterwards asserted; but the Pharisees, who believed the immortality of the soul, and its existence in a future state:

and that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; agreeably to the doctrine of Christ in **Joh 5:28**. In this article the Pharisees of those times were sounder than the modern Jews; for though the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is one of their thirteen articles of faith, and is a fundamental one, which he that does not believe, cannot be said to be of the Jewish religion; yet they limit it entirely to the righteous {s}, and will not allow that the wicked shall rise again: and this notion obtained also very early; for in their Talmud {t} it is reported, as the saying of R. Abhu, that

"the day of rain is greater than the resurrection of the dead; the resurrection of the dead is Myqydul, for the righteous, but the rain is both for the righteous, and the wicked."

Though Abarbinel {u} says, that the sense of this expression is not, that they that are not just shall have no part in the resurrection, but that hereby is declared the benefit and reward to be enjoyed at the resurrection; that that is not like rain, from whence both just and unjust equally receive advantage; whereas only the reward is for the righteous, but not for the ungodly: moreover, he observes, that this saying was not received and approved of by all the wise men, particularly that R. Joseph dissented, and others agreed with him; and as for himself, he openly declares, that that assertion, that the just among the Israelites only shall rise again, is foreign from truth, since the Scripture affirms, Da 12:2 "that many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake"; but if there should be no other than the righteous in the resurrection, they would without doubt be very few; besides it is said, "some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting contempt"; and Isaiah says, Isa 66:24 "and they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me"; which shows, that the ungodly shall rise again, to receive their due punishment: and Manasseh ben Israel {w}, in the last century, argued for the resurrection of both the godly and ungodly, from the same passages of Scripture; and yet he was not of opinion, that the resurrection would be general and common to all men, only that some of all sorts, good, and bad, and middling, would rise again, and which he supposed was the sense of the ancients. It is certain the Jews are divided in their sentiments about this matter; some of them utterly deny that any other shall rise but the just; yea, they affirm {x}, that only the just among the Israelites, and not any of the nations of the world shall rise; others say that all shall rise at the resurrection of the dead, excepting the generation of the flood {y}; and others {z} think, that only they that have been very bad, or very good, shall rise, but not those that are between both; but certain it is, as the apostle affirms, that all shall rise, both just and unjust: the just are they who are made so by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and who being created anew unto righteousness and true holiness, live soberly, righteously, and godly; the unjust are they who are destitute of righteousness, and are filled with all unrighteousness; and these latter, as well as the former, will rise again from the dead; which is clear, not only from the words of Christ, and the writings of the apostles, but from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, particularly Da 12:2 and also from the justice of God, which requires that they who have sinned in the body, should be punished in the body; wherefore it is necessary on this account, that the bodies of the wicked should be raised, that they with their souls may receive the full and just recompense of reward; and likewise from the general judgment, which will include the righteous and the wicked, and who must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to receive for the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil; in order to which there must be a resurrection of them; to which add, the account the Scripture gives of the punishment of the wicked in hell, which supposes the resurrection of the body, and in which the body and soul will be both destroyed. Indeed there will be a difference between the resurrection of the just and of the unjust, both in the time of their rising, the dead in Christ will rise first at the beginning of the thousand years, the wicked not until they are ended; and in the means and manner of their rising; they will be both raised by Christ, but the one by virtue of union to him, the other merely by his power; the just will rise in bodies not only immortal, and incorruptible, but powerful, spiritual, and glorious, even like to the glorious body of Christ; the wicked will rise with bodies immortal, but not free from sin, nor glorious: yea, their resurrection will differ in the end of it; the one will rise to everlasting life and glory, the other to everlasting shame and damnation.

{s} Maimon. in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1. Kimchi in Isa. xxvi 19. Aben Ezra & Saadiah Gaon in Dan. xii. 2. {t} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 7. 1. {u} Prefat. in Isa. fol. 3. 1. {w} De Resurrectione Mortuorum, l. 2. c. 8. {x} Vid. Pocock, Not. Miscel. in port. Mosis, p. 183. {y} Pirke Eliezer, c. 34. {z} Vid. Menassah ben Israel, ut supra.

Acts 24:16

Ver. 16. And herein do I exercise myself,.... Or because of this; on account of this doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which is a doctrine according to godliness, and promotes and engages to a holy life and conversation, as the contrary tends to encourage a dissolute and sinful manner of living; see 1Co 15:32 The apostle studied, and laboured, and bent himself, and employed his thought, care, and time,

to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man; that is, to discharge every duty which God requires, and to give to every man what is due to him; so as to please God, and not offend men, neither Jew nor Gentile, nor the church of God; and so as that conscience may be clear of guilt, and may not be defiled with sin, being purged and purified by the blood of Christ. By a "conscience void of offence", is meant a good conversation; which as it respects God, lies in a carefulness not to offend him, but to do his will; and as it respects men, a shunning what may give offence, or be a stumbling to them; and though this cannot be perfectly attained to in each of its branches, yet there is in every good man a concern to have such a conscience; and the consideration of the resurrection of the dead, the general judgment, and a future state, induce him to it.

Acts 24:17

Ver. 17. Now after many years,.... Absence from Jerusalem; it was now about five and twenty years since his conversion, and most of this time he spent among the Gentiles; three years after it he went up to Jerusalem, and fourteen years after that, **Ga 1:18** but it had now been some years since he had been there:

I came to bring alms to my nation; the collections which were made among the Gentile churches, particularly in Macedonia, for the poor saints at Jerusalem, Ro 15:25.

and offerings; either for the day of Pentecost, according to the usages of that feast, or the offerings on the account of the vow of the Nazarite, Ac 21:26. The Vulgate Latin version adds, "and vows"; unless the spiritual and evangelical sacrifices of prayer and praise can be thought to be meant, since the ceremonial law was now abrogated; though it is manifest the apostle did at some times, and in some cases, comply with the Jews in the observance of it, in order to gain some.

Acts 24:18

Ver. 18. Whereupon,.... Or "among which"; while the apostle was busy about the offerings of the Nazarites:

certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple; and therefore could not be said to profane it; this he observes in answer to the charge of his attempting to profane it, and acquaints the governor how that was; as that having joined himself to four men that had a vow upon them, and being in the temple purifying himself with them, certain Jews that came from Ephesus, in Asia, who knew him there, and had a pique against him, found him here; not profaning the temple, as they pretended, but acting according to the worship and service of it; and that,

neither with a multitude; for there were but four men with him;

nor with tumult; making any noise and riot, or stirring up persons to sedition and rebellion.

Acts 24:19

Ver. 19. Who ought to have been here before thee,.... For they were the only persons who saw him in the temple, and what he was doing; and who by an hideous outcry raised a mob upon him, who took things upon hearsay from them:

and object, if they had ought against me; either with respect to sedition, or blasphemy, error or heresy, if they were capable of proving anything.

Acts 24:20

Ver. 20. Or else let these same here say,.... They that are present, the high priest and the elders, who were come down to accuse him:

if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council; or "Jewish sanhedrim"; when he was brought before them by the chief captain, Ac 22:30 meaning, if any evil was then done by him, or any iniquity proved upon him, let it be declared; for as for his imprecation, or prophecy, that God would smite the high priest, he excused himself on that head, as not knowing it was the high priest.

Acts 24:21

Ver. 21. Except it be for this one voice,.... Sentence or expression following, which declares his faith about the resurrection; not that he thought or owned that this was an evil in him, but that it was the only one, that any of them, the Jews, a part among them, namely, the Sadducees, could condemn, or judge to be evil in him:

that I cried, standing among them; whereby they were thrown into confusion and division among themselves: and it was this,

touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day; see Ac 23:6.

Acts 24:22

Ver. 22. And when Felix heard these things,.... Which were said on both sides, both by plaintiff and defendant, the charges brought against Paul, and his answer to them, as a judge ought to do:

having more perfect knowledge of that way; the Christian religion, which the Jews called heresy, and Paul had embraced; the sense is, either that he had a more perfect knowledge of it than he had before; and by what Paul had said, he saw that it was not contrary to the law, nor had any tendency to promote sedition and tumult; or rather, when he should have more perfect knowledge of this new way, called the sect of the Nazarenes, he would determine this cause, and not before: wherefore

he deferred them; put them off to longer time, and would make no decision in favour of one side or the other:

and said, when Lysias the chief captain shall come from Jerusalem to Caesarea,

I will know the uttermost of your matters: as for the way, or religion of the Christians, he proposed doubtless to consult other persons; and as for the profanation of the temple, and especially about stirring up of sedition, he would inquire of Lysias about that; and when he had got full information of these particulars, then he promised them to bring things to an issue, and finish the cause.

Acts 24:23

Ver. 23. And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul,.... In custody, to watch and guard him, and look after him, that he went not away, since he was neither condemned nor acquitted; and therefore must be retained a prisoner, till one or other was done:

and to let him have liberty; not to go where he pleased, or out of the place of confinement, for then there would have been no need of the after direction, not to prohibit his friends from coming to him; but to free him from his bonds and close confinement; which was done, partly on account of his being a Roman, and partly because he took him to be an innocent man, and it may be because he hoped to receive money from him:

that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him; but that they should have free access to him, and the liberty of conversation with him; which layouts granted show that he was inclined to the side of Paul, both through the defence that he had made for himself, and through the letter which Lysias sent him, as well as through the knowledge he had gained by long observation and experience, of the temper and disposition of the Jews, their priests and elders.

Acts 24:24

Ver. 24. And after certain days,.... Some days after this trial:

when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess; to Caesarea, having been to fetch her from some other place, or to meet her: this woman was the daughter of Herod Agrippa, who was eaten by worms, Ac 12:23 and sister to King Agrippa, mentioned in the next chapter; but though she was born of Jewish parents, and so a Jewess, as she is here called, yet her name was a Roman name, and is the diminutive of Drusus; the first of which name took it from killing Drausus, an enemy's general, and who was of the Livian family; and the name of the mother of Tiberius Caesar was Livia Drusilla; Caius Caligula, the Roman emperor, had also a sister whose name was Drusilla {a}; this name Herod took from the Romans, and gave to his daughter; though the masculine name is often to be met with in Jewish writings; we frequently read of yaowrd ybr, "Rabbi Drusai" {b}; Herod Agrippa {c} left three daughters, born to him of Cypris, Bernice, Mariamne, and Drusilla; and a son by the same, whose name was Agrippa; Agrippa when his father died was seventeen years of age, Bernice was sixteen, and was married to her uncle Herod; Mariamne and Drusilla were virgins, but were promised in marriage by their father; Mariamne to Julius Archelaus, son of Chelcias, and Drusilla to Epiphanes, the son of Antiochus, king of Comagene; but after Herod's death, he refused to marry her, being unwilling to embrace the Jewish religion and relinquish his own, though he had promised her father he would; wherefore her brother Agrippa married her to Azizus king of the Emesenes, who was willing to be circumcised; but this marriage was quickly dissolved; for Felix coming to the government of Judea, seeing Drusilla, was enamoured with her beauty; and by the means of one of his friends, one Simon a Jew, and a native of Cyprus, who pretended to be a magician, he enticed her from her husband, and prevailed upon her to marry him:

he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ; which he did, chiefly on account of his wife, who being brought up in the Jewish religion, had some notion of the Messiah the Jews expected, and could better understand what Paul talked of than he did; who at this time doubtless showed, that Christ was come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he; that he is truly God and man, that he died, and rose again from the dead on the third day, and that he has obtained salvation for sinners, and that whoever believes in him shall be saved; this was the faith in Christ Paul discoursed of, and Felix and his wife heard; but it does not appear that it was attended with the power of God, to the conversion of either of them; it seems to have been merely out of curiosity, and as a diversion to them, and to do his wife a pleasure, that he sent for Paul and heard him.

{a} Sueton. in Vita Tiberii, sect. 3, 4, & in Vita Caligulae, sect. 7. {b} Shemot Rabba, sect. 35. fol. 136. 4. & sect. 43. fol. 140. 4. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 14. 4. & 18. 2. Juchasin, fol. 88. 1. {c} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 11. sect. 6. Antiqu. l. 19. c. 9. sect. 1. l. 20, c. 6. sect. 1, 2.

Acts 24:25

Ver. 25. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,.... The apostle not only discoursed concerning the doctrine of faith in Christ, but insisted upon the duties of religion: and particularly he reasoned upon righteousness; not justifying righteousness, that is only the righteousness of Christ, and which rather belongs to the doctrine of faith in Christ; but the exercise of justice, or the doing of righteousness between man and man; which was agreeably to the light of nature, to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ, and is a virtue highly necessary in a judge, and was greatly wanting in Felix; who, as the historian says {d}, was guilty of much cruelty and injustice throughout this government and therefore very appropriately did the apostle fall on this subject: and he might also reason concerning the necessity of a righteousness, in order to justify before God, and to appear before him with acceptance, and to enter into heaven: he might show, that it was the loss of righteousness which was the reason of the first man being removed from his place and state of happiness, in which he was whilst innocent; and that to admit persons into heaven without a righteousness, is contrary to the pure and holy nature of God, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; and particularly would not be agreeable to his justice, which requires a perfect righteousness; yea, it would be uncomfortable to holy men themselves, to have ungodly and unrighteous persons with them in heaven: he might also reason upon the want of righteousness, which is in every man; how that the first man having lost his righteousness, all his posterity are destitute of one; and that they are not able to work out one acceptable to God, and which will justify in his sight; that the thing is impracticable and impossible, and that that which men call a righteousness is not one, at least is not a justifying one: he might insist upon the unprofitableness of a man's own works of righteousness for such a purpose, by observing the imperfection of them; and that justification by them is contrary to God's declared way of justifying sinners, is derogatory to his free grace, would make null and void the death of Christ, and encourage boasting in men; and all this he might reason about, in order to convince him of the necessity and suitableness of the righteousness of faith in Christ, he had before been discoursing of: and very pertinently in the next place did he insist on "temperance"; or "continence", and chastity; since Felix had enticed away another man's wife, and now lived in adultery with her: and who was now with him, whilst hearing this discourse; which concluded with an account of "judgment to come"; how that Jesus Christ is appointed the Judge of quick and dead, and that all must appear before him, stand at his bar, and be accountable to him for all their actions, and be judged by him, which will be done in the most righteous manner: he might argue this, not only from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, of which Drusilla might have some knowledge, such as Ps 96:13, but from reason, from the relation which men stand in to God, as his creatures, and therefore are accountable to him for their actions; and from the justice of God, which in many instances, in the present state of things, is not manifest: good men are afflicted and suffer much, and bad men flourish and enjoy great prosperity; wherefore there must be another state in which things will have another turn, and justice will take place: he might from hence conclude the certainty of a future judgment; and the universality of it, that it would reach to all men and things, and would proceed according to the strict rules of justice, and in the most awful manner; and that a true and just sentence would be pronounced and strictly executed: upon which account of things,

Felix trembled; his conscience was awakened, accused him of the injustice and incontinence he had been guilty of; and his mind was filled with horror, at the thought of the awful judgment he could not escape, which Paul had described unto him; nor could he bear him to discourse any longer on these subjects:

and answered, go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee; he signifying he was not at leisure now to hear him any longer; when he had a spare hour he would send for him, and hear him out; but this was only an excuse to get rid of him now, and lull his conscience asleep, and make it quiet and easy; which he was afraid would be more and more disturbed, should he suffer Paul to go on preaching in this manner: it is a saying of R. Judah {e},

"say not when I am at leisure I will learn, perhaps thou wilt never be at leisure."

{d} Tacit. Hist. l. 5. {e} Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 4.

Acts 24:26

Ver. 26. He hoped also that money would have been given him of Paul,.... For he observed from his own defence, that he came up to Jerusalem to bring alms and offerings; and he perceived by Tertullus's indictment, that he was at the head of a large body of men; that he was some considerable person, at least who was in great esteem among some sort of people, and whose life and liberty were valuable: and he might hope if Paul had not money of his own, yet his friends would supply him with a sufficiency to obtain his freedom; and it may be that it was with this view that he ordered that they should have free access to him and minister to him, that so he might have to give to him:

that he might loose him; from all confinement, and set him at entire liberty:

wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him; but not about religious matters, but about his civil affairs; suggesting he would release him for a sum of money, which the apostle did not listen to, being unwilling to encourage such evil practices, or to make use of unlawful means to free himself.

Acts 24:27

Ver. 27. But after two years,.... Not of Felix's government, for he had been judge many years in that nation, but of the apostle's confinement at Caesarea:

Porcius Festus came in Felix's room; was made governor of Judea by Nero in his stead; who having had many and loud complaints against him for malpractice, moved him: and so Josephus {f} says, that Festus succeeded Felix in the government of Judea, and calls him as here, Porcius Festus; in the Arabic version he is called Porcinius Festus, and in the Vulgate Latin version Portius Festus, but his name was not Portius, from "porta", a gate, but "Porcius", a porcis, from hogs; it was common with the Romans to take names from the brute creatures; so Suillius from swine, Caprarius and Caprilius from goats, Bubulcus from oxen, and Ovinius from sheep. The famous Cato was of the family of the Porcii; his name was M. Porcius Cato, and came from Tusculum, a place about twelve miles from Rome, where there is a mountain which still retains the name of Porcius; we read also of Porcius Licinius, a Latin poet, whose fragments are still extant; whether this man was of the same family is not certain, it is very likely he might: his surname Festus signifies joyful and cheerful, as one keeping a feast; this was a name common with the Romans, as Rufus Festus, Pompeius Festus, and others:

and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound; he had done many injuries to their persons and properties, he had greatly abused them, and incensed them against him; and now he was sent for to Rome, to answer for his maladministration; wherefore, to gratify the Jews, and to oblige them, in hopes that they would not follow him with charges and accusations, at least would mitigate them, and not bear hard upon him, he leaves Paul bound at Caesarea, when it was in his power to have loosed him, and who he knew was an innocent person: but this piece of policy did him no service, for the persons he had wronged, the chief of the Jews at Caesarea, went to Rome, and accused him to Caesar; and he was sent by his successor thither, to appear before Nero, and answer to the charges exhibited against him; and had it not been for his brother Pallas, who was in great authority at court, he had been severely punished {g}.

{f} De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 14. sect. 1. & Antiqu. l. 20. c. 7. sect. 9. {g} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 20. c. 7. sect. 9.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 25:1

Ver. 1. Now when Festus was come into the province,.... Of Judea, which was a Roman province, over which he was made governor by Nero, the Roman emperor, in the room of Felix; he now being landed in some part of the province, namely, at Caesarea, and so might be said to have entered upon the government of it, as the phrase will bear to be rendered;

after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem; he very likely came by sea from Italy to Judea, and landed at Caesarea; for though Joppa was the nearest port to Jerusalem, yet Caesarea was the safest, and most commodious port, being made so by Herod;
See Gill on "Ac 18:22", and besides, it seems to have been very much the residence of the kings and governors of Judea, Ac 12:19 here Festus stayed three days after his landing, to rest himself after the fatigue of the voyage, and then went up to Jerusalem, the metropolis of the province of Judea.

Acts 25:2

Ver. 2. Then the high priest,.... Ananias, as in Ac 23:2 the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin version, and all the Oriental versions, read, "the chief priests", the whole college of the priests:

and the chief of the Jews; their rulers and elders, the members of the Jewish sanhedrim;

informed him against Paul; they took the first opportunity of waiting upon him, when he was come to Jerusalem; hoping it might be a favourable one to them, since he was just entering upon his government, and might be willing to gratify the chief of the nation, and gain their affection and esteem, and since as yet he was not acquainted with their wicked dispositions and artifices; and brought a bill of information against Paul, and gave a large account of him, what a wicked man he was, and what evils he had committed; they laid many things to his charge, and very heavily accused him, and endeavoured to prepossess the governor, and prejudice him against him:

and besought him; that he would grant them the following request.

Acts 25:3

Ver. 3. And desired favour against him,.... Paul; they asked what would be a favour to them, and a prejudice to him: or "of him", that is, of Festus; they asked a favour of him, and desired it as such, as what would be gratefully accepted and acknowledged by them; which sense is confirmed by the Syriac version; the Arabic version renders it "to", or "upon them"; that is, they asked him to grant a favour to them, or bestow one on them, which is as follows:

that he would send for him to Jerusalem; that his case might be heard before him, and he might be tried and judged by him, as they pretended:

laying wait in the way to kill him; this was their design, though they concealed it, and pretended no other view than that justice might take place: their scheme was, that if they could have prevailed upon Festus to have sent for Paul to Jerusalem, from Caesarea, they would have provided men, perhaps the same forty and upwards as before, in Ac 23:12 to have laid in wait for him in the way as he came, and to have killed him: the whole of this shows the malice of these men, the badness of their cause, the indefatigableness and diligence to attain their end, the danger the apostle was in, and the care of Providence over

him.

Acts 25:4

Ver. 4. But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea,.... Or that he was kept there, and was in proper custody, under the care of a centurion, and should continue there; nor was there any reason why he should be removed, especially since he should return thither speedily, as he adds:

and that he himself would depart shortly thither; the answer was a very wise and prudent one, and the reasons given were just and strong; as that Paul had been sent to Caesarea, was left bound by his predecessor there; there he found him, and there he was under a proper guard, and there it was right for him to continue; and besides, he himself should make no stay in Jerusalem, but should depart for Caesarea in a few days, and therefore it was very improper to send for Paul thither.

Acts 25:5

Ver. 5. Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able,.... Who are at leisure, can spare time, and to whom it will be convenient, without interrupting other business, to take such a journey; and who are able to bear the expenses of it, without hurting their families, and whose health and age will admit of it; and above all, who are masters of this affair, and are capable of forming charges, and of supporting them with proper proofs and evidences: let such

go down with me; from Jerusalem to Caesarea: and accuse this man: in proper form, according to the rules of law, of what he is guilty, and can be proved upon him:

if there is any wickedness in him; or committed by him, anything that is absurd and unreasonable, notoriously flagitious and criminal; that is, contrary to the rules of reason, the common sense of mankind, and the laws of God and men; and especially of the Roman empire, or that is blasphemous or seditious.

Acts 25:6

Ver. 6. And when he had tarried among them more than ten days,.... The

Alexandrian copy, and three of Beza's copies, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "no more than eight or ten days"; and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions leave out the phrase "no more", and read "when he had stayed there", as the former; that is, at Jerusalem; or "when he had remained among them", as the latter; the Jews, chief priests, and others, "eight or ten days"; the historian, not being certain to a day, expresses himself in this manner:

he went down to Caesarea; from whence he came, and where Paul was:

and the next day sitting in the judgment seat; the day after he was come to Caesarea, he sat upon the bench in the court of judicature, to try causes, and particularly the apostle's, which he was very desirous of knowing, for which reason he so soon took the bench: and

commanded Paul to be brought; from the place where he was kept a prisoner, to the judgment hall where Festus was.

Acts 25:7

Ver. 7. And when he was come,.... Into court:

the Jews which came down from Jerusalem; along with Festus, perhaps the high priest with the elders, and Tertullus the orator, as before:

stood round about; either the Apostle Paul, or the judgment seat; the witnesses and accusers were to stand, as well as the person accused; See Gill on "Mr 14:57".

And laid many and grievous complaints against Paul; which they could not prove; for his moral conversation, both before and after conversion, was very strict and conformable to the laws of God and man; and yet as pure and inoffensive as he was, he was not exempt from the calumnies of men; and these many and very grievous; but it was his happiness, and to his honour through the grace of God, that his enemies could not make good anyone thing against him.

Acts 25:8

Ver. 8. While he answered for himself,.... As he was allowed by the Roman laws to do, he pleaded his own cause, and showed the falsehood of the charges exhibited against him; by observing, that as the crimes alleged against him were reducible to three heads, neither of them were just and true:

neither against the law of the Jews; the law of Moses, whether moral, ceremonial, or judicial; not the moral law, that he was a strict observer of, both before and since his conversion; nor the ceremonial law, for though it was abolished, and he knew it was, yet for peace sake, and in condescension to the weakness of some, and in order to gain others, he submitted to it, and was performing a branch of it, when he was seized in the temple; nor the judicial law, which concerned the Jews as Jews, and their civil affairs: neither against the temple; at Jerusalem, the profanation of which he was charged with, by bringing a Gentile into it; which was a falsehood, at least a mistake:

nor yet against Caesar, have I offended at all; for he was charged with sedition, Ac 24:5. Caesar was a common name to the Roman emperors, as Pharaoh was to the kings of Egypt; and which they took from Julius Caesar the first of them, who was succeeded by Augustus Caesar, under whom Christ was born; and he by Tiberius, under whom he suffered; the fourth was Caius Caligula; the fifth was Claudius, mentioned in Ac 11:28 and the present Caesar, to whom Paul now appealed, was Nero; and though succeeding emperors bore this name, it was also given to the second in the empire, or the presumptive heir to it: authors are divided about the original of Caesar, the surname of Julius; some say he had it from the colour of his eyes, which were "Caesii", grey; others from "Caesaries", his fine head of hair; others from his killing of an elephant, which, in the language of the Moors, is called "Caesar": the more common opinion is, that he took his name from his mother's womb, being "Caeso", cut up at his birth, to make way for his passage into the world; in which manner also our King Edward the Sixth came into the world.

Acts 25:9

Ver. 9. But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure,.... As did his predecessor Felix, Ac 24:27 he being just entered upon his new government, and having met with some caresses and civilities from the Jews at Jerusalem, by whom he had been much pressed and urged about the affair of the apostle:

answered Paul, and said, wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? meaning by the Jewish sanhedrim, he Festus being present: this was what the Jews had requested of him when he was at Jerusalem, that he would send for Paul thither, and there let him be judged, and which request he had denied; but having been solicited and importuned by the Jews, perhaps as, they came down together, he was inclined to gratify them, and to admit of it that he should be tried at Jerusalem, before the sanhedrim, he being present; and yet he was unwilling to do this without the prisoner's consent, he being a freeman of a Roman city; fearing he should be charged with delivering up a Roman into the hands of the Jews, which might be resented by the emperor and the Roman senate, should it come to their knowledge.

Acts 25:10

Ver. 10. Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat,.... Not that here was a seat in the judgment hall built by Herod for Caesar himself to sit in, should he ever come there, as some have thought; but the seat on which Festus sat is called Caesar's judgment seat, because it was in a Raman court of judicature, and because Festus, who filled it, represented Caesar himself:

where I ought to be judged: being a Roman citizen, and not at Jerusalem by the sanhedrim of the Jews, who had nothing to do with him:

to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest; it may be by his predecessor Felix, who had informed him of this case; or by Lysias's letter, which might come to his hands; or by the apostle's answer and vindication of himself, which he now made.

have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest; it may be by his predecessor Felix, who had informed him of this case; or by Lysias's letter, which might come to his hands; or by the apostle's answer and vindication of himself, which he now made.

Acts 25:11

Ver. 11. For if I be an offender,.... Against the law of Moses, or the temple at Jerusalem, or Caesar the Roman emperor:

or have committed anything worthy of death; by the laws of the Romans, as sedition, murder, &c.

I refuse not to die; signifying that he did not decline going to Jerusalem, either through any consciousness of guilt, or fear of death; for if anything could be proved against him, that was of a capital nature, he did not desire to escape death; he was ready to die for it; this was no subterfuge, or shift, to evade or defer justice:

but if there be none of these things; to be found, or proved, and made to appear:

whereof these accuse me; pointing to the Jews, that came down to be his accusers, and had laid many and grievous charges against him:

no man may deliver me unto them; not justly, or according to the Roman laws; suggesting that Festus himself could not do it legally;

I appeal unto Caesar; to this the apostle was induced, partly by the conduct of the governor, who seemed inclined to favour the Jews; and partly by the knowledge he might have of their intention to lie in wait for him, should he go up to Jerusalem; and chiefly by the vision he had had, which assured him that he must bear witness of Christ at Rome, Ac 23:11.

Acts 25:12

Ver. 12. Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council,.... Not with the Jewish sanhedrim, or any part of it that came down on this occasion; but with Roman counsellors, which he had to assist him in judgment, when any difficult matters were before him; the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, "with his counsellors"; and the Arabic reads in the singular number, "with his counsellor"; with these he advised, whether it was proper to admit of Paul's appeal, or not; and having had their opinion,

he answered, hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go: the question is put, partly for the more certain knowledge of the thing, that there might be no mistake in it; and partly on account of the Jews, that they might see that though he was disposed to do them a favour, it was not in his power, because of this appeal; and it may be with some resentment in himself, since it carried in it a sort of reflection upon him, as if he was incapable of issuing this affair, or would not be just and faithful in it.

Acts 25:13

Ver. 13. And after certain days,.... Several days after the above appeal made by Paul:

King Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus: this King Agrippa was the son of Herod Agrippa, who killed James the brother of John, and of whose death mention is made in Ac 12:1 the Jewish chronologer {h} calls him Agrippa the Second, the son of Agrippa the First, the fifth king of the family of Herod: he was not king of Judea, this was reduced again into a province by Claudius; and upon the death of his uncle Herod, king of Chalcis, he was by the said emperor made king of that place, who afterwards removed him from thence to a greater kingdom, and gave him the tetrarchy, which was Philip's, his great uncle's; namely, Batanea, Trachonitis, and Gaulanitis, to which he added the kingdom of Lysanias; (see **Lu 3:1**) and the province which Varus had; and to these Nero added four cities, with what belonged to them; in Peraea, Abila and Julias, and in Galilee, Tarichea and Tiberias {i}. The Jewish writers often make mention of him, calling him, as here, King Agrippa; See Gill on "Ac 26:3", and so does Josephus {k}. According to the above chronologer {l} he was had to Rome by Vespasian, when he went to be made Caesar; and was put to death by him, three years and a half before the destruction of the temple; though others say he lived some years after it: and some of the Jewish writers affirm, that in his days the temple was destroyed {m}. Agrippa, though he was a Jew, his name was a Roman name; Augustus Caesar had a relation of this name {n}, who had a son of the same name, and a daughter called Agrippina; and Herod the great being much obliged to the Romans, took the name from them, and gave it to one of his sons, the father of this king: the name originally was given to such persons, who at their birth came forth not with their heads first, as is the usual way of births, but with their feet first, and which is accounted a difficult birth; and "ab aegritudine", from the grief, trouble, and weariness of it, such are called Agrippas {o}. Bernice, who is said to be with King Agrippa, is not the name of a man, as some have supposed, because said to sit in the judgment hall with the king, but of a woman; so called, in the dialect of the Macedonians, for Pheronice, which signifies one that carries away the victory; and this same person is, in Suetonius {p}, called Queen Beronice, for whom Titus the emperor is said to have a very great love, and was near upon marrying her: she was not wife of Agrippa, as the Arabic version reads, but his sister; his father left besides him, three daughters, Bernice, Mariamne, and Drusilla, which last was the wife of Felix, Ac 24:24. Bernice was first married to her uncle Herod, king of Chalcis {q}, and after his death to Polemon, king of Cilicia, from whom she separated, and lived in too great familiarity with her brother Agrippa, as she had done before her second marriage, as was suspected {r}, to which incest Juvenal refers {s}; and with whom she now was, who came together to pay a visit to Festus, upon his coming to his government, and to congratulate him upon it.

{h} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 26. 1. {i} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 11. sect. 5. & c. 12. sect. 1. 8. & c. 13. sect. 2. {k} Antiqu. l. 20. c. 8. sect. 1. {l} Tzemach David, ib. col. 2. {m} Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Sota, c. 7. sect. 8. {n} Sueton. in Vita Augusti, c. 63, 64. {o} A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 16. c. 16. {p} In Vita Titi, c. 7. {q} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 19. c. 5. sect. 1. & c. 9. sect. 1. & de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 11. sect. 5, 6. {r} Antiqu. l. 20. c. 6. sect. 3. {s} Satyr 6.

Acts 25:14

Ver. 14. And when they had been there many days,.... Indulging themselves in pleasure, and spending their time in conversing on various subjects; and in order to carry on the conversation, and pass away time,

Festus declared Paul's case unto the king; in the following manner:

saying, there is a certain man left in bonds by Felix; the former governor in Caesarea, meaning Paul.

Acts 25:15

Ver. 15. About whom, when I was at Jerusalem,.... Quickly after he came to his government:

the chief priests and elders of the Jews informed me; brought an accusation to him, exhibited to him charges against him, presented to him a bill of information, setting forth various crimes he had been guilty of:

desiring to have judgment against him; not barely to have his cause tried, but to have a sentence of condemnation passed upon him; some copies read "condemnation", as the Alexandrian copy, and two of Beza's; and that punishment is designed, and even death itself, is manifest from the following words.

Acts 25:16

Ver. 16. To whom I answered,.... As follows:

it is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die; or to give any man to destruction; to pass sentence of death upon him, without hearing his cause, and purely at the request of another, and merely to gratify him:

before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face; so as to speak to his face, or before him, what they have to charge him with:

and have licence to answer for himself, concerning the crime laid against him; and this was also according to the law of the Jews, **Joh 7:51** though Festus, from such an application to him by the chief priests and elders, might conclude that their manner was different, he being ignorant of their laws and customs; but their prejudice to the apostle carried them to act such an illegal part, or at least to desire it might be acted: it is one of the Jewish canons, that it is unlawful for a judge to hear one of the contending parties, before the other is come in.

Acts 25:17

Ver. 17. Therefore when they were come hither,.... To Caesarea, namely the chief priests and elders of the Jews:

without any delay on the morrow, I sat on the judgment seat: that is, the next day after they came down, Festus went into the judgment hall, and took his place there, in order to hear this cause; which circumstance he mentions, to show how expeditious he was:

and I commanded the man to be brought forth: from his place of confinement, to the hall, to answer for himself.

Acts 25:18

Ver. 18. Against whom when the accusers stood up,.... As they were obliged to do, whilst they were exhibiting their charges, bearing their testimonies, and producing their proofs; Ac 25:7.

They brought none accusation of such things as I supposed: for by his being left in bonds, and by the information of the chief priests and elders, and their violence against him, he imagined he must be chargeable with some notorious capital crime.

Acts 25:19

Ver. 19. But had certain questions against him of their own superstition,.... Or religion; as about their law, which they said Paul had spoke against; and about their temple, which they pretended he had polluted; and about the resurrection of the dead, which he asserted, and some denied:

and of one Jesus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive; for it seems more was said on each side, than is recorded by Luke: the Jews objected to him among other things, his belief in Jesus of Nazareth, whom they traduced as an impostor and deceiver; Paul on the other hand argued, that he was the true Messiah; and in proof of it, affirmed that though they had put him to death, he was risen from the dead, and so was declared to be the Son of God with power: Festus, it is very likely, had never heard of Jesus before, and therefore speaks of him in this manner; or if he had, he had entertained a contemptible opinion of him, as well as of the Jewish religion; and which he expresses, even in the presence of the king, who had outwardly at least embraced it.

Acts 25:20

Ver. 20. And because I doubted of such manner of questions,.... Or was ignorant of them, and knew not what to make of them, or to say to them, and was at an entire loss what to do in this affair:

I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters; before the Jewish sanhedrim, who best understood them.

Acts 25:21

Ver. 21. But when Paul had appealed to be reserved,.... In custody at Caesarea:

unto the hearing of Augustus; to have his cause heard, tried, and judged of, by the Roman Emperor Nero, here called Augustus; for as it was usual for a Roman emperor to be called Caesar, from Julius Caesar, the first of them, so to be called Augustus, from Octavius Augustus, the second emperor: his original surname was Thurinus, but this being objected to him as a reproachful one, he afterwards took the name of Caesar, and then of Augustus; the one by the will of his great uncle, the other by the advice of Munatius Plancus; when some thought he ought to be called Romulus, as if he was the founder of the city, it prevailed that he should rather be called Augustus; not only this surname being new, but more grand, seeing religious places, and in which anything was consecrated by soothsaying, were called "Augusta, ab auctu, vel ab avium gestu, gustuve", according to Ennius {t}: in the Greek text the name is Sebastos, which signifies venerable and worshipful.

I commanded him to be kept; in Caesarea, by a centurion, and not sent to Jerusalem:

till I might send him to Caesar: till he could have an opportunity of sending him to Rome, to take his trial before the emperor.

{t} Suetonius in Vit. Octav. c. 7.

Acts 25:22

Ver. 22. Then Agrippa said to Festus,.... After he had given him the above account:

I would also hear the man myself; Agrippa being a Jew by profession, and knowing more of these things than Festus did, and very likely had heard much concerning Jesus Christ; and if not of the apostle, yet however of the Christian religion; and therefore he was very desirous, not only out of curiosity to see the man, but to hear him; and get some further information and knowledge about the things in dispute, between the Jews and Christians, in which Festus was very ready to gratify him:

tomorrow, said he, thou shall hear him: and sooner things could not well be prepared for an affair of this kind, and for so grand a meeting.

Acts 25:23

Ver. 23. And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come,.... Into the hall, or court of judicature:

and Bernice; his sister, along with him:

with great pomp: in rich dress, with the "regalia", or ensigns of royalty carried before them, and attended with a large train and retinue of servants:

and was entered into the place of hearing; the causes that were tried in court, that particular part of the hall, which was assigned for that purpose; for as there were the proper places for the judge and council, and for the plaintiffs and defendants, so for those that came to hear:

with the chief captains; or tribunes, who had the command of the Roman soldiers; and who had each of them a thousand men under them, as their title signifies:

and principal men of the city; that is, of Caesarea; the magistrates, and chief inhabitants of the place:

at Festus's commandment Paul was brought forth; and became a spectacle to a vast number of men, as he himself says; and which in part fulfilled what Christ had foretold to his disciples, that they should be brought before kings and governors for his sake; see **1Co 4:9**.

Acts 25:24

Ver. 24. And Festus said, King Agrippa,.... He addressed himself to him in the first place, as being the principal person, and of great dignity, as well as knowledge:

and all men which are here present with us; the chief captains, and principal inhabitants of the city:

ye see this man the prisoner at the bar, meaning Paul:

about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me: applied unto him, interceded with him, and very importunately pressed and desired him to give judgment against him:

both at Jerusalem and also here; at Caesarea, whither they came from Jerusalem to accuse him:

crying: in a very noisy and clamorous way:

that he ought not to live any longer; as they did before Lysias the chief captain, Ac 22:22 and so in the hearing of Festus; for it was his death they sought, and nothing else would satisfy them.

Acts 25:25

Ver. 25. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death,.... Which was a public testimony of the apostle's innocence, to the great mortification of his enemies, some of whom might be present; a like testimony was given of him by Lysias, Ac 23:29.

And that he himself hath appealed unto Augustus; the Emperor Nero; see Ac 25:21.

I have determined to send him; having had the opinion of his council upon it.

Acts 25:26

Ver. 26. Of whom I have no certain thing,.... No certain crime, charge, or accusation; nothing of any moment or consequence, no particular thing, nothing but a heap of confused notions, of I know not who or what:

to write unto my lord; meaning the Roman emperor, under whom he served as governor of Judea:

wherefore I have brought him before you; the whole company then present:

and especially before thee, O King Agrippa; as being not only a man of eminence, dignity, and authority, but of knowledge in such matters, which the Jews accused Paul of; see Ac 26:2.

That after examination had; of Paul, and his case;

I might have somewhat to write; concerning him, and the charges exhibited against him to the emperor.

Acts 25:27

Ver. 27. For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner,.... A man bound as if he was a malefactor, and guilty of some heinous crimes, to Rome, to be tried before Caesar:

and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him; for which he is a prisoner, and for which he is sent to the emperor: it seemed to Festus an absurd thing, and what might be justly looked upon by his master, a foolish, silly, and stupid piece of conduct, and void of common sense and reason, mere madness and folly; to send him a prisoner, and not signify in his letter to him, what was laid to his charge; and yet this was so dark and obscure, that he could not tell what to make of it, nor what to write to his lord about it; and hoped therefore, upon this re-examination of Paul before Agrippa, he should come to a more certain knowledge of this affair, and be better furnished to give Nero an account of it, to whom the apostle had appealed.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 26:1

Ver. 1. Then Agrippa said unto Paul,.... After Festus had made the above speech to him, and to all present, and had introduced the affair of Paul, who now stood before them:

thou art permitted to speak for thyself; which a prisoner might not do, until he had leave; and this leave was granted by Festus the Roman governor, who was properly the judge, and not Agrippa, though the permission might be by both; and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "we have ordered", or "permitted thee", &c.

Then Paul stretched forth the hand; as orators used to do, when they were about to speak; or else to require silence; or it may be to show the freedom of his mind, and how ready he was to embrace the opportunity of pleading his own cause; being conscious to himself of his innocence, and relying on the ingenuity and integrity of his judge; and especially of the king, before whom he stood:

and answered for himself; or made an apology, or spoke in vindication of himself, in order to remove the charges brought against him.

Acts 26:2

Ver. 2. I think myself happy, King Agrippa,.... This was an handsome and artificial way of introducing his defense, and of gaining the affection and attention of the king, and yet was not a mere compliment; for it had been his unhappiness hitherto, that his case was not understood; neither Lysias the chief captain, nor the governors Felix and Festus, knew anything of the rites and customs of the Jews, and could not tell what to make of the questions of their law, of which Paul was accused: but it was otherwise with Agrippa, he was master of them, and this the apostle looked upon as a circumstance in his own favour:

because I shall answer for myself this day before thee; not before him as a judge, for Festus was judge, but in his presence; and he being versed in things of this kind, was capable of informing, counselling, directing, and assisting the judge, in what was proper to be done; wherefore it was an advantage to the apostle to plead his own cause, and vindicate himself before such a person from the charges exhibited against him:

touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews; such as violation of the law, profanation of the temple, contempt of the people of the Jews and their customs, and of blasphemy, and sedition; all which he was able to clear himself from, and doubted not but he should do it to the entire satisfaction of the king.

Acts 26:3

Ver. 3. Especially, because I know thee to be expert in all customs,.... Rites and ceremonies of the Jews, whether enjoined by the law of Moses, or by the elders, fathers, and wise men:

and questions which are among the Jews; concerning angels, spirits, and the resurrection of the dead; which were moved and agitated between the Sadducees and Pharisees; and a multitude of others, which were disputed between the schools of Hillell and Shammai, of which their Misna and Talmud are full, and with these Agrippa was well acquainted; and to their rites and customs he conformed, of which we have some instances recorded in their writings: when they went with their firstfruits to Jerusalem {w},

"a pipe sounded before them till they came to the mountain of the house, and when they came to the mountain of the house (the temple), even King Agrippa carried the basket upon his shoulder, and went in till he came to the court."

So concerning the reading of the law by a king, they give this following account {x}:

"a king stands and takes (the book of the law), and reads sitting; King Agrippa stood and took it, and read standing, and the wise men praised him; and when he came to that passage, De 17:15 "Thou mayest not set a stranger over thee", his eyes flowed with tears; they said unto him, fear not, Agrippa, thou art our brother."

Some of their writers say {y}, this was a piece of flattery in them: they also elsewhere commend him for his modesty and humility {z};

"according to the tradition of the doctors, when persons attending a funeral met a bride (with her retinue), the former gave way, and both to a king of Israel, when they met him; but they say concerning King Agrippa, that he met a bride, and gave way, and they praised him."

And whereas it was forbidden to eat on the eve of the passover, before the Minchah, though ever so little, that they might eat the unleavened bread with appetite {a}; it is observed, that even King Agrippa, who was used to eat at the ninth hour, that day did not eat till it was dark {b}: so that from hence it appears, that King Agrippa was famous for his exact knowledge and observance of the customs and manners of the Jews, and which was well known, and was by the apostle:

wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently; since he was charged with a breach of the laws and customs of the Jews; and his defence would proceed upon things which Agrippa was not altogether ignorant of.

{w} Misn. Biccurim, c. 3. sect. 4. {x} Misn. Sota, c. 7. sect. 8. {y} Maimon. in ib. & Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 221. {z} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 17. 1. {a} Maimon. Chametz Umetza, c. 6. sect. 12. {b} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 107. 2.

Acts 26:4

Ver. 4. My manner of life, from my youth,.... That is, his conduct and deportment, his behaviour among men, from the time that he was capable of performing religious exercises, and of knowing the difference between one sect and another, and of being observed and taken notice of by men:

which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem; for though he was born in Tarsus in Cilicia, he was very early brought, or sent by his parents to Jerusalem, where he had his education under Gamaliel; so that the first part of his life was spent in Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea, and among the Jews there; the more learned and knowing part of them, Gamaliel's pupils, and the wise men and their disciples: and his course of life must be well known to them, as he says,

this know all the Jews; that had any knowledge of him, and conversation with him.

Acts 26:5

Ver. 5. Which knew me from the beginning,.... From his youth, from his first coming to Jerusalem:

if they would testify; what they know, and speak out the truth of things, they must say,

that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee; there were three sects of religion among the Jews, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes; the first of these was the most exact, and came nearest to the truth of doctrine, and was the strictest as to outward holiness of life and conversation, and of this sect the apostle was; and according to it he lived, and that in such a manner, as not to be charged with any notorious crime; and indeed in his own, and very likely in the opinion of others, he was then blameless. See Gill on "Mt 3:7".

(Essenes: A Jewish sect, who, according to the description of Josephus, combine the ascetic virtues of the Pythagoreans and the Stoics with a spiritual knowledge of the divine law. It seems probable that the same name signifies "seer", or "the silent, the mysterious". As a sect the Essenes were distinguished by an aspiration after the ideal purity rather than by any special code of doctrines. There were isolated communities of the Essenes, which were regulated by strict rules, and analogous to those of the monastic institutions of a later date. All things were held in common, without distinction of property; and special provision was made for the relief of the poor. Self-denial, temperance and labour--especially agricultural--were the marks of the outward life of the Essenes; purity and divine communication the objects of aspiration. Slavery, war and commerce were alike forbidden. Their best known settlements were on the north west shore of the Dead Sea. J.B. Smith one volume Bible Dictionary.)

Acts 26:6

Ver. 6. And now I stand, and am judged,.... Before the Roman governor, and in the presence of Agrippa:

for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; either for the hope of righteousness, life, and salvation, by the Messiah; who was promised to the Jewish fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and others; see Ge 22:18 or for the hope of the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life; of which there are various testimonies in the writings of the Old Testament, committed to the people of the Jews. Job 19:26 and others; and both these senses may be very well joined together, for it was for asserting that the promised Messiah was come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he; that he was risen from the dead, and that all the dead will be raised by him; and that life and righteousness, salvation, and everlasting glory and happiness, are only by him; for asserting these things, I say, the apostle was now a prisoner, and stood at the bar of a Roman judge, being accused by the Jews.

Acts 26:7

Ver. 7. Unto which promise,.... Of the Messiah, and salvation by him; and of the resurrection of the dead and eternal glory, as following upon it:

our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night hope to come; and enjoy the Messiah, and all blessings along with him; and the happy state of the resurrection and eternal life: the people of Israel were distinguished into twelve tribes, according to the names of the twelve patriarchs, the sons of Jacob; and though ten of the tribes had been carried captive, and had not returned as tribes, yet there were many of the several tribes, who either were left in the land, or returned along with the two tribes, and were mixed with them: and this way of speaking here used by Paul, and also by James, **Jas 1:1** is justified by Jewish writers: the Misnic doctors say {c},

"the twelve tribes bring twelve heifers, and for idolatry they bring twelve heifers and twelve goats:"

compare with this **Ezr 6:17**, yea, they say {d}

""twelve tribes" are called, lhq, "a congregation", eleven tribes are not called a congregation."

This suggests a reason of the apostle's use of this phrase, for he here represents the Israelites as a worshipping assembly, serving God continually, night and day, as they were by their representatives, the priests and stationary men in the temple; and that with intenseness, ardour, and fervency, as the word rendered "instantly" signifies being in a longing and earnest expectation of the coming of the Messiah, and of his world to come, and of the resurrection of the dead, and a future state of happiness.

For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews: for preaching that the Messiah, the twelve tribes hope for, is already come and that there is salvation in him, and in no other, and that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both just and unjust; and that there is another world and state after this, in which men will be happy and miserable; and these were the charges and accusations, or the sum of what were exhibited against him.

{c} Misn. Horayot, c. 1. sect. 5. {d} T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 5. 2.

Acts 26:8

Ver. 8. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you,.... You Heathens and Sadducees; for the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was thought an incredible doctrine by the Heathens in general, and therefore was laughed at by the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers at Athens, when preached by the apostle there; and by a particular sect among the Jews, the Sadducees; and the apostle may be thought either to address himself to Festus, the Roman governor, and to the chief captains, who were present, and, being Heathens, disbelieved this doctrine; or else to King Agrippa, who might be a Sadducee, and to such of the

Sadducees as were in court, and expostulate with them, why it should be looked upon as a thing by no means to be credited,

that God should raise the dead; which may be understood both of the particular resurrection of Christ from the dead, which was not believed, neither by the Romans nor by the Jews, and neither by Pharisees nor Sadducees; or of the general resurrection of the dead, which was judged from the nature of things to be impracticable, and impossible by the latter, as well as by the Heathens: but since God is omniscient and omnipotent, and just and true, knows where every particle of a dead body lies, and can gather all together, and inspire with life; which he can as easily do, as to form all things out of nothing, as he did; and his justice and veracity seem to require, that the same bodies which have been partners with their souls in sinning, or in sufferings should share with them in woe or in happiness; it can neither be absurd, unreasonable, nor incredible, to suppose that God will raise them from the dead.

Acts 26:9

Ver. 9. I verily thought with myself,.... This seems to be a correction of himself, why he should wonder at their ignorance and unbelief, particularly with respect to Jesus being the Messiah, and his resurrection from the dead, and expostulate with them about it; when this was once his own case, it was the real sentiments of his mind, what in his conscience he believed to be right and just; namely,

that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth; to him himself, to his religion, to his Gospel, and ordinances, and people; by blaspheming his name, by denying him to be the Messiah, by condemning his religion as heresy, by disputing against his doctrines, and manner of worship, and by persecuting his followers.

Acts 26:10

Ver. 10. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem,.... The metropolis of Judea, where he had had his education, and was well known; here he consented to the death of Stephen, and held the clothes of the witnesses while they stoned him; and here he haled men and women out of their houses, and committed them to prison, and made havoc of the church of Christ, and destroyed the faith, and those that professed it, as much as in him lay.

And many of the saints I shut up in prison; at Jerusalem; see **Ac 8:3**.

having received authority from the chief priests; to take them up, and imprison them.

And when they were put to death; for it seems there were more than Stephen put to death, though we have no account of them:

I gave my voice against them; not that he sat in council, or was a member of the Jewish sanhedrim, and voted for the execution of the Christians, but he was pleased with the sentence they passed, and approved of it; or he joined the zealots, who, without any form of law, seized on the Christians, and put them to death wherever they found them; and this he assented to, and encouraged: some render the words, "I carried the sentence"; as the Vulgate Latin version; that is, the sentence of condemnation, which the Jewish sanhedrim passed upon the disciples and followers of Christ: this Saul took, and carried, it may be, both to the Roman governor, to be signed by him, and to the officers to put it in execution; so industrious and forward was he in persecuting the saints.

Acts 26:11

Ver. 11. And I punished them oft in every synagogue,.... In Jerusalem, where there were many; See Gill on "Ac 24:12"; by beating and scourging them there, as the manner was; see Mt 10:17.

and compelled them to blaspheme; the Lord Jesus Christ, both to deny him to be the Messiah, and to call him accursed; as the Jews and Heathens obliged some professors of Christianity to do, who were only nominal ones, and had not grace and strength to stand against their threatenings, and to endure their persecutions:

and being exceeding mad against them; full of malice, envy, and hatred:

I persecuted them even to strange cities; particularly Damascus; and of his journey thither, he gives an account in the following verse; or through the violence of his persecution he obliged them to fly to strange cities, where they were foreigners and strangers; though he himself might not follow them there, since we do not read of his going anywhere but to Damascus; whereas they that were scattered by the persecution, in which he was concerned, travelled as

far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, **Ac 9:19**. The phrase may be rendered, "even to cities without"; i.e. without the land of Israel: frequent mention is made in Jewish writings of such and such cities being
Ural huwx, "without the land".

Acts 26:12

Ver. 12. Whereupon as I went to Damascus,.... Being intent, upon the above said things, to punish the saints, compel them to blaspheme, imprison them, and even put them to death on account of these things; upon this errand and business he went to Damascus, the chief city of Syria, where he knew there were many that believed in Christ, who had removed from Jerusalem thither, on account of the persecution, or were settled there before:

with authority and commission from the chief priests; the Jewish sanhedrim, to bring those of them at Damascus bound to Jerusalem, in order to be punished, as in **Ac 9:2** and which the Ethiopic version adds here.

Acts 26:13

Ver. 13. At midday, O king,.... So in Ac 12:6. This circumstance is omitted in **Ac 9:3**. King Agrippa is called upon by the apostle, to excite his attention to what he was about to relate, it being very wonderful, and of great importance.

I saw in the way; that is, to Damascus, when near the city;

a light from heaven; which descended from thence:

above the brightness of the sun; it was a greater light than that, or otherwise it could not have been discerned at noon, or have had the effect it had upon Saul, and his company. This account of the greatness of the light, is not in the other places where this narrative is given:

shining round about me: so in **Ac 9:3**

and them which journeyed with me; this is not mentioned in the other accounts.

Acts 26:14

Ver. 14. And when we were all fallen to the earth,.... Saul, and the men that were with him, for fear of the divine Majesty, who by this extraordinary light was thought to be present: the other narratives only relate Saul's falling to the earth; how this is to be reconciled to their standing speechless, in **Ac 9:7**, See Gill on "Ac 9:7".

I heard a voice speaking unto me, &c. See Gill on "Ac 10:4".
See Gill on "Ac 10:5".

Acts 26:15

Ver. 15. And I said, who art thou, Lord? and he said,.... Or "the Lord said", as the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions read,

I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "Jesus of Nazareth"; See Gill on "Ac 9:5".

Acts 26:16

Ver. 16. But rise and stand upon thy feet,.... This, and what follows in this and the two next verses, are not in any of the former accounts; and these words are used not only because Saul was fallen to the earth, and are an encouragement to rise up, and stand corporeally, but to take heart, and be of good cheer; for though he had acted so vile and cruel a part by Christ, and his people, yet he had designs of grace, and good will to him; and this appearance was not for his destruction, but for his honour, comfort, and usefulness:

for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose; not to take vengeance for past offences, but for the ends hereafter mentioned: and this appearance of Christ was real, corporeal, and personal, and not imaginary, or merely visionary and intellectual; and it was to this sight of Christ he more than once refers, partly in proof of Christ's resurrection from the dead, and partly to demonstrate the truth of his apostleship, **1Co 9:1**.

to make thee a minister and a witness, both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; so that he was an apostle, not of men, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ, as he himself says, **Ga**

1:1. He was a minister, not of man's making, but of Christ's; and they are the only true ministers of the Gospel, who are made by Christ, who have their mission and commission, their qualifications, gifts, and abilities, their doctrine, work, and wages from him: and the apostle's work, as a minister, was to be a witness; it was to testify what he had seen of Christ corporeally; and what knowledge of his person, office, and grace was now communicated to him by the spirit of wisdom and revelation; and what should hereafter be made known to him, either mediately by Ananias, or immediately by Christ and his Spirit; for the apostle had after appearances, visions, and revelations; see Ac 22:17.

Acts 26:17

Ver. 17. Delivering thee from the people,.... That is, the people of the Jews, as they are distinguished from the Gentiles; and so the Syriac version, and two of Beza's copies, and two of Stephens's, read; for the Lord knew, that as soon as ever Saul was converted and professed his name, and preached his Gospel, the people of the Jews would immediately become his implacable enemies, and seek to destroy him; wherefore he promises him before hand deliverance, and security from them:

and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee; to both Jews and Gentiles; to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles; which method the apostle observed, and which course he steered, until the Jews put away the Gospel from them; and then he turned to the Gentiles, to whom he chiefly preached, as their apostle, and was saved from many dangers among them, as is here promised.

Acts 26:18

Ver. 18. To open their eyes,.... The eyes of their understanding, which were shut, and darkened, and blind: one copy reads, "the eyes of the blind"; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "the eyes of their heart"; and to have them opened, is to have them enlightened, to see their lost state and condition by nature, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the plague of their own hearts, the impurity of nature, the impotence of man to that which is spiritually good, the imperfection of obedience, and the insufficiency of a man's righteousness to justify him before God; and to see where help is laid, and where salvation is; to behold Christ as the only able, willing, complete, and suitable Saviour; to see that there is life and righteousness, peace, pardon, grace, and glory in him; and to have an insight into the doctrines of the Gospel, and a glimpse of the invisible things of another world. Now though this is all the work of the Spirit, by whom only the eyes of the understanding are enlightened; yet this is ascribed to the apostle, not as the efficient cause, but as the instrument and means through preaching of the Gospel, which the Spirit of God would, and did make use of:

and to turn them from darkness to light; or "that they might be turned", as the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions render it: by "darkness" is meant, the darkness of nature, the darkness of sin, of ignorance, and unbelief, in which all men by nature are; who are in the dark about, and are ignorant of God, and the perfections of his nature; and about sin, and the evil there is in it, and that comes by it; and the way of peace, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; and the work of the spirit in regeneration and sanctification upon the heart; and about the Scriptures of truth, and the doctrines of the Gospel, and what will be their state and portion in another world; they do not know where they are, what they are, nor where they are going: and in the effectual calling this darkness is in a great measure removed, and they are turned to light; to God, who is light itself, and to Christ, the light of the world, and to the light of the word, and to a participation of the light of grace here, in which they see light, and behold the above things, and of the light of glory hereafter. This is a phrase used by the Jews, at the time of the passover, when they praise the Lord, and give thanks unto him for the wonders he wrought for their fathers and for them, as that he had brought them out of bondage to liberty, and from sorrow to joy, and lwdg rwal hlpam, "from darkness to a great light" {e}. Conversion is the end of the Gospel ministry, and illumination is necessary to it; yea, it lies in a turn from darkness to light, as is here expressed: and this conversion is not a mere external one, or a reformation of manners; this is indeed sometimes called a conversion, and is a man's turning from the evil of his ways, from a vicious life and conversation, to a sober way of living, and is often brought about through the ministry of the word; but then this may be where true conversion is not, and where there is no special illumination of the Spirit, nor any true spiritual light; and there may be a turning again to the former course of life; besides, this external conversion, when it is right and genuine, is the fruit and effect of inward conversion, or true grace, and is at most but the evidence of it: nor is it a conversion to a doctrine in a professional way; men may be converted in this sense, and remain wicked; they may have the form, but not the power of godliness; know the doctrine and profess it, and yet be strangers to the experience of it: nor does it design a restoration after backslidings; which sometimes goes by the name of conversion, such as was Peter's after his fall; but the first work of conversion is here meant, which is internal, and is a turn of the hearts of men; and is not the work of man, but of

God, who has the hearts of all in his hands, and can turn them as he pleases; and is what man is passive in, he does not turn himself, but is turned by the Lord; though ministers may be, and are instruments in it. It follows,

and from the power of Satan unto God: this power of Satan regards not his power over the rest of the devils, whose prince and head he is; hence he is called the prince of devils, and the prince of the power of the air; but his power over the world of men, which he has by usurpation, and therefore is called the prince of the world; but not his power over the bodies of men, by possessing them, inflicting diseases, and death itself upon them, nor over their estates; all which is only by permission of God, whenever he exercises it; but over the souls of men, in whom he rules as in his own kingdom: he is the strong man armed, and the hearts of men are his palaces, which are guarded with devils and unclean lusts; when all the goods are kept in peace by him, there is no concern about sin, no inquiry after salvation, no dread of the curses of the law, nor fear of hell and damnation, but all in the utmost security: and he not only dwells in the hearts of unregenerate persons, but he works effectually there; by stirring up their corruptions, putting ill things into their minds, and instigating them against true spiritual and powerful religion, and the professors of it: he has power over the minds of them that believe not, to blind them, by keeping them in blindness, and increasing it; which he does by diverting their minds from hearing the Gospel; and whilst hearing it, by filling them with enmity against it. Moreover, they are led by him as captives at his will; they are in his power, as the bird is in the snare of the fowler, and as a prisoner in the hands of a jailer; and are entirely at his beck and command, and do his lusts, and obey his will: and this also may have a particular respect to the power and authority which he exercised over the Heathens, before the Gospel came among them; Satan usurped a power over the Gentile world, and took upon him to be the god of it; and for many hundred of years was worshipped in their idols; and he held them fast bound unto him in the fetters of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry; but now the Gospel was sent among them to free them from this power and tyranny of his; and it was made effectual to the turning of multitudes of them from him, and subjection to him, which is done in the effectual calling of every person; not that Satan then has no more power over them to tempt and distress them, but not to rule over them, and lead them about at pleasure, and much less to devour and destroy them: and then also are they turned to God, to have true knowledge of him, and an hearty desire after him, which they had not before; and to a love of him, whose hearts before were enmity to him; and to believe in him, and trust in him as the God of providence, and of grace; and to have communion with him; and to be subject to his government, and yield a cheerful obedience to him, both externally and internally.

That they may receive forgiveness of sins: as an act of God's free grace, through the blood of Christ, which was shed for it; and which free and full forgiveness of sins is published in the Gospel, that whoever believes in Christ, may by faith receive it. This is what every enlightened soul sees it needs, and is desirous of; it is the first thing it wants, and asks at the hands of God; and nothing can be more suitable to its case, and welcome to it; and this is the good news which is declared in the ministry of the Gospel: and it is had in a way of receiving; for it is not purchased with money, nor procured by the merits of men; but is a gift of God, which is received by the hand of faith into the conscience of the enlightened sinner; the consequences of which are peace, joy, and comfort.

And inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in one: by the "inheritance" is meant, either something enjoyed now, as God himself, who is the portion of his people, and the lot of their inheritance; or a part and interest in Christ, who is that good part and portion, and which shall never be taken away; and the blessings of grace in him, which, besides forgiveness of sins, are peace with God, a justifying righteousness, and adopting grace: or rather eternal glory and happiness hereafter is here designed, which is called an "inheritance" or "lot", in allusion to the land of Canaan, which was distributed by lot; not that heaven is a casual thing; but it signifies that every Israelite indeed will have their share and portion in it. There are many things which show an agreement between heaven, and the land of Canaan; that was a goodly land, and ready prepared for the Israelites; and so heaven is the better country, and the city and kingdom God has prepared for his people from the foundation of the world: a wilderness was passed through first, and many battles fought before it was possessed; the people of God pass through the wilderness of this world, and fight the good fight of faith, and then enter into rest: the Israelites were introduced into it, not by Moses, but by Joshua; and saints get to heaven, not by the works of the law, but by Christ the Saviour, another Jesus or Joshua: and lastly, Canaan was a place of rest; and so is heaven. Moreover, it may be so called, in allusion to inheritances among men, though it vastly exceeds all earthly ones, being incorruptible, undefiled, which fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens; yet it bears some likeness to them; it is what is bequeathed to the children of God by their heavenly Father, and comes to them through the death of Christ the testator, and is for ever: it is neither purchased nor acquired, but is freely given; belongs only to the children of God, and is their Father's free gift unto them, and is only enjoyed by such who are "sanctified"; and it lies among them, and will be jointly and equally possessed by them. The heirs of salvation are said to be sanctified in different senses; they are sanctified by God the Father in eternal election, being separated from others, and chosen through sanctification to it; and they are sanctified "in" and "by" the Lord Jesus Christ: they are sanctified in him representatively, he being the covenant head of his people, has all grace, and so all holiness in him for them, which is perfect and complete; and this is the source of all that holiness that is in them, and which they have communicated to them by virtue of their union to him; and also they are sanctified "in" him through the imputation of the holiness of his human nature to them, which is a branch of their justification before God; and they are sanctified by him meritoriously, or by his blood, through which their sins are expiated, and fully atoned for; and so in this sense they are sanctified by it: and they are sanctified internally by the Spirit of God, who in regeneration produces principles of grace and holiness in them, which were not there before; man was originally possessed of a perfect moral holiness, but through sin is become an unholy creature; and in the same state and condition are the children of God by nature, as others, and need the sanctifying influences of the divine Spirit to make them meet for the undefiled inheritance: and this inheritance these sanctified ones receive by faith now, as they do the forgiveness of their sins; that is, they now receive by faith the promise of the inheritance, and the earnest and pledge of it, and their right unto it, and claim upon it: for the phrase,

by faith that is in me, is not to be connected with the word "sanctified", but with the word "receive", in the preceding clause; and has respect to both benefits, which it receives from Christ, the object of it here expressed; for it is not any faith, but faith which is in Christ, by which these blessings of grace are received and enjoyed: and the whole of this shows the great ends and usefulness of the Gospel ministry.

{e} Haggada Shel Pesach, p. 23. Maimon. Hilchot Chametz Umetza, c. 8. sect. 5.

Acts 26:19

Ver. 19. Whereupon, O King Agrippa,.... Having been favoured with this illustrious appearance of the Lord and with this declaration and commission from him:

I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; to Christ himself, who appeared from heaven in so much light and glory, and spoke unto him, and appointed him what he should be, and do, and declared what use he should be of: he did not disbelieve what Christ said, nor was he disobedient to the orders he gave, but immediately set about the work he called him to, without consulting flesh and blood; see **Ga 1:16**.

Acts 26:20

Ver. 20. But showed first unto them of Damascus,.... The Jews at Damascus to whom the apostle first preached; see **Ac 9:20**.

and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea; observing the order of his mission, Ac 26:17 though it was not until after he had been in Arabia, and had returned to Damascus, that he went to Jerusalem, and preached there; see **Ga 1:17** compared with **Ac 9:28**.

and [then] to the Gentiles; as at Antioch in Pisidia, at Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra in Lycaonia; and at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea in Macedonia; and in many places in Greece and Asia, as at Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and others, as this history shows; and indeed he preached the Gospel from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum;

that they should repent; that is, that they should repent of their sins; of sin in general, as it is committed against God, is a transgression of his law, and as it is in itself exceeding sinful, and in its effects dreadful; and of particular sins, such as men have been more especially addicted to, and of which the Jews and Gentiles, the apostle was sent unto, and to whom he preached, had been guilty: as the former of their will worship, and following the commandments and traditions of men, thereby making void the law of God; of their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah; of their persecution of his apostles, ministers, and people; and of their trust in, and dependence upon, their own righteousness for justification: and the latter of their immoralities, superstition, and idolatry; and both not of the outward gross actions of life only, but of inward sins and lusts: and repentance of each of these lies in a different sentiment of them; in a detestation and abhorrence of them; in shame and confusion on account of them; in self-reflections upon them, and humiliation for them; in an ingenuous acknowledgment of them, and turning from them: and this is not a national repentance which the ministers of the Gospel are to show to men the necessity of; though this is not unworthy of them, when there is a call in Providence to it, and the state of things require it; much less a legal one, but an evangelical repentance; which has along with it faith in Christ Jesus, dealing with his blood and righteousness for the remission of their sins, and their justification before God; and which springs from, and is encouraged and heightened by, a sense of the love of God: and now this being a part of the Gospel ministry, does not suppose it to be in the power of men to repent of themselves, since no man, whilst he remains insensible of the evil nature of sin, and the hardness of his heart continues, which none but God can remove, can repent; and when he becomes truly sensible, he then prays to God to give him repentance, and to turn him: nor does it at all contradict its being a blessing of the covenant, a gift of Christ, and a grace of the Spirit of God; nor does it suggest, that the preaching of the word is sufficient of itself to produce it; the contrary of which the ministry of John the Baptist, of Christ, and of his apostles, declares; but the design of its being insisted on in the Gospel ministry, is to show that men are sinners, and in such a state and condition, that they are in need of repentance, and that without it they must perish; and the rather this is to be quietly inculcated, since true repentance is unto life, is the beginning and evidence of spiritual life, and issues in eternal life; and since there is a close connection between that and salvation, and that without it there is no salvation. It follows,

and turn to God; this is to be understood, not of the first work of conversion, which is God's work, and not man's act, and in which man is passive, and which is before repentance, whereas this follows upon it; though the ministers of the word have a concern with this; to bring about this is the design and use of their ministrations; their business is to show the nature of conversion, what it is, and wherein it lies; to rectify mistakes about it, and to observe the necessity of it: but here is designed a turning to God, in consequence of the grace of first conversion; by an acknowledgment and confession of sin to God, by an application to him for pardoning grace and mercy, by a trust and dependence on him for righteousness, life, and salvation, and by obedience to his commands and ordinances. It intends a turning of the Jews from their evil principles and practices, from the traditions of their elders to the law of God, the Gospel of Christ, and the ordinances of it, and of the Gentiles, from their idols to the worship of the true and living God:

and do works meet for repentance the same with "fruits meet for repentance", **Mt 3:8**. And such as are particularly mentioned in **2Co 7:11** they are they which are the reverse of the evil actions they have been guilty of, and which are properly good works. And they are they which are done according to the will of God declared in his word, this is a requisite of a good work; what is not according to the word of God is not a good work, nor can it be any evidence of repentance; and they are also such as spring from love to God, for if they are done through fear of punishment, or for sinister and selfish ends, they show repentance to be a mere legal one: and they are such as are done in faith, in the name and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God by him. All external good works are designed, which show that the inward repentance professed, and that the outward change made in religion and worship, are genuine and sincere: the doctrines of internal repentance and outward worship, and all good works, are parts of the Gospel ministry, and to be insisted on in their proper places.

Acts 26:21

Ver. 21. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple,.... He means the Asiatic Jews, who finding him in the temple, laid hold on him, and dragged him out of it: and, as he says, went about to kill me; for no other reason, but for preaching to the Gentiles, and for preaching the above doctrines to them: what he refers to is in
Ac 21:27.

Acts 26:22

Ver. 22. Having therefore obtained help of God,.... Both to preach the Gospel, and escape danger; for he had delivered him many a time both from Jews and Gentiles, according to his promise, Ac 26:17 and particularly from the Asiatic Jews, when they were about to kill him, by the means of Lysias the chief captain, who rescued him out of their hands; and also from the lying in wait of the Jews to take away his life, and the various methods they used both with Felix and Festus to get him into their power: but the Lord appeared for him, and saved him from all their pernicious designs against him; and therefore he could say as follows,

I continue unto this day: in the land of the living, though in bonds:

witnessing both to small and great; to kings and subjects, as now to Agrippa, Festus, the chief captains and principal inhabitants of Caesarea, and to the common people assembled; to high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, male and female, young and old; to persons of every state, age, and sex:

saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come. This he mentions in opposition to the charge against him, as that he spoke against the law of Moses, as well as against the temple, and the people of the Jews; whereas his doctrine was perfectly agreeable to the writings of Moses, and the prophets, concerning the Messiah, they speak of in many places, and the Jews expected. There is an entire harmony and agreement between the writings of Moses, and the prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New, in all the doctrines of the Gospel revelation; in the doctrine of a trinity of persons in the unity of the divine essence, and of the proper deity of each person; in the doctrines respecting the person, offices, and work of Christ; that he is the Son of God, God and man in one person, and the only Mediator between God and man; and that he is prophet, priest, and King; and that the great work he was appointed to, undertook, and came about, and has fulfilled, is the redemption of his people; and in the several doctrines of grace concerning the choice of men to salvation, the covenant made with Christ on account of them, their redemption, justification, and pardon, their repentance and good works, the resurrection of the dead, and a future state: the particular things instanced in, the apostle preached, and Moses and the prophets said should be, and in which they agreed, are as follow.

Acts 26:23

Ver. 23. That Christ should suffer,.... Great afflictions in soul and body, and death itself; this is recorded by Moses, **Ge 3:15** and is the sense of many of the types, as of the passover, brazen serpent, &c. and of all the sacrifices which from God were appointed by him, and is the constant account of all the prophets from the beginning to the end; see Ps 22:1 **Da 9:26**. The sufferer is Christ, or the Messiah, not the Father, nor the Spirit, but the Word, or Son of God, and not in his divine nature, which was incapable of suffering, but in his human nature; though sufferings may be ascribed to his whole person, both natures being united in him: and hence they became efficacious to answer the purposes for which they were endured; and which he endured, not for himself, nor for angels, but for chosen men, sinners, and ungodly persons; in order to make peace and reconciliation for them, procure the pardon of their sins, obtain eternal redemption for them, deliver them from all evil, and from all enemies, and bring them nigh to God: and what he suffered were no other than what had been foretold in the writings of the Old Testament, which all along represent the Messiah as a suffering one; and in particular that he should suffer in his character, be reproached, and accounted a worm, and no man, Isa 53:3 and in his soul and body, and be put to death and buried, as the above prophecies referred to show; the several circumstances leading on to, or attending his sufferings and death, are distinctly expressed; as the betraying him by one of his disciples, selling him for thirty pieces of silver, his being forsaken by all his disciples, his crucifixion between two thieves, the parting of his garments, giving him gall and vinegar to drink, and the piercing his side with a spear, Ps 41:9. And to this agreed the doctrine of the apostle, who taught that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ that was to come, and that he had suffered all that Moses and the prophets did say should come upon him: but these were not the present sentiments of the Jews, who expected the Messiah to be a temporal Prince and Saviour, and to live in great outward prosperity, and for ever.

And that he should be the first that should rise from the dead: by his own power, and to an immortal life, as Jesus did; and so is the firstborn from the dead, and the first fruits of them that slept: a type of this, in the deliverance of Isaac, is recorded by Moses in
Ge 22:12 compared with Heb 11:19 and the thing itself is foretold by many of the prophets, Ps 16:10.

and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles: in his own person to the people of the Jews, and by his apostles to the Gentiles. In the writings of Moses he is spoken of as the great prophet God would raise up in Israel, to whom they should hearken; and as the Shiloh to whom the gathering of the people should be, De 17:15 and that he should be a light to both Jews and Gentiles, through the ministration of the Gospel, is said by the prophets, **Isa 9:2** and these were the things which the apostle asserted in his ministry, in perfect agreement with those writings.

Acts 26:24

Ver. 24. And as he thus spake for himself,.... Asserting the integrity and innocence of his past life and conversation, in proof of which he appealed to the Jews themselves; setting forth the prejudices to the Christian religion he had been under; declaring the heavenly vision that had appeared to him, and the divine orders he had received; alleging, that in his ministry there was an entire harmony between him, and the writings of Moses, and the prophets, for which the Jews professed a veneration; as he was thus vindicating himself, ere he had well finished his apology,

Festus said with a loud voice; that all might hear, and being moved with resentment at what he had heard; and it may be, he was displeased with Paul that he took so much notice of Agrippa, and so often addressed him, and appealed to him, when he scarce ever turned to, or looked at him:

Paul, thou art beside thyself; not in thy senses, or right mind, to talk of such an appearance and vision, and especially of the resurrection of a person from the dead. This is no unusual thing for the ministers of the Gospel to be reckoned madmen, and the doctrines they preach madness and folly: our Lord himself was said to be beside himself, and to have a devil, and be mad; and so were his apostles, **Mr 3:21** and it is not to be wondered at that natural men should entertain such an opinion of them, since what they deliver is quite out of their sphere and reach: Festus added,

much learning doth make thee mad; the apostle was a man of much learning, both Jewish, Greek, and Roman; and Festus perceived him to be of great reading by his making mention of Moses, and the prophets, writings which he knew nothing at all of. And as this sometimes is the case, that much reading, and hard study, do cause men to be beside themselves, he thought it was Paul's case: so the philosopher {f} suggests, that men of great wit and learning, and who are closely engaged in study, whether in philosophy, or politics, or poetry, or in technical affairs, are inclined to be melancholy, and phrenetic.

{f} Aristotel. Problem. sect. 30.

Acts 26:25

Ver. 25. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus,.... That is, Paul said, as the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read: he replied to Festus, to whom he gives his title of honour, not out of fear, nor flattery, but according to custom; and though he used him in such a reproachful manner, as if he was not himself, which he denies; nor did what he had said show anything of that kind, but the reverse, to which he appeals;

but speak forth the words of truth and soberness; which are true in themselves, being perfectly agreeable to the Scriptures of truth; and are what Christ, who is truth itself, had spoken, and of which he is the subject; and which the spirit of truth leads into, and owns and blesses: the Gospel in general, and all the doctrines of it, are words of truth; they are true, in opposition to that which is false, there is nothing of falsehood in them, no lie is of the truth; and to that which is fictitious, as the counterfeit Gospel of false teachers, which looks like the Gospel, and has the appearance of truth, but in reality is not; and to that which is but shadow, the Gospel, and the truths of it, are solid and substantial ones; hence the law and truth are opposed to each other, **Joh 1:17** and there are particular doctrines of the Gospel, and such as the apostle had been speaking of, or referred unto, which are called truth, words of truth, and faithful sayings; as that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that he is God manifest in the flesh, or is God and man in one person; that he came into the world to save the chief of sinners; that he suffered, died, and rose again from the dead; that justification is by his righteousness; and that as he is the first that rose from the dead, others will rise also; or that there will be a resurrection of the dead by him; see **1Jo 2:21** **1Ti 1:15**. And these are "words of soberness" also; they are words of the highest wisdom, which contain the wisdom of God in a mystery, even hidden wisdom, the deep things of God, and such as could never have been found out by the wisdom of men; they are the means of bringing a man to himself, to his right mind, who before was not himself; of causing a man to think soberly of himself, and not more highly than he ought to think, even to think of himself, that he is the chief of sinners, and the least of saints; and of speaking soberly, wisely, and prudently; and of living soberly, righteously, and godly: they are doctrines, as delivered by the faithful ministers of them, which come from a sound and sober mind, and have a tendency to make wise and sober; and therefore should be spoken "forth", openly and boldly, freely and faithfully, constantly and continually, as they were by the apostle, whatever reproaches, calumnies, and reflections may be cast upon them for so doing, even though they may be called fools and madmen.

Acts 26:26

Ver. 26. For the king knoweth of these things,.... Something of them, of the sufferings and resurrection of the Messiah, and of his showing light to Jews and Gentiles, as they are spoken of by Moses and the prophets, whose writings Agrippa was conversant with, and of these things as fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; at least he had heard the report of them, how that they were said to be accomplished in him.

Before whom also I speak freely; because of the knowledge he had of these things:

for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; as that Moses and the prophets have foretold then, and that they have had their fulfilment in Jesus;

for this thing was not done in a corner: the ministry of Jesus was, public, his miracles were done openly, his suffering the death of the cross under Pontius Pilate was generally known, and his resurrection from the dead was a well attested fact, and the ministration of his Gospel to Jews and Gentiles was notorious. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions refer this to Paul's words and actions, that what he had said and done were not private but public, and of which Agrippa had had, by one means or another, a full account; but the other sense is best.

Acts 26:27

Ver. 27. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?.... What they have said concerning the person, office, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, and that what they have said is fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth?

I know that thou believest; that what the prophets said were true, and are accomplished.

Acts 26:28

Ver. 28. Then Agrippa said unto Paul,.... Either seriously or ironically; rather the former, arising from the convictions of his mind, which he could not stifle nor conceal:

almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian; to profess faith in Jesus as the Messiah, to embrace his doctrine, and submit to his ordinances, which is to be a Christian, at least externally: and when he says "almost", or "in a little", his meaning is, that within a little, or very near, he was of being persuaded to embrace Christianity; or in a little matter, and in some respects; or rather in a few words, and in a small space of time, Paul had strangely wrought upon him to incline to the Christian religion; though the first sense, that he was almost, or within a little of being a Christian, seems to be the best, as appears by the apostle's reply to it: what it is to be a real Christian, See Gill on "Ac 11:26". An almost Christian is one that has much light and knowledge, but no grace; he may know something of himself and of sin, of its being a violation of the law of God, and of the bad consequences of it, but has not true repentance for it; he may know much of Christ in a speculative way, concerning his person and offices, as the devils themselves do, and of the good things which come by him, as peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation; but has no application of these things to himself; he may have a large notional knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel, but has no experience of the power, sweetness, and comfort of them in his own soul; all his knowledge is unsanctified, and without practice: he is one that has a taste of divine things, but has not the truth of them; he may taste of the heavenly gift, of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come; yet it is but a taste, a superficial one, which he has; he does not savour and relish these things, nor is he nourished by them: he has a great deal of faith in the historical way, and sometimes a bold confidence and assurance of everlasting happiness; but has not faith of the right kind, which is spiritual and special, which is the faith of God's elect, the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit; by which the soul beholds the glory, fulness, and suitableness of Christ, under a sense of need, and goes forth to him, renouncing everything of self, and lays hold upon him, and trusts in him for salvation; and which works by love to Christ and his people, and has with it the fruits of righteousness: he may express a great deal of flashy affectation to the word, and the ministers of it, for a while, but has nothing solid and substantial in him; he may partake of the Holy Ghost, of his gifts largely, but not of special and internal grace; and indeed he can only be an almost Christian, that becomes one merely through the persuasion of men: it is one part of the Gospel ministry to persuade men, but this of itself is ineffectual; a real Christian is made so by the power of divine grace. Agrippa was only persuaded, and but almost persuaded by the apostle to be a Christian, but not by the Lord, nor altogether, who persuades Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem.

Acts 26:29

Ver. 29. And Paul said, I would to God,.... This prayer of the apostle's shows his affection for the souls of men, and his great desire for their conversion, and also his sense of the power and grace of God, as necessary to it:

that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am; that is, his wish was that not only Agrippa, but that all that were present, were not only within a little, or in some low degree, but entirely, in the highest and fullest sense, Christians, as he was; that they knew as much of Christ, and had as much faith in him, and love to him, as he had, and were as ready to serve and obey him: he does not wish that Agrippa and the rest that heard him were as he had been, a bigot for traditions and ceremonies, that trusted in his own righteousness, did many things contrary to the name of Jesus, was a blasphemer of him, a persecutor of his saints, and an injurious person; but as he now was, not meaning with respect to his civil circumstances, as a mean poor man, and a tent maker, or with respect to his single state of life, which he elsewhere advises to, **1Co 9:5** or with respect to his ministerial capacity, as an apostle of Christ, and a preacher of the Gospel; but as a Christian, and in a private capacity: his sense is, he wished that they were as he, regenerated by the Spirit of God, new creatures in Christ, called by the grace of God with an holy calling, believers in Christ, lovers of him, pardoned by his blood, justified by his righteousness, sanctified by his grace, children of God, and heirs of eternal life: and all this he wishes for of God, saying, "would to God", &c. knowing that the whole of this is not of men, but of God; all grace, and every blessing of it, which make or show a man to be a Christian indeed, are from him. And this wish is expressive of true grace, which desires the good of others, and also of a spirit truly generous, that is not selfish and monopolizing; and which is concerned for the glory of God, the interest of Christ, and the weakening of Satan's kingdom: and from the whole of this it appears, that a person may arrive to true satisfaction of his own state; and that it is an evidence of grace, when the heart is drawn out in desires, after the salvation of others; and that altogether Christians are the only desirable ones; and that to be made a real Christian is the work of God, and to be ascribed to him. This the apostle wished for, for Agrippa and all that heard him; as does every Gospel minister for their hearers, the hearing of the word being the ordinary means of believing; and the rather it is desired by them, because the condemnation of those that hear the word is otherwise thereby aggravated: the apostle adds,

except these bonds; which were both troublesome and reproachful: not but that he cheerfully endured them himself, and thought it the duty of Christians to bear them patiently, when called to it, but then they were not things to be desired and wished for; the exception is not only Christian like, but humane and genteel.

Acts 26:30

Ver. 30. And when he had thus spoken,.... These words are omitted in the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions:

the king rose up; from the judgment seat; that is, King Agrippa:

and the governor; the Roman governor, Festus:

and Bernice: the sister of King Agrippa:

and they that sat with them; either in council, or to hear; the chief captains, and principal inhabitants of Caesarea.

Acts 26:31

Ver. 31. And when they were gone aside,.... Into some apartment adjoining to the judgment hall:

they talked between themselves; that the common people might not hear their debates, and the result of them, and what were their sentiments concerning Paul and his case:

saying, this man doth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds; according to the Roman laws; for as yet there were no laws among the Romans against the Christians as such, or against their professing and preaching Christ.

Acts 26:32

Ver. 32. Then said Agrippa unto Festus,.... As declaring his sense, and by way of advice and counsel; but not as determining anything himself, for that lay in the breast of Festus, the Roman governor and judge:

this man might have been set at liberty; from his bonds and imprisonment; for ought that appears against him, or any law to the contrary:

if he had not appealed unto Caesar; wherefore an inferior judge could not release him; but so it was ordered in divine Providence, that he should appeal to Caesar, that he might go to Rome, and there bear a testimony for Christ; however, this declaration of Agrippa, and what he and the governor and the rest said among themselves, are a considerable proof of the innocence of the apostle.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Acts 27:1

Ver. 1. And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy,.... The chief city of which was Rome, the metropolis of the empire, where Caesar had his palace, to whom the apostle had appealed; and his voyage thither was determined by Festus, with the advice of Agrippa and his council, pursuant to the apostle's appeal, and which was founded on the will of God; all which concurred in this affair: it was the decree and will of God that the apostle should go to Rome, which was made known to him; and it was his resolution upon that, to go thither, wherefore he appealed to Caesar; and it was the determination of the Roman governor, not only as to his going there, but as to the time of it, which was now fixed: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read "he", instead of "we"; and the Ethiopic version reads expressly "Paul"; but the Greek copies read we: by whom are meant the apostle, and his companions; as Luke the writer of this history, and Aristarchus the Macedonian mentioned in the next verse, and Trophimus the Ephesian, who was afterwards left at Miletus sick, **2Ti 4:20** and who else cannot be said; these were to sail with him to Italy, not as prisoners, but as companions: this resolution being taken,

they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners; who very likely had also appealed to Caesar, or at least the governor thought fit to send them to Rome, to have their cases heard and determined there; and these by the order of Festus were delivered by the centurions, or jailers, in whose custody they had been,

unto one called Julius; in the Alexandrian copy of the third verse, he is called Julianus; he was either one of the Julian family, or rather was one that had been made free by some of that family, and so took the name:

a centurion of Augustus' band; of a Roman band of soldiers, which belonged to that legion which was called "Augusta"; for it seems there was a legion that bore that name, as Lipsius observes, and it may be from Augustus Caesar.

Acts 27:2

Ver. 2. And entering into a ship of Adramyttium,.... Which was in the port of Caesarea; for from thence they set sail to the place where this ship was bound, which very likely was the place here mentioned; there was a city of this name in Africa, and which was built upon the sea shore, and is sometimes called Hadrumentum {g}, as this is called Adramantos, in the Syriac version; and in the Alexandrian copy, and in another manuscript, "a ship of Adramyntum"; it is mentioned with Carthage, a city in Africa, by Pliny {h} and Solinus {i}; the one calls it Adrumetum, and the other Adrymeto; and the latter says, that it, as

well as Carthage, was built by the people of Tyre; and so Sallust {k} says, that the Phoenicians built Hippo, Adrumetum, Leptis, and other cities on the sea coast; and the name seems to be a Phoenician name,
twmrdx "Hadarmuth", which signifies "the court of death"; perhaps it might be so called, either from the badness of the air in which it was, or the dangerousness of its haven: Jerom calls it Hadrumetus, and says {l} it is a city in Byzacium, a country in Africa; he seems to design another place, the metropolis of the Byzacian country, the most fruitful of all the parts of Africa, and which in the Phoenician language was twamrdh "Hadarmeoth"; which signifies "the court of a hundred"; that is, it was a place so fruitful that it brought forth an hundred fold; and agreeably to which is what Pliny says {m}, they are called Libyphoenicians, who inhabit Byzacium, a country so named, in circuit two hundred and fifty miles, and of such great fruitfulness that the land returns to the husbandmen an hundred fold. The former of these is most likely to be the place here meant; and though we nowhere read of the apostle being here, nor of the Gospel being preached here in the early times of Christianity; yet in the "fourth" century there was a church in this place, and Philologus was bishop of it, who subscribed at a council held at Carthage in this century; and in the "fifth" century we read of several bishops of this place, as Aurelius, who was in the Chalcedon council, Flavianus in that at Ephesus, which was reckoned an infamous one, and Helladius, who was in the first Ephesine council, and Felix, who was banished by Gensericus {n}. There was another city of the same name in Aeolia, or Mysia {o}, and which was formerly called Pedasus, and since Landermiti, and was a seaport, and bids fair to be the place here intended; though since there was an island of Lycia called Adramitis {p}, now Audromety, and it was at Myra, a city of Lycia, where this ship stopped, Ac 27:5 and where the passengers changed their ship, this seems most likely to be designed:

we launched; in the said ship from Caesarea:

meaning to sail by the coast of Asia; the lesser Asia, along by Ephesus and Miletus, as they did; for in this last place, as before observed, Trophimus was left sick; the Alexandrian copy reads,
mellonti "that was about to sail"; that is, the ship of Adramyttium was about to sail, or just ready to sail by the coast of Asia, wherefore the company entered, and set forth in it on their voyage:

one Aristarchus a Macedonian, of Thessalonica, being with us; the same person that was with the apostle at Ephesus, and accompanied him into Asia, Ac 19:29 the same went through with him to Rome, and became his fellowlabourer, and fellow prisoner there, **Phm 1:24** **Col 4:10**.

{g} Mela, l. 1. c. 7. {h} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 34. {i} Polyhistor. c. 40. {k} Bellum Jugurth. p. 52. {l} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. B. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 4. {n} Magdeburg. Eccl. Hist. cent. 4. c. 9. p. 496, 497. cent. 5. c. 10. p. 648. {o} Plin. l. 5. c. 30. Ptolom. l. 5. c. 2. Mela. l. 1. c. 18. Pausan. Messenica sive l. 4. p. 268. Herodot. l. 7. c. 42. {p} Stephanus de urbibus.

Acts 27:3

Ver. 3. And the next day we touched at Sidon,.... This was a famous city in Phoenicia, upon the northern border of the land of Israel; it was a maritime place, and noted for trade and navigation; Mela {q} calls it rich Sidon, and the chief of the maritime cities; Jerom {r} calls it the ancient city Sidon; and Curtius says {s} it was renowned for the antiquity and fame of its founders; it is thought to be built by Sidon, the firstborn of Canaan, Ge 10:15 from whom it took its name; so Josephus {t} affirms, that Sidonius, as he calls him, built a city in Phoenicia after his own name, and it is called by the Greeks Sidon; some say it was built by Sidus the son of Aegyptus, and named after him: according to R. Benjamin {u} it was a day's journey from hence to Tyre; and with others {w}, it was not more than two hundred furlongs, about twelve or thirteen miles, which was another city of Phoenicia, as this was: Jerom's {x} account of Sidon is this,

"Sidon, a famous city of Phoenicia, formerly the border of the Canaanites, to the north, situated at the foot of Mount Libanus, and the artificer of glass:"

and so Pliny {y} calls it, it being famous for the making of glass; and Herodotus {z} speaks of it as a city of Phoenicia: Justin the historian says {a} it was built by the Tyrians, who called it by this name from the plenty of fish in it; for the Phoenicians call a fish "Sidon": and indeed Sidon or Tzidon seems to be derived from
dwu, "Tzud", which signifies "to fish"; and the place is to this day called Said or Salt; and so R. Benjamin calls it Tzaida {b}: to this city they came from Caesarea, the day following that they set out on, and here they stopped awhile:

and Julius courteously treated Paul; the centurion into whose hands the apostle was delivered, used him with great humanity and civility; he found grace in his sight, as Joseph did in the sight of Potiphar, and as he himself had done before with Lysias, Felix, Festus and Agrippa:

and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself; for as there were disciples at Tyre, Ac 21:3 so it seems there were at Sidon, both which cities were in Phoenicia, and are often mentioned together; and the apostle was allowed to go ashore, and visit his friends, and be refreshed by them, both in body and spirit, and be provided for by them with things convenient for his voyage. It is highly probable that there was here a Gospel church, but by whom planted cannot be said; our Lord himself was at the borders of this place, Mt 15:21 and the ministers of the word scattered at the death of Stephen, went as far as Phoenicia preaching the Gospel, Ac 11:19 and that there were brethren there, appears from note on: See Gill on "Ac 15:3", in which country Sidon was: in the "third" century there was a church in this place, and Zenobius was presbyter of it, who suffered martyrdom under Dioclesian {c}; in the "fourth" century there was a bishop of the church here, at the synod held at Nice; in the "fifth" century the bishop of the Sidonians, in the council of Chalcedon, declared his opinion with others against Dioscorus, whose name was Damianus; in the "sixth" century, mention is made of a bishop of Sidon, in the acts of the council held at Rome and Constantinople, and in the same century a synod met at Sidon, in the 20th year of Anastasius the emperor {d}: the account of the bishops of Sidon, as given by Reland {e}, is as follows; Theodorus bishop of Sidon subscribed in the first Nicene council, in the year 325; Paulus subscribed in the first council at Constantinople, in the year 381; Damianus was in the council held at Chalcedon, in the year 451; Megas is mentioned in the acts and epistles subjoined to the Chalcedon council; Andreas, bishop of this place, is taken notice of in a letter of John of Jerusalem.

{q} De orbis Situ, l. 1. c. 12. {r} Epitaph. Paulae, Tom. I. fol. 58. {s} Hist. l. 4. c. 1. {t} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 2. {u} Itinerar. p. 85. {w} Reland. Palestina Illustrata, l. 2. p. 433, 510. {x} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. I. {y} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19. & l. 36. c. 26. {z} Euterpe, c. 116. & Thalia, c. 136. {a} Hist. ex Trogo, l. 18. c. 3. {b} Itinerar. p. 34. {c} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 8. c. 13. {d} Magdeburg. Hist. Eccl. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 2. c. 10. p. 551. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 3. c. 3. p. 17. c. 9. p. 243. {e} Palestina Illustrata, l. 3. p. 1014.

Acts 27:4

Ver. 4. And when we had launched from thence,.... From Sidon:

we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary; that is, they sailed below the island of Cyprus; of which see **Ac 4:36** whereas if the wind had been right for them, they would have sailed above the island; leaving it on the right hand, in a straight course to Myra; but now they were obliged to go below it, leaving it on the left hand, going in part about it, through the seas of Cilicia and Pamphylia to Lycia, as follows.

Acts 27:5

Ver. 5. And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia,.... For these two seas joined, as Pliny says {f}, "mare Pamphylium Cilicio jungitur", the Pamphylian sea is joined to the Cilician; and in another place {g} he observes, that in the Pamphylian sea were islands of no note, and in the Cilician sea of the five chiefest was Cyprus (an island mentioned in the preceding verse), and a little after, the sea of Cilicia is distant from Anemurius fifty miles:

we came to Myra a city of Lycia; not Limyra in Lycia, though that lay by the sea side; for according both to Pliny {h} and Ptolomy {i}, Limyra and Myra were two distinct places in Lycia; which was a country, according to the latter, which had on the west and north Asia; (according to others, Caria on the west, and part of Lydia on the north;) on the east part of Pamphylia, and on the south the Lycian sea, or, as others, the Rhodian sea: much less was this the city of Smyrna, as some have said, which lay another way in Ionia, over against the Aegean sea; and still less Lystra, as the Alexandrian copy and Vulgate Latin version read, which was in Lycaonia, and in the continent many miles from the sea: Lycia was a country of the lesser Asia, and lay between Caria and Pamphylia, and so it is mentioned with Caria and Pamphylia, in:

"And to all the countries and to Sampsames, and the Lacedemonians, and to Delus, and Myndus, and Sicyon, and Caria, and Samos, and Pamphylia, and Lycia, and Halicarnassus, and Rhodus, and Aradus, and Cos, and Side, and Aradus, and Gortyna, and Cnidus, and Cyprus, and Cyrene." (1 Maccabees 15:23)

and the Carians, Pamphylians, and Lycians, are frequently put together in history; and the Lycians are said {k} to be originally of Crete, and to have their name from Lycus the son of Pandion; though some think that Lycia took its name "a luce", from light, and of this country Myra was the metropolis: Ptolomy calls it Myrra, as if it had the signification of "myrrhe"; and so Jerom or Origen {l} reads it here, and interprets it "bitter"; but Pliny and others call it

Myra, as here, and it signifies "ointment"; and here the apostle staying some time, though it cannot be said how long, no doubt opened the box of the precious ointment of the Gospel, and diffused the savour of it in this place; for in the beginning of the "fourth" century, in Constantine's time, we read of one Nicolaus, a famous man, bishop of Myra in Lycia, who was present at the council of Nice, and there showed the scars and marks upon him, because of his constant confession of Christ under Maximinus; in the "fifth" century there was a bishop of this place, whose name was Romanus, and was in two synods, in the infamous one at Ephesus, where he favoured Eutyches, and in that at Chalcedon; in the "sixth" century mention is made of a bishop of this church in the acts of the synod at Rome and Constantinople; in the "seventh" century, Polyeuctus, bishop of Myra, was in the sixth synod at Constantinople, and in this century Myra was the metropolitan church of Lycia; in the "eighth" century, Theodorus, bishop of it, was in the Nicene synod; and in the ninth century this place was taken by the Saracens {m}.

{f} Hist. l. 5. c. 27. {g} Ib. c. 31. {h} Ib. c. 27. {i} Geograph. l. 5. c. 3. {k} Herodotus, l. 1. c. 173. & l. 7. c. 92. Pausanias, l. 1. p. 33. & l. 7. p. 401. {l} De Hebraicis Nominibus, fol. 106. A. {m} Magdeburg. Eccl. Hist. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 552. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 588. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 112. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 9. c. 3. p. 13.

Acts 27:6

Ver. 6. And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria,.... Alexandria was the chief city in Egypt, built by Alexander the great, from whom it took its name; it was situated near the sea, and had a famous haven or port, which R. Benjamin {n} calls
hayrdnokla lv lmnh, "the port of Alexandria"; from hence ships were sent into several parts for trade and commerce, and one of these Julius found at Myra: the top sail was a distinguishing sign of a ship of Alexandria, for none might spread their top sails but ships of Alexandria {o}; these were not obliged to strike sail when they came into a port: the Jewish writers make frequent mention of
tyrdnokla hnypo, "a ship of Alexandria" {p}; by which they intend a ship of a large bulk, which had a cistern in it for fresh water for a long voyage; and by this they distinguish ships of bulk from those small ones, that were used about their coasts; a ship of Alexandria with them was a ship that went from the land of Israel to Alexandria; whereas here it seems to design one that belonged to Alexandria, and went from thence to other parts: and this ship was

sailing into Italy; and it was usual for ships to go from Alexandria to Puteoli in Italy, and from thence to Alexandria upon trade and business {q}

and he put us therein; the centurion removed Paul and his companions, and the rest of the prisoners, with whatsoever soldiers were under his care, out of the ship of Adramyttium, into the ship of Alexandria; that is, he ordered them to remove out of one into the other.

{n} Itinerar. p. 121. {o} Senec. Ep. 77. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 2. {p} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 35. 1. & Erubin, fol. 14. 2. & Gloss. in ib. Misn. Ohalot, c. 8. sect. 1. & Celim, c. 15. sect. 1. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {q} Senec. Ep. 77. Philo in Flaccum, p. 968, 969.

Acts 27:7

Ver. 7. And when we had sailed slowly many days,.... Because of contrary winds, as in Ac 27:4 or else for want of wind, as some think; the Syriac version renders it, "and because it sailed heavily"; that is, the ship being loaden with goods:

and scarce were come over against Cnidus; or "Gnidus", as it is sometimes called; it was a city and promontory in Doris, in the Chersonese or peninsula of Caria, famous for the marble statue of Venus made by Praxiteles {r}; it was over against the island of Crete, and is now called Capo Chio; it was the birthplace of Eudoxus, a famous philosopher, astrologer, geometrician, physician and lawgiver {s}; it is made mention of in:

"And to all the countries and to Sampsames, and the Lacedemonians, and to Delus, and Myndus, and Sicyon, and Caria, and Samos, and Pamphylia, and Lycia, and Halicarnassus, and Rhodus, and Aradus, and Cos, and Side, and Aradus, and Gortyna, and Cnidus, and Cyprus, and Cyrene." (1 Maccabees 15:23)

Jerom {t} says, it was a famous island over against Asia, joining to the province of Caria; some think it has its name from the fish "Gnidus", which is taken about this place, and which is of such an extraordinary nature, that when taken in the hand, it stings like a nettle; others {u} derive it from dge "hanad", or "gnad", which, in the Phoenician language signifies "to join"; because, as both Pausanias {w} and Strabo {x} say, it was joined by a bridge or causeway to the continent: it had two ports in it, as the last mentioned writer says, but into neither of them did the ship put, in which the apostle was; nor do we read of the Gospel being preached here, or of a church in it until the "sixth" century, when mention is made of a bishop of Gnidus in the acts of the synod at Rome and Constantinople {y}:

the wind not suffering us; to go right forward, as the Syriac version adds:

we sailed under Crete; or below it, as in Ac 27:4 This is now called Candy; See Gill on "Ac 2:11", over against Salmone; now called Capo Salamone: this, by Pliny {z}, Ptolomy {a}, and Mela {b}, is called Samonium or Sammonium, and by them said to be a promontory in the island of Crete, on the east side of it, over against the island of Rhodes; Strabo calls it Salmonion, an eastern promontory of Crete; and Jerom a maritime city of the island of Crete.

{r} Plin. l. 5. c. 28. Ptolom. l. 5. c. 2. Mela, l. 1. c. 16. Pausanias, l. 1. p. 2. {s} Laert. de Vit. Philosoph. l. 8. p. 622. {t} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. A. {u} Hiller. Onomasticum, p. 790. {w} Eliac. 1. sive, l. 5. p. 335. {x} Geograph. l. 14. {y} Magdeburg. Hist. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. {z} Hist. l. 4. c. 12. {a} Geograph. l. 3. c. 17. {b} De orbis Situ, l. 2. c. 7.

Acts 27:8

Ver. 8. And hardly passing it,.... That is, Salmone, with great difficulty, because of the winds:

came unto a place which is called the Fair Havens; called by other writers Cale Acte, or the fair shore, and is placed by Ptolomy {c} in Eubaea, and by Herodotus {d} in Sicily; but by Stephanus {e} is said to be a city of the Cretians, and which agrees with this account;

nigh whereunto was the city of Lasae; there was a city in Crete called by Solinus {f} Lisson, and by Ptolomy {g} Lyssus, which he places on the south side of the island; and by Pliny {h} Lasos, which comes pretty near to this name, but then he places it in the midland part of Crete; who also makes mention of an island called Lasia over against Troezenium, and another that was one of the Cyclades; the Syriac version here read, "Lasia": Jerom {i} says, Lasea is a city on the shore of the island of Crete, near the place which is called the Fair Havens, as Luke himself explains it; for which some corruptly read "Thalassa"; as do the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; and the

Alexandrian copy "Alassa": Beza conjectures that it is the same with Eloea, which Pliny makes mention of in the above cited place, as a city in Crete.

{c} De ordis Situ. l. 3. c. 15. {d} L. 6. c. 22. {e} De urbibus. {f} Polyhist. c. 16. {g} Ib. l. 3. c. 17. {h} L. 4. c. 12. {i} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. D.

Acts 27:9

Ver. 9. Now when much time was spent,.... In sailing against the wind, or by staying at the Fair Havens; for so the Syriac version renders it, "where we stayed a long time"; and the Ethiopic version, "and there we remained many days": it follows,

and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past; the Syriac version reads, "the fast of the Jews"; this was the day of atonement, which was the grand fast of the Jews, on which day they afflicted their souls, Le 23:27 in memory of the worshipping of the golden calf; on that day they neither eat nor drink, nor do any work, neither do they wash, nor are they anointed, nor do they bind on their shoes, or make use of the marriage bed; nor do they read anything but sorrowful things, as the Lamentations of Jeremiah, until the setting of the sun, and the rising of the stars; and hence this day is called by them Mwu Mwy, "the day of fasting", and lwdgh Mwu, "the great fast, and the day of the fast of atonement, and the fast of the atonement" {k}: now this day was on the 10th of the month Tisri, which answers to the latter part of our September, and the former part of October; so that it was now Michaelmas time, when winter was coming on, and sailing began to be dangerous; about this time of the year the Pleiades set, which brings on tempestuous weather, and unfit for sailing:

Paul admonished them, or gave them some advice to continue where they were.

{k} Vid. Schindler. Lex. Pentaglott. p. 890. & Maimon. Shebitat Ashur, c. 1. sect. 1, 4, 5, 6. & Misa. Yoma, c. 8. sect. 1.

Acts 27:10

Ver. 10. And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive,.... Not only by the tempestuous weather which they had met with, and still continued, and which they must expect to have, if they continued on their voyage; but by a spirit of prophecy, which he was endued with, by which he foresaw, and so foretold, as follows;

that this voyage will be with hurt, and with much damage not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives; or of our persons, or bodies, that is, of the health of them; for certain it is that it was revealed to the apostle, that not one life should be lost; but yet through the shipwreck, what with the fright of it, and being in the water, much damage must accrue to their persons, as well as the ship and all its freight be lost.

Acts 27:11

Ver. 11. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship,.... Who were either one and the same person, or if two persons, the one was the owner, whose the ship was, and the other, he that was at the helm, and steered and directed it; or the one might be the captain, and the other the pilot. The kubernhthv, or "governor", as he is here called with the ancients, was he who sat on an eminence in the stern of the ship, at the helm, and had the direction of it; he gave the orders, which others executed: what qualified him for his post chiefly lay in three things; in the knowledge of the constellations, and winds, of the former that he might direct the course of the ship according to them, and by them foresee future tempests, and of the latter, that he might be acquainted with the several points, from whence they blew; also in the knowledge of ports, and places to put into, and of rocks and sands, that they might be escaped; likewise in the knowledge of the use of the helm, and sails {l}; for one part of his business, as {m} Seneca observes, was to give orders after this manner; so and so move the helm, so and so let down the sails, &c. in every ship there was a governor, and in larger ones sometimes there were two; {n} Aelianus says, the Carthaginians had always two governors in a ship: the other word, nauklhrov, is in the glossary rendered "navicularius", which signifies "the owner" of the ship; and so we render it; though perhaps he is the same with the "proreta", who governed the prow or head of the ship, and was the next in dignity to the governor, and a kind of a sub-governor; and his business was to observe tempests, to explore promontories, rocks and sands, and show them to the governor {o}; and so Isidore {p} says, the owner of the ship is called Naucleros, because the ship is in his lot, "cleros" signifying lot: and as these best understood naval affairs, Julius gave more heed to what they said, and rather believed them,

than those things which were spoken by Paul; by a spirit of prophecy, which he had no notion of; for though he treated him civilly as a man, he had no regard to him as a Christian, or as one endued with the Spirit of God, which he knew nothing of.

{l} Scheffer. de Militia Navali Veterum, l. 4. c. 6. p. 296, 297. {m} Ep. 95. {n} Var. Hist. l. 9. c. 40. {o} Scheffer. ib. p. 302, 303. {p} Originum, l. 19. c. 1. p. 162.

Acts 27:12

Ver. 12. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in,.... Which was called the "Fair Havens", Ac 27:8 which name it might have by an antiphrasis, it being just the reverse; it might be a good summer haven, but not be fit for winter: perhaps it might be an open road or bay, and having nothing to shelter from the boisterous waves, was a place very improper for a ship to be in, in stormy weather; for in open places, as bays and roads, the sea tumbles in very violently in bad weather: this was a haven fit for fair weather only, and therefore might be so called:

the more part advised to depart thence also; the major part of the ship's company were of the same opinion with the master and owner of it, and advised as well as they, to sail from the Fair Havens in quest of a better port; the Syriac version reads, "the most of ours", of the apostle's companions; so that they were against him, according to that version, which is not likely; however, the majority in the ship were for sailing:

if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter, which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west: this place is called in the Syriac version Phoenix; and Ptolomy {q} makes mention both of the city and haven of Phoenix, as on the south side of the island of Crete: and whereas it is here said to lie towards the south west and north west, this may be reconciled to that, as well as to itself; for the haven considered in general lay towards the south, but having its windings and turnings, with respect to them it lay towards both the south west and the north west, and so was a very commodious haven to winter in.

{q} Geograph, l. 3. c. 17.

Acts 27:13

Ver. 13. And when the south wind blew softly,.... Or moderately, which was a good wind for them:

supposing that they, had obtained their purpose; that things would succeed according to their wish, and favour their design:

loosing thence; from the Fair Havens; the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions render it, "loosing from Assos"; which could not be Assos of Troas, mentioned in Ac 20:13 which was many miles from hence; rather Asum, a town in Crete, of which Pliny {r} makes mention, though, according to him, it seems to be an inland town; wherefore it is best to take the word asson, to be an adverb, and render it "thence", as we do; or join it with the next word, and render it,

they came near, or they sailed close by Crete; along the shore, the wind favouring them, that they were in no danger of being dashed upon it, it being a soft gentle wind.

{r} Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 12.

Acts 27:14

Ver. 14. But not long after,.... They had not been long at sea, but

there arose against it; the ship, or the island of Crete, or both:

a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon; in the Greek text it is a "Typhonic" wind, so called, not from the name of a country from whence it blew; rather from Typho, the same with Python, an Heathen deity, who is said to be drowned in the lake Serbonis, or in the river Orontes; about which places this sort of wind is observed to be frequent, and which may take its name from him, being supposed to be raised by him. This wind may very well be thought to be the same which is called Typhon, and is by writers {s} represented as a very tempestuous one, as a sort of whirlwind or hurricane, a violent storm, though without thunder and lightning; and Pliny {t} calls it the chief plague of sailors, it breaking their sails, and even their vessels to pieces: and this may still have its name from Typho, since the Egyptians used to call everything that is pernicious and hurtful by this name; moreover, this wind is also called "Euroclydon". The Alexandrian copy reads, "Euracylon", and so the Vulgate Latin version seems to have read, rendering it "Euro-aquilo, the north east wind". The Ethiopic version renders it, the "north wind"; but according to Aristotle {u}, and Pliny {w} the wind Typhon never blew in the northern parts; though some think that wind is not meant here, since the Typhon is a sudden storm of wind, and soon over; whereas this storm of wind was a settled and lasting one, it continued many days; and that it is only called Typhonic, because it bore some likeness to it, being very blustering and tempestuous: it seems by its name to be an easterly wind, which blew very violently, ploughed the sea, and lifted up its waves; hence the Arabic version renders it, "a mover" or "stirrer up of the waves"; which beat against the ship in a violent manner, and exposed it to great danger.

{s} Aristotel. Meteorolog. l. 3. c. 1. Apaleius de Mundo, p. 266. {t} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 48. {u} Ut supra. (Aristotel. Meteorolog. l. 3. c. 1.) {w} Ib. c. 49.

Acts 27:15

Ver. 15. And when the ship was caught,.... By the wind, snatched up by it, and forcibly carried away:

and could not bear up into the wind; and against it, or look it in the face, as the word signifies; could not ply to windward, the wind being so high and the sea so strong:

we let her drive; about the sea, at pleasure, it being in vain to attempt to get her forward against the wind, or to direct her course.

Acts 27:16

Ver. 16. And running under a certain island,.... Or below a certain island and hard by, it or under the sea shore of it, where the sea might be smoother, the wind not being there so strong:

which is called Clauda: by Ptolomy {x} it is called Claudus, and was near the island of Crete, and now called Gozo. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, and some copies, read "Cauda"; and there was an island near to Crete, which was called Gaudos {y}, and is thought to be the place here meant:

we had much work to come by the boat; which they had with them to go ashore in, or to betake themselves to in case of shipwreck; and which in this storm was in danger of being dashed to pieces against the ship, or lost; and it was with some difficulty that they came at it, and took it up into the ship.

{x} Geograph. l. 3. c. 17. {y} Mela, l. 2. c. 7. Plin. l. 4. c. 12.

Acts 27:17

Ver. 17. Which when they had taken up,.... When they had got the boat into the ship:

they used helps; the mariners made use of other persons, called in the assistance of the soldiers, and passengers, and prisoners; or for the help of the ship, they made use of cords, chains, and such like things:

undergirding the ship: with cords and ropes, which they drew under the keel of the ship, and so bound both sides of the ship, that it might not split and fall to pieces; which may be what is now called "frapping", and is done by putting large ropes under the keel, and over the gunwale; and is used when a ship by labouring hard in the sea breaks the bolts in her sides, and this keeps her from parting. Horace {z} refers to this use of ropes in tempests, when he says, "Nonne vides ut--sine funibus vix durare carinae possint imperiosius Aequor?" do not you see that without ropes the keels can scarcely endure the more imperious sea? Isidorus {a} makes mention of several sorts of ropes made use of in storms; "spirae", he says, are ropes that are used in tempests, which the mariners after their manner call "curcubae; tormentum" is a long rope in ships, according to the same writer, which reaches from head to stern, by which they are bound faster together:

and fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands: which were on the African coast, here called "Syrtes"; either from the conflux of sand and slime, and such like things, which made them very dangerous for shipping, and being covered with water, could not be seen and guarded against, and especially in a storm; or from their drawing of vessels into them, which they retain, suck in, and swallow up; and such the mariners might know were not far off: there were two very remarkable ones on the coast of Africa, the one is called the greater "Syrtes", the other the lesser {b}; the greater was more to the south than the lesser, and also more to the east, and the lesser was to the west: of these "Syrtes", Jerom {c} says, they are sandy places in the great sea very terrible, and to be feared, because they use to draw all into them; they are near the Egyptian sea; the Lybian sea, which washes the African shore, is by

Seneca called from them the "Syrtic sea" {d}: wherefore,

they strake sail; let down their sails; so read some manuscripts in New College, Oxford; in the Greek text it is, "they let down the vessel"; not the boat they had taken in, of which we read after; nor an anchor, or anchors, which would have been improper in a storm; nor the mast, it can hardly be thought that should be the first thing they should cut down, when they did not cast out the tackling till the third day; the storm was vehement on the first, more vehement on the second, when they lightened the ship, and most vehement on the third, when they cast out the tackling; and as Scheffer {e} observes, the mast is never cut down before the loss of other things; wherefore this is to be understood of letting down the sail yard, and contracting the sails; the Syriac version renders it, "we let down the main sail"; or, "the sail", using the Greek word "Armenon", which signifies "a sail":

and so were driven; about in the sea, wheresoever the winds and waves carried them; or very likely the ship was driven before the wind under her bare poles.

{z} Carmin. l. 1. ode 14. {a} Originum, l. 19. c. 4. p. 163. {b} Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 4. Sallust. in Jugurtha Melam. l. 1. c. 7. {c} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. I. {d} De Militia Naval Veterum, l. 1. c. 4. p. 35. {e} Scheffer, ib. p. 297-300.

Acts 27:18

Ver. 18. And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest,.... Sometimes being lifted up as it were to the heavens, and then presently sinking down, as if they were going into the bottom of the sea; such a condition at sea is described to the life by the Psalmist, in Ps 107:25.

the next day they lightened the ship; of its burden, its lading, the goods and merchandise that were in it; as the mariners did in the ship in which Jonah was, **Jon 1:5** the Ethiopic version renders it, "they cast the goods into the sea"; the Arabic version, the "merchandise".

Acts 27:19

Ver. 19. And the third day,.... From the time this storm began, and this tempestuous weather held:

we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship; by which seems to be meant their naval stores and instruments, as sails, ropes, cables, anchors, &c. and yet we afterwards read of their anchors and main sail: it may be rendered, "the furniture of the ship"; and yet it cannot design the ship's provisions, at least all were not cast away; for afterwards mention is made of casting out the wheat into the sea: many versions render it, "the armament of the ship"; and the Ethiopic version adds, "and arms"; the soldiers' arms, and others which belonged to the ship, which were brought with them to defend themselves against an enemy: these, the historian says, "we cast out"; the Apostle Paul's company, Luke and others; but not without the leave and order of the centurion and governor of the ship: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "they cast out": which seems most probable.

Acts 27:20

Ver. 20. And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared,.... The Syriac version adds, "nor moon"; which is an usual description of dark, cloudy, and tempestuous seasons; and which was not only uncomfortable to them, because they could not see these luminaries, and enjoy their beneficial light and influence; but because they had them not to guide and direct them; for the sun, moon, and stars, are useful to sailors, to steer their course by; especially they were to the ancients, before the invention and use of the loadstone; besides, by these they conjectured what weather it would be, as mariners still do; they observed the rising and setting of the sun, whether it shone with equal rays or not, and whether it was red and fiery, or pale; and the like observations they made upon the moon, both as to its colour and size; and especially the constellations and stars were of singular use unto them; and above all, the two Bears, the greater and the lesser; the Greeks observed the former, and the Phoenicians the latter; and who are said by Pliny to have first found out the use of the constellations in navigation; particularly this is ascribed to the famous philosopher Thales, who is said to be a Phoenician; and from other constellations, as Arcturus, Orion, Hyades, &c. they foresaw rains, storms, and tempests: and now what made the case of the apostle and the ship's company the more distressing was, that it was not only dark and cloudy, but very tempestuous, as follows;

and no small tempest lay on us; and all this continued many days: so Virgil {f} represents Aeneas and his company in a like condition at sea, as not able by the heavens to distinguish day from night, nor to direct their course, neither sun nor stars appearing, and so wandered about in the sea three days without the sun, and as many nights without a star; and Homer {g} describes Ulysses in a violent storm at sea, and for the space of nine days tossed about, when on the tenth day he got to land; and Sosia, in Terence {h}, is brought in saying, that he had been thirty days in a ship, expecting death every moment, so boisterous was the storm he was in; and so it was in this case, the winds blew hard upon them, and the rains fell with great violence, and everything was discouraging and distressing; insomuch that

all hope that we should be saved was then taken away; neither the master and owner of the ship, nor the mariners, nor the soldiers, nor prisoners, nor the apostle's companions, had any hope of being saved, but all expected to be lost. The apostle himself knew indeed, that though the ship would be lost, every man's life would be saved; and yet he could have no hope of this, as to the outward appearance of things, but on account of the revelation which the Lord had made to him, and he believed; otherwise, as to all human helps and means, there was no probability of an escape.

{f} Aeneid. l. 3. {g} Odyss. 9. {h} Hecyra, Act. 3. Scen. 4.

Acts 27:21

Ver. 21. But after long abstinence,.... From food, not for want of it, as appears from what follows, Ac 27:36 nor in a religious way, in order to obtain the favour of God; but either for want of appetite, and a nauseousness and loathing of food, through the tossing of the ship, fright at the storm, and fears of death; and chiefly for want of time, being employed for the security of themselves and the ship.

Paul stood forth in the midst of them; that all might hear him:

and said, sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me: it would have been better for them to have taken his advice, and stayed at the Fair Havens,

and not have loosed from Crete; or sailed from thence:

and to have gained this harm and loss; whereby they would have shunned the injuries of the weather, the storm and tempest which they had endured, to the prejudice of their health, and the terrifying of their minds, and have prevented the loss of the goods and merchandise of the ship, and its tackling, utensils, instruments, and arms; the former of these is expressed by "harm" or injury, and the latter by "loss". The apostle addresses them in a very courteous manner, and does not use sharp reproofs, severe language, or upbraid and insult them, only reminds them of the counsel he had given, which had it been taken, would have been to their advantage; and the rather he mentions this, that since what he had foretold was in part already come to pass, they might give the more heed to what he was about to say to them.

Acts 27:22

Ver. 22. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer,.... To take heart and courage, and not be cast down, though things had been thus with them, and they were now in a very melancholy plight and condition.

For there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship; the ship will be lost, but not one person in it: there will be a shipwreck, and so every man's life will be in danger, and yet not one will perish; and therefore there was reason to be of good cheer, since this was what they could not, and did not expect, all hope of being saved was gone: wherefore this, if they could but believe it, must be good news to all the company; and in order to engage them to believe it, the apostle adds,

Acts 27:23

Ver. 23. For there stood by me this night the angel of God,.... One of the ministering, spirits that stand before God, and who was sent by him to the apostle; and appeared to him, either in a vision by a dream, or rather when he was awake, and stood by him, as he was praying for deliverance from the storm; for it is most likely that the apostle should be engaged at such a time as this:

whose I am, and whom I serve: meaning not the angel, but God, whose the angel was; and his the apostle was, by electing, redeeming, and calling grace; God the Father had chosen him in his Son unto salvation; and Christ had redeemed him by his blood; and the Holy Spirit had called him by his grace; and he was not only the Lord's in common, as all other saints are, but he was his apostle and minister, and served him in the ministration of the Gospel of Christ, as well as from a principle of grace, obeyed the law of God, and was subject to the ordinances of Christ; in all which he served with great pleasure and cheerfulness, diligence, constancy, and faithfulness; from right principles, and with right views, being constrained by love, and influenced by the consideration of the relation he stood in to God. And all this was not peculiar to the apostle, but common to all the saints, excepting that of his being an apostle and minister of the Gospel: and the consideration of their relation to God has the same influence upon them it had upon him; they are not their own, nor are they the servants of men, nor do they belong to Satan, nor even to the ministering angels, but they are the Lord's; not merely by creation, as all men are, but in a way of special grace: they are Jehovah the Father's, to whom he bears a peculiar love and favour, and whom he has chosen in his Son for his peculiar people; and which is made manifest and known by drawing them with loving kindness to himself in the effectual calling; by his Gospel coming in power to them; by the blessings of the covenant of grace being bestowed on them; and by the spirit of adoption witnessing to them, that they are the children of God: they are Jehovah the Son's, they are his people made willing in the day of his power; they are his portion assigned him by his Father; they are his spouse and bride, whom he has betrothed to himself; they are his children, to whom he stands in the relation of the everlasting Father; and they are his sheep the Father has given him, and he has laid down his life for; all which appears by their having his Spirit, as a Spirit of regeneration and sanctification, without which none are openly and manifestatively his: and they are Jehovah the Spirit's; they are his regenerated and sanctified ones; they are his workmanship, having his good work of grace begun and carrying on in their souls; they are his temples in which he dwells; he has the possession of them, and will not leave them till he has brought them safe to glory: and under all this evidence, and especially through the testimony of the Spirit of God unto them, they call themselves the Lord's, as the apostle here does, and this engages them to serve him. The natural man has no desire, but an aversion to the service of God; converted men are willing to serve him, and delight to do it; they serve God in the best manner they can, in righteousness and true holiness, in an acceptable manner, with reverence and godly fear, and heartily and willingly; as appears by the pleasure they take in being called the servants of God, by disclaiming all other lords, by running all risks to serve the Lord, and by lamenting it, that they serve him no better.

Acts 27:24

Ver. 24. Saying, fear not, Paul,.... For though the apostle knew and believed he should go to Rome, and appear before Caesar, to whom he had appealed, and where he should bear a testimony for Christ; and though he had previous notice of this storm, and of the loss and damage which should be sustained, and which he expected; yet the flesh was weak, and he might be under some fears and misgivings of heart, for these sometimes attend the best of men.

Thou must be brought before Caesar; as has been declared, and therefore cannot be lost in this storm; it is the will and decree of God, which cannot be frustrated, it must be:

and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee; that is, God had determined to save the whole ship's company for his sake, and in answer to his prayers, which he had been putting up for them; the Lord had heard him, and granted his request, and would save them all on his account: so sometimes God saves a nation, a city, a body of men, even of ungodly men, for the sake of a few that fear his name, who are among them.

Acts 27:25

Ver. 25. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer,.... Which he repeats with more fervency and earnestness, there being so much reason for it:

for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me: true faith lays hold and, settles upon the word and promises of God; and the true believer, knowing his power and faithfulness, firmly persuaded that there shall be a performance of what is said by him, with respect to matter, manner, and circumstances. Whatever God has told his people of, or has promised unto them, shall be performed, whether with respect to things temporal; that they shall not want any good thing; that all their afflictions shall be for their good; that they shall be supported under them, and at last brought out of them: or whether with respect to spiritual things; whatever he has said concerning himself, that he will be their God, will continue to love them, will not leave them, nor forsake them, will guide and protect them, will supply all their need, and give them grace here, and glory hereafter; and whatever he has said concerning his Son, that he is their Saviour and Redeemer, that they are justified by his righteousness, pardoned through his blood, and shall be saved in him with an everlasting salvation; and whatever he has said concerning his Spirit, that he shall enlighten them more and more, carry on his good work in them, and finish it, shall be their comforter and their guide, shall strengthen them in their inward man, and work them up for that selfsame thing, eternal glory: and likewise, whatever he has said concerning the prosperity and happiness of the churches in the latter day; even all those glorious things

spoken of the city of God; and which relate both to the spiritual and personal reign of Christ. Faith takes all this at his word, and firmly believes it shall be as he has said: and it has good grounds and reasons for acting in this manner; from the veracity, faithfulness, and power of God, who has promised; and from the nature of the promises themselves, which are unconditional, immutable, all in Christ, and yea and amen in him, and not one of them has ever failed: and such a believing frame of soul greatly encourages cheerfulness of spirit, and produces it: a believer is cheerful himself, as he has reason to be; he is filled with joy and peace in believing, yea, with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory; and he makes all about him cheerful; he comforts others with the same comforts he has been comforted of God; and however, he exhorts, after his own example, to believe, and be of good cheer; see
2Ch 20:20.

Acts 27:26

Ver. 26. Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island. This circumstance is foretold, that when the whole affair should come to pass, it might be manifest that it was not a casual thing, a fortuitous event, a business of chance, but was predetermined by God, made known to the apostle, and predicted by him. This island was Melita; and the fulfilment of this part of the prediction is related in Ac 28:1.

Acts 27:27

Ver. 27. But when the fourteenth night was come,.... From their setting out from the Fair Havens in Crete, or from the beginning of the storm:

as they were driven up and down in Adria: or "in the Adriatic sea", as the Syriac version renders it: the Adriatic sea is now called by the Turks the gulf of Venice, and the straits of Venice, and sometimes the Venetian sea {i}; but formerly the Adriatic sea included more than the Venetian gulf; it took in the Ionian and Sicilian seas, and had its name from the city Adria, a colony of the Tuscans {k}. It is called by Ptolomy {l} Hadria, and reckoned a city of the Picenes. Pliny {m} places it near the river Padus, and calls it Atriae, a town of the Tuscans, which had a famous port, from whence the sea was before called Atriatic, which is now Adriatic. Adria, Justin {n} says, which is near to the Illyrian sea, and gave name to the Adriatic sea, is a Grecian city; and from this place the ancestors of Adrian, the Roman emperor, originally came; and all the sea between Illyricum and Italy is called the Adriatic; and from the beginning of it, which is at the city of Venice, unto Garganus, a mountain in Italy, and Dyrrachium, a city of Macedonia, it is 600 miles in length, and its largest breadth is 200, and the least 150, and the mouth of it 60. The other part of the sea, which washes Macedonia and Epirus, is called the Ionian sea. Moreover, this whole sea is called the superior sea, with respect to the Tyrrhenian, which dashes the other shore of Italy, and is called the inferior {o}. In this same sea, Josephus {p}, the historian, was shipwrecked as he was on a voyage to Rome: his account is this;

"I came to Rome, having gone through many dangers by sea, for our ship being sunk in the middle of Adria, being in number about six hundred, we swam all night; and about break of day, by the providence of God, a ship of Cyrene appeared to us, in which I, and some others, in all eighty, getting before the rest, were received into it, and so got safe to Dicearchia, which the Italians call Puteoli;"

a place afterwards mentioned, where the apostle also arrived. And the sea itself is often, by the poets {q} called Adria, as here, and is represented as a very troublesome sea; and here Paul, and the ship's company, were driven to and fro by the storm,

when about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country: about the middle of the night the mariners thought, by some observations they made, that they were nigh land; or, as it is in the Greek text, "that some country drew near to them"; which well agrees with the language and sense of seafaring persons, to whose sight the land seems to draw near them, or depart from them, when they draw near, or depart from that: the Ethiopic version is, "they thought they should have seen a city"; they had a notion of some city near; and the Arabic version, "they thought to know in what country, or place" they were; and therefore did as follows.

{i} Hyde not. in Peritzol. Itinera Mundi, p. 53, 54. {k} Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 28. {l} Geograph. l. 3. c. 1. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 3. c. 16. {n} Hist ex Trogo, l. 20. c. 1. {o} Pausanias, Eliac. 1. sive, l. 5. p. 337. {p} In Vita sua, sect. 3. p. 905. {q} Horat. Carnin. l. 1. ode 3. & l. 3. ode. 3. 9. Ovid. Trist, l. 1, eleg. 11.

Acts 27:28

Ver. 28. And sounded,.... Or let down their plummet, or sounding line; which was a line with a piece of lead at the end of it, which they let down into the water, and by that means found what depth it was, by which they could judge whether they were near land or not. The sounding line, with the ancients, was called by different names; sometimes bolis, and this is the name it has here, bolisantev, "they let down the bolis": and the bolis is, by some, described thus; it is a brazen or leaden vessel, with a chain, which mariners fill with grease, and let down into the sea, to try whether the places are rocky where a ship may stand, or sandy where the ship is in danger of being lost: it is also called "catapirates", which is thus described by Isidore; "catapirates" is a line with a piece of lead, by which the depth of the sea is tried. Herodotus makes mention of it under this name, and observes, that when persons are within a day's voyage of Egypt, if they let down the "catapirates", or sounding line, they will bring up clay, even when in eleven fathom deep {r} According to modern accounts, there are two kinds of lines, occasionally used in sounding the sea, the sounding line, and the deep sea line: the sounding line is the thickest and shortest, as not exceeding 20 fathoms in length, and is marked at two, three, and four fathoms with a piece of black leather between the strands, and at five with a piece of white leather: the sounding line may be used when the ship is under sail, which the deep sea line cannot. --The plummet is usually in form of a nine pin, and weighs 18 pounds; the end is frequently greased, to try whether the ground be sandy or rocky, &c. {s}. The deep sea line is used in deep water, and both lead and line are larger than the other; at the end of it is a piece of lead, called deep sea lead, has a hole at the bottom, in which is put a piece of "tallow", to bring up the colour of the sand at the bottom, to learn the differences of the ground, and know what coasts they are on.

And found it twenty fathoms; or "orgyas"; a fathom is a measure which contains six feet, and is the utmost extent of both arms, when stretched into a right line: the fathom, it seems, differs according to the different sorts of vessels; the fathom of a man of war is six feet, that of merchant ships five feet and a half, and that of fly boats and fishing vessels five feet: if the fathom here used was the first of these, the sounding was an hundred and twenty feet; the Ethiopic version renders it, "twenty statues of a man".

And when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms; or ninety feet; by which they imagined that they were near the continent, or some island: in some places, as the coasts of Virginia, for instance, by the use of the deep sea line, it is known how far it is from land; for as many fathoms of water as are found, it is reckoned so many leagues from land.

{r} Scheffer. de Militia Navali Veterum, l. 2. c. 5. p. 150. {s} Chambers's Cyclopaedia in the word "Sounding".

Acts 27:29

Ver. 29. Then fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks,.... Or rough places, as shelves, rocks, or sands, as they might well fear, when the water shallowed so fast, from 20 to 15 fathoms:

they cast four anchors out of the stern; or hinder part of the ship; the Ethiopic version calls it, "the head of the ship": and adds, "where the governor sat"; that is, at the helm, to steer it. Perhaps the reason of this version is, because it is not usual in modern navigation, and so, when this version was made, to cast out anchors from the stern, but from the prow or head of the ship; but it seems this was done by the ancients. According to Pliny, the Tyrrhenians first invented the anchor; though Pausanias ascribes the invention of it to Midas, the son of Gordius: the most ancient ones were made of stone, as was the anchor of the Argonautes; afterwards they were made of wood; and it is said, that the Japanese use wooden anchors now; and these were not pointed, but had great weights of lead, or baskets filled with stones at the head of them, to stop the ship with; last of all they were made of iron, but with a barb or tooth on one side only, not on both: the anchor with two teeth or barbs was found out by Eupalamius; or, as others say, by Anacharsis, the Scythian philosopher: it was usual to have more anchors than one in every ship, of which there was one which exceeded the rest, both in size and strength, and was called the "sacred" anchor; and which was only used in case of necessity {t}; and is what is now called "the sheet anchor". The modern anchor is a large strong piece of iron, crooked at one end, and formed into two barbs, resembling a hook, fastened at the other end by a cable. The parts of an anchor are,

1) the ring into which the cable is fastened;

2) the beam, or shank, which is the longest part of the anchor;

3) the arm, which is that which runs down into the ground; at the end of which is,

4) the flouke or fluke, by some called the palm, being that broad and picked part with its barbs like an arrowhead, which fastens into the ground;

5) the stock, a piece of wood, fastened to the beam near the ring, serving to guide the fluke, so that it may fall right, and fix in the ground.

There are three kinds of anchors commonly used, the kedger, the grapnel, and the stream anchor {u}; yea, I find that there are four kinds of anchors, the sheet anchor, best bower, small bower, and stream anchor: it seems the grapnel is chiefly for the long boat: here were four anchors, but very likely all of a sort, or, however, not diversified in the manner the modern ones are. These they cast out to stop the ship, and keep it steady, and that it might proceed no further, till they could learn whereabout they were:

and wished for the day; that by the light of it they might see whether they were near land, or in danger of rocks and shelves, as they imagined.

{t} Scheffer. de Militia Navali Veterum, l. 2. c. 5. p. 147, 148, 149. {u} Chambers's Cyclopaedia in the word "Anchor".

Acts 27:30

Ver. 30. And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship,.... To save their lives, concluding that it was in the utmost danger, and that it would quickly, notwithstanding the anchors cast out, break away, and fall upon the rocks, and split to pieces:

when they had let down the boat into the sea; which before they had taken up into the ship, Ac 27:16 and now they let it down, in order to get into it, and make their escape:

under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship; the foremost part of the ship, the prow of it; their pretence in attempting to get out of the ship, and into the boat, was, that whereas there were anchors cast out of the stern, or hinder part of the ship, so they would cast out others, from the fore part of it; and "stretch" them "out", as the word signifies, or carry them further out into the sea, for the security of the ship; and to do which, it was necessary to use the boat.

Acts 27:31

Ver. 31. Paul said to the centurion, and to the soldiers,.... He did not direct his speech to the governor and owner of the ship, who very likely, being sensible of the danger, were in the scheme with the mariners, and at the head of them; but to Julius the centurion, and the soldiers under him, who having no knowledge of maritime affairs, were not apprised of the danger, nor aware of the design of the shipmen; and besides, had now great dependence upon the assurance the apostle had given, that no life should be lost: to these he said,

except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved; pointing to the mariners who were about to let down the boat, in order to make their escape: the apostle had before declared, that there should be no loss of any man's life, and yet now affirms, that unless the mariners continued in the ship, the rest of the company could not be saved: this does not show that the decree concerning the salvation of them was a conditional one, and that the condition was, that the mariners should stay in the ship; but that their stay in the ship, who had skill to guide and direct it, as also the company when shipwrecked, were a means absolutely fixed in the decree, and therefore was absolutely necessary: God had determined to save the whole ship's crew, and that in the same way and manner; they were all to be shipwrecked; some were not to leave the ship before hand, and save themselves in the boat, but they were all to be exposed to equal danger, and then be saved; and till that time came, the proper and prudent means were to be made use of, who were the shipmen, who best knew how to manage the ship in this extremity: this teaches us that the end and means, in the decrees of God, are not to be separated; nor is any end to be expected without the use of means; and means are as peremptorily fixed, and are as absolutely necessary, and must as certainly be accomplished, as the end. Thus spiritual and eternal salvation is a certain thing; it is the appointment of God, which is absolute and unconditional, immutable and unfrustrable; there is a sure connection between the decree of God and salvation; it is a scheme drawn by Jehovah in the council of peace, who is God only wise, saw everything before hand that would come to pass, and has power to execute his scheme; it is an affair secured in the covenant of grace, which is sure and immovable; God is faithful who has made it with his Son; and Christ, the surety and Mediator of it, is equal to that part which he has in it; yea, salvation is a finished work, full satisfaction is made for sin, and pardon procured, an everlasting righteousness is brought in, all enemies are conquered and destroyed, and Christ's people are saved from them: and the interest which he has in them shows the certainty of their salvation; for they are given to him, and are in his hands; they are his portion, his treasure and his jewels; they are the purchase of his blood, and the travail of his soul; they are united to him, and are built upon him; they are interested in his preparations and prayers, and are in some sense saved already; and yet there are some things which God has fixed as means, and made absolutely necessary, and without which none can be saved: as for instance, none can be saved without regeneration; without this there is no meetness for heaven; nor does it appear without it that any have a right unto it; nor can an unregenerate man have any true hope of it; wherefore such as are chosen and redeemed, are regenerated by the Spirit of God: so likewise without holiness no man shall see the Lord; this is fixed in the decree of God, and is necessary to the enjoyment of him, and to fellowship with angels and glorified saints; wherefore the Lord sanctifies all he saves: particularly none without faith in Christ will ever be saved; nor is this inconsistent with salvation being by grace, seeing it is not considered as a cause of salvation, but is itself a gift of grace; it lies in receiving things at the hand of God, it admits of no glorying in men, and gives all the glory of salvation to God and Christ, and free grace; and this is necessary because God has appointed it, and therefore he bestows it on all he means to save: to which may be added, that without perseverance in faith and holiness, there is no salvation; wherefore the Lord puts his grace into the hearts of his people to cause them to persevere; he encompasses them with his power, upholds them with the right hand of his righteousness, and preserves them from Satan, and from a final and total falling away.

Acts 27:32

Ver. 32. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat,.... With which it had been fastened to the sides of the ship, and by which the mariners were letting it down, in order to get into it, and go off:

and let her fall off; from the sides of the ship into the sea, and so prevented the shipmen quitting the ship; for now they gave more credit to Paul than to them.

Acts 27:33

Ver. 33. And while the day was coming on,.... Between midnight and break of day: Paul besought them all to take meat; to sit down and eat a meal together:

saying, this day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried; or have been waiting for, or expecting; that is, as the Arabic version expresses it, a shipwreck; for fourteen days past, ever since the storm begun, they had expected nothing but shipwreck and death:

and continued fasting, having taken nothing: not that they had neither ate nor drank all that while, for without a miracle they could never have lived so long without eating something; but the meaning is, they had not eaten anyone regular meal all that while, had only caught up a bit now and then, and ate it, and that but very little.

Acts 27:34

Ver. 34. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat,.... To sit down composedly, and eat meat cheerfully and freely:

for this is for your health; the Alexandrian copy reads, "for our health"; it was for the health of them all, that they might be better able to bear the shock and fatigue of the shipwreck, and be in better spirits, and in a better capacity to help themselves, and one another:

for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you; a proverbial phrase, expressing the utmost safety of their lives, and therefore might cheerfully eat their food, and rest themselves, and be satisfied. To dream of shaving the hair, portended shipwreck to sailors; nor was it lawful for any to pare his nails, or cut off his hair, but in a storm; to which custom, some think, the apostle here alludes {w}; see 1Sa 14:45.

{w} Kirchman. de funer. Rom. l. 2. c. 14. p. 212, 213.

Acts 27:35

Ver. 35. And when he had thus spoken he took bread,.... A piece of bread, of common bread, into his hands; for this could never be the eucharist, or Lord's supper, which the apostle now celebrated, as some have suggested, but such sort of bread that seafaring men commonly eat: mention is before made of "meat" or "food", which the apostle entreated them to take, which includes every sort of sea provisions they had with them; and which, with the ancients, were usually the following: it is certain they used to carry bread corn along with them, either crude, or ground, or baked; the former when they went long voyages, the last when shorter ones; and it is plain that they had wheat in this ship, which after they had eaten they cast out, Ac 27:38 and corn ground, or meal, they had used to eat moistened with water, and sometimes with oil, and sometimes with oil and wine; and they had a sort of food they called "maza" which was made of meat and milk; likewise they used to carry onions and garlic, which the rowers usually ate, and were thought to be good against change of places and water; and they were wont to make a sort of soup of cheese, onions and eggs, which the Greeks call "muttootos", and the Latins "mosetum"; and they had also bread which was of a red colour, being hard baked and scorched in the oven, yea it was "biscoctus", twice baked {x}; as our modern sea biscuit is, and which has its name from hence, and which for long voyages is four times baked, and prepared six months before the voyage is entered on; and such sort of red bread or biscuit very probably was this, which the apostle now took into his hands, and did with it as follows:

and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all: and for them all, as Christ did at ordinary meals, Mt 14:19.

and when he had broken it he began to eat: which was all agreeably to the custom and manner of the Jews, who first gave thanks, and then said "Amen", at giving of thanks; when he that gave thanks brake and ate first: for he that brake the bread might not break it until the "Amen" was finished by all that answered by it, at giving of thanks; and no one might eat anything until he that brake, first tasted and ate {y}.

{x} Vid. Scheffer. de Militia Navali Veterum, l. 4. c. 1. p. 252, 253, 254. {y} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 47. 1. Zohar in Num. fol. 100. 3.

Acts 27:36

Ver. 36. Then were they all of good cheer,.... Encouraged by the apostle's words and example:

and they all took some meat; and made a comfortable meal, which they had not done for fourteen days past.

Acts 27:37

Ver. 37. And we were in all in the ship,.... Reckoning the master and owner of the ship, and the centurion and the soldiers, and the apostle and his company, with whatsoever passengers there might be:

two hundred and threescore and sixteen souls; the Alexandrian copy reads, "two hundred seventy and five"; and the Ethiopic version, "two hundred and six". This account of the number is given to show, that the historian, who was one of them, had an exact knowledge of all in the ship; and this being recorded before the account of the shipwreck, may serve to make the truth of the relation the more to be believed that none of them perished, since their number was so precisely known; and makes it the more marvellous, that such a number of men should be saved, and in a shipwreck; and shows, that there must be a wonderful interposition of divine power to bring them all safe to land.

Acts 27:38

Ver. 38. And when they had eaten enough,....] Were satisfied, having eaten a full meal:

they lightened the ship; of its burden, that it might the better carry them to the shore, and that by the following method:

and cast out the wheat into the sea; which seems to have been part of the ship's provision; or one part of their lading, which they brought from Egypt, and were carrying to Italy: they had cast out some of the goods of the ship before, and also the tackling of the ship, and now, last of all, the wheat; for what was eatable they reserved till last, not knowing to what extremity they might be reduced.

Acts 27:39

Ver. 39. And when it was day they knew not the land,.... What place it was, or the name of it:

but they discovered a certain creek with a shore; a gulf or bay, with a shore near it; the Ethiopic version explains it,

an arm of the sea, where was a port, where they thought they could secure themselves, or get ashore:

into which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship; whither they had a mind, and consulted to run the ship, if it could be done by any means, believing it was the most likely method of saving themselves, and that;

for notwithstanding the assurance they had that no man's life should be lost, they made use of all proper means for their safety and security.

Acts 27:40

Ver. 40. And when they had taken up the anchors,.... The four anchors they cast out of the stern, Ac 27:29 or "when they had cut the anchors", as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; that is, had cut the cables to which the anchors were fastened:

they committed themselves unto the sea; or left them, the anchors, in the sea; or committed the ship to the sea, and themselves in it, endeavouring to steer its course to the place they had in view:

and loosed the rudder bands; by which the rudder was fastened to the ship.---The rudder, in navigation, is a piece of timber turning on hinges in the stern of a ship, and which opposing sometimes one side to the water, and sometimes another, turns or directs the vessel this way or that. The rudder of a ship is a piece of timber hung on the stern posts, by four or five iron hooks, called "pintles", serving as it were for the bridle of a ship, to turn her about at the pleasure of the steersman.---The rudder being perpendicular, and without side the ship, another piece of timber is fitted into it at right angles, which comes into the ship, by which the rudder is managed and directed: this latter is properly called the "helm" or "tiller", and sometimes, though improperly, the rudder itself.---A narrow rudder is best for a ship's sailing, provided she can feel it; that is, be guided and turned by it, for a broad rudder will hold much water when the helm is put over to any side; yet if a ship has a fat quarter, so that the water cannot come quick and strong to her rudder, she will require a broad rudder.---The aftmost part of the rudder is called the "rake" of the rudder. This is the account of a rudder with the moderns {z}: with the ancients, the parts of the rudder were these, the "clavus" or "helm", by which the rudder was governed; the pole of it; the wings or the two breadths of it, which were as wings, and the handle: some ships had but one rudder, most had two, and some three, and some four; those that had but one, seemed to have it in the middle of the stern; and those that had two had them on the sides, not far from the middle; and there were some ships which had them not only in the stern, but also in the prow or head of the ship {a}: that the ancients had sometimes more rudders than one in a ship, has been abundantly proved by Bochartus and Scheherus; take only an instance or two. The Carthaginians, as {b} Aelianus reports, decreed two governors to every ship saying it was absurd that it should have duo phdalia, "two rudders", and that he who was most useful to the sailors, and had the government of the ship, should be alone, and without successor and companion; and so Apuleius {c} says, the ship in which we were carried was shook by various storms and tempests, "utroque regimine amisso", and having lost both its rudders, sunk at the precipice. Some of the Indian ships have three rudders; that of Philopator's had four rudders: how many this ship had, in which the apostle was, cannot be said: but this is certain, that it had more than one; for the words are, "and loosed the bands of the rudders"; and since it is a clear case, that the ships of the ancients had more rudders than one to each, there is no need to suppose a figure in the text, and that the plural number is used for the singular, as Beza thinks: and "the bands" of them were those by which they were fastened; and they were "loosed", as Schefferus conjectures, because when the anchors were cast out, they fastened the rudders higher, that they might not be broken by the dashing of the waves, especially as they were in a storm; but now having taken up the anchors, they loosed these bands: and certain it is, that not only oars but rudders were fastened with cords or ropes to the ship {d}: according to the notion of modern navigation, the rudder band might be thought to be the rope which is turned round the tiller, and made fast to the ship's side, and as the tiller is moved, "surges" round the end of the tiller; and very likely might be made fast, when the ship was at anchor, on one side, to keep the ship from breaking her sheer; but now being loosed, and the helm "a midship", and the mainsail hoisted, the ship ran to the shore before the wind.

And hoised up the main sail to the wind: which they had before struck or let down, Ac 27:17. The main sail is that which is upon the main mast. The Ethiopic version renders it, "the great sail". The great sail was that which is called "acatius", which is another word than is here used: so Isidore {e} says "acatius" is the greatest sail, and is placed in the middle of the ship; "epidromos" is the next in size, and is placed at the stern; and "dolon" is the least sail, and is fixed at the head: and both the Syriac and Arabic versions here render it, "the little sail"; and which sailors put up when they are afraid to use large sails, which would carry too much wind; but the word here used is "artemo", which the above writer says is commended rather for the sake of directing the ship, than for swiftness. And this seems to be the use that was now made of it, namely, to guide the ship into the creek or bay.

And made toward the shore; which was in the creek, or to the haven in it.

{z} Chambers's Cyclopaedia in the word "rudder". {a} Scheffer. de Militia Navali Vetorum, l. 2. c. 5. p. 145, 146. {b} Var Hist. l. 9. c. 40. {c}

Metamorphos. l. 2. p. 24. {d} Vegetus apud Scheffer. de Militia Navali Veterum, l. 2. c. 5. p. 139. {e} Originum, l. 19. c. 3. p. 163.

Acts 27:41

Ver. 41. And falling into a place where two seas met,.... An "isthmus", on each side of which the sea ran; and which the inhabitants of Malta, as Beza says, show to this day, and call it, "la Cala de San Paulo", or the Descent of Saint Paul. The meeting of these two seas might occasion a great rippling in the sea like to a large eddy, or counter tide; and here might be a sand on which

they ran the ship aground; for this place where the two seas met, as the same annotator observes, could not be the shore itself; for otherwise, to what purpose should they cast themselves into the sea, as they afterwards did, if the head of the ship struck upon the shore, and stuck fast there? but must rather mean a shelf of sand, opposite, or near the entrance into the bay, and where the shipwreck was.

And the fore part stuck fast, and remained unmovable; so that there was no getting her off:

but the hinder part was broken by the violence of the waves; that is, the stern; by which means there were boards and broken pieces for the company to get ashore upon.

Acts 27:42

Ver. 42. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners,.... Paul, and the rest: this they had not only an inclination to, but they declared it, and gave it as their opinion, and what they thought advisable to be done directly:

lest any of them should swim out and escape; and they should be accountable for them: but this was dreadful wickedness in them to seek to take away the lives of others, when they themselves were in so much danger; and monstrous ingratitude to the Apostle Paul, who had been so much concerned for their lives, and careful of them, and had been the means of saving them, and for whose sake they were saved: the devil must have had a great hand in this.

Acts 27:43

Ver. 43. But the centurion, willing to save Paul,.... Not only because he was a Roman citizen, but because he perceived he was some extraordinary person; and chiefly because he was moved there unto by a superior influence, that Satan might not have his end; and that the will of God might be fulfilled, that he should go to Rome, and there bear a testimony of Christ.

Kept them from their purpose; would not suffer them to execute their design, restrained them from it, and laid his commands upon them to the contrary.

And commanded that they which could swim, should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land; which some restrain to the Roman soldiers, as if the centurion's speech was only directed to them; though it seems rather to have respect to the whole company, the mariners, who generally can swim, and the soldiers, as many of them as could, and the rest of the prisoners or passengers; though it may be, he might chiefly regard the soldiers, who were usually learned to swim, that they might the more readily pass rivers, in their marches, where they could find no bridges, that so he might be the sooner rid of them, and break their purpose.

Acts 27:44

Ver. 44. And the rest, some on boards,.... Doors, tables, planks, or any such like things:

and some on broken pieces of the ship; or what came from it, as masts, beams, &c.

and so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land; not one was lost, as Paul had foretold. And so it will be with the saints after their afflicted state in this life, who are safe by being in Christ, and by abiding in him and in the use of means; and though by reason of the many difficulties in the way, through the corruptions of their own hearts, the temptations of Satan, the hidings of God's face, various afflictions, and sometimes violent persecutions, they are scarcely saved, yet at last they are certainly saved: so it comes to pass that they get safe on the shores of eternal bliss and happiness; because they are ordained unto it, are the care of Christ, and the purchase of his blood; and are partakers of the blessings of grace, and have the Spirit, as an earnest of the heavenly inheritance; and when landed they are safe; sin will be no more; Satan will be under their feet; there will be no more afflictions of any kind; and they will be with the Lord, and for ever with him. This voyage of the apostle, and the saints with him, was an emblem of the passage of the people of God in this world to heaven: their number was but few; who besides Luke, and Aristarchus the Macedonian, were with him, is not known, Ac 27:2. And so the number of the children of God, in anyone period of time, is but small in comparison of the rest of the world: the apostle and his companions had but very indifferent company, as other prisoners, a band of soldiers, and the sailors; Christ's church is as a rose in a field, a lily among thorns, vexed with the conversation of the wicked, being in a world which lies in wickedness; and which may very fitly be compared to the sea, for the waves of afflictions in it, and the restless and uneasy spirits of the men of it. Sailing at this time was dangerous, Ac 27:9 as the saints' passage through this world always is, and especially now in these last and perilous days; partly through the aboundings of immorality on the one hand, and partly through the spread of error and heresy on the other. A great storm arose, Ac 27:14 and there are many the Christian meets with in his voyage to heaven; and well it is for him that Christ is an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, and that he is built on such a foundation, which the most violent storms cannot move him from. There was no sight of sun or stars for many days, Ac 27:20 and so it is sometimes with the people of God; the sun of righteousness is not seen by them, clouds interpose between him and them; and the stars, the ministers of the Gospel, are removed from them, and their eyes cannot behold their teachers, which make it a distressed time with them: yea, all hope of salvation was gone, Ac 27:20 and such at times is the case of truly gracious souls; their hope, and their strength, they are ready to say, are perished from the Lord, and they are cut off from before his eyes: there was also a long abstinence from food, Ac 27:21 which is sometimes the case in a spiritual sense, and is owing either to want of food, the word of the Lord being precious, there being a famine of hearing the word; or for want of appetite to it: and last of all, there was a design formed by the soldiers to kill Paul, and the prisoners, but were prevented by the centurion, Ac 27:42. The sincere followers of Christ are accounted as sheep for the slaughter, and are killed all the day long in the intention of wicked men; who have always a good will to it, were they not restrained through the goodness of a civil government, and especially by the power and providence of God: however, at last, they get safe to their port and haven, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.

Acts 28:1

Ver. 1. And when they were escaped,.... From the danger they were exposed to by shipwreck, and were got safe to land; this is omitted in the Syriac version:

then they knew that the island was called Melita; an island toward the African shore, where it is placed both by Pliny {g}, and Ptolomy {h}; in which, the latter says, was the city Melita: it lies between Sicily and Tripolis of Barbary, and is now called Malta: it was famous for the knights of Rhodes, which are now called the knights of Malta: it has its name from jlm, "to escape", it being formerly a refuge to the Phoenicians, especially in stormy weather, in their long voyage from Tyre to Gades; and was indeed a place of escape to the Apostle Paul, and those that were with him. And perhaps it might be so called from its being a refuge for pirates; for Cicero {i} says, here pirates used to winter almost every year, and yet did not spoil the temple of Juno, as Verres did: though some say it was so called from the great abundance of honey found in it; for it was a very pleasant and fruitful island, bringing forth great plenty of wheat, rye, flax, cummin, cotton, figs, wine, roses, thyme, lavender, and many other sweet and delightful herbs, from whence bees did gather great plenty of honey. It was, according to Pliny, distant from Camerina eighty four miles, and from Lilybaeum a hundred and thirteen; and it is said to be distant from the promontory of Sicily an hundred miles, though others say sixty; and that it was so far from Syracuse, which is the next place the apostle came to in this voyage, was from Africa an hundred and ninety miles. On the east side, a little from the chief city of it, now called Malta, was a famous temple of Juno, spoiled by Verres, as before observed; and on the south side another of Hercules, the ruins of both which are yet to be seen. The compass of the island is about sixty miles, the length twenty, and the breadth twelve, and has in it five ports, and about sixty villages.

{g} Nat. Hist. l 3. c. 8. {h} Geograph. l. 4. c. 3. {i} Orat. 9. in Verrem, c. 17.

Acts 28:2

Ver. 2. And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness,.... The inhabitants of this island are called barbarians, not from the country of Barbary, near to which they were; nor so much on account of their manners, for, though Heathens, they were a civil and cultivated people, being, as appears from the name of the chief man of the island, under the Roman government; but because of their language, see 1Co 14:11, it being neither Hebrew, Greek, nor Latin; for as the inhabitants were originally a colony of the Phoenicians, they spoke their language; and now though it is inhabited by such as are called Christians, they speak the Saracen or Arabic language, and little different from the old Punic or Phoenician language: however, though the inhabitants could not understand their language, they understood their case, and were very civil and humane to them, and showed them extraordinary kindness:

for they kindled a fire; or set fire to a large pile of wood; for a large fire it must be to be of service to such a number of people, in such a condition as they were:

and received us everyone: though their number were two hundred threescore and sixteen;

because of the present rain, and because of the cold; for a violent rain fell on them, as is usual upon a storm, and much wetted them, so that a fire was very necessary; and it being winter or near it, it was cold weather; and especially they having been so long in a storm, and now shipwrecked; and some having thrown themselves into the sea, and swam to the island; and others having been obliged to put themselves on boards and planks, and get ashore, and were no doubt both wet and cold; so that nothing was more needful and more agreeable to them than a large fire.

Acts 28:3

Ver. 3. And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks,.... Had picked up some sticks, and put them in a bundle fit for the fire, as everyone was busy to assist in this extremity; nor did the apostle think such an action below him, who in all things was a man of great humility and condescension:

and laid them on the fire; to increase it:

there came a viper out of the heat: a viper is a kind of serpent, which brings forth its young living, to the number of twenty, only one in a day, which come forth wrapped up in thin skins, which break on the third day, and set them at liberty; and so is reckoned among viviparous animals, from whence it seems to have its name, whereas other serpents lay eggs and hatch them. It is said {k}, that this remarkable reptile has the biggest and flattest head of all the serpent kind; its usual length is about half an ell, and its thickness an inch; its snout is not unlike that of a hog; it has sixteen small immovable teeth in each jaw, besides two other large, sharp, hooked, hollow, transparent, canine teeth, situate at each side of the upper jaw, which are those that do the mischief: these are flexible in their articulation, and are ordinarily laid flat along the jaw, the animal never raising them but when it would bite The roots or bases of these teeth, or fangs, are encompassed with a vesicle or bladder, containing the quantity of a large drop of a yellow insipid salivous juice.--It has only one row of teeth, whereas all other serpents have two; its body is not at all fetid, whereas the inner parts of the bodies of other serpents are intolerable.--It creeps very slowly, and never leaps like other serpents, though it is nimble enough to bite when provoked.--Its body is of two colours, ash coloured or yellow, and the ground speckled with longish brown spots; the scales under its belly are of the colour of well polished steel. Its bite is exceeding venomous, and its poison the most dangerous. Now when this viper here is said to come out of the heat, the meaning is, that it came out from the sticks, which were laid upon the fire, being forced from thence by the heat of it: and so the Syriac version renders it, "there came out of them" (the sticks) "a viper, because of the heat of the fire"; it lay quiet among the sticks, among which, and such like things, this creature often lies; but when the fire began to heat it, it sprung out:

and fastened on his hand; or wrapped itself about his hand: the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "bit his hand"; but that does not seem so likely, since he felt no harm by it; the Ethiopic version, "hung upon his hand"; which agrees with what follows; nor is it inconsistent with its wrapping itself about his hand, which is the more proper signification of the word used.

{k} Chambers's Cyclopaedia in the word "Viper".

Acts 28:4

Ver. 4. And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast,.... The viper is called "Therion", a beast, it being of the viviparous kind; and hence comes "Theriaca", or "Venice treacle", the foundation of which composition is vipers' flesh; and it is called venomous, because it is of all serpents the most venomous: this when the country people saw

hang on his hand, having wrapped itself about it,

they said among themselves, no doubt this man is a murderer: they might see he was a prisoner by his chain, or might learn it from some of the company, and therefore took it for granted he had been guilty of some crime; and by the viper's fastening on him, they concluded it was murder he was guilty of; for the same notion might obtain among them, as among the Jews, that a murderer that could not be legally convicted, was sometimes punished this way.

"Says R. Simeon ben Shetach {l}, may I never see the consolation, if I did not see one run after his friend into a desert place; and I ran after him, and I saw the sword in his hand, and the blood dropping, and he that was slain panting; and I said to him, O wicked man, who has slain this? either I or thou; but what shall I do? for thy blood is not delivered into my hand; "for the law says, by the mouth of two or three witnesses he shall surely die" (#De 17:6): may he that knows the thoughts take vengeance on that man that slew his friend; they say, they did not remove from thence, vxn abv de, "till a serpent came", and bit him, and he died."

So the Jews observe, that when the execution of capital punishments was taken away from them, yet such who deserved them were punished by God in a way equivalent to them: so for instance, if a man committed a crime, for which he deserved to be burnt, either he fell into the fire, or wkvwn vxn, "a serpent bit him" {m}; or if he deserved to be strangled, either he was drowned in a river, or died of a quinsy. There is a kind of an asp which the Egyptians call "Thermuthis", which they reckon sacred, and worship: this they say will not hurt good men, but destroys the wicked; and if so, says the historian, then dikh, "vengeance", or justice has honoured this creature, to be so sharp sighted as to discern the good from the bad; and they say, Isis sends it to the most wicked {n}. Agreeably to which these men reason,

whom though he hath escaped the sea: has not been drowned there, when shipwrecked,

yet vengeance suffereth not to live. The Greek word "Dice" rendered "vengeance", is the name of a goddess among the Heathens, said to be the daughter of Jupiter and Themis {o}. She is represented as sitting by her father Jupiter; and when anyone does injury to another, informs him of it {p}. She is painted sorrowful, and with a contracted forehead, a grave countenance, and a rough aspect, to strike terror in unrighteous persons, and give confidence to righteous ones {q}, agreeably to her name, which signifies "justice". This deity the barbarians supposed pursued Paul; and though she let him escape the sea, she will not suffer him to live any longer; for they looked upon the viper's fastening on him, as to be sent by her, so to be immediate death to him.

{l} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 37. 2. & Shebuot, fol. 34. 1. {m} Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 214. 2. & T. Bab. Sanhedrin, ib. & Sota, fol. 8. 2. {n} Aelian de Animal l. 10. c. 31. {o} Apollodarus de Deorurn Origon. l. 1. p. 6. Phurnutus de Natura Deorum, p. 80. {p} Hesiod Opera, &c. v. 254, 255. {q} Chrysippus apud Geilium, l. 14. c. 4.

Acts 28:5

Ver. 5. And he shook off the beast into the fire,.... Having held it a while, and as being master of it, and as not being afraid of it, though it was the ready way to provoke it to fasten on him again:

and felt no harm; it having not bit him, nor infected him with its poison; and hereby was fulfilled what our Lord promised to his disciples, Mr 16:18;

Acts 28:6

Ver. 6. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen,.... With the venomous bite of the viper; swelling is one of the symptoms following the bite of this creature; and if the bite does not issue in death, yet the swelling continues inflamed for some time. The symptoms following the bite of a viper are said to be {r} an acute pain in the place wounded; swelling, first red, afterwards livid, spreading by degrees; great faintness; a quick, low, and sometimes interrupted pulse; sickness at the stomach; bilious convulsions: vomiting; cold sweats; sometimes pains about the navel; and death itself, if the strength of the patient, or the slightness of the bite, do not overcome it: if he does overcome it, the swelling continues inflamed for some time; and the symptoms abating, from the wound runs a sanious liquor, little pustules are raised about it, and the colour of the skin is as if the patient were icterical or jaundice; or had the jaundice: the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, "that he should burn", or "burnt"; that is, inflamed, for the bite of the viper causes an inflammation, a hot swelling, which rises up in pustules or blisters:

or fallen down dead suddenly; for immediate death is sometimes the effect of such poison. Pliny {s} relates, that the Scythians dip their arrows in the sanies or corrupt matter of vipers, and in human blood, which by the least touch causes immediate death; and Pausanias {t} reports from a certain Phoenician, that a man fleeing from a viper got up into a tree, where the viper could not reach him, but it blew, or breathed out its poison on the tree, and the man immediately died: though the force of this creature's poison does not always, and in all places, and in all persons operate alike; some die within a few hours, and others live some days, some to the third day, and some to the seventh {u}:

but after they had looked a great while; upon the apostle, to observe whether any inflammation or swelling arose, or death ensued, as they expected: when they had waited some time, perhaps an hour or two,

and saw no harm come to him; that he was neither inflamed, nor swelled, nor dead; that it had no manner of effect upon him, and no evil of punishment was inflicted on him hereby, from whence they could conclude that he was guilty of any notorious crime:

they changed their minds, and said that he was a god: before they took him to be a murderer, and now they even ascribe deity to him, as was usual with the Gentiles, when anything extraordinary was performed by men: so the Lystrians took Paul for Mercury, and Barnabas for Jupiter, upon the apostle's curing the cripple, Ac 14:11; but what god the inhabitants of Melita thought him to be, is not certain; some think Hercules, who was worshipped in this island. The inhabitants of this island now believe that the apostle expelled all poison and venom out of it when he was there; and it is reported, that the children born in this place fear not any snakes, neither are hurt by anything that is venomous, insomuch that they will take scorpions, and eat them without danger; although, in all other parts of the world, those kind of creatures are most pernicious, and yet do no manner of hurt to men in this island; yea, it is affirmed, that there is a sort of earth found here, which kills serpents: as for the eating of them, the viper itself may be eaten; most authors agree {w}, that there is no part, humour, or excrement, not even the gall itself, of a viper, but may be swallowed without much harm; accordingly the ancients, and, as several authors assure us, the Indians at this day, both of the east and west, eat them as we do eels--viper's flesh either roasted or boiled, physicians unanimously prescribe as an excellent restorative, particularly in the elephantiasis, incurable consumptions, leprosy, &c.

{r} Chambers's Cyclopaedia, ut supra. (the word "Viper") {s} L. 11. c. 53. {t} Boeotica, vel, l. 9. p. 583. {u} Alberus de Animal. l. 25. c. ult. {w} Chambers's Cyclopaedia, ut supra. (the word "Viper")

Acts 28:7

Ver. 7. In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island,....

Or "the first man of the island"; so the governor of Melita used to be called, as appears by an inscription mentioned by Bochart, wherein a Roman knight is called prwtov melitaiwn, "the first of the Melitians"; for this island was under the Roman government, and the very name of this chief man shows it: it was first in the hands of the Africans, when Dido built Carthage, which was eight or nine hundred years before the time of Christ: Battus was king of this island, from whom it was taken by Hiarbas king of Lybia, or of the Getulians, and who also conquered Carthage; and it continued under the power of the Carthaginians, until they were conquered by the Romans; and then it was taken by Titus Sempronius, above two hundred years before Christ, in whose hands it was when the apostle was here; since then it has been taken by the Saracenes, though they held it not, being taken from them by Roger earl of Sicily, in the year 1090; and so it remained in the hands of the Sicilians, until the knights of Rhodes were driven out of that island by the Turks, in 1522; and then this was given them by the Emperor Charles the Fifth seven years after, on condition they would oppose the Turks, and defend that part of Christendom, which they bravely did: in the year 1565, it was besieged by Pialis Bassa, but without success {x}; and it is said to be so well fortified, as that it is impossible it should be taken, unless through treachery or famine; it is now in the hands of the said knights: but whether this man was governor of the island or not, it may be reasonably thought that he was the richest man in the island, and in the greatest honour and dignity; and had near the shore, where the ship's company landed, many houses and much land, and farms and vineyards, and the like:

whose name was Publius; or Poplius, as some copies, and the Syriac version read. Publius was a name common with the Romans; it was with them a forename, by which such were called, who were "pupilli", or fatherless, for it is a contraction of "Popilius". There was one of this name who was bishop of Athens, said to succeed Dionysius the Areopagite there; who is thought by some to be the same here mentioned; who they say was first bishop in his own country, which through mistake they make to be Miletus, instead of Melita; and afterwards bishop of Athens, where he suffered martyrdom: but this is not likely, for even though he might be converted by the apostle, of which we have no account; and also became a preacher of the Gospel, of which there is no proof; it is not probable that he should leave his own country, and go to Athens, and take upon him the care of that church there: but whether he was afterwards converted or not, he was very kind to the apostle and the ship's company, as follows:

who received us, and lodged us three days courteously; this was a very considerable instance of humanity and hospitality, to receive so many strangers at once into his houses, as two hundred three score and sixteen; and give them food and lodging, for three days together, and that in such a kind, friendly, and cheerful manner: and thus, as Abraham and Lot, by receiving strangers, entertained angels at unawares, so Publius, though ignorant of it, entertained an apostle of Christ among those strangers; the benefit of which he afterwards enjoyed, and which was a compensation for his liberality and beneficence.

{x} Petav. Rationar. Temp. par. 1. l. 9. c. 11. & 12. p. 501, 507.

Acts 28:8

Ver. 8. And it came to pass that the father of Publius,.... So that Publius was not an old man, though of so much dignity and wealth: the Arabic version, contrary to all copies, and other versions, reads, "the son of Publius":

lay sick of a fever; or fevers, of different sorts, a complication of them, which sometimes is the case; unless this was an intermitting fever, and the several fits of it are intended; or rather the plural number is put for the singular, to denote the vehemence of it, and which was attended with another disorder, and might be brought on by it:

and of a bloody flux; or dysentery, a pain of the bowels, as the Syriac version renders it; or an ulceration of the bowels, as the Arabic version; which occasioned a discharge of blood, so that his case was very threatening. This disease, according to modern writers {y}, is attended with a fever. The word "dysentery" here used properly signifies that kind of flux of the belly, characterized by the frequency of stools, or dejections, mixed with blood, and accompanied with gripes: the fever, ulcer, &c. which attend it, are not essential to the disease; though many both of the ancients and moderns think the ulcer is.--There are three kinds of "dysenteries"; the "first" when a laudable blood is evacuated from a mere plethora, or plenitude, without any disorder of the intestines, as in the haemorrhoidal flux; the "second" when a thin watery blood is evacuated, called the "hepatic" flux, though really arising from haemorrhoidal vessels; the "third" kind, which is that that is properly called the dysentery, is when blood is cast out, mixed with a purulent matter in the excrements: this is either "benign", i.e. without a fever, and not contagious; or "malignant", which is attended with a pestilential fever, and frequently ravages whole cities and provinces, happening most commonly in armies; in the last stage, a sort of caruncles are frequently ejected along with the purulent matter, which are difficult to be accounted for, unless from an excoriation and ulceration of the intestines: sometimes the intestines are even gangrened: this seems to have been the case of the father of Publius, which makes the following cure the more remarkable:

to whom Paul entered in; into the room where he was, no doubt with the consent and leave, if not at the request of Publius; the Ethiopic version adds, "and he entreated him to put his hand upon him"; that is, either Publius asked this favour of the apostle for his father, having heard of the affair of the viper, from whence he concluded there was something divine and extraordinary in him; or the father of Publius asked this for himself:

and prayed and laid his hands on him, and healed him; when Paul had entered the room, and found in what a bad condition the sick man was, he either kneeled down and prayed by him, or stood and prayed over him, and for him, that God would restore him to his health; and this he did, to let them know that he himself was not a god; and that the cure that would now be wrought would be from God, and not from himself, and therefore all the glory should be given to God; and he laid his hands on him, as a sign or symbol, or rite that was used in extraordinary cases, and agreeably to the direction and promise of Christ, Mr 16:18; and upon this a cure followed; both the diseases left him at once, and he was restored to health.

{y} See Chambers's Cyclopaedia in the word "Dysentery".

Acts 28:9

Ver. 9. So when this was done,.... This miracle was wrought, and the fame of it spread over the island:

others also which had diseases in the island came: from all parts of it, to the apostle:

and were healed; of whatsoever diseases they were afflicted with.

Acts 28:10

Ver. 10. Who also honoured us with many honours,.... Not with divine honours, with religious adorations, as if they had been so many deities; for these they would not have received, nor have recorded them, to the commendation of the inhabitants; but civil honours, expressions of respect and gratitude; and particularly gifts and presents, large and valuable, in which sense the phrase is used by Jewish writers; so upon those words in Jud 13:17. "What is thy name, that when the sayings come to pass, we may do thee honour?" they make this paraphrase {z},

"Manoah said to him (the angel), tell me thy name, that I may inquire where to find thee, when thy prophecy is fulfilled, and give thee Nrwd, "a gift", hxnm ala Kwndbkw
Nyaw, "for there is no honour but a present", or "offering"; or wherever this phrase is used, it signifies nothing else but a gift, as it is said, Nu 22:17. "For honouring I will honour thee":"

that is, with money and gifts, as Balaam's answer in the next verse shows, and so the Jewish commentators interpret it {a};
See Gill on "1Ti 5:17";

And when we departed; from the island, which was not till three months from their first coming ashore:

they laded [us] with such things as were necessary; that is, for the voyage: they provided a proper supply of food for them, which they put into the strip, for their use in their voyage; by which they expressed their gratitude for the favours they received from Paul; for whose sake not only his company, but the whole ship's company fared the better: and very likely many of them were converted under the apostle's ministry; for it can hardly be thought that the apostle should be on this island three months, as he was, and not preach the Gospel to the inhabitants of it, in which he always met with success, more or less; and the great respect shown him at his departure seems to confirm this; though we meet with no account of any church, or churches, or preachers of the word in this place, in ecclesiastical history, until the "sixth" century, when mention is made of a bishop of the island of Melita {b}; indeed in the "fourth" century, Optatus Milevitanus is said by some, through mistake; to be bishop of Melita, when he was bishop of Milevis, a city in Africa upon the continent; and, through a like mistake, this island is said to be famous for a council held in it under Pope Innocent, against Pelagius, in the beginning of the "fifth" century; when the council was held at the above place Milevis, and not at Melita, from whence it was called the Milevitan council.

{z} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 10. fol. 199. 1. Vid. Laniado in Judg. xvii. 13. {a} Jarchi & Aben Ezra in loc. {b} Magdeburg. Eccl. Hist. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 5.

Acts 28:11

Ver. 11. And after three months we departed,.... From Melita; here they stayed the three winter months, which were unseasonable for navigation; but now the spring coming on, and the weather agreeable, they left the island, and sailed

in a ship of Alexandria; See Gill on "Ac 27:6";

which had wintered in the isle; perhaps all the said three months, for the same reason:

whose sign was Castor and Pollux; or Dioscuri, that is, the sons of Jupiter; for Castor and Pollux were his sons, by Leda: these are placed among the constellations in the Zodiac, and go by the name of Gemini, or the twins; and these were supposed to have a power of saving men in danger at sea: wherefore such as were about to go to sea, first paid their devoirs, and made vows to them; which they performed when they returned, and were delivered from shipwreck; and when they were in danger at sea, they used to pray unto them: the fiery exhalations that sometimes appear at sea, they took for them; and when only one appeared, it was looked on as a bad omen; but when both, it was reckoned to portend a prosperous voyage; hence they were considered as sea deities; and the Ethiopic version accordingly renders it here "Dioscoura", and adds, "who is the god of the mariners": now the images of these two brothers were sometimes set at the head, or forepart of the ship, as they were in this, from whence the ship took its name; as it is very common for the names of ships to be the same with the pictures or images that are placed at the head of them: whether the centurion chose this ship because of its sign, imagining there might be more safety in it, he having suffered shipwreck already; or whether this was the only one in the island, that was going for Italy, is not certain, nor very material: the Arabic version takes the word rendered Castor and Pollux, to be the name of a man, who was the owner of the ship; for it reads the words thus, "in a ship of Alexandria", that belonged "to a man of Alexandria, called Dioscorides".

Acts 28:12

Ver. 12. And landing at Syracuse,.... A famous city in the isle of Sicily, now called Saragossa: it is placed by Ptolomy {c} on the east side of the island, in the Adriatic sea; it was 180 furlongs, or two and twenty miles and a half in circuit, and formerly had a marble haven and triple wall, and as many towers; the founder of it was Archias, a Corinthian; Pliny says {d}, that it is never so cloudy weather, but the sun is seen in it, at one time or another of the day: Cicero {e} calls it the greatest and most beautiful of all the cities of Greece; it is such a city, he says, that it may be said to consist of four large cities; "one" part of it is called "the island", which has two ports to it; "another" was called Acradina, in which were a large market, beautiful porticos, &c. the "third", Tiche, in which was the ancient temple of Fortune; and the "fourth", which because it was last built, was called Neapolis: it is a very ancient city, being built more than seven hundred years before the birth of Christ; it was a colony of the Corinthians; here reigned two tyrants, whose names were Dionysius; it was attacked by the Carthaginians, but without success, being delivered from the siege by Pyrrhus king of Epirus {f}; it was again assaulted by the Athenians, who were repulsed, and entirely conquered, about the year before Christ 413: after that it was taken by Marcellus, the Roman consul, about the year of the city of Rome 542 {g}, after a three years' siege; during which time it was defended, and preserved by the means of the famous mathematician Archimedes; who by his invention of warlike machines, baffled all the attempts of the Romans; but was killed by a soldier, as he was intent upon his studies, not knowing that the city was taken; and it continued in the hands of the Romans, until it was taken and plundered by the Saracens, in the year of Christ 675; and was retaken by Roger king of Apulia, about the year 1090, and is now under the government of Don Carlos, king of the two Sicilies;

we tarried there three days; on what account it is not said, whether on account of merchandise, or for the sake of the conversation of Christians here: it is certain there were churches in Sicily very early; we read of them in the "second" and "third" centuries; in the time of Constantine, at the beginning of the "fourth" century, there was a church at Syracuse, of which Chrestus was bishop, to whom the emperor wrote a letter himself, which is still extant in Eusebius {h}: in the "fifth" century, Hilarius, a teacher at Syracuse, wrote from thence to Augustine, concerning the Pelagian heresy, to whom he gave an answer: in the "sixth" century, Maximinianus, bishop of this church, had the inspection of all the churches in Sicily committed to him, by Gregory; who was wonderfully preserved in a shipwreck, as he was returning from Rome; in this same age lived John, bishop of Syracuse, and Trajanus a presbyter, and Felix a deacon of the same church: in the seventh century there was one George bishop of this place, to whom Pope Vitalian wrote a letter; and in the same century a bishop of this church was in the sixth council at Constantinople {i}.

{c} Geogr. l. 3. c. 4. {d} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 62. {e} Orat. 9. in Verrem, l. 4. p. 566. {f} Pausanius, l. 1. p. 22. {g} Petav. Rationar. Temp. par. 1. l. 3. c. 9. p. 108. & l. 4. c. 2. p. 137. {h} Eccl. Hist. l. 10. c. 5. {i} Magdeburg. Eccl. Hist. cent. 2. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 5. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 6. c. 10. p. 664. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 6. c. 10. p. 346. c. 13. p. 436. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 358.

Acts 28:13

Ver. 13. And from thence we fetched a compass,.... About the isle of Sicily, from Syracuse to Pachinus, the promontory of the island:

and came to Rhegium; a city in Calabria, called by Ptolomy {k} Regium Julium; it was built, as Solinus {l} says, by the Chalcidensians, and was formerly a city of the Brutians {m}; it is now called Reggio: it is said {n} to have its name from its being broken off from the main continent, for it lies in the straits of Sicily; and formerly Sicily was joined to Italy, but was separated from it by the violence of the sea at this place:

and after one day the south wind blew; they stayed one day at Rhegium, and when they departed from thence, they had a south wind, which was favourable to them: whether the apostle preached here, or no, is not certain, since his stay was so short; some Popish writers tell some idle stories about the apostle's preaching; how that the fishes came to the shore to hear him; that the grasshoppers were commanded by him to be silent, and have never been seen in that place since; that a stone pillar was set on fire by the flame of a candle, by which miracle the inhabitants present were converted and baptized; and one Stephen, that was in company, was made by him their first bishop: but in ecclesiastical history we meet with no account of any church in this place, until the fifth century; when the bishop of it, with others, subscribed a letter of Leo the First, sent into the east; and about the year 440, there was a synod of thirteen bishops convened in this place, on account of a certain ordination; and in the "seventh" century, a bishop of the church at Rhegium was present in the sixth council at Constantinople; in the "eighth", Constantine, bishop of Rhegium, was in the Nicene synod {o}:

and we came the next day to Puteoli; the Syriac version adds, "a city of Italy";

it was formerly called Dicearchia {p}, from the strict justice used in the government of it: it had its name of Puteoli, either "a putore", from the rankness and ill smell of the waters of it, through the "sulphur" and "alum" in them; or "a puteis", from the wells about it, the waters of which, by Pausanias, are said {q} to be so hot, as in time to melt the leaden pipes through which they flow, who calls it a town of the Tyrrhenians; by Pliny {r} it is placed in Campania, and so Jerom {s} says, Puteoli a city, a colony of Campania, the same that is called Dicearchia. Josephus {t} also speaks of it as in the same country; for he says, that Herod and Herodias both came to Dicearchia, (or Puteoli), and found Caius (the emperor) at Baiai, which is a little town in Campania, about five furlongs from Dicearchia; and he also in another {u} place says, the Italians call Dicearchia, potiolouv, "Potioli"; which is the same word the apostle here uses, and which is the Latin "Puteoli" corrupted; it is said to be first built by the Samians: frequent mention is made by writers {w}, of "pulvis Puteolanus", the dust of Puteoli; which being touched by the sea water, hardens into a stone; and was therefore used to bank the sea, break the waves, and repel the force of them: that it was a place by the sea side, may be learned from the sea being called after its name, "mare Puteolanum" {x}, the sea of Puteoli; so Apollonius Tyaneus is said {y} to sail from this place to Rome, whither he came in three days; to this port the ships of Alexandria particularly used to come, and hither persons were wont to go to take shipping for Alexandria {z}; it is now called by the Italians Pozzuolo, and lies about eight miles from Naples; and according to the following story of the Jews', must be an hundred and twenty miles from Rome; who tell us {a}, that

"Rabban Gamaliel, and R. Eleazar ben Azariah, and R. Joshua, and R. Akiba, went to Rome, and they heard the noise of the multitude at Rome, from Puteoli, an hundred and twenty miles:"

the story is a fable designed to signify the vast number of people at Rome, and the noise, hurry, and tumult there; but perhaps the distance between the two places may not be far from truth: and as fabulous is the account which R. Benjamin {b} gives of this place Puteoli, when he says it was called Surentum, a great city which Tzintzan Hadarezer built, when he fled for fear of David.

{k} Geograph. l. 3. c. 1. {l} Polyhistor. c. 8. {m} Mela, l. 2. c. 11. {n} Philo quod mundus, &c. p. 963. & de mundo, p. 1171. Vid. Justin. l. 4. c. 1. & Sallust. fragment. p. 147. {o} Ib. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 7. c. 9. p. 508. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 5. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5. {p} Plin. l. 3. c. 5. {q} Pausan. Messenica vel. 1. 4. p. 285. & Arcadica vel. l. 8. p. 465. {r} Nat. Hist. l. 31. c. 2. {s} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 76. G. {t} Antiqu. l. 18. c. 8. sect. 2. {u} In Vita sua, sect. 3. p. 905. {w}

Plin. l. 35. c. 13. Alex. ab Alex. l. 5. c. 9. Isidor. de origin l. 16. c. 1. p. 135. {x} A. Gell. noct. Attic. l. 7. c. 9. {y} Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 7. c. 8. {z} Philo in Flaccum, p. 968. & de leg. ad Caium, p. 1018. Senec. cp. 77. {a} Echa Rabbati, fol. 59. 4. & T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 24. 1. {b} Itinerar. p. 14.

Acts 28:14

Ver. 14. Where we found brethren,.... Christians; which is not to be wondered at, since it was a port much frequented, and where many came and went, of different countries and nations; particularly there were many Jews here, to whom the Gospel was first preached, and to some of them it was the power of God unto salvation in many places, and doubtless was so here: Josephus {c} speaks of Jews in this place, who were deceived by a false Alexander, who pretended to be the son of Herod, a prince of their nation. Patrobulus, the same with Patrobas in Ro 16:14; who is reckoned one of the seventy disciples, is said to be bishop of this place; See Gill on "Lu 10:1"; though we have no account of its church state until the "fifth" century, when a bishop of the church at Puteoli is said to be in the council held at Ephesus against Eutyches, and sustained the place of Leo, pope of Rome: in the "sixth" century, a bishop of this church was in a council held at Rome, under Symmachus: in the seventh century, the bishop of Puteoli was in the sixth council at Constantinople {d}:

and were desired to tarry with them seven days; that is, the Christians at Puteoli desired the apostle, and those that were with him, to stay a week with them, that they might have the advantage of a day of public worship together, and might enjoy much of their Christian conversation; and accordingly they did stay that time, no doubt by the leave, and with the consent of Julius the centurion; and which shows, that he used the apostle with great civility and courteousness, and was very ready to grant him favours; if he was not in this voyage converted by him, which is not unlikely, considering the whole of his conduct:

and so we went toward Rome; after they had stayed seven days at Puteoli, they set forward on their journey to Rome; for from hence they went thither on foot, though they might have gone from hence to Rome by sea, as Apollonius Tyaneus did; See Gill on "Ac 28:13"; and so likewise Titus the son of Vespasian, who went from Rhegium to Puteoli in a merchant ship, and from thence to Rome {e}; but it may be the ship unloaded here, and there was no other going for Rome at that time: Rome was the metropolis of Italy, the seat of the empire, and mistress of the whole world; it is so well known, as not to need describing: it was built on seven hills, and had its name either from Romulus the founder of it; or from the Greek word rwmh, which signifies "strength" {f}, from whence Romulus is supposed to have his name; with the Hebrews it has its name from its sublimity, height, and glory, from the word Mwr, which signifies to be high and exalted: some say it had its name from Roma, a daughter of Italus, who first laid the foundation of it, though Romulus and Remus brought it into the form of a city; it was built seven hundred and fifty years, and upwards, before the birth of Christ. The Jews make it to be of an earlier date; they say {g}, that at the time Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter, Gabriel descended and fixed a reed in the sea, and brought up clay, and with it was built the great city, which is Rome; and in another place {h} it is said, in the day in which Jeroboam set up the two calves, one at Dan, and the other at Bethel, was built a certain cottage, which is Italy of Greece, that is, Rome; for it is elsewhere observed {i}, Italy of Greece, this is the great city of Rome; and again {k}, on the day in which Jeroboam set up the two calves, Remus and Romulus came and built two cottages in Rome.

{c} Antiqu. l. 17. c. 14. sect. 1. {d} Magdeburg. Eccl. Hist. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 7. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 8. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 5. {e} Sueton. Vita Titi, c. 5. {f} Aur. Victor. Origo Gent. Rom. p. 233. {g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 2. {h} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 56. 2. {i} T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 6. 1. {k} T. Hicros. Avoda Zara, fol. 39. 3. Vid. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 6. 2.

Acts 28:15

Ver. 15. And from thence,.... That is, from Rome, whither they were going:

when the brethren heard of us; when the Christians at Rome heard that the apostle and his friends were landed at Puteoli, and were on their journey to Rome: these were the members of the church at Rome; for there was a church state here before this time. The apostle had before this written a letter to them, called the Epistle to the Romans, in which he treats them as a church. The Papists say that the Apostle Peter was the first bishop of it, and pretend an uninterrupted succession from him; though it is questionable whether he ever was at Rome; and if he was, it is not probable that he should take upon him the care of a single church, which was not consistent with his office as an apostle: in the "first" century, the bishops or pastors of this church were as follow; after the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, Eusebius {l} says, Linus was the first bishop of it, the same that is mentioned in 2Ti 4:21 and according to the same writer {m}, Anencletus succeeded him, and then Clement, a fellow labourer of the Apostle Paul's, **Php 4:3**; who wrote two epistles to the Corinthians, which are still extant; though Eusebius {n}, not consistent with himself, makes Clement in another place to succeed Linus; and some make Clement even to be before him; and some place one Cletus before Anencletus and him: such an uncertainty is there, and such a puzzle attends the first account of this uninterrupted succession; and which seems designed in Providence to bring it into contempt: in the "second" century, Euarestus succeeded Clement; and then followed him Alexander, Sixtus, or Xystus, Telesphorus, Hyginus, Pius, Anicetus, Soter, Eleutherius, and Victor: in the "third" century, Victor was succeeded by Zephyrinus; and after him were Calixtus, Urbanus, Pontianus, Anterus, Fabianus, Cornelius, Lucius, Stephanus, Sixtus, or Xystus II, Dionysius, Felix, Eutychianus, and Gaius: in the "fourth" century, Marcellinus succeeded Gaius; who was followed by Marcellus, Eusebius, Miltiades, Sylvester, Julius, Liberius, Felix II, Damasus, and Siricius {o}; and further than this age, it is not worth while to follow them; the man of sin began to grow apace, and in a century or two afterwards, proclaimed himself universal bishop:

they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and the Three Taverns; these were both of them towns that lay in the Appian way to Rome; the former of these Horace {p} makes mention of, in the account of his journey from Rome to Brundusium; first he says, he came to Aricia, or Rizza, which is about 160 furlongs, or 21 miles from Rome, and from thence to Appii Forum: that Appii Forum was further from Rome than the Three Taverns, appears from what Cicero says {q}, who dates his letter to Atticus from Appii Forum, at four o'clock, and tells him, that be had sent him another a little before from "Tres Tabernae", or the Three Taverns; and indeed, Appii Forum was one and fifty miles from Rome, and the Three Taverns but three and thirty: so that the sense must be, that some of the brethren from Rome came as far as the Three Taverns, and others as far as Appii Forum; which, as before observed, were two towns upon the road: hence the former of these was not a statue of Appius, near the city of Rome, as some have {r} said; nor a market in the city itself, as says Jerom {s}, or a writer under his name; whose words are, Appii Forum is the name of a market at Rome, from Appius, formerly a consul, and from whom the Appian way had its name: but this was a town at some distance; there were several towns in Italy of a like appellation; as Julii Forum, Cornelii Forum, now Imola, Livii Forum, now Forli: Pliny {t} makes mention of an Appii Forum; and there was a town in Calabria, called Taberna: and as the one was not a mere market place, so the other does not design three houses for public entertainment; for the words should not be translated "three taverns", nor indeed translated at all; nor are they by Luke, who retains the Latin name, as the name of a place; and here it was that Severus, the Roman emperor, was killed by Herculius Maximianus {u}; and this, in Constantine's time, was the seat of a bishop; for among the bishops assembled on account of Donatus, mention is made of one "Felix a Tribus Tabernis" {w}, or Felix bishop of Tres Tabernae, the same place we call "the Three Taverns":

whom when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage; that is, when he saw the brethren that came to meet him, he gave thanks to God for the sight of them, which he had so much desired; and he took heart and courage, and went on cheerfully, and in high spirits, towards Rome; in hope of seeing the rest, and believing that God had some work for him to do there.

{l} Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 2. {m} Ib. c. 13. {n} Ib. c. 4. 15. {o} Magdeburg. Eccl. Hist. cent. 2. c. 10. p. 165, &c. cent. 3. c. 10. 193, &c. cent. 4. c. 10. p. 736, &c. {p} Sermonum, l. 1. Satyr 5. {q} Ad Atticum, l. 2. ep. 11. {r} Isidor. Pelusiot. Ep. l. 1. ep. 337. {s} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 95. K. {t} Nat. Hist. l. 14. c. 6. {u} Aurel. Victor. Epitome, p. 346. {w} Optat. de Schism Donat. l. 1. p. 26.

Acts 28:16

Ver. 16. And when we came to Rome,.... To the city itself:

the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; or general of the army; or, as some think, the governor of the "praetorian" band of soldiers, who attended the emperor as his guards: his name is thought to have been Burrhus Afranius; to him Julius the centurion delivered all the prisoners he brought from Caesarea, excepting Paul, to be disposed of by him, in the several prisons, or jails, to whom it belonged to take care of such persons: this clause is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions:

but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him: this was owing, either to the letter which Festus sent to Rome concerning him, and his case; by which it appeared, that he was no malefactor, and therefore to be used in a different manner from the rest of the prisoners; or rather to the intercession of the centurion, who had all along used him in a very civil and courteous manner; who requesting this favour had it granted, that Paul should not be put into the common prison with the rest, but should dwell in an apartment by himself; or, as the Ethiopic version renders it, "at his own will"; where he himself pleased, for he dwelt in his own hired house, Ac 28:30; only he was under the care and custody of a soldier, who constantly attended him wherever he went; and which could not be otherwise, seeing he was chained, as in Ac 28:20 and his chain was put on his right hand, and fastened to the left hand of the soldier, that had him under his keeping; so that wherever he was or went, the soldier must be likewise: hence that passage in Seneca {x},

"as the same chain joins together the prisoner and the soldier, so those things which are unlike go together; fear follows hope."

{x} Epist. 5.

Acts 28:17

Ver. 17. And it came to pass, that after three days,.... From his first coming to Rome, when he had hired himself a house, or lodging, and was settled in it, and was rested from the fatigue of his voyage and journey:

Paul called the chief of the Jews together: he sent to the principal men among them; for though the Jews, were expelled from Rome in the reign of Claudius, they were now returned, and had their liberty of residing there; very likely by means of Poppea, Nero's concubine, who favoured the Jews: but whether they had a synagogue, and these men were the chief and leading men in it, the doctors, rulers, and officers of it, are things not certain; however, these the apostle desired to come to him where he was, for whether he had the liberty of going about where he would, the soldier attending him, is not so clear a point:

and when they were come together; to his house, or lodging:

he said unto them, men and brethren: which was the usual form of address with the Jews; see **Ac 7:2**.

Though I have committed nothing against the people and customs of our fathers; meaning he had said nothing disrespectfully of the people of the Jews; nor had done anything to the prejudice of their temporal, spiritual, and eternal good, but just the reverse; nor had he said or done anything contrary to the laws and customs enjoined the Jews by Moses, even those that were of a ceremonial nature; for though he had everywhere declared that the Gentiles were not obliged to an obedience to them, yet he did not dissuade the Jews from the use of them; and oftentimes complied with them himself, things he had been charged with:

yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans; he was first seized by the Jews in the temple of Jerusalem, and then fell into the hands of Lysias, the chief captain; who bound him, and by whom he was sent to Caesarea, where he was retained a prisoner both by Felix and Festus, Roman governors.

Acts 28:18

Ver. 18. Who when they had examined me,.... About the things laid to his charge, had heard what his accusers had to object to him, and the defence he made for himself:

would have let [me] go; released him from his bonds, and set him at liberty to go where he pleased:

because there was no cause of death in me; no crime proved upon him, which was worthy of death; and this was the sense of Lysias the chief captain, and of Felix and Festus the Roman governors, and of King Agrippa.

Acts 28:19

Ver. 19. But when the Jews spake against it,.... His being cleared and dismissed, and desired he might be sent back to Jerusalem, to be tried and judged there, to which Festus seemed inclined:

I was constrained to appeal to Caesar; to prevent the design of the Jews upon him, which was to way lay him and kill him, or by what ways they could, right or wrong, take away his life; and to provide for his own safety:

not that I had ought to accuse my nation of; meaning, that he had no ill design in this appeal against his country, to expose them, and bring them under reproach and censure, but to vindicate himself, defend his own innocence, and preserve his character and life; suggesting, that what he did was not of choice, but by constraint, and with reluctance; being no friend to Heathen tribunals, nor any enemy to the Jewish nation.

Acts 28:20

Ver. 20. For this cause therefore have I called for you,.... To let them know the true state of his case; that though he was a prisoner, it was not for any crime he had done, much less any of a capital nature; and that as he was no scandal to his country, so neither did he intend to raise any against it, or say or do anything which might bring it into contempt and danger: as well as

to see [you] and speak with [you]; and keep up and maintain a free and friendly conversation together:

because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain; which was then upon him, and he pointed to; the true reason of which was, because he had preached that the Messiah the tribes of Israel were hoping and waiting for, and who is the only solid foundation of the hope of eternal life and salvation, was already come; and that he had suffered and died, and rose again from the dead, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he; see Jer 14:8. And this title well agrees with Jesus Christ, who in the New Testament is called "our hope", and "the hope of glory", **1Ti 1:1**, and he is the hope of every Israelite indeed, of every sensible sinner, of every regenerated person, whether Jew or Gentile; and such are encouraged to hope in him for grace here, and glory hereafter: and whereas they see themselves lost and undone, and that there is no salvation for them by their own works, and that there is salvation in Christ, they are directed and encouraged to hope in him for it; because it is a work finished by him, and is complete in him; it is of free grace and favour bestowed; it is wrought out for the chief of sinners; and such as they themselves are, are invited by himself to look to him for it; and the Gospel declaration is, that whoever believes in him shall be saved: they see themselves to be sinners, and that there is no hope of the forgiveness of their sins from an absolute God, or the absolute mercy of God out of Christ, but that the blood of Christ was shed for the remission of sins, and that God, for Christ's sake, does forgive sins: wherefore they hope in him for it; to which they are encouraged by the proclamation of the grace of God, as a forgiving God in Christ; by the promises of forgiveness in the covenant of grace; by the Gospel declaration of it; by its being entirely of free grace, through the blood of Christ; and by the many instances of the worst of sinners who have been favoured with it: these Israelites, indeed, also see themselves unrighteous creatures, and that they cannot be justified before God by works of righteousness done by them; but that there is a righteousness wrought out by Christ, which is acceptable and well pleasing to God; is freely bestowed on men, and is imputed to all sorts of men, even to the ungodly;

wherefore they hope in him for it, and lay hold on this object of hope set before them: in a word, they have hope of eternal life on his account, that being the gift of God through him; and it being the will of God, that whoever believes in him should have it; and it being in the power and right of Christ to bestow it; and they having also his Spirit as the earnest and pledge of it; as well as have his righteousness as their title to it, his grace as their meetness for it, and have a share both in his intercession and in his preparations of it: moreover, the apostle taught that there would be a general resurrection of the dead, upon which would succeed a state of everlasting happiness for the righteous; and which was the hope of the tribes of Israel in common, especially of every Israelite indeed: now these things had irritated the carnal Jews against him, who could not rest till they had been the means of bringing him into the condition he now was; nor were they content with this, without having his life.

Acts 28:21

Ver. 21. And they said unto him,.... That is, the chief men of the Jews at Rome, whom Paul had called together, replied; either in a lying and dissembling way, or as expressing matter of fact; which last may be allowed:

we neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee: which was very much, that the high priest and sanhedrim had not wrote to the principal men of their religion at Rome; giving an account of the apostle, and his case unto them, in order to prejudice them against him, and to furnish them with charges and accusations; which if they could not prevail by them, so as to get him condemned by the emperor, yet might be a means of preventing any of their nation giving heed unto him, and embracing his sentiments and notions concerning Jesus of Nazareth:

neither any of the brethren that came [from] Jerusalem; or any part of Judea, to Rome; meaning not the Christian Jews, for these they would not call brethren; but those who were of the same religion as well as nation, whom it was usual with the Jews to call brethren:

shewed or spake any harm of thee; so that it looks as if they did make mention of him, but did not charge him with anything that was wicked and criminal: this they said, to show that they were not prejudiced against him by any person or means; and which carried in it a very considerable testimony of the apostle's innocence.

Acts 28:22

Ver. 22. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest,.... What was his opinion and judgment, concerning the Messiah, whether he was come or not, and whether Jesus of Nazareth was he; and concerning other principles relating to him, embraced by the Christians; and what he had to say for the clearing up, proving, and confirming his sentiments about these things:

for as concerning this sect; or heresy, meaning the Christian religion: in saying so, they reproached it; for the Gospel, or Christian religion, is not an human device, the choice and option of man's free will, and what he pleases himself with, as an opinion and invention of his own, or of other men, as "heresy" signifies; but it is of God, and by revelation of Jesus Christ, and is a doctrine of the highest wisdom: nor does it deny or take away any fundamental article of true religion; either natural, as known by the Gentiles, or as revealed, with which the Jews were made acquainted, under the former dispensation; but establishes every such article, as the unity of the divine Being; the worship of the one only and true God of Israel, in a spiritual manner; the doctrine of the Messiah, his person, office, and grace; the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment; and therefore could not be chargeable with heresy: nor was it set up for any worldly gain, or popular applause, which are the things that authors and abettors of heresy have in view; nor was it designed to divide and separate persons from the true church of God, but to bring them to it, and unite them together in it; see
Ac 24:14.

We know that everywhere it is spoken against; this they knew, both by letters they received, and by persons who came from different parts of the world; and which was fact, and was no other than what was foretold concerning Christ, that he should be a sign that should be spoken against, **Lu 2:34**; and which the apostle found true of the Gospel preached by him, both among Jews and Greeks; it being to the one a stumblingblock, and to the other foolishness, **1Co 1:23**, and especially it was contradicted and blasphemed everywhere by the Jews; these in all places opposed themselves to it, and spoke evil of it, and of its preachers and professors: Christ, the author, sum, and subject of the Christian religion, was spoken against in his person; his deity and divine sonship were denied, as they still are; and his offices, as prophet, priest, and King; yea, his actions, even his works of mercy to the bodies of men, by healing their diseases, his conversing with sinners for the good of their souls, the several miracles he wrought, and the whole series of his life and conversation, were blasphemed and evil spoken of: the doctrines of the Gospel in general were contradicted, as they now are by many, as absurd and irrational, and as tending to licentiousness; and in particular those which respect the Father of Christ, as being the Father of Christ, his everlasting love to the elect in him, and his distinguishing grace in the choice of them; and those which relate to Christ, as that he is truly God, and the Son of God, and to his sacrifice, satisfaction, and imputed righteousness; and also which concern the Spirit of God, as his deity and personality, and his operations on the souls of men; and such as relate to a future state, the resurrection of all the dead, and judgment to come: likewise the ordinances of the Christian religion, baptism and the Lord's supper, were despised and spoken against, and the professors of it treated as fools and wicked men; the reasons of all this are, because the Christian religion, and the doctrines of it, are not of men, are contrary to the lusts of men, and particularly to the pride of men; they subject them to reproach and persecution, and gather men out from among them.

Acts 28:23

Ver. 23. And when they had appointed him a day,.... When they should meet together, and when both sides might be better prepared to enter into a conversation on the subject of Christianity; and when there might be an opportunity for a more numerous assembly to hear:

there came many to him into his lodging; the same very likely with his own hired house, Ac 28:30; hither a large number came at the time appointed, more than those whom Paul first sent for:

to whom he expounded; the Scriptures, the writings of Moses, and the prophets; and particularly such parts of them as concerned the Messiah; so our Lord expounded to his disciples in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself, Lu 24:27.

And testified the kingdom of God; or the kingdom of the Messiah, which oftentimes signifies the Gospel, and the Gospel dispensation: he produced full and sufficient proofs and testimonies from prophecies, miracles, and facts, that the kingdom of the Messiah was come; which consisted not in outward pompous things, in temporal riches and honours, as they expected; but in the ministration of the Gospel, and in the administration of its ordinances; and in righteousness and holiness, which give the one a right unto, and the other a meetness for, the kingdom of heaven: and of this he testified, that it is the kingdom of God, of his preparing and of his giving, and is what he calls his people unto, and makes them meet for; and in which they shall reign with him, and enjoy him for ever: and the apostle could testify and make it evident, that there was such a kingdom, and such a future glorious state; from the promise of God, to which the twelve tribes of Israel hoped to come; from the prophecies of the Old Testament, which speak of everlasting life, and of the resurrection of the dead unto it; from the expectations of the saints of the former dispensation, who all died in the faith of it; and from the coming of the Messiah, his sufferings and death, and ascension to heaven, whereby he had brought life and immortality to the clearest light:

persuading them concerning Jesus; endeavouring to persuade them, that Jesus was the true Messiah; that he was truly God, and the Son of God, as well as man; that he was born of a virgin, and wrought miracles, and yielded perfect obedience to the law; that he laid down his life as a sacrifice for sin, and to make reconciliation and atonement for it; that he brought in an everlasting righteousness; that he rose again from the dead for justification; that he was ascended up to heaven, and was set down at the right hand of God, where he ever lives to make intercession, and will come again a second time to judge both quick and dead: these are some of "the things concerning Jesus", as the words may be rendered, which the apostle endeavoured to persuade the Jews into a belief of; as also the blessings of grace which come by him, such as peace and pardon through his blood, reconciliation and atonement by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and complete salvation in him: concerning these he persuaded the Jews, setting things in a clear light, using strong arguments to convince them, and giving full proof, as the nature of them would admit of; and which is no other than moral persuasion, and is of itself ineffectual; efficacious persuasion is only of God; it is he that opens the heart to attend to these things, and gives faith to receive and embrace them: however, it is the duty of Gospel ministers to make use of arguments, and by them to endeavour to persuade men of their need of Christ, and of salvation by him, as the apostle did; see **2Co 5:11**.

Both out off the law of Moses: not the law of the ten commandments, given on Mount Sinai to Moses, who delivered it to the children of Israel, and is opposed to the doctrine of grace and truth, which came by Jesus Christ, **Joh 1:17**; that accuses and convinces of sin, and pronounces guilty, and curses for it; but does not reveal Jesus Christ as a Saviour from it; no proof can be taken from thence of the things concerning Jesus; but the five books of Moses are here meant, in which he wrote of Christ, as our Lord himself says, **Joh 5:46** as he did particularly in **Ge 3:15**; also the types and sacrifices, recorded in his writings, might be made use of in proof of Jesus, and the things of him:

and out of the prophets: such as Ps 22:15 **Isa 7:14**; with many others: and in this work he continued,

from morning till evening; not that we are to suppose, that he carried on one continued discourse upon these subjects, without any intermission; but that he was all the day employed, either in expounding: the Scriptures, proving that the kingdom of the Messiah was come, and using strong and persuasive arguments, to show that Jesus was he; or in answering the cavils and objections of the Jews, to what he said.

Acts 28:24

Ver. 24. And some believed the things which were spoken,.... By him, concerning the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ; even as many as were ordained unto eternal life, and to whom it was given to believe; for faith is the gift of God, and which comes by hearing of the word, when it is attended with a divine power; and then it is not only notionally understood, and barely assented to as truth, but is cordially believed and embraced, and cheerfully professed, and steadily held fast: this was not a mere historical faith, or a bare assent to the truth of the things spoken, nor a mere profession of faith in them, but a believing in Christ with the heart, the sum and substance of them; as they heard these things, their understandings were enlightened, and they saw their need of Christ, and the things of Christ, which were held forth in the ministry of the word; and so approved of them, savoured, relished, and fed upon them; and until this is the case, none can, nor will believe aright:

and some believed not: notwithstanding the full proof, and clear evidence produced by the apostle: these were not of Christ's sheep, their eyes were blinded, and their hearts were hardened, as was prophesied of them, and therefore they could not believe; they were given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart, and were left under the power of obstinate and invincible unbelief: their disbelief of these things arose from the prejudices they had conceived about a worldly kingdom; from the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, they imagining the Messiah would not die, but abide for ever; from the carnal reasonings of their minds, about divine and spiritual things; and from the ignorance that was in them, because of the obduracy of their hearts. The kingdom the apostle testified of was not an Utopian kingdom, nor any of the real kingdoms of this world, but the kingdom of the Messiah they were expecting; but that which he described, being not such an one as they imagined, they believed him not: the things he said concerning Jesus were not trivial, speculative, and indifferent things; but of the greatest moment and importance, and of which there was full proof in their own writings; and though spoken by Paul, were no other than the word of God; and besides, were good news, and glad tidings, and yet they believed them not: this difference among them, some believing and some not believing, was not owing to the power and free will of man, as if some of themselves would, and did believe, and others would not, but to the distinguishing grace of God; for faith is not of man, it is the gift of God, it is the fruit of electing grace, and is given in consequence of it: nor is this any unusual thing, under the same ministration of the word, for one to believe, and another not believe: this is a common case, and is the usual success the Gospel meets with; so it always has been, and so it is, and will be; so it was in the times of Noah, he was a preacher of righteousness to the old world, even of the righteousness of faith, many were disobedient, few believed; and so it fared with the evangelical prophet Isaiah, and with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and other prophets of the Old Testament; and with John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and with Christ himself, as well as with our apostle; and this has been the case ever since his time, now is, and will be, as long as the Gospel is preached.

Acts 28:25

Ver. 25. And when they agreed not among themselves,.... One part believing what was said, and the other disbelieving; and such a division is the usual effect of the Gospel ministry; see
Lu 12:51. Or this may be understood of the unbelieving party, who though they agreed in the main that Jesus was not the Messiah, yet might have different sentiments of the apostle; of the manner of his reasoning, and the nature of his proofs and arguments; and of some things which he delivered, which some might assent to, and others deny; as the Pharisees and Sadducees in the sanhedrim at Jerusalem disagreed about the doctrine of the resurrection: and the rather this may be thought to be the sense, because they not only departed, when very likely those that believed might stay longer, but because at their departure the apostle says something very cutting and stinging, and which he would not say in common of them all, of the believers; and besides, they are afterwards said to reason among themselves, Ac 28:29.

They departed; from the apostle's lodging to their own houses, or to some other place, where they could call over, and debate among themselves, the things they had heard:

after that Paul had spoken one word; a very remarkable one, and full to the purpose, and which he gave them just at parting with them:

well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers; the passage referred to is in **Isa 6:9**, which the prophet Isaiah delivered under the influence and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, being moved by him, as all the holy men of God were; and which was very appropriate, not only to the Jewish fathers in the times of Isaiah, but to their posterity in succeeding ages, in the times of Christ and his apostles; see Mt 13:10; and were exceeding applicable to the present unbelieving Jews, who had been disputing with the apostle, and were now departing from him, in unbelief: and from hence it appears, that since it was the Holy Ghost that spake by Isaiah the prophet, and he that spoke to him and by him, was the Adon, Jehovah, and Lord of hosts, as is clear from **Isa 6:1**; it follows, that the Holy Ghost is a divine person, truly God, and equal with the Father and the Son.

Acts 28:26

Ver. 26. Saying, go unto this people, and say,.... A message sent in wrath and judgment to the people of Israel, rejected from being the people of God, a "lo ammi" being written upon them; and therefore God does not call them "his", but "this" people: and this message was sent by an evangelical prophet, who foretold, in the clearest manner, the Messiah's incarnation, and birth of a virgin, the work he was to do, the sufferings he should undergo, and the glory that should follow; and that after he had seen in a vision the glory of the King Messiah, the perfections of deity filling the temple of his human nature, him exalted on a throne, and attended and worshipped by angels; after he had had such a view of his beauty and excellency, that laid him low in his own sight, and humbled him under a sense of his own impurity and unworthiness; and after he had had a comfortable discovery and application of pardoning grace; and after he had expressed such a readiness and willingness to go on the Lord's errand: which one might have thought would have been of a different nature; and that he would have been sent, and have been made useful, to set forth the glories and excellencies of Christ's person, office, and grace, he had had such a view of; and to preach the comfortable doctrine of pardoning grace to men, which he had just now such a gracious experience of; but on the contrary, he is bid to say, hearing ye shall hear; with bodily ears, the Gospel preached by the Messiah and his apostles:

and shall not understand, spiritually and experimentally, what they heard: to have an opportunity of hearing the Gospel, is a great blessing; seeing it is good news, glad tidings of good things, a joyful sound, and the voice of Christ himself; it is a distinguishing favour, and what all men at all times have not; when it is attended with a divine energy, the Spirit of God is received through it, regeneration, quickening and sanctifying grace are by it; faith comes by hearing it, and Christ is found under the ministration of it; and, generally speaking, the understanding and knowledge of divine things, are by means of it: men are naturally without the understanding of spiritual things, and where the Gospel is not, they remain so; the ministers of the Gospel, and the word preached by them, are the means of leading men into a spiritual understanding of things, though only as, and when attended with the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ: and a special mercy it is when persons, whilst hearing the word, understand what they hear, and can distinguish truth from error; and approve of the truth, receive the love of it, feel the power, and taste the sweetness of it; find it and eat it, believe, embrace, and profess it, and bring forth fruits worthy of it: but on the contrary, when it is heard and not understood, it is an awful dispensation; for hence either they content themselves with bare hearing, and depend upon it for salvation; or they despise and speak evil of what they do not understand; and so their hearing, instead of being a blessing, is an aggravation of their condemnation:

and seeing ye shall see: miracles wrought:

and not perceive; them to be proofs of the things, for which they are wrought: so Jarchi expounds those words,

"ye shall see the wonders, or miracles I have done for you, and shall not set your hearts to know me"

from whence it appears that the Gospel preached in the clearest and most powerful manner, and even miracles wrought in confirmation of it, are insufficient for conversion; and nothing will effect it, but efficacious grace.

Acts 28:27

Ver. 27. For the heart of this people is waxed gross,.... Or fat; stupefied with notions of carnal and temporal things, and become hardened against, and unsusceptible of, divine and spiritual things:

and their ears are dull of hearing; the Gospel, and its joyful sound; to which they stop their cars, as the deaf adder to the voice of the charmer:

and their eyes have they closed; and wilfully shut, against all evidence from facts, miracles, prophecies, and preaching:

lest they should see with [their] eyes, and hear with [their] ears,
and understand with [their] heart, and should be converted; that is, see the evidence of miracles, take in the truth of doctrine, understand the meaning of prophecy, and so be turned from darkness, ignorance, and unbelief, to light, knowledge, and faith:

and I should heal them; or "have mercy on them", as the Ethiopic version renders it; that is, forgive their sins: hearing the Gospel preached, is the ordinary means of understanding spiritual things; and the understanding being enlightened through the ministry of the word, by the Spirit of God, whereby the sinner sees his lost state by nature, his impurity and impotency, the danger he is in, and the destruction that is imminent on him, and he is liable to, and also his need of Christ, and salvation by him; this issues in conversion, in the turning of a man from the evil of his ways, to believe in Christ, walk on in him, and worthy of him; when he is healed of the diseases of his soul, which are many, are natural, and hereditary, mortal and incurable, but by Christ the great physician; by whose stripes, wounds, and blood, there is healing, that is, pardon; for healing diseases, and pardoning iniquities, are one and the same; see Ps 103:3; and at conversion, when a soul is enlightened, and made sensible of the evil of sin, and that there is no cure of this disease, by anything that he or any creature can do, or prescribe for him, but only by the blood of Christ; a discovery of pardoning grace is made unto him; and he is made whole, and cured of every disease that attended him; from whence spring joy, peace, and comfort to him:, but when through hearing the word, the understanding is not enlightened, and conversion does not follow upon it, there is no healing of the disease of sin, no pardon applied; and consequently such must be in a most deplorable and miserable condition, as all ignorant hearers and despisers of the Gospel are; See Gill on "Mt 13:14;
See Gill on "Mt 13:15;

Acts 28:28

Ver. 28. Be it known therefore unto you,.... Unbelievers and despisers, take this along with you at parting, and do not say you were never acquainted with it:

that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles; meaning the Gospel, which is a publication and declaration of that salvation, which God contrived from all eternity; made provision for, and secured in the covenant of grace; which he appointed, called, and sent Christ to effect, in the fulness of time; and which he has accomplished, by his obedience, sufferings, and death; even a full, complete, spiritual, and eternal salvation, from sin, Satan, the world, the curse of the law, and eternal death; that that Gospel which proclaims this, and is the power of God unto it, to them that believe, is sent to the Gentile world, by God himself, who has ordered his ministers to turn to them, upon the rejection of it by the Jews:

and [that] they will hear it: and do understand it and obey it, believe it and profess it: this the apostle could assert upon his own knowledge, who had preached it in many nations of the world; and could testify how gladly they heard it, with what pleasure they received it, how readily they obeyed it, and how cheerfully they professed it, and how steadily they held it; though the Jews despised and put it away from them, judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life: this the apostle says, reproaching them with their folly, stupidity, and infidelity; when the Gentiles, which knew not God, received the Gospel and are saved.

Acts 28:29

Ver. 29. And when he had said these words,.... Cited the prophecy of Isaiah, and declared the mission of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and their calling by it; both which must greatly gravel and disturb the unbelieving part of his audience:

the Jews departed; much displeased and uneasy:

and had great reasoning among themselves; not only with them that believed, but with others, that seemed to incline towards the apostle, and who espoused and undertook to defend some principles of his, against the rest, as the doctrine of the resurrection; and particularly they might take into consideration the passage in Isaiah, the apostle had recited to them at parting, and which was so appropriate to them; as well as the account he gave them of the preaching of the Gospel, and the success of it among the Gentiles, things which must be very grating to them: this whole verse is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Syriac version.

Acts 28:30

Ver. 30. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house,.... In a house which he hired with his own money; in which his friends Luke, Aristarchus, and others, dwelt with him; where he was guarded by a soldier: whether at the expiration of these two years he was set at liberty, and for ten years afterwards travelled into Italy, France, and Spain, preaching the Gospel, as some think; or whether he then suffered martyrdom, is not certain; the latter is most probable:

and received all that came in unto him; there, as the Syriac version reads, that is, into his lodging, as the Ethiopic version expresses it; which is not to be understood of his hospitality, for it cannot be thought that he should provide food and lodging for all that came unto him; but that be admitted all that would to come and hear him, and freely preached the Gospel to them: it should seem by this, as well as by what is said Ac 28:23; that many of the Jews came into his lodging, and heard him expound, that it was a large house he had hired and dwelt in; and such an one Jerom {y} thinks it was, like that he supposes he would have Philemon provide for him, which he desires in his epistle to him, #Phm 22; namely, a house in the most noted place in the city, for the conveniency of those that came to him; large enough to hold many; free from noise and disturbance; and not situated in a scandalous neighbourhood, nor near to shows and plays; and that the lodging should rather be on the floor than in an upper room: and such a house, with all the conditions that Jerom mentions, the Papists pretend to show at Rome to this day; where, as their tradition is, Luke composed, or however finished this his history; which, as the above writer observes {z}, reaches to the two years of Paul's stay at Rome; that is, until the fourth year of Nero; from whence, adds he, we learn that in the same city this book was composed: and it is certain, that Luke was with him, when the apostle wrote his second epistle to Timothy from Rome, and when the time of his martyrdom seemed to himself to be at hand, **2Ti 4:7**.

{y} Comment in Philemon v. 22. Tom. 9. fol. 116. I. {z} Catalog. Script. Eccl. sect. 17. fol. 91. C.

Acts 28:31

Ver. 31. Preaching the kingdom of God,.... That is, the Gospel, as in **Lu 4:43**; he preached up Jesus as the King Messiah, and declared that his kingdom was come, and opened the nature of it; that it consisted not in meats and drinks, but in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; which is the kingdom of grace here, and is within a man, in his heart, where grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life: and he gave them same account of the kingdom of glory, and the way unto it; and showed, that without regeneration and sanctification, no one could be meet for it; and without the justifying righteousness of Christ, no man could have a right unto it, or be possessed of it:

and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ: his person, as God and man; his office as Mediator, being prophet, priest, and King; his incarnation and birth; his life and miracles; his doctrine and obedience, sufferings and death; his resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand; his intercession, and second coming to judgment; with all the truths of the Gospel, in which he has a concern; as redemption, peace, reconciliation and pardon, by his blood and sacrifice, and justification by his righteousness, and salvation and eternal life through him. These things had been the subject of the apostle's ministry, throughout the whole of it: he began at Damascus with preaching Jesus as the Son of God and the true Messiah; and he ends at Rome, with teaching the things concerning him: at his first setting out in the work of the Lord, he determined to make known none but Christ, and him crucified; and in this resolution he continued through the whole course of his life, and abode by it to the end: and this he did

with all confidence; with all freedom and liberty in his soul, though he was bound in his body with a chain; with all plainness, openness, and faithfulness; and with all courage and boldness, though in the midst of adversaries:

no man forbidding him; not the Roman emperor, nor the Roman senate, nor any other magistrate; nor could the Jews hinder him, nor was his mouth to be stopped by any; nor could the open door of the Gospel be shut, or its course be impeded; for though the apostle was bound, the word of God was not, but ran and was glorified; and was made known, and even owned in Caesar's palace; some say Nero's cupbearer, and Poppea his concubine, were converted by him: and he not only continued preaching the Gospel during the two years of his imprisonment at Rome, but also wrote several epistles to churches, and particular persons; as the epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and the Hebrews, and to Philemon, and the "second" epistle to Timothy: some copies add here, "Amen"; and at the close of the Alexandrian copy, stand these words, "the Acts of the holy Apostles"; and at the Syriac version these, "the End of the Acts of the blessed Apostles, that is, of their Histories".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS

Though this epistle is in order placed the first of the epistles, yet it was not first written: there were several epistles written before it, as the two epistles to the Thessalonians, the two to the Corinthians, the first epistle to Timothy, and that to Titus: the reason why this epistle stands first, is either the excellency of it, of which Chrysostom had so great an esteem that he caused it to be read over to him twice a week; or else the dignity of the place, where the persons lived to whom it is written, being Rome, the imperial city: so the books of the prophets are not placed in the same order in which they were written: Hosea prophesied as early as Isaiah, if not earlier; and before Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and yet stands after them. This epistle was written from Corinth, as the subscription of it testifies; and which may be confirmed from the apostle's commendation of Phoebe, by whom he sent it, who was of Cenchrea, a place near Corinth; by his calling Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, who abode at Corinth, **2Ti 4:20**, and Gaius his host, who was a Corinthian, Ro 16:23 **1Co 1:14**, though at what time it was written from hence, is not so evident: some think it was written in the time of his three months' travel through Greece, Ac 20:2, a little before the death of the Emperor Claudius, in the year of Christ 55; others, that it was written by him in the short stay he made at Corinth, when he came thither, as is supposed, from Philippi, in his way to Troas, where some of his company went before, and had been there five days before him: and this is placed in the second year of Nero, and in the year of Christ 56; however, it was not written by him during his long stay at Corinth, when he was first there, but afterwards, even after he had preached from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum: and when he was about to go to Jerusalem, with the contributions of the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, to the poor saints there, Ro 15:19. The persons to whom this epistle was sent were Roman saints, both Jews and Gentiles, inhabiting the city of Rome; of which city and church;
See Gill on "Ac 28:14";

See Gill on "Ac 28:15"; by whom the Gospel was first preached at Rome, and who were the means of forming the church there, is not very evident Irenaeus, an ancient writer, says {a}, that Peter and Paul preached the Gospel at Rome, and founded the church; and Gaius, an ecclesiastical man, who lived in the time of Zephyrinus, bishop of Rome, asserts the same; and Dionysius; bishop of the Corinthians, calls the Romans the plantation of Peter and Paul {b}: whether Peter was ever at Rome is not a clear point with many; and certain it is, that the Apostle Paul had not been at Rome when he wrote this epistle, at least it seems very probable he had not, by several expressions in **Ro 1:10**; and yet here was a church to which he writes, and had been a considerable time; for their faith was spoken of throughout the world, **Ro 1:8**; and when the apostle was on the road to this city, the brethren in it met him, Ac 28:15. The chief design of this epistle is to set in a clear light the doctrine of justification: showing against the Gentiles, that it is not by the light of nature, and works done in obedience to that, and against the Jews, that it was not by the law of Moses, and the deeds of that; which he clearly evinces, by observing the sinful and wretched estate both of Jews and Gentiles: but that it is by the righteousness of Christ imputed through the grace of God, and received by faith; the effects of which are peace and joy in the soul, and holiness in the life and conversation: he gives an account of the justified ones, as that they are not without sin, which he illustrates by his own experience and case; and yet are possessed of various privileges, as freedom from condemnation, the blessing of adoption, and a right to the heavenly inheritance; he treats in it concerning predestination, the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews; and exhorts to the various duties incumbent on the saints, with respect to one another, and to the world, to duties of a moral and civil nature, and the use of things indifferent; and closes it with the salutations of divers persons.

{a} Adv. Haeres. l. 3. c. 1. Vid. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 8. {b} Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 25.

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 1

This chapter contains the inscription of the epistle, and salutation, the preface to it, and the grand proposition of justification by faith, so much enlarged on afterwards; and that this could not be by the law of nature, and the works of it among the Gentiles, is demonstrated by a detail of their horrible wickedness, impiety, and unrighteousness. In the inscription an account is given of the author of the epistle, who is described in **Ro 1:1** by his name Paul: by his relation to Christ, a servant of his; and by his office, an apostle, whose business and concern were with the Gospel; to which he was separated. This

Gospel is commended from the author of it, who is God himself; and from the antiquity of it, **Ro 1:2**, being as ancient as the writings of the prophets; and from the subject of it, being the Lord Jesus Christ; who is described by his relation to God, his Son, by his dominion over the saints, their Lord, by both his natures, human and divine; his human nature, as being of the seed of David, his divine nature, being the Son of God, **Ro 1:4**, which is declared by the power he is possessed of, by the Spirit of holiness that is in him, by his resurrection from the dead, and by the apostles receiving from him grace to fit them for their office, and by the office itself: the end of which was to make some among all nations obedient to him, **Ro 1:5**, among whom were the saints at Rome, who were called by him, and after his name, **Ro 1:6**, which introduces the account of the persons to whom this epistle is written, who are described, **Ro 1:7**, by the place of their abode, Rome; by their interest in the love of God; and by the effect, fruit, and evidence of it, their effectual calling; and then follows the apostle's usual salutation, as in all his epistles, in which he wishes grace and peace for them, from God the Father, and from Christ. The preface begins **Ro 1:8**, in which are a thanksgiving to God, through Christ, for all the saints at Rome, particularly on account of their faith, for which they were everywhere so famous; an appeal to God, **Ro 1:9**, for the truth of his incessant prayers for them, and particularly, **Ro 1:10**, that this was a request he made, that if it was the will of God, he might have a speedy and prosperous journey to, them; an expression of strong affection to them, and of his great desire to see them, **Ro 1:11**, his end in which was partly for their sakes, to communicate spiritual things to them for their establishment, and partly for his own comfort, and the increase of the mutual faith of both, **Ro 1:12**, also a vindication of himself, **Ro 1:13**, showing, that it was not any fault of his, or any neglect of them by him, that he had not been with them as yet, but some things hindered him, in the execution of his purpose to come to them; to which he was moved, partly by the hope of having fruit among them, as among others, and partly through the obligation that lay upon him by virtue of his office, to preach the Gospel to all sorts of men, **Ro 1:14**, he expresses his willingness and readiness to preach the Gospel to them at Rome, as soon as an opportunity would offer, **Ro 1:15**, which was his work and office, what he delighted in, was closely attached to, and by no means ashamed of, **Ro 1:16**, partly because of the nature of it, it was the Gospel, good news and true: and partly because of the author and subject of it, Christ; as also because of the efficacy of it in the salvation of Jews and Gentiles; and likewise because of a principal doctrine revealed in it, **Ro 1:17**, the doctrine of justification by faith, in the righteousness of Christ, confirmed and illustrated by a passage out of **Hab 2:4**, and which he particularly mentions, because he intended to dwell upon it in this epistle: and in order to show that the Gentiles could not be justified in the sight of God by their obedience to the law, and the light of nature, he observes, that they were the objects of the wrath of God, **Ro 1:18**, and that very justly, because they sinned knowingly; they had some knowledge of the truth, but they would not profess it: and that they had such knowledge of it, he proves from the author of it, God, who showed it to them, **Ro 1:19**, and from the means of it, by which they must, and did arrive to some degree of it, namely, the works of creation, **Ro 1:20**. The apostle goes on to expose the ingratitude of them, the vanity of their minds, the pride and folly of their hearts, **Ro 1:21**, the gross idolatry they were guilty of, **Ro 1:23**, for which idolatry they were given up to their own hearts' lusts, to commit the foulest and most scandalous iniquities, even to commit sodomitical practices, and unnatural lusts, both men and women, **Ro 1:24**. And so far were they from having a righteousness to justify them before God, that they were titled with all unrighteousness; and a large list of the vilest sins, being committed by them, is given; and a catalogue of the worst of sinners, as among them, **Ro 1:29**. All which are aggravated by their knowledge of the will of God, through the light of nature, that these things were contrary to it, and were deserving of death; and yet they both did them, and were delighted with those that committed them also: the inference which he leaves to be deduced from hence, and which may easily be deduced, is, that therefore there can be no justification of such persons in the sight of God by their own works.

Ver. 1. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ,.... The name of the author of this epistle is Paul, who formerly was called Saul. Some think his name was changed upon his own conversion; others, upon the conversion of the Roman deputy Sergius Paulus, Ac 13:7; others, that he was so called from the littleness of his stature; but rather it should seem that he had two names, which was usual with the Jews; one by which they went among the Gentiles, and another by they were called in their own land; See Gill on "Ac 13:9". "A servant of Jesus Christ"; not a servant of sin, nor of Satan, nor of man, nor of Moses and his law, nor of the traditions of the elders, but of Jesus Christ; and not by creation only, but by redemption, and by powerful efficacious grace in conversion; which is no ways contrary to true liberty; nor a disgraceful, but a most honourable character; and which chiefly regards him as a minister of the Gospel:

called to be an apostle: an apostle was one that was immediately sent by Christ, and had his authority and doctrine directly from him, and had a power of working miracles from him, in confirmation of the truth of his mission, authority, and doctrine; all which were to be found in the author of this epistle, who did not thrust himself into this office, or take this honour to himself, of which he always judged himself unworthy, but was "called" to it according to the will, and by the grace of God:

separated unto the Gospel of God. This may regard either God's eternal purpose concerning him, his preordination of him from eternity to be a preacher of the Gospel, to which he was separated from his mother's womb, **Ga 1:15**; or the separation of him to that work made by the order of the Spirit of God, Ac 13:2. The phrase used is either in allusion to the priests and Levites, who were separated from their brethren the children of Israel, to their sacred employments; or rather to the apostle's having been vwrp, "a Pharisee", which signifies "one separated", as he was now; only with this difference, before he was separated to the law, but now "to the Gospel", to preach and defend it, which he did with all faithfulness and integrity; the excellency of which Gospel is signified by its being called "the Gospel of God": he is the author of it; his grace is the subject of it; and he it is who commits it to men, qualifies them for the preaching of it, and succeeds them in it.

Romans 1:2

Ver. 2. Which he had promised afore,.... The Gospel is here further commended from the antiquity it: it was no novel doctrine, an upstart notion, but what God had conceived in his own breast from eternity. This mystery was hid in him from the beginning of the world, and was ordained before the world was; in time God was pleased to make it known to the sons of men; he "promised" it, he spoke of it, and declared it

by his prophets, Isaiah and others, "afore" the Apostle Paul was called forth to be a preacher of it; which promise, or promises of it, lie

in the Holy Scriptures; the books of the Old Testament, so called from the author, matter, and usefulness of them. The apostle speaks in the language of his nation, for the Jews frequently call the Bible, writings, Holy Ones; "for", say they, vdq Mybwtk lk, "all the Scriptures are holy" {c}, and style them, vdqh ybtk, "Scriptures of holiness", or holy Scriptures {d}.

{c} Misn. Yadaim, c. 3. sect. 5. {d} Misn. Parah, c. 10. sect. 3. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 116. 2.

Romans 1:3

Ver. 3. Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord,.... These words are in connection with "the Gospel of God", **Ro 1:1**, and express the subject matter of it, the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord; for Christ, as the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, the only Mediator between God and men, who is Lord both of the dead and living, is the sum and substance of the Gospel: he is here described by his relation to God, his Son, of the same nature with him, equal to him, and distinct from him; by his usual names, "Jesus Christ", the one signifying a "Saviour", the other "anointed", and both, that he was anointed of God to be the Saviour of his people; and by his dominion over the saints our Lord, not merely by creation, but by redemption and grace, and happy is the person that can claim interest in him, as is here done; and by the distinction of natures in him:

which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; this respects Christ in his human nature, who was made flesh, and of a woman; and shows his existence before his incarnation, and the immediate power and hand of God in it; and which was done, not by transmutation of him into flesh, but by an assumption of human nature into union with his divine person: he is said to be made "of the seed of David"; this points out the family from whence he sprung; designs the posterity of David, particularly Mary; has regard to the promise made to David, which God fulfilled; and shows the royal descent of Christ: it is added, "according to the flesh"; that is, according to his human nature; which phrase does not denote the corruption, but the truth of that nature; and supposes that he had another nature, otherwise there would have been no need of this limiting and restrictive clause.

Romans 1:4

Ver. 4. And declared to be the Son of God,.... Not made as he is said to be before, when his incarnation is spoken of; nor did he begin to be the Son of God, when he was made of the seed of David, but he, the Son of God, who existed as such, from everlasting, was manifested in the flesh, or human nature: and this his divine sonship, and proper deity, are declared and made evident,

with, or "by"

[his] power; which has appeared in the creation of all things out of nothing; in upholding all things in their beings; in the government of the world, and works of Providence; in the miracles he wrought; in his performing the great work of

redemption; in the success of his Gospel, to the conversion of sinners; and in the preservation of his churches and people: here it seems chiefly to regard the power of Christ in raising the dead, since it follows, and which is to be connected with this clause,

by the resurrection from the dead; and designs either the resurrection of others, as of Lazarus, and some other persons, in his lifetime, and of some at his resurrection, and of all at the last day: or the resurrection of his own body, which dying he had power to raise up again, and did; and which declared him to be, or clearly made it appear that he was the Son of God, a divine person, truly and properly God: and this was done

according to the Spirit of holiness; which may be understood of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, who is holy in himself, and the author of holiness in the saints; and who is the declarer of Christ's sonship, partly by bearing a testimony to it in the word, and in the hearts of believers, and chiefly by being concerned in the resurrection of the body of Christ from the dead; or else by the Spirit of holiness may be meant the divine nature of Christ, which, as it is holy, so by it Christ offered himself to God, and by it was quickened, or made alive, when he had been put to death in the flesh; and which must be a clear and strong proof of his being truly the Son of God.

Romans 1:5

Ver. 5. By whom we have received grace and apostleship,.... That is, either by the Holy Spirit, from whom all grace and gifts come, qualifying for the discharge of any office; or by the Lord Jesus Christ, who is full of grace and truth, has received gifts for, and gives them to men to fit them for whatsoever service he is pleased to call them to. By "grace and apostleship" may be meant, either one and the same thing, the favour and honour of being the apostles of Christ; or different things, and the one in order to the other. Grace may design special saving grace in calling, justification, pardon, and adoption, and sanctification, which was received in common with other saints, and is absolutely necessary to an apostle, and to any ordinary minister of the word; or the doctrine of grace, which they received from Christ, and dispensed to others; or rather the gifts of grace, and the various measures thereof, which they received from their ascended Lord and King, by which they were furnished for apostleship, that is, the work and office of apostles; to which they were called by Christ, and from whom they received a commission to execute it. The apostle takes in others sides himself, and says, "we have received";

partly for the sake of modesty, and partly to keep up his equal title with others to this office; and since this is had in a way of receiving, which supposes giving, and excludes boasting, it obliges to make use of all grace and gifts to the glory of Christ, by whom they are received. The end for which they received such an office, and grace to fit them for it, was, "for obedience to the faith"; that men might be brought by the ministry of the word to obey the faith, Christ the object of faith; to submit to his righteousness, and the way of salvation by him, and to be subject to his ordinances or to obey the doctrine of faith, which is not barely to hear it, and notionally receive it, but to embrace it heartily by faith, and retain it, in opposition to a disbelief and contempt of it; and which is the end and design of the Gospel ministration to bring persons to, Moreover, by

obedience to the faith, or "obedience of faith", as it may be rendered, may be meant the grace of faith, attended with evangelical obedience; for obedience, rightly performed, is only that which is by faith, and springs from it. Now grace and apostleship were received, in order to be exercised

among all nations; not in Judea only, to which the first commission of apostleship was limited, but in all the nations of the world, as the commission renewed by Christ after his resurrection ordered; and that some among all nations of the earth might, by the power of divine grace accompanying the word, be brought to faith and obedience: and all this, the qualifications for the office, the due exercise of it in all the world, and the success that attended it, were

for his name; for the honour and glory of Christ, in whose name they went, and which they bore and carried among the Gentiles, out of whom he was pleased "to take a people for his name", Ac 15:14.

Romans 1:6

Ver. 6. Among whom are ye also,.... The Romans, though they were the chief, were among the nations of the world to whom the apostles were sent; and since Paul was called to be an apostle, and had, as others, grace and apostleship, and particularly the apostleship of the uncircumcision, or was ordained a teacher of the Gentiles, more especially he was an apostle to them, and as such was to be regarded by them. This seems to point out what they were originally; they were among all nations which lay in darkness; and were without Christ and hope, and God in the world; but now,

the called of Jesus Christ. The calling here spoken of is not to an office, or a mere external one by the ministry of the word, but an internal special call by the grace of God; and which is irresistible, efficacious, and unchangeable, and is an high, holy, and heavenly one; by it persons are called out of darkness into light, out of bondage into liberty, out of the world, from the company of the men of it, and the sinful pleasures thereof, to fellowship with Christ and his saints, and off a dependence on themselves, and their own righteousness, to the grace and righteousness of Christ, and to eternal glory. The persons so called are the elect of God, who are secured in Christ, and redeemed by him, and who has a concern with the Father and Spirit in the calling of them: hence they are styled, "the called of Jesus Christ"; they are called by him, and after his name; he has an interest in them; as they were before his chosen and redeemed ones, they are now his called ones; as Jacob and Israel of old were named of God, yarqm, "my called",
Isa 48:12; so these were named Christ's called ones; and who by calling came to be partakers of him and of his grace.

Romans 1:7

Ver. 7. To all that be in Rome,.... These words contain both the inscription of the epistle, and the apostle's usual salutation, as in all his epistles, The inscription of it is not to the Roman emperor; nor to the Roman senate, nor to all the inhabitants in Rome; but to all the saints there, whether rich or poor, bond or free, male or female, Jew or Gentile, without any distinction, being all one in Christ Jesus: and these are described as

beloved of God; not for any loveliness there was in them, nor because of any love in them to God, nor on account of their obedience and righteousness; but through the free favour and sovereign will and pleasure of God, who loved them before he called them, even from eternity, and will love them to eternity; which love of his is the source and spring of all the blessings of grace, and, among the rest, of the effectual calling: hence this character is set before the following one,

called [to be] saints; not born so, nor become so through their own power, but were so by calling grace, as a fruit of everlasting love; men are first beloved of the Lord, and then called to be his saints. The salutation follows; the things wished for in it are, grace to you, and peace: by "grace" is not meant ministerial gifts, which are not common to all the saints; nor the Gospel, which was at Rome already; nor the love and favour of God, which these persons were sharers in, as appears from their above characters; nor the principle of grace, which was now formed there in their effectual calling; but an increase of grace, as to its degrees, acts, and exercise; every grace is imperfect in this respect, and those who have the most stand in need of more; there is such a thing as growing in grace, which is very desirable, and may be expected from God, who is able to make all grace to abound, and has promised to give more: by "peace" is meant, peace with God through Christ; peace in their own consciences, and with one another; all manner of prosperity inward and outward here, and eternal happiness hereafter. The persons from whom these are desired are,

God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; God the Father of Christ is spoken of as our Father, which is by adoption; partly to engage fear and reverence of him at his throne; and partly to encourage freedom and boldness there, and an expectation of receiving every blessing of grace from him: "the Lord Jesus Christ" is mentioned, as being the person through whom, and for whose sake, all the blessings of grace and peace are communicated to us; and being put upon a level with the Father in these petitions, shows him to be equal with him, and so truly and properly God. "Grace" may be thought to be particularly wished for from the Father, though not exclusive of Christ, since he is the God of all grace, who has treasured up a fulness of it in his Son. And "peace" may be considered as desired to be had from Christ, though not exclusive of the Father; since the covenant of peace was made with him, the chastisement of peace was laid on him, and he has made peace by the blood of his cross, and is the giver of it to his people.

Romans 1:8

Ver. 8. First, I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all,.... After the inscription and salutation, follows a thanksgiving, which begins the epistle: it is usual with the apostle in all his epistles to make requests for the churches, with thanksgivings for mercies; his view in it was, to glorify God, to testify his affection to the saints, and to show that all they had must be referred to the grace of God. The object of thanksgiving is God not merely as a creator and preserver, but as a Father, the Father of Christ, and our Father in Christ; as the one God, and our God, Father, Son, and Spirit. The apostle styles him, my God; which distinguishes him from all others, points out his particular interest in him, expresses his knowledge of him and faith in him, and demonstrates that what he did now, he did in faith. The person through whom thanks are given is Jesus Christ. There is no coming to God but through Christ, nor is any sacrifice either of prayer or praise acceptable without him, and since all we have come through him, it is but reasonable that thanks for them should be returned by and through him; the persons for whom this thanksgiving is made were all the Romans, all the saints at Rome, the members of the church there, of whatsoever rank and degree, and in whatsoever, state and condition; the thing for which the apostle was thankful for particularly was, not that their city was mistress of the whole world, and their fame for power, wealth, and grandeur, was spread abroad far and near; but, says he,

that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world; which shows that faith is a grace of great account: God has put an honour upon it, by making it the receiver of all his gifts, and that gives glory to God, and without it nothing is acceptable to him; it answers many excellent uses and purposes in experience; it is that by which saints live upon Christ in this world, and look to the glories of another. This also shows that the saints at Rome did not hide their faith in their breasts, but declared it to others; a public profession both of the grace and doctrine of faith is to be made, and constantly held; both are to be shown forth to others, by deeds as well as words; which greatly redounds to the honour of such churches, causes joy in other churches, and in all the ministers of the Gospel, and is the occasion of many thanksgivings to God.

Romans 1:9

Ver. 9. For God is my witness, whom I serve,.... These words are an appeal to God, and carry in them the nature and form of an oath; the reason of the apostle's using it was, because he was personally unknown to the Romans, and they to him, and so might doubt of his affectionate regard unto them; and therefore for the confirmation thereof he uses it: this was a case which was only known to God and himself, and hence he appeals to him for the truth of it. The object of his oath or appeal, or by which he speaks, is not himself, or anything that belonged to him, nor any creature in heaven or on earth, but God; who in a solemn oath is only to be appealed to and sworn by: he describes him as the God "whom [he] served", to distinguish him from all false gods, and to show that he that takes an oath, should be one that fears and serves the Lord; what he served him in was not the law, but

the Gospel of his Son; Jesus Christ, who is the author, minister, and subject matter of it: he served him in it, by preaching, spreading, and defending it.

This is a service, and a very laborious one, and makes for the honour and glory of God. The manner in which he served him was, as he says,

with my Spirit; either with the Spirit of God, which was given to him; or in a spiritual manner, in opposition to the carnal worship of the Jews; internally, in opposition to bodily exercise only, and voluntarily, with his whole heart, soul, and spirit. The matter or substance of his appeal or oath was,

that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; whence may be observed, that prayer to God ought to be constant; and that we should be concerned for others as well as for ourselves; all the saints should share therein.

Romans 1:10

Ver. 10. Making request, if by any means now at length,.... A principal thing, which be incessantly and importunately requested at the throne of grace, was, that he might have an opportunity of coming to them; that God in his providence would open a way for him; and that he might have a safe and comfortable journey in a very little time; all which he submits to the will of God, as a good man ought to do; and which he thus expresses,

I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God, to come unto you; see **Jas 4:13**.

Romans 1:11

Ver. 11. For I long to see you,.... Not the city of Rome, which was one of Austin's three wishes to have seen in its glory; nor the emperor of it, nor the senate in it, nor its populous inhabitants, fine buildings, riches and grandeur; but the poor saints there, which were the excellent men of the earth, of the whole Roman empire, and in whom was his delight: his desire to see them was not to gratify his curiosity, nor to spend his time in idle chat with them, nor with a view to enrich himself by them; but, says he,

that I may impart some spiritual gift: not any extraordinary gift of the Spirit; but spiritual light, knowledge, peace, and comfort, through the exercise of his ministerial gift: whence it may be observed, that that which qualities men for the preaching of the word to the profit of others, is a gift, a gift by grace; a spiritual one, which comes from the Spirit of God, and may be, and is to be imparted to others in the free use and exercise of it; and that,

to the end that saints may be established; for such who are called by grace, need establishing. They are indeed in a safe state and condition; they are encircled in the arms of everlasting love, they are fixed in the hands of Christ, secured in an everlasting covenant, established on the rock of ages, and settled in a state from whence they can never fall: yet, notwithstanding this, they are sometimes very unstable in their hearts, in their frames, in the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty, and in professing and adhering to the doctrines of the Gospel; wherefore they need establishing, as to a more firm persuasion of interest in the love of God, and in the covenant of grace, as to a more stable exercise of grace in Christ, and as to a more constant discharge of duty, and steady profession of adherence to the truths of the Gospel; to all which the ministration of the word has a tendency, with a divine blessing.

Romans 1:12

Ver. 12. That is, that I may be comforted together with you,.... This is a further explanation of his view, in being desirous of coming to them, and preaching: the Gospel among them; for what makes for establishment, makes for comfort; and what makes for comfort, makes for establishment; and when souls are established, ministers are comforted as well as they; and whilst ministers are imparting their spiritual gifts for the use of others, they themselves are sometimes comforted of God in their work, and particularly when they find there is an agreement between their doctrine, and the experience of the saints:

by the mutual faith both of you and me. The grace of faith is the same in all the saints, and so is the doctrine of it, as dispensed by Christ's faithful ministers, and experimentally received and embraced by his people; the consideration of which has a very great influence on the comfort and establishment of each other; nor are any so perfect, but they may receive benefit from others, even though inferior to them.

Romans 1:13

Ver. 13. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren,.... The apostle calls them brethren, because many of them were Jews, his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, and all of them were his brethren in a spiritual relation;

and this he does to express his affection to them, and engage their attention and credit to him, and particularly to this matter which he now acquaints them with, being unwilling they should be ignorant of it;

that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you: it was not a sudden start of mind, or a desire that lately arose up in him, but a settled resolution and determination, and which he had often made:

but was let hitherto; either by God, who had work for him to do in other places; or by Satan, who sometimes by divine permission has had such power and influence; see **1Th 2:18**, or through the urgent necessities of other churches, which required his stay with them longer than he intended: his end in taking up at several times such a resolution of coming to them was, says he,

that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles: by fruit he means, not any reward of his labour, either temporal or eternal; but the conversion of sinners, the edification of saints, and the fruitfulness of believers in grace and works. The apostle seems to allude to the casting of seed into the earth: Christ's ministers' are husbandmen, who sow the seed of the word, which lies some time under the clods; wherefore patience is necessary to wait its springing up, first in the blade, and then in the ear, then in the full corn in the ear, when it brings forth fruit; all which depend on the blessing of God: and when he adds, "as among other Gentiles", his design is not so much to let them know that they were as other Gentiles, upon a level with them, had no pre-eminence as citizens of Rome, over other saints, being all one in Christ Jesus; as to observe to them his success in other places, where he had been preaching the Gospel of the grace of God.

Romans 1:14

Ver. 14. I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians,.... The meaning is, that he was obliged by the call he had from God, the injunction that was laid upon him by him, and the gifts with which he was qualified, to preach the Gospel to all sorts of men; who are here distinguished into Greeks and Barbarians: sometimes by Greeks are meant the Gentiles in general, in opposition to the Jews; see **Ro 1:16**; but here they design only a part of the Gentiles, the inhabitants of Greece, in opposition to all the world besides; for the Greeks used to call all others that were not of themselves Barbarians {e}: or else by Greeks are meant the more cultivated nations of the world, and by Barbarians the ruder and more uncivil parts of it; to which agrees the next division of mankind,

both to the wise and to the unwise. The Gospel was to be preached "to the wise"; such who thought themselves to be so, and were so with respect to human wisdom and knowledge; though it should be despised by them, as it was, and though few of them were called by it, some were, and still are, though not many; and such wisdom there is in the Gospel, as the wisest of men may learn by it, will be entertaining to them, is far beyond their contempt, and what will serve to exercise their talents and abilities, to search into the knowledge of, and rightly to understand; and it must be preached "to the unwise"; for such God has chosen to confound the wise; these he calls by his grace, and reveals his Gospel to, whilst he hides it from the wise and prudent; and there is that in the Gospel which is plain and easy to the weakest mind, enlightened by the Spirit of God.

{e} Cornel. Nepos, l. 1. c. 2, 7. & 2, 3. & 3. 6. & 4. 1. & passim. Quint. Curtius, l. 3. c. 4, 7. & 6. 5. & passim.

Romans 1:15

Ver. 15. So, as much as in me is, I am ready,.... This explains what he was a debtor to one and another for, namely,

to preach the Gospel; expresses the readiness of his mind to that work, whatever difficulties lay in his way; and declares what a willing mind he had to preach it also to the Romans, as elsewhere:

to you that are at Rome also; the metropolis of the Roman empire, a very public place, the seat of Satan, and where was the heat of persecution.

Romans 1:16

Ver. 16. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ,.... The reason why he was so ready and willing to preach it, even where he ran the greatest risk of his character and life, was, because it was "the Gospel of Christ" he preached, and he was not ashamed of it. This supposes that some were, though the apostle was not, ashamed of the Gospel; as all such are who hide and conceal it, who have abilities to preach it, and do not: or who preach, but not the Gospel; or who preach the Gospel only in part, who own that in private, they will not preach in public, and use ambiguous words, of doubtful signification, to cover themselves; who blend the Gospel with their own inventions, seek to please men, and live upon popular applause, regard their own interest, and not Christ's, and cannot bear the reproach of his Gospel. It expresses, that the apostle was not ashamed of it; that is, to preach it, which he did fully and faithfully, plainly and consistently, openly and publicly, and boldly, in the face of all opposition: and it designs more than is expressed, as that he had the utmost value for it, and esteemed it his highest honour that he was employed in preaching it: his reasons for this were, because it was "the Gospel of Christ"; which Christ himself preached, which he had learnt by revelation from him, and of which he was the sum and substance: and because

it is the power of God; not essentially, but declaratively; as the power of God is seen in making men ministers of it, in the doctrines held forth in it, in the manner in which it was spread in the world, in the opposition it met with, in the continuance and increase of it notwithstanding the power and cunning of men, and in the shortness of time, in which so much good was done by it in the several parts of the world: it is the power of God organically or instrumentally; as it is a means made use of by God in quickening dead sinners, enlightening blind eyes, unstopping deaf ears, softening hard hearts, and making of enemies friends; to which add, the manner in which all this is done, suddenly, secretly, effectually, and by love, and not force: the extent of this power is,

unto salvation; the Gospel is a declaration and revelation of salvation by Christ, and is a means of directing and encouraging souls to lay hold upon it. The persons to whom it is so, are in general,

everyone that believeth: this does not suppose that faith gives the Gospel its virtue and efficacy; but is only descriptive of the persons to whom the Gospel, attended with the power and grace of God, is eventually efficacious: and particularly it was so,

to the Jew first; who as they had formerly the advantage of the Gentiles, much every way, through the peculiar privileges which were conferred on them; so the Gospel was first preached to them by Christ and his disciples; and even when it was ordered to be carried into the Gentile world, it was to begin with them, and became effectual for the salvation of many of them:

and also to the Greek; to the Gentile; for after the Jews had rejected it, as many being called by it as Jehovah thought fit, at that time, it was preached to the Gentiles with great success; which was the mystery hid from ages and generations past, but now made manifest.

Romans 1:17

Ver. 17. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed,.... By "the righteousness of God", is not meant the essential righteousness of God, the rectitude of his nature, his righteousness in fulfilling his promises, and his punitive justice, which though revealed in the Gospel, yet not peculiar to it; nor the righteousness by which Christ himself is righteous, either as God, or as Mediator; but that righteousness which he wrought out by obeying the precepts, and bearing the penalty of the law in the room of his people, and by which they are justified in the sight of God: and this is called "the righteousness of God", in opposition to the righteousness of men: and because it justifies men in the sight of God; and because of the concern which Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, have in it. Jehovah the Father sent his Son to work it out, and being wrought out, he approves and accepts of it, and imputes it to his elect: Jehovah the Son is the author of it by his obedience and death; and Jehovah the Spirit discovers it to sinners, works faith in them to lay hold upon it, and pronounces the sentence of justification by it in their consciences. Now this is said to be "revealed" in the Gospel, that is, it is taught in the Gospel; that is the word of righteousness, the ministration of it; it is manifested in and by the Gospel. This righteousness is not known by the light of nature, nor by the law of Moses; it was hid under the shadows of the ceremonial law, and is brought to light only by the Gospel; it is hid from every natural man, even from the most wise and prudent, and from God's elect themselves before conversion, and is only made known to believers, to whom it is revealed:

from faith to faith; that is, as say some, from the faith of God to the faith of men; from the faith of preachers to the faith of hearers; from the faith of the Old to the faith of the New Testament saints; or rather from one degree of faith to another; for faith, as it grows and increases, has clearer sights of this righteousness, as held forth in the Gospel. For the proof of this, a passage of Scripture is cited,

as it is written, **Hab 2:4**;

the just shall live by faith: "a just", or righteous man is, not everyone who thinks himself, or is thought by others to be so; nor are any so by their obedience to the law of works; but he is one that is made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, which is before said to be revealed in the Gospel. The life which this man lives, and "shall live", does not design a natural or corporeal life, and a continuance of that, for such die a natural death, as other men; nor an eternal life, for though they shall so live, yet not by faith; but a spiritual life, a life of justification on Christ, of holiness from him, of communion with him, and of peace and joy; which spiritual life shall be continued, and never be lost. The manner in which the just lives, is "by faith". In the prophet Habakkuk, the words are, "the just shall live" wtnwmab, "by his faith" (**Hab 2:4**); which the Septuagint render, "by my faith": and the apostle only reads, "by faith", omitting the affix, as well known, and easy to be supplied: for faith, when given by God, and exercised by the believer, is his own, and by it he lives; not upon it, but by it upon Christ the object of it; from whom, in a way of believing, he derives his spiritual life, and all the comforts of it.

Romans 1:18

Ver. 18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven,.... The apostle having hinted at the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; and which he designed more largely to insist upon in this epistle, and to prove that there can be no justification of a sinner in the sight of God by the deeds of the law, in order to set this matter in a clear light, from hence, to the end of the chapter, and in the following ones, represents the sad estate and condition of the Gentiles with the law of nature, and of the Jews with the law of Moses; by which it most clearly appears, that neither of them could be justified by their obedience to the respective laws under which they were, but that they both stood in need of the righteousness of God. By "the wrath of God" is meant the displicency and indignation of God at sin and sinners; his punitive justice, and awful vengeance; the judgments which he executes in this world; and that everlasting displeasure of his, and wrath to come in another world, which all through sin are deserving of, some are appointed to, God's elect are delivered from, through Christ's sustaining it, in their room and stead, and which comes and abides on all impenitent and unbelieving persons. This is said to be "revealed", where? not in the Gospel, in which the righteousness of God is revealed; unless the Gospel be taken for the books of the four Evangelists, or for the Gospel dispensation, or for that part of the ministry of a Gospel preacher, which represents the wrath of God as the desert of sin, the dreadfulness of it, and the way to escape it; for the Gospel, strictly taken, is grace, good news, glad tidings, and not wrath and damnation; though indeed in Christ's sufferings for the sins of his people, which the Gospel gives us an account of, there is a great display of the wrath of God, and of his indignation against sin: but this wrath of God is revealed in the law, it is known by the light of nature, and to be perceived in the law of Moses, and may be observed in the Scriptures, where are many instances and examples of divine wrath and displeasure; as in the total destruction of the old world by a world wide flood, the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, turning Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, the plagues of Egypt, and the several instances mentioned in this chapter. This wrath is said to be God's wrath "from heaven", by the awful blackness which covers the heavens, the storms and tempests raised in them, and by pouring down water or fire in a surprising manner, on the inhabitants of the world; or "from heaven", that is, openly, manifestly, in the sight of all; or from God who is in heaven, and not from second causes; and more especially it will be revealed from heaven, when Christ shall descend from thence at the day of judgment: the subject matter or object of it,

against, or "upon" which it is revealed, are,

all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men; that is, all ungodly and unrighteous men; or all men who are guilty of ungodliness, the breach of the first table of the law, which respects the worship of God, and of unrighteousness, the breach of the second table of the law, which regards our neighbours' good: and these persons are further described as such,

who hold the truth in unrighteousness: meaning either such who know the Gospel, which is "the truth", and do not profess it openly, but hold and imprison it in their minds, which is a great piece of unrighteousness; or if they do profess it, do not live up to it in their lives: or rather the Gentile philosophers are designed, who are spoken of in the following verse; See Gill on "Ro 1:22"; who had some knowledge of the truth of the divine Being, and his perfections, and of the difference between moral good and evil; but did not like to retain it themselves, nor communicate all they knew to others, nor did they live according to that knowledge which they had.

Romans 1:19

Ver. 19. Because that which may be known of God,.... There are some things which could not be known of God by the light of nature; as a trinity of persons in the Godhead; the knowledge of God in Christ as Mediator; the God-man and Mediator Jesus Christ; his incarnation, sufferings, death, and resurrection; the will of God to save sinners by a crucified Jesus; the several peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, particularly the resurrection of the dead, and the manner of worshipping of God with acceptance: but then there are some things which may be known of God, without a revelation. Adam had a perfect knowledge of him; and his sons, though fallen, even the very Heathens have some notion of him, as that there is a God; and by the light of nature it might be known that there is but one God, who is glorious, full of majesty, and possessed of all perfections, as that he is all powerful, wise, good and righteous: and this

is manifest in them, or "to them"; by the light that is given them: it is light by which that which may be known of God is manifest; and this is the light of nature, which every man has that comes into the world; and this is internal, it is in him, in his mind and conscience, and is communicated to him by God, and that by infusion or inspiration; see Job 32:8;

for God hath showed [it] unto them; what may be known of him by that light; and which is assisted and may be improved by a consideration of the works of creation and Providence.

Romans 1:20

Ver. 20. For the invisible things of him,.... Not the angels, the invisible inhabitants of heaven: nor the unseen glories of another world; nor the decrees of God; nor the persons in the Godhead; but the perfections of God, or his "properties", as the Arabic version reads it; and which are explained by "his eternal power and Godhead": these,

from the creation of the world are clearly seen; this is no new discovery, but what men have had, and might, by the light of nature, have enjoyed ever since the world was created; these

being understood, in an intellectual way, by the discursive faculty of the understanding,

by the things that are made; the various works of creation; all which proclaim the being, unity, and perfections of God their Creator,

so that they are without excuse; the very Heathens, who have only the light of nature, and are destitute of a revelation, have no colour or pretext for their idolatrous practices, and vicious lives; nor have they, nor will they have anything to object to God's righteous judgment against them, or why they should not be condemned.

Romans 1:21

Ver. 21. Because that when they knew God,.... Though they had such a knowledge of the being and perfections of God, yet

they glorified him not as God. They neither thought nor spoke honourably of him; nor did they ascribe those perfections to him, which belonged to him; they did not adhere to him as the one and only God, nor honour him as the Creator of all things out of nothing, and as the sole Governor of the universe; they did not glorify him by the internal exercise of fear of him, love to him, or trust in him, nor by any external worship suitable to his nature, and their own notions of him, Seneca is an instance of this, of whom Austin {f} says,

"that he worshipped what he found fault with, did what he reproved, and adored that which he blamed."

Neither were thankful; neither for the knowledge of things they had, which they ascribed to themselves; nor for their mercies, which they imputed to second causes:

but became vain in their imaginations; the vanity or their minds was the spring and source of their evil conduct; which may design the wickedness of their hearts, and the imaginations thereof, which were evil, and that continually; the pride of their natures the carnality and weakness of their reasonings, and the whole system of their vain philosophy; and hence they ran into polytheism, or the worshipping of many gods:

and their foolish heart was darkened; where they thought their great wisdom lay: darkness is natural to the hearts and understandings of all men, which is increased by personal iniquity; Satan is concerned in improving it, and God sometimes gives up the hearts of persons to judicial blindness, which was the case of these men.

{f} De Civitate Dei, l. 6. c. 10.

Romans 1:22

Ver. 22. Professing themselves to be wise,.... The learned men among the Gentiles first called themselves sofoi, "Sophi", wise men: and afterwards, to cover their wretched pride and vanity, filosofoi, "Philosophers", lovers of wisdom; but notwithstanding all their arrogance, their large pretensions to wisdom, and boast of it

they became fools; they appeared to be so; they showed themselves to be such in those very things they prided themselves with the knowledge of: as, for instance, Socrates, after he had asserted the unity of God, and is said to die a martyr for the truth; yet one of the last actions of his life was sacrificing a cock to Aesculapius, at least he desired his friend Crito to do it.

Romans 1:23

Ver. 23. And changed the glory of the incorruptible God,.... God is incorruptible and immortal in his nature, and so is opposed to all corruptible creatures and things: he has a glory which is essential to him, and a manifestative one in the creatures, and which is relative, and of right belongs to him: his absolute essential glory cannot be changed, cannot be taken away from him, nor given to another; but his relative glory may be said to be changed, when another is worshipped in his stead, and called by his name. So Philo the Jew {g} speaks of

"some, who, leaving the true God, make to themselves false ones, and impose the name of the eternal and incorruptible upon created and corruptible beings."

Into an image made like to corruptible man; which was worshipped in different forms by the several nations of the world:

and to birds; as the dove by the Samaritans, the hawk, the ibis, and others by the Egyptians:

and fourfooted beasts; as the ox, and other creatures:

and creeping things; such as beetles, serpents, and others, by the same.

{g} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 678, 679.

Romans 1:24

Ver. 24. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness,.... Not by putting any into them, but by leaving them to the pollution of their nature; by withdrawing his providential restraints from them, and by giving them up to judicial hardness:

through the lusts of their own hearts. The heart of man is the source of all wickedness; the lusts that dwell there are many, and these tend to uncleanness of one sort or another: by it here is meant particularly bodily uncleanness, since it is said they were given up

to dishonour their own bodies between themselves; either alone, or with others; so that as they changed the glory of God, and dishonoured him, he left them to dishonour themselves by doing these things which were reproachful and scandalous to human nature.

Romans 1:25

Ver. 25. Who changed the truth of God into a lie,.... Not the truth of the Gospel, which they were unacquainted with; but that which might be known of God as true, and was known of them by the light of nature; or the true God himself, whom they "changed into a lie"; by ascribing to false deities, which were lying vanities, those things which were known of God; and by worshipping them instead of him: for they

worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator; or "above him" or "against him", in opposition to him, or "besides him", others along with him; or neglecting him, and not worshipping him at all; which is aggravated in that what they worshipped was a creature, either of their own, or of God's making, and whom they neglected was the Creator of them:

who is blessed for ever, Amen; is blessed in himself, and the fountain of all blessedness to his creatures; which is so glaring a truth, that everyone ought to say and set his "Amen" to it.

Romans 1:26

Ver. 26. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections,.... Because of their idolatrous practices, God left them to very dishonourable actions, sodomitical ones, both among the men and women:

for even the women did change the natural use into that which is against nature; either by prostituting themselves to, and complying with the "sodomitical" embraces of men, in a way that is against nature {h}; or by making use of such ways and methods with themselves, or other women, to gratify their lusts, which were never designed by nature for such an use: of these vicious women, and their practices, Seneca {i} speaks, when he says,

"libidine veto nec maribus quidem cedunt, pati natae; Dii illas Deoeque, male perdant; adeo perversum commentae, genus impudicitiae, viros ineunt:"

also Clemens Alexandrinus {k} has respect to such, saying,

"gunaikev andrizontai para fusin, gamou men ai te kai gamousai gunaikev.'

and such there were among the Jews, whom they call wzb wz twllwomx Myvn {l}, and whom the priests were forbidden to marry.

{h} Vid. R. Sol Jarchi in Gen. xxiv. 16. {i} Epist. 95. {k} Paedagog. l. 3. p. 226. {l} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 65. 2. Piske Tosaph. ib. artic. 266. Yevamot, fol. 76. 1. & Piske Tosaph. ib. art. 141. Maimonides in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 4. & Hilchot Issure Bia, c. 21. sect. 8, 9.

Romans 1:27

Ver. 27. And likewise also the men leaving the natural use of the women,.... The very sin of "sodomy" is here designed, so called from Sodom, the place where we first hear of it, Ge 19:5, the men of which place, because they

burned in their lust one towards another, as these Gentiles are said to do, God rained upon them fire and brimstone from heaven: an exceeding great sin this is, contrary to nature, dishonourable to human nature, and scandalous to a people and nation among whom it prevails, as it did very much in the Gentile world, and among their greatest philosophers; even those that were most noted for moral virtue are charged with it, as Socrates, Plato, Zeno, and others {m}: it is a sin which generally prevails where idolatry and infidelity do, as among the Pagans of old, and among the Papists and Mahometans now; and never was it so rife in this nation as since the schemes of deism and infidelity have found such a reception among us. Thus God, because men dishonour him with their evil principles and practices, leaves them to reproach their own nature, and dishonour their own bodies:

men with men working that which is unseemly; and of which nothing like it is to be observed in the brutal world:

receiving in themselves the recompence of their error, which was meet: God punishes sin with sin; for as the Jews say {n}, as

"one commandment draws on another, so one transgression draws on another; for the reward of the commandment is the commandment, hrybe hrybe rkvw and the reward of transgression is transgression."

{m} A. Gellius Noct. Attic. l. 2. c. 18. Laert. Vit. Philosoph. l. 2. in Vit. Socrat. & l. 3. in Vit. Platon. {n} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 2.

Romans 1:28

Ver. 28. And even as they did not like,.... This accounts for the justness of the divine procedure in leaving them to commit such scandalous iniquities; that since they had some knowledge of God by the light of nature, and yet did not care

to retain God in [their] knowledge; or to own and acknowledge him as God, to worship and glorify him as such; but took every method to erase this knowledge out of their minds, and keep it from others:

God gave them over to a reprobate mind; a vain empty mind, worthless, good for nothing devoid of all true knowledge and judgment; incapable of approving what is truly good, or of disapproving that which is evil; a mind that has lost all conscience of things, and is disapproved of by God, and all good men:

to do those things which are not convenient; which are neither agreeably to the light of nature, nor convenient to, or becoming the honour of human nature; things which the brutes themselves, who are destitute of reason, do not do.

Romans 1:29

Ver. 29. Being filled with all unrighteousness,.... From hence, to the end of the chapter, follows a large and black list and catalogue of the sad characters of the Gentiles, and of the best men they had among them; for the apostle is all along speaking, not of the common people, but of their wise professors, and moral instructors; than which there never was a more wicked set of men that ever lived upon the face of the earth; who under the guise of morality were guilty of the greatest pride and covetousness, and of the most filthy debaucheries imaginable: they were "filled with all unrighteousness". This word includes in it all manner of sin and wickedness in general; fitly expresses the condition of fallen men, destitute of a righteousness; designs every violation of the law respecting our neighbour; and is opposed to that vain conceit of righteousness which these men had: particular branches of it follow; as,

fornication; which sometimes includes adultery and an unchastity; simple fornication was not reckoned a sin among the Gentiles:

wickedness; or mischief, which intends not so much the internal wickedness of the heart, as that particular vice, by which a man is inclined and studies to do hurt, to others, as Satan does:

covetousness; this may intend every insatiable lust, and particularly the sin which goes by this name, and is the root of all evil, and was a reigning sin among the Gentiles. Seneca, the famous moralist, was notoriously guilty of this vice, being one of the greatest usurers that ever lived:

maliciousness; the word denotes either the iniquity of nature in which men are conceived and born; or that desire of revenge in men, for which some are very notorious:

envy; at the superior knowledge and learning, wealth and riches, happiness, and outward prosperity of others:

murder: which sometimes arose from envy, wherefore they are put together. There is an elegant "paranomasia" in the Greek text:

debate; strife about words more than things, and more for vain glory, and a desire of victory, than for truth:

deceit; through their empty notions of philosophy; hence "philosophy and vain deceit" go together, **Col 2:8**; making large pretences to morality, when they were the vilest of creatures:

malignity; moroseness; having no courteousness nor affability in them, guilty of very ill manners; as particularly they were who were of the sect of the Cynics. Now they are said to be "filled with", and "full of", these things; not filled by God, but by Satan and themselves; and it denotes the aboundings of wickedness in them, and which was insatiable. The apostle goes on to describe them, as

whisperers; who made mischief among friends, by privately suggesting, and secretly insinuating things into the mind of one to the prejudice of another.

Romans 1:30

Ver. 30. Backbiters,.... Who more publicly defamed the characters of their neighbours, and hurt their good name, credit and reputation, though behind their backs:

haters of God; some read it, "hated of God"; as all workers of iniquity are; but rather this expresses their sin, that they were deniers of the being and providence of God, and showed themselves to be enemies to him by their evil works:

despiteful; both by opprobrious words, and injurious actions:

proud; of their natural knowledge, learning, eloquence and vain philosophy:

boasters: of their parts, abilities, wisdom and works; all which they attributed to themselves, and to the sharpness of their wit, their sagacity and industry:

inventors of evil things; of evil schemes of morality and philosophy, and of evil practices, as well as principles:

disobedient to parents; which was acting contrary to the light of nature.

Romans 1:31

Ver. 31. Without understanding,.... Of God, of his nature and worship, of things divine and even moral, being given up to a reprobate mind:

covenant breakers; had no regard to private or public contracts:

without natural affection; to their parents, children, relations and friends:

implacable; when once offended there was no reconciling of them:

unmerciful; had no pity and compassion to persons in distress.

Romans 1:32

Ver. 32. Who knowing the judgment of God,.... Either of the law of God, the law and light of nature, by which they might in some measure know the difference between good and evil, and what was right and wrong; or the judiciary sentence of God against sin:

that they which commit such things are worthy of death; at least of corporeal death:

not only do the same, but have pleasure in those that do them; all which greatly aggravated their wickedness, since they sinned against light and knowledge, with approbation and good liking of their own sins, and took pleasure in the sins of others. The Jews have a saying {p},

"that no man is suspected of a thing but he has done it; and if he has not done the whole of it, he has done part of it, and if he has not done part of it, he has thought in his heart to do it, and if he has not thought in his heart to do it, xmvw wvev Myrxa har, "he has seen others do it, and has rejoiced"."

And if such a man is a wicked man, how much more wicked are such who commit sin themselves, and delight in the sins of others? now from this whole account we see the insufficiency of the light of nature to guide persons in the way of salvation; what need there was of a divine revelation; and how impossible it is that such men should ever be justified before God, by any works of seeming righteousness done by them; which the apostle had in view, in giving this account of the depraved nature and conduct of the Gentiles, and of those among them who professed to be, and were the wisest and most knowing of them.

{p} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 18. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 2

This chapter contains, in general, a vindication of the justice and equity of the divine procedure against men, such as are described in the preceding chapter; and a refutation of the several pleas that might be made by the Gentiles, who had not the law, and by the Jews who had it; and concludes with exposing the wickedness of the latter, and with showing who they are that are properly Jews, and circumcised persons, in the account of God. It begins, in **Ro 2:1**, with an inference deduced from what had been said in the latter part of the foregoing chapter; concluding that such, be they who they will, Jews or Gentiles, are inexcusable, who do the things they condemn others for: but though the judgment of such persons is wrong, the apostle observes, **Ro 2:2**, that the judgment of God, in the condemnation of them, is right, of which he, and others, were fully assured; and which judgment is commended, by the rule of it, being according to truth; by the objects of it, criminals, who are left without excuse, and by the inevitableness of it, **Ro 2:3**, being such as cannot possibly be escaped: and though some men might hope to escape it, because not immediately punished, but loaded with the blessings of Providence, and peculiar benefits of divine goodness; yet this was to be ascribed to the forbearance of God for the present; and that if these favours were despised, and they had not a good effect upon them to bring to repentance, but instead thereof were more and more hardened under them, as their guilt would be increased, so wrath would be secretly laying up for them, which will be revealed in the day of judgment, **Ro 2:4**, at which time justice will be done to every man as his works will be found to be, **Ro 2:6**, then follows a description of the several sorts of persons that will be judged, and of the different things that will be their portion: as that eternal life will be given to good men, **Ro 2:7**, and the wrath of God poured down on bad men, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, **Ro 2:8**. The happiness of good men is repeated again, and explained, and promised to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile, **Ro 2:10**, and a reason given of this just and equal distribution, taken from the nature of God, who is no respecter of persons, **Ro 2:11**, an instance of which is produced in both Jews and Gentiles, that sin; the one perishing with, the other without the law, **Ro 2:12**, since it is not barely having and hearing the law, but acting up to it, which only can justify before God, **Ro 2:13**, upon which the apostle proceeds to refute the plea that might be made by the Gentiles, in favour of themselves, why they should not be condemned, taken from their not having the written law; for though they had not the law written on tables of stone, as the Jews had, yet they had, as he observes, the law of nature written on their hearts, against which they sinned: this he proves by the effects of it, discernible in many of them by their outward lives and conversations, in conformity to the law; and by the inward testimony of their consciences, approving of good deeds, and reproaching for bad ones, **Ro 2:14**, which two verses being put into a parenthesis, **Ro 2:16**, is connected with **Ro 2:13**, and points at the time when the doers of the law shall be justified, even at the day of judgment: which judgment is described by the author of it, God; by the subject of it, the secrets of men's hearts; by the person employed in the divine procedure, Jesus Christ; and by the evidence and certainty of it, the Gospel preached by the apostle, and then follow a description of the Jews, an account of their profession of religion, and an ironical concession of the several characters they assumed to themselves: they are described by their name, a Jew; by their religion, which lay in trusting in the law of Moses, and in boasting of their interest in God, as the God of Israel, **Ro 2:17**, by their knowledge of the will of God, and approbation of the excellent things of his law, **Ro 2:18**, and by the characters they took to themselves, **Ro 2:19**, from which the apostle takes an occasion to expose the wickedness of some of their principal men, even their teachers, **Ro 2:21**, by whose wicked lives and conversations God was dishonoured, and his name blasphemed among the Gentiles, **Ro 2:23**, hence it appears, that their name, profession, and character, would not justify them before God; wherefore the apostle goes on, to remove their plea taken from circumcision, showing that could be of no use to them, but became void through their breach of the law, **Ro 2:25**, and that, on the other hand, an uncircumcised Gentile, by keeping the law from right principles, and to a right end, appeared to be the true circumcision, **Ro 2:26**, wherefore the circumcised Jew that broke the law, stood condemned by the uncircumcised Gentile that fulfilled it; so far was circumcision from being any part of his justification, or a plea in favour of it, **Ro 2:27**. Then the apostle concludes the chapter, by giving a definition of a real Jew, and of true circumcision; which he does first negatively, that it is not anything external that makes him a Jew, or anything in the flesh that is right circumcision; but secondly, positively, that it is an inward work of grace that denominates a man a Jew, in a spiritual sense, or an Israelite indeed; and that it is the circumcision of the heart, which is wrought by the Spirit of God, that is true and genuine: and such a Jew, and such a circumcision, are approved of by God, and commended by him, when the other have only praise of men, **Ro 2:28**, and therefore, however such persons may be justified before men, they cannot be justified in the sight of God; which is the drift and design of the apostle in the whole.

Ver. 1. Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man,.... Some think, from the connection of these words with the preceding chapter, that the Gentiles are here meant; and particularly those among them who seemed to be virtuous, and took upon them to be the reprovers of others, and yet did the same things themselves, as Socrates, Cato, Seneca, and others; and therefore must be inexcusable, because they knew better, and would be thought to have been so; wherefore such could never be justified before God by their works, but might be justly condemned by him, nor shall they escape his righteous judgment. Others think the Jews are meant, who despised and condemned the Gentiles, and thought themselves to be righteous persons, and justified in the sight of God; and who, though they were secretly guilty of many abominable iniquities, yet were very severe upon the sins of others, and therefore inexcusable: others think that magistrates are designed, whether among Jews or Gentiles, who reprove and punish sin in others, and therefore must be supposed to know the law, and the nature of sin, and so are inexcusable and self-condemned when they do the same things; wherefore though they may pass with impunity among men, they shall not escape the judgment of God. Rather the words respect every man, of whatsoever nation, office, or place; and may be particularly applied to hypocrites, and seem designed to correct censoriousness, and hasty judging, and to throw confusion on such who value themselves on being the censurers and reprovers of others:

whosoever thou art that judgest; whether a Jew or a Gentile, a public magistrate or a private person:

for wherein thou judgest another; that is, in what case or instance; the Complutensian edition and the Arabic version read, "in" "or with what judgment thou judgest another"; See Gill on "Mt 7:2";

thou condemnest thyself; by judging them:

for thou that judgest dost the same things; art guilty of the same thing condemned in others, and therefore must be self-condemned.

Romans 2:2

Ver. 2. But we are sure that the judgment of God,.... By "the judgment of God", is not meant what is exercised on and towards men in this life, but what will follow after death; which is called judgment to come, is represented as certain, will be universal as to persons and things, and is here called "the judgment of God", in opposition to the judgment of men; and because it will be carried on by God only, who is omniscient and omnipotent, and will be definitive: this is and will be,

according to truth, against them which commit such things; in opposition to all hypocrisy and unrighteousness: and it may design the law and light of nature by which the Gentiles, the law of Moses by which the Jews, and the Gospel of Christ by which all have enjoyed the Gospel revelation, will be judged; or the truth of their own consciences in them all: now we may be sure of this judgment; and of its being according to truth, from reason, from Scripture, and from the being and perfections of God.

Romans 2:3

Ver. 3. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same,.... Some men may be so vain as to imagine, that though they do the same things which they condemn in others, they

shall escape the judgment of God: but such will find themselves most sadly mistaken; there is no avoiding the general judgment; all men must come to it; there will be no eluding it through craftiness and deceit, through bribery and corruption; there will be no escaping condign punishment, through might in the criminal, or through the judge's ignorance of his crimes, or want of ability and power to punish.

Romans 2:4

Ver. 4. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness,.... The apostle anticipates an objection against what he had said, taken from the prosperity of these persons; who might conclude from thence, that they were not so wicked as he had represented them; and that they should escape the judgment of God, otherwise they would have been punished by God in this life, and not have prospered as they did; which objection is removed by observing, that it was not their innocence, but "the riches of" divine "goodness, and longsuffering and forbearance", which were the causes of their prosperity: by "the riches of God's goodness", are not meant the riches of his special, spiritual, and eternal goodness, which his own people are only partakers of: but the general riches of his temporal and providential goodness, which the men of the world have commonly the greatest share of; they have it in great plenty, which is signified by "riches": and by his "longsuffering and forbearance" are designed, not his forbearance of his chosen ones and his longsuffering to them, which issue in their salvation; but his forbearance of sinners, and longsuffering towards them, in not as yet pouring down his wrath and displeasure on them; all which are "despised" by them; the riches of his goodness, when he is not glorified for his providential mercies, and in them, and when these are abused to the lusts of men. The

forbearance of God is despised, when men on account of it harden themselves in sin; and his

longsuffering, when they deny his concern in Providence, or a future judgment, and promise themselves impunity. Moreover, the apostle obviates the above objection by asserting that God's end in his goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, was not to testify to their innocence, as they imagined, but to lead them to repentance, of which they were ignorant;

not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. This is to be understood not of a spiritual and evangelical repentance, which is a free grace gift, and which none but the Spirit of God can lead, or bring persons to; but of a natural and legal repentance, which lies in an external sorrow for sin, and in an outward cessation from it, and reformation of life and manners, which the goodness of God to the Jews should have led them to; who had a large share of the good things of life, a land flowing with milk and honey, and many outward privileges which other nations had not, as the giving of the law, the covenant and promises, the word and ordinances; and repentance here chiefly designs, as it may respect the Gentiles, a change of mind and practice in them relating to idolatry and superstition Now the providential goodness of God has a tendency to lead persons to repentance on this account; but of this end of divine goodness the Gentiles were ignorant; nor was this end answered thereby; which shows the wretched depravity of human nature; see Ac 14:15.

Romans 2:5

Ver. 5. But after thy hardness and impenitent heart,.... The apostle goes on to show, that such persons who promise themselves impunity on the score of prosperity, shall not always go unobserved and unpunished; for there is a day of wrath and righteous judgment hastening on, and will take place after they have filled up the measure of their iniquity. There is a natural "hardness" of the heart in every son and daughter of Adam; and there is an acquired habitual hardness, which is increased by sinning; and a judicial one, which God, for sin, sometimes gives persons up unto. An "impenitent heart" is not only an heart which does not repent, but such an one as cannot repent, being harder than the nether millstone. Now men, by such hardness and impenitence,

treasure up unto [themselves] wrath: they are the authors of their own destruction; by which is meant the wrath of God, in opposition to the riches of his goodness, despised by them; and is in reserve for wicked men: and is laid up

against, and will be brought forth in

the day of wrath; which the Scriptures call "the evil day", **Am 6:3** **Eph 6:13**; the day fixed by God, when he will call men to an account for their sins, and stir up all his wrath against them:

and revelation; that is, the day of revelation, when Christ shall be revealed from heaven in flames of fire, the sins of men shall be revealed, and the wrath of God against them:

of the righteous judgment of God; so some copies read; that is, the day of the righteous judgment; so the Arabic version reads, "and of the appearance of God, and of his righteous judgment"; for the judgment will be at the appearance of Christ, who is God, and at his kingdom, **2Ti 4:1**. The Alexandrian copy reads, "and of the retribution of the righteous judgment of God"; and so the Ethiopic version seems to have read, rendering the words, "if so", or "seeing thy retribution may come upon thee", and "if the judgment of God may befall thee"; for when the judgment of God shall come, as there will be a revelation of men's sins, and of the wrath of God against them, there will be a just retribution according to their works. Or "the revelation of the righteous judgment of God"; that is, when the judgment of God, which is now hid, shall appear; and which is said to be "righteous", because it will be carried on in a righteous manner, and proceed upon, and be executed according to the strictest rules of justice and equity.

Romans 2:6

Ver. 6. Who will render to every man according to his deeds. God will be the

Judge, who is righteous, holy, just, and true; every man in particular will be judged; as the judgment will be general to all, it will be special to everyone, and will proceed according to their works; for God will render to wicked men according to the demerit of their sins, the just recompense of reward, eternal damnation; and to good men eternal life, not according to the merit of their good works, which have none in them, but according to the nature of them; such who believe in Christ, and perform good works from a principle of grace, shall receive the reward of the inheritance, which is a reward of grace, and not of debt. In other words, God will render to evil men according to the true desert of their evil deeds; and of his own free grace will render to good men, whom he has made so by his grace, what is suitable and agreeable to those good works, which, by the assistance of his grace, they have been enabled to perform.

Romans 2:7

Ver. 7. To them who by patient continuance in well doing,.... These words are descriptive of one sort of persons, to whom God will render according to their works; and must be understood not of the Gentiles, the best and most moralized among them; for they sought after worldly things, after human wisdom, and popular applause, and not after God, his honour and glory, nor after immortality, which is only brought to light by the Gospel; nor of the pharisaical Jews, who sought for righteousness by the works of the law, and honour and glory from men, and not from God; nor of any unregenerate persons, but only of such who have the true principles of grace implanted in them, whether Jews or Gentiles: now the things which these men seek after are

glory; not the glory of this world, nor any from the men of it; but the glory of God and Christ; to be glorious within and without, by the grace and righteousness of Christ here, and to enjoy eternal glory with him hereafter.

Honour; not that which Adam had in innocence, and did not abide in; but that which is, and abides with Christ, and which all the saints have, and shall have.

Immortality; not the immortality of the soul, which is common to all; but the incorruption of the body, or the glorious resurrection of it to everlasting life at the great day, or the incorruptible crown, and never fading inheritance of the saints in light. The manner in which these things are sought is, "by patient continuance in well doing"; by doing good works, and by doing these good works well, from a principle of faith and love, and with a view to the glory of

God; and by patiently enduring reproaches and sufferings for well doing, and by persevering therein: not that these things are to be had, or are expected by the saints to be had for the sake of patience and well doing; yet they may be sought for, and looked unto, as an encouragement to well doing, and continuance therein; and though not "for", yet "in" well doing there is a reward. These words do not express that for the sake of which glory is had; but only describe the persons who seek, and the manner in which they seek for it, to whom God will render

eternal life, which he of his rich grace promised them before the world was, and of his free favour has put into the hands of Christ for them, and which, as a pure gift of grace, he bestows on them through him.

Romans 2:8

Ver. 8. But unto them that are contentious,.... This is a description of the other sort of persons to whom God will render according to their deeds, "who are of the contention"; who contend for victory, and not truth; strive about words to no profit; are quarrelsome, and sow discord among men, and in churches;

and do not obey the truth; neither attend to the light of nature, and to that which may be known of God by it; nor regard and submit to the Gospel revelation and so design both the Gentiles, which knew not God, and Jews, and others, who obey not the Gospel:

but obey unrighteousness; are servants of sin: to these God renders

indignation and wrath; wrathful or fiery indignation, the hottest of his fury.

Romans 2:9

Ver. 9. Tribulation and anguish,.... These, with the foregoing words, are expressive of the second death, the torments of hell, the worm that never dies, and the fire that is not quenched: which will fall

upon every soul of man that doth evil; whose course of life and conversation is evil; for "the soul that sins shall die",
Eze 18:4, unless satisfaction is made for his sins by the blood of Christ:

of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; regard being had to what nation they belong.

Romans 2:10

Ver. 10. But glory, honour, and peace,.... Which are so many words for the everlasting happiness of the saints; which is a "crown of glory that fadeth not away" (**1Pe 5:4**); an honour exceeding that of the greatest potentates upon earth, since such that enjoy it will be kings and priests, and sit with Christ on his throne to all eternity; and is a peace that passes all understanding: all which will be rendered

to every man that doth good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; which none without Christ, and his grace, and by the strength of nature, does, or can do; not that good works are causes of salvation, but are testimonies of faith, and fruits of grace, with which salvation is connected, whether they be found in Jews or Gentiles; for neither grace nor salvation are peculiar to any nation, or set of people.

Romans 2:11

Ver. 11. For there is no respect of persons with God. It will not come into consideration, at the day of judgment, of what nation men are; or from what parents they are descended; nor of what age and sex persons be; nor in what state and condition they have lived in this world; nor will it be asked to what sect they have belonged, and by what denomination they have been called; or whether they have conformed to such and such externals and rituals in religion; but only whether they are righteous men or sinners; and accordingly as they appear under these characters, judgment will proceed. Some object from hence, though without any reason, to the doctrine of particular election of certain persons to everlasting salvation. This passage respects matters of strict justice, and is a forensic expression relating to courts of judicature, where persons presiding are to have no regard to the faces of men, but do that which is strictly just between man and man; and does not respect matters of grace and free favour, such as giving alms, forgiving debts, &c. A judge, as such, is to regard no man's person, but to proceed in matters before him, according to the rules of law and justice; should he do otherwise, he would be chargeable with being a respecter of persons; but then he may bestow alms on what objects he pleases; and forgive one man who is personally indebted to him, and not another, without any such imputation. This, applied to the case in hand, abundantly clears it; for though God, as a Judge, respects no man's person; yet in matters of grace he distinguishes one person from another, as it is plain he does by the bounties of his Providence. Besides, God is not bound to any person by any laws, but acts as a Sovereign; he is not moved by anything in the creature; as his choice is not confined to persons of any particular nation, family, sex, or condition, so neither does it proceed upon anything, or a foresight of anything in them, or done by them; and as there is no worthiness in them that are chosen, and saved above others, so no injury is done to the rest: add to all this, that those that are saved by virtue of electing grace, are saved in a way of righteousness agreeably to the holy law, and strict justice of God; so that no complaint can be made against the distinguishing methods of grace, upon the foot of strict justice.

Romans 2:12

Ver. 12. For as many as have sinned without law,.... This is an instance of the strict justice of God, and proves him to be no respecter of persons; for the Gentiles, who were "without law", the written law of Moses, not without the law of nature in their breasts, nor without some civil laws and statutes of their own; inasmuch as they "sinned" against the God of nature, and the law and light of nature, they

shall also perish without law: not that their condemnation and perdition will be illegal, or not in due course of law; but it will not proceed upon, or according to the law of Moses, they never had; and much less for not believing in Christ, of whom they never heard; but their perdition will be for their sins committed without the law of Moses, against the law of nature: their not having the written law of Moses will be no plea in their favour, or be a reason why they should not be condemned; their persons will not be regarded as with or without the law, but their sins committed by them, to which facts their consciences will bear witness:

and, so on the other hand,

as many as have sinned in the law; who have been in and under the law of Moses, and have sinned against it, meaning the Jews:

shall be judged by the law; and condemned by it, as they were in this world, and will be hereafter: their having this law will be no bar against their condemnation, but rather an aggravation of it; their hearing of it will be no plea in their favour; nor their doing of it neither, unless they could have done it to perfection; for perfect obedience it requires, as a justifying righteousness, otherwise it curses, condemns, and adjudges to death.

Romans 2:13

Ver. 13. For not the hearers of the law are just before God,.... The apostle here shows, that the Jews were justly condemned, notwithstanding their having and hearing of the law; since hearing without doing it, will never denominate persons righteous in the sight of God, however it might recommend them in the sight of men: regard seems to be had either to the first delivery of the law by Moses to the people of Israel, when he read it to them, and they hearkened to it, and promised obedience; or rather to the reading and hearing it every sabbath day; and may include a speculative knowledge of it, without a practical obedience to it; and which therefore must fall greatly short of entitling them to a justifying righteousness; since not these,

but the doers of the law, shall be justified; by whom are meant, not such who merely literally and externally fulfil the law, as they imagine; for the law is spiritual, and regards the inward as well as the outward man, and requires internal holiness, as well as external obedience; and the apostle is speaking of justification before God, who sees the heart, and not before men, who judge according to outward appearance: nor are such designed who are imperfect doers of the law; for the law requires a perfect obedience, and what is not perfect is not properly righteousness; nor does it, nor can it consider an imperfect righteousness as a perfect one; for it accuses of, pronounces guilty, curses, and condemns for every transgression of it. But such only can be intended, who are doers of it spiritually, internally, as well as externally, and that perfectly. Adam, in his state of innocence, was a perfect doer of the law; he sinning, and all his posterity in him, none of them are righteous, but all pass under a sentence of condemnation. The best of men, even believers in Christ, are not without sin in themselves; and when any of the saints are said to be perfect, it must be understood in a comparative sense, or as they are considered in Christ. There never was but one since Adam, and that is Christ, who has fulfilled, or could perfectly fulfil the law; the thing is impossible and impracticable for fallen man: hence these words must be understood either hypothetically, thus, not the hearers of the law, but if there were any perfect doers of it, they would be justified before God; or else of such persons who are considered in Christ, by whom the whole perfect righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them, and who may be reckoned as perfect doers of it in him, their substitute, surety, and representative.

Romans 2:14

Ver. 14. For when the Gentiles which have not the law,.... The objection of the Gentiles against their condemnation, taken from their being without the law, is here obviated. The apostle owns that they had not the law, that is, the written law of Moses, and yet intimates that they had, and must have a law, against which they sinned, and so deserved punishment, and which they in part obeyed; for these men

do by nature the things contained in the law. The matter and substance of the moral law of Moses agrees with the law and light of nature; and the Gentiles in some measure, and in some sort, did these things by nature; not that men by the mere strength of nature without the grace of God, can fulfil the law, or do anything that is acceptable to God; and indeed, what these men did was merely natural and carnal, and so unacceptable to God. Some understand this of nature assisted by grace, in converted Gentiles, whether before or after the coming of Christ; others expound the phrase, by nature, freely, willingly, in opposition to the servile spirit of the Jews, in their obedience to the law; though it rather seems to design the dictates of natural reason, by which they acted: and so

these having not the law, the written law,

are a law to themselves; which they have by nature and use, and which natural reason dictates to them. So Plato distinguishes the law

"into written and un written {q}: the written law is that which was used in commonwealths; and that kata eyh
ginomenov, "which was according to custom or nature", was called unwritten, such as not to go to market naked, nor to be clothed with women's clothes; which things were not forbidden by any law, but these were not done because forbidden by the unwritten law;"

which he calls "unwritten", because not written on tables, or with ink; otherwise it was written in their minds, and which by nature and use they were accustomed to.

{q} Laertii Vit. Philosoph. l. 3. in Vita Platon.

Romans 2:15

Ver. 15. Which show the work of the law written in their hearts,.... Though the Gentiles had not the law in form, written on tables, or in a book, yet they had "the work", the matter, the sum and substance of it in their minds; as appears by the practices of many of them, in their external conversation. The moral law, in its purity and perfection, was written on the heart of Adam in his first creation; was sadly obliterated by his sin and fall; upon several accounts, and to answer various purposes, a system of laws was written on tables of stone for the use of the Israelites; and in regeneration the law is reinscribed on the hearts of God's people; and even among the Gentiles, and in their hearts, there are some remains of the old law and light of nature, which as by their outward conduct appears, so by the inward motions of their minds,

their conscience also bearing witness; for, as the Jews say {r}
wb hdyem Mda lv wtmvn, "the soul of a man witnesses in him"; for, or against him:

and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another; and this the Heathens themselves acknowledge, when they {s} speak of

"tameion dikasthrion kai krithrion thv suneidhsewv, "the conclave, tribunal and judgment of conscience"; and which they call dikasthn dikaiotaton, "the most righteous judge": whose judgment reason receives, and gives its suffrage to, whether worthy of approbation or reproof; when it reads in the memory as if written on a table the things that are done, and then beholding the law as an exemplar, pronounces itself either worthy of honour or dishonour."

{r} T. Bab. Chagigah, fol. 16. 1. & Taanith, fol. 11. 1. {s} Hierocles in Carmina Pythagor. p. 81, 206, 209, 213, 214.

Romans 2:16

Ver. 16. In the day when God shall judge,.... These words are to be read in connection with **Ro 2:13**, and express the time when both Jews and Gentiles will be judged, called a "day", both because of the clearness and evidence of the judgment that will be made, and because a certain time is fixed, though not known, which will surely come; also the matter of the judgment, which will be,

the secrets of men: whether good or bad, which are only known to God and themselves, and which may have been done ignorantly by them; "for God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil", Ec 12:14, which is so interpreted by the Jews {t},

"when R. Jochanan came to that Scripture, he wept; "for God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing";"

upon which the gloss says, yea, for those things which are hidden from him, which he has committed through ignorance, will he bring him into judgment; everything, even the least thing in a literal sense, but not for such silly trifling things they mention in the same place; doubtless the Holy Ghost means the secrets of men's hearts and actions, and the hidden things of darkness which are contrary to the holy law of God. The person by whom this awful judgment will be carried on is,

Jesus Christ; to whom all judgment is committed, who is ordained Judge of quick and dead, and is every way fit for that office, being God as well as man, and so both omniscient and omnipotent: and this the apostle says will be,

according to my Gospel; his meaning is not that the Gospel will be the, rule of judgment, because he speaking of the judgment of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews, who never heard of the Gospel; but that what he had said concerning a day of judgment, of Christ's being the Judge, and of God's judging by him the secrets of men, were as true and as certain as the Gospel which he preached was; and was "conformable", or agreeable to it, as the Arabic version reads it, and might be learned and proved from it. This he calls, "my Gospel"; not because the author or subject of it; but because it was committed to his trust and was preached by him; and in opposition to, and to distinguish it from the Gospel of the false apostles. Eusebius says {u}, that the Apostle Paul had used to call the Gospel according to Luke his Gospel, and that it is said, that whenever he makes mention of his Gospel, he designs that.

{t} T. Bab. Chagigah, fol. 5. 1. {u} Eccles. Hist. l. 3. c. 4. p. 73.

Romans 2:17

Ver. 17. Behold, thou art called a Jew,.... From hence to the end of the chapter the Jews are particularly addressed; their several privileges and characters are commemorated, which by an ironical concession are allowed them; several charges are brought against them, even against their principal men; and the plea in favour of them, from their circumcision, is considered; and the apostle's view in the whole, is to show that they could not be justified before God by their obedience to the law of Moses: "behold"; take notice, observe it, this will be granted: "thou art called a Jew"; thou art one by name, by nation, and by religion; but no name, nor outward religion, nor a mere profession, will justify before God:

and restest in the law; which may be understood of their having the law and the knowledge of it, what is to be done and avoided easily, without any fatigue and labour; of their pleasing and applauding themselves with the bare having and hearing of it; of their trust and confidence in it; and of their inactivity and security in it, as persons asleep; and so of their coming short of the knowledge of the Gospel, and of Christ the end of the law for righteousness, their whole confidence being placed in that: so the Targumist in **Jer 8:8** paraphrases the words,

"we are wise, "and in the law of the Lord", Nwuyxr agxna, do we trust;"

and makest thy boast of God. There is a right boasting of God in opposition to boasting in the creature, when men ascribe all the blessings of nature and grace to the Lord alone, and praise him for all their enjoyments, temporal and spiritual; and when they trust in, and glory, and make their boast of Christ as the Lord their righteousness, in whom alone they are, and can be justified. But the boasting here spoken of, was such that was not right; these men boasted of their bare external knowledge of the one God, when the Gentiles around them were ignorant of him; of their being the covenant people of God, when others were aliens and strangers; and of their having the word and worship of the true God, which other nations were unacquainted with; and, on these external things they depended, which was their fault.

Romans 2:18

Ver. 18. And knowest his will,.... Not the secret will or purpose of God; nor his revealed will in the Gospel, for of this they were ignorant; but his declared will in the law, showing what is to be done, and what is not to be done: to know which in express terms was a privilege, that other people had not; but then the bare knowledge of this will be of no avail: for persons may know their Lord's will, as the Jews did, and not do it, and so be worthy to be beaten with many stripes:

and approvest the things that are more excellent: or "triest the things that differ"; from one another, and from the will and law of God; or as the Syriac, "discernest" atylw, "things that are convenient"; agreeable, which are fit and ought to be done: and having tried and discerned them, they approved of them in their judgment as the things more excellent; but then they did not put these excellent things in practice which they approved of; and the knowledge and approbation they had of these things, arose from their

being instructed out of the law, and not the Gospel; for the excellent things of the Gospel, they had no discerning, knowledge and approbation of; see **Php 1:10**.

Romans 2:19

Ver. 19. And art confident that thou thyself,.... Being vainly puffed up in, their fleshly minds, they were strongly persuaded that they were very fit persons to be

a guide to the blind: all men are by nature blind, as to the knowledge of divine and spiritual things; the meaner sort of the people among the Jews seem to be intended here; or else the ignorant Gentiles, whom the Jews were very fond of making proselytes to their religion and laws; but miserable guides were they, whether to their own people, or others; blind guides of the blind. Gospel ministers best deserve this title:

a light of them that are in darkness; so Christ, John the Baptist, the disciples of Christ, and all Gospel ministers are; but these men, who arrogated such characters to themselves, were dim lights, and dark lanterns. The apostle seems to have respect to those very high and exalted characters the Jews give of their doctors, as when they call one, arwhnd anyuwb, "the lamp of light" {w}; another, avydq
anyuwb, "the holy lamps" {x}; and a third, larvy rn, "the lamp of Israel" {y}; with many others of the same kind; See Gill on "Mt 5:14" and See Gill on "Joh 5:35".

{w} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 17. 1. {x} Zohar passim. {y} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 28. 2.

Romans 2:20

Ver. 20. An instructor of the foolish,.... All men in a state of unregeneracy are foolish, and need instruction; here the common people among the Jews, who knew not the law, are meant; it was very usual to call anyone of their doctors and masters hrwm, "an instructor": it follows,

a teacher of babes; either in age or in understanding; such who taught either of them were called by the Jews twqwnyt ydmlm, "teachers of babes". Thus they paraphrase the text in Da 12:3:

"they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament. This is the Judge who judges, the judgment of truth truly, and the collectors of alms: and they that turn, many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever; these are, twqwnt ydmlm, "the teachers of babes" {z}."

Though these are said {a} to be inferior to the wise men, or doctors:

which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law: they had not a true knowledge of the law; only a draught and scheme, the outward form of the law, and a mere shadow and appearance of the knowledge of the truth of it. From hence the apostle would have it concluded, that though the Jews had the law, and in some sense knew it, yet inasmuch as they did not perform it, they could not be justified by it; and that even their teachers, their greatest masters and doctors, were very deficient, as appears from what follows; and since they could not be instilled by it, who taught others the knowledge of it, the hearers of it could not expect justification from it.

{z} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 8. 2. & 21. 1, 2. Maimon. Hilchot Talmud Tora, c. 2. sect. 1. {a} Gloss in Sota, fol. 49. 1.

Romans 2:21

Ver. 21. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?.... Several charges are here brought against the Jews, even against their teachers; for though they are put by way of question, they are to be considered as so many assertions and matters of fact; thus, though they taught others, they did not teach themselves; they were blind leaders of the blind; they were ignorant of the law, of the spirituality of it; they were desirous to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they said, nor whereof they affirmed: they were ignorant of the righteousness of God, of whom they boasted; and of the more excellent things of Moses, and the prophets, they pretended to explain; and of the Messiah, of whom their prophecies so much spoke: and besides, what they did understand and teach, they did not practise themselves; than which nothing is more shameful, or more betrays stupidity and ignorance; for as they themselves {b} say,

"he that teaches men, hvey al awhv rbdb, "that which he himself does not do", is like a blind man who has a lamp in his hand, and enlightens others, but he, himself walks in darkness."

And such teachers they own were among them.

"Beautiful (say they {c}) are the words which come out of the mouths of them that do, them: Ben Assai was a beautiful preacher, but did not well observe;"

i.e., to do what he said.

Thou that preach at a man should not steal, dost thou steal? some understand this figuratively, of stealing, or taking away the true sense of the law, and putting a false one upon it; of which these men were notoriously guilty: but rather, it is to be understood literally, not only of the inward desires and motions of their minds after this sin, and of their consenting to, and conniving at theft and robbery, but of their doing it themselves; who, under pretence of long prayers, "devoured widows' houses", Mt 23:14, plundered and robbed them of their substance: no wonder that these men preferred Barabbas, a thief and a robber, to Jesus Christ.

{b} Sepher Hamaalot, p. 87. Apud Buxtorf. Heb. Florileg. p. 75. {c} Bereshit Rabba, fol. 30. 3.

Romans 2:22

Ver. 22. Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery,.... Adultery here is to be taken not figuratively for adulterating the word of God, and mixing it with their own inventions; but literally for the sin of adultery, and that not in heart only, but in act:

dost thou commit adultery? an iniquity which greatly prevailed among the Jews at this time of day; hence Christ calls them "an adulterous generation", Mt 12:39; and that to such a degree, that by the advice of their great Rabbi, R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, they left off the trial of the suspected woman, cases of this nature being so very numerous: and this sin prevailed not only among the common people, but among their principal doctors; as may be learnt from their own writings, and from that conviction of this iniquity which the Scribes and Pharisees were brought under by Christ, when the woman, taken in adultery, was had before him by them, **Joh 8:9**.

Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? for though at this time they abhorred idolatry, to which their forefathers were so much inclined, and so often fell into, yet they were guilty of sacrilege; by violating the worship of God, and polluting it with their own inventions; by pillaging or withholding, or not offering the sacrifices they ought; and by plundering the temple, and converting the sacred things of it to their own use.

Romans 2:23

Ver. 23. Thou that makest thy boast of the law,.... Of their having it, which other nations had not; of their knowledge of it, which many of their own people were without, or had but a small share of; and of their keeping of it even to perfection:

through breaking of the law dishonourest thou God? sin sometimes is expressed by a word which signifies a "fall"; sometimes by another, which signifies missing of the mark, or straying from it; sometimes by another, which signifies a "contrariety to the law" of God; and here, by one which signifies a "passing over it", and the bounds which it has set, as the rule of man's obedience; and hereby God, the lawgiver, is dishonoured: for as God is glorified by good works, when rightly performed, he is dishonoured by evil ones; for his authority, as a lawgiver, is trampled upon and despised. Now persons guilty of such iniquities as here mentioned, could not be justified before God, or accepted by him on account of any works of righteousness done by them.

Romans 2:24

Ver. 24. For the name of God is blasphemed,.... The being and perfections of

God, such as his holiness, omniscience, and omnipotence, are denied, or evil spoken of; and also the law of God, and the forms of worship instituted by him:

among the Gentiles through you: through their iniquities, who when they observe them, conclude that the God of Israel is not omniscient, or he would know, and take notice of these things; and that he is not holy, or he could not bear them; nor omnipotent, or he would revenge them:

as it is written; the passage or passages referred to are not mentioned, but are perhaps Isa 52:5. In the former of these texts the words are, "they that rule over them make them to howl; saith the Lord, and my name continually every day is blasphemed"; which are spoken of the rulers of the people, either of their ecclesiastical or political rulers, or both; and so Aben Ezra interprets them of larvy ylwdg, "the great men of Israel"; and here by the apostle are applied to their doctors and wise men: and in the latter are these words, "thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the Heathen"; that is, by their unbecoming walk and conversation, and especially by the disagreeable conduct of their principal men: and the Jews own the same things, and complain of them in much the "same language the apostle here does, saying, "they disgrace the law before the people of the earth, (the common people, or else the Gentiles,) how? a wise man sits and expounds in the congregation, saying, thou shalt not lend upon usury, and he lends upon usury; he says, thou shalt not commit a robbery, and he commits a robbery; he says, bwngt al, "thou shalt not steal, and he steals": says R. Berechiah, it happened to one man that his cloak was stolen from him, and he went before the judge about it, and he found it spread upon his bed or couch: and, says the same Rabbi, it happened to a certain man that his pot was stolen from him, and he went before the judge about it, and he found it upon his hearth: hence it is said, "as they were increased they sinned against me, therefore will I change their glory into shame", **Ho 4:7** {d}.

{d} Debarim Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 236. 2.

Romans 2:25

Ver. 25. For circumcision verily profiteth,.... The plea from circumcision in favour of the Jews, and their acceptance with God, and justification before him, is here, and in the following verses, considered. The apostle allows that circumcision was profitable; which must be understood whilst it was in force, before the abrogation of it, for since, it is not profitable but pernicious; and then it was only profitable, in case the law was kept:

if thou keepest the law; that is, perfectly; for circumcision obliged persons to keep the whole law. Now the circumcised Jews did not keep it in such sense; wherefore circumcision was of no use to them, but, on the contrary, was an handwriting against them.

But if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision; that is, it is not accounted circumcision; it is of no avail; such a man was all one as an uncircumcised Gentile, and appeared to be uncircumcised in a spiritual sense: the apostle perhaps alludes to a practice among some of the Jews, to bring on and draw over the foreskin, after they had been circumcised; See Gill on "1Co 7:18".

Romans 2:26

Ver. 26. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep,.... These words are spoken hypothetically; if any such persons could be found among the Gentiles who keep the whole law of God; and can only be absolutely understood of such, who from a principle of grace act in obedience to the law; as in the hands of Christ, and who look to Christ as the fulfilling end of it, for righteousness; in whom they keep

the righteousness of the law perfectly:

shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? by this question it is suggested, that an uncircumcised Gentile, who keeps the law as in the hands of Christ, and under the influences of his Spirit and grace, and keeps it in Christ, is reckoned a circumcised person in a spiritual sense, and must be preferable to a circumcised Jew that breaks it.

Romans 2:27

Ver. 27. And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature,.... That is, the Gentiles, who are by nature uncircumcised; for as circumcision was by the command of God, and performed by the art of men, uncircumcision is by nature, and what men naturally have. Now if it, such persons,

fulfil the law in Christ, they will

judge thee, the circumcision: and condemn, as Noah condemned the old world, Heb 11:7, and the men of Nineveh and the queen of the south will condemn the men of that generation, in which Christ lived,
Mt 12:41.

Who by the letter and circumcision transgress the law; that is, either by the law, which is "the letter", and "by circumcision", or "by circumcision which is in the letter", **Ro 2:29**, sin being increased by the prohibitions of the moral law, and the rituals of the ceremonial law, and the more so by a dependence upon an obedience to either of them, or both, for justification.

Romans 2:28

Ver. 28. For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly,.... The apostle removes the plea in favour of the Jews, taken from their name and privilege, by distinguishing between a Jew and a Jew, and between circumcision and circumcision: "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly"; by mere name, nature, nation, religion, and profession:

neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; which takes away the flesh of the foreskin, but not the carnality of the heart; leaves a mark upon the flesh, but no impression on the mind. This is nothing, is not the true, solid, substantial, spiritual circumcision, which only avails in the sight of God.

Romans 2:29

Ver. 29. But he is a Jew which is one inwardly,.... Who has an internal work of grace upon his soul: who has not only an outward name, but an inward nature; not the law of God in the hand, but in the heart; not an external righteousness only, but internal holiness; and who is not a mere outward court worshipper, but a worshipper of God in Spirit and in truth. The Jews have a {e} saying themselves,

"that whosoever denies idolatry, ydwhy arqn, "is called a Jew":"

so that, according to them, this is a name that is not confined to themselves, but belongs to all such who truly fear and worship God; and they say, in the same place, that Pharaoh's daughter was called
tydwhy, "a Jewess", because she denied idolatry, and went down to wash herself from the idols of her father's house. And elsewhere {f},

"that faith does not depend upon circumcision, but upon the heart: he that believes not as he should, circumcision does not make him a Jew; and he that believes as he ought, he indeed is a Jew, though he is not circumcised."

And circumcision is that of the heart; which God requires, and he himself promises to give, De 10:16, upon which last passage, a very noted Jew {g} has this observation, blh tlm ayh taz, "this is the circumcision of the heart"; the very phrase the apostle here uses: circumcision of the flesh was typical of this, which lies in a godly sorrow for sin, in a putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, and in renouncing a man's own righteousness in the business of justification. The ancient Jews had some notion of this typical use of circumcision. So Philo the Jew says {h}, that circumcision taught
hdonwn kai paywn pantwn ektomhn, "the cutting off of all pleasures and affections": and elsewhere he says {i}: it is a symbol of two things particularly; the one is the cutting off of pleasures, as before; and the other is the removal of arrogancy, that grievous disease of the soul: and in another place {k} he calls purity, or chastity, peritomhv peritomhn, "the circumcision of circumcision". Now this our apostle says is

in the spirit; meaning either the spirit or soul of man, which is the seat and subject of it; or the Spirit of God, who is the author of it: the Ethiopic version reads it, "by the Holy Ghost":

and not in the letter; or "by the letter" of the law; but the Holy Ghost produces this spiritual work instrumentally, by the preaching of the Gospel. To which the apostle adds,

whose praise is not of men, but of God; referring not to circumcision immediately spoken of before, but to the Jew who is one inwardly: and alludes to the name Judah, from whence the Jews are called, which comes from the word hdy, which signifies to "praise"; and intimates here, that such persons must not expect praise from men, who are only taken, with outward things, but from God, who searches and knows the heart.

{e} T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 13. 1. {f} Nizzachon ad Gen. xvii. Apud Maji Theolog. Jud. p. 252. {g} R. David Kimchi in Jer. iv. 4. {h} De Migrat. Abraham, p. 402. {i} De Circumcisione, p. 811. {k} De Somniis, p. 1111.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 3

In this chapter are an answer to several objections which follow one upon another, relating to what the apostle had said concerning the equality of the Gentiles with the Jews; and various proofs out of the Psalms and Prophets, showing the general depravity and corruption of mankind, of the Jews as well as of the Gentiles; and the conclusion from all this, that there is no justification by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of God received by faith, of which a large and clear account is given. The first objection is in **Ro 3:1**, and is taken from the unprofitableness of being a Jew and a circumcised person, if that is true which is asserted in the preceding chapter; to which an answer is given, **Ro 3:2**, showing that though many things might be instanced in, in which the Jew had the advantage of the Gentile in external things; this might be mentioned as one for all, and taken sufficient answer, that the Jews had the oracles or word of God committed to their trust, by which they became acquainted with the will of God. The apostle foreseeing that another objection would arise upon this; what signifies their having the oracles of God, when these are not believed by them? prevents it by observing, **Ro 3:3**, that though some did not believe, some did, and as for the unbelief of others, the truth and faithfulness of God in his word were not made void by it; however false and deceitful men are, God is always true to his word, **Ro 3:4**, and which is confirmed by a passage of Scripture, cited out of Ps 51:4, hence arises another objection, that if the righteousness of God is commended and illustrated by the unrighteousness of man, then it would be unjust in God to take vengeance on men for their sins, **Ro 3:5**, which is removed with abhorrence, and answered by observing, that if there was any truth in it, the world could not be judged by God, as it certainly will, **Ro 3:6**, but still the objection is continued and strengthened, **Ro 3:7**, that if God is glorified through the sins of men, not only men ought not to be punished for them, but they should not be reckoned sinners, or as doers of evil things, but of good things, and be indulged in them; to which is replied, that this was the common calumny cast upon the doctrine of the apostle, and persons of such principles and practices are deserving of damnation, **Ro 3:8**. Having removed these objections, the apostle reassumes his former assertion, and supports it, that a carnal circumcised Jew is no better than a carnal uncircumcised Gentile; it being already sufficiently made to appear, that they are both under the power and guilt of sin; and as a further evidence of it, he produces several passages out of the book of Psalms, and out of the prophecies of Isaiah, which fully express the sad corruption of human nature, and especially of the Jews; and this account begins in **Ro 3:10**, and ends in **Ro 3:18**, and which account he suggests, **Ro 3:19**, carries in it such a full conviction of the truth of what he had said, that all men are under sin, that no one would be able to open his mouth in his own defence, but all must acknowledge themselves guilty before God: and then he proceeds to the conclusion he meant to draw from all this, that there is no justification of any before God by the deeds of the law; giving this as a reason for it, because the law discovered sin, but not a justifying righteousness, **Ro 3:20**, that is revealed in another way, by the Gospel, and not the law, though both law and prophets bear a testimony to it, **Ro 3:21**, which righteousness is described by the author of it, God; by the means through which it comes to the use and comfort of men, the faith of Christ; and by the subjects of it, them that believe; in the justification of which there is no difference, **Ro 3:22**, of which a reason is given, **Ro 3:23**, taken from the general state of men, as sinners, and bereaved of the image of God: the several causes, ways, means, and end of the justification of such persons are suggested; the moving cause is the free grace of God, the meritorious or procuring cause the redemption that is in Christ, **Ro 3:24**, and his propitiatory sacrifice, **Ro 3:25**, which is owing to the eternal purpose of God, whose end in it was to declare his purity, holiness, and justice; which end is repeated and enlarged on, in **Ro 3:26**, upon which the apostle asks, **Ro 3:27**, what is become of boasting in the creature? and answers himself by saying, it was excluded, not by the doctrine of works, but by the doctrine of faith, and particularly the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; wherefore the conclusion stands firm and just, from the premises, that justification is by faith without the works of the law, **Ro 3:28**, and it is further confirmed, that Jews and Gentiles, with respect to their state and condition God-ward, are on a level; he is the God of the one, as well as of the other, **Ro 3:29**, and this appears by his justifying both in one and the same way, through faith in the righteousness of this Son, **Ro 3:30**, and the chapter is concluded by obviating an objection that might be made, that through this doctrine of justification by faith the law is made void, and is of no use, **Ro 3:31**, to which the apostle answers, that this is so far from being fact, that the law is established by it.

Ver 1. What advantage then hath the Jew?.... If he is not properly a Jew, who is born of Jewish parents, and brought up in the customs, rites, and religion of the

Jewish nation, but anyone of whatsoever nation, that is born again of water, and of the Spirit; where is the superior excellency of the Jew to the Gentile? A man may as well be born and brought up a Heathen as a Jew; the one has no more advantages than the other by his birth and education: it may be rendered, "what hath the Jew more?" or "what has he superfluous" or "abundant?" the phrase answers to the Hebrew Mdal Nwrty hm in **Ec 1:3**, which is rendered, "what profit hath a man?" and in **Ec 6:8**, Mkxl rtwy hm, "what hath a wise man more", &c. and in **Ro 3:11**, Mdal rty hm, "what is a man better?" the first of these passages the Septuagint render by tiv perisseia, "what abundance?" and the last by ti
perisson, "what more", or "superfluous", or "abundant?" the phrase used by the apostle here:

or what profit is there of circumcision? since that which is outward in the flesh profits not unless the law is kept, otherwise circumcision is no circumcision; and if an uncircumcised Gentile keeps the law, he is a better man than a circumcised Jew; yea, he judges and condemns him; for the only true circumcision is internal, spiritual, and in the heart. To this the apostle answers in the **Ro 3:2**.

Romans 3:2

Ver. 2. Much every way,.... The circumcised Jew has greatly the advantage of the uncircumcised Gentile, Mynp lkm, "in all respects",
du lk le, "on every side", as the Rabbins speak; phrases to which this in the text answers:

chiefly; more especially, particularly, and in the first place;

because that unto them were committed the oracles of God; by which are meant the law of Moses, and the writings of the prophets, the institutions of the ceremonial law, and the prophecies of the Messiah and the Gospel church state; and in a word, all the books of the Old Testament, and whatsoever is contained in them; which are called so, because they are of divine inspiration, contain the mind and will of God, and are infallible and authoritative: and it was the privilege and profit of the Jews that they were intrusted with them, when other nations were not, and so had the advantage of them; they had them for their own use; for hereby they had a more clear and distinct knowledge of God than the Gentiles could have by the light of nature; and besides, became acquainted with the doctrines of a trinity of persons in the Godhead, of the sonship and deity of the Messiah, of the sacrifice, satisfaction, and righteousness of the Redeemer, and of salvation by him; and also with the manner of worshipping of God according to his will; all which the Gentiles were ignorant of. Moreover, they had the honour of being the keepers of these sacred books, these divine oracles, and of transmitting them to posterity, for the use of others.

Romans 3:3

Ver. 3. For what if some did not believe?.... It is suggested, that though the Jews enjoyed such a privilege, some of them did not believe; which is an aggravation of their sin, that they should have such means of light, knowledge, and faith, such clear and full evidences of things, and yet be incredulous: though it should be observed that this was the case only of some, not of all; and must be understood, not of their disbelief of the Scriptures being the word of God, for these were always received as such by them all, and were constantly read, heard, and attended to; but either of their disobedience to the commands of God required in the law, or of their disregard to the promises of God, and prophecies of the Messiah, and of their disbelief in the Messiah himself when he came; but now this was no objection to the advantage they had of the Gentiles, since this was not owing to want of evidence in the word of God, but to the darkness and unbelief of their minds: and,

shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? no, their unbelief could not, and did not make void the veracity and faithfulness of God in his promises concerning the Messiah, recorded in the oracles of God, which they had committed to them; for notwithstanding this, God raised up the Messiah from among them, which is another advantage the Jews had of, the Gentiles; inasmuch as "of" them, "as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is God over all, blessed for evermore", **Ro 9:5**, and he sent him to them, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as a prophet and minister; he sent his Gospel to them first, and called out by it from among them his elect, nor did he take it from them until he had done this: and he took it away only; until "the fulness of the Gentiles", Ro 11:25, is brought in; and then the Gospel shall come to them again with power, and "all Israel shall be saved" (#Ro 11:26).

Romans 3:4

Ver. 4. God forbid, yea, let God be true, but every man a liar,.... Let no such thing ever enter into the minds of any, that the truth of God can be, or will be made of none effect by the want of faith in man; let it be always asserted and abode by; that God is true, faithful to his word, constant in his promises, and will always fulfil his purposes; though "every man is a liar", vain, fallacious, and inconstant: referring to Ps 116:11;

as it is written, Ps 51:4;

that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. This is a proof that God is true, and stands to his word, though men are fallacious, inconstant, and wicked. God made a promise to David, that of the fruit of his body he would set upon his throne; that the Messiah should spring from him; that he would of his seed raise up unto Israel a Saviour. Now David sinned greatly in the case of Bathsheba, 2Sa 11:3 (title), but his sin did not make of no effect the truth and faithfulness of God: though David showed himself to be a weak sinful man, yet God appeared true and faithful to every word of promise which he had sworn in truth to him; and therefore when he was brought to a sense of his evil, and at the same time to observe the invariable truth and faithfulness of God, said, "I acknowledge my transgression, &c. against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight", Ps 51:3, which confession of sin I make, "that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings"; or "when thou speakest", Ps 51:4, which is all one; that is, that thou mightest appear to be just, and faithful, and true in all thy promises, in every word that is gone out of thy mouth, which shall not be recalled and made void, on account of my sins; for though I have sinned, thou abidest faithful; and this also I declare with shame to myself, and with adoring views of thine unchangeable truth and goodness: "that thou mightest overcome"; that is, put to silence all such cavils and charges, as if the faith of God could be made void by the unfaithfulness of men: "when thou art judged"; when men will be so bold and daring to arraign thy truth and faithfulness, and contend with thee about them. This now is brought as a full proof, and is a full proof of this truth, that God is always true to his word, though men fail in theirs, and fall into sin. God kept his word with David concerning the stability of his kingdom, his successor, and the Messiah that should spring from him, though he acted a bad part against God. There is some little difference between these words as they stand in the Hebrew text of Ps 51:4; and as they are cited and rendered by the apostle, in the last clause of them; in the former it is, "that thou mightest be clear"; in the latter, "that thou mightest overcome". Now to vindicate the apostle's version, let it be observed, that the Hebrew word hkz signifies to "overcome", as well as to "be clear"; of which instances may be given out of the Jewish writings. Says {l} Rabba; concerning an argument

used by R. Chanina, in a controversy with other Rabbins, by this R. Chanina ben Antigonus, whnkz, "hath overcome" them: and in another place {m}, whosoever ykzd, "overcomes" a king, they cast him into an empty ditch; where the gloss upon it is, xuwn, he that overcomes a king by words, that is, by disputing with him, which is a disgrace to a king. So the word is used in the Syriac language in
Joh 16:33. Moreover, the sense is the same, be it rendered either way; for as a man, when he overcomes his adversary, and carries his point against him, is clear of his charges and cavils, so God, when he overcomes in judgment, is clear of the imputations of wicked men. Another difference in the citation is, that what in the psalm is rendered "when thou judgest", is by the apostle, "when thou art judged", Ps 51:4, the word, which is used by the Psalmist, Kjpvb, may be rendered either way; either "when thou judgest", as a word of the same form is rendered, when "thou speakest", in Ps 51:4; or "when anyone judges of thee", or "when thou art judged": a like instance is in Ps 46:2; and so it is rendered by the Septuagint, and followed by the apostle, though the word he uses may be considered in the middle voice, and may have an active signification in it; and the phrase, en tw krinesyai se, may be rendered, "when thou judgest", and then both agree.

{l} T. Bab. Niddah, fol. 52. 2. {m} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 10. 2. Sanhedrim, fol. 39. 1. & Becorot, fol. 8. 2.

Romans 3:5

Ver. 5. But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God,.... Hence it appears, that the unrighteousness of men commends the righteousness, or faithfulness of God; and yet all unrighteousness is sin; the wrath of God is revealed against it; and would exclude from heaven, were it not for pardon through the blood of Christ; and besides, the one is contrary to the other, and of itself, of its own nature, cannot influence and affect the other: wherefore this can only be understood of the manifestation and illustration of, the righteousness of God by it; which is covered and commended, in punishing the unrighteousness of men; in setting forth Christ to be a propitiation for sin; and in fulfilling his promises, notwithstanding the failings of his people, of which the case of David is a pregnant proof; just as the love of God is illustrated and commended, by the consideration of the sins of men, for whom Christ died, and his grace and mercy in the conversion of them: but if this be true, what shall we say? shall we allow the following question to be put? this answers to rmyml akya yam, "what is there to say", or "to be said?" a way of speaking, often used by the Talmudists {n}:

is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? if the premises are true, this is a just consequence of them; whereas God does take vengeance on men for their unrighteousness, both here and hereafter, it must be a piece of unrighteousness in him so to do; since that for which he takes vengeance on them commends his own righteousness; but that you may know as well by what follows, that this is not an inference of his own, but another's, he adds,

I speak as a man; Mda ynb Nwvlk, "according to the language of the children of men", a phrase often used by the Jewish doctors {o}. The apostle did not speak the sentiments of his own mind, he represented another man, and spoke in the language of an adversary.

{n} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1. & passim. {o} T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 11. 1. & passim.

Romans 3:6

Ver. 6. God forbid, for then how shall God judge the world?] hlylx, "far be it"; such a notion is detestable and abominable, nor can it be fairly deduced from what is asserted; for it is the unrighteousness of his own people, on whom he takes no vengeance personally, and not the unrighteousness of others, on whom he does take vengeance, which commends his righteousness; and supposing it was that of others, God cannot be unrighteous in performing his threatenings, in a way of righteousness: moreover, unrighteousness is sin, and does not of itself but by accident, illustrate the righteousness of God; wherefore God is not unjust in punishing it; for how should God "judge the world?" whereas nothing is more certain than that he will do it, and that this will be done in righteousness; which could not be, was he unrighteous in taking vengeance; which will be one considerable part of that righteous judgment.

Romans 3:7

Ver. 7. For if the truth of God,.... The "truth of God" is the same with "the righteousness of God", **Ro 3:5**, and means his faithfulness; of which it is hypothetically said, it

hath more abounded; or has been more illustrated,

through my lie to his glory: nothing is more opposite to truth than a lie; a lie of itself can never be of any advantage to truth, or to the God of truth; nothing is more contrary to the nature of God, and more abominable to him; a lie is of the devil, and punishable with eternal death; wherefore it may seem strange, that the truth of God should abound through it to his glory: now let it be observed, that the apostle is not speaking of himself, nor of his lie of unbelief, in his state of unregeneracy; but in the person of a sinful man, "for every man is a liar", **Ro 3:4**, as he says, "I speak as a man", **Ro 3:5**; representing a wicked man, who from what was before said, might collect this as the sense of it, that the truth of God is illustrated by the lies of men: and so much may be owned as the apostle's sense, that the truth of God is commended, illustrated, and made to abound, when it is asserted, that he is true and faithful, and every man is a liar, fallacious, and deceitful; "let God be true, and every man a liar", **Ro 3:4**: moreover, the truth of God may be allowed to abound through the lies of men, in a comparative sense, the one being set against the other; and so as contraries do, illustrate each other: this may be assented to, as that sometimes a lie has been overruled by God, for the accomplishing of his purposes and promises, in which his truth and faithfulness have been displayed, as in the cases of Jacob and the Egyptian midwives; but then this does not arise from its nature and tendency, but from the overruling wisdom and providence of God, and therefore not to be excused hereby from sin; and consequently the inference from it is not just, that therefore "no man can, or ought to be, judged as a sinner"; since his sin turns to such account, as to make for the glory of God, which is intimated in the question:

why yet am I also judged as a sinner? if this be the case, I ought not to be reckoned a sinner, or to be treated as such here, or judged and condemned as one hereafter, which is a most wicked, as well as weak consequence; for though God is true and faithful to his promises, notwithstanding the sins of his people, which are as a foil, to set off the lustre of his truth the more, yet their sins are nevertheless sins, and are taken notice of by him as such, and they are corrected for them; and however God may overrule, in a providential way, the sins of others for his glory, this is no excuse for their sins, nor will it be an exemption of them from punishment. This is the sense of the passage; unless by "the truth of God" should be meant, the Gospel, the word of truth, which is of God; and which through the apostle's "lie", as the Jews might call his ministration of it, "abounded to" the "glory" of God; being spread far and near, and made useful for the conversion of sinners, for turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; and for the planting of churches in the Gentile world, as well as in Judea; which much conduced to the honour of God, and the interest of true religion: and then the meaning of the last clause is, "why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" why am I accounted and condemned as an heretic? as an apostate from the faith? as he was by the Jews, and who are used to call heretics sinners: so "the sinner" in **Ec 7:26** is thus interpreted {p}, Mynymh wla "these are the heretics": and elsewhere it {q} is observed, that concerning the heretics it is said, Pr 10:7, "the name of the wicked shall rot": and I very much suspect this to be the sense of the word in **Joh 9:24**, "we know that this man is a sinner"; an heretic, a man of bad principles; and in **Joh 9:31**; "now we know that God heareth not sinners"; men of corrupt minds; since this character stands opposed to a worshipper of the God of Israel.

{p} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 77. 1. {q} Juchasin, fol. 130. 2.

Romans 3:8

Ver. 8. And not rather, as we be slanderously reported,.... These are the apostle's own words, in answer to the objector he represented; and it is as if he should say, why do not you go on? why do you stop here? "and not rather" say, as we are evil spoken of, and our doctrine is blasphemed:

and as some affirm; ignorantly and audaciously enough:

that we say; and teach:

let us do evil that good may come; a slander cast upon the apostle's doctrine of unconditional election, free justification, and of God's overruling the sins of men for good; and is the same which is cast on ours now, and is no small proof of the likeness and sameness of doctrines:

whose damnation is just; whose judgment would have been right, and their censure of our doctrines just, had it been true that we held such a principle, taught such a doctrine, or encouraged such a practice: or their condemnation is just, for aspersing our principles and practices in so vile a manner; and all such persons are deserving of damnation, who teach such things, or practise after this sort.

Romans 3:9

Ver. 9. What then? are we better than they?.... The apostle returns to what he was treating of in the beginning of the chapter, and suggests, that though the Jew has the advantage of the Gentile, with respect to some external privileges, yet not with regard to their state and condition God-ward, and as in his sight; "are we [Jews] better than they [Gentiles]?"

no, in no wise; upon no consideration whatever, neither as men, nor as Jews; which is directly opposite to a notion that people have of themselves:

"in mankind (they say {r}) there are high degrees, one higher than another, and the Israelites Mda Nym lkm hleml, "are above all mankind"; they are the head, and the nations of the world are the tail, and are like to a serpent, for they come from the filth of the old serpent."

Again, they say {s},

"worthy are the Israelites, for the holy blessed God hath given to them holy souls, from an holy place, "above all the rest of the people", that they may do the commandments, and delight in the law."

And elsewhere {t} it is observed on those words, **Ge 1:24**, "the living creature", or "the soul of the living creature", by R. Aba:

"these are the Israelites, for they are the children of the holy blessed God, and their holy souls come from him; the souls of the rest of the people, from what place are they? says R. Eleazar, from the side of the left hand, which is defiled; for they have polluted souls, and therefore they are all defiled, and defile whoever comes nigh them:"

but they are no better, especially with regard to their estate by nature:

for we have before proved; in the preceding chapters, by full instances to a demonstration; and if that cannot be thought sufficient, he goes on to give more proof in the following "verses":

that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin; under the power and guilt of sin, and a sentence of condemnation for it; which is equally true of the Jews, who were no better than the Gentiles, for being Abraham's seed, for being circumcised, for having the ceremonial law, and other outward privileges; for they were equally born in sin, and by practice sinners, as the Gentiles: and this is true of God's elect in all nations, who are no better by nature, by birth, than others; as deserving of the wrath of God as the rest; no better in their tempers and, dispositions, or in the endowments of their minds, or outward circumstances of life; nor better qualified to receive and improve the grace of God bestowed on them, than others.

{r} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 103. 2. Vid. Nishmat Chayim, orat. 2. c. 7. fol. 61. 1. {s} Zohar in Lev. fol 28. 2. {t} Zohar in Gen. fol. 31. 1.

Romans 3:10

Ver. 10. As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one. The several passages cited here, and in some following verses, are taken out of the Psalms and Isaiah; and are brought to prove, not only that the Jews are no better than the Gentiles, being equally corrupt and depraved as they; but also to show the corrupt state and condition of mankind in general: and the words are not always literally expressed, but the sense is attended to, as in this passage; for in the original text of Ps 14:1, it is, "there is none that doth good"; from whence the apostle rightly infers, "there is none righteous"; for he that does not do good, is not righteous; and therefore if there is none on earth that does good and does not sin, there is none righteous upon earth, "no, not one" single person. The Jews allegorizing that passage in Ge 19:31, "there is not a man in the earth to come into us", remark {u} on it thus,

"Urab qydu vya Nya, "there is not a righteous man in the earth"; and there is not a man that rules over his imagination."

There is none righteous as Adam was, in a state of innocence; for all have sinned, and are filled with unrighteousness, and are enemies to righteousness; none are righteous by their obedience to the law of works; nor are there any righteous in the sight of God, upon the foot of their own righteousness, however they may appear in their own eyes, and in the sight of others; nor are any inherently righteous, for there is none without sin, sanctification is imperfect; nor is it, either in whole or in part, a saint's justifying righteousness; indeed there is none righteous, no, not one, but those who are justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them.

{u} Midrash Haneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 1.

Romans 3:11

Ver. 11. There is none that understandeth,.... This is rightly concluded, from what the Psalmist says, Ps 14:2, "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men", on all the children of men, Jews and Gentiles, "to see if there were any that did understand"; and it appears, upon this survey of them, there was not one understanding person among them: man thinks himself a very wise and understanding creature, though he is born a very ignorant one: true indeed, he has not lost by sin the natural faculty of the understanding, so as to become like the horse and mule, which are without any; and it must be allowed, that natural men have some understanding of things natural, civil, and moral; though there is none that understands even these, as Adam did: but then they have no understanding of things spiritual; no spiritual knowledge of God; no true sense of themselves, their sin and misery; nor do they truly know the way of salvation by Christ; nor have they any experience of the work of the Spirit of God upon their souls; nor any experimental knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel: no man can understand these of himself, by the mere strength of reason, and light of nature; nor can even a spiritual man fully understand them in this life; in consequence of this account and character of men it follows, that

there is none that seeketh after God; that worships him in Spirit and in truth, or prays to him with the Spirit, and with the understanding; who seek him chiefly, and in the first place, with their whole hearts, earnestly, diligently, and constantly; who seek him in Christ, and under the assistance of the Spirit; who seek after the knowledge of God in Christ, communion with him through the Mediator, or his honour and glory.

Romans 3:12

Ver. 12. They are all gone out of the way,.... In Ps 14:3; it is said, "they are all gone aside"; as persons in debt: man had a considerable stock of righteousness, holiness, knowledge, &c. but he has run through all, has contracted large and numerous debts, has been obliged to hide himself, has been used as a bankrupt, and turned out of house and home: Christ indeed has undertook to pay, and he has paid all the debts of his people; and has put them into a better state than ever Adam was in: in Ps 53:3, it is rendered, "everyone of them is gone back"; that is, from God; from his commands, and from their former state and condition: here the phrase is rendered by the apostle, "they are all gone out of the way": that is, out of the way of God and his precepts, out of the way of holiness and righteousness, of light and life; into their own ways, the ways of sin, Satan, and the world of darkness, and of death: so Aben Ezra explains it, "out of the right way"; Kimchi and Ben Melech paraphrase it, "out of the good way: and so"

they are together become unprofitable; the word wxlan, in Ps 14:3 and Ps 53:3; is translated, "they are become filthy"; which R. Aben Ezra interprets by wtxvn, "they are corrupt"; and R. Solomon Jarchi by lwqlql wkphn, "they are turned to corruption"; the metaphor is taken from stinking flesh, which is tainted and corrupted, and so good for nothing, hence here rendered "unprofitable"; for so men being corrupted by sin, are of no use, service, and advantage to God, to men, or to themselves; but, on the contrary, nauseous to God, and to all that are good, and hurtful to themselves and others: for

there is none that does good, no, not one; and therefore must be unprofitable. There is none that can do good in a spiritual manner, without the grace of God, strength from Christ, and the assistance of the Spirit; and there is not even a spiritual man, that can do good perfectly, and without sin.

Romans 3:13

Ver. 13. Their throat is an open sepulchre,.... The several vices of the instruments of speech are here, and in the following verse, exposed: "the throat" is said to "be an open sepulchre", as in **Ps 5:9**, so called, for its voracity and insatiableness; both as an instrument of speech, for the words of the wicked are devouring ones; and as an instrument of swallowing, and so may denote the sinner's eager desire after sin, the delight and pleasure he takes in it, the abundance of it he takes in, and his insatiable greediness for it; likewise for its filthy stench, the communication of evil men being corrupt; and because, as by an open grave, persons may fall unawares to their hurt, so the evil communications of wicked men, as they corrupt good manners, are dangerous and hurtful: R. Aben Ezra explains it by dym Nwoa, "immediate destruction", or sudden death:

with their tongues they have used deceit; which may design the sin of flattery, for the words in **Ps 5:9**; the place referred to, are, "they flatter with their tongue"; either God or men, themselves or others, their princes or their neighbour; for there are flatterers in things sacred and civil, there are self-flatterers, court flatterers, and flattering preachers, and all abominable and mischievous; or the phrase may design the sin of lying, either politically, officiously, perniciously, and religiously; and in this latter way, either with respect to doctrine or practice:

the poison of asps is under their lips; or as in Ps 140:3, "adders' poison is under their lips". The asp is but a small creature, and so is the tongue, **Jas 3:5**, but there is a world of mischief in it, signified by poison; which, as that, is latent and secret, is under it; and as that stupefies and kills insensibly, so an evil tongue does, and that in a deadly and incurable manner: oftentimes the Jews speak of the evil imagination, or corruption of nature entering into persons, and operating in them, owekb orak "as poison in an angry serpent" {w}.

{w} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 62. 2. Yoma, fol. 9. 2.

Romans 3:14

Ver. 14. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. These words are taken from Ps 10:7, by cursing is meant, cursing of God, which is sometimes internal with the heart, and sometimes external with the mouth, as here; and of all good men, though without cause, and to no purpose with respect to the persons they curse, since God has blessed them, and they are blessed, and greatly to their own detriment, for, in the issue, their curses will be turned against themselves. There is also a cursing of superiors, as parents, masters, magistrates, kings, and governors; which is a sore evil, and attended with bad consequences; likewise of themselves, and their fellow creatures: and "the mouth [being] full [of it]", denotes the frequency of the sin; scarce anything else comes out of it but cursing; which discovers the sad corruption of the heart; "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh", Mt 12:34. By "bitterness" is meant, either sin in general, which is "an evil and bitter [thing]", **Jer 2:19**, in its nature and effects; or sinful words, such as oaths, curses, imprecations, all wrathful and deceitful words.

Romans 3:15

Ver. 15. Their feet are swift to shed blood. The sins of the heart and mouth are before described, and now the sins of action are taken notice of; for "the feet" are the instruments of motion and action: and when these are said to be "swift to shed blood", it denotes the readiness and eagerness of men, to murder innocent creatures; which shows the dreadful malice and hatred that is in them. The words are cited from Isa 59:7, and seem to point at the times of Manasseh, who shed so much innocent blood, as to fill Jerusalem with it from one end to the other.

Romans 3:16

Ver. 16. Destruction and misery are in their ways. This passage also is to be found in Isa 59:7, and may be understood either actively thus: all the ways they take, and methods they pursue, are to make their fellow creatures miserable, to ruin and destroy them; or passively, that by their sinful ways and vicious course of life, they themselves are brought to destruction and misery: the way they are walking in is, "the broad way, that leadeth to destruction", **Mt 7:13**; the end of it, what it issues in, is eternal death, the destruction of the body and soul in hell, which will be attended with endless and inexpressible misery.

Romans 3:17

Ver. 17. And the way of peace have they not known. This is a citation front Isa 59:8, and expresses the ignorance of mankind, with regard to true peace, and the way unto it: men are naturally ignorant of the way of peace with God; of the first step which God took towards it; of the council and covenant of peace, in which the scheme of it was drawn, and the method fixed; of Christ the peacemaker, and of the way in which he has made it; and of the Gospel, which reveals and publishes it. They are ignorant of the true way of enjoying peace of conscience; they have no true peace of mind, their consciences are often tortured; and though they may have a stupid and secure peace, yet nothing that is true, real, and solid; for they are without the Spirit, whose fruit is peace; and without faith in Christ, by which true peace only is enjoyed; nor are they spiritually minded, which is life and peace; nor have they any knowledge of the way to have it; they are ready to think it must be had by doing something of their own, and not that it is to be had only in Christ, in his blood and righteousness. They are ignorant of the paths of wisdom, which are peace; peace is enjoyed in them, they lead unto it, and issue in it: they know not the way to eternal peace; they imagine something done by the creature is the way; and are ignorant that Christ is the only way of salvation, the true way to eternal life, everlasting peace and happiness: yea, they know not the way of peace among men, and one another; nor will they do that which is just and right, in order to support and maintain it, but are unjust, deceitful, and quarrelsome; they do not study peace, but rather contention, which they like and approve of. The Jews talk {x} much of their good nature, affability, and condescension, and of their doing this and that, and the other thing, Mwlv ykrd ynpm, "because of the ways of peace".

{x} Misn. Gittin, c. 5. sect. 8, 9. T. Hieros. Demai, fol. 24. 1. Maimon. Obede Cochabim, c. 10. sect. 5.

Romans 3:18

Ver. 18. There is no fear of God before their eyes. The place referred to is Ps 36:1, by the "fear of God", is not meant a fear of God's wrath, of hell and damnation; nor a fearful distrust of his presence, power, providence, and grace; much less an hypocritical fear; but a reverential affection for God, and which is peculiar to the children of God, which springs from a sense of divine goodness, is attended with holiness of heart and life, is consistent with faith, even full assurance of it, and with spiritual joy in its highest degree; it stands opposed to pride and haughtiness, and is a blessing of the covenant of grace: now this is not to be found in unregenerate men, for this springs from grace, and not nature, and is only implanted in the heart in conversion; it appears from the whole life and conversation of unconverted men, that the fear of God is not in their hearts, nor before their eyes.

Romans 3:19

Ver. 19. Now we know that what things soever the law saith,.... By "the law" is meant, not the law of nature, nor the civil law of nations, nor the ceremonial law of the Jews, nor barely the five books of Moses, nor the book of Psalms, of the Prophets, or the writings of the whole Old Testament; but the moral law, as it appears in the whole word of God, which every man is bound to observe, of which all are transgressors, by which is the knowledge of sin, which no man can be justified by, and which Christ was made under, and came to fulfil. This law is represented as a person speaking, and saying many things, some of which are here mentioned; so, hrwt hrma, "the law says" so and so, is an usual phrase with Jewish writers {y}. The persons it speaks to, are

them that are under the law; the Jews were in a peculiar sense under it, as it was given to them by Moses; all mankind are under it, as to the matter of it; they are under obligation to obedience to it, and, through disobedience, come under its sentence of condemnation. The elect of God themselves were, and are in some sense under it; not indeed as a covenant of works, or as in the hands of Moses, nor as a yoke of bondage; nor are they obliged to seek for justification by it, and are entirely delivered from the curse and condemnation of it by Christ. They were under it, and that as a covenant of works, as in Adam, the federal head and representative of all mankind; and came under its sentence of condemnation and death, for his sin, and their own actual transgressions; which is consistent with the everlasting love of God to them in Christ, the covenant of grace made with them in him, as their head and surety, and their justification by him: and they are now under it, as in the hands of Christ; and look upon themselves as obliged, by the love of Christ, to yield a cheerful obedience to it: here it means such as are transgressors of the law, and so under obligation to punishment, without any regard to Jew or Gentile, or any distinction God has made in his own breast: and the things it says to such are, it charges them with sin, and convicts them of it, both of its pollution and guilt: so

that every mouth may be stopped; and have nothing to say of the purity of their nature, which appears to be so sadly stained; nor of their works of righteousness, which are so few, and so very imperfect. The law makes such a representation of things to them, that their mouths are stopped from glorying in themselves, and in their works, which are far from being adequate to the demands of the law; and from complaining against the righteous judgment of God, should he proceed against them in the most rigorous manner:

and all the world may become guilty before God; Jews and Gentiles; all the individuals of mankind are guilty before God, and will be found to be so, sooner or later: some read it, "subject to God", and understand it of a subjection to his grace, being brought to see their need of it, and of salvation by it; but this is not the case of all the world, rather upodikov, signifies a subjection to that justice, vengeance, and wrath of God, to which all men are liable in their own persons; since they are all found guilty by the law, and will appear to be so, and therefore can never be justified by their obedience to it; which is what the apostle is aiming at in all he here says, as appears from what follows; all which "we know" to be true, and are fully assured of, who know the nature and spirituality of the law, and to whom it has come with light and power.

{y} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 16. 1. Taanith, fol. 21. 2.

Romans 3:20

Ver. 20. Therefore by the deeds of the law,.... Hence it most clearly appears, that there can be no justification before God by the law, since it stops the mouths of men, and pronounces them guilty: by "the deeds of the law" are meant, works done in obedience to it, as performed by sinful men, which are very imperfect; not as performed by Adam in innocence or by Christ in our nature whose works were perfect; but as performed by sinful men and of themselves, and not as performed in and by Christ for them who is the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness to all believers: now by such works as these whether wrought before or after conversion, with or without the strength and grace of Christ,

there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: that is, no one person: "flesh" designs men, and men as corrupt and carnal, in opposition to God, who is a Spirit pure and holy; and may have respect to the vain opinion of Jews and Gentiles, who were vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind; the one on account of their wisdom and learning, the other on account of their righteousness; and includes all the individuals of human nature:, the word "justified", does not signify being made righteous by the infusion of righteousness, for the infusion of a righteousness, or holiness, is sanctification, which is a work of the Spirit of God, is internal, and imperfect, and so not justifying; but it is a forensic word, or legal term, and stands opposed to a being condemned; and signifies to be acquitted, discharged, and made righteous in a legal sense, which can never be done by an imperfect obedience to the law: men may be justified hereby in their own sight, and in the sight of others, but not in "his sight"; in the sight of God, who is omniscient, and sees not as man seeth; who is pure, holy, and righteous, and whose judgment is according to truth: this is said in direct contradiction to the Jews {z}, who say,

"a man is not justified for ever, but by the words of the law:"

but in his sight none can be justified, but by the perfect obedience and righteousness of Christ. The reason for it is,

for by the law is the knowledge of sin; it discovers to a man, by the light of the Spirit of God, and as under his influence, and attended with his power, the sins both of his heart and life; and so he is convinced by it as a transgressor and finds himself guilty, and liable to condemnation and death; wherefore he can never hope for and expect justification by it. The Jews ascribe such an use as this to the law, which they suppose it performs in a very gentle manner;

"he that rises in the night (say they {a}), and studies in the law, hbwx hyl aedwm aq atyrwa, "the law makes known to him his sin", but not in a way of judgment, but as a mother makes known to her son in tender language:"

but this is generally done in a rougher way, for the law works wrath.

{z} Zohar in Lev. fol. 33. 3. {a} Zohar in Lev. fol. 10. 2.

Romans 3:21

Ver. 21. But now the righteousness of God,.... The apostle having proved that all men are unrighteous, and that no man can be justified in the sight of God by his obedience, either to the law of nature or of Moses, proceeds to give an account of that righteousness, which does justify before God; and so returns to his former subject, **Ro 1:17**, concerning "the righteousness of God", the revelation of which he makes to be peculiar to the Gospel, as he does here; since he says, that it

without the law is manifested: meaning, either that this righteousness is without the law, and the deeds of it, as performed by sinful men; or that the manifestation of it is without the law, either of nature or of Moses; for the law discovers sin, but not a righteousness which justifies from sin; it shows what righteousness is, but does not direct the sinner where there is one to be had, that will make him righteous in the sight of God: this is made known without the law, and only in the Gospel:

being witnessed by the law and the prophets; a testimony is borne to the justifying righteousness of Christ both "by the law", particularly in the five books of Moses; which testify of Christ, of his obedience, sufferings, and death, by which he brought in life and righteousness; see **Ge 3:15**, compared with **Da 9:24**; and
Ge 15:6 with **Ro 4:9**; and Ge 22:18 with **Ga 3:8**; and De 30:11 with Ro 10:5. And the prophets; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and others; see Isa 42:21.

Romans 3:22

Ver. 22. Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ,.... A further account is given of this righteousness: why it is called "the righteousness of God", and in what sense revealed and manifested, See Gill on "Ro 1:17"; Here it is said to be "by faith of Jesus Christ"; not by that faith which Christ himself had as man, but by that faith, of which he the author and object: the Alexandrian copy reads, "by faith in Jesus Christ"; and not by that as the cause of justification; for faith is neither the efficient, nor the moving, nor meritorious cause of it; no, nor the instrumental cause of it on the part of God or Christ: nor is faith the matter of a justifying righteousness; for faith is a part of sanctification, is itself imperfect, is a man's own, as it is implanted in him, and exercised by him; is here and elsewhere distinguished from righteousness; something else, and not that, as the obedience and blood of Christ, are said to be what men are made righteous and justified by: but faith is a means of apprehending and receiving righteousness; it views the excellency of Christ's righteousness; it owns the sufficiency of it; the soul by it renounces its own righteousness, submits to Christ's, rejoices in it, and gives him the glory of it: now this is by, or through faith,

unto all, and upon all: not all men, for all have not faith, nor are all justified and saved: but

all that believe; which must be understood, not of believing any thing, nor of any sort of believing; but of such, who truly and with the heart believe in Christ for salvation; and who are here opposed to the wise philosophers among the Gentiles, had to all self-righteous persons among the Jews. Though this character does not design any cause or condition of justification, but is only descriptive of the persons, who are declaratively interested in a justifying righteousness, which is said to be "unto", and "upon them"; that is, it is appointed, provided, and wrought out for them, and directed and applied unto them, and put upon them as a garment, and that upon all of them:

for there is no difference; of nation, age, or sex, or of state and condition; no respect is had to persons or works; nor is there any difference with respect to weak or strong believers; the righteousness is equally applied to one as to another, and one is as much justified by it in the sight of God as another.

Romans 3:23

Ver. 23. For all have sinned,.... This is the general character of all mankind; all have sinned in Adam, are guilty by his sin, polluted with it, and condemned for it; all are sinners in themselves, and by their own actual transgressions; this is the case of the whole world, and of all the men in it; not only of the Gentiles, but of the Jews, and the more righteous among them: hence there is no difference in the state and condition of men by nature; nor is there any reason from and in themselves, why God saves one and not another; nor any room to despair of the grace and righteousness of Christ, on account of persons being, in their own view, the worst of sinners:

and hence it is, that they are all

come short of the glory of God; either of glorifying of God; man was made for this purpose, and was capable of it, though now through sin incapable; and it is only by the grace of God that he is enabled to do it: or of glorying: before him; sin has made him infamous, and is his shame; by it he has forfeited all external favours, and has nothing of his own to glory in; his moral righteousness is no foundation for boasting, especially before God: or of having glory from God; the most pure and perfect creature does not of itself deserve any glory and praise from God; good men, in a way of grace, will have praise of God; but sinners can never expect any on their own account: or of the glorious grace of God, as sanctifying and pardoning grace, and particularly the grace of a justifying righteousness; man has no righteousness, nor can he work out one; nor will his own avail, he wants a better than that: or of eternal glory; which may be called the glory of God, because it is of his preparing, what he calls persons to by his grace, and which of his own free grace he bestows upon them, and will chiefly lie in the enjoyment of him; now this is represented sometimes as a prize, which is run for, and pressed after; but men, through sinning, come short of it, and must of themselves do so for ever: or rather of the image of God in man, who is called "the image and glory of God", 1Co 11:7, which consisted externally in government over the creatures; internally, in righteousness and holiness, in wisdom and knowledge, in the bias of his mind to that which is good, and in power to perform it; of all which he is come short, or deprived by sinning.

Romans 3:24

Ver. 24. Being justified freely by his grace,.... The matter of justification is before expressed, and the persons that share in this blessing are described; here the several causes of it are mentioned. The moving cause of it is the free grace of God; for by "the grace of God" here, is not meant the Gospel, or what some men call the terms of the Gospel, and the constitution of it; nor the grace of

God infused into the heart; but the free love and favour of God, as it is in his heart; which is wonderfully displayed in the business of a sinner's justification before him: it appears in his resolving upon the justification of his chosen ones in Christ; in fixing on the method of doing it; in setting forth and pre-ordaining Christ to be the ransom; in calling Christ to engage herein; in Christ's engaging as a surety for his people, and in the Father's sending him to bring in everlasting righteousness; in Christ's coming to do it, and in the gracious manner in which he wrought it out; in the Father's gracious acceptation, imputation, and donation of it; in the free gift of the grace of faith, to apprehend and receive it; and in the persons that partake of it, who are of themselves sinners and ungodly. The meritorious cause of justification is,

the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: redemption supposes a former state of captivity to sin, Satan, and the law, in which God's elect were by nature, and is a deliverance from it; it is of a spiritual nature, chiefly respects the soul, and is plenteous, complete, and eternal: this is in and by Christ; he was called unto it, was sent to effect it, had a right unto it, as being the near kinsman; and was every way fit for it, being both God and man; and has by his sufferings and death obtained it: now, as all the blessings of grace come through redemption by Christ, so does this of justification, and after this manner; Christ, as a Redeemer, had the sins of his people laid on him, and they were bore by him, and took away; the sentence of the law's condemnation was executed on him, as standing in their legal place and stead; and satisfaction was made by him for all offences committed by them, which was necessary, that God might appear to be just, in justifying all them that believe: nor is this any objection or contradiction to the free grace of God, in a sinner's justification; since it was grace in God to provide, send, and part with his Son as a Redeemer, and to work out righteousness; it was grace in Christ, to come and give himself a sacrifice, and obtain salvation and righteousness, not for angels, but for men, and for some of them, and not all; and whatever this righteousness, salvation, and redemption cost Christ, they are all free to men.

Romans 3:25

Ver. 25. Whom God had set forth to be a propitiation,.... Redemption by Christ is here further explained, by his being "a propitiation": which word may design either Christ the propitiator, the author of peace and reconciliation; or the propitiatory sacrifice, by which he is so; and both in allusion to the mercy seat, which was a type of him as such. The apostle here uses the same word, which the Septuagint often render trpk "the mercy seat", by; and Philo the Jew calls it by the same name, and says it was a symbol, thv ilew tou yeou dunamewv "of the propitious power of God" {b}. Christ is the propitiation to God for sin; which must be understood of his making satisfaction to divine justice, for the sins of his people; these were imputed to him, and being found on him, the law and justice of God made demands on him for them; which he answered to satisfaction, by his obedience and sacrifice; and which, as it could not be done by any other, nor in any other way, is expressed by "reconciliation", and "atonement": whence God may be said to be pacified, or made propitious; not but that he always loved his people, and never hated them; nor is there, nor can there be any change in God, from hatred to love, any more than from love to hatred: Christ has not, by his sacrifice and death, procured the love and favour of God, but has removed the obstructions which lay in the way of love's appearing and breaking forth; there was, a law broken, and justice provoked, which were to be attended to, and Christ by his sacrifice has satisfied both; so that neither the wrath of God, nor any of the effects of it, can fall upon the persons Christ is the propitiation for, even according to justice itself; so that it is not love, but justice that is made propitious: for this is all owing to the grace and goodness of God, who "hath set him forth", for this intent, in his eternal purposes and decrees; in the promises of the Old Testament, in the types, shadows, and sacrifices of the old law; by the exhibition of him in our nature, and in the ministration of the Gospel; and this is said to be

through faith in his blood. The "blood" of Christ is that, by which Christ is the propitiation; for without the shedding of that blood, there is no redemption, no peace, no reconciliation, or remission of sin; and "faith" in his blood is the means by which persons become partakers of the benefits of his propitiation; such as peace, pardon, atonement, justification, and adoption: and the end of Christ's being set forth as a propitiation, on the part of God's people, is,

for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: by "sins that are past", are meant, not sins before baptism, nor the sins of a man's life only, but the sins of Old Testament saints, who lived before the incarnation of Christ, and the oblation of his sacrifice; and though this is not to be restrained to them only, for Christ's blood was shed for the remission of all his people's sins, past, present, and to come; yet the sins of the saints before the coming of Christ, seem to be particularly designed; which shows the insufficiency of legal sacrifices, sets forth the efficacy of Christ's blood and sacrifice, demonstrates him to be a perfect Saviour, and gives us reason under the present dispensation to hope for pardon, since reconciliation is completely made: "remission" of sin does not design that weakness which sin has brought upon, and left in human nature, whereby it is so enfeebled, that it cannot help itself, and therefore Christ was set forth, and sent forth, to be a propitiation; but rather God's passing by, or overlooking sin, and not punishing for it, under the former dispensation; or else the forgiveness of it now, and redemption from it by the blood of Christ, "through the forbearance of God"; in deferring the execution of justice, till he sent his Son, and in expecting satisfaction of his Son; which shows the grace and goodness of God to his people, and the trust and confidence he put in his Son: the other end on the part of God, in setting forth Christ to be a propitiation, was

to declare his righteousness Ps 22:31; meaning either the righteousness of Christ, which was before hid, but now manifested; or rather the righteousness of God the Father, his faithfulness in his promises relating to Christ, his grace and goodness in the mission of his Son, the holiness and purity of his nature, and his vindictive justice, in avenging sin in his own Son, as the surety of his people: the execution of this was threatened from the beginning; the types and sacrifices of the old law prefigured it; the prophecies of the Old Testament express it; and the sufferings and death of Christ openly declare it, since God spared not his own Son, but sheathed the sword of justice in him.

{b} Philo de Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 668.

Romans 3:26

Ver. 26. To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness,.... This end is further explained, it being to declare the righteousness of God "at this time", under the Gospel dispensation; in which there was such a display of the grace, mercy, and goodness of God:

that he might be just; that is, appear to be so: God is naturally and essentially just in himself; and he is evidentially so in all his works, particularly in redemption by Christ; and when and while he is

the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus: Jesus, the Saviour, is the object of faith, as he is the Lord our righteousness; the believer in Jesus is a real, and not a nominal one; God is the justifier of such in a declarative way, and God only, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and which sentence of justification is pronounced by him on the foot of a perfect righteousness, which neither law nor justice can find fault with, but entirely approve of; and so he appears just and righteous, even though he justifies the sinner and the ungodly.

Romans 3:27

Ver. 27. Where is boasting then?.... There is no room nor reason for it, either in Jews or Gentiles: not in the Jews, who were very apt to boast of their being Abraham's seed; of their circumcision; of their being Israelites; of their having and keeping the law; of God being their God; and of their knowledge of him: nor in the Gentiles, who were ready to boast of their philosophy, wisdom, and learning; of their self-sufficiency, freewill, and of the things they had in their own power.

It is excluded; it is shut out of doors; the key is turned upon it; it is not allowed of; it is entirely exploded:

by what law? of works? nay; for, that establishes boasting when men seek life, righteousness, and salvation by the works of it, and fancy they shall be able to attain them this way:

but by the law of faith: not by a law requiring faith; nor as if the Gospel was a law, a new law, a remedial law, a law of milder terms; but the word "law" here answers to the Hebrew word hrwt, which signifies any "doctrine" or "instruction", and oftentimes the doctrine of the Gospel, as in **Isa 2:3**, and here particularly, the doctrine of a sinner's justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; according to which doctrine the most unlikely persons are justified, even ungodly persons, the worst and vilest of sinners; and that without any consideration of works, by faith only, which is freely given them; and by faith in Christ's righteousness only: so that there is not the least room for boasting in the creature, but all their boasting is in Christ, who is made unto them righteousness, and by whom they are justified.

Romans 3:28

Ver. 28. Therefore we conclude,.... This is the conclusion from the premises, the sum total of the whole account:

that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. The subject of justification is, "man", not in opposition to angels; nor does it design the Jew against the Gentile, though some have so thought; but the apostle names neither Jew nor Gentile, but "man", to show that Christ's righteousness is unto all, and every man, that believes, be he who he will; and is to be understood indefinitely, that every man that is justified is justified by faith. The means is "by faith", not habitually or actually considered; that is, either as an habit and principle infused into us, or as an act performed by us; but either organically, as it is a means of receiving Christ's righteousness; or objectively, as it denotes Christ the object of it: and all this is done "without works", of any sort; not by a faith which is without works, for such a faith is dead, and of no avail; but by faith without works joined to it, in the affair of justification; or by the righteousness of Christ imputed by God the Father, without any consideration of them, and received by faith, and relied upon by the believer, without any regard unto them.

Romans 3:29

Ver. 29. Is he the God of the Jews only?.... The Jews made their boast of him as such, and would not allow the Gentiles any interest in him: but

is he not also of the Gentiles? yes, of the Gentiles also: God is the God both of Jews and Gentiles; not only as the Creator, preserver, and Governor of them, or as he has a right to demand worship and service of them, but as he is their covenant God; not by virtue of the covenant of circumcision, or by the Sinai Covenant, but by the covenant of grace; as appears by his loving them in Christ, choosing them in him, putting them into his hands, providing blessings of grace for them in him, and sending his Son to redeem them; by calling them by his grace; by their sanctification, adoption, pardon, and justification; by taking out of them a people for his name with whom he dwells, and of whom he takes care; and will never leave nor forsake: all which may lead us to observe the distinguishing grace of God, the happiness of our state and condition, and what encouragement we have for faith and hope in God.

Romans 3:30

Ver. 30. Seeing it is one God,.... God is one in nature and essence, though there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; whence it appears, that he that is the God of the Jews, is also the God of the Gentiles, or there would be more gods than one; and that these are justified in one and the same manner, or God must be divided; for God, as he is one in nature, so he is one in will, in his promises, and in the methods of his grace:

which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. The objects of justification are "the circumcision", the circumcised Jews, and "the uncircumcision", the uncircumcised Gentiles; the circumcision of the one does not forward, and the uncircumcision of the other does not hinder, nor neither of them effect the grace of justification: the justifier of them is one and the same, who is God; and the matter of their justification is the same, which is the righteousness of Christ; and the manner of it, or the means of their comfortable apprehension of it, is the same; for those phrases, "by faith", and "through faith", mean one and the same thing; see **Php 3:9**.

Romans 3:31

Ver. 31. Do we then make void the law through faith?.... Which question is answered by way of detestatation,

God forbid! and by asserting the contrary,

yea, we establish the law. The law is not made void, neither by the grace nor doctrine of faith: not by the grace of faith; for that faith is not right which is not attended with works of righteousness; and those works are not right which do not flow from filth. Such a connection there is between faith and works; and so much do the one depend upon the other. Moreover, none but believers are capable of performing good works aright, and they do them, and they ought to do them: besides, faith, as a grace, looks to Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness, and therefore do not make it void. Nor is it made void by the doctrine of faith, and by the particular doctrine of a sinner's justification by faith in Christ's righteousness, which is here more especially intended; for though it is made void by it, as to any use of it for justification by the deeds thereof; yet its use in other respects is not set aside, such as to inform us of the mind and will of God, to discover and convince of sin, to show believers their deformity and imperfection, to render Christ and his righteousness more valuable, and to be a rule of walk and conversation to them; and it still remains a cursing and condemning law to Christless sinners, though justified ones are delivered from it as such: yea, the law is so far from being made void, that it is established by this doctrine; for by it the perpetuity of it is asserted, the spirituality of it is acknowledged, the perfect righteousness of it is secured: according to this doctrine all its demands are answered; whatever it requires it has, such as holiness of nature, perfect obedience to its precepts, and its full penalty borne: it is placed in the best hands, where it will ever remain; and a regard to it is enforced under the best influence, by the best of motives, and from the best of principles. It is indeed abolished as a covenant of works, and in this sense is made void to believers; and it is done away as to the form of administration of it by Moses; and it is destroyed as a yoke of bondage; and the people of God are free from the malediction of it, and condemnation by it, and so from its terror; yet it remains unalterable and unchangeable in the hands of Christ; the matter of it is always the same, and ever obligatory on believers, who, though they are freed from the curse of it, are not exempted from obedience to it: wherefore the law is not made void, so as to be destroyed and abolished in every sense, or to be rendered idle, inactive, useless, and insignificant; but, on the contrary, is made to stand, is placed on a sure basis and firm foundation, as the words used signify.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 4

The apostle having, in the preceding chapters, proved that there is no justification before God by the works of the law, partly from the depraved state and condition that all men are in by nature, both Jews and Gentiles; and partly from the nature of the law itself, which discovers sin, arraigns men for it, and convicts of it, and pronounces guilty before God for it; as also by showing, that it is by another righteousness, which he describes, that men are justified in the sight of God; proceeds in this to confirm the same by an example; and that which he pitches upon is the most appropriate and pertinent he could have thought of, namely, that of Abraham, the father of the Jews, **Ro 4:1**, for in whatsoever way he was justified, his sons surely could not imagine but it must be the right way, nor should they seek another: now that Abraham was not justified by works, he proves **Ro 4:2**, from an absurdity following upon it, that he would have just reason to glory; whereas no man ought to glory before God, but only in the Lord: and by a passage of Scripture, **Ro 4:3**, to which he appeals, he makes it clearly appear that he was justified by faith, for that says, his faith was counted for righteousness. This case of accounting anything to another for righteousness, is illustrated by two sorts of persons, who have different things accounted to them, and in a different manner; to the worker, the reward is reckoned of debt, and not of grace, **Ro 4:4**, but to the believer that works not, his faith, as Abraham's was, is counted for righteousness; whence it follows, that not the worker is justified by his works, but the believer by the righteousness of faith; and this is confirmed by a testimony of David in

Ps 32:1, by which the apostle proves the imputation of righteousness without works, in which the happiness of men consists, **Ro 4:6**, and shows, that this happiness does not belong to circumcised persons only, but to the uncircumcised also; and therefore is not by circumcision, but by faith, **Ro 4:9**, and which he proves by observing the time when faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness; not when he was circumcised, but before, **Ro 4:10**, the use of which circumcision to him was to assure him, that he should be the father of uncircumcised Gentiles that believed, to whom righteousness should be imputed, as to him when he was uncircumcised, **Ro 4:11**, who are described by their imitation of his faith, which he had, and exercised before his circumcision, **Ro 4:12**. And this leads on to a fresh argument, proving justification to be by faith, and not by the works of the law, since the promise made to Abraham, and his seed, was not through the law, but the righteousness of faith; and consequently both his and their justification were not by the one, but by the other, **Ro 4:13**, or, if otherwise, both the faithfulness of God, and the faith of his people, would be void, and the promise of grace of no effect, **Ro 4:14**. And this is still further argued from the effect of the law working wrath, which, if justification was by it, it would never do, **Ro 4:15**. The wisdom and goodness of God in giving faith, and not works, a concern in justification, are observed, **Ro 4:16**, whereby it appears to be of free grace, faith only being a recipient, and what gives all the glory to God; and also the promise of eternal life through justification by free grace becomes sure to all the spiritual seed; who are distributed into two sorts, the believing Jews under the legal dispensation, and the believing Gentiles, under the Gospel dispensation; of both which Abraham was father; which is confirmed by a testimony out of Ge 17:4, whose faith is described by the object of it, the omnipotent God that quickens the dead, and calls things that are not, as though they were, **Ro 4:17**, and by the nature of it, **Ro 4:18**, believing in hope against hope, resting on the promise of God; and by the strength of it, being not at all weakened by considering, either his own case, or that of his wife's, **Ro 4:19**, and was so far from being staggered through unbelief at these things, that it was strong in exercise, thereby glorifying God, the object of it, **Ro 4:20**, nay, it rose up to a plerophory, a full assurance, **Ro 4:21**, being built upon the power of a promising God; hence, as before observed, his faith was reckoned to him for righteousness, **Ro 4:22**, And now in the same way that he was justified, all his children, his spiritual seed, are justified, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; for what is said concerning the imputation of the righteousness of faith to him, does not concern him only, **Ro 4:23**, but all true believers also; whose faith is described by the object of it, him that raised up Christ from the dead, that is, God the Father, **Ro 4:24**, who is supposed hereby to have been dead, and is represented as the Lord and Saviour of his people; and of whom a further account is given, **Ro 4:25**, as being delivered into the hands of men, of justice, and of death, for the sins of his people, which he took upon him, and bore, and made satisfaction for, and as being raised again for their justification; so that this is a benefit owing not to the works of men, but to what Christ has done and suffered in the room and stead of his people; which is what the apostle meant to bring this point unto; the blessed effects and consequences of which he relates in the next chapter.

Ver. 1. What shall we say then,.... The apostle having proved that there is no justification by the works of the law; to make this appear more clear and evident to the Jews, he instances in the greatest person of their nation, and for whom they had the greatest value and esteem,

Abraham, our father; who was not a righteous and good man, but the head of the Jewish nation; and, as the Syriac version here styles him, athbad avyr, "the head", or "chief of the fathers"; and so the Alexandrian copy, "our forefather": and was the first of the circumcision, and is described here by his relation to the Jews, "our father"; that is,

as pertaining to the flesh; or according to carnal descent, or natural generation and relation; for in a spiritual sense, or with respect to faith and grace, he was the father of others, even of all that believe, whether Jews or Gentiles: now the question put concerning him is, "what he, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?" for the phrase, "as pertaining to the flesh", may be connected with the word

found; and to find anything is by seeking to obtain, and enjoy it: and the sense of the whole is, did he find out the way of life, righteousness, and salvation by the mere hint of carnal reason? and did he obtain these things by his own strength? or were these acquired by his circumcision in the flesh, or by any other fleshly privilege he enjoyed? or was he justified before God by any services and performances of his, of whatsoever kind? There is indeed no express answer returned; but it is evident from what follows, that the meaning of the apostle is, that it should be understood in the negative.

Romans 4:2

Ver. 2. For if Abraham were justified by works,.... That Abraham was not, and could not be justified by works, is clear from hence, that if this was his case, he hath whereof to glory; which will be allowed him before men, on account of his pious life and conversation:

but not before God; who saw all the iniquity of his heart, and was privy to all his failings and infirmities: besides, glorying before God in a man's own works, is contrary to the scheme and method of God's grace; is excluded by the doctrine of faith; nor is there any place for glorying before God but in Christ, and his righteousness: if therefore Abraham had not that of which he could glory before God, he could not be justified by works in his sight: but does not the Apostle James say that he was justified by works, **Jas 2:21**? To this it may be replied, that the two apostles, Paul and James, are not speaking of the same thing: Paul speaks of justification before God, James of justification before men; Paul speaks of the justification of the person, James of the justification of a man's cause, as the truth of his faith, or the uprightness of his conduct; Paul speaks of works, as the causes of justification, James of them as the effects and evidences of faith; Paul had to do with the self-righteous, who trusted in their own works for justification, James with Gnostics, who slighted and neglected the performance of them. These things considered, they will be found to agree.

Romans 4:3

Ver. 3. For what saith the Scripture?.... This answers to bytkd yam, "what is that which is written" {c}? or what does the Scripture say? which is a way of speaking used by the Jews, when anything is proposed, which seems contrary to Scripture, as here justification by works does. A testimony from Scripture is here produced, proving that Abraham was justified by faith, and not by works: the place referred to is Ge 15:6;

Abraham believed God; the object of his faith and trust were not his riches, nor his righteousness, but Jehovah, the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, styled in Ge 15:1, "the Word of the Lord", the essential Word of God, and called his "shield", and "exceeding great reward"; characters which are very applicable to Christ: and this faith of his in the Lord was not a mere assent to the promise of God, but a fiducial act of faith in him; and was not merely concerned with temporal, but with spiritual things, and particularly about Christ the promised seed:

and it was counted to him for righteousness, the meaning of which is not, that Abraham imputed righteousness to God, or celebrated his righteousness and faithfulness, as some; or that the world reckoned Abraham a righteous person, as others; but that God reckoned him righteous, or imputed it to him for righteousness: and the question is, what the it is which was counted to him for righteousness? and that this is to be understood, hnmah le, "concerning faith", as R. Solomon Jarchi says, is out of question; for this is expressly said by the apostle, **Ro 4:9**. The only one is, whether it means the grace of faith by which he believed; or the object of faith on which he believed, and with which his faith was conversant: not the former, for that is not righteousness, nor accounted so; but is distinguished from it, and is that by which a person receives and lays hold on righteousness; besides, whatever may be alleged in favour of the imputation of Abraham's faith to himself for righteousness, it can never be thought to be imputed to others on that account; whereas the very selfsame it is imputed to others also; see **Ro 4:24**; it remains then that it was the promised seed, the Messiah, and his righteousness, which Abraham, by faith, looked unto, and believed in, that was made unto him righteousness by imputation. Now since so great and good a man as Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith in the righteousness of the Messiah, it follows, that none of his sons, nor any other person whatever, ought to seek for, or expect to be justified in any other way.

{c} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 5. 1. & 15. 2. & passim.

Romans 4:4

Ver. 4. Now to him that worketh,.... The apostle illustrates the former case by two sorts of persons in this and the next verse, who have different things accounted to them, and in a different manner. The one is represented as working, the other not. By the worker is meant, not one that works from, and upon principles of grace. The regenerate man is disposed to work for God; the man that has the Spirit of God is capable of working; he that has the grace of Christ, and strength from him, can work well; he that believes in Christ, works in a right way; he that loves Christ, works freely, and from a right principle; and he that has Christ's glory in view, works to a right end: but the worker here, is one that works upon nature's principles, and with selfish views; one that works in the strength of nature, trusting to, and glorying in what he does; seeking righteousness by his work, and working for eternal life and salvation. Now let it be supposed, that such a worker not only thinks he does, but if it could be, really does all the works of the law, yields a perfect obedience to it; what

is the reward that is, and will be

reckoned to him? There is no reward due to the creature's work, though ever so perfect, arising front any desert or dignity in itself: there may be a reward by promise and compact; God may promise a reward to encourage to obedience, as he does in the law, which is not eternal life; for that is the free gift of God, and is only brought to light in the Gospel; and though heaven is called a reward, yet not of man's obedience, but Christ's; but admitting heaven itself to be the reward promised to the worker, in what manner must that be reckoned to him?

not of grace: for grace and works can never agree together; for if the reward is reckoned for the man's works, then it is not of grace, "otherwise work is no more work", Ro 11:6; and if it is of grace, then not for his works, "otherwise grace is no more grace", Ro 11:6; it remains therefore, that if it is reckoned for his works, it must be

of debt: it must be his due, as wages are to an hireling. Now this was not Abraham's case, which must have been, had he been justified by works; he had a reward reckoned to him, and accounted his, which was God himself, "I am thy shield, and exceeding, great reward", Ge 15:1; which must be reckoned to him, not of debt, but of grace; wherefore it follows, that he was justified, not by works, but by the grace of God imputed to him; that which his faith believed in for righteousness. The distinction of a reward of grace, and of debt, was known to the Jews; a the one they called orp, the other rkv: the former {d} they say is lwmgh, "a benefit", which is freely of grace bestowed on an undeserving person, or one he is not obliged to; the other is what is given, Nydb, "of debt", in strict justice.

{d} Maimon. Bartenora & Yom Tob in Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 3.

Romans 4:5

Ver. 5. But to him that worketh not,.... Not that the believer does not work at all, but not from such principles, and with such views as the other; he does not work in order to obtain life and salvation; he does not seek for justification by his doings:

but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly: or that ungodly one: particular reference is had to Abraham, who in his state of unregeneracy was an ungodly person; as all God's elect are in a state of nature, and are such when God justifies them, being without a righteousness of their own; wherefore he imputes the righteousness of another, even that of his own Son, unto them: and though he justifies the ungodly, he does not justify their ungodliness, but them from it; nor will he, nor does he leave them to live and die in it; now to him that worketh not, that is perfect righteousness; or has no opportunity of working at all; or what he does, he does not do, that he might be justified by it; but exercises faith on God as justifying persons, who, like himself, are sinners, ungodly and destitute of a righteousness:

his faith is counted for righteousness; not the act, but the object of it; which was Abraham's case, and therefore was not justified by works. The Vulgate Latin version here adds, "according to the purpose of the grace of God".

Romans 4:6

Ver. 6. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man,.... the apostle having instanced in Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, cites some passages from David, king of Israel, a person of great note and esteem among the Jews, in favour of the doctrine he is establishing; who in a very proper and lively manner describes the happiness of such persons:

unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works. This righteousness cannot be the righteousness of the law, or man's obedience to it; for that is a righteousness with works, is a man's own, and not imputed; and indeed is not a righteousness in the sight of God: nor does man's blessedness lie in, or come by it; no man is, or can be instilled by it, nor saved by it, or attain to heaven and eternal happiness by the means of it; but the righteousness here spoken of is the righteousness of Christ, called the righteousness of God; and is better than that of angels or men; is complete and perfect; by which the law is honoured, and justice is satisfied. This is freely bestowed, and graciously "imputed" by God. Just in the same way his righteousness becomes ours, as Adam's sin did, which is by imputation; or in the same way that our sins became Christ's, his righteousness becomes ours; and as we have no righteousness of our own when God justifies us, this must be done by the righteousness of another; and that can be done no other way by the righteousness of another, than by imputing it to us: and which is done "without works"; not without the works of Christ, of which this righteousness consists; but without the works of the creature, or any consideration of them, which are utterly excluded from justification; for if these came into account, it would not be of grace, and boasting would not be removed. Now such who have this righteousness thus imputed to them, are happy persons; they are justified from all sin, and freed from all condemnation; their persons and services are acceptable to God; it will be always well with them; they are heirs of glory, and shall enjoy it.

Romans 4:7

Ver. 7. Saying, blessed are they,.... These words are cited from Ps 32:1, and contain the proof of the happiness of justified persons. In this citation the singular number is changed into the plural, to take in all sorts of men, Jews and Gentiles, and very agreeably to the sense of the original; for the word yrva may be rendered "blessed are they", or, "O the blessednesses"; that is, of everyone of them,

whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: such whom God justifies by imputing the righteousness of his Son to them, he removes their iniquities from them, which is meant by their being "forgiven", and that "as far as the east is from the west", Ps 103:12; he casts them behind his back, Isa 38:17, and into the depths of the sea, **Mic 7:19**, so that they shall never be found more: such whom he clothes with the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation,
Isa 61:10, "their sins are covered"; from the eye of divine justice, and shall never be seen more, or be brought against them to their condemnation, and therefore must be happy persons. The {e} Jews tell us, that

"on the day of atonement Satan comes to accuse Israel, and he particularizes their sins, and the holy blessed God he particularizes their good works, and takes a pair of balances, and puts their sins against their good works, and weighs the one against the other; and when the two scales of the balances are alike, Satan goes to bring in other sins to overweigh; what does the holy blessed God do? he takes the sins out of the scale, and hides them wlv yryprwp txt, "under his purple garment"; and when Satan comes and finds no iniquity there, as it is said "the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none", Jer 50:20; and when Satan sees this, he says before him, Lord of the world, "thou hast taken away the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin", Ps 85:2. Selah."

The purple garment they explain by wlv Mymxr lv vwblm, "his garment of mercy"; which is true of the mercy of God covering the sins of his people, through the purple blood of his Son; which is the purple covering of Christ, **So**

3:10, under which the saints go safe to glory, and by which blood their crimson and scarlet sins are blotted out, so as never to be seen more.

{e} Caphtor, fol. 59. 1, 2.

Romans 4:8

Ver. 8. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. As he does not to those whom he justifies in Christ, and by his righteousness; for the sins of such he has imputed to his Son, as their surety; and he has bore them, took them away, having made full satisfaction for them; so that these persons will never be charged with them: they now appear before the throne without fault, and are blameless and irreproveable in the sight of God, and therefore must be eternally happy; for he will never think of their sins any more to their hurt; he will remember them no more; he "will never reckon them to them", but acquit them from them, justify and accept them; wherefore they must be secure from wrath and condemnation, enjoy much peace and comfort now, and be happy hereafter.

Romans 4:9

Ver. 9. [Cometh] this blessedness then upon the circumcision [only]?.... That is, upon the circumcised Jews; are they the only persons that partake of this happiness? the word "only" is rightly supplied, and is in the Claromontane exemplar used by Beza, and in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions:

or upon the uncircumcision also? upon the uncircumcised Gentiles; do not they likewise share in this blessedness?

for we say, that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. The design of these words with the following, is to prove that the blessing of justification belongs to Gentiles as well as Jews, and that it is by faith, and not by circumcision; which is done by observing the state and condition Abraham was in when justified.

Romans 4:10

Ver. 10. How was it then reckoned?.... The Arabic version adds, "and when";

and the Ethiopic version reads it, "when was Abraham justified?" expressing the sense, not the words of the original text, with which agree the following questions:

when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? that is, was he justified, or his faith reckoned to him for righteousness, when he was a circumcised, or an uncircumcised person?

not in circumcision; or when he was circumcised; for when it was said of him, that "he believed in the Lord", and "he counted it to him for righteousness", Ge 15:6, he was then uncircumcised, and remained so many years after: for this was before the birth of Ishmael, and Ishmael was "thirteen" years of age when he and his father Abraham were circumcised; so that it must be "fourteen" years, or thereabout, before his circumcision, that this declaration of his being a justified person was made; wherefore the apostle rightly adds,

but in uncircumcision; or whilst an uncircumcised person: hence it clearly appears that circumcision could not be the cause of his justification, since it followed it; and if Abraham when uncircumcised was a justified person, as it is certain he was, why may not uncircumcised Gentiles be justified also? and especially when it is observed, that the covenant made with Abraham when uncircumcised, included the Gentiles; see Ge 12:3.

Romans 4:11

Ver. 11. And he received the sign of circumcision,.... Or "the sign circumcision", as the Syriac version reads it, and so the Alexandrian copy, and two of Stephens's; that is, Abraham received at the hands of God, the commandment of circumcision, which was a "sign" or token of the covenant; not of grace, but of that peculiar covenant God made with Abraham and his natural seed, concerning their enjoyment of the land of Canaan; and which was a distinctive sign or badge, which distinguished the posterity of Abraham from other people, and was also a typical one; not of baptism, for circumcision was peculiar to Abraham's natural seed, whereas baptism is not, but was administered to Gentiles as well as Jews; circumcision was confined to males only, not so baptism; circumcision bears no likeness to, nor any resemblance with baptism, whereas there is always some likeness and agreement between the type and the antitype; besides, if this had been the case, circumcision would have ceased when baptism took place, whereas it is certain it did not, but continued in full force with the rest of the ceremonies until the death of

Christ; and it is as certain, that "baptism" was administered and continued to be administered three or four years before that time; which fully demonstrates the falsehood of that assertion, that baptism succeeds or comes in the room of circumcision; whereas baptism was in full force before circumcision was out of date: but circumcision was a typical sign of Christ, as all the ceremonies of the law were, and of the shedding of his blood, to cleanse from all sin, original and actual, and also of the circumcision of the heart. And was, moreover,

a seal of the righteousness of faith; or which "sign" was "a seal"; and so it signifies the same as before; shmeia outw legousi tav sfragidav, "signs, so they call seals", says Harpocratian {f}, and "to be signed", he says, is used, "instead of being sealed": or it may be expressive of something else, as that circumcision was a seal, not for secrecy, but for certainty; it being a confirmation, not merely of the sincerity of Abraham's faith, but of his justifying righteousness, which was not his faith, but that which his faith looked to; and

which he had, both faith and righteousness,

yet being uncircumcised: whence it follows, that he was not justified by his circumcision, but by a righteousness which he had before he was circumcised, or otherwise his circumcision could not have been a seal of it: though this clause, "which he had, yet being uncircumcised", may be rendered, "which should be in the uncircumcision", that is, in the uncircumcised Gentiles; and the sense be, that circumcision was a seal to Abraham, and gave assurance to him that he should be the father of many nations in a spiritual sense; and that the righteousness of faith which he had, should also come upon, and be imputed to the uncircumcised Gentiles; and accordingly it may be observed, that this seal was continued in full force on his natural seed, until this promise began to take place, and then it was abolished: this seal was broken off when the middle wall of partition was broken down, and the word of righteousness and faith, or the Gospel preaching justification by the righteousness of Christ, was ordered to be published to the Gentile world. It may be inquired whether circumcision being called a seal, will prove that baptism is a seal of the covenant? I answer, that circumcision was only a seal to Abraham of a peculiar covenant made with him, and of a particular promise made to him, and was it to be admitted a seal of the covenant of grace, it will not prove baptism to be such; since, as has been observed, baptism does not succeed it in place, in time, and use; and could this be allowed that it succeeds it, and is a seal of the righteousness of faith, as that was, it can only be a seal to them that have both faith and righteousness, and not to them that have neither; it would only at most be a seal to believers. But, alas! not ordinances, but other things more valuable than they, are the seals of the covenant, and of believers; the blood of Christ is the seal, and the only seal of the covenant of grace, by which its promises and blessings are ratified and confirmed; and the Holy Spirit is the only earnest, pledge, seal, and sealer of the saints, until the day of redemption. The apostle uses the word "seal" concerning circumcision, it being a word his countrymen made use of when they spoke of it, thus paraphrasing on **So 3:8**; they say {g},

"everyone of them was sealed, hlym tmytx, "with the seal of circumcision" upon their flesh, as Abraham was sealed in his flesh:"

that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that is, his circumcision was a seal unto him that he should be so, which explains and confirms the sense of the former clause; not a father of the uncircumcised Gentiles by natural generation, for so he was only the father of the Jews, but of them as they were believers; and not so called because he was the author of their faith, but because they have the same sort of faith he had:

that righteousness might be imputed to them also; not Abraham's faith and righteousness, nor their own, but the righteousness of Christ received by faith, which is unto all, and upon all them that believe, without any difference of Jew or Gentile. Now when the apostle styles Abraham the father of "all" believers, even of uncircumcised ones, he says no other than what the Jews frequently own. Says one {h} of them, speaking of the Ishmaelites;

"they are the seed of Abraham, who was Mynymamh var, "the head of them that believe?""

and says {i} another,

"Hagar might bring the firstfruits, and read, as it is said to Abraham, "a father of, many nations have I made thee",
Ge 17:5; for he is wlwk Mlweh lkl ba, "the father of the whole world", who enter under the wings of the Shekinah;"

and says the same writer elsewhere {k}, having mentioned the above passage,

"they said in times past, thou wast the father of the Syrians, but now thou art "the father of the whole world"; wherefore every stranger may say this, "as thou hast sworn to our fathers", **Mic 7:20**; for Abraham was "the father of the whole world"; seeing, hnwma dml, "he has taught the true faith"."

The apostle reasons on what they themselves allow, to prove that the blessedness of justification comes not only upon the Jews, but upon the Gentiles also.

{f} Lexicon in Decem Rhetores, p. 266. Ed. Manssac. {g} Targum in Cant. 3. 8. {h} In Caphtor, fol. 121. 1. {i} Maimon. Hilchot Biccurim, c. 4. sect. 3. {k} Comment in Misn. Biccurim, c. 1. sect. 4. Vid. T. Hieros Biccurim, fol. 64. 1. & T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 13. 1. & Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 3.

Romans 4:12

Ver. 12. And the father of circumcision,.... So the Jews call Abraham Mylwmynh var {l}, "the head of those that are circumcised"; and Mylwml var {m}, "the head to them that are circumcised"; but the apostle here says, he is a father

to them who are not of the circumcision only; not to the Jews only, in a spiritual sense, and not to all of them, since some were "of Israel", who were not Israel, not Israelites indeed, or true believers;

but [to such] also [who] walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised; that is, who have the same faith he had; imitate and follow him in the exercise of faith; walk by faith, as he did when he was uncircumcised, as they are; and so the Jews say {n},

"Abraham is the father of all, wtnwmab wyrxa Myab, "that go after him in his faith"."

{l} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 18. 3. {m} Juchasin, fol. 5. 2. Midrash Esther, fol. 85. 3. {n} R. Sol. Hammelech Michlol. Jophi in Mal. ii. 15.

Romans 4:13

Ver. 13. For the promise that he should be heir of the world,.... This promise is thought by some to refer to that of his being "the father of many nations", Ge 17:4; by whom the Gentiles are particularly meant, who are sometimes called "the world", and "the whole world", or the elect of God, the believing part of

the world; whether among Jews or Gentiles, who sometimes go by the name of "the world" in Scripture: but to this it may be objected, that the promise here spoken of is made to Abraham's seed, as well as to himself; by which is meant not the Messiah, who is indeed heir of the world, and all things in it, but all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles; as appears from **Ro 4:16**; and therefore cannot be both heirs and inheritance too. Others think the land of Canaan is designed, and by a synecdoche, a part of the world is put for the whole world; but that land is never so called, and, besides, the promise of it belonged to those of the law, and to them only, contrary to what the apostle argues, **Ro 4:14**. Others therefore consider Canaan as a type of heaven, which Abraham and his spiritual seed are heirs of by promise. But rather, by "the world" here, is meant, both this world and that which is to come; Abraham and all believers are the "heirs" of this world, and of all things in it; "all things" are theirs, and, among the rest, the world, Christ being theirs, and they being Christ's; he is heir of all things, and they are joint heirs with him; and how little soever they may enjoy of it now, the time is coming, when they, by virtue of their right, "shall inherit the earth"; see
Ps 37:9; and now they have as much of it as is necessary, and with a blessing, and which the Jews call their "world". It is a saying in their Talmud {o}, Kyyxb hart Kmlwe, "thou shall see thy world" in thy lifetime; which the gloss explains, "thou shalt find", or enjoy all thy necessities, or what is needful for thee; and of Abraham they say {p}, that

"he was the foundation of the world, and that for his sake the world was created;"

and introduce God saying of him thus {q}

"as I am the only one in my world, so he is the only one,
wmlweb, "in his world"."

And as he and all the saints are heirs of this world, so of the world to come, the future salvation, the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, never fading, and reserved in the heavens; for they are heirs of God himself, and shall inherit all things: now this large and comprehensive promise, which takes in the things of time and eternity,

[was] not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law: not through the law of circumcision, or on the score of their obedience to that, for this promise was made before that was enjoined; see Ge 12:2; nor through the law of Moses, which was not as yet given; nor through the law of nature, nor by any

righteousness of the law;

but through the righteousness of faith: by virtue of which they have "all things that pertain to life and godliness", **2Pe 1:3**; and have "the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come", **1Ti 4:8**; enjoy with a blessing what they now have, and have a right and title to the heavenly glory.

{o} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. {p} Caphtor, fol. 99. 2. {q} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 1.

Romans 4:14

Ver. 14. For if they which are of the law be heirs,.... That is, if the Jews who are under the law, and are seeking for righteousness and life by the works of it, should, on the account of their obedience to it, be heirs of the grace of life and of glory,

faith is made void; for if the right to the inheritance is by the works of the law, there is no room for faith; that can be of no use or service;

and the promise made of none effect: if salvation is by works, it is to no purpose for God to promise, or men to believe; for the thing promised depends not upon God's promise, but upon man's obedience to the law; and if that is not perfectly observed, as it cannot possibly be, then the promise of God stands for nothing, and is in course made void. The apostle here argues from the absurdities which follow upon the doctrine of justification by works, as he does from the different effects of the law, in the following verse.

Romans 4:15

Ver. 15. Because the law worketh wrath,.... Not the wrath of man, though that is sometimes stirred up through the prohibitions of the law, to which the carnal mind of man is enmity, but the wrath of God the law is so far from justifying sinners, that it curses and condemns them; and when it comes into the heart and is let into the conscience of a sinner, it fills with terrible apprehensions of the wrath of God, and a fearful looking for of his judgment and fiery indignation:

for where no law is, there is no transgression; hrybe alw hwum al wnyav {r}; a sort of a proverbial expression: had the law of Moses not been given, there was the law of nature which sin is a transgression of; but the law of Moses was added for the better discovery and detection of sin, which would not have been so manifest without it, and which may be the apostle's sense; that where there is no law, there is no knowledge of any transgression; and so the Ethiopic version reads the words, "if the law had not come, there would have been none who would have known sin"; but the law is come, and there is a law by which is the knowledge of sin, and therefore no man can be justified by it; since that convinces him of sin, and fills him with a sense of divine wrath on account of it.

{r} Caphtor, fol. 10. 1.

Romans 4:16

Ver. 16. Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace,.... Meaning either the promise of being heir of the world, or the inheritance itself, or adoption which gives heirship, or remission of Sin, or the blessing of justification, either and all of these are of faith; not as the cause or condition of them, but as the means of God's fixing and appointing to be the recipient of all and each of them: which is done, "that it might be by grace"; appear to be of the free grace and favour of God, as each of these blessings are: forasmuch as every blessing is received by faith, it is manifest it must be by grace; since faith itself is a gift of God's grace, and lies purely in receiving favours at the hand of God, to whom it gives all the glory of them: and this is done with a further view,

to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed. The promise of the above blessings, particularly of the inheritance which is made in the covenant of grace, ordered in all things and sure, and which could not be disannulled by the law that came after it; this being by faith and of grace, and not of works, nor at all depending upon them, becomes sure to all believers, to all Abraham's spiritual seed:

not to that only which is of the law; to the Jews, who are said to be of the law, in distinction to the Gentiles who were without it; and designs such of them as were believers in Christ, and to whom the Gospel was the power of God unto salvation; to these the promise was, and was sure, and not to them only:

but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; to the Gentiles, who though they are not by natural descent from Abraham, yet are of the same faith with him, and so are his seed in a spiritual sense:

who is the father of us all; whether Jews or Gentiles, who are Christ's, and so Abraham's spiritual seed, and heirs of eternal life, according to the free promise of grace.

Romans 4:17

Ver. 17. As it is written I have made thee a father of many nations,.... The passage referred to, is in Ge 17:4; which proves him to be a father not of the Jews only, since they cannot be called "many nations", but of the Gentiles also; and which must be understood in a spiritual sense, for Abraham was the father of them,

before him whom he believed, [even] God; that is, he was so, either in the sight of God, who sees not as man sees; in his account, he was the father of many nations, long before he really in fact was; or "over against" or "like unto him", as the word may signify: as God was the Father of many nations, so was Abraham, though not in such a sense as he is; and as God is the Father of us all that believe, so was Abraham; there is some little likeness and resemblance in this between them, though not sameness. The object of his faith is described as he,

who quickeneth the dead: meaning either the dead body of Abraham and Sarah's womb; or Isaac, who was given up for dead; or the Gentiles, who were dead in trespasses and sins; or rather the dead bodies of men at the last day, a work which none but the almighty God can effect; the consideration of which is sufficient to engage faith in the promises of God, and a dependence on him for the fulfilment or them: and who stands further described as he, who

calleth those things which be not, as though they were; so he called Abraham the father of many nations, when he was not in fact, as if he really was; and the Gentiles his seed and offspring, before they were; and when he comes effectually to call them by his grace, they are represented as "things which are not", whom he called, "to bring to nought things that are", **1Co 1:28**; they were not his people, nor his children, and he called them so, and by his grace made them so, and made them appear to be so; for as in creation so in regeneration, God calls and brings that into being which before was not: and the phrase seems to be an allusion to the creation of all things out of nothing; and it is a Rabbinical one, for so the Jews speaking of the creation say {s}

"Nya la arwq, "he calls to that which is not", and it is excluded; (i.e. all things are excluded out of it, as a chicken out of an egg;) and to that which is, and it is established, and to the world, and it is stretched out."

{s} R. Solomon ben Gabirol in Cether Malcuth apud L. Capell. in loc.

Romans 4:18

Ver. 18. Who against hope believed in hope,.... Abraham believed the promise of God,

that he might become the father of many nations, being assisted by a supernatural aid: "in hope"; of the fulfilment of it by the grace and power of God: "against hope": against all visible, rational grounds of hope; Sarah's womb and his own body being dead, but inasmuch as God had said it, he believed:

according to that which is spoken, so shall thy seed be; his faith rested upon the word of God, which showed the nature of it, and that it was of the right kind.

Romans 4:19

Ver. 19. And being not weak in faith,.... Abraham was not weak in the exercise of his faith, on the promise of God; nor was his faith weakened about the accomplishment of it, neither by the length of time after the promise was made, nor by the seeming insuperable difficulties of nature which attended it; for

he considered not his own body now dead. The Alexandrian copy reads without the negative, "he considered his own body now dead", and so the Syriac version: which makes his faith the greater, that though he did consider his case, yet his faith was not weakened: the phrase, "his body now dead", is an "euphemism" of the "merebrum virile", which by the Jews, when unfit for generation, is called tm rba, "merebrum emortuum" {t}:

when he was about an hundred years old; not being quite an hundred years of age, wanting a year or thereabout:

neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; how unfit she was to conceive and bear children: now though he might consider these things in his mind, yet they did not dwell upon his mind, nor he upon them; at least he did not consider them, so as to distrust the divine promise.

{t} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 55. 2. & Gloss. in ib. Sanhedrin, fol. 55. 1. & Gloss in ib. Shebuot, fol. 18. 1.

Romans 4:20

Ver. 20. He staggered not at the promise of God,.... There is no reason to stagger at, or hesitate about any of the promises of God, since they are made by him that cannot lie; his faithfulness is engaged to perform them; with him all things are possible; every promise is in Christ, yea and amen, and never did any fail; and yet so it is, that some of God's children,

through unbelief, do stagger at the promises of God; thinking either that they are too great for them, or demur upon them through difficulties which attend them:

but so did not Abraham, he

was strong in faith; nothing moved him, no difficulties discouraged him, he made no demur upon the promise, nor had the least hesitation in his mind about the accomplishment of it; but was fully assured that so it would be, as God had said; and thus he was

giving glory to God; ascribing to him the glory of his veracity, faithfulness, power, grace, and goodness, as all such who are strong in faith do; such persons bring the most glory to God, and are the most comfortable in their own souls. This phrase, atwnmyhmb apqttal, "to be strong" or strengthened, or strengthen themselves "in faith", is to be met with in Jewish writings {u}, and is particularly used of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; all the tribes of Israel are not said to be Mtnwmab Myqzx, "strong in their faith"; only the tribe of Levi, when Moses stood in the gate and said, "who is on the Lord's side, let him come unto me", Ex 32:26: whoever is wtnwmab qzx, "strong in his faith" {w}; and there were none in all Israel but the tribe of Levi, who were "strong in their faith".

{u} Zohar in Gen. fol. 83. 4. {w} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 87. 4.

Romans 4:21

Ver. 21. And being fully persuaded,.... He had not only faith, a strong faith, but full assurance of faith:

that what he [God] had promised; though it was so long ago, and there were so many difficulties in the way;

he was able, being the Lord God Almighty,

to perform; so his faith rested upon the power of God, with whom nothing is impossible.

Romans 4:22

Ver. 22. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Not because his faith was strong, and he had a full assurance of it, but because it was right, resting on the promise of God, and relying upon his power and faithfulness to perform it; for though the righteousness of faith is not imputed to any sort of believers, not to mere nominal ones, yet to all such as have true faith, though it may be but weak; for faith, as to nature, kind, and object, though not as to degree, is the same in all true believers, and the same righteousness is imputed to one as to another.

Romans 4:23

Ver. 23. Now it was not written for his sake alone,.... This was not left on the sacred records, Ge 15:6,

that it was imputed to him; purely on his account, merely for his sake, as an encomium of his faith, and an honourable testimony to it, and for the encouragement of it; though this was doing him a very great honour, and was one design of it.

Romans 4:24

Ver. 24. But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed,.... What was written in the books of the Old Testament, was not written merely on account of them who are the subjects thereof, but for the use, learning, instruction and profit of saints under the New Testament dispensation; and particularly this concerning the pulsation of Abraham's faith for righteousness, or of the imputation of the righteousness of faith unto him for justification; which was not Abraham's faith, but that "righteousness" which his faith looked to, and laid hold on: see **Ro 4:12**; for Abraham's faith itself could never be reckoned for righteousness to another, nor indeed was it to himself; but such as believe as Abraham did, they have the same righteousness imputed to them as he had; and truly of the same kind is the faith of Abraham, who believed in "God that quickeneth the dead", **Ro 4:17**; and that of ours:

if, or "seeing"

we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; which descriptive of the faith of New Testament believers, and of the object of it; see Ro 10:9; and which object of faith is further described in **Ro 4:25**.

Romans 4:25

Ver. 25. Who was delivered for our offences,.... Christ was delivered into the hands of men, and into the hands of justice, and unto death; and he was delivered by men, by Judas, to the chief priests, and by them to Pilate, and by Pilate to the Jews and Roman soldiers to be put to death; and he was also delivered up by his Father into the hands of justice and death, according to his determinate counsel and foreknowledge; but not without his own free consent, who voluntarily laid down his life, and gave himself a ransom for his people: he was delivered to death, not for any offences of his own, for he committed none; nor for the offences of angels, for these were not spared; nor for the offences, of all men, since all will not be saved; but for the offences of all God's elect: he was delivered for these, as the causes of his death, and as the end for which he died; namely, to make reconciliation, atonement, and satisfaction for them; which shows the love of the Father in delivering him up, and the grace and condescension of the Son in being willing to be delivered up on such an account: the nature and end of Christ's death may be learnt from hence, that he died not merely as a martyr, or as an example; nor only for the good, but in the room and stead of his people: we may also learn from hence the nature of sin, the strictness of justice, the obligations we lie under to Christ, and how many favours and blessings we may expect from God through him: who also

was raised again for our justification; he was raised again from the dead by his Father, to whom this is often ascribed; and by himself, by his own power, which proves him to be the mighty God; and this was done not only that he might live an immortal and glorious life in our nature, having finished the work he undertook and came about, but for "our justification". He died in the room and stead of his people, and by dying made satisfaction for their sins; he rose again as their head and representative, and was legally discharged, acquitted, and justified, and they in him. Christ's resurrection did not procure the justification of his people, that was done by his obedience and death; but was for the testification of it, that it might fully appear that sin was atoned for, and an everlasting righteousness was brought in; and for the application of it, or that Christ might live and see his righteousness imputed, and applied to all those for whom he had wrought it out.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 5

The Apostle having clearly stated, and fully proved the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of faith, proceeds to observe the comfortable fruits and effects of this great blessing, known and enjoyed by the believer; as also the source and spring of it, the love of God, which appears in the death of Christ, in the room and stead of his people, which is the foundation on which it stands; and likewise gives an illustration of this benefit, by comparing the two heads, Adam and Christ, together. The first fruit and effect of justification, as a benefit perceived and enjoyed by faith, is peace with God through Christ, **Ro 5:1**. The next is access through the Mediator to the throne of grace, where justified ones stand with a holy boldness and confidence, and the third is a cheerful hope of eternal glory, **Ro 5:2**, yea, such not only have joy in the hope of what is to come, but glory even in present afflictions; which prevents an objection that might be made to the above mentioned fruits and effects of justification, taken from the tribulations which saints are exercised with: and what occasions glorying even in these, is the sanctified use, or happy produce of afflictions, these being the means of exercising and increasing patience; by means of which a larger experience of divine things is gained; and through that, hope is confirmed, and all influenced by a plenteous discovery of the love of God to the soul, by the Spirit, **Ro 5:4**, an instance of which love is given, **Ro 5:6**, in Christ's dying for men; which love is enhanced by the character and condition of the persons for whom Christ died, being ungodly, and without strength; and by the time of it, being due time: then follows a further illustration of this love, by comparing it with what instances of love are to be found among men, **Ro 5:7**, by which it appears to be unparalleled; since scarcely for a righteous man, peradventure for a good man, one would die, yet no man dies for the ungodly, as Christ did: hence as his, so his Father's love is highly commended, by giving him up to death for persons while in such a state and condition, and under such a character, **Ro 5:8**, and justification now springing from this love, and being founded on the death of Christ, hence follow a security from wrath to come, **Ro 5:9**, a certainty of salvation, **Ro 5:10**, which is strongly argued from the different characters those Christ died for bear, before and after reconciliation, and from the death to the life of Christ, **Ro 5:10**, and also a rejoicing and glorying: in God through Christ, full expiation being made by his blood for sin, and this received by faith, **Ro 5:11**, and then the apostle proceeds to compare the two heads, Adam and Christ, together; the design of which is to show the largeness and freeness of the love and grace of God; how righteousness for justification comes by Christ; and how the persons, before described as sinners and ungodly, came to be in such a condition; and that is through the sin of the first man, in whom they all were, and in whom they all sinned and died, **Ro 5:12**, wherefore there must be a law before the law of Moses, or there could have been no sin, **Ro 5:13**, but that sin was in being, and was reckoned and imputed to the posterity of Adam, is clear from this single instance, death's power even over infants, from the times of Adam to Moses, **Ro 5:14** who therefore must be a public head, representing all his posterity; so that they were involved in the guilt of his sin, which brought death upon them; and in this he was a type of Christ, as is asserted in the same verse; that so as Adam was but one, and by one sin of his conveyed death to all his seed; so Christ, the Mediator, is but one, and by his one obedience conveys righteousness and, life to all his seed: and yet in some things there is a dissimilitude; sin and death, through the first man, are conveyed in a natural way to his offspring, but righteousness and life from Christ in a way of grace, **Ro 5:15**, It was one offence of Adam's, which brought condemnation and death upon all his posterity; but the righteousness of Christ is not only a justification of his seed from that one offence, but from all others, **Ro 5:16**, the one is unto death, the other unto life; and greater is the efficacy in the one to quicken, than in the other to kill, **Ro 5:17**, where a repetition is made of what is said in **Ro 5:15**, with an explanation, and the similitude between the two heads is clearly expressed, **Ro 5:18**, where condemnation on account of the sin of Adam, and justification through the righteousness of Christ, are opposed to each other; and both as extending to the whole of their several respective offspring, condemnation through Adam's offence to all his natural seed, and justification of life through Christ's righteousness to all his spiritual seed; which is still more fitly and clearly expressed in **Ro 5:19**, where the way and manner in which the one become sinners, and the other righteous, is plainly directed to; that it is, by the imputation of Adam's disobedience to the one, and by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the other: in **Ro 5:20**, an objection is obviated, which might be formed thus; if justification is by the grace of God, and through the obedience and righteousness of Christ, then the law is of no use; what purpose does that serve? what occasion was there for its entrance? The apostle replies, that though justification is not by it, yet a good end is answered by its entrance; for hereby sin is more known to be what it is, both original and actual; and the grace of God appears more abundant in justification from it, and in the pardon of it; and this grace is further illustrated in **Ro 5:21**, by comparing sin and grace together, and the different effects of their empire over the sons of men; the one reigning unto death, the other reigning through righteousness to eternal life by Christ.

Ver. 1. Therefore being justified by faith,.... Not that faith is at the first of our justification; for that is a sentence which passed in the mind of God from all eternity, and which passed on Christ, and on all the elect considered in him, when he rose from the dead; see **Ro 4:25**; nor is it the chief, or has it the chief place in justification; it is not the efficient cause of it, it is God that justifies, and not faith; it is not the moving cause of it, that is the free grace of God; it is not the matter of it, that is the righteousness of Christ: we are not justified by faith, either as God's work in us, for, as such, it is a part of sanctification; nor as our work or act, as exercised by us, for then we should be justified by works, by something of our own, and have whereof to glory; but we are justified by faith objectively and relatively, as that relates to the object Christ, and his righteousness; or as it is a means of our knowledge, and perception of our justification by Christ's righteousness, and of our enjoying the comfort of it; and so we come to

have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle having set the doctrine of justification in a clear light, and fully proved that it is not by the works of men, but by the righteousness of God; and having mentioned the several causes of it, proceeds to consider its effects, among which, peace with God stands in the first place; and is so called, to distinguish it from peace with men, which persons, though justified by faith in Christ's righteousness, may not have; but are sure, having a sense of this, to find peace with God, even with him against whom they have sinned, whose law they have transgressed, and whose justice they have affronted; reconciliation for sin being made, and a justifying righteousness brought in, and this imputed and applied to them, they have that "peace of God", that tranquillity and serenity of mind, the same with "peace with God" here, "which passes all understanding", **Php 4:7**; and is better experienced than expressed: and this is all through our Lord Jesus Christ; it springs from his atoning sacrifice, and precious blood, by which he has made peace; and is communicated through the imputation of his righteousness, and the application of his blood; and is only felt and enjoyed in a way of believing, by looking to him as the Lord our righteousness.

Romans 5:2

Ver. 2. By whom also we have access by faith,.... The access here spoken of is not to the blessing of justification; for though that is a grace which we have access to by Christ, and come at the knowledge of by faith, and enjoy the comfort of through it; and is a grace in which persons stand, and from which they shall never fall, and lays a solid foundation for rejoicing in hope of eternal glory; yet this sense would make the apostle guilty of a great tautology; and besides, he is not speaking of that blessing itself, but of its effects; and here of one distinct from "peace with God", before mentioned, as the word also manifestly shows: nor does it design any other blessing of grace, as pardon, adoption, sanctification, &c. and an access thereunto; not unto the free grace, favour, and good will of God, the source of all blessings; but to the throne of grace, which may be called

that grace, because of its name, for God, as the God of all grace, sits upon it; it is an high favour to be admitted to it; it is grace persons come thither for, and which they may expect to find there: and

in, or "at"

which we stand; which denotes boldness, courage, and intrepidity, and a freedom from a servile fear and bashful spirit, and a continued constant attendance at it; all which is consistent with reverence, humility, and submission to the will of God. Now access to the throne of grace, and standing at that, are "by" Christ. There is no access to God in our own name and righteousness, and upon the foot of our own works. Christ is the only way of access to God, and acceptance with him; he is the Mediator between God and us; he introduces into his Father's presence, gives audience at his throne, and renders both persons and services acceptable unto him: and this access is also "by faith"; and that both in God the Father, as our covenant God and Father; in faith of interest in his love and favour; believing his power and faithfulness, his fulness and sufficiency, and that he is a God hearing and answering prayer: and also in the Lord Jesus Christ; in his person for acceptance; in his righteousness for justification; in his blood for pardon; and in his fulness for every supply: and such as have access to the throne of grace by faith in Christ, being comfortably persuaded of their justification before God, through his righteousness imputed to them, can and do

rejoice in hope of the glory of God; which is another effect of justification by faith: by the "glory of God"; which is another effect of justification by faith: by the "glory of God", is not meant the essential glory of God; nor that which we ought to seek in all that we are concerned, and which we are to ascribe unto him on the account of his perfections and works; but that everlasting glory and happiness which he has prepared for his people, has promised to them, and has called them to by Christ, and will bestow upon them; of which he has given them a good hope through grace; and in the hope and believing views of which they can, and do rejoice, even amidst a variety of afflictions and tribulations in this world. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "in hope of the glory of the children of God"; eternal glory being proper to them.

Romans 5:3

Ver. 3. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also,.... The tribulations of the saints are many and various, through the hatred of the world, the temptations of Satan, their own corruptions; and are the will of their heavenly Father; what Christ has foretold, and they expect; and here particularly design such as are for Christ's sake, which being supported under, and carried through, they glory in: not that these are desirable in themselves, and to the flesh; but they glory in them as they are for Christ's sake, and in a good cause; as they are trials of grace, and of use for the exercise of it: and as they are in the exercise of grace, amidst these tribulations, and are comforted under them, and are helped to have regard to the heavenly glory. The ground of which glorying is, that these afflictions are the means of promoting patience, experience, and hope:

knowing this, that tribulation worketh patience; patience is a grace, of which God is the author; it is one of the fruits of the Spirit; the word of God is the means of its being first implanted; and afflictions are the means of promoting it, when they are sanctified; otherwise they produce impatience, murmurings, and repinings; there is great need of patience under them; and, by divine grace, they are the matter and occasion of exercising, and so of increasing it.

Romans 5:4

Ver. 4. And patience experience,.... As tribulations tend to exercise and increase patience, so patience being exercised and increased, enlarges the saints' stock and fund of experience; of the love and grace of God communicated to them at such seasons; of his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises; of his power in supporting them; and of their own frailty and weakness; and so are taught humility, thankfulness, and resignation to the will of God:

and experience, hope; hope is a gift of God's grace, and is implanted in regeneration, but abounds, increases, and becomes more strong and lively by experience of the love, grace, mercy, power, and faithfulness of God.

Romans 5:5

Ver. 5. And hope maketh not ashamed,.... As a vain hope does, things not answering to expectation, it deceives, and is lost; but the grace of hope is of such a nature, as that it never fails deceives, or disappoints: it neither makes ashamed, nor have persons that have any reason to be ashamed of it; neither of the grace itself, which is a good one; nor of the ground and foundation of it, the person and righteousness of Christ; nor of the object of it, eternal glory:

because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. By "the love of God" is meant, not that love by which we love God, for hope does not depend upon, nor is it supported by our love and obedience to God; but the love of God to us, of which some instances are given in the following verses: us is said "to be shed abroad in our hearts"; which denotes the plenty and abundance of it, and the full and comfortable sensation which believers have of it: "by the Holy Spirit": who leads into, and makes application of it: "and is given to us": for that purpose, as the applier of all grace, the Comforter, and the earnest of heaven. Now the love which the Spirit sheds abroad in the heart, is the source and spring, both of justification itself, which is owing to the free grace of God, and of all the effects of it, as peace with God, access to the throne of grace, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, the usefulness of afflictions, and the stability of hope, and is here alleged as the reason of all.

Romans 5:6

Ver. 6. For when we were yet without strength,.... The apostle having mentioned the love of God proceeds to give an instance, and which is a full proof and demonstration of it, which is, that

in due time Christ died for the ungodly. That Christ died is certain; the death of Christ was foretold in prophecy, typified by the sacrifices of slain beasts, was spoken of by himself, both before and since his death; his enemies have never denied it; and this was the sum of the ministry of the apostles, and is the great article of faith: and that the death of Christ is a singular instance of the love of God, is evident by considering the person that died, the Son of God in human nature, his own, his only begotten Son, his beloved Son; the concern which God had in it, by willing, ordering, and appointing it, awaking the sword of justice against him, not sparing him, but delivering him up for us all; also the nature, kind, and manner of his death, and particularly the persons for whom he died, here described: he "died for the ungodly"; not for himself, he had no sins of his own to die for, nor did he want any happiness to procure; nor for angels, but for men; and these not holy, just, and good men, but ungodly; and not as a mere martyr, or only by way of example to them, and so for their good; but as the Syriac version reads it, aeyvr Plx, "in the room", or "stead of the ungodly", as their surety to make satisfaction for their sins. The Jews have a notion of the Messiah's being a substitute, and standing in the place and stead of sinners; and they say {x},

"that Aaron filled up the place of the first Adam, and was brought near in the room of him;"

which is true of Christ, the antitype of Aaron. On those words, "I will give a man for thee", Isa 43:4; the doctors {y} say,

"do not read Adam, but Edom; for when God removes the decree (or punishment) from a particular man, he provides for the attribute of justice in the room of the man that sinned, Mwdam ab rxa vya, "another man that comes from Edom";"

referring, as I think, to Isa 63:1. And this their character of ungodly shows, that not goodness in man, but love in God, was the moving cause of Christ's dying for them; and that the end of his dying was to atone for their ungodliness: and to illustrate the love of God the more towards them in this instance, they are said to be "without strength" at that time; being so enfeebled by sin, that they were not capable of fulfilling the law, of atoning for the transgressions of it, of redeeming themselves from slavery, of beginning and carrying on a work of holiness their hearts, nor indeed of doing one good thing. Add to all this, that Christ died for these persons in due time; in the most fit, proper, and convenient season to illustrate the love and grace of God; when man appeared both weak and wicked; when the weakness of the legal dispensation had been sufficiently evinced, and the wickedness of man, both among Jews and Gentiles, was at a very great height: or rather by "due time" is meant the "fulness of time", **Ga 4:4**; the time appointed in council by God, agreed to by Christ, and fixed in prophecy; before the departure of the sceptre from Judah, the destruction of the second temple, and at the close of Daniel's weeks.

{x} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 96. 1. & 97. 4. & 98. 3. {y} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 93. 4.

Romans 5:7

Ver. 7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die,.... The design of this, and the following verse, is to show that Christ's dying for ungodly persons is an instance of kindness that is matchless and unparalleled. By "a righteous man", is not meant a truly gracious, holy man; nor one that is made righteous by the obedience of Christ; but one that is so in his own eyes, and in the esteem of others, being outwardly moral and righteous before men; who keeps to the letter of the law, and does, as he imagines, what that externally requires: such were the Pharisees among the Jews, who, though they were had in much outward esteem and veneration among the people, yet were rather feared than loved; and it would have been a difficult thing to have found a person that would cheerfully venture, and lay down his life for any of that complexion and cast:

yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. By "a good man", is not meant a man made so by the grace of God, and who is indeed truly and properly the only good man; but a liberal and beneficent man, who was very bountiful in his charitable distributions to the poor, and very liberal in contributing towards the charge of sacrifices, repairs of the temple, &c. and did more this way than what the law obliged to. Now for such a man perhaps there might be some found so daring and hardy, as to venture and lay down their lives, when there was any danger of his, or any necessity for so doing; so great an interest such men had in the affections of the people. And so the Jews {z} distinguish between qydu, "a righteous man", and dyox, "a good man". They say {a},

"there is a righteous man that is good, and there is a righteous man that is not good; but he that is good for heaven, and the creatures, i.e. for God and men, this is
bwj qydu, "a righteous good man"; but he that is good to God, and evil to men, this is bwj wnyav qydu, "a righteous man that is not good"."

The whole body of the people of the Jews were divided into three sorts: take a short sentence out of their Talmud {b}, not to support the justness of the characters, but for the sake of this threefold division of the people:

"three things are said concerning the paring of the nails,
qydu, "a righteous man" buries them, dyox, "a good man" burns them, evr, "a wicked man" casts them away."

Now to this division of the people the apostle alludes; and there is in the words a beautiful gradation, scarcely for one of the Myqydu, "righteous men", who does just what he is obliged to do by the law, and no more, will any die; perhaps it may be, that for one of
Mydyox, "the good men", who are very liberal to the poor, and towards defraying all the expenses of the temple service, in which they exceed the strict demands of the law, some may be found willing to die; but who will die for the Myevr, "the wicked and ungodly", the profligate and abandoned part of the people? not one, but Christ died for the ungodly: wherefore if instances could be produced of men's dying either for righteous men, or good men, these would not come up to the instance of Christ's dying for men, who were neither righteous nor good.

{z} Maimon in Misn Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 10, 13. Bartenora in Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 4. sect. 6. Juchasin, fol. 12. 2. Kimchi in Psal. iv. 3. {a} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 40. 1. {b} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 18. 1. & Niddah, fol. 17. 1.

Romans 5:8

Ver. 8. But God commendeth his love towards us,.... That is, he hath manifested it, which was before hid in his heart; he has given clear evidence of it, a full proof and demonstration of it; he has so confirmed it by this instance, that there is no room nor reason to doubt of it; he has illustrated and set it off with the greater lustre by this circumstance of it,

in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. God's elect were sinners in Adam, in whom they were naturally and federally, as all mankind were; hence polluted and guilty; and so they are in their own persons whilst unregenerate: they are dead in sin, and live in it, commit it, are slaves unto it, and are under the power and dominion of it; and many of them are the chief and vilest of sinners; and such they were considered when Christ died for them: but are not God's people sinners after conversion? yes; but sin has not the dominion over them; their life is not a course of sinning, as before; and besides, they are openly justified and pardoned, as well as renewed, and sanctified, and live in newness of life; so that their characters now are taken, not from their worse, but better part. And that before conversion is particularly mentioned here, to illustrate the love of God to them, notwithstanding this their character and condition; and to show that the love of God to them was very early; it anteceded their conversion; it was before the death of Christ for them; yea, it was from everlasting: and also to express the freeness of it, and to make it appear, that it did not arise from any loveliness in them; or from any love in them to him; nor from any works of righteousness done by them, but from his own sovereign will and pleasure.

Romans 5:9

Ver. 9. Much more then being now justified by his blood,.... The apostle here argues from justification by Christ to salvation by him, there being a certain and inseparable connection between these two; whoever is justified shall be saved; and speaks of justification "as being now by his blood". Justification in God's mind from eternity proceeded upon the suretyship engagements of Christ to be performed in time; the Old Testament saints were justified of God with a view to the blood of the Lamb which was to be shed; this blood was "now" shed, and an application of justification by it was "now" made to the persons spoken of; which is the reason of this way of speaking. The blood of Christ intends his death, as appears from the context, and shows it to be a violent death; death by the effusion of blood. There is an emphasis upon it, "his blood"; not the blood of bulls and goats, nor of a mere innocent creature, but of Christ the Son of God; which is therefore efficacious to all the purposes for which it was shed, and particularly justification. This being ascribed to it, shows the concern Christ had in it, his blood is here put for the whole matter of justification; the shedding of that being the finishing part of it; and that our justification before God proceeds upon the foot of a satisfaction made to the law and justice of God: hence such as are interested in it,

shall be saved from wrath through him: not from wrath, as a corruption in their own hearts, which oftentimes breaks forth; nor as appearing among the people of God one towards another, which is sometimes very bitter; or as in their avowed enemies, the effects of which they often feel; nor from the wrath of devils, which is as the roaring of a lion; but from the wrath of God, from a sense and apprehension of it in their own consciences, which the law works; from which justification by the blood of Christ frees them; though under first awakenings they feel it, and sometimes, under afflictive dispensations of Providence, are ready to fear it: and also from the infliction of vindictive wrath or punishment for sin; for though they are as deserving of it as others, yet as they are not appointed to it, so they are entirely delivered from it, through Christ's sustaining it in their room and stead: wherefore they are secure from it both in this life, and in the world to come.

Romans 5:10

Ver. 10. For if when we were enemies,.... For the further illustration of the love of God expressed to sinners, by the death of his Son, the state and condition God's elect were in when Christ died for them is taken notice of; they "were enemies"; to God, to his being, perfections, purposes, and providences; to Christ, to his person, offices, grace, and righteousness; to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit, and his divine operations and influences; to the people of God, and to the Gospel and ordinances of Christ; which enmity is deeply rooted in their minds, is causeless, and undeserved, and is implacable, and irreconcileable without the power and grace of God; which grace of God is wonderfully displayed in the reconciliation of such persons,

by the death of his Son. Reconciliation implies a former state of friendship, a breach of that friendship, and a making of it up again; which no ways contradicts the everlasting and unchangeable love of God to his people; for this is not a reconciliation of God to them, but of them to God:

we were reconciled to God; not God to us; and this reconciliation is for their sins, an atonement for them, rather than of their persons; which being done, their persons are reconciled, not to the love, grace, and mercy of God, or to his affections, in which they always had a share, but to the justice of God injured and offended by their sins; and so both justice and holiness on one side, and love, grace, and mercy on the other, are reconciled together, in the business of their salvation; which is brought about by the sufferings and death of Christ: this expresses the wonderful love of God, since this reconciliation arises purely from himself; the scheme of it is of his own contriving; he, whose justice was affronted, and whose law was broken, took the first step towards it, and conducted the whole affair; and which was effected at the expense of the blood and life of his own Son, and that for persons who were enemies to them both. In consequence of this, another reconciliation of them is made by the Spirit of God in regenerations, of which notice is taken in this passage:

much more being reconciled: to God, as a sovereign God, in his decrees, in his providences, and in the method of salvation by his Son; to Christ, to the way of salvation by him, so as to submit both to his righteousness for justification, and to the sceptre of his kingdom, to be ruled and governed by it; to the Spirit, so as to be led by him, to walk after him, and to depend upon him for the carrying on, and finishing the good work of grace begun in them; to the people of God, so as to love them, and delight in their company; and to the Gospel and ordinances, so as highly to value them, long after them, and take pleasure in them. Now from both these reconciliations is inferred the sure and certain salvation of persons so reconciled:

we shall be saved by his life; by the life of Christ, and which designs not so much his life as God; or his living in the hearts of his people by faith; though neither of them are to be excluded; but his life, as man, and that not either his private or public life, as man here on earth, though this has an influence upon, and a concern in the business of salvation; but more especially here is meant the interceding life of Christ in heaven, where he lives, and ever lives to make intercession for his people, and to see the salvation he has obtained by his death applied unto them, and they put into the possession of it.

Romans 5:11

Ver. 11. And not only so, but we also joy in God,.... Something seems here to be understood, and which is to be supplied thus; not only we are saved by his life, and from wrath through him; not only are we reconciled to God by his Son, and Spirit; not only Christ has died for us while sinners and ungodly; not only do we glory in tribulations, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God: "but we also joy in God"; himself, as our covenant God and Father in Christ, as the God of all grace, peace, and salvation; in his perfections, as engaged on our side, and as glorified in our salvation; in the purposes of God, and his covenant transactions with his Son, as they are made known in the everlasting Gospel; in all his providential dispensations, which are mercy and truth; and in our being of him in Christ, and Christ's being made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; in all the blessings of grace we receive from him, the glory of which is his due; and in his sight and presence, and in the enjoyment of him. The means by which saints come at this joying and glorying in God, is

through our Lord Jesus Christ; not the light of nature, nor the law of Moses, nor any works of righteousness done by men, nor through angels or saints, but Christ, and him only; for it is only in and through him that God is their covenant God and Father; by him only have they the agreeable view of his glorious perfections; in him only all his purposes and promises have their fulfilment; it is by his hands, and through his blood, that all the blessings of grace are conveyed to them; their access to God is only by him; and by him they give the praise and glory of every mercy to him. And the ground of this joy is the expiation of sin by Christ,

by whom we have now received the atonement; atonement is not made, but received by us; which denotes the application of the atoning blood and sacrifice of Christ to the conscience, the Spirit's witness of interest in it, and the office of faith, as a recipient of it: it is not faith, nor anything else of the creature's, that makes the atonement, only Christ; but faith receives it from him, and by him; which, as it is the ground of present joying in God, so it is the foundation of hope of future glory: the word "now" refers to the Gospel dispensation. The poor Jews are at the utmost loss about atonement: sometimes they tell {c} us it is by confession, repentance, and good works; sometimes by beneficence and hospitality {d}; sometimes they say their captivity is their atonement {e}; and, at other times, that death expiates all their sins {f}. Blessed be God for the atoning sacrifice of Christ!

{c} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 85. 2. & 86. 1. Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 107. 1. {d} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 27. 1. & Roshhashana, fol. 18. 1, & Yebamot, fol. 105. 1. {e} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 16. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 37. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Teshuba, c. 2. sect. 4. {f} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 60. 1. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 38. 2. T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 28. 1. & Yoma, fol. 42. 1. Gloss in ib.

Romans 5:12

Ver. 12. Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world,.... The design of these words, and of the following, is to show how men came to be in the condition before described, as "ungodly", **Ro 5:6**, "sinners", **Ro 5:8**, and "enemies", **Ro 5:10**; and to express the love of Christ in the redemption of them; and the largeness of God's grace to all sorts of men: the connection of them is with **Ro 5:11**, by which it appears that the saints have not only an expiation of sin by the blood of Christ, but a perfect righteousness, by which they are justified in the sight of God; and the manner how they came at it, or this becomes theirs, together with the necessity of their having such an one, are here declared: by the "one man" is meant Adam the first man, and parent of mankind, who is mentioned by name in **Ro 5:14**; sin which came by him designs a single sin, and not many, even the first sin of Adam, which goes by different names, as "sin" here, "transgression", **Ro 5:14**, the "offence" or "fall", **Ro 5:15**, "disobedience", **Ro 5:19**, and whatever was the first step or motive to it, which led to it, whether pride, unbelief, or concupiscence, it was finished by eating the forbidden fruit; and is called sin emphatically, because it contained all sin in it, was attended with aggravating circumstances, and followed with dismal consequences. Hence may be learnt the origin of moral evil among men, which comes not from God, but man; of this it is said, that it "entered into the world"; not the world above, there sin entered by the devil; but the world below, and it first entered into paradise, and then passed through the whole world; it entered into men by the snares of Satan, and by him it enters into all the inhabitants of the world; into all men that descend from him by ordinary generation, and that so powerfully that there is no stopping of it. It has entered by him, not by imitation, for it has entered into such as never sinned after the similitude of his transgression, infants, or otherwise death could not have entered into them, and into such who never heard of it, as the Heathens; besides, sin entered as death did, which was not by imitation but imputation, for all men are reckoned dead in Adam, being accounted sinners in him; add to this, that in the same way Christ's righteousness comes upon us, which is by imputation, Adam's sin enters into us, or becomes ours; upon which death follows,

and death by sin; that is, death has entered into the world of men by sin, by the first sin of the first man; not only corporeal death, but a spiritual or moral one, man, in consequence of this, becoming "dead in sin", deprived of righteousness, and averse, and impotent to all that is good; and also an eternal death, to which he is liable; for "the wages of sin is death", **Ro 6:23**; even eternal death: all mankind are in a legal sense dead, the sentence of condemnation and death immediately passed on Adam as soon as he had sinned, and upon all his posterity;

and so death passed upon all men; the reason of which was,

for that, or because "in him"

all have sinned: all men were naturally and seminally in him; as he was the common parent of mankind, he had all human nature in him, and was also the covenant head, and representative of all his posterity; so that they were in him both naturally and federally, and so "sinned in him"; and fell with him by his first transgression into condemnation and death. The ancient Jews, and some of the modern ones, have said many things agreeably to the apostle's doctrine of original sin; they own the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin to his posterity to condemnation and death;

"through the sin of the first man (say they {g}) tm hta, "thou art dead"; for he brought death into the world:"

nothing is more frequently said by them than that Adam and Eve, through the evil counsel of the serpent, amle lklw Nwl atwm wmyrg, "were the cause of death to themselves and to all the world" {h}; and that through the eating of the fruit of the tree, aera yryyd lk
atwm wbyyxta, "all the inhabitants of the earth became guilty of death" {i}: and that this was not merely a corporeal death, they gather from the doubling of the word in the threatening, "in dying thou shalt die", **Ge 2:17** (margin);

"this doubled death, say they {k}, without doubt is the punishment of their body by itself, hmue ynpb vpnlw, and also of the "soul by itself"."

They speak of some righteous persons who died, not for any sin of their own, but purely on the account of Adam's sin; as Benjamin the son of Jacob, Amram the father of Moses, and Jesse the father of David, and Chileab the son of David {l}, to these may be added Joshua the son of Nun, and Zelophehad and Levi: the corruption and pollution of human nature through the sin of Adam is clearly expressed by them;

"when Adam sinned, (say they {m},) he "drew upon him a defiled power, amle ynb lklw hyl byaow, "and defiled himself and all the people of the "world"."

Again {n},

"this vitiosity which comes from the sin and infection of our first parents, has invaded both faculties of the rational soul, the understanding by which we apprehend, and the will by which we desire."

This corruption of nature they call erh ruy, "the evil imagination", which, they say {o}, is planted in a man's heart at the time of his birth; and others say {p} that it is in him before he is born: hence Philo the Jew says {q}, that sumfuev to amartanon esti, "to sin is connatural", to every man that is born, even though a good man; and talks {r} of suggeghnhnon koukon, "evil that is born with us", and of {s} suggeneiv khrev, "spots that are of necessity born with" every mortal man. And so his countrymen {t} often speak of it as natural and inseparable to men; yea, they represent Adam as the root and head of mankind, in whom the whole world and all human nature sinned: descanting on those words, "as one that lieth upon the top of a mast", Pr 23:34;

"this (say they {u}) is the first man who was Mda ynb lkl
var, "an head to all the children of men": for by means of wine death was inflicted on him, and he was the cause of bringing the sorrows of death into the world."

And in another place, speaking of Adam, they say {w}, that

"he was Mlwe lv hayrb rqye, "the root of the creation", or "of the men of the world"; and death was inflicted upon him and on his seed, because he sinned one sin in eating of the tree."

And it is observed,

"that heydyh ah, the "He" demonstrative is not prefixed in Scripture to proper names, which yet is to the word "Adam"; the reason is, (say they {x},) because in Adam all his posterity are pointed at, and the whole human species designed."

Again, they observe {y}, that

"the end of man is to die, of which this is the reason, because Mdah Nym, "mankind" has sinned; that is, the nature of which he is composed, or in other words, Adam and Eve have sinned."

Once more {z}

"when he (Adam) sinned, ajx wlk Mlweh lk, "all the whole world sinned", and his sin we bear;"

and {a} that

"the whole congregation of Israel have need of atonement for the sin of the first Adam, for he was hdeh lkk bwvx, reckoned as the whole congregation;"

which exactly tallies with the apostle's assertion in this text.

(When this commentary was written, it was generally accepted that all the fossils in the rocks were laid down by Noah's world wide flood and that the universe was about 6000 years old. Since that time, science has postualated that life evolved over billions of years and that the fossils are a result of this evolutionary process. If you accept the Bible as your authority you cannot accept the theory of evolution in any form. Firstly, the biblical chronology restricts the age of the universe to about 6000 years. Secondly, in order to get fossils, animals must die. This verse tells us that sin, not evolution, is the cause of death. Death and suffering did not exist until after Adam sinned. Hence before Adam sinned, no animal died and it would be impossible for any fossils to form. Before the fall, all animals ate plants, not other animals **Ge 1:30**. Paul tells us in **Ro 8:20** that Adam's sin subjected all of creation to the curse, not just mankind.
See Gill on "Ro 6:23".
See Gill (Editor's note) on "Ex 20:11". Editor)

{g} Debarim Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 244. 2. {h} Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 1, 2, 3, 4. & 36. 3. 4. & 37. 2. & 46. 4. & 54. 3. & 67. 3. & 86. 1. & 98. 1. in Exod. fol. 106. 1. & 127. 2. in Lev. fol. 46. 2. 3. Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 225. 3. Caphtor, fol. 37. 2. {i} Targum in Ruth iv. 22. & in Eccles. vii. 29. {k} R. Joseph Albo in Sepher lkkarim, l. 4. c. 41. {l} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 2. Bava Bathra, fol. 17. 1. Zohar in Gen. fol. 36. 4. & Imre Binah in ib. & 44. 4. & lmre Binah in ib. & Numb. fol. 83. 2. {m} Zohar in Gen. fol. 37. 1. {n} Menasseh ben Israel Praefat. ad lib. de Fragilitate Humana. {o} Aben Ezra in Psal. li. 5. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 14, 3. 4. {p} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 30. 1. {q} De Vita Mosis, p. 675. {r} De Praemiis, p. 920. {s} De Nomin. Mutat. p. 1051. {t} Kimchi in Psal. li. 5. Menah ben Israel de Fragilitate, par. 1. p. 2. {u} Bemidhar Rabba, fol. 198. 3. {w} Caphtor, fol. 102. 1. {x} Menasseh ben Israel de cermino Vitae, c. 3. sect. 8. p. 198. {y} En Jaacob, par. 1. fol. 19. 4. {z} Zohar in Lev fol. 46. 2. R. Menachem Rakanati apud Voisin. Obs. in Pugionem Fidei, p. 590. {a} Zohar in Gen. fol. 76. 3. & 36. 3.

Romans 5:13

Ver. 13. For until the law, sin was in the world,.... This is a proof of sin's having entered into the world, by one man's transgression of the positive law of God, which forbid him the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; since it was in the world before the law of Moses was given: the sin of Adam and the guilt of that were in the world before, and came upon all men to condemnation; the general corruption of nature appeared before; and actual sins, and transgressions of all sorts were committed before; as by the immediate posterity of Adam, by the men of the old world, by the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, by the patriarchs and their posterity, by the Egyptians, Canaanites, and others. They were all guilty of sin, corrupted by it, and under the dominion of it, except such as were released from it by the grace of God: now when sin is said to be until this time, the meaning is not that it existed and continued until the law of Moses took place, and then ceased; for that law did not, and could not take away sin, it rather increased it, at least it became more known by it; but that it was in being before it, and had influence and power over the sons of men, so as to subject them to death:

but sin is not imputed when there is no law. This looks like an objection, that if there was no law before Moses's time, then there was no sin, nor could any action of man be known or accounted by them as sinful, or be imputed to them to condemnation; or rather it is a concession, allowing that where there is no law, sin is not imputed; but there was a law before that law of Moses, which law was transgressed, and the sin or transgression of it was imputed to men to condemnation and death, as appears from what follows.

Romans 5:14

Ver. 14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses,.... Though the law of Moses was not yet given, death exerted itself, and extended its dominion over all the sons and daughters of Adam, during the interval between Adam and Moses; which clearly shows that sin was in the world, and that there must be a law in being, which that was a transgression of: death is represented as a king, as sin and Satan sometimes are; and indeed, death reigns by sin, and Satan both by sin and death; their empires rise, stand, and fall together. So

Bildad calls death "the king of terrors", Job 18:14; and a very formidable and powerful king he is; his dominion is very large, his power uncontrollable, and the dread of him very great, especially to Christless sinners. The Jews say {b}, that at the resurrection the world will be renewed, and will not be as at the first, when amleb
atwm jylvd, "death reigned in the world"; referring to the same period of time the apostle here does. The subjects of his government were not only adult persons, who had been guilty of many actual transgressions, but he reigned

even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. This does not exclude the dominion of death over such who had sinned after the likeness of Adam, but rather confirms its power over them; nor does it intend adult Gentiles, who did not sin in the same manner, nor against the same law, as Adam did; but it designs infants, not yet guilty of actual sin; and therefore since death reigns over them, who only holds and exercises his dominion by virtue of sin, it follows, that they must have original sin in them; the guilt of Adam's transgression must be imputed to them, and the corruption of nature, from him, derived unto them, or it could not reign over them. A child of a year old, the Jewish doctors {c} say, has not tasted the taste of sin, that is, has not committed actual sin; and observe {d}, that young children die on account of the sins of their parents: but the true reason of their dying is here suggested by the apostle; which is the transgression of Adam:

who is the figure of him that was to come; meaning, either his posterity that were to come out of his loins, whose figure, type, and representative he was; or rather Christ, who is sometimes called
o ercomenov, "he that was to come"; and the Arabic version reads the words thus, "who was a type of Adam that was expected"; that is, of Christ the second Adam, that was expected to come, according to the promise and prophecy: of him the first Adam was a type, in his human nature, in the formation and quality of it; as the first Adam was made by God of the virgin earth, the second Adam was born of a virgin; as the first, so the second Adam was pure, holy, upright, and wise; in his office, as Lord of the world, head of the woman, priest in his house, and prophet to his posterity; in his marriage with Eve, a figure of the church; but in nothing more clearly than in his being a covenant head to all his offspring: and this is what the apostle chiefly designs, since he runs the parallel between them on this account in the following verses; showing, that as the one conveyed sin and death to all his seed, so the other communicates righteousness and life to all that belong to him. So the Jews say {e}, that by Adam is intimated the righteous branch, the Messiah; and that xyvm dwo awh Mda dwo, "the secret of Adam is the secret of the

Messiah".

{b} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 96. 1. {c} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 22. 2. {d} Massecheth Calah, fol. 17. 2. {e} R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 2. 3. & 3. 1.

Romans 5:15

Ver. 15. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift,.... By "the offence", or "fall", as the word signifies, is meant the first sin of Adam; by which he offended God, and fell from that estate in which he was created, and all his posterity with him; and by the "free gift" is meant, the righteousness of Christ, which justifies from that, and all other offences: now, though there is a great likeness between Adam and Christ; both are men, the first Adam is called "the one man", and so is the second Adam Jesus Christ; partly for the sake of the comparison between him and the first, and also to express the truth of his human nature; and because the Redeemer ought to be a man, though not a mere man; both are sole authors of what they convey to their respective offspring, Adam of sin, Christ of righteousness; both convey single things, Adam only one sin, not more, for when he had committed one sin, he broke the covenant made with him and his posterity, and so ceased in after acts to be a representative of them; Christ conveys his righteousness, or obedience to the law, without any additional works of righteousness of ours to complete it; and both convey what they do, "to all" their respective offspring: yet there is a dissimilitude between them, as to the manner of conveyance and the effects thereof; the offence or sin of Adam is conveyed in a natural way, or by natural generation, to all who descend from him in that manner; the righteousness of Christ is conveyed in a way of grace, to his spiritual seed: hence it is called, not only the "free gift", but "the grace of God, and the gift by grace", which is "by one man, Jesus Christ"; because of the grace of the Father, in fixing and settling the method of justification, by the righteousness of his Son; in sending him to work out one, that would be satisfying to law and justice; and in his gracious acceptation of it, on the behalf of his people, and the imputation of it to them; and because of the grace of the Son in becoming man, in being made under the law, yea, made sin and a curse, in order to bring in an everlasting righteousness; and because of the grace of the Spirit, in revealing and applying it, and working faith to receive it; for as the righteousness itself is a free grace gift, bestowed upon unworthy persons, so is faith likewise, by which it is laid hold on and embraced: and as there is a disagreement in the manner of conveying these things, so likewise in the effects they have upon the persons to whom they are conveyed; and the apostle argues from the influence and effect the one has, to the far greater and better influence and effect the other has:

for if through the offence of one many be dead; as all Adam's posterity are, not only subject to a corporeal death, but involved in a moral or spiritual, and liable to an eternal one, through the imputation of guilt, and the derivation of a corrupt nature from him: then

much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many; that is, the righteousness of Christ, in which the grace of God is so illustrious, is much more effectual to the giving of life to all his seed and offspring; not barely such a life as Adam had in innocence, and which he lost by the offence, but a spiritual and an eternal one; which sheds the exuberance of this grace, which secures and adjudges to a better life than what was lost by the fall.

Romans 5:16

Ver. 16. And not as [it was] by one that sinned, [so is] the gift,.... The apostle goes on with the dissimilitude between the effects of Adam's sin, and Christ's righteousness:

for the judgment was by one to condemnation; by "judgment" is meant, not the judgment of God, or the judiciary sentence pronounced by God on Adam and his posterity for sin; but the guilt of the one man's sin, which is imputed to all men to condemnation, on account of which the sentence of condemnation passed on all men; the law transgressed, became a ministration of condemnation to them:

but the free gift is of many offences unto justification; the righteousness of Christ, which stands opposed to the guilt of Adam's sin, being imputed to all his offspring, is to the justification of them; and that not only from the guilt of that particular offence, but from many other offences, even all their actual sins and transgressions, of every sort; which is another instance of the exuberance, or abounding of the grace of God, in the righteousness of Christ, not only over the sin of the one man, but also over the sins of many, even all the elect of God; for the last clause may be also thus rendered, "the free gift is of the offences of many, unto justification".

Romans 5:17

Ver. 17. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one,.... It may be rendered, "by one offence death reigned by one"; for it was the single sin of Adam, the first sin that was committed by him, which gave death its reigning power over the sons of men:

"Adam, say {f} the Jewish doctors, transgressed,
atyyrwad dx adwqp le, one commandment of the law,"

and was the cause of death to himself, and to all the world. These words are a repetition, with a further explanation, of **Ro 5:15**; there it is said, "through the offence of one many be dead"; here "by one man's offence", or "by one offence, death reigned by one"; in which death is represented as a mighty monarch, a powerful king; and designs not only corporeal death, which has mounted the throne by sin, and is supported in its dominion by an ordinance of heaven; but also a moral or spiritual death, which has seized on all mankind, and reigns in every power and faculty of the soul of man; and likewise an eternal one, which will have power over all those, who have no part in the first resurrection: in **Ro 5:15**, "the grace of God, and the gift by grace", are said to "abound unto many"; here they are said to

receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness: by abundance of grace is designed, either something distinct from the justifying righteousness of Christ; such as the abundant grace and mercy of God, in regeneration and conversion; the various graces of the Spirit then implanted; the many things then wrought in the heart; the large discoveries! of pardoning grace, and the abundance of the love of God shed abroad in the soul by the Spirit: or rather the same with "the gift of righteousness", because of the large display of the grace of God in it; by which "righteousness" is meant, not righteousness or holiness infused into us; but the righteousness of Christ, which is a free grace gift, and is enjoyed in a way of receiving; which denotes the act of faith, and supposes giving; and hence there is no room for boasting, but great reason for thankfulness: now such persons who have received this abundant grace and free gift,

shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ; in corporeal life, they are not now subject to death as a penal evil, as other persons are, and though they die this death, they will triumph over it in the resurrection morn, they will rise again to everlasting life; they reign now in spiritual life over sin, Satan, and the world; and they will reign in eternal life, they will sit on thrones, wear crowns, and possess a kingdom of glory for ever and ever; and all by and through one, Jesus Christ, and not on account of any works, or merits of theirs.

{f} Zohar in Num. fol. 52. 1. Vid. Caphtor, fol. 102. 1. supra citat.

Romans 5:18

Ver. 18. Therefore as by the offence of one,.... Or by one offence, as before, the guilt of which is imputed to, and

[judgment came] upon all men to condemnation; which word is used in a legal sense, and intends condemnation to eternal death, as appears from the antithesis in the text; for if "justification of life", means an adjudging to eternal life, as it certainly does, the judgment or guilt, which is unto condemnation, must design a condemnation to eternal death, the just wages of sin: and this sentence of condemnation comes upon all men, all the sons of Adam without exception, even upon the elect of God themselves; though it is not executed upon them, but on their surety, whereby they are delivered from it:

even so by the righteousness of one, [the free gift] came upon all men to justification of life; the righteousness of Christ being freely imputed without works, as it is to all the men that belong to the second Adam, to all his seed and offspring, is their justification of life, or what adjudges and entitles them to eternal life. The sentence of justification was conceived in the mind of God from eternity, when his elect were ordained unto eternal life, on the foot of his Son's righteousness; this passed on Christ at his resurrection from the dead, and on all his people as considered in him, when they, in consequence of it, were quickened together with him; and this passes upon the conscience of a sinner at believing, when he may, as he should, reckon himself alive unto God, and is what gives him a right and title to everlasting life and glory.

Romans 5:19

Ver. 19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners,.... Agreeably to this the Jews say {g}, that

"for the sin of the first man, all that are born of him,
Myevr wyhy, "become wicked"."

This is the sum of what is said in the foregoing verses, that as by Adam's sin all his posterity are made sinners, and so are brought under a sentence of condemnation; in like manner by the obedience of Christ, all his seed are made righteous, and come under a sentence of justification of life: the persons made sinners are said to be "many", in opposition to the "one man", by whose disobedience they became so, and because there is an exception of one, even Jesus Christ; and mean all the natural descendants of Adam, who are many, and are so called, to answer to the subjects of justification in the next clause: what they are made sinners by, is "the disobedience of one man, Adam"; and by the first and single disobedience of his, in eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, by which they "were made sinners": the meaning of which is not, that they became sufferers for it, or subject to death on the account of it; the word used will not bear such a sense, but signifies men guilty of sin, and sometimes the worst and chief of sinners; besides, the apostle had expressed that before; add to this, that the sons of Adam could not be sufferers for his sin, or subject to death on account of it, if they were not made sinners by it, or involved in the guilt or it: and though the posterity of Adam are habitually sinners, that is, derive corrupt nature from Adam, yet this is not meant here; but that they are become guilty, through the imputation of his sin to them; for it is by the disobedience of another they are made sinners, which must be by the imputation of that disobedience to them; he sinned, and they sinned in him, when they had as yet no actual existence; which could be no other way, than by imputation, as he was reckoned and accounted their head and representative, and they reckoned and accounted in him, and so have sinned in him. This is also evident, from the sentence of condemnation and death passing upon all men for it; and even upon those, who had not actually sinned; to which may be added, that Adam's posterity are made sinners through his disobedience, in the same way as Christ's seed are made righteous by his obedience, which is by the imputation of it to them;

so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous; not by their own obedience; nor by their own obedience and Christ's together; but by his sole and single obedience to the law of God: and the persons made righteous by it are not all the posterity of Adam, and yet not a few of them; but "many", even all the elect of God, and seed of Christ; these are all made righteous in the sight of God, are justified from all their sins, and entitled to eternal life and happiness.

{g} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 97. 1.

Romans 5:20

Ver. 20. Moreover, the law entered,.... By "the law" is meant, not the law of nature, much less the law of sin; rather the ceremonial law, which came in over and above the moral law; it entered but for a time; by which sin abounded, and appeared very sinful; and through it the grace of God much more abounded, in the sacrifice of Christ prefigured by it: but the moral law, as it came by Moses, is here intended; which entered with great pomp and solemnity on Mount Sinai; and intervened, or came between Adam's sin and Christ's sacrifice; and also came in besides, or over and above the promise of life by Christ; and may moreover be said to enter into the conscience of a sinner, with the power and energy of the Spirit of God: and the end of its entrance is,

that the offence might abound; meaning either the sin of Adam, he had been speaking of under that name, that that itself, and the imputation of it to his posterity, and also the pollution of human nature by it, together with all the aggravating circumstances of it, might appear more manifest; or sin in general, any and all actual transgressions, which abound through the law's discovering the evil nature of them, and so taking away all excuse, or pretext of ignorance: by prohibiting them, whereby the corrupt nature of man becomes more eager after them; and by accusing, threatening, terrifying, and condemning, on account of them: one view of the apostle in this, doubtless, is to show, that there can be no justification by the law:

but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: sin has abounded in human nature, in all the individuals of it; and grace has superabounded in the same nature, being assumed by the Son of God, and united to him, who has appeared in it "full of grace and truth", **Joh 1:14**: sin has abounded in all the powers and faculties of the soul, in the understanding, will, and affections, of an unregenerate man; but in regeneration, the grace of God much more abounds in the same powers and faculties, enlightening the understanding, subduing the will, and influencing the affections with love to divine things: sin abounded in the Gentile world, before the preaching of the Gospel in it; but afterwards grace did superabound in the conversion of multitudes in it from idols, to serve the living God; and where sin has abounded in particular persons to a very great height, grace has exceeded it, as in Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, Saul, and others.

Romans 5:21

Ver. 21. That as sin hath reigned unto death,.... This is another end of the law's entrance, or rather an illustration of the grace of God, by comparing the reigns of sin and grace together: sin has such a power over man in a state of nature, as amounts to a dominion; it has not only an enticing, ensnaring power, to draw into a compliance with it, and an obstructive power to hinder that which is good, and an operative one of that which is evil, and a captivating, enslaving one to the same; but it has a kingly, governing, and commanding power: its dominion is universal as to men, and with respect both to the members of the body, and faculties of the soul; it is supported by laws, which are its lusts; and has its voluntary subjects, to whom it gives wages; its reign is very cruel and tyrannical; it is "unto death" corporeal, moral, or spiritual, and eternal. The ancient Jews often represent sin in the same light; they frequently speak {h} of jlwv erh ruy, "the corruption of nature reigning" over men; and say {i}: that he is Klm "a king" over the several members of the body, which answer to him at the word of command. "The old and foolish king" in **Ec 4:13**, is commonly interpreted by them of sin; which they say {k} is called "a king", because he rules in the world, over the children of men, and because all hearken to him: it is a petition much used by them {l},

"let not the evil imagination or corruption of nature "rule" over me:"

and on the other hand, they represent grace, or a principle of goodness, as a king, reigning over the corruption of nature; thus interpreting these words, "my son, fear thou the Lord and the king", they ask {m},

"who is the king? the king (say they) bwj ruy Klmh, is "the good imagination", or principle of goodness, who reigns over the evil imagination, which is called a king."

And in another place {n} they say of a good man, that he bwj ruy Kylmh, "caused the good imagination to reign" over the evil one; with which in some measure agrees what follows:

even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord; by grace is meant, either grace as it is in the heart of God; which reigns or bears sway in man's salvation in all the parts of it, "through righteousness"; consistent with the justice of God, in a way in which that is glorified, through the redemption of Christ: it reigns "unto eternal life"; grace has promised, prepared it, and makes meet for it, and will introduce into it, and freely give it: it reigns "by Jesus Christ"; grace reigns by him, righteousness, or justice, is glorified by him, and eternal life is in him, through him, and by him: or grace as it is in the hearts of converted persons, is meant where it reigns, has the dominion, is the governing principle, and that in a way of righteousness and true holiness; and will reign until it is perfected in glory, or is crowned with eternal life; all which are by Jesus Christ, namely, grace, righteousness, and life.

{h} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 52. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2. {i} Abot. R. Nathan, c. 16. fol. 5. 2. Targum in Eccl. ix. 14. Midrash Koheleth, fol. 80. 1. {k} Zohar in Gen. fol. 102. 1. Midrash Koheleth, fol. 70. 2. Caphtor, fol. 20. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 14. 4. Jarchi in Eccl. iv. 13. {l} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 60. 1. Shaare Zion, fol. 73. 1. Seder Tephiltot, fol. 3. 1. Ed. Basil. {m} Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 218. 1. {n} Midrash Koheleth, fol. 78. 3.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 6

The Apostle having finished his design concerning the doctrine of justification, refutes the charge brought against it as a licentious doctrine, and prevents any ill use that might be made of it by men of evil minds, justified persons by the strongest arguments, and with the best of motives to holiness of life and conversation: he saw, that whereas he had affirmed in the preceding chapter, that sin being made to abound by the law, in the condemnation of sinners, the grace of God the more abounded in their justification and pardon; that some would rise up and object, that this doctrine countenances men's continuance in sin, and opens a door to all manner of iniquity; and that others would abuse this doctrine, and encourage themselves in a vicious course of life, upon this mistaken notion, that the grace of God would be the more illustrious by it; all which is suggested in **Ro 6:1**, to which an answer is returned in **Ro 6:2**, with an abhorrence of everything of this kind; and by an argument, showing the absurdity and inconsistency of it, seeing persons dead to sin, as justified ones are, cannot live in it: and that they are dead to sin, and under obligation to live unto righteousness, he argues from their baptism into Christ's death, which represents their being dead with Christ, and buried with him, **Ro 6:3**, and likewise the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and theirs by him, whereby they are both fitted and obliged to walk in newness of life; since they are, and should be like him, as in his death, so in his resurrection from the dead: and the rather, as they are implanted in him, as the branches in the vine, **Ro 6:4**, and especially as it was the great end of his death, that by the crucifixion of sin with him, it might so be destroyed, that his people should be no more servants to it, **Ro 6:6**, this being proved, that justified ones are dead to sin, the apostle argues upon it, that such are freed from sin, **Ro 6:7**, and therefore ought not, and cannot live in it; for this must be given into as an article of faith, that such as are dead with Christ live, and shall live a life of communion with him, **Ro 6:8**, which is inconsistent with living in sin: he further argues from the resurrection of Christ, which was not to die more, **Ro 6:9**, and suggests, that in like manner, those who have been dead and buried, and risen with him, which their baptism signifies, should not live in sin, which is no other than dying again; and to strengthen this, directs to the ends of Christ's death and resurrection, **Ro 6:10**, the end of the one being unto sin, to finish, make an end of that, and be the death of it, and the end of the other, being living unto God; wherefore in like manner, such who profess to be Christ's, to be justified by his righteousness, to be baptized into his death, and to be risen with him, should account themselves dead unto sin, and so not live in it, and alive to God through the righteousness of Christ, and so live to his honour and glory, **Ro 6:11**, and having thus answered the objection, and removed the calumny, and set this matter in a clear light, the apostle proceeds to dehort from sinning, and to exhort to holiness of life, **Ro 6:12**, in which he compares sin to a tyrant, the lusts of it to the laws of such an one, and which therefore should not be obeyed; and the rather, as the wages of them are death, and have made the body already mortal; wherefore the members of it should not be employed in such service, but in the service of God: and whereas it might be objected, that sin is too strong and prevalent, and has got the mastery, and will keep its power, the apostle declares it as a promise of grace, that sin shall not have the dominion, **Ro 6:14**, giving this as a reason, because such as are justified and sanctified, are not under the law, as a covenant of works, but under the covenant of grace, of which this promise is a part; and in order to prevent an ill use of this doctrine, and remove an objection that might be made, that if not under the law, men are under no restraints, but may go on in sin without control, he answers it with his usual detestation, **Ro 6:15**, and argues the folly and absurdity of living in sin upon such an account, because it would make them servants of sin unto death, **Ro 6:16**, and so they were before conversion, but now were otherwise, for, which they had reason to be thankful, **Ro 6:17**, since through the grace of God they had yielded an hearty obedience to the Gospel; wherefore to obey sin would be to return to their former state of bondage; whereas being freed from the power and dominion of sin, they were now the servants of righteousness, and ought to act becoming such a character, **Ro 6:18**, wherefore it was but acting the part of reasonable men, it was but their reasonable service, to yield themselves servants, not to sin and uncleanness, but to righteousness and holiness, **Ro 6:19**, in order to engage to which, the apostle puts them in mind of their former state; how that when they were in subjection to sin, they had nothing to do with the exercise of righteousness, **Ro 6:20**, and therefore as there was an alteration made in them, they ought to be just the reverse in their conduct and conversation; for he appeals to them, that they had no pleasure nor profit in their former course of life; which had brought upon them shame and confusion, and must have ended in death, had it not been for the grace of God, **Ro 6:21**, but now as they were delivered from the slavery and dominion of sin, they were under a better master, were servants to God; and the fruit of their service was holiness, and the issue of all would be everlasting life, **Ro 6:22**, which is illustrated by the contrary, **Ro 6:23**, the wages due from the service of sin, and which only could be expected from it, being death; whereas grace and holiness, the gift of God, issue in eternal life by Christ Jesus; in whose hands it is, and through whom it comes, and is enjoyed.

Ver. 1. What shall we say then?.... The apostle here obviates an objection he saw would be made against the doctrine he had advanced, concerning the aboundings of the grace of God in such persons and places, where sin had abounded; which if true, might some persons say, then it will be most fit and proper to continue in a sinful course of life, to give up ourselves to all manner of iniquity, since this is the way to make the grace of God abound yet more and more: now says the apostle, what shall we say to this? how shall we answer such an objection? shall we join with the objectors, and say as they do? and

shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? that is, shall we persist in a vicious way of living with this view, that the grace of God may be magnified hereby? is it right to commit sin on such an account? or is this a fair inference, a just consequence, drawn from the doctrine of grace? To be sure it was not, the objection is without any ground and foundation; sin is not "per se", the cause of the glorifying God's grace, but "per accidens": sin of itself is the cause of wrath, and not of grace; but God has been pleased to take an occasion of magnifying his grace, in the forgiveness of sin: for it is not by the commission of sin, but by the pardon of it, that the grace of God is glorified, or made to abound. Moreover, grace in conversion is glorified by putting a stop to the reign of sin, and not by increasing its power, which would be done by continuing in it; grace teaches men not to live in sin, but to abstain from it; add to this, that it is owing to the want of grace, and not to the aboundings of it, that men at any time abuse, or make an ill use of the doctrines of grace; wherefore the apostle's answer is,

Romans 6:2

Ver. 2. God forbid,.... By which he expresses his abhorrence of such a practice, and that this was a consequence which did not follow from the premises, and was far enough from his thoughts, and which he had in the greatest detestation: and he further argues against it by asking,

how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? There is a death for sin, a death in sin, and a death to sin; the latter is here mentioned, and persons may be said to be "dead to sin", both as justified and sanctified: justified persons are dead to sin, inasmuch as that is not imputed to them to condemnation and death; they are discharged from it; it cannot hurt them, or exert its damning power over them; it is crucified, abolished, and made an end of by Christ: sanctified persons are dead to sin; sin is not made their business, it is not their course of life; it is no longer a pleasure to them, but is loathsome and abominable; it is looked upon, not as a friend, but an enemy; it does not reign, it has not the dominion over them; it is subdued in them, and its power weakened; and as to the members of the flesh, and deeds of the body, it is mortified: to live in sin, is to live after the dictates of corrupt nature; and persons may be said to live in it, when they give up themselves to it, are bent upon it; when sin is their life, they delight in it, make it their work and business, and the whole course of their life is sinful: now those who are dead to sin, cannot thus live in it, though sin may live in them; they may fall into sin, and lie in it some time, yet they cannot live in it: living in sin, is not only unbecoming the grace of God revealed in the Gospel, but is contrary to it; it is detestable to gracious minds, yea, it seems impossible they should live in it; which is suggested by this question, "how shall we?" &c. The thing is impracticable: for, for a gracious soul to live in sin, would be to die again, to become dead in sin, which cannot be; he that lives and believes in Christ shall never die, spiritually or eternally.

Romans 6:3

Ver. 3. Know ye not that so many of us as, etc.] You must know this, you cannot be ignorant of it, that whoever

were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death: and therefore must be dead to sin, and consequently ought not to live, nor can they live in sin. This does not suppose, that some of this church were baptized persons, and others not; but that some might be baptized in water who were not baptized into Christ: there is a difference between being baptized in water in the name of Christ, and being baptized into Christ, which believers in their baptism are; by which is meant, not a being brought by it into union with Christ, which is either secretly from eternity, or openly at conversion, and both before the baptism of true believers; nor a being brought by it into the mystical body of Christ the church, for this also is before it; but rather it designs a being baptized, or a being brought by baptism into more communion with Christ, into a participation of his grace and benefits; or into the doctrine of Christ, and a more distinct knowledge of it: the power of which they feel upon their hearts, and so have really believed in Christ, heartily love him, and make a sincere profession of him; though rather the true meaning of the phrase "baptized into Christ", I take to be, is to be baptized purely for the sake of Christ, in imitation of him, who has set us an example, and because baptism is an ordinance of his; it is to submit to it with a view to his glory, to testify our affection for him, and subjection to him, without laying any stress or dependence on it for salvation; such who are thus baptized, are "baptized into his death"; they not only resemble Christ in his sufferings and death, by being immersed in water, but they declare their faith in the death of Christ, and also share in the benefits of his death; such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and atonement: now this proves, that such persons are dead to sin, who are so baptized; for by the death of Christ, into which they are baptized, they are justified from sin; by the death of Christ, their old man is crucified, and the body of sin destroyed; besides, believers in baptism profess themselves to be dead to sin and the world, and their baptism is an obligation upon them to live unto righteousness.

Romans 6:4

Ver. 4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death,.... The nature and end of baptism are here expressed; the nature of it, it is a "burial"; and when the apostle so calls it, he manifestly refers to the ancient and only way of administering this ordinance, by immersion; when a person is covered, and as it were buried in water, as a corpse is when laid the earth, and covered with it: and it is a burial with Christ; it is a representation of the burial of Christ, and of our burial with him as our head and representative, and that "into death"; meaning either the death of Christ as before, that is, so as to partake of the benefits of his death; or the death of sin, of which baptism is also a token; for believers, whilst under water, are as persons buried, and so dead; which signifies not only their being dead with Christ, and their communion with him in his death, but also their being dead to sin by the grace of Christ, and therefore ought not to live in it: for the apostle is still pursuing his argument, and is showing, from the nature, use, and end of baptism, that believers are dead to sin, and therefore cannot, and ought not, to live in it; as more fully appears from the end of baptism next mentioned;

that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father, even so we also should walk in newness of life; for the end of baptism is not only to represent the death and burial, but also the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which is here said to be "by the glory of the Father", some read the words, "unto the glory of the Father"; meaning either, that the Father might be glorified hereby; or that Christ, being raised from the dead, might enjoy glory with the Father, as he does in human nature; but rather the phrase expresses the means by which, and not the end to which, Christ was raised from the dead: and by the "glory of the Father" is meant, the glorious power of the Father, which was eminently displayed in raising Christ from the dead; and as baptism is designed to represent the resurrection of Christ, which is done by raising the person out of the water, so likewise to represent our resurrection from the death of sin, to a life of grace: whence it must be greatly incumbent on baptized believers, who are raised from the graves of sin by the power of Christ, to "walk in newness of life"; for since they are become new creatures, and have new hearts and new spirits given them, new principles of light, life, grace, and holiness implanted in them, and have entered into a new profession of religion, of which baptism is the badge and symbol, they ought to live a new life and conversation.

Romans 6:5

Ver. 5. For if we have been planted together,.... This is not to be understood of an implantation of Jews and Gentiles together in One body; nor of an implantation of believers together in a church state; but of an implantation of Christ and his people together; which is openly done at conversion, in consequence of a secret union with him before; when they are transplanted from a state of nature, and are ingrafted into Christ; have the graces of the Spirit of God implanted in them, and grow up under the dews of grace, and shinings of the sun of righteousness upon them, and bring forth much fruit; now as these persons, by virtue of their secret union with Christ from eternity, as their head and representative, with whom they were crucified, in whom they died representatively, share in his death, enjoy the benefits of it, and feel its efficacy, and through it become dead to the law, sin, and the world, which is meant by the likeness of his death; so these same persons shall be also planted

in the likeness of his resurrection; that is, they shall share in the benefits, and feel and enjoy the effects of it; not only their bodies will be raised at the last day, as their souls are now regenerated by virtue of it, and in resemblance to it; but their are, and shall be so influenced by his Spirit and grace, which has raised them from death to life, that they shall walk in newness of life; of which baptism is a lively representation, and to which it is a constant obligation.

Romans 6:6

Ver. 6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him,.... By the old man is meant the corruption of nature; called a man, because natural to men; it lives and dwells in them; it has spread itself over the whole man; it rules and governs in men; and consists of various parts and members, as a man does: it is called "old", because it is the poison of the old serpent, with which man was infected by him from the beginning; it is derived from the first man that ever was; it is as old as the man is, in whom it is, and is likewise called so, with respect to its duration and continuance; and in opposition to, and contradistinction from, the new man, or principle of grace: it is called "ours", because continual to us; it is in our nature, it cleaves to us, and abides in us. This name the apostle took from his countrymen the Jews, who were wont to call the vitiosity of nature hereby; so R. Aba on that passage, "the firstborn said to the younger, our father is old", Ge 19:31, asks, what is the meaning of this, "our father is old?" this, answers he, is the evil imagination, or corruption of nature, which is called
Nqz, "old", according to **Ec 4:13**; and is said to be old,
Mdah Me dlwnv, "because it is born with the man" {o}; or as the reason is elsewhere given {p}, because it is joined to him from his birth, to his old age: this, they say {q}, is with a man as soon as he is born, from the hour of his birth, as soon as ever he comes into the world. Now this is said to be "crucified with him"; that is, with Christ, when he was crucified: the Jews {r} have a notion that the evil imagination, or corruption of nature, ljbty al, will not be made to cease, or be abolished out of the world, till the King Messiah comes, and by him it is abolished: this is so crucified by the death, and at the cross of Christ, as that it cannot exert its damning power over believers; and is so crucified by the Spirit and grace of Christ in them, as that it cannot reign over them, or exercise its domineering power over them; wherefore they are dead unto it, and that to them, and therefore cannot live in it; which is done,

that the body of sin might be destroyed: by "the body of sin" is meant sin itself, which consists, as a body does, of various members; and also the power and strength of it, which the Jews {s} call erh ruyd alyx, "the power of the evil imagination"; this is crucified with Christ, and nailed to his cross by his sacrifice and satisfaction, that its damning power might be destroyed, abolished, and done away: and it is crucified by the Spirit and grace of Christ, that its governing power might be took away, and that itself be subdued, weakened, and laid under restraints, and its members and deeds mortified:

that henceforth we should not serve sin; not that it should not be in us, for as yet, neither by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, nor by the power of his grace, is sin as to its being removed from the people of God: but that we should not serve it, make provision for it, indulge it and obey it, in the lusts thereof.

{o} Midrash Haneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 1. Vid. Caphtor, fol. 20. 1. {p} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 70. 2. {q} Zohar in Gen. fol. 102. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 14. 4. {r} Zohar in Exod fol. 94. 4. {s} Ib.

Romans 6:7

Ver. 7. For he that is dead, is freed from sin. This is not to be understood of a natural or a corporeal death; for this is the effect of sin, and is inflicted by way of punishment for it, on Christless persons; so far is it from being an atonement for sin, as the Jews {t} fancy; besides, there are many persons, who as they die in their sins, they will rise in them; though a natural death is alluded to, when persons are free from those laws and obligations to service and duty they are under whilst living: but here it is to be understood of a spiritual or mystical death, and of persons who are dead to the law, by the body of Christ; dead to sin by the sacrifice and grace of Christ; who are baptized into the death of Christ, and in imitation of him: such are "freed from sin"; not from the being of it; nor from the burden of it; nor from a continual war with it; nor from slips and falls into it; no, not even freed from it, in the most solemn services and acts of religion; but they are freed from the dominion of it, from servitude to it, and also from the guilt of it, and from obligation to punishment on account of it: they are, as it is in the Greek text, and as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, "justified from sin".

{t} See Gill "Ro 5:11".

Romans 6:8

Ver. 8. Now if we be dead with Christ,.... This does not imply any doubt about it, but is rather a taking it for granted: seeing we are dead with Christ by union with him, as our head and representative, and by communion with him in the benefits of his death, and being planted together in the likeness of it; or being dead to the law, sin, and the world, through the virtue and efficacy of Christ's death:

we believe that we shall also live with him; not only a life of justification by faith in his righteousness; and a life of sanctification from him, and to his glory; the continuance of which, and a perseverance in it, are firmly believed; but a life of glory and happiness with him hereafter, both in the new Jerusalem, in the new heavens, and new earth, in the glorious state of the church on earth, and in heaven to all eternity; where they shall be personally and visibly with him, in soul and body, and shall live in the most intimate and uninterrupted communion with him, enjoying the highest pleasure, and the most consummate happiness; and are therefore under the greatest obligation, whilst here on earth, to live, not in sin, but to righteousness, and to his praise and glory; with whom they are now dead to sin, and with whom they not only hope, but believe they shall live throughout the endless ages of eternity.

Romans 6:9

Ver. 9. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead,.... That Christ is risen from the dead, is a certain fact, well attested, thoroughly known, and firmly believed; the prophets prophesied of it, Christ himself foretold it, angels affirmed it, and the apostles were witnesses of it, as is also the Holy Ghost: and it is as certain, that he

dieth no more; he is raised to an immortal life, and will live for evermore; there is no need of his dying again, his death having been a full atonement and expiation of all the sins and transgressions of his people:

death hath no more dominion over him: it once had dominion over him; it held him under its power for a time, according to the divine determination, and by his own consent: but it was not possible he should be holden of it longer; both on account of the dignity of his person, as the Son of God, and the virtue and efficacy of his sacrifice, as the surety of his people, having put away sin for ever by it. He is the holy man the Jews {u} speak of, "who is the mystery of the name Jehovah, and in him there is no sin, neither shall death have the dominion over him."

{u} Tikkune Zohar, fol. 112. p. 1. apud Rittangel. de verit. Relig. Christ. p. 68.

Romans 6:10

Ver. 10. For in that he died,.... The death of Christ was settled and agreed to in the covenant and council of peace; it was spoken of by the prophets, and typified by sacrifices; Christ came into the world in order to die, and actually did die the death of the cross; in which the great love of God and Christ is expressed to us; and which is a fundamental article of the Christian faith: and when he died,

he died unto sin once: he died to that, which we by nature are dead in, and could never make atonement for; which he himself never lived in, and which men naturally love to in; and which had he not died for, we must have died for to all eternity; and he died not for any sin of his own, or of angels, nor for the sins of every man, but for the sins of his people; it may be rendered, he died in sin: in the likeness of sinful flesh, in which he was sent; having as a surety sin laid on him, and bore by him, and for which he was wounded, bruised, and died: or rather to sin; that is, to make atonement for it, procure the pardon of it, take it away, and utterly abolish it: and this he did "once"; this is observed, in reference to the repeated sacrifices of the old law, which could never expiate or remove sin; and to show, that Christ's dying once was enough, his sacrifice was fully satisfactory to the law and justice of God:

but in that he liveth: which must be understood, not of his life as God, but as man; and that not on earth, but in heaven; where he lives with God, at the right hand of God, and by him, by the power of God: and

he liveth unto God; to his glory, and to make intercession for us.

Romans 6:11

Ver. 11. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves,.... Two things the apostle would have believers consider of themselves, and reckon themselves, to be, in consequence of their relation to Christ, who was dead, but is alive, and as agreeable thereunto: the one is, that they would look upon themselves

to be dead indeed unto sin: believe their discharge from it, and not fear condemnation and death on account of it; and that it shall not be imputed to them, or have any damning power over them, since Christ has died unto it, or for it; and therefore should have no fellowship with it, nothing to do with it, as being dead unto it, and that to them: the other is, that they would consider themselves

alive unto God, through, Jesus Christ our Lord; and that either in a legal sense, as justified persons; men in a state of nature, or of "Pharisaism", think themselves alive, when they are not; but when they come under a work of the Spirit of God, they see themselves otherwise, and are convinced both of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify from it; and when they have the righteousness of Christ revealed unto them, and faith is wrought in them to look unto it, and lay hold upon it, they are in themselves, and in their own apprehensions, alive, and that "unto God", in the sight of God; and their life of faith on the righteousness of Christ, is unto the glory of God, and will be followed with an eternal life with God, to which the justifying righteousness of Christ gives them a title; and this is all through Christ, and his righteousness: or this is to be considered by them of themselves as sanctified persons, who are quickened by the Spirit of Christ, and can feel the burden of sin, see the corruption of their nature, hear the voice both of law and Gospel, breathe after spiritual things, speak the language of Canaan, walk by faith on Christ, and work and act for him; which life of faith and holiness is "unto God", to his glory and honour, and is "through Christ", and is maintained and supported by him: or they should consider themselves not only as being justified before God, and made alive by his Spirit, but as such who shall live to and with God, through Christ, for evermore; for as Christ died and rose again, and lives unto and with God for ever, so they being dead to sin through him, and being quickened together with him and by his Spirit, shall never die the second death, but shall have everlasting life.

Romans 6:12

Ver. 12. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,.... Since grace reigns in you, sin should not: seeing ye are dead to sin, are baptized into the death of Christ, and are dead with him, and alive through him, sin therefore should not reign in you, and over you. This exhortation does not suppose a freewill power in man naturally, for this is spoken to persons, who had the Spirit and grace of

Christ, and in whom God had wrought both to will and to do of his good pleasure; nor is this exhortation unnecessary to believers, though they are dead to sin, and though God has promised it shall not have the dominion over them, and though reigning sin, as divines say, cannot be in regenerate persons; for though they are entirely dead to sin as justified persons, yet not perfectly so as sanctified: they are indeed dead to sin, but sin is not dead in them; it struggles, it makes war, leads captive, and threatens absolute and universal dominion, wherefore such an exhortation is necessary; besides, though God has promised that sin shall not have the dominion, yet making use of means, such as prayer to God that it may not, striving against it, opposing it, in order to hinder its dominion, are no ways inconsistent with the promise of God, whose promises often have their accomplishment in the use of means: moreover, whereas some divines say, that reigning sin may be and others that it cannot be in regenerate persons, it should be observed, that if by reigning sin is meant, sinning against God out of malice and contempt, with the whole heart, without any struggle against it, or repentance for it, or so as to lose the grace of God, and never rise more, then it must be said that it cannot be in a regenerate man; but if by it is meant, falling into sin against their consciences, knowingly and willingly, so as to distress their minds, lose their peace, and grieve the Spirit of God, so as to be held under it, and be led captive by it, such power sin may have in them, and over them; and therefore the exhortation is not needless; and when the apostle says, let it not reign "in your mortal body", by it is either meant the whole man, or rather the body only, which is the instrument of sinning, and is become mortal through sin; and being so, is a reason why it should not reign in it, since it has done so much mischief to it already: and this also denotes the time of sin's being in us, and of the danger of its reigning in us; it is only whilst we are in this mortal body; and the consideration of our mortality should quicken us to war against sin, and be careful not to

obey it in the lusts thereof; the lusts of the body, or flesh, which are therefore sometimes called fleshly lusts, are many, and have great power and influence; and may be said to be obeyed, when provision is made to fulfil them, when these are the business of a man's life, and the whole of his conversation is taken up in them, without struggle against them, or opposition to them; and heroin lies the reign of sin.

Romans 6:13

Ver. 13. Neither yield ye your members,.... The apostle more fully explains what he means by obeying sin in the lusts thereof; a presenting, or making use of the "members, as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin": by their "members" he means the several powers and faculties of the soul, and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "your souls"; or the several parts of the body, or both; by "yielding", or presenting of them, is designed the employment of them in the service of sin,

as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: that is, as means of performing unrighteous actions, in obedience to sin, or the corruption of nature with its lusts: the word translated "instruments", signifies "arms" or "weapons": so the ancients {w} formerly reckoned weapons the members of soldiers; and here the apostle calls the members weapons, which he would not have the saints use in favour of sin, an enemy and a tyrant; for that would be unrighteous in itself, and injurious to God and themselves: says he,

but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead: that is, present themselves soul and body to God, give up and devote themselves to him, and to his service, and yield a cheerful obedience to him; considering themselves as under great obligation so to do, inasmuch as they are freed from condemnation and death, by the righteousness of Christ; and quickened, when dead in trespasses and sins, by his Spirit and grace; and therefore should yield

your members, their whole selves,

as instruments, or weapons

of righteousness unto God; by fighting against sin, revenging all disobedience, and fulfilling obedience to the commands of God: the same is here meant, as is by putting on "the armour of light" Ro 13:12, and wearing and making use of "the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and the left", **2Co 6:7**.

{w} Alexander ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 12. p. 18.

Romans 6:14

Ver. 14. For sin shall not have dominion over you,.... It has dominion over God's people in a state of unregeneracy: and after conversion it is still in them, and has great power oftentimes to hinder that which is good, and to effect that which is evil; it entices and ensnares, and brings into captivity, and seems as though it would regain its dominion, and reign again, but it shall not. This is not a precept, exhortation, or admonition, as before, though some read it as such, "let not sin have dominion over you"; nor does it express merely what ought not to be, but what cannot, and shall not be; it is an absolute promise, that sin shall not have the dominion over believers; and respects not acts of sin, but the principle of sin; and means not its damning power, though that is took away, but its tyrannical, governing power: "it shall not lord it over you", as the words may be rendered; for in regeneration, sin is dethroned; Christ enters as Lord, and continues to be so; saints are in another kingdom, the kingdom of Christ and grace; could sin reign again over them, they might be lost and perish, which they never can: now this is a noble argument why saints should use their members as weapons of righteousness for God and against sin; since they are sure of being conquerors, and are secure from the tyrannical government of sin over them. The Jewish doctors say {x}, there are three persons, erh ruy Nhb jlv al, "over whom the evil imagination", or "sin, had not the dominion"; and these are they, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but these are not the only persons, for all Abraham's spiritual seed, all that are of the faith of Abraham, enjoy the same favour: the reason of this is,

for ye are not under the law; by which is meant, not the law of nature; nor the civil law of the Jews; nor their ceremonial law; but either the law of sin, as a governing principle; or rather the moral law: this they were under, so as to obey it, but not in order to obtain righteousness by it; or as forced to obey it by its threats and terrors; they were not under its rigorous exaction; nor under its curse and condemnation; nor as irritating sin, and causing it to abound; or as a covenant of works:

but under grace; under the covenant of grace, and in the enjoyment of the blessings of it; under the Gospel, and the dispensation of it, which leads and teaches men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; under and in the possession of the grace of justification and pardon, which strongly influence to righteousness and holiness; and under regenerating and sanctifying grace as a reigning governing principle in the soul. The apostle's view in this is, to affect the saints with their present privilege, and to engage them in a cheerful conflict with sin, and to stir up in them an abhorrence of living in it.

{x} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 17. 1.

Romans 6:15

Ver. 15. What then? shall we sin,.... Does it follow from hence, that therefore we may sin, and go on and continue in it, because we are not under the law, but under grace? here the apostle meets with an objection of the adversary, saying, that if men are not under the law, and are free from all obligation to it, then they may live as they list; nor can they be chargeable with sin, or that be objected to them; since where there is no law, there is no transgression, and sin is not imputed where there is no law; and if they are under grace, or in the love and favour of God, from which there is no separation, then they cannot be damned, do what they will: but this objection proceeds upon a mistaken sense of the phrase, "under the law"; for believers, though they are not under the law as the ministry of Moses, yet they are under it, as it is in the hands of Christ; and though not under its curse, yet under obligation to obedience to it, from principles of love and grace; and a transgression of it is sin in them, as in others; and which is taken notice of by God, and visited with stripes in a: fatherly way, though his loving kindness is not removed: and to argue from the unchangeableness of God's grace, or the doctrines of it, as encouraging licentiousness, is greatly to abuse the grace of God, and manifestly betrays such persons to be ignorant of it and its influence; since nothing more powerfully engages to a love of holiness, and hatred of sin; wherefore the apostle, answers to this objection in his usual way,

God forbid; signifying his abhorrence of everything of this kind.

Romans 6:16

Ver. 16. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves,.... The apostle goes on with his answer to the above objection, by making use of an argument from the nature of servants and their obedience, a thing well known to everyone, and which none could be ignorant of; which he delivers by way of distribution, that such who yield themselves

servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness: such who obey sin, are the servants of sin; they are at the beck and command of sin; they give up themselves to the service of it with delight and diligence, and are perfect drudges to it: this is a very unhappy situation; their service is very unreasonable; and they are rendered incapable of serving God, for no man can serve two masters; they are hereby brought into the drudgery of the devil; into a state of bondage, out of which nothing but grace can extricate them; into a very mean and contemptible condition, and even a deplorable one; for if grace prevent not, they will have the wages of sin paid them, which is death, for their obedience is "of sin unto death"; which will lie in an eternal separation from Father, Son, and Spirit, in a sense of divine wrath, and in the company of devils and damned spirits: now this is added, to show the malignant nature and just demerit of sin, and to deter and dissuade persons from the service of it: on the other hand, such as obey the Lord, are the servants "of obedience unto righteousness": but why is not this obedience, which is the obedience of faith to the Gospel, of Christ, and of the new man to God or Christ, said to be "unto life", as the antithesis seems to require? because though death is the fruit of sin, yet life is not the fruit of obedience, but the fruit of obedience is righteousness; by which is meant, nor a justifying one before God, but righteousness before men; or a course of living soberly and righteously, which is the effect of being under grace; and hence it appears, that true believers can make no such ill use of their privilege, as is suggested in the objection.

Romans 6:17

Ver. 17. But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin,.... Not that the apostle must be thought to give thanks to God for that these persons had been the servants of sin, than which nothing is more disagreeable to God, or caused more shame to themselves; but that inasmuch as they had been in the drudgery and service of sin, they were now freed from it. Just as if a person, that has been a slave for some time in Algiers, should bless God, or be thankful to the instrument of his deliverance, that whereas he had been in such slavery, he is now redeemed from it: wherefore it is added,

but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. By "the form of doctrine", is meant the Gospel, which is the "doctrine" of the Scriptures, of Christ and his apostles, and is sound and according to godliness; and is a "form", or contains a summary and compendium of truths, and is a pattern or exemplar, according to which ministers are to preach, and people to hear and receive. So the word opwj which is the same with tupov here, is used by the Jewish {y} writers for a form, copy, pattern, or exemplar of any sort of writings This form of doctrine is hlbq, "a Cabala", but not like that of the Jews' oral law, or form of traditions {z}, handed down, as they say, from one man, and set of men, to another; but this is delivered from the Father to Christ, from Christ to his apostles, and by them to the saints; and "into which they were delivered", as it may be rendered, as into a mould; and so received the impression of it, and were evangelized by it: so such are who have a spirit of Gospel liberty, in opposition to a spirit of bondage; who live by faith on Christ, and not by the works of the law; who derive their comfort from him, and not from anything done by them; whose repentance and obedience are influenced by the grace of God, and who are zealous of good works, without any dependence on them. This form of doctrine was "obeyed" by them; by which is meant, not a mere obedience to the ordinances of the Gospel; nor a bare hearing of the doctrines of it, and giving an assent unto them; but an embracing of them by faith for themselves, so as to lay hold on Christ in them, submit to his righteousness therein revealed, and be willing to be saved by him, and him alone, in his own way; and this is the obedience of faith: the reason why faith is expressed by obedience is, because faith receives truth upon the veracity of God, and not upon the dictates of carnal reason; and is always more or less attended with external obedience to the will of God; and that is rightly performed only by faith. And this obedience did not lie in words, or proceed on mercenary views, and in an hypocritical way; but was "from the heart"; and was real and sincere: and good reason there is why a hearty, cheerful, and voluntary obedience should be yielded to t he Gospel; since it is from God; Christ is the substance of it; it is truth, and the word of our salvation. The Alexandrian copy reads, "from a pure heart"; and the Arabic version, "from the sincerity of your heart"; and the Ethiopic version, "with your whole heart".

{y} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 26. 1. Bava Bathra, fol. 44. 2. R. Moses Kotzensis Mitzvot Tora, precept. Affirm. 50. {z} Vid. Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1.

Romans 6:18

Ver. 18. Being then made free from sin,.... Not from a sinful nature; nor from a corrupt heart; nor from vain thoughts; nor from sinful words; nor from sinful actions altogether; but from the damning power of sin: sin brought all men under a sentence of condemnation; Christ has bore the execution of this sentence in himself for his people; hence, as considered in him, they are free from it; and such as are born again have passed from death to life, and shall never enter into condemnation: likewise, such persons are free from the guilt of sin; men are in a legal sense arraigned for sin, accused of it, and being convicted, are pronounced guilty before God; and awakened souls have a sense of it in themselves; but the blood of Christ sprinkled on their consciences frees them from it; though fresh sins committed bring fresh guilt, which requires the continual application of the blood of Jesus for pardon and cleansing: but what is chiefly designed here is freedom from the servitude of sin, as appears from the context. Now God's elect are not released voluntarily by their former masters; nor is their freedom obtained by their own power and will; but it is of

God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and the Gospel is generally the means of it, and happy are those persons who are blessed with it! They are rid of a bad master; are freed from the worst of bondage; will be no more servants, as before; are delivered from the power, and out of the kingdom of darkness; are heirs of heaven, and shall enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God: and for the time present are

become the servants of righteousness; servants to God, whose Gospel they obey; servants to Christ, whose righteousness they submit to; and servants to the law of righteousness, as held forth by Christ; they give up themselves to a course and life of righteousness, in which there are true honour, peace, and pleasure.

Romans 6:19

Ver. 19. I speak after the manner of men,.... This refers either to what the apostle had said already concerning service and liberty, things which were known among men, and easy to be understood; or to the following exhortation: what he was about to say, he delivered in a manner suited to their understandings, and was anyrwpinon, "that which was human"; not angelic, or what required the power, purity, and perfection of angels; or what was unreasonable or impossible, but what was their reasonable service, as men; and might be done through the grace of God, in the strength of Christ, and by the assistance of the Spirit: and though he might have insisted upon it with good reason, that they ought to be more diligent and industrious in the service of God than they had been in the service of sin; yet

because of the infirmity of their flesh, considering that they had flesh, or corrupt nature, and were attended with weakness in knowledge, faith, and obedience; he only pressed this upon them, that in like manner as they had been servants to sin, they would be servants to righteousness:

for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity; what they yielded to the service of sin were their "members"; by which, as before, may be meant, either the powers and faculties of their souls, or the parts and members of their bodies, or both; and particularly the latter, as the eyes and ears, the tongue, the mouth, the hands, and feet, which are all employed by a natural man in the drudgery of sin: these are yielded to sin under the form and character of "servants"; and as such are governed, directed, and ordered to fulfil this and the other lust, which is done willingly and readily: these members are "yielded", presented, and given up cheerfully to this slavery; which is both scandalous and unrighteous: it is "to uncleanness"; which designs all sorts of pollution and filthiness, both of flesh and spirit: "and to iniquity"; everything that is contrary to the law, all unrighteousness and ungodliness; and it is added, "unto iniquity"; which may design all sorts of sin, a progress in it, adding continually to it; which shows them to have been thorough hearty servants of sin. Now what the apostle exhorts to, and requires of them, is, that

even so now they would yield their members servants to righteousness unto holiness; that is, let the same members that have been employed in the service of sin, be made use of in the service of righteousness: let your eyes be employed in looking and diligently searching into the Scriptures of truth; your ears in hearing the Gospel preached; your lips, mouth, and tongue, in expressing the praises of God, for what he has done for you; your hands in distributing to the interest of religion, and the necessities of the saints; and your feet in hastening to attend on public worship, and observe the testimonies of the Lord: let them be employed under the same form and character as servants, waiting upon the Lord, ready to fulfil his will; and in the same manner, freely, willingly, and cheerfully, and that constantly and universally, in all acts of righteousness and holiness.

Romans 6:20

Ver. 20. For when ye were the servants of sin,.... This is an argument used, or a reason given, why regenerate persons should be diligent in the service of righteousness; because when they were employed in the drudgery of sin, they

were free from righteousness; they had no righteousness, nor were they desirous of any; yea, averse to it, threw off the yoke of the law of righteousness, and lived in a very unrighteous manner: hence may be observed what is the free will of man in an unregenerate state; not free to, but "from" righteousness; free enough to evil, but from all that is good; and also what obligation lies upon believers, who are delivered from the bondage of corruption, and the servitude of sin, to a life and service of righteousness; inasmuch as they were before free from it, and unconcerned about it, but are now made by the grace of God free to it, they ought therefore cheerfully to pursue it, and neglect no opportunity of performing it.

Romans 6:21

Ver. 21. What fruit had ye then in those things?.... That is, what profit, pleasure, satisfaction, or comfort, had ye in the commission of sin? Sin yields no real profit to the servants of it. If a man, by sinful practices, could amass together the riches of the Indies, or gain the whole world, yet if his soul is lost thereby, what advantage would it be to him? he would be infinitely the loser by it; nor would all his wealth and riches profit him in the day of God's wrath and righteous judgment: nor is there any true pleasure in sin; persons may imagine within themselves they enjoy a real pleasure whilst they are serving divers lusts; but this is but imaginary, it is not real; and this imaginary pleasure is but for a season; it issues in bitterness and death: nor is there any satisfaction in it; when men have endeavoured to gratify their carnal lusts and sensual appetites in every way that can be devised, they still remain as they were; nor can they reflect with real satisfaction, and without some slinging remorse, upon the methods they have pursued to gain it: nor is there any true honour in sin, nothing but what is scandalous and disgraceful to human nature; shame, sooner or later, is the fruit of sin:

whereof ye are now ashamed; some men may be indeed for the present so hardened as not to blush and be ashamed at the commission of the vilest sins; such are they who have no sense of sin, have no fear of God, or regard to men; and so sin openly, and without any guise, glory in it, and make their boast of it: but when persons are wrought upon by the Spirit of God, they are ashamed of sin; which might be exemplified in the case of Adam and Eve, of Ephraim, of the prodigal son, and of the poor publican; the reason is, because light is struck into their hearts; and this makes manifest the odious and detestable nature of sin; sin is hereby seen in its own proper colours, as exceeding sinful, loathsome, and abominable: besides, the grace and goodness of God are discovered in the forgiveness of it; and the glory of God's purity and holiness, and the beauty and loveliness of Christ, are discerned by such persons; all which have a tendency to make them ashamed of sin, out of love with it, and to abhor it: and a good thing it is to be brought to be ashamed of sin here; for such who are not ashamed of it here, shall be brought to everlasting shame and confusion hereafter. Nay, this is not all; not only shame will be the fruit of sin, but it will also issue in death:

for the, end of those things is death: the profit, the reward, and wages of them is death: sin not only brings a spiritual or moral death on persons, on all the powers and faculties of their souls, and is followed with a corporeal death; but if grace prevent not, it will end in an eternal one; for however right and good the ways of sin may seem to the carnal mind, "the end thereof are the ways of death" (#Pr 14:12 16:25).

Romans 6:22

Ver. 22. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God,.... In what sense regenerate persons are free from sin, and are become the servants of God, has been observed already; the consequence of which is, that such have their

fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life: holiness is a fruit of freedom from the bondage of sin, and of serving God; holiness begun in regeneration, calling, and conversion, is a fruit of the Spirit; a course of living righteously is a fruit of holiness, as a principle implanted; a gradual increase in holiness is carried on by the Spirit of God in a course of righteousness; and a course of righteousness, from a principle of grace, issues in perfect holiness; "without which no man shall see the Lord" (#Heb 12:14): here it seems to design, that holiness is fruit, or that which is gain and profit to persons, in opposition to sin, in which there is no profit: it is not indeed profitable to God in point of merit; yet holiness, as a principle of grace, is profitable to the saints in point of meetness for glory; and holiness, as it denotes an external course of life, is useful and profitable on many accounts; hereby God is glorified, the doctrine of Christ is adorned, religion is honoured and recommended, our own credit, reputation, and peace, are preserved, and our neighbour's good promoted.

And the end is everlasting life: as sin issues, if grace prevent not, in everlasting death; holiness issues in eternal life, not by way of merit, but of free gift.

Romans 6:23

Ver. 23. For the wages of sin is death,.... By sin, is meant every sin, original sin, actual sin, every kind of sin, lesser and greater: the "death" which sin deserves, is a corporeal death; which is not owing to the original nature and constitution of men; nor merely to the divine appointment; but to sin, and the decree of God, on account of it; which is inflicted on Christless sinners, as a punishment for sin, though not on believers as such, because Christ has took away the sting and curse of it: a death of diseases and afflictions also follows upon sin, as its proper demerit; which are properly punishments to wicked men, and are occasioned by sin in believers: there is a death of the soul, which comes by sin, which lies in an alienation from God, in a loss of the image of God, and in a servitude to sin; and there is an eternal death, the just wages of sin, which lies in a separation of soul and body from God, and in a sense of divine wrath to all eternity; and which is here meant, as is clear from its antithesis, "eternal life", in the next clause. Now this is "the wages" of sin; sin does in its own nature produce it, and excludes from life; it is the natural issue of it; sin is committed against an infinite God, and righteously deserves such a death; it is its just wages by law. The Greek word oqwnia, signifies soldiers' wages; see **Lu 3:14** and in

"At which time Simon rose up, and fought for his nation, and spent much of his own substance, and armed the valiant men of his nation and gave them wages," (1 Maccabees 14:32)

Sin is represented as a king, a mighty monarch, a tyrannical prince; sinners are his subjects and vassals, his servants and soldiers, who fight under him, and for him, and all the wages they must expect from him is death. So the word is interpreted in the Glossary,
misyov stratiwtikov, "soldiers' wages"; and so it is used by the Jewish writers, being adopted into their language; of a king, they say {a}, that he should not multiply to himself gold and silver more than to pay aynpoa, which they {b} interpret by twlyyx rkv, "the hire of armies", or the wages of soldiers for a whole year, who go in and out with him all the year; so that it denotes wages due, and paid after a campaign is ended, and service is over; and, as here used, suggests, that when men have been all their days in the service of sin, and have fought under the banners of it, the wages they will earn, and the reward that will be given them, will be death: and it is frequently observed by the Jewish doctors {c}, that
ajx alb htym Nya, "there is no death without sin": sin is the cause of death, and death the fruit and effect of sin:

but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. These words, at first sight, look as if the sense of them was, that eternal life is the gift of God through Christ, which is a great and glorious truth of the Gospel; but their standing in opposition to the preceding words require another sense, namely, that God's gift of grace issues in eternal life, through Christ: wherefore by "the gift of God" is not meant eternal life, but either the gift of a justifying righteousness, or the grace of God in regeneration and sanctification, or both, which issue in eternal life; the one is the saints' right and title, the other their meetness for it: so that as death is the wages of sin, and is what that issues in, and brings unto, eternal life is the effect of grace, or what the grace of God in justifying and sanctifying his people issues in; even a life free from all sorrow and imperfection; a life of the utmost perfection and pleasure, and which will last for ever: and as the grace of God, which justifies and sanctifies them, is "through Christ", so is the eternal life itself which it brings unto: this is in Christ, comes through his righteousness, sufferings, and death; is bestowed by him, and will greatly consist in the enjoyment of him. All grace is the gift of God, and is freely given, or otherwise it would not be grace; particularly the justifying righteousness of Christ is the gift of God; and the rather this may be meant here, since the apostle had been treating of it so largely before, and had so often, in the preceding chapter, called it the gift of righteousness, the free gift, and gift by grace, and justification by it, the justification of life, because it entitles to eternal life, as here: it may be said to issue in it; for between justification and glorification there is a sure and close connection; they that are justified by the righteousness of Christ, are certainly glorified, or enjoy eternal life; and though this may be principally intended here, yet is not to be understood to the exclusion of other gifts of grace, which have the same connection and issue: thus, for instance, faith is the gift of God, and not of a man's self, and he that has it, has eternal life, and shall, Or ever possess it; repentance is a free grace gift, it is a grant from the Lord, and it is unto life and salvation; and on whomsoever the grace of God is bestowed, so as to believe in Christ for righteousness, and truly repent of sin, these shall partake of eternal glory. It may be observed, that there is a just proportion between sin, and the wages of it, yet there is none between eternal life, and the obedience of men; and therefore though the apostle had been pressing so much obedience to God, and to righteousness, he does not make eternal life to be the fruit and effect of obedience, but of the gift of the grace of God.

{a} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 4. {b} Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. Vid. Cohen de Lara, Ir. David, p. 17. {c} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 1. Vajikra Rabba, parash. 37. fol. 176. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 70. 4. Zohar in Gen. fol. 44. 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 115. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 7

The Apostle, in this chapter, discourses concerning the freedom of justified and regenerated persons from the law, and concerning the nature, use, and excellency of it; in which he removes several objections to it, and gives an account from his own experience of the struggle and combat there is between flesh and spirit in a regenerate person; and which shows, that though believers are justified from sin, yet still sin remains in them, and is the complaint of their souls. Whereas he had in **Ro 6:14**, of the preceding chapter, asserted that believers are not under the law, but under grace: he knew that this would be matter of offence to the believing Jews, who still retained an high opinion of the law; wherefore he takes it up in the beginning of this chapter, and explains his meaning, and shows in what sense justified ones are delivered from it; and first observes a known maxim, which everyone, especially such as know anything of the nature of laws, must allow of; that the law has power over a man as long as he lives, and no longer, **Ro 7:1**, and then particularly instances in the law of marriage, **Ro 7:2**, which is in force as long as both parties live and no longer: during the husband's life the wife is bound, but when dead she is loosed, and which is further explained, **Ro 7:3**, that should she marry another while her husband is alive, she would be an adulteress; but he being dead, should she marry, she is liable to no such imputation: this the apostle accommodates, **Ro 7:4**, to the case of the law, and the saints' deliverance from it, in which he asserts that they are dead to the law, and that to them, as in **Ro 7:6**, by the body of Christ; and therefore the law could have no dominion over them, as is the case of all laws when men are dead; and so they might be lawfully married to another, to bring forth fruit to God, according to the particular law of marriage. This is illustrated by the different state and condition of God's elect, before and after conversion; whilst in an unconverted state the law irritates indwelling sin, and the lusts of it, and by the members of the body operates to the bringing forth the deadly fruit of sin, **Ro 7:5**, but when delivered from the irritating power of the law, that being dead in consequence of the sufferings and death of Christ, they are both in a capacity, and under an obligation to serve the Lord, in a new and spiritual manner, **Ro 7:6**, and whereas he had said that the motions of sin are stirred up by the law, **Ro 7:5**, he saw that an objection might be raised against the law, as if that was sinful; this he removes by expressing his abhorrence of such a thought, by pointing out the law as that which makes known sin, and by the experience he himself had of it, making known indwelling sin to him, **Ro 7:7**, when he goes on to give an account of the workings of corrupt nature in him, under the prohibition of the law; how it was with him before it entered into his conscience, and how it was with him afterwards; that before he thought himself alive, and in a fair way to eternal life; but afterwards, as sin appeared to him more vigorous than ever, he found himself a dead man, and dead to all hope of life by the law, being killed by it, or rather by sin which worked by it, **Ro 7:8**, and therefore he vindicates the law as holy, just, and good, **Ro 7:12**, and answers an objection that might be formed from what he had said concerning the effect the law had upon him, as if it was made death unto him; whereas the office it did was to show him the exceeding sinfulness of sin, which, and not the law, was the cause of death, **Ro 7:13**, for to it with other saints he bears this testimony, that it is spiritual, though in comparison of it he was carnal and sold under sin, **Ro 7:14**, and from henceforward to the end of the chapter, he gives an account of the force and power of indwelling sin in him, and the conflict there was in him between grace and corruption: he had knowledge of that which is good, approved of it, and yet did it not, hated sin and yet committed it, **Ro 7:15**, but however, his desire after that which was good, and his approbation of it, showed that he agreed to this, that the law was good, **Ro 7:16**, nor was his commission of sin to be imputed to his renewed self, but to indwelling corruption, **Ro 7:17**, the fleshly part in him, in which was no good thing, **Ro 7:18**, he found he had a will to that which is good, but not power to perform it; which was abundantly evident by his practice, seeing what he would he did not, and what he would not he did. **Ro 7:19**, from whence he concludes again, **Ro 7:20**, as in **Ro 7:17**, that the evil he did was to be reckoned not to his spiritual, or renewed self, but to his corrupt nature; which he found, as a law that had power to command and to cause to obey, always at hand, close by him when he was desirous of doing good, **Ro 7:21**, and yet amidst all these workings of sin in him, he found a real delight and pleasure in the holy law of God, as he was renewed in the spirit of his mind, **Ro 7:22**, upon the whole he perceived there were two contrary principles in him, which militated one against the other, and sometimes so it was, that through the strength of corrupt nature in him, he was made a captive to the law of sin and death, **Ro 7:23**, which fetched from him a doleful lamentation and complaint, as if his case was desperate, and there was no deliverance for him, **Ro 7:24**, and yet upon a view of his great Redeemer and Saviour, Jesus Christ, he takes heart, and thanks God that there was, and would be a deliverance for him through Christ, **Ro 7:25**, and then closes the account which stood thus in his experience, and does in the experience of every regenerate man; that with his renewed mind he served the holy law of God from a principle of grace, and with his fleshly and carnal part the law of sin.

Ver. 1. Know ye not, brethren,.... The apostle having asserted, **Ro 6:14**, that the believing Romans were "not under the law"; which he knew would be displeasing to many, and excepted to by them, especially the Jews that were among them, who though they believed in Christ, yet were zealous of the law, takes it up again, and explains and defends it. That they were the Jewish converts at Rome he here particularly addresses, appears partly from his calling them "brethren", for they were so according to the flesh, as well as in a spiritual relation, and this he rather mentions to soften their resentments, and conciliate their minds to him; and partly from the words included in a parenthesis,

for I speak to them that know the law; not the law of nature, but the law of Moses, as the Jews did, being trained up in the knowledge of it; to these he appeals, saying, "know ye not", for the truth of a principle or maxim he afterwards improves, which they could not be ignorant of,

how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he, or "it",

liveth; for the word "liveth" may refer either to man or to the law. The law may be said to live, when it is in full force, and to be dead, when it is abrogated and disannulled; now whilst it lives, or is in force, it has dominion over a man; it can require and command obedience of him, and in case of disobedience can condemn him, and inflict punishment on him: and this power it has also as long as the man lives who is under it, but when he is dead it has no more dominion over him; then "the servant is free from his master", **Job 3:19**; that is, from the law of his master; and children are free from the law of their parents, the wife from the law of her husband, and subjects from the law of their prince. This is so clear a point that none can doubt of it. The Jews have a saying {d}, that

"when a man is dead, he becomes twumh Nmw hrwt Nm yvpx, free from the law, and from the commands."

{d} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 30. 1. Niddah, fol. 61. 2. & T. Hieros. Kilaim, fol. 32. 1.

Romans 7:2

Ver. 2. For the woman which hath an husband,.... The former general rule is here illustrated by a particular instance and example in the law of marriage; a woman that is married to a man,

is bound by the law to her husband; to live with him, in subjection and obedience to him,

so long as he liveth; except in the cases of adultery, Mt 19:9, and desertion, **1Co 7:15**, by which the bond of marriage is loosed, and for which a divorce or separation may be made, which are equal to death:

but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband; the bond of marriage is dissolved, the law of it is abolished, and she is at entire liberty to marry whom she will, **1Co 7:39**.

Romans 7:3

Ver. 3. So then if while her husband liveth,.... True indeed it is, that whilst her husband is alive, if

she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; she will be noted and accounted of as such everybody, except in the above mentioned cases:

but if her husband be dead; then there can be no exception to her marriage:

she is free from the law; of marriage, by which she was before bound:

so that she is no adulteress; nor will any reckon her such; she is clear from any such imputation:

though she be married to another man; hence it appears that second marriages are lawful.

Romans 7:4

Ver. 4. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also,.... Here the apostle accommodates the foregoing instance and example to the case in hand, showing, that the saints were not under the law, the power and dominion of it; since that, as when a man is dead, the woman is loosed from that law by which she was bound whilst he lived, that she may lawfully marry another man, and bear children to him without the imputation of adultery; so believers being dead to the law, and the law dead to them, which is all one, they are loosed from it, and may be, and are lawfully married to Christ, that they may bring forth the genuine fruits of good works, not in order to obtain righteousness and life by them, but for the honour and glory of God; in which account may be observed, an assertion that the saints and children of God

are become dead to the law, and that to them, as in **Ro 7:6**, and can have no more power over them than a law can have over dead persons, or a dead abrogated law can have over living ones. They are represented as "dead to sin", and "dead with Christ", **Ro 6:2**; and here, "dead to the law", as in **Ga 2:19**, and consequently cannot be under it; are out of the reach of its power and government, since that only has dominion over a man as long as be lives the law is dead to them; it has no power over them, to threaten and terrify them into obedience to it; nor even rigorously to exact it, or command it in a compulsory way; nor is there any need of all this, since believers delight in it after the inward man, and serve it with their minds freely and willingly; the love of Christ, and not the terrors of the law, constrains them to yield a cheerful obedience to it; it has no power to charge and accuse them, curse or condemn them, or minister death unto them, no, not a corporeal one, as a penal evil, and much less an eternal one. And the way and means by which they become dead to the law, and that to them is,

by the body of Christ; not by Christ, as the body or substance of the ceremonial law; see **Col 2:17**; since that is not singly designed, but the whole law of Moses; but by "the body of Christ", is either meant Christ himself, Heb 10:10, or rather the human nature of Christ, Heb 10:5, in which the law meets with every thing it can require and demand, as holiness of nature, which is the saints' sanctification in Christ; obedience of life, which is their righteousness; and sufferings of death, which is the penalty the law enjoins, whereby full expiation of sin is made, complete pardon is procured, and eternal redemption obtained; so that the law has nothing more to demand; its mouth is stopped, it is not in its power to curse and damn believers, they are dead to that, and that to them: the reason why the law is become so to them, and they to that, is,

that ye should be married to another; or "that ye should be to another", or "be another's"; that is, that ye should appear to be so in a just and legal way; for they were another's, they were Christ's before by the Father's gift, and were secretly married to him in the everlasting covenant, before he assumed their nature, and in the body of his flesh bore their sins, satisfied law and justice, paid their debts, and so freed them from the power of the law, its curse and condemnation, or any obligation to punishment; all which was done in consequence of his interest in them, and their marriage relation to him; but here respect is had to their open marriage to him in time, the day of their espousals in conversion; to make way for which, the law, their former husband, must be dead, and they dead to that, that so their marriage to Christ might appear lawful and justifiable; who is very fitly described by him,

who is raised from the dead; and is a living husband, and will ever continue so, will never die more; and therefore as the saints can never be loosed from the marriage bond of union between Christ and them, so they can never be loosed from the law of this husband; wherefore though they are dead to the law as a covenant of works, and as ministered by Moses, and are free from any obligation to it, as so considered, yet they are "under the law to Christ", **1Co 9:21**; under obligation, by the ties of love, to obedience to it, and shall never be loosed from it. The end of being dead to the law, and of being married to Christ, is,

that we should bring forth fruit unto God. The allusion is to children being called "the fruit of the womb", Ps 127:3, and here designs good works, the fruits of righteousness, which are brought forth by persons espoused to Christ, under the influence of the Spirit and grace of God; and they are "unto God", that is, for the honour and glory of God; meaning either Christ the husband of believers, who is God over all blessed for ever; or God the Father, to whose praise and glory they are by Christ; and which is a reason and argument which strongly excites and encourages the saints to the performance of them: and let it be observed, that as children begotten and born in lawful marriage are only true and legitimate, and all before marriage are spurious and illegitimate; so such works only are the true and genuine fruits of righteousness, which are in consequence of a marriage relation to Christ; are done in faith, spring from love, and are directed to the glory of God; and all others, which are done before marriage to Christ, and without faith in him, are like spurious and illegitimate children.

Romans 7:5

Ver. 5. For when we were in the flesh,.... This respects not their being under the legal dispensation, the Mosaic economy; which lay greatly in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, such as regarded the flesh chiefly; so their meats and drinks concerned the body; their ablutions and washings sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; their circumcision was outward in the flesh; the several rituals of the law consisted in outward things, though typical of internal and spiritual ones; hence those that trusted in them trusted in the flesh: but to be "in the flesh" stands opposed, **Ro 7:8**; to a being "in the spirit"; whereas there were many under that legal and carnal dispensation who were in the spirit, and had the Spirit of God, as David and others; besides, the apostle must be thought to use the phrase in such a sense, as to include all the persons he is speaking of and writing to, who were both Jews and Gentiles, for of such the church at Rome consisted; and the sense is this, "for when we", Jews and Gentiles, who are now believers in Christ, "were" formerly, before our conversion to, and faith in Christ, "in the flesh", that is, in a corrupt, carnal, and unregenerate state and condition; in which sense the word "flesh" is frequently used in the next chapter: now not all such who have flesh, sin, or corrupt nature in them, must be reckoned to be in the flesh, for there is a difference between flesh being in persons, from which none are free in this life, and their being in the flesh; nor all such who commit sin, or do carnal things at times, for there is not a just man that doth good and sinneth not; but such who are as they were born, without any alteration made in them by the Spirit and grace of God; who have nothing but flesh in them, no fear of God, nor love to and faith in Christ, nor any experience of the work of the Spirit of God upon their souls; no true sight and sense of sin, nor any spiritual knowledge of salvation by Christ; in whom flesh is the governing principle, whose minds and principles are carnal, and their conversation wholly so; yea, persons may be in the flesh, in an unregenerate state, who may abstain from the grosser immoralities of life, and even make a profession of religion: now such these had been the apostle is speaking of and to, and tells how it was with them when in this state;

the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death: by "the motions of sin" are meant, the evil passions and affections of the mind, the lusts of the heart, sinful desires, evil thoughts, the imaginations of the thoughts of the heart, the first motions of the mind to sin: these "were by the law"; not as the efficient cause of them, that neither produces nor encourages them; it is holy, just, and good, requires truth in the inward parts, and not only forbids the outward acts of sin, but even covetous desires, and lustful thoughts: no, these inward motions of sin arise from a corrupt heart and nature; are encouraged and cherished by the old man that dwells there; and men are enticed by Satan to a compliance with them. Some think that the meaning of the phrase is, that these secret lusts of the heart are made known by the law, as in **Ro 7:7**, so they are, but not whilst a man is in the flesh, or in an unregenerate state, but when he comes to be wrought upon powerfully by the Spirit of God, who makes use of the law to such a purpose: but the true sense of it is, that these motions of sin are irritated, provoked, and increased, through the law's prohibition of them; which is not to be charged as a fault on the law, but to be imputed to the depravity and corruption of man; who is like to one in a burning fever, very desirous of drink, who the more it is forbid, the more eager is he of it; or like a mighty torrent of water, which rises, rages, flows, and overflows, the more any methods are taken to stop its current; or like a filthy dunghill, which when the sun strikes powerfully on it, it exhales and draws out its filthy stench; which nauseous smell is not to be imputed to the pure rays of the sun, but to the filthiness of the dunghill: these motions of sin are said to "work in our members"; in the members of our bodies, which these sinful affections of the soul make use of to put them into action, and so they bring forth fruit; very evil fruit indeed, for nothing else can be expected from such an evil tree as the corrupt nature of man is: and this fruit is "unto death": deadly fruit, worthy of death, and would issue in eternal death, if grace did not prevent: the rise, beginning, motion, progress, and issue of sin, are most exactly and beautifully described, agreeably to this account here, by the Apostle James, **Jas 1:13**.

Romans 7:6

Ver. 6. But now we are delivered from the law,.... From the ministration of it, by Moses; from it, as a covenant of works; from its rigorous exaction; from its curse and condemnation, all this by Christ; and from its being an irritating, provoking law to sin, through the corruption of nature, by the Spirit and grace of Christ; but not from obedience to it, as in the hands of Christ. The Vulgate Latin version, and some copies read, "from the law of death"; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "we are loosed from the law, and are delivered from the former doctrine"; the doctrine of the legal dispensation.

That being dead; not sin, but the law: in what sense believers are dead to the law, and that to them, See Gill on "Ro 7:4".

Wherein we were held: as a woman is by the law to her husband, or as persons guilty, who are detained prisoners; so we were "kept under the law, shut up unto the faith", as in a prison, **Ga 3:23**; Now the saints deliverance from the law through the abrogation of it, that losing its former life, vigour, power, and dominion, is not that they may live a loose licentious life and conversation, but that they

should serve the Lord their God without slavish fear, and with a godly one, acceptably, in righteousness and holiness, all the days of their lives; and their Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who is King of saints, lawgiver in his church, and whose commandments are to be observed from a principle of love, in faith, and to his glory; yea, even the law itself, as held forth by him, as the apostle says in the close of this chapter, "with the mind I myself serve the law of God", **Ro 7:25**: the manner in which this service is to be, and is performed, is, in newness of Spirit; under the influences of the Spirit of God, the author of renovation, of the new creature, or new man created in us, in righteousness and true holiness; and from a new heart, and new Spirit, and new principles of life, light, love, and grace, formed in the soul; and by walking in "newness of life", **Ro 6:4**, or by a new life, walk, and conversation:

and not in the oldness of the letter; not in the outward observance of the law of Moses, which is the "letter"; not indulging the old man, or walking after the dictates of corrupt nature; nor behaving according to the old former course of living: on the whole it may be observed, that a believer without the law, being delivered from it, that being dead to him, and he to that, lives a better life and conversation under the influence of the Spirit of God, than one that is under the law, and the works of it, destitute of the grace of God; the one brings forth "fruit unto death", **Ro 7:5**, the other serves the Lord, "in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter".

Romans 7:7

Ver. 7. What shall we say then? is the law sin?.... The apostle having said, that "the motions of sins were by the law", **Ro 7:5**, meets with an objection, or rather an ill natured cavil, "is the law sin?" if the motions sins are by it, then it instigates and prompts men to sin; it cherishes it in them; it leads them and impels them to the commission of it, and therefore must be the cause of sin; and if the cause of sin, then it must be sin, or sinful itself: "what shall we say then?" how shall we remove this difficulty, answer this objection, and silence this cavil? To this it is replied by way of detestation and abhorrence,

God forbid! a way of speaking often made use of by the apostle, when any dreadful consequence was drawn from, or any shocking objection was made to his doctrine, and which was so monstrous as scarcely to deserve any other manner of refutation; see **Ro 3:3**; and next by observing the use of the law to discover sin; which it does by forbidding it, and threatening it with death; by accusing for it, convincing of it, and representing it in its proper colours, it being as a glass in which it may be beheld just as it is, neither greater nor less; which must be understood as attended with a divine power and light, otherwise as a glass is of no use to a blind man, so neither is the law in this sense, to a man in a state of darkness, until the Spirit of God opens his eyes to behold in this glass what manner of man he is: now since the law is so useful to discover, and so to discountenance sin, that itself cannot be sin, or sinful. The apostle exemplifies this in his own case, and says, nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; which he says not in the person of another, there is no room nor reason for such a fancy; but in his own person, and of himself: not of himself at that present time, as is evident from his way of speaking; nor of himself in his childhood, before he came to years of discretion to discern between good and evil; but as, and when he was a grown person, and whilst a Pharisee, **Php 3:5**; he did not know sin during his being in that state till the law came, and entered into his conscience, and then, and by it, he knew sin, **Ro 7:7**, the exceeding sinfulness of it, **Ro 7:13**, and that he himself was the chief of sinners, **1Ti 1:15**. Nay he goes on to observe, that by the law he came to know, not only the sinfulness of outward actions, but also of inward lusts; says he,

for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shall not covet: as it does in Ex 20:17. This is a way of speaking used by the Jews, when they produce any passage out of the law, thus {e},
hrma hrwth, "the law says", if anyone comes to kill thee; referring either to 1Sa 24:11 or Ex 22:1; and a little after, "the law says", namely, in **Ex 3:5**, "put off thy shoes from off thy feet", &c. By "lust" is meant the inward motions of sin in the heart, any and every desire of the mind after it; not only studied and concerted schemes, how to bring about and compass an evil action; but every loose vagrant thought of sin, and inclination to it; yea, every imagination of the thought of the heart, before the imagination is well formed into a thought; and not only a dallying with sin in the mind, dwelling upon it with pleasure in thought, but even such sudden motions and starts of the mind to sin, to which we give no assent; such as are involuntary, yea, contrary to the will, being "the evil [we] would not", **Ro 7:19**, and are displeasing and hateful to us; these are meant by lust, and which by the law of God are known to be sinful, and only by that. These were not known to be so by the Gentiles, who only had the law and light of nature; nor are they condemned, nor any provision made against them, nor can there be any made, by the laws of men: and though these inward lusts are condemned by the law of God, yet inasmuch as they were not punishable by men, and could be covered with the guise of an external righteousness, multitudes who were born under, and brought up in that law, were secure and indolent about them, did not look upon them as sins, or as at all affecting their righteousness; but imagined that, "touching the righteousness of the law", they were "blameless", **Php 3:6**; which was the case of all the Pharisees, and of the apostle whilst such: but when the law came and entered his conscience with power and light attending it, then he saw, such innumerable swarms of lusts in his heart, and these to be sinful, which he never saw and knew before: just as in a sunbeam we behold those numerous

little bits of dust, which otherwise are indiscernible by us. Now since the law is of such use, not only to discover the sinfulness of outward actions, but also of inward lusts and desires, that itself cannot be sinful.

{e} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 62. 2.

Romans 7:8

Ver. 8. But sin taking occasion by the commandment,.... By "the commandment" is meant, either the whole moral law, or that particular commandment, "thou shalt not covet", Ex 20:17, which, the Jews say, comprehends all;

"God, (say they {f},) caused them (the Israelites) to hear the ten words, which he concluded with this word, "thou shalt not covet"; wb Mywlt Mlwkv, "for all of them depend on that": and to intimate, that whoever keeps this commandment, it is as if he kept the whole law, and whoever transgresses this, it is all one as if he transgressed the whole law;"

and no doubt but it does refer to any unlawful thought of, desire after, and inclination to anything forbidden in the other commandments. By "sin" is meant, not the devil, as some of the ancients thought; but the vitiosity and corruption of nature, indwelling sin, the law in the members that took "occasion" by the law of God; so that the law at most could only be an occasion, not the cause of sin, and besides, this was an occasion not given by the law, but taken by sin; so that it was sin, and not the law, which

wrought in [him] all manner of concupiscence. The law forbidding every unclean thought, and covetous desire of unlawful objects, sin took an occasion through these prohibitions to work in him, stir up and excite concupiscence, evil desire after all manner of things forbidden by the law; hence it is clear that not the law, but sin, is exceeding sinful:

for without the law sin was dead; not that, before the law of Moses was given, sin lay dead and unexerted, for during that interval between Adam and Moses sin was, and lived and reigned, and death by it, as much as at any other time; but when the apostle was without the law, that is, without the knowledge of the spirituality of it, before it came with power and light into his heart and conscience, sin lay as though it was dead; it was so in his apprehension, he fancied himself free from it, and that he was perfectly righteous.

{f} Abkath Rochel, l. 1. par. 1. p. 3. Ed. Huls.

Romans 7:9

Ver. 9. For I was alive without the law once,.... The apostle says this, not in the person of Adam, as some have thought; who lived indeed, in a state of innocence, a perfectly holy and righteous life, but not without the law, which was the rule of his actions, and the measure of his obedience; he had the law of nature written upon his heart, and a positive law respecting the forbidden fruit given him, as a trial of his obedience; and though when he transgressed he became mortal, yet sin could not be said to revive in him, which never lived before; nor does the apostle speak in the person of a Jew, or the whole body of the people of Israel before the law was given on Mount Sinai; before that time the sons of Abraham did not live without a law; for besides the law of nature, which they had in common with others, they were acquainted with other laws of God, as the laws of circumcision, sacrifices, and the several duties of religion; see Ge 18:19; and when the law did come from Mount Sinai, it had not such effects upon them as are here expressed: but the apostle is speaking of himself, and that not as in his state of infancy before he could discern between good and evil, but when grown up, and whilst a Pharisee; who, though he was born under the law, was brought up and more perfectly instructed in it than the common people were, and was a strict observer of it, yet was without the knowledge of the spirituality of it; he, as the rest of the Pharisees, thought it only regarded the outward actions, and did not reach to the spirits or souls of men, the inward thoughts and affections of the mind; the law was as it were at a distance from him, it had not as yet entered into his heart and conscience; and whilst this was his case he was "alive", he did not know that he "was dead in trespasses and sins", **Eph 2:1**, a truth he afterwards was acquainted with; nor that he was so much as disordered by sin; he thought himself healthful, sound, and whole, when he was diseased and full of wounds, bruises, and sores, from head to foot; he lived in the utmost peace and tranquillity, without the least ruffle and uneasiness, free from any terror or despondency, and in perfect security, being in sure and certain hope of eternal life; and concluded if ever any man went to heaven he certainly should, since, as he imagined, he lived a holy and righteous life, free of all blame, and even to perfection;

but when the commandment came; not to Adam in the garden of Eden; nor to the Israelites on Mount Sinai; but into the heart and conscience of the apostle, with power and light from above:

sin revived; it lift up its monstrous head, and appeared in its ugly shape, exceeding sinful indeed; it grew strong and exerted itself; its strugglings and opposition, its rebellion and corruption were seen and felt, which show that it was not dead before, only seemed to be so; it was in being, and it lived and acted before as now; the difference was not in that, but in the apostle's sense and apprehension of it, who upon sight of it died away:

and I died; he now saw himself a dead man, dead in sin, dead in law, under a sentence of death which he now had within himself; he saw he was deserving of eternal death, and all his hopes of eternal life by his obedience to the law of works died at once; he now experimentally learnt that doctrine he so much insisted afterwards in his ministry, and to the last maintained, that there can be no justification of a sinner by the deeds of the law, since by it is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 7:10

Ver. 10. And the commandment which was ordained to life,.... The law which promised a continuance of an immortal life to Adam, in case of perfect obedience to it; and which was appointed to the Israelites, that by the observation of it they might live in the land of Canaan, and in the quiet and full possession of their privileges and enjoyments; but was never ordained to eternal life, or that men should obtain that by their obedience to it; since eternal life is the free gift of God, without respect to any works of men; see **Ga 3:21**; This same law, the apostle says,

I found to be unto death; as it was an occasion, through the vitiosity of nature, of stirring up sin in him, which brought forth fruit unto death; as it convinced him that he was a dead man and worthy of death; as it threatened him with it, and struck all his hopes of eternal life dead, and left him in this condition without giving him the least direction or assistance whereby to obtain life.

Romans 7:11

Ver. 11. For sin taking occasion by the commandment,.... As in **Ro 7:8**,

deceived me; either by promising pleasure or impunity: the same effect is ascribed by the Jews to the evil imagination or corruption of nature, which they say is called an enticer, Mda htpmv, "that deceives man" {g}:

and by it slew me; mortally wounded me: not the law, but sin by the law, deceived and slew him; so that as before, the law is cleared from being the cause of sin, so here, from being the cause of death; for though the law is a killing letter, the ministration of condemnation and death, yet it is not the cause of it; but sin, which is a transgression of the law, is that which deceives or leads out of the way, as the word signifies, and then kills. The metaphor is taken from a thief or a robber, who leads a man out of the way into some bypath, and then murders him.

{g} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 141. 3. & 150. 1.

Romans 7:12

Ver. 12. Therefore the law is holy,.... This is a conclusion or inference drawn from the preceding discourse, in commendation of the law; that standing clear of any charge or imputation of sin, as being the cause of it. This epithet the apostle gives to the law is what the Jews frequently give it; worthy are the Israelites, say they {h},

"to whom is given avydq atyyrwa "the holy law"; in which they study day and night."

By "the law" is meant the whole body of the precepts of it in general; and by

the commandment, either the same, or everyone of the commandments in particular, and especially that which is cited, "thou shall not covet". Some have thought that the three properties of it design the threefold division of the law; and suppose that by that which is "holy" is meant the ceremonial law, which sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; by that which is "just", the judicial law, which pointed out to the Jewish commonwealth what was right and wrong; and by that which is "good", the moral law in all its precepts: but nothing is more certain, than that the moral law is only spoken of in this context, which may be said to be

holy, because of its author, the holy God, from whom nothing can come but what is holy; and because of the matter of it, it is a transcript of the holy nature of God, a declaration of his holy will; it requires holiness both of heart and life; it forbids whatever is unholy, and commands nothing but what is holy; it teaches men to live holy, sober, righteous, and godly lives. It may be truly called

just, or righteous, as it demands perfect obedience to all its precepts, or it will not admit of it as a righteousness; as it pronounces guilty, curses and condemns for every disobedience of it; as it deals impartially with persons the transgressors of it; and as it acquits believers upon the foot of the righteousness of Christ, the fulfilling end of it. It is rightly called

good, from the author of it, God, from whom every good thing comes, and nothing else; from the matter of it, and from the use of it both to saints and sinners.

{h} Zohar in Gen. fol. 48. 4.

Romans 7:13

Ver. 13. Was then that which is good, made death unto me?.... An objection is started upon the last epithet in commendation of the law; and it is as if the objector should say, if the law is good, as you say, how comes it to pass that it is made death, or is the cause of death to you? can that be good, which is deadly, or the cause of death? or can that be the cause of death which is good? This objection taken out of the mouth of another person proceeds upon a mistake of the apostle's meaning; for though he had said that he died when the commandment came, and found by experience that it was unto death, yet does not give the least intimation that the law was the cause of his death; at most, that it was only an occasion, and that was not given by the law, but taken by sin, which, and not the law, deceived him and slew him. Nor is it any objection to the goodness of the law, that it is a ministration of condemnation and death to sinners; for "lex non damnans, non est lex", a law without a sanction or penalty, which has no power to condemn and punish, is no law, or at least a law of no use and service; nor is the judge, or the sentence which he according to law pronounces upon a malefactor, the cause of his death, but the crime which he is guilty of; and the case is the same here, wherefore the apostle answers to this objection with abhorrence and detestation of fixing any such charge upon the law, as being the cause of death to him, saying,

God forbid; a way of speaking used by him, as has been observed, when anything is greatly disliked by him, and is far from his thoughts. Moreover, he goes on to open the true end and reason of sin, by the law working death in his conscience;

but sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that is, the vitiosity and corruption of nature, which is designed by sin, took an occasion, "by that which is good", that is, the law, through its prohibition of lust, to work in me all maimer of concupiscence, which brought forth fruit unto death; wherefore, upon the law's entrance into my heart and conscience, I received the sentence of death in myself, that so sin by it, "working death in me, might appear sin" to me, which I never knew before. This end was to be, and is answered by it, yea,

that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful; that the corruption of nature might not only be seen and known to be sin, but exceeding sinful; as being not only contrary to the pure and holy nature of God, but as taking occasion by the pure and holy law of God to exert itself the more, and so appear to be as the words kay'
uperbolhn amartwlov, may be rendered, "exceedingly a sinner", or "an exceeding great sinner"; that being the source and parent of all actual sins and transgressions; wherefore not the law, but sin, was the cause of death, which by the law is discovered to be so very sinful.

Romans 7:14

Ver. 14. For we know that the law is spiritual,.... We who have a spiritual understanding of the law, who have been led into the true nature of it by the Spirit of God, know by experience that that itself is "spiritual"; and therefore can never be the cause of sin or death: the law may be said to be "spiritual", because it comes from the Spirit of God; and reaches to the spirit of man; it requires truth in the inward parts; spiritual service and obedience; a serving of it with our minds; a worshipping of God in spirit and truth; a loving of him with all our hearts and souls, as well as a performance of all the outward acts of religion and duty; and because it cannot be truly obeyed and conformed to without the assistance of the Spirit of God. To this spirituality of the law the apostle opposes himself,

but I am carnal, sold under sin: from hence to the end of the chapter many are of opinion, that the apostle speaks in the person of an unregenerate man, or of himself as unregenerate; but nothing is more clear, than that he speaks all along of himself in the first person, "I am carnal":, &c. autov egw, "I myself", as in **Ro 7:25**, and in the present tense of what he then was and found;

whereas, when he speaks of his unregenerate state, and how it was with him under the first convictions of sin, he speaks of them as things past, **Ro 7:5**; besides, several things which are said by the apostle can neither agree with him, nor any other, but as regenerate; such as to "hate evil", "delight in the law of God", and "serve it with the mind", **Ro 7:15**. Moreover, the distinctions between flesh and spirit, the inward and the outward man, and the struggle there is between them, are to be found in none but regenerate persons; and to say no more, the thanksgiving for deliverance from sin by Christ can only come from such; nor are any of the things said inapplicable to men that are born again, as will appear by the consideration of them as they follow: for when the apostle says, "I am carnal"; his meaning is, either that he was so by nature, and as he saw himself when sin through the law became exceeding sinful to him; or as he might be denominated from the flesh or corruption of nature which was still in him, and from the infirmities of the flesh he was attended with; just as the Corinthians, though sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints, are said to be "carnal" on account of their envying, strife, and divisions, **1Co 3:1**, or in comparison of the "spiritual" law of God, which was now before him, and in which he was beholding his face as in a glass, and with which when compared, the holiest man in the world must be reckoned carnal. He adds, "sold under sin"; he did not "sell himself" to work wickedness, as Ahab, 1Ki 21:25, and others; he was passive and not active in it; and when at any time he with his flesh served the law of sin, he was not a voluntary, but an involuntary servant; besides, this may be understood of his other I, his carnal I, his unrenewed self, the old man which is always under sin, when the spiritual I, the new man, is never under the law of sin, but under the governing influence of the grace of God.

Romans 7:15

Ver. 15. For that which I do, I allow not,.... The apostle having cleared the law from the charge of being the cause either of sin or death, and taken the blame to himself, proceeds to give an account of the struggle and combat he found in himself between the flesh and spirit; "that which I do, I allow not". That which he did was evil, since he allowed not of it; but this is to be understood not of any notorious crime committed by him, and repeated again and again; nor of a sinful course of life, for before his conversion he was not a profane man, but externally moral; and after his conversion, had his conversation in the world by the grace of God in righteousness and holiness; a vicious course of life being contrary to the grace of God implanted in him, and the doctrines of grace professed by him; but of internal lusts, the workings of corruptions in his heart, and which are real actions of the mind, together with the various frailties and infirmities of life: when that apostle says that what he did, ginwskw, "I know not": his meaning is, not that he was utterly ignorant of them, of their nature and operations; that he was insensible of their motions, and unconcerned about them; for his sense of them, and concern for them, are expressed by him in the strongest terms, "I know", "I find", "I see", "O wretched man", &c. **Ro 7:18**; but either that the efforts and effects of sin in him were so sadden, and at an unawares, that he was sometimes overtaken and held captive, before he knew well where he was, or, what he was doing; or the sense is, that he had not a full knowledge of the evil of his heart, the corruptions of his nature, nor did he understand all his infirmities and the errors of his life; or else the meaning is, I own it not as right, but confess it to be wrong, I do not acknowledge these actions as the productions of the new man, they are alien to him, but as the deeds of the old man; or rather, "I do not approve" of them, I dislike, abhor, and detest them; I cannot excuse or palliate them, but must condemn them; so words of knowledge in the Hebrew language are expressive of love, liking, and approbation; see **Ps 1:6**; on which last text, "I know him", says Jarchi, hbx Nwvl, "it is the language of love", or a phrase expressive of strong affection; and so here, I know not, I do not like, love, and approve of these things, or I do not "allow" of them, and indulge myself in them, I loathe them and myself for them; and is this talking like an unregenerate man? can it be thought that the apostle speaks of himself as unregenerate, or represents such a man?

for what I would, that do I not; what he desired and willed was good, though he did it not; and so the Vulgate Latin version reads, "for not the good which I would, I do": and so the next clause, "but the evil which I hate, I do": and what was that? he would have had his thoughts always employed about the best things; he would have had his affections continually and alone set on God, Christ, and the things of another world; he would he was desirous to keep the whole law of God, and do the whole will of God, and live without sin, and as the angels do in heaven: now such a will as this is never to be found in unregenerate persons; this is from God, and the power of his grace: when he says he did not what he willed, what he was desirous of, and bent upon, his sense is, not that he never did any good thing he willed; for he did many good things, as every good man does, but he did not always do the good he willed, and never perfectly, nor anything without grace and strength from Christ: he adds,

but what I hate, that do I; sin was what he hated; it being contrary to the pure and holy nature of God, to the good and righteous law of God, and was in itself, to his view, exceeding sinful: he hated vain thoughts, unclean desires, revengeful lusts, the secret motions of all sin in his heart, and the various evil actions of life; which can never be said of an unregenerate man; who loves sin, delights in iniquity, and takes pleasure in them that do it; and yet what the apostle hated he did; he wrought with his carnal I, his flesh, and through the power of it, and force of temptation, though not without reluctance, remorse, and repentance. The Karaite Jews, which were the better sort of them, say and hold some things, not much unlike to what is here delivered;

"though a man (say they {i}) should transgress some of the commandments, or the commandments in part, Upxh du le al
hwat trwbgtl, "through the strength of lust, and not on account of, or with pleasure not delight", he shall be one of those that shall enter into paradise."

{i} R. Eliahu in Addareth, c. 3. apud Triglaud de Sect. Karaeorum, c. 10. p. 176.

Romans 7:16

Ver. 16. If then I do that which I would not,.... This is a corollary, or an inference from what he had related of his own experience; that since what he did, though it was contrary to the law of God, yet was what he did not will nor allow of, but hated, it must be a clear point, that he

consented to the law, that it was good; lovely and amiable; that it forbad those things which were hateful, and commanded those things which were desirable to a good man; and so is acknowledged to be a very beautiful rule of obedience, walk, and conversation.

Romans 7:17

Ver. 17. Now then, it is no more I that do it,.... This is another inference, deduced from what is before said, that since he did not approve, but hated what he did, and willed the contrary, it was not he as spiritual, as born again, as a new man, a new creature, that did it; see **1Jo 3:9**. He says,

But sin that dwelleth in me; the old man, the carnal I, the evil present with him, the law in his members; which not only existed in him, and wrought in him, and that at times very strongly, but dwelt in him, had its abode in him, as it has in all regenerate persons, and will have, as long as they are in the body.

Romans 7:18

Ver. 18. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh,.... The apostle goes on to give some further account of himself, what he knew, and was fully assured of by long experience; as that

dwelleth no good thing in him, that is, in his flesh, or carnal self; for otherwise there were many good things dwelt in him; there was the good work of grace, and the good word of God in him, and even Father, Son, and Spirit, dwelt in him; but his meaning is, that there was no good thing naturally in him; no good thing of his own putting there; nothing but what God had put there; no good thing, but what was owing to Christ, to the grace of God, and influence of the Spirit; or as he himself explains it, there was no good thing in his "flesh"; in the old man that was in him, which has nothing in his nature good; no good thing comes out of him, nor is any good thing done by him: and this explanative and limiting clause, "that is, in my flesh", clearly proves, that the apostle speaks of himself, and as regenerate; for had he spoke in the person of an unregenerate man, there would have been no room nor reason for such a restriction, seeing an unregenerate man is nothing else but flesh, and has nothing but flesh, or corrupt nature in him; and who does not know, that no good thing dwells in such persons? whereas the apostle intimates by this explication, that he had something else in him beside flesh, and which is opposed to it; and that is spirit, or the new man, which is of a spiritual nature, and is seated in the spirit, or soul, and comes from the Spirit of God; and in this spiritual man dwell good things, for "the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth"; so that though there was no good thing dwelling in his flesh, in the old than, yet there were good things dwelling in his spirit, in the new and spiritual man, the hidden man of the heart: and he adds,

to will is present with me; which must be understood, not of the power and faculty of the will, with respect to things natural and civil, which is common to all men; nor of a will to that which is evil, which is in wicked men; but of a will to that which was good, which he had not of himself, but from God, and is only to be found in regenerate persons; and denotes the readiness of his mind and will to that which is spiritually good, like that which Christ observes of his disciples, when he says, "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak", Mt 26:41, which may serve much to illustrate the passage before us: since it follows,

but how to perform that which is good, I find not; he found he had no strength of himself to do what he willed; and that he could do nothing without Christ; and that what he did by the strength and grace of Christ, he did not do perfectly. To will to live without sin, not to have a lustful or a revengeful thought in his breast, was present with him, but how to perform, how to live in this manner, which was so desirable to him, being born again, he found not. It may be asked, how does this agree with what the apostle says, "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure?" **Php 2:13**. To this it may be replied, that when God does work in his people both to will and to do, he does not work both equally alike, or to the same degree, so that the work answers to the will; God never works in them so to do, as to will, for when they are wrought in, acted upon, and influenced to do the most, and that in the best manner, they never do all that they would; and sometimes God works in them to will, when he does not work in them to do; as in the case of the disciples of Christ, in whom he worked to will to watch with Christ an hour, but did not work in them to do, Mt 26:40; and whenever he works in the saints, whether to will or to do, or both, it is always of his own good pleasure.

Romans 7:19

Ver. 19. For the good that I would, I do not,.... The apostle here repeats what he had delivered in **Ro 7:15** to strengthen and confirm this part of his experience; that though he had a will to that which was good, yet he wanted power, and had none of himself to perform; and therefore often did what he would not, and what he would he did not.

Romans 7:20

Ver. 20. Now if I do that I would not,.... The same conclusion is formed here, as in **Ro 7:17**, not with any view to excuse himself from blame in sinning, but to trace the lusts of his heart, and the sins of his life, to the source and fountain of them, the corruption of his nature; and to ascribe them to the proper cause of them, which was not the law of God, nor the new man, but sin that dwelt in him.

Romans 7:21

Ver. 21. I find then a law,.... This is to be understood either of the corruption of nature, which he found by experience to be in him; and which, because of its force, power, and prevalence it sometimes had in him, he calls "a law"; it forcibly demanding compliance with its lusts; and is the same with what he calls "evil", and which the Jews so frequently style erh ruy "the evil imagination", by which they mean the corruption of nature; and one of the seven names, and the first of them, by which it is called, they tell us {k}, is, er, "evil"; the very name it goes by here, and which they say God calls it, **Ge 6:5**; and well may it be so called, since it is originally, naturally, and continually evil; it is evil in its nature and consequences; it is the source and spring of all evil:

that when I would do good; says the apostle, as soon as any good thought arises in me, any good resolution is entered into by me, or I am about to do anything that is good,

evil, the vitiosity of nature,

is present with me, and hinders me; it came into the world with me, and it has continued with me ever since; it cleaves close unto me, it lies very nigh me, and whenever there is any motion to that which is good, it starts up, which seemed to lie asleep before, and exerts itself, so that I cannot do the good I would. The Jews say {l}, there are twbbl ytv, "two hearts" in man, the good imagination, and the evil imagination. The apostle here speaks as of two wills in regenerate men, one to good, and another to evil: or this may be understood of the law of God, which he found agreed with his mind, willing that which is good, though sin lay so near to him; or he found that willing that which was good was the law of God, very agreeable to it; and that the law was on his side, favouring him, encouraging him to that which is good, though sin kept so close to him; to which sense agree the following words.

{k} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 52. 1. & Kiddushin, fol. 30. 2. {l} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 135. 4.

Romans 7:22

Ver. 22. For I delight in the law of God,.... This an unregenerate man cannot do; he does not like its commands, they are disagreeable to his corrupt nature; and as it is a threatening, cursing, damning law, it can never be delighted in by him: the moralist, the Pharisee, who obeys it externally, do not love it, nor delight in it; he obeys it not from love to its precepts, but from fear of its threatenings; from a desire of popular esteem, and from low, mercenary, selfish views, in order to gain the applause of men, and favour of God: only a regenerate man delights in the law of God; which he does, as it is fulfilled by Christ, who has answered all the demands of it: and as it is in the hands of Christ, held forth by him as a rule of holy walk and conversation; and as it is written upon his heart by the Spirit of God, to which he yields a voluntary and cheerful obedience: he serves it with his mind, of a ready mind freely, and without any constraint but that of love; he delights together with the law, as the word here used signifies; the delight is mutual and reciprocal, the law delights in him, and he delights in the law; and they both delight in the selfsame things, and particularly in the perfect obedience which the Son of God has yielded to it. The apostle adds,

after the inward man; by which he means the renewed man, the new man, or new nature, formed in his soul; which had its seat in the inward part, is an internal principle, oil in the vessel of the heart, a seed under ground, the kingdom within us, the hidden man of the heart, which is not obvious to everyone's view, it being not anything that is external, though never so good: this in its nature is agreeable to the law of God, and according to this a regenerate man delights in it: but then this restrictive limiting clause supposes another man, the old man, the carnal I, according to which the apostle did not delight in the law of God; and proves, that he speaks of himself as regenerate, and not as unregenerate, or as representing an unregenerate man, because no such distinction is to be found in such a person; nor does such a person delight at all, in any sense, upon any consideration in the law of God, but is enmity against it, and not subjected to it; nor can he be otherwise, without the grace of God.

Romans 7:23

Ver. 23. But I see another law in my members,.... That is, he saw, he perceived it by experience; he felt the force and power of inbred corruption working in him, and as a law demanding obedience to it; and which he might well call "another law", it being not only distinct from, but opposite to the law of God he delighted in; the one is good, the other evil; this other law is a transgression of the law of God, and which he observed to be "in [his] members", i.e. in the members of his body; not that it had its seat only, or chiefly in his body, and the parts of it, but because it exerted itself by them, it made use of them to fulfil its lusts: the same phrase is used in the Targum on Ps 38:3; which renders the words there thus, there is no peace, yrbab, "in my members" because of my sin: now this law was, says he, warring against the law of my mind; by the "law of [his] mind" is meant, either the law of God written on his mind in conversion, and which he delighted in, and served with his mind, as renewed by the Spirit of God; or the new nature in him, the principle of grace wrought in his mind, called "the law" of it, because it was the governing principle there; which reigns, and will reign in every regenerate person through righteousness, unto eternal life, though the law of sin opposes all its force and power against it; that is not only contrary to it, lusts against it, but wars, and commits acts of hostility against it: the state of regenerate persons is a warfare, they have many enemies to combat with, as Satan and the world; but those of their own household, within themselves, in their own hearts, are the worst of all; there is a civil war in them, as it were a company of two armies, flesh and spirit, sin and grace, combating together; and so it will be as long as this life lasts; so true is that saying of the Jews {m}, in which they agree with the apostle,

"as long as the righteous live, Nruy Me Mymxln, "they are at war with the corruption of their nature"; when they die they are at rest:"

hence we read of erh Nuy tmxlm, "the war of the evil imagination" {n}: but what is worst of all, this is sometimes

bringing [them] into captivity to the law of sin, which is in [their] members; that is, to itself; for the law in the members, and the law of sin in the members, must be the same: and it may be said to bring into captivity to itself, when it only endeavours to do it, though it does not effect it; for sometimes words which express an effect only design the endeavour to effect, but not that itself; see
Eze 24:13. But admitting that this phrase intends the real and actual effecting of it, it is to be understood of a captivity to sin, different from that an unregenerate man is in; who is a voluntary captive to sin and Satan, gives up himself to such slavery and bondage, and rather goes, than is brought or carried into it; whereas a regenerate man is, through the force of sin, and power of temptation, violently drawn and carried into captivity; in which he is held against his will, and to his great uneasiness: besides, this expression does not denote absolute dominion, which sin has not over a regenerate man; nor is it utterly inconsistent with his character as such; for as a subject of one nation may be taken a prisoner, and be carried captive into another nation, and yet remain a subject where he was, and does not become one of that country of which he is carried captive; so a regenerate man, being carried captive by sin, does not come under the absolute dominion of sin, or cease to be a subject of

the kingdom of grace, or in other words, a regenerate person: moreover, the very phrase of "bringing into captivity" supposes that the person before was not a captive; whereas every unregenerate man one, was always so, and never otherwise: add to all this, that this captivity was very distressing and uneasy to the person, and makes him cry out, "O wretched man", &c. whereas the captivity of an unregenerate person is very agreeable to him; he likes his prison, he loves his chains, and do not choose to be in any other state and condition; though, as the Jews {o} say, there is no captivity hmvnh twlgk, "like the captivity of the soul"; and nothing so grieving and afflictive to a good man as that is. The apostle uses much such language as his countrymen do, who frequently represent man as having two principles in him, the one good, the other bad; the one they call erh ruy, "the evil imagination", or corruption of nature; the other they call bwjh
ruy, "the good imagination", or principle of grace and goodness; which they say {p}, are at continual war with each other, and the one is sometimes hbvn, "carried captive" by the other. The good imagination, they say {q}, is like to one that Nyrwoax tybb vwbx, "is bound in a prison"; as it is said, "out of prison he cometh to reign"; to which agrees what they say {r},

"how shall I serve my Creator whilst I am yruy ryoa, "a captive to my corruption", and a servant to my lust?"

{m} Bereshit Rabba, Parash. 9. fol. 7. 4. {n} Tzeror Hammer, fol. 93. 3. & 113. 3. & 115. 2. & 144. 4. & 145. 1, 2. {o} Caphtor, fol. 14. 2. {p} Zohar in Gen. fol. 56. 3. {q} Pirke Abot R. Nathan, c. 16. fol. 5. 2. {r} Machzor Jud. Hispan. apud L. Capell. in Rom. vi. 16.

Romans 7:24

Ver. 24. O wretched man that I am,.... Not as considered in Christ, for as such he was a most happy man, being blessed with all spiritual blessings, and secure from all condemnation and wrath; nor with respect to his inward man, which was renewing day by day, and in which he enjoyed true spiritual peace and pleasure; nor with regard to his future state, of the happiness of which he had no doubt: he knew in whom he had believed; he was fully persuaded nothing could separate him from the love of God; and that when he had finished his course, he should have the crown of righteousness laid up for him: but this exclamation he made on account of the troubles he met with in his Christian race; and not so much on account of his reproaches, persecutions, and distresses for Christ's sake; though these were many and great, yet these did not move or much affect him, he rather took delight and pleasure in them; but on account of that continual combat between, the flesh and spirit in him; or by reason of that mass of corruption and body of sin he carried about with him; ranch such a complaint Isaiah makes, **Isa 6:5**, which in the Septuagint is, w talav egw, "O miserable I". This shows him to be, and to speak of himself as a regenerate man; since an unregenerate man feels no uneasiness upon that score, or makes any complaint of it, saying as here,

who shall deliver me from the body of this death? or "this body of death"; by which some understand, this mortal body, or the body of flesh subject to death for sin; and suppose the apostle expresses his desire to quit it, to depart out of it, that he might enjoy an immortal life, being weary of the burden of this mortal body he carried about with him: so Philo the Jew {s} represents the body as a burden to the soul, which nekroforousa, "it carries about as a dead carcass", and never lays down from his birth till his death: though it should be observed, that when the apostle elsewhere expresses an earnest longing after a state of immortality and glory, some sort of reluctance and unwillingness to leave the body is to be observed, which is not to be discerned here; and was this his sense, one should think he would rather have said, when shall I be delivered? or why am I not delivered? and not who shall deliver me? though admitting this to be his meaning, that he was weary of the present life, and wanted to be rid of his mortal body, this did not arise from the troubles and anxieties of life, with which he was pressed, which oftentimes make wicked men long to die; but from the load of sin, and burden of corruption, under which he groaned, and still bespeaks him a regenerate man; for not of outward calamities, but of indwelling sin is he all along speaking in the context: wherefore it is better by "this body of death" to understand what he in **Ro 6:6** calls "the body of sin"; that mass of corruption that lodged in him, which is called "a body", because of its fleshly carnal nature; because of its manner of operation, it exerts itself by the members of the body; and because it consists of various parts and members, as a body does; and "a body of death", because it makes men liable to death: it was that which the apostle says "slew" him, and which itself is to a regenerate man, as a dead carcass, stinking and loathsome; and is to him like that punishment Mezentius inflicted on criminals, by fastening a living body to a putrid carcass {t}: and it is emphatically called the body of "this death", referring to the captivity of his mind, to the law of sin, which was as death unto him: and no wonder therefore he so earnestly desires deliverance, saying, "who shall deliver me?" which he speaks not as being ignorant of his deliverer, whom he mentions with thankfulness in **Ro 7:25**; or as doubting and despairing of deliverance, for he was comfortably assured of it, and therefore gives thanks beforehand for it; but as expressing the inward pantings, and earnest breathings of his soul after it; and as declaring the difficulty of it, yea, the impossibility of its being obtained by himself, or by any other than he, whom he had in view: he knew he could not deliver himself from sin; that the law could not deliver him; and that none but God could do it; and which he believed he would, through Jesus Christ his Lord.

{s} De Agricultura, p. 191. {t} Alexander ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 5,

Romans 7:25

Ver. 25. I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,.... There is a different reading of this passage; some copies read, and so the Vulgate Latin version, thus, "the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord"; which may be considered as an answer to the apostle's earnest request for deliverance, "who shall deliver me?" the grace of God shall deliver me. The grace of God the Father, which is communicated through Christ the Mediator by the Spirit, the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ, the principle of grace formed in the soul by the Spirit of God, which reigns in the believer as a governing principle, through righteousness unto eternal life, will in the issue deliver from indwelling sin, and all the effects of it: but the more general reading is, "thanks be to God", or "I thank God"; the object of thanksgiving is God, as the Father of Christ, and the God of all grace: the medium of it is Christ as Mediator, through whom only we have access to God; without him we can neither pray to him, nor praise him aright; our sacrifices of praise are only acceptable to God, through Christ; and as all our mercies come to us through him, it is but right and fitting that our thanksgivings should pass the same way: the thing for which thanks is given is not expressed, but is implied, and is deliverance; either past, as from the power of Satan, the dominion of sin, the curse of the law, the evil of the world, and from the hands of all spiritual enemies, so as to endanger everlasting happiness; or rather, future deliverance, from the very being of sin: which shows, that at present, and whilst in this life, saints are not free from it; that it is God only that must, and will deliver from it; and that through Christ his Son, through whom we have victory over every enemy, sin, Satan, law, and death; and this shows the apostle's sure and certain faith and hope of this matter, who concludes his discourse on this head thus:

so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin; observe, he says, "I myself", and not another; whence it is clear, he does not represent another man in this discourse of his; for this is a phrase used by him, when he cannot possibly be understood of any other but himself; see **Ro**

9:3; he divides himself as it were into two parts, the mind, by which he means his inward man, his renewed self; and "the flesh", by which he designs his carnal I, that was sold under sin: and hereby he accounts for his serving, at different times, two different laws; "the law of God", written on his mind, and in the service of which he delighted as a regenerate man; "and the law of sin", to which he was sometimes carried captive: and it should be taken notice of, that he does not say "I have served", as referring to his past state of unregeneracy, but "I serve", as respecting his present state as a believer in Christ, made up of flesh and spirit; which as they are two different principles, regard two different laws: add to all this, that this last account the apostle gives of himself, and which agrees with all he had said before, and confirms the whole, was delivered by him, after he had with so much faith and fervency given thanks to God in a view of his future complete deliverance from sin; which is a clinching argument and proof that he speaks of himself, in this whole discourse concerning indwelling sin, as a regenerate person.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 8

As the former chapter shows that sanctified ones are not free from the being of sin in them, which is a ground of general complaint and uneasiness; this chapter shows, that justified ones are freed from the guilt of sin, and secure from punishment for it; and have the utmost reason to rejoice and be glad, and even to triumph in a plerophory and full assurance of faith, on account of the various privileges they enjoy, through the grace of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit; and which are distinctly, largely, and severally mentioned: it begins, **Ro 8:1**, with taking notice of a particular privilege saints have in Christ, and, by virtue of union to him, security from all condemnation; and which is inferred from their sure and certain deliverance from sin by Christ, **Ro 8:25**, the persons sharing in this privilege are described by their being in Christ, and by their walking after the Spirit of Christ, in consequence of it: a reason confirming this privilege is given, **Ro 8:2**, taken either from the Gospel, declaring the saints' freedom from the law; or from the power and efficacy of the Spirit, delivering them from the tyranny and dominion of sin; or rather from the holiness of Christ's human nature, as a branch of their justification: this privilege is made more fully to appear, and the saints' interest in it by the mission of Christ, to bring in everlasting righteousness for them, which is the foundation of it, **Ro 8:3**, the occasion of which was the weakness of the law, or rather the impotency of man, through the corruption of nature, to fulfil the law: the sender, or the efficient cause of this mission, is God the Father; the person sent, his own Son; the manner in which he was sent, in human nature, which had the appearance of being sinful; what God did in it, he condemned sin in it; which is a reason, why there is no condemnation to them, that are in him; and the end of all this, **Ro 8:4**, was, that the law of righteousness might be perfectly fulfilled by Christ for them, or by them in him; who are described in part, as in **Ro 8:1**, upon the repetition of which part of the description, the apostle proceeds to show the difference between unregenerate and regenerate persons, **Ro 8:5**, partly by their characters; the one being carnal, or after the flesh, the other being spiritual, or after the Spirit; and by their different affections, the one minding the things of the flesh, the other the things of the Spirit; the different issue and effect of which, namely, a carnal and a spiritual mind are observed, **Ro 8:6**, death following upon the one, life and peace upon the other; the reasons of which, with respect to the former, are given, **Ro 8:7**, taken from the enmity of the carnal mind to God, and the non-subjection of it to the law of God, and the impossibility of its being subject to it; and therefore nothing but death can be expected; from whence this conclusion is made, **Ro 8:8**, that unregenerate men are not in a state, nor in a capacity to please God, or do what is acceptable to him, the above being the disposition and temper of their minds: and then in **Ro 8:9**, the apostle returns to the argument from whence be had digressed, and suggests, that though he had said the above things of unregenerate men, he had other thoughts of those to whom he writes; they were not in the flesh, nor minded the things of the flesh, and so were not liable to condemnation and death; and which he proves by the inhabitation of the Spirit of God in them; for such who have him not, have no proof nor evidence of their being Christ's, and so consequently have no proof of their security from condemnation; and partly by Christ's being in them, and which is the evidence of their being in Christ, and so of the above privilege, **Ro 8:10**, the consequence of which is, that though by reason of sin the body is mortal, and does die, yet the soul lives not only naturally, but spiritually, by faith in Christ now, and in glory hereafter, by virtue of Christ's righteousness imputed to it, and so is free from condemnation and death; besides, by virtue of the Spirit's dwelling in them, their mortal bodies will be quickened in the general resurrection, **Ro 8:11**, and from all these blessings of divine goodness, both in soul and body, the apostle infers, that the saints are under obligation, not to live in a carnal, but in a spiritual manner, **Ro 8:12**, and to which he exhorts, **Ro 8:13**, and presses by motives, taken from the different consequences of those things; death following by living after the flesh, and life through the mortification of sin, by the Spirit of God: and whereas the walking after the Spirit, by which he had described those that are safe from condemnation, is owing to their being led by him; and their being led by him, being an evidence of their divine sonship, **Ro 8:14**, from hence he passes to consider the privilege of adoption: and that these saints were interested in this privilege, he proves **Ro 8:15**, partly by their not having the spirit of bondage which belongs to servants; and partly by their having the spirit of adoption, who had made known this grace unto them, and their interest in it: and that they had received him as a spirit of adoption, was evident by their calling God their Father under his influence; and also by the witness he bore to their spirits, that they were the children of God, **Ro 8:16**, of which they were conscious: and from this privilege of adoption, the apostle concludes heirship, **Ro 8:17**, and which is of such a nature, that there is none like it; both with respect to the subject of it, God himself; with respect to him with whom they are heirs, Christ Jesus; and the way in which they come to share the glorious inheritance with him, is through suffering with him, and for him; and this they need not grudge to do, since there is no comparison between their sufferings, and the glory they shall enjoy, **Ro 8:18**, which both Jews and Gentiles were in the expectation of; the latter of which are described in **Ro 8:19**, by their name, the creature, the whole creation; and by their present condition, the Gospel being come among them to the conversion of many, which raised an expectation of many sons and daughters being born to God among them, **Ro 8:19**, and by their former state and condition, **Ro 8:20**, which is mentioned, to illustrate the grace of God in the present blessing bestowed upon them, in sending the Gospel to them; which state was a subjection to vanity, through the god of this world, who led them captive at his will, **Ro 8:21**, and then by the deliverance of them, they were in hope and expectation of, from bondage to liberty, **Ro 8:21**, and this groaning and travailing: in birth in a spiritual sense, for the bringing forth of many sons to God among the Gentiles, the apostle, and other ministers of the word, who had preached the Gospel among them, were witnesses of, **Ro 8:22**, yea, not only the Gentiles, but the Jews also, who are described as having the first fruits of the Spirit, **Ro 8:23**, were waiting for the manifestation of the children of God among the Gentiles, with them to complete at last the mystical body, who shall share together the glory before spoken of, which their sonship and heirship entitle them to; and for which there is encouragement to wait with patience and in hope, from the connection of salvation with the grace of hope; and from, the nature of the thing hoped for, which is unseen, but certain, **Ro 8:24**. From hence the apostle proceeds to consider another privilege which the saints have, who are in the Spirit, and walk after the Spirit, the Spirit helps their infirmities; particularly in prayer, the matter of which, in some cases, they are at a loss about, **Ro 8:26**, and this he does, by making intercession for them; the manner in which this is done in them, is with unutterable groans; and the rule according to which it is made, is the will of God, the mind of the Spirit being known by the searcher of hearts, **Ro 8:27**, in a word, such are the privileges of believers in Christ, that every thing in the whole world, in heaven, and in earth, in themselves and others, whether good or bad, prosperous or adverse, work together for their good, so that nothing can go wrong with them in the issue, **Ro 8:28**, who are described by their love to God, and by their effectual calling, according to his purpose; which being mentioned, leads the apostle to the source and spring of all these and other privileges, the everlasting love of God; signified by his foreknowledge of his people, **Ro 8:29**, which is the cause of their predestination to a conformity to the image of Christ, the firstborn among many brethren; with which predestination, calling, justification, and glorification, are inseparably connected, **Ro 8:30**, from all which blessings of grace it may be concluded, that God is on the side of such persons, who are interested in these favours; and nothing is to be feared, but every good thing is to be expected by them, **Ro 8:31**, which is confirmed by an argument from the greater to the lesser, that if God has given his Son for them, he will freely give all things to them, **Ro 8:32**, in a view of which, the apostle rises up in a triumph of faith, and challenges all the enemies of the saints, and denies that any charge can be brought against them of any avail, since God is the justifier of them, **Ro 8:33**, or that they shall ever enter into condemnation, being secured from it by the death of Christ; and which security is yet more strengthened by his resurrection, session at the right hand of God, and intercession for them, **Ro 8:34**, and then asks, since Christ has shown such love to them, by these instances of it, what can separate from it, **Ro 8:35**, and enumerates several things which befall the saints in this life, which, however mean and abject they may render them in the esteem of men, do not at all abate the love of Christ to them: that such is their case, that they are exposed to afflictions and sufferings, and even death itself, for the sake of Christ, is proved **Ro 8:36**, by a testimony out of Ps 44:22, and then an answer is returned to the above question in the negative, that none of the things mentioned could separate them from the love of Christ; so far from it, that by virtue of Christ who had loved them, they were conquerors, and more than conquerors in all these things, and over all their enemies, **Ro 8:37**, and the chapter is concluded in **Ro 8:38**, with the full and firm persuasion of the apostle, that nothing in the whole universe, in the whole compass of created beings, be they what they will, good or bad, or which are or shall be, an enumeration of many of which is made, should ever separate him, or any of the people of God from his love, which is in Christ Jesus: so that upon the whole, notwithstanding indwelling sin, notwithstanding the various afflictions which attend them in this world, yet in consideration of the many privileges they enjoy, and the glory they are heirs of, they have great reason to rejoice, and look upon themselves to be in the most safe and happy condition.

Ver. 1. There is therefore now, no condemnation,.... The apostle having discoursed largely in the preceding chapter, concerning the struggle and combat believers feel within themselves, and opened the true causes and reasons of the saints' grievances and complaints, and what gives them the greatest uneasiness in this life, proceeds in this to take notice of the solid ground and foundation they have of spiritual peace and joy; which arise from their justification and adoption, the purposes and decrees of God, and particularly the everlasting and unchangeable love of God in Christ, the source, spring, and security, of all the blessings of grace. The chapter begins with a most comfortable account of the safety of believers in Christ; the apostle does not say there is nothing condemnable in them, for sin is in them and is condemnable, and condemned by them; and is hurtful to their spiritual joy and comfort, though it cannot bring them into condemnation, because of their being in Christ Jesus: he says there is ouden katakrima, "not one condemnation" to them, or one sentence of condemnation against them; which must be understood not of illegal ones, for they are liable to many condemnations from their hearts, from the world and the devil; but of legal, justifiable ones, and there are none such, neither from God the Father, for he justifies; nor from the Son, for by his righteousness they are justified; nor from the Holy Spirit, who bears witness to their spirits, that they are in a state of justification: there is not one condemnation lies against them, with respect to their numerous sins, original and actual, though every sin deserves one; not one from the law of God, of which sin is a transgression, for though that is a condemning law, yet it is only so to them that are under it; not to them that are Christ's, whom he has redeemed from it: moreover, the apostle says, that there is no condemnation now to the saints; which "now" must not be considered, as if it supposes that there was formerly condemnation to them; it is true indeed they were under a sentence of condemnation, as considered in Adam, and under a covenant of works with him, and in their own apprehensions when convicted; but as considered in Christ, as the elect of God always were, and who was their surety, and so their security from all eternity, they never were in a state of condemnation: nor does this suppose, that there may be condemnation to them hereafter, though not now; for sin, the cause of condemnation, is removed; Christ has bore the condemnation their sins deserved in himself; their justification is from all sin, past, present, and to come; their union to Christ is indissoluble, and neither the love of Christ, nor the justice of God, will admit of their condemnation; for this "now", is not an "adverb" of time, but a "note of illation"; the apostle inferring this privilege, either from the grace of God, which issues in eternal life, **Ro 6:23**; or from that certain deliverance believers shall have from sin, for which he gives thanks, **Ro 7:24**; The privilege itself here mentioned is, "no condemnation": condemnation is sometimes put for the cause of it, which is sin, original and actual; now though God's elect are sinners, both by nature and practice, and after conversion have sin in them, their sanctification being imperfect, yet there is none in them with respect to justification; all is transferred to Christ, and he has removed all away; he has procured the pardon of all by his blood, he has abolished all by his sacrifice, he justifies from all by his righteousness, and saves his people from all their sins: condemnation may also be considered with respect to guilt; all mankind are guilty of Adam's sin, and are guilty creatures, as they are actual transgressors of the law; and when convinced by the Spirit of God, acknowledge themselves to be so; and upon the repetition of sin, contract fresh guilt on their consciences; but an heart sprinkled with the blood of Christ, is clear of guilt; for all the guilt of sin is removed to Christ, and he has took it away; hence there is no obligation to punishment on them, for whom Christ died: again, condemnation may design the sentence of it: now though the law's sentence passed upon all in Adam, and so upon God's elect, as considered in him; yet as this sentence has been executed on Christ, as their surety, in their room and stead, there is none lies against them: once more, condemnation may mean actual damnation, or eternal death, the wages of sin, which those who are in Christ shall never die; they are ordained to eternal life, and are redeemed from this death; they are made alive by Christ, and have eternal life secured to them in him, and which they shall certainly enjoy: the persons interested in this privilege are described, as such

which are in Christ Jesus; not as mere professors are in Christ, who may be lost and damned: but this being in Christ, respects either that union and interest which the elect of God have in Christ, from everlasting: being loved by him with an everlasting love; betrothed to him in a conjugal relation; chosen in him before the foundation of the world; united to him as members to an head; considered in him in the covenant of grace, when he engaged for them as their surety; and so they were preserved in him, notwithstanding their fall in Adam; in time he took upon him their nature, and represented them in it; they were reckoned in him when he hung upon the cross, was buried, rose again, and sat down in heavenly places; in consequence of which union to Christ, and being in him, they are secure from all condemnation: or this may respect an open and manifestative being in Christ at conversion, when they become new creatures, pass from death to life, and so shall never enter into condemnation: hence they stand further described, as such

who walk not after the flesh; by which is meant, not the ceremonial law, but the corruption of nature, or the corrupt nature of man, called "flesh"; because propagated by carnal generation, has for its object fleshly things, discovers itself mostly in the flesh, and makes persons carnal and fleshly; the apostle does not say, there is no condemnation to them that have no flesh in them, for this regenerate persons have; nor to them that are in the flesh, that is, the body; but who walk not after the flesh, that is, corrupt nature; and it denotes such, who do not follow the dictates of it, do not make it their guide, or go on and persist in a continued series of sinning:

but after the spirit, by which is meant, not spiritual worship, in opposition to carnal ordinances; but rather, either a principle of grace, in opposition to corrupt nature, called "Spirit", from the author, subject, and nature of it; or the Holy Spirit of God, the efficient cause of all grace: to walk after him, is to make him our guide, to follow his dictates, influences, and directions; as such do, who walk by faith on Christ, and in imitation of him, in the ways of righteousness and holiness; and such persons walk pleasantly, cheerfully, and safely: now let it be observed, that this walk and conversation of the saints, is not the cause of there being no condemnation to them; but is descriptive of the persons interested in such a privilege; and is evidential of their right unto it, as well as of their being in Christ: and it may be further observed, that there must be union to Christ, or a being in him, before there can be walking after the Spirit. The phrase, "but after the Spirit", is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; and the whole description of the persons in some copies, and in the Ethiopic version.

Romans 8:2

Ver. 2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,.... These words are of difficult interpretation. They may be understood of the Gospel revealing and declaring deliverance from the law of Moses; wherefore there can be "no condemnation", **Ro 8:1**, by it. The Gospel may be designed by "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"; which may be called a law, not as succeeding the law of works, by which that is abrogated; nor as requiring conditions to be performed, or as enjoining duties to be observed, or as delivering out threatenings in case of disobedience; but as it is a doctrine, order, and chain of truths, as the Hebrew word hrwt signifies, and which is sometimes used for the Gospel, **Isa 2:3** as nomov is, **Ro 3:27**. It may be called the law, or doctrine "of the Spirit", because the Spirit is the author of it, and makes it powerful and effectual to the good of souls; by it the Spirit of God is conveyed into the heart; and the substance of it are spiritual things: and the "law of the Spirit of life", because it discovers the way of life and salvation by Christ; is the means of quickening dead sinners; of working faith in them, by which they live on Christ, and of reviving drooping saints; and also it affords spiritual food, for the support of life: and this may be said to be "in Christ", or by him, inasmuch as it comes from, and is concerning him; he is the sum, the substance, and subject matter of it:

the law of sin and death may intend the law of Moses, called "the law of sin"; not as if it was sinful, or commanded or encouraged sin, for it severely prohibits it; but because by it, through the corruption of man's nature, sin is irritated, and made to abound; it is the strength of sin, and by it is the knowledge of it: and it may be called "the law of death", because it threatened with death, in case of disobedience; it sentences and adjudges transgressors to death; and when it is attended with power, it strikes dead all a man's hopes of life, by obedience to it; it leaves persons dead as it finds them, and gives no life, nor hopes of it; by it none can live, or be justified: now, though Christ is the author of deliverance from it, yet the Gospel is the means of revealing and declaring this deliverance; which designs not an exemption from obedience to it, but freedom from the curse and condemnation of it; and this sense well agrees with **Ro 8:1**; likewise the words are capable of being understood of the power and efficacy of the Spirit of God, in delivering regenerate persons from the dominion and tyranny of sin; and which may be considered as a reason why they "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit", **Ro 8:1**: "life" may well be ascribed to the Spirit of God, or be called the Spirit of life, because he has life in himself as the Father and Son have; and is the author of life to others, of natural life to all men as creatures, and of spiritual life to the people of God in regeneration; and is a quickening spirit to them afterwards, as he will be to the dead bodies of the saints in the resurrection: by "the law" of the Spirit may be meant, the energy and power of the Spirit in conversion; which work requires power, and a man has no power of himself to effect it; but there is a power in the Spirit, which works irresistibly, though not by any force or compulsion to the will, but it moves upon it sweetly, powerfully, and effectually: and all this may be said to be "in Christ": the life which the Spirit is the author and giver of, is in Christ as the head of his people, the proper repository of all grace, and the fountain of life; the Spirit himself is in him, both as God and as man, and as Mediator, hence the saints receive him and his gifts and graces from him; and the law of the Spirit, or his power and efficacy in working, is "in" or "by" Christ, through his sufferings and death, and in consequence of his mediation: now this powerful and quickening efficacy of the Spirit delivers regenerate persons from the force and tyranny of sin, called here "the law of sin and death"; a "law of sin", because it has power and dominion over unregenerate persons, its throne is in the heart of man, and its laws are many and powerful; and "the law of death", because its reign is tyrannical, barbarous and cruel, it is unto death: and from its governing influence, and tyrannical power, does the Spirit of God free his people in regeneration; not from the being of sin; nor from the rage of it, and disturbance it gives; nor from such power of it, but that they may fall into sin; but so as that sin does not properly reign over them, nor legally, nor universally, or so as to bring a death on their graces, and their persons into condemnation. Once more, those words may be understood of the holiness of Christ's human nature, as a branch of our justification, and freedom from the guilt of sin, and condemnation by it: for as "the law of sin and death" may design inherent corruption, and the force and power of it in the saints; so the opposite to it, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ", may mean the purity and holiness of his human nature. That Christ's human nature is pure and holy is certain, from express texts of Scripture, from its union to the Son of God, from the ends and purposes of its assumption, from the inefficacy of Satan's temptations, and from the whole course of his life and conversation; for though he was in the likeness of sinful flesh, was reckoned a sinner by men, was attended with infirmities, the effects of sin, though not sinful, had all the sins of his people imputed to him, and endured afflictions, and at last death; yet his nature was pure and untainted: for he did not descend from Adam by ordinary generation; and though made of a woman, yet the flesh he took of her was sanctified by the Holy Ghost; his body was prepared by God, and curiously wrought by the Spirit, from whom his whole human nature received a fulness of habitual holiness: and this may be called "the Spirit of life" in him, because he is a quickening Spirit in regeneration, justification, and the resurrection from the dead; "the law" of it, because the holiness of his nature lies in, arises from, and is conformable to a law that is within him, written on his heart; and because, together with his obedience and death, it has a force, power, and authority, to free from condemnation; for this is not a mere necessary qualification of him to be the Mediator, or what renders his obedience, sacrifice, and intercession, efficacious and valuable, or is merely exemplary to us, but is what is imputed to us, as a part of our justification. The law requires a holy nature of us, we have not one, Christ assumed one for us, and so is the end of the law, or answers the requirement of the law in this respect, as well as in all others: and hence, though sanctification begun in us, does not free us from the being of sin, and all its force and power, yet perfect sanctification in Christ frees from all condemnation by it.

Romans 8:3

Ver. 3. For what the law could not do,.... This is not to be understood of "the law of the mind", in opposition to "the law of sin", which indeed is very feeble and impotent; man had a power originally of obeying the divine commands, but through sin he has lost his strength and power; and even a renewed mind cannot perform what it would, which is owing to the flesh, or corrupt nature; it has strong desires after holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God; but these desires cannot be fulfilled by it, and indeed without Christ it can do no good thing: nor is the ceremonial law intended, though this is weak, and there are many things it could not do; it could not expiate and atone for sin; nor remove the guilt of it, nor cleanse from the filth of it: But the moral law is here designed; this, though it can, and does accuse of sin, can convince of it, can curse, condemn, and condemn to death for it; yet it could not condemn sin itself, which is only abolished by Christ; it cannot restrain from sin, nor change a sinful nature, nor sanctify an impure heart; nor free from the guilt of sin, nor comfort a distressed mind under a sense of it, it cannot subject persons, or bring them to before God, or give life, or save from death; the reason is,

in that, or because

it was weak through the flesh. The weakness of the law is total and universal, it has no strength at all; though not original and natural, but accidental; it is owing to the flesh, or the corrupt nature of man: or rather the weakness is in sinful men, and not in the law; and the sense is this, that human nature is so weakened by sin, that it is incapable of fulfilling the law; the weakness of the law is not from itself, but from man: to this agrees what the Jewish writers {u} say,

"there is not a word in the law "weak", or broken; wherefore when thou considerest and observest it, that thou dost not find it strong, as an hammer that breaks the rocks, awh Knym avlx yaw, "but if weak, it is of thyself"."

To which may be added that usual saying of theirs, hrwt hla zwe Nya, "there is no strength but the law" {w}; unless the apostle can be thought to oppose this notion of theirs. Wherefore because of the weakness of the law, or of human nature to fulfil it,

God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. The person sending is God, who gave the law weakened by the flesh, against whom we have sinned: and who is righteous, pure, and holy: which considerations enhance his grace and goodness, in the mission of Christ. This must be understood of God the Father, who is here manifestly distinguished from the Son; and who is God, but not solely, or to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and who sent Christ, though not singly, for the "Lord God and his Spirit sent" him, Isa 48:16; though as it is most agreeable for a father to send his son, this is generally ascribed to him; and he being the first person in the Godhead, is the first in order of working, and so in redemption. The person sent is his own Son; not by creation, as angels and men are; nor by adoption, as saints are; nor is he called so, on account of his incarnation, resurrection, or mediatorship, for he was the Son of God antecedent to either of them; but his own proper Son, and not in any metaphorical sense; a Son of the same nature with him, begotten of him, and his Son in that nature in which he is God. The act of sending, does not suppose inequality of nature; for though he that is sent is not greater, yet as great as he that sends; two equals, by agreement, may send each other; a divine person may assume an office, and under that consideration be sent, without supposing inferiority of nature, as in the case of the Holy Spirit; and an inferiority as to office, is allowed in the case of the Son; God sent his Son under the character of a servant, to do work: nor does this act imply change of place; there is indeed a "terminus a quo", from whence he was sent, from heaven, from his Father there; and there is a "terminus ad quem", to which he was sent into this world; but then this coming of his from heaven to earth, was not by local motion, but by assumption of nature; nor was it out of any disrespect to his Son, but out of love to us, that he sent him; nor was he sent against his will; he showed no reluctance at the proposal to him in the council of peace, but the utmost willingness; nor any at his coming into the world: nor at the work itself, which he entered upon, and went through with the greatest eagerness and cheerfulness: nor does it suppose him whilst sent, and here on earth, to be in a state of absence and separation from his Father; he was still in his bosom, yet in heaven, and his Father always with him: but it supposes that he existed before he was sent; that he was a person, and distinct from the Father, or he could not be sent by him; that he had authority from him, considered in his office capacity: in a word, this sending of the Son, designs the manifestation of him in human nature; as appears from the form and manner in which he was sent, "in the likeness of sinful flesh"; which expresses the reality of his incarnation, of his having a true real human nature; for flesh is not to be taken strictly for a part of the body, nor for the whole body only, but for the whole human nature, soul and body; which though it looked like a sinful nature, yet was not sinful: the likeness of it denotes the outward appearance of Christ in it; who was born of a sinful woman; was subject to the infirmities of human nature, which though not sinful, are the effects of sin; was reckoned among transgressors, was traduced as one himself by men, and treated as such by the justice of God; he having all the sins of his people on him, for which he was answerable: "and" hence God, "for sin, condemned sin in the flesh"; not the law, which was weak through the flesh; nor sinners, who broke the law; but sin itself, the transgression of the law, all kind of sin, and all that is in it the act of condemning it, does not design God's disapproving of it, and judging it to be evil; this he could not but do, as being contrary to his nature, an act of hostility against him, a breach of his law, and what brings ruin upon his creatures; and this he would have done, if Christ had never suffered in the flesh; and he has taken other methods, both among his own people and the world, to show his dislike of sin: nor does this act intend the destruction of the power and dominion of sin, in regeneration; this is the work of the Spirit, and is done in our flesh, and not in the flesh of Christ; but it is to be understood of the condemnation and punishment of sin, in the person of Christ: sin was laid on him by the Father, and he voluntarily took it upon himself; justice finding it there, charges him with it, demands satisfaction, and condemns him for it; and hereby sin was expiated, the pardon of it procured, and it was, entirely done away: now this is said to be done "for sin"; some join the phrase with the former part of the text, either with the word "sending", and take the sense to be, that God sent his Son for, or on the account of sin, to take it away, and save his people from it; or "with sinful flesh", which was taken from a sinful person; but it stands best as it does in our version, and may be rendered "of sin"; for God condemned sin of sin in Christ, that is, by the vengeance he took of it, in the strictness of his justice, through the sufferings of his Son, he showed sin to be exceeding sinful indeed; or rather "by sin"; that is, by an offering for sin, so the word is used in Heb 10:6; and answers to hajx, in Ps 40:6, by being made which, sin was condemned "in the flesh" of Christ, who was put to death in the flesh, "for" the sins of his people, and bore all the punishment due unto them: from hence we learn the evil of sin, the strictness of justice, and the grace of the Redeemer.

{u} Zohar in Lev. fol. 3. 2. {w} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 4. 4. & 9. 4.

Romans 8:4

Ver. 4. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,.... By the righteousness of the law, is not meant the righteousness of the ceremonial law, though that was fulfilled by Christ; but of the moral law, which requires holiness of nature, righteousness of life, and death in case of disobedience; active righteousness, or obedience to the precepts of the law, is designed here. This is what the law requires; obedience to the commands of it is properly righteousness; and by Christ's obedience to it we are made righteous, and this gives the title to eternal life: now this is said to be "fulfilled in us"; this is not fulfilled by us in our own persons, nor can it be; could it, where would be the weakness of the law? man might then be justified by it, and so the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ, must be set aside: there never was any mere man that could fulfil it; for obedience to it must not only be performed perfectly, but with intenseness of mind and spirit; a man must be sinless in thought, word, and deed; and this would be to put man upon a level with Adam in a state of innocence, and the angels in heaven: nor is this to be understood of any righteousness inherent in man; internal holiness is never called the righteousness of the law; and could it be thought to be righteousness, yet it can never be reckoned the whole righteousness of the law: and though it is a fruit of Christ's death, it is the work of the Spirit, and is neither the whole, nor any part of our justification: but this is to be understood of the righteousness of the law fulfilled by Christ, and imputed to us; Christ has fulfilled the whole righteousness of the law, all the requirements of it; this he has done in the room and stead of his people; and is imputed to them, by virtue of a federal union between him and them, he being the head, and they his members; and the law being fulfilled by him, it is reckoned all one as it was fulfilled in, or if by them; and hence they are personally, perfectly, and legally justified; and this is the end of Christ's being sent, of sin being laid on him, and condemned in him. The descriptive character of the persons, who appear to be interested in this blessing, is the same with that in **Ro 8:1**,

who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:
See Gill on "Ro 8:1".

Romans 8:5

Ver. 5. For they that are after the flesh,.... By flesh is meant the corruption of nature; and they may be said to be "after" it, not all that have flesh in them, for the best of saints have it in them; regenerating grace does not remove it from them; there is a difference between being in and after the flesh, and flesh being in us; but such who are as they were born, who have nothing but flesh, or corrupt nature in them, in whom that is the governing principle, whose minds are carnal, and whose whole walk and conversation is, such, are here meant: and these persons

do mind the things of the flesh: not merely things corporeal, belonging to the welfare of the body; or things natural for the improvement of the mind; or things civil, as riches, &c. which may be minded and sought after in a lawful way; but things sinful, the lusts, works, and sins of the flesh: which they may be said to "mind", since they judge them to be good; the bent and application of their minds are to them; their affections are set upon them; they are solicitously careful to provide for them, and savour and relish them: nor is it to be wondered at, since these are natural to them; they are opposite to God and so agreeable to them; they have no mind, thought, affection, or relish, for anything else; and it is entirely owing to mighty grace, that any mind the things of the Spirit:

but they that are after the Spirit; not such who follow the dictates of their own spirits; or are outwardly reformed; nor all that have spiritual gifts; or profess themselves to have the grace and Spirit of God; but such who are born again, are renewed in the spirit of their minds, in whom grace is the governing principle: the work of the Spirit is begun in them, though not perfected: the Spirit himself dwells in them, and they walk after him; their minds and conversations are spiritual, though there may be a great deal of carnality in their hearts, thoughts, words, and actions, which is matter of grief unto them: these mind

the things of the Spirit; the graces of the Spirit; spiritual blessings; the doctrines of the Gospel; spiritual sacrifices and services: these have some understanding of, can discern the difference between them and carnal things, judge and approve of them as right; have a great esteem and affection for them, and taste a sweetness in them. They have no mind naturally to these things; nor is the bias of their minds altered by themselves, nor could it; this is wholly the work of the Spirit of God; and these things are minded only because, and as they are agreeable to the spiritual part, the inward man.

Romans 8:6

Ver. 6. For to be carnally minded is death,.... The phrase the apostle here uses, includes the best part of corrupt man; the mind, the understanding, the judgment, the will, the affections, the thoughts, the reason, and reasonings of man; and may be rendered, "the wisdom", or "prudence of the flesh"; so called, to distinguish it from that wisdom which is from above; from that natural and civil wisdom, which is laudable; and it shows that the wisest part of man is but carnal: all sorts of persons destitute of the grace of God are concerned herein; or this is applicable to them all, as the sensualist, the worldling, the proud Pharisee, and the wise disputer of this world. This wisdom of the flesh, or carnal mindedness, "is death"; not that it is conversant about death; or that such persons are thoughtful of it, endeavour to make it familiar to them; or are desirous of it, and esteem it as a privilege; this only spiritually minded men do: but the sense is, that this issues in death; death is not the object, but the end of carnal mindedness; carnal mindedness, so far as it prevails in the saints, brings a death upon them. It is true, indeed, they cannot die a spiritual, or an eternal death; yet sometimes they are very dead and lifeless in their frames, in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; which is frequently owing to their carnality: and the effect of this must needs be death in carnal men; since it alienates from God; it renders them transgressors of the law, and obnoxious to its curse; it sets the soul against, and diverts it from Christ the way of life; and if grace prevent not, must be the cause of, and issue in eternal death; because it is sin and sinful, it is enmity to God, it disqualifies for life, and makes persons fit companions for the heirs of wrath:

but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace; spiritually minded men are the only living persons in a spiritual sense, for all that are in and after the flesh are dead; and so far as carnal mindedness prevails in professors, there is a deadness in them as to all spiritual exercises; and oftentimes as to outward appearance, there is no difference between them and dead men: but spiritually minded men are evidently living persons; they have a spiritual discerning of spiritual things; they breathe after them, savour and relish them; they talk of spiritual things, and walk in a spiritual manner; they are not only alive, but lively in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; and are the means of enlivening others; and their end will be everlasting life; which is certain from the declared will and promise of God, and from the grace of life and Spirit of life which are in them. "Peace" also is another effect of spiritual mindedness; such enjoy peace of conscience: this is a fruit of the Spirit; a part of the kingdom of grace the are possessed of; and the things their minds are conversant with are productive of it; which is the gift of God, passes all understanding, and is of more worth than all the world: such men are also of peaceable dispositions in commonwealths, in neighbourhoods, in families, and churches; induced thereunto by the noblest arguments; and their end will be peace, which will be perfect and eternal.

Romans 8:7

Ver. 7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God,.... These words contain a reason why the issue of carnal mindedness is death; because the carnal mind, the wisdom of the flesh, is not only an enemy, but enmity itself against God: against his being; it reasons against it; it wishes he was not; it forms unworthy notions of him; thinks him such an one as itself; and endeavours to bury him in forgetfulness, and erase out of its mind all memorials of him: it is at enmity against his perfections; either denying his omniscience; or arraigning his justice and faithfulness; or despising his goodness, and abusing his grace and mercy: it finds fault with, and abhors his decrees and purposes; quarrels with his providences; it is implacable against his word and Gospel; especially the particular doctrines of grace, the Father's grace in election, the Son's in redemption, and the Spirit's in regeneration; and has in the utmost contempt the ordinances and people of Christ. This enmity is universal, it is in all men in unregeneracy, either direct or indirect, hidden or more open; it is undeserved; it is natural and deeply rooted in the mind, and irreconcilable without the power and grace of God. It shows itself in an estrangedness from God; in holding friendship with the world, in harbouring the professed enemies of God, in living under the government of sin and Satan; in hating what God loves, and in loving what God hates; in omitting what God commands, and committing what he forbids; it manifests itself in their language, and throughout the whole of their conversations.

For it is not subject to the law of God; carnal men are subject to the law's sentence of condemnation, but not to its precepts, by obedience to them; there may be an external, and which is a servile obedience to it, but not a free, voluntary, internal one, and still less a perfect one: the carnal mind is so far from an obedient subjection to the law, that it is far off from the law, and the law from that; it hates and despises it, thwarts and contradicts it in every instance, and, as much as in it lies, makes it void; which fully proves the enmity of the carnal mind against God; for hereby his being is tacitly denied, his sovereignty disputed, his image defaced, his government withdrawn from, and these persons are declared, and declare themselves enemies to him:

neither indeed can be; without regenerating grace, without the power and Spirit of God, unless it is written upon the heart by the finger of God; for carnal men are dead in sin, and so without strength to obey the law; and besides, the carnal mind, and the law of God, are directly contrary one to another. Where is man's power and free will? no wonder the carnal mind do not stoop to the Gospel of Christ, when it is not, and cannot be subject to the law of God. Hence we see the necessity of almighty power, and efficacious grace in conversion. It is Christ's work to subject men to the law, and which is done when he justifies by his righteousness: agreeably to which the Targum on Isa 53:11; paraphrases it thus:

"in his wisdom he shall justify the righteous, that atyrwal

Nyaygo adbevl, "he may subject many to the law"."

And in Isa 53:11, the transgressors he hath subjected to the law.

Romans 8:8

Ver. 8. So then they that are in the flesh,.... They that are in the flesh are the same who are said to be after it, **Ro 8:5**, and are there described. Such

cannot please God; men, whilst unregenerate, and as such, cannot please God; for though the persons of God's elect are wellpleasing to him always, as considered in Christ, in whom they are loved with an everlasting love, and were chosen in him, and all provisions grace and glory made for them in him; yet as considered in themselves, and whilst in the flesh, do not please him; for they are straying from him, are alienated from his life, are destitute of all grace, and particularly faith, without which it is impossible to please him; are filthy and unclean, and hence, whilst such have no enjoyment of him, or communion with him; wherefore he sends his Spirit to work in them that which is wellpleasing in his sight: but this is not to be understood so much of persons, and their non-acceptableness to God, as of the inability of unregenerate men to obtain the good will of God, or make their peace with him; which they have no inclination to, being enmity against him; and were they inclined to it, know not how to go about it; nor can they draw nigh to God to treat with him about terms of peace; nor can they do that which can procure peace; Christ is the only person that can, make peace, and has done it: or rather, of the impotency of natural men to do anything which pleasing in the sight of God. There are many things which are pleasing to him, such as prayer, praise, giving of alms, keeping his commandments, and walking in his ways; but these unregenerate men cannot do in any acceptable manner to God; for they are without the Spirit, without Christ, without faith; and in all they do have no view to the glory of God: they have neither grace, nor strength, nor right principles, nor right ends.

Romans 8:9

Ver. 9. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,.... That is, ye are not carnal, but spiritual men; or ye are not in a state of unregeneracy, but in a state of grace: the reason proving this is, if so be, or "seeing"

that the Spirit of God dwell in you; the inhabitation of the Spirit is a distinguishing character of a regenerate man; which is to be understood not of his omnipresence, nor of a participation of his gifts, whether ordinary or extraordinary: nor does the Spirit of God only dwell in his people by his graces, but in person as in office, and in a way of special favour; as a spirit of illumination, regeneration, sanctification, and faith, as a comforter, a spirit of adoption, an intercessor, and as a pledge and seal of happiness: which inhabitation is personal; is not peculiar to him to the exclusion of the Father and of the Son; is expressive of property and dominion; is not confined to the souls of men, for he also dwells in their bodies; it is operative, powerful, and perpetual; it is the security of the saints' perseverance, and the pledge of their resurrection and future glory. This is owing not to any goodness in them, or to any fitness and preparations of theirs to receive him; but to a federal union to Christ and relation to him, to our Lord's ascension and intercession, and to the love and grace of the Father; and this proves a man to be a regenerate man, to be in the Spirit, and not in the flesh; for the Spirit of God is never in this sense in an unregenerate man, nor is he in any such sense without his grace; so that the indwelling of the Spirit is the grand evidence of relation to God, of an interest in Christ and union to him, and of a man's state and condition God-ward;

now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. By "the Spirit of Christ", is not meant the human soul of Christ; nor his divine nature; nor his Gospel, which is the Spirit that gives life; but the Holy Ghost, the third person in the Trinity, the same which is called the Spirit before; and proves Christ to be God, he proceeds from him as from the Father, is sent by him, and with which Christ's human nature was fitted and filled. The Jews {x} often speak of xyvmh xwr, or xyvmd axwr "the spirit of the Messiah". Now to have him is not barely to partake of his gifts, but of his graces; to be possessed of him as one's own; to have communion with him, and to have him dwelling in us. There are some who have him not, nor never will have him, being none of Christ's; and God's elect, whilst in an unregenerate state, are without him; and whilst such, though they are his chosen and adopted ones, they are his by his Father's gift and his own purchase, they are his pardoned ones through his blood, and his justified ones through his righteousness; yet they are not his regenerated, called, and sanctified ones; nor can they claim any interest in him; nor are they known to be his by themselves or others; nor have they any communion with him, or enjoyment of him.

{x} Zohar in Gen. fol. 19. 3. & 107. 3. & 128. 3. Baal Hatturim in Gen. 1, 2. Caphtor, fol. 113. 2.

Romans 8:10

Ver. 10. And if Christ be in you,.... Not as he is in the whole world, and in all his creatures, or circumscriptively, and to the exclusion of himself elsewhere; for his person is above in heaven, his blood is within the vail, his righteousness is upon his people, and his Spirit and grace are in them; and so he comes to be in them, he is formed in their hearts by the Spirit of God in regeneration, when the Father reveals him not only to them, but in them; and he himself enters and takes possession of them as his own, manifests himself to them, communicates his grace, and grants them communion with him. This being their case,

the body is dead because of sin: by which is meant, not the body of sin, though this is called a body, and a body of death, yet is not dead, much less is it so by reason of sin; but this fleshly body, because liable to afflictions, which are called deaths, has the seeds of mortality in it, and shall in a little time die, notwithstanding the gift of it to Christ, though it is redeemed by his blood, and united to him; the reason of it is not merely the decree of God, nor does it arise from the original constitution of the body, but sin is the true reason of it, sin original and actual, indwelling sin, but not by way of punishment for it, for Christ has bore that, death is one of the saints' privileges, it is for their good, and therefore desired by them; but that they might be rid of it, and free from all those troubles which are the consequences of it:

but the spirit is life, because of righteousness; not the Spirit of God, who lives in himself, is the author of life to others, of natural and spiritual life, continues as a principle of life in the saints, is the pledge of everlasting life, and is so to them because of the righteousness of Christ nor grace, or the new creature, which is sometimes called Spirit, and may be said to be life, it lives unto righteousness, and is owing to and supported by the righteousness of the Son of God; but the soul of man is here meant, in opposition to the body, which is of a spiritual nature, immaterial and immortal; and this may be said in believers to be life or live, for it not only lives naturally, but spiritually; it lives a life of holiness from Christ, a life of faith upon him, and a life of justification by him, and will live eternally; first in a separate state from the body after death, till the resurrection morn, it does not die with the body, nor sleep with it in the grave, nor is it in any "limbus" or state of purgatory, but in paradise, in heaven, in the arms and presence of Christ, where it is not inactive, but employed in the best of service: and after the resurrection it will live with the body in glory for evermore; and this is owing to righteousness, not to the righteousness of man, but the imputed righteousness of Christ; for as it was sin, and loss of righteousness thereby which brought death on man, the righteousness of Christ is that on which believers live now, and is their right and title to eternal life hereafter.

Romans 8:11

Ver. 11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead,.... These words are not to be understood as they are by some, of the continued work of sanctification in the heart by the Spirit of God; for regeneration, and not sanctification, is signified by quickening, which quickening occurs when the Spirit of God first takes up his dwelling in the soul; besides, the apostle had spoke of the life of the spirit or soul before; and they are mortal bodies, and not its mortal souls, which are said to be quickened, for these cannot mean the body of sin, or the remains of corruption, as they are said to be, and which are never quickened, nor never can be. To understand the words in such a sense, is not so agreeable to the resurrection of Christ here mentioned; whereas Christ's resurrection is often used as an argument of ours, which is designed here, where the apostle argues from the one to the other. The Spirit

dwells in the saints as his temples: the Spirit that dwells in them is, "the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead"; by whom is meant God the Father, to whom the resurrection of Christ from the dead is here and elsewhere ascribed. This "periphrasis" of him is used, to express the power, justice, and grace of God in the resurrection of his Son; to show that the Spirit of God was concerned in it; and the greatness of the person of the Spirit that dwells in the saints; and what reason they have to believe the sanctification of their souls, and the redemption of their bodies, since such a divine Spirit dwells in them; wherefore,

he that raised up Christ from the dead, which is the Father,

shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you; not the souls of the saints, for these die not: but their "bodies", called "mortal", because appointed to death, are under the sentence of it, and in which it already works; "your" bodies and not others; mortal ones, and not airy, celestial, immortal ones; the very same they carry about with them here, and in which the Spirit of God had dwelt. These shall be quickened. The Jews frequently express the resurrection by Mytmh tyyxt, "the quickening of the dead" some distinguish {y} between hmwqt "the resurrection" of the dead, which is common to the wicked, and tyyxt, "the quickening" of them, peculiar to the righteous: though, it is observed, this distinction does not always hold: however, this act of quickening seems here designed to express the peculiar blessing, of the saints; for though the wicked shall be raised from the dead, yet they will not rise with the saints, nor by virtue of union to Christ, nor to an eternal life of joy and happiness; in this sense the saints only will be quickened, "by the Spirit"; not as an instrument, but as a coefficient cause with the Father and Son: or "because of the Spirit that dwelleth in you", the bodies of the saints are the temples of the Holy Ghost, they are sanctified by him, where he continues to dwell by virtue of union to Christ, and in consequence of it will quicken them at the last day; so the Jews say, that the Holy Ghost brings to the resurrection of the dead {z}.

{y} Vid. Buxtorf. Lexic. Rabbinic. p. 745, 746. {z} Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15.

Romans 8:12

Ver. 12. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors,.... The appellation, "brethren", is not used, because they were so by nation or by blood, though many in the church at Rome were Jews; nor merely in a free familiar way of speaking; but rather on account of church membership, and especially because they were in the same spiritual relation to God and Christ: and the use of it by the apostle, shows his great humility and condescension, and his love and affection for them, and is designed to engage their attention and regard to what he was about to say, to them and of them; as that they were "debtors"; which is to be understood of them not as sinners, who as such had been greatly in debt, and had nothing to pay, and were liable to the prison of hell; for no mere creature could ever have paid off their debts; but Christ has done it for them, and in this sense they were not debtors: but they were so as saints, as men freed from condemnation and death; which doctrine of Christian liberty is no licentious one; it does not exempt from obedience, but the more and greater the favours are which such men enjoy, the more obliged they are to be grateful and obey; they are debtors, or trader obligation,

not to the flesh, to corrupt nature,

to live after the flesh, the dictates of that; nor should they be, both on God's account, since that is enmity to him, and is not subject to his law; and on their own account, because it is an enemy to them, brings reproach on them, and exposes them to death; but though it is not expressed, it is understood, that they are debtors to God; to God the Father, both as the God of nature, and of grace, as their covenant God and Father in Christ, who has blessed them with all spiritual blessings in him; to Christ himself, who has redeemed them by his blood: and to the Spirit of God who is in them, and for what he has been, is, and will be to them.

Romans 8:13

Ver. 13. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die,.... Such persons are dead, whilst they live, and shall die a second or an eternal death, if grace prevent not. It may be asked, whether one that has received the grace of God in truth, can live after the flesh; flesh, or corrupt nature, though still in such a person, has not the dominion over him: to live in sin, or in a continued course of sinning, is contrary to the grace of God; but flesh may prevail and greatly influence the life and conversation, for a while; how long this may be the case of a true believer, under backslidings, through the power of corruptions and temptations, cannot be known; but certain it is, that it shall not be always thus with him. It may be further inquired, whether such an one may be so left to live after the flesh, as to die and perish eternally; Christ expressly says, such shall not die that live and believe in him; grace, which is implanted in their souls, is an incorruptible and never dying seed; grace and glory are inseparably connected together; but then such persons may die with respect to their frames, their comforts and the lively exercise of grace, which seems to be here intended; as appears from the next clause,

but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. This is not to be understood of the mortification of the body itself; nor does it design any maceration or afflicting of it by any severities of life; nor of the destruction of the body of sin by Christ: or of the being and principles of sin in the saints by the Spirit of Christ; which is contrary to Scripture, to the experience of the saints, who find it in them, alive in them, and to their expectations, whilst in this world: nor is this mortification to be considered as a part of regeneration, which by some divines is made to consist in a sense of sin, grief for it, and hatred of it, in avoiding it, and in an expulsion of vicious habits and inclinations; but it should be observed, that the apostle is writing to persons that were already regenerate; nor does he ever exhort persons to regenerate themselves, which he would do here, if this was the sense; regeneration is a work of the Spirit of God, in which men are passive, whereas in the mortification here spoken of the saints are active, under the influence of the Spirit of God; besides, regeneration is done at once, and does not admit of degrees; and in and by that, sin, as to its being and principle, is so far from being destroyed, that it seems rather to revive in the sense and apprehension of regenerated persons: but it is a mortification of the outward actings of sin in the conversation, called, "the deeds of the body": and in the Claromontane exemplar, and in the Vulgate Latin version, "the deeds of the flesh": or as the Syriac version renders it, ykpwh, "the conversations", or manners of it, and so the Ethiopic version; that is, its outward course of life: and it signifies a subduing and weakening the vigour and power of sin in the lives and conversations of the saints, to which the grace and assistance of the Spirit are absolutely necessary; and such who are enabled to do so, "shall live" comfortably; they shall have communion with Christ here, and shall live a life of glory with him hereafter. Such a way of speaking as this is used by the Jews; say they {a},

"what shall a man do that he may live? it is replied, wmue
tymy, "he shall mortify himself";"

which the gloss explains by "he shall humble himself"; walk humbly before God and men, in his life and conversation.

{a} T. Bab. Tamid, fol. 32. 1. Vid. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 63. 2. Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 65. 3.

Romans 8:14

Ver. 14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God,.... Not by the spirit of the world, or of the devil, or by their own spirits: the act of leading ascribed to the Spirit is either in allusion to the leading of blind persons, or such who are in the dark; or rather to the leading of children and teaching them to go; which supposes life in those that are led, and some degree of strength, though a good deal of weakness; and is a display of powerful and efficacious grace, and is always for their good: the Spirit of God leads them from sin, and from a dependence on their own righteousness, in paths they formerly knew not, and in which they should go, in the paths of faith and truth, of righteousness and holiness, and in a right, though sometimes a rough way; he leads them to the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, and to the fulness of grace in him; into the presence of God, to the house and ordinances of God; into the truths of the Gospel, from one degree of grace to another, and at last to glory; which he does gradually, by little and little he leads them to see the iniquity of their hearts and natures, to lay hold on Christ and salvation by him, into the doctrines of grace, and the love and favour of God, and proportionally to the strength he gives: now such persons,

they are the sons of God: not in so high a sense as Christ is; nor in so low a sense as Adam was, and angels are; much less in such sense as wicked magistrates be; nor merely as professors of religion in common; but by adoption, not national, such as that of the Jews, but special; and which has some agreement with civil adoption, it being of persons to an inheritance, which they have no legal right unto, and it is done freely: though there is a difference between the one and the other; for in divine adoption there is no need on the adopter's side; nor no worth on the side of the adopted; proper qualifications are conveyed to them for the enjoyment of the inheritance, and which is enjoyed, the father and firstborn being living, and is an inheritance which vastly exceeds all others: now this blessing of being the sons of God, is owing not to ourselves, nor to our earthly parents, but to God; to the Father, who predestinated to it, and fixed it in the covenant of grace; to Christ, it is by him, as the Son of God, it is through him, as the Mediator, and it is for him, it is for his glory; and also to the Spirit of God, who manifests it, works faith to receive it, witnesses to it, and seals up to the full enjoyment of it. This favour is an instance of surprising grace, exceeds other blessings, makes the saints honorourable, is attended with many privileges, and lasts for ever: such who are in this relation to God, ought to ascribe it to his grace, to require him with thankfulness, and a becoming conversation, to be followers of him, and to love, honour, and obey him.

Romans 8:15

Ver. 15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear,.... By "the spirit of bondage" is meant, not the Spirit of God: for this is just the reverse of his character, who is a "free Spirit", or hbydn xwr, "a Spirit of liberty"; and is contrary to his work and office, which is to show a soul its state of bondage by nature, and to deliver out of it; and though fear may arise from the convictions of sin, yet this he removes by discoveries of love; moreover, his work is to make application of grace and righteousness to sensible sinners, and to administer comfort to distressed minds, and make them meet for glory; and it is also contrary to the character of the persons in whom he dwells, who are the sons of God; besides, the Spirit of God, as a spirit of adoption, is in the text itself manifestly opposed to this spirit: but by it is intended a man's own spirit whilst in a state of unregeneracy, and particularly whilst under a work of the law; and it refers to that "pharisaical" spirit which prevailed among the Jews. Men in a state of nature are under a spirit of bondage to the lusts of the flesh; by these they are captivated and enslaved, and the consequence of it is a fearful apprehension, when convicted, of death, judgment, and wrath to come. They are in slavery to the god of this world, who leads them captive, and by injecting into them fears of death, are subject to bondage. The Jews in particular were in bondage to the law, ceremonial and moral; to the ceremonial law, as circumcision, observation of days, and multitudes of sacrifices. This law was an handwriting of ordinances against them; it obliged them to keep the whole moral law; the sacrifices of it could not take away sin; the breach of it, being punishable with death, must unavoidably induce a "spirit of bondage unto fear": they were in bondage to the moral law, which naturally genders to it, as it demands perfect obedience, but gives no strength to perform; as it shows a man his sin and misery, but not his remedy, as it accuses charges with sin, and curses and condemns for moreover, a spirit of bondage is brought upon persons through it, when they seek for justification and salvation by the works of it, for such obey it with mercenary views, not from love, but fear; and their comforts rise and fall according to their obedience: now these believers, though they had formerly been under such a spirit of bondage, were now delivered from it; nor should they return to it again:

but ye have received the spirit of adoption, by which is designed not a spirit of charity, or love, or inherent grace: adoption is not owing to inherent grace, or is any part of it: regeneration and adoption differ; adoption makes men the children of God, regeneration makes them appear to be so by giving them the nature of children; adoption is not a work of grace in us, but an act of grace without us, having its complete being in the mind of God; it is antecedent to a work of grace, inherent grace is a consequence of it, though no man knows, or has the comfort of his adoption, until he believes: rather a filial child like spirit, such a spirit as becomes the children of God is here meant; a spirit of freedom with God, of reverence of him, and of love of him, and of obedience to him; springing from filial affection and without mercenary views; a meek, harmless, and inoffensive spirit. Though it seems best of all to understand by it the Holy Spirit of God, who is distinguished from the spirit of believers, **Ro 8:16**, and is called "the Spirit of his Son" in a parallel place, **Ga 4:6**, and stands opposed here to a spirit of bondage, and may be so called because as a spirit of grace he flows from adoption; and is the discoverer, applier, witness, and ratifier of the blessing of adoption; and is the pledge, earnest, or seal of the future adoption or eternal inheritance: now the Spirit is received as such from the Father and the Son into the hearts of believers, by the means of the Gospel, in order to make known their adoption to them, which is an instance of grace, and ought to be acknowledged; for

we cry Abba, Father: by the help of the spirit of adoption; we, the saints under the Gospel dispensation, in opposition to the legal one, under which they had not that freedom; "cry" which denotes an internal vehemency and affection of soul, and an outward calling upon God, as a Father, with confidence; "Abba, Father, Father" is the explanation of the word "Abba", and which is added for explanation sake, and to express the vehemency of the affection, and the freedom and liberty which belongs to children: the words in the original are, the one a Syriac word in use with the Jews, the other a Greek one, and denotes that there is but one Father of Jews and Gentiles. The word "Abba" signifies "my Father", and is expressive of interest and of faith in it; and read backwards is the same as forwards, God is the Father of his people in adversity as well as prosperity; it is the word used by Christ himself in prayer, and which he directs his people to; to say no more, it is a word which the Jews did not allow servants, only freemen to make use of, and to be called by;

"it is a tradition; (say they {b},) that servants and handmaids, they do not use to call tynwlp amyaw ynwlp aba, "father such-a-one, or mother such-a-one";"

in allusion to which the apostle suggests, that only freemen, such as have the spirit of adoption, and not servants or bondsmen, can make use of this word "Abba", or call God their Father.

{b} T. Hieros. Niddah, fol. 492. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2. Massecheth Senachot, c. 1. sect. 13. Maimon. Hilch. Nechalot, c. 4. sect. 5.

Romans 8:16

Ver. 16. The Spirit itself beareth witness,.... The thing which the Spirit of God witnesses to is,

that we are the sons of God; which supposes the case in some sense doubtful and uncertain, at least that it is called in question; not by others, though it sometimes is, as by Satan, which need not seem strange, since he called in question the sonship of Christ himself, and by the world who know them not, and by good men, till better informed: but the testimony of the Spirit is not the satisfaction of others, but the saints themselves; who are ready to doubt of it at times, because of the greatness of the favour, and their own sinfulness and unworthiness; especially after backslidings; through the temptations of the devil, and because of their many trials and afflictions. Now this witness of the Spirit is to establish and confirm it; not to make the thing itself surer, for that stands on the sure foundation of predestination, on the unalterable covenant of grace, on union to Christ; redemption by him, the gift of Christ, and continuance of the Spirit; but to assure them of it, and of their interest in it; for the testimony is given "to our spirits"; so the words are read by the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and by the Vulgate Latin; which reading seems better than

with our spirits; for our own spirits are no witnesses to ourselves: the Father and Son are co-witnesses of the Spirit, but not our own spirits; the spirits of the saints are they which receive the witness of the Spirit of God, to which it is made; not to their ears, for it is not an audible testimony; but to their hearts, it is internal; to their renewed souls, where faith is wrought to receive it; to their understandings, that they may know and be assured of it; to their spirits, which are apt to faint and doubt about it. Now it is "the Spirit itself" that bears this witness, and not others, or by others, but he himself in person; who is a divine witness, whose testimony therefore must be greater than others, and a faithful one, who will never deceive; for he witnesses what he knows, and what is sure and certain: his very being and habitation in the saints are witnesses and proofs of their adoption; his powerful operations and divine landings persuade to a belief of the truth of it; and by shedding abroad the Father's love in the heart, and by the application of Gospel promises, he causes and encourages them to "cry Abba", Father; which is a wonderful instance of his condescension and grace.

Romans 8:17

Ver. 17. And if children, then heirs,.... Children, whether natural or adopted, are heirs to their parents, and according to the Roman laws, which some think the apostle here respects, whether male or female; but according to the Jewish laws {c}, females did not inherit only in case of want of male issue; for though Job's daughters inherited with his sons, this was a peculiar case; and the Jewish writers say {d}, it was Nypwyw Ntbyvx Kwtm, "on account of their worth and beauty"; yet adopted children among them, whether male or female, were equal to natural children in possessing the inheritance; however, the apostle includes both here, who are all one in Christ Jesus, and are all the children of God by faith in him, and so heirs of God: either efficiently, he makes them heirs; they are not so by nature, nor do they become such by the works of the law; but God his rich grace adopts them into his family, begets them again, and freely bestows the inheritance on them: or subjectively, they are heirs of himself; he not only makes them his heirs, but he himself is their inheritance and portion; they are heirs of all things which are his; they share in his love, grace, and mercy; and his wisdom, power, truth, and faithfulness, and indeed, every perfection of his are engaged on their side, and in their favour; all things are theirs who have God to be their God and Father; the Gospel and the ministers of it are theirs; the world and the things of it, life and death, things present and things to come; heaven and happiness, which go by the names of glory, riches of glory, kingdom, eternal life and salvation, are all represented as things to be inherited by the saints. The Jews speak of God's inheriting of man, as the highest pitch of greatness man can arrive unto; thus explaining and paraphrasing on the names of the places from which the Israelites journeyed, Nu 21:18, say {e},

"when a man makes himself as a wilderness, which is common to all, the law is given to him by gift, as it is said, "and from the wilderness to Mattanah": and when it is given to him by gift, la wlhn, "God inherits him", as it is said, "and from Mattanah to Nahaliel"; the gloss upon it is, the law becomes to him hlxn wmk, "as an inheritance"; and when la wlxnv, "God inherits him", he ascends to his greatness, i.e. to the highest pitch of it, as it is said, from "Nahaliel to Bamot";"

for when a man is worthy of this, as one of their commentators {f} on this place observes, he is called, "the inheritance of God", according to De 32:9; but our apostle speaks not of the saints as God's inheritance, which to be sure they are, but of God as theirs; and not of their inheriting the law, but God himself, which is certainly the highest pitch of honour and greatness that men can possibly enjoy. It is added,

and joint heirs with Christ: it is through him they are heirs of God and of glory; and with him will they partake of and enjoy the inheritance, which is secured to them by their being co-heirs with him: nor does this at all derogate from the honour of Christ, as heir of all things, since he is the firstborn among many brethren, and in this, as in all things, he has the pre-eminence. But before the saints enjoy the inheritance with Christ they must expect to suffer with him and for him; though in the issue they may be assured of this, that they shall be glorified together; their sufferings lie in the way to glory, and glory is and will be the end of their sufferings:

if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together: Christ and his people being one, he the head, and they the members, suffer together; when he suffered, they suffered with him and in him, as their head and representative; and they partake of the virtue and efficacy of his sufferings; and they also suffer afflictions, many of them at least of the same kind with Christ, only with these differences; his were penal evils, theirs not; his were attended with a vast sense of wrath and terror, theirs oftentimes with, joy and comfort; his were meritorious, not so theirs. Moreover, many of their sufferings are for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; on the other hand, by reason of that union which is between Christ and believers, he suffers with them, he reckons their afflictions his, and sympathizes with them; and the consideration of this greatly animates and encourages them in their sufferings, and especially when they observe that they shall be "glorified together"; not with his essential glory, nor with his mediatorial glory, but with that glory which his Father has given him for them. There is a glorification of the saints in Christ, and a glorification of them by Christ, and a glorification of them with Christ, which will consist in likeness to him, and in the everlasting vision and enjoyment of him.

{c} Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 8. sect. 2. T. Hieros. Bava Bathra, fol. 16. 1. {d} Jarchi in Job xlii. 15. {e} T, Bab. Nedarim, fol. 55. 1. {f} En Yaacob, fol. 22. 1.

Romans 8:18

Ver. 18. For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time,.... By "this present time" may be meant, the then present age, in which the apostle lived; which was an age in which the people of God suffered much, as was foretold by Christ, and which was necessary for the confirmation of the Gospel; for grace and strength answerable to their trials were given them; and the power of God was visibly to be seen in the supporting of them; though this was not the only suffering age: wherefore by the present time may be understood, the present time of life here on earth; which is a time of suffering, and which cannot well be otherwise, considering the world in which we are, and the nature of it, the state and condition of our souls, and the constitution of our bodies, and the many enemies we have about us; but then this present time of life is the only suffering time to the saints, for no sooner are they removed from hence, but they are in heaven, where neither wicked men nor devils can reach them, where their souls are freed from sin and unbelief, from doubts and fears, and everything that is distressing; and after the resurrection there will be no more diseases nor death in their bodies; and this present time is but a short time, a little while, and all sufferings will be at an end; wherefore they

are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. The future happiness of the saints is expressed by glory, of which the glory of this world is but a faint resemblance; a glory which is already given to Christ, and he is entered into the possession of; it is already, but as yet it is unseen, but will be "revealed" hereafter, when Christ himself shall appear in it; and it will not only be revealed to the saints, as the glory of Christ, as Mediator; and it will not only be visible upon them, upon their bodies, which will be made like to the glorious body of Christ; but it will be revealed in them, and greatly lie in the perfection of knowledge and holiness in their souls: now between the sufferings of the saints in the present state of things and their future happiness, is no comparison, either with respect to quality or quantity. Their afflictions are "light" in comparison of the due desert of sin, the sufferings of Christ, and the torments of the damaged in hell, and when under divine supports; but glory is heavy, it is a "weight of glory". The sufferings of the saints are but for a time, but their glory is eternal; nor is there any comparison to be made between them by way of merit, for there is no manner of proportion between the one and the other, nor can the one have any causal influence upon the other. This is the judgment of things the apostle made, "I reckon" or "I think" which is said, not as his bare opinion, or as in the least doubting the truth of what he said; but having deliberately weighed things in his mind, and reasoned upon them, came to this conclusion, that so it must be. The allusion is either to logicians, who having settled the premises draw the conclusion; or to arithmeticians, who, having cast up the account, give the sum total. Though, after all, the "glory" here spoken of may mean the glorious Gospel of Christ, which was more and more to be revealed in the Gentile world, "in" or "by us" the apostles, in comparison of which all their sufferings were as nothing.

Romans 8:19

Ver. 19. For the earnest expectation of the creature,.... Some by the creature understand the universe, all created beings animate and inanimate, which having suffered much by the sin of man, are introduced by a rhetorical figure, as waiting for deliverance and a restoration to their paradisiacal estate; but some part of the world is manifestly distinguished from them, **Ro 8:23**, others think that angels are here meant, who being obliged to minister to sinful men, are represented as groaning and longing for the time when all the children of God shall be brought in, that they may be dismissed from their service; but what is said of subjection to vanity, of the bondage of corruption, and of their groaning and travailing in pain, can never agree with such happy spirits: others suppose that men in general are designed, being by sin brought into a state of bondage and corruption, subjected to vanity, attended with troubles, and liable to death, and so groan under their present miseries for deliverance; but to desire anything of a spiritual nature cannot be ascribed to men in general; and besides, as before observed, some persons are distinguished from them, **Ro 8:23**, others have been of opinion, that the new creature, or renewed persons, are here intended, who being burdened with indwelling sin, groan under it, long for deliverance from it, and are waiting for the heavenly glory; but these cannot be said to be in a state of bondage to corruption, for they are freed from the dominion of sin, and are become the servants of righteousness. It is best of all by "the creature" to understand the Gentile world. "The creature" here, and "the whole creation", **Ro 8:22**, must be the same; now the phrase pasa ktisiv, "the whole creation", or "every creature", as it may be rendered, signifies the nations of the world, in distinction to the Jews; see Mr 16:15; compared with Mt 28:19 and answers to twyrb, "the creatures"; by which name the Jews often in their writings call the Gentiles, to distinguish them from the Israelites. Take two or three instances, as follow,

"let your commerce (say they {g}), &c. be in a peaceable manner, twyrbh Me, "with the creatures"; what do "the creatures" say concerning him? such an one, blessed be his father who taught him the law, blessed be his master who taught him the law; woe twyrbl Mhl, "to the creatures", because they learn not the law; such an one who hath learned the law, they observe how beautiful are his ways, and how well ordered his works; of him it is written, saying, "and said unto me, thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified", Isa 49:3;"

where the creatures and the Israelites are evidently distinguished from one another: again {h},

"woe twyrbl Mhl, "to the creatures", who know not, nor have they any regard for the service of their Creator; for it is a tradition, (says R. Isaac,) that "Bath Kol", or a voice, goes out every day from Mount Horeb, and says, woe twyrbl Mhl, "to the creatures", because of the service of their Creator."

And a little after,

"if twyrbh, "the creatures", knew the love with which the holy blessed God loves Israel, they would roar like young lions to follow after him."

Once more {i},

"all the prayer twyrbh lv, "of the creatures", is only for the earth; Lord let the earth be fruitful, Lord let the earth prosper; all the prayer larvy lv, "of the Israelites", is only for the house of the Lord, Lord let the house of the sanctuary be built."

Now what "the creature", the Gentile world, is represented as earnestly waiting, and wistly looking out for, is

the manifestation of the sons of God; which is made first at their conversion, and afterwards openly and more fully at the appearance of Christ in the resurrection morn. There is a manifestation of the sons of God, at conversion. They that are the sons of God, are his sons before by divine predestination, and through the covenant of grace; as such they were given to Christ; and under this character, and as standing in this relation, he assumed their nature, and died for them, in order to gather them together; and indeed, this previous relation is the ground and foundation of the Spirit of Christ being sent down into their hearts, to manifest their adoption to them; for before conversion, it is not manifested, neither to themselves nor others, but then it is in some measure made known. This may in a particular manner be applied to the Gentiles, and God's elect among them. They were the sons of God before they were manifested as such; they are spoken of in prophecy as in that relation; see Isa 45:11; and seemed to be designed chiefly, if not altogether, by "the children of God scattered abroad", in Joh 11:51. These were not known, nor looked upon by the Jews, to be the children of God; but when the Gospel came in among them, as the power of God, it manifested them to be such: so that where it was formerly said, "ye are not my people", there it is said, "ye are the sons of the living God", **Ho 1:10**. But the full manifestation of the sons of God will be in their glorification at Christ's second coming; when they shall be openly taken into God's family, and shall be owned by Christ in this relation, before angels and men; they will appear in themselves otherwise than now they do; they will be put into the possession of the inheritance they are adopted to, and will have that honour and dignity which belong to their character actually conferred on them; so that they shall appear, not only to themselves, but to all the world, to be what they are: now this, in the whole compass of it, the Gentiles might be said to be in earnest expectation of, and waiting for. They may be said, in some sense, to expect and wait for the manifestation of the Son of God himself, the Messiah, who is called "the desire of all nations", **Hag 2:7**: for it was promised, that "to him should the gathering",
Ge 49:10, or, as some read it, "the expectation of the people", or "nations be":

they also waited for his law, his doctrine, the everlasting Gospel, Isa 42:4, and when that was come among them, and became the power of God to the salvation of many of them, this raised in them an earnest expectation of many, of multitudes of the sons of God being manifested among them, according to several prophecies of the Old Testament, which largely speak of this matter; and they continue to wait for the bringing in of the fulness of them in the latter day, and for the ultimate glory, which all the sons of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, shall enjoy together.

{g} F. Bab. Yoma, fol. 86. 1. {h} Zohar in Exod. fol. 2. 3. {i} Bareshit Rabba Parash. 13. fol. 11. 3.

Romans 8:20

Ver. 20. For the creature was made subject to vanity,.... This designs the vanity and emptiness of the minds of the Gentiles, who were without God and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, without the law and Gospel, and grace of God; also the vain conceits they had of themselves, of their wisdom, knowledge, learning, and eloquence; likewise their vain philosophy, particularly their gross idolatry, their polytheism, or worshipping of many gods; together with their divers lusts and vices, to which they were addicted, to such a degree, that they might be truly said to be made subject thereunto, being under the government of these things, slaves unto them, and in such subjection, as that they could not deliver themselves from it; though it is said,

not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Though they were willingly vain, yet they were not willingly made subject to vanity; they willingly went into idolatrous and other evil practices, but the devil made them subject, or slaves unto them; he led them captive at his will, and powerfully worked in them, by divine permission, so that they became vassals to him, and to their lusts; for he seems to be designed, "by him who hath subjected the same", and not Adam, by whom sin entered into the world.

Romans 8:21

Ver. 21. Because the creature itself also,.... The phrase in hope, which stands in our version, at the end of the preceding verse, should be placed in the beginning of this, and be read in connection with **Ro 8:19** being a parenthesis, thus: "the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, in hope that the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption"; and so it is placed in some copies, and in the Syriac version: that is, "the Gentiles" earnestly wait and expect a larger number of converts among them, in hopes that ere long the whole Gentile world will be freed from

the bondage of corruption, under which it at present groaned; by which is meant, the bondage they were in, not only to their sinful lusts, but to Satan the god of this world; and particularly to their idols, by which they corrupted themselves, and to which they were enslaved: they hope for a deliverance from hence,

into the glorious liberty of the children of God; which designs either the liberty of grace the children of God have here; and which consists in a freedom from the dominion of sin and Satan, from the law and bondage of it, in the free use of Gospel ordinances, in liberty of access to God, and a freedom from the fear of death, and a glorious liberty it is; or the liberty of glory the saints shall enjoy in the other world, which will lies in a freedom from the prison of the flesh, from the body of sin and death, from all sorrows and afflictions, from all reproaches and persecutions, from the temptations of Satan, from doubts, fears, and unbelief, and in the full vision of God through Christ, and in a free conversation with angels and saints.

Romans 8:22

Ver. 22. For we know that the whole creation groaneth,.... As a woman with child, ready to bring forth: for it is added,

and travaileth in pain together until now; regeneration is owing to the grace of God, which is compared to "seed", of which men are born again; the means of conveying it is the Gospel, and ministers are the instruments of begetting souls to Christ, and who travail in birth till Christ be formed in them: now the Gospel being carried by the apostles into the Gentile world, and being succeeded there, it was like a woman big with child, ready to bring forth many sons to God; for as it was prophesied, so it came to pass, that "more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife", Isa 54:1; and these births were attended with pain. The apostles preached the word with much contention, and the Gentiles received it in much affliction, though with the joy of the Holy Ghost; as a woman rejoices when a man child is brought forth, though the birth has been attended with pain and labour. This was an united groan, and travail of all the converted Gentiles in the several parts of the world, together with the ministers of the Gospel, earnestly desiring more instances of conversion among them; and this vehement desire had appeared "until now", from the first time of the preaching of the Gospel among the Gentiles, to the writing of this epistle; and supposes, that though there were many spiritual births, there were more to come; as there has been, and will be more abundantly, in the latter day: and moreover, this painful labour, and these united groans for spiritual births, the apostles were well acquainted with, and therefore could say, "we know", &c. by their preaching among them, in whom they could easily observe, and do in their writings take notice, how eagerly desirous they were of having the Gospel preached unto them.

(The whole creation was brought under a curse because of Adam's sin. This curse will be removed in the eternal state when Christ will restore the creation to the way it was in the beginning. Editor.)

Romans 8:23

Ver. 23. And not only they, but ourselves also,.... Not only they Gentiles, but we Jews likewise:

which have the firstfruits of the Spirit: meaning either the apostles, who were all Jews, and who most of them received the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit on the day of "Pentecost", which was the day of the firstfruits, Nu 28:26; and to which there seems to be an allusion here; or else the Jewish converts in general: to the Jews the promises of the Messiah were made; to them he first came; the Gospel was first preached unto them, and some of them first believed in Christ; they had the grace of God communicated to them in conversion, which they received as the firstfruits, with respect to an after increase; or in regard to glory, like the firstfruits, grace is of the same kind with glory, and is a pledge and earnest of it; saints judge by grace the firstfruits, what glory is, and therefore long after it; now of these persons thus described it is said,

even we ourselves groan within ourselves; their groans were inward from their hearts, not hypocritical or were among themselves, common to them all; and that not merely on their own account, the corruptions of their hearts, the sufferings they endured for the sake of the Gospel, and in a longing expectation for the heavenly glory, but also for the conversion of the Gentiles, for which they incessantly laboured, and prayed night and day;

waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Adoption is explained by the redemption of the body; and by the one may be known what the other means: by "the redemption of our body" is not meant the redemption of God's elect, body and soul, by the blood and death of Christ, which was already finished; and which the saints, who had received the firstfruits, were partakers of in themselves, and therefore could not be said to be waiting for it: but it designs either the redemption of the natural body, by the resurrection from the dead; when the bodies of the saints will be delivered from that mortality, corruption, weakness, and dishonour, under which they lie in the grave; when they will be refined and spiritualized, and freed from everything which makes them an incumbrance, and an uneasiness to their souls or spirits now; or else the redemption of the mystical body the church, of which the Gentiles make a considerable part, and is to be understood of a deliverance of the church, from the distresses and persecutions it then laboured under; or rather of a making up of the body, the church, by a redemption or deliverance of that part of it, which lay among the Gentiles, from that vanity and bondage of corruption, to which it was subject, into the manifestation and glorious liberty of the sons of God: and then by "adoption" is meant, the special grace of adoption, manifested to the Gentiles in their effectual calling; which the Jews who had received the firstfruits of the Spirit were waiting for, and had good reason to expect, from many prophecies in the writings of the Old Testament; and to which they were the more encouraged, by many appearances of the grace and power of God, attending the ministry of the Gospel among them; and which adoption will be more fully manifested in the resurrection morn; wherefore also the inheritance, which the whole mystical body the church will then enter upon the possession of, may well be called "the adoption", because the saints are adopted to it; adoption gives them the title to it, none but adopted ones will enjoy it; and their enjoyment of it will be the full manifestation and completion of the grace of adoption; this saints are waiting for, both for themselves and others, and it is worth waiting for; for it is "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, which fades not away, reserved in the heavens", **1Pe 1:4**: and there is good ground to wait for it; it is a bequest of their heavenly Father, who has adopted them; it is a gift of his free grace; it is already in the hands of Christ, with whom they are co-heirs; and they have already the Spirit, as the earnest of it.

Romans 8:24

Ver. 24. For we are saved by hope,.... We who have received the firstfruits, who were in a lost perishing condition, and by nature no better than others, than the Gentiles, are saved by sin and wrath to come by Christ, with a spiritual and everlasting salvation. They were already saved in the preparations and purposes of God; in the covenant of grace; in the arms and hands of Christ, through his purchase; and as considered in him; and with respect to the inchoation and application of salvation, in effectual calling, and their right unto it by the righteousness of Christ; and with regard to the certainty of it, in faith and hope: the manner in which they are said to be saved, is "by", or "in hope"; not that hope is the cause of salvation, but the means by which souls are brought to the enjoyment of it; salvation, or glory, is the object of it:

but hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for? in the former clause, "hope" signifies the grace itself, but here the object of it; which is represented as unseen, not yet fully enjoyed, something future, and to be hoped for; as the resurrection of the dead, which is the object of hope, and is unseen, and even incredible to carnal reason, and is to come, and good foundation there is in divine revelation, to hope for it; and the hope of it is of great use to the saints, whilst in this world of trouble: eternal glory and happiness is also the object of the hope of believers; it is said to be the hope of their calling, which they are called by grace to; the hope of righteousness, which the righteousness of Christ is the ground and foundation of; and that blessed hope, the sum of their happiness; and hope laid up for them in heaven, where it is safe and secure; all which is unseen, and yet to come; but good reason there is to hope for it, since the Scriptures of truth so clearly express it; and the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, lay such a solid foundation for hope of it: the Alexandrian copy reads, "why doth he yet wait for?" and so the Ethiopic version, with which agrees the Syriac version, reading the whole, "for [if] we see it, why should we wait for it?"

Romans 8:25

Ver. 25. But if we hope for that we see not,.... Whether it be the hour of death, or the second coming of Christ, or the resurrection of the dead, and eternal glory; all which are unseen by us, and to be hoped for:

then do we with patience wait for it; as that which is certain and real, as something valuable, which will be satisfying, and be received with the utmost joy. This supposes, that the persons who wait for it believe it, and their interest in it, at least hope they have one; that they have a valuable esteem and affection for it; that they are not in a state of perfection and happiness; and that they sit loose by the things of this world, and are ready to part with the one, and grasp the other: the manner of their waiting is "with patience"; a grace, of which God is the efficient, Christ is the exemplar, and the word the means; and which is of great use under afflictions from the hand of God, under the reproaches and persecutions of men, under desertions and want of answers in prayer, under the temptations of Satan, and in the expectation of the heavenly glory.

Romans 8:26

Ver. 26. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities,.... The Spirit of God which dwells in us, by whom we are led, who is the spirit of adoption to us, who has witnessed to our spirits, that we are the children of God, whose firstfruits we have received, over and above, and besides what he has done for us, "also helpeth our infirmities"; whilst we are groaning within ourselves, both for ourselves and for others, and are waiting patiently for what we are hoping for. The people of God, all of them, more or less, have their infirmities in this life. They are not indeed weak and infirm, in such sense as unregenerate persons are, who have no spiritual strength, are ignorant of their weakness, do not go to Christ for strength, nor derive any from him, and hence can perform nothing that is spiritually good: nor are they all alike infirm; some are weaker in faith, knowledge, and experience, than others; some are of more weak and scrupulous consciences than others be: some are more easily drawn aside through corruption and temptation than others are; some have weaker gifts, particularly in prayer, than others have, yet all have their infirmities; not only bodily afflictions, persecutions of men, and temptations of Satan, but internal corruptions, and weakness to oppose them, and to discharge their duty to God and man; and also have their infirmities in the exercise of grace, and in the performance of the work of prayer; though they are not left to sink under them, but are helped by "the Spirit": by whom is meant, not any tutelar angel, or the human soul, or the gift of the Spirit in prayer, but the Holy Spirit of God himself; who, as the word here used signifies, "helps together", with hope and patience, graces which he has implanted, and which he invigorates and draws forth into act and exercise; or with the saints labouring under their burdens; or with the Father and the Son, who also are helpers of the saints: and this helping of them implies, that their infirmities and burdens are such as they must sink under, unless they are helped; and which is done by the Spirit, by bringing to remembrance, and applying the precious promises of the Gospel, by shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts, by acting the part of a comforter to them, by putting strength into them, and by assisting them in prayer to God:

for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. The children of God are not ignorant of the object of prayer, that it is God, and not a creature, God, as the God of nature, providence, and grace, God in the persons of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit, and with a view to his glorious perfections: nor of the way of coming to God in prayer, through Christ; nor of the manner of performing it in faith, with fervency, sincerity, reverence, humility, and submission; nor who they should pray for, for themselves, for all men, even enemies, particularly for the saints, and ministers of the Gospel; nor of many other things respecting prayer, as that it is both their duty and privilege; their own inability, and the need of the assistance of the Spirit in it; but what they are ignorant of is chiefly the matter of prayer: indeed the whole Bible is an instruction in general to this work, so is the prayer Christ taught his disciples, and the several prayers of saints recorded in the Scriptures; the promises of God, and their own wants and necessities, may, and do, greatly direct them; as for instance, when under a sense of sin, to pray for a discovery of pardoning grace; when under darkness and desertions, for the light of God's countenance; when under a sense of weakness of grace, and the strength of corruptions, for fresh supplies of grace and strength, for communion with God in ordinances, for more grace here, and glory hereafter; but what of all things they seem to be, at least at some times, at a loss about, is what to pray for with respect to things temporal, such as riches, honour, friends, &c. to have present afflictions removed, or temptations cease; and too often it is, that they pray with greater importunity for lesser things, than for things of more importance; and more from an intemperate zeal, and with a view to self, than for the glory of God:

but the Spirit itself maketh intercession, for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered; not the spirit of a man; or the gift of the Spirit in man; or a man endued with an extraordinary gift of the Spirit; but the Holy Ghost himself, who makes intercession for the saints: not in such sense as Christ does; for he intercedes not with the Father, but with them, with their spirits; not in heaven, but in their hearts; and not for sinners, but for saints: nor in the manner as Christ does, not by vocal prayer, as he when on earth; nor by being the medium, or way of access to God; nor by presenting the prayers of saints, and the blood and sacrifice of Christ to God, as Christ does in heaven; nor as the saints make intercession for one another, and for other persons: but he intercedes for them, by making them to intercede; he indites their prayers for them, not in a book, but in their hearts; he shows them their need, what their wants are; he stirs them up to prayer, he supplies them with arguments, puts words into their mouths, enlarges their hearts, gives strength of faith in prayer, and all the ardour and fervency of it; he enables them to come to God as their

Father; and gives them liberty and boldness in his presence, which requires an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, faith in the blood and righteousness of Christ, and a view of God, as a God of peace, grace, and mercy: and this intercession he makes, "with groanings which, cannot be uttered"; not that the Spirit of God groans, but he stirs up groans in the saints; which suppose a burden on them, and their sense of it: and these are said to be "unutterable"; saints, under his influence, praying silently, without a voice, as Moses and Hannah did, **1Sa 1:13**, and yet most ardently and fervently; or as not being able to express fully what they conceive in their minds, how great their burdens are, and their sense of their wants.

Romans 8:27

Ver. 27. And he that searcheth the hearts,.... This is peculiar to God, and a "periphrasis" of him; angels, neither good nor bad, can search into the hearts of men; one man cannot know the heart of another, nor any man fully know his own; this is the prerogative of God: and

he knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit; not the spirit of men, but of God: that affectionate desire and meaning of the Spirit of God, in the unalterable groans of the saints; he knows the wise meaning there is in them, for so fronhma may signify, and is opposed to the carnal mind, or wisdom of the flesh, which desires foolish things. The searcher of hearts knows this, not barely by his omniscience, but he regards it, approves of it, attends, and gives an answer to it; which is no small encouragement to pray, though it be but with sighs and groans unutterable; since the omniscient God understands, and respects such kind of prayer: and the reason is,

because he, the Spirit of God,

maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God; the persons for whom he intercedes are saints: to whom Christ is made sanctification; who are called to be saints; are sanctified by the Spirit of God, and walk after him: now such are the objects of God's delight, they are chosen by him, preserved in Christ, and have his righteousness imputed to them; to these he has made known his Gospel, has given his grace, and will at last the inheritance; so that intercession made for such will certainly be regarded: it may be rendered, "he maketh intercession for holy things according to God"; for spiritual blessings, divine favours, things that belong to God; or divine things, which are agreeably to his nature and will: and since it is the Holy Spirit that makes intercession, and the persons are holy for whom he makes it, and this is made for holy things, and all according to the will of God, which the Spirit of God must fully know, saints may be confident of the prevalence and success of such intercession.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good,.... There is a temporal good, and a spiritual good, and an eternal one. Temporal good is what the men of the world are seeking after, and generally have the greatest share of, and the saints the least; and yet they have as much as is needful for them, and what they have, they have with a blessing; and even sometimes afflictions work for the temporal good of God's children: spiritual good lies in a lively exercise of grace and a conformity of the soul to God; and is what the men of the world least regard, and the saints most; and sometimes afflictions issue in this sort of good, as they do also in eternal good, for they work for us an exceeding weight of glory: by "all things" may be meant, all beings good and bad: all good beings eternal or created: eternal, as Jehovah the Father, all his perfections, purposes, promises, provisions, and performances; Jehovah the Son, as the mighty God, and as Mediator, all that he is in himself, all that he has in himself, all that he has done, or is doing, all his titles, characters, and relations; Jehovah the Spirit, in his person, offices, and operations; these all have worked together in the council of peace, in the covenant of grace, and in redemption; and they do work together in sanctification, and so they will in glorification, and that for the good of the saints: all created ones, as good angels, good magistrates, good ministers of the Gospel: all evil beings, as devils, persecuting magistrates, heretics, and false teachers: all things, good and bad: all good things, outward peace and prosperity, external gifts, the ministry of the word, the administration of ordinances, church censures, admonitions, and excommunications; all evil things, sin the evil of evils: original sin, or the fall of Adam, which contains all other sins in it, was attended with aggravating circumstances, and followed with dismal consequences, yet has been overruled for good; hereby a Saviour became necessary, who was sent, came, and wrought out salvation; has brought in a better righteousness than Adam lost; entitled his people to a better life than his was, and makes them partakers of the riches both of grace and glory: actual sin, inward or outward; indwelling sin; which is made use of, when discovered, to abate pride, to lead to an entire dependence on Christ, to teach saints to be less censorious, to depend on the power and grace of God to keep them, and to wean them from this world, and to make them desirous of another, where they shall be free from it; outward sins, of others, or their own; the sins of others, of wicked men, which observed, raise an indignation in the saints against sin, and a concern for God's glory, and to look into their own hearts and ways, and admire the grace of God to them, that this is not their case; of good men, which are recorded, and may be observed, not for example and encouragement in sin, but for admonition, and to encourage faith and hope under a sense of it; of their own, for humiliation, which issues in weakening the power of sin in themselves, and the strengthening of the graces of others: but from all this it does not follow, that God is the author of sin, only that he overrules it to wise and gracious purposes; nor should any take encouragement to sin, to do evil that good may come; nor is sin itself a real good; nor is it to be said that it does no hurt; for though it cannot hinder the everlasting salvation of God's people, it does a great deal of hurt to their peace and comfort; and that it is made to work in any form or shape for good, is not owing to its own nature and influence, which is malignant enough, but to the unbounded power and unsearchable wisdom of God: all evils or afflictions, spiritual and temporal, work together for good; all spiritual ones, such as the temptations of Satan, which are made useful for humiliation, for the trial of grace, to show us our weakness, our need of Christ, and to conform us to him, and also to excite to prayer and watchfulness; the hidings of God's face, which make his presence the more prized when enjoyed, and the more desirable. Temporal afflictions, afflictions in body, name, or estate, nay even death itself, all work together for the good of God's people. The Jews tell us of one Nahum, the man Gamzu, who, they say, was {k} so called, because of everything that happened to him he used to say, hbwjl wz Mg, "Gam zu letobah", "this is also for good": and they give instances of several misfortunes which befell him, upon which account he used these words, and how they proved in the issue to his advantage: agreeably to this is the advice given by them,

"for ever (say they {l}) let a man be used to say, all that the Lord does, dybe bjl, "he does for good"."

Now that all things do work together for good, the saints "know", and are firmly persuaded of; both from the word and promises of God, and from the instances of Jacob, Joseph, Job, and others, and also from their own experience: and it is to be observed, that it is not said that all things "have" worked together, and so they may again, or that they "shall" work together, but all things work together for good; they "now" work together, they are always working together, whether it can be observed or not: prosperity and adversity, whether in things temporal or spiritual, work "together", and make an intricate woven work in providence and grace; which will be viewed with admiration another day: one copy reads, "God works together", or "causes all things to work together for good"; and so the Ethiopic version, "we know that God helps them that love him, to every good thing": and to this agrees the Syriac version, "we know that to them that love God, he in everything helps them to good"; and certain it is, that God is the efficient cause, that makes all things work together for his people's good. The persons to whom all things work together for good, are described as such

that love God; a character, which does not agree with all the sons and daughters of Adam: love to God is not naturally in men; it is wrought in the soul in regeneration, and is an evidence of it; it grows up with faith, which works by it; without it, a profession of religion is vain; and where it is once wrought, it lasts for ever; it ought to be superlative and universal, constant, warm and ardent, hearty and sincere: such who have it, show it by a desire to be like to God, and therefore imitate him, by making his glory the supreme end of their actions; by being careful not to offend him; by delighting in his presence, in his people, word, ordinances, ways, and worship; and by undervaluing the world, and all things in it, in comparison of him; who is to be loved for the perfections of his being, the characters and relations he stands in and bears to his people, and on account of the love with which he has loved them, and which is indeed the spring and source of theirs. They are further described, as such

who are the called according to his purpose. The called of God and of Jesus Christ; not to any office, or by the external ministry of the word only, but by special grace; from darkness to light, from bondage to liberty, from the company of sinful men to fellowship with Christ, from a trust in their own righteousness to a dependence on his, to grace here, and glory hereafter; which is done according to the purpose of God: the persons called are fixed upon by God; none are called but whom God purposed to call; those who are called can assign no other reason of it than the will of God; and no other reason but that can be given why others are not called; the time when, the place where, the means whereby persons are called, are all settled and determined by the will, and according to the purpose of God.

{k} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 21. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 108. 2. Cosri, fol. 151. 1. {l} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 60. 2.

Romans 8:29

Ver. 29. For whom he did foreknow,.... The foreknowledge of God here, does not intend his prescience of all things future; by which he foreknows and foretells things to come, and which distinguishes him from all other gods; and is so called, not with respect to himself, with whom all things are present, but with respect to us, and which is eternal, universal, certain, and infallible; for in this sense he foreknows all men, and if this was the meaning here, then all men would be predestinated, conformed to the image of Christ, called by grace, justified and glorified; whereas they are a special people, whom God has foreknown: nor is this foreknowledge to be understood of any provision or foresight of the good works, holiness, faith, and perseverance of men therein, upon which God predestinates them to happiness; since this would make something out of God, and not his good pleasure, the cause of predestination; which was done before, and without any consideration of good or evil, and is entirely owing to the free grace of God, and is the ground and foundation of good works, faith, holiness, and perseverance in them: but this regards the everlasting love of God to his own people, his delight in them, and approbation of them; in this sense he knew them, he foreknew them from everlasting, affectionately loved them, and took infinite delight and pleasure in them; and this is the foundation of their predestination and election, of their conformity to Christ, of their calling, justification, and glorification: for these

he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son; having perfect, distinct, special knowledge of them, joined with love to them, he predetermined, or fore-appointed them in his eternal mind, in his everlasting and unchangeable purposes and decrees to this end, conformity to the image of Christ; which is not to be understood of the Spirit of Christ: God's elect indeed are chosen to be holy, and through sanctification of the Spirit, but are never said to be conformed, made like to the Spirit, nor is the Spirit ever called the image of Christ; but this designs either likeness to Christ as the Son of God, or conformity to him in his human nature. There is indeed a great disparity between the sonship of Christ, and of the saints; he is the eternal and natural Son of God, he is the one and only begotten Son, they are adopted ones, yet in some things there is a likeness; as he is the Son of God, so are they the sons of God, though not in the same sense; as he is a beloved Son, so are they; as he is the firstborn with respect them, they are the firstborn with respect to angels; as he has an inheritance, so have they; moreover, he has a very great concern in their sonship; the predestination of them to it is by him; the blessing itself is founded on union to him, on their conjugal relation to him, and his assumption of their nature; it comes to them through his redemption, and is actually bestowed on them by him; and this conformity to Christ as sons, will mere fully appear hereafter, when they shall be like him, and see him as he is: or this may be understood of the saints' conformity to Christ in his human nature, both here and hereafter: here in holiness; the image of God was in in his first creation, this is defaced by sin; and in regeneration, the image of Christ is stamped, his grace is wrought in them, his Spirit is put into them, to enable them to walk in him, and after him: this will be complete hereafter, and will consist in perfect holiness, being freed from the very being, as well as the power and guilt of sin; in perfect knowledge of everything that will tend to their happiness; and in glory like to Christ, both in soul and body:

that he might be the firstborn among many brethren; the persons among whom Christ is the firstborn are described by their relation, "brethren"; to one another, being related to the same Father, regenerated by the same grace, taken into the same family, and heirs of the same glory; and to Christ, which relation, as brethren to him, is not merely founded on his incarnation, but in their adoption; and which is evidenced by their regeneration, and doing the will of his Father; an which relation he owns, and is not ashamed of: they are also described by their number, "many"; for though they are but few, when compared with the world; yet they are many, a large number, considered by themselves; and among these, Christ is the "firstborn"; he is the firstborn of God, the begotten of the Father, he is the first begotten, and as such he is the only begotten; he is the firstborn of Mary, she had none before him, and he is the only one that ever was born in the manner he was; he is the first begotten from the dead, his resurrection is called a begetting, and he was the first in time that rose from the dead by his own power, and to an immortal life, and the first in causality and dignity. Christ is the firstborn with respect to all creatures in general; he was begotten of the Father before all creatures were; he is the first cause of them all, the governor, basis, and support of them: and he is the firstborn with respect to the saints; who are of the same nature with him, are made partakers of the divine nature, are sons in the same family, though not in the same class of sonship: moreover, this character may regard not so much birth as privilege which belongs to Christ as Mediator; who, as the firstborn had, has the blessing, the government, the priesthood, and the inheritance; all which is owing to, and is one end of divine predestination. The Cabalistic {m} writers among the Jews give the name of "firstborn" to the second Sephira, number, or person, "Wisdom", which answers to the Son of God.

{m} Vid. Cabala Denudata, par. 1. p. 200. & par. 2. p. 7.

Romans 8:30

Ver. 30. Moreover, whom he did predestinate,.... Not to sufferings, which are not expressed nor designed, but to grace and glory after mentioned. This predestination is of particular persons, who, in consequence of it, are called, justified, and glorified; it is the effect of divine grace, and entirely owing to it; it is the source of all the other blessings of grace, and is therefore placed at the head of them, and secures them all:

them he also called; not to afflictions: many may be called to afflictions, and endure them, who are neither justified nor glorified; besides, the people of God, though they meet with many afflictions, between their call to eternal glory, and their enjoyment of it, yet they are not so much called to afflictions, as to patience under them: their call is of grace, by special grace, to peculiar blessings of grace, and to a kingdom and glory; and this their calling is secured by predestination, and connected with glorification: and whom he called,

them he also justified; the meaning of which is, not that he approved of them as sincere and faithful, on account of their faith and patience in sufferings; for neither of their sufferings, nor of their faith and patience in them, is there the least mention in the passage; nor can any instance be produced of the use of the word "justified" in this epistle, or elsewhere in this sense: but the meaning is, that such persons whom God predestinates and calls, he makes them righteous by the imputation of the righteousness of his Son unto them; which is unto all, and upon all them that believe; by which they are justified before God, and in their own consciences, from all sin, and so secured from all wrath and condemnation; wherefore glorification stands inseparably connected with it:

and whom he justified, them he also glorified; which is not meant of being made glorious under sufferings; nor of being made glorious by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; for the word is never used in this sense, nor is God ever said to glorify his people in this way; and the apostle is speaking of the saints in general, and not of particular ones: if this was the sense, none would be predestinated, called, and justified, but such who have the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; and none would have the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, but such persons; whereas many have had these, and yet no interest in the grace of God, and everlasting happiness: but eternal glory is here meant, which is what the apostle had been speaking of in the context; is what the elect are predestinated and called unto; and which their justification gives them a right and title to; and will consist in a likeness to Christ, in communion with him, in an everlasting vision of him, and in a freedom from all that is evil, and in an enjoyment of all that is good; and so the great end of predestinating grace will be answered in them mentioned in the foregoing verse: now this glorification may be said to be already done, with respect to that part of God's elect, who are in heaven, inheriting the promises; and is in some sense true also of that part of them which is on earth, who are called and justified; being made glorious within by the grace of Christ, and arrayed and adorned with the glorious robe of his righteousness; by the one they have a meetness, and by the other a right to eternal glory; of which this grace they have received is the beginning, pledge, and earnest: besides, they are already glorified in Christ, their head and representative, and in the view of God, and with respect to the certainty of it, it being prepared and made ready for them, is in the hands of Christ for them, and is insured to their faith and hope. It is an observation of a Jewish writer {n},

"that a thing twyhl rzgnv, "which is decreed to be", is spoken of in the past tense:"

this is the Scripture style concerning things decreed, and such is the glorification of all God's elect.

{n} Aben Ezra, in Jon. ii. 2.

Romans 8:31

Ver. 31. What shall we then say to these things? &c, Either to these afflictions, shall we murmur and repine at them? no, since they work together for our good, and are not to be compared with our future glory, which is certain; for if we suffer with, and for Christ, we shall be glorified together: or to these blessings just now mentioned, as the foreknowledge of God, divine predestination, effectual calling, free justification, and eternal glorification, what can be said to these? nothing can be added to them, they are a complete set of blessings, wanting nothing; nor can the greatness of them be fully expressed, or the freeness of God's grace displayed in them, sufficiently declared: what remains for us to do, but to be thankful for them, and glory in them? or what can be said "against" them? nothing at all, they cannot be contradicted or gainsaid; they are true and faithful sayings; they can never be made void, and of no effect, by hell or earth; nor ought our unbelieving hearts to have anything to say against interest in them: or what is to be said, or inferred "from" them? why, the free, sovereign, unchangeable, and everlasting love of God, in providing and bestowing such benefits; and the certainty of salvation, which is infallibly secured hereby:

if God be for us; or, "seeing he is for us", has an affection for us, which appears from the gift of himself, Son, and Spirit, and all the blessings of grace and glory; and is on our side: as that he is on the side of his people, is evident from his preservation of them from the evils of the world and their own corruptions; from the supports he gives them under afflictions and temptations; from his carrying on the work of grace upon them, notwithstanding all the opposition made unto it; and from their safety and security they enjoy by him, notwithstanding the power of their enemies; he is so for them, and on their side, as that he will certainly save them. This he has determined to do, he has sent his Son to obtain salvation for them, his Spirit to apply it to them, and keeps them by his power to the full enjoyment of it: and since this is the case,

who can be against us? none can be against them. There are some that cannot possibly be against them; if Jehovah the Father is not against them, the Son cannot be against them, nor the Spirit; good angels cannot be against them, so far from it, that they rejoice at their good, minister to them, and are a guard about them; the law cannot be against them, because it is fulfilled in them; nor justice, because it is satisfied, and all its demands answered: and though there may be some who may be against them, and oppose themselves to them, yet their opposition is to no purpose; they will never prevail over them to their ruin and destruction; as neither sin, nor Satan, nor the world, nor death itself.

Romans 8:32

Ver. 32. He that spared not his own Son,.... It is said that God spared not the angels that sinned, nor the old world, which was full of violence, nor Sodom and Gomorrah, whose wickedness was great, nor the Egyptians and their firstborn, refusing to let Israel go, nor the Israelites themselves, when they transgressed his laws, nor wicked men hardened in sin; all which is not to be wondered at; but that he should not spare "his own Son", his proper Son, of the same nature with him, and equal to him, the Son of his love, and who never sinned against him, is very amazing: he spares many of the sons of men in a providential way, and in a way of grace, but he did not spare his own Son, or abate him anything in any respect, what was agreed upon between them, with regard to the salvation of his people; as appears by his assuming human nature, with all its weaknesses and infirmities; by his having laid on him all the iniquities of his people, and all the punishment due unto them he inflicted on him, without the least abatement; and by his sufferings not being deferred at all, beyond the appointed time; when full satisfaction for all their sins were demanded, the whole payment of their debts to the uttermost farthing insisted on, and all done according to the utmost strictness of divine justice: and which was not out of any disaffection to him; nor because he himself deserved such treatment; but because of the counsel, purpose, and promise of God, that his law and justice might be fully satisfied, and his people completely saved: moreover, the sense of the phrase may be learnt from the use of it in the Septuagint version of Ge 22:12, "thou hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son from me", which that renders ouk efeiso, "thou hast not spared thy beloved Son for me": so God did not spare his Son, because he did not withhold him:

but delivered him up for us all. That is, God the Father delivered him, according to his determinate counsel and foreknowledge, into the hands of wicked men; into the hands of justice, and to death itself; not for all men, for to all men he does not give Christ, and all things freely with him, nor are all delivered from condemnation and death by him; wherefore if he was delivered up for all men, he must be delivered up in vain for some; but for "us all", or "all us", whom he foreknew, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified; and not merely as a martyr, or by way of example only, and for their good, but as their surety and substitute, in their room and stead: wherefore

how shall he not with him freely give us all things? Christ is God's free gift to his elect; he is given to be a covenant to them, an head over them, a Saviour of them, and as the bread of life for them to live upon: he is freely given; God could never have been compelled to have given him; Christ could never have been merited by them; nothing that they could give or do could have laid him under obligation to have bestowed him on them; yea, such were the persons, and such their characters, for whom he delivered him up, that he might have justly stirred up all his wrath against them; and yet such was his grace, that he has given his own Son unto them; and not him alone, but "all things" with him: all temporal good things, needful and convenient; all spiritual blessings, a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, sanctifying grace, adoption, and eternal life: and all "freely", in a sovereign way, according to his own good will and pleasure, without any obligation or compulsion; not grudgingly nor niggardly, but cheerfully and bountifully, absolutely, and without any conditions; for he is not moved thereunto by anything in them, or performed by them.

Romans 8:33

Ver. 33. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?.... The elect of

God are a certain select number of persons, whom he has so loved, as of his sovereign good will and pleasure, to choose in Christ before the foundation of the world, unto eternal life and salvation, by certain ways and means of his own appointing, as sanctification and faith, so that they are peculiarly his: but are these persons chargeable with nothing criminal? yes, with Adam's sin; with a want of original righteousness; with multitudes of sins before conversion, some of them with very great ones; and all, even after conversion, with frequent infirmities and backslidings: and will none rise up and exhibit charges of this nature against them? yes, even now, they very often bring charges against themselves; they are very apt to charge one another; Satan, the accuser of the brethren, lays many things to their charge very frequently, and so do the men of the world; but all these charges avail nothing, since none of the divine persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, lay anything against them: not God the Father, for

it is God that justifieth; he against whom sin is committed, who is the lawgiver, and the righteous judge, justifies them from every charge; not by teaching them the way of justification, nor by infusing righteousness into them, or on account of any works of righteousness done by them, but by pronouncing them righteous through the imputation of the righteousness of his Son unto them: observe, that "God's elect", as such, are the objects of justification; which proves the eternity of it; the speciality of it as belonging to particular persons, and the everlasting security and continuance of it.

Romans 8:34

Ver. 34. Who is he that condemneth,.... That is, the elect of God: all mankind are deserving of condemnation, and are under the sentence of it, as in Adam; some are foreordained to condemnation; all in final impenitence and unbelief, are condemned already; and the whole world of the ungodly will be condemned at the last day; but none of God's elect are, or shall be condemned: for they are loved with an everlasting love; they are chosen unto salvation; they are in Christ, where there is no condemnation; they are brought to believe in him, and by him are justified from all sin, and so are secure from condemnation. They are indeed deserving of it as others, considered in themselves; and are under the sentence of it, as in Adam, with the rest of mankind; and in their own apprehensions, when convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment. And are there none that will condemn them? yes, their own hearts often condemn them; they are very forward to condemn one another; the world condemns them, and so does the god of it: but neither

Father, Son, nor Spirit, will condemn them; not the Father, for he justifies; nor the Son, for

it is Christ that died: that he died is certain; the death he died was the death of the cross; the persons he died for were God's elect; the reason of his dying for them was to make atonement for their sins; this came to pass through his substitution in their room and stead; this death of his was but once, yet of an eternal efficacy, and so a full security of them from all condemnation: for sin, the cause of condemnation, was removed by it; the condemnation itself was bore by Christ in their stead; the law and justice of God were satisfied by it; pardon of sin was procured by his blood; and complete justification obtained by his active and passive obedience; all which is confirmed by his resurrection, session at God's right hand, and intercession: wherefore it is added,

yea, rather that is risen again. As the death, so the resurrection of Christ, is the security of God's elect from condemnation; inasmuch as Christ rose again, as a conqueror over death, and over sin, the sting of death, and over Satan, who had the power of death; and also as a surety, having given satisfaction to law and justice: he engaged as a surety for his people; God in justice, and according to his righteous law, dealt with him, and by him as such; he satisfied both, and therefore was set free by them; hence neither law nor justice can condemn; besides he rose again as a common person, head and representative of his people, and for their justification: he first stood charged with all their sins, which by his Father, and with his own consent, were imputed to him; he was condemned and suffered death for them; when he rose from the dead, he was justified and acquitted from them all; and all his people were justified in him, and with him: yea, the resurrection of Christ is rather a greater security from condemnation, than his death; Christ's death expiated sin, but his resurrection brought in the everlasting righteousness; notwithstanding Christ's death, had he not risen again, we should have been in our sins, and so liable to condemnation; Christ's dying showed that he was arrested and condemned, but his resurrection shows that he is discharged, and we in him:

who is even at the right hand of God. The ascension of Christ, his entrance into heaven, and session at the right hand of God, are also a very considerable security of God's elect from condemnation; for when he ascended from earth to heaven in human nature, accompanied by angels, of which they and his disciples were witnesses, he led captivity captive, or triumphed over those that led his people captive, as sin, Satan, the law, death, and every other enemy of theirs; he entered into heaven to prepare it for them, to take possession of it in their name, to appear in the presence of God for them, and as having obtained the eternal redemption of them, where he was received with a welcome, as the surety and head of the chosen ones, and then sat down at the right hand of God; which shows that he had done his work, and to satisfaction, is advanced above all, power is given to him, all things are put under him, and he is head over all things to the church: and since he is at the right hand of God, as an advocate and intercessor for his people, it will be to no purpose, and of no avail, that Satan, or any other enemy, is at their right hand to resist them:

who also maketh intercession for us; which is done, not by vocal prayer, as in the days of his flesh on earth; or as supplicating an angry judge; or as controverting: a point in the court of heaven; but by the appearance of his person for us, by the presentation of his sacrifice, by offering up the prayers and praises of his people, by declaring it as his will, that such and such blessings be bestowed upon them, and by seeing to it, that the benefits of his death are applied to those, for whom they were designed; which intercession of Christ proceeds upon the foot of a satisfaction made; it always continues, and is ever prevalent, and so has a considerable influence to secure from condemnation. The apostle, in this verse, seems to have in view a passage in Job 34:29; which the Septuagint render, "and he gives peace, and who is he that condemneth?"

Romans 8:35

Ver. 35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?.... By "the love of Christ" is not meant the saints' love to Christ, but his love to them; he is indeed the object of their love, and so strong is their love to him, that it can never be destroyed; for though there may be an abatement in the fervour of it, it can never be lost; yet this is never called the love of Christ: besides, the apostle is speaking not of their love to Christ, but of the love of God and Christ to them, throughout the context; and his design is, to strengthen the faith of God's people, and comfort their souls, under their various afflictions: now nothing more effectually serves such purposes, than the love of Christ; and the things here instanced in are such, as are apt to inject doubts and fears, about interest in the love of Christ, and of the love of God in Christ, as it is interpreted in some following verses: moreover, the separation here interrogated is not of Christ from us, but of us from him; whereas was it our love to Christ, which is here meant, it should rather have been put, who shall separate him from us, and not us from the love of Christ? That Christ does love the elect of God, who are the persons here spoken of, is evident from his undertaking for them, espousing their persons, assuming their nature, dying in their room and stead, paying off their debts, and redeeming their persons, by going to prepare a place for them, by interceding for them, by supplying them with all grace, and using them in the most free and familiar manner; which love of his is wonderful, matchless, and inconceivable, special and peculiar, free and undeserved, exceeding affectionate, unchangeable, durable, and for ever. This is the bond of union to Christ; and the union which is made by it is exceeding near and close; it is real; perfect, and indissoluble, nothing can separate from it: not

tribulation; or "affliction", which springs from his love, and is the fruit of it; and notwithstanding that, he rests in his love; this is not taken away, but is often sensibly enjoyed, in the midst of afflictions:

or distress; whether of body or mind; straitness in the affairs and circumstances of life, or straitness of mind, in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; for "though we believe not, yet he abides faithful", **2Ti 2:13**, to his covenant and promises:

or persecution: from the world; for this is rather an evidence that Christ has loved them chosen and called them, because the world hates them:

or famine: want of the necessaries of life, as food and drink; being exposed to great hunger and thirst, which has sometimes been the lot of the dear children of God:

or nakedness; want of proper clothing, or the use of common apparel; wandering about in sheep skins and goat skins, which has been the case of some, of whom the world was not worthy, and so no proof of separation from the love of Christ:

or peril; dangers from different quarters, by different persons and ways; such as the Apostle Paul had trial of, who was highly in the love of Christ, 1Co 11:26;

or sword; that is, death by the sword; which death James the brother of John died, Ac 12:13: now, though this may separate the head from the body, and separate soul and body, yet cannot separate from the love of Christ.

Romans 8:36

Ver 36. As it is written, for thy sake we are killed,.... This passage is a citation out of Ps 44:22; and the meaning is, that for the sake of God, and his pure worship, Old Testament saints were frequently put to death, or exposed to the persecutions of men, which often issued in death; as New Testament saints have been, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, even

all the day long; that is, they were liable to death all the day long; or every day, one or other of them was put to death:

we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter; they were reckoned as fit for nothing else, and were continually exposed unto it; were used as sheep are, as if they were made for no other use and service, but to be slaughtered; hence they are called, "the flock of slaughter", Zec 11:7; and as this expresses the brutality of their persecutors, so their harmlessness, meekness, humility, and patience in sufferings, being under them like lambs or sheep. This testimony is produced, to show that suffering death has been the common lot of the saints in all ages: and is designed to animate the people of God under the Gospel dispensation, to suffer with cheerfulness; the allusion may be to the lambs and sheep daily slain for sacrifice; either to the lambs of the sacrifice slain morning and evening; or to others that were slain in any part of the day from morning to night, for other sacrifices, in the court of the tabernacle and temple.

Romans 8:37

Ver. 37. Nay, in all these things,.... The former words being inserted in a parenthesis, these are an answer to the question in **Ro 8:35**, "what shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation?" &c. "nay", it shall not, nor any of the other things mentioned: "in all these things"; afflictions, distresses, persecutions, famine, nakedness, sword, or any other thing of the same kind:

we are more than conquerors; not only over sin and Satan, but the world, the reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions of it; which they cheerfully and courageously undergo, insomuch that they are not only conquerors, but "more than conquerors": they have above overcome, they have exceedingly the better of it; for they not only patiently bear afflictions and persecutions, but they glory in them; their experience, faith, and joy, are often increased by them; they have sometime solicited, and even wearied their persecutors; they have got the victory with ease, over Satan and his hellish emissaries, by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony: but this is not owing to themselves, or through their own strength, but

through him that loved us; meaning either God the Father, whose love is mentioned in the following verses, or rather the Lord Jesus Christ; and so some copies express it, "through Christ that loved us": "through him", who has got the victory over all his and his people's enemies, and makes them sharers in his conquests; "through him", who is able to help them, and has strength sufficient to carry them through, and brings them off more than conquerors; who has loved them, still loves them, and whose love engages his power to stand by them and protect them against all their enemies.

Romans 8:38

Ver. 38. For I am persuaded,.... These words with the following, express the strong persuasion, and full assurance of faith the apostle had, that nothing whatever could separate him and the rest of God's people, from his love towards them in Christ Jesus. This persuasion not only regards himself, but others; and is not conjectural, but certain; and which did not arise from any special and extraordinary revelation, but is founded upon the nature of the love of God itself, the security of it in Christ, and of the persons of God's elect in him; upon eternal predestination, and the unalterable purposes of God; upon the promise and oath of God; upon adoption, and the gracious witnessings, assistances, and inhabitation of the Spirit; and is greatly increased by the consideration of the death, resurrection, and intercession of Christ. The things enumerated, which are not able to separate from the love of God, are as follow:

death; death separates men from the world, their worldly habitations and substance; it separates the soul from the body, and one friend from another; and in process of time, may take off all thoughts and affections for departed friends, but it is not able to separate from the love of God; it is so far from it, that it lets the soul into the fullest enjoyment of it: and as corporeal death, so no other kind of death can do it; for if the death of the body cannot, the death of afflictions never can; and as for a moral or spiritual death, and an eternal one, these shall never befall the children of God:

nor life; this natural and temporal life, which is frail and mortal; the love of God is better than this life, and this itself is the effect of divine favour; wherefore this can never separate from the love of God, nor anything in it: the life of believers is indeed filled up with troubles and exercises, and attended with much imperfection and sin; but nothing does, or can alienate the affections of God from his children; for though he exercises them with the trials of life, and chastises them for their sins, yet his loving kindness be does not take away from them:

nor angels; by whom are meant evil angels, the devils; for as for good angels, they never attempt to separate God and his people; they rejoice at their good, minister to them, are their guardians whilst here, at death they carry their souls to heaven, and at the last day will gather all the elect together; but evil angels do endeavour it, by temptations to sin, and accusations for it; by stirring up heresies and persecutions, in order to destroy them, but cannot succeed; for the saints are upon God's heart, are in Christ's hands, and on him the rock; and the Spirit of God is in them, who is greater than he that is in the world:

nor principalities: civil magistrates; who though they may separate them from their company, and cast them out as evil; may separate them in prisons one from another; and separate soul and body, by killing the latter, which is all they can do; yet they cannot separate neither soul nor body from the love of God: the Jews often say, that if all the nations of the world were gathered together, they could not extinguish {n} or cause to cease {o}, or take away the love which is between God and his people Israel {p}:

nor powers; either the same with the former; or false teachers who had the power of working miracles in confirmation of their doctrines, by which they deceived many; and if it had been possible, would have deceived the elect of God, but that was impossible:

nor things present; present evils, the afflictions of the present life; God does not cease to love when he afflicts his people; yea, afflictions spring from his love, and in them he afresh manifests his love to them; they are overruled for their good, and issue in eternal glory. Present temptations also may be meant. The best of saints have been exposed unto them; Christ himself was not exempted from them; these do not, nor cannot separate from the love of God; which is manifest from the regard which God and Christ have to tempted ones, by sympathizing with them, supporting and succouring of them, rebuking the tempter, and delivering from them. Present desertions, or the hidings of God's face, which often is the case of his dear children, can have no such effect; their relation to God still continues; they have great nearness unto him, are engraven on the palms of his hands, are set as a seal on his heart, and he bears a strong affection to them; though, for wise reasons, he is pleased for a moment to hide himself from them: yea, the present body of sin and death saints carry about with them in this life, cannot separate them; sin has separated the angels from

God, who rebelled against him; it drove Adam out of the garden of Eden, and will exclude the wicked from the divine presence to all eternity; and it often separates between God and his own people, with respect to communion, but never with respect to union to him, or interest in him; for he knew what they would be when he set his love upon them; his love broke through all the corruptions of nature and sins of life in their conversion; and appears to continue the same from the strong expressions of his grace to them, notwithstanding all their backslidings; could sin separate in this sense, no one would remain the object of his love. Now this does not suppose that God loves sin, nor does it give any encouragement to it; for though it cannot separate from interest in God, yet it does from the enjoyment of him. Again, present good things may be designed, the good things of this life, temporal enjoyments; these are given in love; and though they may be but few, they are in mercy, and with a blessing; and the great mercy of all is, that these are not their all, nor do they take off their value and esteem for the love of God, which is better to them than all the things of life; and though "the prosperity of fools shall destroy them", **Pr 1:32**, the prosperity of the saints shall never be their ruin:

nor things to come; whether good or bad, prosperous or adverse; more afflictions, fresh difficulties with the body of sin; an hour of temptation, and time of distress that is to come upon all the earth; or the evil days of old age; God will never leave, nor forsake his people, or cause his loving kindness to depart from them, in whatsoever state or condition they may come into: the Vulgate Latin version adds, "nor fortitude"; and the Ethiopic version, "nor powers"; and one copy adds it in the beginning of **Ro 8:39**, "nor power".

{n} Targum in Cant. viii. 7. {o} Shemot Rabba, sect. 49. fol. 144. 1. {p} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 179. 4.

Romans 8:39

Ver. 39. Nor height, nor depth,.... Neither heaven, earth, nor hell, nor any of the inhabitants of either, or anything in either; no high or low place, to be cast down from the one, or into the other; nor the height of honour and prosperity, or the depth of meanness and adversity; nor the height of power, or depth of policy in men or devils;

nor any other creature. This takes in the whole compass of created beings in heaven, earth, and sea; and most strongly expresses the inseparableness of the saints from the love of God, by anything or creature whatever; nothing in the whole universe

shall be able to separate us the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord: by "the love of God", is not meant the saints' love to God; for though this is sometimes called the love of God, it is from him, as the author of it, and to him, as the object of it, and may be said to be in Christ, or by him, and can never be lost; yet the apostle would not have expressed such a strong confidence and full persuasion about this, and would rather have said, had this been his meaning, that nothing shall be able to separate our love from God, or God from our love, and not us from the love of God; besides, he is speaking of that love by which we are more than conquerors, and manifestly intends the love with which God loves his people, particularly the love of God the Father: and this is "in Christ Jesus our Lord"; he has expressed it in and through Christ, in choosing and blessing them in him, and in sending him to die for them; and it still continues in him, and is in him as their Lord, head, husband, and Redeemer; and is a reason why nothing can separate them from it: which is to be understood, not of the effects of love, and the application of it, which may be suspended for a time; nor of the manifestation and sense of it, which believers may be without for a while; nor of any sort of separation from God, for saints themselves may be separated from him, with respect to intimate sensible communion and fellowship; but the sense of this passage is, that they can never be separated from the love of God, so as that that union which is made by it between God and them can ever be dissolved, or they cease to have any share or interest in his love. This the apostle was persuaded could never be.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 9

The apostle having discoursed of justification and sanctification, and of the privileges of justified and sanctified ones, proceeds to treat of predestination, the source and spring of all the blessings of grace; and to observe how this distinguishing act of God's sovereign will has taken place, both among Jews and Gentiles; in treating of which, he knew he should go contrary to the sense of his countrymen the Jews, who have a notion that all Israel shall have a part in, or inherit the world to come {q}: and that the Gentiles will be for ever miserable; and nothing was more disagreeable to them, than to talk of their rejection of God, and the calling of the Gentiles; wherefore that it might be manifest, that it was not out of pique and ill will to them, that the apostle said the things hereafter related; he expresses the most cordial affection to them imaginable, and which he introduces in **Ro 9:1**, by way of appeal to Christ, who knew the truth of what he was about to say, and who could, together with the Spirit of God and his own conscience, testify for him that it was no lie: the thing he appeals for the truth of, is in **Ro 9:2**, that the salvation of the Jews lay near his heart; that it was no pleasure to him to think or speak of their rejection, but was what gave him continual pain and uneasiness: and his great desire for their good is expressed in a very strong and uncommon manner, **Ro 9:3**, the reasons of it are partly the relation they stood in to him, being his brethren and kinsmen; and partly the many privileges they had been favoured with of God; an enumeration of which is given, **Ro 9:4**, and foreseeing an objection, he prevents it, which might be made, that if the Jews were cast off, the promise of God to that people that he would be their God, would become void, and the preaching the Gospel of Christ to them of no effect; to which he answers by distinguishing between Israel and Israel, or the elect of God among them, and those that were not; wherefore though the latter were rejected according to the purpose of God, the promise and preaching of the word had their effect in the former, **Ro 9:6**, and that there was such a distinction, he proves from the two sons of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael, who were both Abraham's seed; yet one was a child of promise, and the other a child of the flesh, and were emblematical of the children of the promise, and the children of the flesh among that people; **Ro 9:7**, and further confirms this by the instance of Jacob and Esau, who were born of the same parents, and were twins; and yet one was in the favour of God, and the other not; and that this was owing not to works, but to the sovereign will of God in election, he proves by observing that this was before good or evil were done by either of them, **Ro 9:11**, and that this was notified to Rebekah before, **Ro 9:12**, as appears from a passage in Ge 25:23, and by another passage in **Mal 1:2**, which is cited, **Ro 9:13**, then an objection is started, **Ro 9:14**, that if God loves one, and hates another, both being in equal circumstances, as Jacob and Esau were, he must be guilty of unrighteousness; which he answers and removes, first by a detestation of such a charge against God, and then by producing testimonies out of the books of Moses, proving both election and reprobation, as being not of the works of men, but of the will of God; the former of these he proves, **Ro 9:15**, from Ex 33:19, by which it appears, that the choice of men to salvation is not according to the will of man, but according to the grace and love of God, **Ro 9:16**, the latter he proves by the case of Pharaoh, **Ro 9:17**, and the Scripture relating to that, **Ex 9:16**, and from both testimonies concludes, **Ro 9:18**, that God's having mercy on one, and hardening another, are according to his sovereign will and pleasure; then another objection rises, up, if so, God has no reason to find fault with men that are hardened in sin, since they are according to his will, and in sinning do but fulfil it, and which no man resists; and this objection is formed in a very pert and sneering manner, and insinuates that God is cruel and acts unreasonably, **Ro 9:19**, to which he answers, by putting the objector in mind that he was a man, a mere creature that started it, and that it was God against whom it was made; and by observing the folly and madness of replying against God, and the absurdity of such a procedure, taken from the consideration of the one being a creature, and the other the Creator, **Ro 9:20**, and by instancing in the case of the potter, who has power over his clay, to form it in what shape, and for what use he pleases, **Ro 9:21**, and accommodates this, both to the affair of election and reprobation, and to the business of the latter first, **Ro 9:22**, where he observes the end of God in it to show forth his power and wrath, and describes the subjects of it, which clears him from injustice, and points at the patience of God towards them, which frees him from the charge of cruelty, **Ro 9:22**, and then proceeds to apply the metaphor before used, to the objects of election styled vessels of mercy, and the end of the Lord to manifest the riches of his glory in them, and the method he takes to bring them to eternal happiness, by preparing them for it by grace, **Ro 9:23**, which is done in the effectual calling, the objects of which are both Jews and Gentiles, **Ro 9:24**, That it is the will of God that the Gentiles should be called, he proves, **Ro 9:25**, from some passages in Hosea, **Ho 2:23**, and that God had chosen, and so would call some among the Jews, he clearly makes appear, **Ro 9:27**, from some prophecies of Isaiah, Isa 10:22, and then he concludes the chapter by observing the free and distinguishing grace of God, in the calling of the Gentiles, and the justification of them by the righteousness of Christ; that such who were far off from it, and sought not after it, should enjoy it, **Ro 9:30**, when the Israelites, who were diligent and zealous in seeking after a righteousness to justify them before God, yet did not arrive to one, **Ro 9:31**, the reasons of which are given, **Ro 9:32**, because it was not the righteousness of faith, or the righteousness of Christ received by faith they sought; but a legal one, and by works which can never be attained by sinful men: they sought after a wrong righteousness, and in a wrong way, because they stumbled at Christ, and rejected him and his righteousness; and this removes an objection which is suggested in the two preceding verses, that God is unrighteous in calling the Gentiles, who never sought after righteousness, and in rejecting the Jews that followed after one: and that they did stumble at Christ and his righteousness, is no other than what was foretold in **Isa 8:14**, and that whoever believes in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, shall be saved, he suggests is a doctrine agreeably to Isa 28:16, which passages are referred to, **Ro 9:33**.

{q} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1.

Ver. 1. I say the truth in Christ, I lie not,.... The apostle being about to discourse concerning predestination, which he had mentioned in the preceding chapter, and to open the springs and causes of it, and also concerning the induration and rejection of the Jewish nation; he thought it necessary to preface his account of these things with some strong assurances of his great attachment to that people, and his affection for them, lest it should be thought he spoke out of prejudice to them; and well knowing in what situation he stood in with them, on account of his preaching up the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and how difficult it might be for him to obtain their belief in what he should say, he introduces it with a solemn oath, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not": which refers not to what he had said in the foregoing chapter, but to what he was going to say; and is all one as if he had said, as I am in Christ, a converted person, one born again, and renewed in the spirit of my mind, what I am about to speak is truth, and no lie; or I swear by Christ the God of truth, who is truth itself, and I appeal to him as the true God, the searcher of hearts, that what I now deliver is truth, and nothing but truth, and has no falsehood in it. This both shows that the taking of an oath is lawful, and that Christ is truly God, by whom only persons ought to swear:

my conscience bearing me witness. The apostle, besides his appeal to Christ, calls his conscience to witness to the truth of his words; and this is as a thousand witnesses; there is in every man a conscience, which unless seared as with a red hot iron, will accuse or excuse, and bear a faithful testimony to words and actions; and especially a conscience enlightened, cleansed, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, as was the apostle's: hence he adds,

in the Holy Ghost; meaning either that his conscience was influenced and directed by the Holy Ghost in what he was about to say; or it bore witness in and with the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost with that; so that here are three witnesses called in, Christ, conscience, and the Holy Ghost; and by three such witnesses, his words must be thought to be well established.

Romans 9:2

Ver. 2. That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. This is the thing he appeals to Christ for the truth of, and calls in his conscience and the Holy Ghost to bear witness to. These two words, "heaviness" and "sorrow", the one signifies grief, which had brought on heaviness on his spirits; and the other such pain as a woman in travail feels: and the trouble of his mind expressed by both, is described by its quantity, "great", it was not a little, but much; by its quality it was internal, it was in his "heart", it did not lie merely in outward show, in a few words or tears, but was in his heart, it was a heart sorrow; and by its duration, "continual", it was not a sudden emotion or passion, but what had been long in him, and had deeply affected and greatly depressed him: and what was the reason of all this? it is not expressed, but may pretty easily be understood; it was because of the obstinacy of his countrymen the Jews, the hardness of their hearts, and their wilful rejection of the Messiah; their trusting to their own righteousness, to the neglect and contempt of the righteousness of Christ, which he knew must unavoidably issue in their eternal destruction; also what greatly affected his mind was the utter rejection of them, as the people of God, and the judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, he full well knew was coming upon them, and which he was about to break unto them.

Romans 9:3

Ver. 3. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ,.... Some consider this as the reason of the apostle's great heaviness, and continual sorrow of heart, because he had made such a wish as this, and read the words, "for I have wished", or "did wish"; that is, in my unregenerate state, whilst I was a persecutor of Christ, and a blasphemer of his name, I wished to be for ever separated from him, and to have nothing to do with him; for then I thought I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus, and this I did out of respect to the Jewish nation, and because I would not relinquish the Jewish religion; but oh! what a trouble of mind is it to me? what uneasiness does it give me when I think of it, and reflect upon it? But this can never be the apostle's meaning, for he would never have appealed to Christ in so solemn a manner, and took an oath upon it, for the truth of his enmity to Christ, and alienation from him before conversion, which everybody knew; nor was it anything strange, that whilst he was an unbelieving Jew, he should wish himself separated from Jesus of Nazareth, and always to remain so; and his having done this before his embracing of Christianity could be no evidence of his present affection for the Jewish nation, especially since he repented of it, and was sorry for it. But this wish, whatever is meant by it, is mentioned as an instance of his great love to his countrymen the Jews. Many have thought that his meaning is, that he had so great a value for them, that he could even wish himself, and be content to be eternally separated from Christ, everlastingly banished from his presence, never to enjoy communion more with him, or in other words, to be eternally damned, that they might be saved. But this is what could never be, and which he knew, was impossible to be done, and was contrary to that strong persuasion he had just expressed in the close of the foregoing chapter. Nor is it consistent with his love to Christ, to wish any thing of this kind; it would make him to love the Jews much better than Christ; since, according to this sense, he must wish to be parted from him, that they might be saved, and consequently must love them more than Christ: nor is it consistent with, but even contrary both to the principles of nature and grace; it is contrary to the principles of nature, for a man to desire his own damnation upon any consideration whatever; and it is contrary to the principle of grace, which always strongly inclines to be with Christ, and not separated from him; in a word, to be accursed from Christ in this sense, could be no proper means of the salvation of the Jews, and therefore it cannot be thought to be desirable, or wished for. Some things are said indeed for the qualifying of this sense of the words, as that the apostle said this inconsiderately, when he was scarcely himself, through an ecstasy of mind, and intemperate zeal, and an overflow of affection for his nation; but this is highly to reflect upon the apostle, and to represent him in a very unworthy manner, when it is certain he said this with the greatest deliberation and seriousness; he introduces it in the most solemn manner, with an appeal to Christ, the Holy Spirit, and his own conscience, and therefore it could never drop from him through incogitancy, and an overheated affection. Again, it is said, that this wish was made with a condition, if it was the will of God, but that he knew was not; or if it could be for the good of these people, this also he knew it could never be: the best qualification Of it is to say it is an hyperbolical expression; and so if it is, it must be with a witness, being such an hyperbole, as is not to be matched in sacred or profane writings. The words of Moses are thought to be a parallel one, "blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written", Ex 32:32; but that is not to be understood of the book of eternal life; but either of the book of the law, as R. Sol. Jarchi expounds it, which God had ordered him to write, and his desire is, that his name might not stand there; or rather of the book of this temporal life, that he might die and not live. It remains then that these words must have another meaning. Now let it be observed, that the word anayema, here translated "accursed", answers to the Hebrew word Mrx, which, with the Jewish writers, is one sort of excommunication in use among them, and the greater sort; the forth of it, as given by them, is very horrible, and shocking {r}; See Gill on "Joh 9:22"; and so we may observe the word "anathema" here used is mentioned as a form of excommunication in 1Co 16:22; of all such as love not Christ and his Gospel, and make it appear by their principles or practices, or both, that they do not, and so ought to be removed from the communion of churches. Now, taking the word in this sense, the apostle's meaning is, that he could wish to be excommunicated from Christ; that is, from the body of Christ, from the church of Christ, Christ mystical, as the word "Christ" is used, 1Co 12:12; to be deprived of the ordinance of Christ's house, to be degraded from his office in it, and not to be so much as a member in it. He saw that these branches, the people of the Jews, were going to be cut off, and no longer to be of the church of God; and such was his affection to them, that he could have wished rather to be cut off himself, that they might be spared; and this was an instance of great love to them, since, next to Christ, the church and the ordinances of it were exceeding dear unto, and highly valued by the apostle. Again, it is worthy of observation, that the Hebrew word Mrx, which the Septuagint render by anayema, the word in the text, is used for any thing devoted to God, and which could not be alienated to any other use or service; and if it was a man, or any among men that was devoted, it was not to be redeemed, but was "surely to be put to death", Le 27:29. Some have thought that Jephthah's daughter was put to death upon this law; but be that as it will, the apostle here may reasonably be thought to allude unto it, and his sense be this, that he could wish himself anayema einai apo tou cristou, "to be devoted unto death", not from Christ, but "by" Christ; and some copies read upo, "by": I could wish that my dear Lord and Master, as if he should say, would appoint and order me to die, might this nation of mine but escape that ruin and destruction I see is coming upon them, as a nation and a church; I could be content to die the most accursed death, and be treated in the most ignominious manner, might they but be saved; a like expression is that of R. Ishmael {s}, Ntrpk yna larvy ynb "may I be an expiatory sacrifice for the children of Israel";

"which (says one commentator {t}) he said, Ntbx Kwtm, "because of his love to them"; and it is as if he should say, all the punishment which is right to come upon them, I will take it on myself, in order to atone for them;"

and says another {u},

"the sense is, he took upon him their redemption, and this he said, wtbha bwrl, "because of the greatness of his love":"

now for a man to die for his country, that a whole nation perish not, was agreeably to the sentiments both of Jews and Gentiles, and was the highest instance of love among men; "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends", Joh 15:13; and this is carrying the sense of the apostle's wish high enough, and not too far. The persons on whose account he could have expressed this wish, are described by their natural relation to him,

my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh: he calls them his brethren, not in a spiritual sense, nor in a strict natural sense, but in a general way, as being of the same nation: it is a saying with the Jews {w}, Myxa larvy lk, "all the Israelites are brethren"; for the same reason he calls them kinsmen; and these appellations he uses to remove that ill will and prejudice they had conceived in their minds against him, and to signify the ground of his affection for them: and he adds, "according to the flesh", to distinguish them from his spiritual brethren and relations; for though they were brethren in a national sense, they were not all so in a spiritual relation.

{r} Vid. Buxtorf. Lexic. Rabbinic. p. 827, 828. {s} Misn. Negaim, c. 2. sect. 1. {t} Bartenora in ib. {u} Maimon. in Misn. Negaim, c. 2. sect. 1. {w} Caphtor, fol. 38. 1.

Romans 9:4

Ver. 4. Who are Israelites,.... Which were their national name, as descended from Jacob, whose name was Israel; and it was accounted a very honourable one; see **Php 3:5**; and the very name they bore gave the apostle some concern that they should be cut off; and then he proceeds to enumerate the several distinguishing favours and privileges they had been partakers of:

to whom pertaineth the adoption; not that special adoption, which springs from eternal predestination, is a blessing of the covenant of grace, comes through the redemption of Christ, and is received and enjoyed only by believers in him; for all that were Israelites, were not in this sense the children of God; but national adoption is here meant, by which the whole body of the people, as nation, were the sons of God, his firstborn:

and the glory; either the ark of the covenant, which is so called in Ps 63:2, according to Kimchi; or the clouds in the tabernacle and temple, which were called the glory of the Lord, and were symbols of his presence, the same with the Shekinah; and so Aben Ezra interprets power, the ark, and glory, the Shekinah, Ps 63:2,

and the covenants; not the two Testaments, Old and New, but the covenant of circumcision, made with Abraham their father, and the covenant at Sinai they entered into with the Lord; some copies, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read, "the covenant":

and the giving, of the law: hrwt Ntm, a way of speaking the {x} Jews make use of when they take notice of this privilege; for it was peculiarly given to them with great solemnity by God himself, through the disposition of angels into the hands of Moses the mediator, and by him to them; and on account of this, they reckoned themselves more beloved of God than the rest of mankind {y}

and the service of God; or "the service", as in the Greek text. So the Jews {z} are used to call it hdwbe, "the service"; and false worship is called by them hrz hdwbe, "strange service", which is the title of one of their Misnic tracts; and here it signifies the whole worship of God, in the whole compass of it, sacrifices, prayer, praise, &c. daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly:

and the promises; both temporal and spiritual, especially such as related to the Messiah, and which now had their accomplishment.

{x} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 1. Zohar in Lev. fol. 5. 2, 3. {y} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 103. 2. {z} Vid. Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 2.

Romans 9:5

Ver. 5. Whose are the fathers,.... Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for, according to the {a} Jewish writers,

"they call none in Israel twba, "fathers", but three, and they are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and they call none "mothers" but four, and they are, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah:"

their descent from these fathers was a privilege, though they valued themselves too highly upon it; but what was the crown and glory of all, and which they took the least, though the apostle took the most notice of, is,

and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came; that is, either of the fathers, or of the Israelites, from whom Christ, according to his human nature, sprung; being a son of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, of the seed of David, and the son of Mary; hence the Messiah is called larvyd ahyvm, "the Messiah or Christ of Israel" {b}:

who is described as

over all, angels and men, being the creator, upholder, and governor of them; and as having another nature, a divine one, being

God, truly and properly God,

blessed for evermore; in himself, and to be blessed and praised by all creatures. The apostle alludes to that well known periphrastic name of God so much used by the Jews, awh Kwrb vwdqh, "the holy, blessed God"; to which, by way of assent and confirmation, the apostle puts his

Amen. Now all these particular privileges are mentioned by him, as what heightened his concern for these people; it filled him with heaviness and sorrow of heart, when he considered, that persons who had been partakers of such favours, and especially the last, that the Messiah should spring from them, be born of them, and among them, and yet that they should be given up to ruin and destruction.

{a} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {b} Targum in Isa. xvi. 1, 5. Mic. iv. 8.

Romans 9:6

Ver. 6. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect,.... Or "it is not possible indeed that the word of God should fall"; see **1Sa 3:10**; This the apostle says, partly to relieve his own mind pressed with sorrow, and partly to obviate an objection some might make, or prevent any mistake any might be ready to go into; as though from what he suggested that what God had said concerning the people of the Jews, was made void and without effect: for whether by the "word of God" are meant, the Scriptures in general, the prophecies of the Old Testament, these were now about to have their accomplishment, in the rejection of the Jews, and in the conversion of the Gentiles; or whether by it is designed the Gospel, this, as preached both by Christ and his apostles, had had its effect upon God's chosen ones among that people; it was become the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first: or rather by it may be intended, God's word of promise to Abraham, that he would be a God to him, and to his seed after him; and that he and they should be heir of the world, of this and of that which is to come; particularly the heavenly inheritance, which he gave to him by promise; this was not made void, or had taken none effect: for this was made only to Abraham and his spiritual seed; and therefore though his carnal seed believed not, and for their unbelief should be cut off, this did not make the faith, or faithfulness of God of none effect:

for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; that is, they which are the descendants of the patriarch Jacob, whose name was Israel; or who are of the Israelitish nation, of the stock of Israel, belonging to that people; they are not all larvy ta, "the Israel", by way of emphasis, as in Ps 25:22, or the "Israel of God", **Ga 6:16**, the Israel whom Jehovah the Father has chosen for a peculiar people; which Christ has redeemed from all their iniquities; which the Spirit of God calls with an holy calling, by special grace, to special privileges; the seed of Israel who are justified in Christ, whose iniquities are so pardoned and done away, that when they are sought for they shall not be found, and who are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: or in other words, though they are "Israel after the flesh", 1Co 10:18, yet not after the Spirit; though they are by nation Israelites, they are not Israelites "indeed", as Nathanael was, **Joh 1:47**; they are Jews outwardly, not inwardly; they have not all principles of grace, uprightness, and sincerity in them: now to these spiritual Israelites, or seed of Abraham, were the word of God, the promises of God concerning spiritual and eternal things made, and upon these they had their effect; and therefore it could not be said that the word of God had taken none effect; though the whole body of Israel after the flesh were cut off and rejected. Some copies, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "who are Israelites"; and the Ethiopic version, "they are not all Israel who came out of Egypt".

Romans 9:7

Ver. 7. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham,.... The Jews highly valued themselves, upon being the natural seed of Abraham; and fancied, upon this account, that they were children, which the apostle here denies: neither

are they all children; as in the former verse, he explains in what sense they were Israelites, which he had mentioned among their high characters and privileges, as descending from Jacob, and in what sense they were not; so in this he shows in what manner the "adoption", **Ro 9:4**, belonged to them, and it did not; being Abraham's seed, they were his natural children, and the children of God by national adoption; but, they were not all the spiritual children of Abraham, nor the children of God by the special grace of adoption; these characters only belonged to some of them, and which are equally true of

Gentile believers; who being of the same faith with Abraham, are his children, his seed, and also the children of God: natural descent from Abraham avails nothing in this case, as is clear from the instance of Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was the natural seed of Abraham, as well as Isaac; but he was not a son of Abraham in a spiritual sense, nor a child of God; he was not a child of promise, this was peculiar to Isaac:

but in Isaac shall thy seed be called; see Ge 21:12. The meaning of which is, either that the progeny of Abraham in the line of Isaac should only be called, accounted, and esteemed, in an eminent sense, the seed of Abraham, and not his posterity in the line of Ishmael: agreeably to which the Jews say {c}, that

"Ishmael is not Mhrba lv werz llkb, "in the general account of the seed of Abraham"; for it is said, "in Isaac shall thy seed be called", Ge 21:12; nor is Esau in the general account of the seed of Isaac; hence, says R. Joden bar Shalom, in Isaac, that is, in part of Isaac."

So another {d} of their writers, on mentioning this passage, observes,

"that it is said in Isaac, qxuy lk alw, but "not all Isaac";"

or all that sprung from him. Or this has respect to the most eminent and famous seed of Abraham, the Messiah, in whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed; who was to spring from him by Isaac, in the line of Jacob; and may likewise have a personal respect to Isaac himself, the son of the promise, a child of Abraham in a spiritual sense, when Ishmael was not; and to whom belonged the spiritual promises and blessings, and who was to be, and was effectually called by the grace of God; and may include also his whole seed and posterity, who, both natural and spiritual, were children of the typical promise, the land of Canaan, and the enjoyment of temporal good things; and the matter also children of the antitypical promise, or of those spiritual and eternal things, which God has promised to Abraham's spiritual seed, whether among Jews or Gentiles; and which always have their effect, and had, even when, and though Abraham's natural seed had a "lo ammi", **Ho 1:9**, written upon them.

{c} T. Hieros. Nedarim, fol. 38. 1. {d} Yom Tob in Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 7. sect. 1.

Romans 9:8

Ver. 8. That is, they which are the children of the flesh,.... This is an explanation of the foregoing verse, and shows, that by "the seed of" Abraham are meant, the natural seed of Abraham, who are born after the flesh, or descend from him by carnal generation:

these are not the children of God; that is, not all of them, nor any of them, on account of their being children of the flesh, or Abraham's natural seed; for adoption does not come this way; men do not commence children of God by their fleshly descent; they are not "born of blood", but of God, who are the sons of God:

but the children of the promise are counted for the seed; tyrb ynb "children of the covenant", is a common phrase with the Jews; who reckoned themselves as such, because they were the seed of Abraham: thus in their prayers they say {e} to God,

"we are thy people, Ktyrb ynb, "the children of thy covenant", the children of Abraham thy friend."

And so they were the children of the covenant, or promise, which God made with Abraham and his natural seed, respecting the land of Canaan, and their enjoyment of temporal good things in it; but they were not all of them the children of the promise, which God made to Abraham and his spiritual seed, whether Jews or Gentiles, respecting spiritual and eternal things; to whom alone the promises of God, being their God in a spiritual sense, of spiritual and eternal salvation by Christ, and of the grace of the Spirit of God, and of eternal life belong; and who are the seed which were promised to Abraham by God, saying, "thou shalt be a father of many nations",
Ge 17:4: for which reasons, because these spiritual promises belong to them, and because they themselves were promised to Abraham, as his children, therefore they are called "children of the promise": or rather, because as Isaac was a child of promise, being born after the Spirit, by virtue of the promise of God, through his divine power and goodness, when there were no ground or foundation in nature, for Abraham and Sarah to hope for a son; so these are called "children of promise", **Ga 4:28**, because they are born again, not through the power of nature, and strength of their own free will; they are not born of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, according to the will of God and his abundant mercy, by the word of truth, through his power, Spirit, and grace; and by faith receive the promises made unto them; and are counted and reckoned as "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the

promise", **Ga 3:29**, whether they be Jews, or whether they be Gentiles: and since now the promises of God are all made good to these persons, the word of God is not without effect, or is not made void, by the casting off the children of the flesh, or the carnal seed of Abraham, who were not children of the promise in the sense now given.

{e} Seder Tephillot, fol. 3. 2. Ed. Basil. fol. 6. 1. Ed. Amstelod.

Romans 9:9

Ver. 9. For this is the word of promise,.... The following passage is the Scripture, which contains the promise concerning the birth of Isaac; which was the produce, not of nature, but of divine grace and power; and was typical of the regeneration of God's elect, who "as Isaac was, are the children of promise", **Ga 4:28**, for as Ishmael was a type of them that are born after the flesh, and are carnal men, so Isaac was a type of those, who are born after the Spirit, and are spiritual men: the promise is,

at this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son; the passage referred to is in Ge 18:10; which there stands thus, "I will certainly return unto thee, according to the time of life, and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son": some difference there is between the words as cited by the apostle, and as they stand in the original text; the word "lo", is omitted by the apostle, nor was there any necessity to repeat it, since it was used only to excite Abraham's faith, attention, and wonder; also the phrase "thy wife", is neglected, the reason is, because the words in Genesis are an address to Abraham, here the substance of the promise to him is produced; besides it was not only well known in the apostle's time, that Sarah was the wife of Abraham, but that as such she brought forth Isaac, wherefore it was not so very necessary it should be mentioned here; add to this, that it is not repeated in Ge 18:14, which will justify our apostle in the omission of it: but the greater seeming difference is, that what in Genesis is rendered, "according to the time of life", is by the apostle, "at this time": some think, that there may be an emendation of the present original text, and suppose a various reading, and that the apostle, instead of hyx, "life", read hzx, "this", but there is no occasion for such a supposition, or to make this amendment: for the phrase "the time of life", signifies the present time, the "nunc stans"; so R. Levi ben Gerson {f}, understands this phrase, "according to the time of life", hte tdmwew tmyyq ayhv tazh tek, "according to this time which is now standing and abiding" and adds, rightly is this said, because neither time past nor to come are to be found, only the present time, the "nunc stans" and afterwards more than once explains it, of this present time, the next year: and so both R. Solomon Jarchi, and R. Aben Ezra {g}, expound it, tazh tek, "according to this time", the year following; that is, exactly according to this present time next year, or this time twelve month; besides, in Ge 17:21 it is said, "at this set time", and in Ge 18:14, "at the appointed time"; all which support the apostle in his version.

{f} Perush in Gen. fol. 26. 4. & 27. 2, 3. Vid. in 2 Reg. iv. 16. {g} In Gen. xviii. 10.

Romans 9:10

Ver. 10. And not only this,.... This instance of Ishmael and Isaac, is not the only one, proving that Abraham's natural seed, the children of the flesh, are not all children, the children of God:

but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, "it was said unto her", **Ro 9:12**, being in a parenthesis, "the elder shall serve the younger". The apostle was aware, that the Jews would be ready to say, that the instance of Ishmael and Isaac was not a pertinent one; since Ishmael was not born of Sarah, the lawful wife of Abraham, but of a bondwoman, which was the reason his rejection, when Isaac was the son of promise, by the lawful wife, and that they were children of Abraham in the line of Isaac, and so children of the promise, as he was: wherefore he proceeds to mention the case of Jacob and Esau, which was not liable to any such exception; seeing they not only had the same father, but the same mother, Isaac's lawful wife; they were conceived by Rebecca at once, were in the same womb together, were twins, and if any had the preference and advantage, Esau had it, being born first; and yet a difference was made between these two by God himself, and which was notified by him to the mother of them, before either were born.

Romans 9:11

Ver. 11. For [the children] being not yet born, So says {h} the Chaldee paraphrast,

"the prophet said unto them, was it not said of Jacob,
dylyta ald de, "when he was not yet born", that he should be greater than his brother?"

the Syriac version supplies, "his children", that is, Isaac's; and the Arabic version, "his two children". This shows, that the apostle designs not the posterity, but the very persons of Jacob and Esau; since as he speaks of their conception in the verse preceding, so of their birth in this: and though in the words of God to Rebecca, and which are urged in favour of the other sense, it is said, "two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people", Ge 25:23; yet this primarily respects the persons of Jacob and Esau, as the roots of their respective offspring; and only secondarily their posterity, as branches that should sprout from them; it properly regards their persons, and only in an improper, figurative, and metonymical sense, their seed; for in no other sense could two nations, or two manner of people be in Rebecca's womb, than as there were two persons there, who would be the authors of two nations and people; and whatever may be said for their respective posterity, taking their rise from one common father Isaac, or for their being chosen or rejected as nations, before they were in being as such, yet it cannot be said with any propriety, that "Rebecca conceived" their several offspring "by one, even by our father Isaac", **Ro 9:10**: which sense well agrees with the scope of the apostle, which is to prove, that all were not Israel which were of Israel, and that all Abraham's natural seed were not the children of God; which he could not better exemplify, than in the persons of Jacob and Esau; for to have instanced in the posterity of Esau, would have been foreign to his purpose, and not accord with the continuation of his discourse in the following verses, which entirely proceeds upon the subject of personal election and rejection, and with the scriptural account of the personal characters of Jacob and Esau; and from hence, as from many other passages, it may be concluded, that predestination, whether to life or death, is a personal thing, concerns particular persons, and not nations, or collective bodies of men:

neither having done any good or evil; Jacob and Esau were under all considerations upon an equal foot, were just in the same situation and condition, when the one was loved and the other hated; or in other words, when the one was chosen, and the other rejected; they were neither of them as yet born, and had they been born, their birth and parentage could have been no reason why one was chose and the other not, because in both the same; nor had the one performed a good action, or the other an evil one; so that Jacob was not loved for his good works, nor Esau hated for his evil ones; which confirms the truth of this doctrine, that the objects of predestination, whether to life or death, are alike, are in the same situation and condition: whether they are considered in the corrupt mass, or as fallen, they are all equally such, so that there could not be any reason in them, why some should be chosen and others left; or whether in the pure mass, antecedent to the fall, and without any consideration of it, which is clearly signified in this passage, there could be nothing in the one, which was not in the other, that could be the cause of such a difference made: so that it follows, that works neither good nor evil are the causes moving God to predestinate, whether to life or death; good works are not the cause of election to eternal life, for not only, this act of distinguishing grace, passed before any were done, but also these are fruits, effects, and consequence of it, and so cannot be the causes thereof; God does not proceed in order branches of salvation, as in calling, justification, &c. according to them, and therefore it cannot be thought he should proceed upon this foot in the first step to it; and which is ascribed to his free grace, in opposition to works. Evil works are not the cause of the decree of rejection, for this also being as early as the decree of election, as it must unavoidably be, was before any evil works were done; sin is not the cause of God's decree, but of the thing decreed, eternal death; otherwise all the individuals in the world being equally in sin, must have been rejected: it remains then, that not any works of men, good or bad, are the cause of predestination in either of its branches, but the sovereign will and secret counsel of God: that

the purpose of God according to election might stand: the decree of God, which is entirely free, and depends upon his own will and choice, stands firm and immutable, and is not to be disannulled by earth or hell, for it stands not on the precarious foot of works:

not of works: did it, it would not stand sure, for nothing is more variable and uncertain, than the actions of men:

but of him that calleth: who is the unchangeable Jehovah; it stands upon his invariable will and immutable grace, whose "gifts and calling are without repentance", Ro 11:29.

{h} Targum in Hos. xii. 3.

Romans 9:12

Ver. 12. It was said unto her,.... To Rebecca, Ge 25:23,

the elder shall serve the younger, or "the greater shall serve the lesser", an Hebrew way of speaking; so Japheth is called lwdgh, "the great", or, as we render it, "the elder", Ge 10:21; and the evil imagination is said {i} to be lwdg, "greater", that is, elder than the good, thirteen years; See Gill on "Lu 22:26"; The sense is, Esau shall be a servant to Jacob; which is to be understood, not of temporal servitude; for in this sense he never was a servant to him; so far from it, that as soon as Jacob had got the birthright and blessing, he was obliged to flee from the face and fury of Esau; and upon his return after many years, he sent messengers to Esau in a very submissive manner, charging them after this manner, "thus shall ye shall say to my lord Esau, thy servant Jacob saith thus", &c. Ge 32:4, and when he found that his brother was coming to meet him, which threw him into a panic fear, lest he should "smite [him], and the mother with the children", Ge 32:11, he prepares presents for him; and when he came to him, bowed himself seven times, and his wives and children bowed likewise; and the language in which he addressed his brother Esau, all the while they were together, was that of "my lord": now if this oracle was to be understood of outward temporal servitude, it is strange it should have no appearance, nor any shadow of an accomplishment in the persons of Jacob and Esau, supposing it was to have one in their posterity; and indeed the completion of it, in this sense, is not very evident in their offspring. It is certain, there was a long train of dukes and kings in Esau's family, before there was any king in Israel; the posterity of Esau were in lordly grandeur and splendour, when the children of Israel were grievously oppressed with hard bondage in Egypt. The single instance usually referred to, when the Edomites became tributaries to David, was near a thousand years after the giving out of this oracle; and this show of servitude did not last long, for in Joram's time they revolted, and so continued; and it is evident, that at the time of the Babylonish captivity, the children of Edom were prosperous and triumphant, and said concerning Jerusalem, "Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof", Ps 137:7: this servitude therefore is to be understood in a spiritual sense, of Esau's exclusion from the favour of God, and blessings of grace, signified by his being rejected from inheriting the blessing, which was given to Jacob; and it appeared that he was not a son, but a servant, by his departure, and pitching his dwelling elsewhere; which showed he had no interest in spiritual adoption, no right to the covenant of grace, nor was he an heir of heaven, all which were peculiar to Jacob: Esau was a servant of sin, under the dominion of it, and in bondage to it; whilst Jacob was the Lord's freeman, and, as a prince, had power with God and with men, and prevailed: Esau was serviceable to Jacob, both in things temporal and spiritual; as reprobates are to the elect, for all things are for their sakes, and work together for their good; Jacob's being obliged to flee from his brother, was for his good; by this means he got him a suitable wife, and large substance: his brother's meeting him on his return, which gave him so much pain and uneasiness, issued in his spiritual good; this sent him to the throne of grace, to humble himself before God, acknowledge his mercies, and his dependence on him, to implore his help, and plead his promises; and thus the oracle was verified in the persons of Jacob and Esau.

{i} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 80. 1.

Romans 9:13

Ver. 13. As it is written,.... In **Mal 1:2**;

Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. These words are explanative of the former; they are of like import, and the one interpret the other; and show, that the former are to be understood in a spiritual, and not in a temporal sense, and of the persons, and not the posterity of Jacob and Esau; for though Malachi prophesied long after Jacob and Esau were personally dead, yet the Lord in that prophecy manifestly directs the murmuring Jews to the personal regard he had had to Jacob and Esau, and which had continued in numberless instances to their respective posterities, in order to stop their mouths, and reprove their ingratitude; and though he speaks of the nation of the Edomites, and to the posterity of Israel, yet it is evident, that he has a respect to the persons of Jacob and Esau, from whence they sprung, when he says, "was not Esau Jacob's brother?" **Mal 1:2**, now though an Edomite may be said to be brother to an Israelite, yet Esau is never said, nor can he with any propriety be said to be the brother of Jacob's posterity: it remains, that these words regard their persons, and express the true spring and source of the choice of the one, and the rejection of the other; and which holds true of all the instances of either kind: everlasting and unchangeable love is the true cause and spring of the choice of particular persons to eternal salvation; and hatred is the cause of rejection, by which is meant not positive hatred, which can only have for its object sin and sinners, or persons so considered; but negative hatred, which is God's will, not to give eternal life to some persons; and shows itself by a neglect of them, taking no notice of them, passing them by, when he chose others; so the word "hate" is used for neglect, taking no notice, where positive hatred cannot be thought to take place, in Lu 14:26.

Romans 9:14

Ver. 14. What shall we say then?.... A form of expression the apostle frequently uses, when he is about to introduce an objection, as is what follows:

is there unrighteousness with God? This is not an objection of his own, but of an adversary, which he takes up and returns an answer to; and which itself greatly serves to settle and confirm the true sense and meaning of the apostle in this place; as that it could not be, that election and rejection of men should proceed according to their merits; or that God chooses some for their good works, and rejects others for their wicked works, because no man could ever pretend to charge God with unrighteousness on this account; nor could it be that God chose and rejected men, upon a foresight of their good and evil works, for this also would not be liable to such an objection; nor that the Jews, having made the law of none effect by their traditions, despised the Gospel, crucified Christ, and persecuted his disciples, are therefore cast off, and the Gentiles, being obedient both in word and deed, are received into favour, for this likewise would not be chargeable with unrighteousness by men; but that two persons, as Jacob and Esau, and the same may be said of all mankind, being upon an equal foot, not being yet born, nor having done either good or evil, an inequality, a difference is made between them, by God himself; the one is chose, the other passed by: now in this is some show, some pretence at least, for such an objection; nor is it any wonder to meet with it from the carnal reason of men; wherefore we may be sure that the latter, and not either of the former, is the true sense of the apostle; since only this, and not either of them, is liable to such an exception: let us attend to the apostle's answer, which is "first" in his usual manner, by way of detestation and abhorrence,

God forbid: God is not unrighteous in his nature; nor in any of his ways and works; nor in this, in choosing some and rejecting others. There is no unrighteousness with God in that part of predestination, commonly called election; for this is neither an act of justice, nor injustice; not of justice, but of grace and mercy; of undue and undeserved grace and mercy, of mere sovereign grace and mercy; and is what God was not obliged to do; wherefore to choose some and not others, is no act of injustice; for injustice is a violation of justice, which has no place in this affair: if it is an act of injustice, it must be either to them that are chosen, or to them that are not; not to them that are chosen, to them it is an act of favour and good will, they are chosen to grace and glory, to holiness here, and happiness hereafter; not to them that are passed by, because they had no right nor claim to the grace and glory, which by this act are denied them, and therefore no injustice is done them. Every prince may choose his own ministers and favourites, and who he will have of his privy council, without doing any injustice, to those he takes no notice of; every man may choose his own company who he will converse with, without doing any wrong to such he does not think fit to admit to an intimacy with him; and yet men are not willing to allow the Most High that liberty, which every man daily takes, and may lawfully make use of: nor is there any unrighteousness with God in the other branch of predestination, commonly called reprobation, which is either negative or positive; negative reprobation is the act of preterition, or God's passing by, leaving, taking no notice of some, while he chose others: now the objects of this act are to be considered either in the pure, or in the corrupt mass; if in the pure mass, i.e. of creatureship, which seems to be the apostle's meaning, as being not yet created, made, or born, and having done neither good nor evil; no injustice is done by this act, for as it found them, it left them; it put nothing into them, no evil in them, nor appointed them to any, of any kind; man after, and notwithstanding this act, came into the world an upright creature, and became sinful, not by virtue of this act, but by their own inventions: or if considered as in the corrupt mass, as fallen creatures, sunk into sin and misery, which is the case of all mankind; since God was not obliged to save any of the sinful race of men, whose destruction was of themselves, it could be no injustice to pass by some of them in this condition, when he chose others; for if it would have been no injustice to have condemned all, as he did the angels that sinned, whom he spared not, it can be no act of injustice in him, to leave some of them in that condition, which sin had brought them into, whilst he has mercy on others; unless to have mercy on any, can be thought to be an act of injustice: what unrighteousness can there be in this procedure, any more than in drowning the world of the ungodly, whilst Noah and his family were saved in the ark? or in raining showers of fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities of the plain, whilst Lot, his wife, and two daughters, were delivered from the same? Positive reprobation is the decree, or appointment to damnation: now as God damns no man but for sin, so he has decreed to damn no man but for sin; and if it is no unrighteousness in him to damn men for sin, as to be sure it is not, so it can be no unrighteousness in him to decree to damn any for it: upon the whole it appears, that whatever show, upon first sight, there may be for a charge of unrighteousness against such a procedure of the Divine Being, there is no real foundation for it. The objection is to be treated with abhorrence and indignation.

Romans 9:15

Ver. 15. For he saith to Moses,.... That is, God said to Moses. The apostle goes on to answer to the above objections, by producing some testimonies out of the writings of Moses, in favour of both branches of predestination; showing, that the doctrine he had advanced, was no other than what God himself had delivered to Moses, whose name and writings were in great esteem with the Jews, whereby the apostle might hope to give full satisfaction in this point. The first passage he cites, is in Ex 33:19.

And will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. This is produced, in favour of special, particular, and personal election, and to clear it from any charge of unrighteousness; and by it, it appears, that God bestows his grace and mercy in time, on such persons he has willed and determined from all eternity to bestow it; this, is clear from hence, for since all this is dependent on his will, it must be as this was his will from eternity, seeing no new will can possibly arise in God, God wills nothing in time, but what he willed before time; that this grace and mercy are shown only to some persons, and that the only reason of this is his sovereign will and pleasure, and not the works and merits of men; wherefore since this grace and mercy rise out of his own free good will and pleasure, and are by no means the creature's due, it most clearly follows, that God in determining to bestow his grace and mercy, and in the actual doing of it, whilst he determines to deny it, and does deny it to others, cannot possibly be chargeable with any unrighteousness.

Romans 9:16

Ver. 16. So then it is not of him that willeth,.... This is not a consequence drawn by an adversary, showing that if this be the case, it signifies nothing for men to will or do, they may even sit still and do nothing, but depend on the mercy of God; but this is a conclusion of the apostle's from the above cited testimony, inferring from thence, that election, which is what he is discoursing of, is "not of him that willeth",

nor of him that runneth: that is, is not owing to the will or works of men, to the desires, inclinations, and affections of their minds, or to the actions of their lives; these are not the motives, conditions, or causes of this act:

but of God that sheweth mercy; in a free sovereign way and manner, which he is not obliged to by anything the creature wills or works; he is at full liberty, notwithstanding whatever they will or do, to give his grace and mercy, when, where, and to whom he pleases; and therefore to give it to some, and deny it to others, can never be accounted an act of injustice, since he is not bound to give it to any. Some make the it to be the blessing of Isaac, which was not of the will of any of the parties concerned; not of Isaac who willed it to Esau; nor of Esau who willed it to himself, but had it not; nor of the will of the persons who had their desires, not of the will of Rebecca, who was desirous of it for her son Jacob, nor of the will of Jacob, who desired it for himself, though he had it; nor of either of them that ran, not of Esau, who made haste to hunt for, and prepare venison for his father, nor of Jacob, who ran to the flock, for two kids of the goats; but of God that showed mercy to him, who, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, had signified before to Rebecca, that "the elder should serve the younger", Ge 25:23: as the apostle had mentioned this so lately, it might still be in his thoughts, and he may allude to it; but election being what he is discoursing of in the context, that is the "it" here designed; and what is true of that, is true of salvation in all its parts, and therefore some understand it in the large sense of salvation; though by others so qualified and limited, as to spoil the glory of the text: some saying that the sense is, it is not of him that willeth and runneth wrong, but of the grace and mercy of God; but as no man would ever assert, that salvation is of him that wills and runs wrong, so the apostle had no occasion to deny it: others say, that it is not only of him that wills, and only of him that runs, but also of God that shows mercy; making man's will and works joint causes with the mercy of God in man's salvation; and besides, as Austin {k} long ago observes, according to this sense, the words might as well be read, it is not only of God that shows mercy, but of him that willeth, and of him that runneth, which no Christian would dare to say: the true sense is, that as election, which is the leading step to salvation, is not owing at all to the will of men, but to the good pleasure and will of God; and not at all to the works of men, that being done before them, and they being the fruits and effects of that, but to the free love, grace, and good will of God; so salvation in all its parts and branches, as redemption, justification, regeneration, calling, and conversion, faith, repentance, hope, love, &c. and eternal life, is not to be ascribed at all to the will of men, nor at all to the works of men, but entirely and alone to the love, grace, and mercy of God through Christ.

{k} Enchiridion, c. 32.

Romans 9:17

Ver. 17. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh,.... arq rma, "The Scripture saith", is a Talmudic {l} way of speaking, used when any point is proved from Scripture; and is of the same signification with
anmxr rma, "the merciful God says"; and so the sense of it here is, God said to

Pharaoh; the testimony here cited, stands in **Ex 9:16**; where it is read thus, "for this cause have I raised thee up",
Kytdmeh, or "made thee stand", "for to show in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth"; and is produced by the apostle in proof of the other branch of predestination, called reprobation, and to vindicate it from the charge of unrighteousness: in which may be observed, that the act of raising up of Pharaoh is God's act,

even for this same purpose have I raised thee up; which may be understood in every sense that is put upon that phrase, unless that which some Jewish {m} writers have annexed to it, namely, that God raised Pharaoh from the dead; otherwise, I say, all the rest may well enough be thought to be comprised in it; as that God ordained and appointed him from eternity, by certain means to this end; that he made him to exist in time, or brought him into being; that he raised him to the throne, promoted him to that high honour and dignity; that he preserved him, and did not cut him off as yet; that he strengthened and hardened his heart, irritated, provoked, and stirred him up against his people Israel; and suffered him to go all the lengths he did, in his obstinacy and rebellion: all which was done,

that I might shew my power in thee; his superior power to him, his almighty power in destroying him and his host in the Red sea, when the Israelites were saved: and the ultimate end which God had in view in this was,

that my name might be declared throughout all the earth; that he himself might be glorified, and that the glory of his perfections, particularly of his wisdom, power, and justice, might be celebrated throughout the world. The sum of it is, that this man was raised up by God in every sense, for God to show his power in his destruction, that he might be glorified; from whence the apostle deduces the following conclusion.

{l} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 82. 2. & 84. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 47. 1. Zebachim, fol. 4. 1, 2. & passim. {m} Pirke Eliezer, c. 42.

Romans 9:18

Ver. 18. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will,.... These are the express words of the former testimony: it follows,

and whom he will he hardeneth; which is the just and natural consequence of what is contained in the latter; for if God could, or he did, without any injustice, raise up Pharaoh, and harden his heart against him and his people, that he might rise up against him and destroy him by his power for his own glory, then he may harden any other person, and even whom he will: now this hardening of men's hearts may be understood in perfect agreement with the justice and holiness of God: men first harden their own hearts by sinning, as Pharaoh did; what God does, is by leaving them to the hardness of their hearts, denying them that grace which only can soften them, and which he is not obliged to give, and therefore does them no injustice in withholding it from them; by sending them both mercies and judgments, which through the corruption of their hearts, are the means of the greater hardening of them; so judgments in the case of Pharaoh, and mercies in the case of others; see **Isa 6:10**; by delivering them up into the hands of Satan, and to their own lusts, which they themselves approve of; and by giving them up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart, as a just punishment for their impieties.

Romans 9:19

Ver. 19. Thou wilt say then unto me,.... That is, thou wilt object to me; for this is another objection of the adversary, against the doctrine the apostle was advancing: and it is an objection of a mere natural man, of one given up to a reprobate mind, of an insolent hardened sinner; it discovers the enmity of the carnal mind to God; if is one of the high things that exalts itself against the knowledge of him; it is with a witness a stretching out of the hand against God, and strengthening a man's self against the Almighty; it is a running upon him, even upon the thick bosses of his bucklers; it carries in it the marks of ill nature, surliness, and rudeness, to the last degree:

why doth he yet find fault? The objector does not think fit to name the name of "God", or "the Lord", but calls him "he"; and a considerable emphasis lies upon the word "yet": what as if he should say, is he not content with the injustice he has already exercised, in passing by some, when he chose others; in leaving them to themselves, and hardening their hearts against him, and to go on in their own ways, which must unavoidably end in destruction; but after all this, is angry with them, finds fault with them, blames, accuses, and condemns them, for that which they cannot help; nay, for that which he himself wills? this is downright cruelty and tyranny. The objector seems to have a particular regard to the case of Pharaoh, the apostle had instanced in, when after God had declared that he had raised him up for this very purpose, to make known his power, and show forth his glory in all the world, still finds fault with him and says, "as yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?" **Ex 9:17**; and yet he himself had hardened his heart, and continued to harden his heart, that he might not let them go as yet; and when he had let them go, hardened his heart again to pursue after them, when he drowned him and his host in the Red sea; all which in this objection, is represented as unparalleled cruelty and unmercifulness; though it is not restrained to this particular case, but is designed to be applied to all other hardened persons; and to expose the unreasonableness of the divine proceedings, in hardening men at his pleasure; and then blaming them for acting as hardened ones, when he himself has made them so, and wills they should act in this manner:

for who hath resisted his will? This is said in support of the former, and means not God's will of command, which is always resisted more or less, by wicked men and devils; but his will of purpose, his counsels and decrees, which stand firm and sure, and can never be resisted, so as to be frustrated and made void. This the objector takes up, and improves against God; that since he hardens whom he will, and there is no resisting his will, the fault then can never lie in them who are hardened, and who act as such, but in God; and therefore it must be unreasonable in him to be angry with, blame, accuse, and condemn persons for being and doing that, which he himself wills them to be and do. Let the disputers of this world, the reasoners of the present age, come and see their own faces, and read the whole strength of their objections, in this wicked man's; and from whence we may be assured, that since the objections are the same, the doctrine must be the same that is objected to: and this we gain however by it, that the doctrines of particular and personal election and reprobation, were the doctrines of the apostle; since against no other, with any face, or under any pretence, could such an objection be formed: next follows the apostle's answer.

Romans 9:20

Ver. 20. Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God?.... Or "answerest again to God": some have been so weak and wicked as to suggest, that the apostle met with an objection he could not answer, or give a fair solution of, and therefore takes the method he does: but when the several things returned in answer by the apostle are considered, it will appear that he has taken the wisest method to silence such an audacious objector, and that he abundantly clears God from the charge of cruelty and unmercifulness. And he answers "first", by putting the insolent creature in mind of what he was; "nay, but O man, who art thou?" &c. Thou art man, and not God; a creature, and not the Creator; and must not expect that he, thy Creator, will give an account of his matters to thee, or a reason why he does, this or the other thing. Thou art but a man, who in his best estate was vanity, being mutable; thou art a fallen sinful creature, and obnoxious to the wrath and displeasure of God for thy sins, and darest thou to open thy mouth against him? thou art a poor, foolish, and ignorant man, born like a wild ass's colt, without understanding, and wilt thou take upon thee to confront, direct, or counsel the Most High, or tell him what is fitting to be done, or not done? "next" the apostle answers, by pointing out his folly and madness, in replying to God. To speak to God in behalf of a man's self at the throne of grace, in the most submissive manner, for any mercy or favour wanted, is an high privilege, and it is a wonderful condescension in God to admit of; and when a man, a good man takes upon him to plead with God on the behalf of others, of a wicked people, a sinful nation, he ought to set before him the example and conduct of Abraham, who in a like case acknowledged himself to be but dust and ashes, and more than once entreated, that the Lord would not be angry at his importunity; but for a man to answer again to God, which a servant ought not to do to his master, to litigate a point with God, to dispute a matter with him, is the highest instance of arrogance and impudence: "woe unto him that striveth with his Maker, let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth", Isa 45:9: with their equals, with men like themselves, but let no man dare to "contend with God"; if he should, "he cannot answer him one of a thousand", **Job 9:3**; for "he is wise in heart", in forming all his counsels, purposes, and decrees; "and mighty in strength", to execute them; "who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered?" **Job 9:4**. Another way the apostle takes in answering the objection is, by showing the absurdity of a creature's wrangling with God about his make, and the circumstances in which he is made:

shall the thing formed, say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? reference is had to Isa 45:9; Now as it would be a most absurd thing for the clay, was it capable of speaking, to say to the fashioner of it, why dost thou put me into such or such a shape and form? or for any piece of workmanship to say to the maker of it, he has no hands, no head, no judgment and skill; or for a child to say to its parents, what begettest thou, or what hast thou brought forth? so absurd and unreasonable is it, for any to say to God, why hast thou appointed me to such and such ends and purposes, and has brought me into being in such a manner, and under such circumstances? There is a story in the Talmud {n}, which may be pertinently produced here;

"it happened to R. Eleazar ben Simeon, of Migdal Gedur, that he went from his

master's house, and he was riding on an ass, and travelling by the sea side, and as he rejoiced exceedingly, and his heart was lifted up because he had learnt much of the law, there was joined to him a certain man that was very much deformed, and says to him, peace be upon thee Rabbi; but he did not return the salutation to him, but says to him "Raca", how deformed is that man! perhaps all thy townsmen are as deformed as thee; he replied to him, I do not know, but go and say, ynavev
Nmwal, "to the workman that made me", how ugly is this vessel thou hast made, when he knew in himself that he has sinned; upon this the Rabbi dismounted his ass, and fell down before him, and said unto him, I entreat of thee forgive me; he said unto him, I cannot forgive thee, till thou goest "to the workman that made me", and say, how ugly is this vessel which thou hast made."

{n} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 2. Massechet Derech Eretz, c. 4. fol. 18. 1.

Romans 9:21

Ver. 21. Hath not the potter power over the clay,.... By the power the potter has over the clay, to shape it in what form he pleases, and out of it to make what vessels he pleases, and for what purposes he thinks fit, which will be most to his own advantage, the apostle expresses the sovereign and unlimited powder which God has over his creatures; the passages referred to, are Isa 64:8, in which God is represented as the potter, and men as clay in his hands; now if the potter has such power over the clay which he did not make, only has made a purchase of, or has it in his possession, much more has God a power, who has created the clay, to appoint out of it persons to different uses and purposes, for his own glory, as he sees fit; even

of the same lump, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour. The apostle seems to design hereby, to point out to us the object of predestination to be man, as yet not made, but as lying in the mere mass of creatureship, signified by the unformed clay, before put into any shape; and is an allusion to the first creation of man, out of the clay, or dust of the earth, **Ge 2:7**; for such a consideration of man best agrees with the clay, lump, or mass, not yet formed, than as already made, and much less as fallen and corrupted: for if men, in predestination, were considered in the corrupt mass, or as fallen creatures, they could not be so well said to be made out of it, both to honour and dishonour; but rather since they were all dishonourable, that some were left in that dishonour, and others removed from it unto honour: besides, if this is not the case, God must create man without an end, which is contrary to the principle of reason and wisdom; the end is the cause, for which a thing is what it is; and it is a known rule, that what is first in intention, is last in execution, and "vice versa": the end is first fixed, and then the means; for God to create man, and then to fix the end of his creation, is to do what no wise potter would do, first make his pots, and then think of the end of making them, and the use they are to be put unto. To make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour, is for God to appoint creatures, which are to be made out of the same mass and lump, for his own glory; which end, his own glory, he determines to bring about by different means, as these following: with respect to the vessels of honour, whom he appoints for his glory, he determines to create them; to suffer them to fall into sin, whereby they become polluted and guilty; to raise and recover them, by the obedience, sufferings, and death of his Son; to regenerate, renew, and sanctify them, by his Spirit and grace, and to bring them to eternal happiness; and hereby compass the aforesaid end, his own glory, the glorifying of his grace and mercy, in a way consistent with justice and holiness: with respect to the vessels of dishonour, whom he also appoints for the glorifying of himself, he determines to create them out of the same lump; to suffer them to fall into sin; to leave them in their sins, in the pollution and guilt of them, and to condemn them for them; and hereby gain his ultimate end, his own glory, glorifying the perfections of his power, justice, and holiness, without the least blemish to his goodness and mercy: now if a potter has power, for his own advantage and secular interest, to make out of the same clay what vessels he pleases; much more has God a power, out of the same mass and lump of creatureship, to appoint creatures he determines to make to his own glory; which he brings about by different methods, consistent with the perfections of his nature.

Romans 9:22

Ver. 22. What if God, willing to show his wrath,.... The apostle proceeds to clear God from any charge of cruelty and unmercifulness, by observing his conduct in time, both towards those he passes by, and towards those he chooses; for in this and the following verse, nothing is said relating to any act of God before time, everything of that kind being considered already. In this verse, the apostle considers the conduct of God towards the vessels of dishonour; and let it be observed, that these are called

vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; they are said to be vessels, and so no longer considered in the clay, in the mass and heap of creatureship, but as

creatures formed and made, and brought into being; and so to be used as instruments in God's hands, to subserve his ends and purposes, and therefore called "vessels"; and not only so, but "vessels of wrath", fallen sinful creatures, and so deserving of the wrath of God, and objects of his vindictive justice, in whom he may righteously display his wrath and vengeance: hence they may be so called, being as vessels filled with his wrath; as such who are the instruments and executioners of his wrath are called, in Isa 13:5, wmez ylk, "vessels of his wrath"; and in
Jer 50:25; where the Septuagint use the same phrase as here: and they are moreover said to be "fitted for destruction", as Haman is said to be by the Jews {o}; whom they affirm to be the same with Memucan, and ask why is his name called Memucan? and answer,
twnerwpl Nkwmv, "because he was fitted for punishment": so these are said to be "fitted for destruction", that is, eternal damnation; not by God, for this does not respect God's act of ordination to punishment; but by Satan, the god of this world, that blinds them, who works effectually in them, and leads them captive at his will; and by themselves, by their own wickedness, hardness of heart, and impenitence, do they treasure up to themselves wrath, against the day of wrath, so that their destruction is of themselves: a phrase somewhat like this is used in Ps 31:12, where the Psalmist, under some dismal apprehensions of himself, says, that he was like dba ylk, "a perishing vessel", or "a vessel of perdition"; the Septuagint render it, skeuov apolwlov, "a lost vessel". Now what is the method of the divine conduct towards such persons? he

endures [them] with much longsuffering; as he did the old world, before he destroyed it; and as he did Pharaoh, before he cut him off: God not only supports such persons in their beings, amidst all their impieties and iniquities, but follows and fills them with his providential goodness, insomuch that many of them have more than heart can wish; nay, to many he affords the outward means of grace, which they slight and despise; externally calls them, but they refuse, loving darkness rather than light, and therefore are inexcusable: now if after all this patience, indulgence, and forbearance, when he could in justice have sent them to hell long ago, he is "willing to show his wrath"; his displicency at sin and sinners, his vindictive justice, his righteous vengeance:

and to make his power known; what it is he can do, by the utter destruction and damnation of such persons; what man in his senses can ever find fault with such a procedure, or charge it with tyranny, cruelty, and unmercifulness?

{o} T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 12. 2.

Romans 9:23

Ver. 23. And that he might make known the riches of his glory,.... That is, his glorious riches, the perfections of his nature, his love, grace, and mercy, his wisdom, power, faithfulness, justice, and holiness; all which are most evidently displayed in the salvation of his people, here called

vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory. They are said to be vessels, and so considered as creatures, made and brought into being; "vessels of mercy", and so fallen creatures, and by sin become miserable, for only such are objects of mercy: they are not called so, because deserving of mercy more than others, they are in no wise better than others, and are by nature children of wrath, even as others; but because God of his infinite goodness fills them with his mercy, displays it in them, in the redemption of them by his Son, in the regeneration of them by his Spirit, and in their eternal salvation: and these are by him "afore prepared unto glory"; to everlasting happiness, which he has chosen them to before time, and calls them to in time; to this glory he does not take them, until he has prepared them for it; which act of preparation does not regard the eternal predestination of them to eternal life, but an act of his grace towards them in time; and which lies in putting upon them the righteousness of his Son, and in putting his grace in them; or in other words, in justifying them by the imputation and application of the righteousness of his Son unto them, and by the regeneration, renovation, and sanctification of their hearts, by his Spirit. Now what if God willing to make known his glorious perfections, by displaying his mercy to such sinners, and by preparing them for heaven in a way consistent with his holiness and justice, what can any man that has the exercise of his reason object to this? The whole of his conduct is free from blame and censure; the vessels of wrath he shows his wrath upon, are such as fit themselves for destruction, and whom he endures with much longsuffering and patience, and therefore he cannot be chargeable with cruelty; the vessels of mercy he brings to glory, none of them are taken thither, until they are prepared for it, in a way of righteousness and holiness, and therefore he cannot be charged with acting contrary to the perfections of his nature.

Romans 9:24

Ver. 24. Even us whom he hath called,.... From election the apostle proceeds to calling, the fruit and evidence of it, taking the same method he did in **Ro 8:30**, with a view to treat of the call of the Gentiles, of which he afterwards gives proof from prophecy; whence it appears to be according to divine predestination, upon which prophecy is founded; for God foretells that such a thing will be, because he has foreordained it shall be. These words are explanative of the former, and show who the vessels of mercy are; they are such whom God calls by his grace. Election may be known by calling, as the cause by its effect, and that without an extraordinary revelation. This may as well be known, as man's adoption, justification, and the forgiveness of his sins; for as all the chosen are, and shall be called in time, so all that are truly called by the grace of God, are manifestly, and to a demonstration, the chosen vessels of salvation: if a man is satisfied of his calling, he ought to be equally so of his election, the one being demonstrable by the other; and for such an one to doubt of it, is his sin and crime. Moreover, the above phrase, "afore prepared for glory", is here further explained; to be afore prepared for glory, is no other than to be called, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God; for this is the saints' preparation for glory, before they come to it; and hereby the means are expressed, even sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, through which God appoints his people unto salvation: now this calling is to be understood, not of a call to any office, as of Aaron to the priesthood, of Saul to the kingdom, of the disciples of Christ to apostleship, or of ministers to the work of the ministry; for persons may be called to the highest office in church and state, as Judas to: apostleship, and Pharaoh to the throne of Egypt, and yet have no share in electing grace: nor of a call by the external ministry of the word, which is often slighted, despised, and of none effect; in this sense many are called, who are not chosen: but of a call that is by the powerful, efficacious, and irresistible grace of God; a call that is internal, that reaches the heart, and not the ear only: a special one that is peculiar to God's elect, is by special grace, and is to special blessings, as both grace and glory; it is an high, heavenly, and holy calling, and is without repentance; between which and glorification, as between it and eternal election, there is a close and an inseparable connection. The objects of this grace follow,

not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles; not all the Jews, nor all the Gentiles, but some of each; as all are not chosen, all are not redeemed, only some out of every kindred, tongue, nation, and people; so not all, but some only are called by grace: and this is not peculiar to the Jews, it reaches to the Gentiles also; and under the present dispensation, to the far greater number of them.

Romans 9:25

Ver. 25. As he also saith in Osee,.... **Ho 2:23**, so "Hosea" is called "Osee", as here, in the Septuagint in Ne 10:23. That is, as God says in the prophecy of Hosea, which was given by divine inspiration; and speaks of the calling of the Gentiles, as the spiritual Israel, after God had wrote a "lo-ammi", **Ho 1:9**, and a "loruhamah", **Ho 1:6**, upon the people of the Jews; and shows, that he had appointed some from among the Gentiles, to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ; since he foretells their calling, long before they were in being; which could have no other foundation than his own eternal sovereign will and pleasure:

I will call them my people, which were not my people; his people they were before he called them, in some sense; inasmuch as he had chosen them for his people, had promised in covenant they should be, had given them to Christ as his people, and him to be a covenant to them: who, as such, made reconciliation for them, sanctified them by his blood, redeemed and saved them; but then they were not known to be the people of God, neither by themselves, who knew not God, and so could not know themselves to be his people; nor by others, by the Jews, by whom they were called the uncircumcision, sinners of the Gentiles; looking upon the character or the people of God, as only belonging to themselves: God had not as yet laid hold on them as his people, and claimed his right in them, and made known himself to them as their covenant God; he had not avouched them to be his people, nor had they avouched him to be their God; as yet they were not his willing people, nor a holy people, not being formed for himself, by his mighty grace; nor a people near unto him, with respect to worship and fellowship, but afar off from him. His calling them his people, is his acquainting them with their relation to him, which he had taken them in to himself, of his own grace; for so it is in **Ho 2:23**: "And I will say unto them which were not my people, thou art my people": in the effectual calling, the Spirit of God is sent down into the hearts of his people, to witness their relation to him, and to work faith in their souls, to receive the testimony; when they reply and say, "thou art my God", **Ho 2:23**, and so they come to know themselves to be the people of God, of which they were before ignorant; and to be known others, by being made a willing people, in the day God's power upon them, willing to be saved by him in his own way, and willing to serve and worship him in his own ordinances, and according to his own appointment; and by being holy and righteous, having the characters, and enjoying the privileges of the people of God:

and her beloved, which was not beloved. In the text in **Ho 2:23**, it is, "I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy": hence the Vulgate Latin has added this clause to the text, though unsupported by any copy, or other version. The apostle is to be justified in his version, by the Septuagint interpreters, who have rendered the passage in Hosea, "I will love her that was not beloved"; and by the true sense of the word Mxr there used, which signifies to love in the most kind, tender, and endearing manner; see Ps 18:1; where the word is used and so rendered. The sense is not, that God's chosen ones among the Gentiles were not the objects of his love before calling; for their very calling is the fruit, effect, and so the evidence of love before. The love of God is from everlasting to everlasting, invariably and unchangeably the same; he had chosen them in his Son; he had made a covenant with them in Christ, had put them into his hands, and made them his care and charge; he had sent him to die for them, and obtain eternal redemption for them; and all this before he called them, which abundantly proves his love to them: but this love was not manifested to their souls; it had not been shed abroad in their hearts; they had no sensation of it in their breasts; the streams of that river of God had not as yet flowed into their souls; nor were they partakers of the effects of it in themselves; but being called by grace, they feel, they experience, and enjoy that, and all the happy: fruits and effects of it; the loving kindness of God is let down into their hearts in the effectual calling, and with it he draws them to himself, as a fruit and evidence of his everlasting and unchangeable love to them.

Romans 9:26

Ver. 26. And it shall come to pass that in the place,.... This is another citation out of Hosea, and is to be seen in **Ho 1:10**, and the meaning is, that in those countries, as here in Great Britain, in the very selfsame place, or spot of ground,

where it was said unto them, ye are not my people; where were nothing but idolatry and idolatrous worshippers, and whose worship, works, and actions, declared them not to be the people of God:

there shall they be called the children of the living God; not only children of God, but of the living God; in opposition to their idol gods, their lifeless deities, and senseless statues of gold, silver, brass, wood, or stone, they fell down to and worshipped. The chosen of God among the Gentiles, were from all eternity predestinated to the adoption of children; this blessing was provided, laid up, and secured for them, in the covenant of grace; in this relation of children were they given to Christ, and under this consideration of them did he partake of the same flesh and blood with them, and died, to gather them together, who were scattered abroad in the several parts of the world; and because they were antecedently sons by adopting grace, therefore the Spirit of God in effectual calling is sent down into their hearts to bear witness to their spirits, that they are the children of the living God, and to work faith in their souls to believe it; by which grace they receive this blessing, as all others, even the right and privilege of being the children of God; by this they claim it, and enjoy the comfort of it; and so are manifestly, both to themselves and others, the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; though this will more clearly appear another day, than it does now.

Romans 9:27

Ver. 27. Esaias crieth concerning Israel,.... The apostle having produced proper testimonies in proof of the calling of the Gentiles, proceeds to mention others; showing, that some few of the Jews also were to be called, according to prophecy, founded upon divine predestination; which, though they are full proofs of the calling of some from among the Jews, yet at the same time suggest the casting off of the far greater number of them; and which is the apostle's view in citing them, as appears from what he says both here and in the two following chapters. The first testimony is taken out of Isa 10:22, and is prefaced or introduced with these words; which either express the great concern of mind and sorrow of heart, with which the prophet spoke them, even with strong crying and tears, seeing a remnant of them only was to be saved; or they show his heart's desire and prayer to God, "for Israel", as the words may be rendered, how that he cried to the Lord for them, entreated him with earnestness and importunity, and wrestled with him on their behalf; or they declare the presence of mind, the freedom of expression, the boldness and intrepidity with which he delivered this message to the Jews, which he knew must be ungrateful to them; in doing which, he run the risk of losing his interest in their affections, if not his life; and inasmuch very probably they did not choose to hear it, but turned away from him, he cried aloud, he spared not, he lift up his voice like a trumpet, as he is bid to do elsewhere, resolving they should hear what he had to say, from the Lord of hosts. This is a form of speech used by the Jews, in citing Scripture; thus, xwu aybnh, "the prophet cries" {p}, namely, in Isa 26:1, which is spoken of the same prophet as here; and again {q} the Holy Spirit txwu, "cries, and says", in some certain passage of Scripture; and in another place {r} the Holy Spirit "cried", saying, as in **Joe 3:3**: "they have cast lots for my people".

Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea: this part of the testimony seems rather to be taken from **Ho 1:10**, which may easily be accounted for; since the apostle had just cited the words in Hosea, and so carrying them in his mind, transcribes this sentence from thence; it perfectly agreeing in sense with the passage in Isaiah he had in view, where it stands thus, "though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea", Isa 10:22; that is, though the number of them be such as to be compared thereunto; though they are many as the sand of the sea, as the Targum, Kimchi, and Aben Ezra explain it. This was promised unto Abraham, and had its accomplishment in the days of Solomon, and in after times; they were for quantity, for number, as the sand of the sea, even innumerable; and for quality, being barren and unfruitful, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers:

a remnant shall be saved; that is, a few persons only; rav arqy jemh, "few are called a remnant", as Kimchi on the place observes; these are the remnant among the Jews, according to the election of grace; the few that were chosen, though many were called by the external ministry of Christ and his apostles; the little city, and few men in it, even the escaped of Israel, he that was left in Zion, and that remained in Jerusalem; the little flock among them, which were as sheep among wolves; the few that entered in at the strait gate, and found the way to eternal life; the few that shall be saved; and these shall certainly be saved, with a spiritual and eternal salvation. These, according to the prophecy, were to return to the mighty God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah; be converted to him, and so saved by him with an everlasting salvation: God had resolved upon it, whose counsel shall stand; he had promised it in covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure; he sent his Son to save these his people from their sins, who is become the author of eternal salvation to them; the grace of God is efficacious and powerful enough, to make them willing to be saved by Christ, and to bring them to him, to venture upon him, and commit their souls to him, to be saved by him; and almighty power is concerned, to keep them through faith unto salvation: so that this little remnant, through the Father's everlasting and unchangeable love, the Son's purchase, prayers, and preparations, and the spirits grace, which works them up for this selfsame thing, shall be certainly and completely saved; though with respect to the difficulties attending it, which could have been surmounted by none but Christ, and by reason of their discouragements arising from sin, temptations, and persecutions, they may be said to be scarcely saved.

{p} Tanchuma, fol. 17. 3. apud Surenhus. Biblos Katallages, p. 14. {q} Mechilta, fol. 15. 1. Ib. {r} Megillat Esther, fol. 93. 1.

Romans 9:28

Ver. 28. For he will finish the work,.... This passage has some difficulty in it: some, instead of "work", read "account", and suppose it is an allusion to the balancing of accounts, when the remainder is cut off, which commonly is but little; and so regards the small number of the Jews that shall be called and saved, as before: others read it "the word", and differently explain it; some understanding it of the incarnate Word, of his being emptied, and made of no reputation, of his being cut off in a very short time, a few years after he had entered upon his public ministry, and of the few persons converted under it; others of the law, of the cutting off, or abolishing the ceremonial law, perfecting or completing the moral law, and abbreviating it, or reducing it into a short compendium; others of the Gospel, bringing in and revealing a perfect righteousness, for the justification of sinners, which the law could not do; all foreign to the apostle's purpose. Those who think God's work, his strange work is meant, his work of punitive justice he will finish,

and cut it short in righteousness, because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth, when he cut off and destroyed the greater part of the people of the Jews, and saved a remnant, seem to come nearer the mind of the prophet and the apostle's design, in citing this passage. The words as in Isaiah, I would choose to render and explain thus;
Uwrx Nwylk, "the absolute", or "precise degree", so Aben Ezra, interprets it, Mvhm rwzg, "that which is decreed by God", the decree concerning the salvation of the remnant, hqdu Pjwv, "he", i.e. God "shall cause to overflow in righteousness", Isa 10:22, as an overflowing river; that is, he shall abundantly execute it, he shall completely fulfil it, to finish and cut it short in the most righteous manner, consistent with all his divine perfections; hurxnw hlk yk, "for the decree and that determined", so Aben Ezra, trzgn hrzg, "the decree decreed" by God, "the Lord God of hosts", hve, "shall execute", accomplish, make short and full work of it, "in the midst of all the land", Isa 10:23, that is, of Judea: so that the words contain a most strong and invincible reason, why the remnant shall be saved; because God has made an absolute decree, concerning the salvation of it, which he will accomplish in the fullest manner, agreeably to his justice and holiness: the logov, or "word", the apostle from the prophet speaks of, that should be finished, and cut short and accomplished in righteousness, is the sentence, counsel, or decree, conceived in the divine mind, concerning this matter: hence as the decree of election stands firm and sure, not upon the works of men, but upon the absolute, sovereign, and efficacious will of God; so the salvation of his chosen people is not precarious,

but a most sure and certain thing.

Romans 9:29

Ver. 29. And as Esaias said before,.... In the beginning of his prophecy, in **Isa 1:9**.

Except the Lord of sabaoth had left us a seed; the title and character the great God goes by here, is "Lord of sabaoth", that is, "of hosts", or "armies"; the Septuagint often leave the word untranslated, as here and elsewhere, as in **1Sa 1:11**. He is Lord of the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, whom he brings forth by number, calls by their names, and them to praise him; of the angels, the multitude of the heavenly host, that do his pleasure, fight under him, and for him; and of the hosts of nations, of the several kingdoms of the world, who are all under his government, and among whom he acts according to his sovereign will and pleasure. Kimchi on the place says, he is called so,

"because of "the hosts above", and because of "the hosts below", who are the Israelites, that are called "hosts"; wherefore he would not consume us all, as we deserved:"

no, according to the council of his own will, he left them "a seed"; or as it is in Isaiah, a very small remnant": and so the Syriac here,
adyro, a remnant"; both signify one and the same, namely, a few persons only: "a remnant" signifies a few, which remain out of a large number; and so does "seed", which is reserved for sowing again, after the whole stock is sold off, or consumed: and the leaving of this small number designs God's gracious acts of reserving in the election of a people for himself; the calling them by his grace in time, and preserving them from general corruption; which if he had not done among the Jews, as Jarchi on the text says,

"of himself, and by his mercies, and not for our righteousnesses,"

we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha; the cities which God destroyed with fire and brimstone from heaven, for their iniquities: had it not been for electing grace, they would have been like the inhabitants of these cities for wickedness; and the case would have been the same with us and with the whole world, had it not been for God's act of election, choosing some to holiness here, and happiness hereafter. The decree of election is so far from being a door to licentiousness, that it is the true spring and source of all real holiness, that has been, or is in the world; and had it not been for this, there would have been no such thing as holiness in the world; and consequently not only Judea, but thee whole world, were it not for this, must have been long before now, like Sodom and Gomorrah, in their punishment.

Romans 9:30

Ver. 30. What shall we say then?.... To God's calling of a large number of the Gentiles, and only a very few of the Jews, according to his eternal purposes and decrees; what can be objected to it? is he chargeable with any unrighteousness? must it not be referred to his sovereign will and pleasure? is it not an instance of his grace and goodness, that he calls and saves some, when they were all so wicked, that he might in justice have destroyed every individual of them? or what is further to be said, concerning both Jews and Gentiles? or what can be objected to what may be further observed concerning them? as

that the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness; the very same persons among them, who are, called by grace, and are vessels of mercy, before their calling were without a righteousness, stout hearted, and far from one; being without Christ, and destitute of his Spirit; they were ignorant of righteousness, of the righteousness of God, and of his law, and consequently of what true righteousness is; they were unconcerned about it, and did not labour after it, as the Jews did. They did not pursue and improve the light of nature, about God and things of a moral kind, as they might have done; but held the light and truth they had in unrighteousness, and indeed were filled with nothing else: and yet these persons

have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. The righteousness they attained unto, was not a righteousness of their own, not the righteousness of works, or a righteousness by the deeds of the law, to which the righteousness which is of faith is always opposed; nor faith itself, which is distinguished from it; but the righteousness of Christ, so called, not because that faith is the cause or condition of it, but because the discovery of it is made to faith; that receives it, lays hold on it, and exercises itself on it; by it the soul renounces its own righteousness, looks to, and depends on Christ's, and rejoices in it. These Gentiles being called by grace, "attained", "comprehended", or "apprehended" this righteousness; not by the light of nature, which makes no discovery, nor gives the least hint of it; but by the light of faith they apprehended it, as revealed in the Gospel; which faith they had not of themselves, but of God; so that the whole of this account is a wonderful instance of the grace of God, and abundantly confirms the observation made before by the apostle, that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that shows mercy", **Ro 9:16**; since these persons had nothing in them, disposing and qualifying them for a justifying righteousness, and yet attained one; and the grace appears to be the more distinguishing, by what follows.

Romans 9:31

Ver. 31. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness,.... The Israelites, the far greater part of the Jews, who were not called by the grace of God, were all very zealous of the law, called "the law of righteousness"; because the matter of it was righteous, it was so in its own nature; and because perfect obedience to it is righteousness; as also because they sought for righteousness by the deeds of it. They very violently and eagerly pursued after it, they tugged and toiled, and laboured with all their might, as persons in running a race, to get up to the law, and the righteousness of it; and yet Israel, with all the pains and labour taken,

hath not attained to the law of righteousness: some of them fancied they had, supposing an external conformity to it, to be all that it insisted upon; not knowing the spirituality of it, that it required truth and holiness in the inward parts; and that he that offended in one point of it, was guilty of all, and therefore could not be justified by it.

Romans 9:32

Ver. 32. Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith,.... The question is asked, why they did not attain to that, which with so much diligence they pressed after? the answer is, because, as they did not seek for righteousness in a right place, or object, they sought for it in the law, and the works of it, where it is never to be found by a sinful creature, and not in Christ, in whom only are righteousness and strength; so they did not seek for it in a right way, by faith in Christ, without which it is impossible to please God, and by which only true righteousness is discerned and received:

but as it were by the works of the law; not by works which looked like works of the law, and were not; but they sought it as if they expected their justification before God was to be by works of righteousness done by them; or as if it was partly by their own works, and partly by the goodness of God, accepting of them for a justifying righteousness. The Alexandrian Copy, and some others, read only, "as it were by works"; and so does the Vulgate Latin version: another reason, or else a reason of the former is,

for they stumbled at that stumbling stone; meaning the word of the Gospel, at which Peter says they stumbled, and particularly the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ; or rather Christ himself, who was "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness", **1Co 1:23**.

Romans 9:33

Ver. 33. As it is written,.... In **Isa 8:14**; for the beginning and end of this citation are out of the latter, and the middle of it out of the former. This is an instance of gldm, "skipping", from place to place, concerning which the rules with the Jews were {s}, that the reader

"might skip from text to text, but he might not skip from prophet to prophet, except only in the twelve prophets, only he might not skip from the end of the book to the beginning; also they might skip in the prophets, but not in the law;"

which rules are exactly complied with by the apostle. The beginning of this citation is out of Isa 28:16:

behold I lay in Zion. The "stone" said to be laid in Zion, is by the "Chaldee paraphrast" interpreted of a "king"; by R. David Kimchi, of King Hezekiah, and by Jarchi of the King Messiah; and is truly applied by the apostle to Jesus Christ: the layer of this stone is God the Father, who laid him as the foundation stone, in his eternal purposes and decrees, in his counsels and covenant, in promise and in prophecy, in the mission of him into this world, and in the preaching of the everlasting Gospel: the place where he is laid is Zion, meaning either literally Judea or Jerusalem, where the Messiah was to appear, whither he came, and from whence his Gospel went forth; or mystically the church, where he is laid as the foundation of it, and of the salvation of all the members thereof; though, through the sin and unbelief of others, he proves to be

a stumbling stone, and rock of offence; which phrases are to be seen in **Isa 8:14**, and are spoken of, and ascribed to a divine person, even to the Lord of hosts; and are by the Targumist thus paraphrased, "and if ye obey not", hyrmym, "his word shall be for revenge, and for a stone smiting, and a rock of offence", and in the Talmud {t}, it is said, that

"the son of David (the Messiah) shall not come until the two houses of the fathers are destroyed out of Israel; and these are the head of the captivity which is in Babylon, and the prince in the land of Israel, as it is said, **Isa 8:14**."

So that, according to the ancient Jews, this passage belongs to the Messiah, and is properly made use of for this purpose by the apostle, who had seen the accomplishment of it in the Jews; who stumbled at the outward meanness of Jesus of Nazareth, at his parentage, the manner of his birth, his education, the mean appearance of himself and followers; at his company and audience, his ministry, miracles, death, and the manner of it; and so believed not in him, for righteousness, life, and salvation; and thus it came about that they did not attain, or come up to the law of righteousness, or the righteousness of the law: but

whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed; that is, who believes in Christ unto righteousness, who builds his faith, and hope of eternal salvation on him, the foundation God has laid in Zion, and at which the unbelieving Jews stumbled and fell; he shall neither be ashamed here nor hereafter: he shall not be ashamed of his faith and hope in Christ; nor of Christ, as the Lord his righteousness; nor shall he be ashamed or confounded at his appearing, but shall be justified before men and angels, and be received into his kingdom and glory. There is some difference between the passage as here cited, and as it stands in Isa 28:16, where it is read, "he that believeth shall not make haste": either to lay any other foundation, being fully satisfied with this, which is laid by God; or shall not make haste to flee away, through fear of any enemy, or of any danger, being safe as built on this foundation; and so shall never fall, be moved, or ashamed and confounded. Some have fancied a various reading, but without any reason. A very learned Oriental critic {u} of our own nation has observed, that the Arabic words "Haush" "Hish" answer to the Hebrew word, vwx, the prophet uses, and which have three significations in them, "hasten", to "fear", and be "ashamed"; the first of these is retained here by the Jewish commentators and modern versions; the second by the "Chaldee paraphrast", and Syriac translation; and the third by the Septuagint, and the apostle; and they may be all taken into sense, for he that is afraid runs about here and there, and at length is put to shame and confusion.

{s} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 24. 1. Yoma, fol. 69. 2. Maimon. Tephilla, c. 12. sect.

14. {t} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 38. 1. {u} Pocock. Not. Miscell. in Port. Mosis, p. 10, 11.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 10

In this chapter are contained an account of the two righteousnesses of faith and works, a summary of the Gospel of Christ, a description of the grace of faith, in the nature, use, and means of it, and several testimonies concerning the calling of the Gentiles; and whereas the apostle knew that this, as well as what he had said in the latter part of the preceding chapter, that the Jews had not attained to the law of righteousness, but stumbled at the stumbling stone, would be offensive to his countrymen the Jews; wherefore that it might appear that he said this not out of disaffection and ill will to them, he declares his sincere regard unto them, and the great respect he had for them, by calling them "brethren", by expressing his good will to them, by praying for the salvation of them, Ro 10:1, by bearing testimony of their zeal for God, Ro 10:2, though he faithfully observes to them, that it was an ignorant zeal, of which ignorance he gives an instance, Ro 10:3, particularly in the attribute of God's righteousness; from which ignorance arose all their misconduct in religious things, especially in the article of justification; hence they sought to be justified by their own righteousness, and rejected the righteousness of Christ, and then points out to them the true end of the law, for righteousness which is Christ, Ro 10:4, which if they had known would have set them right, and which is another instance of their ignorant and misguided zeal: this leads him on to what he had in view, which was to give an account of the two righteousnesses he had suggested in the latter part of the former chapter, the righteousness of the law, which the Jews sought for and found not, and the righteousness of faith, which the Gentiles without seeking for enjoyed; and this account he gives in the words of Moses, for whom they had the greatest regard: the description of the former is given in his words, in Ro 10:5, which suggest the impossibility of keeping the law, and obtaining life by it, and therefore it is a vain thing to seek for righteousness by the works of it; the latter is described,
Ro 10:6, by the certainty of it, being wrought out by Christ, who came down from heaven, fulfilled the law, and died, and rose again from the dead; and by the plainness and evidence of it, as revealed in the Gospel, Ro 10:8, the sum of which Gospel is, that whoever believes in Christ and confesses him shall be

saved, Ro 10:9, which faith and confession, when genuine, are with the heart and mouth agreeing together; the consequences of which are righteousness and salvation, comfortably apprehended and enjoyed, Ro 10:10, and that the above is the sum of the Gospel, and that there is such a connection between faith and righteousness, and between confession and salvation, is confirmed, Ro 10:11, by a testimony from the prophet,
Isa 28:16, which being expressed in such a general manner, as to extend to every believer, whether Jew or Gentile, reasons are given,
Ro 10:12, in support of such an explanation of that passage, taken from the equal condition of all, there being no difference between them naturally, from the universal dominion of God over them, and from his liberal communication of grace and goodness to all that call upon him; which last reason is confirmed, Ro 10:13, by a passage of Scripture in **Joe 2:32**, on occasion of which, the apostle proceeds to treat of the calling of the Gentiles, and of the means of it, the preaching of the Gospel, which was necessary to it, which is made out by a train of reasoning after this manner; that seeing salvation is only of such that call upon the name of the Lord, and there could be no calling upon him without believing in him, and no believing without hearing, and no hearing without preaching, and no preaching without mission, which is proved by a citation out of Isa 52:7, and no success in preaching, when sent, without the exertions of efficacious grace, as appears from the case of the Jews, who had the ministration of the Gospel to them by Isaiah, and yet all did not believe it; as is evident from Isa 53:1, and seeing the conclusion of which is, that faith comes by preaching, and preaching by the order and command of God, Ro 10:14, it follows, that it was proper that ministers should be sent, and the Gospel preached to the Gentiles, and that attended with power, in order that they should believe in the Lord, and call upon his name and be saved; and which method God had taken, and which he had foretold he would take, in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and which were now fulfilling: that the Gospel was preached to them, and they heard it, were matters of fact, and were no other than what should be, or might be concluded, from Ps 19:4, cited, Ro 10:18, and that the Jews could not be ignorant of the calling of the Gentiles is clear, first from the words of Moses, De 32:21, which the apostle produces, Ro 10:19, and from a passage in the prophecy of Isa 65:1. So that this was no other than what Moses and the prophets said should be, Ro 10:20, and the chapter is closed, Ro 10:21, with another passage out of the same prophet in the next verse, showing the rejection of Christ and his Gospel by the Jews, and which justifies their being cast off by him, of which the apostle treats largely in the next chapter.

Ver. 1. Brethren, my heart's desire,.... The apostle having suggested, that a few of the Jews only should be called and saved; that the far greater part should be rejected; that the Israelites who sought for righteousness did not attain it when the Gentiles did, but stumbled and fell at Christ, and would be ashamed and confounded; and knowing the prejudices of that people against him, therefore lest what he had said, or should say upon this subject, should be thought to arise from hatred and ill will to them, he judged it proper, as before, to express his trouble and sorrow on their account; so now his great love and affection to them, and which he signifies by calling them "brethren": for not the Roman believers are here addressed, as if he was telling them how much he loved his own nation; but either the Jews in general, whom he looked upon and loved as his brethren, according to the flesh; and whatever they thought of him, he considered them in such a relation to him, which obliged him to a concern for their good and welfare; or rather the believing Jews, that were members of the church at Rome, whom, besides using the common style of the Jewish nation, who were wont to call all of their country brethren, he could speak to, as being such in a spiritual relation, being children of the same father, partakers of the same grace and privileges, and heirs of the same glory. Now he declares to these persons, that the "desire [of his] heart" was towards Israel, he bore a good will to them, his mind was well disposed and affected towards them, he had a cordial, sincere, and hearty respect for them; and so far was he from being their enemy, that he continually bore them upon his mind at the throne of grace: and his

prayer to God for Israel [was], that they might be saved; not only that they might be saved in a temporal sense, from these grievous calamities and sore judgments he saw were coming upon them, which he had reason to believe would issue in the destruction of them, as a nation and church; but that they might be spiritually converted, turned from their evil ways, and brought to believe in Christ, whom they had despised and rejected, and so be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: this he might desire not only from a natural affection for them, but as a minister of the Gospel, who cannot but wish that all that hear him might be converted and saved; and as a believer in Christ he might pray for this in submission to the will of God; and especially as he knew there was a seed, a remnant according to the election of grace, at that present time among them, that should be saved, though the larger number of them were cast off. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read "for them", instead of "for Israel"; not naming them, being easily understood; and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions.

Romans 10:2

Ver. 2. For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God,.... A zeal for God; for the being and unity of God, against the polytheism and idolatry of the Gentiles; for the word of God, the writings of the Old Testament, of which they were zealous defenders and preservers, and which they diligently read and heard explained, and whereby they thought to obtain eternal life; for the law of God, moral and ceremonial, especially for the rituals of the Mosaic economy; for the service and worship of God, they spared no pains, but compassed sea and land to bring in proselytes to their religion; all which the apostle could testify from his own knowledge, and by his own experience, who had been as great a zealot as any of them all. But now whilst the apostle is expressing his strong affection for this people, he is careful to act the faithful part to them, and points out their mistakes, and shows them their faults; which he does in this and the following verse, by observing, that they had a zeal of God indeed,

but not according to knowledge: it was not well regulated, it proceeded on mistaken principles, and moved in a wrong way, in persecuting the church of God, in doing things contrary to the name of Christ, in putting to death his ministers and members, thinking that hereby they did God good service; which arose from their ignorance of their Father, and of the Son: though they had a zeal of God, they knew neither God nor Christ aright; they did not know God in Christ, nor Jesus to be the true Messiah; they understood neither law nor Gospel truly, and fancied the Gospel was contrary to the law, and an enemy to it; and therefore in their great zeal opposed it, and the professors of it; they were zealous of the law, and of doing the commands of it, but knew not the true nature, use, and end of the law; as appears by what follows.

Romans 10:3

Ver. 3. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness,.... Either of the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel, which is no other than the righteousness of Christ, and which they knew nothing of, the whole Gospel being a sealed book, and wholly hidden from them; or of the righteousness of God required in the law, they imagining that only an external conformity to the commands of the law, was all that was necessary to attain to a justifying righteousness by it, not knowing the spirituality of it, and that it required conformity of heart and nature, as well as life and conversation; or rather of the attribute of God's righteousness, the strictness of his justice, the purity and holiness of his nature: for though they knew that he was holy, just, and righteous, yet did not think he was so strict as to insist upon every punctilio, and to take notice of every little default and defect in obedience; and especially that he had any regard to the heart and the thoughts of it, and required perfect purity there or that he would accept of nothing less than an absolutely perfect and complete righteousness; nor justify any without full satisfaction to his justice: hence they were

going about to establish their own righteousness; which they would never have done, had they known the righteousness of God, in either of the above senses; the Alexandrian copy, and some others, omit the word "righteousness", and only read, "their own", leaving it to be understood, and which is easily done; and so reads the Vulgate Latin version: by "their own righteousness", as opposed to God's, is meant the righteousness of works, their obedience to the law, an outward conformity to it, an observance of the rituals of it, and a little negative holiness. This they endeavoured to "establish" or "make to stand" in the sight of God, as their justifying righteousness, which is all one as setting chaff and stubble, briers and thorns, to a consuming fire; as the attempt expresses madness in them, the phrase suggests weakness in their righteousness, which they would fain make to stand, but could not, it being like a spider's web before the besom, or like a dead carcass, which men would set upon its feet to stand alone, but it cannot; than which nothing can be a greater instance of egregious folly: their "going about" or "seeking" to do this, shows their ignorant zeal, and the toil, the pains, the labour they used to effect it, but all in vain, and to no purpose; as appears by their hearing, reading, fasting, praying, giving alms to the poor, and tithes of all they possessed; all which they were very careful and studious of, and especially to have them done in the sight of men: and so it was that they

have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God; that is, the righteousness of Christ, so called, because approved and accepted of by God, imputed by him to his people, and given them by him as a free gift, and which only justifies in his sight; and because it is wrought by Christ, who is truly and properly God, and revealed and applied by the Spirit of God. This the Jews submitted not to, because they had no true humble sense of themselves as sinners, nor did they care to acknowledge themselves as such; which submission to Christ's righteousness requires and necessarily involves in it; no man will ever be subject to it, till he is made sensible of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and brought to an humble acknowledgment of it; the Spirit of God first convinces of sin and then of righteousness; and because they had an overweening opinion of their own righteousness, which they trusted to, and depended upon, imagining it to be blameless, and to contain all that the law required, and therefore they stood in no need of any other; and as for the righteousness of Christ they had it in contempt, their carnal minds being enmity to him, were not subject to his righteousness, nor could they, nor can any be, without the powerful efficacious grace of God, making them willing in the day of his power. This phrase denotes the rebellion of their wills, against Christ and his righteousness, they acting as rebellious subjects against their sovereign prince.

Romans 10:4

Ver. 4. For Christ is the end of the law,.... The apostle here observes that to them which had they known, would have regulated their zeal, removed their ignorance and set them right, in that which they stumbled at, and fell. By the "law" here, is not meant the ceremonial law, of which, indeed, they were all very zealous, and of which Christ also was the end in many respects; he was the final cause of it, or that for the sake of which it was; it had not been given had it not been for him; all its institutions, ordinances, and sacrifices, were on his account: they were all shadows of him, and he the body and substance of them; he was the end or mark and scope at which they all aimed; every type looked to him, and every offering directed the worshipper to him; he was the terminus of it, to whom it was to reach, and beyond whom it was not to go; it was a schoolmaster for instruction and direction until Christ came, and no longer. He was the fulfilling end of it, every thing in it had its accomplishment in him; and then lastly, he put an end to it, he disannulled it because of its after weakness and unprofitableness; he blotted out this hand writing of ordinances, and entirely abolished this law of commandments; but then Christ was not the end of this law for righteousness; Christ's obedience to it is no part of justifying righteousness, especially not to everyone that believes, not to the Gentiles who never were under any obligation to observe it: the moral law is here designed, and when Christ is said to be the end of it, the meaning is not that he was the end of its being given; for that was to be a rule of righteousness and life to men, and a ministration of death in case of disobedience: or that he was the scope of this law, though the Syriac version renders it hko, "the scope" of the law is the Messiah, the mark at which it aimed, or which it directs persons to; for the law does not direct to Christ at all, in any way; it requires and insists upon a perfect righteousness, but gives not the least hint of the righteousness of Christ, nor does it in any form direct unto it; by it is the knowledge of sin, but no knowledge of a Saviour from sin; not the law, but the Gospel directs and encourages sensible sinners to believe in Christ and be saved; on the contrary, the law is a killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death; but Christ is either the consuming or consummating, the destroying or fulfilling end of the law. He is the destroying end of the law, not as to the nature, being, matter and substance of it, which is invariable and eternal, and is not, and cannot be made void by the doctrine of faith; nor as to the true use of it; but as a covenant of works, as to the ministry of it by Moses, and as to its curse and condemnation. Though I rather think the latter is here meant, namely, that Christ is the fulfilling end of the law, since it is added,

for righteousness: for the bringing in an everlasting righteousness; a righteousness justifying in the sight of God; a righteousness sinners wanted, and could not obtain of themselves, and could never be obtained but by a perfect fulfilling of the law: this Christ has done partly by the conformity of his nature, being exactly like that, and what it requires holy, just, and good; and partly by perfect obedience of his life to all its precepts; and also by suffering the penalty of it, death, in the room and stead of all his people; and so the whole righteousness of the law is fulfilled by him, and he becomes the end of it, for a justifying righteousness before God,

to everyone that believes: not to him that works for life, and in order to obtain a righteousness of his own; nor to the Jew only, but also to the Gentile, even to everyone, be who he will, that has faith in Christ; not that faith is either the matter, cause, or condition of righteousness, but this righteousness is only revealed unto, and received by the believer, and can only be pleaded by him, as his justifying righteousness. Moreover, this phrase is descriptive of the persons to whom Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, and suggests that for whomsoever he has fulfilled the law, in order to bring in for them a justifying righteousness, faith in consequence is given to them, to receive and embrace it, and enjoy all the comfort and privileges of it.

Romans 10:5

Ver. 5. For. Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law,.... In this, and some following verses, an account is given of the two righteousnesses before mentioned, called their own and the righteousness of God; and that chiefly in the words of Moses, which is wisely done by the apostle, he and his writings being in great esteem among the Jews. The description he gives of the righteousness of the law, that is, righteousness which the law requires, and is done in obedience to its commands, is,

that the man which doth those things, shall live by them, or "in them"; and which is to be seen in Le 18:5: "ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them"; from whence it appears, that by "those things" a man is to do, are meant the statutes and judgments of God, not the ordinances of the ceremonial, but the precepts of the moral law; and that the righteousness of the law lies in "doing" and keeping those statutes, not merely externally, but internally, with all the heart, and soul, and strength; the law requires love to God, fear of him, and faith in him, and an inward disposition of the mind towards him, and a conformity of heart and nature to his law, as well as outward obedience; and all this is to be done perfectly and completely in every punctilio the law requires, otherwise no life is to be expected, nor any righteousness to be had by it. The Jewish writers understand the life promised by the law, to be eternal life. The two Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrase the words thus, "he shall live in them", amle yyxb, "in eternal life"; in like manner Jarchi explains them, "he shall live", abh Mlwel, "in the world to come"; to which agrees the note of R. Aben Ezra, who interprets it of lie in both worlds; he says the statutes of the law are life to them that do them in both worlds, for if a man understands the secret of them, he shall live for ever, and shall never die. The life which the law promised to Adam in his state of perfection, who was the only mere man that ever was capable of perfectly fulfilling it, was the continuance of the happy life he enjoyed; the life it promised to the Israelites, at the renewing of it on Mount Sinai, was a long and prosperous life in the land of Canaan; as for the promise of eternal life, that was made before the world began, in the covenant of grace, and is a peculiar promise and blessing of that covenant, is an entire gift of God's grace, and never was designed to be enjoyed through men's obedience to the law of works, but through the righteousness and death of Christ, who is the fulfilling end of the law: hence it appears, that as the righteousness of the law is a righteousness of works done by men, it cannot be the righteousness God imputes, for that is without works, and by which a man can be justified before God; and since the law requires internal and perfect obedience to it, it is certain that it cannot be yielded by fallen creatures; hence it follows, that there can be no life, and so no righteousness by it, the consequence of which, when observed by sinful men, horror, terror, and gloomy despair; the very reverse of which is the language of the righteousness of faith.

Romans 10:6

Ver. 6, 7. But the righteousness which is of faith,.... Or "with respect to the righteousness of faith"; the other righteousness before called the righteousness of God, because God is the author of it, here the righteousness of faith, because that receives it,

speaketh on this wise; the selfsame writer who describes the righteousness of the law in such a manner, that it gives no room to a fallen creature ever to expect life and salvation by it, gives such an account of the righteousness of faith, as forbids all doubting and despair:

say not in thine heart; let not such a thought enter into thy mind, much less express it with thy lips;

who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above, or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). These words are not properly a citation of
De 30:12; but the apostle makes use of some phrases which are there, with his own explications of them; though the difference between them, stripped, of these explications is not very material: in the first clause, "who shall ascend into heaven?" the apostle leaves out the phrase, "for us"; which as to the sense was not absolutely necessary to retain; the difficulty, indeed, seems greater in the latter clause, "who shall descend into the deep?" which in the text of Moses is, "who shall go over the sea for us?" but when it is considered that the sea is often called the deep, and that sailing on it and over it, is expressed by "going down to the sea in ships",
Ps 107:23; and moreover, when it is observed that the Jerusalem Targum paraphrases it thus,

"the law is not in heaven that it should be said, oh that we had one of us, as Moses the prophet, who could go up to heaven and bring it to us! nor is it beyond the great sea, that it should be said, oh that we had one of us, as Jonah the prophet abr amy yqmwel twxyyd, "who could descend into the depths of the great sea", and bring it to us;"

the apostle is to be justified in his expressions. His sense, indeed, may seem to be different from that of Moses, and of the common interpretations of the Jewish writers, as in the above paraphrase and in the following account of them from the Talmud, understanding them of the law {w};

"says Abdimo bar Chama bar Dousa, what is the meaning of that Scripture, "neither is it in heaven, nor is it beyond the sea?" it is not in heaven, for if it was in heaven you must needs go up after it, and if it was beyond the sea, you must needs go over after it; Rabba says, not in heaven is it, you will not find it in him that exalts his knowledge in himself as the heavens, nor will you find it in him that enlarges his knowledge in himself, as the sea; R. Jochanan says, not in heaven is it, you will not find it in those that are of a haughty spirit, nor beyond the sea is it, you will not find it among traders abroad, or merchants."

Though the apostle's sense may be brought pretty near to this, after this manner; who shall go up to heaven, or down to the deep, either to bring us the knowledge of the law, and yield an obedience to it which that requires of us, or to give us a full account of the Gospel of the grace of God? there is no room, nor reason, for men to say this in their hearts, or to make a doubt of them, as if they were not done already; to do so, is to deny that Christ is come in the flesh, and risen from the dead, who has given the true sense and knowledge of the law, and has perfectly fulfilled it, in the room and stead of his people, and by whom the doctrine of grace and truth is come, particularly the doctrine of a sinner's justification before God; this is brought nigh in the ministration of the word, so that there is no need of such inquiries as these. Moreover, for the illustration of these words, let it be observed, that these phrases are proverbial, and often used to express things impossible, of which take the following instances;

"it is a tradition of the Rabbins {x} if a man says to his wife, lo, this is thy divorce, on condition that "thou ascendest to the firmament", on condition that "thou descendest into the deep"; on condition that thou passest over the great sea on foot, this is no divorce;"

the reason is, rvpya yav, "because it is impossible". Again {y},

"if a man says to a woman, if thou wilt "ascend into the firmament", or if thou wilt "descend into the deep", lo, thou art espoused to me by this penny; but if thou wilt not go up into the firmament, nor go down into the deep, thou shalt not be espoused; and after that he puts the penny into her hand, lo, the condition becomes void, and behold she is espoused immediately, for the thing is known
rvpya yav, "that it is impossible" for her to fulfil the condition."

So here are forbidden all such thoughts, words, or expressions which carry such a sense as this; who will go down to the deep to fetch such a wretch as I am out of the lowest hell, to deliver me from the curses of the law, and the wrath of God, and bring me out of this wretched miserable condition in which I am? or go up to heaven and carry me there, and put me in the possession of the undefiled inheritance? all this is as impossible to be done, as for a man to ascend to heaven, or go down into the deep: now though the righteousness of the law encourages such despondency and black despair, the righteousness of faith, or the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ's righteousness, forbids every thing of this kind; assuring the sinner, that Christ is come down from heaven in human nature, that he has fulfilled all the righteousness of the law by his obedience in life, and has bore the penalty of it in his sufferings and death, and is risen again for justification; so that such questions should not be put, nor such despairing thoughts encouraged: besides, to think and speak in this manner, is to set aside the whole scheme of the Gospel, and supposes the person to doubt whether Christ is come down from heaven; and therefore asks, who shall go up to bring him down? and that he is not risen from the dead; and therefore puts the question, who will go down to the deep to fetch him up? whereas he is already come, has obeyed, suffered, and died, and rose again, and is become the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes.

{w} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 55. 1. Maimon. Talmud Tora, c. 3. sect. 8. {x} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 84. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 94. 1. {y} Maimon. Hilchot Ishot. c. 6. sect. 7. Vid. Zohar in Exod. fol. 40. 4. & 43. 1.

Romans 10:7

See Gill on "Ro 10:6".

Romans 10:8

Ver. 8. But what saith it,.... The Scripture; so some copies, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic version read, "what saith the Scripture?" the Arabic version, "what dost thou say?" or "what saith he", Moses? for what follow are manifestly his words, in De 30:14,

the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; which is to be understood not of the law, for Moses himself is not speaking of the law only, but either of the whole word of God, both law and Gospel; or particularly of the Gospel, which holds forth those special blessings and promises of grace, pardon of sin, and circumcision of the heart, which are mentioned in the context, as what should be bestowed upon the people of the Jews in the latter days; and so is rightly applied by the apostle to the then dispensation, and is to be understood of the Gospel; which was nigh both in the ministration of it, by the apostles, to Jews and Gentiles, and in the application and experience of it; it was not only "in the mouth" of the preachers, but also of the hearers of it, by a hearty and sincere confession; and "in [their] hearts", being attended with the power of God, and received in the love of it, was truly believed in, and cordially embraced;

that is, the word of faith. This phrase, atwnmyhmd hlm, "the word of faith", may be seen in the Jewish writings {z}; and this shows what word is here meant, even the Gospel so called, because it contains doctrines which are to be believed upon the testimony of God, and particularly the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ received by faith; and because it proposes Christ as the object of faith, and encourages souls to believe in him for life and salvation; and is also the means of begetting and implanting faith in the heart, and without it the preaching of it is of no avail: and it is further described by the ministration of it,

which we preach; being sent, commissioned, qualified, and assisted by Christ thereunto; which shows the agreement between Moses and the apostles of Christ; for the word which he spoke of, they preached, and indeed said no other things than what the prophets and Moses said should come, that Christ should suffer in the stead of his people, and rise again for their justification; the sum of which is delivered in Ro 10:9.

{z} Zohar. in Gen. fol. 45. 4.

Romans 10:9

Ver. 9. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,.... That is, if a man shall make a good, sincere, and hearty confession to God, before the church and people of God, and before the world, that Christ is his Lord and Saviour, whom he desires to serve, and to be saved by; and this as arising from a comfortable experience of the grace of God in his soul, and from a true faith in Christ in his heart, wherefore it follows,

and shall believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for this article of Christ's resurrection includes the several other articles of faith: it supposes his death, and that supposes his life, and the obedience of it; and his life implies his being here on earth, and that his coming down from heaven to do the will of his Father; and this is the rather mentioned, which is here ascribed to God the Father, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, because that Christ is risen again for our justification, with which true faith is principally concerned; for such a faith is intended, not which lies in a mere assent to the truth of this, or any other article of the Christian religion; but which is concerned with Christ for righteousness, life, and glory; and with such a faith salvation is certainly and inseparably connected.

Romans 10:10

Ver. 10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness,.... The apostle here explains the nature and use both of faith and confession; as true faith does not lie in the bare assent of the mind to the Gospel, or any truth contained in it, respecting the person and office of Christ, so neither does it lie, as not in the brain, so not in the tongue, but in the heart; it is not a notional knowledge of things to be believed; nor is it saying that a man believes; but it is heart work, a believing with all the heart; such a faith in which all the powers of the soul, the understanding, will, and affections, are concerned, it is a seeing of the Son, a beholding of the glory, fulness, suitableness, ability, and willingness of Christ as a Saviour, with the eye of the understanding spiritually enlightened; it is a going out of the soul to Christ, in various acts, such as venturing into his presence, prostrating itself at his feet, resolving if it perishes it will perish there; a giving up itself unto him, determining it will have no other Saviour, leaning and relying on him, and living upon him; which faith works by love to Christ, moves the affections, stirs up the desires of the soul to his name, and endears him and all that belong to him to it. The use of this grace is, "unto righteousness"; it is not instead of one, for faith is not our righteousness; nor is it in order to work out one, for this grace puts a soul on renouncing its own righteousness; but its use is to receive one, even the righteousness of Christ, which when it spies, it admires, receives, lays hold on, and rejoices in looking on itself as righteous through this righteousness, and so has peace with God through Christ:

and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. This is to be understood not of confession of sin, though that is proper and requisite to be made, both with respect to the participation, and enjoyment of salvation, particularly pardoning grace and mercy, and to an admission to Gospel ordinances; but of confession of Christ, as appears from the preceding verse, which lies in a frank and open acknowledgment of what Christ is in himself, as that he is truly and properly God, the Son of God, the true Messiah, the Mediator between God and man, and the only Saviour of lost sinners, and of our faith in him, with respect to ourselves, to our pardon, justification, acceptance and salvation in him and through him; in ascribing the whole of our salvation to him, and giving him the glory of it; in declaring to the churches of Christ what he has done for our souls, and in subjecting ourselves to his ordinances. This confession must be made both by words and facts, must be open, visible, and before men; and also real, hearty, and sincere, the words of the mouth agreeing with the experience of the heart; and such a good profession made before God, angels, and men, highly becomes all that believe with the heart. This was the practice of the primitive saints; yea, all nations own, acknowledge, and profess the God they worship; and should not we confess our God, Saviour and Redeemer? Christ himself confessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate, and is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. So to do, makes both for the glory of God, and for our own real good and advantage. Yea, it is "unto salvation"; not as a cause of it, for Christ alone is the author of eternal salvation; but a sincere and well made confession of Christ points out to all that know us where and from whom we expect to have salvation; it is what lies in the way, and is to be taken up by all that believe in Christ, and to be held fast without wavering until we receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

Romans 10:11

Ver. 11. For the Scripture saith,.... Of this form of expression, or mode of speaking, See Gill on "Ro 9:17". The passage referred to is Isa 28:16, cited before in **Ro 9:33**; the view with which it is produced is to prove the certain connection between faith and righteousness, and confession and salvation; or in other words, to observe that such who cordially believe in Christ, and make a sincere profession of their faith in him, shall be saved. There are some things somewhat different from, though agreeing in sense with, the words as they stand in the prophet; there it is indefinitely said, "he that believeth", here an universal is made use of,

whosoever, or "everyone"

that believeth: which phrases are equipollent, and a certain truth it is, that whosoever believes in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, be he who he will, shall surely be saved: here the object believed in, is expressed

in him, which is there implied, and may easily be understood of the stone laid in Zion for a foundation, which is Christ; for other foundation can no man lay, and whoever by faith builds on this foundation is safe:

and shall not be ashamed; neither in this world, nor in that to come; in the Hebrew text it is, "shall not make haste"; how this may be reconciled, See Gill on "Ro 9:2",
See Gill on "Ro 9:3".

Romans 10:12

Ver. 12. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek,.... Some reasons are here assigned, confirming the apostle's sense of the prophet's words, that everyone that believes in Christ shall be saved; for there is no distinction of nations, no superiority on account of carnal descent, or fleshly privileges, no preeminence on the score of the laws and ordinances of the former dispensation, all which are now abolished; nor is there any difference in their state God-ward, all being under sin, and without a righteousness, and all standing in need of the righteousness of Christ, and salvation by him; to which is added another reason,

for the same Lord over all, or "is over all": by whom is meant, either God the Father, who is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, **Ro 3:29**; or rather the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all; and is to be understood, not of his being so merely by creation, but redemption, he having bought with his blood all the elect of God, both among the Jews and among the Gentiles; so that he has the same equal propriety in one as another, and they the same claim to him, and the same encouragement to believe in him, for righteousness and life: and moreover, he

is rich unto all that call upon him; he is not only rich as God, being possessed of all divine perfections and glory, but as Mediator, having the riches of grace and glory in him; and is rich, beneficent, liberal and free in dispensing, pardoning, justifying, and sanctifying grace to all that come unto him, throw themselves at his feet, implore his grace and righteousness, and call upon him with faith and fervency. Such as these are here designed, and not all that make mention of his name, or are called by it; but who are the true worshippers of him in faith and fear; for the invocation of his name includes all worship of him, and exercise of grace upon him; hence this passage is no inconsiderable proof of his proper deity.

Romans 10:13

Ver. 13. For whosoever shall call upon the name the Lord,.... This testimony is taken out of **Joe 2:32** and is brought to prove the truth of what the apostle had just suggested, that all that call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, will find him rich and plenteous in mercy, and ready to dispense his grace and salvation to them: such

shall be saved; be they who they will, whether Jews or Gentiles; not with a temporal salvation only, but with a spiritual and eternal one; for the words of the prophet refer to Gospel times, as the context shows, and is cited and applied thereunto by the Apostle Peter, **Ac 2:16**; besides, the deliverance and salvation Joel speaks of, is of a "remnant whom the Lord shall call", **Joe 2:32**; and designs the remnant according to the election of grace, whether among Jews or Gentiles, whom God calls by his efficacious grace; between which call and eternal glory, there is a certain and inseparable connection.

Romans 10:14

Ver. 14. How then shall they call on him in whom they, have not believed?.... The apostle having observed, that whoever, Jew or Gentile, believe in the Lord and call upon his name, shall be saved; and that the same Lord was ready and willing to dispense his grace, without any difference to them; suggests, that it was therefore absolutely necessary, that the Gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews; that it was the will of God it should be; that what he and others did, was by a divine commission; that they were sent by the Lord to preach the Gospel to them; that hearing they might believe, and so call upon the name of the Lord, and be saved; and therefore the Jews ought not to blame them for so doing, for there was a real necessity for it, since there can be no true calling upon God without faith, no faith without hearing, no hearing without preaching, and no preaching without a divine mission. The first of these is signified by this interrogation. Every man calls upon the God he believes in, and him only; this has been the practice of all men, in all nations; such as have not believed in God and Christ, do not call upon them; it is true indeed, there may be an external invocation of them, where there is no true faith; but then this is not calling upon them in truth and sincerity; as is their faith, so is their calling upon them; as the one is historical, the other is only external; there is no true invocation without faith, or any that is acceptable to God, or of any avail to men; for calling on the name of the Lord, as it ought to be practised in all religious worship, so it includes and every part of worship as done in faith:

and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? the meaning is, that there is no faith in Christ without hearing of him; as it is in human, so in divine faith, there may be believing without seeing, but not without hearing; so we believe that there were such men as Alexander and Julius Caesar, and other persons now in being, though we never saw them, having heard of them, or had a report made of them, which we have reason to give credit to; so there may be, and is faith in Christ without seeing him with our bodily eyes, though not without hearing of him; for of an unheard of person, there can be no faith in him, because no exercise of thought about him. This is to be understood of outward hearing of the word, and of adult persons only; for that, infants may have the grace of regeneration, and so faith wrought in them by the Spirit of God, without hearing the word, is not to be denied; since as they are capable of the principles of corruption, why not of grace? and also of such persons as have the right and free exercise of the faculties of hearing and speaking, and not of such who never could hear, and speak; for as the Spirit works where, and how he pleases, so he can work faith in the hearts of such persons who never heard the word, and enable them to exercise it on the proper object, and cause them secretly to call upon the name of the Lord, with groans which cannot be uttered. Moreover, this is to be, understood of the ordinary way and means of believing; for though God can, and sometimes does work by other means, and even without any, yet his usual way and method is, to bring men to faith and repentance by the hearing of the word:

and how shall they hear without a preacher? or there is no hearing without, preaching; there may be reading without it, and this ought to be where there is preaching, to see that what is preached is agreeably to the Scriptures; but there is no hearing the word explained without preaching; explaining the word is preaching. There is no hearing of Christ, and salvation by him, without the preaching of the Gospel; the usual and ordinary way of hearing from God, and of Christ, is by the ministry of the word: this shows not only the necessity and usefulness of the Gospel ministry, but also points out the subject matter of it, which is Christ, and him crucified. They that preach ought to preach concerning the person of Christ, his offices, grace, righteousness, blood, sacrifice and satisfaction, otherwise men may hear the preacher, and not hear Christ.

Romans 10:15

Ver. 15. And how shall they preach, except they be sent,.... There is no proper, rightful, regular, and lawful preaching of the word without a mission, which is either extraordinary, or ordinary; extraordinary mission was such as the apostles themselves had; who, as they were called to extraordinary service, had extraordinary qualifications, and were sent forth in an extraordinary manner, with a power of doing miracles, and immediately by Christ himself. Ordinary mission is of men to be pastors and teachers, which includes qualifications for the ministerial work; for whom Christ sends forth into such service, he bestows gifts on them, fitting them for it, some more, some less, but all have some; and it also includes a call unto it, which is either internal, and by the Spirit of God, and lies partly in the furniture he gives, and the inclination of the heart to this good work which he forms; and which arises not from a vanity of mind, and a desire of popular applause, and worldly views, and sinister ends; but from a real concern for the good of souls, and the glory of Christ, being willing to deny themselves, and forsake all for Christ, to suitor reproach for his name's sake, and to forego all worldly interest, and secular views: or is external, which is given by the churches of Christ, after due trial and examination of gifts, and a serious consideration of the matter, and that in the most solemn manner; and this is what may be properly called a preacher's mission, and none but such who are in this way sent out ought to preach the Gospel: and to such well agrees, and may be applied, that passage in Isa 52:7, where

it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things; which words are not to be understood of the messengers that brought the tidings of deliverance from the Babylonish captivity, but of the ministers of the Gospel. In Isa 52:7 it is expressed in the singular number, "how beautiful are the feet of him", &c. and is by some understood of Christ, as it is also by many Jewish writers: thus interpreting the "turtle's voice" in **So 2:12**;

"this (say they {a}) is the voice of the King Messiah, proclaiming and saying, "how beautiful on the mountains", &c."

And elsewhere {b} it is observed, that the

"Rabbins say, great is peace, for when the King Messiah comes, he does not open but with peace, as it is said, "how beautiful upon the mountains", &c."

And says {c} another,

"one verse says, "how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings", xyvmh Klmh vryp, "the explanation", or meaning is, the King Messiah:"

and some of the more, modern ones {d} of them, own these words are, xyvmh taybw hlwagh Nynem, "concerning the redemption, and the coming of the Messiah": and so the worlds, however they may principally regard the Messiah and his ministry, are property applied to the apostles of Christ; and may be rightly understood of any minister of the Gospel, whose business it is to "preach the Gospel of peace": which is so called from the subject matter of it, peace made by the blood of Christ, which it proclaims; from the effect of it, producing, peace and tranquillity in distressed minds, and making men of peaceable dispositions; and from the use of it, which is to direct men to the way of peace, to guide their feet in it, lead them to eternal peace: their work is also to "bring glad tidings of good things"; such as reconciliation, righteousness, pardon, life, and eternal salvation, by a crucified Christ; and the preaching of such a Gospel, and bringing such news, make their "feet beautiful": one should have thought rather their lips than their feet would be took notice of; the reason of this is, partly because of the agreeableness of their walk and conversation to the doctrine they preach; and partly because of their readiness to preach it everywhere, though they run the utmost risk in so doing; and also because of their swiftness, particularly of the apostles, in going through the cities of Israel, and running over the Gentile world with the Gospel of peace, in so short a time as they did; and more especially because of the acceptableness of their message, with which they were sent and ran; see 2Sa 18:27. And so this passage is pertinently alleged to prove, that mission is necessary to preaching; since these words declare the character of Gospel ministers, as publishers of peace, and messengers of good tidings; and express the message itself, and the nature of it; both which suppose them to be sent by another, even the Lord, under whose authority, and by whose warrant they act; just as ambassadors, heralds, and messengers do, by virtue of a commission they receive from their prince.

{a} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 11. 4. {b} Vajikra Rabba Parash, c. 9. fol. 153. 2. Perek Shalom, fol. 20. 1. {c} Raziel, fol. 23. 2. {d} Menasseh ben Israel Nishmath Chayim, fol. 41. 2.

Romans 10:16

Ver. 16. But they have not all obeyed the Gospel,.... Who hear it, and to whom it is preached; for though ministers may be regularly sent forth, and rightly preach the Gospel in the purity of it, yet there is no success without the power of God attending it: ministers may preach, and men may hear, and yet not obey the Gospel; that is, cordially embrace the doctrines, and sincerely submit to the ordinances of it:

for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report; or "our hearing", agreeably to the Hebrew word in Isa 53:1, wntewmv, and which designs not the "hearing" with which the apostles heard Christ, though what they heard from him, they made known to men; but the hearing, or the word heard, which others had from them, namely, the report they made in their ministry, of the person and grace of Christ, which was disregarded, when the arm and power of the Lord were not, revealed and exerted: this was the case of the Jews in Isaiah's time, and the same in the times of Christ and his apostles, and is always the case, when divine power does not attend the preaching of the Gospel.

Romans 10:17

Ver. 17. So then faith comes by hearing,.... That is, by preaching; for the word hearing is used in the same sense as in the preceding verse; and designs the report of the Gospel, or the preaching of the word, which is the means God makes use of, to convey faith into the hearts of his people; for preachers are ministers, or instruments, by whom others believe:

and hearing by the word of God; or "of Christ", as some copies read, and so do the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; and intends either the holy Scriptures, which have God for their author, and Christ for the subject of them; and which furnish the men of God, or ministers of the Gospel, with proper materials to preach; and so hearing or preaching is by them, or else the command of God or Christ, which rhma more properly signifies; and the sense is, that men preach the Gospel in obedience to the commandment of the everlasting God, and according to the orders, mission, and commission, warrant and authority, of the Lord Jesus Christ: and so these words are the conclusion, and sum of the whole; that as invocation is owing to faith, so faith to hearing, hearing to preaching, preaching to a mission; whence it follows, that it is the original will of God, to send forth his apostles and ministers, to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews; that they hearing might believe, and believing call upon the Lord, and so be saved by him: it is a saying of the Jews, aylt rwbdb heymv, "hearing depends upon the word" {e}.

{e} Zohar in Deut. fol. 110. 3.

Romans 10:18

Ver. 18. But I say, have they not heard?.... rmwa ynaw, "but I say", is a phrase frequently used by the Jewish doctors in disputation, either in forming or answering objections. The Ethiopic version confines these words to Israel, and reads, "have not Israel heard?" whereas they are to be understood both of Jews and Gentiles; the question refers to each, and the answer is,

yes, verily: which the Arabic renders just the reverse, "no", or "not at all, notwithstanding their sound went into all the earth"; and so makes this an aggravation of their stupidity, and obstinate rejection of the Gospel, that they would not hear it, though its sound reached every place; but the answer is in the affirmative, they did hear. The Jews heard the Gospel in the times of Isaiah, and other prophets, though they disbelieved the report of it; they heard it from John the Baptist, and were pleased with his ministry for a while; yea, they heard Christ himself preach it, who spake as never man did, with power and authority, as the Scribes did not, and wondered at his gracious words; they heard the apostles of Christ, who for some time were limited in their ministry to them only, and after their commission was enlarged, were ordered to preach first to them; so that they could not say they had not heard it, and they were left entirely inexcusable. The Gentiles also had heard it; the apostles were bid to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; and at a proper opportunity, they did as the Lord commanded them, and the Gentiles heard the Gospel with joy and pleasure; multitudes were converted everywhere, and churches raised through their ministry, according to the will of God; thus

their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world; the passage referred to is Ps 19:4, which some here, as there, understand literally of the works of nature, the heavens, the firmament, the sun, moon and stars, proclaiming every where the being of God, his perfections, especially his wisdom, power, and goodness; so that the Gentiles were not without hearing of God, even whilst they were destitute of a divine revelation; which was a sort of a prelude of the after extensive spread of the Gospel among them: a voice, or sound, is ascribed to the inanimate creatures; and which is so loud, that it reaches to the end of the earth. There are three voices, the Jews say {f} which go "from one end of the world to the other"; and one of them is hmx lglg lwq, "the voice of the orb of the sun": others understand these words of the law, of which many "encomiums" are given in the psalm from whence this passage is taken; and though it was delivered peculiarly to the people of the Jews, yet the fame of it reached the nations of the world, as Moses suggests it would, **De 4:6**; and the Jews say {g}

"that when the law was given to Israel, wpwo dew Mlweh Pwom Klwh wlwq, "its voice went from one end of the world to the other"."

Or as it is better expressed by Philo {h}, and almost in the words of this text,

"the fame of the laws which Moses left, is gone throughout all the world, unto the ends of the earth."

But certain it is, that the apostle is speaking neither of the light of nature, nor the law of Moses, but of the preaching of the Gospel; and what the Psalmist, literally understood, says of the heavens, that the apostle in an allegorical and mystical sense, or by an argument from the lesser to the greater, or by way of allusion, applies to the apostles and ministers of the Gospel, the luminaries of the world, and stars of heaven; whose ministry, by this time, had reached the then known parts of the habitable world; as it was to do, before the destruction of Jerusalem, according to Christ's prediction, Mt 24:14, and as the Apostle Paul testifies it had, **Col 1:6**, and in which he himself had a very considerable share, having preached the Gospel from Jerusalem, round about unto Illyricum. There is some little difference between the passage in the Psalms, and as cited or referred to by the apostle, who instead of "their line", reads "their sound"; which have made some suspect a corruption of the present Hebrew text, or a various reading; and that the Septuagint, followed by the apostle, used a copy which had not, Mwq, "their line", but Mlwq, "their voice", and which was the true reading; but then how came the Chaldee paraphrase to render it by,
Ktm, "extension", and Aquila by kanwn, "a canon", or "rule?" and besides, the Masora observes, that this word is no where else read, which is not true of Mlwq, for that often occurs; to which may be added, had this been the reading, the Septuagint would have rendered it most probably, as they do elsewhere, by "voice", and not "sound": but for the reconciliation of this let it be observed, that the Hebrew word signifies a rule, or plummet, or such a line as builders use in their work, as a direction to them, hence Kimchi {i} explains it by Mnyynb, "their building"; and so it may signify any rule, or direction, whether given by writing, and so Aben Ezra {k} interprets it by btkm, "writing", or by word of mouth; besides, the carpenter's line, when stretched out, and remitted upon the timber, makes a sound, and hence the word might be used for one: all this agrees with the ministry of the apostles, who were builders; and as they

worked by a line and rule themselves, so they gave out rules and directions to others, both by writing and preaching, both which reached far and near; this the apostle seems to allude to, in 2Co 10:13, where he speaks of the measure, line, and rule of their ministry, which reached to Corinth and further, without going into another man's line: moreover, that great Oriental critic, and our countryman, Mr. Pocock {l}, has shown from the use of the word hwq, in the Arabic language, that the word in the Psalms may signify a loud cry, or noise, as well as a line, or rule; so that the psalmist and the apostle may be easily reconciled.

{f} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 20. 2. {g} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 1. {h} De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 657. {i} In Psal. xix. 4. {k} In ib. {l} Not. in Portam Mosis, c. 4. p. 48, &c.

Romans 10:19

Ver. 19. But I say, did not Israel know? etc.] Some supply the word "God", did not Israel know God? verily, they did; they knew the being and perfections of God, the unity of God, and the trinity of persons in the divine essence; they knew the will of God, and the right way of worshipping him; for they were favoured with a divine revelation; to them were committed the oracles of God, and to them belonged the giving of the "Gospel", did not Israel know the Gospel? yes, they did; they not only heard it, but knew it; not spiritually and experimentally, but nationally and speculatively, and, against the light and conviction of their own minds, obstinately rejected it with contempt: but I rather think this question refers to the calling of the Gentiles, and their own rejection; and the sense is, did not Israel know, that the Gentiles were to be called by the grace of God, and that they themselves were to be cast off? they did know this, at least something of it, though not so clearly as it is now revealed to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; but in some measure they could not but know it, since there were such strong hints of it in the writings of the Old Testament, some of which are hereafter produced:

first Moses saith; not "Moses the first", as if there was another, or a second Moses, but either Moses, who is the first of the inspired writers, and chief of the prophets; or rather this regards order of time, Moses in the first place says so and so, for other testimonies are after cited; the passage in Moses referred to, is
De 32:21.

I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. The Gentiles are here designed by "them that are no people": who before God, and in his sight, as all nations are, were as a drop of the bucket, as the small dust of the balance: nay, even as nothing, yea, less than nothing and vanity: likewise they were no people of any account, of any name; they were mean and contemptible, neglected and overlooked by God himself, and treated with contempt by the Jews, his professing people: and besides, they were not as yet openly and visibly the people of God; they neither called upon his name, nor were they called by his name; he had not as yet taken from among them a people for his name: these are also meant by "the foolish nation"; Jarchi {m} says, the Cuthites, or Samaritans, are intended; who were neighbours to the Jews, and greatly hated by them: but it may more rightly be applied to all the Gentiles in general, who notwithstanding their large pretensions to natural, civil, and moral wisdom, yet being without a true knowledge of God, Christ, and the Gospel, were a foolish people; and in nothing more did their folly appear, than in their idolatry and superstition. Now the Lord threatened by these people to provoke the Jews to jealousy, and to anger them; and this was but just, and by way of retaliation; for since they provoked him to jealousy and anger, by worshipping strange gods, which plainly declared their want of faith in him, affection for him, and their departure from him; it was a righteous thing in him to provoke them to jealousy of him, as if he had no affection for them, who had been so long, in some sense, an husband to them all; and as about to cast them off; and to anger them, by sending his Gospel among the Gentiles, and calling them by his grace, and making them partakers of his special favours; whereby this prophecy had its full accomplishment: for though the Jews rejected and despised the Gospel themselves, yet nothing more provoked them than that it should be carried among the Gentiles; see Ac 22:21. Now from these words of Moses, the Israelites must needs know, they could not but know that it was the will of God to call the Gentiles, and reject them.

{m} In Deut. xxxii. 21.

Romans 10:20

Ver. 20. But Esaias is very bold, and saith,.... The apostle here produces another testimony in proof of this, that the Israelites must needs have some knowledge of this truth, the calling of the Gentiles; since a famous prophet of theirs, Isaiah, also spake out with great freedom; he did not mince the matter, or cover it with dark sayings, but with all plainness and perspicuity, and with great courage and intrepidity declared it; though he knew he run the risk, not only of his fame and credit among the Jews, but of his life also, for so doing: the citation is made from Isa 65:1.

I was found of them that sought me not, I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me; here also the Gentiles are meant by "them that sought me not, and asked not after me"; the Messiah; and so R. Moses the priest says {n}, that these words are to be understood, Mlweh twmwa le, "concerning the nations of the world". The common people among them sought after the things of the world; their philosophers sought after the wisdom of it; and the more devout and religious among them sought the observance of superstitious rites and ceremonies, and, at best and most, a little morality and external righteousness; but none sought after Christ, for they knew nothing of him, and therefore did not so much as ask after him; they did not ask counsel of him, nor ask concerning him, nor ask for him; not for his coming into the world, as the Jews did, nor for the preaching of the Gospel among them, for it came among them unasked for, unexpected, and undesired, as well as undeserved by them, nor for any blessing of his; and yet such was his grace and goodness, that he was "found" of these persons, in the preaching of the Gospel; which by his kind providence was brought among them, and they were brought under the hearing of it; and by the Spirit of God directed to him in it, in whom they found life, peace, pardon, righteousness, food, and rest, and every valuable blessing; a pearl of great price they found, a finding which can never be lost: he is also said to be "made manifest" unto them, not in the flesh, but in the ministry of the word; in which his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, are evidently set forth, and clearly manifested; and besides the outward manifestation of Christ to them by the Gospel, they had no internal revelation of him in their hearts by his Spirit, setting forth to them his grace and fulness, and showing them their interest therein: from this prophecy, also, the Jews could not but have some knowledge of this mystery of grace.

{n} In Aben Ezra in Isa. lxv. 1.

Romans 10:21

Ver. 21. But to Israel he saith,.... Or against Israel, or concerning Israel he saith in the same prophecy in Isa 65:2.

All day long I have stretched forth my hands, unto a disobedient and gainsaying people: very rightly does the apostle apply these words to Israel, as he does the former to the Gentiles; and just in like manner does the above mentioned Jewish writer, R. Moses the priest, interpret them. The Lord's "stretching out [his] hands all the day long" to them, designs the ministry of the prophets one after another to them, the preaching of John the Baptist, of Christ and his apostles among them: but they were a stiffnecked and rebellious people, uncircumcised in heart and ears; would have none of his counsel, and despised his reproof; contradicted and blasphemed the word; rejected the Messiah and his Gospel; killed the Prince of life, and persecuted his apostles; so that it was just with God to write a "Lo-ammi", **Ho 1:9**, upon them, and cast them off; and, to pave the way for the account of the rejection of these people in the next chapter, is all this said, and these testimonies produced.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 11

The apostle having spoken of the calling of the Gentiles, and given a hint of the perverseness of the Jews in slighting the Gospel, proceeds in this chapter to treat of their rejection; in which he shows, that it was not universal, though of the greater part in his time; and which he confirms by some passages out of the Old Testament, and then points at the end and design of God in the casting them off; and exhorts the Gentiles not to insult them, but to learn to be humble and cautious by what was done to them; and foretells the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, which will be general, so that their rejection is not final; and resolves the whole dispensation of God, both with respect to Jews and Gentiles, into the unsearchable wisdom and sovereign will of God: he begins with an objection he saw would be made upon what he had said, concerning the calling of the Gentiles, and the unbelief of the Jews, that then God had wholly cast off his people, Ro 11:1, to which he answers with a "God forbid", by way of detestation; and by instancing in himself, who was of the people of the Jews, and yet was called; and by distinguishing between some and others among them: there were some who were foreknown, loved, and chosen of God from everlasting: these were not cast off, but others who were not foreknown, Ro 11:2, and then he illustrates the present case of the Jews by observing how it was with them in the times of Elias; who though he complained of their apostasy and cruelty, and imagined that there were none left but himself that worshipped the true God, yet there were then seven thousand, which were preserved from the idolatry of Baal, Ro 11:2, and so the apostle observes it was now,

Ro 11:5, there was a small number whom God of his free grace had chosen, and reserved for himself, and so were not all cast away, as the objection suggested; and having called this choice an election of grace, he argues the contrariety and inconsistency of grace and works in this affair, Ro 11:6, and since it appeared that there were two sorts of people among them, one that were chosen and the other not, hence it was, that though Israel did not obtain the righteousness they sought for, yet they that were chosen obtained it, and so were not cast away, when the rest were, Ro 11:7, and that so it should be, or that this should be the case of the greater part of the Jews, that they should be given up to blindness and hardness of heart, the apostle proves by some testimonies of Isaiah and David, which he produces,
Ro 11:8, hence follows an objection, that if this be the case, then God had appointed them to stumble, that they might fall even all of them, and always continue fallen; to which the apostle answers with a "God forbid", as usual, when anything is objected which is abhorred; and by observing the view, event, and order of things; showing, that the fall of the Jews issued in the salvation of the Gentiles; and the salvation of the Gentiles was to provoke the Jews to seek the same mercy, Ro 11:11, and then follows an improvement and illustration of this end, or event of their fall, Ro 11:12, that if the fall and lessening of the Jews were the means of enriching the Gentiles with the riches of Christ and his grace, what a glory must be brought to them, when they should all of them be converted and join them! and that the rejection of the Jews was neither total nor final, the apostle argues from his office, even as an apostle of the Gentiles, whom he addresses as such, Ro 11:13, and from his view and end in executing that office, which was to provoke the Jews to emulate the Gentiles, and so save some of them, Ro 11:14, and then he repeats in other words, Ro 11:15, the argument he had used in Ro 11:12, and proves the future conversion of the Jews, from the instances of conversion and sanctification, which had been, and were then among them; which were as the firstfruits to the lump, and the root to the branches; and were pledges and tokens of a general conversion and sanctification of them hereafter, Ro 11:16, and by occasion of the metaphor of the root and branches before used, he expresses the rejection of the Jews, by the breaking off some of the branches, and the reception of the Gentiles by their ingrafting into a Gospel church state among the converted Jews, enjoying the same privileges with them, Ro 11:17, and since they were originally of a wild olive tree, and merely of grace partook of the root and fatness of the good olive of the Gospel church state, as consisting first of the Jews, they ought not to be haughty and insolent, and boast and brag over the Jews, since they were beholden to them, and not the Jews to them,
Ro 11:18, and whereas an objection might be made, that the Jews were cast

out, to make room for the Gentiles, Ro 11:19, and therefore the one must be more deserving than the other; the apostle replies to it, Ro 11:20 by granting, that the one were broken off, or rejected, that the other might be ingrafted, or taken in but then as it was owing to unbelief in the Jews that they were cast off, in which the Gentiles were before conversion as well as they, so it was by faith they stood in their church relation, which was the gift of God, and owing to his grace; so that their ingrafting and continuance in a Gospel church state were not the effect of merit in them; wherefore he gives them this good advice, not to be proud and lifted up with their privileges, as though they were of their own deserving, but to fear the Lord and his goodness, from whence they sprung; and suggests, that they should be so far from making such an use of the rejection of the Jews, that it ought rather to engage them to caution, care, and fear; for they were the natural branches in the olive tree, and if these were not spared when behaving disagreeably, they must not expect to fare otherwise, who were originally of the wild olive tree, should they act unworthy of the privileges they enjoyed, Ro 11:21, wherefore the apostle recommends to their serious consideration the severity of God in the casting off of the Jews, and his goodness in taking in them, the Gentiles; and threatens them with cutting off, should they slight, neglect, or misuse the goodness of God to them in his house and ordinances, Ro 11:22, and on the other hand, an intimation is given, that the Jews, though broken off shall be grafted in again, should their unbelief discontinue, and faith in Christ be given them, which was not impossible with God; he is able both to remove their unbelief, give them faith, and reinstate them in a church relation,
Ro 11:23, and as it is without doubt he can do it, it looks very likely that he will; which may be argued from the ingrafting of the Gentiles, who were like the olive tree, wild by nature; were cut out from thence, and, contrary to nature, grafted into the good olive tree; wherefore by an argument from the lesser to the greater, much more may it be thought, that the Jews, the natural branches, will, in God's own time, be grafted in their former church state, some of their ancestors were in, Ro 11:24, yea, the apostle argues the certainty of their conversion, and reinstatement into the Gospel church, from the design of Providence in suffering blindness in part to happen to them; which was not intended always to continue, only until all the elect of God are gathered in among the Gentiles; and this mystery of Providence and grace, he thought fit to acquaint the Gentiles with, lest they should be conceited of themselves, as if they only shared the favour of God, and were deserving of it, to the contempt of the Jews, Ro 11:25, Moreover, the apostle affirms that all Israel shall be saved,
Ro 11:26, which is consequentially deduced from what he had said, and which he proves by a passage, out of Isa 59:20, and by its being a principal part of the

covenant, which God has made with them, which he will not break, but shall be fulfilled; when he shall make them sensible of their sins, and take them away by the application of his pardoning grace, Ro 11:27, and whereas the implacable enmity of the Jews to Christ and his Gospel might be objected to such a gracious procedure of God towards them, the apostle removes the objection, by granting that they were enemies to the Gospel on account of the Gentiles, to whom it was preached; but then there was a chosen people among them, who were beloved of God; which would be made manifest, because of the oath and promise made unto their their fathers, Ro 11:28, wherefore as the purposes, promises, and covenant of God are immutable, so the gifts of his grace, and the calling of his people included in them, are things certain and irrevocable, Ro 11:29, and so the calling of the Jews, and the gifts of his grace designed for them, which is another proof of their calling and conversion; and which is further argued, and made both more probable and certain, by comparing the case of the Jews and Gentiles together; as for the Gentiles, they were formerly infidels and obtained mercy, through the unbelief of the Jews, Ro 11:30, wherefore arguing from the less probable to that which is more so, the Jews, though for the present unbelievers, yet it may be thought, that through the mercy the Gentiles had received, they would some time or other be provoked to seek for, and so obtain the same mercy,
Ro 11:31, and the rather this may be given into and received, not only because they both have been in a state of unbelief, but the end and design of God in concluding them in it, were to have mercy on each of them, Ro 11:32, which dispensation of God both to one and to the other by turns, in different ways, was so amazing and unaccountable to the apostle, that he breaks out into admiration at the wisdom and knowledge of God: which were so abundant, that they could not be searched out, conceived of, and expressed, Ro 11:33, the reasons of which lay in his own breast, and are only known to himself no one having known his mind, or been his counsellor, Ro 11:34, nor is he obliged to give an account of his matters, and the reasons of his proceedings, to any of his creatures; he is not indebted to them for anything, nor does he any injustice to any of them, by whatsoever steps he takes in Providence and grace; let that appear, and recompense will be made, Ro 11:35, everything must be resolved into his sovereign will and pleasure, and so this of choosing some, and leaving others, of rejecting the Jews, and receiving the Gentiles, and also that of calling the Jews again; as it is reasonable everything should, since all things are from him, through him, and to him, Ro 11:36, and so all glory is due unto him, and here ends the doctrinal part of this epistle.

Ver. 1. I say then, hath God cast away his people?.... The Alexandrian, copy adds here, "whom he foreknew", as in Ro 11:2: upon the citation of the above passages out of Moses and Isaiah, relating to the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews, the apostle saw an objection would arise, which he here takes up from the mouth of an adversary, and proposes it; in which is suggested, that God has cast away all his people the Jews, according to this count; and if so, where is his covenant with Abraham? what is become of his promises? and how is his faithfulness to be accounted for? and what hope can any Israelite have of ever obtaining salvation? than which, nothing can be thought more injurious to God, and absurd in itself. This was an old prejudice of the Jewish nation, and still continues, that God never would, nor has he cast them away, even in their present condition; it is one of the articles of their creed, received by the Karaites {o}, a sect among them, that

"the blessed God twlgh yvnal oam al, "hath not cast away the men of the captivity", though they are under the chastisements of God; but it is fit that they should every day obtain salvation by the hands of Messiah, the Son of David."

Now to this objection the apostle makes answer; "first", in his usual way,

God forbid, when anything was objected which was displeasing to him, abhorred by him, which was not agreeable to the perfections of God, to the truth of his word, and promises, and could by no means be admitted of; and next by observing his own case, which was a standing instance to the contrary; for God had chosen him unto eternal salvation, Christ had redeemed him by his blood, and he was effectually called by grace; and as to his eternal state, he had no doubt or scruple about it; and besides, the Lord had made him a minister of the Gospel, had greatly qualified him for that work, had raised him to the high office of an apostle, and had made him very useful to the souls of many, both Jews and Gentiles; and yet he was one of the nation of the Jews, and therefore God had not cast them all away, as the objection insinuates:

for I also am an Israelite; according to the flesh, by lineal descent from Jacob or Israel; see 2Co 11:22; as well as in a spiritual sense:

of the seed of Abraham; "the grandfather of Israel"; the head of the Jewish nation he was, both of his natural and of his spiritual seed, who is the father of us all:

of the tribe of Benjamin; a very little tribe, which in the time of the Judges was near being destroyed, and, upon the return from the captivity of Babylon, was very small, as it was at this time; and yet God had not cast away this, much less all the tribes of Israel.

{o} Apud Trigland. de Sect. Karaeorum, c. 10. p. 151.

Romans 11:2

Ver. 2. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew,.... The apostle goes on with his answer to the objection, by distinguishing and explaining who he meant by the people God had not cast away, namely, which were "foreknown" by him; for all mankind are in a sense his people, being made, maintained, and supported in their beings by him, yet they are not all foreknown; for were they, they would be all predestinated, called, conformed to the image of Christ, justified and glorified; but some of them will be cast away, being bad and wicked, and will be sent into everlasting punishment: and though the people of the Jews in general were the people of God, being in a sense chose, known, and distinguished by him from the rest of the world, yet they were not all a "foreknown" people, in the sense the apostle uses the word; wherefore a great number of them were cast away, of which afterwards the apostle speaks largely in this chapter: but then there were a people among them, that were the people of God in a more special sense; they were chosen by him from everlasting to be his people; they were taken into the covenant of his grace as such; they were given to Christ as his people, and were redeemed and saved by him on that account; and were, or were to be called, with an holy calling, when they are openly declared to be the people of God, whom he foreknew: he not merely knew them before, by his general prescience and foreknowledge, which extends to all persons and things; or foresaw their faith, holiness, and good works, and so chose them for himself; for faith, holiness, and good works, are fruits and effects of electing grace; but he so knew them before, even from all eternity, as that he approved of them, liked them, loved them, and took delight and complacency in them: now these his people he never did, nor never will cast away. Their numbers may be but very small in some periods of time, yet none of them are cast away; God may not immediately arise to their help and assistance in time of distress, or so soon as they desire and expect; he may withdraw his presence, hide himself, and stand at a distance from them; he may afflict them in a fatherly way, when they may think he has cast them off, or cast them away; whereas he never casts any of them away, nor out of his heart's love, nor out of his sight, nor out of the covenant of his grace, nor out of the hands of his Son, nor out of his family, or so as that any of them shall perish eternally; so far from it, that he takes the utmost delight in them, grants them the greatest nearness to himself, bears the strongest affection for them, and takes the most diligent care of them; whoever casts them out of their affection and company, he will not; the reasons are, because his love to them is unchangeable, his purpose concerning their salvation stands firm and sure, his word and oath are unalterable, his gifts and calling are without repentance; and they are his jewels, portion, and inheritance; they are as the apple of his eye, and continually held by his right hand. The apostle next replies to this objection, by putting them in mind of the case and state of the church of God, in the times of Elijah; and what judgment that prophet formed of it, and in which he appeared to be mistaken:

wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? do ye not know? ye cannot be ignorant who have, and read the Scripture, what it says of Elias, or "in Elias"; that is, as the Arabic version renders it, "in the history of Elias"; in the account it gives of his life and times:

how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying: that is, how he spoke to God in prayer concerning Israel; and instead of praying for them, as the prophets were wont to do, he was obliged to bring a complaint against them for their idolatry, contempt of the worship of God, and violent persecution of his true followers. The apostle chose to mention this instance because there was some likeness between his case and Elijah's; and the state of the people of Israel at the then present time, and as in the times of Elijah; for as the Jews in his time killed and persecuted the prophets of the Lord, so in the present time they had killed the Lord Jesus Christ, and persecuted his apostles; and as Elijah, though one of their own prophets, was obliged to make intercession against them, so the apostle, though one of their own countrymen, could not but speak against them, and of their just rejection by God: and this he observes, to soften their resentments against him, when so great a prophet had done so before him: and this the Jews themselves own {p}, for they say that Elijah larvy le ayyrwgyjq rbdm, "brought an accusation against Israel": and it is observed by another {q} that

"coals are said of Isaiah and Elijah, because they delivered an accusation against Israel: one called them a people of unclean lips, and the other said, for they have forsaken thy covenant:"

which is the apostle's sense.

{p} Laniado in 1 Kings xix. 14. {q} Jarchi in Isa. vi. 6.

Romans 11:3

Ver. 3. Lord, they have killed thy prophets,.... By the order of Jezebel, wife of Ahab king of Israel, 1Ki 18:4. This sin of slaying the prophets of the Lord is charged upon the Jews by Christ,
Mt 23:31, and by the apostle, **1Th 2:15**. In the text in
1Ki 19:14, it is added, "with the sword": which expresses the manner of death they were put to; and this clause is there put after the following, according to a rule of transposition among the Jews;
See Gill on "Mt 27:10".

And digged down thine altars; either the altars which the patriarchs had formerly built, and were still in being; and though not used, yet were kept and had in great veneration; wherefore the pulling of them down was done in contempt of them, and of the worship of God, which had been formerly performed there; or else such altars, which the religious among the ten tribes built, since the times of Jeroboam, who forbad them to go up to Jerusalem, but ordered them to go to Dan or Bethel; which they not choosing to do erected altars in different places for divine service, and which the Jews {r} say were allowed; for from that time, the prohibition of altars at other places than at Jerusalem ceased:

and I am left alone: meaning either as a prophet, not knowing that Obadiah had hid an hundred prophets by fifty in a cave, 1Ki 18:4; or else as a worshipper of the true God, imagining that he was the only person in Israel, that had a true zeal for the Lord of hosts:

and they seek my life; lay in wait for it, Jezebel by her emissaries being in quest of him; it is added in 1Ki 19:14, "to take it away"; for she had swore by her gods, that by the morrow about that time, his life should be as the life of one of the prophets of Baal he had slain; and in one copy it is added here.

{r} Kimchi in 1 Kings xviii. 30.

Romans 11:4

Ver. 4. But what saith the answer of God unto him?.... The divine response, or oracle, the lwq tb, "Bath Kol", or voice from heaven; the still small voice of the Lord, which Elijah heard, 1Ki 19:12:

I have reserved to myself; for his worship and service, to be partakers of his grace, inheritors of his kingdom, to show forth his praise, and for his name's sake, for his honour and glory: these he reserved in eternal election, in the council and covenant of peace; separated them in time from others by his grace, and preserved them from the general defection and apostasy: even

seven thousand men: meaning either that precise and exact number, which was but small in comparison of the very large multitude of persons that were in the ten tribes, or else a certain number for an uncertain:

who have not bowed the knee; a sign of reverence and adoration:

to [the image] of Baal; Jezebel's god, the god of the Zidonians; a name common to many of the "deities" of the Gentiles, and signifies "lord", or "master"; we read of "Baalim" in the plural number, for there were "lords many" of this name: in the Greek text the article is of the feminine gender, wherefore our translators have supplied the word image. This word has, in the Septuagint version, sometimes a feminine article as here; see 2Ki 21:3; but in 1Ki 19:18, from whence this passage is taken, the article is masculine, as it is also in **Jud 2:11**, and in other places. This deity being either of both sexes, or of no distinguished sex; or it may be, the reason it has so often a feminine article is, because it was a young heifer, or in the form of one; so in the history of Tobias 1:5, it is said, that "all the tribes which apostatized together sacrificed",
th baal th damalei, "to Baal the heifer". The apostle's view in mentioning this instance is to show, that when the church and cause of God are at the lowest, God has always some true worshippers of him; and that he never casts away his foreknown people, whose numbers are generally more than they are thought to be by the saints themselves; good men, as Elijah, may be mistaken in this matter; all which he accommodates to the then present state of God's people, in Ro 11:5.

Romans 11:5

Ver. 5. Even so then at this present time also,.... In which the apostle lived, the time of preaching the Gospel, the accepted time, the day of salvation, which then was, and also now is; at that time when the Gospel was sent unto the Gentiles, and God took out of them a people for his name; when multitudes of them were converted, and embraced the faith of Christ; and when the Jews in general had rejected the Messiah, killed the Lord Jesus, persecuted his apostles, and contradicted and blasphemed the Gospel; yet still God had made a reserve of some among them, for himself:

there is a remnant; alluding either to Isa 10:21, or to the oracle delivered to Elijah, saying, "I have reserved", or "left", &c. 1Ki 19:18, that as God had reserved for himself, in Elijah's time, a number of persons, who had not gone into the idolatrous worship of Baal, when the greater part of the Israelites did, so he had taken care to make a like reserve in the apostle's time, when the bulk of the Jewish nation had refused the Messiah, and despised his Gospel. This is a further proof, that God had not cast away all the people of the Jews; and that as Elijah was not the only worshipper of the true God in his time, so the apostle was not the only instance of grace among that people now; there was a number of them; the number of the disciples after our Lord's ascension, was an hundred and twenty; upon the first sermon preached by Peter, three thousand were converted, and added to them; after that, they are said to be about five thousand, and still multitudes were added, both of men and women, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith; so that before the dispersion of the church at Jerusalem by a persecution, there might be at least such a number called by grace, as God had reserved in Elijah's time; though these, when compared with the generality of the nation, which remained in unbelief, were but a few, and therefore called a "remnant", or a "reserve", as the word may be rendered; for these were a set of men, whom God had reserved and preserved in his Son, and in the covenant of his grace, from everlasting; and had kept a watchful eye over them in time, reserved them in his providence, and saved them to be called; and by calling them, had reserved them by his grace, and preserved them by his power, from the general unbelief, impenitence, blindness, and ignorance, which prevailed over the people of the Jews; which reserve was not owing to their superior goodness, they being in no wise, with respect to nature, birth, and privileges, better than those who were not reserved; nor to the disposition of their minds and wills, their minds and consciences being defiled, and their wills naturally as obstinate and perverse as others; nor to any good works done by them, since works before calling are not properly good, and those after are the fruits of that grace: but this reverse was made,

according to the election of grace; God's choice of these persons before the world was, which is the source and spring of all the blessings of grace, both in time eternity: hence these persons were put into the hands of Christ, secured in an everlasting covenant, took special care of by divine Providence, were called by grace, justified, sanctified, and at last glorified: and this choice is owing to grace, for not men's choice of God's grace, but God's choice, owing to his, own grace, is here meant. The Pelagians would have it, that this election is the choice which man makes of the grace of God: whereas such is the enmity of mans nature, and will against God and his grace, that he would never make choice of that, if the grace of God did not first make choice of him, and lay hold upon him: grace here, does not design the object of the choice, but the cause, spring, and motive of it, which is not any habit or quality in men, as faith and holiness, for these are fruits and effects of electing grace, and so not causes, motives, or conditions of it, but the free love and favour of God in his own heart; and shows the sovereignty and freeness of election, which is no ways depending on the will and works of men, but upon the sovereign good will and pleasure of God.

Romans 11:6

Ver. 6. And if by grace, then is it no more of works,.... Upon election, being called "the election of grace", the apostle forms an argument, showing the contrariety and inconsistency of grace, and works, in that affair; proving, that it must be by the one or the other: and if by the one, then not by the other; and that these two cannot be mixed and blended together in this matter. If election is "by grace", as it certainly is; for no other reason can be given why God has chose one, and not another, but his own sovereign pleasure, or that free favour and unmerited love, with which he loves one and not another; and not because they are better, or had done or would do better things than others; "then it is no more", or not at all, for it never was "of works", was not influenced by them, does not arise from them, for it passed before ever any were done; and those that are done aright spring from it, and therefore could never be the rule and measure, causes, motives, and conditions of it;

otherwise grace is no more grace; for

"grace (as Austin has long ago observed) is not grace, unless it is altogether freed;"

it will lose its nature, and ought to change its name, and be no more called or reckoned grace, but a due debt; and a choice of persons to salvation should be thought, not to be what God is free to make or not, but what he is obliged to, as a reward of debt to men's works:

but if it be of works, then it is no more grace; if election springs from, and depends upon the works of men, let no man ascribe it to the grace of God; for there is nothing of grace in it, if this be the case:

otherwise work is no more work; that will free gift: but these things are contrary to one another; and so unalienable and unalterable in their natures, that the one cannot pass into the other, or the one be joined with the other, in this or any other part of man's salvation; for what is here said of election, holds true of justification, pardon of sin, and the whole of salvation. The Ethiopic version applies it to justification.

Romans 11:7

Ver. 7. What then?.... What can be said to the point the apostle is upon? it is as clear as the sun, out of all question, that God has not cast away all the people of the Jews, nor any whom he foreknew, any age or period of time; neither in the time Elijah, nor in the apostle's, he always having a reserve of some for himself; which reserve is owing to a previous choice of them, and that previous choice to ascribed not to any works of theirs, but to his free grace and sovereign pleasure. Indeed

Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; that is, carnal Israel, the body and bulk of that people; who sought for life and righteousness by their obedience to the law, and which they in general were in quest of, and pursuit after, but did not obtain, though, some of them might imagine they did; for the thing was impracticable and impossible, no life nor righteousness are ever to be had by the law of works; they did not obtain life and righteousness, because they sought them in a wrong place and in a wrong way; they sought them not by faith in Christ Jesus, where they are only to be had, but by their own works, which fall abundantly short of procuring them for them:

but the election hath obtained it. The apostle divides Israel into two parts, "the election and the rest": by "the election" he means, elect men, the remnant among them, whom God had reserved for himself; just as "circumcision" designs circumcised persons, and "uncircumcision" uncircumcised persons, and "calling" called ones, and "righteousness" righteous men and women; see **Ro 3:30** **2Pe 3:13**. Now these chosen ones obtained mercy, grace, life, and righteousness in Christ, as the apostle himself did, who was one of them; and that by virtue, and in consequence of their election, for which reason the word is here used; hence mercy was shown them, grace was bestowed upon them, the righteousness of Christ was imputed to them, faith was given them, holiness was wrought in them, and they entitled to, and made meet for eternal life: these among Israel then obtained such favours and blessings; and so God's elect, in all ages and nations, obtain the same things, and will obtain; for the purpose of God according to election stands sure, his word and oath are immutable, his covenant inviolable, his grace inalienable, and his power omnipotent:

and the rest were blinded: the non-elect, or those who were not chosen and reserved, to whom Christ was "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence"; and who "stumbled at the word" of the Gospel, "being disobedient" to the divine revelation, "whereunto they were appointed", **1Pe 2:8**; hence they obtained no mercy, grace, faith, life, righteousness, and eternal salvation, but were "blinded"; left in that native blindness and ignorance, in which they were born and brought up; were blinded by themselves wilfully more and more; as they knew not the Messiah, so neither would they understand; they sinned wilfully against light knowledge; they shut their eyes against all that evidence and demonstration given, of Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah, by his doctrines and miracles; and they were blinded by Satan, the god of this world, by whom they were led captive; who wrought effectually in them, and stirred up the malice and enmity of their minds against Christ and his Gospel; for they were of their father the devil, and his lusts they would do; and they were also blinded by God himself, so that they could not believe; for after all this, it was but just with God to give them up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart.

Romans 11:8

Ver. 8. According as it is written,.... In Isa 29:10 which passages the apostle seems to refer to, though it is not exactly word for word as here, yet the sense is the same:

God hath given them the spirit of slumber; or of stupidity and insensibility, so that they were as persons in a deep sleep; their senses locked up, without any knowledge of, or concern about, the danger they were in; having no sense of sin, or of the need of a Saviour; or of their being upon the borders of eternal ruin and damnation, or of any ways and means to escape it; but careless and secure, as persons fast asleep in the midst of the sea, or upon the top of a mast, who, when stricken and beaten, feel it not; but if by jogging are awaked at all, immediately return to sleep again, and so sleep the sleep of eternal death:

eyes that they should not see; which being closed by the deep sleep and stupidity of mind they were judicially given up to, could see no beauty in

Christ, wherefore they should desire him; none of the glories and excellencies of his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; noticing amiable and agreeable in his Gospel, and the truths of it; nor had they any light in the prophets of the Old Testament, which were so remarkably fulfilled in him; their minds were blinded, a vail was upon their hearts, and which remains to this day:

and ears that they should not hear; for persons in a sleep, as their eyes are closed that they cannot see, so their ears are stopped that they cannot hear: and thus it was with these Jews, the awful judgment being upon them; they were uncircumcised in heart and ears; they were like the deaf adder, stopping their ears to the charming voice of Christ in the Gospel; and being given up in a judicial way, could neither understand his speech, nor hear his word: and this spirit of stupidity and insensibility, as it appeared in the times of Isaiah, so it continued

unto this day; the then present time, in which the apostle lived; and has continued ever since, at least in part, and will until the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in. These passages, with some others following, are produced by the apostle out of their own prophets, to take off their resentment against him; and lest, he should be thought to be severe upon them, when he said no more of them, but what had been prophesied long before concerning them. So Jarchi on Isa 29:10; says, that Isaiah prophesies larvy yevwp le, "concerning the transgressors of Israel".

Romans 11:9

Ver. 9. And David saith,.... That is, Christ by the mouth of David, or David in the person of Christ; for the psalm out of which the following words are taken is a prophecy of the Messiah, as appears from some passages cited out of it in the New Testament, and applied to Christ; compare Ro 11:4 with Joh 15:25, and Ro 11:9 with **Joh 2:17**, and Ro 11:21 with Joh 19:28; and what are here cited are not so much imprecations, as predictions of what should befall the Jews, by way of recompense for their ill usage of the Messiah, in giving him gall for meat, and vinegar for drink,
Mt 27:34:

let their table be made a snare, and a trap and a stumbling block. By their "table" may be meant, the altar; see **Mal 1:7**; and the sacrifices offered up upon it, their meat offerings and drink offerings, and all others; likewise the laws concerning the difference of meats, and indeed the whole ceremonial law may be intended, which lay in meats and drinks, and such like things: now the Jews placing their justifying righteousness before God, in the observance of these rites and ceremonies, and imagining that by these sacrifices their sins were really expiated and atoned for, they neglected and submitted not to the righteousness of Christ, but went about to establish their own; so that that which should have led them to Christ, became an handwriting of ordinances against them, and rendered Christ of no effect to them: moreover, the sacred writings, which are full of spiritual food and divine refreshment, the prophecies of the Old Testament, which clearly pointed out Christ, not being understood, but misapplied by them, proved a trap, a snare, and a stumbling block to them; so that they rejected the true Messiah, which issued in their utter ruin and destruction: yea, the preaching of the Gospel, the salutary truths and wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, were a stumbling block to the Jews, nay, even the savour of death unto death. Though these words may be literally understood of their table mercies, the necessary provisions of life, their common food and drink, of which they had great scarcity in their last wars; so that they not only by wicked methods stole it from one another, but ate what was forbidden by their law, and what was abhorrent to nature, as one is said to eat her own child; nor is it to be overlooked what is suggested by some, that the passover may be meant by their "table"; which was their grand yearly feast, and which they were eating {s} when they were surrounded and taken by the Roman army, like birds in a net, or beasts in a trap: and all this as

a recompense to them; a just judgment upon them, by way of retaliation for their ill treatment of Christ when on the cross, giving him gall and vinegar for his meat and drink.

{s} Josephus de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9.

Romans 11:10

Ver. 10. Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see,.... Which is to be understood not literally of their being struck with blindness, as the men of Sodom were by the angels, and as Elymas the sorcerer was by the Apostle Paul; but mystically, of the eyes of their understandings being darkened, as they were by themselves and by Satan, and judicially by God; so that they could not see into the true same of the prophecies and promises concerning Christ; and how all the characters of the Messiah met in Jesus of Nazareth; their eyes were so blinded, that they could see no beauty nor comeliness in him; no excellency in his person, nothing wonderful in his works, nor amiable in his doctrine; nay, not only spiritual things, the things of the Gospel, were hid from the most wise and prudent among them, from their doctors and Rabbins, but also the things which regarded their temporal peace and happiness were hid from their eyes; their eyes were not only darkened with respect to things spiritual and evangelical, but even with regard to things natural and civil: never did a people act more imprudently for their temporal safety and welfare, or appear so infatuated in all their conduct, as they did, as the history of their wars does abundantly declare:

and bow down their back alway; which may denote their subjection and bondage to the Romans, when taken and carried captive by them; who laid very heavy burdens on them, which bowed down their backs indeed, multitudes of them being condemned to the mines; or this may design the general disposition of the minds of these people, which are bowed to the earth, for they mind nothing but earth and earthly things; the acquiring of which they are bent upon at any rate, and are infamous for their earthly mindedness, covetousness, extortion, usury, tricking, and over reaching: or this phrase may be expressive of that trembling, distress, horror, and despair, which shall seize them; especially when the son of man comes in the clouds of heaven, and they that have pierced him shall behold him, and wail because of trim; for in the Psalms the words are, "make their loins continually to shake", Ps 69:23.

Romans 11:11

Ver. 11. I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall?.... This is an objection, which the apostle takes from the mouth of an adversary; and the purport of it is, you say that the people of the Jews being blind, have stumbled at Christ and his Gospel, as was prophesied of them, and to which they were appointed; pray what were God's view and end in this? was it that they should fall and perish eternally? if it be so, is not this doing himself, what he forbids others, namely, "to put a stumblingblock before the blind?" Le 19:14, and can he be excused from cruelty, and rejoicing at the misery of others? or is their stumbling permitted, that they should "all" fall through unbelief, and be cast away? and so it is an objection of the same kind with Ro 11:1; or since they have stumbled, and have thereby fell into a forlorn and miserable condition, are they always to continue in it, as the last clause in the above cited passage suggests? To which the apostle answers,

God forbid; neither of these are to be admitted of. The end which God had in view, in suffering the Jews to stumble and fall, was not their destruction, but rather the salvation of the Gentiles; and especially not the destruction of "all" of them, blindness had only happened "in part" to them; for there was a remnant among them according to the election of grace, which should be saved; a chosen number, which obtained life and righteousness by Christ; yea, a fulness of them, how small soever their number might be now, which should be brought in; and still less that they should always continue in this sad condition, their unbelief had brought them into; for the time would come, when there would be a receiving of them as life from the dead, when all Israel should be saved. And at present there appeared nothing ill in view,

but rather through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles. That is, the Gospel; which is sometimes called salvation, the Gospel of our salvation, the word of "salvation"; because it is a declaration of salvation by Christ, and is the power of God unto it; or a means made effectual by the power of God to convince persons, both of their need, and of the worth of it, and also a means of the application of it to them, by the Spirit of God: now this came to the Gentiles by the ministry of the apostles, according to the orders and command of Christ; and that through the fall of the Jews, their unbelief and rejection of the Messiah; for the Gospel was first preached to them, but they contradicting and blaspheming it, the apostles turned to the Gentiles, and preached it to them, as the Lord had commanded them: and thus they came to be acquainted with the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ, and to have it powerfully applied to their souls by the Spirit of God; when salvation might be said to "come" to them, in such sense as our Lord says it did to Zacchaeus and his house, Lu 19:9: and another end is to be answered hereby; which is

for to provoke them to jealousy: that is, to provoke the Jews to jealousy; not in an ill sense, as in Ro 10:19, and as they were provoked upon the first sending of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and the calling of them, when they discovered a great deal of envy, wrath, and bitterness; but in a good sense, as will appear in the latter day, when being convinced of their sin in rejecting the Messiah, and observing the many advantages the Gentiles have received by embracing him, and they have lost by their contempt of him, will be provoked to an holy emulation of them, and be stirred up through their means to seek the Lord their God, and David their King; and thus things will wind about in Providence. The fall of the Jews makes way for the Gospel among the Gentiles; and this having had its effects with them, will be a means of putting the Jews upon serious thoughts about, and a studious inquiry after, the true Messiah, and salvation by him; all which is a full answer to the question, and the objection contained in it.

Romans 11:12

Ver. 12. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world,.... By "the world", as is clear from the next clause, is meant the Gentiles; who were frequently called so by the Jews, who reckoned themselves to be "the church", and all the nations round about them, "the world"; which observation may serve to illustrate other passages of Scripture; see **Joh 3:16**; now the fall of the Jews, which was a lessening of them, was the riches of the Gentiles;

and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; the number of the true believers in Christ among them were very few, the generality of them received him not, but stumbled at him, and fell through unbelief; but the few that did believe were the means of carrying and spreading the Gospel, which is, "the unsearchable riches of Christ", **Eph 3:8**, in the Gentile world: thus at first a persecution being raised against the church at Jerusalem, the ministers of the Gospel were scattered abroad, and went everywhere preaching the word; and afterwards the Jews behaving in a very indecent manner towards the apostles of Christ, they turned in a manner wholly to the Gentiles; and thus by the means of a few, a diminutive company, of which the Apostle Paul was one, the Gospel, the pearl of great price, treasure hid in a field, and put into earthen vessels, was carried into the Heathen world, and by it they were enriched. This handful of men that went out of Judea, were the means of converting vast numbers, large multitudes of souls among the Gentiles, which may be also designed by "riches": this word sometimes signifying plenty, see **Ro 2:4**; and also of enriching them with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and of directing them to Christ, who has durable riches, treasures of wisdom and knowledge, riches of grace, and riches of glory. Now the apostle argues, that if such a small number of the Jews who embraced Christ, were of so much advantage to the Gentiles,

how much more their fulness? when converts to Christ among them will be as the sand of the sea, a nation of them shall be born again at once, and all Israel be saved. This will be a great accession to the Gentile church, bring much glory to it, contribute greatly to its welfare, and be a means of establishing their faith, and of putting fresh life and vigour into them, and of inspiring them with more zeal for Christ, and for his honour and glory.

Romans 11:13

Ver. 13. For I speak to you Gentiles,.... The church at Rome, as the primitive churches for the most part did, consisted of Jews and Gentiles; hence the apostle sometimes addresses the one, as in **Ro 2:17**, and sometimes the other, as here; and this he does to observe unto them the grace and goodness of God, in enriching them with the Gospel of salvation; and that they might not despise the Jews, from whom it first came out, and through whose fall it came to them, and was preached among them by some of that nation:

in as much as I am the apostle of the Gentiles. He was ordained and set apart by God, in his eternal purposes, to be a teacher of the Gentiles; he was sent immediately by Christ to bear his name among them, though not among them only, to the exclusion of the people of Israel; he chiefly preached the Gospel to them, though sometimes to the Jews also; and the success of his ministry was mostly among the uncircumcision, though he sought by all ways and means to gain both Jews and Gentiles: hence he addresses the Gentiles with greater freedom and boldness, because he was their apostle, and had been so useful among them; and is a reason why we Gentiles should have a special regard to his writings; for though every word of God is pure, and all Scripture is divinely inspired, and is profitable on one account or other; nor is any part of it to be slighted and neglected; yet as Paul's epistles are written chiefly to the Gentile churches, excepting that to the Hebrews, and which some question whether it is his, they ought especially to be attended to by us; though, alas, of all the inspired writings they are had in the least esteem:

I magnify mine office: not himself, for he was not of a self-exalting spirit, but humble and lowly minded, ready at all times to own himself to be less than the least of saints and the chief of sinners; but his office, which he had received from Christ, as an instance of his grace and favour. This was magnified partly by the miracles, signs, and wonders done by him, in proof, and for the confirmation of his apostleship; and partly by his constant, diligent, and faithful preaching of the Gospel: as also by the unwearied pains he took to spread it far and near; and likewise by the numbers of souls he was the means of bringing to the knowledge of Christ; and it was no small accession of glory to his office, as an apostle of the Gentiles, that he was an instrument of the conversion of many among the Jews.

Romans 11:14

Ver. 14. If by any means I may provoke to emulation,.... What he had in view, even in discharging his office among the Gentiles with so much labour, assiduity, and indefatigableness, was, that if possible he might stir up the Jews to emulate and imitate the Gentiles, in seeking after Christ; for these he means when he says,

them which are my flesh; they being his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, for it was common with the eastern nations to call such persons their flesh; see Ge 29:14; and carries in it a reason why he was so solicitous for their welfare, because of the relation of them to him, and the natural affection he bore towards them; and his hope was, that they seeing the nations of the earth blessed in the promised seed, through his preaching the Gospel to them, great gatherings of the people to Shiloh, and the Gentiles seeking to the root of Jesse, set up for an ensign to the people, might be provoked to an emulation of them; and likewise seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and thereby have his end he so much wished for and desired:

and might save some of them; he says "some", not all, for he knew the bulk of the people was rejected, only a seed was left among them, a remnant according to the election of grace that should be saved, and which did obtain righteousness and life, while the rest were blinded. The ministers of the Gospel may be said to save souls, not efficiently, for the author or efficient cause of salvation is God only; the Father has chose unto it, the Son has effected it, and the Spirit applies it; but instrumentally, as the word preached by them is the means of regeneration, faith, and conversion, with which salvation is connected: and as they show unto men the way of salvation, and encourage souls to believe in Christ, in whom alone it is. Now the apostle argues from his office, and the usefulness of it, to some among the Jews, to saving purposes, to prove that their rejection was not total.

Romans 11:15

Ver. 15. For if the casting away of them,.... This argument, as before, in Ro 11:12, is from the lesser to the greater, showing that as the Gentiles received present advantage through the rejection of the Jews, they would receive far greater at their future recovery, and which proves that their rejection is not final; for by "the casting away of them", is meant the rejection of the Jews, and refers to God's writing a "Lo-ammi", **Ho 1:9**, upon them, and his taking away the Gospel from them, and which were the occasion of

the reconciling of the world, the Gentiles; not of God's drawing the scheme of their reconciliation in his Son; nor of the actual reconciliation of them by his sufferings and death; but of the Gospel, the word of reconciliation being carried among them upon the Jews' disbelief and contempt of it, which was made effectual by the power of divine grace, to the reconciling of them to God, to the, way of salvation by Christ; to be willing to serve him, and be saved by him; to, lay down their arms, surrender to his victorious grace, and become obedient to him both by word and deed; and if this was the case then, as it was, he asks

what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead? By the receiving of them is meant the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, when they will be received by Christ, on whom they will look with an eye of faith, and mourn in an evangelical manner for their sins against him; who casts out none that come unto him, but receives them into his arms in the most kind and tender manner; and when they will be also openly received into the house and family of God, into the visible church of Christ; and as the apostle afterwards says, "be grafted into their own olive tree", Ro 11:24; and this their restoration will be as "life from the dead"; which regards not so much the quickening of the Jews themselves, though their conversion will be, as the conversion of every sinner is, a resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace, and is so represented in Eze 37:1, but rather the reviving the work of God among the Gentile churches, who having lain long in a dead, lifeless, lukewarm, and indifferent frame of spirit, will be aroused and quickened, at this wonderful work of grace upon the Jews; and besides it will be as unexpected by them, and as surprising to them, as a person's being raised from the dead would be; yea as joyful, and as welcome to them, as if a man received his nearest relation and friend from the dead; add to this, and which some of the ancients make to be the sense of the place, quickly after the conversion of the Jews, the fulness of the Gentiles being brought in, and nothing more to be done in a way of grace, the first resurrection from the dead will follow, and happy is he that will have part in it.

Romans 11:16

Ver. 16. For if the firstfruit be holy,.... Some by "the firstfruit" and "root" understand Christ, who is sometimes called, "the firstfruits of them that slept", 1Co 15:20, and "the root of Jesse and David", Isa 11:10, and indeed of all the righteous; and certain it is, that since he is holy, has all the holiness of his people in him, and is sanctification unto them, they shall be holy likewise; have it imparted to them in this life, and perfected in them in another: but this does not seem to agree with the apostle's argument. Others think that by them are meant the Jewish ancestors, and particularly Abraham, and dream of a holiness derived from him to his natural seed; but if no such holiness was derived from him to his immediate offspring, Ishmael, it can hardly be thought any should be communicated by him to his remote posterity; and to these here designed, at the distance of four or five thousand years from him: but by them are intended the first converts among the Jews, under the Gospel dispensation; it being usual with the apostle to call those persons, that were first converted in any place, the firstfruits of it; see Ro 16:5; These were they who received the firstfruits of the Spirit in Judea, and who first among the Jews hoped and believed in Christ; these were but few in number, as the "firstfruit" is but small in comparison of "the lump", and mean, abject, and despicable, as the "root" under, and in a dry ground is; but yet were pledges and presages of a larger number of souls among that people, to be converted in the latter day: now the apostle's argument is, "if the firstfruit be holy",

the lump is also holy, and if the root be holy, so are the branches; that is, that whereas those persons who were converted among the Jews, however few in number, and despicable in appearance they might be, yet were truly sanctified by the Spirit of God; and as they were, so should the whole body of that people be in the last days, "when holiness [shall] be upon the horses' bells, [and] every pot in Judah and Jerusalem shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts", Zec 14:20, by which metaphorical expressions is meant, that holiness should be common to the whole nation, and all the inhabitants of it, of which the call of some few among them was a pledge and presage. The allusion in the former clause is to the holy offerings of firstfruits to the Lord, the two wave loaves, Le 23:14, whereby the whole lump was sanctified, for after use throughout the year following; and that in the latter clause, to the holiness of trees; that is, to trees devoted to sacred use or that were planted in a field appropriated thereunto: hence we read {t}, that the men of Jericho permitted, or as other exemplars read it, cut down vdqh lv twyzmg, "branches of holiness", or "holy branches"; and eat fallen fruit on the sabbath day. {u} Bartenora explains these branches, of such that grow upon a tree devoted to holy uses; and Maimonides {w}, observes, that they thought it lawful to eat what grew in a holy field.

{t} Misn. Pesachim, c. 4. sect. 8. {u} In Misn. Pesachim. c. 4. sect. 8. {w} In ib.

Romans 11:17

Ver. 17. And if some of the branches be broken,.... This is to be understood, not of the exclusion of the Jews from their national church; for the persons designed by the "branches", were the principal members of it, as the civil and ecclesiastical rulers, the priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, and the far greater part of the people; and on the other hand, the apostles and followers of Christ were put out of their synagogues, and deemed by them heretics and apostates: nor of the destruction of the Jewish nation, city, and temple; for as yet they existed as a nation, their city of Jerusalem was in being, and their temple standing: but of their being left out of the Gospel church, gathered among them, they not believing in the Messiah, but rejected and crucified him; and though afterwards the Gospel was preached to them, they despise it, contradicted, and blasphemed it; so that it pleased God to take it wholly away from them, when they might be truly said to be, "as branches broken off"; which phrase seems to be borrowed from Jer 11:16; they were withered, lifeless, and hopeless, being cast off by God, and neglected by his ministers, the Gospel being removed from them, and they without the means of grace and salvation: and this was the case of the generality of the people; for though the apostle only says "some", making the best of it in their favour against the Gentiles, and speaking in the softest terms; yet they were only a few, a seed, a remnant, that were taken into the Gospel church, and the rest were blinded, hardened, rejected, and left out for their unbelief:

and thou being a wild olive tree: speaking to the Gentiles, to some, not to all of them; for not a whole tree, but a part of one, what is cut out of it, a scion from it is grafted into another; and so they were a certain number which God took out from among the Gentiles, to be a people for his name and glory, and who before conversion were comparable to a wild olive tree; for though they might have some show of morality, religion, and worship, yet lived in gross ignorance, superstition, idolatry, and profaneness were destitute of a divine revelation, of all spiritual light and knowledge, of true righteousness and the grace of God; were barren and unfruitful in good works, were without hope, God and Christ in the world. This metaphor rather regards their character, case, and manners, than their original; in respect of which they and the Jews were on a level, being by nature equally corrupt, and children of wrath; and yet though a wild olive tree, were

grafted amongst them; meaning either the broken branches, in whose stead they were grafted; the Syriac version favours this sense, reading it Nwhytkwdb, "in their place"; as also in Ro 11:19; and so the Ethiopic version: or rather the believing Jews, of whom the first Gospel church and churches consisted; for the Jews first trusted in Christ, received the firstfruits of the Spirit, and were first incorporated into a Gospel church state; and then the

Gentiles which believed were received among them. The first coalition of Jews and Gentiles, or the ingrafting of the Gentiles in among the Jews that believed, was at Antioch, when dropping their distinctive names of Jews and Gentiles, they took the common name of Christians,
Ac 11:19. So that this is not to be understood of an ingrafting into Christ unless by a visible profession, but of being received into a Gospel church state; which is signified by the "olive tree" in the next clause:

and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; the Gospel church is so called for its excellency the olive tree being a choice tree, as they were a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; for its fruitfulness, bringing forth berries that are wholesome, delightful, and useful, so the saints are filled with the fruits of grace, and good works, which are by Christ to the praise and glory of God; for its beauty when laden with fruit, so a Gospel church is beautiful maintaining the purity of Gospel doctrine, discipline, worship and conversation; "his beauty shall be as the olive tree", Ho 14:6; see Jer 11:16; and for its verdure and durableness, and growing on the mountains, all which may denote the continuance and firmness of the church of Christ. Now the Gentiles being grafted into a Gospel church state with the believing Jews, partook of the same root and fatness as they did, being built upon the same "foundation of the apostles prophets", **Eph 2:20**; rooted, grounded, and built up in the same church state they enjoyed the same privileges, had the doctrines of Christ and his apostles preached to them, communicated with them in the ordinances of the Gospel, and were satisfied with the goodness and fatness of the house of God; for they became "fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel", **Eph 3:6**, the apostle speaks according to the nature of the olive tree, which is unctuous, from whence an oil is taken, which makes the face of man to shine, the fruit of which fattens those that are lean; and hence it loses not its leaves, dia to yermon kai liparon, "because of its heat and fatness", as Plutarch {x} says.

{x} Sympos. l. 8. qu. 10.

Romans 11:18

Ver. 18. Boast not against the branches,.... Those that were broken off: the apostle would not have them vaunt it over them, despise them, and trample upon them; but pity them, and pray for and be abundantly thankful and humbled before God, under a sense of Ida sovereign and distinguishing grace, who had settled them in a Gospel church state, who were before comparable to a wild olive tree; and much less should they glory over the believing Jews, among whom they were, there being no difference between them, for they were all one in Christ Jesus:

but if thou boast; but if such a vain temper of mind should prevail, he suggests they would do well to sit down and consider what little reason they had on their side to glory; and if such glorying and boasting, one against another was lawful, the Jews had the greatest reason for it; for, adds the apostle,

thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. The Jews received no advantages from the Gentiles, but on the contrary the Gentiles from the Jews, to whom were committed the oracles of God, and by whom they were faithfully kept and transmitted to the Gentiles; the Gospel itself came out first from among them; the first preachers of it were Jews, who carried it into the Gentile world, where it was greatly succeeded to the conversion of many, who by this means were brought into a Gospel church state, and so enjoyed all the privileges they did: yea, Christ himself, according to the flesh, came of them, was sent unto them, was the minister of them, lived and died among them, and wrought out the great salvation for his people; hence "salvation" itself is said to be "of the Jews", **Joh 4:22**, so that the root and foundation of all their enjoyments were from the Jews, and not those of the Jews from them; hence there was no room, nor reason, for boasting against them, and vaunting it over them.

Romans 11:19

Ver. 19. Thou wilt say then,.... This is an objection which the apostle foresaw the Gentiles would make against what he had said, and in favour of their boasting;

the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. The sense of which is, that the Jews were rejected and left out of the Gospel church, on purpose to make way for the Gentiles, that they might be put in their room; and consequently the Jews must be more vile and unworthy, and the Gentiles more deserving of such favours and privileges, or God would never have taken such a step, to leave out one to make room for the other.

Romans 11:20

Ver. 20. Well,.... To this the apostle answers, by approving and granting in, part what was said, that the unbelieving Jews were broken off and rejected, and that the Gentiles that believed in Christ were grafted in among the Jews that professed his name; but then he tacitly denies that it was for their sakes, and their account, they were broken off, but for their own incredulity:

because of unbelief they were broken off; because of their unbelief and contempt of the Messiah, they were rejected of God, and died in their sins; that which excluded their forefathers from the land of Canaan, shut them out of the Gospel church state, and the kingdom of heaven:

and thou standest by faith; which is not of a man's self, but the gift of God; so that it was not by their merits, and better deservings, but by the grace of God that they were in the situation they were; they were blessed with faith in Christ, and having made a profession of it were admitted to Gospel ordinances, and into a Gospel church; and being helped hitherto to hold the profession of their faith in a becoming manner they stood their ground, and continued in their church relation; and therefore ought not to give way to a vain boasting spirit, but to be humble, modest, and dependent; wherefore he gives them this proper pertinent, and wholesome advice,

be not highminded, but fear. The apostle would have them not be elated with their gifts, privileges, and enjoyments, and look over others, or down upon them with contempt and disdain, considering that all they had and enjoyed were owing to the goodness of God, and not to any deserts of theirs; and therefore should fear the Lord and his goodness; for not a fear of hell and damnation, or a distrust of the grace of God, is here meant; but a fear of offending him, and that not from a dread of punishment, but from a sense of his grace and goodness; and also designs humility of soul, in opposition to pride, haughtiness, and elation of mind, a lowly carriage and behaviour to others, and an humble dependence on grace and strength from above, to enable to persevere and hold out to the end; for "let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" into sin, 1Co 10:12; so as to dishonour God and Christ grieve the Holy Spirit, wound his own conscience, and bring himself under the censure of the church, and to be cut off from the good olive tree, the root and fatness of which he now partakes.

Romans 11:21

Ver. 21. For if God spared not the natural branches,.... That is, executed his righteous judgments, inflicted due punishment upon the Jews, unchurched them, and stripped them of those privileges they enjoyed in a church state; who were the natural descendants of Abraham; were naturally, and as born into the world, in a national church state and in that national covenant God made with that people; to whom belonged a national adoption, in which sense they were the sons of God, his firstborn; they were chosen by him as a special and peculiar people, to very great favours and privileges; they were Christ's own, he came of them according to the flesh, and was particularly sent unto them, and ministered among them; wherefore, if, at last, God did not spare this people, though he had for a long time done it, but stirred up all his wrath against them, they disbelieving his Son, rejecting and despising the Messiah, and salvation by him, this should awaken the fear, care, and caution of the Gentiles in a church state, lest if they behave not well, he should deal in like manner with them:

take heed lest he also spare not thee; for whatever was done to the Jews in former or latter times, are written for the instruction and admonition of Gentiles; and the use they are to make thereof is, to be careful and cautious, lest by imbibing principles derogatory from the grace of God and glory of Christ, or by an unbecoming walk and conversation they provoke the Lord to unchurch them as he has done the Jews before them; and which they may the rather fear, since the Jews were the natural branches, and they formerly strangers and aliens.

Romans 11:22

Ver. 22. Behold therefore the goodness, and severity of God,.... The consideration of both the grace and kindness of God to some, and his severity or strict justice towards others, is recommended by the apostle as very proper to abate pride, vain glory, and haughtiness of spirit; and to engage to humility, fear, care, and caution;

on them which fell, severity: the Jews who stumbled at Christ and his Gospel, and fell by unbelief, God in strict justice and righteous judgment not only destroyed, as afterwards their nation, city, and temple, and scattered them abroad in the world to be a reproach, a proverb, a taunt, and a curse in all places; but cast them off as his people, broke his covenant with them, took away his Gospel from them, left them out of a Gospel church state, except a few, and gave up the generality of them to blindness and hardness of heart; so that wrath is come upon them to the uttermost, both with respect to things civil and religious, and they continue as living standing monuments of God's severity and justice, to be beheld by us Gentiles with pity and concern, and to excite in us the fear of God, and caution as to our conduct and behaviour in the world, and in the church:

but towards thee, goodness; the Gentiles, who not only share in the goodness and grace of God, displayed in the election of many of them to eternal life, in their redemption by Christ, and the effectual calling of them by the grace of God; but in their church state, they being made fellow citizens with the saints, fellow heirs, and of the same body, and having a place and a name in God's house, better than that of sons and daughters; and therefore under great obligation to fear the Lord, and his goodness, and to walk worthy of the calling wherein they are called, in all humility and lowliness of mind:

if thou continue in his goodness; meaning not the love, grace, and free favour of God, or the grace of the Spirit, a continuance in which no "if" is to be put upon; for such who are interested in the love of God always continue in it, and nothing can separate them from it; and such as have the graces of the Spirit implanted in them, as faith, hope, and love, can never lose them; these always remain in them, and they in the possession of them, though not always in the exercise of them; but the goodness of God in a church state is here meant, as the means of grace and comfort, the ministration of the word and ordinances; and the sense is, if thou dost not despise the riches of divine goodness in a church relation, if thou dost not abuse it, or walk unworthy of it, if thou abidest by it, and retainest a value for it, thou wilt still share the advantages of it:

otherwise thou also shall be cut off; from the good olive tree, the Gospel church state, into which the Gentiles were taken; and which, with respect to particular persons, may intend the act of excommunication by the church, expressed in Scripture by purging the old leaven, putting away the wicked person, withdrawing from such that are disorderly, and rejecting heretics, that is, from the communion of the church; and with respect to whole bodies and societies, an entire unchurching of them by removing the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; which threatening has been awfully fulfilled in many Gentile churches, in Asia, Africa, and Europe; and therefore may serve to awaken our fear, care, and caution, lest we should be treated in like manner.

Romans 11:23

Ver. 23. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief,.... The apostle suggests that the Jews also might be recovered and brought into a Gospel church state, provided they did not continue in infidelity; but inasmuch as they seem to lie under invincible ignorance, obstinacy, and unbelief, and were such bitter enemies to the Gospel, and abhorrers of Gospel ordinances, and a Gospel church state; yea, that they must and will abide in unbelief, unless the Spirit of God convinces them of it, and it is given to them to believe in Christ, and they are powerfully drawn by the Father to come to the Son, there is no possibility or likelihood that they

shall be grafted in, or taken into a Gospel church state; to which the apostle answers, and argues for their ingrafting, and the possibility of it from the power of God:

for God is able to graft them in again; as many of them were in the times of the apostles, and some since, for nothing is impossible with God; he can remove their unbelief, knock off the shackles and fetters in which they are held, and bring, them out of the prison of infidelity, in which they are shut up; he is able to take away the blindness of their minds, and the hardness of their hearts, the veil that is over them, and turn them to the Lord; he can by his mighty power work faith in them, and cause them to look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn in an evangelical manner; he can bring them to Christ, and into his churches, and among his people, and fold them with the rest of his sheep; so that there one fold of Jew and Gentile, under one shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Romans 11:24

Ver. 24. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree,.... As the apostle argues the possibility of bringing the Jews into a Gospel church state, from the power of God; so here the probability of it, or the easiness and likelihood of its being performed, from the ingrafting of the Gentiles; who were originally like an olive tree,

which is wild by nature, grows in the field, bears no fruit, and is useless and unprofitable; so they by nature were sinners of the Gentiles, children of wrath, full of unrighteousness, without any fruit of holiness; being not within the pale of the Jewish church and commonwealth; but in the wide field of the world, worthless, and of no account; and yet many were "cut out of" this wild olive tree; were, through the ministration of the Gospel, by the power of divine grace separated from the rest of the world; were effectually called and brought into a Gospel church state; God took out from among them a people for his name. This their being cut out of the wild olive, as it expresses the power and grace of God towards them, it might teach them humility, as it led them to observe their original state and condition:

and wert grafted, contrary to nature, into a good olive tree: for an olive tree being full of fatness, will not admit of ingrafting; nor was it ever usual to ingraft upon olive; hence the Jews say {y}
xbkrh Nhb Nya Mytz, "there is no ingrafting on olives": besides, it is contrary to nature, use, and custom, to ingraft wild scions, or grafts of any sort into a good stock; but always good scions or grafts into a wild stock, for in wild hungry stocks, grafts grow best: but in the ingrafting of the Gentiles into a Gospel church state, just such a method was taken, as if a wild graft were let into a good stock; so that this ingrafting was not of nature, it was contrary to it; but of pure grace, and, sovereign good will and pleasure; and the apostle's argument is this, that if the Gentiles, who were originally as a wild olive tree; if some as grafts were taken out from among them, and, quite contrary to their own nature, and the nature of things, were, by the goodness and grace of God, grafted into a good olive, the Gospel church state;

how much more shall these which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? that there is a greater likelihood, and more easily may it be, according to all appearance of things, that the Jews, the natural branches or descendants of Abraham, should be brought into a Gospel church state, which first began among them, and which at first only consisted of some of their nation. The Gospel church is called "their own olive tree", in allusion to Israel, or the Jewish church, which is often so called in their writings.

"Says {z} R. Joshua ben Levi, to what are the Israelites like? tyzl, "to an olive tree"; to teach them that as the leaves of an olive tree do not fall, neither on sunshine days, nor on rainy days; so the Israelites will never cease, neither in this world, nor in the world to come; and says R. Jochanan, to what are the Israelites like? "to an olive"; to teach thee that as an olive does not send forth its oil, but by the means of pressing, so the Israelites do not return to do good, but by the means of chastisement:"

and says another {a} of their writers,

"as oil ascendeth above all liquids, and is not mixed with them; so the Israelites ascend above all nations, and are not mixed with them; and there is an intimation that they are even like tyzl, "to an olive", that is pressed or squeezed; for so the Israelites are bruised and afflicted, and yet, notwithstanding all this, they ascend by virtue of the law, which is called "oil olive"."

It is easy to see from whence this simile is borrowed.

{y} T. Hieros. Celaim, c. 1. fol. 27. 2. {z} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 53. 2. {a} R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 83. 4.

Romans 11:25

Ver. 25. For I would not, brethren,.... The apostle in order to raise the attention of the Gentiles to what he was about to deliver to them, not only styles them "brethren", expressing his affection for them, and their relation to him and other believing Jews, and to one another, being all one in Christ Jesus, partakers of the same grace, and heirs of the same glory; but also tells them, that what he had to acquaint them with was a "mystery", a thing secret and hidden, which had not been heard of and known, at least not so fully and clearly as he was about to reveal it; and because of his great respect for them, he was unwilling, as he says,

that ye should be ignorant of this mystery; he was desirous that they should abound and improve in all spiritual knowledge and judgment, and, among the rest, be better informed of this particular article, the call of the Jews: and his view in apprizing them of it is expressed in the following clause,

lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: lest they should imagine that they were the only wise and knowing persons, and be elated in their minds with their knowledge and understanding, and look with contempt upon the poor, blind, ignorant Jews, as if they were always to remain in such a state of darkness and infidelity. The thing he had to inform them of is,

that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; by Israel is meant the Jews, the descendants of Jacob, whose name was Israel. Philo the Jew observes {b}, that this name signifies orasin yeou, "the vision of God"; indeed, Jacob had it given him when he wrestled with the angel, and saw God face to face, though it does not seem to be for that reason; however, blindness had now befallen the Jews, who had been favoured with a divine revelation, with the knowledge of God, his will and worship; and none were more blind than those who were called the servants and messengers of the Lord of hosts, as the Scribes and Pharisees, the priests and princes of the

Jewish world. This "blindness" designs their unbelief, the hardness of their hearts, and darkness of their understandings with respect to God himself, whom they knew not in Christ; not as the Father of Christ; nor even the perfections of his nature, particularly his righteousness; which was the reason of their setting up their own righteousness, and of their non-submission to the righteousness of Christ: they were blind as to the Messiah; they knew him not, when he came; they saw no beauty and comeliness in him; could not discern the characters of him in Jesus, though they were so manifest; and rejected him notwithstanding the clear evidence of his ministry and miracles. They were in the dark about the sense of the prophecies of the Old Testament; a vail was upon their hearts when they read them, so that they understood them not, and could not see their accomplishment in Christ; they were even ignorant of the law, the spiritual nature, true use, and right end and scope of it; and it is no wonder that the Gospel should be hidden from them. This blindness "happened" to them not by chance, but befell them by the decree, and according to the will of God, who hardens whom he pleases; and according to various predictions in the Old Testament, cited in
Mt 13:14; and in righteous judgment, for since they liked not to retain God and his Christ in their knowledge, it was but just in God to give them up to reprobate minds, to judicial blindness, and hardness of heart: but then this blindness only happened to them "in part"; not that it was only in some measure or some degree, for it was total, they were darkness itself, and had no spiritual and evangelic light at all on whom it fell; but that this blindness was not general with respect to persons, there were some few, a seed, a remnant, that were delivered from it, though the far greater part of the nation were involved in it, and continue in it to this day; and will do, "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in": that is, till the whole number of God's elect among them, be called and brought into the Gospel church state, which in the latter day will be very great; when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea; when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ; and the abundance of the sea shall be converted, and the forces of the Gentiles shall come to the church, and multitudes of them shall flock thither, as doves to their windows: and since the blindness of the Jews is not yet removed, it seems plain that the full number of God's chosen ones among the Gentiles is not yet completed in regeneration; for as soon as ever they are all called and brought in, the vail will be taken away from the Jews, and they will be turned unto the Lord.

{b} De Temulentia, p. 251. & De Sacrificiis Abel & Cain, p. 151.

Romans 11:26

Ver. 26. And so all Israel shall be saved,.... Meaning not the mystical spiritual Israel of God, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, who shall appear to be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, when all God's elect among the latter are gathered in, which is the sense many give into; but the people of the Jews, the generality of them, the body of that nation, called "the fulness" of them, Ro 11:12, and relates to the latter day, when a nation of them shall be born again at once; when, their number being as the sand of the sea, they shall come up out of the lands where they are dispersed, and appoint them one head, Christ, and great shall be the day of Jezreel; when they as a body, even the far greater part of them that shall be in being, shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their King; shall acknowledge Jesus to be the true Messiah, and shall look to him, believe on him, and be saved by him from wrath to come. There is a common saying among them {c}, abh Mlwel qlx Mhl vy larvy lk, "all Israel shall have a part", or "portion in the world to come"; and in support of this they usually produce the passage in Isa 60:21: "thy people also shall be all righteous": yea, they even go so far as to say {d},

"that hell fire will have no power over the transgressors of Israel;"

fancying, that every individual person of their nation will be saved; though they sometimes except such who deny the resurrection of the dead, and that the law is from heaven, or is an epicure, and he that reads foreign books, or is an enchanter, or pronounces the ineffable name: but the apostle is not to be understood with such a latitude; he refers to the last times, and to a very general conversion of them to the Messiah:

as it is written, Isa 59:20:

there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer: the words of the prophet are, "and the Redeemer shall come to Zion": by the Redeemer, or Deliverer, words of the same signification, is meant the Messiah, as the Jews {e} themselves own, and apply this passage to him; who is the "Goel", or near kinsman of his people, to whom the right of their redemption belongs as man; and who as God was able to effect it, and, as God-man and Mediator, was every way qualified for it, and has obtained it for them: and whereas, in the prophet Isaiah, he is said to "come to", and by the apostle, "out of Zion", this may be reconciled by observing, that the servile letter l sometimes signifies "from", as well as to, when it is put in the room of m; of which instances may be given, as Ex 16:1 compared with

2Ch 11:4. Besides, the Messiah was to come out of Zion, as well as to come to it, according to Ps 14:7; so that the apostle fitly expresses the faith and expectation of the old Jewish church in this citation:

and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; in the prophet it is, "and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob", Isa 59:20. The apostle follows the translation of the Septuagint, and which is favoured by the Chaldee paraphrase, which runs thus; "the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to turn the rebellious ones of the house of Jacob to the law"; so that the Jew {f} has no reason to charge the apostle with a perversion of the prophet's words, when they are cited so agreeably to their own Targumist: and the sense of them relates not to what Christ did on the cross, when the iniquities of his people were laid on him, and he bore them, and removed them all in one day from them; but to what he will do to the Jews in the latter day, in consequence thereof; he will convince them of their ungodliness, give them repentance for it and remission of it.

{c} Misn. Sanhedrin c. 11. sect. 1. {d} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 19. 1. & Chagiga, fol. 27. 1. {e} Aben Ezra in loc. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. {f} R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 81.

Romans 11:27

Ver. 27. For this is my covenant unto them,.... This is what God has promised to them in covenant, and he will be as good as his word; his covenant will never be broken, it will always remain sure and inviolable; so that there is not only a possibility, and a probability, but even a certainty, of the call and conversion of the Jews; which promise and covenant will have their accomplishment,

when I, saith the Lord,

shall take away their sins: some think that the apostle alludes to Jer 31:34; others, that he takes this passage out of Isa 27:9; where in the Septuagint version the selfsame phrase is used; though it may be no citation, or reference, but the apostle's own words, explaining what is meant by "turning away ungodliness from Jacob", Ro 11:26; and as before; regards not the taking away of their sins by the sacrifice of Christ, which is done already, and is what the blood of bulls and goats could not do; but of the removing of their sins from themselves, from their consciences, by the application of the blood of Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness.

Romans 11:28

Ver. 28. As concerning the Gospel,.... Whereas it might be objected to the call and conversion of the Jews, their implacable enmity to the Gospel, the apostle replies, by granting, that with respect to that,

they [were] enemies to God and Christ, to the Gospel, and the ministers of it, and particularly to the apostle:

for your sakes; the Gentiles, to whom it was preached, and by whom it was received, and which greatly irritated and provoked the Jews; or the sense is, that they were suffered to reject the Gospel, and treat it with hatred and virulence, that by this means it might be taken away from them, and carried to the Gentiles; so that the present enmity of the Jews to the Gospel, turned to the advantage of the Gentiles, and should not hinder the future conversion of God's elect among them in the latter day:

but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes; as many of them as belong to the election of grace, are beloved of God; and will appear to be so, when they are called by grace, as they will be, for the confirming of the promises concerning their future restoration made unto their fathers; not one of which shall ever fall to the ground, or they be deprived of any gifts and blessings of grace, which God has purposed for them, or promised to them, as is clear from what follows:

Romans 11:29

Ver. 29. For the gifts and calling of God,.... By "gifts" are meant, not the gifts of nature and providence, as life, health, strength, riches, and honour, which God sometimes gives, and repents of, and takes away; as he repented that he had made man upon earth, and Saul king of Israel; which must be understood by an "anthropopathy", after the manner of men, and that not of a change of the counsel of his mind, but of the course of his providence: nor do gifts here design external gifts of grace, or such gifts of the Spirit, which qualify men for ministerial work, for public service in the church; for these may be taken away, as the "parable" of the "talents" shows, Mt 25:29; see 1Co 13:8; but the special and spiritual gifts of God's free grace, which relate to the spiritual and eternal welfare of the souls of men, even that, grace which was given to God's elect in Christ before the world was, and all those spiritual blessings wherewith they were then blessed in him: these

are without repentance; that is, they are immutable and unalterable; God never revokes them, or calls them in again, or takes them away from the persons to whom he has made such a previous donation: the reasons are, because that his love from whence they spring is always the same; it admits of no distinction, nor of any degrees, nor of any alteration; and electing grace, according to which these gifts are bestowed, stands sure and immovable; not upon the foot of works, but of the sovereign will of God, and always has its sure and certain effect; and the covenant of grace, in which they are secured, remains firm and inviolable; and indeed, these gifts are no other than the promises of it, which are all yea and amen in Christ, and the blessings of it, which are the sure mercies of David. Whatever God purposes, or promises to give, or really does give to his people, whether into the hands of Christ for them, or into their own, he never repents of or reverses. Agreeably to these words of the apostle, the Jews say {g}

"that the holy blessed God, after hntmh Ntnv, "that he hath given a gift", lbqmh hnxqy al, "never takes it away from the receiver"; and this is the "Gemara", or doctrine of the Rabbins {h} ylqv al lqvm ybhy bhymd, "that giving they give, but taking away they do not take away"; the gloss upon it is, ybhyd rtb, "after it is given":"

the meaning is, that what is once given to men from heaven, is never taken away from them up into heaven: and elsewhere {i} they ask,

"is there any servant to whom his master gives a gift, and returns and takes it away from him?"

Moreover, the apostle here says the same of the "calling of God", as of gifts; by which is meant, not a bare external call by the ministry of the word, which oftentimes is without effect, and may be where persons are neither chosen, nor converted, nor saved; but an internal effectual call, by special, powerful, and efficacious grace; and designs either actual calling, to which are inseparably annexed final perseverance in grace, and eternal glorification; or rather the purpose of God from eternity, to call his people in time, and which is never repented of, or changed. The apostle's argument here is this, that since there are a number of people among the Jews whom God has loved, and has chosen to everlasting salvation, and has in covenant promised to them, and secured and laid up gifts for them, and has determined to call them by his grace; and since all these are unchangeable and irreversible, the future call and conversion of these persons must be sure and certain.

{g} R. Saphorno apud R. Juda Muscato in Sepher. Cosri, fol. 43. {h} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 25. 1. {i} T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 15. 1.

Romans 11:30

Ver. 30. For as ye in times past have not believed God,.... The times referred to, are the times of ignorance, idolatry, and superstition; when God suffered the Gentiles, for many hundreds of years, to walk in their own ways; while the Jews were his favourite people, were chosen by him above all people, separated from them, and distinguished by his goodness; had his word and oracles, his judgments and his statutes to direct them, and many other valuable blessings: the times before the coming of the Messiah are here meant, when these people sat in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death; till Christ, who came to lighten the Gentiles, sent his Gospel among them, and which has been attended with great success; in these times they were in a state of incredulity: they either, as some of them, did not believe there was a God, or that there was but one God, at least but very few believed it; and these did not know who he was; nor did they glorify him as God, or perform any true spiritual worship to him: the far greater part believed there were more gods, and did service to them which by nature were no gods, and fell down to idols of gold, and silver, and wood, and stone:

and yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; that is, they were regenerated, effectually called and converted, through the rich and abundant mercy of God; repentance unto life was granted to them; and faith in our Lord Jesus, as a free grace gift, was bestowed upon them; and they had an application of pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of Christ, made unto them; and all this through the unbelief of the Jews: not that their unbelief could be the cause of their obtaining mercy; but the Jews not believing in the Messiah, but rejecting him, and contradicting and blaspheming his Gospel, it was taken away from them, and carried to the Gentiles; which was the means of their believing in Christ, and obtaining mercy; so that the unbelief of the Jews was the occasion and means, in Providence, of bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles, whereby faith came; see Ro 11:11. This mercy they are said to enjoy "now"; for the present time of the Gospel is the dispensation of mercy to the

Gentiles.

Romans 11:31

Ver. 31. Even so have these also now not believed,.... Now is the time of the Jews' unbelief, blindness has happened to them, the vail is over their hearts; as the Gentiles formerly did not believe God, so the Jews do not now; though they believe there is a God, and that there is but one God, yet they do not believe God in Christ; nor that he is the Father of Christ; or that Christ is the Son of God, the true Messiah, and Saviour of the world: they do not believe, as some read the words, connecting them with the next clause, and so they stand in the original text, "in your mercy"; meaning either Christ, in whom the Gentiles obtained mercy; or the Gospel, the means of it; or the sense is, that they do not believe that mercy belongs to the Gentiles, having entertained a notion, treat the Messiah, and the blessings of mercy and goodness by him, are peculiar to Israel: but our version after Beza, who follows Theophylact, connects the clause with the following,

that through your mercy they may obtain mercy; not through the mercy the Gentiles show to others, but which they have received of God; and principally intends faith, which springs from the mercy of God, and is a gift of his pure, free, rich grace; and stands opposed to the unbelief of the Jews, through which the Gentiles are said to obtain mercy; and the meaning: is, that in time to come, the Jews, observing the mercy obtained and enjoyed by the Gentiles, will be provoked to jealousy, and stirred up to an emulation of them, to seek for the same mercy at the same hands, and in the same way, they have had it; see Ro 11:11; The apostle's argument in favour of the call and conversion of the Jews, upon the whole is this, that since the unbelief of the Gentiles was no bar to their obtaining mercy, and that through the infidelity of the Jews; then it cannot be thought, that the present blindness, hardness of heart, enmity, and unbelief, which now attend the Jews, can be any obstacle to their obtaining mercy in the same way the Gentiles have; but as the one has been, the other also will be.

Romans 11:32

Ver. 32. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief,.... Both Jews and Gentiles, particularly God's elect among them: some think the metaphor is taken from the binding up of sheaves in bands; and that Jews and Gentiles are the sheaves, and unbelief the band, in which they are bound together; but the apostle is not speaking of their being together in unbelief, but as separate, first the Gentiles, and now the Jews: rather it seems to be taken from a prison, and Jews and Gentiles are represented as prisoners, and unbelief the prison, in which they are shut up by God: not that God is the author of unbelief, or of any other sin in men; he does not put it into them, or them into that, but finding them in unbelief, concludes them in it, or leaves them in such a state, and does not as yet however deliver out of it, or say to the prisoners, go forth: moreover, to be "concluded in unbelief", is the same as to be "concluded under sin", **Ga 3:22**; that is, to be thoroughly convinced of it; and to be held and bound down by such a sense of it in the conscience, as to see no way to escape deserved punishment, or to obtain salvation, but by fleeing to the mercy of God in Christ:

that he might have mercy upon all: not upon all the individuals of Jews and Gentiles; for all are not concluded in, or convinced of the sin of unbelief, but only such who are eventually believers, as appears from the parallel text, **Ga 3:22**; and designs all God's elect among the Jews, called "their fulness", Ro 11:12; and all God's elect among the Gentiles, called "the fulness of the Gentiles", Ro 11:25; for whom he has mercy in store, and will bestow it on them; and in order to bring them to a sense of their need of it, and that he may the more illustriously display the riches of it, he leaves them for a while in a state of unbelief, and then by his Spirit thoroughly convinces them of it, and gives them faith to look to, and believe in, the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.

Romans 11:33

Ver. 33. O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God,.... These words are the epilogue, or conclusion of the doctrinal part of this epistle, and relate to what is said throughout the whole of it hitherto; particularly to the doctrines of salvation by Christ, justification by his righteousness, predestination, the calling of the Gentiles, the rejection of the Jews, and their restoration in the latter day; upon the whole of which, the apostle breaks forth into this pathetic exclamation; the design of which is to show, how much of the wisdom and knowledge of God is displayed in these doctrines, and how small a part of it is known by the best of men, and therefore ought not to be cavilled at and objected to, because of some difficulties attending them, but to be received upon the testimony of divine revelation: and if there was a depth in these things unsearchable and past finding out by so great a man as the apostle, who had by revelation such knowledge in the mysteries of grace, and who had been caught up into the third heaven, and heard things unutterable, how much less is it to be fathomed by others, and therefore should be silent: by "the wisdom and knowledge of God", one and the same thing is meant; and design not so much the perfections of the divine nature, which are infinite and unsearchable, the understanding of which is too high for creatures, and not be attained to by them; nor the display of them in the works of creation and providence, in which there are most glorious and amazing instances; but rather the effects of them, the counsels and decrees of God; which are so wisely formed and laid, as not to fail of their accomplishment, or to be frustrated of their end; and the doctrines of grace relating to them, in which are treasures, riches, that is, an abundance of wisdom and knowledge; and a depth, not to be reached to the bottom of, in this imperfect state, and in which the knowledge and wisdom of God are wonderfully displayed: thus in the doctrine of redemption and salvation by Christ, wherein God has abounded in all wisdom and prudence; in the person fixed upon to be the Saviour, his own Son; who by the assumption of human nature, being God and man in one person, was very fit and proper to be a Mediator between God and man, to transact the affair of salvation; was every way qualified for it, and able to do it: so likewise in the manner in which it is accomplished, being done in a way which glorifies all the divine perfections; in which the rights of God's justice and the honour of his holiness are secured, as well as his love, grace, and mercy, displayed; in which Satan is most mortified, sin condemned, and the sinner saved; and also in the persons, the subjects of it, ungodly sinners, enemies, the chief of sinners, whereby the grace of God is the more illustrated, and all boasting in the creature excluded. The wisdom of God manifestly appears, in the doctrine of a sinner's justification; which though it proceeds from grace, yet upon the foot of redemption and satisfaction, in a way of strict justice; so that God is just, whilst he is the justifier; it is of persons ungodly, and without a righteousness in themselves, and yet by a perfect and complete righteousness, answerable to all the demands of law and justice; and the grace of faith is wisely made the recipient of this blessing, that it might appear to be of free grace, and not of works, and that the justified ones might have solid peace, joy, and comfort, from it. The doctrine of predestination is full of the wisdom and knowledge of God; his choice of some to everlasting life in his Son, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, for the glorifying of his grace and mercy, in a way of righteousness; and his passing by others, leaving them to themselves, and in their sins, justly to perish for them, for the glorifying of his justice, are acts of the highest wisdom, and done according to the counsel of his will. The account just given of the call of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews, is an astonishing scheme of infinite wisdom; that, on the one hand salvation should come to the Gentiles, through the fall of the Jews, and they should obtain mercy through their unbelief; and on the other hand that the restoration of the Jews should be as life from the dead to the Gentiles; and the Jews, through their mercy, obtain mercy; and that both, in their turns, should be shut up in unbelief by God, that he might have mercy on them all, "O the depth", &c. To which is added,

how unsearchable are his judgments! which are not to be understood of his awful judgments on wicked men in particular, nor of the administrations of his providence in general; though these are a great deep, and in many instances are unsearchable, and cannot be counted for in the present state, but will hereafter be made manifest; nor of the commands of God, sometimes called his judgments, which are all plain, and may be easily searched out in his word; but rather of the counsels and purposes of God, and the doctrines of grace relating thereunto; which are the deep things of God, and are only searched out by the Spirit of God, who reveals them to us:

and his ways past finding out! not the methods and course of his providence, though his way in this respect is often in the deep, his footsteps are not to be known, discerned, and traced, by finite creatures; but rather the goings forth and steps of his wisdom from everlasting, in his purposes and decrees, council and covenant, which are higher than the ways of men, even as the heavens are higher than the earth; and which are all mercy and truth to his chosen people, and strict justice to others, and not to be found out by any; particularly his ways and methods, and dealings, with both Jews and Gentiles; that he should for so many hundred years leave the Gentiles in blindness and unbelief; and now for as many years his favourite people the Jews in the same, and yet gather in his elect out of them both; these are things out of our reach and comprehension.

Romans 11:34

Ver. 34. For who hath known the mind of the Lord,.... The intentions of his mind, the thoughts of his heart, and the counsels of his will: these could never have been known, if he had not revealed them; nor can the doctrines relating to them, though externally revealed, be known by the natural man, or by the mere dint of nature, but only by the light of the Spirit of God; who searches them, and makes them known in a spiritual manner to spiritual men, who have a spiritual discerning of them; and yet even by these they are not known perfectly, only in part, and are seen through a glass darkly:

or who hath been his counsellor? or was of his council, when all things were fixed according to his sovereign will: when the scheme of man's salvation was consulted and agreed upon between the eternal Three, there was no creature, angel, or man there; no created angel, only the eternal One, "the Counsellor", **Isa 9:6**; or as the Septuagint there style him, aggelov megalhv boulhv, "the angel of the great council"; none but Father, Son, and Spirit, were present, when the book of life was made, when the names of God's elect were put into it, and others left out; when all things relating to his chosen ones, both for time and eternity, whether among Jews or Gentiles, were determined, ordered, and settled; and as there was no creature that assisted, or could give any advice about these matters, so there were none that were privy to the resolutions, determinations, and counsels of his will; which were purposed in himself and in his Son, and were known only to them and his Spirit, which is in him: from the whole it appears, that predestination is not according to men's works, or the foresight of them; for then these things would be plain and easy, they would not be unsearchable and past finding out; there would not be an unfathomable depth in them; the mind and counsels of God, and the springs of them, would be obvious; but it is according to his secret, sovereign, and unchangeable will.

Romans 11:35

Ver. 35. Or who hath first given to him,.... See Job 41:11; no man can give God anything, which he has not first given him, or which he has not a prior right to, or a claim upon him for; Adam, in innocence, was not able to give God anything, nor are the angels in heaven, much less sinful men on earth; their bodies and souls, and all their enjoyments, all that is good in them, or done by them, are from the Lord; men by all their good works, best duties and services, give nothing to God, nor lay him under any manner of obligation to them: hence no man can merit anything at the hands of God, if he could,

it shall be recompensed to him again; but it is impossible there should be merit in a creature, who has nothing but what he has from God, and does nothing but what he is obliged to do; and that not by his own strength, but by the grace and strength of God; and therefore there is no retribution made by God as of debt, but of grace: hence it follows, that God is indebted to, and obliged by none, and may do what he will with his own; love Jacob and hate Esau; choose one and not another; reject the Jews, and call the Gentiles; save and justify some, and not others; none can call him to account, or say unto him, what dost thou?

Romans 11:36

Ver. 36. For of him, and through him, and to him are all things,.... Not only all things in nature and providence, he being the Maker and efficient cause of things, and the preserver and supporter of them their beings, and to whose glory they are all designed and directed; but all things in grace owe their original to him, as their first cause; they are produced by him, and make for his glory; they all spring from his sovereign will, are brought about by his almighty power, and tend to the glory of his grace; as does every thing in election, redemption, and regeneration: particularly the counsels and purposes of God respecting men may be here meant; which all rise out of his own heart, without any motive or inducement to them in the creature; are accomplished by his divine power, notwithstanding all the opposition of men and devils; and all issue in his glory, even such of them as may seem to carry in them severity to some of his creatures: and since this is the case, the following doxology, or ascription of glory to God, is justly and pertinently made,

to whom be glory for ever; and which will be given to him by angels and men to all eternity, for the perfection of his being, the counsels of his will, and the works of his hands, both of nature and grace; to which the, apostle annexes his

amen, so be it, assenting to it, wishing for it, and believing of it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 12

The doctrines concerning predestination, justification, &c. being established, the duties of religion are built upon them, and enforced by them in this and the following chapters. The apostle first exhorts all the members of the church in common to a regard to the worship of God, in opposition to the things of the world; and then the officers of the church particularly, to the discharge of their duty; and next all of them, both officers and members, to the performance of various duties respecting God, themselves, one another, and the men of the world. The duty of attending public worship is first mentioned, signified by a presentation of their bodies to the Lord, Ro 12:1, to which they are moved, partly by the plenteous mercy and goodness of God to them; and partly by the acceptableness of it to God; as also by the reasonableness of the thing: then follows a dehortation from conformity to the world, the men and manners of it, in superstition and will worship, or in acts of immorality, Ro 12:2, and also an exhortation to a different course of life, in seeking to please God; which is proposed upon a principle of grace in them, being renewed in the Spirit of their mind; and with this end and view, that they might the better prove, try, and discern, and come at, a greater knowledge of the mind and will of God: and whereas gifts are apt to swell men with pride and vanity, such as qualify men to bear any office in the church, the apostle cautions against this spirit and conduct, and exhorts to sobriety and humility; by observing, that what gifts they have, are such that God has given them, and which they have not of themselves; and what they have is only in part and in measure, some one and some another; and none have all gifts, Ro 12:3, this he illustrates, Ro 12:4, by an human body and the members of it, which being many, have not the same office, but some one and some another; which he accommodates to the body of Christ the church, Ro 12:5, which though but one in Christ, has many members; and these are members one of another, and are designed mutually to serve and help each other, for which the gifts among them were bestowed: and then the apostle proceeds to take notice of the particular officers in the church, and exhorts them to the function of their offices, according to their different gifts; as, first, the preacher to preach according to the rule of faith, and the measure of gifts bestowed, Ro 12:6, and then the deacon, the other officer, to attend to his deaconship, Ro 12:7, and inasmuch as these officers, according to their different gifts, may be distinguished, some having a talent for stating, explaining, and defending doctrines, and may be called doctors, or teachers, let them attend to the doctrinal part of the word; and others having a talent in the practical way of preaching, whether by way of exhortation or comfort, and may be called exhorters or comforters, let them attend to that branch of the ministry, Ro 12:8, and as for the deacon, the performance of his office, whether it be by distributing to the poor, let him do it impartially and faithfully; or by assisting in the government of the church, let it be done with all diligence; or by showing mercy to the poor in distress, besides what they usually receive, let it be done with a cheerful countenance: next follow various duties which are mentioned, not in an exact order or method, but may be reduced to these heads; such as concern God, an unfeigned love of him, abhorrence of all evil, and a close attachment to whatsoever is good, Ro 12:9, and also the worship of him, which is to be performed with diligence and fervency, Ro 12:11, the exercise of the grace of hope with joy, patience in the midst of tribulations, and perseverance in prayer, Ro 12:12, then such duties as concern one another, as Christians and brethren in a church relation; as to exercise an affectionate

brotherly love to each other, and to honour one another; and even to give each other the preference, who may be equal or superior, both in spiritual gifts, and in temporal things,
Ro 12:10, and with respect to poor saints, to communicate cheerfully to their necessities; and with respect to strangers, to entertain them hospitably, Ro 12:13, and as to every member, whether in prosperous or adverse circumstances, to bear a part with them, rejoicing with the one, weeping with the other, Ro 12:15, and to behave with humility, modesty, and sobriety, towards all,
Ro 12:16, and next such duties as concern the men of the world, particularly to bless, and not curse persecutors, Ro 12:14, not to retaliate evil for evil, but to do everything that is of good report in the sight of men, Ro 12:17, to study, if possible, to live peaceably with all men, Ro 12:18, to bridle passion and refrain from wrath, and not seek private revenge, but leave it with the Lord to take vengeance, Ro 12:19, on the other hand, to he kind and beneficent to enemies, by giving them food and drink when hungry and thirsty, expressed in the words of Solomon, Pr 25:21, the reasons for which are, because hereby an enemy may be wrought upon, and be brought either to shame or repentance, and become a friend,
Ro 12:20, and because by doing otherwise, resenting and returning the evil, a man is conquered by it; whereas, by the other method, the enemy is conquered by good, Ro 12:21, and it is much more commendable and honourable to be a conqueror, than to be conquered.

Ver. 1. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,.... The apostle having finished the doctrinal part of this epistle, proceeds to that which is more practical; and enforces the several duties of religion, upon the principles he had before laid down, a method generally observed by him in all his epistles. The illative particle "therefore", shows that the following exhortations are so many conclusions, consequences, and inferences, deduced from what had been said in the latter part of the preceding chapter; that since all things are of God, and by him and to him, then the saints ought to present their bodies to him, and to know, approve, and do his will; and since they have nothing but what they have received from him, they ought not to think too highly of, or glory in their attainments. The introduction to these exhortations, is in a very kind and affectionate manner; the saints are addressed as "brethren", and very appropriately; since this expresses the relation they stood in to the apostle, for whom he had an hearty love and concern; and therefore what he pressed them to was out of a sincere regard to their good, as well as to the glory of God; also their relation to each other, and which several of the duties he urges had a connection with; likewise their relation to God, being of his family, having one and the same Father, and so under obligation to regard his will, honour and reverence him: moreover, these things are moved, not in an imperious way, in an authoritative manner, but by way of entreaty, "I beseech you"; as an ambassador of Christ, and as though in his stead: nor are they enforced by terrors, threats, and menaces, but "by the mercies of God"; that is, the abundant mercy of God, displayed in their election, regeneration, and calling; than which, nothing can have a greater influence on a believer, to engage him to holiness of life and conversation; and shows, that the doctrines of grace are no licentious ones, nor do they render useless precepts, exhortations, entreaties, cautions, and advice, particularly such as follow;

that ye present your bodies; not barely that part of them commonly so called, for this is not to be understood of a mere presentation of the body in public worship: for though this ought to be, yet not without the heart engaged therein, otherwise bodily exercise will be of no avail; nor of a bare abstinence from grosser sins done in the body, and against it, and which defile and dishonour it; much less of a maceration, and keeping under the body, by watchings, fasting, &c. and still less of an offering of the body at death in a way of martyrdom, though this ought to be cheerfully complied with when called for: but by their bodies are meant, themselves, their whole souls and bodies, all the powers and faculties of their souls, and members of their bodies; and the presenting of them, designs a devoting of them, with all readiness and willingness, to the service of God for his honour and glory, without putting any confidence in, or placing any dependence upon them; which would be sacrificing to their own net, and burning incense to their drag; it includes the whole of their service, conversation, and religion, internal and external. So the Jews {k} say,

"worthy is the portion of the righteous, who offer every day this offering before the Lord; and what is it?
whyyvpnw whyymrg, "their bodies and their souls", which they offer before him."

The allusion is to the rite of sacrificing, to the bringing of the slain beast, and laying it on the altar, and there presenting and offering it to the Lord. Under the Gospel dispensation all believers are priests; and the sacrifices they bring are not the bodies of slain beasts, but their own bodies, their whole selves; and these

a living sacrifice, in opposition to the bodies of slain beasts offered under the legal dispensation, and to the dead works of such as are destitute of faith in Christ, and to the lifeless performances of the saints themselves at certain times; and designs such a presentation of themselves in the performance of religious duties, as springs from a principle of life under the quickening influences of the Spirit of God, with faith and fervency; though without any view to obtain life hereby, for that is only by the offering up of the body of Christ once for all. Another epithet of this sacrifice of our bodies to God is

holy, in allusion to the sacrifices under the law, which were separated from common use, and devoted to God, and were not to have the least spot and blemish in them; and regards men sanctified by the Spirit of God, and whose actions flow from a principle of holiness, and are performed under the influence of the Holy Spirit; and such sacrifices as are both living and holy, cannot but be

acceptable to God through the mediation of his Son, by whom, as the persons, the souls and bodies of his people, so their spiritual sacrifices, whether of prayer or praise, are only acceptable to him:

which is your reasonable service; it is agreeably to reason, and especially as sanctified, that men who have their beings from God, and are upheld in them by him, and are followed with the bounties of Providence; and especially who are made new creatures, and are blessed by him with all spiritual blessings in Christ, that they should give up themselves to him, and cheerfully serve him in their day and generation; such service is also agreeably to the Scriptures of truth, the standard of filth and practice, and contain and enforce nothing but what is highly reasonable to be complied with; it is such service as lies not in the slaying of irrational creatures, but in the presenting of men endued with rational powers unto God; and is of a spiritual nature, performed by spiritual men, under the influence of the Spirit of God: and is suitable to the nature and perfections of God, and stands opposed to the corporeal and carnal service of the Jews.

{k} Zohar in Lev. fol. 4. 2.

Romans 12:2

Ver. 2. And be not conformed to this world,.... By this world is meant, either the Mosaic dispensation, and Jewish church state, so called in opposition to abh Mlwe, "the world to come", the Gospel dispensation; in which there were a worldly sanctuary, and the rites and ceremonies of which are styled the rudiments and elements of the world; to which believers in the present state are by no means to conform, there being sacrifices and ordinances of another nature, it is the will of God they should observe and attend unto: or else the men of the world are designed, carnal and unregenerate men, among whom they formerly had their conversation, from among whom they were chosen, called, and separated, and who lie and live in wickedness, and therefore should not be conformed unto them: which is to be understood, not in a civil sense of conformity to them in garb and apparel, provided that pride and luxury are guarded against, and decency and sobriety observed, and the different abilities of persons and stations in life are attended to; or to any other civil usages and customs which are not contrary to natural and revealed religion; but of a conformity in a moral sense to the evil manners of men, to walk vainly, as other Gentiles do, to go into the same excess of riot with them; for this is contrary both to the principle and doctrine of grace, which teach men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts: and of a compliance with the men of the world in a religious sense, by joining with them in acts of idolatry, superstition, and will worship, and in anything that is contrary to the order, ordinances, and truths of the Gospel.

But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind; which regards not the first work of conversion and renovation; for in this sense these persons were transformed, metamorphosed, changed, and renewed already; but the after progress and carrying on the work of renovation, the renewing of them day by day in the spirit of their minds; see **Eph 4:23**; which believers should be desirous of, and pray for, and make use of those means which the Spirit of God owns for this purpose, attending to the spiritual exercises of religion, as reading, meditation, prayer, conference, the ministration of the word and ordinances, which is the reverse of conformity to the world: and the end to be attained hereby is,

that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; by which is meant not the secret will of God, which cannot be searched into, proved, and known, till time and facts discover it: but the revealed will of God, both in the law, as in the hands of Christ, which contains nothing but what is good; and which when done in faith, from a principle of love, and to the glory of God, is acceptable through Christ; and is perfect as a law of liberty, and rule of walk and conversation; and which is to be proved and approved of by all the saints, who delight in it after the inward man: and also that which is contained in the Gospel; as that all that the Father had given to Christ should be redeemed by him, that these should be sanctified, and persevere to the end, and be glorified; all which is the good will of God, an acceptable saying to sensible sinners, and such a scheme of salvation as is perfect and complete, and needs nothing to be added to it; and is, by such who are daily renewed in the spirit of their minds, more and more proved, tried, discerned, and approved of, even by all such who have their spiritual senses exercised to discern things that differ.

Romans 12:3

Ver. 3. For I say, through the grace given unto me,.... The Ethiopic version reads, the grace of God: and so two of Stephens's copies. By which the apostle intends, not that internal grace which was wrought in his soul; nor the Gospel of the grace of God, which he preached; nor the gifts of grace, which qualified him for that service; but the grace of apostleship, or that authoritative power, which he, as the apostle, received from Christ to say, command, give orders and instructions to churches, and particular persons:

to every man that is among you: every member of the church, in whatsoever state or condition, whether in office or not; of whatsoever abilities or capacity, having gifts, whether more or less; the manifestation of the Spirit being given to everyone to profit with, for his own and the good of others:

not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think; that is, either not to arrogate to himself what does not belong to him, and detract from others, who may have equal, if not superior, abilities to him; or not to glory in what he has, as if he had not received it, and as if it was altogether owing to his own sagacity, penetration, diligence, and industry; or not to search into things too high for him that are out of his reach, and beyond his capacity; though this is not to be understood as discouraging a search into the Scriptures of truth, the more difficult parts of it, and the more knotty points of controversy; but as forbidding inquiry into things not lawful to be searched into, or, if lawful, as requiring such a scrutiny to be made with modesty, and an humble dependence on superior light and assistance, and a discovery of it with humility and lowliness of mind;

but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith: such ought to consider that what gifts, abilities, light, and knowledge they have, they have then, not of themselves, but from God; that they have not all faith, and all knowledge, or do not know the whole of the faith of the Gospel only a measure of it, which is dealt out, divided, and parted to every man, some having a greater degree of evangelical light than others; and that all have some, but none all. The Syriac version renders it, "faith in measure"; one of Stephens's copies reads, "the measure of grace"; see **Eph 4:7**.

Romans 12:4

Ver. 4. For as we have many members in one body,.... The apostle illustrates what he said last concerning God's dealing to every man the measure of faith, by comparing the church of Christ to an human body, which is but one, and has many members in union with it, and one another; and which are placed in an exact symmetry and proportion, and in proper subserviency to each other, and for the good of the whole:

and all members have not the same office, or "action"; they do not exercise the same function, and perform the same operation, but each that which is peculiar to itself: the eye only sees, but does not hear, nor taste, nor smell; the ear only hears, but neither sees, or does any of the aforesaid things; the palate tastes, the nose smells, the hand handles, the foot walks, and the same may be observed of the other members of the body, which have not the same, but their particular offices, and all and each of them their usefulness.

Romans 12:5

Ver. 5. So we being many are one body in Christ,.... This is the application of the above simile. The chosen of God, the redeemed of Christ, and those that are justified by his righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit; though they are but few in comparison of the men of the world, but considered in themselves are many, and yet make up but one body, the church, of which Christ is the head: and though this general assembly; or church universal, may be distinguished into several congregational churches, and distinct communities, yet each community, consisting of divers persons, is but one body "in Christ", united and knit together by joints and bands, under him their head, Lord, and King; in him, and not in Caesar, or any earthly monarch, to distinguish this body from bodies politic, or any civil community among men:

and everyone members one of another; as in union with Christ their head, so to one another in love, walking in holy fellowship together, sympathizing with, and serving each other.

Romans 12:6

Ver. 6. Having then gifts, differing,.... As in a natural body, the various members of it have not the same office, and do not perform the same actions, thus they have not the same, but different faculties; one has one faculty, another another; the eye has the faculty of seeing, the ear of hearing, &c. thus in the spiritual body the church, as there are different members, these members have not the same work and business assigned them; some are employed one way, and some another; also they have diversities of gifts for their different administrations and operations, and all from Christ their head, by the same Spirit, and for the service of the whole body,

according to the grace that is given unto us; for all these gifts are not the effects of nature, the fruits of human power, diligence, and industry, but flow from the grace of God, who dispenses them when, where, and to whom he pleases in a free and sovereign manner; and therefore to be acknowledged as such, and used to his glory, and for the good of his church and people. Wherefore

whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith. The offices here, and hereafter mentioned, are not of an extraordinary, but ordinary kind, such as are lasting, and will continue in the church unto the end of time: and are divided into two parts, which are after subdivided into other branches. The division is into "prophesying" and "ministering". By "prophesying" is meant, not foretelling things to come, thought this gift was bestowed upon some, as Agabus, and others in the Christian church; but this, as it is of an extraordinary nature, so it is not stinted and limited according to the proportion of faith; but preaching the Gospel is here designed, which is the sense of the word in many places of Scripture, particularly in 1Co 13:2. Now such who have this gift of prophecy, or of opening and explaining the Scriptures, ought to make use of it, and constantly attend toil: "let us prophesy"; diligently prepare for it by prayer, reading and meditation, and continually exercise it as opportunity offers; nor should any difficulty and discouragement deter from it: or whereas this last clause is not in the original text, it may be supplied from Ro 12:3; thus, "let us think soberly", who have this gift, and not be elated with it, or carry it haughtily to those who attend on the exercise of it: but behave with sobriety, modesty, and humility, in the discharge thereof: "according to the proportion of faith". There must be faith, or no prophesying; a man must believe, and therefore speak, or speak not at all; a Gospel minister ought not to be a sceptic, or in doubt about the main principles of religion; such as concern the three divine persons, the office, grace, and righteousness of Christ, and the way of salvation by him: he should be at a point in these things, should firmly believe, and with assurance assert them, nor fear to be called dogmatical on that account: he is to preach according to his faith, the proportion of it: which may be the same with the measure of it, Ro 12:3. And so the Syriac version reads it, htwnmyhd atxwvm Kya, "according to the measure of his faith"; to which the Arabic version agrees; that is, according to the measure of the gift of Christ he has received; according to the abilities bestowed on him; according to that light, knowledge, faith, and experience he has; he ought to preach up unto it, and not in the least come short of it; or by "the proportion", or "analogy of faith", may be meant a scheme of Gospel truths, a form of sound words, a set of principles upon the plan of the Scriptures, deduced from them, and agreeably to them; and which are all of a piece, and consistent with themselves, from which the prophesier or preacher should never swerve: or the Scriptures themselves, the sure word of prophecy, the rule and standard of faith and practice: the scope of the text is to be attended to, its connection with the preceding or following verses, or both; and it is to be compared with other passages of Scripture, and accordingly to be explained: and this is to follow the rule directed to.

Romans 12:7

Ver. 7. Or ministry, [let us wait] on our ministry,.... The word diakonia sometimes signifies the whole ecclesiastical ministry, even the office of apostleship, as well as the ordinary ministration of the Gospel; see **Ac 1:17**; but here "deaconship", or the office of ministering to the poor saints, as in **Ac 6:1**, being a distinct office from prophesying: or preaching the word, and should be used, exercised, and attended to with diligence, care, and constancy; for such who are appointed to this office, are chosen not only to a place of honour, but of service and business, in which they should behave with prudence, sobriety, and humility:

or he that teacheth, on teaching. The gift of prophesying or preaching is subdivided into "teaching" and "exhorting"; the one belongs to "teachers" or doctors, the other to "pastors"; as the distinction is in **Eph 4:11**, not that different officers and offices are intended, but different branches of the same office; and one man's talent may lie more in the one, and another man's in the other; and accordingly each should in his preaching attend to the gift which is most peculiar to him: if his gift lies in teaching, let him constantly employ himself in that with all sobriety and "teaching" does not design an office in the school, but in the church; it is not teaching divinity as men teach logic, rhetoric, and other arts and sciences, in the schools; but an instructing of churches and the members thereof in the doctrines of the Gospel, in order to establish and build them up in their most holy faith; see 1Co 12:28; it chiefly lies in a doctrinal way of preaching, in opening, explaining, and defending the doctrines of Christ, as distinct from the practical part of the ministry of the word, and the administration of ordinances, in which the pastor is employed as well as in this.

Romans 12:8

Ver. 8. Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation,.... This is the other branch of prophesying or preaching, and which is more practical, and lies in giving a word of exhortation to the saints, as their particular cases call for; for as prophets were teachers, Ac 13:1; so also exhorters, Ac 15:32; and one considerable branch of the ministry, and which is more principally the pastor's work, as well as to teach, is to exhort all sorts of persons, young and old, rich and poor, high and low, bond and free, under his care, with all longsuffering and doctrine. The words will bear to be read, "he that comforteth, on consolation"; and so the Syriac version renders them, haywbb wh anaybmd tyaw, "and another who is a comforter, in his consolation". Though all the ministers of the Gospel are to speak comfortably to the saints, by preaching the doctrines of free justification by Christ's righteousness, and remission of sins by his blood, by bringing the good news of salvation by him, and by opening the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel; yet some have a greater talent this way than others; some are "Boanergeses", sons of thunder, **Mr 3:17**, and others "Barnabases", sons of consolation, **Ac 4:36**; and each should attend to that with all diligence and humility, he is best qualified for.

He that giveth, [let him do it] with simplicity. Here begins the subdivision of the deacon's office into its several branches, "giving", "ruling", and "showing mercy": by "giving" is meant, not giving of his own, or performing: acts of charity, which is common to all the members of the church, who ought liberally to contribute to the relief of the poor; but imparting or distributing the church's money to proper objects, which is to be done "with simplicity"; with all faithfulness and integrity, without fraud or embezzling the church's stock, with impartiality, and without respect of persons, and liberally and bountifully, as the word here used signifies; see **2Co 8:2**;

he that ruleth, with diligence; deacons are the "helps, governments", mentioned in 1Co 12:28, who are assisting to the pastor in the government of the church; their business is, to observe the conversations of the members of the church, and to warn them that are unruly and walk disorderly, to compose differences, and prepare matters to lay before the church; a deacon is proistamenov, "one that goes before"; and leads on others by way of example in his conduct and conversation; or as the Syriac renders it, avyrb Maqd, "that stands at the head" of affairs in the church; in the management of which he ought to use all study, thoughtfulness, care and diligence:

he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness; which is not to be understood of showing compassion to miserable objects in common, or of giving alms to necessitous persons, and which ought to be done according to the Jewish {l} canons, twpy Mynp rbob, "with a cheerful countenance"; and is what is highly pleasing to God, who "loves a cheerful giver": but of a branch of the deacon's office, whose work, among other things, is to visit the sick and distressed, and communicate to them as their wants require; all which should be done, not in a morose and frowning manner, but with a pleasant look and cheerful countenance, which makes the visit and the gift more welcome, acceptable, and useful.

{l} Maimon. Hilch. Mattanot Anayim, c. 10. sect. 4. 13.

Romans 12:9

Ver. 9. Let love be without dissimulation,.... The apostle having given out suitable exhortations to the officers of this church, ministers and deacons, proceeds to stir up to the exercise of grace, and the discharge of such duties as were common to all the members of the church; and begins with "love", which is the cement of saints, and the bond of perfectness, without which all the gifts that men have, the profession they make, and works they do are of no avail, and they themselves nothing. Here it is to be taken, in the largest and most comprehensive sense, for love to God, Christ, the saints, and fellow creatures, and ought, with respect to each, to "be without dissimulation"; or "hypocrisy": love to God should be with all the heart, soul, and mind, otherwise the fear of him, and obedience to him, will be only outward, formal, customary, and hypocritical; love to Christ should be with sincerity, and so it is where it is right, hearty, and genuine; such can appeal to him as the searcher of hearts, that from the heart they love him; and love to one another should be not in word, and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth; yea, the love professed to fellow creatures, ought never to be through fear of men or mercenary views, but honest, upright, and sincere.

Abhor that which is evil; sin, both in its principle and in its actings; it being hateful to God, Father, Son, and Spirit, contrary to the nature, being, and perfections of God, a transgression of his righteous law, exceeding sinful in itself, and pernicious in its effects and consequences; for all which it is to be abhorred by the saints: the word apostugountev, here used, designs the greatest aversation imaginable, a turning away from it, as what is the most loathsome, detestable, and abominable; and such an hatred of it with horror, as of the Stygian lake, or hell itself:

cleave to that which is good; to God, who is originally, infinitely, and immutably good; who is good in his nature, and works, and to all his creatures, and especially his chosen people, and therefore should be cleaved unto; to his will, his ways, and worship; and to Christ the good shepherd of the sheep, the Lamb that is to be followed and cleaved unto, whithersoever he goes; and to the good Spirit of God, after whom we should walk, and not after the flesh; and to the good people of God, assembling with whom should not be forsaken; and to the good Gospel of Christ, and the truths of it, which should be held fast; and to the ordinances of the Gospel, which ought to be constantly attended on; and to every good work, to which we should be ready, careful to maintain, and ever follow, both among ourselves and all men: they should even be glued unto it, as the word here signifies.

Romans 12:10

Ver. 10. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love,.... This is one branch of that love, before advised to, which should be unfeigned, and without guile and deceit. The objects of this grace are "brethren", not in such sense as all the descendants of Adam are, or men of the same country be, or as such who are born of the same parents in a natural sense are; to each of whom love is due under their respective characters and relations: but such who are so in a spiritual sense, who are born of God, are of his household, belong to his family, are the brethren of Christ, and one another; and are either members of the same church, incorporated together in the same church state, or at least members of Christ, and of the church universal. Now love to these should be kind, tender, and affectionate, reciprocal and mutual; such should love one another; there should be no love wanting on either side; and it ought to be universal, and reach to all the saints, though of different gifts, light, knowledge and experience, or whether high or low, rich or poor; and should show itself by bearing one another's burdens, bearing with, and forbearing each other, forgiving one another, and by edifying one another in their most holy faith, and praying with, and for one another.

In honour preferring one another; saints should think honourably of one another, and entertain an honourable esteem of each other; yea, should esteem each other better thou themselves; and not indulge evil surmises, and groundless jealousies of one another, which is contrary to that love that thinks no evil. They should speak honourably of each other in Christian company, and discourage that evil practice of whisperings, backbitings, and innuendos; they should treat each other with honour and respect in their common conversation, and especially when met together as a church of Christ. They should go before each other in giving honour, and showing respect, as the word prohgoumenov, signifies: they should set each other an example; and which also may be taken into the sense of the word, should prevent one another, not waiting until respect is shown on one side to return it again. Nor does this rule at all break in upon that order that should subsist, and be maintained in bodies civil and ecclesiastical, which requires superior honour to be given to persons according to their character, office, and station in which they are.

Romans 12:11

Ver. 11. Not slothful in business,.... Meaning not worldly business, or the affairs of life; though slothfulness in this respect is scandalous to human nature, and especially in persons under a profession of religion; men should diligently pursue their lawful callings for the support of themselves and families, and the interest of Christ: but spiritual business, the affairs of piety and religion, the service of God, private and public, to which we should not be backward, nor slothful in the performance of; such as preaching, hearing, reading, praying, and other ordinances of God; yea, we should be ready and forward to every good work, and particularly, and which may be here greatly designed, ministering to the poor saints in their necessity; in doing which we show that kind, tender, affectionate, brotherly love, and give that honour and respect, at least that part of it, which is relief, required in the foregoing verse; see **Heb 6:10**. Remarkable is that saying of R. Tarphon {m},

"The day is short, and the work great, Mylue Mylewphw, "and workmen slothful", and the reward much, and the master of the house is urgent."

Fervent in spirit; in their own spirits, for the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the cause of religion, in imitation of Christ himself, and as Phinehas and Elijah were; which fervency of spirit is opposed to that lukewarmness of soul, **Re 3:16**, that coldness of affection, and leaving of the first love, **Re 2:4**, so much complained of, and resented by Christ in his people: or else in the Spirit of God; for there may be fervency in men's spirits, which comes not from the Spirit of God, as in the Jews, and particularly Saul, before his conversion, who had "a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge", Ro 10:2; but when "the love of God is shed abroad in the heart" by the Spirit of God, **Ro 5:5**, this will make a man's spirit fervent in the service of God, for which the apostle would have these believers concerned. A disciple of the wise men among the Jews is {n} said to be xtr, "fervent", because the law is as a boiling pot unto him; much more should a disciple of Christ be fervent, who has the Gospel of Christ, the love of God, and the grace of the Spirit to inflame his soul with true zeal and fervour.

Serving the Lord; some copies read, "serving time": the likeness of the words, kairov and kuriov, especially in an abbreviation, may have occasioned this different reading; which should it be followed, is not to be understood in an ill sense, of temporizing, or time serving, of men's accommodating themselves, their sentiments and conduct, according to the times in which they live, in order to escape reproach and persecution; but of redeeming the time, improving every season to do good, and taking every opportunity of serving God. But as the reading our version follows is confirmed by authentic copies, and by the Syriac, and other Oriental versions, it is best to adhere to it: by "the Lord" is here meant either God, Father, Son, and Spirit, who are the alone object of divine service and religious worship; or the Lord Jesus Christ, who most frequently goes by the name of Lord in the New Testament; and who is the one Lord, whose we are and whom we should continually serve, being under the greatest obligations to him, not only as our Creator, but as our head, husband, and Redeemer. Very rightly does the apostle premise fervency in spirit to serving the Lord; for without the Spirit of God there is no true worshipping and serving of him, and which ought to be done with fervency as well as with constancy. The Syriac version renders it, "serve our Lord".

{m} Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 15. {n} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 4. 1.

Romans 12:12

Ver. 12. Rejoicing in hope,.... Of the glory of God, than the hope of which nothing can make a believer more cheerful in this world; the saints' joy is therefore called the "rejoicing of the hope", **Heb 3:6**. This is placed between serving the Lord, and being patient in tribulation; for nothing tends more to animate the people of God to a cheerful serving of him, or to make them more patient under afflictions, than a hope of being for ever with the Lord:

patient in tribulation; whilst the saints are in this world they must expect tribulation; their way to heaven lies through it; and it becomes them to be patient under it, not murmuring against God, on the one hand, nor reviling of men, on the other.

Continuing instant in prayer: prayer is needful at all times, but especially in a time of tribulation and distress, whether inward or outward. This should be made without ceasing; saints should watch unto it with all perseverance; men should pray always, and not faint; never give out and over, or be discouraged. This advice is rightly given and placed here, to teach us that we are to go to the throne of grace continually for fresh supplies of grace, and strength to enable us to exercise the grace, and perform the duties exhorted to both in preceding and following verses.

Romans 12:13

Ver. 13. Distributing to the necessity of saints,.... Or "communicating", as many versions render the word; "distributing" more properly belongs to the officers of the church, the deacons, and communicating to the members of it in common. All men in general are to be relieved that are in want, even our very enemies, and particularly such as are our own flesh and blood, nearly related to us, aged parents, &c. and especially they that are of the household of faith, here called "saints"; and indeed, such only come under the care and notice of a church: and they are such, whom God has set apart for himself, has chosen in his Son, that they should be holy; whom Christ has sanctified, or whose sins he has expiated by his blood; and to whom he is made sanctification; and in whose hearts a work of grace and holiness is wrought by the Spirit of God, which is the sanctification of the Spirit they are chosen through, as a mean to eternal salvation by Christ; and in consequence of this, they live soberly, righteously, and godly, and have their conversations as become the Gospel of Christ: and such as these, being in necessitous circumstances, are to be communicated to; for not all, or any of the saints, but only such as are in "necessity", are here pointed at; it is not communicating to the saints, but to their necessity, which is recommended. It is the will and pleasure of God, that some of his dear children should be in strait circumstances of life, be reduced to want and distress, partly to try their own graces, their faith and trust in God, and dependence on him; and partly the graces of others, the charity, liberality, and beneficence of those who have of this world's goods: and who are the persons that are to "communicate", not words only, saying, be warmed and filled, and give nothing; but their substance, they are to deal their bread to the hungry, clothe the naked, and give a portion to as many as are in need: and these acts of giving and receiving, are one way by which the saints have communication with each other, and which is suggested by the word "communicating" here used; for fellowship does not lie merely in private conversation, and in sitting down together at the Lord's table, but in "communicating to one another such things" as are needful, as for the soul, so for the body. Some copies read, "communicating to the memories of the saints"; not making images of them, and praying to them, but speaking well and honourably of them, and imitating them in what they did well; see Pr 10:7.

Given to hospitality; or, as it may be rendered, "pursuing", or "following after love to strangers"; which is properly hospitality: respect is to be shown not to such only who are members of the same community with us, but also to such of the people of God, that may be of another country, or of some distant parts of our own, not before known by us; who by persecution, and distress of some sort or another, or by some providence or another, are obliged to remove from their native place. These we are to love, and show our love to, not only by directing and advising, but, if need be, by giving them food and raiment, and lodging them: this is a duty incumbent on ministers of the Gospel, and on private members, and on all who are in any capacity to perform it; and which should be done cheerfully, and without grudging; and what persons should use, inure, and give themselves to, yea, should seek after, and call to objects of it; as Abraham and Lot did, who thereby entertained angels unawares, and is what the apostle here means by pursuing and following after it.

Romans 12:14

Ver. 14. Bless them which persecute you,.... It is the lot of God's, people in this world to be persecuted by the men of it, in some shape or another, either by words or deeds; either by reviling and reproaching them, and speaking all manner of evil of them; or by hindering them the free exercise of religious worship, by confiscation of their goods, imprisonment of their persons, by violently torturing their bodies, and taking away their lives; under all which circumstances they are taught to

bless them; that is, to pray for them, that God would show them their evil, give repentance to them, and the remission of their sins; which is the order Christ gave to his disciples, **Mt 5:44**; and encouraged to an observance of, by his own example, Lu 23:34; and has been followed herein by his disciples and apostles, **Ac 7:60** **1Co 4:12**. Moreover, by "blessing" may be meant, giving them good words, mild and soft answers, "not rendering evil for evil, railing for railing", **1Pe 3:9**; but, on the contrary, blessing, in imitation of Christ, who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again", **1Pe 2:23**: "bless",

and curse not: to have a mouth full of cursing and bitterness, **Ro 3:14**, is the character of an unregenerate man, and what by no means suits one who names the name of Christ; for blessing and cursing to proceed out of the same mouth, is as absurd and unnatural, as if it should be supposed that a fountain should send forth sweet water and bitter, or salt and fresh, **Jas 3:10**. The imprecations upon wicked men, used by David and other good men, are no contradictions to this rule; since they were made under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, and were predictions of God's vengeance, which in righteous judgment should fall on them, and are not to be drawn into an example by us.

Romans 12:15

Ver. 15. Rejoice with them that do rejoice,.... Not in anything sinful and criminal, in a thing of nought, in men's own boastings; all such rejoicing is evil, and not to be joined in; but in things good and laudable, as in outward prosperity; and to rejoice with such, is a very difficult task; for unless persons have a near concern in the prosperity of others, they are very apt to envy it, or to murmur and repine, that they are not in equal, or superior circumstances; and also in things spiritual, with such who rejoice in the discoveries of God's love to their souls, in the views of interest in Christ, and of peace, pardon, and righteousness by him, and in hope of the glory of God; when such souls make their boast in the Lord, the humble hearing thereof will be glad, and will, as they ought to do, join with them in magnifying the Lord, and will exalt his name together:

and weep with them that weep; so Christ, as he rejoiced with them that rejoiced, at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, wept with them that wept, with Mary at the grave of Lazarus. The design of these rules is to excite and encourage sympathy in the saints with each other, in all conditions inward and outward, and with respect to things temporal and spiritual; in imitation of Christ their great high priest, who cannot but be touched with the infirmities of his people; and as founded upon, and arising from, their relation to each other, as members of the same body; see 1Co 12:26;

Romans 12:16

Ver. 16. Be of the same mind one towards another,.... Which is not to be understood of the sameness of their judgment, or of their agreement in sentiments, espousing the same doctrines, observing the same ordinances, and in the same manner, and attending to the same form of discipline; but of their having the same love, and being of the same accord and affection to one another, entertaining the same good opinion, or a better, of others than of themselves; and so the Syriac version renders the passage, "what ye think of yourselves, think also of your brethren": think of one another, as equally interested in the love of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, blessed with the same spiritual blessings in him, and called in the same hope of your calling; and do not think of one another, as being one richer or wiser than another, do not value yourselves upon that:

mind not high things; be not highminded, do not think too highly of yourselves, and despise others; meddle not with, nor grasp at things too high for you, that are out of your reach, and beyond your capacity; nor seek great things for yourselves, as riches, honours, &c. nor covet great company:

but condescend to men of low estate; or "to low things"; be content with mean and low things in life, and disdain not to take notice of and converse with, men in a low condition, whether in things temporal or spiritual; who may be poor in this world, be very ignorant and illiterate, as to general knowledge and learning; be men of mean parts and abilities, of very small gifts, and be weak in faith and experience; condescend to their weaknesses, bear their infirmities, and become all things to them for their good, and God's glory: consider the apostle is writing to citizens of Rome, who might be tempted to look upon themselves above others, and to look disdainfully upon others, as citizens too often do on country people, as if they were below them, as persons of low life to them:

be not wise in your own conceits; see **Pr 3:7**. This is attended with bad consequences, spoils a man's usefulness, prevents his improvement in knowledge, tempts him to reject all counsel and advice given him, and to treat his fellow creatures and Christians with haughtiness and insolence, and exposes him to the scorn and contempt of men: or "be not wise by or with yourselves"; imagining you have all the wisdom, and others have none; or keeping it to yourselves, what wisdom you have communicate it to others; the

Ethiopic version reads, "say not, we are wise"; see Job 12:2.

Romans 12:17

Ver. 17. Recompence to no man evil for evil,.... Neither evil words for evil words, railing for railing; nor evil deeds for evil deeds, one ill turn for another; nor the evil of punishment for the evil of fault, unless it be by persons, who under God have an authority to inflict it; as the civil magistrate, who "is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil", Ro 13:4; but private revenge is what is here forbidden:

providing things honest in the sight of all men. The Vulgate Latin reads, "not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men"; and the Alexandrian copy reads, "in the sight of God and in the sight of men", which clause seems to have crept in here, out of **2Co 8:21**. The words are not to be understood of a man's providing things honest, decent, and commendable, as suitable food and raiment for his family, in the sight of all men, to the honour of religion, and the credit of his profession, which is right to be done; but of a provident, thoughtful, and studious concern, to do everything that is laudable and of good report among men. The Syriac version renders the words alter this manner, atbj Nwdbetd Nwkl ljbtn ala, "but be careful to do well", or exercise beneficence before all men; either restraining it to acts of beneficence, even to them that do us ill, in opposition to rendering evil to them; or applying it to all offices of humanity, and every good work, which are to be done in the sight of men; not merely to be seen of them, and in a vainglorious way, in order to obtain their esteem and applause, as did the Pharisees; but to avoid offence; to put, to silence, by well doing, the ignorance of wicked men; and to shame them that falsely accuse the good conversation of the saints; and to recommend the Gospel and true religion, and win men over to it thereby, and give an occasion to them of glorifying God.

Romans 12:18

Ver. 18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably,.... Or be at peace, seek after peace, pursue it, and cultivate it:

with all men; with those that we are immediately concerned with, in a natural relation; so husbands should live peaceably with their wives, and wives with their husbands; parents with their children, and children with their parents;

masters with their servants, and servants with their masters; and one brother, relation, and friend, with another: and so with all we are concerned with in a spiritual relation, as members of Christ, and in the same church state; such should be at peace among themselves, **1Th 5:13**; peace should rule in their hearts, **Col 3:15**, and they should study to keep "the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace", **Eph 4:3**: yea, with all we are concerned in a civil sense; saints should live peaceably in the neighbourhood, towns, cities, and countries, where they dwell, and show themselves to be the quiet in the land; should pray for the peace of the place where they are; and do all that in them lies to promote it, by living themselves peaceably and quietly, in all godliness and honesty; yea, they should live peaceably with their very enemies, "if it be possible"; which is rightly put, for there are some persons of such tempers and dispositions, that it is impossible to live peaceably with; for when others are for peace, they are for war; and in some cases it is not only impracticable, but would be unlawful; as when it cannot be done consistent with holiness of life and conversation, with the edification of others, the truths of the Gospel, the interest of religion, and the glory of God; these are things that are never to be sacrificed for the sake of peace with men: the apostle adds another limitation of this rule, "as much as lieth in you"; for more than this is not required of us; nothing should be wanting on our parts; every step should be taken to cultivate and maintain peace; the blame should lie wholly on the other side; it becomes the saints to live peaceably themselves, if others will not with them.

Romans 12:19

Ver. 19. Dearly beloved,.... This affectionate appellation the apostle makes use of, expressing his great love to them, the rather to work upon then, and move them to an attention to what he is about to say; which they might assure themselves was in great tenderness to them, for their good, as well as the glory of God: moreover, he may hereby suggest to them, not only that they were dear to him, but that they were greatly beloved of God, that they were high in his favour and affection; and this he might him unto them, in order to melt them into love to their fellow Christians and fellow creatures, and even to their enemies, and never think of private revenge:

avenge not yourselves; this is no ways contrary to that revenge, a believer has upon sin, and the actings of it, which follows on true evangelical repentance for it, **2Co 7:11**, and lies in a displicency at it, and himself for it, and in abstaining from it, and fighting against it; nor to that revenge a church may take of the disobedience of impenitent and incorrigible offenders, by laying censures on them, withdrawing from them, and rejecting them from their communion; nor to that revenge which civil magistrates may execute upon them that do evil; but this only forbids and condemns private revenge in private persons, for private injuries done, and affronts given:

but rather give place to wrath; either to a man's own wrath, stirred up by the provocations given him; let him not rush upon revenge immediately; let him sit down and breathe upon it; let him "give"
arta, "space", unto it, as the Syriac, which may signify time as well as place; and by taking time his wrath will, subside, he will cool and come to himself, and think better on it: or to the wrath of the injurious person, by declining him, as Jacob did Esau, till his wrath was over; or by patiently hearing without resistance the evil done, according to the advice of Christ, **Mt 5:39**; or to the wrath of God, leave all with him, and to the day of his wrath and righteous judgment, who will render to every man according to his works; commit yourselves to him that judgeth righteously, and never think of avenging your own wrongs; and this sense the following words incline to,

for it is written, De 32:35;

vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord; vengeance belongs to God, and to him only; it is proper and peculiar to him, not to Heathen deities, one of which they call dikh, "vengeance"; see
Ac 28:4; nor to Satan, who is of a revengeful spirit, and is styled the enemy and the avenger; nor to men, unless to magistrates under God, who are revengers and executioners of his wrath on wicked men; otherwise it solely belongs to God the lawgiver, whose law is broken, and against whom sin is committed: and there is reason to believe he will "repay" it, from the holiness of his nature, the strictness of his justice, his power and faithfulness, his conduct towards his own people, even to his Son, as their surety; nor will he neglect, but in his own time will avenge his elect, which cry unto him day and night; and who therefore should never once think of avenging themselves, but leave it with their God, to whom it belongs.

Romans 12:20

Ver. 20. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him,.... These words are taken from Pr 25:21, and to be understood, as a Jewish {o} writer observes, wemvmk, according to "their literal sense"; though some of the Rabbins explain them in an allegorical way, of the corruption of nature. The

Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, reads "but if"; so far should the saints be from meditating revenge upon their enemies, that they should do good unto them, as Christ directs, **Mt 5:44**, by feeding them when hungry, and giving drink unto them when thirsty:

if he thirst give him drink; which includes all offices of humanity and beneficence to be performed unto them: the reason, or argument inducing hereunto is,

for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head; not to do him hurt, not to aggravate his condemnation, as if this would be a means of bringing down the wrath of God the more fiercely on him, which is a sense given by some; as if this would be an inducement to the saints to do such acts of kindness; which is just the reverse of the spirit and temper of mind the apostle is here cultivating; but rather the sense is, that by so doing, his conscience would be stung with a sense of former injuries done to his benefactor, and he be filled with shame on account of them, and be brought to repentance for them, and to love the person he before hated, and be careful of doing him any wrong for the future; all which may be considered as a prevailing motive to God's people to act the generous part they are here moved to: in the passage referred to, Pr 25:21, "bread" and "water" are mentioned as to be given, which include all the necessaries of life: and it is added for encouragement, "and the Lord shall reward thee". The sense given of this passage by some of the Jewish commentators on it agrees with what has been observed in some measure; says one {p} of them,

"when he remembers the food and drink thou hast given him, thou shall burn him, as if thou puttest coals upon his head to burn him, er Kl twvem rwmvyw, and "he will take care of doing thee any ill";"

that is, for the time to come: and another of them observes {q} that

"this matter will be hard unto him, as if thou heapest coals on his head to burn him, wtvb bwrm, "because of the greatness of his shame", on account of the good that he shall receive from thee, for the evil which he hath rendered to thee."

This advice of showing kindness to enemies, and against private revenge, is very contrary to the dictates of human nature, as corrupted by sin. The former of these Julian the emperor represents {r} as a "paradox", though he owns it to be lawful, and a good action, to give clothes and food to enemies in war; and the latter, to revenge an injury, he says {s}, is a law common to all men, Greeks and Barbarians; but the Gospel and the grace of God teach us another lesson.

{o} Jarchi in Prov. xxv. 21. {p} R. Aben Ezra in loc. {q} R. Levi ben Gersom in loc. Vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 147. 2. {r} Fragment. inter opera, par. 1. p. 533. {s} Ad Atheniens. p. 501.

Romans 12:21

Ver. 21. Be not overcome of evil,.... Neither of the evil one, Satan, who is very busy to stir up the corruption of nature to an hatred of enemies, and to seek revenge; but give no place nor heed unto him, resist him, and he will flee from you, **Jas 4:7**; "put on the whole armour of God", **Eph 6:11**, whereby you may defend yourselves, that he cannot touch you: nor of the evil of sin that dwells in you; "for whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage", **2Pe 2:19**; nor of the evil of the man that has done you an injury, as you will be, if you return evil for evil, or take any steps and measures to avenge yourselves; for then not you, but he that has done you the wrong, will be the conqueror:

but overcome evil with good; overcome the evil man, and the evil he has done you, by doing good to him, by feeding him when hungry, by giving him drink when thirsty, by clothing him when naked, and by doing other offices of kindness and humanity to him; which is most likely to win upon him, and of an enemy to make him your friend: and if not, however it will show that you are conquerors, yea, "more than conquerors", **Ro 8:37**, through the grace and strength of him that has loved you, over Satan, over the corruptions of your own hearts, and over the malice and wickedness of your enemies.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 13

The principal things contained in this chapter, enjoined the saints, are the duties of subjection to magistrates, love to one another, and to all men, and temperance and chastity in themselves: it begins with duties relating to the civil magistrates, requiring obedience of everyone unto them, Ro 13:1, and that for these reasons, because the civil magistracy, or government, is by divine appointment; wherefore to obey them in things of a civil nature, is to obey God; and to resist them is to resist God; and also because of the pernicious consequence of such resistance, damnation to themselves, Ro 13:2, for the magistrate not only causes terror by penal laws, but he inflicts punishment on delinquents, and is the executioner of God's wrath and vengeance on such, Ro 13:3, and likewise because of the profit and advantage to obedient subjects; such not only have the good will and esteem of their rulers, and are commended by them, but are defended and protected in their persons and properties, Ro 13:3, moreover, the apostle enforces the necessity of subjection to them, not only in order to avoid punishment, but to answer a good conscience; this duty being according to the light of nature, and the dictates of a natural conscience; which if awake, must be uneasy with a contrary behaviour, Ro 13:5, and for the same reason he urges the payment of tribute to them, as well as on account of the reasonableness of it, taken from magistrates spending their time, and using their talents, in an attendance on the service of the public, Ro 13:6, and which is further confirmed by the general rule of justice and equity, or of doing that which is just and right to everyone, of which particulars are given, Ro 13:7, and then after a general exhortation to pay all sorts of debts owing to superiors, inferiors, or equals, the apostle passes to the debt of love owing to one another, and to all mankind; which is exhorted to on this consideration, that the performance of it is a fulfilling the law, Ro 13:8, which is proved, by showing that the several precepts of the law, of which an enumeration is given, are reducible to, and are included in love to our neighbours as ourselves, Ro 13:9, and since it is the nature of love not to work ill, but to do good to the neighbour, the conclusion follows, that it must be as asserted, that love is the fulfilment of the law, and ought by all means to be attended to, as a principal duty of religion, Ro 13:10, next the apostle proceeds to exhort the saints to a watchful, chaste, sober, and temperate course of life; as being perfectly agreeable to the privileges they enjoyed, to the present condition they were in, and to that future state of happiness they were in expectation of: he exhorts to be watchful and sober, and not indulge sleep and slothfulness, in consideration of the time in which they were, and with which they were acquainted, it being not night, but day; at least the one was wearing off, and the other coming on; the time of life being short, and the day of salvation approaching nearer and nearer, Ro 13:11, wherefore such actions should be done, as are agreeable to the day, and not the night, to light, and not darkness; and particularly such works of darkness are dissuaded from, which are contrary to temperance and sobriety, as rioting, and drunkenness; and to chastity, as chambering: and wantonness; and to peace and concord, as strife and envying, which frequently follow upon the former: and the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to faith in Christ, and an imitation of him, expressed in a figurative way by a metaphor, taken from the putting on of garments; and with a dehortation from an immoderate provision for the flesh, so as to promote, excite, and cherish, the lusts of it, Ro 13:13.

Ver. 1. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers,.... The apostle having finished his exhortations to this church, in relation to the several duties incumbent upon both officers and private Christians, as members of a church, and with reference to each other, and their moral conduct in the world; proceeds to advise, direct, and exhort them to such duties as were relative to them as members of a civil society; the former chapter contains his Christian Ethics, and this his Christian Politics. There was the greater reason to insist upon the latter, as well as on the former, since the primitive saints greatly lay under the imputation of being seditious persons and enemies to the commonwealth; which might arise from a very great number of them being Jews, who scrupled subjection to the Heathen magistrates, because they were the seed of Abraham, and by a law were not to set one as king over them, that was a stranger, and not their own brother, and very unwillingly bore the Roman yoke, and paid tribute to Caesar: hence the Christians in common were suspected to be of the same principles; and of all the Jews none were more averse to the payment of taxes to the Roman magistrates than the Galilaeans; see **Ac 5:37**. And this being the name by which Christ and his followers were commonly called, might serve to strengthen the above suspicion of them, and charge against them. Moreover, some Christians might be tempted to think that they should not be subject to Heathen magistrates; since they were generally wicked men, and violent persecutors of them; and that it was one branch of their Christian liberty to be freed from subjection to them: and certain it is, that there were a set of loose and licentious persons, who bore the name of Christians, that despised dominion, and spoke evil of dignities; wherefore the apostle judged it advisable especially to exhort the church of Rome, and the members who dwelt there, where was the seat of power and civil government, so to behave towards their superiors, that they might set a good example to the Christians in the several parts of the empire, and wipe off the aspersion that was cast upon them, as if they were enemies to magistracy and civil power. By "the higher powers", he means not angels, sometimes called principalities and powers; for unto these God hath not put in subjection his people under the Gospel dispensation; nor ecclesiastical officers, or those who are in church power and authority; for they do not bear the temporal sword, nor have any power to inflict corporeal punishment: but civil magistrates are intended, see **Tit 3:1**; and these not only supreme magistrates, as emperors and kings, but all inferior and subordinate ones, acting in commission under them, as appears from **1Pe 2:13**, which are called "powers", because they are invested with power and authority over others, and have a right to exercise it in a proper way, and in proper cases; and the "higher" or super eminent ones, because they are set in high places, and have superior dignity and authority to others. The persons that are to be subject to them are "every soul"; not that the souls of men, distinct from their bodies, are under subjection to civil magistrates; for of all things they have the least to do with them, their power and jurisdiction not reaching to the souls, the hearts, and consciences of men, especially in matters of religion, but chiefly to their bodies, and outward civil concerns of life: but the meaning is, that every man that has a soul, every rational creature, ought to be subject to civil government. This is but his reasonable service, and which he should from his heart, and with all his soul, cheerfully perform. In short, the sense is, that every man should be subject: this is an Hebraism, a common way of speaking among the Jews, who sometimes denominate men from one part, and sometimes from another; sometimes from the body or flesh, thus "all flesh is grass", Isa 40:6, that is, all men are frail; and sometimes front the soul, "all souls are mine", Eze 18:4, all belong to me; as here, "every soul", that is, every man, all the individuals of mankind, of whatsoever sex, age, state, or condition, ecclesiastics not excepted: the pope, and his clergy, are not exempted from civil jurisdiction; nor any of the true ministers of the Gospel; the priests under the law were under the civil government; and so was Christ himself, and his apostles, who paid tribute to Caesar; yea, even Peter particularly, whose successor the pope of Rome pretends to be. "Subjection" to the civil magistrates designs and includes all duties relative to them; such as showing them respect, honour, and reverence suitable to their stations; speaking well of them, and their administration; using them with candour, not bearing hard upon them for little matters, and allowing for ignorance of the secret springs of many of their actions and conduct, which if known might greatly justify them; wishing well to them, and praying constantly, earnestly, and heartily for them; observing their laws and injunctions; obeying their lawful commands, which do not contradict the laws of God, nature, and right reason; and paying them their just dues and lawful tribute, to support them in their office and dignity:

for there is no power but of God; God is the fountain of all power and authority; the streams of power among creatures flow from him; the power that man has over all the creatures, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fishes of the sea, is originally of God, and by a grant from him; the lesser powers, and the exercises of them, in the various relations men stand in to one another, are of God, as the power the husband has over the wife, parents over their children, and masters over their servants; and so the higher power that princes have over their subjects: for it is the God of heaven that sets up kings, as well as pulls them down; he is the King of kings, from whom they derive their power and authority, from whom they have the right of government, and all the qualifications for it; it is by him that kings reign, and princes decree justice.

The powers that be are ordained of God. The order of magistracy is of God; it is of his ordination and appointment, and of his ordering, disposing, and fixing in its proper bounds and limits. The several forms of government are of human will and pleasure; but government itself is an order of God. There may be men in power who assume it of themselves, and are of themselves, and not of God; and others that abuse the power that is lodged in them; who, though they are by divine permission, yet not of God's approbation and good will. And it is observable, that the apostle speaks of powers, and not persons, at least, not of persons, but under the name of powers, to show that he means not this, or the other particular prince or magistrate, but the thing itself, the office and dignity of magistracy itself; for there may be some persons, who may of themselves usurp this office, or exercise it in a very illegal way, who are not of God, nor to be subject to by men. The apostle here both uses the language, and speaks the sentiments of his countrymen the Jews, who are wont to call magistrates, "powers"; hence those sayings were used among them; says Shemaiah {t},

"twvrl edwtt la, "be not too familiar with the power"."

that is, with a magistrate, which oftentimes is dangerous. Again,

"says {u} Rabban Gamaliel, twvrb Nyryhz wyh, "take heed of the power" (i.e. of magistrates), for they do not suffer a man to come near them, but in necessity, and then they appear as friends for their own advantage, but will not stand by a man in the time of distress."

Moreover, after this manner they explain {w} **Pr 5:8**,

""remove thy way far from her", this is heresy; "and come not nigh the door of her house", twvrh wz, "this is the power". The gloss on it is, magistrates, because they set their eyes upon rich men to kill them, and take away their substance."

And a little after it is observed,

""the horse leech hath two daughters, crying, give, give", Pr 30:15: it is asked, what is the meaning of give, give? Says Mar Ukba, there are two daughters which cry out of hell, and say in this world, give, give, and they are heresy, twvrhw, "and the civil power"."

The gloss on this place is,

"Heresy cries, bring a sacrifice to the idol; "Civil Power" cries, bring money, and gifts, and revenues, and tribute to the king."

Nevertheless, they look upon civil government to be of divine appointment. They say {x}, that

"no man is made a governor below, except they proclaim him above;"

i.e. unless he is ordained of God: yea, they allow {y} the Roman empire to be of God, than which no government was more disagreeable to them.

"When R. Jose ben Kisma was sick, R. Chanina ben Tradion went to visit him; he said unto him, Chanina, my brother, my brother, knowest thou not that this nation, (the Romans) hwkylmh Mymvh Nm, "have received their empire" from God? for it hath laid waste his house, and hath burnt his temple, and has slain his saints, and destroyed his good men, and yet it endures."

Nay, they frequently affirm {z}, that the meanest office of power among men was of divine appointment. This is the apostle's first argument for subjection to the civil magistrate.

{t} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 10. {u} Ib. c. 2. sect. 3. {w} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 17. 1. {x} In Buxtorf. Florileg. Heb. p. 178. {y} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 18. 1. {z} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 51. 1. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 2. Jarchi in 1 Chron. xxix. 11.

Romans 13:2

Ver. 2. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power,.... The office of magistracy, and such as are lawfully placed in it, and rightly exercise it; who denies that there is, or ought to be any such order among men, despises it, and opposes it, and withdraws himself from it, and will not be subject to it in any form:

resisteth the ordinance of God, the will and appointment of God, whose

pleasure it is that there should be such an office, and that men should be subject to it. This is not to be understood, as if magistrates were above the laws, and had a lawless power to do as they will without opposition; for they are under the law, and liable to the penalty of it, in case of disobedience, as others; and when they make their own will a law, or exercise a lawless tyrannical power, in defiance of the laws of God, and of the land, to the endangering of the lives, liberties, and properties of subjects, they may be resisted, as Saul was by the people of Israel, when he would have took away the life of Jonathan for the breach of an arbitrary law of his own, and that too without the knowledge of it,
1Sa 14:45; but the apostle is speaking of resisting magistrates in the right discharge of their office, and in the exercise of legal power and authority:

and they that resist them, in this sense,

shall receive to themselves damnation; that is, punishment; either temporal, and that either by the hand of the magistrate himself, who has it in his power to punish mutiny, sedition, and insurrection, and any opposition to him in the just discharge of his duty; or at the hand of God, in righteous judgment, for their disobedience to an ordinance of his; as in the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who opposed themselves both to the civil and sacred government of the people of Israel, Nu 26:9; and were swallowed up alive in the earth, Nu 26:10: or eternal punishment, unless the grace of God prevents; for "the blackness of darkness is reserved for ever", **Jude 1:13**, for such persons, who, among other of their characters, are said to "despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities", **Jude 1:8**. This is another argument persuading to subjection to magistrates.

Romans 13:3

Ver. 3. For rulers are not a terror to good works,.... That is, to them that do good works in a civil sense; who behave well in the neighbourhoods, towns, cities, and countries where they dwell. The apostle seems to anticipate an objection made against governors, as if there was something very terrible and formidable in them; and which might be taken up from the last clause of the preceding verse; and which he removes by observing, that governors neither do, nor ought to inject terror into men that behave well, obey the laws, and keep a good decorum among their fellow subjects, not doing any injury to any man's person, property, and estate. The Jews {a} have a saying, "that a governor that injects more fear into the people, than is for the honour of God, shall be punished, and shall not see his son a disciple of a wise man."

But to the evil; to wicked men, who make no conscience of doing hurt to their fellow creatures, by abusing their persons, defrauding them of their substance, and by various illicit methods doing damage to them; to such, rulers are, and ought to be terrors; such are to be menaced, and threatened with inflicting upon them the penalty of the laws they break; and which ought to be inflicted on them by way of punishment to them, and for the terror of others. R. Chanina, the Sagan of the priests {b}, used to say,

"pray for the peace of the kingdom, for if there was no
harwm, "fear", (i.e. a magistrate to inject fear,) one man would devour another alive."

Wilt thou not then be afraid of the power? of the civil magistrate, in power and authority, to oppose him, to refuse subjection to him, to break the laws, which, according to his office, he is to put in execution.

Do that which is good: in a civil sense, between man and man, by complying with the laws of the land, which are not contrary to the laws of God; for of doing good in a spiritual and religious sense he is no judge:

and thou shalt have praise of the same; shall be commended as a good neighbour, a good citizen, and a good commonwealth's man; an honest, quiet, peaceable man, that does not disturb the peace of civil society, but strengthens and increases it.

{a} T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 17. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 25. sect. 1.
{b} Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 2.

Romans 13:4

Ver. 4. For he is the minister of God to thee for good,.... He is a minister of God's appointing and commissioning, that acts under him, and for him, is a kind of a vicegerent of his, and in some, sense represents him; and which is another reason why men ought to be subject to him; and especially since he is appointed for their "good", natural, moral, civil, and spiritual, as Pareus observes: for natural good, for the protection of men's natural lives, which otherwise would be in continual danger from wicked men; for moral good, for the restraining of vice, and encouragement of virtue; profaneness abounds exceedingly, as the case is, but what would it do if there were no laws to forbid it, or civil magistrates to put them in execution? for civil good, for the preservation of men's properties, estates, rights, and liberties, which would be continually invaded, and made a prey of by others; and for spiritual and religious good, as many princes and magistrates have been; a sensible experience of which we have under the present government of these kingdoms, allowing us a liberty to worship God according to our consciences, none making us afraid, and is a reason why we should yield a cheerful subjection to it:

but if thou do that which is evil, be afraid: of the punishment of such evil threatened by law, and to be inflicted by the civil magistrate;

for he beareth not the sword in vain. The "sword" is an emblem of the power of life and death, the civil magistrate is invested with, and includes all sorts of punishment he has a right to inflict; and this power is not lodged in him in vain; he may and ought to make use of it at proper times, and upon proper persons:

for he is the minister of God; as is said before, he has his mission, commission, power and authority from him; and is

a revenge to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil; he is a defender of the laws, a vindicator of divine justice, an avenger of the wrongs of men; and his business is to inflict proper punishment, which is meant by wrath, upon delinquents.

Romans 13:5

Ver. 5. Wherefore ye must needs be subject,.... To the higher powers, to the civil magistrates; there is a necessity of it, because magistracy is God's ordinance, it is for the good of men; and such that oppose it will severely smart for it: but subjection to it from Christians should be,

not only for wrath; through fear of punishment, and for the sake of escaping it; either the wrath of men or of God, in this or the other world:

but also for conscience sake: to keep conscience clear, to exercise a good one void of offence towards God and men; for natural reason, conscience itself, dictates that there ought to be such order among men, that civil government should take place, and ought to be submitted to.

Romans 13:6

Ver. 6. For, for this cause pay you tribute also,.... To show that we are subject to the higher powers, and as a proof and evidence of our subjection to them, we do and ought to pay tribute to them, to support them in their office and dignity; and this is done not for fear of trouble, of distress on goods and estate, or imprisonment of person, but for conscience sake: payment of taxes is not a mere matter of prudence, and done to avoid dangerous consequence, but is and ought to be a case of conscience; whatever is anyone's due, and of right belongs to him, conscience dictates it ought to be paid him; as therefore it tells a man, that whatever is God's should be rendered to him, so whatever is Caesar's, should be given him; and indeed to do otherwise, to refuse to pay tribute, or by any fraudulent means to deprive the civil magistrate of his due, is not only to do an injury to him, but to the whole body politic, which has a greater concern therein than he himself; and such a person forfeits all right and claim to his protection:

for they are God's ministers. This is another reason why tribute should be paid them, not only to testify subjection to them, and keep conscience clear, but because they are called unto, and put into this high office by God; for promotion to such honour and high places comes not from east, west, north, or south; but is by the providence of God, who puts down, and sets up at pleasure; they are his vicegerents, they act under him, are in his stead, and represent his majesty; and therefore, in some sort, what is done to them is done to him:

attending continually upon this very thing; not of laying, collecting, and receiving tribute, but of service and ministry under God, for the welfare of their subjects; for rightly to administer the office of magistracy requires great pains, care, diligence, and assiduity; and as great wisdom and thoughtfulness in making laws for the good of the body, so a diligent constant concern to put them in execution, to secure the lives of subjects from cut throats and murderers, and their properties and estates from thieves and robbers; and they are not only obliged diligently to attend to such service at home, but to keep a good lookout abroad, and penetrate into, and watch the designs of foreign enemies, to defend from their invasions, and fight for their country; that the inhabitants thereof may live peaceable and quiet lives, enjoying their respective rights and privileges; and since therefore civil government is a business of so much care, and since our rulers are so solicitous, and constantly concerned for our good, and which cannot be done without great expense, as well as diligence, we ought cheerfully to pay tribute to them.

Romans 13:7

Ver. 7. Render therefore to all their dues,.... To all princes, magistrates, and officers, that are placed over us, from the supreme governor to the lowest officer under him, should we render as a due debt, and not as a mere gift, whatever belongs to them, or is proper for them for the due discharge of their office, to encourage in it, and support the dignity of it, whether external or internal:

tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom. These two words include all sorts of levies, taxes, subsidies, &c. and the former may particularly design what is laid on men's persons and estates, as poll money, land tax, &c. and the latter, what arises from the exportation and importation of goods, to and from foreign parts:

fear to whom fear; not of punishment; for a good subject has no reason to fear the civil magistrate in this sense, only the man that does evil, the malefactor; as for the good neighbour, citizen, and subject, he loves the magistrate the more, the more diligent he is in putting the laws in execution against wicked men; but this is to be understood of a fear of offending, and especially of a reverence bore in the mind, and expressed by outward actions, and such as has going with it a cheerful obedience to all lawful commands:

honour to whom honour; there is an honour due to all men, according to their respective rank and station, and the relation they stand in to each other; so servants are to honour their masters, children their parents, wives their husbands, and subjects their princes; all inferior magistrates are to be honoured in their place, and more especially the king as supreme, in thought, word, and gesture; see **1Pe 2:17**.

Romans 13:8

Ver. 8. Owe no man anything,.... From the payment of dues to magistrates the apostle proceeds to a general exhortation to discharge all sorts of debts; as not to owe the civil magistrate any thing, but render to him his dues, so to owe nothing to any other man, but make good all obligations whatever, as of a civil, so of a natural kind. There are debts arising from the natural and civil relations subsisting among men, which should be discharged; as of the husband to the wife, the wife to the husband; parents to their children, children to their parents; masters to their servants, servants to their masters; one brother, friend, and neighbour, to another. Moreover, pecuniary debts may be here intended, such as are come into by borrowing, buying, commerce, and contracts; which though they cannot be avoided in carrying on worldly business, yet men ought to make conscience of paying them as soon as they are able: many an honest man may be in debt, and by one providence or another be disabled from payment, which is a grief of mind to him; but for men industriously to run into debt, and take no care to pay, but live upon the property and substance of others, is scandalous to them as men, and greatly unbecoming professors of religion, and brings great reproach upon the Gospel of Christ.

But to love one another. This is the only debt never to be wholly discharged; for though it should be always paying, yet ought always to be looked upon as owing. Saints ought to love one another as such; to this they are obliged by the new commandment of Christ, by the love of God, and Christ unto them, by the relations they stand in to one another, as the children of God, brethren, and members of the same body; and which is necessary to keep them and the churches of Christ together, it being the bond of perfectness by which they are knit to one another; and for their comfort and honour, as well as to show the truth and reality of their profession. This debt should be always paying; saints should be continually serving one another in love, praying for each other, bearing one another's burdens, forbearing each other, and doing all good offices in things temporal and spiritual that lie in their power, and yet always owing; the obligation to it always remains. Christ's commandment is a new one, always new, and will never be antiquated; his and his Father's love always continue, and the relations believers stand in to each other are ever the same; and therefore love will be always paying, and always owing in heaven to all eternity. But what the apostle seems chiefly to respect, is love to one another as men, love to one another, to the neighbour, as the following verses show. Love is a debt we owe to every man, as a man, being all made of one blood, and in the image of God; so that not only such as are of the same family, live in the same neighbourhood, and belong to the same nation, but even all the individuals of mankind, yea, our very enemies are to share in our love; and as we have an opportunity and ability, are to show it by doing them good.

For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law; that is, not who loves some one particular person, but every other person besides himself, even his neighbour, in the largest sense of the word, including all mankind, and that as himself; such an one has fulfilled the law, the law of the decalogue; that part of it particularly which relates to the neighbour; the second table of the law, as the next verse shows: though since there is no true love of our neighbour without the love of God, nor no true love of God without the love of our neighbour; and since these two involve each other, and include the whole law, it may be understood of fulfilling every part of it, that is, of doing it; for fulfilling the law means doing it, or acting according to it; and so far as a man loves, so far he fulfils, that is, does it: but this is not, nor can it be done perfectly, which is evident, partly from the impotency of man, who is weak and without strength, yea, dead in sin, and unable to do any thing of himself; and partly from the extensiveness of the law, which reaches to the thoughts and desires of the heart, as well as to words and actions; as also from the imperfection of love, for neither love to God, nor love to one another, either as men or Christians, is perfect; and consequently the fulfilling of the law by it is not perfect: hence this passage yields nothing in favour of the doctrine of justification by works; since the best works are imperfect, even those that spring from love, for love itself is imperfect; and are not done as they are, in a man's own strength, and without the Spirit and grace of God. Christ only has fulfilled the law perfectly, both as to parts and degrees; and to him only should we look for a justifying righteousness.

Romans 13:9

Ver. 9. For this, thou shalt not commit adultery,.... The apostle here reckons up the several laws of the second table, with this view, that it might appear that so far as a man loves his neighbour, whether more near or distantly related, he fulfils the law, or acts according to it. He omits the first of these, the fifth commandment, either because he had urged this before, so far as it may be thought to regard magistrates; or because, according to the division of the Jews, who reckon five commands to each table, this belonged to the first: and he puts the seventh before the sixth, which is of no great moment; the order of things being frequently changed in the Scripture, and which is often done by Jewish writers, in alleging and citing passages of Scripture; and with whom this is a maxim,
hrwtb rxwamw Mdqwm Nya, "that there is no first nor last in the law" {c}; that is, it is of no importance which stands first or last in it: it follows,

thou shall not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet; which are the sixth, eighth, ninth, and tenth commands of the decalogue, Ex 20:13:

and if there be any other commandment; of God, respecting the neighbour, either in the decalogue, as there was the fifth,
Ex 20:12, or elsewhere, the apostle repeating this by memory:

it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself; see Le 19:18; this is the summary and epitome of them; so Christ reduces the laws of the first table to the head of love to God, and those of the second to the head of love to the neighbour, Mt 22:37, as the apostle does here, and in **Ga 5:14**, and the Apostle James, in **Jas 2:8**.

{c} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 6. 2.

Romans 13:10

Ver. 10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour,.... That is, the man that truly loves his neighbour, will contrive no ill against him, nor do any to him; he will not injure his person, nor defile his bed, nor deprive or defraud him of his substance; or do hurt to his character, bear false testimony against him, or covet with an evil covetousness anything that is his; but, on the contrary, will do him all the good he is capable of:

therefore love is the fulfilling of the law: so far as a man loves his neighbour, he acts agreeably to the law, and the particular precepts of it above mentioned: what the apostle says of love to the neighbour, the Jews frequently say of love to God;

"he that loveth God (they say {d}) Nryma rve Myyqm, "hath fulfilled the decalogue", both above and below."

And again {e},

"there is no service like the love of God, R. Abba saith it is atyyrwad allk, "the sum of the law"; for the ten words of the law wlylkta akh, "are herein comprehended", or "fulfilled":"

and elsewhere {f} they observe,

"that hbhab hlwlk hrwth lk, "the whole law is comprehended", or fulfilled "in love"."

{d} Zohar in Deut. fol. 111. 3. {e} Zohar in Deut. fol. 113. 1. {f} Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, praecept. affirm. 3. prope finem.

Romans 13:11

Ver. 11. And that knowing the time,.... That it is day and not night, the Gospel day, the day of salvation; in which the grace of God shines forth, like the sun in its meridian glory; life and immortality are brought to light, righteousness and salvation are revealed; and so a time not for sloth and sleep, but business; in which the saints should active in the exercise of grace, and discharge, of duty; owing no man anything but the debt of love; and that the dawn of grace, and day of spiritual light had broke in upon their souls, and dispelled the darkness of sin, ignorance and unbelief; that the darkness was past, and the true light shined, and the sun of righteousness was risen on them: all which they full well knew and were conscious of, and therefore should observe,

that now it is high time for us to awake out of sleep; since sleep is for the night, and not the day; the Alexandrian copy reads, "for you". This is to be understood, not of the dead sleep of sin, in which unconverted persons are, to be awoke out of which is a work of divine power; but of the carnal security and drowsy frame of spirit which sometimes attend the churches and children of God, the wise as well as the foolish virgins; and lies in grace being dormant in, the soul; in a backwardness to duty, and a slothfulness in the performance of it; in resting in the outward duties of religion; in lukewarmness about the cause of Christ; in an unconcernedness about sins of omission and commission; and in a willingness to continue in such a sluggish frame: all which arise from a body of sin and death, and an over anxious care for the things of the world; from a weariness in spiritual exercises, and an abstinence from spiritual company and ordinances and from outward peace and liberty: such a frame of spirit, when, it prevails and becomes general is of bad consequence to the churches of Christ; the spirit of discerning, care and diligence in receiving members, are in a great measure lost, and so they are filled with hypocrites and heretics; Christ absents himself from them; leanness of soul is brought upon them; and they are in danger of being surprised with the midnight cry: the methods God takes to awaken his people out of such a sleep are various; sometimes in a more gentle way, by the discoveries his love, which causes the lips of those that are asleep to speak; sometimes by severe reproofs in the ministry of the word; and sometimes by sharp persecutions in providence; and at last it will be done by the midnight cry: the argument, showing the reasonableness of awaking out of sleep, and that it was high time to do so, follows,

for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed; by which is meant, not temporal salvation, or a deliverance from the persecution the saints endured in Judea, from their own countrymen, by the departure of them from Jerusalem, a little before its destruction, by the destruction of that city, and the peaceful times of Vespasian; but a spiritual and eternal salvation: not Christ the author of it, who was come to effect it; nor that itself, as obtained, which was now done, finished, and completed; nor the application of it to their souls, which also had been made; but the consummate enjoyment of it in heaven, the salvation of their souls at death, and both of soul and body at the resurrection; consisting in a freedom from every evil, and in a full possession of all that is good and glorious: this is brought nearer to the saints, to their sight and view, as their faith grows and increases; and they are nearer the enjoyment of that than when they first believed; and which is a strong reason why a sluggish, slothful frame should not be indulged; what, sleep, and heaven so near at hand! just at their Father's house, ready to enter into the joy of their Lord, into his everlasting kingdom and glory, and yet asleep!

Romans 13:12

Ver. 12. The night is far spent,.... Not of Jewish darkness, which was gone, and was succeeded by the Gospel day; nor of former ignorance in Gentilism and unregeneracy, for that was past, and the true light shined; much less of security in the latter day, which was not yet come on; rather of persecution and distress for Christ's sake; but it is best of all to understand it of the present time of life; so it is called by the Jews {g}, hlyll hmwd hzh Mlweh, "this world is like to the night": and which, in the best of saints, is attended with imperfection and darkness, errors and mistakes, in principle and practice, in doctrine and conversation; however, it is far spent, and in a little time will be over:

the day is at hand; not the Gospel day, for that was already come; nor the day of grace, and spiritual light and comfort to their souls, for that also had taken place; nor the latter day glory, which then was at a distance; rather the approaching day of deliverance from present persecutions; but it is much better to understand it of the everlasting day of glory, which to particular persons was then, and now is at hand; a little while, and the night of darkness, affliction, and disconsolation will be over, and the day of glory will succeed, when there will be no more night, no more darkness, no more doubts, fears, and unbelief; but one continued series of light, joy, and comfort, and an uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit; and which is another reason why the saints should not indulge themselves in sleep, but be active, since the halcyon days are at hand, as well as a reason why they should attend to the following exhortations:

let us therefore cast off the works of darkness; as the apostle had made use of the metaphors of night and day, and of sleep, and awaking out of sleep, and rising in the morning to business, so he continues the same; and here alludes to persons throwing off their bed clothes, and covering of the night, and putting on proper raiment for the day. By "works of darkness" are meant evil works, which are opposite to the light; to God, who is light itself; to Christ, the light of the world; to the word of God, both law and Gospel, which is a light to our paths; to both the light of nature, and the light of grace: and which spring from the darkness of the mind, and are encouraged to by the god of this world, and by his angels, the rulers of the darkness of it; and which are generally done in the dark, and are such as will not bear the light; and, if grace prevent not, will end in outer darkness, in blackness of darkness, reserved by the justice of God, as the punishment of them. "Casting [them] off" expresses a dislike of them, a displicency with them, and an abstinence from them. Some copies read, "the armour of darkness", which agrees with what follows:

and let us put on the armour of light; the whole armour of God, the use of which lies in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; particularly good works are designed here, which though they are not the believer's clothing, his robe of justifying righteousness, they are both his ornament and his armour; by which he adorns the doctrine of Christ, and defends his own character and principles against the charges find calumnies of then: these being performed aright, spring from the light of grace in a regenerate man, and are such as will bear the light to be seen of men; and are the lights which are to shine before men, that they beholding them, may glorify God; so virtue was by Antisthenes {h}, called anafaireton oplon, "armour which cannot be taken away": the allusion is thought to be to the bright and glittering armour of the Romans; the Alexandrian copy reads, "the words of light".

{g} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 24. 4. {h} Diogen. Laert. l. 6. in Vita Antisthen. & Hesychius de viris illustr. p. 17.

Romans 13:13

Ver. 13. Let us walk honestly as in the day,.... Being under the day of the Gospel dispensation, and the day of grace having dawned, and the daystar of spiritual light and knowledge being risen in our hearts, and we being exposed to the view of all men in broad daylight, ought not to lie down and sleep, but to arise and be active, and walk decently with the armour of light on us, as becomes the Gospel of Christ; not naked and unclothed, which would expose us and the Gospel to shame and contempt:

not in rioting; the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "in singing", or "songs"; meaning lewd ones, sung at riotous feasts and banquets, made not for refreshment, but for pleasure and debauchery, what the Romans {i} call "comessations"; feasts after supper in the night season, and design all sorts of nocturnal revels: "Comus", the word here used, is with the Heathens the god of feasts, perhaps the same with "Chemosh", the god of the Moabites, 1Ki 11:33.

And drunkenness; which always attended such unseasonable and immoderate festivals:

not in chambering; in unlawful copulations, fornication, adultery, and all the defilements of the bed:

and wantonness; lasciviousness, unnatural lusts, as sodomy, &c.

not in strife and envying; contention and quarrels, which are usually the consequences of luxury and uncleanness.

{i} Seutonius in Vita Vitell. c. 13.

Romans 13:14

Ver. 14. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,.... As a man puts on his clothes when he rises in the morning: the righteousness of Christ is compared to a garment, it is the best robe, it is fine linen, clean and white, and change of raiment; which being put on by the Father's gracious act of imputation, covers the sins and deformities of his people, defends them from divine justice, secures them from wrath to come, and renders them beautiful and acceptable in his sight: which righteousness being revealed from faith to faith, is received by faith, and made use of as a proper dress to appear in before God; and may be daily said to be put on by the believer, as often as he makes use of it, and pleads it with God as his justifying righteousness, which should be continually: moreover, to put on Christ, and which indeed seems to be the true sense of the phrase here, is not only to exercise faith on him as the Lord our righteousness, and to make a profession of his name, but to imitate him in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; to walk as he walked, and as we have him for an example, in love, meekness, patience, humility, and holiness:

and make not provision for the flesh; the body: not but that due care is to be taken of it, both for food and clothing; and for its health, and the continuance and preservation of it by all lawful methods; but not so as

to fulfil the lusts thereof; to indulge and gratify them, by luxury and uncleanness: it is a saying of Hillell {k}, hmr hbrm rvb hbrm "he that increases flesh, increases worms"; the sense his commentators {l} give of it is, that

"he that increases by eating and drinking, until he becomes fat and fleshy, increases for himself worms in the grave:"

the design of the sentence is, that voluptuous men, who care for nothing else but the flesh, should consider, that ere long they will be a repast for worms: we should not provide, or be caterers for the flesh; and, by pampering it, stir up and satisfy its corrupt inclinations and desires.

{k} Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 7. {l} Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 7. Vid. Fagium in ib.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 14

The apostle, having finished his exhortations to duties of a moral and civil kind, proceeds to the consideration of things indifferent, about eating some sorts of meats, and keeping days; to which he might be led by the last clause of the preceding chapter, lest that should be interpreted as referring to those who used their Christian liberty in eating every sort of food; in the use of which it was requisite to exercise that love which is the fulfilling of the law, he had so much pressed and recommended in the foregoing chapters. The church at

Rome consisted both of Jews and Gentiles: and the former, though they believed in Christ, were not clear about the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and thought they ought still to observe the distinction of meats and days, which were made in it; the latter looked upon themselves under no manner of obligation to regard them; and even among thee Jews, some might have greater light and knowledge in these things than others, and used their Christian liberty, when others could not; and this occasioned great animosities and contentions among them; and some on account of these things were called strong, and others weak: and the chief view of the apostle in this chapter, is to give advice to each party how to behave one towards another; how the strong should behave to the weak, and the weak to the strong: and he begins with the strong, and in general exhorts them to a kind, tender, and affectionate regard to their weaker brethren, and not to perplex their minds with disputations about things to little profit, Ro 14:1, then a distribution of the members of this church into two parts is made,
Ro 14:2, showing the reason of the above exhortations; the one sort being strong believers, the others weak, the one eating all things, the other herbs; when some advice is given to each, that the strong should not despise the weak, nor the weak judge the strong; for which reasons are given: and the first is taken from the common interest they both have in the affection of God, and in divine adoption, Ro 14:3, And another is taken from the relation which believers stand in to God, as servants; and therefore not to be judged and condemned, but to be left to their Lord and master, which is illustrated by a simile of such a relation among men, Ro 14:4, and then another instance of different sentiments about Jewish rites and ceremonies is given, Ro 14:5, respecting the observation of days, in which also the members of the church were divided, some observing them, and some not; and the apostle's advice is, that every man should act as he was persuaded in his own mind, and not be uneasy with another: the reason for which he gives, Ro 14:6, because the end proposed by the one, and the other, is the honour and glory of God, and which is the same in the man that eats, or does not eat meat, since both give thanks to God. And this is further confirmed from the general end of the Christian's life and death likewise, which is not to himself, but to the Lord,
Ro 14:7, from whence it is concluded, that they are the Lord's in life and death, and all their actions are devoted to him; who by dying, rising, and living again, appears to be the Lord of quick and dead, and will judge both, Ro 14:9, and therefore to his judgment things should be left, and one should not condemn or despise another, since all must stand at his bar, Ro 14:10, which is proved Ro 14:11, from a passage in Isa 45:23, from all which it is concluded, Ro 14:12, that an account must be given by everyone to God, at the general judgment; wherefore it is right and best, not to judge and condemn one

another, but to judge this to be the most reasonable and agreeable to Christian charity, that care be taken not to offend, or cause a brother to stumble, Ro 14:13, and whereas it might be objected, that nothing was impure in itself, and therefore might be lawfully eaten, which the apostle allows, and as for himself, was fully persuaded of, yet it was impure to them who thought it so, Ro 14:14, and therefore should not eat; nor should others, when it gave offence to such persons; and which is dissuaded from, because to eat to the grief of the brethren, is contrary to Christian charity; and because it destroys the peace of such persons, and they are such whom Christ has died for, Ro 14:15, besides, hereby reproach might be brought upon them, the Gospel they professed, and the truth of Christian liberty they used, Ro 14:16, and moreover, the kingdom of God did not lie in the use of these things, but in spiritual ones, Ro 14:17, and which should be chiefly regarded, since the service of God in them, is what is grateful to him, and approved by all good men, Ro 14:18, wherefore the things which make for peace and edification should be followed after, things much preferable to meats and drinks, Ro 14:19, for the sake of which the peace of a brother, which is the work of God, should not be destroyed, Ro 14:20, for though all things are pure in themselves, and lawful to be eaten, yet it is an evil to eat them to the offence of another, and for another to eat them against his conscience, which he may be drawn into by the example of others; wherefore it is best to abstain from eating flesh or drinking wine, and everything else that is stumbling and offensive to a weak brother, Ro 14:21, and whereas the strong brother might object and say, I have faith in this matter, I believe it is lawful for me to eat anything, and why should I not? the apostle answers, by granting that he had faith, but then he observes, he ought to keep it to himself, and not disturb his weak brother, by putting it into practice openly; but should keep it to himself, it being his happiness not to condemn himself by using his liberty with offence, Ro 14:22, and then some advice is given to the weak brother, not to eat with a doubting conscience, Ro 14:23, because in so doing, he would be self-condemned, and because it would not be of faith, and therefore sinful.

Ver. 1. Him that is weak in the faith,.... This address is made to the stronger and more knowing Christians among the Romans, how to behave towards those that were inferior in light and knowledge to them, with regard to things of a ritual and ceremonial kind: and by "him that is weak in the faith", is meant, either one that is weak in the exercise of the grace of faith, who has but a glimmering sight of Christ; who comes to him in a very feeble and trembling manner; who believes his ability to save him, but hesitates about his willingness; who casts himself with a peradventure on him; and who is attended with many misgivings of heart, faintings of spirit, and fluctuation of mind, about his interest in him: or one that is weak in the doctrine of faith; has but little light and knowledge in the truths of the Gospel; is a child in understanding; has more affection than judgment; very little able to distinguish truth from error; cannot digest the greater and more sublime doctrines of grace; stands in need of milk, and cannot bear strong meat; is very fluctuating and unsettled in his principles, and like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine: or rather one that is weak in his knowledge of that branch of the doctrine of faith, which concerns Christian liberty; and that part of it particularly, which respects freedom from the ceremonial law: it designs one, and chiefly a Jew, who though a believer in Christ, and an embracer of the other truths of the Gospel, yet had but very little knowledge of Gospel liberty; but though that believers were to observe all the rituals of the Mosaic dispensation, not knowing that they were abolished by Christ. The phrase is Jewish; it is {m} said,

"what is the meaning of the phrase, in Rephidim, Ex 17:1 it signifies such as are of weak hands; as if it had been said, because the Israelites were Mtnwmab Mypr, "weak in their faith"."

The advice the apostle gives, in reference to such a person, is to

receive him; not only into their affections, and love him equally, being a believer in Christ, as one of the same sentiments with them, only in this matter, but also into church fellowship with them. The Syriac version reads it, adya hyl wbh, "give him the hand": in token of communion, a form used in admission of members. The Gentiles were apt to boast against, and look with some contempt upon the Jews, and were ready to object to their communion, because of their want of light and knowledge in these matters; but this was no bar of communion, nor ought a person to be rejected on account of his weakness, either in the grace, or in the doctrine of faith, when it appears he has the true grace of God; and much less on account of his weakness in that branch of it, concerning Christian liberty; for since Christ does not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, nor despise the day of small things, churches should not: it may also intend a receiving of such into intimate conversation, at their private meetings and conferences; taking particular notice of them; giving them proper instructions; praying with them and for them; endeavouring to build them up in their most holy faith, and to bring them into the knowledge of those things they are weak in; bearing their weaknesses patiently, and bearing with them in great tenderness: thus such should be received, but not to doubtful disputations; to vain jangling and perverse disputings, such as will rather perplex than inform them; and will leave their minds doubtful and in suspense, and do them more harm than good.

{m} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 77. 1.

Romans 14:2

Ver. 2. For one believeth that he may eat all things,.... He is fully persuaded in his mind, that there is nothing in itself common, or unclean; that the difference between clean and unclean meats, commanded to be observed by the law of Moses, is taken away; and that he may now lawfully eat any sort of food; every creature of God being good, and none to be refused, because of the ceremonial law which is abrogated, provided it, be received with thanksgiving, and used to the glory of God:

another who is weak eateth herbs; meaning not one that is sickly and unhealthful, and of a weak constitution, and therefore eats herbs for health's sake; but one that is weak in the faith, and who thinks that the laws concerning the observance of meats and drinks are still in force; and therefore, rather than break any of them, and that he may be sure he does not, will eat nothing but herbs, which are not any of them forbidden by the law: and this he did, either as choosing rather to live altogether on herbs, than to eat anything which the law forbids; or being of opinion with the Essenes among the Jews, and the Pythagoreans among the Gentiles, who thought they were to abstain from eating of all sorts of animals.

Romans 14:3

Ver. 3. Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not,.... Such who had a greater degree of Gospel light and knowledge, and made use of their Christian liberty in eating any sort of food, were not to despise as they were apt to do, such as abstained therefrom on account of the ceremonial law, as weak, ignorant; superstitious, and bigoted persons; or were not to set them at naught, or make nothing of them, as the word signifies, have no regard to their peace and comfort; but, on the other hand, were to consider them as brethren in Christ, though weak; and as having a work of God upon their souls, and therefore to be careful how they grieved them, destroyed their peace, or laid stumblingblocks in their way:

and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth: such who thought it not their duty to eat anything, but to forbear the use of some things directed to in the law, were not to censure and condemn, as they were apt to do, those who used their liberty in these things, as profane persons, and transgressors of the law of God; but leave them to the last and righteous judgment, when every one must be accountable to God for the various actions of life: the reason used to enforce this advice on both parties is,

for God hath received him: which respects both him that eateth, and him that eateth not, him that is despised, and him that is judged; and is a reason why one should not despise, nor the other judge, because God had received both the one and the other into his heart's love and affection, into the covenant of grace, and into his family by adoption: they were received by Christ, coming to him as perishing sinners, according to the will of God; whose will it likewise was, that they should be received into church fellowship, as being no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and God had also received them into his service, and they were made willing to serve him, as well as to be saved by him; and did serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear, in righteousness and holiness; and this is the rather to be taken into the sense of this passage, because of what follows.

Romans 14:4

Ver. 4. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant,.... This is another reason, dissuading from censoriousness and rash judgment, taken from civil things; one man has nothing to do with another man's servant; he has no power over him, nor any right to call him to an account for his actions; nor has he any business to censure or condemn him for them, or concern himself about them: so the believer supposed to be judged, does not belong to him that takes upon him to judge and condemn him; he is another's servant, he is the servant of God: he is chosen by God the Father for his service, as well as unto salvation; he is bought with the price of Christ's blood, and therefore not his own, nor another's, but Christ's, he is bought with his money; and he is also born in his house, the church; the Spirit of God in regeneration forms him for himself, for righteousness and holiness; under the influence of whose grace he voluntarily gives up himself to the service of God, and is assisted by him to keep his statutes and do them; and what has another to do with him? what power has he over him, or right to judge him?

to his own master he standeth or falleth, the meaning of which is, either if he "stands", that is, if he serves his Lord and master, of which "standing" is expressive; and continues in the service of him, whose servant he professes to be; this is to his master's advantage and profit, and not to another's: and if he "falls", that is, from his obedience to him, as such who profess to be the servants of God may; they may fall off from the doctrine of grace they have embraced; and that either totally and finally, as such do who never felt the power of it in their hearts; or partially, from some degree of steadfastness in the faith: and such also may fall from a lively exercise of the graces of faith, hope, and love, and into great sins, which is to their master's dishonour, and cause his ways and truths to be evil spoken of; and so it is to their own master they fail: or else the sense is, to their own master they are accountable, whether they stand or fall, serve or disobey him; and it is according to his judgment and not another's, that they "stand", or are and will be justified and acquitted, and will hear, well done, good and faithful servant; and according to the same they will "fall", or be condemned, and hear, take the slothful and unprofitable servant, and cast him into outer darkness: so the words "standing" and "failing" are used by the Jews in a forensic sense, for carrying or losing a cause, for justification or condemnation in a court of judicature, and particularly in the last judgment: and so they explain **Ps 1:5**, "the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment": the Targum paraphrases it,

"the wicked shall not be justified in the great day;"

and Jarchi upon the place says, there shall be no lgr tmqh, "standing of the foot" of the wicked, in the day of judgment; see
Lu 21:36.

Yea, ye shall be holden up; which words seem to be a sort of correction of the apostle's, as if he should say, why do I talk of falling, one that is a true servant of the Lord's shall not fall, at least not totally and finally, nor in the last judgment; for he is holden by the right hand of God, by the right hand of his righteousness, and is kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation:

for God is able to make him stand; and will make him stand: words of power oftentimes include willingness as well as ability; see **Jud 5:24**. God will make such to persevere to the end, because he has loved them with an everlasting love, chosen them in Christ, made a covenant with them in him, and has put them into his hands, and made them his care and charge; Christ has redeemed them by his blood, now intercedes, and is making preparations for them in heaven; they are united to him, and are built on him, the sure foundation; and the Spirit of God has begun that good work, which shall be performed. God will make such to stand in judgment with intrepidity, and without shame, being clothed with the righteousness of his Son; and shall therefore have the crown of righteousness given them, and an abundant entrance administered into his kingdom and glory: hence they ought not to be judged by man's judgment, nor need they regard it. The Alexandrian copy reads, "the Lord is able", &c.

Romans 14:5

Ver. 5. One man esteemeth one day above another,.... This is another instance of the difference of sentiments in this church, about the observation of rituals; and is not to be understood of days appointed by the Christian churches for fasting, or abstinence from certain meats, either once a year, as the "Quadragesima", or Lent; or twice a week, as Wednesdays and Fridays; for these are things of much later observation, and which had never been introduced into the church of Rome in the apostle's time; nor were there any disputes about them: much less of days of Heathenish observation, as lucky or unlucky, or festivals in honour of their gods; for the apostle would never say, that a man who regarded such a day, regarded it to the Lord; nor would have advised to a coalition and Christian conversation with such a man, but rather to exclude him from all society and communion: it remains, therefore, that it must be understood of Jewish days, or of such as were appointed to be observed by the Jews under the former dispensation, and which some thought were still to be regarded; wherefore they esteemed some days in the year above others, as the days of unleavened bread, or the passover; particularly the first night, which was a night to be observed throughout their generations; and in their service for it to this day, use these words, twlylh lkm hzh hlylh hntvn hm, "how different is this night from every other night" {n}? and the feast of tabernacles, especially the last and great day of the feast, and the day of Pentecost; also one day in a month above others, the first day of the month, or new moon; and one day in a week, the seventh day sabbath: now there were some, who thought that the laws respecting these days were still in force, particularly the latter, and therefore esteemed it above another: but let it be observed, that the man that did so was one that was weak in faith; the same man that ate herbs, because he would not be guilty of violating those laws, which ordered a distinction of meats to be observed, the same weak man esteemed one day above another, imagining the laws concerning the distinction of days were still obligatory, not rightly understanding the doctrine of Christian liberty, or freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law:

another esteemeth every day alike; that is, one that is strong in faith, and has a greater degree of the knowledge of the Gospel, and of evangelical liberty, knows that the distinction of days, as well as of meats, is taken away, since the word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us, Christ the passover is sacrificed for us, the firstfruits of the Spirit have been received, and light by the church from the sun of righteousness, and Christ the true sabbath and rest is come; and therefore, being firmly persuaded there is no more holiness in days than there is in places, has the same regard for one day as another. The difference between these two lay here, the weak brother regarded a day for the sake of a day, as having by a positive law, he supposed to be in force, a superiority to another, and he regarded worship for the sake of this day; the stronger brother, though he also observed a day for divine worship, which is the Lord's day, since there must be some time for it as well as place, yet he observed the day for the sake of worship, and not worship for the sake of the day:

let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind; this is the advice the apostle gives to both parties; his sense is, that he would have each of them fully enjoy their own principle and practice undisturbed; he would have the weak brother, that esteemed one day above another, indulged in his way, since it arose from weakness, until he had better light, nor should he be despised for his weakness; he would have the stronger Christian also peaceably enjoy his sentiment, and pursue what he believed to be right; nor should he be judged, censured, and condemned, as a profane person, and a transgressor of the law: his counsel is, that they would sit down and carefully examine the word of God, and act according to the best light they should receive from thence; and take care especially, that they did not act contrary to their own consciences, with doubt and hesitation; they ought to be thoroughly satisfied in their own minds, and being so, should content themselves with their different sentiments and practices, without despising or censuring one another.

{n} Haggada Shel Pesach, p. 5.

Romans 14:6

Ver. 6. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord,.... The apostle strengthens the above advice with this reason, because what is done both by one and the other, is done unto the Lord. The weak brother that esteems one day above another, and regards the passover, pentecost, and feast of tabernacles, a new moon, or a seventh day sabbath, does it in obedience to the commands of the Lord, which he thinks are still binding, not knowing that they are disannulled by Christ; and the worship performed by him on any of those days is done in the name and strength of the Lord, with a view to his glory, and as believing it was pleasing in his sight; and whether he is right or wrong, it is to the Lord he does it, and to his own master he stands or falls. The following clause is omitted in the Alexandrian copy and some others, and in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, but is in most Greek copies, and retained in the Syriac and Arabic versions.

And he that regardeth not the day, the Lord he doth not regard it; believing it is the will of the Lord, that all distinction of days should cease; and that the law of commandments contained in ordinances, respecting such Jewish days, is abolished by the Lord Jesus Christ; and that it is to the honour the Lord not to observe them: for to regard the days of the feast of tabernacles, is tacitly to say, that the Word has not tabernacled among us; and to observe he days of the passover, is virtually to deny that our passover is sacrificed for us; and to keep the day of Pentecost, is all one as to affirm, that the firstfruits of the Spirit have not been given; and to regard a new moon, is in effect to say, that the church has not received evangelical light from Christ, the sun of righteousness; and to keep a seventh day sabbath, is a strong insinuation, as if Christ the true sabbath, in whom we have our spiritual and eternal rest, is not come; however, it is to the Lord that the stronger brother and more confirmed believer disregards any of those days; and it is to his own master he stands or falls, nor is he to be judged of man's judgment: and the same is the case of the eater, or non-eater of meats forbidden by the law:

he that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks. The man that is strong in faith, and is fully persuaded by the Lord Jesus that all distinction of meats, as of days, is ceased, eats any thing, and every sort of food, that comes in his way, without making any difference; and when he eats or drinks at any time, it is all to the glory of God; which is a clear case, by his giving God thanks, as becomes him, for the food he eats: he acknowledges that these are the creatures of God, and his gifts to him; he gives him thanks for the right he has given him to eat of them, and for taking away the distinction of meats, and giving him the free use of his creatures; and the more thankful he is when he considers how unworthy he is of the least of these mercies: and

he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth, or, and giveth God thanks. The man that is weak in faith, that eateth not food forbidden by the law, abstains from such food, purely on account of the Lord, in obedience to his will, and with a view to his glory, supposing such a law to be in full force; and is thankful to God for the herbs he allows him to eat, or for other food not forbidden by the law: and therefore since each party shows such a religious concern for the glory of the Lord, the apostle argues they ought to be easy one with another. The Alexandrian copy reads, "and giveth the Lord thanks".

Romans 14:7

Ver. 7. For none of us liveth to himself,.... That is, none of us believers; others may, but these do not, at least they ought not, nor do they when under the influence of the grace of God: they do not live, neither to righteous, nor to sinful self; they do not live upon their duties and services; nor do they ascribe their life, righteousness, and salvation to them; nor do they live to their own lusts, or make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, and much less to the lusts and wills of others:

and no man dieth to himself; every man dies, and must, or undergo a change equivalent to death; believers die as well as others, not eternally, or the second death, but corporeally, or a temporal death, but not to themselves; as they do not seek their own will and pleasure, and profit in life, so neither in death; they do not die to their own advantage only; death is gain unto them, it frees thema from all their sorrows, toil, and labours, and introduces them into the presence of Christ, and the enjoyment of everlasting happiness; but this is not all their death issues in, but also in the glory of Christ: moreover, no man has the power over life or death; as his life is not from himself, he has no power to lengthen or shorten it, nor to hinder or hasten death; this belongs to another Lord and master, whom life and death are both to subserve. This is an illustration of the above reason, by which the apostle confirms his advice.

Romans 14:8

Ver. 8. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord,.... As natural, so spiritual life is derived from the Lord, and believers live by faith upon him, and according to his will revealed in the word; find to his honour and glory; at least they desire so to do:

and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; resigning up life unto him, whenever it is his pleasure; magnifying of him, as by life, so by death; dying to be with him, to be raised again by him, and live with him for evermore; in the faith and hope of this, the believer both lives and dies, and so glorifies Christ both in life and death: hence this conclusion follows,

whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's; by the gift of the Father to him, by his own purchase, and the power of his grace, making them willing to give up themselves to him: and hence it is, that under a sense of this, that they are his, and not their own, nor another's, they do all they do for his glory; whether they observe, or not observe a day, it is to the Lord; whether they eat, or not eat things formerly forbidden, it is to him; and whether they live or die, it is to the Lord, whose they are: and hence also it is, that they are not to be despised and set at nought, or to be judged and censured by one another, since they belong to another master, who is their Lord, and will be their Judge.

Romans 14:9

Ver. 9. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived,.... This last word "revived" is omitted by the Vulgate Latin, but very naturally placed by the Syriac, between Christ's dying and rising. The Alexandrian copy reads, "died and lived": and the Ethiopic version, "died and revived": the end of all which was,

that he might be the Lord both of the dead and living; that is, of believers, whether dead or alive; for though he is Lord of all, as God and Creator, yet his appearing to be Lord by his dying, rising, and living again, can only have respect to them, for whom dying he has abolished death, and destroyed Satan; whom he has redeemed from sin, and delivered from this present evil world; and so having freed them from those other lords which had the dominion over them, shows himself to be their one and only Lord: and by rising again from the dead, ascending to heaven, and sitting at the right hand of God, all creatures and things being subject to him, he is made or declared both Lord and Christ; and living again, and continuing to live for ever, he appears to have the keys of hell and death; and will open the graves, and raise from thence, and judge both quick and dead, those that will be found alive at his coming, and such as he will cause to rise from the dead then; till which time, the apostle suggests, the decision of these differences about meats and days was to be left; and in the mean time the saints were to cultivate peace and love among themselves.

Romans 14:10

Ver. 10. But why dost thou judge thy brother?.... These words are spoken to the man weak in faith, that scrupled eating of certain meats, and chose rather eat none, and live on herbs, and who esteemed one day above another; and was very apt to censure and condemn such as made use of their Christian liberty in these things, though they were brethren, not in a natural or civil, but in a spiritual relation:

or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? these words, on the other hand, are directed to the stronger believer, who believed he might eat all things, and esteemed every day alike; being fully persuaded, that the distinction of meats and of days was now ceased; and such were apt to be puffed up with their superior knowledge and faith, and were ready to treat with an air of contempt those that were weak; showing little or no regard to their peace and edification, though they stood in the same relation to each other. The emphasis lies upon the word "brother", in both branches of the expostulation; and the force of the apostle's reasoning is that they should not judge or despise one another, because they were brethren, stood in the same relation to God and Christ, belonged to the same family, were partakers of the same grace, and had no pre-eminence one over another; they had but one master, and all they were brethren: and which he further enforces with the following reason or argument,

for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; at the last day, when he shall sit on his throne of glory, and all nations shall be gathered before him, and he shall pronounce and execute the decisive sentence on each of them: there is a particular, and a general judgment; a particular judgment at death, when the soul is immediately consigned to bliss or woe; and a general one in the end of time; which may be proved both from reason, as from the relation creatures stand in to God, from the inequality of things in this life, and the conscious fears of men with respect to a future one; and from divine revelation, Christ will be the Judge, he is so appointed by his Father, and is every way fit for it, being God omniscient and omnipotent; and when he shall appear in his glory, he shall sit on his judgment seat, the dead will be raised, the books will be opened, and all shall be summoned to appear before him, of every age and sex, of every rank and degree, and of every character, good or bad: here the saints are particularly designed, "we shall all stand"; whether ministers or private Christians, weak or strong believers; they that are apt to judge, and others that are too ready to despise; they shall all stand before the tribunal of Christ, who is sole Judge, and shall render to every man according to his works, and from whom they shall all receive their sentence. The allusion is to human courts of judicature, in which the judge sits upon a bench, and they that are tried stand before him; see **2Co 5:10**. The Alexandrian copy reads, "the judgment seat of God".

Romans 14:11

Ver. 11. For it is written,.... In Isa 45:23; though Justin Martyr {o} cites a like passage with what follows, as out of Ezekiel 37, but no such words appear there, either in the Hebrew text, or Septuagint version:

as I live, saith the Lord; the form of an oath used often by the Lord; who because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, by his own life; signifying, that what he was about to say, would as surely come to pass, as that he lived; and in the original text in Isaiah it is, "I have sworn by myself"; which being generally expressed, the apostle, perfectly agreeable to the meaning of it, gives the particular form of oath he swore, as in Isa 49:18;

every knee shall bow to me; which is not to be understood literally of bowing of the knee at the name of Jesus, which has no foundation in this, nor in any other passage of Scripture, but figuratively, of the subjection of all creatures to Christ, both voluntary and involuntary. The Complutensian edition adds, "of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth", as in **Php 2:10**, from whence these words seem to be taken:

and every tongue shall confess to God; that is, everyone that has a tongue, every man, be he who he will, a good or a bad man, shall own at the last day, that Christ is God and Lord of all; see **Php 2:10**. It may be asked, how this passage appears to be a proof of what the apostle had asserted, for which purpose it seems to be cited, since here is nothing said of Christ, nor of his judgment seat, nor of all standing before it? to which may be returned, that it is clear from the context in the prophet, that the Messiah is the person speaking, who is said to be a just God and Saviour; and is represented as calling upon, and encouraging all sorts of persons to look to him for salvation; and as he in whom the church expected righteousness and strength, and in whom all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory; and which the Chaldee paraphrase all along interprets of yyd armym, "the Word of the Lord"; the essential Word of God, the true Messiah: moreover, the bowing of the knee, and swearing, or confessing, to him, relate to his lordship and dominion over all; and suppose him as sitting on his throne of glory, as Lord of all, or as a judge on his judgment seat, in a court of judicature, where such like actions as here mentioned are performed; and whereas every knee is to bow, and every tongue to confess to him, which include all mankind, it follows then, that all the saints shall stand before him, bow unto him, own him as their Lord, and be judged by him. Kimchi says {p}, that this shall be Mymyh trxab, "in the last days": and which the apostle rightly refers to the day of the general judgment. This place affords a considerable proof of Christ's true and proper deity, being in the prophet styled "Jehovah", and by the apostle "God"; and such things being ascribed to him, as swearing by himself, which no creature may do, and the subjection and confession of all creatures to him, whether they will or not.

{o} Apolog. 2. pro Christianis, p. 87. {p} In Isa 45:23.

Romans 14:12

Ver. 12. So then everyone of us,.... this is the conclusion, drawn from the foregoing account of things, that there will be a general judgment, that Christ will be Judge, and all must appear at his bar; from whence it necessarily follows, that every man, and so every Christian, strong or weak, whatever may be his gifts, talents, and abilities,

shall give an account of himself to God; that is, to Christ, who is God; which is another proof of his deity, for he will be the Judge, the Father will judge no man; it is before his judgment seat all shall stand; and therefore the account must be given to him by every one, of himself, and not another; of all his thoughts, words, and deeds, which will be all brought into judgment; and of his time and talents, how they have been spent and used; and of all his gifts of nature, providence, and grace, how they have been exercised for the glory of God, his own good, and the good of others: the formal manner in which this will be done is unknown unto us; however, this is certain, that the saints will have upon this reckoning, in what sort soever it may be, a full and open discharge, through the blood and righteousness of Christ. The Jews {q}, say, in much such language as the apostle does, that

"when a man removes out of this world, then hyraml anbvwx
byhy, "he gives an account to his Lord", of all that he has done in the world."

{q} Zohar in Gen. fol. 49. 3.

Romans 14:13

Ver. 13. Let us not therefore judge one another more,.... With respect to the observance or non-observance of the laws relating to meats and drinks, and days, and times; the apostle means, that they should not judge rashly, nor anything before the time; they should not censure and judge each other's characters and states, on account of these things, but leave all to the decisive day, to Christ the Judge, and to his bar, before which all must stand:

but judge this rather; or reckon this to be the most proper, fit, and advisable:

that no man put a stumblingblock or occasion to fall in his brother's way; as in the former part of the advice the apostle seems to have respect more especially to the weak brethren, who were ready to judge and condemn such as neglected the observance of the laws about meats and days, as transgressors, and as wicked persons, that ought not to be in the communion of the church; so in this he seems more principally to have regard to the stronger brethren; who, through their imprudent use of their Christian liberty, offended weaker minds, and were the occasion of their stumbling and falling, which it became them to be careful to prevent; and rather than be a means of anything of this nature, it was much better, as he afterwards observes, neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, and entirely drop or forego the use of their liberty.

Romans 14:14

Ver. 14. I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus,.... As for the apostle's own sense and judgment about the distinction of meats, it was this,

that there is nothing unclean of itself; that every creature, as originally made by God, is good; that what is eatable, or fit for food, may be eaten, whatever the Mosaic laws, being now abrogated, say to the contrary; and that whatever physical or natural difference there may be between the creatures of God, one being naturally fit for food, and another not; yet there is no moral distinction between them, there is nothing in any of them that can morally defile a man by eating them; nor indeed is there now any ceremonial distinction between them, and so no ceremonial pollution by them. This was not a bare conjecture, nor a mere opinion, but a point of certain knowledge, a matter of faith, and of full assurance of faith; the apostle was thoroughly persuaded of the truth of it, and had not the least doubt nor difficulty in his mind about it; he was as fully assured of it, as he was of his salvation by Christ, and of his interest in the love of God, from which he could never be separated, and therefore expresses it in language equally as strong; and this he came to the knowledge and persuasion of, "by the Lord Jesus"; by his express words, Mt 15:11; or by a revelation from him, in which way he had the whole Gospel: he might be informed of this matter in like manner as Peter was, by a vision from heaven, Ac 10:10, or he knew this through the abrogation of the whole ceremonial law by Christ, who abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances, and so these laws relating to the difference of meats among the rest; and he knew, that all the creatures in their original creation were good, and though cursed, for man's sake yet Christ had removed the curse, and sanctified them for the use of his people, who, under the Gospel dispensation, might make use of them at pleasure, without distinction: and the Jews themselves own, that what before was unclean, shall in the days of the Messiah be clean: so they explain Ps 146:7; "the Lord looseth the prisoners", which they would render, "the Lord looseth that which was forbidden"; and give this as the sense {r}

"every beast which was unclean in this world (the Jewish state), awbl dytel htwa rhjm hb"h, "God will cleanse it in the time to come" (in the times of the Messiah), when they shall be clean as at the first, to the sons of Noah."

So they observe, that the Hebrew word for a hog, ryzx, comes from rzx, which signifies to return; because, say they {s}, hereafter God will cause it to return to the Israelites; and even now, as formerly, they allow of eating anything that is torn, or dies of itself, or hog's flesh to an army entering into a Gentile country, and subduing it, where they can find nothing else {t}:

but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean; such a man that thinks the laws concerning clean and unclean meats are still in force, and binding upon him, ought to refrain from eating them; because he would act contrary to his conscience, and so violate and defile it; wherefore though the apostle was so fully satisfied in his own, mind, yet he would not have weak and scrupulous consciences do themselves any hurt through his faith; for if they ate doubtingly, and without faith, it was an evil. Capellus {u} mentions a rule laid down by the Jews, but does not direct where it is to be found, nor have I yet met with it, very agreeable to this of the apostle's, which runs thus:

"this is the grand general rule in the law, that every thing which thou dost not know, rwoa Kyle rwoa wa rtwm awh Ma, "whether it is lawful or unlawful, to thee it is unlawful", until thou hast asked a wise men concerning who may teach thee that it is lawful."

{r} Bereshit Rabba in Maji Synops. Jud. Theolog. p. 224. R. Moses Hadarsan in Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 11. c. 12. p. 699. {s} Abarbinel. Rosh

Amana, c. 13. fol. 18. 2. {t} Maimon. Hilch. Melacim, c. 8. sect. 1. {u} In loc.

Romans 14:15

Ver. 15. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat,.... The apostle proceeds to give reasons why, though he was so fully persuaded that nothing was unclean of itself, and so he, and any other of the same persuasion, might lawfully eat anything; yet they should forbear, and not make use of this liberty; because if a brother should be grieved by it, that is, either should be concerned and troubled at it inwardly, both because the person that eats is thought by him to have transgressed a command of God, and because he himself is not only despised as a weak brother, but as if he was a "judaizing" Christian, and walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel; or else should be emboldened thereby to eat, and so wound and defile his weak conscience; or be so galled and offended at it, as to stumble and fall off from his profession of Christianity, and withdraw his communion, as judging there is nothing in it, no regard being had to the law of God:

now walkest thou not charitably; this is a breach of the rule of charity or brotherly love; such an one is a brother, and though a weak one, yet he is to be loved as a brother, and to be charitably walked with: true charity, or love, vaunts not itself over, nor is it puffed up against a weak brother; nor is it unconcerned for his peace, but bears with his weaknesses, and forbears the use of things grieving to him:

destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. This is to be understood, not of eternal destruction, that can never be thought to be either in the will or power of any man; such a degree of malice can never arise in the heart of any, to wish for, desire, or take any step towards the eternal damnation of another; and could any thing of this kind be among the men of the world, yet surely not among brethren of the same faith, and in the same church state; and were there any so wicked as to desire this, yet it is not in their power to compass it, for none can destroy eternally but God; see
Mt 10:28; besides, it is not reasonable to suppose, that eternal damnation should follow upon eating things indifferent, or be caused by an offence either given or taken through them; moreover, though such as only think themselves, or profess themselves, or are only thought by others to be such, for whom Christ died, may be eternally destroyed, yet none of those can, for whom Christ really died; for they are his special people, his peculiar friends, his own sheep, his body the church, which can never perish; and he, by dying, has

procured such blessings for them, such as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, peace with God, and eternal life, which will for ever secure them from destruction: besides, should anyone of them be destroyed, the death of Christ would be so far in vain, nor would it appear to be a sufficient security from condemnation, nor a full satisfaction to the justice of God; or God must be unjust, to punish twice for the same fault: but this is to be understood of the destruction of such a man's peace and comfort, which is signified by grieving, stumbling, offending, and making him weak; and the words are a fresh reason, why they that are strong in the faith of Christian liberty, should nevertheless forbear the use of it, to preserve the peace of a weak brother; which is a matter of importance, and the rather to be attended to, since it is the peace of one that belongs to Christ, whom he has so loved as to die for, and therefore should be the object of the regard and affections of such as believe in Christ and love him.

Romans 14:16

Ver. 16. Let not then your good be evil spoken of. The Vulgate Latin reads it, "our good", and so the Syriac version; the sense is the same, and to be understood either of the Gospel in general, which is good in its author, matter, effects, and consequences; is good tidings of good things, and which might be blasphemed by the men of the world, on account of the divisions and contentions among the professors of it, about such little trivial things, as eating this or the other sort of food; and therefore care should be taken, that it be not evil spoken of through such conduct: or else the doctrine of Christian liberty in particular, which is a good thing; Christ has procured it, and bestows it upon his people; it is a valuable blessing in itself, and is attended and followed with many considerable privileges and immunities; but may be evil spoken of by those, who do not so well understand it, through an imprudent use of it by those who do; and who therefore should guard against any reproach that may be cast upon it; and rather than this should be the case, forego the use of it, in things of an indifferent nature; see 1Co 10:30; so that this is another of the apostle's reasons, why though nothing is of itself unclean, yet it should be abstained from on account of others.

Romans 14:17

Ver. 17. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink,.... Neither the kingdom of glory, nor the ultimate glory and happiness of the saints in the other world, is attained to by any such things; for neither eating and drinking, nor not eating and drinking, can recommend to the divine favour, or give a meetness for heaven, or a right unto it; see **1Co 8:8**, nor does the kingdom of grace, the principle of grace, lie in such things, nor in anything that is external; nor does the Gospel, or Gospel church state, which frequently go under this name of the kingdom of God, consist of such things as the ceremonial and the legal dispensation did, but the Gospel and the dispensation of grace are opposed unto them; see **Heb 9:10**.

But righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The kingdom of glory, which is the kingdom of God, because of his preparing, giving, calling to, and putting into the possession of, is attained unto by righteousness; not the righteousness of men, but the righteousness of Christ imputed by God, and received by faith; and through peace made by the blood of Christ, and rejoicing in him, without having any confidence in the flesh, which is a branch of the Spirit's grace in regeneration. The kingdom of grace, or the governing principle of grace in the soul, and which is of God's implanting there, lies in righteousness and true holiness, in which the new man is created; in truth and uprightness in the inward parts, where the laws of God are put and written; and in peace of conscience, arising from the blood and righteousness of Christ; and in that spiritual joy and comfort the Holy Ghost produces, by leading to a sight of Christ, and an interest in him and his atonement. The Gospel, which gives an account both of the kingdom of grace and of glory, reveals the righteousness of Christ, and teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world: it is a publication of peace by the blood of Christ; it calls men to peace, to cultivate peace one among another, and to seek those things which make for it; and when it comes in power, is attended with joy in the Holy Ghost, and is the means of increasing it; and this is another reason, persuading to Christian forbearance, in the use of things indifferent.

Romans 14:18

Ver. 18. For he that in these things serveth Christ,.... That is, in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; he whose faith is an obedient one, and embraces these things, and from the heart obeys them; who seeks righteousness alone by Christ, and peace and pardon through his blood; who rejoices in Christ Jesus, and puts no trust in the flesh, in moral duties or ceremonial services; and who, from principles of grace, serves Christ in a way of righteousness, wherein he possesses true peace of conscience, and abundance of spiritual joy and comfort: the Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "in this thing"; as if it referred only to the right use of Christian liberty, about things indifferent: such an one

is acceptable to God; in Christ the beloved, in whom he believes, from whom he derives all his peace, joy, and comfort; and whom he serves in righteousness and holiness, and through whom also all his services are acceptable unto God:

and approved of men; of good men, of such that can discern things that differ, and approve those that are excellent; and even of bad men, for such who live honestly and uprightly, who cultivate peace and friendship among men, and carry themselves cheerfully and civilly to all men, cannot but be approved of by the generality of them, though they may dislike them on other accounts.

Romans 14:19

Ver. 19. Let us therefore follow after the things, Since the kingdom of God is in part peace, and the man that serves Christ in this, as in other things, is accepted with God, and grateful to men, the apostle very pertinently exhorts to seek after such things,

which make for peace: not with God, for, for a sinful creature to make peace with God is impracticable and impossible, nor is there any exhortation to it in all the word of God; and if there was, it would be unnecessary here; since the persons here exhorted were such for whom peace with God was made by Christ, and who had a clear and comfortable sense of it in their own souls; and besides, for any to be put upon, or to attempt to make their peace with God, must highly reflect upon the methods of God's grace, in reconciling sinners to himself; and be injurious to the blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction of Christ, by which only peace is made: but the apostle means, either what makes for a man's own peace, or for the peace of others; the things which make for a man's own peace in his own conscience distressed with sin, are looking to, and dealing with the blood of Christ, which speaks peace and pardon; and the righteousness of Christ, which being apprehended by faith, a soul has peace with God through Christ; and also an embracing the Gospel, and the truths of it, which direct to Christ, which publish peace, and are the means of increasing and establishing a solid and well grounded peace, on the free grace of God and merits of Christ: attending on ordinances, and exercising a conscience void of offence towards God and men, are means of continuing and promoting a man's peace; he enjoys peace in them, though he do not derive it from them; yea, in the peace of others, is a man's own peace; and this is what is chiefly meant, a pursuing of things which make for the peace of others; of all men, and especially of saints; this is what should be eagerly followed after, closely pursued, and all ways and means should be made use of, to promote and secure it: this is the will of God; it is well pleasing to Christ, and a fruit of the Spirit; it is one part of the Gospel dispensation; church fellowship cannot be profitable and pleasant without it; it suits with the character of saints, who are sons of peace; and agrees with their privileges they enjoy, or have a right unto, as spiritual peace here, and eternal peace hereafter;

and things wherewith one may edify another. The church is often compared to a building, to a temple, a city, an house, and saints are the materials thereof; who are capable of being edified, or built up, yet more and more, both by words and by deeds; by words, by the ministry of the word, which is set up and continued among other things, for the edifying of the body of Christ; by praying with, and for each other; and by Christian conversation, about the experience of the grace of God, and doctrines of the Gospel, whereby saints may be useful in building up one another in their most holy faith; and so likewise by avoiding all filthy, frothy, and corrupt communication; all angry words and wrathful expressions, which tend not to profit, and are not for the use of edifying, but the contrary: moreover, edification is promoted by deeds, by acts of charity, or love; for charity edifies not by bare words but by loving in deed and in truth, by serving one another in love; for the spiritual body of Christ his church, makes increase unto the edifying of itself in love; and also by laying aside the use of things indifferent, when disagreeable to any of the brethren; for though all things may be lawful to be done by us, yet all things do not edify the brethren; and things which make for the edification of the body, as well as our own, are diligently to be sought after. The Vulgate Latin version, and some copies, read, "let us keep", or "observe those things wherewith one may edify another".

Romans 14:20

Ver. 20. For meat destroy not the work of God,.... The Syriac reads it, "the works of God"; referring either to righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, of which the kingdom of God consists; or to the weak brother, who both as a creature, and as a new creature, is the workmanship of God; and to the good work of grace, the work of faith upon his soul, which is the work of God; or rather to his peace, and the peace of the church of Christ, which is both the will and work of God; peace is what he calls his people to, and what he himself is the author of; and may be destroyed, and sometimes is, by trifling things; whereas a true believer, though ever so weak, cannot be destroyed, nor the good work of God upon his soul be lost, nor any part of it; not the work of faith, which Christ prays for that it fail not, and is both the author and finisher of; but the work of peace and edification in particular persons, and in a church, may be destroyed, but it is pity it should, by so small a matter, so trivial a thing as meat, or the use of anything that is indifferent:

all things indeed are pure. The Ethiopic version adds, "to the pure"; to them that have pure consciences, sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and have no doubt or scruple about eating things indifferent; but this addition seems to be taken out of **Tit 1:15**; though it may serve to explain the sense, which is, that all sorts of food, without any distinction, may be eaten; there is nothing common or unclean, every creature in itself is good, and every Christian may lawfully eat thereof, with moderation and thankfulness. This is a concession which stands thus corrected and restrained,

but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. The Arabic version adds, "of his neighbour"; which is a good interpretation of the passage; for the apostle means not with offence to a man's own conscience, though so to eat is an evil too, but with offence to a fellow Christian; it is not an evil in itself to eat, but when this circumstance of offending another thereby attends it; it is evil, though not in itself, yet in its consequences; it offends a weak brother, displeases Christ, who would not have one of his little ones offended, and brings a woe upon the person by whom the offence comes. The Ethiopic version reads, "who eats inordinately"; which to be sure is sinful, but is not the meaning here.

Romans 14:21

Ver. 21. It is good neither to eat flesh,.... Any sort of flesh, even that which is not forbidden in the law, rather than offend a weak brother; and the apostle determines for himself, that he would not, where there was any danger of doing this, **1Co 8:13**.

Nor to drink wine; not only the wine of libations to Heathen deities, but wine in common; which was not prohibited by the law of Moses, but in the case of a Nazarite, and of vows:

nor anything, be it what it will,

whereby thy brother stumbleth. The Syriac version reads, "our brother"; anyone that stands in such a spiritual relation to any of us; and for which reason care should be taken, that no stumblingblock, or occasion to fall, should be put in his way; particularly that Christian liberty in things indifferent be not unseasonably and imprudently used, and so become a means of stumbling and staggering to weak minds:

or is offended; to that degree, as to censure and judge him that eats, as an impious person, and a transgressor of the law; with whom he cannot keep his communion, but withdraws himself from it, and is even tempted to drop his profession of the Christian religion entirely, being ready to think it is not right, since contrary to the law of Moses:

or is made weak; more weak in the faith than he was before, and his love is weakened and grows very cold and indifferent to his Christian brethren, that can take and use a liberty which he cannot. These two last phrases are not in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, nor in the Alexandrian copy, though in others, and are used for the sake of explanation and amplification.

Romans 14:22

Ver. 22. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God,.... Which is to be understood, not of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the doctrines of the Gospel; for a man that has such faith given him, ought not to keep it in his own breast, but to declare it to others; he ought to make a public visible profession of it, before many witnesses; it becomes him to tell the church of God what great things the Lord has done for him; and as he believes with the heart, so he ought to make confession with the mouth unto salvation; but this faith only designs a full persuasion in a man's own mind, about the free and lawful use of things indifferent, the subject the apostle is upon; see Ro 14:5; and his advice on this head is, to keep this faith and persuasion in a man's own breast, and not divulge it to others, where there is danger of scandal and offence: he does not advise such to alter their minds, change their sentiments, or cast away their faith, which was right and agreeable to his own, but to have it, hold and keep it, though, within themselves; he would not have them openly declare it, and publicly make use of it, since it might be grieving and distressing to weak minds; but in private, and where there was no danger of giving offence, they might both speak of it, and use it; and if they could not, should satisfy themselves that God, who sees in secret, knows they have this faith, and sees their use of it, though others do not, for from him they have it; so the Ethiopic version reads it, and "if thou hast faith with thyself, thou art secure before God, from whom thou hast obtained it"; and should be thankful to him for it, and use it in such a manner as makes most for his glory, and the peace of his church since to him they must give an account another day: some copies and versions read without an interrogation, thou hast faith; and others, "thou, the faith which thou hast, have it to thyself", &c. so the Alexandrian copy and the Syriac version.

Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth; or "approves of"; that is, it is well for that man who observes no difference of meats, if either he does not act contrary to his own conscience, and so condemns himself in what he allows himself in; or exposes himself to the censure, judgment, and condemnation of others, in doing that which he approves of as lawful, and is so, but unlawful when done to the offence of others: some understand this as spoken to the weak believer, signifying that he is in the right, who, through example, and the force of the sensual appetite, is not prevailed upon to allow himself to eat, contrary to his own conscience, and whereby he would be self-condemned; but as the strong believer is addressed in the beginning of the verse, I choose to think he is intended in this part of it; and the rather, because the weak believer is taken notice of in the next verse, with a peculiar view to this very thing.

Romans 14:23

Ver. 23. And he that doubteth,.... Or makes a difference between meats and meats, or is in suspense whether any difference should be observed or not,

is damned; not with everlasting damnation, which is not the consequent of, nor connected with such an action, as eating of a thing indifferent, with a scrupulous conscience; but such an one is condemned in his own conscience; he is self-condemned, his conscience condemns him for what he himself does; and he is self-condemned in judging and censuring others, for the same things: so the Syriac renders it, hl byyxta, "he becomes guilty", or he contracts guilt to himself, or is self-condemned; and so the Arabic, "he is already condemned",

because [he eateth] not of faith: or of a full persuasion in his own mind that he is right in eating; he halts between two opinions, and is doubtful in his own mind what is best to do, and therefore, whilst this is his case, he ought to refrain:

for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. This is a general rule, or axiom, which is not only applicable to the present case, but to any other, whether of a natural, civil, moral, or evangelic kind: "whatsoever does not spring from faith", as the Arabic version renders it, cannot be excused of sin; whatever is not agreeable to the word and doctrine of faith, ought not to be done; whatever is done without faith, or not in the exercise of it, is culpable, for without faith nothing can be pleasing to God; and whatever is contrary to the persuasion of a man's own mind, is so far criminal, as it is a violation of his conscience; whatever men do, especially in a religious way, they ought to make faith of it, or to be fully persuaded of it in their own minds, or they act amiss: in the Arabic version, the Complutensian edition, the Alexandrian copy, and some others, Ro 16:25, "now to him that is of power", &c. are here added; which have induced some to think, that the apostle intended to have finished his epistle here; but having more time, and other things occurred to write of, he proceeded.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 15

The apostle in this chapter pursues his exhortation to mutual affection and forbearance, notwithstanding their different sentiments about the use of meats, and observation of days; excuses his writing so freely to them, which they might bear with, in consideration of his being an apostle, especially an apostle of the Gentiles, and which office he magnified and fulfilled everywhere; gives them the reasons why he had not as yet been with them though he greatly desired it, encourages them to expect, a visit from him; and concludes with earnestly entreating them that he might have a share in their prayers: and first, as an inference from what he had said in the preceding chapter, he lays it down as a duty incumbent on himself, and all that were strong in the doctrine of Christian liberty, to bear with the infirmities of weak Christians, and not please themselves, but others, Ro 15:1, which he enforces, from the usefulness of it, it being for the good and edification of others, Ro 15:2, and from the example of Christ, who pleased not himself, Ro 15:3, and which is proved from a passage of Scripture in Ps 69:9, the pertinency of which passage, and the citation and application of it to Christ and the present case, are vindicated from this consideration, that whatever was written in former times, was for the use of the saints under the Gospel dispensation, Ro 15:4, and that the exhortation might

have its effect upon them, be puts up a prayer to God for them, that such a temper of mind might be in them, which would be for the glory of God, Ro 15:5, and then he repeats his exhortation, Ro 15:7, that they would affectionately receive one another; which he urges by the example of Christ, who had received them to the glory of God; and that they might glorify him, and this was one way of doing it: and that this argument might have the greater weight with both parties, he observes, that Jesus Christ had a special regard to the Jews, and was their minister, sent unto them to fulfil the promises made unto their fathers, and had received them; and therefore though they were weak, they were not to be despised, grieved, and offended, Ro 15:8, and as for the Gentiles, it was a clear case that God had had long ago a design of mercy to them, and that they were to be, and were now received by Christ, and so under obligation to glorify God for his mercy; and therefore not to be judged and condemned, though they did not conform to the ceremonial law; and this he proves in Ro 15:9, from several passages of Scripture in Ps 18:49, and closes this argument he had so long insisted on with a prayer to God for them, that they might be in the exercise of faith and hope; and, in the exercise of those graces, be filled with joy and peace, Ro 15:13, and in order to prevent an objection that might be made to these prayers and exhortations of his, that they suggested that they were wicked and ignorant men, devoid of affection, and knew not how to behave to each other, nor to exhort one another, the apostle softens such a resentment, by calling them brethren, and by expressing his persuasion of their abundant goodness, knowledge, and abilities, Ro 15:14, and excuses the freedom he took with them by observing, that he only acted the part of a monitor, Ro 15:15, and the rather this freedom might be allowed him, on account of the great gifts bestowed upon him, qualifying him to be an apostle of Christ; and especially as he was an apostle of the Gentiles and so their apostle,
Ro 15:16, and on account of his office, gifts, and usefulness, he had reason to glory; though through Christ only, and in things relating to God, and not himself, Ro 15:17, when he takes an occasion to enlarge on his ministry, and magnify his office; partly from the end and success of it, bringing the Gentiles to the obedience of Christ,
Ro 15:18, and partly from the means and causes of such success the preaching of the word, working miracles, and the power of the Holy Ghost; and from the extent of it, reaching from Jerusalem to Illyricum,
Ro 15:19, and from the difficulty which attended it, he preaching in places where the Gospel was never preached before, and which he chose to do, Ro 15:20, and which was necessary to be done, according to a prophecy in Isa 52:15, which he cites, Ro 15:21, and observes, that it was his preaching in these many and distant parts that was the reason of his not having been with

the saints at Rome,
Ro 15:22, but now gives them reason to expect his coming; partly because he had finished his travels in those countries, and partly because of the vehement desire he had to see them, Ro 15:23, and besides, an opportunity seemed to be offering, he intending to take a journey to Spain, when it would lie in his way to come to Rome, and be for his advantage, Ro 15:24, in the mean while he informs them what he was engaged in, to carry the contribution of the Macedonian and Asian churches to Jerusalem, for the poor saints there, Ro 15:25, on which contributions he enlarges, showing not only who made them, and for whom, but the source and spring of them, they arose from their good will and pleasure, Ro 15:26, and yet they were debtors, and under obligation to do what they did; it was but a piece of justice and equity, since those churches had received of the spiritual things of the Jews, Ro 15:27, and as for his coming to them, he acquaints them of the time that it would be, when he had finished the above service and labour of love, and when he should come into Spain, as he had before signified, Ro 15:28, and of the manner in which he should come, of which he was fully persuaded, as that it would be with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, Ro 15:29, and then with great importunity desires them to pray for him, and that very earnestly, Ro 15:30, particularly that he might be delivered from his enemies in Judea, and that the saints there would accept of what he brought them from the Gentiles, Ro 15:31, and that, if it was the will of God, he might come to them and be refreshed with them,
Ro 15:32, and then closes the chapter with a salutation of them, or a wish that the God of peace might be with them, Ro 15:33.

Ver. 1. We then that are strong,.... Meaning not only ministers of the Gospel, who are men of strong parts, great abilities, mighty in the Scriptures, valiant for the truth on earth, and pillars in God's house; for though the apostle includes himself, yet not merely as such, but as expressing it to be his duty in common with other Christians; and the rather he does this, to engage them to the practice of it: but the stronger and more knowing part of private Christians are here intended; the Apostle John's young men, who are strong, in distinction from little children, or new born babes, that are at present weaklings; and from fathers who are on the decline of life, and just going off the stage; see **1Jo 2:12**; when these young men are in the bloom and flower of a profession, in the prime of their judgment, and exercise of grace; who are strong in Christ, and not in themselves, in the grace that is in him, out of which they continually receive; who are strong in the grace of faith, and are established and settled in the doctrine of it; and have a large and extensive knowledge of the several truths of the Gospel; and, among the rest, of that of Christian liberty:

ought to bear the infirmities of the weak; of them that are weak in faith and knowledge, particularly in the knowledge of their freedom from Mosaical observances: their "infirmities" are partly their ignorance, mistakes, and errors, about things indifferent; which they consider and insist on, and would impose upon others, as necessary and obliging; and partly the peevishness and moroseness which they show, the hard words they give, and the rash judgment and rigid censures they pass on their brethren, that differ from them: such persons and their infirmities are to be borne with; they are not to be despised for their weakness; and if in the church, are not to be excluded for their mistakes; and if not members, are not to be refused on account of them; since they arise from weakness, and are not subversive of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel: they are not to be treated as wicked men, but as weak brethren; and their peevish tempers, morose dispositions and conduct, their hard speeches and censorious expressions, are patiently to be endured; they should be considered as from whence they arise, not from malice and ill will, from a malignant spirit, but from weakness and misguided zeal, for what they take to be in force, when it is abolished: moreover, they are to be complied with in cases not sinful, as the apostle did in circumcising Timothy, Ac 16:3, and purifying himself according to the law, Ac 21:26; and so to the weak he became weak, to gain some, **1Co 9:22**, and therefore could urge this exhortation by his own example with greater force; and which he represents, not only as what would be honourable, and a point of good nature, and as doing a kind action, but as what "ought" to be; what the law of love obliges to, and what the grace of love, which "bears all things", 1Co 13:7, constrains unto; and which indeed if not done, they that are strong do not answer one end of their having that spiritual strength they have; and it is but complying with the golden rule of Christ, to do as we would be done by, **Mt 7:12**:

and not please ourselves: either entertain pleasing thoughts of, and make pleasing reflections on their stronger faith, greater degree of knowledge, superior light and understanding; which being indulged, are apt to excite and encourage spiritual pride and vanity, and generally issue in the contempt of weaker brethren; nor do those things, which are pleasing and grateful to themselves, to the offence and detriment of others; for instance, and which is what the apostle has reference to, to gratify their appetite, by eating such meat as is forbidden by the law of Moses, to the grieving of the weak brethren, wounding their consciences, and destroying their peace; these things should not be done; stronger Christians should deny themselves the use of their Christian liberty in things indifferent, when they cannot make use of it without offence.

Romans 15:2

Ver. 2. Let everyone of us please his neighbour,.... Every man, particularly his Christian friend and brother, whom he should seek to please in all things, and by all means lawful; he should carry it affably and courteously, should make himself agreeable to him; should condescend and accommodate himself to his weakness, and bear his infirmities, and deny himself rather than displease him. The Vulgate Latin version and some copies read, "let everyone of you"; but the other reading is preferable, and best agrees with the context, Ro 15:1.

For his good; or as the Syriac renders it, atbjb, "in good things"; for he is not to be pleased, gratified, and indulged, in any thing that is evil: we are not to please any man in anything that is contrary to the Gospel of Christ, for then we should not be faithful servants of his; nor in anything repugnant to the commands of God, and ordinances of Christ, who are to be obeyed and pleased, rather than men; nor in anything that is of an immoral nature, we are not to comply with, though it may be to the displeasure of the dearest relation and friend; but in everything that is naturally, civilly, morally, or evangelically good, we should study to please them; and in whatsoever may be for their good, temporal, spiritual, or eternal: and

to edification: of our neighbour, brother, and Christian friend, for the establishment of his peace, the increase of his spiritual light, and the building of him up in his most holy faith; and also of the whole community, or church, to which each belong, whose peace and edification should be consulted, and everything done, which may promote and secure it; and among which this is one, every man to please his neighbour, in things lawful and laudable.

Romans 15:3

Ver. 3. For even Christ pleased not himself,.... He sought not his own ease, pleasure, profit, honour, and glory, but to do his Father's will and work, **Joh 4:34**; and he always did the things which pleased him, in his obedience, sufferings, and death; and sought not his own, but his glory: moreover, what he did and suffered were not for himself, but for us; he became incarnate for us; he obeyed, suffered, and died for us; he came not to be ministered to, to be attended upon as an earthly prince, enjoying his own ease and pleasure, things grateful to nature, but to minister to others, Mt 20:28; hence he appeared in the form of a servant, did the work of one in life, and at last became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, **Php 2:7**: not but that he was well pleased in doing and suffering all this; it was his delight to do the will of God: it was his meat and drink to finish his work; yea, that part of it which was most disagreeable to flesh and blood, was most earnestly desired by him, even the baptism of his sufferings; and in the view of the salvation of his people, and of enjoying their company with him to all eternity, he endured the cross patiently, and despised the shame with pleasure, Heb 12:2: but then he met with many things which were far from being grateful to human nature; such as the hardness and unbelief of the Jews, with which he was grieved, their scoffs and insults, reproaches and jeers; the ignorance, frowardness, and moroseness of his own disciples, whose infirmities he bore; and at last the sufferings of death, that bitter cup, which he as man desired might pass from him; but, however, he submitted to his Father's will, Mt 26:39; all which prove what the apostle here affirms. This instance of Christ, the man of God's right hand, the son of man, whom he has made strong for himself, the head of the church, the leader and commander of the people, bearing the infirmities of the weak, and not pleasing himself, is very pertinently produced, to enforce the above exhortations; who is an example to his people in the exercise of every grace, and the discharge of every duty; as in beneficence, forgiving of injuries, mutual love, meekness and humility, suffering of afflictions, and patience. The proof of it follows,

but as it is written, in Ps 69:9;

the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me; which are the words of Christ unto his Father, as the whole psalm is to be understood not of David, but of the Messiah, as is clear from the citations out of it, and references to it in the New Testament; see **Joh 2:17**, compared with Ps 69:9, and the meaning of them is, either that the reproaches which were cast on the house, worship, and ordinances of God, affected Christ as much as if they had been cast upon himself; which stirred up his zeal to take the method he did, to show his resentment at such indignities; see **Joh 2:15**, or that the same persons by whom the name of God was blasphemed, his sanctuary polluted, and his ordinances reproached, also reproached him; and he bore in his bosom the reproach of all the mighty people, which were in great plenty poured upon him; they reproached him with being a glutton, a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, Mt 11:19; they said he was a Samaritan, and had a devil, **Joh 8:48**: charged him with blasphemy and sedition, Mt 26:65; and when on the cross, mocked, reviled, and wagged their heads at him, Mt 27:39; all which he bore patiently, and reviled not again: moreover, by "reproaches" may be meant the sins of his people, by which the name of God was blasphemed, his law trampled upon with contempt, and the perfections of his nature, as his justice and holiness, dishonoured; and which fell upon Christ, not by chance, but by the appointment of God, and according to his own voluntary agreement; and which he bore in his own body, and made satisfaction for; which though he did willingly, in order to obtain some valuable ends, the salvation of his people, and the glorifying of the divine perfections, the honouring of the law, and satisfying of justice, yet the bearing of them, in itself, could not be grateful to him as such; neither the charge of sin, nor the weight of punishment; and in this respect he pleased not himself, or did that which was grateful to his pure and holy nature.

Romans 15:4

Ver. 4. For whatsoever things were written aforetime,.... In the books of the Old Testament; the apostle says this, to vindicate the pertinency of the above citation, and to prevent any objection that might be made against it; since whatsoever was written in that psalm did not belong personally to David, but to Christ; and what is written concerning him, is designed for the use and instruction of his people; yea, whatever is written anywhere in the sacred Scriptures,

were written for our learning; to instruct in the knowledge of Christ, of his person, offices, grace, righteousness, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension; and of the great salvation and redemption he came to obtain, and has obtained; and to teach us the doctrines of grace, of pardon through the blood of Christ, atonement by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, acceptance in his person, and eternal life through him; as also to inform us of our duty, and how we ought to behave both towards God and men:

that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope; the Scriptures are not only written for our present instruction, but for the ingenerating, encouraging, and establishing, an hope of eternal Life in another world; which they are the means of, under the influence of divine grace; since they give us a clear account of eternal life; of the promise of it in Christ; of its being procured by him, and secured in him; of the means of enjoying it, through his blood and righteousness; of the declarations of God's free grace and mercy to sinners, and of the various instances of persons who have been made partakers of it; all which encourage to hope in the Lord, and to rejoice in hope of the glory of God; believing we also may have and enjoy the thing hoped for, "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures"; both which are encouraged thereby: the "patience of the Scriptures" is not a stoical apathy, a stupid indolence; and is of a different kind from that patience the writings of the Heathen philosophers define and recommend: the Scripture gives an account of the true nature of patience, in bearing all sorts of evils for Christ's sake; of the excellency and usefulness of it; and do strongly exhort unto it upon the best principles, and with the best motives; and are full of promises to the exercise of it, and furnish out the best examples of suffering affliction, and patience: "the comfort of the Scriptures" is such as is not to be met with elsewhere. These writings abound with exceeding great and precious promises, and excellent doctrines, big with consolation to the saints; and both serve much to cherish, support, and maintain an hope of eternal happiness; all which prove the divine authority, excellency, and usefulness of the sacred writings, and recommend the reading of them by us, and the hearing of them explained by others.

Romans 15:5

Ver. 5. Now the God of patience and consolation,.... These titles and characters of God are manifestly used on account of what is before said concerning the Scriptures, and to show, that the efficacy and usefulness of them, in producing and promoting patience and comfort, entirely depend upon God the author of them: from exhorting, the apostle proceeds to petitioning; well knowing that all his exhortations would be of no avail without the power of divine grace accompanying them. The words are a prayer. The object addressed is described as "the God of patience", because he is the author and giver of that grace: it is a fruit of his Spirit, produced by the means of his word, called the word of his patience. The Heathens themselves were so sensible that this is a divine blessing, that they call patience yewn eurhma, "the invention of the gods" {w}. God is the great pattern and exemplar of patience; he is patient himself, and bears much and long with the children of men; with wicked men, whose patient forbearance and longsuffering being despised by them, will be an aggravation of their damnation; but his longsuffering towards his elect issues in their salvation: he waits to be gracious to them before conversion, and after it bears with their infirmities, heals their backslidings, forgives their iniquities, patiently hears their cues, requests, and complaints, relieves and supports them, and carries them even to hoary hairs; and is in all a pattern to be imitated by his people. He is also the object of this grace; he it is on whom and for whom saints should and do patiently wait, until he is pleased to manifest himself, and communicate to them for the supply of their wants of every sort; and upon whose account and for whose sake they patiently suffer reproach and persecution; the exercise of patience is what he requires, and calls for, and is very grateful and well pleasing to him; to all which add, that he it is who strengthens to the exercise of it, and increases it; and which he does sometimes by tribulation; faith and other graces, being thereby tried, produce patience; and which at length, through divine grace, has its perfect work. Moreover, the object of prayer is described, as "the God of consolation"; all true, real, solid comfort springs from him, which he communicates by his son, the consolation of Israel; by his Spirit, the comforter; by his word, the doctrines and promises of which afford strong consolation to the heirs of promise, sensible sinners and afflicted souls; by the ordinances of the Gospel, which are breasts of consolation; and by the faithful ministers of Christ, who are "Barnabases", sons of consolation, **Ac 4:36**. The petition follows,

grant you to be like minded one towards another; which does not respect sameness of judgment in the doctrines of faith; though this is very necessary to an honourable and comfortable walking together in church fellowship; much less an agreement in things indifferent: the apostle's meaning is not, that they should all abstain from meats forbidden by the law of Moses, or that they should all eat every sort of food without distinction; nor that they should all observe any Jewish day, or that they should all observe none; rather, that everyone should enjoy his own sentiment, and practise as he believed: but this request regards a likeness of affection, the sameness of mutual love, that they be of one heart, and one soul; that notwithstanding their different sentiments about things of a ceremonious kind, yet that they should love one another, and cease either to despise or judge each other; but think as well and as highly of them that differ from them, as of themselves, and of those of their own sentiments, without preferring in affection one to another; but studying and devising to promote and maintain, as the Syriac here reads it, atwywv, "an equality" among them; showing the same equal affection and respect to one as to the other, and to one another; the Jew to the Gentile, and the Gentile to the Jew; the strong to the weak, and the weak to the strong. This is what is greatly desirable. It is grateful to God; it is earnestly wished for by the ministers of the Gospel: and is pleasant and delightful to all good men; but it is God alone that can give and continue such a Spirit: this the apostle knew, and therefore prays that he would "grant" it: and for which request there is a foundation for faith and hope concerning it; since God has promised he will give his people one heart, and one way, as to fear him, so to love one another. The rule or pattern, according to which this is desired, is next expressed,

according to Christ Jesus; according to the doctrine of Christ, which teaches, directs, and engages, as to sameness of judgment and practice, so to mutual love and affection; and according to the new commandment of Christ, which obliges to love one another; and according to the example of Christ, who is the great pattern of patience and forbearance, of meekness and humility, of condescension and goodness, and of equal love and affection to all his members.

{w} Archilochus apud Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 7. c. 12.

Romans 15:6

Ver. 6. That ye may with one mind and one mouth;.... This is the end for which the above request is made, and shows, that a cordial and sincere affection for one another is necessary to the worshipping of God with one consent, to a joining together in acts of religious service, both in praying to God, and in praising of him, which latter seems here chiefly designed; for how should there be an agreement of heart and voice, of mind and mouth, in praising God, unless there is a singleness of heart, and oneness of affection? This is necessary in order to

glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, God "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"; leaving out, the copulative, which we translate "even", but may as well be rendered "and"; and be read, as by some, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". God is the God of Christ, as Christ is man; who prepared the human nature for him, anointed it with the Holy Spirit, supported it in life, in sufferings and death, and glorified it at his own right hand; and in which nature Christ exercised every grace on him, as faith, hope, and love; discharged every duty to him, worshipped him, prayed unto him, and was in all things obedient to his will: and God is the Father of Christ, as Christ is God; for as man he had no father. Now he is "glorified" when the perfections of his nature are ascribed unto him; when notice is taken of the works of his hands, and the glory of his majesty, which appears in them; when praise is offered up, and thanks given for all mercies, temporal and spiritual, he bestows on his people; when they join together in the solemn worship of him, presenting their bodies, and giving up their hearts unto him; when they unite in praying to him, and singing his praise; and when their lives and conversations are agreeable to their profession of him.

Romans 15:7

Ver. 7. Wherefore receive ye one another,.... Into your hearts and affections; embrace one another cordially, the Jew the Gentile, the Gentile the Jew, the strong brother the weak, the weak the strong:

as Christ also received us. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read "you". Both Jews and Gentiles, as appears from the following verses. Christ received all the chosen ones into his heart's love and affection from eternity; he received them in the council of peace, and when the covenant of grace was made at his Father's hands, in the most tender manner, in order to take the care of them, preserve and save them; he assumed their nature, took upon him their sins, and sustained their persons in time, when he became incarnate, and suffered and died for them; and he receives them in the effectual calling on their coming to him, which he encourages by assuring them, that he will in no wise cast them out; so far is he from it, that he embraces them with open arms, and in the most affectionate manner receives them, though sinners, and eats with them; and notwithstanding all their unworthiness, sins, and transgressions:

to the glory of God: that is, either in order to bring them to the enjoyment of eternal life and happiness; which is sometimes so called, because of the glory that shall be beheld by the saints, be revealed in them, and put upon them, both in soul and body; and which is all of God's preparing and bestowing, and will lie in the vision and enjoyment of him: for this they were chosen in Christ, given to him, and received by him before the world began; and that they might enjoy it, Christ came into this world, took on him their persons, and died in their stead; and to this they are called by his grace with an holy calling; and when he has guided them with his counsel through this world, he will receive them to this glory: or else by "the glory of God" is meant the glorifying of God, the perfections of God, as his wisdom, power, faithfulness, truth, justice, holiness, love, grace, and mercy, and the like; which is done by Christ's becoming the surety, and Mediator of the new covenant, **Heb 7:22**, by his assumption of human nature, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and by obtaining redemption for his people: and the force of the apostle's exhortation and argument is, that as Christ has received his people both in eternity and time, in so tender a manner, though unworthy, whereby he has glorified God, which was the principal end in view, and next to that the glorifying of them; so it becomes them to be like minded to one another, Ro 15:5, and affectionately receive and embrace each other, that so they may join together in glorifying the God and Father of Christ also, Ro 15:6.

Romans 15:8

Ver. 8. Now I say,.... Or affirm that Christ has received both Jews and Gentiles: that he has received the Jews, and therefore they are not to be despised, though they are weak, appears from hence,

that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision; he is rightly called a minister, for this was the end of his coming into the world, and the whole of his work in it was not to be ministered unto, but to minister to others, Mt 20:28, both in life and at death. This character agrees with him in all his offices; as King he ministers judgment to the people; and as priest he is the minister of the true tabernacle of the human nature, **Heb 8:2**, in which he offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people, and now in it makes intercession for them; but here it is expressive of his prophetic office, in which he is such a minister as never was before, or since, or ever will be; if we consider the dignity of his person, being the Son of God; the greatness of his qualifications, having the Spirit without measure; the nature of his doctrines, which were amazing words of grace and truth; and the manner of his delivery, which was with authority; and that all other ministers receive their mission, qualifications, doctrine and success from him: he is styled a minister of "the circumcision", not literally considered, as if he administered circumcision to any, which he did not; he was indeed subject to it as a son of Abraham, as a Jew by birth, as under the law, and in order to fulfil all righteousness, **Mt 3:15**, and to show that he was truly man, and that he had regard to the people and ordinances of the Old Testament, as he showed by baptism he had to those of the New, and to signify our cleansing and atonement by his blood; but circumcision is either to be understood in a spiritual sense of circumcision in the Spirit, and not in the flesh, with which the true circumcision, or believers in Christ, are circumcised in him, through his circumcision; or rather the word here is to be taken metonymically, for the uncircumcised Jews, as it often is in this epistle; see **Ro 2:26**. So that the meaning is, that Christ was their minister and preacher, just as Peter is said to have the apostleship of the circumcision, **Ga 2:8**, or to be the apostle of the Jews; as Paul was of the Gentiles, Ro 11:13, and to have the Gospel of the circumcision committed to him, it being his province to preach it to them, **Ga 2:7**, Christ as a minister or preacher in the personal discharge of his prophetic office, was sent only to the Jews; among them he lived, and to them he only preached; nor did he allow his apostles to preach to any other till after his resurrection; and which is a manifest proof that he received the Jews, and took them under his care, and showed a particular regard unto them: the ends of his being a minister to them were,

for the truth of God; to preach the Gospel of salvation, the word of truth unto them, for which he was promised and sent; and in doing of which he declared the righteousness, faithfulness, loving kindness, and truth of God unto them:

and to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; the fathers of the world, Adam, Noah, &c. or rather the Jewish fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and others; concerning the Messiah's being the seed of the woman, and of Abraham, and of David; concerning the coming of Shiloh, the raising up of the great prophet among the Jews, &c. all which promises are yea and amen in Christ, ratified and fulfilled in him.

Romans 15:9

Ver. 9. And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy,.... In choosing them in Christ as vessels of mercy, and in redeeming them by Christ as well as the Jews, and in regenerating and calling them by his abundant grace; and which as they clearly show that Christ has received them, and therefore are not to be censured and judged as irreligious persons, because of the use of their Christian liberty; so these things lay them under obligations to glorify God, to show forth his praise both by lip and life, since what they enjoy is not by promise, as the Jews, but of mere mercy; not but that promises arise from grace and mercy, though the accomplishment of them is owing to truth and faithfulness; but the Gentiles had no promises made to them, and yet obtained mercy, though there were many promises made concerning them, and many oracles and predictions in favour of them stood on divine record; some of which the apostle here produces to prove what he had asserted, that Christ had received them, and they were bound to glorify God on that account:

as it is written, in Ps 18:49;

for this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name; which words are not spoken unto God by David, literally, considered, but as representing the Messiah; for David when he penned this Psalm, was in the decline of life; the next account after this is of his last dying words, 2Sa 23:1; nor could he hope to praise God among the Gentiles, nor did he in person, but in his Son the Messiah. These words are the words of Christ unto his Father, who in the title of the psalm is called "the servant of God", he being the Mediator eminently; he is represented as encompassed with the sorrows and snares of death and the grave, which agree with Jesus when in the garden, and on the cross. God is all along in it spoken as his helper and deliverer, as he was to Christ in his human nature, having promised to be so, and on which he depended; and the person, the subject of the psalm, is a victorious person, one that has got the conquest over all enemies, which is in the fullest sense true of the Messiah, who has overcome the world, made an end of sin, destroyed Satan, spoiled principalities and powers, and abolished death; and particularly is said to be the head of the Heathen, and they to be voluntary subjects to him, Ps 18:43, which is expressed in much the same language as the like things are in Isa 55:4; which is so manifest a prophecy of the Messiah; add to all which, that the Lord's anointed, the King Messiah, and who is called David, is expressly mentioned in the words following these that are cited, and which are applied by the Jews {x} themselves to the Messiah; as is Ps 18:32 paraphrased of him, by the Targumist upon it: what is here said by the Messiah to God, is that he would "confess to him among the Gentiles"; which is to be understood not of confession of sin, or of a confession of faith in him; but of praise and thanksgiving, a celebration of his perfections, particularly his, race, mercy, and goodness; ascribing honour and glory to him, either for the conversion of the Gentiles, as he did in the believing Jews, Ac 11:18, or by the mouth of the Gentiles, for what God had done in bringing the Gospel to them, Ac 13:48, or among them, by his apostles and ministers of the Gospel being made very successful among them, and made to triumph in Christ, whilst they diffused the savour of his knowledge in every place. The word "Lord" is omitted in this citation, though it appears in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, and in the Complutensian edition, and two of Stephens's copies: "and sing unto thy name"; psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to the glory of his grace, as in all the churches of the Gentiles, to which they are directed by the Spirit of Christ, **Eph 5:19**.

{x} Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. Midrash Tillim in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 47. 3.

Romans 15:10

Ver. 10. And again he saith,.... God or Christ, in De 32:43;

rejoice ye Gentiles with his people; which from the Hebrew text are by some rendered, "rejoice his people O ye Gentiles"; to which agree the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, who render it, "praise O ye nations his people"; or as some copies of the former, "the judgment of his people"; and the latter adds, the house of Israel. The note of R. Sol. Jarchi on the text is, "at that time the nations shall praise Israel; see what is the praise of this people that cleave unto the Lord, &c."

But the design of this song is to praise God, and not the people of Israel; who in it are severely reproved for their many iniquities, and especially their very great ingratitude to God, and are threatened with the heaviest judgments. This is seen by other Jewish writers, who interpret the words accordingly, as R. Aben Ezra does, whose note is

"then shall they praise him, when God shall avenge their blood;"

and to this sense is the Jerusalem Targum,

"praise before him O ye people, praise him O his people of the house of Israel;"

but the words may be better translated either thus, "rejoice O ye nations, his people"; that is, ye Gentiles who are his people, whom God has taken into his covenant, and whom he will declare as such in his own time, which time was now come, and therefore had reason to rejoice; see **1Pe 2:9**; or thus, "rejoice ye Gentiles, and his people"; let both Jews and Gentiles rejoice; let them rejoice together when they come to be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the same promises and privileges; when they shall be together in one fold, under one shepherd; and especially when the fulness of each of them is brought in, and God has avenged himself of his and their enemies; and which agrees with the apostle's sense, and whose version is supported by the Septuagint interpreters; and his supplement is to be justified, there only wanting a copulative in the Hebrew text, which is often the case in that language, and which may easily be supplied by "and" or "with"; as it is with the latter by the apostle, in perfect agreement with the sense of the words.

Romans 15:11

Ver. 11. And again,.... It is written in Ps 117:1,

praise the Lord all ye Gentiles, and laud him all ye people; that is, praise him both Jews and Gentiles, for his merciful kindness and truth, as in Ro 15:2; the Gentiles for his mercy in choosing, redeeming, and calling them, as before; and the Jews for his truth and faithfulness in the fulfilment of his praises. R.

David Kimchi on this psalm observes, that

"it consists of two verses only, and that it belongs xyvmh
twmyl, "to the days of the Messiah"; and intimates, by the composition of it in two verses only, that all people shall be divided into two parts, or be on two sides, Israel shall be in their law, and all the nations in seven precepts,"

i.e. of Noah.

Romans 15:12

Ver. 12. And again Esaias saith,.... In Isa 11:10;

there shall be a root of Jesse. This prophecy is applied to the Messiah by the Jews {y}, who say,

"that when the King Messiah is revealed, there shall be gathered to him all the nations of the world, so that that Scripture shall be fulfilled which is written, "there shall be a root of Jesse", &c."

This character, "the root of Jesse", may be understood of Christ with respect to his divine nature, who, as God, was before Jesse, and the author of his being, as of all creatures; just in such sense as he is called "the root and offspring of David", **Re 5:5**; the root of David, as he is God, and the offspring of David, as he is man; unless both are to be interpreted of his human nature, as the phrase here also may be, and denote his descent from Jesse as man; and so the Jewish writers interpret it as well as some Christian ones. This is R. David Kimchi's comment;

""and there shall be a root of Jesse"; the meaning is, yvy
vrvm auwyh, "which goes out from the root of Jesse", according to Isa 11:1, for "Jesse" is the root. And so the Targum of Jonathan, yvyd hyrb rb, "the son's son of Jesse";"

that is, David's son, the King Messiah, who sprung from Jesse's family, when that family was very low and mean, like to a tree cut down to, its roots, and to a root in a dry ground; out of which sprung the man the branch, David's son and Lord. This character may be applied to Christ as Mediator, who as a root is unseen and unknown to carnal men, and mean, abject, and of no account in the eyes of the world; the root that not only bears Jesse, David, and other good men, but all the branches of God's elect, from whom they have their beings, both in a natural and spiritual sense; which communicates life and nourishment to them; in whom their life is hid, and is safe when scarcely to be discerned in them; and from whom they have all their fruitfulness, and to whom is owing their perseverance in faith and holiness.

And he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; or, as the Syriac version, "and he that shall rise shall be a prince unto the Gentiles"; or, as the Arabic, "and he that shall rise out of it", the root, "shall rule over the Gentiles". In the Hebrew text in Isaiah, this is said of the root, and to be read thus, "which shall stand for an ensign of the people", Isa 11:10; because mention is made of a root, the apostle expresses the standing of it by rising out of it, which signifies both the incarnation and exaltation of Christ; and because an ensign is a token of power and government, therefore he has rendered it to "reign", agreeably enough to the sense; since upon Christ's exaltation, and setting up his ensign or standard, the Gospel, in the Gentile world, multitudes became voluntary subjects to him, and still do; over whom he rules by his grace and Spirit, and will more largely and manifestly in the latter day, when the kingdoms of this world shall be his. In like manner R. Aben. Ezra explains the words of the Messiah.

"Says he, this may be understood, for all the whole world shall be wtwvr txt, "under his power", or government."

And so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases them, "and kingdoms shall obey him"; so that the Jew can have no reason to complain of the apostle's version.

In him shall the Gentiles trust, or "hope"; this in the Hebrew text is, "to him shall the Gentiles seek"; which cannot be truly done without faith and hope; see Heb 11:6; for the hope and faith of enjoying what is sought for, put persons upon seeking: so that the apostle here gives us the true sense of the words, and most fully describes the affection of the Gentiles to Christ; who having some knowledge of him, seek unto him for life and salvation, prostrate themselves at his feet, venture upon him, commit themselves to him, and hope and trust in him. This part of the prophecy is by the Jews understood of the Messiah.

"All the Gentiles (says R. David Kimchi on the text) shall seek xyvmh la, "to the Messiah", and shall go after him to do what he commands; all of them shall obey him."

But why no mention made of the Israelites seeking to the Messiah? hear what they say, and which still confirms the sense of these words {z}.

"The Israelites will have no need of the doctrine of the King Messiah in future time, as it is said, "to him shall the Gentiles seek", and not the Israelites."

True enough! The apostle dwells on the proof of this point, it not being so easy of belief with the Jews, but makes it clear from the law, psalms, and prophets, which is the threefold division of the writings of the Old Testament; see Lu 24:44.

{y} Zohar in Exod. fol. 71. 1. Vid. R. Aben Ezra & R. David Kimchi in loc.
{z} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 85. 3. & Midrash Tillim apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 3. c. 9.

Romans 15:13

Ver. 13. Now the God of hope,.... This character is taken from the latter part of Ro 15:12, and is occasioned by it, "in him shall the Gentiles trust", or "hope"; and is proper to God as he is the author and giver of this grace; for naturally men are without it; that which is a good hope is the gift of God, and through his grace, and is wrought in the heart in regeneration; for to this are the children of God begotten again. Moreover, God is the object of it; not wealth and riches, nor works of righteousness, but Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, particularly Christ, is called the believer's hope; that is, the object of it, in whom the Gentiles hope and trust. Likewise, it is God that encourages to the exercise of it by the proclamations of his grace, and mercy, and plenteous redemption; by the discoveries of his love, and views of interest in him; and by bringing to mind the past experiences of his goodness: he preserves and maintains this grace useful and lively, firm and steadfast, at least in being, which sometimes seems almost perished and gone; he increases it, and causes his people to abound in the exercise of it, and continues it even unto death. The Ethiopic version reads, "the God of our promises", which are what hope has respect unto, and builds upon:

fill you with all joy and peace in believing. This is a petition to the God of hope. The apostle has recourse again to prayer, knowing that all his exhortations would be useless, without the grace of God accompanying them: and it is observable, that he prays for the same things mentioned in the above prophecies and promises, as joy, peace, and hope; for though God has promised ever so great things concerning his people, he will be inquired of by them to do them for them. One part of this petition is, that God would "fill them with all joy"; not with every kind of joy; not with worldly joy, or with the joy of hypocrites, who rejoice in sin, or in their own boastings, which is evil; but with spiritual joy, joy in God as a covenant God and Father; in Christ, in his person, righteousness, and salvation; and in the Holy Ghost, the author of it, whose fruit it is; and in the Gospel, doctrines, blessings, and promises of it; and in the view and hope of the heavenly glory, amidst various afflictions and tribulations: and it designs an abundance of it, even a fulness thereof; though the petition implies, that as yet it is not full; it is frequently interrupted and broke in upon by the corruption of nature, and falls into sin, by the temptations of Satan, through divine desertions, and various trials and exercises; yet it supposes it may be increased, as by the renewed discoveries of the love of God, of interest in Christ, and through the gracious influences of the Spirit; and even made full and complete, though not in this, yet in the other world: another branch of the petition is, that God would fill with "peace", with a sense of their peace with him, made by the blood of Christ; with a conscience peace in their own breasts, arising from a view of their justification by the righteousness of Christ, and from the sprinklings of his blood upon them; and also with peace one among another, which was much wanting, and the apostle was very desirous of: and all this he asks, that it might come to them "in believing"; in the way of faith, and the exercise of that grace; for joy comes this way; faith and joy go together; where one is, the other is also; and as the one increases, so does the other; a believing view of interest in Christ is attended with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: and so peace comes in at the door of faith: there is no true peace till a soul is brought to believe in Christ; and that is promoted and increased by repeated acts of faith on Christ, or by a constant living by faith on him; see Isa 26:3. The end for which this petition is made is,

that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. By hope is meant that grace which God is the author, object, and promoter of; and the Syriac version reads it, hrbob, "in his hope", or "the hope of him"; of enjoying him, of meeting with him, and having communion with him in his house and ordinances; of having fresh supplies of grace from him, and of being favoured with all the blessings of grace laid up in an everlasting covenant, and at last with eternal life and glory: to "abound" herein, is to be in the free and frequent exercise of this grace, being encouraged by the grace of God, and an enlarged experience of it, and supported by faith, the substance of things hoped for: and this "through the power of the Holy Ghost"; not by might or power of man, but by that same divine power which first began the good work, and must fulfil it; which at first implanted the grace of hope, and must perform the work of that, as of faith. The same power is requisite to cause grace to abound, or saints to abound in the exercise of it, as was to the first production of it. The Vulgate Latin reads, "that ye may abound in hope, and in the power of the Holy Ghost"; but there is no copulative in the Greek text.

Romans 15:14

Ver. 14. And I myself also am persuaded of you,.... This is said by way of prevention to an objection that might he made to the apostle's prayers and exhortations by the Romans. What does the apostle mean by all this? what does he think of us, or take us to be? men that live in malice to one another, devoid of all humanity, and mutual respect? a parcel of fools and ignorant men, that know nothing of divine things? and though there may be some that are much to be blamed for their conduct and carriage to their fellow Christians, what, are there none among us fit to give advice and admonition? To which the apostle replies, that he was far from entertaining such thoughts of them; that though he had not seen them in person, yet he had had such an account of their faith and practice, which were famous throughout the world, that he was thoroughly persuaded of better things of them, though he thus spake; and therefore, to mollify them, and abate their resentment, he adds,

my brethren; testifying his affection to them, owning the spiritual relation they stood in to him, and declaring the great esteem he had for them, and the high opinion he had of them: saying,

that ye also are full of goodness; not naturally, for there is no good thing in men by nature, but what they had was from the Spirit of God, whose fruit is "goodness": and by which may be meant, either the good gifts of the Spirit of God, or rather his graces, even the good work of grace in general, and which is goodness itself: it comes from a good cause, the good Spirit of God; is good in its own nature, not having the least mixture or tincture of evil in it; and good in its effects, since it makes and denominates a man a good man; now these saints might be said to be full of this, to denote the abundance, the superabundance of grace in this work: or particularly beneficence, humanity, and sympathy to fellow Christians, may be intended. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "full of love": but the copies and eastern versions read as we do.

Filled with all knowledge; not with every sort of knowledge, with the knowledge of all languages, or of all the arts and sciences, of all things, natural and political; but with all spiritual knowledge relating to God, his nature and perfections, his mind and will; to Christ and the work of redemption by him; to the Spirit, and the operations of his grace; to the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; to their duty to God, fellow creatures, and fellow Christians; in short, with all knowledge necessary to salvation, though as yet not perfect, and which will not be in this world, but in another:

able also to admonish one another; as they must be, since they were both good and knowing; goodness and knowledge are necessary to admonition, and qualify persons for it: if a man is not a good man himself, he is not fit to admonish another; and if he has not knowledge, he will not be able to do it as it should be; and without humanity and tenderness, he will not perform it aright, and with success; but all this being in these persons, they were able and fit for it. Some copies read it, "able also to admonish others"; so the Syriac version renders; which makes the expression still stronger, and enlarges their praise and commendation.

Romans 15:15

Ver. 15. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you,.... Or freely, in taking notice of their party contentions and ill usage of each other, and in reproving, advising, and exhorting them; and which he excuses by observing, that it was,

in some sort, or "in part" only; meaning either that it was only in some part of the epistle he had took such a liberty, which is the sense of the Arabic version, which renders it, "in some parts of the oration"; or else that he had regard not to all of them, but to some only, to a part of the church who were most culpable; and did not design a charge against them all, and that what he said should be applied to the whole body; or rather that the boldness and freedom he had taken was bat in some sort, it was but in part: this he says to mitigate it, and that it might not be thought to be so large as it might appear at first; it was but "a little more boldly", that he wrote unto them, as the Syriac renders it; for this clause is not to be read in connection with the word "written", as if the apostle had only wrote of the doctrines of grace in some sort, or in part, for he declared the whole counsel of God, and never kept back anything profitable to the churches: he adds,

as putting you in mind; which is also said to excuse his writing, and the manner of it; he did not take upon him to be their teacher and instructor, to inform them of things they knew nothing of; only to be their monitor, to put them in mind of and refresh their memories with what they had been well instructed and established in before; see **2Pe 1:12**;

because of the grace that is given to me of God; meaning not the doctrine of "grace, concerning" which, as the Ethiopic version renders it, he was putting them in mind; nor the internal grace of the Spirit, by which he was inclined and assisted to write unto them; but the grace of apostleship, or that high office, which, by the grace of God, and not because of any merits of his, he was called unto: this he mentions also to excuse the freedom of his writing; since what he did was in consequence of, pursuant and agreeably to, his office as an apostle; and therefore could not have answered it to God, or them, if he had not done it; wherefore he hoped it would be took well by them.

Romans 15:16

Ver. 16. That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ,.... The office of apostleship is here amplified and enlarged on, and the ends shown for which that grace was given to him, that he should be a minister; not in holy things about the temple, as the priests and Levites were; or a teacher of the law, some were fond of; but a minister of Christ, one that was made so by him, was qualified and sent forth to minister in his name to men; and who was a preacher of him; Jesus Christ, and him crucified, was the grand subject of his ministrations; he adds,

to the Gentiles; for to them, though not to the exclusion of the Jews, was he appointed a minister by Christ, and sent by him to them; among them he chiefly ministered, and was particularly and eminently useful to them; and this is another reason why the Romans ought to bear with a little boldness and freedom in writing to them, since he was the apostle of the Gentiles:

ministering the Gospel of God; not the service of the temple, nor the traditions of the elders, nor the law of Moses, nor the morality of the Heathens; but the Gospel, of which God is the author, whose grace is the subject, and whose glory is the end; and is good news from him to the chief of sinners; to the preaching of which the apostle was separated by him:

that the offering up of the Gentiles; not the offering the Gentiles offered up, their prayers, praises, or good works, though these are acceptable to God through Christ; but the Gentiles themselves, by the offering up of whom is meant their conversion; which was the end of the apostle's ministering the Gospel among them, and in which he was the happy instrument. The allusion is to the priests slaying and offering up sacrifices under the law. The apostle was a priest in a figurative and improper sense; the sacrifices he offered up were not slain beasts, but men, the Gentiles, cut to the heart by the sword of the Spirit, the ministry of the Gospel; whose inside being laid open to them, and they brought to a sense of their lost condition, and need of Christ, were, through the power of divine grace attending the word, made willing to offer, or give up themselves to the Lord, to be saved by him, and him only: this the apostle, as an instrument, was concerned in; and all his view was, that it

might be acceptable; that is, to God, as nothing is more so to him than a broken and a contrite heart, or souls brought to a sense of themselves; and to believe in Christ, and submit to his righteousness; and then both ministers and converts are unto God, a sweet savour of Christ:

being sanctified by the Holy Ghost; this is said in allusion to the washing of the sacrifices under the law; and intimates, that the Gentiles, though unclean by nature and practice, yet being sanctified by the Spirit of God, whose proper work it is to sanctify, become an acceptable, being an holy sacrifice to an holy God.

Romans 15:17

Ver. 17. I have therefore whereof I may glory,.... Not in himself, for he that taught others not to glory in men, would not glory in himself; not in his carnal descent and fleshly privileges; nor in his knowledge of, and compliance with, the ceremonies of the law; nor in his legal, moral, and civil righteousness before God; nor in his gifts and attainments, as merited and procured by himself; nor in his labours in the ministry, and the success of it, as of himself: but

through Jesus Christ; or "in Jesus Christ", as read the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; in what Christ was unto him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: he could boast of what he had from him, and through him, even of all spiritual blessings in him; and of a large measure of grace he had received from him; and of great and eminent gifts Christ had bestowed on him; he gloried in his cross, and boasted of a crucified Jesus, whom others despised; and whom he made the subject of his ministry, and took delight in preaching: and freely owned that all he did was through Christ strengthening him; and that all his success in his work was owing to him, and of this he had to glory: and which was in those things which pertain to God; not "with God", as the Syriac reads it; for though in some cases it may be lawful to glory before men, yet not before God, or in his presence: nor is it anything a man may glory in, not in his own things, but in the things of God; in things relating to the Gospel of God, to the pure preaching of it, to the furtherance and spread of it, and the recommending of it to others; to the worship and ordinances of God, and a spiritual attendance on them; to the grace of God, and the magnifying of that in the business of salvation; and to the glory of God, which ought to be the chief end of all actions, natural, moral, and religious, and whether private or public. The apostle has chiefly reference to his ministerial function, and the things of God relating to that, in which he was employed; see **Heb 5:1**.

Romans 15:18

Ver. 18. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things,.... He suggests that the false teachers did speak of things which were not done by them at all, and much less were what Christ had done by them; and signifies that he was a conscientious man, and could speak nothing but what was truth; his conscience would not suffer him, nor could he allow himself to make mention of anything, that was not done by him, as if it was; nor of anything that was done by himself, nor of anything that was done, as if it was done by himself, but as it was wrought by Christ; nor had he any need to speak of any other things which he had wrought himself, as he could not of what he had not wrought at all; or, as he says,

which Christ hath not wrought by me: signifying that what he had wrought, and which he could with good conscience speak of to the honour of Christ, and the glory of his grace, were not wrought by himself, but what Christ wrought by him; he was only the instrument, Christ was the efficient cause: as a Christian, it was not he that lived, but Christ lived in him; as a minister, it was not he that spoke, but Christ spoke in him; nor was it he that laboured, but the grace of Christ that was with him; much less was it he that converted souls, but Christ did it by him:

to make the Gentiles obedient; the nations of the world, who had been brought up in blindness and ignorance of God, in rebellion and disobedience to him. The Gospel was sent among them, and was blessed unto them, to make them, of disobedient, obedient ones; not to men, but to God; not to magistrates and ministers, though they were taught to be so to both, but to Christ; to him as a priest, by being made willing to be saved by him, and him only, renouncing their own works, and disclaiming all other ways of salvation; and to submit to his righteousness for their justification before God, and acceptance with him; and to deal with his precious blood for pardon and cleansing; to rely on his sacrifice for the atonement of their sins, and to make use of him as the new and living way to the Father, as their one and only mediator, advocate, and intercessor; and to him as a prophet, to the faith of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; not barely by hearing it, and notionally assenting to it, but by embracing it heartily, and professing it publicly and sincerely; and to him as a King, by owning him as such, and as theirs; and by subjecting to his ordinances, and obeying his commands in faith and fear, and from love to him: the means whereby these persons were brought to the obedience of Christ, and of faith, are

by word and deed; or "deeds", as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read: by the former is meant, the word of the Gospel and the preaching of it, being sent unto them, and coming with power, and not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and by the latter, either the labour of the apostle, the pains he took, the hardships he endured, in ministering: the Gospel to them; or his agreeable life and conversation, which were a means of recommending the word, and of engaging an attention to it; or rather the miraculous works and mighty deeds which were wrought by the apostle, in confirmation of the doctrine he preached, as it seems to be explained in Ro 15:19.

Romans 15:19

Ver. 19. Through mighty signs and wonders,.... Or "in", or "through the power of signs and wonders", as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions render the words. These carrying along with them evidence and conviction of the truth of what was delivered, wrought wonderfully and powerfully on the minds of the Gentiles to embrace the Gospel, and submit to the ordinances of it; though all would have been insufficient, had it not been for what follows,

by the power of the Spirit of God: the Alexandrian copy and one of Stephens's read, "by the power of the Holy Spirit", and so does the Vulgate Latin version; meaning, either that the mighty signs and wonders in healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, raising the dead, &c. were performed not by the efficacy and working of Satan, as the signs and lying wonders of antichristian men, but by the Spirit of God, by whom Christ and all his apostles wrought the miracles they did; or that the ministration of the word in which the apostle laboured, was by the power of the Spirit of God; it was he that imparted all spiritual gifts to him, qualifying him for this service; it was he that assisted him in it, and enabled him to go through it; it was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power that he performed it; and that not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth: or else that the obedience of the Gentiles to the faith of Christ, through the preaching of the Gospel, and the wonderful works that attended it as means, were purely owing to the power of the Spirit of God, as the efficient cause; it was not by might, or power of the preacher; nor merely by the power of signs and wonders; but by the powerful and efficacious grace of the Spirit of God, who took away the stony, stubborn, and disobedient heart, and gave them an heart of flesh, a tender, flexible, and obedient one; and caused them to walk in and observe the commandments and ordinances of the Lord:

so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ; that which Christ, as God, is the author of; as man, was a preacher and minister of; and, as Mediator, is the subject matter of: this the apostle "preached fully" and completely, every part and branch of it, kept back nothing of it, but faithfully declared the whole; and so fulfilled it, as the word may be rendered, and his ministry; or he filled the Gospel, the net of the Gospel, which he spread in every place; or rather he diffused the knowledge of it everywhere; he filled all places with it wherever he came, even "from Jerusalem" round about unto Illyricum: not that he began to preach at Jerusalem, but at Damascus; from whence he went to Arabia, and after that to Jerusalem; but inasmuch as he was of Jerusalem, and had preached there, from whence the Gospel originally came, and this was the boundary of his ministry one way, he makes mention of it; as Illyricum was the boundary of it another way, which was on the extreme part of Macedonia: it is now called Sclavonia, and is an European nation; part of it is Dalmatia, mentioned **2Ti 4:10**. Apollonia was in it, according to Mela {z}, where the apostle is said to pass through, Ac 17:1, it has on the south the gulf of Venice, on the north the Danube, on the west Germany, and on the east Thracia and Macedonia: according to Ptolomy {a}, Illyris, or Illyricum, was bounded on the north with upper and lower Pannonia, now called Hungary and Austria; on the east with upper Mysia, now Servia; and on the south with part of Macedonia; it lies over against Italy, the Adriatic sea being between them; its length, from the river Drinus to Arsa, is reckoned about 480 miles, and its breadth, from the mountains of Croatia to the sea, is computed to be about 120: it is by some divided into Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Albania; Slavonia is the western part, Albania the eastern, and Dalmatia between them; according to others, it includes Slavonia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Dalmatia; and had its name of Illyricum, from Illyrius, the son of Cadmus; or as others, from Illyrius, the son of Celta: here the Gospel was preached by the Apostle Paul, and no doubt with success; and churches were planted here, and which remained for several ages: in the "second" century there was a church in Illyricum, and Eleutherius was bishop, who is said to be a famous teacher; he was born at Rome, and his mother Anthia is reported to be converted by the Apostle Paul; in the same age lived one Quirinus, first a tribune, and then a bishop of Illyricum, who became a martyr under Trajan: in the "third" century there were churches in Illyricum, though devastations were made in it by the Goths; in the "fourth" century, frequent mention is made of the churches in Illyricum; and the bishops convened at Rome under Damascus in the times of Constantius wrote with great respect to the brethren in Illyricum; in Siscia, a city in this country, Quirinus a bishop suffered martyrdom; here a synod met against the Arians, and yet many in this country were infected with that heresy, by Valens and Ursatius; in this age Hilary, of Poictiers in France, spread the Gospel in this country; and he and Eusebius of Vercelli, in Piedmont, visited the churches, and corrected what was amiss: in the "fifth" century there was a church in Illyricum, and in Salo, a city of Dalmatia, Glycerius was bishop: in the "sixth" century there were also churches here, as appears from the letter of Symmachus to the bishops of them, and to their people; and in this age also Gregory wrote to all the bishops in Illyricum, to receive such bishops as were banished: in the "eighth" century, the bishops of Illyricum were in the Nycene synod, and Boniface gathered a church in Slavonia {b}; thus far Christianity may be traced in this country: hither the apostle went, not in a direct line, but round about, and took many countries, cities, and towns in his way, as the history of his journeys and travels in the Acts of the Apostles shows, and as he here suggests.

{z} De orbis situ, l. 2. c. 10. {a} Geograph. l. 2. c. 17. {b} Magdeburg. Eccl. Hist. cent. 2. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 158. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 4. 14. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 6. c. 3. p. 22. c. 5. p. 181, 182. c. 7. p. 311. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 7. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 7. c. 3. p. 33. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 7.

Romans 15:20

Ver. 20. Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel,.... The sense is, not barely that he strove to preach the Gospel and not the law, the pure Gospel, and, not a mixed one; nor only that he endeavoured to preach it fully, and leave out nothing; but that he had an holy ambition to preach it, not where Christ was named; as in Judea, where he had been for many ages spoken of and expected, and where he had lately appeared, lived, suffered, and died, and where his Gospel had been preached by all the apostles; as also in such parts of the Gentile world, where others of the apostles had been, and had made mention of his name, and published the glad tidings of salvation by him; but he chose rather to go to such Heathen nations, as were wholly without any knowledge of him; who had only the dim light of nature to guide them; had had no promises nor prophecies of the Messiah, nor so much as any hints, at least very distant ones, concerning him; and where as yet the sound of the Gospel bad not reached:

lest I should build on another man's foundation; meaning not the law of Moses, nor the doctrines of the false teachers, but the foundation of the true apostles, and which was no other than the foundation Christ, he himself laid; but he chose not to go where they had laid the foundation by preaching Christ and his Gospel, that he might not take another man's crown, or boast in another man's line, or of other men's labours; but rather to go where others had never been, that he might first lay the foundation himself, by preaching Christ, and him crucified, and so the more act up to his character as an apostle, and as the apostle to the Gentiles.

Romans 15:21

Ver. 21. But as it is written,.... In Isa 52:15;

to whom he was not spoken of, they shall see, and they that have not heard shall understand; for the Messiah was not spoken of to the Gentiles; they were strangers to the covenants of promise; the oracles of God were committed to the Jews; God gave his word and statutes to them, and not to any other nation: and yet, according to this prophecy, the Gentiles were to see him whom they had no account of; not in the flesh with their bodily eyes, in which sense only, or at least chiefly, the Jews saw him; but with the eyes of their understanding, by faith, as exhibited and evidently set forth before them as crucified, in the Gospel and the ordinances of it: and though they had heard nothing of him, having for many hundreds of years been left in ignorance, and suffered to walk in their own ways, until the apostles were sent among them; whose sound went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world; yet when this would be the case, according to these words, they would understand the mind and will of God, the mysteries of his grace, the nature of the person and offices of

Christ, the design of his coming into the world, and the way of salvation by him; all which was greatly brought about and accomplished, in the ministry of the Apostle Paul among them. The passage is very pertinently cited and applied by the apostle. The whole paragraph is to be understood of the Messiah, from whence it is taken, as it is owned, and accordingly interpreted by many Jewish writers, both ancient {b} and modern {c}; and these words particularly respect the kings and nations of the world, who are represented as struck with silence and wonder, when, upon the preaching and hearing of the Messiah, they should see him by faith, and spiritually understand what is declared concerning him. The difference between the apostle's version of these words, which is the same with the Septuagint, and the text in Isaiah, is very inconsiderable. The first clause of the Hebrew text may be literally rendered thus, "for him, who was not spoken of to them, they shall see"; and the apostle's Greek in this manner, to whom "it was not spoken of concerning him, they shall see"; the sense is the same, and person intended Christ: the latter clause, which we from the Hebrew text render, "and that which they had not heard, shall they consider"; and here, "they that have not heard, shall understand", has nothing material in it, in which they differ; for in the former part of it both design the Messiah, and the things concerning him, the Gentiles had not heard of; and the latter is rendered and explained by the Targum, and by R. Sol Jarchi, as by the apostle, wlktoa, "they shall understand"; and which fitly expresses the sense of the Hebrew word used by the prophet.

{b} Targum in Isa. lii. 13. Pesikta in Kettoreth hassammim in Num. fol. 27. 2. Tanchuma apud Huls. Jud. Theolog. p. 321. {c} Baal Hatturim in Lev. xvi. 14. R. Moses Aishech in lsa. lii. 13. Vid. R. Aben Ezra in ib.

Romans 15:22

Ver. 22. For which cause also,.... By reason of being employed for so many years, in preaching the Gospel from Jerusalem, round about to Illyricum; taking so large a compass to minister in, and striving to introduce, propagate, and spread the Gospel, where Christ was never named before:

I have been much hindered from coming to you; or he had been often, and by many ways, and upon many accounts, hindered from coming to them; the frequent calls to different and distant places, and the great work of preaching the Gospel in those dark parts of the world, and settling churches there, which was upon his hands, prevented his giving them a visit at Rome, which he much and often desired: as in the preceding verses the apostle excuses his freedom of writing to this church, so here his long delay of coming to them, assigning the reason of it.

Romans 15:23

Ver. 23. But now having no more place in these parts,.... Not because persecution was too hot for him, and therefore could not stay any longer, for this was what he expected everywhere; nor did it discourage him in his work, for he took pleasure in enduring it for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; but because he had fully preached the Gospel from Jerusalem, in his circuit to Illyricum, had filled every town and city with it, had planted churches in every place, and ordained elders over them, to whom the care and charge of them were committed; that there were no more places for him to preach in, but either where he himself had been already, or some other of the apostles; not but that he could have stayed with usefulness to these new formed churches, for the edifying and confirming of them, for the furtherance of the joy of faith in them, and for the defence of the Gospel and its ordinances among them; but his proper work as an apostle being to preach the Gospel to all nations, and where Christ was not named, and to plant churches; and there being no more room in these climates, or regions, for such service, he begins to think of some other places, particularly Spain, where as yet very probably the Gospel was not preached: however, he found himself at leisure to visit other places, and hereby gives the church at Rome some hopes of seeing him from this consideration, as well as from what follows:

and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; he had not only a desire, but a very vehement desire to come to them; he longed to see them, as he elsewhere says; so that since now he had leisure, they might hope it would not be long ere they did see him; especially as the thing had been upon his mind and thoughts for many years past; which shows that the Gospel had been preached very early at Rome, that many had been converted by it, and a church had been formed there some years ago, and was known to the apostle; on which account, having heard much of their faith and obedience, he had a longing desire of a great while to see them.

Romans 15:24

Ver. 24. Whensoever I take my journey into Spain,.... Which he had now meditated and resolved upon, being a place, as before observed, where it is very likely the Gospel as yet had not been preached, which made him desirous of going thither; but whether he ever went thither, or not, is not certain; some think he never performed the intended journey; others affirm he did, some time between his two appearances before Nero. Sepharad, in **Ob 1:20**, is taken by the Jewish writers for this country; and is by the Targum, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra on that place, called aympoa, "Aspamia"; a name not greatly different from Hispania, by which it usually goes among the Greeks and Latins; but Kimchi calls it aynpo, "Spania", the very word used in this place, and by us rendered "Spain", as it is usually called: it was called "Span" in the language of the Celtic, who first inhabited it, which signifies a companion; it was formerly called Iberia, from the river Iberus; afterwards Hesperia, from Hesperus, the brother of Atlas; and then Hispalia, from the city Hispalis, or Sevil; and from thence corruptly Hispania; there are some that derive it from spania, from the roughness of some places in it, barren, uncultivated, and uninhabited: it has on the east the Pyrenean mountains, by which it is divided from France, on the west the Atlantic ocean, on the north the Cantabrian, and on the south the Herculean sea, and the straits of Gades: now as the apostle intended a journey into this country; he mentions it, in order to raise their expectations of seeing him; since in his way thither, he would have a fair opportunity of coming to them; yea, he assures them, that whenever he went thither, he would come:

I will come to you: it was his real intention, a settled resolution and determination in his mind so to do; but whereas everything of this kind depends not upon the will of man, but upon the will and providence of God, and so many unforeseen things fall out which prevent the fulfilling of human purposes, therefore he adds,

for I trust, or "hope"

to see you in my journey: he could not be certain that he should see them, but he hoped he should, for nothing was more desirable to him; his wish was not to see their emperor, their senate, or their famous city, but them, the church of Christ there; and a beautiful and delightful sight it is, to see a church of Christ in Gospel order, walking together in the faith and fellowship, and ordinances of it, and in peace one with another:

and to be brought on my way thitherward by you; he not only hoped to see them, but that he should have the company of some of them along with him, in his way to Spain; from whose conversation he might expect much spiritual pleasure and refreshment; and by whom he might be directed in his way, as well as supplied with all necessaries for his journey; in which sense the phrase of bringing on in the way, is sometimes used; see **Tit 3:13**; though before he should depart from them, he hoped to have abundance of satisfaction in his conversation with them together as a church:

if first I be somewhat, or in part,

filled with your company; or with you, meaning that before he should set forward from them to Spain, that he should be greatly delighted with beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith, hearing their sweet experiences, and observing their holy life and conversation, and their peace and concord among themselves; not that he expected entire satisfaction, a satiety of pleasure, fulness of joy, which are only to be had in the presence of God, and communion with angels and glorified saints; though perhaps he might expect more than he had, for at his first answer before Nero, all these Romans forsook him and fled; saints are often disappointed in their raised expectations of what they shall enjoy in each other's company.

Romans 15:25

Ver. 25. But now I go unto Jerusalem,.... Whither he was bound in spirit, not knowing what should befall him there, from which he could not be dissuaded by his friends, and thither he did go:

to minister unto the saints; not to preach the Gospel, though doubtless he did that when he was there; but to distribute among the poor saints what had been raised for them by the Greek churches; who had entreated him to take upon him this service, even the fellowship of ministering to the saints; and though this might seem below his office as an apostle, and as what more became an inferior officer, a deacon in a church; yet the apostle's heart was so much in it, and he was so bent upon it, and so diligent to execute it, that he postponed his journey to Spain and visit to Rome for the sake of it, and assigns this as a reason why he could not come at present.

Romans 15:26

Ver. 26. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia,.... That is, the churches of Macedonia, particularly Philippi and Thessalonica; and the churches of Achaia, especially the church at Corinth, which was the metropolis of Achaia:

to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem; of which contribution, of their great forwardness, readiness, and liberality, a large account is given in **2Co 8:1**; from whence Origen and others have rightly concluded, that this epistle to the Romans was wrote after that; since in that the apostle exhorts and encourages them, by the example of the Macedonian churches, to finish the collection they had begun; which collection is here called a contribution, or "communion", as the word signifies; it being one part of the communion of churches and of saints, to relieve their poor, by communicating to them, and to assist each other therein; and in which they have not only fellowship with one another, but with Christ the head; who takes what is done to the least of his brethren as done to himself: the persons for whom the collection was made, are "the poor saints", or "the poor of the saints"; for not all the saints, but the poor among them, were the objects of this generosity: they were saints such as are sanctified by God the Father in eternal election, and by the blood of Christ in redemption, and by the Spirit of Christ in the effectual calling, to these this goodness extended; for though good is to be done to all men, yet more especially to the household of faith: they were "poor", which is the lot of many who are saints, whom God has chosen, to whom the Gospel is preached, and who are called by grace: these came to be so, either through the great dearth which was throughout the world in the times of Claudius Caesar, when the brethren at Jerusalem particularly suffered, and were relieved by the disciples at Antioch; but this collection was made some years after that, and therefore rather they became so, through the persecutions of their countrymen; by whom they suffered joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had a better and more enduring substance in heaven; or else through their having sold all their possessions, and thrown their money into one common stock and fund, for mutual subsistence, which was now exhausted: these poor saints lived at Jerusalem, which was at a great distance from Macedonia and Achaia; but though they were strangers, and unknown by face to them, and had only heard of them, and their distress; yet this was no objection to their cheerful contribution; they considered them as members of the same body, as belonging to the same family, and as standing in the same spiritual relation to God and Christ with themselves; and upon this foot they acted; and what they did is worthy the imitation of all the churches and people of God.

Romans 15:27

Ver. 27. It hath pleased them [verily],.... This is repeated from the former verse, and is designed to point out the spring of this contribution, and the manner in which it was performed: it arose from themselves; it was the pure effect of their good will and pleasure; the first motion was from among themselves; it was their own thought, mind, and will; they were willing of themselves unto it, and begun it of themselves, unasked, and not moved unto it by any other: it was not done by constraint or necessity, but was entirely free; they did not make it for ostentation sake, or to gain the applause of men, but from a principle of love to the poor saints; and which showed itself to be sincere, hearty, and genuine, by deeds, and not bare words: they performed this service with great alacrity and cheerfulness; they gave not sparingly, but largely; it was not a matter of covetousness, but of bounty; and they did it not grudgingly, but cheerfully; they took delight and pleasure in it; their hearts and souls were in it, and yet notwithstanding did but what they ought to do.

And their debtors they are; for being debtors to God for their temporal and spiritual mercies; and to Christ for what he has done for them in redemption, and for what he is to them; and to the Spirit for the influences and operations of his grace upon them, they are debtors to the saints; they are bound to love them; they owe the debt of love to them, as they are in the spiritual relation of the children of God, members of Christ, and brethren one of another; and their paying of this debt to them is, in some sense, reckoned a paying it to the divine persons. Moreover, it was not merely a debt of love which these Gentiles owed, and in this way paid to the believing Jews; but it was a debt of justice and equity; they had received what was of valuable consideration from them, and by their means: Christ himself was of the Jews; hence salvation is said to be of them, **Joh 4:22**. The writings of the Old Testament were committed to them, and faithfully preserved by them; and from them transmitted to the Gentiles; the apostles were all Jews, under whose ministry they were enlightened, converted, and brought to the knowledge of Christ, and salvation by him; the Gospel of the grace of God came out from among them; it was first preached in Judea, and at Jerusalem; and from thence was carried and spread in the Gentile world; yea, it looks very likely, and is not at all unreasonable to suppose, that the charge of carrying and spreading the Gospel among the Gentiles was at first defrayed by the believing Jews, and out of that common stock and fund which was at Jerusalem; for it was not proper that the apostles, at their first setting out, should take anything of the Gentiles, lest they should be thought to be mercenary persons, who only sought their own worldly advantage: hence the apostle argues from the greater to the lesser,

for if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things: the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, which are spiritual things; contain and make known spiritual blessings; impart spiritual gifts; in which the Spirit of God is greatly concerned, he is the author of them; he leads men into them; qualifies them to preach them unto others; blesses and succeeds them to the conversion; comfort, and edification of souls; and by means of which he himself is received as a Spirit of illumination, sanctification, and faith: and which doctrines also relate to the spiritual and eternal welfare of the souls and spirits of men; hereby they are enlightened, quickened, comforted, and nourished up unto eternal life: wherefore, since this is the case, and these the favours the Gentiles enjoyed through the Jews,

their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things; in outward and temporal things; in things pertaining to the flesh; or outward man, for the clothing and nourishment of the body. This he said to stir up the Romans, who were Gentiles also, and under the same obligations to make a contribution for them likewise.

Romans 15:28

Ver. 28. When therefore I have performed this,.... Meaning when he had dispatched that business, and finished that affair which the Macedonian and Achaian churches had entreated him to engage in, and which he had undertook; namely, to take their collection, and carry it to Jerusalem, and distribute it among the poor saints there; and which he expresses by another phrase,

and have sealed to them this fruit. The liberality of the Gentile churches is called fruit, as it may be on many accounts; as with respect to the apostle, it was the fruit of his ministry and laborious preaching of the Gospel among them; he had been sowing the seed of the word, and planting churches in these parts; and among other fruits brought forth hereby, as the conversion of sinners, and edification of saints, the exercise of grace, and performance of good works, this of liberality to the poor saints was one: with respect to the persons, the objects of this bounty, it was the fruit of their spiritual things, which the Gentiles, by their means, had been partakers of; and would be as fruit, useful and profitable to them, to relieve their wants, supply them with necessaries, and make their lives more comfortable: and also with respect to the contributors, it was the fruit of the Spirit of God, and his grace in them; it was the fruit of faith, which works by love; and it was the fruit of their love to Christ, and to his saints; and was profitable to them in things temporal, spiritual, and eternal; promises of each being made and performed to such that sow liberally and bountifully. Now the ministration of this to the poor saints at Jerusalem, and on the behalf of the Grecian churches, the apostle calls a "sealing" it to them; and it is thought to be an allusion to the delivery of money sealed up, that it may not be lost, nor made use of for any other purpose than that for which it was designed: whether the apostle carried this collection sealed or not, it matters not; his sense is, that he should deliver it whole and safe unto them, and in such manner as to leave no suspicion that he had converted any part of it to his own use; though the word here used seems to answer to the Hebrew Mtx, which, with the Jews, frequently signifies to conclude, "finish", and make an end of anything, as well as to "seal"; the sealing up of letters being the last and finishing part of them. Innumerable instances might be given; take the following one as a proof {d}:

"we find in the former prophets, Nymtwx wyhv, "that they sealed", or ended their words with words of praise, or with words of consolation Says R. Eliezer, except Jeremiah, Mtxv, "who sealed", or finished with words of reproof."

So the word is used in **Da 9:24**, and then the apostle's plain meaning is, when I have made an end of this affair, have finished this business of ministering and distributing to the poor saints at Jerusalem,

I will come by you into Spain. The Ethiopic version reads it, "Lasitania", designing, no doubt, Lusitania, which was formerly a part of Spain, now called Portugal. Whether the apostle ever was there is not certain nor very probable, since when he came to Jerusalem he was apprehended, and after sometime sent a prisoner to Rome, where he suffered; however, it was his intention to go to Spain, and to take Rome in his way thither.

{d} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 8. 4.

Romans 15:29

Ver. 29. And I am sure when I come to you,.... He intended to go to Spain; he was not sure he should reach thither; but he was positive in it he should come to Rome. It had been much and long upon his mind; and under an impress of the Spirit of God upon him, he had signified some time before this, that after he had been at Jerusalem, he "must see, Rome also", Ac 19:21, and it was afterwards more expressly told him by the Lord, that as he had testified of him at Jerusalem, he should bear witness at Rome also,
Ac 23:11, and therefore he was fully assured he should come to Rome, and

was as confident of the manner of his coming thither.

I shall come in, or "with"

the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; with the Gospel, the good news of salvation by Christ; and which must make him a welcome person to every sensible soul wherever he came; to this he was chosen, separated, and called; for this he was abundantly qualified; this was committed to his trust, and which he carried with him wherever he went: and he was not ashamed of it, and was ready to preach it even at Rome also. With "the Gospel of Christ"; not his own, or another's, or any man's, but Christ's, which he had by the revelation of Christ; of which Christ is the sum and substance, and which Christ himself preached; "with the blessing of the Gospel of Christ". Some by "blessing" understand a liberal contribution, which he trusted he should make at Rome, for the poor saints at Jerusalem; believing that their hearts would be opened, under the preaching of the Gospel, to give freely to them, and that this would be a blessing that would attend it: but rather he means, either the blessed gifts he had, qualifying him for preaching the Gospel, with which he should come and deliver it among them, and which would attend it with success; such as boldness of spirit, freedom of speech, enlarged knowledge, mighty signs and wonders, and the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power: or the blessed effects it would have on them, in establishing them in the present truths; in further enlightening and instructing their minds; in edifying, quickening, and comforting them; and in nourishing up with the words of faith and sound doctrine, unto eternal life: or the blessings of grace exhibited and set forth in the Gospel; such as justification and forgiveness of sins, peace and reconciliation, salvation and eternal life. Nay, he believed he should come in, or with the "fulness" of all this; meaning, either that he believed he should find them full of the Gospel, and the fruits of it; or rather that he should come full fraught with it, and fully preach it to them, and keep back thing that would be profitable. There is a fulness in the Gospel; it is full of the deep things of God, which the Spirit searches and reveals, **1Co 2:10**; it is full of the doctrines of grace and truth, which Christ himself is said to be full of, **Joh 1:14**: it is full of exceeding great and precious promises transcribed from Christ, and out of the covenant of grace; and it is full of a variety of food, of milk for babes, **Heb 5:13**, and meat for strong persons, **Heb 5:14**. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read only, "with the fulness of the blessing of Christ"; and so the Ethiopic version.

Romans 15:30

Ver. 30. Now I beseech you, brethren,.... Having declared his intention of coming to them, and his confidence of it, he entreats an interest in their prayers; and which he urges from the consideration of their mutual relation as "brethren"; and therefore should love one another, and show it, among other things, by praying for each other to their common parent, in whom they have a joint interest, saying, as directed by Christ, "our Father which art in heaven", **Mt 5:45**; thereby signifying, that they prayed not for themselves only, but for all the brethren, all the children of God: and this the apostle further urges,

for Christ's sake; whose servant he was, and in whose cause he was engaged, whose Gospel he preached, and whose glory he sought; and therefore, if they had any regard for Christ, and the good of his interest, he beseeches them that they would pray for the continuance of his life and usefulness; since for him to live was for the good of the churches of Christ, though for him to die would be his own personal gain: and which he also stirs them up to,

for the love of the Spirit; meaning either the love of the Father, and of the Son, which was shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit, which he had directed them into, and they had a comfortable sensation of; or that love to God, to Christ, and one another, which the Spirit of God had wrought in them in regeneration; or that love with which the Spirit of God equally loved them, as the Father, and the Son; and which he had shown in their conversion and sanctification, in applying all grace unto them, and indwelling in them as the Spirit of adoption, and as the earnest and pledge of the heavenly inheritance.

That ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me. The apostle prayed for himself, as he had been wont to do ever since he was a converted man; but knowing well the force of united social prayer, he desires the assistance of others. He represents prayer as an agony, an holy conflict, and striving with God, a wrestling with him, as Jacob did, who held him, and would not let him go without the blessing, and had power with him, and prevailed. The phrase denotes the fervency of prayer, the strength, labour, and energy of it; see **Col 4:12**; and also intimates, that the apostle foresaw he should have a combat with many enemies where he was going, and should be in great danger by them; and therefore desires they would join him in the use of their spiritual armour, and in that particular part of it, prayer, which has been often used to good purpose against the enemies of the Gospel: he does not desire these Romans to beg the assistance of their senate or emperor: but to pray to God for him, and join with him in their prayers to him, who is a God hearing prayer, and able to save. The petitions he would have them put up to him, are as follow:

Romans 15:31

Ver. 31. That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea,.... By whom some think are meant such, who, though they believed in Jesus as the Messiah, yet were violently set against the apostle for preaching down the ceremonial law; and from whom he foresaw he should be in much danger when he came to Jerusalem, and therefore desires the church at Rome to pray for his deliverance from them; though rather such who did not believe in Jesus Christ at all are designed; and who were enemies to the Gospel, and to all Gospel ministers, but especially to the Apostle Paul, for preaching among the Gentiles, and such doctrines as he did, which struck at their peculiar notions; and, as he feared, he should be set upon by them, and his life be in great danger, so it was; see Ac 21:27; though he was not disheartened and intimidated, and did not shun going up to Jerusalem, though entreated not to go; yet he thought proper to engage the churches of Christ in prayer for him, that he might be delivered out of the hands of such wicked and unreasonable men, who being destitute of faith in Christ, were filled with enmity against his ministers; see **2Th 3:1**;

and that my service which I have for Jerusalem, may be accepted of the saints; that is, that the collection which was made by the Gentile churches for the poor saints at Jerusalem, the ministration of which unto them he had took upon him, might be cheerfully and gratefully received by them. One would think there were no fear of this, nor any need to pray for it; for if they were poor, and in necessitous circumstances, as they were, they would be glad of relief, and thankfully accept it: but the case was this, and the difficulties attending this service were, that this collection came from the Gentiles, to whom the Jews had an aversion, and was brought to them by one that they had entertained an ill opinion of, being informed that he had taught the Gentiles to forsake Moses, not to circumcise their children, or walk after the customs; wherefore he did not know whether, though in necessity, anything coming for their relief from such a quarter, and through his hands, would be received with any pleasure by them: besides, his desire was that it might be received as a token of the true and sincere love the Gentiles bore to them; and be a means of reconciling the believing Jews to them, to own them as sister churches of the same faith and order with themselves.

Romans 15:32

Ver. 32. That I may come unto you with joy,.... The end the apostle had, in desiring them to request the above things at the throne of grace for him, was, that he might come to them, which unless he was delivered from the unbelieving Jews, could not be; and therefore since they had an interest in this matter, he might hope they would be the more importunate in their supplications for him, the he might escape their hands; and seeing also, should the saints there use him in an ungrateful manner, and slight the kindness of the Gentile churches, and his service should not have the desired effect, his coming to them would be with sorrow: wherefore he puts them upon praying for success in this affair, that so when he came among them he should have no uneasiness upon his mind, or, anything of this kind to distress him, and interrupt that pleasure and delight he promised himself in their company and conversation: he adds,

by the will of God: resigning himself, and submitting all things to the sovereign will of God, and the wise disposals of his providence: he knew his deliverance from his enemies must be by, and the success of his services owing to, and his coming to Rome entirely according to, the will of God, and as he should think fit and proper; so he acted himself, and so he taught these believers to have their regard to, and sit down contented with the will of God in all things; to which he subjoins,

and may with you be refreshed; with the presence of God among them, with the Gospel in the fulness and blessing of it with which he should come and with the mutual faith and comfortable experience of him and them, which they should communicate to each other; than all which nothing is more reviving, and refreshing to the spirits of God's people.

Romans 15:33

Ver. 33. Now the God of peace be with you all, Amen. As God is in this chapter before styled the God of patience, Ro 15:5, and the God of hope, Ro 15:13, because of his concern in these graces; so he is here styled "the God of peace", because of his concern in that peace which is made between him and his people, by the blood of Christ. This peace was first upon his thoughts, which are therefore called thoughts of peace; a council of peace was held between him and his Son upon this head; the scheme of reconciliation was drawn by him in it; he entered into a covenant of peace with Christ, which takes its name from this momentous article of it; he appointed Christ to be the peacemaker, and laid on him the chastisement of our peace; and it pleased him by him to reconcile all things to himself, **Col 1:20**. Moreover, he is so called because he is the giver of all true solid conscience peace, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding of natural men; and which when he gives, none can give trouble; and is what he fills his people with in a way of believing, leading their faith to the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of his Son. He is also the author of happiness and prosperity, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, and likewise of all the peace and concord which is in his churches, and among his saints; so that when the apostle wishes that the God of peace might be with them, he not only prays that the presence of God might be with them; but that they might have fresh views of their interest in peace, made by the blood of Christ; that they might enjoy peace in their own consciences, arising from thence; that they might be possessed of felicity of every kind, and that unity and harmony might subsist among them; that the peace of God might rule in their hearts, and they live in love and peace one with another, laying aside all their differences as Jews and Gentiles, about the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses; to which the apostle may have a particular respect in this concluding wish of his, and here indeed properly the epistle ends; the following chapter being as a sort of postscript, filled up with salutations and recommendations of particular persons; wherefore the word "Amen" is placed here, though it is wanting in the Alexandrian copy.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Romans 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 16

This chapter contains a recommendation of a single person, herein mentioned; a list of the chief of the saints at Rome, who are saluted by name, and some with singular encomiums; a caution to beware of false teachers; various salutations of persons that were with the apostle sent to the church at Rome; and the whole is concluded with a doxology, or an ascription of glory to God. First, a commendation is given of a woman, by whom this long letter was sent, who is described by her name, Phebe; by her spiritual relation, a sister in Christ; by her office or character, a servant of the church at Cenchrea, Ro 16:1, who is recommended to the saints at Rome, to receive her into their communion, conversation, and affection, as became them, and to assist her in every thing she might need from them; which is enforced by this reason, because she had been a succourer of the apostle, and many others, Ro 16:2, and next follows a catalogue of the principal saints at Rome, to whom the apostle sends his Christian salutations; and among these stand, in the first place, Aquila and Priscilla, and the church in their house, Ro 16:3, who are described as greatly assisting to him in the cause of Christ, and as having a strong affection for him; which they showed by risking their lives on his account, for which he gives them thanks, as did all the churches: Secondly, Epaenetus is next saluted, as having a great interest in the apostle's affections, and as being one of the first converts in Achaia, Ro 16:5. Thirdly, a woman named Mary, who did her utmost to serve the apostle, and those that were with him, Ro 16:6. Fourthly, a couple of saints, Andronicus, and Junia, described by their relation to the apostle, his kinsmen; by their sufferings with him, fellow prisoners; by the fame and credit they were in among the Christians of the first rank, even the apostles; and by their early conversion, being converted before the apostle himself, Ro 16:7. Fifthly, next in the list is Amplias, who is saluted as in the Lord, and as beloved in him, Ro 16:8. Sixthly, two worthy men are joined together, Urban and Stachys; the one is saluted as an helper in Christ, and the other as beloved by the apostle, Ro 16:9. Seventhly, Apelles is next named, and commended as one approved in Christ. Eighthly, the family of Aristobulus is greeted, Ro 16:10. Ninthly, a kinsman of the apostle's, by name Herodion: and, Tenthly, the household of Narcissus, said to be in the Lord, Ro 16:11. Eleventhly, two excellent women are greeted, who had been indefatigable in the service of Christ: and, Twelfthly, another woman, by name Persis, a person to be respected and loved, on account of her labour in the Lord, Ro 16:12. Thirteenthly, Rufus is saluted as one chosen in Christ, and also his mother, and who was the mother of the apostle, Ro 16:13. Fourteenthly, five of the saints are joined together, who are mentioned by name, and other brethren with them, whose names are not set down, Ro 16:14, and, Lastly, five other saints, with all the brethren with them, are likewise saluted, Ro 16:15, and these, and all the members of the church, are exhorted to salute one another in an affectionate and chaste manner, who are told that all the churches saluted them,

Ro 16:16, then follows the exhortation to take care of false teachers, to mark them, and avoid them; who are described as schismatics and heretics, making divisions in the church, and preaching contrary to the Gospel taught and learned, Ro 16:17. The arguments or reasons made use of to enforce the exhortation, are taken partly from the characters of these teachers, being selfish men, who served not the Lord Jesus, but their own bellies; and deceivers, who by smooth words and plausible doctrines imposed upon simple minds,

Ro 16:18, and partly from the characters of the saints at Rome, who were simple and credulous, and ready to give in to everything that carried an

appearance of truth; and though they were to be commended for their ready obedience to the Gospel, yet it became them to mingle wisdom and prudence with their simplicity and readiness to receive what appeared to be truth, Ro 16:19, and from a promise of victory over Satan and his emissaries in a short time; to which the apostle annexes his usual salutation, and "Amen", as if he had concluded the epistle,
Ro 16:20, but adds various salutations of persons that were with him, who desired to be remembered to the brethren at Rome, as Timotheus a fellow worker, Lucius, Jason and Sosipater, his kinsmen, Ro 16:21, Tertius the writer of the epistle, Ro 16:22, Gaius the host of the apostle, and of the whole church; Erastus, chamberlain of the city of Corinth, and Quartus a brother, Ro 16:23, and then the apostle repeats the above salutation, Ro 16:24, and yet still has not finished his epistle, but concludes with a doxology, Ro 16:25, in which is celebrated the power of God, in establishing his people according to the Gospel, commended by its being the preaching of Christ, and the revelation of the mystery hid from ages past; and the goodness of God is also taken notice of, in giving orders to make it manifest, and in making it manifest to the Gentiles, in order to bring them to the obedience of faith; and likewise the wisdom of God is observed, to whom wisdom alone belongs, and which is apparent in the Gospel before mentioned, and in all the methods of his grace, as well as providence; and glory to him, through Christ for ever, is wished and prayed for; and so ends this excellent and valuable epistle.

Ver. 1. I commend unto you Phebe our sister,.... This chapter chiefly consists of commendations and salutations of persons, and begins with the former. It was usual to give letters of commendation of a member of one church to those of another; see **2Co 3:1**; The person who is here recommended was, as appears from the subscription of this epistle, if that may be depended on, the bearer of this letter, and is described by her name, Phebe; as she dwelt at Cenchrea, it is probable she was a Grecian, as is her name. Pausanias {e} makes frequent mention of one of this name in Greece. With the Heathen poets, Pheobus was the sun, and Phoebe the moon. Though it is not unlikely that she might be a Jewess, since there were many of them in those parts; and this was a name in use among them. We often read {f} of R. Ishmael ybap Nb, "ben Phoebi", which I take to be the same name with this. She is recommended as a sister, "our sister"; not in a natural, but spiritual relation; one that was a member of the church at Cenchrea, and in full communion with it; for as it was usual to call the men brethren, it was common to call the women sisters. Elderly men were called fathers, younger men brethren; elderly women were styled mothers, and younger women sisters, who were partakers of the grace of God, and enjoyed the fellowship of the saints:

which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea. This place was a seaport of the Corinthians, distant from Corinth about seventy furlongs, or eight or nine miles: it was on one side of the Isthmus, as Lechea was on the other {g}; See Gill on "Ac 18:18". In the way to this place from the Isthmus, as Pausanias relates {h}, was the temple of Diana, and a very ancient sculpture; and in Cenchrea itself was the temple of Venus, and a wooden image; and near the flow of the sea was a Neptune of brass. But now, in this place, was a church of Jesus Christ; and since it was so near to Corinth, it shows that churches in those early times were not national, or provincial, but congregational. Of this church Phebe was a servant, or, as the word signifies, a minister or deacon; not that she was a teacher of the word, or preacher of the Gospel, for that was not allowed of by the apostle in the church at Corinth, that a woman should teach; see 1Co 14:34; and therefore would never be admitted at Cenchrea. Rather, as some think, she was a deaconess appointed by the church, to take care of the poor sisters of the church; though as they were usually poor, and ancient women; that were put into that service, and this woman, according to the account of her, being neither poor, nor very ancient; it seems rather, that being a rich and generous woman, she served or ministered to the church by relieving the poor; not out of the church's stock, as deaconesses did, but out of her own substance; and received the ministers of the Gospel, and all strangers, into her house, which was open to all Christians; and so was exceeding serviceable to that church, and to all the saints that came thither: though it is certain that among the ancient Christians there were women servants who were called ministers. Pliny, in an epistle of his to Trajan the emperor, says {i}, that he had examined two maids, "quae ministrae dicebantur", "who were called ministers", to know the truth of the Christian religion.

{e} Graec. Deseript. l. 2. p. 125. l. 3. p. 190. l. 4. p. 276. {f} Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 9. 1. & 35. 2. Jucbasin, fol. 24. 2. & 54. 2. {g} Plin. Natural Hist. l. 4. c. 4. Ptolem. l. 3. c. 16. {h} in Corinthiacis, p. 88. {i} Epist. l. 10. ep. 97.

Romans 16:2

Ver. 2. That ye receive her in the Lord,.... This is one thing he recommends her to them for, that they would receive her in a kind and friendly manner into their houses, and into their hearts' love and affections; admit her to their private meetings, and into church fellowship with them, and that as one that was in the Lord, and belonged to him; and also in his name, and for his sake:

as becometh saints; that is, both that they would treat her with that humanity, courteousness, Christian affection, and respect, as became them who were saints by calling and profession; and that they would use her as being one of the saints, a godly, holy person, and as such an one ought to be used, by virtue of the communion of saints:

and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: what her business was at Rome is not known; whether it was only to visit the saints; or whether it was to have a cause tried in any court of judicature there; or whether she came upon worldly business, as Lydia of Thyatira was at Philippi to sell her purple, when the Apostle Paul was there, it matters not: whatever assistance they could give her, either by directing her where the saints lived; or by giving her proper counsel and advice; or helping her forward in her worldly affairs; or whatever she was concerned in, this is desired; and is another thing for which the apostle recommends her to them, adding this reason,

for she hath been a succourer of many; or "a patroness of many" of the saints in necessity and distress. The word that is here used,
prostathv, is, as Harpocratian says {k} the name by which such were called by the Athenians, oi twn metoikwn proesthkutev, "that were over the sojourners", who had the care and direction of them. And such was this woman to the poor saints in Cenchrea, and the strangers that came thither; not as being in such an office by the order and appointment of the church, but what she cheerfully and voluntarily took up herself and performed at her own expense, otherwise there would not be so much in the character as to deserve such peculiar notice, nor she be so worthy of praise and commendation: moreover, the apostle observes, that he also partook of her succour and assistance,

and of myself also; which would hardly have been the case had she been one that had only the care of the poor sisters of the church, which was the office of the deaconess: but she being a rich generous woman, and the apostle having shared in her bounty, gratefully acknowledges it; and he the rather mentions it, as knowing it would the more endear her to the saints at Rome, who would take more notice of her for the respect she had shown to him.

{k} Lexic. decem Orator. p. 255.

Romans 16:3

Ver. 3. Greet Priscilla and Aquila,.... The former of these, who was a woman, and the wife of the latter, is in some copies called Prisca; and so the Vulgate Latin here reads it, as she is also called in **2Ti 4:19**. Her being named before her husband, is without design, for sometimes he is put before her, as in Ac 18:2. And it is a rule with the Jews {l}, that there is neither first nor last in the Scriptures; that is, strict order is not always observed; it is sometimes inverted, find nothing depends upon it: hence the reasons assigned by some, that she was first converted, or had more zeal than her husband, are uncertain and impertinent. She is called Priscilla in the Ethiopic version, as he is in the Arabic, Achilles: he was a Jew of Pontus, and was with his wife drove out of Rome by Claudius Caesar, when with her he went to Corinth, where he met with the Apostle Paul; and they being of the same craft, abode and wrought together at their trade of tent making; and when the apostle removed from thence, they went with him, and were with him at Ephesus; where, meeting with Apollos, who, though an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, yet being in some things deficient these two took him unto them, in a private way, and taught him the way of God's salvation more perfectly,
Ac 18:24: where they left the apostle is not certain; but either Claudius being dead, or the edict which ordered the Jews to depart from Rome being revoked, or not regarded, they returned thither again; and were here when the apostle wrote this epistle, and whom he salutes, calling them

my helpers in Christ Jesus; in spreading the Gospel, and promoting the kingdom, honour, and interest of Christ; for though they did not publicly preach, at least not Priscilla, yet they were very useful in their private conferences and instructions, both to ministers of the Gospel, as in the case of Apollos, and to young Christians: as the apostle, wherever he went, was instrument of the conversion of many souls; these were helpful privately in encouraging the young converts, comforting them with their own experiences and thereby helped them forward, instructed, strengthened, and established them; and so were greatly assistant to the apostle in the work of the Lord Jesus.

{l} T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 6. 3.

Romans 16:4

Ver. 4. Who for my life laid down their necks,.... That is, exposed themselves to great danger to save the apostle's life: the allusion is to the manner of executions by beheading, and to one person's laying down his head, and offering his neck to the executioner the room of another: this we are not to suppose was literally done; but the design of the expression is, that in some shape or another they risked their own lives for the apostle's; which might be done either at the insurrection in Corinth against Paul, when the Jews dragged him to the judgment seat of Gallio, and beat Sosthenes the ruler of the synagogue before him; or the uproar in Ephesus by Demetrius and the craftsmen, when Paul and his companions were in great danger; at both which times and places these two persons were, and being very zealous, were no doubt active to preserve the apostle, and which he acknowledges with thankfulness:

unto whom not only I give thanks, but all the churches of the Gentiles; both for the care they took of him, and the danger they exposed themselves to on his account; which the apostle expresses his sense of gratitude for, and which all the Gentile churches were under obligations to do likewise, since they had a common share in his labours and usefulness, he was the apostle of them all; and also for their help and assistance in carrying on the work of the Lord in all the churches of the Gentiles.

Romans 16:5

Ver. 5. Likewise greet the church that is in their house,.... Which was either their own family, which might be somewhat large, and consisting entirely or chiefly of religious persons; for when they were in other places they had a church in their house as well as Rome; see 1Co 16:19; or the saints at Rome, who used to meet privately at their house, and pray and sing praises together, speak to one another of the things of God, and build up one another in their most faith; and from their gathering together in the name of Christ, and for the worship of him, and among whom his presence, according to his promise, was, they are called a church, or an assembly of Christians.

Salute my well beloved Epaenetus; for though all the saints were beloved by the apostle, yet there were some, as this good man, for whom he might have, on some account or another, a particular affection; as our Lord, as man, had for his disciple John, though he loved all his disciples. There is one of this name, said to be one of the seventy disciples, and bishop of Carthage; See Gill on "Lu 10:1".

Who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ; that is, either he was one of the chief and principal for gifts and grace, or one of the first that was converted to Christ in those parts: the allusion is to the firstfruits under the law, which were offered unto the Lord, and were pledges of, and sanctified the rest. The Vulgate Latin, instead of Achaia, reads "Asia": and so it is read in the Alexandrian copy, and others: the reason of this different reading seems to be, because the house of Stephanas are said to be the firstfruits of Achaia, 1Co 16:15. But this hinders not but that Epaenetus might be so too, for he might be one of the family of Stephanas, who was now removed to Rome. If he was a Jew, his Jewish name might be Judah, the same with Epaenetus, in Greek.

Romans 16:6

Ver. 6. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. Some copies read, "you"; and so do the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions: and indeed it seems most likely that the persons on whom this good woman bestowed so much labour, and to whom she was so very serviceable, were the saints at Rome, where she lived, rather than the apostle and his companions; not but that she might have been in some parts where she had met with him, and his friends, and had been very indefatigable in assisting and supplying them, in a very generous and liberal manner, with all the necessaries of life; and was exceeding useful in encouraging the ministers of the Gospel, and in promoting the interest of Christ. Her name Mary is the same with Miriam in Hebrew; whether she was of Jewish extract is not certain, and who she was is not known: some have conjectured her to be the same that Ignatius wrote an epistle to; not Mary of Castabilis, but of Naples, who was at Rome in the time of Linus, the Latin version reads "Cletus", and of Clement, on whom he bestows very great characters; calling her most faithful, worthy of God, and a bearer of Christ, and in all things wise {m}: and in another letter {n} of his he represents her as exceeding learned, an exemplar of godly women, and having a church in her house. But both these epistles are thought, by learned men, to be falsely ascribed to him, and so not to be depended on.

{m} Ignat. Epist. ad Mariam, p. 69, 70. {n} lb. ad Heronem, p. 97. Ed. Voss.

Romans 16:7

Ver. 7. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen,.... According to the flesh, being perhaps not only of the same nation, Jews, but also of the same tribe, the tribe of Benjamin, and even of the same family, and might be nearly allied in blood. And though the apostle did not value himself upon his carnal descent, yet he had a very great value and affection for his relations after the flesh, even though they were only of the same nation; see **Ro 9:3**; and especially for such as were partakers of the grace of God, as these his kinsmen were. These were their Gentile names, the one Greek, the other Latin; but both were Jews. Grotius thinks that their Jewish names were, the one Masinissa, and the other Naarah; and that the latter was the wife of the former, but they rather seem both to be men; Junia should be read Junias, a contraction of Junilius:

and my fellow prisoners; either at Philippi, or in some other place; for though we read only of the apostle's being in prison at that place, and at Rome, yet it is certain from his own account, 2Co 11:23; that he was frequently imprisoned; and Clement of Rome says, he was seven times in bonds {o}, at one of which times these were bound with him, but when and where is not known. This is a greater character of them, and a greater honour to them, than to be called his kinsmen after the flesh:

who are of note among the apostles; were well known by, and in great account with the twelve apostles, though not of their number; they might be converted by them, and be followers of them in Judea; they are thought by some to be of the number of the seventy disciples, whom Christ himself sent forth to preach: Andronicus particularly is mentioned among them, and said to be bishop of Pannonia, or rather of Spain; See Gill on "Luke 10:1"; however, they might be preachers of the Gospel, and be persons of great fame and renown as such; for which reason they might be called apostles, that being a name sometimes given to ordinary ministers of the word, and to such who were messengers of the churches, **2Co 8:23**, as these might be, and were famous for their prudent, faithful, and diligent discharge of their office and duty:

who also were in Christ before me; which is to be understood, not of their secret being in Christ, as being loved by him, chosen in him, given to him, and represented by him in the covenant of grace; for they had not a place in Christ's heart, or a share in his love before him; wherefore the Arabic version is not only a bad one, but carries a false sense in it; which renders the clause thus, "who were in the love of Christ before me": nor were they chosen in Christ before him, for all the elect were chosen together in him before the foundation of the world; nor were they given to him, put into his hands, and made his care and charge before him; nor were they considered in Christ as their covenant head before him; Christ became their surety for them together, and received grace, blessings, and promises for them, and they in him before the world began; and was their common head and representative in time, in their nature; and they were all together crucified, buried, and raised with him, and set down with him in heavenly places together. But they were in the profession of faith, and in the church of Christ, and in the ministry of the word before him, being converted and brought to the faith of Christ before he was; which is the saints' open being in Christ, and is the effect and evidence of their being secretly in him from everlasting: this is to be created in Christ, or made new creatures in him; to be brought to believe in him, and even into him for righteousness, pardon, peace, acceptance, and eternal life, which are in him; and to live upon him, and in him, and derive all light and life, grace and strength, joy, peace, and comfort from him, as the branch derives its sap and nourishment from the vine, in which it is; and in this sense these men were in Christ before the apostle; they were converted persons, professors of religion, members of a church, and Gospel ministers before him: and though this is nothing in the business of salvation, who is called first or last; the one is equally as safe and as happy as the other; the thief that was called at the last hour, and the last man that will be called by grace in the world; yet it is a great blessing and mercy to be converted early; hereby a multitude of sins is prevented, and more, service done for Christ. And doubtless the apostle had this in view, and therefore gives these his kinsmen the preference to himself, that whilst he was a blasphemer of Christ, a persecutor of his people, and injurious to his interest, these made a profession of his name, preached his Gospel, and served his cause: it shows also, that they were persevering Christians, were pillars in the house of God, and never went out; and on account of their constancy and long standing, were worthy of respect. The apostle rises gradually in the character of these persons; as it was more to be fellow prisoners with him than to be his kinsmen, so it was more to be of note among the apostles, or to be eminent preachers of the Gospel, than to be fellow prisoners with him; and it was more to be in Christ than them all, than to be Paul's kinsmen, fellow prisoners with him, or to be known and approved of by the apostles, to be messengers of churches, preachers of the word, or even to be apostles themselves, and the chiefest of them; for such are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, are complete and perfect in him, are safe and secure, and can never perish; and being once in Christ, are always in him, and will be found in him living and dying, and at judgment.

{o} Epist. ad Corinth. p. 14.

Romans 16:8

Ver. 8. Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. This was a Roman name; the Vulgate Latin reads "Ampliatus", and so do the Alexandrian copy, and the Ethiopic version: some call him "Amphias", and "Amphiatus", and say, but whether on good authority I will not affirm, that this man was bishop of Odyssus; but be he who he will, the apostle had a singular affection for him; and that not upon any external account, as natural relation, riches, honour, learning, &c. but for the Lord's sake, and as he was in Christ, a member of him, and so in a spiritual relation to the apostle; a "brother" of his, as the Ethiopic version here calls him; and because he was honoured with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and for his usefulness in the Gospel of Christ Jesus.

Romans 16:9

Ver. 9. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ,.... This also was a Roman name, and which many of the popes of Rome have since taken to themselves; he is said to be one of the seventy disciples, and to be a bishop in Macedonia; See Gill on "Lu 10:1"; which is not very probable: others have conjectured him to be one of the pastors of the church of Rome, which is more likely; and if he was, but few of his successors have deserved the character given of him, an "helper in Christ"; in spreading the Gospel, and enlarging the kingdom and interest of Christ:

and Stachys my beloved; this is a Greek name, he is said to be one of the seventy disciples, and bishop of Byzantium;
See Gill on "Lu 10:1". According to the Roman martyrology, he was ordained bishop of the Byzantine church, by Andrew the apostle, but this is not to be depended on; he was, however, because of his faith in Christ, and love to him, or on such like spiritual accounts, very dear to the apostle.

Romans 16:10

Ver. 10. Salute Apelles approved in Christ,.... Origen was in doubt whether this was not the same person with Apollos the Alexandrian Jew, whom Aquila and Priscilla met with at Ephesus; but had he been intended, the apostle would doubtless have said more of him, he being so eminent and remarkable a preacher of the Gospel; though indeed the character here given is very considerable; besides, Apollos did not live at Rome, though it was not impossible he might be there at this time. The name seems to be a Greek one, there was a famous painter of this name in Greece; though it was also used among the Jews, and this person here might possibly, be a Jew; for Horace {p} speaks of one of this name, when he says, "credat Judaeus Apella"; by whom he means, not, as many have thought, a circumcised Jew in general, but a particular person, a Jew of that name: but it is of no importance whether he was a Jew or a Gentile; some say he was one of the seventy disciples, and bishop of Smyrna; See Gill on "Lu 10:1". However, he was one that was approved in Christ; approved of God in Christ, who approves of none but in Christ; not of any on account of their own commendations, or those of others; for not he that commendeth himself is approved of God, nor whom others commend; and oftentimes what is highly esteemed of men, is abominable in the sight of God; nor does he approve of any on the score of their own works and duties, or as in themselves considered, whose righteousness in as filthy rags, and they themselves polluted and unclean; but as in Christ his well beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased, and with all in him; and so God's elect are, as this man was approved of in him the beloved, even in his own Son, in whom both persons and services are accepted: moreover he was approved of by Christ, and that from eternity, as presented to him in the glass of his Father's purposes and decrees; and in time, as adorned with his own grace, and clothed with his justifying righteousness, and as faithfully serving him in his day and generation: he was also proved to be in Christ; he had proved it to himself, to his own satisfaction, by observing, upon self-examination, that Christ was in him; and he had made it to appear to others, by his faith in Christ, love to him, zeal for him, and close attachment to his Gospel, against all errors and heresies, whereby they are approved are made manifest; and that in the face of all opposition and persecution: he was tried and proved, and so approved by a variety of tribulations and afflictions; his faith remained firm, and he abode by the interest of a Redeemer; and so he was tried, or proved, as the Arabic version renders it, "in the religion of Christ"; in which he was sincere, upright, and faithful; his faith was unfeigned, his love without dissimulation, he was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile: if a preacher of the word, he did not corrupt it, but in sincerity, and as in the sight of God and Christ, spoke it; and if only a private believer, he was one that desired the sincere milk of the word, and was in all respects a sincere upright man in Christ; so the word here used may be understood, being the reverse of adokimov, reprobate, rejected, spurious, adulterate and disapproved: in a word, this character shows, that he was not only approved of God and Christ, but of all good men, and particularly the apostle; and that on account of his being in Christ, united to him, and closely attached to his service and interest, and was an honour to it:

salute them which are of Aristobulus's household. This was also a Greek name, though in use among the Jews; there was one of this name master of Ptolomy, king of Egypt, who was of Jewish extract, and of the priests, "In the hundred fourscore and eighth year, the people that were at Jerusalem and in Judea, and the council, and Judas, sent greeting and health unto Aristobulus, king Ptolemeus' master, who was of the stock of the anointed priests, and to the Jews that were in Egypt:" (2 Maccabees 1:10)

One of the sons of Hyrcanus, the high priest of the Jews, was called by this name; Herod had a son of this name, and it was a name much in use in his family, and among his descendants: who this man was is not known, nor is he himself saluted by the apostle; either because he was now dead, or was absent from Rome at this time; for some say he was sent into Britain, our isle, to preach the Gospel, of which he is said to be bishop, and one of the seventy disciples;
See Gill on "Luke 10:1"; or perhaps he might not be a believer in Christ, only his household believers, and therefore they only are taken notice of.

{p} Serraon. l. 1. Satyr. 5. prope finem.

Romans 16:11

Ver. 11. Salute Herodion my kinsman,.... According to the flesh, being of the same nation, a Jew; or of the same tribe, the tribe of Benjamin; or of the same family, and nearly allied in blood to him: though the name is of Attic, or Parthic original, and seems to be a derivative of Herod; this man is reckoned among the seventy disciples, and said to be bishop of Tarsus: See Gill on "Lu 10:1".

Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord; some have thought, that this Narcissus is the same man that Suetonius {q} and other writers speak of {r}, who was secretary to Claudius Caesar; a very great favourite of his, who amassed a great deal of wealth under him, and was raised to great honour and dignity by him: he himself is not saluted, either because he was not at home, which might be the case, if, as Ambrose, or rather Hilary the deacon on the text says, he was a presbyter and abroad, performing his office in foreign parts; or because he was dead, or rather not a believer: if he was the same with Claudius's favourite, he was dead before this time, being miserably put to death by Agrippina {s}, the wife of Claudius; and seems to have died a wicked man, and justly punished for his being the cause of the destruction of others, through his calumnies: nor are all of his household saluted, not being all converted persons; it being frequently the method of divine grace to take some of a family, and not all, and bring them to Zion; only those that were "in the Lord", on his heart, and in his hands, secretly represented by him, and united to him, and who were openly in him, being called by his grace, and brought to believe in him, and live upon him.

{q} In Vita Claud sect. 28. {r} Tacitus, Dio, &c. {s} Tacit. Hist. l. 13.

Romans 16:12

Ver. 12. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord,.... These two were women, and are said to be noble women of Iconium, whom the apostle converted there, and afterwards went to Rome the names are Greek {t}, though they might be Jewish women, since Tryphon is the name of a man among the Jews. Trypho, the famous Jew, with whom Justin Martyr had his dialogue, is well known, and perhaps is the same with R. Tarphon, or Tryphon, so often mentioned in the Misnic and Talmudic writings: however, as these were women, their labour cannot be understood of their labouring in the word of the Lord, or in the public ministry of it, since this was forbid by the apostle, and therefore would never commend them on account of it; but of their great usefulness and indefatigableness, in serving the interest of their dear Lord with their purses; in relieving the poor of the church, in entertaining and supplying the ministers of the Gospel, as well as by their private instructions, exhortations, and giving an account of their own experience, whereby they might greatly encourage, edify, and strengthen young converts, and other Christians, as Priscilla with her husband did; and were unwearied in doing everything that they were capable of, in promoting the Gospel and kingdom of Christ:

salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord; who being a woman also, and perhaps of Persic original, and might have her name from her country; her labour must be understood of the same kind with the former, only with this addition, that she abounded and exceeded in it; she is said by the Syriac scholiast to be the wife of Rufus, mentioned in Ro 16:13.

{t} Vid. Gutherleth. Animadv. Philolog. in Inscript. Smyrn. p. 115, &c.

Romans 16:13

Ver. 13. Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord,.... This was a Roman name; frequent mention is made Jewish writings {u} of one Turnus Rufus, a Roman officer,

that destroyed the temple, and ploughed up the city of Jerusalem; the name was in use among the Cyrenians, for one of the sons of Simon of Cyrene, whom the Jews compelled to carry the cross of Christ, was so called, Mr 15:21; and some have thought that the same person is here meant, nor is it unlikely; he is said to be one of the seventy disciples, and to be bishop of Thebes;
See Gill on "Lu 10:1". The apostle knew him, and that as one "chosen in the Lord"; meaning either that he was a choice believer in Christ, an excellent Christian, one of the highest form; for though all true believers have like precious faith, yet some are strong, and others weak, in the exercise of it; this man was eminent for his faith in Christ: or he might be one that was chosen to some office in the church, as to that of a deacon, or pastor; though had this been the case, it is much the particular office was not mentioned: rather therefore this is to be understood of his being chosen in Christ to grace and glory and that from all eternity; for the phrase is only used in one place more, **Eph 1:4**; and there most manifestly designs the election of persons in Christ, before the foundation of the world; which election is made not "for" Christ, or the sake of his merits, his blood, righteousness and sacrifice, which have no causal influence on this act, and which purely arises from the love and grace of God; nor merely "by" him as God equal with the Father, though this is true; but "in" him, as the head and representative of the chosen ones: this instance, as others, shows that election is not of nations, nor churches, but of particular persons; and so expresses the distinguishing, free, and sovereign grace of God in it, that one and not another should be chosen; though these are on an equal foot, and so not owing to foreseen faith, holiness, and good works. The apostle knew this man to be a chosen vessel, not by immediate revelation, or divine inspiration, but by his faith in Christ, and love to him, and by the power of the Gospel on him; and so may anyone know himself, or another man hereby to be chosen, and ought in a judgment of charity so to think of him, as long as his life is agreeably to his profession; see **1Th 1:4**. The apostle not only salutes this man, but his mother also, who doubtless was a believer in Christ, and highly respected by him:

and his mother and mine; the mother of Rufus in nature, and his mother in affection; and who very probably had endeared herself to the apostle by some kind offices, which she, as a Christian, had performed towards him; for the apostle cannot mean his own natural mother, besides Rufus's, whom he salutes, and whom Anselm on the place suggests might be at Rome; since it can hardly be thought he would have passed the mention of her in so transient a manner.

{u} T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 69. 2. T. Bab. Nedar. fol. 50. 2. Avoda Zara, fol.

20. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 65. 2. Juchasin, fol. 36. 2.

Romans 16:14

Ver. 14. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes,.... The two first of these names are Greek, and the persons called by them, with Herodion before mentioned, are taken notice of in the Roman martyrology, as disciples of the apostle; Asyncritus is said to be bishop of Hyrcania, and Phlegon of Marathon, and both of the seventy disciples; See Gill on "Lu 10:1"; Hermas is said to be bishop of Philippi, or Aquileia, and brother of Pope Pius the First, and to be the author of the book called Pastor, or the Shepherd, cited by many of the ancients; but all is doubtful and uncertain. Patrobas is a Roman name, Martial makes mention of it {w}; it seems to be composed of the Greek word pathr, or the Latin "pater", and the Syriac aba, "Abba", and signifies the same as the other two. This man might be a Jew, whose name was Abba; we often read of R. Abba in the Jewish writings {x}, and as the Jews were wont to have two names, the one Gentile, the other Jewish, Pater might be this man's Gentile name, and Abba his Jewish one, and both being put together, by contraction be called "Patrobas"; he is said to be of the seventy disciples, and to be bishop of Puteoli; See Gill on "Lu 10:1". The last of them, Hermes, is a Greek name, the same with Mercurius, which the Lystrians called Paul by, in Ac 14:12, who he was is not known; he is also mentioned among the seventy disciples, and said to be bishop of Dalmatia:

and the brethren which are with them; these seem to have lived together, with others who were their brethren, not in a natural but spiritual relation, and whom the apostle owned and loved as such.

{w} Epigr. l. 2. ep. 27. {x} Juchasin, fol. 70. 1, &c.

Romans 16:15

Ver. 15. Salute Philologus, and Julia,.... The first of these is a Greek name, and the name of a man, and signifies a lover of learning. This name Atteius assumed to himself, which Eratosthenes had done before him, because of his great learning {y}; this man is reckoned among the seventy disciples, and is said to be bishop of Sinope: See Gill on "Lu 10:1". Julia is a woman's name, and Roman, probably the wife of the former; one of Stephens's copies read, "Junia":

Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them; who all dwelt together also in one family; and were saints, by separation, imputation, and the effectual calling; were called to be saints, and lived as such, and had a place in the apostle's affections on that account: Nerio, or Neriene, according to Gellius {z}, was a name with the Sabines, signifying "strength", from whence came Nero; and Olympas is the same with Olympius, said to be of the seventy disciples, and a Roman martyr; See Gill on "Lu 10:1". It deserves some notice, that among all the persons here mentioned by name, known by the apostle to be at Rome, that he takes no notice of Peter; which surely he would have done, had he been, as the Papists say, bishop of Rome, and resided there.

{y} Suetonius de illustr. Gram. c. 10. {z} Noct. Attic, l. 13. c. 22.

Romans 16:16

Ver. 16. Salute one another with an holy kiss,.... Christian salutation is a wishing all temporal, spiritual, and eternal happiness, to one another; and which, as it should be mutual, should be also hearty and sincere, and this is meant by the "holy kiss"; the allusion is to a common custom in most nations, used by friends at meeting or parting, to kiss each other, in token of their hearty love, and sincere affection and friendship for each other; and is called "holy", to distinguish it from an unchaste and lascivious one; and from an hypocritical and deceitful one, such an one as Joab gave to Amasa, when, inquiring of his health, he took him by the beard to kiss him, and stabbed him under the fifth rib, 2Sa 20:9; and as Judas, who cried, hail master, to Christ, and kissed him, and betrayed him into the hands of his enemies, Mt 26:49. I say, it is an allusion to this custom, for it is only an allusion; the apostle did not mean that any outward action should be made use of, only that their Christian salutations should not be mere complaisance, or expressed by bare words, and outward gestures and actions, either of the hand or mouth; but that they should spring from real love and true friendship, and be without dissimulation, hearty and sincere:

the churches of Christ salute you. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "all the churches"; that is, in Greece, or in the neighbourhood where the apostle was, and who might know of his writing to this church, and thereby send their Christian salutations to it; or if they did not know of his writing, yet as he knew their sincere affections, and hearty good will to this church, and the members of it, he in their names sent greetings to them: this shows the communion of churches, and how they ought to wish and sincerely desire each other's welfare.

Romans 16:17

Ver. 17. Now I beseech you, brethren,.... The apostle being about to finish his epistle, and recollecting that he had not given this church any instructions about the false teachers, who had been the cause of all their differences and uneasiness, inserts them here; or he purposely put them in this place, amidst his salutations, that they might be taken the more notice of; and very pertinently, since nothing could more express his great affection and tender concern for them; and these instructions he delivers to them, not in an authoritative way, as he might, and sometimes did, but by way of entreaty, beseeching them, and with the kind and loving appellation of brethren, the more to engage them to attend to what he was about to say to them:

mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned. The men he would have taken notice of were such who divided them in their religious sentiments, introducing heterodox notions, contrary to the doctrine of the Scriptures, of Christ and his apostles, and which they had learned from them; such as justification by the works of the law, the observance of Jewish days, and abstinence from meats, enjoined by the ceremonial law, and that as necessary to salvation; to which some gave heed, and others not, and so were divided; whereas the doctrine of faith is but one, the Gospel is one uniform thing, all of a piece; and those that profess it ought to be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment: hence their minds were alienated from each other, and they began to despise and judge one another, yea, to go into factions and parties, being unwilling to receive and admit each other to communion; and thus by these men they were divided in sentiments, affection, and worship; and which must needs cause offence to the church and the godly members of it, as well as cause many so to be offended, as to stumble and fall from the doctrine of faith, and profession of it, and greatly stagger and distress weak believers, and bring a scandal on religion, and the name and ways of Christ among the world, as nothing does more so than the jars and discords among Christians: wherefore the apostle advises to "mark" such persons, look out for, narrowly watch, strictly observe, and diligently examine them: the metaphor is taken from watchmen, who look out from their watch tower, and observe who are coming, or pass by, and take up suspicious persons, and carefully inquire who they are, and what they are about, and whether friends or foes. So both ministers of the Gospel, and members of churches, should not be asleep, which is the opportunity false teachers take to sow the seeds of false doctrine, discord, and contention, but should watch, and be upon their guard, and look diligently, that none among them fail of, or fall from, the doctrine of grace, or any root of bitterness, error, or heresy as well as immorality, spring up, which may be troublesome, and defile others; they should observe, and take notice of such who are busy to spread false doctrine, should watch their motions, follow them closely, take them to an account, examine their principles according to the word of God; and if found to be contrary thereunto, note them as false teachers:

and avoid them; shun their ministry, drop attendance on it, depart far from them, have no private conversation with them, receive them not into their houses, nor bid them God speed; with such do not eat, have no communion with them at the Lord's table, withdraw from them as disorderly persons, who act contrary to the doctrine and order of the Gospel, and after proper admonition reject them from all fellowship with you.

Romans 16:18

Ver. 18. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ,.... They do not preach him, but themselves; they do not seek the things of Christ, his honour and glory, the spread of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his kingdom and interest; they seek their own things, worldly honour and applause, riches, wealth, and grandeur; they seek to please men, and so are not the servants of Christ: they introduced the observance of meats and drinks in to the kingdom of Christ, which it do not consist of, and neglected the doctrines of righteousness and peace, from whence springs joy in the Holy Ghost, and so in these spiritual things did not serve Christ; and therefore, as they were not acceptable to God, were not to be approved of by Christian men, but to be marked and avoided:

but their own belly; which they made a god of, and devoted themselves to the service of all their views were to gratify and indulge their sensual appetite. The false teachers among the Jews were particularly addicted to this vice: hence the apostle sometimes calls them dogs, **Php 3:2**, on account of their voraciousness, and who, in Isaiah's time, were greedy ones that could never have enough,
Isa 56:11; and in our Lord's time devoured widows' houses, under a pretence of long prayers for them, Mt 23:14; and were like the Cretians, evil beasts, and

slow bellies, **Tit 1:12**, unwilling to labour, and lived upon the spoil of others:

and by good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple: they were deceivers; they lay in wait to deceive, made use of the hidden things of dishonesty, walked in craftiness, and handled the word of God deceitfully; and therefore to be marked and avoided: they deceived "the simple", harmless, and innocent, that think no evil, nor are aware of any; who have little understanding of things; persons of weak minds, easy to be imposed upon; very credulous, ready to believe every word, so the simple man does, as Solomon says, Pr 14:15; and such false teachers choose to tamper with, and make their attacks upon, being able to gain upon them the most easily, as their father the devil, the old serpent, did, when he first assailed human nature: the "hearts" of these they deceive; they work upon their affections, blind their understandings, impose on their judgments, and corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ: and this they do "by good words and fair speeches"; either by making use of the words of Scripture, and a show of arguments taken from thence; so Satan cited Scripture in his dispute with our Lord; and so heretics, in all ages, have pretended toil in favour of their principles, by which means they have gained on many to follow their pernicious ways; or by using words and phrases that faithful ministers of Christ use, such as the grace of God, the righteousness of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, but in a different sense; as some among us now frequently make mention of them, when they mean no more by them than the light of nature within them, and the dictates of a natural conscience; or by an elegant style, a set of fine words, a flow of rhetorical expressions, great swelling words of vanity, which such men generally affect, and so work themselves into the admiration of the common people; or by doctrines suited to the carnal minds and reasonings of men, which tickle human nature, and swell it with pride and vanity; as by preaching up the purity and power of it, asserting man's free will, and the strength of it to that which is good; the capacity of man to keep the law, and perform good works; justification by them before God, and acceptance with him, on account of them; atonement for sins committed, by repentance and reformation; that God does not regard trifling things, some sins are venial, and easily passed over; that concupiscence is no sin; God does not rigorously exact duty, he takes the will for the deed, and is merciful unto all, and if but sincere, there is no doubt of heaven; and such men, generally speaking, instead of correcting vice, and reproving men for their sins, connive at them, indulge them in them, soothe and flatter, commend and defend them, whereby they attach them to their persons and interest.

Romans 16:19

Ver. 19. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men,.... That is, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, "the fame" and report of their obedience to the faith, to the doctrine of the Gospel, and the ministers of it, was spread everywhere, was well known to everyone, and spoken of with commendeth among all the churches in all nations: and this the apostle mentions as another reason why they should beware of false teachers, since it would be greatly to their reproach, should they, after all this, drop that form of doctrine which they had obeyed, desert the faithful ministers of the word, and follow these false teachers; should this be the case, they would be as notorious for their disobedience, as now for their obedience: and moreover, the apostle might hereby suggest, that whereas it was everywhere known how readily and at once they embraced the Gospel of Christ; this credulity and readiness to believe, which was their commendation, might have invited false teachers among them, who might hope and take encouragement from hence the more easily to gain upon them; and therefore they ought to be upon their watch and guard, and beware of them, and not believe every spirit:

I am glad therefore on your behalf; that they had so cheerfully and readily embraced the Gospel, and from the heart obeyed that form of doctrine delivered to them; and that their praise for this was in all the churches of Christ, and had everywhere a good report on this account:

but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil; which is just the reverse of natural and unregenerate men, who are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge; some reference seems to be had to the words of Christ in Mt 10:16; the apostle's meaning is, that though he rejoiced at the heartiness and simplicity of their obedience, and the credit they obtained abroad on account of it, yet was he not without his fears and jealousies concerning them; and could not but greatly wish them more wisdom to understand the doctrines of the Gospel, to discern things that differ, and approve that which is the most excellent, and hold fast that which is good; and with all their harmlessness, innocence, and simplicity, prudently guard against all evil doctrines and principles, such as might unawares lead them into bad practices, dishonourable to religion, and uncomfortable to themselves.

Romans 16:20

Ver. 20. And the God of peace,.... See Gill on "Ro 15:33";

shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. Some read this by way of wish or prayer, "may the God of peace bruise"; so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and the Alexandrian copy; but others as ours, as a promise, or as expressive of the apostle's faith and hope in this matter; and which he mentions to encourage the members of this church to be upon their guard, and make head against these false teachers; since in a little time they might be assured of victory over Satan and these his emissaries: as it is before suggested, that the methods these men used to beguile weak minds were much like those that Satan used when he attacked our first parents, so here is a manifest allusion to what was said by way of threatening to him, "it", the woman's seed, "shall bruise thy head", **Ge 3:15**; and which has had its accomplishment in Christ, who has not only destroyed the works of the devil, but him himself, and spoiled his principalities and powers, and bruised him and them under his feet, when he led captivity captive; and though, for the trial of the graces of his people, Satan is permitted to attack them in various shapes, yet in a short time he will be bruised under their feet, as he is already under their Lord and master's. The apostle refers not so much to his coming among them in a short time, when he might hope and believe that he should be an instrument of crushing these men Satan made use of, of quelling the contentions they raised, and putting a stop to the divisions they made, and under the influence, and by the assistance of the God of peace, restore them to their former peace and tranquillity, though it is a sense not to be despised; much less does he refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was to be in a very short time, when the crucifiers of Christ and the persecutors of the saints would have the wrath of God come upon them to the uttermost, since these Romans had no great and immediate concern with them; nor does he regard the spread of the Gospel in the Gentile world, whereby Satan fell as lightning from heaven, and was cast out of the idol temples, for this was greatly fulfilled already: but rather he refers to the time of Constantine, when Satan's seat at Rome was overturned, when he was cast down from his throne and trampled under feet, who had deceived the whole world, the whole Roman empire, when the Gospel triumphed over its secret and open enemies, profane persecutors, and perfidious teachers, over idolatry and superstition on the one hand, and error and heresy on the other, though this did not last long; wherefore some have thought the apostle refers to the latter day, when Satan shall be bound a thousand years, or to the last of all, when he shall be for ever under the feet of the saints, and never be able to give them any more trouble; and this the apostle might say would be shortly, since the second coming of Christ was expected to be quickly: yea, this may be applied to the case of every believer now, and be for his encouragement to be vigilant and on his guard against Satan, to resist him, repel his temptations, and oppose his emissaries; since he may assure himself he shall be more than a conqueror over him through Christ, that has loved him, and that in a very little time, when death comes, and he shall enter into the joy of his Lord, where he will be out of the reach of Satan, and unmolested by him.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen: to enable you to abide by the truth; to mark and avoid the authors of sects, and causes of divisions, and offences; to oppose error and defend truth; to keep from falling, to stand against every assault of Satan, and to bear up under every temptation of his; to get the victory over him, and to preserve them safe to the kingdom and glory of Christ.

Romans 16:21

Ver. 21. Timotheus my work fellow,.... Now follow the salutations of the friends and companions of the apostle: we may imagine that when this epistle was just concluding, that these his friends being about him, one said, pray send my Christian salutation to our dear friends at Rome, so said a second, and likewise a third, and so on, and Timotheus he began. This is the same person with Timothy, a disciple the apostle met with at Derbe, whose father was a Greek, and his mother a Jewess, and a believer in Christ. This same man he circumcised because of the Jews, and took him along with him, and was his companion in his travels, and very assisting to him in the work of the ministry, in spreading the Gospel, and promoting the interest of Jesus Christ; and therefore he here calls him his "work fellow"; he wrote two epistles to him afterwards when at a distance front him, in which he often calls him his son, his dear and well beloved son, having a great affection for him, because as a son with a father he served with him in the Gospel of Christ:

and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater my kinsmen salute you. This Lucius was either Lucius of Cyrene, who was one of the prophets in the church at Antioch, Ac 13:1, though indeed he is never said to travel with the apostle, or to be at Corinth, from whence this epistle was written; or rather, therefore, as others think, Luke the evangelist, who was a constant companion of the apostle, and was at Corinth with him at this time, as appears from Ac 20:5; Jason no doubt is he of Thessalonica, that received Paul and Silas into his house, and when an uproar was made concerning them, was brought before the rulers of the city, and gave security for them, Ac 17:5. This is a Jewish name, and he himself was a Jew, as is clear from his being a kinsman of the apostle's; his name was ewvy, "Jeshua" or "Jesus"; so we read of one Jason, the brother of Onias the high priest of the Jews,

"But after the death of Seleucus, when Antiochus, called Epiphanes, took the kingdom, Jason the brother of Onias laboured underhand to be high priest," (2 Maccabees 4:7)

and whose name, as Josephus {a} relates, was Jesus, but he chose to be called Jason, very likely because that was a name among the Greeks, whose fashions he was fond of. Sosipater was Sopater of Berea, who, with others, accompanied the apostle into Asia, Ac 20:4; he also was a Jew, and his Jewish name, as Grotius conjectures, might be Abisha, or rather Abishua, the name of the son of Phinehas the high priest, **1Ch 6:4**. Mention is also made of one of this name, Sosipater, in

"12. Howbeit Dositheus and Sosipater, who were of Maccabeus' captains, went forth, and slew those that Timotheus had left in the fortress, above ten thousand men. 24. Moreover Timotheus himself fell into the hands of Dositheus and Sosipater, whom he besought with much craft to let him go with his life, because he had many of the Jews' parents, and the brethren of some of them, who, if they put him to death, should not be regarded." (2 Maccabees 12:12,24)

These three last were Paul's kinsmen after the flesh, as well as in the spirit; being of the same nation, and perhaps of the same tribe, and it may be of the same family; they are all three mentioned among the severity disciples: Lucius is said to be bishop of Laodicea in Syria, Jason of Tarsus, and Sosipater of Iconium;
See Gill on "Lu 10:1".

{a} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 5. sect. 1.

Romans 16:22

Ver. 22. I Tertius, who wrote this epistle,.... This name is a Latin one, and perhaps the person might be a Roman, for the names Secundus, Tertius, Quartus, Quintus, &c. were common with the Romans; unless it may be thought, as it is by some, that this man was the same with Silas, who was a constant companion of the apostle; and the Hebrew word vlv is the same as Tertius; he also is numbered among the seventy disciples, and said to be bishop of Iconium; See Gill on "Lu 10:1". Whosoever he was, it is certain he was an amanuensis of the apostle, who wrote this letter, either from the apostle's notes, or from his mouth.

Salute you in the Lord. Some connect this phrase, "in the Lord", with the other, "wrote this epistle", and make the sense to be that he wrote this epistle for the Lord's sake, for his honour and glory; which he might do, though he wrote it not by inspiration, being only scribe to the apostle; but it is better connected with the word "salute", and the sense is, that his salutation was not a mere form, nor only concerned their temporal good, but their spiritual welfare; that he wished them well in the Lord, that they might have much communion with him, and larger measures of grace from him.

Romans 16:23

Ver. 23. Gaius mine host,.... There was one Gaius a Macedonian, that was with the apostle at Ephesus, Ac 19:29; and another Gaius of Derbe, that accompanied him into Asia, Ac 20:4; whether either of these, as the latter seems more probable, was this person, is not certain. However, it seems very likely that it is the same Gaius the apostle baptized at Corinth, **1Co 1:14**; and some have thought him to be the same that the Apostle John wrote his third epistle to, and indeed the characters of hospitality and generosity there given him well agree with this, who was not only the apostle's host that entertained him in a kind and liberal manner, but of all the saints:

and of the whole church, saluteth you; that is, of the church at Corinth, to whom he was kind and hospitable, even to as many as stood in need of his assistance; or of the church of Christ in general, being beneficent and liberal to all Christian strangers that came that way, lodged them at his house, and provided every thing proper and convenient for them. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that there was a public hospital or receptacle for strangers at Corinth, in imitation of the Jews, who had a place adjoining to their synagogues to entertain travellers in; and that Gaius was the chief officer and overseer of this house, who, discharging his trust well, is deservedly commended. That the Jews had places near their synagogues for such a purpose is, certain. It is said {b},

"why do they sanctify (or consecrate the day?) that travellers may do their duty, who eat, and drink, and sleep in the synagogue."

The gloss on it is,

"not the synagogue itself, but the chambers which were near the synagogue, are called the synagogue, and from thence they heard the consecration."

And elsewhere {c} it is said,

"in the synagogues they neither eat nor drink--but there is a place near the synagogue where travellers used to sleep and eat;"

and then follows what is said before. And Maimonides {d} observes,

"there is no sanctification (of the sabbath) but in the place where the meal is eaten; so a man may not sanctify in one house, and eat in another; but if he sanctifies in this, he must eat in this; but why do they sanctify in the synagogue? because of travellers who eat and drink there."

Upon which his commentator remarks {e}, that

"they do not eat in the synagogue at all, but they eat,
tonkh tybl Kwmoh tybb, "in a house near the synagogue", where they sit at the time of hearing the sanctification."

But whether there was such an house at Corinth near the place of public worship, or any where else for this purpose, is not certain; and to make Gains only an overseer over such an house, though a faithful one, greatly sinks his character; since one would conclude from hence, that his entertainment of the apostle, and other saints, was at his own expense.

Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you; whom the apostle is said to leave at Corinth, **2Ti 4:20**, and at another time to send along with Timotheus into Macedonia, if the same person is intended; for these do not seem so well to accord with his being in such an office, which must require attendance, and would not admit of going from place to place with the apostle, or of being sent by him. The city, of which he was chamberlain, was the city of Corinth, where the apostle and this Erastus were, when this epistle was wrote. The word translated "chamberlain", is often used for a steward; and here it signifies such an officer as had the care of the city chest or coffer, and distributed the public money; and seems to answer to the "quaestor urbanus", or city treasurer, among the Romans, whose business it was to receive the city accounts, and disburse at all occasions of public expenses; so that this was a place of honour and trust; hence it appears, that though not many, yet some rich and honourable were called by grace, and embraced the Gospel. His name signifies beloved, and is the same with David in Hebrew. What nation he was of is not certain, whether a Roman, a Greek, or Jew; one of this name is reckoned among the seventy disciples, and it said to be bishop of Paneas, or of the Philippians; See Gill on "Lu 10:1".

Quartus a brother; not of Tertius, nor of Erastus, nor of the apostle according to the flesh, as some have thought, but a brother in a spiritual relation. This man, as appears from his name, was a Roman; probably had before lived at Rome, and therefore sends his salutations to the Christians there: he is mentioned among the seventy disciples, and said to be bishop of Berytus;
See Gill on "Lu 10:1".

{b} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 101. 1. {c} Gloss. in T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 3. 2.
{d} Hilchot Sabbat, c. 29. sect. 8. {e} Maggid. Misnah in ib.

Romans 16:24

Ver. 24. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. This verse is placed by the Syriac at the end of the chapter, and is wanting in the Ethiopic version, and in one ancient copy, being, excepting the word all, the same as at the end of Ro 16:20; but inasmuch as it is in all other copies, it ought to be repeated and stand here: the reason of the repetition may either be, because the former might be written by his amanuensis, and this with his own hand, as was usual with him in all his epistles, by which they might be known to be his, **2Th 3:17**; or the apostle having so great an affection for this church, knew not how to take his leave of them, but repeats his valediction again and again, as here, and in
Ro 16:20. Ro 16:25 are placed in some copies, at the end of Ro 16:14, and omitted here, as they are by the Arabic version, which begins thus, "to the only most wise God, Jesus Christ": and so considers the following doxology as be, longing to Christ, and to him as God, and as the only most wise God.

Romans 16:25

Ver. 25. Now to him that is of power to stablish you,.... God is here described by his power, and the particular instance of it is the establishing of his people; that is, in the Gospel, as the Syriac version reads the next clause, and in the profession of it, with grace in their hearts, and in the exercise of it, and more lively and cheerful discharge of duty; See Gill on "Ro 1:11";

according to my Gospel; this is the means by which God usually establishes his people in faith and holiness; it is, indeed, an act of divine power, and which there is reason to hope and believe will be exerted; for words which express the power of God to do this, or the other thing, generally import willingness to do it, as the word does here; but then this is commonly done in the use of means: and that is the Gospel, than which nothing has a greater tendency to, and is better calculated for, and with a divine blessing always issues in the establishment of the saints. The apostle calls the Gospel his, not because he was the author of it, or the subject of it; but because he was the minister of it; it was that Gospel which he was sent and qualified to preach, and did preach fully and faithfully, and which he explains by the following clauses:

and the preaching of Jesus Christ: being that Gospel which Jesus Christ himself preached, for which he was anointed and sent, and which first began to be spoken by him in its power and purity, and in such a manner as it never was before or since: and of which he also is the subject; it treats of his person, offices, righteousness, blood, sacrifice, and salvation; and which when preached aright is done in his name, by his authority, through gifts, grace, and strength received from him, and with a view to his glory: it follows as a further explanation of it,

according to the revelation of the mystery; by which is meant, not, as some think, only the calling and conversion of the Gentiles through the preaching of the Gospel, though what is said of it well agrees with it; see **Eph 3:3**; nor merely the mystery of Christ's incarnation and redemption by him; but the whole Gospel, and all the truths of it, which is often in Scripture called a "mystery", because the reason of many of its important doctrines does not clearly appear to the carnal reason of men; and the "modus" of several of them will ever remain inexplicable by us, as the doctrine of the Trinity, the sonship of Christ, and his incarnation, the resurrection, &c. though the things themselves are most clearly revealed, as here "revelation" is ascribed unto them; by which is meant not that internal revelation of them, by the Spirit of God to the souls of men, though absolutely necessary to the understanding of them in a spiritual manner; nor the revelation of them to the apostles by Christ, by which, and not by men, they were taught and received; but that revelation which they have made of them in the external ministry of the word:

which was kept secret since the world began, or "from eternal times": from all the ages of the former dispensation, or that have run out from the beginning of the world; not that this mystery of the Gospel was entirely unknown, nor any hints given of it in those ages; for there certainly were, as to our first parents after the fall, to Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, and others; but it was but obscurely revealed, only some dark intimations were given of it; it was exhibited in types, shadows, and sacrifices; and, in a comparative sense, was wrapped up in darkness and silence, in reference to the more clear discovery and open exhibition of it under the Gospel dispensation.

Romans 16:26

Ver. 26. But now is made manifest,.... In these last days, in which God has spoken by his Son, by whom the doctrines of grace are most clearly revealed, and fully dispensed; and by his apostles, who were blessed with a clear insight into them, and with extraordinary gifts to minister them;

and by the Scriptures of the prophets; or prophetic writings, in which these truths are hinted, and by which, being made manifest by Christ and his apostles, they are attested and confirmed;

according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith; that is, it is by the express order and command of that God who is from everlasting to everlasting, that the mystery of the Gospel is made manifest by the preaching of the apostles being witnessed to by the law and prophets in all its doctrines; particularly justification by Christ's righteousness, remission of sins through his blood, and salvation by his sufferings and death; that this should be made known not only in the land of Judea, but to all the nations of the world; for this end, that many souls may be brought to submit to the righteousness of faith, to embrace the doctrine of faith, make a profession of it, be subject to the ordinances of it, live by faith on Christ, and also soberly, righteously and godly in this world: if this commandment refers, as it seems to do, to the order of Christ to his apostles, to preach the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles, to the Jews first, and upon their rejection of it, to turn to the Gentiles; for so, says the apostle, has the Lord commanded us, Ac 13:46; here is a clear proof that Christ is God, and that he is the everlasting God.

Romans 16:27

Ver. 27. To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ,.... This may be understood of God the Father, who is the only wise God, originally, essentially, and infinitely; though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and whose infinite wisdom appears in the works of creation and providence, in redemption and salvation by Christ, and in the whole scheme of the Gospel so largely commended in the foregoing verses: and the glory of all is displayed in, and to be given to him through Christ as Mediator; as the glory of his power and wisdom, particularly mentioned, who is the wisdom of God and the power of God; and the glory of the Gospel, of which Christ is the sum and substance; and the glory of salvation by him, and indeed of all his perfections; which is most illustriously manifested in it, in the contrivance, impetration, and application of it; and this glory is to be ascribed to him

for ever, throughout the endless ages of eternity, as it will be by angels and men; to which the apostle sets his

Amen, as wishing that so it might be, and as firmly believing that so it will be: the subscription of the epistle runs thus, "written to the Romans from Corinthus", and sent "by Phebe, servant of the church at Cenchrea": which though it is not in every copy, nor are the subscriptions at the end of the epistles always to be depended upon; yet this seems to be a right and true one, both with respect to the place from whence, and the person by whom it was sent, as well as with respect to the persons to whom it is inscribed, of which there is no doubt.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST CORINTHIANS

This was not the first epistle that was written by the apostle to the Corinthians, for we read in this of his having written an epistle to them before, **1Co 5:9**, but this is the first epistle of his unto them, that is now extant; and has been received by the churches, as of divine authority, being written by the inspiration of God, of which there has been no doubt in any age. The apostle himself was nearly two years at Corinth; where he preached with great success; and was the instrument of converting many persons, who by him were formed into a church state, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, as is clear from many passages in this epistle, and whom be left in good order, and in great peace and harmony; but quickly after his departure, false teachers got in among them, and bad principles were imbibed by many of them, and evil practices prevailed among them, and they fell into factions and parties, which occasioned the apostle to write this epistle to them, as well as their writing to him concerning certain things, they desired to have his judgment and opinion of, **1Co 7:1**, It is thought to be written about the year of Christ 55, and in the first year of Nero, though some place it in the year 59. It was written not from Philippi, as the subscription added to it affirms, but from Ephesus, as appears from 1Co 16:8, and, it may be, after the uproar raised there by Demetrius, as should seem from a passage in 1Co 15:32. The matter of it is various. The apostle first rebukes them for their schisms and divisions; suggests that their regard to the wisdom of men, and the philosophy of the Gentiles, had brought the simplicity of the Gospel into contempt with them; blames them for their conduct in the case of the incestuous person, and urges them to put him away from them; reproves them for going to law with one another before Heathen magistrates, and warmly inveighs against fornication; and then answers several questions, and resolves several cases concerning marriage; treats of things offered to idols, and of the maintenance of ministers; and dissuades from idolatry, and all appearance of it; takes notice of the unbecoming conduct of the members of the church at the Lord's supper; and discourses concerning the nature and use of spiritual gifts, and commends charity above them; observes and corrects some irregularities in the use of their gifts; proves by various arguments the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which some of them denied; exhorts to a collection for the poor saints, and to several other things, and concludes the epistle with the salutations of others, and of himself.

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST CORINTHIANS 1

This chapter contains the general inscription of the epistle, the usual salutation, and a special thanksgiving for blessings received; after which the apostle intimates the occasion of his writing, the divisions about their ministers, which gives him an opportunity of discoursing concerning the nature, end, use, and efficacy of the preaching of the Gospel. The inscription is in **1Co 1:1**, in which an account is given of the persons concerned in this epistle; and first of Paul, the only inspired writer of it, who is described by his name, by which he went among the Gentiles; by his office, an apostle of Jesus Christ; and by the manner in which he came into it, being called to it not through any merit of his own, but through the sovereign will and pleasure of God: and next mention is made of Sosthenes, a brother minister of the Gospel, who was with the apostle, and joined in the salutation of the church, to whom the epistle is written; who are described, by their general character, a church of God; by the place of their abode, and seat of their church state, Corinth; and by their special characters, sanctified in Christ by election, and saints through the effectual calling; and with them are joined all other saints in Achaia, that belonged to them and the apostle, that called upon the name of the Lord; and then follows the salutation in **1Co 1:3**, usual in all the epistles; after that a thanksgiving to God for the grace they had by Christ in general, **1Co 1:4**, and particularly for their gifts of utterance and knowledge, which were plentifully bestowed upon them, **1Co 1:5**, and were a confirmation to them of the Gospel of Christ, **1Co 1:6**, and by which it appeared, that they were not behind other churches in these things; and are commended for their waiting for the coming of Christ, **1Co 1:7**, by whom the apostle assures them, they would be so confirmed in the mean while, as to be presented blameless by him in that day, **1Co 1:8**, of which they might be assured from the faithfulness of God, who had called them to communion with Christ, **1Co 1:9**, upon which he exhorts them to unity of affection and judgment, for this end, that there might be no schisms among them; and this he does in a way of entreaty, and that by the name of Christ, and from the consideration of their being brethren, **1Co 1:10**, suggesting hereby, that there were divisions among them: and signifies, that he had good reason to believe it, having had an account of them from a family of repute among them, **1Co 1:11**, and then expressly mentions what their differences were about, namely, their ministers, **1Co 1:12**, and uses arguments to dissuade them from their dividing principles and practices; showing, that one was their Lord and master, Christ, who was crucified for them, and in whose name they were baptized, and not his ministers, **1Co 1:13**, and since some among them made an ill use of their having been baptized by the apostle, he is thankful that he had baptized no more of them, and mentions by name those that he had baptized, **1Co 1:14**, and gives a reason for it, taken from the principal end of his mission by Christ, which was to preach the Gospel, and not only or chiefly to baptize, **1Co 1:17**. The manner in which he was sent to preach, and did preach it, is observed by him, not in the words of human wisdom; and that for this reason, lest either the Gospel should be of no use, or the effect of it should be ascribed to a wrong cause; and then be obviates an objection that might be made to this way of preaching, that hereby the Gospel would be brought into contempt; to which he answers, by granting that it would be, and was reckoned foolishness by them that were blinded and were lost; and by observing on the other hand, that it was effectual to saving purposes to others, **1Co 1:18**, and though the former sort might be the wise and prudent of this world, this need seem no strange thing, since the infatuation of such persons is no other than what was foretold would be, as appears from a testimony out of Isa 29:14, cited in **1Co 1:19**, upon which some questions are put, and inquiries made, after men of wisdom and learning, whose wisdom God made foolish, **1Co 1:20**, the reason of which was, because they did not make a right use of their natural wisdom in the knowledge of God, wherefore it was his pleasure to save men by means esteemed foolishness by them, **1Co 1:21**, and these wise men, who accounted the preaching of the Gospel foolishness, are distinguished into two sorts, Jews and Gentiles; the one requiring miracles to confirm it, the other seeking wisdom in it, **1Co 1:22**, but finding neither, though there were really both, the preaching of a crucified Christ was a stumbling to the one, and folly to the other, **1Co 1:23**, though those that were called by grace from among them, whether Jews or Gentiles, had different sentiments of it, and of Christ preached in it, in whose esteem he was the power and wisdom of God, **1Co 1:24**, the reason of which was, because there are superior wisdom and power in Christ and his Gospel, which the apostle, an ironical concession, calls the foolishness and weakness of God, to the wisdom and power of men, **1Co 1:25**, and instances in the effectual calling and conversion of the Corinthians, who for the most part were not the wise, the mighty, and noble, **1Co 1:26**, but the foolish, weak, and base; and the end of God, in the call of such, was to draw a veil over and bring to confusion the wisdom and power of men, **1Co 1:27**, and also that no creature whatever should dare to glory before him, **1Co 1:29**, but the true object of glorying in is pointed at, the Lord Jesus Christ; and the reason of it, all blessings of grace being in him, and from him, is suggested, **1Co 1:30**, so that whoever glories, should glory in him, **1Co 1:31**.

Ver. 1. Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ,.... The author, or rather the writer of the following epistle; for the Holy Ghost was the author and dictator of it, and which was never doubted: he is described by his, name Paul, though his Jewish name was Saul; and very probably he being a Jew by birth, and yet born in a Roman city, might have two names, the one Jewish, the other Gentile; and by the one he went when among the Jews, and by the other when concerned with the Gentiles: and also by his office, "an apostle of Jesus Christ"; immediately called, and sent forth by him; had the Gospel from him by immediate revelation, and a commission to preach it; and which high office was confirmed by signs and wonders, and mighty deeds; by the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost conferred on him, and on others under his ministry; and by the eminent success which attended the preaching of the Gospel by him. This his character he the rather mentions, because some in this church, through the insinuations of the false apostles, demurred upon it; whereas this was not a mere name given him by men, and by which he was only commonly called by them, but was an office he was "called" to by Christ; he did not rush into it, or assume it of himself, but had a divine warrant for it; for he was invested with it,

through the will of God: both by the secret will and purpose of God, by which he was a chosen vessel, to bear the name of Christ among the Gentiles, **Ac 9:15**; and by the revealed will of God, signified by the Spirit of God, who said, "separate me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have called them", Ac 13:2, and shows, that it was not owing to any worth or merit in him, but purely to the free grace and sovereign will and pleasure of God, that he was made an apostle of Christ:

and Sosthenes our brother. This seems to be the same man, who was the chief ruler of the synagogue of the Jews at Corinth; and was converted to the Christian faith by the Apostle Paul whilst there, as appears from his favouring the cause of the apostle, for which the Jews beat him before the judgment seat, and yet Gallio the Roman deputy took no notice of it, Ac 18:17: in the Syriac dictionary {a} mention is made of one Sosthenes, governor of a city, one of the seventy disciples, who was educated at Pontus, and cast into the sea by the order of Nouna; and is also said to be bishop of Colophon in Ionia, See Gill on "Lu 10:1"; but without any reason. This person the apostle joins with him, not as in equal office with him, but as a brother in Christ, and very probably a ministering brother, and a companion of his; and the rather, because he might be well known to the Corinthians, and respected by them; wherefore he chose to join him with him, to show their agreement in doctrine and discipline, and in advice to them, which might have the greater weight with them; see Ac 18:17.

{a} Bar Bahluli apud Castel. Lex. Polyglott. col. 2444. Vid. Euseb, Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 12.

1 Corinthians 1:2

Ver. 2. Unto the church of God which is at Corinth,.... This epistle is inscribed to the saints at Corinth; who are described by their being "the church of God", a particular congregated church; a number of persons gathered out of the world, and joined together in holy fellowship, carrying on the worship of God together, and walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; a very high character this, to be called the church of God, which is the pillar and ground of truth: and it may be observed, that this is here given to a people, among whom were many irregularities, errors, disorders, and divisions; which shows, that a church of God is not to be unchurched for everything that is amiss in them: they are further described by the place of their abode, Corinth, the "metropolis" of Achaia; a very large and opulent city, a place of great trade and commerce, and famous both for its wealth and wisdom; but not so famous for anything as this, that there was a church of Christ in it; of the city of

Corinth, See Gill on "Ac 18:1"; and of the church, See Gill on "Ac 18:8". The members of it in general, for it cannot be thought to hold good of every individual, are said to be

sanctified in Christ Jesus; not by baptism, for they were sanctified before that; but were set apart, or chosen in Christ from all eternity, to grace here, and glory hereafter; justified by the blood and righteousness of Christ, in which sense the word "sanctified" is sometimes used; and to whom Christ was made "sanctification" and righteousness; and in consequence of which they were sanctified by his Spirit in his name, out of that fulness of grace and holiness which is in him: wherefore it follows,

called to be saints; for though they were chosen to holiness in Christ, and through sanctification of the Spirit unto salvation, yet before calling were unholy; though Christ had given himself for them to sanctify and purify them, yet whilst uncalled were impure; they fell in Adam, and became both guilty and filthy through his transgression; and by their first birth were unholy and unclean, and were so in their lives and conversations; nor are any holy by natural descent: these were not born saints, nor made so by their own free will, but were become such through the powerful grace of God in the effectual calling; in which not only desires after holiness, but principles of holiness were wrought in them; and by which they were called to the practice of external holiness, or to live an holy life and conversation. And this epistle is not only inscribed to these saints at Corinth, but to them,

with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord; as in Corinth, so in any part of Achaia, of which Corinth was the chief city. Invocation of the name of Christ not only respects prayer to him, but includes the whole of religious worship: see
Ro 10:13; and this being given to Christ, and perforated in his name, is a very considerable proof of his true and proper deity; and the Ethiopic version here styles him, "God, our Lord Jesus Christ"; for none but God is to be invoked; nor can any but a divine person, one that is truly and properly God, without idolatry, be regarded as the object of religious worship and adoration. The phrase

both theirs and ours, either, as some think, refers to "every place" and so read the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and the sense is, that the apostle inscribes his epistle to all that call upon the name of Christ, whether in Judea or in the Gentile world, in the place where the apostle was, or the Corinthians were, or any of the other saints in Achaia were; signifying, that invocation of God is not confined to any particular place, but that men may now lift up holy hands prayer to God everywhere; or rather it refers to "our Lord", and shows that Christ is the common Lord of his people, whom they all invoke, and by whom they are called, and therefore ought to love one another.

1 Corinthians 1:3

Ver. 3. Grace be unto you, and peace from God,.... This is an usual salutation in all Paul's epistles; See Gill on "Ro 1:7".

1 Corinthians 1:4

Ver. 4. I thank my God always on your behalf,.... Now follows a thanksgiving for various blessings bestowed upon this church, which is a proof of the apostle's great affection for it, and how much its welfare lay at his heart. The object of thanksgiving is God, for as he is the author of all mercies, the glory and praise of them ought to be given to him. The apostle styles him "my God", to distinguish him from others; and to express his faith of interest in him; and to observe to this church, that all the good things they enjoyed came from him, who was his God and their God, his Father and their Father; and for which reason he returned thanks to him for them, and by so doing set them an example: the persons on whose behalf he gave thanks were not at this time himself and Sosthenes, but the members of the church at Corinth; and the continuance of his thankfulness for them, is "always", as often as he went to the throne of grace, or at any other time thought of them: what he particularly gives thanks to God for in this verse is,

for the grace which is given you by Jesus Christ: and includes all sorts of grace, adopting, justifying, pardoning, regenerating, and sanctifying grace; every particular grace of the Spirit, as faith, repentance, hope, love, fear, humility, self-denial, &c. all are gifts of God, and entirely owing to his free grace, and not to man's free will and power, or to any merits of his; and all come through the hands of Christ, and are given forth by him, as the Mediator of the covenant, and in consequence of his blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and merit.

1 Corinthians 1:5

Ver. 5. That in everything ye are enriched by him,.... This is still a continuation of the thanksgiving for this church, that they were "enriched", or plentifully and abundantly provided for by Christ, with all grace, with all the riches of grace; with his own unsearchable riches, of which they were made partakers, and the riches of glory, to which they were entitled by him; and all which come to them through his poverty, which makes his grace in the donation of these riches the more illustrious: and particularly the apostle is thankful, that they were enriched by Christ

in all utterance, and in all knowledge; that not only they had the knowledge of the truths and doctrines of the Gospel, concerning the person, offices, grace, and righteousness of Christ in the theory of them, or a speculative notion of them; but for the most part had a spiritual experimental knowledge of these things; and many of them had such large gifts of knowledge, elocution, and utterance, that they were richly qualified to preach the Gospel to others; nay, even had the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, so as to speak with divers tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

1 Corinthians 1:6

Ver. 6. Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. By "the testimony of Christ" is meant the Gospel of Christ, which bears a testimony to his deity, his incarnation, his obedience, sufferings, and death, his resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, session at God's right hand, and intercession for the saints; to redemption by his blood, justification by his righteousness, pardon and atonement of sin by his sacrifice, and complete salvation by his obedience and death. This, as it had been preached to the Corinthians, was confirmed and established among them, by the signs and miracles with which it was attended; by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, particularly of prophecy bestowed on many of them; and by the internal power and energy of the Spirit, accompanying and applying it to their souls.

1 Corinthians 1:7

Ver. 7. So that ye come behind in no gift,.... Ordinary or extraordinary; a detail of the gifts which were bestowed on them is made in 1Co 12:8; by which it appears that they were not inferior in gifts to any of the churches:

waiting for the coming; or "the revelation" of our Lord Jesus Christ; who will appear a second time, come in great glory, will raise the dead, and judge both quick and dead; when gifts will cease and be of no more use, and when they must all be accounted for; and therefore, till that time comes, should be diligently made use of, and improved to the interest and service of Christ; who will surely come again, and call his servants and churches to an account for the talents he has intrusted them with; and whose coming is to be believed, loved, looked, and hoped for by all, that love him in sincerity and truth.

1 Corinthians 1:8

Ver. 8. Who shall also confirm you unto the end,.... The author of this blessing of confirmation is not the Lord Jesus Christ, though he is mentioned in the latter part of **1Co 1:7**; and seems to be the antecedent to the relative "who" in this, but is not, for this confirmation is made in him; see **2Co 1:21**; and besides, it is in order that the saints might be blameless in the day of Christ, and so must design some other person distinct from him, which is God the Father, **1Co 1:4**, to whom the apostle gives thanks, and continues to do so unto this verse; in which he assures the saints of confirmation in grace by God, the author and giver of all grace: and which may be understood of their confirmation in the love and favour of God, from which there can be no separation; and of their establishment in the person of Christ, and in the doctrines of grace; and of the permanency of the grace of the Spirit in them, and of their perseverance in faith and holiness unto the end: that is, of their days; even until the day of Christ, when the good work begun in them shall be performed and finished; that is, "for ever", as the Ethiopic version reads it; for the love of God to his people always continues; their interest in Christ can never be lost; grace in them is an immortal seed; nor shall they be ever finally and totally moved away from the hope of the Gospel:

that ye may be blameless; not in themselves, for no man is without his faults; none of God's children are without their failings and infirmities; they have whereof to blame themselves, and may be blamed by God too in a providential way; but they are so in Christ their head, being justified by his righteousness, and washed in his blood; and so in the sight of God, as considered in Christ; and will appear such

in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall descend from heaven, and take his saints to him, and present them to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

1 Corinthians 1:9

Ver. 9. God is faithful, by whom ye were called,.... These words contain arguments, assuring the saints of their confirmation in grace, and of their being preserved blameless to the day of Christ, taken from the faithfulness of God, who is always true to his promises: whatever he has said, he will do it; he will never suffer his faithfulness to fail; and since he has made so many promises concerning the establishment of his people, and their perseverance to grace, they may assure themselves of them; and also from his having called them by his grace, for whom he effectually calls by his grace, he glorifies; and particularly from his having called them

unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; to partake of his grace, and to be heirs of glory with him; to enjoy communion with him in private and public exercises of religion, which is an evidence of being in him, and of union to him; for it is not merely into the fellowship of his saints or churches, but into the fellowship of his Son they are said to be called; and such are members of Christ, of his body, of his flesh, and of his bone; and shall never be lost and perish, but shall be confirmed to the end; be preserved in him blameless, and presented to him faultless, and have everlasting life.

1 Corinthians 1:10

Ver. 10. Now I beseech you, brethren,.... The apostle having observed the many favours and blessings bestowed on this church, proceeds to take notice of the divisions and contentions which were fomented in it; and in the most kind and tender manner entreats them to take every proper step to prevent schisms among them: he does not use his apostolical power and authority, or lay his injunctions and commands upon them, which he might have done, but most affectionately beseeches them; styling them brethren, as they were in a spiritual relation, being children of the same Father, members of the same body, and partakers of the same grace, and is a reason why they should not fail out by the way: and this obsecration is made

by the name of the Lord Jesus; which he wisely judged must have its weight and influence on many of them, to whom that name must be dear and precious, and which they called upon and were called by; and shows, that he was not acting in his own name, and seeking his own profit; but was concerned in and for the name of Christ, and for his honour and interest, which lay at stake by their contentions. His earnest request to them is,

that ye speak the same thing; profess the same truths, and express them in the same words; which shows the lawfulness, yea, necessity and usefulness, of confessions and articles of faith, being made and agreed to by members of churches; and which should be drawn up in a form of sound words, and abode by; for the introducing of new words and phrases is often the means of bringing in new doctrines, and of raising great contentions and animosities; wherefore using the same words to express truth by is a very proper and prudent expedient to prevent them:

and that there be no divisions, or schisms

among you; which are generally made by innovations in doctrine, or worship; by forming new schemes of religion, new articles of faith, and modes of discipline: but

that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; which regards not only the sameness of love and affection, to one another, being, as the first Christians were, of one heart and of one soul; but their agreement in their judgments and sentiments, of both doctrine and discipline; and such an entire harmony and symmetry among them, as in the members of the body, where each member and bone being in their proper place, exactly answer to, and tally with each other; and which is the most effectual way to speak the same things, and so bar against all schisms and divisions; and such an agreement is absolutely necessary to the peace, comfort, and well being of a church; for how should "two", and much less more, "walk together", unless they are "agreed?" **Am 3:3**.

1 Corinthians 1:11

Ver. 11. For it hath been declared unto me, of you, my brethren,.... Lest the above advice of the apostle should be thought to be impertinent and needless, and to proceed upon groundless suspicions and jealousies of his, he signifies that he not only had some broad hints of their contentions and divisions, but the whole affair was laid open, and made manifest to him: the thing was a clear point to him; he had no reason at all to doubt of the truth of it; nor could they deny it, the proof was so strong, the evidence so full, being given by them which are of the house of Chloe. Some take Chloe to be the name of a place; a city so called is said to have been in Cappadocia; but it seems rather to have been the name of a woman. Horace {b} several times makes mention of a woman of this name, and so does Martial {c}. Pausanias {d} calls the goddess Ceres by it, the goddess of husbandry; the word signifying green grass of the field. The person the apostle speaks of was one that very probably lived at Corinth, and was a member of the church there, and at the head of a family of great worth and credit; who being grieved at the growing animosities, and disturbances there raised, wrote to the apostle, and gave him a distinct account of them, desiring him to use his interest to put a stop to them. He mentions this family by name, to show that he had not took up an idle tale, and received reports from anybody, nor from a single person only, but from a family of repute among them; and who could have no other views in the relation of it to him, than the good of the church, and the glory of God: and what they had made out clearly to him was,

that there are contentions among you; about their ministers, as appears afterward, as well as about opinions in doctrines, and ceremonies in worship, which occasioned undue heats, and great indecencies, tending to make rents and schisms among them.

{b} Carrain. l. 3. Ode 7, 9, 19. {c} L. 4. Epigr. 22. & l. 9. Epigr. 13. {d} L. 1. sive Attica, p. 38.

1 Corinthians 1:12

Ver. 12. Now this I say that everyone of you saith,.... This the apostle affirms not upon his own personal knowledge, but upon the credit of the report the house of Chloe had made unto him; and his meaning is not that every individual member of this church, but that many of them, and the far greater number of them, were in the following factions, some being for one minister, and some for another: one part of them said,

I am of Paul; he had been instrumental in their conversion: he had baptized some of them, and first laid the foundation of a Gospel church among them; was a solid, brave, and bold preacher of the Gospel, and was set for the defence of it; wherefore he was the minister for them, and they were desirous of being called and distinguished by his name: but there was another party that said, and I of Apollos; in opposition to Paul, whom they despised, as a man whose aspect was mean; his bodily presence weak, made no figure in the pulpit; his speech low and contemptible; his discourses plain, not having that flow of words, and accuracy of expression, as Apollos had; who was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, who coming to Corinth after the Apostle Paul, many were taken with his way of preaching; he was the preacher for them, and they chose to be called after him, and in distinction from others: whilst another company of them said,

and I of Cephas; or Peter, in opposition both to Paul and Apollos; who with them were new upstart ministers, in comparison of Peter, who was with Christ from the beginning, and saw his miracles, and heard his doctrines; and, besides, had the apostleship and Gospel of the circumcision, on which account they highly valued him; for these must be supposed to be the converted Jews among them, who still retained a regard to the ceremonies of the law; wherefore they fixed on Peter as their minister, and to be called by his name: but others said,

and I of Christ; which some take to be the words of the apostle, declaring who he was of, and for, and belonged unto; intimating that they, as he, should call no man father, or master, on earth, or be called by any other name than that of Christ. Others consider them as the words of the Corinthians, a small part of them who were very mean and contemptible, and therefore mentioned last, who chose to be known and called by no other name than that of Christians; but I rather think that these design a faction and party, to be condemned as the others. These were for Christ, in opposition to Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, and any other ministers of the word. They were for Christ without his ministers; they were wiser than their teachers; they were above being under any ministrations and ordinances; as the others attributed too much to the ministers of the Gospel, these detracted too much from them, and denied them to be of any use and service. Some persons may be, in such sense, for Christ, as to be blame worthy; as when they use his name to deceive men, or divide his interest.

1 Corinthians 1:13

Ver. 13. Is Christ divided?.... Some read the words as an assertion, "Christ is divided"; that is, his body, the church, is divided by such factions and parties; though in some copies mh, the note of interrogation, is put before the clause, and so to be rendered, "is Christ divided?" no; his human body was not to be divided; a bone of him was not to be broken, Joh 19:36; the seamless garment he wore was not to be rent asunder, Joh 19:23; nor is his mystical body, the church, to be torn in pieces by schisms and divisions; nor is anyone part of his Gospel different from, or opposite to another part of it; his doctrine is the same as preached by one minister and another, and is all of a piece, uniform and harmonious. Christ is not divided from his Father, not in nature; though he is to be distinguished from him, yet not to be divided; he is one in nature with him, though he is a distinct person from him; nor is he, nor can he, or will be ever separated from him; nor is he to be divided from him in his works and actions, with whom he was jointly concerned in creation, providence, and grace; and such are to be blamed as dividers of Christ from the Father, who talk of Christ to the exclusion of the Father, or to the dropping and neglect of any of his acts of grace; as his everlasting love to his chosen ones, the eternal election of them in Christ, the covenant of grace made with him, and the instance of his grace in the gift and mission of his Son: nor is Christ divided from himself, not in his nature and person; the two natures, human and divine, are united in one person; they are to be distinguished, and not to be confounded, yet not to be separated as to wake two distinct persons: nor in his offices; a whole Christ is to be received; Christ in his kingly as well as in his priestly office; to claim him as a Saviour and disown him as a King, is dishonourable to him; it is to make one end of his death void, as much as in such lies, which is, that he may be Lord of dead and living; and argues a carnal selfish spirit, and that faith in him is not right: such are to be blamed for being for Christ, and as dividers of him, who talk of being saved by him, and yet would not have him to rule over them. Nor is he divided from his Spirit, not from the person of the Spirit; he is to be distinguished from him as a person, but is one in nature with him; nor from his gifts and graces, which he has as man and Mediator without measure; nor from the work of the Spirit; for it is his grace the Spirit of God implants in the hearts of men: it comes from him, it centres in him, it makes men like him, and glorifies him; such who cry up Christ, and cry down the work of his Spirit upon the soul, are to be blamed for being for Christ, and to be reckoned dividers of them as much as in them lies: nor is Christ divided from his church and people; there is a close union between them, and he dwells in them, and among them; and they are to be blamed that talk of Christ, and never meet with his saints in public service and worship: nor is he divided from his ministers, word, and ordinances; Christ is the sum of the ministry of the word; the ordinances are instituted by him; he submitted to them himself, and is the substance of them, and has promised his presence in them to the end of the world: and what God has put together, let no man put asunder.

Was Paul crucified for you? no; he had taught them another doctrine; namely, that Christ was crucified for them, that he died for their sins, and had bought them with the price of his own blood; and therefore they were not to be the servants of men, or to call any man master, or to be called by his name, or any other man's, only by Christ's, who had redeemed them by his blood; so that they were not their own, nor any other's, but his, and ought to glorify him with their souls and bodies, which were his.

Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul; no; but in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The apostle did not pretend to be the author of a new revelation, or the propagator of a new religion, but was a preacher of the Gospel, and an administrator of the ordinances of Christ; wherefore he baptized not in his own name, but in the name of Christ: to whose worship and service such as are baptized are devoted, and not to the service of men, and therefore not to be called after their names.

1 Corinthians 1:14

Ver. 14. I thank God that I baptized none of you,.... The Alexandrian copy and the Syriac version read, "I thank my God"; not that the apostle disliked the ordinance of baptism, or the administration of it; and much less that he thought it criminal, or an evil in him to perform it; nor was he at any time displeased at the numbers of persons who desired it of him; but on the contrary rejoiced where proper subjects of it were brought to a submission to it; but inasmuch as some persons in the church at Corinth made such an ill use of his having baptized them, he was greatly thankful that it was so ordered in providence, that the far greater part of them were baptized by other ministers, either by those who were with him, or came after him; and that he baptized none of them with his own hands,

but Crispus and Gaius. The former of these was the chief ruler of the Jewish synagogue at Corinth, who hearing the apostle, and believing in Christ, was baptized by him, Ac 18:8 and the latter was a very liberal and hospitable man, and was the apostle's host, whilst he was at Corinth; see Ro 16:23.

1 Corinthians 1:15

Ver. 15. Lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. The

Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "lest anyone should say that ye were baptized in my name"; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "that ye might not say we have been baptized in his name". This gives the true reason why the apostle was so thankful he had baptized no more of the members of this church, lest either some should reproach him, as having done it in his own name, and as seeking his own honour and interest; or lest others should affect, from their being baptized by him, to be called by his name, as if he was the author and patron of a new sect.

1 Corinthians 1:16

Ver. 16. And I also baptized the household of Stephanas,.... The same name with "Stephanios", or "Stephanio" in Pliny {e}. Before he says he had baptized none but Crispus and Gaius; but recollecting things, he corrects himself, and observes, that he had also baptized the household of Stephanas, who by the Greek writers is thought to be the same with the jailer baptized by the apostle at Philippi, but was now removed from thence to Corinth, and was become a famous and useful man there. No argument can be formed from the baptism of his household in favour of infant baptism, since it must be first proved that he had any infants in his family, and that these were baptized; and if his household and the jailer's are the same, it is certain that his household were such who were capable of having the word of God spoke to them, and who actually did believe in God. And if they were not the same, yet it is clear that this household of Stephanas consisted of adult, converted, and very useful persons; they were the firstfruits of Achaia, and had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, 1Co 16:15.

Besides, that is, the above mentioned persons,

I know not whether I baptized any other; meaning at Corinth, for he might have baptized, and doubtless did baptize many more in other places, for anything that is here said to the contrary: of this he would not be positive; for though he might fully know, and well remember, on recollection, who, and how many, were baptized by him with his own hands there, yet he could not tell but that some persons might have removed thither, and become members of the church in that place, who had been baptized by him elsewhere.

{e} Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 48.

1 Corinthians 1:17

Ver. 17. For Christ sent me not to baptize,.... Some think the apostle refers to his particular mission from Christ, Ac 26:16 in which no mention is made of his administering the ordinance of baptism; but no doubt he had the same mission the rest of the apostles had, which was to baptize as well as preach; and indeed, if he had not been sent at all to baptize, it would have been unlawful for him to have administered baptism to any person whatever; but his sense is, that baptism was not the chief and principal business he was sent about; this was to be done mostly by those preachers of the word who travelled with him, or followed after him: he was not sent so much about this work,

but to preach the Gospel; for which he was most eminently qualified, had peculiar gifts for the discharge of it, and was greatly useful in it. This was what he was rather sent to do than the other, and this "not with wisdom of words". Scholastic divinity, or the art of disputation, is by the {f} Karaites, a sect among the Jews, called
Myrbdh tmkx, "wisdom of words": this the apostle seems to refer to, and signifies he was not sent with, or to preach, with words of man's wisdom, with human eloquence and oratory, with great swelling words of vanity, but in a plain, humble, modest manner; on which account the false teachers despised him, and endeavoured to bring his ministry into contempt with others: but this way and manner of preaching he chose for this reason,

lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect; that is, either lest men's ears and fancies should be so tickled and pleased with the eloquence of speech, the elegancy of diction, and accuracy of expression, the cadency of words, and beauty of the oration, with the manner, and not with the matter of preaching, and so the true use, end, and design of the doctrine of a crucified Christ be defeated; or lest the success of the ministry should be attributed to the force of enticing words, and the strength and persuasion of oratory, and not to the energy of divine power attending the doctrine of the cross.

{f} Sepher Cosri Orat. 5. Sign. 15, 16. fol. 277. 2. 278. 1.

1 Corinthians 1:18

Ver. 18. For the preaching of the cross,.... Not of the Christian's cross, which he is to take up and bear for the sake of Christ; though this is a doctrine taught by Christ, and his apostles, and found to be true by the saints in all ages; and is what is had in great aversion and contempt, being very disagreeable to the natural man: but of the cross of Christ, the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ; or the doctrine of peace and reconciliation by the blood of his cross, and of righteousness, pardon, atonement, and satisfaction by the offering up of himself upon it as a sacrifice for sin, is here intended; and which

is foolishness in the esteem of many; and that because man's wisdom has no hand either in forming the scheme of it, or in the discovery of it to the sons of men; and besides, being revealed, it is very disagreeable to the carnal reason of man. This way of preaching is very impolite and unfashionable, and therefore despised; it is a doctrine which is not received by the wise and learned, but has been in all ages loaded with reproach, stigmatized either as a novel or licentious doctrine, and attended with persecution; though the only doctrine God owns for conversion, which administers comfort to distressed souls, and is food for the faith of believers; yea, it is a display of the highest wisdom; is what angels approve of, and desire to look into; is wiser than the wisdom of men; it has made foolish the wisdom of this world, and is what is only able to make a man wise unto salvation; and yet this doctrine is accounted foolish, yea foolishness itself; but to whom is it so?

to them that perish. All mankind are in a lost and perishing condition, by reason of sin, and want of righteousness. There are some who shall not perish; the Father has chose them unto salvation, the Son has redeemed them, and the Spirit sanctifies them; but there are others who do perish in their sins; wicked and ungodly men, Carried away with their own lusts and blinded by Satan, the god of this world: these are they that are lost, to whom the Gospel is hid, and who judge it foolishness; but their judgment of it is not to be regarded, being no more capable to judge of the glory and wisdom of the Gospel, than a blind man is of colours: but unto us which are saved; who are chosen in Christ unto salvation; whose persons and grace are secured in Christ, and in the everlasting covenant; for whom Christ has wrought out salvation; and to whom it is applied by the Spirit of God; and who are kept unto the full enjoyment of it by divine grace: to these

it is the power of God; organically or instrumentally; it being the means of quickening them when dead in sin, of enlightening their dark minds, of unstopping their deaf ears, of softening their hard hearts, and of enemies making them friends to God, Christ, and his people: and it is likewise so declaratively, there being a wonderful display of the power of God in the ministration of it; as may be seen when observed who were the first preachers of it, men of no figure in life, of no education, illiterate mechanics, very mean and abject; into these earthen vessels were put the treasure of the Gospel, that the excellency of the power might appear to be of God, and not man; as also the doctrine they preached, a crucified Christ, disagreeable to the wisdom of men; the manner in which they spread it, not by force of arms, by carnal weapons, but spiritual ones; moreover, the opposition they met with from rabbins, philosophers, princes, kings, and emperors, and all the states and powers of the world; and yet in how short a time, maugre all opposition, did they carry the Gospel throughout the whole world, to the conversion of millions of souls, and the planting of churches everywhere; and which Gospel has continued and increased, notwithstanding the efforts of persecutors and false teachers, and all the power and artifice of men and devils; all which can be attributed to nothing else but the mighty power of God: add to this, that the Gospel is the power of God in the esteem of the saints, who know it to be so by inward experience; they have felt the power of it on their hearts; it has wrought effectually in them, and therefore they are the best judges, and are capable of giving the best account of it.

1 Corinthians 1:19

Ver. 19. As it is written,.... The passage referred to is in Isa 29:14 where it is read, "the wisdom of their wise men shall perish; and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid"; and is rendered by the Septuagint, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will hide the understanding of the prudent": which is much the same with the apostle's version of it: and the sense of the prophecy is, that in the times of the Messiah, under the Gospel dispensation, the mysteries of grace should be hid from the wise rabbins among the Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees, who, with all their sagacity, parts, and learning, would not be able to comprehend the doctrines of the Gospel; by these their wisdom and understanding would be nonplussed, so that they would reject them as foolishness, because their carnal reason could not reach them; which shows what an infatuation they were given up to: and if this should be the case, as it was with the wise and learned philosophers among the Gentiles, it need not be wondered at; it was what was foretold in prophecy concerning the Jews, who had the oracles of God, and the advantage of a divine revelation; and therefore it need not be stumbling to them that are saved, that the Gospel should meet with so much scorn and contempt among them that perish in the Gentile world. These words are very pertinently cited by the apostle, since they are acknowledged by the Jews themselves to signify the departure of wisdom from the wise men of Israel, in the times of the destruction of the temple, as Jarchi on the place observes.

1 Corinthians 1:20

Ver. 20. Where is the wise? where is the Scribe?.... These are the apostle's own words; though he may allude to Isa 33:18 where there are some phrases much like these, but the meaning is very different. Though they are interpreted by the Talmudists {g} in a sense pretty near the apostle's; for thus they remark upon them,

"where is the Scribe? he that counts all the letters which are in the law; "where is the receiver, or weigher?" who weighs all the light and heavy things in the law; "where is he that counted the towers?" he who counts, or teaches the three hundred traditions:"

so that they understand these of their Scribes and Misnic doctors, and such that are curious searchers into the hidden senses of Scripture. The apostle also seems to allude to a distinction that obtained among the Jews, of wise men, Scribes, and mystical interpreters of the word. They had their ymkx, "wise men", which was a general name for men of learning and knowledge; and their yrpwo, "Scribes", who interpreted the law in the literal and grammatical sense; and their ynvrd, "preachers, or disputers", who diligently searched into the hidden meaning of the Scriptures, and sought for and delivered out the mystical and allegorical sense of them, and who used to dispute about them in their schools. These three are sometimes to be met with together, and as distinct from each other. They say {h} that

"God showed to the first man every generation, wyvrwdw, "and its expounders, or disputers"; and every generation,
wymkxw, "and its wise men"; and every generation,
wyrpwow, "and its Scribes.""

And the apostle's sense is, "where is the wise?" the man that boasts of his superior wisdom and knowledge in the things of nature, whether among the Jews or Gentiles; "where is the Scribe?" the letter learned man, who takes upon him to give the literal sense of the law;

where is the disputer of this world? the Jewish world, who pretends to the knowledge of the more abstruse and secret senses of Scripture; where are these men? they are not to be found among those that God employs in the ministration of the Gospel; he has laid them aside, and chosen others, where are they? what use have they been of to men? are men under their instructions the better, either in principle or practice? where are the thousands that have been turned to God by their wisdom, as can be shown by the faithful ministers of the Gospel? where are they? let them come and produce their cause, and bring forth their strong reasons against the Gospel they account foolishness, and try if these will stand before its superior power and wisdom; where are they? are they not fools, with all their wisdom and learning? The words may be rendered, "where is the searcher, or inquirer of this world?" and may design the same sort of persons whom the Jews call rqxmh ymkx, "the wise men of search, or inquiry" {i}, and sometimes rqxmh yvna, "the men of search, or inquiry" {k}; by whom they seem to intend such who search into the nature of things, who study natural philosophy.

Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? by bringing in the Gospel scheme, which the men of the world, the greatest wits in it, are not able to understand; by laying their wisdom aside as useless in the business of salvation; by showing it to be vain and empty, and of no service in things spiritual and divine; by detecting, through the ministration of the Gospel, the sophisms of men, and showing that the schemes both Jews and Gentiles give into abound with folly, with stupid notions, and are full of gross errors and fatal mistakes.

{g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 2. & Chagiga, fol. 15. 2. {h} Bereshit Rabba Parash. 24. fol. 21. 1. Vid. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 5. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 38. 2. {i} Kimchi in Sopher Shorashim, rad. hhb, & in Psal. cii. 26. {k} Aben Ezra in Psal. civ. 29.

1 Corinthians 1:21

Ver. 21. For after that in the wisdom of God,.... These words contain a reason proving the infatuation of men, with respect to "the wisdom of God"; by which may be meant either Christ, who is the wisdom of God, was in the world, and yet the world of the Jews, and their chief Rabbins among them, with all their wisdom, neither knew him, nor God his Father; or the Gospel, which is also so called, and though this was come, both into the Jewish and Gentile world, yet neither of them, by their natural wisdom, knew the God of grace, so manifestly revealed in it; or rather the works of creation, in which there is such a visible display of the wisdom of God: yet "the world by wisdom knew not God"; the author of them: the Gentiles knew him not in any spiritual and saving manner, as in Christ, or the God of all grace; yea, they knew him not as the God of nature to be the one, only, true God; they knew him not so as to glorify him as God, or to worship him in a right way and manner: wherefore,

it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe; it was his purpose and decree within himself; it was his sovereign good will and pleasure; it was what he, without any motion from, or merit in the creature, resolved of himself from all eternity that he would "save", not the wise man, the Scribe, the disputer of this world, the rationalist, the talker, nor the worker, but "them that believe" in his Son; that look unto him, venture on him, and commit the care and keeping of their souls to him, however weak, mean, and despicable they may otherwise be; or whether they believe with a weak, or a strong faith, so be it, it is but true: the Ethiopic version reads, "that believe in this foolish doctrine"; and this he determined to do, and did, "by the foolishness of preaching"; or by that sort of preaching, which both for the matter of it, Christ, that itself, and the manner of it, the world reckons foolishness; and which are the things of the Father's grace in election, of the Son's grace in redemption, and the Spirit's in regeneration: so the wise men of the world, with all their wisdom, are left ignorant of God, and perish in their sins, whilst the Gospel they despise is the power of God unto salvation to all that believe in Christ; this, through efficacious grace, becomes the means of regenerating and quickening men, showing them their need of salvation, and where it is, and of working faith in them to look to Christ for it.

1 Corinthians 1:22

Ver. 22. For the Jews require a sign,.... The Jews had always been used to miracles, in confirmation of the mission of the prophets sent unto them, and therefore insisted on a sign proving Jesus to be the true Messiah; except signs and wonders were wrought, they would not believe; and though miracles were wrought in great numbers, and such as never man did, they remained incredulous, and persisted in demanding a sign from heaven, and in their own way; and it was told them that no other sign should be given them, but that of the prophet Jonah, by which was signified the resurrection of Christ from the dead; this was given them, and yet they believed not, but went on to require a sign still; nothing but miracles would do with them, and they must be such as they themselves pleased: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read "signs", in the plural number:

and the Greeks seek after wisdom; the wisdom of the world, natural wisdom, philosophy, the reason of things, the flowers of rhetoric, the ornaments of speech, the beauties of oratory, the justness of style and diction; as for doctrines they regarded none, but such as they could comprehend with, and account for by their carnal reason, everything else they despised and exploded. Hence we often read {l} of tynwwy tmkx, "the Grecian wisdom", or wisdom of the Greeks; which, the Jews say {m}, lay in metaphors and dark sayings, which were not understood but by them that were used to it; the study of it was forbidden by them, though some of their Rabbins were conversant with it {n}.

{l} T. Bab Menachot, fol 99. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 82. 2. {m} Maimon & Bartenora in Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 14. {n} Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 25. 1. Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 3. fol. 31. 2.

1 Corinthians 1:23

Ver. 23. But we preach Christ crucified,.... Regardless of the sentiments and opinions of Jews and Gentiles, of what the one required and the other sought after; and in opposition to all their senseless and groundless cavils, the apostle and his fellow ministers continued preaching the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ, and him only; though it was

unto the Jews a stumblingblock; as was prophesied it should be, and as it came to pass; for they not only stumbled at the meanness of his birth, parentage, and education, at his ministry, miracles, company and audience; but especially at his sufferings and death: it was a stumbling to them that he should die at all, for they understood out of their law, that Christ should abide for ever; and it was more so that he should die the death of the cross, by which, according to their law, he appeared to be accursed; and most of all this was stumbling to them, because they expected a temporal kingdom to be set up by him:

and unto the Greeks foolishness; as that the Son of God should be crucified; that riches should come through his poverty, and men be brought to a kingdom and glory through one so mean and abject; that there should be life for men in his death, and salvation through his crucifixion, or the shameful death of the cross; that blessings should come through his being made a curse; and that his death should be an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of men; and that justification should be by one that was condemned; and peace and pardon should be by his blood; and that he should be raised again from the dead. These things were the subject of their ridicule and banter, and, in their opinion, deserved rather to be laughed at than credited. The Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Vulgate and all the Oriental versions, read, "unto the Gentiles".

1 Corinthians 1:24

Ver. 24. But unto them which are called,.... Effectually, by the grace of God, not merely externally, but internally; these have other sentiments of Christ, and the doctrine of salvation by him; for being called out of darkness, and savingly illuminated by the Spirit of God, they see wisdom, beauty, glory, excellency, and suitableness in Christ, and in his Gospel; and having felt the power of it upon their souls, with them,

both Jews and Greeks, of whatsoever nation they be, and whatsoever their prejudices have been, Christ, to them is,

the power of God, and the wisdom of God: he is "the power of God"; this is opposed to the Jews who stumbled at his weakness, his sufferings and death, even the death of the cross; and is to be understood of him, not as God, in which sense he is Mighty, yea, the Almighty, and which appears by his works of creation and providence; but as Mediator, and of him in his low and mean estate, and even when he was crucified through weakness; in respect to that very thing in which he was weakness, and so stumbling, to others, he is to them that are called the power of God; as is clear by his bearing all the sins of his people in his own body, on the tree, the cross whereon he was crucified, and all the punishment due thereunto; and yet he failed not, nor was he discouraged, nor did he give out, till he had satisfied law and justice perfectly, and made a full end of sin, and an entire reconciliation for iniquity; as also by destroying, by his death, the devil, who had the power of death, and spoiling all his principalities and powers, triumphing over them on his cross; by redeeming his people from all their sins, and the curse of the law, and from him that was stronger than they; by abolishing death, and at last raising himself from the dead; all which show him, even when and "though" crucified, to be the power of God, or to be possessed of Almighty power; for these are things which a mere creature could never have done: and he is "the wisdom of God", also, in the account of these persons; and which likewise is to be understood, it being opposed to the opinions the Greeks had of him, not of him as the essential wisdom of God, as he is the wise Creator and Governor of the universe; but of him as Mediator, and in respect to that for which the Greeks accounted him foolishness: for in redemption and salvation by a crucified Christ, God hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence: there is in this article a high display of the wisdom of God; for hereby justice was satisfied in that nature which sinned, and Satan destroyed in that nature which he himself had been the ruin of; hereby sin was condemned, and yet the sinner saved; pardon and justification came to be in a way of grace, and yet of strict justice; all the divine perfections harmonize, and are glorified, and God has hereby executed his wise designs and counsels of old; yea, even the wisdom of God is seen in Christ's dying the death of the cross, whereby he appeared to be made a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law, and that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us.

1 Corinthians 1:25

Ver. 25. Because the foolishness of God,.... Not that there is any such thing as "foolishness" in God, nor the least degree of weakness in him; but the apostle means that which the men of the world esteem so, and therefore, by an ironical concession, calls it by those names; by which is intended either Christ, who, as crucified, is counted foolishness; yet he "is wiser than men": yea, even than Solomon, who was wiser than all men besides; Christ is greater than he in wisdom, having all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him; yea, in redemption by the blood of his cross, which is accounted such an egregious instance of folly, there is such a display of wisdom as surpasses all the wisdom of men and angels: and though he is, as crucified, esteemed as

the weakness of God, yet in this respect,

is stronger than men; stronger than the strong man armed; and has done that by his own arm, has brought salvation for his people, which neither men nor angels could ever have done: or all this may be understood of the Gospel of Christ, which is condemned as folly and weakness, and yet has infinitely more wisdom in it, than is to be found in the best concerted schemes of the wisest philosophers; and has had a greater influence on the minds and manners of men than theirs ever had; it is the manifold wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation. Moreover, these words may be applied to the saints, called in **1Co 1:27**

the foolish and weak things of the world; and yet even these, in the business of salvation, how foolish soever they may be in other respects, are wiser than the wisest of men destitute of the grace of God; and however weak they are in themselves, in their own esteem, and in the account of others, they are able to do and suffer such things, through the strength of Christ that no other men in the world are able to perform or endure. The phrases here used seem to be a sort of proverbial ones; and the sense of them is, that whatever, in things

divine and spiritual, has the appearance of folly and weakness, or is judged to be so by carnal men, is wiser and stronger not only than the wisdom and strength of men, but than men themselves with all their wisdom and strength. It is very likely, that proverbial expressions of this kind, with a little alteration, were used by the Jews. The advice the young men gave to Rehoboam is thus paraphrased by the Targumist {o},
abad hytrwbg Nm apyqt ytwvlx, "my weakness is stronger than the strength of my father"; which is very near the same with the last clause of this verse.

{o} In 2 Chron. x. 10.

1 Corinthians 1:26

Ver. 26. For ye see your calling, brethren,.... That is, those that were called by the grace of God among them; for as circumcision and uncircumcision stand for circumcised and uncircumcised persons, and election for elect persons, and righteousness for righteous persons, **Ro 3:30** so here "calling" designs men called by grace; the manner of whose calling, and what sort of persons they were, the apostle signifies, they did or might, or ought, to see, observe, and consider; for respect is here had, not, as some have thought, to the first preachers of the Gospel, who were mechanics, fishermen, illiterate persons, very mean and despicable; but to the members of the church at Corinth, whether public preachers, or private members. The city of Corinth had in it many noble families, of high birth and quality, abounded with learned philosophers and rich merchants; and yet it was easy to be seen,

how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. The apostle does not say that there were none of the wise, the mighty, and noble called; for there were Crispus, and Sosthenes, rulers of the synagogue, and Gains a rich hospitable man, and Erastus the chamberlain of the city, and it may be some others of a like or better figure in life; but there were not many of them; instances of this kind are but few recorded in the Scripture; as Joseph of Arimathea a rich counsellor, Paulus Sergius a Roman deputy, Dionysius the Areopagite, and some in Caesar's palace; which show that nobility, riches, and learning, as they do not at all contribute towards a man's salvation, so neither can they hinder it where grace takes place; but, generally speaking, God has thought fit, for wise reasons, to choose and call persons of different characters.

1 Corinthians 1:27

Ver. 27. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world,.... So the Jews, in distinction from their wise Rabbins and doctors, call others, amled Nyvpj, "the fools of the world" {p}; the persons whom God made choice of from all eternity, as appears by his calling them in time, are such who with respect to the wisdom of the world are foolish; have not those natural parts and abilities, that sagacity and penetration in things natural and civil, that knowledge and learning which many others have; and are therefore esteemed foolish by the men of the world, in comparison of whom; who are the wise and prudent, they are but babes: and God's end in his choice of them, and calling them, is

to confound the wise; who sooner or later will be brought to shame and confusion, to see such idiots, as they took them to be, wiser than they in the business of salvation; having been directed and influenced by divine grace to choose that good part, which shall never be taken from them, when they will be stripped of their nobility, wealth, and wisdom; to see these men go into the kingdom of heaven, and they themselves shut out:

and God hath chosen the weak things of the world; who cannot boast of their birth and pedigree, of their ancient and illustrious families; have no titles of honour to aggrandize them, nor estates, possessions, and worldly substance to support themselves with; and this he has done,

to confound the things which are mighty; as Haman was by the advancement of Mordecai. It will be to the utter confusion of the rich and mighty, to see persons of the lowest class in life made kings and priests by Christ, set among princes, and upon the throne of glory; and they themselves fleeing, and calling to the mountains to fall upon them, and cover them from the sight of him that sits on the throne, and the Lamb.

{p} Zohar in Numb. fol. 63. 3. & 65. 4.

1 Corinthians 1:28

Ver. 28. And base things of the world,.... Who are reckoned the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things; men of mean birth, education, and business of life:

and things that are despised; and set at nought, as poor persons generally are;

yet God

hath chosen them; even the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom:

yea, and things which are not; some think the Gentiles are here intended, who by the Jews are called "things that are not": as in the apocryphal books:

"O Lord, give not thy sceptre unto "them that be nothing", and let them not laugh at our fall; but turn their device upon themselves, and make him an example, that hath begun this against us." (Esther 14:11)

"56 As for the other people, which also come of Adam, thou hast said that "they are nothing", but be like unto spittle: and hast likened the abundance of them unto a drop that falleth from a vessel. 57 And now, O Lord, behold, these heathen, which have ever been "reputed as nothing", have begun to be lords over us, and to devour us." (2 Esdras 6)

See Gill on "Ro 4:17" for note on non-entities, or such who are not in being, are meant; but who are not accounted of, or are reckoned as nothing; and these the Lord calls by his grace, as a fruit and evidence of electing love:

to bring to nought things that are; who, on the account of their noble birth, large possessions, and high attainments in knowledge and learning, thought themselves something; all which will one day be abolished, and will stand them in no stead with regard to future happiness and glory. The Jews {q} have a saying quite contrary to all this, that

"the Shekinah, or presence of God, does not dwell on any but upon a wise man, a mighty man, and a rich man."

{q} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 92. 1.

1 Corinthians 1:29

Ver. 29. That no flesh should glory in his presence. That is, "in the presence of God", as some copies, and the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read; not in their blood, birth, families, lineage, and natural descent; nor in their might, power, and dominion; nor in their riches, wealth, and substance; nor in their wisdom, learning, and parts: for however these may be gloried in before men, yet not before God. These are of no account with him, nor will they be regarded by him, or men on account of them; and he has taken a method in choosing and calling the reverse of these, to stain the glory of all flesh, that no man may attribute his salvation to any thing of the creature, but wholly to the sovereign grace and good pleasure of God.

1 Corinthians 1:30

Ver. 30. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus,.... These words, as they direct to the proper object of glorying, Christ, so they show the high honour the called ones are brought to in and through Christ, and are opposed to their outward meanness, folly, weakness, poverty, and contempt. They are first of God the Father, of his own rich free grace and goodness, without any regard to any motive, merit, or desert of theirs, put into Christ by electing grace, in whom they are preserved and blessed; and which is their original secret being in him; and is made manifest by regenerating grace, by their being made new creatures; which also is not owing to their blood, or to the will of the flesh, or to the will of man, but to God and his free favour in Christ: and in consequence of their being in Christ, as their head and representative, he becomes all to them, which is here expressed;

who of God is made unto us wisdom. Though they are foolish creatures in their own and the world's esteem, yet Christ is their wisdom; he is so "efficiently", the author and cause of all that spiritual wisdom and understanding in divine things they are possessed of; he is so "objectively", their highest wisdom lying in the knowledge of his person, blood, and righteousness, of interest in him, and salvation by him; with which knowledge eternal life is connected: and he is so "representatively"; he is their head, in whom all their wisdom lies; he acts for them as their wisdom to God, he is their Counsellor, their Advocate, who pleads and intercedes for them, and as their wisdom to men, and gives them a mouth and wisdom which their adversaries are not able to gainsay; and having the tongue of the learned, he speaks a word in season to themselves, when weary, distressed, and disconsolate, and for them in the court of heaven; he is their wisdom, to direct their paths, to guide them with his counsel, in the way they should go, safe to his kingdom and glory:

and righteousness. He is the "author" of righteousness; he has wrought out and brought in one for them, which is well pleasing to God, satisfying to his justice, by which his law is magnified and made honourable; which justifies from all sin, and discharges from all condemnation, is everlasting, and will answer for them in a time to come; this he has brought in by the holiness of his nature, the obedience of his life, and by his sufferings and death: and which is "subjectively" in him, not in themselves; nor does it lie in any thing wrought in them, or done by them; but in him as their head and representative, who by "imputation" is made righteousness to them; and they the same way are made the righteousness of God in him; or in other words, this righteousness, by an act of the Father's grace, is imputed, reckoned, and accounted to them as their justifying righteousness:

and sanctification; Christ is the sanctification of his people, through the constitution of God, the imputation of the holiness of his nature, the merits of his blood, and the efficacy of his grace, he is so "federally" and "representatively"; he is their covenant head, and has all covenant grace in his hands for them, and so the whole stock and fund of holiness, which is communicated to them in all ages, until the perfection of it in every saint: this is sanctification in Christ, which differs from sanctification in them in these things; in him it is as the cause, in them as the effect; in him as its fountain, in them as the stream; in him it is complete, in them it is imperfect for the present: and they have it by virtue of union to him; sanctification in Christ can be of no avail to any, unless it is derived from him to them; so that this sanctification in Christ does not render the sanctification of the Spirit unnecessary, but includes it, and secures it: likewise Christ is the sanctification of his people "by imputation", as the holiness of his human nature is, together with his obedience and sufferings, imputed to them for their justification; Christ assumed an holy human nature, the holiness of it was not merely a qualification for his office as a Saviour, or what made his actions and sufferings in that nature significant and useful, or is exemplary to men; but is a branch of the saints justification before God: the law required an holy nature, theirs is not holy; Christ has assumed one not for, himself, but for them, and so is the end of the law in all respects: and this may be greatly designed in the whole of this passage; "wisdom" may stand in general for the wise scheme of justification, as it is laid in Christ; "sanctification" may intend the holiness of his nature; "righteousness" the obedience of his life; and "redemption" his sufferings and death, by which it is obtained: but then justification and sanctification are not to be confounded; they are two distinct things, and have their proper uses and effects; sanctification in the saints does not justify, or justification sanctify; the one respects the power and being of sin, the other the guilt of it. Moreover, Christ is the sanctification of his people "meritoriously"; through the shedding of his blood, whereby he has sanctified them, that is, expiated their sins, and made full atonement for them; see Heb 10:10. Once more, he is their sanctification "efficiently"; by his Spirit, as the author, and by his word, as the means; he is the source of all holiness, it all comes from him, and is wrought by his Spirit in the heart; which lies in filling the understanding with spiritual light and knowledge; the mind with a sense of sin, and a detestation of it; the heart with the fear of God; the affections with love to divine objects and things; the will with submission and resignation to the will of God in all respects; and is exercised in living a life of faith on Christ, and in living soberly, righteously, and godly, before God and man: and this, though imperfect now, will be perfected from and by Christ, without which it is impossible to see the Lord:

and redemption; which he is by the appointment of his Father, being foreordained to it before the foundation of the world; and this sense of the word made will agree with every clause in the text; and he is so efficiently, having obtained eternal redemption from sin, Satan, the law, and this present evil world, for his people; and "subjectively", it being in him, and every other blessing which is either a part of it, and comes through it, or is dependent on it, as justification, adoption, and remission of sins. Moreover, this may have respect not only to redemption past, which is obtained by Christ; but to that which draws near, the saints are waiting for, and to which they are sealed up by the Spirit of God; even their redemption and deliverance from very being of sin, from all sorrow and sufferings, from death and the grave, and everything that is afflicting and distressing.

1 Corinthians 1:31

Ver. 31. That, according as it is written,.... **Jer 9:23**.

He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord; not in his own wisdom, riches, and strength; but in Christ, as his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 2

The apostle, in this chapter, pursues the same argument as before, that the Gospel needed not the wisdom and art of men: this he illustrates by his own example; and then he extols the Gospel above all the wisdom of men; and observes how it comes to be made known to men, even by the Spirit of God: hence it follows, that it is to be taught in his words, and not in the words of men; and that it can be only known and judged of by the spiritual, and not by the natural man. He instances in himself, and in his own ministry, when at Corinth, where he preached the Gospel in a plain and simple manner, without using the ornaments of speech, and human wisdom, **1Co 2:1** his reason was, because he had determined with himself to preach not himself, but a crucified Christ, **1Co 2:2**. His manner of behaviour is more largely declared, **1Co 2:3** that he was so far from being elated with his human literature, and priding himself with that, and making use of it in an ostentatious way, that he was attended with much weakness, fear, and trembling; and his discourses were not adorned with the flowers of rhetoric, but were delivered with the power, evidence, and demonstration of the Spirit, **1Co 2:4**. And his end and view in this method of preaching were, that the faith of his hearers should not be ascribed to human wisdom, but to a divine power, **1Co 2:5** but lest the Gospel should be thought meanly and contemptibly of, because of the plain dress in which it appeared, the apostle affirms it to be the highest wisdom, as those who had the most perfect knowledge of it could attest; a wisdom superior to the wisdom of this world, or of its princes, since that comes to nothing, **1Co 2:6** the excellency of which he expresses by various epithets, as the wisdom of God, mysterious wisdom, hidden wisdom, ancient wisdom, ordained before the world began, for the glory of the saints, **1Co 2:7** a wisdom unknown to the princes of the world, who otherwise would not have been concerned in the crucifixion of Christ, **1Co 2:8** and that this far exceeds the capacity of men, and could never have been found out by them, he proves, **1Co 2:9** by a testimony out of Isa 64:4 and then proceeds to show how it comes to be known by any of the sons of men, that it is by the revelation of the Spirit of God, **1Co 2:10** which is illustrated by the nature of the spirit of man within him, which only knows the things of a man; so in like manner only the Spirit of God knows the things of God, and can make them known to others, **1Co 2:11**. And in this way he observes, that he and others became acquainted with these things; namely, by receiving not the spirit of the world, which at most could only have taught them the wisdom of the world, but the Spirit of God, whereby they knew their interest in the blessings of free grace, published in the Gospel, **1Co 2:12**. And seeing the Gospel is made known by the Spirit of God, it should be delivered, not in the words of man's wisdom, but in the words of the Holy Spirit, as the apostle affirms he and other ministers did deliver it, returning to his former argument, **1Co 2:13**. And also it follows from hence, that the things of the Gospel, which the Spirit reveals, cannot be known and received by the natural man, who has no discerning of them, and so no value for them, **1Co 2:14** and can only be discerned, judged, and approved of by spiritual men, **1Co 2:15** and who are not to be judged by natural and carnal men, because they have not the mind of Christ, and so cannot instruct them; but spiritual men have it, such as the apostle and others, **1Co 2:16**.

Ver. 1. And I, brethren, when I came to you,.... This account the apostle gives of himself is occasioned, either by what he had said in the latter part of the preceding chapter, concerning the choice God has made of the foolish, weak, base, and despicable things of the world, and of his calling them by his grace both to fellowship with the saints in common, and therefore he accommodated his ministry unto them, and in particular to the ministry of the word, of which he himself was a like instance and an example; or else by what he had declared in **1Co 1:17** of the same chapter, that he was sent to preach the Gospel,

not with wisdom of words; which he here reassumes, and affirms agreeably, that when he first came to Corinth, he

came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom; for though he was not only versed in Jewish learning, being brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; but had also a good share of Grecian literature, and was capable, upon proper occasions, to cite the Greek poets, as he does Aratus, Ac 17:28 and Menander, **Tit 1:12** and so could, had he thought fit, have adorned his discourses with pompous language, with the flowers of rhetoric, and the eloquence of the Grecians; yet he chose not such a high and florid style, and which savoured so much of human wisdom and art; for the subject he treated of required no such dress, nor any great swelling words of vanity, or a bombast style to set it off, and gain the applause and assent of men: for what he delivered were plain matters of fact, attested by God himself,

declaring unto you the testimony of God; that is, the Gospel, which bears a testimony to the love, grace, and mercy of God, his kindness and good will to the sons of men, in giving and sending his only begotten Son to be the Saviour and Redeemer of them; and in which God bears a testimony of his Son, of his sonship, deity, mediation, incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death, of his resurrection, ascension to heaven, session at his right hand, intercession for his people, and his second coming to judgment, and of eternal life and salvation by him. All which being matter of fact, and depending upon the witness of God, which is greater than that of men, needed no art nor oratory of men to recommend it: it was enough in plain words, and easy language, to declare it, with the evidence by which it was supported. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, "the mystery" of God: and so the Syriac version ahlad azr, "the mystery of God" one of Stephens's copies reads, "the mystery of Christ"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "the testimony of Christ".

1 Corinthians 2:2

Ver. 2. For I determined not to know anything among you,.... This was a resolution the apostle entered into before he came among them, that though he was well versed in human literature, and had a large compass of knowledge in the things of nature, yet would make known nothing else unto them, or make anything else the subject of his ministry,

save Christ, and him crucified: he had a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ himself, and which he valued above all things else; and this qualified him to make him known to others; and which knowledge he was very willing and ready to communicate by preaching the Gospel, which is the means of making known Christ as God's salvation to the souls of men; and on this subject he chiefly insisted, and in which he took great delight and pleasure; he made known the things respecting the person of Christ, as that he was God, the Son of God, and truly man. God and man in one person; the things respecting his office, as that he was the Messiah, the mediator, prophet, priest, and King, the head, husband, Saviour, and Redeemer of his church and people; and the things respecting his work as such, and the blessings of grace procured by him; as that justification is by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, peace, reconciliation, and atonement by his sacrifice, and salvation alone and entirely by him. His determination was to preach none but Christ; not himself, nor man; nor the power and purity of human nature, the free will and works of the creature, but to exclude all and everything from being partners with Christ in the business of salvation. This was the doctrine he chose in the first place, and principally, to insist upon, even salvation by Christ, and him, as

crucified: that which was the greatest offence to others was the most delightful to him, because salvation comes through and by the cross of Christ; and he dwelt upon this, and determined to do so; it being most for the glory of Christ, and what was owned for the conversion of sinners, the comfort of distressed minds, and is suitable food for faith, as he knew by his own experience.

1 Corinthians 2:3

Ver. 3. And I was with you in weakness,.... Meaning either the weakness of his

bodily presence, the contemptibleness of his voice, and the mean figure he made as a preacher among them, both with respect to the matter and manner of his ministry in the eyes of many; or his lowly and humble deportment among them, not exerting the power and authority Christ had given him as an apostle; but choosing rather to work with his own hands, as he did at Corinth, to minister to his own necessities, and those of others; or the many persecutions which he endured there for the sake of preaching a crucified Christ; and which he sometimes calls "infirmities"; see
2Co 12:9 wherefore it is added,

and in fear, and in much trembling: not only on account of the greatness and awfulness of the work in which he was engaged, and lest the souls he ministered unto should be drawn aside from the truth, and into a sinful compliance; but because of the violence of men against him, threatening his life, and lying in wait for it: hence, the Lord, to encourage him, spake in a vision to him, and bid him not be afraid, but boldly preach his Gospel, and not be silent; assuring him of his presence, and that no man should set on him to hurt him, for he had many chosen vessels there to call by his grace through his ministry, Ac 18:9 which no doubt greatly served to remove the fears and tremor that attended him.

1 Corinthians 2:4

Ver. 4. And my speech, and my preaching,.... As he determined, so he acted. As the subject matter of his ministry was not any of the liberal arts and sciences, or the philosophy and dry morality of the Gentiles, but salvation by a crucified Christ; so his style, his diction, his language used in preaching,

was not with enticing words of man's wisdom; with technical words, words of art, contrived by human wisdom to captivate the affections; and with bare probable arguments only, a show of reason to persuade the mind to an assent, when nothing solid and substantial is advanced, only a run of words artfully put together, without any strength of argument in them; a method used by the false teachers, and which the apostle here strikes at, and tacitly condemns:

but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; partly by making use of solid proofs out of the writings of the Old Testament, indited by the Spirit of God, and which amounted to a demonstration of the truths he delivered; and partly by signs, and wonders, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, those extraordinary instances of divine power, which greatly confirmed the doctrines he preached: and besides all these, the Spirit of God wonderfully assisted him in his work, both as to words and matter; directing him, what to say, and in what form, in words, not which human wisdom taught, but which the Holy Ghost taught; and accompanying his ministry with his power, to the conversion, comfort, edification, and salvation of many.

1 Corinthians 2:5

Ver. 5. That your faith should not stand,.... "Or be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God". The Spirit of God directed him, and he under his influence chose, and by his assistance pursued this way of preaching, with this view, and for this reason, that faith in Christ, and in the doctrines of his Gospel, which comes by hearing, might not be attributed to the force of human eloquence and oratory; or stand upon so sandy a foundation, as that which might, if that was the case, be puffed away by a superior flow and force of words; but that it might be ascribed, as it ought to be, to almighty power, stand in it, be supported by it, and at last be finished and fulfilled with it.

1 Corinthians 2:6

Ver. 6. Howbeit we speak wisdom,.... Though the wise philosophers among the Gentiles accounted the Gospel foolishness; and though the apostle, by an ironical concession, had called the ministry of it the foolishness of preaching, and the foolishness of God, and had thought best, for wise reasons, to deliver it in a plain and simple manner, without the embellishments of human wisdom; yet he vindicates it from the charge of folly: it was not folly, but wisdom, which he and his fellow ministers preached, and that of the highest kind, as appears from what follows. Though it was not esteemed so by all men, yet

among, or with

them that are perfect; adult, at age, opposed to babes and children; such who have their understandings enlightened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation; who have their senses exercised to discern between divine and human wisdom; and who are perfect in a comparative sense, having more spiritual knowledge and understanding than others; for none, in the present state of things, are absolutely perfect in knowledge; they that know most, know but in part: now to such the Gospel and the doctrines of it appear to be the highest wisdom; for the apostle's sense is not that he and other Gospel ministers preached the more sublime doctrines of it to a select set of persons that had more judgment and a better understanding of things than others: if this could be thought to be the apostle's meaning, he might be supposed to allude to a custom among the Jews, not to deliver the sublime things of the law, but to persons so and so qualified.

"Says R. Ame {r}, they do not deliver the secrets of the law, but to him who has the five things or characters in **Isa 3:3**"

So they did not suffer the first chapter of Genesis and the visions of Ezekiel to be read until thirty years of age {s}; and from them the Pythagoreans took their notion of not declaring their mysteries but to teleioi, "perfect ones", the word here used {t}; but the apostle's sense is, that to such that were perfect, and even to everyone that had the least degree of spiritual knowledge, the Gospel was wisdom. Some refer this clause not to persons, but things; and so the Arabic version reads it, "we speak wisdom concerning things that are perfect"; as the things of the Gospel are, such as a plenteous redemption, perfect righteousness, full pardon, plenary satisfaction, and complete salvation and happiness:

yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: meaning not the idolatry, superstition, curious and magic arts introduced by demons, which principalities and powers, with all their works, are spoiled and destroyed by Christ; but either the political wisdom and crafty schemes of the civil governors of the world, against Christ and his Gospel, who were by this time most, if not all of them, dead; or the vain philosophy of the wise and learned among the Gentiles, who every day were less and less in vogue, through the quick and powerful spread of the Gospel; or rather the highest pitch of wisdom and knowledge in divine things, which the doctors and Rabbins among the Jews attained to in the age before the Messiah's coming; called "this world" in distinction from the times of the Messiah, which in Jewish language was, "the world to come", as Dr. Lightfoot observes; who with all their wisdom were confounded and brought to nought by the superior wisdom of the Gospel.

{r} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 13. 1. {s} Hieron. prefat. in Ezekiel & ad Paulin. Tom. III. fol. 3. 2. {t} Hierocles in Pythag. Carmin. p. 302.

1 Corinthians 2:7

Ver. 7. But we speak the wisdom of God,.... Not of men, not of the wise politicians, the learned philosophers and Rabbins; that which human wisdom has no hand in forming, nor in revealing, nor in propagating, and which is disliked and disapproved of by it: the Gospel is the sole produce of divine wisdom, and in which there is a glorious display of it; even in those doctrines which are the most charged with folly, as salvation by a crucified Christ, justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, satisfaction by his sacrifice, &c.

in a mystery; it is mysterious wisdom. The Gospel is full of mysteries; there is the mystery of God, of a trinity of persons in the divine essence; the mystery of Christ, of his person, as God manifest in the flesh, of his divine sonship, and incarnation in the womb of a virgin; the mystery of the Spirit's grace in regeneration, of the saints' union to Christ, and communion with him, the resurrection of the same body, the change of living saints at Christ's coming, with many others:

even the hidden wisdom; the Gospel lay hid in God, in the thoughts of his heart, in the deep things of his mind, the counsels of his will, and purposes of his grace; it was hid in Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; it was hid under the types and shadows of the ceremonial law; and is hid in the Scriptures, which must be diligently searched for it, as for hidden treasures. It was hid from angels, and from Adam, until revealed; it was in some measure hid from the Jews under the former dispensation, to whom it was made known; and in some sense from believers, under the present dispensation, who as yet know it but in part; and is entirely hid from natural men, even from the most wise and prudent among them. This epithet expresses the preciousness, secrecy, and also security of the Gospel; hidden things being commonly of value, and being kept secret, are also safe; hidden and secret wisdom has been always esteemed, both by Greeks and Jews: hence that saying {u} of the latter,

"he that would be rich in learning of the law, hnwpu ayhv hmkxhw "and that wisdom which is hidden", in a hidden and secret place, should hide and secrete himself from the children of men."

The apostle adds,

which God ordained before the world. The Egyptians and Grecians boasted much of the "earliness" of their wisdom, but neither of them are to be mentioned with the Gospel for the antiquity of it; it is the birth of God's counsels of old, the produce of his purposes, which he purposed in Christ before the world was; a scheme of things he drew in his eternal mind; it is a transcript of the council of peace and covenant of grace, which were from everlasting; what the Jews {w} say of the law, is much more true of the Gospel,

"that it was treasured up with God (they say two thousand years, and sometimes nine hundred and seventy four ages), before the world was created;"

and often speak of it as one of the seven things created before the world was {x}. Moreover, this was to our glory; under the present dispensation, which by reason of the Gospel has a glory in it surpassing the former; it is to the glory both of the ministers of it, whose honour it is to be employed in preaching it, and in being by it the instruments of converting such who will be their glory another day, and to the glory of all believers who are by it called to the obtaining of the glory of Christ Jesus.

{u} Caphtor, fol. 81. {w} T. Bab. Zebacbim, fol. 116. 1. Zohar. in Exod. fol. 20. 4. & 35. 1, 2. & 66. 3. & in Numb. fol. 66. 3. {x} T. Bab. Pesachim. fol. 54. 1. Nedarim, fol. 39. 2. Zohar. in Lev. fol. 14. 4. Targum Jon. ben Uzziel in Gen. iii. 24.

1 Corinthians 2:8

Ver. 8. Which none of the princes of this world knew,.... Meaning not the devils, as some have thought, who had they known what God designed to do by the death of Christ, would never have been concerned in bringing it about; nor so much the political governors of the Roman empire, particularly in Judea, as Herod and Pontius Pilate, who also were entirely ignorant of it; but rather the ecclesiastical rulers of the Jewish church state, called hzh Mlwe, "this world", in distinction from abh Mlwe, "the world to come", or times of the Messiah; see **Heb 2:5** such as the priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, the Rabbins and learned doctors. These knew nothing of the wisdom of the Gospel, or the wise counsels of God concerning salvation by Christ; they knew not the Messiah when he came, nor the prophecies concerning him; the Jews and their rulers did what they did through ignorance, and fulfilled those things they knew nothing of; see **Ac 3:17**.

for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. They would have received him, believed in him, and not put him to death: a very great character is here given of Christ, "the Lord of glory", or the glorious Jehovah; reference seems to be had to Ps 24:7 where he is called, "the King of glory", and is an argument of his true and proper deity: he is so called because possessed of all glorious perfections, and is the brightness of his Father's glory; the same honour and glory are due to him as to the Father; and the same ascriptions of glory are made to him by angels and men. This is an instance of what the ancients call a communication of idioms or properties, whereby that which belongs to one nature in Christ, is predicated of his person, as denominated from the other: thus here the crucifixion of him, which properly belongs to his human nature, and that to his body only, is spoken of his person, and that as denominated from his divine nature, "the Lord of glory"; and he being so, this rendered his crucifixion, sufferings, and death, in human nature, efficacious to answer all the purposes for which they were endured.

1 Corinthians 2:9

Ver. 9. But as it is written,.... Not in an apocryphal book, called the Apocalypse of Elijah the prophet, as some have thought, but in Isa 64:4 with some variation; and is brought to prove that the Gospel is mysterious and hidden wisdom, unknown to the princes of this world, and ordained before the world was, for the glory of the saints: for the following words are not to be understood of the glories and happiness of the future state; though they are indeed invisible, unheard of, and inconceivable as to the excellency and fulness of them, and are what God has prepared from all eternity, for all those on whom he bestows his grace here; but of the doctrines of grace, and mysteries of the Gospel, as the context and the reason of their citation abundantly show; and are what

eye hath not seen, nor ear heard: which could never have been seen to be read by the eye of man, nor the sound thereof ever heard by the ear of man, had not God been pleased to make a revelation of them; and though they are to be seen and read in the sacred writings, and to be heard either read or expounded, with the outward hearing of the ear; yet are neither to be seen nor heard intellectually, spiritually, and savingly, unless, God gives eyes to see, and ears to hear; the exterior senses of seeing and hearing are not sufficient to come at and discover the sense of them; flesh and blood, human nature cannot search them out, nor reveal them, no nor the internal senses, the intellectual capacity of men:

neither have entered into the heart of man; this clause is not in the original text; but is a phrase often used by the Jews, for that which never came into a man's mind, was never thought of by him, or he ever had any conceptions, or the least notion and idea of; so the elders of the city, at the beheading of the heifer, are represented not only as saying, "our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it"; but also neither wnybl le htle, "hath it entered into our hearts", that the sanhedrim hath shed blood {y}; and elsewhere {z} it is said, this matter is like to a king,
wblb hlev, "into whose heart it entered", to plant in his garden, &c.

The things which God hath prepared for them that love him; in the original text it is, "for him that waiteth for him"; the sense is the same, for such as hope in the Lord and wait for him, are lovers of him; and the meaning is, that God has prepared and laid up in his own breast, in his counsels and covenant, in the types, shadows, and sacrifices of the old law, in the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament, such doctrines and mysteries of grace as were not so seen, heard, known, and understood by the Old Testament prophets and saints; and has reserved for his people under the Gospel dispensation, the times of the Messiah, a more clear discovery of them: so the Jews themselves own that these words belong to the world to come {a}, which with them commonly signifies the days of the Messiah; though here they think fit to distinguish them, and interpret the phrase, "eye hath not seen", of the eye of the prophets: their words are these {b};

"all prophesied not, but of the days of the Messiah; but as to the world to come, eye hath not seen, O God, besides thee."

The gloss on it is,

"the eye of the prophets hath not been able to see it."

Indeed, the mysteries of the Gospel are more clearly discerned now, than by the prophets formerly.

{y} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 46. 2. {z} Sepher Bahir in Zohar in Gen. fol. 31. 1. {a} Zohar in Exod. fol. 64. 4. & 67. 2. {b} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 34. 2. Sabbat, fol, 63. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1. Maimon. in Misn. Sanhed. c. 11. sect. 1. & Hilch. Teshuva, c. 8. sect. 7. & Jarchi in Isa. lxiv. 4.

1 Corinthians 2:10

Ver. 10. But God hath revealed them unto us,.... Should it be said, that since this wisdom is so hidden and mysterious, the doctrines of the Gospel are so unknown, so much out of the sight and understanding of men, how come any to be acquainted with them? The answer is ready, God has made a revelation of them, not only in his word, which is common to men, nor only to his ministers, but to private Christians and believers,

by his Spirit; which designs not the external revelation made in the Scriptures, though that also is by the Spirit; but the internal revelation and application of the truths of the Gospel to the souls of men, which is sometimes ascribed to the Father of Christ.
Mt 16:17 sometimes to Christ himself, **Ga 1:12** and sometimes to the Spirit of Christ, **Eph 1:17** and who guides into all truth, Joh 16:13, and here to the Father by the Spirit:

for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God; which does not suppose any ignorance of these things in the Spirit, antecedent to his searching of them; but his complete and perfect knowledge of them; even as God's searching of the hearts of men expresses his omniscience, and through knowledge of all that is in them: the "all things" the Spirit searches into, and has a perfect knowledge of, do not design in the utmost extent everything which comes within the compass of his infinite understanding; but every thing that is in, or belongs to the Gospel of Christ, even the more mysterious and sublime, as well as the more plain and easy doctrines: for the "deep things of God" intend not the perfections of his nature, which are past finding out unto perfection by men; nor the depths of his wise and righteous providence; but the mysterious doctrines of the Gospel, the fellowship of the mystery which was hid in God, his wise counsels of old concerning man's salvation, the scheme of things drawn in his eternal mind, and revealed in the word.

1 Corinthians 2:11

Ver. 11. For what man knoweth the things of a man,.... The thoughts of a man's heart, the conceptions of his mind, the schemes he is drawing there, his designs, purposes, and intentions; these can never be known by another man, no, nor by angels or devils; not by any creature; by none

save the spirit of a man which is in him? which is only conscious to, and can only make known the things that are in him:

even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God; and which, as it proves how secret, hidden, unknown, the mysteries of grace are, until revealed by the Spirit; so it gives full evidence to the deity of the Holy Ghost, and clearly shows he must be God, who is in him, knows the thoughts of his heart, the counsels of his mind, his purposes and decrees, and what is contained in them.

1 Corinthians 2:12

Ver. 12. Now we have received not the spirit of the world,.... Meaning either Satan, the god of the world, the spirit that is in it, and rules over it; or the sinful carnal disposition of the men of the world, which is a spirit of covetousness, uncleanness, pride, malice, and error; or rather the carnal wisdom of the world, which is common to worldly men, lies in the knowledge of worldly things, and is pursued and exercised for worldly advantages:

but the Spirit which is of God; the Holy Ghost, which proceeds from the Father and the Son, is the gift of God to his people, and whom they receive through the doctrine of faith into their hearts, as a spirit of illumination, faith, comfort, adoption, truth, and as a seal and earnest of future glory:

that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God; who has given himself, his Son, and all things freely along with him, as a justifying righteousness, remission of sins, adoption, and eternal life; all which were provided for them in the council and covenant of peace, and made up that grace given unto them freely in Christ before the world began; for there was not only an eternal purpose to bestow these gifts, in the mind of God, and a promise of them in covenant, but a real donation of them to them, as considered in Christ so early: besides, God gave his Son, and Christ gave himself for them before they knew anything of the matter; and therefore must be unknown, until made known by the Spirit of God, who is sent unto them, and into their hearts, for this purpose, to make them known; which he does, by showing all this grace, and by opening and applying the truths of the everlasting Gospel: and this knowledge is not a mere notional one, but spiritual, experimental, and approbational, joined with affection and admiration; and is a knowledge of interest in these things, and which makes both humble and obedient.

1 Corinthians 2:13

Ver. 13. Which things also we speak,.... Namely, the things which have not been seen by the eye, heard by the ear, or understood by the heart of man; the things God has prepared for his people; the deep things of God; the things of God which are only known to the Spirit; the things that are freely given to them of God, and made known to them by the Spirit of God: these things are spoken out, preached, and declared to the sons of men,

not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth; which are learned in the schools of the philosophers, put together by human art, and "in the taught words of human wisdom", as the clause may be rendered; such as are taught and acquired by human learning, so artificially formed in their order and structure as to work upon the affections of men, captivate the mind, and persuade to an assent.

But which the Holy Ghost teacheth; or "in the taught" words "of the Holy Ghost"; in the language of the Scriptures, edited by the Spirit of God; or such as the Holy Spirit taught them, suggested to them, directed them to the use of; for he not only supplied them with matter, but furnished them with words, with proper and spiritual oratory:

comparing spiritual things with spiritual; the things of the Spirit of God, the doctrines of the Gospel, with the spiritual writings of the Old Testament, whereby their truth and harmony are demonstrated; speaking as the oracles of God, and prophesying or preaching according to the analogy of faith; and adapting spiritual words to spiritual truths, clothing them with a language suitable and convenient to them, not foreign and flourishing, but pure, simple, and native; or accommodating and communicating spiritual things, as to matter and form, to spiritual men; which sense the Arabic version favours and confirms, such being only capable of them; and with these there is no need to use the eloquence, oratory, wisdom, and words of men.

1 Corinthians 2:14

Ver. 14. But the natural man,.... Not a babe in Christ, one that is newly born again, for though such have but little knowledge of spiritual things, yet they have a taste, and do relish and desire, and receive the sincere milk of the word, and grow thereby; but an unregenerate man, that has no knowledge at all of such things; not an unregenerate man only, who is openly and notoriously profane, abandoned to sensual lusts and pleasures; though such a man being sensual, and not having the Spirit, must be a natural man; but rather the wise philosopher, the Scribe, the disputer of this world; the rationalist, the man of the highest attainments in nature, in whom reason is wrought up to its highest pitch; the man of the greatest natural parts and abilities, yet without the Spirit and grace of God, mentioned **1Co 1:20** and who all along, both in that chapter and in this, quite down to this passage, is had in view: indeed, every man in a state of nature, who is as he was born, whatever may be the inward furniture of his mind, or his outward conduct of life, is but a natural man, and such an one

receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: not the things relating to the deity, personality, and perfections of the Holy Spirit, though these the natural man knows not, nor receives; nor the things done by him, particularly the operations of his grace on the souls of men in regeneration, concerning which he says, as Nicodemus did, "how can these things be?" but the truths of the Gospel before spoken of; so called, because they are contained in the Scriptures edited by the Spirit of God, are the deep things of God, which he searches into and reveals; and because they are made known by him, who is given and received for that end and purpose, that the saints might know them; and because they are delivered by the preachers of the Gospel, in words which he teacheth; now these the natural man receives not in the love of them, so as to approve of and like them, truly to believe them, cordially embrace them, and heartily be subject to them, profess and obey them, but on the contrary abhors and rejects them:

for they are foolishness unto him; they are looked upon by him as absurd, and contrary to reason; they do not agree with his taste, he disrelishes and rejects them as things insipid and distasteful; he regards them as the effects of a crazy brain, and the reveries of a distempered head, and are with him the subject of banter and ridicule:

neither can he know them: as a natural man, and whilst he is such, nor by the help and mere light of nature only; his understanding, which is shut unto them, must be opened by a divine power, and a superior spiritual light must be thrown into it; at most he can only know the literal and grammatical sense of them, or only in the theory, notionally and speculatively, not experimentally, spiritually, and savingly:

because they are spiritually discerned; in a spiritual manner, by a spiritual light, and under the influence, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God. There must be a natural visive discerning faculty, suited to the object; as there must be a natural visive faculty to see and discern natural things, so there must be a spiritual one, to see, discern, judge, and approve of spiritual things; and which only a spiritual, and not a natural man has.

1 Corinthians 2:15

Ver. 15. But he that is spiritual,.... Meaning not any particular individual person, not the pope of Rome, as his adherents vainly imagine, whom they fancy to be a supreme and infallible judge in things spiritual, from whose judgment is no appeal, and who himself comes not under the judgment of any; for he is so far from being a spiritual man, or having judgment in spiritual things, that he stands described as the man of sin, the son of perdition, the wicked one, the beast, to whom a mouth is given, speaking great things and blasphemies; but a set of men are here meant, and not such who are only outwardly reformed in their lives and conversations, who are at best but moral, and not spiritual men; nor all that have a form of godliness, an appearance of spirituality; there may be such who may have this, and yet deny the power of it, in which the principle and essence of spirituality lies; nor all such who have spiritual gifts, which may be where there is no spiritual grace; or that have a greater degree of spiritual knowledge than others, or that even have a greater degree of real grace than others; for though these are certainly spiritual men, 1Co 3:1 yet they are not the only ones; others that have less knowledge and grace, are spiritual also, and are comprehended in this character; much less does it design such who have no flesh or sin in them, for there are none without sin in the present state; and if this was essential to a spiritual man, there would be no spiritual man in the world; such are only the saints in heaven, who are without fault before the throne: and after the resurrection will have spiritual bodies, as well as their spirits or souls are now made perfect: but here a spiritual man intends every man that is born of the Spirit; seeing what is born of the Spirit, is Spirit, or spiritual; from whence the regenerate man is denominated spiritual, he is such an one that is quickened by the Spirit of God, and lives spiritually by faith on Christ; he breathes after spiritual things, salvation by Christ, and an interest in him, communion with God, conformity to Christ, pardon of sin, a justifying righteousness, and eternal life: he has spiritual senses, and these in exercise; he has a spiritual sight of things, of himself, and his lost state by nature, and of the person, grace, and things of Christ; he has a spiritual hearing of the Gospel, by which faith comes; he hears so as to live, and he lives so as that he hears the joyful sound with understanding, approbation, and acceptance; he has a spiritual taste of things, of the grace of God, the fruit of Christ, and the truths of the Gospel; and he smells a sweet savour in them; he has a spiritual feeling, he feels the weight and burden of sin, the gracious influences and operations of the Spirit, and handles Christ, the word of life: he talks the spiritual language of Canaan, and his speech betrays him to be a spiritual man; and he walks spiritually by faith on Christ, and in the paths of holiness, righteousness, and truth: he is one that is renewed by the Holy Spirit, in the spirit of his mind; has a new heart, and a new spirit put within him; and is become a new creature in Christ: he has the good work of grace wrought in his soul; and in him grace is the reigning principle; in him the Spirit of God himself dwells, and he is led by him out of himself to Christ, and into all truth, and walks after him, and not after the flesh: his conversation is spiritual and heavenly; he is spiritually minded, he minds not the things of the flesh, but the things of the Spirit; and though there is a great deal of carnality in him, in his thoughts, his words, and actions, yet this is matter of grief to him, and is his daily complaint: and such an one

judgeth all things; or "discerneth all things"; not all things in nature, or which fall within the compass of human knowledge; there are many things he may have no knowledge of, nor judgment in, being for the most part not the wise and prudent, but the foolish things of the world who are spiritual; but things divine and spiritual, the things of the Spirit of God, the doctrines of the Gospel before spoken of; and these not every difficult passage of Scripture, or knotty point of controversy, but the several articles of faith, necessary and essential to salvation; these are plain and easy to him, they stand before him in a clear light; as that salvation is alone by Christ, pardon by his blood, justification by his righteousness, &c. these he has seen and tasted of, and relishes, and can discern things that differ, and approve those which are more excellent; he can distinguish truth from error, and the voice of Christ from the voice of a stranger; and knows when the Gospel is preached, and when not, of which he judges by the word of God and his own experience: not that every spiritual man has a like degree of spiritual knowledge and judgment, but everyone discerns and judges according to the measure of the gift of Christ:

yet he himself is judged of no man; or "discerned of no man": that is, not of any natural man; who is not capable of discerning and judging who and what he is; only a spiritual man can discern and judge of his spiritual light, grace, and state; as the churches of Christ do, when persons are proposed to, them for communion; the other knows him not, but takes him to be a weak, or a wicked man, an hypocrite and a deceiver; and it is a small thing with him to be judged of man's judgment; he cares not what judgment the natural man passes upon him; nor does his faith in things spiritual, stand upon the authority and judgment of men; nor will he submit to it; nor can he be reproved, convinced, and refuted by such a person: for though a thousand sophistic arguments may be used with him which he cannot answer, he has a witness within himself to the truths of the Gospel, which opposes itself, and stands its ground against all objections; as with respect to the impurity of human nature, the impotency of man to anything that is spiritually good of himself, the insufficiency of his righteousness to justify him before God, the proper deity and real excellency of Christ, his blood and righteousness, and the internal work of the Spirit of God on the heart; sooner may a rock be removed out of its place, than a truly spiritual man can be convicted by a natural man of the falsehood of these things, of which he has had an inward experience, as well as is instructed in them by the word of God; nor can he be better taught and instructed by the natural man.

1 Corinthians 2:16

Ver. 16. For who hath known the mind of the Lord,.... The deep counsels of his heart, the scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ, as drawn in his eternal mind, the sense of the Spirit of God in the writings of the Old Testament, the things of the Spirit of God, or the doctrines of grace more clearly revealed under the Gospel dispensation; not any natural man, by the light of truth and strength of reason, has known any of these things. The apostle either cites or alludes to Isa 40:13

that he may instruct him? not the Lord, who needs no instruction from any, nor can any teach and instruct him, nor would any be so bold and insolent as to attempt it nor does the knowledge of the mind of the Lord qualify any for such a work; since if he knows ever so much of it, he cannot know more than the Lord himself: but the spiritual man, whom a natural man, being ignorant of the mind of the Lord, cannot instruct; and so the words give a very proper and sufficient reason why the spiritual man is not discerned, judged, convinced, and instructed by the natural man:

but we have the mind of Christ; the same with "the mind of the Lord" which proves that Christ is the Lord, or Jehovah, and so truly and properly God; and which is to be understood, not only of the apostles and ministers of the Gospel, but of all true believers; and therefore want no instruction, as they can have none from the natural man; though chiefly of the former, whereby they were abundantly qualified for the further instruction even of spiritual men.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 3

In this chapter the apostle returns to the charge of schisms and contentions upon the Corinthians, which were the occasion of the epistle; and reproves them for their divisions, which were about their ministers; and gives them their just and due character, and who, though they were useful and commendable in their places, were not to be gloried in; and especially it was a great piece of weakness and folly, to set up one against another, when they had an equal interest in them all. Having, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, made mention of the spiritual man, the apostle tells the Corinthians, to whom he writes, that he could not address them as spiritual, but as carnal; and not as perfect men, among whom he spake the wisdom of God, but as babes in Christ, **1Co 3:1** and this rudeness and ignorance of theirs account for his conduct towards them, in delivering the plain and easy, and not the sublime doctrines of the Gospel to them, because they were not able to bear them; nor were they yet able, notwithstanding the length of time, the proficiency they had made, and the many teachers they had had among them, **1Co 3:2** and to prove that they were carnal, and not spiritual, he instances in their envy, strife, and contentions, which were carnal works, or works of the flesh, **1Co 3:3** and gives some particulars of their contentions about their ministers, which put it out of all doubt that they were carnal, **1Co 3:4** and reproves them for such contentions, and argues the folly and sinfulness of them; partly from the character of their preachers, as servants and ministers, who were the instruments of their faith and conversion, through the grace of God, and therefore not to be set up at the head of them as their lords and masters, **1Co 3:5** and partly from the unprofitableness of their ministry, without a divine blessing, **1Co 3:6** and also from the unity and equality of the ministers among themselves, though their labours and reward were different, **1Co 3:8** and therefore parties and factions were not to be made on their account; and besides, as they were labourers with God, and the church were his husbandry and building, in which they were employed, **1Co 3:9**, though they might differ in some superstructure points, yet they agreed in the foundation; and the apostle instances in himself under the character of a wise master builder, laying the foundation, and others building on it, **1Co 3:10** and declares what this foundation was, which he and other Gospel ministers agreed in laying; nor was there any other that could be laid, to any good purpose besides, which is Jesus Christ, **1Co 3:11** and then distinguishes between the different sorts of builders, the one laying on the foundation things of the greatest worth and value, and others things very trifling and useless, **1Co 3:12** and intimates that there would be a time, when there would be a revelation and declaration of every man's work, of what sort it is, **1Co 3:13** so that, according to their different structures, there will be a different reward, as is suggested, **1Co 3:8** for though both sorts of preachers are upon the foundation, and so their persons will be safe, yet what they have built upon that foundation, according to the nature of it, shall either abide or be destroyed, **1Co 3:14** wherefore inasmuch then as the church of Christ is a temple, a building laid on such a foundation as Christ, it ought not to be defiled by factions and divisions, by errors and heresies; especially since it is holy, and the Spirit of God dwells in it; and whoever does defile it shall surely be destroyed; and therefore the apostle dissuades from it, both from the turpitude of the action, and the danger of it, **1Co 3:16** he cautions against the wisdom of this world, which was the cause of their divisions; as being self-deceiving, and contrary to true wisdom, **1Co 3:18** and as being foolishness in the account of God, which he proves by some passages of scripture, **1Co 3:19** and concludes, therefore, that no man ought to glory in men, in the best of men, not even in ministers, **1Co 3:21** so as to separate and divide them, one from another, and set up one above another, since they, and all things else, were theirs, **1Co 3:22** the ground and evidence of which their right and property in them are given, they being Christ's, and Christ's God's, **1Co 3:23**.

Ver. 1. And I, brethren, could not speak unto you,.... Though the apostle was a spiritual man himself, had spiritual gifts, even the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, could judge all things, had the mind of Christ, and was able to speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, yet could not speak it to them,

as unto spiritual; not but that they had the Spirit of God in them, and a work of grace upon them; for they were, as the apostle afterwards says, the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelt in them; they were washed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God; but had not that spiritual discerning, or judgment in spiritual things, which some believers had, at least when the apostle was first with them; and now they were under great spiritual declensions, and had not those spiritual frames, nor that spiritual experience and conversation, which some other Christians had:

but as unto carnal: not that they were in a carnal state, as unregenerate men are; but had carnal conceptions of things, were in carnal frames of soul, and walked in a carnal conversation with each other; though they were not in the flesh, in a state of nature, yet the flesh was in them, and not only lusted against the Spirit, but was very predominant in them, and carried them captive, so that they are denominated from it:

even as unto babes in Christ; they were in Christ, and so were new creatures; they were, as the Arabic version reads it, "in the faith of Christ"; though babes and weaklings in it, they were believers in Christ, converted persons, yet children in understanding, knowledge, and experience; had but little judgment in spiritual things, and were unskilful in the word of righteousness; at least this was the case of many of them, though others were enriched in all utterance and knowledge, and in no gift came behind members of other churches.

1 Corinthians 3:2

Ver. 2. I have fed you with milk,.... It is usual with the Jews to compare the law to milk, and they say {c}, that

"as milk strengthens and nourishes an infant, so the law strengthens and nourishes the soul;"

but the apostle does not here mean hrwt lv blx, "the milk of the law", as they {d} call it, but the Gospel; comparable to milk, for its purity and wholesomeness, for the nourishing virtue there is in it, and because easy of digestion; for he designs by it, the more plain and easy doctrines of the Gospel, such as babes in Christ were capable of understanding and receiving: and not with meat; the more solid doctrines of the Gospel, and sublime mysteries of grace; the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom; such truths as were attended with difficulties, to which the carnal reason of men made many objections, and so were only fit to be brought before such who are of full age, young men, or rather fathers in Christ; who have had a large experience, and a long time of improvement in spiritual knowledge, and have their senses exercised to distinguish between truth and error. The reason he gives for this his conduct is,

for hitherto ye were not able to bear it; they could not receive, relish, and digest it; it was too strong meat for them, they being weak in faith, and but babes in Christ; wherefore he prudently adapted things to their capacities, and that in perfect consistence with that faithfulness and integrity, for which he was so remarkable: for the Gospel he preached to them, which he calls "milk", was not another Gospel, or contrary to that which goes by the name of "meat": only the one consisted of truths more easily to be understood, and was delivered in a manner more suited to their capacities than the other: he adds,

neither yet now are ye able; which carries in it a charge of dulness and negligence, that they had been so long learning, and were improved no more in the knowledge of the truth; were as yet only in the alphabet of the Gospel, and needed to be afresh instructed in the first principles of the oracles of God; for anything beyond these was too high for them. The apostle seems to allude to the manner and custom of the Jews, in training up their children to learning; as to their age when they admit them scholars, their rule is this {e},

"they introduce children (into the school) to be taught when six or seven years of age, wpwg Nynbw Nbh xk ypl, "according to the child's strength, and the make of his body, and less than six years of age they do not take any in.""

But sooner than this, a father is obliged to teach his child at home, concerning which they say {f},

"from what time is his father obliged to teach him the law? as soon as he begins to speak, he teaches him the law Moses commanded us, and "hear O Israel", and after that he instructs him, Myqwop Myqwop jem jem, "by little and little, here and there a verse", till he is six or seven years of age, and, wyrwb ypl lkh, "all this according to the clearness of his understanding";"

i.e. as he is able to take things in; and even till twelve years he was to be used with a great deal of tenderness:

"says R. Isaac {g}, at Usha they made an order, that a man should "use his son gently", until he is twelve years of age; the gloss upon it is, if his son refuses to learn, he shall use him Mykr Myrbdbw txnb, "with mildness and tender language.""

{c} Kimchi in Isa. lv. 1. Abarbinel, Mashamia Jeshua, fol. 26. 1. {d} Jarchi in Cant. v. 12. {e} Maimom. Talmud Tora, c. 2. sect. 2. {f} Ib. c. 1. sect. 6. {g} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 50. 1.

1 Corinthians 3:3

Ver. 3. For ye are yet carnal,.... The Syriac reads it,
Nwtna robb, "ye are in the flesh": a phrase the apostle elsewhere uses of men

in an unregenerate state; but this is not his meaning here, as before explained, but that carnality still prevailed among them, of which he gives proof and evidence:

for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? They envied each other's gifts and knowledge, strove about words to no profit, entered into warm debates and contentions about their ministers, and went into factions and parties, which were distinguished by the names they were most affected to; in all which they gave too clear evidence of their prevailing carnality, that they too much walked as other men, who make no profession of religion; that they were led by the judgment of men, and were carried away with human passions and inflections; and in their conduct could scarcely be distinguished from the rest of the world. The things that are here mentioned, and with which they are charged, are reckoned by the apostle among the works of the flesh, **Ga 5:19** the phrase, "and divisions", is omitted in the Alexandrian copy, and in some others, and in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions.

1 Corinthians 3:4

Ver. 4. For while one saith, I am of Paul,.... This shows what their envying and strife, and divisions were about, and from whence they sprung; and which serve, to strengthen the proof, and support the charge of carnality brought against them; for when one sort made a party for Paul, and set up him as their minister above all others; and said

another, I am of Apollos, preferring him for his eloquence above Paul, or any other preacher, as appears from **1Co 1:12** there was a third sort for Cephas, whom they cried up as superior to the other two, or any other man; and a fourth were for Christ, and despised all ministers whatever:

are ye not carnal? all this was a demonstration of it: they could never clear themselves from it, they must be convicted in their own consciences of it; to which the apostle appeals: the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, "are ye not men?"

1 Corinthians 3:5

Ver. 5. Who then is Paul? and who is Apollos?.... The apostle's name being used, and he a party concerned, could speak the more freely upon this head, and ask what they thought of himself, and other preachers, whether they were more than men? what authority and power they had, whether they looked upon them as the authors of a new religion, or the founders of a new sect, that were to go by their names? and directs them what light to consider them in, how that they were

but ministers by whom ye believed: they were servants to Christ and to his churches, and not lords; they did not assume any dominion over men, or pretend to lord it over God's heritage; there is but one Lord and master, and that is Christ, whom they served, and taught others to obey; they were only instrumental in the hand of God, by whom souls were directed, encouraged, and brought to believe in Christ; as for faith itself, that is the gift of God, the operation of his power, and of which Christ is the author and finisher; they laid no claim to this as their work, or imagined they had any dominion over it; that they could either implant it, or increase it of themselves; but thought it honour enough done them, that it came by their ministry; and that that, and the joy of it, were helped and furthered by their means: the Vulgate Latin version reads, "his ministers whom ye believed"; that is, the ministers of Christ, whom they believed in; not in the ministers, but Christ; the Arabic version renders it, "but two ministers, by whom ye believed"; referring to Paul and Apollos, who are meant:

even as the Lord gave to every man; gifts to minister with, and success to his ministry; making him useful to this and the other man, to bring him to the faith of Christ; all which is owing to the free grace and sovereign good will and pleasure of God.

1 Corinthians 3:6

Ver. 6. I have planted,.... That is, ministerially; otherwise the planting of souls in Christ, and the implanting of grace in them, are things purely divine, and peculiar to God, and the power of his grace; but his meaning is, that he was at Corinth, as in other places, the first that preached the Gospel to them; and was an instrument of the conversion of many souls, and of laying the foundation, and of raising and forming a Gospel church state, and of planting them in it;

Apollos watered; he followed after, and his ministry was blessed for edification; he was a means of carrying on the superstructure, and of building up souls in faith and holiness, and of making them fruitful in every good word and work: each minister of the Gospel has his proper gifts, work, and usefulness; some are planters, others waterers; some are employed in hewing down the sturdy oaks, and others in squaring and fitting, and laying them in the building; some are "Boanergeses", sons of thunder, and are mostly useful in conviction and conversion; and others are "Barnabases", sons of consolation, who are chiefly made use of in comforting and edifying the saints: but God gave the increase: for as the gardener may put his plants into the earth, and water them when he has so done, but cannot cause them to grow, this is owing to a divine blessing; and as the husbandman tills his ground, casts the seed into it, and waits for the former and latter rain, but cannot cause it to spring up, or increase to perfection, this is done by a superior influence; so ministers of the Gospel plant and water, cast in the seed of the word, preach the Gospel, but all the success is from the Lord; God only causes it to spring up and grow; it is he that gives it its increasing, spreading, fructifying virtue and efficacy.

1 Corinthians 3:7

Ver. 7. So then, neither is he that planteth anything,.... Not that he is the happy instrument of beginning the good work:

neither he that watereth; who is the means of carrying of it on: not that they are simply and absolutely nothing, without any restriction and limitation; they are men, they are Christians, they are ministers, and useful ones, by whom others believe; they are labourers together with God, ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, and so to be accounted of; but they are nothing in themselves, nor in their own account, or with respect to God: they are nothing of themselves as ministers; they have nothing but what they have received; all their gifts are from God, nor can they exercise them aright without the grace of God, not being able to think a good thought as of themselves; nor are they anything in making their planting and watering effectual; and so no glory belongs to them; nothing is to be ascribed to them, they have no part or lot in these things:

but God that giveth the increase; he gives them their abilities, assists them in the exercise of their gifts, makes their ministrations useful, and he has, as he ought to have, all the glory.

1 Corinthians 3:8

Ver. 8. Now he that planteth, and he that watereth are one,.... Not in every respect so; they were different as men, they were not the same individual persons, nor in the same office; Paul was an apostle, Apollos only a preacher of the Gospel; nor had they the same measure of gifts, nor did they labour alike, or were of the same usefulness; but they had one and the same commission to preach the Gospel; and the Gospel they preached was the same; and so were their views, aims, and ends, which were the glory of God, and the good of immortal souls; and they had the same love and affection for one another; they were one in their work, judgment, and affection; and which carries in it a strong reason and argument why the members of this church should not contend and divide about them:

and every man shall receive his own reward; either from men, that double honour he is worthy of, maintenance and respect; or rather from God, not a reward of debt, for his labours are by no means meritorious of anything at the hands of God, from whom he has all the grace, strength, and abilities he labours with; but of grace, even the reward of the inheritance, because he serves the Lord Christ; which is by bequest, through the death of the testator, and common to all the children of God, and heirs of glory:

according to his own labour; and not another's; and not according to the success of it, but according to that itself; not that that is the measure of the reward, for the reward infinitely exceeds it; but is that to which God has graciously annexed the promise of the reward, as an encouragement to it.

1 Corinthians 3:9

Ver. 9. For we are labourers together with God,.... The ministers of the Gospel are labourers in the Lord's vineyard, and not loiterers; their work is a laborious work, both to body and mind; which lies in close study and meditation, in diligent reading and constant prayer, in frequent ministration of the word, and administration of ordinances; besides reproofs, admonitions, and exhortations, counsels, and instructions, which are often necessary: it is a work, which no man is sufficient for of himself; what requires diligence, industry, and faithfulness; is honourable, and, when rightly performed, deserves respect: nor do they labour alone, but with God; not as co-ordinate, but as subordinate workers; for though they labour in planting and watering, yet they bear no part with him in giving the increase; he is the husbandman, the chief master builder, they are labourers under him; however, he works with them; hence their labours are not in vain, and they have great encouragement to go on in their work; and they are God's labourers with one another, which is a sense of the phrase not to be overlooked. The apostle often, in his epistles, speaks of his fellow workmen, and fellow labourers, who wrought together with him under God:

ye are God's husbandry; or tillage; he is the proprietor of the field, the occupier of it, the husbandman who breaks up the fallow ground of the hearts of his people; he casts in the seed of grace, he makes the ground good, and causes it to bring forth fruit; the churches of Christ are his property, land of his fertilizing, and all the fruit belongs unto him; they are gardens of his planting, and vineyards of his watering, and which he keeps night and day, lest any hurt:

ye are God's building; as the former metaphor is taken from agriculture, this is from architecture: believers in a church state are God's house, in which he dwells, and which he himself has built; he has laid the foundation, which is Jesus Christ; he makes his people lively stones, and lays them on it; he raises up the superstructure, and will complete the building, and ought to bear all the glory, and in all which he makes use of his ministers as instruments.

1 Corinthians 3:10

Ver. 10. According to the grace of God which is given unto me,.... Lest the apostle should be thought to be too much elated with the characters he had given of himself, and other ministers, or to assume too much to himself, in what he was about to say of himself, he ascribes all the gifts he had, and the usefulness he was of, as a labourer and builder in the church of God, to rich grace; by which he was called unto, and qualified for such work: as a wise master builder. This same phrase, sofov arcitektwn, "a wise master builder", is used by the Septuagint interpreters, in **Isa 3:3** by which they render Myvrx Mkx, "the cunning artificer", or the wise man of the carpenters, or artificers. The architect of all is God the Father, Son, and Spirit; God the Father is the builder of all things; Christ builds his church on himself the rock; and the saints are built up an habitation for God, through the Spirit; ministers are builders under God, instruments he makes use of, and who would labour in vain, unless the Lord build the city: such an one was the apostle, though he calls himself a master builder with respect to inferior ministers; he being in the highest office in the church, as an apostle, and not a whit behind the chief of them; and was the chief apostle of the Gentiles, and was principally concerned in preaching the Gospel to them, and in raising churches among them. The allusion is to the Jews, who use to call the Rabbins and doctors, and the disciples of the wise men, "builders": they ask in a certain place {h}, Nyanb yam,

"who are the builders? says R. Joehanna, these are the disciples of the wise men, who employ themselves in the building of the world all their days {i}."

That is, the law, as one {k} of their writers explains this building; hence they are sometimes called builders of the law, and which was looked upon to be an high character: it is said {l} of a certain person, that

"R. Zeira praised him, and called him, atyyrwad hyynb, "a builder of the law.""

But the apostle was a Gospel builder, a builder of Gospel churches in Gospel truths, and in faith and holiness; these were foolish builders, but he a wise one; and his wisdom lay in the knowledge of Christ, in preaching him, and in winning souls unto him; and particularly in that he took care in his ministry, to lay a good foundation:

I have laid the foundation; meaning not only that as at other places, so at Corinth, he first preached the Gospel to them, and was the first instrument of their conversion, and laying the foundation of a Gospel church state; but that in his preaching he laid Christ as the one and only foundation, for men to build their faith and hope upon, for everlasting life and happiness, mentioned in the following verse:

and another buildeth thereupon; which designs not a private Christian, who was directed in the apostle's ministry to build his soul upon the rock of ages, Christ the sure foundation laid in Zion; though there is a truth in this, the apostle laid Christ as a foundation, and encouraged others to build their faith and hope upon him, as to eternal salvation; and many were enabled to do so, which was the happy fruit of his ministry, and what gave him pleasure; and in this sense he also himself built upon this foundation, for this cannot be said of another, to the exclusion of himself; he would never lay a foundation, and direct others to build on it, and not build upon it himself; but another minister of the Gospel is meant, as Apollos, or any other who might follow him, and be a means of carrying on the building upon the foundation he had laid; and of edifying and establishing souls upon it; and of rearing up superstructure truths, upon the foundation one:

but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon; that he builds by line, evenly, according to the analogy of faith; that he builds in proportion to the foundation; and lays such things upon it as are becoming it, and suitable to it.

{h} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 114. 1. {i} Jarchi, Maimon. Sampson, & Bartenora in Misn. Mikvaot, c. 9. sect. 6. {k} Juchasin, fol. 81. 1. {l} T. Hieros. Gittin, fol. 48. 4.

1 Corinthians 3:11

Ver. 11. For other foundation can no man lay,.... Men may attempt to lay other foundations than Christ, and build upon them, but to no purpose; they will be of no avail; all besides him are sandy foundations; such as fleshly privileges, a carnal descent, a religious education, an external profession of religion, a man's own righteousness, and the absolute mercy of God; but men ought to lay no other, nor can they, that will be of any advantage to themselves or others:

than that which is laid; by Jehovah the Father, both in his eternal counsels and covenant, when he set forth and appointed Christ to be the Saviour and Redeemer of his people; and in the fulness of time, when he sent him forth under the same characters; and by the Spirit of God, when he reveals Christ to them, and forms him in them; and by the ministers of the Gospel, who jointly agree to lay him ministerially, as the foundation for souls to build their hope upon: hence he is called the "foundation of the apostles and prophets", as here,

which is Jesus Christ; he is the foundation personally considered, as God-man and Mediator, on which the church, and every believer is built; he is the foundation of the covenant of grace, and of eternal salvation; of the faith and hope, peace, joy, and comfort of all the saints; and of the building of God, that house not made with hands, that city which has foundations, eternal glory in the other world; and he is the foundation, doctrinally considered; or the doctrines of his proper, deity, of his divine and eternal sonship, of his incarnation, of his Messiahship, of his obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead, of justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, &c. are fundamental ones: the Jews were wont to call the principal articles of their religion, ydwoy, "foundations": Maimondes has entitled one of his tracts, hrwth ydwoy "the foundations of the law"; but the doctrines respecting the person, offices, and grace of Christ, are the only foundation of the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 3:12

Ver. 12. Now if any man build upon this foundation,.... The different materials laid by one and the same man, on this foundation, or the different doctrines advanced upon it, are some of them comparable to

gold, silver, precious stones; for their intrinsic worth and value; for the purity and sincerity of them; for their weight, importance, solidity, and substantiality; for their durableness; for the great esteem they are had in by those, who know the worth of them; and for the great usefulness they are of unto them, being rich in themselves, and enriching to them; and these are the great, momentous, and valuable truths of the Gospel, which agree with and are suitable to the foundation they are built upon: so the Jews {m} compare their oral and written law, the former to gold, and the latter to precious stones, but the metaphors much better suit the doctrines of the Gospel: others are like to

wood, hay, stubble; by which are meant, not heretical doctrines, damnable heresies, such as are diametrically opposite to, and overturn the foundation; for one and the same man builds the former, as these, and is himself saved at last; neither of which is true, of such that deliver doctrines of devils: but empty, trifling, useless things are meant; such as fables, endless genealogies, human traditions, Jewish rites and ceremonies; which through the prejudice of education, and through ignorance and inadvertency, without any bad design, might by some be introduced into their ministry, who had been brought up in the Jewish religion; as also the wisdom of the world, the philosophy of the Gentiles, oppositions of science falsely so called, curious speculations, vain and idle notions, which such who had their education among the Greeks might still retain, and be fond of; and through an itch of vain glory, mix with their evangelic ministrations; and in a word, everything that may now be advanced in the Gospel ministry, not so honourable to the grace of God, or so becoming the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, nor so consistent with the Spirit's work of grace, may be meant hereby; the same minister at different times, and sometimes at one and the same time in his ministry, lays the foundation, Christ, and builds on it for a while excellent valuable truths, raises a superstructure of gold, silver, and precious stones, and then covers the edifice with trifling, impertinent, and inconsistent things, with wood, hay, and stubble; and so at last, of this promising fine stately building, makes a thatched house,

{m} Koheleth Jaacob in Caphtor, fol. 109. 2.

1 Corinthians 3:13

Ver. 13. Every man's work shall be made manifest,.... The doctrine he preaches shall be sooner or later made manifest to himself, and to his hearers; who shall see the inconsistency, irregularity, and deformity of such a building; at first so well laid, then piled up with such excellent materials, and at last covered in with such trifling or incoherent stuff:

for the day shall declare it; meaning not the day of judgment, though that is often called the day, or that day, and will be attended with fire, and in it all secrets shall be made manifest; but the apostle intends a discovery that will be made of doctrines in this world, before that time comes: wherefore this day rather designs a day of tribulation; as of persecution, which tries men's principles, whether they are solid or not; and of error and heresy, when men are put upon a re-examination of their doctrines, whereby persons and truths that are approved are made manifest; or of some great calamity, such as the destruction of Jerusalem, whereby many wrong notions the Jews yet retained were discovered: but it is best of all to understand this day of the Gospel day, and of the progress of Gospel light, especially in some particular periods of it; as in the primitive times, at the reformation from popery, and the more remarkable Gospel daylight, which will be in the latter times, when the impertinence and inconsistency of many things which now obtain in the ministry will be seen; see **Eph 5:13**.

Because it shall be revealed by fire: not that day, but the man's work, or doctrine:

and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is; by the fire is meant, not the general conflagration of the world, when that, and all that is therein, will be burnt up; much less the fire of purgatory, the "papists" dream of, for the punishment of evil actions; for the apostle is not speaking of the actions of men, good or bad, but of the doctrines of ministers; rather the fire of tribulation and affliction, which, as it is for the trial of the grace of faith, so of the doctrine of faith, whereby it becomes much more precious than of gold that perisheth; or of some fiery dispensation of God's vengeance, as on Jerusalem: though the word of God, which is as fire, seems to be intended; which in some certain times so blazes forth, and will more especially in the latter day, that by the light of it, both ministers and churches will be able to see clearly the bright shining lustre of the gold, silver, and precious stones; and with so much heat, as to burn up the wood, hay, and stubble; when the difference between these things will be most easily discerned.

1 Corinthians 3:14

Ver. 14. If any man's work abide,.... That is, if any minister's doctrine will bear the test of daylight, to be looked into, and abide the fire of the word; as gold, silver, and precious stones will, or such doctrines as are comparable to them, which will shine the brighter for being tried by this fire:

which he hath built thereupon; upon the foundation Christ, in entire consistence with, and proportion to it, and highly becoming it:

he shall receive a reward; either from the churches of Christ here, who shall honour and respect him for his faithful labours in the ministry; or from Christ hereafter, who will say, well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

1 Corinthians 3:15

Ver. 15. If any man's work shall be burnt,.... If any minister's doctrine he has preached shall be destroyed and disappear, shall be disapproved of, and rejected by the churches, not being able, to bear the light and heat of the fire of God's word:

he shall suffer loss; of all his labour and pains he has been at, in collecting together such trifling, useless, and inconsistent things; and of all that glory and popular applause he might expect from men, on account of them, and which was the snare that drew him into such a way of preaching:

but he himself shall be saved; with an everlasting salvation; not by his ministerial labours, much less by his wood, hay, and stubble, which will be all burnt up; but through his being, notwithstanding all the imperfections of his ministry, upon the foundation Christ:

yet so as by fire; with much difficulty, and will be scarcely saved; see **1Pe 4:17** with great danger, loss, and shame; as a man that is burnt out of house and home, he escapes himself with his own life, but loses all about him: so the Syriac version reads it,
arwn Nmd Kya, "as out of the fire": see **Zec 3:2**. Or the sense is, that he shall be tried by the fire of the word, and convinced by the light of it of the errors,

irregularities, and inconsistencies of his ministry; either in his time of life and health, or on a death bed; and shall have all his wood, hay, and stubble burnt up, for nothing of this kind shall he carry with him in his judgment to heaven; only the gold, silver, and precious stones; and will find that the latter doctrines, and not the former, will only support him in the views of death and eternity.

1 Corinthians 3:16

Ver. 16. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God,.... The apostle having spoken of the saints as God's building, of himself as a wise master builder, of Christ as the only foundation, and of various doctrines as the materials laid thereon, proceeds to observe to this church, and the members of it, that they being incorporated together in a Gospel church state, were the temple of God; and which was what they could not, or at least ought not, to be ignorant of: and they are so called, in allusion to Solomon's temple; which as it was a type of the natural, so of the mystical body of Christ. There is an agreement between that and the church of Christ, in its maker, matter, situation, magnificence, and holiness; and the church is said to be the temple of God, because it is of his building, and in which he dwells: what the apostle here says of the saints at Corinth, the Jewish doctors say of the Israelites {n},
Mta hwhy lkyh, "the temple of the Lord are ye"; and which being usually said of them in the apostle's time, he may refer unto; and much better apply to the persons he does, of which the indwelling of the Spirit was the evidence:

and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you: in particular members, as a spirit of regeneration, sanctification, faith, and adoption, and as the earnest and pledge of their future glory; in their ministers to fit and qualify them for their work, and carry them through it; and in the whole church, to bless the word and ordinances, for their growth, comfort, and establishment. This furnishes out a considerable proof of the deity and distinct personality of the Spirit, since this is mentioned as an evidence of the saints being the temple of God, which would not be one, if the Spirit was not God, who dwells therein; and since a temple is sacred to deity, and therefore if he dwells here as in a temple, he must dwell here as God; and since he is mentioned as distinct from God, whose Spirit he is, and dwelling, a personal action is ascribed to him, he must be a distinct divine person.

{n} R. Alshech in Hag. ii. 5.

1 Corinthians 3:17

Ver. 17. If any man defile the temple of God,.... By the wisdom of the world, through philosophy, and vain deceit; by bringing in false doctrines, errors, and heresies, and hereby corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ; and make rents, factions, and divisions among them:

him shall God destroy; body and soul in hell; for as their wicked principles and heretical notions are pernicious to others, they are damnable to themselves, and will bring upon them that judgment which lingereth not, and that damnation which slumbereth not. The false prophet, as well as the beast, and the devil, shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. God is not only an avenger of all immoralities committed against his righteous law, but of all false doctrine and false worship, and of everything that is contrary to the Gospel, and to the order and ordinances of it. The reason of this is,

for the temple of God is holy; alluding to the holiness of Solomon's temple,

"into which a man might not go with his staff, nor with his shoes on, nor with his purse, nor with dust upon his feet, nor might he make it a thoroughfare, and much less spit in it {o}."

And yet, how was it polluted in our Lord's time by the Jews, who made it a den of thieves, instead of an house of prayer?

which temple ye are. This is added for further confirmation, and to assert their holiness in doctrine, worship, and conversation, and to deter the false teachers from making use of any means to corrupt them in either.

{o} Misn. Beracot, c. 9. sect. 5.

1 Corinthians 3:18

Ver. 18. Let no man deceive himself,.... With vain notions of serving God and religion, and of doing the churches good by his carnal and worldly wisdom, and with false hopes of escaping the vengeance of God for sowing the tares of error, heresy, and discord among his people.

If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world; either a member of them, or a preacher among them, who thought himself wise in worldly wisdom; or was desirous to be thought so by others; or would be a truly wise man in this world, whilst he lives in it, and before he goes out of it:

let him become a fool that he may be wise; not that, properly speaking, folly is the way to wisdom; but that that man that would be wise in a spiritual sense, must first learn to know himself; must be convinced of, and acknowledge his own folly, embrace the Gospel of Christ, which is esteemed foolishness by the world; submit to the ordinances of Christ, which are despised by men; and take up the cross of Christ, and follow him, bear reproach and persecution for his sake, than which nothing is more ridiculous with carnal men: he must deny his worldly wisdom, his carnal and righteous self, and wholly rest and rely on Christ, and his righteousness, for eternal life and happiness, and so will he become truly wise unto salvation. The Jews {p} have a saying,

"that everyone wmue lbnmh, "that makes himself a fool", for the words of the law, at the end, shall be exalted."

{p} Raya Mehimua in Zohar in Numb. fol. 104. 2.

1 Corinthians 3:19

Ver. 19. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God,.... The wisdom of the Jewish, or Gentile world. It is had in no account with him; it is despised and neglected by him; he makes it foolish, destroys it, and brings it to nothing; he lays it aside as useless, to make men wise unto salvation, and by the foolishness of preaching saves them that believe; he passes by the wise and prudent, and hides the things of the Gospel from them; so, that, with all their learning and wisdom, they can neither apprehend nor comprehend the mysteries of grace, whilst he reveals them unto babes, and chooses the foolish things of this world to spread the knowledge of himself, his Son, his Gospel, and the truths of it, and whom he makes successful, to the confusion of the wise and learned.

"For it is written", bytkdk, an usual form of citing Scriptures with the Jews; it is in **Job 5:13** he taketh the wise in their own craftiness, or by it. What Eliphaz says of the wise politicians of the world, who are often disappointed of their crafty devices, and cannot perform the enterprises they have took in hand, but their schemes are broken, and the snares they laid for others they are taken in themselves, is applied by the apostle to the Jewish doctors, or the Gentile philosophers, or rather to the false teachers among the Christians; whose schemes they have formed to corrupt the churches, and demolish the Gospel, prove their own destruction; nor will they, with all their cunning, be able to get out of the hand of God, and escape his awful vengeance. The allusion is either to the taking of wild beasts and birds in snares and nets, or to the taking of men in flight, laying hold of them with the hand, and grasping them hard, that they cannot get loose. The Targum interprets the words of the wise men of Pharaoh, and of the Egyptian astrologers, schemes they have formed to corrupt the churches, and demolish the Gospel, prove their own destruction; nor will they, with all their cunning, be able to get out of the hand of God, and escape his awful vengeance. The allusion is either to the taking of wild beasts and birds in snares and nets, or to the taking of men in flight, laying hold of them with the hand, and grasping them hard, that they cannot get loose. The Targum interprets the words of the wise men of Pharaoh, and of the Egyptian astrologers.

1 Corinthians 3:20

Ver. 20. And again,.... Not in the same place, nor in the same book, but in the Psalms, in Ps 94:11. This form of citing Scriptures answers to dwew and moreover, used by the Jewish doctors when the matter does not so clearly appear from the first proof, and therefore they produce another {q}: and so here the apostle, for the further confirmation and illustration of this point, that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, to the testimony of Eliphaz, adds this of David,

the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain; in the Psalms it is, "the Lord knoweth the thoughts of men, that they are vanity"; which the apostle not only cites, but explains and teaches; as that by men is meant men of wisdom and knowledge, of the greatest capacities, whose thoughts, reasonings, schemes, and devices, the omniscient God not only knows, but makes known, and discovers them, sooner or later, to be vain and fruitless, yea, vanity itself; and notwithstanding all their machinations and contrivances, his counsel shall stand, his Gospel shall be maintained, his truths shall prevail, and his ordinances shall be continued, and his work go on.

{q} Vid. Surenhusii Biblos Katallages, p. 11, 531.

1 Corinthians 3:21

Ver. 21. Therefore let no man glory in men,.... The apostle means ministers, who are but men, even the best of them, and therefore not to be gloried in; and has chiefly respect to the false teachers, whose wisdom, learning, and eloquence, the Corinthians were greatly taken with, and boasted of; it was so ensnaring to them, that they even idolized them for it, called them their masters, pinned their faith on their sleeve, gave up themselves to them, and were greatly under their authority, influence, and direction, which is here condemned; and which was so far from being right, that they ought not to behave in such manner to the best of ministers, nor to glory in anyone above another; no, not in Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas;

for all things are yours; all the ministers, and all they are endowed with; these were all for their use and service, for their benefit and advantage; wherefore it was very wrong to set up one above, or against another, or for any party to engross anyone minister, when he belonged to them all; and great weakness to reject others, when they had a common right and property in them.

1 Corinthians 3:22

Ver. 22. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas,.... These are particularly named, because their disputes were chiefly about them; but what is said of them is true of all other, and all the ministers of Christ, that they are the church's. The gifts which Christ received for them, and has bestowed on them, are not their own, but the church's, and are given to them, not so much for their own use, as for the good and benefit of others. They are made able ministers of the New Testament, not by themselves, nor by man, but by God; who disposes of them as blessings to his churches, and gives them to be pastors and teachers of them, to feed them with knowledge, and with understanding; they are qualified by the Spirit of God for the service of the saints, and are separated by him to it, and are constituted overseers of the flock by his direction; they are placed as stewards of the mysteries and manifold grace of God, to dispense them with wisdom and faithfulness to all in his family, and are the servants of the churches for Jesus' sake, and therefore not to be gloried in; though to be respected in their place and station:

or the world: this, with what follows, is an amplification of the account, and is as if the apostle should say, you should be so far from glorying in man, in a few poor weak instruments, and especially in that in them, which with God is foolishness and vanity, that not only all the ministers of the word are yours, but even the whole world is yours; though called out of it, esteemed the filth of it, and have so little a share of it. The world was made for the sake of the saints, and is continued on their account; when they are called by grace, it will soon be at an end. It is their Lord's, and so theirs, both as Creator and Mediator: the good things of the world are enjoyed by the saints in a peculiar way, as covenant mercies and blessings, so as they are not by others, The evil things of it, as the sins and lusts of it, are escaped by them; and the afflictions they meet with in it are made to work for their good; and as they are heirs of the world, as Abraham was, so they shall inherit it in a much better form than it now is: the present heavens will pass away, the earth and all therein will be burnt up, and new heavens and a new earth arise, in which will dwell none but righteous persons: the world, in its present state, is an inn, suited to the condition of the saints, as pilgrims and strangers; but then it will be as a palace, fit for the spouse and bride of Christ.

Or life; in every view of it: the life of Christ, which he lived here on earth, in obedience to his Father's will, and which he now lives in heaven, where he ever lives to make intercession for his people, and for their good; that fulness of life that is in him, and that eternal life which is through him, are all theirs. The lives of the ministers of the Gospel are for their profit and advantage; and they are spared and continued on their account; their own lives are theirs, though not to live to themselves, nor to the lusts of men, but by faith on Christ, and to the glory of God, and which is what they desire.

Or death: the death of Christ was for them, in their room and stead, for their sins, to make satisfaction to divine justice for them; and the benefits of it are enjoyed by them. The death of good men, ministers, martyrs, and confessors, is theirs, serves to confirm their faith, animate their zeal, and encourage them to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering. Their own death is a blessing to them; the sting is taken away by Christ; the curse is removed; it is no penal evil to them; it is a deliverance of them from all the sorrows and troubles of this life, and is their passage into endless glory and happiness.

Or things present; whether prosperous or adverse; and these, whether they be their own or others, all work together for their good.

Or things to come; future troubles and exercises; or future good things, either in this world, or in the world to come; the invisible glories of a future state:

all are yours; which is repeated for confirmation sake, and to observe, that if there was anything that was omitted, or could not be thought to be included in any of the above expressions, that also was theirs.

1 Corinthians 3:23

Ver. 23. And ye are Christ's,.... This is the ground and foundation of all things being theirs, and shows in what way they come by them, and what gives them their claim and property: they are Christ's, he has an interest in them, and they in him; they are his, not only by creation, as all men are, but by the Father's special gift of them to him, as his spouse and bride, his children, his sheep, his portion, and his jewels; they are his through the purchase of his own blood, and by a voluntary surrender of themselves unto him, under the influence of his Spirit and grace; they are his by their profession of him; they avouch themselves to be the Lord's and call themselves by his name; and they are his by his possession of them, and dwelling in their hearts by faith; and all they have are his. Their worst things are his; their sins are accounted to him, and laid on him by imputation, and have been bore and done away by him: their griefs and sorrows are his, their reproaches his, and their afflictions and sufferings his. Their best things are his; their temporal mercies come from him, and through him; and all their spiritual blessings, they are blessed with in him; and all the good things done by them are done in his strength, by the assistance of his Spirit, and in virtue of his grace.

And Christ is God's; he is his Son, his own, his only begotten and well beloved Son, as he is a divine person; and as man he is his creature, made by him, and inferior to him; he is the head of him, as the man is of the woman; and as Mediator, he is his righteous servant, whom he has chosen, called, brought forth, upheld, and in whom he is glorified: so that, upon the whole, the saints should not glory in men, though ever so great and good, but in God, and in Christ, as of God, made unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 4

The chief heads of this chapter are the account that ought to be had of the ministers of the Gospel; cautions against censoriousness, rash judgment, pride, and self-conceit; the uncomfortable circumstances and situation of the ministers of the Gospel for the sake of preaching it; the apostle's fatherly affection to the Corinthians, and his authority over them; his resolution in submission to the will of God of coming to them, and the manner in which it might be expected he would come. The apostle exhorts to have in proper esteem the preachers of the Gospel, and that because they are Christ's ministers and stewards of his grace, and faithful in the discharge of their duty, **1Co 4:1**. And as for himself, whom he includes in the number of the faithful dispensers of the word, he cared not what judgment was passed upon him; nor should he think fit to be set down by it, partly because it was human, and arose from an ill spirit; and partly because he judged himself; as also because his conscience testified that he faithfully discharged his office; and besides, the Lord was his judge, **1Co 4:3** who in his own time would judge him; and he, as every other faithful minister, shall have praise of God, and therefore before that time judgment was not to be passed by men, **1Co 4:5** and then gives a reason why he had mentioned his own name, and the name of Apollos, under such figurative expressions as he had done in the preceding chapter, that they might be examples of modesty and humility for others to follow, **1Co 4:6** and expostulates with those who were vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds; that seeing they were no better than others, and what gifts they had were not of themselves, but of God, they had no reason to glory and vaunt it over others, **1Co 4:7** and in an ironical way expresses the exalted and flourishing condition they were in, and which he rather wishes than asserts, and which carries in it a sort of a denial of it, **1Co 4:8** and goes on to represent the miserable condition that the faithful preachers and followers of Christ were in, and that in order to abate the pride and swelling vanity of these men, **1Co 4:9** showing, that it was far from being a reigning time in the churches of Christ; his end in mentioning which, as well as the sharpness he had used in reproving, were not in order to expose them to shame, but for their admonition, **1Co 4:14** and that he did not take too much upon him in dealing thus freely and roundly with them, appears from the spiritual relation he stood in to them, as a father, **1Co 4:15** and therefore it became them as children to submit to him, and imitate him, **1Co 4:16** and an instance of his paternal care of them, and love to them, was his sending Timothy among them, whose character he gives, and whose work and usefulness he points out to them, **1Co 4:17**, and closes the chapter with a promise of coming to them, if it was agreeable to the will of God; and the rather he was bent upon it, because some had given out he would not come, and rejoiced at it; wherefore, in order to try them, whether they were only verbal or powerful professors, he was desirous of coming to them, **1Co 4:18** since religion did not lie in talking, but in an inward powerful experience of things, **1Co 4:20** which he feared was wanting in some by their outward conversation; and therefore puts a question in what way they would chose he should come unto them, and hence should accordingly order their conversation and behaviour, **1Co 4:21**.

Ver. 1. Let a man so account of us,.... Though the apostle had before said that he, and other ministers of the Gospel, were not any thing with respect to God, and, with regard to the churches, were theirs, for their use and advantage; yet they were not to be trampled upon, and treated with contempt, but to be known, esteemed, and honoured for their works' sake, and in their respective places, stations, and characters; and though they were but men, yet were not to be considered as private men, and in a private capacity, but as in public office, and as public preachers of the word; and though they were not to be regarded as lords and masters over God's heritage, but as servants, yet not as everyone's, or as any sort of servants, but

as the ministers, or servants, of Christ; as qualified, called, and sent forth by him to preach his Gospel; as ambassadors in his name, standing in his place and stead, and representing him, and therefore for his sake to be respected and esteemed; and as such who make him the subject of their ministry, preach him and him only, exalt him in his person, offices, blood, righteousness and sacrifice, and direct souls to him alone for life and salvation:

and stewards of the mysteries of God; though they are not to be looked upon as masters of the household, that have power to dispose of things in the family at their own pleasure; yet they are to be regarded as stewards, the highest officers in the house of God; to whose care are committed the secret and hidden things of God; whose business it is to dispense, and make known, the mysteries of divine grace; such as respect the doctrine of the Trinity, the incarnation of Christ, the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his person, the church's union to him, and communion with him, with many other things contained in the Gospel they are intrusted with.

1 Corinthians 4:2

Ver. 2. Moreover, it is required in stewards,.... Upon mentioning that part of the character of Gospel preachers, as stewards, the apostle is put in mind of, and so points out that which is principally necessary in such persons: as,

that a man be found faithful; to the trust reposed in him; to his Lord and master that has appointed him to this office; and to the souls that are under his care: and then may a minister be said to be so, and which is his greatest glory, when he preaches the pure Gospel of Christ without any human mixtures, the doctrines and inventions of men; and the whole Gospel, declaring all the counsel of God, keeping back nothing which may be profitable to souls; when he seeks not to please men, but God; and not his own glory, and the applause of men, but the honour of Christ, and the good of souls: and such a faithful steward was the apostle himself.

1 Corinthians 4:3

Ver. 3. But with me it is a very small thing,.... It stood for little or nothing, was of no account with him, what judgment and censures were passed on him by men with regard to his faithfulness in the ministry not even by the Corinthians themselves:

that I should be judged of you; not that the apostle declined, or despised the judgment of a church of Christ, rightly disposed, and met together in the fear of God, to try prove, and judge of his ministry, and his fidelity in it; but he made no account of theirs, and slighted it as being under bad influence, the influence of the false teachers, who had insinuated many things among them to the prejudice of the apostle's character; wherefore he set it at nought and rejected it, and rightly refused to submit to it, and, indeed, to any mere human judgment:

or of man's judgment: it is in the Greek text, "or of man's day": in distinction from the day of the Lord, or the day of judgment; and because that men have their stated days for judgment, and because of the clearness of evidence, according to which judgment should proceed. This is not a Cilicism, as Jerom thought, but an Hebraism; so the Septuagint render vwna Mwy, in Jer 17:16 hmeran anyrwpou, "man's day"; and very frequently in the Talmud {r} is the distinction of Mymv ynyd, "the judgments of God" and Mda ynyd, "the judgments of men"; the former the apostle was willing to be subject to, but not to the latter; he appealed from men to God; he cared not what any man thought or said, or judged of him; he not only was indifferent to the judgment of the Corinthians concerning him, whether they did or did not praise him, but of any other person; and so the Syriac version renders it, vna rb lk Nm wa, "or of any man": he adds,

yea I judge not mine own self; for though as a spiritual man he judged all things, and so himself, his conduct, state, and condition; examined his own heart and ways, and was able to form a judgment of what he was and did; yet he chose not to stand and fall by his own judgment; and since he would not abide by his own judgment, who best knew himself, much less would he be subject to theirs, or any human judgment, who must be greater strangers to him; and this he said, not as conscious to himself of any unfaithfulness in his ministerial work.

{r} T. Bab Bava Koma, fol. 22. 2. 29. 1. 47. 2. 55. 2. 56. 1. 91. 1. 98. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 82. 2.

1 Corinthians 4:4

Ver. 4. For I know nothing by myself,.... Which must be understood with a restriction to the subject he is upon, faithfulness in the ministry; otherwise he knew much by himself of indwelling sin, and the corruption of his nature, which he sometimes found very strong and prevalent in him, and of the daily infirmities of life; but as to his ministerial service, he was pure from the blood of all men; he honestly declared what he knew to be the mind of God, and concealed nothing that might be useful to men; in this he had a clear conscience, void of offence both towards God and men,

Yet am I not hereby justified; from all fault and blame, which might possibly escape his knowledge and observation; for in many things all offend, and no man can understand all his errors; and there might be some mistakes which the apostle was not privy to, or conscious of; and were he even free from all, he declares, that such an unstained integrity, in the discharge of his ministerial work, was not the matter of his justification before God, nor did he depend upon it:

but he that judgeth me is the Lord; either who adjudges me to eternal life, justifying me through the righteousness of his Son, in which alone I desire to be found, living and dying; or he that knows my heart, and all my ways, will be my judge at the last day; and to his judgment I appeal and submit, and sit easy in the mean while under all the censures and calumnies of men. The apostle did, as his Lord and Saviour had done before him, who, when he was reviled and reproached by men, conscious of his own innocence and integrity, committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.

1 Corinthians 4:5

Ver. 5. Therefore judge nothing before the time,.... This is said to prevent rash and precipitate judgment, and agrees with that well know Jewish maxim, Nydb Nynwtm wwh, "be slow in judgment" {s}; not hasty to pass sentence; it is best to leave things to the great day of account, than to be free in censuring one another. There is a time "fixed" for the awful judgment, though of that day and hour knows no man: judge nothing

until the Lord come; who at the fixed time will certainly come to judgment, and that suddenly, at unawares, in an hour no man knows of:

who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness; meaning not so much vices, immoralities, wickedness of all sorts committed in the dark, and which it is a shame to speak of; but those hidden things of dishonesty, those secret arts and private methods which false teachers have made use of to conceal themselves, and carry on their base designs to the injury of truth, the souls of men, and the cause of Christ:

and will make manifest the counsels of the heart; what were the views and intentions, the aims and ends of these men in taking upon them to be preachers of the word; when it will appear that these were not the glory of God, and the good of the souls of men, but filthy lucre, popular applause, or some such mercenary view, and sinister end.

And then shall every man have praise of God. Every regenerated soul; everyone that is a Jew inwardly; everyone that has the circumcision of the Spirit; and particularly every faithful minister, who is more especially designed; to whom it will be said, "well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord". The apostle, in these words, has respect to the false teachers who sought the praise of men, and not the honour which comes from God; and which the true ministers of the word will have another day, however despised and criticised by men now.

{s} T. Bab Sanhed, fol. 7. 2. & Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1.

1 Corinthians 4:6

Ver. 6. And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred,.... Not what he had said concerning the different factions at Corinth, one being for Paul, and another for Apollos, and another for Cephas, as if these several parties did not really go by those names, but by those of others, the false teachers; only the apostle, to decline everything that looked like reflection, put these, as the

Syriac version renders it, "upon" his own "person", and Apollos's, the sooner and better to put an end to such divisions; for it is certain, from his way of arguing and reasoning, that these are not fictitious names, but they were really divided, and were quarrelling among themselves about himself, Apollos, and Cephas: but his meaning is, when he says,

I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos these things; that he had "brought these comparisons", as the Arabic version reads it, concerning himself and Apollos; namely, that one was a planter, and another a waterer; that they were both labourers and builders, ministers or servants, and stewards: and these similes, and such a figurative way of speaking he had made use of, as he says,

for your sakes; for the sake of the members of this church, that they might have right notions of them, and accordingly account of them, and behave towards them: or, as he adds,

that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written: meaning, either in the word of God in general; or in some particular passages of Scripture he might have respect to; or rather in the above places in this, and the foregoing chapter, where he gives the fore mentioned characters of ministers; where, in the apostles themselves, in their own words, from their own account, they might learn, on the one hand, not to ascribe too much to them, nor, on the other hand, to detract from their just character and usefulness: and also,

that no one of you be puffed up for one against the other; speak great swelling words of vanity, and envy, for one minister against another; when they are all one, bear the same character, are in the same office, and are jointly concerned in the same common cause of Christ and the good of immortal souls.

1 Corinthians 4:7

Ver. 7. For who maketh thee to differ from another,.... This question, and the following, are put to the members of this church, who were glorying in, and boasting of the ministers under whom they were converted, and by whom they were baptized, to the neglect and contempt of others; when the apostle would have them consider, and whatever difference was made between them and others, was made, not by man, but God; that whatever good and benefit they had enjoyed under their respective ministers, were in a way of receiving, and from God; and therefore they ought not to glory in themselves, nor in their ministers, but in God, who had distinguished them by his favours: whatever difference is made among men, is of God; it is he that makes them to differ from the rest of the creation; from angels, to whom they are inferior; and from beasts, to whom they are superior; and from one another in their person, size, shape, and countenance, which is a physical, or natural difference. It is God that makes them to differ from one another in things of a civil nature; as kings and subjects, masters and servants, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, which may be called a political, or civil difference; and there is an ecclesiastical difference which God makes in his own people, who have gifts differing one from another; there are diversities of gifts, administrations, and operations among them, and all from the same spirit: but the grand distinction God has made among men, lies in his special, distinguishing, and everlasting love to some, and not others; in his choice of them in Christ unto everlasting salvation; in the gift of them to Christ in the eternal covenant; in the redemption of them by his blood; in his powerful and prevalent intercession for them; in God's effectual calling of them by his grace; in his resurrection of them from the dead to everlasting life, placing them at Christ's right hand, and their entrance into everlasting glory; when the distinction will be kept up, as in the above instances, throughout the endless ages of eternity; all which is owing, not to anything of man's, but to the free grace, sovereign will, and good pleasure of God.

And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? whatever mercies and blessings men enjoy, they have in a way of receiving, and from God the Father of all mercies: all natural and temporal mercies are received from him; even such as respect the body, the make, form, and shape of it, perfection of limbs, health, strength, food, raiment, preservation of life, continuance in being, with all the comforts of it: and such as relate to the soul, its formation, which is by the father of spirits, its powers and faculties, natural light, reason, and understanding, all its endowments, abilities, all natural parts, and sharpness of wit; so that no man ought to glory in his wisdom, as if it was owing to himself, when it is all of God. All supernatural and spiritual blessings are received from God; such as a justifying righteousness, sanctifying grace, remission of sin, the new name of adoption, strength to perform good works, to bear and suffer reproach and persecution for Christ, and to persevere to the end, with a right and title to eternal glory.

Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? To glory in any mercy, favour, or blessing received from God, as if it was not received from him, but as owing to human power, care, and industry, betrays wretched vanity, stupid and more than brutish ignorance, horrid ingratitude, abominable pride and wickedness; and is contrary to the grace of God, which teaches men humility and thankfulness. To God alone should all the blessings of nature, providence, and grace be ascribed; he ought to have all the glory of them; and to him, and him only, praise is due for them. That proud Arminian, Grevinchovius {t}, in answer to this text, said,

"I make myself to differ; since I could resist God, and divine predetermination, but have not resisted, why may not I glory in it as of my own?"

{t} Contr. Ames. p. 253.

1 Corinthians 4:8

Ver. 8. Now ye are full,.... That is, in their own opinion: these words, and some following expressions, are an ironical concession. They were not full of God, and divine things; nor of Christ, and of grace out of his fulness; nor of the Holy Ghost, and of faith, as Stephen and Barnabas are said to be; nor of joy and peace in believing; nor of goodness and spiritual knowledge; but they were full of themselves, and were pulled up in their fleshly minds with an opinion of their abilities, learning, oratory, and eloquence, of their ministers, and of their own great improvements in knowledge under their ministrations. They fancied they had got to a perfection in knowledge and were brimful of it; and as the full stomach, from which the metaphor is taken, loathes the honeycomb, so these persons loathed the apostle's ministry, and the pure preaching of the Gospel; imagining that they had attained to something above it, and stood in no need of it; when, alas! they were but babes, children in understanding, and needed milk instead of strong meat; so far were they from being what they thought themselves to be.

Now ye are rich; not in faith; nor in good works; nor in spiritual gifts and knowledge, though some among them were; but that is not here intended: the meaning is, they were rich, and abounded in knowledge in their own account. Like the Laodiceans, they conceited themselves to be rich, and increased with goods, when they were poor, and wretched, and miserable.

Ye have reigned as kings without us. The saints, in the best sense, are kings, made so by Christ; and have not only the name, and the ensigns of royalty, as crowns and thrones prepared for them, but kingdoms also: they have a kingdom of grace, which they enjoy now, and shall never be removed; in which they reign as kings under the influence of the Spirit of God, over the corruptions of their own hearts, which are laid under the restraints of mighty grace; and over the world, which they have under the feet; and over Satan, who is dethroned and cast out of them; and they shall inherit the kingdom of glory hereafter; but nothing of this kind is here intended. The sense of the words is, that these persons imagined that they had arrived to such a pitch of knowledge, as to be independent of the apostles; needed no instructions and directions from them, and were in great tranquillity and ease of mind, and attended with outward prosperity, so that they lived, as kings, the most happy life that could be desired; upon which the apostle expresses his hearty wish for them:

and I would to God ye did reign; not in carnal security, and in affluence of worldly enjoyments, which the apostle was not desirous of for himself, and other his fellow ministers; nor in a spiritual sense, merely as believers in common, and as he then did; but with Christ in his kingdom state here on earth:

that we also might reign with you; for all the saints will be together when Christ takes to himself his great power, and reigns; they will all reign with him on earth a thousand years; this is a faithful saying, nothing more true, or to be depended on, that those that suffer with him shall also reign with him; and not a part of his people only, but the whole body: hence the apostle wishes, that this reigning time for the church of Christ was come, then he and the rest of the apostles would reign also: but, alas! it was a plain case, from the condition they were in, of which the following words give a narrative, that this time was not yet.

1 Corinthians 4:9

Ver. 9. For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last,.... Meaning either in time, in respect to the prophets and patriarchs under the former dispensation; and to the apostles, who were sent forth by Christ when on earth; when he, and Barnabas, and others, had received their mission since his ascension; or in state and condition, who though they were set in the first place in the church, yet were the least in the esteem of men; and were treated as the most mean, vile, and abject of creatures; were set or showed forth to public view, and made a gazing stock by reproaches and afflictions. And

as it were appointed to death; were continually exposed unto it; were in death oft, always carrying about with them the dying of the Lord Jesus; and were all the day long killed for his sake; all which the apostle not only thought, but believed, were not casual things, fortuitous events, but the determinations and appointments of God; and were brought about in his wise providence to answer some valuable ends, which made him the more easy under them, and reconciled unto them.

For we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. The word translated "spectacle" signifies a "theatre"; and the allusion is to the Roman theatres, in which various exercises were performed, for the gratification of the numerous spectators, who were placed around in a proper distance to behold; and not so much to the gladiators who fought, in such places, for the diversion of the multitude, as to those unhappy persons who were cast to the wild beasts, let loose upon them to devour them; which horrid barbarities were beheld by the surrounding company with great pleasure and satisfaction; and such a spectacle were the apostles in their sufferings and persecutions to the "whole" world, distinguished into "angels" and "men". By "angels" may be meant the devils, who stirred up the princes of this world against the apostles, to persecute and afflict them; than which nothing was a greater pleasure to these envious and malicious spirits: though good angels may be also included, as witnesses of the faith, courage, and constancy of the saints, and as comforters of them in all their tribulations; but evil angels seem chiefly designed: and by "men" are meant wicked men, who are as much pleased to behold the barbarities and butcheries committed upon the people of God, as the Romans in their theatres were to see the tragical scenes that were acted there.

1 Corinthians 4:10

Ver. 10. We are fools for Christ's sake,.... They were so in the esteem of men, for their close attach merit to a crucified Christ; and for preaching the doctrine of salvation by him; and for enduring so much reproach, affliction, and persecution, for his sake and the Gospel's:

but ye are wise in Christ. This is ironically said; for his meaning is not that they were truly wise in Christ, in the knowledge and faith of him, in preaching his Gospel, or professing his name; but they were so in their own eyes, and made use of much worldly wisdom and carnal policy in their profession of religion. Their ministers took care to preach, and they to profess Christ, in such a manner as to retain the favour of the world, and to escape reproach and persecution.

We are weak; in your account; our bodily presence is weak, and speech contemptible; we are men of mean capacities and abilities; nor are we able to express ourselves in that strong and masculine way, with those masterly strokes of eloquence and oratory your ministers do; or we are pressed down with infirmities, and afflictions, and persecutions.

But ye are strong; your ministers are men of great parts, strong voice, masculine language, and powerful oratory; and you abound in outward prosperity, and are free from persecution for the cross of Christ.

Ye are honourable; high in the favour and esteem of men for your wisdom and learning, your riches and wealth, power and grandeur.

But we are despised; are in dishonour and disgrace, for the mean appearance we make, the Gospel we preach, and the cross we bear.

1 Corinthians 4:11

Ver. 11. Even unto this present hour,.... What is about to be related was not what befell the apostles now and then, and a great while ago; but what for a considerable time, and unto the present time, was more or less the common constant series and course of life they were inured to:

we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked; wanted the common necessaries of life, food to eat, and raiment to put on, and gold and silver to purchase any with; which might be, when, as it was sometimes their case, they were in desert places, or on the seas; or when they fell among thieves; or had given all away, as they sometimes did, for the relief of others; or when they were not, as sometimes, taken notice of, and provided for, where they ministered, as they ought to have been.

And are buffeted; not only by Satan, as the apostle was, but by men; scourged, whipped, and beaten by them; scourged in the synagogues by the Jews with forty stripes save one; and beaten with rods by the Romans, and other Gentiles.

And have no certain dwelling place; were in an unsettled state, always moving from one place to another, and had no place they could call their own; like their Lord and master, who had not where to lay his head; and like some of the Old Testament saints, who wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, in deserts, and in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

1 Corinthians 4:12

Ver. 12. And labour, working with our own hands,.... As the apostle did at Corinth, Ac 18:3 and elsewhere; partly to minister to his own necessities, and those of others; and partly that he might not be burdensome to the churches; and also to set an example of diligence and industry to others; though he had a right and power to claim a maintenance of those to whom he ministered.

Being reviled, we bless; as Christ commanded, **Mt 5:44** and the apostle himself directed and exhorted to, Ro 12:14

being persecuted, we suffer it; that is, patiently; neither resisting our persecutors, nor murmuring and repining at our unhappy circumstances; but taking all in good part, as what is the will of God, and will make for his glory.

1 Corinthians 4:13

Ver. 13. Being defamed, we entreat,.... Being blasphemed, as the word signifies, being evil spoken of, our good name taken away, and characters hurt; we entreat or pray to God for them, that he would convince them of their evil, give them repentance unto life, and remission of their sins, according to Christ's direction, **Mt 5:44** and in imitation of his example, Lu 23:34 or we entreat them; so the Syriac version reads it, Nwhnm Nnyeb, "we beseech them": not to blaspheme and speak evil of us, since it will be to their own hurt; we give them smooth words, and soft language, not rendering railing for railing, or reviling for reviling:

we are made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things unto this day; referring, as some think, to **La 3:45** or to the lustrations and expiations among the Heathens, who when any calamity was upon them, particularly a plague among them, used to take one of the refuse of the people, and sacrifice him by way of expiation; or any living creature, as a sheep which with imprecations they cast into a river, or into the sea, fancying it carried away all the contagion along with it; hence, by way of reproach, such that were under disgrace, and were ejected, and exiled, were called kayarmata, "purgations"; the refuse of the people, by which the rest were purged {u} or the reference is to any dirt, or filth in common, swept out of houses, and trodden under foot;

and so expresses the mean and abject condition of the apostles, and with what disdain and contempt they were treated in the world: all which shows that they were far from reigning as kings; and whilst this was their case, who were at the head of the interest of Christ, it must be a vain conceit of the Corinthians, that they reigned as kings without them.

{u} Vid. Turnebi Adversaria, l. 19. c. 22. & 26. 7. & 27. 16.

1 Corinthians 4:14

Ver. 14. I write not these things to shame you,.... Though they had a great deal of reason to be ashamed of the vain opinion they had of themselves, and that they suffered the faithful ministers of Christ to want the necessaries of life, when they abounded so much with the good things of it; and though the apostle's view in giving this narrative was to bring them under a sense of their faults, and to a conviction of them, and so to shame for them, in order to their future reformation and amendment; yet it was not merely to put them to the blush, but to admonish and instruct them, that he enlarged on these things:

but as my beloved sons I warn you; they being his children in a spiritual sense, for whom he had the strongest love and affection, as their spiritual Father; and as it was his place, and became him standing in such a relation to them, he warned, admonished, and put them in mind of their obligations and duty to him.

1 Corinthians 4:15

Ver. 15. For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ,.... Or "schoolmasters"; by whom he means the false teachers, whom, for argument sake, he admits to be instructors in Christ, or ministers of his, as in 2Co 11:23 and who were many, and of whose number the Corinthians boasted; though they were not so numerous as here supposed; for the expression is hyperbolical: perhaps some reference may be had to the multitude of schoolmasters, tutors, and governors, and who also were called twba, "fathers", which those that were Jews of this church at Corinth had before they believed in Christ; as the members of the great sanhedrim, the great number of doctors, wise men, Scribes and Pharisees, who pretended to instruct them: now though it should be allowed, that the present teachers among them were instrumental in instructing them further in the knowledge of Christ; or as the Arabic version reads it, "in the love of Christ"; yet they had no hand in their conversion; the apostle first preached the Gospel to them, and ministerially laid Christ the foundation among them, and directed them unto him, and was the minister by whom they believed; these teachers at most and best built on his foundation, and that only wood, hay, and stubble; and whereas they were only a sort of schoolmasters, and not fathers, they taught with mercenary views, and for lucre's sake, and with severity, as such men do; and not with such a single eye to their good, and with that tenderness and affection a parent has, and in which relation he stood to them:

yet have ye not many fathers; as it is in nature, so it is in grace; how many masters and instructors soever a child may have, whether together or successively, he has but one father; and so how many after instructors, either nominally or really, believers may have to lead them on, or who pretend to lead them on to a further knowledge of Christ; yet have they but one spiritual father, who has been the happy instrument and means of their conversion, as the Apostle Paul was to the Corinthians;

for in Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the Gospel; which is to be understood of regeneration, a being born again, and from above; of being quickened when dead in trespasses and sins; of having Christ formed in the soul; of being made a partaker of the divine nature, and a new creature; which the apostle ascribes to himself, not as the efficient cause thereof, for regeneration is not of men but of God; not of the will of the flesh, of a man's own free will and power, nor of the will of any other man, or minister; but of the sovereign will, grace, and mercy of God, Father, Son, and Spirit. The Father of Christ beget us again according to his abundant mercy; and the Son quickens whom he will; and we are born again of water and of the Spirit, of the grace of the Spirit; hence the washing of regeneration, and renewing work are ascribed to him: but the apostle speaks this of himself, only as the instrument or means, which God made use of in doing this work upon the hearts of his people; and which the other phrases show: for he is said to do it "in Christ"; he preached Christ unto them, and salvation by him, and the necessity of faith in him; he directed them to him to believe in him, and was the means of bringing of them to the faith of Christ; and it was the power and grace of Christ accompanying his ministry, which made it an effectual means of their regeneration and conversion: and which were brought about "through the Gospel"; not through the preaching of the law; for though by that is the knowledge of sin, and convictions may be wrought by such means; yet these leave nothing but a sense of wrath and damnation; nor is the law any other than a killing letter: no regeneration, no quickening grace, no faith nor holiness come this way, but through the preaching of the Gospel; in and through which, as a vehicle, the Spirit of God conveys himself into the heart, as a spirit of regeneration and faith; and God of his own will and rich mercy, by the word of truth, by the Gospel of grace and truth, which came by Christ, so called in distinction from the law which came by Moses, begets us again as his new creatures; which shows the usefulness of the Gospel ministry, and in what account Gospel ministers are to be had, who are spiritual fathers, or the instruments of the conversion of men.

1 Corinthians 4:16

Ver. 16. Wherefore, I beseech you,.... Though he might have used the power and authority of a father, yet he chose rather to entreat and beseech them; saying,

be ye followers of me; for who should children follow, but their parents? The Vulgate Latin, adds, "as I am of Christ"; so Chrysostom in his time read it; and Beza says he found it so written in one Greek exemplar; and so it is in one of Stephens's; it seems to have crept in from 1Co 11:1. However, though it might not be now expressed by the apostle, it is to be supposed; for he never desired any to follow him any more, or further than he followed Christ; particularly he was desirous that these his spiritual children would follow him, and abide by him in the doctrine of a crucified Christ, he had preached among them, and not the false apostles, who had represented his ministry as weak and foolish; and in his life and conversation, especially in his humble carriage and deportment among them, and in his tender love and affection for them; observing their growing pride, haughtiness, and vain opinion of themselves, and those unnatural divisions and animosities which were fomented among them; and also in bearing reproach and persecution cheerfully and patiently, for the Gospel of Christ; a detail of which he had given them in some preceding verses.

1 Corinthians 4:17

Ver. 17. For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus,.... This is an instance of his care of them, concern for them and respect unto them; that he not only writes unto them, giving his best advice and counsel, promising to come unto them; but in the mean while sends Timothy to them, whose character is here given as one dear to him, and in all things trusty and faithful:

who is my beloved son; so, in his epistles to him, he often styles him his son, his own son in the faith, his dearly beloved son; not that he was the instrument of his conversion, for he was a disciple of Christ before the apostle was acquainted with him; see Ac 16:1 but either because of his age, he being younger than he; or because of his great affection for him; and chiefly because, as a son with a father, he served him in the Gospel, **Php 2:22** and since he was so familiar with him, and so much loved by him, it might reasonably be thought he full well knew his ways and methods of doctrine and practice.

And faithful in the Lord; a faithful steward of the mysteries of grace; faithful in the Gospel of Christ, and to the souls of men; a faithful minister of the Lord's; one who had been tried, proved, and found faithful, and therefore might be trusted to, and depended upon:

who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways; his way of preaching, and the doctrines he taught; and what should be the manner of life and conversation agreeably thereunto, and to his own; and all those rules and orders he gave for the discipline and management of the affairs of churches; all which he had formerly delivered to them, though they, through length of time, and the ministry of the false teachers among them, had greatly forgotten them: wherefore Timothy is sent, not to teach them new ways, nor, indeed, to teach at all, whose youth they might be tempted to despise; but only to put them in mind of what the apostle had formerly taught them: and which are recommended by their being such ways,

which be in Christ; the doctrines he had preached among them, the sum and substance of them were Christ, and him crucified; the ordinances he had delivered to them were what he had received from Christ; and all the rules and methods he had proposed to them for the regulation of their conduct, and the management of their ecclesiastical affairs, were such as were agreeably to the mind of Christ, and tended to his glory; he took no step, nor proposed any to be taken, but in Christ, and for the good of his interest: and he adds,

as I teach everywhere, in every church; the faith he delivered everywhere was one and the same; the Son of God, preached by him, was not yea and nay; the trumpet he blew always gave a certain sound; the rules prescribed by him, and orders he laid down, for the conduct of life, and government of churches, were exactly alike in all places; he taught no doctrines at Corinth, nor enjoined the observance of any rule, but what all other churches were taught and directed to; his plan of doctrine and discipline was the same everywhere.

1 Corinthians 4:18

Ver. 18. Now some are puffed up,.... Some with their gifts, learning, and eloquence, and with the high station they were in, in the church; believing they should continue therein undisturbed, thinking them selves safe and secure through the absence of the apostle, and which they flattered themselves would always be the case:

as though I would not come to you; and others that were for Apollos and Cephas against Paul, were puffed up against their fellow members on the same account; hoping they should never see him more, to put them in any other situation than what they were in, by demolishing their factions and parties; and others, as the incestuous person, and those that took encouragement to sin by his example, were also puffed up upon this score, and mourned not over, nor repented of their iniquities, but remained secure and hardened; believing the apostle would never more come among them, to call them to an account for their malpractices.

1 Corinthians 4:19

Ver. 19. But I will come to you shortly,.... This he said as threatening them, but not by way of prophecy; for it is not certain that he ever did come to them after this; but by way of promise, as it was then the real intention, inclination, and resolution of his mind, though with this condition,

if the Lord will; which is rightly put, and what the apostle had a continual regard unto, in all things he was concerned; see **Ro 1:10** and though it is not absolutely necessary that this should be expressed by us always in so many words; though should it, as the sentence is short and full, there would be no impropriety in it; yet this should always be the sense of our minds and conduct in all the affairs of life; see **Jas 4:13**

and will know not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power; meaning chiefly the false teachers; and that his concern would be, not so much to observe their masterly language, the eloquence of their speech, the quaintness of their expressions, the cadency of their words, how nicely they were put together, and how fitly pronounced; but what life there was in their ministry, what power went forth with their words, and how effectual their preaching was to the, conversion of sinners, and the edifying of the church of God.

1 Corinthians 4:20

Ver. 20. For the kingdom of God,.... By "the kingdom of God" is not meant the kingdom of heaven, or the ultimate glory and happiness of the saints; though that is a kingdom prepared by God, which he gives to his children, calls them to by his grace, and will give them an abundant entrance into, when time shall be no more with them; and though that is not attained to "in", or "by word", by mere talk and profession; not everyone that says Lord, Lord, shall enter into it; or that professes the name of Christ, and prophesies in it; but "in" or "by power"; through the power of God, beginning, carrying on, and finishing a work of grace upon the soul, and keeping it, through faith, unto salvation: nor the kingdom of grace, or that internal principle of grace in the soul, which reigns, and by which Christ reigns there, and by which the saints appear to be kings as well as priests unto God: though this also does not lie "in word", in a profession of faith, in talking about love, and in making pretensions to the knowledge of divine things; nor merely in deeds, and outward actions, in bodily exercise, in a form of godliness, and a round of religion, and a show of righteousness;

but in power: in internal powerful godliness; for true godliness is a powerful thing; faith is powerful, and so is love; and so is prayer, and preaching; and so is all religion, internal and external, where there is the life and truth of grace, and that in exercise. But I rather think the Gospel is here meant, often in Scripture called the kingdom of God, and the doctrines of it, the mysteries of the kingdom; because it is a message from the King of kings; the means of setting up the kingdom or grace in the heart; its subjects are things concerning the kingdom of God; it is what has brought life and immortality, or an immortal life to light; and gives the best account of the invisible glories of the heavenly state, and points out the saints' meetness for it, and title to it; declaring that except a man is born again, and has a better righteousness than his own, even that of Christ's, he shall neither see nor enter into the kingdom of heaven. Now the Gospel is not in "word"; though it lies in the word of God, the Scriptures of truth: and treats of the essential word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ; and cannot be preached without words, even the words of men; yet is not to be preached with wisdom of words, with enticing words of man's wisdom, or in the words which man's wisdom teacheth; nor does the efficacy of it lie in, or depend upon the words of the preacher, or on mere moral persuasion: for whenever it is effectual, it comes not "in word only, but also in power"; **1Th 1:5** and by "power" is meant, not a power of working miracles the first preachers of the Gospel had, and by which it was greatly confirmed; nor a godly life and conversation which that enforced upon, and engaged both ministers and people to; but the powerful efficacy of the Spirit, attending the preaching of the Gospel to the quickening of dead sinners, the enlightening of blind eyes, and unstopping of deaf ears; the softening of hard hearts, the delivering of persons from the slavery of sin and Satan, the transforming and renewing of them both inwardly and outwardly; and to the comforting, enlivening, strengthening, and establishing of the saints; all which can never be ascribed to the persuasive language of men, but to the power of God; and which is the more apparent when it is observed what mean and despicable instruments in the eyes of men are made use of: what the doctrines are that are preached, not being of man, nor agreeably to his carnal reason, but esteemed foolishness by him; and the manner in which they are propagated, not in a carnal way, by outward force, but by the foolishness of preaching: and the opposition made to it both by the enmity of man's heart unto it, by the men of the world, and by Satan and his principalities and powers.

1 Corinthians 4:21

Ver. 21. What will ye?.... Or "how will ye, that I should come unto you?" as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read it: since the apostle had determined upon his coming to them: and had made mention of it, he puts it to them, in what manner they themselves would choose he should come unto them;

shall I come unto you with a rod; either as a schoolmaster, as were their false teachers, with a "ferula"; or as a father with a rod of correction and chastisement, assuming his paternal authority, putting on severe looks, and using roughness; or rather as an apostle with the apostolical rod; by which is meant not excommunication, which is what belongs to a whole community, and not any single person; but a power of inflicting punishment on the bodies of delinquents, by smiting with diseases, and even with death itself; for as the prophets of the Old Testament had a power from God of inflicting diseases and death upon offenders; so had the apostles of the New, as appears from the instances of Ananias, and Sapphira, and Elymas the sorcerer:

or in love, and in the spirit of meekness? with the affection of a father, with a pleasant countenance, and a meek spirit; in opposition to that roughness and sharpness, he had an authority, as an apostle of Christ, to use in proper cases;

and therefore as the latter would be most eligible by them, his suggestion is, that they would behave accordingly, that there might be no occasion to come to them in the former manner, which was not desirable by him, There seems to be an allusion to a practice among the Jews, in the punishing of a drunkard or gluttonous person; the rule for which was this {w},

"they first correct him jbvb wa Myrbdb "with words", or "with a rod", as it is written, De 21:18 and have chastened him; but if he adds and repeats (i.e. goes on in his sin), then they stone him."

Or rather the allusion is to the judges in the sanhedrim, one of the instruments or ensigns of whose office was "a rod or staff" to smite with; it is said {x} of R. Hona, when he went to the sanhedrim, he used to say, bring me the instruments of the Tabernae (the place where the sanhedrim sat); what are they? "the staff" (in Cocceius's edition it is yrjwx, "the rods", and the sandals, the trumpets, and the thongs); the gloss is, "the thong" for scourging, "the staff" (or rods) for beating the rebellious until they return, the "trumpets" for excommunication, and the "sandals" for plucking off the shoe; things in which the judges of the court were concerned, and here the apostle proposes to come as judge; see **1Co 5:3**.

{w} R. Elias in Adderet apud Trigland. de sect. Karaeor. c. 10. p. 161. {x} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 7. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 5

In this chapter the apostle blames the Corinthians for conniving at a sin committed by one of their members; declares what he was determined to do, and what should be done by them in this case; and in general advises to shun conversation with wicked men; in **1Co 5:1** mention is made of the sin committed by one among themselves, and which was publicly known, and commonly talked of; and which in general was fornication, and particularly incest, a man lying with his father's wife; and which is aggravated by its being what was not named, or could not be named among any virtuous persons among the Gentiles without offence: and yet the members of this church, at least the majority of them, were unconcerned at it, and were so far from mourning over it, and taking any step to remove the person from them that had done it, that they were swelled with pride, and gloried on account of their gifts, and perhaps on account of this man, who had committed the iniquity, **1Co 5:2**. This affair being related to the apostle, though at a distance; and he well knowing all things concerning it, as though he was present, resolved what should be done in this case by himself, **1Co 5:3** and that was to deliver the man to Satan, in the name, and with the power and authority of Christ, when the members of this church were gathered together, and his Spirit with them; the end of which was for the destruction of the man's body, and the salvation of his soul, **1Co 5:4** and then the apostle returns to blame them for their glorying in men, and in external gifts, and pleading these as a reason why the man should be continued, and not removed from them; not considering the danger they were exposed to, and which he illustrates by the simile of leaven, a little of which affects the whole lump: suggesting thereby the danger they were in by continuing such a wicked person among them, **1Co 5:6** wherefore pursuing, the same metaphor, taken from the Jewish passover, he exhorts to remove from them the man that had sinned, as the Jews at the passover removed the leaven out of their houses; that so they might appear to be a church renewed, and purged, and clear of leaven, keeping the true and spiritual passover, which they were under obligation to do, since Christ, the antitype of the passover, was sacrificed for them, **1Co 5:7** wherefore it became them to keep the feast of the Lord's supper; and indeed, to have the whole course of their conversation so ordered, as to avoid sin and sinners, and to behave in truth and uprightness, **1Co 5:8** when the apostle goes on to put them in mind of what he had formerly written unto them, as suitable to the present case, which was, that they should not keep company with wicked men, particularly with fornicators, such as this man, though in a more heinous manner, **1Co 5:9** and explains what was his meaning; not that they were to have no manner of conversation with persons of such a character, and of such like evil characters, in things of a civil nature, for then there would be no living in the world, **1Co 5:10**. But his sense was, that they should keep no company with persons guilty of the sins mentioned, who bore the name of Christian brethren, and were members of the same church state with them, from whose communion they ought to be removed; and indeed, so much familiarity with them should not be indulged, as even to eat with them, **1Co 5:11**. The reason of this difference, which he made between wicked men, who were not members of the church, and those that were, is because he had nothing to do, nor they neither, with them that were without the church, as it was their business only to take cognizance of them that were within, **1Co 5:12** but neither of them had anything to do, to judge and censure those that did not belong to the church, but should leave them to God, the righteous Judge; and then closes all, **1Co 5:13** with what he had chiefly in view throughout the whole chapter, and that is, that they would remove from their communion the wicked person who had been guilty of the sin first mentioned.

Ver. 1. It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you,.... The apostle having reproved the Corinthians for their schisms and divisions about their ministers, proceeds to charge them with immoralities committed among them, and which were connived at, and took no notice of by them; and particularly a very notorious one, which he here mentions with its aggravated circumstances. It was done among them; not only by one of their citizens, nor merely by one of their hearers, but by one of their members, and so was cognizable by them as a church; for though they had nothing to do with them that were without, yet they were concerned with them that were within: this was a public offence; it was known by everyone, and it was in everybody's mouth; it was heard in all companies; it was "commonly", olwv, "universally" talked of, and reported; it was generally known at Corinth, and in all Achaia, so that the church could not plead ignorance, nor could they be excused from blame in not as publicly declaring their abhorrence of the fact, as it was committed, which was fornication: fornication, olwv, "generally" taken, might be committed among them in all the branches of it, as that may include simple fornication, adultery, incest, and all acts of uncleanness; wherefore the apostle proceeds to describe that particular instance of fornication, that one of their members was guilty of:

and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife; not but that such unnatural copulations were practised, as among the Indians, Moors, Bactrians, Ethiopians, Medes, and Persians, as reported by sundry writers {y}; and among the Arabians, before prohibited by Mahomet {z}; but then such marriages and mixtures were not allowed of among the more civil and cultivated nations, as the Grecians and Romans, and never mentioned but with detestation and abhorrence: and if this man was a Jew, it was an aggravation of his sin, that he should be guilty of a crime decried by the Gentiles, as well as it was a violation of a known law of God given to the Jews, Le 18:7 and, according to the Jewish writers {a}, such a man was doubly guilty: their canon is,

"ba tva le abh he that lies with his father's wife is guilty, on account of her being his father's wife, and on account of her being another man's wife, whether in his father's life time, or after his death, and whether espoused or married;"

and such an one was to be stoned. Of this kind was this man's crime; he had his father's wife, not his own mother, but his stepmother; for there is a distinction between a mother and a father's wife, as in the above canon.

"These are to be stoned, he that lies with his mother, or with his father's wife."

Whether this man had married his father's wife, or kept her as his concubine, continuing in an incestuous cohabitation with her, is not certain, and whether his father was dead or living; which latter seems to be the case from **2Co 7:12** his iniquity was abominable and intolerable, and by no means to be winked at in church of Christ.

{y} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 24. Curtius, l. 8. c. 2. Philo, de special. leg. p. 77. 8. Tertul. Apolog. c. 9. Min. Foelix, p. 34. Clement. Alex. Paedagog. p. 109. Origen. contr. Cels. l. 6. p. 331. Hieron. adv. Jovin. l. 2. fol. 26. {z} Koran, c. 4. Vid. Pocock. spec, Arab. Hist p. 337, 338. {a} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 4.

1 Corinthians 5:2

Ver. 2. And ye are puffed up,.... Either with the gifts, learning, and eloquence of their preachers, and particularly of this man, who, by some, is thought to be one of their teachers; and though he was guilty of so foul a crime, yet they still applauded him, and cried him up for a wonderful preacher: or one party was puffed up against another; that which was opposite to the party this man belonged to, boasting over the other as free from the scandal that was exposed unto; or the other were puffed up with their lenity and forbearance, boasting of it as an act of humanity and good nature, and an instance of charity, showing that they were not severe upon one another, for mistakes in life: or else were puffed up and gloried in the thing itself, as an instance of Christian liberty, and their freedom from the law, through a sad mistake of it; and in which they might be strengthened by a notion of the Jews, that it was lawful for proselyted Gentiles to do such things, for so says Maimonides {b}.

"The sentence of the law is, that it is free for a Gentile
wma avyv, "to marry his mother", or his sister that are made proselytes; but the wise men forbid this thing, that they may not say we are come from a holiness that is heavy, to one that is light."

But this writer concludes that a proselyte might marry his father's brother's wife, and his father's wife; and so says his commentator {c}, and observes, that it was the opinion of R. Akiba, which Rabbi was contemporary with the Apostle Paul: so that this notion prevailed in his days, and does in some measure account for the commission of such a sin by a church member, and the church's negligence about it:

and have not rather mourned; not only personally, and separately, but as a body; they ought to have met together as a church, and humbled themselves before God for this scandalous iniquity done in the midst of them, and pray unto him,

that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you; not by excommunication, for that they could and ought to have done themselves; but by the immediate hand of God, inflicting some visible punishment, and taking him away by an untimely death, which the Jews call tyrk, "cutting off", by the hand of God; and such a punishment, they say, this crime deserved; according to them, there were six and thirty cuttings off in the law, or so many things which deserved death by the hand of God; and the two first that are mentioned are these, he that lies with his mother or with his father's wife {d}.

{b} Hilchot lssure Bia, c. 14. sect. 12, 13. {c} Auctor Ceseph Misna in ib. {d} Misn. Ceritot, c. 1. sect. 1.

1 Corinthians 5:3

Ver. 3. For I verily, as absent in body,.... As he really was, being now at Philippi, if any dependence is to be had upon the subscription of this epistle; or rather at Ephesus; however, wherever he was, it is certain he was not at Corinth:

but present in spirit; in his affection to them, care of them, and concern for their good, and the glory of God:

have judged already; he had considered of the matter, thought very deliberately about it, and was now come to a point, to a determination concerning it, what to do in it:

as though I were present; upon the spot, in person, to do what he had resolved upon:

to him that hath so done this deed; this infamous one, and in so scandalous a manner, and which was continued in: what that was which the apostle, upon mature deliberation and judgment, determined to do with this wicked man, is expressed in **1Co 5:5** which is to be connected with this, the whole fourth verse being to be read in a parenthesis, and that was to deliver him to Satan.

1 Corinthians 5:4

Ver. 4. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,.... These words contain an account of the several things and circumstances, that should attend the awful act of the apostle, in delivering this man to Satan; it would be done "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"; by his command, power, and authority, and for his glory; in whose name all miraculous actions, as this was one, were performed:

when ye are gathered together; as a church, in a public manner, in one place; not to do this business, for this was purely apostolical; but to be witness of this wonderful operation, to acknowledge the justice of God in it, and that they might fear and take warning by it:

and my spirit; meaning that though he was absent in body, he should be present in spirit; and that the extraordinary gift of the Spirit of God bestowed on him would be visibly exercised upon this man before them all, as if he himself was in the midst of them; and this not by any power of his own, but

with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ; to which all such miraculous effects, as this hereafter related, are to be ascribed.

1 Corinthians 5:5

Ver. 5. To deliver such an one unto Satan,.... This, as before observed, is to be read in connection with **1Co 5:3** and is what the apostle there determined to do with this incestuous person; namely, to deliver him unto Satan; by which is meant, not the act of excommunication, or the removing of him from the communion of the church, which is an act of the whole church, and not of any single person; whereas this was what the church had nothing to do with; it was not what they were to do, or ought to do, but what the apostle had resolved to do; and which was an act of his own, and peculiar to him as an apostle, see **1Ti 1:20**. Nor is this a form of excommunication; nor was this phrase ever used in excommunicating persons by the primitive churches; nor ought it ever to be used; it is what no man, or set of men, have power to do now, since the ceasing of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which the apostles were endowed with; who, as they had a power over Satan to dispossess him from the bodies of men, so to deliver up the bodies of men into his hands, as the apostle did this man's:

for the destruction of the flesh; that is, that his body might be shook, buffeted, afflicted, and tortured in a terrible manner; that by this means he might be brought to a sense of his sin, to repentance for it, and make an humble acknowledgment of it:

that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus; that he might be renewed in the spirit of his mind, be restored by repentance, and his soul be saved in the day of Christ; either at death, when soul and body would be separated, or at the day of the resurrection, when both should be reunited; for the flesh here means, not the corruption of nature, in opposition to the spirit, as a principle of grace, but the body, in distinction from the soul: nor was the soul of this man, only his body, delivered for a time unto Satan; the end of which was, that his soul might be saved, which could never be done by delivering it up to Satan: and very wrongfully is this applied to excommunication; when it is no part of excommunication, nor the end of it, to deliver souls to Satan, but rather to deliver them from him. The phrase seems to be Jewish, and to express that extraordinary power the apostles had in those days, as well in giving up the bodies to Satan, for a temporal chastisement, as in delivering them from him. The Jews say, that Solomon had such a power; of whom they tell the following story {e}:

"one day he saw the angel of death grieving; he said to him, why grievest thou? he replied, these two Cushites have desired of me to sit here, "he delivered them to the devil"; the gloss is, these seek of me to ascend, for their time to die was come; but he could not take away their souls, because it was decreed concerning them, that they should not die but in the gate of Luz, Myryevl hmlv whnyrom "Solomon delivered them to the devils", for he was king over them, as it is written, 1Ch 29:12 for he reigned over them, that are above, and them that are below."

The phrase is much the same as here, and the power which they, without any foundation, ascribe to Solomon, the apostles had: this is their rod which they used, sometimes in striking persons dead, sometimes by inflicting diseases on them themselves; and at other times by delivering them up into the hands of Satan to be afflicted and terrified by him, which is the case here. And it may be observed, that the giving up of Job into the hands of Satan, by the Lord, is expressed in the Septuagint version by the same word as here; for where it is said, **Job 2:6** "behold, he is in thine hand"; that version renders it, "behold, paradidwmisoi auton, I deliver him to thee", that is, to Satan; and which was done, that his body might be smote with sore boils by him, as it was; only his life was to be preserved, that he was not suffered to touch.

{e} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 53. 1.

1 Corinthians 5:6

Ver. 6. Your glorying is not good,.... Their glorying in their outward flourishing condition, in their riches and wealth, and in their ministers, in their wisdom and parts when under such an humbling dispensation; and especially if their glorying was in the sin itself, and their connivance at it, it was far from being good, it was very criminal, as the consequence of it was dangerous:

know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? This, in nature, is what everybody knows; and the proverb, which is much used by the Jews {f}, was common in the mouths of all, and the meaning of it easy to be understood: thus, whether applied to the leaven of false doctrine, nothing is more manifest, than when this is let alone, and a stop is not put to it, it increases to more ungodliness; or to vice and immorality, as here; which if not taken notice of by a church, is not faithfully reproved and severely censured, as the case requires, will endanger the whole community; it may spread by example, and, under the connivance of the church, to the corrupting of good manners, and infecting of many.

{f} Neve Shalom apud Caphtor, fol. 41. 1.

1 Corinthians 5:7

Ver. 7. Purge out therefore the old leaven,....] Meaning either the incestuous person, whose crime might well be compared to sour "leaven", and be called old because of his long continuance in it; whom the apostle would have removed from them; this is properly the act of excommunication, which that church was to perform, as a quite distinct thing from what the apostle himself determined to do. The allusion is to the strict search the Jews made {g}, just before their passover after leaven, to purge their houses of it, that none of it might remain when their feast began; which they made by the light of a lamp, on the night of the fourteenth of the month Nisan, in every secret place, hole, and corner of the house: or this may be an exhortation to the church in general with respect to themselves, as well as this man, to relinquish their old course of sinning, to "put off concerning the former conversation the old man", **Eph 4:22** the same with the old leaven here; it being usual with the Jews {h} to call the vitiosity and corruption of nature hoyebv rwav, "leaven in the lump"; of which say {i},

"the evil imagination of a man, as leaven the lump, enters into his bowels little, little, (very little at first,) but afterwards it increases in him, until his whole body is mixed with it."

That ye may be a new lump; that they might appear to be what they professed to be, new men, new creatures in Christ, by their walking in newness of life; and by removing that wicked person, they would be as the apostles were, when Judas was gone from them, all clean through the word of Christ:

as ye are unleavened; at least professed to be. They were without the leaven of sin; not without the being of sin in their hearts, nor without the commission of it, more or less, in their lives; but were justified from it by the righteousness of Christ, and had the new creature formed in their souls, or that which was born of God in them, that sinned not. The apostle compares the true believers of this church to the unleavened bread eaten at the passover, for the grace of their hearts, and the simplicity of their lives; as he does the incestuous man to the old leaven, that was to be searched for, and cast out at the feast:

for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. This is observed, to show the pertinency of the similes of leaven and unleavened, the apostle had made use of; and to make some further improvement of them, for the use, comfort, and instruction of this church; saying, that Christ is "our passover", the Christians' passover; the Jewish passover was a type of Christ; wherefore Moses kept it by faith, in the faith of the Messiah that was to come; see Heb 11:28 as it was instituted in commemoration of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, so likewise to prefigure Christ, and the redemption of his people by him. The Jews have a saying {k},

"that in the month Nisan they were redeemed, and in the month Nisan they will be redeemed;"

which was the month in which the passover was kept; and for the confirmation of which, they mention the following texts, **Mic 7:15**. There is an agreement between the passover, and Christ, in the sacrifice itself, and the qualities of it; it was a "lamb", as Christ is the "Lamb" of God, of his appointing and providing, and fitly so called, for his innocence and harmlessness, his meekness, humility, and patience; it was a lamb "without blemish", as Christ is, without spot and blemish, without the spot of original sin, or blemish of any actual transgression: it was a male, as Christ is the son or man, the head of the body, and the "firstborn" among many brethren; it was a male of the first year; in which it might prefigure Christ in the flower of his age, arrived at man's estate, and having had experience of a variety of sorrows and afflictions. There is also some likeness between them in the separation and slaying of it. The passover lamb was to be "taken out from the sheep, or from the goats"; as Christ's human nature was chosen out from among the people, and, in God's eternal counsel and covenant, separated from the rest of the individuals of human nature, and taken into a federal union with the Son of God, and preordained before the foundation of the world, to be the Lamb slain; it was also wonderfully formed by the Holy Ghost in the virgin's womb, and separated and preserved from the infection of sin; and in his life and conversation here on earth, he was separated from sinners, from being like them, and is now made higher than the heavens. This lamb was kept up from the "tenth" of the month, to the "fourteenth", before it was killed; which might typify preservation of Christ, in his infancy, from the malice of Herod, and, in his riper years, from the designs of the Jews upon him, until his time was come; and it is to be observed, that there was much such a space of time between his entrance into Jerusalem, and his sufferings and death; see Joh 12:11. The lamb was "slain", so the Prince of life was killed; and "between the two evenings", as Christ was in the end of the world, in the last days, in the decline of time, of the age of the world, and even of the time of the day, about the "ninth" hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon, the time between the two evenings; the first evening beginning at noon as soon as the sun began to decline, the other upon the setting of it. There is likewise a comparison of these together to be observed, in the dressing and eating of it. The passover lamb was not to be eaten "raw nor sodden"; so Christ is to be eaten not in a carnal, but in a spiritual way, by faith; it was to be "roast with fire", denoting the painful sufferings of Christ on the cross, and the fire of divine wrath that fell upon him; it was to be eaten "whole", as a whole Christ is to be received by faith, in his person, and in all his offices, grace, and righteousness; not a "bone" of it was to be "broken", which was fulfilled in Christ, Joh 19:36 it was to be eaten "with unleavened bread", which is spiritualized by the apostle in the next verse; and also with "bitter herbs", expressive of the hard bondage and severe afflictions, with which the lives of the Israelites were made bitter in

Egypt; and significative of the persecutions and trials that such must expect, who live godly and by faith in Christ Jesus: it was eaten only by Israelites, and such as became proselytes, as Christ, only by true believers; and if the household was too little, they were to join with their "neighbours"; which might typify the calling and bringing in of the Gentiles, when the middle wall of partition was broken down, Christ, his flesh and blood being common to both. The first passover was eaten in haste, with their loins girt, their shoes on, and staves in their hands, ready to depart from Egypt to Canaan's land; denoting the readiness of believers to every good work; having their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; their loins girt about with truth, their lights burning, and they like men waiting for their Lord's coming; hasting unto the day of the Lord, being earnestly, desirous of being absent from the body, that they might be present with him: in a word, the receiving of the blood of the passover lamb into a bason, sprinkling it on the lintel, and two side posts of the doors of the houses, in which they ate it, which the Lord seeing passed over those houses, when he passed through Egypt to destroy the firstborn, whence it has its name of the passover, were very significative of the blood of sprinkling, even the blood of Christ upon the hearts and consciences of believers; whereby they are secured from avenging justice, from the curse and condemnation of the law, and from wrath to come, and shall never be hurt of the second death. Thus Christ is our antitypical passover, who was sacrificed, whose body and soul were offered as an offering and sacrifice unto God for us, that he might be proper food for our faith; and also in our room and stead, to make satisfaction to divine justice for all our sins and transgressions.

{g} Misn Pesachim, c. 1. sect. 1. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Chametz Umetzah, c. 2. sect. 3, 4. {h} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 7. 4. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 29. 4. Caphtor, fol. 38. 2. & 41. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 73. 2. 84. 4. 86. 1. 87. 3. 95. 3, 4. & 119. 4. Baal Hattarim in Lev. ii. 11. {i} Zohar in Exod. fol. 71. 3. {k} T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 11. 1, 2. Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 49. 3.

1 Corinthians 5:8

Ver. 8. Therefore let us keep the feast,.... Not the feast of the passover, which was now ceased, though this is said in allusion to it; when the master of the house used to say {l},

"everyone that is hungry, let him come and eat; he that hath need, let him come xopyw, "and paschatize", or keep the feast of the passover:"

but rather the feast of the Lord's supper is here meant, that feast of fat things Isaiah prophesied of; in which are the richest entertainments, even the flesh and blood of Christ; though it seems best to understand it of the whole course of a Christian's life, spent in the exercise of spiritual joy and faith in Christ; he that is of a merry heart, as the believer of all men in the world has reason to be of, "hath a continual feast", Pr 15:15 of spiritual mirth and pleasure, rejoicing always in Christ, as he ought to do: which feast, or course of life, is to be kept "not with old leaven"; in the old, vain, sinful manner of conversation, as before:

neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; not in malice to any man, or one another, nor in any sort of wickedness, living in no known sin, and allowing of it:

but with the unleavened bread of sincerity; as opposed to malice, of sincere love to God and Christ, and to his people: and of truth; of Gospel doctrine, discipline, and conversation.

{l} Haggada Shel Pesach, p. 4. Ed. Rittangel.

1 Corinthians 5:9

Ver. 9. I wrote unto you in an epistle,..... Not in this same epistle, and in **1Co 5:2** as some think; for what is here observed is not written in either of those verses, but in some other epistle he had sent them before, as is clear from **1Co 5:11** which either came not to hand, or else was neglected by them; and so what he here says may be considered as a reproof to them, for taking no notice of his advice; but continuing to show respect to the incestuous person, though he in a former epistle had advised them to the contrary: no doubt the apostle wrote other epistles to the Corinthians, besides those that are in being; see 2Co 10:10 nor does such a supposition at all detract from the perfection of Scripture; for not all that were written by him were by divine inspiration; and as many as were so, and were necessary for the perfection of the canon of Scripture, and to instruct us in the whole counsel of God, have been preserved; nor is this any contradiction to this epistle's being his first to this church; for though it might not be his first to them, yet it is the first to them extant with us, and therefore so called: what he had written to them in another epistle was not to company with fornicators; which he had not so fully explained, neither what fornicators he meant, nor what by keeping company with them; he therefore in this distinguishes upon the former, and enlarges his sense of the latter; declaring that they were not so much as to eat with such persons; which shows, that this prohibition does not regard unclean copulation, or a joining with them in the sin of fornication, they had been used to in a state of unregeneracy, for some sort of companying with fornicators is allowed of in the next verse; whereas no degree of a sinful mixture with them would ever be tolerated: but that it is to be understood of a civil society and familiar conversation with them; which might bring a reproach upon religion, be a stumbling to weak Christians, and be of dangerous consequence to themselves and others; who hereby might be allured and drawn by their example into the commission of the same sinful practices. The apostle seems to allude to the customs and usages of the Jews, who abstained from all civil commerce and familiar acquaintance with unbelievers. They say,

"that everyone that does not study in the law,
axrwab hyme Khml v"kw atrwxo hyb dbemlw hybgl brqml ryoa, "it is forbidden to come near him, and to exercise merchandise with him, and much less to walk with him in the way", because there is no faith in him {m}."

{m} Zohar in Lev. fol. 33. 2.

1 Corinthians 5:10

Ver. 10. Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world,.... By "the fornicators of this world" are meant, such as were guilty of this sin, who were the men of the world, mere worldly carnal men, who were never called out of it, or ever professed to be; in distinction from those that were in the church, that had committed this iniquity; and the apostle's sense is, that his former prohibition of keeping company with fornicators was not to be understood as referring to such persons as were, out of the church, as if no sort of civil conversation and commerce were to be had with men of such, and the like infamous characters; or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters: that is, of this world; for this clause is to be understood of each of these; so we read {n} of
amled Nyeub, "the covetous of the world"; by the covetous are meant, either such who are given up to inordinate lusts, who work all uncleanness with greediness, and can never be satisfied with their filthy enjoyments; or such who are greedily desirous of riches and wealth, and of increasing their worldly

substance by any method, right or wrong; and who not only withhold that which is meet from others, but will not allow themselves what is proper and necessary: "extortioners" are either "ravishers", as the word may be rendered: such who by force violate the chastity of others, youths or virgins; or robbers, who, by violence and rapine, take away that which is the fight and property of others; or such who oppress the poor, detain their wages by fraud, or lessen them, and extort that by unlawful gain, which is unreasonable: idolaters are those who worship the false deities of the Heathens, or any idol, graven image, or picture of God, or men, or any creature whatsoever, or any but the one Lord God. The apostle, under these characters, comprises all manner of sin against a man's self, against his neighbour, and against God; against himself, as fornication; against his neighbour, as covetousness and extortion; and against God, as idolatry: and since the world abounded with men guilty of these several vices, all kind of civil correspondence with them could not be avoided,

for then must you needs go out of the world; meaning not out of Greece, or of any of the cities thereof, into other parts, but out of the world itself; they must even destroy themselves, or seek out for a new world: it is an hyperbolical way of speaking, showing that the thing is impracticable and impossible, since men of this sort are everywhere; and were all trade and conversation with them to be forbidden, the families of God's people could never be supported, nor the interest of religion maintained; a stop would soon be put to worldly business, and saints would have little or nothing to do in the world; wherefore, as the Arabic version reads it, "business would compel you to go out of the world".

{n} Zohar in Exod. fol. 31. 2.

1 Corinthians 5:11

Ver. 11. But now have I written unto you,.... Which shows, that what he had written before was at another time, and in another epistle; but not that what he was now writing was different from the former, only he explains the persons of whom, and the thing about which he has before written:

not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator; or if any man that is a brother is called, or named a fornicator; or covetous, or an idolater; or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no, not to eat. The apostle's meaning is, that in his prohibition of keeping company with men of the above character, he would be understood of such persons as were called brethren; who had been received into the church, and had been looked upon, and had professed themselves to be such; and who might be mentioned by name, as notoriously guilty of fornication, covetousness, idolatry, and extortion, mentioned in the former verse; to which are added two other sins any of them might be addicted to, as "railing" either at their fellow brethren and Christians, or others giving reproachful language to them, and fixing invidious characters on them: and "drunkenness"; living in the frequent commission of that sin, and others before spoken of; and that such persons remaining impenitent and incorrigible, still persisting, in such a vicious course of life, after due admonition given them, were not only to be removed from their religious society, from the communion of the church, and be debarred sitting down, and eating with them at the Lord's table, or at their love feasts, but also were to be denied civil conversation and familiarity with them, and even not suffered to eat common food at the same table with them: which though lawful to be used with the men of the world, yet for some reasons were not advisable to be used with such; partly for vindicating the honour of religion, and preventing the stumbling of the weak; and partly to make such offenders ashamed, and bring them to repentance. The apostle alludes to the behaviour of the Jews, either to persons that were under any pollution, as a woman in the days of her separation, when her husband hme lkay al, "might not eat with her" off of the same plate, nor at the same table, nor on the same cloth; nor might she drink with him, nor mix his cup for him; and the same was observed to persons that had issues on them {o}: or rather to such as were under ywdn, "the sentence of excommunication", and such an one was obliged to sit the distance of four cubits from others, and who might not eat nor drink with him; nor was he allowed to wash and shave himself, nor a sufficiency of food, nor any to sit with him within the space of four cubits, except those of his house {p}.

{o} Maimon. Hilch. Issure Bia, c. 11. sect. 17, 18, 19. & Tumaot Okelim, c. 16. sect. 11. & R. Abraham in ib. {p} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 16. 1. & Piske Tosaph. in ib. art. 67, 68.

1 Corinthians 5:12

Ver. 12. For what have I to do to judge,.... To admonish, reprove, censure, and condemn:

them also that are without? without the church, who never were in it, or members of it; to whom ecclesiastical jurisdiction does not reach; and with whom the apostle had no more concern, than the magistrates of one city, or the heads of one family have with another:

do not ye judge them that are within? and them only? The apostle appeals to their own conduct, that they only reproved, censured, and punished with excommunication, such as were within the pale of the church, were members of it, and belonged unto it; nor did they pretend to exercise a power over others; and it would have been well if they had made use of the power they had over their own members, by admonishing and reproving such as had sinned; by censuring delinquents, and removing from their communion scandalous and impenitent offenders; and therefore they need not wonder that the apostle only meant fornicators, &c. among them, and not those that were in the world, by his forbidding to company with such: reference seems to be had to ways of speaking among the Jews, who used not only to call themselves the church, and the Gentiles the world, and so them that were without, both their land and church; but even those among themselves that were profane, in distinction from their wise and good men. They say {q},

"if a man puts his phylacteries on his forehead, or upon the palm of his hand, this is the way of heresy (or, as in the Talmud {r}, the way of the Karaites); if he covered them with gold, and put them upon his glove (or on his garments without, so Bartenora, or, as Maimonides interprets it, his arm, shoulder, or breast), lo, this is
Mynwuyxh Krd, "the way of them that are without":"

on which the commentators {s} say, "these are the children of men, who walk after their own judgment, and not the judgment of the wise men": and Maimonides {t} says, they are such who deny the whole law, and neither believe anything, either of the written or the oral law.

{q} Misn. Megilla, c. 4. sect. 8. {r} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 24. 2. {s} Jarchi, Bartenora, & Yom Tob, in Misn. Megilla, c. 4. sect. 8. {t} In. ib.

1 Corinthians 5:13

Ver. 13. But them that are without God judgeth,.... Or "will judge", in the great day of judgment; wherefore though such persons did not fall under the censures and punishment of the apostle, nor of a church of Christ, yet they shall not go unpunished; God will call them to an account for their fornication, covetousness, idolatry, extortion, &c. and will judge, condemn, and punish them, according to their works; and therefore since they do not fall under the cognizance of the churches of Christ, they are to be left to the tribunal of God; and all that the saints have to do is to watch over one another, and reprove, rebuke, and censure, as cases require, and as the case of this church did.

Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person; not that wicked thing, as some read it, but that wicked one; meaning not the devil, who is sometimes so called; a sense of the words proposed by Calvin, not asserted; but that wicked man, that, incestuous person, whom the apostle would have removed from among them, by excommunication; which was what became them as a church to do, and which lay in their power to do, and could only be done by them, and was to be their own pure act and deed: reference seems to be had to those passages in De 17:7 where the Septuagint render the phrase, exareiv ton poneron ex umwn autwn, "thou shalt put away that wicked one among yourselves".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 6

The principal view of this chapter is to dissuade Christians from going to law with one another before Heathens, and also from fornication: the apostle begins with the first of these, and argues against it, from its being a daring, dangerous, and scandalous practice; and from the different characters of the persons, before whom controversies about civil things among Christians should and should not be brought; the one being saints, and so conscientious persons, and would do the right thing; the other unjust, and so justice could not be expected to be done by them, **1Co 6:1**, and that the former, and not the latter, should be appointed judges in such cases, is argued from the greater to the lesser; that seeing these will judge the world, much more then should they be employed in matters of less consequence, **1Co 6:2** and by the same sort of argument it is further urged, that even angels themselves shall be judged by the saints; then much more might affairs appertaining to this life, be brought before them, and be decided by them, **1Co 6:3** yea, even the things that were litigated by them, and which they had power of judging in, were such as might be determined by the men of the least capacity among them, and therefore had no need to bring them before Heathen magistrates, **1Co 6:4** besides, it could not be spoken of, but to their shame, that after all their boast of their gifts, learning, and eloquence, there was not one man of wisdom and ability among them, to judge in matters of civil property, **1Co 6:5** and this evil of commencing law suits in Heathen courts of judicature, is aggravated by its being done, not between Christians and heathens, but between one Christian brother and another, and that before men that were infidels, **1Co 6:6** and which to do, showed a great deficiency of love, wisdom, and care; and much better it was to take and suffer wrong, than to be guilty of such criminal conduct, **1Co 6:7** yea, those, that drew their brethren before such judgment seats, did them wrong, both by bringing them thither, and by getting their cause in an unjust manner, **1Co 6:8** wherefore, to deter from such unrighteous procedures, the apostles declares, that all injurious persons, and wicked men in any way, and of any sort, should not inherit the kingdom of God, **1Co 6:9** and whereas some of those the apostle writes to had been such, but now through the grace of God were otherwise, this should be considered as an argument, why they should not contend with one another before persons destitute of the grace they were partakers of, **1Co 6:11** and now the apostle having mentioned fornication as a sin which excluded from the kingdom of God, and this being reckoned by the Gentiles an indifferent thing; he first observes of indifferent things in general, that are really so, that though they are lawful to be used, it is not expedient to use them at all times, and under all circumstances; and especially care should be taken, that by the use of them, we do not become slaves unto them, **1Co 6:12** and then particularly instances in meats, which without distinction might be lawfully eaten, they being made for the belly, and the belly for them; which was answering the original design of them, though hereafter both will be destroyed; yet fornication must not be put upon a level with them, and reckoned indifferent as they are; since the body was not made to be abused and defiled, or for fornication: but to be redeemed and sanctified by the Lord, and to serve him, and who was appointed for the redemption and sanctification of that, **1Co 6:13** moreover, the sin of fornication is dissuaded from, by the consideration of the resurrection of the body as a glorious one, by the power of God, of which Christ's resurrection is a pledge; and therefore should not be defiled with this sin, **1Co 6:14** as also from the bodies of the saints being the members of Christ; and therefore should not be made the members of an harlot by fornication, these things being utterly absurd and inconsistent, **1Co 6:15**. Which is illustrated by observing, that he that is joined in unlawful copulation with an harlot, becomes one flesh with her, **1Co 6:16** which is confirmed by a passage cited out of **Ge 2:24** which regards carnal copulation in general; but one that is in union with Christ, and is become a member of him, is one spirit with him; and therefore since there is such a spiritual union between them, fornication, which joins, unites, and makes a man one with an harlot, should be carefully avoided, **1Co 6:17** and in order the more to deter from this sin, the apostle observes, that it is not like some other sins, which are without the body, but this is by it, and with it, and against it; it is dishonourable, and may be hurtful to it, **1Co 6:18** to which he adds, that the bodies of the saints are the temples of the Holy Ghost, where he dwells, and therefore should not be polluted with fornication, **1Co 6:19** and closes all with an argument, taken from their bodies not being their own property, to use and abuse at pleasure, but the purchase of Christ's blood; and therefore it was incumbent upon them to glorify him with them, as well as with their spirits, and not defile them with fornication.

Ver. 1. Dare any of you, having a matter against another,...., Any thing in difference, an action, cause, or suit. The apostle having dispatched the affair of the incestuous person, and blamed this church for their conduct therein: and having given them instructions what they should do, proceeds to lay before them another evil among them he had to complain of; which was, when any difference arose among them about their worldly concerns, they would

go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints; a method of proceeding condemned by the Jews, who would not suffer any causes of theirs to be tried before Gentiles, only before Israelites; their canon runs thus {u},

"he that tries a cause before the judges of the Gentiles, and before their tribunals, although their judgments are as the judgments of the Israelites, lo, this is an ungodly man; and it is as if he blasphemed and reproached, and lift up his hand against the law of Moses our master, as it is said, Ex 21:1 now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them, Mywg ynpl alw, "and not before the Gentiles"; twjwydh ynpl alw, "and not before idiots", private or illiterate men."

They looked upon such an action as bad as profaning the name of God; hence they say {w},

"we must not try a cause in the courts of the Gentiles, for they come from the strength of judgment; this is Esau an hairy man, for they have no concord nor mercy--and he that comes before thee y"vh llxm, "profanes the name of God", who is gracious and merciful, and honours the name of an idol--wherefore he that brings a cause before the Gentiles, is the occasion of spreading the property of judgment in the world----therefore let a cause be tried before the Israelites, for they are the secret of mercy, and not before the Gentiles, nor before idiots:"

they affirm {x} it to be a greater sin than murder, and that not only profanations of the name of God, but rapine and violence are comprehended in it; and that to give evidence in an Heathen court against an Israelite, deserves excommunication; for so it is said, {y}

"he that bears witness against an Israelite
Mywg lv twakreb, "in the courts of the Gentiles", and by his testimony gets money from him, which is not according to the judgment of the Israelites, they excommunicate him until he repays it."

Again {z}

"it is forbidden to order causes in the courts of (the rest of the nations) idolaters, for they have no part in the side of our faith."

The apostle here dissuades from this practice, of going to law before Heathen magistrates, not only from its being an imprudent, but an impudent, "daring", rash and adventurous action; and seems surprised that any should attempt it, when it must unavoidably expose their weaknesses and faults to their enemies; nor could they expect justice to be done them by men of such a character, as "unjust", who neither feared God, nor regarded men; were not only destitute of righteousness, but filled with all unrighteousness, and had not so much as the principles of common justice and equity in them; when on the contrary, from the saints, men who have the principles of grace and holiness wrought in them, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, who have the fear of God before their eyes, and upon their hearts; they might reasonably conclude, were matters brought before them, they would be adjusted according to judgment and truth, without exposing the sin and weakness of any party to the world.

{u} Maimon. Hilch. Sanhedrin, c. 26. sect. 7. Vid. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 38. 2. {w} R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 80. 4. {x} R. Bechai in Kad Hakkemach, fol. 21. 4. apud Buxtorf, Lex. Talm. col. 1666. {y} Maimon. Talmud Tora, c. 6. sect. 14. {z} Zohar in Exod. fol. 103. 3.

1 Corinthians 6:2

Ver. 2. Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world,.... The apostle appeals to them concerning this matter, as a thing well known unto them, or might easily be known by them; for this was either a traditional notion among the Jews, many of whom were in this church, that good men should judge the world; as is said of the righteous in the apocryphal book:

"They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign for ever." (Wisdom 3:8)

and so the Jews say {a}, that

"the first day of the month is the beginning of judgment in the whole world, and Isaac sat on a throne, amle Ndyml, "to judge the world":"

or this might be collected, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, out of **Da 7:18**, but the difficulty is, in what sense the apostle means the saints shall judge the world; not merely in a comparative sense, for so even will the Heathens, the men of Nineveh, and the queen of Sheba, judge and condemn the Jews; nor as assessors on the throne with Christ, for though they shall sit on the same throne with him as reigning, yet not as judging with him, all judgment is solely committed to him: nor merely as approving that judiciary sentence, that will be pronounced by him on the world; for even wicked men themselves, and devils, will be obliged to own the justice of it; but his meaning is, that in a little time the saints, Christian men, men under a profession of Christianity at least, should be governors in the world, and bear the office of civil magistracy in it; which came to pass in a few centuries after the writing of this, and has been more or less the case ever since; and will be more so in the latter day, when kings shall be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church; and when the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High: upon which the apostle strongly argues,

and if the world shall be judged by you; if such men as you shall bear sway in it, fill up all civil offices in it, even the highest; shall sit upon the benches of judges, and on the thrones of kings, and at last have the government of the whole world; since such honour the saints shall have, and be abundantly capable of it,

are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? is it too high a post, and can you be thought to be unqualified for, and unfit to have such trivial things, of little or no moment and importance, things relating to the common affairs of life, brought before you, and be tried, and judged by you?

{a} Ibid. in Lev. fol. 13. 4.

1 Corinthians 6:3

Ver. 3. Know ye not that we shall judge angels,.... Meaning not the ministers of the Gospel, and pastors of churches, called "angels", **Re 1:20** whose doctrines are examined, tried, and judged by the saints, according to the word of God; nor the good angels, who, were it possible that they could, or should publish a Gospel contrary to what has been preached by the apostle, would be contradicted, condemned, and accursed by him, see **Ga 1:8** but the evil angels, the devil and his angels: and this is to be understood not of their future final judgment and condemnation at the last day, when saints will subscribe unto, and approve of the sentence pronounced upon them, and will triumph over them in their destruction; but of the judgment of them, and of their ejection out of the Gentile world, out of their oracles, idols, and idol temples, to which Christ refers, Joh 12:31 and calls the judgment of this world, and the casting out of the prince of it by the ministry of his apostles; and which was now already begun, and ere long would be fully accomplished: accordingly the Syriac version renders it, "know ye not
Nnynyd akalmld, that we are about to judge angels?" and the Arabic, "know ye not that we judge angels?" from whence the apostle infers very justly,

how much more things that pertain to this life? this animal life; to the trade and business of life; to pecuniary matters, to estates and possessions in this world, about which differences may arise between one saint and another.

1 Corinthians 6:4

Ver. 4. If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life,.... Not judgements relating to life and death, for these were not in the power of a Jewish sanhedrim now, and much less of a Christian community, but were wholly in the power of the Roman magistrates; but judgments relating to the common affairs of life, or what the Jews call twnwmm ynyd, "pecuniary judgments" {b}, in distinction from twvpn ynyd, "judgments of souls", or capital ones. The Jews say {c},

"that forty years before the destruction of the temple, capital judgments were taken from Israel; and in the days of R. Simeon ben Jochai, pecuniary judgments were taken away from Israel."

Now this Rabbi lived many years after the times of the apostles, so that as yet the Jews had a power of exercising such judgments; and no doubt the Christian's also, who as yet were very little, if at all, distinguished from the

Jews by the Romans: and therefore since such judgments were within the compass of their authority, the apostle advises

to set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church; meaning, not those of the lowest circumstances of life, and of the meanest abilities and capacities; for in the next verse he requires a wise man for such a business; but private persons, laymen, who were not in any office and authority in the church, in distinction from pastors, elders, and rulers, that were in office, power, and high esteem, whom he would not have troubled with cases of this nature; but should rather choose out from among the laity persons of the best judgment and capacity, to be umpires and arbitrators in such worldly matters, which do not so properly come under the notice and cognizance of spiritual guides. The phrase, "to judge", is not in the original text, where it is only kayizete, "set", or "put in the chair"; but is added in the Vulgate Latin version; and to which agree both the Syriac and Arabic versions; the former reading the words, "they that are despised in the church, set for you in judgment"; and the latter, "make them to sit judges". The Jews, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, besides their great sanhedrim of seventy one persons, and that other of twenty three in their cities of note, and their triumvirate in every synagogue, had also two sorts of benches, who judged of lesser matters; the one was called Nyxmwm lv Nyd tyb, "the bench of authorized persons", experienced men, that were approved of, and had their authority from the sanhedrim; and the other was called twjwydh lv Nyd tyb, "the bench of idiots" {d}, or private persons, or Nyxmwm Nnyav Nyd tyb, "the bench of those who were not authorized" {e}, or had not their authority, from the higher courts; but being judged proper persons, were chosen by the people to arbitrate matters in difference between them; and these are the men the apostle means, at least alludes to, before whom he would have the causes brought.

{b} Misn Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 1. {c} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin. fol. 24. 2. {d} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 32. 1. {e} Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 17. sect. 13. T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 88. 2. Gloss. in. ib.

1 Corinthians 6:5

Ver. 5. I speak to your shame,.... Not that they did set such persons to judge, but that they did not; and instead of so doing went to law with their brethren before the unjust:

is it so that there is not a wise man among you? this also the apostle speaks to their shame, who had so much gloried in their wisdom, and boasted of their parts and abilities to the contempt of others, and even of the apostle himself; and yet acted as if there was not a wise man among them capable of judging and determining trivial matters, but they must carry them before unconverted persons:

no not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? for though the above mentioned benches consisted of three persons, yet the contending parties might choose one man to be an arbitrator and judge between them. The rule with the Jews was this {f};

"pecuniary judgments are by three, but if he is authorised or approved by the majority, ydyxy wlypa Nd, "he may judge alone". Says R. Nachman, as I judge pecuniary judgments alone; and so says R. Chaijah, as I judge pecuniary punishments alone."

{f} T. Bab. Sanhed. fol. 5. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Sanhed. c. 5. sect. 8.

1 Corinthians 6:6

Ver. 6. But brother goeth to law with brother,.... The relation meant is spiritual; it was usual for members of churches to be called brethren, they professing to be born again of the same Father, and belonging to the same family under Christ, the son, firstborn, and master of it: and a very wicked and shameful thing it was, that persons in such a relation, being of such a family, should go to law with one another at all:

and that before the unbelievers; which is an aggravation of their sin and folly. The apostle before calls them "unjust", now "infidels", such as had no faith in Christ, disbelieved the Messiah, and denied the whole Gospel, and therefore no faith or confidence should be put in them; for, generally speaking, such as have no faith, are not only wicked, but unreasonable men, men of no reason, conscience, justice, and equity; and therefore very improper persons for believers to bring their causes before.

1 Corinthians 6:7

Ver. 7. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you,.... Or a "defect": a want of brotherly love, or there would be no occasion to go to law at all; a want of wisdom and conduct, or proper persons would be pitched upon, and chosen out from among themselves to be arbitrators and judge between them; and a want of care among their leaders, who else would have pointed out to them such a method of accommodation, and not have suffered them to go the lengths they did:

because ye go to law one with another; which would never be, was there not a declension among you, a decay of your first love, and of the power of religion and true godliness:

why do ye not rather take wrong why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? than to go to law, especially before unjust persons and unbelievers, taking the advice of Christ, **Mt 5:40** It is more advisable to a believer to suffer wrong than to go to law with any man, and especially with a brother. It is a petition in the Jewish liturgy {g},

"let it please thee, O Lord God, and the God of my fathers, to deliver me this day, and every day---from hard judgment, and a severe adversary, tyrb Nb wnyav Nybw tyrb
Nb awhv Nyb, "whether he be a Son of the covenant, or whether he be not a son of the covenant"."

{g} Seder Tephillot, fol. 3. 2. Ed. Basil. fol. 5. 2. Ed. Amst.

1 Corinthians 6:8

Ver. 8. Nay, you do wrong and defraud,.... So far were they from taking and acting up to the advice given, that instead of taking wrong, they did wrong; and instead of suffering themselves to be defrauded, they defrauded others:

and that your brethren; that were of the same faith, of the same religion, and in the same church and family: in short, neither party, not the plaintiff, nor the defendant, sought anything more or less than to wrong, trick, and defraud each other; such a sad corruption and degeneracy prevailed among them: hence the apostle thought to deal plainly and closely with them, as in the following verses.

1 Corinthians 6:9

Ver. 9. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?.... A way of speaking much like that in the Talmud, Myqydul ala ywve wnya abh Mlwehv edwy ywh "know thou, that the world to come is not made but for the righteous?" {h} Without a righteousness there will be no entrance into the world of bliss and happiness hereafter; and this must be a better righteousness than what a sinful creature is capable of working out, and no other than the righteousness of Christ. It was a loss and want of righteousness that cast the angels down from heaven, and turned Adam out of paradise; and whoever of his posterity: are destitute of one, will fall short of enjoying the glory of God; for it is not agreeable to the holy nature of God, to his infinite justice and righteous law, to admit any into heaven without a righteousness: hence a judgment seat is erected, before which all must stand; and those that will be found without a righteousness, will be for ever excluded the kingdom of heaven; and could any unrighteous persons be received there, it would spoil the pleasure and happiness of the saints. Now this is said, partly to dissuade the Corinthians from going to law with each other before unrighteous persons, who have no right to the kingdom of God, and living and dying as they are, will have no share in it; and therefore since they are not to be fellow heirs and companions with them in another world, they should not bring their causes before them in this; and partly to reprove them for their injurious and unrighteous actions among themselves, their tricking and defrauding of one another, with other sins they were guilty of; which, if not repented of, would show, that notwithstanding their profession, they were destitute of the grace of God, were unfit to be in the kingdom of God, in a Gospel church state here below, and would be shut out of the kingdom of heaven hereafter.

Be not deceived imagining, that through your knowledge and profession you shall be saved, live as you will:

neither fornicators, such as are guilty of uncleanness with persons in a single state:

nor idolaters; who worship more gods than one, and not the true God; who do service to them that are not gods, and perform what the Jews call hrz hdwbe "strange service": and not only fall down to stocks and stones, but serve divers lusts and pleasures, the idols of their own hearts:

nor adulterers: such as have criminal conversation with persons in a married state:

nor effeminate; or "soft", or, as the Syriac renders it, albxm, "corrupters"; that is, of themselves, by voluntary pollution, such as are guilty of the sin of Onan, Ge 38:8.

Nor abusers of themselves with mankind; sodomites.

{h} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol 47. 1.

1 Corinthians 6:10

Ver. 10. Nor thieves,.... Who take away another man's property, secret or openly, by fraud or force.

Nor covetous: insatiable, in the lust of uncleanness; or greedy of worldly gain, bent upon increasing their substance at any rate, by circumvention, fraud, and deceit; and do not use the things of this life as they should, for their own good, and that of others.

Nor drunkards who are strong to drink strong liquors; who give up themselves thereunto: who sit down on purpose to intoxicate themselves, and are frequent in the commission of this sin.

Nor revilers; who are free with other men's characters, load them with reproaches, and take away their good names; either openly or secretly, either by tale bearing, whispering, and backbiting, or by raising and spreading scandalous reports in a public manner.

Nor extortioners ravishers of virgins; or plunderers of men's substance in an open and forcible way; or who extort unlawful gain:

shall inherit the kingdom of God; not that these sins, any or all of them, are unpardonable; for such who have been guilty of them may, through the blood of Christ, receive the remission of them, and through the grace of the Spirit of God obtain repentance for them, and have both right and meetness for the kingdom of heaven, as the following words show.

1 Corinthians 6:11

Ver. 11. And such were some of you,.... Not all, but some of them; and of these everyone was not guilty of all these crimes; but some had been guilty of one, and others of another; so that they had been all committed by one or another of them. The Corinthians were a people very much given to uncleanness and luxury, without measure {i}, which was the ruin of their state: and among these wicked people God had some chosen vessels of salvation; who are put in mind of their former state, partly for their present humiliation, when they considered what they once were, no better than others, but children of wrath, even as others; and partly to observe to them, and the more to illustrate and magnify the grace of God in their conversion, pardon, justification, and salvation; as also to point out to them the obligations that lay upon them to live otherwise now than they formerly did.

But ye are washed; which is not to be understood of external washing, of corporeal ablution, or of their being baptized in water; so they might be, and yet not be cleansed from their filthiness, either by original or actual transgressions; nor of the washing of regeneration, which more properly comes under the next head; but of their being washed from their sins by the blood of Christ, through the application of it to them, for the remission of them; which supposes them to have been polluted, as they were originally, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; naturally, for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? and internally, in heart, mind, and conscience; also universally, both as to persons, and as to the powers and faculties of their souls, and members of their bodies; and that they could not wash and cleanse themselves by any ceremonial purifications, moral duties, or evangelical performances; but that this was a blessing of grace they enjoyed through the blood of Christ, by which they were washed from their sins, both in the sight of God, his justice being satisfied for them, they were all pardoned and done away, so as to be seen no more, and they appeared unblamable and irreprovable in his sight; and also in their own apprehensions, for being convinced of their pollution, and being directed to Christ for cleansing, the Spirit of God took his blood, and sprinkled it on their consciences, to the appeasement of them, the removal of sin from thence, and a non-remembrance of it.

But ye are sanctified; which designs not their sanctification by God the Father, which is no other than the eternal separation of them from himself, or his everlasting choice of them to eternal happiness; nor the sanctification of them, or the expiation of their sins by the blood of Christ, this is meant in the former clause; nor their sanctification in Christ, or the imputation of his holiness with his obedience and death for their justification, which is intended in the following one; but the sanctification of the Spirit, which lies in a principle of spiritual life infused into the soul, in a spiritual light in the understanding, in a flexion of the will to the will of God, both in grace and providence, in a settlement of the affections on divine objects, and in an implantation of every grace; which is a gradual work, as yet not perfect, but will be fulfilled in all in whom it is begun.

But ye are justified; not by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of Christ. Justified they were from all eternity, as soon as Christ became a surety for them; and so they were when he rose from the dead, who were justified as their head and surety, and they in him; but here it is to be understood of their being justified in the court of conscience, under the witnessings of the Spirit of God; who having convinced them of the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and having brought near the righteousness of Christ unto them, and wrought faith in them to lay hold on it, pronounced them justified persons in their own consciences; whence followed joy, peace, and comfort.

In the name of the Lord Jesus; which may refer, as the following clause, to all that is said before: by "the name of the Lord Jesus" may be meant he himself; and the sense be, that they were washed by his blood, sanctified by his Spirit, and justified by his righteousness; or it may intend the merit and efficacy of Christ's blood, sacrifice, and righteousness; as that their sins were pardoned, and they cleansed from them through the merit of the blood of Christ shed for the remission of their sins; and that they were regenerated and sanctified through the efficacy of Christ's resurrection from the dead; and were instilled by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ: or else the name of Christ may design his Gospel, through which they received the knowledge of God's way of pardoning sinners, and justifying them, and the Spirit of God, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification:

and by the Spirit of our God; who sprinkled the blood of Christ upon them, to the cleansing of them; who sanctified their hearts, and revealed the righteousness of Christ unto them for their justification, and pronounced the sentence of it upon them. It is to be observed, that all the three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, are here mentioned, as being jointly concerned in those acts of grace.

{i} Aelian. Hist. var. l. 1. c. 19.

1 Corinthians 6:12

Ver. 12. All things are lawful unto me,.... That is, which are of an indifferent nature; otherwise everything is not lawful to be done:

but all things are not expedient; when the doing of them destroys the peace, comfort, and edification of others; when it stumbles and grieves weak minds, and causes offence to them; see 1Co 10:23

all things are lawful for me; which is repeated for the sake of saying the following words:

but I will not be brought under the power of any; which would be very inexpedient, should any by the use of liberty in things indifferent, on the one hand, offend his brethren, and, on the other, bring himself into bondage to those very things he has the free use of; and therefore the apostle determines, that these shall not have the mastery over him, that he will use them, or not use them, at his pleasure. It is somewhat difficult to know what in particular he has respect unto, whether to what he had been treating of before, concerning going to law before unbelievers; and his sense be, that however lawful this might be in itself, yet it was not expedient, since it was exposing of themselves to ungodly persons, and a putting themselves under their power to judge and determine as they pleased; or whether to the use of meats forbidden under the law, or offered to idols; which though in themselves lawful to be eaten, every creature of God being good, and not to be refused and accounted common and unclean; yet it was not expedient to use this liberty, if a weak brother should be grieved, or a man himself become a slave to his appetite.

1 Corinthians 6:13

Ver. 13. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats,.... All sort of food is appointed and provided to satisfy the appetite and stomach, to fill the belly, and nourish the body; and the belly, and all the parts through which the food passes, are purposely formed by God for the reception and digestion of the food, for its secretion, chylification, and nutrition by it, and the ejection of the excermentitious parts.

But God shall destroy both it and them: at death, and in the grave, when the one shall be consumed, and the other be needless and useless; and though that part of the body, with the rest, will be raised at the last day, since the body will be raised perfect, consisting of all its parts; yet there will be no appetite, no desire in the stomach after meats, no need of them to fill the belly, and so no use of these parts for such purposes as they now are; for the children of the resurrection will be like the angels, and stand in no need of eating and drinking.

Now the body is not for fornication. Though meats are appointed for the belly, and the belly for them, and this and the other sort of meats are of an indifferent kind, which may or may not be used; yet this cannot be said of fornication, which the Corinthians, and other Gentiles, took to be equally indifferent as meats; but the apostle shows there is not the same reason for the one as the other. The body was not originally made and appointed for fornication; this is quite besides the will of God, who has provided marriage as a remedy against it:

but for the Lord; for Jesus Christ, for whom a body was prepared in God's council and covenant; and for the sake of which, and after the exemplar of it in God's eternal mind, the body of man was first formed; and which was also made, as after the image, so for the glory of Christ, to be a member of his, to be redeemed by him, and to serve him in, in righteousness and holiness, and at last to be raised by him, and made like to his glorious body at the great day.

And the Lord for the body; he was preordained in the council of God, and provided in the covenant of grace, and sent in the fulness of time to be a Redeemer and Saviour of the body, as well as the soul; to be a sanctifier of it, and the raiser of it up from the dead in the resurrection; all which are so many arguments to dissuade from the sin of fornication.

1 Corinthians 6:14

Ver. 14. And God hath both raised up the Lord,.... God the Father has raised up from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, though not exclusive of the Son, who was equally concerned in the resurrection of himself, whereby he demonstrated himself to be the Son of God, truly and properly God.

And will also raise up us by his own power; for the resurrection of the dead, whether of Christ, or of his people, is an act of power, of God's own power, even of his almighty power, and is what the power of a mere creature could never effect. Now as Christ, the head, is raised, so shall all his members by the same power; their bodies will be raised powerful, glorious, incorruptible; and spiritual; an argument that they were never made for fornication, nor to be defiled with such uncleanness.

1 Corinthians 6:15

Ver. 15. Know ye not that your bodies are the members, of Christ,.... The whole persons of God's elect were chosen in Christ, and given to him, and made one with him, their bodies as well as their souls; and both are redeemed by him, and, in union with him, are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones:

shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. Signifying, that it is a most absurd, indecent, abominable, and detestable thing, that the bodies of the saints, which are the members of Christ, should be joined in carnal copulation with an harlot.

1 Corinthians 6:16

Ver. 16. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot,.... Not in marriage, but in carnal copulation, and unclean embraces, is one body with her

for two ("saith he", Adam, or Moses, or God, or the Scripture, or as R. Sol. Jarchi says, the Holy Spirit, **Ge 2:24**)

shall be one flesh; what is originally said of copulation in lawful marriage, in which man and wife, legally coupled together, become one flesh, is applied to the unlawful copulation of a man with an harlot, by which act they also become one body, one flesh; and which is made use of by the apostle, to deter the members of Christ from the commission of this sin, which makes a member of Christ one body and flesh with an harlot, than which nothing is more monstrous and detestable. The apostle here directs to the true sense of the phrase in Genesis, "and they shall be one flesh"; that is, man and wife shall only have carnal knowledge of, and copulation with each other. Some Jewish {k} writers interpret this phrase, dlwh dum "on account of the foetus", which is formed by the means of them both, and which becomes "their one flesh": others {l}, thus as if they were, or because they are, like as if they were one flesh; but others {m}, in more agreement with the apostle, think that this has respect rwbxh la, "to that conjunction", by which the fixing of the species is completed; and others {n} expressly thus, "they two shall be one flesh", dxa rvb Myvwe Mhynvv Mwqml, "that is, in the place where both of them make one flesh": which is equally done by unlawful copulation with an harlot, as with a man's own wife.

{k} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 3. Jarchi in Gen. ii. 24. {l} Aben Ezra in ib. {m} R. Levi ben Gersom in ib. {n} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 18. fol. 15. 3. T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 58. 3.

1 Corinthians 6:17

Ver. 17. He that is joined unto the Lord,.... As every elect person is; his whole person, soul and body, is united to the Lord Jesus Christ, to his whole person, as God-man and Mediator; even as Adam and Eve, whose marriage was a representation of the marriage between Christ and his church, were personally united, and were called by the same name; and as the whole human nature of Christ, consisting of a true body and a reasonable soul, was united to the person of the Son of God; and as appears from the influence that union with Christ has upon the redemption, sanctification, and resurrection of the body. The ground, foundation, and bond of which union is, not the Spirit on Christ's part; for the Spirit being received as a spirit of regeneration, sanctification, &c. is a fruit of union to Christ, and an evidence of it; nor faith on our part, which as a grace is not ours, but the gift of God, and is a fruit of union; nor is it of an uniting nature, but is a grace of communion; and the foundation of all its acts, as seeing Christ, going to him, receiving of him, walking on in him; &c. is a previous union to Christ; but it is the everlasting and unchangeable love of Christ to them, shown in his choice of them, in his covenant with his Father on their behalf, in his engaging for them as a surety, in assuming their nature, and acting, both in time and eternity, as the representative of them, which is the bond and cement of their union, and from which there can be no separation. This union is first discovered in the effectual calling, and will be more manifest hereafter. Now he that is in this sense united to Christ,

is one spirit; for this union is a spiritual one; it is complete and perfect; near and indissoluble; by virtue and in consequence of it, God's chosen ones come to have and enjoy the same spirit in measure, which Christ their head and Mediator has without measure: hence they have the Spirit of God, as a spirit of illumination and conversion, of faith and holiness, of adoption, and as the earnest, pledge, and seal of their future glory. And since so it is, fornication, which makes them one flesh with an harlot, ought studiously to be abstained from.

1 Corinthians 6:18

Ver. 18. Flee fornication,.... As that which is hurtful, scandalous, and unbecoming Christians; avoid it, and all the occasions of it, that may lead unto it, and be incentives of it:

every sin that a man doth is without the body not but that other sins are committed by the body, and by the members of it as instruments; they are generally committed by the abuse of other things that are without, and do not belong to the body; and so do not bring that hurt unto and reproach upon the body, as fornication does:

but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body; not meaning his wife, which is as his own body; but his proper natural body, which is not only the instrument by which this sin is committed, but the object against which it is committed; and which is defiled and dishonoured by it; and sometimes its strength and health are impaired, and it is filled with nauseous diseases hereby.

1 Corinthians 6:19

Ver. 19. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost,.... What is said in **1Co 3:16** of the saints in general, is here said of their bodies in particular. The Holy Spirit, in regeneration and sanctification, when he begins the good work of grace on a man, takes possession of his whole person, soul and body, and dwells therein as in his temple. So the Jews {o} call the body of a righteous man Nkvm, the "habitation" of the Holy Spirit. Now it is most abominably scandalous and shameful that that body, which is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, which is sacred to him as a temple, should be defiled by the sin of fornication: it is added,

which is in you, which ye have of God; meaning the Holy Spirit which was in them, as in his temple; which dwelt in their hearts, and influenced their bodies, lives, and conversations; and which they received of God as a wonderful instance of his grace and love to them; that he should be bestowed upon them, to regenerate, renew, and sanctify them, to implant every grace, to make them a fit habitation for God, and meet for the inheritance of the saints in light:

and ye are not your own: their own masters, at their own dispose, to live to their own lusts, or the lusts of men; men have not power over their bodies to abuse them at pleasure by fornication, or such like uncleanness, neither single nor married persons; see **1Co 7:4** and of all men, not the saints, who are neither their own nor other men's, nor Satan's, but God's; not only by creation, but by choice and covenant; and Christ's by gift, by purchase, and powerful grace, and in a conjugal relation to him; wherefore fornication ill becomes them.

{o} R. Joseph Albo. apud Pocock. Not. in Pert. Mosis, p. 120, 121.

1 Corinthians 6:20

Ver. 20. For ye are bought with a price,.... Not with gold and silver, but with the precious blood of Christ, as the whole church, and all the elect of God are. This proves them to be the Lord's, not only his redeemed ones, being ransomed by a price from the bondage of the law, sin, Satan, and the world; but his espoused ones, and which is chiefly designed here; for one way of obtaining and espousing a wife among the Jews was by a price {p};

"a woman (they say) is obtained or espoused three ways;
Pokb, "by silver", by a writing, and by lying with; by silver, the house of Shammai say, by a penny, and the value of a penny; the house of Hillel say, by a "pruta", and the value of a "pruta": how much is a "pruta?" the eighth part of an Italian farthing."

That is, be it ever so small a price, yet if given and taken on the account of espousals, it made them valid; and it was an ancient rite in marriage used among other nations {q} for husband and wife to buy each other: Christ, indeed, did not purchase his church to be his spouse, but because she was so; but then his purchasing of her with his blood more clearly demonstrated and confirmed his right unto her, as his spouse; he betrothed her to himself in eternity, in the everlasting covenant of grace; but she, with the rest of the individuals of human nature, fell into sin, and so, under the sentence of the law, into the hands of Satan, and the captivity of the world; to redeem her from whence, and by so doing to own and declare her his spouse, and his great love to her, he gave himself a ransom price for her; which lays her under the greatest obligation to preserve an inviolable chastity to him, and to love and honour him.

Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's; by "God" is here meant more especially the Lord Jesus Christ, by the price of whose blood the bodies and souls of his people are bought, which lays the obligation on them to glorify him in and with both; and contains a very considerable proof of the deity of Christ; who is "glorified", when all the perfections of the divine nature are ascribed to him; when the whole of salvation is attributed to him, and he is looked unto, received, trusted in and depended on as a Saviour, and praise and thanks are given unto him on that account; and when his Gospel is embraced and professed, and walked worthy of, and his ordinances submitted to, and his commandments kept in love to him: and he is to be glorified both in body and spirit; "in body", by an outward attendance on his worship, and a becoming external conversation; by confessing and speaking well of him; by acting for him, laying out and using time, strength, and substance, for his honour and interest; and by patient suffering for his name's sake: "in spirit", which is done when the heart or spirit is given up to him, and is engaged in his service, and when his glory lies near unto it; the reason enforcing all this, is because both are his; not only by creation, but by his Father's gift of both unto him; by his espousal of their whole persons to himself; and by his redemption of both soul and body from destruction: the Vulgate version reads, "bear" or "carry God in your body", and leaves out the next words, "and in your spirit", which are God's; and which also are left out in the Ethiopic and in the Alexandrian copy, and some others.

{p} Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 1. {q} Servius, in Virgil. Georg. l. 1. lin. 31.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 7

In this, chapter, various cases concerning marriage being proposed to the apostle, are answered by him; and he discourses of the nature, use, and end of marriage, and of the duties of married persons to one another; and gives advice to such as were unmarried, and points at the advantages of a single state, where it can be continued in without danger. Some of the Corinthians having written to him upon these heads, he returns for answer in general, that abstinence from marriage was most advisable; that is, at that time of persecution, and by those who had the gift of continence, and for reasons after mentioned, **1Co 7:1** though, in order to avoid fornication, it was absolutely necessary for truth who had not that gift to enter into it, and act agreeably thereunto, **1Co 7:2** and therefore advises both parties in such a state to yield due benevolence to each other, **1Co 7:3** giving this as a reason for it, that neither of them had power over their own bodies, but over each other's, **1Co 7:4** wherefore abstinence from the marriage bed ought not to be but with the following limitations; that it be by mutual agreement, and only for a time, and that only for the sake of devotion but that they come together again, lest Satan should take an advantage of their incontinency, and tempt them to evil, **1Co 7:5** though in all this the apostle would be understood to speak, not in an authoritative, but a permissive way, and rather by way of counsel than of command, **1Co 7:6** and expresses his hearty wish, that everyone was, and would continue, in a single state, as he himself; though he corrects himself by observing, that it was not the pleasure of God to bestow the gift of continency on everyone, and therefore suggests, that it was right for everyone to act according to the gift he had received, **1Co 7:7** and then addresses persons in a single state, whether they had ever been married or not, and advises them so to abide, partly by his own example, and partly by the profitableness of it, **1Co 7:8** but if they had not the gift of continency, his counsel is, that they enter into a marriage state, giving this reason for it, that it is better to enter into such a state than to be inflamed with lust, **1Co 7:9** and then he directs himself to married persons; and these he commands, not in his own name, but in the name of the Lord, to live together; and particularly, that the wife should not leave her husband for any trivial matter, or on account of any difference that might arise between them, **1Co 7:10** and that if she so did, she ought to remain unmarried, or seek to be reconciled to her husband, and come to him again; and, on the other hand, the husband ought not to divorce his wife, unless in case of adultery and wilful obstinate desertion, **1Co 7:11**. And as to another case of conscience which was moved unto him, whether a believer, having married an unbeliever, should live together; he answers, that if a Christian brother had married an unbelieving wife, and she thought fit to continue with him, he should not put her away, **1Co 7:12**. And so a Christian woman that had married an unbelieving husband, if it was his pleasure to dwell with her, she ought not to forsake him, **1Co 7:13** giving this reason for it, because they were legally married to each other, or otherwise their children must be reckoned bastards; whereas by maintaining the validity of their marriage, and abiding by it, they would appear to be legitimate, **1Co 7:14** but if the unbeliever, whether man or woman, thinks fit to desert the believing wife or husband, so be it, the party deserted may make themselves easy, nor are they under obligation to remain unmarried: however, as they are called to peace they ought to seek it, and endeavour to live quietly together, **1Co 7:15** and that for this reason, because they may be the means of the conversion, and so of the salvation of the unbelieving party, **1Co 7:16** hence the apostle takes an occasion to exhort every man in general to walk and abide in the calling wherein he is called, this being an order he had given to all the churches, **1Co 7:17** and which he exemplifies by particular instances, as that those who are called in circumcision, or in uncircumcision, should abide so, **1Co 7:18** because these are nothing, or indifferent things, which may be, or may not be; but keeping the commandments is binding, and not to be dispensed with, **1Co 7:19** wherefore the general rule is repeated, that it might be the more regarded and observed, **1Co 7:20**. And another instance given, illustrating it, as that if a man is called while a servant, he should make himself easy, and continue so; though if he can have his freedom it is most eligible, **1Co 7:21**. The reason persuading him to be satisfied with his condition is, because he that is called by grace, though a servant in a civil sense, is the Lord's freeman in a spiritual sense; and, on the other hand, he who is free in a civil sense when called, is in a spiritual sense a servant of Christ, **1Co 7:22** as clearly appears by his being bought with the price of his blood; and therefore neither one nor the other should be servants of men in matters of religion, **1Co 7:23**. Wherefore, as before, it becomes every man to abide in the station in which he is called, until it please God in his providence to change his situation, **1Co 7:24**. After this the apostle returns to his former subject about marriage, and addresses the virgins particularly, concerning whom he declares he had no express commandment from the Lord, but however was willing to give his judgment and advice, with all sincerity and uprightness, as one that had the honour to be counted faithful by the Lord himself, **1Co 7:25** and his judgment was, that considering the present persecution of the churches of Christ, it was better for single persons, men or women, to remain so, **1Co 7:26** though he advises those that were married by no means to desert one another, or seek to dissolve the marriage bond; as, on the other hand, those that were free from it, he would not have them seek out for a wife, **1Co 7:27** though should they, it would not be criminal in them; and whether young men or maidens, it was not unlawful for them to marry, only it was not so convenient for the present; and such therefore must expect trouble in the world, **1Co 7:28**. However, it was proper, since time was short, and every worldly enjoyment was fading and perishing, that care be taken that there be no abuse of any, in whatsoever state and condition, or circumstance men were in; neither to be too much depressed with afflictive providences, nor too much elated with prosperous ones; and by no means to indulge to lasciviousness and luxury, **1Co 7:29**. And whereas the married life is a careful one, and the apostle was desirous the persons he writes to should be without any distressing care, he advised so strongly as he did to a single state; and in order to persuade to it, he puts the difference between an unmarried and a married man, who though they both had their cares, yet about different things; the former about divine and religious things, in order to please the Lord; the latter about worldly things, in order to please his wife, **1Co 7:32**. And just the like difference he observes there is between a wife and a virgin; the virgin, she is concerned about and taken up in religious matters, that she may increase in holiness, both inward and outward; and the wife is engaged in worldly and domestic affairs, which engross her thoughts and time, in order to please her husband, **1Co 7:34** wherefore the advice he had given to continue single, was manifestly for the profit and advantage of such persons in spiritual things; though he gave it with no design to ensnare any, who had not the gift of continence, but advised to it, when it could be done, in a comely manner, and that they might attend upon the worship of God, without distraction by worldly cares for their families, **1Co 7:35** but in case, when a virgin is ripe for marriage, and there is a necessity for it, it is by no means advisable in parents to behave uncomely to her, and refuse to marry her, and so deprive her of the remedy against incontinence; when such is the case, she ought to marry, that being not sinful, yea, it would be sinful to do otherwise, **1Co 7:36** yet where there is no necessity, where persons have the gift of continency, are steadfastly determined not to marry, but, to keep their virginity, this is commendable as well as profitable, **1Co 7:37** whence this conclusion is drawn, that they that marry do well, rather than burn in lust, or commit sin, but they that do not marry, having the gift of continency, do better, both for themselves, and for the Lord, **1Co 7:38**. And whereas whilst an husband is living, the wife is bound by law to continue with him; and when he is dead, she may marry whom she will, So be it she seeks the Lord, and has his glory in view, **1Co 7:39** yet in the judgment of the apostle she would be a much more happy person should she continue a widow; and this was not only his own private judgment, but he had reason to believe it was according to the mind of the Spirit of God, **1Co 7:40**.

Ver. 1. Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me,.... Though the false apostles had greatly influenced the members of this church, yet there were many among them that had a very great respect for the apostle, and kept up a correspondence with him, though at a distance from him, by writing; in which way they informed him of their doubts and difficulties, that arose in their minds about certain things, and desired his judgment in them, to which they paid a very great deference. The things they wrote to him about, here referred to, may be collected from the contents of this chapter, and some others following; as whether a Christian man ought not to abstain from the use of women; whether a believer ought to live with an unbelieving yoke fellow; whether such as had been circumcised should not make use of some methods to draw on the foreskin of their flesh; whether apprentices, who were called by the grace of God, ought to serve out their time with their masters; and concerning celibacy or virginity, the eating of things offered to idols, and the maintenance of ministers: and he begins with the first; to which he answers,

it is good for a man not to touch a woman; which is to be understood, not of merely touching a woman, which can neither be criminal, nor in all cases inexpedient, or be attended with any ill, or dangerous consequences; nor of the matrimonial contract, which is lawful and honourable; but of the act of carnal copulation with a woman: in this sense the Jews use the phrase,

"there are three (they say {r}) that fled from transgression, and the blessed God joined his name with them; and they are these, Joseph, and Joel, and Phalti. Joseph, as appears from what is said, Ps 81:5 "a testimony in Joseph is his name"; what is the meaning of the phrase "in Joseph?" this testifies concerning him,
rpyjwp tvab egn alv, "that he did not touch Potiphar's wife" (i.e. he did not lie with her); Jael, as is clear from what is said, **Jud 4:18** "and Jael went forth to meet Sisera, and she covered him with a mantle"; what is the meaning of the phrase, hkymvb? (which is rendered, "with a mantle";) our Rabbins here (in Babylon) say with a linen cloth; but our Rabbins there (in the land of Israel) say with bed clothes; says Resh Lekish, if we run over the whole Scripture, we shall not find any household goods so called; wherefore what is it? it is all one as hk ymv, "my name is thus": and the meaning is, my name witnesses concerning her, evr wtwa hb egn alv, "that that wicked one (Sisera) did not touch her" {s}; (i.e. had not carnal knowledge of her;) Phalti, as is evident from hence, one Scripture says, "and Saul gave Michal his daughter to Phalti", 1Sa 25:44 and another Scripture says Phaltiel; sometimes he is called Phalti, and sometimes he is called Phaltiel; who takes Phalti? and who gives Phaltiel? but I testify concerning him; dwd tvab egn alv, "that he did not touch David's wife"; (i.e. did not lie with her;)"

see Ge 20:6. And in this sense also is the word "touch" used, both by Greek and Latin authors. The apostle's meaning is not that it is unlawful to marry, or that it is sinful to lie with a woman in lawful wedlock; but that it is much better, and more expedient on several accounts, to abstain from the use of women, when persons have the gift of continency.

{r} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 164. 4. & 165. 1. Vid Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 91. 4. {s} Vid. Kimchi in Jud. iv. 18.

1 Corinthians 7:2

Ver. 2. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication,.... Or "fornications"; meaning either the frequent commission of that sin; or all sorts of uncleanness and pollution, which may be avoided by wedlock, and the proper use of the marriage bed, where the gift of continency is not bestowed: wherefore to prevent unlawful copulations, as of single persons with one another, or of a married person with a single one, the apostle advises, as being what is right and proper,

let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband; that is, let every man that has a wife enjoy her, and make use of her, and let every woman that has an husband, receive him into her embraces; for these words are not to be understood of unmarried persons entering into a marriage state, for the words suppose them in such a state, but of the proper use of the marriage bed; and teach us that marriage, and the use of it, are proper remedies against fornication; and that carnal copulation of a man with a woman ought only to be of husband and wife, or of persons in a married state; and that all other copulations are sinful; and that polygamy is unlawful; and that one man is to have but one wife, and to keep to her; and that one woman is to have but one husband, and to keep to him.

1 Corinthians 7:3

Ver. 3. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence,.... The Syriac version renders it, byxttmd abwx, "due love"; and so the Arabic; and may include all the offices of love, tenderness, humanity, care, provision, and protection, which are to be performed by the husband to his wife; though it seems chiefly, if not solely, here to respect what is called, htne, Ex 21:10 "her marriage duty", as distinct from food and raiment to be allowed her; and what is meant by it the Jewish doctors will tell us: one says {t}, it is hjmh vymvt, "the use of the marriage bed"; and, says another {u}, hyle abl, "it is to lie with her", according to the way of all the earth. And so the phrase here, "due benevolence", is an euphemism, and designs the act of coition; which as it is an act of love and affection, a sign of mutual benevolence, so of justice; it is a due debt from divine ordination, and the matrimonial contract. The Jewish doctors have fixed and settled various canons {w} concerning the performance, of this conjugal debt: and the apostle may not be altogether without some view to the rules and customs which obtained in his own nation.

And, likewise also the wife unto the husband; she is not to refuse the use of the bed when required, unless there is some just impediment, otherwise she comes under the name of tdrwm, a "rebellious wife"; concerning whom, and her punishment, the Jews {x} give the following rules:

"a woman that restrains her husband from the use of the bed, is called rebellious; and when they ask her why she rebels, if she says, because it is loathsome to me, and I cannot lie with him; then they oblige him to put her away directly, without her dowry; and she may not take any thing of her husband's, not even her shoe strings, nor her hair lace; but what her husband did not give her she may take, and go away: and if she rebels against her husband, on purpose to afflict him, and she does to him so or so, and despises him, they send to her from the sanhedrim, and say to her, know thou, that if thou continuest in thy rebellion, thou shalt not prosper? and after that they publish her in the synagogues and schools four weeks, one after another, and say, such an one has rebelled against her husband; and after the publication, they send and say to her, if thou continuest in thy rebellion, thou wilt lose thy dowry; and they appoint her twelve months, and she has no sustenance from her husband all that time; and she goes out at the end of twelve months without her dowry, and returns everything that is her husband's."

This account, with a little variation, is also given by Maimonides {y}.

{t} Mosis Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, praecept. neg. 81. Sol. Jarchi in Exod. xxi. 10. {u} Maimon. Hilch. Isbot, c. 12. sect. 2. Vid. Aben Ezra in Exod. xxi. 10. {w} Vid. Misn. Cetubot, c. 5. sect. 6. & Mikvaot, c. 8. sect. 3. {x} Mosis Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 81. {y} Hilch. Ishot, c. 14. sect. 8, 9, 10. Vid. Misn. Cetubot, c. 5. sect. 7. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

1 Corinthians 7:4

Ver. 4. The wife hath not power of her own body,.... To refrain the use of it from her husband; or to prostitute it to another man:

but the husband; he has the sole power over it, and may require when he pleases the use of it:

and likewise also the husband has not power over his own body: to withhold due benevolence, or the conjugal debt from his wife; or abuse it by self-pollution, fornication, adultery, sodomy, or any acts of uncleanness: but the wife; she only has a power over it, a right to it, and may claim the use of it: this power over each other's bodies is not such, as that they may, by consent, either the husband allow the wife, or the wife the husband, to lie with another.

1 Corinthians 7:5

Ver. 5. Defraud ye not one the other,.... By withholding due benevolence, denying the use of the marriage bed, refusing to pay the conjugal debt, and which is called a "diminishing of her marriage duty", Ex 21:10 where the Septuagint use the same word "defraud", as the apostle does here; it is what both have a right to, and therefore, if either party is denied, it is a piece of injustice, it is properly a defrauding; though with proper conditions, such as follow, it may be lawful for married persons to lie apart, and abstain from the use of the bed, but then it should never be done,

except it be with consent: because they have a mutual power over each other's bodies, and therefore the abstinence must be voluntary on each side; otherwise injury is done to the person that does not consent, who is deprived against will of just right; but if there is agreement, then there is no defrauding, because each give up their right; and such a voluntary abstinence is commended by the Jews {z};

"everyone that lessens the use of the bed, lo, he, is praiseworthy; and he who does not make void, or, cause to cease the due benevolence, but wtva tedm, "by consent of his wife";"

i.e. he also is praiseworthy: another condition of this abstinence is that it be only for a time; which shall be agreed unto, and fixed by both parties; not for ever which would be contrary to the will of God; the institution and end of marriage, and of dangerous consequence to either party. The Jews allow of a vow of continency for a while; and which they limit to different persons; thus {a},

"if a man by a vow excludes, wife from the use of the bed, the school of Shammai say it is for the space of two weeks, the school of Hillell say one week; scholars go out to learn the law, without leave of their wives, thirty days, workmen one week;"

which vow, for such a limited time, they seem to allow of, without mutual consent; and herein they disagree with the rule the apostle gives; and who further observes, the end to be had in view by such a voluntary separation for a time,

that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; not that this was necessary for the ordinary discharge of such service, as for private acts of devotion among themselves, and constant family prayer; but either when times of fasting and prayer on some emergent occasions were appointed by themselves, or by the church, or by the civil government on account of some extraordinary and momentous affairs; and this seems to be observed by the apostle, in agreement with the customs and rules of the Jewish nation, which forbid the use of the bed, as on their great and annual fast, the day of atonement {b}, so on their fasts appointed by the sanhedrim for obtaining of rain {c}: the word "fasting" is omitted in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, and so it is in the Alexandrian copy, two of Stephens's; and others: the apostle adds,

and come together again; to the same bed, and the use of it, and that for this reason,

that Satan tempt you not for your incontinence; for not having the gift of continency, should they pretend to keep apart long: Satan, who knows the temperament and disposition of men and women, may tempt them not only to hatred of, and quarrels with one another, but to impure lusts and desires, to fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness; a very good reason why, though abstinence from the marriage bed for a short time, by the consent of both parties, for religious purposes, may be lawful, yet ought not to be continued; since Satan may hereby get an advantage over them, and draw them into the commission of scandalous enormities. The Jews have a notion of Satan's being a tempter, and of his tempting men to various sins, which they should guard against, as idolatry, &c. So say they {d},

"thou mayest not look after idolatry, according to **De 4:19** and again, thou must take heed lest this be a cause of it to thee, Ktwa tyoy Njvw, "and Satan tempt thee" to look after them, and do as they do:"

and again {e}, frequently should a man think

"upon the unity of the blessed God, lest there should be anything above or below, before him or behind him, or by him, and so, wtyom Njvh, "Satan tempt him", and he come into heresy."

{z} Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 21. sect. 11. {a} Misn. Cetubot, c. 5. sect. 6. {b} Misn. Yoma, c. 8. sect. 1. {c} Misn. Taanith, c. 1. sect. 6. {d} Mosis Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 14. {e} Mosis Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 15.

1 Corinthians 7:6

Ver. 6. But I speak this by permission,.... Referring either to what he had said before, though not to all; not to **1Co 7:2** that for the avoiding of fornication, every man should make use of his own wife, and every woman of her own husband; since this is not by permission, but by command, **Ge 2:24** that carnal copulation should be between one man and one woman in a married state; nor to **1Co 7:3** for that married persons ought to render due benevolence to, and not defraud each other, having a power over each other's bodies, is a precept, and not a permission, Ex 21:10 but to **1Co 7:5** their parting for a time, and coming together again: it is not an absolute command of God that they should separate for a time, on account of fasting and prayer, but if they thought fit to do so by agreement, they might; nor was there any positive precept for their coming together again directly, after such service was over. The apostle said this,

not of commandment; but, consulting their good, gives this advice, lest Satan should be busy with them, and draw them into sin; but if they had the gift of continence, they might continue apart longer; there was no precise time fixed by God, nor did the apostle pretend to fix any: or it may refer to what follows after, that he would have all men be as he was; though he laid no injunction, but left them to their liberty; unless it can be thought to regard marriage in general, and to be said in opposition to a Jewish notion, which makes marriage hwum, a "command";

"a man, they say {f}, is bound to this command at seventeen years of age, and if he passes twenty and does not marry, he transgresses, and makes void an affirmative precept;"

but the apostle puts it as a matter of choice, and not of obligation.

{f} Maimon. Hilch, Isbot, c. 15. sect. 2.

1 Corinthians 7:7

Ver. 7. For I would that all men were even as I myself,.... The apostle speaks not of his state and condition, as married or unmarried, for it is not certain which he was; some think he had a wife, others not: it looks, however, as if he had not at this time, as appears from **1Co 7:8** but be it which it will, it can hardly be thought he should wish all men to be in either state, either all married, or all unmarried; but he speaks of the gift of continency, which he had, as the following words show; and this he desires for all men, that they might not be in any danger from Satan's temptations, and that they might be more fit for and intent upon the service of Christ. The Syriac version adds, atwykdb in "purity", or "chastity"; which may be preserved in a marriage state, as well as in single life:

but every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that: all the gifts of nature and grace which men have, they have of God, and not of themselves; and every man has a gift proper to himself; no one man has all gifts, but some one, and some another; and with respect to the case in hand, one man has the gift of continency, another the gift of marriage; all cannot contain themselves, only to whom it is given: and all are not disposed to marriage; some are inclined to a single life, and some to a marriage state; and of those that are married, some can abstain from the use of the marriage bed longer than others, without being in danger of being tempted by Satan for their incontinency; and such a disposition is desirable.

1 Corinthians 7:8

Ver. 8. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows,.... Not by way of command, but advice: by the "unmarried" he means, either such men who never were in a married state, or else such who had been married, but their wives were dead; which latter sense seems more agreeable, since they are joined with "widows", who had lost their husbands:

it is good for them if they abide; unmarried, and do not change their condition any more; not that it was sinful to marry again, for he allows of it in the next verse, in case they have not the gift of continence; and therefore "good" here, is not opposed to evil, only signifies that it would be better for them, more expedient and profitable for them; they would be more free from the cares of life, have less trouble, and be more at leisure to serve the Lord; and which he knew by experience, and therefore, proposes himself as an example:

even as I; that is, as he was then; for at that time it seems certain that he had no wife; though whether he had had one, and she was now dead, or whether he had never been married, may be matter of dispute; the former seems most agreeable, since he proposes himself as an example to widowers and widows; and having known what a married and single state both were, was better able to give his judgment of both, and proper advice to such persons which must come with more force and strength, and a better grace, from such an one.

1 Corinthians 7:9

Ver. 9. But if they cannot contain, &c. Or "if they do not contain", as the words may be rendered, and as almost all versions do render them; if they have not the gift of continency; if they are not willing, and do not think fit to contain, for none are to be compelled; if either therefore they want a will or power to contain, let them marry; it is not only lawful for them to marry, but it is right and best for them; hence it appears that second marriages are lawful, which were condemned by some of the ancients: for it is better to marry than to burn; or be burnt; not with material fire, as Judah ordered Tamar to be brought forth and burnt with, for whoredom; nor with hell fire, the just demerit of uncleanness; but with the fire of lust itself; and so the Syriac version reads it, "it is better to marry than to be burnt" atgrb, "with lust"; when persons not only find in them some lustful motions and desires, and a glowing heat of concupiscence; but are as it were all on fire with the lusts of the flesh, and in great danger of being drawn into the commission of fornication, adultery, or other pollutions, and even unnatural lusts; it is much better to enter into a marriage state, though it may have its cares, inconveniences, and difficulties, than to be under temptations and inclinations to such defilements: so the Jews often express the lust of concupiscence by fire; they tell {g} us a

"story of R. Amram, that he redeemed all the captives, men and women; and the women and the virgins dwelt in a chamber in his house alone; one time, Satan kindled in him, hwath va, "the fire of lust", and he set a ladder to go up to them, and when he came upon the steps of the ladder, he began to cry with a loud voice, Mrme yb arwn Mrme yb arwn, "fire in the house of Amram, fire in the house of Amram": and the men came to quench the fire, and found nothing burning; for it was only his intention to cause to cease from him the fire of lust; and his thought ceased and his mind grew cool; and they asked him, why he mocked them? he replied, for this is a greater "fire" than all the fires in the world, for it is the fire of hell:"

This story is also told in the Talmud {h}, with some little variation: so we read of one that is er ruyb jyhlta, "inflamed" {i}, or all on fire "with the corruption of nature", who does not direct his heart to God: and such a man that finds his corruptions prevail over him, he ought to marry, they say {k}, as a proper remedy against it:

"he whose mind is intent upon the law continually, and learns it as Ben Azzai, and cleaves to it all his days, and does not marry a wife, there is no iniquity in

his hands, and that because his corruption does not prevail over him; but if his corruption prevails over him,
hva avyl byyx, "he ought to marry a wife":"

and that for the very reason the apostle here gives. The Ethiopic version reads, "it is better to marry than to commit fornication"; that and adultery both are expressed by fire and burning, with the Jews, as they prove from **Ho 7:4** {l}

{g} Caphtor, fol. 62. 1. {h} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 81. 1. {i} Zohar in Lev. fol. 21. 1. {k} Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 15. sect. 3. {l} Vet. Nizzachon, p. 43, 44.

1 Corinthians 7:10

Ver. 10. And unto the married I command,.... To the unmarried and widows he spoke by permission, or only gave advice and counsel to remain unmarried, provided they could contain; but if not, it was advisable to marry; but to persons already in a married state, what he has to say to them is by commandment, enjoining what they are under obligation to observe, not being at liberty to do as they will:

yet not I, but the Lord; not as if he took upon him the dominion over them, to make laws for them, and, in an imperious authoritative way, oblige them to obedience to them; no; what he was about to deliver, was not a law of his own enacting and obtruding, but what their Lord, their Creator, head, husband, and Redeemer, had ordered and enjoined; and this grave solemn way of speaking he makes use of, to excite their attention, command awe and reverence, make the greater impression upon their minds, and show the obligation they were under to regard what was said:

let not the wife depart from her husband; for the same law that obliges a man to cleave to his wife, obliges the wife to cleave to her husband, **Ge 2:24** and those words of Christ, "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder", Mt 19:6 regard the one as well as the other; and the rules he has given, forbidding divorces only in case of adultery, **Mt 5:32** are as binding upon the wife as upon the husband. The wife therefore should not depart from her husband upon every slight occasion; not on account of any quarrel, or disagreement that may arise between them; or for every instance of moroseness and inhumanity; or because of diseases and infirmities; nor even on the score of difference in religion which, by what follows, seems to be greatly the case in view. The apostle observes this, in opposition to some rules and customs which obtained among Jews and Gentiles, divorcing and separating from one another upon various accounts; not only husbands put away their wives, but wives also left their husbands: for women to put away, or leave their husbands, were not in former times allowed of among the Jews, but from other nations crept in among them; indeed if a man married one under age, and she did not like him for her husband, she might refuse him, and go away without a bill of divorce; the manner of refusal was, by saying before two witnesses, I do not like such an one for my husband, or I do not like the espousals, with which my mother or my brother espoused me, or in such like words; and sometimes a written form of refusal was given {m}; but otherwise where marriage was consummated, such a departure of the wife was not allowed. Salome, the sister of Herod, is thought to be the first that introduced it, who sent a bill of divorce to Costobarus {n} her husband; and in this she was followed by Herodias, the daughter of Aristobulus, who left her husband, and married Herod Antipas {o}; and it seems certain, that this practice prevailed in Christ's time, since not only such a case is supposed, Mr 10:12 but a very flagrant instance is given in the woman of Samaria, **Joh 4:18** who had had five husbands, not in a lawful regular manner, one after another upon their respective deaths, but she had married them, and put them away one after another: and as for the Gentiles, the account the Jews {p} give of them is, that though they had

"no divorces in form, they put away one another; R. Jochanan says, wtvrgm wtva, "a man's wife might put him away", and give him the dowry:"

though, according to other accounts, they had divorces in form, which, when a man put away a woman, were called grammata apopomphv, "letters of dismission"; and when a woman left her husband, apoleiqewv grammata, "letters of dereliction", such as Hipparchia the wife of Alcibiades gave to him {q}; and Justin Martyr {r} gives us an instance of a Christian woman, who gave her husband what the Roman senate called a divorce.

{m} Maimon. Hilch. Gerushim, c. 11. 1. 8. 11. & Ishot, c. 4. sect. 3. {n} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 15. c. 7. sect. 10. {o} lb. l. 18. c. 6. sect. 1. {p} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 18. fol. 15. 3. {q} Plutarch. in Alcibiade. {r} Apolog. 1. p. 41, 42.

1 Corinthians 7:11

Ver. 11. But and if she depart,.... This is said, not as allowing of such a departure, which only in case of fornication is lawful; but supposing it a fact, that a woman cannot be prevailed upon to stay with her husband, but actually forsakes him upon some difference arising between them,

let her remain unmarried: she ought not to marry another man; her departure does not make the marriage void; nor is it to be made void by any difference between them, either on religious or civil accounts, only in case of adultery; and therefore, if upon such separation she marries, she is guilty of adultery:

or be reconciled to her husband; which is rather to be chosen, than to remain separate, though unmarried; if she has given the offence, and is the cause of the separation, she ought to acknowledge it, and ask forgiveness of her husband, and return to him and live in peace with him; and if the fault is on his side, she ought to make use of all proper methods to convince him of it, bring him into good temper, forgive any injury done her, and live peaceably and comfortably together:

and let not the husband put away his wife; as the Jews were wont to do, upon every trifling occasion; See Gill on "Mt 5:31" See Gill on "Mt 5:32"

1 Corinthians 7:12

Ver. 12. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord,.... He had spoken before to married persons in general, and had delivered not his own sentiments barely, but the commandment of the Lord, that such should never separate from, or put away each other; in which he has respect to such as were upon equal foot in matters of religion, who were both of them believers in Christ; but now he speaks to the rest, to such as were unequally yoked, the one a believer, the other an unbeliever; and what he delivers on this head, concerning their living together, there being no express determination of this matter by the Lord himself, he under divine inspiration gives his sense of it; as that such marriages were valid, and that such persons ought to live together, and not separate on account of difference in religion: or the sense is, that as "to the rest" of the things they had wrote to him about, besides what he had given answer to already, he should speak to under divine illumination; though he had not an express law of Christ to point unto them, as the rule of their conduct: and particularly, whereas they had desired his judgment and advice upon this head, whether one who before conversion had married an unbeliever, ought to live with such an one, or whether it would not be advisable to leave, or put such away, to it he answers,

if any brother hath a wife that believeth not; that is, if any man who is now a brother, one called by the grace of God, and is in church fellowship, has a wife to whom he was married whilst in a state of unregeneracy and infidelity; who is as she was when he married her, entirely destitute of faith in Christ; not one that is weak in the faith, or only makes an outward profession, but that has no faith at all in Christ, nor in his Gospel, not so much as an historical one; who disbelieves, denies, and rejects, the truths of the Gospel:

and she be pleased to dwell with him; loves her husband, chooses to continue with him, notwithstanding their different sentiments of religion:

let him not put her away; infidelity is no reason for a divorce. The Gospel revelation does not dissolve the natural obligations men and women are in to one another. The Jews had a law prohibiting marriages with Heathens and idolaters; and such marriages were dissolved, and such wives put away, Ex 34:16 but this was a law peculiar to that people, and was not obligatory on other nations, and especially has no place under the Gospel dispensation.

1 Corinthians 7:13

Ver. 13. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth,.... The apostle puts the case both ways, there being the same reason for one as for another; that if she that was a sister, who was partaker of the grace of God, and a member of the church, had a husband to whom she was married before her conversion; who was an unbeliever, had no faith in Christ, nor any notion of the Gospel, but an infidel to both:

and if he be pleased to dwell with her; loves her, and is willing to continue with her; neither puts her away from him, nor departs from her on account of her Christianity:

let her not leave him; but continue, and cohabit with him as man and wife; this is the advice the apostle gives, as agreeably to the light of nature and reason; as becoming the Gospel of Christ, and as what might serve to recommend it, and spread the knowledge of it.

1 Corinthians 7:14

Ver. 14. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife,.... That is, "by the believing wife"; as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, and so it is read in some copies; and likewise in the next clause the same is read,

by the believing husband; this is a reason given by the apostle why they should live together. This cannot be understood of internal sanctification, which is never the case; an unbeliever cannot be sanctified by a believer in this sense, for such a sanctification is only by the Spirit of God; nor external sanctification, or an outward reformation, which though the unbelieving yoke fellow may sometimes be a means of, yet not always; and besides, the usefulness of one to another in such a relation, in a spiritual sense, urged as a reason for living together, in **1Co 7:16** nor merely of the holiness of marriage, as it is an institution of God, which is equally the same in unbelievers as believers, or between a believer and an unbeliever, as between two believers; but of the very act of marriage, which, in the language of the Jews, is expressed by being "sanctified"; instances almost without number might be given of the use of the word vdq, in this sense, out of the Misnic, Talmudic, and Rabbinic writings; take the following one instead of a thousand that might be produced {s}.

"The man vdqm, "sanctifies", or espouses a wife by himself, or by his messenger; the woman vdqtm, "is sanctified", or espoused by herself, or by her messenger. The man vdqm, "sanctifies", or espouses his daughter, when she is a young woman, by himself or by his messenger; if anyone says to a woman, yvdqth, "be thou sanctified", or espoused to me by this date (the fruit of the palm tree,) yvdqth, "be thou sanctified", or espoused to me by this (any other thing); if there is anyone of these things the value of a farthing, tvdwqm, "she is sanctified", or espoused, and if not she is not tvdwqm, "sanctified", or "espoused"; if he says, by this, and by this, and by this, if there is the value of a farthing in them all, tvdwqm, "she is sanctified", or espoused; but if not, she is not tvdwqm, "sanctified", or espoused; if she eats one after another, she is not tvdwqm, "sanctified", or espoused, unless there is one of them the value of a farthing;"

in which short passage, the word which is used to "sanctify", or be "sanctified", in the Hebrew language, is used to espouse, or be espoused no less than "ten" times. So the Jews {t} interpret the word "sanctified", in **Job 1:5** he espoused to them wives; in the Misna, the oral law of the Jews, there is a whole treatise of Nyvwdyq "sanctifications" {u}, or espousals; and in the Gemara or Talmud {w} is another, full of the disputes of the doctors on this subject. Maimonides has also written a treatise of women and wives {x}, out of which might be produced almost innumerable instances in proof of the observation; and such as can read, and have leisure to read the said tracts, may satisfy themselves to their heart's content. Let it be further observed; that the preposition en, which is in most versions rendered "by", should be rendered "in" or "to" or "unto", as it is in the next verse, and in many other places; see Mt 17:12 **Col 1:23** if it be rendered in the former way, "in", it denotes the near union which by marriage the man and woman are brought into; if in the latter, it designs the object to which the man or woman is espoused, and the true sense and even the right rendering of the passage is this: "for the unbelieving husband is espoused to the wife, and the unbelieving wife is espoused to the husband"; they are duly, rightly, and legally espoused to each other; and therefore ought not, notwithstanding their different sentiments of religion, to separate from one another; otherwise, if this is not the case, if they are not truly married to one another, this consequence must necessarily follow; that the children born in such a state of cohabitation, where the marriage is not valid, must be spurious, and not legitimate, and which is the sense of the following words:

else were your children unclean, but now are they holy; that is, if the marriage contracted between them in their state of infidelity was not valid, and, since the conversion of one of them, can never be thought to be good; then the children begotten and born, either when both were infidels, or since one of them was converted, must be unlawfully begotten, be base born, and not a genuine legitimate offspring; and departure upon such a foot would be declaring to all the world that their children were illegitimate; which would have been a sad case indeed, and contains in it another reason why they ought to keep together; whereas, as the apostle has put it, the children are holy in the same sense as their parents are; that as they are sanctified, or lawfully espoused together, so the children born of them were in a civil and legal sense holy, that is, legitimate; wherefore to support the validity of their marriage, and for the credit of their children, it was absolutely necessary they should abide with one another. The learned Dr. Lightfoot says, that the words "unclean" and "holy" denote not children unlawfully begotten, and lawfully begotten; but Heathenism and Christianism; and thinks the apostle alludes to the distinction often made by the Jews, of the children of proselytes being born in "holiness", or out of it, that is, either before they became proselytes or after; but it should be observed, that though the word "holiness" is used for Judaism, yet not for Christianity; and besides, the marriages of Heathens were not looked upon as marriages by the Jews, and particularly such mixed ones as of a Jew and Gentile, they were not to be reckoned marriages; for so they say {y},

"he that espouses a Gentile woman, or a servant,
Nyvwdyq Nnya, "they are not espousals"; but lo, he is after the espousals as he was before the espousals; and so a Gentile, or a servant, that espouses a daughter of Israel,
Nyvwdyq Nhyvwdyq Nya, "those espousals are no espousals";"

nor do they allow children begotten of such persons to be legitimate. This learned writer himself owns such a tradition, and which he cites {z},

"that a son begotten in uncleanness is a son in all respects, and in general is reckoned as an Israelite, though he is a bastard, wnb wnya hywgh Nm Nbh, "but a son begotten on a Gentile woman is not his son";"

all which are just the reverse of what the apostle is here observing; and who, it must be remarked, is speaking of the same sort of holiness of children as of parents, which cannot be understood of Christianity, because one of the parents in each is supposed to be an Heathen. The sense I have given of this passage, is agreeable to the mind of several interpreters, ancient and modern, as Jerom, Ambrose, Erasmus, Camerarius, Musculus, &c. which last writer makes this ingenuous confession; formerly, says he, I have abused this place against the Anabaptists, thinking the meaning was, that the children were holy for the parents' faith; which though true, the present place makes nothing for the purpose: and I hope, that, upon reading this, everyone that has abused it to such a purpose will make the like acknowledgment; I am sure they ought.

{s} Misn. Kiddushin, c. 2. sect. 1. {t} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 152. 1. {u} Massech. Kiddushin. {w} T. Bab. & Hieros. Kiddushin. {x} Hilch Ishot. c. 3. & 4. & 5. & 6. & 7. & 8. & 9. {y} Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 4. sect. 15. {z} Maimon. Hilch. Issure Bia, c. 12. sect. 7. Vid. Ib. Hilch. Nechalat, c. 2. sect. 12.

1 Corinthians 7:15

Ver. 15. But if the unbelieving depart,.... If the unbelieving party, man or woman, separate themselves from the believing party on account of religion, and in hatred to it, and will not live with the believer unless Christ is denied, his Gospel abjured, and his ordinances and worship relinquished:

let him depart; he or she, though not without making use of all proper means to retain them; but if, after all, they will go, unless such things are complied with as are unreasonable and sinful, they are not to be held, but let go; and the deserted person may sit down contented, being not to be blamed, the fault entirely lying upon the deserter:

a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. The Ethiopic version reads it, "to such an one"; one that is called by grace a church member, and so a brother or sister in Christ, is not to be subject to an unbeliever in matters of conscience, in things appertaining to the worship of God, and the service and glory of Christ; nor, being in such circumstances, that either Christ must be forsaken, or the unbeliever will depart, are they obliged to yield to such an one, but rather suffer a departure; nor are they bound to remain unmarried, but are free to marry another person, after all proper methods have been tried for a reconciliation, and that appears to be impracticable; desertion in such a case, and attended with such circumstances, is a breach of the marriage contract, and a dissolution of the bond, and the deserted person may lawfully marry again; otherwise a brother, or a sister in such a case, would be in subjection and bondage to such a person:

but God hath called us to peace; which ought to be sought after and maintained, so far as it can be consistent with truth, the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and interest of religion. The believing party being threatened with a desertion, ought as much as possible to seek for peace and reconciliation, and do all that can be to prevent a departure; for saints are called by the grace of God, to follow after and cultivate peace, not only with one another in their Christian communion as saints, but with all men, even their enemies, and especially with such as are so nearly allied; wherefore the departure should not be easily admitted, or a new marriage be suddenly entered into, reconciliation, if it can be obtained, being most eligible and becoming a Christian.

1 Corinthians 7:16

Ver. 16. For what knowest thou, O wife,.... These words may be understood, as containing a reason either why the believing party should be easy at the departure of the unbeliever, after all proper methods have been used in vain to retain him or her; taken from the uncertainty and improbability of being of any use to them, to bring them to the knowledge of Christ, and salvation by him; "for what knowest thou, O wife"; thou dost not know, thou canst not know, thou canst not be sure,

whether thou shall save thy husband? be the means of bringing of him under the means of grace, and so of his conversion and salvation; there is no likelihood of it, since he is such an implacable enemy to Christ, and so bitterly averse to the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; and therefore since he is determined to separate, even let him go: or else, as rendering a reason why the believer should seek for peace and reconciliation, and by all means, if possible, continue to dwell with the unbeliever; taken from hopes of being serviceable under a divine influence and blessing, for their spiritual and eternal good, the wife for the good of the husband; by whose conversation he may be won over, and prevailed upon to entertain a better opinion of the Christian religion; to take a liking to the Gospel, and to attend upon the ministry of the word, which may be made the power of God unto salvation to him:

or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shall save thy wife; this may possibly be done, in the same manner as now suggested: persons in such a relation have often great influence upon one another, and are by divine Providence often great blessings to each other, in things spiritual as well as temporal. This puts me in mind of a case related by the Jewish doctors {a}:

"it happened to a holy man that he married a holy woman, and they had no children; say they, we are of no manner of profit to the blessed God; they stood up and divorced one another; he went and married a wicked woman, and she made him wicked; she went and married a wicked man,
qydu wtwa htvew "and she made him righteous";"

or, to use the apostle's phrase, "saved him".

{a} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 17. fol. 14. 4.

1 Corinthians 7:17

Ver. 17. But as God hath distributed to every man,.... This text is so placed, and the words of it so expressed, as that it may have regard both to what goes before, and follows after; it may have respect to every man's proper gift, whether of continence, or of disposition to marriage, which every man has of God, **1Co 7:7**, and accordingly ought to live in a single, or in a married state; or it may refer to the last verse, what knowest thou, &c. and ei mh, which we render "but", be translated either "unless"; and then the sense is, thou knowest not, O man or woman, whether thou shalt save thy wife or husband, nor any other, unless God, who distributes his, grace to everyone as he pleases; or else it may be rendered if "not", and the sense be, if thou shouldst not save thy husband, or thou, man, shouldst not save thy wife; yet "as God hath distributed to every man" his own proper gift, both as to nature and grace; his proper sphere of usefulness, and the station in which he would have him be, and the place he would have him fill up, and the business he must do in life; so let him act, and

as the Lord hath called everyone; which is to be understood of that particular station of life, and those circumstances of it, in which men are providentially placed by God, or are found in when he calls them by his grace; as whether married or unmarried; whether joined to a believer or an unbeliever; whether circumcised or uncircumcised; whether bond or free; a servant or a master; and so may refer to what follows, as well as to what goes before:

so let him walk; contented with his station and kind of life, agreeably to the profession he makes of the Gospel, doing all the good he can to those he is concerned with:

and so ordain I in all churches; the decisions and determinations he had made, in the cases proposed to him about marriage, the rules and orders he had prescribed, what he had given out by way of precept or permission, by command or counsel, or what he was about to deliver, were no other than what he in common enjoined other churches; and therefore they ought not to think that they were used with more strictness and severity than others; and might be induced hereby to attend to what was advised or enjoined, since it was what was common to all the churches.

1 Corinthians 7:18

Ver. 18. Is any man called being circumcised?.... That is, if any man that is a Jew, who has been circumcised in his infancy, is called by the grace of God, as there were many in those days, and many of them in the church at Corinth:

let him not become uncircumcised; or "draw on" the foreskin; as some did in the times of Antiochus, for fear of him, and to curry favour with him, who, it is said, 1 Maccab. 1:15, "made themselves uncircumcised", and forsook the holy covenant; and so did Menelaus, and the sons of Tobias, as Josephus reports

{b}; and there were many, in the days of Ben Cozba, who became uncircumcised by force,
Nykwvm, they had their foreskins drawn on by the Gentiles against their wills, and when he came to reign were circumcised again {c}; for, according to the Jews, circumcision must be repeated, and not only four or five times {d}, but a hundred times, if a man becomes so often uncircumcised {e} They make mention of several particular persons who voluntarily became uncircumcised, or, to use their phrase, and which exactly answers to the word used by the apostle,
wtlreb Kvwm "that drew over his foreskin"; as Jehoiachin {f}, Achan {g}, yea even the first Adam {h}; one guilty of this, they say, makes void the covenant {i}; it was accounted a very great sin, so great that he that committed it was reckoned {k} among them that shall have no part in the world to come, but shall be cut off and perish; physicians say, this may be done by the use of an instrument they call spaster, which has its name from the word used in the text. The apostle's sense is, that such as had been circumcised, and had now embraced the faith of Christ, had no reason to be uneasy, or take any methods to remove this mark from their flesh, because it was abolished by Christ, and now of no significance; since as it did them no good, it did them no hurt:

is any called in uncircumcision? let him not become circumcised?; that is, if a Gentile who was never circumcised is called by grace, let him not submit to circumcision, which is now abrogated, and is altogether unnecessary and unprofitable in the business of salvation; yea, hurtful and pernicious if done on that account, since it makes men debtors to do the whole law, and Christ of none effect unto them.

{b} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 5. sect. 1. {c} Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 9. 1. & Sabbat, fol. 17. 1. T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 72. 1. & Gloss. in ib. {d} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 46. fol. 41. 4. {e} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 72. 1. {f} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 161. 1. {g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 44. 1. {h} Ib. fol. 38. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 1. & 40. 4. {i} Hieros, Peah, fol. 16. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 27. 3. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 41. 4. {k} Maimon. Hilch. Teshuba, c. 3. sect. 6. & Milah, c. 3. sect. 8.

1 Corinthians 7:19

Ver. 19. Circumcision is nothing,.... In the affair of justification before God, and acceptance with him; it cannot make any man righteous in the sight of God, nor recommend him to the divine favour; it is no evidence of a man's calling, or of his having the truth or grace of God in him; nor is it of any avail in the business of salvation. It was something formerly; it was a command and an ordinance of God, to Abraham and his natural seed; it pointed at the corruption and pollution of nature; was typical of the effusion of the blood of Christ, for pardon, and cleansing, and of the internal circumcision of the heart; it was a sign and seal to Abraham, that he should be the father of many nations, and that the righteousness of faith should come upon the uncircumcised Gentiles; and was a distinguishing character of the people of the Jews, until the Messiah came: but now it is nothing, nor has it any of these uses, being with the rest of the ceremonies abolished by Christ; it gives no preference to the Jew above the Gentile; he that has this mark in his flesh, is not a whir the better for it, and he that is without it, is not at all the worse; and is a reason why both the one and the other should be easy, and not attempt any alteration in themselves with regard to this, or think the better or worse of themselves on account of it. This is said in direct opposition to the sentiments of the Jews, who extol circumcision to the skies. The apostle says it is nothing, and they say it is everything, and everything is nothing without it; they say, it is the hinge of their whole law {l}, and that it is equal to all the precepts in the law {m}; their extravagant commendations of it take in the following passage {n};

"says R. Eliezar ben Azariah, uncircumcision is rejected, because by it the wicked are defiled, as it is said, "for all the Gentiles are uncircumcised"; says R. Ishmael, hlym hlwdg, "great is circumcision"; for on account of it, thirteen covenants were made; says R. Jose, "great is circumcision", for it drives away the sabbath, the weighty (command in the law, that is, it is obliged to give way to it); R. Joshua ben Korcha says, "great is circumcision", for it was not suspended to Moses the righteous one full hour; R. Nehemiah says, "great is circumcision", for it drives away plagues; says Rabba, "great is circumcision", for notwithstanding all the commands which Abraham our father did, he was not called perfect until he was circumcised; as it is said, "walk before me, and be thou perfect"; says another, "great is circumcision", for had it not been for that, the holy blessed God would not have created his world; as it is said, "thus saith the Lord, if my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth","

More of this kind might be produced, but enough of this.

And uncircumcision is nothing; it does not hinder any having an interest in, and partaking of the blessings of grace; nor their enjoyment of the Gospel and Gospel ordinances; nor their communion and fellowship with the churches of

Christ, much less their everlasting salvation, as say {o} the Jews;

"the holy blessed God (say they) rejects the uncircumcised, and brings them down to hell; as it is said, Eze 32:18 "son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down"; and so says Isaiah, **Isa 5:14** "therefore hell hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth", qx ylbl; that is, to him that hath not the law of circumcision; as it is said, Ps 105:10 "and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant"; for no circumcised persons go down to hell:"

but the keeping of the commandments of God; that is something; not that the commands of God, and the observance of them, are of any avail to procure the pardon of sin, acceptance with God, justification in his sight, and eternal salvation; yet they are of moment, as they are the commands and ordinances of God; and ought to be kept in faith and fear, as they were delivered from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God; and though for keeping of them there is no reward of debt, yet in keeping of them there is a reward of grace; peace of mind is had, and the presence of God enjoyed; obedience to them, upon Gospel principles and motives, is a fruit of grace, an evidence of faith, and of the new creature; it is the ornament of a Christian profession, and is profitable to men.

{l} Shebet Judah, p. 94. Ed. Gent. {m} Zohar in Lev. fol. 6. 1. T. Bab. Nedarim, fol 32. 1. Caphtor, fol. 9. 2. {n} Misn. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 11. Maimon. Hilch. Milah, c. 3. sect. 8, 9. {o} Shemot Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 104. 4. Vid. Maimon. in Misn. Sabbat, c. 19. sect. 6.

1 Corinthians 7:20

Ver. 20. Let every man abide in the same calling,.... Civil calling, station, and business of life,

wherein he was called; that is, in which he was when he was called by the grace of God; and is to be understood of such a calling, station, and business of life, as is lawful, honest, and of good report; otherwise he ought not to abide in it, but betake himself to another, as Matthew and Zacchaeus, when called by grace, left the scandalous employment of a publican: nor is it the apostle's sense, that a man that is in an honest way of living, may not change that for another that is equally so, as if a man was bound down to that sort of business he is in when first called; for no doubt it may be lawful, and there may be just reason for it in Providence, why a man should change his calling and station in life; though this ought not to be done rashly and unadvisedly, and without wise and good reasons; but the chief view of the apostle is to teach contentment in every condition, and station of life, and that persons should not be uneasy and restless in it, and seek for an alteration when there is no just occasion; and particularly he seems to have reference, either to the different state of married and unmarried persons, he had before been speaking of; see **1Co 7:27** or to the different circumstances of Jew and Gentile, as circumcised or uncircumcised, as in the foregoing verse; or to the different condition of bond and free, servant and master, in the following verse; and persuades them to remain easy and satisfied, for that the Christian religion does not necessarily require a change in a man's civil circumstances of life.

1 Corinthians 7:21

Ver. 21. Art thou called being a servant?.... That is, called by grace whilst in the condition of a servant,

care not for it; do not be troubled at it, and uneasy with it; be not anxiously solicitous to be otherwise; bear the yoke patiently, go through thy servitude cheerfully, and serve thy master faithfully; do not look upon it as any objection to thy calling, any contradiction to thy Christian liberty, or as unworthy of, and a reproach upon thy profession of Christ:

but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. The Syriac renders the last clause, xwlptd Kl ybg, "choose for thyself to serve"; perfectly agreeable to the sense given of the words, by several great critics and excellent interpreters, who take the apostle's meaning to be, that should a Christian servant have an opportunity of making his escape from his master, or could he by any art, trick, and fraudulent method, obtain his liberty, it would be much more advisable to continue a servant, than to become free by any such means: yea, some seem to carry the sense so far, that even if servants could be made free in a lawful way, yet servitude was most eligible, both for their own and their master's good: for their own to keep them humble and exercise their patience; for their master's not only temporal, but spiritual good; since by their good behaviour they might be a means of recommending the Gospel to them, and of gaining them to Christ; but one should rather think the more obvious sense is, that when a Christian servant has his freedom offered him by his master, or he can come at it in a lawful and honourable way, this being preferable to servitude, he ought rather to make use of it; since he would be in a better situation, and more at leisure to serve Christ, and the interest of religion: however, certain it is, that the apostle's design is, to make men easy in every station of life, and to teach them how to behave therein; he would not have the freeman abuse his liberty, or be elated with it, nor the servant be uneasy under his servitude, nor be depressed by it, for the reasons following.

1 Corinthians 7:22

Ver. 22. For he that is called in the Lord,.... Which is to be understood, not of any civil calling, or of calling to an office; or of the outward call by the ministry of the word only; but of an internal, special, powerful, evangelical, and saving call by the grace of God; which is of persons out of darkness into light, out of bondage into liberty, from their sinful companions to the company and society of Christ and his people, from off themselves and their own righteousness, to the grace and righteousness of Christ, and out of the world unto a kingdom and glory. And this may be said to be, in the Lord; either because it is by him, he is the efficient cause of it, his grace the moving cause, and his glory the end; or because it is in consequence of being in him, united to him, persons are first in the Lord, and then called by him; or because they are called into fellowship and communion with him; the whole is true, and make up the sense of the text; for he that is effectually called by grace, is called by the Lord, and by virtue of being chosen in him, and in union to him, and to partake of all the blessings of grace and glory that are with him. And such an one,

being a servant; in a natural and civil sense when called, in a spiritual sense

is the Lord's freeman; he is free from sin, not from the being, but from the servitude, guilt, and damning power of it: he is free from Satan, not from his temptations and insults, but from his dominion and captivity; he is ransomed from him, by the redemption of Christ, and is turned from his power in conversion; he has not that influence over him he before had; and he is so safe and secure from him, that he can never be destroyed by him, and in a short time Satan will be bruised under his feet: he is free from the law, the observance of the ceremonial law, and all its numerous burdensome rites; and from the moral law, not from obedience to it, as in the hands of Christ, but from the bondage, curse, and condemnation of it, as ministered by Moses: he is free of the company of saints, of the church of God below, and of heaven, the city God has built and prepared for his; he is free to the use of all things indifferent, provided it is done in faith, the peace of weak brethren secured, and the glory of God preserved; he is free to all the privileges and immunities of the house of God, and to the throne of grace, come when he will; and therefore though a servant, in another sense he is a very happy man; he is free indeed, and can never be disenfranchised, or arrested, or cast into prison; the various privileges he is free unto and enjoys, show him to be a happy man; and the effects following on his freedom prove it, as peace with God, the presence of Christ, joy in the Holy Ghost, fellowship with saints, and a well grounded hope of glory; he is not only called to the liberty of grace, which he enjoys, but will be delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God; and therefore has no reason to be uneasy with his civil servitude: on the other hand,

likewise he that is called being free; he that is called by the grace of God, with an holy and effectual calling, being a freeman, his own master, and it may be the master of others in a civil sense, he, in a spiritual one,

is Christ's servant: he is bought by Christ with his money, with the price of his blood; and therefore he has a right unto him, and a claim to his service; and he becomes a voluntary servant to him, through the power of his grace upon him; and though he serves his Lord Christ without mercenary views, freely, readily, and cheerfully, from a principle of love and gratitude, he shall not fail of a reward of grace; he shall be honoured of God, approved of men, and shall receive the reward of the inheritance: Christian liberty, and the service of Christ, are not at all inconsistent; nor should we entertain any other notions of liberty, but what are consistent with serving the Lord; whatever liberty contradicts, that is no true liberty; though it may have the face of it, it is no other than bondage.

1 Corinthians 7:23

Ver. 23. Ye are bought with a price,.... Some read these words interrogatively, as **1Co 7:18**, "are ye bought with a price?" and suppose them directed to such who had bought out their time of servitude with a sum of money, and ought not to return to their former condition; but they are rather to be read affirmatively, and to be understood of all, whether freemen or servants, that are bought with the inestimable price of Christ's blood, as in **1Co 6:20** and contain in them a reason why such as are called by the grace of God, whilst in a state of civil servitude, are Christ's freemen, because they are redeemed by him from sin, Satan, the law, and from among men; and also why such as are called by the grace of God, being in a state of civil liberty, are Christ's servants, because he has purchased them with his blood, and therefore has a right unto them, both to their persons and service:

be not ye the servants of men: not that the apostle dissuades such as are redeemed by Christ, and are believers in him, from being the servants of men in a civil sense; for this would be to contradict himself, who here and elsewhere exhorts servants to continue in the service of their masters, and to perform it heartily and cheerfully, and with great sincerity and integrity; but his meaning is, that since they were redeemed from a vain conversation by the blood of Christ, they should not be servants to the lusts of men, nor obey them in things sinful and wicked, which were contrary to law and Gospel, and which were made unlawful by the word of God, and were a breach of the command of their Lord and master Christ; nor should they in matters of religion and the worship of God submit to the authority of any set of men whatever, or be subject to the doctrines and commandments of men; whether these relate to Jewish ceremonies, or Gentile superstitions, or be a mixture of both: they were to call no man master upon earth; nor suffer any to lord it over them, as the false teachers very much did in this church; but to acknowledge Christ, who had bought them to be their only Lord and master. The allusion seems to he to a tradition of the Jews, that the Israelites being redeemed out of Egypt were the servants of God, and not of men {p};

"R. Jochanan ben Zaccai was explaining this Scripture, Ex 21:6 how different the ear is from all the members of the body; says the holy blessed God, the ear that heard my voice on Mount Sinai, at the time I said, the children of Israel are my servants, Mydbel Mydbe alw, and "not servants to servants"; and this goes and gets itself a master, let it be bored: R. Simeon ben Ribbi was explaining the same Scripture, how different the door and the door post were from all the parts of the house; says the holy blessed God, the door and the door post, which were witnesses in Egypt, at the time that I passed by the threshold, and by the two door posts, and I said, the children of Israel are my servants, and not servants to servants, and I brought them out of bondage to liberty; and this goes and gets itself a master, let it be bored before them."

{p} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 22. 2.

1 Corinthians 7:24

Ver. 24. Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, The apostle repeats the advice given in **1Co 7:20** and prefaces it with that tender and affectionate appellation, "brethren", the more to engage them to attend to it; showing also that whatever difference there was in their civil state and condition, there was none in their religious one; they were all brethren, one of another, they were his brethren, yea, even the brethren of Christ:

therein abide with God; that is, abide in his civil calling and station of life, be it what it will, as knowing he is in that state it is the will of God he should be in; and as in the sight of God, who knows all men, and what is best for them, and who sees and observes all their actions and conduct of life; and with whom there is no respect of persons, of bond or free, of masters or servants; they are admitted equally to enjoy the same favours and privileges in the house of God; have the same access to the throne of grace, and enjoy the same communion with God; and therefore should be content in their present situation, discharging the several duties of their station aright, and exercise a good conscience both towards God and man.

1 Corinthians 7:25

Ver. 25. Now concerning virgins,.... Whether they should continue in the same state or not, whether they should marry or not, was one of the cases put to the apostle, and which the Corinthians wrote to him about, and to which he returns this answer:

I have no commandment of the Lord: neither in the Old Testament, in the law of Moses, or writings of the prophets; nothing is therein enjoined concerning celibacy, or commanding persons to live a single life; but on the contrary there are many things directing and exciting to a marriage state; nor had the apostle any command from the Lord Jesus Christ, under the Gospel dispensation, obliging to virginity; nor any special orders, or peculiar revelation from the Spirit of God, fixing and settling this point:

yet I give my judgment, what will be most advisable, convenient, and prudent to be done, considering persons, times, and circumstances. The apostle does not make use of his power and authority, as such, to make decrees, and prescribe rules, binding on the consciences of men; only humbly and modestly gives his opinion, which if thought well of, might be followed by them: and the more to engage them to take his advice, he adds,

as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful; the meaning of which is, not that he, through the goodness and mercy of the Lord, had with great integrity preserved his virginity, and so proposes himself, as an instance and example of retaining it; for it is not certain, that though the apostle was now single, that he had never been married; it seems rather that he had, and therefore this cannot be his sense; nor does he refer to his faithfulness, to the Gospel committed to his trust, and the faithful discharge of his whole ministerial service, and which was owing to divine grace and mercy; but to that plainness, honesty, and integrity, which appeared in the whole course and conduct of his life, and in all his conversation with men; and particularly in giving advice about any matter, or declaring his sentiments on any subject: and when a man is free and faithful, and openly and honestly tells his mind, it greatly recommends him, and commands attention and regard to what he says; and faithfulness, it may be observed, considered in this sense, is not of nature, but of grace; it is obtained not by a man's own power and strength, but by the grace and mercy of God; to which it is here ascribed.

1 Corinthians 7:26

Ver. 26. I suppose, therefore, that this is good,.... The opinion of the apostle, the sentiment of his mind, his judgment in this case were, that it was better, more advisable and eligible, for persons that were single to continue so; his reason for it follows,

for the present necessity; by which is meant not the shortness of life, and the necessity of dying, when husband and wife must part, upon which trouble ensues; nor the various sorrows, cares, encumbrances, trials, and exercises that attend a conjugal state, as bearing and bringing forth, and bringing up children, provision for the family, &c. which are common to all, and at all times more or less; but the present time of persecution, under which the churches of Christ were; agreeably the Syriac version reads it,
anbzd aqea ljm, "because of the necessity of the time", or season: using the very Greek word in text; as the Targumists {q} also have frequently adopted it into their language, and use the phrase
yqea tev, "an hour, or time of necessity", for a time of great affliction and distress, just as the apostle does here; because this was the present case of the Christians, he thought it most prudent for such as were single to remain so; since as they were often obliged to move from place to place, to fly from one city to another, this would be very incommodious for married persons, who might have young children to take care of, and provide for; see Mt 24:19 upon a like account, the Jewish doctors advise to the same the apostle here does {r};

"from the day that the empire is extended, which decrees hard decrees upon us, and causes the law and the commandments to cease from us, and does not suffer us to circumcise children; it is right that we agree among ourselves, hva avyl alv, not to marry, and beget children:"

I say it is good for a man so to be; to remain unmarried, to live a single life, to be a virgin; for the word "virgin", as here used, relates to men as well as maidens, and denotes the single state of either. The apostle does not add, "even as I"; as he does in **1Co 7:8** which seems to confirm the conjecture already made, that he was not a bachelor, but a widower; otherwise he would doubtless have enforced this advice by his own example, as before.

{q} Targum Jon. & Hieros. in Gen. xxii. 14. & xxxviii. 25. & Targum Sheni in Esth. v. 1. {r} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 60. 2.

1 Corinthians 7:27

Ver. 27. Art thou bound unto a wife?.... Or to a woman; either by promise, or by espousal, or by consummate marriage; either of which is a tic, or obligation, a bond, and especially the latter; marriage is such a bond as cannot be dissolved, but by the death of one of the parties; see **Ro 7:2** unless in case of adultery, or of wilful desertion: and it is a bond which mutually obliges; as the husband is bound by the law of marriage to live chastely and lovingly with his wife, and to take care of her, and provide for her; so the wife is bound by the same law to live in like manner with her husband, and to submit unto him, and obey him:

seek not to be loosed; do not depart from her, nor seek to be divorced, nor even desire to be loosed by death:

art thou loosed from a wife? being either never married, or else if having been married the wife is dead, or legally divorced for a just cause:

seek not a wife, or woman; make no inquiry after one; be content to live without one; enter not into a marriage state, nor take any step towards it; it is best to continue loosed, for the reason above given, that is, provided the person has the gift of continence, otherwise not; see **1Co 7:5**.

1 Corinthians 7:28

Ver. 28. But and if thou marry, thou sinnest not,.... If a man that has never been married, or one that has, if legally loosed from his wife, thinks fit to marry, he commits no sin, he breaks no law of God, far from it; marriage is honourable in all. The apostle would be understood, that in the advice he before gives, he is not dissuading from marriage, as a thing sinful and criminal; only that it was more advisable to such as could to abstain from it, under the present circumstances of things; and what he says of a man holds equally true of a virgin:

and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned; the one may as lawfully marry as another; there is no law forbidding virgins to marry, any more than young men; and if they think fit to enter into such a state, they break no law of God, and consequently sin not:

nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh; that is, such young men and virgins, who choose to marry, and who generally promise themselves a great deal of pleasure, shall meet with a great deal of trouble; and that even where they expected the most satisfaction and delight, "in the flesh"; the body, the outward man, and external circumstances of life. This "trouble" is the same with the present necessity before mentioned, the persecutions and tribulations the saints should suffer in the flesh, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; not that married persons should be the only ones that should have trouble in this way, but that such persons would be less able to bear it, or to escape from it. Moreover, this may be extended to all the sorrows, troubles, and distresses which attend a married state:

but I spare you; the sense of which is, either that the apostle, out of his great tenderness to such who were inclined to marry, and could not contain, just gave this hint, that such should have trouble in the flesh; but did not dwell upon it or enter into particulars, lest they should be discouraged from it, and fall into temptation, sin, and a snare; or because of the great respect he had to the Corinthians, he gave the above advice to keep themselves single, that they might the better bear afflictions and persecutions, for the sake of their profession, and escape many troubles which others endure.

1 Corinthians 7:29

Ver. 29. But this I say, brethren, the time is short,.... This is another reason, with which the apostle supports his advice to virgins, and unmarried persons, to remain so; since the time of life is so very short, and it is even but a little while to the end of the world, and second coming of Christ; and therefore seeing the marriage state is so full of care and trouble, and it affords still less time for the service of Christ and religion, he thought it most advisable for them to, continue in a single life, that they might be more at leisure to make use of that little time they had for their spiritual good and welfare, the edification of others, and the glory of Christ: unless it should be rather thought that the apostle is still enlarging upon the former argument, taken from the present time, being a time of distress and persecution; and so the phrase, "the time is short", or "contracted", and full of anguish and affliction, is the same with the present necessity, and trouble in the flesh; and since this was the case, he suggests again, that an unmarried state was most preferable:

it remaineth that both they that have wives, be as though they had none: and as for the rest, they that were married, his advice to them was, that they should so behave as if they were not married; not that he would have them put away their wives, or fancy with themselves that they had none, or make no use of the marriage bed; but suggests a moderate use of it; he would not have them give up themselves to lasciviousness and carnal lusts and pleasures, even with their own wives, and spend their time altogether in their company and embraces: but since the time of life was short, and that full of troubles, they should spend it in the service and worship of God, private and public, as much as possible; and not in the indulging and satisfying of the flesh.

1 Corinthians 7:30

Ver. 30. And they that weep, as though they wept not,.... They that weep for troubles and crosses, things adverse and afflicting in a marriage state, for the loss of wives or children, should express their sorrow in such a manner and degree, as if they wept not; not that the apostle here introduces and establishes a stoical apathy, and would have persons show no manner of concern for these things; but he directs to a moderate use of sorrow, to such a degree as not to hinder and divert from the exercises of piety and religion:

and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; such who are blessed with great prosperity, and with whom everything goes well; they have married wives, and have children, and thrive in the world; let them rejoice on the account of these things, in such a still, silent way, as if they rejoiced not, their hearts not being set upon their outward felicity, nor elated with it; but rejoicing rather that their names were written in heaven, that they had an interest in Christ and his grace, and a right and title to the glories of another world, and at the same time be thankful to God for what they enjoy in this:

and they that buy as though they possessed not; meaning, not any sort of buyers, everyone is a buyer in some sense; but such as purchase estates, buy houses and lands, and become proprietors of large tracts. These the apostle would not have hold their substance for themselves, but hold it as if they did not hold it, parting with it for the use of others; and as persons that are only stewards, and not properly owners, and in a little time must quit it all, and be accountable for their use and disposition of it.

1 Corinthians 7:31

Ver. 31. And they that use this world, as not abusing it,.... Such as have a large affluence of the things of this world, should use them in a moderate and temperate manner; should not squander them away extravagantly, or spend them on their lusts, and use them intemperately, which is to abuse them:

for the fashion of this world passeth away; not the nature, matter, and substance, but the figure and form of it; for after this world is burnt up, a new one, as to form and fashion, will arise, in much more beauty and glory; all that looks glorious and beautiful in the present world, as riches, honour, &c. are all mere show and appearance, having nothing solid and substantial in them; and are all fluid and transitory, are passing away; there is nothing firm and permanent; in a little time, all will be at an end, the world itself, as to its present form, and all that is in it; when there will be no more marrying, nor giving in marriage, no more buying and selling, no more of the present changes and vicissitudes of prosperity and adversity, of joy and sorrow; these scenes will be all removed, and quite a new face of things appear: wherefore what the apostle exhorts unto, with respect to present conduct and behaviour, must be right and good.

1 Corinthians 7:32

Ver. 32. But I would have you without carefulness,.... This is another reason, by which the apostle confirms the advice he gives to virgins to remain such, because the married state is full of cares, whereas the single life is no more free from them; and therefore he wishes them to continue in such a state, that they might be without anxious and distracting cares of temporal things, things relating to the good decorum and sustenance of a family, and so be more free and at leisure for the service of God; which he illustrates, by showing the different cares that married and unmarried persons are involved in:

he that is unmarried, careth for the things that belong to the Lord; such as hearing the word, reading it, meditating upon it, praying to God and attending upon all ordinances, taking every opportunity to glorify God, and do good to others; but this is not to be understood as matter of fact, that unmarried persons are so studiously concerned for these things, or that this is the case of all of them; there are many unmarried persons think nothing about them; and are not at all concerned with them; but the meaning is, that such persons are more at leisure, and can more conveniently attend to these things, and ought so to do; and they that have the grace of God will be more or less solicitous to observe them:

how he may please the Lord; for when these things are attended to in faith and fear, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, the good of their own souls and others, they are well pleasing to the Lord; and though they are not meritorious of eternal life, yet they are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, and will be taken notice of with approbation, and followed with a reward of grace another day.

1 Corinthians 7:33

Ver. 33. But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world,.... Attending diligently to the business and calling of life, he is engaged in, that he may provide food and clothing, and other necessaries for the support and sustenance of his family:

how he may please his wife: and make her and his children easy and comfortable. This also is not to be understood of every individual person in a married state as matter of fact; for, on the one hand, there are some who take no care to please their wives and provide for their families, and are worse than infidels; and, on the other hand, there are others who take a proper care to make a suitable provision for their wives and children, to the satisfaction of both; and yet this is not their only care, they also care for the things of the Lord, and concern themselves much for his honour and glory: but the sense is, that, generally speaking, persons in such a state are greatly involved in worldly cares, and have not that leisure, and those opportunities, that single persons have to attend religious exercises; wherefore the single state, on this account, is, in the apostle's opinion, the more preferable.

1 Corinthians 7:34

Ver. 34. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin,.... The word memeristai, translated "there is difference", stands in some copies at the end of the last verse, and in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, by which it is rendered, "and is divided"; referring to the married man, whose thoughts are distracted with the cares of the world, and his mind divided between the Lord and his wife, between the things that please the one, and those that please the other; so that he cannot attend upon the Lord without distraction, as the unmarried person may; see **1Co 7:35**. But the more generally received reading is what we follow; in which words the apostle shows, that there is just the same difference between a married and an unmarried woman, as there is between a married and an unmarried man. There is no difference in their nature, nor sex, but in their state and condition, and in the cares which involve the one and the other.

The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord; not everyone that is unmarried, but one that has the grace of God, being in a single state; as such an one is more at leisure, and can more conveniently attend on the service of the Lord, so she ought, and generally speaking does: and her end in so doing is,

that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; not in body only, but in spirit also; for outward chastity, without internal holiness, will be of little avail: but as a close adherence to the Lord, and to his worship and service, may be a means of preserving from external pollutions of the body, so likewise of carrying on the internal work of grace upon the soul; not that it is to be thought that unmarried persons are the only ones that are holy in body and spirit; there are some that are so in neither; and there are many married persons that are chaste in their bodies, and possess their vessels in sanctification and honour, and are blessed with inward spiritual purity.

But she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband; not by beautifying and adorning herself with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; though this is all that some care for; but with good works, taking care of her household and family affairs, bringing up her children in an orderly manner, honouring and obeying her husband, doing everything to oblige him, and to engage his love and affection to her, as becomes her; nor is this said of her by way of criticism, only that such is her state and situation in life, that she has not the opportunities and advantages the unmarried person has of serving the Lord; on which account the single life is represented as most advisable to abide in.

1 Corinthians 7:35

Ver. 35. And this I speak for your own profit,.... The apostle suggests, that in giving the advice he did to unmarried persons to abide single, he had nothing else in view than their temporal and spiritual advantage; that they might be better able to meet and grapple with persecution for the sake of the Gospel; that they might be more free from the cares and encumbrances of life, and more at liberty to serve the Lord; whereby not only his glory, but their spiritual good, might be promoted; not that he thought that marriage was unlawful, or that the single life was a more honest, and a more chaste way of living, or that it was absolutely necessary, and an incumbent duty upon them to remain single, nor would he be so understood: all that he had said was by way of advice; he had very faithfully laid before them the advantages and disadvantages of both states, and now leaves them to their full liberty to do as they pleased to take his advice, or not:

not that I may cast a snare on you; as fowlers on birds: had he enjoined virginity as necessary, and insisted upon it, that it was absolutely their duty to live a single life; this would have been laying an obligation upon them, and an ensnaring and entangling of them: hereby some might have engaged in a single life, who had not the gift of continence, and so might have been drawn into the sin of fornication, or into unnatural lust, and such impurities as would be very scandalous unto, and highly reflect upon, the Gospel of Christ. But the apostle delivered himself on the subject with no such view, and in such a manner as is plain he meant not to ensnare any:

but for that which is comely, and that you may attend upon the Lord without distraction: all he aimed at, by advising them to a single life, was that they might more orderly and constantly, and without distraction of mind, through the cares of the world, wait upon the Lord, and serve him; which, in his opinion, was choosing the good part with Mary; whilst others, like Martha, were troubled, divided, and distracted with many things.

1 Corinthians 7:36

Ver. 36. But if any man think,.... This some understand of a man that is engaged, or betrothed to a virgin, and protracts marriage, who may use his prudence in consummating it, if he pleases, for any thing the apostle has said to the contrary: but it is better to understand it of a parent, or one that has the care and guardianship of virgins; if such an one is of opinion,

that he behaveth himself uncomely towards his virgin: by exposing her to contempt and reproach, in retaining her at home, and not giving her in marriage when at proper age for such a state; it being reckoned reproachful to be at, or past the age of marriage, or to be in years, and not married; or by so doing lay her under temptation to do that which is uncomely, to commit fornication, which would be uncomely, both to him, and to her; and such a tendency has living in a single state, contrary to inclination. The apostle may have respect to a Jewish tradition founded upon the supposed sense of Le 19:29 "do not prostitute thy daughter to cause her to be a whore" {s}.

"Says R. Eliezer, this is he who marries his daughter to an old man. Says R. Akiba, (who was contemporary with the apostle,) this is he who detains his daughter at home when she is marriageable."

If she pass the flower of her age; that is, one that is arrived to years of maturity, is ripe for marriage, and is what the Jewish doctors call trgb; who, according to them, was one of twelve years and a half old {t}, at which age virgins were judged fit to marry: hence that saying of theirs {u}

"if thy daughter, hrgb, "is ripe", or come to the flower of her age, make thy servant free and give her to him."

Moreover, according to their canons, such an one was no longer under her father's power; for so runs the canon {w},

"hrgbv Nwyk "when she is at the flower of her age", she is no more under her father's power:"

her father cannot make void her vows, though a husband can {x}:

and need so require: that she be given in marriage to a man; if she has not the gift of continence; if she is in danger of falling into the sin of fornication, and the father or guardian are sensible of this:

let him do what he will, he sinneth not; he is under no obligation by what the apostle had said to detain her in a single life; he may give her in marriage if he pleases: he may

do what she will, as it may be rendered; comply with her inclination and desire in marrying her to some person; in doing which, neither he nor she will break any law of God, and so not sin therein:

let them marry; let parents marry their children when this is the case; let the young men and young women marry who are so disposed; there is no reason why they should not; there is nothing contrary to it in the word of God, nor in the advice of the apostle; nay, according to him, it was much better to marry than to burn, or to be exposed to any snare and temptation.

{s} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 76. 1. {t} Maimon. Hilchot Ishot, c. 2. sect. 2. {u} T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 113. 1. {w} Misn. Nidda, c. 5. sect. 7. {x} Misn. Nedarim, c. 10. sect. 2. T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 70. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Nedarim, c. 11, sect. 7.

1 Corinthians 7:37

Ver. 37. Nevertheless, he that standeth steadfast in his heart,.... The apostle returns to confirm his former advice, where it can be attended to with safety; and observes, that notwithstanding what he had allowed might lawfully be done, and was proper to be done; yet a man that had deliberated upon, and had well weighed the matter of virginity, the case of a single life, and was at a point about in, having no hesitation nor fluctuation of mind concerning it: and also "having no necessity"; of acting otherwise, either through the meanness of his circumstances, or rather through the weakness of his virgin, she not having the gift of continency:

but hath power over his own will; his daughter's will being the same with his, and she entirely consenting to live a single life; otherwise he would have no power of acting as he pleased in such a case:

and hath so decreed in his heart: it is a fixed point on mature deliberation, in which he himself is hearty and determined, and his child perfectly assents to it, so that on all hands it is an agreed matter:

that he will keep his virgin; at home with him, unmarried, and not give her to any man in marriage:

doth well: or that which is for both temporal and spiritual profit and advantage, as before observed. Some understand all this of a man's keeping his own virginity, and determining to continue unmarried.

1 Corinthians 7:38

Ver. 38. So then he that giveth [her] in marriage doth well,.... Does that which is in its own nature good; that which is agreeable to the will of God, is of his institution and appointment, and therefore must be good, and answer many good ends and purposes. Such an one that marries his daughter, he seeing a necessity for it, and a propriety in it, does a very good thing; secures her chastity, and his own credit; prevents fornication, and other evils that might follow; consults the good of mankind, and the honour of religion.

But he that giveth [her] not in marriage doth better; not a better action in itself, simply considered; but more profitable and advantageous under such and such circumstances, with such and such conditions and consequences; since hereby a single person is more fit to encounter with and endure persecutions, is freer from the cares of life, and more at liberty to wait upon the Lord, and give up himself to his service.

1 Corinthians 7:39

Ver. 39. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth,.... That is, she is bound to her husband, by the law of marriage, during his life; nor can the bond of marriage between them be dissolved but by the death of one of them, except in the cases of adultery, and wilful desertion, see **Ro 7:2**.

But if her husband be dead; or "asleep", for so the word may be rendered; though it designs death: death is often expressed by sleeping in Scripture; for the dead will not always remain in such a state, but be raised from thence at the last day, just as persons are awaked out of sleep. The Alexandrian copy reads apoyanh, "dead"; and so seems the Ethiopic version to have read.

She is at liberty to marry whom she will: so that second marriages are lawful, though condemned by many of the ancients: the liberty of a widow is greater than that of a virgin, because a virgin is under the power, and at the dispose of her parents; but a widow is at her own dispose; and death having dissolved her former obligation, she is at entire liberty to marry, or not marry, and to marry whom she pleases, that is not forbidden by the laws of God:

only in the Lord; not that it is absolutely necessary that her husband should be in the Lord, a converted person, a believer in Christ; though such an one should be most desirable and eligible: but either that she should continue in the possession of her faith in Christ, and not relinquish it for the sake of an husband; or that she enter into this state in the fear of the Lord, calling upon him, and consulting him in such an important affair; and take care that whom she marries is not within the line prohibited by the Lord.

1 Corinthians 7:40

Ver. 40. But she is happier if she so abide,.... That is, a widow, in an unmarried state; which is to be understood not of the happiness of another world, but of this: the apostle's meaning is, that she would be more free from cares, and less liable to trouble, would live with more peace and quietness, and be more at leisure to serve the Lord, second marriages oftentimes proving more disagreeable than the first; but in this the apostle only gives his opinion, enjoins nothing by way of command, or in an authoritative manner: and therefore adds,

after my judgment: according to his sense of things, and agreeably to the advice he had before given to unmarried persons, whether virgins or widows, such a person was likely to have most peace, and least trouble, remaining a widow, than if married, and so consequently more happy: and in order to engage such to regard his counsel, he further says,

and I think also that I have the Spirit of God; that though he had no express command, nor did he pretend to any, nor did he lay any injunction on any, but left them to their liberty; yet he could not but think, nay, he was assured, though he thus modestly expresses himself, that he was directed to give this advice by the Spirit of God.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 8

In this chapter the apostle proceeds to consider the case of eating things offered to idols, which, though an indifferent thing, was abused by many in the Corinthian church, to the scandal and hurt of weak Christians; wherefore the apostle dissuades from the use of it, and refutes the arguments which were used by them in defence of their practice. And the general foundation on which they proceeded being their knowledge of Christian liberty, he begins with that; and makes answer to it, by granting, that he, and they, and all had knowledge in general; and by distinguishing between knowledge and charity, the one puffing up, and the other edifying: wherefore to argue from the one, to the disuse of the other, was wrong, **1Co 8:1** seeing that kind of knowledge, which was not accompanied with love, was no true knowledge, **1Co 8:2** but that was right which had annexed to it love to God, and our neighbour, **1Co 8:3** and then applies this observation to the case of things offered to idols; and explains the knowledge which some had, and boasted of, that an idol was nothing, and that there was but one God, **1Co 8:4** which latter he proves and confirms, partly by allowing that there were many nominal gods and lords, both in heaven and earth; but then they were only so by name, not by nature, **1Co 8:5** and partly by observing the common faith of Christians, that there is but one God, and one Lord Jesus, who are both described by their names and properties, **1Co 8:6** But now, though there was such knowledge concerning an idol, as nothing, and things offered to it, as indifferent, in some, this was not the case of all; who, as their knowledge was small, their consciences were weak, and were defiled by eating such things through the example of others, **1Co 8:7** wherefore it became such who had greater knowledge to abstain from eating them; partly from the unprofitableness of such eating to them with respect to divine acceptance, it making them neither better nor worse, **1Co 8:8** and partly from the harmfulness of it to others, it being a stumblingblock to the weak, which ought not to be laid in their way, **1Co 8:9** and emboldening to do so likewise to the injury of their weak consciences, **1Co 8:10** and so was to the loss and ruin of their peace and comfort, which is aggravated by their being brethren, and such for whom Christ died, **1Co 8:11**. Thus by wounding their weak consciences, they that drew them into this practice, by their example, sinned both against their brethren, and Christ himself, **1Co 8:12**. From all which the apostle concludes, that rather than offend a weak brother, it was right never to eat any flesh at all; and this he strengthens by his own example and resolution, **1Co 8:13**.

Ver. 1. Now as touching things offered unto idols,.... This was another of the things the Corinthians wrote to the apostle about, desiring to have his judgment in; it was a controversy that had been before moved, whether it was lawful to eat things that had been sacrificed to idols. This was considered in the council at Jerusalem, Ac 15:28 and it was agreed to, for the peace of the churches, that the Gentiles, among other things, be advised to abstain from them; which, it seems, the church at Corinth knew nothing of, for the controversy was now moved among them: some that were weak in the faith, and had not, at least, clear notions of Gospel liberty, thought it very criminal and sinful to eat them; others that had, or boasted they had, more knowledge, would not only eat them privately at home, having bought them of the Heathen priests, or in the common meat markets, where they were exposed to sale, and at public feasts, to which they were invited by their friends; but would even go into an idol's temple, and sit and eat them there, to the great grief and prejudice of weak Christians; and what they had to plead in their own defence was their knowledge, to which the apostle here replies:

we know that we all have knowledge; said either affirmatively and seriously; and the meaning is, that the apostles and other Christians knew, and were conscious to themselves of their light and knowledge, and were assured, and might affirm with confidence, that they all, or the most part, only some few excepted, see **1Co 8:7** had the same knowledge of Christian liberty as they had; knew that an idol was nothing, and that eating meats offered to them could not defile, or do them any hurt; for they were very sensible there was nothing common or unclean of itself, and yet did not think fit to make use of their knowledge to the grieving and wounding of their fellow Christians: or else this is said ironically, we are wise folks; you particularly are men of knowledge, and wisdom will die with you; you know that you know; you are very knowing in your own conceits, and very positive as to your knowledge. It was the saying of Socrates, that that this one thing he knew, that he knew nothing; but men wise in their own opinions know everything:

knowledge puffeth up; not true knowledge; not that which comes from above, which is gentle and easy to be entreated; not sanctified knowledge, or that which has the grace of God going along with it; that makes men humble, and will not suffer them to be puffed up one against another; but a mere show of knowledge, knowledge in conceit, mere notional and speculative knowledge, that which is destitute of charity or love:

but charity edifieth; that is, a man that has knowledge, joined with love to God, and his fellow Christians, will seek for that which makes for the edification of others; and without this all his knowledge will be of no avail, and he himself be nothing.

1 Corinthians 8:2

Ver. 2. And if any man think that he knows anything,.... Whoever has an opinion of himself, or is conceited with his own knowledge, and fancies that he knows more than he does; which is always the case of those that are elated with their knowledge, and treat others with contempt, and have no regard to their peace and edification:

he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know; if he did, he would know this, that he ought to consult the peace, comfort, and edification of his brother; and therefore whatever knowledge he may fancy he has attained to, or whatever he may be capable of, and hereafter obtain, for the present he must be put down for a man that knows nothing as he should do; for he knows neither his duty to God nor man; if he knew the former, he would know the latter.

1 Corinthians 8:3

Ver. 3. But if any man love God,.... As they do, and show it, who love their brethren, and are careful not to grieve them; and make use of their superior knowledge, not for their destruction, but edification:

the same is known of him; is taught by him, made to know more by him; such an one increases in spiritual knowledge, or he is highly approved of, esteemed, and beloved by God: he takes a special and particular notice of him, manifests his love to him, and will own and acknowledge him another day, when proud, haughty, overbearing, and hard hearted professors, will be rejected by him.

1 Corinthians 8:4

Ver. 4. As concerning therefore the eating of those things,.... The apostle having enlarged on the head of knowledge, which those who made an ill use of their Christian liberty urged in favour of their conduct; he returns to the subject in question, in relation to meats,

that are offered in sacrifice unto idols. The determinations of the Jewish schools concerning this affair are as follow, which admit of no manner of profit by them in any shape:

"a beast, the whole of which they offer to idols, is forbidden of profit, even its dung, and its bones, and its horns, and its hoofs, and its skin, all is forbid to be of any profit" {y}.

Again {z},

"flesh or wine, or fruits, which are brought in to be offered up to idols, are not forbidden to profit with, although they are brought into the idol's temple, until they offer them up before it; hynpl Mwbyrqh "but when offered up before it"; they become an offering; and though they may return them, and bring them out, lo, these are forbidden for ever; and all that is found in an idol's temple, even water and salt, are forbidden of profit by the law, lk wnmm lkwaw, "and he that eats anything thereof" is to be beaten."

Once more {a},

"an Israelite that lifts up a cheese to worship it, but does not worship it, but a Gentile worships it, it is forbidden of profit, became the lifting of it up is an action; and so if he lifts up an egg, and a Gentile comes and worships it, it is forbidden; he that cuts a gourd, or any such thing, and worships it, it is forbidden, &c."

But by these decrees we Christians are not bound;

we know that an idol is nothing in the world; among the things created by God in the world; for though the matter of it may be of God, the form is of men; nor has it any share in the government of the world: and though that of which it may be made, as gold, silver, brass, &c. is something; yet as it is a form and representation of God, it is nothing, because there can be no representation of the invisible God; it is nothing, that is, it has no divinity in it, it is no God. Though it may have an existence, as the sun, moon, and stars, yet not divinity; and in that sense nothing. The apostle here speaks the language of the Jewish doctors, who say {b},

"why dost thou envy an idol? vmm hb Nyav, "since it is nothing, or there is nothing it.""

And again {c},

"the Rabbins say, since vmm z"eb Nyaw, "there is nothing in an idol", why do they call them deities;"

Very likely the apostle may have reference to Mylyla, the Hebrew word for idols, which signifies things of nought, that are good for nothing, are of no value, and are as nothing, **Isa 2:20**.

And that there is none other God but one. This clause may be considered either as a reason of the former, why an idol is nothing, is no deity, is no God, "for there is none other God but one", as it may be rendered; or as a part of what believers know; for as they know an idol is nothing, so they know, both from reason and revelation, from the books of the Old and New Testament, that there is but one God, and consequently that idols are nothing, and that they cannot defile them, nor anything that is offered to them.

{y} Maimon. Hilch. Obede Cochabim, &c. c. 7. sect. 3. {z} Ib. sect. 15. {a} Ib. c. 8. sect. 3. {b} Prefat. ad Echa Rabbati, fol. 40. 3. {c} Debarim Rabba, fol. 236. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 135. 2. & 138. 2. & 141. 4.

1 Corinthians 8:5

Ver. 5. For though there be that are called gods,.... That are so by name, though not by nature; who are called so in Scripture, as angels and magistrates, or by men, who give them such names, and account them so:

whether in heaven; as the sun, moon, and stars:

or in earth; as men who formerly lived on earth; or various creatures on earth, who have been accounted deities; or stocks and stones graven by man's device:

as there be gods many: almost without number, as were among the Egyptians, Grecians, Romans, and others; yea, even among the Jews, who falling into idolatry, their gods were according to the number of their cities, **Jer 2:28**

and lords many; referring to the Baalim, or the several idols that went by the name of Baal, or lord, as Baal Peor, Nu 25:3 Baal Zephon, Ex 14:2 Baal Zebub, **2Ki 1:2** Baal Berith, **Jud 8:33**.

1 Corinthians 8:6

Ver. 6. But to us there is but one God, the Father,.... In this Christians and Jews agree with the best and wisest philosophers of the Gentiles, that there is but one God; which is clear from the perfections of God, as necessary existence, eternity, infinity, omnipotence, all-sufficiency, goodness, and perfection; from one first cause of all things; from the government of the world; and from the writings of the Old and New Testament: so that to us believers this point is out of all doubt; but who this one God is the Gentiles knew not, and the Jews are very ignorant of; but we Christians know him to be "the Father"; by whom meant either God essentially considered, the one God, Father, Son, and Spirit, called the Father, not in relation to any person in the Godhead, but in relation to the creatures: so this one God, Father, Son, and Spirit, is the Father of spirits, the creator of angels, and the souls of men, the God of all flesh, the Father of all the individuals of human nature, the Father or author of all the mercies and blessings the children of men enjoy. Or else personally considered, and so designs the first person in the Godhead, who is called so in relation to his Son, who is styled the only begotten of the Father: and when he is said to be the one God, it must be understood, not as exclusive of the Son and Spirit; for if the Son stands excluded in this clause from being the one God with the Father, by the same rule of interpretation, the Father, in the next clause must stand excluded from being the one Lord with Christ; but as dominion or lordship belongs to the Father, so deity to the Son, and also to the Spirit.

Of whom are all things; all created beings and things; angels are of him, are created by him, serve and worship him; devils are of him, and under him, and at his control, though they have rebelled against him; all mankind are of him, and are his offspring; the whole universe, the heavens, the earth, and seas, and all that in them are, are of him; all things in nature, providence, grace, and glory, come of him: he is the author of every mercy, temporal and spiritual.

And we in him: or "for him": as creatures we are not only made by him, but live in him, and are supported in him, and by him, and are created for his glory: though this seems rather to respect what believers are, as new creatures; they are in God; they are interested in him as their covenant God, and in his everlasting and immutable love; they are engraven on his hands, and set as a seal on his heart; they are "into him", as it may be rendered; they are brought into nearness to him, and communion with him; and are "for him", are chosen, redeemed, regenerated, and called for the glorifying of his grace, and to show forth his praise.

And one Lord Jesus Christ; so called, not to the exclusion of the Father and Spirit, but in opposition to the lords many before mentioned, and with respect to all his people. Christ is the one Lord of all, as he is God over all, the Creator and Former of all things; and he is so likewise as Mediator, having all power, dominion, and government put into his hands: he is, in a special sense, the one Lord of his people, and that by right of marriage to them; by right of redemption of them; through his being an head unto them, and King of them; and by a voluntary surrender of themselves to him, rejecting all other lords, as sin, Satan, and the world, who have formerly had dominion over them, they acknowledge him to be their one and only Lord:

by whom are all things; in nature; all the created beings of this, or the other world, whether visible or invisible, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, are by him; no creature was made without him, and all by him; and all things in grace, our election, redemption, reconciliation, pardon, justification, and everlasting glory and happiness,

And we by him; we are redeemed by him from sin, Satan, the law, death, and hell; we are by him what we are, as Christians, as believers in him; by him, and from him, we have all the grace and the supplies of it we have; by him we have access to the Father, and fellowship with him; by him we are governed, influenced, protected, and preserved to his kingdom and glory; and by him we are, and shall be, saved with an everlasting salvation.

1 Corinthians 8:7

Ver. 7. Howbeit, there is not in every man that knowledge,.... The apostle is not speaking of Heathens, in whom there was no knowledge of the one true God, the author of all things, and of the one Lord Jesus, the only saviour and Redeemer; but of Christians, in whom there was the knowledge of these things, but not in all of them; the knowledge of this, that an idol was nothing; for though they knew that an idol was not God, and had no true deity in it, nor was it any true representation of God, yet fancied that it had an influence upon food that was offered to it, to defile it, and render it unclean, so that it ought not to be eaten; and since there were such persons that were so ignorant and weak, it became those who had more knowledge to be careful how they laid stumblingblocks in the way of such, to the prejudice of their consciences: that there were such, the apostle affirms,

for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour, eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; that is, there were some persons even at that very time, though they had been so long converted from Heathenism to Christianity, yet had such an opinion of an idol, that they really thought in their own consciences, that there were something in an idol, they could not well tell what, that defiled

meats offered to it, and made them unlawful to be eaten; and yet, through the influence of the example of others, were prevailed upon to eat of them, having at the same time a notion of such food, as if it was not common food, but had received some virtue from the idol; and not without some regret, and uneasiness of mind, as being polluted with it. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read,
sunhyeia "through custom of the idol"; and so the Ethiopic version seems to have read: and the sense is, that some having been formerly accustomed to worship idols, and to eat things offered to them, as having received some virtue from them, still retained an opinion, that there was some difference between such meats and others.

And their conscience being weak is defiled; because such act against the dictates of their own conscience; which, though weak, is binding, and sinned against, defiles, according to the rules given by the apostle, Ro 14:14.

1 Corinthians 8:8

Ver. 8. But meat commendeth us not to God,.... These words are said by the apostle, either as expressing the argument of such as had knowledge in favour of themselves, that what they did was a thing indifferent, by which they were made neither better nor worse; nor did they look upon it as meritorious, or expect any favour from God on account of it, and therefore were not to be blamed for using their liberty in the manner they did: or else they are spoken by him as his own sense: and the meaning is, that eating of meat, any sort of meat, and so that which is offered to idols, or abstinence from it, neither one nor the other recommends any to the love and favour of God; abrqm al, "does not bring near", or give access to God, as the Syriac version renders the phrase; does not ingratiate any into his affectionate regards, or make them acceptable unto him:

for neither if we eat are we the better; or "abound", not in earthly but spiritual things, in the graces of the Spirit, and particularly in the esteem and good will of God, upon which such an action can have no influence:

neither if we eat not are we the worse; or are deficient; meaning not in temporal things, but, as before, in spiritual; true grace and piety are not a whit the less; nor are such persons less in the love and favour of God, which is not to be known and judged of by any such action, or the omission of it.

1 Corinthians 8:9

Ver. 9. But take heed lest by any means,.... This is either a reply to the instance of such as argued in favour of eating things offered to idols; or a limitation and explanation of the apostle's own concession, that it made a man, with respect to the favour of God, neither better nor worse: yet care should be taken, lest

this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak; he owns they had a liberty, or a right, or power, as the word may be rendered, of eating, or not eating, as they pleased; but then they ought to be cautious, lest they should be the means of offending, or causing to offend, such who were weak in the faith, and had not that knowledge of Christian liberty they had: not the use of their power and liberty is here denied, but the abuse of it is guarded against; for though the action itself was indifferent, yet as it might be used, it might be sinful, being attended with very bad consequences, such as hereafter mentioned.

1 Corinthians 8:10

Ver. 10. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge,.... That is, not any person whatever; not one that has equal knowledge, and can with a good conscience take the same liberty; but one that is weak in the faith, that has not such a clear sight of the doctrine of Christian liberty: if such an one should observe one that is famous for his superior abilities, learning, and knowledge,

sit at meat in the idol's temple; or at table, or at a feast, where, it seem, after the sacrifice was over, a feast was made of what was left, and friends were invited to partake of it; and some such there were in this church, who to show their Christian liberty, and their knowledge of it, would go and sit down at these feasts publicly, looking upon such meats as having nothing different from common food, or what they bought in the markets, or brought up as their own:

shall not the conscience of him that is weak; in knowledge, who is not clearly instructed in the doctrine of Christian liberty, but has some doubts upon his mind whether it is lawful to eat such meats, imagining them to be polluted by the idol: "be emboldened"; Greek for "edified"; that is, induced by such an example, and confirmed by such an instance with boldness, and without fear, to eat those things which are offered to idols, contrary to his light, and knowledge, and conscience; and so upon a reflection on what he has done, wound his weak conscience, destroy his peace, and distress his soul. This the apostle proposes to the consideration of these men of knowledge and liberty, as what might be the case, and which they could not well deny, to dissuade them from the use of their liberty, in all places and times, and under all circumstances; all which ought to be seriously weighed and attended to in this business.

1 Corinthians 8:11

Ver. 11. And through thy knowledge,.... These words contain an aggravation of the sin such persons are guilty of, who are the means, by their example, of ensnaring weak minds, and causing them to stumble and fall, even in some sense so as to perish:

shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? every word almost carries in it an exaggeration of this matter; it is not some slight injury that is done to the person, but even causing him to "perish"; and this is not said of any person, but a "brother", to whom the strongest affection, and strictest regard, should be shown; and a "weak" brother, of whom the greater care should be taken; and therefore it is an instance of cruelty to do damage to such an one, and that not ignorantly, which cannot be pretended, but "through thy knowledge"; not through the true use, but abuse of it: those that have knowledge should know better, and improve it to the edification, and not the destruction of fellow Christians; and all this done in a case of indifference, that might as well be let alone, of which there was no necessity for the doing of it: but what aggravates most of all is, that this affects a person for "whom Christ died"; that he had such a value for as to purchase and redeem with the price of his own blood; and yet these men made so little account of, as by so trifling a thing to risk their good and welfare. Some would from hence conclude the doctrine of universal redemption, that Christ died for all men, even for them that perish; but it should be observed, that the words are put by way of interrogation, and prove no matter of fact, even supposing they could be understood of eternal ruin and destruction; and at most only imply the danger and possibility thereof through offences given, were they not preserved by the power and grace of God through Christ, who died for them, and so will not suffer them to perish; though this is no thanks to them who lay stumblingblocks in their way, and, as much as in them lies, cause them to perish, in this sense: besides, the "perishing" of this weak brother is to be understood of his peace and comfort, and is explained by "defiling" his conscience, **1Co 8:7** by wounding it, **1Co 8:12** and making him to offend, **1Co 8:13** through an imprudent use of

Christian liberty in those who had the greater knowledge, and by a participation of things offered unto idols, in an idol's temple, and not of his eternal damnation in hell; which could never enter into the apostle's thought, as to be brought about hereby, as appears from **1Co 8:8** and so is no proof of Christ's dying for such as perish eternally: for those for whom Christ has died, he has by his death procured such blessings for them, as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, peace with God, reconciliation unto him, and eternal salvation, which will for ever secure them from perishing in such sense.

1 Corinthians 8:12

Ver. 12. But when ye sin so against the brethren,.... Through sitting at meat in an idol's temple, and thereby violating the new commandment of love; by which saints are obliged to love one another as brethren, and take care to do nothing that may hurt and prejudice one another's peace and comfort, it being an incumbent duty upon them by love to serve one another: and

wound their weak conscience: as before observed: it is contrary to the law of love to wound a brother; it is an aggravation of the sin to wound a weak one; what greater cruelty than to strike or beat, as the word here used signifies, a sick and infirm man? and greater still to strike and wound his conscience than any part of his body; for a wounded spirit is insupportable without divine aid and influence; and what serves most to enhance the crime and guilt is,

ye sin against Christ, who has so loved this weak brother as to die for him; and between whom there is so close an union, as between head and members; and from whence such a sympathy arises, that what is done to or against such a person, Christ takes as done to himself. The Syriac version emphatically adds, wh, "himself".

1 Corinthians 8:13

Ver. 13. Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend,.... This is the conclusion of the whole, which the apostle makes with respect to himself, and proposes for the imitation of others; that since an imprudent use of Christian liberty, in this article of eating things offered to idols, might be attended with such bad consequences, as to lay a stumblingblock in the way of weak Christians, and be a means of emboldening them to do things contrary to their consciences, and so break the peace of their minds, wound their spirits, grieve and afflict their souls, and not only so, but so to do would be to sin against Christ himself; rather than do any of these things, or be accessary to them, he determines, in the strength of divine grace, that

he will eat no flesh while the world standeth; or "for ever": not only he resolves he will not eat flesh offered to idols, but no other flesh, if this was an offence to a weak brother; and he not only concludes to abstain a few days, or months, or years, but as long as he should live in the world: he chose rather to live on herbs, or any other food but this,

lest, says he,

I make my brother to offend: this is truly Christian charity, a proof of brotherly love, and it shows a concern for the peace and welfare of others, when a person foregoes his own right, and drops the use of his liberty, rather than grieve, wound, and offend a brother in Christ.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 9

The principal things in this chapter are the proof of the apostle's office and authority; arguments for his own maintenance, and the maintenance of Gospel ministers; reasons why he did not make use of his right and privilege in this respect: and the whole is concluded with an exhortation to diligence and perseverance in the Christian course of life, of which he himself was an example. He begins with his office, as an apostle, and proves it; partly by his independency on men, not having his call and mission from them; and partly by his corporeal sight of Christ, and the authority which he in person received from him; and also by the success of his ministry among the Corinthians, **1Co 9:1**, wherefore, whatever might be objected to him by other persons, they had no reason to object to his apostleship, seeing they, being converted under his ministry, were so many seals of it, **1Co 9:2**, and since his call to the ministry was firm and valid, he had a right, as other ministers, to a maintenance of himself and family, should he have any, from the churches, without labouring with his own hands, **1Co 9:3**, which he proves from the law of nature and nations, exemplified in the cases of soldiers, planters of vineyards, and keepers of flocks, who by virtue of their calling and service have a right to a livelihood, between whom, and ministers of the Gospel, there is some resemblance, **1Co 9:7**, and also from the law of Moses, particularly the law respecting the ox, which was not to be muzzled when it tread out the corn; and which he observes is to be understood, not only and barely in the letter of oxen, but of ministers of the word, who are as husbandmen that plough and thresh in hope, and therefore should be partakers of their hope, **1Co 9:8**. Moreover, the apostle argues the right of the maintenance of the ministers of the Gospel, from the justice and equity of the thing, that seeing they minister spiritual things, it is but reasonable that they should receive temporal ones, **1Co 9:11**, and which the apostle argues for himself, and Barnabas, as from the instances of other apostles, **1Co 9:5**, so from the examples of those that succeeded him in Corinth, who were maintained by that church; though he did not think fit, when among them, to claim his right, and make use of his power, lest any check should be put to the progress of the Gospel, **1Co 9:12**. And he goes on to make this point clear and manifest from the case of, the priests and Levites under the former dispensation, who ministering in holy things, had a provision made for them, **1Co 9:13**. And lastly, from the constitution and appointment of Christ himself, who has ordained it as a law of his, that the preachers of the Gospel should live of it, **1Co 9:14**, though the apostle himself did not make use of this his privilege; nor would he ever make use of it, especially at Corinth, for which he gives his reasons; and his principal one was, that his glorying might not be made void, **1Co 9:15** which did not lie in preaching the Gospel, for that he was obliged to do, **1Co 9:16**, for if he had engaged in it of his own accord, he would have had his reward; but since it was through necessity, he could not claim any, **1Co 9:17**, or if any, it could be no other than to preach the Gospel "gratis", and without charge, which was the thing he gloried in, **1Co 9:18**, and thus, though he lived independent of men, both with respect to his office and his maintenance, yet in order to gain souls to Christ, and be the instrument of their salvation, he became a servant to all, **1Co 9:19**, who are distributed into three sorts, the Jews that were under the law, **1Co 9:20**, the Gentiles that were without the law, **1Co 9:21**, and weak Christians, **1Co 9:22**, all which he did, not with any lucrative view to himself, but for the sake of the Gospel, that he might partake of that, and of the glory he was called unto by it, **1Co 9:23** which, and not temporal things, he was looking unto, and pressing after; and which he illustrates by a metaphor taken from the Grecian games, well known to the Corinthians, particularly that of running races, in which all ran, but one only had the prize: wherefore he exhorts the Corinthians to run in like manner, that they may obtain the prize which he mentions, and describes as an incorruptible crown, in opposition to a corruptible one, which others strove for, **1Co 9:24**, and to this he animates by his own example and conduct, which he expresses in terms borrowed from racers and wrestlers, expressive of his humility, sobriety, and temperance;

which things he exercised, that whilst he was a preacher to others, he might not be worthy of reproof and disapprobation himself, **1Co 9:26**.

Ver. 1. Am I not an apostle? am I not free?.... The Syriac, Ethiopic, and Vulgate Latin versions, put the last clause first; so the Alexandrian copy, and some other copies; and many interpreters are of opinion that it is the best order of the words; the apostle proceeding by a gradation from the less to the greater, having respect either to his freedom in the use of things indifferent, as eating of meats, &c. for though he did not think fit to use his liberty, to the wounding of weak consciences, it did not follow therefore that he was not free, as some might suggest from what he had said in the latter part of the foregoing chapter: or he may have respect to his freedom from the ceremonial law in general; for though, for the sake of gaining souls to Christ, he became all things to all men; to the Jews he became a Jew, that he might gain them; yet in such a manner as to preserve his liberty in Christ, without entangling himself with the yoke of bondage. Some have thought he intends, by his liberty, his right to insist upon a maintenance, and that he was no more obliged to work with his hands than other persons, of which he treats at large hereafter; but to me it rather seems that the words stand in their right order; and that, whereas there were some persons that either denied him to be an apostle, or at least insinuated that he was not one, nor was he to be treated as such, he goes upon the proof of it; and the first thing he mentions is his freedom, that is, from men; no man had any authority over him; he was not taught, nor sent forth, nor ordained by men as a minister, but immediately by Jesus Christ, as apostles were; they were set in the first place in the church, and had power to instruct, send forth, and ordain others; but none had power over them; and this being the apostle's case, proved him to be one; he was an apostle, because he was free:

have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? He had a spiritual sight of him by faith, but that did not show him to be an apostle; this is what he had in common with other believers: whether he saw him in the flesh, before his crucifixion and death, is not certain; it is very probable he might; yet this was no more than what Herod and Pontius Pilate did; but he saw him after his resurrection from the dead, to which he refers, 1Co 15:8 and designs here, as a proof of his apostleship, this being what the apostles were chosen to be eyewitnesses of, Ac 10:41 and publish to the world: now our apostle saw him several times; first at the time of his conversion, next when in a trance at Jerusalem, and again in the castle where the chief captain put him for security, and very probably also when he was caught up into the third heaven:

are not you my work in the Lord? as they were regenerated, converted persons, and were become new creatures; not efficiently, but instrumentally; they were God's workmanship, as he was the efficient cause of their conversion and faith; his only, as an instrument by whom they believed; and therefore he adds, "in the Lord"; ascribing the whole to his power and grace: however, as he had been the happy instrument of first preaching the Gospel to them, and of begetting them again through it; of founding and raising such a large flourishing church as they were; it was no inconsiderable proof of his apostleship.

1 Corinthians 9:2

Ver. 2. If I be not an apostle unto others,.... This is said by way of supposition, not concession; for he was an apostle to many others; he was an apostle of the Gentiles in general; as the apostleship of the circumcision belonged to Peter, that of the uncircumcision fell to his share: but however, as if he should say, be that as it will,

yet doubtless I am to you; all the signs of apostleship were wrought among them; not only the grace of God was implanted in them under his ministry, but the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were received by them through it; and many signs, wonders, and mighty deeds, were done in the midst of them by him: see 2Co 12:12 which were sufficient to put the matter quite out of doubt with them:

for the seal of mine apostleship, are ye in the Lord; alluding to the sealing of deeds and writings, which render them authentic; or to the sealing of letters, confirming the truth of what is therein expressed; and the sense is, that their being converted persons, and so openly in the Lord, in union with him; or being made new creatures by the power of his grace, through his preaching, was an authentic proof of his apostleship, and served him instead of a letter testimonial and recommendatory; see **2Co 3:1**. Some copies read, "the seal of my epistle", and so the Ethiopic version.

1 Corinthians 9:3

Ver. 3. Mine answer to them that do examine me is this. These words are referred by some to the following, as if the apostle's answer lay in putting the questions he does in the next verses; but they rather seem to belong to the preceding, and the meaning to be this, that when any persons called in question his apostleship, and examined him upon that head, what he thought fit to say in answer to them, and in defence of himself, was by referring them to the famous church at Corinth, who were as particular persons, and as a church, his work in the Lord, and everyone of them as so many seals of his apostleship; he being the first preacher of the Gospel to them, the founder of them as a church, and the instrument of their conversion.

1 Corinthians 9:4

Ver. 4. Have we not power to eat and to drink?] Having proved his apostleship, he proceeds to establish his right to a maintenance as a Gospel minister; which he expresses by various phrases, and confirms by divers arguments: by a "power to eat and drink", he does not mean the common power and right of mankind to perform such actions, which everyone has, provided he acts temperately, and to the glory of God; nor a liberty of eating and drinking things indifferent, or which were prohibited under the ceremonial law; but a comfortable livelihood at the public charge, or at the expense of the persons to whom he ministered; and he seems to have in view the words of Christ, Lu 10:7.

1 Corinthians 9:5

Ver. 5. Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife,.... The phrase "a sister, a wife", is an Hebraism, and answers to hlkytxa, "my sister, spouse", **So 4:9**. The Jews called their wives, sisters, not on account of religion, which also is not the meaning here; but because of the common relation that men and women, all mankind, stand in to one another, antecedent to any nearer relation, as that of man and wife. The sense the Papists put on these words, to secure them from being a proof of the lawfulness of the marriage of the ministers of the Gospel, can by no means be the true one; which is, that they are to be understood of a rich woman, or women, the apostles had a power to carry about with them, to minister of their substance to them, and provide for them; for such a sense is directly contrary to the subject and argument the apostle is upon; which is to show the right that he and others had, of casting themselves entirely upon the churches for a maintenance; whereas this is contriving a way for relieving the churches of such a charge; besides, the act of "leading", or carrying "about", is expressive of such a power over them, as cannot be thought to agree with persons of such substance; and whose voluntary act this must be, to go along with them and supply them; add to this, that for the apostles to lead about with them wherever they went women, whether rich or poor, that were not their wives, would be of no good report, and must tend to hurt their character and reputation: moreover, though these words clearly imply the lawfulness of a minister's marriage, and suppose it, yet they do not express the act itself, or the lawfulness of entering into such a state, but rather what follows after it; and the sense is this, that the apostle and others, supposing them to have wives, and it may be added also, and children, they had a right to take these with them wherever they went, and insist upon the maintenance of them, as well as of their own, at the public expense:

as well as other apostles; who it seems did so, that had wives and families, as Philip the Evangelist had four daughters, Ac 21:8.

And as the brethren of the Lord: who it seems were married persons, and took such a method; by whom are meant James, Joses, Judas, and Simon; who were the near kinsmen of Christ, it being usual with the Jews to call such brethren:

and Cephas; that is, Peter, who it is certain had a wife; see **Mt 8:14** and therefore it is with a very ill grace that the pope, who pretends to be Peter's successor, should forbid the marriage of ecclesiastical persons.

1 Corinthians 9:6

Ver. 6. Or I only and Barnabas,.... Who were for a great while companions and fellow travellers; are we alone? are we exempted from those rights and privileges, common to others?

have not we power to forbear working? that is, with their hands, at their trades and occupations, to get their living by: Paul worked at his trade, and so it seems Barnabas did likewise: Paul wrought with his hands at Corinth, in company with Aquila and Priscilla, they being tentmakers as he, Ac 18:3 and so he did in other places; he appeals for the truth of this to the elders of the church at Ephesus, Ac 20:34 and to the church of the Thessalonians, **1Th 2:9** not but that he had a right and power to leave off business, to forbear working, and require a maintenance from those to whom he ministered; but for some reasons he chose not to make use of this his power and liberty, because he would not be chargeable to them; and lest that upon his first preaching the Gospel to them, they should think he had worldly selfish ends in view, and not the good of souls, and glory of Christ; however, he hereby lets them know, that though Barnabas and he continued to get their bread by their own hand labour, they had a right to quit their trades, and throw themselves upon them for a maintenance. The apostle seems, in this, to imitate the ancient, wise, and holy men of his nation, who taught the law freely, and took nothing for it; not that they thought it was unlawful, or that they had no right to a maintenance on account of it, but for the honour of religion, and that piety they professed; and lest the law should be thought to be made a trade of, they chose not to insist upon it {d}.

{d} Maimon. & Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 5.

1 Corinthians 9:7

Ver. 7. Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges?.... Some people have done so, as did the Habessines {e}, and the ancient Romans {f}; though before the apostle wrote this, the senate had made an act, that the soldiers should have a stipend from the public; and this being now so common, and universally obtaining everywhere, the apostle puts the question he does; and his meaning is, that since ministers of the Gospel are the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and are engaged in a warfare state, in fighting the good fight of faith, against his enemies, and those of his church, it is but reasonable that their charges should be bore, and they maintained at the public expense:

who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? The church of Christ is a vineyard, it is often so called in Scripture; ministers are planters, vinedressers, and labourers in it; and as the mystical Solomon, the owner of the vineyard, ought to have his thousand, the cultivators of it, the keepers of the fruit, should have their two hundred, **So 8:12**

Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? The churches of Christ are compared to flocks of sheep; the ministers of the word are pastors, or shepherds, who have the care and oversight of them, and feed them with knowledge and understanding; and it is but right and just that they enjoy the fruit of their labours, and have a proper and suitable maintenance, as it is that he who feeds a flock should eat of the milk which that produces.

{e} Ludolph. Hist. Ethiop. l. 2. c. 14. {f} Liv. Hist. l. 4. prope finem. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 22.

1 Corinthians 9:8

Ver. 8. Say I these things as a man?.... After the manner of men, reasoning from things common among men, and obvious to everyone's observation:

or saith not the law the same also? As the subject the apostle is upon was capable of being illustrated and confirmed by instances common unto, and easy of observation among men; so it might be supported by divine authority; it was not only a clear point from the reason of things, but was certain by the law of God.

1 Corinthians 9:9

Ver. 9. For it is written in the law of Moses,.... De 25:4

Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. The manner of threshing, or beating out the corn among the Jews, was not the same with ours; it was not done by the flail, at least not always, but by the means of oxen; and by these not only treading upon it to and fro, but drawing a wooden instrument after them, the bottom of which was stuck with iron teeth, and the top of it filled with stones, to press it down close by the weight thereof; the sheaves put in proper form, the oxen were led to and fro upon them, drawing this threshing instrument after them, by which means the grain was separated from the husk and ear {g}; see Isa 41:15 The learned Beckius {h} has given us a figure of this instrument, and the manner of using it: now according to this law, whilst the ox was thus employed, its mouth was not to be muzzled, but it might freely eat of the corn it trod upon, excepting, the Jews say {i}, what was dedicated to sacred uses. They give many rules relating to this law, and particularly observe, that it is to be extended to all sorts of creatures, as well as the ox, and to all sorts of business {k}; and that what is said of the ox, is much more to be observed with respect to men {l}; and which agrees with the apostle's reasoning here:

doth God take care for oxen? yes, he does, and for creatures of less importance than they, even the fowls of the air, and the most worthless of them, sparrows, two of which are sold for a farthing; but not for them only, nor principally, but chiefly for men.

{g} Ben Melec. in 2 Sam. xii. 31. & Jarchi in Isa. xli. 1, 5. {h} Not. in Targum in 1 Chron. xx. 3. p. 210. Vid. Surenhusii Biblos Kattallages, p. 535. {i}

Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Meilah, c. sect. 6. & Trumot, c. 9. sect. 3. {k} Jarchi in loc. Maimon. Hilch. Shecirot, c. 13. sect. 1, 2, 3. Moses Kotsensis Mitzot Tora, pr. neg. 184. & affirm. 91. {l} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 88. 2.

1 Corinthians 9:10

Ver. 10. Or saith he it altogether for our sakes,.... That is, God says this, or delivers out this law, forbidding the muzzling the ox, while it treads out the corn; not merely for the sake of the ox, but chiefly for the sake of men; and so Jarchi upon the place says, that the ox is mentioned, Mda ta ayuwhl, "to express man"; and so another of the Jewish writers {m} interprets the law in De 22:6. "Thou shalt not take the dam with the young";

"the intention of the command is, not to have mercy on birds, "but for the sake of men", he (God) says this, whom he would accustom to meekness and compassion:"

and particularly this is here said, for the sake of ministers of the Gospel, who for their spiritual strength, and labours in their work, may be compared to oxen; see **Eze 1:10**. This law is elsewhere produced by the apostle, and urged in favour of the maintenance of ministers, as here, **1Ti 5:17** and therefore

for our sakes no doubt it is written; to teach men, that as any workmen are not to be deprived of proper sustenance, so neither they that labour in the word and doctrine:

that he that ploweth should plow in hope; of enjoying the fruit of his labours:

and that he that thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope; of having a supply out of that he is threshing.

{m} R. Menuachcm apud Ainsworth on Deut. xxii. 7. & Drusium in loc.

1 Corinthians 9:11

Ver. 11. If we have sown unto you spiritual things,.... The preachers of the Gospel are compared to sowers of seed; the seed they sow is the word of God, which is like to seed, for its smallness and despicableness in the eyes of carnal men; and yet as the seed is the choicest which is laid by for sowing, the Gospel is most choice and excellent to true believers; like seed, it has a generative virtue through divine influence; and whereas unless sown into the earth, it brings forth no fruit, so neither does the word, unless it has a place in the heart, where, as seed in the ground, its operation is secret, its increase gradual, and its fruitfulness different. The ground they sow upon is, very various; some of their hearers are like the wayside, careless, ignorant, and on whom no impression is made; others are like the stony ground, who though for a while they express some affection and liking, yet not having the root of grace in them, whenever persecution arises, forsake the hearing of it; others are like the thorny ground, which are at first very promising, and greatly reformed, but inwardly full of the cares and lusts of the world, which choke the word, and make it unfruitful; and others are like the good ground, who are made good by the grace of God, understand the word, receive it, hold it fast, and in whom it is fruitful: sowing requires skill and art, and so preaching the Gospel does, and that more than human; and is constantly in its returning season to be attended to, notwithstanding the winds and clouds, and so the ministry of the word, notwithstanding all reproaches, persecutions, and afflictions; and as the same sort of seed, without mixture, and in plenty, is to be cast into the earth, so the same pure and unmixed Gospel of Christ is to be preached, and that without keeping back any thing that is profitable: and once more, as the sower, when he has cast his seed into the earth, waits long and with patience for its springing up and increase, so do the faithful dispensers of the Gospel: and what they sow or minister is of a spiritual nature; it comes from the Spirit of God, he is the dictator of it; he by his gifts qualifies men to preach it, and by his power makes it effectual to the souls of men; and through it conveys himself to them, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification: the matter of the Gospel is spiritual; it contains spiritual doctrines, such as justification, pardon of sin, adoption, regeneration, &c. and are what concern the souls and spirits of men, and their spiritual and eternal welfare:

is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? meaning temporal ones, what concern the flesh, the body, the outward man, and the support thereof. The argument is from the greater to the less, and much the same with that in Ro 15:27. The difference between carnal and spiritual things is very great; the one has a vastly superior excellency to the other; and therefore if for carnal things men receive spiritual ones, they can be no losers thereby, but must be gainers; nor should it be thought any hardship or burden upon them, or any great and wonderful thing done by them, to support and maintain such who are so useful to their souls, and the spiritual welfare of them.

1 Corinthians 9:12

Ver. 12. If others are partakers of this power over you,.... Meaning not any tyrannical power and jurisdiction over them, with respect either to faith or practice; but the right of a maintenance, which either the false apostles, or the true ordinary ministers of the word there, justly claimed, and did enjoy:

are not we rather? he and Barnabas, especially himself, who was more than an ordinary minister, an apostle, and the first preacher of the Gospel to them:

nevertheless, we have not used this power; though others had, and they had a right to it, but did not choose to insist upon it; and, rather than do so, worked with their own hands; their not making use of this power was not because they stood in no need of it, and enjoyed an affluence of temporal things, for the reverse of this was their case:

but suffer all things: famine, thirst, nakedness, hard labour, and many other hardships:

lest we should hinder the Gospel of Christ; some might suggest, that they preached the Gospel only for gain, and not for the good of souls, and glory of Christ; and other mean spirited persons might be backward of embracing and professing the Gospel, lest it should become chargeable to them; wherefore that the Gospel might not be retarded in its course by the calumny of some, and the sordidness of others, the apostle thought fit to drop his claim to a maintenance from them; though at the same time he would have them know it was a just due, and therefore goes on to defend it by other arguments.

1 Corinthians 9:13

Ver. 13. Do ye not know, that they which minister about holy things,.... Not the priests in the temples of the Heathen deities, as the Ethiopic version suggests; but the priests in the temple at Jerusalem, who were employed in slaying the sacrifices, taking off their skins, cutting them into pieces, laying them in order with the wood upon the altar, and burning them, with other services they there performed, which were well known to the Corinthians, many of this church being Jews:

live of the things of the temple; the tithes and firstfruits, and other oblations, and presents in money or goods, thither brought; nor had they any other way of living and supporting their families; for the priests and Levites had no inheritance among the children of Israel, and therefore provision was made for them in this way:

and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar; some read it, "who sit at the altar"; but none might sit in the temple but a king of the house of David {n}; the priests and Levites always stood in their ministry, some doing one thing, and some another; some slew the sacrifice, others sprinkled the blood; some took away the ashes, others laid the wood, others brought up the parts of the sacrifice when slain, skinned, and cut asunder, and laid them on the altar {o}, and these partook with the altar; some parts the altar devoured, being consumed by fire upon it; but then there were other pieces which by law were reserved for the priests, and upon which they and their families lived: hence the distinction of xbzm tlyka, the food of the altar, and Mda tlyka, "the food of man" {p}; and therefore as it was but just and equitable that persons so employed should be maintained out of the revenues of the temple and altar, it is but right that Gospel ministers should be provided for with a suitable maintenance.

{n} Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 8. sect. 1. {o} Misn. Yoma, c. 2. sect. 3. Tamid. c. 3. sect. 1. {p} Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in Menachot, c. 3. sect 1.

1 Corinthians 9:14

Ver. 14. Even so hath the Lord ordained,.... That is, the Lord Jesus Christ, in Mt 10:10 it is an order and appointment of his that his ministering servants, who labour in preaching his Gospel, should be sufficiently taken care of, as to a comfortable livelihood; he has not indeed fixed it in the same way as the priests and Levites had theirs under the law; but as the one was just and right, that they should be maintained out of the things belonging to the temple and altar, and live on them, so it is his will and pleasure,

that they which preach the Gospel; that continue to do so, that labour, and not loiter in the word and doctrine, who do the work of the ministry fully and faithfully, and not bear the name only of Gospel preachers: should live of the Gospel; not the Gospel itself, which is spiritual, and not corporeal food; but the sense is, that in consideration and because of their preaching the Gospel, they should be supplied with the proper necessaries of life: the learned Mr. Mede has proved, by various instances, that the word euaggelion, here rendered "Gospel", and which signifies good news and glad tidings, is in other writers

used for a reward, given to such that bring good tidings; and has rightly observed, that the Hebrew word
hrvb, which signifies the same, is used in a like sense in **2Sa 4:10** and accordingly the sense here will be, that it is the ordination of Christ, that such who faithfully bring the news and glad tidings of salvation to sinners, should, as a reward for such good news, be provided for with a comfortable maintenance, on which they should live.

1 Corinthians 9:15

Ver. 15. But I have used none of these things,.... Either none of these arguments or reasons, for a minister's maintenance, taken from the reason of things, the law of Moses, the examples of the priests and Levites, and the order and appointment of Christ, in favour of himself, and that he might be provided for by them accordingly; or none of the things he had a right to do as other apostles, as to eat and drink at the public expense, to lead about with him a sister, a wife, had he any, and to forbear working with his own hands:

neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me; it was not on his own account that he gave these strong reasons, urged these instances, and so undeniably proved this point, that ministers should be maintained by the people; and this he says to prevent what some might be ready enough to suggest, that though the apostle had as yet took nothing of the church at Corinth, it was plain, that for the time to come, he meant to do it; and therefore had written these things with such a view, to make way for his after supply from them. This he denies, and gives his reason for it,

for it were better for me to die; through want, with famine, could he be supplied no other way, than to take the least farthing of them:

or than that any man should make my glorying void; meaning not so much his inward pleasure, joy, and satisfaction in preaching the Gospel freely, it being more blessed to give than to receive; but his boasting or glorying, not before God, but against the false apostles; that he had never taken anything of the church at Corinth for preaching, nor never would, when they had insinuated he preached for gain, and by artful methods had got their money, and drained their purses.

1 Corinthians 9:16

Ver. 16. For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of,.... The sense is not, that if he preached the Gospel in order for a livelihood, and to serve his private advantage, he should have no room for glorying; since, if this was the case, he should be obliged to do it, or perish for want: but his meaning is, that though he preached the Gospel ever so well, or ever so freely, and might glory before men, and against the false teachers, who insulted him in his character and office; yet not before God, from whom he received all his gifts, abilities, and qualifications, to preach the Gospel; all his light and knowledge in it; all his enlargements in meditation, and liberty in expression; all his faithfulness and integrity, courage and intrepidity, in the discharge and performance of his work, were by divine grace and assistance; and his success in it owing to the power and Spirit of God, so that he had nothing to glory of on any of these accounts: hence these words are a correction, or rather an explanation of the preceding:

for necessity is laid upon me; not of getting a livelihood by preaching, for he could have got, and did get this another way, even by labouring with his hands; nor of force and compulsion, for no one more readily engaged in it, or more cheerfully performed it; but of obligation from the divine call to this work, and from his own conscience, in which he knew it to be an heavenly one, and from the nature of the trust committed to him, and because of the good of immortal souls, and the honour of Christ; all which lay with weight upon him, and obliged him in duty, love, and gratitude, to attend to it:

yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel; which is to be understood, not of any temporal affliction, as reproach, persecution, famine, nakedness, sword, &c. for such sort of woes frequently attend those that do preach the Gospel; but of the wounding of his conscience, and exposing himself, through the neglect of his calling, and contempt of the divine will, to the wrath and curse of God for ever; not that the apostle feared this would be his case, or that it possibly could be; but he thus speaks, to show what he or any other minister of the Gospel would deserve, at the hand of God, who having abilities to preach, should not make use of them; or should preach, but not the Gospel; or only a part of it, and not the whole; or should entirely desist from it, through self-interest, or the fear of man, or through being ashamed of Christ and his Gospel, or as not able to bear the reproach and persecution attending it.

1 Corinthians 9:17

Ver. 17. For if I do this thing willingly,.... That is, not freely and without receiving anything for preaching, without seeking any temporal profits and advantages; nor in pure love to Christ, and the good of souls, without any fear of punishment, or hope of reward; but the apostle supposes a case which was not, and his sense is, that supposing no necessity had been laid upon him, or any injunction or command given him to preach the Gospel, but he had entered on it without any obligation upon him, then, says he,

I have a reward; or should have one, or might expect one; so the Jews {q} say, that a reward is given to him, who does anything unbidden:

but if against my will, or unwillingly,

a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me; which was his case; the Gospel was committed to his trust, as anything is to the trust and charge of a steward by his lord, who is obliged to take care of it, and is accountable for it, and of whom faithfulness is required; he did not undertake this economy, or dispensation of the Gospel of himself, of his own mind and will, but it was enjoined him by one that had the command over him, and could and did oblige him to take the charge of it; though he made him willing, as well as able to do it: and therefore since this was the case, that it was not at his own option whether he would preach the Gospel or not, but he was obliged to it by one, that had a superior power and influence over him; hence, though he performed it ever so well, and with never so much faithfulness and integrity, he asks in the following verse,

{q} Maimon. apud Hammond in loc.

1 Corinthians 9:18

Ver. 18. What is my reward then?.... None at all, I have none to expect, hope for, or claim, in a way of debt; I am a servant intrusted by my Lord with the Gospel, and an unprofitable one I am; I do, at most and best, but what is my duty, and for that I can claim no reward: all the reward that remains is only this,

verily, that when I preach the Gospel, which I am obliged to do,

I may make the Gospel of Christ without charge; to them that hear it, as he did to the Corinthians, which was his glorying in **1Co 9:15** and is the same with his reward here; for this means not any reward from God, but his glorying among men, and against the false teachers; that when he preached the word at Corinth, he was not chargeable to any, nor would he ever be: his reason for it is,

that I abuse not my power in the Gospel; his right of having a maintenance, whilst he was preaching the Gospel; to have made use of which would have been an abuse of it, since it would have given occasion to the false apostles to reproach and calumniate, and might have been an hinderance to the Gospel of Christ, and a stumbling to some weak minds.

1 Corinthians 9:19

Ver. 19. For though I be free from all men,.... As an apostle, being in the highest office in the church, he had none superior to him, that could exercise any power and authority over him, and was also independent of men for his maintenance, which he got by his own hand labour: though it may be observed, that the word "men" is not in the original text, and the word "all" may as well have respect to things as men; and the sense be, that he was free, as from the curse of the moral law, so from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and all the rituals of it, and might, if he would, make use of his Christian liberty; the following verses seem to incline to this sense, as the preceding ones do to the former:

yet have I made myself servant unto all; in faithfully and indefatigably preaching the Gospel to them; undergoing all manner of affliction and persecution for the sake of that and them; behaving towards them with all meekness and humility; condescending to their weakness, and accommodating himself to their capacities and customs:

that I might gain the more; than other apostles have done, or than it could be reasonably thought he should, had he behaved in a more lordly and domineering manner: his end was not to amass wealth, to gain riches and treasures of good things to himself, but many souls to Christ, who otherwise must have been lost; but being brought to the knowledge of Christ, and salvation by him through his ministry, it was profit to them, and gain to Christ: the metaphor is taken from merchants, who spare no pains, but take every method to acquire gain and profit; the ministers of the word are spiritual merchants, their traffic lies in the souls of men, whom they are studiously and anxiously careful to bring to Christ.

1 Corinthians 9:20

Ver. 20. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew,.... That is, in religion; or with respect to some religious observances peculiar to the Jews, for he himself was really a Jew by nature; who became as one unto them in this sense, when he for their sakes circumcised Timothy at Derbe, or Lystra, purified himself at Jerusalem, shaved his head at Cenchrea, observed their sabbath, and abstained from some sorts of food forbidden in the law; and his end in so doing was, not to confirm them in such usages, but that he might hereby have the greater influence over them, and by little and little bring them off of these things, or, as he says,

that I might gain the Jews; bring them over to Christ, and off of a dependence on their own righteousness, for justification before God:

to them that are under the law, as under the law; the Vulgate Latin version adds, "when I was not under the law", and so the Alexandrian copy and some others; by whom seem to be meant the same persons as before; though some have thought that the Samaritans are intended, and others the Sadducees: but if any as distinct from the former are designed, they should rather seem to be the converted Jews; who though they believed in Christ, looked upon themselves to be still under the law, and therefore observed it; with whom the apostle on certain occasions complied, as if he was under it too, that he might have the greater share in their affections and credit; hoping in time that by such means he might be able to prevail upon them to relinquish these things, and wholly attend to the Gospel and ordinances of Christ, or, as he says,

that I might gain them that are under the law; meaning the Jews, who were observers of the law of Moses.

1 Corinthians 9:21

Ver. 21. To them that are without law, as without law,.... Meaning the Gentiles, who, though they were not without the law of nature, nor without many good civil laws, by which the more cultivated and civilized nations among them were governed, yet they were without the written law of Moses; a description of the Gentiles, usual with the Jews; see **Ro 2:12**. And to these the apostle accommodated himself, as if he was without the law; by conversing with them without any difference; by eating any sort of food with them; by not circumcising Titus, when the Jews would have had it done; and by resisting Peter, when he, by his example, would have influenced the Gentiles to have lived as did the Jews:

being not without law to God; or "the law of God", the moral law; for though he was delivered from the curse and condemnation of it, and as a covenant of works, and the ministry of it by Moses, yet not from the matter of it, and obedience to it, as a rule of walk and conversation: and therefore his compliance with the Gentiles was not in anything that was contrary to the moral law; nor did he act as one that had nothing to do with that law, "but" as one that was

under the law to Christ, or "under the law of Christ"; that is, the law of love, which obliged him to take every lawful and proper method for the good of such souls:

that I might gain them that were without law; to believe in Christ for life and salvation, and to serve the law of God as in the hands of Christ, the only Lawgiver and King in his church; in testimony of their gratitude to him, for the blessings of grace received by him, without having any dependence on their obedience to it, for acceptance with God.

1 Corinthians 9:22

Ver. 22. To the weak became I as weak,.... That is, to weak Christians, who were weak in faith, and had not such clear knowledge of Gospel liberty, and therefore scrupled the eating of some sorts of meat, and particularly meats offered to idols; and the apostle so far consulted the peace and edification of these weak brethren, and so far complied with them, and became as one of them, that, rather than offend them, he determined to eat no meat while the world stood:

that I might gain the weak; promote their edification and welfare, who otherwise might be stumbled, be in danger of falling from, and laid under a temptation to desert the faith of the Gospel:

I am made all things to all men; which is to be understood, as in all the other instances of his being so, not in cases and things criminal and sinful, contrary to the moral law, and the dictates of his own conscience, subversive of the

Gospel of Christ, and of the order and discipline of it, but in cases and things of an indifferent nature:

that I might by all means save some; that is, that he might be the means of saving some of Jews and Gentiles, and of all sorts of men; by preaching the Gospel of salvation to them, and by directing them to Christ, the only Saviour of lost sinners; thus he explains what he means by so often saying that he might gain them.

1 Corinthians 9:23

Ver. 23. And this I do for the Gospel's sake,.... The Alexandrian copy and some others read, "all things I do", &c. and so the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; that is, he became all things to all men, and so and so to different persons; not for his own sake, for his own temporal advantage, or to curry favour with men; not for the sake of gaining wealth, or honour and applause to himself, but for the spread of the Gospel, and its greater usefulness among men: to which he adds,

that I might be partaker thereof with you; meaning either the fruit of the Gospel, the conversion and salvation of sinners, which would be matter of joy both to him and them; or the blessings of grace and eternal life, which the Gospel reveals and promises, which he desired to enjoy in common with others, not only with the Corinthians, for the word "you" is not in the original text, but with Jews and Gentiles; with men of all sorts, who may be gained over to Christ, and saved by him, through the ministry of the word.

1 Corinthians 9:24

Ver. 24. Know ye not that they which run in a race,.... The allusion in this and the following verses is to the Grecian games, which consisted, among other things, of running of races, and of wrestling, combating, and fighting; and which are in this and the context particularly mentioned: and the apostle the rather makes use of these terms, and refers to these things, because they were well known to the Corinthians, and refers to them as well known; for the Isthmian games were performed in their neighbourhood, and doubtless had been seen by many of them, for the Corinthians were presidents of them. The race, or stadium in which they ran, was the space or interval between the place they set out from, and that which they ran unto, and consisted of 125 paces, or

625 feet; it was the space of a furlong, and about the eighth part of a mile: in this they

run all; as many as would, that came around from all parts, striving who should be foremost and get the crown;

but one receives the prize; which was held by the president of the game, or judge of the race, and received by the winner, who was judged to be so by him; and was no other in the Isthmian games, which are most likely to be referred to here, than a crown made of pine tree branches, or leaves, and sometimes of dried parsley {s}:

so run that ye may obtain. The apostle accommodates or applies the above account to the Christian's course of life, and exhorts to run in it in like manner as racers do in a race. The "stadium", or "race" plot in the which the believer runs, is this world, or this present life; he is only a runner now and here, for no sooner is the time of his departure come, but his course or race is finished; and, as his forerunner Christ, sits down in full rest from all his labours as at a table, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and on a throne with Christ: the course he runs includes the exercise of every grace, particularly faith, which is expressed not only by going to Christ, walking in him, but by fleeing and running to him; and the discharge of every duty, signified by a running in the way of God's commandments; and, in a word, the whole of a Christian profession, and the holding of it fast, and holding on in it unto the end. The act of "running" is a motion forward, a following on to know the Lord, a going from strength to strength, from one degree of grace to another, a pressing forward toward the mark for the prize; and requires spiritual strength from Christ, and a daily renewal of it; is to be performed with readiness, swiftness, and cheerfulness, in opposition to a slowness of heart to believe, and a slothfulness and sluggishness in the business and service of Christ. The manner of running, "so", that is, as the Grecians ran in their races; they ran "all", so should all believers run, ministers and churches, churches and the several members thereof, old and young professors; so the church determines for herself, her members, and the daughters of Jerusalem, "we will run after thee", **So 1:4** and they have this encouragement which the others had not, for only one received the prize with the Grecians, but here all, that run well, obtain: again, they ran and strove to be foremost, who should get to the goal first and receive the prize, so should believers be emulous to outdo each other, to go before one another, in faith and holiness; striving in the strength of Christ, who should do most service for him, and bring most glory to him: moreover, as they ran in the way that was marked out for them, not turning to the right hand or the left, so should believers run in the way of salvation, which is Christ; in the way of holiness, faith, and truth; and in the path of duty and ordinances, which are all clearly pointed out unto them: once more, as they while running kept their eye upon the mark, so should believers, while running the race set before them, be continually looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of faith: to say no more, as they kept running till they came to the end of their race, so should the saints; there is no time for stopping or looking back; remember Lot's wife. The end of running is to obtain the prize, the incorruptible crown of eternal life; not that this is to be procured in a way of merit by running; for the best services of the saints have no merit in them, they are previously due to God, nor can they be profitable to him; and besides, are done by the assistance of his own grace and strength; nor is there any proportion between the best works of men, and this crown of glory, life, and righteousness; yea, salvation, or eternal life, is expressly denied to be of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, and is always represented as this crown is, to be a free gift: the meaning of the expression is, that believers are to run on in their Christian race, that they may, and when they are come to the end of it they shall, as he that came foremost in the race did, stretch forth their hand, lay hold on, and receive the crown which the righteous Judge will give them; and is the true import of the word made use of here, and the sense the same with **1Ti 6:12**. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life", and denotes that the persevering saint shall enjoy the crown.

{s} Schmid. Prolegam. in Isthm. Pindar, p. 5, 6. & Not. in Olymp. p. 312. Paschalius de Coronis, l. 6. c. 27. p. 441.

1 Corinthians 9:25

Ver. 25. And every man that striveth for the mastery,.... Either in running a race, or in wrestling; for the word here used agrees with both, and both are in the context referred to, nor has the apostle as yet done with his allusion to running in a race;

is temperate in all things; contains himself from venery, abstains from certain sorts of food, which tend to hinder the agility, or weaken the strength of the body; and indulges not himself in sloth and idleness, but exercises himself in various manners, that he may be prepared for running or wrestling: the apostle's view in this, seems to be to strengthen some exhortations he had already given, to abstain from fornication, and the immoderate use of venery; to forbear eating things offered to idols, and not give themselves up to luxury and intemperance; for should they be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, they would be very unfit for their Christian race, or for wrestling with principalities and powers, and the discharging of the business of a Christian profession:

now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; they confine themselves to a certain diet and course of living, and abstain from things otherwise desirable to nature; and this they do for the sake of a fading crown, a crown of leaves, made of the boughs and leaves of olives, laurels, pine, &c. or of parsley, green or dried, as before observed {t}:

but we an incorruptible; even eternal life; compared to a crown, for the riches, glory, and lustre of it; and as suitable to the character and dignity of saints, who are kings as well as priests unto God: it is called "incorruptible", because it is so in its own nature; nor can it be corrupted by other things, as crowns even of gold may; nor shall any corrupt person wear it; the corruption of nature must be removed from the saints, yea, that frailty and mortality of human nature, which sometimes goes by the name of corruption, must be taken away, ere they can inherit this crown and kingdom; nor will it ever fade away, as the corruptible crowns of the conquerors in these games did, and that in a very short time; but this will last for ever, and always continue in the same glory and lustre.

{t} Vid. Alex. ab Alex, Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 8.

1 Corinthians 9:26

Ver. 26. I therefore so run,.... The apostle animates the Corinthians by his own example, telling them that he ran so as he exhorted them; he ran with cheerfulness and swiftness in the way marked out for him, looking to Jesus; continuing steadfast in the profession of his faith, and discharge of his duty as a Christian, and in preaching the Gospel as a minister; and nothing had he more at heart, than to finish his course with joy:

not as uncertainly; as one that knew not, or was in doubt about the way in which he should run, and so ran in and out, sometimes in the way, sometimes out of it; since it was clearly pointed out to him in the word of God: the allusion is to the white line which was drawn from the place the runners set out at to the goal; so that they did not run uncertainly, nor could they be at a loss to steer their course: nor did the apostle run, for what, as the Syriac version renders it, ewdy am, "is unknown": he knew what he ran for, for the incorruptible crown of glory, he knew the nature of it; nor was he uncertain as to the event and issue of his running; he knew that this crown was laid up safe and secure, that it would be given him, and he should wear it; he had no doubt at all about it; and with this certain knowledge both of the way and prize, and full assurance of faith and hope, he ran:

so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. The allusion is here to fighting with the fist, when, before the combat was entered on, the person used to swagger about, and beat about with his fists, striking the air with them, having no adversary before him; only showing what he could do if he had one, or when he should encounter: so did not the apostle, he did not fight with his own shadow, or a man of straw, or beat the empty air; but gave home blows to real adversaries, Satan, the world, and the flesh; the latter of which is particularly mentioned in the next verse.

1 Corinthians 9:27

Ver. 27. But I keep under my body,.... The allusion is still to fighters, who, by cuffing and boxing, give their antagonists black and blue eyes, which is the proper signification of the word here used: so it is said {u} of Menedemus, that in questions or scholastic exercises, he was so vehement and pugnacious, that he never departed without upwpia ferwn, "carrying away black and blue eyes". This is not to be understood by the apostle of his natural body, and of his keeping it under by immoderate watchings, fastings, and labours, or by whipping and scourging, and lying upon the bare ground, and other such practices; but of the body of sin, the corruption of nature, and of that being laid under some restraints; of the mortifying the deeds of the body through the Spirit, of crucifying the affections with the lusts, of putting off the old man with his deeds, as concerning the former conversation, and of making no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof: it seems to be the same with what the Jews call {w}, wruy vbwk, "a subduing of a man's evil concupiscence": who is a strong man? they say {x},
wruy ta vbwkh, "he that subdues his corruption", according to
Pr 16:32 and again {y}

"the sons of Ulam were mighty and powerful men,
Nwhyruy Nyvbk, "subduing their corruptions", as man that draws a bow with wisdom."

And bring it into subjection; so as not to serve and obey it in the lusts thereof; but to have the ascendant of it, and government over it, that it does not, and cannot reign as it formerly did: the allusion is still to the combatant, who gets and keeps his antagonist under him, and has the command of him, and throws him on the ground, or drags him about at pleasure:

lest that by any means when I have preached to others; the Gospel of the grace of God, for their souls' profit and advantage, to gain and save them; and have called upon them so to run, that they might receive and enjoy the incorruptible crown:

I myself should be a castaway, or rejected, or disapproved of; that is, by men: the apostle's concern is, lest he should do anything that might bring a reproach on the Gospel; lest some corruption of his nature or other should break out, and thereby his ministry be justly blamed, and be brought under contempt; and so he be rejected and disapproved of by men, and become useless as a preacher: not that he feared he should become a reprobate, as the word is opposed to an elect person; or that he should be a castaway eternally, or be everlastingly damned; for he knew in whom he had believed, and was persuaded of his interest in the love of God, and that he was a chosen vessel of salvation, that could not be eternally lost: though supposing that this is his sense, and these his fears and concern, it follows not as neither that he was, so neither that he could be a lost and damned person: the fears of the saints, their godly jealousies of themselves, and pious care that they be not lost, are not at all inconsistent with the firmness of their election, their security in Christ, and the impossibility of their final and total falling away; but on the contrary are overruled, and made use of by the Spirit of God, for their final perseverance in grace and holiness.

{u} Hesychius de Philosophis, p. 48. {w} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 145. 2, 3. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 69. 2. {x} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 1. {y} Targum in 1 Chron. viii. 40.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 10

In this chapter the apostle cautions the Corinthians against security on account of their gifts, knowledge, and profession, since men of great characters, and enjoying high privileges, have fallen into sin, and have been severely punished; and he particularly cautions against idolatry, and all appearances of it, on which account he again introduces the case of eating things offered to idols, and dissuades from it, when it tended to idolatry, and had the appearance of it; though in some cases he allows of eating them, but directs that all should be done to the glory of God, and without offence to any, as they had him for an example. And now, whereas in the latter part of the preceding chapter he had signified his jealousy of himself, lest he should be a castaway, he pursues the thought, and improves it to the use of the Corinthians, that they, on account of their high attainments, should not think themselves secure of all danger; and for this purpose sets before them the instances and examples of the Jewish fathers, of which he would not have them ignorant, who were persons that enjoyed great privileges, and were partakers of things which bore some resemblance to Gospel ordinances; as their passing under the cloud through the sea was a figure of baptism, and their eating manna, and drinking water out of the rock, which was a type of Christ, had some likeness to the ordinance of the Lord's supper, of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, which are meat and drink indeed in a spiritual sense, 1Co 10:1 and yet all these persons that enjoyed these privileges were not acceptable to God; nor did they enter into the land of Canaan, but fell in the wilderness, 1Co 10:5 in which they were examples to men under the Gospel dispensation, that they may shun the evils which were the cause of their fall and overthrow, 1Co 10:6 particularly idolatry, of which their making and worshipping the golden calf is an instance, 1Co 10:7 also fornication, on account of which three and twenty thousand fell in one day, 1Co 10:8 likewise tempting Christ, which brought upon them destruction by the fiery serpents, 1Co 10:9 moreover, murmuring against God, and his servants, for which reason the destroyer was sent among them, and destroyed them, 1Co 10:10. All which happened, and are recorded for the use, instruction, and admonition of professors of religion in these last times, 1Co 10:11 from all which the apostle infers, by way of caution to the saints, that they should not be secure of standing, but take heed lest they fall, since so many and such great persons had before fallen, 1Co 10:12. But for their comfort, under afflictions, he observes, that as they were common to men, so the faithfulness of God was concerned to support them under them, and deliver them out of them, that they might not utterly fail of the grace of God, and perish by them, 1Co 10:13. And in order to their standing, he particularly dehorts them from idolatry, 1Co 10:14 and every appearance of it, as eating things offered to idols, in an idol's temple, which is what he has chiefly in view, as appears by the following verses: and whereas they were men of wisdom and judgment whom he addressed, he was the more encouraged to use the following arguments with them, the force of which they would understand, 1Co 10:15. And his first argument is taken from the Lord's supper, and the communion of his body and blood, which believers have with him in eating the bread, and drinking the wine; suggesting, that in like manner such who eat things offered to idols, as such, had communion with them, and so were guilty of idolatry, and therefore should be abstained from, 1Co 10:16. His next argument is taken from the union and communion which saints have one with another at the Lord's table, whereby they appear to be one body and one bread; and so such that associate themselves with idolaters in their temples, and eat with them things offered to idols, are one with them in a like sense, and chargeable with idolatry, 1Co 10:17. To which is added a third, taken from the priests of the Israelitish nation, who eating of the sacrifices, were partakers of the altar, worshipped the God of Israel, and had communion with him; and so in like manner eating of the sacrifices offered to idols, and especially in one of their temples, might be very well interpreted a partaking of their altars, a worshipping of them, and so idolatry, 1Co 10:18 not that he thought that an idol was to be considered as a deity, or that things offered to it were upon an equal foot with the Lord's supper, or Jewish sacrifices, 1Co 10:19 but as there was a communion in the one, so in the other; for as for the sacrifices of the Gentiles, they were offered to devils, and not to God; and which he mentions to deter them from having the most distant regard to such sacrifices, 1Co 10:20 it being the most inconsistent, as well as shocking thing in the world, to partake of both cups and tables, those of the Lord, and those of devils, 1Co 10:21 wherefore the apostle dissuades from such idolatrous practice, from the pernicious and dangerous consequences of them, stirring up the Lord to jealousy, fighting against him, and being destroyed of him, 1Co 10:22. But inasmuch as things offered to idols were in themselves indifferent, the apostle directs to a proper use of them; and observes, that though they might be lawfully eaten, yet the expediency of time and place, and the edification of others, ought to be considered, 1Co 10:23 for we are not to seek our own pleasure, but the welfare of others, 1Co 10:24. If indeed such meat is sold in the butchers' meat markets in common with others, it may be bought and eat, when no questions are asked about it, what it is, 1Co 10:25 and that for this reason, because the earth, and all that is in it, are the Lord's, and his people have a right to all through him, and therefore may make use of every creature in it, 1Co 10:26. So if an idolater invites a believer to dine with him, and he accepts the invitation, he may very lawfully eat whatever is before him, even though it be meat offered to idols, provided he asks no questions about it, 1Co 10:27. But should anyone present point at certain meat, and say that was offered to idols, then it was advisable not to eat of it; partly for the sake of the unbeliever that pointed at it, who would be hardened in his idolatry by it; and partly for the sake of the conscience of a weak believer present, who might be offended at it; and the reason given to enforce such a conduct is, because there is plenty of other food without it, 1Co 10:28. And then the apostle explains whose conscience he meant; not the conscience of him that is invited, but either of the unbeliever, or the weak brother; and suggests a reason why he should not make use of his liberty in their presence, and under such circumstances, lest it should be censured and condemned, 1Co 10:29 or he be reproached for what he had, through good will, and had reason to be thankful for, 1Co 10:30 wherefore, upon the whole, the apostle advises in this affair, and in all others, to have the glory of God in view in the first place, 1Co 10:31 and next to that to be careful not to offend any sort of persons whatever, 1Co 10:32 and proposes himself as an example in these things to be followed; who sought not his own advantage, but the pleasure and profit of others, and to promote, as much as in him lay, their salvation, and not hinder it, 1Co 10:33.

Ver. 1. Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant,.... The apostle having suggested his own fears and jealousies, lest, notwithstanding all his gifts and grace, he should be left to do anything that might be a means of laying him aside, and rendering him useless in his ministerial work; and which he hints for the use of these Corinthians, who boasted of their knowledge, and made an imprudent use of their Christian liberty, to the hurt of weak minds; he proceeds to lay before them the case of the Jewish fathers, who, notwithstanding the many favours and privileges they were blessed with, yet falling into lust, fornication, intemperance, and idolatry, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and entered not into the land of rest; wherefore the apostle would not have them be ignorant, or unmindful, or take no notice of these things, since they were for ensamples to them, and written for their admonition, and were warnings to them to take care lest they should also fall: particularly the apostle's view is to dissuade from the eating of things offered to idols, though a thing indifferent, and from their imprudent use of their Christian liberty with respect unto it; since it was not only doing an injury to weak believers, but it likewise exposed themselves to danger, who, by using such freedom as to sit in an idol's temple, and there publicly eat, might be drawn into idolatry itself; nor should they depend upon their knowledge, and gifts, and attainments, since it is clear, from these instances, that the highest external privileges, favours, and enjoyments, cannot secure men from falling: for which purpose it was proper to call to mind,

how that all our fathers were under the cloud; which was a symbol of the divine presence with the Israelites, as it was on Mount Sinai, and in the tabernacle and temple; was a protection of them, being in the daytime as a pillar of cloud to screen them from the scorching heat of the sun, and in the night time as a pillar of fire to preserve them from beasts of prey, as well as in both to guide and direct them in the way; and was a type of Christ, who is a covert from the heat, as well as the wind and storm; a protection of his people from the vindictive justice and wrath of God, and from the rage and fury of men and devils. This also might express the state and condition of the former dispensation, which was dark and obscure in comparison of the present one, in which saints, with open face, behold the glory of the Lord; and likewise the state of the people of God in this world, even under the present dispensation, who, in comparison of the heavenly glory, and the beatific vision the saints enjoy there see but through a glass darkly. This cloud, which is sometimes represented as a pillar, was not an erect solid body, which was at some distance before the Israelites, and merely as a guide, but was all around them; it was before them, and behind them, and on each side, and was over them; see Nu 14:14 so that the apostle rightly says they were under it. And to distant beholders in the daytime it looked like a pillar of cloud; and in the nighttime, the sun being down, it looked like a pillar of fire; for one and the same thing is meant by both and so the Jews say {z}, that

"the pillar of cloud, wbbwo encompassed the camp of Israel, as a wall encompasses a city, nor could the enemy come at them."

Hence those allusions to it in **Isa 4:5**. The Jews indeed speak of several clouds of glory; nor are they agreed about the number of them:

"when the people of Israel were travelling in the wilderness, they say {a}, they had clouds of glory, Nrxom, "that surrounded them", four at the four winds of the world, that the evil eye might not rule over them,
Nwhywle Nm dxw "and one above them", that the heat and sun, as also the hail and rain, might not have power over them; and one below them, which carried them as a nurse carrieth her sucking child in her bosom; and another ran before them at the distance of three days' journey, to level the mountains, and elevate the plains, and it slew all the fiery serpents and scorpions in the wilderness."

And elsewhere {b} it is said,

"how many were the clouds of glory, Nypyqm, "that encompassed Israel" in the wilderness? R. Hoshea and R. Josiah are divided. R. Josiah says five, four at the four winds, and one went before them. R. Hoshea says seven, four at the four winds of the heavens, and one Nlemlm, "above them", and one below them, and one ran before them;"

to which he ascribes the above effects: but the Scripture speaks but of one cloud, which departed at the death of Moses:

and all passed through the sea; the Red sea, in a very miraculous manner; Moses by a divine order lift up his rod, and stretched out his hand over it, and the Lord by a strong east wind caused it to go back, and made it dry land; the waters were divided, and rose up as a wall, on the right hand, and on the left, so that the children of Israel passed through it on dry ground, and all came safe to shore, and not one perished; and yet but two of these entered into the land of Canaan. Origen {c} says,

"he had heard it as a tradition from the ancients, that in the passage through the sea, to every tribe of Israel were made separate divisions of water, and that every tribe had its own way open in the sea."

And indeed this is a tradition of the Jews, whom he means by the ancients, or at least such who had received it from them; by which it appears to be a very ancient one.

"R. Eliezer says {d}, that in the day in which the waters flowed, and were congealed together, there were twelve paths made, according to the twelve tribes, and the waters became a wall."

The same is related, by others {e}: Mahomet has it in his Alcoran {f}, in which he was assisted by a Jew, and from whom he doubtless had it. He observes, it was said to Moses,

"smite the sea with thy rod, and when he had smitten it, it became divided into twelve parts, between which were as many paths, and every part was like a vast mountain."

But be this as it will, it is certain that they all passed through it, and came safe to shore.

{z} Pirke Eliezer, c. 44. {a} Targum in Cant. 2. 6. {b} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 177. 1, 2. {c} Homil. 5. in Exod. fol. 37. col. 3. E. {d} Pirke Eiiezer, c. 42. {e} Maimon. & Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 4. {f} C. 26. p. 304. Ed. Sale.

1 Corinthians 10:2

Ver. 2. And were all baptized unto Moses,.... "In or by Moses"; and so the Syriac version renders it, avwm dyb, "by the hand of Moses"; by his means and direction, he going before, they followed after him into the sea, and passed through on dry land, and came out on the shore, which carried in it a resemblance of baptism; when they believed the Lord, and his servant Moses, Ex 14:31 and gave up themselves to him as their leader and commander through the wilderness: and this their baptism was

in the cloud, and in the sea; which may be considered either as together or separately; if together, the agreement between them and baptism lay in this; the Israelites, when they passed through the Red sea, hid the waters on each side of them, which stood up as a wall higher than they, and the cloud over them, so that they were as persons immersed in and covered with water; and very fitly represented the ordinance of baptism as performed by immersion; and which is the way it was administered in the apostles' time, to which he refers; and is the only way it ought to be administered in; and in which only the Israelites' passage through the sea, and under the cloud, could be a figure of it: or this may be considered separately, they were baptized in the cloud; which was either, as Gataker {g} thinks, when the cloud went from before the face of the Israelites, and stood behind them, and was between the two camps, to keep off the Egyptians from them, which as it passed over them let down a plentiful rain upon them, whereby they were in such a condition as if they had been all over dipped in water; or their being all under the cloud, and all over covered with it, was a representation of the ordinance of baptism, in which a person is all over covered with water; and then they were baptized in the sea, as they passed through it, the waters standing up above their heads, they seemed as if they were immersed in it. Very great is the resemblance between that passage of theirs, and baptism. For instance, their following Moses into the sea, which is meant by their being "baptized into him", was an acknowledgment of their regard unto him, as their guide and governor, as baptism is a following of Christ, who has left us an example that we should tread in his steps; and is an owning him to be our prophet to teach us, and lead us the way; and it is a profession of our faith in him, as our surety and Saviour, and a subjection to him as our King and Governor. This their baptism in the sea was after their coming out of Egypt, and at their first entrance on their journey to Canaan's land, as our baptism is, or should be, after a person is brought out of worse than Egyptian bondage and darkness, and has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and at the beginning of his profession of him, and entrance on his Christian race. The descent of the Israelites into the sea, when they seemed as buried in the waters, and their ascent out of it again on the shore, has a very great agreement with baptism, as administered by immersion, in which the person baptized goes down into the water, is buried with Christ therein, and comes up out of it as out of a grave, or as the children of Israel out of the Red sea; and as they, when they came out of it, could rejoice and sing in the view of their salvation and safety, and of the destruction of all their enemies, so the believer can, and does rejoice in this ordinance, in the view of his salvation by Christ, and safety in him, and of all his sins being buried and drowned in the sea of his blood; witness the instances of the eunuch and jailer. But though the Israelites were all in this sense baptized, yet they did not all inherit the land of Canaan.

{g} Aniversar. Miscellan. p. 30.

1 Corinthians 10:3

Ver. 3. And did all eat the same spiritual meat. Meaning the manna; and which the Jews also call {h} ynxwr lkam, "spiritual food", as also their sacrifices, {i} ynxwr Mxl, "spiritual bread": not that the manna was so in own nature; it was corporeal food, and served for the nourishment of the body; but either because it was prepared by angels, who are ministering spirits, at the command of God, and hence called angels' food, Ps 78:25 or rather because it had a mystical and spiritual meaning in it; it was not the true bread, but was typical of Christ, who is so: it resembled Christ in its original; it was prepared of God, as Christ is, as his salvation prepared before the face of all his people; it was the free gift of God, as Christ is to the mystical Israel; it came down from heaven, as Christ, the true bread of life did: it answered to him in its nature; it was in form round, expressive of his being from everlasting to everlasting, and of the perfection both of his divine and human natures; it was in colour white, signifying his purity of nature, and holiness of life and conversation; it was in quantity small, setting forth his outward meanness and despicableness in the eyes of men; and in quality it was sweet in taste, as Christ, and all the blessings and fruits of his grace are to believers. The usefulness of the manna was very great, a vast number, even all the Israelites, were supplied with it, and supported by it for forty years together, as all the elect of God, and the whole family of Christ are by the fulness of grace which is in him; and as in order that it might be proper and suitable food, it was ground in mills, or beaten in a mortar, and baked in pans; so Christ was bruised, and wounded, and endured great sufferings, and death itself, that he might be agreeable food for our faith: and as the Israelites had all an equal quantity of this food, none had more or less than others, so all the saints have an equal share and interest in Christ, in his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; as they have the same like precious faith, they have the same object of it. To say no more, as the manna was the food of the wilderness, or of the people of Israel, whilst travelling in it, so Christ, and the fulness of grace that is in him, are the food and supply of the spiritual Israel, and church of God, whilst they are passing through this world to the heavenly glory. Now, though all the Israelites did not eat of Christ, the true bread, which was typified by the manna; yet they all ate the same food, which had a spiritual meaning in it, and a respect to Christ, but did not all enter into the land flowing with milk and honey.

{h} Yade Mose in Shemot Rabba, fol. 109. 3. {i} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 93. 2.

1 Corinthians 10:4

Ver. 4. And did all drink the same spiritual drink,.... By which is meant the water out of the rock, which was typical of the blood of Christ, which is drink indeed, and not figurative, as this was, for which reason it is called spiritual; or of the grace of Christ, often signified by water, both in the Old and New Testament; and is what Moses and the law could not give; for righteousness and life, grace and salvation, could never be had by the works of the law: and very unpromising it was, and is to carnal men, that these should come by a crucified Christ, as it was to the Israelites, that water, in such plenty, should gush out of the rock in Horeb; but as those waters did not flow from thence without the rock being stricken by the rod of Moses, so the communication of the blessings of grace from Christ is through his being smitten by divine justice with the rod of the law; through his being, stricken for the transgressions of his people, and and being made sin, and a curse of the law in their room and stead. And as those waters continued through the wilderness as a constant supply for them, so the grace of Christ is always sufficient for his people; a continual supply is afforded them; goodness and mercy follow them all the days of their lives:

for they drank, of that spiritual rock that followed them; by which the apostle means not Christ himself, for he went before them as the angel of God's presence, but the rock that typified him; not that the rock itself removed out of its place, and went after them, but the waters out of the rock ran like rivers, and followed them in the wilderness wherever they went, for the space of eight and thirty years, or thereabout, and then were stopped, to make trial of their faith once more; this was at Kadesh when the rock was struck again, and gave forth its waters, which, as the continual raining of the manna, was a constant miracle wrought for them. And this sense of the apostle is entirely agreeable to the sentiments of the Jews, who say, that the Israelites had the well of water all the forty years {k}. The Jerusalem Targum {l} says of the

"well given at Mattanah, that it again became unto them violent overflowing brooks, and again ascended to the tops of the mountains, and descended with them into the ancient valleys."

And to the same purpose the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel {m},

"that it again ascended with them to the highest mountains, and from the highest mountains it descended with them to the hills, and encompassed the whole camp of Israel, and gave drink to everyone at the gate of his own dwelling place; and from the high mountains it descended with them into the deep valleys."

Yea, they speak of the rock in much the same language the apostle does, and seem to understand it of the rock itself, as if that really went along with the Israelites in the wilderness. Thus one of their writers {n} on those words, "must we fetch you water out of this rock?" makes this remark:

"for they knew it not, eloh Klhv ypl, "for that rock went", and remained among the rocks."

And in another place it is said {o},

"that the rock became in the form of a beehive; (elsewhere {p} it is said to be round as a sieve;) and rolled along,
Mhme tabw, "and came with them", in their journeys; and when the standard bearers encamped, and the tabernacle stood still, the rock came, and remained in the court of the tent of the congregation; and the princes came and stood upon the top of it, and said, ascend, O well, and it ascended."

Now, though in this account there is a mixture of fable, yet there appears something of the old true tradition received in the Jewish church, which the apostle has here respect to.

And the rock was Christ: that is, it signified Christ, it was a type of him. So the Jews {q} say, that the Shekinah is called vwdq elo, "the holy rock"; and Philo the Jew says {r} of this rock, that the broken rock is h sofia tou yeou, "the wisdom of God". Christ may be compared to the rock for his outward meanness in his parentage and education, in his ministry and audience, in his life and death; and for his height also, being made higher than the kings of the earth, than the angels in heaven, and than the heavens themselves; and for shelter and safety from the wrath of God, and from the rage of men; and for firmness, solidity, and strength, which are seen in his upholding all things by his power, in bearing the sins of his people, and the punishment due unto them, in the support of his church, and bearing up his people under all afflictions and temptations, and in preserving them from a total and final falling away: and a rock he appears to be, as he is the foundation of his church and every believer, against which hell and earth can never prevail; and to it he may be likened for duration, his love being immovable, his righteousness everlasting, his salvation eternal, and he, as the foundation of his church, abiding for ever.

{k} Jarchi in Numb. xx. 2. {l} In Numb. xxi. 20. {m} In ib. {n} Jarchi in Numb. xx. 10. {o} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 177. 2. {p} Gloss. in T. Bab. Pesach. fol. 54. 1. {q} Zohar in Num. fol. 87. 4. & Imre Binah in ib. {r} Lib. Allegor. l. 3. p. 1103.

1 Corinthians 10:5

Ver. 5. But with many of them God was not well pleased,.... As he is with none but those that are in Christ; and with none of the services of men, but what are done in faith, which become acceptable to him through Jesus Christ; for in him only persons and services are accepted with God; and this was the way of acceptance in the Old, as in the New Testament dispensation: how many of the Jewish fathers God was not well pleased with, or took no delight in, but hated and abhorred, which is the sense of the phrase here, whether they were the greatest part or not, is not certain; however, they were not all, excepting Joshua and Caleb, as some interpreters understand it; for not all that died in the wilderness were out of the special grace and favour of God, witness Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and, it is to be supposed and hoped, hundreds and thousands more; but the apostle has respect to such who were the instances of God's direful vengeance and displeasure, as appears from the reason given;

for they were overthrown in the wilderness: he does not say merely that they died there, for many with whom God was well pleased died there; but these, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, being stricken, thrown down, and overthrown by the immediate hand of God; they did not die a common death, according to the ordinary course of nature; but by the plague, or by the sword, or by fire from heaven, or by fiery serpents, or by a destroying angel, or by one judgment or another, as hereafter mentioned.

1 Corinthians 10:6

Ver. 6. Now these things were our examples,.... Or "types"; that is, these punishments which were inflicted on these persons for their sins, were designed as instructions for others to avoid the like sins, that they may escape the same punishment; just as the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, being condemned with an overthrow, as these men were, were made ensamples to all that should hereafter live such vicious lives and conversations; and in a very lively manner, as in a type or print, these exhibited the displeasure of God against sin, what such must expect who commit it; so men are called out of Babylon, lest, partaking of her sins, they also receive of her plagues. The Jews have a common saying {s}
Mynbl Nmyo twbal eryav "that what happened to the fathers is a sign unto the children"; to which the apostle may have respect:

to the intent that we should not lust after evil things. The apostle proceeds to enter into particular instances, in which these things were examples, teaching us to avoid sin, and so punishment; and begins with lust, which is the root and foundation of all sin; all the evil in the world arises from it, and the world itself is full of it, and is in God's account the same as action: and here he particularly strikes at those Corinthians, that lusted after the feasts in the idols' temples; and hints that that arose rather from a carnal sensual appetite, which ought not to be indulged, than from any other principle:

as they also lusted; that is, after evil things, the fish, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, onions, and garlic of Egypt, Nu 11:4 which though they were not evil in themselves, yet the Israelites sinned in lusting after them, in not being content with the manna, the food which God had prepared for them; and besides, their desire after these things did not arise from want, but from a sensual appetite, and was attended with murmuring against the Lord and his servants, and was highly resented; for though the Lord gave them flesh according to their desire, yet while it was between their teeth, he sent a plague among them, by which multitudes were taken off, and the name of the place was called hwath twrbq, "Kibroth Hataavah, the graves of lusts"; the people that lusted being buried there, Nu 11:34.

{s} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 77. 4.

1 Corinthians 10:7

Ver. 7. Neither be ye idolaters,.... To which they seemed inclined to be, at least there was great danger that such they would be, by carrying their liberty to such a pitch, as to sit in an idol's temple, and there eat things sacrificed unto them; and which the apostle cautions against, and uses arguments to dissuade them from in the following part of this chapter:

as were some of them, as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play: referring to Ex 32:6 when the Israelites, whilst Moses was in the mount, made a molten calf, and worshipped it, built an altar before it, and instituted a feast and a play; and which was performed by dancing about the calf, and singing to the honour of it, Ex 32:18 for their sitting down to eat and drink is not to be understood of an ordinary meal, but of a feast kept in honour of the golden calf, and which they covered by calling it a feast to the Lord; and their playing also was on the same account, in imitation of the Heathens, who made feasts, and appointed plays to the honour of their deities: some indeed interpret {t} this last action of uncleanness, which they committed after their feast was over, and which also was sometimes done in the Heathen temples, the word being sometimes used in this sense; see Ge 39:14 but others understand it of the act of idolatry; so two of the Chaldee paraphrases interpret the words in Exodus {u}; "they rose up to play", harkwn anxlwpb, in strange service, i.e. idolatry; and though the apostle does not mention their punishment, yet it was a very great one, three thousand persons fell the sword on that account, Ex 32:28.

{t} Vid. Jarchi in Exod. xxxii. 6. {u} Targum Jon. ben Uzziel & Jerusalem in ib. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 53. fol. 47. 4. & Shemot Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 89. 3.

1 Corinthians 10:8

Ver. 8. Neither let us commit fornication,.... To which the Corinthians were much addicted: hence the apostle elsewhere, in this epistle, makes use of arguments, to dissuade from it, as he does here, they judging it to be no evil:

as some of them committed; i.e. fornication; as they did at Shittim, with the daughters of Moab, Nu 25:1 which was a stratagem of Balaam's, and the advice he gave to Balak king of Moab, to draw them into that sin, which made way for their commission of idolatry, which they committed by eating the sacrifices of their gods, and bowing down unto them; particularly they joined themselves to Baal Peor, the same with Priapus, one part of whose religious rites lay in acts of uncleanness, and this brought the divine displeasure on them:

and fell in one day three and twenty thousand; in Nu 25:9 the number said to be "twenty and four thousand": and so say all the three Targums on the place {w}, and both the Talmuds {x} and others {y}; on the other hand, all the Greek copies of this epistle, and the Oriental versions, agree in the number of twenty and three thousand; so that it does not appear to be any mistake of copies, in either Testament. To reconcile this matter, or at least to abate the difficulties of it, let the following things be observed; as that the apostle does not write as an historian, and so not with that exactness as Moses did; besides, he does not say that there fell "only" three and twenty thousand, and this beings lesser number than is contained in his, and so a certain truth; moreover, Moses and the apostle use different words in their account; Moses says there died so many, including the heads of the people that were hanged up against the sun, and all that perished by the sword; the apostle says, that there fell such a number, referring only to the latter, who only could be properly said to fall, and not those that were hanged up: now the heads of the people that suffered the first kind of death, might, as is very probable, be a thousand; and they that died in the other way, three and twenty thousand, which make the sums to agree, and both are expressed by Moses, under the general name of a plague or stroke; to all this, that the apostle uses a limiting clause, which Moses does not, and says that these three and twenty thousand fell in one day. So that it is very likely that the heads of the people, supposed to be a thousand, were hanged up in one day; and the three and twenty thousand that fell by the sword died the next, which the apostle only takes notice of. Hence the Jew {z} has no reason to charge the apostle with an error.

{w} Targum Onkelos, Jon. ben Uzziel & Jerusalem in Numb, xxv. 9. {x} T. Hieros Sota, fol. 21. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 1. {y} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 68. 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 127. 3. {z} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 36. p. 468.

1 Corinthians 10:9

Ver. 9. Neither let us tempt Christ,.... As all such persons do, who, presuming on the power and grace of Christ to keep them, or upon what they have received from him, unnecessarily expose themselves to snares and temptations, and so to danger; and as many of the Corinthians did, who are here chiefly respected, who trusting to their gifts and attainments, their knowledge and Christian liberty, would go into an idol's temple, sit down at meat there, and exposed themselves great and imminent danger; which was a tempting Christ, whether he would preserve them or not:

as some of them also tempted; that is, as some of the Israelites tempted, which they did more than once; but what is referred to here, is the time they spake against God and Moses, in Nu 21:5 as appears from the punishment annexed, their being destroyed by serpents. The Arabic version adds "him", meaning Christ, which is a right interpretation of the text; otherwise there would be no force in the apostle's reasoning; for Christ was the angel that went before the Israelites in the wilderness, the angel of God's presence, that bore, and carried, and saved them; he is the Jehovah they tempted at Massah and Meribah, and elsewhere, and God they spake against at this place referred to; hence it is clear that our Lord existed before his incarnation, and that he is truly and properly God; the Alexandrian copy reads, "neither let us tempt God", and so the Ethiopic version: "and were destroyed of serpents"; fiery ones, which were sent among them by the Lord Christ, they tempted and spoke against, which bit them, and of these bites many of them died. This might lead to the consideration, of the original cause of man's sin and fall, and the ruin of human nature, by the means of a serpent; and may be an emblem of the future destruction of the wicked, which will be everlasting fire, prepared for the devil, the old serpent, and his angels.

1 Corinthians 10:10

Ver. 10. Neither murmur ye,.... Against the true apostles of Christ, and faithful ministers of the word; nor against the laws and ordinances of Christ, or providences of God; so some of the members of this church did, or were inclined to do:

as some of them also murmured: as against the Lord, so against Moses and Aaron. The people of Israel were very prone unto, and often guilty of this sin; but what the apostle here has respect unto, is either their murmuring upon the report the spies made of the good land, in Nu 14:1, or that of Korah and his company against Moses and Aaron, as principal officers, who were for setting all upon a level; and of all the people against them, for the death of these men, Nu 16:1,

and were destroyed of the destroyer; meaning either some judgment of God upon them, as the earth's opening and swallowing up Korah and all that belonged unto him; and the fire that came down from heaven, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense; and the plague which swept away fourteen thousand and seven hundred of those that murmured against Moses and Aaron, on the account of the death of the said persons; and any other judgment by which the carcasses of those fell in the wilderness, that murmured upon the report of the spies; or else since angels were usually employed by God, in inflicting such judgments, by the destroyer may be meant an angel, such an one as smote the firstborn in Egypt, and bears the same name, Heb 11:28 and as smote Israel with a pestilence upon David's numbering the people, and was about to have destroyed Jerusalem, had he not been restrained, 2Sa 24:15 and as, smote an hundred fourscore and five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians, in one night, 2Ki 19:35. So that though an angel may be intended, it is not necessary, on account of the character given him, to understand an evil angel; it is true indeed, that Satan is by the Jews {a} called tyxvmh, "the destroyer"; and Samuel, the same with Satan, is called "the angel of death"; to which the allusion is in **Heb 2:14** and evil angels are frequently styled hlbx ykalm, "destroying angels" {b}; as distinct from ministering ones, and to which some think the apostle here refers.

{a} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2. {b} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 72. 1. Beracot, fol. 51. 1.

1 Corinthians 10:11

Ver. 11. Now all these things happened unto them,.... All these punishments came upon them in various ways, not by chance, but by the will of God, and as their sins deserved:

and were for ensamples; to others, to their future posterity, and to the churches of God in all ages:

and they are written for our admonition; that men in a church state particularly may take warning, by these instances of their sin and punishment, to avoid the one and escape the other, and not presume upon their external privileges and favours:

upon whom the ends of the world are come; "or in whom the ends of ages are met"; for the apostle does not mean this material visible world, the universe and all things in it, which has continued, since the writing of this, about two thousand years: but the Jewish ages, or times of the Mosaic economy, which begun when these instances of sin and punishment were, and which now in the times of the apostles were at an end; everything in those periods that were figurative and emblematical, having their fulfilling end and accomplishment, and also were now abrogated: likewise the ages or times of Gentile darkness and ignorance may be intended, which now were come to an end, through the light of the Gospel, and the power of God attending the ministration of it; and hence the ends both of the Jewish and Gentile ages may be said to come upon, or meet in the apostles and their times, who had the advantage of looking back on former ones, and of receiving instruction from thence.

1 Corinthians 10:12

Ver. 12. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth,.... Since the Jewish fathers, who enjoyed such peculiar favours and eminent privileges, had such various judgments inflicted on them; since they stood not, but many of them were visible instances of God's displeasure; they were overthrown and cast down, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and entered not into the land of rest; therefore all such persons who think themselves safe and sure, trusting to themselves, or depending upon the knowledge and gifts they have, the favours and privileges they enjoy; everyone of these should

take heed lest he fall. This advice was exceeding proper, whether it be considered as spoken to true believers, or formal professors; for true believers may fall into temptation, into sin, from a degree of steadfastness in the Gospel, and from a lively and comfortable exercise of grace; but not finally, totally, and irrecoverably; since they are enclosed in the arms of everlasting love, secured in the hands of Christ, built on a foundation that will never fail, and are kept by an almighty power which can never be overcome; but yet, since they may fall to the dishonour of God, the reproach of the Gospel of Christ, the grieving of the Spirit of God, the wounding of their own souls, the stumbling of weak believers, and the strengthening of the hands of the wicked; such an exhortation is not superfluous, even to such; and many and strong are the reasons and arguments why they should take heed lest they fall; nor are admonitions needless to that which God's decree and promise secure: since these are often the means in and by which God executes his decree, and makes good his promise; see Ac 27:22. Moreover, if this exhortation be considered as given to formal professors, it is very pertinent; for such as these may fall, as they often do, from that which they seemed to have, from the truths of the Gospel, and a profession of them, and into scandalous sins, and at last into condemnation; and the rather since the apostasy of such persons is injurious to the honour and interest of true religion; hereby the ways of God are evil spoken of, the name of Christ blasphemed, profane sinners hardened, and weak believers stumbled, as by the falls of real Christians: besides, it must be worse for themselves, who hereby bring upon themselves a severe punishment; see **2Pe 2:21** and indeed these seem to be the persons the apostle chiefly respects; not such who truly: thought they stood, and did really stand; for such stand in the true grace and love of God, in Christ, in whom they are chosen, and by whom they are redeemed and saved, and by that faith which he is the author and finisher of; and so shall never finally and totally fall away; but such "that thinketh", o dokwn, "who seemeth", to himself and others, "that he standeth"; and manifestly designs such who were swelled with a vain opinion of themselves, their gifts and knowledge; who tempted God, and "trusted" to themselves, as the Ethiopic version reads it, and despised weak believers; but lest real believers should be hereby discouraged, the apostle adds,

1 Corinthians 10:13

Ver. 13. There hath no temptation taken you,.... Some, indeed, understand these words by way of reproof, that whereas their trials and exercises which had attended them were very light ones, and comparatively trivial; and yet they had given way to these temptations, and had sunk under them, and fallen by them, for which they were greatly to be blamed; or as threatening them with something more severe than anything as yet had befallen them, signifying that though they had as yet stood, and thought they still should; yet they ought not to presume on their own strength, or depend on outward things; since the temptations that as yet had come upon them were such as men might easily bear; there was no great trial or experiment of their grace and strength by them; they had not yet resisted unto blood; there were heavier and severer trials they might expect; and therefore should not be too secure in themselves, but take heed lest when these things should come upon them, in such a time of great temptation, they should fall away: but I rather think the words are spoken by way of comfort to the saints; intimating that as no temptation or affliction had befallen them, so none should, but what either came from men, or was common to men, or which men by divine assistance, and under divine influence, might bear; and therefore should not distress themselves with the apprehensions of it, as if it was some strange or unusual thing, and as if they must unavoidably perish and be destroyed by it:

but such as is common to man: "or is humane". There are divine temptations, or such as come from God; God may be said to tempt his people, as he did Abraham, by enjoining them things very hard and disagreeable to nature; and by afflicting them either in body or estate; and by withdrawing his presence, and withholding the communications of his grace, to try their faith, show them their weakness and need of himself. There are also diabolical temptations, or such as come from Satan; who tempts by soliciting to sin, by suggesting blasphemous thoughts, and filling with doubts and fears; and by dissuading from the use of means, as attending at the throne of grace, and on the word and ordinances: but the apostle here speaks of human temptations, such as come from men; meaning reproaches and persecutions, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; and which are temptations or trials of grace, as of faith and patience, and under which there is great danger of falling away: now when the apostle says that none but such temptations had befallen them, he does not mean that they had been, or were, or would be entirely free from other temptations; but that those which they mostly dreaded, and were in danger by, were but human, such as came from men, and were, as our version suggests, common to Christian men, their brethren, who were in the flesh as they, and might be endured by men, strengthened by the grace of God; wherefore they had nothing to fear from hence, especially when they considered the faithfulness, care, and power of God next observed:

but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: no man can be tempted, afflicted, or persecuted by men, but by a divine permission, and that voluntary; nor more than, or above that measure which God hath determined; who proportions the affliction to the strength he determines and promises to give, and does give, and the strength of his people to the temptation or affliction he suffers to befall them; for which his faithfulness is engaged, having promised that as their day is, their strength shall be; that he will never leave them nor forsake them, and that he will bear, and carry, and save them unto the uttermost, and that they shall hold on and out unto the end:

but will with the temptation make a way to escape; for as he by his permission makes way for the temptation or affliction, which otherwise could not come; and as he knows how, in what manner, and at the best time, to deliver his people out of temptations; so he does and will, in his providence, open a way that they may escape out of them, at least so as not to be overpressed and destroyed by them:

that ye may be able to bear it; for God does not always think fit to remove at once an affliction or temptation, though at the earnest request of his people, as in the case of Paul, 2Co 12:7 yet he gives them grace sufficient to endure and stand up under it, yea, to get the victory of it, to be more that conquerors, and triumph over it.

1 Corinthians 10:14

Ver. 14. Wherefore, my dearly beloved,.... Some copies add, "brethren"; as do the Complutensian edition, and Ethiopic version; all which endearing epithets are used to persuade to attend to the exhortation enforced upon the foregoing considerations; since the Jewish fathers, who were idolaters, fell so much under the divine displeasure; and since such who thought they stood were so liable to fall, and the temptation to which they exposed themselves was of such a dangerous consequence; therefore,

flee from idolatry; as what is most dishonourable, pernicious, and abominable: the apostle's meaning is, not only that they would not worship idols, or commit plain downright acts of idolatry; but that they would stand at the greatest distance from idols, not so much as go into an idol's temple, and there sit down and eat; which if not a real act of idolatry, had at least the show of one; and his sense is, that they would abstain from all appearance of idolatry, from every occasion of it, and whatsoever led unto it; particularly he means, that they would not eat of things sacrificed to idols as such, and in an idol's temple; which he considers as a species of idolatrous worship, and by a similar instance he after proves it to be so, even a partaking of the table of devils.

1 Corinthians 10:15

Ver. 15. I speak as to wise men,.... That is, what he was now going to say concerning the Lord's supper, and the communion which believers have with Christ in it, which they as Christians must have knowledge of; and concerning the participation of the altar the Israelites had, who ate of the sacrifices of it, which many of them, being Jews, as such must know; and therefore being fully persuaded of the propriety and pertinency of the instances he was about to produce, and of the justness of his reasoning upon them, he appeals to the Corinthians, as men of wisdom and understanding in these things, and makes them themselves judges thereof:

judge what I say; consider and weigh the matter well, and you will discern and judge that what I say is proper and pertinent, just and right.

1 Corinthians 10:16

Ver. 16. The cup of blessing, which we bless,.... Meaning the cup of wine used in the Lord's supper, which being set apart for that service, is taken up, and the name of the Lord called upon over it; and he is blessed and praised for his wondrous love and grace, in the gift and mission of his Son, to shed his precious blood for us, for the remission of our sins; the whole church joining with the administrator, both in the act of blessing and praise over the cup, and in the participation of it. This cup is so called in allusion to the cup of wine used at common meals, or at the passover among the Jews, which they used to take and bless God with, and give him thanks for their mercies, and was commonly called hkrb lv owk, "the cup of blessing" {c}.

"Three things (says R. Judah {d}) shorten a man's days and years; when they give him the book of the law to read, and he does not read, Krbl hkrb lv owk, "the cup of blessing to bless with", and he does not bless, and when he accustoms himself to government."

Again, so they comment on Ge 21:8 {e}

"what is the meaning "of the day that Isaac was weaned?" the holy blessed God will make a feast for the righteous, in the day that he weans the people of the seed of Isaac, and after they eat and drink, they give to Abraham Krbl hkrb lv owk, "the cup of blessing to bless with"; he says to them, I will not bless, because Ishmael sprung from me; they give it to Isaac, he says to them, I am not fit to bless, for Esau came from me; they give it to Jacob, he says unto them I will not bless, for I married two sisters in their lifetime, which the law forbids me; they say to Moses, take it and bless, he says to them I will not bless, for I was not worthy to enter into the land of Israel, neither in life nor in death; they say to Joshua, take it and bless, he says I cannot bless, for I am not worthy of a son, as it is written, Nun his son, Joshua his son; they say to David, take thou it and bless, he saith unto them I will bless, and it is comely for me to bless; as it is said, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord"."

Once more they ask {f},

"what is a beautiful cup? hkrb lv owk, "the cup of blessing";"

and which, they {g} observe, ought to hold the fourth part of a log of wine. These instances clearly show from whence the apostle borrowed this expression, and which he chooses to make use of because well known to the Jews, and as being very appropriate to the cup in the Lord's supper, he is speaking of:

is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? it is; that is, it is a sign, symbol, and token of fellowship with Christ in his death; it is a means of having communion with him, and of enjoying the blessings of grace which come through his blood; such as righteousness, peace, pardon, and atonement; all which true believers are made partakers of; and this part of the Lord's supper, the cup being drank of, is a testimony and an indication of the same: "the bread which we break"; which is the other part of the ordinance, which, though performed first, is mentioned last, because of the argument the apostle pursues upon it. The act of breaking the bread does not only design the distribution and eating of it, but the manner also in which it is prepared for distribution and eating, namely by breaking it into pieces; and which is aptly expressive of the body of Christ, which was wounded, bruised, and broken for us:

is it not the communion of the body of Christ? it is; for not only believers by this act have communion with his mystical body, the church, but with his natural body, which was broken for them they in a spiritual sense and by faith eat his flesh, as well as drink his blood, and partake of him, of his sufferings and death, endured in his body, and of all the blessings of grace consequent thereon. The apostle's view in this instance, and his argument upon it, is this, that if believers, by eating the bread and drinking the wine in the Lord's supper, spiritually partake of Christ, of his body and of his blood, and have communion with him; then such who eat of things sacrificed unto idols, have in so doing communion with them, and partake of the table of devils, and so are guilty of idolatry, which he would have them avoid.

{c} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 11. 3, 4. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 51. 1, 2. & 52. 1. Pesachim, fol. 105. 2. 106. 1. 109. 2. {d} T. Bab. Berncot, fol. 55. 1. {e} Capthor, fol. 47. 1. {f} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 76. 2. & Erubin, fol. 29. 2. {g} Piske Tosephot in Sabbat, art. 287. & Erubin, art. 46. 157. Vid. Zohar in Exod. fol. 57. 3. & 59. 2, 3. & 65. 1.

1 Corinthians 10:17

Ver. 17. For we being many, are one bread and one body,.... The several members of the church of Christ; particular believers are indeed many, considered in themselves, in their own persons; yet by virtue of their union to Christ, which is manifested by their communion with him, they are one bread with him, the bread of life, and one body with his, signified by the bread; they are of one and the same mass and lump, they are incorporated together, they are flesh of his flesh, and one spirit with him: or they are one bread and body among themselves; as bread consists of many grains of corn which have been ground and kneaded together, and make up one loaf; and as the members of an human body are many, and make up one body; so believers, though they are many, yet are one body, of which Christ is the head; one in union with him and one another, and one in their communion together at the Lord's table; and so the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "as therefore the bread is one, so we all are one body"; having communion with Christ and one another:

for we are all partakers of that one bread; in the supper, which is all of the same nature and kind, and is a symbol of the body of Christ, and our fellowship with him and each other. The application designed is this, that as believers, by partaking of the same bread, appear to be the same body, and of the same mass and lump with one another; so such as eat things sacrificed unto idols, appear to be of the same mass and lump with Heathen idolaters: Dr. Lightfoot has very pertinently produced some passages out of Maimonides, concerning mixing, associating, or communion of neighbours in courts on sabbath eves, that so they may enter into each other's houses on the sabbath day, for the illustration of this passage; of which mixing the Jews have a whole treatise in their Misna and Talmud, which they call Erubin; and of which they say {h}

"but how is this mixture or association? it is thus, they mix together, dxa lkamb, "in one food", which they prepare on the eve of the sabbath; and it is as if they should say, for we are all mixed together, and have all one food; nor does anyone of us divide the right from his neighbour--they do not mix in courts, but hmylv tpb "with a whole loaf" only; though the mass or lump baked may be the quantity of a "seah", yet if it is broken, they do not associate with it; but if it is whole, though it be but the value of a farthing, they mix with it--how do they mix or associate together in the courts? they collect hmylv txa hlh, "one whole cake", out of every house, and put all in one vessel, in one of the houses of the court--and the whole association being gathered together, blesses the Lord--and eats:"

upon which the above learned writer observes, that if it were customary among the Israelites, to join together in one political or economical body, by the eating of many loaves collected from this, and that, and the other man; we are much more associated together into one body, by eating one and the same bread, appointed us by our Saviour.

{h} Maimon. Hilch. Erubin, c. 1. sect. 6, 8, 16.

1 Corinthians 10:18

Ver. 18. Behold Israel after the flesh,.... So the apostle calls them, to distinguish them from the Israel of God, the spiritual Israel, whether Jews or Gentiles; who are born again, believe in the true Messiah, worship God in a spiritual manner, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in fleshly things; but these were the descendants of Jacob or Israel by carnal generation, were carnal men, in the flesh, in a state of unregeneracy, and were employed in a carnal worship, in the observance of carnal commandments and ordinances; these the apostle directs to, to see, consider, and take notice of what they were doing; from whence some instruction might be taken, for the further clearing of the present point:

are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? yes, they are. The priests and Levites who waited at the altar, and ministered about holy things there, who brought the sacrifices and laid them upon the altar of the burnt offerings, where the altar consumed and devoured one part by fire, and that which was left they ate among themselves; and so as they had communion with one another in eating, they partook of the altar, of the things, or sacrifices of the altar, and showed themselves to be of the Jewish religion, and professed and declared that they worshipped the God of Israel, and would be thought to have communion with him in so doing; in like manner, such who eat of things sacrificed to idols, declared themselves to be idolaters, to be of the Pagan religion, to be worshippers of idols, and to have fellowship with them.

1 Corinthians 10:19

Ver. 19. What say I then?.... Or may be objected to, or inferred from, what I say;

that an idol is anything, or that which is sacrificed to idols is anything? to which must be answered, as the Syriac version reads,
al, "no", by no means; by running the parallel between Christians having communion with the body and blood of Christ, in the Lord's supper, through eating the bread and drinking the wine, the Israelites partaking of the altar, by eating of the sacrifices of it, and men's joining with idols and idolaters, by eating things sacrificed to idols; it follows not that an idol has anything of deity in it, and is to be set upon a level with God, when, as he had said before, an idol was nothing, and what he now said did not at all contradict that; or that things offered to idols are to be had in the same account, or to be equalled to, or be thought to have any thing in them, as the elements of the bread and wine in the Lord's supper, or the sacrifices that were offered by the Israelites on the altar, according to the divine command; he meant no such thing, but only argued from the greater to the lesser, and his sense is more fully declared in the next words.

1 Corinthians 10:20

Ver. 20. But I say,.... This is my sense and meaning,

that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice unto devils, and not to God; reference is had to De 32:17 for what the Gentiles sacrificed, though they did not sacrifice intentionally to the idols of gold, silver, wood, and stone, but to God in them, as they pretended; yet inasmuch as in such worship and sacrifices they were directed, instigated, influenced, and assisted by devils, who took up their residence in these idols, and gave forth their oracles from them, they sacrificed to them; and which some have done, as in India and China, professedly and openly, and all other idolaters, eventually, virtually, and covertly:

and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils; as all wicked men have, in the commission of any lust, sin, or immorality; and as all idolaters have in their superstitious practices, and idolatrous worship; and if grace prevent not, will have to all eternity in everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; wherefore the apostle would have the Corinthians flee from idolatry, and all appearance of it, and abstain from eating things offered to idols, of which they could not eat without having fellowship with devils; this he says, to deter them from such practices, which must be very horrible and shocking, and bespeaks in him great care of them, and affection for them.

1 Corinthians 10:21

Ver. 21. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils,.... Not only they ought not, but they could not rightly, truly, and really drink the cup of wine in the Lord's supper, in the true faith of Christ's bloodshed, and his sacrifice offered up for them, in remembrance of his love, and to the honour of his name; and also the cup of wine of libations, poured out and drank to the honour of the Heathen deities; these things are utterly inconsistent; no man can serve two masters, God and mammon, or God and Baal; nor is there any concord between Christ and Belial, or agreement between the temple of God and idols:

ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils; no man can spiritually, however he may externally partake of the entertainment provided, on the table of the Lord, at his supper instituted and kept in commemoration of him; and also with gust and pleasure, and without any concern for the peace of weak minds, and the honour of God, eat things set upon a table in an idol's temple, and before the idol, and as sacrificed unto it.

1 Corinthians 10:22

Ver. 22. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?.... As they do who are guilty of idolatry in any shape: nothing is more highly resented by God, or stirs him up more to wrath and fury, and to inflict punishment; he cannot bear, nor will he admit of a rival in religious worship; he is a God jealous of his own honour; nor will he give, or suffer to be given by others, his praise and glory to graven images:

are we stronger than he? to give into idolatrous practices, is to proclaim and enter into a war against God; and what madness must this be? who can be so sottish and stupid as to think of succeeding? when God is omnipotent, and man a poor feeble impotent creature, a worm, and but dust and ashes: thus the apostle dissuades from idolatry, and every species and branch of it; partly from its ill effect, in bringing men into fellowship with devils; and partly from the impossibility of practising it, in consistence with a true and real participation of the cup and table of the Lord; and from the absurdity and stupidity of it, and its dangerous consequence, in exposing men to the vengeance of an almighty incensed Being.

1 Corinthians 10:23

Ver. 23. All things are lawful for me,.... All sorts of food are lawful to be eaten, every creature of God is good, there is nothing common or unclean in itself, polluted or polluting; and so things offered to idols may be lawfully eaten, but not as such, or in an idol's temple, or before a weak brother; to do which is contrary to the honour of God, and the edification of the saints: and therefore

all things are not expedient; to be done always, and in all places, and before all persons. The apostle suggests, that though they might be lawful to him, and he might make use of his liberty in eating them; yet they might not be expedient, or of service, but on the contrary hurtful to others; and which therefore ought to be judged a sufficient reason for the omission of them:

all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not; though things of an indifferent nature may be lawfully used, yet they do not always tend to the edification of others, which should be consulted; and when this is the case, they ought to be disused. This is observed in answer to an objection taken from the doctrine of Christian liberty, allowing the free use of all the creatures, and disengaging men from an observance of the distinction of meats and drinks which the apostle grants; and yet argues from his own example, and the edification of the saints, that this is not always to be closely pursued; but believers should forego what they have a right to use, when the peace and welfare of their fellow Christians require it.

1 Corinthians 10:24

Ver. 24. Let no man seek his own,.... His carnal pleasure and private advantage in eating things sacrificed to "idols", to the hurt and disadvantage of his brethren; otherwise it is lawful for a man to seek his own good, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, to seek for the necessaries of life, his spiritual peace and comfort, and his everlasting welfare and happiness; but then he should not only seek his own,

but every man another's wealth, or "that which is another's"; for the word "wealth" is not in the original text. The apostle's meaning is, that a man, in the use of things indifferent, should not seek the gratifying of his sensual appetite or other passions, what may be pleasing or profitable to himself; but should consult the profit and edification of others.

1 Corinthians 10:25

Ver. 25. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles,.... the word makellon, rendered "shambles", here used, is a Latin word, and is made use of by Latin writers in the same sense as here, for a place where food was sold {i}. The original of the name is said {k} to be this; one Macellus, a very wicked and profane man, being for his robberies and filthy life condemned to die, a place was built in his house by Aemylius and Fulvius, censors, for selling of provisions, and which from his name was called "Macellum". The Syriac version retains the word here, and so do the Talmudists, and Rabbins {l} frequently; who say {m},

"Nylwqm, the "shambles", and the butchers of Israel, though flesh of them is found in the hand of a stranger, it is free:"

into these places the priests sent to be sold what was offered to their idols, which they could not dispense with themselves, or thought not lawful to make use of; for the Egyptians, as Herodotus says {n}, used to cut off the heads of their beasts that were sacrificed, and carry them into the market and sell them to the Greeks, and if there were no buyers they cast them into the river. Now the apostle allows, that such meat that was sold in the shambles might be bought and eat of, but not in an idol's temple; there was a difference between an idol's temple, and eating things sacrificed to idols there, and buying them in shambles or meat market, and eating them at home:

that eat; buy, carry home, dress and eat, in your own houses:

asking no question; whether it was sacrificed to idols, or not:

for conscience sake; either a man's own, which may be hurt, wounded, and defiled, by eating contrary to it, should he know that what he eats had been offered to an idol; whereas if he asks no questions, and knows nothing of the matter, his conscience will not be afflicted: or else another man's that may stand by whilst the meat is bought, and sold; and who hearing questions asked and answered, and yet observes the meat, though sacrificed to idols, dressed and ate by the buyer, his conscience being weak, may be offended and grieved.

{i} Vid. Suet. Vita Jul. Caesar, c. 43. & Tiber. Nero, c. 34. {k} Alex. ab Alex Genial Diet. l. 3. c. 23. {l} T. Hieros. Chagiga, fol. 76. 2. T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29. 2. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 75. 3. {m} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 95. 1. {n} L. 2. c. 39.

1 Corinthians 10:26

Ver. 26. For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof,.... Which words are taken out of Ps 24:1 and to be understood of Christ, who by creation and preservation is Lord of the whole earth, and as Mediator has all in his possession; and having broken down the middle wall of partition, gives his people the free use of all creatures, of the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea, and the trees, fruits, and plants of the earth, which are the fulness thereof; and therefore as the saints have a full right from Christ, to make use of all the creatures in a moderate way, and with thankfulness, they need not fear being defiled by any of them; provided they do not act contrary to the honour of God, and in favour of an idol, or against their own conscience, and the peace of weak believers.

1 Corinthians 10:27

Ver. 27. If any of them that believe not,.... In Christ, and make no profession of faith in him; but are infidels to his person, office, grace, righteousness, Gospel, and ordinances, as there were many such at Corinth: "bid you" to a feast; invite you to dine or sup with them in their own houses:

and ye be disposed to go; the apostle does not lay any commands upon them to go, or not go, but leaves them to their own will, inclination, and discretion; for as circumstances might be, it might be either proper or improper to listen to an invitation from such a quarter; but if they were inclined, and did think fit to go, which they might without sin; for as it is lawful to trade, so to eat and drink with unbelievers; then his advice is,

whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no questions for conscience sake; that is, as before, as whether it is offered to idols or not; lest either their own, or another's conscience should be hurt thereby.

1 Corinthians 10:28

Ver. 28. But if any man say unto you,.... Either a weak believer, to prevent the doing of what he thought to be sinful; or the unbeliever, that invites to try the integrity of his Christian guest, and to draw him into a snare:

this is offered in sacrifice unto idols; the meat that is in that dish, or that portion of food which stands in such a part of the table, came out of an idol's temple, and was sacrificed to idols; which with the Jews were forbidden {o}: for

"everything that came out of an idol's temple was forbidden, and was reckoned as the sacrifices of the dead; for it was not thought possible it could be there, and not offered to idols:"

now when any at the feast, either believer or unbeliever, should thus point at any particular dish, and affirm this of it; then the apostle's advice is,

eat not for his sake that showed it: who, if a weak believer, will be grieved and wounded; and if an infidel, will be hardened in his impiety, and be furnished with an opportunity of reproaching the Christians, as variable, insincere, and unfaithful in their religion:

and for conscience sake; which is explained in the following verse:

the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; which words are neither in the Syriac version, nor in the Vulgate Latin, nor in the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and are thought by some to be added, from 1Co 10:26 though the repetition of them is far from being impertinent; since they contain a very good reason why such a man should abstain from things sacrificed to idols, seeing there is such a plenty and variety of creatures for his use, which he has a right to eat of; and therefore is under no necessity to eat of such sacrifices, nor is it any hardship upon him to forbear the use of them.

{o} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 32. 2.

1 Corinthians 10:29

Ver. 29. Conscience I say, not thine own,.... Which is well informed about these things, and is fully persuaded that an idol is nothing, and that things sacrificed to idols are nothing; and as they cannot profit a man, or help forward his comfort, peace, and happiness, so they cannot hinder them:

but of the others; either the weak brother, or the unbelieving master of the feast; it is for the sake of their consciences such food must not be eaten, lest either the one should be grieved, or the other reproach:

for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? this is not an objection of the Corinthians, setting forth the unreasonableness of being condemned, for the use of their Christian liberty by another's conscience, be he who he will, believer or unbeliever, when they had an undoubted right to such an use, and their own consciences did not condemn them: but they are the words of the apostle, expressing his own sense, that it was not right and fitting that he should make use of his liberty, and eat under such a circumstance as here pointed out, and so his liberty should be condemned as sinful by another man's conscience; since the weak believer would be apt to censure, judge, and condemn him as a libertine, and the unbeliever as an atheist, or one that had no regard to any religion at all; and therefore he reasons, that it was best to abstain from eating, rather than expose his liberty to such a censure and condemnation.

1 Corinthians 10:30

Ver. 30. For if I by grace be a partaker,.... Either of Christian liberty, through the grace of God; or of the creatures God has given men to eat of through his goodness, and which are enjoyed by the saints with thankfulness:

why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? that is, why should I expose myself to evil tongues, the blasphemies and reproaches of men, by eating things of this kind, under this circumstance, when there are so many creatures I can use without offence, and be thankful for? or why should my liberty be reproached through an imprudent use of it, for which I have the utmost reason to be thankful? wherefore upon the whole it is best to deny one's self in such a case, rather than risk one's character, the glory of God, and the honour of religion.

1 Corinthians 10:31

Ver. 31. Whether therefore ye eat or drink,.... Which may principally refer to eating things sacrificed to idols, and drinking the libations of wine offered to them, since this is the subject of the apostle's discourse; in doing of which he directs them to have the glory of God in view, and so to conduct, that that end may be answered: and it may also be applied to common eating and drinking, or to ordinary meals upon food, about which there is no dispute; and which common actions of life are done to the glory of God, when every mercy is considered and owned as coming from him; and when we confess ourselves unworthy of any; and when we ascribe all we have to the free and unmerited goodness of God; and enjoy every mercy of this kind, as a fruit of our Father's love to us, as a blessing of the covenant, and as coming to us through the blood of Christ; when we are contented and satisfied with what we have, and act faith continually on God for future fresh supplies, and give thanks for all we receive: and if this, then much more eating and drinking in an ordinance way should be directed to the glory of God and Christ, as eating the bread, and drinking the wine in the Lord's supper; and which is so done, when it is done in a decent and reverend manner, in the exercise of faith, discerning the Lord's body, eating his flesh, and drinking his blood in a spiritual manner, without dependence on the actions done, and in remembrance of the love of God and Christ.

Or whatsoever ye do; in a natural, civil, or religious respect, in preaching, hearing, praying, fasting, giving of alms, &c. whatever in the closet, in the family, in the church, or in the world, in private, or in public:

do all to the glory of God; God's glory is the end of all his works and actions; in creation, providence, and grace; in election, in the covenant, in the blessings and promises of it, in redemption, in the effectual calling, and in bringing many sons to glory. The same is the end of all Christ's actions, as man and Mediator, of his doctrines and miracles, of his obedience, sufferings, and death in this world, and of his interceding life in the other; who, as he lives to make intercession for us, lives unto God, to the glory of God; and therefore the glory of God should be the end of all our actions: besides, without this no action can be truly called a good one; if a man seeks himself, his own glory, and popular applause, or has any sinister and selfish end in view in what he does, it cannot be said, nor will it be accounted by God to be a good action. The Jews have a saying much like this, Mymv Mvl wyhy Kyvem lk "let all thy works be done to the glory of God" {p}; which one of their commentators {q} explains thus:

"even when thou art employed in eating and drinking, and in the business of life, thou shalt not design thy bodily profit, but that thou mayest be strong to do the will of thy Creator."

{p} Pirke Abot, c. 2, sect. 12. {q} Bartenora in ib.

1 Corinthians 10:32

Ver. 32. Give none offence,.... Avoid everything that may be the occasion of offence, of the stumbling and falling of others; whether things indifferent, when they are offensive to weak minds, and grieve, and wound, and stumble them; especially things sinful, which as they offend God, and are therefore called "offences", so they are offensive to the churches of Christ, and are cognizable by them; they are staggering and stumbling to weak believers, when committed by professors of religion; are the means of inducing others to sin, and of hardening profane sinners in their iniquities, and give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme: but things that are good, and are made our incumbent duty, are not to be avoided, though persons may be offended thereat; such as the pure preaching of the Gospel, the profession of it, and submission to the ordinances thereof; for an offence is either taken or given; to give offence is one thing, which we should carefully avoid; and to take it, when there is no just reason for it, is another, and not to be regarded:

neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God; which may be considered as having a peculiar respect to the people of God: the two first of these, namely, Jews and Gentiles, being what constituted the first churches, and this at Corinth, so that they may be thought to be the parts, and the church the whole; and the apostle first mentions the one, and then the other, signifying, that they were not to give offence neither to single persons, nor to the whole church; and particularly in the case of eating things offered to idols, care was to be taken that neither Jews nor Gentiles were offended, being both members of the church. Or these may be considered as including all sorts of persons; for Jews and Gentiles include the whole world, and may here mean all that are without, that have no true faith in Christ, nor any spiritual knowledge of him; and "the church", all such as know him, believe in him, and profess his name: so that the apostle's sense is, that care should be taken that no offence be given to any sort of men, neither to the men of the world, of whatsoever character, nor to professors of religion, and more especially the latter; since offending one of the least of them that believe in Christ, is displeasing to him; and since he was so careful to guard against the offence of them, and will, by his angels, at the last day, gather out of his kingdom all such as offend; and has ordered his churches to mark them which cause offences and divisions; and since it is so hard a thing to reconcile an offended brother, who is harder to be won than a strong castle; though that is not his excellency, yet as it makes the case so difficult, it should be guarded against.

1 Corinthians 10:33

Ver. 33. Even as I please all men in all things,.... The apostle sets himself as an example, though he was far from being a man pleaser, in the bad sense of that phrase; nor must these all things, in which he is said to please all men, be taken in the largest sense; but are to be understood of things indifferent, which might be done or avoided, without breaking the law of or contradicting the Gospel of Christ, or any of its rules and ordinances, to all which the apostle was inviolably attached; nor did he in these things seek to please men, but in all to act the part of a faithful servant of Christ, and steward of the mysteries of grace; see **1Co 9:19**. Moreover, it is not to bc thought that in fact he pleased all men; it is certain he did not; but he studied to please them; he did all that in him lay; he took the most proper methods to do it, though they were sometimes ineffectual.

Not seeking my own profit; worldly profit and advantage, riches, wealth, the emoluments of life, ease, rest, and pleasure; and chiefly he means the use of liberty in things indifferent; he was willing to forego all for the good of others:

but the profit of many, that they may be saved; he neglected his own private advantage, and the gratifying of himself in anything which was otherwise lawful, when he saw that would be an offence to others, be an hinderance of the Gospel, and deter any from embracing the Christian doctrine; that so he might be the, means of promoting the spiritual profit and edification of many souls, that they might be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; He does not say all, but many, knowing that all will not be saved, only the elect of God; and whereas he knew not who these were, nor where they lay, he behaved in this manner to all men, that he might be the instrument of the spiritual good and salvation of the chosen ones among them, by preaching the Gospel to them without offence.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 11

In this chapter the apostle blames both men and women for their indecent appearance in public worship, and admonishes them how they should behave with the reasons of it; and also corrects some abuses and irregularities among them, at, or before, the Lord's supper; which leads him to give a particular account of that ordinance, of the nature, use, and design of it, and some directions about the performance of it, and attendance on it. He begins with an exhortation suitable to what he had said in the latter part of the preceding chapter, to follow him, as he followed Christ, 1Co 11:1 and praises them for their remembrance of him, and for the keeping the ordinances as they were delivered to them; that is, as many of them, and as far as they did so, 1Co 11:2. And in order to make way for what he had on his mind to reprove them for, and admonish them about, he observes, that as God is the head of Christ, and Christ the head of every man, so the man is the head of the woman, 1Co 11:3 wherefore for him to appear, and join in public worship, with his head covered, is to dishonour his head, 1Co 11:4 as, on the other hand, for a woman to have her head uncovered in divine service, is to dishonour her head, it being all one as if her head was shaved, 1Co 11:5 wherefore it is concluded, that if it is a shame for her to be shaved or shorn, she ought to be covered when attending the worship of God, 1Co 11:6. The reason why a man should be uncovered at such a time is, because he is the image and glory of God; and the reason why the woman should be covered is, because she is the glory of the man, is made for his glory, and to be in subjection to him, of which the covering is a token, 1Co 11:7 and that she is so, is argued from the order of the creation, man being not of the woman, but the woman of the man, 1Co 11:8 and from the end of the creation, man being not for the woman, but the woman for the man, 1Co 11:9. Another reason why the woman should be covered at the time of public worship is, because of the angels then present, 1Co 11:10 but lest on this account the woman should be treated with contempt by the man, the apostle observes, that they are not, and cannot be without one another; and that they are from each other in different senses, and both from the Lord, 1Co 11:11, and then proceeds to other arguments, showing that women should not appear uncovered in the house of God: one is taken from the uncomeliness of it, which must be so judged by everyone, 1Co 11:13 and another is taken from nature and custom, and the contrary in men, which is disagreeable and shameful; for, if, the dictates of nature, it is shameful in men to wear long hair, it must be comely and decent in women, and what is for their glory, to wear such hair, since it is their covering, 1Co 11:14. But if, after all the apostle had said on this subject, there should be any contentious persons disposed to wrangle about it, he observes, that they were not proper persons to be continued in the church, 1Co 11:16 and then proceeds to take notice of some ill conduct of many in the Corinthian church, at, or before, the eating of the Lord's supper; partly through schisms and factions, they meeting in parties for that purpose; which he had heard of, and had reason to believe, and could not praise them for; their coming together in such a manner, being for the worse, and not the better, 1Co 11:18 and the rather he gave credit to this report, since there were heresies among them, which issue in schisms and divisions, and which must be expected, that hereby Christ's faithful ones might be distinguished from others, 1Co 11:19 when he goes on to show how they abused the ordinance of the supper, not only by meeting together in parties, but by indulging their sensual appetites in eating and drinking, which was the principal end in coming together, and not the Lord's supper, 1Co 11:20 for they stayed not one for another, but one took his supper before the other, and so the one was full, and the other hungry, 1Co 11:21 the evil of which the apostle exposes by observing the indecency of such a conduct, when they had houses of their own to feast in; the contempt which they cast upon the church of God, and the shame they exposed the poor and hungry unto, all which was far from being praiseworthy, 1Co 11:22 upon which he gives a particular account of the Lord's supper, as he had it from Christ himself, the time when, the manner in which it was instituted and celebrated by him, the significance of its several parts, its use, and end, and the continuance of it until the second coming of Christ, 1Co 11:23 and then he proceeds to show the evil of an unworthy partaking of this ordinance, how that such are guilty of, and vilify and reproach the body and blood of Christ, 1Co 11:27 wherefore previous to a participation of it a man should examine himself as to his repentance towards God, and faith in Christ, 1Co 11:28 seeing such that are unworthy communicants bring condemnation on themselves, not having spiritual judgment to discern the Lord's body in the ordinance, 1Co 11:29 and so become liable to diseases and death itself, which was the case of several in the Corinthian church, 1Co 11:30 whereas, if persons would but examine and judge of themselves before hand, they would not be exposed to such judgments, 1Co 11:31 though the people of God, when they are afflicted, should look upon their afflictions, not as punishments, but as chastisements inflicted on them, for this end, that they might not be condemned with the world of the ungodly hereafter, 1Co 11:32. Wherefore the apostle's advice is, that when they came to the Lord's table they would not form themselves into factions and parties, and one part of them eat before, and separate from the rest, but that they would tarry till they all come together, and then join as one body and one bread, 1Co 11:33 and that if any man was an hungry, he should eat at home, and not have an ante-supper in the house of God, indulging his appetite there to his condemnation, and those that joined with him, 1Co 11:34 and the chapter is concluded with an intimation, that besides these irregularities, there were others in this church which the apostle signifies he would correct, when he should be in person with them.

Ver. 1. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. &c] These words more properly close the preceding chapter, than begin a new one, and refer to the rules therein laid down, and which the apostle would have the Corinthians follow him in, as he did Christ: that as he sought, both in private and public, and more especially in his ministerial service, to do all things to the glory of God, and not for his own popular applause, in which he imitated Christ, who sought not his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him; so he would have them do all they did in the name of Christ, and to the glory of God by him: and that as he studied to exercise a conscience void of offence to God and man, in doing which he was a follower of Christ, who was holy in his nature, and harmless and inoffensive in his conversation; so he was desirous that they should likewise be blameless, harmless, and without offence until the day of Christ: and that whereas he endeavoured to please men in all things lawful and indifferent, wherein he copied after Christ, who by his affable and courteous behaviour, and humble deportment, sought to please and gratify all with whom he conversed; so he would have them not to mind high things, but condescend to men of low estates, and become all things to all, that they might gain some as he did: and once more, that as he sought not his own pleasure and advantage, but the salvation of others, in imitation of Christ, who pleased not himself, but took upon him, and bore cheerfully, the reproaches of men, that he might procure good for them; so the apostle suggests, that it would be right in them not to seek to have their own wills in every thing, but rather to please their neighbour for good to edification.

1 Corinthians 11:2

Ver. 2. Now I praise you, brethren,.... The apostle prefaces what he had to say by way of commendation of them; though some think that this is said in an ironical way, because there are many things both in this chapter, and in the following part of this epistle, delivered in a way of reproof; but whoever considers the change of style in 1Co 11:17 will easily see, that this must be spoken seriously here, and is designed to raise the attention to what he was about to say, and to prepare their minds to receive, and take in good part, what he should say by way of rebuke; who could not well be angry when he praised them for what was praiseworthy in them, and reproved them for that which was blamable. The things he commends them for are as follow,

that ye remember me in all things; that is, either that they were mindful of him, though at a distance from them, and had such a veneration for him, and paid such respect to him, and to his judgment, as to write to him to have his sense about any point of doctrine, or case of conscience which had any difficulty in them; or that they bore in memory the doctrines of the Gospel which he had delivered among them; see 1Co 15:2 The Arabic version reads, "that ye remember my sayings and deeds"; the doctrines he preached among them, and the examples he set them:

and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you; meaning, among the rest, if not principally, baptism and the Lord's supper, which he received from Christ, and delivered unto them; see 1Co 11:23 and which they, at least many of them, kept and observed in the faith of Christ, from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory, and that as to the form and manner in which they were delivered to them by the apostle, agreeably to the mind of Christ; but was the apostle alive now, would, or could he praise the generality of those that are called Christians on this account? no; neither of these ordinances in common are kept as they were delivered: as to baptism, it is not attended to either as to subject or mode, both are altered, and are different from the original institution; and the Lord's supper is prostituted to the vilest of men; and, what is "monstrum horrendum", is made a test and qualification for employment in civil and military offices under the government.

1 Corinthians 11:3

Ver. 3. But I would have you to know,.... Though they were mindful of him, and retained in memory many things he had declared among them, and kept the ordinances as delivered to them; yet there were some things in which they were either ignorant, or at least did not so well advert to, and needed to be put in mind of, and better informed about: and as the apostle was very communicative of his knowledge in every point, he fails not to acquaint them with whatsoever might be instructive to their faith, and a direction to their practice:

that the head of every man is Christ; Christ is the head of every individual human nature, as he is the Creator and Preserver of all men, and the donor of all the gifts of nature to them; of the light of nature, of reason, and of all the rational powers and faculties; he is the head of nature to all men, as he is of grace to his own people: and so he is as the Governor of all the nations of the earth, who whether they will or no are subject to him; and one day every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue confess that he is the Lord of all. Moreover, Christ is the head of every believing man; he is generally said to be the head of the church, and so of every man that is a member of it: he is a common public head, a representative one to all his elect; so he was in election, and in the covenant of grace; so he was in time, in his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to, and entrance into heaven; and so he is now as an advocate and intercessor there: he is the political head of his people, or an head in such sense, as a king is the head of his nation: he is also an economical head, or in such sense an head as an husband is the head of his wife, and as a parent is the head of his family, and as a master is the head of his servants; for all these relations Christ sustains: yea, he is a natural head, or is that to his church, as an human head is to an human body: he is a true and proper head, is of the same nature with his body, is in union to it, communicates life to it, is superior to it, and more excellent than it. He is a perfect head, nothing is wanting in him; he knows all his people, and is sensible of their wants, and does supply them; his eye of love is always on them; his ears are open to their cries; he has a tongue to speak to them, and for them, which he uses; and he smells a sweet savour in them, in their graces and garments, though they are all his own, and perfumed by himself: there are no vicious humours in this head, flowing from thence to the body to its detriment, as from Adam to his posterity, whose head he was; but in Christ is no sin, nothing but grace, righteousness, and holiness, spring from him. There's no deformity nor deficiency in him; all fulness of grace dwells in him to supply the members of his body; he is an one, and only head, and an ever living and everlasting one.

And the head of the woman is the man, The man is first in order in being, was first formed, and the woman out of him, who was made for him, and not he for the woman, and therefore must be head and chief; as he is also with respect to his superior gifts and excellencies, as strength of body, and endowments of mind, whence the woman is called the weaker vessel; likewise with regard to pre-eminence or government, the man is the head; and as Christ is the head of the church, and the church is subject to him, so the husband is the head of the wife, and she is to be subject to him in everything natural, civil, and religious. Moreover, the man is the head of the woman to provide and care for her, to nourish and cherish her, and to protect and defend her against all insults and injuries.

And the head of Christ is God; that is, the Father, not as to his divine nature, for in respect to that they are one: Christ, as God, is equal to his Father, and is possessed of the same divine perfections with him; nor is his Father the head of him, in that sense; but as to his human nature, which he formed, prepared, anointed, upheld, and glorified; and in which nature Christ exercised grace on him, he hoped in him, he believed and trusted in him, and loved him, and yielded obedience to him; he always did the things that pleased him in life; he prayed to him; he was obedient to him, even unto death, and committed his soul or spirit into his hands: and all this he did as to his superior, considered in the human nature, and also in his office capacity as Mediator, who as such was his servant; and whose service he diligently and faithfully performed, and had the character from him of a righteous one; so that God is the head of Christ, as he is man and Mediator, and as such only.

1 Corinthians 11:4

Ver. 4. Every man praying or prophesying,.... This is to be understood of praying and prophesying in public, and not in private; and not to be restrained to the person that is the mouth of the congregation to God in prayer, or who preaches to the people in the name of God; but to be applied to every individual person that attends public worship, that joins in prayer with the minister, and hears the word preached by him, which is meant by prophesying; for not foretelling future events is here meant, but explaining the word of God, the prophecies of the Old Testament, or any part of Scripture, unless singing of psalms should rather be designed, since that is sometimes expressed by prophesying: so in 1Sa 10:5 "thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them, and they shall prophesy". The Targum renders it thus, Nyxbvm Nwnaw, "and they shall sing praise"; upon which Kimchi observes, that it is as if it was said, their prophecy shall be twryv, "songs" and praises to God, spoken by the Holy Ghost. So in 1Sa 19:23 it is said of Saul, that he "went on and prophesied". The Targum is, he went on, xbvmw, "and praised". And again, "he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied". Targum, xbvw, "and praised", or sung praise. Once more, in 1Ch 25:1 it is said of Asaph, and others, that they "should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals"; which Kimchi explains of Asaph's singing vocally, and of his sons playing upon musical instruments.

Having his head covered; which, it seems, was the custom of some of them so to do in attendance on public worship: this they either did in imitation of the Heathens {r}, who worshipped their deities with their heads covered, excepting Saturn and Hercules, whose solemnities were celebrated with heads unveiled, contrary to the prevailing customs and usages in the worship of others; or rather in imitation of the Jews, who used to veil themselves in public worship, through a spirit of bondage unto fear, under which they were, and do to this day; and with whom it is a rule {s}, that "a man might not stand and pray, neither with his girdle on, hlwgm varb alw, nor with his head uncovered; nor with his feet uncovered."

Accordingly it is said {t} of Nicodemus ben Gorion,

"that he went into the school grieved, and Pjetn, "veiled himself", and stood in prayer;"

and a little after that

"that he went into the sanctuary and "veiled" himself, and stood and prayed;"

though the Targum on **Jud 5:2** suggests,

"that the wise men sit in the synagogues, ylg vyrb, "with the head uncovered", to teach the people the words of the law;"

and on **Jud 5:9** has these words,

"Deborah in prophecy said, I am sent to praise the Scribes of Israel, who when they were in tribulation did not cease from expounding the law; and so it was beautiful for them to sit in the synagogues, "with the head uncovered", and teach the people the words of the law, and bless and confess before the Lord;"

but it seems that a different custom had now prevailed; now from this Gentile or judaizing practice, the apostle would dissuade them by observing, that such an one that uses it, "dishonoureth his head"; meaning either in a figurative, spiritual, and mystical sense, his head Christ, in token of the liberty received from him, and because he is above in heaven, and clear of all sin, the head must be uncovered in public worship; or otherwise the reverse is suggested of him, which is highly to dishonour him, and is the sense many interpreters give into: rather the reason should be, because Christ, the believer's head, appears for him in heaven, opens a way of access for him, gives him audience and acceptance in his person, and through his blood and righteousness; and therefore should appear with open face and head uncovered, as a token of freedom and boldness; otherwise he dishonours his head as if his blood and sacrifice were not effectual, and his intercession not prevalent: but the natural head, taken in a literal sense, is rather meant; and the sense is, that by covering it, it looks as if he was guilty and ashamed, and in subjection; whereas to appear uncovered expresses freedom, boldness, and superiority, like himself, who is the head of the woman; whereas to be covered, as with a woman's veil or hood, is effeminate, unmanly, and dishonourable.

{r} Macrob Saturnal. l. 3. c. 6. Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 14. & 19. & 22. {s} Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 5. sect. 5. {t} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 20. 1.

1 Corinthians 11:5

Ver. 5. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth,.... Not that a woman was allowed to pray publicly in the congregation, and much less to preach or explain the word, for these things were not permitted them: see 1Co 14:34 but it designs any woman that joins in public worship with the minister in prayer, and attends on the hearing of the word preached, or sings the praises of God with the congregation, as we have seen, the word prophesying signifies,

with her head uncovered. It may seem strange from whom the Corinthian women should take up this custom, since the Jewish women were not allowed to go into the streets, or into any open and public place, unveiled {u}. It was a Jewish law, that they should go out no where bare headed {w}: yea, it was reckoned scandalous and ignominious to do so. Hence it is said, {x} Mhl yang varh ywlgv, "that uncovering of the head is a reproach" to the daughters of Israel: and concerning the adulterous woman, it is represented as said by the priest {y},

"thou hast separated from the way of the daughters of Israel; for the way or custom of the daughters of Israel is Nhyvar twowkm twyhl, "to have their heads covered"; but thou hast gone "in the ways of the Gentiles", who walk with head bare."

So that their it should seem that these Corinthians followed the examples of the Heathens: but then, though it might be the custom of some nations for women to go abroad bare headed; yet at their solemnities, where and when they were admitted, for they were not everywhere and always, they used to attend with their heads veiled and covered {z}. Mr. Mede takes notice indeed of some Heathen priestesses, who used to perform their religious rites and sacrifices with open face, and their hair hanging down, and locks spreading, in imitation of whom these women at Corinth are thought to act. However, whoever behaved in this uncomely manner, whose example soever she followed, the apostle says, dishonoureth her head; not her husband, who is her head in a figurative sense, and is dishonoured by her not being covered; as if she was not subject to him, or because more beautiful than he, and therefore shows herself; but her natural head, as appears from the reason given:

for that is even all one as if she were shaven; to be without a veil, or some sort of covering on her head, according to the custom of the country, is the same thing as if her head was shaved; and everyone knows how dishonourable and scandalous it is for a woman to have her head shaved; and if this is the same, then it is dishonourable and scandalous to her to be without covering in public worship. And this shows, that the natural head of the man is meant in the preceding verse, since the natural head of the woman is meant in this.

{u} Maimon. Hilch. Ishot, c. 24. sect. 12. {w} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 72. 1. {x} R. Sol. Jarchi in Numb. v. 19. {y} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 193. 2. {z} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 17.

1 Corinthians 11:6

Ver. 6. For if the woman be not covered,.... That is, if her head is not covered with some sort of covering, as is the custom of the place where she lives,

let her also be shorn; let her hair be cut short; let her wear it as men do theirs; and let her see how she will look, and how she will like that, and how she will be looked upon, and liked by others; everybody will laugh at her, and she will be ashamed of herself:

but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven: as it is accounted in all civilized nations: the very Heathens {a} speak of it as a thing abominable, and of which there should not be one single dreadful example: then let her be covered; with a veil, or any sort of covering in common use.

{a} Vid. Apul. Metamorph. l. 2. p. 21.

1 Corinthians 11:7

Ver. 7. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head,.... The Ethiopic version adds, "whilst he prays"; which is a proper interpretation of the words, though a wrong version; for the apostle's meaning is not, that a man should not have his head covered at any time, but whilst he is in public worship, praying, prophesying, or singing of psalms: the reason is,

forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God. The apostle speaks of man here as in his first creation, in his state of innocence before his fall; but now he has sinned and defaced this image, and come short of this glory; which lay partly in his body being made after the exemplar of the body of Christ, the idea of which God had in his eternal mind, and according to which he shaped the body of Adam: and partly in his soul, in that righteousness and holiness, wisdom and knowledge, and all other excellent gifts in which it was formed. So the Jews {b} say, the understanding is Mvh dwbk "the glory of God". And it chiefly lay in the power and dominion he had over all the creatures, and even over the woman when made; at least this is principally respected here, in which there is such a shine and representation of the glory and majesty, power and dominion of God; and therefore man ought to worship him with his head uncovered, where this image and glory of God is most illustriously displayed: not but that the woman, is the image and glory of God also, and was made as man, after his image and likeness, with respect to internal qualities, as righteousness, holiness, knowledge, &c. and with regard to her power over the other creatures, though in subjection to man; but yet man was first originally and immediately the image and glory of God, the woman only secondarily and mediately through man. The man is more perfectly and conspicuously the image and glory of God, on account of his more extensive dominion and authority:

but the woman is the glory of the man; being made out of him, and for his help and assistance, and to be a crown of honour and glory to him. The apostle speaks the sense, and in the language of the Jews. The words in Isa 44:13. "After the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man", are by the Targum rendered, "after the likeness of a man, after the glory of a woman"; and the note of a famous {c} interpreter of theirs upon the last clause is, "this is the woman", hleb trapt ayhv "who is the glory of her husband"; but why is she to be covered for this reason, when the man is to be uncovered? it is to be observed, that it is in the presence and worship of God that the one is to be uncovered, and the other covered; the one being the glory of God, and therefore to be uncovered before him; and the other the glory of man, and therefore to be covered before God; and especially, since being first in the transgression, she who is man's glory has been the means of his shame and disgrace. The Jews seem to make this the reason of the difference; they ask {d}, "why does a man go out with his head uncovered, and a woman with her head covered? it is answered, it is like to one that has committed a sin, and he is ashamed of the children of men, therefore she goes howkm hvarw, "with her head covered"."

{b} Maimon. in Misn. Chagiga, c. 2. sect 1. 1. {c} R. Sol. Jarchi in Isa. xliv. 13. {d} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 17. fol. 15. 1.

1 Corinthians 11:8

Ver. 8. For the man is not of the woman,.... In the present state of things, and according to the ordinary course of generation and propagation of mankind, man is of the woman, though not without the means of man; he is conceived in her, bore by her, and born of her; but the apostle respects the original formation of man, as he was immediately made by God out of the dust of the earth, before the woman was in being, and so not of her:

but the woman of the man; she was made out of his rib, and took both her name and nature from him; God was the author, and man the matter of her being; her original under God, is owing to him; and therefore as he was first in being, he must be superior to her: this serves to prove all that has been as yet said; as that man is the head of the woman, the woman is the glory of man, what he may glory in as being from him; and therefore there should be this difference in their appearance at public worship.

1 Corinthians 11:9

Ver. 9. Neither was the man created for the woman,.... To be subservient to her; for she was not in being when he was created; and though it is the proper business of man to provide for, take care of, and defend the woman, as the weaker vessel, yet these were not the original ends of his creation; he was made for God, for his service and glory:

but the woman for the man; to be an help meet for him, who was already created; to be a companion and associate of his, both in religious worship and in civil life; and for the procreation and education of children.

1 Corinthians 11:10

Ver. 10. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head,.... The generality of interpreters, by power, understand the veil, or covering on the woman's head, as a sign of the man's power over her, and her subjection to him; which Dr. Hammond endeavours to confirm, by observing that the Hebrew word dydr, which signifies a woman's veil, or hood, comes from a root which signifies power and dominion; but in that he is mistaken, for the word is derived not from hdr, to rule, govern, or exercise power and authority, but from
ddr, to expand, stretch out, or draw over, as a woman's veil is drawn over her head and face. The Greek word exousia more properly signifies the power she had of putting on and off her covering as she pleased, according as times, places, and persons; made it necessary:

because of the angels; various are the senses given of these words, some taking them in a proper, others in a figurative sense: some in a proper sense of angels, and these either good or bad. Tertullian {e} understands them of evil angels, and that a woman should cover her head in time of worship, lest they should lust after her; though much rather the reason should be, lest they should irritate and provoke lust in others: but it is better to understand them of good angels, who attend the assemblies of the saints, and observe the air and behaviour of the worshippers; wherefore women should cover their heads with respect to them, and not give offence to those pure spirits, by an indecent appearance: it is agreeable to the notions of the Jews, that angels attend public prayers, and at the expounding of the word; they often speak {f} of an angel,
twlpth le hnwmmh "that is appointed over prayers"; hence {g} Tertullian seems to have took his notion of an angel of prayer: and of angels being present at expounding of the Scriptures, take the following story {h};

"it happened to Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai, that he was riding upon an ass, and as he was journeying, R. Eleazar ben Arach was leading an ass after him; he said to him, Rabbi, teach me one chapter in the work of Mercavah (Ezekiel's vision); he replied to him, not so have I taught you, nor in the Mercavah a single man, unless he was a wise man by his own industry; he answered him, Rabbi, give me leave to say one thing before thee, which thou hast taught me; immediately Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai alighted from his ass and "veiled himself", and sat upon a stone under an olive tree; he said to him, Rabbi, why dost thou alight off from the ass? he replied, is it possible that thou shouldst expound in the work of Mercavah, and the Shekinah be with us, wntwa Nywlm trvh ykalmw, "and the ministering angels join us", and I ride upon an ass?"

And a little after,

"R. Joshua and R. Jose the priest were walking on the road, they said, yea, let us expound in the work of Mercavah; R. Joshua opened and expounded, and that day was the solstice of Tammuz, and the heavens were thickened with clouds, and there appeared the form of a bow in the cloud, "and the ministering angels gathered together", ewmvl Nyabw, "and came to hear": as the children of men gather together, and come to see the rejoicings of the bridegroom and bride."

Moreover, this veiling of the woman in public worship because of angels, may be an imitation of the good angels, who when they sung the praises of God, and adored and glorified his perfections, covered their faces and their feet with their wings, **Isa 6:1**. Many understanding these words in a figurative sense, and in this also they are not agreed; some by angels think young men are meant, who, for their gracefulness and comeliness, are compared to angels; others good men in general, that attend religious worship; others ministers of the word, called angels often in the book of the Revelations; which last seems to be most agreeable of any of these senses; and the women were to cover their heads, that they might not offend either of these, or stir up any impure desires in them; see **Ec 5:6** but as these words follow the account given of the creation of the woman from the man, and for his sake; this may have no reference to her conduct in public worship, but to the power she had of using her covering, or taking it off, or putting it on, at the time of her espousals to a man; which was sometimes done by proxy, or messengers, whom the Jews call Myxwlv, "angels" {i}; their canon is,

"a man may espouse (a wife) by himself, wxwlvbw, "or by his angel", or messenger; and a woman may be espoused by herself, or by her angel, or messenger:"

wherefore because of these angels, or messengers, that came to espouse her to such, she had power over her head to take off her veil, and show herself, if she thought fit; or to keep it on, as expressing her modesty; or just as she pleased, when she by them was espoused to a man, for whose sake she was made; which sense, after Dr. Lightfoot, many learned men have given into, and seems probable.

{e} De Veland. Virg. c. 7. {f} Shemot Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 106. 2. Zohar. in Gen. fol. 97. 2. {g} De Oratione, c. 15. {h} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 2. {i}

Misn. Kiddushin, c. 2. sect. 1.

1 Corinthians 11:11

Ver. 11. Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman,.... This is said, partly to repress the pride and insolence of man, that he might not be too much elated with himself, and his superiority over the woman, and look with any degree of disdain and contempt upon her, and treat her with indifference and neglect; and partly to comfort the woman, that she might not be dejected with the condition and circumstances in which she was, since the one is not without the other; nor can they be so truly comfortable and happy, as not the man without the woman, who was made for an help meet for him,

so neither the woman without the man in the Lord. The phrase "in the Lord" is added, to show that it is the will of God, and according to his ordination and appointment, that the one should not be without the other; or it may design that lawful conjunction and copulation, of one man and one woman together, according to the will of the Lord, which distinguishes it from all other impure mixtures and copulations. The Arabic version reads it, "in the religion of the Lord"; and the sense is, that the one is not without the other in religious worship, and in the enjoyment of religious privileges; that though the woman may not pray publicly and expound the Scriptures, yet she may join in prayer, and hear the word preached, sing the praises of God, and enjoy all ordinances; for in Christ no distinction of sex is regarded, men and women are all one in him, and equally regenerated, justified, and pardoned, and will be glorified together.

1 Corinthians 11:12

Ver. 12. For as the woman is of the man,.... Originally; so Eve was of Adam, made out of one of his ribs:

even so is the man also by the woman; now man is born of a woman, he is conceived of one, and brought into the world by one. This is the way in which mankind is propagated, the species preserved, continued, and increased; and therefore there is no reason why the woman should be despised, or the man should be lifted up with himself above her, since they are so dependent upon, and so useful to each other:

but all things of God. The Arabic version reads it, "all creatures are of God"; which is true, but not the truth of these words, which are to be restrained to the subject of the discourse; as that both the man and the woman are of God; they are made by him, and after his image and likeness; that the man is the glory of God, and the woman the glory of the man; the authority of the man over the woman, and the subjection of the woman to the man, are of God, and according to his constitution and appointment; as also that the woman should be of the man, and for his sake, and that the man should be by the woman, and neither should be without the other: these are not things of human constitution, but are settled by the wise counsel of God, and therefore to be cheerfully submitted to, as the best order of things.

1 Corinthians 11:13

Ver. 13. Judge in yourselves,.... The apostle having gone through a variety of reasoning and arguments, showing the superiority of the man to the woman, by which he would prove, that the one should be covered, and the other uncovered, returns to his subject again, and appeals to the common sense and understanding of the Corinthians, and makes them themselves judges of the matter; suggesting that the thing was so clear, and he so certain of what he had advanced being right, that he leaves it with them, not doubting but that they would, upon a little reflection within themselves, join with him in this point:

is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? in you judgment you can never think so, however pleasing and gratifying such a sight may be, to the lust of the flesh, and to the lust of the eye; he does not mention prophesying, only instances in praying; but it is to be understood of one, as of another; and his meaning is, that it is an uncomely thing in a woman to appear in public service with her head uncovered, whether it be in joining in the public prayers, or in singing of psalms, or in hearing the word expounded; and though the apostle does not put the case of the man's praying to God, or prophesying in his name with his head covered, yet his sense is the same of that, as of the woman's.

1 Corinthians 11:14

Ver. 14. Doth not even nature itself teach you,.... By nature is either meant, the law and light of nature, reason in man, common sense, or rather custom, which is second nature; and which, in this case, must be restrained to the Greeks and Jews; for though among the Grecians the men cut their hair, and did not suffer it to grow long, as also did the Jews, yet there were many nations {k} who did not, even at that time, observe such a rule or custom; but as the Jews and Greeks were the persons chiefly, if not solely, known to the Corinthians, the apostle signifies, that the usages of these people might direct and inform them in this matter:

that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him; he looks unmanly and womanish, and exposes himself to ridicule and contempt.

{k} Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 18. Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 10. prope finem.

1 Corinthians 11:15

Ver. 15. But if a woman have long hair,.... And wears it, without cutting it, as men do:

it is a glory to her; it is comely and beautiful; it is agreeable to her sex, she looks like herself; it becomes and adorns her:

for her hair is given her for a covering; not instead of a covering for her head, or any other part of her body, so that she needs no other: we read indeed of the daughter of Nicodemus ben Gorion, that she was obliged to make use of her hair for a covering in such a sense {l};

"it happened to R. Jochanan ben Zaccai that he rode upon an ass, and went out of Jerusalem, and his disciples went after him; he saw a young woman gathering barley corns out of the dung of the Arabian cattle; when she saw him,
hrevb hpjetn, "she covered herself with her hair", and stood before him:"

but this covering was made use of, not of choice, but by force, through her poverty, she having no other; this was not the custom of the nation, nor was the hair given to women for a covering in this sense, nor used by them as such, unless by Eve before the fall; but is rather an indication that they want another covering for their head, it not being so decent that their long hair should be seen. The Jewish women used to esteem it an immodest thing for their hair to be seen, and therefore they took care, as much as possible, to hide it under another covering;

"one woman, whose name was Kimchith, had seven sons, and they all ministered in the high priesthood; the wise men said unto her, what hast thou done, that thou art so worthy? she replied to them, all my days the beams of my house never saw yrev yelq, "the plaits of my hair" {m};"

that is, they were never seen by any person, even within her house.

{l} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 66. 2. {m} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 47. 1.

1 Corinthians 11:16

Ver. 16. But if any man seem to be contentious,.... That is, if anyone will not be satisfied with reasons given, for men's praying and prophesying with their heads uncovered, and women's praying and prophesying with their heads covered; but will go on to raise objections, and continue carping and cavilling, showing that they contend not for truth, but victory, can they but obtain it any way; for my part, as if the apostle should say, I shall not think it worth my while to continue the dispute any longer; enough has been said to satisfy any wise and good man, anyone that is serious, thoughtful, and modest; and shall only add,

we have no such custom, nor the churches of God; meaning, either that men should appear covered, and women uncovered in public service, and which should have some weight with all those that have any regard to churches and their examples; or that men should be indulged in a captious and contentious spirit; a man that is always contending for contention sake, and is continually cavilling and carping at everything that is said and done in churches, and is always quarrelling with one person or another, or on account of one thing or another, and is constantly giving uneasiness, is not fit to be a church member; nor ought he to be suffered to continue in the communion of the church, to the disturbance of the peace of it. This puts me in mind of a passage in the Talmud {n}.

"The Rabbans teach, that after the departure of R. Meir, R. Judah said to his disciples, do not let the disciples of R. Meir enter here, Nh Nynrtnqv ynpm, "because they are contentious"."

{n} T. Bab. Nazir, fol. 49. 2. & Kiddushin, fol. 52. 2.

1 Corinthians 11:17

Ver. 17. Now in this that I declare unto you,.... The Syriac version reads, "this is what I command"; which some refer to what he had been discoursing of, adding to his arguments, and the examples of the church, his own orders and command, that men should worship God publicly, uncovered, and women covered; though it seems rather to respect what follows, what the apostle was about to declare unto them; concerning which he says,

I praise you not; as he did in 1Co 11:2 that they were mindful of him, remembered his doctrines, and kept the ordinances in the manner he had delivered them to them: and it should seem by this, that the greater part of them were not to be blamed, though some few were, for their irregular and indecent appearance in public worship, men with a covering on their heads, and women without one; but in what he was about to say, he could not praise them at all:

that you come together; to the house of God, to pray unto him, to sing his praises, to hear his word, and attend his ordinances, particularly the Lord's supper:

not for the better; for edification and instruction, for the quickening and comforting of your souls; that you may grow in grace and knowledge, become more holy, zealous, fruitful, and useful:

but for the worse; to indulge luxury and intemperance, to encourage heresies, schisms, and divisions, and so grow more carnal, scandalous, and useless.

1 Corinthians 11:18

Ver. 18. For first of all, when ye come together in the church,.... The place where the church met together to perform divine service, called "one place". 1Co 11:20 and is distinguished from their own "houses", 1Co 11:22 and the first thing he took notice of as worthy of dispraise and reproof, in their religious assemblies, were their animosities and factions:

I hear that there be divisions among you: schisms and parties, either about their ministers, one being for Paul, another for Apollos, and another for Cephas; or in the celebration of the Lord's supper, and that which went before it, they going into separate bodies, and partook by themselves, and each took his own supper before another, one ate, and another did not. This the apostle had heard from the house of Chloe:

and I partly believe it; meaning, either that this was the practice of a part of the church to do so, though not of them all; or that part of the report that had been made to him was true; though he hoped in that charity which hopeth all things, that it was not quite so bad as was feared or represented, since things are generally heightened and increased by fame; but yet he had it from such good hands, that he could not but believe there was something in it. So the Syriac version renders it, Mdm Mdmw, "and something, something I believe".

1 Corinthians 11:19

Ver. 19. For there must be also heresies among you.... This is a reason why he was ready to believe there might be something of truth in the report he had received of the divisions among them; for if there were heresies, false doctrines, and bad principles, among them, such as were subversive of the fundamentals of Christianity, as the denial of the resurrection of the dead, &c. it was no wonder that there were schisms and factions among them, since heresies generally issue in them. These, the apostle says, "must be"; because God has decreed they shall, whose counsel is immutable, and his purpose unalterable; and since this always was the case, that there were false prophets under the former dispensation, it must be expected that false teachers will arise in the churches now, bringing in damnable heresies; and since Satan is always busy to sow the tares of false doctrine; and human nature, being both weak and wicked, is so susceptible thereof, and so easily imposed upon and deceived, it cannot be thought that it should be otherwise; which, by the goodness and wisdom of God, are overruled to a very good purpose:

that they which are approved: who sincerely believe in Christ, are sound in the faith, and have a well grounded experience of it; who have themselves tried things that differ, and approve of them that are excellent, and have been tried by others, and found to be sincere, upright, and faithful, and are approved of God and good men:

may be made manifest among you; by their steadfastness in the faith, their zealous attachment to it, earnest contention for it, and warm and honest vindication of it; and by the departure of those from them who oppose it, and go on the side of error and heresy; by which means it is known who are the sincere followers of the Lamb, in doctrine, discipline, and conversation, and who not.

1 Corinthians 11:20

Ver. 20. When ye come together therefore into one place,.... Though epi to auto does not signify so much the unity of the place, as of the persons meeting together, and their conjunction; so the phrase is used by the Septuagint, in De 25:11, yet it supposes a place where the church were wont to assemble for divine worship;

this is not to eat the Lord's supper: their view in coming together was not so much to celebrate the supper of the Lord, as to partake of their own supper, which was either the paschal supper, or something like it; which many of them "judaizing" observed before the Lord's supper, in imitation of Christ, as they pretended, who first ate the passover, and then instituted the supper. Now there being a great deal of good eating and drinking in this ante-supper, many of them came together for no other end but to partake of that, at least this was their chief view, and not the Lord's supper; or when they did meet together on this account, it was in such an irregular and disorderly manner, and they confounded these suppers together, and behaved so ill at them, and ate the Lord's supper so unworthily, that it could not be rightly called eating of it; or when they had eaten their ante-supper in such an indecent way, neither staying for one another, nor keeping within the bounds of temperance and sobriety; at least having indulged their carnal appetites to such a degree, and raised themselves to such a pitch of gaiety and cheerfulness; it was not fit for them to eat the Lord's supper, to go from such a full meal to the table of the Lord. This was called the Lord's supper, because he was the author of it; and he is the subject of it; and for him, the remembrance of him, it is appointed, kept up, and continued. The Syriac version understands it of the Lord's day, and reads it thus, "when therefore ye meet together, not as is fit for", or becomes, Nrmd hmwyl, "the day of our Lord, do ye eat and drink".

1 Corinthians 11:21

Ver. 21. For in eating,.... Not at the Lord's table, but at tables spread for them in the place of divine worship, where everyone brought his own food, under a pretence that others, particularly the poor, should eat with him; but instead of that, he sat down and ate it himself, and would not stay till the rest came, to eat together:

but everyone taketh before other his own supper; that is, without tarrying till all came together, in order to eat a friendly meal with each other, to encourage and increase brotherly love, one would sit down and fill himself before another came; so that some went without, whilst others had too much; and thus the designed end was not answered, and the whole was a piece of confusion and disorder:

and one is hungry, and another drunken; he that came late had nothing to eat, and so was hungry; when he that was first either eat and drank to excess, or at least very plentifully, so that he was very cheerful, and more disposed to carnal mirth, than in a serious and solemn manner to partake of the Lord's supper; and who is thought to be the rich man, who brought his own provisions, and ate them himself when he had done; as the poor may be meant by the hungry, who having no food to bring with them, and none being communicated to them by the rich, were in want, and starving; so that here were many abuses justly chargeable on them. Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, that by him that was "drunken" meant the Jew that ate the paschal supper, of which he ate and drank freely; and by him that was "hungry", the Gentile, who was so not out of poverty and necessity, but because he refused and avoided eating of the ante-supper, as savouring of Judaism; and so here was a schism and division among them.

1 Corinthians 11:22

Ver. 22. What? have ye not houses to eat and drink in?.... This shows that one taking his supper before another, was not in their own houses, before they came to the place of divine worship, but in the house of God; and the apostle suggests, that if they must have their ante-suppers, and were disposed to eat and drink freely, before they partook of the Lord's supper, it was more decent and orderly, and less reflected upon the honour of religion and the ordinances of Christ, to eat and drink in their own houses; in which they were not only more private and retired, but which they had for such purposes; whereas the house of God was not for any such use, nor should they meet together there on such an account; at least, such disorderly, unequal, and intemperate feasts there, were very scandalous and reproachful: and it was contrary to a Jewish canon to eat and drink in the synagogues, which runs thus {o},

"in the synagogues they do not use a light behaviour, nor do they eat and drink in them;"

though they sometimes speak of travellers eating and drinking and lodging in the synagogues {p}, yet they interpret these of places adjoining to them:

or despise ye the church of God; that is, expose it to contempt and scorn; meaning either the community, the people of God gathered together in a Gospel church state; or the place where they met for public worship, which the Ethiopic version calls, "the house of God"; which was rendered very contemptible by such disorderly practices;

and shame them that have not; no houses to eat in, or supper to eat, or any of this world's goods, or money to purchase food for themselves; who must be confounded and put to shame, when, coming in expectation of being fed, the provisions were eaten up by the rich before they came, or, however, were not allowed to partake when they did come; this was such a respecting of persons, as was justly culpable in them by the apostle.

{o} T. Hieros. Megilia, fol. 74. 1. & T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 28. 1. {p} Gloss. in T. Bab. Bava Bathra, & Pesachim, fol. 101. 1. & Gloss. in ib. Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 29. sect. 8. & Maggid Misna in ib.

1 Corinthians 11:23

Ver. 23. For I have received of the Lord,.... The apostle observes unto them the rule, use, and end of the Lord's supper; his view in it is, to correct the disorders among them, and to bring them to a strict regard to the rule which had such a divine authority stamped upon it; and to observe to them, that in that supper all equally ate and drank; and that the end of it was not a paschal commemoration, but a remembrance of Christ, and a declaration of his sufferings and death. The divine authority of the Lord's supper is here expressed; it was not only instituted by him as Lord, having all power and authority in and over his churches, to appoint what ordinances he pleases; but the plan and form of administration of it were received from him by the apostle. This was not a device of his, nor an invention of any man's, nor did he receive the account from men, no not from the apostles; but he had it by revelation from Christ, either when he appeared to him at his first conversion, and made him a minister of the Gospel; or when he was caught up into the third heaven, and heard things unspeakable and unutterable:

that which also I delivered unto you; for whatever he received from Christ, whether a doctrine or an ordinance, he faithfully delivered to the churches, from whom he kept back nothing that was profitable, but declared the whole counsel of God unto them: now this he refers the Corinthians to, as a sure rule to go by, and from which they should never swerve; and whatever stands on divine record as received from Christ, and delivered by his apostles, should be the rule of our faith and practice, and such only;

that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed; or delivered; as he was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God the Father, and as he was by himself, who voluntarily gave himself up into the hands of men, justice and death, for our offences; and so the Arabic version reads it here, "in the night in which he delivered up himself"; as he did in the garden to Judas and his company: it was in the night when he came in search of him with officers, and a band of soldiers, and when he betrayed him and delivered him into their hands; and that same night, a little before, our Lord instituted and celebrated the ordinance of the supper with his disciples. The time is mentioned partly with regard to the passover it followed, which was killed in the evening and ate the same night in commemoration of God's sparing the firstborn of Israel, when at midnight he destroyed all the firstborn of Egypt, and so was a night to be observed in all generations; and because this feast was to be a supper, and therefore it is best to observe it in the evening, or decline of the day. The circumstance of Judas's betraying him is mentioned, not only because it was in the night, and a work of darkness; but being in the same night he instituted the supper, shows the knowledge he had of his death by the means of the betrayer, and his great love to his disciples, his church and people, in appointing such an ordinance in remembrance of him, and his death, when he was just about to leave them:

took bread; from off the table, out of the dish, or from the hands of the master of the house; an emblem of his body, and of his assumption of human nature; of his taking upon him the nature of the seed of Abraham, of that body which his Father prepared for him, in order to its being broken; or that he might in it endure sufferings and death for his people.

1 Corinthians 11:24

Ver. 24. And when he had given thanks,.... So Lu 22:19, but Mt 26:26 and Mr 14:22 say "he blessed"; not the bread, but his Father; for to bless and give thanks is one and the same thing with the Jews; so we often read of their blessing for the fruits of the earth, for wine and bread; concerning which they have these rules {r},

"he that blesseth for the wine, before food, frees the wine that is after food; he that blesseth for the dessert before food, frees the dessert after food; tph le Krb, "he that blesseth for the bread", frees the dessert, for the dessert does not free the bread;"

or excuse from a blessing for that again;

"if they sit at eating, everyone blesses for himself; if they lie (upon couches) Mlkl Krbm dxa, "one blesses for them all"; when wine is brought to them whilst they are eating, everyone blesses for himself: if after food, "one blesses for them all";"

our Lord conformed to these rules, he blessed and gave thanks for the bread separately, and he afterwards blessed, or gave thanks for the wine; and as he and his disciples lay at table, he blessed and gave thanks for them all; for this is not to be understood of any consecration of the bread by a certain form of words, changing its nature and property, and converting it into the body of Christ; but either of asking a blessing of his Father upon it, that whilst his disciples were caring of it, their faith might be led to him, the bread of life, and to his broken body, and spiritually feed and live on him, and receive spiritual nourishment from him; or else of giving thanks to his Father for what was signified by it, for the true bread he gave unto his people, meaning himself; and for that great love he showed in the gift and mission of him; and for the great work of redemption, and all the benefits of it he had sent him to procure, and which were just on finishing; and for all the might, strength, and assistance, he gave to him as man and Mediator, in completing the business of salvation for his people; which was the joy set before him, and which filled his heart with pleasure and thankfulness; both these senses may be joined together, and may direct us as to the matter of blessing and giving thanks at the supper; for no form of words is pointed out to us; what were the express words our Lord used we know not:

he brake it; as a symbol of his body being wounded, bruised, and broken, through buffetings, scourgings, platting of a crown of thorns, which was put upon his head, and piercing his hands and feet with nails, and his side with a spear; for which reason the right of breaking the bread in this ordinance ought literally and strictly to be observed: Christ himself took the bread and brake it, denoting his willingness to lay down his life, to suffer and die in the room of his people; and this action of breaking the bread was used in order to be distributed, and that everyone might partake, as all the Israelites did at the passover, and not as these Corinthians at their ante-suppers, when one was full and another hungry; but Christ broke the bread, that everyone might have a part, as every believer may and ought, who may eat of this bread, and drink of the wine, and feed by faith on Christ, and take every blessing procured by him to themselves:

and said, take, eat; that is, to his disciples, to whom he gave the bread, when he had took and given thanks and brake it, bidding them take it; receive it into their hands, as an emblem of their receiving him, and the blessings of his grace in a spiritual sense, by the hand of faith; and eat the bread put into their hands, as a symbol of their eating and living by faith on Christ as crucified, as having loved them, and given himself for them;

this is my body; in opposition to, and distinction from,
xop lv wpwg, "the body of the passover", as the lamb was called {s}; meaning not his mystical body the church, of which he is head, though this is one bread, and one body, 1Co 10:17 but his natural body, and that not properly, as if the bread was really changed into it; for the bread in the supper, after the blessing over it, and thanks given for it, retains its same nature, properties, form, and figure, only is set apart for the use of commemorating the broken body of Christ; and therefore this phrase is to be understood in a figurative sense, that it was a sign and seal of his body; it being broken into pieces represented his wounds, bruises, sufferings, and death; just in such sense as the rock is said to be Christ, in 1Co 10:4 not that that was really Christ, but was a type and sign of him: which is

broken for you; for though a bone of him was not broken, but inasmuch as his skin and flesh were torn and broken by blows with rods and fists, by whippings and scourgings, by thorns, nails, and spear; and body and soul were torn asunder, or divided from each other by death; and death in Scripture is expressed by rbv, "breaking"; see Jer 19:11 his body might be truly said to be broken, and that for his people; not merely to confirm his doctrine, or set an example of patience, or only for their good; but in their room and stead, as their surety and substitute:

this do in remembrance of me; signifying that it was not a passover commemoration, or a remembrance of the Israelites going out of Egypt; which because done in the night, as that was, and following upon the passover, the judaizing Christians among the Corinthians took it to be in remembrance of that; having imbibed that notion which the Jews then had, and still retain, that their deliverance from Egypt will be remembered in the days of the Messiah {t};

"Nyrykzm, "they commemorate" the going out of Egypt in the nights; says R. Eleazer ben Azariah, lo, I am about seventy years of age, and I never was worthy to say, that the going out of Egypt was recited in nights, till Ben Zoma expounded what is said, De 16:3 "that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt; all the days of thy life; days of thy life", mean days; "all the days of thy life", nights; but the wise men say, "the days of thy life"; mean this world, and "all the days of thy life" include the days of the Messiah:"

now the apostle mentions these words of our Lord, to show that the design of the institution of this ordinance of the supper was not in commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt; but it was in remembrance of himself, of what he did and suffered on the behalf of his people: particularly the eating of the bread was intended to bring to remembrance how the body of Christ was wounded, bruised, and broken for them; how he bore their sins in his own body on the tree, and suffered, and made satisfaction for them; and which was spiritual food for their faith when they reflected on it, and could not fail of bringing to their remembrance the love of Christ in all, when this was the case.

{r} Misn. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 5, 6. {s} Misn. Pesachim, c. 10. sect. 3. {t} Misn. Beracot, c. 1. sect. 5.

1 Corinthians 11:25

Ver. 25. After the same manner also he took the cup,.... That is, off from the table, or out of the hands of the master of the house, and blessed or gave thanks, as he did before when he took the bread; see Mt 26:27, "when he had supped"; the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, "when they had supped"; which give a true sense, though not a literal translation; for both Christ and his disciples had supped, having both eaten the passover supper, and the bread, the principal part in the Lord's supper, when he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them:

saying, this cup is the New Testament, or covenant,

in my blood; alluding to the old covenant, which was ratified and confirmed by the blood of bulls, and which was called "the blood of the covenant", Ex 24:8

but the new covenant was established with Christ's own blood, of which the wine in the cup was a sign and symbol; for neither the cup, nor the wine in it, can be thought to be the covenant or testament itself, by which is meant the covenant of grace, as administered under the Gospel dispensation; called new, not because newly made, for it was made from everlasting; or lately revealed, for it was made known to our first parents immediately after the fall, and to other saints in succeeding ages, though more clearly exhibited by Christ under the present dispensation; but it is so called in distinction from the old covenant, or former mode of administration of it, under the Mosaic economy; and it is always new, and will be succeeded by no other; and it provides for and promises new things, and which are famous and excellent, and preferable to all others. Now this is said to be "in the blood" of Christ; that is, it is ratified, and all its blessings and promises are confirmed by his blood: hence his blood is called "the blood of the everlasting covenant", Heb 13:20, pardon and righteousness, peace and reconciliation, and entrance into the holiest of all, all come through this blood, and are secured by the same; and to which the faith of the saints is directed in this ordinance, to observe, receive, and enjoy for themselves:

this do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me; of his soul's being poured out unto death; of his blood being shed for the remission of sins; and of his great love in giving himself an atoning sacrifice to divine justice, and laying such a foundation for solid peace and joy in the hearts of his people.

1 Corinthians 11:26

Ver. 26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup,.... Not any bread, or any cup: but what is ate and drank in an ordinance way, and according to the institution and appointment of Christ, and with a view to the end proposed by him; and though there is no set fixed time for the administration of this ordinance, yet this phrase seems to suggest that it should be often: and very plainly signifies, that the bread and wine, after the blessing or thanksgiving, remain such, and are not converted into the real body and blood of Christ; but are only outward elements representing these to faith;

ye do show the Lord's death till he come; or rather, as it may be rendered in the imperative mood, as an exhortation, direction or command, "show ye the Lord's death till he come"; since everyone that eats and drinks at the Lord's table does not show forth his death, which is the great end to be answered by it; for the design of the institution of it is to declare that Christ died for the sins of his people: to represent him as crucified; to set forth the manner of his sufferings and death, by having his body wounded, bruised, and broken, and his blood shed; to express the blessings and benefits which come by his death, and his people's faith of interest in them; and to show their sense of gratitude, and declare their thankfulness for them; and all this, "till he come"; which shows the continuance of this ordinance, which is to last till Christ's second coming, where the carnal ordinances of the former dispensation were shaken and removed; and also the continuance of Gospel ministers to the end of the world, to administer it, and of churches to whom it is to be administered: this assures of the certainty of Christ's second coming; as it leads back to his coming in the flesh, suffering and dying in our stead, and thereby obtaining redemption for us; it leads forward to expect and believe he will come again, to put us into the full possession of the salvation he is the author of; when there will be no more occasion for this ordinance, nor any other, but all will cease, and God will be all in all. The apostle here refers to a custom used by the Jews in the night of the passover, to show forth the reason of their practice, and that institution to their children; when either {u}

"the son asked the father, or if the son had not understanding (enough to ask), then the father taught him, saying, how different is this night from all other nights? for in all other nights we eat leavened and unleavened bread, but in this night only unleavened; in all other nights we eat the rest of herbs, but in this night bitter herbs; in all other nights we eat flesh roasted, broiled, and boiled, in this night only roasted; in all other nights we wash once, in this night twice; and as elsewhere {w} it is added, in all other nights we eat sitting or lying, in this night all of us lie; and according to the capacity of the child, the father teaches him,"

particularly he was to inform him what these several things showed forth, or declared {x}; as that

"the passover dygm, "declared", or "showed forth", that the Lord passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt; the bitter herbs "showed forth", that the Egyptians made the lives of our fathers bitter in Egypt; and the unleavened bread "declared" that they were redeemed; and all these things are called hdgh, "the declaration", or showing forth:"

and there is a treatise called xop lv hdgh, "the showing forth of the passover"; in which, besides the things mentioned, and many others, it is observed {y}, that it was commanded the Jews rpol, "to declare" the going out of Egypt, and that everyone that diligently declares the going out of Egypt, is praiseworthy:

now the apostle observes this end of the Lord's supper, to show forth his death, in opposition to the notion of the "judaizing" Christians at Corinth, who thought of nothing else but the showing forth of the passover, and the declaration of that deliverance and redemption wrought for the people of Israel; whereas the true and only intent of it was to show forth the death of Christ, redemption by him, and the greatness of his love expressed therein, and which is to be continued till his second coming; whereas the time was come when it should "be no more said, the Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt", Jer 16:14.

{u} Misn. Pesach. c. 10. sect. 4. Haggadah Shel. Pesach. p. 5. {w} Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 2. {x} Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora prec. aff. 41. {y} P. 5, 6. Ed. Rittangel. & Seder. Tephillot. Ed. Basil. fol. 243. 1.

1 Corinthians 11:27

Ver. 27. Wherefore,.... Since this is the plain institution of the Lord's supper, the form and manner of administering of it; and since the bread and wine in it are representations of the body and blood of Christ, and the design of the whole is to remember Christ, and show forth his death; it follows, that

whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. The bread and cup are called the bread and cup of the Lord; because ate and drank in remembrance of him, being symbols of his body and of his blood, though not they themselves; these may be eaten and drank "unworthily", when they are eaten and drank by unworthy persons, in an unworthy manner, and to unworthy ends and purposes. The Lord's supper may be taken unworthily, when it is partook of by unworthy persons. This sense is confirmed by the Syriac version, which renders it hl awv alw, "and is not fit for it", or is unworthy of it, and so the Ethiopic version; now such are all unregenerate persons, for they have no spiritual life in them, and therefore cannot eat and drink in a spiritual sense; they have no spiritual light, and therefore cannot discern the Lord's body; they have no spiritual taste and relish, no spiritual hungerings and thirstings, nor any spiritual appetite, and can receive no spiritual nourishment, or have any spiritual communion with Christ: and so are all such persons, who, though they may profess to be penitent ones, and believers in Christ, and to have knowledge of him, and love to him; and yet they have not true repentance, neither do they bring forth fruits meet for it, and so as they are improper subjects of baptism, they are unworthy of the Lord's table; nor have they faith in Christ, at least only an historical one, and so cannot by faith eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of God, nor perform the ordinance in a way well pleasing to God; nor have they any spiritual knowledge of Christ, only what is speculative and notional, and so cannot discern the Lord's body; nor any real love to him, and therefore very improper persons to feed on a feast of love; nor can they affectionately remember Christ, or do what they do from a principle of love to him, and therefore must be unworthy receivers: as likewise are all such professors, whose lives and conversations are not as become the Gospel of Christ; such crucify Christ afresh, and put him to open shame, and are therefore unfit to show forth his crucifixion and death; they bring a reproach on the Gospel and ordinances of Christ, and cause his name, and ways, and truths to be blasphemed, and grieve the members of the churches of Christ, and therefore ought not to be admitted to the table of the Lord: indeed, no man is in himself worthy of such an ordinance, none but those whom Christ has made so by the implantation of his grace, and the imputation of his righteousness; and whom he, though unworthy in themselves, invites and encourages to come to this ordinance, and to eat and drink abundantly. Moreover, this ordinance may be attended upon in an unworthy manner; as when it is partook of ignorantly, persons not knowing the nature, use, and design of it; or irreverently, as it was by many of the Corinthians, and it is to be feared by many others, who have not that reverence of the majesty of Christ, in whose presence they are, and who is both the author and subject of the ordinance; or without faith, and the exercise of it on Christ, the bread of life, and water of life; or unthankfully, when there is no grateful sense of the love of God in the gift of his Son, nor of the love of Christ, in giving himself an offering and sacrifice for sin; or when this feast is kept with the leaven of malice and wickedness, and with want of brotherly love, bearing an ill will to, or hatred of, any of the members of the church, To all which may be added, that this bread and cup are ate and drank unworthily, when they are partook of to unworthy ends and purposes; as to qualify for any secular employment, and to gain any worldly advantage; or to be seen of men, and to be thought to be devotional and religious persons; or to commemorate anything besides Christ; as the "judaizing" Corinthians did the "paschal" lamb; or to procure eternal life and happiness thereby, fancying that the participation of this ordinance gives a meetness for, and a right to glory: now such unworthy eaters and drinkers are "guilty of the body and blood" of the Lord; not in such sense as Judas, Pontius Pilate, and the people of the Jews were, who were concerned in the crucifixion of his body, and shedding of his blood, the guilt of which lies upon them, and they must answer for another day; nor in such sense as apostates from the faith, who, after they have received the knowledge of the truth, deny it, and Christ, the Saviour; and so crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame, count the blood of the covenant a common or unholy thing, and tread under foot the Son of God; at least, not every unworthy receiver of the Lord's supper is guilty in this sense; though there might be some among the Corinthians, and is the reason of this awful expression, who looked upon the body and blood of Christ as common things, and made no more account of them than of the body and blood of the passover lamb; but in a lower sense, every unworthy communicant, or that eats and drinks unworthily, may be said to be guilty of the body and blood of Christ, inasmuch as he sins against, and treats in an injurious manner, an ordinance which is a symbol and representation of these things; for what reflects dishonour upon that, reflects dishonour on the body and blood of Christ, signified therein.

1 Corinthians 11:28

Ver. 28. But let a man examine himself,.... Whether he has a true sense of sin, sorrow and repentance for it; otherwise he will see no need of a Saviour, nor will he look to Christ for salvation, or be thankful to him for redemption by him; all which are necessary in a due observance of this ordinance; also, whether he is in the faith, whether he is a partaker of the true grace of faith, which is attended with good works, and shows itself by love to Christ, and to the saints; whereby a man goes out of himself to Christ for spiritual food and strength, peace and comfort, righteousness, life, and salvation; and by which he receives all from Christ, and gives him all the glory: this is absolutely necessary to his right and comfortable partaking of the Lord's supper, since without faith he cannot discern the Lord's body, nor, in a spiritual sense, eat his flesh, and drink his blood, nor attend on the ordinance in a manner acceptable unto God. Let him also examine and try whether he is sound in the doctrine of faith; or let him prove himself to be so, or show that he is one that is approved thereby; to whom the word of faith has come with power, and who has received it in the love of it, and firmly believes it; since an heretic is to be rejected from the communion of the church, and to be debarred the ordinances of it: let him examine himself, whether Christ is in him, whether he is revealed to him, and in him, as God's way of salvation, and the hope of glory; whether he is formed in his soul, his Spirit put, and his grace implanted there; since if Christ is not within, it will be of no avail to partake of the outward symbols of his body and blood. But if a man, upon reflection, under the influence and testimony of the Spirit, can come to a satisfaction in these things, however mean and unworthy he may seem in his own sight, let him come to the table of the Lord, and welcome.

And so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; none should discourage or hinder him; nor should he deprive himself of such a privilege, to which he has an undoubted right. There seems to be an allusion in these words to what the master of the family used at the passover, when he said {z},

"everyone that is hungry, lwkyw yty, "let him come and eat", and everyone that hath need or ought, let him keep the passover."

{z} Haggadah Shel Pesach, p. 4.

1 Corinthians 11:29

Ver. 29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily,.... As before explained, 1Co 11:27 "eateth and drinketh damnation to himself"; or guilt, or judgment, or condemnation; for by either may the word be rendered; nor is eternal damnation here meant; but with respect to the Lord's own people, who may through unbelief, the weakness of grace, and strength of corruption, behave unworthily at this supper, temporal chastisement, which is distinguished from condemnation with the world, and is inflicted in order to prevent it, 1Co 11:32 and with respect to others it intends temporal punishment, as afflictions and diseases of body, or corporeal death, as it is explained in 1Co 11:30. This they may be said to eat and drink, because their unworthy eating and drinking are the cause and means of it. Just as Adam and Eve might be said to eat condemnation to themselves and posterity, because their eating of the forbidden fruit was the cause of it. So the phrase, "does not eat condemnation", is used in the Persic version of **Joh 3:18** for "is not condemned". And let it be observed, that such an one is said to eat and drink this judgment or condemnation to himself, and not another; he is injurious to nobody but himself: this may serve to make the minds of such easy, who are not so entirely satisfied with some persons who sit down with them at the Lord's table, when they consider that it is to their own injury, and not to the hurt of others they eat and drink:

not discerning the Lord's body. This is an instance of their eating and drinking unworthily, and a reason why they eat and drink condemnation to themselves, or contract guilt, or expose themselves either to chastisement or punishment; because they distinguish not the Lord's supper from an ordinary and common meal, but confound them together, as did many of the Corinthians, who also did not distinguish the body of Christ in it from the body of the paschal lamb; or discern not the body of Christ, and distinguish it from the bread, the sign or symbol of it; or discern not the dignity, excellency, and usefulness of Christ's body, as broken and offered for us, in which he bore our sins on the tree, and made satisfaction for them; a commemoration of which is made in this ordinance.

1 Corinthians 11:30

Ver. 30. For this cause many are weak and sickly,.... Because of their unworthy participation of the Lord's supper, many in the Corinthian church were attended with bodily infirmities and diseases; either by way of fatherly chastisement and correction in such who were truly the Lord's people, though they had behaved unworthily; or by way of punishment to such who were not, and had sinned very grossly:

and many sleep; that is, die a corporeal death, which is often in Scripture signified by sleep, and frequently used of the saints, and their death, and may intend and include some of them here; for though the Lord might resent so far their unworthy conduct and behaviour at his table, as to remove them out of this world by death, yet their souls may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

1 Corinthians 11:31

Ver. 31. For if we would judge ourselves,.... Examine, try, and prove ourselves as above directed, before we eat and drink; or condemn ourselves, by confessing, acknowledging, and mourning over sin, and by repentance for it; or separate ourselves from the company of profane sinners, come out from among them, and touch not their unclean things; or join with them in their unfruitful works of darkness:

we should not be judged; by the Lord; he would not inflict these diseases, sicknesses, and death.

1 Corinthians 11:32

Ver. 32. But when we are judged,.... This is said by way of consolation to the saints, that when the hand of the Lord is upon them, and he is afflicting them, they should consider these things, not as the effects of his vindictive wrath and justice, as proper punishments for their sins, but as fatherly chastisements for their good:

we are chastened of the Lord; as children by a father, in love and kindness, in order to bring to a sense of sin, repentance for it, and acknowledgment of it, and behave the better for the future:

that we should not be condemned with the world; the world of ungodly men, the men of the world, carnal, worldly, and Christless sinners. There is a world, a multitude of them that will be condemned. So far has Christ been from dying for the redemption and salvation of every individual person in the world, that there is a world of men that will be righteously condemned at the last day. Now the present afflictions and chastisements of the saints are laid upon them, and blessed to them for their spiritual good, that they may not be condemned to the second death, to everlasting fire, to endless damnation, or be punished with everlasting destruction along with them.

1 Corinthians 11:33

Ver. 33. Wherefore, my brethren,.... Though he had said some very awful and awakening things to bring them to themselves, to reclaim them, and rectify disorders among them; yet he hoped well of them in general, and softens the severe things he had said, by calling them "brethren"; and hereby prepares them to attend to, and receive the more kindly, what he had further to say:

when ye come together to eat; that is, when ye come to the place of public worship at the usual stated time, in order to eat the Lord's supper, tarry one for another; do not begin to celebrate the ordinance until the church is met together in general, or at least till as many are got together as may be expected will come; for a church is not obliged to tarry for every individual person; nor can it be thought that every member can attend, there being various providences which may detain them: the apostle's view is to promote unity, Christian respect, and brotherly love in the ordinance; that they would sit down and join together, according to the rule of Christ, without respect to persons, or going into parties, factious, and divisions.

1 Corinthians 11:34

Ver. 34. And if any man hunger let him eat at home,.... Whereby the apostle shows his dislike of their ante-suppers in the place of public worship, at which they behaved in so indecent a manner, neglecting the poor, and too freely indulging themselves; and therefore if anyone was hungry, and could not wait till the Lord's supper was over, let him eat at home before he come to the place of worship, and satisfy his appetite, that he might with more ease and decency attend the table of the Lord:

that ye come not together unto condemnation or judgment; that is, that you may so behave when ye come together, that you may not bring upon you the judgment of the Lord, either by way of punishment or chastisement; that is to say, bodily diseases or death.

And the rest will I set in order when I come: meaning, not doctrines of faith, but things respecting ecclesiastical order and polity, which were amiss among them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 12

In this chapter the apostle discourses concerning spiritual gifts, showing the author, nature, use, and excellency of them; compares the church to an human body, and in a beautiful manner sets forth the symmetry and subserviency of the members of it to one another, being set in different places, and having different gifts; and enumerates the several offices and gifts in the church, and yet suggests there is something more excellent than them. He intimates, that spiritual gifts are valuable things, and should be taken notice of; nor would he have the saints ignorant of them, and therefore gives the following account, 1Co 12:1 and yet he would not have those that have them be proud of them, and lifted up with them; for which reason he puts them in mind of their former state in Heathenism, to make and keep them humble, 1Co 12:2 and points out such who have the Spirit of God, the author of all gifts and grace; not such who call Jesus accursed, but they that call him Lord, 1Co 12:3 which Holy Ghost, who is called Spirit, Lord, and God, is the author of the different gifts bestowed upon men, 1Co 12:4 the end of bestowing which gifts is the profit of others, 1Co 12:7 of which gifts there is an enumeration in nine particulars, 1Co 12:8 of each of which the Spirit of God is the worker and giver, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, 1Co 12:11 and which are all for the good of the whole community; which is illustrated by the simile of an human body, which as it consists of many members, and is but one, so Christ mystical, or the church, though it consists of divers persons, yet they are all one in Christ, and all their gifts are for the service of each other, 1Co 12:12 which unity is proved and confirmed by the saints being baptized by one Spirit into one body, the church, and by drinking of him, or partaking of the same grace, 1Co 12:13 and in order to show the usefulness and profit of every spiritual gift, even the meanest, to the churches of Christ, and that none might be despised, he enlarges upon the metaphor of the human body he had compared the church to, and by it illustrates the unity of the church, and the members of it, 1Co 12:14 and shows that the inferior members should not envy the superior ones, or be dejected because they have not the same gifts: and conclude from hence, that they are not, or deserve not, to be of the same body, 1Co 12:15 seeing it is convenient and absolutely necessary that there should be many members, and these set in different places, and have different gifts and usefulness; and particularly what should make them easy is, that God has placed them according to his will and pleasure, 1Co 12:17. And, on the other hand, he shows, that the more noble, and excellent, and useful members, ought not to despise the lower, meaner, and more ignoble ones, partly because of the usefulness and necessity of them, they cannot do without them, 1Co 12:21 and partly because of the honour put upon them, 1Co 12:23, and all this is so ordered, that there be no schism, but that there should be a mutual care of one member for another, and that they should sympathize with each other, 1Co 12:25. This simile the apostle more plainly and particularly accommodates and applies to the church, the body of Christ, and the members of it, and of one another, 1Co 12:27 and gives an enumeration of the several officers and offices in the church, set there by God himself; and there are no less than eight of them, some greater than others, most of them proper and peculiar to the primitive church, though some perpetual, and which still continue, 1Co 12:28 but in the times in which they were all of them in being and use, every member of the church was not possessed of them, only some, though all had more or less the advantage of them, 1Co 12:29. Wherefore, he concludes with an exhortation to the saints to covet the best of those gifts; and yet observes that there was something more excellent than them, and preferable to them, which he was about to show them, 1Co 12:31 and hereby he makes an easy transition to the next chapter, in which he recommends charity, and prefers it to gifts.

Ver. 1. Now concerning spiritual gifts,.... Though the word "gifts" is not in the original text, it is rightly supplied by our translators, as it is in the Arabic version: for the apostle does not mean spiritual graces, nor spiritual words, or doctrines, nor spiritual meats and drinks, nor spiritual men, each of which are mentioned before in this epistle; though the latter is thought by some to be here intended, and that the apostle's view is to show the difference between those that are spiritual, and those that are not; but as spiritual gifts are the subject of the apostle's discourse throughout this chapter, and the two following, they seem very manifestly to be designed here. The apostle having gone through various heads of discourse, which he either of himself, or at the request of others, wrote upon, proceeds to a new subject, that of spiritual gifts, which he seems to have been desired to give his thoughts upon, and advice about; since there were some in this church who were discouraged, because they had not the gifts which some had; and others that had them were elated and puffed up with them, and treated those below them with neglect and contempt; and with a view to both these the apostle writes as follows,

brethren, I would not have you ignorant; neither of the author of these gifts, who is the Spirit of God, who dispenses them according to his sovereign will and pleasure, and not according to the deserts of men, and are not acquired by the industry, or through the merit of any, but are his free grace gifts; nor of the nature of them, for there are differences and diversities of them, some have one, and some another, but no man all; nor of the design and use of them, which is the edification of the whole body; and every gift, though ever so mean, is of service; and therefore as, on the one hand, none ought to be discouraged, so, on the other hand, none should be lifted up with pride, or give way to a boasting spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:2

Ver. 2. Ye know that ye were Gentiles,.... That is, by religion; hence the Syriac version renders it apnx, "profane" persons, given up to wickedness, bigotry, and superstition; for by nation they were Gentiles still; and which must be understood of one part of this church only; for some of them were Jews, as is clear from many passages in the epistle to this church, and practices referred to. This the apostle observes to humble them, by putting them in mind of what they had been formerly; they were born and brought up in the Heathen religion, when they knew not the true God, much less had any knowledge of Christ, and still less of the Spirit of God; and therefore if they were favoured with any of his gifts, these must be owing to his grace, and not to their deserts, and therefore they ought not to glory: he adds, with the same view,

carried away unto these dumb idols; to idols that were nothing in the world, had no divinity in them, as he had before asserted; to dumb ones, that had mouths, but could not speak, the oracles that were delivered from them, being spoken not by them, but were either satanical delusions, or the jugglings of a priest; to these they were carried by the power of Satan, the influence of their priests, and the orders of their magistrates, to consult them as oracles, to pay their devotions to them, and do them service:

even as ye were led; that is, to these dumb idols; the Syriac adds, Nvrwp ald, "without any difference", not being able to distinguish between these and the true God; and to whom they were led as brute beasts were, that were sacrificed unto them, or as blind men are led by the blind, as they were by their blind and ignorant priests; and therefore, if they had now received the Spirit, and his gifts, they ought to ascribe the whole to the free grace of God, and be humble under a sense of their unworthiness.

1 Corinthians 12:3

Ver. 3. Wherefore I give you to understand,.... Or "I make known unto you"; what I am about to say are certain truths, and to be depended on,

that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; or "anathema", as did the unconverted Gentiles, who knew nothing of Jesus but by report; which report they had from the Jews, his enemies; and by that report he appeared to them to be a very wicked and detestable person, who was put to death by the means of his own countrymen, was hanged upon a tree, and so to be counted and called accursed: the apostle seems to have reference to the sense these Corinthians had of Jesus, and what they called him before their conversion; whence it appeared that they spoke not by, nor were they possessed of the Spirit of God then, and therefore their having of him now was an instance of pure grace; or else respect is had to the Jews, who not only, whilst Jesus was living, blasphemed him, but continued to call him accursed after his death, whilst they were in their own land; and after the destruction of their city and temple, they continued, as Justin Martyr observes {a} to Trypho the Jew, to "curse" Christ, and them that believed in him; and to this day privately call him by such names as will hardly bear to be mentioned, were it not for the explanation of such a passage: thus they {b} call him twe-wvy, "Jesus the perverse", or he that perverteth the law of God; and "Jesu", the name they commonly give him, they say is the abbreviation of wrkzw wmv xmy, "let his name and memory be blotted out"; and which they sometimes explain by
hbewtw rqv "Jesu is a lie, and an abomination: they call him a strange God, and vanity" {c}, and often by the name of ywlt {d}, "one that was hanged", and so with them accursed; and which seems to be the name the Jews, in the

apostle's time, gave him, and to which he here refers. Now, as in the former verse he may have regard to the Gentiles, so in this to the Jews in this church, who, before conversion, had so called Christ, when it was plain they had not the Spirit of God then, or they could not have so called him; and therefore if they were partakers of him now, they ought to admire divine grace, and not glory in themselves, and over others. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that Jewish exorcists who strolled about, and pretended to do miracles by the Holy Ghost, and yet called Jesus "anathema", are meant, of whom the Corinthians might assure themselves that they did not speak, nor act, nor were acted by the Spirit of God. The words may be applied to all such as detest and deny the doctrines of Christ, respecting his person and office; as that he is come in the flesh, is the true Messiah, the Son of God, truly and properly God; that his death is a proper sacrifice, and full satisfaction for sin; and that justification is by his imputed righteousness: without any breach of charity it may be said, such persons do in effect call Jesus accursed, nullifying his person, sufferings, and death, as to the dignity and efficacy of them; and cannot be thought to have, and speak by, the Spirit of God, who if they had him, would teach them otherwise. Moreover, as the word "anathema" here used answers to Mrx, "Cherem", a form of excommunication among the Jews; it may be truly said that such call Jesus accursed, or "anathema", who, if I may be allowed the expression, excommunicate him out of their sermons and faith; these crucify him afresh, trample him under foot, count his blood as a common thing, and do malice to his Spirit; and therefore cannot be thought to have him, and speak by him.

And that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost; or Jehovah; which, with the Jews, was a name ineffable, to which the apostle might have respect. Christ is Lord of all, of angels, good and bad; of men, righteous and wicked; of the chief among men, the kings, princes, and lords of the earth; as he is God by right of nature, and as Creator of them by virtue of that; and because of his providential power and influence in the government of the universe; he is Lord of his church and people, by the Father's gift of them to him; by his espousal of them to himself; by the purchase of his blood; and by the conquests of his grace; and as appears by the various relations he stands in to them, as father, husband, head, King, and master. Now, though a man may historically say all this, as the devils may, and hypocritically, as formal professors and foolish virgins do now, and will at the last day; and as all men then will by force, whether they will or not, confess that Jesus is Lord, who have not the Spirit of God; yet no man can call him his Lord, can appropriate him to himself truly and really, as his Lord, Saviour, and Redeemer, as David, Thomas, the Apostle Paul, and others have done; but by the Spirit; since such an appropriation includes spiritual knowledge of Christ, strong affection to him; faith of interest in him, an hearty profession of him, and sincere subjection to him; all which cannot be without the Spirit of God: for he is the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; and true love to Christ is a genuine fruit of his; faith in Christ, is entirely of his operation; and a subjection to the righteousness of Christ, and to his ordinances, is through the influence of his grace; and it is owing to his witnessings that any can truly, and in faith, claim their interest in him. Upon the whole, the apostle's sense is, let a man pretend to what he will, if he does not love Jesus Christ, and believe in him, he is destitute of his Spirit; and whoever loves Christ, and believes in him, and can call him his Lord in faith and fear, however mean otherwise his gifts may be, he is a partaker of the Spirit of God.

{a} Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 335. {b} Buxtorf. Abbrev. p. 10. {c} Buxtorf. Abbrev. p. 101, 102, 103. {d} Ib. Lex. Talmud. col. 2596.

1 Corinthians 12:4

Ver. 4. Now there are diversities of gifts,.... Of spiritual ones, as in 1Co 12:1 which spring from the free grace, and good will and pleasure of God, and are not owing to the merits of men; and therefore such who have the largest share of them should not boast of them as acquired by themselves, or be puffed up on account of them; and those who have the smallest measure should be content and thankful; for though the gifts are different, some have greater, and others lesser, none have all, but all have some, yet not alike:

but the same Spirit; is the author and giver of all as he pleases; the lesser gifts, and the smallest degree of them, come from the Spirit of God, as well as the greater. Gifts here seem to be the general name for all that follow; and

administrations and

operations are the two species of them; and of these a particular account is afterwards given.

1 Corinthians 12:5

Ver. 5. And there are differences of administrations,.... Or ministries; offices in the church, ministered in by different persons, as apostles, prophets, pastors, or teachers and deacons; who were employed in planting and forming of churches, ordaining elders, preaching the word, administering ordinances, and taking care of the poor; for which different gifts were bestowed on them, they not all having the same office.

But the same Lord; meaning either Jesus Christ, whom the believer, by the Holy Ghost, says is Lord; who, as the ascended King of saints, and Lord and head of the church, appoints different offices and officers in it; and having received, gives gifts unto them, qualifying them for the same; all which comes through the same hand, and not another's; or rather the Lord, the Spirit, who calls men to these several ministrations, separates and fits them for them, and constitutes and installs them into them, and assists them in the discharge of them; since he only, and all along, is spoken of in the context as the efficient of these several things.

1 Corinthians 12:6

Ver. 6. And there are diversities of operations, There are some that are ordinary, as the good work of grace, and the several parts of it, the work of faith, the labour of love, and patience of hope, which the Spirit of God begins, carries on, and finishes in all the elect of God, and members of Christ; and there are others which are extraordinary, and are here meant, and hereafter specified.

But it is the same God which worketh all in all. Interpreters in general understand by God here, God the Father; as by the Lord in the preceding verse, the Lord Jesus Christ, as distinct from the Spirit in 1Co 12:4 and apprehend that this furnishes out a considerable proof of a trinity of persons in the Godhead, which I will not deny; but I rather think that the Holy Ghost is designed in each verse, by Spirit, Lord, and God; since the various gifts, administrations, and operations, are particularly and peculiarly ascribed to him in the following verses; and the distribution of them is said to be the effect of his sovereign will; and so we have a most illustrious testimony of his proper deity and personality; who is the only true "Jehovah" with the Father and Son, to which the word "Lord" in the New Testament generally answers, and who is the omnipotent God, "which worketh all in all"; all the works of nature throughout the universe, and all the, works of grace in the hearts of all his people, and all the extraordinary operations effected by any of them.

1 Corinthians 12:7

Ver. 7. But the manifestation of the Spirit,.... Not that which the Spirit manifests, as the grace and love of God, an interest in Christ, the doctrines of the Gospel, and the things of another world; for he is a spirit of revelation, more or less, in the knowledge of these things; but that which manifests that a man has the Spirit of God; or rather the gifts of the Spirit, as the fruits and graces of the Spirit, the least measure of which, as being able to say that Jesus is Lord, shows that a man has the Spirit of God; or rather the gifts of the Spirit, ordinary or extraordinary, which are such as manifestly declare their author:

is given to every man; not that the special grace of the Spirit is given to every individual man in the world, nor to every member of a visible church, for some are sensual, not having the Spirit; but as the same graces of the Spirit are given to every regenerate man, for all receive the same spirit of faith, so the gifts of the Spirit, more or less, either ordinary or extraordinary, are given to all such persons;

to profit withal; not to make gain of, as Simon Magus intended, could he have been possessed of them; nor to encourage pride or envy, or to form and foment divisions and parties; but for profit and advantage, and that not merely private, or a man's own, but public, the good of the whole community or church, to which the least grace or gift, rightly used, may contribute.

1 Corinthians 12:8

Ver. 8. For to one is given by the Spirit,.... Now follows a distinct and particular enumeration of the operations of the Spirit, though not all of them, yet as many as the apostle thought necessary; and which are called the manifestation of him, and which most clearly show him to be the author of them to different persons;

the word of wisdom: by which is meant "the manifold wisdom of God"; the wonderful scheme of salvation through the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, in which God has "abounded in all wisdom and prudence"; together with all other deep, mysterious, and sublime doctrines of the Gospel, the knowledge of which were peculiarly given to the apostles in the first place, who have the first office or ministry in the church, by "the spirit of wisdom"; and which they had a faculty, a gift of declaring, opening, and explaining unto others.

To another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; meaning either knowledge of future events; or an universal knowledge of the Scriptures of truth, and the doctrines contained in them, of the whole mind and will of God therein, which is a distinct thing from saving grace: see 1Co 13:2 and is what was given to the prophets, the second office in the church, by him who is the spirit of prophecy, and by whom the prophetical writings were dictated; and therefore he is the best interpreter of them, and who only can lead into the true knowledge thereof.

1 Corinthians 12:9

Ver. 9. To another faith by the same Spirit,.... Not the grace of faith, which is common to all believers, though given by the same Spirit: but rather the doctrine of faith, and ability to preach it, and boldness and intrepidity of spirit to assert and defend it in the face of all opposition; all which are from the Spirit of God, and are more or less given to pastors and teachers, the third office in the church. Though generally this is understood of a faith of working miracles, as in 1Co 13:2 but the working of miracles is mentioned afterwards as distinct, unless it can be thought that this is the general name for miracles, and the rest that follow the particulars of them.

To another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; of healing all manner of sicknesses and diseases: this power Christ gave his disciples, when he first sent them out to preach the Gospel, and which he repeated when he renewed and enlarged their commission after his resurrection; and which was exercised with effect, sometimes only by overshadowing the sick with their shadows, as by Peter, **Ac 5:15** sometimes by, laying hands on them, as the father of Publius, and others, were healed by Paul, Ac 28:8 and sometimes by anointing with oil, **Jas 5:14**. Now these gifts were bestowed in common, by the Spirit, on apostles, prophets, and pastors, or elders of the church, in those early times: the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "by one Spirit".

1 Corinthians 12:10

Ver. 10. To another the working of miracles,.... Or "powers": mighty deeds, wonderful works, such as are apparently above, and out of the reach of nature, and beyond the compass of human power and skill; such as raising the dead, causing the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, and the like; of which, see some instances in **Ac 3:6**. Though others understand by these the extraordinary powers the apostles had of punishing offenders; of which the striking Ananias and Sapphira dead, by Peter, the smiting Elymas the sorcerer with blindness, by Paul, and the delivering the incestuous person, and Hymenaeus, and Alexander, to Satan, by the same apostle, are instances.

To another prophecy: either foretelling of future events, as was given to Agabus, and the four daughters of Philip, and others, Ac 11:27 or a gift of understanding the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of preaching the Gospel, which is in this epistle frequently called "prophesying", particularly in the two following chapters; and those endowed with it are called prophets, Ac 13:1.

To another discerning of spirits; by which gift such that were possessed of it could, in some measure, discern the hearts of men, their thoughts, purposes, and designs, their secret dissimulation and hypocrisy; as Peter, by this gift, discerned the dissimulation and lying of Ananias and Sapphira; and by it they could also tell whether a man that made a profession of religion had the truth of grace in him, or not; so Peter knew hereby that Simon Magus was in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, notwithstanding his specious pretences to faith and holiness, whereby he imposed upon Philip the evangelist, who might not have this gift of discerning spirits; by which also they could distinguish the Spirit of God from the lying spirits in men; of which there is an instance, Ac 15:17.

To another divers kinds of tongues; whereby such could speak all manner of languages, which they had never learned, understood, and been used to: this Christ promised his disciples, when he sent them into all the world to preach the Gospel, Mr 16:16 and so anticipates an objection they otherwise might have made, how they should be able to preach it to all, so as to be understood, when they were not acquainted with the languages of all nations; an instance of which we have in the apostles on the day of Pentecost, **Ac 2:4** and which continued many years after with them, and other persons in the churches; see 1Co 13:2.

To another the interpretation of tongues; one that had this gift, when a discourse was delivered in an unknown tongue, used to stand up and interpret it to the people, without which it could be of no use to them; and sometimes a person was gifted to speak in an unknown tongue, and yet was not capable of interpreting his discourse truly and distinctly in that the people understood: see

1Co 14:13. The rules to be observed in such cases, and by such persons, see in 1Co 14:27.

1 Corinthians 12:11

Ver. 11. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit,.... Though these gifts, ministrations, and operations, are so different in themselves, and are bestowed upon different persons, yet they are all wrought by one and the same Spirit of God, who is the true Jehovah, and properly God, as these his works declare; for who, but the most high God, could ever communicate such gifts to men?

Dividing to every man severally as he will; giving one man this gift, and another that; imparting such a measure to one, and such a portion to another, just as seems good in his sight. For as his special grace in regeneration is dispensed when and where, and to whom he pleases, signified by the blowing of the wind where it listeth, **Joh 3:8** so his gifts, ordinary and extraordinary, are severally distributed, according to his sovereign will and pleasure. This is a clear and full proof of the personality of the Spirit, who is not only distinguished from his gifts, and the distribution of them, which is a personal act described to him; but this is said to be done according to his will, which supposes him an intelligent agent, capable of choosing and willing; and whose will agrees with the Father's, and with the Son's.

1 Corinthians 12:12

Ver. 12. For as the body is one,.... That is, an human body; for of this the apostle speaks, and takes a simile, and forms a comparison from, showing the union among saints, and their mutual participation of the various gifts of the Spirit; for an human body is but one body, and not more.

And hath many members; as eyes, ears, hands, feet, &c].

And all the members of that one body being many are one body; as numerous as they may be, they all belong to, and make up but one body; performing different offices, for which they are naturally fitted for the good of the whole:

so also to Christ; not personal, but mystical; not the head alone, or the members by themselves, but head and members as constituting one body, the church. The church, in union with Christ, the head, is but one general assembly, and church of the firstborn written in heaven, though consisting of the various persons of God's elect, who are closely united one to another, and their head Christ; and therefore are denominated from him, and called by his name; see **Ro 9:3**.

1 Corinthians 12:13

Ver. 13. For by one Spirit are we all baptized,.... This is to be understood not of water baptism; for the apostle says not in one, and the same water, but "by", or "in" one Spirit, are we all baptized; the baptism of water, and of the Spirit, are two different things; see **Mt 3:11**. Besides, all that are baptized in water, are not baptized in or by the Spirit, as the case of Simon Magus, and that of others, show; nor does water baptism incorporate persons into the church of Christ; neither into the invisible church, which is the body of Christ, and here meant; nor into a visible Gospel church state; they being indeed true believers, and baptized, are proper persons to be received into a church; but baptism itself does not put them into it, or make them members of it: persons may be baptized in water, and yet may never be joined to a church. There is indeed an allusion made to water baptism, but it is the grace of the Spirit in regeneration and sanctification which is here intended; which grace, both in the Old and in the New Testament, is frequently signified by water, and called a baptism, or a being baptized, because of the plenty, abundance, and superabundance of it, then bestowed; and is expressed by floods and rivers, and a well of living water; and is what qualifies and fits persons for the ordinance of water baptism. Now this is wrought by the Spirit of God, and is owing to his divine power and energy; not to water baptism, which has no regenerating virtue in it; nor to carnal regeneration, or a being born of blood, or of the best of men; nor to the will of any man; nor to the will of the flesh, or the power of man's freewill; but to God, to the Spirit, who is Lord and God, and the only sanctifier of the sons of men; by which spiritual baptism, or by whose grace in regeneration and conversion they are brought into one body: the mystical body of Christ, the universal and invisible church; that is, openly and manifestatively; for otherwise it is the grace of God in election, and in the everlasting covenant, choosing them in Christ, as members in their head, and constituting them such, that puts them among that number; but spiritual baptism, or the sanctifying grace of the Spirit, makes them appear to belong to that body, and makes them meet for, and gives them a right unto, a particular Gospel church, and the privileges of it, which the Spirit of God directs and brings them to. Whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free;

it matters not of what nation, or of what state and condition of life persons be; if they are regenerated and sanctified, they appear equally to belong to Christ, to be of his body, and have an equal propriety in all immunities and blessings belonging to his people; see **Col 3:11**

and have been all made to drink into one Spirit; are all partakers of the same graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, love, &c. and daily receive under his guidance, direction, and influence, out of the same fulness of grace in Christ, from whence they draw and drink this water with joy; and all drink the same spiritual drink, the blood of Christ, whose blood is drink indeed: and there may be in this clause an allusion to the ordinance of the supper, as in the former to the ordinance of baptism. Moreover, all new born babes, as they desire the sincere milk of the word, so they drink of it, and are refreshed with it, and are nourished by the words of faith, and sound doctrine, under the application, of the Spirit; and being trees of righteousness, and the planting of the Lord, the Spirit, they are watered by his grace, under the ministrations of the Gospel; and as they become one body under Christ, the head, so they are made to drink into one Spirit, or to become of one heart and soul with one another, being knit together in love, the bond of perfectness.

1 Corinthians 12:14

Ver. 14. For the body is not one member,.... Not only one; nor is anyone member the body, though ever so eminent, as the head or eye: thus the church of Christ is not one person only, or does not consist of one sort of persons; as only of Jews, or only of Gentiles, or only of rich and freemen, or only of men of extraordinary gifts and abilities, or greatly eminent for grace and spiritual knowledge:

but many; members, as the Arabic version adds; as eyes, ears, hands, feet, &c. so in the mystical body of Christ, the church, there are many members, some in a higher station, others in a lower; some of greater gifts, grace, and usefulness, others of lesser; some Jews, other Gentiles; some bond, others free; yet all one in Christ the head, and all related to each other.

1 Corinthians 12:15

Ver. 15. If the foot shall say,.... The lowest member of the body, which is nearest the earth, treads upon it, sustains the whole weight of the body, and performs the more drudging and fatiguing exercises of standing and walking; and may represent one that is in the lowest station in the church, a doorkeeper in the house of God; one that is really the least of saints, as well as thinks himself so; and has the smallest degree of heavenly affection, and knowledge of spiritual light and understanding;

because I am not the hand; the instrument of communication and of action; and may signify such an one, that liberally imparts to the necessities of others, who has it both in his hand and heart, and is ready to communicate; one that is full of good works, of charity towards men, and piety towards God; who does all things, Christ strengthening him, natural, civil, moral, and evangelical; yea, even miracles and mighty deeds are done by his hand:

I am not of the body; have no part in it, am no member of it, do not belong to it:

is it therefore not of the body? or "it is not therefore not of the body", as the Syriac version renders it; that is, it is not "for this word", as the Arabic, or so saying, as the Ethiopic, not of the body; it nevertheless belongs to it, and is a member of it, nor can it be otherwise: thus the meanest person in the mystical body, the church, though he should say, that because he is not so handy and useful as another, cannot give so largely, nor do so much as another, therefore he is no proper member of the church; it does not follow that so it is, for Christ, the head of the church, regards such as members; he admires the "beauty" of his church's "feet", and has provided for the covering, ornament, and security of them, being himself clothed with "a garment down to the feet", which equally covers and adorns that part of the body as the rest; he does not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, or despise the day of small things; he regards their prayers, and takes notice and accepts of their meanest services; and they are, and should be considered as members of the body, by the rest and by themselves, the mystical body, the church, though he should say, that because he is not so handy and useful as another, cannot give so largely, nor do so much as another, therefore he is no proper member of the church; it does not follow that so it is, for Christ, the head of the church, regards such as members; he admires the "beauty" of his church's "feet", and has provided for the covering, ornament, and security of them, being himself clothed with "a garment down to the feet", which equally covers and adorns that part of the body as the rest; he does not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, or despise the day of small things; he regards their prayers, and takes notice and accepts of their meanest services; and they are, and should be considered as members of the body, by the rest and by themselves.

1 Corinthians 12:16

Ver. 16. And if the ear shall say,.... The organ that receives sounds, and can distinguish them, and in which member is placed the sense of hearing; and may design such as are hearers of the word of God, not merely externally, but internally; who hear so as to love, savour, and relish it; so as to understand and believe it, and to act in compliance with it; and distinguish it for themselves, though they may not be able to give a distinct account of it to others, or instruct others in it:

because I am not the eye: the organ of seeing, in which is seated the visive faculty, and which receives light, and uses it for the good of the body, whose superintendent it is; and may be expressive of the ministers of the Gospel, who are that to the church, as eyes are to the body; they are the light of the world, have a clear insight into the doctrines of the Gospel, and communicate their light to others; they are set in the highest place in the church, and as watchmen and overseers there, to instruct; guide, and direct the members of it:

I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? it certainly is; and so such as are only hearers of the Gospel, being affectionate, believing, understanding and fruitful hearers; though they have not such large knowledge and clear light, so as to be capable of overseeing and instructing others, yet are true and useful members of the church, are highly respected by Christ the head, and to be had in esteem by their fellow members, who may be superior to them.

1 Corinthians 12:17

Ver. 17. If the whole body were an eye,.... And nothing else,

where were the hearing? there would be no ear, and so no sense of hearing: and if the whole were hearing: or only consisted of a member capable of the sense of hearing,

where were the smelling? there would be no nose, the organ of smelling, and that sense would be wanting: thus if the church only consisted of ministers of the Gospel, of men of eminent light and knowledge, qualified for the preaching of the word to others, there would be no hearers; and on the other hand, if it only consisted of hearers, of such who only could hear the word to their own advantage, there would be none of a quick understanding, or of a quick smell to discern perverse things, to distinguish truth from error, to discern spirits, and direct the rest of the members to wholesome and savoury food, and preserve them from what would be hurtful and pernicious to them.

1 Corinthians 12:18

Ver. 18. But now hath God set the members,.... The members of a natural body, as they are all made and fashioned by God in the form they be, so they are each of them set by him in the place they are:

everyone of them in the body as it hath pleased him; according to his sovereign will, without consulting any; and each stands in the best situation and position they could be put, and for the greatest service and usefulness to the whole: so God, and not man, hath set every member in the mystical body, the church, in such a place and part of it, as he himself thought fit; some in a higher, others in a lower station, but all for the good of the body; and therefore each member ought to be content with his place, gift, and usefulness, be they what they will; since it is the wise counsel and sovereign pleasure of God, who works all things after the counsel of his own will, that so it should be.

1 Corinthians 12:19

Ver. 19. And if they were all one member,.... As all eye, or all ear, or all hand, or all foot:

where were the body? where would be the body? it would not be a body consisting of such proper and suitable members, as now it is: so if the community of the saints were either all ministers, or all hearers, &c. there would be no body, consisting of different persons, to receive any benefit or usefulness from either; the church of Christ would not be that uniform, useful, and consistent community it is.

1 Corinthians 12:20

Ver. 20. But now are they many members,.... Of different make and shape, in different parts and places, and of different use and service:

yet but one body; all are united together, and make up one complete body, and which without each of them would not be perfect: so there are many members in the body of Christ, the church; some are teachers, others are hearers; some give, and others receive; but all make up but one church, of which Christ is the head; nor can anyone of them be spared; was anyone wanting, even the meanest, there would be a deficiency, and the church would not be the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

1 Corinthians 12:21

Ver. 21. And the eye cannot say unto the hand,.... Every member of the natural body is useful and necessary. The eye, the seat of the sense of seeing, cannot say to the communicating and working hand,

I have no need of thee: I can do without thee: so the seers and overseers of the church, the ministers of the Gospel, cannot say to the liberal and munificent hands, we have no need of you; for as the one stand in need of the light, instruction, comfort, advice, and direction of the other, so the other stand in need of communication from them; and as God has made it a duty, that he that is taught in the word should communicate to him that teacheth in all good things; and as it is his ordinance that they which preach the Gospel should live of it; so he has generally ordered it in his providence, that they that teach should need such assistance:

nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. The head, which is the seat of the senses, and is superior to, and has the command and government of all the members of the body, cannot say to the lowest and most distant parts of it, the feet, you are needless and useless; so those that are set in the first place in the church, are over others in the Lord, and have the rule over them, cannot say to those that are under them, and submit unto them, even the lowest and meanest of them, that they are of no use and service to them; they can no more be without them, than the head can be without the feet, or than princes can do without subjects, or magistrates without citizens, or generals without soldiers.

1 Corinthians 12:22

Ver. 22. Nay, much more those members of the body,.... The apostle, in a beautiful gradation, proceeds to take notice of such parts of the body as are more weak, dishonourable, and uncomely, showing the necessity and usefulness of them:

which seem to be more feeble; than others, do not consist of a strong bony substance, and are not fenced with sinews, as the belly and its intestines: yet these

are necessary; nor could the body be sustained, nourished, and refreshed, without them; so the more weak and feeble saints, whose hearts and hands are to be strengthened, whose infirmities are to be bore, have their usefulness; and the effectual working in the measure of every part, even of the feeble and tender, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in love: and these God has seen fit, as necessary to call by his grace, and place in the body, that his strength may be made perfect in their weakness, and to confound the mighty; and out of the mouths even of babes and sucklings to ordain strength and praise.

1 Corinthians 12:23

Ver. 23. And those members of the body,.... As the back parts of it:

which we think to be less honourable; though greatly useful,

upon these we bestow more abundant honour; by clothing them, for a man's garments are his honour and glory; See Gill on "Mt 6:29", so the poor members of Christ's church, who are thought to be, though they really are not, the less honourable, have the more abundant honour conferred on them by God and Christ: God has chosen the poor of this world; Christ has sent his Gospel to them; these the Spirit calls and sanctifies, and makes them all glorious within; these Christ has given his churches a particular charge to take care of now, and will own them as his brethren at the great day, before angels and men; as he now greatly honours them with his presence, a large experience of his grace, and the supply of his Spirit:

and our uncomely parts; which distinguish sexes, and are appointed for generation;

have more abundant comeliness; by an external covering and ornament, to preserve decency and modesty. I do not know who should be designed by these, unless backsliding believers, who have been suffered to fall into great sins; these are the uncomely parts of the church, who, when made sensible of their evils, are restored again, and received into the church; and a mantle of love is cast over all their failings; and all possible care taken that their faults may not be exposed to the world, that so the name of God, and ways of Christ, may not be blasphemed and evil spoken of.

1 Corinthians 12:24

Ver. 24. For our comely parts have no need,.... As the face, eyes, nose, lips, cheeks, &c. which stand in no need of an external covering, of any outward ornament: so such as are blessed with the bounties of nature and providence, with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and are eminent for grace and holiness, and are enabled to walk worthy of their calling, and to have their conversations as become the Gospel of Christ, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, these have no need of such a covering, as the former have, to hide and conceal them from the world:

but God hath tempered the body together; he hath composed it in such a forth, constituted it in such an order, mixed and united all its parts in such a manner, as that they are all beneficial to each other; and such is the harmonious contexture of the whole, that it is a most beautiful structure:

having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked; or, as the Syriac version renders it, "which is the least"; and such is the temperament and constitution of the church, having mixed rich and poor persons, of greater and lesser gifts, together, for mutual good.

1 Corinthians 12:25

Ver. 25. That there should be no schism in the body..... No complaint of one member against another, as useless and unnecessary; no murmuring on that account; no tumults and rioting; no rebellion and insurrection of one against another; no dissension, no division. The use Menenius {e} Agrippa made of this simile, applying it to the body politic, as the apostle here does to the spiritual body, for the appeasing of a sedition among the people; is well known, and usually mentioned by interpreters on this place:

but that the members should have the same care one for another; that is, they are so tempered and mixed together, are in such close union with, and have such a dependence on each other, that they are necessarily obliged to take care of each other's good and welfare, because they cannot do one without another; and so God has ordered it in the church, that persons should be so placed in it, and gifts disposed of among them in such a manner, that every man is obliged, not only to look on, and be concerned for his own things, that he takes care of himself, and performs his office, but that he looks every man on the things of others, his good and safety being involved in theirs.

{e} Liv. Hist. l. p. 43.

1 Corinthians 12:26

Ver. 26. And whether one member suffer,.... Pain; even the meanest, lowest, and most distant, as the foot or hand, toe or finger:

all the members suffer with it; are more or less affected therewith, and bear part of the distress; as is easily discerned, by their different forms and motions on such an occasion: so when anyone member of the mystical body is in affliction, whether inward or outward, of body or mind, the rest are, or should be, affected with it, condole, sympathize, help, and assist; and remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, as if they themselves were in bonds, and them that suffer adversity, whether spiritual or temporal, as being in the body, not only in the flesh, but as being part of the body, the church; and therefore should weep with them that weep, and bear a part with them in their sorrows. The Jews have a saying {f}, that

"if one brother dies, all the brethren grieve; and if one of a society dies, hlwk hrwbhh lk gadt, "the whole society grieves";"

and also another {g},

"that everyone that afflicts himself, rwbyuh Me, "with the congregations", is worthy to see or enjoy the comfort of the congregation or church;"

or one member be honoured; by being set in the highest place, and employed to the greatest usefulness, or by being most richly and beautifully clothed and adorned:

all the members rejoice with it; as sharing in the honour, Or benefit of it: so if one member of the church of Christ is honoured with an high office, with great gifts, with a large measure of grace, spiritual light, knowledge, and experience, with great discoveries of the love of God, with the presence of Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, or with the good things of this life, and an heart to make use of them for the interest of religion, the other members rejoice at it; for so it becomes the saints to rejoice with them that rejoice, and be glad, both at the temporal and spiritual prosperity of each other: and upon the whole it is clear, that the meanest have no reason to be discouraged, nor the highest and greatest to be proud and elated.

{f} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 105. 2. & 106. 1. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Ebel, c. 13. sect. 12. & Seder Olam Rabba, p. 9. {g} T. Bab. Taanith. fol. 11. 1.

1 Corinthians 12:27

Ver. 27. Now ye are the body of Christ,.... Not his natural body, which his Father prepared for him, in which he bore our sins on the tree, and which was offered up once for all; nor his sacramental body, or the bread in the supper, which is a representation of his body; but his body mystical, the church; not that the Corinthians were the whole of the body, only a part of it, as every single congregational church is of the church universal. This is an accommodation of the simile the apostle had to so much advantage enlarged upon:

and members in particular; or in part: meaning either that they as single members were part of the general body: or that only a part of them were so, there being some among them, as in all particular and visible churches, who had not the true grace of God; and so are neither members of Christ, nor of the general assembly and church of the firstborn: or the sense is, that they were not only members of Christ, and of his body, but were particularly members one of another, in strict union and close communion, and of mutual use and service to each other.

1 Corinthians 12:28

Ver. 28. And God hath set some in the church,.... As before the apostle gives an account of the various different gifts of the Spirit, qualifying men for service in the church of Christ, here he enumerates the several offices and officers:

first apostles; as were the twelve disciples, and Paul the apostle; men that were immediately sent by Christ himself, and had their commission and doctrine directly from him; and a power of working miracles, to confirm the truth of their mission and ministry; they were sent into all the world to preach the Gospel, to plant churches everywhere, and to ordain officers in them; they were not confined to any particular church, but had power and authority in all the churches, to preach the word, administer ordinances, advise, counsel, direct, reprove, and censure:

secondarily, prophets; who either had the gift of foretelling things to come, as Agabus and others; or who had a peculiar gift, by divine revelation, of explaining the prophecies of the sacred writings, and of preaching the Gospel:

thirdly, teachers; the same with pastors, elders, and overseers; the ordinary ministers of the word, who have a gift of expounding the Scriptures; not by extraordinary revelation, but by the ordinary gift of the Spirit, in the use of means, as reading, meditation, and prayer; and whose work is to preach the word, administer ordinances, feed and govern particular churches, over whom they are set: after that miracles; which is to be understood, not of some persons, as distinct from apostles, prophets, and teachers, who also had the power of working miracles; but from persons and officers in the church, the principal of which the apostle had mentioned, he passes to things, which belonged at least to some of them; unless it can be thought that there were in those times private Christians, who were neither apostles nor prophets, nor teachers, and yet had a power of doing miracles:

then gifts of healing; the sick, by anointing them with oil, which was only one species of doing miracles; and which was sometimes performed, not only by apostles, and such like extraordinary persons, but by the common elders and ordinary officers of the church:

helps: meaning either the ministers of the word in common, who are helpers of the faith and joy of the saints, and are means of increasing their knowledge and spiritual experience, and of establishing them in the truth; see Ac 18:27 or else such evangelists and ministers of the word as were assistants to the apostles, such as Mark, and Timothy, and Titus; or rather the deacons of churches, whose business it is to take care of tables; the Lord's table, the minister's, and the poor's, and all the secular affairs of the church; and so are helps to the minister, relieve him, and free him from all worldly concerns, that he may the better attend to prayer, and the ministry of the word. These, whether one or the other, are so called, in allusion to the priests and Levites, who were hydeom, "helps", or assistants to the high priest, in the burning of the red heifer, and in other things {h}:

governments; some by these understand the same with pastors and elders, who have the rule and government of the church; others lay elders, a sort of ruling elders in the church, as distinct from pastors. Dr. Lightfoot thinks such are intended, who had the gift of discerning spirits. I rather think with De Dieu, that the word designs counsellors; see the Septuagint in Pr 11:14 and here intends such as are men of wisdom and prudence, who are very proper persons to be consulted and advised with, by the pastor, elder, or overseer, in matters of moment and importance in the church:

diversities of tongues; such as have the gift of speaking with divers tongues; or of interpreting them, or both. The Vulgate Latin version and some copies add, "interpretations of tongues".

{h} Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 3. & Parah, c. 3. sect. 6.

1 Corinthians 12:29

Ver. 29. Are all apostles?.... No some are prophets, as distinct from apostles; and some are teachers, as distinct from them both, and some are neither:

are all prophets? no; some are apostles, above them, and some are teachers, inferior to them; and but very few there were who had that peculiar character and gift:

are all teachers? no; the far greater part of the members of churches are hearers, or persons that are taught in the word; are neither in the office of teaching, nor have they the qualifications for it.

Are all workers of miracles? no; in those early times, when the gift of doing miracles was bestowed, it was not given to all, only to some; and now there are none that are possessed of it.

1 Corinthians 12:30

Ver. 30. Have all the gifts of healing?.... No; when these gifts were in being, all had them not. When anointing with oil, in order to heal the sick, was in use, it was only performed by the elders of the church, not by the common members of it, who were to be sent for by the sick on this occasion:

do all speak with tongues? no; it was not true in fact, as they well knew; though this was greatly coveted after, as a following chapter of this epistle shows;

do all interpret? that is, unknown tongues, strange languages; or can they? no. This also was a peculiar gift bestowed on some persons only.

1 Corinthians 12:31

Ver. 31. But covet earnestly the best gifts,.... Which may be rendered either indicatively as an assertion, "ye do covet earnestly the best gifts": of prophesying and teaching, of doing miracles, healing diseases, speaking with, and interpreting, different tongues and languages; but I can, and do show you something that is better, and more excellent than these: or, by way of interrogation, "do ye covet earnestly the best gifts?" do you zealously affect them, fervently desire them, and emulate one another in your endeavours after them? I have something to observe to you which exceeds them all, and which you would do well to follow after, and eagerly pursue; or imperatively, as an exhortation, as it is rendered by our translators: and by the best gifts may be meant, the best of these external gifts before mentioned; and not those of the highest class, and the more extraordinary, but which are the most useful and beneficial to the church, as preaching or prophesying was: the Corinthians seemed most covetous and desirous of speaking with different tongues; but the apostle shows, in 1Co 14:1, by divers reasons, that prophesying was preferable, being more serviceable and useful to the church, and so more eligible and to be desired by them, to which he may have regard here: or else by them are meant the internal graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love, which are all of them gifts of God's grace; all useful and valuable, and better than all external extraordinary gifts whatever, which a man might have, and be nothing, be lost and damned; whereas he that believes in Christ, has a good hope through grace, and love in his soul to God, Christ, and his people, though he is destitute of the other gifts, shall certainly be saved; wherefore these are the gifts which men should be solicitous for and covet after, and be greatly concerned to know that they have them, and to be content without the other:

and yet show I unto you a more excellent way: if by the best gifts are designed the above graces of the Spirit, then by "the more excellent way", Christ must be meant, the author and object of these graces; who is the way to the covenant, and to a participation of all the blessings of it, as justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life; the way into a Gospel church, and to all the ordinances of the Gospel dispensation, as baptism, and the Lord's supper; for faith in him is the prerequisite, and proper qualification for the enjoyment of each of these: Christ is the way of salvation, and the way to the Father, and to heaven and eternal happiness; and an excellent one he is, the more, yea, the most excellent; he is the only way to each of these; he is the new and living way, a plain and pleasant one; and so a safe and secure one, in which all that walk shall certainly be saved: now this way the apostle showed, declared, pointed out in the ministry of the word; it was his chief and principal business, the sum of his doctrine, to make known Christ, and him crucified, as the way, the truth, and the life; to direct souls to him, and to show them the way of salvation by him: but if by the best gifts are meant the more useful ones of those before mentioned, as prophesying, or preaching, then the more excellent way designs grace, special and internal grace; and that either grace in general, regenerating, sanctifying grace, including all sorts of grace; which is the way of a soul's passing from the death of sin to a life of faith and holiness; and is the way to eternal glory, and which gives a meetness for it, and is inseparably connected with it. This is a more excellent way than gifts; for gifts, be they ever so great, may be lost or taken away, through disuse or misimprovement; but grace always remains, can never be lost, nor will ever be taken away, but will issue in everlasting life: men may have the greatest gifts, and yet not be saved, as Judas and others; but he that has the least degree of faith in Christ, hope in him, and love to him, shall be saved by him with an everlasting salvation: or particularly the grace of charity, or love to the saints, may be intended by the more excellent way; which is the evidence of a man's passing from death and life; the new commandment of Christ, and the fulfilling of the law; without which, a man, though he has never such great gifts, he is nothing as a Christian, nor in the business of salvation; and is the greatest of all the graces of the Spirit; and is of such a nature, that when prophecies, tongues, knowledge, and all external gifts shall fail, and even the internal graces of faith and hope shall cease, the one being changed for vision, and the other swallowed up in enjoyment, this will continue; and the rather this grace may be thought to be meant, since the apostle immediately passes to treat it in the next chapter, and prefers it to all gifts, and even graces.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 13

This chapter is taken up in the commendation of the grace of charity, or love, which is preferred to all gifts whatsoever; is described by its properties and effects, and particularly its duration; on which account it is represented as more excellent than other principal graces. The apostle prefers it to gifts, by which it appears to be the more excellent way, he speaks of in the latter part of the preceding chapter: he begins with the gift of tongues, which without charity makes a man noisy, but not spiritual, 1Co 13:1 he next mentions the gifts of knowledge of the mysteries of the Gospel, and of preaching them; and also the gift of working miracles, on the account of which a man thinks himself something, and yet with all these, not having the grace of love, he is nothing, 1Co 13:2 to which he adds alms deeds and martyrdom, and observes, that a man may do the one in the most extensive manner, and suffer the other in the most dreadful shape; and yet if love be wanting, from whence, as a principle, all actions and sufferings should flow, these will be of no avail, 1Co 13:3 and then the apostle proceeds to describe and commend this grace, by its effects and properties, and that in sixteen particulars; by which it appears to be exceeding useful, and what adorns and recommends the person possessed of it, 1Co 13:4 and enlarges upon the last, namely, the duration and perpetuity of it; showing that the gifts of knowledge, speaking with tongues, and preaching, shall fail, but this will not, 1Co 13:8 the failure of these gifts he proves from the imperfection of them, which therefore must be removed in a perfect state of things, 1Co 13:9 this he illustrates, by comparing the present imperfect state to childhood, and the future one to manhood, which he exemplifies in himself, 1Co 13:11 the imperfect knowledge of the one he compares to looking at objects through a glass, and to an enigma, riddle, or dark saying; and the perfect knowledge of the other, to seeing face to face, without any artificial help, 1Co 13:12 and he concludes this excellent commendation of charity by observing, that it is not only preferable to gifts, but even to graces, and these the more eminent, and which are abiding graces too, as faith and hope; and yet charity exceeds these, both as to its duration and use, 1Co 13:13.

Ver. 1. Though I speak with the tongues of men,.... That is, of all men, all languages that men anywhere speak, or have been spoken by them. The number of these is by some said {i} to be "seventy five"; but the general opinion of the Jews is, that at the confusion of languages at Babel, they were seventy; for they say {k}, that then

"the holy blessed God descended, and "seventy angels" surrounding the throne of his glory, and confounded the languages of seventy people, and every nation of the seventy had their own language and writing, and an angel set over each nation;"

whether this may be the reason, why the tongues of angels are mentioned here with those of men, let it be considered. Mordecai, they say {l}, was skilled in all these seventy languages, so that when he heard Bigthan and Teresh, who were Tarsians, talking together in the Tarsian language, he understood them. The same is said {m} of R. Akiba, R. Joshua, and R. Eliezer; yet, they say {n}, that this was one of the qualifications of the sanhedrim, or of such that sat in that great council, that they should understand these seventy languages, because they were not to hear causes from the mouth of an interpreter. It is affirmed {o} of Mithridates, king of Pontus and Bithynia, that he had "twenty five" nations under his government, and that he so well understood, and could speak the language of each nation, as to converse with men of any of them, without an interpreter. Apollonius Tyaneus {p} pretended to understand, and speak with the tongues of all men; such a case the apostle supposes here, whether attained to by learning, industry, and close application, or by an extraordinary gift of the Spirit, which latter seems to be what he intends; and the rather he mentions this, and begins with it, because many of the Corinthians were greatly desirous of it; some that had it not, were dejected on that account; wherefore to comfort them, the apostle suggests, that the grace of love which they were possessed of, was abundantly preferable to it; and others that had it were lifted up with it, and used it either for ostentation or gain, or to make parties, and not to the edification of their brethren; which showed want of love, and so were no better than what the apostle hereafter asserts: what he says here and in the following verses, is in an hypothetical way, supposing such a case, and in his own person, that it might be the better taken, and envy and ill will be removed: he adds,

and of angels; not that angels have tongues in a proper sense, or speak any vocal language, in an audible voice, with articulate sounds; for they are spirits immaterial and incorporeal; though they have an intellectual speech, by which they celebrate the perfections and praises of God, and can discourse with one another, and communicate their minds to each other; see **Isa 6:3** and which is what the Jews {q} call,

"blh rwbyd, "the speech of the heart"; and is the speech (they say) Myrbdm Mykalmhv, "which the angels speak" in their heart; and is the "pure language", and more excellent than other tongues; is pleasant discourse, the secret of the holy seraphim--and is Mykalmh xyv, "the talk of angels"; who do the will of their Creator in their hearts, and in their thoughts:"

this is not what the apostle refers to; but rather the speech of angels, when they have assumed human bodies, and have in them spoke with an audible voice, in articulate sounds; of which we have many instances, both in the Old Testament and the New, wherein they have conversed with divers persons, as Hagar, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Manoah and his wife, the Virgin Mary, Zechariah, and others; unless by the tongues of angels should be meant the most eloquent speech, and most excellent of languages; or if there can be thought to be any tongue that exceeds that of men, which, if angels spoke, they would make use of. Just as the face of angels is used, to express the greatest glory and beauty of the face, or countenance, **Ac 6:15** and angels' bread is used for the most excellent food, Ps 78:25. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, and that not without reason, that the apostle speaks according to the sense and conceptions of the Jews, who attribute speech and language to angels. They tell us {r} that R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, who was contemporary with the apostle, and lived to the destruction of Jerusalem, among other things, he was well versed in, understood trv ykalm txyvw Mydv txyv, "the speech of demons", and "the speech of the ministering angels": and which they take to be the holy tongue, or the Hebrew language; they observe {s}, that

"the children of men (by whom I suppose they mean the Israelites) are in three things like to the ministering angels; they have knowledge as the ministering angels, and they walk in an erect stature as the ministering angels, trvh ykalmk vdqh Nwvlb Myrpomw, "and they speak in the holy tongue, as the ministering angels"."

They pretend that the angels do not understand the Syriac language; hence they {t} advise a man,

"never to ask for what he wants in the Syriac language; for (says R. Jochanan) whoever asks for what he wants in the Syriac language, the ministering angels do not join with him, for they do not know the Syriac language;"

and yet, in the same page, they say that Gabriel came and taught one the seventy languages: but let the tongues of angels be what they will, and a man be able to speak with them ever so well,

and have not charity; by which is meant not giving of alms to the poor, for in 1Co 13:3 this is supposed in the highest degree it can be performed, and yet a man be destitute of charity; nor a charitable opinion of men as good men, let their principles and practices be what they will; for this is not true charity, but rather uncharitableness, and acting the most unkind part to their souls, to consider and caress them as such, when destruction and ruin are in all their ways; but the grace of love is here meant, even love to God, and love to Christ, and love to the saints, which is a grace implanted in regeneration by the Spirit of God; and which, if a person is destitute of, as he may, who has never so great a share of learning, or knowledge of the languages, or even the extraordinary gift of speaking with divers tongues; all his learning is but an empty sound, his eloquence, his diversity of speech, is but like the man's nightingale, "vox & praeterea nihil", a voice and nothing else; or as the apostle here says, supposing it was his own case,

I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal; or rather, "the loud", or "high sounding cymbal", as in Ps 150:5 which the Septuagint there render by kumbaloiv alalagmou, a phrase of the same signification with this: for not that little tinkling instrument used by the Heathens is here meant; though what is here said of the cymbal agrees with that; which made a tinkling noise when shaken, or struck with anything, or with one against another; and was an hollow vessel of brass, in form of the herb called "navel wort" {u}; but rather that musical instrument which bore this name, used in the Jewish worship under the Old Testament; and which, the Jews {w} say, was an instrument that gave a very great sound; and that the sound of it was heard as far as Jericho {x}, which was some miles from Jerusalem; they say {y}, that the cymbals were two brazen instruments or pieces of brass, which they struck one against another, and so made a sound. The cymbal was also used in the worship of Heathen deities, and the allusion here in both the things mentioned, is either to the tinkling of brass, and the sounding of cymbals in the worship of idols {z}; which were mere empty sounds, and of no avail, as is a man's speaking with divers tongues, destitute of the grace of love; or to the confused clamours and noises made upon going to battle, just upon the onset, by drums and cymbals, and hceioiv calkoiv, hollow sounding pieces of brass; as appears from Polytenus, Plutarch, Appianus and others {a}; to which confused noises the apostle compares the most eloquent speech without love. The Greeks had a play they used at feasts, I will not say the allusion is to it here, but leave it to be though of, which they call "Cottabisis"; when, the liquor that was left, they cast into cups of brass, and such whose liquor made the greatest sound in the cup, fancied himself to be loved again, by the person he loved {b}: sounding brass and tinkling cymbals are inanimate things, things without life, as all such persons are destitute of spiritual life, who are devoid of the grace of love; and though they, by an extraordinary gift, and under a divine impulse, speak with divers tongues, they are but like hollow vessels of brass, and sounding cymbals, which only make a noise when they are stricken, and what they give is a mere empty sound, which is of no profit to themselves; they cannot hear, nor be delighted with it, but are rather hurt, being worn out thereby; nor of no great advantage to others, unless they give a musical sound, and that only delights the ear, but neither feeds nor clothes the body; of such little use and profit are men, speaking with tongues destitute of the grace of love, either to themselves or others.

{i} Eupherus & alii in Clement. Alex. Stromat. l. 1. p. 338. {k} Pirke Eliezer, c. 24. {l} Targum in Esther ii. 22. Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1. T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 48. 4. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 13. 2. {m} Juchasin, fol. 36. 2. {n} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 17. 1. & Menachot, fol. 65. 1. {o} A. Gellii Noct. Attic. l. 17. c. 17. {p} Philostrat. Vita Apollon. l. 1. c. 13. {q} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 2. 3. & 13. 4. {r} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 28. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 134. 1. Vid. Zohar in Numb. fol. 92. 1. {s} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 16. 1. & Sabbat. fol. 12. 2. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 74. fol. 65. 2. & Vajikra Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 147. 1. {t} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 33. 1. {u} Vid. Pignorium de Servis, p. 163. 165. {w} Bartenora in Misn. Shekaelim, c. 5. sect. 1. & Kimchi in Psal. cl. 5. {x} Misn. Tamid. c. 3. sect. 8. {y} Bartenora in Misn. Eracin, c. 2. sect. 5. R. David Kimchi & R. Samuel Laniado in 2 Sam. vi. 5. {z} Vid. Arnob. adv. Gentes, l. 7. p. 280. Ed. Elmenhorst, & Ovid, Metamorph. l. 3, fab. 7. {a} Vid. Vaa Till. not. in Lydium de re militare, p. 38. {b} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 10.

1 Corinthians 13:2

Ver. 2. And though I have the gift of prophecy,.... Either of foretelling future events, as Balaam, who foretold many things concerning the Messiah and the people of Israel, and yet had no true love for either; and Caiaphas, who was high priest the year Christ suffered, and prophesied of his death, and was himself concerned in it, being a bitter enemy to him; or of explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, by virtue of an extraordinary gift which some persons had; or of the ordinary preaching of the word, which is sometimes expressed by prophesying, which gift some have had, and yet not the grace of God; see **Php 1:15**

and understand all mysteries; either the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, the mysterious doctrines of the Gospel; such as the trinity of persons in the Godhead, the incarnation of Christ, the unity of the two natures, human and divine, in him, eternal predestination, the doctrines of regeneration, justification, satisfaction, and the resurrection of the dead; all which a man may have a speculative understanding of, and be without love to God or

Christ, or to his people: or else the mystical sense of the types, figures, and shadows of the old law; as the meaning of the passover, brazen serpent, and the rock in the wilderness, the tabernacle, temple, sacrifices, and all things appertaining thereunto. The Jews give us an instance {c} of one who was no lover of Christ, and lived in the times of the apostle; R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, of whom they boast, and who they say was the least of the disciples of Hillell, and yet

"perfectly understood the Scripture, the Misna, the Gemara, the traditions, the allegorical interpretations, the niceties of the law, and the subtleties of the Scribes, the lighter and weightier matters of the law (or the arguments from the greater to the lesser, and "vice versa"), the arguments taken from a parity of reason, the revolution of the sun and moon, rules of interpretation by gematry, parables, &c."

The apostle proceeds,

and all knowledge; of things natural, as Solomon had; of the heavens, and the stars thereof, of the earth and sea, and all things therein, and appertaining thereunto; of all languages, arts, and sciences; of things divine, as a speculative knowledge of God, and the perfections of his nature, of Christ, his person and offices, of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it:

and though I have all faith; not true, special, saving faith, or that faith in Christ, which has salvation connected with it; for a man cannot have that, and be nothing; such an one shall be certainly saved; and besides, this cannot be without love, and therefore not to be supposed: but all historical faith, an assent to everything that is true, to all that is contained in the Scriptures, whether natural, civil, moral, or evangelical; to all that is contained in the law, or in the Gospel; that faith which believes everything: so the Jews {d} say, what is faith? that in which is found atwnmyhm lk, "all faith"; or rather the faith of miracles is meant, both of believing and doing all sorts of miracles, one of which is mentioned;

so that I could remove mountains; meaning either literally, a power of removing mountains from one place to another, referring to Mt 17:20 so Gregory of Neocaesarea, called "Thaumaturgus", the wonder worker, from the miracles done by him, is said {e} to remove a mountain, to make more room for building a church; but whether fact, is a question; or this may be understood figuratively, see **Re 8:8** for doing things very difficult and wonderful, and almost incredible. The Jews used to call their learned and profound doctors, such as could solve difficulties, and do wondrous things, by the name of mountains, or removers of mountains; thus {f}

"they called Rab Joseph, "Sinai", because he was very expert in the Talmudic doctrines, and Rabbah bar Nachmani,
Myrh rqwe, "a rooter up of mountains"; because he was exceeding acute in subtle disputations."

Says Rabba {g} to his disciples,

"lo, I am ready to return an answer smartly to everyone that shall ask me, as Ben Azzai, who expounded in the streets of Tiberias; and there was not in his days such a
Myrh rqwe, "rooter up of mountains", as he."

Again {h},

"Ula saw Resh Lekish in the school, as if Myrh rqwe, "he was rooting up the mountains", and grinding them together; says Rabenu, does not everybody see R. Meir in the school, as if he was "rooting up the mountains of mountains", and grinding them together?"

They {i} elsewhere dispute which is the most honourable to be called, "Sinai" or a remover of mountains;

"one says "Sinai" is the more excellent name; another says "the rooter up of mountains" is the more excellent; Rab Joseph is Sinai, and Rabbah the remover of mountains;"

the gloss says the former is so called,

"because the Misnic laws and their explications were ordered by him, as if they had been given on Mount Sinai,"

though he was not so acute as Rabbah; and the latter was called the rooter up of mountains, because

"he was sharp and subtle in the law;"

once more on those words relating to Issachar, Ge 49:15 "and bowed his shoulder to bear", it is observed {k}; that "this intimates that he was wise in wisdom, Myrh qrpm, "a breaker of the mountains", a shatterer in pieces of the rocks of dissensions and division various ways; as it is said, Jer 23:29 "is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" So a wise man, by the sharpness of his wit, breaks the mountains of difficulties, and divides them by the words of his mouth: hence they used to call the wise men by the names of Sinai, and a rooter of mountains; because they beat and brake the rocks in pieces, the traditions that are difficult and deep."

The phrase is also used of removing difficulties in a civil and political sense, as well as in a theological one {l}: but let a man be able to do ever such great things, yet if he has not "charity", love to God, to Christ and to his people, he is nothing at all; as the apostle says of himself, supposing it was his own case,

I am nothing; not nothing as a man, nor nothing as a gifted man, still he would be a man, and a man of gifts; nor does the apostle say, that his gifts were nothing, that the gift of prophecy was nothing, or the gift of understanding mysteries nothing, or the gift of knowledge nothing, or the gift of doing miracles nothing, for these are all something, and very great things too, and yet a man in whom the grace of love is wanting, is nothing himself with all these; he is nothing in the account of God, of no esteem with him; he is nothing as a believer in Christ, nor nothing as a Christian. This is also a Jewish way of speaking; for they say {m},

"as a bride that is to be adorned with four and twenty ornaments, if she wants anyone of them, Mwlk hnya, "she is nothing"; so a disciple of a wise man ought to be used to the twenty four books (of the Scripture), and if he is wanting in one of them, Mwlk wnya, "he is nothing"."

{c} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 134. 1. & Succa, fol. 28. 1. {d} Zohar in Numb. fol. 60. 1. {e} Gregor. Pap. Dialog. l. 1. c. 7. {f} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 64. 1. Shalsheleth Hakabala, fol. 25. 2. Juchasin, fol. 95. 2. & 160. 2. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 32. 2. Halichot Olam, p. 23, 207. {g} Gloss. in T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 29. 1. Juchasin, fol. 44. 2. {h} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 24. 1. {i} T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 14. 1. Juchasin, fol. 112. 1. {k} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 39. 3. & 126. 4. {l} Vid. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 3. 2. {m} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 18. 2.

1 Corinthians 13:3

Ver. 3. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,.... Of which the Jews give us instances; they say {n}, that R. Ishcab stood, Myynel wyokn lk qylxhw, "and distributed all his goods to the poor"; and a little after they say the same of King Monbaz, that he stood and gave away, or dispersed, "all his goods to the poor"; and elsewhere {o} they say of R. Eliezer ben Judah, that the collectors of alms ran away from him, because he would have given them wl vyv
hm lk, "all that he had"; and of another, they say {p}, that he took all that he had in his house, and went out to divide it among the poor; but of what avail was all this, when what these men did, they did not from a principle of love to God, nor to Christ, nor even to the poor, to whom they gave their substance; but to have honour and applause from men, and have and obtain eternal life hereafter? for they thought by so doing, that they deserved to behold the face of God, enjoy his favour, and be partakers of the happiness of the world to come {q}:

and though I give my body to be burned; which may be done by a man that has no principle of grace in him; the very Heathens have done it; as the Indian queens upon the decease and funeral of their husbands; and Calenus, an Indian philosopher, who followed Alexander the great, and erected a funeral pile, and went into it of his own accord; and Peregrinus, another philosopher, did the like in the times of Trajan. The apostle here respects martyrdom, and by a prophetic spirit has respect to future times, when burning men's bodies for religion would be in use, which then was not; and suggests that there might be some, as according to ecclesiastical history there seems to have been some, who, from a forward and misguided zeal, and to get themselves a name, and leave one behind them, have exposed themselves to the flames, and yet "have not" had "charity", true love to God, a real affection for Christ, or to his saints: wherefore the apostle hypothetically says, supposing himself to be the person that had done all this, it profiteth me nothing: such things may profit others, but not a man's self; giving all his goods to the poor may be of advantage to them, and giving his body to be burned in the cause of religion may be of service to others, to confirm their faith, and encourage them to like sufferings when called to them; but can be of no avail to themselves in the business of salvation; which is not procured by works of righteousness, even the best, and much less by such which proceed from wrong principles, and are directed to wrong ends; the grace of God being wanting, and particularly that of love.

{n} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 2. {o} Juchasin, fol. 51. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 148. 2. {p} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 34. fol. 174. 4. & Mattanot

Cehunah in ib. {q} T. Pesach. fol. 8. 1, 2. Roshhashanah, fol. 4. 1. Bava Bathra, fol. 10. 1, 2.

1 Corinthians 13:4

Ver. 4. Charity suffereth long,.... The apostle, in this and some following verses, enumerates the several properties and characters of the grace of love; and all along represents it as if it was a person, and no doubt designs one who is possessed of it, and in whose heart it is implanted and reigns; such an one is said to "suffer long", or be "patient", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; not only under afflictions by the hand of God, which such an one considers as arising from love; but under the reproaches and persecutions of men, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, and in imitation of him; such a person is slow to anger when abused, not quick of resentment, nor hasty to revenge when affronted; but exercises forbearance, suffers long, and bears much, and is ready to forgive:

and is kind; liberal, and bountiful, does good to all men, even to enemies, and especially to the household of faith; he is gentle to all men, affable and courteous to his brethren, and not morose, churlish, and ill natured; he is easy and yielding to the tempers and humours of men; accommodates himself to their infirmities, capacities, manners, and circumstances, in everything he can, that is not contrary to the glory of God, the interest of Christ, the honour of religion, his own con science, and the good of men;

charity envieth not; or he that has the grace of love to God, Christ, and the saints, does not envy the temporal happiness of others, though it is what he has not, or is greater than he enjoys; as Rachel envied her sister, because she had children when she herself had none; as Joseph's brethren envied him because he had a greater share in his father's affections than they had; or as good men may be tempted to envy the prosperity of the wicked, when they themselves are in adversity; but this grace, when in exercise, will not suffer a person to do: nor will such an one envy the superior measures of grace, the more excellent spiritual gifts, or the greater degree of usefulness, and of success in any spiritual undertaking, and so of greater honour and respect, in any of the saints and servants of Christ to themselves, of which Moses and John the Baptist are remarkable instances, Nu 11:28,

charity vaunteth not itself, is not ostentatious, a proud boaster; either of what he has, the things of nature, as wisdom, riches, honour, strength, &c. or spiritual gifts; or of what he does, since what such an one does, he does from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, and not to be seen of men, or to gain their esteem and applause: or is not rash, and precipitant; does not run headlong into measures, to promote his own honour and interest, without considering what will be the consequence of things; nor is he rash with his mouth, or hasty with his lips, to utter anything unbecoming before God or men. The Arabic version renders it, "does not speak deceitfully"; or hypocritically, for nothing is more contrary to true genuine love than this; the Syriac version renders it, "is not tumultuous"; noisy and seditious: such an one is not troublesome in a commonwealth, nor does he go into parties and factions in churches, but is all the reverse:

is not puffed up swelled with pride, and elated with a vain conceit of himself, of his parts and abilities, of his learning, eloquence, wisdom, and knowledge, as the false teachers in this church were; knowledge without grace, unsanctified knowledge, mere notional speculative knowledge, puffeth up; but charity, or the grace of love, does not; that edifies and preserves persons from being puffed up with themselves, or one against another.

1 Corinthians 13:5

Ver. 5. Doth not behave itself unseemly,.... By using either unbecoming words, or doing indecent actions; for a man unprincipled with this grace will be careful that no filthy and corrupt communication proceed out of his mouth, which may offend pious ears; and that he uses no ridiculous and ludicrous gestures, which may expose himself and grieve the saints; accordingly the Syriac version renders it, "neither does it commit that which is shameful": such an one will not do a little mean despicable action, in reproaching one, or flattering another, in order to gain a point, to procure some worldly advantage, or an interest in the friendship and affection of another. Some understand it in this sense, that one endued with this grace thinks nothing unseemly and unbecoming him, however mean it may appear, in which he can be serviceable to men, and promote the honour of religion and interest of Christ; though it be by making coats and garments for the poor, as Dorcas did; or by washing the feet of the saints, in imitation of his Lord and master: or "is not ambitious", as the Vulgate Latin version reads; of honour and applause, and of being in the highest form, but is lowly, meek and humble:

seeketh not her own things: even those which are "lawful", as the Arabic version renders it; but seeks the things of God, and what will make most for his honour and glory; and the things of Christ, and what relate to the spread of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his kingdom; and also the things of other men, the temporal and spiritual welfare of the saints: such look not only on their own things, and are concerned for them, but also upon the things of others, which they likewise care for:

is not easily provoked: to wrath, but gives place to it: such an one is provoked at sin, at immorality and idolatry, as Paul's spirit was stirred up or provoked, when he saw the superstition of the city of Athens; and is easily provoked to love and good works, which are entirely agreeable to the nature of charity:

thinketh no evil; not but that evil thoughts are in such a man's heart, for none are without them; though they are hateful, abominable, and grieving to such as are partakers of the grace of God, who long to be delivered from them: but the meaning is, either that one possessed of this grace of love does not think of the evil that is done him by another; he forgives, as God has forgiven him, so as to forget the injury done him, and remembers it no more; and so the Arabic version reads it, "and remembers not evil"; having once forgiven it, he thinks of it no more; or he does not meditate revenge, or devise mischief, and contrive evil against man that has done evil to him, as Esau did against his brother Jacob; so the Ethiopic version, by way of explanation, adds, "neither thinks evil, nor consults evil"; or as the word here used will bear to be rendered, "does not impute evil"; reckon or place it to the account of him that has committed it against him, but freely and fully forgives, as God, when he forgives sin, is said not to impute it; or such an one is not suspicious of evil in others, he does not indulge evil surmises, and groundless jealousies; which to do is very contrary to this grace of love.

1 Corinthians 13:6

Ver. 6. Rejoiceth not in iniquity,.... Neither in his own, nor in others; but on the contrary is grieved for it; he mourns over his own iniquities, the corruption of his heart, the infirmities of his life, his secret sins, which none know but God and his own soul; he is greatly troubled at the profaneness and immorality of the men of the world, and the sins of professors cut him to the heart: nor does he rejoice in injustice, as the word used here may be rendered, in any unjust action or injury, that may be done to any, yea, even to an enemy; even as Christ, when Peter, in great zeal for him, drew his sword and cut off the ear of one of the high priest's servants, who was more busy than the rest in apprehending Christ, and showed more malignancy than others, was so far from rejoicing at it, that he was displeased with Peter for doing it, and was moved with so much compassion to that man, though his enemy, as to heal him: but rejoiceth in the truth; in the truth of the Gospel, and the success of it; such an one can do nothing against it, but for it, will buy it at any rate, but sell it upon no account whatever; and he rejoices greatly when he sees any walking in it, and agreeably to it; for truth, as it stands opposed to iniquity or unrighteousness, may signify an upright, holy, and righteous conversation, a conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ, which that teaches, and by which it is adorned; now a gracious soul desires this in itself, and delights to see it in others.

1 Corinthians 13:7

Ver. 7. Beareth all things,.... The burdens of fellow Christians, and so fulfils the law of Christ, which is the law of love; the infirmities of weak believers, and the reproaches and persecutions of the world: or "covers all things", as it may be rendered, even a multitude of sins, as charity is said to do, **1Pe 4:8** not by conniving at them, or suffering them to be upon a brother; but having privately and faithfully reproved for them, and the offender being brought to a sense and acknowledgment of them, he freely forgives them as trespasses against him, covers them with the mantle of love, and industriously hides and conceals them from others;

believeth all things; that are to be believed, all that God says in his word, all his truths, and all his promises; and even sometimes in hope against hope, as Abraham did, relying upon the power, faithfulness, and other perfections of God; though such a man will not believe every spirit, every preacher and teacher, nor any but such as agree with the Scriptures of truth, the standard of faith and practice; nor will he believe every word of man, which is the character of a weak and foolish man; indeed, a man of charity or love is willing to believe all the good things reported of men; he is very credulous of such things, and is unwilling to believe ill reports of persons, or any ill of men; unless it is open and glaring, and is well supported, and there is full evidence of it; he is very incredulous in this respect:

hopes all things; that are to be hoped for; hopes for the accomplishment of all the promises of God; hopes for the enjoyment of him in his house and ordinances; hopes for things that are not seen, that are future, difficult, though possible to be enjoyed: hopes for heaven and eternal happiness, for more grace here and glory hereafter; hopes the best of all men, of all professors of religion, even of wicked men, that they may be better and brought to repentance, and of fallen professors, who declare their repentance, and make their acknowledgments; he hopes well of them, that they are sincere, and all is right and will appear so:

endureth all things; that are disagreeable to the flesh; all afflictions, tribulations, temptations, persecutions, and death itself, for the elect's sake, for the sake of the Gospel, and especially for the sake of Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 13:8

Ver. 8. Charity never faileth,.... It may fail as to the exercise of it, as other graces do; it may be left, but not lost; the fervour of it may be remitted and abated; it may wax cold through the prevalence of sin; it may be greatly damped by the growth of error and heresy, which eat as do a canker; and may be much obstructed by an anxious and immoderate care and concern for worldly things; which are very pernicious to all the branches of vital religion and powerful godliness, and particularly love to God, Christ, and the brethren: but this grace never fails as to its principle; it is an immortal and an incorruptible seed; it lives throughout the most violent temptations, as in Peter; and under the greatest desertions and sorest afflictions, still there is an affection for God; Christ is he whom such a soul loves; and the saints are the excellent in the earth, in whom is all his delight: and it also continues as to its use, and will do so, when faith and hope will loose theirs, even in the other world; for faith will be changed into vision, and hope into enjoyment; but love will be the same, only act in a higher sphere, and to a greater degree, and in a perfect manner:

but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; by which are meant, either the predictions of future events, not that they shall fail in their accomplishment, but they shall be no more, because they will all be accomplished; or else the gifts of explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of preaching the doctrines of the Gospel, will be no more, because there will be no need of them in a state of perfection:

whether there be tongues they shall cease; not but that, in the resurrection, that member of the body, the tongue, will be restored as the rest, and be everlastingly employed in celebrating the perfections of God, in singing the hallelujahs of the Lamb, and in joining with angels and other saints in songs of praise to the eternal Three; but the gift of speaking with divers tongues will cease, indeed it has already; nor will there be any use for such an extraordinary gift in the other world; when probably, and as it is thought by some, there will be but one language, and that the Hebrew language; as the whole earth was of one language and speech before the confusion at Babel:

whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away; that is, the word of knowledge, peculiarly given by the spirit to some persons only; or that peculiar gift of knowledge of divine things, by which some are qualified to be instructors of others; the present means both of communicating, and of obtaining and increasing knowledge by the preaching and hearing of the word, will be no more used: and besides, imperfect knowledge of every sort will disappear, it will become perfect; that knowledge which is in part will be done away, when perfect knowledge takes place; for so we are taught to explain it by the following words.

1 Corinthians 13:9

Ver. 9. For we know in part,.... Not that the Scriptures, the rule and measure of knowledge, and from whence spiritual knowledge is derived, are imperfect; so that there is need of unwritten traditions, and of enthusiastic revelations and inspirations, to inform of things otherwise unknown; for though they were at sundry times, and in divers manners delivered, yet now they contain a complete system of divine truths, to which nothing is to be added, and from which nothing is to be taken away; or that only a part of the saints know the things of God; for though there is a difference between them, some have more knowledge than others, yet all have some, all are taught of God, and know him, and have that anointing which teacheth all things; wherefore the sense also is not, that only a part of truth, and not the whole, is known; for the Spirit of God leads into all truth; the whole counsel of God is made known in the Scriptures, and by the ministers of the word; though, to this sense the Arabic version inclines, rendering it, "some part of doctrine we know"; and so in 1Co 13:12 "some part of knowledge I know"; as also the Syriac version, which renders it lylq ygo Nm, "a little from much we know"; but the true meaning is, that though the rule of knowledge is perfect, and all the saints have knowledge, and every truth of the Gospel is known; yet by those that know most, it is known but imperfectly: the truth itself may be most clearly discerned, as it is revealed in the word; yet the manner of it, how it is, may not be known; and many difficulties may attend it, and objections be raised to it, which are not easily solved; as in the doctrines of the Trinity, predestination, the union of the two natures in Christ, the resurrection of the dead, &c.

and we prophesy in part; the word of prophecy, as it sure, it is also perfect, to which we do well to take heed; and though all do not prophesy, yet all that do, and that prophesy aright, that is, explain the word of God aright, these preach the Gospel fully, declare the whole counsel of God, and keep back nothing profit able to the saints; yet still their prophesying or explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, or the mysteries of the Gospel, is but imperfect at best in the present state of things.

1 Corinthians 13:10

Ver. 10. But when that which is perfect is come,.... When perfect knowledge of God, of Christ, and of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven shall take place; which will not in this life, but in that which is to come. So the Jews say {r} that at the resurrection, upon the reunion of the soul and body,

"the children of men shall attain to hmylv hed, "perfect knowledge";"

which is what the apostle refers to here:

and then that which is in part, shall be done away: the imperfection of knowledge shall be removed; the imperfect manner of communicating knowledge, and of receiving and acquiring it, will cease: thus the apostle explains what he means by the cessation and failing of knowledge, and prophecy; not that knowledge itself will be no more, and a state of ignorance and darkness succeed; but imperfect knowledge will vanish away, or rather will be perfected, or be swallowed up in perfect knowledge; the imperfection of it will disappear; and it will be no more taught and received in part; the whole of truth will be clearly known.

{r} Midrash Haneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 1.

1 Corinthians 13:11

Ver. 11. When I was a child I spake as a child,.... That cannot speak plain, aims at words rather than expresses them, delivers them in a lisping or stammering manner: hereby the apostle illustrates the then present gift of speaking with divers tongues, which was an extraordinary gift of the Spirit, was peculiar to some persons, and what many were very fond of; and yet this, in its highest degree and exercise, was but like the lisping of a child, in comparison of what will be known and expressed by saints, when they come to be perfect men in heaven:

I understood as a child; and so does he that understands all mysteries, in comparison of the enlightened and enlarged understandings of glorified saints; the people of God, who are in the highest form and class of understanding, in the present state of things, are but children in understanding; it is in the other world, when they are arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, that they will in understanding be men:

I thought, or "reasoned",

as a child; whose thoughts are low and mean, and reasonings very weak; and so are the thoughts and reasonings of such as have all knowledge here below, in comparison of that perfect knowledge, those clear ideas, and strong reasonings of the spirits of just men above:

but when I became a man, I put away childish things; childish talk, childish affections, and childish thoughts and reasonings; so when the saints shall be grown to the full age of Christ, and are become perfect men in him, tongues shall cease, prophecies shall fail, and knowledge vanish away; and in the room thereof, such conversation, understanding, and knowledge take place, as will be entirely suited to the manly state in glory.

1 Corinthians 13:12

Ver. 12. For now we see through a glass,.... In this present life, they that are enlightened by the Spirit of God, see God, the perfections and glory of his nature, the riches of his grace and goodness, as displayed in Christ; they behold the glory of Christ, as full of grace and truth, and are filled with love to him; the desires of their souls are after him, and they are changed into the same image by his Spirit; they discern the things of the Spirit of God; the veil being removed from them, they behold wondrous things, out of the law of God and Gospel of Christ, even such things as are unseen unto, and unknown by the natural man: but then it is all "through a glass"; not of the creatures; for though the invisible things of God may in some sort be seen and understood by the things that are made; and God, as the God of nature, may be seen in the works of creation and providence, yet not as the God of grace; it is only in his Son, and through the glass of the Gospel, he is to be beheld in this light: and so it is through the glass of the word and ordinances, that the glory of the person of Christ, of his offices, fulness of grace and righteousness, is only to be seen; in these he is evidently set forth to the eye of faith, as the surety, Saviour, and Redeemer of his people, and through these the knowledge of divine truths is communicated: and through all these but

darkly: "in an enigma", or "riddle", or "dark saying", as the word here used may be rendered; that is, in this present state, in comparison of the future one; for though the sight of things under the Gospel dispensation is clear, and with open face, in comparison of the legal one, yet even this is very obscure, and attended with great darkness and imperfection, when compared with the beatific vision in heaven, which will have no manner of interruption and obscurity in it:

but then face to face: there will be no intervening mediums of vision; not the glass of the word and ordinances; there will be no need of them, God and Christ will be seen as they are; the judgments of God, his providential dispensations, will be all made manifest, and will be legible without the help of a glass; the doctrines of grace and truth will lie open and clear, free of all dark speeches, obscure hints, or enigmatical expressions: and as there will be nothing to intervene by way of assistance, there being no need of any, there will be nothing to intercept the sight; the objects will be nigh, even face to face; the view will be full and clear, the sight will be perfect, as well as the converse with the objects will be familiar; and which, without the least obstruction, will always so continue: there seems to be here a double reference, partly to what the Lord says of Moses, in Nu 12:8 "with him will I speak, mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches"; and partly to what the Jews say of him, with a view to the same passage:

"all the prophets (say they {s}) looked through a glass, which did not give light; (or, as they sometimes say, which was spotted, and was not clear;) Moses our master looked hryamh ayrlqpoyab, "through a glass that gave light";"

or, as elsewhere, was bright and clear, and without any spot. Again, they say {t},

"all the prophets prophesied by the means of an angel; hence they saw what they saw hdyxw lvmb, "by way of parable and riddle", or dark saying; Moses our master did not prophesy by the means of an angel; as it is said, "with him will I speak mouth to mouth"; and it is said, "the Lord spake to Moses, face to face"; and it is also said, "the similitude of the Lord shall he behold"; as if it was said, that there should be no parable; but he should see the thing clearly without a parable; of which likewise the law testifies, saying, "apparently, and not in dark speeches"; for he did not prophesy hdyxb, "by way of riddle"; (in an enigmatical way, darkly;) but apparently, for he saw the matter clearly."

The two glasses, clear and not clear, the Cabalistic doctors call "tiphereth" and "malchuth" {u}.

""Tiphereth" (they say) is a clear and well polished glass, by which Moses prophesied and had visions, "and saw all things most exactly", in a very singular manner; "malchuth" is the glass that is not clear; so that he that prophesies by that, prophesies "by riddle", and parable."

Now the apostle suggests, that as there was such a difference between Moses and the rest of the prophets, the one saw clearly, the other through a glass darkly; a like, yea, a much greater difference there is between the clearest views saints have of divine things now, and those they shall be blessed with hereafter, and which he exemplifies in himself:

now I know in part; though not a whit behind the chief of the apostles; though his knowledge in the mystery of Christ was such, as had not been given to any in ages and generations past; and though he had been caught up into the third heaven and had heard words not lawful to be uttered, yet owns his knowledge in the present state to be but imperfect; which may be instructive to such, who are apt to entertain an high opinion of themselves, and dream of perfection in this life:

but then shall I know, even as I am known; in the other world and state, he signifies that he should know God, Christ, angels, and glorified saints, and all truths in a perfect manner, even as he was known of God and Christ perfectly, allowing for the difference between the Creator and the creature; his sense is, that he should have as full and complete a knowledge of persons and things as he was capable of; it would be like, though not equal to, the knowledge which God had of him; and which would be attended with the strongest love and affection to the objects known, even as he was known and loved of God.

{s} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 49. 2. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 1. fol. 147. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 30. 2. & 98. 3. & 103. 3. & in Exod. x. 3. & xi. 3. & xiv. 4. & 34, 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 46. 4. & 170. 2. Shaare ora, fol. 26. 2. {t} Maimon. Jesode Hatora, c. 7. sect. 6. {u} Lex. Cabal. p. 139. R. Moses in Sepher

Hashem in ib.

1 Corinthians 13:13

Ver. 13. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three,.... Which are the principal graces of the Spirit of God: faith is to be understood, not of a faith of miracles, for that does not abide; nor of an historical one, or mere assent to truth; persons may have this faith, and believe but for a while; but of that faith, which is peculiar to God's elect; is a fruit and effect of electing grace, and for that reason abides; is the gift of God, and one of those which are without repentance; is the work of God, and the operation of his Spirit, and therefore will be performed with power; it is the grace by which a soul sees Christ, goes unto him, lays hold on him, receives him, relies on him, and lives upon him: "hope" is also a gift of God's grace, implanted in regeneration; has God and Christ, and not any worldly thing, or outward performance, for its object, ground, and foundation, to build upon; it is of things unseen, future, difficult, yet possible to be enjoyed; it is supported by the love of God, is encouraged by promises, and is sure, being fixed on Christ and his righteousness; it is that grace by which saints wait for things promised, and rejoice in the believing views of glory and happiness: charity designs love to God, Christ, and the saints, as has been explained, and a large account is given of it in this chapter: these are the three chief and leading graces in God's people, and they abide and continue with them; they may fail sometimes, as to their lively exercise, but never as to their being and principle; faith may droop and hang its wing, hope may not be lively, and love may wax cold, but neither of them can be lost; Christ prays that faith fail not, hope on him is an anchor sure and steadfast, and nothing can separate from the love of Christ; as not from the love of Christ to his people, so not from theirs to him: these graces abide now, during the present life: he that has true faith in Christ, shall die in it; and he that has a good hope through grace, shall have it in his death; and love will outlive death, and be in its height and glory in the other world: for which reason it is added,

but the greatest of these is charity; and is said to be so, not that it is on every account the greatest; faith in many things exceeds that, as what is ascribed to it in Scripture shows; but because of the peculiar properties and effects of it before mentioned, it including faith and hope, as in 1Co 13:7 and besides many other things, and because, without this, faith and hope are nothing: and besides, its usefulness is more extensive than either of the other two; a man's faith is only for himself; a just man lives by his own faith, and not another's; one man's faith will be of no service to another, and the same is true of hope

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 14

In this chapter the apostle discourses concerning the use of spiritual gifts, and prefers prophesying, or preaching, to every other gift; and directs to the order and manner of using it, and also points at the persons who should exercise it; and whereas there was much confusion and disorder in this church, in the management of the affairs of it, the chapter is concluded with a general exhortation to do everything in a decent and orderly manner. The apostle begins with an exhortation to follow after charity, which he had commended in the preceding chapter, and had preferred to gifts, and yet he would not have gifts slighted, but represents them as desirable; particularly prophesying or preaching, which he prefers above all, 1Co 14:1 and especially above the gift of tongues, and for which he gives his reasons; he that speaks with tongues, speaks to God and not to men; at least not to their understanding, though he may by his gift deliver the most excellent truths, 1Co 14:2 whereas he that preaches speaks to men, to their edification, exhortation, and comfort, 1Co 14:3 the one edifies himself, and the other the church, 1Co 14:4 wherefore since he had a sincere affection for this church, though he could wish they all had the gift of speaking with tongues, yet he rather desired they might have the gift of preaching, because that was most for edification, 1Co 14:5 and exemplifies this in himself, that should he come to them speaking with divers tongues, this would be of no use to them, unless he came revealing, making known, and preaching the doctrines of the Gospel to them, 1Co 14:6 and illustrates this by a simile taken from musical instruments, in which unless there is a distinction of sounds, the music will not be understood, and there can be nothing grateful and pleasant: and such is speaking with divers tongues, without an interpretation, 1Co 14:7 and particularly by a simile taken from the trumpet, as used in war; which if it gives a sound that is unknown, it will be no direction to prepare for the battle, 1Co 14:8 which similes are accommodated to the case in hand; showing that words easy to be understood by the hearer should be made use of by the speaker, or speaking is in vain, 1Co 14:9 each word in every language indeed has its signification, some idea or another annexed to it; but if this is not understood by the hearer as well as the speaker, they become barbarians to one another, 1Co 14:10 wherefore such as were eagerly desirous of spiritual gifts, should covet those that were most for edification; and if speaking with tongues were what they were most set upon, they should pray for the gift of interpretation also, 1Co 14:12 because, for instance, if prayer is made in an unknown tongue, the extraordinary gift indeed may be exercised, but not to the understanding, and so not to the profit of others, 1Co 14:14 hence the apostle determines for himself, that though he should make use of his spiritual gifts, both in praying and singing, it should be in such a manner as to be understood by others, as well as himself, 1Co 14:15 and it was right for everyone to do so likewise, otherwise persons not knowing what is prayed for, or thanks given for, would be so far from being able to join in the exercise, that they could not so much as say Amen at the conclusion of it, 1Co 14:16 and though thanks might be returned for a mercy received in ever so agreeable a manner, yet it could be no ways edifying to a man that did not understand the language in which it was expressed, 1Co 14:17 not that the apostle said all this, because he had not such a gift himself, for he had it to a greater degree than any in this church had arrived to, 1Co 14:18 yet after all it was more eligible to him to speak live words in a public manner, so as to be understood, than ten thousand in a language the people were ignorant of, 1Co 14:19 wherefore he exhorts the Corinthians not to act the childish part, to covet speaking with tongues, but rather the more manly one, to prophesy, or preach, to the understanding of others, 1Co 14:20 moreover, the apostle deters them from seeking to speak with divers tongues, by citing a passage out of Isa 28:11 by which it appears, that speaking with divers tongues and strange languages was sometimes threatened as a punishment, and not given as a blessing, 1Co 14:21 besides, speaking with tongues was a sign of unbelief, and used for the conviction of unbelievers; whereas prophesying, or preaching, was a sign of faith, and was for the profit of believers, and therefore the most desirable, 1Co 14:22 to which he adds another reason, dissuading from the use of speaking with divers tongues in public, where they are not understood, taken from the opinion that ignorant and unbelieving persons coming into their assemblies would entertain of them, as though they were madmen, 1Co 14:23 whereas should they preach in a language understood, on the contrary it might be of use for the conviction of such persons, who having the secrets of their hearts laid open to them, will fall down and worship God, whose word they hear; and when they depart, report that the divine presence is with such a people, 1Co 14:24 hence the apostle proceeds to direct to the proper and orderly manner of using gifts; that whereas there were different ones among them, one had one gift, and another had another, they might all be used, provided they were used in such a manner as to tend to edification, 1Co 14:26 so for instance, if speaking in an unknown tongue was used, it should be only by two or three at most, one after another; and there should be an interpreter to make known the meaning of what was said to the people, 1Co 14:27 but if there were none that had the gift of interpreting, then it was most advisable for the speaker to be silent in public, and only in private speak to God and himself, 1Co 14:28 and then as for those that had the gift of prophesying, or preaching, these should exercise their gift two or three at a time, one after another, and the rest should sit and judge what they delivered, whether agreeable to the word of God or not, 1Co 14:29 and should anything be more clearly revealed to one that sat and heard, the speaker should be silent, and give way to him, that he might have the opportunity of declaring it to the edification of the church, 1Co 14:30 for all that had the gift of preaching might use it one after another, by turns, for general instruction and comfort, 1Co 14:31 seeing spiritual gifts are subject to and at the dispose of those that are possessed of them: or the doctrines preached by the one are subject to the examination and judgment of the other, 1Co 14:32 for God, the donor of all gifts, is the author of order and peace, and not of confusion in all the churches, 1Co 14:33 and whereas the apostle had suggested, that all might prophecy, or preach, that is, that had gifts qualifying for it, he would be understood only of men, and not women, who were not permitted to speak in the church in a way of preaching; no, not even to ask questions there about what they heard, but if they wanted to be informed of any thing they did not rightly understand, they were to ask their husbands at home; this the apostle argues, partly from the law, which commands them to be in obedience to men, and partly from the indecency of such a practice, 1Co 14:34 and seeing as it should seem such a practice did obtain in the church at Corinth, the apostle warmly reproves them for it, it being what was not to be observed in other churches, by intimating to them, that the Gospel neither came out from them, nor did it come to them only, 1Co 14:36 and whoever had a gift of preaching, or a spiritual understanding of things, must allow, that what the apostle said were not the commandments of men, but of God, 1Co 14:37 but as for ignorant persons, who were affectedly and wilfully such, they must so remain, there was no help for it, 1Co 14:38 upon which the apostle repeats his exhortation he set out with, to desire in the first place the gift of prophesying, or preaching, though he would not have speaking with tongues forbidden, provided the above rules were attended to, 1Co 14:39 and concludes with a general exhortation to do all the above things, and everything relating to the doctrine and discipline of the church, in a becoming and orderly manner, 1Co 14:40.

Ver. 1. Follow after charity,.... The apostle having so highly commended charity, or love, in the preceding chapter, presses here to an eager pursuit after it; that is, to an exercise of it, and after those things which make for it, and will serve to maintain and increase it: and everything he has said in praise of it before serves as an argument, or reason, to follow hard after it, with an eagerness used in hunting, and with such violence as persecutors express in pursuing and laying hold on those they seek after, to which there is an allusion in the word here used:

and desire spiritual gifts: for though he had given charity the preference to them, he did not mean that they should despise and neglect them, or treat them with indifference, and be unconcerned about them; but, on the other hand, that they should be very zealous for them, ambitious of them, and earnestly covet them; since being rightly used and kept in their proper place, they were greatly beneficial and profitable to the churches of Christ, and the glory of God:

but rather that ye may prophesy: of all the gifts of the Spirit, the apostle prefers prophesying, and recommends this to the Corinthians, as what they should be chiefly desirous of, and more desirous of than of speaking with tongues, which many among them were so very fond of: by which he means, not so much the gift of foretelling future events, though there was such a gift bestowed on some persons in those times, and, in certain cases, was very profitable to the churches; but a gift of preaching the word, or explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of praying and singing of psalms, all which, as appears from some following parts of this chapter, were included in it; and that not in an ordinary, but in an extraordinary way; a person possessed of this gift could at once, without the use of means, or help of study, preach the word, and open the more difficult parts of Scripture; he had an extraordinary gift of prayer, which he could make use of when he pleased, and at once compose and deliver out a psalm, or hymn, in the public congregation.

1 Corinthians 14:2

Ver. 2. For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue,.... Or with tongues, as some copies and the Ethiopic version read: Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that the Hebrew tongue, which was become a dead language, and understood but by few, is here meant, and that not without reason; seeing the public prayers, preaching, and singing of psalms among the Jews, were in this languages {x}; in imitation of whom, such ministers, who had the gift of speaking this language, read the Scriptures, preached, prayed, and sung psalms in it, which were no ways to the edification of the people, who understood it not; upon which account the apostle recommends prophesying, praying, and singing, in a language that was understood: otherwise he

speaketh not unto men; to the understanding, profit, and edification of men: but unto God: to his praise and glory, and he only knowing, who knows all languages, and every word in the tongue what is said; excepting himself, unless there should be any present capable of interpreting:

for no man understandeth him: or "heareth him": that is, hears him, so as to understand him; he may hear a sound, but he cannot tell the meaning of it, and so it is of no use and advantage to him:

howbeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries; though under the influence and by the extraordinary gift of the Spirit he has, and to his own Spirit and understanding, and with great affection and devotion within himself, he speaks of the deep things of God, and the mysteries of his grace, the most glorious truths of the Gospel, yet the meaning of his voice and words not being known, he is a barbarian to them that hear him; and though what he delivers are truths of the greatest importance, they are a mere jargon to others, being unintelligible.

{x} Vid. Gloss. in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 3. 1. & in Yoma, fol. 20. 2.

1 Corinthians 14:3

Ver. 3. But he that prophesieth,.... Preaches, prays, or sings, in a language understood by the common people:

speaketh unto men to edification; to the building of them up in Christ, and on their most holy faith, so that they grow up as an holy temple to the Lord: and exhortation; to the more vigorous exercise of grace, and the more cheerful and fervent discharge of duty:

and comfort; of distressed minds, either through the temptations of Satan, or divine desertions, or inward corruptions, or outward afflictions; for all which ends and purposes the Scriptures are written, and gifts are bestowed on men to explain them; and which ends are answered when God gives a blessing to the word; but can never be expected, if delivered in a language not understood. This bears hard upon the Papists performing any part of divine worship in a language unintelligible to the common people.

1 Corinthians 14:4

Ver. 4. He that speaketh its an unknown tongue,.... Be it the Hebrew language, or any other; some copies, and the Ethiopic version, read, "with tongues":

edifieth himself; his heart may be warmed, his affections raised, his devotion kept up, and he be in a very spiritual and comfortable frame, knowing and understanding what he himself says:

but he that prophesieth, edifieth the church: which is the great end of the Gospel ministry, which is for the edifying the body of the church: wherefore that which tends to the edification of more, even the whole church, must be preferable to that, which at most can only edify one, and that the speaker himself.

1 Corinthians 14:5

Ver. 5. I would that ye all spake with tongues,.... This the apostle says, to prevent being misunderstood; for his view was not to bring the gift of tongues into contempt, or to represent it as at all times, and on all occasions, useless and insignificant; nor would he be thought to envy them this gift, or beat them off of desiring it; for, for his own part, he could wish they all had it, was it the will of God; though he must needs say, that prophesying was most desirable by him, as being most profitable;

but rather that ye prophesied; he wished them all prophets, as Moses did all the Lord's people; he was not against their speaking with tongues, but this was the most eligible, for which he gives this reason:

for greater is he that prophesieth, than he that speaketh with tongues; that is, he is more useful and profitable to men, and so consequently more honourable, in higher esteem, and more valued, and in greater dignity, being in a more serviceable post and office, and which is more beneficial and advantageous to mankind:

except he interpret; what he said; and then he might stand upon an equal foot, and be equally useful with him that prophesieth; but this everyone could not do that spake with tongues; for speaking with tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, were two distinct gifts; see 1Co 12:10 and though a man that had the gift of tongues might understand what he himself said to his own edification, yet not be able to interpret it to the understanding and edification of others; and if he could not do this, his speaking was to no purpose: hence the apostle advises such an one to pray that he might interpret, have the gift of interpretation also, in

1Co 14:13.

That the church may receive edifying: which otherwise cannot be thought it should, or be expected, and then an opportunity and ordinance would be wholly lost.

1 Corinthians 14:6

Ver. 6. Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues,.... The apostle exemplifies this matter in himself, and supposes it his own case, that should he who was the apostle of the Gentiles, and to be received by them as such, when he came to them, come with this gift of tongues, which he was capable of, as much, or more than any, see 1Co 14:18 and only make use of that,

what shall I profit you? of what use would my ministry be to you? what instruction, comfort, and edification, could you receive by it?

except I shall speak to you, either by revelation; by the revelation of Jesus Christ, whereby he received the Gospel he preached; or by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and the mysteries of his grace, by which they were made known unto him at first, or by a fresh immediate revelation from heaven:

or by knowledge; the word of knowledge, one of the peculiar gifts of the Spirit, 1Co 12:8.

Or by prophesying; the gift of prophecy, another of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, mentioned in the same chapter, 1Co 12:10 and already explained:

or by doctrine? the same with the word of wisdom, another gift of the same Spirit, in 1Co 12:8. The apostle intimates, that by the use and exercise of these gifts, he might be profitable to them, to lead them into a clearer view of the doctrines of the Gospel, and for the further improvement of their knowledge in the Scriptures of truth, which could never be done by bare speaking with tongues, and with tongues they understood not.

1 Corinthians 14:7

Ver. 7. And even things without life giving sound,.... He instances in things inanimate, that have neither reason, sense, nor life, in musical instruments, and these of various sorts:

whether pipe or harp; wind music, or hand music; either that which is blown with the breath, or pressed or stricken with the hand:

except they give a distinction in the sounds; or "tunes", so as one may be discerned from another; as that this is such a musical note, and that is another:

how shall it be known what is piped or harped? what tune is played; such an use of instruments would be a mere jargon, and not music, and so yield no pleasure to the ear, or mind; and just the like must speaking in an unknown tongue be, to one that understands it not.

1 Corinthians 14:8

Ver. 8. For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound,.... That is not plain and manifest, so as that it cannot be known on what account it is given:

who shall prepare himself to the battle? the allusion is to the custom of many nations, Jews and others, who, when about to engage in war, made use of musical instruments, particularly the trumpet, to gather the soldiers together, prepare them for the battle, give them notice of it, and animate them to it {y}; the sound of the trumpet was the alarm of war; see **Jer 4:5**. And particularly the allusion may be to the two silver trumpets, ordered by God to Moses for the Jews, which were to be made of a whole piece, and to be used for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps, and to blow an alarm with when they went to war against the enemy, Nu 10:1 and were a lively emblem of the Gospel, whose use is to gather souls to Christ, to direct saints in their journeying, and to prepare and animate them for battle, with their spiritual enemies; and of which use it is, when it gives a certain and even sound, as it does when clearly and rightly blown; and that is, the sound of love, grace, and mercy, to the sons of men, through a bleeding Saviour; salvation alone by a crucified Jesus, peace and pardon by his blood, justification by his righteousness, and atonement by his sacrifice; when it is blown aright, it blows a blast on all the goodliness of man, it magnifies the grace of God, exalts the person of Christ, debases the creature, shows its impurity, imperfection, and inability; and expresses the nature, use, and necessity of efficacious grace; and puts believers on doing good works for necessary uses, but not for life, righteousness, and salvation; and so its sound is equal, even, and certain: and when it is so, it is a means of gathering souls to Christ, the standard bearer and ensign of the people; and of engaging them to enlist themselves as volunteers in his service; and of animating them to fight under his banner the battles of the Lord of hosts: but if this trumpet gives an uncertain sound, as it does when grace and works are blended together in the business of salvation; and faith or works put in the room of, or joined with the righteousness of Christ in justification; when particular election and general redemption, or the salvability of all men, are put together; the covenant of grace represented as conditional, and preparations for grace, and offers of grace, and days of grace talked of, that may be past and lost; then who can prepare himself for the battle? persons must be thrown into, and left in the utmost uncertainty and confusion: when this is the case, they know not what side to take on, but halt between two opinions; they know not what that faith is they are to fight and earnestly contend for; they are not able to discern an enemy from a friend; they have no heart to fight and endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ; nor can they promise themselves, or be assured of victory, which the certain sound of the Gospel gives them.

{y} Vid Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 2. p. 178.

1 Corinthians 14:9

Ver. 9. So likewise you, unless ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood,.... This is an accommodation of the foregoing similes to the case in hand: for as unless there is a distinction of notes and tunes, it cannot be music, nor it cannot be known what is piped or harped; and unless the trumpet gives a certain sound, none can know when to prepare himself for the battle; so unless in the public ministry and service a language is spoken, and words made use of, which are understood without difficulty:

how shall it be known what is spoken? the subject matter of the discourse, prayer, or psalm, will be all lost, and therefore cannot be for edification, exhortation, or comfort:

for ye shall speak into the air; into which such words are resolved, and the use and benefit of them, as to others, cease with the breath, by which they are delivered: any part of divine service performed in such a way is all in vain, and to no purpose; it is all lost labour, it is beating the air, and talking to the wind. This condemns the practice of the Papists, performing divine service in a language not understood by the common people; and exposes the folly of those, who are fond of a florid style, of bombast words, great swelling words of vanity in their public discourses: this is only speaking into the air, with regard to the vulgar, whose edification should be consulted: and as the end of the Gospel ministry is public usefulness and edification, plainness of speech, words easy to be understood, should be used; such as are apt and fit to convey the true idea of things to people in common; these are the acceptable words, which the wise preacher, who is desirous of doing good to the souls of men, will seek out, and studiously make use of.

1 Corinthians 14:10

Ver. 10. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices,.... anvl, "tongues", or "languages", as the Syriac version renders it; that is, as many as there are nations in the world; there may be seventy of them, as the Jews say there were at the confusion of languages at Babel; there may be more or less:

and none of them is without signification: every language, and every word in a language, has a meaning in it, an idea annexed to it, which it conveys to him that understands it, and that cannot be done without a voice ordinarily speaking.

1 Corinthians 14:11

Ver. 11. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice,.... The force and power of a language, the signification of it, the ideas its words convey, but only hear the sound of it:

I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me: like one of those rude and uncultivated people that inhabit deserts and wild places, who can neither understand the language of others, nor be understood by others; and indeed may be meant of any sort of people, that do not understand one another's language: the word rb, "bar", and arb, "bara", in the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic languages, not only signifies a field, a wood, or desert place, but also without, or any thing extraneous; and being doubled, signifies one that lives without, in another land; a stranger, and that speaks a strange language; so all other nations of the world were barbarians to the Hebrews, and particularly the Egyptians; see the Targum on Ps 114:1 and so were all other nations to the Greeks, see **Ro 1:14** and also to the Romans:

and the sense is, that where the signification of a language and the sense of words are not known, the speaker is like a man that lives in a strange country to him that hears him; and the hearer is like to one that lives in a strange country to him that speaks, since they cannot understand one another. The word sometimes is used for men, afwnoi h ankooi, {z}, "that can neither speak nor hear", men dumb and deaf; and when words cannot be understood, the case is all one as with such persons.

{z} Scholia in Aristoph. in Avibus, p. 550.

1 Corinthians 14:12

Ver. 12. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts,.... Gr. "of spirits"; that is, "of the gifts of the Spirit", as the Syriac version renders it; and we rightly, "spiritual gifts"; the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, for which the apostle does not blame them; these being what he had before exhorted them to covet earnestly, and zealously affect and desire: but then he further advises,

seek that ye may excel, to the edifying of the church: above all, be desirous of such gifts, and of excelling in them, and abounding in the exercise of them, which may be most profitable and edifying to the members of the church; and what these were, and in what manner to be used, he had before signified: the Alexandrian copy reads, seek that ye may prophesy.

1 Corinthians 14:13

Ver. 13. Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue,.... The Hebrew, or any other, the gift of speaking with which is bestowed upon him:

pray that he may interpret; that he may have also the gift of interpretation of tongues; for as has been before hinted, these two gifts were distinct; and a man might have the one, and not the other; a man might speak in an unknown tongue, so as to understand himself, what he said, and be edified, and yet not be capable of translating it at once into the common language of the people; and if he could not do this, he would not excel in his gift to the edification of the church; whereas if he could interpret he would, and therefore, above all things, he should pray to the Father of lights, the giver of every good and perfect gift, that he might be furnished with this also.

1 Corinthians 14:14

Ver. 14. For if I pray in an unknown tongue,.... In the Hebrew tongue, which the greatest part of the Jewish doctors insisted {a} upon should be only used in prayer; which notion might be borrowed from them, and now greatly prevailed in the church at Corinth; and the custom was used by such as had the gift of speaking that language, even though the body and bulk of the people understood it not:

my spirit prayeth; I pray with my breath vocally; or else with affection and devotion, understanding what I say myself, and so am edified; or rather with the gift of the Spirit bestowed on me:

but my understanding is unfruitful; that is, what I say with understanding to myself is unprofitable to others, not being understood by them.

{a} Vid. Trigland. de Sect. Kar. c. 10. p. 172, 173.

1 Corinthians 14:15

Ver. 15. What is it then?.... A Talmudic way of speaking, and answers to whm, often used when a difficulty arises in any case, then the question is, "what is it then?" what is to be done? what is most prudent, advisable, and eligible? what is proper to be determined and resolved on in such a case? the same with ti oun lekteon, "what then is to be said?" used by Philo the Jew {b}: as here, shall I not pray with the Spirit at all, because my understanding, or that which I understand, is of no use to others, being not understood by them? shall I entirely neglect, lay aside, and make no use of the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, bestowed upon me on this account? no:

I will pray with the Spirit; meaning not with the human breath, or spirit only, vocally, with an articulate voice, and distinct sounds, so as to he understood; nor with his own spirit, or in a spiritual way, with a spirit of devotion and fervency, with his whole heart and soul engaged in such service, though this is necessary to it; nor with the common and ordinary assistance of the Spirit of God, though without this prayer cannot be performed aright, with faith and fervency, freedom and boldness; but with the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, so as to pray in an extraordinary manner, with divers tongues, in an unknown language; this, as the apostle was capable of, he determined to use at proper times, and on proper occasions: but then he also resolves,

and I will pray with the understanding also; not merely so as to understand himself, or with an understanding enlightened by the Spirit of God; with a spiritual experimental understanding of things, so as to know the object of prayer, the way of access to him, the need of the Spirit's influence, his own wants and necessities, and that he shall have the petitions he asks in faith, according to the will of God, all which is very requisite in prayer; but so as to be understood by others: his sense is, that though on some occasions he might choose to make use of his extraordinary gift, yet he would also pray in a language, in which he might be understood by the people; that so they might be able to join with him, and receive some fruit and advantage thereby; and that their souls might be refreshed, as well as his:

I will sing with the Spirit; meaning also not with the spirit, or breath, singing vocally only; nor with his own Spirit, with his heart engaged in the work, with grace in it, in the lively exercise of faith, hope, and love, with much spiritual light, knowledge, experience, and judgment, which are very necessary to the due discharge of this duty; nor merely with the ordinary aid of the Spirit of God, which yet is greatly needful to excite attention, assist meditation, enlighten the understanding, raise the affections, strengthen faith, and make a comfortable application of what is sung; but as before, with the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, by which the apostle was capable of delivering out a psalm, or hymn, extempore, and that in an unknown tongue: but then he also determines,

I will sing with the understanding also; not to his own understanding, or by or with the understanding of what is sung, though that is absolutely needful; but to the understanding of others, and in a language also which may be understood by others, and in which they could join with him in that service: perhaps the apostle may have some respect to the title of some of David's psalms, lykvm, "Maschil", which signifies "causing to understand".

{b} Leg. Alleg. l. 1. p. 48.

1 Corinthians 14:16

Ver. 16. Else when thou shall bless with the spirit,.... Which must be understood of giving thanks to God, not in a private way, in the family and at meals, but in a public manner before the whole congregation, for mercies temporal and spiritual, especially the latter; and that not with the breath, or voice only; nor with the affections of the heart, with the soul, and all that is within it, though that is what should be; nor with the common assistance of the Spirit, and under the influence of his grace, which excites to true gratitude; but with the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, pronouncing the blessing, or expressing the thanksgiving with divers tongues, or in an unknown language: when this part of divine service, which by the way is distinct from singing, is performed in this manner,

how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned; idiwtou, "idiot". The word jwydh, "idiot", is often used by the Jewish writers, and signifies a plebeian, one of the common people; and is sometimes indeed distinguished from a wise man, or a learned man; but frequently signifies a private person, whether learned or unlearned, that is not in so high a post as others; hence we read {c} twjwydh Mynyyd, "of private judges", which were not of the great sanhedrim, and of private men, as distinguished from kings {d};

"there are three kings, and four twjwydh, "private men", (the Jews say,) that have no part in the world to come; the three kings are Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh; the four private persons are Balsam, Doeg, Ahithophel, and Gehazi:"

here a private man is distinguished from the public minister that blesses, or gives thanks in the name of the people; and not to be understood of a single person, whose place and office it was to say "Amen", at the minister's giving of thanks, and who stood in some particular place for that purpose; but of the whole body of the people, who, in distinction from the minister, were in the condition of private men, and all joined, as will be seen hereafter, in saying "Amen"; now the apostle's question is, that if thou who art a public minister, givest blessing and praise, or returnest thanks to God in an unknown tongue, how shall the common people, or anyone that is in a private capacity,

say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? It was usual to say "Amen" at blessing, or giving of thanks privately at meals, by those that were present, concerning which are the following rules {e};

"he that breaks the bread, might not break it until the "Amen" was finished out of the mouth of those that answered; Rab Chasdai says out of the mouth of the major part of those that answer:"

and elsewhere {f} it is said,

"they answer "Amen" after an Israelite has blessed, but they do not answer "Amen" after a Cuthite (a Samaritan, or any Gentile, or Christian) hath blessed, unless the whole blessing is heard:"

but of this kind of blessing the apostle speaks not, but of blessing in public: upon which all the people, and not a single person only, as with one united voice, said Amen; see 1Ch 16:36 to this practice the apostle refers; concerning which the rule {g} is;

"that the congregation may not answer "Amen", until the blessing is finished out of the mouth of the priests; and the priests may not begin the other blessing, until the "Amen" is finished out of the mouth of the congregation."

There were different sorts of "Amen", or rather different pronunciations of it; of which the Jews say {h},

"they may not answer with a fatherless "Amen"; nor with a sudden or violent "Amen"; (pronounced quick and in haste;) nor with an "Amen" cut off, or asunder (the last letter of it not pronounced): says Ben Azzai, whoever answers with a fatherless "Amen", his children shall be fatherless; with a quick "Amen", his days will be short; with an "Amen" cut off, his days shall be cut off; and whoever prolongs "Amen", his days and years shall be prolonged."

Now, hmwty Nma, "a fatherless Amen", was when a person answered, and he did not know what he answered {i} to; and such an "Amen", in the case here, must a private man answer with, at the giving of thanks in an unknown tongue; and to answer "Amen" to what was said in a language not understood, was not allowed of; so the woman suspected of adultery was to be sworn and examined by the priest in a language she understood; and was to say "Amen, Amen", to what was said, in a language known to her {k}; for if she did not understand it, how could she say "Amen?" which is the apostle's reasoning here: but was this an affair of such importance, to be instanced in and argued upon in this manner? with the Jews it was, who say {l},

"that greater is he that answers "Amen", than he that blesses:"

and indeed they bestow very extravagant encomiums on those who say it in a proper manner;

"there is nothing greater (they say {m}) in the sight of the blessed God, than the "Amen" the Israelite answers with; says R. Joden, whoever answers "Amen" in this world, is worthy to answer "Amen" in the world to come;"

again {n},

"says R. Joshua ben Levi, whoever answers "Amen", his hame shall be great and blessed for ever and ever; says R. Simeon ben Lakish, whoever answers "Amen" with all his strength, the gates of paradise will be opened for him, according to Isa 26:2."

Moreover, it was a practice of the primitive Christians at the Lord's supper, at the close of it, to say with a loud voice "Amen"; the account Justin Martyr gives of it is this {o}; that

"when the minister had finished the prayers, and the thanksgiving, all the people present, with a joyful acclamation, said "Amen"; which word, he observes, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies "so be it":"

and this custom might obtain in the Corinthian church at this time, to which the apostle is thought by some learned men to refer.

{c} Misn. Yebamot, c. 12. sect. 1. {d} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 90. 1. {e} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 47. 1. {f} Misn. Beracot, c. 8. sect. 8. {g} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 39. 2. {h} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 47. 1. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 27. {i} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 12. 3. Succa, fol. 54. 1. & Megilla, fol. 72. 1. {k} Maimon. Hilch. Sota, c. 3. sect. 7. {l} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 53. 2. & Nazir, fol. 66. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 19. 2. & Baal Hatturim in Deut. xxvii. 15. {m} Debarim Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 242. 2. {n} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 119. 2. Shaare Zion, fol. 99. 2. 100. 2. 101. 1. {o} Apolog. 2. p. 97.

1 Corinthians 14:17

Ver. 17. For thou verily givest thanks well,.... In very proper words, and pertinent expressions, with great affection and devotion, suitable to the service;

but the other is not edified; the rest of the people, who do not understand the language in which thanks are given; "thy friend", as the Syriac version reads it; or thy next neighbour, he that stands by thee, receives no manner of profit by it, because he does not understand what is said.

1 Corinthians 14:18

Ver. 18. I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all. This the apostle says, to observe to them that he did not despise speaking with tongues: nor did he endeavour to beat them off, and dissuade them from desiring them, or envied their having them, because he was destitute of them himself; for he had this gift in a very eminent manner, and oftentimes made use of it, and was frequently under a necessity of so doing; he could speak with more tongues than any of those that had them, and spoke them oftener than they did; having occasion for them through his travelling into different countries, and preaching the Gospel to people of divers languages; and this he mentions also not in a boasting manner, but in great humility, giving thanks to God, and acknowledging him to be the author of this gift.

1 Corinthians 14:19

Ver. 19. Yet in the church I had rather speak five words,.... Referring not to the five books of Moses, as Jerom suggests, and much less, as the Papists say, to the five words, "for this is my body"; by the muttering of which they suppose the bread in the Lord's supper to be transubtantiated into the body of Christ; but meaning a very few words, which he chose to speak in the church before the congregation, when and where saints were met together for public worship, for their edification and comfort, and the glory of God; for though at other times, and to other people, he might think fit to make use of his gift in speaking with divers tongues, yet at such a time and place he thought it much more eligible to say ever so few words

with understanding: so as to be understood by others, as well as himself:

that by my voice I might teach others also; the doctrines of the Gospel, the mysteries of grace, the duty of men towards God and men, and one another:

than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue; than to deliver ever so long an oration in a language not understood by them, which could be of no use unto them; for though they might hear his voice, the sound of his words, yet thereby he could not teach and instruct them to their profit, unless they understood the language which he spoke; and therefore five words understood were more likely to be of use than ten thousand spoken in a strange language.

1 Corinthians 14:20

Ver. 20. Brethren, be not children in understanding,.... There are some things in children in which it is reproachful for believers to be like them; as nonproficiency in knowledge, want of capacity to receive, bear, and digest strong meat; levity, fickleness, and inconstancy, unskilfulness in the word, deficiency of knowledge, want of understanding, not of things natural, but spiritual and evangelical; which is the more aggravated, since their understandings were opened and enlightened; an understanding was given them; the Spirit of God, as a spirit of understanding, was bestowed on them; they had the Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation, and the man of God perfect; and also the ministers of the Gospel to explain divine truths to them; and many had been a long time in the school of Christ, and might have been teachers of others; and yet; after all, were children in understanding, and needed to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God. The apostle here has chiefly reference to the gift of speaking with tongues, these Corinthians were so desirous of; which when they had it, was only to talk like children; and for them to prefer it to other gifts, which were more useful and beneficial, discovered their judgment to be but the judgment of children; and if they desired this, and made use of it for ostentation, it showed a childish vanity, from which the apostle here dissuades:

howbeit in malice be ye children: in other things it is commendable to imitate children, and be like them; as in innocence and harmlessness of conversation; to be meek, modest, and humble, free from pride and vain glory; to be without guile and hypocrisy, without rancour and bitterness, envying and malice, but tender hearted, and ready to forgive. This the apostle recommends:

but in understanding be men; or "perfect", of ripe and full age, who have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil, rbg "a man", says Aben Ezra {p}, in our language, signifies ted alm, "one full of knowledge", as in Ex 10:11. It is not perfection of justification that is here meant, for babes in Christ are as perfect in this sense as grown men; nor a perfection of sanctification, for there is no such thing as this in any in this life; there is a perfection of sanctification in Christ, and of parts in everyone that is a new creature; and as that denotes sincerity and uprightness, it is in all that have known the grace of God in truth; but then these are each of them as true of new born babes, young converts, as of older Christians, and strong men: but of knowledge and understanding in divine things; which though it is imperfect in the best, yet in some it is in greater perfection than in others; who may, in a comparative sense, be said to be perfect, or men of full age, who are arrived to a considerable ripeness and maturity of spiritual knowledge; and this is what believers should be pressing after, and desirous of, and make use of all proper methods, such as reading, hearing, and praying, to attain unto.

{p} Comment. in Psal. xxxvii. 23.

1 Corinthians 14:21

In the law it is written,.... In Isa 28:11 for the word law is not be confined to the five books of Moses, but includes all the writings of the Old Testament; and this entirely agrees with the sense of the Jews. Says R. Azarias {q}

"is it not to be found with our wise men, of blessed memory, in many places, that the word hrwt, "law", comprehends the prophets, and the holy writings?"

And he gives an instance out of the Talmud, and which indeed is very pertinent to the purpose, and is rightly produced, and will support the apostle in calling the prophecy of Isaiah the law, since it is so called in the following passage {r}. R. Chijah bar Aba says, that

"R. Jochanan said, from whence is the resurrection of the dead to be proved, hrwth Nm, "out of the law?" from what is said in Isa 52:8 "thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing". It is not said "they sing", but "they shall sing": from hence the resurrection of the dead is to be proved out of the law."

And out of the same book the apostle cites the following words;

with [men of] other tongues, and other lips, will I speak unto this people, and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord: the words, "men of", are a supplement of our translators, and which does not seem very necessary: nor is any made in other versions. The words, as they are in our translation of the prophet, are read thus, "with stammering lips, and another tongue, will he speak to this people". Some difference there is between the two passages, which are of no great moment; the words "lips" and "tongue" are inverted by the apostle; nor was it at all material to observe the strict order of them in the citation: and he has also rendered "stammering lips" by "other tongues", and that very rightly; for the word gel, used by Isaiah, does not signify stammering, but derision or mocking; so persons that are spoken to in a language they understand not, look upon themselves to be mocked and derided: and the apostle is to be justified by the Chaldee paraphrase, which renders the words, llmm ywnvb, "with change of speech": that is, with another and different language. Moreover, it is to be observed, that the prophet delivers the passage in the third person, and the apostle cites it in the first: the reason of this is, because he adds these words to it, "saith the Lord": partly for the sake of the authority of the words, and partly to engage the attention of the Corinthians to them; and certain it is, that Isaiah's meaning is, that the Lord would speak in such a manner to the Jews: the other phrase, "for all that will they not hear me", are taken out of Isa 28:12. Some think that this prophecy refers to God's speaking, by the apostles on the day of Pentecost, with divers tongues, to the Jews; when, though there were three thousand converted at that time, yet these were but comparatively few; the body of the people remained incredulous, and hearkened not to the apostles, though their ministry was attended with such signs and wonders: but rather the sense seems to be this, that whereas the Lord had spoken in the plainest manner to the people of the Jews, by the prophets, as he would afterwards by the apostles, and had repeated his words so often, that even a child might be thought to be capable of receiving them; yet such was their stupidity and obstinacy, that they slighted and disregarded them; wherefore he threatens them he would take another method with them, and speak to them in his providences, by people of different and strange languages, as by the Chaldeans, Medes, and Persians, in the seventy years' captivity, and by the Romans, and other nations since, among whom they now are; and yet all this has had no effect upon them to listen to the doctrine of the prophets and apostles. Hence the Corinthians had no reason to be so desirous of speaking with divers tongues, since these have been threatened and used by God in a way of punishment to a people, and not a blessing.

{q} Meor. Enayim, c. 7. fol. 47. I. {r} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2.

1 Corinthians 14:22

Ver. 22. Wherefore tongues are for a sign,.... Of wrath and punishment inflicted on a rebellious and unbelieving people, and not of grace and kindness, as prophesying, or speaking to them by the prophets, was; and so this is an inference from what is said in the preceding verse, and shows, that there was no reason why believers should be so very desirous of them. But if these words refer to all that is said before on this subject, the word "sign" may be taken for a miracle; and so a new argument is formed against an over fondness for divers tongues, and the use of them in public worship, showing the preferableness of prophecy to them; for speaking with divers tongues was used in a miraculous way,

not to them that believe; who have no need of miracles to raise their attention to what is said, and that it may gain credit with them, or to confirm their faith in it:

but to them that believe not; to prepare them to listen to what might be suggested to them, when they see the persons speaking were endued with miraculous powers, and to engage their assent to it, and belief of it; and so with such persons, and for such purposes, was the gift of speaking with divers tongues used by the apostles, **Ac 2:4** but inasmuch as the Corinthian church consisted of believers, there was no need of such a sign or miracle among them; wherefore, if they desired such gifts, and to make use of them, they should choose to do it, not in the church, but among unbelievers:

but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not; that is, not for them only; for prophesying or explaining the prophetic writings, or preaching the word, may be, and often is, the means of converting unbelievers; yet this is not the only use, nor does it serve for, or administer comfort to unbelievers as such; but is profitable to, and serves

for them which believe: it is for their edification, exhortation, and comfort, 1Co 14:4 it is the means of building them up on their most holy faith; of quickening and stirring them up to the exercise of grace, and performance of duty; of comforting them under various distresses, inward and outward; and of establishing, strengthening, and settling them, and therefore much more eligible to be used in a church of Christ, than speaking with tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:23

Ver. 23. If therefore the whole church,.... The whole congregation of believers incorporated together in a Gospel church state, consisting of its officers and private members; the church at Corinth is particularly designed:

be come together in one place; to worship God, to pray unto him, sing his praise, preach and hear the word, as were usually done. Hence may be observed the custom of the primitive churches to meet together, in some certain place, for divine worship; nor did the members of them in common forsake the assembling of themselves together on that account, though it was the evil practice of some of them; the whole church, all the members of it, met together: and it may be seen from hence, that the church, and the place where it met, are two different things:

and all speak with tongues; divers tongues, languages not understood; meaning, not that all that came together spoke with tongues; but that as many as did speak, should they speak with such, and without an interpreter.

And there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers; either private Christians, who, though they have learned Christ, and understand the doctrines of the Gospel, yet are ignorant of languages; or rather the same persons with unbelievers, Heathens that have no knowledge of Christ, nor faith in him, and who also understood no other language but the Greek: if any such persons should come into the place where the church was met together, and should hear him or them that spoke, speak in a language they understood not, and which they were very well assured was equally unknown to the whole congregation, and so could be of no service to them:

will they not say ye are mad? act like men in a frenzy, that have not the use of their reason; since speaking in a strange language to a congregation that know not one word of what is said, is speaking to the air, and to no profit at all to them that hear; and who but a madman would do this? The apostle here argues from the scandal and contempt that would be poured upon them by such a practice; and the rather he mentions this, because it seems as if their governing view was the glory and applause of men, in which, he suggests, they would be sadly disappointed.

1 Corinthians 14:24

Ver. 24. But if all prophecy,.... That is, all that speak publicly in the church, not together, but in their order, one after another, as is hereafter directed:

and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned; an unbeliever that has only the knowledge of his mother tongue, in which prophesying or preaching is used:

he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; of all the prophets or preachers; they all reprove him, and detect his secret, as the Arabic version renders the words; and to the same purport the Ethiopic. This must be understood of such persons whom the Spirit of God, under, and by the ministry of the word, powerfully works upon; whose hearts he opens to receive the word, and to whom he effectually applies it; whom he convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment, shows the evil of their hearts and ways, reproves their errors, convicts them of their mistakes, and informs their judgments, and condemns all their principles and practices which are not agreeably to the word of God.

1 Corinthians 14:25

Ver. 25. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest,.... Not to the prophets, or preachers, or to the rest of the congregation, but to himself; the word preached being in the hands, and trader the influence, direction, and application of the Spirit of God, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; showing the plague and naughtiness of it, discovering the lusts that are in it, detecting the errors of the mind, and filling the conscience with a sense of guilt, and a consciousness of deserved punishment; so that the person looks upon himself as particularly spoken to, and as if the person speaking had knowledge of all that was within him, and adapted his discourse on purpose to him, and delivered it for his sake alone; concluding, that there is, and must be, something more than human in it:

and so falling down on his face: either publicly before the whole congregation; or when retired, as one ashamed of his sins and errors, and not able to look either God, or good men, in the face; and being in an adoration posture; or however, being truly humbled before God under a sense of his iniquities,

he will worship God; pray unto him, and earnestly entreat he would be merciful to him a sinner, and blot out all his transgressions, and forgive him all his sins; and will ever after acknowledge him to be the true God, embrace his Gospel, submit to his ordinances, and attend his service:

and report: or "declare", freely and openly to the church, to all men, to the world, and to his company from whence he came, and to whom he belonged,

that God is in you of a truth: that the Spirit of God, who is truly God, and searches the deep things of God, and reveals them, and the deep things of men, and makes them manifest, is in the prophets and preachers, otherwise they would never be able to make manifest the secrets of the heart as they do; and that the presence of God is in the church, and the power of God goes along with the ministration of the word: hereby, now many valuable ends are answered, a sinner is converted, God is worshipped and glorified, credit is brought to religion, the church of Christ is spoken well of, and prophets or preachers are honoured; wherefore prophesying, seeing it is both for the edification of believers, and conversion of sinners, ought to be desired, and made use of before speaking with tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:26

Ver. 26. How is it then, brethren?.... Or "what is it brethren?" The Arabic renders it, "what is the sense of my words?" The meaning of what he had said, the drift of his whole discourse; or rather the sense is, what is to be done in the case he was about to propose?

when ye come together; as a church into one place, to worship God;

everyone of you hath a psalm; not that everyone had this, or any other gift here mentioned, but that there were some among them that had one or other of these several gifts: some of them had a gift of composing and singing a psalm extempore; they delighted in psalmody, and were forward to promote it, and fond of spending the time wholly in it.

Hath a doctrine; others of them had a gift of deducing doctrines out of the word of God, which is profitable for that purpose, in an extraordinary manner, without study, and were capable of teaching them, and instructing men in them in a very edifying way:

hath a tongue others had the gift of speaking with divers tongues; or had knowledge and skill in the Hebrew tongue, could not only pray and sing in that language, and read the sacred text, but could deliver a sermon in it.

Hath a revelation; others had a peculiar insight into the types and figures of the Mosaic dispensation, a clear view of the prophetic writings, and a large discovery of the mysteries of the Gospel, by the Spirit, as a spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Hath an interpretation; others had a gift of interpreting languages, particularly the Hebrew language, when anything was delivered therein by another. Now the apostle answers to the question, what is to be done in such a case, where there is such a variety of gifts, and everyone is desirous of exercising his peculiar gift?

let all things be done to edifying; intimating, that each of these things might be done; every gift might be made use of: he that had a psalm might sing it; and he that had a doctrine might deliver it; he that had a tongue might speak with it; and he that had a revelation might declare it; and he that had an interpretation might make use of it; provided that care was taken that each was done in such a manner, as might be for the edifying of the church that was met together; otherwise, if it was only for ostentation sake to make a show of their gifts and talents, and to nourish their own pride and vanity, no good end would be answered; it had better be let alone: but if edification could be promoted, each gift might be employed; for which the apostle gives the following directions.

1 Corinthians 14:27

Ver. 27. If any man speak in an unknown tongue,.... He begins with the gift of tongues, with speaking in an unknown tongue, as the Hebrew language, because this they were desirous of: and the rule for this he would have observed is,

let it be by two, or at most by three, and that by course. The Arabic version reads it, "let him speak to two, or at most three, and separately"; as if it respected the number of persons he was to speak to at a time, and that in a separate and private manner: but the apostle's sense is, that two such persons as had the gift of speaking in an unknown tongue, or three at most, should be only employed at one opportunity, lest too much time should be taken up this way, and prevent a more useful and edifying exercise; and that these should speak not together, which would be a mere jargon and confusion, and make them took like madmen, and render them entirely useless indeed; but in course, one after another, that so an interpreter might be able to take their sense, and render what they said, and express it in a language the people understood: for it follows,

let one interpret what the two or three had said. This practice seems to be borrowed from the Jews, who had such an officer in the synagogue as a "Methurgeman", or "an interpreter". The rise of which office, and the rules to be observed in the performance of it, are as follow, delivered by Maimonides {s}:

"from the times of Ezra it has been customary that an interpreter should interpret to the people what the reader reads in the law, so that they may understand the nature of things; and the reader reads one verse only, and is silent until the interpreter has interpreted it; then he returns and reads a second verse: a reader may not raise his voice above the interpreter, nor the interpreter raise his voice above the reader. The interpreter may not interpret until the verse is finished out of the mouth of the reader, and the reader may not read a verse until the interpretation is finished out of the mouth of the interpreter; and the interpreter might not lean neither upon a pillar, nor a beam, but must stand in trembling, and in fear; and he may not interpret by writing, but by mouth: and the reader may not help the interpreter; and they may not say the interpretation written in the law; and a little one may interpret by the means of a grown person, but it is no honour to a grown person to interpret by the means of a little one; and two may not interpret as one, but one reads Mgrtm dxaw, "and one interprets" {t}."

An interpreter might not interpret according to his own sense, nor according to the form of the words, or its literal sense; nor might he add of his own, but was obliged to go according to the Targum of Onkelos {u}, which they say was the same that was delivered on Mount Sinai. The place they stood in was just before the reader; for so it is said {w},

"the interpreters stand before the wise man on the sabbath days, and hear from his mouth, and cause the multitude to hear."

And elsewhere it is said {x},

"the interpreter stands before the wise man, the preacher, and the wise man (or doctor) whispers to him in the Hebrew language, and he interprets to the multitude in a language they hear,"

or understand. And sometimes these sat at his side, and only reported what the doctor whispered privately. So

"it is said {y}, that when the son of R. Judah bar Ilai died, he went into the house of Midrash, or the school, and R. Chaniah ben Akabia went in and sat by his side, and he whispered to him, and he to the interpreter, and the interpreter caused the multitude to hear."

And they never put any man into this office until he was fifty years of age {z}. Several of the Jewish Rabbins were interpreters, as R. Chananiah before mentioned, and R. Chutzphit, and others {a}.

{s} Hilchot Tephilla, c. 12 sect. 10. ll. {t} Vid. T. Bab. Roshhashana, fol. 27. 1. & Megilla, fol. 21. 2. {u} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 49. 1. & Maimon. Hilchot Ishot, c. 8. sect. 4. {w} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 50. 2. Gloss. in ib. {x} Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 20. 2. {y} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 21. 1. {z} Juchasin, fol. 44. 2. {a} Ib. fol. 42. 1. & 44. 1, 2.

1 Corinthians 14:28

Ver. 28. But if there be no interpreter,.... None that has the gift of interpretation of divers tongues, and he that speaks with them has not that, which was sometimes the case:

let him keep silence in the church; let him not make use of his gift publicly before the whole congregation, since without an interpreter it will be entirely useless:

and let him speak to himself, and to God; he may make use of his gift to his own edification, and to the glory of God, by speaking with a low voice, or in his heart, which he himself may be conscious of, and God the searcher of hearts, and that knows all languages, fully understands; and so may be edified himself, and God may be glorified by him; whereas, if he was to use it openly and publicly, it would not only be unprofitable, but an hinderance to others: or he might retire to his own house, and there exercise it by himself, and in the presence of God, when it might be of some use and advantage to himself, but would be highly improper to bring it into the church, or public congregation; for instead of assisting, it would but dampen their devotion, and therefore it was very reasonable he should be silent there.

1 Corinthians 14:29

Ver. 29. Let the prophets speak, two or three,.... The apostle having finished the rules for streaking with an unknown tongue, proceeds to lay down some for the gift of prophesying; and observes, that where there are a number of prophets, as very likely there were in the church at Corinth, two or three of them might prophesy, or explain the prophecies of the Old Testament, or preach the Gospel at one opportunity or meeting: he does not use that restrictive clause, "at most", as before, because if there was any necessity or occasion for it, more might be employed, so that care was taken not to burden the people, and send them away loathing; and this they were to do, as before, in course, one after another, otherwise it would be all confusion, nor could they be heard to edification. Though some have thought that they might speak together at one and the same time, in different parts of the church:

and let the other judge: the other prophets that sit and hear, and all such as have a spirit of discerning, whether what the prophets say comes from their own spirits, or from a lying spirit, from the spirit of antichrist, or whether from the Spirit of God; and even the body of the people, private members of the church, and hearers, might judge of the doctrine for themselves, according to the word of God, the standard of faith and practice; and were not to believe every spirit, but try them, whether they were of God, and their doctrines by his word, whether they were true or false; for the spiritual man is in a measure capable of judging all things of a spiritual kind, through that spiritual experience he has of the word of God, and divine things, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 14:30

Ver. 30. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by,.... To another prophet that sits, and hears, and tries, and judges what he hears; if he has a clearer revelation made to him of what the other is speaking of, and has a more distinct knowledge of it, and is capable of removing any difficulty that attends it, and of expressing it more plainly, and of proving it more largely, and of setting it in an easier light to the understandings of men:

let the first hold his peace; be that was speaking, upon such an intimation being made to him, let him stop, and give way to him that has the revelation, that the church may receive the benefit of it: hence it may be observed, that the custom of the primitive churches was to hear the word sitting, and the prophet or preacher stood, or sat, as he thought fit; See Gill on "Mt 5:1", and that sometimes a revelation was made, and light conveyed to these prophets in a very sudden and extraordinary manner, when it was proper that it should be at once communicated for the good of the whole society: but this is to be understood only of those prophets or preachers, not of the common people; for it must not be thought that any that rose up, and pretended to a revelation, might be indulged to deliver it, and the speaker give way to him, which might be attended with much confusion, and many bad consequences; but only such who were known to have gifts, and who at certain times had peculiar revelations made unto them.

1 Corinthians 14:31

Ver. 31. For ye may all prophesy one by one,.... Not every member of the church, but everyone that had the gift of prophecy; so that they were not confined to two or three prophets at a meeting, but as many as would, or as had anything to deliver, and as time would allow; only care must be taken that confusion be avoided, and order preserved by exercising in turns one after another. This was agreeably to the custom of the Jewish synagogue, in which more might read and speak, though but one at a time; for

"it is forbidden to read in the book of the law, except one only, that all may hearken, and be silent, that so they may hear the words from his mouth, as if they had heard them that very moment from Mount Sinai."

So here,

that all may learn; more of the doctrine of Christ, and of the mind and will of God, and attain to a greater knowledge in the mysteries of the Gospel, and in the duties of religion, even prophets and teachers as well as private members and common hearers; for there are none who know ever so much, but are capable of being further taught and instructed, and that sometimes by such whose gifts are interior to them:

and all may be comforted; or exhorted, or receive exhortation. The word used signifies both; and prophecy is useful both for exhortation and comfort, and that both to preachers and people.

1 Corinthians 14:32

Ver. 32. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. Meaning either that the doctrines which the prophets deliver, the explanations they give of passages of Scriptures, the revelations they declare, are subject to the examination, judgment, and censure of other prophets; who have a right to try and judge them, either according to a more clear revelation they may have, or rather according to the sure word of prophecy, the Scriptures of truth; and indeed they are subject to the trial and judgment of the whole church, and therefore ought not to be stiff in their own sentiments, and obstinately persist in them, but cheerfully and readily submit them to be examined, and approved or disapproved by others; and particularly when one that sits by signifies he has something revealed to him, which will better explain, or give further light into what the speaker is upon, he ought to submit and give way to him; and thereby truth may be made manifest and established, instruction, edification, and comfort promoted, and peace and order preserved: or else the sense is, that the spiritual gifts of the prophets, and the inspirations and instincts by which they are acted, and the affections which are excited in them, are subject to themselves, so that they can use, or not use those gifts; though they have the word of the Lord they can forbear speaking, as Jeremy did, for a while, and as the case of Jonah shows; or they can refrain themselves and be silent, and wait till they have proper opportunity of speaking, being not like the prophets of false gods, who are acted by an evil spirit, and observe no order or decorum, but with a sort of fury and madness deliver involuntarily what is suggested to them: but such is not the case of true prophets that are influenced and directed by the Spirit of God, who will give way to one another; one will be silent while the other speaks, and by turns prophesy one after another; and where there is not such a subjection, it is a sign that the Spirit of God is not in them, for the reason that follows.

1 Corinthians 14:33

Ver. 33. For God is not the author of confusion,.... Or disorder, or "tumult", as the Syriac renders it; wherefore he does not inspire and excite his prophets to deliver themselves in a disorderly and tumultuous manner, so as to break in one upon another; but when one speaks, the other is silent, or when one has anything revealed to him, and he signifies it in a proper manner, the other stops and gives way to him, and when he has done another succeeds, and so the rest in order, till the whole opportunity is filled up in an orderly and edifying manner; and whatever is contrary to, or breaks in upon such a method, God is not the author of: for he is the author

of peace, harmony, unity, and concord among his prophets and teachers, and so of order, for the former cannot be without the latter; where there is no order in the ministry, there can be no peace among the ministers, nor comfort in the churches; but God is the God of peace, he calls for, requires, disposes, and approves of peace and order among all his people:

as in all churches of the saints. The Vulgate Latin reads, "as I teach in all", &c. and so read some copies, and may refer to all that is said before; and the sense be, that all the rules he had prescribed concerning speaking with tongues, and prophesying, were not new ones, but such as he had directed to be observed in all churches he was concerned with, and which consisted of holy and good men; or God is the author, not of confusion, but of peace in all the churches; he orders and disposes peace among them, and they attend to it: peace and order, and not confusion and tumult, prevail in all churches that deserve to be called churches of the saints, and therefore were in this to be imitated by the church at Corinth.

1 Corinthians 14:34

Ver. 34. Let your women keep silence in the churches,.... This is a restriction of, and an exception to one of the above rules, that all might prophesy; in which he would be understood of men only, and not of women; and is directed against a practice which seems to have prevailed in this church at Corinth, allowing women to preach and teach in it; and this being a disorderly practice, and what was not used in other churches, the apostle forbids and condemns, and not without reason:

for it is not permitted unto them to speak; that is, in public assemblies, in the church of God, they might not speak with tongues, nor prophesy, or preach, or teach the word. All speaking is not prohibited; they might speak their experiences to the church, or give an account of the work of God upon their souls; they might speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; or speak as an evidence in any case at a church meeting; but not in such sort, as carried in it direction, instruction, government, and authority. It was not allowed by God that they should speak in any authoritative manner in the church; nor was it suffered in the churches of Christ; nor was it admitted of in the Jewish synagogue; there, we are told {b}, the men came to teach, and the women ewmvl, "to hear": and one of their canons runs thus {c};

"a woman may not read (that is, in the law), rwbub, "in the congregation", or church, because of the honour of the congregation;"

for they thought it a dishonourable thing to a public assembly for a woman to read, though they even allowed a child to do it that was capable of it.

But they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. In **Ge 3:16**, "thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee". By this the apostle would signify, that the reason why women are not to speak in the church, or to preach and teach publicly, or be concerned in the ministerial function, is, because this is an act of power, and authority; of rule and government, and so contrary to that subjection which God in his law requires of women unto men. The extraordinary instances of Deborah, Huldah, and Anna, must not be drawn into a rule or example in such cases.

{b} T. Hieros Chagiga, fol. 75. 4. & T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 3. 1. {c} Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 12. sect. 17. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 23. 1.

1 Corinthians 14:35

Ver. 35. And if they will learn anything,.... If they are desirous of learning anything in relation to doctrine, duty, or discipline, and of improving their knowledge of divine things, which is very commendable in them; if any difficulty arises in their minds whilst hearing the word, which they want to have removed, or any question to ask for information sake,

let them ask their husbands at home; privately, when retired from the public assembly; for though men might ask one another concerning this, and the other point, in the church, as was usual in the synagogue worship, to which this church at Corinth in many things conformed; yet women were not allowed this freedom, and even in things which belonged to women to do; as for instance, making the cake of the first of their dough, which was to be an heave offering to the Lord, the men were to teach the women at home how, and when to separate it from the rest {d}. So the apostle directs women, when they wanted to be informed about any point, to apply to their husbands at their own houses, if they were such as were capable of instructing them; if not, they might apply to other men that were Christian men, and men of knowledge, especially to the prophets, pastors, and teachers of the church, at their habitations:

for it is a shame for women to speak in the church; it is a shame to themselves, as being contrary to the natural modesty and bashfulness of the sex, and a shame to the church, to the non-members of it, and especially to the elders, and more experienced part of it, to be taught and directed by a woman; it is a disgrace to herself and sex, as betraying uncommon pride and vanity, and an unnatural boldness and confidence; and a disgrace to the church to be under such a ministry and conduct.

{d} Bartenora in Misn. Challa, c. 3. sect. 1.

1 Corinthians 14:36

Ver. 36. What? came the word of God out from you?.... That you must give laws to other churches, and introduce new customs and practices never known or used before? No; the word of the Lord came out of Zion, and the law or doctrine of the Lord, the word of the Gospel, the doctrine of the grace of God, came out of Jerusalem. The apostles that first preached it were Jews, and they preached it first in their own land, and planted churches there, before it came to the Gentiles; and therefore the apostle suggests it would be right to consider what was the practice of the churches in Judea, the first Gospel churches, concerning women's speaking in the church, and to conform thereunto; when they would be able to observe, that these first churches from whence the word of God came to them, disallowed of any such practice, but in this point agreed with the old synagogue:

or came it unto you only? no, it came to many other nations, and people, and towns, and cities besides them; and many churches were formed among the Gentiles, who had no such custom, did not permit their women to speak in the church; and therefore why should they be singular and different from all others? other churches had the word of God, had gifts, and prophesying as well as they, and yet had introduced no such custom; and therefore it became them to pay a deference to the judgment and practice of others, especially since these were under, and acted according to the direction of the apostle, which they ought to have been subject to.

1 Corinthians 14:37

Ver. 37. If any man think himself to be a prophet,.... Or "seems to be a prophet", and is really one; for the apostle does not so much design to strike at the pride, vanity, and appearances of false prophets, as to observe, that those that are really prophets, have the gift of prophesy, either of foretelling future events, or a peculiar gift of preaching the Gospel, and explaining the Scriptures, will allow what he had said to be right:

or spiritual; not merely one that has the Spirit of God, is regenerated and sanctified by him, in opposition to a natural and carnal man; or one that has a larger knowledge of spiritual things, in distinction from a babe in Christ; but one that is endued with spiritual gifts, with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, with a discerning of spirits; as there were such among them no doubt, as well as prophets, and who were distinct from them, having the word of wisdom and knowledge:

let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord; if he is a true prophet, and really a spiritual man, he will clearly see, and therefore ought to own, that the rules here prescribed concerning speaking with tongues and prophesying, and concerning the intolerableness, unlawfulness, and indecency of women's speaking in public assemblies, are perfectly agreeable to the commands of Christ, and are to be esteemed as such, being delivered under the influence and direction of his Spirit; and which the prophet and spiritual man must discern and allow, if they have the Spirit of God; for whatever was commanded by the apostles under divine inspiration, was all one as if immediately commanded by Christ himself.

1 Corinthians 14:38

Ver. 38. But if any man be ignorant,.... Of "these" words, as the Arabic version adds, and does not know and own them to be the commandments of Christ; though he may profess himself to be a prophet, or a spiritual man, he is a very ignorant one, and has not the Spirit of God he pretends to: and if he will not be convinced, but goes on to doubt, and call in question the truth of these things, and obstinately persist in his ignorance,

let him be ignorant: let him be treated and despised as an ignorant man; and let his ignorance be no hinderance to any in receiving these rules and directions as the commandments of Christ; for no regard is to be had, or pity shown, to a man of affected ignorance, and wilful obstinacy; such a man is not to be known and owned, but shunned and rejected.

1 Corinthians 14:39

Ver. 39. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy,.... The apostle now draws to a conclusion, and reassumes the exhortation he gave in the beginning of the chapter, pressing the members of this church to desire the gift of prophecy, that being the most eligible and preferable to others, particularly to speaking with tongues, since it was the most useful and edifying, as he abundantly proves:

and forbid not to speak with tongues; such as have that gift, and are desirous of exercising it, provided they observe the rules prescribed, and have an interpreter; this he adds to promote love, and prevent dissension and discord.

1 Corinthians 14:40

Ver. 40. Let all things be done decently and in order. Which may refer not only to what is said in this chapter, but in the foregoing part of the epistle; go not to law before the unbelievers; let not a believing yokefellow depart from an unbelieving one; let not him that has knowledge sit in an idol's temple, and eat meat there; let not a man pray with his head covered, and a woman with hers uncovered; come not to the house of God to eat and drink intemperately, thereby reflecting dishonour and scandal on the ordinance of the Lord's supper; let not any speak in an unknown tongue in the church, without an interpreter, as if he was a madman, nor suffer women to teach in public; all which are very unbecoming, and contrary to the rules of decency: do not encourage animosities, factions, and parties; despise not the faithful ministers of the word, but honour and obey them in the Lord; neglect not the discipline of the church, lay on censures, and pass the sentence of excommunication on such as deserve them; keep the ordinances as they have been delivered, particularly that of the Lord's supper; observe the rules prescribed for prophesying and speaking with tongues, and so all these things will be done according to the order of the Gospel: and the words may be considered as a general rule for the decent and orderly management of all things relating to the worship of God, and discipline of his house; that in all things a good decorum, and strict order, be observed, that nothing be done contrary to the rules of decency, and the laws and commandments of Christ.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
1 Corinthians 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 15

The apostle, in this chapter, recommends the Gospel, and gives a summary of it, proves the resurrection of Christ, and by various arguments establishes the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and answers objections made unto it. He also sets forth the glory there will be upon the bodies of risen saints, and the change that will be made on living ones; and concludes with an exhortation to perseverance in faith and holiness. As his chief view is the doctrine of the resurrection, he introduces this by recommending the Gospel in general, or by observing that this is a principal doctrine which should be remembered and retained, because it was the Gospel which he had preached, and they had received, and had hitherto persevered in, 1Co 15:1 and besides was essential to salvation, and the means of it, by which they would be saved, if they retained it, except their faith in it was in vain, as it would be should they drop it, 1Co 15:2. And moreover, the apostle had received it by divine revelation, and had faithfully delivered it to them, and therefore it became them to hold it fast; the sum of which were the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, agreeably to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, 1Co 15:3 and then he reckons up the eyewitnesses of the latter, as first Peter, then the twelve disciples, then five hundred brethren at one time; next James, and all the apostles; and last of all himself, 1Co 15:5 of whom he speaks in a very diminishing style, describing himself as an abortive, affirming himself to be the least of the apostles, and unworthy to be in that office, or bear that name, giving this as a reason for it, because he had been a persecutor of the church of Christ, 1Co 15:9 wherefore he ascribes the dignity he was raised to entirely to the free grace of God; and yet he magnifies his office, and observes, that the gifts of grace bestowed upon him were not in vain, and that he was a more abundant labourer than the rest of the apostles, and had more success; but then he freely declares that all he had, and all he did, were by the grace of God, 1Co 15:10. But however, not to insist upon the difference between him and other apostles; he observes, that the subject matter of their ministry was the same, namely, a suffering and risen Saviour, and who was also the object of the faith of the believing Corinthians, 1Co 15:11 wherefore the apostle proceeds to blame some among them for denying the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, seeing it was a principal part of the ministry of the Gospel, that Christ was risen from the dead, 1Co 15:12 whereas that would not be true, if there is no resurrection of the dead, 1Co 15:13 but that Christ is risen, is not only evident from the testimonies of eyewitnesses before produced, but from the absurdities that follow upon a denial of it, as that the preaching of the Gospel was a vain thing, and faith in it also, 1Co 15:14 yea, the apostles would be no other than false witnesses of God, testifying that he raised up Christ, when he is not risen, if the dead rise not, 1Co 15:15 which argument is repeated, 1Co 15:16 and other absurdities following such an hypothesis are added; as besides what was before mentioned, that faith becomes hereby a vain thing, such as have believed in him must be in an unregenerate state, and both under the power and guilt of sin, 1Co 15:17 nay, not only so, but such who are dead in Christ, or for his sake are lost and perished, 1Co 15:18 and even those of the saints who are alive must be the most unhappy and miserable of all mortals, 1Co 15:19. But inasmuch as it is a certain point that Christ is risen, it is as clear a case that the saints will rise, which is argued from Christ being the firstfruits of those that are fallen asleep in him, which secures their resurrection to them, 1Co 15:20 and from his being their covenant head, as Adam was to his posterity; so that as all his offspring died in him, all the saints will be quickened by Christ, death coming by the one, and the resurrection by the other, 1Co 15:21. And whereas it might be objected, if this is the case, why did not the saints, who were dead before the resurrection of Christ, rise from the dead when he did, or quickly after? To which it is answered, there is an order observed agreeable to the firstfruits and lump: Christ, the firstfruits, is first, and then they that believe in him, 1Co 15:23 and this will not be until the second coming of Christ, and the end of all things, when all the elect of God shall be gathered in; and then they will be raised and presented to the Father complete in soul and body, and all rule and authority among men will cease, 1Co 15:24. But in the mean while Christ must reign until all enemies are subject to him, and the last of all that will be destroyed by him is death; which is another argument proving the resurrection of the dead; for if death is destroyed, the dead must rise, and never die more, 1Co 15:25 That all things will be put under the feet of Christ, every enemy, and so death, is proved from a testimony out of **Ps 8:6**. But to prevent a cavil, and secure the honour of God the Father, he is excepted from being subject to him, 1Co 15:27 so far is he from being so, that the Son shall be subject to him, and appear to be so as Mediator, by giving up the account of things to him; the end of which is, that God, Father, Son, and Spirit, may be all in all, 1Co 15:28. The resurrection of the dead is further argued from the sufferings of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, for the sake of him and his Gospel, and particularly this doctrine of it, which are first figuratively expressed under the notion of a baptism, 1Co 15:29 and then more literally and clearly signified by being in jeopardy, and exposed to danger of life continually, 1Co 15:30 and which is exemplified in the case of the apostle himself, who was liable to death daily, 1Co 15:31 of which he gives a particular instance in his fighting with beasts at Ephesus. Moreover, another absurdity would follow upon this, should this doctrine not be true; and that is, that a loose and licentious life, such an one as the Epicureans live, would be encouraged hereby, 1Co 15:32 from which the apostle dissuades; partly from the pernicious effect of it, which he shows by a passage cited out of one of the Heathens, 1Co 15:33 and partly from its being contrary to a righteous conversation, and from the stupidity, sinfulness, and ignorance, which such a course of life, upon such principles, declares, 1Co 15:34. And then the apostle proceeds to answer questions, and remove objections relating to the resurrection of the dead; which questions and objections are put, 1Co 15:35 which suppose the thing to be impossible and absurd, and to which answers are returned, first by observing, that grain which is sown in the earth first dies before it is quickened, and that it does not rise up bare grain as it was sown, but in a different form and shape, with additional circumstances greatly to its advantage; and has a body given by the power, and according to the pleasure of God, and suitable to the nature of the seed; by which is suggested, that in like manner the body first dies, and then is raised;, and though the same body, yet it is raised in a different form with different qualities, by the power, and according to the will of God; and therefore seeing there are every year such innumerable instances in nature, of dead and putrefied grain being revived, it need not be thought incredible, impracticable, and absurd, that God should raise the dead, 1Co 15:36 and that the body, though the same shall rise different from what it was when laid in the grave, is illustrated by the difference of flesh in men, beasts, fishes, and birds; which, though all of it flesh, differs from each other; and so will the flesh of the body, in the resurrection, differ from the flesh it is now clothed with, 1Co 15:39. And the same is further illustrated by the difference there is in the heavenly and earthly bodies, in the sun, and moon, and stars, and in one star from another; all which have respect to the same, showing not any difference there will be in risen bodies among themselves, but in risen bodies from what they now are, 1Co 15:40 as appears by the accommodation of these similes to the resurrection of the dead; and which differences are clearly expressed, the present bodies being corrupt, dishonourable, weak, and natural, the risen ones being incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual, 1Co 15:42. And that the risen bodies will be spiritual, the apostle proves, by comparing Adam and Christ together; the one had a natural body, the other had a spiritual body after his resurrection, 1Co 15:45 the order of which is given, the natural body of Adam was before the spiritual body of Christ, 1Co 15:46. Their original is also taken notice of, the one being of the earth, the other front heaven, 1Co 15:47 and so accordingly the offspring of the one, and of the other, are different; the offspring of the first Adam are earthly like him, and have a natural body, as he had; the offspring of the second Adam are heavenly, as he was, and will have a body like to his; for as they bear the image of the first man, from whom they naturally descend, by having a natural body like to his, so they must bear the image of the second man, the Lord from heaven, by having a spiritual body fashioned like to his glorious body, 1Co 15:48. And there is an absolute necessity for this, seeing bodies, in their present state, and case, as natural, mortal, and sinful, cannot be admitted into the possession of the kingdom and glory of the Lord, 1Co 15:50 but inasmuch as all will not die, and so be raised again, but some will be alive at the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead, a difficulty arises how the living saints will come by spiritual bodies, in order to inherit the kingdom of God, without which they cannot inherit it: this difficulty the apostle removes, by making known a secret never divulged before, that at the same time the dead will be raised, which will be at the sounding of a trumpet; in a moment, at once the living saints will be changed, and become immortal and incorruptible, as the raised ones, 1Co 15:51 for so it must be that these corruptible and mortal bodies be clothed with incorruption and immortality, either by the resurrection of them, or a change upon them, when either way they will become spiritual, 1Co 15:53. And hereby some prophecies in Isaiah and Hoses will have their accomplishment, 1Co 15:54 on the mention of which, some things in them are explained, as that sin is the sting of death, and the law is the strength of sin, which regard the prophecy in Hosea, 1Co 15:56 and the victory obtained over death, which is mentioned in the prophecy of Isaiah, is ascribed to God, who gives it through Christ, to whom thanks are returned for it, 1Co 15:57. And the chapter is concluded with an exhortation steadfastly to abide by the cause of Christ, and in his service; to which the saints are encouraged from this consideration, that they will find their account in it, 1Co 15:58.

Ver. 1. Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel,.... The apostle here passes on, and proceeds to a new subject, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which some in this church denied; and which he undertakes to prove, establish, and defend; and in order to lead on to it, observes, that what he was about to declare, make known, or put them in mind of, was no other than the Gospel he had formerly preached to them, they had received, professed to stand in, and were saved by, unless their faith was in vain. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead he calls "the Gospel", that being a most important doctrine, and a fundamental article of it. The resurrection of Christ from the dead made a considerable part in the ministry of the apostles, to the grief of the Sadducees among the Jews, to the scorn of the Gentile philosophers, and to the faith, hope, and comfort of Christians: this is the sum and substance of the word of faith, or doctrine of the Gospel, upon which the whole depends; see Ro 10:8 and the resurrection of the saints is connected with it, and assured by it. This indeed is the Gospel, good news, glad tidings that the bodies of the saints shall be raised again, and made like to the glorious body of Christ; and being reunited to their souls, shall live with him to all eternity; and were this out of the Gospel, it would not be Gospel, or good news; it would be an idle story, faith would be a vain thing, and hoping and believing Christians of all the most miserable. Moreover, says the apostle, the Gospel I declare, is

which I preached unto you; meaning, when he first came among them, and which had been so very useful to them for conversion and consolation; and therefore if he himself, or an angel from heaven, was to preach any other doctrine, it was to be rejected; and hence, much less should the false teachers be regarded: yea, adds he, it is the doctrine which also you have received; when first enlightened and converted, with all gladness and joyfulness, with all readiness and cheerfulness, in the love of it, and by a full assent to it; and therefore having had such an experience of it, should not now depart from it: nay, he further says,

and wherein ye stand; as he hoped they did, at least it was what they ought to have done, and doubtless was the case of the majority of them, and whose example it became the rest to follow.

1 Corinthians 15:2

Ver. 2. By which also ye are saved,.... It was the means of their salvation, and had been made the power of God unto salvation to them. Salvation is inseparably connected with true faith in Christ as a Saviour, and with a hearty belief of his resurrection from the dead, which is the earnest and pledge of the resurrection of the saints; and because of the certainty of it in the promise of God, through the obedience and death of Christ, and in the faith and hope of believers, which are sure and certain things, they are said to be saved already. To which the apostle puts in the following provisos and exceptions; the one is,

if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you; or rather, "if ye hold fast, or retain"; that is, by faith, the doctrine preached to you, and received by you, particularly the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; for the salvation that is connected with it does not depend upon the strength of the memory, but upon the truth and steadfastness of faith: it is the man that perseveres in the faith and doctrine of Christ that shall be saved; and everyone that has truly believed in Christ, and cordially embraced his Gospel, shall hold on, and out to the end; though the faith of nominal believers may be overthrown by such men, as Hymenaeus and Philetus, who asserted, that the resurrection was past already; but so shall not the faith of real believers, because the foundation on which they are built stands sure, and the Lord has perfect knowledge of them, and will keep and save them. The other exception is,

unless ye have believed in vain: not that true faith can be in vain; for that is the faith of God's elect, the gift of his grace, the operation of his Spirit; Christ is the author and finisher of it, and will never suffer it to fail; it will certainly issue in everlasting salvation: but then as the word may be heard in vain, as it is by such who are compared to the wayside, and to the thorny and rocky ground; and as the Gospel of the grace of God may be received in vain; so a mere historical faith may be in vain; this a man may have, and not the grace of God, and so be nothing; with this he may believe for a while, and then drop it: and since each of these might possibly be the case of some in this church, the apostle puts in these exceptions, in order to awaken the attention of them all to this important doctrine he was reminding them of.

1 Corinthians 15:3

Ver. 3. For I delivered unto you first of all,.... Not only in the first place as to order; but among the chief and principal things, as the words will bear to be rendered, this was insisted on in his ministry; this was one he after relates, even a crucified Christ, or the doctrine of his dying for the sins of his people; and which he mentions to lead on to his resurrection; which he meant to improve, and does improve, in a very strong manner, in favour of the resurrection of the saints. This doctrine of a crucified Saviour, which he at first determined only to make known among them, and did make known, was what he fully and faithfully delivered to them, as he had received it:

that which also I received; not from men, but from Christ; for from him he had the doctrines of the Gospel, as well as the ordinances of it; and he delivered nothing to be believed and practised, but what he had received, and which ought to be the practice and conduct of every Gospel minister; whatever they have received they should deliver, and nothing else: and especially the following important doctrine,

how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; that is, of the Old Testament, the writings of Moses, and the prophets, according to Scripture promises, Scripture types, and Scripture prophecies; particularly **Ge 3:15** **Da 9:24** which declare that his heel was to be bruised, that he should be brought to the dust of death, should pour out his soul unto death, and be stricken and cut off in a judicial way, and that for sins; not his own, but for the sins of his people, in order to atone for them, procure the pardon of them, take them away, make an end of them, and abolish them; all which he has done, as the Gospel declares, and the apostle affirms; and thereby was accomplished what Moses and the prophets did say should come to pass. Every promise, type, and prophecy recorded in the law, in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning his sufferings and death, had their fulfilment in him; nothing was more clearly prefigured and foretold, and nothing more punctually and fully answered.

1 Corinthians 15:4

Ver. 4. And that he was buried,.... That is, according to the Scriptures; for as he died and rose again according to the Scriptures, he was buried according to them; which speak of his being in hell, in "sheol", in the grave, and of his making his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, Ps 16:10 and which had their accomplishment through Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, who begged the body of Jesus, wrapped in linen, and laid it in his own new tomb. And besides these Scripture prophecies of his burial, Jonah's being three days and three nights in the whale's belly was a type of it, and according to which our Lord himself foretold it, Mt 12:40. Now since this was prophesied of, and typified, and had its actual accomplishment, it was very proper for the apostle to take notice of it, both to confirm the certainty of Christ's death, and the truth of his resurrection, which his death and burial are mentioned, in order to lead on to, and next follows:

and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: that he should rise again from the dead was very plainly hinted or expressed in several prophecies which speak of the rising of his dead body, of its not being left in the grave so long as to see corruption; and which therefore could not be in it more than three days; and of his lifting up his head after he had drank of the brook by the way; of his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, which suppose his resurrection, Isa 26:19. And that he should rise again the third day, is not only suggested in **Ho 6:2** but was prefigured by the deliverance of Isaac on the third day after Abraham had given him up for dead, from whence he received him, in a figure of Christ's resurrection; and by Jonah's deliverance out of the whale's belly, after he had been in it three days. The Jews take a particular notice of the third day as remarkable for many things they observe {e}, as

"of the third day Abraham lift up his eyes, Ge 22:4 of the third day of the tribes, Ge 42:18 of the third day of the spies, **Jos 2:16** of the third day of the giving of the law, Ex 19:16 of the third day of Jonah, **Jon 1:17** of the third day of them that came out of the captivity, **Ezr 8:15** of the third day of the resurrection of the dead, as it is written, **Ho 6:2** "after two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight"."

From which passage, it is clear, that they under stood the prophecy in Hosea of the resurrection of the dead; and it is observable, that among the remarkable third days they take notice of, are the two instances of Isaac's and Jonah's deliverances, which were Scripture types of Christ's resurrection. From which observations they establish this as a maxim {f}, that

"God does not leave the righteous in distress more than three days."

That Christ did rise again from the dead, in pursuance of those prophecies and types, the apostle afterwards proves by an induction of particular instances of persons who were eyewitnesses of it.

{e} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 56. fol. 49. 3. {f} Mattanot Cehunah in ib.

1 Corinthians 15:5

Ver. 5. And that he was seen of Cephas,.... Or Simon Peter; for Cephas was a name given him by Christ, **Joh 1:42**. This was not another Cephas, one of the seventy disciples, as Clemens suggests {g}, but the Apostle Peter himself, to whom it is certain the Lord appeared. Not that he was the first person by whom Christ was seen after his resurrection, for he first appeared to Mary Magdalene, Mr 16:9 but the testimony of the women the apostle omits, and it seems as if Peter was the first of the men that saw Christ when risen, see Lu 24:34. Whether he was one of the disciples that went to Emmaus, to whom Christ joined himself, and entered into discourse with, is not certain; it should rather seem, that the appearance here referred to was when he was alone;

then of the twelve; though there were then but eleven of them, Judas being gone from them, and having destroyed himself; and at the first appearance of Christ to them, there were but ten present, Thomas being absent; and yet because their original number, when first chosen and called, were twelve, they still went by the same name; see Joh 20:24. The appearance or appearances here referred to are those in Joh 20:19. The Vulgate Latin reads the "eleven"; and so the Claromontane exemplar.

{g} Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 12.

1 Corinthians 15:6

Ver. 6. After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once,.... Not at, or near Jerusalem, for the number of the disciples that were together there, made but about an hundred and twenty, **Ac 1:15** but in Galilee, where Christ, in the days of his flesh, had most chiefly conversed, most frequently preached and wrought his miracles, and where the number of his disciples and followers were very large: here he promised his disciples to go before them, and show himself to them after his resurrection, as he accordingly did, Mt 26:32. And this being signified by the apostles to the brethren there, it is no wonder that there was such a number of them gathered on that occasion:

of whom the greater part remain unto this present; and so might be personally applied unto for the truth of this, was it necessary; it being but about five or six and twenty years ago at the writing of this epistle:

and some were fallen asleep; were dead, as it might be reasonably thought there were among so many, and in such a length of time; though doubtless these had surviving friends, relations, and acquaintance, to whom they had communicated this important case, and who were ready to attest what they had heard them in the most solemn manner declare.

1 Corinthians 15:7

Ver. 7. After that he was seen of James,.... Not James the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, though he was seen by him with other disciples, Joh 20:19 who was now dead when the apostle wrote this, having been killed by Herod many years ago, Ac 12:2 and so not quite so proper a witness to be mentioned; but James the son of Alphaeus, and brother of our Lord, a man of great fame and credit with the Jews, and still living, and therefore a proper and pertinent evidence. This appearance was made unto him when alone; and though the Scripture elsewhere makes no mention of it, there is no room to doubt it, since the apostle here affirms it. As for the account of the appearance of Christ to this James, immediately, after his resurrection, recorded by Jerom as he found it in the Gospel according to the Hebrews, it seems to be fabulous. His account is this {h};

"the Gospel written according to the Hebrews, which was lately translated by me into the Greek and Latin tongues, and which Origen often uses, relates, after the resurrection of the Saviour, that when the Lord had given the linen cloth to the priest's servant, he went to James, and appeared to him: for James had swore that he would not taste any bread from the time he had drank the cup of the Lord, until he saw him rising from the dead. Again, a little after, bring me, says the Lord, the table and the bread; and it is immediately added, he took the bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave it to James the just, and said unto him, my brother, eat thy bread, for the son of man is risen from the dead."

Then of all the apostles; at the Mount of Olives, when he led them out of Jerusalem, as far as Bethany, blessed them, and was parted from them, and ascended to heaven out of their sight, Lu 24:50 so that this was the last appearance of him on earth after his resurrection.

{h} Catalog. Script. Eccles. sect. 3. fol. 90. 1.

1 Corinthians 15:8

Ver. 8. And last of all he was seen of me also,.... Either when the apostle was caught up into the third heaven; or when he was in a trance in the temple at Jerusalem; or rather at the time of his conversion, when he not only heard the voice of Christ, but saw him in the human nature; for he expressly says, that he appeared unto him, and he calls it the heavenly vision, Ac 26:16. This was a sight of Christ in heaven, not on earth, such an one as Stephen had, and was a corporeal one; otherwise it would have been impertinent to have mentioned it, with the rest of the ocular testimonies of Christ's resurrection. Not that this was the last time that Christ was seen, or to be seen, for he was seen after this by the Apostle John in a visionary way, and will be corporeally seen by all the saints at the last day; but Paul was the last of the apostles and brethren before named, and he had his vision of Christ after them all; and perhaps it might be a more clear, full, and distinct one than any of the rest, as the last things are sometimes the most excellent. The apostle adds, as of

one born out of due time: or "as an abortive"; not that he was really one, but like one: several learned interpreters think the apostle refers to a proverbial way of speaking among the common people at Rome, who used to call such supernumerary senators in the times of Augustus Caesar, who got into the senate house by favour or bribery, "abortives" {i}, they being generally very unworthy persons; and therefore calls himself by this name, as being in his own opinion a supernumerary apostle, and very unworthy of that office: though others rather think that he refers to a "posthumous" birth, to one that is born after the death of his father; because that the rest of the apostles were all chosen, and called, and sent forth, whilst Christ, their everlasting Father, was living on earth, but he not till after his death, resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven: but it seems best to understand him of an abortion, a miscarriage, or birth before its time; and may respect either the manner of his conversion, which was done both suddenly, immediately, and at once, by a sudden light from heaven, when he little thought of it, and had no expectation of it, which is commonly the case of abortions; and also powerfully and irresistibly, being effected by mighty and efficacious grace, as births before the full time are often occasioned by blows or outward force, and are violent extrusions of the foetus; or else the state and condition in which he was when Christ was first seen by him: as to his bodily state, as soon as ever he saw the light about him, and the object by it, he was struck blind, and continued so some days, like an hidden untimely birth, and like an infant that never saw light, **Job 3:16**. And as to his spiritual estate, his soul was like an unshapen foetus, Christ being not yet formed in him, his image stamped on him, and his grace implanted in him; yea, it may be applied to the present apprehensions he had of himself, and which he expresses without a figure in the next verse, though in a beautiful manner, with a view to what he here says, when he observes that he was "the least of the apostles, and not meet to be called" one; as an abortive, or one born before its time, is imperfect in one respect or another, is not come to its proper size and shape, and scarcely is to be reckoned in the class and number of men.

{i} Vid. Sueton. in Vita August. c. 35.

1 Corinthians 15:9

Ver. 9. For I am the least of the apostles,.... Referring not to the littleness of his stature, but to the figure before used, and as expressing not the opinion of others concerning him, but the true and real sense he had of himself, for which he himself gives the strongest reason that can be given; and by "apostles" he means not only the twelve, but all other ministers of the Gospel that were sent forth by Christ to preach it: nor need this be wondered at, when he says, that he was less than the least of all saints, **Eph 3:8** though when his person and doctrines were traduced by false teachers, and attempts were made to disgrace his ministry, and render it useless, in vindication of himself, and without vanity, he does not stick to assert, that he was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles, 2Co 11:5 and yet here adds,

that am not meet to be called an apostle; not only to be one, but to bear the name of one. No man was meet or fit for such an office of himself; none of the apostles were any more than himself; but his meaning is, that though he was chosen, and called, and qualified by the gifts and grace of God for this office, yet he was unworthy to be called by the name of an apostle of Christ, for the reason following, because I persecuted the church of God: he not only consented to the death of Stephen, the first martyr, and held the clothes of them that stoned him; but he made havoc of the church, haling men and women to prison, and continued to breathe out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord; and had letters of commission from the high priest in his pocket, to seize any of this way at Damascus, and bring them bound to Jerusalem, when Christ met him in the way, and was seen by him: according to his own account, he shut up many of the saints in prison, gave his voice against them when they were put to death, punished them oft in every synagogue, compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceeding mad against them, persecuted them to strange cities; see **Ac 7:1**. This he mentions both for his own abasement and humiliation, and to magnify the grace of God, to which he ascribes all he was, had, and did, as in the next verse.

1 Corinthians 15:10

Ver. 10. But by the grace of God I am what I am,.... As he was what he was by the grace of God in a private capacity, upon a level with other Christians, being a chosen vessel of salvation, not by works, nor on account of faith, or any holiness of his, but by grace; being regenerated, called, sanctified, justified, pardoned, and adopted by it; being a believer in Christ through faith, as a gift of God's grace, and having a good hope of eternal glory the same way; so he was what he was, as a minister of the Gospel, as an apostle, as in that high office purely by the grace of God: he was not made one by men, nor by his education, learning, and industry, nor through any merits of his own, but by the free favour and sovereign will of God, bestowing on him gifts and grace, by which he was qualified for apostleship, and to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ:

and his grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain; by "grace", in the former clause, is meant the good will and free favour of God, from whence all the blessings of goodness arise; here the gifts of grace, particularly such as qualify for the ministry. For what qualifies men for the preaching of the Gospel is not human learning, nor natural parts, nor internal grace, neither separately nor altogether: but peculiar gifts, which lie in an understanding of the Scriptures, and the doctrines of the Gospel, and in an aptitude to explain and teach them to the edification of others: and these gifts are not of nature, nor acquired by art and industry, but are of grace; are gifts freely bestowed by God, and are not in vain, at least should not be; they are not to be wrapped up in a napkin, and hid in the earth; they are not to be neglected, but to be stirred up and improved by prayer, meditation, reading, constant study, and frequent use, as they were by the apostle; and by a divine blessing were not without their use, to the good of souls, and the glory of God. Hence as what he was, so what he had, was by the grace of God, and likewise what he did, as follows:

but I laboured more abundantly than they all; meaning, not the false apostles, who were loiterers, and not labourers, but the true apostles of Christ; not than them all put together, but than anyone of them singly considered; he laboured in the Lord's vineyard, in the word and doctrine, preaching in season and out of season; he travelled over a greater part of the world, preached oftener, and wrote more than any of the rest; was the instrument of converting more souls, and he planted more churches, endured more hardships and sufferings than any of the other apostles;

Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me; he attributes all to the grace of God, and nothing to himself; it was the grace of God that made him an apostle of Christ, and preacher of the Gospel; it was that which being bestowed on him qualified him for it; it was that which enabled him to labour and toil, to do and suffer all he did, and which gave success to all his ministrations. He is exceedingly careful to magnify the free favour of God, and the gifts of his grace; and means not the grace that was in him, but the grace that was without him, though with him.

1 Corinthians 15:11

Ver. 11. Therefore whether it were I or they,.... By whom Christ was seen first or last, we were all eyewitnesses of him; or whether I am the least, and others the chief of the apostles; or whether I have laboured more abundantly than they all, this matters not:

so we preach; we agree in our ministry to preach Christ, and him only, and with one heart and mouth assert, that he died, was buried, and rose again the third day:

and so ye believed; these several truths relating to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Thus the apostle, after he had made a digression upon his own character, as one of the witnesses of Christ's resurrection, returns to the subject he set out upon in the beginning of the chapter, in order to lead on to the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which he proves by the resurrection of Christ, in the following verses. One of Stephen's copies read, "so we believed"; and so the Ethiopic version seems to have read; see **2Co 4:13**.

1 Corinthians 15:12

Ver. 12. Now if Christ be preached that he arose from the dead,.... As he was by the Apostle Paul, when at Corinth, and by all the rest of the apostles elsewhere.

How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? Who these were is not certain, whether Hymenaeus and Philetus, whose notion this was, were come hither, or any of their disciples; or whether they were some of the followers of Simon Magus and Cerinthus, who denied the resurrection; or rather, whether they were not Jews, and of the sect of the Sadducees, who though they believed in Christ, retained their old principle, that there is no resurrection of the dead, cannot be affirmed: however, it is certain that they were such as were then at Corinth, and went under the Christian name; and it is highly probable were members of the church there; and who not only held this notion privately, but broached it publicly, saying, declaring, affirming, and that openly, before the whole church, what were their opinions and sentiments: it was indeed but some of them, not all that were chargeable with this bad principle, which the apostle asks how, and with what face they could assert, then it had been preached, and so fully proved to them, that Christ was risen from the dead; and if so, then it is out of question that there is a resurrection of the dead; for their notion, as it is here expressed, was not only that there would be no resurrection of the dead, but that there was none, nor had been any: though the apostle's view is also to prove the future resurrection of the dead, and which is done by proving the resurrection of Christ, for his resurrection involves that of his people; for not only the saints rose in, and with Christ, as their head representatively, and which is the sense of the prophecy in **Ho 6:2** but because he is their head, and they are members of him, therefore as sure as he the head is risen, so sure shall the members rise likewise; nor will Christ's resurrection, in a sense, be perfect, until all the members of his body are risen: for though the resurrection of Christ, personally considered, is perfect, yet not as mystically considered; nor will it till all the saints are raised, of whose resurrection Christ's is the exemplar and the pledge: their bodies will be raised and fashioned like unto Christ's, and by virtue of union to him, and as sure as he is risen, for he is the firstfruits of them that slept. Besides, as he became incarnate, obeyed, suffered, not for himself, but for his people, so he rose again on their account, and that they dying might rise also; which if they should not, one end at least of Christ's resurrection would not be answered: add to this, that the same power that raised Christ from the dead, can raise others, even all the saints; so that if it is allowed that Christ is raised, it need not be thought incredible that all the dead shall be raised; and particularly when it is observed, that Christ is the efficient, procuring, and meritorious cause of the resurrection from the dead, as well as the pattern and earnest of it.

1 Corinthians 15:13

Ver. 13. But if there be no resurrection of the dead,.... If there is no such thing as a resurrection of any, if the thing is not possible, if it never has been, is, or will be true in fact:

then is Christ not risen. The apostle argues from a general, to a particular; from the general resurrection of the dead, to the particular resurrection of Christ; and from a negation of the one, to a negation of the other; for what does not agree with the whole, does not agree with the part; and what is true of the whole, is true of the part; but if the resurrection of Christ is not true, many are the absurdities that must follow upon it, and which the apostle next enumerates.

1 Corinthians 15:14

Ver. 14. And if Christ be not risen,.... If this is a truth, and must be taken as granted, as it must be, if there is no resurrection at all:

then is our preaching vain; false, empty, delusory, unprofitable, and useless; not only that part of it which more especially concerns the resurrection of Christ, but even the whole of it; preaching Christ as the Son of God, which was the subject of the apostle's ministry, and which he set out with, is to no purpose, if he is not risen; for one considerable proof of his sonship depends upon his resurrection, which is the declaration of it; for who can believe him to be the Son of God, if he is detained under the power of the grave? one reason why he could not be held of death, and the pains and cords of it, any longer than was necessary, and was his pleasure, was because he was the Son of God, as well as surety of his people, who had paid the whole debt: so the preaching of his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death, is of no use and avail, if he has not abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light, first in himself, and then for his people:

and your faith is also vain; either the grace of faith, by which they believed on Christ, or the doctrine of faith; or since this is repeated, 1Co 15:17 the one may be meant here, and the other there. The doctrine of faith they had given their assent to, not only respecting the resurrection of Christ, but any other truth relating to his person and office, must be vain and empty, and without any foundation; even that faith which is one, uniform, harmonious, and consistent, which was once delivered to the saints; which they are to stand fast in, to strive, contend, and fight for, and not part with at any rate, upon any account whatever; and yet this, and the preaching and belief of it, are useless and insignificant things, if Christ is not risen; such wretched absurdities must follow upon the denial of that truth.

1 Corinthians 15:15

Ver. 15. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God,.... The apostles were chosen to be witnesses of the resurrection of Christ; he appeared to them, and was seen by them for this purpose; and they were sent into all the world, to bear their testimony to this truth, which they accordingly did: now if Christ is not risen, they have bore a false testimony; and what greater scandal, or a more odious character can be fixed upon a man, than to be a false witness? but God forbid that such an imputation should be fastened upon the holy apostles of Christ, who cannot be thought to have any sinister end in publishing such a falsehood; who were sure on account of declaring it, and abiding by it, to meet with nothing but hatred, reproach, persecution, poverty, and death; but this is not all, nor the worst; for if they are false witnesses, they are false witnesses of God; they are of his suborning; he selected them as witnesses; he must put this lie into their mouths, and send them into the world under his authority to publish it; than which to say nothing can be thought of more blasphemous and execrable; and yet this must follow, upon a denial of the resurrection of Christ:

because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be the dead rise not; it may be read, "we have testified against God", as the Vulgate Latin does; for as it must be bringing a false testimony from God, so it must be bearing a false testimony against him, to say that he raised Christ from the dead, when he is not risen; which must be the case, if there is no resurrection of the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:16

Ver. 16. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. This is a repetition of the argument in 1Co 15:13 made partly to show the importance of it, and partly to observe other absurdities, following upon the conclusion of it.

1 Corinthians 15:17

Ver. 17. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain,.... As before in 1Co 15:14 not only the doctrine of faith, but the grace of faith in Christ; even that faith, which is the faith of God's elect; the pure gift of his grace, and the operation of his power; which Christ is the object, author, and finisher of; and which he prays for, that it may not fail; and to which salvation is so often promised in the sacred Scriptures; and yet is vain, than which nothing can be more absurd: it follows,

ye are yet in your sins: in a state of nature and unregeneracy, under the power and dominion of sin, being neither regenerated nor sanctified; for regeneration is owing to the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and is a branch of the power, virtue, and efficacy of it: but if Christ is not risen, there never was, is, or will be any such thing as regeneration and sanctification; things, if ever wrought by the Spirit, are done by him in virtue, and in imitation of the resurrection, as well as the death of Christ: moreover, if Christ is not risen, his people are under the guilt of their sins; there is no expiation nor remission of them, nor justification from them; for though he was delivered as a sacrifice to atone for their offences, and his blood was shed to obtain the forgiveness of their sins, yet he must be raised again for their justification, and be exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, as to give repentance, so remission of sins, or they will never enjoy these blessings; for notwithstanding his sufferings and death, if he lies under the power of the grave, they must remain under the power and guilt of sin, and be liable to everlasting punishment for it.

1 Corinthians 15:18

Ver. 18. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ,.... That is, who are dead, and have died in Christ: death is often represented by a sleep, and that more than once in this chapter; and doubtless with a view to the resurrection, which will be an awaking out of it, since it will not be perpetual: some understand this of such only who were fallen asleep, or died martyrs for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; as Stephen, James the brother of John, and others; but rather it designs all such as die in Christ, in union with him, whether in the lively exercise of faith, or not; of whom it must be said, if Christ is not risen, that they

are perished: soul and body; for if there is no reason to believe the resurrection of the dead, there is no reason to believe the immortality of the soul, or a future state, but rather that the soul perishes with the body, and that there is no existence after death: though should it be insisted on that the soul survives, and shall live without the body to all eternity, it must be in a state of misery, if Christ is not risen, because it must be in its sins; and neither sanctified nor justified, and consequently cannot be glorified, so that the whole may be said to be perished; the body perishes in the grave, the soul in hell; but God forbid that this should be said of those, who have either died for Christ, or in him: can it be that any that are in Christ, that are united to him, one body and spirit with him, should ever perish? or those that are asleep in him be lost? no, those that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him at the last day, who shall be for ever with him, and for ever happy.

1 Corinthians 15:19

Ver. 19. If in this life only we have hope in Christ,.... The object of a believer's hope is not any creature, man, or angel; nor any creature enjoyment, as gold and silver; nor any creature righteousness, moral, legal, and civil; nor any external privilege, or profession of religion; but Christ alone as a surety, Saviour, and Redeemer; his person, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and fulness: and what they hope for in him are, all grace, and the supplies of it; the forgiveness of their sins, the justification of their persons, eternal life and salvation; grace here, and glory hereafter; for all which they have great reason and encouragement to hope in him; but if their hope in him was only in this life, or whilst this life lasts; if they had not hope in death, that they should live again, and after death for the resurrection of their bodies; or if they hoped in Christ only for the things of this life, or as the Arabic version renders it, "if we from Christ, and by him, expect happiness in this world only"; if our hope in him is bounded with this life, and confined to the things of it, and does not reach to the things of another life, the things of eternity, the invisible glories of another world, to be enjoyed in soul and body;

we are of all men the most miserable; which may have respect not only to the apostles, though eminently true of them, who had little of the comforts of this life, being continually exposed to hardships and persecution for the sake of Christ; were set forth as a spectacle to angels and men; were accounted the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things; and suffered many indignities, and great reproach and affliction, and that for asserting the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; but is also true of all others that hope in Christ, and believe in him; for these not only deny themselves the pleasures, honours, and profits of this world, but are exposed continually to the hatred, reproach, and persecution of it; they are chastised by God as other men are, that they may not be condemned with the world, and yet they must be condemned, if Christ is not risen; they are harassed and distressed by Satan, who follows them with his temptations and suggestions, which are so many fiery darts, which give them great pain and uneasiness, when others are unmolested by him; they groan under a body of sin they carry about with them, and desire and long to be unclothed, that they might be clothed upon with glory and immortality; and yet these very desires and earnest longings after a blessed eternity do but add to their misery, if there is no foundation for them, and they will at last be frustrated: these are the sad conclusions, and wretched absurdities that must follow, upon the denial of the resurrection of the dead, and of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:20

Ver. 20. But now is Christ risen from the dead,.... As was before proved by ocular testimonies, and before preached and asserted; and now reassumed and concluded, from the glaring contradictions, and dreadful absurdities that follow the denial of it:

and became the firstfruits of them that slept; who were already fallen asleep; respecting chiefly the saints that died before the resurrection of Christ; and if Christ was the firstfruit of them, there is no difficulty of conceiving how he is the firstfruits of those that die since. The allusion is to the firstfruits of the earth, which were offered to the Lord: and especially to the sheaf of the firstfruits, which was waved by the priest before him, De 26:2 and to which Christ, in his resurrection from the dead, is here compared. The firstfruits were what first sprung out of the earth, were soonest ripe, and were first reaped and gathered in, and then offered unto the Lord; so Christ first rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, and presented himself to God; as the representative of his people; for though there were others that were raised before him, as the widow of Sarepta's son by Elijah, the Shunammite's son by Elisha, and the man that touched the prophet's bones when put into his grave, and Jairus's daughter, the widow of Naam's son, and Lazarus by Christ; yet as these did not rise by their own power, so only to a mortal life: but Christ, as he raised himself by his own power, so he rose again to an immortal life, and was the first that ever did so; he was the first to whom God showed, and who first trod this path of life. The firstfruits were the best, what was then ripest, and so most valuable; Christ is the first, and rose the first in dignity, as well as in time; he rose as the head of the body, as the firstborn, the beginning, that in all things he might have, and appear to have, as he ought to have, the pre-eminence. The firstfruits sanctified the rest of the harvest, represented the whole, gave right to the ingathering of it, and ensured it; Christ by lying in the grave, and rising out of it, sanctified it for his people, and in his resurrection represented them; they rose with him, and in him; and their resurrection is secured by his; because he lives, they shall live also. The firstfruits were only such, and all this to the fruits of the earth, that were of the same kind with them, not to tares and chaff, to briers and thorns; so Christ, in rising from the dead, is only the firstfruits of the saints; of such as are the fruits of his death and of his grace, who have the fruits of his Spirit in them, and are filled with the fruits of righteousness by him; just as he is the firstborn from the dead, with respect to the many brethren, whom he stands in the relation of a firstborn: once more, as the allusion is particularly to the sheaf of the firstfruits, it is to be observed, that that was waved before the Lord, the morrow after the sabbath, Le 23:11 which, as the Jews {f} interpret, was the morrow after the first good day, or festival of the passover; the passover was on the fourteenth day of the month; the festival, or Chagiga, on the fifteenth, and which, in the year that Christ suffered, was a sabbath day also; and the morrow after that, the sheaf of the firstfruits was waved; now Christ suffered on the passover, rested in the grave on the seventh day sabbath, and on the morrow after that, rose from the dead, the very day that the first fruits were offered to the Lord: so that the allusion and phrase are very appropriately used by the apostle.

{f} Targum & Jarchi in Lev. xxiii. 11.

1 Corinthians 15:21

Ver. 21. For since by man came death,.... The first man, by sin, was the cause of death; of its coming into the world, and upon all men, by which corporeal death is here meant; though the first man also by sin brought a moral death, or a death in sin on all his posterity; and rendered them liable to an eternal death, which is the just wages of sin; but since the apostle is treating of the resurrection of the body, a bodily death seems only intended:

by man came also the resurrection of the dead; so God, in his great goodness and infinite wisdom has thought fit, and he has so ordered it, that it should be, that as the first man was the cause of, and brought death into the world, the second man should be the cause of the resurrection of life. Christ is the meritorious and procuring cause of the resurrection of his people; he by dying has abolished death; and by rising from the dead has opened the graves of the saints, and procured their resurrection for them, obtained for them a right unto it, and made way for it: and he is the pattern and exemplar, according to which they will be raised; their vile bodies will be fashioned, and made like to his glorious body; and whereas both in life and in death they bear the image of the first and earthly man, in the resurrection they will bear the image of the second and heavenly one: he also will be the efficient cause of the resurrection; all the dead will be raised by his power, and at the hearing of his voice; though the saints only will be raised by him, in virtue of their union to him, and interest in him, being members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

1 Corinthians 15:22

Ver. 22. For as in Adam all die,.... The apostle here shows who he meant in the former verse, by the one man the cause of death, and by the other the author of the resurrection of the dead, and that he intended Adam and Christ; all men were in Adam seminally, as the common parent of human nature, in such sense as Levi was in the loins of Abraham when Melchizedek met him, and in him paid tithes unto him; and they were all in him representatively, he being the federal head of all his posterity, and so a type and figure of Christ that was to come; and being in him, they all sinned in him, and so died in him, the sentence of death passed on them in him; they became subject to a corporeal death, which has ever since reigned over mankind, even over infants, such who have not sinned after the similitude of his transgression; this was the doctrine of the Jewish church; See Gill on "Ro 5:12", to which may be added one testimony more; says {g} one of their writers,

"by the means of the first Adam lkl htym honqn, "death was inflicted by way of punishment on all":"

even so in Christ shall all be made alive: not made spiritually alive, for Christ quickens whom he will; not all in this sense, some die in their sins; nor are all entitled to an eternal life; for though Christ has a power to give it, yet only to those whom the Father has given to him; it is true indeed, that all that are in

Christ, chosen in him and united to him, are made alive by him, and have the gift of eternal life through him; but the apostle is not speaking of such a life, but of a corporeal one: to be quickened or made alive, is with the Jews, and other eastern nations, a phrase of the same signification with being raised from the dead, and as the context here shows; and not to be understood of the resurrection of all men, for though there will be a resurrection of the just and unjust, yet the one will be the resurrection of life, and the other the resurrection of damnation; now it is of the former the apostle here speaks, and expresses by being made alive: and the sense is, that as all that were in Adam, all that belonged to him, all his natural seed and posterity, all to whom he was a federal head, died in him, became mortal, and subject to death through him; so all that are in Christ, that belong to him, who are his spiritual seed and offspring, to whom he is a covenant head, and representative, shall be raised to an immortal life by him; or as all the elect of God died in Adam, so shall they all be quickened, or raised to life in and by Christ.

{g} Baal Hatturim in Dent. iii. 26.

1 Corinthians 15:23

Ver. 23. But every man in his own order,.... Not of time, as if the saints that lived in the first age of the world should rise first, and then those of the next, and so on to the end of the world; nor of dignity, as that martyrs should rise first in the order of martyrs, and preachers of the word in the order of preachers, and private Christians in the order and rank of private Christians; or of age, as the elder first, and then the younger; or of state and condition, as married persons in the order of married persons, and virgins in the order of virgins; these are all foreign from the sense of the words; the order regarded is that of head and members, the firstfruits and the harvest. There seems to be an allusion to the ranging and marshalling of the Israelites, everyone by his "own standard"; which both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render hyoqj le, "by or according to his own order": and so the Septuagint kata tagma, the word here used; and the sense is, that every man shall be raised from the dead, according to the head under which he is ranged and marshalled. Christ the head is risen first; next all those that are under him, as an head, will rise from the dead; the dead in Christ will rise first; and then a thousand years after that, those who are only in their natural head, by whom death came to them, and have lived and died in a natural estate, will rise last; but as the apostle is only upon the resurrection of the saints, he carries the account and observes the order no further than as it concerns Christ and his people:

Christ the firstfruits; he rose first in order of time, dignity, causality and influence; See Gill on "1Co 15:20".

afterwards they that are Christ's; not immediately after; for now almost two thousand years are elapsed since the resurrection of Christ, and yet the saints are not raised; and how many more years are to run out before that, is not to be known; but as there was an interval between the firstfruits, and the ingathering of the harvest; so there is a considerable space of time between the resurrection of Christ as the firstfruits, and the resurrection of his people, which will be the harvest; and that will be at the end of the world, according to Mt 13:39 the persons who shall rise first and next after Christ, are they that are his; who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and were given to him by his Father as his spouse, his children, his sheep, his portion, and his jewels; who were purchased and redeemed by his blood, are called by his grace and regenerated by his Spirit, and who give up themselves to him, and are possessed by him: and the interest that Christ has in them here expressed, carries in it a strong argument of their resurrection; which may be concluded from their election in Christ, which can never be made void; from the gift of their whole persons to Christ by his Father, with this declaration of his will, that he should lose nothing of them, but raise it up at the last day; from his redemption of their bodies as well as their souls; from the union of both unto him; and from the sanctification of both, and his Spirit dwelling in their mortal bodies as well as in their souls: the time when they will be raised by Christ is,

at his coming; at his second and personal coming at the last day; then the dead in Christ will rise first, and immediately; and he will judge the quick and dead, those that will be found alive, and those that will be then raised from the dead: when this will be no man knows; yet nothing is more certain, than that Christ will come a second time; and his coming will be speedy and sudden; it will be glorious and illustrious, and to the joy and salvation of his people; since their bodies will then be raised and reunited to their souls, when they, soul and body, shall be for ever with the Lord. The Vulgate Latin reads the words thus, "they that are Christ's, who have believed in his coming"; both in his first and second coming; but there is nothing in the Greek text to encourage and support such a version and sense.

1 Corinthians 15:24

Ver. 24. Then cometh the end,.... Or "after that the end", the end of all things;

either at the close of the thousand years, when the wicked dead will be raised last, and the final state of all men will openly take place; the end of the righteous will be peace and everlasting joy, and an uninterrupted communion with Christ, and enjoyment of life eternal, of the ultimate glory, and consummate happiness in soul and body; and the end of the wicked will be destruction and death, everlasting punishment in hell, where will be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth for evermore: or at the beginning of the thousand years; immediately upon Christ's second and personal coming, will be the end of the world; the heavens shall pass away, the elements shall melt, and the earth and all its works be burnt up; though these shall not be annihilated or destroyed, as to their being and substance, but only as to their present form and qualities; they shall be renewed, out of them shall arise new heavens, and a new earth, whereon righteous persons, and only righteous persons, will dwell, even all the righteous that will be raised at Christ's coming, or shall then be bound alive, where they shall reign with him during the thousand years; and then there wilt be an end of preaching the Gospel, and of administering ordinances, there being no more elect souls to be gathered in; nor will saints stand in need of edification and comfort from such means; then will also be the end, the accomplishment of all the purposes, promises, and prophecies of God, relating to the state and condition of his church and people in all the periods of time, and to their complete glory and happiness; the number of God's elect in regeneration, sanctification, and glorification will now be complete, the saints will be all perfected, and the church be as a bride prepared and adorned for her husband; and their salvation in soul and body consummate, there wilt be nothing wanting; then that which is perfect will be come, their bodies being raised and reunited to their souls, and both with the Lord: so the word "end" denotes the accomplishment, completion, and perfection of things; see Lu 22:37. Moreover, there will now be an end of all sin and sorrow of the saints; of all troubles and afflictions, inward or outward, and of death itself; and also of the kingdom of Christ, in its present form and manner of administration: the kingdom or church of Christ will not consist then of nominal and real Christians, of foolish and wise virgins, hypocrites and saints, but only of the latter; nor will it be governed by such laws and ordinances as now; nor will these be in the hands of such officers, as pastors and teachers, as at present, who are appointed to explain, enforce, and execute them: and this end of all things at the coming of Christ, will be

when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; not the kingdom of nature, which he has as the Son of God, as God equal with the Father, in right of nature, and upon the foot of creation, all being made by him; and which kingdom reaches to all creatures, angels, and men; this he did not receive from his Father, nor is he in it subordinate to him, but rules and works conjunctly with him in it; nor is he accountable to him in the administration of it; nor will he ever deliver it up to him: nor the kingdom of glory, which was prepared for the saints from the foundation of the world, is freely given to them by their Father, which they are called unto, and have a meetness for it, and a right unto it; this Christ has in his hands for them, and will not deliver it up to his Father, but introduce the heirs of it into it, quickly upon his coming; but the mediatorial kingdom is here meant, the kingdom of saints, over which Christ is appointed and set as King; even the whole church and general assembly of the firstborn, written in heaven. These were all given to Christ, put into his hands, and made his care and charge by his Father; and he undertook to preserve, protect, and save them; and had, as Mediator, all power in heaven and in earth, and everything subservient to support his kingdom and interest as such, given him; and he has been from the beginning of the world ruling in the midst of his enemies, subduing the people under him, and causing his people in the day of his power to be willing to serve him; writing his laws in their hearts, putting his Spirit within them, to cause them to walk in his statutes and keep his judgments; saving them out of the hands of their enemies, protecting and keeping them in safety, and providing every good thing for them; and continually delivering one or another of them from the power of darkness, and translating them into his own kingdom; and now having completed the number of them, in whose hearts he has reigned by his Spirit and grace, he will deliver them up to the Father from whom he received them; even everyone of them; all the children he gave unto him, and all of them; their bodies as well as their souls being now raised from the dead, as it was his Father's declared will they should be, when he gave them to him; and they will be delivered up and presented by him to his Father, perfectly holy, entirely faultless, and without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: and now this does not suppose that he will then cease to reign over his church and people; for, as the Father is the everlasting King, and reigned in and over the church, whilst this kingdom was in the hands of Christ, so Christ will continue to reign over it, when he shall have delivered it to the Father; he will no more cease to reign then, than the Father does, during the present administration of the government of the church; Christ will then be so far from ceasing to reign, that he will reign more visibly and gloriously than ever, though in a different manner to what he does now; now he rules over his people in the midst of his enemies, but then he will rule in the midst of his saints; now he reigns in their hearts by his Spirit, and through the use of the word and ordinances, but then he will reign in person among them, displaying the glory of his majesty, without the use of such means, signs, and symbols. Nor does this imply any inferiority in Christ, as God, to the Father; since this is to be understood of him as Mediator, who as such is the Father's servant, and a righteous and faithful one he is, who will give a good account of the persons committed to his care and government, and of his administration; and in which sense it will be allowed the Father is greater than he; but this no way militates against his proper deity, and equality with the Father. The Ethiopic version, contrary to all copies and other versions, reads, "when God the Father shall have delivered up his own kingdom". The Jews {h} speak of

"ten kings that have ruled, from one end of the world to another; the first King is the holy and blessed God, the second Nimrod, the third Joseph, the fourth Solomon, the fifth Ahab, the sixth Nebuchadnezzar, the seventh Cyrus, the eighth Alexander the Macedonian, the ninth will be the King Messiah, according to **Da 2:35** and of the tenth King they say, "then shall the kingdom return to its author"; or to him that was the first King, and he shall be the last; as is said, Isa 44:6."

and this will be,

when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power; which since it is expressed in such universal terms, may very well be thought to reach to, and include all sort of rule, authority, and power whatever; when this time and state of things take place, all civil rule, authority, and power, will cease; even that which is now of God, and to which we are to be subject for the Lord's sake, and for conscience sake; and which is now encouraged and supported by Christ, by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice; this will be pulled down and utterly destroyed by him, the stone cast out of the mountain without hands; when the kingdom and the greatness of it will be given to him and to his saints; when the kings and princes of the earth will be no more, have no more rule and authority among men, but be upon a level with the meanest peasants, and shall be brought to the tribunal of Christ, and be judged by him: then also will all ecclesiastical rule, authority, and power be laid aside; there will be no more apostles, prophets, evangelists, nor bishops, elders, pastors, and teachers; who are now set over the churches in the Lord, to rule them according to the laws of Christ, by ministering the word faithfully, and administering the ordinances truly; and to whom when they rule well, subjection and honour are due; but all this will be no more, when the end comes, and the kingdom is delivered to the Father: nor will there be any more domestic, or family rule and government, as of the husband over the wife, the parent over the child, or the master over the servant; all will be upon an equal foot: nor any angelical authority and power, which angels may now exercise under God, over kingdoms, provinces, states, or particular persons: and especially all diabolical rule, authority, and power will be abolished, which Satan has usurped, or has been given him by men, as the god of this world; he, the prince of the world, was cast out through Christ's death, and by the preaching of the Gospel in the Gentile world; his principalities and powers were then spoiled and triumphed over; though he has still retained some sort and show of government, but then there will not be the least appearance of any; during the thousand years he will be cast into and shut up in the bottomless pit, and not suffered to go out and deceive the nations any more; and at the end thereof, though he will make one and his last onset, on the city of the saints, it will be fruitless, and he and all his shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and there lie in torment for ever and ever: not the persons of these several powers shall be destroyed, but they shall be divested of the power and authority which they now have, either by right or usurpation.

{h} Pirke Eliezer, c. 11.

1 Corinthians 15:25

Ver. 25. For he must reign,.... That is, Christ must reign; he is set as King over God's holy hill of Zion; he is King of saints; he is made and declared to be both Lord and Christ; he is exalted at the right hand of God as a Prince, where he sits and rules and reigns; and his sitting at God's right hand is here explained by his reigning, for reference is had to Ps 110:1 he must reign because it is the unalterable will, and unchangeable decree and purpose of God, that he should reign; and because he has promised it, and prophesied of it; and because the state and condition of his people require it, who otherwise could not be saved, nor dwell safely: and so he must and will,

till he hath put all enemies under his feet; and made them his footstool; meaning either all the elect of God, who in a state of nature are enemies in their minds, by wicked works, to himself and to his Father; whom he conquers by his grace, subdues their rebellious wills, of enemies makes them friends, brings them to his feet, and to a subjection to his sceptre, to his Gospel and ordinances; and he must reign till he has brought every elect soul into such an obedience to himself: or rather antichrist and his followers, and all wicked and ungodly men, with Satan and his angels; who will be destroyed with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming; and will be cast down by him into hell, and there be ever objects of his wrath and vengeance: and till all this is done he must reign; not that he shall cease to reign afterwards, but that he shall reign notwithstanding these enemies of his and his people, who would not have him to reign over them; and will reign until they are subdued or destroyed; and when they are entirely vanquished and overcome, who can doubt of his reigning then? or what, or who will there be to hinder it? The Alexandrian copy, and others, read, "his enemies"; and so do the Syriac and Ethiopic versions.

1 Corinthians 15:26

Ver. 26. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Not eternal death; for though that is abolished by Christ with respect to his own people, who shall never be hurt by it, and over whom it shall have no power; yet the wicked will always be subject to it, and under the dominion of it: but a corporeal one is here meant; which is an enemy, the fruit, effect, and wages of sin; the penalty and curse of the law; is contrary to human nature, and destructive of the work of God's hands: it is, indeed, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, become the friend of his people; it is disarmed of its sting, and ceases to be a penal evil; it is the saints' passage to glory, what frees them from the troubles of this world, and is their way to the joys of another; but yet in itself is formidable to nature, and disagreeable to it: and it is the last enemy; it is so both in its rise and duration; it appeared as an enemy last; Satan was the first enemy of mankind, who attacked, tempted, and ruined the first parents of human nature, and all their posterity in them; and by this means, sin, the next enemy, came into the world of men; and, last of all, death, with its numerous train of calamities, either going before, attending, or following of it: and as it was the last enemy that came into the world, it is the last that will go out of it; for when the saints are rid of Satan, and clear of sin, they will remain in the grave under the power of a corporeal death till the resurrection, and then that will be "destroyed": for the saints will be raised to an immortal life, never to die more, and to an enjoyment of everlasting life, in the utmost glory and happiness; and though the wicked when they rise, they will rise to damnation, to shame and contempt, yet their worm will never die, nor their fire be quenched; they will always live, though in torment, there will be no more corporeal death, neither among the righteous nor the wicked; it will be utterly abolished: and thus the apostle, though he seems to digress from his subject awhile, by relating the several things which will either immediately or quickly follow the second coming of Christ; yet at the same time has it in view, and proves the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which must needs be, or death cannot be said to be destroyed, and by degrees returns to his subject again.

1 Corinthians 15:27

Ver. 27. For he hath put all things under his feet,.... This is a reason proving that all enemies, and death itself, shall be put under the feet of Christ, and is taken out of **Ps 8:6** which is spoken of one that is styled man, and the son of man; and is to be understood not of Adam in a state of innocence; for the word there used signifies a frail mortal man, which he then was not, nor could he be called the son of man; and though the earth was subdued and subject to him, and he had dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowls of the air, and every living thing that moveth on the earth, yet all creatures were not subject to him in this large sense, in which it is here and elsewhere explained by the apostle; and much less of man in his fallen state, who instead of having all things under his feet, is become like the beasts that perish; many of them: are unsubdued to him, and he is even in fear of them, and he himself is subject to corruption and vanity: but of the man Christ Jesus, who took and bore all the sinless infirmities of human nature; is often called the son of man; of whom God was mindful, and whom lie visited in his state of humiliation, at the time of his death, resurrection, and exaltation; who was made through sufferings of death a little lower, or a little while lower than the angels, but now crowned with glory and honour; in whose days God ordained strength and praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, to the confusion of his enemies; and has put all things under his feet, which may elude all things animate and inanimate, the whole creation and universe of things, the world and its fulness, the earth and all that is therein, the beasts of the forest, and the cattle of a thousand hills; he is heir of the world, and has a right to it, and to dispose of it, not merely as the Creator, but as Mediator; it is put in subjection to him to make use of, and what is in it to subserve his mediatorial kingdom and his glory; when his ends are answered by it, the earth and all that is therein shall be burnt up, and a new earth arise out of it, in which Christ and his people will dwell: the air and all that is therein are under him; the fowls of it are at his dispose; he it was that rained feathered fowls as the sand of the sea, about the camp of the Israelites in the wilderness, and commanded the ravens to feed Elijah in distress; and who holds the winds in his fist, lets them loose, calls them in, and commands them at pleasure; as he also does the sea, and the boisterous waves of it, and has dominion over the fishes in it; one of those supplied him with money, to pay his tribute; and multitudes of them, more than once, were gathered together, and taken up by his order and direction; and at the last day, the sea at his command will give up the dead that are in it; yea, this may extend to all rational creatures, angels and men, friends or foes: good angels, principalities and powers, are subject to him, as appears by their attendance on him: at his incarnation, ascension, and second coming; by their ministration to him in the wilderness, and in the garden; by their employment under him, for the good of the heirs of salvation; by their dependence on him, as their Creator and head, and by their adoration of him as their Lord and God. Evil angels, the devils, are also put under his feet, as is evident from his overcoming Satan, and baffling all his temptations; by his dispossessing the devils out of the bodies of men, and giving his disciples also power over them; by his spoiling them at death, and triumphing over them in his ascension; by delivering his people out of their hands, and power, in conversion; and by his binding of Satan during the thousand years, and by casting him and his angels into everlasting fire prepared for them. Elect men are made subject to him, by the power of his grace upon them; and yet their subjection to him, to his Gospel ordinances, and the sceptre of his kingdom; is voluntary and from their hearts; it proceeds from a principle of love to him; and is universal, being a regard unto, and a compliance with all his precepts; and evil men are also under his dominion and control; he rules them with a rod of iron; he disappoints their counsels, restrains their wrath, overrules their evil designs and actions against his people for good; and will one day gather them all before him, pass the righteous sentence on them, and send them into everlasting punishment. Moreover, this may reach to everything that is for the glory of Christ as Mediator, and for the good of his church, and to every enemy of his or theirs, as the world, sin, Satan, and the last enemy, death; to prove the subjection of all which to Christ, this testimony is produced: and respects Christ as Mediator, and the Father's delivering all things into his hands, and giving him all power in heaven and in earth, and rule over all creatures and things;

but when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him; that is, when David, or the Holy Spirit by him, said the above words, in **Ps 8:6** nothing is more clear and evident, than that God the Father, who made all things subject to Christ as Mediator, is himself not subjected to him; since his power as such must be greater than his: this exception is made to secure the government, power, and honour of the Father; for though he has made his firstborn higher than the kings of the earth, yet not higher than himself; and though he has set him his King over his holy hill of Zion, yet not over himself; and though it is his will that all men should honour the Son, as they honour the Father, yet not above him, or more than he; nor has he quitted the government, either in the world or in the church, by subjecting all things to Christ: and this exception is also made to confirm the universal power and empire of Christ, for an exception to a general rule does but the more establish it; and since the Father is only excepted, it is a clear case, that he has left nothing that is not put under him;

see **Heb 2:8** but it must be observed, that though the Holy Spirit is not mentioned, yet he is equally excepted; since he is the one God with the Father, and was jointly concerned in the mission, unction, and installation of Christ, as Mediator; nor can he be reckoned among the all things put in subjection to Christ, for they regard only creatures, and many of these enemies, with neither of which the Spirit of God can be numbered; and though the gifts and graces of the Spirit are put into Christ's hands, and are at his dispose, yet the person of the Spirit can never be thought to be put under his feet.

1 Corinthians 15:28

Ver. 28. And when all things shall be subdued unto him,.... For all things as yet are not put under him in fact; though in right God the Father has given to him an authoritative power over all things, and a right to dispose of them at his pleasure; but all things are not actually and in their full extent subject to him, yet they will be when the last enemy is destroyed: and

then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him; which must be interpreted and understood with great care and caution; not in the Sabellian sense, of refunding of the characters of the Son, and so of the Father unto God; when they suppose these characters, which they imagine to be merely nominal, bare names, will be no more, and God shall be all; but as the Father will always remain a father, so the Son will remain a son; for, as the Son of the Highest, he will reign over his people for ever, and he the Son, as a priest, is consecrated for ever, more: nor in the Eutychian sense, of the change of the human mature into the divine, in which they fancy it will be swallowed up, and God will be all; but Christ will always continue as a man; he went up to heaven as such, and he will return as a man, and be visible to all in the human nature, and in that be the object of the wonderful vision of the saints to all eternity: nor in the Arian sense, according to the divine nature, as if he was in that inferior to the Father, when he is equal with him, has all the perfections he has, and the whole fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him; it is much better and safer to understand it as it commonly is of him, as man; though in this sense, he was always subject to his Father, ever since he was incarnate, whereas this seems to respect something peculiar at this time. Others therefore think, that the church, the mystical body of Christ, is here meant, which in all its members, and these both in soul and body, will be presented and delivered up to God; but the words are spoken of him under whom all things are put, which is not true of the church; and though that is sometimes called Christ, yet never the Son; and besides, the church has been always subject to God, though indeed, it will not be in all its members, and in every respect subject until this time: it is best, therefore to understand it of the Son's giving up the account of his mediatorial kingdom and concerns to his Father; when it will appear that he has in the whole of his conduct and administration been subject to him; that he has in all things acted in his name, done all by his power, and to his honour and glory; and now having accomplished all he undertook and was intrusted with, gives in his account, delivers up his charge, and resigns his office; all which will be plain proofs of his subjection: when I say he will resign or lay aside his office as Mediator, my meaning is not that he will cease to be God-man and Mediator; but that he will cease to administer that office as under God, in the manner he now does: he will be the prophet of the church, but he will not teach by his Spirit, and word, and ordinances as now, but will himself be the immediate light of the saints, he will be a priest for ever, the virtue of his sacrifice and intercession will always remain, but he will not plead and intercede as he now does; he will also reign for ever over and among his saints, but his kingdom will not be a vicarious one, or administered as it now is; nor be only in his hands as Mediator, but with God, Father, Son, and Spirit:

that God may be all in all; for by God is not meant the Father personally, but God essentially considered, Father, Son, and Spirit, who are the one true and living God; to whom all the saints will have immediate access, in whose presence they will be, and with whom they shall have uninterrupted fellowship, without the use of such mediums as they now enjoy; all the three divine Persons will have equal power and government in and over all the saints; they will sit upon one and the same throne; there will be no more acting by a delegated power, or a derived authority: God will be all things to all his saints, immediately without the use of means; he will be that to their bodies as meat and clothes are, without the use of them; and all light, glory, and happiness to their souls, without the use of ordinances, or any means; he will then be all perfection and bliss, to all the elect, and in them all, which he now is not; some are dead in trespasses and sins, and under the power of Satan; the number of them in conversion is not yet completed; and, of those that are called many are in a state of imperfection, and have flesh as well as spirit in them; and of those who are fallen asleep in Christ, though their separate spirits are happy with him, yet their bodies lie in the grave, and under the power of corruption and death; but then all being called by grace, and all being raised, and glorified in soul and body, God will be all in all: this phrase expresses both the perfect government of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, over the saints to all eternity, and their perfect happiness in soul and body, the glory of all which will be ascribed to God; and it will be then seen that all that the Father has done in election, in the council and covenant of peace, were all to the glory of his grace; and that all that the Son has done in the salvation of his people, is all to the glory of the divine perfections: and that all that the Spirit of God has wrought in the saints, and all that they have done under his grace and influence, are all to the praise and glory of God, which will in the most perfect manner be given to the eternal Three in One. The Jews have some expressions somewhat like this, as when they say {i} of God,

"things future, and things that are past, are together with thee; what is from everlasting and to everlasting, or from the beginning of the world to the end of it, these are "all" of them in thee, and thou art "in" them "all"."

So lk, "all", is with the Cabalistic doctors {k}, the name of the Lord. And he is so called because all things are in him; "Jovis omnia plena".

{i} R. Judah in Shir Hajichud, fol. 341. 1. apud Seder Tephillot, Ed Basil. {k} Lex. Cabalist. p. 474, 475, 652. Shaare Orah, fol. 6. 1.

1 Corinthians 15:29

Ver. 29. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead,.... The apostle here returns to his subject, and makes use of new arguments to prove the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and reasons for it from the baptism of some persons; but what is his sense, is not easy to be understood, or what rite and custom, or thing, or action he refers to; which must, be either Jewish baptism, or Christian baptism literally taken, or baptism in a figurative and metaphorical sense. Some think that he refers to some one or other of the divers baptisms of the Jews; see **Heb 9:10** and particularly to the purification of such who had touched a dead body, which was done both by the ashes of the red heifer burnt, and by bathing himself in water; and which, the Jews say {l}, intimated Mytmh
tyyxtl, "the resurrection of the dead": wherefore such a right was needless, if there is no resurrection; to strengthen this sense, a passage in Ecclesiasticus 34:25 is produced, baptizomenov apo nekrou, "he that washeth himself after the touching of a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing?" but the phrase there used is different; it is not said, he that baptizeth or washeth himself for the dead, but from the dead, to cleanse himself from pollution received by the touch of a dead body: it is also observed, that the Jews, as well as other nations, have used various rites and ceremonies about their dead, and among the rest, the washing of dead bodies before interment; see **Ac 9:37** and

this by some is thought to be what is here referred to; and the reasoning is, if there is no resurrection of the dead, why all this care of a dead body? why this washing of it? it may as well be put into the earth as it is, since it will rise no more; but how this can be called a baptism for the dead, I see not: rather therefore Christian baptism, or the ordinance of water baptism is here respected; and with regard to this, interpreters go different ways: some think the apostle has in view a custom of some, who when their friends died without baptism, used to be baptized in their room; this is said to be practised by the Marcionites in Tertullian's time, and by the Corinthians in the times of the Apostle John; but it does not appear to have been in use in the times of the Apostle Paul; and besides, if it had been, as it was a vain and superstitious one, he would never have mentioned it without a censure, and much less have argued from it; nor would his argument be of any weight, since it might be retorted, that whereas such persons were mistaken in using such a practice, they might be also in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead: others are of opinion that such persons are intended, called Clinics, who deferred their baptism till they came upon their death beds, and then had it administered to them; but as this practice was not in being in the apostle's time, and was far from being a laudable one; and though the persons to whom it was administered were upon the point of death, and nearer the dead than the living, and were as good as dead, and might be intended by them, for their advantage, when dead and not living; yet it must be a great force and strain on words and things, to reckon this a being baptized for the dead: others would have the words rendered, "over the dead"; and suppose that reference is had to the Christians that had their "baptisteries" in their places of burial, and by being baptized here, testified their faith and hope of the resurrection of the dead; but this was rather a being baptized among the dead, than over them, or for them; and moreover it is not certain, that they did make use of such places to baptize in; to which may be added, that the primitive Christians had not so early burying grounds of their own: others would have the meaning to be, that they were baptized for their dead works, their sins, to wash them away; but this baptism does not of itself, and no otherwise than by leading the faith of persons to the blood of Christ, which alone cleanses from sin, original and actual; nor is this appropriate to the apostle's argument. Others imagine, that he intends such as were baptized, and added to the church, and so filled up the places of them that were dead; but the reason from hence proving the resurrection of the dead is not very obvious: those seem to be nearer the truth of the matter, who suppose that the apostle has respect to the original practice of making a confession of faith before baptism, and among the rest of the articles of it, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, upon the belief of which being baptized, they might be said to be baptized for the dead; that is, for, or upon, or in the faith and profession of the resurrection of the dead, and therefore must either hold this doctrine, or renounce their baptism administered upon it; to which may be added another sense of the words, which is, that baptism performed by immersion, as it was universally in those early times, was a lively emblem and representation of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and also both of the spiritual and corporeal resurrection of the saints. Now if there is no resurrection, why is such a symbol used? it is useless and insignificant; I see nothing of moment to be objected to these two last senses, which may be easily put together, but this; that the apostle seems to point out something that was done or endured by some Christians only; whereas baptism, upon a profession of faith in Christ, and the resurrection from the dead, and performed by immersion, as an emblem of it, was common to all; and therefore he would rather have said, what shall we do, or we all do, who are baptized for the dead? I am therefore rather inclined to think that baptism is used here in a figurative and metaphorical sense, for afflictions, sufferings, and martyrdom, as in Mt 20:22 and it was for the belief, profession, and preaching of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, both of Christ and of the saints, that the apostles and followers of Christ endured so much as they did; the first instance of persecution after our Lord's ascension was on this account. The Apostles Peter and John, were laid hold on and put in prison for preaching this doctrine; the reproach and insult the Apostle Paul met with at Athens were by reason of it; and it was for this that he was called in question and accused of the Jews; nor was there anyone doctrine of Christianity more hateful and contemptible among the Heathens than this was. Now the apostle's argument stands thus, what is, or will become of those persons who have been as it were baptized or overwhelmed in afflictions and sufferings, who have endured so many and such great injuries and indignities, and have even lost their lives for asserting this doctrine,

if the dead rise not at all? how sadly mistaken must such have been!

why are they then baptized for the dead? how imprudently have they acted! and what a weak and foolish part do they also act, who continue to follow them! in what a silly manner do they expose themselves to danger, and throw away their lives, if this doctrine is not true! which sense is confirmed by what follows: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, "for them", and so the Vulgate Latin version; and the Ethiopic in both clauses reads, "why do they baptize?"

{l} R. Bechai & Zohar apud Lightfoot in loc.

1 Corinthians 15:30

Ver. 30. And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?] Not only they that have suffered martyrdom for the faith of Christ, and for this article of it, have acted very injudiciously and indiscreetly; but we, also, who are on the spot, whether ministers or private Christians, must be highly blameworthy, who continually expose ourselves to dangers, and are for Christ's sake killed all the day long, are every moment liable to innumerable injuries, tortures and death; who in his senses would act such a part, if there is no resurrection of the dead? such, as they must be of all men the most miserable, so of all men the most stupid.

1 Corinthians 15:31

Ver. 31. I protest by your rejoicing,.... Some copies read, "our rejoicing"; and so the Ethiopic version, which seems most natural and easy; since it follows,

which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord; who in him could rejoice and glory in afflictions and sufferings, which he endured as a preacher of the Gospel for his sake; and which being certain and evident, and what might be depended upon, he makes a protestation by it, saying,

I die daily; which is to be understood, not in a spiritual sense of dying unto sin; he was dead unto sin, as to its damning power, through the death of Christ, and as to its governing power, through the Spirit and grace of Christ, but still it was living and dwelling in him; but in a corporeal sense: he instances in himself in particular, who was one that was in jeopardy or danger of his life every hour; he always bore in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and was continually delivered to death for Jesus' sake; death was always working in him, he expected it every day, and was ready for it; he did not count his life dear unto himself, but was very willing to lay it down for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; which he would never have done, if he had not good reason to believe the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:32

Ver. 32. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus,.... This is one of the particulars of the jeopardy and danger of life he had been in: some understand this in a figurative sense, and think that by "beasts" are meant

Satan, the roaring lion, and his principalities and powers; or men of savage dispositions, persecuting principles, and cruel practices; as Herod is called a fox, by Christ, and Nero a lion, by the apostle; and suppose his fighting with them at Ephesus designs his disputations with the hardened and unbelieving Jews, his concern with exorcists, the seven sons of Sceva, and the troubles he met with through Demetrius the silversmith, and others of the same craft; the reason of such an interpretation is, because Luke makes no mention of anything of this kind, that befell the apostle in his history of the Acts of the Apostles: but to this it may be replied, that Luke does not relate everything that befell him and the rest; and his omission of this is no sufficient argument against it; besides, a literal sense not to be departed from, unless there is a necessity for it; and especially when it is suitable to the context, and to the thread and reasoning of the discourse, as it is certainly here; the literal sense best agrees with the apostle's argument. There were two sorts of usages among the Romans in their theatres; sometimes they cast men naked to the wild beasts, to be devoured by them, as wicked servants, deadly enemies, and the vilest of men {m}; and so the Syriac version renders the words here, "if as among men, atwyxl
tydtva, "I am cast to the beasts": and seems to represent it as a supposed case, and not as matter of fact, in which the difficulty about Luke's omission is removed, and the argument in a literal sense is just and strong: sometimes they put men armed into the theatre to fight with beasts {n}, and if they could conquer them and save themselves it was well, if not, they fell a prey to them; it is this last custom that is here referred to: and if regard is had to what befell thee apostle at Ephesus, when Demetrius and his craftsmen made the uproar mentioned in Ac 19:21 this could not be in reality, but only in the purpose and design of men; and certain it is, that though he was not then had to the theatre, yet Demetrius and his men intended to have hurried him there, as they did Gaius and Aristarchus his companions; and he himself was desirous of going thither, had he not been prevented by the disciples, and by the Asiarchs his friends, who had the command of the theatre where these practices were used; and then the sense is this, if after the manner of men, or in the intention and design of men, and as much as in them lay, "I have fought with beasts at Ephesus"; though if this epistle was written, as it is said to be, before that commotion by Demetrius, no respect can be had to that; but rather to something in fact before, at the same place, when the apostle did actually fight with beasts, and was wonderfully and providentially preserved; and may he what he refers to, in **2Co 1:8** when he despaired of life, had the sentence of death in himself, and yet was delivered; and then his sense is, if "after the manner of brutish men", the Romans, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus": which I was obliged to do, or deny the Gospel preached;

what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? instead of its being a glorious action, it was a fool hardy one; and if he had died in it, what profit could he have had by it, if he rose not again; or if there is no resurrection of the dead? instead of incurring such dangers, and running such risks, it would be more eligible to sit down and say with the Epicureans,

let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die; which words seem to be taken out of Isa 22:13 and are used in favour of the doctrine of the resurrection, showing that the denial of it opens a door to all manner of licentiousness; and are not spoken as allowing or approving of such a conduct; nor as his own words, but as representing a libertine, and pointing out what such an one would say, and might justly infer from such a tenet, that there is no resurrection of the dead.

{m} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 5. Tertul. Apolog. c. 40. & de Spectaculis, c. 19. {n} Tertul. de Spectaculis, c. 21. & 23. Cicero in Vatinium Orat. 32.

1 Corinthians 15:33

Ver. 33. Be not deceived,.... By such as deny the doctrine of the resurrection, and by their reasonings about it; or by such libertines who go into the denial of it, and argue from thence in favour of their licentious course of life:

evil communications corrupt good manners. This is a sentence taken out of Menander, an Heathen poet, showing how dangerous is the conversation of evil men, and what an influence bad principles communicated and imbibed, have on the lives and practices of men. This the apostle cites not out of ostentation, or to show his reading, learning, and acquaintance with such sort of writers; but partly to observe, that this was a truth obvious by the light of nature, and partly because such a testimony might be more regarded by the Corinthians, who might be fond of such authors, and what was said by them; just as when he was at Athens among the philosophers there, he cites a passage out of Aratus, Ac 17:28 as he does another out of Epimenides concerning the Cretians, **Tit 1:12**.

1 Corinthians 15:34

Ver. 34. Awake to righteousness, and sin not,.... The apostle represents the

Corinthians as inebriated with bad principles and notions, and as fallen asleep, and as greatly remiss, and declined in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; and therefore calls upon them to awake out of sleep, to watch and be sober, and attend to "righteousness"; to the justice of God, which requires the resurrection of the dead, and makes it necessary that men may receive the things done in the body, whether good or evil; for as it is a righteous thing with God to render tribulation to them that sin against him, and trouble his people; so it is but just, that those bodies which Christ has purchased with his blood, who have served him, and suffered for his sake, should be raised again, that, together with their souls, they may enjoy the happiness provided for them; and to the righteousness of Christ, to look unto it, lay hold on it, exercise faith upon it, desiring to be found in it living and dying; and to works of righteousness, to a holy life and conversation, a living soberly, righteously and godly; and not spend their time, and give up themselves to vain speculations and notions; which were so far from being edifying, that they were very detrimental to themselves and others. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "awake, ye righteous": for righteous persons, good men, the wise as well as foolish virgins, sometimes fall asleep, and need awaking out of it; which is done by one providence or another, or by the ministry of the word, and whenever to purpose, by the powerful and efficacious grace of God: the words may be rendered, "awake righteously"; or as the Syriac version reads, "awake your hearts righteously"; and as the Arabic, "with a due awaking"; that is, as it becomes you, and as it is just, right, and proper you should: "and sin not"; not that they could be, or that it could be thought they might be without sin in them, or without sin being done by them; but that they ought not to live a sinful course of life, which the denial of the resurrection led unto, or indulged in; or not sin by denying that doctrine, and giving themselves up to a vicious life in consequence of it:

for some have not the knowledge of God; are like the Gentiles that are without God, and know him not; they know not, or, at least, do not own the truth of God in his word, declaring and testifying the doctrine of the resurrection; they err in that point, not knowing the Scriptures, the sense of them, and this truth contained in them; nor the power or God in raising the dead, nor the justice of God, which makes it necessary that the dead should be raised:

I speak this to your shame; that there should be such ignorant persons in their community; that there were any of such bad principles as to deny the resurrection of the dead, and of such dissolute lives as to give up themselves to sensual lusts and pleasures: that such were continued in the church, kept company with, indulged and caressed; and that there was so great a corruption in doctrine, discipline, and conversation, among them.

1 Corinthians 15:35

Ver. 35. But some man will say,.... Or "some one of you", as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; for there were some among them members of this church, that denied the resurrection of the dead, 1Co 15:12 a weak believer indeed may be designed, one of the babes in Christ in this church, that could not digest such strong meat, but had some doubt and difficulties in his mind about this point, though he did not absolutely deny it: but by the manner in which the objections and queries are put, and the sharpness in which the apostle answers them, it looks rather that an infidel as to this doctrine is intended, one of those Epicureans, who said, 1Co 15:32 "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die"; or some Heathen philosopher, a mere natural man, that rejected this doctrine because not agreeable to his carnal reason, and laughed at it as monstrous and ridiculous:

how are the dead raised up? This query is put, not as though the person merely hesitated, and was in some suspense about this matter, or with a desire to be informed; but as denying the thing, and as objecting to it as a thing impossible, and impracticable; suggesting it could not be, it was a thing incredible that those dead bodies which have been laid in the earth for so many hundred, and some, thousands of years, and have been long ago reduced to dust, and this dust has undergone a thousand forms; that such whose bodies have been burnt to ashes, or destroyed by wild beasts, and digested by them, should ever be raised again. Such a doctrine must be past all belief:

and with what body do they come? out of their graves, as you say, and appear on the earth at the last day: will they come forth with the same bodies, or with other? with earthly or heavenly ones? mortal or immortal? with bodies different from one another, and from what they now are?

1 Corinthians 15:36

Ver. 36. Thou fool,.... Not transgressing the law of Christ, which makes him that calls his brother a fool in danger of hell fire; for the apostle said not this in anger, and from a malevolent disposition, as that rule supposes, but out of zeal for truth, and to reprove the stupidity and folly of such a bold objector; in opposing the veracity and power of God, in setting up his reason above divine revelation, and in not attending even to natural philosophy itself; in which professing to be wise he might be justly called a fool, and therefore sends him to the husbandman to learn of him how to answer his own queries:

that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and which is more especially true of a grain of wheat: our Lord observes the same, See Gill on "Joh 12:24", and designs by the simile his own death, and resurrection, and the fruit following thereon. This seed being cast into the earth corrupts, rots, and dies, and then is quickened, and rises up in stalk, blade, and ear. Which shows that the dissolution and corruption of the body by death is so far from being an objection to its resurrection, that it is necessary to it, even as the dying and putrifying of the seed, or grain of wheat, is necessary to its quickening and rising up again; and that if God is able to quicken a seed or grain that is rotten and entirely dead, and cause it to rise up in verdure and with much fruit, as he does every year in millions of instances, why should it be thought incredible that God should quicken dead bodies, when the one is as much an instance of his power as the other? The Claromontane exemplar reads, "except it die first"; and so the Vulgate Latin version.

1 Corinthians 15:37

Ver. 37. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be,.... The sower, for instance, does not take a stalk of wheat in its blade, and ear, and full corn in the ear, encompassed with the husk, and sow it in the earth, which is the body or form in which it appears when it rises up again, and is come to its full growth:

but bare grain (or naked grain) it may chance of wheat, or some other grain; wheat, or any other grain, is cast into the earth naked, beat out of the husk; and that selfsame grain rises up again, clothed with additional verdure, beauty, and fruitfulness; and so the body which comes out of its mother's womb naked, and returns naked again, **Job 1:21** to which the apostle seems to allude, will rise again the same body, though with additional glories and excellencies; so that if it should be asked, how is it possible that a dead body can be raised up again? the possibility of it may be seen, in the quickening and raising up of a grain of wheat, that first rots and dies; and if it be inquired with what body the dead will be raised, it may in some measure be observed in this instance, that though it will be the same body, yet with different and excelling qualities: this simile seems to have been much in use among the Jews, to illustrate this doctrine, and we have some traces of it still in their writings {o}:

"Cleopatra the queen asked R. Meir, saying, I know that the dead shall live, for it is written, "they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth", Ps 72:16 but when they rise, shall they rise naked, or shall they rise in their clothes? to which he replied, much more than wheat: for as wheat is buried, hmwre, "naked", it comes forth, (or springs up,) with many clothings; and how much more the righteous, who are buried in their clothes?"

and again {p},

"says R. Eliezer, all the dead shall stand in the resurrection of the dead, and shall rise with their garments on; from whence do you learn this? from the seed of the earth, especially from wheat; for as wheat is buried "naked", and comes forth with many clothings, much more the righteous, who are buried in their clothes."

{o} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol, 90. 2. {p} Pirke Eliezer, c. 33.

1 Corinthians 15:38

Ver. 38. But God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased him,.... It is not the husbandman, nor the sun, nor the rain, that give the grain of wheat, or any other, its verdure and beauty, the form in which it springs up, its stalk, blade, and ear, but God by his own power, and of his sovereign will and pleasure; and he does not create this new form, but gives it; and does not barely give it, but gives the body to it: to the selfsame grain, and not another: so the resurrection of the dead is God's work; it is an instance of his power, and of his sovereign will; and is to his people a branch of that eternal life, which is his pure gift through Jesus Christ; all that glory in which the body will arise springs from his free grace, and is bestowed upon the selfsame body, which was carried about here, and laid in the grave: and to every

seed its own body; which is suitable and natural to it, according to its kind; see **Ge 1:11** as cummin to cummin, anise to anise, wheat to wheat, barley to barley, and not on the contrary; showing, that it is the same body that is raised that dies, though it is in a more glorious, and with more excellent qualities; which is manifest from express passages of Scripture; see Job 19:26 from the signification of the word resurrection, which is a raising up of that which is fallen and if the same body that falls by death is not raised, but another is given, it will not be a resurrection, but a creation: and also from the figurative phrases by which it is expressed, as here by the quickening of seed cast into the earth, and elsewhere by awaking out of sleep; now as it is the same seed that is sown that springs up again, and the same body that sleeps that awaked out of it, so it is the same body that is interred in the earth, and falls asleep by death, that will be quickened and awaked at the resurrection: and it is clear from the places from whence the dead will be raised, the repositories of them, as death and hell, or the grave, and the sea; for none but the same bodies that are laid in the grave, or cast into the sea, can be said to come forth out of them, or be delivered up; by them: and from the subject of the resurrection, the bodies of men, their vile and mortal bodies, which can be no other than their present ones; and from the end of the resurrection, which is that some may come to life, and others to damnation; and from the justice of God, which requires that the same bodies Christ has purchased, find who have served and suffered for him, should be glorified; and the same that have done evil against him, and abused themselves and his people, be punished: this might be argued from the translations of Enoch and Elijah in their bodies to heaven, in which they were on earth; and from the resurrection of the bodies of the saints at Christ's resurrection, and the change that will be on the bodies of living saints at the coming of Christ; for it is not reasonable to suppose, that some of the saints shall have their own bodies, and others none at all, or not the same they lived in here: this may be further confirmed, from the resurrection of Christ's body, which was the same he had before; it was not changed into a spirit, but consisted of flesh and bones, as it had done; and had on it the very print of the nails, and spear in his hands, feet, and side; and to this the bodies of the saints are to be fashioned: add to all this, if it is not a resurrection of the same body, but new ones are created, to which the soul will be united, it will not be a resurrection, but a transmigration of souls into other bodies; but as every seed has its own body, so will every soul have its own body, though greatly different as to its qualities, and much improved for the better, as in seed sown: and this is the sense of the ancient Jews {q},

"says R. Chijah, Mwqy hwhd apwg awhhd, "that that selfsame body that was shall rise", is clear from what is written, thy dead men shall live, Isa 26:19 and it is not written, shall be created; from whence it is evident that they shall not be created, but shall be quickened:"

and again {r},

"in the time to come, the holy blessed God will quicken the dead, and raise them Mrpem, "out of their own dust", that they may not be a building of dust, as they were at first, when they were created out of dust itself, a thing which is not stable, according to **Ge 2:7** and at that time they shall be raised out of the dust, out of that building, and shall stand in a stable building, that they may have stability, or duration."

So on those words, "I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal", De 32:39 they observe {s}, that

"as wounding and healing are dxab, "in one", (and the same body,) so death and life are dxab, "in one and" the same."

{q} Zohar in Exod. fol. 12. 3. {r} Midrash Hannealam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 81. 1. {s} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2.

1 Corinthians 15:39

Ver. 39. All flesh is not the same flesh,.... Or "equal", as the Syriac version renders it; though all flesh is flesh, as to the nature and substance of it; agrees in its original, being by generation; and is supported by food, and is alike frail and mortal; all flesh is grass, rises out of it, or is maintained by it, or withers like that, yet not of equal worth, value, and excellency: "but" there is "one" kind "of flesh of men"; which is superior to, and more excellent than any other; being animated by a rational soul, and is set in the first place; so we read of vya rvb, "the flesh of man", for mankind, Job 12:10 see Ex 30:32.

Another flesh of beasts; as sheep and oxen, and other beasts of the field;

another of fishes: which may be observed against the Papists, who distinguish between flesh and fish, as if there was no flesh of fishes; and on their fast days prohibit flesh, but allow the eating of fish; thus flesh is attributed to fishes, as here, in Le 11:11 upon which text Aben Ezra observes, lo, fish is called flesh; but as our doctors say, according to the custom of those times; and so it is by the Jews, who say {t},

"all flesh is forbidden to boil in milk, Mygd rvbm, "except the flesh of fishes", and locusts; and it is forbidden to set it on a table along with cheese, except "the flesh of fishes", and locusts:"

and another of birds; the fowls of the air. This is another similitude, illustrating the resurrection of the dead; and is not designed to point out the difference between the raised bodies of the righteous, and the wicked; as if the former were signified by the flesh of men, and the other by the flesh of beasts, fishes, and birds; nor among the wicked themselves, with whom there will be degrees of punishment; nor among the saints, as if the flesh of one should differ from that of another. The intent of this simile is only to show, that the resurrection of the dead will be in real flesh, in their own flesh, in the selfsame flesh, as to substance, with which they were clothed when on earth; but that it will, as to its qualities, be different from it, as one sort of flesh is now from another; and that if God can, as he does, make different sorts of flesh, and yet all for kind are flesh, there is no difficulty in conceiving, that God is able to raise the dead in their own flesh, and yet different from what it now is; being free from all weakness, frailty, corruption, and mortality.

{t} Misn. Cholin, c. 8. sect. 1.

1 Corinthians 15:40

Ver. 40. There are also celestial bodies,.... Or bodies in the heavens, as the sun, moon, and stars:

and bodies terrestrial; or bodies on earth, animate and inanimate, men, beasts, trees, minerals, &c.

But the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another: though both sorts are bodies, yet their qualities differ, and there is a greater glory in the one than in the other. This is another similitude, serving to help our ideas of this doctrine of the resurrection of the body; that though it is the same in substance, yet different in qualities; and does not design any difference between the bodies of good men and bad men, elect and reprobate; as if the one were intended by the celestial bodies, and the other by the terrestrial; and much less degrees of glory in the saints themselves, who, imagine them in as low a form as can be, can never be compared to terrestrial ones; but it shows the difference there will be between the raised bodies and the present ones; which will be as great as that which now is between celestial and terrestrial bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:41

Ver. 41. There is one glory of the sun,.... Which is the greater light, the fountain of light, and whose glory exceeds that of the other heavenly bodies:

and another glory of the moon; which is the lesser light, and receives its light from the sun, and consequently its glory is inferior:

and another glory of the stars; which though very bright and sparkling, and are innumerable, have a lesser glory, at least to our appearance, than the sun and moon: the Jews have a notion {u}, that

"all the stars and the orbs are endued with a soul, and with knowledge, and understanding; and that they live, and stand, and know him that said, and the world was; and everyone of them, "according to his greatness", wtlem yplw, "and according to his dignity", praise and glorify their Creator, as the angels; and as they know God, so they know themselves, and the angels that are above them; for the knowledge of the stars and the orbs is lesser than the knowledge of angels, and greater than the knowledge of men:"

for one star differeth from another star in glory; all which is to be understood, not as if the glory of the sun meant the glory of Christ, the sun of righteousness, who excels in glory, even in his human nature; and the glory of the moon, the glory of the church, who receives her's from Christ; and the glory of the stars; the glory of particular saints; and as if there will be, in the resurrection state, degrees of glory among them: for what peculiar glory can be thought to be upon the body of one, that is not upon another, when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father? and admitting there was any truth in this, it is not the truth of this text; the only design of which, as the above, is to show, that as not only celestial and terrestrial bodies differ from each other, but even heavenly ones, so at the resurrection, the bodies of the saints then will differ in glory from their present ones; though these are now the members of Christ, are presented to God an holy sacrifice, and are washed with pure water.

{u} Maimon. Iesode Hatorah, c. 3. sect. 11.

1 Corinthians 15:42

Ver. 42. So also is the resurrection of the dead,.... This will be the case and condition of risen bodies, they will be as different from what they now are, though they will be the same in substance, as a stalk of wheat in its blade and ear, and full corn in the ear, is from the naked grain, when cast into the earth; or as the flesh of men is from the flesh of beasts, fishes, and birds; or as celestial bodies from terrestrial ones; or as the glory of the sun differs from the glory of the moon and stars; or as one star differs from another star in glory; that this is the apostle's sense is clear from the induction of particulars following, by which he explains in clear terms what he before signified by similitudes:

it is sown in corruption; it should be observed, that the word sown, in this and the following verses, does not merely relate to the interment of the body, but also to its generation; and includes its state, condition, and character, during life; as well as points out what it is at death, and its sepulture in the earth: it is from first to last a corruptible body; it is born frail and mortal, and liable to corruption and death; it is corrupted with sin, and so a vile body; there is a world of iniquity in one of its members, the tongue, and what then must there be in all its parts? but besides this moral corruption, in which it is during the present state, it is liable to a natural one; from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, it may be covered with wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores; a right arm may be dried up and withered away, and a leg may corrupt and mortify, and so any other part; the whole is supported by corruptible things, by meat that perisheth; and which if it did not corrupt and perish, would not be nourishing; and as meats are for the belly, and the belly for meats, in a short time God will destroy both it and them; the whole frame and texture of the body will be dissolved by death, and be brought to worms, corruption, and dust; and in this case will lie in the grave till the resurrection morn:

it is raised in incorruption: the very same body that was sown, generated, lived, and died, shall be raised again, but different from what it was; it will be incorruptible; its parts will be no more subject to corruption; it will not be supported by corruptible things; it will be immortal, and never die more, and will be clear of all its moral corruption; it will no more be a vile body, but fashioned like to the holy and glorious body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:43

Ver. 43. It is sown in dishonour,.... Its original is dishonourable, it comes, as the Jews often say {w}, hhwro hpjm, "from a filthy drop"; its generated brought forth in a manner we are ashamed of; it is conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; it is unclean, and born of the flesh: and when born, is in such a condition, as is to the loathing of it; some of its members are less honourable; and so uncomely as always to need a covering; it is subject to various blemishes, defects, and imperfections, and few bodies are without one or another; and liable to many injuries and affronts, as the body of our Lord himself was, who gave his back to the smiters, his cheek to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not his face from shame and spitting; and in death, it is nauseous, filthy, and very dishonourable, so that the nearest relation and friend cannot take pleasure in it, but desires to bury it out of sight; and amidst the greatest funereal pomp and splendour, it is laid in the grave in dishonour, to be the companion of corruption and worms: but in the resurrection,

it is raised in glory; in perfect beauty and comeliness, without the least blemish, defect, or imperfection; nor will there be any part of it that will occasion shame; it will be metamorphosed, and fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ; it will shine as the sun, and be as the brightness of the firmament: and so the Jews understand the passage in Da 12:3 they say {x} that

"God will beautify the bodies of the righteous in time to come, as the body of the first man when he entered into the garden of Eden; and that the soul, whilst it is in its dignity, is sustained by the superior light, and is clothed with it; and when it enters into the body in time to come, it enters with the light; and then will the body shine as the brightness of the firmament, according to Da 12:3."

It is sown in weakness; it comes into the world in great weakness; what is weaker than the body of a new born babe? it cannot move, nor help itself in any respect; and how weak and defenceless is the body of man, when adult; as he is subject to various diseases and disorders, which weaken his strength in the way, and is surrounded with natural infirmities, arising from hunger, thirst, nakedness, labour, &c. so he is not armed, as many other creatures are, for defence and offence; nor can he resist and overcome many things which do him hurt, much less can he resist death, or retain his spirit then; and through weakness at last dies, and is devoid of all strength, and as such is laid in the grave, where there is no work that he can do: but

it is raised in power; it is raised by the power of God, and with great power in itself; being able to subsist without food, and of moving itself from place to place, with great agility; and capable of the highest services before God and the Lamb, without weariness; nor will it be ever more liable to weakness or death; death shall have no more power over it; nor shall it be encompassed or attended with any infirmity whatever.

{w} Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 1. {x} Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 1.

1 Corinthians 15:44

Ver. 44. It is sown a natural body,.... Or an animal one, being generated as animals are, and supported with food as they be, and die at last as they do: see **Ec 3:19**.

It is raised a spiritual body; not as to substance, but as to its quality; it will not be changed into a spirit; our Lord's risen body, to which ours will be conformed, was not a spirit, but, as before, consisted of flesh and bones: but the body will then be subject to the spirit and soul of man; it will be employed in spiritual service, for which it will be abundantly fitted and assisted by the Spirit of God; and it will be delighted with spiritual objects; it will be like the angels, those excellent spirits; it will live as spirits do, without natural helps and means, as meat, drink, clothes, sleep, and, as they, will never die:

there is a natural; or "animal body", such as the first man's was, and those are that descend from him by ordinary generation; and

there is a spiritual body; such as the body of Christ now is, and as will be the bodies of the risen saints; the phrase is Jewish, ynxwrh Pwgh, "the spiritual body" {y} and the flesh of the righteous, being Mynxwr Mrvb, "spiritual flesh" {z}, are to be met with in their writings.

{y} Nishmath Chayim. fol. 37. 1. {z} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 9. 4.

1 Corinthians 15:45

Ver. 45. And so it is written,.... In **Ge 2:7**

the first man Adam was made a living soul: in the Hebrew text it is, man, or Adam, became, or was made a living soul; that is, as the apostle says, "the first man Adam": he calls him, as the Jews {a} frequently do, Nwvarh Mda, "the first man"; he was the first man that was made, and the first parent of mankind, and the head and representative of all his posterity, and so the first in time, causality and dignity; whose name was Adam, so called by God in the day he was created, because he was formed hmdah Nm, "from the ground, or earth"; when God breathed life into the earthly mass, or lump; and being animated with a rational soul, it became an animal body, or a living creature; and so the apostle proves, from the first man that was upon earth, that there is a natural, or animal body; a body animated by a soul, and which was supported by eating and drinking, by sleep and rest; and was capable of dying, and should die, in case of sin; and which was the state of it in its first creation, whilst in innocence, and before the fall; and this is all he meant to prove by this Scripture; for what follows is not mentioned as therein written, or elsewhere, but as the apostle's own assertion:

the last Adam was made a quickening spirit: by "the last Adam" is meant Jesus Christ, called Adam, because he is really and truly a man, a partaker of the same flesh and blood as the rest of mankind; and because he is the antitype of the first man Adam, who was a figure of him that was to come; and therefore called Adam, for the same reason as he is called David and Solomon: he is said to be "the last", in distinction from the first Adam, with respect to him he stood, Nwrxa, last upon the earth, as in Job 19:25 to which passage some think the apostle here alludes; and because he appeared in the last days in the end of the world, and is the last that shall rise up as a common head and representative of the whole, or any part of mankind: now he is made "a quickening spirit"; which some understand of the Holy Spirit, which filled the human nature of Christ, raised him from the dead, and will quicken our mortal bodies at the last day; others of the divine nature of Christ, to which his flesh, or human nature, was united; and which gave life, rigour, and virtue, to all his actions and sufferings, as man; and by which he was quickened, when put to death in the flesh, and by which he will quicken others another day: though rather I think it is to be understood of his spiritual body, of his body, not as it was made of the virgin, for that was a natural, or an animal one; it was conceived and bred, and born as animal bodies are; it grew and increased, and was nourished with meat and drink, and sleep and rest; and was subject to infirmities, and to death itself, as our bodies be; but it is to be understood of it as raised from the dead, when it was made a spiritual body, for which reason it is called a "spirit": not that it was changed into a spirit, for it still remained flesh and blood; but because it was no more supported in an animal way; nor subject to those weaknesses that animal bodies are, but lives as spirits, or angels do; and a quickening one, not only because it has life itself, but because by virtue of the saints' union to it, as it subsists in the divine person of the Son of God, their bodies will be quickened at the last day, and made like unto it, spiritual bodies; also because he lives in his body as a spiritual one, they shall live in theirs as spiritual ones: and so the apostle shows, that there is a spiritual, as well as an animal body; that as the first man's body, even before the fall, was an animal or natural one; the last Adam's body upon his resurrection is a spiritual and life giving one, as the Syriac version renders it;

so the Cabalistic writers {b} speak of

"Adam; who is the holy and supreme, who rules over all, and gives spirit and life to all."

{a} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol 38. 2. & 100. 1. & alibi passim. & Mda Nwmdq, Cabala denud. par. 4. p. 195, &c. Vid. 2 Esdras iii. 21. {b} Zohar in Exod. fol. 59. 4.

1 Corinthians 15:46

Ver. 46. Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual,.... As the apostle before proves the distinction of a natural and spiritual body, and gives instances of both in the two principal men in the world, the first and the last; and points out the difference between them, the one being animated, and having life given unto it, the other animating, and giving life to others; proceeds to observe the order of these, how that one was before the other; the spiritual body, though the more perfect and most excellent, yet was not first in being:

but that which is natural; Adam's animal body was before Christ's spiritual body:

and afterwards that which is spiritual; yea, even Christ's animal, or natural body, was before his spiritual one; his body taken from the virgin, and formed in her womb, and in which he lived here on earth, was an animal body, as before observed; and upon his resurrection, it commenced a spiritual one; being the same in substance as the former, only different in qualities; and just so it is, and will be, with the bodies of the saints'; which is the apostle's design and view, in observing this order; the natural body is first, and then the spiritual; it is first a natural body, as generated and nourished, as weak and dying, and it is afterwards a spiritual one, when raised from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:47

Ver. 47. The first man is of the earth, earthy,.... He was formed out of the earth, **Ge 2:7** and the word there used signifies red earth. Josephus {c} observes, that the first man was called Adam, which in the Hebrew tongue signifies red, because he was made out of red earth; for such, adds he, is the true and virgin earth: Pausanias {d} makes mention of a clay, which is not the colour of earth, but like the sand of brooks and rivers; and gives a smell very near to that of the skin, or body of men; and which is said to be the remains of that clay, out of which all mankind was made: but be that as it will, Adam was certainly made out of the earth, and had his habitation and abode assigned him in the garden of Eden, and was made to cultivate and till it; his lordship and dominion, at most and best, only extended to the terraqueous globe, and the creatures in it; and having sinned, he was not only thrust out of the garden to till the ground out of which he was taken, but doomed to return to the dust from whence he came; and whose sin and fall had such an influence on him and his posterity, as to make their souls sensual and earthly, to mind, affect, and cleave unto earthly things:

the second man is the Lord from heaven; as Adam was the first man, Christ is the second man; and these two are spoken of, as it they were the only two men in the world; because as the former was the head and representative of all his natural posterity, so the latter is the head and representative of all his spiritual offspring: and he is "the Lord from heaven"; in distinction from the first man, who was of the earth, and whose lordship reached only to the earth; whereas Christ is Lord of all, not only Lord of lords below, but Lord of angels and saints above; the whole family in heaven and in earth is named of him; and he has all power in heaven and in earth, and a name above every name in this world, and that to come, and is indeed higher than the heavens: this is not to be understood of his human nature, or of his human body, as if that came down from heaven, and passed through the virgin, as some heretics of old said, as water through a pipe; for though it was conceived and formed in a miraculous manner, under the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost from on high, yet was formed out of the matter and substance of the virgin, and so was of the earth; and was indeed an earthly body, supported by earthly means, and at last returned to the earth, and was interred in it: but it is to be understood either of Christ as a divine person, as the Son of God, as Lord of all, coming down from heaven at his incarnation; not by local motion, or change of place, but by assumption of the human nature into union with him, the Lord from heaven; or rather of him as he shall descend from heaven, as the Lord and Judge of all at the last day, when he will come in his glorious, spiritual, and heavenly body; and raise the righteous dead, and fashion their bodies like his own; when what follows will have its full accomplishment. The Cabalistic doctors among the Jews often speak {e} of Nwyle Mda, "the superior man", and Nwtxt Mdaw, "the inferior man"; and in their Cabalistic table {f}, in the sixth "sephirah", or number, they place the man from above, the heavenly Adam; and, in one of their writings {g}, have these remarkable words, "anynt Mdaw hale Mda Nam, "who is the supreme man and the second man", but of whom it is said, Pr 30:4 "what is his name, and what is his son's name?" what is his name? this is the supreme man; what is his son's name? this is the inferior man; and both of them are intimated in that Scripture, **Ex 3:13** "and they shall say unto me, what is his name? what shall I say?""

Some copies, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; leave out the word "Lord", and add the word "heavenly", reading the clause thus, "the second man from heaven, heavenly".

{c} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 1. sect. 2. {d} Phocica, sive l. 10. p. 615. {e} Raziel, fol. 26. 1. & 31. 1. & 33. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 4. {f} In Cabala Denudata, par. 2. p. 9. {g} Zohar in Gen. fol. 39. 2.

1 Corinthians 15:48

Ver. 48. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy,.... As was Adam's body, so are the bodies of those that descend from him; they are houses of clay, earthly houses of this tabernacle, which rise out of the earth, are maintained by the things of it, and return to it again:

and as is the heavenly, such are, or will be

they also that are heavenly; as is the glorious and spiritual body of Christ, the Lord from heaven, as that now is in heaven, and will be when he descends from thence; so will be the bodies of them that are heavenly, that are heaven born souls now, are partakers of the heavenly calling, and whose conversation is in heaven; and who, in the resurrection morn, will have heavenly, spiritual, and glorious bodies, like unto Christ's: so Philo {h} the Jew on those words, "and man became a living soul", has this note;

"there are two kinds of men, for the one is "the heavenly man", and the other is "earthy"; the heavenly man is he, who is made after the image of God, incorruptible, and wholly devoid of earthy substance; the earthy is made of seminal matter, which is called the ground."

{h} Leg. Allegor. l. 1. p. 46.

1 Corinthians 15:49

Ver. 49. And as we have borne the image of the earthy,.... Which regards not so much the sinful image of the first man upon the soul, or the depravity of the powers and faculties of it, as his image of frailty and mortality on the body, having like him a body subject to infirmities and death:

we shall also bear the image of the heavenly; which likewise regards not so much the spiritual image of Christ stamped on the soul in regeneration, when Christ is formed in the heart, and the new man is created after his likeness, and which more and more appears, through every transforming view of him, and will be complete in glory, as the image and likeness of Christ upon the bodies of the saints in the resurrection, when they shall be fashioned like unto his: some copies, as the Alexandrian and others, read the words as an exhortation, let us bear the image, &c. as if the words were an improvement of the apostle's reasoning on this subject, engaging saints to be more concerned for, and seeking after a greater likeness to Christ in righteousness and true holiness; but the other reading and sense are best.

1 Corinthians 15:50

Ver. 50. Now this I say, brethren,.... Upon the whole, I assert this, and observe it to you, out of a truly Christian respect for you, as brethren in the Lord, that

flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God: this shows the necessity there is of a difference between the body that now is, and that which shall be, which the apostle has so largely insisted on, and so clearly proved and explained, in the preceding verses; because the body, as it now is, is not capable of possessing the heavenly glory; was it to be introduced into heaven, in the condition it is now, it would break in pieces, and crumble into dust; it would not be able to bear the glory of that state and place: by flesh and blood is meant, not human nature as to the substance of it, or as consisting of flesh and blood, for that can and does inherit the kingdom of God; witness the human nature, or body of Christ, the bodies of the saints that rose after his resurrection, and those of Enoch and Elijah, who were translated body and soul to heaven; so that this passage makes nothing for those that deny the resurrection of the same body, and plead for a new and an aerial one: but the human nature, or body, so and so qualified, is here meant; either as corrupted with sin, for without holiness and righteousness no man shall see the Lord, or enter into and possess the kingdom of heaven; or flesh and blood, or an human body, as it is now supported in this animal life, with meat and drink, &c. and as it is frail and mortal, and subject to death, in which sense the phrase is used in Scripture; see Mt 16:17 and often by the Jews; so Abraham is represented by them as saying {i},

"I am Mdw rvb, "flesh and blood", tomorrow I shall depart out of the world, or die:"

it would be endless to give the many instances that might be produced of this use of the phrase with them, and in which sense it is to be taken here: and the meaning is, that saints in their frail mortal bodies, such as they now are, are not capable of enjoying the heavenly glory; which is called "the kingdom", because of its riches, glory, grandeur, and magnificence; and the kingdom "of God", because it is of his preparing and giving; and what he calls his people to, and makes them meet for, and in which they will reign with him for evermore: heirs of it they may be, and are now whilst in this frail and mortal state; but inherit, possess, and enjoy it, they cannot, as not without holiness of soul, so not without immortality of body; and therefore it is necessary that the body should rise different in qualities from, though the same in substance with, the present body; that it should rise incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual; that it may be fitted for, and be able to bear the exceeding weight of glory in the other world:

neither doth corruption inherit incorruption: by corruption is not so much meant sin, or the corruption of nature, or man as corrupted by sin, though it is true of such an one, that he does not, and cannot inherit incorruption; the incorruptible crown, the crown of glory that fadeth not away, the incorruptible inheritance, reserved in the heavens, those riches which moth and rust corrupt not; but the body, as it is generated in corruption, is supported by corruptible things, and is subject to corruption and worms; in such a situation it is unfit for, and incapable of inheriting eternal glory; it must be different from what it is; it must put on immortality, and be clothed with incorruption: the word inherit in both clauses shows, that the heavenly glory is an inheritance, and belongs to children only; is their heavenly Father's bequest unto them; is not bought or acquired by anything of theirs; and is what they enter into and upon, in virtue and consequence of the death of the testator, Christ.

{i} Bemibdar Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 202. 3.

1 Corinthians 15:51

Ver. 51. Behold, I show you a mystery,.... Or a secret, which could never have been discovered by reason, or the light of nature, and what is of pure revelation; and which perhaps the apostle became acquainted with, when he was caught up into the third heaven; and is what is never made mention of by any prophet, or apostle, but himself: he prefaces the account of it in this manner, partly to show the great respect he had for these Corinthians, that he treated them as his bosom friends, to whom he communicated his secrets; and partly to excite their curiosity and attention:

we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; some copies read, "we shall all rise again, but we shall not all be changed", and so the Vulgate Latin version; according to which the sense is, all will rise again, both just and unjust, but all will not be changed into a state of glory; but the apostle is only speaking of the saints, of whom it is true, not only that they shall rise again, but shall be changed from corruption to incorruption; wherefore this cannot be a true reading: others read the words thus, "we shall all die, but we shall not all be changed"; and so the Ethiopic version and the Alexandrian copy seem to have read; which is just the reverse of the text, and arises from a wrong sense of **Heb 9:27** where it is not said, it is "appointed unto all men", but "unto men once to die"; from which rule there has been some exceptions, as the instances of Enoch and Elijah show; and there will be more at the time of Christ's coming, for all will not sleep in their graves, or die, for death is meant by sleeping; they will not die as men ordinarily do, and continue under the power of death, but they will be changed at once from corruption to incorruption, from dishonour to glory, from weakness to power, from being natural to be spiritual bodies; this change all the saints will undergo, whether dead or alive, at Christ's coming; the dead by a resurrection from the dead, and the living by a secret and sudden power, which will at once render their bodies, without separating them from their souls, immortal and glorious: and this reading and sense are confirmed by the Syriac and Arabic versions.

1 Corinthians 15:52

Ver. 52. In a moment,.... Or point of time, which is very short indeed; what a moment is, according to the Jewish doctors,
See Gill on "Mt 4:8".

In the twinkling of an eye; these two the Jews not only put together as here, but make one to be as the other; so they say {k}, Nye Prhk egrh, "a moment is as the twinkling of an eye". This phrase, as the twinkling of an eye, is frequently used in Jewish writings {l}, to signify how speedily ard suddenly anything is done, and which is the design of it here; and the apostle's meaning is, that the change upon the bodies of living saints will be so quick, that it will be done in a trice, before a man can shut his eyes and open them again; so that it will be as it were imperceptible, and without the least sensation of pain; this may also be referred to the resurrection, which will be quick, and done at once; though it seems rather, and chiefly, to respect the change of the living; what follows, indeed, favours the other sense also; for all will be quick and sudden, the coming of Christ, the raising of the dead, and the change of the living:

at the last trumpet, for the trumpet shall sound; or "by the last trumpet", as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; that is, by means of it, through the sounding of that:

and the dead shall be raised incorruptible; free from all frailty, mortality, and corruption, when the trumpet shall sound:

and at the same time also,

we shall be changed; the saints that will be found alive; the apostle speaks in the first person, because of the uncertainty of Christ's coming, and of the blowing of the last trumpet, he not knowing but it might be in his time; what this last trumpet will be, is not easy to say; it can hardly be thought to be a material one: the Jews {m} have a notion, that a trumpet will be blown at the time of the resurrection of the dead, as at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; which will quicken the dead, as they say it then did; and that this will be blown by Michael the archangel {n}: it seems very likely to be the same with the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God, **1Th 4:16** all which may be no other than the voice of Christ; at the hearing of which, the dead will rise; but whether this will be an articulate one, as at the raising of Lazarus, or is only expressive of his power, which will then be put forth, is not material, nor a point to be determined: and what if by all this should be meant some violent claps of thunder, as at Mount Sinai, which will shake the whole earth; and when almighty power will be put forth to raise the dead: since such are by the Jews {o} called the voices of the son of David, and are expected by them, a little before his coming? This is called the "last" trumpet, not so much with respect to those that go before, much less to the seven trumpets in the Revelations, of which as yet there was no revelation made, but because there will be none after it; see:

"And the trumpet shall give a sound, which when every man heareth, they shall be suddenly afraid." (2 Esdras 6:23)

{i} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 202. 3. {k} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 2. 4. Eeha Rabbati, fol. 54. 4. {l} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 2. 2. Sabbat, fol. 34. 2. Zohar in Gen, fol. 38. 4. & 39. 1. & 65. 4. Caphtor, fol. 75. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 77. fol. 67. 4. {m} Targum. Jon. in Exod. xx. 18. & Kettoreth Hassammim in ib. Abarbinel. Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 11. 4. {n} Abkath Rochel, p. 138. {o} T. Bab. Sanhedrim, fol. 97. 1. & Gloss. in ib. Vid. Megilla, fol. 17. 2.

1 Corinthians 15:53

Ver. 53. For this corruptible must put on incorruption,.... The apostle returns to what he had before asserted, concerning the necessity of an alteration in the qualities of bodies, in order to the enjoyment of the heavenly state; showing, that the selfsame body the saints now have, for he seems to point with his finger to his own, and which are incorruptible ones, shall and must be clothed with incorruption:

and this mortal must put on immortality; the body that now is mortal, must become immortal; it must put off its rags of mortality, and be clothed with the shining robes of immortality; and which must be done, either by first dying, and then rising from the dead; or by undergoing alive a quick and sudden change, which will at once remove all corruption and mortality; see:

"He answered and said unto me, These be they that have put off the mortal clothing, and put on the immortal, and have confessed the name of God: now are they crowned, and receive palms." (2 Esdras 2:45)

1 Corinthians 15:54

Ver. 54. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption,.... As at the coming of Christ, both the bodies of living saints, and of dead ones being raised, will: and this

mortal shall have put on immortality; which will be the case, in the resurrection morn:

then shall be brought to pass that saying that is written; then that passage will have its full accomplishment, which stands in Isa 25:8 where it is read,

he will swallow up death in victory, or "for ever". That is, the Messiah shall by his death, and resurrection from the dead, obtain such an entire victory over death, not only for himself, but for all his people, that in the resurrection morn, when they will be all raised from the dead, death will be so swallowed up, that it will be no more: the Jews acknowledge that this prophecy belongs to the times of the Messiah; so they say {p}, that

"the Messiah shall descend from Pharez, and in his day the holy blessed God will cause death to be swallowed up, as it is said, Isa 25:8 "he shall swallow up death in victory":"

and again {q},

"when the King Messiah comes, the holy blessed God will raise up those that sleep in the dust, as it is written, he shall swallow up death in victory:"

they also say {r}, that this passage refers to future time, and to the world to come. The prophet expresses it actively, it being a prediction of what was to be done by the Messiah; the apostle cites it passively, as being accomplished by him after the resurrection, and considered as a part of the song sung by the risen saints; to which is added,

{p} Shemot Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 131. 4. {q} Zohar in Gen. fol. 73. 1. {r} Zohar in, Exod. fol. 108. 1, 2, 4. Misn. Moed Katon. c. 3. sect. 9. Zohar iu Lev. fol. 46. 3. Yade Mose in Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 20. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 48. 2.

1 Corinthians 15:55

Ver. 55. O death, where is thy sting?.... These words, with the following clause, are taken out of Ho 13:14 and that they belong to the times of the Messiah, the ancient Jews acknowledge; and the Chaldee paraphrase interprets them of the Logos, or Word of God, rendering them thus,

"my Word shall be among them to kill, and my Word to destroy;"

wherefore the apostle is not to be charged with a misapplication of them, nor with a perversion of them, as he is by the Jew {s}: in the prophet they are thus

read, "O death, I will be thy plagues, O grave, I will be thy destruction"; between which, and the apostle's citation of them, there is some difference; the word yha, which we render in both clauses, "I will be", the apostle translates "where", and that very rightly, and so it should be rendered there; and so it is by the Septuagint interpreters, who render the whole as he, with a little variation, "where is thy revenge, O death? where is thy sting, O grave?" and so the Arabic version of Hosea still nearer the apostle, "where is now thy victory, O death?" or "where is thy sting, O grave?" and even the Chaldee paraphrase on Ho 13:14 renders the same word "where"; for instead of, "I will be thy king", the Targum reads, Na Kklm, "where is thy king?" and Aben Ezra, a Jewish writer of great note, on Ho 13:14 observes, that there are some that say the word is to be inverted as if it was xya, "where", and he adds, and it is right; a like observation he makes on those words in
1Co 15:14 and that that is the true sense of the word in both verses, is attested by Ebn Jannahius Tanchuma {t}; so that the apostle is thus far to be justified, in his citation of this passage: it is further to be observed, that instead of "thy plagues", he reads, "thy sting"; and I doubt not, but that among the many things which rbd signifies, as it must be owned it does signify the plague, or pestilence, see Ps 90:6 and which perhaps is so called, from the venomous nature of it, and the poisonous sting that is in it, so likewise a sting, though there is no instance of it; certain it is, that bees are called Myrbd, and as Cocceius {u} observes, from their sting; and so in the Chaldee and Arabic languages, a bee, or a wasp, is called arbd; and it is to such sort of creatures, that the allusion is here made; who having lost their stings, can do no hurt; and which will be the case of death in the resurrection morn, when risen saints will insult over it in this triumphant manner; having nothing more to fear from it, any more than a man has to be afraid of any animal whatever, that has lost its sting: and in the following clause,

O grave, where is thy victory? instead of "destruction", as it must be allowed the word bjq signifies, see Ps 90:6 the apostle reads victory; but then there is no difference in the sense; for the grave gets its victory over its thousands, and ten thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousands, and millions of millions, by the destruction of them, which now it glories in, and boasts of; but in the resurrection morn, when its destruction will be at an end, the triumphant saints may reasonably ask, where is its boasted victory, since it can destroy no longer.

{s} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 87. p. 463. {t} Apud Pocock. Not. Miscellan. ad Port. Mosis, p. 69, 70. {u} Lex. Heb. in rad. rbd.

1 Corinthians 15:56

Ver. 56. The sting of death is sin,.... Death has a sting, and which was originally in it, and that is sin; sin is the cause of death, it is what has given rise and being to it; it entered into the world by it, and is supported in its empire through it; it gives it its resistless power, which reaches to all sorts of persons, young and old, rich and poor, high and low, bond and free; it gives it all its bitterness, agonies, and miseries; and it is by that it does all the hurt and mischief it does; and it may fitly be compared to a sting, for its poisonous and venomous nature:

and the strength of sin is the law; not that the law of God is sinful, or encourages sin: it forbids it under the severest penalty; but was there no law there would be no sin, nor imputation of it; sin is a transgression of the law: moreover, the strength of sin, its evil nature, and all the dreadful aggravations of it, and sad consequences upon it, are discovered and made known by the law; and also the strength of it is drawn out by it, through the corruption of human nature; which is irritated and provoked the more to sin, through the law's prohibition of it; and this is not the fault of the law, but is owing to the vitiosity of nature; which the more it is forbidden anything, the more desirous it is of it; to which may be added, that sin is the more exceeding sinful, being committed against a known law, and that of the great lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; whose legislative power and authority are slighted and trampled upon by it, which makes the transgression the more heinous; it is the law which binds sin upon a man's conscience, accuses him of it, pronounces him guilty, curses, condemns, and adjudges him to death for it.

1 Corinthians 15:57

Ver. 57. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory,.... Over sin the sting of death, over the law the strength of sin, and over death and the grave; and which will be the ground and foundation of the above triumphant song in the resurrection morn, as it is now at this present time of praise and thankfulness to God: and it is all

through our Lord Jesus; he has got the victory over sin; he has put it away by the sacrifice of himself; he has finished and made an end of it; for though it reigns over his people before conversion, and dwells in them after it, yet in consequence of his atonement for it, it loses its governing power through the

Spirit and grace of God in regeneration, and entirely its damning power over them, and in the resurrection morn will not be so much as in being in them; the view of which now fills them with joy, thanksgiving, and triumph. Christ has obtained a victory over the law; he has stopped its mouth, and answered all its demands; he has been made under, and subject to it; he has obeyed its precepts, and bore its penalty, and has delivered his from the curse and condemnation of it, so that they have nothing to fear from it; it is dead to them, and they to that: he has also abolished death by dying and rising again, so as that it shall have no more dominion over him; and he has abolished it as a penal evil to his saints; and though they die, they shall not always remain under the power of death, they shall live again, and with him for ever: he has conquered the grave by rising out of it himself, and living for evermore, having the keys of the grave in his hands; and will at the last day oblige it to give up its dead, when his victory over this, with respect to his people, will be abundantly manifest: now this victory, in all its branches, is given by God to believers; they are made to share in all the victories of Christ their head, and are more than conquerors through him; but this is not by merit, but by gift, the gift of God the Father, who gives his Son, and all things with him that are his; and this gift is a distinguishing one; it is given to us, and not to others; and which therefore calls aloud for praise and thankfulness. The title of the "ninth" psalm may be rendered, "to the conqueror over death", or "that is the author of victory over death, even to the Son, a psalm of David", **Ps 9:1**.

1 Corinthians 15:58

Ver. 58. Therefore my beloved brethren,.... This is the conclusion of the whole, and contains the use the apostle makes of the above doctrine, addressing the saints at Corinth in the most tender and affectionate manner; owning the spiritual relation they stood in to him, and expressing the great love he had for them, which filled him with a concern for them, that they might be both sound in principle, and right in practice, and continue so:

be ye steadfast, unmoveable; in all the doctrines of the Gospel, and particularly in this of the resurrection of the dead, which he had been labouring throughout the whole chapter:

always abounding in the work of the Lord; going on in it, being more and more in the practice of it; either in the work of the ministry, which some of them were in, to which the Lord had called them, and for which he had fitted and qualified them, and in which his glory was greatly concerned, and therefore called his work; or any other work, even all good works, which the Lord commands, requires, calls his people to, and strengthens them to perform: which when they do they may be said to abound, and to be fruitful in every good work: and for their encouragement it is added,

forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord; the labour of such who were in the ministry was not in vain, but was by the Lord made useful for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints, who would be their joy, and crown of rejoicing another day; and which must be no small encouragement to labour; and labour in any kind of good work has here its usefulness: it is profitable unto men, and though not meritorious of eternal life, yet the good works of the saints will follow them; Christ will not forget their work and labour of love which they have shown to his name and people, but will take notice of them as fruits of his own grace, and bestow his rewards upon them, though not in a way of debt, but of grace; which the doctrine of the resurrection assures of, and encourages to hope for; and so must he a friend to the practice of good works, as the contrary doctrine must be an obstruction to them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Corinthians 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 16

This chapter concludes the epistle, with some directions to the Corinthians concerning a collection for the poor saints; with some intimations of himself, Timothy, and Apollos coming to them, and giving them a visit; with exhortations to watchfulness, constancy, courage, and charity; with recommendations of some persons to them mentioned by name; with divers salutations of them by himself and others; and with his good wishes for them. He urges them to make a collection for the poor saints, from the example of the churches of Galatia, according to his order, 1Co 16:1. He points out the time when he would have it made, on the first day of the week; and the persons that should contribute to it, every member of the church; and the act of distribution, by laying up in store; and the manner, measure, and rule of doing it, according as they were blessed in Providence with temporal things; and the end of it, that there might be no collections to make when the apostle should come among them, 1Co 16:2 and this, when made, and being ready at his coming, he proposes to send to Jerusalem, by persons approved of and recommended by them, 1Co 16:3 and that he would also go along with them, should it be thought fit and proper, 1Co 16:4. He signifies his resolution of coming and paying them a visit, when he should pass through Macedonia, 1Co 16:5 when he had some thoughts of tarrying with them for a while, at least throughout the winter season, 1Co 16:6 in all which he submits to the will of God, 1Co 16:7. The reason why he could not come as yet was, because he had determined to stay at Ephesus till Pentecost, where he now was, 1Co 16:8 and what prevailed upon him to stay there was, because there was an opportunity of preaching the Gospel with a prospect of success; and there were many enemies to hinder it all they could, and therefore the apostle's presence seemed necessary, 1Co 16:9. He intimates, that Timothy would come to them shortly, and exhorts them to take care of him, and carry it respectfully to him; giving this as a reason, because he was engaged in the same work of the Lord he himself was, 1Co 16:10. He enjoins them, that whilst he should continue with them they would not despise him on account of his youth; and when he should depart from them, to conduct him in peace to him who was in expectation of him, along with other brethren, 1Co 16:11 and then he excuses Apollos not coming to them at present; and observes, that it was not for want of entreaty in him, but for want of will in Apollos, who notwithstanding would come when a convenient time should offer, 1Co 16:12. Next follow several exhortations to be upon their watch and guard, to be steadfast in the doctrine, grace, and profession of faith, and to behave themselves like men of a truly Christian spirit and courage, and to do everything in their church state in the exercise of the grace of love, 1Co 16:13 and then he recommends unto them the family of Stephanas, and exhorts them to have them in respect and reverence, and be subject to such, and particularly that family; partly because they were the firstfruits of his ministry, in those parts; and partly because they had given up themselves to the ministry of the saints, 1Co 16:15 as also because the coming of Stephanas to him, together with two other persons, named Fortunatus and Achaicus, had made him glad; supplied what was lacking in them; had refreshed his spirit and theirs; and therefore should be took notice of, and respectfully used, 1Co 16:17. And then follow various salutations, first of the churches of Asia in general, then of Aquila and Priscilla, and the church in their house, 1Co 16:19. Next of all the brethren at Ephesus, or that were with the apostle, 1Co 16:20 and last of all of the apostle himself, 1Co 16:21. And the chapter is closed with several wishes of different sorts, and which respect different persons; those that love not Christ, and live and die so, he wishes they may be accursed at the coming of the Lord, as they will be; and which is mentioned to deter professors of religion from everything that looked like want of love to Christ, whom they professed, 1Co 16:22 as for others, even as many as loved Christ, and which he hoped of them all, he wishes the grace of Christ might be with them, 1Co 16:23 and gives his love to them all, without any distinction; and which is to be understood not of a natural, but spiritual affection, it being in Christ, and for his sake, 1Co 16:24.

Ver. 1. Now concerning the collection for the saints,.... Not at Corinth, but at Jerusalem, as appears from 1Co 16:3 for the poor saints there, who were reduced to poverty, either through the spoiling of their goods by their persecuting countrymen; or through the selling of their possessions, and putting their substance into one common stock, which was now exhausted, partly by their living upon it, and partly by the expending of it for the enlargement of the interest of Christ, and the spread of his Gospel among the Gentiles; so that it was but fit and reasonable that they should assist them in their necessitous circumstances: wherefore the apostle, after he had gone through the various subjects he thought fit to write upon, relating both to doctrine and practice, proceeds to give some orders, directions, and instructions, concerning this matter.

As I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. The churches of Galatia were those he wrote an epistle to, which bears their name, and in which he takes notice of the request of the apostles at Jerusalem to him, that he would remember the poor as he travelled through the Gentile countries, and which, no doubt, he mentions, as a hint unto them to collect for them. **Ga 2:10** though the order he here speaks of was doubtless given them when he passed through the region of Galatia, Ac 16:6. This he observes by way of example to the church at Corinth, and to show them, that what he ordered them was no other than what he enjoined other churches, and which they were ready to come into, as these in Galatia, and also in Macedonia; and designs this as a spur unto them, that if the Galatians, who were a more rude and uncultivated people, being now called by grace, were ready to such a good work, they who were a more polite people, and used to civility, humanity, and tenderness, would not be backward to it.

1 Corinthians 16:2

Ver. 2. Upon the first day of the week,.... In an ancient copy of Beza's, and in some others, it is added, "the Lord's day". Upon some one first day of the week, or more, if there was a necessity for it, until the collection was finished; though the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "every first day": but this is not the apostle's intention, that a collection should be made every first day, but only on some one day, or as long as it was necessary: for at the close of the verse he gives this reason for it, "that there be no gatherings when I come":

whereas, if this collection was to have been every first day, and to have been always continued, it must have been when he was present, as well as when absent; but this was only designed for a certain time, and on a certain account: the reason of his fixing upon the first day of the week was, because on this day the disciples of Christ, and the primitive churches, met together for divine worship, to hear the word, and observe the ordinances of Christ; see Joh 20:19 and was a very fit reason for such a work, when their hearts were warmed with the presence of God and Christ, with the grace of the Spirit, and the doctrines of the Gospel, and their affections were knit to one another, and to all the saints: and so we find from the accounts of Justin Martyr {w}, and of Tertullian {x}, that it was usual for the primitive churches in the age following that of the apostles, after the worship of God was over, to collect money for widows and orphans, and for saints in distress, such as were banished into distant parts, or condemned to the mines; and this practice was very agreeable to the customs of the apostle's countrymen, the Jews, from whence he might take this, who used to collect for, and distribute to the poor on their sabbath {y}.

"The alms dish was every day, but the alms chest from evening of the sabbath to the evening of the sabbath,"

It was collected and distributed then, as their commentators say {z}.

Let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him. The persons who are to contribute are everyone, of every sex, age, state, and condition, male and female, young and old, servants and masters, the meaner as well as the richer sort; the poor widow threw in her mite into the treasury as well as the rich men: the act of communication or distribution is signified by laying by him in store; for this is not to be understood of separating a part of his substance from the rest, and laying it up htybb, "in his own house", as the Syriac version renders it, or the putting it in his pocket in order to give it; though both these acts may be necessary, as preparatory to the work: but it intends the very act itself: for communicating to the poor is laying up in store a good foundation for the time to come; it is a laying up treasure in heaven, and riches there, which will never corrupt: the manner in which this is to be done, and the measure of it, "as God hath prospered him"; according to the success he has in his worldly business, and the increase of his worldly substance, and which is the way to have it enlarged. The Jews have a saying {a},

"if a man observes his provisions to be straitened, let him do alms of them, how much more if they are large."

The Vulgate Latin version renders, it, "laying up what pleases him well"; and the Arabic version, "what through liberality he pleases, and shall be convenient for him"; for this ought to be a freewill offering, as a matter of bounty and generosity, and not of covetousness, or of force and necessity, but as a man, of himself has purposed in his own heart, and which he does with cheerfulness and freedom.

That there be no gatherings when I come; who had other work, and greater service to do among them; besides, he was desirous of having this collection over and ready when he came, that he might directly send it away to Jerusalem, knowing the pressing necessities of the saints there.

{w} Apolog. 2. p. 98, 99. {x} Apolog. c. 39. {y} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 8. 2. Maimon, Hilch. Mattanot Anayim, c. 9. sect. 6. {z} Maimon. R. Samson & Bartenora in Misn. Peah, c. 8. sect. 7. {a} T. Bab. Gittim, fol. 7. 1.

1 Corinthians 16:3

Ver. 3. And when I come,.... To Corinth, as he intended very quickly:

whomsoever you shall approve by your letters; that is, such persons as this church should approve, and choose, and fix upon as proper persons to go with their collection; which approbation and choice they would signify by letters to the church, and principal men of it in Jerusalem, giving them a character as men of probity and faithfulness:

them will I send. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions join the phrase, "by letters", to this clause; according to which reading the sense is, such as the church should choose for this service, the apostle would send with letters of commendation from him, to the elders and church at Jerusalem, recommending them as brethren in the Lord, and to be had in respect, and treated in a Christian manner by them; to which their being messengers from such a church, and having letters from so great an apostle; besides, the business they should come about would entitle them to, which was

to bring your liberality, or "grace",

unto Jerusalem; meaning the money collected for the poor saints there; which he calls grace, because it was owing to the goodness of God, that they were in a capacity to contribute to others, and to the grace of God that they had a heart to do it; and because it was in a free and gracious manner, and in the exercise of grace, of faith in Christ, and love to the saints, that they did it, and with a view to the glory of the grace of God, of which this was a fruit and evidence.

1 Corinthians 16:4

Ver. 4. And if it be meet that I go also,.... If it should be convenient for me to go, or it should be thought proper and expedient that I should go; or, as the Syriac version renders it, "if this work should be worthy that I should go"; and the Arabic version, "if the thing should be worthy to go with me"; that is, their beneficence; if so large a collection should be made, that it will be worthy of an apostle to go along with it, hereby artfully pressing them to a good collection:

they shall go with me; that is, those brethren whom the church shall approve and send; for he would not go alone, nor propose it, to remove all suspicion of converting any money to his own use.

1 Corinthians 16:5

Ver. 5. Now I will come unto you,.... Which he again assures them of, as being his real intention and design; though some had given out that he would not come to them any more, and hoped they should never see him any more; see **1Co 4:18**.

When I shall pass through Macedonia; hereby fixing the time when he intended to visit them after he had gone through that country, and had received their collections for the saints at Jerusalem, which the churches there so generously made, and pressed him to the ministering of, of which he speaks in his next epistle.

For I do pass through Macedonia; not that he was then passing through Macedonia, or was in it, and so at Philippi, from whence this epistle is said to be written, as the subscription at the end of it expresses, for he was now at Ephesus; see 1Co 16:8 and from thence was this epistle written; he was not in Macedonia till some time after, see **2Co 2:12** but the sense is, that he should take his tour through Macedonia; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "for I shall pass through Macedonia"; and so coming into Greece, he intended to come to Corinth, and stay some time with them.

1 Corinthians 16:6

Ver. 6. And it may be that I will abide,.... He could not be certain what calls in Providence he might have to some other places, where his presence would be necessary:

yea, and winter with you; stay all winter with them, for the space of three months, as we read he did in Greece, Ac 20:1.

That ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go; both by accompanying him in person themselves, in token of honour and respect, and by providing things necessary for his journey; see
Ac 15:3.

1 Corinthians 16:7

Ver. 7. For I will not see you now by the way,.... Just to look upon them, and be gone, be like a wayfaring man that tarries but for a night:

but I trust to tarry a while with you; the whole winter season:

if the Lord permit; submitting all to the will of God, at whose sovereign disposal he always was, and at whose beck and command he desired to be, and to do nothing, or be any where, but what was agreeable to the will of God.

1 Corinthians 16:8

Ver. 8. But I will tarry at Ephesus till Pentecost. The feast of weeks, or of harvest, which was fifty days from the passover;
See Gill on "Ac 2:1" which though abrogated at the death of Christ, was observed by the Jews, and is mentioned by the apostle, not as a festival that the Christians were obliged to regard, or did regard, but as pointing out the time he intended to stay at Ephesus: and we elsewhere read, that he was greatly desirous of being at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, Ac 20:16 not to keep it, but because there would then be abundance of people from all parts there, to whom he should have an opportunity of preaching the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 16:9

Ver. 9. For a great door,.... Meaning an opportunity of ministering the word at Ephesus, a very populous city, and where he might have hope great good would be done. Some think that by this fair opportunity, or hopeful prospect, he means the populousness of the city; others, the conversion of some great men in it, which had made way for the introduction of Gospel there: but it seems rather to intend the desire that there appeared in many persons here to have the Gospel preached unto them; they flocked unto it; their hearts were opened to attend to it, and great numbers believed; and the apostle found a door of utterance in himself, and a door of entrance in them, which were reasons with him to tarry here.

And effectual is opened to me; not by him, but to him: this door was opened by him who has the key of David, that opens, and no man shuts; and the door of faith being opened by him, it was effectual to the quickening of sinners dead in trespasses and sins, to the enlightening of blind eyes, unstopping of deaf ears, and softening hard hearts; to the turning of souls from the power of Satan to God, to the quickening, comforting, and establishing of saints, and indeed to salvation to all that believe; which is the case when the word comes, not in word only, but in power; then it works effectually in them that believe; and since there was an opportunity of preaching the Gospel with such good effect, the apostle was desirous of making use of it:

and there are many adversaries; as there always are where the Gospel is preached, and especially with success, when sinners are converted, and saints are edified and comforted. The adversary Satan roars, and the posse of devils under him are employed one way or another to obstruct the Gospel if possible; false teachers are raised up to oppose it, and profane men are instigated by him to persecute the preachers and professors of it: so it was at Ephesus, the Jews disputed against it, and spoke evil of it; Demetrius the silversmith, and those of his craft, rose up in a tumultuous manner, crying, great is Diana of the Ephesians, stirring up the people against the apostle, and his companions; all which he had some foreviews of, and found to be true by experience, as may be seen in
Ac 19:21 and which, though to another man would have been a reason to have departed, was a reason with him to stay; to bear his testimony to the Gospel, to appear in the defence of it, against the disputers of this world, and to strengthen and establish the minds of weak believers in it, who might have

been in some danger through so many adversaries; wherefore he saw and judged that his presence was necessary, and that it was proper for him to stay the time he mentions.

1 Corinthians 16:10

Ver. 10. Now if Timotheus come,.... The apostle had sent him already, as appears from **1Co 4:17** and he was now gone from him; but whether he might not be prevented by unforeseen incidents in his journey, he could not say; and therefore speaks cautiously of his coming; from whence it is evident, that this epistle was not sent by Timothy, as the subscription to it suggests.

See that he may be with you without fear; should he come to them, the apostle desires they would take care of him, that he might be safe and secure from enemies of every sort, of which there were many at Corinth; who, as they were of a malignant disposition to him, would use a disciple of his ill: and these were not only, or so much, infidels and profane sinners, but false teachers, and the factions under them, and especially they of the circumcision.

For he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do; which is a reason why they should be careful of him, that nobody molest him, and put him into fear; since though he was not in so high an office as the apostle, yet he was called to the same work of the ministry, was engaged in the same service of Christ, and was zealous in promoting the same common cause, interest, and kingdom of the Redeemer, and faithfully preached the same Gospel as the apostle did; and therefore would doubtless meet with the same enemies, and be in the same danger.

1 Corinthians 16:11

Ver. 11. Let no man therefore despise him,.... On account of his youth; see **1Ti 4:12**, or neglect to take care of him, which would be to despise him, since he was employed in such an honourable work, equally as the apostle himself: hence it is manifest, that as the lives of Gospel ministers ought to be defended and secured by those to whom they minister, their persons ought to be treated with esteem and respect.

But conduct him forth in peace; when he takes his leave, wish him all happiness and prosperity, accompany him some part of the way in his journey, and provide things necessary for him; all which used to be done to such who laboured in the word and doctrine, and were counted worthy of double honour; and such an one Timothy was judged by the apostle to be:

that he may come unto me; at Ephesus, where he now was, in peace and safety, and relate to him the state and condition of the church; their steadfastness in the faith, their care of him, and the respect they had shown him; all which would be grateful to the apostle:

for I look for him with the brethren; that is, either the brethren that were with the apostle were in earnest expectation of him, together with himself; and so the Ethiopic version reads, "for our brethren with me have expected him"; or else that he looked for him along with the brethren, that either went with him, or should come with him from Corinth, being sent by the church.

1 Corinthians 16:12

Ver. 12. As touching our brother Apollos,.... Who was a senior man to Timothy, an eloquent preacher, one who had been at Corinth, and was well known to the saints there, and greatly approved by many of them; wherefore the apostle excuses it, that he should send the one, and not the other, and shows that it was no fault of his: for, says he,

I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren; who seem to be Timotheus and Erastus, see Ac 19:22. He greatly importuned him to go along with them, knowing how acceptable he would be among them, and hoping he might be of great use to them in composing their differences, and rectifying their disorders.

But his will was not at all to come at this time; or "it was not the will"; that is, of God, as some supply it, for him to come now; or he had no mind himself, nor could he be persuaded; he had reasons to himself why he judged it not proper to come at present: however, for their encouragement it is added,

but he will come when he shall have convenient time; he is not averse to coming, but some things at present hinder him; when he has a suitable opportunity he will make use of it.

1 Corinthians 16:13

Ver. 13. Watch ye,.... The apostle in the mean while, before he closes his epistle, thinks fit to give some proper and pertinent exhortations, which might be of general use to this church; and first exhorts them to watchfulness, not for the coming of Apollos, and a convenient season for that; but over themselves, over their hearts, thoughts, affections, words, actions, and their whole conversations; and over one another, that they go not into bad principles, and evil practices; and also against sin in general, every appearance, and the first motions of it, and particularly unbelief; and against Satan, and his temptations, who is an indefatigable enemy, and whose wiles, devices, and stratagems are many and cunning; and against the world, its charms and snares; and likewise against false teachers, who lie in wait to deceive, and therefore to be guarded against; many of which were among these Corinthians, and made this exhortation very necessary. It became them likewise to watch daily at wisdom's gates, to wait constantly upon God in the word and ordinances, and especially to watch unto prayer, and in it, and after it; to all which it is necessary that they should be awake, and not asleep, to which the wise as well as foolish virgins are subject; that they should be sober, and not be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life; and that they be in their proper station, on their watchtower, keeping a good lookout, and being ready armed, to attack an enemy when descried. Many are the reasons why the saints should be upon their watch and guard; as because they have many eyes upon them; the eyes of the omniscient God are upon them, who sees and takes notice of all their actions; the eyes of angels are upon them, and even in their solemn assemblies; the eyes of saints are upon them, though watching for their good; and the eyes of evil men for their halting; and the eyes of devils are upon them, waiting an opportunity to do them hurt and mischief, if possible. Moreover, unwatchfulness exposes to many evils, temptations, and snares; to which may be added, as an inducement to watchfulness, the uncertainty of Christ's coming either at death, or to judgment.

Stand fast in the faith: which is proper to those that are watchful; for men asleep cannot well stand. This exhortation may respect either standing in the grace of faith, in opposition to doubting and unbelief, and design a continuance in the exercise of it, notwithstanding all the corruptions of nature, and the various sins and infirmities of life, the frequent temptations of Satan, and the many afflictions and trials in the world, which may occasion diffidence and distrust; for standing in this grace, and in such a constant exercise of it, greatly glorifies God, is what is wellpleasing in his sight; and in this way saints have communion with God, peace and comfort in their souls, and much spiritual joy and pleasure: it is the grace by which they stand, and therefore should stand in it, and by which they overcome the world. Or else it may intend standing in the doctrine of faith, in opposition to a departure from it, or a giving up any part of it, or wavering about it; it becomes saints to be steadfast in it, and abide by it, whoever is against it; let them be ever so many, or ever so wise and learned, and whatever may be said against it, as that it is a novel one, a licentious one, and a set of irrational principles, and whatever is the opposition that is made against it, though bonds and afflictions, reproach and persecution in every shape attend it, yet none of these things should move them from it. Perhaps that particular doctrine of faith, the resurrection of the dead, may be greatly regarded. Moreover, standing in the profession of faith, both of the grace and doctrine of faith, may be intended; for as this is to be made, it is to be held fast, and stood fast in, without wavering, by all true believers, who have great encouragement so to do from the person and grace of Christ, and from the love and faithfulness of God, and the many gracious promises he has made. Wherefore,

quit yourselves like men, be strong; a like phrase is often used by the Septuagint interpreters, as in De 31:6, from whence the apostle seems to have taken it. It answers to the Hebrew word
wvvath, in Isa 46:8.

Quit you like men; like men of wisdom and understanding; be not like children for non-proficiency, instability, and weakness; see
1Co 14:20; act the part of men; believe not every spirit; be not carried and tossed about with every wind of doctrine; search the Scriptures, and try every doctrine by them; and having found what is truth abide by it, and be proficients in it, instructing and establishing yourselves and others. In which sense the Jews use this phrase, saying {b},

"in a place where there are no men, vya twyhl ldtvh, "study to be a man", or to show thyself a man;"

which one of their commentators {c} explains thus;

"use and accustom thyself to obtain excellent things, and afterwards when there are no wise men to teach, then do thou teach thyself."

And another {d} after this manner;

""in the place where there is no man" to sit at the head and teach doctrines," do thou. Or play the man, as in 2Sa 10:12; act like men of valour and courage, stand fast, keep your ground, and contend earnestly for the faith; be valiant for the truth on earth; fight the good fight of faith: it is a good cause believers are engaged in; they have a good Captain and Commander at the head of them; they are provided with good weapons, may be sure of victory, and of having the crown of righteousness, life, and glory: wherefore

be strong; that is, for the faith: so the Targumist on **Jer 9:3** renders the phrase, "they are not valiant for the truth, wpyqt
atwnmyhl al, they are not strong for the faith: be strong"; not in themselves, but in the Lord, and in the power of his might; in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; believe in him, look to him for strength as well as righteousness; trust in his power, whose arm is not shortened; depend on his grace, which is always sufficient; take heart, be of good courage, and fear no enemy; see **Jos 1:6**, which seems to be particularly referred to here.

{b} Misn. Pirke Abot, c. sect. 5. Vid. T. Bab Beracot, fol. 63. 1. {c} Maimon. in Misn. ib. {d} Bartenora in Misn. Beracot, fol. 63. 1.

1 Corinthians 16:14

Ver. 14. Let all your things be done with charity. Signifying, that the whole of their obedience to Christ, their observation of, and subjection to all his ordinances and commands, should spring from, and be done in love to him; and that the whole of their conduct and behaviour towards one another ought to be with charity, which bears all things, and covers a multitude of sins; and that all their church affairs, their business at church meetings, should be transacted, not with strife and vain glory, but in peace, and with mutual affection, with a concern for the good of each other, and of the whole body, and for the glory of God; for without charity or love, and the exercise of this grace, it signifies little what men either have or do; and such an exhortation was the more necessary to this church, since it was so full of factions, contentions, and divisions.

1 Corinthians 16:15

Ver. 15. I beseech you, brethren,.... Entreat or exhort you as brethren in the Lord; this entreaty or exhortation is to submission to fellow helpers and labourers of the ministry, more particularly expressed in the following verse, after the apostle has given a character of the household of Stephanas, who are principally intended, and which contains reasons and arguments why they should be submitted to; and which account stands in the following parenthesis,

ye know the house of Stephanas; a person of note at Corinth, whom the apostle had baptized, together with his family, **1Co 1:16**. The Vulgate Latin version, and some copies, add, "and of Fortunatus and Achaicus", persons mentioned along with Stephanas, in **1Co 1:17**;

that it is the firstfruits of Achaia: this family was one of the first in the regions of Achaia, of which Corinth was the metropolis, that believed in Christ; these were some of the first instances of conversion, and who received the firstfruits of the Spirit in these parts, and by the grace of God had been enabled to persevere hitherto, and were worthy of respect: the same he says of Epaenetus, in Ro 16:5;

and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints; that is, either to minister to the wants of poor saints, whether out of their own substance, or the churches' stock, being deacons, or to minister to the saints by preaching the Gospel; which good work they desired, willingly gave up themselves to, and cheerfully engaged in, and took the oversight and care of the flock, not by constraint, but willingly; not that they thrust themselves into an office, or came into it in an irregular way, but being called into it in an orderly manner by the church, and invested with it, they applied to the execution of it with great heartiness, diligence, and zeal, and so were very deserving of due respect, as next mentioned.

1 Corinthians 16:16

Ver. 16. That ye submit yourselves to such,.... To persons of such a character, and in such an office; if in ministering to poor saints, by assisting them, and by putting into their hands; and putting it in their power to discharge their work fully, in which they were so heartily concerned; and if in the work of the ministry of the word, by attending their ministrations, receiving the truths delivered by them with faith and love, so far as they appeared to be agreeably to the word of God; hearkening to their admonitions, counsels and advice, regarding their censures and reproofs by the authority of the church, and in their name, and by subjection to the laws of Christ's house, as put in execution by them, see Heb 13:17, and to everyone that helpeth with us; in any form, whether by relieving the poor, or by preaching the Gospel:

and laboureth; in the Lord's vineyard, in the word and doctrine, for the good of souls, and the glory of Christ: for such are worthy of double honour, and ought to be valued and esteemed for their works' sake, and submitted to in everything that is according to the rules of the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 16:17

Ver. 17. I am glad of the coming of Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus,.... Who very probably were those of the household of Chloe, mentioned in **1Co 1:11**, who came either of their own accord, or were sent as messengers from the church at Corinth to the apostle; who was glad to see them, one of them being baptized by him, and perhaps all of them converted under his ministry: however, they were believers in Christ, if not ministers of the Gospel, which seems very probable.

For that which was lacking on your part they have supplied; which is not to be understood of their supplying him with money, in which the Corinthians had been deficient; for as he had never taken anything of them, he was determined he never would; see 2Co 11:7; but either of their presence which supplied the want of theirs, the apostle had been for some time greatly desirous of; or whereas they had been greatly wanting in sending him an account of the state of the church, and how things stood with them, these brethren greatly supplied that defect, by giving him a very particular account of their church affairs.

1 Corinthians 16:18

Ver. 18. For they have refreshed my spirit,.... By their coming and presence; the very sight of them gave him joy and pleasure, and more so their Christian discourse and conversation, and especially the account they brought of this church; for though there were many things in it which were very disagreeable, and were the occasion of this epistle, yet there were others related, which were exceedingly pleasing to the apostle, and revived his spirit, which had been greatly depressed by what he might have heard of them from another quarter, and through fear that it was worse with them than it really was; for by these brethren he understood, that there were many in the church that had great grace, and large gifts bestowed on them, so that they came behind none in these things; and were steadfast in the faith of the Gospel, and with rigour opposed the false teachers; and in all things sought the welfare of the church, and the interest of Christ; and this was good news to the apostle, and which exhilarated his spirit: and he adds,

and yours; his spirit and theirs, in divine things, being the same; they were of one heart and soul; they had the same love, and were of one accord, and of one mind; so that what was grateful to the one, was so to the other: or his sense is, that when these brethren should return, and acquaint the church how the spirit of the apostle was revived, and refreshed with the narrative they gave him of the affairs of the church, their spirits would be also refreshed too. Dr. Hammond thinks that this phrase is taken out of the Greek translation of **Zec 6:8**, "have quieted my spirit", which the Septuagint interpret by anepausan ton yumon mou, "they stilled", or "caused my wrath to cease"; and in the same way Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi explain the words; but the apostle's phrase is nearer to the original itself of that text, yxwr ta wxynh, "they have stilled", or "caused my spirit to rest"; and is the very same phrase the Syriac version uses here; and which the Chaldee paraphrase renders thus, ytwer ty wdybe, "they have done my will"; that which was agreeable and well pleasing to God; and so these brethren by their coming and company, and news they brought, did that which was grateful and satisfactory to the apostle: and the phrase of the spirit of man having rest from another, is often used in the Rabbinical writings, for having satisfaction in them, and approving of them; so they say, {e},

"wnmyh hxwn twyrbh xwrv, that everyone "from whom the spirit of men have rest", the Spirit of God has rest; and everyone from whom the spirit of man has no rest, the Spirit of God has no rest:"

and which their commentators {f} explain thus,

"whoever is beloved below, it is manifest that he is beloved above:"

therefore acknowledge ye them that are such; as these men; know them, have an affection for them, show respect to them, highly esteem of them for their works' sake; see **1Th 5:12**.

{e} Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 10. {f} Jarchi & Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 10.

1 Corinthians 16:19

Ver. 19. The churches of Asia salute you,.... The Syriac version renders it, "all" the churches. This shows, that this epistle was not written from Philippi, as the subscription to it attests, for then he would rather have said; the churches of Macedonia salute you, but at Ephesus, where he now was; see 1Co 16:8; and this is the more confirmed, by the following salutation of Aquila and Priscilla, who it is plain from Ac 18:18, were with the apostle at Ephesus:

Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord; Aquila was a Jew of Pontus, and Priscilla was his wife, who came from Italy, all Jews being obliged to depart from Rome, by the order of Claudius Caesar. These came to Corinth, where they met with the apostle; and being of the same occupation, stayed and wrought with him; and when he went from thence to Ephesus, accompanied him thither; see Ac 18:3; wherefore having personal knowledge of the members of this church, through their stay with the apostle there, for the space of a year and a half, send their Christian salutations to them, with great affection and respect:

with the church that is in their house: their family consisting of believers, and being kept in such good decorum, and employed daily in singing, praying, expounding, and conferring together about divine things, looked like a little church; and it may be that at certain times the principal members of the church at Ephesus met in their house for religious worship, and to consider and debate about the affairs of the church; and very likely as they were of the same occupation with the apostle, he himself dwelt here; and which might be the more an occasion of the church assembling here at times; and the Vulgate Latin version adds, "with whom also I lodge".

1 Corinthians 16:20

Ver. 20. All the brethren greet you,.... Either the brethren, the members of the church at Ephesus; or the apostle's brethren in the ministry, that were along with him, as Sosthenes and others; or the brethren that were come to him from Corinth, namely Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus:

greet ye one another with an holy kiss; See Gill on "Ro 16:16".

1 Corinthians 16:21

Ver. 21. The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. The apostle had an "amanuensis", that wrote the epistle for him; but to prevent counterfeits, and that the church to whom he wrote might be assured of the genuineness of the epistle, that it was truly his own, he wrote with his own hand his common salutation; see **2Th 3:17**, and which is not in the following words, but what is expressed in
1Co 16:23.

1 Corinthians 16:22

Ver. 22. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ,.... The Vulgate Latin, and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, read "our Lord". The apostle here does not so much mean profane and unregenerate sinners, who are destitute of love to Christ, from ignorance of him; nor such who, from the same principle, might persecute him in his members, for such are to be even prayed for, and wished well unto; and oftentimes such are called by grace, and become true and sincere lovers of Christ; and the apostle himself was an instance of it: some think the Jews are intended, who were the mortal enemies of Christ; hated his name and person, his Gospel and interest, and maliciously persecuted the same; they called Jesus accursed, and therefore deserved an anathema to be pronounced on them; it was prophesied of them, that their name should be left for a curse; and it was threatened to them, in case of non-repentance, upon the coming of John the Baptist, in the spirit of Elijah, that the Lord would come and smite their land with a curse; which had its accomplishment in the destruction of Jerusalem; see Isa 65:15; others think the Gnostics are intended, one of whose tenets was, that it was lawful not to confess Christ in a time of persecution, in order to save themselves; and such might be truly said not to love our Lord Jesus, and on whom such an anathema as after mentioned might rightly be denounced: though it should seem rather, that some persons in this church, or that infested it, are referred to as the false teachers, and those who sided with them, who made factions and divisions in the church of Christ; allowed themselves in the commission of fornication and incest, and such like impurities; had no regard to the peace of the consciences of weak brethren, but laid stumblingblocks in their way; behaved in a very irreverent manner at the Lord's table, and gave in to very pernicious errors and heresies, particularly denying the resurrection of the dead; and by their many bad principles and practices plainly showed that they did not in deed and in truth love our Lord Jesus: wherefore of every such an one the apostle says,

let him be anathema. The word anathema, answers to the Hebrew Mrx, and is rendered by it here in the Syriac version; and signifies anything separated and devoted to holy uses; and so it is used by the Septuagint, in Le 27:28, and in the New Testament, Lu 21:5, and which, if alienated to any other purposes, entailed a curse on persons; hence it is often translated "accursed", as **Ro 9:3**
1Co 12:3, and here it signifies, that such persons that love not the Lord Jesus, should be rejected by the saints, and separated from their communion; and so the Arabic version renders it, "let him be separated"; that is, from the church; let him be cast out of it, and cut off from it; as, so living and dying without love to Christ, he will be accursed by him at the last day, and will have that awful sentence denounced on him, "go ye cursed". The apostle adds another word, about which there is some difficulty,

maranatha; some make this to be the same with "anathema"; the one being the Syriac, the other the Greek word, as "Abba, Father"; and think that "maranatha" is put for atmrxm, "maharamatha"; others think that it is the same with atanwrxm, "maharonatha", which signifies "from wrath to come"; and being joined with the other word, intends an anathematizing or devoting persons to wrath to come: others take it to be the last, and worse sort of excommunication among the Jews; and observe, that the first sort was called ywdn, "Niddui", which was a separation from company and conversation, to which reference may be had in **Lu 6:22**; the second sort was called Mrx Cherem, to which "anathema" answers, and was a separation, attended with curses and imprecations; and a third sort was called atmv, "Shammatha", and is thought to answer to "maranatha", giving the etymology of it, as if it was, ata Mv, "the name", i.e. "God cometh", as "maranatha" read as two words, signify "our Lord cometh": but this is not the etymology the Jews give of "Shammatha" {g}; they ask,

"what is "Shammatha?" says Rab, htym Mv, "there is death"; and Samuel says, hyhy hmmv, "desolations shall be";"

but of the other etymology there is no mention made among them; nor is ever the word "maranatha" used by them for excommunication; the sense of which certainly is, "our Lord cometh"; and the Ethiopic version, joining it with the former word, renders the whole thus, "let him be anathema in the coming of our Lord", which seems to be pretty much the sense of the apostle: it is best to consider this word, or rather these two words, "maran atha", "our Lord cometh", as added by the apostle, to put persons in mind of the coming of

Christ; either at the destruction of Jerusalem, to take vengeance on the Jews, who did not love, but hated him, and maliciously persecuted him, and his; or of the second coming of Christ to judgment, when all the wicked of the earth shall be accursed by him, and all such that love him not will be bid to depart from him.

{g} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 17. 1.

1 Corinthians 16:23

Ver. 23. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. This is the apostle's salutation in all his epistles, and is a token of the truth and genuineness of them; See Gill on "Ro 16:20"; and is a wish for a supply of all grace from Christ, and an increase of it in the saints; that they may have the communications of it to them, to quicken, invigorate, and draw forth into exercise the grace they have received, and to enable and assist them in the discharge of every duty.

1 Corinthians 16:24

Ver. 24. My love be with you all,.... Meaning either that he desired that he might be loved by them, as they were by him, and might always have a place in their hearts and affections, as they had in his; or that his love, which extended to all of them without exception, to rich and poor, greater or lesser believers, might be always acceptable to them; and which he now commended to them, and saluted them with, from his very heart: and that it might not be thought to be a carnal affection, or on account of any outward things, he adds,

in Christ Jesus; he loved them for Christ's sake, because they were his, had his grace bestowed on them, his image stamped upon them, and his Spirit put within them; and concludes as usual, with an

Amen; both by way of request, and for the sake of confirmation; desiring that so it might be, and believing that so it would be. The following subscription is added, not by the apostle, but by some other hand since. "The first" epistle "to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, by Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, and Timotheus"; but, as has been already observed, this epistle was not written from Philippi, but from Ephesus, where the apostle now was, as appears from 1Co 16:8; nor was it sent by Timotheus, for he was sent out before the writing of this epistle, see **1Co 4:17**, and the apostle puts an if upon his coming to them, in 1Co 16:10, which he would scarcely have done, if he had sent this letter by him; though very probably it was sent by the other three, who came from Corinth, at their return thither.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Corinthians 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS

This epistle, according to the subscription at the end of it, was written from Philippi of Macedonia; and though the subscriptions annexed to the epistles are not always to be depended on, yet it seems very likely that this was written from thence; for the apostle not finding Titus at Troas, as he expected, went into Macedonia, where he met with him, and had an account from him of the success of his first epistle; of the state and condition of the church, and of the temper and disposition of mind in which the members of it were, and which gave him great satisfaction; upon which he immediately wrote this second epistle, and sent it by the same person to them; see **2Co 2:12** **2Co 7:5**. It is very probable it might be written the year after the former; and so it is placed by Dr. Lightfoot in the year 56, as the former is in the year 55; though some place this in the year 60, and the other in 59. The occasion of this epistle was partly to excuse his not coming to them according to promise, and to vindicate himself from the charge of unfaithfulness, levity, and inconstancy on that account; and partly, since what he had wrote about the incestuous person, had had a good effect both upon him and them, to direct them to take off the censure that had been laid upon him, and restore him to their communion, and comfort him; likewise to stir them up to finish the collection for the poor saints they had begun; as also to defend himself against the calumnies of the false teachers, who were very industrious to sink his character and credit in this church; which he does by observing the doctrines of the Gospel he preached, which were far more glorious than, and abundantly preferable to, the ministration of the law of Moses, which those men desired to be teachers of; as likewise the success of his ministry in every place; the many sufferings he had underwent for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; the high favours and privileges he had received of the Lord, as well as the signs, wonders, and miracles done by him in proof of his apostleship; and in which are interspersed many things useful and instructive.

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS 1

This chapter contains the inscription of the epistle, the salutation of the persons to whom it is written, the preface to it, and the first part of it, in which is the apostle's defence of himself from the charge of fickleness and inconstancy. The inscription is in **2Co 1:1**, in which an account is given of the person, the writer of this epistle, by his name Paul, and by his office, an apostle of Jesus Christ, which is ascribed to the will of God as the spring and cause of it; and with himself he joins Timothy, whom he calls a brother: also an account is given of the persons to whom the epistle is inscribed, who are both the church at Corinth, and all the saints throughout the region of Achaia, of which Corinth was the chief city: the salutation, and which is common to all the epistles of the Apostle Paul, is in **2Co 1:2**, and the preface begins **2Co 1:3**, with a thanksgiving to God, who is described by the relation he stands in to Christ, as his Father, by the manifold mercies and blessings he is the author and donor of, and by the consolation he administers; an instance of which is given, **2Co 1:4**, in the apostle and his companions, who had been comforted by him; the end of which was, that they might be instruments of comforting others in like troubles with the same consolations; the great goodness of God in which is illustrated by proportioning their consolation by Christ to their sufferings for him, **2Co 1:5**, and the end both of their afflictions and their comforts is repeated and explained; and by a dilemma it is shown, that both were for the good of the saints at Corinth, **2Co 1:6**, and a strong assurance is given, that as they shared in sufferings for Christ, they would partake of consolation by him as they had done, **2Co 1:7**. Next the apostle, in proof of what he had said, gives an instance of the trouble he had been in, and of the comfort and deliverance he had received, which he would not have the Corinthians ignorant of: he mentions the place where it was, in Asia, and gives an account of the nature of the affliction, how great it was; it was out of measure, above the strength of man, and induced despair of life, **2Co 1:8**, so that the apostle, and those that were with him in it, expected nothing but death, and were under the sentence of it in their own apprehensions; the end of God in suffering which, was to take them off of all self-confidence, and to engage their trust in God, to which the consideration of his power in raising the dead is a strong argument, **2Co 1:9**. And indeed this deliverance, which God wrought, for the apostle, and his friends, was a deliverance as it were from death, and a very great one; and which had this effect upon them, the designed and desired end, trust and confidence in God for future deliverance, having had an experience of past and present, **2Co 1:10**, which deliverance the apostle acknowledges, was owing to the prayers of the Corinthians, as a means or helping cause of it; and which favour was bestowed thereby for this end, that as it came by the means of many, thanks might be returned by many for it, 2Co 1:11. And the reason why the apostle, and his fellow ministers, had such an interest in the prayers of the Corinthians, was their agreeable conversation in the world, and particularly at Corinth, which their consciences bore witness to, and they could reflect upon with pleasure; it being through the grace of God with great simplicity and sincerity, and not with carnal craft and subtlety: or this is mentioned by the apostle to remove the charge of levity, and to vindicate himself and others from it, 2Co 1:12, which he next enters upon, premising that the constant course of their lives was such as before described, and which there was no reason to doubt would always continue such; for the truth of which he appeals to what they had seen, and owned to be in them, 2Co 1:13, and that it was acknowledged, at least in part, that the apostles were their rejoicing, or of whom they boasted as to their conduct and conversation, even as they were persuaded they would be matter of rejoicing in the day of Christ to them, 2Co 1:14. And then the apostle acknowledges his intention and promise of coming to them, which was in confidence of their value for him, and of their being real Christians and persevering ones; and for this end, that he might establish them in the grace which they had received, 2Co 1:15, and also, after he had passed by them into Macedonia, and was returned from thence to them again, that he might be helped on by them in his journey to Jerusalem, with the collection for the poor saints there, 2Co 1:16. But then he denies that he used levity, or carnal policy and purposes, or was guilty of any contradiction; all which expresses by certain interrogations, 2Co 1:17, which confirms by the ministration of the Gospel among them, which was all of apiece, without contradiction for the truth of which he calls God to witness; and so argues from the uniformity of his ministry, to the constancy of his word of promise, 2Co 1:18. Which argument he amplifies and enlarges on, by observing the subject matter of the Gospel ministry, which is Jesus Christ the Son of God; and which, though preached by different ministers, himself, Silvanus, and Timothy, yet was the same, had no contrariety in it, as preached by the one, and by the other, 2Co 1:19, and therefore there was no reason to conclude that he was fickle and inconstant in his promise to them, when he was so invariable in his ministry among them: besides, as all the promises of God are sure and certain, being made by the God of truth, and being in Christ, and the performance of them being for the glory of God by the saints; so the promises of every good man, in imitation of God and Christ, are firmly and constantly observed, as much as can be by frail and finite creatures, 2Co 1:20; and that the apostle, and his fellow ministers, were not so fickle and changeable as they were represented, neither in their principles, nor in their practices, the apostle takes notice of some blessings of grace, which they enjoyed in common with other saints, and with the Corinthians; such as stability in Christ, the unction of divine grace, the seal and earnest of the Spirit in their hearts; all which they had from God, and which kept them close to God, and preserved them in his grace, and from a fickle variable temper of mind, and from changeableness either in doctrine or conduct, **2Co 1:21**. And then the apostle proceeds to give the true reason why he had not as yet come to Corinth, according to his promise, which was on their account, and not his own, that they might not come under that severe discipline and correction, which their faults required; and for the truth of this he calls God to witness, **2Co 1:23**. But lest it should be objected that this was assuming a dominion over them, a lording it over God's heritage, he observes, that he and his fellow ministers did not pretend to have dominion over their faith, only to be helpers of their joy, **2Co 1:24**.

Ver. 1. Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,.... The inscription of this epistle is pretty much the same with that of the former; only whereas here he styles himself an apostle of Jesus Christ, there he says he was "called" to be one: for he did not assume that character and office without the call of Christ, and will of God; and which he chooses to mention, in opposition to the false apostles, who had neither. Likewise, in the inscription of the former epistle Sosthenes is joined with him; in this Timothy, whom he calls

our brother, not so much on account of his being a partaker of the same grace, as for his being a minister of the same Gospel: and he the rather mentions him, because he had sent him to them, to know their state, and was now returned to him with an account of it, and who joined and agreed with him in the substance of this epistle. Moreover, the former epistle is directed as "unto the church of God which is at Corinth"; so to all that call upon the name of Christ in every place; and this is directed also to the same church, together

with all the saints which are in all Achaia; which was a very considerable part of Greece, and of which Corinth was the metropolis: and the apostle's intention in directing it in this form was, that copies of this letter might be sent to them, who equally, with this church, stood in need of the reproofs, exhortations, and instructions which are in it.

2 Corinthians 1:2

Ver. 2. Grace be to you,.... This salutation is the same with that in the former epistle, and is common to all his epistles;
See Gill on "Ro 1:7".

2 Corinthians 1:3

Ver. 3. Blessed be God,.... This is an ascription of praise and glory to God, for he can only be blessed of men, by their praising and glorifying him, or by ascribing honour and blessing to him: and in this form of blessing him he is described, first by his relation to Christ,

even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: whose Son Christ is, not by creation, as angels and men, nor by adoption, as saints, but in such a way of filiation, as no creatures are, or possibly can be: he is his only begotten Son, his own proper Son, his natural and eternal Son, is of the same nature with him, and equal to him in perfections, power, and glory. This is rightly prefaced by the apostle to the other following characters, since there is no mercy nor comfort administered to the sons of men but through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and Saviour of sinners. And next he is described by his attribute of mercy, and the effects of it, or by his merciful disposition to his creatures,

the Father of mercies. The Jews frequently address God in their prayers {a} under the title or character of, Mymxrh ba, "Father of mercies". The plural number is used, partly to show that God is exceeding merciful; he delights in showing mercy to poor miserable creatures, and is rich and plenteous in the exercise of it: nothing is more common in the Talmudic writings, than to call him anmxr, "the merciful", and this is partly to express the multitude of his tender mercies, of which he is the "Father", author, and giver, both in a temporal, and spiritual sense; for there are not only innumerable providential mercies which the people of God share in, and partake of, but also a multitude of spiritual mercies. Such as redemption by Christ, pardon of sin through his blood, regeneration by his Spirit, supplies of grace out of his fulness, and the word and ordinances; all which are owing to the mercy of God, which they have abundant reason to be thankful to him, and bless him for, being altogether unworthy and undeserving of them. God is also described by his work of comforting the saints,

and the God of all comfort; most rightly is this character given him, for there is no solid comfort but what comes from him; there is none to be had in, and from the creatures; and whatever is had through them it is from him: and all spiritual comfort is of him; whatever consolation the saints enjoy they have it from God, the Father of Christ, and who is their covenant God and Father in Christ; and the consolation they have from him through Christ in a covenant way is not small, and for which they have great reason to bless the Lord, as the apostle here does; for it is from him that Christ, the consolation of Israel, and the Spirit, the Comforter, come, and whatever is enjoyed by the Gospel.

{a} Seder Tephillot, fol. 55. 8. Ed. Basil. fol. 77. 1. & passim, Ed. Amstelod. Sapher Shaare Zion, fol. 54. 1. Vid. Kabbala Denudata, par. 1. p. 7.

2 Corinthians 1:4

Ver. 4. Who comforteth us in all our tribulation,.... The apostle in this verse gives a reason of the former thanksgiving, and at the same time confirms the above character of God, as "the God of all comfort", by his own experience, and that of his fellow ministers; who, though they had been in great tribulation and affliction for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, yet were not left destitute of divine help and support under their trials; but had much consolation and sweet refreshment administered to them by the presence of God with them, the application of his promises to them, the shedding abroad of his love in them, and the fellowship and communion they enjoyed with Father, Son, and Spirit. The end of this, or why God was pleased to comfort them in such a manner, was not so much on their own account; though it showed that they were loved, and not hated and rejected of God, but for the good of others:

that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God; many are the troubles and afflictions of the saints in this life, but it is the will of God that they should be comforted: and the persons he employs and makes use of in this way are his ministering servants, whose principal work and business it is to speak comfortably to the people of God; see Isa 40:1, and that they may be able to do so, that they may be fitted and furnished for so good a work, they are blessed with a rich experience of divine consolation in themselves, under the various troubles and exercises they are attended with in the course of their ministry; and such persons are, of all others, the fittest, and indeed the only proper persons to speak a word in season to weary souls.

2 Corinthians 1:5

Ver. 5. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us,.... By "the sufferings of Christ" are not meant those which he suffered in his own person for the sake, and in the room and stead of his people, the fruits and effects of which abound to them, and in them; but those which he suffers in his members, or which they suffer for his sake; and which are said to "abound in" them, because of the variety and greatness of them; though not as if they were more or greater than what Christ suffered in his soul and body, when he was made sin and a curse for his people: yet notwithstanding the abundance of them, such is the goodness and grace of God, that he proportions comforts to them; as their afflictions increase, so do their comforts; as their sufferings for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, are more and greater,

so, says he, our consolation aboundeth by Christ: meaning, either that consolation which they felt and enjoyed in their own souls, under all their tribulations, which abundantly answered to them, and which they ascribe to Christ, from and by whom it comes to them; or else that consolation, which, by preaching Christ, abounded to the relief of others who were in distress and trouble.

2 Corinthians 1:6

Ver. 6. And whether we be afflicted it is for your consolation,.... The apostle repeats and explains the end of both his comforts and his troubles, and shows, by a dilemma, a strong way of arguing, that the afflictions and consolations, the adversity and prosperity of him, and the other ministers of the Gospel, were for the good of the saints: and it is as if he should say, when you see us continue to preach the Gospel with so much boldness and cheerfulness, amidst so many reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, you must be the more established in the faith, and confirmed in the truth of the Gospel; and this cannot fail of ministering much peace, satisfaction, and comfort to your minds. This animates you to hold fast the rejoicing of your hope, and the profession of your faith firm unto the end; and with the greater cheerfulness and pleasure meet with, and endure afflictions yourselves for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel: nay, he says, that the afflictions of Christ's ministers were not only for their consolation, but also for their

salvation, which is effectual, or is effectually wrought

in, or by

the enduring, patient bearing,

of the same sufferings which we also suffer. Not that the afflictions of the saints, or of others, and their patient enduring of them, are the cause of their salvation; for Christ is only the efficient cause, he is the sole author of spiritual and eternal salvation; but these are means the Spirit of God makes use of, as he does of the word and ordinances, to bring the saints to a satisfaction as to their interest in it, and are the ordinary way in which they are brought to the possession of it.

Or whether we be comforted it is for your consolation and salvation: for whatsoever comfort God is pleased to communicate to us, it is not kept in our breasts, and for our own use, but we immediately and readily impart it to you, that you may share with us the advantage of it, and be comforted together with us; that your faith in the doctrine of salvation may be established, your hope of it increased, and that you may be more comfortably assured you are in the way to it, and shall enjoy it.

2 Corinthians 1:7

Ver. 7. For our hope of you is steadfast,.... We have long ago entertained hopes of you, that the work of God is begun upon your souls, and will be carried on, and that you will hold on in the profession of your faith unto the end, and not be moved by the afflictions you see in us, or endure in yourselves; and so will pass on cheerfully in your Christian race, in the midst of all your troubles, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, you may expect to be possessed of; and this hope, for or concerning you, continues with us firm and immovable.

Knowing, which may refer either to the Corinthians; so the Arabic version, "be ye knowing", or "know ye"; you may, or should know; this you may assure yourselves of: or to the apostle and other ministers; so the Syriac version, Nnyedy, "we know", we are persuaded of the truth of this,

that as you are partakers of the sufferings; that is, of Christ, and the same which we also suffer for him:

so shall ye be; or rather, "so you are also of the consolation"; for the apostle seems to respect not future happiness and glory, in which, as there will be no afflictions and troubles, so no comfort under them, but present consolation, which the saints enjoy here as a pledge and earnest of that fulness of joy which they shall have with Christ for evermore.

2 Corinthians 1:8

Ver. 8. For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble,.... The apostle was very desirous that the Corinthians might be thoroughly acquainted with the trouble that had lately befallen them; partly because it would clearly appear from hence what reason he had to give thanks to God as he had done; and partly, that they might be encouraged to trust in God, when in the utmost extremity; but chiefly in order to remove a charge brought against him by the false apostles; who, because he had promised to come to Corinth, and as yet had not come, accused him of lightness and inconstancy, in as much as he had not kept his promise. Now to show that it was not owing to any such temper and disposition of mind in him, he would have them know, that though he sincerely intended a journey to them, yet was hindered from pursuing it, by a very great affliction which befell him: the place where this sore trouble came upon him, is expressed to be in Asia: some have thought it refers to all the troubles he met with in Asia, for the space of three years, whereby he was detained longer than he expected; but it seems as though some single affliction is here particularly designed: many interpreters have been of opinion, that the tumult raised by Demetrius at Ephesus is here meant, when Paul and his companions were in great danger of their lives, Ac 19:21, but this uproar being but for a day, could not be a reason why, as yet, he had not come to Corinth: it seems rather to be some other very sore affliction, and which lasted longer, that is not recorded in the Acts of the Apostles: the greatness of this trouble is set forth in very strong expressions,

as that we were pressed out of measure. The affliction was as an heavy burden upon them, too heavy to bear; it was exceeding heavy,
kay' uperbolhn, even to an "hyperbole", beyond expression; and

above strength, that is, above human strength, the strength of nature; and so the Syriac renders it, Nlyx Nm, "above our strength"; but not above the strength of grace, or that spiritual strength communicated to them, by which they were supported under it: the apostle adds,

insomuch that we despaired even of life; they were at the utmost loss, and in the greatest perplexity how to escape the danger of life; they greatly doubted of it; they saw no probability nor possibility, humanly speaking, of preserving it.

2 Corinthians 1:9

Ver. 9. But we had the sentence of death in ourselves,.... By the sentence of death is meant, not any decree of heaven, or appointment of God that they should die; nor any sentence of condemnation and death passed on them by the civil magistrate; but an opinion or persuasion in their own breasts, that they should die; so far were they from any hopes of life, that they looked upon themselves as dead men, as the Egyptians did, when their firstborn were slain, and said, "we be all dead men", Ex 12:33, and to this extremity they were suffered to be brought by the wise counsel of God, for the following purposes, to learn to lay aside all self-trust and confidence:

that we should not trust in ourselves; in our strength, wisdom, and policy, to make our escape, and preserve our lives; and also to teach and encourage them to trust in God alone, and depend on his arm, on his almighty power:

but in God which raiseth the dead; who will raise the dead at the last day, and so is able to deliver persons when they are in the most distressed condition, and in their own opinion as dead men.

2 Corinthians 1:10

Ver. 10. Who delivered us from so great a death,.... Accordingly, being enabled to trust in God, when all human hope and helps failed, to believe in hope against hope, then the Lord appeared for them, and delivered them from this heavy affliction; which, because by reason of it they were not only in danger of death, and threatened with, but were even under the sentence of it, is therefore called a death, and so great an one, see 2Co 11:23. The apostle expresses the continuance of the mercy,

and doth deliver; which shows that they were still exposed to deaths and dangers, but were wonderfully preserved by the power of God, which gave great encouragement to them to hope and believe that God would still preserve them for further usefulness. The Alexandrian copy leaves out this clause, and so does the Syriac version.

In whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; all the three tenses, past, present, and future, are mentioned, which shows that an abiding sense of past and present deliverances serves greatly to animate faith in expectation of future ones.

2 Corinthians 1:11

Ver. 11. You also helping together by prayer for us,.... Though the apostle ascribes their deliverance solely to God, as the author and efficient cause of it; yet he takes notice of the prayers of the saints for them, as helping causes or means of their obtaining it. It was a very laudable practice in the churches, and worthy of imitation, to pray for the ministers of the Gospel, and especially when under affliction and persecution; see Ac 12:5, and the prayers of those righteous ones were heard by God, and often effectual for the deliverance of them, as they were in the present case: for

by the means of many persons, who wrestled together in prayer with God,

the gift of deliverance from so great a death, which the apostle looked upon as a wonderful mercy, carisma, "a free grace gift", was "bestowed upon" them, which was granted for this end,

that thanks may be given by many on our behalf; which is but reasonable, and ought to be observed; for since many were concerned in asking for, and obtaining the mercy, they ought to join in thanksgiving for it: and the apostle's view in this is to stir them up to a joint acknowledgment of the deliverance with them, which better became them than to side with the false apostles in their charge against him.

2 Corinthians 1:12

Ver. 12. For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience,.... This rejoicing or glorying of the apostle's in the testimony of their consciences, to the goodness of their hearts, actions, conduct, and behaviour, was not before God, and in his sight, but before men, who were ready to accuse their good conversation in Christ: nor are these words to be considered as they generally are by interpreters, as if it was the testimony of a good conscience, which was the ground of their faith and confidence, that God would deliver them, and was an helping cause, together with the prayers of the saints, of their present deliverance. They refer to the charge exhibited against the apostle, that he had falsified his word in not coming to Corinth according to his promise; under which charge he could sit easy, having a witness within him, which was better than a thousand others, that

we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards; the Corinthians, of which they themselves must be conscious:

in simplicity; in opposition to double mindedness; they did not say one thing, and mean another, and act contrary to both; their heart and mouth went together, and their conduct agreed with both; what they promised they meant to perform; and where there was a want of performance, it was owing to intervening providences, which hindered, and not to any deceitfulness in them: the conscience of the apostle bore him witness, that he behaved in the simplicity and singleness of his heart; and also in

godly sincerity, or "in the sincerity of God"; that is, such as God requires, gives, and approves of, and which will stand in his sight, will bear his examination, and to which he gives his testimony; and that his conduct was

not influenced with fleshly wisdom: he used no artful sophistical methods to impose upon, and delude persons, for any sinister ends, or worldly advantage:

but by the grace of God; which was bestowed upon him, implanted in him, and which taught him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world.

2 Corinthians 1:13

Ver. 13. For we write none other things to you,.... The things we write unto you concerning our conduct; and behaviour, are no other

than what you read; not in our letters to you, but in our lives and conversations, when we were among you, and which you must own and acknowledge to be just and right; we can appeal to you, that what we say, and are obliged to say of ourselves, in our own defence, is what, upon a recollection, you will easily remember to have seen and observed:

and I trust; or "hope", through the grace of God, we shall be enabled so to walk, as that

you shall acknowledge even to the end; that our conversations are as become the Gospel of Christ, and are clear of that hypocrisy and deceit our adversaries would insinuate concerning us.

2 Corinthians 1:14

Ver. 14. As also you have acknowledged us in part,.... This may refer either to the thing known and acknowledged, namely, the integrity of the apostle's conversation, and others; which though they did not know thoroughly and perfectly, yet did in part, and that so far as that they might acquit them from the charge brought against them; or to the persons who knew this, as that there were some in the church of Corinth, a part of them, though not all, who knew and had acknowledged them to be upright and sincere ministers of the word, and had declared that they had reason to rejoice and bless God that ever they heard them: and

that we are your rejoicing: or "glorying in", or "unto the day of the Lord Jesus": when he shall come to judge the world in righteousness, then they should before him, angels and men, rejoice and glory in this, that they had been blessed with such sincere and faithful ministers, who sought not any worldly advantage, but the glory of Christ, and the salvation of souls:

even as, adds the apostle,

ye also are ours; we do now, and so we shall then, rejoice and glory in this, that our labour among you was not in vain, but was blessed for your conversion and edification.

2 Corinthians 1:15

Ver. 15. And in this confidence I was minded,.... Being fully persuaded of your affection for me, as having been instrumental in the conversion of many of you, and of your esteem of me as a faithful and upright minister of the word, and of your being my rejoicing in the day of Christ, I was desirous, and had determined, and so promised,

to come to you before; when I sent my first epistle to you, or before now, or before I went into Macedonia; and what I now say was the sincere intention of my mind; I thought really to have done what I had such an inclination to: and my view in it was,

that you might have a second benefit; the meaning of which according to some is, first by his letter to them, and then by his presence with them; or as others, one benefit when he should pass by them to Macedonia, and a second, when he should return to them from thence, according to the following verse; or rather, as the first benefit which they received from him, and under his ministry, was their conversion, so this second benefit may design their edification, and establishment in the faith, their growth in grace, and improvement in spiritual knowledge.

2 Corinthians 1:16

Ver. 16. And to pass by you into Macedonia,.... It was his first intention and determination to have come first to Corinth, and then to Macedonia, to have took this city in his way thither; which was an argument of his love to them, and his great desire to see them; since he might have gone, as he did, a nearer way to Macedonia, than by Corinth:

and to come again out of Macedonia to you; when he had gone through that, and done his business there unto the Corinthians; and after some stay with them,

of you to be brought on my way towards Judea; where he intended to go, with the collections he had made for the poor saints at Jerusalem, in the several churches in Asia; but though this was his first resolution, which he had signified either by letter, or messengers, yet he afterwards changed his mind, for some reasons within himself; it may be, having heard some things disagreeable of them, which he thought more convenient to acquaint them with in an epistle first, and to try what effect that would have upon them, before he came in person: that he changed his mind, appears from the former epistle, 1Co 16:5, where he says, "I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia"; and upon this account it is he excuses and vindicates himself in the following verse.

2 Corinthians 1:17

Ver. 17. When I was therefore thus minded, did I use lightness?.... When I had thus determined to come to you, and had signified the same by writing, or messengers, did I use lightness in my resolutions and promises? did I act rashly, unadvisedly, and without consideration? did I promise certainly that I would come, without annexing any condition to it? did I not say, I would come to you shortly, if the Lord will? see **1Co 4:19**.

Or the things that I purpose, do l purpose according to the flesh? do I consult myself? my own interest and advantage? do I seek the gratification of any carnal affection, as covetousness, ambition, or vain glory? &c. what sinister end could have been obtained, if I had come as I purposed, or is answered by my not coming? or when I have purposed anything, have I resolved upon it in my own strength? have I thought it lay in my own power to effect it?

that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay? as if I could make my "yea" continue "yea", and my "nay, nay?" when all actions are weighed by God, and all events are at his dispose; man appoints, and God disappoints; and who can help these things? or thus, has there appeared such contradictions in my words, and such inconstancy in my conduct, that my "yeas" are "nays", and my "nays yeas?" that I say one thing at one time, and another at another time, or both in the same breath? that I should say one thing, and mean another, on purpose to deceive, and change my mind and conduct without any reason?

2 Corinthians 1:18

Ver. 18. But as God is true,.... It seems that the false apostles had insinuated, that as the apostle had not kept his word in coming to them as he had promised, that he was not to be depended upon in his ministry; that he might as well contradict himself, and deceive others in the one, as well as in the other: wherefore he appeals to God in a very solemn manner, calls him to witness to the truth of his doctrine; for these words may be considered as the form of an oath; or he argues from, the truth and faithfulness of God, to the certainty and invariableness of the word preached, who is so true and faithful as that he will never suffer his word to be yea and nay: for when the apostle says, that

our word towards you was not yea and nay, he does not mean his word of promise to come to Corinth; but the word of his preaching, the doctrine of the Gospel, which was not uncertain, changeable, sometimes one thing, and sometimes another, and contradictory to itself. And by this the apostle would intimate, that since he was faithful and upright, uniform, consistent, and all of a piece in preaching the Gospel to them; so they ought to believe, that he was sincere in his resolutions and promises to come and see them, though as yet he had been hindered, and had not been able to perform them.

2 Corinthians 1:19

Ver. 19. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ,.... The apostle having asserted that the Gospel preached by them was not yea and nay, variable and different, or what was affirmed at one time was denied at another, proceeds to point out the subject of the Gospel ministry,

the Son of God, Jesus Christ; that Christ is "the Son of God": this article he began his ministry with, **Ac 9:20**, and all the apostles affirmed the same thing; and which is of the greatest moment and importance, and ought to be abode by, insisted on, and frequently inculcated; as that he is the eternal Son of God, existed as such from everlasting, is of the same nature, and has the same perfections with his Father; and therefore is able to destroy the works of the devil, for which he was manifested in the flesh, and every way equal to the business of redemption, which he has finished; and having passed into the heavens under this character, is a powerful advocate with the Father; and which renders him a sure foundation for the church, and a proper object of faith: that the Son of God is Christ, anointed to bear and execute the office of a mediator in the several parts and branches of it; a prophet to teach his people, a priest to make atonement and intercession for them, and a King to govern and protect them: and that the Son, who is become the Lord's Christ, is Jesus, a Saviour; and that salvation is alone by him, to which he was appointed from eternity, and was sent in the fulness of time to effect it; and by his obedience, sufferings, and death, is become the author of it, and is the only able, willing, and suitable Saviour for poor sinners. This is the principal subject and strain of the Gospel ministry; and which makes it good news, and glad tidings to lost perishing sinners. The agreement between the faithful ministers of the Gospel is here plainly hinted,

who was preached among you by us, even by me, and Silvanus and Timotheus. These ministers being mentioned by the apostle with himself, shows his humility in putting them on a level with himself; and his modesty and candour in not monopolizing the Gospel to himself, but allowing others to be preachers of it as well as he: and his design herein seems to be for the confirmation of the Gospel, and to show that he was not singular and alone, and could not be blamed by them, without blaming others; and chiefly to express the harmony and unanimity of Gospel preachers. The prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New, agreed in all the doctrines and truths of the Gospel; so did the apostles themselves; and so all faithful dispensers of the word have in all different times and places agreed, and still do agree; which serves greatly to corroborate the truth of the Gospel. The Gospel being faithfully preached by these persons, was not yea and nay; it had no contradiction in it; each part agreed together, was entirely harmonious, and consistent. Their doctrine was, that Christ is the Son of God, truly and properly God; that he took upon him the office of a Mediator, and executes it; that he is the only Saviour of sinners; that God has chosen a certain number of men in Christ before the foundation of the world, has made a covenant with them in Christ, and blessed them in him; that Christ has redeemed them by his blood; that these are regenerated by the Spirit and grace of Christ, are justified by his righteousness, and shall finally persevere, and be partakers of eternal life; which is all of a piece, and in it no yea and nay. Yea and nay doctrines are particular election, the possibility of the salvation of the non-elect, the salvability of all men, and universal redemption; justification by faith, and, as it were, by the works of the law; conversion, partly by grace, and partly by the will of man; preparatory works, offers, and days of grace; and final perseverance made a doubt of: but such is not the true ministry of Christ and his apostles,

but in him was yea; the Gospel, as in Christ, and as it comes from him, and has been preached by his apostles, and faithful ministers, is all of a piece; its constant and invariable strain, and by which it may be known and distinguished, is, to display the free, rich, and sovereign grace of God, to magnify and exalt the person and offices of Christ, to debase the creature, and to engage persons to the performance of good works, on Gospel principles, and by Gospel motives, and for right ends. The apostle using those words, "yea and nay", conforms to the language of the Jews, his countrymen, who to magnify their doctors and Rabbins, and to raise their credit, say such things of them;

""yea, yea", are the words of the house or school of Shammai; Nh Nh, "yea, yea", are the words of the school of Hillell {b}."

And in another place {c};

"the receiving and giving, or the dealings of a disciple of a wise man, are in truth and faithfulness. He says, Nh Nh
lew wal wal le, "concerning nay, nay, and concerning yea, yea"."

But what is here said better agrees with the principles and practices of the disciples and followers of Christ.

{b} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 20. 1. {c} Maimon. Hilch. Dayot, c. 5. sect. 13.

2 Corinthians 1:20

Ver. 20. For all the promises of God in him [are] yea,.... This is a reason or argument proving what is before said, that "in" Christ "was yea", since "all the promises of God in him are yea"; and shows, that God has made many promises to his people: mention is here made of "promises", and of "all" the promises; or, as the words may be rendered, "as many promises of God". There are some which concern the temporal good of the saints; as that they shall not want any good thing; and though they shall be attended with afflictions, these shall work for their good, and they shall be supported under them. Others concern their spiritual good; some of which relate to God himself, that he will be their God, which includes his everlasting love, his gracious presence, and divine protection. Others relate to Christ as their surety and Saviour, by whom they are, and shall be justified and pardoned, in whom they are adopted, and by whom they shall be saved with an everlasting salvation: and others relate to the Spirit of God, as a spirit of illumination, faith, comfort, strength, and assistance, and to supplies of grace by him from Christ: and others concern everlasting life and happiness, and are all of them very ancient, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; are exceeding great and precious, suited to the various cases of God's people; are free and unconditional, immutable and irrevocable, and will all of them have their certain accomplishment. These promises are all "in" Christ; with and in whom could they be but in him, since he only existed when they were made, which was from everlasting? with and in whom should they be of right, but in him with whom the covenant, which contains these promises, were made, and who undertook the accomplishment of them? where could they be safe and secure but in him, in whose hands are the persons, grace, and glory of his people? not in Adam, nor in angels, nor in themselves, only in him. Moreover, these promises are "in him yea",

and in him amen; they are like the Gospel which exhibits them, consistent, and all of a piece; like the covenant which contains them, and is ordered in all things, and sure; and like the author of them, whose faithfulness and lovingkindness to his in Christ shall never fail; and like Christ himself, in whom they are, who is "the amen, the true and faithful witness, the same today, yesterday, and for ever"; by whose blood, the covenant, and all the promises of it, are ratified and confirmed, and in whom, who is the truth of them, they are all fulfilled. And these are

unto the glory of God by us; these serve to illustrate and advance the glory of God, when they are preached by us, and held forth by us in the Gospel, just as they are in Christ, free, absolute, and unconditional; and when they are received "by us" as believers in Christ; for the stronger we are in the faith of the promises, the more glory we give to God; faith by laying hold on, and embracing the promises, glorifies the veracity, faithfulness, power, and grace of God. The Syriac version puts the "Amen" into this last clause, and reads it thus, "therefore by him we give Amen to the glory of God".

2 Corinthians 1:21

Ver. 21. Now he which stablisheth us with you,.... Two things are in this verse ascribed to God. First, the establishing of the saints in Christ; in which may be observed, that the people of God are in a firm, settled, established state and condition; they are encircled in the arms of everlasting love; they are secure of the favour of God; they are engraven on his hands, and set as a seal on his heart, from whence they can never be removed; they are taken into his family by adopting grace; and will never be turned out; they are in a state of justification, and shall never enter into condemnation; they are regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God, and shall never finally and totally fall from that grace they have received. This their establishment is "in" Christ, and in no other. They had no stability in Adam, nor have they any in themselves; their standing is alone in him; the unchangeable love and favour of God, which is their grand security, is in Christ; the covenant of grace, in which is all their salvation, is made and stands fast with him; their persons, with all their grace and glory, are put into his hands, and made his care and charge, and there they are safe. They are espoused unto him, made one with him, incorporated into him, and are built upon him the rock of ages, where they are so established, that hell and earth cannot shake them, so as to remove and unsettle them from this foundation: one and all of them, and all together, are established in him,

us with you; all the elect of God are alike, and together in Christ, and have the same place and standing in his love, power, and care; they make up one body, of which Christ is the head, and not one of them shall be lost, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, ministers or private believers; for so this phrase may be interpreted, "us" Jews "with you" Gentiles, or "us" ministers "with you" believers. This work of establishing the saints in Christ is wholly the Lord's act; he

is God that does it; which does not contradict the word and ordinances being means of establishment; nor does it hinder or discourage persons making use of means for their stability; for the apostle here is not speaking so much of the stability of hearts, frames, and exercise of grace, as of state; though a firm, steady, and stable assurance of interest in Christ, is what God gives by his Spirit. The apostle's view seems to be this, that whatever steadfastness and stability the saints have, whether ministers or people, they ought to ascribe it entirely to God, Father, Son, and Spirit. "Secondly", the anointing of them:

he hath anointed us; which is to be understood either of the unction of ministers, with the gifts of the Spirit for ministerial service; or rather of the anointing of private Christians with the grace of the Spirit, compared to oil or ointment, in allusion to the anointing oil under the law, by which the tabernacle, and its vessels, Aaron, and his sons, were anointed, who were typical of the saints and priests of God under the Gospel; or to the lamp oil in the candlestick, which was pure, and for light; or to oil in common, for its sweet smell, refreshing nature, and for its usefulness for ornament and healing. This also is the Lord's work, and not man's; this unction comes from the God of all grace, through Christ, by the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 1:22

Ver. 22. Who hath also sealed us,.... "Two" things more are here attributed to God; "first", the sealing of his people. The use of seals is various, as to denote property in things, to distinguish one thing from another, to show esteem and affection for persons or things, and for security and protection, and to hide and conceal; all which might be applied to sealing, as expressive of the grace of God to his people, in claiming a property in them, distinguishing them from the rest of the world, setting his affections on them, securing and protecting their persons, and hiding them under the shadow of his wings: but sometimes a seal is used to certify, make sure, or assure the truth of a thing; see **Joh 3:33** in which sense the word "sealing" is used here, and intends that assurance which God gives his people of their interest in his love, and the covenant of grace; of their election of God, and redemption by Christ; of their interest in Christ, and union with him; of their justification by him, and adoption through him; of the truth of grace in their hearts, their perseverance in it, and sure and certain enjoyment of eternal glory. The persons thus sealed are not carnal and unconverted persons, only believers in Christ, and these, after they commence such; the seal by which they are sealed, is not any of the ordinances, as circumcision under the Old Testament, or baptism, or the Lord's supper under the New; for these are no seals, nor are they ever so called; but the Spirit of God himself, as the Holy Spirit of promise; for the same who, in the next clause, is called the earnest, is the seal; see **Eph 1:13**. "Secondly", the giving of the earnest of the Spirit:

and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts: by "the Spirit" is meant, not the gifts and graces of the Spirit merely, but the Spirit of God and Christ himself; who was concerned in the creation of the world, in inditing the Scriptures, in forming and filling the human nature of Christ, and in his resurrection from the dead; he himself is given as an "earnest": the word arrabwn, here used, and in **2Co 5:5** is the Hebrew word Nwbre, and comes from
bre, which signifies "to become a surety, to give a pledge"; and is used for a pledge in covenants and bargains, both in Scripture, see
Ge 38:17, and in Jewish writings {d}; which is given as an earnest, and in part of what it is a pledge of, and is never returned: the Spirit of God is an earnest or pledge of the heavenly inheritance, which is not only prepared for us, and promised to us, and Christ is in the possession of in our nature, in our room and stead, and as our representative; but the Spirit of God also is sent down "into our hearts" as a pledge of it; where he dwells as in his temple, supplies us with all grace, witnesses to us our sonship, and assures us of the heavenly glory: and as such he is "given"; and an unmerited free grace gift he is; for him to be given in this manner, and for such a purpose, is a wonderful display of the love of the Father, and of the Son, and is a surprising instance of his grace and condescension of the Spirit, and for which we should be abundantly thankful.

{d} Midrash Megillath Esther, fol. 94. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Mechira, c. 7. sect. 1. & c. 11. sect. 4.

2 Corinthians 1:23

Ver. 23. Moreover, I call God for a record upon my soul,.... The apostle having asserted his stability, both as a minister and a Christian, which, with others, he had from God, appeals to him in the most solemn manner, in full form of an oath, for the truth of what he was about to say; and is all one as if he had said, I swear by the living God, the searcher of all hearts; I call upon him to attest what I say, and bear witness to my soul, that it is true,

that to spare you, I came not as yet unto Corinth; however fickle, unstable, and inconstant, it may be insinuated to you I am, or you may take me to be, I do assure you in the name and presence of God, that the true reason of my not coming to you hitherto, since I gave you reason to expect me, was, that I might not be burdensome or chargeable to you; or I have delayed coming to you, hoping for a reformation among you, that when I do come, I may not come with a rod, and severely chastise you for the many disorders among you; that I might not use sharpness according to the power God has given me, in an extraordinary way, as an apostle, to punish for offences committed. Hence we learn, that an oath is a solemn appeal to God, and may be lawfully made in cases of moment and importance, as this of the apostle's was; whose character was traduced, and with which was connected the usefulness of his ministry; and it being an affair that could not be determined in any other way, and an oath being for confirmation, and to put an end to strife, he makes one in this serious and awful manner.

2 Corinthians 1:24

Ver. 24. Not for that we have dominion,.... Since he had spoke of "sparing" of them, lest it should be thought that he and his fellow ministers assumed to themselves any tyrannical power over the churches, or lorded it over God's heritage, these words are subjoined: in which there is something denied of the ministers of the Gospel, as that they

have not dominion over your faith: by which may be meant both the grace and doctrine of faith: they cannot give or produce in the heart the grace of faith; that is the gift of God; of which Christ is not only the object, but the author; it is of the operation of the Spirit, and the effect of almighty power; it flows entirely from the free grace of God; all that ministers can do is to propose the object of faith, and, by arguments taken from the word of God, encourage souls to believe in the object proposed, and so are, through a divine blessing on their ministrations, instruments by which some believe; but they themselves cannot command faith in any; nor can they increase or add unto it where it is; this also is the Lord's work: nor have they any dominion over the doctrine of faith; they are to deliver nothing to the people but what is contained in the Scriptures, and the people are obliged to believe no more than what they find there; no alteration is to be made in the rule and doctrine of faith; ministers have no power to make and impose new articles of faith, though they may require and insist upon an assent to those truths which they deliver, according to the word of God. Likewise, something is asserted of them,

but are helpers of your joy. "Joy" is a grace wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God, of which Christ is the object; it goes along with faith, and as that improves, so does this; it is often interrupted by the corruptions of the heart, the temptations of Satan, and divine desertions, and so is in this life imperfect; though it may be increased, as it sometimes is, and that by the ministration of the Gospel; for as the ministers of it are the means and instruments of that joy which is first felt in conversion, so likewise of increasing it by their comfortable doctrines and instructions; for their ministry is, and is often blessed, for the furtherance and joy of faith. A reason of which is given,

for by faith ye stand; and so are not subject to men, nor to any tyrannical government of ours; nor have we anything to charge you with concerning your faith: which may design the grace of faith, and express its use in the perseverance of the saints, who stand not upon their faith, but "by it"; and by it, not as a cause but as a means of their perseverance; by which they rely on the power and faithfulness of God, lean upon Christ, and walk on in him, live upon him, continually receive from him, and in his strength stand against the temptations of Satan, and snares of the world: and it may also denote the strength and continuance of faith; a man may be said to stand by it, when he strongly believes his interest in God, in his love, and the covenant of his grace, his interest in Christ, and salvation by him; is satisfied about the truth of grace on his soul, makes no demur upon the promises, nor hesitates about the doctrines of grace, or his future happiness, but rejoices in hope of the glory of God; as also, when he continues in the exercise of faith, notwithstanding the corruptions of his nature, the temptations of Satan, the hidings of God's face, and the many afflictions and trials he meets with in the world. Moreover, this passage may be applied to the doctrine of faith, in and by which the saints may be said to stand, in opposition to any wavering or hesitation about it, to a cowardly spirit in giving way in the least to the adversaries of it, or to a departing from it; which by no means should be done, though a greater number is on the other side, and they be the rich and learned; though the doctrines of it are disagreeable to the carnal reason of man, are loaded with reproach, and followed with the rage, malice, and persecutions of men: or these words may relate to a profession of faith: care should be used in taking up a profession of faith; where the true grace of God is, it ought to be done; when it is made, it ought to be stood in, and abode by; and it is the honour of saints to stand in it, and to it, and hold it fast.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Corinthians 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS 2

The apostle, in this chapter, goes on to give reasons of his not coming, as yet, to Corinth; and removes the charge of severity, which some might think him guilty of, in what he had written in his former epistle concerning the incestuous person, who having repented of his sin, he would now have comforted, and the censure laid on him by the church taken off; after which he gives an account of the success of the Gospel in several parts, of its power and purity, and of the faithful dispensation of it by himself and others: in **2Co 2:1**, he assigns this as a reason why he had determined with himself not to come to Corinth as yet, and why he deferred his coming, that when he came he might not be sorrowful himself, nor make others sorrowful, which necessarily involve each other; for if he made others sorrowful by his sharp rebukes, which as things had been he could not but in faithfulness give, he must be in sorrow himself, since there would be none to make him cheerful, but such whom he made sorrowful, **2Co 2:2**, wherefore to meet together under such circumstances must be uncomfortable; and hence he chose to put off his coming until things took another turn; and this was the reason of his writing with so much seeming severity concerning the incestuous person, in the former epistle, to bring him and them to repentance, and so prevent that sorrow which he otherwise must have had, had he in person come to them whilst they were unconcerned about that affair; and that he might have that joy, which he was confident of everyone was desirous he should have, **2Co 2:3**, and he was so far from being of a cruel and uncompassionate disposition, that it was with an aching heart, and with flowing eyes, that he wrote that letter to them; nor was it written with that view merely to grieve them, but to let them know the tender and affectionate concern he had for their welfare, **2Co 2:4**. Besides, this affair of the incestuous person was not only matter of grief to the apostle, but to them all; or he was not the only person he was grieved with, but with them all, and therefore it was necessary to use greater severity and roughness, **2Co 2:5**. However, inasmuch as the end he had in view was answered, the humbling of the delinquent, and bringing him to repentance, nothing more was to be done, the punishment of excommunication was sufficient, **2Co 2:6**, and that ought now to be removed, and the man forgiven, and comforted, lest he should be overwhelmed with sorrow, and be reduced to despair, **2Co 2:7**. Wherefore the apostle entreats them to give some fresh assurances of their love to the repenting brother, and signify it by their hearty reception of him into communion again, **2Co 2:8**, in doing which they would give proof of their obedience to him the apostle, which was an end he had in writing to them before, concerning the excommunication of the same person, **2Co 2:9**, and which he urges them to from his own example, who was ready to join with them in forgiving him, out of love to them, and in the name of Christ, **2Co 2:10**, and the rather it became them to do so, lest Satan should get an advantage of them, and establish a bad principle and practice among them, that such as fall into sin, though they repent, should not be restored to the communion of the church, of whose devices in different forms and shapes, to do mischief to the churches of Christ, and particular believers, the apostle and others were not ignorant, **2Co 2:11**. Moreover, what had took up his time, and had prevented him from coming to Corinth as yet, was his being called to, and employed in the preaching of the Gospel elsewhere, particularly at Troas, where he was the rather inclined to stay, and there was a necessity of it, because there was a door opened for it, **2Co 2:12**, and yet not finding Titus, there, as he expected, he was uneasy, and departed thence into Macedonia, in quest of him, **2Co 2:13**, where, as in other places, he preached the Gospel with success, which he ascribes to God, and gives him thanks for it, **2Co 2:14**, which success he illustrates by dividing the persons to whom he preached the Gospel, into two classes, they that are saved, and they that perish, **2Co 2:15**, on whom it had different effects, diffusing death, and adding death to death in the one, and communicating life, and adding life to life in the other: and lest he should be thought to arrogate too much to himself, and other ministers of the word, of whom he speaks, he acknowledges his and their insufficiency to preach the Gospel, and make it effectual; and that all fitness for it, and all the virtue and efficacy of it, were from the Lord, **2Co 2:16**, and then gives the reason why he, and the rest of the faithful ministers of the Gospel, were a sweet savour to Christ, as he had asserted, because they did not, as others, corrupt this box of ointment, but faithfully and sincerely poured it out, without mixing and adulterating it; and this they did as being in the view of the omniscient God, to whom they could appeal for their integrity and honesty, **2Co 2:17**.

Ver. 1. But I determined with myself,.... The apostle having removed the charge of levity and inconstancy brought against him, goes on to excuse his delay in coming to them, and to soften the severity, which some thought too much, he had used in his former epistle: he determined with himself, he took up a resolution within his own breast some time ago, says he,

that I would not come again to you in heaviness; that he would not come with sorrow and heaviness, bewailing their sins not repented of, and by sharp reproofs and censures, which in such a case would be necessary, be the cause of grief and trouble to them; wherefore he determined to wait their repentance and amendment before he came again. The word "again", may be connected with the phrase "in heaviness"; and the sense be, that in his former epistle, which was a sort of coming to them, he made them heavy and sorry, by sharply rebuking them for some disorders that were among them; and since it has been a settled point with him, that he would not come in heaviness again: or with the word "come"; and then the meaning is, as his first coming among them was to the joy of their souls, so it was a determined case with him, that his second coming should not be with grief, either to them or himself, or both; and this is the true reason why he had deferred it so long.

2 Corinthians 2:2

Ver. 2. For if I make you sorry,.... That is, should he come among them, and be the means of fresh grief and sorrow:

who is he then that maketh me glad? such was his love and affection for them, and sympathy with them, that should they be grieved, he should grieve also; they were the only persons he could take any delight in at Corinth; wherefore should they be in heaviness, he would be so too, and then what pleasure would he have in being among them? since not a man of them would be in a condition and capacity to make him cheerful:

but the same which is made sorry by me. The Ethiopic version without any authority reads this clause, "except he whom I have made glad"; but the apostle is to be understood either of some particular man, the incestuous person, who had been made sorry, by that awful punishment of being delivered up to Satan, inflicted on him; or else the singular number being put for the plural collectively, is to be understood of all the members of the church at Corinth, who had been greatly grieved by the sharp reproofs he had given them; and therefore unless this trouble was removed, he could not expect to have much comfort and pleasure with them.

2 Corinthians 2:3

Ver. 3. And I wrote this same unto you,.... Not what he had written in the preceding verse, or in **2Co 1:23**, where he says, that his not coming to them as yet was to spare them; but what he had written to them in his former epistle, concerning the excommunication of the incestuous man, which had so much grieved both him and them; and this the apostle chose rather to order by writing, than in person; hoping to hear of their repentance and amendment, before he came among them:

lest, says he,

when I came, or should come,

I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; some copies and the Complutensian edition read, "sorrow upon sorrow"; and so does the Vulgate Latin version, which seems to be transcribed from **Php 2:27**, that is, he took this method of sending a reproving letter, in order to bring them to a sense and acknowledgment of sin; lest should he come in person, some would have been a grief and trouble to him, having fallen into sin not repented of; who ought to have been matter of rejoicing to him, as being the seals of his apostleship, and his work in the Lord: and this step he was the more encouraged to take, through the confidence he had of them,

having confidence in you all; being fully persuaded of their affection for him, and opinion of him:

that my joy is the joy of you all; that their joy and grief were mutual and common; that what he rejoiced in, they did likewise; and what was displeasing to him was displeasing to them; and therefore upon the first hint given, he took care to remove the occasion of such displeasure, that their mutual comfort might take place; assuring them, and of which they might be assured, that it was no joy to him to grieve them; he could have none when theirs was gone; his ultimate view in writing to them in the manner he had, was not to grieve, but to bring them to repentance and reformation, which issued in the mutual joy of him and them.

2 Corinthians 2:4

Ver. 4. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart,.... Being greatly pressed in his spirit, and grieved at his heart, for the abominable iniquities among them, which they seemed to take no notice of, and to be unconcerned about, yea, rather to be puffed up with:

I wrote to you with many tears; as signs and expressions of, and by which were vented, the inward anguish and distress of his soul; and the letter he sent to them in some measure bore witness to it: which was written,

not that you should be grieved; that is, not merely for the sake of grieving of them, in which he took no pleasure; not but that the apostle designed and desired to affect their minds with a holy grief and godly sorrow for sin, and hereby their amendment; but his chief view was, next to their spiritual good, and God's glory, to express the greatness of his love to them: as he says,

that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you; as his love was very vehement towards them, he was desirous they should know it, and how exceeding abundant it was; and that it was even greater towards them, than to others; and he thought he could not give a greater proof and evidence of it, than by reproving them faithfully, and that sharply too, as the necessity of the case required.

2 Corinthians 2:5

Ver. 5. But if any have caused grief,.... The incestuous person is here manifestly designed, though he is not named, who had been the cause and occasion of much grief and sorrow, both to himself and others; for the apostle is not to be understood, as though he doubted whether he had caused grief or not, but rather takes it for granted, as a certain point; "if", seeing, or although he has caused grief:

he hath not grieved me but in part; or in some measure; as it has reflected dishonour on God and his ways, truths and ordinances; and has brought trouble upon himself, and the church of which he is a member; for the apostle now rejoiced, that he was truly humbled for his sin, and sincerely, and in an evangelical manner, repented of it; his grief was over, and it was as if it was not; and the offence he took was now wholly removed: besides, though this man did grieve him, it was but in part; he was not the sole cause of his grief: they also greatly added to it by their unconcernedness of him, and negligence in reproving him, though he takes notice only of this single man:

that I may not overcharge you all; bear hard upon them, aggravate their sin, and increase their trouble: or thus, that man has not grieved me only, but in some measure all of you; for the phrase "all you", may be considered, not in connection with the word "overcharge", but with the word "grieved"; and the reading and sense of the whole be this, "he hath not grieved me, but in part, or in some measure"; or as the Syriac reads it, Nwklkl lylq ryub, "almost all of you": but this, as if he should say, I do but just mention, would not dwell upon it, "that I may not overcharge" him, or be thought to be overbearing, or should aggravate his sin and sorrow: for,

2 Corinthians 2:6

Ver. 6. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment,.... By this punishment is meant, the excommunication of the incestuous person, or the censure that was laid upon him by the church: for this

was inflicted by many; not by the pastor only, or by the elders or more eminent persons in the church, but by the multitude, by the whole congregation, at least upo twn pleionwn, "by the more"; the greater, or major part; and not by one, or a few only: in inflicting this punishment, or laying on this censure in the public manner they did, they were certainly right, and to be commended; but inasmuch as there appeared signs of true repentance, it was sufficient, it had answered the purpose for which it was inflicted, and therefore it was high time to remove it: from whence we learn, that in case of gross enormities, there ought to be a public excommunication; and that this is to be done by the vote, and with the consent of the whole church, or the major part of it; and that in process of time, when the person thus dealt with has given the church satisfaction as to the truth and genuineness of his repentance, the censure ought to be taken off and he be cordially received into the communion of the church again. This "punishment", or "rebuke", epitimia, "by many", is the same which the Jews call {e} Mybrb hxkwth, "a reproof by many"; which is given by many, or in the presence of many.

{e} R. Eliahu in Adderet, c. 3. apud Trigland. de Sect. Karaeorum, p. 166.

2 Corinthians 2:7

Ver. 7. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him,.... On the other hand, so far the apostle suggests they should be from inflicting any other punishment on him, or by any means adding to, and increasing what was inflicted, that they ought to forgive him his offence, by taking off the censure from him, which had been sufficient for the purpose, and had continued on him a sufficient time:

and comfort him; by restoring him to the communion of the church, and to an enjoyment of all the privileges and ordinances of the house of God: and this was necessary to be done,

lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow: be overwhelmed with trouble, engulfed in despair, and so become unfit for the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; to prevent therefore such dangerous and pernicious consequences, it is incumbent on the churches of Christ, as soon as ever they observe that censures have answered the end in bringing persons to a sense and acknowledgment of sin and amendment of life, to remove them, and restore such to fellowship.

2 Corinthians 2:8

Ver. 8. Wherefore I beseech you,.... Or exhort you:

that ye would confirm your love towards him: express your love to him in the most kind and tender manner, show the same, and as strong love to him as you did before, and as if he had never offended; receive him as a brother in the most affectionate manner, and embrace him with the most endearing expressions of respect and friendship; and let your reception of him in this kind and friendly way be with the full consent, and by the joint vote and suffrage of the whole church, for so the word translated "confirm" signifies; for as the ejection of a person out of a church must be done by the decree and vote of the church, or it is not authentic, so the reception of a person into it must be in like manner; and since this was to be done by the suffrage of the church, the apostle beseeches and exhorts them to do it.

2 Corinthians 2:9

Ver. 9. For to this end also did I write,.... Or "I have written", both in this and in his former epistle to them, and in both with this view,

that I might know the proof of you; that he might try, prove, and know them:

whether ye be obedient in all things; he wrote unto them in his former epistle, to put away that wicked man from them; which he did not do, merely to reproach the man, and fix a brand of infamy on him; nor merely to grieve and afflict their minds; nor only to show his own power and authority, which he as an apostle had received from Christ, but to make trial of their obedience; and he had had a proof of it in their rejection of him; and now he writes unto them, that since this man was truly humbled for his sin, and had repentance unto life not to be repented of, that they would as cheerfully receive him, and restore him to his place; that as the apostle had a proof of their obedience in the one, he might also have in the other, and so in all things: hence it appears, that though it belongs to the whole church, and that only, to reject or receive members, yet as ministers of the Gospel are set over the churches, to govern, guide, direct, and go before in matters of discipline; so whatever they propose, according to the rule of God's word, ought to be carefully attended to and obeyed.

2 Corinthians 2:10

Ver. 10. To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also,.... This may extend to the forgiveness of any person, in any case; either in time past, or at the present time, or in time to come; though it has a particular respect to the forgiveness of the incestuous man, which the apostle had determined in his own mind, and was very ready to come into, and very desirous to join with the church in, as they had joined with him in the excommunication of him; and in order to engage them in such a temper and disposition, he tells them it was on their account he did it:

for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it; which is as if he should say, whenever I have forgiven any offender, as I now do forgive this man, I always do it for your sake; either at your request, or in confidence of this, that you yourselves have forgiven; or for your good, peace, and welfare: and besides, what I do of this kind, I do it

in the person of Christ; in his sight and presence, who knows that what I do this way, I do it sincerely, and with my whole heart and soul; or rather I do it in his name, and by his authority; and since I forgive this man for your sakes, and in the name of Christ, you ought to do so likewise.

2 Corinthians 2:11

Ver. 11. Lest Satan should get an advantage of us,.... Or make gain of us, or we should be circumvented by him; a metaphor taken from covetous persons, who take every occasion, and make use of every advantage to circumvent and deceive persons in trading with them: Satan gets an advantage of the churches, when church discipline is brought into neglect and contempt, or turned into tyranny; or when he can draw off any person from a church, or keep him out of it: wherefore the apostle's argument is, that since the incestuous person had true repentance for his sin, he ought to be forgiven, comforted, and received into the church; lest by too great severity, and a too long continuance of the censure on him, he should be either plunged into despair, or be drawn into a denial of the faith, or into an open scandalous course of wickedness; and so the church entirely lose a member, that might, by the proper use of discipline, have been an useful one, and Satan gain one:

for we are not ignorant of his devices; and cunning stratagems; some of his crafty contrivances and designs are known, though not all of them; and this particularly, that he sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light, and under pretence of showing a just indignation against sin, and keeping up a strict and righteous discipline, destroys souls, ruins churches, and brings religion into contempt. This was one of his devices in former times, that persons who fell into any gross sin after baptism, and a profession of religion, were never to be restored and received into the communion of the church again, let their repentance be ever so sincere. This cruel and inexorable spirit, under the show of strict religion and discipline, is what the apostle here would caution against, as one of the wiles of Satan.

2 Corinthians 2:12

Ver. 12. Furthermore, when I came to Troas,.... The apostle proceeds, in this latter part of the chapter, to take notice of and remove the charge of ostentation and insincerity in preaching the Gospel, and hints at other reasons of his not coming to Corinth; particularly that he took a journey to Troas, expecting to meet with Titus there, who was to give him an account of the affairs of the church at Corinth, which he was desirous of knowing before he went thither; but missing of Titus, is uneasy, and goes for Macedonia; though he was first detained awhile at Troas, having a good opportunity of preaching the Gospel there, with a prospect of success. Troas was a city of the lesser Asia near the Hellespont, formerly called Troy; of Paul's being at this place more than once, see **2Ti 4:13**, and of this place
See Gill on "Ac 16:8", and of the church there,
See Gill on "Ac 20:7". Hither he came,

to preach Christ's Gospel; that Gospel, of which Christ is both the author and subject; and is no other than the good news and glad tidings of peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation, by a crucified Jesus; this was his work and business; his heart was in it, he took delight in this service, and it was what he pursued in every place wherever he came; and in this place he had much encouragement; for he adds, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord; such an one as was opened to him at Ephesus, 1Co 16:9; he had a good opportunity of preaching the Gospel to many souls, many were inclined to attend his ministry, from whence he conceived great hopes of doing good; a door of utterance was given to him to preach the Gospel boldly and freely, and a door of entrance for the Gospel to pass into their hearts: all which was not of men, "but of the Lord"; who has the key of David, who opens and no man shuts, shuts and no man opens.

2 Corinthians 2:13

Ver. 13. I had no rest in my spirit,.... Though there was such a door opened to preach the Gospel, and such an opportunity of doing good, yet he was greatly distressed in his mind; very restless and uneasy in his spirit, and could not be satisfied to stay; which shows, that though he was so great a man, he was but a man, and of like passions with others: and the occasion of this dissatisfaction and uneasiness was,

because, says he,

I found not Titus my brother; whom he so styles, not merely because he was a fellow Christian, but because he was a fellow labourer in the Gospel; and by calling him so, puts an honour upon him, and expresses his affliction for him: now not finding him as he expected, he grew uneasy: not that he wanted him as an interpreter for him, or his assistance in preaching the Gospel at Troas, where so many were inclined to hear the word; but because he was exceedingly desirous of knowing from him the state of affairs in the church at Corinth; so that this whole account is given, to show his affectionate concern for, and care of that church: which he goes on with, saying,

but taking my leave of them; the disciples at Troas, and ordering and prescribing, as the word here used signifies, how things should be managed for the best after his departure; for as there was a door opened for the ministry of the word, it cannot be thought he would leave it thus, without fixing proper persons to go on with the work, and proper directions how to conduct themselves; and very likely he ordained Carpus to be their elder, bishop, or overseer: and having done this, he

went into Macedonia; in quest of Titus, whom he so earnestly desired to see, and by whose coming to him he was greatly refreshed and comforted; see **2Co 7:5**.

2 Corinthians 2:14

Ver. 14. Now thanks be unto God,.... The apostle having mentioned the door that was opened for him at Troas, to preach the Gospel with success, calls to mind the great and manifold appearances of God for him and his fellow ministers, in blessing their labours to the conversion of many souls; which causes him to break forth into thanksgiving to God, on this account: what he takes notice of, and is thankful to God for is, that he

always causeth us to triumph in Christ; not only had done so, but continued to do so: some versions ascribe this act of triumph to God, as his act, reading the passage thus, "now thanks be unto God, who triumphs over us", or "by us in Christ"; who has conquered us by his grace, and made use of us as instruments for the conversion of sinners; and so first triumphed over us, having subdued us to himself, and then over others by us, in whose hearts the arrows of his word have been sharp and powerful: so the word is used for the person's own act of triumph spoken of, **Co 2:15**, but here it signifies, as words do in the Hebrew conjugation "Hiphil", which most commonly denotes an effect upon another, or which is caused and produced in another, and is rightly rendered, "which causeth us to triumph"; and refers not to the triumph of faith, common with the apostles to other believers; though this is in Christ, in his righteousness, death, resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand, and intercession; and is what God causes, and to whom thanks is to be given for it: but this is a triumph peculiar to ministers of the Gospel, who are made to triumph over men and devils, over the world, the reproaches, persecutions, smiles, and flatteries of it; over wicked men, by silencing them, stopping the mouths of gainsayers, refuting false teachers, and preserving the Gospel pure, in spite of all opposition; and by being made useful to the turning of many souls from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God: and this is

in Christ: it is owing to the victory he has got; it is by his strength, it is in his name, for his sake, and because of his glory herein concerned: and

always; wherever the ministers of Christ are called to labour, and wherever the Gospel is purely and powerfully preached by them, some good is done; and they are made to triumph over hell and earth, over sin, Satan, and the world; and for all this, thanks is due to God; for he it is that causes them to triumph, or they never could; as will easily appear, if we consider what poor weak instruments they themselves are; what opposition is made against them; what wonderful things are done by them; by what means they triumph, by the preaching of the cross, and that in the midst of the greatest pressures and afflictions. Thanks are also given to God, that he

maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place; by "his knowledge" is meant, either the knowledge of God, who causes the ministers of the Gospel to triumph; or the knowledge of Christ, in whom they triumph; or rather of both, of the knowledge of God in Christ; and designs the Gospel, which is the means thereof: and which is said to have a "savour" in it, and denotes the acceptableness of it to sensible souls; and the good name, fame, and credit, which Christ has by the faithful ministration of it; and is an allusion to **So 1:3**. Now this, God is said to make manifest; it was hid before, hid in himself, and to the sons of men; it was like a box of ointment shut, but now opened by the preaching of the word, which diffuses a fragrant smell; and therefore he is said to make it manifest "by us": the ministers of the Gospel, who openly, boldly, and faithfully preach it; and "by manifestation of the truth"; spread the savour of it, and that "in every place", where they come; their commission being at large, to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

2 Corinthians 2:15

Ver. 15. For we are unto God a sweet savour,.... Here a reason is given, why the savour of the knowledge of God in Christ is made manifest by the ministers of the Gospel, because they themselves are a sweet savour; not that they are so in themselves, for they have the same corrupt hearts and natures, and complain of them as other men; but as having the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, comparable to fragrant and sweet smelling ointments, **So 1:3**, by which they are enabled to preach the savoury doctrines of the Gospel, and to adorn and recommend them by their exemplary lives and conversations: the allusion is to Aaron and the priests under the law, who were anointed with the anointing oil, which was poured upon their heads, ran down upon their beards, and descended to the skirts of their garments, so that they were all over a perfume, a sweet smell and savour; and so are the ministers of the word, being anointed with that, which the other was typical of. They are said to be a sweet savour

of Christ, because they have their gifts, grace, and Gospel from him, and he is the subject of their ministry; so that this sweet savour of theirs, is not properly theirs, but his, whose person, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, grace, and the fulness of it, as held forth in the Gospel ministry, are sweet and savoury to believers. Moreover, it is "unto God" they are such a savour, not unto men, mere carnal men, for with them they are the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things; but they are grateful and well pleasing to the Lord, as their ministrations make for, and show forth his honour and glory: and this they are

in them that are saved, who are chosen by God unto salvation, for whom Christ has wrought it out, to whom it is applied by the Spirit of God, who are heirs of it, and are kept unto it, and for it, by the power of God, and shall certainly enjoy it: yea, they are a sweet savour

in them that perish, all mankind are, through sin, in a perishing condition: some of them shall never perish; but are, and shall be saved with an everlasting salvation: others will perish in their sins, to which they are abandoned; and what sense the ministers of the Gospel are a savour in these is shown in the following verse.

2 Corinthians 2:16

Ver. 16. To the one we are the savour of death unto death,.... Who are for death, or appointed to it; see Jer 43:11. What the apostle says of the Gospel, and Gospel ministers, the Jews his countrymen used frequently to say of the law, and to which he seems to refer;

"saith Rabba {f}, to them that go on the right hand of it, (the law,) it is yyxd amo, "the savour of life"; but to them that go on the left hand of it, it is atwmd amo, "the savour of death"."

Again {g},

"everyone that studies in the law for the sake of it, to him it becomes Myyx Mo, "the savour of life", according to **Pr 3:18**, but everyone that studies in the law, not for the sake of it, to him it becomes twmh Mo, "the savour of death";"

once more {h},

"if a man is worthy or righteous, to him the law becomes
Myyx Mo, "the savour of life"; but if he is not righteous, it becomes to him htym Mo, "the savour of death":"

and this they not only say of the written law, but also of their oral law {i}, and are not contented with those general descriptions of persons to whom the law is so, but particularly mention the Gentiles;

"the words of the law (say they {k}) are Myyx Mo, "the savour of life", to the Israelites; and twmh Mo, "the savour of death", to the nations of the world:"

that the law should be the savour of death, since it is the ministration of it, and cannot give life, see **Ga 3:21**, is no wonder; but that the Gospel and the ministers of that, should be the savour of death unto death, may seem strange, but so it is. These preach up salvation by the death of Christ, and so are the sweet savour of the death of Christ; but this being despised and rejected by the sons of men, is "unto the death", and issues in the eternal death of the despisers and rejecters of it; likewise this doctrine preached by them, strikes with death all a man's wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, and declares that life and salvation are only by Christ and his righteousness; and besides, is attended with persecution and death, and therefore is foolishness to them that perish; and so becomes "the savour of death unto death"; a savour, but not a sweet savour, nor the sweet savour of Christ; a sweet savour indeed to God, whose justice, holiness, power, and wisdom, are displayed in the death and righteous destruction of sinners, but not to them:

to the other, the savour of life unto life; those who are ordained to eternal life. The Gospel preached by Christ's faithful ministers is the means of quickening souls, and giving them "spiritual life"; and of supporting and maintaining that life, and of nourishing them up unto "eternal life"; and so becomes "the savour of life" spiritual, "unto life" eternal. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and so the Ethiopic version, read both clauses, "from death to death, and from life to life"; with which compare **Ro 1:17**, and then the meaning may be, either as Grotius observes, that the ill report of the Gospel from men dead in sin, brings death to those who give credit to it; and the good report of it from God, the author of life, to which may be added from ministers, who are alive in a spiritual sense, is the means of life to others: or they are the means of adding death to death, death eternal, to death spiritual, or moral; death for sin, to death in sin, the Gospel being despised; and of increasing spiritual life, the comforts of it; and of adding eternal life to spiritual life: upon the whole of which, the apostle makes this exclamation,

and who is sufficient for these things; the meaning of which is either, who is able to search and find out the reason of this different influence of the Gospel ministry upon the souls of men? no man can do it; it must be ascribed to the sovereign will and pleasure of God, who hides the Gospel from some, and reveals it to others; or who is sufficient for the preaching of the Gospel? no man is sufficient of himself, very insufficient in the best sense, and none so but by the grace of God, and gifts of his Spirit; or who is sufficient to give success to the Gospel when preached? none can do this; Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God alone that gives the increase.

{f} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 2. {g} Taanith, fol. 7. 1. {h} Yoma, fol 72. 2. {i} Zohar in Gen. fol. 19. 3. {k} Vajikra Rabba, fol. 147. 1. Debarim Rabba, fol. 233. 3. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 9. 4.

2 Corinthians 2:17

Ver. 17. For we are not as many,.... The apostle here removes from himself, and other ministers of the Gospel, a character which belonged not to them, but to the false apostles; who are described by their number many; there were great swarms of false teachers in the early times of Christianity; see **1Jo 2:18**; some copies read, "as the rest": and so the Syriac and Arabic versions; and also by their quality,

which corrupt the word of God; by "the word of God", may be meant the Scriptures in general, which are from God, contain his will, and which he uses for the good of men, and his own glory, and may be corrupted by false glosses, and human mixtures, and by adding to them, or taking from them; or the Gospel in particular, which is the word of truth, of faith, righteousness, reconciliation, and salvation, and which was corrupted by these false teachers, by making merchandise of it; they huckstered the word of God, made gain of it, sought merely their own worldly interest and advantage in it, and so mixed it with their own vain philosophy, to please the carnal ears and hearts of men; they blended law and Gospel, grace and works, in the business of salvation; they did, as peddling merchants do, mix good and bad commodities together, and then vend them for sound ware; or as vintners, who mix their wine with water, and sell it for neat wine. The Septuagint interpreters on **Isa 1:22**, translate the last clause of that verse thus, oi kaphloi sou misgousi ton oinon udati, "thy vintners mix wine with water"; which may be understood in a moral or spiritual sense; so did these men mix, and hereby corrupt the Gospel, the word of God; and so the Syriac version reads the words Nygzmmd, "who mix the word of God": now the apostle says, they did not do so; they delivered out the word pure and unmixed, without any corruption or adulteration:

but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, says he,
speak we in Christ; they spoke "in Christ", in the name of Christ, of or concerning him, and him only, and freely, fully, and plainly, as God's free gift, and the only way of salvation without the works of men: and they spoke, "as of sincerity"; what they delivered was the sincere milk of the word; the manner in which they did it was sincere, with all integrity and faithfulness; and so were their views, which were not their own profit and applause, but the glory of God and the good of souls; they spoke in Christ, and with all sincerity, "as of God"; by whom they were called and sent forth to speak in his name, and from whom they received the Gospel, and gifts, and abilities to preach it; and all this they did, in the sight of God, as the searcher of hearts, and to whom they knew they must give an account of their ministry another day.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Corinthians 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS 3

In this chapter the apostle clears himself from the charge of arrogance and self-commendation, and ascribes both the virtue and efficacy of his ministry, and his qualifications for it, to the Lord; and forms a comparison between the ministration of the Gospel, and the ministration of the law, showing the preferableness of the one to the other; and consequently how much more happy and comfortable the state and condition of the saints under the Gospel dispensation is, than under the legal one: on account of what the apostle had said in the latter part of the preceding chapter, concerning the excellency, usefulness, and success of the Gospel ministry, he foresaw an objection would arise; that he and his fellow ministers were proud and arrogant, and commended themselves, which was unseemly, and not agreeably to the character they bore; which objection he obviates, **2Co 3:1**, by putting some questions, signifying that they were not guilty of vain boasting; nor did they need any commendations of their own, or others, nor any letters to recommend them, either from Corinth to other places, or thither: a practice which, he suggests, the false teachers made use of; and in **2Co 3:2** he gives the reason why they did not stand in need of such letters, because the members of the church at Corinth were their epistle or letter, declaring to all men the efficacy and success of their ministry among men; but lest he should be charged with arrogating to himself and others, he declares, **2Co 3:3** that though the Corinthians were their epistle, yet not so much theirs as Christ's; Christ was the author and subject, they only were instruments; the writing was not human, but the writing of the Spirit of God; and that not upon outward tables, such as the law was written upon, but upon the tables of men's hearts, which only God can reach; however, that they had been useful, successful, and instrumental in the conversion of souls, through the ministry of the word, that he was confident of, **2Co 3:4** though the sufficiency and ability to think, study, and preach, were not of themselves, and still less to make the word effectual for conversion and comfort, but of God, **2Co 3:5** wherefore he ascribes all fitness, worthiness, and ability to preach the Gospel, to the grace and power of God, by which they were made ministers of it; and hence he takes occasion to commend the excellency of the Gospel ministry above that of the law, which he does by observing their different names and effects; the Gospel is the New Testament or covenant, or an exhibition of the covenant of grace in a new form; the law is the Old Testament, or covenant, which is vanished away; which, though not expressed here, is in **2Co 3:14** the Gospel is spirit, the law the letter; the one gives life, and the other kills, **2Co 3:6** wherefore the apostle argues from the one to the other, that if there was a glory in the one which was only a ministration of death, as the law was, **2Co 3:7** then the Gospel, which was a ministration of spiritual things, and of the Spirit of God himself, must be more glorious, **2Co 3:8** and if that was glorious which was a ministration of condemnation, as the law was to guilty sinners; much more glorious must be the Gospel, which is a ministration of the righteousness of Christ, for the justification of them, **2Co 3:9** yea, such is the surpassing glory of the Gospel to the law, that even the glory of the law is quite lost in that of the Gospel, and appears to have none in comparison of that, **2Co 3:10** to which he adds another argument, taken from the abolition of the one, and the continuance of the other; that if there was a glory in that which is abolished, there must be a greater in that which continues, **2Co 3:11** and from hence the apostle proceeds to take notice of another difference between the law and the Gospel, the clearness of the one, and the obscurity of the other; the former is signified by the plainness of speech used by the preachers of it, **2Co 3:12** and the latter by the veil which was over Moses's face, when he delivered the law to the children of Israel; the end of which they could not look to, and which is a further proof of the obscurity of it, **2Co 3:13** as well as of the darkness of their minds; which still continues with the Jews in reading the law, and will do until it is taken away by Christ, **2Co 3:14** and that there is such a veil of darkness upon the hearts of the Jews, when reading the law of Moses; and that this continues to this day, is again asserted, **2Co 3:15** and an intimation given that there will be a conversion of them to the Lord, and then it will be removed from them, **2Co 3:16** and who that Lord is to whom they shall be turned, and by whom they shall have freedom from darkness and bondage, is declared,

2Co 3:17 and the happy condition of the saints under the Gospel dispensation, through the bright and clear light of it, is observed, **2Co 3:18** in which the Gospel is compared to a glass; the saints are represented as without a veil looking into it; through which an object is beheld, the glory of the Lord; the effect of which is a transformation of them into the same image by degrees; the author of which grace is the Spirit of the Lord.

Ver. 1. Do we begin again to commend ourselves?.... The apostle having asserted that he and his fellow ministers always triumphed in Christ, and made manifest the savour of his knowledge in every place; were a sweet savour of Christ to God, did not corrupt the word of God, as some did, but sincerely and faithfully preached Christ; some might insinuate from hence, that he was guilty of arrogance and vain glory; wherefore to remove such a charge, or prevent its being brought, he asks, "do we begin again to commend ourselves?" we do not; what we say, we say honestly, sincerely, in the simplicity of our hearts, without any view to our own glory and applause among men, or for any worldly profit and advantage, or to ingratiate ourselves into your affections; we have no such views: some read these words without an interrogation, "we do begin again to commend ourselves"; as we have done already, in this and the former epistles; and as it is but just and right that we should vindicate our characters, support our good name and reputation, and secure and maintain our credit, which some would maliciously deprive us of:

though we have no need, as some others, of epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you; our persons, characters, and usefulness are too well known, to require commendatory letters front others to you, or from you to others. The false apostles are here struck at, whose practice it was to get letters of commendation from place to place; which they carried about and made use of for their temporal advantage, having nothing truly good and excellent in them to recommend them to others. The apostle does not hereby condemn letters of recommendation, which in proper cases may be very lawfully given, and a good use be made of them; only that he and other Gospel ministers were so well known, as to stand in no need of them.

2 Corinthians 3:2

Ver. 2. Ye are our epistle,.... Here a reason is given why they stood in no need of letters of commendation, to or from the church at Corinth, because that church was their living epistle, and which was much preferable to any written one. The apostle calls them their epistle in the same sense, as they are said to be his "work in the Lord, and the seal of his apostleship", **1Co 9:1** they were so as persons regenerated by the Spirit and grace of God, in whose conversion he was an instrument; now it was the work of conversion in them, which was the epistle said to be

written in our hearts; some think it should be read, "in your hearts"; and so the Ethiopic version reads it; and it looks as if it should be so read, from the following verse, and from the nature of the thing itself; for the conversion of the Corinthians was not written in the heart of the apostle, but in their own; and this was so very notorious and remarkable, that it was

known and read of all men; everyone could read, and was obliged to acknowledge the handwriting; it was so clear a case, what hand the apostle, as an instrument, had in the turning of these persons from idols to serve the living God; and which was so full a proof of the divinity, efficacy, truth, and sincerity of his doctrine, that he needed no letters from any to recommend him.

2 Corinthians 3:3

Ver. 3. Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared,.... But lest it should be thought that the apostle attributed too much to himself, by saying that the Corinthians were our epistle; here he says, they were "manifestly declared"

to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us; so that the apostles and ministers of the word were only amanuenses, Christ was the author and dictator; yea, he himself is the very matter, sum, substance, and subject of the epistle; he is formed in the hearts of his people in conversion, his image is stamped, his grace is implanted, his word, his Gospel dwells richly, his laws and ordinances are written here; he also is the exemplar, believers are but copies of him, in grace and duty, in sufferings, in the likeness of his death and resurrection: and they are "manifestly declared" to be so, by the impresses of Christ's grace upon them; by the fairness of the copy; by the style and language of the epistle; by their likeness to Christ; by their having not the form only, but the power of godliness; and by their lives and conversations: now in writing these epistles, the ministers of the Gospel are only instruments, "ministered by us". They are made use of to show the sinner the black characters which are written upon him, and that what is written in him, and to be read by him, by the light of nature is not sufficient for salvation; they are employed as instruments in drawing the rough draught of grace in conversion, and in writing the copy over again, fairer and fairer; being the happy means blessed by God, for the building up of souls in faith and holiness, in spiritual knowledge and comfort. These epistles are

not written with ink; of nature's power, or of rhetorical eloquence and moral persuasion;

but with the Spirit of the living God: every grace that is implanted in the soul is wrought there by the Spirit of God; or he it is that draws every line, and writes every word and letter; he begins, he carries on and finishes the work of grace on the soul; and that as "the Spirit of the living God": hence saints become the living epistles of Christ; and every letter and stroke of his making, is a living disposition of the soul in likeness to him; and such are written among the living in Jerusalem, and shall live and abide for ever as the epistles of Christ: again, the subjects of these epistles, or that on which they are written, are

not tables of stone; such as the law was written upon, on Mount Sinai: of these tables there were the first and second; the first were the work of God himself, the latter were hewed by Moses, at the command of God, Ex 32:16 the former being broken when he came down from the mount, which by the Jewish writers are said to be miraculously made, and not by the means and artifice of men {l}; yea, that they were made before the creation of the world {m}, and which, they commonly say, were made of sapphire; See Gill on "2Co 3:7" these, as the latter, were two stones, which, Jarchi says {n}, were of an equal size; and were, as Abarbinel says {o}, in the form of small tables, such as children are taught to write upon, and therefore are so called: some pretend to give the dimensions of them, and say {p}, that they were six hands long, and as many broad, and three thick; nay, even the weight of them, which is said {q} to be the weight of forty "seahs", and look upon it as a miracle that Moses should be able to carry them; on these stones were written the ten commands; and the common opinion of the Jewish writers is, that five were written on one table, and five on the other; this is the opinion of Josephus {r}, Philo {s}, and the Talmudic writers {t}; and the tables are said to be written on both sides, Ex 32:15. Some think that the engraving of the letters perforated and went through the tables, so that, in a miraculous manner, the letters were legible on both sides; others think, only the right and left hand of the tables are meant, on which the laws were written, five on a side, and which folded up like the tables or pages of a book; though others are of opinion, that they were written upon, both behind and before, and that the law was written twice, both upon the fore part and back part of the tables, yea, others say four times; and some think the phrase only intends the literal and mystical, the external and internal sense of the law: however, certain it is, as the apostle here suggests, that the law was written on tables of stone, which may denote the firmness and stability of the law; not as in the hands of Moses, from whence the tables fell and were broken, but as in the hands of Christ, by whom they are fulfilled; or else the hardness of man's heart, his stupidity, ignorance of, and not subject to the law of God:

but fleshly tables of the heart: alluding to Eze 36:26 and designs not carnal hearts, but such as are made soft and tender by the Spirit of God. The table of the heart is a phrase to be met with in the books of the Old Testament; see **Pr 3:3** and very frequently in the writings of the Jews {u}.

{l} R. Levi ben Gersom in Pentateuch, fol. 113. 2. {m} Zohar in Exod. fol. 35. 1. {n} Perush in Exod. xxxi. 18. {o} In Pentateuch, fol. 209. 2. & 211. 3. {p} T. Hieres Shekalim, fol. 49. 4. Shemot Rabba, c. 47. fol. 143. 2. Bartenora in Misn. Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 6. {q} Targum Jon. in Exod. xxxi. 18. & in Deut. xxxiv. 12. {r} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 5. sect. 8. {s} De Decalogo, p. 761, 768. {t} T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 49. 4. Shemot Rabba, sect. 47. fol. 143. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 35. 1. {u} Vid. Targum Jon. in Dent. vi. 5, & in Cant. iv. 9.

2 Corinthians 3:4

Ver. 4. And such trust have we,.... This refers to what he had said in the latter end of the foregoing chapter, and the beginning of this; as that they made manifest the savoury knowledge of God and Christ everywhere, and were the sweet savour of Christ to many souls; were sufficient in some measure, through the grace of Christ, to preach the Gospel sincerely and faithfully, and were attended with success, had many seals of their ministry, and particularly the Corinthians were so many living epistles of commendations of the power and efficacy of their ministry; such confidence and firm persuasion of the truth of grace on your souls, and of our being the happy instruments of it, we have

through Christ, the grace of Christ,

to God-ward: who is the object of our confidence and hope, and the ground thereof.

2 Corinthians 3:5

Ver. 5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves,.... Though we are sufficient for this work to which God has called us, and have such trust and confidence that he has blessed and owned us, and done such great things by us; yet we do not ascribe anything to ourselves, to any power of ours, to any self-sufficiency in us: for "we are not sufficient of ourselves" neither for the work of the ministry, nor for the conversion of sinners, nor for faith and hope in God, nor for any spiritual work whatever; not even to think anything as of ourselves; any good thing, either for our own use and benefit, or for the advantage of others; we are not able of ourselves to meditate with judgment and affection upon the word of God, to study the Scriptures, to collect from them things fit for the ministry; and much less with freedom and boldness to speak of them to edification; and still less able to impress them upon the heart: for though you who are the epistle of Christ are ministered by us, yet not by any power and self-sufficiency of ours;

but our sufficiency is of God; to think, to speak, and to act for his glory.

2 Corinthians 3:6

Ver. 6. Who also hath made us able ministers,.... This is an answer to the question in **2Co 2:16** who is sufficient for these things? no man is of himself; we are indeed sufficient for them, but not of ourselves; our sufficiency is of God, he hath made us able, or sufficient ministers: such ministers as are not of men's, but God's making, are sufficient ones; and none are sufficient but whom God makes so; and those he makes able and sufficient, by giving them spiritual gifts, fitting them for the ministry: and these are ministers

of the New Testament, or "covenant"; the covenant of grace, of which Christ is the Mediator and surety; called "new", not because newly made, for it was made with Christ from everlasting; nor newly revealed, for it was made known to Adam after his fall, and to all the Old Testament patriarchs, and was exhibited under the legal dispensation, though but darkly, in types, shadows, sacrifices, &c. which therefore waxing old is vanished away; and the covenant of grace is now more clearly revealed under the Gospel dispensation, free from all the obscurity it before laboured under; and therefore is called "new", as well as because it will always continue so, and never give way to another covenant: now the Gospel, and the ministry of it, is nothing else but an exhibition of the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises; and the work and business of those who are ministers of it is not to insist upon the covenant of works, the terms, conditions, obligations, promises, and threatenings of that covenant; but to open and explain the nature, promises, and blessings of the covenant of grace: for such who are fit and proper ministers, are ministers

not of the letter, but of the spirit; which is to be understood, not of any difference between the books of the Old and the New Testament, for a faithful minister of the word may and will bring forth things new and old, out of the one as well as the other; nor of the literal and allegorical, or mystical sense of the Scriptures, as if the latter and not the former was only to be attended to; nor of the difference of communicating the Gospel by letters, and preaching it by word of mouth; since both methods may be used for the spread of it, as were by the apostles themselves; but of the difference there is between the law and the Gospel. The law is "the letter", not merely because written in letters, for so likewise is the Gospel; but because it is a mere letter, hereby showing what is to be done or avoided, without any efficacy in it, or communicating any to enable persons to obey its commands, to give life to its observers, or either to sanctify or justify any who are under it, or of the works of it; it is a mere letter, as observed by an unregenerate man, who only regards the externals of it, being unacquainted with its spirituality. The Gospel is "the spirit"; see **Joh 6:63** it contains spiritual things, and not things merely natural, moral, and civil, as does the law, but spiritual blessings and promises; it penetrates into the spirit and soul of man, and comes from, and is attended with the Spirit of God. The law is

the letter that

killeth, by irritating and provoking to sin, the cause of death, which though not the design and natural tendency of the law, and therefore not to be blamed, yet so it is, through the corruption of human nature; and by convincing of sin when the sinner is killed, and it dead in his own apprehension; and by not only threatening with death, but by cursing, condemning, and punishing with it:

but the Gospel is

the spirit, which

giveth life; it is a means in the hand of the Spirit of God, of quickening dead sinners, of healing the deadly wounds of sin, of showing the way of life by Christ, and of working faith in the soul, to look to him, and live upon him; it affords food for the support of the spiritual life, and revives souls under the most drooping circumstances. The apostle may allude to a distinction among the Jews, between the body and sou] of the law; the words, they say, are hrwt apwg, "the body of the law"; and the book of the law is the clothing; and besides these, there is atyrwad atmvn, "the soul of the law"; which wise men look into {w}.

{w} Zohar in Numb. fol. 63. 2.

2 Corinthians 3:7

Ver. 7. But if the ministration of death,.... The apostle having observed the difference between the law and the Gospel, the one being a killing letter, the other a quickening spirit, enlarges upon it, and more, fully explains it; and proceeds to take notice of other things in which they differ; and to show the superior glory and excellency of the one to the other; for that by "the ministration of death", he means the law, as delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, is clear from its being said to be

written and engraven in stones; as that was by the finger of God himself: rightly does the apostle say, that it was both "written" and "engraven"; for the two tables of the law are expressly said to be written with the finger of God, Ex 31:18 meaning either the Spirit of God, who is sometimes so called, Lu 11:20 compared with
Mt 12:28 or the power of God, which at once caused this writing to exist; and it is in so many words affirmed, that "the writing" was "the writing of God"; and not of man, nor of any creature, no not of an angel, Ex 32:16 yea, even the two tables which were hewn out by Moses, after the first were broken, were written upon by the Lord himself, and not Moses, Ex 34:1. So that as the work of the tables was the work of God, and wonderfully made, the form of the letters, as Abarbinel {x} observes, were miraculously made by him; for this law was, en grammasi, "in letters", as the apostle here says; and as it was written in the Hebrew language, very likely it was in the same form of letters now in use with the Jews; though some have thought that the Samaritan letters are the original ones: moreover, the law was not only written, but "engraved"; for so it is said, that the writing was graven upon the tables, Ex 32:16 and though the word so rendered is no where else used but there, it is rightly rendered graven, as appears by the apostle in this place; and which may lie confirmed by the Targumist on that, who renders it by qyqx, "engraven"; and by the Septuagint
kekolammenh, which signifies the same; and so in the book of Zohar {y}, the letters are said to be wpylgta, "engraven" on the tables: and that the tables were tables of stone, it is certain; they are often so called, Ex 24:12 wherefore the

apostle very properly says, that the law was engraven "in stones"; but what stones these tables were made of cannot be said; the Jews, who affect to know everything, will have them to be precious stones, but what they were they are not agreed in; for though they generally say {z} they were made of the sapphire stone, and sometimes say {a} they were hewed out of the sapphire of the glorious throne of God; yet at other times they call them marble tables {b}; and Aben Ezra {c} was of opinion, that the tables which Moses hewed were not of any precious stone, for he asks where should a precious stone of such size be found? though others pretend to say {d}, that Moses in a miraculous manner was shown a sapphire quarry in the midst of his tent, out of which he cut and hewed the stones; but very likely they were common ones; however, certain it is, that the tables of stone, as written and engraven by the Lord himself, were made, as the apostle here says, "in glory", egenhye en doxh; and so Jarchi on Ex 32:16 "and the tables were the work of God", says, this is to be understood literally
wdwbkbw, "and in" or "for his glory"; or by his glorious power he made them: now this law, though thus written and engraven, and glorious, it was "the ministration of death"; and is so called, because it threatened and punished the transgressors of it with a corporeal death; they that sinned against it died without mercy upon proper evidence and witnesses; every precept of it had this penalty annexed to it, in ease of disobedience; as the having any other goals but one, making of graven images, taking the name of God in vain, the violation of the sabbath, dishonouring of parents, murder, adultery, theft, and covetousness; instances there are of each of these being punishable by this law with a bodily death: and besides, it is the ministration of eternal death, the wages of sin the transgression of the law; which is that wrath of God, a sense of which it is said to work; the curse it threatens with and the second death or lake of fire it casts into: and may be said to be the "ministration" of it; as it shows persons they are deserving of it, pronounces the sentence of it on them, and will execute it upon them, if grace prevent not; now though it was the ministration of death, yet it

was glorious. There were many things which made it so; but what the apostle here particularly takes notice of is the glory that was upon the face of Moses, when he received it and brought it from the Lord, which was very great;

so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away. The history of this may be read in Ex 34:29 it was a real visible glory that was upon the skin of his face, so that it shone again; it is said, "the skin of his face shone"; and this shining of his face the apostle very properly calls "the glory of his

countenance": agreeably to the Septuagint version, which renders it, "the appearance of the skin, or colour of his face, was glorified"; and still nearer to the paraphrase of Onkelos, which is, "the splendour of the glory of his countenance was great"; and to the Targum of Jonathan, which also assigns the reason of it, and which seems to be the true one, "the splendour of the form of his countenance was glorious, because of the splendour of the glory of the majesty of God, at the time he talked with him". The Vulgate Latin version has led many wrong, to paint Moses with two horns, rendering it, "his face was horned", the Hebrew word having the signification of an horn in its derivative; because glory darted from him like horns, as rays of light do from the sun; see **Hab 3:4** and this brightness and glory were so very great, and so dazzling, that Aaron and the people of Israel were afraid to come nigh; which Jarchi, a Jewish writer, imputed to their sin, and shame, and fear, having worshipped the calf; but our apostle ascribes it to the lustre of his countenance, which was such that they could not steadfastly look upon it; they saw it indeed, as it is said in
Ex 34:35 yet they could not look wistly at it, nor bear the splendour of it; though this was only a glory, which was to continue but a while; according to the opinion of Ambrose {e}, this glory continued on Moses's countenance as long as he lived; but be it so, it at last was done away: now this glory was put there to bear a testimony to the divine authority of the law, that it came from God, and was to be received at the hands of Moses, with awful reverence as from God, and to make them afraid of violating a law which came with such majesty and glory; and also to command awe and respect from the Israelites to Moses, whom they were inclined at every turn to treat with contempt, and to let them see that he had communion with God, which this was the effect of: now this was a circumstance which rendered the law glorious, and was expressive of a real glory in it; which, though as this on Moses's face, "was to be done away"; wherefore the apostle argues;

{x} In loc. {y} In Exod. fol. 35. 1. {z} Zohar ib. Targum Jon. in Dent. xxxiv. 12. {a} Targum in Cant. 1. 11. Targum Jon. in Exod. xxxi. 18. {b} Targum Jon. in Deut. ix. 9, 10. {c} In Exod. xxxii. 15. {d} Jarchi in Exod. xxxiv. 1. Pirke Eliezer, c. 46. {e} Comment. in Psal. cxix. 135.

2 Corinthians 3:8

Ver. 8. How shall not the ministration of the Spirit,.... By "the ministration of the Spirit", is meant the Gospel; so called not only because it ministers spiritual things, as peace, pardon, righteousness and salvation, spiritual joy and comfort, and even spiritual life; but because it ministers the Spirit of God himself, by whom it is not only dictated, and by him at first confirmed, and who qualities persons for the preaching of it; but by it he conveys himself into the hearts of men, and makes it powerful for illumination, consolation, edification, and an increase of every grace; and therefore must be rather glorious, or much more glorious than the law, the ministration of death.

2 Corinthians 3:9

Ver. 9. For if the ministration of condemnation be glory,.... So the Jews call the law, for they say, hrwt ala dwbk Nya, "there is no glory but the law" {f}; this is another head of opposition or difference between the law and the Gospel, from whence the superior glory of the one to the other is argued. The law is "the ministration of condemnation"; as sin is a transgression of the law, it accuses for it, convinces of it, pronounces guilty, and adjudges to death on account of it; which is the condemnation it ministers; and this it does to all Adam's posterity, and for his sin too; and to all the actual transgressors of it, to all unbelievers, to all that are under it; even to God's elect themselves, as considered in Adam, and in themselves as transgressors; and this it ministers to their consciences when convicted, though it is never executed on them, because of the suretyship engagement and performances of Christ. The Gospel is

the ministration of righteousness; not of a legal one, or a man's own, but of the righteousness of Christ, by which the law is honoured, justice is satisfied, and God's elect justified from all sin and condemnation; this being perfect, pure, and spotless, and for ever: the Gospel is "the ministration" of it, as it is a means of stripping a man of his own righteousness, of revealing Christ's to him, and of working faith in him, and encouraging him to lay hold upon it for himself; and thus it is not to righteous persons, but sinners, to all believers, to all the second Adam's posterity; now as

much more as righteousness exceeds condemnation, and a justified state a condemned one, so "much more" does the Gospel

exceed the law

in glory.

{f} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 33. 4.

2 Corinthians 3:10

Ver. 10. For even that which was made glorious,.... The apostle grants that there was a glory in the law: it "was made glorious"; it was glorious in the author of it, who is God; it was of his appointing and ordaining, agreeable to his nature, and a declaration of his will; his authority was stamped upon it, and it was written by himself, which cannot be said of any other law whatever; it was glorious in its promulgation, God himself appeared in great glory at the giving of it; Christ was then present; it was ordained by angels, and by them delivered into the hands of Moses, on whose face such a glory was left as could not be steadfastly looked upon; and it was attended with thunderings, lightnings, the sound of a trumpet, &c. it was glorious in the matter of it, it contained great and excellent things; the substance of it is love to God, and to our neighbour; and it was glorious in its properties, being, in its nature and substance, holy, just, good, spiritual, perfect, immutable, and eternal; but yet

had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. There is such an excelling glory in the Gospel, that the other is swallowed up and lost in it; it excels it in those things in which it was so glorious: in the author of it, which, though the same, yet with this difference; the law was given by God as a judge, the Gospel by him as a Father, as the Father of Christ, and of his people in him; the law is the birth of his holiness and righteousness, the Gospel of his wisdom, grace, and love; the law declares his will with respect to duty, the Gospel with respect to salvation; the authority of God is stamped on the law, but the Gospel is the image of Christ; the law was written by the finger of God, but the Gospel was hid in his heart, and came from thence: in the promulgation of it, through the long train of patriarchs and prophets, that went before it to usher it in; it was published by Christ, the Son of God himself, confirmed by the gifts and miracles of the Holy Ghost, and in it is a greater display of the glory of God; it was attended with angels too, and a voice from heaven delightful and not terrible; and there was a glory on Christ's countenance, far exceeding that of Moses's: in the matter of it; which is the love, grace, and mercy of God; the Lord Jesus Christ, in all the glories and fulness of his person and offices; salvation by him, spiritual blessings, exceeding great and precious promises; neither of which are to be observed in the law: the ordinances of it vastly exceed the legal ones; and it has greatly the advantage of it in its effects on the souls of men, when accompanied by the Spirit of God.

2 Corinthians 3:11

Ver. 11. For if that which is done away,.... Here another difference is pointed out, which subsists between the law and the Gospel, and proves that the one is more excellent and glorious than the other. The law is "that which is done away"; not merely the ceremonial law, or the judicial law, but the whole ministry of Moses, and particularly the law of the Decalogue: for the better understanding of this, distinguish between the matter and ministry of it; the ministry of it by Moses is done away, the matter of it so far as of a moral nature abides: distinguish between the law, as in the hands of Moses and of Christ; as in the hands of Moses it is broken to pieces and abolished, as in the hands of Christ, as King in his church, it remains: distinguish between precepts and precepts; some are mixed, being partly moral, and partly ceremonial, as the fourth and fifth commands, and others are not; what is ceremonial, or purely related to the Jews whilst in their civil policy, and in the land of Canaan, is done away; but what is purely moral, is, as to the matter of it, still obliging: distinguish between the law as a covenant of works, and as a rule of walk and conversation; as a covenant of works it is done away, as a rule of walk and conversation it still continues: distinguish between persons and persons; to them that are redeemed from it, it is done away; to them that are under it, it remains; and lastly, distinguish between a right and a wrong use of it; as to any use of it to justify us before God, by our obedience to it, it is done away; but as it may be of use to convince sinners of sin, and to direct saints in a course of righteousness, so it abides. The Gospel is "that which remaineth"; which denotes the continued efficacy, the incorruptibleness, the inexpugnableness, and duration of it; notwithstanding all the opposition of men and devils to it, still its blessings, promises, doctrines, ordinances, and effects continue; it remains in the Scriptures, in the church, in the hearts of believers, and in the world too, until all the elect of God are gathered in: now as things that remain are much more glorious than those which are done away, so the Gospel must be much more glorious than the law.

2 Corinthians 3:12

Ver. 12. Seeing then that we have such hope,.... Having this confidence, and being fully persuaded that God has made us able and sufficient ministers of the Gospel, has called and qualified us for such service; and since we have such a ministry committed to us, which so much exceeds in glory the ministry of Moses, a ministry not of death and condemnation, but of the Spirit and of righteousness; not which is abolished and done away, but which does and will remain, in spite of all the opposition of hell and earth:

we use great plainness of speech; plain and intelligible words, not ambiguous ones: or "boldness"; we are not afraid of men nor devils; we are not terrified by menaces, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself: or "freedom of speech"; we speak out all our mind, which is the mind of Christ; we declare the whole counsel of God, hide and conceal nothing that may be profitable to the churches; we are not to be awed by the terror, or drawn by the flatteries of men to cover the truth; we speak it out plainly, clearly, with all evidence and perspicuity. The apostle from hence passes on to observe another difference between the law and the Gospel, namely, the obscurity of the one, and the clearness of the other.

2 Corinthians 3:13

Ver. 13. And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face,.... This he did, because there was such a glory upon his face when he came down from the mount, that the Israelites could not bear to look upon him; and also to take off that dread of him which was upon them, for they were afraid to come nigh him; and that so they might be able to hearken and attend to the words of the law, he delivered to them: the account of Moses's putting on this veil is in Ex 34:33 where Onkelos renders it by ypa tyb, "the house of the face", or a "mask": and Jarchi on the place says it was a "garment", which he put before his face; and both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call it ardwo, "a linen cloth": now this veil upon his face had a mystery in it; it was an emblem of the Gospel being veiled under the law, and of the darkness and obscurity of the law in the business of life and salvation; and also of the future blindness of the Jews, when the glory of the Gospel should break forth in the times of Christ and his apostles; and which was such,

that the children of Israel, the Jews, as in the times of Moses, so in the times of Christ and his apostles,

could not steadfastly look to; not upon the face of Moses, whose face was veiled; not that they might not look, but because they could not bear to look upon him; but they could not look

to the end of that which is abolished; that is, to Christ, who is the end of the law, which is abrogated by him: to him they could not look, nor could they see him to be the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness; which being fulfilled, is done away by him; and this because of the blindness of their hearts, of which blindness the veil on Moses' face was typical: though the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, "to the face of him which is abolished".

2 Corinthians 3:14

Ver. 14. But their minds were blinded,.... This confirms the sense given of the foregoing verse, and shows, that not the Israelites only in Moses's time, but the Jews in the times of the Gospel, had their minds so blinded, that they could not behold the glory of the Gospel, nor Christ the end of the law; see Ro 11:7.

For until this day, to this very time,

remaineth the same veil untaken away; not the selfsame veil that was on Moses's face, but the veil of blindness, darkness, and ignorance, upon the hearts of the Jews:

in the reading of the Old Testament; the books of the Old Testament, which were used to be read in their synagogues every sabbath day; the true spiritual meaning of which, as they respect Christ and the Gospel dispensation, they understood not; of which darkness, the veil on the face of Moses was a type and emblem:

which veil is done away in Christ; can only be removed by Christ, by his Spirit and grace, and through the light of the Gospel of Christ, shining into the heart; and so dispel that blindness and ignorance which is in the understanding; whereby the books of the Old Testament are understood, and appear to agree exactly with the Gospel of Christ, in the books of the New Testament.

2 Corinthians 3:15

Ver. 15. But even unto this day, when Moses is read,.... These words are an explanation of the former, and show that by the Old Testament is designed, more especially, Moses, or the writings of Moses; which were frequently read, and preached upon in the Jewish synagogues; see Ac 13:15 and that by "the veil untaken away", is meant,

the veil upon their heart; that is, the veil of blindness, ignorance of Christ, and the Gospel; of the prophecies of the Old Testament, and even of the law itself, its nature, use, and end; preferring the traditions of their fathers, before the written law of Moses.

2 Corinthians 3:16

Ver. 16. Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord,.... The heart, upon which the veil now is; or the body of the Jewish nation, as in the latter day; when they "shall turn", or "be turned", by the Spirit, power, and grace of God, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn, and embrace him as the true Messiah and only Saviour:

the veil shall be taken away; the veil of blindness and ignorance, respecting themselves, case, state, and condition, and the way of salvation by Christ; the veil of unbelief, with regard to his person, offices, and grace, and of error in points of the greatest moment and importance; then all the darkness and obscurity that is upon the books of Moses and the prophets, and which is now upon their hearts in reading them, will be gone. The prophecies of the Old Testament will be seen in their proper light, and to be evidently fulfilled in Christ; the true nature, use, and end of the law, will be discovered; and both they and that will be freed from all darkness that now attends them. The Jews themselves acknowledge, that though the law is light, yet there is an obscurity in it, by reason of the several ways of interpreting it; and therefore,

"he that studies in it, has need to remove, hwom rxa hwom, "veil after veil", which is upon the face of it, in order to come at the light of it {g}:"

and intimate, that the veil on Moses's face was an emblem of this obscurity, which agrees with what the apostle hints in this context; and also own, that there is now upon them a veil of ignorance; and, say they {h}, God has promised to remove, wnlkv lem twlkoh Kom, perhaps it should be hwom, "the veil of folly off of our understanding", referring, as is thought, to Isa 25:7.

{g} R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 90. 2. {h} Chobat Halebabot, par. 1. c. 3. apud L. Capell. in loc.

2 Corinthians 3:17

Ver. 17. Now the Lord is that Spirit,.... "The Lord", to whom the heart is turned, when the veil is removed, is Jesus Christ; and he is "that Spirit", or "the Spirit": he, as God, is of a spiritual nature and essence; he is a spirit, as God is said to be, **Joh 4:24** he is the giver of the Spirit of God, and the very life and spirit of the law, without whom as the end of it, it is a mere dead letter: or rather as by Moses in **2Co 3:15** is meant, the law of Moses, so by the "Lord" here may be meant the Gospel of Christ: and this is that Spirit, of which the apostles were made ministers, and is said to give life, **2Co 3:6**.

And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; which may be understood of the third person in the Godhead; where he is as a spirit of illumination, there is freedom from former blindness and darkness; where he is as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, there is freedom from the bondage of sin, and captivity of Satan; where he is as a comforter, there is freedom from the fear of hell, wrath, and damnation: where he is as a spirit of adoption, there is the freedom of children with a father; where he is as a spirit of prayer and supplication, there is liberty of access to God with boldness, Though rather the Gospel as attended with the Spirit of God, in opposition to the law, is here designed; and which points out another difference between the law and the Gospel; where the law is, there is bondage, it genders to it; it has a natural tendency to it: quite contrary is this to what the Jews {i} say, who call the law, twryx, "liberty": and say,

"that he that studies in the law, hath alkm wryx, "freedom from everything":"

whereas it gives freedom in nothing, but leads into, and brings on persons a spirit of bondage; it exacts rigorous obedience, where there is no strength to perform; it holds men guilty, curses and condemns for non-obedience; so that such as are under it, and of the works of it, are always under a spirit of bondage; they obey not from love, but fear, as servants or slaves for wages, and derive all their peace and comfort from their obedience: but where the Gospel takes place under the influence of the Spirit of God, there is liberty; not to sin, which is contrary to the Gospel, to the Spirit of God in believers, and to the principle of grace wrought in their souls; but a liberty from the bondage and servitude of it: a liberty from the law's rigorous exaction, curse, and condemnation, and from the veil of former blindness and ignorance.

{i} Zohar in Gen. fol. 90. 1. & in Exod. fol. 72. 1. & in Numb. fol. 73. 3.

2 Corinthians 3:18

Ver. 18. But we all with open face,.... We are not like Moses, who had a veil on his face; nor like the Jews, who have one on their hearts: "but we all"; not ministers and preachers of the Gospel only, but all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, greater or lesser believers, who are enlightened by the Spirit of God, and are converted to Christ: "with open face"; which may regard the object beheld, the glory of Christ unveiled, that has no veil on it, as Moses had on his face, when he delivered the law; or the persons beholding, who are rid of Jewish darkness; the veil of the ceremonial law, and of natural darkness and blindness of mind; and so clearly and fully, comparatively speaking,

beholding as in a glass; not of the law, but of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; not with the eyes of their bodies, but with the eyes of their understandings, with the eye of faith; which sight is spiritual, delightful, and very endearing; throws a veil over all other objects, and makes souls long to be with Christ: the object beheld is

the glory of the Lord; Jesus Christ: not the glory of his human nature, which lies in its union to the Son of God, and in its names which it has by virtue of it; and in its being the curious workmanship of the Spirit of God, and so is pure and holy, and free from all sin; and was outwardly beautiful and glorious, and is so at the right hand of God, where we see him by faith, crowned with glory and honour; and shall behold him with the eyes of our bodies, and which will be fashioned like to his glorious body; but this sight and change are not yet: rather the glory of his divine nature is meant, which is essential and underived, the same with his Father's; is ineffable, and incomprehensible; it appears in the perfections he is possessed of, and in the worship given to him; it was manifested in the doctrines taught, and in the miracles wrought by him; there were some breakings forth of this glory in his state of humiliation, and were beheld by the apostles, and other believers, who saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father. Though the glory of Christ as Mediator, being full of grace and truth, seems to be chiefly designed; this he has from God, and had it from everlasting; this he gives to his people, and is what makes him so glorious, lovely, and desirable in their eye: and whilst this delightful object is beheld by them, they are

changed into the same image; there was a divine image in man, in his first creation; this image was defaced by sin, and a different one took place; now in regeneration another distinct from them both is stamped, and this is the image of Christ; he himself is formed in the soul, his grace is wrought there; so that it is no wonder there is a likeness between them; which lies in righteousness and holiness, and shows itself in acts of grace, and a discharge of duty. The gradual motion of the change into this image is expressed by this phrase,

from glory to glory: not from the glory of the law to the glory of the Gospel; or from the glory of Moses to the glory of Christ; rather from the glory that is in Christ, to a glory derived in believers from him; or which seems most agreeable, from one degree of grace to another, grace here being signified by glory; or from glory begun here to glory perfect hereafter; when this image will be completed, both in soul and body; and the saints will be as perfectly like to Christ, as they are capable of, and see him as he is: now the efficient cause of all this, "is the Spirit of the Lord". It is he that takes off the veil from the heart, that we may, with open face unveiled, behold all this glory; it is he that regenerates, stamps the image of Christ, and conforms the soul to his likeness; it is he that gradually carries on the work of grace upon the soul, increases faith, enlarges the views of the glory of Christ, and the spiritual light, knowledge, and experience of the saints, and will perfect all that which concerns them; will quicken their mortal bodies, and make them like to Christ; and will for ever rest as a spirit of glory on them, both in soul and body: some read these words,

by the Lord of the Spirit, and understand them of Christ, others read them, "by the Lord the Spirit", as they very well may be rendered; and so are a proof of the true and proper deity of the Holy Spirit, who is the one Jehovah with the Father and the Son. The ancient Jews owned this;

"the Spirit of the living God, (say {k} they,) arwbh wnyyh, this is the Creator himself, from him all spirits are produced; blessed be he, and blessed be his name, because his name is he himself, for his name is Jehovah."

{k} R. Moses Botril in Sepher Jetzirah, p. 40. Ed. Rittangel.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Corinthians 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS 4

In this chapter, the apostle declares the constancy, sincerity, and integrity of him, and his fellow ministers, in preaching the Gospel; asserts the clearness and perspicuity of it; removes the charge of pride and arrogance from them; takes notice of the afflictions he and others endured, for the sake of the Gospel; what supports they had under them, and what comforts they enjoyed:

in **2Co 4:1** he observes, that seeing they were employed in such a ministry, as before described in the preceding chapter, though they met with troubles in it, they did not sink under them; the reason of which was, partly the excellency of the ministry, and partly the grace and mercy of God; and they were no less sincere than they were diligent; and were the reverse of the false teachers, who used dishonest methods, craftiness and deceit; these they disclaimed, and delivered out naked truth, with all simplicity and evidence, and as in the sight of God, in confirmation of which they could appeal to the consciences of all that heard them, **2Co 4:2** and whereas the apostle had affirmed the plainness and clearness of the Gospel ministry, both in the preceding chapter, and in the foregoing verse, he foresaw that an objection would be raised against it, which he anticipates, **2Co 4:3** showing, that though the Gospel was not spiritually discerned and savingly understood by some persons, yet this was not to be charged upon the Gospel, as if it was attended with darkness and obscurity; but it was owing to the unbelief of men, and the power of Satan over them, in blinding their minds; otherwise the Gospel in itself was light and glorious, in which Christ, the image of God, in a most resplendent manner appears; and those on whom Satan thus wrought were such as did not belong to God's elect, but were of the number of them that perish: moreover the integrity of the apostle and other ministers appeared in their preaching Christ, and not themselves; and in serving the churches in that way, for the sake of Christ; so that they were far from being chargeable with pride, vanity, and arrogance, **2Co 4:5** and they readily acknowledged, that all the Gospel light they had was from that God, who spoke light out of darkness in the first creation, whereby they were qualified to communicate light to others, in the name of Christ, **2Co 4:6** and though they had a treasure committed to their trust, and which they had within them, yet they freely owned they were but earthen vessels; and the reason why such treasure was put there was, that the power seen in the conversion of sinners by their ministry might appear to be not of themselves, but of the Lord, **2Co 4:7** and then the apostle proceeds to give an account of the afflictions endured by them, and of the divine supports they had, by which they were preserved from being overwhelmed with them, **2Co 4:8** one end of which afflictions, and which are signified by bearing the dying of Jesus in their bodies, and by being exposed to death for his sake, was, that his life might be manifest in them, or his power in the upholding of them, **2Co 4:10** and herein lay the difference between them and the Corinthians; the one were in deaths oft, and in very great distresses, and the other in prosperous circumstances, **2Co 4:12** but however, they had much consolation amidst their sorrows and troubles, and which they had partly through the Spirit of faith, and in a way of believing; and who after the example of David, and having the same Spirit as he had, believed and spake, **2Co 4:13** and partly through the hope of the resurrection of the dead, to which they were encouraged by the resurrection of Christ, **2Co 4:14** as also by considering what valuable ends were answered by their bearing afflictions for the sake of Christ, and preaching the Gospel, namely the good of the churches of Christ, and the glory of God, **2Co 4:15** and besides, they had an experience of the daily renovation of the inward man, or of the carrying on of the work of grace upon their souls; and of an increase of grace, right, and joy in them; and this kept them from fainting, though their outward circumstances and outward man were but in a poor condition, **2Co 4:16** but more especially what raised their spirits, and kept them from sinking under their afflictions, was the view they had of eternal glory and happiness, to which they had respect; and the comparison they were led to make between their present afflictions, and glory, which their afflictions were working for as, that their afflictions were light, glory heavy; their afflictions were but for a moment, their weight of glory was for ever; their afflictions were seen and temporal, their glory unseen and eternal; or the things of this world, which they often needed, and yet did not regard, were visible and temporary things; but the things of another world they had their eye upon were invisible, only visible to faith, and would endure for ever.

Ver. 1. Therefore seeing we have this ministry,.... The apostle having largely insisted on the difference between the law and the Gospel, the ministration of the one and of the other, proceeds to give an account of his own conduct, and that of his fellow apostles and ministers: "we", says he, "faint not"; under all the reproaches cast upon us, persecutions raised against us, and tribulations that attend us; we do not sink in our spirits, or give out from the ministry; we go on cheerfully in our work, in the thee of all opposition, encouraged by the consideration of the excellency of the ministry, which they had from the Lord, were put into, and continued in; which was so valuable in itself, and so useful in its effects; being the ministration of the Spirit and of righteousness, having in it such an excelling glory to the law, and attended with so much light and liberty: to which he adds the consideration of the mercy of God they were partakers of,

as we have received mercy; which may refer either to the grace and mercy of God, which they had received in conversion; a sense of which abiding upon them, so influenced their minds, to hold forth the riches of abounding grace and mercy to poor sinners in the Gospel, that nothing could deter them from it; or to the grace, favour, and good will of God, in making, supporting, and continuing them as ministers of the word; all which, they were sensible, was owing not to men, but God; not to their merit, but to his mercy; not to their worthiness, parts, learning, &c. but to his free gift, favour, and grace, by which only they were what they were, as preachers of the Gospel.

2 Corinthians 4:2

Ver. 2. But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty,.... Or "shame"; this is a further account of the conduct of the first ministers of the Gospel, and very worthy of our imitation, and in which the apostle strikes at the different manner of behaviour in the false apostles: this may respect both doctrine and practice; they abhorred and rejected everything that was scandalous and reproachful to the Gospel of Christ; in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, they had their conversation in the world; they were open and above board, both in principle and practice; the same men in public, as in private; they used no art to cover their doctrines, or hide their conversations; everything of this kind was detestable to them; whereas the false teachers took a great deal of pains to colour over both their sentiments and their lives; and "a shame it was to speak of the things that were done of them in secret", **Eph 5:12**. Moreover, they were

not walking in craftiness; they used no sly and artful methods to please men, to gain applause from them, or make merchandise of them; they did not lie in wait to deceive, watching an opportunity to work upon credulous and incautious minds; they did not, by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple; nor put on different forms, or make different appearances, in order to suit themselves to the different tempers and tastes of men, as did the false apostles:

not handling the word of God deceitfully. They did not corrupt it with human doctrines, or mix and blend it with philosophy, and vain deceit; they did not wrest the Scriptures to serve any carnal or worldly purpose; nor did they accommodate them to the lusts and passions of men; or conceal any part of truth, or keep back any thing which might be profitable to the churches:

but by the manifestation of the truth, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God; that is, they with all plainness and evidence clearly preached the truth as it is in Jesus, presenting it to, and pressing it upon the consciences of men; where they left it, and to which they could appeal; and all this they did, in the sight and presence of the omniscient God, to whom they knew they must give an account of themselves and their ministry.

2 Corinthians 4:3

Ver. 3. But if our Gospel be hid,.... When the Gospel is called ours, the meaning is, not that ministers are the authors or subject of it; but it is so styled, because they are intrusted with it; it is preached by them; and is in opposition to another Gospel, the Gospel of the false apostles. Here an objection is obviated, which the apostle saw would be made against the clearness and perspicuity of the Gospel, asserted by him in the foregoing chapter; taken from some persons, who though they sat under the ministry of the word, were not enlightened by it, saw no glory nor excellency in it, nor were their minds in the least affected with it: to which he replies, saying, "if our Gospel be hid",

it is hid to them that are lost. But why should the apostle put an if upon its being hid? is it not hid? is it not "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom?" To which may be answered, that it was hid in God from the beginning of the world; and in Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and in the ceremonial law, which contained types and shadows of many things in it; and was hid from whole nations, and for whole ages formerly: but now God has made known the mystery of his will; Christ is manifest in the flesh; the ceremonial law is done away, and the Gospel is preached to Jews and Gentiles; so that it is hid to none, as to the outward ministration of it: and if the internal, spiritual, and saving knowledge and experience of it is hid from any, eventually and finally, it is "to them that are lost": all mankind are in a lost and perishing condition through sin; though some will not be lost eternally, whom God has chosen, Christ has redeemed, and who by the Spirit are brought savingly to believe in Christ; but there are others, that will be lost for ever; and to these the Gospel is hid; and they are such, who are left to the native blindness of their minds, and are given up to a reprobate mind, to judicial darkness, and are suffered to be under the influence of the prince of darkness, as in the following verse; now such instances are no more an objection to the clearness and perspicuity of the Gospel, and the ministration of it, than men born blind, who never could, nor never will see light, are to the bright and clear shining of the sun noon day.

2 Corinthians 4:4

Ver. 4. In whom the god of this world hath blinded,.... The description of the persons to whom the Gospel is hid, is here further carried on; in which the character of Satan is given, who is here styled "the god of this world"; just as he is by Christ, "the prince of this world", Joh 12:31 not because he had any hand in the making of it, or has any concern in the government of it, or in the disposal of men or things in it; but because of his influence over the worst, and greatest part of the world; which lies in wickedness, under the power of this wicked one, being led captive by him at his will; who have voluntarily given themselves up to him, and whose lusts they will do; and so declare themselves to be his children, and him their Father, yea, their god: the influence he has over them is, he

hath blinded the minds of them that believe not. The apostle here seems to refer to one of the devils, which the Jews {l} frequently speak of lamo, "Samael"; who they say is the head of all the devils; a very malignant spirit, and who deceived our first parents; the word is compounded of la, "god", and amo, "to blind"; him they call the angel of death, and say {m}, that he hath amle ynp Kyvxa, "brought darkness upon the face of the world", or the creatures, the Gentiles: agreeably to which the apostle calls the devil, "the god that hath blinded"; what he blinds in men, is "their mind": the more excellent and knowing part of man; not the eyes of their bodies, but of their understandings; which shows the near access Satan has to the souls of men; he penetrates into their very hearts and minds, and has an influence there: the persons whose minds he blinds, are those "who believe not"; which distinguishes them from others that perish, who never enjoyed the Gospel, and therefore he says, "in", or "among whom"; and from true believers, on whom Satan can have no such influence; and is a reason of these men's perishing, and of Satan's influence over them; and must be understood of reprobates, and final unbelievers: the influence he has over them is expressed by "blinding" them; which he does, by diverting them from hearing the Gospel, and by stirring up the enmity of their minds against it, and by increasing their natural darkness and blindness with respect to it. The end which Satan has in doing this is,

lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them; here many things are hinted, in commendation of the Gospel, as that it is the Gospel of Christ; because he was not only the greatest and best preacher of it that ever was, but also is the author and subject of it; Christ is the sum and substance of the Gospel, the principal thing in it, or person that is spoken of therein; and then Christ who is the grand subject of the Gospel is described, in order to recommend it the more, as "the image of God". The Jews {n} call the Messiah, la Mlu, "the image of God"; some copies, and the Complutension edition, and the Arabic version, read, "the image of the invisible God", as in **Col 1:15**. So Christ is as the Son of God, being the natural, substantial, essential, eternal, not created, and perfect image of his Father; and so he is as man and Mediator: further, the Gospel is said to be the

"glorious" Gospel of Christ, as it must needs be, since it so clearly and illustriously sets forth the glory of Christ; contains such glorious doctrines and promises in it, and is attended with such glorious effects, where it comes with power: add to all this, that "light" is attributed to it; the Jews {o} speak of the "light of the law", and the law is called light; and say, that
hrwt ala rwa Nya, "there is no light but the law"; but this may be more truly said of the Gospel, by which not only persons may be notionally enlightened, who never were made really partakers of the grace of God, but is the means of spiritual and saving illumination to thousands, when it is attended with the demonstration of the Spirit: now all these excellent characters of the Gospel serve to enhance the spite and malice of Satan, in endeavouring all he can to kinder the bright shining of this glorious Gospel, to and upon any of the sons of men; and his reason for so doing is, because he knows, that should the Gospel shine unto them, the interest and glory of Christ would be advanced, and his own would decline.

{l} Targum Jon. ben Uzziel in Gen. iii. 6. Zohar in Gen. fol. 37. 2. Vajikra Rabba, fol. 162. 3. Debarim Rabba, fol. 245. 3. Tzeror Hammor in Gen. fol. 6. 2. & 7. 3. Vid. Irenaeum. adv. Haeres. l. 1. p. 136. {m} Zohar in Gen. fol. 31. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 93. 3. {n} Zohar in Gen. fol. 31. 1. {o} Targum in Job iii. 16. T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 7. 2. Tzreor Hammor, fol. 89. 4.

2 Corinthians 4:5

Ver. 5. For we preach not ourselves,.... These words contain a reason why the apostles behaved themselves in the manner described, **2Co 4:2** and serve to explain in what sense this inspired writer is to be understood, when he calls the Gospel our Gospel, **2Co 4:3** and most clearly proves the Gospel to be a glorious one, which he had asserted, **2Co 4:4** since Christ, and not themselves, is the subject of it, "for we preach not ourselves". They did not preach any doctrine of their own devising; they did not set up themselves as lords over the faith and consciences of men; nor was their view in preaching to set forth their learning, parts, and eloquence, or to amass wealth and riches to themselves; nor did they assert the purity of human nature, or the power of man to do anything of himself that is spiritually good; or that justification and salvation are by works of righteousness done by men. To do any, or each, or all of these, as did the false apostles, is to preach a man's self: but so did not these faithful dispensers of the word, but they

preached Christ Jesus the Lord; that is, the doctrines respecting the person, office, and grace of Christ; as that he is truly and properly God, the eternal and only begotten Son of God, God and man in one person, the only Mediator between God and man, and the Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners; that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the true Messiah; and that this Christ is Jesus, a Saviour, the only able and willing one; and that this Jesus Christ is "Lord" of all, especially of the saints; not only as Creator, but as their head, husband, and Redeemer; that peace and reconciliation, pardon and righteousness, life and salvation, are only by him: and they also declared themselves the servants of the churches,

and ourselves your servants. The apostle does not say they were the servants of Christ, though they were, and esteemed it their greatest honour to be so; for he had no need to observe this, since this is included in their preaching him as "Lord": nor does he say they were the servants of men, or menpleasers, for then they would not be the servants of Christ; but he asserts them to be the servants of the churches: and which must be understood, not with respect to things temporal, with which they had no concern; but with regard to things spiritual, particularly to the ministration of the word, and administration of ordinances: and this they professed to be,

for Jesus' sake; either for the sake of preaching Christ unto them; or because they were chosen and called by him to this service, and in which they were willing to continue, for the sake of his honour and interest.

2 Corinthians 4:6

Ver. 6. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,.... The causal particle for, shows these words to be also a reason of the foregoing; either why they so clearly beheld the glory of the Lord, 2Co 4:18 or why they renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, 2Co 4:2 or why their Gospel could not be hid, 2Co 4:3 or why they did not preach themselves, but Christ, 2Co 4:5 because God had

shined in their hearts; and in this light, they saw the glory of Christ; could not bear any secret, hidden, scandalous practices; and held forth the word of light and life to others; and seeing so much of their own weakness, sinfulness, and unworthiness, dared not to preach themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; in which may be observed the character of the true God, as opposed to Satan, the god of this world, who is said to blind the minds of men, 2Co 4:6 whereas the true God is represented as the author of "light", and as producing it by a word of "command", and that "out" of mere "darkness"; respect is here had to the creation of all things at the beginning, when "darkness was upon the face of the deep--and God said, let there be light and there was light", **Ge 1:2**. Now this character of God, as creating light in this wonderful manner, is prefaced to his giving spiritual light unto his people; because of the agreement there is between light corporeal and spiritual, in their nature and production; for as there was darkness upon the earth before there was light, so there is a natural darkness in the minds of men, before any spiritual light is infused into them; and as light was the first production out of the dark and unformed chaos, so light is the first thing that is struck into the soul in conversion; moreover, as light was the effect of almighty power, so is the spiritual illumination, or the opening of the eyes of the understandings of men, who are naturally born blind; and as light was a creation of that which was not before, so the work of grace on the soul is not an increase of, or an addition to, or an improvement of the light of nature, but it is a new light, created in the understanding; add to all this, that both corporeal and spiritual light are good, and both called "day"; the influence that God has over the hearts of men, and the effect he produces there are, he

hath shined in our hearts. The hearts of men are like this dark terraqueous globe, having no light in them; God is as the sun, the fountain of light, which shines upon them and in them; so as to give them a true sight and sense of sin, and of their lost state and condition; so as to cause them to see the fulness and suitableness of Christ as a Saviour; so as to warm their affections, and draw out their desires after Christ, his ways, truths, ordinances, and people; and so as to give them light into the mysteries of the Gospel; particularly he so shines into the hearts of some, whom be makes ministers of the Gospel, as to give more light and knowledge into Gospel truths, than he does to others; and his end in doing this, is

to give: that is, that his ministering servants may give

the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; men must be first made light in, and by the Lord, or they will never be fit and proper persons to hold forth the word of light, or to communicate light to others; God first shines into their hearts, and then they give light to others: by "the glory of God" is not meant the essential glory of God, or the perfections of his nature, though these are to be seen in the face, or person of Christ; but rather the glorious counsels of God, and scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ; or in other words, the glorious Gospel of God: and by "the knowledge" of it is designed, not a mere notional speculative knowledge of the Gospel, but an experimental one; a spiritual knowledge of the Gospel, of Christ in it, of God in Christ, and of an interest in God's salvation by Christ: now when the ministers of the word are said to give the light of this to men, or to enlighten them with this knowledge, it cannot be thought that they are the efficient causes, for such are only Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit; but only that they are instrumental, and are means in the hands of God, of bringing persons to see the fellowship of this mystery: all which is done, "in the face of Jesus Christ"; this denotes the clearness and perspicuity of their ministry, and of that knowledge which is communicated by it; see **2Co 3:12** and also the authority by which they act; it is in the name and person of Christ, in which sense the phrase is used, **2Co 2:10**.

2 Corinthians 4:7

Ver. 7. But we have, this treasure in earthen vessels,.... This is a further commendation of the Gospel; and by which the apostle removes an objection against it, taken from the cross and persecutions that attend it, and the outward meanness of the ministers of it. The Gospel is called a "treasure", for not grace, nor Christ, but the Gospel is here meant; which is so styled, because it contains rich truths, and an abundance of them; comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones, for the price of them, their antiquity, distance of place from whence they come, and their duration; because it has in it rich blessings, spiritual ones, the blessings of the new covenant, solid, substantial, and irreversible ones, and a fulness of them; and because it consists of exceeding great and precious promises, of more worth than thousands of gold and silver; free, absolute, and unconditional ones, which are yea and amen in Christ, and relate both to this, and the other world; and also because it exhibits and shows forth to us the riches of God and of Christ, of grace and of glory; which are unsearchable, substantial, satisfying, and durable: the repository, or cabinet, in which this treasure is, are "earthen vessels"; by which are meant, ministers of the word, who are so in themselves, in their own esteem, and in the esteem of others; probably the apostle might have in view **La 3:2**. The doctors and scholars among the Jews are compared hereunto;

"says R. Eleazar {p}, to what is a disciple of a wise man like, in the esteem of a man of the world? at first he is like to a golden cup; when he has conversed with him, he is like to a silver cup; and when he has received any profit by him, he is like vrh lv Nwtyql, "to an earthen cup", which, when broken, cannot be repaired again: the law (say they) is not confirmed but by him, who makes himself

orx ylkk, "as an earthen vessel" {q}: R. Joshua {r} was a great man in the king's palace, and he was deformed; wherefore Caesar's daughter said, wisdom is beautiful
rewkm ylkb, "in an ugly vessel"; and he brought her a simile in proof of it from wine, which is not kept in a silver vessel."

The allusion is either to the earth itself, in which treasure lies, or is hid, and out of which it is dug; or to pots and vessels made of earth, into which treasure has been used to be put; or to earthen pitchers, in which lights or lamps were formerly carried; see **Jud 7:16** where Gideon's three hundred men, are said to have empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers; they carried lamps with them to give them light, it being night when they went into the camp of Midian; and those they put into pitchers, that the Midianites might not perceive them afar off, as a Jewish commentator well observes {s}; in like manner the Gospel put into earthen vessels is a glorious light to some, whilst it is hidden to others: yea, even lamps themselves were no other than earthen vessels, in which light was put; for so says Maimonides {t}, a lamp, a burning light, is vrx ylk, "an earthen vessel", like a reed; and on the top of it is a little ear, which joins to it; and when it is made, a piece of old cloth is put upon the burning oil, and it continues in it; also an earthen vessel is made, in which there is a hollow place for to set the light in, and in it is gathered all that flows from the oil out of the light; and it is strengthened about the head of the candlestick, that the brass might not be hurt by the oil; and this vessel is called the house in which the light subsides, or the receptacle of the light; and which receptacle, another of the Misnic commentators says {u}, is an earthen vessel, made to put the light in; and the lamp, he also says, is like an earthen platter, sharp pointed below, &c. and this allusion well agrees with the context, in which the Gospel is represented as a glorious light, shining in darkness, **2Co 4:4**. The Greek word ostrakinoiv, the apostle uses, signifies also "shells of fishes"; and in like manner does Philo the Jew {w} compare the human body;

"I am (says he) very little concerned for this mortal body which is about me, and cleaves to me ostreou dikhn, "like the shell of a fish"; though it is hurt by everyone."

And the reference may be to pearls, which are said to have been found in such shells, particularly in oysters; and is designed to express, either the frail mortal bodies of the ministers of the Gospel, comparable to brittle shells; or baked earth; or rather the outward mean despicable condition of the apostles, and preachers of the word; being men of no figure in the world, for birth, learning, or outward grandeur; and being attended with sinful infirmities also, as other men; and more especially as they were labouring under reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, for the sake of the Gospel; see Jer 32:14. The reason why it pleased God to put such a rich and valuable treasure into the hands of persons so mean and contemptible was,

that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us: that is, that it might appear that the making of such persons ministers of the word was not of themselves, was not owing to their natural abilities, or to any diligence and industry, and acquirements of their own, or to any instructions they had received from others, but to the grace of God, and the effectual working of his power; and that the success which attended their ministrations in the conversion of sinners, and building up of saints, could only be ascribed to the exceeding greatness of divine power; and that the supporting of them in their work, under all the persecutions raised against them, and opposition made unto them, could be attributed to nothing else; of which power, instances are given in the following verses.

{p} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 52. 2. {q} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 4. 2. {r} Juchasin, fol. 33. 2. {s} Laniado in Judg. vii, 16. {t} In Misn. Celim, c. 2. sect. 8. {u} Bartenora in ib. {w} De Joseph. p. 536.

2 Corinthians 4:8

Ver. 8. We are troubled on every side,.... Or afflicted; en panti, either "in every place", wherever we are, into whatsoever country, city, or town we enter, we are sure to meet with trouble, of one sort or another; for wherever we be, we are in the world, in which we must expect tribulation: or "always", every day and hour we live, as in **2Co 4:10** we are never free from one trial or another: or "by everyone"; by all sorts of persons, good and bad, professors and profane, open persecutors and false brethren; yea, some of the dear children of God, weak believers, give us trouble: or "with every sort" of trouble, inward and outward; trouble from the world, the flesh and the devil:

yet not distressed; so as to have no hope, or see no way of escape; so as to have no manner of comfort, or manifestations of the love of God; or so as to be straitened in our own souls; for notwithstanding all our troubles, we have freedom at the throne of grace, and in our ministry; we can go with liberty to God, and preach the Gospel boldly to you:

we are perplexed; and sometimes know not what to do, which way to take, what course to steer, or how we shall be relieved and supplied; we are sometimes at the utmost loss about things temporal, how we shall be provided for with food and raiment; nor are we without our perplexing thoughts, doubts, and fears, about spiritual affairs:

but not in despair; of the Lord's appearing and working salvation, both in a temporal and spiritual sense.

2 Corinthians 4:9

Ver. 9. Persecuted, but not forsaken,.... Pursued from place to place, and followed with menaces, curses, and reproaches; laid hold on, proscribed, imprisoned, and threatened with the severest tortures, and death itself; but our God never leaves us nor forsakes us; though we are followed close by evil men, and left by our friends, we are not forsaken of God:

cast down we sometimes are, as an earthen vessel; **2Co 4:7**, which may be cast out of a man's hands, in order to be dashed to pieces; or as a man in wrestling, see **Eph 6:12** may be thrown to the ground by his antagonist, so we are sometimes foiled by sin, Satan, and the world:

but not destroyed; we are still safe in the hands of Christ, and are kept by the power of God; and, indeed, to what else can all this be ascribed? it is surprising that earthen vessels should bear and suffer so much, and not fall, or be dashed to pieces.

2 Corinthians 4:10

Ver. 10. Always bearing about in the body,.... The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, "in our body"; and the Syriac version, in this and the next clause, reads, "in our bodies", and some copies in this read, "bodies"; continually carrying about with us, in these mortal bodies of ours, wherever we go,

the dying of the Lord Jesus; by which is meant, not the doctrine of the sufferings and death of Christ, and of salvation by a crucified Saviour, which they bore and carried about with them in a ministerial way, wherever they came and preached, but the sufferings they themselves underwent: so called, because of the likeness there is between the sufferings of Christ, and theirs; as he was traduced as a wicked man, a deceiver, and a stirrer up of sedition, so were they; as he was persecuted, so were they; as he was liable to death, and at last was delivered up to it, so were they: and also because of the union and sympathy which were between them; Christ and they were one body and one Spirit; so that what was endured by the members, the head had a fellow feeling of, and sympathy with; and reckoned what was done to them, as done to himself: and besides, the sufferings they underwent, and death they were exposed unto, were for his sake, as it is explained in the next verse:

for we which live; who are still in the land of the living, though it is almost a miracle we are, considering the circumstances we are in:

are always delivered; that is, continually exposed

to death for Jesus' sake: and the end of all these sufferings, which is expressed alike in both verses is,

that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body, or "mortal flesh"; the meaning of which is, that it might appear that Jesus, though he died, is risen again from the dead, and lives at the Father's right hand, and ever lives to make intercession for us; of which there is a full proof, inasmuch as we are supported by him under all the trials and sufferings we endure for his sake; for because he lives, we live also, amidst so many dangers and deaths, which attend us.

2 Corinthians 4:11

Ver. 11. See Gill on "2Co 4:10".

2 Corinthians 4:12

Ver. 12. So then death worketh in us,.... This is the conclusion of the foregoing account, or the inference deduced from it; either the death, or dying of Christ, that is, the sufferings of his body, the church, for his sake, energeitai, "is wrought in us"; fulfilled and perfected in us; see **Col 1:24** or rather a corporeal death has seized upon us; the seeds of death are in us; our flesh, our bodies are mortal, dying off apace; death has already attacked us, is working on our constitutions gradually, and unpinning our tabernacles, which in a short time will be wholly took down and laid in the dust:

but life in you. Some understand these words as spoken ironically, like those in **1Co 4:8** but the apostle seems not to be speaking in such a strain, but in the most serious manner, and about things solemn and awful; and his meaning is, ours is the sorrow, the trouble, the affliction, and death itself, yours is the gain, the joy, the pleasure, and life; what we get by preaching the Gospel are reproach, persecution, and death; but this Gospel we preach at such expense is the savour of life unto life to you, and is the means of maintaining spiritual life in your souls, and of nourishing you up unto eternal life; and which is no small encouragement to us to go on in our work with boldness and cheerfulness: or these words regard the different state and condition of the apostle, and other ministers, and of the Corinthians; the one were in adversity, and the other in prosperity.

2 Corinthians 4:13

Ver. 13. We having the same Spirit of faith,.... By faith here is meant, not the doctrine, but the grace of faith; a believing in the doctrines of the Gospel, and in the person of Christ; an exercise of that grace upon the death and resurrection of Christ; and particularly a looking by faith in full expectation of the saints' resurrection from the dead, and eternal glory, together with a reliance on the power, faithfulness, and promises of God to support under the afflictions of this life. Now of this faith the Spirit of God is the author; this is not of ourselves, of our own power, it is the free gift of God, and a valuable gift it is; it is of the operation of God, and the produce of his almighty power; and of this the Spirit of God, in conversion, is the powerful operator: hence he is here called the "Spirit of faith". So the "third" number in the Cabalistic tree of the Jews, the intelligence sanctifying, which answers to the third person in our doctrine of the Trinity, is called {x},

"Nmwa hnwma and hnwmah ba, "the artificer of faith", and "the author or parent of faith", because from its power faith flows."

Which is the "same" in all saints; the Spirit is the same in one as in another, and so is the faith which he is the author of; see **2Pe 1:1**. Faith is the same in all the saints that have been from the beginning of the world, under the Old and New Testament dispensations; it was the same in all the churches in the apostle's time, in Rome as at Ephesus, in Ephesus as at Rome, and in Thessalonica as at Rome and Ephesus, and so in all the other churches; though it may be, the apostle may chiefly design the sameness of faith, and of the

Spirit, in him and his fellow ministers, and in these Corinthians, though death was working in the one, and life in the other; which appeared in their free and bold ministration of the word, notwithstanding all they met with on account of it, in imitation and encouraged by the example of David,

according as it is written, Ps 116:10.

I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak: where there is true faith, and the true Spirit of faith, there will be a speaking of, for, and in the name of Christ, as there ought to be: for as "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation". This is true of believers in common, sooner or later, at one time or another; but more especially of the ministers of the word, who have a firm and well grounded belief in the doctrines of the Gospel, and person of Christ; and therefore speak freely, and without any doubt and hesitation about these things, boldly, and without the fear of men, and sincerely and faithfully, as in the sight of God: hence they make Christ the main subject of their ministry, because they believe in him, and nothing can stop their mouths from speaking of him; faith, and a spirit of faith, fit for public work and service, and give freedom and boldness in the ministration of the Gospel, and are a great support under persecution for the sake of it.

{x} Sepher Jetzirah, Semit 3. p. 6.

2 Corinthians 4:14

Ver. 14. Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus,.... Besides having the same spirit of faith, mentioned in the preceding verse as a support under tribulation, the apostle proceeds in this, and some following verses, to take notice of other things which gave them relief under their pressures; such as the resurrection from the dead, all their afflictions being for the good of the churches and glory of God, the inward and comfortable experiences of the love and grace of God in the midst of them, and the end and issue of them, eternal glory. The former of these is observed here; "knowing", being firmly persuaded, and fully assured, that he "which raised up the Lord Jesus"; by whom God the Father is more especially designed, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, who were jointly concerned in raising the dead body of our Lord: shall raise us up also by Jesus; which may regard the resurrection of all the saints by Christ, not as a mere instrument, but as a co-efficient cause with the Father and Spirit: this the apostle concludes from the power of God in

raising up Christ from the dead; he that is able to do the one, is certainly of power to effect the other; and also from that union there is between Christ and his people; he is the head, they are his members; and because the head is raised, the members shall be likewise. Christ's resurrection is not only the pattern, but the pledge of the resurrection of the saints. Now this doctrine, as it was fully known, and firmly believed by the apostles, was of great use to bear them up under their outward troubles; for though they were so afflicted and persecuted, death was visibly working in them, and they might expect in a short time to be laid in the grave; yet this was their consolation, that they should be raised again immortal and glorious by Christ; some copies read, "with Jesus", and so the Vulgate Latin version: "he shall present us with you"; that is, he will present us ministers, together with you the saints, and the rest of the elect of God; first,
hytwl, "to himself", as the Syriac version adds, and then to his Father, in their full number, completely righteous and holy. These words indeed may be understood of a deliverance from temporal affliction, from that death they were labouring under, and exposed unto, and the sense be this; we firmly believe that he that raised up Christ from the dead, will deliver us from the present death of affliction, which will be a sort of resurrection from the dead, and will make us to stand by you, or in your presence; or, in other words, being thus delivered, we shall have an opportunity of visiting you, we have so long desired, and you have expected, which will be to your edification and comfort.

2 Corinthians 4:15

Ver. 15. For all things are for your sakes;.... This is a very large and comprehensive expression, and reaches to all the things of Christ, as well as of his ministers. The incarnation, obedience, death, and resurrection of Christ, are all for the sake of God's elect; and so the ministry of his apostles and servants, their gifts, graces, comforts, and experiences; and so likewise all their reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions; see **2Co 1:6**. These were endured for their sakes, and tended to their establishment in the faith; were for the furtherance of the Gospel, and of the faith and joy of saints; and this gave no small pleasure and relief to them under their sufferings, that they were of such use to others. Moreover, all their deliverances, when in any imminent danger; were for the sake of the churches:

that the abundant grace; held forth in their ministrations, manifestly to be seen in supporting them under their troubles, and delivering them out of them:

might through the thanksgiving of many; for such appearances of divine goodness, see **2Co 1:11**

redound to the glory of God; which is another thing that yielded them a pleasing satisfaction, in all their distresses for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel.

2 Corinthians 4:16

Ver. 16. For which cause we faint not,.... Since our afflictions are overruled for the good of others, and the glory of God, we are not discouraged by them; our spirits do not sink under the weight of them; we do not give out from the work of the ministry because of them, but go on cheerfully therein: and the more so, since

though our outward man perish; our outward circumstances of life are very mean and despicable; we are oftentimes in a very distressed condition through hunger, thirst, nakedness, and want of the common necessaries of life; our bodies are almost worn out with fatigue, labour, and sorrow; our earthly tabernacles are tottering, and just ready to fall in pieces:

yet the inward man is renewed day by day; that is, continually; it answers to Mwy Mwyw, an Hebraism; see **Es 2:11** the internal hidden man of the heart, the new man is in a prosperous condition; our souls are in good health; the work of God is comfortably carried on in us; we have sweet and repeated experiences of the love of God; we are growing in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ; and, like the palm tree, the more weight is hung upon it, the more it thrives; and, like the children of Israel in Egypt, the more they were afflicted the more they grew.

2 Corinthians 4:17

Ver. 17. For our light affliction,.... The difference between the present and future state of the saints is here expressed, the disparity between them shown, and the influence the one has upon the other. The present state is a state of "affliction". Affliction is the common lot of the children of men, but more especially of the children of God, and is here designed by "our" affliction; for these, besides their soul trouble, meet with such in the world, and from the men of it, others do not. Afflictions are appointed for them by their heavenly Father; provision is made for them, and support under them, in the covenant of grace; they are Christ's legacy to them, and by which they are conformed to him; they are always for their good, spiritual and eternal; and lie in their way to heaven, through which they must pass into the kingdom: now these their outward afflictions which are here meant, lie chiefly in the meanness of their outward circumstances; in poverty and distress, in disgrace, reproaches, and persecutions for their profession of Christ, and his truths: and in opposition to this their mean and despicable condition in the eyes of the world, their future state is signified by "glory", as it often is in the word of God; and is of such a nature, that all the glories of this world, such as kingdoms, crowns, inheritances, possessions, riches, honour, and substance of every kind and degree, by all which the heavenly state is expressed, are but faint resemblances of it: it is the same glory Christ has entered into, is possessed of for, and will give to all his people; it will chiefly lie in communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, with angels, and one another; there will be a visible glory upon the bodies of the saints, which will be fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ; and their souls will be blessed with perfect knowledge and holiness. Their affliction is represented as "light" which though it is not in itself, but often very grievous and heavy to be borne, especially when any soul trouble is added to it; yet is light, when the saint is supported by the arm of the Lord, indulged with his presence, and favoured with the discoveries of his love. The afflictions of God's people are light, when compared with their deserts, with the sufferings of Christ, the torments of the damned in hell, and the joys of heaven, which are here, by way of opposition thereunto, styled a "weight of glory". The apostle has respect to the Hebrew word dwbk, which signifies both "weight" and "glory", and is often used for riches, honour, and whatsoever is excellent, solid, and substantial: and here the phrase designs the weighty riches of glory, that massy crown of glory which fadeth not away, that bulky and more enduring substance, which Christ will cause them that love him to inherit. Again, the afflictions of the children of God are said to be

for a moment; they are but for a while, and that a little while; at most they are but for the present time of life, and that is but as a vapour which appears for a little while, and then vanishes away; it is but as a moment, a point of time, in comparison of eternity: but the glory the saints are chosen and called unto, that weight of it which shall be put upon them is "eternal", it will last for ever; it will know no end: hence it is called an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, an everlasting kingdom, everlasting habitations, an incorruptible inheritance, and a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Now the present affliction of the people of God has a considerable influence upon this; it is said here, that it

worketh for us this glory. The Jews {y} introduce God speaking words much like these.

"Saith the holy blessed God, I have sent them chastisements in this world, abh Mlwel Mtwewrz qzxl, "to strengthen their arms for", or that their arms may lay hold upon the world to come."

Now afflictions may be said to work eternal glory for the saints, not by way of merit, for they are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed; there is no proportion between them; besides, the heavenly kingdom and glory was prepared from the foundation of the world, and is a free grace gift of their heavenly Father; but they work as means of enjoying it, as the word and ordinances do; the Spirit of God makes use of them, as of the other, to work up the saints for that selfsame thing, glory: these are means of trying, exercising, and improving their graces, of weaning their hearts from this world, and drawing out their desires, hope, and expectation of another; they are the way in which believers walk to glory, and which it last issue and terminate in it; glory follows upon them, though it is not for them.

{y} R. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Torah, praecept. affirm. 17.

2 Corinthians 4:18

Ver. 18. While we look not at the things which are seen,.... These are the things of this world, such as riches, honours, pleasures, profits, &c. which are visible to, and strike the senses of a natural man, and are temporal, endure but for a time, are transitory, fleeting, and quickly gone. To "look" at these things is to desire them, set the affections on them, and to make the enjoyment of them a man's chief scope and aim; and when this is the case, afflictions cannot be said to work for such, or to work them for an eternal weight of glory; but when believers have their eyes and hearts taken off of these things, they either look not at them, or with contempt upon them; "while", and when they are in such frames of soul, afflictions are operating for their future good. Or by these things that are seen may be meant afflictions themselves, the cross, with all that belongs to it; which also are discernible by the outward senses, and are but for a time. Now a believer is not to stand looking and poring upon his afflictions; for while he does so, they work impatience, murmurings, repinings, unbelief, &c. but when and while he looks off of these to Christ, and to what he has done and suffered, and to the glories of another world, and to the recompense of reward, he not only finds himself supported under his present afflictions, which he does not so overlook as to despise; but he also finds his heart seeking after, and his affections set upon, and his faith, hope, and expectation raised in the views of things above, where Christ is: and so he is kept looking

at the things which are not seen; by the corporeal eye, nor by the eye of carnal sense and reason; only by the eye of faith, which is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen": and these things, the joys and glories of heaven, "are eternal"; will last for ever, will never end; all which is great encouragement to faith and patience under the present afflictive dispensations of Providence.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Corinthians 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS 5

The apostle, in this chapter, enlarges upon the saints' comfortable assurance, expectation, and desire of the heavenly glory; discourses of the diligence and industry of himself and other Gospel ministers in preaching the word, with the reasons that induced them to it; and closes it with a commendation of the Gospel ministry from the important subject, sum, and substance of it. Having mentioned in the latter part of the, preceding chapter, the eternal weight of glory, the afflictions of the saints are working for, and the invisible realities of that state they are looking to, here expresses the assurance that he and others had of their interest therein; and which he signifies by an edifice, and illustrates it by its opposition to the body, which he compares to an house and tabernacle; the one is man's, the other of God, and not made with hands; the one is earthly, the other in heaven; the one is to be, and will be dissolved, the other is eternal, **2Co 5:1** and therefore it is no wonder that it should be so earnestly desired, as it is said to be in **2Co 5:2** where the desire of it is signified by groaning, which supposes something distressing, and which makes uneasy; and by an earnest longing after deliverance and happiness, and which is explained by a desire to be clothed upon with the house from heaven; where the heavenly glory is not only, as before, compared to an house, but also to a garment, which all those that are clothed with the righteousness of Christ may justly expect to be arrayed with; for these will not be found naked nor remain so, **2Co 5:3** which earnest desire after immortality and glory is more fully explained, 2Co 5:4 in which not only the body, in its present state, is again compared to a tabernacle, and the saints represented as being distressed, and so groaning whilst in it; but the cause of this groaning is suggested, which is a burden they labour under, both of sin and affliction; and yet such is the natural inclination of man to remain in the body, and his unwillingness to part from it, that he does not desire to be stripped of that, but to have the robe of immortality put upon it, that so the present mortality that attends it might be wholly swallowed up in it: and that the saints had reason to believe there was such an happiness to be enjoyed, and that they had such an interest in it is clear; because as God had prepared that for them, he had also wrought and prepared them for that; and besides, had given them his Spirit as the earnest and pledge of it, 2Co 5:5 wherefore, as they were confidently assured of it, and considering that they were but sojourners and strangers whilst in the body, and in the present state of things, and not at home in their Father's house, and absent from Christ, 2Co 5:6 as is evident from their walking by faith in the comfortable assurance, lively hope, and earnest expectation of things future and unseen, and not in the beatific vision of them, 2Co 5:7. Hence they were very desirous, and chose rather to quit their present dwelling, the tabernacle of the body, that they might be at home, and enjoy the presence of the Lord, 2Co 5:8. And this confidence and hope of eternal things wrought in the apostle, and other faithful ministers of the word, great carefulness and diligence to serve the Lord acceptably, and discharge with faithfulness the trust reposed in them, 2Co 5:9 the reason of which concern also, or what likewise animated them to a diligent performance of their duty, was their certain appearance before the judgment seat of Christ; which appearance will be universal, and when there will be a distribution of rewards and punishments to everyone according to his works, 2Co 5:10. And besides, it was not only their own personal concern in this awful affair that engaged them to such a conduct, but the regard they had to the good of immortal souls, to whom the day of judgment must be terrible, unless they are brought to believe in Christ; and for the truth of this they could appeal both to God, and to the consciences of men, particularly the Corinthians, 2Co 5:11. And lest this should be imputed to pride and arrogance, the apostle suggests the reason why he made mention of all this, that they might have wherewith to answer the false teachers, and vindicate the faithful ministers of the Gospel, 2Co 5:12. However, let it be construed which way it will, as the effect of madness or sobriety, this he could with the greatest confidence affirm, that his view was the glory of God, and the good of souls, 2Co 5:13 and to this diligence and faithfulness in preaching the Gospel, he and others were not only moved by their desire and expectation of happiness, by the future judgment in which they must appear, and by their concern for immortal souls, that they might escape the vengeance of that day; but they were constrained thereunto by the love of Christ in dying for them, and in whom they died, 2Co 5:14 the end of which was, that they might live not to themselves, but to him that died and rose again, 2Co 5:15. And as a further instance of their integrity and faithfulness, the apostle observes, that they had no regard to men on account of their carnal descent, and outward privileges, as the Jews; nor even did they consider Christ himself in a carnal view, or esteem of him as a temporal king, as they once did, 2Co 5:16 their sole aims and views being the spiritual good of men, and the advancement of the spiritual interest and kingdom of Christ; and the conclusion from hence is, that whoever is truly in Christ, and in his kingdom, is a new creature, and is in a new world, in a new dispensation, in which both the old things of the law, and of Heathenism, and of his former conversation are gone, and all things in doctrine, worship, and conversation are become new, 2Co 5:17. And from hence the apostle proceeds to a commendation of the Gospel dispensation, and the ministry of it, from its author God, and from the subject matter of it, reconciliation of men to God by Christ, 2Co 5:18 which is more fully explained and enlarged on, both with respect to the efficient cause of reconciliation, the objects of it, and the means and manner in which it is brought about, and also the publication of it in the Gospel by the ministers of it, 2Co 5:19 and who are described as the ambassadors of Christ, acting in the name of God, and as in the stead of Christ, for the good of men, 2Co 5:20. And closes the chapter with an account of the great propitiation, Christ, by whom reconciliation is made; as that he was in himself without sin, and yet was by imputation made sin for sinners, that they, in the same way, might be made righteous in the sight of God through him, 2Co 5:21.

Ver. 1. For we know, that if our earthly house,.... By this house is meant the body, so called from its being like a well built house, a curious piece of architecture; as an house consists of a variety of parts fitly framed and put together in just symmetry and proportion, and with an entire usefulness in all, so is the body of man; which shows the power and wisdom of God the architect: likewise, because it is the dwelling place of the soul, which makes it appear, that the soul is more excellent than the body, is independent of it, and capable of a separate existence from it: it is said to be an "earthly" house, because it is from the earth; is supported by earthly things; has its present abode on the earth, and will quickly return to it: and the earthly house of this tabernacle, in allusion to the tabernacles the patriarchs and Israelites of old dwelt in; or to the tents and tabernacles of soldiers, shepherds, travellers, and such like persons, which are soon put up and taken down, and removed from place to place; and denotes the frailty and short continuance of our mortal bodies. So Plato {z} calls the body ghinon skhnov, "an earthly tabernacle"; so the Jews were wont to call the body an house, and a "tabernacle":

"every man (they say {a}) has two houses, Pwgh tyb, "the house of the body", and the house of the soul; the one is the outward, the other the inward house."

So Abarbinel {b} paraphrases those words, Isa 18:4.

""I will consider in my dwelling place; I will return", or again consider in my dwelling place, which is the body, for that is vpnh Nkvm, "the tabernacle of the soul"."

Now this tabernacle may, and will be, "dissolved", unpinned, and taken down; which does not design an annihilation of it, but a dissolution of its union with the soul, and its separation from it: and when the apostle puts an "if" upon it, it is not to be understood as though it is uncertain whether it would be dissolved or not, unless it be said with a view to the change that will be on living saints at Christ's second coming; but it is rather a concession of the matter, and may be rendered, "though the earthly house", &c. or it points out the time when the saints' future happiness shall begin, "when the earthly house", &c. and signifies that being in the body, in some sense, retards the enjoyment of it. Now it is the saints' comfort whilst they are in it, and in a view of the dissolution of it, that they

have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? which some understand of the glorified body upon its resurrection, as opposed to its frail, mortal, earthly frame in its present situation; though rather all this designs the happiness of the saints, which will be begun, and they shall immediately enter into, at the dissolution of their bodies, and will be consummated at the resurrection; which is all of God's building and preparing; not made by the hands of the creature; or obtained by works of righteousness done by men; and it lies in the heavens, and will continue for ever. So the {c} Jews speak of avydq tyb, "the holy house", in the world to come, and which they suppose is intended in
Isa 56:5. In this the saints have a present interest; they have it already built and prepared for them; they have an indubitate right and title to it through the righteousness of Christ; they have it secured to them in Christ, their feoffee in trust, their head and representative; and they have the earnest of it, the Spirit of God in their hearts; of all which they have sure and certain knowledge: "for we know"; they are well assured of the truth of this from the promise of God, who cannot lie, from the declaration of the Gospel, the testimony of the Spirit, and

the close and inseparable connection there is between the grace they have already received, and the glory that shall be hereafter.

{z} In Clement. Alexandr. Stromat. l. 5. p. 593. {a} Sepher Caphtor, fol. 38. 2. {b} Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 11. 4. {c} Zohar in Exod. fol. 34. 3. & 35. 3.

2 Corinthians 5:2

Ver. 2. For in this we groan earnestly,.... Meaning either for this happiness we groan, or rather in this tabernacle we groan. These words are a reason of the former, proving that the saints have a building of God; and they know they have it, because they groan after it here; for the groanings of the saints are under the influence and direction of the Spirit of God, who makes intercession for them, as for grace, so for glory, according to the will of God: and this groaning is further explained by

desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; by which is meant not the glorified body in the resurrection morn; for though the bodies of the saints will be glorious, incorruptible, powerful, and spiritual, they are not said to be celestial, nor will they be from heaven, but be raised out of the earth: besides, the apostle is speaking of an habitation the soul will go into, and is desirous of going into as soon as it removes out of the earthly house of the body, and of a clothing it desires to be clothed with as soon as it is stripped of the garment of the flesh: wherefore, by the house from heaven must be meant the heavenly glory, which departed souls immediately enter into, and are arrayed with, even the white and shining robes of purity, perfection, and glory they shall be clothed with, as soon as ever their tabernacles are unpinned and dissolved. The Jews indeed speak of a celestial body which the soul shall be clothed with immediately upon its separation from the earthly body, and much in such figurative terms as the apostle does in this, and the following verse;

"when a man's time is come, say they {d}, to go out of this world, he does not depart until the angel of death has stripped him of the clothing of body, (see 2Co 5:4) and when the soul is stripped of the body, by the angel of death, it goes arxa apwg awhhb avbltmw, "and is clothed with that other body", which is in paradise, of which it was stripped when it came into this world; for the soul has no pleasure but in the body, which is from thence, and it rejoices because it is stripped of the body of this world, Mylv arxa avwblb vbltaw "and is clothed with another perfect clothing"."

And a little after,

"the holy blessed God deals well with men, for he does not strip men of their clothes until he has provided for them other clothes, more precious and better than these, except the wicked of the world, who return not to their Lord by perfect repentance; for naked they came into this world, and naked (see **2Co 5:3**) they shall return hence."

And in another place {e},

"the soul does not go up to appear before the Holy King, until it is worthy to be clothed alyeld avwblb, "with the clothing which is above"."

{d} Zohar in Exod. fol. 62. 1, 2. {e} Zohar in Exod. fol. 92. 2. Vid. fol. 84. 3. & in Gen. fol. 49. 3. & Caphtor, fol. 18. 2. & 78. 2.

2 Corinthians 5:3

Ver. 3. If so be that being clothed,.... This supposition is made with respect to the saints who shall be alive at Christ's second coming, who will not be stripped of their bodies, and so will "not be found naked", or disembodied, and shall have a glory at once put upon them, both soul and body; or these words are an inference from the saints' present clothing, to their future clothing, thus; "seeing we are clothed", have not only put on the new man, and are clothed and adorned with the graces of the Spirit, but are arrayed with the best robe, the wedding garment, the robe of Christ's righteousness,

we shall not be found naked; but shall be clothed upon with the heavenly glory, as soon as we are dismissed from hence. Some read these words as a wish, "O that we were clothed, that we might not be found naked!" and so is expressive of one of the sighs, and groans, and earnest desires of the saints in their present situation after the glories of another world.

2 Corinthians 5:4

Ver. 4. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan,.... There are some of the saints who are not in the tabernacle, the body. They were in it, but now are not; their bodies are in the grave, the house appointed for all living; and their souls are in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, in everlasting habitations, in the mansions prepared in Christ's Father's house; and they have done groaning, being delivered from every oppressor, sin, Satan, and the world; are at rest from all their labours, and ate free from every burden; only the saints who are in the tabernacle of the body, in an unsettled state, groan, being in the midst of tribulation, and not yet in the enjoyment of that happiness they are wishing for. The reason of their groaning is, because they are

burdened with the body itself, which is a clog and incumbrance to the soul in its spiritual exercises; and oftentimes by reason of its disorders and diseases a man becomes a burden to himself; but what the saints are mostly burdened with in this life, and which makes them groan the most, is the body of sin and death they carry about with them; the filth of it is nauseous, grievous, and intolerable; the guilt of it oftentimes lies very heavy on the conscience; the weight of it presses hard, and is a great hinderance to them in running their Christian race; nor have they any relief under this burden, but by looking to a sin bearing and sin atoning Saviour, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. They are also frequently burdened with Satan's temptations, with blasphemous thoughts, solicitations to sin, the fears of death, the pangs of it, and what will follow upon it; though God is faithful, who will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able to bear; however, these temptations are great burdens, and occasion many a groan: to which may be added the various afflictions of life, which though comparatively "light", are in themselves heavy, grievous burdens, and hard to be bore; the nature, number, and continuance of them often make them so; and especially they are such, when God is pleased to hide his face, and withhold the discoveries of his love and mercy. The apostle goes on to explain what he means by desiring to be clothed,

not for that we would be unclothed; that is, of our bodies; and this he says, not through any love and liking he had to this animal life, or to the sensual methods of living here, which make natural men in love with life, and desirous of always living here; but from a principle of nature, which recoils at death, does not like a dissolution, chooses any other way of removing out of this world than by death; a translation of soul and body together to heaven, like that of Enoch and Elijah's, is more eligible even to a good man; or such a change as will be upon the living saints at the coming of Christ, which the apostle seems to have in view, who will be not unclothed of their bodies, as men are at death,

but clothed upon; as is here desired, with incorruption and immortality:

that mortality might be swallowed up of life; not that the mortal body, or the substance of the body, which is mortal, might be consumed and destroyed, but that mortality, that quality to which it is subject by sin, might be no more: and he does not say, that "death may be swallowed up of life", which will be done in the resurrection morn; but mortality, which being swallowed up by a translation, or such a change as will be at the last day, will prevent death: and the phrase, swallowed up, denotes the suddenness of the change, in an instant, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and that without any pain, or such agonies as usually attend death; and also the utter, final, and total abolition of mortality; so that there will never be more any appearance of it; his desire is, that it may be swallowed up "of the life", which is properly and emphatically life, as this life is not; and means the glorious, immortal, and everlasting life, which saints enter into as soon as they are rid of their mortal bodies, and the mortality of them.

2 Corinthians 5:5

Ver. 5. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing,.... By "the selfsame thing" is meant, either the cross, the burden of sorrows and afflictions, under which the saints groan whilst here, which God has appointed them unto, and therefore to be bore patiently by them; or that glory and immortality, which they, as vessels of mercy, were prepared by him for from everlasting; for which their bodies and souls are formed by him in creation, and for which they are made meet in regeneration, by the curious workmanship of his Spirit and grace upon them: and seeing he "is God", and not man, who hath wrought them for this, either by his secret purposes and preparations of grace in eternity, or by his open works of creation and regeneration in time; there is no doubt but they shall certainly enjoy it, since his counsels are immutable, and he is a rock, and his work is perfect; whatever he begins he finishes, nor is he ever frustrated of his end: one of Stephens's copies adds, "and hath anointed us", which seems to have been transcribed from **2Co 1:21**.

Who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit; and therefore may be assured of possessing the inheritance, of which he is the earnest; see **2Co 1:22**.

2 Corinthians 5:6

Ver. 6. Therefore we are always confident,.... Because God has formed us for immortality and glory, and given us his Spirit as the earnest of it, we take heart, are of good courage, do not sink under our burdens, or despair of happiness, but are fully assured of enjoying what we are desirous of:

knowing that whilst we are at home in the body; or whilst we are inmates or sojourners in the body; for the body is not properly the saints' home; whilst they are in it, they are but pilgrims and strangers; the time of their abode in it is the time of their sojourning: during which time they

are absent from the Lord; not with respect to his general presence, which is everywhere, and attends all creatures, an absence from which is impossible; nor with respect to his spiritual presence, which though not always sensibly enjoyed, yet frequently; nor are the children of God ever deprived of it totally and finally; but with respect to his glorious presence, and the full enjoyment of that. Now the knowledge and consideration of this, that the present state and situation of the saints, whilst in the body, is a state of pilgrimage, and so of absence from the Lord Christ, and from their Father's house, serves to increase their confidence and assurance, that they shall not long continue so, but in a little time shall be at home, and for ever with the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:7

Ver. 7. For we walk by faith, and not by sight. Faith is a grace which answers many useful purposes; it is the eye of the soul, by which it looks to Christ for righteousness, peace, pardon, life, and salvation; the hand by which it receives him, and the foot by which it goes to him, and walks in him as it has received him; which denotes not a single act of faith, but a continued course of believing; and is expressive, not of a weak, but of a strong steady faith of glory and happiness, and of interest in it: and it is opposed to "sight": by which is meant, not sensible communion, but the celestial vision: there is something of sight in faith; that is a seeing of the Son; and it is an evidence of things not seen, of the invisible glories of the other world; faith looks at, and has a glimpse of things not seen, which are eternal; but it is but seeing as through a glass darkly; it is not that full sight, face to face, which will be had hereafter, when faith is turned into vision.

2 Corinthians 5:8

Ver. 8. We are confident, I say, and willing rather,.... We are cheerful in our present state, being assured of future happiness; though we choose rather

to be absent from the body; that is, to die, to depart out of this world. The interval between death, and the resurrection, is a state of absence from the body, during which time the soul is disembodied, and exists in a separate state; not in a state of inactivity and sleep, for that would not be desirable, but of happiness and glory, enjoying the presence of God, and praising of him, believing and waiting for the resurrection of the body, when both will be united together again; and after that there will be no more absence, neither from the body, nor from the Lord:

and to be present with the Lord. This was promised to Christ in the everlasting covenant, that all his spiritual seed and offspring should be with him. This he expected; it was the joy of this which was set before him, that carried him through his sufferings and death with so much cheerfulness; this is the sum of his prayers and intercession, and what all his preparations in heaven are on the account of. It is this which supports and comforts the saints under all their sorrows here, and which makes them meet death with pleasure, which otherwise is formidable and disagreeable to nature; and even desirous of parting with life, to be with Christ, which is far better.

2 Corinthians 5:9

Ver. 9. Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent,.... This may be understood either of the ministers of the Gospel in particular, who labour in the word and doctrine, are ambitious, as the word here used signifies, and strive to preach the Gospel, not to please men, but their Lord and master; or of saints in general, who are intent upon this, and whose highest ambition is, that whether living or dying they

may be accepted of him; both persons and services: such who are born again, who are believers in Christ, and truly love him, are earnestly desirous of doing those things which are pleasing to him; and do in the strength of Christ endeavour to perform them. Faith is a diligent, industrious, and operative grace, and makes persons like itself. As none ought to be, so none are more careful to perform good works, or more ambitious to excel others in them, and thereby please their Lord, than believers. And these are the only persons that can please him, for without faith it is impossible to please him; for these act from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory; and may they be but accepted of him, living and dying, both in this and the other world, they have the highest favour they can wish for and desire.

2 Corinthians 5:10

Ver. 10. For we must all appear,.... This is a reason why the saints are so diligent and laborious, so earnest and intent upon it, to be accepted of the Lord, because they must stand

before the judgment seat of Christ; who is appointed Judge of the whole earth, who is every way qualified for it, being God omnipotent and omniscient; and when he comes a second time will sit upon his great white throne, a symbol of purity and integrity, and will enter on this work, and finish it with the strictest justice and equity: and before him "we must all appear"; all the saints as well as others, ministers and people, persons of all ranks and conditions, of every nation, age, and sex; there will be no avoiding this judgment, all "must appear", or "be made manifest"; they will be set in open view, before angels and men; their persons, characters, and actions, even the most secret will be:

that everyone may receive the things done in his body; which he has performed by the members of the body as instruments thereof, or whatsoever he has done whilst in the body; and so this not only reaches to words and actions, but includes all the secret thoughts of the mind, and counsels of the heart, which will be made manifest: and when it is said, that "everyone shall receive" these; the meaning is, that he shall receive the reward of them,

according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad; the reward of good works will be of grace, and not of merit: good works will be considered at the last judgment, not as causes of eternal life and happiness, to which the saints will be adjudged; but will be produced in open court as fruits of grace, and as evidences of the truth of faith, which will justify the Judge in proceeding according to what he himself, as a Saviour, has said,

he that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned. The reward of bad works will be in strict and just proportion, according to the nature and demerit of them. The Jews say {f}, that

"all the works which a man does in this world, apwgb, "in the body", and spirit, he must give an account of in body and spirit before he goes out of the world."

And again {g}, all the works of men are written in a book, vyb Nh bwj Nh, "whether good or evil", and for them all they must give account.

{f} Zohar in Gen. fol. 57. 3. {g} Midrash Hanneelim in Zohar in Gen. fol. 75. 4.

2 Corinthians 5:11

Ver. 11. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord,.... Or the fear of the Lord; by which is meant either the grace of the fear of the Lord, implanted in the hearts of the apostles, and in which they acted in their ministry, faithfully dispensing to men the mysteries of grace; from which they could by no means be moved, because the fear of God was before their eyes, and upon their hearts; or rather the terror of the Lord in the last judgment, which will be very great, considering the awfulness of the summons, arise ye dead, and come to judgment; the appearance of the Judge, which will be sudden, surprising, and glorious; the placing of the thrones, the opening of the books, the position of the wicked, the dreadful sentence pronounced on them, and the immediate execution of it; all which the ministers of the word know from the Scriptures of truth; they know the Judge, that there will be a general judgment, and that the day is fixed for it, though they know not the exact time: and therefore

persuade men; not that their state is good because of a little outside morality, nor to make their peace with God, or get an interest in Christ, or to convert themselves, neither of which are in the power of men to do; but they endeavour to persuade them by the best arguments they are masters of, taken from the word of God, and their own experience, that they are in a dangerous state and condition, walking in a way that leads to destruction; that they are liable to the curses of the law, the wrath of God, and everlasting ruin; that present duties of religion will not make amends for past sins, nor can their tears atone for their crimes, or any works of righteousness done by them justify them before God; and that salvation is only by Christ, who is both able and willing to save the chief of sinners: and they endeavour to persuade and encourage poor sensible sinners to venture on Christ, and believe in him to the saving of their souls. So the Arabic version reads it, "we persuade men to believe"; though when they have done all they can, these persuasions of theirs are ineffectual, without the powerful and efficacious grace of the Spirit of God; however, in so doing they discharge a good conscience, and act the faithful part to God and men:

but we are made manifest unto God; who searches the heart, and tries the reins, who knows all actions, and the secret springs of them; to him the sincerity of our hearts, and the integrity of our conduct, are fully manifest; we can appeal to him that it is his glory, and the good of souls, we have in view in all our ministrations:

and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences; that you also can bear witness to our faithfulness and honesty, to the unwearied pains we have taken, and the hearty concern we have shown for the welfare of the souls of men. One of Stephens's copies reads, "and we trust"; which agrees with the apostle's speaking in the first person plural in this, and the preceding verses.

2 Corinthians 5:12

Ver. 12. For we commend not ourselves again to you,.... We have no need to do so, being well known to you; nor do we intend it when we thus speak of ourselves, and of our ministrations:

but give you occasion to glory on our behalf; suggest some things to you which you may make use of in our favour, for the vindicating of our characters and conduct:

that you may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart; by whom are meant the false apostles who gloried in an outward show, in their learning, eloquence, and popular applause they had acquired, and not in the sincerity of their hearts, and the testimony of a good conscience, things which the true apostles of Christ were most ambitious of.

2 Corinthians 5:13

Ver. 13. For whether we be besides ourselves,.... As some took them to be, and as Festus thought the Apostle Paul was, because of the doctrines they preached, and the self-commendation they were obliged to enter into through the calumnies of their adversaries; in which they did not so much seek their own reputation, as the honour and glory of God, which was struck at through them:

it is to God; it is for his glory, and not our own, that we act this part, for which we are condemned as madmen.

Or whether we be sober; think and speak meanly of ourselves, and behave with all modesty and lowliness of mind: it is for your cause; for your instruction and imitation. The glory of God, and the good of his churches, were what concerned them in every part of life. Some refer this to the apostle's being, or not being, in an ecstasy or rapture. Others to his speaking, either of the more sublime doctrines of the Gospel, on account of which he was reckoned mad, though in the delivering of them he had nothing else but the glory of God in view; or of the lower and easier truths of it, which were more accommodated to meaner capacities; in doing which he sought their edification and advantage.

2 Corinthians 5:14

Ver. 14. For the love of Christ constraineth us,.... Or "containeth us"; holds and keeps us in our station and duty, as soldiers are held and kept together under a banner, or ensign displayed; to which the church refers, when she says, "his banner over me was love", **So 2:4**. Nothing more effectually keeps ministers, or other believers, in the work and service of their Lord, or more strongly obliges and constrains them to a cheerful discharge of their duty to him, and one another, than his love displayed in his covenant engagements, in his assumption of human nature, and particularly in his dying for them, which is the instance given in the text:

because we thus judge; having well weighed, and maturely considered the affair,

that if one died for all, then were all dead; or "seeing one died for all"; for it is rather an assertion than a supposition, upon which the apostle reasons. The person designed, who died for all, is Jesus Christ, though not mentioned, and is to be supplied from the former clause. The doctrine of Christ's dying for men was well known, so that there was no need to mention his name; he is called "one", in distinction to the "all" he died for, and as exclusive of all others, he being sufficient of himself to answer the ends of his death; and therefore is to be looked unto, and believed on, alone for salvation, and to have all the glory of it. The manner of his dying is for, or in the room and stead of all; so that he died not merely as a martyr, or by way of example, or only for their good, but as their substitute, in their room and stead, having all the sins of his people upon him, for which he made satisfaction; and this the nature of his death shows, which was a sacrifice, a ransom, a propitiation and atonement. The persons for whom Christ died are all; not every individual of mankind, but all his people, all his sheep, all the members of his church, or all the sons he, as the great Captain of salvation, brings to glory. Wherefore this text does not make for the doctrine of general redemption; for it should be observed, that it does not say that Christ died for "all men", but for "all"; and so, agreeably to the Scriptures, may be understood of all the persons mentioned. Moreover, in the latter part of the text it is said, that those for whom Christ died, for them he rose again; he died for no more, nor for others, than those for whom he rose again: now those for whom he rose again, he rose for their justification; wherefore, if Christ rose for the justification of all men, all would be justified, or the end of Christ's resurrection would not be answered; but all men are not, nor will they be justified, some will be condemned; hence it follows, that Christ did not rise from the dead for all men, and consequently did not die for all men: besides, the "all" for whom Christ died, died with him, and through his death are dead both to the law and sin; and he died for them, that they might live, not to themselves, but to him; neither of which are true of all the individuals of mankind: to which may be added, that the context explains the all of such who are in Christ, are new creatures, are reconciled to God, whose trespasses are not imputed to them, for whom Christ was made sin, and who are made the righteousness of God in him; which cannot be said of all men. The conclusion from hence is,

then were all dead; meaning, either that those for whom Christ died, were dead in Adam, dead in law, dead in trespasses and sins, which made it necessary for him to die for them; otherwise, there would have been no occasion for his death; yet it does not follow from hence, that Christ died for all that are in such a condition; only that those for whom Christ died were dead in this sense, admitting this to be the sense of the passage; though death in sin seems not to be intended, since that all men are dead in sin, would have been a truth, if Christ had died for none; and much less is this an effect, or what follows upon the death of Christ; nor does it capacitate, but renders men incapable of living to Christ: wherefore a mystical death in, and with Christ, seems rather to he meant; and so the Ethiopic version reads it, "in whom everyone is dead". Christ died as the head and representative of his people, and they all died in him, were crucified with him, and through his death became dead to the law, as to its curse and condemnation; and to sin, as to its damning power, being acquitted, discharged, and justified from it; the consequence of which is a deliverance from the dominion of it, whereby they become capable of living to the glory of Christ. The sense of the passage is not, that Christ died for all that were dead, but that all were dead for whom he died; which is true of them, whether in the former, or in the latter sense: the article oi, is anaphorical or relative, as Beza and Piscator observe; and the meaning is, that if Christ died for all, then all "those" were dead for whom he died.

2 Corinthians 5:15

Ver. 15. And that he died for all, that they which live,.... The end of Christ's dying for men was that they might live; live, in a legal sense, live a life of justification; and that they which live in such a sense,

should not henceforth live unto themselves: to their own lusts, and after their own wills, to either sinful self, or righteous self:

but unto him which died for them, and rose again; that is, for them, for their justification; for all those for whom Christ died, for them he rose again; and who were justified, acquitted, and discharged when he was; which cannot be said of all mankind; and which is an obligation on such persons to live to Christ, to ascribe the whole of their salvation to him, and to make his glory the end of all their actions. Some copies read, "which died for them all".

2 Corinthians 5:16

Ver. 16. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh..... Since the death and resurrection of Christ, which has broken down the middle wall of partition, and has took away all distinction of men, we know, we esteem, we value no man on account of his carnal descent, and fleshy privileges, as being of the Jewish nation, a descendant of Abraham, and circumcised as he was; or on account of their outward state and condition, as being rich and honourable among men, or on account of their natural parts and acquirements, their learning, wisdom, and eloquence; nor do we own any man to be a Christian, that lives after the flesh, to himself, and not to Christ; nor do we make account of the saints themselves as in this mortal state, but as they will be in the resurrection, in consequence of Christ's having died for them, and rose again.

Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh: some of them had seen him in the flesh; others valued him on account of his being of the Jewish nation, and of his relation to them according to the flesh; and all of them had formerly entertained carnal apprehensions of him, and his kingdom, as though it would be a temporal one:

yet now henceforth know we him more; no more in this mortal state, being risen from the dead; nor do we value ourselves upon having seen him in the flesh; for though such a sight and knowledge of him was desirable, yet a spiritual knowledge is much more preferable; and many there were who knew him in the flesh, who neither enjoy his spiritual presence here, nor will they be favoured with his glorious presence hereafter. Moreover, we do not judge of him as we did before we had a spiritual knowledge of him, and as our countrymen did, by his outward circumstances, by his parentage and education, his poverty and afflictions, his company and conversation, that he could not be the Messiah, the Son of God, and therefore was worthy of death; we have quite other thoughts and apprehensions of him now, believing him to be the Christ of God, a spiritual Saviour and Redeemer, whose kingdom is not of this world; we have relinquished all our national prejudices, and former notions, concerning the Messiah, his kingdom, and people. Some copies add, "after the flesh"; and the Arabic version, "yet now know we him no more in that".

2 Corinthians 5:17

Ver. 17. Therefore if any man be in Christ,.... There's a secret being in Christ from everlasting; so all that are loved by him, espoused unto him, chosen and preserved in him, to whom he was a covenant head, surety, and representative, are in him, united to him, and one with him; not in such sense as the Father is in him, and the human nature is in him, but as husband and wife, and head and members are one: and there is an open being in Christ at conversion, when a man believes in Christ, and gives up himself to him; faith does not put a man into Christ, but makes him appear to be in him: and such an one "is a new creature"; or, as some read it, "let him be a new creature": who understand being in Christ to be by profession, and the sense this, whoever is in the kingdom or church of Christ, who professes himself to be a Christian, ought to be a new creature: the Arabic version reads it, "he that is in the faith of Christ is a new creature". All such who are secretly in Christ from everlasting, though as yet some of them may not be new creatures, yet they shall be sooner or later; and those who are openly in him, or are converted persons, are actually so; they are a new "creation", as the words may be rendered: hvdx hyyrb, "a new creation", is a phrase often used by the Jewish {h} doctors, and is applied by the apostle to converted persons; and designs not an outward reformation of life and manners, but an inward principle of grace, which is a creature, a creation work, and so not man's, but God's; and in which man is purely passive, as he was in his first creation; and this is a new creature, or a new man, in opposition to, and distinction from the old man, the corruption of nature; and because it is something anew implanted in the soul, which never was there before; it is not a working upon, and an improvement of the old principles of nature, but an implantation of new principles of grace and holiness; here is a new heart, and a new spirit, and in them new light and life, new affections and desires, new delights and joys; here are new eyes to see with, new ears to hear with, new feet to walk, and new hands to work and act with:

old things are passed away: the old course of living, the old way of serving God, whether among Jews or Gentiles; the old legal righteousness, old companions and acquaintance are dropped; and all external things, as riches, honours, learning, knowledge, former sentiments of religion, are relinquished:

behold, all things are become new; there is a new course of life, both of faith and holiness; a new way of serving God through Christ by the Spirit, and from principles of grace; a new, another, and better righteousness is received and embraced; new companions are sought after, and delighted in; new riches, honours, glory, a new Jerusalem, yea, new heavens, and a new earth, are expected by new creatures: or the sense of the whole may be this, if any man is entered into the kingdom of God, into the Gospel dispensation, into a Gospel church state, which seems to be the sense of the phrase "in Christ", in **Ga 3:28** he is become a new creature, or is got into a new creation, as it were into a new world, whether he be a Jew or a Gentile; for with respect to the former state of either, "old things are passed away"; if a Jew, the whole Mosaic economy is abolished; the former covenant is waxen old, and vanished away; the old ordinances of circumcision and the passover are no more; the daily sacrifice is ceased, and all the other sacrifices are at an end, Christ, the great sacrifice, being offered up; the priesthood of Aaron is antiquated, there is a change of it, and of the whole law; the observance of holy, days, new moons and sabbaths, is over; the whole ceremonial law is at end; all the shadows of it are fled and gone, the things they were shadows of being come by Christ, the sum and substance of them; and there is no more a serving God in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit: and if a Gentile, all the former idols he worshipped he turns from, and his language is, "what have I to do any more with idols? or what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" all former sacrifices, superstitious rites and ceremonies, with which he worshipped them, are relinquished by him; with all other Heathenish customs, rules, and methods of conduct he had been used to: "behold, all things are become new"; to the one, and to the other; the Gospel dispensation is a new state of things; a new form of church state is erected, not national, as among the Jews, but congregational, consisting of persons gathered out of the world, and anew embodied together; new ordinances are appointed, which were never in use before, as baptism and the Lord's supper; a new and living way is opened by the blood of Christ into the holiest of all, not by the means of slain beasts, as among the Jews, nor by petty deities as with the Gentiles; a new commandment of love is enjoined all the followers of the Lamb; and another name is given them, a new name, which the mouth of the Lord their God has named, not of Jews nor Gentiles, but of Christians; and new songs are put into their mouths, even praise to God: in short, the Gospel church state seems to be, as it were, a new creation, and perhaps is meant by the new heavens and new earth, Isa 65:15 as well as those who are the proper members of it, are new creatures in the sense before given.

{h} T. Hieros. Roshhashana, fol. 59. 3. Vajikra Rabba, fol. 170. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, fol, 202. 3. Cosri, fol. 62. 2. & R. Levi ben Gersom in Exod, fol. 108. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 121. 2.

2 Corinthians 5:18

Ver. 18. And all things are of God,.... A man's being brought into a Gospel church state is of God; the causing all old things to pass away, whether in the Jewish or Gentile world, is of God; the shaking of the heavens and the earth, and the removing of those things that are shaken, the abrogation of the ceremonial law, the putting an end to all the Mosaic rites and sacrifices, the ejection of Satan out of the Heathen temples, and the abolition of Gentilism, with every thing else that comes under the names of old, and new, are of God: it is he that causes old things to pass away, and makes all things new, see Re 21:1. Moreover, as all things in the old creation are from him, all creatures owe their beings to him, are supported in them by him, and all are made for his pleasure, and his glory so all things in the new creation are of him; the work of renovation itself is his; all the grace that is implanted in regeneration comes front him: nothing is of the creature, or to be ascribed to it. All things in redemption are of him; he drew the plan of it, called his Son to be the Redeemer, appointed and sent him as such; and particularly that branch of it, reconciliation, is of him:

who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. The work of reconciliation, or making atonement for sin, is ascribed to the Father; not that he is the author of it, for it is properly Christ's work; but because he took the first step towards it: he formed the scheme of it; he set forth his Son in his purposes and decrees to be the propitiary sacrifice; he assigned him this work in council and covenant, in promise and in prophecy, and sent him to effect it; therefore he is said to do it "by" him; that is, by his blood and sacrifice, by his sufferings and death, to which, and to which alone, the Scriptures ascribe our peace and reconciliation: and this is made to "himself": as being the party offended, whose law was broken, against whom sin was committed, and whose justice required and demanded satisfaction:

and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; which is the Gospel of peace, the word which preaches, publishes and declares, peace made by the blood of Christ; which is a gift to ministers, and a blessing to the people. The free grace of God greatly appears in this matter; God the Father sets this work of reconciliation on foot, Christ has brought it about, and the ministers of the Gospel publish it.

2 Corinthians 5:19

Ver. 19. To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,.... This expresses and explains the subject matter of the ministration of the Gospel, especially that part of it which concerns our reconciliation with God; and declares the scheme, the author, the subjects, the way, and means, and consequence of it. The phrase, "in Christ", may be either joined with the word "God", as in our version, "God was in Christ reconciling"; that is, he was in Christ drawing the scheme, fixing the method of reconciliation; his thoughts were employed about it, which were thoughts of peace; he called a council of peace, and entered into a covenant of peace with Christ, who was appointed and agreed to, to be the peacemaker. Or with the word "reconciling", thus, God "was reconciling in Christ"; that is, by Christ; and so it denotes, as before, actual reconciliation by Christ. God, in pursuance of his purposes, council, and covenant, sent his Son to make peace; and laid our sins, and the chastisement of our peace upon him; this is the punishment of sin, whereby satisfaction was made for it, and so peace with God: or with the word "world", thus, "God was reconciling the world in Christ"; by whom are meant, not all the individuals of mankind, for these are not all in Christ, nor all reconciled to God, multitudes dying in enmity to him, nor all interested in the blessing of non-imputation of sin; whereas each of these is said of the world: but the elect of God, who are chosen in Christ, whose peace Christ is, whose sins are not imputed to them, and against whom no charge of any avail can be laid; and particularly the people of God among the Gentiles are here designed, who are frequently called "the world" in Scripture; being the world which God loved, for whose sins Christ is the propitiation, and of the reconciling of which mention is particularly made, Joh 3:16. And this sense well agrees with the context, which signifies, that no man is regarded for his natural descent; it is no matter whether he is a Jew or a Gentile, provided he is but a new creature: for Gospel reconciliation, and the ministry of it, concern one as well as another. Moreover, this reconciliation must be considered, either as intentional, or actual, or as a publication of it in the ministry of the word; and taken either way it cannot be thought to extend to every individual person in the world: if it is to be understood intentionally, that God intended the reconciliation of the world to himself by Christ, and drew the scheme of it in him, his intentions cannot be frustrated; his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure; a scheme so wisely laid by him in his Son, cannot come to nothing, or only in part be executed; and yet this must be the case, if it was his design to reconcile every individual of mankind to himself, since a large number of them are not reconciled to him: and if the words are to be understood of an actual reconciliation of the world unto God by Christ, which sense agrees with the preceding verse, then it is out of all question, that the word "world" cannot be taken in so large a sense as to take in every man and woman in the world; since it is certain that there are many who are not reconciled to God, who die in their sins, whose peace is not made with him, nor are they reconciled to the way of salvation by Christ: and should it be admitted that the ministry of reconciliation is here designed, which is not an offer of reconciliation to the world, but a proclamation or declaration of peace and reconciliation made by the death of Christ; this is not sent to all men; multitudes were dead before the word of reconciliation was committed to the apostles; and since, there have been great numbers who have never so much as heard of it; and even in the times of the apostles it did not reach to everyone then living: besides, the text does not speak of what God did by the ministry of his apostles, but of what he himself had been doing in his Son, and which was antecedent, and gave rise unto and was the foundation of their ministry. There was a scheme of reconciliation drawn in the counsels of God before the world began, and an actual reconciliation by the death of Christ, which is published in the Gospel, which these words contain the sum and substance of: and this reconciliation, as before, is said to be "unto himself"; to his offended justice, and for the glory of his perfections, and the reconciling of them together in the affair of salvation:

not imputing their trespasses. This was what he resolved upon from all eternity, that inasmuch as Christ was become the surety and substitute of his people, he would not impute their sins to them, or look for satisfaction for them from them; but would reckon and place them to the account of their surety, and expect satisfaction from him; and accordingly he did, and accordingly he had it. And this will, not to impute sin to his people, or not to punish for it, which existed in God from everlasting, is no other than a justification of them; for to whom the Lord does not impute sin, he imputes righteousness, and such are properly justified.

And hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation; or put it in us, as a rich and valuable treasure; for such the doctrine of peace and reconciliation, by the blood of Christ, is; a sacred deposition, committed to the trust of faithful men, to be dispensed and disposed of for the use and purpose for which it is given them.

2 Corinthians 5:20

Ver. 20. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ,.... Since God has made reconciliation by Christ, and the ministry of it is committed to us, we are ambassadors for him; we come with full powers from him, not to propose terms of peace, to treat with men about it, to offer it to them, but to publish and proclaim it as made by him: we represent him, and God who made it by him,

as though God did beseech you by us; to regard this embassy and message of peace, which we bring from him; to consider from whence it takes its rise, what methods have been used to effect it, and how it is accomplished; which should oblige to say and sing with the angels, "glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men"; and to behave in peaceable manner to all men, and one another:

we pray you in Christ's stead; representing him as if he was present before you:

be ye reconciled to God; you, who are new creatures, for whom Christ has died, and peace is made; you, the members of the church at Corinth, who upon a profession of faith have been taken into such a relation; be ye reconciled to all the dispensations of divine Providence towards you; let your wills bow, and be resigned to his, since he is the God of peace to you; and as you are reconciled by Christ as a priest, be reconciled to him as your King, and your God; to all his ordinances and appointments; to all the orders and laws of his house; conform in all things to his will and pleasure, which we, as his ambassadors, in his name and stead, have made known unto you. You ought to be all obedience to him, and never dispute anything he says or orders.

2 Corinthians 5:21

Ver. 21. For he hath made him to be sin for us,.... Christ was made of a woman, took flesh of a sinful woman; though the flesh he took of her was not sinful, being sanctified by the Spirit of God, the former of Christ's human nature: however, he appeared "in the likeness of sinful flesh"; being attended with infirmities, the effects of sin, though sinless; and he was traduced by men as a sinner, and treated as such. Moreover, he was made a sacrifice for sin, in order to make expiation and atonement for it; so the Hebrew word hajx signifies both sin and a sin offering; see Ps 40:6 and so amartia, **Ro 8:3**. But besides all this, he was made sin itself by imputation; the sins of all his people were transferred unto him, laid upon him, and placed to his account; he sustained their persons, and bore their sins; and having them upon him, and being chargeable with, and answerable for them, he was treated by the justice of God as if he had been not only a sinner, but a mass of sin; for to be made sin, is a stronger expression than to be made a sinner: but now that this may appear to be only by imputation, and that none may conclude from hence that he was really and actually a sinner, or in himself so, it is said he was "made sin"; he did not become sin, or a sinner, through any sinful act of his own, but through his Father's act of imputation, to which he agreed; for it was "he" that made him sin: it is not said that men made him sin; not but that they traduced him as a sinner, pretended they knew he was one, and arraigned him at Pilate's bar as such; nor is he said to make himself so, though he readily engaged to be the surety of his people, and voluntarily took upon him their sins, and gave himself an offering for them; but he, his Father, is said to make him sin; it was he that "laid", or "made to meet" on him, the iniquity of us all; it was he that made his soul an offering for sin, and delivered him up into the hands of justice, and to death, and that "for us", in "our" room and stead, to bear the punishment of sin, and make satisfaction and atonement for it; of which he was capable, and for which he was greatly qualified: for he

knew no sin; which cannot be understood or pure absolute ignorance of sin; for this cannot agree with him, neither as God, nor as Mediator; he full well knew the nature of sin, as it is a transgression of God's law; he knows the origin of sin, the corrupt heart of man, and the desperate wickedness of that; he knows the demerit, and the sad consequences of it; he knows, and he takes notice of too, the sins of his own people; and he knows the sins of all wicked men, and will bring them all into judgment, convince of them, and condemn for them: but he knew no sin so as to approve of it, and like it; he hates, abhors, and detests it; he never was conscious of any sin to himself; he never knew anything of this kind by, and in himself; nor did he ever commit any, nor was any ever found in him, by men or devils, though diligently sought for. This is mentioned, partly that we may better understand in what sense he was made sin, or a sinner, which could be only by the imputation of the sins of others, since he had no sin of his own; and partly to show that he was a very fit person to bear and take away the sins of men, to become a sacrifice for them, seeing he was the Lamb of God, without spot and blemish, typified in this, as in other respects, by the sacrifices of the legal dispensation; also to make it appear that he died, and was cut off in a judicial way, not for himself, his own sins, but for the transgressions of his people; and to express the strictness of divine justice in not sparing the Son of God himself, though holy and harmless, when he had the sins of others upon him, and had made himself responsible for them. The end of his being made sin, though he himself had none, was,

that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; not the essential righteousness of God, which can neither be imparted nor imputed; nor any righteousness of God wrought in us; for it is a righteousness "in him", in Christ, and not in ourselves, and therefore must mean the righteousness of Christ; so called, because it is wrought by Christ, who is God over all, the true God, and eternal life; and because it is approved of by God the Father, accepted of by him, for, and on the behalf of his elect, as a justifying one; it is what he bestows on them, and imputes unto them for their justification; it is a righteousness, and it is the only one which justifies in the sight of God. Now to be made the righteousness of God, is to be made righteous in the sight of God, by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. Just as Christ is made sin, or a sinner, by the imputation of the sins of others to him; so they are made righteousness, or righteous persons, through the imputation of his righteousness to them; and in no other way can the one be made sin, or the other righteousness. And this is said to be "in him", in Christ; which shows, that though Christ's righteousness is unto all, and upon all them that believe, it is imputed to them, and put upon them; it is not anything wrought in them; it is not inherent in them. "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength", says the church, Isa 45:24 and also, that the way in which we come by this righteousness is by being in Christ; none have it reckoned to them, but who are in him, we are first "of" God "in" Christ, and then he is made unto us righteousness. Secret being in Christ, or union to him from everlasting, is the ground and foundation of our justification, by his righteousness, as open being in Christ at conversion is the evidence of it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Corinthians 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS 6

The apostle having given a commendation of the Gospel in the latter part of the preceding chapter, does in this address the ministers of it that were at Corinth, under the character of fellow labourers, and by way of entreaty, that they would be careful to make it appear that they had not received neither the Gospel of the grace of God, nor gifts to minister it, in vain, **2Co 6:1** and in proof of the Gospel being a ministry of reconciliation, and a doctrine of free grace and salvation, which carry in them so many arguments why it should not be received in vain, the apostle in **2Co 6:2** cites a passage out of Isa 49:8 by which it appears, that the Gospel dispensation is a time of acceptance, and of salvation; and which he accommodates to the then present time in which he lived; and is true of the whole intermediate time between the sufferings and death of Christ, which was the time in which he was helped and succoured, and his second coming, when all the elect will have been gathered in: after which he proceeds to give directions how to conduct without offence, that so no blame and reproach might fall upon the ministration of the Gospel, **2Co 6:3** and proposes himself, and other faithful ministers, as examples to them, who had approved themselves as the ministers of God by their patient bearing all kind of afflictions for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, of which a particular enumeration is given in **2Co 6:4** and by the exercise of various other graces, virtues, and gifts bestowed upon them, and which were illustrious in them, of which there is a particular detail in **2Co 6:6** though by reason of the different lights in which they were viewed by men, as well as the different appearances they made, and the different things that might be said of them, either through misrepresentation or ignorance, or as under different considerations, many very strange and enigmatical things are predicated of them, **2Co 6:8** which can only be unriddled by their being possessors of the Gospel of Christ, and being partakers of the grace of God. And next the apostle addresses the members of the church at Corinth; and to make way for the exhortations he had to deliver to them, and that they might be taken in good part by them, he expresses his great regard to them; how free he was to communicate anything that might be profitable to them, and how much his heart was enlarged with love to them, **2Co 6:11** that there was no straitness of Spirit in him towards them, though there was so much in them towards him, **2Co 6:12**. Wherefore he entreats them, as his children, that as he had shown paternal love to them, they would also express filial affection and obedience to him, **2Co 6:13** and then he enters upon his exhortation to have no communion with ungodly persons; and which he confirms by five arguments taken from the disagreement of righteousness and unrighteousness, of light and darkness, of Christ and Belial, of a believer and an unbeliever, and of the temple of God and of idols, **2Co 6:14** by which he suggests, that as the proper characters of wicked men are unrighteousness, darkness, Belial, unbelievers, and idols, or idolaters; so the names of saints were righteousness, light, Christ, believers, and the temple of God; and in proof of the latter, he produces some passages out of Le 26:11 and in the words of the prophet Isa 52:11 he calls upon the Corinthians to quit the company of sinful and unclean men, to separate from them, and have nothing to do with them in things criminal and sinful; and for their encouragement to regard such an exhortation, the promises of God are mentioned; as that he will receive such persons into his protection, and will behave as a father towards them, and treat them as his sons and daughters, **2Co 6:17**.

Ver. 1. We then, as workers together with him,.... The ministers of the Gospel are workers or labourers; their ministry is a work, and a very laborious one, which none have strength equal to, and are sufficient for; of themselves: it is a work that requires faithfulness and diligence, is honourable; and those who perform it aright deserve respect. These do not work alone: according to our version, they are "workers together with him"; meaning either God or Christ, not as co-ordinate with him, but as subordinate to him: he is the chief shepherd, they under ones; he is the chief master builder, they under workers; but inasmuch as he is with them, and they with him, he is over them, and stands by them, great honour is done them; they have encouragement to work; and hence it is that their work is successful. Though the phrase, "with him", is not in the original text, where only one word, sunergountev, is used, and may be rendered "fellow workers", or "fellow labourers", meaning with one another: and since therefore reconciliation was made by Christ, and the ministry of it was committed to them, and they were appointed ambassadors for him, and were in his stead, therefore, say they,

we beseech you also; you ministers also; as we have entreated the members of the church, to be reconciled to the order of the Gospel, and the laws of Christ in his house, so as fellow labourers with you, and jointly concerned in the same embassy of peace, we beseech you the ministers of the word in this church,

that ye receive not the grace of God in vain: by "the grace of God", is not meant the grace of God in regeneration, and effectual calling, which can never be received in vain; for the grace of God never fails of producing a thorough work of conversion; nor is it ever lost, but is strictly connected with eternal, glory: but by it is meant either the doctrine of grace, the Gospel of Christ, so called, because it is a declaration of the love and grace of God to sinners, ascribes salvation in part, and in whole, to the free grace of God, and is a means of implanting and increasing grace in the hearts of men. Now this may be received in vain by ministers and people, when it is but notionally received, or received in word only: when it is abused and perverted to vile purposes, and when men drop, deny it, and fall off from it; or else by the grace of God may be designed gifts of grace, qualifying for ministerial service; and the sense of the exhortation be, that they be careful that the gifts bestowed on them might not be neglected by them, but be used and improved to the advantage of the church, and the glory of Christ; by giving up themselves to study, meditation, and prayer, by labouring constantly in the word and doctrine, and by having a strict regard to their lives and conversations, "that the ministry be not blamed"; which exhortation he pursues in, and by his own example and others, in some following verses, the next being included in a "parenthesis".

2 Corinthians 6:2

Ver. 2. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted,.... These words are a citation from Isa 49:8 and are spoken by the Father to Christ, declaring he had heard him, as he always did. He heard him when he put up that prayer to him, recorded Joh 17:1 for the glorification of himself, by strengthening him as man in his work, by raising him from the dead, setting him at his own right hand, and giving him the glory he had with him before the world was; for the good of his people, the preservation of those that were called, the conversion of them that are called, and the glorification of all the Father had given him: he heard him in the garden, and answered him; the will of God was done according to his desire, and his will was conformed to the will of his Father, and he was delivered from the fear of death; his ends in his prayer there were answered, which were to show the greatness of his sufferings, the impossibility of man's salvation in any other way, and that there could be no alteration made in the methods of obtaining it. He heard him on the cross with respect to the deliverance of him from man, with regard to his being forsaken by God, and for the forgiveness of his enemies. Now this period of time in which he was heard on account of these several things, is called a time accepted; or, as in the Hebrew text, Nwur te, "a time of good will, or acceptance"; a season in which God expressed good will to the sons of men, by sending his own Son to work out salvation for them; this was good will to men, and not to angels, to such as were ungodly, enemies, sinners, and the worst of sinners: it was a time very grateful to him; it was "the accepted year of the Lord"; the sufferings, sacrifice, satisfaction, and righteousness of his Son were well pleasing to him; because his purposes, promises, and covenant transactions had their accomplishment, his perfections were glorified, and his people saved. And it was a time of acceptance, or an acceptable time to men, since it was the day of their salvation, and therefore must be exceedingly agreeable to all such who see their need of it, know the worth of it, and are sensible that there is no other way of salvation than by him.

And in the day of salvation have I succoured thee. These words are still spoken to Christ, who whilst he was in human nature, working out the salvation of his people, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, was succoured, or helped by his Father. This help was promised to him as man, and he expected it, and exercised faith on God for it, and which was actually and punctually given him; and which is no instance of weakness in Christ, who is the mighty God, and was mighty to save; but an indication of the Father's regard to the human nature of Christ, and of his concern for the salvation of men; and also shows what power and strength were necessary to accomplish it.

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. These are the words of the apostle, applying the former to the present Gospel dispensation; which he introduces with prefixing a "behold" to each sentence, in order to raise both attention to, and admiration at what is delivered:

now is the accepted time; not that the Gospel dispensation is a milder dispensation of things, in which God will accept of an imperfect sincere obedience to his law, in the room of a perfect one; or in which Christ is now offered to sinners, and it is left to them whether they will accept of him or not: but it is so called, because God and Christ now testify their good will to the sons of men, and are ready to accept of, and embrace poor sensible sinners coming to them; and because the Gospel publishes salvation by Christ, which, as it is worthy of their acceptation, cannot but be acceptable to them: now is the day of salvation: now is salvation preached, as being done, already obtained by Christ for sinners, the chief of sinners; it is now brought home to their souls by the ministration of the Gospel under the influence of the Spirit of God; now sinners are convinced of their need of it, and that it cannot be had elsewhere; now they are made to submit to Christ, to be saved by him, and him alone, are encouraged to believe in him, and are by him actually possessed of it. "Now" is, and not yesterday was, the day of salvation; and "now", and that for ever, that is, as long as the Gospel dispensation continues; for it will be always now till all the elect of God are gathered in. This day of grace and salvation will never be over till that time comes; it is still "now is the day of salvation": though men may have long withstood the ministration of the Gospel, and notwithstanding their manifold sins and transgressions. There is no withstanding the "now" of grace when it comes with the power of the Holy

Ghost.

2 Corinthians 6:3

Ver. 3. Giving no offence in anything,.... These words are in connection with 2Co 6:1 and to be considered either as a continuation of the exhortation to others, that they would take care to give no offence to any; or rather as an account the apostle gives of himself, and other ministers, by way of example; and is as if he had said, I Paul, Timotheus, Silvanus, and other ministers of the word, take all possible care to lay no stumblingblock in the way of the hearers of the Gospel; to give no offence to them that are without, or to them that are within, to Jew or Gentile, or to the church of God, neither by word nor writing, by doctrine or conversation, or in any way whatever: that the ministry be not blamed; the ministry of the word of reconciliation, which they had received of the Lord Jesus. The apostle knew there were persons enow who were waiting all opportunities, and taking all advantages to vilify and reproach the ministry of the Gospel, and so hinder its progress and spread; and that if that was once brought into contempt by the disagreeable conduct of the preachers of it, there would be but little hope of success from it. Some copies read, "our ministry"; and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; the Ethiopic version reads, "your ministry".

2 Corinthians 6:4

Ver. 4. But in all things approving ourselves,.... It is not sufficient for a minister of the Gospel to avoid everything that might bring any blot or scandal on his ministry; but he should in all things, and by all ways and means, proper, lawful, and laudable, approve, prove, and show himself to be a true and faithful dispenser of the word. All in such an office ought to make it appear, that they are such by behaving and conducting

as the ministers of God; as becomes such, whom he has chosen, called, and fitted for that service; and particularly in, or

by much patience; by a large, constant, and continued exercise of that grace; and by bearing patiently many things for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, without murmuring at the hand of God, or being angry with men, and without fainting and sinking in their own spirits:

in afflictions; that is, in patiently bearing, them. This word may be considered as a general word, including all sorts of afflictions whatever, of which the following are particular species:

in necessities; want of food, drink, and raiment, being hungry, thirsty, and naked, as the apostles sometimes were: in distresses; both of bad mind; being in such straits and difficulties they know not where to look, what course to steer, or which way to turn themselves.

2 Corinthians 6:5

Ver. 5. In stripes,.... As the Apostle Paul particularly was, who was thrice beaten with rods, and five times scourged by the Jews with the scourge of forty stripes save one.

In imprisonments; under which are included bonds, in which they often were for the Gospel of Christ:

in tumults; and uproars of the people, when their lives were frequently in imminent danger: or "in tossings to and fro"; being drove from place to place through the fury of their enemies;

in labours; in a laborious ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances; or by labouring with their own hands to supply their necessities:

in watchings; being obliged to work night and day at their hand labour, and in preaching, praying, and singing psalms; which exercises they were often employed in at midnight:

in fastings; by which are meant not voluntary, but involuntary ones, through want of food to eat.

2 Corinthians 6:6

Ver. 6. By pureness,.... The apostle having observed how he, and other ministers of God, showed themselves to be such by patiently bearing everything that was afflictive and distressing to the outward man, proceeds to show how they approved themselves in other respects; and which more chiefly regard the inward man, the exercise of grace, and a spiritual behaviour: "by pureness"; of doctrine and conversation, chastity of body and mind, sincerity of heart, and integrity of life:

by knowledge; of the Scriptures of truth, the mysteries of grace; or by a prudent conduct, a walking in wisdom with caution and circumspection:

by longsuffering: not easily provoked to wrath, but bearing with patience every indignity and affront:

by kindness; gentleness, sweetness of temper and manners, affability and courteousness:

by the Holy Ghost; influencing and assisting in the exercise of every grace, and the discharge of every duty, or by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, ordinary and extraordinary:

by love unfeigned; without dissimulation, being not in word only, but in deed and in truth towards the brethren, and to all men.

2 Corinthians 6:7

Ver. 7. By the word of truth,.... By preaching the Gospel, truly, sincerely, without any adulteration of it, which comes from the God of truth, has for its subject matter Christ, who is the truth, and into which ministers are guided by the Spirit of truth, and every doctrine of which is truth:

by the power of God; accompanying the word to the conversion and salvation of multitudes of souls; or by the signs, wonders, and miracles which were wrought for the confirmation of it:

by the armour of righteousness, on the right hand, and on the left: meaning, either the whole armour of God, with which a Christian is all over clothed from head to foot, and in the strength of Christ may engage any adversary without fear; or else particularly the sword of the Spirit in the right hand, and the shield of faith in the left, whereby both the offensive and defensive part may be acted; or, as others think, uprightness of conscience, and holiness of life and conversation; with which being blessed, though on the one hand he meets with prosperity, and on the other hand with adversity, he is not lifted up with the one, nor cast down with the other; he is moved by neither, but passes on unconcerned.

2 Corinthians 6:8

Ver. 8. By honour and dishonour,.... Some persons think and speak honourably of us, and behave in a reverent manner towards us; they wish us well, bid us God speed, receive us into their houses, and treat us with respect: others think meanly of us, speak of us with the utmost contempt, and use us as if we were the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things; so we pass through the world; this is the treatment we meet with on the right hand and on the left; nor are we much affected with it:

by evil report and good report; as it fares with our persons, so with our doctrine: some speak well of it, receive and embrace it; others blaspheme it, and have it in the utmost abhorrence; we are charged with the vilest of crimes, and our doctrines loaded with the most absurd and wicked consequences, and both branded in the most infamous manner by one set of men; and by others both our persons and principles are cleared and vindicated from all such aspersions, and are highly commended and applauded.

As deceivers; for so they were accounted, as Christ was before them, by the unbelieving Jews, and by the false apostles, as if they were the authors, or abettors, and spreaders of errors, and the instruments of leading people aside.

And yet true; true and faithful ministers of the word; true to their Lord and master; true to the trust committed to them; true to the Gospel of Christ, and to the souls of men.

2 Corinthians 6:9

Ver. 9. As unknown, and yet well known,.... Not unknown to Father, Son, and Spirit, or to one another, but to the world; and that not with respect to their outward estate, but their spiritual and eternal state; as that they were the chosen of God, the children of God, and born again; they knew not what a life they lived, or what they lived upon; and as they were unacquainted with their inward troubles, they were strangers to their spiritual joys here, and to what they shall partake of hereafter. Moreover, something more may be intended in this word "unknown"; as that they were not owned, esteemed, and approved of by them, but slighted, despised, hated, and persecuted:

and yet well known; to God the Father, who loved them with an everlasting love, chose them in Christ, gave them to him, made a covenant with him on their account, and sent his Son to redeem them, which knowledge of them is special, eternal, affectionate, approbative, and attended with care of them; well known to Jesus Christ, who knows all that are his, specially, distinctly, perfectly, and that from everlasting, bears a strong affection for them, takes great care of them, indulges them with intimate communion with him, and openly owns and acknowledges them as his own; well known to the Spirit of God, who enlightened and quickened them, regenerated and sanctified them, wrought faith and every other grace in them, witnessed their adoption to them, led them into all truth, filled and furnished them with his gifts, and dwelt in them, and abode with them, as the seal and earnest of their future glory; and were well known to the saints, and one another: they loved each other, delighted in each other's company; they knew each other's experiences, joys, and sorrows, and, in some measure, their hearts, and even their spiritual and eternal estate.

As dying, and behold we live. They were as dying men, having the seeds of mortality in them, being subject to diseases, which bring on death; and especially as they carried about with them the dying of the Lord Jesus, were continually exposed to death, and in danger of it, lived in the views of it, had the sentence of it in themselves, and were appointed to it. And "behold", to admiration "we live"; a natural life, which we have from God, depends upon hint, and is preserved by him amidst a thousand dangers and enemies to which it is exposed; and we live a spiritual life, a life of grace from Christ, a life of faith on him, and communion with him.

As chastened and not killed; "chastened" by men, and chastened by God; not in a way of vindictive wrath, but in a fatherly manner; but "not killed", or put to a corporeal death by our persecutors, who have sought to take away our lives, but have not yet been suffered to do it: or by the Lord, by the means of afflictions, the messengers of death; these sometimes bring very near it, and God chastens by them, but does not as yet give over to death, because our time is not yet come, and our work not yet done.

2 Corinthians 6:10

Ver. 10. As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,.... As to their outward appearance they are sorrowful, and oftentimes really so on account of sin, their own and others, by reason of afflictions, temporal and spiritual; and as to the state and condition of the church of Christ, and the interest of religion: and

yet always rejoicing; not in themselves, or in any creature, but in the Lord, in the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, and salvation by him. As poor, yet making many rich. It is, generally speaking, the lot of Christ's ministers to be poor in this world; and there are some reasons for it, why it is, and should be so; as that they might be maintained by the people, which is the ordinance of God; that it might appear that Christ's kingdom is not of this world; that the faith of men might not stand in the riches of the world, but in the power of God; that ministers might not be above their work, nor neglect it, nor drop it; and that they might not be ensnared and encumbered with the things of life.

And yet making many rich: are instruments in making many souls rich in things spiritual; by showing them their spiritual poverty, stripping them of what they trusted in, and valued themselves upon; directing them where true riches are, and furnishing them with spiritual knowledge, with the knowledge of things more worth than thousands of gold and silver.

As having nothing, and yet possessing all things; for the apostles left all for Christ, were sent out bare by him; what they had they gave away, and were very destitute of worldly enjoyments: "and possessing all things"; they had food and raiment, with which they were content, what was sufficient for them, and which they had in mercy, and with a blessing; and then they enjoyed all spiritual good things; they had not only a right unto them, but were possessed of them; they had all things pertaining to life and godliness; they had Christ, and all things with him, and therefore could say as Jacob did, that they had enough, yea, that they had all things.

2 Corinthians 6:11

Ver. 11. O ye Corinthians,.... The apostle having exhorted the ministers of the church at Corinth to take care of their ministry, that they fulfil it, and that it might appear that the Gospel, and gifts fitting them to preach it, were not received in vain by them; all which he strengthens and encourages by his own example; and that of others, addresses the members of the church in a very pathetic manner, saying,

our mouth is open to you; to speak our minds freely to you; we shall hide and conceal nothing from you, we shall deal with you with all plainness and faithfulness. This seems to refer unto, and pave the way for what he afterwards says about their unequal fellowship with unbelievers:

our heart is enlarged: with love to you, and eager desires after your good; and it is from the abundance of our hearts, and hearty affection for you, that our mouth is open so freely to communicate to you.

2 Corinthians 6:12

Ver. 12. Ye are not straitened in us,.... The meaning of which is, either you are not brought into straits and difficulties by us; we do not afflict and distress you, or fill you with anguish and trouble;

but ye are straitened in your own bowels; you are distressed by some among yourselves, who ought not to be with you, with whom you should have no fellowship and communion: or thus, you have room enough in our hearts, our hearts are so enlarged with love to you, that they are large enough to hold you all; an expression, setting forth the exceeding great love, and strong affection the apostle bore to the Corinthians; when, on the other hand, they had but very little love to him comparatively; he had a heart to hold them all without being straitened for room; and among all them they could scarce find room enough in their hearts and affections for him.

2 Corinthians 6:13

Ver. 13. Now for a recompence in the same,.... That your love to me may answer mine to you; that as you have my heart, I may have yours, and the same room in your heart, as you have in mine. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "having the same recompence"; and the Arabic version renders it, "grant to me the same recompence"; and the Syriac version, "recompense to me my usuries that are with you"; that is, repay me with affection, let love be returned for love.

I speak as unto my children; which relation subsisting between us requires mutual affection; for as a father should love his children, so children should love their father:

be ye also enlarged; in your love to me, as I am to you; and then, as if he should say, you will bear with, and take in good part the following exhortation and advice.

2 Corinthians 6:14

Ver. 14. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,.... This seems to be an allusion to the law in De 22:10 and to be a mystical explanation of it; and is to be understood not as forbidding civil society and converse with unbelievers; for this is impracticable, then must believers needs go out of the world; this the many natural and civil relations subsisting among men make absolutely necessary; and in many cases is both lawful and laudable, especially when there is any opportunity or likelihood of doing them any service in a spiritual way: not is it to be understood as dehorting from entering into marriage contracts with such persons; for such marriages the apostle, in his former epistle, had allowed to be lawful, and what ought to be abode by; though believers would do well carefully to avoid such an unequal yoke, since oftentimes they are hereby exposed to many snares, temptations, distresses, and sorrows, which generally more or less follow hereon: but there is nothing in the text or context that lead to such an interpretation; rather, if any particular thing is referred to, it is to joining with unbelievers in acts of idolatry; since one of the apostle's arguments to dissuade from being unequally yoked with unbelievers is, "what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" and from the foregoing epistle it looks as if some in this church had joined with them in such practices; see 1Co 10:14. But I rather think that these words are a dissuasive in general, from having any fellowship with unbelievers in anything sinful and criminal, whether in worship or in conversation:

for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? This, with what is said in the following verse, and in the beginning of the next to that, contain reasons or arguments engaging believers to attend to the exhortation given not to keep company with unbelievers. By "righteousness" is meant righteous persons, who are made the righteousness of God in Christ, to whom Christ is made righteousness, or to whom the righteousness of Christ is imputed for justification; and who also have principles of grace and holiness in their hearts, or have the kingdom of God in them, which consists of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and who being made free from the dominion of sin, are become servants of righteousness: and by unrighteousness is designed unrighteous persons, who are destitute of a justifying righteousness, are filled with all unrighteousness, and are, as it were, a mass and lump of iniquity; now, what fellowship can there be between persons of such distant characters?

And what communion hath light with darkness? regenerate men are made light in the Lord; they are enlightened into their state and condition by nature, to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, to behold the glory, beauty, fulness, and suitableness of Christ, so as to be sensible of their need of him, and to be able to look unto him for life and salvation; they are enlightened more or less into the doctrines of the Gospel, and the duties of religion; and their path is a shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day. Unregenerate persons are "darkness" itself; they are dark and ignorant of God in Christ, of the way of salvation by Christ, of the work of the Spirit of God upon the heart, and of the mysteries of grace; they know not themselves, nor the sad estate they are in; they are born, and brought up in darkness worse than Egyptian darkness; they go on in it, and if grace prevent not, will be cast into utter and eternal darkness. Now, what "communion" can there be between persons so different one from another? for what is more so than light and darkness? these the God of nature has divided from each other; and they are in nature irreconcilable to one another, and so they are in grace.

2 Corinthians 6:15

Ver. 15. And what concord hath Christ with Belial?.... The word "Belial" is an Hebrew word, and is only used in this place in the New Testament, but often in the Old; this word is differently read and pronounced, some copies read it "Beliar", and accordingly in the Ethiopic version it is "Belhor", and by Jerom read {i} Belvir"; but he observes, that it is more rightly called Belial": in some copies it is "Belias", and so Tertullian {k} read it; and Jerom {l} says, that most corruptly read it "Belias", for "Belial": some derive it from ylb, "Beli", and hle, "Alah", and signifies "without ascent"; one in a very low condition, of low life, that never rises up, and comes to any thing; to which Kimchi's etymology of the word seems to agree, who says {m}, that Belial is a wicked man, xyluy lbw hley lb, "who does not succeed, and does not prosper": others say it signifies {n} one that is
lwe ylb, "Beli Ol, without a yoke", without the yoke of the law; so Jarchi explains children of Belial, in De 13:13 without yoke, who break off the yoke of God; and so say {o} the Talmudists,

"children of Belial, are children that break off Mymv lwe, "the yoke of heaven" (i.e. the law) from their necks;"

lawless persons, who are under no subjection to God or man: others {p} derive it from ley, "Jaal", and ylb, "Beli", and so it signifies one that is unprofitable, does no good, and is good for nothing; and it is applied in Scripture to any wicked person, or thing; it is commonly rendered by the Chaldee paraphrast, a "wicked man"; and by Aquila and Suidas it is interpreted, "an apostate", and so it is rendered here in the Arabic version; sometimes the corruption of nature is called "Belial" by the Jews {q}, than which nothing can be more contrary to Christ; it is also a name of the devil; by Hesychius, "Beliar" is interpreted "a dragon", by which name the devil is sometimes called; and here the Syriac version is, "what concord hath Christ with Satan?" most interpreters by Belial understand the devil, who has cast off the yoke of obedience to God, and is unprofitable, yea, noxious and hurtful to men; between whom and Christ there is no concord, but a perpetual enmity; and as there is no concord between Christ personal, and Belial the devil, so what can there be between Christ mystical the church, which goes by the name of Christ, 1Co 12:12 and wicked men, the sons of Belial; who have cast away the law of the Lord, are not subject to the law of God, nor can they be, and are become unprofitable to themselves, and others?

or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? such have no part, and shall have no part or portion in one and the same thing; the believer's part and portion are God, Christ, and an eternal inheritance; the unbeliever's part and portion will be in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; and therefore what part, society, or communion, can they have with one another?

{i} De Nominibus Hebraicis, fol. 106. K. {k} De Corona, c. 10. {l} Comment. in Ephes. iv. 27. {m} Sepher Shorashim, rad. lb. {n} Hieronym Quaestasive Trad. Heb. in Lib. Reg. fol. 74. I. Tom. 3. & in Ephes. iv. 27. R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 141. 4. & 142. 2. {o} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 111. 2. {p} Philip Aquinas, Schindler, Cocceius, &c. {q} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 148. 3. & 149. 2.

2 Corinthians 6:16

Ver. 16. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?.... That is, what association, confederation, or covenant agreement can the saints, who are the temple of God, have with idols, or their worshippers? no more than the ark of the Lord had with Dagon, or Dagon with the ark; which when brought into his temple, and set by him, the idol fell down, and part of him was broke to pieces:

for ye are the temple of the living God; some copies read "we are", and so the Ethiopic version. The Corinthians, not only as particular believers, were the temples of God, both with respect to their souls and bodies, but they, as a church of Christ incorporated together, were the temple of God; wherefore the apostle does not say, ye are the "temples", but "the temple" of the living God, in allusion to the temple built by Solomon; and that in respect to him the builder of it, who was a type of Christ, the son of David, the Prince of peace, the beloved of the Lord, who was to build the temple, the Gospel church, and to bear the glory; and as Solomon's temple was built on an eminence, on Mount Moriah, so the church is built upon a rock, higher than men, than angels, than the heavens, and out of the reach of men and devils, so as to hurt and destroy it. The matter of the temple at Jerusalem were timber of cedar, and costly stones, hewed, squared, and fitted for the building, before they were brought thither; so the proper materials of a Gospel church are such as are born of incorruptible seed, and therefore comparable to cedars; and are lively stones, hewed, fitted, and squared by the Spirit and grace of God, and put and jointed in among the saints: Solomon's temple was a very stately magnificent building; it was overlaid within with pure gold, expressing the internal glory of Christ's church, which is all glorious within, having the Lord himself to be the Glory in the midst of her: the church of Christ may be compared to the temple also, for the firmness of its foundations and pillars; Christ is the foundation of his church, and that itself is the pillar and ground of truth: that temple was holy, being set apart for the worship and service of God, as the church of Christ is sanctified by the Spirit of God, and is built up a spiritual house, to offer the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise to God: it is called the "temple of God", because it is of his building, and where he dwells; "of the living God", because he has life in himself, and gives both spiritual and eternal life to his people; and in opposition to the idols of the Gentiles, who have no life in them; are representations of dead men, cannot give life, nor any of the comforts of life to their votaries; and who, by worshipping them, expose themselves to eternal death. The evidence of the saints, or church of Christ being the temple of the living God, is as follows,

as God hath said, Le 26:11. I will dwell in them; not by his omnipresence, so he dwells everywhere; nor by his omnipotence, so he dwells in, and with all his creatures, supporting them by the word of his power; but by his Spirit and grace, or by his spiritual and gracious presence, which he favours his people with, in the use of ordinances, and where according to his promises they may expect it:

and walk in them. This denotes the communion God is pleased to afford his church and people, and that gracious presence of his with them, whilst they are sojourners here, and passing on to the heavenly glory; as God is said to "walk in a tent and tabernacle" with the "Israelites", whilst they were travelling through the wilderness to Canaan; so he walks in his temple, and with his church and people, whilst they are travelling home to the heavenly Canaan; he walks in them, as in his court and palace, or as in his garden, where he takes much pleasure and delight, and great notice and care of them. R. Solomon Jarchi explains the phrase in Le 26:12 "I will walk among you", thus; I will walk with you in the garden of Eden, or paradise, as one of you, and ye shall not be afraid of me: but the passage regards the presence of God with his people here, and not hereafter:

and I will be their God; not as the God of nature and providence only, but as the God of all grace; as their covenant God and Father in Christ; which is the greatest happiness that can be enjoyed:

and they shall be my people: his special people, loved by him with a peculiar love, on whom he bestows peculiar blessings; and who are made a willing people, willing to be his people by powerful grace, and are formed for himself, his service, and glory: hence it follows,

2 Corinthians 6:17

Ver. 17. Wherefore come out from among them,.... Since they were the temple of the living God, built up an habitation for the Most High; since he resided among them, took his walks in the midst of them, was their God, and they were his people. These words are taken out of Isa 52:11 where the several phrases here used may be observed. They seem to be directed to the Israelites, and particularly to the priests and Levites, who bore the vessels of the Lord; and are fitly applied to believers under the Gospel dispensation, who are by Christ made priests unto God. They are usually interpreted by the Jewish writers, as a call to the Jews to come out of captivity, to quit Babylon and Persia, and the several cities and countries where they were; and are applied in Re 18:4 to mystical Babylon, the church of Rome, as a call to God's people, to leave the superstitions and idolatries of that church, lest they be partakers of her plagues; and here, by the apostle, as an exhortation to believers in general, to forsake the company and conversation of the men of the world: who may be said to come out from among them at first conversion, when they are called to forsake their own people, and their Father's house, to leave their native country, and seek an heavenly one; and when, in consequence of effectual

calling grace, their conversations are different from what they were before, and from other Gentiles; when they dislike their former companions, abhor their sinful conversation, abstain from it, keep out of it, as being infectious, hurtful, and detrimental to them; when they have no fellowship with the workers of iniquity, but reprove them both by words and deeds, which is their incumbent duty: the phrase in Isaiah is, "go ye out from the midst of her"; which Kimchi interprets, "out of the midst of every city in which thou art"; that is, in which idolaters lived; and well agrees with
ek mesou autwn here, "out of the midst of them":

and be ye separate, saith the Lord; this phrase is not to be met with expressly in our version of the above text in Isaiah, but is signified by several expressions in it; the words rendered "depart ye, depart ye", are by the Targum, or Chaldee paraphrase on the place, expressed by wvrpta wvrpta, "be ye separate, be ye separate", which are the very words of the apostle here; and the phrase, "touch no unclean thing", is explained by R. Aben Ezra, Mlweh twmwam
wldbyv, "that they might be separate from the nations of the world" and another word, wrbh, "be ye clean", signifies such a purgation as is made by separation, by removing the clean from the unclean, by separating the wheat from the chaff. The people of God are a separate people in election, redemption, and the effectual calling, and ought to be so in their conduct and conversation; they ought to separate themselves from all superstition and will worship in religious matters, and from the evil customs and manners of the world, though they are sure to become a prey, and to expose themselves to the contempt and rage of it:

and touch not the unclean thing. The allusion is to several laws under the former dispensation, which forbid touching many things which were accounted unclean, whereby pollution was contracted, and the persons were obliged to a ceremonial cleansing; see **Le 5:2**
Nu 19:11. It has no regard to touching, tasting, and eating any sort of food, which was forbid as unclean by the ceremonial law; for the difference between meats clean and unclean was now removed; but if anything is particularly designed by the unclean thing, it seems to be idolatry, and to be a prohibition of joining with worshippers of idols in their idolatrous practices, whereby a moral pollution is contracted; since in the beginning of the former verse it is said, "what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" though it is rather intended in general, to forbid all communion and fellowship with unclean persons and things, not to touch them, to come nigh them, or have anything to do with them:

and I will receive you; this, and what follows in the next verse, are said to encourage believers to keep at a distance from wicked and immoral persons, whose company and conversation are dishonourable, ensnaring, and defiling. These persons had been already received into the love of God, his best and strongest affections, from which there can be no separation; and in the covenant of grace, which as it cannot be removed, so neither could they be removed out of that; they were received into the church of Christ, and had a place and a name in it, better than that of sons and daughters; and as they had been received by Christ, when they came to him as poor perishing sinners without him, so they were still received graciously, notwithstanding their many backslidings: neither of these therefore is the sense of this passage: but, that whereas by quitting society with carnal men, they would expose themselves to their resentments; the Lord here promises, that he would take them under the wings of his protection; he would take care of them and preserve them, keep them as the apple of his eye, and be a wall of fire round about them, whilst in this world; and when he had guided them by his counsel here, would "receive" them "to glory": this clause seems to be taken from the latter part of Isa 52:12 which may be rendered, "the God of Israel will gather you"; i.e. to himself, and protect them.

2 Corinthians 6:18

Ver. 18. And will be a father unto you,.... The same is promised to Solomon, **2Sa 7:14** and said of Israel, Jer 31:9 which is thought to be referred unto. This is not to be understood of the first commencement of this relation, as though God now began to be their Father; nor indeed of the first manifestation of it, which had been already made to their souls by the Spirit of adoption, witnessing to their spirits that God was their Father, and they were his children; but of his acting, and continuing to act the part of a father to them; which he does, by pitying his children, sympathizing with them, and supporting them under all their trials and afflictions; by taking care of them, that they have food and raiment convenient for them; by laying up for them, as he has done in his covenant, in his Son, and in heaven; by communicating unto them, by passing by their offences and miscarriages to him, and by correcting them for their good, and at last giving them the heavenly inheritance, and putting them into the possession of it:

and ye shall be my sons and daughters. This also does not relate to the first act of adoption, when these persons first became the sons and daughters of God;

for so they were by adopting grace, in the mind, counsel, and covenant of God, from eternity; as such they were considered when given to Christ, when he assumed their nature, and died to gather them together in one; and as antecedent to faith and the work of the Spirit upon their souls: nor even of the first discovery of this grace unto them; but the meaning is, that whereas they were the sons and daughters of God, they should be treated as such; whenever he spoke to them, or dealt with them in providence, he would speak to them and deal with them as children; or it may refer to the more full and open manifestation of their sonship, before angels and men, at the appearance of Christ: to all which is added,

saith the Lord Almighty; for confirmation sake, and to encourage the faith of the saints; since he who said all this is the Lord God Almighty, and so able to perform it; and of which, and his willingness, no question is to be made, since he has said it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Corinthians 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS 7

This chapter begins with an inference deduced, from what is said in the latter part of the foregoing chapter, engaging to holiness of heart and life, in opposition to filthiness of flesh and spirit, **2Co 7:1** and the apostle, in order to prevail upon the Corinthians kindly to receive his exhortations, observes his own conduct, and that of his fellow ministers towards them; as that they had done them no injury by the advice they had given them, nor had they corrupted them by unsound doctrine, or had coveted their worldly substance, **2Co 7:2** not that by so saying he would insinuate as if they had been guilty of injury, corruption, and covetousness; it was far from his thoughts to suggest anything of that kind concerning them, for whom he had so great an affection, as never to separate from them, but living and dying to continue the same regards unto them, **2Co 7:3** and which he expresses, and had shown everywhere, by the freedom of speech he had used concerning them, and his boasting of them, and the joy and comfort he had in the midst of his troubles, by the good news he had received of them, **2Co 7:4**, which he had in the following manner; for though when in Macedonia he had no rest, partly through outward troubles, and partly through inward fears, **2Co 7:5** yet meeting with Titus, who had been with them, and had brought an account of their state, it was a means God made use of for the comfort of him, **2Co 7:6** and it was not merely the sight of

Titus that yielded him this consolation, but the comfortable reception he had met with at Corinth; and also the good effect the apostle's letter written to them had upon them, as related by Titus; what a desire they had to see him, what grief that they should sin, and by it distress him, and what a fervent affection they had for him **2Co 7:7** for which reason he did not repent of the letter he sent them, though it did produce sorrow in them, since that was of the right kind, and was but for a time, **2Co 7:8** yea, he was so far from it, that he was glad, not merely on account of their sorrow, but because their sorrow was a godly one, and issued in repentance; and so they were no losers, but gainers by the epistle, it producing such good effects, **2Co 7:9** which leads him to distinguish between a true right godly sorrow, and a worldly one, and that by their consequences; repentance and salvation following upon the one, and death upon the other, **2Co 7:10** the fruits and evidences of which godly and true repentance he makes mention of in seven particulars, by which it appeared that their sorrow and repentance were sincere and genuine, **2Co 7:11** when the apostle proceeds to observe to them the end he had in view in writing to them, upon the account of the incestuous person, in which he had used great plainness and faithfulness; and this was not merely on account of him that offended, nor only on account of the person injured by him, but chiefly to testify his care of, and concern for their welfare, as a church of Christ, **2Co 7:12** and inasmuch as though they had been grieved, yet were now comforted, it added to the consolation of the apostle and his companions, and the more delighted they were, when they understood what a reception Titus had among them, what reverence he was had in, what respect was shown him, and care was taken of him, **2Co 7:13** and the rather, seeing the apostle had boasted of the liberality, generosity, and affectionate regard of the Corinthians to the ministers of the Gospel, Titus found it to be all true what he had said; so that he had no reason to be ashamed, as he must have been, had they behaved otherwise, **2Co 7:14** and still it gave him further pleasure, that by their behaviour to Titus, they had gained his heart, and increased his affection towards them; which he could not but express, whenever he called to mind, or made mention of the great respect, veneration, and obedience, they yielded to him, **2Co 7:15** and indeed it was not only in this instance, but in all others, the apostle had confidence concerning them, which heightened his joy and pleasure in them, **2Co 7:16**.

Ver. 1. Having therefore these promises,.... That God will walk in his temple, and dwell in his churches, be their God, and they his people, that he will receive them, and be their Father, and they his sons and daughters; which promises they had not in hope, as Old Testament saints had the promises of the Messiah and his kingdom, and as New Testament saints have of the resurrection, the new heavens and new earth, and of appearing with Christ in glory; but in hand, in actual possession; for God was really become their God and Father, and they were his people and children; they had had communion with him, and were received, protected, and preserved by him; which promises and blessings of grace, and which are absolute and unconditional, the apostle makes use of to engage them to purity and holiness; and is a clear proof, that the doctrine of an absolute and unconditional covenant of grace has no tendency to licentiousness, but the contrary: and that his following exhortation might be attended to, and cheerfully received, he uses a very affectionate appellation,

dearly beloved; so they were of God, being his people, his sons and daughters, adopted, justified, called, and chosen by him; and so they were by the apostle and his fellow ministers, who, as he says in a following verse, were in their hearts to die and live with them; some copies read brethren, and so the Ethiopic version. The exhortation he urges them to, and, that it might be the better received, joins himself with them in it, is,

let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit: by "the filthiness of the flesh" is meant external pollution, defilement by outward actions, actions committed in the body, whereby the man is defiled; such as all impure words, filthiness, and foolish talking, all rotten and corrupt communication, which defile a man's own body; as the tongue, a little member, when so used does, and corrupts the good manners of others; all filthy actions, as idolatry, adultery, fornication, incest, sodomy, murder, drunkenness, revellings, &c. and everything that makes up a filthy conversation, which is to be hated, abhorred, and abstained from by the saints: by "filthiness of the spirit" is meant internal pollution, defilement by the internal acts of the mind, such as evil thoughts, lusts, pride, malice, envy, covetousness, and the like: such a distinction of Pwgh tamwj, "the filthiness of the body", and vpnh tamwj, "the filthiness of the soul", is to be met with among the Jews; who say {r}, that when a man has taken care to avoid the former, it is fit he should take care of the latter; they also call the evil imagination, or corruption of nature, "the filth of the body" {s}. Now when the apostle says, "let us cleanse ourselves", this does not suppose that men have a power to cleanse themselves from the pollution of their nature, or the defilement of their actions; for this is God's work alone, as appears from his promises to cleanse his people from their sins; from the end of Christ's shedding his blood, and the efficacy of it; from the sanctifying influences of the Spirit; and from the prayers of the saints to God, to create in them clean hearts, to wash them thoroughly from their iniquity, and cleanse them from their sin: besides, the apostle is not here speaking either of the justification of these persons, in which sense they were already cleansed, and that thoroughly, from all their sins and iniquities; nor of the inward work of sanctification, in respect of which they were sprinkled with clean water, and were washed in the layer of regeneration; but what the apostle respects is the exercise of both internal and external religion, which lies in purity of heart and conversation, the one not being acceptable to God without the other; he is speaking of, and exhorting to the same thing, as in the latter part of the preceding chapter; and suggests, that it becomes those who have received such gracious promises to be separate from sin and sinners, to abstain from all appearance of sin, and to have no fellowship with sinners; to lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of haughtiness, and, under a sense of either external or internal pollution, to have recourse to the fountain opened; to deal by faith with the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, of heart, lip, and life; and which is the only effectual method a believer can make use of, to cleanse himself from sin; namely, by washing his garments, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb:

perfecting holiness in the fear of God; by "holiness" is not meant the work of sanctification upon the heart, for that is wholly the work of the Spirit of God, and not of man; he begins it, carries it on, and perfects it of himself; but holiness of life and conversation is here designed, which in conversion the people of God are called unto, and which highly becomes them: and this they are to be "perfecting"; not that a believer is able to live a life of holiness, without sin being in him, or committed by him; this is in, possible and impracticable in the present life; but the sense of the word epitelountev is, that he is to be carrying on a course of righteousness and holiness to the end; to the end of his life, he is to persevere as in faith, so in holiness; as he is to go on believing in Christ, so he is to go on to live soberly, righteously, and godly, to the end of his days; which requires divine power to preserve him from sin, and keep him from falling; and the grace of God, the strength of Christ, and the assistance of the Spirit, to enable him to perform acts of holiness, and the several duties of religion, and to continue in well doing: all which is to be done, "in the fear of God"; not in a servile slavish fear, a fear of hell and damnation, but in a filial fear, a reverential affection for God, an humble trust in him, and dependence on him, for grace and strength; it is that fear which has God for its author, is a blessing of the new covenant, is implanted in regeneration, and is increased by discoveries of pardoning grace; and it has God for its object, not his wrath and vindictive justice, but his goodness, grace, and mercy. This shows from what principle, and upon what views believers act in a course of righteousness and holiness; not from the fear of hell, nor from the fear of men, or with a view to gain their applause, but as in the sight of God, from a reverential affection to him, a child like fear of him, and with a view to his glory.

{r} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 111. 2. {s} Zohar in Lev. fol. 43. 2.

2 Corinthians 7:2

Ver. 2. Receive us,.... Into your affections, let us have a place in your hearts, as you have in ours: Gospel ministers ought to be received with love and respect, both into the hearts and houses of the saints; for "he that receiveth you", says Christ, "receiveth me", Mt 10:40. Their doctrines are to be received in the love of them, and with faith and meekness; and this may be another part of the apostle's meaning here; receive the word and ministry of reconciliation, which we as the ambassadors of Christ bring, and the several exhortations we give in his name, particularly the last mentioned: next follow reasons, or arguments, engaging, them to comply with this request,

we have wronged no man; we have done no man any injury in his person, estate, or name. There is one among you that has done wrong, and another among you that has suffered wrong, **2Co 7:12** and we have given very faithful advice to the church how to behave in this affair; but, in so doing, we have neither wronged him nor you; and as not in this, so neither in any other case: if I or my fellow apostles have wronged you in anything, it is in not being "burdensome" to you for our maintenance, "forgive me this wrong", 2Co 12:13 for in no other respect have we done you any: some understand this of any lordly power, or tyrannical domination they had exercised over them, denied by the apostle; we have not behaved in an insolent manner towards you, we have not lorded it over God's heritage, or claimed any dominion over your faith, or required any unreasonable obedience and submission from you:

we have corrupted no man; neither by our doctrines and principles, which are perfectly agreeable to the word of God, make for the good of souls, and tend to the glory of Christ; nor by our example, but have been careful to lead such lives and conversations as are becoming the Gospel of Christ, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and are patterns to them that believe; nor have we corrupted by flatteries, or with bribes, any of the leading men among you, in order to gain their good will, and thereby respect and credit among others:

we have defrauded no man, or "coveted no man"; no man's silver, gold, or apparel; we have not sought yours, but you; not to amass wealth to ourselves, but that we might be useful to your souls, for your spiritual good, and serviceable to the glory of Christ; we have not through covetousness made merchandise of you, with feigned words, as the false apostles have done, therefore receive us.

2 Corinthians 7:3

Ver. 3. I speak not this to condemn you,.... Referring either to the exhortations before given, to have no sinful conversation with unbelievers, and to cleanse themselves from all impurity, external and internal; and to go on in a course of holiness, in the fear of God, to the end of life; or to the account just given of himself and fellow ministers; and his sense is this, the exhortations I have given must not be so understood, as though I charged and accused you with keeping company with unbelievers, or as though you were not concerned for purity of life and conversation; or when I remove the above mentioned things from myself and others, I mean not to lay them upon you, as if I thought that you had wronged, corrupted, or defrauded any; when I clear myself and others, I do not design to accuse or condemn you; my view is only to the false apostles, who have done these things, when we have not, and therefore we have the best claim to your affections:

for I have said before, you are in our hearts; you are inscribed on our hearts, engraven there, "ye are our epistle written in our hearts", **2Co 3:2** ye are not straitened in us, **2Co 6:12** you have a place and room enough in our affections, which are strong towards you, insomuch that it is our desire and resolution

to die and live with you; or together: neither death nor life shall separate our love, or destroy our friendship; there is nothing we more desire than to live with you; and should there be any occasion for it, could freely die with you, and for you.

2 Corinthians 7:4

Ver. 4. Great is my boldness of speech towards you,.... Or "liberty of speaking", which I use with you; I very freely, and without any disguise, open my mind to you; I faithfully tell you your faults; I am free in my exhortations and counsels to you, as in the case of the incestuous person, and in other instances, which is a sign of true friendship; for had I any suspicion of you, or not cordial affection for you, I should have been more reserved, more upon my guard, and have spoke and wrote with more caution: besides,

great is my glorying, or "boasting of you"; of your faith in Christ, your love to the people of God, respect to the ministers of the Gospel, obedience to us, and very great liberality to the poor saints, of which the apostle frequently boasts in this epistle: now as speaking freely to them when present with them, or in writing to them, so glorying in them, and speaking well of them when absent, clearly showed what an opinion he had of them, and what true hearty respect he had for them:

I am filled with comfort, says he; not only with divine and spiritual consolations from God, but with the news Titus brought of the state of this church, of the good effect the apostle's reproof and advice had both upon them, and the offender among them, and of their tender and affectionate regard to him: this filled him brimful of comfort, yea, adds he,

I am exceeding joyful; I abound, I over abound in joy; such is the joy that possesses my soul, at the tidings brought me, that it superabounds all the sorrow and anguish of spirit, out of which I wrote unto you, occasioned by the unhappy affair among you: yea, it makes me inexpressibly joyful in all our tribulation; which is not small we meet with, wherever we go, in preaching the Gospel of Christ.

2 Corinthians 7:5

Ver. 5. For when we were come into Macedonia,.... Whither Paul went in quest of Titus, not finding him at Troas, **2Co 2:12** and where he met with him, and had the agreeable account from him of the state of this church; but here, as elsewhere, they had their troubles:

our flesh had no rest; that is, their outward man, their bodies; they were continually fatigued with preaching, disputing, fighting; what with false teachers, and violent persecutors, they had no rest in their bodies; though, in their souls, they had divine support and spiritual consolation; and it was no small addition to their joy to hear of the flourishing condition of this church:

but were troubled on every side; from every quarter, by all sorts of enemies; see **2Co 4:8**.

Without were fightings, within were fears; there seems to be an allusion to De 32:25. They had continual combats with false teachers, and furious persecutors, without the church, or in the world, or in their bodies; and within the church, or in themselves, in their own minds, had many fears, lest any should be discouraged by the violence of persecutions, or be drawn aside by the doctrines of the false apostles: and as it was with the apostles in these respects, so it is with private believers: without are fightings; their outward conversation in this life is a warfare; partly with false teachers, with whom they fight the "good fight of faith", contend for the doctrine of faith, using the spiritual weapons of the Scriptures of truth; and partly with the men of the world, to whose rage and contempt they are exposed, and among whom they endure a great fight of afflictions, with patience, and in the exercise of faith, whereby they gain the victory over the world and partly with Satan, their avowed adversary, and implacable enemy, against whom they wrestle in the strength of Christ, making use of the whole armour God provided for them, by the help of which, through divine grace, they come off more than conquerors; and partly with the lusts and corruptions, or open prevailing iniquities which are in the world, to which they oppose themselves, and, by the power of God keeping them, are preserved from: not that their only fightings are thus without; for there is, as it were, a company of two armies within them, sin and grace, flesh and spirit, opposing each other: and hence, as well as from other causes, are "fears within"; about their interest in everlasting love, electing grace, and the covenant of grace; about the presence of God with them, and the truth of grace in them; about their interest in Christ, their sonship, their final perseverance, and enjoyment of the heavenly glory: and though these fears are not their excellencies, but their infirmities, yet this will be more or less their case, till that state takes place, when there will be no more fightings, no more fears.

2 Corinthians 7:6

Ver. 6. Nevertheless, God that comforteth those that are cast down,.... Or "humble ones": such as are humbled under the afflicting hand of God, and have low and mean apprehensions of themselves; these God looks unto, dwells with, revives their hearts, cheers their drooping spirits, and fills them with comforts; he has been used to do so with such persons; he has raised comfort to them; they may expect it, and the apostle experienced it; and which he refers to God as the author of it, as he had done in the beginning of this epistle, calling him "the God of all comfort"; he was the efficient cause, the means by which it was effected was the coming of Titus:

comforted us by the coming of Titus; to whom the apostle bore a very great affection, he being his son in a spiritual sense, a companion with him in his travels, and of great usefulness and service in the ministration of the Gospel; so that the very sight of him gave him pleasure; and the more, inasmuch as he had for some time longed to see him, that he might have some account from him of the affairs of this church.

2 Corinthians 7:7

Ver. 7. And not by his coming only,.... It was not barely by his coming, that he and his fellow ministers were so much comforted:

but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you. The church at Corinth received Titus with all respect and reverence; treated him in the most kind and tender manner; satisfied him in the affair of the incestuous person; greatly refreshed his spirits with an account of their faith in Christ, experience of the grace of God, and their regard and close attachment to the honour of religion, and the interest of the Redeemer; many comfortable opportunities had he with them, in preaching among them, and conversing with them; and the account of this added to the apostle's consolation; for the joys and comforts of one believer yield a considerable pleasure, and are matter of joy and comfort, to another:

when he told us your earnest desire; that is, of seeing the apostle, of satisfying him in the thing he had complained of, and of reformation in their conduct, and the discipline of Christ's house for the future:

your mourning; for the evil that had been committed among them; the dishonour it had brought upon the doctrine and ways of Christ; their remissness, carelessness, and neglect in discharging their duty; and the grief and sorrow occasioned hereby to the apostle:

your fervent mind toward me; in vindicating him, his character, doctrine, and conduct, against the false apostles, and others:

so that I rejoiced the more: his joy on this narrative of things abundantly exceeded his troubles and afflictions, which surrounded him on every side, and overcame and extinguished that sorrow, which had possessed him on their account; and greatly added to the joy he felt by the coming of Titus, and the consolation that he had met with at Corinth.

2 Corinthians 7:8

Ver. 8. For though I made you sorry with a letter,.... His former epistle, relating to the incestuous person:

I do not repent, though I did repent; not of writing the letter, which was wrote by divine inspiration; but of the sorrow occasioned by it, though now he did not repent of that:

for I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though it were but for a season; inasmuch as the sorrow was true, hearty, and genuine, though it was but for a time, the apostle was entirely satisfied, and the more pleased, because of its brevity, since it was sincere.

2 Corinthians 7:9

Ver. 9. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry,.... Their grief and sorrow, as a natural passion, was no matter or cause of joy to him; nor was this what he sought after, being what he could take no real pleasure in; for so far as that was a pain to them, it was a pain to him:

but that ye sorrowed to repentance; their sorrow issued in true evangelical repentance, and this was the ground of his rejoicing; for as there is joy in heaven among the angels, at the repentance of a sinner, so there is joy in the church below, among the saints and ministers of the Gospel, when either sinners are brought in, or backsliders returned by repentance:

for ye were made sorry after a godly sort; what gave him so much joy and satisfaction was, that their sorrow was of the right sort; it was a godly sorrow, they sorrowed after; or according to God, according to the will of God, and for sin, as it was committed against him; it was a sorrow that God wrought in them:

that ye might receive damage by us in nothing; what added to his pleasure was, that his writing to them, and the effect it produced, had not been in the least detrimental to them; things had worked so kindly, and this sorrow had wrought in such a manner, that they were not hurt in their souls, but profited; nor in their church state, they had not lost one member by it; nay, the offender himself, which was the occasion of all this trouble, was recovered and restored by these means.

2 Corinthians 7:10

Ver. 10. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation,.... These words contain a reason, proving that they had received no damage, but profit by the sorrow that had possessed them, from the nature of it, a "godly" sorrow; a sorrow which had God for its author; it did not arise from the power of free will, nor from the dictates of a natural conscience, nor from a work of the law on their hearts, or from a fear of hell and damnation, but it sprung from the free grace of God; it was a gift of his grace, the work of his Spirit, and the produce of his almighty power; being such, which no means, as judgments, mercies, or the most powerful ministry of themselves could effect; it was owing to divine instructions; it was heightened and increased with a discovery of the love of God, and views of pardoning grace and mercy being attended with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: it had God also for its object, as well as its author; it was a sorrow, ahla ljmd, "which is for God", as the Syriac version reads the words, and also the Ethiopic; on the account of God, his honour, interest, and glory; it was a sorrow for sin, because it was committed against a God of infinite holiness, justice, and truth, goodness, grace, and mercy; and it was a sorrow,
kata yeon, "according to God", according to the mind and will of God; it was, as it is rendered by the Arabic version, "grateful to God"; what he took notice of, observed, and approved of; and was also such a sorrow as bore some resemblance to what in God goes by the name of grieving and repenting, as that he had made man, because of sin; there being in it a displicency with sin, an hatred of it, and a repentance that ever it was committed: moreover, this sorrow is further described, from its salutary operation, it "worketh repentance"; it is the beginning of it, a part of it, an essential part of it, without which there is no true repentance; this produces it, issues in it, even in an ingenuous confession of sin, a forsaking of it, and in bringing forth fruits meet for repentance, in the life and conversation: and this repentance is unto salvation; not the cause or author of it, for that is Christ alone; nor the condition of it, but is itself a blessing of salvation, a part of it, the initial part of it, by which, and faith we enter upon the possession of salvation; it is an evidence of interest in it, and issues in the full enjoyment of it: and this, or repentance, is such as is

not to be repented of; or that is stable and immovable, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; which "never returns", or goes back, as the Syriac version, but remains the same not repented of; for to either of them may it be applied: salvation is not to be repented of; it is not repented of by God, who repents not, neither of the thing itself, nor of the way and manner in which it is effected, nor of the persons saved by it, and his choice of them to it; nor is it repented of by them, who believe in Christ to the saving of their souls: nor is true repentance, which is connected with it, to be repented of; God does not repent of giving it, for "his gifts and calling are without repentance"; nor does the repenting sinner repent of it; nor has he any occasion, since it is unto life, even "unto eternal life", as the Ethiopic version here renders it; and as it is called "repentance unto life", in Ac 11:18. This sorrow is likewise illustrated by its contrary,

but the sorrow of the world worketh death; a worldly sorrow is such, as is common to men of the world, as Cain, Pharaoh, Judas, and others; it springs from worldly selfish principles, and proceeds on worldly views; it is often nothing more than a concern for the loss of worldly things, as riches, honours, &c. or for a disappointment in the gratification of worldly lusts and pleasures: and this worketh death; temporal and eternal death; it sometimes brings diseases and disorders on the body, which issue in death; and sometimes puts men upon destroying themselves, as it did Ahithophel and Judas; it works in the minds of men a fearful apprehension of eternal death, and, if grace prevent not, issues in it.

2 Corinthians 7:11

Ver. 11. For behold, this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort,.... The apostle proceeds to describe godly sorrow by its effects, which are so many evidences of the sincerity and genuineness of it; some of the things mentioned are peculiar to the case of the Corinthians, and others common to evangelical repentance in any:

what carefulness it wrought in you; to remove the incestuous person from communion with them, which they were very negligent of before; to sin no more after this sort; to keep up, for the future, a more strict and regular discipline in the church; to perform good works in general, and not to offend God:

yea, what clearing of yourselves; not by denying the fact, or lessening, or defending it; but by acknowledging their neglect, praying it might be overlooked, declaring that they were not partakers of the sin; nor did they approve of it, but disliked and abhorred it, and were highly pleased with the method the apostle advised to:

yea, what indignation; not against the person of the offender, but against his sin; and not his only but their own too, in not appearing against him, and taking notice of him sooner; and particularly that they should act in such a manner, as to deserve the just rebuke of the apostle:

yea, what fear; not of hell and damnation, as in wicked men and devils, who repent not; but of God, and of grieving his ministers; and lest the corruption should spread in the church, as the apostle had suggested, "a little leaven leavens the whole lump";

yea, what vehement desire; of seeing the apostle; of giving him full satisfaction; of behaving in quite another manner for the time to come; and to be kept from evil, and to honour God by a becoming conversation:

yea, what zeal; for God and his glory; for restoring the discipline of the church: for the doctrines of the Gospel; for the ordinances of Christ's house; for the supporting the character of the apostle, and other ministers of the word, against the false apostles:

yea, what revenge; not of persons in a private way, vengeance belongs to God; but of all disobedience, particularly that of the unhappy criminal among them, which has shown in the punishment inflicted on him by many:

in all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter; of the incestuous person: it appeared plainly that they did not consent to, and approve of his sin; and though at first they were unconcerned about it, did not mourn over it as they ought, nor make such haste to deal with the offender as they should, yet having discovered true repentance for their sloth, negligence, and indulgence, they are acquitted, and stand, in the apostle's view of them, as if they had not offended.

2 Corinthians 7:12

Ver. 12. Wherefore, though I wrote unto you,.... Meaning in his former epistle, with so much sharpness and severity, and as may have been thought too much:

I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong; not for the sake of the incestuous person only and chiefly, not merely for his correction and restoration; though these things were intended, and earnestly desired by the apostle:

nor for his cause that suffered wrong: that is, the father of the incestuous person, who had been injured by this wicked action; it was not only or merely out of favour and respect to him, and that some compensation should be made to him in a church way, by detesting the crime, casting out the offender, and declaring themselves on the side of the injured person, and against him that had done the injury:

but that our care for you, in the sight of God, might appear unto you: some copies, and the Complutensian edition, and the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, "that your care for us", &c. and then the sense is, that you might have an opportunity of showing your affection for us, your regard to us, how readily you obey us in all things; but the other reading is to be preferred, the meaning of which is, that the apostle in writing did not so much consult and regard the private good of any particular person, either the injurer or the injured, though these were not out of his view; but he wrote in the manner he did, chiefly that it might be manifest what a concern he had for the good and welfare of the whole church; lest that should be corrupted, and receive any damage from such a notorious delinquent being tolerated or connived at among them; and that it was such a care and concern as was real, hearty, and sincere, was well known to God, and for the truth of which he could appeal to him.

2 Corinthians 7:13

Ver. 13. Therefore we were comforted in your comfort,.... In the comfortable situation the church was in; not in their grief and sorrow, as a natural passion, but in the effects of it as a godly sorrow; by which it appeared that their repentance was genuine, and that they were clear in the matter that had given so much trouble; and that things had so well succeeded for the welfare and more comfortable estate of the church for the future. The comfortable estate, flourishing condition, and well being of churches, yield great pleasure and consolation to the ministers of the Gospel: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "our comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we, for the joy of Titus"; not only the repentance of the Corinthians, and the blessed effects of that, occasioned joy in the apostle; but what added to it, and increased it the more abundantly, was the joy of Titus, which he had been a partaker of during his stay with them:

because his spirit was refreshed by you all; not by one only, or a few, but by all the members of the church; he was received by them with great respect, provided for in a liberal manner, treated with all humanity and courteousness; and, above all, his mind was eased and filled with an unexpected pleasure, to find them in such an agreeable frame of mind; so sensible of their neglect of duty, so ready to reform, so united in themselves, so affected to the apostle, and so determined to abide by the order, ordinances, and truths of the Gospel, against all false teachers.

2 Corinthians 7:14

Ver. 14. For if I have boasted anything to him of you,.... As of their faith in Christ, of their liberality to the saints, their affection for him, and obedience to him as children to a father:

I am not ashamed; since these all appeared to be true; as he must have been had they been otherwise:

but as we spake all things to you in truth; that is, our preaching among you was true; all the doctrines we delivered to you were truth; our word was not yea and nay, but uniform, and all of a piece:

even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth; some understand this of the boasting which the apostle made concerning Titus, in his epistle to them, highly commending him, and which they found to be in all things exactly true; but the words rather design his boasting of the Corinthians unto Titus, which was found to be true by him.

2 Corinthians 7:15

Ver. 15. And his inward affection is more abundant toward you,.... Or "his bowels"; denoting the tenderness of his heart, the strength of his affections, which inwardly and to a very great degree moved towards them; especially

whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all; to him, and to me by him; to the advice and orders given, which were so readily, cheerfully, and universally complied with; and

how with fear and trembling you received him; that is, with great humility and respect, with much deference to him: considering his character as a minister of the Gospel, and as one sent by the apostle to them, they embraced him with great marks of honour and esteem; for this is not to be understood of any inward slavish fear or dread of mind, or trembling of body at the sight of him, and because he came to know their estate, and with reproofs from the apostle to them.

2 Corinthians 7:16

Ver. 16. I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things. That I can speak freely and boldly to you, reprove, admonish, and advise you, since you take it all in good part, as I design it; that I can confidently speak in your favour, boast of your love and obedience, which is found upon trial and by experience to be truth; and that I can promise myself every good thing from you, that is proper to ask of you, and lies in your power to perform; which he says partly to commend them for their past conduct, and partly to pave the way for what he had to say to them, concerning making a collection for the poor saints.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Corinthians 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS 8

In this chapter the apostle stirs up the Corinthians, to make a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, by a variety of arguments, and gives a commendation of Titus and some other brethren, who were appointed messengers to them on that account. He first sets before them the example of the Macedonian churches, who had made a liberal collection for the above persons; which the apostle calls the grace of God, and says it was bestowed on them; and it was not the generosity of one church only, but of many, and so worthy of imitation, **2Co 8:1** which generosity of theirs he illustrates by the circumstances and condition they were in, they were not only in great affliction, but in deep poverty; and yet contributed with abundance of joy, and in great liberality, **2Co 8:2** yea, this they did not only to the utmost of their power, and according to the best of their abilities; but their will was beyond their power, they had hearts to do more than they were able; and what they did, they did of themselves without being asked and urged to it, **2Co 8:3** nay, they even entreated the apostle and his fellow ministers to take the money they had collected, and either send or carry it to the poor saints at Jerusalem, and minister it to them themselves, **2Co 8:4** and which was beyond the expectation of the apostle, who knew their case; and yet it was but acting like themselves, who at first gave themselves to the Lord and to the apostles by the will of God, **2Co 8:5** and this forwardness and readiness of the Macedonian churches, or the churches themselves put the apostle upon desiring Titus to go to Corinth, and finish the collection he had begun; and which carries in it more arguments than one to excite them to this service; as that this was not only at the request of the apostle, but of the Macedonian churches, that Titus should be desired to go on this business; and besides the thing had been begun, and it would be scandalous not to finish it, **2Co 8:6** and next the apostle argues from their abounding in the exercise of other graces, which he enumerates, that they would also in this, **2Co 8:7** for to excel in one grace, and not in another, was not to their praise and honour; however, he did not urge them to this in an imperious way, and to show and exercise his authority; but was moved unto it through the generous example of others, and that there might be a proof of their sincere love and affection to the Lord, and to his people, **2Co 8:8** but as what he wisely judged would have the greatest weight with them; he proposes to them the example of Christ, and instances in his great love to them; who though was rich became poor for them, that they might be enriched through his poverty, **2Co 8:9** and therefore should freely contribute to his poor saints. Moreover, inasmuch as the apostle did not take upon him to command, only give advice, he should be regarded; and that the rather because what he advised to was expedient for them, would be for their good, and be profitable to them; as well as prevent reproach and scandal, which would follow should they not finish what they had begun so long ago, **2Co 8:10** wherefore he exhorts them cheerfully to perform what they had shown a readiness to; and points out unto them the rule and measure of it, that it should be out of their own, what they were possessed of, and according to their ability; which be it more or less would be acceptable to God, **2Co 8:11** for his meaning was not that some should be eased and others burdened; but that all should communicate according to what they had, **2Co 8:13** to which he stimulates them from the hope of the recompence of reward, whenever it should be otherwise with them than it was, and things should change both with them who communicated, and with them to whom they communicated; or this was the end proposed by the apostle, that in the issue there might be an equality between them, **2Co 8:14** which he confirms and illustrates by the distribution of the manna to the Israelites, who had an equal measure, **2Co 8:15** as appears from what is said, Ex 16:18 next the apostle enters upon a commendation of the messengers, that were appointed and ordered to be sent to them upon this errand, and begins with Titus; and gives thanks to God, that had put it into his heart to be so solicitous about this matter, **2Co 8:16** and praises him for his forwardness in undertaking it of his own accord, and in performing it without being urged to it, **2Co 8:17** and next he commends another person, whose name is not mentioned, who was sent along with him; a person of note and fame in all the churches, **2Co 8:18** and who had the honour to be chosen by the churches for this service, **2Co 8:19** and the reason why more persons than one were sent, was to prevent any suspicion of converting the collections to wrong purposes; and to preserve and secure a good character, a character of honesty before God and men, **2Co 8:20**. To these two a third was added, whose name also is not mentioned, and who had been proved to be a diligent man, and appeared more so in this matter upon the apostle's confidence in the Corinthians, that they would readily attend to the service these were sent to promote, **2Co 8:22** and thus having separately given the characters of these men, they are all of them commended again; Titus, as the apostle's partner and fellow helper; and the other brethren as the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ, **2Co 8:23** and the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to the members of the church at Corinth, to give these messengers a proof of their love to the poor saints before all the churches, and make it appear that he had not boasted of them in vain, **2Co 8:24**.

Ver. 1. Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God,.... The apostle having said everything that was proper to conciliate the minds and affections of the Corinthians to him, and the matter in difference being adjusted to the satisfaction of all parties concerned; he proposes what he had wisely postponed till all was over, the making a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem; which he enforces by the example of the Macedonian churches, the churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, &c. He addresses them in a kind and tender manner, under the endearing appellation of "brethren", being so in a spiritual relation; and takes the liberty to inform them of the goodness of God to some of their sister churches; "we do you to wit", or "we make known unto you". The phrase "to wit" is an old English one, and almost obsolete, and signifies to acquaint with, inform of, make known, or give knowledge of anything. The thing informed of here, "is the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia"; by which is meant, not any of the blessings of grace common to all the saints, such as regeneration, justification, adoption, forgiveness of sin, and the like; but beneficence, liberality, or a liberal disposition to do good to others, called "the grace of God"; because it sprung from thence, as all good works do when performed aright; they were assisted in it by the grace of God; and it was the love and favour of God in Christ, which was the engaging motive, the leading view, which drew them on to it. This was

bestowed upon them, not merited, it was grace and free grace; God may give persons ever so much of this world's goods, yet if he does not give them a spirit of generosity, a liberal disposition, they will make no use of it for the good of others: and this was bestowed

on the churches of Macedonia; not on a few leading men among them, but upon all the members of these churches in general; and not upon one church, but upon many; a spirit of liberality was in general diffused among them, and this is proposed for imitation. Examples have great influence, and the examples of many the greater; too many follow a multitude to do evil; here the example of many, even of many churches, is proposed in order to be followed to do good, to exercise acts of beneficence and goodness, in a free generous way to saints in distress; which as it is here called, "the grace of God", so in some following verses, "the gift, the same grace, and this grace", **2Co 8:4** agreeably to the Hebrew word dox, which signifies "grace" and "free bounty"; and is used for doing good, or for beneficence, which the Jews call Mydox twlymg "a performance of kind and bountiful actions": which are done freely, and for which a person expects no return from the person to whom he does them: and this they distinguish from xqdu, "alms", after this manner {t};

"an alms (they say) is exercised towards the living, beneficence towards the living and the dead; alms is used to the poor, beneficence both to the rich and poor; alms is performed by a man's substance, beneficence both by body and substance."

{t} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 3.

2 Corinthians 8:2

Ver. 2. How that in a great trial of affliction,.... The apostle proceeds to show the condition these churches were in when, and the manner in which, they contributed to the relief of others. They were in affliction: they received the Gospel at first in much affliction, as did the church at Thessalonica, which was one of them; and afterwards suffered much from their countrymen for the profession of it, by reproaches, persecutions, imprisonments, confiscation of goods, &c. They were under trying afflictions, which tried their faith and patience, and in many of them. Now for persons in prosperity, when all things go well with them, to be liberal is no such great matter; but for persons in adversity, under trying dispensations of Providence, amidst many afflictive ones to communicate generously to the relief of others, is something very remarkable, and worthy of notice and imitation, which was the case of these churches: for notwithstanding this,

the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality; so that it appears likewise that they were not only in great afflictions, but in deep poverty; had but an handful of meal in the barrel, and a little oil in the cruse, their purses almost empty, and their coffers almost exhausted; they had gotten to the bottom of their substance, had but very little left; and yet freely gave, with joy, even with an abundance of it. The allusion seems to be to the words of David, in 1Ch 22:14 now behold, yyneb which the Septuagint render by kata ptwceian mou, "according to my poverty, I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold", &c. for by "the abundance of their joy", is not so much meant the joy they felt in the midst of their afflictions, so that they could glory in them, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, as the cheerfulness of their spirits in contributing to the necessities of others; glad at heart they were that they had hearts to do good, and an opportunity of doing it; which they gladly laid hold on, observing the divine rule, "he that sheweth mercy", let him do it "with cheerfulness": and this they did, considering the small pittance they were possessed of, very largely; for though their poverty was deep, and their purses low, their hearts were large and full, and their hands ready to communicate; so that their poverty "abounded to the riches of their liberality": though their poverty was great, their liberality was rich and large; though it might be but little they gave in quantity, it was much in quality, much in liberality; like the poor widow, who, of her want and penury, cast in more than all the rich besides, not in quantity, but in liberality; they only giving some, and a disproportionate part, she her all.

2 Corinthians 8:3

Ver. 3. For to [their] power, I bear record,.... They gave according to their ability, to the utmost of it, which is the most that can be desired, or be given; for no man can give more than he has, nor is he required to do more than he is able:

yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; not that they did or could do beyond their power; but they were "willing" beyond their power; their hearts were larger than their purses; they would gladly have done more than they had ability to do; and to this the apostle bears testimony to give it credit, which otherwise might have been called in question: and it is to be observed, that these churches communicated in this cheerful manner and large way, considering their circumstances, to the utmost of their ability, "of themselves"; unasked, not having been put upon, pressed, and urged to such a service; for persons to give when they are asked, especially when they do it readily, at once, without demurring upon it, and with cheerfulness, is much; but to give unasked discovers a very generous and beneficent disposition: this is reckoned by the Jews as one of the excellencies in giving of alms {u},

"when a man gives into the hands of another lavyv Mdwq, "before he asks"; and the next degree to this is, when he gives to him after he asks; and the next to this, who gives less than is proper, but with a cheerful countenance."

{u} Maimon. Hileh. Mattanot Anayim, c. 10. sect. 11, 12, 13.

2 Corinthians 8:4

Ver. 4. Praying us with much entreaty,.... They not only gave freely, being unasked by the apostles; but they sought to them, and earnestly entreated them,

that they would receive the gift; the beneficence, what they had so freely and generously collected: and

the fellowship of the ministering to the saints; what they had communicated for the service of the poor saints at Jerusalem, in which they testified their having and holding fellowship with the churches of Christ; and that they would receive it at their hands, and take it upon them, and carry it to Jerusalem, and distribute to the poor saints there, as should seem to them most proper and convenient; which they accordingly agreed to; see Ro 15:25.

2 Corinthians 8:5

Ver. 5. And this they did not as we hoped,.... All this was unexpected by the apostles, who knew their great affliction and deep poverty, and therefore could not have hoped for such a collection from them; or that they would have desired the apostle to have ministered it for them:

but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God; the sense of which is not barely, or only, that they committed themselves to the care of Providence in all their afflictions and poverty, trusting in God that he would provide for them for time to come, and therefore even in their strait circumstances gave liberally; and were so much under the direction of the apostles, God so disposing their minds, that they were willing to do or give anything that they should say was proper; yea, were very willing that some of their number should leave their habitations and families to accompany them, in forwarding this good work elsewhere: but the apostle seems to have respect to what these persons did at first conversion, when they gave themselves to Christ, to be saved by him, and him alone; and to serve him to the uttermost, in everything, he should signify to be his will; and when they joined themselves to the churches of Christ, and put themselves under the care, government, and direction of the apostles, who were over the churches in the Lord: and therefore though what the members of these churches collected, was very wonderful and beyond expectation; yet when it is considered that these persons had long ago given their whole selves, their all to Christ, had committed all into his hands, and devoted themselves entirely to his service; and had declared their subjection to his ministers as servants under him, and to his word and ordinances as ministered by them; it need not be so much wondered at, that they should be so liberal in giving away their worldly substance for the relief of Christ's poor members, when they had given their precious souls, their immortal all, and had committed the salvation of them entirely to him. Giving themselves to Christ, in this sense, supposes that they had a true sight and apprehension of their state and condition by nature, how sinful they were, and lost and undone in themselves; that they were destitute of a righteousness, and unable to obtain one by the works of the law; that they were in hopeless and helpless circumstances, as considered in themselves; that they were diseased from head to foot, and could not cure themselves; that they were dead in law, and liable to the curse and condemnation of it; for till men see themselves in such a case they will never give themselves to Christ, or betake themselves to him to be saved by him. Moreover, this supposes some knowledge of him as God's ordinance for salvation, as the Saviour of the Father's appointing and sending; of him, as having effected it by his obedience and death; of his being the only Saviour, a suitable one, both able and willing to save to the uttermost, even the chief of sinners that come to God by him. It is expressive of faith in Christ; of seeing the Son and the fulness of grace and salvation in him, and of going to him for it; of staying, resting, leaning, and relying upon him, venturing on him, committing all into his hands, and trusting him with all and for all. It denotes subjection to him, as their husband, to whom they give themselves as his spouse and bride, and consent to be the Lord's in a conjugal relation; and submission to him in all his offices, as a prophet to be taught and instructed by him, as a priest to be washed in his blood, and justified by his righteousness, to which they heartily submit, and as their Lord and King to the sceptre of his kingdom, the laws of his house, and ordinances of his Gospel; for they are made a willing people, not only to be saved by him, but to serve him in body and soul, and with all they have; as it is but right they should, since he has given himself, his all, for them. Giving themselves up to the apostles, signifies not a surrender of themselves to them as lords over God's heritage, to be governed and ruled over in a tyrannical and arbitrary way; but a submitting of themselves to them, as Christ's servants set over them in the Lord, whilst they minister the word and administer the ordinances, according to the will of Christ; owning them as their fathers, or instructors, and guides, and as watchmen and overseers placed in and over the churches, for their spiritual welfare: all which is,

by the will of God: as that poor sensible sinners should give up themselves to Christ, to be saved by him, and serve him; and that they should join themselves to the churches, and be subject to the care, teachings, and government of his servants in his house.

2 Corinthians 8:6

Ver. 6. Insomuch that we desired Titus,.... Observing the very great readiness, cheerfulness, and liberality of the poor Macedonians in this matter, the apostles could do no other than desire Titus to forward, hasten, and accomplish a like liberal contribution among the Corinthians; or the sense is, that the Macedonians not only prayed with much entreaty, as in **2Co 8:4** that the apostle would be pleased to take their collection, and send or carry it to Jerusalem; but also that they would entreat Titus,

that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also; that is, that as he had already moved this affair to the Corinthians while he was with them, and had made some progress in it, though what, through one thing or another, it had been retarded, and lay in some measure neglected; that he might be desired to go again, on purpose to complete so good a work, so acceptable to God, and so useful to the poor saints; which carries in it a new and strong argument to stir up the Corinthians to this service; since they had not only the example of the Macedonian churches, but it was even at their request that Titus was desired to go upon this errand; and to this sense read the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

2 Corinthians 8:7

Ver. 7. Therefore as ye abound in everything,.... In all gifts and every grace, in the use and exercise of them, insomuch that they were enriched in everything, and wanted nothing; see **1Co 1:5**, that is here expressed in general, is explained by particulars following:

in faith: both in the doctrine of faith, which they had received and professed, held fast to, and abode by; yea, they abounded in the knowledge of it, zeal for it, and thankfulness to God on account of it; and in the grace of faith, not an historical one, nor the faith of miracles, but that which is peculiar to God's elect, is the gift of his grace and the work of his Spirit, which has Christ for its object, and works by love; in this they abounded, inasmuch as they had a large measure of it, grew in it, were full of it, and were much in the exercise thereof:

in utterance, or "speech": meaning either the gift of speaking with tongues, which many in this church had; or the gift; of understanding and explaining the word of God with much freedom; or a liberty of mind and speech to declare their faith in Christ, and make an ingenuous confession of it to others:

in knowledge; of God and of Christ, and of the truths of the Gospel:

and in all diligence: their ministers were diligent in preaching the Gospel, the people in hearing the word, and attending on ordinances, and both studiously careful to keep up the discipline of the church; and very industrious to discharge the several duties of religion, and to assist one another, both in things temporal and spiritual:

and in your love to us: the apostles and ministers of the word, whom they loved, esteemed, and honoured for their works' sake: and since they were so eminent for these graces, and the exercise of them, the apostle exhorts them to liberality to the poor saints;

see that ye abound in this grace also; for as faith, utterance, knowledge, diligence, and love to Christ's ministers are graces; so also is kindness shown to Christ's poor members, it is a gift of God's grace, cannot be rightly exercised without the assistance of his grace, has for its objects men who have received the grace of God, and will be rewarded with a reward of grace; persons eminent for the several graces of the Spirit of God, and the exercise of them, it may be not only desired, but expected from them, that they should abound in the exercise of beneficence to the poor. This is another argument exciting to that good work.

2 Corinthians 8:8

Ver. 8. I speak not by commandment,.... Either of God, who has not fixed the certain times when, or certain sums which persons are to give, and other circumstances, which are left to discretion; but in general has signified it as his will, that those in necessity are to be relieved by such who are in ability to do it: or as an apostle, he did not speak in an imperious manner, extorting from them a collection, or laying his apostolical injunctions upon them to make one; he did not go about to force or oblige them to it, for men in such cases must act willingly, and what they do, must do of their own accord with cheerfulness, and not through constraint or grudgingly:

but by occasion of the forwardness of others; or "through carefulness for others"; what moved the apostle to propose this matter to the Corinthians, and exhort them to it, were either the forwardness of the Macedonians, cheerfully contributing in the midst of their poverty, and their urgent solicitations that the same good work might go on elsewhere, or else the very great care and concern that he himself had for the poor saints at Jerusalem: it was not therefore to show his apostolical authority, that he sent Titus to them to finish this service; but he was stirred up hereunto, partly by the bounty and solicitations of others, and partly by bowels of compassion within himself, and concern in his own mind for the poor saints; and also, as he adds,

to prove the sincerity of your love; to God, to Christ, to his ministers, and to the saints, particularly the poor; that their love might appear to be true, genuine, hearty, and real to others, to all men as well as to them the apostles.

2 Corinthians 8:9

Ver. 9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus,.... This is a new argument, and a very forcible one to engage to liberality, taken from the wonderful grace and love of Christ, displayed in his state of humiliation towards his people; which is well known to all them that have truly believed in Christ; of this they are not and cannot be ignorant, his love, good will, and favour are so manifest; there are such glaring proofs of it in his incarnation, sufferings, and death, that leave no room for any to doubt of it:

that though he was rich; in the perfections of his divine nature, having the fulness of the Godhead in him, all that the Father has, and so equal to him; such as eternity, immutability, infinity and immensity, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, &c. in the works of his hands, which reach to everything that is made, the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that in them are, things visible and invisible; in his universal empire and dominion over all creature; and in those large revenues of glory, which are due to him from them all; which riches of his are underived from another, incommunicable to another, and cannot be lost:

yet for your sakes he became poor; by assuming human nature, with all its weaknesses and imperfections excepting sin; he appeared in it not as a lord, but in the form of a servant; he endured in it a great deal of reproach and shame, and at last death itself; not that by becoming man he ceased to be God, or lost his divine perfections, thought these were much hid and covered from the view of man; and in his human nature he became the reverse of what he is in his divine nature, namely, finite and circumscriptible, weak and infirm, ignorant of some things, and mortal; in which nature also he was exposed to much meanness and outward poverty; he was born of poor parents, had no liberal education, was brought up to a trade, had not where to lay his head, was ministered to by others of their substance, and had nothing to bequeath his mother at his death, but commits her to the care of one of his disciples; all which fulfilled the prophecies of him, that he should be ld and yne, "poor" and "low", Ps 41:1. The persons for whom he became so, were not the angels, but elect men; who were sinners and ungodly persons, and were thereby become bankrupts and beggars: the end for which he became poor for them was,

that they through his poverty might be rich; not in temporals, but in spirituals; and by his obedience, sufferings, and death in his low estate, he has paid all their debts, wrought out a robe of righteousness, rich and adorned with jewels, with which he clothes them, and through his blood and sacrifice has made them kings and priests unto God. They are enriched by him with the graces of his Spirit; with the truths of the Gospel, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; with himself and all that he has; with the riches of grace here, and of glory hereafter. These are communicable from him, though unsearchable, and are solid and substantial, satisfying, lasting, and for ever. Now if this grace of Christ will not engage to liberality with cheerfulness, nothing will.

2 Corinthians 8:10

Ver. 10. And herein I give my advice,.... As Daniel did to Nebuchadnezzar, **Da 4:27**. The apostle did not choose to make use of his apostolical authority, or give orders, as he sometimes did in such cases; he did not think fit to speak by way of commandment, obliging them to what they ought to do willingly; looking upon this the most prudential step, and wisest method he could take in order to succeed, only to give his judgment in this matter, as what would be best for them, and most conducive to their real good:

for this is expedient for you; most versions read it, "profitable"; doing acts of beneficence is profitable to persons, as to things temporal, God usually blessing such with a greater affluence of the things of life, and which indeed is often promised; and is also profitable with respect to things spiritual, for if God does not make it up to them in temporal enjoyments, yet with his presence, the discoveries of his love, the joys of his salvation, and an increase of every grace; so Gaius, that hospitable man to the apostle, and all Christian strangers, was in much spiritual health, and a prosperous condition in his soul, when but in an ill state with respect to his body: yea, such a conduct is profitable in relation to things eternal; for as it springs from the grace of God, and men are assisted therein by it, and is exercised towards persons that have received it, it will be rewarded with a reward of grace; though it may be, the apostle here does not so much argue from the utility, as the decency of it in the Corinthians;

who, says he,

have began before, a year ago, not only to do, but also to be forward, or "willing": it is hard to say whether the apostle designs to commend or reprove them; and indeed, it seems as if there was a mixture of praise and dispraise in this passage; it was in their favour that they had begun before, even a year ago, and were willing and forward of themselves to this good work; yea, were the first that set it on foot, and so were an example to the Macedonian churches, and others; but then this was against them, that the other churches, which began later than they, had finished before them; whether this their charity was obstructed, as some have thought, through some affliction and persecution that befell them, which if it appeared would much excuse them; or rather it was neglected through lukewarmness and indolence; wherefore the apostle gives his sentiments, that to save their own credit, it was expedient for them to finish what they had begun; for otherwise, as their boasting of them would be in vain, so they would expose themselves to contempt and incur disgrace; and it was not only proper that they should do this, but do it willingly, and with much cheerfulness, for that is meant by being "forward" or "willing"; that they not only do it, but do it with a good will, which they at first discovered.

2 Corinthians 8:11

Ver. 11. Now therefore perform the doing of it,.... This is a conclusion from the former advice, to finish what was readily willed; for as it is not enough to do a thing, unless it is done cheerfully and willingly, so it is not sufficient to express a good will to such service as is here called to, without doing it; both should go together:

that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also; in some cases there is neither power nor will to do good; in others there is will, when there is not a power; but in this case of beneficence to the poor saints, as there was a willingness declared, there was an ability in the Corinthians to perform; they had it in the power of their hands, more or less, to act: and the apostle in the last clause of this verse points out the rule and measure of their liberality,

out of that which you have; according to your abilities, and as God has prospered you; and with which he shuts up the mouths of all objectors, rich and poor: should the rich say, would you have us give away all we have? the answer is, no; but "out of that which you have", something of it, according as you are able; should the poorer sort say, we are in mean circumstances, we have families to provide for, and can spare little, and what we can do is so trifling, that it is not worth giving or accepting; the reply is, give "out of that which you have", be it less or more; it follows,

2 Corinthians 8:12

Ver. 12. For if there be first a willing mind,.... If what is done springs from a truly noble, generous spirit, a spirit of bountifulness and liberality; and is given cheerfully and freely, and according to a man's ability; the quantity matters not, whether it be more or less:

it is accepted; both of God and man:

according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. The widow's mite was as acceptable, and more so, than all the rich men cast into the treasury; a cup of cold water given to a prophet, in the name of a prophet, is taken notice of by God, and shall have its reward. The present sent by the Philippians to the Apostle Paul, and which perhaps was not very large, was "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God", **Php 4:18**.

2 Corinthians 8:13

Ver. 13. For I mean not that other men be eased and you burdened. Referring either to the givers; and that either to the richer and meaner sort in this church; the apostle's sense being, not to put the whole burden of the collection upon some only, whilst others were excused doing little or nothing; but that everyone should give according to his ability; or to other churches in poorer circumstances; and the apostle's meaning was, not that these churches by reason of their meanness should be entirely free from this service, as it was plain they were not, by the instance of the Macedonians; and that the whole be devolved upon the Corinthian church, and others that were rich; but that all should contribute according to their circumstances: or this may refer to the persons given to, and for whom this beneficence was asked; for the words may be rendered, "for not that there may be ease", or relaxation "to others, and to you affliction" or straitness; that is, his meaning was, not that there should be such a contribution raised for these poor saints at Jerusalem, that they should live in ease and great abundance; whilst their benefactors, through an over abundant generosity to them, were straitened, and their families reduced to great difficulties; this was what was far from his intentions.

2 Corinthians 8:14

Ver. 14. But by an equality,.... All that he meant was, that there might be an equality both in givers and receivers, proportioned to their several circumstances and stations of life:

that now at this time; which was a very necessitous time at Jerusalem, there being a famine there, and their common stock exhausted:

your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want; which respects either the different abilities of givers at different times; and that whereas now the church at Corinth was rich, and wealthy, and had great abundance of the things of this world, they in this general collection were able to make up the deficiencies of other churches; and so should it ever be their case, as it might be, that they should be reduced, and these other churches increased, and enjoy a large abundance, they might hereafter in their turn supply what would be wanting in them: or else the persons given to; and the sense is, that should they ever change circumstances, as it was not impossible that they that were now rich should become poor, and they that were poor become rich; then as their abundance had been a supply to the wants of others, the abundance of others in their turn would be a supply to their wants; so that the argument is taken from the hope of retribution, in case of such vicissitudes; see **Lu 6:38** his view was,

that there may be equality; either that in time to come an equal return may be made, should it be necessary; or that at present some sort of equality might be observed between the rich and poor; that the rich should so distribute as not to leave themselves without a proper support, according to their station of life; and yet so freely communicate, that the poor may not be without food and raiment, suitable to their lower sphere of life.

2 Corinthians 8:15

Ver. 15. As it is written,.... In Ex 16:18

he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; respect is had to the history of the manna, a sort of food God prepared for the Israelites in the wilderness; and which were gathered by them every morning, by some more, by others less; and yet when it came to be measured, every man had his "omer" and no more, one had nothing over, and the other not at all deficient; each man had his proper and equal quantity; and which, by the Jews {w}, is looked upon as a miracle that was wrought: many useful instructions may be learned from this history, as that as there was a general provision made by God for the Israelites, good and bad, and the mixed multitude that came from Egypt with them; so there is an universal providence of God which reaches to all creatures, even to the vegetable, to the birds of the air, and beasts of the field, to all the individuals of human nature, and to the bad among them as well as the good; though to the latter it is more special, who of all men have the least reason to be distrustful and uneasy: and as that provision was daily, so is that providential supply which all creatures have from God; he is to be trusted to, and depended on daily; application is to be made to him every day for daily bread; nor should there be any anxious concern for the morrow. Moreover, as the Israelites, though the manna was prepared for them, were to rise in the morning and gather it before the sun waxed hot; so notwithstanding the providence of God, and the daily care he takes of men, yet diligence, industry, and the use of means are highly commendable. And as some gathered more and others less, yet upon measuring it with the "omer", there was an entire equality, one had not more nor less than another; so upon the winding up of things in Providence, such as have gathered much riches in the morning of life, in the evening of death will have nothing over, nor anything to show more than others; and they that have gathered little will appear to have had no lack; both will have had food and raiment, and no more, only with this difference, some will have enjoyed a richer diet and clothing, and others a meaner, and both suitable to their circumstances in life; which may instruct us to depend upon divine Providence, daily to be content with such things as we have, and to make a proper use of what is gathered, whether more or less, and not only for ourselves, but for the good of others. This discovers the egregious folly of such, who are anxiously concerned for the gathering and amassing much worldly riches together; which when they have done, they lay it up for themselves, and do not make use of it for common good, neither for the good of civil society, nor the interest of religion. Let it be observed, that those Israelites who from a selfish covetous disposition, and distrust of divine Providence, left of their manna till the morning, "it bred worms and stank": which was by the just judgment of God inflicted as a punishment; for otherwise it was capable of being kept longer. So when covetous mortals lay up for themselves for time to come, and do not communicate to the necessities of others, such a practice breeds and produces worms, moth, and rottenness in their estates, which gradually decrease, or are suddenly taken from them, or they from them: such an evil disposition is the root and cause of many immoralities in life; it greatly prejudices professors of religion in things spiritual; and it tends to their everlasting ruin, to breed that worm of an evil conscience that will never die, and to render their persons stinking and abominable, both in the sight of God and men.

{w} Jarchi & Aben Ezra in Exod. xvi. 18. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 76. 3.

2 Corinthians 8:16

Ver. 16. But thanks be to God,.... The apostle proceeds to give an account of the persons and their characters, who were employed in making this collection at Corinth for the poor saints, and begins with Titus; and the rather because he had been already concerned in setting afoot that good work among them; and gives thanks to God,

which, says he,

put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you, by "earnest care" is meant that very great carefulness, solicitude, and diligence, Titus had shown in stirring them up to a liberal contribution; and which was the same that he had expressed in the arguments just now used by him, to engage them in the same service; and this care, as it was a very earnest and hearty one, so he suggests that it was more for them, than for the sake of the poor; the performance of acts of beneficence and liberality tending more to the advantage and account of the giver than of the receiver: and he further intimates, that these good motions in the heart of Titus were not merely natural, or the effects of human power and free will, but were of God, as every good thing is; they were wrought in him by the Spirit of God, and sprung from the grace of God, and therefore the apostle returns thanks to God for the same; and the mention of this could not fail of carrying weight with it, and of having some influence on the minds of the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 8:17

Ver. 17. For indeed, he accepted the exhortation,.... The Macedonians besought the apostle with much entreaty to give unto him, **2Co 8:4** or which being moved by their example, they gave unto him, namely, that he would go and finish what he had already begun; and accordingly he did not refuse, but readily accepted the exhortation: yea, not only so,

but being more forward; than was known or could have been expected; which shows that this was put into his heart by God, before it was moved unto him; so that if he had never been asked, or exhorted hereunto, he would have gone of himself:

of his own accord he went unto you; so great is his care of you; so great his love unto you so willing was he to come again and pay another visit: and especially on this account, where he had before been treated with so much respect and kindness. Titus having been at Corinth already, and being well known there, the apostle forbears saying anything more in his commendation.

2 Corinthians 8:18

Ver. 18. And we have sent with him the brother,.... The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "our brother"; and one of Stephens's copies, "your brother": who this brother was, is not certain; some think it was Luke the evangelist, the companion of the apostle in his travels:

whose praise is in the Gospel, throughout all the churches; being known and highly commended by all the churches, for the Gospel he wrote; but it is not certain that Luke as yet had wrote his Gospel; and much less that it was so much known at present among the churches; and besides, this brother's praise seems to be on account of his preaching the Gospel, and not writing one: others think Barnabas is intended, who was chosen and sent out by the churches along with the apostle; but these in a short time separated from each other, nor do we read of their coming together again: others are of opinion, that Apollos is designed, who was a very eloquent preacher, and of whom the apostle had given the Corinthians an intimation in his former epistle, that he would come to them at a convenient time; but to him is objected, that he never was chosen of the churches, to travel with the apostle on such an account as here mentioned: others would have it that Silas or Silvanus is meant, who was a very constant companion of the apostle, and of whom he makes mention in most of his epistles; and others have made no doubt of it, but John Mark is here meant, who not only wrote a Gospel, but was an excellent preacher of it, and was chosen by the churches to go along with Paul and Barnabas; and though there was some distaste taken to him by Paul, he was afterwards reconciled to him, and for his profitableness in the ministry was greatly desired by him; but after all, it is difficult to determine who it was, nor is it of any great moment: a "brother" he was; being not only a regenerate person, but a preacher of the Gospel; a brother in the ministry, and "one whose praise was in the Gospel"; greatly admired, and much commended, for his excellent talent in preaching the Gospel; and for this he was famous "throughout all the churches"; a very great commendation indeed; but this is not all, it follows,

2 Corinthians 8:19

Ver. 19. And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches,.... Not only famous for preaching the Gospel, but he was also appointed by the joint suffrages of the churches, which were made by the lifting up or stretching out of the hand, as the word here used signifies; this brother was not chosen to this service by a few private persons, or by a single church only, but by several churches; which does not refer to the churches at Jerusalem and Antioch, as if the apostles were appointed, and others were appointed by these churches to travel with them, in order to collect money for the poor saints at Jerusalem; of which no mention is any where made, only of their being sent out by them to preach the Gospel. James, Cephas, and John indeed, when they gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that they might go to the Heathen, desired them to "remember the poor"; **Ga 2:9** but these were not the churches. The church at Antioch did collect for the brethren in Judea, at the time of the famine among them, and sent their bounty by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, which seems to be the case here. This brother was chosen by the churches who collected, and not by the churches in Judea, for whom the collections were made; for it was usual, and what was right and proper, that the churches chose whom they thought fit to carry their liberality to Jerusalem; see 1Co 16:3. Now this brother had the honour to be chosen by these churches,

to travel, says the apostle,

with us, with this grace; bounty or beneficence of the churches, what they had freely and liberally contributed for the supply of the poor, from a principle of grace, and by the assistance of it;

which is administered by us; not given by the apostles, but collected by them; or what was procured by their means, in the several churches to whom they had moved it, and by proper arguments had excited them to it, with which they cheerfully complied: and this was done on a two fold account, both

to the glory of the same Lord: Jesus Christ, who is the one Lord over all; the same Lord of the apostles, and the church at Corinth; the same Lord of the Corinthians, and the Macedonian and other churches; and the same Lord of the poor saints at Jerusalem, and the rich members of the several churches that contributed to them: and also to

the declaration of your ready mind; or to stir up their ready mind to increase it and promote it in them, as well to make it manifest, and that it might appear to others, how readily and freely they came into this service; so that the apostle's concern in this administration was not from any sinister and selfish ends; no, nor so much for the relief of the poor, though this was greatly designed, as for the glory of Christ, and the honour of his churches.

2 Corinthians 8:20

Ver. 20. Avoiding this, that no man should blame us,.... There is an allusion in these words to mariners, who, when sensible of danger, steer their course another way, in order to shun a rock and secure themselves. So the apostles being aware of the censorious spirits of some persons, and to prevent all suspicion of their converting any part of what they had collected to their own private use, sent Titus with it, a man of known probity and integrity; and he not by himself only, but another brother with him, one who had obtained a good report as a minister of the Gospel in all the churches: and, besides, was appointed not by the apostles, but by the churches themselves, to this service. This shows the good conduct, and great prudence of the apostle, and his care and solicitude that the ministry be not blamed; he knew he had many enemies, and how subject such are to suspicion and jealousy, when persons are intrusted with much, which was the case here; for it is added,

in this abundance which is administered by us: which designs the very large contributions which were made by the churches, through the means of the apostle's moving, exciting, and encouraging them thereunto; and which were committed to their care and trust, and at their entreaty they had accepted of.

2 Corinthians 8:21

Ver. 21. Providing for honest things,.... Or premeditating, forecasting, or considering before hand in the mind, things that are good, that are of good report among men, as well as accounted good by God; for it becomes professors of religion, and especially ministers of the Gospel, to be careful not only to exercise a good conscience towards God; but so to behave, that they may obtain and preserve the good opinion of men; for when they have once lost their credit and reputation among men, their ministry becomes in a great, measure useless; wherefore the apostle adds,

not only in the sight of the Lord: the same Lord as before, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is a diligent searcher of the hearts, and discerner of the thoughts, and observer of the ways and actions of all his people;

but also in the sight of men; not that the apostle affected a mere outside show, popular applause, and the praise of men; but was concerned lest any weak persons, by their conduct, should be stumbled and fall, the edification of any should be hindered, and their ministry become unprofitable.

2 Corinthians 8:22

Ver. 22. And we have sent with him our brother,.... This is a third person sent about this business. The apostle, in this, conformed to the customs of his nation; at least if he did not purposely do it, it agrees with the Jewish canons, which require three persons for the distribution of alms.

"The alms dish, (they say {x}) is by three; nor do they appoint hvlvm twxp Nyonrp "overseers" of it "less than three"."

Again, they say {y},

"the poor's chest is collected by two, hvlvb tqlxtmw "but distributed by three"; it is collected by two, because they do not appoint governors over a congregation less than two, and it is distributed by three, even as pecuniary judgments; but the alms dish is collected by three, and distributed by three; for the collection and distribution are alike:"

who this brother was, sent by the apostle with Titus and the other person, is as uncertain as the former. Some think it was Luke, others Apollos, others Timothy, others Sosthenes, others Epaenetus, others Silas, others Zenas the lawyer; a brother he was, and a very considerable character is given of him:

whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things; he was a very diligent and industrious man, and so fit for this service; he had been tried and proved, and was found to be so, not only once or twice, but oftentimes; and that not in a few instances, but in many; and in nothing did he ever show more diligence than in this matter:

but now much more diligent; than ever he had been in anything before:

upon the great confidence which I have in you; what doubled and increased this brother's diligence, and made him so eager for, and forward to this work, was, his observing the great confidence the apostle expressed of the very great readiness and liberality of the Corinthians; and which tacitly carries in it an argument exciting them thereunto: or this last clause may be read, "which he hath in you"; and so regards the confidence this brother had in them, which made him so ready to engage with, and join the other messengers.

{x} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 21. 1. {y} Misn. Peah, c. 8. sect. 7. & Jarchi, Maimonides & Bartenora, in ib. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 8. 2. Maimon. Mattanot Anayim, c. 9. sect. 5.

2 Corinthians 8:23

Ver. 23. Whether any do inquire of Titus,.... The apostle here sums up the characters of each of the above persons; as for Titus, he says,

he is my partner; he had been his companion in his travels, a partner with him in preaching the Gospel, as well as in the troubles and persecutions he had met with; and was one with whom he had had sweet communion and fellowship:

and fellow helper; or worker,

concerning you; he had been a joint instrument with him, either in their conversion, or consolation, and correction; or for their edification and instruction, and setting things right, which had been out of order among them:

or our brethren be inquired of; if their characters are asked after, as well as Titus's; by whom are meant not his fellow apostles, but the two brethren who were sent along with Titus; what may be truly said of them is,

they are the messengers of the churches; they were chosen and sent forth by the churches, not only to preach the Gospel, but particularly to take care of the ministration to the poor saints. They were messengers appointed by the churches for this service, and were also appointed to the service of the churches; respect seems to be had to the public minister in the synagogues, who was called rwbu
xylv, "the messenger of the congregation", or "church" {z}; whose business was to take care about the reading of the law and the prophets, to pray in public, and also to preach if there was no other; so we read {a} also of Nyd tyb yxwlv, "the messengers of the sanhedrim"; who were sent at the proper time to reap the sheaf of the first fruits, and of others who swore the high priest before the day of atonement {b}; and of hwum yxwlv, "the messengers of the commandment" {c}; who went to hear the exposition (of the traditions) and visit the head of the captivity:

and the glory of Christ: meaning either that the churches were the glory of

Christ, in whom he is glorified, where his glory is seen, and his presence enjoyed; or rather the messengers of them, on whom the image of Christ was stamped, who faithfully performed the work of Christ, in all things sought his glory and not their own; and in and by whom his glory was displayed, and held forth to others.

{z} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 37. 2. Tosephot Beracot, fol. 34. 1. Misn. Beracot, c. 5. sect. 5. {a} Misn. Menachot, c. 10. 3. {b} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. 5. {c} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 26. 1.

2 Corinthians 8:24

Ver. 24. Wherefore show ye to them, and before the churches,.... This is the conclusion of the apostle, upon summing up the characters of these messengers; and his exhortation is, that since they were persons of so much note and worth, as they ought to be received with great marks of respect and affection, so they would take care evidently to make it appear to them who were sent by the churches, and before the churches, or before them who represented the churches; or so as that it might be known by the churches from whence they came, when they returned with their report; or be evident to the churches in Judea, when their liberality should be brought to them:

the proof of your love; to Christ and his poor members, how hearty and sincere it was:

and of our boasting on your behalf; how willing and forward they were to this good work, and how liberal they would be.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Corinthians 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS 9

The apostle proceeds in this chapter upon the same subject, the making a collection for the poor saints; gives the reason why he sent the brethren to them on this account; directs to the manner in which this service should be performed, and subjoins some fresh arguments to encourage them to it. As for the ministration itself, he suggests, it might seem needless to say any more about it, since he had said so much already in the preceding chapter, **2Co 9:1** and especially seeing they were so forward to it, and were even prepared for it a year ago; of which the apostle had boasted to the Macedonian churches, **2Co 9:2** and whereas it might be objected, that since there was such an inclination in them to this good work, why did he send these brethren to them? the reason of this he gives, **2Co 9:3** that they might get their collection ready against the time he came, lest should any of the Macedonians come along with him, and this collection not be made, his glorying of them would be in vain, and both he and they would be ashamed; wherefore he sent them before hand to prevent everything of this kind, and that their collection might appear to be not done in a covetous niggardly way, but bountifully and cheerfully, **2Co 9:5** which manner he directs unto, and encourages from the advantages of it, under the metaphorical phrases of sowing and reaping, intimating, that as a man sows, so he reaps; or in proportion to his giving, is he blessed, **2Co 9:6** wherefore he advises to give heartily, freely, and cheerfully, and that from this consideration, because cheerful giving is acceptable to God, being like himself, **2Co 9:7** who, as he loves, so he rewards the cheerful giver; and as he is able to give him abundance, so he does, whereby he is more qualified and fitted for such liberal service, **2Co 9:8**. And this is confirmed by a passage of Scripture cited out of Ps 112:9 showing, that he that gives bountifully to the poor is ever regarded by the Lord, **2Co 9:9** and which is further proved from the general course of Providence, which so multiplies and increases the seed sown in the earth, that it usually ministers seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; to which the apostle had alluded in the use of these metaphorical expressions; or he puts up a prayer that there might, or delivers out a promise that there would be a like increase in giving liberally, as in sowing plentifully, **2Co 9:10**. And then he makes use of a new argument, stirring up to bountifulness, taken from the glory which is brought to God through thanksgiving to him, from the poor and needy, supplied by the liberality of those whose hearts he had opened, **2Co 9:11**. On which argument he enlarges, showing, that not only by this bounty the wants of the poor are supplied, and thanksgivings offered up to God on that account; but also the poor saints are led to glorify God for sending his Gospel to these their benefactors, and giving them his grace to submit unto it, which had had such an influence upon them as to cause them to communicate to their necessities in such a generous manner, **2Co 9:12**. To which he adds another argument, taken from the prayers of the poor saints, for those who liberally contributed to them, that they might prosper in body and soul, in things temporal and spiritual, **2Co 9:14**. And the chapter is concluded with a thanksgiving to God for the grace bestowed upon all the churches, and particularly for the gift of Christ to the sons of men; which contains in it another argument for beneficence and liberality, **2Co 9:15**.

Ver. 1. For as touching the ministering to the saints,.... It looks at first sight as if the apostle was entering upon a new subject, though by what follows it appears to be the same; for by "ministering to the saints", he does not mean the ministry of the Gospel to them; nor that mutual assistance members of churches are to give each other; but either the fellowship of ministering to the saints, which the churches had entreated him, and his fellow ministers, to take upon them, namely, to take the charge of their collections, and distribute them to the poor saints at Jerusalem; or rather these collections themselves, and their liberality in them: with respect to which he says,

it is superfluous for me to write to you; that is, he thought it unnecessary to say any more upon that head, because he had used so many arguments already to engage them in it, in the foregoing chapter; and because he had sent three brethren to them, who well understood the nature of this service, and were very capable of speaking to it, and of enforcing the reasonings already used; and more especially he judged it needless to dwell on this subject, for the reasons following.

2 Corinthians 9:2

Ver. 2. For I know the forwardness of your mind,.... How that they were willing of themselves to engage in this good work; how readily they came into it; what a cheerful disposition of mind they showed towards it; and how forward they were to begin the collection:

for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia; he had one it before, which had put them upon the like service, and he still continued to boast of them,

that Achaia was ready a year ago: not that their collection was ready made so long ago; but they had shown a readiness of mind, as to every good work, so to this of communicating to the saints a year ago, when they made a beginning, though as yet had not finished. By Achaia is meant, the inhabitants of Achaia. The Arabic version renders it, the citizens of Achaia; of this country, See Gill on "Ac 18:12". It is sometimes taken in a large sense, and designs Greece, and includes the countries of Doris, Hellas, Aetolia, Locri, Phocis, Boeotia, Attica, and Megaris; and had its name, as some say, from the frequent inundation of waters; and others, from one of the three generals of the Pelasgi, who were of this name; and sometimes it is taken strictly and properly for the country of the Peloponnesus, or the Morea. And so Drusius, out of Hesychius, has observed, that the Achaeans were Greeks; but properly they were they that inhabited that part of Peloponnesus, called Achaia; and these seem to be intended here. The Gospel was preached in these parts with success; Epaenetus, whom the Apostle Paul salutes, Ro 16:5 and the house of Stephanas he mentions, 1Co 16:15 were the firstfruits of it; and in process of time several churches were here gathered, and which continued for several ages. In the "second" century there was a synod in Achaia, concerning the time of keeping Easter, in which Bacchylus, bishop of Corinth, presided; in the beginning of the "fourth" century, the bishops of Achaia were present at the council of Nice, and in the same century bishops out of this country assisted at the synod in Sardica; in the "fifth" century there were many churches in Achaia, and the bishops of them were present in the Chalcedon synod; out of this country went several bishops, in the "seventh" century, to Constantinople, and were in the sixth synod there; and in the "eighth" century there were bishops of Achaia in the Nicene synod {d}: here by Achaia are designed the churches of Christ, which were in that part of Greece in which Corinth stood, and of which that was the metropolis; so that when the apostle says Achaia was ready, his meaning is more particularly, that the Corinthians were ready:

and, adds he,

your zeal hath provoked very many: or "the zeal which is of you"; which sprung from, and was occasioned by them; for not the zeal of the Corinthians is here intended, as seems at first view, but that emulation which was stirred up in some of the leading persons among the Macedonians, upon hearing how ready they at Corinth were to minister to the necessitous brethren; and the zeal which appeared in these principal men, which was very warm, and yet prudent and seasonable, wrought very much on the minds of others, who, led by their example, contributed in a very generous and unexpected manner. In the Greek text it is, "the zeal out of you"; or, as the Arabic version renders it, "the zeal that arose from you", which was occasioned by them.

{d} Hist. Eccles. Magdeburg. cent. 2. c. 9. p. 125. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 5. c. 9. p. 425. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 7. c. 10. p. 258. cent. 9. c. 2. p. 7.

2 Corinthians 9:3

Ver. 3. Yet have I sent the brethren,.... Titus, and the other two mentioned in the foregoing chapter: one manuscript reads, "we have sent"; and the Ethiopic version, "they have sent", that is, the Macedonians; but the common reading is best. It might be objected, that since the apostle knew the forwardness of their minds, how ready they were a year ago, and had boasted so much of their liberality, that it must be unnecessary to send the brethren to them, to stir them up to this work; which objection is prevented by observing the reason of his sending them:

lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf: or, "in this part", in this particular thing, atwbu adh le, "concerning this business", or affair of beneficence to the poor, as the Syriac version renders it. He had boasted of them with respect to other things besides this; but he was chiefly concerned, knowing the frailty and changeableness of human nature, and how possible it was that their forwardness might abate, and they grow cold and indifferent to such service, lest his glorying of them should be in vain in this particular instance; wherefore he sent the brethren to put them on, that as they had begun they would finish:

that as I said ye may be ready, That as he had said to the Macedonians, that they were ready in mind, it might appear to be so; or as he had ordered them in his former epistle, they might be actually ready; have their collection ready made, so that there might be no gathering when he came.

2 Corinthians 9:4

Ver. 4. Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me,.... The apostle had determined to come himself, though he was afterwards prevented by Providence, but could not be certain of the coming of the Macedonian brethren with him; however, as it was probable that some of them would come, whose hearts were so much in this work, therefore he judged it fit and proper to send the brethren before hand, in case they should come:

and find you unprepared; not so ready for this service as had been boasted of, and the collection not finished, which had been begun a year ago.

We (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting; or "in this same substance", or "subsistence of boasting": a boasting, which, he thought, they had the most solid and substantial ground and foundation to proceed upon; which, should it come to nothing, must cause shame both in the apostles, who had so largely, and with so much assurance, boasted of them; and in the Corinthians, who must be put to the blush, when it should be told them how much they had been boasted of with respect to their readiness, and yet were unprepared: so tlxwt, "hope", expectation, confidence, is rendered by the Septuagint kauchma, "boasting", Pr 11:7 and in Ps 39:5 upostasiv, the word here used. And some copies, and also the Vulgate Latin version, only read, "in this substance", or glorying, and leave out boasting as superfluous.

2 Corinthians 9:5

Ver. 5. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren,.... Titus, and the other two, on whom he did not lay his commands, or apostolical injunctions, according to the authority and dignity of his office; only exhorted or besought them, and which was judged by him very needful and proper at this time:

that they would go before hand unto you; before him, and the Macedonian brethren that might probably come with him:

and make up before hand your bounty; or blessing; for any present sent, or delivered, by one person to another, as a token of their friendship, favour, and good will, whether in a necessitous case or not, was by the Jews called hkrb, "a blessing"; see Ge 33:11 and especially what is contributed for the relief of the poor may be so called, because it is not only a part of the bounty of Providence, and blessings of life, with which men are favoured; but is also one way of blessing God for the mercies he has blessed them with, and likewise of blessing, or doing good to fellow creatures and Christians. Moreover, because for this the poor bless their benefactors; and it is a blessing itself to do good to others. Now the apostle judged it expedient to send the brethren before hand to complete and finish this good work begun.

Whereof, says he,

ye had notice before: in his former epistle, 1Co 16:1 or which was promised before by them; or had been spoken of so much before by him to other churches:

that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, or blessing,

not as of covetousness; that is, that the collection being ready made, largely and liberally, it might appear to be a free generous action, and show what a noble bountiful disposition they were of; and not performed as covetous men usually do what they do, sparingly, tenaciously, keeping their money as long as they can, being loath to part with it.

2 Corinthians 9:6

Ver. 6. But this I say,.... This the apostle would have the Corinthians take notice of, and well consider, it being what he could aver for truth, by observation and experience; that as in things natural, so in things of a moral and spiritual kind,

he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully, or with blessings,

shall reap also bountifully; or with blessings; as a man sows, so shall he reap; the one is in proportion to the other. Sowing and reaping are here used in a metaphorical sense. The former signifies doing acts of beneficence and liberality. So it is used in the Old Testament, and in Jewish writings; see **Ec 9:6**. The interpretation of the latter text, give me leave to produce out of the Talmud {e} as follows, and which will serve to illustrate this of the apostle's.

"Says. R. Jochanan, in the name of R. Benaah, what is that which is written, "blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox, and the ass?" blessed are the Israelites, for when they are employed in the law, Mydox twlymgbw, "and in acts of beneficence", their evil concupiscence is delivered into their hand, and they are not delivered into the hand of their evil concupiscence: or, as it is elsewhere {f} said, such are worthy of the inheritance of two tribes, Joseph and Issachar; as it is said, "blessed are ye that sow beside all waters", hqdu ala heyrz Nyaw, "and there is no sowing but alms"; or, by the word "sowing", nothing else is meant but doing of alms, as it is said, Ho 10:12 and there is no water but the law, or nothing else is meant by water but the law, as it is said, Isa 55:1. And as to these words, "that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass", it is a tradition of the house of Elias, for ever let a man place himself by the words of the law, as an ox to the yoke, and an ass to the burden."

There is a good deal of likeness between sowing the seed in the earth, and doing of alms, or acts of beneficence. The seed that is sown is what is selected and reserved out of the stock expended or sold off, which if not done, there would be no provision for futurity; so that which a man gives for the relief of the necessitous, is what he lays by him in store of what God has prospered him with; in doing which he may hope for a fruitful harvest, whereas otherwise he could expect none: as seed is cast from, and scattered about by the sower all over the field; so what is given to the poor, it is parted with unto them, and spread among them, everyone has a portion; and it looks like a diminution of a man's substance, and as if it would never return with any advantage; though it does, as in a natural, so in a metaphorical sense. The sower casts and scatters his seed with an open hand; was he to gripe it in his fist, or only let go a grain of corn or wheat here and there, he would have but a poor harvest; so the cheerful giver opens his hand wide, and bountifully supplies the wants of the needy; who, as the sower casts his seed on the empty field, so he bestows his bounty on indigent persons, on all men in want, especially the household of faith: and, as when he has done, he harrows the ground, and covers the seed under the earth, where it lies hid, and is very unpromising for a while, and yet be exercises faith, hope, and patience, with respect to an harvest; so the generous benefactor does what he does in as private a manner as may be; and though for a time his good deeds may seem to be attended with little prospect of reward, yet in the end they certainly shall; for as a man sows, so shall he reap: if he sows, that is, gives nothing, he shall reap nothing; if he sows but little, he shall reap little; and if he sows much, he shall reap much; and that of the selfsame kind which he sows; as he is liberal in things temporal, so shall he prosper and succeed in the same; see **Pr 3:9**.

{e} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 5. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 2. 4. {f} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 17. 1.

2 Corinthians 9:7

Ver. 7. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart,.... Which is not to be understood of the quantity, or any set sum he has fixed upon in his mind to give; but of the quality or nature of giving; or of the manner in which he is to give:

so let him give; of his own will and free choice, from his very heart; not as directed and forced by others, but according to his own counsel and determination:

not grudgingly; or not of grief; with pain and uneasiness of mind, grieving at parting with what is given, reflecting on the persons that move him to it, or on the objects moved for. The Jews {g} reckon this the lowest degree of all in giving alms; "when a man gives to anyone" bueb, "with grief", to which the apostle seems to refer: who adds,

or of necessity; of force, by coaction, being obliged to it by the influence, example, or commands of superiors; or through the powerful motives, or prevailing entreaties of others; for without these, men, according to their abilities, should give of themselves freely and liberally:

for God loveth a cheerful giver; or one that gives twpy Mynp rbob, "with a cheerful countenance", as the Jews {h} say; or as elsewhere {i}, "with a cheerful heart": their rule is this,

"he that doth the commandment, i.e. alms, let him do it
xmv blb, "with a cheerful heart"."

Who looks pleasantly on the person or persons that move him to it, or on the object to whom he gives; who parts with his money willingly, and takes delight in doing good to others; such givers God loves: not that their cheerful beneficence is the cause of his special peculiar love to them in his own heart, which arises from nothing in man, or done by him; but the meaning is, that God does well to such persons; shows his love to them; he lets them know how kindly he takes such acts of theirs, by prospering and succeeding them in their worldly affairs. In the Septuagint in Pr 22:8 are these words, "God blesses a cheerful man, and a giver", which the apostle refers to.

{g} Maimon. Mattanot Anayim, c. 10. sect. 14. {h} Maimon. Mattanot Anayim, c. 10. sect. 13. {i} Vajikra Rabba, fol. 174. 1. Parash. 34.

2 Corinthians 9:8

Ver. 8. And God is able to make all grace abound towards you,.... By "all grace" is meant, not the love and favour of God, the source of all blessings enjoyed in time and eternity; nor the blessings of grace, the fruits of it; nor the Gospel which reveals them; nor the various graces of the Spirit implanted in regeneration; nor gifts of grace, fitting men for ministerial service; all which God is able to make to abound, and does, when he gives enlarged discoveries of his love, makes fresh applications of covenant grace, leads more fully into the knowledge of his Gospel, carries on the work of his grace in the soul, and calls forth grace into act and exercise, and increases gifts bestowed; nor even merely temporal blessings of every sort, which men are unworthy of, are all the gifts of his goodness, and are given to his people in a covenant way; and which he can, and often does increase: but by it is meant all that goodness, beneficence, and liberality exercised towards the poor members of Christ; God is able, and he will, and it ought to be believed that he will, cause to return with an increase, all that which is expended in relieving the necessities of the saints; that is not thrown away and lost, which is communicated to them, but shall be repaid with use and interest, be restored with abundance, any more than the seed which the husbandman casts into the earth; for as God is able, and has promised, and will, and does cause that to spring up again, and bring forth an abundant increase, so will he multiply the seed of beneficence, and increase the fruits of righteousness. This now contains a new argument to move to liberality, and an antidote against the fears of want, which persons are sometimes pressed with, and tend to prevent their bountiful acts of charity:

that ye always having all sufficiency in all things: that is, God is able to increase, and will so increase your worldly substance, that you shall have a sufficiency, a perfect and entire sufficiency; enough for yourselves and families, for the entertainment of your friends, and the relief of the poor; which shall give you satisfaction and contentment, and that at all times, and with respect to everything necessary for you, as to food and raiment, that so ye may abound to every good work; as to all good works, so to this of beneficence in particular, and to every branch of it, as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and the like.

2 Corinthians 9:9

Ver. 9. As it is written,.... In Ps 112:9 where it is said of the good and righteous man,

he hath dispersed hynwmm, "his riches", his substance, as the Chaldee paraphrase adds by way of explanation; not in a profuse extravagant manner, but with wisdom and prudence, and yet largely and liberally, according to his ability. Just as the sower scatters his seed here, and there, and in every place, with an open and wide hand, to the good man distributes to all in necessity, and makes them all partakers of his bounty; he gives not only to one, but to many, and not to all without distinction he meets with, whether necessitous or not:

he hath given to the poor. This explains the former phrase, and points out the persons, the objects of the good man's bounty and compassion:

his righteousness remaineth for ever. This is not to be understood of his justifying righteousness, as if that consisted of, and was established upon his works of bounty and charity to the poor; nor of his fame among men on

account of his liberality; nor of any reward in another world; but of his beneficence itself, it being common with the Jews to call alms hqdu, "righteousness":
See Gill on "Mt 6:1" and the sense is, that what such a man bestows in charity on the poor shall not be lost, but shall be like the seed cast into the earth, shall spring up again, and bring forth fruit with increase, according to what follows.

2 Corinthians 9:10

Ver. 10. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower, and bread for your food,.... For so the words ought to be pointed and read, as is clear from Isa 55:10 to which they refer; and are a "periphrasis" of God, who so blesses the seed that is cast into the earth, that it brings forth such an increase, as that there is a sufficiency of bread for food to the eater for the present year, and a sufficiency of seed to sow with again the next year; and that God, that does this every year, is able "to minister to", or supply your present necessities;

and to multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; though some consider these as a wish or prayer of the apostle's, that God would do all this for them. Some copies, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read all in the future tense, "he will minister" to you, or "supply" you, "and will multiply your seed sown",

and will increase the fruits of your righteousness; and so contain a promise of a divine blessing, encouraging to liberality with cheerfulness, by strengthening their faith in the providence of God; who as he multiplies, not the seed expended in the family, or sold at market, or as in the barn, or laid up for a better price, but the seed sown in the field, so he will multiply the substance of men; not what they lay out on themselves and families, or lay up in their coffers, but what they give away, or bestow on Christ's poor: and all effects which follow acts of liberality, and which are here designed by "fruits of righteousness", such as a good name among men, blessing, praise, thanksgiving, and prosperity in things temporal and spiritual, these God will abundantly increase; some of which are mentioned in the following verses. So alms with the Jews is not only called hqdu, "righteousness", but "seed sown". Thus Jarchi interprets Ps 37:26 "and his seed is blessed", he that erwz, "sows" righteousness or alms, its end shall be for a blessing, or in the end he shall be blessed; and the phrase, "rain righteousness", in Ho 10:12 is by the Septuagint rendered, gennhmata dikaiosunhv, "fruits of righteousness", the same as here, from whence it seems to be taken.

2 Corinthians 9:11

Ver. 11. Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness,.... These words may be connected with **2Co 9:8** being included in a parenthesis; and the sense is, that God was not only able to give them a sufficiency, and would give them a sufficiency of temporal things, as food and raiment to their satisfaction, and contentment for themselves, but a fulness, an exuberancy, an overplus also; not for luxury and intemperance, but that having such an affluence in all the good things of life, they might at all times, and upon every occasion, exercise a bountiful disposition in relieving the poor:

which causeth through us thanksgiving to God; not their riches and fulness, but their liberal distribution of them to the poor saints, to which they were stirred up by the apostles; who were thankful to God who had so well succeeded their exhortations and advice, and which was the cause of thanksgivings in others: and since therefore such beneficence tended to the glory of God, as giving of thanks makes for his glory, this then ought to be attended to, and diligently performed; and so it furnishes out a new argument to this good work, which is enlarged upon in the following verses.

2 Corinthians 9:12

Ver. 12. For the administration of this service,.... Not only by the Corinthians, and others, in giving and collecting, but by the apostles in ministering and distributing their contributions to the poor saints, produced these two very good effects: for it

not only supplieth the wants of the saints; makes up their deficiencies, relieves their necessities, and furnishes them with what is comfortable and refreshing to them under their many sorrowful circumstances, which is answering a very valuable end:

but is abundant also by many thanks givings to God; it has over and above this excellency in it, or its excellent use is enhanced, and abundantly appears by this consideration; that many precious souls are sent hereby to the throne of grace to give thanks to God, who put it into the hearts of the apostles to move the churches on their behalf, and who wrought upon them so cheerfully and largely to contribute to their necessities.

2 Corinthians 9:13

Ver. 13. Whiles by the experiment of this ministration,.... That is, the poor saints at Jerusalem having a specimen, a proof, an experience of the liberality of the Gentile churches ministered to them by the apostles, first,

they glorify God; by giving thanks unto him, acknowledging him to be the author of all the grace and goodness which they, and others, were partakers of; particularly

for your professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ. The Gospel of Christ is the doctrine of grace, life, and salvation by Christ, of which he is the author, as God, the subject matter, as Mediator, and the preacher, as man: subjection to it lies in a hearty receiving of the doctrines of it, and a cheerful submission to his ordinances; and this subjection was professed, declared, and made known to the churches in Judea, by their sending so largely to their relief, which they would never have done, if they had not cordially embraced the Gospel of Christ; for true faith in the doctrine of grace, and a sincere obedience to it, are best declared and known by love to the saints; for faith works by love, both to Christ, and to his people: next they glorified God by giving thanks to him,

for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; which shows, that though they were truly grateful, and heartily thankful for the favours they themselves received, yet not for these only, but for what other poor saints, in other places, were also partakers of; yea, that in the first place they were more sensibly affected with, and more especially thankful for the grace of God bestowed on the Gentiles, in sending the Gospel among them, and bringing them to a subjection to it, than for the temporal good they received from them.

2 Corinthians 9:14

Ver. 14. And by their prayer for you,.... The sense is, they glorify God on your behalf, making mention of you in all their prayers at the throne of grace, giving thanks to God for your liberality to them, and imploring all the blessings both of the upper and nether springs upon you; and this contains another argument engaging the Corinthians to liberality, taken from the prayers of the saints for them: or the words may be connected with 2Co 9:12 the thirteenth verse being in a parenthesis; and show not only that this ministering to the poor saints relieved their wants, and caused thanksgivings to God, but abounded in this fruit also; it put them upon daily and importunate supplications to God for their welfare both in soul and body.

Which long after you; or "earnestly desire you"; that is, "to see you", as the Ethiopic version adds; or exceedingly love you: their affections are wonderfully drawn out to you; not so much, or barely for your kindness to them, as

for the exceeding grace of God in you; for that large measure of it which was bestowed upon them in regeneration, as their unfeigned faith, lively hope, and sincere love; and for all that grace which was displayed in their justification, adoption, sanctification, and whole salvation.

2 Corinthians 9:15

Ver. 15. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. Meaning either the goodness of God, both to the giver and receiver; for that the one gave so liberally, and the other received so largely, was from the grace of God, who so powerfully inclines the hearts of his children to do good, and offer so willingly of what he has given them, and who so wonderfully provides for the supply of the poor and needy; or else that exceeding grace of God which was so eminently, largely, and freely bestowed on the Corinthians in their effectual calling; or, as some think, Christ himself, who is to be sure "the unspeakable gift" of God; who, though his Son, his own Son, his only begotten Son, the Son of his love, his Son and heir, yet he gave him to be a covenant to the people, the head of his church, the Saviour of sinners, and to be a sacrifice in their room and stead: none can tell how great this gift is, which is so suitable and seasonable, so large and comprehensive, nor declare the love both of the Father and the Son, expressed in it. Thankful we should be for it; and our thankfulness should be shown by highly prizing and valuing this gift; by laying the whole stress of our salvation on Christ; by ascribing all the glory of it to him; by giving up ourselves to him, and to his interest; by walking worthy of him in all well pleasing, and by communicating to the support of his cause, and the supply of his poor ministers and members. And thus the apostle tacitly suggests one of the strongest arguments that can be used, to stir up the saints to generosity and liberality, taken from the wonderful grace of God in the gift of his Son; for if he of his free grace, and unmerited love, has given his Son to, and for his people, and with him all things freely, both the riches of grace and glory, then they ought freely and bountifully to communicate temporal good things to the poor members of Christ, for whom God and Christ have an equal love, as for themselves.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Corinthians 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS 10

In this chapter the apostle has chiefly to do with the false teachers, and it is taken up in refuting their calumnies of him, and in exposing their boasting of themselves; and as he goes along, he takes notice of the efficacy of the Gospel, and of the success and extent of it, as it was preached by him, and other Gospel ministers, and points at the proper manner and ground of glorying. And whereas the false teachers had represented him as a mean spirited man, as well as his outward aspect was contemptible, and that he had not that authority and courage he boasted of, he describes himself by those characters they had reproached him with: by his name Paul, which signified little, they suggesting that he was little in soul, as well as in body; by his modesty and humility, when he was with the Corinthians, and by his boldness, now absent from them: and he entreats them by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, which he imitated, and they ought also, that they would not join in those sneers, nor reproach him for these things, 2Co 10:1 and that they would so behave, that, when he came among them, he might have no occasion of using that power and authority, which the false teachers called bluster and boldness; and which he had thought and determined in his own mind to exercise on some who traduced him and his fellow ministers as carnal selfish persons, 2Co 10:2 which calumny he removes by owning, that they walked in the flesh, in the body, and were subject to imperfections, as men; but denies that their ministerial warfare or service was managed in a carnal and worldly, or in a weak way and manner, 2Co 10:3 assigning this reason for it, because the weapons they made use of, in the warfare of their ministry, to defend truth, and annoy the enemy, to enlarge Christ's kingdom, and weaken Satan's, were not carnal, weak, and worldly, but spiritual and efficacious, through the power of God that accompanied them; and which appeared by the use they were of to the demolishing the strong holds of the flesh, and bringing down the haughty and lofty imaginations of the fleshly mind, which were opposed to the knowledge of God, and the refuting all the sophisms of fleshly wisdom, and carnal reasonings against the Gospel of Christ. This was the influence it had on some through the power of divine grace, whereby they became obedient to Christ, and subject to his word and ordinances, 2Co 10:4 whilst on others, as on Elymas the sorcerer, who sought to pervert the right ways of God, the apostolical power was exercised in a way of just punishment and awful vengeance, 2Co 10:6. The apostle moreover suggests to the Corinthians, that they judged of him, and the false teachers, according to the outward appearance of things, which was wrong: however, let these men make ever so great a show in the flesh, or what pretensions soever to Christianity, to being the members and ministers of Christ, the apostle would have them observe, that he, and those with him, were, and were to be looked upon as equally the same, 2Co 10:7 nay, should he exalt himself above them, and affirm he had an authority superior to theirs, which he describes by the efficient cause of it, the Lord, and by its end, edification, and not destruction, he should have no reason to be ashamed, since he was capable of giving proof of it, 2Co 10:8 however, he would say no more of this for the present, lest he should strengthen the calumny cast upon him, that it was his way to terrify by his letters, with blustering menaces of his power and authority, 2Co 10:9 and which calumny is more fully expressed in the words of the false teachers, who said, that his letters were bold and blustering, and by which he would be thought to be a man of power and authority; though, alas! a man of no speech nor presence, when in person among men, and so not to be regarded, 2Co 10:10. In answer to which the apostle returns, that he would have such a reviler know, that as he was in word by letters when absent, such would he be found to be in deed when present, 2Co 10:11 and then proceeds to expose the vain glorying of the false teachers, and to observe those things which he, and other faithful ministers of the word, might glory of; though they could not give themselves the liberties they did, and chose to glory in the Lord; they could not commend themselves in that bold and insolent manner, to the contempt of others, when there was no necessity for it, as the false teachers did, 2Co 10:12 nor could they boast of things they never did; of conversions they never were instruments of; of the planting of churches they had no concern in; and of spreading the Gospel where they had never been, which was the case of these men: whereas, whenever they gloried, it was when there was an absolute necessity for it, and always with modesty, acknowledging the grace and goodness of God unto them, and ever with truth; and of their own labours, and not of others; and particularly with respect to Corinth, it was with the strictest regard to truth that they affirmed they were the first that preached the Gospel there, converted souls, and planted a Gospel church, and hoped they should be the means of spreading it further still, 2Co 10:13. However, they did not desire to glory in themselves, but in the Lord, from whom they had all their gifts, success, and usefulness; and so they directed others to do, 2Co 10:17 and because, for this reason, that he that commends himself is not approved of God, but he that is commended by the Lord, 2Co 10:18.

Ver. 1. Now I Paul myself beseech you,.... The apostle having said what was necessary and proper to stir up the Corinthians to a liberal contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem, returns to the vindication of himself against the false apostles; and earnestly entreats the members of this church,

by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, not to regard their reproaches, and join with them in them; for did they but consider the meek and gentle deportment of Christ, so worthy of his and their imitation, they would see there was no reason to reflect on him for that part of his conduct, in which he followed his Lord and master; whose meekness was to be seen in the assumption of human nature, in the whole of his life and conversation, and in his sufferings and death; and his "gentleness" of Spirit to be observed in his coming into this world, not to judge and condemn it, but that the world might be saved; in bearing all indignities and insults, without being provoked to wrath and revenge; in rebuking his disciples for the severity of their spirits, declaring he came to save, and not take away the lives of men; in praying for his enemies, and in his silence under all the ill treatment he met with from the worst of men. As the apostle had this excellent example before him, which served both to regulate his conduct, and support him under the hard measures he met with, so he was desirous to direct others to the observance of it, which might be a check upon the ill usage of him. He here speaks of himself in the language of his adversaries, who meant by these characters to expose him to scorn and contempt: "I Paul myself"; whose name the false teachers played upon, it signifying "little"; and he being of little stature, they reproached him for it, and would insinuate, that as his name was "little", and his person mean, his bodily presence weak, and his speech contemptible, that he had a little soul, was a man of small knowledge, mean parts, and a very insignificant minister. Now it is as if the apostle should say, I am not ashamed of my name, nor of my person, and I am willing to own myself the least of the apostles, yea, less than the least of all saints; but I beg of you by the mild and gentle Spirit of my Lord and master, whom I am not ashamed to imitate, that you would not join in those sneers. I am Paul, autov, the "same" in my principles and practice, in my doctrine and life, when present and absent; though my enemies say the contrary, as that I am such an one,

who in presence am base, or "humble among you": they suggested, that when he was at Corinth he was humble and modest in his conversation, mild and gentle in all his expressions and deportment; and which they interpreted of a meanness and baseness of spirit, as though he crept and cringed to curry favour with men, to avoid offence, and gain and keep an interest among them:

but being absent, am bold toward you; wrote blustering, hectoring, terrifying letters, threatening to come with his apostolic rod and deliver them up to Satan, to fright them into a compliance with him.

2 Corinthians 10:2

Ver. 2. But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present,.... That is, he entreated them that they would so behave for the future, that he might have no occasion, when he came among them, to use that power and authority they called boldness, which he had received from Christ for edification, and not destruction; as for that asperity and roughness with which he wrote, and which was thought to be too severe, it was in order to reclaim them, and so prevent that sharpness he was empowered by Christ to use: for though he had said in his former epistle, **1Co 4:21** "shall I come unto you with a rod or in love? and in the spirit of meekness?" he chose to come in the latter, rather than with the former; namely, not

with that confidence wherewith, says he,

I think to be bold: by "confidence" he means the faith of miracles he was possessed of, and particularly the power he, and other apostles had, of striking dead or blind incorrigible offenders, or of delivering them to Satan to undergo some corporeal punishment; which he had been thinking of, and reasoning about in his own mind, and was almost come to a conclusion concerning it, to inflict it upon, and with it to be bold,

against some which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh; who not barely thought so within themselves, but reasoned the matter with others, and would fain persuade them to believe that they did walk in a carnal manner; not that they had the face to say, that they walked after the dictates of corrupt nature, or lived in open vice and profaneness; but that they walked in craftiness, had their conversation in the world with fleshly wisdom, seeking their own worldly interest and secular advantage; which is denied by the apostle, **2Co 1:12** and was the real case, and true picture of the false teachers themselves.

2 Corinthians 10:3

Ver. 3. For though we walk in the flesh,.... The apostle removes the calumny of walking after the flesh, by owning that they were in the flesh, in the body, in a state of imperfection, attended with many weaknesses and infirmities, and surrounded with a variety of afflictions and sorrows; in this sense they were, and lived and walked in the flesh; but then he denies the charge exhibited against them,

we do not war after the flesh: every Christian's life is a warfare with Satan, and his principalities and powers, with the world, the men and lusts of it, and with the corruptions of their own hearts; and much more is the life of a minister of the Gospel, who is called forth to meet the adversary in the gate; to stand in the hottest place of the battle, and sustain the whole fire and artillery of the enemy; to fight the good fight of faith, endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ, and with the weapons he is furnished with to war a good warfare: which is not done "after the flesh"; in such a manner as the men of the world wage war with one another; or upon carnal principles; or with carnal selfish views; or in a weak way and manner; but in a spiritual way, with all simplicity and disinterested views, with great courage and intrepidity of mind.

2 Corinthians 10:4

Ver. 4. For the weapons of our warfare,.... By "warfare" is here meant, not that which is common to all believers, who are enlisted as volunteers under the captain of their salvation, and fight his battles, and are more than conquerors through him; but what is peculiar to the ministers of the Gospel; and designs the ministerial function, or office, and the discharge of it. So the Levitical function, or the ministerial service of the Levites, is called hdbeh abu, "the warfare of the service", **Nu 8:25**. The ministry of the word is so styled, because that as war is waged in defence of men's rights, properties, and liberties, and for the weakening of an enemy's power and possessions, and for the enlargement of kingdoms and dominions; so this is in defence of the truths and liberty of the Gospel, that they may continue and abide; for the weakening of Satan's kingdom, by delivering the lawful captives, taking the prey from the mighty, turning souls from the power of Satan to God, and translating them from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ Jesus; and so for the enlargement of his kingdom, by spreading the Gospel far and near. The "weapons" with which this warfare is managed are the Scriptures of truth, the sword of the Spirit, the word of God; and which indeed are an armoury, out of which may be taken weapons of all sorts, both offensive and defensive; such as serve both to establish and secure the doctrines of the Gospel, and to refute the errors of the wicked: to which may be added all those gifts which Christ has received for, and gives to men, qualifying them for the work of the ministry, and for the understanding of the sacred writings; together with all those means made use of by them for their improvement in spiritual knowledge; such as diligent reading the word of God, and the labours of his faithful servants, frequent meditation thereon, and earnest prayer to God for more light and experience. Also the various graces of the Spirit, with which they are endued, may be taken into the account; such as the breast plate of faith in Christ, and love to himself, his people, word, ordinances, cause, and interest; the helmet of salvation, hope, the girdle of truth and faithfulness, and the excellent grace of patience to endure all hardships, reproaches, insults, afflictions, and persecutions, cheerfully; and finally, all the acts of their ministration, such as preaching, prayer, the administration of ordinances, and laying on of censures, with the consent of the church. Now these weapons

are not carnal; such as the men of the world fight with, not the temporal sword; for Christ sent forth his apostles without that, naked and unarmed amidst their enemies, his kingdom not being of this world, and so not to be defended and propagated in such a way; or as the weapons the false apostles used, such as natural eloquence, fleshly wisdom, carnal reason, cunning craftiness, the hidden things of dishonesty, and great swelling words of vanity; or they were not weak and impotent, which is sometimes the signification of "flesh"; see **Ge 6:3**

but mighty through God: powerful and effectual through the blessing of God, and the influences of his grace and Spirit for the conversion of sinners, the edification of saints, the defence of truth, the confutation of error, the destruction of Satan's kingdom, and the enlargement of Christ's: for these weapons are not powerful of themselves; they are passive instruments, which are only efficacious when used by a superior hand; when the Gospel ministration is attended with "the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power"; and then they are serviceable

to the pulling down of strong holds. The allusion seems to be to the falling of the walls of Jericho, at the sound of ram's horns, which must be ascribed not to those instruments, which were in themselves weak and despicable, but to the power of God that went along with the sound of them. By strong holds are meant, the strong holds of sin and Satan; such as unbelief, pride, hardness of heart, &c. with which the heart of man is walled (so bl twryq, "the walls of the heart", **Jer 4:19**) against God and Christ, and the Gospel of the grace of God, and by which Satan fortifies himself, and keeps the palace and goods in peace, until the everlasting doors are thrown open, which were bolted and barred; and these walls of defence are pulled down by the King of glory, who enters in, which is usually done by the power of God, in the ministry of the Gospel: so sins are called strong holds, fortresses, and bulwarks, by the Talmudists {k}, who give this as the sense of Ec 9:14

"a little city, this is the body; "and few men in it", these are the members; "and there came a great king against it, and besieged it", this is the evil imagination, lust, or concupiscence; and built against it
Mydwum, "great bulwarks", or fortresses, twnwe hla, "these are iniquities"."

And so Philo the Jew {l} speaks of ta bebaiathv kakiav ereismata, "the firm munitions of vice" being broken down. Or else by them may be meant the fortresses of a man's own righteousness, holiness, good works, and moral duties, in which he entrenches, and thinks himself safe: which the Spirit of God, in the ministry of the word, blows a blast upon, and which are cast down by it, that revealing a better righteousness, even the righteousness of Christ; or else the fleshly wisdom, rhetorical eloquence, and sophisms of false teachers, with which they endeavoured to fortify themselves against the doctrines of the Gospel, but in vain.

{k} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 32. 2. {l} De Confusione Linguarum, p. 335.

2 Corinthians 10:5

Ver. 5. Casting down imaginations,.... Or "reasonings"; the carnal reasonings of the minds of natural men against God, his providences and purposes, against Christ, and the methods of salvation, and every truth of the Gospel; which are all disproved, silenced, and confounded, by the preaching of the word, which though reckoned the foolishness and weakness of God, appears to be wiser and stronger than men; and whereby the wisdom of the wise is destroyed, and the understanding of the prudent brought to nothing:

and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; every proud thought of the heart, every great swelling word of vanity, every big look, even all the lofty looks and haughtiness of men, with every airy flight, and high towering imagination, reasoning, and argument advanced against the Gospel of Christ; which is here meant by the knowledge of God, and so called, because it is the means of leading souls into the knowledge of God, even into a better knowledge of him than can be attained to, either by the light of nature, or law of Moses; to a knowledge of him, and acquaintance with him in Christ the Mediator, in whom the light of the knowledge of the glory of God is given; and with which knowledge of God eternal life is connected, yea, in this it consists; it is the beginning of it, and will issue in it.

And bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; or "carrying captive the whole understanding"; that is, so illustrating it with divine light, that it clearly sees Christ to be the alone, able, willing, full, and suitable Saviour, and so becomes obedient to him, both as a Saviour and a King; such an enlightened soul looks to him alone for life and salvation, ventures on him, and relies upon him, and is desirous and willing to be saved by him in his own way; he receives and embraces all his truths and doctrines with faith and love, and obeys them from the heart, and cheerfully and willingly submits to all his commands and ordinances; for though he is taken by the grace of God, and all his strong holds, reasonings, and high thoughts are demolished by the power of God in the Gospel, and he himself is carried captive, yet not against, but with his will, to be a voluntary subject of Christ, and cheerfully to submit to the sceptre of his kingdom.

2 Corinthians 10:6

Ver. 6. And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience,.... Not with the temporal sword, as the civil magistrate, but with the spiritual one; meaning either censures and excommunication, which a faithful minister of the Gospel, with the suffrage of the church, has at hand, and a power to make use of, for the reclaiming of disobedient persons; or rather that extraordinary power which was peculiar to the apostles, of inflicting punishments on delinquents, such as what was exercised by Peter upon Ananias and Sapphira, by the Apostle Paul on Elymas the sorcerer, the incestuous person, and Hymenaeus and Philetus, and which still continued with him; it was ready at hand, he could exercise it whenever he pleased, he only waited a proper time:

when your obedience is fulfilled: till they were thoroughly reformed from the several abuses, both in doctrine and practice, they had fallen into, and were brought into a better order and decorum, and appeared to have been in all things obedient to the directions he had given; being unwilling, as yet, to use the awful authority he had from Christ, lest any of the dear children of God, who were capable of being restored by gentler methods, should suffer with the refractory and incorrigible.

2 Corinthians 10:7

Ver. 7. Do ye look on things after the outward appearance,.... Or "look upon things", ironically said; or "ye do look on things", a reproof for making judgment of persons and things, by the outward appearance of them; so many judged of Paul by the meanness of his person, the weakness of his body, the lowness of his voice, his outward circumstances of life, his poverty, afflictions, and persecutions; and despised him; whilst they looked upon the riches, eloquence, haughty airs, noisiness, and personable mien, of the false apostles, and admired them:

if a man trusts to himself that he is Christ's: is fully assured that he has an interest in his love and favour, is redeemed by his blood, is a partaker of his grace, and a believer in him; or rather, that he is a minister of the Gospel, and an apostle of Christ, one that is qualified and sent forth by him to preach the word:

let him, of himself, think this again, that as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's; that is, he may, and ought of himself, without another's observing it to him, of his own accord, willingly reason and conclude, by the selfsame marks and evidences he would be thought to be a minister of Christ, that we are also. The sense is, that let a man be ever so confident of his being a true minister of the Gospel, he will not be able to point out one criterion or proof of his being so, but what he might discern in the Apostle Paul, and the rest of his fellow ministers, and therefore ought to conclude the same of them as of himself. In which may be observed the great modesty of the apostle, who does not go about to disprove others being Christ's, who so confidently boasted of it; nor bid them look to it to see if they were or not, since all that say so are not; only as if granting that they were, he would have them look upon him, and his fellow apostles as such also, who had at least equal pretensions to this character.

2 Corinthians 10:8

Ver. 8. For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority,.... Than as yet he had done, or used to do; or rather the sense is, should he boast of a greater authority than the false apostles, or even than the true ministers of the Gospel in common had, he should not exceed the bounds of truth and modesty; for as an apostle he not only had an authority from Christ to preach the Gospel, and administer ordinances, but also had an extraordinary power of punishing offenders, as before observed:

which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for destruction; a power which no mere man, no creature, though ever so exalted, could have given; none but Christ, who is Lord of heaven and earth, and who has all power in his hands, could clothe with such authority as this; and which is given by him, though for the destruction of the flesh, or punishment of the body, yet for the salvation and good of the soul or spirit, as in the case of the incestuous person; and though sometimes for the destruction of the individual person or persons punished by it, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, yet for the edification, spiritual instruction, and welfare of the whole community or church, of which these were a part. So this authority was exercised on Hymenaeus and Philetus, that either they themselves might not learn to blaspheme, or cease to blaspheme Christ, or his apostles, or the truths of the Gospel; or that others might be deterred from such a practice; and so was for the edification of the one, or the other, and the preservation of the whole.

I should not be ashamed; as one that has told an untruth, or as a vain glorious man, who has made his boast of what he has not. The apostle signifies, that he should be able to make good such an assertion, should he think fit to mention it.

2 Corinthians 10:9

Ver. 9. That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters. Here seems to be something wanting, which is to be supplied, The sense is, though I might lawfully boast of the superior authority which we apostles have above other persons, in using sharpness with men insolent and hardened in sin; yet I will not, I forbear every thing of that kind, I drop it, I do not choose to insist upon it;
ana amxm, "I overlook", or "neglect" it, "I do not care" to do it, as the Syriac version supplies it; and this he thought most prudent and advisable, lest he should give any occasion to the above calumny that he was bold, and blustering, and terrifying by his letters when absent, and only threatened that he had no power to perform.

2 Corinthians 10:10

Ver. 10. For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful,.... These words contain the reason why he did not choose to say any more of his authority as an apostle to punish offenders, that he might give no occasion for such a calumny, some among them, or the false apostles, had cast upon him; that his epistles, referring particularly to his former epistle, and that part of it which respected the incestuous person, and his delivery to Satan, were blustering and thundering; were laden with sharp reproofs and severe menaces; were heavy with charges, were filled with great swelling words, with boasts of power and authority, and with threatenings what he would do, when he came among them; whereas when present, as at his first coming to them, he was mild and gentle, even to a degree of meanness and baseness, as they suggested; and so they concluded he would be, should he come again; and therefore his letters were not to be regarded:

but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible: he made a mean figure, being of a low stature, and having an infirm body: the account the historian {m} gives of him is this, that

"he had a small and contracted body, somewhat crooked and bowed, a pale face, looked old, and had a little head; he had a sharp eye; his eyebrows hung downwards; his nose was beautifully bent, somewhat long; his beard thick and pretty long; and that, as the hair of his head, had a sprinkling of gray hairs:"

hence one in Lucian {n} scoffingly says of him,

"when the bald headed Galilean met me, with his hook nose, who went through the air to the third heaven:"

though the words of this text rather regard his mind and mien than the make of his body; and suggest that he was not a man of that greatness of soul, and largeness of mind, not possessed of those abilities and gifts, and of that freedom of speech, and flow of words, his letters promised; but instead of that, was a man of a mean spirit, very abject and servile, and to be despised; his conduct weak, and carrying no majesty and authority with his presence, his words without weight, his language vulgar, and style neglected; and, upon all accounts, a person worthy of no notice, and not at all to be either feared or regarded.

{m} Nicephorus, l. 2. c. 37. {n} In Philopatr.

2 Corinthians 10:11

Ver. 11. Let such an one think this,.... The apostle seems to have in view some one particular person, though he does not choose to name him, who had more especially reproached him after this manner; and who was either one of the members of this church, or rather one of the false apostles: and so in the foregoing verse, instead of "say they", in which way both the Syriac and Vulgate Latin read, and is followed in our version, it is in the original text fhsi, "says he", or "he says"; and so a certain particular person seems designed in 2Co 11:4 whom the apostle would have to know and conclude with himself, and of which he might fully assure himself, that such as we are in word by letters, when we are absent, such will be also in deed, when we are present: he threatens the calumniator, that he should find him, to his sorrow, the same man present as absent; that what he sent by letters, should be found to be fact, when he came again; whose coming would not be with all that tenderness and gentleness, as when he first preached the Gospel to them, for which there was then a reason; since he and others had swerved from the truths of the Gospel, and the right ways of God, which would require the severity he threatened them with, and the execution of which might be depended upon.

2 Corinthians 10:12

Ver. 12. For we dare not make ourselves of the number,.... Some understand this as spoken ironically, as if the apostle jeeringly should say, he would not pretend to join, or put himself upon a level, who was a poor, little, mean, despicable person, with such great men as the false apostles were, men of such large gifts, and of such great learning and eloquence; though they may be understood without an irony, that the modesty of the apostle and his fellow ministers would not suffer them to mingle with such persons, and act the vainglorious part they did: or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; they were not so vain and foolish, as to give high encomiums of themselves, therefore would not boast even of the authority they had, and much less say that in letters, which they could not make good in fact:

but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise, or "understand not"; how foolish they are, how ridiculous they make themselves; they do not understand what they say, nor whereof they affirm; they do not understand themselves, what they really are; for to form a right judgment of themselves, they should have considered the gifts and abilities, the learning and knowledge of others, and thereby might have taken an estimate of their own; but instead of this, they only consulted themselves, and measured and compared themselves with themselves; which was acting just such a foolish part, as if a dwarf was to measure himself not with any kind of measure, or with another person, but with himself; only surveys himself, and his own dimensions, and fancies himself a giant. Just the reverse is this, to what is said in Philo the Jew {o},

"thn gar ouyeneian thn emautou metrein emayon, "I have learned to measure the nothingness of myself", and to contemplate thy exceeding great bounties; and moreover, perceive myself to be dust and ashes, or if there is any thing more abject."

{o} Quis rer. divin. Haeres, p. 485.

2 Corinthians 10:13

Ver. 13. But we will not boast of things without our measure,.... Or things unmeasurable; meaning not doctrines, the knowledge of which they had not attained to, and which were not to be measured by reason or revelation, such as the Gnostics boasted of; but the sense is, that they would not glory in, and boast of actions, that were never done by them, within the compass of their ministration, as the false apostles did; who pretended that they had been everywhere, and had preached the Gospel, and had made converts in all parts of the world; but the apostle and his fellow labourer, desired only to speak of those things which were done of them, and of their successful labours:

according to the measure of the rule; not the measure of the gift of Christ, or of faith bestowed upon them; nor the measuring rule and canon of the Scriptures, though both are truths; but the places or parts of the world, which God in his secret purpose had fixed, and in his providence directed them to preach in: or as he says,

which God hath distributed to us; parted and divided to them; assigning such and such places to some, and such and such to others, as he himself pleased, to discharge their ministerial office in; drawing as it were a line, or setting a bound, by which and how far each should go, and no further:

a measure to reach even unto you; the line of their ministration was drawn, or the bounds of their preaching were carried from Judea, and through all the intermediate places to Corinth, so that the Corinthians were properly under the jurisdiction of the apostles, and in their district; wherefore the false apostles had really no right nor claim to be among them; nay, their measure reached to the ends of the world, according to Ps 19:4 "their line" Mwq, "is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world".

2 Corinthians 10:14

Ver. 14. For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure,.... They did not go beyond the bounds set them by the purpose and providence of God, by going to Corinth; nor did they boast of things without their measure, when they spoke of their labours, and of the success of their ministrations among them; nor did they assume and arrogate to themselves what did not belong to them, when they claimed an authority over them, and a right of exercising their apostolical office among them:

as though we reached not unto you; by right, or according to the will of God, and the measuring line and bounds he drew and fixed for them:

for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the Gospel of Christ. The case is clear, it is a plain matter of fact, that they were not only come to other places, where they had preached the Gospel, and planted churches, but as far as to Corinth also, where they came "in, by, or with the Gospel of Christ": not their own, or what was of their own invention, but Christ's; of which he is the author, minister, and subject; they did not come without something with them; they came with the good news and glad tidings of salvation by Christ; they came preaching the Gospel, which was owned for the conversion of many souls, and for the raising a very considerable church; all which was a full proof that they were of right, and not by usurpation, come to them; that they had not thrusted themselves in, where they had no business, and consequently still retained a power over them.

2 Corinthians 10:15

Ver. 15. Not boasting of things without our measure,.... The apostle here asserts what he had done before, 2Co 10:13 with a view to explain it, as he does, saying,

that is of other men's labours; when they boasted of the Corinthians as their converts and children, whom they had begotten through the Gospel of Christ, they did not boast of other men's labours, as did the false apostles; who when they came to Corinth, found a church already planted by the apostle, and a multitude of believers, of whose conversion and faith he had been an instrument; and yet these men claimed them as their own, and an authority over them, when they were the fruit of the apostle's labours:

but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly; the sense is, that the apostle hoped, for he could not be sure, this lying in the secret will of God, that when the faith of the Corinthians was grown stronger, and more settled and established, and so would not stand in so much need of their care and instruction, they should be enlarged through their means; and that they should not stop here, but that the line, measure, or rule of their ministry, should be drawn to a greater length, and the bounds of it extended and carried abundantly further. The apostle intimates, that the weakness of their faith, and the disorders and divisions that were among them, were a hinderance to the spread of the Gospel; and that if their church state were in a better and a more settled condition, as it would give the apostles more leisure to preach the Gospel elsewhere, so it would serve to recommend it to other places beyond them; which would be an enlargement of the bounds of their ministry, and a means of magnifying of Christ and his Gospel, and of them also.

2 Corinthians 10:16

Ver. 16. To preach the Gospel in the regions beyond you,.... Here the apostle clearly expresses what he hoped for, and explains what he meant by being enlarged according to rule; namely, that he should be at liberty to preach the Gospel elsewhere; and hoped he should be directed by the providence of God, to carry it into the more remote and distant parts of the world, where as yet Christ had not been named:

and not to boast in another man's line: or enter into another man's province, glory in other men's labours, as did the false apostles: and boast

of things made ready to our hand; that is, of places cultivated and improved, by the preaching of the Gospel, so as to bring forth fruit to the honour and glory of God; where many souls were already converted, and churches were planted and put into good order, and were in a flourishing condition; see Ro 15:18.

2 Corinthians 10:17

Ver. 17. But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. Not in himself, nor in his outward circumstances of life, or inward endowments of mind; not in his natural or acquired parts; not in his wisdom, knowledge, learning, and eloquence; nor in his own righteousness, labours, and services, much less in other men's labours; nor in his own sense of himself; nor in the opinion and popular applause of others; but in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the author and donor of all gifts, natural and spiritual; in his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and in his judgment and approbation of men and things, which sense the following words direct unto.

2 Corinthians 10:18

Ver. 18. For not he that commendeth himself is approved,.... Such may be said to commend themselves, who ascribe that to themselves, which do not belong to them; as that they are the ministers of Christ, and sent forth by him, when they are not; who boast that they have large ministerial gifts, when they have none; and of their great service and usefulness, when it is all the produce of other men's labours; and what they have and do, they wholly impute to their own power and industry, and not to the grace and power of God: now such persons are neither approved by God, nor good men; for their own self-commendation stands for nothing, and is so far from being acceptable to God or men, that it must be nauseous and disagreeable; see Pr 27:2.

But whom the Lord commendeth: they are approved by God and men, and they are such whom he highly honours, as he did Paul, by counting them faithful; and putting them into the ministry, by qualifying them for his service, by assisting them in it, and making them abundantly useful for the good of souls, and the glory of his name: by all which he bears a testimony to them, and shows his approbation of them, and at last will say, well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Corinthians 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS 11

In this chapter, the apostle continues his discourse concerning the false teachers; blames the Corinthians for their connivance at them, and subjection to them; gives a true and ample description of them; compares himself with them, and by various instances shows, that he was greatly superior to them: and whereas self commendation was necessary, and could not be avoided in this argument, and this might look like folly, and by some be deemed such, he entreats the Corinthians that they would bear with him in it, as well as in his reproofs and admonitions to them, 2Co 11:1 and assigns his godly jealousy over them, as the reason why he entered into this subject, and proceeded in such a way of reasoning on it; and the rather this might be bore with in him, since he had such a concern in espousing them to Christ; his end in which was, to present them a chaste virgin to him, 2Co 11:2 and what this jealousy was he explains, lest their minds should be corrupted by the false teachers, and they should forsake the pure and simple Gospel of Christ; which he exemplifies in the instance of Eve being deceived by the serpent, 2Co 11:3 and proceeds to blame them for preferring these false teachers to the faithful ministers of the word; seeing, put them in the best light they could, it was but the same Jesus they preached, and not another and a better Saviour; and it was but the same spirit of faith they received through their ministry, and not another and a better; and the same Gospel they brought, and did not come with better news, or more joyful tidings; had this been the case, there would have been some reason for extolling one above another, 2Co 11:4 for which there was not the least foundation, especially with respect to the Apostle Paul, who was not inferior to the chief of the true apostles of Christ, and therefore could not be at all behind these men, 2Co 11:5 and seeing it might be objected to him that he was rude in speech, when these were men of great eloquence, he allows it; but then affirms he was not so in knowledge, in which he exceeded them; for the truth of which, lie appeals to the Corinthians themselves, 2Co 11:6 and he suggests, that it was very ungrateful in them, that inasmuch as he humbled himself when among them, by working with his own hands, that they might be exalted, that they should despise him on that account, and prefer these avaricious men before him, 2Co 11:7 when that he might be able to preach the Gospel freely, he took of other churches, 2Co 11:8 and particularly was supplied by the Macedonian brethren, and so was not at all chargeable and burdensome to them, and he was determined ever to remain so, 2Co 11:9 and which he confirms by an oath, that no man should ever be able to prevail upon him to take anything of the churches in the region of Achaia, in which Corinth was, 2Co 11:10 and whereas it might be insinuated that such a resolution showed that he had no true affection for them, this he denies, and appeals to the omniscient God for the truth of his love to them, 2Co 11:11 but the true reason why he had so determined, was to prevent the false teachers having any opportunity to reproach him, and exalt themselves, 2Co 11:12 and this leads him on to a description of them, by their ambition and arrogance, in assuming a title that did not belong to them; by their crafty, cunning, and deceitful manner of working, and by their hypocrisy in mimicking the apostles of Christ, 2Co 11:13 nor need this seem strange to any, when Satan himself has been transformed into an angel of light, 2Co 11:14 and whom, the apostle suggests, these men imitated; whose ministers they were, though they looked like ministers of righteousness, and on whom the apostle denounces severe punishment, 2Co 11:15 and as he saw himself under a necessity of boasting, in order to stop the mouths of these men, to vindicate himself, and prevent mischief being done by them, he renews his entreaty in 2Co 11:1 that the Corinthians would not reckon him as a fool; or if they did, that they would bear with his folly, and suffer him to boast of himself a little, 2Co 11:16 and that the Christian religion, and the Gospel of Christ, might not come under any reproach and blame, for his conduct in this particular, he observes, that what he was about to say on this head of boasting, was not by any order or direction from the Lord, but of himself, and might have the appearance of folly in it, 2Co 11:17 and the rather he might be indulged in it, seeing many, even the false teachers, had gloried in a carnal way, and of outward things, and which made it necessary that he should glory also, 2Co 11:18 and which foolish boasting in them, even many of the Corinthians had bore with, and that with a great deal of pleasure; and therefore might suffer him, a single man, to boast a little of himself unto them, whom he ironically calls wise, 2Co 11:19 of which he gives instances, by being brought into bondage, devoured, pillaged, insulted, and abused, by the false teachers, 2Co 11:20 nor had they abused and reproached them only, but the apostle also, as weak and contemptible; but then he would not bear it, but would boldly engage and enter the lists with them, though this might be by some reckoned foolish boasting, 2Co 11:21 and then follows the comparison between him and them, by which it appears that he was upon an equal foot with them, on account of nation, descent, and parentage, 2Co 11:22 that he was superior to them as a minister of the Gospel, as was manifest by his more abundant labours in it, and by his sufferings for it, the dangers he was exposed unto on account of it, and the many hardships he endured in the ministration of it, of which he gives a variety of particulars, 2Co 11:23 to which he adds, besides these things, and all other outward ones, that the daily care of all the churches of Christ was upon him, 2Co 11:28 and such was his sympathy with all sorts of Christians, even the weak and offended brethren, that he was affected with them, bore their infirmities, and sought to reconcile and make them easy, which greatly increased the weight of business that was upon him, 2Co 11:29 and seeing there was a necessity of glorying, he chose to glory in his infirmities and sufferings, and on which he had mostly enlarged, 2Co 11:30 and for the glory of divine Providence, and to express his thankfulness for the mercy, he relates a particular instance of deliverance from imminent danger; for the truth of which he appeals to the God and Father of Christ, the eternally blessed One, 2Co 11:31 the danger he escaped, the manner and means of the escape, and the place where, are particularly mentioned, 2Co 11:32.

Ver. 1. Would to God you could bear with me a little,.... The false apostles boasted so much of their gifts, abilities, and usefulness, that the apostle found himself under a necessity of saying some things in his own defence, for the honour of God, and the good of this church; which otherwise his modesty would not have permitted him, and which he saw would be accounted and censured as folly in him by others; and therefore he entreats their patience a little while, and that they would suffer him to say a few things in vindication of his character, and not be offended; though it would be in commendation of himself, which, were he not forced to, would look vain and foolish: and therefore says,

bear with me a little in my folly, and which he presses with importunity,

and indeed bear with me; he insists upon it, he urges it as what he must not be denied in; for could he have avoided it, he would not have done it; but such was the case, that if he did not do it, he must greatly suffer in his character and usefulness; the members of this church would be in great danger from these false apostles, and the honour and glory of Christ lay greatly at stake; which when considered, he hoped his request would be granted: the last clause may be rendered, but also ye do bear with me; signifying that they had done so already, and continued to do so, and therefore he could not but encourage himself, that they still would bear with him a little longer, and in a few things more.

2 Corinthians 11:2

Ver. 2. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy,.... He lets them know it was not so much on his own account, or at all with any selfish views, or for any secular interest of his own, that he was so concerned, but it was "a godly jealousy", or a "zeal of God"; which he was inspired with by God, and which was for the honour and glory of God, even Jesus Christ, who is God overall; and for their real good and spiritual welfare, as a church of Christ, that possessed him, which put him upon saying what he was about to do; and what affected him the more was, when he considered himself as a friend of the bridegroom, who had been concerned in the betrothing of them to Christ:

for I have espoused you to one husband; by whom is meant Christ, as the following clause explains it: Christ stands in the relation of an husband to the church catholic and universal; to the whole general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; even to all the elect of God, that ever were, are, or shall be; and so he does to particular congregated churches, as he did to this church at Corinth, and so he does to every individual believer: which character he responds to, by loving them with a love prior to theirs, a love of complacency and delight, which is single, special, and peculiar, strong and affectionate, wonderful and inconceivable, constant, and what will last for ever; by sympathizing with them under all their afflictions, temptations, desertions, and exercises of every kind; by nourishing and cherishing them, which phrases are expressive of the spiritual food and clothing he provides for them, of that intimate communion he admits them to, and of that whole care he takes of them; by paying all their debts, supplying all their wants, supporting them with his right hand, protecting them against all their enemies, giving them grace here, and glory hereafter; and, last of all, by interesting them in his person, and all that he has, in all the blessings and promises of the covenant in his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. The act of espousing, the apostle here, with respect to this church, takes to himself, though in another sense, and which is the principal one, it is ascribed to Christ himself, who betroths all his to himself in righteousness, in judgment, in lovingkindness, and tender mercies; he saw them in his Father's purposes and decrees, in all the glory they were designed to be brought unto, when he loved them as his Father did, and desired them for his spouse and bride, which was granted to him; and then secretly in covenant betrothed them to himself, and ever after looked upon them as in a conjugal relation to him; wherefore though they fell in Adam, and became guilty and filthy, he gave himself for them as his church and bride, to sanctify and cleanse them, that he might present them to himself, just such a glorious church he had seen them before. In consequence of this, the Spirit of God attends the ministration of the Gospel, to the conversion of each of these souls, when they become willing to be the Lord's, and give their free and full consent to have him for their husband; and this is the day of their open espousal to him, and in this the apostle had, and other ministers of the Gospel have a concern; he was a means, in the hands of the Spirit, of their regeneration, a minister by whom they believed, an instrument in directing their souls to Christ, by setting forth his unsearchable riches, the glory of his person, and fulness of his grace: as Abraham's servant set forth the greatness of his master, and the large possessions his son was heir to, and brought out his bracelets and ear rings, his jewels of gold and silver, and thereby gained his point, a wife for Isaac; so the Spirit of God going along with the ministration of the apostle so wrought upon these Corinthians, as to give up themselves to the Lord, and take him for their head and husband, Saviour and Redeemer. This was the concern the apostle had herein, and his view, desire, and hope were, to set them before Christ their husband, pure and incorrupt:

that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ; that is, single in their love to, him, strictly adhering to him, and him only, as standing in such a relation to them; pure in the principles of faith, sincere and upright in their worship, and holy in their lives and conversations; nothing was more desirable to him than this, that he might thus present them to Christ at the great day; whereby it would appear, that his labour was not in vain in the Lord: now having been concerned in this affair of espousing them to Christ, and they not yet presented to him, or took home by him, he could not, as things were circumstanced, but entertain a godly jealousy over them in his own breast, lest the false apostles should draw them aside in any degree from their love to Christ, and faith in him.

2 Corinthians 11:3

Ver. 3. But I fear lest by any means,.... Jealousy is always attended with fear, care, and solicitude, whether in things natural or spiritual. The apostle, as things were in this church, could not but express his fears, lest

as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety; that is, the old serpent the devil, who made use of a serpent, the most subtle creature of all the beasts of the field, and seduced Eve from her obedience to God, to transgress his command, by eating the forbidden fruit. The apostle here speaks the language and sense of the Jews, who say {p}, that, Mhl dxa Mv vxnw Njv "Satan and the serpent have one name", i.e. are the same; and that it was the old serpent (the devil), hwxl ytpd, "that beguiled Eve" {q}, and who is said to be corrupted by him;

"the serpent (they say {r}) was corrupted first, after that, hwx hlqlqtn, "Eve was corrupted", and after that Adam was corrupted."

So the apostle was jealous and fearful, knowing that the false apostles were ministers of Satan, artful and cunning men, lest, through their craftiness and sophistry, your minds, says he,

should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ; that is, lest their judgments should be misled, their minds be vitiated with corrupt principles, and be carried away in any degree with the error of the wicked, from off the pure and simple doctrine of the Gospel, which respects the person and grace of Christ; and chiefly lies in this one plain, easy, and important truth, salvation alone by him. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "your minds should be corrupted, and should fall from the simplicity that is in Christ".

{p} Caphtor, fol. 93. 1. {q} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 50. 1. {r} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 15. 2.

2 Corinthians 11:4

Ver. 4. For if he that cometh,.... Meaning either some particular man, the apostle might have had some information of, who came from Judea to Corinth, under the character of a true apostle; or anyone of the false apostles whatever, who came of their own accord, and was never sent by Christ, or by any of his churches:

preacheth another Jesus whom we have not preached; that is, if he proposes and recommends in his ministry, a better Saviour and Redeemer than had been preached by the apostles; one that was better qualified, and more fit for the purposes of salvation; one that they could more safely venture their souls upon, and believe in, as the alone able and all sufficient Saviour, a thing impossible to be: or the sense is, if this other apostle taught the doctrine of salvation by Christ, in another and better method and in a clearer manner, more to the honour of the Redeemer, the glory of God, and the good of their souls, they would have some reason then to pay a greater regard to him:

or if ye receive another spirit which ye have not received; a better spirit than the Spirit of God, which the had received through the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles; either for graces, for they had received him as a spirit of regeneration and conversion, of sanctification and faith, of adoption and liberty, of peace and joy, and comfort; or for gifts, both ordinary and extraordinary, which could not possibly be; the spirit which the contrary ministers brought with it, and tended to not generate in them, must be the reverse of this, even a spirit of bondage again to fear:

or another Gospel which ye have not accepted, or "embraced"; a better Gospel than had been preached by the apostles, and received by them; which contained more wholesome doctrines, more comfortable truths, more excellent promises, better tidings of good things, than those of peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation, by a crucified Jesus; proposed a better scheme of things, more for the honour of the divine perfections, and for the comfort and safety of believers; and which laid a better foundation for faith and hope, and tended more to encourage true religion and powerful godliness:

ye might well bear with him; receive his doctrine, submit to his authority, and prefer him to the apostles: but since another and a better Saviour than Jesus of Nazareth could not be proposed, or the doctrine of salvation by him be preached in another and better manner than it was; nor had they received, nor could they receive, another and a better spirit, than the spirit of grace and truth, which was communicated to them, through the apostle's ministry; nor was a better and a more excellent Gospel preached to them, than what they had heard; therefore they ought not to connive at, indulge and tolerate, such a false apostle among them, which it seems they did; and was the reason of the apostle's fears and jealousies, before expressed: and besides, supposing that this man that was among them, and caressed by many of them, did preach the same Jesus, and the same doctrine of salvation by him, and the same Spirit and power went along with his ministry, it being the same Gospel that was preached by Paul and others, there was no reason why he should be set up above them, who had been the instruments of conveying the Gospel, and the Spirit of it, to them, long before he was known by them.

2 Corinthians 11:5

Ver. 5. For I suppose I was not a whit behind,.... This is very modestly expressed by the apostle; for he does not assert, and in a haughty and confident way affirm, but only supposes, or thinks that this might be admitted, that he was not inferior to, or did not come short of, in gifts, grace, and usefulness,

the very chiefest of the apostles: such as Peter, James, and John; who seemed to be pillars, were eminent apostles, of great note among them, and such as Christ, in the days of his flesh, took particular notice of. This he says, not to exalt himself, but to show, how weakly and injudiciously the Corinthians acted in setting up the false apostle above him; or else these words are spoken ironically, and design the false teachers, who vaunted so much of their gifts, learning, eloquence, and usefulness; and extolled themselves at such a rate, as if they were uper lian apostolwn, "greatly above the apostles"; and therefore he jeeringly calls them

the very chiefest of them; and yet thinks fit to put himself at least, upon an equality with them: one manuscript reads, "the chiefest of the apostles among you"; and the Ethiopic version seems to have read you.

2 Corinthians 11:6

Ver. 6. But though I be rude in speech,.... Which might be objected to him, setting himself upon a level with men so famous for their diction, and elegance of style; and to this he answers, not by owning he was so, but granting it to be so; for the Apostle Paul was not an unlearned man, an idiot in speech, unskilful in language, his writings testify the contrary; he did not indeed, in his public ministry, dress his sermons with the flowers of rhetoric, or adorn his discourses with the words of human wisdom, with bombast, and great swelling words of vanity; he chose a plainer and easier style, more accommodated to the vulgar, to the capacities of the people he was concerned with; for he had not to do with philosophers and senators, but with the common people chiefly; with persons of every sex, age, and condition of life: in this sense indeed he acted as an idiot, a plebeian, a private person; he used a popular style, or, as the Jews say of several of their Rabbins {s}, he jwydh Nwvl vrwd, "preached", or explained "in the common language" of people; which the common people used, and not the learned, and to which reference may be had here: but though he wisely pursued this method, as being most likely to be useful,

yet he was

not rude

in knowledge, or unskilful in the mysteries of the Gospel; he was well learned in the knowledge of Christ, and in the doctrines of grace, as all his discourses, sermons, and letters testified; and however negligent he might be thought to be of his style, and take no pains or care about the elegance of his language, but rather studied a plain and popular diction, yet he was always careful to convey profitable and useful knowledge to the souls of men; and thought his discourses might not be fraught with all the beauties of oratory, and enticing words of man's wisdom, they were full of spiritual knowledge, and showed him to have a large understanding of divine things, for the truth of which he appeals to the Corinthians:

but we have been thoroughly manifest among you in all things; his faith and doctrine, as well as manner of life, were well known unto them; he had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God unto them: his knowledge in the mystery of Christ's person and grace, and in all the parts of the everlasting Gospel, was no secret to them; he had used no artful methods to hide himself, or conceal the truth; but by manifestation of it, had commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God; and by observing this, as he had witnesses now among them of the truth of it, so he strikes at the hypocrisy and deceitful methods the false teachers took to cover themselves, their practices, and principles.

{s} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 104. 1.

2 Corinthians 11:7

Ver. 7. Have I committed an offence in abasing myself,.... Either by behaving among them, when he was first with them, in a very modest and humble manner, in much fear and trembling, without pride and haughtiness, or affectation of power and authority over them; or by using a popular style, suited to the capacity of the common people; or by labouring with his own hands, exercising his trade of tent making among them, that he might provide food for himself, and not be chargeable to them; and which he suggests was so far from being criminal in him, that he ought rather to be commended for it; since it could not be thought to be with any view to himself, and his own advantage, but purely for their good:

that you might be exalted; that nothing might lie in their way of receiving the Gospel of Christ, or prejudice them against it; that they might the more easily be brought to listen to it, come to the knowledge of it, and embrace it, and so be exalted, as they were, to a participation of the grace of Christ; to fellowship with him; to the honour and dignity of being a church of Christ; to an enjoyment of the privileges of God's house; to have a name better than that of sons and daughters, and to have a right and title to the heavenly glory: "because", or is it

because I have preached to you the Gospel of God freely? The Gospel he preached was not his own, but God's; of which he was the author; his grace was the subject of it, and his glory the end of its ministration; which he had given to the apostle to preach; to which he had separated him, for which he had abundantly qualified him, and in which he was greatly succeeded by him. This he preached "freely" to the Corinthians at his first coming among them, without putting them to any expense, or receiving anything from them; which though he might lawfully have done, yet he judged it most advisable, at that time, to minister to his own necessities, by working with his hands, lest he should be burdensome to them; and this be an objection to the Gospel he preached, that he sought rather theirs than them; and for so doing he was not to be blamed, but to be praised: and yet such was the weakness of many at least in this church, that they highly valued the false apostles, who made merchandise of them, and treated with contempt this excellent servant of Christ, who had freely imparted the Gospel to them.

2 Corinthians 11:8

Ver. 8. I robbed other churches,.... Meaning the churches of Macedonia; not that what he had of them was by force and rapine, or by plundering of them, and spoiling of their substance, and living upon them against their wills, as soldiers use a conquered people, though the allusion is to such a custom; for what he had of theirs was freely communicated to him; as appears from the following verse: but because these churches from whom he received were poor, and the Corinthians whom he served were rich, he calls it a robbing of the former, though there was no injury in the case, for it was voluntary, because it was expended for the service of the latter:

taking wages of them to do you service; or "for your ministry"; either to supply their poor, or rather to support the ministry of the Gospel among them. The apostle continues the metaphor, taken from soldiers, to whom wages are due for their warfare; as are also to the ministers of the Gospel, the good soldiers of Jesus Christ; since no man goes a warfare at his own charges and expense but is for by those in whose service he is: and therefore, though the apostle did not think it advisable to ask for, and insist upon wages from them at that time, for his service among them, yet he took it of others in lieu of it; and this he mentions, partly to show that wages were due to him for his ministry, and partly to observe to them who they were beholden to for the support of the Gospel at first among them; as also to stir them up to be serviceable to other churches, as others had been to them.

2 Corinthians 11:9

Ver. 9. And when I was present with you, and wanted,.... Whilst he was among them, preaching the Gospel to them, he wanted the common necessaries of life: and yet, says he,

I was chargeable to no man, or "benumbed no man"; a metaphor, as some think, taken from the torpedo, or cramp fish; which is of such a cold and benumbing nature, as that, when even at the hook, it will strike the fisherman with its cold, and so benumb him as to take away his feeling, and the use of his limbs: now the apostle's meaning is, that he did not chill and benumb any man's charity, by asking relief from him, for he importuned no man on this account; nor was he benumbed himself, to the detriment of any man; for though he was reduced to great straits, he was not slothful and sluggish in preaching the Gospel, but pursued it with as much diligence and industry as if he had been supported by it in the most handsome manner; nor did he act the part of an idle drone, sit still and starve, but laboured with his own hands, to the relief of himself and others; and whereas it could not be thought he should be able to provide this way thoroughly, both for himself and these that were with him, it was made up by other hands:

for that which was lacking to me; which he could not make up by his own hand labour and industry:

the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied; meaning either Silas and Timotheus, who came to him from Macedonia, whilst he was at Corinth, working at his trade with Aquila and Priscilla, Ac 18:5 who might bring him a supply out of these parts; or else some that belonged to the churches of Macedonia, particularly the Philippians, who frequently communicated to him, and sent him presents by some or other of the brethren, as by Epaphroditus, **Php 4:15**.

And in all things, adds he,

I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you; he worked hard, lived sparingly, and received from others; that as in respect to his maintenance, so in everything else he might live without being a dead weight upon them, or any ways troublesome to them: not that a minister's maintenance is, or ought to be reckoned a burden upon a people; it is but a due debt, and what is their just right; but because it is accounted so by carnal men, and such as are disaffected to the Gospel, and the ministry of it, therefore the apostle uses such language:

and so will I keep myself; time is, for the future; he having taken up a resolution in himself not to be chargeable and troublesome to them, but to provide for himself some other way. This he adds, lest they should think that he had said what lie did to stir them up to a discharge of their duty, in contributing towards his support for time to come.

2 Corinthians 11:10

Ver. 10. As the truth of Christ is in me,.... To show the firmness of his resolution, and how determined he was to abide by it, he joins an oath to it; for these words are the form of an oath; and it is as if he should say, as sure as Christ is truth, who is in me; or as that the truth of grace, or the truth of the Gospel of Christ is in my heart and mouth, so sure will I constantly persevere in this determination; or let the truth of Christ never be thought to be in me, if I do not:

no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia; or this boasting shall not be stopped in me; of preaching the Gospel freely at Corinth, and that he had not been chargeable and burdensome to them; nor would he be for time to come, neither there, nor in any part of Achaia, of which Corinth was the metropolis;
See Gill on "2Co 9:2". No man should stop his mouth from boasting of this, by putting anything into his hands, for he was determined not to receive anything from any person in these climates; not but that he reserved a liberty in himself to receive from other persons and churches, for his comfortable subsistence, and so much the limitation of his resolution to these parts implies; for if he had not intended to have received a supply from any persons whatever, the restriction to the regions of Achaia would have been unnecessary; and he should rather have said, that no man should stop him of this boasting in any part of the world. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "this boasting shall not be broken"; and to the same sense the Syriac version, "this boasting shall not be abolished".

2 Corinthians 11:11

Ver. 11. Wherefore? because I love you not?.... Why did the apostle do this? why did he take nothing, and resolve to take nothing of the Corinthians, for preaching the Gospel to them? why did he determine, that no man should prevent his glorying of this, in all the country of Achaia? was it because he did not love the Corinthians? some might insinuate this was the reason of it, that he had no true affection for them, and therefore would take none of their gifts, but despised both them and theirs, and loved the Macedonian and other churches better than they. To which he answers by saying,

God knoweth; which is another form of an oath, and is a solemn appeal to God, the searcher of hearts, who knows all things, that he knew he heartily loved them; that it was not want of love to them, which was the reason of his entering into such a resolution, never to take anything of them; but it was something else, quite another thing, which induced him to it, and is mentioned in the following verse.

2 Corinthians 11:12

Ver. 12. But what I do, that I will do,.... As he preached the Gospel freely at Corinth and in Achaia, so he was determined to do it for the future, for this reason only, or chiefly:

that, says he,

I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion: meaning the false apostles, who sought for, and were desirous of every occasion and opportunity of exalting themselves, and reproaching him: that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we; the sense of which according to some interpreters is, that whereas some of the false apostles, at least who were rich men, took nothing for preaching, but gave their labours freely, were very desirous that the apostle would receive of the churches in these parts, that they might have an occasion against him, and an opportunity of showing themselves, as in learning and eloquence, so in this respect, to be superior to him, in that they preached freely, and he for gain; wherefore to cut off such an occasion, the apostle determines he would take nothing; that in this very thing which they boasted of, that they preached the Gospel freely, they might appear to be at most to be but upon a par with the apostle, and not to exceed him. This sense would seem very appropriate, was it a clear point that the false apostles received nothing for preaching; but the contrary is most evident; wherefore the apostle's meaning is, that these men were desirous that he would take wages, because they did; that in this respect he might not excel them, and that they might be able to plead his example and authority, and so get an occasion of extorting more money from the Corinthians: wherefore to cut off all such occasion from them, the apostle resolves to take nothing himself; that whereas they boasted they were equal to, or superior to the apostles, they might be found, would they follow their example, even as they, not taking any money at all of them, and poor, and working with their own hands.

2 Corinthians 11:13

Ver. 13. For such are false apostles,.... Such as those he had in view, who sought an occasion to depress him, and exalt themselves, and to get money from the Corinthians; these were "false apostles", or apostles falsely so called; they had the name, but not the thing; they were not called and sent forth by Christ; they had not the grace of apostleship, or gifts qualifying them for that high office; the power and authority they exercised was usurped by them; they could not prove their mission by true and real miracles; nor had they any seals of their apostleship, as those who were sent by Christ had:

deceitful workers; they went by the name of labourers in Christ's vineyard, when they were loiterers in it; they pretended to work, but did not; and to work for Christ, when they only served themselves, and their own bellies; they took upon them to interpret the Scriptures, but in a very fallacious manner; they walked in craftiness, and handled the word of God deceitfully, and lay in wait to deceive men; and were masters of so much art and cunning, that, if it was possible, they would have deceived the very elect:

transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ: not so much by putting on a like garb or dress, but by pretending to be of the same principles, and to follow their practices, and to pursue the same good ends in their ministrations.

2 Corinthians 11:14

Ver. 14. And no marvel,.... This need not be wondered at, nor is it any new or strange thing; nor should it be thought to be incredible that there are such persons in being:

for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light; a good angel, one that has his abode in the regions of light; and is possessed of divine and spiritual light and understanding; who is clothed and arrayed with light, this is his form and essence. The apostle speaks agreeably to the notion, of the Jews, who say {t}, "rwa Mh Mlk Mykalmhv, "that all the angels are light", the clothing of God himself;"

and they have a distinction between Mwyd Nykalm, "angels of the day", and angels of the night {u}: now Satan, the enemy of mankind, sometimes appears in the form of one of these; as he did to Eve in the garden, and to Christ in the wilderness; and by such appearances he often imposes on mankind; pretends the greatest friendship, when he designs nothing but ruin; and under a notion of good, either honest, or pleasant, or profitable, draws on into the commission of the greatest evils; and, under a show of truth, introduces the most notorious falsehoods and errors; and, under a pretence of religion, all sorts of idolatry, superstition, and impiety; it is in this way he has succeeded in his enterprises and temptations; these are his wiles, stratagems, and cunning devices.

{t} R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 18. 4. {u} Zohar in Numb. fol. 91. 1. & 93. 3.

2 Corinthians 11:15

Ver. 15. Therefore it is no great thing,.... It is no strange and wonderful thing; it may easily be given into; no man need to make any doubt of it, or hesitate concerning it, since the devil himself, who is an angel of darkness, is transformed into an angel of light:

if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; not that they really are transformed into such ministers, but they appear and look like such; they are not really, but "as the ministers of righteousness"; they put on the form and air of faithful upright ministers of the word, and would be thought to be such; they mimic Gospel preachers, who assert the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, though they most miserably corrupt it, and blend it with something of their own; and which they endeavour to palliate, and cover from the sight of men; and especially they set up themselves as such, by pretending to be great friends to holiness and good works, which they press with much vehemence, and oppose to the doctrines of grace, with all their might and main; in doing which, they greatly serve their master, whose ministers they are; and who well knows that the doctrine of works may do much prejudice to the Gospel interest, and churches of Christ, but will never convert nor save one soul: a dreadful character these men have, for though they would pass for ministers of righteousness, friends to holiness, and men zealous of good works, they are no other than ministers of Satan, doing his work, serving his interest, and propagating his kingdom, which is a kingdom of darkness:

whose end shall be according to their works; for either God will make public examples of them in this world, or if they are not made manifest here, though they may deceive themselves and others, they cannot deceive God; he will take off the mask, their hypocrisy shall be detected, their evil works will be laid open, and they will be judged according to them, and condemned for them to everlasting punishment.

2 Corinthians 11:16

Ver. 16. I say again, let no man think me a fool,.... For praising himself, or speaking in his own commendation; which he was obliged to do, in vindication of his own character, against the false apostles, for the sake of the Gospel he preached, and for the advantage and welfare of the Corinthians; that they might not be imposed upon and carried away with the insinuations of these deceitful men; wherefore he desires them once more, that if he must be accounted a fool for speaking in his own behalf;

if otherwise, says he, if they could not be persuaded that he acted a wise part, but must be looked upon as a fool, for what he said of himself,

yet as a fool receive me; or "suffer me", or bear with my folly: he desires that he might have, and use the liberty which fools have usually granted to them, to speak out the truth, and all they know, which is not always allowed to wise men:

that I may boast myself a little; in a few instances, and for a small space of time; he suggests, that the false apostles boasted much of themselves, and they bore with them, and had done so for a great while; and therefore it was no unreasonable request he made, that they would also suffer him to boast of himself a little, especially since there was such an absolute necessity for it.

2 Corinthians 11:17

Ver. 17. That which I speak,.... Meaning in vindication and commendation of himself, on this subject of glorying; or, as here expressed, in this confidence of boasting; for which he thought he had good ground and foundation to go upon, and therefore might express himself with the greatest assurance, see **2Co 9:4** this he declares he spoke not as from the Lord, but of himself:

I speak it not after the Lord; or "Christ", as some copies read; or "our Lord", as the Syriac version; his sense is, that he did not then speak as an apostle, or one sent by Christ; he put off this character for the present, and took that of a fool upon him, that he might speak the more freely to the Corinthians, and the more severely against the false apostles; he did not pretend to any express command from Christ for so doing, or that he acted in imitation of him, who was meek and lowly; or that what he said came from the Spirit of the Lord; or, indeed, that it was agreeably to his own Spirit, and the principles of grace formed in him; but was obliged to it, through the boasts of the false apostles; which though it was not criminal and unlawful, but necessary, right, and proper, considering the reasons of it, the end for which, and the intention and view with which it was done; yet viewing the form and manner of this boasting, without attending to the circumstances of it, it had the appearance of folly: wherefore the apostle says, he spoke not as according to the commandment, or example of his Lord; or according to the Spirit of the Lord, or his own Spirit, as renewed by his grace:

but as it were foolishly; he does not say that what he said was foolishness, but it looked like it, and would be deemed so by such who were strangers to the true springs of it.

2 Corinthians 11:18

Ver. 18. Seeing that many glory after the flesh,.... Or with respect to things external, such as their high birth and parentage, carnal descent, circumcision, learned education, and the like; of which the false apostles, being Jews, boasted, who it seems were many; and though a multitude is not to be followed to do evil, yet the apostle thought, that since there were so many who were indulged by this church in this way, he might be allowed to boast also of such like things, so far as he could with truth and a good conscience, and in order to secure some valuable ends:

I will glory also; for he was of the seed of Abraham as well as they, of the stock of Israel, and tribe of Benjamin, circumcised the eighth day, and brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; but these are not all the things he could, and would, and did glory of; he gloried of these, and of others besides them, which the false apostles could not, and thereby proved himself to be superior to them, even in external things, of which they bragged so much.

2 Corinthians 11:19

Ver. 19. For ye suffer fools gladly,.... They bore with the false apostles, who were fools; were continually proclaiming their folly, boasting of themselves, ascribing that to themselves which did not belong to them, and were puffed up by their fleshly minds; they indulged these men in their folly, and that with pleasure and delight; they not only winked at it, and overlooked it, but were pleased with it: seeing ye yourselves are wise; acting like men who count themselves wise, and keep fools for their pleasure, diversion, and sport. These words may be considered either as spoken seriously by the apostle, and as wondering that they should suffer such fools to go on in their vain boasts, and especially with pleasure; since they were men of wisdom, who were otherwise taught of God, and by the word; they had been made wise unto salvation, and were enriched in all utterance, and in all knowledge; they had been instructed by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and in the mysteries of his Gospel; and therefore it was surprising that they could bear with such vain and foolish men, and especially with delight; for though it is the part of a wise man to bear with fools, yet not with pleasure; so that this carries in it a tacit reproof to them: or else the last clause may be considered as spoken ironically, and as a severe jibe upon their folly for tolerating such a parcel of fools among them; as if he should say, you show yourselves to be men of wisdom, as you would be thought to be; you act the wise part, do not you, in suffering such empty headed men to converse with you, and delight in their vain talk and conversation? however, the whole furnishes out an argument for the apostle, and which he means to improve; that if they could suffer and bear with such fools, and so many of them, and that gladly, then they might and ought to bear a little with him in his folly, which is what he entreats of them.

2 Corinthians 11:20

Ver. 20. For ye suffer if a man bring you into bondage,.... They not only suffered and tolerated the foolish boasting of these men with pleasure, but patiently and stupidly bore their oppressions, injuries, and insults, things that were intolerable, which no man of any sense and wisdom would ever suffer; and yet they took all quietly from them, made no objection, but patiently submitted to them, and therefore might well bear a little with him; they were voluntarily led captive, and brought into bondage by them, to the yoke of the ceremonial law, to the observance of circumcision, meats and drinks, days, months, times and years; and to the yoke of human doctrines, traditions, tenets, laws, and rules: if a man devour or eat; though they devoured their houses, as the Pharisees did; ate up their substance, were insatiable in their covetousness; were greedy dogs that could never have enough, could not satisfy their voracious appetites, without devouring and consuming all they had, yet they took it patiently:

if a man take of you; not food and raiment, or a proper stipend, or wages which might be voluntarily raised, and cheerfully given; but they took away their goods from them by force, as the Arabic version reads it, whether they would or not, to which they quietly submitted:

if a man exalt himself; as these men did, extolling their nation, their descent and lineage, their parentage and education, and fleshly privileges; in suiting the Corinthians as persons of a mean and base extraction, as having been Heathens and sinners of the Gentiles, yet not a word was returned in answer thereunto:

if a man smite you on the face; though they gave them very opprobrious language, vilifying and reproaching them as uncircumcised persons, upbraiding and hitting them on the teeth with their former idolatries and manners of life; yet all was taken in good part, so much were they under the government and influence of these men.

2 Corinthians 11:21

Ver. 21. I speak as concerning reproach,.... These words may be considered either as explanative of the latter part of the former verse, "if a man smite you on the face"; that is not to be understood strictly and literally, of one man's striking another on the face, but of reproach and contumelious language, used by the false apostles to the Corinthians; or they may have reference to the apostle's design in the whole, which was partly to reproach, the Corinthians for acting such a stupid part, in patiently bearing so many and such indignities from these men; and partly to expose the scandalous and reproachful usage of them by the false apostles, that if possible their eyes might be opened to see through them, and discard them: or else these words may be regarded in connection with what follows, as though we had been weak; and then the apostle's meaning is, that as to the business of scandal and reproach he was speaking of, this was not confined to the Corinthians only, but they the true apostles had their share of it; for the false apostles reproached them, as poor, weak, fearful, and pusillanimous men; because they did not use that authority, and exercise that domination over them, they did not bring them into bondage, devour their substance, take away their goods from them by force, insult over them, and treat them in an ignominious and contemptuous manner; and intimated that they were upon all accounts inferior to them, and not worthy to be mentioned with them; which moved the apostle to exert himself, and boldly rise up in his own defence, saying,

howbeit, wherein soever any is bold; to boast of his pedigree, character, office, and usefulness,

I speak foolishly; as it might seem, and be so interpreted by some,

I am bold also; to enter the lists with him, to compare notes, and see on which side the superiority lies; and which is done in the following verses, to the full confutation of all the pride, vanity, blind boasting of the false apostles.

2 Corinthians 11:22

Ver. 22. Are they Hebrews? so am I,.... The nation of the Jews were called Hebrews, not from Abraham, as some have {w} thought, through ignorance of the Hebrew language, which will by no means admit of such a derivation and etymology of the name; wherefore the Jewish writers never make mention of this opinion as among any of them; had they took their name from Abram or Abraham, they would rather have been called Abramires or Abrahamites, and not Hebrews; besides, Abraham himself is called an Hebrew, Ge 14:13 and to be so called from himself, and not denominated from some other person or thing, can never be imagined, it would be most absurd and ridiculous; to which may be added, that the apostle in this verse makes mention of being the seed of Abraham, as a distinct character from that of Hebrews: others have been of opinion that the name is derived from rbe, "Habar", which signifies, "to pass over"; and was occasioned by one or other of the following events; either from Abraham's passing over the river Euphrates, when he came out of Mesopotamia into the land of Canaan, and so was called Abram, yrbeh "Hahibri, the passer over", or the Hebrew {x}, and so his posterity were called after him; or from the posterity of Canaan, who, after the confusion at Babel, settled in that part of Asia which lies between the river Jordan and the Mediterranean sea, and from them called the land of Canaan; and who were called by the Chaldeans, from whom they separated, and by the neighbouring nations, Hebrews, or passers over, because they passed over the river Jordan; and so Abraham passing over the river Euphrates to them, and learning their language, and continuing there, he was called an Hebrew also, and his posterity after him {y}; or from Arphaxad, or Heber, passing over the river Tigris or Euphrates, and settling in the land of Canaan {z}; but it is not likely that a nation should take its name from such an event: others think it a more probable opinion that Abraham was so called, and hence his posterity after him, from the name which the Canaanites gave to Mesopotamia, from whence he came; calling it Heber Hannahar, or the country beyond the river: just as we call foreigners Transmarines, or people beyond sea; and of this opinion were some of the Jewish writers {a}; but not Mesopotamia, but Canaan, is called the land of the Hebrews, Ge 40:15. The more commonly received opinion with the {b} Jews is, and which is most likely, that they are so called from Heber, the father of Peleg, in whose days the confusion of languages was made, and what is now called the Hebrew language being the first and original one, was retained in him and in his family; hence Shem is said to be the father of all the children of Heber, Ge 10:21 that is, the Hebrews, as the same people are called the children of Israel from Israel, and the children of Judah from Judah, and sometimes they go by the name of Heber, as in Nu 24:24 when as the Assyrians are called Ashur, from whom they have their name, so the Hebrews are called Heber, from whom they take their denomination: and it should be observed, that this is not only a national but a religious name, and those people were called so, because they were of the faith as well as the descendants of Heber; so Shem was the father of others, but in a peculiar manner the father of the children of Heber, because the religion he professed was continued with them; and so Abraham is particularly called the Hebrew, not only because he descended from Heber, but was of the same, religion; and so his posterity, not in the line of Ishmael, but of Isaac, are so called; and not as descending from Isaac in the line of Esau, but of Jacob; and hence it was not lawful for the Egyptians to eat bread with the Hebrews, not because they were of another nation, but because of another religion, Ge 43:32. It seems that these false apostles were Jews, since it is not denied by the apostle, but granted; they were some such like false brethren as those who came from Judea to Antioch, and disturbed the church there, Ac 15:1 and whereas they boasted of their being Hebrews, the descendants of the ancient patriarch Heber in the line of Abraham; the apostle was able to match them in this, and asserts himself to be an Hebrew too, which he could do with the strictest truth, for he was an

Hebrew of the Hebrews, he was an Hebrew by father and mother's side:

are they Israelites? so am I. The Jews were called Israelites from Israel, a name which was given to Jacob their ancestor, upon his wrestling with an angel, and prevailing over him; and was accounted an honourable one, or title of honour; for the people of Israel were they whom God chose for a peculiar people to himself above all others, brought them out of Egypt, fed them in the wilderness, and led them through it, and settled them in the land of Canaan, and bestowed upon them special and peculiar privileges; see **Ro 9:4**. The Jews are very extravagant in the praise of Israelites; they not only make them the favourites of God, beloved of him, because called children, and had the law given them {c}, and extol them above all mankind; See Gill on "Ro 3:9" but they even make them equal to the ministering angels, and say they are pure from sin as they, especially on the day of atonement {d}, yea, more excellent than they {e}: in this also the apostle could answer them, for he was of the stock of Israel, and of the tribe of Benjamin, a son of Jacob, or Israel; and was an Israelite indeed, as Nathanael, for all are not Israel that are of Israel:

are they the seed of Abraham? so am I: of this the Jews mightily boasted; see **Joh 8:33** they reckon themselves, even the poorest among them, as the nobles and princes of the earth {f}; and even other people have been fond of being reckoned of the stock of Abraham, as particularly the Lacedemonians,

"Areus king of the Lacedemonians to Onias the high priest, greeting: It is found in writing, that the Lacedemonians and Jews are brethren, and that they are of the stock of Abraham:" (1 Maccabees 12:20,21)

The Jews make a merciful disposition to men to be a sign and evidence of being of the seed of Abraham {g}; but in a spiritual sense, an interest in Christ, and faith in him, denominate men to be truly Abraham's seed, and heirs of the promise: this is to be understood here in a natural sense, and of being of Abraham's seed in the line of Jacob, for otherwise the Ishmaelites and Idumeans were of the seed of Abraham; but they were his seed in that line in which the promised seed, the Messiah, was to come; though this was of no avail, without having the same faith Abraham had, and believing truly in Christ, as his spiritual seed do, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; however, the apostle was equal to them in this respect; he was of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, and above them in another, in that he was of Abraham's spiritual seed by faith in Christ Jesus.

{w} Artapanus apud Euseb. praepar. l. 9. c. 18. p. 420. Ambrosius sive

Hilarius in Phil. iii. 5. & alii. {x} Hicronymus in Ezek. c. 7. fol. 183. B. Theodoret. in Gen. Qu. 60. {y} Erpeuius. {z} Ar. Montan. Canaan, c. 9. Vid. Sigonium de Repub. Heb. l. 1. c. 1. p. 16. {a} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 3. Vid. Jarchium in Gen. x. 21. & xiv. 13. & Aben Ezram in Exod. xxi. 2. {b} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4. Targ. Jon. in Gen. x. 21. Sepher Cosri, par. 1. sect. 49. fol. 24. 2. R. Nehemiah in Bereshit Rabba, ut supra, Aben Ezra in Gen. x. 21. & xxxix. 14. & in Exod. i. 16. Kimchi in rad. rbe. {c} Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 14. {d} Pirke Eliezer, c. 48. {e} lb. c. 47. {f} Misn. Bava Kama, c. 8. sect. 6. {g} T. Bab. Betza, fol. 32. 2.

2 Corinthians 11:23

Ver. 23. Are they ministers of Christ?.... The apostle could have answered to this question that they were not, being neither sent by Christ, nor preachers of him, and who sought their own things and not his, being false apostles, and deceitful workers; but he chose not to litigate this point with them, and by a rhetorical concession allows it; and replies,

I speak as a fool; that is, he might be thought to speak as such an one, for what he afterwards says; and if he was, he must be content, he could not help it, there was a necessity for it, to stop the mouths of these vain boasters:

I am more; that is, more a minister of Christ than they, more manifestly so than they were; yea, he was more than an ordinary minister of Christ, he was an apostle, the apostle of the Gentiles, and laboured and suffered more than even the rest of the true apostles of Christ, and therefore must be greatly superior to the false ones:

in labours more abundant; in taking fatiguing journeys, preaching the Gospel constantly, administering ordinances, working with his own hands, &c.

in stripes above measure; which were cruelly and unmercifully inflicted on him by his enemies, and which he afterwards mentions:

in prisons more frequent; as at Philippi, and so after this at Jerusalem, and Rome, and perhaps in other places, though not recorded; Clemens Romanus says {h}, that he was seven times in bonds:

in deaths oft; that is, frequently in danger of death, in such afflictions and evils as threatened with death, and therefore are so called; see **2Co 1:8**.

{h} In Epist. ad Corinth, i. p. 14. Ed. Oxon. 1669.

2 Corinthians 11:24

Ver. 24. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. We have no account in the Acts of the Apostles, or elsewhere, of any one of these five scourgings, which the apostle underwent from the Jews; but there is no doubt to be made of them. The number of stripes he received at each time agrees with the traditions and customs of the Jews. The original law for scourging a delinquent is in De 25:2 where it is said, "forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed"; according to the nature of the case, forty stripes and no more might be inflicted, but fewer might suffice in some cases; the apostle's having but thirty nine at a time was not because the Jews thought his crime did not require full forty; or that they out of tenderness and compassion to him abated him one; but they proceeded with him to the utmost rigour of this law, according to their interpretation of it; for so runs their tradition {i},

"with how many stripes do they beat him? (a criminal,) it is answered, txa rox Myebra, "with forty save one"; as it is said, "with the number forty"; that is, which is next to forty; R. Judah says, with full forty is he to be beaten;"

but the decision is not according to R. Judah, as the commentators say {k}; and this is the general sense of their {l} interpreters of that law, and what they take to be the genuine meaning of it; so that the apostle was punished according to the extremity of it, in their account. This is a settled rule and point with them, txa rox
Myebra hrwt twqlm {m}, "that scourging according to the law is with forty stripes save one"; Maimonides {n} observes, that

"they did not add to forty, if a man was as strong and robust as Samson, but they lessen the number to a man that is weak; for if a weak man should be beaten with many stripes, he may die; wherefore the wise men say, that if he be never so robust, they scourge him but with "thirty nine";"

so that no mercy shown to Paul, or any regard had to his weak constitution, for it was the utmost they ever inflicted; besides, according to their manner of scourging, See Gill on "Mt 10:17", they could not have given him another stroke, without giving him three stripes more, which would have made it forty two, and so have exceeded, which the law forbids; for they whipped with a scourge of three cords, and every stroke went for three; so that by thirteen strokes, thirty nine stripes were given, and if a fourteenth had been added, there would have been forty two stripes; agreeably to which they say {o},

"when they condemn a delinquent to how many stripes he is able to receive, they do not count but by stripes that are fit to be trebled; if they reckon he is able to bear twenty, they do not say he is to be beaten with twenty one, so that they may be able to treble, but he is to be beaten with eighteen; they condemn to receive forty, and after he begins to be beaten, they see he is weak, and they say he cannot receive more than these nine or "twelve" with which he is beaten, lo, this is free; they condemn him to receive twelve, and after he is scourged they see he is strong and able to receive more, lo, he is free, and is not to be beaten any more upon the estimation:"

so that you see that, according to their own canons, they could if they would have mitigated this punishment of the apostle's; but such was their cruelty and malice, that they carried it to the utmost height they could.

{i} Misn. Maccot. c. 3. sect. 10. {k} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {l} Targum Jon. & Jarchi in Deut. xxv. 3. Zohar in Deut. fol. 119. 3. Joseph Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 23. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. Affirm. 105. {m} T. Hieros. Nazir, fol. 53. 1. {n} Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 17. 1. {o} Ib. sect. 2. Misn. Maccot, c. 3. sect. 11.

2 Corinthians 11:25

Ver. 25. Thrice was I beaten with rods,.... Or "wands", by the Romans; for this was a Roman punishment, distinct from scourging with cords used by the Jews. There is mention made but of one time only that he was so beaten, elsewhere, and that is in Ac 16:22 which was at Philippi; but that he was so many times beaten in this way, there is no room to doubt:

once was I stoned. This was at Lystra, at the instigation of the Jews that came from Antioch and Iconium, Ac 14:19 by whom he was left for dead:

thrice I suffered shipwreck; neither of which are mentioned by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles; for the shipwreck he suffered as when he went to Rome was some time after the writing of this epistle, and therefore cannot be one of these here referred to a night and a day I have been in the deep; some understand this of a well, called "Bythos", or "the deep", which was near Lystra, where the apostle was hid for such a space of time after his deliverance there; but this, were it so, he would scarcely reckon among his very great hardships and sufferings: others of a prison at Cyzicum in Asia, which, because of its very great height, was called "the depth of the sea", in which the apostle was imprisoned for such a time; but, we nowhere read that he ever was at that place, or preached there, and much less was imprisoned there; and had he, it is not likely that he should particularly point out such a short imprisonment, but would have let it pass in the general account of being in prisons before mentioned: but rather this is to be understood of the sea, often called the "deep" in Scripture, where by some accident he was cast, and was in it, as the Syriac version has it, atnypo ald, "where was no ship", or without one, being shipwrecked; or being cast, or having fallen into the sea, he was swimming in it, or was preserved by a broken piece of the ship, or by some other means, or by the wonderful providence of God for so long a time; though as sailing in those times was chiefly by coasting, this phrase may only signify that the ship in which he was was drove from the coast into the sea, and lost sight of the land for the space of a day and night, and lay floating about in the deep, which was reckoned very dangerous. The word nucyhmeron, "a night day", signifies a whole natural day, consisting of a night and a day; and is an Hebraism, and answers to rqbw bre, "the evening and the morning", which make a full day; see **Ge 1:5** **Da 8:14**.

2 Corinthians 11:26

Ver. 26. In journeying often,.... Through several countries and kingdoms to preach the Gospel, as he did from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum:

in perils of waters; by the floods being out, which made it very troublesome and dangerous travelling, especially to persons on foot, as was the case of our apostle:

in perils of robbers; for though he had seldom much to lose, yet was in danger of being ill used, and of his life being taken away by such ruffians:

in perils by my own countrymen; the Jews, who bore an implacable hatred to him, because of the doctrines of grace he preached, in opposition to the works of the law of Moses, whether moral or ceremonial; and who generally were concerned in stirring up the Gentiles against him wherever he came:

in perils by the Heathen; the Gentiles, who were incensed against him for inveighing against their idols and idolatrous worship, and other wicked and enormous practices they were addicted to; particularly at Ephesus, by the means of Demetrius the shrine maker, Ac 19:23,

in perils in the city; in any and every city he came into; for bonds and affliction abode him everywhere, as at Jerusalem, Damascus, Antioch, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, &c.

in perils in the wilderness; by robbers and wild beasts, through hunger and thirst, and by the sands in hurricanes and tempests; though this may be understood not strictly of desert places, but of the country in distinction from the city; See Gill on "Mt 3:1" where travelling is difficult and dangerous, and the people more rustic and uncivil: the phrase, twrbdmh tnkob, "in perils of the wildernesses", is a Rabbinical one {p}; as is also Myb hnkoh, "peril in the sea" {q}, next mentioned:

in perils in the sea; not only by shipwreck, but through pirates, and the ill usage of mariners, want of provisions, &c.

in perils among false brethren; who pretended to be Christians, but "judaized", teaching the necessity of observing circumcision, and other ceremonies of the law, in order to salvation; these, as the apostle always warmly opposed, so they were sworn enemies to him, and ever sought to do him what mischief they could.

{p} Sepher Cosri, fol. 296. 2. {q} Sepher Cosri, fol. 297. 2.

2 Corinthians 11:27

Ver. 27. In weariness and painfulness,.... Through long journeys and frequent preaching; or "in labour and trouble"; or in troublesome labour, for all labour is not so; as hunting, hawking, &c. though laborious, yet delightful; but the labours of the apostle were painful and troublesome to the flesh, though he had much inward spiritual delight and pleasure in them:

in watchings often; being sometimes engaged at midnight, either in preaching, or praying, or staging psalms, and sometimes obliged to work early and late with his own hands to supply his necessities:

in hunger and thirst; as when at sea, or in wilderness places, or where no notice was taken of him for preaching the Gospel; he doing that freely without asking the assistance of any, which in some places would have been prejudicial to his designs, and the spread of the Gospel:

in fastings often; voluntary ones, which he engaged in, not as meritorious works, but to keep under his body, and as proper to attend the work of prayer at certain times:

in cold and nakedness; when travelling in the winter season, and but poorly clothed to keep him from the inclemencies of the weather; and having no certain dwelling place to retire unto and abide in, during any severe season there might be, and wanting the comforts of life to support him under such inconveniences.

2 Corinthians 11:28

Ver. 28. Besides those things that are without,.... Or are omitted, which he had passed by, and had not mentioned in the account and enumeration of things he had given; for otherwise the things he had taken notice of and instanced in, were things external; but besides them and many other things which would be too tedious to relate,

that which cometh upon me daily, is not to be forgotten; meaning the prodigious deal of business which was every day upon his hands, through the continual coming of brethren to him, either for advice, or comfort, or instruction; and through the multiplicity of letters from divers parts, which he was obliged to give answers to; and the several duties of the day, as prayer, meditation, reading, praising, preaching, &c. and to sum up the whole, and which is explanative of the phrase,

the care of all the churches; not of ten, or twenty, or some only; but of all of them, he being the apostle of the Gentiles, and was concerned in planting, and raising them, and preaching the Gospel to most of them; and who continually stood in need of his watch and care over them, to provide ministers for some, to prevent schisms and heat divisions in others; to preserve others from errors and heresies, and warn them of the dangers to which they were exposed by false teachers; and to animate, strengthen, and support others under violent persecutions, lest their faith should fail, and they be tempted to desert the Gospel, and drop their profession of religion.

2 Corinthians 11:29

Ver. 29. Who is weak, and I am not weak?.... What church is so? or what particular believer is so? for he had not only the care of all the churches, but of all believers upon him; whoever was weak in the faith he was concerned for them, to instruct, establish, and strengthen them; and suited his discourses, reasonings, and language, to their capacity, that they might understand him, and take in right notions of things: or whoever was of a weak and scrupulous conscience about things indifferent, and fearful of using them lest they should sin in so doing, he was cautious of offending them, or doing anything by which their consciences should be defiled, and their peace be broken: or whoever was afflicted, either in body or mind, he sympathized and bore a part with them: "who is offended, and I burn not?" whoever was stumbled and made to fall by anything he said or did, or by the words and actions of others, it gave him sensible pain, it made him very uneasy; he was as one in a flame, all on fire, full of grief and trouble till the cause of the offence was removed, and the person offended made easy and restored; the word here used answers to the Hebrew word Mge, used in
Job 30:25 where it is said, "was not my soul grieved for the poor?" which Mr. Broughton renders, "did not my soul burn for the poor?" Now by all this which the apostle did and suffered, by all actions and sufferings, care and sympathy, he fully appeared to be a true and faithful minister of Christ, and abundantly more than the false apostles, who could produce none of these things as testimonies in their favour.

2 Corinthians 11:30

Ver. 30. If I must needs glory,.... The apostle signifies that glorying was not agreeable to him; he was not fond of it, it was a subject he did not delight to dwell upon; what he had done was by force, and through necessity; he was compelled to it by the boasts of the false apostles: and since he must needs glory in order to stop their mouths;

I will glory, says he, of things which concern mine infirmities; meaning not his sins, for these cause shame; but his afflictions and sufferings for Christ, under which he was supported, and from which he was delivered by the power of Christ; and that was the reason he chose to glory of them; for though they rendered him mean and despicable in the eyes of the world, yet his bearing them with so much patience, courage, and pleasure, and his many singular deliverances out of them, served greatly to illustrate the power and grace of Christ, and at the same time proved him to be a true and faithful minister of the Gospel; to whom so much honour was vouchsafed, as to suffer shame for the name of Christ, and to be so singularly marked out by him, as the object of his favour, love, and care.

2 Corinthians 11:31

Ver. 31. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,.... These words are in the form of an oath, and are a solemn appeal to God, that knows all things, for the truth of the whole that he had declared in the foregoing verses, and of the remarkable deliverance related in the following. "God", says he, who is the searcher of hearts, and an omniscient being, to whom all things are open and manifest,

knoweth that I lie not; in anyone single instance he had mentioned, nor in what he was about to declare; which because it was a fact done by a stratagem, and a good while ago, and which was not known to the Corinthians, and of which perhaps at that time he could not produce any witnesses; therefore calls God to testify the truth of it, whom he describes as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"; God is his "God" as Mediator, and head of the elect, to whom as to them he is a covenant God; and as man, being his Creator, supporter, and the object of his faith, hope, love, and worship; and his "Father" as God, and the Son of God, by supernatural generation, being the only begotten of him, in a way ineffable and inexpressible: "and who is blessed for evermore"; in himself, and Son, and Spirit, and is the source of all happiness to his creatures.

2 Corinthians 11:32

Ver. 32. In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king,.... Aretas or Al-Hareth was a king of Arabia, of the family of the Gassanii; among whom were many of this name {r}; and who for some hundreds of years ruled over Syria, of which Damascus was the metropolis. The fourth king of that family was of this name, and perhaps is the person here meant; and after him there were four more of the same family so called; it was a name of Arabian kings in other families. The fifteenth king of the Yamanensians was of this name, and so was the "seventeenth" of the Hirensians {s}, and the "third" of the kings of Cenda; in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, there was an Aretas king of the Arabians, mentioned in the Apocrypha {t}.

"In the end therefore he had an unhappy return, being accused before Aretas the king of the Arabians, fleeing from city to city, pursued of all men, hated as a forsaker of the laws, and being had in abomination as an open enemy of his country and countrymen, he was cast out into Egypt." (2 Maccabees 5:8)

Josephus {u} also makes mention of Aretas king of the Arabians, who seems to have been king of Arabia Petraea, since his royal seat was at Petra, to whom Hyrcanus fled by the advice of Antipater, the father of Herod the great; and there was also one of this name in the times of Herod himself, who succeeded Obodas {w}; yea, there was an Aretas king of Petraea, in the times of Herod the tetrarch, whose daughter Herod married, and put her away when he took Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, which occasioned a quarrel between him and Aretas, which issued in a battle, in which Herod was beaten {x}; and who is thought to be the same king which is here spoken of: the name Aretas or Al-Hareth, as Hillerus {y}, observes, signifies the lion; and a lion with the eastern nations was a symbol of royalty and dominion; hence such names were given to persons of illustrious birth and power; so Ali, the son-in-law of Mahomet, was called by the Arabs and Persians the lion of God: now Syria, where Damascus was, and which is called by Pliny {z} Damascus of Syria, had been of long time in the hands of the kings of Arabia; and {a} Josephus makes mention of Aretas, king of Coele Syria, who was called to the government by those who had Damascus in their hands; very probably by Milesius, who was governor of the tower of Damascus, and commanded twn damaskhnwn thn polin, "the city of the Damascenes", as Josephus calls Damascus, just as it is here in the next clause; in which country of Coele Syria, Ptolomy {b} also places Damascus; and Grotius has proved from Justin Martyr {c} and Terlullian {d}, that Damascus formerly belonged to Arabia, though in their times it was reckoned to Syro Phoenicia: here the apostle preached to the confounding of the Jews that dwelt there, which provoked them to enter into a consultation to take away his life; and that he might not escape their hands, they moved to the then governor who was under the king, that the gates might be watched day and night; see **Ac 9:23** to which he agreed; and as the apostle here says,

kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, or set a guard about it; or as the Arabic version reads it, "he shut up the city"; and placed a watch at the gates of it night and day, or allowed the Jews to do so:

desirous to apprehend me; in order to deliver him into their hands, who were now his sworn enemies for the Gospel's sake; willing to do them this favour to ingratiate himself into their affections; or perhaps it might be insinuated to him, that he was a seditious person.

{r} Pocock. Specimen Hist. Arab. p. 76, 77, 78. {s} Pocock. ib. p. 58, 70, 79. {t} Vid. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 13. c. 13. sect. 3. {u} Antiqu. l. 14. c. 1. sect. 4. de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 2. {w} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 16. c. 9. sect. 4. & c. 10. sect. 8, 9. {x} Ib. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 6. sect. 1. {y} Onomasticum Sacrum, p. 116, 748. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 8. {a} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 15. sect. 1, 2. {b} Geograph. l. 5. c. 15. {c} Dialog. cum Tryphone Jud. p. 305. {d} Adv. Marcion. l. 3. c. 13.

2 Corinthians 11:33

Ver. 33. And through a window in a basket was I let down,.... The house in which he was, like Rahab's, was built upon the wall of the city, and as she let down the spies by a cord through the window, and as David was by Michal; so the apostle was let down by the brethren with cords, as Jeremiah was, Jer 38:6 where the Septuagint use the same word as here, through a window; "which", as the Arabic version reads it, "was in the wall"; or he was let down by the wall side, "in a basket or net"; so sarganh, and atgyro, the word which the Syriac version here uses, signify and design a basket made of withs, wrought together in the form of network; frequent mention is made in the Jewish writings {e} of twnwlxh twgyro, "the networks and lattices of windows"; whether these were not taken off the window and put into a form like a basket, and in it the apostle let down by the brethren with the help of cords, may be inquired into: however, he

escaped his hands; the governor's, and the Jews too who lay in wait for him. This deliverance he mentions with thankfulness to God, and as an instance of divine Providence in the preservation of him, for much usefulness to the church of Christ; the Vulgate Latin version reads, and "thus he escaped his hands".

{e} Misn. Oholot, c. 8. sect. 4. & Negaim, c. 13. sect. 3. T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 125. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Corinthians 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORTHINIANS 12

The apostle in this chapter proceeds upon the same subject, in vindicating himself against the false teachers, and giving proof of his apostleship; he takes notice of a very remarkable and unusual vision he was favoured with; makes mention of an uncommon temptation of Satan, how he was delivered from it, and the use it was of to him; excuses his boasting to the Corinthians; lays the blame of it upon them who obliged him to do it, though they had such undeniable proofs of his apostleship among them; signifies he intended to come and see them, and expresses his strong affection for them, and good will towards them; removes the calumnies of covetousness, guile, and craftiness; reproves them for their sins, and threatens them in case of impenitence. Though in some respects glorying was not so convenient, and quite disagreeable to the apostle himself, yet such were his circumstances, that it was become necessary for him to do it, and therefore goes on with it; and to his character, qualifications, labours, sufferings, and deliverances, adds the visions and revelations of the Lord he had been honoured with, 2Co 12:1 and singles out a very particular one, which he describes by the time when, about fourteen years ago; by the person who saw it, himself, whom he speaks of in the third person, that there might be as little appearance of boasting as possible; by the place where it was seen, the third heaven, into which he was caught; by the form or manner of the vision, or the circumstance and condition in which he was when he saw it, of which he could give no account; as whether in or out of the body, 2Co 12:2, which last circumstance is repeated to denote the certainty of it, and his ignorance as to this part of it; for the truth of which he appeals to God, 2Co 12:3, and affirms again, that such an one as he had described was caught up to paradise; by which he explains what he meant by the third heaven, and further declares, that being there he heard words unutterable, 2Co 12:4. Now though this vision was matter of glorying, yet since he was the person that was so highly honoured with it, he would not dwell any longer on it, but rather speak of his infirmities, as he afterwards does, 2Co 12:5, yet if he had shown a design of boasting, it would not have been acting a foolish part; however, he thought it best to forbear, lest it should lead any into too high an opinion of him, 2Co 12:6, and indeed, these high enjoyments were apt to fill himself with pride and vanity, wherefore God, in his infinite wisdom, thought fit to take some methods to humble him; which leads him to give an account of a sore temptation that befell him, which was grievous to him, and in which he was buffeted by Satan; the end of which was to keep down his pride, and hide it from him, 2Co 12:7. The use this was of to him, and how he behaved under it, and the request he made to the Lord to be freed from it, are declared in 2Co 12:8, to which he received an answer, which was full and satisfactory, gave him pleasure, and determined him to glory in his infirmities, 2Co 12:9, which he does in 2Co 12:10, and gives an enumeration of them, and his reason for glorying in them: and whereas he knew he should be chargeable with folly, in glorying in other things as he had done, he blames the Corinthians for it, who had obliged him to it; for had they engaged as they should have done in the vindication and commendation of him, there would have been no need of his own; and they were furnished with matter and arguments enough for such a purpose, since it must have been a plain case to them that he was not inferior to the chief of the apostles, 2Co 12:11, of which they had a full demonstration, partly by the signs, wonders, and mighty deeds which were done in the midst of them by him, 2Co 12:12, and partly by the gifts of grace bestowed on them through his ministry, on account of which they did not come short of any other churches; unless it was in this, that they had the Gospel preached without charge unto them, 2Co 12:13, the apostle goes on to acquaint them that he had a third time intended to come and see them, when he would be no more burdensome and chargeable to them than he had been before; have no regard to theirs but to them, acting the part of a father that lays up for his children, but takes nothing from them, 2Co 12:14, and expresses his strong affection for them, even though they should show but little to him, and his earnest desire to be serviceable to them, and the pleasure he should take therein, 2Co 12:15, and whereas it was suggested by the false teachers, that though he did not take money of them in person, he had used some underhand crafty methods by the means of others to drain them of it, 2Co 12:16, he replies and vindicates his innocence, by putting the question to them in general; whether he had made any gain by any persons he had sent to them, 2Co 12:17, and particularly inasmuch as he had sent Titus and another brother, whether he had made any gain of them, and whether the apostle and he were not of the same spirit; and whether they did not take the same steps, 2Co 12:18, and then observes, that all the pains that he took in the vindication of himself, was not so much on his own account as theirs, even for their edification, that that might not be hindered, for whom he had the most endeared affection: and for the truth of all this he appeals to God, 2Co 12:19, and closes this chapter with observing the many evils which were among them, which he feared he should find among them, when he came, unrepented of; and which would be matter of grief and humiliation to him, and oblige him to use that severity among them which would not be agreeable to them, 2Co 12:20.

Ver. 1. It is not expedient doubtless for me to glory,.... Though it was lawful for him to glory, and was necessary in the present circumstances of things, in vindication of himself, and to preserve the Corinthians from being carried away with the insinuations of the false apostles; and so for the honour and interest of Christ and the Gospel; yet it was not expedient on some other accounts, or profitable and serviceable to himself; he might find that it tended to stir up pride, vanity, and elation of mind in him, and might be interpreted by others as proud boasting and vain glorying; wherefore he chose to drop it, and pass on to another subject; or rather though it was not expedient to proceed, yet, before he entirely quitted it, he thought it proper to say something of the extraordinary appearances of God unto him. Some copies, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "if there was need of glorying, it is not indeed expedient"; the Syriac version, "there is need of glorying, but it is not expedient"; and the Arabic version, "neither have I need to glory, nor is it expedient for me: I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord"; such as the Lord had made to him, and not man; and which were not the fruit of his own fancy, or the delusions of Satan; but were from the Lord Jesus Christ, and his glory. The apostle might very well speak of "visions" or heavenly appearances, since he was favoured with many; his conversion was owing to a vision or appearance of Christ to him, whom he saw with his bodily eyes, and heard him speaking to him, and which he calls "the heavenly vision"; at another time when at Troas, a vision appeared to him in the night, and a man of Macedonia stood and prayed him to come over and help them; and when at Corinth the Lord spoke to him by a vision, and bid him not be afraid, but go on preaching the Gospel, because he had much people there to be brought in through his ministry: and as for revelations, besides what are ordinary and common to all believers, he had extraordinary ones; the Gospel and the scheme of it, the knowledge of the several particular doctrines of it, were not attained to by him in the common way, but he had them by the revelation of Jesus Christ; the several mysterious parts of it, particularly that of the calling of the Gentiles, to which might be added, the change that will be upon the living saints at Christ's second coming, were made known to him by revelation; and sometimes in this extraordinary way he was directed to go to such or such a place, as at a certain time he went up to Jerusalem by "revelation", where he was to do or suffer many things for the sake of Christ: though he had no revelation of anything that was different from, and much less contrary to the Gospel, and as it was preached by the other apostles; for there was an entire agreement between him and them in their ministry; see **Ga 2:2**, and these visions and revelations were for his instruction, direction, and encouragement in the ministration of the Gospel; and being of an extraordinary nature, were suitable to those extraordinary times, and not to be expected in an ordinary way, nor is there any need of them now; besides, these were visions and revelations of the Lord, and not the effects of enthusiasm, and a warm imagination, nor diabolical delusions, or the pretensions and cheats of designing men; and were for the confirmation and establishment of the Gospel, and not to countenance a new scheme, or introduce a new dispensation; wherefore all visions and revelations men pretend to, which are for such a purpose, are to be despised and rejected.

2 Corinthians 12:2

Ver. 2. I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago,.... Which is to be understood of himself, as appears from 2Co 12:7, where he speaks in the first person; and the reason why he here speaks in the third, is to show his modesty and humility, and how much he declined vain glory and popular applause; and whilst he is speaking of himself, studies as it were to conceal himself from being the person designed, and to draw off the mind of the reader from him to another person; though another cannot be intended, for it would not have been to his purpose, yea, quite beside it, when he proposes to come to visions and revelations he had of the Lord, to have instanced in the rapture of another. Moreover, the full and certain knowledge he had of this man, of the place he was caught up to, and of the things he there heard, best agrees with him; as also his attesting, in such a solemn way, his ignorance of the manner of this rapture, whether in the body or out of the body, and which he repeats and refers to the knowledge of God, clearly shows he must mean himself; besides, it would otherwise have been no instance of any vision of his, nor would the rapture of another have at all affected his character, commendation, and praise, or given him any occasion of glorying as this did: though he did not choose to take it, as is clear by his saying that if he gloried of it he should not be a fool, yet forbore, lest others should entertain too high an opinion of him; and after all, he was in some danger of being elated with this vision along with others, that the following sore temptation was permitted, to prevent his being exalted with it above measure: and when he calls this person, meaning himself, a "man", it is not to distinguish him from an angel, whose habitation is in the third heaven, and so no wonderful thing to be found there; or from any other creature; nor perhaps only to express his sex, a man, and not a woman, though the Syriac version uses the word arbg, peculiar to the masculine sex; but merely to design a person, and it is all one as if it had been said, I knew a person, or I knew one in Christ: and the phrase "in Christ", is not to be connected with the word "know", as if the sense was, that he called Christ to witness the truth of what he was about to say, and that what he should say was not with a view to his own glory, but to the glory and honour of Christ only; but it is to be connected with the word "man", and denotes his being in Christ, and that either, as Dr. Hammond thinks, in a singular and extraordinary manner; as John is said to be "in the spirit", **Re 1:10**, that is, in an ecstasy; and so here this man was in the Spirit of Christ, and transported by him to see visions, and have revelations; or rather it intends a spiritual being in Christ, union to him, the effect of which is communion with him. The date of

fourteen years ago, may refer either to the time when the apostle first had the knowledge of his being in Christ, which was at his conversion; he was in Christ from all eternity, being given to him, chosen in him, loved by him; set as a seal upon his heart, as well as engraven on the palms of his hands, and represented by him, and in him, in the everlasting covenant; and so in time, at his crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God; in consequence of all which, when the set time was come, he became a new creature, was converted and believed in Christ, and then he knew himself to be in him; he was in him secretly before, now openly; and this was about fourteen years before the writing of this epistle; the exact time of his conversion might well be known and remembered by him, it being in such an extraordinary manner: or also this date may refer to the time of his rapture, which some have thought was some time within the three days after his conversion, when he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank; some have thought it to be eight years after his conversion; but the most probable opinion is, that it was not at Damascus, but when he was come again to Jerusalem, and was praying in the temple, and was in a trance or ecstasy, Ac 22:17, though the difference there is among chronologers, and the uncertainty of their conjectures, both as to the time of the apostle's conversion, and the writing of this epistle, makes it very difficult to determine this point. They that make this rapture to be at the time of his conversion, seem to be furthest off of the truth of things; for whether his conversion be placed in the 34th year of Christ, as some, or in the 35th, as others, or in the 36th; and this epistle be thought to be written either in the 56th, or 58th, or 60th, the date of fourteen years will agree with neither: they indeed make things to agree together best, who place his conversion in the year 36, make this rapture to be eight years after, in the year 44, and this epistle to be written in the year 58. Dr. Lightfoot puts the conversion of the apostle in the year 34, the rapture of him into the third heaven, in the year 43, at the time of the famine in the reign of Claudius, Ac 11:28, when he was in a trance at Jerusalem, Ac 22:17, and the writing of this epistle in the year 57. That great chronologer, Bishop Usher, places Paul's conversion in the year 35, his rapture in the year 46, and the writing of this epistle in the year 60. So that upon the whole it is hard to say when this rapture was; and it may be, it was at neither of the visions recorded in the Scripture, which the apostle had, but at some other time nowhere else made mention of:

when, as he here says,

such an one was caught up to the third heaven, the seat of the divine Majesty, and the residence of the holy angels; where the souls of departed saints go immediately upon their dissolution; and the bodies and souls of those who have been translated, caught up, and raised already, are; and where the glorified body of Christ is and will be, until his second coming. This is called the "third" heaven, in respect to the airy and starry heavens. The apostle refers to a distinction among the Jews of yatt aymvw yaeuym aymvw
yalye aymv, "the supreme heaven, the middle heaven, and the lower heaven" {f}; and who also make a like division of worlds, and which they call lpvh Mlwehw yeumah Mlwew Nwyle Mlwe, "the supreme world, and the middle world, and the lower world" {g}; and sometimes {h} the world of angels, the world of the orbs, and the world of them below; and accordingly the Cabalistic doctors talk of three worlds;
hatylt amle, "the third world", they say {i}, is the supreme world, hidden, treasured, and shut up, which none can know; as it is written, "eye hath not seen", &c. and is the same with the apostle's "third heaven". The state and condition in which he was during this rapture is expressed by the following words, put into a parenthesis,

whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth: whether his soul remained in his body, and he was caught up soul and body into heaven, as Elijah was carried thither soul and body in a chariot with horses of fire; or whether his soul was out of his body, and he was disembodied for a time, as Philo the Jew {k} says that Moses was aswmaton, "without the body", during his stay of forty days and as many nights in the mount; or whether this was not all in a visionary way, as John was "in the Spirit" on the Lord's day, and Ezekiel was taken by a lock of his head, and lifted up by the Spirit between earth and heaven, and brought "in the visions of God to Jerusalem", cannot be said. The apostle did not know himself, and much less can any other be able to say how it was; it is best with him to refer and leave it to the omniscient God; one of the four persons the Jews say entered into paradise, who are hereafter mentioned in See Gill on "2Co 12:4", is said to have his mind snatched away in a divine rapture {l}; that is, he was not himself, he knew not where he was, or whether in the body or out, as says the apostle.

{f} Targum in 2 Chron. vi. 18. {g} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 4. & 3. 2, 3. {h} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 83. 2. {i} Zohar in Numb. fol. 66. 3. {k} De Somniis, p. 570. {l} Cosri, p. 3. sect. 65. fol. 190. 1. 2.

2 Corinthians 12:3

Ver. 3. And I knew such a man,.... The same man, namely himself, is here designed, and the same rapture spoken of, and the condition he was in expressed in the same words: which repetition is made for the more strong affirmation of what he delivered, and to signify the marvellousness of this vision, and how surprising and unaccountable it was.

2 Corinthians 12:4

Ver. 4. How that he was caught up into paradise,.... Not the earthly paradise in which our first parents were; this was destroyed by the flood, and the place where it was not now to be known; and to what purpose the apostle should be carried thither cannot be guessed at; though some have thought that this is here meant: but not this, nor any place distinct from the "third" heaven, or place of the blessed, is meant; which is the sense of many of the ancients, who suppose the third heaven and paradise to be two distinct places, and that the apostle had two separate raptures. Clemens Alexandrinus {m}, reads the words thus, "I knew a man in Christ caught up to the third heaven, kakeiyen eiv ton paradeison, from thence to paradise"; and so Theophilact upon the place says, "from the third heaven he was immediately called up into paradise"; and so Oecumenius, "he was caught up unto the third heaven, and so again from thence into paradise"; and some modern writers have been inclined to think there were two raptures, and the rather inasmuch as the apostle is said to be caught "up to" the one, and caught "up into" the other, and makes use of the words "caught up" twice; or otherwise he would be guilty of a tautology, both in that and in repeating his ignorance of the manner of the rapture; to which is added, that he proposed to speak of "visions" and "revelations" in the plural number, 2Co 12:1, and afterwards calls this vision an "abundance of revelations", 2Co 12:7, but as it was at the same time that he was caught up to the third heaven, and into paradise, there being one and the same date of fourteen years ago to both; and as, in the account of the one and the other, he was equally ignorant of the manner how he was caught up, whether in the body, or out of the body; and seeing that there is no account of what he saw and heard in the third heaven, but only what he heard in paradise, which is referred to be told in the after account of this vision; and as the third heaven and paradise are one and the same place, it seems most reasonable to conclude, that not two raptures and two visions are here designed, but only one; and without any show of a vain repetition, the apostle having begun the account of this vision, might reassume what he had said, in order to give a more plain and clear account of it; and especially as there were some things he had not yet mentioned, and the whole was not easy to be understood and taken in, and the manner of it even unknown to himself; and this he might do to raise the attention the more unto it, as being something wonderful and extraordinary; besides, if his design had been to have given an account of two raptures, he would have distinguished them in a numerical way; and would have told us that he was twice caught up, as well as he afterwards says that he besought the Lord "thrice", at another time; and this would have been necessary to have prevented a mistake, of taking the one and the other for the same rapture, as is generally done; heaven is called paradise, because as the garden of Eden, which bears that name, was of God's planting, so is this made and prepared by him; as that was a delightful place, so is this; also because of Christ the tree of life, which is in the midst of it, besides an innumerable company of angels, and spirits of just men made perfect, the pure and undefiled inhabitants of it; and because of the river of divine love, of endless pleasures, the saints there are made to drink of. It was usual with the Jews to call heaven Nde Ng, "the garden of Eden", or paradise; and which they {n} sometimes speak of as upper and lower; the lower they suppose the souls of men are introduced into, immediately upon their dissolution; where they stay a while, and then go up to the upper paradise, the world of souls, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are. The Jews ought not to object to the apostle's being had into paradise before his death, for they tell us of several that entered there whilst alive;

"nine (they say {o}). Nde Ngb Mhyyxb wonkn, "entered in their life time into the garden of Eden", or paradise; and these are they, Enoch the son of Jared, and Elijah, and the Messiah, and Eliezer the servant of Abraham, and Hiram king of Tyre, and Ebed Melec the Ethiopian, and Jabez the son of Rabbi Judah the prince, and Bethiah the daughter of Pharaoh, and Sarah the daughter of Asher; and there are some that say also {p} Rabbi Joshua ben Levi";

and in another place {q},

"four odrpb wonkn, entered into paradise; and these are they, Ben Azzai, and Ben Zoma, another, and R. Akiba;"

upon which is {r} added,

"they entered into paradise as it were by the hands of God, and they did not ascend up above really, but it seemed to them as if they ascended;"

how far this may serve to explain and illustrate the apostle's case, I leave, with this observation more concerning another use of the word paradise with them; which sometimes signifies a considerable share of knowledge of mysterious things, relating to the nature of God, angels, &c. of which Maimonides having spoken, says {s},

"these things the former wise men called odrp, "paradise", as they say, "four entered into paradise": and although they were the greatest men of Israel, and exceeding wise men, yet they had not all of them power to know and comprehend all these things clearly; and I say, that he is not fit to walk odrpb, "in paradise", but he whose belly is filled with flesh and bread, and it is bread and flesh to know what is forbidden, and what is lawful, and the other precepts of a like nature;"

and again {t},

"a man that is filled with all these virtues (meaning with wisdom, and understanding, and government of the passions and appetites) is perfect in his body, as he that enters into paradise, and inclines himself to these things which are great and afar off:"

once more {u},

"the words of the tradition are comprehended in the written law, and the exposition of them in the oral law; and the things which are called odrp, paradise, are contained in the Talmud;"

this they {w} call hmkxh odrp, "the paradise of wisdom"; whether this sense and use of the word may be applied to the passage before us, and so be expressive of that large share of divine knowledge which was communicated in an extraordinary way to the apostle, may deserve some consideration: however, this is certain, that when he was caught up into paradise, he

heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter; to instance in particular things, which be then either saw or heard, as some have done, is bold and daring; as that he saw the divine Being with the eyes of his understanding, the several angelic forms, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, and the glory and beauty of the souls of departed saints; and heard the harmonious music of each of these happy creatures; had a view of the book of life, and was shown the order and method of divine predestination; was let into the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles, and the change that will be on living saints, and heard the whole account of the dispensation of things, in the church of Christ to the end of the world: the things were unspeakable, never yet related, and so not to be known: they were such things which the apostle himself, when out of the rapture, might have but very inadequate ideas of, and such as he was not able to put into proper words and language to be understood by others; and which as he heard them not from a mere man, but from the Lord, so no mere man was able to utter them, none but he of whom he had heard them: and besides, whatever conceptions the apostle might have of them himself, and how capable soever he was of expressing them; yet they were not fit and proper to be told in the present state of things, being no part of the counsel of God relating to man's salvation, the whole of which he faithfully declares; and yet were necessary to be heard by him, in order to establish his faith in the Gospel, to animate him in his ministry, and fortify his mind against all the afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions, he was to meet with for the sake of Christ. The phrase seems to be the same with wrmal rvpa ya, "it is impossible to say it" {x}; and of such like secret things in paradise, or the world of souls, the Jews say {y} that

"they are hidden, and which hbytkb twlel Mywar Mnya, "are not fit to produce in writing";"

and so these were such as were not lawful to speak out, glwssaiv anyrwpinaiv, "with human tongues", as Justin Martyr says {z}; they were not in such sense "unspeakable", as not to be expressed by any; for they were expressed either by Christ himself, who was glorified in human nature, whom the apostle might now see and hear, or by some angel or angels, or they could not have been heard by the apostle as they were; but they were such as before never been spoken to any mortal man, and so could never have been spoken by any; and though they had been spoken to a mortal man, yet they could not be spoke by him to others; for though when he heard them, his human soul, for that present time, might conceive and take in much of the nature and meaning of them, yet they were such as he could not express by words, and represent to others by speech after the vision was over, and especially at this distance: not that it was sinful to have done it, if he could have done it; or that the things themselves were of such a nature, that it would have been criminal to have rehearsed them; but rather that it was impossible to do it, at least fully, since they might greatly regard the glory of the divine Being, and the worship paid him by the heavenly inhabitants: or could it be done in any tolerable manner, it might not be altogether convenient and proper in the present state of things; since the worship of the upper world lying in praise without prayer, might not be so fit to be related, lest it should be imitated by saints on earth: and seeing what the apostle heard was ineffable, and not to be spoken by himself; no credit is to be given to those spurious things called the Revelation and Ascension of Saint Paul, in which the author or authors of them pretend to tell us what these things were.

{m} Strom. l. 5. p. 586. {n} Nishma Chayim, par. 1. c. 10. fol. 25. 2. &c. {o} Derech Eretz, fol. 19. 1. Zohar in Exod, fol. 102. 3. {p} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 31. 1, 2. {q} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 2. {r} Tosephot, ib. {s} Jesode Tora, c. 5, sect. 19, 20. {t} Jesode Tora, c. 7. sect. 2. {u} Ib. Talmud Tora, c. 1. sect. 12. {w} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 96. 4. {x} T. Bab. Megilla, fol, 21. 1. {y} Nishmat Chayim, fol. 28. 1. {z} Expositio fidei, p. 379.

2 Corinthians 12:5

Ver. 5. Of such an one will I glory,.... The apostle in great modesty seems to speak of some other person, and not himself, as caught up into the third heaven, when he yet means himself; and does as it were distinguish himself from himself; himself in paradise from himself on earth; his sense is, that though he might lawfully glory of such a person so highly exalted and favoured, yet since this was his own case, he chose to forbear, and say no more of it:

yet of myself I will not glory; though he could, and might, and did glory in the Lord, who had done such great things for him; as that he was in Christ, and knew himself to be so, had been rapt up into heaven, and heard things unutterable; yet he would not glory of these things as from himself, as owing to any merit or worthiness of his, but as instances of mere favour, grace, and goodness; if he gloried of anything of himself in his present state and condition, it should be of his weaknesses:

but in mine infirmities; not his sinful ones, for these he mourned over, and was humbled before God and man under a sense of; but his many pressing difficulties of life, heavy reproaches, very great afflictions, and violent persecutions he endured for Christ's sake; see 2Co 12:10.

2 Corinthians 12:6

Ver. 6. For though I would desire to glory,..... Had a mind to it, chose it, and was fond of it, thought fit to proceed in this way concerning this vision, or this with many others:

I shall not be a fool; in reality; though he might seem and be thought to be so by others; he does indeed before call his glorying "folly", and "speaking foolishly"; but he means only as it might be interpreted by others, for in fact it was not: the reason is,

for I will say the truth; he said nothing but what was strictly true, in the account of himself in the preceding chapter, and appeals to God as his witness; nor anything in the relation of this vision, but what was entirely agreeable to truth; and to speak truth, though it be of a man's self, when he is called to it, cannot be deemed folly;

but now I forbear; he did not choose to go on, or say any more upon this head at this time; though he had many visions, and an abundance of revelations, yet he did not judge it proper to give a particular account of them:

lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me; should take him to be more than human, as before this the Lycaonians at Lystra did; who supposed that he and Barnabas were gods come down in the likeness of men, and brought out their oxen and garlands to do sacrifice to them; and as, after this, the inhabitants of Melita, seeing the viper drop from his hand without any hurt to him, said he was a god; to prevent such extravagant notions of him, he forbore to say any more of his extraordinary visions and revelations; but chose rather that men should form their judgments of him by what they saw in him and heard from him, as a minister of the Gospel.

2 Corinthians 12:7

Ver. 7. And lest I should be exalted above measure,.... Over much elated in his mind, and swelled with a vain conceit of himself:

through the abundance of the revelations; for he had not only one or two, or a few, but an abundance of them; and which, as everything does but grace, tended to lift up his mind, to stir up the pride of his heart, and to entertain too high and exalted thoughts of himself. Pride is naturally in every man's heart; converted persons are not without it; knowledge, gifts, and revelations are apt to puff up with spiritual pride, unless counterbalanced and over poised by the grace of God. This great apostle was not out of danger by them, for he was not already perfect; wherefore to prevent an excess of pride and vanity in him on account of them, he says,

there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me; many have been the thoughts and conjectures of men about what is here meant by the apostle. This ought to be allowed and taken for granted, that the thorn in the flesh, and the messenger of Satan, design one and the same thing; the former is a figurative expression, the latter a literal one, and explanative of the former. Some have thought that corporeal afflictions are here designed, which may be compared to thorns: see **Ho 2:6**, and which are not joyous, but grievous to the flesh, and come not by chance, but are by divine appointment, and are designed and made use of, to hide pride from men; and sometimes, by divine permission, Satan has an hand in inflicting them, as in the case of Job: whilst such a general sense is kept to, it is not to be despised, without entering into the particular bodily disorder with which the apostle was afflicted, as some do; some saying it was the choleic, others the gout, others a pain in the ear, and others the headache; which latter it is said he was much troubled with; but these are mere conjectures: others think that the corruptions of nature are intended which in regenerate persons are left, as the Canaanites were in the land, to be "thorns" in the eyes and sides of the Israelites, Jos 23:13. These, to be sure, were felt by the apostle, and were very grievous and humbling to him, and were no doubt sometimes stirred up by Satan, which made him complain bitterly, and groan earnestly; and it may be observed, to strengthen this sense, that it was usual with the Jews to call concupiscence, or the vitiosity of nature, Satan; for so they {a} often say, erh
ruy awh Njvh, "Satan, he is the evil imagination", or corruption of nature; and particularly they call the lust of uncleanness by this name; and it is said {b} of a young man of Israel, being tempted by a young woman of Midian, through the counsel of Balaam, that Njvh
wb rewb, "Satan burned in him", and he turned aside after her; and that the evil imagination is the old serpent; yea, they call this "the messenger of hell", a phrase very much like what is here used.

"R. Hona {c}, as he was preaching to the children of men to take warning, said unto them, children, beware Mnhyg lv
axylvm, "of the messenger of hell"; but who is this? the evil imagination, or concupiscence, is that which is "the messenger of hell";"

and this sense is agreeable, provided the particular corruption the apostle was harassed with is not pretended to, as is by some, who pitch upon the lust of

uncleanness, and spare not to mention the person by name, one Tecla, who, they say, travelled with him, and was a snare to him; but this is to do injury to the character of so holy an apostle, and to represent him as exposing himself to the false apostles, against whom he was guarding: others think that a variety of afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions, for Christ's sake and the Gospel, are here meant, which were as pricking briers and grieving thorns to him; see Eze 28:24, and which were given and ordered by divine appointment for his good; this sense, 2Co 12:9, lead unto, and seem to confirm: others are of opinion that the temptations of Satan are designed, which, as they are called "fiery darts", which the archers of Satan, and his principalities and powers, shoot thick and fast at the saints, to their great annoyance; so may be here called, especially some very particular, eminent, and sore temptation, a "thorn in the flesh", very pungent, and giving a great deal of pain and uneasiness; others suppose that some particular emissary of Satan, either some one of the false apostles and teachers, who greatly opposed him, as Alexander the coppersmith, who did him much harm; or such an one as Hymenaeus or Philetus, that blasphemed and spoke evil of him; or some violent persecutor of him is intended. But, after all, I see not but that the devil himself may be meant; for, as before observed, the phrase "a thorn in the flesh" is metaphorical, and the other, a "messenger of Satan", is literal, and explains it; and the whole may be read thus, "there was given to me a thorn in the flesh", namely, aggelov
satan, "the angel Satan to buffet me"; so that Satan, who was once an angel of light, now of darkness, is the "thorn in the flesh"; and might be suffered to appear visibly to him from time to time, in a very terrible manner, and which was very grievous to be borne; he might by permission have great power over his body, as he had over Job's, to use it ill, to beat and buffet it; for this also may be taken literally: and he might likewise in other ways greatly distress him by stirring up the corruptions of his heart; by following him with his satanical injections, suggestions, and temptations; by raising violent persecutions, and instigating many of his emissaries against him; and this sense is the rather to be chosen, because it includes all others that have any show of truth. The Jews {d} sometimes make mention of the angel or messenger of Satan mocking at the righteous, and buffeting them; so God is by them said {e} to deliver Nebuchadnezzar Njvh Kalml, "to a messenger of Satan". This sore exercise befell the apostle for his good, to keep down the pride of his nature;

lest, adds he again, I should be exalted above measure; for such ends and purposes does the Lord, in his infinite wisdom, deal with his people. The {f} Jews have a notion that this was one reason of God's tempting or trying Abraham with the sacrifice of his Son, to depress that pride that was likely to arise in him because of his greatness.

"This temptation (they say) was necessary at that time, because above, the grandeur of Abraham is declared how great it was before his enemies made peace with him; and Abimelech, king of the Philistines, and Phichol, the chief captain of his host, were obliged to enter into a covenant with him, and asked him to show favour to them, and to the land in which he sojourned; and perhaps hereby wbl hbg, "his heart was lifted up", in the ways of God; wynye wmrw, "and his eyes were lofty"; when he saw himself blessed with riches, and with children, and with grandeur and glory, as the glory of kings; wherefore God was "willing to try him": with a wall of iron, (this great difficulty) to see if there was any dross left in him."

{a} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 16. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 2. 3. s. 3. 10. 4. 13. 3. 20. 2. 50. 3. 58. 3. 72. 4. 73. 2. 86. 1. 87. 2. 93. 1. 96. 1. 99. 4. 100. 4. 101. 42. 113. 1. & 133. 2. & 141. 3. &; 149. 2. & 152. 3. Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 7. 2. {b} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 229. 1. {c} Midrash Hannelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 67. 4. {d} R. Eliezer Katon de Scientia Animae, l. 10. apud Gaffarell. Cod. Cabal. Misc. pic. Mirandal. Index p. 23. ad calcem Wolf. Heb. Bibliothec. {e} Shemot Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 105. 4. {f} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 22. 1.

2 Corinthians 12:8

Ver. 8. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice,.... With respect to the thorn in the flesh, the messenger Satan, who gave him so much continual disturbance. This sent him to the throne of grace, to request of the Lord,

that it, or rather, "he might"

depart from me: this request greatly confirms the above sense, for it can hardly be thought the apostle would be so importunate about the removal of a common bodily affliction; and he knew that the corruption of his nature would remain with him as long as he was in the body; and as for afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions for the Gospel's sake, he was well apprized they would abide him wherever he went; but that so troublesome an adversary might depart, as it must be greatly desirable, so it was a very proper request: and it is made to a very proper person, to the "Lord" Jesus Christ; who in the days of his flesh had such power over the devils, as to dispossess them from the bodies of men by a word speaking, and held them in subjection, and in a panic fear of him; and when upon the cross, he spoiled principalities and powers, and in the latter day will bind Satan with a chain, and shut him up in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. This request was made thrice, not with any view to the three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit; nor to the three usual times of prayer in a day, morning, noon, and night; nor is any exact number of times intended; but the sense is, that he frequently besought the Lord on this account.

2 Corinthians 12:9

Ver. 9. And he said unto me,.... Either by what the Jews call lwq tb, "Bath Kol", a voice from heaven, an articulate audible one; or by some extraordinary revelation of the Spirit of God; or by a divine impression upon his mind; whereby he was assured of what follows,

my grace is sufficient for thee; the Lord always hears and answers his people sooner or later, in one form or another, though not always in the way and manner they desire; but yet in such a way as is most for his glory and their good: the apostle had not his request granted, that Satan might immediately depart from him, only he is assured of a sufficiency of grace to support him under the exercise, so long as it should last. There seems to be an allusion to the word ydv, "Shaddai", an appellation of God, Ge 17:1, and signifies, "which is sufficient": for God is all sufficient, and is a name that belongs to the Messiah. The angel whom God promised to the Israelites, to go before them in the wilderness, Ex 23:23, the Jews say {g} is "Metatron" (which is a corruption of the word "mediator"), whose name is as the name of his master. "Metatron" by gematry is "Shaddai, one that is sufficient": however, certain it is, that the grace of Christ is alone sufficient for all his people, to all saving purposes, in all their times of need. It is alone sufficient, not to the exclusion of the grace of the Father or the Spirit; but in opposition and distinction to anything else, that may be rightly or wrongly called grace; what men generally call common or sufficient grace, which, they say, is given to all men, is a mere chimera; no grace is sufficient but what is effectual, and that is only the grace of Christ: the light of nature is insufficient to any saving purpose; the Gospel, which is called grace, and is the means of grace, is insufficient of itself to salvation, without the powerful and efficacious grace of Christ going along with it; and so are gifts, whether ordinary or extraordinary: nothing short of the grace of Christ is sufficient grace; and this is sufficient for all the elect of God, Jews and Gentiles, Old and New Testament saints, the family in heaven and in earth, the people of God that are already called, and are to be called, and for the worst and vilest of sinners; and it is sufficient to all saving purposes, to the acceptance of their persons before God, to their justification in his sight, to their pardon and cleansing, to their regeneration and sanctification, to the supply of all their wants, and to their perseverance in grace unto glory; and it is sufficient in all their times of need, in times of bodily affliction, of violent persecution, soul desertion, Satan's temptations, and at the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. The reason given to support this answer, and to strengthen the apostle's faith in it, is,

for my strength is made perfect in weakness; by the "strength" of Christ is meant, not his strength as the mighty God, but that communicative strength which he has, and is in him as Mediator, and which saints look to him for, and receive from him; this is "made perfect in" their "weakness"; not that their weakness can add perfection to his strength, for his strength is perfect in itself, not to say anything of the contradiction such a sense carries in it; but the meaning is, that the strength of Christ is made to appear, is illustrated and shines forth in its perfection and glory, in supplying, supporting, and strengthening his people under all their weakness; and if they were not left to some weaknesses in themselves, his strength would not be so manifest; see **Jas 2:22**. The answer to the apostle's request, supported with this reason, was wonderfully satisfactory to him; wherefore he concludes,

most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities; in the weaknesses which attended either his body or soul, through the buffetings of the angel Satan, rather than in his visions and revelations; or rather than insist upon his departure from him, he is content things should be as they were, since he had such a promise of a sufficiency of grace to bear him up, under and through whatever was the pleasure of God concerning him; and since the strength of Christ was made illustrious through his weakness, so that Satan was not able to make any advantage over him, he is willing to remain in the same posture and condition:

that the power of Christ, says he,

may rest upon me, or "tabernacle over me"; he considered himself as a poor weak feeble creature, and the power of Christ as a tabernacle over him, as the power of God is represented as a garrison about the believer, **1Pe 1:5**, sheltering, preserving, and protecting him from the insults of Satan, in every form and shape; see **Isa 4:6**, where Christ is said to be a tabernacle, for a place of refuge, and for a covert.

{g} Jarchi in Exod. xxiii. 23. Sepher Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Numb. fol. 87. 1.

2 Corinthians 12:10

Ver. 10. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities,.... Not in them simply considered, but as they were made use of to his advantage, for the exercise of his grace, and for his more abundant consolation; and especially as they tended to the glory of Christ, and made his grace, power, and strength the more conspicuous: by infirmities are meant all outward troubles, everything that is mean and abject, distressing and afflicting, whether from Satan or the world; it seems to be a general term, which includes and is explained by the following particulars:

in reproaches; of Satan, the accuser of the brethren, who sometimes reproachfully insinuates that they are hypocrites, and serve God and Christ with mercenary views and selfish ends; and of the men of the world, who traduce them as deceivers, treat them with opprobrious language, and lead them with revilings and contumelies, endeavour to take away their characters, credit, and reputation; the faithful servants of Christ must go through bad report, and suffer shame for the name of Christ; but these reproaches with Moses are esteemed by them greater riches than the treasures of Egypt:

in necessities; not of the soul, the better part, there being a sufficiency of grace in Christ to relieve all its wants; but of the body, the apostle was sometimes reduced to very necessitous circumstances, wanting the common necessaries of life, being hungry, thirsty, and naked, and yet cheerful:

in persecutions; from place to place by the enemies of the Gospel, by whom he was severely handled by beating, scourging, and imprisonment; but his stripes were the marks of the Lord Jesus; his chains were his crown, and his prison a palace to him:

in distresses, or "straits"; both as to body and mind, encompassed with such difficulties that he knew not what way to take, or course to steer: and all

for Christ's sake; not for any real crime done by him, but for a profession of Christ, preaching his Gospel, and for the glory of his name; and which made all these afflictions so delightful to him, having in the midst of them the love of God to comfort him, the power and strength of Christ to support him, and the grace of the Spirit to assist him, and the presence of all the three Persons with him; this he suggests to be the ground and reason of his delight and pleasure, in such otherwise disagreeable circumstances:

for when I am weak, then am I strong; when he was attended with all the above mentioned infirmities, when laden with reproaches, surrounded with necessities, followed with persecutions, and brought into the utmost straits and difficulties, and was most sensible of his weakness in himself to bear and go through all these things; then was he upheld by the divine arm, and strengthened by the power of Christ; so that he was not only able to sustain the conflict, but became more than a conqueror, and even to triumph in the midst of these adversities; he could and did readily take the advice in **Joe 3:10**, and express himself in the same language there directed to, and to which he seems to refer, "let the weak say I am strong"; for he that is weak in himself, and sees himself to be so, is strong in Christ, and has a comfortable experience of renewed strength from him, as his day is. The Jews have a saying {h} somewhat like this,

"the righteous even Myqzxtm Myvlx Nhvk, "when they are weak strengthen themselves"; as it is said, Ge 48:2, and the wicked, though in their strength, fall, according to **Es 7:8**."

{h} Baal Hatturim in Gen. xlviii. 2.

2 Corinthians 12:11

Ver. 11. I am become a fool in glorying,.... This is either to be understood conditionally, if he had acted as a fool in commending himself, or was to be reckoned and called so by others, for glorying of himself, his visions and revelations; or as an ironical concession, allowing himself to be a fool for so doing, as he knew he should be traduced by his enemies; which concession he makes with a view to remove the blame from himself, and cast it upon the Corinthians: ye have compelled me: they were not only the occasion of his glorying, but they had forced him to it by their conduct; for he was obliged either to take this method for the vindication of his character, and preserve his future usefulness, or else to suffer the false apostles to triumph over him, to the great detriment of the Gospel, and of this church at Corinth particularly; whereas both might have been prevented, had they acted the part that became them:

for I ought to have been commended of you; when the false apostles reproached him, and insinuated things among them to his disadvantage, they ought not only to have turned a deaf ear to them, and to have checked and reproved them, and so have put a stop to their calumnies; but they should have spoke in commendation of him, and have declared how faithfully he had preached the Gospel to them; how useful he had been to their souls, for conviction, conversion, edification, and comfort; how laborious and indefatigable he had been in his ministry; what success attended him, and what wonderful things were done by him in proof of his divine mission; all which they were conscious of, and could with the utmost safety have affirmed of him:

for in nothing, says he,

am I behind the very chiefest apostles; meaning either the false apostles, who set themselves upon an equality with the true ones, and above him; or rather the real apostles of Christ, and those that were of the greatest note among them, as Peter, James, and John; for though he was behind them in time, yet not in gifts, labour, and usefulness: but lest this should be thought to savour of vain boasting, he adds,

though I be nothing; which may be considered either as a declaration of his own thoughts of himself, and an humble acknowledgment of his own nothingness; that he was nothing as a man, as an Hebrew, a Pharisee, with respect to his external privileges and righteousness, not more and better than others; and nothing as an apostle and a Christian of himself, but was wholly and entirely what he was by the grace of God; or as the judgment and opinion of the false apostles concerning him, who spoke of him, and treated him as a worthless man, of no account, and not to be regarded.

2 Corinthians 12:12

Ver. 12. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you,.... Not only the doctrine which he preached, the power that attended it, and the success it met with among them, were clear signs and evident proofs of his being sent by Christ; not only they themselves, who were converted under his ministry, were testimonials and seals of his apostleship, but also the many other wonderful works done by him confirmed the same, and showed him to be an apostle, and that he was not a whit behind, but equal to the chiefest of them: nor does he refer them to signs that were wrought by him, among others, and in other places, which were many; but to those which they themselves were witnesses of, and therefore might and ought to have spoken of them in defence of him; and in order to stop the mouths of the false apostles, a particular enumeration of these signs follows:

in all patience; it is one sign, and what is here mentioned in the first place of an apostle and minister of Christ, that he patiently bears all injuries and indignities, reproaches, persecutions, and all manner of afflictions, for Christ's sake and the Gospel's; and this the apostle did; and had he not been sent by Christ, it is not reasonable to imagine that he would have exposed himself to so many evils and dangers; or would have bore with so much patience the ill usage of men, and particularly the unkindness and ingratitude he met with at Corinth; but he took all patiently, having their good and the glory of Christ at heart:

in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds; meaning preternatural and miraculous performances; such as raising the dead, healing the sick, cleansing lepers, casting out devils, speaking with divers tongues, and the like, which were confirming evidences of apostleship; so
Nyrwbgw Nyon, "wonders and powers", or "mighty deeds", are mentioned together by the Jews {i}, as the same things.

{i} Zohar in Exod. fol. 96. 2. & 97. 1.

2 Corinthians 12:13

Ver. 13. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches,.... The apostle here suggests, and appeals to themselves for the truth of it, that in nothing they came short of other churches; that as he was not behind the very chiefest of the apostles, and so they had no reason to be ashamed of him and despise him; neither were they inferior in gifts, grace, and knowledge, to other churches, all which were through his ministry; wherefore they ought to have spoken well of him, and not to have taken the part of the false apostles against him; since all the honour and credit they were in as a church were owing to him as an instrument. The Gospel was first preached to them by an apostle; they were converted under the ministry of an apostle; they were planted and settled as a church by the means of an apostle; and in which respects no church could go beyond them, or boast of more; they had the same Gospel preached to them, and with as much power and purity as other churches; they had received the same Spirit, the same graces, and the same gifts of the Spirit, both ordinary and extraordinary; so that they came behind others in no gift whatever; see

1Co 1:7, and had the same miraculous works done among them, as were in other places, for the confirmation of the Gospel. There was not one thing the apostle could think of, in which they differed from others, and which he mentions;

except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? because he freely preached the Gospel to them, took no wages of them, but chose rather to work with his own hands, and supply his necessities, than to be troublesome to them; in this, indeed, they differed from other churches, who liberally contributed to their ministers, and honourably maintained them:

forgive me this wrong; not that the apostle seriously desired this, or thought that he had done them any real injury, and so acknowledges it; for if any wrong was done hereby, it was to himself, and not them; but it is an ironical way of speaking, and was a sharp rebuke to them, for their ignorance, ingratitude, and negligence.

2 Corinthians 12:14

Ver. 14. Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you,.... Not that he had been twice at Corinth, and was now about to come a third time; for as yet he had been but once there, when he first preached to them, was the means of their conversion, and settled them in a church state; he had promised them to come a second time, but as yet was prevented; see 1Co 16:5, and now a third time he had purposed it in his mind, and had prepared for it, and was just ready to come unto them; when he assures them he had not altered his mind, nor should he change his conduct, but steer the same course he had:

and I will not be burdensome to you; he signifies he would preach the Gospel freely to them, and take nothing of them; and this he says lest they should think with themselves, that though he took no stipend of them before, yet when he came again he would:

for I seek not yours; their money and substance, as did the false apostles:

but you; they themselves, their spiritual good and welfare, the comfort, edification, instruction, and salvation of their immortal souls; like a good and faithful shepherd, who sought not the fleece, but the good of the flock; or rather like a loving tender father, that was affectionately concerned for the good of his children:

for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children; not but that children ought to take care of, and provide for their aged and indigent parents, and churches ought to maintain their faithful ministers; but the apostle argues from a common fact which nature and affection direct unto, and have formed into a sort of a law, that parents not only care for their children, bring them up, and provide for them food and raiment; but as they are blessed by Providence, lay up treasures for them for tithe to come, and not children for their parents; this is neither usual nor necessary, for however, as the case may be, children may be obliged to maintain their parents when grown old and in want, yet not to lay up substance for them for futurity; and by it the apostle suggests, that he was a spiritual father to these Corinthians, and they were his children; for whose spiritual welfare he had the highest concern, and whatever he did was out of no disrespect to them, but from the strongest affection for them.

2 Corinthians 12:15

Ver. 15. And I will gladly spend,.... Meaning all his time, talents, and strength, which God had bestowed upon him for their spiritual profit and advantage; yea, all that small pittance of worldly goods that he enjoyed: he not only determined to take nothing from them, but was willing to communicate his little substance to them, or spend it in their service; and not only so, but be spent for them:

and be spent for you, or "for your souls": for the good of them; his sense is, either that he was willing to have his whole substance expended, if it would be of any use to them; or his whole strength exhausted, in laborious preaching to them; or even his life to be laid down for them, was it necessary; which sense is favoured by the Syriac and Arabic versions; all which expressed his tender affection as a spiritual father for them: adding,

though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved; though he loved them more than he did other churches, or than the false apostles loved them, and yet were loved by them less than he was by other churches; or by them, than the false apostles were; or rather the meaning is, that though he increased in his love, and in the expressions of it to them, and they grew colder and more indifferent to him, yet this should not hinder his warmest desires and most earnest endeavours after their spiritual and eternal welfare. This way of speaking strongly expresses his love to them, and tacitly implies the lukewarmness of theirs to him; and yet that it should be no discouragement to him to proceed in doing them all the service he was capable of.

2 Corinthians 12:16

Ver. 16. But be it so, I did not burden you,.... These words are not spoken by the apostle in his own person of himself, but in the person of his adversaries, and contain a concession and an objection of theirs, but be it so; they granted that he had not burdened the Corinthians, that he had took nothing of them himself for preaching the Gospel; they owned that he had preached it freely; this was so clear a point, and so flagrant a case, that they could not deny it; yet they insinuated to the Corinthians, and objected to the apostle, that though he did not receive anything from them with his own hands, yet he craftily and cunningly made use of others to drain their purses, and receive it for him; and which is suggested in the next clause:

nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile; so say the false apostles of me; for these are not the words of the apostle in his own person; nor to be understood of any spiritual craft, or lawful cunning and prudent artifices used by him, to allure and draw the Corinthians into a good liking and opinion of the Gospel and of his ministry, and so caught them, and was the happy means of their conversion; but they are spoken in the person of the false apostles, charging him with a wicked and criminal craftiness, by making use of other persons in a sly underhanded way, to get this church's money, when he pretended to preach the Gospel freely; to which he answers in the next verse.

2 Corinthians 12:17

Ver. 17. Did I make a gain of you,.... He appeals to the Corinthians against such calumnies and false insinuations, whether ever he had circumvented them in such a manner, or had ever used such artful methods to pillage them; or whether ever he had discovered any covetous disposition towards anything of theirs; or had employed any persons to draw out their substance from them, and get it for himself: he owns he had sent some persons to them on different errands, and asks if he had dealt fraudulently with them,

by any of them whom, says he,

I have sent to you: he desires them to name one single person of the many who came to them from him, that had received any money from them for him; or that they had any reason to believe he had employed for such purposes; and if they could not pitch on a single instance, they ought therefore to look upon this as a downright slander and calumny.

2 Corinthians 12:18

Ver. 18. I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother,.... The apostle proceeds to mention one or two persons that he had sent unto them, and desires to know whether they could charge them with any such practices. He had desired, exhorted, and encouraged Titus to go unto them, and collect money from them; but not for either of themselves, but for the poor saints at Jerusalem; and he sent another brother along with him, who is by some supposed to be Luke, to be a companion of him, and an assistant to him; and who was a witness of what he did, and for what purpose he was sent, and how he behaved:

did Titus make a gain of you? did he greedily desire your substance? did he show an avaricious temper, or a covetous inclination after your money? did he by any methods extort it from you? say if Titus, or the brother with him, received anything from you, either on their own, or my account?

walked we not in the same Spirit? in the same Spirit of God, being directed and influenced by him; or in the same disposition of mind, being agreed and determined to preach the Gospel freely, and receive nothing for it:

walked we not in the same steps? took the same methods, lived the same course of life, working with their own hands to supply their wants, rather than be burdensome to others: the apostle suggests, that where are the same Spirit, temper, disposition, and principles, there will be the same works and actions; and as for covetousness, it is neither agreeable to the Spirit of God, nor to the spirit of a Christian.

2 Corinthians 12:19

Ver. 19. Again, think you that we excuse ourselves to you?.... The apostle would not have the Corinthians imagine, that by what he had said once and again in this epistle, he meant to excuse himself from coming to them, for he really and sincerely intended it; or that by this long defence of himself against the false apostles, he designed so much an apology for himself, or that he used any feigned words, or artful methods, to exculpate himself from any charge against him, particularly that of covetousness just mentioned; for he had no view to cover himself by studied apologies, and set orations, and evade anything exhibited against him, and make himself look innocent when guilty; it was not with any such intention he had dwelt so long on this subject:

we speak before God in Christ; in all sincerity and uprightness of soul, without colour, guile, or deceit, calling God and Christ to witness the truth of what was said; the apostle spoke all he did, as in the presence of the omniscient God; and as one in Christ, and a preacher of his Gospel, that would not deliver an untruth knowingly, for the whole world:

but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edification; it was not for himself so much, for his own credit, reputation, and glory, he did what he did; had this been the case, he would not have said the half part of what he had; but it was for their sake, out of love to them, that they might be built up and established in the faith of the Gospel, and not be carried away with the error of the wicked.

2 Corinthians 12:20

Ver. 20. For I fear lest when I come,.... This fear arose from his fatherly affection for them, and care of them:

I shall not find you such as I would; truly penitent for former sins, thoroughly reformed in life and manners, zealous for God, Christ, and the Gospel, and hearty lovers of one another:

and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not; sharp in his reproofs and admonitions, severe in his corrections and censures, and lawfully using the authority he had from Christ, to punish incorrigible offenders:

lest there be debates; or "strifes", or contentions among them, about words to no profit, or about their ministers, as before; one being for Paul, and another for Apollos, and another for Cephas:

envyings: at each other's gifts, or "jealousies" of one another, and evil surmisings:

wraths; breaking out into words and actions, which discover hatred of mind, a malignant spirit, quite contrary to that of the Gospel:

strifes: law suits before heathen magistrates; contentions in the church who shall be greatest; or about lesser matters of religion, or things indifferent, vain, and trifling, and kept up merely for the sake of victory:

backbitings; speaking evil of one another, detracting from, hurting, or taking away each other's character and good name:

whisperings; secretly sowing discords among friends, and privately suggesting evil things of each other:

swellings; with pride and conceit of themselves, because of their riches, learning, and eloquence, and looking with disdain upon others:

tumults; at church meetings, interrupting one another, going into parties, and making rents and schisms.

2 Corinthians 12:21

Ver. 21. And lest when I come again,.... Another thing which he feared would be the case when he came again to them, that he himself should be afflicted and distressed, seeing them in a disorderly and dissolute course of life, be obliged to punish them, which would be an humiliation and matter of grief to him:

my God will humble me; instead of rejoicing in the fruit of his labours, that they were not in vain, he signifies that he should have great sorrow of heart; and whereas he had promised himself much pleasure and comfort in visiting them, it would be the reverse; and inasmuch as he had boasted of them to others, he should be ashamed:

and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, or "before"; not before conversion, but before the writing of this or the former epistle; for nothing was more grieving, and occasioned more sorrow and humiliation to the apostle, than the unbecoming walk of professors; and nothing more sensibly affects a faithful minister of the Gospel:

and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication, and lasciviousness, which they have committed. The city of Corinth was famous, or rather infamous, for unclean practices; as fornication, adultery, lasciviousness in words and deeds, and other unnatural lusts; "Corinthian whores" was a common proverb; nor was it proper for persons to go to Corinth, there were so many snares for lust and uncleanness; there were said to be above a thousand prostitutes in the temple of Venus there {k}; hence the very great impurities and wickedness, which many of the members of this church were guilty of, may be accounted for; some of them had repented, others not, which was the great concern of the apostle: and from hence we may learn, that gracious souls may be suffered to fall into great sins; and that when they are truly brought to repentance, they ought to be restored to communion with the church; but impenitent ones are to be cut off, and remain so, till brought to a due sense of their evils.

{k} Alex. ab Alex. Genial Dier. l. 4. c. 13. & 5. 15. & 6. 26.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Corinthians 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORTHINIANS 13

In this chapter the apostle continues his resolution to come to the Corinthians, and to threaten with severity the incorrigible among them, giving the reasons of it; prays to God that they might so behave, that there might be no occasion for the exercise of it; and concludes the epistle with very useful exhortations, and hearty wishes of good things to them. He intimates to them again, that he intended this third time to come unto them, when he would not spare them, as they might expect he would not; partly because they had such repeated warnings, reproofs, and admonitions from him, 2Co 13:1 and partly because many of them had sinned before, and were stubborn and obstinate, and had not repented, 2Co 13:2 as also because they had tempted him, and demanded a proof of his power and authority, and of Christ speaking in him, 2Co 13:3 and whereas this sprung from the outward appearance of the apostle, whose bodily presence was weak, he observes to them the instance of Christ himself in human nature, who was crucified through weakness, and yet lives by the power of God; and so he and his fellow ministers were weak like Christ, and for his sake, and yet lived, and should live by the power of God; so that their outward appearance was no proof of their want of the power of Christ in them, 2Co 13:4 besides, he directs them to themselves for a proof of it; who upon examination would find, that they were in the faith, and Christ was in them; which was owing to the ministry of the apostle, as a means and instrument; and so they had a proof in themselves of Christ's speaking in the apostle, and being mighty in, and towards them, or else they must be reprobate, injudicious, and disapproved persons, 2Co 13:5 but whether they were such persons or not, he was confident that he would not be found such; but would appear to be in the faith, to have Christ in him, and to have power and authority from him, 2Co 13:6 however, the apostle's hearty prayer for them was, that they might be kept from evil; and that they might do that which is good, and so be approved of God and men; and there be no occasion to use any severity with them, when he should come among them, 2Co 13:7 otherwise he could do nothing against the truth, could not connive at error and sin, but must use the power and authority he had to crush everything of that kind, and defend truth, 2Co 13:8 and so far was he from glorying in his power, and priding himself with it, that it was a pleasure to him to have no occasion to make use of it, by which it might seem as if he was without it; and it rejoiced him, when they stood fast in the faith, and walked as became the Gospel, and so needed not the rod of reproof and correction; nay, he could even wish, that they were wholly perfect, and free from all blame, and every kind of charge, 2Co 13:9 and the end he had in the writing in the manner he did, being absent from them, was, lest when he should come among them, he should be obliged to make use of his power he had from Christ for edification, and not destruction; to prevent which, he wrote and admonished them, in order to bring them to repentance, that so he might have no occasion to use severity and sharpness, 2Co 13:10 and then he takes his farewell of them, by giving them some exhortations to harmony, unity, peace, and love among themselves, 2Co 13:11 gives the salutations of all the saints unto them, 2Co 13:13 and then his own, with which he concludes the epistle, which is a wish of all the blessings of grace from all the three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, 2Co 13:14.

Ver. 1. This is the third time I am coming to you,.... Or "am ready to come to you", as the Alexandrian copy reads, as in 2Co 12:14. Though he had been as yet but once at Corinth, and is to be reckoned and accounted for, either after this manner; he had been "once" with them when he first preached the Gospel to them, and was the means of their conversion, and laid, the foundation of their church state, of which there is some account in Ac 18:1 he came to them a "second" time, by writing his first epistle, when he desired to be considered by them, as though he was present with them, **1Co 5:3** and now a "third" time by this second epistle, in which he also speaks as if he was among them, see the following verse; or else in this way, he had been actually in person with them one time, and had been about to come in purpose and preparation a "second" time, but was prevented, and now was just ready a "third" time to set forward in his journey to them; see 2Co 12:14 and so the Syriac version reads it here, "this is the third time that I am ready to come to you", and which our version also favours. The Alexandrian copy and some others, the Complutension edition, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read, "behold, this third time", &c. in order to raise and fix their attention to what he was saying, or about to say:

in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established; referring to De 19:15 which he applies much in the same manner Christ does in Mt 18:16 and which it is probable he had in view; signifying hereby, that he proceeded in a judicial way, according to due form of law, and in such a manner as Christ had directed; and that they were to look upon his several comings in the sense now explained, to be as so many witnesses, whereby the several charges exhibited against them were fully attested and confirmed, so that things were now ripe for judgment, and for a final sentence to pass upon them.

2 Corinthians 13:2

Ver. 2. I told you before, and foretell you as if I were present a second time,.... He means, that he had in his former epistle faithfully told them of their evils, and admonished them for them; and now he sends to them a second time before his coming, and again admonishes them, as if he was upon the spot with them; so that they had, as before, three witnesses, also a first and second admonition; which, should they be without success, he must proceed further:

and being absent now, I write to them which heretofore have sinned; before he wrote his first epistle, of which he had information, and had faithfully reproved and admonished them; see 2Co 12:21.

And to all other; that might since be drawn into a compliance with sinful practices, through their example; or as the Arabic version renders it, "to the rest of the congregation"; who would be witnesses for him, and against them, that he had admonished them a first, and a second time: and by his present writing declares,

that if I come again; for, not knowing what might fall out to prevent him, though he was bent upon coming, and ready for it, nor what was the will of God about it, he does not choose to be positive in the matter; and therefore writes conditionally, and with a guard, and no doubt with a submission to the divine will:

I will not spare; this was the reason why as yet he had not been at Corinth, because he was willing to spare them; see **2Co 1:23** being loath to come to severities, if gentler methods would take effect; but now having used all proper means, he is at a point, and determined not to spare, but to use his apostolical rod, or that power which the Lord had given him in an extraordinary way, as an extraordinary officer, to punish incorrigible offenders, in such manner as the incestuous person, and Hymenaeus and Philetus had been used by him.

2 Corinthians 13:3

Ver. 3. Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me,.... This is the reason why he was determined, that should he come among them, he would not spare them, because they called in question his apostleship, and demanded a proof of it; which, of all men, they had the least reason to do; for they themselves were the seals of his apostleship, and the signs of an apostle had been done among them; they queried whether he was an ambassador of Christ, and was sent by him, and in his name; whether the message he came with was from him, and whether the Gospel he preached was his voice; and particularly whether he had such a power to punish delinquents, as he threatened them with the exercise of; a strange infatuation of the false apostles this, since Christ, who sent him, was with him, and spoke in him, and by him:

which to you-ward, says he,

is not weak, but is mighty in you; the Gospel of Christ, at the first preaching of it to them by him, was the power of God unto salvation to them; and was attended with divers signs and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost; and besides, they had instances of the power of Christ towards them in an awful way, in punishing sinners; as in the delivery of the incestuous person to Satan, which was done by his Spirit being with them when assembled; and by smiting many of them with sickness, diseases, and infirmities, and with death itself, who had sinned, **1Co 5:4**. Wherefore, seeing after all these instances of the voice and power of Christ in him, they yet questioned his apostolical authority, and sought proof of it; and especially since this was not so much a tempting of him, as a tempting of Christ in him, he was resolved not to spare them.

2 Corinthians 13:4

Ver. 4. For though he was crucified through weakness,.... Of the human nature;

for the nature which Christ assumed was in all things like to ours, excepting sin; it was subject to all sinless infirmities; it was mortal, passible, liable to sufferings, and death, and so he came to be crucified; though not against his will, or without his previous assent; as God, he was able to have prevented his crucifixion if he would; he gave an instance of his power over men, at the time of his apprehension, by striking them down to the ground; and told Pilate his judge at his trial, that he could have no power to crucify him, if it was not given him from above; and he showed his superiority over devils when upon the cross, by spoiling principalities and powers; so that his crucifixion was not owing to want of power as God, but he became capable of it through his weakness as man:

but yet he lives by the power of God; he was raised from the dead by a divine power; by his own power as God, as well as by his Father's, and so was declared to be the Son of God with power; and he lives at the right hand of God as man and Mediator, vested with all power in heaven and in earth; though, in the days of his flesh, he appeared so weak, mean, and despicable: now the apostle mentions this case of our Lord's, to deter the Corinthians from despising him, on account of his outward weakness and meanness; and from hence buoying themselves up, and in which they were encouraged by the false apostles, that he had not, and could not exercise the power he talked of; they had observed what mean figure he made when he was among them; and whatever weight there might be in his letters, yet his bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible; wherefore he sets before them the instance of Christ, who though he appeared very weak in his state of humiliation, yet he now lives in power, to assist and strengthen his ministers, in every branch of their work; and suggests, that as it was with Christ, it was, and would be in some measure with him, and his fellow ministers:

for we also are weak in him: like him, and for his sake, they were subject to infirmities, reproaches, persecutions, and distresses; carried about daily the dying of the Lord Jesus; bore a very great resemblance to him in his state of humiliation; were very much as he was in this world, and bore much for his name's sake; the Alexandrian copy and the Syriac version read, "with him"; being crucified with him, and dead with him:

but we shall live with him by the power of God towards you; which is not to be understood of being raised by Christ to an immortal life, and of living with him in glory; though this is a certain truth, that such who suffer with Christ, shall live and reign, and be glorified together with him; but of the life, power, and efficacy of the ministers of Christ, and of Christ in and with them, displayed in the lively ministration of the word and ordinances, in the vigorous discharge of all the branches of their office; not only in preaching, but in rebuking, admonishing, laying on of censures, and punishing criminals; and especially regards the powerful exertion and use of the apostolic rod; for this life is not only with Christ, or through Christ being in them, notwithstanding all their outward weakness, and by the power of God, which supports them under all, and enables them to perform their work, but is "towards you"; the Corinthians, to be exercised towards them, to be seen among them, and felt by them.

2 Corinthians 13:5

Ver. 5. Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith,.... These words are to be considered in connection with 2Co 13:3 for seeing they sought and demanded a proof the voice and power of Christ in the apostle, he directs them to self examination, to look within themselves, to try, prove, and recognise their own souls; where if things were right, they would find a proof of Christ's speaking in him, to them: he advises them to examine the state of their own souls, and see whether they were in the faith; either in the doctrine of faith, having a spiritual and experimental knowledge of it, true love and affection for it, an hearty belief of it, having felt the power of it upon their souls, and abode in it; whether, as the Syriac version reads it, Nymyq atwnmyhb, "ye stand in the faith", firm and stable; or in the grace of faith, either of miracles, or that which is connected with salvation; and which if they were in it, and had it, is attended with good works; operates by love to Christ and to his people; by which souls go out of themselves to Christ, live upon him, receive from him, and give him all the glory of salvation: and if this was their case, he desires to know how they came by their faith; and suggests, that their light in the doctrine of the Gospel, and their faith in Christ Jesus, as well as the miraculous gifts many of them were possessed of, were through his ministry as the means; and this was a full proof of Christ's speaking in him:

prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you; by which he means, that if they took a survey of things in their own souls, it would appear that Christ was in them; not as he is in all the world, filling heaven and earth with his presence; or as he is in every rational creature, as the Creator and author of the light of nature; but in a special and spiritual manner, by his Spirit and grace; the Father reveals him in his people, as the foundation of their hope of glory; he himself enters and takes possession of their hearts in conversion, communicates his grace, and manifests himself, and is formed there by his Spirit; his graces are implanted, his image is stamped, his Spirit is put within them, and he himself dwells by faith: and this upon inquiry would be found to be the case of the Corinthians,

except, says the apostle,

ye are reprobates; meaning not that they were so, as such may stand opposed to the elect of God; for persons may as yet neither be in the faith, nor Christ in them, and yet both be hereafter, and so not be left of God, or consigned to destruction; but that if they were not in the doctrine of, faith, then they were reprobate concerning it, or void of judgment in it; and if they had not the grace of faith, and Christ was not in them, then they were not genuine, but nominal professors, like "reprobate silver", counterfeit coin; which when detected, would be "disapproved", not only by God, but man, as this word also signifies, and so stands opposed to them that are "approved", 2Co 13:7 or if they did not make such an examination, probation, and recognition of themselves, they would be without probation: or as the Arabic version, without experiment. The apostle hereby brings them into this dilemma, either that if upon examination they were found to be in the faith, and Christ in them, which blessings they enjoyed through his ministry, then they did not want a proof of Christ speaking in him; but if these things did not appear in them, then they were persons of no judgment in spiritual things, were not real Christians, but insignificant and useless persons.

2 Corinthians 13:6

Ver. 6. But I trust that ye shall know,.... Whether they were reprobates or not, the apostle would not pretend to say; that he left to themselves, and of which they were capable of making judgment for themselves: however, he hoped and believed, that he and his fellow apostles would give such proof of themselves, as that they should know certainly

that we, says he,

are not reprobates; men void of judgment in the doctrines of the Gospel, but have light, knowledge, and understanding in them; or useless and unprofitable in the ministry, but were the savour of life unto life to many; were ministers by whom others believed; were successful labourers in the Lord's vineyard, and builders in his house; and were made very useful for the conversion, comfort, and edification of many souls: or that they were not men disapproved either by

God, or his people; since as they faithfully served Christ in the ministration of the Gospel, they were acceptable to God, and approved of men: or were not men without a proof of Christ speaking in them; they might assure themselves they would have too soon, for some of them, an evidence of that power and authority which Christ had lodged in them, to punish such as repented not of their evils.

2 Corinthians 13:7

Ver. 7. Now I pray to God,.... A strong mark of the apostle's affection for them. For though they used him so ill, he took every way and method to do them good; he not only wrote to them, sent the brethren to them, but put up his supplications at the throne of grace for them: The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, read, "we pray", &c. And one of his petitions for them was,

that ye do no evil; which, though impracticable and impossible, considering the situation of the people of God in this world, yet is desirable by every good man, both for himself and others; and was desired by the apostle, partly that their consciences might not be wounded, their souls grieved, their peace broke in upon, and their comforts lost; and partly that the name of God, and his cause and truths, might not be blasphemed; and chiefly that he might have no opportunity of exercising his apostolical rod for their correction:

not that we should appear approved. This was a clear case that he sought their good, and not his own credit, and the exercise of power; if they committed evil, his faithfulness would be seen in reproving, rebuking, and exhorting them; and if they continued impenitent, his apostolical authority would be manifest in their punishment, so that he would appear approved, or with a proof of the power of Christ in him; but this he did not desire, but most earnestly wished there might be no occasion for any such evidence:

but that they should do that which is honest; or "good", both in the sight of God and men, that which is according to the will of God, springs from love, is done in faith, and with a view to the glory of God; and the apostle's praying, both that they might be kept from evil, and do that which is good, shows the impotence of man's free will, the necessity of the grace of God to abstain from sin, and perform good works; and this the apostle earnestly desired,

though, says be,

we be as reprobates; weak and infirm persons, incapable of giving any proof of the power of Christ, and appear as such, who have no marks of apostolical authority. The apostle chose rather to be looked upon as a poor, mean, and insignificant person, than that they should sin, and require the exercise of his chastising rod, whereby he would be seen to be what they called in question.

2 Corinthians 13:8

Ver. 8. For we can do nothing against the truth,.... The apostles had no power, nor could they, nor did they desire to exercise any against such who received the truth of the Gospel in the love of it; who continued in it, walked in it, and held it fast; who worshipped God in Spirit and in truth, and who walked uprightly, and as became the truth; for as the law is not made for such persons, but the reverse, so the authority the apostles had received from Christ was not to be exercised upon such:

but for the truth: for the sake of defending the truth against those that dropped, denied, and opposed it; and for the honour of it, by chastising, correcting, reproving, censuring, and punishing such, who either contradicted it, or caused it to be blasphemed and spoken evil of.

2 Corinthians 13:9

Ver. 9. For we are glad when we are weak,.... Appear to be so, look like persons disarmed of all power and authority; the apostles rejoiced when they had no occasion of exerting themselves, and of exercising that high office, and extraordinary commission they had received of Christ Jesus:

and ye are strong; stand fast in the doctrine of faith, and are lively and active in the exercise of the grace of faith; are strong in Christ, and in his grace, and in the power of his might, to withstand every temptation of Satan, every corruption of their own hearts, and to perform every duty aright.

And this also we wish, even your perfection; or restoration, or jointing in again; a metaphor taken from the setting of bones that are dislocated and out of joint; for the church at Corinth was like a disjointed body, and the apostle's wish was, that their animosities might cease, their divisions be healed, their disorders rectified, and each member be in its proper place, behaving as became the Gospel of Christ; see **1Co 1:10**.

2 Corinthians 13:10

Ver. 10. Therefore I write these things being absent,.... Assuring them of his power and authority, expressing his concern for their welfare, earnestly desiring that they might be kept from evil, and perform good works; and that they might be in a more honourable, orderly, and comfortable situation, whilst he was absent from them, and before he came among them:

lest, being present, I should use sharpness; meaning severe reproofs and censures, or rather the exercise of the apostolic rod:

according to the power the Lord haft given me, to edification, and not to destruction; by striking persons dead, as Ananias and Sapphira were by Peter; or by delivering them up to Satan to have corporeal punishment inflicted on them, as were Hymenaeus and Philetus, and the incestuous person by the Apostle Paul; which, though it was for the destruction of the flesh, yet for the salvation of their souls, and for the good, use, and edification of the rest of the society, that they might take warning thereby, and shun the evils which were the occasion of such severity.

2 Corinthians 13:11

Ver. 11. Finally, brethren, farewell,.... Or "rejoice", with spiritual joy in Christ, their Saviour and Redeemer; in his person, in whom they were accepted; in his righteousness, by which they were justified; in his blood, by which they were washed and cleansed; and in his fulness, from which they were supplied; and particularly, that they had such a faithful monitor, such an hearty well wisher of their souls' welfare, and who was so naturally and affectionately concerned for their good:

be perfect; seek after perfection in knowledge, grace, and holiness, and in the performance of good works: or "be restored"; or jointed and knit together, as before; see 2Co 13:9 let every difference subside, all breaches be made up, every member take and fill up his place, and all things be done decently and in order:

be of good comfort; or "exhort" one another to the diligent discharge of duty, to love and good works; or comfort one another in all distresses, inward and outward, both by words and deeds, according to the ability God has given; or take comfort, be of good heart, do not refuse to be comforted either by God or men.

Be of one mind; in religious sentiments, in the doctrines and principles of grace, and ordinances of the Gospel; for as there is but "one Lord" to be believed in, so there is, and ought to be, but "one" system of "faith" to be received, and "one baptism" to be administered in one and the same way, to one and the same sort of persons; which sameness of judgment, in faith and worship, is very necessary to church communion, and the comfort of it; for how can two, and much less more, walk comfortably together, unless they are agreed in these things?

Live in peace both with them that are without, and them that are within, with all men, and with the members of the church; which to do, is to the credit of religion, the comfort of church members, and the joy of Christ's ministers:

and the God of love and peace shall be with you; he who is love itself, and has loved his people with an everlasting love, and who is the author and donor of spiritual and eternal peace, and who has called his people to peace, and expects and requires it among themselves, and all men, will grant to such his gracious presence; than which nothing can be more grateful and desirable.

2 Corinthians 13:12

Ver. 12. Greet one another with an holy kiss.
See Gill on "Ro 16:16".

2 Corinthians 13:13

Ver. 13. All the saints salute you. Being all interested in the same divine favour, redeemed by the same blood, and sanctified by the same grace, they have a common concern for each other's welfare;
See Gill on "Ro 16:16".

2 Corinthians 13:14

Ver. 14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.... Meaning either the love of Christ; see **2Co 8:9** which is the same with that of his Father's, is as early, and of the same nature, being a love of complacency and delight; and which, as it is without beginning, will be without end. This is the ground and foundation of all he has done and underwent for his people; of his becoming their surety; of his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death in their room and stead; an interest in which, though they always have, yet they have not always an abiding sense of it with them, which is what the apostle here prays for: or else by the grace of Christ is meant the fulness of grace that is in him as Mediator; which is desired to be with the saints as the object of their trust and dependence; to be strong in, draw living water with joy out of, receive and derive daily from; not forsake it, and hew out broken cisterns, but continually apply to, and make use of it, as the fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon; to be with them as a supply to their wants, to furnish them with every thing they stand in need of, and to enable them to do his will and work: or else the redeeming grace of Christ is particularly designed, and the intent of the petition is, that they might see their interest in it, and in all the branches of it; as that they were redeemed by his blood from sin, law, and wrath, had all their sins expiated and forgiven through his sacrifice, and were justified from all things by his righteousness.

And the love of God; the Father, as the Arabic version adds very justly, as to the sense, though it is not in the text; meaning the love of God to his people, which is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, free and undeserved, special and peculiar, is dispensed in a sovereign way, is unchangeable, abides for ever, is the source and spring of all the blessings both of grace and glory. Now when this is entreated to be with all the saints, it does not suppose that it is ever from them, or that it can be taken away from them, but whereas they may be without a comfortable sense of it, and a view of interest in it, the apostle prays, that in this respect it might be with them; that they might be directed into it, have it shed abroad in their hearts, and they be rooted and grounded in it, and comprehend for themselves the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of it.

And the communion of the Holy Ghost; either a larger communication of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, called "the supply of the Spirit", **Php 1:19** necessary to carry on the good work of grace, and perform it to the end; or else that communion and fellowship which the Spirit of God leads the saints into with the Father, by shedding abroad his love in their hearts, and with the Son, by taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to them; and also that nearness which the spirits of believers have with the Spirit of God, when he witnesses to their spirits that they are the children of God, becomes the earnest of the inheritance in their hearts, and seals them up unto the day of redemption: all which is requested by the apostle, to

be, says he,

with you all; or "with your company", or "congregations", as the Arabic version reads it, with all the saints; for their interest in the love of the Father, in the grace of the Son, and in the favour of the Spirit, is the same, whatever different sense and apprehensions they may have thereof. This passage contains no inconsiderable proof of a trinity of persons in the Godhead, to whom distinct things are here ascribed, and of them asked, equal objects of prayer and worship. "Amen" is by way of assent and confirmation, and as expressive of faith in the petitions, and of earnest desire to have them fulfilled. According to the subscription at the end of this epistle, it was written by the apostle when he was at Philippi, a city of Macedonia, and transcribed by Titus and Lucas, and by them sent or carried to the Corinthians; which seems to be agreeable to what is suggested in the epistle itself, though these subscriptions are not to he depended upon. The Syriac version only mentions Luke; and some copies read, by Titus, Barnabas, and Luke.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Galatians 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS

The persons to whom this epistle is written were not such who made up a single church only, in some certain town or city, but were such of which several churches consisted, in a region or country called Galatia, as is evident from **Ga 1:2** and the members of these churches seem to be chiefly, if not altogether Jews, since the apostle includes them with himself; as having been under the law, under tutors and governors, and in bondage under the elements of the world, and to whom the law had been a schoolmaster, though now they were no longer under it as such, **Ga 3:23** or however, though some of them might have been originally Gentiles, yet, previous to their conversion, had become proselytes to the Jews, and now were returning to Judaism again, as appears from **Ga 4:8**. When and from whence this epistle was written, is not very clear and manifest: some have thought, that it was written about the time of the writing of the epistle to the Romans, and upon a like occasion; but if it was written about that time, it could not he written from Rome, as the subscription to this epistle attests, since it is certain, that when the apostle wrote his epistle to the Romans, he had never, as yet, been at Rome. Beza is of opinion, that it was written from Antioch, between the return of Paul and Barnabas thither from their first journey, and the troubles which broke out in that church, Ac 14:28. But to this it is reasonably objected, that it is questionable whether there were so early any churches in Galatia at all; and if there were, it does not seem that the defection from the faith, complained of in this epistle, as yet had took place in any of the churches; for it was after this date that the troubles upon this head arose at Antioch, which seems to have been the first place, and the church there the first church the judaizing teachers practised at and upon. Some Latin exemplars testify that it was written from Ephesus; of which opinion was Erasmus; but as Dr. Lightfoot observes, the same reason is against this as the former, seeing the corruption that was got into this church was then but beginning, when the apostle was at Ephesus: it seems therefore most likely, that it was written from Rome, as the subscription in the Greek copies affirms; and which is strengthened by the Syriac and Arabic versions, seeing it seems to have been written after the apostle had made the collections, in several places, for the poor saints at Jerusalem, **Ga 2:10** and when the apostasy from the faith had got to a great pitch; nor is it any objection that there is no express mention made of his bonds in it, as there is in those epistles of his, which were written from Rome; since, when he wrote this, he might have been delivered from them, as some have thought he was after his first defence; and besides, he does take notice of the marks of the Lord Jesus he bore in his body, **Ga 6:17**. Dr. Lightfoot places the writing of this epistle in the year and in the "fifth" of Nero; some place it in 55, and others in 58. That there were churches in Galatia very early, is certain from Ac 18:23 but by whom they were planted is not so evident; very likely by the apostle, since, it is certain, both from this epistle, that he was personally in this country, and preached the Gospel here, **Ga 4:13** and from Ac 16:6 and if he was not the instrument of the conversion of the first of them, which laid the foundation of a Gospel church state, yet it is certain, that he was useful in strengthening the disciples and brethren throughout this country, Ac 18:23. But after his departure from them, the false teachers got among them, and insinuated, that he was no apostle, at least that he was inferior to Peter, James, and John, the ministers of the circumcision; and these seduced many of the members of the churches in this place, drawing them off from the evangelical doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, persuading them that the observation of the ceremonial law, particularly circumcision, was necessary to their acceptance with God, and justification in his sight: wherefore the occasion and design of this epistle were to vindicate the character of the apostle as such; to establish the true doctrine of justification by faith, in opposition to the works of the law; to recover those who were carried away with the other doctrines; to exhort the saints to stand fast in the liberty of Christ, and to various other duties of religion; and to give a true description of the false teachers, and their views, that so they might beware of them, and of their principles.

INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS 1

This chapter contains the inscription of the epistle, the apostle's usual salutation of the persons he writes to, and the charge he brought against them for their fickleness and inconstancy, in showing any manner of disposition towards a removal from the Gospel; the truth, certainty, and authority of the Gospel, and an account of himself, who was a preacher of it; of his life before conversion; of the nature and manner of his conversion; of his travels, labours, and usefulness afterwards. The inscription is in **Ga 1:1** in which the writer of the epistle is described by his name Paul, and by his office, an apostle; which office he had not of men, but of God, of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and of God the Father, who is described by his power in raising Christ from the dead. The persons to whom the epistle is inscribed are the churches of Galatia, and those that joined the apostle in the salutation of them were the brethren that were with him. The salutation follows, **Ga 1:3** in which mention being made of Christ, there is a declaration of a singular benefit by him, which contains the sum of the Gospel, as that he gave himself for the sins of his people, to deliver them from the present evil world, according to the will of God, **Ga 1:4** upon which a doxology, or an ascription of glory is made, either to Christ, who gave himself, or to the Father, according to whose will he did, or to both, **Ga 1:5**. After which the apostle proceeds to exhibit a charge of levity against the Galatians; and which he expresses in a way of admiration, that they should so soon be carried away from the doctrine of grace, to another doctrine the reverse of it, **Ga 1:6** though he somewhat mitigates this reproof by laying the blame on the false teachers, who were troublers of them, and perverters of the Gospel of Christ; and corrects himself for calling their false doctrine by the name of another Gospel, **Ga 1:7** and delivers out, and pronounces an anathema on all such, whether angels or men, that should preach any other Gospel than he had preached, and they had received, **Ga 1:8**. The excellency of which Gospel is set forth, by the matter of it, being not human but divine, and by the manner of preaching it, with all simplicity and honesty, not seeking to please men, **Ga 1:10** and from the efficient cause of it, it being denied to be after man, or received from, or taught by man, but is ascribed to the revelation of Christ Jesus, **Ga 1:11**. And that the apostle had it not from men, he proves by the account of himself, and his conversation before conversion, as how that he had been a persecutor of the church of God, of those that professed the

Christian religion and doctrine; wherefore he could not have the Gospel, as not from nature and education, so not from the chief priests, Scribes, and elders, who encouraged him to persecute, **Ga 1:13**. And this he further makes to appear by his great proficiency in the religion of the Jews, and his abundant zeal for the traditions of the fathers, which set him at the greatest distance from, and opposition to, the Gospel of Christ, **Ga 1:14**. And, on the other hand, that he received it of God, and by the revelation of Christ, he proves by the account he gives of his effectual calling and conversion; the source and spring of which was the sovereign will of God in divine predestination, and the moving cause of it, the free grace of God, **Ga 1:15**. The manner in which this was done was by a revelation of Christ in him; and the end of it was, that he might preach Christ to the Gentiles, which he immediately did, without consulting flesh and blood, **Ga 1:16**. And as it was a clear point that he could never receive the Gospel from the Jews before his conversion, he and they being enemies to it, and persecutors of it; so it was evident that he did not receive it, after his conversion, even from Christian men, seeing he did not, upon his conversion, go directly to Jerusalem, and confer with the apostles there, who were the most likely persons to have taught him the Gospel; but instead of this he went into Arabia preaching the Gospel, and then came back to Damascus, where he was converted, **Ga 1:17**. And it was three years after his conversion, that he went to Jerusalem to visit Peter; and his stay with him was very short, no longer than fifteen days; and he was the only apostle he saw there, excepting James, the brother of Christ, **Ga 1:18** for the truth of all which he appeals to God the searcher of hearts, **Ga 1:20**. And then goes on with the account of himself, and his travels; how that when he departed from Jerusalem, he did not go into any other parts of Judea, and visit the churches there, but went into the countries of Syria and Cilicia; and was not so much as known by thee, or personally, by any of the churches, or members of the churches in Judea, **Ga 1:20** so that as it could not be thought by his short stay at Jerusalem, and the few apostles he saw there, that he received the Gospel he preached from them, so neither from any other ministers, or body of Christians in the land of Judea; for all they knew of him was by hearsay only, as that he who was formerly a persecutor of them, was now become a preacher of the Gospel he had sought to destroy, **Ga 1:22** wherefore it was a clear case he had not received the Gospel from them. Besides, as they had heard that he preached the Gospel of Christ, they glorified God for it, who had revealed it to him, and bestowed gifts upon him, fitting him for such service, **Ga 1:24**.

Ver. 1. Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by man,.... The writer of this epistle, Paul, puts his name to it, as to all his epistles, excepting that to the Hebrews, if that be his, being neither afraid nor ashamed to own what is herein contained. He asserts himself to be "an apostle", which was the highest office in the church, to which he was immediately called by Christ, and confirmed in it by signs and wonders. This he chose to mention, because of the false teachers, who had insinuated he was no apostle, and not to be regarded; whereas he had received grace and apostleship from Christ, and was an apostle, "not of men", as were the apostles or messengers of the sanhedrim {a}; See Gill on "2Co 8:23" and as were the false apostles, who were sent out by men, who had no authority to send them forth: the apostle, as he did not take this honour to himself, did not thrust himself into this office, or run before he was sent; so he was not sent by men; he did not act upon human authority, or by an human commission: this is said in opposition to the false apostles, and to an unlawful investiture with the office of apostleship, and an usurpation of it, as well as to distinguish himself from the messengers and ambassadors of princes, who are sent with credentials by them to negotiate civil affairs for them in foreign courts, he being an ambassador of Christ; and from the messengers of churches, who were sometimes sent with assistance or advice to other churches; and he moreover says, "nor by man"; by a mere man, but by one that was more than a man; nor by a mortal man, but by Christ, as raised from the dead, immortal and glorious at God's right hand: or rather the sense is, he was not chosen into the office of apostleship by the suffrages of men, as Matthias was; or he was not ordained an apostle in the manner the ordinary ministers of the Gospel and pastors are, by the churches of Christ; so that as the former clause is opposed to an unlawful call of men, this is opposed to a lawful one; and shows him to be not an ordinary minister, but an extraordinary one, who was called to this office, not mediately by men, by any of the churches as common ministers are:

but by Jesus Christ; immediately, without the intervention of men, as appears from Ac 26:16. For what Ananias did upon his conversion was only putting his hands on him to recover his sight, and baptizing him; it was Christ that appeared to him personally, and made him a minister; and his separation with Barnabas, by the church, under the direction of the Holy Ghost, Ac 13:2 was to some particular work and service to be done by them, and not to apostleship, and which was long after Paul was made an apostle by Christ. Jesus Christ being here opposed to man, does not suggest that he was not a man, really and truly, for he certainly was; he partook of the same flesh and blood with us, and was in all things made like unto us, sin excepted; but that he was not a mere man, he was truly God as well as man; for as the raising him from the dead, in the next clause, shows him to be a man, or he could not have died; so his being opposed to man, and set in equality with God the Father, in this verse, and grace and peace being prayed for from him, as from the Father, **Ga 1:4** and the same glory ascribed to him as to the Father, Ga 1:5 prove him to be truly and properly God. The apostle adds,

and God the Father; Christ and his Father being of the same nature and essence, power and authority, as they are jointly concerned and work together in the affairs or nature and Providence, so in those of grace; and particularly in constituting and ordaining apostles, and setting them in the church. This serves the more to confirm the divine authority under which Paul acted as an apostle, being not only made so by Christ, but also by God the Father, who is described as he,

who raised him from the dead; which is observed, not so much to express the divine power of the Father, or the glory of Christ, as raised from the dead, but to strengthen the validity of the apostle's character and commission as such; to whom it might have been objected, that he had not seen Christ in the flesh, nor familiarly conversed with him, as the rest of the apostles did: to which he was able to reply, that he was not called to be an apostle by Christ in his low and mean estate of humiliation, but by him after he was raised from the dead, and was set down at the right hand of God; who personally appeared to him in his glory, and was seen by him, and who made and appointed him his apostle, to bear his name before Gentiles, and kings, and the people of Israel; so that his call to apostleship was rather more grand and illustrious than that of any of the other apostles.

{a} Misn. Menachot, c. 10. sect. 3. & Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5.

Galatians 1:2

Ver. 2. And all the brethren which are with me,.... Meaning either the brethren of the church where he was when he wrote this epistle, who were children of the same Father, regenerated by the same grace, belonged to the same family and household of God, and were heirs together of the grace of life; or else his fellow ministers, who were assisting to him in his work, and were companions with him in his travels, and whom he sometimes mentions by name and joins with him in his epistles, as Sosthenes, Silvanus, and Timothy; and the rather he takes notice of the brethren here, whoever are meant, to show that they agreed with him in the doctrines of grace he defends, and in the charges he brought against this church, and in the reproofs and advice he gave them; which he might suppose, and hope, would have the greater weight and influence upon them;

unto the churches of Galatia; Galatia was a country in the lesser Asia, inhabited by the Gauls, who coming thither out of Europe, mixed with the Grecians; whence it was first called Gallo Graecia, and afterwards Galatia; See Gill on "Ac 16:6". The metropolis of it, as Pliny {b} says, was formerly Gordium, and the chief towns or cities, according to him, were Ancyra, Tavium, and Pessinus; and in some, or all of these places, it is very probable, were the churches here mentioned; See Gill on "Ac 18:23". It seems there were more than one in this country; for the primitive churches were not national nor provincial, but congregational, consisting of persons called out of the world, and joined together in holy fellowship and who walked in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord: and though these churches had many among them that were disorderly, and were swerving from the faith of the Gospel, yet were not unchurched, but honoured still with the name of churches, there being no perfection to be expected in this state of things; as not in particular persons, so not in congregated bodies and societies; though it is observed by some, that they are barely called churches, without any additional epithets, as churches of God, beloved of God, called to be saints, faithful and sanctified in Christ, which are bestowed on other churches; whereby the apostle is thought to show his indignation and resentment at their principles and practices. For quickly after the Gospel was preached unto them, false teachers crept in among them, endeavouring to subvert it, by mixing it with the law, and joining Moses and Christ; and in which they very much succeeded; and is the reason of the apostle's writing this epistle.

{b} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 32.

Galatians 1:3

Ver. 3. Grace to be you,.... After the inscription above, in which the writer of the epistle, and the persons joined to him, are described, and the churches to whom it is written, follows the salutation in these words, and which is common to all the epistles of this apostle; of the sense of which, See Gill on "Ro 1:7". The Alexandrian copy reads, "from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ"; and the Ethiopic version reads, "our Father".

Galatians 1:4

Ver. 4. Who gave himself for our sins,.... The antecedent to the relative "who, is our Lord Jesus Christ", **Ga 1:3** and the words are an illustration of the good will of God the Father, and of the grace and love of Christ, in the gift of himself, for the sins of his people: he did not merely give, "sua, his own things", what were his properly, but, "se, himself"; not the world, and the fulness of it, gold, silver, and such like corruptible things; no, nor men for them, and people for their lives; nor angels, his creatures, and ministering spirits; but his own self, his life, his flesh, his blood, his body, and soul, his whole human nature, and this as in union with himself, a divine person, the eternal Son of God. He gave himself freely, cheerfully, voluntarily, into the hands of men, justice, and death itself, as a sacrifice for sin, to expiate it, make reconciliation and atonement for it, which could not be done by the sacrifices of the legal dispensation; to procure the remission of it, which could not be had without shedding or blood; and utterly to take it away, finish it, and make an end of it, and abolish it, so as that it might never rise any more to the condemnation of his people: and this reached to "sins" of all sorts, not only original, but actual, and these of thought, word, and deed; and this oblation of himself upon the cross, was not for any sin of his own, who had none, nor for the sins of angels, of whom he was no Redeemer aud Saviour, but "for our sins"; not the sins of the apostles, or of the Jews only, nor yet of all mankind, but of God's elect, called the friends of Christ, his sheep and church, for whom he gave himself; and his end in so doing was,

that he might deliver us from this present evil world; by which is meant, either the Jewish world, or church state, in which were a worldly sanctuary, and which were subject to ceremonies and traditions, called the elements and rudiments of the world; and who were possessed of worldly notions, and in expectation of a worldly kingdom to be set up by the Messiah; and both in principle and in practice were sadly degenerated, and were become very evil and wicked: or the present age and generation of men, whether of Jews or Gentiles, which was so corrupt, as the like was never known; or in general the present world, and the men of it, in distinction either from the world before the flood, as in **2Pe 3:5** or rather from the new heavens and earth, which will be after the present ones, and wherein will dwell righteousness; or, in a word, from the world which is to come, as they are frequently opposed in Scripture: and which is said to be "evil", not with respect to the matter, that being all very good, as created by God; but with respect to the men of it, who lie in wickedness, under the power of the wicked one, and of their own sins; and to the things which are in it, all which are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Now Christ gave himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people, that as in consequence of this they might be delivered and saved from the damning power, so from the governing power and influence of all that is evil in this present world; as from Satan, the god of it, who has usurped a power over it; from the lusts that are predominant in it; from the vain conversation of the men of it; from the general conflagration of it at the last day, and from the perdition of ungodly men, and their eternal destruction in hell: and all this is

according to the will of God, and our Father, It was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God that Christ was delivered up into the hands of wicked men, and put to death by them; it was his will of purpose and decree, to deliver him up into the hands of justice and death, and that he should give himself sacrifice for sin; yea, it was his will of command, that he should lay down his life for his sheep, to which he was obedient; it was his pleasure, it was what was agreeable to him, was to his good liking, that he should die for the sins of his people; it was owing to the love of God, who is our Father in Christ, and by adopting grace, and not to any worth or desert of ours, that Christ gave himself for us; as his own love, so his Father's will, were what solely moved him to it.

Galatians 1:5

Ver. 5. To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. That is, either to Christ, who gave himself to expiate the sins of his people, on the account of which all honour and glory are due to him from them; or to God the Father, according to whose will of purpose and command Christ gave himself, for which glory ought to be ascribed unto him; and it may well be thought, that both are taken into this doxology: the Father is to be glorified, who of his everlasting love, and free favour, did in his eternal purposes and decrees in his counsel and covenant, so wisely frame and order things, that his own Son should be given to be an offering for sin; and Christ is to be glorified, that he, of his free rich grace and love, agreed to give himself, and did give himself to be a ransom for his people, which has been testified in due time. This ascription of glory to both shows the greatness of the blessing, and the grateful sense which all interested in it ought to bear upon their minds continually, "for ever and ever"; or "to the ages of ages", a Jewish phrase, the same with Nymle ymlel {c}. To which the apostle adds his "Amen", as joining with all the saints, above or below, in ascribing salvation, and the glory of it, to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

{c} Zohar in Gen. fol. 72. 3.

Galatians 1:6

Ver. 6. I marvel that ye are so soon removed,.... The apostle now enters on the subject matter of this epistle, and opens the occasion and design of it, which were to reprove the Galatians for their instability in the Gospel; and, if possible, to reclaim them, who were removed, or removing from the simplicity of it; and which was very surprising to the apostle, who had entertained a good opinion of them, looked upon them as persons called by the grace of God, well established in the doctrines of the Gospel, and in no danger of being carried away with the error of the wicked the person from whom he says they were removed is,

from him that called you into the grace of Christ; by whom is meant, not the apostle himself, who had been an instrument in the calling of them to the knowledge of Christ, and the participation of his grace, and from whose Gospel, or the Gospel as preached by him, in its clearness and purity, they were now departing; but either Christ, and so the Syriac and Arabic versions read the words, "from Christ who called you by own grace"; or rather God the Father, and some copies read, "into", or "by the grace of God": to whom calling is most commonly ascribed in the sacred writings: and which is to be understood, not of a ministerial call, or a call to preach the Gospel of Christ; though there might be some in these churches who were called both internally and externally to that sacred office; nor a mere outward call by the ministry: for though doubtless there might be some among them who were only so called, yet as much as they were under profession of Christ, and nothing appearing to the contrary, they were all in a judgment of charity looked upon as effectually called by the grace of God; which calling is here meant: for they were called "into the grace of Christ"; some read it, "in", or "by the grace of Christ": referring it either to the moving cause of calling, which is not the works and merits of men, but the free grace and favour of God in Christ; or to the efficient cause of it, which is not the power and will of man, but the efficacious grace of Christ, through the powerful operations of his Spirit: but the words are well rendered, "into the grace of Christ"; that is, to the enjoyment of the fulness of grace which is in Christ; of all the blessings of grace he has in his hands; such as justification, peace, pardon, atonement, wisdom, strength, joy, comfort, and every supply of grace; and particularly fellowship with him, into which the saints are called, and than which nothing is more desirable: but the difficulty is, how such persons can be said to be removed from God, who has thus called them to partake of grace in Christ. They are not, nor can they be removed from the everlasting and unchangeable love of God to them in Christ, of which their calling is a fruit, effect, and evidence; nor from their covenant interest in him, which is immovable and inviolable; nor from a state of justification, in which they openly are, who in the effectual calling have passed from death to life, and so shall never enter into condemnation; nor from the family and household of God, in which they are; no, nor from the grace of calling with which they are called by God, and which has eternal salvation inseparably connected with it; but this must be understood doctrinally of their removal from the Gospel of Christ, though not of a total and final one. It is observed by some, that the word used is in the present tense, and shows that they were not gone off from the Gospel, but were upon going, so that the apostle had some hopes, yea, confidence of their being restored, **Ga 5:10**. And besides, though such as are truly called by grace cannot be finally and totally deceived by false prophets and false teachers, yet they may be greatly unhinged by them, and may fall from some degree of steadfastness in the doctrine of faith, which was the case of these Galatians: but what increased the apostle's surprise, and aggravated their sin and weakness, was, that they were "so soon" removed from the simplicity of the Gospel; he having been with them but a few years before, and preached the Gospel to them, which the means of their conversion, and of planting churches among them; at least he had lately paid them a visit, when he afresh strengthened them in the faith of the Gospel, Ac 18:23. Or this may regard that easiness of mind which appeared in them, who upon the first attack of them by the false teachers, were weakly and cowardly giving up their faith, and at once giving into the notions of these men, as soon as they were proposed unto them. That which they are said to be removed

unto is

another Gospel, different from that, and very unlike to what had been preached to them, and they had received; which had nothing of the grace of Christ, of the doctrines and blessings of grace that had, by which they were called; very different from the Gospel of Christ, and his apostles, insomuch that it did not deserve the name of a Gospel; and the apostle calls it so, not that he thought it to be one, but because it was in the opinion of others, and was so styled by the false apostles; wherefore, by way of concession, he so calls it, though he immediately corrects it.

Galatians 1:7

Ver. 7. Which is not another,.... It is no Gospel, no joyful sound, no good news, and glad tidings; the doctrine which attributes justification to the works of the law, or mixes grace and works in the business of salvation, which was the doctrine of these false teachers, is no Gospel; not truly so, however it may be called; nor does it bring any solid peace and joy to distressed minds. There is but one pure Gospel of the grace of God, and Christ, and his apostles; there is not one and another; there is but one faith, one doctrine and scheme of faith; the Gospel is single and uniform, all of a piece, has no yea and nay, or contradiction in it; this trumpet gives no uncertain sound, nor any dreadful, but a joyful one:

but there be some that trouble you; meaning the false apostles, whose names he does not think fit to mention, as being unworthy to be named, and to have their names transmitted to posterity. These troubled the churches with their doctrines and principles, by raising disputes and controversies among them, injecting doubts and scruples into their minds, which puzzled and confounded them, and made them uneasy, and which broke in upon that peace of soul which the Gospel brings and establishes; for no true solid peace is attained to, and enjoyed, but by the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, which the doctrine of justification by works, &c. tends to destroy.

And would pervert the Gospel of Christ; which has Christ for its author, subject, and preacher; and particularly the doctrine of justification by his righteousness, which they sought to change, to throw into a different shape and form, to adulterate by mixing it with the works of the law, and so, if possible, destroy it: to this they showed a good will, but were not able to effect, for the Gospel is an everlasting one; it is immovable, and so is that particular doctrine of it; it remains, and will remain in spite of opposition to it. Thus the apostle prudently lays the blame of the Galatians removing from the Gospel to another upon the false teachers, hoping he should be able to reclaim them by solid arguments, and gentle methods.

Galatians 1:8

Ver. 8. But though we, or an angel from heaven,.... The apostle, in order to assert the more strongly the truth, purity, and perfection of the Gospel, as preached by him; and to deter persons from preaching another Gospel, and others from receiving it, supposes a case impossible; and, in such a case, denounces his anathemas. It was not possible, that he, or any of his fellow apostles, who had been so clearly led and so fully established in the Gospel of

Christ, and of which they had had such a powerful and comfortable experience in their souls, could ever preach one different from it; nor was it possible that a good angel, one that is in heaven, that always beholds the face of God there, is ever ready to do his will, as he never could be employed by God in publishing another, so he never would; and yet, was it possible or such a thing to be done by such men, or such an angel, he or they would deserve the curse of God and men; their having the highest names, or being of the highest character, and in the highest office and class of beings, would not screen them; and therefore how should the false apostles, and those who followed them, ever think to escape, since even these would not, should they

preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you; that is, not only anyone that is contrary to it, but any one besides it; for such was the perfection of the Gospel, as preached by the apostle, who declared the whole counsel of God, and kept back nothing that was profitable to the churches, that no addition could, or might be made unto it:

let him be accursed, or "anathema"; see 1Co 16:22 which may respect his excommunication out of the church, and his sentence of condemnation by Christ at the last day; and the sense be this, let him be ejected from the ministry of the word, degraded from his office, and cast out of the church; let him be no more a minister, nor a member of it; and let him be abhorred of men, and accursed of Christ; let him hear the awful sentence, "go ye accursed", &c.

Galatians 1:9

Ver. 9. As we have said before, so say I now again,.... Either when he first preached the Gospel among them; or rather referring to what he had just now said, which he repeats with some little alteration; as if any, men, or angels, be they of what name, figure, rank, or office whatever,

preach any other Gospel unto you, than that ye have received; and as the apostle thought, readily, willingly, sincerely, and heartily, in the love of it; assenting to the truth, feeling the power of it, and openly professing it:

let him be accursed; which he repeats, for the more solemn asseveration and confirmation of it; and to show that this did not drop from his lips hastily and inadvertently; nor did it proceed from any irregular passions, or was spoken by him in heat, and in an angry mood, his mind being ruffled, disturbed, and discomposed; but was said by him in the most serious and solemn manner, upon the most thoughtful and mature consideration of the affair.

Galatians 1:10

Ver. 10. For do I now persuade men, or God?.... To "persuade", is to teach; see Ac 18:4 the sense of which, with respect to men, is easy, but, with regard to God, difficult; and indeed cannot be applied to him, consistent with his divine perfections; and therefore something must be understood, and which may be supplied either thus, "do I now persuade", you or others, that "men or God" are to be hearkened to? not men, but God; the apostle did not teach them to hearken either to himself, or any of the other apostles, Peter, James, and John, any further than as he and they preached the pure Gospel of Christ; but should they do otherwise, they were not to be attended to, but God, who spake by his Son; or Christ, who is God as well as man; who is the great prophet in the church, a son in his own house, whose voice is to be hearkened to in all matters of doctrine, worship, and duty: or thus, "do I now persuade" you, to obey "men or God"; not men, but God; he did not teach them to regard the traditions of the elders, or to obey the commandments of men, but, on the contrary, the ordinances of Christ, who is the one Lord, and only master, whose orders are to be observed: or thus, "do I now persuade", to trust in "men or God?" to believe in the one or the other; not in men, in the wisdom, strength, riches, and righteousness of men, but in the living God; in the grace of God, and in the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ: or thus, "do I persuade" for the sake of "men, or God?" not for the sake of gaining honour, glory, and applause from men, as the Pharisees and false apostles did, but for the glory of God, the hour of Christ, and the good of immortal souls: or else not persons, but things are meant, by men and God: and the sense is, that the apostle taught and persuaded men to believe, not things human, but divine; he did not preach himself, or seek to set up his own power and authority over men; or set forth his eloquence, learning, parts, and abilities; or to gain either applause or riches to himself; he did not teach human wisdom, the vain philosophy of the Gentiles, and opposition of science, falsely so called; nor the traditions of the elders, nor the commandments of men; nor the power and purity human nature, or the righteousness of man: but delivered things divine; he persuaded to things concerning God, and the kingdom of God; see Ac 19:8 he taught, that without the regenerating grace of the Spirit of God, no man should see, and without the justifying righteousness of Christ, no man should enter into the kingdom of heaven, as his Lord had done before him; he preached the things concerning the grace and love of God, the person and offices of Christ, and the Spirit's work of regeneration and sanctification: the word "now", refers to all the time since his conversion, to the present: before his call by grace, he persuaded persons to hearken to men, to obey the traditions of the elders, to trust in their own righteousness for justification before God; but now he saw otherwise, and taught them to lay aside everything that was human, and to believe in God, trust in and depend on his justifying righteousness; and this he did, without any regard to the favour and affection of men, as appears from what follows:

or do I seek to please men? no, he neither pleased, nor sought to please them; neither in the matter of his ministry, which was the grace of God, salvation by a crucified Christ, and the things of the Spirit of God; for these were very distasteful to, and accounted foolishness by the men of the world; nor in the manner of it, which was not with excellency of speech, or the enticing words of man's wisdom, with the flowers of rhetoric, but in a plain and simple style. There is indeed a pleasing of men, which is right, and which the apostle elsewhere recommends, and was in the practice of himself; see Ro 15:2. This proceeds from right principles, by proper ways and means, and to right ends, the glory of God, the good, profit, edification, and salvation of men; and there is a pleasing of men that is wrong, which is done by dropping, concealing, or corrupting the doctrines of the Gospel, to gain the affection and applause of men, and amass wealth to themselves, as the false apostles did, and who are here tacitly struck at; a practice the apostle could by no means come into, and assigns this reason for it:

for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ: formerly he had studied to please men, when he held the clothes of those that stoned Stephen, made havoc of the church, hating men and women to prison; and went to the high priest, and asked letters of him to go to Damascus, and persecute the followers of Christ, thereby currying favour with him; but now it was otherwise, and he suggests, that was this his present temper and conduct he should have continued a Pharisee still, and have never entered into the service of Christ; for to please men, and be a servant of Christ, are things inconsistent, incompatible, and impracticable; no man pleaser can be a true faithful servant of Christ, or deserve the name of one: the apostle here refers to his office as an apostle of Christ, and minister of the Gospel, and not to his character as a private believer, in which sense every Christian is a servant of Christ; though to men is even contrary to this; for no man can serve two masters, God and the world, Christ and men. The Septuagint version of Ps 53:5 is, "for God hath scattered the bones",
anyrwpareskwn, "of men pleasers", to which agree the Syriac and Arabic

versions.

Galatians 1:11

Ver. 11. But I certify you, brethren,.... Though the Galatians had gone such lengths with their false teachers, yet the apostle still calls them "brethren"; as hoping well of them, that they were born of God, did belong to his family, and were heirs of the grace of life; and this he the rather makes use of, to show his affection to them, and to engage their attention to the assurance he gives, of the divine original and authority of the Gospel preached by him; which though they formerly knew and believed, yet through the insinuations of the false apostles, were drawn into some doubts about it: wherefore he declares in the most solemn and affectionate manner,

that the Gospel which was preached of me, is not after man. Their guides that were leading them wrong, did not presume to say, that the Gospel was after man, for they themselves pretended to preach the Gospel; but that the Gospel preached by the apostle had no other authority than human, or than his own to support it: wherefore he denies that it was "after man"; after the wisdom of man, an human invention and contrivance, a device and fiction of man's brain; nor was it after the mind of man, or agreeably to his carnal reason, it was disapproved of by him, and beyond his capacity to reach it; nor was it of his revealing, a discovery of his; flesh and blood, human nature, could never have revealed it; nor is it in the power of one man to make another a minister of the Gospel, or to give him or himself success in the ministration of it, but the whole is of God.

Galatians 1:12

Ver. 12. For I neither received it of man,.... Not from Gamaliel, at whose feet he was brought up; he received the law from him, and knowledge in the Jews' religion, and in the traditions of the elders, but not a whit of the Gospel; on the contrary, he received prejudices against it from him, or was strengthened in them by him; no, nor from the apostles of Christ neither, whom he saw not, had no conversation with for some years, after he was a preacher of the Gospel, and therefore did not receive it at their hands; no, nor from Ananias, nor any other man:

neither was I taught it: that is, by man; he did not learn it of men, as men learn law, physics, logic, rhetoric, natural philosophy, and other things at school:

but by the revelation of Jesus Christ; meaning, not through Christ being revealed to him by the Father, as in **Ga 1:16** though it is a sense not to be overlooked; but by Christ, the revealer of it to him; and regards either the time of his rapture into the third heaven, when he heard words not to be uttered; or rather since that is not so certain when it was, the time of his conversion, when Christ personally appeared unto him, and made him a minister of his Gospel; and immediately from himself, without the interposition, or use of any man, or means, gave him such light into it, and such a furniture of mind for the preaching of it, that he directly, as soon as ever he was baptized, set about the ministration of it, to the admiration of the saints, and confusion of the enemies of Christ. These words furnish out another proof of the deity of Christ; for if the Gospel is not after man, nor received of, or taught by man, but by Christ, then Christ cannot be a mere man, or else being by him, it would be by man; and which also confirms the authority and validity of the Gospel, and carries in it a strong reason for the apostle's anathematizing all such as preach any other.

Galatians 1:13

Ver. 13. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past,.... His manner and course of life, in his state of unregeneracy, how diametrically opposite his education and behaviour, his principles and practices, were to the Gospel; which show that he had not received it, nor was he taught it of men. This they might have heard of, either from himself, when he first preached among them, who was very free to acknowledge his former sins and errors; or from the Jews, who were scattered abroad in the several countries; and it may be, from them, who were forced to fly to strange cities, and perhaps to some in Galatia, on account of his persecution: now his life and conversation, before his conversion, were spent

in the Jews' religion; or "in Judaism". He was born of Jewish parents, had a Jewish education, was brought up under a Jewish doctor, in all the peculiarities of the Jewish religion, and so could have received no hints, not in a notional way, of the truths of the Gospel; which he might have done, had he been born of Christian parents, and had had a Christian education: besides, he was brought up in the religion of the Jews, not as it was founded and established by God, but as it was corrupted by them; who had lost the true sense of the oracles of God committed to them, the true use of sacrifices, and the end of the law; had added to it a load of human traditions; placed all religion in bare doing, and taught that justification and salvation lay in the observance of the law of Moses, and the traditions of the elders: add to this, that he was brought up in the sect of the Jewish religion, Pharisaism, which was the straitest sect of it, and the most averse to Christ and his Gospel; so that he could never receive it, or have any disposition to it from hence; so far from it, that he appeals to the Galatians, as what they must have heard,

how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God; which he now knew, and believed to be the church of God; though then he did not, but rather a synagogue of Satan; and this he mentions, as an aggravation of his sin, under a sense of which he was humbled all his days: when he is said to persecute it "beyond measure", the meaning is not, as if there were any lawful measure, or due bounds of persecution, but that he persecuted the saints in a most violent and outrageous manner, beyond all others that were concerned with him: the church of God at Jerusalem is particularly designed, and the members of it, the disciples of Christ; whom he hated, and committed to prison, and breathed out threatenings and slaughter against, and destroyed: wherefore it follows, and wasted it; or destroyed it; as much as in him lay, he sought to do it, though he was not able to effect it entirely; he made havoc of it, dispersed its members, caused them to flee to strange cities, persecuted them to death, gave his voice against them to have them punished and put to death: such an aversion had he to the followers of Christ, and the Christian doctrine.

Galatians 1:14

Ver. 14. And profited in the Jews' religion,.... Or "in Judaism"; and the more he did so, or was versed in, and wedded to their principles, the more violent a persecutor he was. He was under a very considerable master, Gamaliel, a Rabbi of great note among the Jews; and he himself a youth of uncommon natural abilities, so that his proficiency in Jewish learning was very great; even, as he says,

above many my equals in mine own nation: not proselytes in other nations, but such as were natives of his own country: or were "in his own kindred", his near relations, who were his contemporaries, of the same age with him; and very modestly he says "many", not "all":

being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers: he had a zeal, but, not according to knowledge; and a greater degree of it than the rest of his countrymen; and that not so much for the written law delivered to his fathers, as for the oral law, the traditions and customs of his ancestors; which had been handed down, as they pretended, from one to another, and were now swelled to an almost infinite bulk; and mean the traditions of the elders, condemned by Christ, as making void the commandments of God: now his close attachment to, and eager zeal for these traditions, put him upon using more violent measures in persecuting the saints, and further off from the Gospel of Christ: and now from this account of himself it is a clear point, that during this period of his life he could never have received the Gospel from men, which is his view in giving it.

Galatians 1:15

Ver. 15. But when it pleased God,.... Here begins his account of his conversion, and call to the ministry; all which he ascribes entirely to the sovereign good pleasure, and free grace of God:

who separated me from my mother's womb. By his "mother" is meant, not in an improper and figurative sense, the Jewish church, or the old synagogue, the mother of all its members; the Jerusalem which then was, and was in bondage with her children; from which bondage, blindness, ignorance, superstition and bigotry, he was delivered, when called by grace: nor the church at Antioch, which is never called a mother church; and though he was by that church, with Barnabas, separated for the work of the ministry, yet not from it: but by his "mother", without a figure is meant, his real natural mother, whose name is said to be Theocrita; and this separation from her womb is to be understood either of that distinction made of him in Providence, as soon as born; which not only took him, and safely brought him out of his mother's womb, but ever since took special care of him, and saved and preserved him to be called; for all the chosen vessels of salvation are distinguished from others, in a providential way; they are more under the special care of Providence than others are, even whilst in a state of unregeneracy; God's eye of Providence is upon them, his heart is towards them, he waits upon them to be gracious to them, and many are the remarkable appearances of Providence for them; see Ps 22:9. Or rather this designs divine predestination, which is a separation, a setting apart of persons, for such and such purposes, as here of the apostle; and the eternity of it, it being very early done, from his mother's womb; whilst he was in it, before he was born, and had done either good or evil; from the beginning of time, from the foundation of the world, and before it, even from eternity: all which phrases express the same thing, and intend either his predestination to grace and glory, to holiness and happiness, to sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, and to the obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; or his predestination to apostleship, to the work of the ministry, to the Gospel of Christ, to which he was separated in eternity, and in time; reference seems to be had to **Jer 1:5** or indeed both, and his separation or predestination to both was owing to the sovereign will and good pleasure of God, as was also his after call:

and called me by his grace; which follows upon separation, as it does on predestination, in **Ro 8:30** and is to be interpreted either of his call at conversion, by powerful and efficacious grace; when he was called out of Jewish darkness, blindness, and ignorance, into Gospel light and knowledge; out of the bondage of sin, Satan, the law, and traditions of the fathers, into the liberty of Christ; from conversation with the men of the world, among whom before he had it, into the fellowship of Father, Son, and Spirit, angels and saints; out of himself, and off of a dependence on his own righteousness, to trust in Christ: in a word, he was called into the grace of Christ here, into a participation of all the blessings of grace, and to eternal glory by him hereafter; which call was not of men, but of God, as the efficient cause of it; and by his grace, as the moving and procuring cause of it, and without the use of means, the word, which is the ordinary way in which God calls his people; so that it is plain his first light into the Gospel, was not of man, nor so much as by the means of man: or this call may respect his call to the ministry, which was at the same time he was effectually called by grace; and which also was not of man, nor of himself; he did not thrust himself into this work, but God called him; and that of his mere grace and good will, without any respect to any merits, deserts, or qualifications in him.

Galatians 1:16

Ver. 16. To reveal his Son in me,.... This clause stands in connection with that in the preceding verse, "but when it pleased God"; the revelation of Christ in the apostle being the mere fruit and effect of God's will and pleasure: some versions read it "by me", making the apostle to be the instrument and means, by whom God revealed his Son Jesus Christ to others, which is a certain truth, but this is rather contained in the following clause: others read it "to me", and which also is true; for Christ was revealed to him in the glory of his person, the fulness of his grace, the necessity, suitableness, and completeness of his salvation; not objectively in the Gospel, or merely notionally, speculatively in the theory of things, but spiritually, experimentally, and savingly; and which is better expressed, and nearer the original, by "in him"; for he had an internal discovery of him as God's salvation, and of his interest in him as such; Christ was formed in him, his Spirit was put within him, his grace was implanted in him; he lived and dwelt in his heart by faith, as the Son in his own house; he was known unto him, as Christ in him the hope of glory: now the end of all this, of his separation from mother's womb, of his call by the grace of God, of the large revelation of Christ to him, and in him was,

that, says he,

I might preach him among the Heathen; as he did: Christ was the subject of his ministry; the things respecting his person, as that he was very God, the Son of God, God and man in one person the things respecting his office, as that he is the only Mediator between God and man, the prophet of the church, the high priest over the house of God, and King of saints; the doctrines of his grace, and which concern his obedience, sufferings, and death; as that peace and pardon are by his blood, justification by his righteousness, reconciliation and satisfaction by his sacrifice, and eternal life and complete salvation alone by him; all which is evangelizing, or preaching good news and glad tidings to sensible sinners: the persons to whom he was to preach these things, and did, were "the Heathen", or Gentiles; he was a chosen vessel for this purpose; Christ, when he called him, sent him to them; the work he was to do, and did, lay chiefly among them; hence he is called an apostle, and teacher of them:

immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; which some understand of carnal reason, and that he did not stand reasoning and debating the matter with himself, whether it would be for his credit and reputation, for his worldly interest and advantage, to enter upon the ministry of the word; whether it would be advisable to expose himself, by so doing, to reproach and persecution; but immediately, as soon as he was called by grace, and Christ was revealed in him, he set about it: others, by "flesh and blood", understand carnal men; and others his countrymen the Jews, and those of them that were his relations, his own flesh; but rather men in general are intended, any whatever, and especially the apostles; whom, he afterwards says, he had no conversation with, upon his first setting out in the ministry. It is usual with the Jews to call men, in distinction and opposition to God, Mdw rvb, "flesh and blood". Infinite almost are the examples that might be given thereof out of their writings. See Gill on "Mt 16:17".
See Gill on "Eph 6:12".

Galatians 1:17

Ver. 17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem,.... That is, immediately, as soon as he was converted, not till three years after, as follows; though by the account which Luke gives of him, **Ac 9:23** and by that which the apostle gives of himself, Ac 22:17 it looks as if he went to Jerusalem some little time after his conversion, and before the date here given: and therefore some have thought that he did go up to Jerusalem pretty quickly, when, praying in the temple, he fell into a trance, and was ordered to make haste from thence, and go far hence unto the Gentiles and accordingly he made no stay, did not go to any of the apostles, and neither saw nor conversed with any of them, which is what he here says,

to them which were apostles before me. The twelve, who were called, ordained, and sent forth as apostles before he was; for last of all Christ appeared to him, and was seen by him as one born out of due time: his meaning is, not that he was a successor of the apostle's, but that they were instated in the office of apostleship before him; and this he mentions to show that he did not receive the Gospel from men, no not from the apostles themselves; since, upon his conversion, he did not go up to Jerusalem to see any of them, and talk with them; nor did he stand in need of any instructions from them, being immediately furnished sufficiently by Christ himself; nor did his work lie at Jerusalem, nor so much among the Jews as among the Gentiles, and therefore to them he went:

but I went into Arabia. This journey of the apostle is wholly omitted by Luke, nor should we have known anything of it, had it not been for this account: how long he stayed there, what he did, and what success he met with among the Arabs are no where related; no doubt but he preached the Gospel to them, and as his ministry everywhere was owned and blessed by God, it may be very reasonably thought it was here at his first setting out in it. The Arabic version reads it, "I went to Balcam", which was a city in Syria; but without any foundation for it; for it was not Syria, but Arabia to which he went. There are three countries which bear the name of Arabia, and which are called to distinguish them from one another, Arabia Petraea, Arabia Deserta, and Arabia Felix; of which
See Gill on "Ac 2:11". It is very likely it was the former of these which the apostle went to, as being nearest to Syria, since from Damascus, the metropolis of Syria, he went thither; and Damascus itself was at this time under the government of an Arabian king, see
2Co 11:32. So Pliny frequently speaks of Arabia as near to Syria, Palestine, and Judea: in one place he says {l}, Arabia divides Judea from Egypt; and

elsewhere {m} observes, that Syria is distinguished by many names; for it is called Palestina, where it touches the Arabians, and Judea, and Coele, and Phenice; and Peraea, or the country beyond Jordan, he says, is next to Arabia and Egypt; and on the east of the lake of Asphaltites he places Arabia, that belongs to the Nomades; so likewise Josephus {n} places Arabia at the east of Peraea, or the country beyond Jordan; and says {o} in another place, that Arabia borders on Judea, the metropolis of which was Petra, where Aretas the king had his royal palace: Jerom {p} likewise observes, that the river Jordan divides Judea and Arabia; so that this country into which the apostle went was not a great way off of Syria and Judea, whither he returned again after some time; which seems to be about the space of three years, by what follows in the next verse, and when he had done the work and will of God in those parts; where doubtless he was the instrument of converting souls, and planting churches, and here it is certain were churches in ages following: in the "third" century were churches in Arabia, mentioned along with the churches in Syria, by Eusebius {q}; in which age lived two famous Arabian bishops, Beryllus and Maximus; and the same historian {r} reports, that in the times of Dioclesian there were some wonderful martyrs in Arabia, who suffered the most cruel tortures and death, for the sake of Christ: and in the "fourth" century there were Arabian bishops in the Nicene council, and in other synods, as at Jerusalem and Sardica; and in the same century there were bishops of Arabia Petraea, at the synod in Antioch, whose names were Nicomachus and Cyrion: and also in the "fifth" century there were churches and bishops in the same country {s}, not to trace them any further:

and returned again unto Damascus; and then it was, that being increased in spiritual strength and knowledge, he proved that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah, to the confusion of the Jews there; which drew upon him their resentment and indignation, so that they took counsel and lay in wait to kill him; but the disciples let him down through a window, by the wall of the city in a basket, and so he escaped them.

{l} Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 21. {m} lb. l. 5. c. 12, 14, 16. {n} De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 3. sect. 3. {o} Antiqu. l. 14. c. 1. sect. 4. & l. 4. c. 4. sect. 7. {p} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 92. G. {q} Eccl. Hist. l. 7. c. 5. {r} lb. l. 8. c. 12. {s} Hist. Eccl. Magdeburgh. cent. 4. c. 9. p. 350, 390, 405, 425. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 2. c. 10. p. 552.

Galatians 1:18

Ver. 18. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem,.... Not three years after his return to Damascus, but after his conversion; and now it was that he moved to become a member of the church at Jerusalem; but they did not care to admit him, fearing that he was not a disciple, till such time that Barnabas took him, and brought him to the Apostles Peter and James, and related his conversion and his boldness in preaching the Gospel at Damascus: his view in going up to Jerusalem at this time was partly his own safety, being obliged to fly from Damascus, but chiefly

to see Peter. The Alexandrian copy, and another, read "Cephas", and so does the Ethiopic version, the same with Peter: not to see what sort of a man he was, but to pay him a Christian visit; to converse with him about spiritual things; to know how the work of God went on under him, as the minister of the circumcision; and to relate to him, what success he had met with as the minister of the uncircumcision; but not to receive the Gospel from him, or to be ordained a preacher of it by him; for he had been three years already in the work of the ministry, before he made him this visit; and besides, his stay with him was very short, nor could he have received much from him, in so short a time, in an ordinary way:

and abode with him fifteen days; and even all this time was not wholly spent in conversation with him; for he was, during this time, coming in and going out at Jerusalem, where he preached boldly in the name of Christ, and disputed against the Grecians.

Galatians 1:19

Ver. 19. But other of the apostles saw I none,.... This is observed to show, that as he did not receive the Gospel from Peter, so neither from any of the other apostles, whom he did not so much as see, much less converse with;

save James the Lord's brother; not James the son of Zebedee, the brother of John, whom Herod slew with the sword; but James the son of Alphaeus, he who made the speech in the synod at Jerusalem,
Ac 15:13 was the writer of the epistle which bears his name, and was the brother of Joses, Simon, and Judas, who are called the brethren of Christ, Mt 13:55 and that because they were the kinsmen and relations of Christ according to the flesh, it being usual with the Jews to call such brethren. The relation came in and stood thus; this James was James the less, the son of Mary the wife of Cleophas,

Mr 15:40 which Cleophas was the brother of Joseph, the husband of Mary the mother of our Lord, as Eusebius, from Hegesippus, relates; and so our Lord and this James were brothers' children, as was supposed: or else the wife of Cleophas the mother of James, was sister to Mary the mother of Christ, as she is called, Joh 19:25 and so they were sisters' children, or own cousins; and thus Jerom {t}, after much discourse on this subject, concludes that Mary the mother of James the less was the wife of Alphaeus, (or Cleophas, which is the same,) and the sister of Mary the mother of the Lord, whom the Evangelist John surnames Mary of Cleophas; and persons in such a relation, and even uncles and nephews, were called brethren by the Jews; see Ge 12:5 nor is James one of our Lord's disciples being called his brother, any contradiction to **Joh 7:5** as the Jew {u} affirms, where it is said, "neither did his brethren believe in him"; since they might not believe in him then, and yet believe in him afterwards: besides, Christ had brethren or relations according to the flesh, distinct from his disciples and apostles, and his brethren among them; see Mt 10:1 such as were James, Judas, and Simon; nor does the Evangelist John say, that none of Christ's brethren believed in him, only that they that came to him and bid him go into Judea did not. Some have been of opinion that a third James, distinct from James the son of Zebedee and James the son of Alphaeus, is here meant; who was not of the twelve apostles, and was surnamed James the just, and called the brother of Christ because of his faith, wisdom, and becoming conversation; but certain it is, that this James was of the number of the apostles, as appears from the exceptive clause, "other of the apostles saw I none, save James", &c. and from his being put with Cephas and John, who were pillars and the chief among the apostles; and besides it was James the son of Alphaeus, who was surnamed the "just", and Oblias {w}, and presided over the church at Jerusalem, and was a man of great esteem among the Jews; and is by {x} Josephus, as here, called the brother of Jesus.

{t} Advers. Helvidium, Tom. II. fol. 4. M. {u} R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 8. p. 469. {w} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 23. Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccl. sect. 3. fol. 89. {x} Antiqu. l. 20. c. 8. sect. 1.

Galatians 1:20

Ver. 20. Now the things which I write unto you,.... Concerning his education, his religion, his principles and practices before conversion; concerning his call by the grace of God, the revelation of Christ in him, and his preaching of him among the Heathen; concerning his travels to several places for this purpose, and especially concerning his not receiving the Gospel from men, not from any of the apostles; and how that upon his conversion he did not go up to Jerusalem to any of them, to be taught and sent forth by them; and that it was not till three years after that he wept thither to see Peter, with whom he stayed but fifteen days, and saw no other apostle, but James the Lord's brother. Now this being a matter of moment, and what he had been charged with by the false teachers, that the Gospel he preached he had received from men, in order to disqualify him and bring him into contempt as an apostle, and which they had insinuated to the Galatians; he therefore not only wrote these things, but for the confirmation of them solemnly appeals to God the searcher of hearts for the truth of them;

behold, before God I lie not; which is not only a strong asseveration, but a formal oath; it is swearing by the God of truth, calling him to be witness of the things that he had written; whence it is manifest that an oath upon proper occasions, where there is a necessity for it, and a good end to be answered by it, may be lawfully made.

Galatians 1:21

Ver. 21. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. For having disputed against the Grecians at Jerusalem, and being too hard for them, it so irritated them, that they were going to murder him; which being known to the brethren there, they got him out of the way, and had him down to Caesarea, and so to Tarsus, a city in Cilicia; where he was born; in which places and in the countries about he preached the Gospel of Christ; to Tarsus, Barnabas went for him seeking him, and finding him brought him to Antioch in Syria; and both in Syria and Cilicia he preached, no doubt with success, since we read of believing Gentiles and churches in those parts he afterwards visited; being sent along with others, with the letter and decrees of the synod at Jerusalem to them, and whom he confirmed; See Gill on "Ac 15:23",
See Gill on "Ac 15:41": in the Greek text these countries are called "climates"; a climate in geography is said {y} to be a part of the surface of the earth, bounded by two circles parallel to the equator, and of such a breadth as that the longest day in the parallel nearer the pole, exceeds the longest day in that next the equator, by some certain space, viz. half an hour--. The beginning of the climate is the parallel circle wherein the day is the shortest, the end of the climate is that wherein the day is the longest;--each climate only differs from its contiguous ones, in that the longest day in summer is longer or shorter by half an hour in the one place than in the other:--vulgarly the term climate is bestowed on any country or region differing from another, either in respect of

the seasons, the quality of the soil, or even the manners of the inhabitants, without any regard to the length of the longest day; in which sense it seems to be used here, as also in Ro 15:23. Of the country of Syria, See Gill on "Mt 4:24". Cilicia is a country of Asia Minor, now called Caramania; it had its name of Cilicia, as Herodotus says {z}, from Cilix, the son of Agenor, a Phoenician: though Bochart {a} derives it from Challekim or Challukim, which signifies stones, it being a stony country; and so Herodotus {b} calls it "mountainous" Cilicia; it is said to have Pamphilia on the west, the tops of Mount Taurus on the north, Mount Amanus on the east, and the Cilician sea on the south; Jerom says {c}, Cilicia is a province of Asia, which the river Cydnus cuts in the middle, and Mount Amanus, of which Solomon makes mention, separates it from Syria-Coele.

{y} Chambers's Cyclopaedia in the word "Climate". {z} L. 7. Polymnia, c. 91. Solinus, c. 51. {a} Canaan, p. 376. {b} L. 2. Euterpe, c. 34. {c} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 95. M.

Galatians 1:22

Ver. 22. And was unknown by face,.... Or "in person". This is said to prevent what might be objected, that though the apostle had not received the Gospel he preached from any of the apostles at Jerusalem; yet he might have had it from the churches that were in the land of Judea, and from some of the principal men in them; but this was so far from being truth, that he was not so much as known unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ; for there was not only a famous church of believers in Christ at Jerusalem, the metropolis of the land, but there were several congregated churches in the several parts of that country: by Judea we are to understand that part of the land of Israel so called, which was distinct not only from Samaria; but from Galilee and Perea, or the country beyond Jordan; for according to the Jews {d}, the land of Israel was divided into three parts, Judea, Perea, and Galilee. Judea again was divided into three parts, the hill country, the plain, and the valley; and the plain of Lydda is as the plain of the south, and its mountainous part as the king's mountain; from Bethhoron to the sea is one province: and elsewhere {e} it is said, that the hill country of Judea is the king's mountain, the plain of it is the plain of the south, and the valley is from Engedi to Jericho--from Bethhoron to Emmaus is mountainous, from Emmaus to Lydda is a plain, and from Lydda to the sea a valley; from which may be collected where this country lay, and where were these churches here spoken of; the foundation of which might be laid in the conversion of some in those parts, through the ministry of the disciples of Christ, who were appointed witnesses of him not only in Jerusalem, but in all Judea and Samaria, **Ac 1:8** and about the time of the Apostle Paul's conversion, and his being at Jerusalem, there were churches gathered in Judea, as distinct from Galilee and Samaria, **Ac 9:31** particularly at Caesarea, Lydda, Saron, and Joppa. It is very likely that all the apostles, when they first set out to preach the Gospel after the ascension of Christ and the effusion of the Spirit, began in Judea; though some might make a very short stay, and others a longer. The Apostle and Evangelist Matthew is generally thought to have exercised his ministry chiefly in Judea, and to have continued there long; here he wrote his Gospel for the sake of the Jews that believed {f}; and that, as a very ancient writer says {g}, when Peter and Paul preached at Rome, and founded the church there. Judas Thaddaeus is also said {h} to go through Judea, Galilee, Samaria, Arabia, Syria, and Mesopotamia; and certain it is, that Philip, after he had baptized the eunuch, preached in all the cities from Azotus to Caesarea, where he seems to have stayed awhile and preached, **Ac 8:40** and where afterwards was a Gospel church state, of which See Gill on "Ac 10:48" and at Lydda and Saron, which were both in Judea, there were saints who were visited by the Apostle Peter, and others converted by him, about the time that our apostle here refers to; of the church at Lydda; See Gill on "Ac 9:32" at Joppa also, which was in the tribe of Dan, there were disciples at the same time, and very likely a church there; See Gill on "Ac 9:38" and it may be observed that the Apostle Peter was the minister of the circumcision, he had the Gospel of the circumcision committed to him, and he continued with and preached much to the circumcised Jews; and so in all likelihood was the instrument of planting the churches in Judea here spoken of. These are said to be

in Christ, as the church at Thessalonica, and that at Corinth are elsewhere said to be; because they professed to believe in Christ, were called by his name, and called upon his name; and though every individual member of them might not be in Christ, really united to him, and have communion with him; yet since they were all under a profession of him, they are considered as in him. The Arabic version reads it, "the churches of Judea which believe in Christ"; which though not a literal translation, gives the true sense of the passage, and distinguishes those churches from the synagogues or assemblies of the Jews which did not believe in Christ.

{d} Misn. Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 2. {e} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 38. 4. {f} Hieron. Catalog. Script. Ecclesiast. sect. 4. fol. 90. A. {g} Irenaeus adv. Haeres. l. 3. c. 1. {h} Hist. Eccles. Magdeburg. cent. 1. l. 2. c. 10. p. 449.

Galatians 1:23

Ver. 23. But they had heard only,.... What they knew of the apostle was only by hearsay; they had never seen him, nor heard him preach, nor conversed with him, only had it reported to them;

that he which persecuted us in times past; some few years ago, and not them personally, but such as were of the same faith with them, the church at Jerusalem and the members of it; which he made havoc of, committing men and women to prison, and causing others to flee to strange cities;

now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed; all as in him lay he endeavoured to destroy it, though he could not entirely root it up; he destroyed many of the disciples that held it, and did all he could to discourage others from embracing and professing it; he made use of the strongest arguments he was master of to confute it, and of the secular arm to crush and extirpate it, but now was become a preacher of it: by "faith" is meant not so much the grace of faith, though to show the nature, necessity, and usefulness of faith in Christ, and to direct and encourage sensible sinners, as he did the jailer, to believe in him, was a principal part of his ministry; but rather the doctrine of faith, which is always designed, when it is said, as here, to be preached or to be obeyed, stood fast in and contended for, or to be departed and erred from, to be made shipwreck of and denied. The Gospel is called the word of faith, the mystery of faith, the faith of the Gospel, common faith, most holy faith, the faith once delivered to the saints; it contains things to be believed; it proposes and directs to the great object of faith; and is the means of implanting and increasing that grace, and without which the ministry of it is of no use: it takes in all articles of faith, respecting the divine Being, the unity of God, the trinity of persons in the Godhead, the equal and proper deity of each person, their personal distinctions from each other, the attribution of all divine works, worship and honour to them; it relates to everything concerning man, in his original creation, in his state of innocence and integrity; concerning the fall of Adam, the imputation of his sin to all his posterity, the corruption of human nature, and the impotence of man to all that is spiritually good: it regards all the acts of grace of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in and towards any of the sons of men: it includes all the doctrines of it, as of the free, sovereign, everlasting, and unchangeable love of God; of eternal, personal, and irrespective election of some to grace and glory, by which both are secured; of the everlasting, absolute, unconditional, and sure covenant of grace; of particular redemption by Christ, proceeding on a full satisfaction to divine justice; of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ; of reconciliation and pardon by his blood; of regeneration and sanctification by the Spirit; of the perseverance of the saints in faith and holiness, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal glory: now this faith, in the several momentous branches of it, the apostle preached, published, declared, spoke out openly and publicly; fully and completely, without dropping, concealing, or keeping back anything; clearly and plainly, without using ambiguous phrases, or words of double meaning, with all faithfulness and integrity, boldness and constancy.

Galatians 1:24

Ver. 24. And they glorified God in me. Or "for me"; on his account; for the wonderful grace bestowed on him and wrought in him; for the surprising change that was made in him, that of a persecutor he should become a preacher, which they ascribed, as he himself did, to the abundant grace of God; they were greatly thankful and blessed God, who had given him such large gifts, and made him so greatly useful in the cause, and among the churches of Christ. And by observing this, how much the churches in Judea were affected with the grace of God vouchsafed to him, though they had never seen him nor heard him, he tacitly strikes at and rebukes the false teachers, and the Galatians that adhered to them, for their different treatment of him; to whom he was not only known by face, but had preach among them so fully, clearly, and powerfully, the Gospel of the grace of God.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Galatians 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS 2

In this chapter the apostle proceeds with the narrative of himself, and gives an account of another journey of his to Jerusalem, where he had a conversation with the chief of the apostles; in which they approved of his ministry, allowed of his commission, and took him into fellowship with them, but gave him no new instructions, nor added to his spiritual light and knowledge; from whence it appeared that the Gospel he preached was not after men, or received from men, as he had asserted in the preceding chapter; and he also gives an account of his meeting with Peter at Antioch, and how he reproved him for some judaizing practices; which leads him to assert the doctrine of justification by faith, in opposition to the works of the law; which is the grand point he had in view to establish in this epistle, and which he vindicates from the charge of licentiousness. He begins with an account of another journey of his to Jerusalem, the circumstances of which he relates, as the time when, fourteen years ago; the persons he took with him as his companions, Barnabas and Titus, **Ga 2:1** what moved him to it, a revelation from God; and the business he did when come thither, he communicated the Gospel, and that not to any but to such that were of reputation, and not publicly but privately; his end was, that it might appear how successful he had been in his ministry, and had not laboured in vain, **Ga 2:2** then follows a narrative of a particular event relating to Titus, who is described as one of his companions, and by his nation, a Greek; and who though an uncircumcised person, yet the apostles and elders at Jerusalem did not oblige him to be circumcised, which showed that they were of the same mind with the apostle in this point, **Ga 2:3** and the reason of it was because of the false teachers, that they might not give them any handle; who are described by their character, false brethren, by their private manner of getting in among the saints, and by their ends and views, which were to spy out their Christian liberty and bring them into bondage, **Ga 2:4** to whom the apostle opposed himself, and would not give way for the least space of time; for this end, that the truth of the Gospel might continue with the Gentiles, **Ga 2:5** and as for the apostles, though they were men of great character and reputation, nor would the apostle detract from it; yet they added nothing to him, he received nothing from them, **Ga 2:6** but, on the other hand, partly because they saw that as the Gospel to be preached to the Jews was committed to Peter, so the same Gospel to be preached to the Gentiles was committed to Paul; and partly because of the same efficacy and success in the ministry of the one as in the ministry of the other; as also because they perceived what gifts of grace were bestowed on the apostle; they gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, as a token of their mutual agreement, and as being of the same society, **Ga 2:7** nor did they give him and Barnabas anything in charge, but only to remember the poor, to which he was forward enough of himself, **Ga 2:10** after which follows an account of an opposition made by the apostle to Peter, which was done at Antioch, and to his face, and not without reason, **Ga 2:11** for whereas some time before he ate with the Gentiles, which was commendable in him, he afterwards declined conversation with them, moved to it by fear of the converted Jews, **Ga 2:12** and such was the force of his example, that other Jews, who before did not scruple eating with the Gentiles, separated likewise, and even Barnabas himself, Paul's companion, **Ga 2:13** wherefore seeing this was not walking according to the Gospel of Christ, and with that integrity and uprightness which became such persons, the apostle publicly reproved Peter, and expostulated with him; partly on account of his former conversation with the Gentiles, though he himself was a Jew, and therefore it was absurd and contradictory in him to oblige the Gentiles to live as the Jews did, **Ga 2:14** and partly on account of the ledge which he and Peter and others who were Jews, and not sinners of the Gentiles, had of the doctrine of justification; that it was not by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ; for to this end they had believed in Christ that they might be justified, not by the one, but by the other; which doctrine is confirmed by a passage referred to in Ps 149:2 and whereas it might be objected that this doctrine of free justification opened a door to licentiousness, the apostle answers to it by an abhorrence of it, **Ga 2:17** and by observing that this would build up what he had destroyed, **Ga 2:18** besides, he argues the contrary from his being dead to the law, that he might live unto God, **Ga 2:19** and from his crucifixion with Christ, and of the old man with his deeds; and from Christ's living in him, and his living by faith upon him, **Ga 2:20** and for the further confirmation of the doctrine of justification being by faith, and not by works, he suggests, were it otherwise, both the grace of God would be frustrated and made void, and the death of Christ be in vain, **Ga 2:21**.

Ver. 1. Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem,.... That is, either after it pleased God to call him by his grace, and reveal his Son in him; or rather after he had been at Jerusalem to see Peter, with whom he stayed fifteen days, and then went into Syria and Cilicia; so that it was seventeen years after his conversion that he took this journey to Jerusalem he here speaks of; and he seems to refer to the time when he and Barnabas went from the church at Antioch to the apostles and elders about the question, whether circumcision was necessary to salvation, Ac 15:1 which entirely agrees with the account the apostle here gives of this journey, and which he went not alone, but

with Barnabas: and took Titus with me also; Barnabas is mentioned in Luke's account as going with him at this time, but Titus is not; who, though he was not sent by the church, yet the apostle might judge it proper and prudent to take him with him, who was converted by him, was a minister of the Gospel, and continued uncircumcised; and the rather he might choose to have him along with him, partly that he might be confirmed in the faith the apostle had taught him; and partly that he might be a living testimony of the agreement between the apostle's principles and practice; and that having him and Barnabas, he might have a competent number of witnesses to testify to the doctrines he preached, the miracles he wrought, and the success that attended him among the Gentiles; and to relate, upon their return, what passed between him and the elders at Jerusalem; for by the mouth of two or three witnesses everything is established.

Galatians 2:2

Ver. 2. And I went up by revelation,.... He was not sent for by the apostles at Jerusalem, nor did he go of himself, nor only by the vote of the church at Antioch, but by a divine revelation; not a revelation made to the church, or by the prophets there, but by God himself to him; he had a secret impulse from the Spirit of God, and a private intimation given him, that it was the will of God he should go up at this time; which is no ways inconsistent with his being sent by the church, but served as a confirmation to him, that what they determined was right, and according to the mind of God:

and communicated unto them that Gospel, which I preach among the Gentiles; that self-same Gospel, which he had preached, and still continued to preach to the Gentiles; relating to free and full remission of sin by the blood of Christ, justification by his righteousness without the works of the law, and freedom from all the rituals and bondage of the Mosaic dispensation: for as the Gospel he preached was all of a piece, uniform and consistent, so he did not preach one sort of doctrine to the Gentiles, and another to the Jews; but the very self-same truths which were the subject of his ministry in the Gentile world, which were a crucified Christ, and salvation alone by him, these he communicated, laid before, and exposed unto the consideration of the elders and apostles at Jerusalem; not with a view either to give or receive instructions, but to compare their sentiments and principles together; that so it might appear that there, was an entire harmony and agreement between them; and this he did not publicly, to the whole church, at least at first, and especially the article of Christian liberty, which respects the freedom of the believing Jews, from the yoke of the law; for as yet they were not able to bear this doctrine; they could pretty readily agree that the Gentiles were not obliged to it, but could not think themselves free from it; wherefore the apostle, in great prudence, did not avouch this in the public audience:

but privately to them which were of reputation; or "who seemed to be", i.e. somewhat, very considerable persons; not in their own opinion, or appearance only, but in reality, they seemed to be, and were pillars in the house of God; particularly he means James, Cephas, and John, then in great esteem with the saints, and deservedly honoured and respected by them, they being faithful labourers in the word and doctrine; so the Jewish doctors {a} call men of great esteem, Mybwvx, who "seem to be", or "are accounted of", a word to which the phrase here used answers: these were spiritual men, capable of judging of all spiritual things; men of full age, whose senses were exercised to discern between truth and error; and were very proper persons for the apostle to lay the scheme of his ministry before, and the various truths he insisted on in it: these he met "privately", or "separately", and "singly", as it may be rendered; he either conversed with the apostles alone, and all together, in some private house; or separately, one by one, in their own houses, and there freely and familiarly discoursed with them about the several doctrines of the Gospel; and particularly this, of freedom from the law: his end in it was, as he says,

lest by any means I should run, or had run in vain: which is said, not with regard to himself, as if he had entertained any doubt of the doctrines he had preached, and needed any confirmation in them from them; for he was fully assured of the truth of them, and assured others of the same; or that he questioned the agreement of the apostles with him; or that his faith at all depended on their authority; but with regard to others, and his usefulness among them. The false teachers had insinuated that his doctrine was different from that of the apostles in Jerusalem, and so endeavoured to pervert the Gospel he preached, and overthrow the faith of those that heard him; and could this have been made to appear, it would in all likelihood have rendered, in a great measure, his past labours in vain, and have prevented his future usefulness: some read these words as an interrogation, "do I in any manner run, or have I run in vain?" no; from the account he laid before the church, the elders, and apostles, both in private and in public, Ac 15:4 it clearly appeared what success attended his ministry, how many seals he had of it, what numbers of souls were converted under it, and how many churches were planted by his means; for by "running" here is not meant the Christian course he ran, in common with other believers, which lies in the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty; but the course of his ministry, which he performed with great activity, application, diligence, and constancy, until he had finished it.

{a} Vid. Sol. Ben Melech in Psal. xl 17.

Galatians 2:3

Ver. 3. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek,.... There was such an agreement between the apostle, and his fellow apostles at Jerusalem, even about this article of the necessity of circumcision, and other rituals of the law of Moses, to salvation; that Titus, whom he brought along with him, an intimate companion of his in his travels, a fellow labourer with him in the ministry, and now upon the spot, though he was a Gentile, an uncircumcised person, yet even not he

was compelled to be circumcised: the elders did not urge it, or insist upon it, as proper and necessary; they looked upon it as a thing indifferent, left him to his liberty, and made use of no forcible methods to oblige him to it; yea, were of opinion, as Peter and James in the synod declared, that such a yoke ought not to be put upon the necks of the disciples, and that those who turned to God from among the Gentiles, should not be troubled with these things.

Galatians 2:4

Ver. 4. And that because of false brethren,.... This is the reason why the elders did not insist upon the circumcision of Titus, why he did not submit to it, and why the apostle would not admit of it: had it been left as a thing indifferent, or had it been moved for in order to satisfy some weak minds, it might have been complied with, as in the case of Timothy; but these men insisted upon it as necessary to salvation; they were sly, artful, designing men; could they have gained their point in such an instance; could they have got such a precedent at such a time, when this matter was canvassing, they would have made great use of it in the Gentile churches, for which reason it was by no means judged proper and expedient. These men are described as "false brethren": they had the name, but not the grace, which entitles to the character of "brethren"; they called themselves Christians, but were in reality Jews: at the head of these, Cerinthus, that arch-heretic, is said {b} to be. They are further described as such,

who were unawares brought in, who came in privily; into the churches, and into the ministry, into private houses, where the apostles were; or rather into the public synod, where they were convened together about this article of the necessity of circumcision to salvation. Their views, aims, and ends were,

to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus; by which is meant, not a liberty to sin, which is no Christian liberty, is contrary to Christ, to the Spirit of Christ, to the principle of grace in believers, and to the doctrines of the Gospel; but a liberty from sin; not the being of it, but the dominion and damning power of it: that branch of Christian liberty the apostle here chiefly designs is a freedom from the law, both the moral law, as in the hands of Moses, and as a covenant of works, though not from obedience to it as in the hands of Christ, and as a rule of walk and conversation; but from obeying it, in order to obtain life, righteousness, and salvation by it, and from the curse and condemnation of it; and chiefly the ceremonial law, circumcision, and all the other rituals of it, and the free use of all things indifferent, provided the glory of God, and the peace of weak believers, are secured. This liberty is said to be had "in Christ", because Christ is the author of it; it is that with which Christ makes his people free; and such as are made free by him, are free indeed; and is what they come to enjoy by being in him; for by having union to him, they come to partake of all the blessings of grace which come by him, and this among the rest. Now the design of these false teachers getting in privily among the apostles, elders, and brethren, was to make their remarks upon this liberty, to object to it, and, if possible, to break in upon it, and destroy it, and so gain another point, which follows:

that they might bring us into bondage; to the moral law, by directing souls to seek for justification and salvation by the works of it, which necessarily induces a spirit of bondage, genders to a state of bondage and involves in it; and to the ceremonial law, by engaging to an observance of circumcision, that yoke of bondage, and of day, months, times, and years, and other beggarly elements, which naturally lead on to such a state.

{b} Epiphan. contr. Haeres. l. 1. Tom. 2. Haeres. 28.

Galatians 2:5

Ver. 5. To whom we gave place by subjection,.... Meaning not the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem, who did not insist upon the observance of the rituals of the law as necessary, but were one and all of opinion that the Gentiles should be free from them; but the false teachers with whom they combated, and would not yield in the least unto, so as to be brought into subjection to their impositions, nor suffer others to yield unto them:

no, not for an hour; for the least space of time, knowing what advantages and improvements would be made of it, should they allow of the use of these things as necessary for any short time, though it should be agreed then to drop them. This is a way of speaking used by the Jews, when they would express their steady adherence to any principle or practice; of which take the following instance from Gamaliel {c}:

"it happened to Rabban Gamaliel, that he read the first night he was married; his disciples said to him, master, hast thou not taught us, that the bridegroom is free from reading the Shema, i.e. "hear, O Israel", &c. the first night? he

replied to them, I will not hearken to you to cause to cease from me the yoke of the kingdom of heaven,
txa hev wlypa, "even one hour"."

The reason why the apostle, and others with him, were so resolute and pertinacious in this matter was,

that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you; with the Galatians in particular, and with all the Gentiles in general, which otherwise would have been in danger of being entirely removed from them, at least of being adulterated and mixed with the Mosaic rites, and the inventions of men; whereas the apostle's desire was, that, the Gospel might be continued with them genuine, sincere, and unmixed, in opposition to the shadows of the law, and the false doctrines of men.

{c} Misn. Beracot, c. 2. sect. 5.

Galatians 2:6

Ver. 6. But of these, who seemed to be somewhat,.... Not the false brethren, but the Apostles James, Cephas, and John, who were Mybwvx, "men of great esteem": high in the opinion of all good men; not that they were looked upon to be more than human, as Simon Magus gave out that he was "some great one", and his followers thought him to be "the great power of God"; for such an extravagant conceit of these men was never entertained; nor were they thought to be something when they were nothing, for they really were somewhat; they were ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of grace; they were the Lord's ambassadors, and the apostles of the Lamb. However, says the apostle,

whatsoever they were; pote, "formerly", some time ago, which our version does not so fully express,

it maketh no matter to me, God accepteth no man's person. This is said, not by way of slight or contempt, but in vindication of himself, whom the false teachers endeavoured to lessen, by giving high encomiums of the apostles at Jerusalem. It looks as if they had upbraided the apostle with being a persecutor of the church before his conversion, when nothing of such a nature could be laid to the charge of these men, and therefore he was not to be set upon a level with them: to which he may be thought to reply in such manner as this, that as for himself, it is true, he had been an injurious person to the saints; and he was ready to own it, for his own humiliation, and to illustrate the grace of God in his conversion; and as these excellent men, what they were before their conversion, it was no concern of his; though, perhaps, was he disposed to inquire into their characters then, some blemishes might be found therein, as well as in his; but it is not what he and they had been, but what they now were: he could have observed, that they were persons formerly of a very low figure in life, of mean occupations, fishermen by employment, and very illiterate persons, when he was bred a scholar at the feet of Gamaliel; but he chose not to make such observations, he knew that God was no respecter of persons, nor was he influenced by any such external circumstances, but chose whom he pleased to such an high office; and that he, who of fishermen made them apostles, of a persecutor had made him one also. Or these false teachers perhaps had objected to him, that these valuable men had been with Christ from the beginning, were eyewitnesses of his majesty, heard the doctrines of the Gospel from his lips, and saw his miracles, had had a similar conversation with him, when he was a preacher of much later date, and could not pretend to such advantages, and therefore ought not to be equalled to them: his answer is, that whatever privileges of this kind they had enjoyed, as could not be denied but they were considerable, yet this mattered not, nor did it make any great difference between him and them; he had seen Christ too, though as one born out of due time; had received an immediate commission from him to preach his Gospel, and was appointed an apostle by him as they were, without any respect of persons: and whereas it might have been urged, that these men had entertained different sentiments from him formerly, concerning the observance of the law, he signifies he had nothing to do with that, to their own master they stood, to whom they must give an account, who, without respect of persons, will render to every man according to his works: and, adds he,

for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me; whatever opinions they formerly gave into, in their conversation with him, when he communicated the Gospel he preached to them, they found no fault with it; they did not go about to correct it; nor did they make any addition to it; the scheme of truths he laid before them, which had been the subject of his ministry, was so complete and perfect, containing the whole counsel of God, that they had nothing to add unto it; which shows the agreement between them, that he did not receive his Gospel from them, the perfection of his ministry, and that he was not a whit behind them in knowledge and gifts.

Galatians 2:7

Ver. 7. But contrariwise, when they saw that the Gospel,.... James, Cephas, and John, were so far from blaming or correcting anything in the apostle's ministry, or adding anything to it, that they highly approved of it; and as a token of their agreement with him and Barnabas, gave them the right hand of fellowship: the reasons of their so doing are inserted here, and in the following verse, and in the next to that: the reason here given is, because

they saw that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision was to Peter; by "the uncircumcision and circumcision" are meant the Gentiles and Jews; see **Rom 2:26** by the Gospel of the one, and the Gospel of the other, two Gospels are not designed, for there is but one Gospel, and not another. Paul did not preach one Gospel unto the uncircumcised Gentiles, and Peter another to the circumcised Jews; but the same Gospel was preached by both, and is so called with respect to the different persons to whom it was preached by these apostles. The Apostle Paul was ordained a minister of the Gentiles, and he chiefly preached among them, though not to them only. Peter was principally employed among the Jews, though also as he had opportunity he sometimes preached to the Gentiles: however, the subject of both their ministrations was the Gospel, which is said to be "committed" to them, as a trust deposited in their hands, not by man, but by God; the management of which required both prudence and faithfulness, and which were eminently seen in these good stewards of the mysteries of God. This being observed by the apostles at Jerusalem, they came into an agreement that one part should discharge their ministry among the Gentiles, and the other among the Jews.

Galatians 2:8

Ver. 8. For he that wrought effectually in Peter,.... The Syriac version renders it, "he who exhorted Peter to"; the Arabic version is, "he who strengthened Peter in"; the Spirit of God is meant, who filled Peter with such eminent gifts, and inspired him with so much zeal and resolution

to the apostleship of circumcision, to discharge his office as an apostle among the Jews; and who wrought by him such wonderful works for the confirmation of it, as curing the man that was lame from his birth, striking Ananias and Sapphira dead for telling lies, and raising Dorcas from the dead, and communicating miraculous gifts by the imposition of his hands; and which same Spirit also made his ministrations effectual to the conversion of a large number of souls, as of three thousand by one sermon.

The same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles. The Spirit of God wrought as effectually in, and by him, as in Peter; filled him with extraordinary gifts for the discharge of his work among the Gentiles, and inspired him with equal zeal, constancy, and intrepidity of mind; wrought as many miracles by him to confirm his mission; such as striking blind Elymas the sorcerer, healing the cripple at Lystra, raising Eutychus from the dead, with many other signs and wonders wrought by him among the Gentiles, through the power of the Spirit of God, whereby they became obedient by word and deed. The same Spirit also accompanied the Gospel preached by him, to the conversion of multitudes, by which means many famous churches were founded and raised among the Gentiles; and this is another reason which induced the apostles at Jerusalem to take Paul and Barnabas into an association with them.

Galatians 2:9

Ver. 9. And when James, Cephas, and John,.... These are the persons all along designed, though not till now named. James was the brother of our Lord, the son of Alphaeus, who wrote the epistle that goes by his name, made that famous speech in the synod at Jerusalem, Ac 15:13, presided in that church, was a man of great holiness, and much esteemed of by the saints, and had a good report of them that were without. Cephas is Simon Peter. This name was given him by Christ, **Joh 1:42** and in the Syriac language signifies a "stone", as Peter does in the Greek, to which our Lord alludes, Mt 16:18. John was the evangelist, and the same that wrote the epistles, was the beloved disciple, and who outlived all the rest:

who seemed to be pillars; not as the Arabic version, "who thought themselves such", but were esteemed so by others, and very rightly. They were pillars among the apostles of the highest note and greatest eminence among them; they were the very chief of the apostles; for though they were all in the same office, and had the same commission, and were employed in the same work, yet there were some who made a greater figure than others, as these did, and are therefore called pillars; they were more conspicuous, and to be observed, and taken notice of, than the rest; they were pillars in the church, set in the highest place there, and the ornaments of it; see **Pr 9:1**. They are called so for their constancy and stability in preaching the Gospel, and suffering for the sake of Christ; they were steadfast and immoveable in his work, nor could they be shaken or deterred from it by the menaces, reproaches, and persecutions of men; and they were the means of supporting others that were feeble minded, and of defending and maintaining the truths of the Gospel; and were set, as Jeremiah was, as a defenced city, an iron pillar, and brazen walls against all the enemies of Christ, and his Gospel; and were, as the church is said to be, "the pillar and ground of truth". The apostle may have respect to the titles of this kind which were bestowed on the Jewish doctors. It is said {d},

"when R. Jochanan ben Zaccai was sick, his disciples went in to visit him; and when he saw them, he began to weep; his disciples said to him, lamp of Israel, ynymyh dwme, "the right hand pillar", &c. why dost thou weep?"

So another of their Rabbins is said {e} to be

"one of the walls, ydwmew, "and pillars" of the school."

The character better agrees with these eminent apostles, who when they

perceived the grace that was given unto me; meaning not so much the grace of the Spirit of God that was wrought in him, or the good work of grace upon his soul, with which the church at Jerusalem, and the apostles there, had been made acquainted some years before; but the grace and high favour of apostleship, which was conferred upon him, and all those extraordinary gifts of grace, whereby he was qualified for the discharge of it; and particularly the efficacy and success of his ministry through the grace of God which went along with it, and was so visible in it:

they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; as a token of a covenant or agreement between them; they took them, as it were, into partnership with them, admitted them as apostles into their society, and gave their full consent, particularly to this article,

that we, Paul and Barnabas,

should go unto the Heathen, preach among the Gentiles;

and they, Peter, and those that were with him,

unto the circumcision, and discharge their office among the Jews; and, to show their joint agreement, used the above rite; and which ceremony was used as among other nations {f}, so with the Jews, when covenants were made, or partnership was entered into; see **Le 6:2** where the phrase, ey tmwvtb, "in putting of the hand", and which we render in fellowship, is, both by Onkelos, and Jonathan ben Uzziel, rendered aky twptwvb, "in fellowship of the hand", or "by the right hand of fellowship"; that being given in token of their agreement and consent to be partners together, to which the allusion seems to be here; or to the making of proselytes, to whom they "stretch out the hand" to bring them under the wings of the Shekinah {g}, or in token of their being proselytes.

{d} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 28. 2. {e} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 46. 1. {f} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 19. Cormel. Nepos, l. 2. c. 8. Gale's Court of the Gentiles, part 2. book 2, c. 6. sect. 9. & c. 9. sect. 3. {g} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 147. 4.

Galatians 2:10

Ver. 10. Only they would that we should remember the poor,.... Not in a spiritual sense, as some have thought, though these the apostle was greatly mindful of; but properly and literally the poor as to the things of this world; and may design the poor in general, everywhere, in the several churches where they should be called to minister, and particularly the poor saints at Jerusalem; who were become such, either through the frequent calamities of the nation, and a dearth or scarcity of provisions among them, and which affected the whole country; or rather through the persecutions of their countrymen, who plundered them of their goods for professing the name of Christ; or it may be through their having given up all their substance into one common stock and fund, as they did at first, and which was now exhausted, and that in a great measure by assisting out of it the preachers who first spread the Gospel among the Gentiles; so that it was but just that they should make some return unto them, and especially for the spiritual favours they received from them, as the Gospel, and the ministers of it, which first went out of Jerusalem: the "remembering" of them not only intends giving them actual assistance according to their abilities, which was very small, but mentioning their case to the several Gentile churches, and stirring them up to a liberal contribution:

the same which I also was forward to do; as abundantly appears from his epistles to the churches, and especially from his two epistles to the Corinthians. Now since the apostles at Jerusalem desired nothing else but this, and said not a word concerning the observance of the rites and ceremonies of the law, and neither found fault with, nor added to the Gospel the apostle communicated to them, it was a clear case that there was an entire agreement between them, in principle and practice, and that he did not receive his Gospel from them.

Galatians 2:11

Ver. 11. But when Peter was come to Antioch,.... The Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, instead of "Peter", read "Cephas", who, by some ancient writers, is said to be not Peter the Apostle, named Cephas by Christ, but one of the seventy disciples. So Clemens {h} says, that Cephas, of whom Paul speaks, that when he came to Antioch he withstood him to his face, was one of the seventy disciples who had the same name with Peter the Apostle: and Jerom says {i} that there were some who were of opinion, that Cephas, of whom Paul writes that he withstood him to his face, was not the Apostle Peter, but one of the seventy disciples called by that name: but without any manner of foundation; for the series of the discourse, and the connection of the words, most clearly show, that that same Cephas, or Peter, one of the twelve disciples mentioned, **Ga 2:9**, with James and John, as pillars, is here meant. Our apostle first takes notice of a visit he made him, three years after his conversion, **Ga 1:18**, when his stay with him was but fifteen days, and, for what appears, there was then an entire harmony between them; fourteen years after he went up to Jerusalem again, and communicated his Gospel to Peter, and the rest, when they also were perfectly agreed; but now at Antioch there was a dissension between them, which is here related. However, the Papists greedily catch at this, to secure the infallibility of the bishops of Rome, who pretend to be the successors of Peter, lest, should the apostle appear blameworthy, and to be reproved and opposed, they could not, with any grace, assume a superior character to his: but that Peter the Apostle is here designed is so manifest, that some of their best writers are obliged to own it, and give up the other as a mere conceit. When Peter came to Antioch is not certain; some have thought it was before the council at Jerusalem concerning the necessity of circumcision to salvation, because it is thought that after the decree of that council Peter would never have behaved in such a manner as there related; though it should be observed, that that decree did not concern the Jews, and their freedom from the observance of the law, only the Gentiles; so that Peter and other Jews might, as it is certain they did, notwithstanding that, retain the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses; and according to the series of things, and the order of the account, it seems to be after that council, when Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, and with others continued there for some time, during which time Peter came thither; see Ac 15:30 and the following contention happened, I withstood him to the face: not in show, and outward appearance only, as some of the ancients have thought, as if this was an artifice of the apostle's, that the Jews, having an opportunity of hearing what might be said in favour of eating with the Gentiles, might be convinced of the propriety of it, and not be offended with it: but this is to make the apostle guilty of the evil he charges Peter with, namely, dissimulation; no, the opposition was real, and in all faithfulness and integrity; he did not go about as a tale bearer, whisperer, and backbiter, but reproved him to his face, freely spoke his mind to him, boldly resisted him, honestly endeavoured to convince him of his mistake, and to put a stop to his conduct; though he did not withstand him as an enemy, or use him with rudeness and ill manners; or as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, and false teachers resist the truth; but as a friend and an apostle, and in an amicable manner, and yet with all uprightness: his reason for it was,

because he was to be blamed; some read it, "was blamed", or "condemned", either by others, by the Jews, for his going into Cornelius's house formerly; but what has this to do with the present case? or by those who lately came from James to Antioch, for his eating with the Gentiles there; yet this could be no reason for the apostle's withstanding him, but rather a reason why he should stand by him; or he was condemned by himself, self-condemned, acting contrary to the sentiments of his mind, and what he had declared in the council at Jerusalem; though it is best to render the word, to be blamed, which shows that the apostle did not oppose him for opposition sake, rashly, and without any foundation; there was a just reason for it, he had done that which was culpable, and for which he was blameworthy; and what that was is mentioned in the next verse.

{h} Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 12. {i} In loc.

Galatians 2:12

Ver. 12. For before that certain came from James,.... The Lord's brother, mentioned before with Cephas and John, who resided at Jerusalem, from whence these persons came; and who are said to come from James, because they came from the place and church where he was, though, it may be, not sent by him, nor with his knowledge. They were such as professed faith in Christ; they were "judaizing" Christians believing in Christ, but were zealous of the law. Now before the coming of these persons to Antioch, he, Peter,

did eat with the Gentiles; which is to be understood, not of eating at the Lord's table with them, but at their own tables: he knew that the distinction of meats was now laid aside, and that nothing was common and unclean of itself, and that every creature of God was good, and not to be refused if received with thankfulness; wherefore he made use of his Christian liberty, and ate such food dressed in such manner as the Gentiles did, without any regard to the laws and ceremonies of the Jews; and in this he did well, for hereby he declared his sense of things, that the ceremonial law was abolished, that not only the Gentiles are not obliged to it, but even the Jews were freed from it, and that the observance of it was far from being necessary to salvation: all which agreed with the preaching and practice of the Apostle Paul, and served greatly to confirm the same, and for this he was to be commended: nor is this mentioned by way of blame, but for the sake of what follows, which was blameworthy:

but when they were come he withdrew and separated himself; not from the church, and the communion of it, for then he had been guilty of schism, but from private conversation with the Gentiles: he did not visit them in their own houses, and sit down at table and eat with them, as he was wont to do; which argued great inconstancy and instability, very unbecoming one that seemed to be, and was a pillar in the church of God, as well as much dissimulation, for he knew better than he acted; his conduct did not agree with the true sentiments of his mind, which he covered and dissembled; and which must be very staggering to the believing Gentiles, to see so great a man behave in such a manner towards them, as if they were persons not fit to converse with, and as if the observance of Jewish rites and ceremonies was necessary to salvation. What induced him to take such a step was, his

fearing them which were of the circumcision: that is, the circumcised Jews, who professed faith in Christ, and were just now come from Jerusalem; not that he feared any danger from them; that they would abuse his person, or take away his life; but he might either fear he should come under their censure and reproofs, as he formerly had for going to Cornelius, and eating with him and his; or lest that they should be offended with him, and carry back an ill report of him, as not acting up to his character as an apostle of the circumcision. This led him into such a conduct; so true is that of the wise man, that "the fear of man bringeth a snare", Pr 29:25.

Galatians 2:13

Ver. 13. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him,.... Not the men that came from James, for they never acted otherwise, and therefore could not be said to dissemble; but the Jews that were members of this church at Antioch from the beginning; or who came along with Paul and Barnabas, and stayed with them there; see
Ac 15:35 and who before had ate with the Gentiles, as Peter; but being under the same fear he was, and influenced by his example, concealed their true sentiments, and acted the very reverse of them, and of their former conduct:

insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation; so good a man as he was, full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost; who had been a companion of the Apostle Paul's in his travels among the Gentiles, had greatly assisted him in preaching the Gospel to them, was a messenger with him at the council in Jerusalem, heard the debates of that assembly, and the issue of them, returned with him to Antioch, and was one with him both in principle and practice; and yet so forcible was the example of Peter, and the other Jews, that, as with a mighty torrent, he was carried away with it, and not able to withstand it; such is the force of example in men who are had in great veneration and esteem: wherefore it becomes all persons, particularly magistrates, masters of families, and ministers of the Gospel, to be careful what examples they set, since men both of grace and sense are much influenced by them.

Galatians 2:14

Ver. 14. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly,.... Or "did not foot it aright"; or "walked not with a right foot": they halted, as the Jews of old did, between two opinions, being partly for God, and partly for Baal; so these seemed, according to their conduct, to be partly for grace, and partly for the works of the law; they seemed to be for joining Christ and Moses, and the grace of the Gospel, and the ceremonies of the law together; they did not walk evenly, were in and out, did not make straight paths for their feet, but crooked ones, whereby the lame were turned out of the way; they did not walk in that sincerity, with that uprightness and integrity of soul, they ought to have done:

nor according to the truth of the Gospel; though their moral conversations were as became the Gospel of Christ, yet their Christian conduct was not according to the true, genuine, unmixed Gospel of Christ; which as it excludes all the works of the law, moral or ceremonial, from the business of justification and salvation, so it declares an entire freedom from the yoke of it, both to Jews and

Gentiles. Now when, and as soon as this was observed, the apostle, without any delay, lest some bad consequences should follow, thought fit to make head against it, and directly oppose it:

I said unto Peter before them all. The Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read "Cephas", as before. The reproof was given personally and principally to Peter, though Barnabas and others were concerned with him, because he was the first in it, the chief aggressor, who by his example led on the rest; and this was given publicly before Barnabas, and the other Jews that dissembled with him, and for their sakes as well as his; before the Jews that came from James for their instruction and conviction, and before all the members of the church at Antioch, for the confirmation of such who might be staggered at such conduct; nor was this any breach of the rule of Christ, Mt 28:15 for this was a public offence done before all, and in which all were concerned, and therefore to be rebuked in a public manner: and which was done in this expostulatory way,

if thou being a Jew; as Peter was, born of Jewish parents, brought up in the Jews' religion, and was obliged to observe the laws that were given to that people:

livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews; that is, he had done so, he had ate with the Gentiles, and as the Gentiles did, without regarding the laws and ceremonies of the Jews relating to meats and drinks; being better informed by the Spirit of God, that these things were not now obligatory upon him, even though he was a Jew, to whom these laws were formerly made:

why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? he asks him, with what conscience, honour, and integrity, with what consistency with his own principles and former practice, he could compel, not by force, nor, it may be, even by persuasions and exhortations, but by his example, which was very strong and powerful, the Gentiles, to whom these laws were never given, and to observe which they never were obliged; how he could, I say, make use of any means whatever to engage these to comply with Jewish rites and ceremonies. The argument is very strong and nervous; for if he, who was a Jew, thought himself free from this yoke, and had acted accordingly, then a Gentile, upon whom it was never posed, ought not to be entangled with it: and in what he had done, either he had acted right or wrong; if he had acted wrong in eating with the Gentiles, he ought to acknowledge his fault, and return to Judaism; but if right, he ought to proceed, and not by such uneven conduct ensnare the minds of weak believers.

Galatians 2:15

Ver. 15. We who are Jews by nature,.... I Paul, and you Peter and Barnabas, and the rest of the Jews at Antioch. Some are Jews by grace, in a spiritual sense, as all are that are Christ's, that are true believers in him, that are born again, and have internal principles of grace formed in their souls, of whatsoever nation they be; see **Ro 2:28**. Others become Jews by being proselytes to the Jewish religion: such were the Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven, that were dwelling at Jerusalem, when the Spirit was poured down on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, **Ac 2:5**, but these here spoken of were such as were Jews by birth; they were born so, were descended of Jewish parents, and from their infancy were brought up in the Jewish religion, and under the law of Moses, and in the observance of it:

and not sinners of the Gentiles: Mleih twmwa yevr, "the wicked of the nations of the world", as the {l} Jews call them. Not but that the Jews also were sinners both by nature and practice, were involved in the guilt of sin, under the power of it, and defiled with it, as the apostle elsewhere most fully proves: nor is this said with regard to the vain opinion the Jews had of themselves, as very holy and righteous persons, who in their own apprehension needed neither repentance nor remission; and who looked upon the Gentiles as very unholy and unfit for conversation with them: but this more particularly respects that part of the character of the Heathens, that they were without the law, and were under no restraints, but lived in all manner of wickedness, without hope and God in the world, and so were notorious sinners, filled with all unrighteousness, profligate and abandoned to every evil work, and are therefore called emphatically "sinful men", Lu 24:7. And indeed the word eynov, Gentiles, among themselves is sometimes used for merov ti povhrotaton, "a certain most wicked part" of Gentiles in a city {m}, and so may here design such who lived the most dissolute lives and conversations, to which the Jews are opposed, who had a written law, and were under a better regulation and discipline. The reason of this description, both in the positive and negative branch of it, is to observe, that since they, the apostles, and others, who were born Jews, and so under the law of Moses, and, until Christ came, were under obligation to observe it, but had now relinquished it, and wholly and alone believed in Christ for righteousness and life; then it was the most unreasonable thing in the world, by any means whatever, to lead the Gentiles, who never were under the law, to an observance of it.

{l} Mattanot Cehunah in Vajikra Rabba, fol. 164. 3. {m} Harpocratian. Lex. p. 93.

Galatians 2:16

Ver. 16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law,.... That is, Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and other believing Jews knew this, and that from the law itself, which requires perfect and sinless obedience, and accuses, holds guilty, and adjudges to condemnation and death for the least failure, both as to matter or manner of duty; and from the prophets, which declare that by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in the sight of God, and who bear witness to the doctrines of remission of sin, and justification by the righteousness of Christ; and from the Gospel, in which this truth is most clearly revealed; and from the illumination of the blessed Spirit, who led them into all truth; and from the revelation of Jesus Christ they were favoured with; and from their own experience, being fully convinced of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and of the necessity, suitableness, and fulness of the righteousness of Christ. By "the works of the law" are meant, not only obedience to the ceremonial law, though this is included, but also to the moral law; for it can hardly be thought, that the men the apostle opposes could ever dream of justification by their compliance with the rituals of the ceremonial law if they believed there could be no justification by their obedience to the moral law; for if there is no justification by the latter, there can be none by the former: the words are therefore to be taken in the largest sense, as rejecting all works of the law, of whatsoever kind, from justification in the sight of God; and such works are designed, as are performed by sinful men in and of themselves, otherwise men are justified by the works of the law as performed by Christ in their room and stead, but not by any as performed by themselves, for at best they are very imperfect, and so cannot justify; they are opposed to the grace of God, to which the justification of a sinner is always ascribed, and therefore cannot be by works; such a scheme would disannul the death of Christ, and promote boasting in men, and indeed is impracticable and impossible:

but by the faith of Jesus Christ; not by that faith, which Christ, as man, had in God, who promised him help, succour, and assistance, and for which he, as man, trusted in him, and exercised faith upon him; but that faith of which he is the object, author, and finisher; and not by that as a cause, for faith has no causal influence on the justification of a sinner; it is not the efficient cause, for it is God that justifies; nor the moving cause, or which induces God to justify any, for that is his own free grace and good will; nor the meritorious or procuring cause, for that is the obedience and bloodshed of Christ; nor is faith the matter of justification; it is not a justifying righteousness; it is a part of sanctification; it is imperfect; as an act it is a man's own, and will not continue for ever in its present form, nature, and use; and is always distinguished from the righteousness of God, by which we are justified, which is perfect, is another's, and will last for ever. Men are not justified by faith, either as an habit, or an act; not by it as an habit or principle, this would be to confound justification and sanctification; nor as an act, for as such it is a man's own, and then justification would be by a man's works, contrary to the Scripture: but faith is to be taken either objectively, as it relates to Christ, the object of it, and his justifying righteousness; or as it is a means of receiving and apprehending Christ's righteousness; the discovery of it is made to faith; that grace discerns the excellency and suitableness of it, approves of it, rejects a man's own, lays hold on this, and rejoices in it:

even we have believed in Jesus Christ; we who are Jews by nature, being fully apprized that there is no justification by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of Christ, received by faith, have quited all confidence in our own works, and are come to Christ, and believe in him, not only as the Messiah, but as the Lord our righteousness:

that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; not that faith, as before observed, has any causal influence on justification. These Jews did not believe in Christ, in order by their believing to procure their justification before God, and acceptance with him, but that they might receive, by faith, this blessing from the Lord in their own conscience, and enjoy the comfort of it, and all that spiritual peace which results from it, and which they could not find in the works of the law:

for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified; reference seems to be had to Ps 143:2 and contains a reason why these believing Jews relinquished Moses in his law, in whom they formerly trusted, and looked to, and depended on for their justification, because that by obedience to the law of works no sinful mortal man can be justified in the sight of God,

Galatians 2:17

Ver. 17. But if while we seek to be justified by Christ,.... As they did, and not only sought for, but obtained what they sought for, because they sought for it at the hands of Christ, and not as it were by works, but by faith, even a justifying righteousness in him.

We ourselves also are found sinners; that is, either we should be so, were we not to rest here, but seek to join our own works with Christ's righteousness for our justification, and so make Christ the minister of sin, of an imperfect righteousness, which cannot justify, which God forbid should ever be done by us; or we are reckoned sinners by you, judaizing Christians, for leaving the law, and going to Christ for righteousness; and if so, Christ must be the minister of sin, for he has directed and taught us so to do; but God forbid that any such thing should be said of him: or if we are still sinners, and unjustified persons, notwithstanding we seek to Christ to be justified by him, but need the law, and the works of it to justify us, then Christ, instead of being a minister of righteousness, is a minister of the law, the strength of sin, which accuses for it, and is the ministration of condemnation and death on account of it, which God forbid should ever be: or this is an objection of the adversary to the doctrine of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, as if it made void the law, discouraged the performance of good works, opened a door to licentiousness that men might continue sinners, and live as they wish, being under no restraints of the law, or under obligation to obedience it, and by such doctrine make

Christ the minister of sin; who hereby teaches men to live in sin, and in the neglect of duty; to which the apostle answers,

God forbid; as holding such consequences in the utmost abhorrence and detestation; see **Ro 6:1**.

Galatians 2:18

Ver. 18. For if I build again the things which I destroyed,.... Which must be understood not of good things, for formerly he destroyed the faith of the Gospel, at least as much as in him lay, and now he built it up, established, and defended it; in doing which he did no evil, or made himself a transgressor, but the reverse; he showed himself a faithful minister of Christ: but of things not lawful, such as the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, which were now abrogated, and he had declared to be so all over the Gentile world; and therefore should he go about to establish these things as necessary to salvation, or teach men to join the observance of them with Christ's righteousness for justification, then, says he,

I make myself a transgressor: for he could not be otherwise, be the case how it would with respect to the abrogation, or non-abrogation of the law; for if the law was not abolished, then he made himself a transgressor of it; by neglecting it himself, and teaching others to do so; and if it was abolished, then it must be criminal in him to enforce the observance of it as necessary to a sinner's justification before God. Now though the apostle transfers this to himself, and spoke in his own person to decline all invidious reflections and characters; yet he tacitly regards Peter, and his conduct, who had been taught by the vision the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and acted accordingly by conversing and eating with the Gentiles, and had declared that law to be an insupportable yoke of bondage, which the Gentiles were not obliged to come under; and yet now, by his practice and example, built up and established those very things he had before destroyed, and therefore could not exculpate himself, from being a transgressor: or these things may regard sins and immoralities in life and conversation; and the apostle's sense be, that should he, or any other, take encouragement to sin from the doctrine of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, as if he was the author and minister of sin, and allowed persons in it; this would be to establish sin, which the righteousness of Christ justifies from, and engage in a living in sin, to which, by Christ's righteousness, they are dead unto; than which, nothing can be, a greater contradiction, and which must unavoidably make them not only transgressors of the law, by sinning against it, but apostates, as the word parabathv here used signifies, from the Gospel; such must act quite contrary to the nature, use, and design of the Gospel in general, and this doctrine in particular, which teaches men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and that being dead to sin, they should live unto righteousness.

Galatians 2:19

Ver. 19. For I through the law am dead to the law,.... The apostle further replies to the objection against the doctrine of justification, being a licentious one, from the end of his, and other believers, being dead to the law: he owns he was dead unto it, not in such sense as not to regard it as a rule of walk and conversation, but so as not to seek for life and righteousness by it, nor to fear its accusations, charges, menaces, curses, and condemnation: he was dead to the moral law as in the hands of Moses, but not as in the hands of Christ; and he was dead to it as a covenant of works, though not as a rule of action, and to the ceremonial law, even as to the observance of it, and much more as necessary to justification and salvation: and so he became "through the law"; that is, either through the law or doctrine of Christ; for the Hebrew word hrwt, to which nomov answers, signifies properly doctrine, and sometimes evangelical doctrine, the Gospel of Christ; see **Isa 2:3** and then the sense is, that the apostle by the doctrine of grace was taught not to seek for pardon, righteousness, acceptance, life, and salvation, by the works of the law, but in Christ; by the doctrine of the Gospel, which says, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved; he became dead to the law, which says, do this and live: or through the books of the law, and the prophets, the writings of the Old Testament, which are sometimes called the law, he learnt that righteousness and forgiveness of sins were only to be expected from Christ, and not the works of the law; things, though manifested without the law, yet are witnessed to by the law and prophets: or through the law of his mind, the principle of grace formed in his soul, he became dead to the power and influence of the law of works, he being no longer under the bondage of that, but under grace, as a governing principle in his soul: or the word law, here twice used, may signify one and the same law of works; and the meaning be, either that through Christ's fulfilling the law in his room and stead, assuming an holy human nature the law required, and yielding perfect obedience to it, and submitting to the penalty of it, he became dead to it; that is, through the body of Christ, see **Ro 7:4** and through what he did and suffered in his body to fulfil it; or through the use, experience, and knowledge of the law, when being convinced of sin by it, and seeing the spirituality of it, all his hopes of life were struck dead, and he entirely despaired of ever being justified by it. Now the end of his being dead unto it, delivered from it, and being directed to Christ for righteousness, was, says he,

that I might live unto God; not in sin, in the violation of the law, in neglect and defiance of it, or to himself, or to the lusts of men, but to the will of God revealed in his word, and to his honour and glory; whence it most clearly follows, that though believers are dead to the law, and seek to be justified by Christ alone, yet they do not continue, nor do they desire to continue in sin, or indulge themselves in a vicious course of living, but look upon themselves as under the greater obligation to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

Galatians 2:20

Ver. 20. I am crucified with Christ,.... Not literally, for so only the two thieves were crucified with him, but mystically; Christ was crucified for him in his room and stead, and so he was crucified with him, and in him, as his head and representative. Christ sustained the persons of all his people, and what he did and suffered was in their name, and on their account, and so they were crucified and suffered with him, as they are said to be buried with him, and to be risen with him, and to sit together in heavenly places in him. Moreover, their old man was crucified with him; when he was crucified, all their sins, the whole body of them, were laid upon him, and he bore them, and bore them away, destroyed and made an end of them; they received their mortal wound by his crucifixion and death, so as never to be able to have any damning power over them; and in consequence of this the affections and lusts are crucified, and the deeds of the body of sin mortified by the Spirit and grace of God, in regeneration and sanctification, so as not to have the dominion over them; the world is crucified to them, and they to the world; and this is another reason proving that justification by Christ is no licentious doctrine. This clause is, in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, put at the end of the preceding verse.

Nevertheless I live; which is to be understood, not of his natural, but of his spiritual life; the life of justification he lived, by faith, on the righteousness of Christ; and the life of sanctification which he had from Christ, by the quickening influences of his Spirit, by virtue of which he walked in newness of life. The believer is a mere paradox, he is dead to the law, and "yet lives" to God; he is crucified with Christ, and yet lives by him; yea, a crucified Christ lives in him.

Yet not I; not the same I as before, but quite another man, a new creature: he did not now live as in his state of unregeneracy, and whilst in Judaism; he was not now Saul the blasphemer, the persecutor, and injurious person; nor did he now live Saul the Pharisee: or the life he had was not of his own obtaining and procuring; his life of righteousness was not of himself, but Christ; his being quickened, or having principles of life and holiness implanted in him, was not by himself, but by the Spirit; and the holy life and conversation he lived was not owing to himself, to his power and strength, but to the grace of God; or it was not properly himself, or so much he that lived,

but Christ liveth in me: who was not only the author and maintainer of his spiritual life, but the life itself; he was formed in his soul, dwelt in his heart, was united to him, was one with him, whence all vital principles and vital actions sprung, and all the communion and comforts of a spiritual life flowed.

And the life which I now live in the flesh; in the body, whilst in this mortal state, whereby he distinguishes that spiritual life he had from Christ, and through Christ's living in him, both from the natural life of his body, and from that eternal life he expected to live in another world; and which, he says,

I live by the faith of the Son of God; meaning, not that faith which Christ, as man, had, but that of which he is the author and object, by which the just man lives; not upon it, for the believer does not live upon any of his graces, no, not upon faith, but by faith on Christ, the object; looking to him for pardon, righteousness, peace, joy, comfort, every supply of grace, and eternal salvation: which object is described as "the Son of God"; who is truly God, equal with his Father; so that he did not live upon a creature, or forsake the fountain of living waters, but upon the only begotten Son of God, who is full of grace and truth: of whom he further says,

who loved me; before the foundation of the world, from everlasting, prior to his love to him; and freely, without any regard to worth or merit, and though he was a blasphemer and a persecutor; and him personally, and particularly, in a distinguishing manner, of which he had a special knowledge and application by the Spirit of God; and was a reason and argument constraining him, and prevailing on him to live to him who loved him, and died for him, or, as he adds,

and gave himself for me; his whole self, his soul and body, as in union with his divine person, into the hands of justice, and unto death, in his room and stead, as an offering and sacrifice for sin, and which he did freely and voluntarily; and is a strong and full proof of his love to him. Now though Christ gave his life a ransom for many, and himself for his whole church, and all the members of his mystical body, yet the apostle speaks of this matter as singularly respecting himself, as if almost he was the only person Christ loved and died for; which shows that faith deals with Christ not in a general way, as the Saviour of the world, but with a special regard to a man's self: this is the life of faith; and these considerations of the person, love, and grace of Christ, animate and encourage faith in its exercises on him.

Galatians 2:21

Ver. 21. I do not frustrate the grace of God,.... Or "cast it away", as the Vulgate Latin version reads it; or "deny it", as the Syriac and Arabic; or "despise, reject, and make it void", as other versions; meaning either the grace of the Son of God in giving himself for him, just mentioned by him; or the particular doctrine of grace, justification, he is speaking of, as proceeding from the grace of God, upon the foot of the righteousness of Christ; or the whole Gospel, all and each of which would be denied, despised, rejected, made null and void, be in vain, fallen and departed from, should justification be sought for by the works of the law: but this the apostle did not do, and therefore did not frustrate the grace of God: which to do would be to act the most ungenerous and ungrateful part to God, and Christ, and to that love and grace which are so largely displayed in the free justification of a sinner.

For if righteousness come by the law; if a justifying righteousness is to be attained unto by the works of the law, or men can be justified by their obedience to it,

then Christ is dead in vain; there was no necessity for his dying: he died without any true reason, or just cause; he died to bring in a righteousness which might have been brought in without his death, and so his blood and life might have been spared, his sufferings and death being entirely unnecessary; which to say is to cast contempt upon the wisdom, love, and grace of God in this matter, and to offer the greatest indignity to the person, character, sufferings, and death of Christ. Wherefore it may be strongly concluded, that there is no righteousness by the law of works, nor to be attained that way, otherwise Christ had never died; and that justification is solely and alone by his righteousness.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Galatians 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS 3

In this chapter the apostle reproves the Galatians for their disobedience to the Gospel, and departure from it; confirms the doctrine of justification by faith, by various arguments; shows the use of the law, and the abrogation of it, and makes mention of several privileges which belong to believers in Christ. He begins with a sharp reproof of the Galatians, and represents them as foolish and bewitched, and charges them with disobedience to the truth of the Gospel, which is aggravated by the clearness of the Gospel ministry, in which a crucified Christ, and justification by him, had been so evidently set before them, **Ga 3:1**, and by the fruit and effect of it, they having received the Spirit by it, and not by the preaching of the law of works, **Ga 3:2** and it still increased their folly, that whereas they had begun with the Spirit of God, and set out in a dependence on him and his grace, they seemed now as if they would end in a carnal and legal way, **Ga 3:3**. To which is added, the consideration of their having suffered many things for the sake of the Gospel, which must be suffered in vain should they relinquish the Gospel, though the apostle hoped otherwise of them, **Ga 3:4**, nay, they had not only received through the preaching of the Gospel the Spirit, and his graces, but even extraordinary gifts attended it, for the confirmation of it, **Ga 3:5**, so that this case of theirs was a very aggravated one, and they were guilty of great folly and madness: from hence the apostle passes to the main thing in dispute, the great truth of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ, which these persons were departing from, and which he establishes by several arguments; and first from the instance and example of Abraham, who was justified by faith, as appears from that which he believed, being imputed to him as his justifying righteousness, **Ga 3:6**, and as many as are believers in Christ are his spiritual children, and so undoubtedly are justified the same way their father was, **Ga 3:7**, and particularly that the Gentiles are justified by faith is clear from the preaching of the Gospel to Abraham, and the promise made unto him, that in his seed all nations should be blessed; that is, with the blessing of justification, **Ga 3:8**. The conclusion of which instance and example is, that as faithful Abraham was blessed with a justifying righteousness through faith, so all that believe are blessed along with him with the same blessing, **Ga 3:9**, and that no man can be justified by the works of the law is certain, since the law is so far from justifying any on account of obedience to it, that it pronounces a curse upon all that do not perfectly and constantly fulfil it, **Ga 3:10**. And this is still further evident from a passage in the prophecy of **Hab 2:4** which declares, that the just live by faith, or that those who are truly righteous are such who are justified by it, **Ga 3:11**. And this is illustrated by the law and faith being contrary; for if a just man lives by faith, then not by the law, for the law does not direct a man to believe, but to work, and to live by his works, **Ga 3:12**. And the apostle having spoken of the law as a cursing law, takes the opportunity of showing how believers are delivered from the curse of it, which is done by Christ's being made a curse for them; and that he was, appears from his being crucified and hanged on a tree; the ends of which were, that the same blessing of justification Abraham had, might come upon the Gentiles through Christ, and that they might by faith receive the promise of the Spirit, **Ga 3:13** so that it is clear from hence, that the blessing of justification is through Christ's being made a curse, and is received by faith, and is not by the works of the law. The apostle next argues from the inheritance being by covenant, testament, or promise, and therefore not by the law: he observes, that a man's covenant or testament, when confirmed, can neither be disannulled, nor have anything added to it, and much less can the covenant or testament of God, confirmed of him in Christ, be disannulled by the law, or the promise in it be made of none effect by that which was several hundred years after a declaration of it to Abraham, to whom, and to whose seed, the promises were made; so that it unavoidably follows, that since the inheritance or blessing of life is by promise, as is clear from its being given to Abraham by promise, then it is not of the law, **Ga 3:15**. And whereas an objection might arise, if this be the case, of what use and service can the law be? to what purpose, or for what end, was that given? The apostle answers, that it was added because of transgressions; and that it was to endure until Christ should come, to whom the promise was made; and accordingly it was published in a very grand and solemn manner by angels, and was put into the hands of a mediator, Moses, who stood between God as one party, and the people of Israel as another, **Ga 3:19**. Moreover, as it might be further objected, that, according to this way of reasoning, the law is against the promises; the apostle replies in a way of detestation and abhorrence of any such thing, and by an argument from the insufficiency of the law to justify, since it cannot give life, **Ga 3:21**. And then proceeds to point out another use of the law, which is to conclude men under sin, or convince men of it, that they, seeing their need of righteousness and life by Christ might receive the promise of it through faith in him **Ga 3:22**, and so far were men from being justified by the law under the former dispensation, that they were kept under it as in a garrison, and shut up in it as in a prison, until Christ, the object of faith, was revealed, and released them, **Ga 3:23**, and was moreover as a rigid and severe schoolmaster; and so it continued until the times of Christ; and these therefore being the uses of the law, it is a clear case that justification is by faith, and not by that, **Ga 3:24**. Besides, Christ being now come, the Jews themselves are no more under this law as a schoolmaster; it is now abolished, and therefore there is no justification by it, **Ga 3:25**. And that this is the case of true believers in Christ is evident, because such are the children of God, and are taught and led by the Spirit of God, and are free, and not under the law as a schoolmaster, **Ga 3:26**. Besides, as they are baptized into Christ, they have put him on, as the Lord their righteousness, and so profess to be justified by him, and him only, **Ga 3:27**, and these, let them be of what nation, sex, state, and condition soever, are all one in Christ, and are all justified in one and the same way; and being Christ's they are Abraham's spiritual seed, and so heirs of the same promise of righteousness and life as he, **Ga 3:28**.

Ver. 1. O foolish Galatians,.... Referring not to any national character, as some have thought, by which they were distinguished from others for their rudeness in knowledge, their ignorance and folly, as the Cretians for their lying, &c. nor to their former state in unregeneracy, it being common to all men, to God's

elect themselves, before conversion, to be foolish in a moral and spiritual sense; but to their present stupidity about the article of justification, it being an instance of most egregious folly to leave Christ for Moses, the Gospel for the law, and the doctrine of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, which brings so much solid peace and comfort with it, for the doctrine of justification, by the works of the law, which naturally leads to bondage. Now this was said, not rashly, nor in anger, or on purpose to reproach and provoke, and so not at all contrary to **Mt 5:22** but in like manner as Christ said to his disciples, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe", &c.
Lu 24:25. So the apostle here, as pitying the Galatians, grieved for them, and as one surprised and astonished that ever people of such light, that had had the Gospel so clearly preached to them, should ever give into such a notion.

Who hath bewitched you? some false teacher or another had, or it cannot be conceived how their heads should ever have been turned this way; which must be understood, not in a literal and proper sense, as Simon Magus bewitched the people of Samaria with his sorceries, but in a figurative and improper one; that as sorcerers and enchanters cast a mist before people's eyes, or, by some evil arts or juggling tricks, deceive their sight, and make objects seem to appear which do not, or in a different form than they really do, so these deceitful workers, who had transformed themselves into the apostles of Christ, as Satan sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light, had set this doctrine in a false light before them, thereby to corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ. Though the apostle reproves the Galatians for their folly and weakness in giving in so easily to such deceptions, yet he imputes the chief fault unto, and lays the greatest blame on the false teachers; whom he represents as sorcerers and enchanters, and their doctrine, particularly that of justification by works, as witchcraft; it being pleasing to men, a gratifying of carnal reason, and operating as a charm upon the pride of human nature. What Samuel said to Saul, 1Sa 15:22 may be applied to the present case, "to obey" the truth "is better than sacrifice", than all the rituals of the ceremonial law: "and to hearken" to the Gospel of Christ, "than the fat of rams", or any of the legal institutions; "for rebellion" against, and opposition to any of the doctrines of the Gospel, and especially to this of justification by the righteousness of Christ, "is as the sin of witchcraft". The Greek word, baskanw, signifies "to envy", and hence, "to bewitch"; because the mischief, by witchcrafts, generally proceeds from envy; and so the Syriac version, which the Arabic follows, renders it, Nwkb Mox wnm, "who hath envied you", which suggests this sense, that the false apostles envying their light and knowledge in the Gospel, their faith, peace, comfort, and happiness, had endeavoured to introduce another doctrine among them, subversive of all this.

That ye should not obey the truth. This clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in some others, and in the Syriac version. By "the truth" is meant, either the whole Gospel, often so called, in opposition to the law, and the types and shadows of it; and because it is contained in the Scriptures of truth, and comes from the God of truth; the substance of it is Christ, who is the truth, and is what the Spirit of truth leads into; or else particularly the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, which is the truth the apostle is establishing, and these Galatians seemed to be going off from, through the artful insinuations of the false teachers. Formerly these people had not only heard this truth, but embraced it: they received the love of it, were strongly affected to it, and firmly believed but now they began to hesitate and doubt about it; they were not so fully persuaded of it as heretofore; they seemed ready to let it go, at least did not hold it fast, and the profession of it, without wavering as before; they were fallen from some degree of the steadfastness of their faith in, and of the obedience of it to this truth, which is what was the design of the false apostles, and is here charged upon the Galatians. The aggravations of which follow in this, and in some subsequent verses,

before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth; meaning in the ministry of the Gospel, in the clear preaching of it by the apostle; Jesus Christ was the sum and substance of his ministry, in which he was set forth and described, and, as it were, painted to the life by him; the glories and excellencies of his divine person, the nature of his office, as Mediator, the suitableness of him as a Saviour, the fulness of his grace, the efficacy of his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness, were so fully, and in such a lively manner expressed, that it was as if Christ was personally and visibly present with them; yea, he was so described in his sufferings and death, as hanging, bleeding, dying on the accursed tree, that he seemed to be as it were, as the apostle adds,

crucified among you: for this cannot be understood literally, for he was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem; nor does it respect the sin of the Galatians in departing from the Gospel, as if that was a crucifying of him again, and a putting him to open shame; nor their sufferings for the sake of Christ, as if he, in that sense, was crucified in them, and with them: but it intends the clear Gospel revelation of a crucified Christ, in the preaching of him by the apostle, which was such that no picture, no image, no crucifix would come up to, and which, where such preaching is, are altogether vain and needless; and the clear view these saints had, by faith, in the glass of the Gospel of Christ, and him crucified, which so realized the object, as if it was present and before the natural eye. Now this was an aggravation of their weakness and folly, that after such clear preaching, and clear sight, they had of the Gospel, and of Christ in it, that they should in the least degree depart from it.

Galatians 3:2

Ver. 2. This one thing would I learn of you,.... Though there were many things he could have put to them, yet he would only ask this one question, which, if rightly attended to, and honestly answered, must expose their folly, and put an end to the controversy upon this head:

received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? This question supposes they had received the Spirit; that is, the Spirit of God, as a spirit of wisdom and knowledge in the revelation of Christ; as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification; as a spirit of faith and adoption; and as the earnest, seal, and pledge of their future glory. Now the apostle asks, whether they received this Spirit "by the works of the law"; meaning, either whether they could imagine, that they by their obedience to the law had merited and procured the Spirit of God; or whether they thought that the Spirit came to them, and into their hearts, through the doctrine or preaching of the law: the former could not be true, for if they could not obtain righteousness and life by the works of the law, then not the Spirit; besides, works done without the Spirit of God, are not properly good works: not the latter, for though by the law is the knowledge of sin, yet this leaves nothing but a sense of wrath and damnation in the conscience; it is the killing letter, and a ministration of condemnation and death, and not of the Spirit, and of life; this belongs to the Gospel, "or the hearing of faith"; for by "faith", is meant the Gospel, and particularly the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ's righteousness; and by "the hearing" of it, the preaching of it, the report of it, Isa 53:1 which, in the Hebrew text, is wntemv, "our hearing", that by which the Gospel is heard and understood. Now in this way the Spirit of God is received; while the Gospel is preaching he falls on them that hear it, conveys himself into their hearts, and begets them again by the word of truth: and in this way the Galatians came by the Spirit, and which is another aggravation of their folly, that they should enjoy so great an advantage by the Gospel, and yet be so easily removed from it.

Galatians 3:3

Ver. 3. Are ye so foolish?.... Is it possible you should be so stupid? and do you, or can you continue so?

having begun in the Spirit; that is, either in the Spirit of God, whom they had received through the preaching of the Gospel. They set out in a profession of religion in the light, under the influence, and by the assistance of the Spirit; they began to worship the Lord in spirit, and in truth, without any confidence in the flesh; they entered upon the service of God, and a newness of life, a different conversation than before, a spiritual way of living in a dependence on the grace and help of the divine Spirit: or in the Gospel, which is the Spirit that gives life, is the ministration of the Spirit of God, and contains spiritual doctrines, and gives an account of spiritual blessings, and is attended with the Holy Ghost, and with power. This was first preached unto them, and they embraced it; this they begun and set out with in their Christian profession, and yet it looked as if they sought to end with something else:

are you now made perfect by the flesh? or "in" it; not in carnality, in the lusts of the flesh, as if they now walked and lived after the flesh, in a carnal, dissolute, wicked course of life; for the apostle is not charging them with immoralities, but complaining of their principles: wherefore, by "the flesh" is meant, either the strength of mere nature, in opposition to the Spirit of God, by which they endeavoured to perform obedience to the law; or else the law itself, in distinction from the Gospel; and particularly the ceremonial law, the law of a carnal commandment, and which consisted of carnal ordinances, and only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; and also their obedience to it; yea, even all their own righteousness, the best of it, which is but flesh, merely external, weak, and insufficient to justify before God. This is a third aggravation of their folly, that whereas they begun their Christian race depending upon the Spirit and grace of God, now they seemed to be taking a step as if they thought to finish it in the mere strength of nature; and whereas they set out with the clear Gospel of Christ, and sought for justification only by his righteousness, they were now verging to the law, and seeking to make their justifying righteousness perfect, by joining the works of the law unto it, which needed them not, but was perfect without them.

Galatians 3:4

Ver. 4. Have ye suffered so many things in vain?.... These Galatians had suffered great reproach, many afflictions and persecutions for the sake of the Gospel, as all that embrace it must expect to do; and which to them that persevere in the faith of the Gospel will not be in vain, they will be followed with eternal life and glory; not that these things are meritorious of such happiness, or deserve such a reward; the reward of them is not of debt, but of grace. But, if such who have made a profession, and have suffered for it, should after all relinquish it, their sufferings for it are in vain; they will come short of that glory which is promised to them that suffer for righteousness sake: and this is another aggravation of the folly of these persons, that they should suffer so much persecution for the Gospel, which, if not true, they must have suffered in vain, and might as well have avoided it; and, if true, by relinquishing it not only sustain a great loss, but bring great hurt and damage to themselves:

if it be yet in vain; by which words the apostle does, as it were, correct himself, and expresses his hope of them, that they would see their mistake, revoke their error, and abide by the truth of the Gospel.

Galatians 3:5

Ver. 5. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit,.... By whom he means not himself, nor any other minister of the Gospel, in whose power it does not lie to minister the Spirit, either the ordinary or the extraordinary gifts of it unto men; but either God or Christ who had ministered, and still continued to minister the grace of the Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel; or rather the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which were manifested at the first preaching of the Gospel to them for the confirmation of it, and which they were still supplied with, as the following words show:

and worketh miracles among you; so that this is a distinct argument from that in **Ga 3:2** and a further proof and aggravation of the folly and stupidity of the members of this church, who had not only received through the Gospel the Spirit, as a spirit of regeneration, at least many of them, but had seen the Gospel confirmed by the extraordinary gifts, signs, and wonders of the Holy Ghost, and which were still among them; and yet they were departing from this Gospel, through which all this was done: for it is asked,

doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? and the apostle's meaning is, that these extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and these miracles done among them, did not attend the preaching of the law, or the doctrine of justification by works, taught by the false apostles, but the doctrine of faith, of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ, delivered by him and others, for the truth of which he appeals to themselves; and therefore they must be guilty of the most egregious folly, once to think of, or take anyone step towards a departure from that doctrine. The Alexandrian copy reads here, as in **Ga 3:2**, "received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

Galatians 3:6

Ver. 6. Even as Abraham believed God,.... The apostle having observed, that the special grace and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were received not through the preaching of the law, but through the doctrine of faith; by an easy transition, passes on to a further confirmation of the doctrine of justification by faith, by producing the instance of Abraham, what the Scripture says of him, and the promise made unto him; which is very appropriate to his purpose, since Abraham was certainly a righteous man, the first of the circumcision, and the head of the Jewish nation; and whom the false teachers much gloried in, and boasted of their being his seed, and of being circumcised as he was; and would fain have persuaded the Gentiles to the same practice, in imitation of him, and as necessary to their justification before God; whereas the apostle here shows, referring to Ge 15:6 that Abraham was justified by faith, and not by any works whatever, much less by circumcision; for what he here refers to, was many years before his circumcision; and since therefore he was a justified person, declared to be so, before it and without it, it was not necessary to his justification, nor is it to any other person's: he

believed God. The object of faith is God, Father, Son, and Spirit; here Jehovah the Son seems principally intended, who in Ge 15:1 is called the "Word of the Lord"; the essential Word, who was with God from everlasting, and was God, and in the fulness of time was made flesh and dwelt among men; and "Abraham's shield", the same the apostle in **Eph 6:16** calls "the shield of faith"; meaning not the grace of faith, but Christ the object of faith; which faith lays hold on, and makes use of as a shield against the temptations of Satan: and also his "exceeding great reward"; his all in all, being made to him, as to all believers, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: him he believed, not only that he was God, but he believed his word of promise, and in his power and faithfulness to fulfil it; which regarded not only his natural offspring, and a numerous race, the enjoyment of the land of Canaan, and many temporal good things in it, but the Messiah, and spiritual blessings in him: he "believed in the Lord", Ge 15:6 in Jehovah the Word, in him as his shield, and exceeding great reward, in him as the Lord his righteousness:

and it was accounted to him for righteousness; that is, by God, whom he believed; for the sense is, not that Abraham ascribed righteousness to God, and celebrated his justice and faithfulness, as some; nor, as others, that Abraham was accounted a righteous man by the world; but that something was accounted by God to Abraham as his righteousness, which could not be the act of his faith; for faith is not a man's righteousness, neither in whole nor in part; faith and righteousness are two distinct things, and are often distinguished one from another in Scripture: besides, that which was accounted to Abraham for righteousness, is imputed to others also; see **Ro 4:23** which can never be true of the act of his faith; but is of the object of it, the word of the Lord, his shield and exceeding great reward, the Lord his righteousness and strength, who is made or accounted, as to him, so to others, righteousness. The righteousness of Christ, whom he believed in, was accounted to him as his justifying righteousness now for faith to be accounted for righteousness, is all one as to be justified by faith; that is, by Christ, or by his righteousness imputed and received by faith; and if Abraham was justified this way, as he was, the apostle has his argument against the false teachers.

Galatians 3:7

Ver. 7. Know ye therefore,.... Or "ye know"; this is a thing known by you, at least may, or should be; it ought not to be contradicted or disputed, it is so plain a case, and so clear a point:

that they which are of faith; of the faith of Abraham, as in **Ro 4:16** have the same faith as he had, for nature and kind; though it may not be to the same degree, yet exercised on the same object, Jehovah the Word, the Lord our righteousness, and wrought by the same Spirit; or who are of the faith of Christ, believers in him with all their hearts, and for themselves; who look to him for righteousness and life, who seek for justification by his righteousness, and trust in him alone for it, and not in the works of the law:

the same are the children of Abraham; his spiritual seed, though they may not be his natural offspring; for he is the father of all that believe, whether of the circumcision or the uncircumcision, and of none else in a spiritual sense: in this the apostle strikes at the false teachers, who boasted of their being the seed of Abraham, his natural descendants, which they might be, and yet not his spiritual children; for none are such, but they that are of faith, or seek for righteousness by faith; not they that are of the law, or seek for justification by the works of it, and so not heirs of the blessing; were they, faith would be made void, and the promise of none effect, Ro 5:14 and his view herein is to prove, that the Gentiles, who believe, are the true seed of Abraham, the children of the promise, those in many nations, he was promised to be the father of; and his further view is to observe, that as the father of the faithful was justified, so are all his children; and that as he was justified by faith, so are they.

Galatians 3:8

Ver. 8. And the Scripture foreseeing,.... This seems to agree with the Jewish forms or citing passages of Scripture, bwtkh har hm, "what does the Scripture foresee?" and hrwt htar hm, {n} "what does the law foresee?" The Scripture here, by a "prosopopeia", is represented as foreseeing an event that would come to pass, and accordingly spoke of it before hand, and designs God the author of the Scripture; and so the Syriac version renders it, "for seeing" ahla edy Mdqd, "that God" foreknew, &c. and means either the Holy Spirit, who searches the deep things of God, is privy to all his counsels and decrees, and to this of the justification of the Gentiles; or God the Father, who justifies the uncircumcision through faith, according to his own provision and predetermination of it, before the world was; for he was in Christ, reconciling the world, his elect among the Gentiles, from all eternity; when he resolved not to impute their sins to them, but to his Son, who engaged to be their surety: or rather the Son of God, since he was the preacher of this to Abraham; who lay in the bosom of the Father, and was not only acquainted with all his purposes and determinations, but entered into a covenant with him, for, and on the behalf of the people, the chosen ones, among the Gentiles as well as Jews; and undertook to bring in a righteousness for them, by which, being received by faith, they should evidentially, manifestly, in the court of their own consciences, be justified: wherefore the wisdom of God, the eternal Logos, having such a certain foresight, both as God and as Mediator, concerned in the covenant of grace for his people,

that God would justify the Heathen through faith: that is, that whereas a righteousness would be wrought out, and brought in, for the justification of all God's elect, and the doctrine of it be preached among the Gentiles, to whom faith would be given to lay hold on, and receive this righteousness, God would hereby, and hereupon pronounce the sentence of justification in the court of conscience; from whence follow peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; the Scripture, the author, and substance of it, God the Word, preached before, the Gospel unto Abraham; for not to the Father or the Spirit, as to the Son, can preaching be so well ascribed: Christ was the first preacher of the Gospel that ever was; he first preached it to Adam and Eve in the garden, and afterwards to Abraham: it was Gospel, it was good news to him, that the Messiah should spring from him, and all nations be blessed in him; he rejoiced at it, and by faith saw Christ's day and was glad and particularly that part of the Gospel, and which is a principal part of it, justification by faith; and that, as it concerned the Gentiles, was preached unto him; and before his circumcision, of which that was a sign and seal, namely, that the righteousness of faith should be upon the uncircumcised Gentiles; and before the law of works was given on Mount Sinai, and long before the doctrine of justification by faith was preached unto the Gentiles, and they enjoyed the comfort of it; which shows this to be the Gospel, and to be no new doctrine, nor different from what was so early taught; the sum and substance of which lies in these words, "in thee shall all nations be blessed"; the passage referred to, is in Ge 12:3 and is repeated Ge 18:18 and in Ge 22:18 is thus expressed,

in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; which shows, that this is not to be understood of Abraham personally, but of his seed; and which cannot intend Isaac, the immediate seed of Abraham, in whom it was never verified; and besides, is carried down to his seed, Ge 26:4 as not terminating in him; and for the same reason it cannot design Jacob, the immediate seed of Isaac; see
Ge 28:14 nor the whole body of the Jews, the posterity of Jacob, in whom it never had its completion; for when and how have the nations of the earth been blessed in them? either whilst in their own land, when they would have no conversation with them, neither on a civil or sacred account, unless they conformed to their rites; or since their dispersion, so far from it, that their name is used by way of reproach, and as a proverb, a taunt, and a curse everywhere; but it is to be understood of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the son of Abraham, took upon him the seed of Abraham, and to whom it is applied, **Ga 3:16** as by the Apostle Peter, **Ac 3:25**. The phrase being "blessed in" him, does not signify a blessing of themselves or others, or a proverbial expression that should be used among the Gentiles, "God bless thee as Abraham, or the God of Abraham bless thee, or God bless you as he did the Israelites, or seed of Abraham"; for no one instance can be produced of the nations of the world ever using such a form of blessing; no history, sacred or profane, makes mention that these, or any other Jewish forms of blessing, were ever used among the Gentiles: but here it designs blessings in Christ, and not temporal, but spiritual ones, even all spiritual blessings; as redemption,

reconciliation, peace, pardon, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life, and particularly justification; this is the blessedness more especially intended, which comes not upon the circumcision only, but the uncircumcision also; and they that partake of this are blessed indeed; for they are justified from all sin, are free from condemnation, secure from the wrath of God, have a title to eternal life, and shall certainly be glorified: and when it is said that "all nations" shall be thus blessed, the meaning is, not that every individual of all nations shall enjoy this happiness, for all are not in Christ, nor have his righteousness imputed to them, nor have faith in him, there are many that will be condemned with the world; but some of all nations, that God will have saved, and Christ has redeemed by his blood; and these are the many he justifies, even all the elect of God, in the various nations of the world.

{n} Bemidbar Rabba, Parash. 10. fol. 201. 4. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 122. 1.

Galatians 3:9

Ver. 9. So then they which be of faith,.... This is the apostle's conclusion upon the whole, from the instance of Abraham, and, the promise made to him; and is an explanation of the preceding clause, and shows that it must be taken in a limited sense, and understood not of every individual; only of those who are of the same faith with Abraham, are believers in Christ, and seek for justification by faith in him, and not by the works of the law:

these are blessed with faithful Abraham; in his seed Christ; they are blessed with a justifying righteousness in Christ as he was, and will be blessed with eternal life as he is; they shall sit with him, and with Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. The character of "faithful" given to him, respects not his uprightness and integrity among men, but his faith in God; and does not suppose that he was blessed for his faith, but that it was through faith that he received the blessing of justification, and not by the works of the law; and that in the same way, all that believe enjoy the same favour, for to them it is limited and restrained: nor can the Jews of all men find fault with this interpretation of the apostle's, since they themselves interpret the above clause of some particular persons of the nations of the world, and say in so many words, that

"the meaning is, not that all the men of the world should be blessed, but that every family that is in the world,
wtnwmaw wtemvml brqttv, "that comes to the obedience and faith of him" (God,) to it shall adhere the blessing and providence. {o}"

{o} Abarbinel in Pentateuch, fol. 54. 1, 2. Vid. R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 1. c. 13. p. 135.

Galatians 3:10

Ver. 10. For as many as are of the works of the law,.... The apostle does not say, "as many as were of the law", to whom it belonged, who were born and brought up in it, and to whom it was given, the Jews; for there were some of them who believed in Christ, were blessed with Abraham, and not under the curse of the law; nor does he say, "as many as do the works of the law": for the works of the law are to be done, though not in order to obtain righteousness and life by them; yet it is not the doing of them, but the not doing of them, that entails the curse on men: his meaning is, that as many as seek for justification by the works of the law, and trust in their own righteousness for acceptance with God, these are so far from being blessed or justified hereby, that they

are under the curse, that is, of the law; they are under its sentence of condemnation and death, they are deserving of, and liable to the second death, eternal death, the wrath of God, here meant by the curse; to which they are exposed, and which will light upon them, for aught their righteousness can do for them; for trusting in their works, they are trusting in the flesh, and so bring down upon themselves the curse threatened to the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm; not only that trusts in a man of flesh and blood, but in the works of man; his own, or any other mere creature's: besides, by so doing, he rejects Christ and his righteousness, whereby only is deliverance from the curse of the law; nor is it possible by his present obedience to the law, be it ever so good, that he can remove the guilt of former transgressions, and free himself from obligation to punishment for them: nor is it practicable for fallen man to fulfil the law of works, and if he fails but in one point, he is guilty of all, and is so pronounced by the law; and he stands before God convicted, his mouth stopped, and he condemned and cursed by that law he seeks for righteousness by the deeds of:

for it is written, De 27:26

cursed is everyone that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. The law requires doing; it is not content with mere theory without practice; it is not enough to know it, or hear it, it must be done. The Jews boasted of their knowledge, and trusted much to the hearing of it read

every sabbath day; but not those who had a form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law, or were hearers of it, were just before God, but the doers of it are justified; and it requires perfect obedience, an observance of all things contained in it, which can never be performed by fallen man. The Jews pretend {p}, that Abraham their Father hlwk hrwth lk Myyq, "fulfilled all the whole law"; and the same they say {q} of the Israelites in common, than which nothing is more untrue; for in many things all men offend: moreover, the law requires constant perfect obedience; not only that a man should do all things commanded in it, but that he should continue to do them from his infancy, to the day of his death; and in failure hereof, it pronounces every man cursed, without any respect to persons, or any regard to pleas, taken from the infirmity of human nature, the sincerity of the heart, or repentance for transgressions. It should be observed, that the word "all" is not in the Hebrew text, in De 27:26, but is manifestly implied, an indefinite proposition being equal to an universal one; and agreeably to the true sense of the words, it is inserted by the apostle here, as it is in the Septuagint and Samaritan versions there; and perfectly accords with the sense of the best interpreters among the Jews; one of them has this gloss upon the words {r},
hlwk hrwth lk ta llk Nak, "here he (Moses) comprehends all the whole law"; and another {s} says the same thing, almost in the same words; this

"(says he) includes all the commandments which are in the law: and the note of a third is {t}, there are some that say, this is to be understood hrwth lk le "of the whole law"; and there are others that say, it is to be understood of those things that are mentioned (above), but they say nothing, for it is written "to do them"; and it is right in my eyes, that he curses for the negative commands mentioned, and he curses him who does not keep even secretly the affirmative precepts, wherefore he says "to do them":"

to which may be added, the observation of another of them {u} that these words intimate, that a man ought to honour the law,
hvembw rwbydbw hbvhmb, "in thought, and word, and in deed": nor should this be thought to be too severe, that the law of God curses men for nonperformance of the whole. The Athenians {w} formerly condemned persons as guilty, though they had not broke the whole law, yet if they had transgressed but one syllable of it: upon the whole it is a clear point, that there can be no justification by the works of the law, since it curses in case of want of perfect and constant obedience to it.

{p} Misn. Kiddushin, c 4. sect 14. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 28. 2. {q} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 1. {r} Jarchi in loc. {s} Bechai in loc. {t} Aben Ezra in loc.

{u} R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 152. 3, {w} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 5.

Galatians 3:11

Ver. 11. But that no man is justified,.... There are some that are justified, as all God's elect are, in his own mind and will from eternity; which will of his to justify them, upon the righteousness of his Son, undertook by him to bring in, is their justification in the court of heaven; and all that believe in Christ are openly and manifestly justified in the court of conscience, under the testimony of the Spirit of God: but no one is justified

by the law; it is in the Greek text, "in the law"; there were many justified before the law was given, as Noah, Job, Abraham, and all the Ante-Mosaic believers; and there were many justified "in", or under the legal dispensation; but none of them were justified by their obedience to the law, but by the righteousness they believed they had in the Lord: especially no man is justified

in the sight of God; who sees the heart, knows the spring of actions, and whose judgment is according to truth; that is, by the law and the deeds of it, however they may before men:

it is evident; it is a clear case, out of all dispute, as appears from **Hab 2:4**

for the just shall live by faith; which may be read either, "the just by faith, shall live": that is, the man who is just by faith, or justified by faith, not by it as a principle or act, or as the cause or matter of his justification, but by the object of his faith, Christ and his righteousness apprehended by faith, and so not just or justified by works; he shall live a life of justification, through that righteousness his faith receives; he shall live comfortably, with much peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, as the result of his being justified by faith; and shall live eternally, and never die the second death: or the "just shall live by faith"; he that is righteous, not by his own works, but by the obedience of Christ, shall live not upon faith, but by it on Christ, and his righteousness, which is revealed from faith to faith; and this makes it a clear point, that he is not justified by the law, for if he was, he would not live by faith on Christ, but in and by the deeds of the law.

Galatians 3:12

Ver. 12. And the law is not of faith,.... The Arabic version adds, "but of man"; which as it is an addition to the text, so it contains false doctrine; for though the law is not of faith, yet not of man, but of God; the law does not consist of faith in Christ, nor does it require it, and that a man should live by it upon his righteousness; it is the Gospel that reveals the righteousness of Christ, and directs and encourages men to believe in him and be saved; nor does the law take any notice of a man's faith; nor has it anything to do with a man as a believer, but as a doer, in the point of justification:

but the man that doth them shall live in them; the passage referred to, is in Le 18:5, the word "them", relates to the statutes and judgments, not of the ceremonial, but of the moral law, which are equally obligatory on Gentiles as on Jews. The Jewish doctors {x} observe on those words, that

"it is not said, priests, Levites, and Israelites, but
Mdah, "the man"; lo, you learn from hence, that even a Gentile that studies in the law, is as an high priest:"

so that whatever man does the things contained in the law, that is, internally as well as externally, for the law is spiritual, reaches the inward part of man, and requires truth there, a conformity of heart and thought unto it, and that does them perfectly and constantly, without the least failure in matter or manner of obedience, such shall live in them and by them; the language of the law is, do this and live; so life, and the continuation of that happy natural life which Adam had in innocence, was promised to him, in case of his persisting in his obedience to the law; and so a long and prosperous life was promised to the Israelites in the land of Canaan, provided they observed the laws and statutes which were commanded them: but since eternal life is a promise made before the world began, is provided for in an everlasting covenant, is revealed in the Gospel, and is the pure gift of God's grace through Christ, it seems that it never was the will of God that it should be obtained by the works of the law; and which is a further proof that there can be no justification in the sight of God by them, see **Ga 3:21**.

{x} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 1.

Galatians 3:13

Ver. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,.... The Redeemer is Christ, the Son of God; who was appointed and called to this work by his Father, and which he himself agreed to; he was spoken of in prophecy under this character; he came as such, and has obtained eternal redemption, for which he was abundantly qualified; as man, he was a near kinsman, to whom the right of redemption belonged; and as God, he was able to accomplish it. The persons redeemed are "us", God's elect, both of Jews and Gentiles; a peculiar people, the people of Christ, whom the Father gave unto him; some out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation: the blessing obtained for them is redemption; a buying of them again, as the word signifies; they were his before by the Father's gift, and now he purchases them with the price of his own blood, and so delivers them "from the curse of the law"; its sentence of condemnation and death, and the execution of it; so that they shall never be hurt by it, he having delivered them from wrath to come, and redeemed from the second death, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. The manner in which this was done was by being

made a curse for us; the sense of which is, not only that he was like an accursed person, looked upon as such by the men of that wicked generation, who hid and turned away their faces from as an abominable execrable person, calling him a sinner, a Samaritan, and a devil; but was even accursed by the law; becoming the surety of his people, he was made under the law, stood in their legal place and stead and having the sins of them all imputed to him, and answerable for them, the law finding them on him, charges him with them, and curses him for them; yea, he was treated as such by the justice of God, even by his Father, who spared him not, awoke the sword of justice against him, and gave him up into his hands; delivered him up to death, even the accursed death of the cross, whereby it appeared that he was made a curse: "made", by the will, counsel, and determination of God, and not without his own will and free consent; for he freely laid down his life, and gave himself, and made his soul an offering for sin:

for it is written. De 21:23,

cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree: it is in the Hebrew text, ywlt, "he that is hanged": which is the very name the Jews {y} commonly call Christ by way of reproach; that is, "everyone that hangeth", as the apostle rightly renders it; which is always the sense of an indefinite phrase, unless a restriction is put: adding out of the same verse, "on the tree", by way of explanation; for which he cannot upon any account be found fault with, since it is manifest one hanged on a tree is meant, "who is accursed of God", or "the curse of God"; the curse of God, in vindicating his righteous law, was visibly on such a person; as it was on Christ, when he hung on the cross, in the room and stead of his people; for he was made a curse, not for himself, or for any sins of his own, but for us; in our room and stead, for our sins, and to make atonement for them: upon the whole, the Jew {z} has no reason to find fault as he does, either with the apostle's sense, or citation of this passage; for whether it be rendered "hangeth", or is "hanged", the sense is the same; and though the apostle leaves out the word "God", it is clear from what he says, that his meaning is, that the curse of God lighted upon Christ as the surety of his people, standing in their legal place and stead, in order to redeem them from the law and its curse; since he says, he was "made a curse" for them, which must be done by the Lord himself: and whereas the Jew objects, that it is impossible that anyone, even an Israelite, should be delivered from the curses of the law, but by the observance of it, this shows his ignorance of the law, which, in case of sin, requires a penalty, and which is its curse; and it is not future observance of the law will free from that: and as for the Gentiles, he says, to whom the law was not given, and who were never under it, they are free from the curses of it, without a redemption; but as this is to be, understood not of the ceremonial, but of the moral law, it is a mistake; the Gentiles are under the moral law, and being guilty of the violation of it, are liable to its curse; and cannot be delivered from it, but through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; by virtue of which, they have a part and portion in the blessings promised as follows.

{y} Vid. Buxtorf. Lexic. Talmudie. col. 2596. {z} R. Isaac Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 89. p. 469.

Galatians 3:14

Ver. 14. That the blessing of Abraham,.... The same blessing Abraham enjoyed, even justification by the righteousness of Christ; and what was promised to Abraham, that in him, his seed, that is Christ, the Gentiles should be blessed, or justified; for though this blessing may in general comprise every spiritual blessing, yet it chiefly regards that of justification; or a deliverance from the curse of the law, and which is the end of Christ's being made a curse, that this blessedness

might come on the Gentiles; the uncircumcision, as well as the circumcision; see **Ro 4:9** that is, upon as many of them as were ordained unto eternal life, and in consequence of that believe in Christ; quite contrary to a Jewish notion, that "no blessing dwells but upon an Israelite {a}:"

now though this blessing, as all other spiritual ones, were laid up in the covenant of grace, put into the hands of Christ, and God's elect blessed therewith, as considered in him, yet the curse of the law for their transgressions stood in the way of their personal enjoyment of it, to their peace and comfort in their own souls; wherefore Christ is made a curse for them, to make way for the blessing to take place upon them; which is by an act of God's grace imputed to them, and is received by faith:

through Jesus Christ; or "in Jesus Christ", as the words may be read; meaning either, that this blessing comes upon the Gentiles that were in Christ, chosen in him, in union with him, and represented by him, both in the covenant and on the cross; or else that Christ is the Mediator, as from whom, so through whom, this, as every blessing of grace, comes to the children of God:

that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith; Beza puts the copulative and to this clause, reading it, "and that we", &c. as does the Ethiopic version; thereby more clearly pointing out this to be another end of Christ's being made a curse for us: by "the promise of the Spirit" may be meant, either by an "hypallage", the Spirit of promise, who opens and applies the promises; or the Spirit promised, not as a spirit of regeneration, conversion, and faith; for, as such, he cannot be received by faith; Since, antecedent to his being so, there can be no faith; but rather as a spirit of adoption, in respect to which he is said to be received, **Ro 8:15** and this blessing of adoption, as in consequence of redemption from under the law, its curse and condemnation, **Ga 4:4**. Or else a spiritual promise, in distinction from the temporal promise of the land of Canaan, made to Abraham and his natural seed, and means the promise of eternal life and happiness in the world to come; which promise is now received by faith, and that in consequence of the sufferings and death of Christ the testator; see **Heb 9:15**.

{a} Zohar in Exod. fol. 51. 3.

Galatians 3:15

Ver. 15. Brethren,.... Whereas in **Ga 3:1**, he calls them "foolish Galatians", which might seem too harsh and severe, therefore, to mitigate and soften their resentments, he styles them brethren; hoping still well of them, and that they were not so far gone, but that they might be recovered; and imputing the blame and fault rather to their leaders and teachers, than to them:

I speak after the manner of men; agreeably to a Talmudic form of speech in use among the Jews, Mda ynb Nyvlk hrwt hrbd, "the law speaks according to the language of the children of men", or "after the manner of men" {b}, when they argue from any Scripture, in which a word is repeated, and the latter word seems to point out something peculiar: but the apostle's meaning is, that the thing he was about to speak of was taken from among men, in common use with them, and what was obvious to the common sense and understanding of men, and might easily be applied and argued from, as it is by him:

though it be but a man's covenant, or testament, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto; if a covenant made between men, or a man's will and testament, be confirmed, signed, sealed, and witnessed, in a proper manner, no other man can make them void, or take anything from them, or add anything to them, only the parties concerned by their own will and consent; and if this be the case among men, much less can the covenant of God, confirmed by two immutable things, his word and oath, or his will and testament, or any branch of it, be ever disannulled, or be capable of receiving any addition thereunto. The apostle seems to have a particular respect to that branch of the covenant and will of God, which regards the justification of men in his sight by the righteousness of Christ, to which the false teachers were for adding the works of the law.

{b} T. Bab Ceritot, fol. 11. 1. Bava Metzia, fol. 94. 2. Sanhedrin, fol. 90. 2. Maccot, fol. 12. 1. Vid Halicot Olam, tract 4. c. 3. p. 199.

Galatians 3:16

Ver. 16. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made,.... The promises design the promises of the covenant of grace mentioned in the next verse, which are exceeding great and precious, better than those of any other covenant; and which are all yea and amen in Christ, and are chiefly of a spiritual nature; though all the temporal blessings of God's people come to them in a covenant way, and by virtue of the promise; for godliness has the promise of this life, that God will verily feed them, withhold no good thing from them proper for them, sanctify all their afflictions, support under them, and never leave nor forsake them: but the promises here intended principally are such as these, that God will be their God, and they shall be his people, the promise of Christ as a Saviour and Redeemer of them; of the Spirit as their sanctifier, and the applier of all grace unto them; of justification by Christ's righteousness, and pardon by his blood; of adoption through free rich grace; of perseverance in grace, and of the eternal inheritance: now these promises were made, errhyhsan, "were said unto", or spoken of, to Abraham and his seed; that is, they were discovered, made manifest, and applied to Abraham, the father of many nations; and were declared to belong to him and his spiritual seed, even all that believe, whether Jews or Gentiles; for the apostle is not speaking of the original make and constitution of the covenant of grace and its promises, which were made from all eternity; the grand promise of life was made before the world began, and Christ was set up as Mediator from everlasting, before ever the earth was, which suppose a covenant in which this promise was granted, and of which Christ was the Mediator as early; it was made long before Abraham, or any of his spiritual seed, were in being; nor was it made with any single person, any mere creature, Abraham, or any other, but with Christ, as the head and representative of the whole election of grace: but what is here treated of is, the declaration and manifestation of the covenant, and its promises to Abraham; which was frequently done, as upon the call of him out of the land of Chaldea, upon his parting with Lot, when he was grown old, and when Eliezer his servant was like to be his heir, and just before the giving of him the covenant of circumcision, and again upon the offering up of his son Isaac:

he saith not unto seeds, as of many; in the plural number, as if Jews and Gentiles were in a different manner his spiritual seed:

but as of one; using the singular number:

and to thy seed, which is Christ; meaning not Christ personal, though he was of the seed of Abraham, a son of his, as was promised; but the covenant and the promises were not now made with, and to Christ, as personally considered, this was done in eternity; but Christ mystical, the church, which is the body of Christ, of which he is the head, and is called by his name, 1Co 12:12 and designs all Abraham's spiritual seed, both Jews and Gentiles; who are all one in Christ, and so Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise; hence there is no room for the objection of the Jew to the apostle's application of this passage to Christ {c}, that the Scripture speaks not of any particular person, but of seed in a general and collective sense, of a large and numerous offspring; since the apostle designs such a seed by Christ, as numerous as the stars of the sky, and the sand on the sea shore, even all believers in all nations, Abraham is the father of; though did the apostle mean Christ particularly, and personally considered, there are instances to be given, where the word "seed" is used, not in a collective sense, but of a single person, as in **Ge 4:25**. Nor has the Jew {d} any reason to charge him with a mistake, in observing that the word is not in the plural, but in the singular number, when it is the manner of the Hebrew language to speak of seed only in the singular number; but this is false, the word is used in the plural number, and so might have been here, had it been necessary, as in **1Sa 8:15** concerning seed sown in the earth, from whence the metaphor is here taken. The first tract in the Jews' Misna, or oral law, is called, Myerz, "seeds"; and the word, even as spoken of the posterity of men, is used in the plural number in their Talmud {e}; where they say,

"pecuniary judgments are not as capital ones; in pecuniary judgments, a man gives his money, and it atones for him; in capital judgments, his blood, and the blood wytwerz, "of his seeds", or posterity, hang on him to the end of the world; for we so find in Cain, who slew his brother; as it is said, "the bloods of thy brother crieth"; it is not said, the blood of thy brother, but the bloods of thy brother, his blood, and the blood wytwerz, "of his seeds"."

{c} Chizzuk Emuna, par. 1. c. 13. p. 134. {d} Ib. par. 2. c. 90. p. 468. {e} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 37. 1.

Galatians 3:17

Ver. 17. And this I say,.... Assert and affirm as a certain truth, that is not to be gainsaid;

that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul; by "the covenant" is meant, not the covenant made with Adam, as the federal head of all his posterity; for this was made two thousand years before the law was given; nor that which was made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai, for that itself is the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after this covenant; nor the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham, for that was not so long by some years, before the giving of the law, as the date here fixed: but "a covenant confirmed of God in Christ"; a covenant in which Christ is concerned; a covenant made with him, of which he is the sum and substance, the Mediator, surety, and messenger; and such is what the Scriptures call the covenant of life and peace, and what we commonly style the covenant of grace and redemption; because the articles of redemption and reconciliation, of eternal life and salvation, by the free grace of God, are the principal things in it. This is said to be "in Christ", eiv criston, "with respect to Christ"; though the

Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out this clause, nor is it in the Alexandrian copy, and some others; meaning either that this covenant has respect to Christ personal, he having that concern in it, as just now mentioned, and as it was made manifest and confirmed to Abraham, was promised in it to spring from him; or rather that it has respect to Christ mystical, as before, to all Abraham's spiritual seed, both Jews and Gentiles: and this is said to be "confirmed of God", with respect thereunto; which must be understood, not of the first establishment of the covenant, in and with Christ, for that was done in eternity; nor of the confirmation of it by his blood, which was at his death; nor of the confirmation of it in common to the saints by the Spirit of God, who is the seal of the covenant, as he is the Spirit of promise; but of a peculiar confirmation of it to Abraham, either by a frequent repetition thereof, or by annexing an oath unto it; or rather by those rites and usages, and even wonderful appearances, recorded in Ge 15:9 and which was "four hundred and thirty years before" the law was given, which are thus computed by the learned Pareus; from the confirmation of the covenant, and taking Hagar for his wife, to the birth of Isaac, 15 years; from the birth of Isaac, to the birth of Jacob, 60 years, Ge 25:26, from the birth of Jacob, to his going down into Egypt, 130 years, Ge 47:9, from his going down to Egypt, to his death, 17 years, Ge 47:28 from the death of Jacob, to the death of Joseph in Egypt, 53 years, Ge 50:26 from the death of Joseph, to the birth of Moses, 75 years; from the birth of Moses, to the going out of the children of Israel from Egypt, and the giving of the law, 80 years, in all 430 years. The Jews reckoned the four hundred years spoken of to Abraham, Ge 15:13 and mentioned by Stephen, **Ac 7:6** from the birth of Isaac; but they reckon the four hundred and thirty years, the number given by Moses, Ex 12:40 and by the apostle here, to begin from the confirming the covenant between the pieces, though somewhat differently counted; says one of their chronologers {f}, we reckon the 430 years from the 70th year of Abraham, from whence to the birth of Isaac were 30 years, and from thence to the going out of Egypt, 400 years; and another {g} of them says,

"they are to be reckoned from the time that the bondage was decreed, in the standing between the pieces; and there were 210 years of them from thence to the going down to Egypt, and these are the particulars; the 105 years which remained to Abraham, and the 105 years Isaac lived after the death of Abraham, and there were 10 years from the death of Isaac, to the going down to Egypt, and it remains that there were 210 years they stayed in Egypt:"

another {h} of their writers says,

"that from the time that the decree of the captivity of Egypt was fixed between the pieces, to the birth of Isaac, were 30 years; and from the birth of Isaac to the going down of the children of Israel into Egypt, 400 years; take out from them the 60 years of Isaac, and the 130 years that Jacob had lived when he went into Egypt, and there remain 210."

Josephus reckons {i} these years from Abraham's coming into the land of Canaan, to the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and makes them 430, agreeably to Ex 12:40 and to the apostle here, and to the Talmud; See Gill on "Ac 7:6". However, be these computations as they will, it is certain, that the law, which was so long after the confirming of the covenant to Abraham, could not make it null and void: or that it should make the promise of none effect; the particular promise of the covenant, respecting the justification of Abraham and his spiritual seed, by faith in the righteousness of Christ.

{f} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 7. 1. {g} Juchasln, fol. 156. 2. {h} Jarchi in T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 9. 1. {i} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 15. sect. 2.

Galatians 3:18

Ver. 18. For if the inheritance be of the law,.... By the inheritance is meant, either the eternal inheritance, everlasting life and happiness in heaven, which is the gift of God through Christ, and not attained to and enforced by the works of the law; or particularly the blessing of justification, promised in the covenant to Abraham, and his spiritual seed; even to the Gentiles, and inherited by them; which is not obtained through obedience to the law of works, nor does it belong to those who seek for it by the deeds of the law, for these are not heirs of it; see **Ro 4:14**. For was this the case,

it is no more of promise; it cannot be by merit and by promise, by works and grace too; these can never be reconciled, and consist together; if it is by promise, then not of the law; and if it is of the law, it is not by promise: "but" nothing is more certain than this, that

God gave it, freely, without any consideration of the works of the law,

to Abraham by promise; wherefore justification is not by works, but by the free grace of God, through faith in the righteousness of Christ; and in this way men become heirs according to the hope of eternal life: all which is directly opposite to the notion of the Jews, who say, that, Nde Ng wvry twum rkvb, "for the reward of the commandments, men shall inherit paradise {k}."

{k} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 152. 3.

Galatians 3:19

Ver. 19. Wherefore why then serveth the law?.... If this be the case, might an objector say, why was the law given? what ends and purposes are to be served by it? of what use can it be? there had as good been no law at all, if the inheritance is not of it, and there is no justification by it. To which it is answered,

it was added because of transgressions; four hundred and thirty years after the covenant made with Abraham; it did not succeed it, nor take the place of it, and so make it null and void; but was over and above added unto it, for the sake of restraining transgressions; which had there been no law, men would not have been accountable for them; and they would have gone into them without fear, and with impunity; but the law was given, to lay a restraint on men, by forbidding such and such things, on pain of death; and also for the detecting, discovering, and making known transgressions, what they are, their nature and consequences; these the law charges men with, sets them before them, in their true light and proper colours; and convicts them of them, stops their mouths, and pronounces them guilty before God: moreover, this law entered in, over and above any other revelation God was pleased to make, "that the offence might abound", **Ro 5:20** either that particular offence, the sin of Adam, the apostle is there speaking of; the heinous nature of which, its aggravated circumstances, and the justness of its imputation to his posterity, were more clearly discerned by this law; and so the Syriac version here renders it in the singular number,
atwnyjom ljm, "because of transgression"; or all other offences and transgressions, which are increased through the multiplicity of precepts, and attended with more aggravating circumstances, than if no law was given, and more eagerly pursued after, through the prohibition of them; such being the corrupt nature of man, that the more anything is forbidden, the more desirous it is of it: add to all this, that the law was given for the punishing of transgressions, for which it curses, and threatens with death, and inflicts it on Christless sinners: hence it is clear there can be no justification by it, and yet it is not useless and insignificant:

till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made; either Christ the seed of the woman, and of Abraham, who was to come in the flesh, and is come; and to whom the grand promise of life, and all the promises of the covenant were made; not for himself, but for those he represented, and in whom they are all secure: until whose coming to finish transgression, and bring in everlasting righteousness, the law was to continue in the form in which, and the use for which it was added, and then to cease as the ministration of Moses; for through the coming of Christ it received its full accomplishment, and came to an end; the ceremonial law was utterly abolished, and the moral law ceased to be a covenant of works, though it continues a rule of walk and conversation; and the whole Mosaic economy was no more: or else the seed here intends the spiritual seed of Abraham; particularly among the Gentiles, to whom the promise of blessedness, of justification, and eternal life was made; and the sense be, that till such time that a generation of faithful men, of believers in Christ, should arise among the Gentiles, the law was to continue with the Jews; but when they should spring up, the middle wall of partition should be broken down, and Abraham's spiritual seed among Jews and Gentiles make up one body, one people, and be fellow heirs and partakers of the promise of God in Christ, through the Gospel:

and it was ordained by angels; not Moses and Aaron, and Joshua, as some say; for though Moses was concerned in the giving of the law, yet not Aaron nor Joshua, nor are any of them ever called angels; but the holy elect angels are here meant, the ten thousands of saints, or holy ones, God came to Mount Sinai with, and the Lord was among, in the holy place; see De 33:2 and so the Jews say {l} that the Lord appeared on Mount Sinai gloriously, aykalmd hytyk Me, "with companies", or "troops of angels", to give the law to his people: and this may be said to be "ordained" by them, inasmuch as it might be written and spoken by them, as the instruments and ministers God made use of; for though the tables are said to be the work of God, and the writing the writing of God, and to be written with the finger of God, and he is said to speak all the words of it, yet this hinders not, but that all this might be done by the means of angels; who might be employed in disposing and fitting the stones in the form they were, and in writing the law upon them; hence it is said to be given by the disposition of angels, **Ac 7:53** and certain it is, that it was spoken by them, **Heb 2:2** they forming in the air those articulate and audible sounds, when the law was delivered; who were also concerned in the thunderings and lightnings, and in the blowing of the trumpet, that waxed louder and louder at that time:

in the hand of a mediator; not Christ, as many interpreters, ancient and modern, have thought; for though he was present at the giving of the law, as appears from **Ac 7:38** and is the Mediator between God and man, and had the law in his hand, out of which it went forth as the lawgiver; and as the surety of his people has fulfilled it, and by so doing put an end to it, and delivered them from the curse and condemnation of it; yet he is the Mediator of the new and better covenant, not the ministration of death, but of life; and so Moses and Christ, the law and Gospel, the old and the new covenant, are continually opposed to each other; besides, the mediator here seems to be represented as inferior to the angels, and as receiving the law into his hands from them, by whom it was ordained; which to conceive of Christ, is very much to the demeaning and lessening of him. Moses is the mediator here meant, who stood between God and the people of Israel; not to make peace between them, but to show the word of God from him to them, and this at their own request; see **De 5:5**, and in his hand the tables of the law were, when he came down from the mount, and was a typical mediator of Christ. So the Jews say of him, that

"he was yeuma, "a mediator" between them and God {m}."

{l} Targum in 1 Chron. xxix. 11. {m} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 136. 1, 2.

Galatians 3:20

Ver. 20. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one,.... A mediator supposes two parties he stands between, and these at a distance from, or disagreeing with each other; where there is but one party, there can be no need of, nor any reason for, a mediator; so Christ is the Mediator between God and men, the daysman, **Job 9:33**, that lays his hands upon them both; and Moses, he was the mediator between God and the Israelites:

but God is one; not in person, for there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one, in nature and essence; so that though there are three persons, there is but one God, and who is the God both of Jews and Gentiles; who is of one mind concerning them, and has taken them into one and the same covenant, and makes use of one and the same method in the justification of them: but the true sense of the phrase here is, that whereas a mediator supposes two parties at variance, "God is one of the two"; as the Ethiopic version reads the words; he is a party offended, that stands off, and at a distance, which the law given by angels in the hand of a mediator shows; so that that is rather a sign of disagreement and alienation, and consequently that justification is not to be expected by it.

Galatians 3:21

Ver. 21. Is the law then against the promises of God?.... If the law was added because of transgressions, and curses for them, and if the inheritance is not of it, but by promise, were it, it would not be by promise, then, says an objector, it is against the promises: these are contrary to one another, and God, in giving the one and the other, must contradict himself: to which it is replied,

God forbid; a way of speaking the apostle uses, when he would express his abhorrence and detestation of anything, as here; for though the law and promises are distinct things, and have their separate uses, yet they are not contradictory to each other; the law has its use, and so have the promises; the promises do not set aside the law as useless on all accounts, nor does the law disannul the promises, but is subservient to them:

for if there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law; but the law cannot give life, spiritual life to a dead sinner; God only can do this, Father, Son, and Spirit; so far is the law from giving it efficiently, that it is not so much as the means of it; it is not made use of this way; God makes use of the law to kill, but not to make alive; he makes use of the law to strike dead all a man's hopes of happiness, by the deeds of it; but it is the Gospel he uses to quicken and comfort; that is the Spirit that giveth life. The law requires as much of a dead sinner, as it did of Adam in innocence, but gives him no life, activity, and strength to perform; could it quicken him, and enable him to do all its demands perfectly, then there would be righteousness, and so justification by it, as by the promise; whence it appears that there is no contrariety in the law to the promises: the reason why there is no righteousness is, because it cannot give life, spiritual life and strength; and if so, then not eternal life; which is the free gift of God, and not the merit of men's works: this is directly contrary to a notion of the Jews, who cry up the law as a life giving law; say they {n},

"great is the law, hyvwel Myyx tntwn ayhv, "for it giveth life to them that do it", in this world, and in the world to come:"

and elsewhere {o},

"the law is a tree of life to all that study in it,
yyx Nwl bhyml, "to give unto them life" in this world, and "to give unto them life" in the world to come."

{n} Pirke Abot, c. 6. sect. 6. {o} Zohar in Gen. fol. 70. 3. & in Num. fol. 62. 1.

Galatians 3:22

Ver. 22. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin,.... By the "Scripture" is meant, either the writing of the law in particular, the killing letter, or the whole Scripture, or God in it; and who by and in it has shown, declared, and proved, that all the individuals of human nature, Jews and Gentiles, and all that is in them, and done by them, are under the power and dominion of sin, defiled by it, and involved in the guilt of it; for it is not pantav, "all persons", but panta, "all things", belonging to all persons; all the members of their bodies, and faculties of their souls; all their thoughts, inclinations, and intentions; all their works and services, even their best righteousness, which is as filthy rags; all are declared to be sinful and polluted, and men on account of them to be guilty before God, and liable to punishment; from whence there can be no escape by the law of works; for they are like men concluded, or shut up in a prison, from which there is no apparent likelihood of deliverance: now the Spirit of God, discovering to men this their wretched and desperate condition, under the law and sin, reveals Christ and his righteousness to them, and enables and encourages them to believe in him, by whom only they can be justified from all things, they cannot by the law of Moses, in which they see themselves shut up, as in a prison:

that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe; by the "promise" is intended, the promise of life and salvation, and particularly of a justifying righteousness; which is given, not merited; righteousness is a gift, a gift of grace, a free gift, and so is eternal life; salvation in all its parts is of free grace; Christ is a free gift, and so are all things along with him; yea, faith itself, by which they are received, it is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; Christ is the author and finisher, as well as the object of it; and therefore here called "the faith of Jesus Christ": and such that have it, to them the promise, or the things promised, righteousness and life are given, which the law could not give; not to them that work, but to them that believe: thus the law is so far from being against the promises of God, that it is subservient to them; for though the law has no tendency in itself to bring persons to Christ, and to believe in him for righteousness, yet this concluding men under sin, showing them their desperate, and hopeless, and helpless condition, the Spirit of God takes occasion from hence to reveal Christ unto them, and to enable them as perishing creatures to venture on him, and lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel; and so they come to enjoy the grand promise of it, even life and salvation by Christ.

Galatians 3:23

Ver. 23. But before faith came,.... This is to be understood, not of the grace of faith, which was under the former dispensation, as now; the Old Testament saints had the same Spirit of faith, and the same grace of faith, as for its nature, object, and use, as New Testament saints have; Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c. believed in Christ, and were justified by faith in his righteousness, as we are. It is much better to understand it of the doctrine of faith, which though preached to Adam, and by Noah, and to Abraham, and by Isaiah, and others, yet not so clearly, largely, and fully, as by Jesus Christ and his apostles; so that the times of the Gospel may be called the times of faith, in comparison of the times of the law, and which some think is here meant; but it is best to interpret it of Christ, the object of faith, who was to come, and is come in the flesh, to fulfil the law; and, by so doing, has put an end to it; and to redeem his people from under it, and to save them with an everlasting salvation; for before this his coming in the flesh, the people of the Jews, of whom the apostle was one, were under the law:

we were kept under the law; as persons in a garrison, as the word signifies; they were kept distinct and separate from the rest of the nations of the world, and had neither civil nor religious conversation with them; and so were preserved in some measure both from their impieties and idolatries, which otherwise they were naturally prone to; and as a distinct people, unto the coming of the Messiah, who was to arise from among them; so that their being kept under the law in this sense, was both for their honour and their safety: though the meaning may also be, that they were kept under it as persons under a military guard, as the word likewise imports; and signifies, that the law kept a strict guard and a watchful eye over them, as the Roman soldier had over Paul, that kept him, and held fast the chain in his hand, with which he was bound, that he might not get loose and escape from him; see Ac 28:16 to which the apostle seems here to allude; the law kept them close to the discharge of their duty, and held them fast as prisoners; and which is more fully expressed in the next clause,

shut up. The Syriac version reads this in connection with the former, thus, Nnyvybx dk Nl awh rjn aowmn "the law kept us shut up", as in a prison; and the same way reads the Arabic version; which shows the state and condition the Jews were in under the law, and how they were treated by it; not as good and righteous persons, but as persons in debt, as criminals and malefactors; a prison is made, and so the law, for such sort of persons; the law considered and used them as sinners, as criminals convicted and condemned; it did itself accuse, convict, and pronounce them guilty, and condemned them to punishment; and detained them as prisoners in its dark dungeon, where they had little light and comfort; and were as in a pit, wherein is no water; though they lay here as prisoners of hope, in expectation of the Messiah's coming; who was to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, and to say to the prisoners, Come forth, and to them that sit in darkness, Show yourselves. Also the allusion may be to the custom of the eastern nations, in the usage of their slaves and captives; who in the daytime used to grind at a mill in a prison house, and in the night time were put down into a pit and shut up, and a mill stone put to the mouth of the pit {p}; and so describes the state of bondage and slavery the Jews were in under the law, who differed nothing from servants, to whom the saints under the Gospel dispensation are opposed, **Ga 3:26** as being the children of God by faith in Christ. And in this uncomfortable condition they continued,

unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed; that is, until Christ the object of faith came, who was to be revealed, or made manifest in the flesh; who, before his incarnation, not only lay in the bosom of the Father, but was in a great measure hid under the types and prophecies of the Old Testament; which though they gave some hints of him, yet but obscure ones, in comparison of the revelation made of him by his appearance in human nature; by the testimonies of his Father by a voice from heaven of angels, of John the Baptist, and others; and by his own doctrines and miracles, and by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

{p} Schindler Lex. Pentaglott. in voce xwr, col. 1712.

Galatians 3:24

Ver. 24. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ,.... So the words should be read, as they are by the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; for the words "to bring us" are a supplement of our translators, and have nothing to answer to them in the original; and the sense of the passage is, that the law performed this office of a schoolmaster until the coming of Christ; which shows that till that time the church was in its minority, that the Jews were but children in knowledge and understanding, and therefore stood in need, and were under the care of a schoolmaster, the law, by which the whole Mosaic administration is designed. They were taught by the moral law, the letter, the writing on the two tables, with other statutes and judgments, their duty to God and men, what is to be done and to be avoided, what is righteousness and what is not, the nature of sin, its demerit and consequences; but these gave them no instructions about a Saviour, and life and righteousness by him. The ceremonial law gave them some hints of the Gospel scheme, and the way of salvation by Christ, but in a manner suited to their estate of childhood; by sights and shows, by types and figures, by rites and ceremonies, by shadows and sacrifices; it taught them by divers washings the pollution of their nature, their need of the blood of Christ to cleanse from all sin; by circumcision, the necessity of regeneration, and the internal circumcision of the heart; by the passover, the daily sacrifice and other offerings, the doctrines of redemption, satisfaction, and atonement; and by the brazen serpent, the necessity of looking to Christ for life and salvation, and by various other things in that branch of the legal economy: but besides the instruction the law gave, it made use of discipline as a schoolmaster does; it kept a strict eye and hand over them, and them close to the performance of their duty; and restrained them from many things their inclinations led them to, threatening them with death in case of disobedience, and inflicting its penalties on delinquents; hence they that were under its discipline, were through fear of death it threatened them with, all their time subject to bondage: even the ceremonial law had something awful and tremendous in it; every beast that was slain in sacrifice was not only an instruction to them that they deserved to die as that creature did; but carried in it a tacit acknowledgment and confession of their own guilt; and the whole was an handwriting of ordinances against them. Moreover, the law being called a schoolmaster, shows that the use of it was but temporary, and its duration but for a time; children are not always to be under, nor designed to be always under a schoolmaster, no longer than till they are come to a proper age for greater business and higher exercises of life; so the law was to continue, and did continue, to be of this use and service to the Jewish church during its minority, until Christ came, the substance of all it taught and directed to: both the Jerusalem Targum and that of Jonathan ben Uzziel, on Nu 11:12 use the very Greek word the apostle does here, concerning Moses, rendering the words, as a "pedagogue" or "schoolmaster" bears a sucking child into the land, &c.

That we might be justified by faith; by Christ the object of faith, by his righteousness, which faith looks unto and receives, and not by the law and the works of it; the people of the Jews were in such a state under the law, and the law of that use unto them before the coming of Christ, as above represented, that it might be made manifest, be a clear point, and out of all dispute, that there is no such thing as justification by the law; for how could ever such a blessing be expected from it, when men were kept under it as under a military guard; when they were shut up in it as in a prison, and were treated by it as malefactors, convicted and condemned; and when they were under the discipline of it, as a rigid and severe schoolmaster? this being their case till Christ came, when it ceased to be all this to them, he being the end of it for righteousness, it became a thing self-evident, that justification is only by him and his righteousness, and so the end here mentioned was answered.

Galatians 3:25

Ver. 25. But after that faith is come,.... That is, since Christ the object of faith is come in the flesh, and has fulfilled the law, and redeemed them that were under it from its bondage, curse, and condemnation:

we are no longer under a schoolmaster; under the law as such; as no longer under it as a military guard, nor in it as a prison, so neither under it as a schoolmaster; not needing its instructions, or its discipline; since Christ is come as a prophet to teach and instruct, as a priest to atone for sin, and make intercession for transgressors, and as a King to rule and govern; in whose hands, and not in the hands of Moses, the law now is, as a rule of walk and conversation.

Galatians 3:26

Ver. 26. For ye are all the children of God,.... Not by nature, as Christ is the Son of God, for he is the only begotten of the Father, and in such sense as neither angels nor men are the sons of God; nor by creation, as Adam and all mankind, and the angels are; but by divine adoption by an act of God's rich and sovereign grace, putting them among the children in saying this the apostle directs himself to the Gentiles for their comfort, and says this of them all in a judgment of charity, they being under a profession of faith; lest they should think, because they were not Abraham's seed according to the flesh, nor were ever trained up under the law as a schoolmaster, that they were not the children of God: whereas they were such not by the law, as none indeed are,

but by faith in Christ Jesus; not that faith makes any the children of God, or puts them into such a relation; no, that is God's own act and deed; of his free rich grace and goodness, God the Father has predestinated his chosen ones to the adoption of children, and has secured and laid up this blessing for them in the covenant of grace; Christ by redemption has made way for their reception and enjoyment of it; the Spirit of God, in consequence of their sonship, as a spirit of adoption bears strong reason and argument, proving that they are not under the law as a schoolmaster, in which light it is here set by the apostle; since they are sons and not servants, and so free from the bondage of the law; they are sons grown up into the faith of Christ, and are led and taught by the Spirit of God, as they are that are the children of God by faith; and as is promised to the saints under the Gospel, that they shall be "all taught of God"; and therefore stood in no need of the law as a schoolmaster, which only was concerned with the Jews, whilst they were children under age; and has nothing to do with such, whether Jews or Gentiles, who believe in Christ, and are growing up into him their head, till they come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of him.

Galatians 3:27

Ver. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ,.... Not that it is to be imagined that these churches of Galatia, or any of the primitive churches, consisted of baptized and unbaptized persons; for this would be acting contrary to the commission of Christ and the order of the Gospel: but this way of speaking supposes that there might be some of them, who though baptized in water, yet not into Christ; and that those who are truly and rightly baptized, who are proper subjects of it, and to whom it is administered in a proper manner, are baptized into Christ: not that by baptism they are brought into union with Christ, but into communion with him; for they are not merely baptized in his name, and by his authority, and according to his command, and into his doctrine, and a profession of him; but into a participation of the blessings of grace which are in him, and come through his sufferings and death; for they that are baptized into Christ are baptized into his death and resurrection from the dead; they are led by faith to behold the cleansing of their souls, and the remission of their sins by his blood, and their justification by his righteousness; how he was delivered for their offences, died for their sins, was buried in the grave, and their iniquities with him, and rose again for their justification; of all which, baptism, performed by immersion, is a lively emblem; and this is to be baptized into Christ, namely, being baptized believing in him, and calling on his name: and such

have put on Christ; both before and at baptism: before it they put him on as the Lord their righteousness; his righteousness is compared to a garment, is called

the best robe, the wedding garment, fine linen, clean and white, the robe of righteousness, a garment down to the feet; this is imputed to the elect of God by the Father, through a gracious act of his, and what they are clothed and covered with by the Son, and is put upon them and applied unto them by the Spirit; and which faith receiving puts off its own rags of righteousness, and makes use of this as its proper dress to appear in before the most High; and such through divine grace are enabled to put off the old man and put on the new; that is, walk in their outward lives and conversation, not according to the dictates of corrupt nature, but according to the principles of grace, of the new man formed in the soul, for righteousness and holiness, and in imitation of Christ; having him for an example, and desiring to walk as he walked; which is another sense of putting on Christ, namely, a following of him in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; see
Ro 13:14 and such persons, as they are the proper subjects of baptism, who have believed in Christ for righteousness, and walk worthy of him; so in baptism they may also be said to put him on as they thereby and therein make a public profession of him, by deeds as well as words, declaring him to be their Lord and King; and afresh exercise faith upon him, as their Saviour and Redeemer, and imitate and follow him in it, as their pattern; who himself submitted to it, leaving them an example that they should tread in his steps; which when they do, they may be said to put him on. The allusion is either to the putting off and putting on of clothes at baptism, which being performed by immersion, required such actions, which no other mode does; or, to the priests putting off their common clothes, and then bathing or dipping themselves in water, and, putting on the garments of the priesthood before they entered on their service; concerning which take the following rules prescribed by the Misnic doctors {q};

"no man may enter the court for service, though clean,
lwbjyv de, "until he dips himself" five times, and washes his hands and feet ten times;"

for every time he immersed himself, he washed his hands and feet before and after: again,

"there is a vail of fine linen between him (the high priest) and the people; he puts off his clothes,
hle lbjw dry, "he goes down and dips himself, he comes up", and wipes himself; then they bring him the golden garments, and "he puts them on", and washes his hands and his feet; then they bring him the daily sacrifice, &c."

and a little after,

"they bring him (the high priest on the day of atonement) to the house of Paryah, and in the holy place there was a vail of fine linen between him and the people; he washes his hands and his feet, and puts off his garments: R. Meir says, he puts off his garments, and then washes his hands and his feet; "he goes down and dips himself, he comes up again", and wipes himself; then they bring him the white garments, and he puts them on, and washes his hands and his feet:"

all which may serve to illustrate this passage, and point out to us what the apostle alludes unto, as well as to observe to us the distinction the Jews made between the immersion of the whole body, and a washing of a part of it.

{q} Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 3, 4, 6. Vid. Misn. Tamid, c. 1. sect. 1, 2.

Galatians 3:28

Ver. 28. There is neither Jew nor Greek,.... Not but that there were such in being; and in the churches of Christ, for the primitive churches consisted of both; but the meaning is, that there is no difference between them, the middle wall of partition being broken down, and that, in the business of justification and salvation, it signified nothing whether a man was a Jew or a Greek; he was never the better for being a circumcised Jew, nor never the worse for being an uncircumcised Gentile; both by nature are equally sinners, and stand in need of the justifying righteousness of Christ, and the regenerating grace of the Spirit. The Gospel was equally preached to both, and was made useful to some of the one and of the other; and who, believing in Christ, had a right to the same ordinances and privileges of the Gospel, and shared in the same blessings of grace.

There is neither bond nor free. There were such persons in the world then, and in the churches too; nor does the Gospel dissolve the civil and natural relations and obligations men are in and under to one another, it confirms and secures them; but the sense is, that God, in calling, justifying, and saving men, is no respecter of persons, as being high and low, rich and poor, bond or free, servants or masters: he calls, justifies, and saves men of every station and condition of life; and bond slaves and servants called by grace are Christ's free men, and have an equal right as those that are free to all the immunities of the Gospel: in some Heathen nations bond slaves and servants were not admitted, only freemen, to be present at the sacred service, and worship of their deities {r}; but the Gospel makes no such distinction of men in its doctrine, worship, and ordinances, which lie open to all ranks and orders of men:

there is neither male nor female; among the Heathens {s} also females were not admitted to some of their sacred rites and ceremonies; and among the Jews the males only were concerned in many things both of a civil and religious nature; no female might be heir to an inheritance with a male {t}; females had no share in the civil government, nor in the priesthood; males were to appear three times a year before the Lord, and, according to their oral law, women and servants were exempted {u}; the mark of circumcision, the sign of the covenant made with Abraham and his natural seed, was only upon the males; but now under the Gospel dispensation there is no distinction made between male and female as to divine things; as they are alike called by the grace of God, they have the same right to Gospel ordinances, baptism and the Lord's supper, and to every spiritual privilege. The apostle's design is to show the common right of believers, of every nation, condition, and sex, and to encourage the Gentiles, and demolish the pride, vanity, and boasting of the Jews, their men especially, who valued themselves upon these "three" very things which the apostle here makes no account of; as that they were Israelites and not Gentiles, freemen and not servants, men and not women; and in their public prayers they give thanks to God in this form,

"blessed be the Lord our God, the King of the world, that he hath made me an Israelite; blessed be the Lord, &c. who hath not made me a Gentile; blessed be the Lord, &c. who hath not made me a "servant"; blessed be the Lord, &c. who hath not made me a "woman";"

instead of which last the woman say,

"blessed be the Lord, &c. who hath made me as he pleased {w}:"

for ye are all one in Christ Jesus; being alike chosen in him, united to him, redeemed by his blood, justified by his righteousness, regenerated by his Spirit, the children of God by faith in him, and heirs of the same grace and glory, they make, both Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, male and female, as it were but one new man in him; one body, of which he is the head, one spiritual seed of Abraham and of Christ.

{r} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dierum, l. 2. c. 14. Aurel. Victor. de orig. Gent. Rom. c. 8. Aristophanis Thesmophor, & Bourdin in ib. p. 782. {s} Alex. ab

Alex. ib. Aurel. Victor, c. 6. {t} Maimon. Nechalot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2. {u} Misn. Chagiga, c. 1. sect. 1. {w} Sedor Tephillot, fol. 2. 2. Ed. Basil. fol. 4. 1. Ed. Amst. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 13. 2.

Galatians 3:29

Ver. 29. For if ye be Christ's,.... Or seeing ye are his, not by creation only, but by the Father's gift to him, by the purchase of his own blood, by the power of his grace, making them willing to give up themselves to him; not only his by profession, saying they are the Lord's, calling themselves by his name; but by possession, Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, and they having his Spirit as a spirit of regeneration and adoption:

then are ye Abraham's seed; not his natural but his spiritual seed, the seed that should come, and to whom the promises were made, **Ga 3:16** and so were upon an equal foot even with the Jews that believed:

and heirs according to the promise; being the children of God, they are heirs of God; and being the spiritual children of Abraham, the children of the promise, which are counted for the seed, they are, according to the promise made to Abraham and his spiritual seed, heirs of the blessings of the grace of life, and of the eternal inheritance; of the blessing of justification of life, and of everlasting salvation; of this world and of the world to come; of all the spiritual blessings of the covenant of grace, and of the incorruptible and undefiled inheritance of the saints in light; to which they are begotten through the abundant mercy of God, for which they are made meet by the grace of Christ; and to which they have a right by his justifying righteousness.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Galatians 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS 4

In this chapter the apostle discourses concerning the abrogation of the ceremonial law, under which the Old Testament saints were, being as children under tutors; blames the Galatians for returning to it when they were freed from it; puts them in mind of their former affection to him and to his ministry; describes the false apostles, who had been the occasion of their departure from the truth, and by a beautiful allegory sets forth the difference between the legal and Gospel dispensations. And whereas in the latter part of the preceding chapter he had compared the law to a schoolmaster, under which the Jews were till Christ came; he here makes use of another simile to express the same thing by, which is that of an heir while under age being under tutors and governors, until the time fixed by the parent's will, **Ga 4:1** an accommodation of which simile is in **Ga 4:3**, by which the Jews under the former dispensation are represented as children, and as in a state of bondage to the ceremonial law, from which there is a deliverance by Christ at the appointed time of the Father, by whom he was sent for that purpose; the act of sending is ascribed to God the Father; the person sent is described as the Son of God; the time when is called the fulness of time; and the circumstances under which he was sent were, that he was made of a woman, and made under the law, **Ga 4:4**, the ends of his being sent were to redeem his people from it, who were under it; and that they might receive the adoption of children, the privilege and spirit of it, **Ga 4:5**. Hence because they were the sons of God, and as a fruit and effect of the redemption of them by Christ, the Spirit of God is sent down into their hearts, to make known and witness their adoption, **Ga 4:6**, and the benefits arising from hence are, that such are or should be no longer the servants of the law, but are children and free from it, and are heirs of God, **Ga 4:7**, and that the grace of God might appear the more illustrious in this privilege of sonship, and the folly of the Galatians be more manifest in returning to the ceremonial law, notice is taken of what they were and did before conversion, and what they were inclined to now; that whereas whilst they were ignorant of God, they served nominal fictitious deities, such as were not by nature gods; and yet now, though they knew God, and were known of him, seemed desirous of being in a state of servitude and bondage to the weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law, **Ga 4:8**, of which instances are given in their observing days, months, times and years, **Ga 4:10**, which gave the apostle a great deal of concern, fearing his labour among them was in vain, and to no purpose, **Ga 4:11**, wherefore he entreats them as his brethren to imitate him, who being a Jew, yet had relinquished the observation of the ceremonial law, **Ga 4:12**, and then he reminds them of their former regard unto him; how that though he preached the Gospel to them through much weakness, yet they did not despise him and reject him on account of his infirmities, but received him with all the tokens of respect imaginable, as if he had been an angel; yea, as if he had been Christ himself, **Ga 4:13**, who then reckoned themselves happy persons on account of the Gospel he preached to them, and then had such an affection for him, that if it had been needful they would have given their eyes unto him; and yet now he was become their enemy for preaching the same truths he did then, justification by faith in Christ's righteousness and the abrogation of the law, **Ga 4:15**, next he gives an account of the false apostles, who pretended a zealous affection for the Galatians; which was not a good one, nor with right views, **Ga 4:17**, though zeal in a good cause, and which continues, is very commendable, **Ga 4:18**, and such a constant and hearty attachment had the apostle to them; wherefore he calls them his little children, says he travailed in birth on their account, it being his earnest desire that Christ might appear to be formed in them, **Ga 4:19**, wherefore since he was in doubt and distress about them, he was very desirous of being with them, and to alter his way of arguing with them; and from the law, and not the Gospel, show them their mistake and folly, **Ga 4:20**, which he does in the following allegorical way, by observing that Abraham had two sons, the one by a servant maid, the other by his lawful wife; the one was after the flesh, the other by promise; which allegorically signified the two covenants of Sinai and of Sion, **Ga 4:22**. Agar the bondmaid represented the covenant made at Mount Sinai in Arabia, under which the carnal Jews and their posterity were in a state of bondage; and Sarah the free woman, the covenant of grace under the Gospel dispensation and the Gospel church state, which is from above, free, fertile, and numerous, **Ga 4:25**, which is confirmed, **Ga 4:27**, by a passage out of Isa 44:1 and as these two women were typical of the two covenants, so their respective offspring represented the two sorts of professors, legalists and evangelical Christians. True believers in Christ are like Isaac, the children of the promise; legalists are like Ishmael, men after the flesh, and of the same persecuting spirit with him: wherefore as it was then, that carnal Ishmael persecuted spiritual Isaac, so at this time the carnal Jews persecuted the real Christians, **Ga 4:28** nevertheless for the comfort of the latter, it is observed out of the Scripture that the former shall be cast out, and not be heir with them, **Ga 4:30**, and the conclusion of the whole is, that the saints under the Gospel dispensation are not in bondage to the law, but are made free by Christ; to which freedom they are called, and in which they should stand, **Ga 4:31**.

Ver. 1. Now I say,.... To illustrate what he had said of the law's being a schoolmaster to the Jews until the coming of Christ, and then ceasing as such, he proposes the case of an heir during his minority, till he come to the proper time of enjoying his estate.

that the heir, as long as he is a child; anyone that is an heir to his father's estate, or another's, whilst under age, being reckoned as a child, as he is from his infancy to his manhood,

differeth nothing from a servant: he is not his own man, nor at his own dispose; he cannot do as he pleases; he is under restraint; he is kept to school or to business, and is liable to correction and chastisement according as he behaves; nor can he have the free use of his father's estate,

though he be Lord of all, of all the servants, according to the Arabic version; or of the whole estate his father left him, of which he is Lord in right, but not in possession; he is right heir to it, though as yet it is not in his hands, nor can he do with it as he will.

Galatians 4:2

Ver. 2. But is under tutors and governors,.... The word rendered "tutors", is adopted by the Jewish Targumists and Rabbins into their language; and by the former is used {x} for any ruler and governor, civil or domestic; and by the latter, for such as are guardians of infants, fatherless children, and such as are under age, as it is here used; and who were either appointed by the will of the deceased, or by the sanhedrim, of whom they say {y}, Nnymqwm al ynnqydl apwrjwpa, "we do not appoint a tutor or guardian for a bearded person"; that is, an adult person, one that is grown up to man's estate; but aqwnyl apwrjwpa hyl Nnymqwm, "we appoint a guardian for an infant"; and they had not used to appoint women or servants, or such as were minors themselves, or any of the common people; but men of substance, integrity, and wisdom {z}; a fatherless child had two tutors {a}; the power that guardians so appointed had, is at large described by Maimonides {b}. Governors were such as acted under the tutors or guardians, and were employed by them for the improvement of their estates and minds, as stewards, schoolmasters, &c. until the time appointed of the father; by his last will and testament, which might be sooner or later, as he pleased; but if he died intestate, the time of minority, and so the duration of tutors and guardians, were according to the laws of the nation; which with the Romans was until a man was twenty five years of age; and with the Jews, for a male, was until he was thirteen years of age and one day; and for a female, until she was twelve years of age and one day, if the signs of ripeness of age appeared; but if they did not, the time was protracted until they were twenty, and even sometimes till they were thirty five years of age, before the matter was determined {c}.

{x} Targum Jon. ben Uzziel in Gen. xxxix. 4. & xli 34, 35. & xliii 15. Targum in Esther i. 8. & 2. 3. {y} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 39. 1, 2. {z} Maimon. Hilch. Necabot, c. 10. sect. 6. {a} Bartenora in Misn. Pesachim, c. 8. sect. 1. {b} Hilch. Nechalot, c. 11. {c} Ib. Hilch. Ishot, c. 2. sect. 1, 2.

Galatians 4:3

Ver. 3. Even so we,.... Jews, for of such the apostle is only speaking, and to whom he applies the above case of heirs in minority; it was to the Jews he had spoken of the law, as being a military guard, a prison, and a schoolmaster to them; and then having addressed the Gentiles, as being the children of God, baptized into Christ, one in him, interested in him, the spiritual seed of Abraham, and heirs of all the blessings of grace and glory; he returns to the Jews, and represents their estate and condition under the law by the above simile, which he here makes an application of:

when we were children; not in age, but in knowledge of divine, spiritual, and evangelical things; which must be understood not of every individual person among them, for there were some grown men, men of great faith, light, knowledge, and experience; but of the bulk and generality of the people of the Jews, and that also in comparison of the clear understanding of the saints under the Gospel dispensation. The Jews were like children, peevish, froward, and perverse, and often stood in need of correction and chastisement; and as children are pleased with pictures, shows, sights, and gaudy amusements, so they were taken with an external pompous form of worship, and which they had, and was suited to their infant state; and which infant state of the Jewish church commenced from the time of their coming up out of Egypt, and lasted until the times of the Messiah; see Ho 11:1.

Were in bondage under the elements of the world; by which are meant, not the four elements of fire, water, earth, and air; nor the angels, who by some are thought to preside over them; nor the sun and moon, according to whose revolutions the festivals of the Jews were regulated; but the several institutions of the Mosaic economy, which were to the Jews what an A B C, or an alphabet of letters, is to one that is beginning to learn; or what an accidence and grammar be to such who are learning any language, and which contain the rudiments of it; as the physical elements are the first principles of nature, and the general rules of speech and language are the rudiments thereof, so the Mosaic institutions were the elements, rudiments, or first principles of the Jewish religion, taught them by the law, as their schoolmaster, and by which they were used as children: these are called "elements", in allusion to the first principles of nature and learning; and the elements "of the world", because they lay in outward worldly and earthly things, as meats, drinks, divers washings, &c. and because that hereby God instructed the world, at least a part of it, the world of the Jews: or as the word kosmov may be rendered "beauty", or "elegancy", these were elegant elements, which in a most beautiful manner taught the people of the Jews the first principles of the doctrine of Christ: but nevertheless, whilst they were under the instructions and discipline of the law as a schoolmaster, "they were in bondage"; referring not to their bondage in Egypt, nor in the several captivities into which they were carried by their neighbours; nor to the bondage of sin and Satan, common to all men in a state of nature; but to the bondage which the law naturally gendered, led them to, induced upon them, and kept them in, through its sanctions and penalties; for, through fear of death, they were under a servile disposition, and were all their lifetime subject to bondage; they carried a yoke of bondage upon their necks, and were under a spirit of bondage unto fear; they were like children closely kept to school to learn their letters, say their lessons, and perform their tasks; and, if not, receive due correction, which kept them in continual fear and bondage.

Galatians 4:4

Ver. 4. But when the fulness of time was come,.... The time agreed and fixed upon between God and his Son from all eternity, in the council and covenant of peace, when the Son of God should assume human nature; which time was diligently searched into by the prophets, was revealed unto them, and predicted by them; as more generally that it should be before the civil government ceased from Judah, and before the destruction of the second temple; and more particularly by Daniel in his prophecy of the "seventy weeks", towards and about the close of which there was a general expectation among the Jews of the Messiah's coming; and was the fulness of time here referred to, and what is sometimes called the dispensation of the fulness of time, the end of the Mosaic dispensation and Jewish church state, the last days of that state, and the end of the Jewish world, as to their ecclesiastical and civil polity. The Jews themselves own that the time of the Messiah's coming is fixed, and that at that time he shall come, whether they are worthy or not, for so it is asserted in their Talmud {d};

"says R. Jochanan, the son of David does not come, but in an age which is all worthy, or all wicked; in a generation which is all worthy, as it is written, Isa 60:21 in a generation that is all wicked, as it is written, Isa 66:5 and it is written, "for my name's sake will I do it"; says R. Alexander, R. Joshua ben Levi objects what is written,
Isa 60:22 "in its time"; and it is written, "I will hasten it"; if they are worthy I will hasten it, if they are not worthy it shall be hteb, "in its time"."

And accordingly a more modern writer of theirs says {e},

"our redemption upon all accounts shall be, hnmzb, "in its time", whether worthy or, wicked; but if worthy its time will be hastened;"

it must be owned they do not always say so: this phrase, "the fulness of time", is an Hebraism, and is the same with ymy talm, in **Eze 5:2** which the Septuagint render thn plhrwsin twn hmerwn, "the fulness of days", and we, "when the days were fulfilled", when the time was up; and the same sense it has here, and it is also the same with dewm, "the appointed time", **Hab 2:3** and answers to proyesmia tou patrov, "the time appointed of the Father", **Ga 4:2**.

God sent forth his Son; God not absolutely and essentially, but personally and relatively considered, is here meant, namely, God the Father, as appears from the relation the person sent stands in to him, "his Son"; not by creation, as angels, Adam, and all men are the sons of God; nor by adoption, as saints are; or by office, as magistrates be; or on account of his incarnation or resurrection from the dead, for he was the Son of God before either; but by divine generation, being the only begotten of the Father, of his divine nature and essence, equal to him, and one with him: and who was "sent" by him, not out of disrespect to him, but love to us; nor without his consent or against his will, he readily and heartily agreeing to it; nor does it imply any local motion or change of place, but only designs the assumption of human nature; nor does it suppose any superiority and inferiority, for though Christ, as man, and in his office capacity, as Mediator, is inferior to the Father, yet not as to his divine nature, or as the Son of God; but it suggests, that he existed before he was sent, and that as a person, and as a distinct person from the Father, otherwise he could not with any propriety be said to be sent by him; and also that there was an entire harmony and agreement between them in this matter, the Father agreed to send his Son, and the Son agreed to be sent; and that as to his taking upon him the office of Mediator, and his assumption of human nature in order to obtain eternal redemption: all this was not of himself, but done in concert with his Father, from whom as Mediator he had his mission and commission;

made of a woman; "made", not created as Adam was; nor begotten by man, as men in common are; nor is he said to be born, though he truly was, but "made"; which word the Holy Ghost chooses, to express the mighty power of God, in his mysterious incarnation, wonderful conception, and birth; though some copies read, "born of a woman"; and so the Arabic and Ethiopic version: "of a woman"; whose seed he was from the beginning said to be; of a woman, without a man; of a woman, a virgin, as was foretold; and not only made and formed in her, but of her, of her flesh and blood, of which he took part; and which denotes the low estate and great humiliation of Christ, and shows that as sin came into the world by the woman, the Saviour from sin came also the same way:

made under the law; under the civil and judicial law as a Jew, to which he was subject, paying tribute to the collectors of it; and which was necessary; that it might appear he sprung from that nation, to whom he was promised; and that he came before the civil government of that people was at an end; and to teach us subjection to the civil magistrate: and as a son of Abraham he was made under the ceremonial law, was circumcised the eighth day, kept the several feasts of tabernacles, passover, &c. and which was proper, since he was the principal end of it, in whom it centres, and for whose sake it was made; and that he might completely fulfil it, and by so doing put a period to it: and he was made under the moral law, both as a man and the surety of his people, and was subject to all the precepts of it, and bore the penalty of it, death, in their room and stead, and thereby fulfilled it, and delivered them from its curse and condemnation. So the Targumist {f}, joins the incarnation of the Messiah and his subjection to the law together, as the apostle here does;

"the prophet saith to the house of David, because a child is born unto us, and a son is given to us, hrjml yhwle
atyrwa lybqw, "and he hath took upon him the law to keep it, and his name shall be called", &c."

{d} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. Vid. Jarchi & Kinachi in Isa. lx. 22. {e} Kimchi in Psal. cviii. 4. {f} In Isa. ix. 6.

Galatians 4:5

Ver. 5. To redeem them that were under the law,.... By whom are meant chiefly the Jews, who are elsewhere represented as in and under the law, in distinction from the Gentiles who were without it; see **Ro 2:12** the Gentiles indeed, though they were not under the law of Moses, yet were not without law to God, they were under the law of nature. The law was given to Adam as a covenant of works, and not to him as a single person, but as a federal head to all his posterity; hence he sinning, and they in him, they all came under its sentence of condemnation and death, God's elect not excepted, and who are the persons said to be redeemed; for Christ was not sent to redeem all that were under the law; for as all mankind were included in it as a covenant of works made with Adam, and all are transgressors of it, the whole world is pronounced guilty before God by it, and liable to the curse of it; but not all mankind, only some out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, are redeemed by Christ, even all the elect, whether among Jews or Gentiles. The chosen among the Jews seem to be here principally designed; the redemption of them, which is the end of Christ's being sent, intends not only a deliverance of them from sin and Satan, and the world, to whom they were in bondage, but from the law under which they were; from the bondage of the ceremonial, and from the curse and condemnation of the moral law:

that we might receive the adoption of children; by which may be meant, both the grace, blessing, and privilege of adoption, and the inheritance adopted to; both are received, and that in consequence of redemption by Christ; and such as receive the one will also receive the other. Adoption, as a blessing of grace, exists before it is received; nor does the reception of it add anything to the thing itself; it was in God's designation from all eternity, who predestinated his chosen ones unto it by Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will; it was provided, laid up, and secured for them in the everlasting covenant; and is part of that grace given them in Christ before the world began; but sin intervening, whereby the law was broken, obstacles were thrown in the way of God's elect receiving and enjoying this privilege in their own persons; wherefore Christ was sent to redeem them from sin and the law, and by so doing remove these obstructions, that so they might receive this privilege in a way consistent with the righteousness and holiness of God, as well as with his grace and goodness: receiving of it shows it to be a gift, a free grace gift, and not owing to any merit of the creature; faith is the hand which receives it, as it does all other blessings, as Christ himself, grace out of his fulness, righteousness, pardon, &c. and has no more causal influence on this than on any of these; faith does not make any the sons of God, or put them among the children; but receives the power, the authority, the privilege from God through Christ, under the witnessings of the spirit of adoption; whereby they become such, and have a right to the heavenly inheritance, which they shall hereafter enjoy.

Galatians 4:6

Ver. 6. And because ye are sons,.... That is of God, so some copies read; and the Ethiopic version, "inasmuch as ye are his sons"; not in so high a sense as Christ is the Son of God; nor in so low a sense as all men are his offspring; nor in such sense as magistrates are the children of the most High; nor merely on account of a profession of religion, as the "sons of God" was a phrase very early used of the worshippers of the true God; but by virtue of adoption, and which is not owing to the merits of men, who are by nature children of wrath, but to the free rich sovereign grace of God. It is a privilege and blessing of grace in which all the three persons are concerned. The Father has predestinated to it, and in the covenant has provided and laid it up; he set up his Son as the pattern to which these sons should be conformed, and proposed the glory of his own grace, as the end; by virtue of which act of grace they were considered as the children of God, as early as the gift of them to Christ; and so by him when he partook of their flesh and blood, and died to gather them together who were scattered abroad; see **Heb 2:13**. The Son of God has also an hand in this affair; for through his espousing their persons, they become the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty; and through his assumption of their nature they become his brethren, and so to be in the relation of sons to God; through his redemption they receive the adoption of children, and at his hands the privilege, the power itself, to become such. The Spirit of God not only regenerates them, which is an evidence of their sonship, but as a spirit of adoption manifests it to them, works faith in them to receive it, and frequently witnesses to the truth of it; all which show how any come and are known to be the sons of God. This is a privilege that exceeds all others; it is more to be a son than to be a saint; angels are saints, but not sons, they are servants; it is more to be a child of God, than to be redeemed, pardoned, and justified; it is great grace to redeem from slavery, to pardon criminals, and justify the ungodly; but it is another and an higher act of grace to make them sons; and which makes them infinitely more honourable, than to be the sons and daughters of the greatest potentate upon earth; yea, gives them an honour which Adam had not in innocence, nor the angels in heaven, who though sons by creation, yet not by adoption. The consequence, and so the evidence of it, follows,

God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "our Father"; all the three divine persons here appear, as having a concern in this business, as before observed; here are God and his Son, and the Spirit of his Son, said to be sent; by whom is designed not any work of his upon the heart, nor any of his gifts and graces; but he himself in person, even the same Spirit of God that moved upon the face of the waters at the creation of the world, and moved holy men of God to write the Scriptures; who formed and filled the human nature of Christ, and descended on him as a dove; and by whom Christ and his apostles wrought their miracles; and who is called the Spirit of his Son; as he is frequently by the Jews {g},
xyvm Klm lv wxwr, "the Spirit of the King Messiah"; and sometimes {h}

hyrmym xwr, "the Spirit of his word", the essential word of God; because he proceeds from him as from the Father, and because he dwells in him, in an eminent manner, as Mediator, and is sent by virtue of his mediation and intercession; and he is the rather mentioned under this character, because adoption proceeds upon the natural sonship of Christ, and is what is the peculiar office of the Spirit to testify. When he is said to be "sent", it does not suppose any local motion or change of place in him, who is a spirit infinite, immense, and omnipresent; nor any inferiority to the Father that sends him, or to the Son whose Spirit he is; for he is one God with the Father and Son, and with the Father is the sender of Christ,
Isa 48:16, but it regards his peculiar office in this affair of adoption, by agreement of all the three persons; the Father predestinated to it, the Son redeems, that it might be received, and the Spirit is sent to discover, apply, and bear witness to it; which is a wondrous instance of the grace of God. The place where he is sent is "into" the "heart": where he is as a principle of spiritual life, and which he furnishes and supplies with all grace; where he dwells as in his temple, and is the evidence of God's dwelling there, and also of interest in Christ; is there as a pledge and an earnest of future glory; and the whole is a surprising instance of condescending grace. The work he does there is various, and consists of divers parts; as convincing of sin, and righteousness, working faith, and acting the part of a comforter; but what is here referred to, is the discharge of his office as a spirit of adoption, "crying Abba, Father". The word Abba is an Hebrew, or rather a Syriac or Chaldee word, signifying "father"; and which is added for explanation sake; and its repetition may denote the vehemency of filial affection, the strength of faith and confidence as to interest in the relation; and being expressed both in Hebrew and Greek, may show that God is the Father both of Jews and Gentiles, and that there is but one Father of all; and if it might not be thought too curious an observation, it may be remarked that the word "Abba", read backwards or forwards, is the same pronunciation, and may teach us that God is the Father of his people in adversity as well as in prosperity. The act of "crying", though it is here ascribed to the Spirit, yet is not properly his, but the believers; and is attributed to him because he excites, encourages, and assists them as a spirit of adoption to call God their Father; and may be understood both of the secret internal crying of the soul, or exercise of faith on God as its Father, and of an open outward invocation of him as such, with much confidence, freedom, and boldness.

{g} Bereshit Rabba, fol. 2. 4. & 6. 3. Vajikra Rabba, fol. 156. 4.
See Gill on "Ro 8:9". {h} Targum in 2 Chron. ii. 6.

Galatians 4:7

Ver. 7. Wherefore thou art no more a servant,.... This is a benefit resulting from adoption, and the manifestation of it to the children of God, and supposes them to have been formerly servants; as whilst in a natural state they were the servants of sin, the vassals of Satan, slaves to the world, and the lusts of it, and in bondage to the law; but now being declared to be the sons of God under the witnessings of the Spirit, they are freed from the servitude of sin, from the captivity of Satan, from the slavery of the world, and particularly from the law, and that spirit of bondage which it brought upon them, which is chiefly designed; and from which they are delivered by the spirit of adoption, enabling and encouraging them to cry "Abba", Father; so that they are now no more under the former servile spirit, the spirit of a servant,

but a son; whose spirit, state, and case, are vastly different from those of a servant: the servant has not that interest in his master's affections as the son has; nor that liberty of access to him; nor is he fed and clothed as he is, or shares in the same privileges he does; nor is his obedience performed in the same free generous manner, from a principle of love and gratitude, but in a servile and mercenary way; and though he may expect his wages, he cannot hope for the inheritance; nor does he always abide in the house as the son does. He that is once a son, is always so, and no more a servant: predestination to sonship is immutable; it is God's act to put any among the children, and none can put them out; the covenant of grace, in which this blessing is secured, is unalterable; union with Christ, the Son of God, on which it is founded, is indissoluble; the spirit of adoption, wherever he witnesses, abides as such. They that are the sons of God may be corrected and chastised, as they often are, in a fatherly way; but these corrections are proofs for, and not against their sonship; they may indeed judge themselves unworthy to be called the sons of God, and may be in such frames of soul as to conclude, at least fear, they are not; but still the relation abides, and ever will. They will never more be servants, but always sons. The very learned Mr. Selden {i} thinks the apostle alludes to a custom among the Jews, who allowed only freemen, and not servants and handmaids, to call any Abba, Father such an one, or "Imma", Mother such an one: but this seems to proceed upon a mistaken sense, and rendering of a passage in the Talmud {k}, which is as follows, tynwlp amaw ynwlp aba Mtwa Nyrwq Nya twxpvw Mydbe; which he thus renders, "neither servants nor handmaids use this kind of appellation, Abba", or "Father such an one", and "Imma", or "Mother such an one"; whereas it should be rendered, "servants and handmaids, they do not call them Abba, Father such an one", and "Imma, Mother such an one"; this is clear from what follows. "The Family of "R. Gamaliel" used to call them Father such an one, and Mother such an one"; which in the other Talmud {l} is, "the family of" R. Gamaliel "used to call their servants and their handmaids Father Tabi, and Mother Tabitha"; which were the names of the servant and handmaid of Gamaliel. Rather therefore reference is had to a tradition {m} of theirs, that

"a servant, who is carried captive, when others redeemed him, if under the notion of a servant, or in order to be one, he becomes a servant; but if under the notion of a freeman, dbetvy al, "he is no more a servant"."

Or to the general expectation of that people, that when they are redeemed by the Messiah, they shall be servants no more; for so they say {n},

"your fathers, though they were redeemed, became servants again, but you, when ye are redeemed,
Nydbetvm Mta Nya dwe, "shall be no more servants";"

which in a spiritual sense is true of all that are redeemed by Christ, and through that redemption receive the adoption of children, and is what the apostle here means.

And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ; which is another benefit arising from adoption. Such as are the children of God, they are heirs of God himself; he is their portion and exceeding great reward; his perfections are on their side, and engaged for their good; all his purposes run the same way, and all his promises belong to them; they are heirs of all the blessings of grace and glory, of righteousness, of life, of salvation, and a kingdom and glory; and shall inherit all things, and all "through Christ": he is the grand heir of all things; they are joint heirs with him; their sonship is through him, and so is their heirship and inheritance; their inheritance is in his possession, it is reserved safe in him; and by him, and with him they shall enjoy it. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, only read, "an heir through God", and so the Vulgate Latin version; and the Ethiopic version only, "an heir of God".

{i} De Successionibus ad Leg. Ebr. c. 4. p. 33. {k} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 16. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilch. Nechalot, c. 4. sect. 5. {l} T. Hieros. Niddah, fol. 49. 2. Vid. Massech. Semachet, c. 1. sect. 13. {m} Misn. Gittin, c. 4. sect. 4. {n} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 37. 2.

Galatians 4:8

Ver. 8. Howbeit then, when ye know not God,.... Whilst in Gentilism, and in a state of unregeneracy, they had no true knowledge of God; though they might know by the light of nature, and works of creation, that there was a God, yet they did not know who he was, but called either mortal men, or some one or other of the creatures, or stocks, and stones, and images of men's device, by this name; they knew not the God of Israel; they did not know God in Christ, and are therefore said to be without him; and a common description of them it is, that they knew not God: and whilst this was their case, what follows was true of them,

ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods; only by name, and in the opinion of men, but have no divinity in them, are only called gods, mere nominal, fictitious deities, who have nothing of the nature and essence of God in them; for there is but one God by nature and essence, the Father, Son, and Spirit; all others have only the name and appearance, but not the truth of deity; and these the Gentiles in their times of ignorance did "service" to, which is what the Jews call hrz hdwbe, "strange service"; that is, idolatry, concerning which there is a whole treatise in the Talmud, and which bears that name {o}. This service lay in paying homage to them, worshipping of them, and performing various rites and ceremonies in a way of adoration, and which they reckoned religious service; and which, comparatively speaking, whilst in this state of blindness, was excusable in them; though it is a wonderful instance of grace that such idolaters should be the sons of God.

{o} Aveda Zara.

Galatians 4:9

Ver. 9. But now, after that ye have known God, &c,] God in Christ, as their covenant God and Father, through the preaching of the Gospel, and in the light of divine grace; God having caused light to shine in their dark hearts; and having given them the light of the knowledge of himself in the face of Christ, and having sent down into their hearts the Spirit of his Son, crying "Abba", Father.

Or rather are known of God; for it is but little that the best of these, that have the greatest share of knowledge, know of him; and what knowledge they have, they have it first, originally, and wholly from him: that knowledge which he has of them is particular, distinct, and complete; and is to be understood, not of his omniscience in general, so all men are known by him; but of his special knowledge, joined with affection, approbation, and care: and the meaning is, that they were loved by him with an everlasting love, which had been manifested in their conversion, in the drawing of them to himself, and to his Son; that he approved of them, delighted in them, had an exact knowledge, and took special care of them: but, oh, folly and ingratitude!

how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage? meaning the ordinances of the ceremonial law, he before calls "the elements of the world", and here "weak", because they could not give life, righteousness, peace, joy, comfort, and salvation; and, since the coming of Christ, were become impotent to all the uses they before served; and beggarly, because they lay in the observation of mean things, as meats, drinks, &c. and which were only shadows of those good things, the riches of grace and glory, which come by Christ. The Galatians are said to turn again to these; not that they were before in the observation of them, except the Jews, but because there was some likeness between these, and the ceremonies with which they carried on the service of their idols; and by showing an inclination to them, they discovered a good will to come into a like state of bondage they were in before; than which nothing could be more stupid and ungrateful in a people that had been blessed with so much grace, and with such clear Gospel light and knowledge.

Galatians 4:10

Ver. 10. Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. Lest the apostle should be thought to suggest, without foundation, the inclination of these people to be in bondage to the ceremonies of the law, he gives this as an instance of it; which is to be understood, not of a civil observation of times, divided into days, months, and years, for which the luminaries of the heavens were made, and into summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, which is not only lawful, but absolutely necessary; but of a religious observation of days, &c. not of the lucky and unlucky days, or of any of the festivals of the Gentiles, but of Jewish ones. By "days" are meant their seventh day sabbaths; for since they are distinguished from months and years, they must mean such days as returned weekly; and what else can they be but their weekly sabbaths? These were peculiar to the Israelites, and not binding on others; and being typical of Christ, the true rest of his people, and he being come, are now ceased. By "months" are designed their new moons, or the beginning of their months upon the appearance of a new moon, which were kept by blowing trumpets, offering sacrifices, hearing the word of God, abstaining from work, and holding religious feasts; and were typical of that light, knowledge, and grace, the church receives from Christ, the sun of righteousness; and he, the substance, being come, these shadows disappeared. By "times" are intended the three times in the year, when the Jewish males appeared before the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the three feasts of tabernacles, passover, and pentecost, for the observance of which there was now no reason; not of the feast of tabernacles, since the word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us; nor of the passover, since Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us; nor of pentecost, or the feast of weeks, or of the first fruits of the harvest, since the Spirit of God was poured down in a plenteous manner on that day upon the apostles; and when the firstfruits of a glorious harvest were brought in to the Lord, in the conversion of three thousand souls. And by "years" are to be understood their sabbatical years; every seventh year the land had a rest, and remained untilled; there were no ploughing and sowing, and there was a general release of debtors; and every fiftieth year was a jubilee to the Lord, when liberty to servants, debtors, &c. was proclaimed throughout the land: all which were typical of rest, payment of debts, and spiritual liberty by Christ; and which having their accomplishment in him, were no longer to be observed; wherefore these Galatians are blamed for so doing; and the more, because they were taught to observe them, in order to obtain eternal life and salvation by them.

Galatians 4:11

Ver. 11. I am afraid of you,.... Which shows the danger he apprehended they were in, by taking such large steps from Christianity to Judaism, and expresses the godly jealousy of the apostle over them; intimates he had some hope of them, and in the whole declares his great love and affection for them; for love is a thing full of care and fear:

lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain; in preaching the Gospel among them with so much diligence and constancy, though so many afflictions and pressures lay upon him. Faithful ministers of the word are laborious ones; and such an one was the apostle; and who indeed laboured more abundantly than the rest in all places wherever he came; and such will be concerned, as he was, lest their labours should be in vain, not to themselves, but to the souls of others, whose everlasting good and welfare they are seeking. But how is it that the apostle should fear that his labour in preaching the Gospel would be in vain, and become of no effect through their observance of days, months, times, and years? because that hereby the pure spiritual and evangelic worship of God was corrupted, they bringing into it that which God had removed, and so became guilty of will worship; their Christian liberty was infringed, and they brought into bondage, a deliverance from which the Gospel proclaims; the doctrine of free grace in pardon, justification, and salvation, was made void, they observing these things in order to procure them thereby; and it was virtually and tacitly saying, that Christ was not come in the flesh, which is the main article of the Gospel; for since these things had respect to him, and were to continue no longer than till his coming, to keep on the observation of them, was declaring that he was not come; which is in effect to set aside the whole Gospel, and the ministration of it; so that the apostle might justly fear, that by such a proceeding all his labour, and the pains he had took to preach the Gospel, and salvation by Christ unto them, would be in vain.

Galatians 4:12

Ver. 12. Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am,.... Though they had gone so far backwards, yet still hoping well of them that they would he reclaimed, he styles them "brethren": not in a carnal but spiritual relation, as being born of God, and belonging to his family; and out of his sincere and hearty love for them as his brethren in Christ, he exhorts them to be as he was; which some understand of affection, as desiring them to show the same love to him as to themselves, that he might be to them as another I, as a part of themselves; so true friendship makes, and true friends look upon each other to be, as Jonathan and David, and the first Christians were, of one heart and soul. But this phrase rather seems to have regard to likeness and imitation; and the sense is, that he would have them to be as he was, and do as he did; to be as free from the law, and the servitude and bondage of it, as he was; to reckon themselves dead unto it, as he did; and to relinquish the observance of days, and months, and times, and years, and any and every part of the ceremonial law, and to account all these things, as he had done, loss and dung for Christ; and this he presses, not in an authoritative way, laying his commands as an apostle upon them, but in a kind and gentle manner entreating them: and which he backs with the following reason or argument,

for I am as ye are; as your very selves; I have the same love for you, you have for yourselves; I love you as I do myself; this way go such interpreters that understand the exhortation to regard love and affection: but rather the meaning is, be as I am, and do as I do, "because I was as you are"; so the Syriac and Arabic versions read the words. Some think that the apostle particularly addresses the Jews in these churches; and that his sense is, that he was born a Jew, as they were, was brought up in the Jewish religion, and in the observance of these things, as they had been, and yet he had relinquished them, therefore would have them do so likewise: or rather his intention is, that he had been as zealous for the observation of the ceremonial law, and all the rituals of it, as they now were; and though he was a Jew by birth, and had had a Jewish education, and so had been prejudiced in favour of these things, yet he had renounced them all; and therefore they who were Gentiles, and were never under obligation to them, should never think of coming into bondage by them; and since he had accommodated himself to them, and had become all things to all, that he might gain some, whether Jews or Gentiles, so he hoped they would condescend to him, and follow his example: or this may have respect, not to his former but present state, according to our version; and the sense be, I am as you are, and you are as I am with respect to things spiritual; we are both alike in Christ, chosen in him, and redeemed by him; are equally regenerated by his Spirit, and are all the children of God by faith in him, and no more servants; are all equally Christ's free men, and have a right to the same privileges and immunities; and therefore be as I am, as free from observing the ceremonies of the law, and so from the bondage of it, since we are upon an equal foot, and upon the same foundation in Christ.

Ye have not injured me at all; what injury they had done was to God, whose will it was that these things should be abolished; and to Christ, who had broken down the middle wall of partition; and to the Gospel, which proclaimed liberty to the captives; and to their own souls, by entangling themselves with the yoke of bondage; but no personal private injury was done to the apostle by their compliance with the law. This he says, lest they should think that he spoke out of anger and resentment, and on account of any personal affront offered to him; which leads him to take notice of their former kindness and respect to him, and which he designs as a reason why they should pay the same deference to him now as then.

Galatians 4:13

Ver. 13. Ye know how, through infirmity of the flesh,.... Meaning either their infirmity, to which the apostle accommodated himself in preaching the Gospel to them, delivering it in such a manner as suited with their capacities, feeding them with milk, and not with strong meat; or his own infirmity, respecting either some particular bodily infirmity and disorder, as the headache, with which he is said to be greatly troubled; or the weakness of his bodily presence, the mean outward appearance he made, the contemptibleness of his voice, and the great humility with which he behaved; or rather the many reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions which attended him, when, says he,

I preached the Gospel unto you at the first; not the law, but the Gospel; and this he did at his first entrance among them, and was the first that preached it to them, and was the means of their conversion; and therefore, being their spiritual Father, they ought to be as he was, and follow him as they had him for an example.

Galatians 4:14

Ver. 14. And my temptation which was in my flesh,.... The same with the infirmity of his flesh, and which was a trial of his faith and patience, and every other grace, as the afflictions of the saints be. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "your temptation in my flesh"; that which was a trial of them, whether they would receive him or not. This

ye despised not; nor the apostle on the account of it, nor his ministry; they thought never the worse of him, nor of the Gospel he preached, because of this:

nor rejected; him, nor the counsel of God declared by him,

but received me; as they did, into their cities and places of worship, into their houses, and into their hearts and affections: and that

as an angel of God; with all that reverence and respect, that high esteem, veneration, and affection, as if one of the celestial inhabitants had been sent down from heaven to bring them the good tidings of the Gospel: or "as a messenger of God", as the phrase may be rendered: as one that had his mission and commission from God, which was not at all disputed by them: but they looked upon him under that character, and regarded him as such,

even as Christ Jesus; as his ambassador, as representing him, as being in his stead; yea, if he had been personally present as man among them, they could not have shown greater respect to him as such, than they did to the apostle; for as for any religious worship and adoration, that they did not offer to him; and had they, he would have addressed them in like manner he did the inhabitants of Lystra, Ac 14:14. Now since they showed him so much respect, notwithstanding all his infirmities, temptations, and afflictions, when he first preached the Gospel; what should hinder that they should not pay the same regard to him now, by abiding in his doctrine and following his example, since he was the same man in his principles and practices now as then?

Galatians 4:15

Ver. 15. Where is then the blessedness you spake of?.... Or, as some copies read, "what was then your blessedness?" what, and how great was it? meaning, when the Gospel was first preached to them by him; when Christ was revealed to them as God's salvation; when the doctrines of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, and full pardon by his atonement and satisfaction by his sacrifice, were published among them; when the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts, and the Spirit of Christ was sent thither, crying "Abba", Father: but, alas! where was this blessedness now, since they were turning to the weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law, and were inclined to observe its ordinances, and bring themselves hereby into a state of bondage? They were happy persons while under the ministry of the apostle; as a Gospel ministry is a great happiness to any that enjoy it; for this is the way to find eternal life, to have spiritual peace and pleasure, joy and comfort, light and liberty, whereas a contrary doctrine leads to all the reverse. The apostle hereby puts them in mind how they were looked upon as happy persons by himself at that time, whom they received with so much respect and reverence, and his ministry with so much readiness and cheerfulness, and to so much profit and advantage; and also by other churches who were sensible of the high favour they enjoyed, by having so great a preacher of the Gospel among them; and even at that time they thought themselves the happiest persons in the world, and that they could not have been more so, unless they had had Christ himself in person among them; so beautiful were the feet of this bringer of glad tidings to them:

for I bear you record, that if it had been possible ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me; so fully persuaded was the apostle of their strong and sincere affection for him at that time, that he was ready to attest the truth of this in any form to any persons; that were it a possible thing for them, and could it have been of any advantage to him, they would even have plucked out their eyes, than which nothing is dearer, or more useful to a man, and have parted with them to him, and for his sake; and doubtless persons so affected would cheerfully have laid down their lives for him; but things had taken another turn since.

Galatians 4:16

Ver. 16. Am I therefore become your enemy,.... Not that he was an enemy to them, he had the same cordial affection for them as ever; he had their true interest at heart, and was diligently pursuing it; but they, through the insinuations of the false teachers, had entertained an ill opinion of him, and an aversion to him, and treated him as if he had been an enemy to them, and as if they had a real hatred of him: and that for no other reason, as he observes, but

because I tell you the truth; the Gospel so called, because it comes from the God of truth, is concerned with Christ, who is truth itself, and is dictated, revealed, and blessed by the Spirit of truth; and is opposed unto, and is distinct from the law, which is only an image and shadow, and not truth itself: it chiefly respects the great truths of salvation alone by Christ, and justification by his righteousness; and may also regard what he had said concerning the abrogation of the law, blaming them for the observance of it, and calling its institutions weak and beggarly elements; all which he told or spoke publicly, plainly, honestly, fully, and faithfully, boldly, constantly, and with all assurance, consistently, and in pure love to their souls; and yet it brought on him their anger and resentment. Telling the truth in such a manner often brings many enemies to the ministers of Christ; not only the men of the world, profane sinners, but professors of religion, and sometimes such who once loved and admired them.

Galatians 4:17

Ver. 17. They zealously affect you,.... Or "are jealous of you"; meaning the false apostles, whose names, in contempt, he mentions not, being unworthy to be taken notice of, and their names to be transmitted to posterity. These were jealous of them, not with a godly jealousy, as the apostle was, lest their minds should be corrupted from the simplicity of the Gospel; but they were jealous, lest they should love the apostle more than they, and therefore represented him in a very bad light, and expressed great love and kindness for them themselves:

but not well; their zeal and affection were not hearty, and sincere, and without dissimulation, but were all feigned, were only in word and in tongue, not in deed, and in truth: this zealous affection neither proceeded from right principles, nor with right views; they sought themselves, and their own carnal worldly interest, their own pleasure and profit, and not the good and welfare of the souls of these Galatians:

yea, they would exclude you; that is, either from the apostle, from bearing any love unto, and having any respect for him. What they were wishing and seeking for was to draw off the minds and affections of these persons from him; or they were desirous of removing them from the Gospel of Christ unto another Gospel, and did all they could to hinder them from obeying the truth; and particularly were for shutting them out of their Christian liberty, and bringing them under the bondage of the law; yea, were for separating them from the churches, that they might set up themselves at the head of them. Some copies read "us", instead of "you"; and then the meaning is, that they were desirous of excluding the apostle from their company, and from having any share in their affections, which makes little alteration in the sense: and others, instead of "exclude", read "include"; and which is confirmed by the Syriac version, which renders the word Nwkvbxml, "but they would include you"; that is, either they would include, or imprison you under the law, and the bondage of it; or they would monopolize you, and engross all your love to themselves; and which is also the sense of the Arabic version:

that you might affect them; love them, show respect to them, be on their side, follow their directions, imbibe their doctrines, and give up yourselves wholly to their care, and be at their call and command.

Galatians 4:18

Ver. 18. But it is good to be zealously affected,.... A zealous affection when right is very commendable, as the instances of Phinehas, Elijah, John the Baptist, and our Lord Jesus Christ show, and a contrary spirit is very disagreeable. But then it must be expressed

in a good thing; in a good cause, for God, and the things of Christ; for the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, and for the discipline of God's house, and against immorality and profaneness, errors and heresies: and it should be "always"; not at certain times, and upon some particular accounts, but it should be constant, and always continue; it should be ever the same towards God, Christ, and his ministers:

and not only when I am present with you; by which the apostle suggests, that while he was with them they were zealously attached to him and truth; but no sooner was he gone from them, but their zealous affection abated, and was fixed on others, which discovered their weakness, fickleness, and inconstancy; whereas he was always the same to them, and bore the same love to them, as the following words show.

Galatians 4:19

Ver. 19. My little children,.... A soft and tender way of speaking, used by Christ to his disciples, and frequently by that affectionate and beloved disciple, John. It is expressive of the apostle's strong love and affection for them, and points out their tenderness in the faith, and that small degree of spiritual light and knowledge they had, as well as signifies that he had been, as he hoped, and in a judgment of charity believed, an instrument of their conversion, and was their spiritual parent: hence it follows,

of whom I travail in birth again; he compares himself to a woman with child, as the church in bringing forth souls to Christ sometimes is; and all his pains and labours in the ministry of the word to the sorrows of a woman during the time of childbearing, and at the birth. When he first came among them, he laboured exceedingly; he preached the Gospel in season, and out of season; he followed his indefatigable endeavours with importunate prayers; and his ministry among them was attended with much weakness of body, and with many reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, comparable to the birth throes of a woman in travail: however, as he hoped he was the means of their being born again, of the turning of them from Heathenism to Christianity, and from serving idols to serve the living God, and believe in his Son Jesus Christ; but the false apostles coming among them had so strangely wrought upon them, and they were so much gone back and degenerated, that they seemed to be like so many abortions, or as an unformed foetus; wherefore he laboured again with all his might and main, by writing to them, using arguments with them, sometimes giving them good words, at other times rough ones, and fervently praying for them, if possible, to recover them from Judaism, to which they were inclined, to the pure Gospel of Christ.

Until Christ be formed in you; which is the same as to be created in Christ, to be made new creatures, or new men in him; or, in other words, to have the principle of grace wrought in the soul, which goes by the name of Christ formed in the heart; because it is from him, he is the author of it, and it bears a resemblance to him, and is that by which he lives, dwells, and reigns in the souls of his people. Now though, as he hoped, this new man, new creature, or

Christ, was formed in them before, when he first preached the Gospel to them; yet it was not a perfect man; particularly their knowledge of Christ, of his Gospel, and Gospel liberty, was far from being so, in which they went backwards instead of forwards; and therefore he was greatly concerned, laboured exceedingly, and vehemently endeavoured, which he calls travailing in birth again, to bring them to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. It is also the same as to be conformed to the image of Christ, which in regeneration is stamped upon the saints, and is gradually increased, and will be perfected in heaven; and that this might more manifestly appear, over which a veil was drawn, by their departure in any degree from the truths of the Gospel, was what he earnestly sought after: once more, it is the same as to have the form of Christ; that is, of the Gospel of Christ upon them, or to be cast into the form of doctrine, and mould of the Gospel, and to receive a Gospel impression and spirit from it; which is to have a spirit of liberty, in opposition to legal bondage; to live by faith on Christ, and not on the works of the law; to derive comfort alone from him, and not from any services and duties whatever; to have repentance, and the whole course of obedience, influenced by the grace of God, and love of Christ; and to be zealous of good works, and yet have no dependence on them for justification and salvation. This is what the apostle so earnestly desired, when, instead of it, these Galatians seemed to have the form of Moses, and of the law.

Galatians 4:20

Ver. 20. I desire to be present with you now,.... His meaning is, either that be wished he was personally present among them; that he had but an opportunity of seeing them face to face, and telling them all his mind, and in such a manner as he could not in a single epistle; or that they would consider him, when they read this epistle, as if he was really among them; and as if they saw the concern of his mind, the agonies of his soul, the looks of his countenance, and heard the different tone of his voice:

and to change my voice; when present with them, either by a different way of preaching; that whereas before he preached the Gospel of the grace of God unto them, and his voice was charming to them like that of an angel, and even of Jesus Christ himself; but they having turned their backs upon it, and slighted it, he would now thunder out the law to them they seemed to be so fond of; even that voice of words, which when, the Israelites on Mount Sinai heard, entreated they might hear no more; as these Galatians also must when they heard the true voice of it, which is no other than a declaration of wrath, curse, and damnation; or by using a different way of speaking to them, as necessity might require, either softly or roughly, beseeching or chiding them, which might more move and affect them than an epistle could:

for I stand in doubt of you, The Vulgate Latin reads it, "I am confounded in you"; and the Syriac, hymtd, "I am stupefied"; and to the same sense the Arabic. He was ashamed of them for their apostasy and degeneracy; he was amazed and astonished at their conduct; or, as the word may be rendered, be was "perplexed" on their account; he did not know what to think of them, and their state; sometimes he hoped well of them, at other times he was ready to despair; nor did he well know what course to take with them, whether to use them roughly or smoothly, and what arguments might be most proper and pertinent, in order to reclaim them.

Galatians 4:21

Ver. 21. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law,.... Not merely to obey it, as holy, just, and good, from a principle of love, and to testify subjection and gratitude to God; so all believers desire to bc under the law: but these men sought for justification and salvation by their obedience to it: they desired to be under it as a covenant of works, which was downright madness and folly to the last degree, since this was the way to come under the curse of it; they wanted to be under the yoke of the law, which is a yoke of bondage, an insupportable one, which the Jewish fathers could not bear; and therefore it was egregious weakness in them to desire to come under it: wherefore the apostle desires them to answer this question,

do ye not hear the law? meaning either the language and voice of the law of Moses, what it says to transgressors, and so to them; what it accused them of, and charged them with; how it declared them guilty before God, pronounced them accursed, and, ministered sententially condemnation and death unto them; and could they desire to be under such a law? or rather the books of the Old Testament, particularly the five books of Moses, and what is said therein; referring them, as Christ did the Jews, to the Scriptures, to the writings of Moses, and to read, hear, and observe what is in them, since they professed so great a regard to the law; from whence they might learn, that they ought not to be under the bondage and servitude of it. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "have ye not read the law?" and so one of Stephens's copies; that is, the books of the law; if you have, as you should, you might observe what follows.

Galatians 4:22

Ver. 22. For it is written,.... In Ge 16:15

that Abraham had two sons, not two sons only; for besides the two referred to, he had six more, Ge 25:2 but it being only pertinent to the apostle's purpose to take notice of these two, he mentions no more, though he does not deny that he had any more. These two sons were Ishmael and Isaac:

the one by a bondmaid. Ishmael was by Hagar, Sarah's servant, who represented the covenant the Jewish nation was under the bondage of.

The other by a free woman. Isaac was by Sarah, Abraham's proper and lawful wife, who was mistress of the family, and represented in figure the covenant, and Gospel church state, and all believers, Gentiles as well as Jews, as under the liberty thereof.

Galatians 4:23

Ver. 23. But he who was of the bondwoman,.... Ishmael, who was begotten and born of Hagar,

was born after the flesh; after the common order and course of nature, through the copulation of two persons, the one able to procreate, and the other fit for the conception of children; and was typical of the Jews, the natural descendants of Abraham, who, as such, and upon that account, were not the children of God, nor heirs of the eternal inheritance:

but he of the free woman was by promise; by a previous promise made by God to Abraham, that he should have a son in his old age, when his body was now dead, and when Sarah his wife, who had always been barren, was now grown old, and past the time of bearing children; so that Isaac was born out of the common order and course of nature; his conception and birth were owing to the promise and power of God, and to his free grace and favour to Abraham. This son of promise was a type of the spiritual seed of Abraham, whether Jews or Gentiles, the children of the promise that are counted for the seed; who are born again of the will, power, and grace of God, and are heirs, according to the promise, both of grace and glory, when they that are of the law, and the works of it, are not. All which is further illustrated in the following verses.

Galatians 4:24

Ver. 24. Which things are an allegory,.... Or "are allegorized": so Sarah and Hagar were allegorized by Philo the Jew {p}, before they were by the apostle. Sarah he makes to signify virtue, and Hagar the whole circle of arts and sciences, which are, or should be, an handmaid to virtue; but these things respecting Hagar and Sarah, the bondwoman and the free, and their several offspring, are much better allegorized by the apostle here. An allegory is a way of speaking in which one thing is expressed by another, and is a continued metaphor; and the apostle's meaning is, that these things point at some other things; have another meaning in them, a mystical and spiritual one, besides the literal; and which the Jews call
vrdm, "Midrash", a name they give to the mystical and allegorical sense of Scripture, in which they greatly indulge themselves. An allegory is properly a fictitious way of speaking; but here it designs an accommodation of a real history, and matter of fact, to other cases and things, and seems to intend a type or figure; and the sense to be, that these things which were literally true of Hagar and Sarah, of Ishmael and Isaac, were types and figures of things to come; just as what befell the Israelites were types and figures of things that would be under the Gospel dispensation, 1Co 10:11

for these are the two covenants, or "testaments"; that is, these women, Hagar and Sarah, signify, and are figures of the two covenants; not the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace. Hagar was no figure of the covenant of works, that was made and broke before she was born; besides, the covenant she was a figure of was made at Mount Sinai, whereas the covenant of works was made in paradise: moreover, the covenant of works was made with Adam, and all his posterity, but the covenant which Hagar signified was only made with the children of Israel; she represented Jerusalem, that then was with her children. Nor was Sarah a figure of the covenant of grace, for this was made long before she had a being, even from everlasting; but they were figures of the two administrations of one and the same covenant, which were to take place in the world successively; and which following one the other, are by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews called the first and the second, the old and the new covenants. Now these are the covenants or testaments, the old and the new, and the respective people under them, which were prefigured by these two women, and their offspring.

The one from the Mount Sinai; that is, one of these covenants, or one of the administrations of the covenant, one dispensation of it, which is the first, and now called old, because abolished, took its rise from Mount Sinai, was delivered there by God to Moses, in order to be communicated to the people of Israel, who were to be under that form of administration until the coming of the Messiah. And because the whole Mosaic economy was given to Moses on Mount Sinai, it is said to be from thence: hence, in Jewish writings, we read, times without number, of ynyom hvml hklh, a rite, custom, constitution, or appointment given to Moses "from Mount Sinai", the same phrase as here. Sinai signifies "bushes", and has its name from the bushes which grew upon if, {q}; in one of which the Lord appeared to Moses; for Horeb and Sinai are one and the same mount; one signifies waste and desolate, the other bushy; as one part of the mountain was barren and desert, and the other covered with bushes and brambles; and may fitly represent the condition of such that are under the law.

Which gendereth to bondage; begets and brings persons into a state of bondage, induces on them a spirit of bondage to fear, and causes them to be all their lifetime subject to it; as even such were that were under the first covenant, or under the Old Testament dispensation:

which is Agar; or this is the covenant, the administration of it, which Hagar, the bondwoman, Sarah's servant, represented.

{p} De Cherubim, p. 108, 109. {q} Pirke Eliezer, c. 41.

Galatians 4:25

Ver. 25. For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia,.... The Arabic version, instead of Arabia, reads "Balca". The Syriac version makes Hagar to be a mountain, reading the words thus, "for Mount Hagar is Sinai, which is in Arabia": and some have been of opinion that Sinai was called Hagar by the Arabians. It is certain, that rgx, which may be pronounced Hagar, does signify in the Arabic language a stone or rock; and that one part of Arabia is called Arabia Petraea, from the rockiness of it; the metropolis of which was trgx, or "Agara", and the inhabitants Agarenes; and Hagar was the name of the chief city of Bahrein, a province of Arabia {r}: and it may be observed, that when Hagar, with her son, was cast out, they dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, Ge 21:21 which was near to Sinai, as appears from
Nu 10:12 so that it is possible that this mount might be so called from her,

though there is no certainty of it; and near to it, as Grotius observes, was a town called Agra, mentioned by Pliny {s} as in Arabia. However, it is clear, that Sinai was in Arabia, out of the land of promise, where the law was given, and seems to be mentioned by the apostle with this view, that it might be observed, and teach us that the inheritance is not of the law. It is placed by Jerom {t} in the land of Midian; and it is certain it must be near it, if not in it, as is clear from **Ex 3:1**. And according to Philo the Jew {u}, the Midianites, as formerly called, were a very populous nation of the Arabians: and Madian, or Midian, is by {w} Mahomet spoken of as in Arabia; and it may be observed, that they that are called Midianites in Ge 37:36 are said to be Ishmaelites, Ge 39:1 the name by which the Arabians are commonly called by the Jews. The apostle therefore properly places this mountain in Arabia. But after all, by Agar, I rather think the woman is meant: and that the sense is, that this same Agar signifies Mount Sinai, or is a figure of the law given on that mount.

And answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children; that is, agrees with and resembles the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of all the cities and towns in Judea; and she, being a bondwoman, represented that state of bondage the Jews were in, when the apostle wrote this, who were in a state of civil, moral, and legal bondage; in civil bondage to the Romans, being tributaries to the empire of Rome, and under the jurisdiction of Caesar; in moral bondage to sin, to Satan, to the world and the lusts of it, whose servants they in general were; and in legal bondage to the ceremonial law, which was a yoke of bondage: they were in bondage under the elements or institutions of it, such as circumcision, a yoke which neither they, nor their forefathers could bear, because it bound them over to keep the whole law; the observance of various days, months, times, and years, and the multitude of sacrifices they were obliged to offer, which yet could not take away sin, nor free their consciences from the load of guilt, but were as an handwriting of ordinances against them; every sacrifice they brought declaring their sin and guilt, and that they deserved to die as the creature did that was sacrificed for them; and besides, this law of commandments, in various instances, the breach of it was punishable with death, through fear of which they were all their life long subject to bondage: they were also in bondage to the moral law, which required perfect obedience of them, but gave them no strength to perform; showed them their sin and misery, but not their remedy; demanded a complete righteousness, but did not point out where it was to be had; it spoke not one word of peace and comfort, but all the reverse; it admitted of no repentance; it accused of sin, pronounced guilty on account of it, cursed, condemned, and threatened with death for it, all which kept them in continual bondage: and whereas the far greater part of that people at that time, the Jerusalem that then was, the Scribes, Pharisees, and generality of the nation, were seeking for justification by the works of the law, this added to their bondage; they obeyed it with mercenary views, and not from love but fear; and their comforts and peace rose and fell according to their obedience; and persons in such a way must needs be under a spiritual bondage.

{r} Castel. Lex. Polyglot. col. 804. {s} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28. {t} De locis Hebraicis, fol. 96. H. {u} De Fortitudine, p. 741. {w} Koran, c. 7. p. 126.

Galatians 4:26

Ver. 26. But Jerusalem which is above,.... This Sarah was a type and figure of; she answered to, and agreed with this; which is to be understood, not of the church triumphant in heaven, but of the Gospel church state under the administration of the new covenant; and that, not as in the latter day glory, when the new Jerusalem shall descend from God out of heaven, but as it then was in the apostle's time, and has been since. Particular respect may be had to the first Gospel church at Jerusalem, which consisted of persons born from above, was blessed with a Gospel spirit, which is a spirit of liberty, out of which the Gospel went into all the world, and from among whom the apostles and first preachers of the word went forth everywhere, and were the means of the conversion of multitudes, both among Jews and Gentiles, and so might be truly said to be the mother of us all. The church in general, under the Gospel, may be, as it often is, called Jerusalem, because of its name, the vision of peace; being under the government of the Prince of peace; the members of it are sons of peace, who are called to peace, and enjoy it; the Gospel is the Gospel of peace, and the ordinances of it are paths of peace; and the new covenant, under the administration of which the saints are, is a covenant of peace. Jerusalem was the object of God's choice, the palace of the great King, the place of divine worship, was compact together, and well fortified: the Gospel church state consists of persons, who, in general, are the elect of God, among whom the Lord dwells, as in his temple. Here his worship is observed, his word is preached, and his ordinances administered; saints laid on the foundation, Christ, and being fitly framed together, grow up unto an holy temple in him, and are surrounded by him, as Jerusalem was with mountains, and are kept by his power unto salvation. This is said to be above, to distinguish it from the earthly Jerusalem, the inhabitants of which were chiefly men of the world, carnal men; but this heavenly Jerusalem, or Gospel church state, chiefly consists of persons born from above, called with an heavenly calling, and who bear the image of the heavenly one, whose conversation is in heaven, who are seeking things above, and in a little time will be there themselves; its constitution and form of government are from above, and so are its doctrines, and its ordinances. The Jews often Speak of alyeld Mlvwry, or hale, or hlem lv, "Jerusalem above" {x}, as distinguished from Jerusalem below: and to this distinction the apostle seems to have respect here, who further says concerning this Jerusalem, that she

is free; from the servitude of sin, Satan, and the world, from the yoke of the law, and from a spirit of bondage; having the Spirit of God, the spirit of adoption, who is a free spirit, and makes such free that enjoy him; and where he is, there is true liberty. He adds,

which is the mother of us all; that are born again, whether Jews or Gentiles, as particularly the church at Jerusalem was, and the Gospel church state in general may be said to be; since here souls are born and brought forth to Christ, are nursed up at her side, and nourished with her breasts of consolation, the word and ordinances. This form of speech is also Jewish: thus it is said {y} that

"Zion, larvyd Nma, "the mother of Israel", shall bring forth her sons, and Jerusalem shall receive the children of the captivity."

Again, explaining Pr 28:24 it is observed {z}, that there is no father but the ever blessed God, wma Nyaw, "and no mother" but the congregation of Israel. Some copies leave out the word "all"; and so do the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and only read, "the mother of us", or "our mother".

{x} Zohar in Gen. fol. 13. 2. & 16. 2. & 75. 4. & 77. 1. & 78. 2. & 114. 3. & 121. 1. & in Exod. fol. 6. 1. & 92. 2. T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 5. 1. Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 2. Caphtor, fol. 14. 2. & 25. 2. & 65. 1. & 68. 2. & 71. 2. & 118. 2. Raziel, fol. 13. 1. & 27. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 61. 3. & 150. 3. Nishmat Chayim, fol. 26. 2. Kimchi in Hos. xi. 19. {y} Targum in Cant. 8. 5. {z} Sithre Tora in Zohar in Gen. fol. 55. 2. & Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 34. 1.

Galatians 4:27

Ver. 27. For it is written,.... Isa 44:1, which is cited to prove, that the heavenly Jerusalem, or Gospel church state, is the mother of us all, and has brought forth, and still will bring forth, many souls to Christ, even many more than were under the legal dispensation by the Jewish church, though the Lord was an husband to them, Jer 31:32. The words are,

rejoice thou barren that bearest not, break forth and cry thou that travailest not, for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband; by her that was "barren", and "bore" not, and "travailed" not, and was "desolate", is not meant the Gentile world, which before the coming of Christ was barren and destitute of the knowledge of him, and from among whom very few were called by grace; but the Gospel church in the first beginnings of it, in Christ's time, and especially about the time of his death, and before the pouring forth of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, when the number of its members were few; for the names of the disciples together were but 120, when it seemed to be barren, and desolate, and deprived of its husband Christ, but was quickly to have a large accession to, it, both of Jews and Gentiles; and therefore is called upon to "rejoice, break forth", and "cry"; that is, to break forth into songs of praise, and express her spiritual joy, by singing aloud, and setting forth in hymns and spiritual songs the glory of powerful and efficacious grace, in the conversion of such large numbers of souls, the like of which had never been known under the former administration. Three thousand were converted under one sermon, and added to this first Gospel church; and the number of its members still increased, and the number of the men that afterwards believed was about five thousand; and after this we hear of more believers being added to the Lord, both men and women; and also that a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith; and when out of this church, the apostles, and other preachers of the Gospel went everywhere into the Gentile world, thousands of souls were converted, and a large number of churches formed, and a spiritual seed has been preserved ever since; and in the latter day Zion will travail in birth, and bring forth a numerous offspring; a nation shall be born at once, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in. Agreeably to this sense the Jewish writers, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Aben Ezra, understand this passage of Jerusalem; as does also the Chaldee paraphrase, which renders it thus:

"Praise, O Jerusalem, which was as a barren woman that bringeth not forth; rejoice in praise, and be glad, who was as a woman which conceives not, for more are the children of Jerusalem forsaken than the children of the habitable city, saith the Lord."

Galatians 4:28

Ver. 28. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was,.... The Ethiopic version reads, "you, brethren"; and so one of Stephens's copies. As the two women, Hagar and Sarah, might be, and are allegorized; so likewise their respective offspring. Isaac signified, and was a type and figure of Abraham's spiritual seed, whether Jews or Gentiles, under the Gospel dispensation: and as he was, so they are,

the children of promise; as Isaac was promised unto Abraham, so were this spiritual seed, when it was said unto him, that he should be the father of many nations, as he is the father of us all, even of all them that believe, be they of what nation soever; and as Isaac was born by virtue, and in consequence of a promise made to Abraham of God's free good will and pleasure, and his generation and conception were beyond the strength and course of nature, were the effects of a divine power, and were something supernatural; so this spiritual seed are born again, by virtue, and in consequence of a promise, not only made to Abraham, but to the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the covenant, that he should see his seed, enjoy a numerous offspring, and which should endure for ever; and also to the church, of whom it is said, that this and that man should be born in her; and particularly in consequence of the promise cited in the foregoing verse, from whence these words are an inference, deduction, or illustration: and these children of the promise, so called from hence, are born again, above and beyond the strength of nature; not through the power and free will of man, but through the abundant mercy and sovereign will of God, by his powerful and efficacious grace, and by the word of promise, the Gospel, as a means. Moreover, to these children, or spiritual seed of Abraham, signified by Isaac, do all the promises belong, as that of God, as a covenant God gave unto them; of Christ, as a Saviour and Redeemer; of the Holy Spirit, as a sanctifier and comforter; and of all good things, of temporal mercies, so far as are for their real good; and of all spiritual blessings, as righteousness, peace, pardon, comfort, all supplies of grace, and eternal life: and these likewise receive these promises; the Holy Spirit, as a spirit of promise, opens and applies them to them, puts them into the hand of faith, and enables them to plead them with God, and to believe the performance of them; so that this character in all respects agrees with them.

Galatians 4:29

Ver. 29. But as then,.... In the times of Abraham, when Hagar and Sarah, the types of the two dispensations of the covenant, and Ishmael and Isaac, the figures of the two different seeds, the natural and spiritual seed of Abraham, legalists and true believers, were living:

he that was born after the flesh; which was Ishmael, who was a type, or an allegorical representation of such who were under the Sinai covenant, and were seeking for righteousness by the works of the law; as he was born after the flesh, according to the ordinary course of nature, and was, as he was born, a carnal man; so are self-justiciaries, notwithstanding all their pretensions to religion and righteousness, just as they were born; there is nothing but flesh in them; they are without God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and have neither true faith, nor hope, nor love, not any other grace; they have no internal principle of goodness in them; flesh, or corrupt, nature, has the government of them, is the reigning principle in them; their minds are fleshly, and so are their tenets; and such is their conversation, they trust in the flesh, in outward performances, in their own righteousness, and so come under the curse; for as many as trust in an arm of flesh, or are of the works of the law, are under the curse of it:

persecuted him that was born after the Spirit: by whom is meant Isaac, who, though he was not conceived under the overshadowings of the Holy Spirit, without the help of man, as Christ was; yet because of the divine power which was so eminently displayed in his conception and generation, under all the difficulties, and disadvantages, and seeming impossibilities of nature, he is said to be born after the Spirit: and besides, he was also regenerated by the Spirit of God, was a good man, and one that feared the Lord, as the whole account of him shows; and in this also fitly pointed out the spiritual seed, true believers, under the Gospel dispensation, who are born again of water, and of the Spirit, and are renewed in the spirit of their minds; in whom the work of the Spirit is begun, and grace is the governing principle; in whom the Spirit of God dwells and operates; and whose conversation is spiritual, and who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The persecution of Isaac by Ishmael was by "mocking" him, Ge 21:9 the Hebrew word there made use of is in allusion to Isaac's name, which signifies "laughter": and Ishmael laughed at him, jeered and derided him. The Jewish doctors are divided about the sense of this: some say that the word rendered "mocking" is expressive of idolatry, according to Ex 32:6 and that Ishmael would have taught Isaac, and drawn him into it; others that it signifies uncleanness, according to Ge 39:17 and that he talked to him in a lascivious and indecent manner, in order to corrupt his mind: others that it designs murder according to **2Sa 2:14** and that he intended to kill him, and attempted it {a}; it is pretty much received by them, that either he finding him alone, or they going out to the field together, he took his bow and drew it, and shot an arrow at him, with an intention to kill him {b}, though he pretended it was but in play: and one of their writers on the text says {c}, that the word used, by gematry, that is, by the arithmetic of the letters, signifies gwrhl, "to slay"; so that this persecution was not by words only, but by deeds: but others {d} of them more rightly think, that it meant a contention about the inheritance, which Sarah's words to Abraham seem to confirm; and that Ishmael claimed the birthright, and despised Isaac as the younger son; insisted upon the right to the inheritance, and mocked at the promise of God, with respect to Isaac; and might threaten what he would do to him, should he claim it thereupon: mocking has been always reckoned a species of persecution; so the Old Testament saints, among other instances of persecution, had trial of "cruel mockings"; thus our Lord was persecuted, and also his apostles

and even so it is now. The carnal Jews, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, persecuted the spiritual seed that believed in Christ, both by words and deeds; they confiscated their goods, imprisoned their persons, and even put them to death; and the false teachers, though they did not, and could not go such lengths, yet as persons fitly represented by Ishmael, they derided the apostles, and mocked at the doctrines of grace preached by them, and despised those that embraced them; and pleaded that the inheritance belonged to them, upon the foot of the works of the law: and so it is at this day; though there is no persecution of men's persons and estates, yet there never was a greater persecution of the doctrines of grace, and of the righteousness of Christ, and the saints more mocked at and derided for maintaining them; and that by persons just of the same complexion as those in the apostle's time, signified by Ishmael, carnal professors, and self-righteous persons.

{a} Jarchi in Gen. xxi. 9. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 53. fol. 47. 4. {b} Jarchi & Bereshit Rabba, sect. 53, fol. 47. 4. Pirke Eliezer. c. 30. {c} Baal Hattrim, in loc. {d} Jarchi & Bereshit Rabba, ut supra. (sect. 53, fol. 47. 4.)

Galatians 4:30

Ver. 30. Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture?.... This is a Talmudic form of citing Scriptures, and answers to harq yam, "what says the Scriptures {e}?" the passage referred to is Ge 21:10 and which are the words of Sarah to Abraham; but inasmuch as she spake them under divine inspiration, and they were approved of and confirmed by God, as appears from Ge 21:12 they are ascribed to God speaking in the Scripture:

cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. There is very little difference in the citation from the original. The apostle omits the word "this" in both clauses, which though very proper to be expressed by Sarah, to point out the person she meant, and as being in a vehement passion, was not absolutely necessary to be retained by the apostle, since by the context there is no difficulty of knowing who is meant by her; though the Alexandrian copy has the word in it: and instead of "with my son, with Isaac", the apostle says, "with the son of the free woman, Sarah"; there speaking of herself, whose character the apostle gives, in opposition to the bondwoman: in like manner a Jewish writer {f} reads and interprets it,

"for the son of this woman shall not be heir hrybgh Nb Me, "with the son of the mistress"."

The casting of Hagar and Ishmael out of Abraham's family was a type and emblem of the rejection of the carnal and self-righteous Jews from the Gospel church state; nor ought any carnal persons, any that are after the flesh, unregenerate ones, or that trust to their own righteousness, to be in a Gospel church; as they will also be excluded and thrust out of the kingdom of heaven, into which no unregenerate and unrighteous, or self-righteous persons shall enter. The Jews make this ejection of Hagar and her son to be both out of this world and that which is to come {g}. The reason given why the one should not be heir with the other perfectly agrees with the Jewish canons; which was not because he was the son of a concubine, for the sons of concubines might inherit, if they were Israelites, and free, but because he was the son of a bondwoman, for thus they run {h};

"all that are near of kin, though by iniquity, are heirs, as they that are legitimate; how? thus for instance, if a man has a son that is spurious, or a brother that is spurious, lo, these are as the other sons, and the other brethren for inheritance; but if, hxpv Nm wnb, "his son is by an handmaid", or by a strange woman, he is no son in any of these matters, llk vrwy wnyaw, "and no heir at all":"

and again {i},

"an Israelite that hath a son by an handmaid, or by a Gentile, seeing he is not called his son, he that he has after him by an Israelitish woman, hkxnl rwkb, "is the firstborn for inheritance", and takes the double portion."

The reason assigned for non-inheritance in the text implies that the children of the free woman, the spiritual seed of Abraham, shall inherit the privileges of

God's house, the blessings of grace, and eternal glory; they are children of the promise, and heirs according to it; when the children of the bondwoman, self-righteous ones, shall not; for the inheritance is not of the law, neither are they heirs who are of the works of it; nor is it to be enjoyed by mixing the law and Gospel, grace and works, in the business of salvation.

{e} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 9. 2. {f} R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror, fol. 21. 3. {g} Pirke Eliezer, c. 30. {h} Maimon. Hilch. Nechalot, c. 1. sect. 7. {i} Ib c. 2. sect. 12.

Galatians 4:31

Ver. 31. So then, brethren,.... This is the conclusion of the whole allegory, or the mystical interpretation of Agar and Sarah, and their sons:

we are not children of the bondwoman; the figure of the first covenant, which gendered to bondage, and typified the Jews in a state, and under a spirit of bondage to the law; New Testament saints are not under it, are delivered from it, and are dead unto it:

but of the free; of Sarah, that was a type of the new and second covenant; and answered to the Gospel church, which is free from the yoke of the law; and whose children believers in Christ are, by whom they are made free from all thraldom and slavery; so the children of the mistress and of the maidservant are opposed to each other by the Jews {k}. The Vulgate Latin version adds to this verse from the beginning of the next chapter, "with the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free"; and the Ethiopic version, "because Christ hath made us free"; and begin the next chapter thus, "therefore stand, and be not entangled", &c. and so the Alexandrian copy, and three of Stephens's.

{k} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 152. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Galatians 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS 5

In this chapter the apostle exhorts to stand fast in Christian liberty, and warns against the abuse of it; and directs to shun various vices, and encourages, to the exercise of several graces, and the observance of several duties; and concludes with a caution against vain glory, provocation to wrath, and envy: and whereas, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, he had made it appear that the believers under the Gospel dispensation were free from the bondage of the law, he begins this with an exhortation to continue steadfastly in the liberty of the Gospel; and the rather, since it was what Christ obtained for them, and bestowed on them; and to take care, that they were not again brought under the bondage of the ceremonial law, particularly the yoke of Circumcision, Ga 5:1, and dissuades from submitting to it, by observing, that it tended to make Christ unprofitable to them, Ga 5:2, and that it laid them under an obligation to keep the whole law, Ga 5:3, and that it made Christ wholly useless to them; and that such who sought for justification by obedience to the ceremonial law were apostates from the Gospel of the grace of God, Ga 5:4, as also by showing, that it was contrary to the general faith and expectation of the saints, who were looking for and expecting eternal glory and happiness, not by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Ga 5:5, nor were circumcision or uncircumcision of any avail, but the true faith in Christ, which shows itself by love to him and to his people, Ga 5:6, and likewise by reminding them how well they set out at their first conversion, and proceeded; nor had they any to hinder them from obeying the truth, and therefore it was shameful in them to go back to the beggarly elements they had first relinquished, Ga 5:7, nor was the present opinion they had imbibed, of God that called them, or what they received when first effectually called by grace, but what had been since taken up, Ga 5:8, and whereas it might be objected, that it was only in a single article concerning the ceremonial law, and which was, embraced only by a few persons, and therefore not to be regarded, the apostle puts them in mind of a proverb, that a little leaven leavens the whole lump, and therefore not to be connived at, Ga 5:9, however, a little to mitigate the sharpness of his reproof, he expresses his good opinion and confidence of them, that upon a mature consideration of things, they would not be otherwise minded than they formerly had been, or he now was; and lays the blame of all upon the false teacher, or teachers, that troubled them, and who should bear their own judgment or condemnation, Ga 5:10, and whereas it was insinuated, that the apostle himself had preached up circumcision as necessary to salvation, he removes this calumny by observing, that were it true, he would not suffer persecution as he did, nor would the Jews be offended at his preaching as they were, Ga 5:11, and then out of zeal for the glory of God, and hearty affection to the Galatians, he wishes those false teachers that troubled them with their pernicious doctrines were cut off either by the Lord, or from the church, Ga 5:12, and next he directs to the right use of Christian liberty, to which they were called; and cautions against the abuse of it; that they should not use it as an occasion to the flesh, but, on the contrary, serve one another in love, **Ga 5:13** giving this as a reason, because love is the fulfilling of the law, **Ga 5:14**, whereas a contrary spirit and conduct are attended with pernicious consequences, even the destruction of each other, **Ga 5:15**, and therefore advises them to walk in the Spirit, whose fruit is love, and then they would not fulfil the lust of the flesh, **Ga 5:16**, for these two, flesh and Spirit, are contrary the one to the other, and the Spirit hinders the performance of the lusts of the flesh, **Ga 5:17**, besides, such who give up themselves to the conduct of the Spirit, and are led thereby, are not under the law, the bondage of it, nor liable to its curse, **Ga 5:18**, and having made mention both of flesh and Spirit, he takes notice of the works and fruits of the one, and of the other, by which they are known; and as for the works of the flesh he observes, that they are manifest, and gives an enumeration of them in "seventeen" particulars; and to deter from them declares, that whoever lives in the commission of them, shall not inherit the kingdom of God, **Ga 5:19**, and as for the fruits of the Spirit, these are also well known by spiritual men, "nine" of which are particularly mentioned, and against which there is no law, **Ga 5:22**, and from the whole concludes, that such as are true believers in Christ, and are led by his Spirit, and have the fruits of it, have the flesh with its affections and lusts crucified, **Ga 5:24**, and ends the chapter with some exhortations to walk in the Spirit, and not be ambitious of worldly honour, nor provoke one another to wrath, nor envy each other's happiness, **Ga 5:25**.

Ver. 1. Stand fast therefore in the liberty,.... There is the liberty of grace, and the liberty of glory; the former of these is here meant, and lies in a freedom from sin; not from the indwelling of it, but from the dominion, guilt, and damning power of it; from the captivity and tyranny of Satan, though not from his temptations and insults; from the law, the ceremonial law, as an handwriting of ordinances, a rigid severe schoolmaster, and a middle wall of partition, and from all its burdensome rites and institutions; from the moral law as a covenant of works, and as administered by Moses; and from the curse and condemnation of it, its bondage and rigorous exaction, and from all expectation of life and righteousness by the deeds of it; but not from obedience to it, as held forth by Christ, and as a rule of walk and conversation; and from the judicial law, or those laws which concerned the Jews as Jews: moreover, this liberty lies in the free use of things indifferent, as eating any sort of food without distinction, so that it be done in faith, with thankfulness to God, in moderation, and with temperance, and so as that the peace and edification of fellow Christians are not hurt; also in the free use of Gospel ordinances, which they that are fellow citizens with the saints have a right unto, but not to lay aside or neglect at pleasure; which is not to use, but to abuse their liberty:

again, another branch of it is access to God, with freedom and boldness at the throne of grace, through the Mediator, under the influences of the divine Spirit; to which may be added, a deliverance from the fears of death corporeal, who is a king of terrors to Christless sinners, and which kept Old Testament saints, all their lifetime subject to bondage and eternal, or the second death, by which Christ's freemen are assured they shall not be hurt: now, in this liberty, the children of the free woman, believers under the Gospel dispensation, are very pertinently exhorted to stand fast, in consequence and consideration of their character; that is, they should highly prize and esteem it, as men do their civil liberty; and maintain it and defend it, at all hazards; abide by the doctrine of it without wavering, and with intrepidity; not giving up anyone part of it, however, and by whomsoever, it may be opposed, maligned, and reproached; and keep up the practice of it, by obeying from the heart the doctrine of it, by becoming the servants of righteousness, by frequent attendance at the throne of grace, and continual observance of the ordinances of Christ; and then should take heed of everything that tends to break in upon it, as any doctrine or commandment of men; particularly the doctrine of justification by works, and all sorts of superstition and will worship: and the rather, because of the concern Christ has in this liberty, it is that

wherewith Christ hath made us free; we are not free born, but on the contrary homeborn slaves, as Ephraim was; nor could this liberty in any of its branches be obtained by us, by any merit, righteousness, act, or acts of ours, but is wholly of Christ's procuring for us, both by price and power; whereby he has ransomed and delivered us out of the hands of all our spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, the law, and death; and it is of his proclaiming in the Gospel, and of his applying by his Spirit, whom he sends down into our hearts as a free Spirit, to acquaint us with it, and lead us into it, who works faith in us to lay hold upon, and receive this blessing of grace as others:

and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. The metaphor is taken from oxen put under a yoke, and implicated with it, from which they cannot disengage themselves: some of the members of this church had been Jews, who had formerly been under the yoke of the law, and seemed desirous to return to their former state of bondage, from which the apostle dissuades, and therefore uses the word again: or else he may refer to the bondage of corruption and idolatry, which they as Gentiles were in, before their conversion; and intimates, that to give into the observance of; Jewish rites and ceremonies would be involving themselves in a state of bondage again; for by "the yoke of bandage" he means the law, which the Jews frequently call twum lwe "the yoke of the commandments" {l}; particularly the ceremonial law, as circumcision; which Peter, Ac 15:10 represents as a yoke intolerable; the observation of days, months, times, and years; the multitude of sacrifices, and which could not take away sin; but proclaimed their guilt and obligation to punishment, and were an handwriting of ordinances against them, and thereby they were held and kept in bondage, and such a yoke is the moral law as delivered by Moses, requiring perfect obedience, but giving no strength to perform, nor pointing where any is to be had; showing a man his sin and misery, and so working wrath in his conscience, but giving not the least intimation of a Saviour, or of life and righteousness by another; accusing, pronouncing guilty, cursing, and condemning; hence such as seek for righteousness by it are in a miserable subjection to it, and are sadly implicated and entangled with the yoke of it: every doctrine and ordinance of men is a yoke of bondage which should not be submitted to; nay, any action whatever, performed in a religious way and in order for a man's acceptance with God, and to obtain his favour, and according to his observance of which he judges of his state, and speaks peace and comfort to himself, or the reverse, is a yoke of bondage: as, for instance prayer at such and so many times a day, reading such a number of chapters in the Bible every day, fasting so many times in the week, and the like; so that what are branches of Christian liberty, such as frequent prayer to God, reading the sacred writings for instruction and comfort, and the free use of the creatures, are turned into a yoke of bondage, which should be guarded against.

{l} Misn. Beracot, c. 2. sect. 2. T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 4. 2.

Galatians 5:2

Ver. 2. Behold, I Paul say unto you,.... The apostle proceeds to give some reasons and arguments to enforce the above exhortation and dissuasion: the first of which is introduced with a note of attention, "behold"; what he was about to say being matter of great moment and importance; and also mentions himself by name, as the assertor of it; and that, either because his name was well known to them, and the rather because of his apostolical authority; and to show his full assurance of this matter, and his intrepidity, and that he was no ways ashamed of it, they might, if they pleased, say it to whomsoever they would, that Paul the apostle affirmed,

that if ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing: he speaks of circumcision, not as when it was an ordinance of God, but as it was now abolished by Christ; and that got as singly performed on some certain accounts for he himself circumcised Timothy for the sake of the Jews; but as done in order to salvation, or as necessary unto it; which was the doctrine the false apostles taught and these Galatians were ready to give into: now circumcision submitted to on this consideration, and with this view rendered Christ unprofitable, made his death to be in vain, his sacrifice of no effect, and his righteousness useless: besides, Christ is a whole Saviour, or none at all; to join anything with him and his righteousness, in the business of justification and salvation, is interpreted by him as a contempt and neglect of him, as laying him aside, and to such persons he is of no profit; and if he is not, what they have, and whatsoever they do, will be of no advantage; wealth and riches, yea, the whole world could it be gained, their works and righteousness, whatever show they make before men, God has declared shall not profit them; and trusting to these renders Christ unprofitable to them. This is directly contrary to the notions of the Jews, who think they shall be saved for their circumcision, and that that will secure them from hell; they say {m} no circumcised person goes down to hell, and that whoever is circumcised shall inherit the land; but there is none shall inherit the land, save a righteous person; but everyone that is circumcised is called a righteous man {n}; so that circumcision is their righteousness, on account of which they expect heaven and happiness.

{m} Shemot Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 104. 4. {n} Zohar in Exod. fol. 10. 2.

Galatians 5:3

Ver. 3. For I testify again to every man,.... This is the form of an oath, a calling God to witness, swearing by the living God, and declaring as in his presence to every man, whether Jew or Gentile, whoever he be:

that is circumcised; in order to obtain salvation, and as necessary to it:

that he is a debtor to do the whole law; and this it is that made circumcision an insupportable yoke, for that itself might be bore, and was bore by children of eight days old; but the fulfilling of the whole law cannot be done by any man; and yet everyone that is circumcised, in order to procure righteousness and life, is bound to keep the whole law; because the law is only his righteousness, when he observes all that is required in it, and as the Lord has commanded; if he does not, he is pronounced accursed: and this proves what was before said, that Christ is of no profit to such persons; because they reject him and his righteousness, and, as much as in them lie, make void his obedience, sufferings, and death: hence the same thing is repeated, though not in the same words, in the next verse.

Galatians 5:4

Ver. 4. Christ is become of no effect unto you,.... Or "ye are abolished from Christ"; or as others by an "hypallage" read the words, "Christ is abolished unto you"; for by their seeking for justification by their own works, it was all one to them as if there was no Christ, and no righteousness in him, and no salvation by him; they had nothing to do with him, nor he with them:

whosoever of you are justified by the law; that is, who sought to be justified by their obedience to the law, or who thought they were, and trusted in themselves that they were righteous; for otherwise, by the deeds of the law, no flesh living can be justified:

ye are fallen from grace; that is, either from that grace which they professed to have; for there might be some in these churches, as in others, who were only nominal Christians, and formal professors; who had declared they saw themselves lost and undone sinners, destitute of a righteousness, and professed to believe in Christ alone for righteousness and strength, but now trusted in themselves, and in the works of the law: or from the scheme of grace in the whole of man's salvation, which will admit of no mixture of works; either it is one or the other, it cannot be both; wherefore by their taking on the side of works, they showed that they had entirely dropped the scheme of grace: or else from the Gospel of the grace of God, from whence they were removed, through the influence of false teachers; particularly the doctrine of free justification by the grace of God, through the righteousness of Christ; which was entirely set aside by their seeking to be instilled by the works of the law; and from this they might be said to be fallen, who were on such a bottom.

Galatians 5:5

Ver. 5. For we through the Spirit wait,.... Who have believed in Christ, Christians in general, and the apostle and the brethren with him in particular; who also were Jews born, and brought up as such; and yet they did not look for, and expect heaven and happiness through circumcision, or any of the works of the law, but through the righteousness of Christ received by faith, under the influence and testimony of the Spirit of God, and therefore much less should Gentiles:

for the hope of righteousness by faith; by which is meant, not the believer's justifying righteousness, as if it was something future he is waiting for; for this is already wrought out, and brought in by Christ, the end of the law for righteousness; is revealed in the Gospel from faith to faith; is discovered and applied to the saints by the Spirit of God; is put upon them, and imputed to them by the Father; and is what they now have, not in hope, but in hand; their faith having received it, as their justifying righteousness; in which they will ever be found, living and dying: but eternal glory and felicity is here intended, called "hope"; because it is the object of hope, or is what is hoped for; it is unseen, as what is hoped for is: it is future, and what is to be enjoyed hereafter, and therefore hoped for; it is certain, possible to be enjoyed, though with difficulty; which gives room for hope, and exercises and tries that grace; the foundation and encouragement of hope in it are the person, blood, sacrifice, and righteousness of Christ, who is our hope: and hence it is styled "the hope of righteousness", because none but righteous persons shall enjoy it: and that by virtue, and in consequence of their being justified by the righteousness of Christ, which gives them their title to it; and hence they look for it, and shall enjoy it, on the foot of justice, as well as of grace and goodness: "waiting" for it supposes it to be certain, real, solid, substantial, valuable, and worth waiting for; which, when possessed, will be with the utmost pleasure, and be abundantly satisfying; and that the persons that wait for it have knowledge, and at least hope of interest in it; and do highly value and esteem it, having their hearts set on it, and looking with contempt on the things of time and sense, in comparison of it: the manner in which they wait is, "through the Spirit", and "by faith"; the Syriac version reads, "through the Spirit, which is of faith"; that is, by the Spirit received through faith; see **Ga 3:14** but it is best to consider them apart; believers look and wait for heaven, under the influence and encouragement of the Spirit of God; who is the author of the faith by which they look for it, and of the hope which is concerned with it; and who is the revealer and applier of the righteousness of Christ, the foundation of it; and which gives some glimpses of the heavenly glory to the saints, shows them their interest in it, witnesses to their sonship, and so to their heirship; and is the pledge and earnest of their inheritance; all which gives great strength and encouragement to faith, by which they also expect it; believing not only the reality of it, but their own interest in it; and so walk by faith in the believing views thereof, until they receive the end of it.

Galatians 5:6

Ver. 6. For in Christ Jesus,.... The Arabic version reads, "in the religion of Christ"; in the religion of Moses, or of the Jews under the former dispensation, the things after mentioned were of some moment and consideration; but are of no account in the Christian religion, and under the Gospel dispensation: circumcision and uncircumcision make no difference in the church of Christ, or are any bar to communion with it; nor do they make any alteration in the love and favour of Christ, who is all in all to his people, whether Jews or Gentiles; nor have they any influence at all on salvation, Christ being a common Saviour to the circumcised and uncircumcised; nor are they any evidence for or against a person's being in Christ, or having an interest in him:

neither circumcision availeth anything; not now as a command and ordinance of God, being abolished by Christ; nor as a type, having its accomplishment in him, and his people; nor as a privilege, giving any preference in any respect to the Jew above the Gentile; nor is it of any weight or consequence, or has any concern in the business of salvation:

nor uncircumcision; it is no hinderance to the enjoyment of the Gospel, to entrance into a Gospel church state, or to admission to the ordinances of it; nor to the participation of the blessings of grace, as justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life:

but faith which works by love; faith has a concern in justification and salvation, not by way of causal influence, but as it is that grace which receives the righteousness of Christ, through which we are saved, and kept by the power of God unto salvation; yet not any sort of faith, but that which is operative, is attended with good works; and which works itself by love to God, to Christ, to his people, ways, worship, truths, and ordinances. The Syriac version renders it, zrmgtmd "which is perfected by love"; that is, is showed to be right, true, and genuine thereby; see **Jas 2:22**.

Galatians 5:7

Ver. 7. Ye did run well,.... In the Christian race; when they first set out in a profession of religion, they embraced and held fast, and were zealously attached to the truths of the Gospel; they were in the lively exercise of grace on its proper object, and very diligent in the discharge of duty; they made great proficiency in the knowledge of divine things, and ran with cheerfulness and without weariness in the ways of Christ, and in the paths of truth and holiness. The metaphor is taken from runners in a race; see **1Co 9:24** so far this is said to their commendation, but this should have been persisted in:

who did hinder you; not the apostle, or any of his brethren; no, they encouraged them to go on, and gave them all the assistance they could, to help them forward; but it was the false apostles that hindered them, who did all they could to remove them to another Gospel, and turn them aside out of the right way:

that ye should not obey the truth? of the Gospel, particularly the truth of justification by the righteousness of Christ; which they did not so cheerfully embrace, and show such a respect unto, as they had formerly done; see **Ga 3:1**, and which he says not by way of inquiry, but of complaint and concern; and with some indignation against the persons who had been the means of hindering their Christian progress, and with a view to reclaim the Galatians if possible.

Galatians 5:8

Ver. 8. This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. That is, the opinion they were persuaded to believe; and which the Syriac version renders, Nwkoyp, "your persuasion"; this is not of God, who had called them into the grace of Christ; nor of Christ, who had called them to the knowledge of himself, and communion with him; nor of the Spirit of Christ, who had called them with an holy calling, and who still continued to call them to repentance; nor of any faithful minister of the Gospel, who had been concerned as an instrument in their effectual calling; meaning the notion they were persuaded to give into, that circumcision and the works of the law were necessary to salvation, and that these were to be joined with the righteousness of Christ for justification; such a conceit as this could never be of God, nor any evangelical minister, but must be of Satan or his emissaries, the false apostles.

Galatians 5:9

Ver. 9. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. A proverbial expression pretty much in use with the Jews; see **1Co 5:6**, respecting either persons or things; and is in answer to, or prevents an objection that might be made, or something that might be said, in favour of these churches; that their case was not so bad, or the danger they were in so great, as was represented by the apostle; since they were only a few persons that propagated this notion, and but few that received it, at least thoroughly gave into it; and that, if it was an error, it was but a small one, and only regarded a single ritual, or a few rituals of the law; to which the apostle replies, by supposing, but not granting this to be the case, since they were pretty generally declined, and the error was not a slight one, that as a little sour leaven influences and ferments a large mass, or lump of dough, and makes it of the same nature with it, so a small error in doctrine, as it may be thought to be, increases to more ungodliness, and eats as doth a canker; and though a few hands may be first concerned in propagating it, and but few be infected with it, yet these may soon spread the contagion through the whole society: wherefore errors and false teachers should be nipped in the bud, and stopped in their beginnings, how inconsiderable soever they and their tenets may be judged to be.

Galatians 5:10

Ver. 10. I have confidence in you through the Lord,.... Though the apostle had said many things which carried in them the appearance of roughness and severity, yet he still entertained hopes of them that they were not so far gone, but that they might be brought back again; and he here expresses his confidence of it. This confidence in them is not of faith, for no trust is to be put in men; no, not in the best; but of charity, or love, which hopes all things, and believes all things; and which proceeded upon a thorough persuasion he had, that there was some good thing in them; and therefore was confident, that he that had begun the good work would perform it, and not suffer them to be carried away finally and totally with the error of the wicked: and this confidence he had "through the Lord"; either through the Spirit of the Lord, whose office it is to lead into all truth, as it is in Jesus; and who had suggested this to the apostle, and possessed him of this confidence; so that it was not a conjecture and fancy of his, but an intimation from the Spirit of the Lord: or through the Lord Jesus Christ, or "in the Lord", Christ, as the phrase may be rendered; that is, on account of their being in Christ, which the apostle hoped and believed; where they were safe and secure from a final and total seduction; he was confident, that whatever they might seem to be now, things would take a different turn in time:

that you will be none otherwise minded; than he was, and they formerly were, when the Gospel was first preached to them, and embraced by them; and particularly in the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ which was the doctrine then called in question, and in debate:

but he that troubleth you; he seems to have respect to some particular person, who was the principal of the false teachers, and most famous for his learning, knowledge, gifts, and abilities; and who had done, and was likely to do, the most mischief among them; and was a troubler of God's Israel, and of the pure waters of the sanctuary; he unsettled their minds, and caused them to halt between two, Moses and Christ, law and Gospel, and the doctrines of justification by works, and by the righteousness of Christ; the one being what gave true solid peace and comfort, the other introduced confusion, distress, and fears: the apostle threatens him, and declares that he

shall bear his judgment; or condemnation, or damnation, his punishment in this, or the other world; for the judgment, or condemnation, of such that bring in damnable harasses, and pernicious errors, lingereth not, will not be long delayed; and their damnation slumbereth not, but in a little time will seize upon them; when as they have rejected Christ as a sin bearing and atoning Saviour, and his righteousness as the justifying one, they will, agreeably to their own doctrine, be left to bear their punishment themselves, which will be intolerable, and to all eternity; nor shall any escape it,

whosoever he be; though ever so knowing and learned, and let his parts and abilities be what they will; or he be ever so famous among men, and cried up as a most excellent preacher.

Galatians 5:11

Ver. 11. And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision,.... The apostle was traduced by the false teachers, as a preacher of circumcision himself in some places; and this they did partly to show him to be a variable and inconsistent man, who preached one doctrine in one place, and another in another place, and so not to be attended to; and partly with others, to draw them into their scheme upon his authority: what might give them the handle, or at least what they improved to this purpose, might be his circumcising of Timothy; but though he did this as a thing indifferent, and for the sake of the Jews, to make them easy; yet he never preached it after his conversion, and much less as necessary to justification and salvation, as these men did. This calumny he refutes by putting the following question or questions;

why do I yet suffer persecution? as is clear he did, for being against it, and preaching it down; great part of the persecutions the apostle endured was from the Jews, and that on account of his teaching them everywhere, that were among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, and that they should not circumcise their children, and walk after the customs of their nation; a clear point this, that he did not preach it; had he, persecution from this quarter would not have followed him; and he could have done it with a good conscience, he must act a very weak part in suffering persecution on that account. The Arabic version gives the words a very different turn, and yet furnishes an answer to the calumny; "why do I persecute him that uses it?" that is, if I am a preacher of it, why am I so warm and violent an opposer of those that submit to it? these things are so opposite that there is no reconciling them; to the same purpose is the Ethiopic version: "then is the offence of the cross ceased". The last mentioned version reads it, "the cross of Christ"; and so the Alexandrian copy; meaning not the cross of affliction, reproach, and persecution, which Christ has enjoined every follower of his to take up and bear for his sake, and is offensive to the carnal man; nor the cross on which he suffered, or the sufferings of the cross; but the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ, which was an offence and a stumblingblock to the Jews; now if the apostle had preached circumcision as necessary to salvation, the other doctrine must have been dropped, and consequently the offence taken at it must have ceased, whereas it was not. The Syriac version reads by way of question, "is the offence of the cross ceased?" no it is not, a plain case then is, that the apostle did not preach circumcision, but only a crucified Christ, as necessary to salvation. Moreover, the Jews that believed would not have been so offended as they were at his preaching, had he preached the one as well the other; their offence was not that he preached Christ crucified, but that he preached, that, by the cross of Christ, circumcision and the other rituals of the ceremonial law were now abolished.

Galatians 5:12

Ver. 12. I would they were even cut off which trouble you. These words are a solemn wish of the apostle's with respect to the false teachers, or an imprecation of the judgment of God upon them; that they might be cut off out of the land of the living by the immediate hand of God, that they might do no more mischief to the churches of Christ: this he said not out of hatred to their persons, but from a concern for the glory of God, and the good of his people. The word here used answers to the Hebrew word xpq, and which is often made use of by the Jews in solemn imprecations; we read {o} of a righteous man, wynb ta xpqm, "that cut off his children": the gloss upon it is,

"he used to say, when he made any imprecation, ynb ta xpqa, "may I cut off my children";"

that is, may they die, may they be cut off by the hand of God, and I bury them;

"says R. Tarphon {p}, may my children be "cut off", if these books of heretics come into my hands, that I will burn them;"

and says the same Rabbi {q} may I "cut off" my children, or may my children be cut off, if this sentence or constitution is cut off, or should perish. There is another use of this word, which may have a place here, for it sometimes signifies to confute a person, or refute his notion {r}.

"It is a tradition of the Rabbius, that after the departure of R. Meir, R. Judah said to his disciples, let not the disciples of R. Meir come in hither, for they are contentious; and not to learn the law do they come, but twklhb ynxpql, "to cut me off"; (i.e. as the gloss says, to show how sharp they are that none can stand against them;) to confute and overcome me, by their sentences, or constitutions."

So the apostle here might wish that the mouths of these false teachers were stopped, their notions refuted, that they might give them no more trouble; to which agrees the Arabic version; "they that trouble you I wish they were dumb"; or that their mouths were stopped, as such vain talkers should be; see **Tit 1:10** or the sense of the apostle is, that it was his will and desire that these men should be cut off from the communion of the church; with which views he mentions the proverbial expression in **Ga 5:9** with which compare **1Co 5:6** or that they would cut themselves off, by withdrawing from them, going out from among them, and leaving them as these men sometimes did.

{o} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 85. 1. {p} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol, 116. 1. {q} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 17. 1. Misn. Oholot, c. 16. sect. 1. & Maimon, in Bartenora in ib. {r} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 52. 2. Nazir, fol. 49. 2.

Galatians 5:13

Ver. 13. For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty,.... He calls them "brethren", to testify his affection to them, and to put them in mind of their relation to one another, which required mutual love, a thing he is about to press them to; he asserts that they were "called" not merely externally, but internally, by the effectual grace of God, out of bondage to sin, Satan, and the law, unto the liberty of the Gospel and of the grace of God; that liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, **Ga 5:1** this he said in a judgment of charity, hoping well of them:

only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh; corrupt nature, which in unregenerate men takes encouragement from, and makes an ill use of the best of things, as the mercy and patience of God; and not only takes an occasion by the law, forbidding sin to work and stir up all manner of concupiscence; but also by the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, such as eternal election, free justification, &c. which though the source and fountain, the barrier and security, of all true and real holiness, are improved and abused by wicked minds, under the influence and instigation of Satan, to vile purposes; and though regenerate persons are not in the flesh, and do not live after it, yet that is in them, and there is a proneness in them to sin; and Satan is watching all opportunities and advantages against them; so that there is need for such a caution as this, that they do not misuse their Christian liberty by indulging the flesh and the lusts of it, which is apt to take an occasion to cherish its lusts, and especially when given: Christ's free men should not do so, for that is to disgrace the doctrine of Christian liberty, to enthral themselves in, bondage instead of using their liberty aright, and to give the enemy occasion to blaspheme: the doctrine of Christian liberty may bc abused, or used as an occasion to the flesh, and to fulfil the lusts of it; when under a pretence thereof men think themselves exempt from obedience to the civil magistrate, which is using this liberty as a cloak of maliciousness; or that they are free from obedience to the law of God, as a rule of walk and conversation; or from subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel; or when they use the creatures God has given them the free use of without thankfulness, and in an immoderate manner; and when they make things indifferent which are not, or use indifferent things to the prejudice of others; and their liberty becomes a stumblingblock to weak Christians, which the apostle seems greatly to regard here; since he adds,

but by love serve one another: the Vulgate Latin version reads, "by the love of the Spirit": and so some copies; Gospel liberty and the service of the saints are not at all inconsistent; as it becomes them to love one another, as the new command of Christ, their profession of religion, and their relation to each other, require, so they should show their love by their service; as by praying one with and for another, by bearing each other's burdens, sympathizing with and communicating to each other in things temporal and spiritual; in forbearing with and forgiving one another; by admonishing each other when there is occasion for it, in a meek, tender, and brotherly way; by instructing and building up one another on their most holy faith, and by stirring up one another to all the duties of religion, private and public.

Galatians 5:14

Ver. 14. For all the law is fulfilled in one word,.... Not the ceremonial law, to which acts of mercy, kindness, and love are opposed, and from which they are distinguished; but the law of the decalogue given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and by him to the people of the Jews; and intends either only the second table of it, since only love to the neighbour is mentioned; or else the whole of it, both tables, since it is said, "all the law"; which by Christ is reduced to two heads, love to God, and love to the neighbour; and though the former is not here expressed, it is implied as a cause in the effect, for the love of God is the cause, and so the evidence of love to the neighbour; nor can there be the one without the other. The two tables of the law consist of Myrbdh trve, "ten words"; as the {s} Jews commonly call them, and we the decalogue, and yet they are fulfilled in one; that is, they are to be brought into such a compendium, reduced to such an head; or as the apostle in a parallel place says, they may briefly be comprehended in this saying,
Ro 13:9. The Jews make the commandments of the law to be a very large number indeed, but at last reduce them to one, as the apostle here does,

"six hundred and thirteen commandments (they say {t}) were given to Moses----David came and reduced them to eleven, Psalm xv, Isaiah came and reduced them to six, Isa 33:15 Micah came and reduced them to three, **Mic 6:8** Isaiah came and reduced them to two, Isa 56:1, Amos came and reduced them to one, **Am 5:4** but this being objected to, it is observed that Habakkuk came, txa le Ndymexw, "and reduced them to one", **Hab 2:4** that is faith, as here the apostle reduces them to love:"

even in this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: these words are taken out of Le 19:18 and which R. Akiba says {u}, agreeably with the apostle, whose contemporary he was, is hrwtb lwdg llk, "the grand general rule in the law"; or the grand comprehensive of the law: the object of love, the "neighbour", signifies not only, as there the Jews explain it, those of their own people, or proselytes to their religion; but all sorts of men, whether in a natural, civil, or spiritual relation; and whether those that do us good or do us ill, friends or enemies: the measure or rule of love is, "as thyself"; and designs not an equality of affection, but a likeness of effects; that is, to do the same kind acts of love to others, one would choose to have done to ourselves: and this is the fulfilling of the law; that is, so far as a man loves aright, so far he fulfils the law; not that he does it perfectly, for man in his fallen state is unable to do that, for the law is exceeding broad, and reaches to thoughts, desires, and inclinations, as well as to words and deeds; and besides, love said to be the fulfilling of it, is imperfect; hence then there can be no justification by works of charity, nor by any services of men, which at best are imperfect; nor are they done in their own strength, and without the grace of God; nor is there any that can be said to have fulfilled the law perfectly but Christ, and to him must we look for a justifying righteousness. These words contain a reason engaging to love one another, and to do all kind of offices of love to each other; since it is a main and principal thing contained in the law, and to which that may be reduced.

{s} Exod. xxxiv. 28. Vid. Targum Onk. & Jon. in ib. {t} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 23. 2. & 24. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 151. 1. {u} In Jarchi in Lev. xix. 18.

Galatians 5:15

Ver. 15. But if ye bite and devour one another,.... Another reason inducing to love is taken from the pernicious consequences of a contrary spirit and conduct. The allusion is to beasts of prey falling upon and devouring one another: for wolves or dogs to worry sheep is not strange; but for sheep to distress one another is unnatural. The apostle does not say, if grievous wolves should enter in among you and not spare the flock; but suggests if they themselves should act the part of wolves to one another; having reference to their controversies about the law and circumcision, and the necessity thereof to justification and salvation; which were managed with great heat and bitterness, occasioned great contentions, and threatened them with divisions, parties, and factions; and were attended with envy and malice, with reproachful words, biting sarcasms, scandalous invectives, and injurious actions, which must be of bad consequence: hence he adds,

take heed that ye be not consumed one of another; that is, either beware lest each other's particular peace and comfort be destroyed, which is oftentimes done this way, though a person's state and condition God-ward may be safe; or lest their church state should be destroyed and come to nothing, since love is the cement of it, which being loosened, threatens a dissolution; for as no civil community, either public or private, divided against itself, can stand long, so no religious one; and for want of love the Lord threatens to remove, and sometimes does remove, the candlestick out of its place.

Galatians 5:16

Ver. 16. This I say then, walk in the Spirit,.... The advice the apostle thinks fit to give, and which he would have observed, is, to "walk in the Spirit", that is, either after the Spirit of God; making the word inspired by him the rule of behaviour, which as it is the standard of faith, so of practice, and is the lamp unto our feet, and the light unto our path; taking him himself for a guide, who not only guides into all truth, but in the way of holiness and righteousness unto the land of uprightness; and depending upon his grace and strength for assistance throughout the whole of our walk and conversation: or in the exercise of the graces of the Spirit of God; as in the exercise of faith upon the person and grace of Christ, of which the Spirit is the author; and in love to God, Christ, and one another, which is a fruit of the Spirit; and in humility, lowliness of mind, meekness and condescension; all which is to walk in the Spirit, or spiritually, and strengthens the argument for love the apostle is upon: and this he encourages to by observing,

and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh; he does not say there shall be no flesh, nor any lust of the flesh in them if they walk spiritually; or that the flesh should not act and operate in them; or that they should do no sinful action; all which is only true of Christ; and the contrary is to be found and observed in all true Christians, though ever so spiritual; but that they should not fulfil or perfect the lust of the flesh; should not give up themselves entirely to the power and dictates of the flesh, so as to be under it and at its command, and be obedient servants and slaves unto it; for, in this sense only, such that are spiritual do not, commit sin, they do not make a trade of it, it is not their constant employ or course of conversation.

Galatians 5:17

Ver. 17. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit,.... By "flesh" is meant, not the carnal or literal sense of the Scripture, which is Origen's gloss, as militating against the spiritual sense of it; nor the sensual part of man rebelling against his rational powers; but the corruption of nature, which still is in regenerate persons: and is so called because it is propagated by carnal generation; has for its object carnal things; its lusts and works are fleshly; and though it has its seat in the heart, it shows itself in the flesh or members of the body, which are yielded as instruments of unrighteousness; and it makes and denominates men carnal, even believers themselves so far as it prevails: by "the Spirit" is meant the internal principle of grace in a regenerate man, and is so called from the author of it, the Spirit of God, whose name it bears, because it is his workmanship; and from the seat and subject of it, the soul or spirit of man; and from the nature of it, it is spiritual, a new heart and a new Spirit; its objects are spiritual, and it minds, savours, and delights in spiritual things: and the meaning of the lusting of the one against the other, for it is reciprocal, hence it follows,

and the Spirit against the flesh, is that the one wills, chooses, desires, and affects what is contrary to the other; so the flesh, or the old man, the carnal I, in regenerate persons, wills, chooses, desires, and loves carnal things, which are contrary to the Spirit or principle of grace in the soul; and on the other hand, the Spirit or the new man, the spiritual I, wills, chooses, desire, approves, and loves spiritual things, such as are contrary to corrupt nature; and this sense is strengthened by the Oriental versions. The Syriac version reads, "for the flesh desires that" aknd, "which hurts", or is contrary to "the Spirit"; and "the Spirit desires that which hurts", or is contrary to the "flesh"; and much in the same way the Arabic version renders it, "for the flesh desires that which militates against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires that which militates against the flesh"; to which the Ethiopic version agrees, reading it thus, "for the flesh desires what the Spirit would not, and the Spirit desires what the flesh would not"; the reason whereof is suggested in the next clause:

and these are contrary the one to the other; as light and darkness, fire and water, or any two opposites can be thought to be; they are contrary in their nature, actings, and effects; there is not only a repugnancy to each other, but a continued war, conflict, and combat, is maintained between them; the flesh is the law in the members or force of sin, which wars against the spirit, the law in the mind, or the force and power of the principle of grace; these are the company of two armies, to be seen in the Shulamite, fighting one against the other. So the Jews say {w} of the good imagination, and of the evil one, by which they mean the same as here, that they are like Abraham and Lot; and that

"though they are brethren, joined in one body, hzl hz
Mybywa Mh, "they are enemies to one another";"

hence it follows,

so that ye cannot do the good that ye would which may be understood both of evil things and of good things. The former seems to be chiefly the apostle's sense; since the whole of this text is a reason given why those who walk spiritually shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, because they have a powerful governing principle in them, the Spirit, or grace; which though the flesh lusts against, and opposes itself unto, yet that also rises up against the flesh, and often hinders it from doing the works and lusts of it. There is in regenerate men a propensity and inclination to sin, a carnal I, that wills and desires sin, and wishes for an opportunity to do it, which when it offers, the flesh strongly solicits to it; but the Spirit, or the internal principle of grace, opposes the motion; and like another Joseph says, how can I commit this great wickedness and sin against a God of so much love and grace? it is a voice behind and even in a believer, which, when he is tempted to turn to the right hand or the left, says, this is the way, walk in it, and will not suffer him to go into crooked paths with the workers of iniquity; and so sin cannot have the dominion over him, because he is under grace as a reigning principle; and the old man cannot do the evil things he would, being under the restraints of mighty grace. This is the apostle's principal sense, and best suits with his reasoning in the context; but inasmuch as the lusting and opposition of these two principles are mutual and reciprocal, the other sense may also be taken in; as that oftentimes, by reason of the prevalence of corrupt nature, and power of indwelling sin, a regenerate man does the evil he would not, and cannot do the good he would; for he would always do good and nothing else, and even as the angels do it in heaven; but he cannot, because of this opposite principle, the flesh.

{w} Tzeror, Hammor, fol. 15. 3.

Galatians 5:18

Ver. 18. But if ye be led by the Spirit,.... That is, of God, who is the guide and leader of his people. It is a metaphor taken from the leading of persons that are blind; as such are before conversion, and whom the Spirit of God leads in ways they knew not, and in paths they had not known: or from the leading of children, and teaching them to go; so the Spirit leads regenerate persons, and teaches them to walk by faith in Christ. This act of leading supposes life in the persons led, for dead men cannot be led; the Spirit is first a Spirit of life from Christ before he is a leader; and also it supposes some strength, though a good deal of weakness; were there no spiritual strength derived from Christ, they could not be led; and if there was no weakness, there would be no need of leading; it is an instance of powerful and efficacious grace upon them, yet not contrary to their wills, though they are led, they are not forced; they go freely, being led, as there is good reason for it; for the Spirit of God always leads for their profit and advantage, and for the spiritual delight, pleasure, and comfort of their souls; he leads out of the ways of sin, and so of ruin and destruction, and from Mount Sinai, and all dependence on a legal and moral righteousness; he leads to Christ, to his person, for shelter, safety, and salvation, to his blood, for pardon and cleansing, to his righteousness, for justification, and to his fulness, for every supply of grace; he leads into the presence of God, and to his house and ordinances; he leads into the covenant of grace, to the blessings, promises, and Mediator of it; he leads into all truth as it is in Jesus, in the ways of faith and truth, and in the paths of righteousness and holiness, and always in a right way, though sometimes in a rough one, to the city of their habitation; he leads from one degree of grace to another, and at last to glory: all which he does gradually; he leads by little and little into a man's sinfulness, and to see his interest in Christ, and by degrees into the doctrines of the Gospel, and the everlasting love of the three Persons; and proportionally to the strength he gives, and as they are able to bear: now such persons as these have nothing to fear from the law of God:

ye are not under the law; such are not only delivered from the law in fact, but in their own apprehensions; they have the comfortable knowledge and experience of it; the law is no terrifying law to them; it works no wrath in them; they are delivered from the spirit of bondage to fear, by the Spirit of God, by whom they are led; nor are they under it, nor do they need it as a pressing forcing law to duty; they delight in it, and cheerfully serve it, being constrained by love, and not awed by fear; nor are its accusations and charges regarded, or to be regarded, by such who are led by the Spirit to Christ, the end of the law for righteousness; and they are entirely freed from its curse and condemnation, though they are under it, and desire to be under it, as held forth by Christ the King of saints; and, under the Spirit's influence and guidance, yield a cheerful and evangelical obedience to it.

Galatians 5:19

Ver. 19. Now the works of the flesh are manifest,.... By "flesh" is meant corrupt nature, as before, and by the works of it, not only external acts of sin, but inward lusts; for such are here mentioned among its works, as "hatred", "wrath", "envyings", &c. and both external and internal acts are so called, because they spring from the flesh, or corrupt nature, and are what that urges and solicits to, and are wrought thereby, and are what denominate and show men to be carnal: these are said to be "manifest"; not that they are all, and always publicly done, and are open to the sight of men; for they are works of darkness, and often done in secret, though they are always manifest to God the searcher of hearts, and will be brought to light in the day of judgment; but they are known to be sins in some measure by the light of nature, and especially by the law of God; and a clear case it is, that they are contrary to the Spirit, both to the Spirit of God, and to the principle of grace he forms in the heart; and that such who live in the commission of them are not led by him, nor are under the influence of his grace:

which are these; though all are not mentioned, only some of the chief, by which judgment may be made of the rest:

adultery; this is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and in the Alexandrian copy; it is a defilement of the marriage bed, and is the sin of uncleanness committed by two persons, one of which at least is in a married state, is condemned by the law of God and light of nature:

fornication; which though by many of the Gentiles was reckoned no sin, or a very small one, stands here among the works of the flesh, that are manifest and to be avoided; it is the sin of uncleanness committed by persons in a single state;

uncleanness, it is a general name for all unchastity, in thought, word, or action; and may here design more especially all unnatural lusts, as

sodomy, self-pollution, &c.

lasciviousness; or wantonness, all lustful dalliance, everything that leads on to acts of uncleanness, or attends them, as impure words, filthy gestures, and the like.

Galatians 5:20

Ver. 20. Idolatry,.... Which some understand of covetousness, which is so called; but rather it means the worshipping of other gods, or of graven images:

witchcraft; any real or pretended league and association with the devil, seeking to converse with familiar spirits, to gain unlawful knowledge, or to do hurt to fellow creatures; which, as it is doing honour to Satan, detracts from the glory of God, and rightly follows idolatry; conjuration, soothsaying, necromancy, and all kind of magic are included and condemned hereby:

hatred: internal hatred of any man's person, even of our very enemies, is forbidden; in the original text it is "enmities": as the carnal mind is nothing else but enmity against God and Christ, against law and Gospel, and all good men, and everything that is good:

variance, or "contentions"; fighting and quarrelling, by words scandalous and reproachful, what we commonly call scolding:

emulations or "zeals"; not good, but bad: a boiling and rising up of the spirits and passions, at the honour and happiness of another:

wrath or "wraths" violent emotions of the mind, moving to revenge, and seeking the hurt and mischief of others:

strife or "strifes"; perpetual contradictions and cavilings, either expressed by words, or working in the mind; for this strife may be in a man's heart, according to **Jas 3:14**

seditions or "divisions": schisms and factions, dissensions in things domestic, civil, and religious:

heresies; bad principles and tenets, relating to doctrine, which are subversive of the fundamentals of the Gospel and the Christian religion; and are the produce of a man's own invention, and the matter of his choice, without any foundation in the word of God; and these are works of the flesh, for they spring from a corrupt and carnal mind, and are propagated with carnal views, as popular applause, worldly advantage, and indulging the lusts of the flesh.

Galatians 5:21

Ver. 21. Envyings..... Uneasy distressing tortures of the mind, grieving at the good of others, that any should be in an equal, or in a better condition than themselves:

murders, destroying of men's lives, which is often the consequence of the above evils:

drunkenness; excess in drinking of wine or strong drink, whereby the stomach is overcharged, the mind is intoxicated, and the body enfeebled and unable to perform its office; this is often the source of many, or all of the works of the flesh before mentioned:

revellings; excess in feed, nocturnal riotings in eating, drinking, dancing, singing, chambering and wantonness. The Syriac version renders it, armz, "lascivious singing"; and the Arabic version, "songs" which are a part of the nightly revels: and such like which are of the same nature and kind; so the apostle shuts up the account, it being too tedious to give an enumeration of all the works of the flesh; nor was it necessary, judgment may be made of the rest by these; nor might it be so proper, since the carnal heart is but the more pleased with, and irritated by, the mention of evil things:

of the which I tell you before: before the judge comes and the awful judgment proceeds, when these will all be made manifest, and every man will be judged according to his works: this the apostle did, as putting them in mind of the evil nature of these things, and assuring them of the bad consequences that would follow, if grace prevented not:

as I have also told you in time past; when he first preached among them, and warned them to flee from the wrath to come; he then laid before them the evil nature of these things, the dreadful effects of them, and showed that there was no salvation from them, but by Christ:

and that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God; by which is meant the heavenly glory, called a "kingdom", because of the grandeur and magnificence of that state; and "of God", because it is of his preparing and giving, what he calls his own to by his grace, and puts them into the possession of and where he reigns and will reign for ever, and show forth the glory of his majesty: this is possessed in way of inheritance, which shows it to be a bequest of our heavenly Father's, a free grace gift of his, and not to be obtained by the works of the law, or merits of men; but what belongs, and is peculiar to the children of God, who are so by adopting grace: now they that do such works of the flesh as before enumerated; that is, that live in the commission of these things, whose whole lives are employed in such work, living and dying in such a state, without repentance towards God and faith in Christ, shall never enjoy eternal life and happiness; though such who have done these things, being brought to a sense of them, and to the blood and righteousness of Christ for pardon and justification, for life and salvation; such, notwithstanding the works of the flesh done by them, shall, through the free grace of God, and the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, inherit the kingdom and glory of God.

Galatians 5:22

Ver. 22. But the fruit of the Spirit,.... Not of nature or man's free will, as corrupted by sin, for no good fruit springs from thence; but either of the internal principle of grace, called the Spirit, **Ga 5:17** or rather of the Holy Spirit, as the Ethiopic version reads it; the graces of which are called "fruit", and not "works", as the actions of the flesh are; because they are owing to divine influence efficacy, and bounty, as the fruits of the earth are, to which the allusion is; and not to a man's self, to the power and principles of nature; and because they arise from a seed, either the incorruptible seed of internal grace, which seminally contains all graces in it, or the blessed Spirit, who is the seed that remains in believers; and because they are in the exercise of them acceptable unto God through Christ, and are grateful and delightful to Christ himself, being "his pleasant fruits"; which as they come from him, as the author of them, they are exercised on him as the object of them, under the influence of the Spirit; and because they are profitable to them that are possessed of them, seeing the promise of this life and that which is to come is annexed to them; and the good works which are done in consequence of them are profitable to men: once more, as the works of the flesh are the unfruitful works of darkness, and make men so, and therefore cannot be called fruit properly; these, as they are fruits, and are rightly and properly so called, so they make men fruitful, and to abound in divine things, and are as follow:

Love. This the apostle begins with, it being the fulfilling of the law, the bond of perfectness, and without which a profession of religion is insignificant; it may be understood of love to God, of which every man's heart is destitute, being enmity against God, until regenerated by the Spirit of God; when he sheds abroad the love of God in the heart, and which is the ground and reason of any man's truly loving God: and also of love to Christ, which the natural man feels nothing of till the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ, opens his eyes to see the loveliness of his person, the suitableness of his grace, righteousness, and fulness, and the necessity of looking to him for life and salvation; and likewise of love to the saints, which a carnal man is a stranger to, until he is renewed by the Holy Ghost, who in regenerating him teaches him to love the brethren; and which is the evidence of his having passed from death to life, through the mighty power of his grace. Moreover, love to the house and worship of God, to the truths and ordinances of the Gospel, all which men have naturally an aversion to, may be included in this first fruit of the Spirit: the next follows, which is

joy, even that which is in the Holy Ghost, and has him for its author. The object of it is God, not as an absolute God, but as a covenant God and Father in Christ; as the God of salvation, as clothing with the robe of his Son's righteousness, and as pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, full atonement being made by the sacrifice of Christ; who also is the object of this joy in his person, fulness, righteousness, offices, relations, and when beheld, embraced, and enjoyed in a way of communion. This joy, likewise, which is the produce of the Spirit, lies in spiritual things, and arises from an apprehension or good hope of interest in them, as justification, pardon, peace, adoption, and eternal glory; and is peculiar to such who have the Spirit, for a stranger intermeddles not with this joy, nor can he form any judgment of it, and is even unspeakable by the believer himself. Moreover, joy in the good of others, of fellow creatures and fellow Christians, in their outward and inward prosperity, in their temporal, spiritual, and eternal good, which, as it is a grace of the Spirit, may well enough be thought to be at least part of the sense of the word here; since it follows upon, and is joined with love, and stands between that and

peace, which is another fruit of the Spirit: and designs peace with God in a man's own conscience, produced there by the Spirit of God, in consequence of peace being made by the blood of Christ; and that through the application of the blood of Christ for pardon, and of his righteousness for justification to the soul of a sensible sinner by the blessed Spirit, the effect of which is peace, quietness, and tranquillity of mind; also peace with men, with the saints, and with all others; for such who are under a work of the Spirit of God, and are influenced and led by him, seek after the things which make for peace and edification among the brethren, and are desirous if possible to live peaceably with all men: hence appears another grace in them,

longsuffering; which intends not so much a patient waiting for good things to come, for more grace, and for glory, through the Spirit; but a patient bearing and enduring of present evils with joyfulness, being strengthened by the Spirit with all might, according to his glorious power; being slow to anger, ready to forgive injuries, put up with affronts, and bear with, and forbear one another: and which is usually accompanied with gentleness, humanity, affability, courteousness, shown both in words, gestures, and actions; in imitation of the gentleness of Christ, and agreeably to that wisdom, that heavenly doctrine of the Gospel, which, among other things, is said to be gentle, and easy to be entreated. To which is added goodness; and what else can come from the good Spirit of God, the author of the good work of grace upon the soul? and which disposes it to acts of goodness unto men, in a natural, civil, moral, spiritual, and evangelic way, for the benefit both of soul and body; and which must here be understood, and which is well pleasing to God when done in the exercise of the following grace,

faith; for though fidelity, both in words and actions, which is very ornamental to the Gospel, and a profession of religion may be meant; yet faith in Christ is not to be excluded, as it is generally by interpreters; for this is not of a man's self, nor have all men it: it is a gift of God, the operation of his power, and the work of his Spirit, whence he is styled the spirit of faith; and which therefore must have a place among his fruits; and which lies and shows itself in believing in Christ for salvation, in embracing the doctrines of the Gospel, and making a profession of them, which is called the profession of faith; all which, when right, comes from the Spirit of God.

Galatians 5:23

Ver. 23. Meekness,.... Humility and lowliness of mind, of which Christ is an eminent example and pattern; and which the Holy Spirit from him transcribes into the heart of a regenerate person; and lies in having mean thoughts of himself, in walking humbly with God, acknowledging every favour, being thankful for every blessing, and depending on his grace, and in behaving with modesty and humility among men. The last of the fruits of the Spirit mentioned is

temperance, or "continence"; and designs both chastity and sobriety, and particularly moderation in eating and drinking. It may be observed, that these fruits of the Spirit are opposed to the works of the flesh. So love is opposed to hatred; joy to emulations and envying; peace to variance, strife, and seditions; longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, and meekness, to wrath and murders; faith to idolatry, witchcraft, and heresies; and temperance to adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, drunkenness, and revellings.

Against such there is no law; meaning, against such fruits, graces, and good things; these being perfectly agreeable to the law of God, which is holy, just, and good, and spiritual; and are so far from being forbidden by it, that they are highly esteemed and approved of by it: or against persons that are possessed of such fruits; for these appear to be in the spirit, and to be led by the Spirit; and therefore are not under the law, and have nothing to fear from it, as a terrifying, accusing, cursing, and condemning law. The works of the flesh, and they that are of the flesh, are such that come under the notice and lash of the law; and not the fruits of the Spirit, and they that are after the Spirit, as such are who partake of his fruit.

Galatians 5:24

Ver. 24. And they that are Christ's,.... Not all as yet that are secretly so, who are chosen in him, and by him, are given by the Father to him in covenant, and whom he has purchased by his blood, and considers as his people, his sheep, and his children, though as yet they are not called by his grace; of these, as yet, what follows cannot be said, and therefore must mean such as are openly Christ's, whom he has laid hold on as his own in the effectual calling, who have his Spirit as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, who have truly believed in Christ, and have given up themselves unto him.

Have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts: by the flesh is meant, not the natural body to be macerated and afflicted with fastings, watchings, &c. but the corruption of nature, the old man and carnal heart. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "their own flesh"; and so do the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; their concern lying with their own, and not with the corruptions, affections, and lusts of others. By "the affections and lusts" are intended, not the natural affections and passions of the soul, and the desires of it; but its vile and inordinate affections, its corrupt inclinations, evil desires, and deceitful lusts; all which are "crucified" first "with Christ", as the Arabic version reads; see **Ro 6:6** and which are so abolished, done away, and destroyed, by the sacrifice of Christ, that the damning power of them over his people is entirely gone. And in consequence of this crucifixion of the body of sin, with Christ upon the cross, when he finished and made an end of it, sin, with its passions and lusts, is crucified by the Spirit of God in regeneration and sanctification; so that it loses its governing power, and has not the dominion it had before: not but that the flesh, or corrupt nature, with its evil affections, and carnal lusts, are still in being, and are alive; as a person fastened to a cross may be alive, though he cannot act and move as before, being under restraints, so the old man, though crucified, and under the restraints of mighty grace, and cannot reign and govern as before, yet is alive, and acts, and operates, and oftentimes has great sway and influence; but whereas he is deprived of his reigning power, he is said to be crucified: and though this act is ascribed to them that are Christ's, yet not as done by them in their own strength, who are not able to grapple with one corruption, but as under the influence of the grace of Christ, and through the power of his Spirit; see **Ro 8:13**.

Galatians 5:25

Ver. 25. If we live in the Spirit,.... Or "by the Spirit", as all do that are spiritually alive. Sin has not only brought on men a corporeal death, and made them liable to an eternal one, but has also induced upon them a spiritual or moral death; they are dead in trespasses and sin, nor can they quicken themselves, nor can any creature give them life; not the ministers of the word, nor the angels in heaven, only the blessed Spirit is the spirit of life from Christ; who entering into them, frees them from the law of sin and death, and implants a principle of spiritual life in them, whereby they live a life of faith on Christ, of holiness from him, and communion with him: and this the apostle makes use of, as an argument with believers to walk after the Spirit,

let us also walk in the Spirit: or "by the Spirit"; by his help and assistance, according to the rule of his word, and under his influence and direction as a guide, to which he had before advised in **Ga 5:18**.

Galatians 5:26

Ver. 26. Let us not be desirous of vain glory,.... Ambitious of being thought wiser, and richer, and more valuable than others; of having the preeminence in the management of all affairs, and of having honour, esteem, and popular applause from men: this may well be called vain glory, since it is only in outward things, as wisdom, riches, strength, and honour, and not in God the giver of them, and who can easily take them away; and therefore is but for a time, and is quickly gone, and lies only in the opinion and breath of men.

Provoking one another; not to good works, which would be right, but to anger and wrath, which is contrary to Christian charity, or true love; which, as it is not easily provoked, so neither will it provoke others to evil things. The Syriac version renders it by
Nylqm, "slighting", or "despising one another"; and the Arabic version, "insulting one another"; vices to which men, and even Christian brethren in the same communion, are too prone.

Envying one another; their gifts and abilities, natural and spiritual; their rank and station in the world, or in the church. These were sins the Galatians very probably were subject to; and where they prevail, there is confusion, and every evil work, and are therefore to be watched and guarded against.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Galatians 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO GALATIANS 6

In this chapter the apostle exhorts to the exercise of various things, which greatly become professors of religion, such as meekness towards backsliders, love to the saints, modesty in themselves, and beneficence to others; exposes the hypocrisy and ambition of the false teachers, in order that the Galatians might beware of them, and not be ensnared by them; and gives an account of his own disposition, conduct, and sufferings, as a rule and example to them, and by which they might judge of the difference between him and the false apostles; and concludes the epistle with his apostolical salutation and benediction. Having mentioned the fruits of the spirit in the preceding chapter, he singles out some of them, and a little enlarges upon them; and begins with meekness, as that should be used by spiritual men to fallen believers, which he persuades to, not only because they are brethren, and but men, and have been overtaken in sin unawares; but because, though they themselves are spiritual, yet should consider they are liable to be tempted, **Ga 6:1**. And next he advises to show their love to one another, by bearing each other's burdens, which he enforces by this argument, it being a fulfilling the law of Christ, **Ga 6:2**. And whereas pride and haughtiness lie in the way of such a deportment, he dissuades from a vain opinion of a man's self, that being no other than self-deception, **Ga 6:3**, and observes, that a man will have the best view of himself and see what occasion he has for glorying, when he considers himself simply and nakedly, and not in comparison with others, **Ga 6:4**, and there is good reason why he should do so, seeing every man must give an account of his own actions, be judged according to them, and receive his reward or punishment, **Ga 6:5**. Hence the apostle passes to liberality and beneficence, and first to teachers of the word, to whom such as are taught by them should communicate, and that in good things, and in all good things, **Ga 6:6**. The arguments used to enforce this exhortation are, that to do otherwise is a deception of themselves, and is a mocking of God; and besides, they shall be treated according to their actions, the use or abuse of what God has given them, signified by a proverbial expression, what a man sows, that shall he reap, **Ga 6:7**, which is enlarged upon and illustrated, by observing, that he that spends his substance merely on himself, and on carnal pleasures, and to indulge the flesh, the issue of things to him will be ruin, temporal and eternal; but he that lays out his substance on spiritual things, and for spiritual purposes, the issue will be life everlasting, **Ga 6:8**. Wherefore the apostle renews the exhortation to be bountiful without weariness, seeing there is a reaping time coming, **Ga 6:9**, and then points out the persons in general to whom good is to be done as opportunity offers, even all men, but especially such as are believers in Christ, are of his family, and particularly stewards there, as ministers of the Gospel are, **Ga 6:10**. And thus the apostle, having finished what he chiefly intended in this epistle, observes to the Galatians the great regard he had to them, shown in writing to them so long a letter, and that with his own hand, **Ga 6:11**. And as his chief view was to detect the false apostles, he cannot conclude without taking some further notice of them, which he does by exposing their hypocrisy and ambition; they only made a show of religion outwardly, and obliged others to do that, which they did not choose themselves, namely, to be circumcised; and their ends in all this were, that they might be free from persecution, and have matter of glorying in the proselytes they made, **Ga 6:12**, but the apostle was of a quite different temper and disposition; so far was he from glorying in his own flesh, or others, that his determination was to glory only in Christ, and in his cross, and that for this reason, because the world thereby was crucified to him, and he unto the world, **Ga 6:14**, as also, because circumcision, which the false teachers obliged to, and gloried in, and likewise uncircumcision, were of no avail in religious, spiritual, and eternal affairs, but a new creature, **Ga 6:15**, and this is what everyone ought to attend unto as the rule of his walk and conduct, since upon such shall be mercy and peace, as upon the Israel of God, **Ga 6:16**. And whereas the false apostles boasted of the flesh, and circumcision in it, the apostle opposes thereunto the marks of his sufferings for Christ, which he bore in his body; and therefore with great gravity and authority charges, that no man should give him any further trouble about what had been the subject matter of this epistle, **Ga 6:17**, and closes it with his usual salutation, expressing his affection for the Galatians, as his brethren, wishing the best of blessings for them, the grace of Christ, and that this might be in their hearts, and with their spirits, **Ga 6:18**.

Ver. 1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault,.... Or "be taken before" in one; not, as Grotius thinks, before this epistle should come to them, which is a very jejune and empty sense of the words; nor before the conversion of the man, because sins before conversion do not come under the notice and cognizance of a church, or are liable to its reproofs and censures; but before the man is aware, through negligence and imprudence, for want of caution and circumspection, and so is carried away, either through the treachery of his own heart, and the power of corruption; or through the temptations of Satan, who goes about, and comes on the back of them, lays snares for them, and attacks them unawares, and takes all advantages of them; or by the ill examples of others, whereby they are drawn aside, and into sin. The apostle has no particular respect by a "fault" to schisms in the church, or to any errors or heresies in doctrine, though the restoration of such in meekness should be endeavoured; but rather to immorality in life and conversation, and indeed to any of the works of the flesh mentioned in the preceding chapter; and especially he means any "fall" of professors, as the word used signifies, into sin, through inadvertency and want of care and watchfulness, in distinction from a wilful, obstinate, and continued course of sinning; and intends not any man in the world, for those that are without, churches and members of churches have nothing to do with in a church way; but any man that is a brother, a church member, that stands in such a relation to them, when he falls into sin, is to be taken notice of by them. And so the Syriac version reads, "any one of you"; as does one of Stephens's copies.

Ye that are spiritual; meaning not such who had greater spiritual gifts than others, their ministers, pastors, and ecclesiastical governors, though these may be so called; and to them it belongs to reprove and rebuke, recover and restore backsliders, which they should do in gentleness and meekness; but the apostle here addresses the brethren in general, the several members of the church, even all but those that were fallen: nor does he mean such as have more spiritual knowledge than others, in opposition to babes; nor regenerate persons, and such as had the Spirit of God, in distinction from carnal men; but such as live and walk in the Spirit, and are strong, and stand by the power and grace of the Spirit of God, as opposed to the weak, and who were fallen through the prevalency of the flesh, and force of temptation; whose duty it is, and on whom it lies, to

restore such an one, that is overtaken and fallen. The allusion is to the setting of bones that are broken, or out of joint, which is done with great care and tenderness. Professors fallen into sin are like broken and dislocated bones; they are out of their place, and lose both their comfort and usefulness, and are to be restored by gently telling them of their faults, and mildly reproving them for them; and when sensible of them, and troubled for them, by speaking comfortably to them, and by bringing them again, and resettling them in their former place in the church, and restoring them to their former usefulness and good conduct: and which is to be done in the spirit of meekness: in the exercise of that grace which is a gift and fruit of the Spirit of God; or with a meek and humble spirit, not bearing hard upon them, and treating them in a supercilious and haughty manner, upbraiding them with their faults, aggravating them, and using them roughly, and with sharpness, which in some cases is necessary, but not in this:

considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted: a spiritual man should consider himself as in the body, and as carrying about with him a body of sin, a corrupt and treacherous heart, that is full of deceitful lusts, by which he may be tempted also, and drawn away and enticed; and as being liable to the temptations of Satan, and of being overcome by; them, against which he should watch and pray; and should think with himself what he would choose, and should desire to be done to him in such a case, and do the like to others that are in it. This is a reason enforcing the exhortation; and indeed almost every word in the text carries an argument engaging to it. The relation the saints stand in to one another, as "brethren", should excite them to seek each other's welfare, and to restore any that are fallen, and to abstain from all roughness and severity. The persons addressed are "spiritual", and therefore should behave as such as have the fruits of the Spirit, and, among the rest that of meekness; and, since they are strong, should help the weak, and raise up the fallen: the persons recommended to them, as the objects of their pity, care, and concern, are not such who have given up themselves to sin, but are circumvented by it, and "overtaken" in it, suddenly, and at unawares. And besides, are men, frail sinful men, liable to sin, encompassed with infirmities, and exposed to snares and temptations, which are common to human nature, and therefore should be used gently and tenderly: The apostle having given an enumeration in the foregoing chapter, of the works of the flesh, and fruits of the Spirit, directs such as are in the exercise of the latter, how to behave towards those that fall into the commission of any of the former, which may be expected, since there is flesh as well as spirit in the best.

Galatians 6:2

Ver. 2. Bear ye one another's burdens,.... Which may be understood either of sins, which are heavy burdens to sensible sinners, to all that are partakers of the grace of God; Christ is only able to bear these burdens, so as to remove them and take them away, which he has done by his blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction; saints bear one another's, not by making satisfaction for them, which they are not able to do, nor by conniving at them, and suffering them upon them, which they should not do, but by gently reproving them, by comforting them when overpressed with guilt, by sympathizing with them in their sorrow, by praying to God for to manifest his pardoning grace to them, and by forgiving them themselves, so far as they are faults committed against them: or else the frailties and infirmities of weak saints, which are troublesome, and apt to make uneasy, are meant; and which are to be bore by the strong, by making themselves easy with them, and by accommodating themselves to their weakness, and by abridging themselves of some liberties, which otherwise might be lawfully taken by them; or afflictions may be designed, which are grievous to the flesh, and are bore by others, when they administer help and relief under them, whether in a temporal or spiritual way; and when they condole them, and sympathize with them, bear a part with them, and make others' griefs and sorrows their own:

and so fulfil the law of Christ; which is the law of love to one another, Joh 13:34 in opposition to the law of Moses, the judaizing Galatians were so fond of, and by which Christ's disciples may be distinguished from those of Moses, or any others. This is a law or doctrine which Christ has clearly taught, and recovered from the false glosses of the Pharisees; it is his new commandment, which he has strengthened and enforced by his own example in dying for his people, and which he, by his Spirit, inscribes upon their hearts. The Jews speak of the law of the Messiah as preferable to any other.

"The law (they say {x}) which a man learns in this world is vanity, in comparison of xyvm lv wtrwt "the law of the Messiah", or Christ;"

by "fulfilling", it is meant, doing it, acting in obedience to it, and not a perfect fulfilling it, which cannot be done by sinful creatures.

{x} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 83. 1.

Galatians 6:3

Ver. 3. For if a man think himself to be something,.... Of himself; to have anything of himself, to do anything of himself, and of himself to attain to life and salvation:

when he is nothing: of himself; not even as a creature, but owes his being and preservation, and all the mercies of life, to another, even to God; has no grace nor gifts of himself, but what he has received, and can do no good thing, not think a good thought, or perform a good action, of himself, and much less of himself procure eternal life and salvation:

he deceiveth himself: and will find himself sadly mistaken, and wretchedly disappointed another day; or whoever thinks himself to be some famous and excellent person, to be something more, and better than others, of a more excellent nature, and of greater abilities, that he is free from sin, or at least holier than others, and not liable to fall as others, whom he looks upon with disdain and contempt, wanting that charity which the law, and new commandment of Christ, requires, when he is nothing but sin and vanity, he is destitute of the grace of God, he deceives himself and the truth is not in him. This the apostle says to depress pride, and a swelling conceit of themselves, and all uncharitable, rough, and severe usages of others. A saying like this the Jews have {y};

"whoever he is that is something, or thinks in himself that he is Mwlk, "something", it would be better for him if he had never been created."

{y} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 79. 1.

Galatians 6:4

Ver. 4. But let every man prove his own work,.... Not concern himself about the actions and works of others; let him review his own heart and actions; let him examine, try, and prove his whole conduct in life by the rule of God's word, when he will find enough at home, without bearing hard upon, and censuring others:

and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another; which is either ironically said, he will then see what reason he has to rejoice and glory in his own works, and vaunt over others, and to boast of his performances, and despise others; so far from it, that he will have reason to be ashamed of himself, and to own and acknowledge his unworthiness and unprofitableness: or if, upon such a review, examination, and probation of his works, it shall appear that he has had his conversation in the world, by the grace of God, in simplicity and godly sincerity, this testimony of his conscience will be his rejoicing; see **2Co 1:12**. He may rejoice "in himself", in his own works, as the fruits of grace, but not as the effects of his own power and strength; and may glory and boast of them before men, in vindication of his cause and character, and as evidences of the truth of grace, but not before God, as if they were the matter of his justification and acceptance:

and not in another; that is fallen into sin; making use of his sins and faults to set off himself, and to increase his own praise and condemnation; rejoicing in this, that he is better than others, and is not, as the Pharisee said, as other men are, as wicked as they, or has not fallen into such sins as others have done. He will have occasion to take such a method as this, if his conversation will bear the test; he will have rejoicing in the testimony of his own conscience, and will have no need to compare himself with others; his glorying will be on account of his own actions, and not through a comparison of other men's. This no ways contradicts a man's glorying in God, and rejoicing in Christ Jesus alone, in the business of salvation. It only regards a man's glorying before men, in a modest and humble manner, of what he is enabled to do, by the grace of God, without fetching in the characters of other men that are wicked, or have fallen, to illustrate his own.

Galatians 6:5

Ver. 5. For every man shall bear his own burden. That is, either do his own work, which God has allotted him to do, whether in a more public or private station of life; which, because it is generally troublesome to the flesh, is called a "burden", and "his own", being peculiar to himself, and in which no other is concerned; and which he should patiently bear, cheerfully attend to, and constantly and faithfully perform while in this world: or he shall give an account of his own actions, and not another's, to God, in the other world; he shall be judged according to his own works, what they are in themselves, and not by a comparison of other men's, who have been more wicked than he; which will be no rule of judgment with God, nor of any advantage to man. Every wicked man will bear his own burden; that is, the punishment of his own sins, and not another's; so the judgments of God, inflicted on men in this world, are often called
avm, "a burden"; see Isa 13:1 and so may the punishment of the wicked in another world, which will be grievous and intolerable. The saints will be exempt from bearing this burden, because Christ has bore it for them, even all their sins, and all the punishment due unto them; but another burden, if it may be so called, even an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, shall be bore by them; and every man shall receive his own reward, and not another's; and that according to his own works and labour, and not another's; not indeed for his works, but according to them, the nature of them, according to the grace of God, from whence his works spring, and by which they are performed. This the apostle says to take off men from dwelling upon, and censuring the actions

of others, and from making use of them to set off their own, and buoy themselves up with vain hopes, because they are better than others; and also to engage them to attend strictly to their own actions, and consider them simply and absolutely as in themselves, and not as compared with other men's, since they will be accountable for their own actions, and not other men's; and will be judged according to their own works, and not in a comparative view to others.

Galatians 6:6

Ver. 6. Let him that is taught in the word,.... Instructed in the knowledge of the word, either of the essential Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, of his person, office, and grace; or rather of the written word, particularly the Gospel, which is sometimes called the word, without any additional epithet, which distinguishes it, and directs to the sense of it; and sometimes with such, as the words of truth, the word of faith, the word of righteousness, the word of reconciliation, and the word of this salvation, so called from the nature, use, and subject matter of it. He that is taught in this, is, according to the original word used here, a "catechumen"; and which designs not one that is just beginning to learn the first principles of the oracles of God, but anyone that is instructed in it, as this word is rendered in **Ro 2:18** whether more or less, or whether internally or externally: one that is internally taught in and by the word, is one that has been taught to know himself, and his lost state by nature; to know Christ, and salvation by him; to know the truths of the Gospel, and to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly. It may include everyone that is only outwardly taught, that is but an external hearer; and so the Syriac version renders the clause, atlm emvd, "he that hears the word": of which there are many sorts, and on whom it is an incumbent duty to

communicate to him that teacheth; who is commissioned, and qualified and sent forth by Christ, and whose office in the church is to teach the word, to preach the Gospel, to instruct men in the truths of it, and teach them their duty also to God and men, such are to be communicated to; that is, such as are under their instructions ought to impart of their worldly substance to them, for their honourable and comfortable support and maintenance; for since they spend their time, and make use of their talents, gifts, and abilities, for their instruction in spiritual things, it is but reasonable, and no such great matter, that they partake of their carnal things; and especially since it is the will and ordinance of Christ, that they that preach the Gospel should live of it. The apostle adds, in all good things; which may be either connected with the word "teacheth", and so be descriptive of the teacher, as the Arabic version reads, "him that teacheth all his good things"; good doctrines, excellent truths, the wholesome words of Christ, which he is intrusted with, has a knowledge and experience of; and who freely and faithfully imparts them, and conceals and keeps back nothing, but declares the whole counsel of God, all that he knows, and that is good and profitable; and carries in it a very strong argument why he should be communicated to: or else with the word "communicate"; and the sense either be, let him be a partaker of, and join with him in everything he says or does that is good, but not in anything that is evil, which is a sense some give into; or rather let him impart of his temporal good things unto him: temporal things are good as they are of God, and in themselves, and when rightly used answer good purposes; all a man's good things are not to be communicated, only a part, according to his ability, and in proportion to others; and yet the communication should be large and liberal, sufficient to support the teacher in an honourable manner, and to supply him with all the necessaries of life, that his mind may be free from secular cares, and he be at leisure to attend to the instructing of others.

Galatians 6:7

Ver. 7. Be not deceived,.... By false teachers, who, in order to engross all to themselves, dissuaded the Galatians from communicating to their honourable pastors, and faithful ministers of the word; or by themselves, who being of a tenacious and covetous disposition, devised various things to excuse them from performing this their duty to the preachers of the Gospel; as that they had families of their own to maintain, that their circumstances were such that they could give little or nothing this way, and the others, who were of better abilities in life, ought to bear this charge; and with such like things endeavoured to satisfy their consciences in the neglect of their duty: but this was all self-deception, for

God is not mocked; nor will he be; men may deceive themselves, and others, with such excuses and false appearances, yet they cannot deceive God, who knows their hearts as well as their worldly substance, and that the omission of their duty arises not from want of ability, but from a covetous temper; and who looks upon withholding from his ministers that which is due unto them as mocking of him, and which he will not suffer with impunity:

for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; as to kind, quality, and

quantity, generally speaking; if he sows wheat he reaps wheat, if he sows barley he reaps barley; no man can expect to reap another sort than what he sows; and if it is good seed he may hope for a good crop; and if he sows bountifully, he shall reap bountifully; but if he sows sparingly, he shall reap sparingly; and if he sows nothing, he can never reap anything. This is a proverbial expression, and may be applied to all actions, good and bad, and the reward and punishment of them, and particularly to acts of beneficence, and the enjoying of the fruits thereof;
See Gill on "2Co 9:6".

Galatians 6:8

Ver. 8. For he that soweth to his flesh,.... Not that taking due care of a man's body, seeking the preservation of its health, providing proper food and raiment for himself, and all necessaries for the good and support of his family, is to be called sowing to his flesh, nor is he to be called a carnal sower; but he is such an one that pampers his flesh, gratifies and indulges the lusts of it, who minds the things of the flesh, lives after it, and does the works of it, who spends his substance in a luxurious way upon himself and family; or whose whole bent, and study, and employment, is to increase his worldly riches, to aggrandize himself and posterity, to the neglect of his own soul, the interest of religion, the poor of the church, and ministers of the Gospel:

shall of the flesh reap corruption; shall by such carnal methods procure for himself, in this world, nothing but what is corruptible, as silver and gold be, and such treasure as moth and rust corrupt; such substance as will not endure, but is perishing, and may be by one providence or another taken from him; so that all his care in sowing comes to nothing, and is of no advantage to himself, nor to his posterity; see **Hag 1:4**, and shall fall into the pit of corruption, and be punished with everlasting destruction, and die the second death in the world to come.

But he that soweth to the Spirit; not his own, but the Spirit of God; or that soweth spiritual things, that minds and savours the things of the Spirit, lives in the Spirit, and walks in the Spirit; that lays out his worldly substance in promoting spiritual things, in encouraging the spiritual ministers of the word, in supporting the interest of spiritual religion, in relieving the poor of Christ's churches, in contributing to the spread of the Gospel, and the administration of the word and ordinances in other places, as well as where he is more immediately concerned:

shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting; in the use of such spiritual means, though not as meritorious, or as causes, he shall attain to, and enjoy eternal happiness in the other world; or of, and by the Spirit of God, by whose grace and strength he sows, and does all the good things he does, by and of him sanctifying him, and making him meet for it, and not of himself, or any works of righteousness done by him, shall he inherit eternal life; which is the pure gift of God through Jesus Christ, and bestowed as a reward of his own grace.

Galatians 6:9

Ver. 9. And let us not be weary in well doing,.... This may be understood of well doing, or doing good works in general, of every sort; which are such as are done according to the will of God, from a principle of love to him, in faith, and in the name and strength of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God: or else acts of beneficence to Christ's ministers and poor in particular; which are agreeable to the mind of God, and wellpleasing in his sight: and in doing which men should not be weary; nor are they, when their spiritual strength is renewed, and grace is in exercise, though they may meet with many things which tend to discourage and make them weary; such as change in their own circumstances, losses in the world, the multitude of objects, the ungratefulness of some, and unworthiness of others:

for in due time we shall reap; either in this world, sooner or later; in proper time, in God's own time, by enjoying an increase of the fruits of righteousness; for the seed sown shall spring up again; the bread that is cast on the waters will be found after many days; and such as honour the Lord with their substance shall be blessed with plenty of temporal good things, either they or theirs: or else in the other world, or at the end of this; which will be the harvest time, the reaping time, the time of enjoying eternal life:

if we faint not; but continue to the end, persevere constantly in doing acts of beneficence, and patiently wait, as the husbandman does, for the precious fruits of the earth; for there must be a distance of time between sowing and reaping; men must not expect to reap as soon as they sow; and therefore should not be weary of sowing, nor impatient in waiting, though they do not see as yet the appearance of the fruits thereof; for in their season they will be seen and enjoyed.

Galatians 6:10

Ver. 10. As we have therefore opportunity,.... Or "ability", so the phrase is sometimes used {z}; as occasion requires, objects offer, as there is ability of well doing, and that continues; while the time of life lasts, which is the time for sowing, or doing good works:

let us do good unto all men; not only to our relations, friends, and acquaintance, but to all men; to them that are strangers to us, of whatsoever nation, Jew or Gentile; and of whatsoever religion or sect, yea, even to our very enemies:

especially unto them who are of the household of faith: the children of God, that belong to his family, are true believers in Christ, hold the doctrine of faith, make a profession of it, and keep it fast; these are more especially to be the objects of Christian beneficence and liberality. The apostle may have sense reference to a practice among the Jews, who took a particular care of the children of good men that were poor;

"there were two chambers in the temple, the one was called the chamber of secrets, and the other the chamber of vessels: into the chamber of secrets, religious men used to put privately, whereby were privately maintained the poor Mybwj ynb, "of the children of good men" {a}."

The Targumist on **Jer 5:3** has a phrase much like to this applied to God, paraphrasing the passage thus; is it not, O Lord, revealed before thee, atwnmyh ydbel abjwal, "to do good to the servants of faith?"

{z} See Hammond on. Phil. iv. 10. {a} Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 6.

Galatians 6:11

Ver. 11. Ye see how large a letter,.... Whether it be read as imperative, "see ye", observe, take notice; or as indicative, "ye see", ye do see, or you may see with your own eyes, it is of no great consequence: "how large a letter", or "with what letters"; which some understand of the largeness of the characters he wrote in; others of the deformity of them, he not writing a good hand, being an Hebrew, and not used to writing Greek; others of the grand and sublime matter which it contained; though neither of these seem to be the apostle's meaning; but he intends the length of the epistle, the prolixity of his writing;

and which he mentions, as an instance and expression of his love to then, care of them, and concern for them: inasmuch as he took so much pains to write so long a letter to them, in order to set things right in their view, and recover them from error: not but that he had sent as long, or longer letters to other churches, as to the Romans, the Corinthians, and Hebrews: but then it is to be observed what follows,

I have written unto you with my own hand. The epistle to the Romans was written by Tertius, though dictated by the apostle, Ro 16:22 as very likely the others were by Timothy, or some other amanuensis. The apostle only put his name, and wrote his salutation, which was his token, in all his epistles, of the truth and genuineness of them; **2Th 3:17**, but this was not only dictated by him, but wrote with his hand, which very probably the Galatians knew; and since it was not usual for him to do so, it was the greater proof of his affection for them; that amidst so much work, and such labours as he was employed in, he should sit down and write so long an epistle to them with his own hand, in order to expose the errors of the false teachers, and reclaim them.

Galatians 6:12

Ver. 12. As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh,.... By whom are meant the false apostles, who are here described, and their views, aims, and ends, opened and exposed. These were very desirous to carry a good face of things outwardly, of appearing outwardly righteous before men, and to be accounted so by them; and therefore did all they to be seen of them, and gain applause from them. They were such, as the Syriac version renders the words, as desired
Nwrhbtvnd, "to glory in the flesh"; their carnal descent and privileges, in their being Hebrews, the seed of Abraham, of the stock of Israel; and in the circumcision of their flesh; or in their external gifts, their natural parts, acquired abilities, learning, eloquence, and the like: moreover, as the Vulgate Latin version reads, "they were willing to please in the flesh": to please carnal men, Israel after the flesh, in carnal and fleshly things; they sought not to please God or Christ, but men, and so were not the servants of either. They were desirous, as the Arabic version renders the words, "that honour should be done them in" "the flesh"; they sought external glory from men, and to be outwardly and publicly honoured by them; and all their religion was a mere outward show, a piece of pageantry; which lay in the observation of carnal ordinances, such as respected meats and drinks, circumcision in the flesh, and other carnal commandments:

they constrain you to be circumcised; not by using any outward force and violence; but either by their example, which had great influence, as that has both with respect to the embracing of evil principles, and giving in to bad practices: or by their doctrine; the arguments they made use of to persuade them to it, being formed and managed with great art and subtlety, wrought strongly upon them: or rather by overawing them, with threatenings of hell and damnation; affirming, that unless they were circumcised, they could not be saved: and their end was,

only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ, or "by the cross of Christ"; meaning either the manner in which persecution might be suffered, as by being reproached, ill used, and suffering death as Christ did; or by bearing the cross of affliction and tribulation Christ has appointed for, and calls his followers to; or else the object for which it is endured, the preaching of the cross, or the Gospel of salvation by a crucified Christ; for this doctrine, and the preaching and professing of it, and living a life answerable to it, always bring persecution with them: and that persecution, which is more especially here regarded, was what came from the Jews, who in general were greatly offended at the preaching of a crucified Christ; and particularly from the professing part among them, who though they believed in Christ, and were not displeased at preaching in his name; yet were greatly affronted at, and highly resented, and as much as in them lay, by reproaches and hard censures, and the like, persecuted those who opposed circumcision, and the ceremonies of the law; and to avoid the ill will, contempt, and persecution of these, the false teachers preached up circumcision, and obliged their people to submit to it.

Galatians 6:13

Ver. 13. But neither they themselves that are circumcised,.... That is, the pleaders for, and preachers of circumcision, whether they themselves were actually circumcised, or not; it means those that were of the circumcision, on that side of the question, whether heartily or not:

keep the law; of circumcision, as persons may preach up that, which they themselves do not practise; as did the Pharisees, the predecessors of these men; or if they did keep the law, and submit to it, yet this might be done, not out of regard unto it, and zeal for it, but for some other end; as Simon Magus submitted to baptism, and others preached Christ of envy and contention, and not of good will; or if they did do it in obedience to the law, yet this was not keeping the whole law, which circumcision obliged to; and which, unless they did so keep it, would signify nothing; and this no man is capable of keeping perfectly, and consequently no righteousness, life, and salvation, can be had hereby: besides, though these men were so zealous for the lighter matters of the law, the rites and ceremonies of it, as circumcision, &c. they disregarded the weightier and more material parts of it, as judgment, mercy, and faith; these they kept not, nor attended to: and many of them lived very dissolute lives and conversations, at least secretly, if not openly; which abundantly proved that they were far from keeping the law; and that their pleading for it, and submitting to some of the rituals of it, were not out of pure love and strict regard to it, but for some other end:

but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh; that is, in the circumcision of it; or, as the Ethiopic version, "in your bodies". Their view in bringing persons to submit to circumcision was, that they might have occasion to glory among the Jews, and boast to them of the numbers of proselytes they brought, and of the service they did to Judaism, and so increase their fame and glory among them.

Galatians 6:14

Ver. 14. But God forbid that I should glory,.... The apostle, on the contrary, expresses his aversion to glorying in anything these men did; not in his outward carnal privileges, as a Jew; nor in his moral, civil, and legal righteousness; nor in his gifts and attainments; nor in his labours and success, as of himself; nor in the flesh of others, or in any outward corporeal subjection to any ordinance, legal or evangelical; his glorying and rejoicing were rather in the spirituality, the faith, hope, love, patience, order, and steadfastness of the saints, than in anything in the flesh, either his own or others: and indeed he chose not to glory in any thing,

save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; meaning either the infirmities, reproaches, tribulations, and persecutions, which he endured for the sake of Christ, and the preaching of his Gospel; or the Gospel, the doctrine of the cross of Christ, and salvation by it: or rather a crucified Christ himself, whom he preached; though counted foolishness by some, and was a stumbling to others: he gloried in him, and determined to know, and make known, none but him, in the business of salvation; he gloried in him as crucified, and in his cross; not in the wood of the cross, but in the effects of his crucifixion; in the peace, pardon, righteousness, life, salvation, and eternal glory, which come through the death of the cross; he gloried in Christ as his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption:

by whom the world is crucified to me: so that he feared not the worst men, and things in it, any more than he would one that was fastened to a cross, or dead; since Christ, by his crucifixion and death, had overcome the world, the prince of it, the men and malice of it, the sin that was in it, and had made him more than a conqueror also; his faith in a crucified Christ overcame the world likewise; so that he looked upon it as the Israelites saw the Egyptians, dead on the sea shore; nor did he affect and love, but trampled upon and despised, as crucified persons generally are, those things in it which are the most alluring to the flesh, the lusts of it; the doctrine of grace, of a crucified Christ, taught him to deny the riches, honours, pleasures, profits, and applause of the world; which were to him as dross, in comparison of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord: the ceremonial law also, the elements of the world, were dead unto him, being nailed to the cross of Christ, to be of no further use and service unto men:

and I unto the world; that is, am crucified to the world, as the Syriac and Arabic versions express it; that is, he was despised by the world for the sake of a crucified Christ, as the world was by him, in comparison of him; the world had no affection for him, as he had none for the world; and as the ceremonial law was dead to him, so he was dead to that, through the body of Christ, and had nothing to do with these beggarly elements, nor they with him, which sense is confirmed by the following words.

Galatians 6:15

Ver. 15. For in Christ Jesus,.... These words are omitted in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; See Gill on "Ga 5:6",
See Gill on "1Co 7:19", they contain a reason why the apostle gloried in a crucified Christ, and looked upon the world as dead to him, and he to that, in every state of it; particularly as it may design "the worldly sanctuary" of the Jews, and all the rites and ceremonies appertaining to it; and among the rest

circumcision, which availeth not anything; neither as a command, type, or privilege; or in the business of salvation, being abolished by Christ:

nor uncircumcision; being now no bar to the Gospel, Gospel ordinances, or a

Gospel church state; or to any of the blessings of the everlasting covenant, which come upon the uncircumcision, as well as the circumcision. But to apply these words to baptism and non-baptism is a wretched perversion, and making a very ill use of them, whereby the minds of men are worked up to an indifference to a Christian institution; for though baptism is of no avail in the business of salvation, yet it cannot be said of it, as of circumcision, that it avails not anything as a command; for it is a standing ordinance of Christ; or as an emblem and sign, for it is significative of the death and burial, and resurrection of Christ; or as a privilege, for it is of use to lead the faith of God's people to his blood and righteousness for pardon and justification; for he that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved; and it is necessary to church communion: and, on the other hand, it cannot be said that non-baptism avails not; it is a bar to church fellowship; and a neglect of baptism in those who are the proper subjects of it, is resented by Christ, and is a rejecting of the counsel of God against themselves; which was the case of the Pharisees, in the time of John the Baptist:

but a new creature. The phrase is Rabbinical;
See Gill on "2Co 5:17" by which is meant, not a new creation of a man, as a man, of the members of his body, or of the faculties of his soul; nor of an external reformation, or a walking in newness of life, which is the fruit and effect of this new creation work; but an internal principle of grace, a good work of God begun in the soul, called the hidden man of the heart, the new man, Christ formed in us, of which faith that works by love is a part: this is called a "creature", and so not of man, but God; for none can create but himself; and in which work man is purely passive, as the heavens and the earth were in their creation: it is "but" a creature, and therefore needs divine support, fresh strength from God, and frequent supplies of grace to maintain and preserve it; nor is it to be trusted in, but the grace which is in Christ, from whence it comes, and by which it is secured. This is a "new" creature, in opposition to the old man; and because it is a principle in man, which never was there before; it consists of a new heart and spirit, of new eyes, ears, hands, and feet, expressive of new principles and actions, of new light, life, love, desires, joys, comforts, and duties: now this is of avail; it is a branch of the new covenant of grace, which God has therein promised to bestow on his people; it is an evidence of interest in Christ, the new and living way to the Father, and eternal life; such are newborn babes, regenerated persons, and have a right and meetness for the kingdom of God; shall possess the new Jerusalem, shall dwell in the new heavens and new earth; they are called by the Lord's new name, the adopted children of God; and have a new song put into their mouths, which none but redeemed and newborn souls can sing; and shall drink

the new wine of endless joys and everlasting pleasures with Christ, in his Father's kingdom. These words are said to be taken out of the Apocalypse of Moses, a spurious book, but without any foundation.

Galatians 6:16

Ver. 16. And as many as walk according to this rule,.... Or canon; meaning not the canon of the Scriptures in general, which is the perfect rule, and only standard of faith and practice; according to which we are to walk, believe, and act; but either the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, the subject of this epistle, the truth the apostle had been explaining, vindicating, and confirming; and which to depart from, is going out of the way of truth; and an abiding by it, is walking in it; and is a good rule and standard, by which to distinguish between truth and error; for whatever is contrary to that article of faith cannot be true: or else the rule delivered in the preceding verse, declaring circumcision and uncircumcision to be of no avail in salvation, but a new creature; and to walk according to this rule, is to renounce all trust in, and dependence upon any outward things; to believe alone in Christ, for righteousness and life; to live by faith upon him, and to walk in newness of life, under the influences of his Spirit and grace:

peace be on them, and mercy. This is the apostle's godly wish, unfeigned desire, and hearty prayer for all such persons, be they who they will; Jews or Gentiles, circumcised or uncircumcised: by peace he means, a view of their peace with God, made by the blood of Christ; peace in their own consciences, which passes all understanding, and arises from a comfortable sense of justification by the righteousness of Christ, of pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice; and which is enjoyed in a way of believing; and also peace with one another, among themselves as brethren, which is a very desirable blessing: in short, it includes all prosperity and happiness, inward and outward, temporal, spiritual, and eternal: and by "mercy", he designs the love and grace of God, to sinful miserable creatures in themselves, which is the spring and fountain of all peace and prosperity; and which is displayed in the covenant of grace, and all the blessings of it; in the mission and incarnation of Christ, and redemption by him; in regeneration, forgiveness of sin, and complete salvation; and intends a fresh discovery, manifestation, and application of the mercy of God to his children; who often stand in need thereof, being distressed with the guilt of sin, or are under desertions or afflictive providences, at which time to have mercy showed them, is exceeding suitable and agreeable: when the apostle wishes these to be "on" them, it signifies that these blessings come from above, as every good gift does; that they descend as a cloud, and rest upon them, and abide with them, refreshing, comforting, and protecting them: he adds,

and upon the Israel of God; which is a further description of the persons, for whom he prays for these blessings; and is not to be understood by way of distinction from them, but as an amplification of their character; and as pointing out the Israel, by way of emphasis, the Israel, or Israelites indeed, the spiritual Israel, as distinct from Israel according to the flesh; see 1Co 10:18. The "Israel of God", or as the Arabic version reads it, "Israel the propriety of God"; which he has a right unto, and a claim upon; who are chosen by him, Israel his elect; who are redeemed by him, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; who are called by his grace, and are styled Israel his called; who are justified in his Son, and by his righteousness; and for whose sake he is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, to give them repentance and remission of sin; and who are, or will be saved by him, with an everlasting salvation; and is a name that includes all God's elect, whether Jews or Gentiles: though it may have a particular respect to such of the Israelites, or Jews, God had foreknown and reserved for himself; and who believed in Christ, and walked as new creatures, without confidence in the flesh. The Jews themselves own, that strangers, or proselytes, shall be called by the name of Israel; so they {b} explain Isa 44:5, latter part.

{b} Jarchi & Abarbinel in Isa. xliv. 5.

Galatians 6:17

Ver. 17. From henceforth let no man trouble me,.... Having so clearly stated and explained the doctrine of justification, and so largely proved that it is not by works, but by faith, and that circumcision and other rituals of the ceremonial law were not necessary to it, he desires, nay, in an authoritative way he requires, that they give him no further trouble on that head; signifying, that he expected they would be satisfied with what he had wrote, and abide by the truth and obey it, as they had formerly done; that he should hear no more objections from them, or complaints of them: nor need they further inquire his sense of these things; by this they would fully know his faith and practice; as indeed they might also by his suffering persecutions on the account of his faith, and his preaching the Gospel of Christ, and particularly this part of it:

for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus; by which he means, not the marks in Christ's hands, feet, and side; but the reproachful characters the apostle was stigmatized with; or the real scars in his body, made by beating, scourging, and stoning of him; or his sufferings and persecutions in general, which he endured for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; see 2Co 11:23. The allusion is either to servants and soldiers, who, when taken into service, used to have some particular mark put upon them, that they might be known to be such an one's servant, or soldier {c}; as the Hebrew servant, who was willing to serve his master, had his ear bored through with an awl, Ex 21:6 so the apostle was known to be a firm and faithful servant, and a good soldier of Christ, by the reproaches and afflictions which he underwent for his sake; or else to those marks which, by way of reproach and punishment, were made upon fugitive servants, or soldiers, that deserted; as the sufferings of the apostle were designed as reproaches to him, and punishments of him, for preaching the Gospel of Christ; but these he gloried in, and bore and carried as trophies and marks of honour. Just as veteran soldiers show the scars and wounds they have received in battle, as tokens of their valour and courage, in facing and fighting the enemy in greatest danger: these he is said to bear "in his body"; not in the bodies of others, he gloried not in their flesh, as the false apostles did; nor in the circumcision of his own flesh, the scar that left there the mark of Moses and of a Jew; but in those things which were marks of his being a disciple of Christ, and not of Moses, and which he bore for his sake; and since therefore it was so easy to discern on which side of the question he was, from his suffering persecution for the cross of Christ; and since he had so many and such great trials and exercises, he, with apostolical gravity and authority, commands them to give him no more trouble, from the time of their reception of the epistle, henceforward.

{c} Vid. Lydium de re militare, l. 1. c. 6.

Galatians 6:18

Ver. 18. Brethren,.... So he calls them, to testify his affection for them, notwithstanding their infirmity and instability, and the roughness with which he had treated them; and to show his great humility and condescension in owning the relation, and putting them on a level with himself, which the pride of the false teachers would not suffer them to do.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit: which is his concluding benediction and usual salutation and token in all his epistles: he wishes that more gifts of grace might be bestowed upon them; that the Gospel of the grace of God might be continued with them; that the love of Christ might be shed abroad in their hearts; that they might receive out of his fulness grace for grace; that there might be an increase of grace in their souls; that it might abound in them, and they grow in the exercise of it: he does not pray that the law of Moses, or the righteousness of works, but that the grace of Christ might be with them; not in the mere notion of it, but in the spiritual experience of it; that it might be in their hearts, and with their spirits, quickening, comforting, and strengthening them; making them more spiritual and evangelical in their frames and duties, and freeing them from a carnal and legal spirit: to all which he sets his

Amen; signifying his desire that so it might be, and his faith that so it would be. The subscription of the letter follows,

unto the Galatians, written from Rome; where perhaps he was then a prisoner; the Arabic version adds, "by Titus and Luke": who might be sent with it, but the subscriptions of the epistles are not to be depended on.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ephesians 1:1

EPHESIANS: THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

The city of Ephesus is, by Pliny {a}, called the other light of Asia; Miletus was one, and Ephesus the other: it was the metropolis of the lesser Asia, and one of the twelve cities of Ionia, and the first and chief of them: it is said to be built by the Amazons {b}: it was famous for the magnificent temple of Diana; and the inhabitants of it were very much given to superstition and idolatry, and even to devilish arts, Ac 19:19. It abounded with orators and philosophers, and men of great wisdom and learning {c}; and was formerly a very rich, trading, flourishing city, but now a village, and a poor desolate place; it retains the name of Efeso, though the Turks call it Aia Salik. Hither the Apostle Paul first went after he had been at Corinth, though he then made but a short stay; when he came thither again, he found twelve disciples, and was the instrument of making a great many more: here he continued two or three years and formed a Gospel church, very large and flourishing, to whom he writes this epistle; and which was written by him when he was a prisoner at Rome, as appears by several passages in it, **Eph 3:1**, and seems to have been written much about the same time as were the epistles to the Philippians, and to the Colossians, and to Philemon. Dr. Hammond thinks it was written about the year 58, and Dr. Lightfoot places it in 59, and the fifth year of Nero. The occasion of it was the foresight the apostle had of false teachers that would spring up in this church, after his death, and spread their pernicious doctrines, and draw away disciples after them, and do great mischief in the church; wherefore the design of this epistle is to establish the saints in the doctrines of the Gospel, that so they might not be carried away with the errors of the wicked: the subject matter of it is most excellent; it treats of the most sublime doctrines of grace, of divine predestination, and eternal election, of redemption by Christ, and of peace and pardon by his blood, of conversion by the power of efficacious grace, and of salvation by the free grace of God, in opposition to works: it also very largely treats of the nature and usefulness of the Gospel ministry, and of gifts qualifying for it, and of the several duties of religion incumbent on Christians; and the method which is used is exceeding apt and beautiful, for the apostle first begins with the doctrines of the Gospel, which he distinctly handles and explains, and then proceeds to enforce the duties belonging to men, both as men and Christians.

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 1

In this chapter are contained the inscription of the epistle, the salutation of the persons to whom it is written, the apostle's thanksgiving for blessings received by him, and them; in which the efficient, moving, procuring, and final causes of salvation are taken notice of, and the several parts and branches of it observed; and the whole is concluded with prayers for the Ephesians; in which mention is made of various things to the comfort of the saints, and to the glory of Christ. The inscription is in **Eph 1:1**, in which the author of the epistle puts his name, declares his office, and how he came into it; and describes the persons to whom he wrote it, by their religious characters, and the place of their abode. The salutation is in **Eph 1:2**, which is common to all his epistles: and in **Eph 1:3**, is the thanksgiving to God, as the God and Father of Christ, for spiritual blessings in Christ in general; and then he proceeds to particulars, and begins with election, which is represented as an act of God the Father, as of particular persons, as done in Christ, and from the foundation of the world, the end of which is perfect holiness and love, **Eph 1:4**, and which is further illustrated under the name of predestination; the blessing which that is an appointment to, is the adoption of children; the moving cause of it, is the good pleasure of the divine will; the instrumental cause, or means, is Christ Jesus; the end with God is for himself, **Eph 1:5**, and which, in the next verse, is explained of the glory of his grace; to which grace, acceptance with him in Christ is owing; and which is another spiritual blessing, or a branch of election and predestination, **Eph 1:6**. To which is added another, and that is redemption; the author of which is Christ; the price, or procuring and meritorious cause of it is his blood; a branch of which is forgiveness of sins; and the whole is according to the plenteous and free grace of God, **Eph 1:7**, the entire plan and scheme of which is the produce of abundant wisdom and prudence, **Eph 1:8**, and is no other than the mystery of the will of God revealed in the Gospel, according to his sovereign will and purpose, **Eph 1:9**, which lay hid within himself until the fulness of times, or the Gospel dispensation, in which Christ being sent, has gathered all together in himself, **Eph 1:10**, through whom the saints enjoy the inheritance they are adopted to in predestination, which is the effect of an unfrustrable purpose, and a wise counsel and will, **Eph 1:11**. The end of which is, that those predestinated, redeemed, and adopted ones, should be to the praise and glory of God, **Eph 1:12**, and who are described as such, who first trusted in Christ upon hearing the Gospel; and after they had believed in him, were sealed by the Holy Spirit, said to be the Spirit of promise, **Eph 1:13**, and who is also spoken of as the earnest and pledge of the saints' inheritance, and who will continue so until all the people of God are redeemed from the grave in the resurrection morn, which will also issue in the praise and glory of God, **Eph 1:14**, and now on account of all these blessings of predestination, adoption, redemption, calling, and the sealing of the Spirit; as also, because of their faith in Christ, and love to the saints, these believers were possessed of, the apostle gave thanks, and continued to give thanks to God in his prayers to him, **Eph 1:15**. The object of his prayers is described as the God of Christ, and Father of glory; the petitions to him are for an increase of knowledge of Christ from the Spirit, as a spirit of wisdom and revelation, **Eph 1:17**, and that they might have a clearer view of the nature of that glory they were called unto, and were hoping for, **Eph 1:18**, and observe the wonderful display of the power of God in their conversion and faith; which is illustrated by comparing it with that power which was shown in raising Christ from the dead, **Eph 1:20**, which leads the apostle to take notice of the exaltation of Christ at the right hand of God in heaven, consequent on his resurrection; where he is advanced above angels and men, and has all things in subjection to him for the good of his church, of which he is the head, and which is his body and fulness, **Eph 1:21**.

Ver. 1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,....
See Gill on "Ro 1:1".
See Gill on "1Co 1:1".
See Gill on "2Co 1:1".

See Gill on "Ga 1:1".

To the saints which are at Ephesus; of this place, see the note above upon the title of the epistle, and See Gill on "Ac 18:19". The persons residing there, to whom the epistle is written, are described by their character, as "saints"; being separated by the grace of God the Father in eternal election; whose sins were expiated by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and to whom he himself was made sanctification; and who were internally sanctified by the Spirit of God, and lived holy lives and conversations. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "to all the saints"; whether officers of the church, or private members, whether rich or poor, bond or free, strong or weak believers, of greater or lesser abilities.

And to the faithful in Christ Jesus: who were in Christ, not only by electing grace, but were openly and manifestly in him, through converting grace; and abode in him as branches in the vine; continued constant, and persevered in faith and holiness; and were faithful to the cause and interest of Christ, and to his Gospel and ordinances; and were hearty and sincere in the profession of their faith in Christ, and love to him and his: or, as the Arabic version renders it, "and to them that believe in Jesus Christ"; with all their hearts, to the saving of their souls; who look unto him, venture on him, rely upon him, and trust in him for life and salvation, and who shall certainly be saved; of such the church at Ephesus consisted, to whom this epistle was written: of the church there, See Gill on "Ac 20:17".

{a} L. 5. c. 29. {b} Plin. ib. Justin ex Trogo, l. 2. c. 4. {c} Philostrat. Vita Apollon. l. 8. c. 3.

Ephesians 1:2

Ver. 2. Grace be to you, and peace from God,....
See Gill on "Ro 1:7".

Ephesians 1:3

Ver. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,.... God, the first person in the Trinity, is the God of Christ, as Christ is man and Mediator; he chose and appointed him to be the Mediator, and made a covenant with him as such; he formed and prepared an human nature for him, and anointed it with the Holy Ghost above measure, and supported it under all his trials and sufferings, and at last glorified it: and Christ, as man, prayed to him as his God, believed, hoped, and trusted in him as such, and loved him as in such a relation to him, and cheerfully obeyed his commands. And the same is the Father of Christ, as Christ is God; as such he is the Son of God; not by creation, as angels and Adam, nor by adoption, as saints, but by natural generation; he being the only begotten of the Father, his own proper Son, of the same nature and perfections with him, and equal to him. Now to "bless" God is neither to invoke nor confer a blessing on him; for there is none greater than he to be called upon; nor does he need anything, nor can he receive anything from his creature; but it is either to congratulate his greatness and goodness, to ascribe blessing, glory, and honour to him, or to give thanks unto him, both for temporal and spiritual mercies. And the reasons why he is blessed, or praised by the saints as the God and Father of Christ, are; because these are his New Testament titles, under which he is more clearly made known, and in which he delights; and because he is their God and Father in Christ; nor can they come to him in any other way, but through him; and because it is through him that all their blessings come to them, and therefore all their praises must go this way, as follows:

who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: God is the author and giver of all blessings; and he blesses his people with them, as he is the God and Father of Christ, and as he is their covenant God and Father in Christ; and he only can bless; if he blesses not, none can; and if he blesses, they are blessed indeed: the "us" that are blessed, are such who deserve, according to the tenor of the law, to be cursed; and are not all men, but some distinct from others; and who are before described as saints, and faithful in Christ Jesus; and include both Jews and Gentiles, who belong to the election of grace. And the blessings such are blessed with are spiritual, so called to distinguish them from temporal blessings. The Jews have the like distinction of
twynmz twbwj, "temporal blessings", and twynxwr twbwj, "spiritual blessings" {d}; which latter are solid, substantial, and lasting blessings; and which concern the good of the soul or spirit of man; and are agreeable to, and desired by a spiritual man; and are applied by the Holy Spirit of God; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "with every blessing of the Holy Spirit": and which are very comprehensive, and take in all the fulness of grace in Christ; all the blessings and sure mercies of the everlasting covenant; all things pertaining to life and godliness, such as justification, peace, pardon, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life: and with these the saints are blessed "in heavenly" places; God that blesses them is in heaven, and so is Christ, in

whom they are blessed; and the completion of their blessedness will be in heaven, where their hope is laid up, and their inheritance is reserved: and this phrase may denote the safety of them, being out of the reach of any enemy, sin, Satan, or the world, to deprive them of them, as well as the nature of them; for it may be read, "in heavenly things", and so distinguishes these blessings from such as are of an earthly kind; and points at the original of them, being such as descend from above, come down from heaven; and also the tendency of them, which is to heaven; and being what give a right unto, and a meetness for the kingdom of heaven: and these they are blessed with "in Christ"; as he is their head and representative, and as they are members in him, and partakers of him; through whom, and for whose sake, they are conveyed unto them, and who himself is the sum and substance of them. Agreeably to this way of speaking, the Targumist, Jonathan ben Uzziel, on **Nu 6:27** paraphrases the last clause thus, "I will bless them", yrmymb, "in my word". The date of these blessings, "hath blessed us", may respect either first conversion, when the discovery and application of the blessings of grace are made to God's people; or the making of the covenant with Christ, their head, to whom all grace was then given, and to them in him, and their election was in Christ, as follows.

{d} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 79. 2.

Ephesians 1:4

Ver. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him,.... This choice cannot be understood of a national one, as Israel of old were chosen by the Lord; for the persons the apostle writes to were not a nation; nor does he address all the inhabitants of Ephesus, only the saints and faithful in Christ that resided there; nor are they all intended here, if any of them. However, not they only, since the apostle includes himself, and perhaps some others, who did not belong to that place, nor were of that country: nor does this choice regard them as a church; for though the saints at Ephesus were in a church state, yet the apostle does not write to them under that formal consideration, but as saints and faithful; nor are these persons said to be chosen to church privileges, but to grace and glory, to be holy and blameless: besides, from **Eph 1:3**, the apostle seems to speak of himself, and some others, who first trusted in Christ, as distinct from the believers at Ephesus, **Eph 1:13**, nor is this choice of persons to an office, for all that are here intended were not apostles, or pastors, or deacons: nor can it design the effectual calling, or the call of persons in time by efficacious grace; because this was before the foundation of the world, as follows: but it intends an eternal election of particular persons to everlasting life and salvation; and which is the first blessing of grace, and the foundation one, upon which all the rest proceed, and

according to which they are dispensed; for according to predestination are calling, justification, and glorification. The author of this choice is God, God the Father, who is distinguished from Christ, in whom this act is made; and it is according to his foreknowledge, and is an act of his grace, and is entirely sovereign: the objects of it, us, are not angels, but men, considered as unfallen with respect to the end, and as fallen with respect to the means; and these not all mankind: to choose, implies the contrary; and they that are chosen are distinguished from others, and are represented as few; nor do all men partake either of the means or end appointed in the decree of election; and yet some of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, are included in it; though none for any previous qualifications in them, as not for their good works, faith, holiness, or perseverance therein; for these are fruits and effects of election, and therefore cannot be causes or conditions of it: and this choice is made in Christ; and the persons chosen are chosen in him, and by being chosen they come to be in him; for this refers not to their openly being in him at conversion, as believers, but to their secretly being in him before time. Christ, as Mediator, is the object of election himself; and all the elect were chosen in him as their head, in whose hands their persons, grace, and glory are, and so are safe and secure in him: the Arabic version renders it, "by him"; not as the meritorious cause, for Christ's merits are not the cause of election, though they are of redemption and salvation; but as the means, in order to the end: the Ethiopic version renders it, "to him"; to salvation by him, and to the obtaining of his glory; as if he and his benefits, being the end of this choice, were intended; which was made

before the foundation of the world: and that it was so early, is certain, from the love of God to his people, which this is the effect of, and which is an everlasting love; and from the covenant which was made with Christ from everlasting, on account of these chosen ones, when Christ was set up as the head and representative of them; and from the provision of all spiritual blessings for them in it, which proceeds according to this choice; and from the preparation of a kingdom for them from the foundation of the world; and from the nature of God's decrees, which are eternal; for no new will, or act of will, can arise in God, or any decree be made by him, which was not from eternity: God's foreknowledge is eternal, and so is his decree, and is no other than himself decreeing. The end of this choice follows,

that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love; the objects of it are not chosen because they were holy, but that they might partake of the sanctification of the Spirit; that they might be sanctified by him here, and be perfectly holy hereafter; and be without fault and blame, both in this life, as instilled by the righteousness of Christ, and as washed in his blood; and in the life to come, being entirely freed from all sin, and without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; and appear so in the sight of Christ, who will present them to himself, and in the sight of his Father, to whom they will also be presented by him, even in the sight of divine justice: and this will be all "in love", or "through love", as the Syriac version renders it; or "through his love", as the Arabic version; for the love of God is the source and spring of election itself, and of holiness and happiness, the end of it; and which is shed abroad in the hearts of God's people now, and will be more fully comprehended and enjoyed in the other world; and which causes love again in them to him. A phrase somewhat like this is used by the Targumist on Ec 11:6 where, speaking of a man's children, he says;

"it is not known unto thee which of them bj ywhml rxbta, "is chosen to be good", this, or that, or both of them, to be alike good."

Some copies put the stop at before him; and read the phrase, "in love"; in connection with the words following, thus, "in love", or "by love hath predestinated us"; so the Syriac version.

Ephesians 1:5

Ver. 5. Having predestinated us,.... Predestination, taken in a large sense, includes both election and reprobation, and even reaches to all affairs and occurrences in the world; to the persons, lives, and circumstances of men; to all mercies, temporal or spiritual; and to all afflictions, whether in love or in wrath: and indeed providence, or the dispensations of providence, are no other than the execution of divine predestination; but here it is the same with election, and is concerned with the same persons, and has regard to a special blessing, the elect are appointed to, as follows;

unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself; by which is meant, either the grace of adoption, which is an act of the Father's love, a blessing provided and secured in the covenant of grace; and is of persons to an inheritance, to which they have no legal right; and is entirely free, there being no need on the adopter's part, and no worth on the part of the adopted: or rather the inheritance they are adopted to; which exceeds all others, is incorruptible, undefiled, and fades not away; and lies among the saints in light, and belongs to all the children of God: and this they are predestinated unto by God the Father, who takes them into his family, puts them among the children, and gives them a goodly heritage: and that "by Jesus Christ"; or through him; for both the grace of adoption, and the kingdom and glory they are adopted to, come by and through him as Mediator; through his espousing their persons, assuming their nature, and redeeming them from under the law and its curses; through his giving them a power and privilege openly to be the sons of God; and through faith in him, whereby they are manifestly such: the phrase "unto himself", either refers to God the Father, who has chosen, set apart, formed and reserved his people and children for himself, for his peculiar treasure, and for his own glory; or to Jesus Christ, that he might have some brethren, and they be conformed to him, and he be the firstborn among them, and in all things have the pre-eminence; and that they might be with him, and behold his glory, and he be glorified in them: and this act of divine predestination was

according to the good pleasure of his will: the will of God is the rule of all his actions, and of all his acts of grace and goodness; and the good pleasure of it appears in the predestination of men to grace and glory: and from hence it is manifest, that foreseen faith, holiness, and good works, are excluded from being the moving cases of predestinating grace; and that it is wholly to be resolved into the good will and pleasure of God; the view in it being entirely as follows,

Ephesians 1:6

Ver. 6. To the praise of the glory of his grace,.... The grace of God manifestly appears in the predestination of men to adoption; in that God had no need of sons, he having a dear and well beloved one; in whom he is well pleased; and in that those he adopts are so unworthy of the relation; and in that men, and not angels, should be taken by him into his family; and that some, and not others of the same race; and that this should be before the world was; and in providing Christ as a Redeemer, to open the way for the reception of this grace and happiness; and in appointing the grace of faith to be the receiver of it: and the glory of the grace of God appears herein; the glory of God is the supreme end of all he does; and the glory of his grace, and not his power, or other perfections of his, and the manifestative glory of that is here intended; yea, the "praise" of that glory: and this end is answered, when the children of God ascribe their adoption to the free grace of God; and when they admire it, and are thankful for it, and walk worthy of the relation they are brought into:

wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved; the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, "his own beloved Son", and so the Claromontane exemplar; the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the beloved of God the Father; and was so from everlasting, and will be so to everlasting; which has appeared by his nearness to him, lying in his bosom; by his being privy to all his counsels, purposes, and designs; in putting all things into his hands, and in showing him all that he does; and by his giving him honour and glory, as man and Mediator: and he is the beloved of the saints, for the transcendent excellencies that are in him, and for his love to them, and for what he has done for them, and is unto them; and in him is their acceptance: which is to be understood of the acceptance of their persons, as founded in the blood and righteousness of Christ, and so of their services in him; of God's act of delight and complacency in them, as considered in Christ; who looks upon them, and is well pleased with them, and rests in his love towards them; which is an amazing instance of grace: it was grace that gave them a being in Christ, and which has provided in predestination everything to make them grateful to God; and the very act of acceptance is of mere grace; for internal grace, or grace infused, is not here meant, but the free favour of God: some read not "in which", but "which" ecaritwsen, "he freely gave us in the beloved"; so the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Syriac and Arabic versions.

Ephesians 1:7

Ver. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood,.... Redemption supposes captivity and slavery, and is a deliverance out of it; God's elect by nature are in bondage to sin, Satan, and the law; through the grace of Christ, they are redeemed from all iniquity; ransomed out of the hands of him that is stronger than they; and are freed from the law, its bondage, curse, and condemnation, and from every other enemy: and this benefit Christ is the author of; he was called to be the Redeemer of his people from all eternity; and he was sent in the fulness of time, to procure the redemption of them; to which he had a right, being their near kinsman; and for which he was every way fit, being God as well as man; and which he has obtained by his obedience, sufferings, and death: and in whom it resides, as in its proper subject and author; who, by imputation, is made redemption to all the chosen ones; for not angels, but men, share in this redemption; and not all men, but elect men; such as are chosen in Christ, predestinated to the adoption of children by him, and who are accepted in the beloved: and this comes to them through the blood of Christ, which was freely shed on the cross to procure it; and was a sufficient ransom, or redemption price; it being not only the same blood with those who are redeemed, but the blood of an innocent person; and not of a mere man, but of one who is truly and properly God, as well as man; see more of this See Gill on "Col 1:14". A branch of this redemption follows, or a blessing that comes by it, and along with it,

the forgiveness of sins; of all sins, original and actual, past, present, and to come; and this is through the blood of Christ, which was shed for the same: and yet is

according to the riches of his grace; for God of his rich grace found the ransom price, and gave his Son, as well as he gave himself, his life, a ransom for many; and how much soever it cost Christ to procure redemption and pardon, they are free to his people; who are redeemed without money and price of theirs, and whose sins are forgiven freely for Christ's sake.

Ephesians 1:8

Ver. 8. Wherein he hath abounded toward us,.... That is, in the grace which is so abundantly displayed in redemption and forgiveness of sin, through the blood of Christ:

in all wisdom and prudence; this may be understood, either of the aboundings of grace in the Gospel; which may be called all wisdom and prudence, because it is the wisdom of God; it is the product of his wisdom, and a display of it; the doctrines it contains are full of wisdom, and are the means of communicating it to men, and of making them wise unto salvation; and it may be so called, to set forth the excellency and perfection of it, as greatly transcending all human wisdom; and in this the grace of God has much abounded, for the Gospel is a declaration of the free grace of God, in the salvation of sinners by Christ; in the free justification of them by his righteousness; and in the full pardon of their sins through his blood; and is a kind invitation and free promise of grace to all sensible sinners: or else of the aboundings of grace in conversion; all men by nature are foolish and unwise; in conversion God makes men to know wisdom in the hidden part, which he puts there; and for which purpose the Spirit is given as a spirit of wisdom; and some part of the work of sanctification lies in spiritual light, knowledge, and understanding; and the Syriac version reads the last clause, "and in all spiritual understanding"; and faith particularly may be intended, which is sometimes expressed by knowledge; and now the grace of God is exceeding abundant with faith and love, in regeneration, sanctification, and conversion; or rather this may be understood of the display of divine wisdom, in the work of redemption and salvation by Christ; and which is to be seen, in pitching upon a proper person to be the Mediator, to become a sacrifice, and make intercession, who is the Son of God, truly God and man, and so every way able to perform the business of salvation; and in the manner of its being effected, in a way wherein grace and mercy are highly exalted, and yet in no wise reproachful to the holiness of God, or injurious to his justice, but to the honour of them, in which Satan is greatly mortified, and sin is condemned, and yet the sinner saved; and in the several parts of it, in the justification of the ungodly without works, by the righteousness of another, in pardoning their sins in a way of justice and faithfulness, and yet according to the riches of grace, and in the security of the persons of God's elect, and of their grace and glory in Christ; and in the subjects of this salvation, who are the foolish things of this world, ungodly sinners, the chief of sinners; and lastly, in making faith the receiver of all the blessings of salvation, that so it might appear to be all of grace.

Ephesians 1:9

Ver. 9. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will,.... The Gospel, which is a mystery, a hidden mystery, the mystery of God and of Christ, and the mystery of the Gospel; the several doctrines of it are called the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; such as are concerning the trinity of persons in the Godhead, the union of the two natures in Christ, his sonship and incarnation, the saints' union and communion with him, the work of the Spirit of God upon the soul, the calling of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Jews, the resurrection of the dead, and the change of living saints: and the Gospel is the mystery of the will of God; of his will in saving sinners by Christ; and it declares that he does all things in salvation, according to his sovereign will and pleasure; chooses, redeems, justifies, pardons, and calls whom he pleases; and this is made known by the ministry of the word, and by the Spirit, as a spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ and his Gospel: the discovery of which is,

according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself; both with respect to the persons to whom it is made known, and with respect to the time when he makes it known; both these are as he pleases, and as he has purposed in his own breast; the Gospel is sent when and where he has determined within himself it shall go; and persons are called by it according to his purpose and grace.

Ephesians 1:10

Ver. 10. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times,.... Or "according to the dispensation", &c. as the Alexandrian copy reads; the fulness of time appointed by God, and fixed in the prophets; after many times and seasons were elapsed, from the creation of the world; at the most suitable and convenient time, when a new economy or dispensation began, within which all this was to be effected, hereafter mentioned:

he might gather together in one all things in Christ; this supposes, that all things were once united together in one; angels and men were united to God by the ties of creation, and were under the same law of nature, and there were peace and friendship between them; and this union was in Christ, as the beginning of the creation of God, in whom all things consist: and it supposes a disunion and scattering of them; as of men from God, and from good angels, which was done by sin; and of Jews and Gentiles from one another; and of one man from another, everyone turning to his own way; and then a gathering of them together again: the word here used signifies to restore, renew, and reduce to a former state; and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; and according to this sense, it may seem to have respect to the times of the restitution of all things, the restoration and renovation of the universe; when there will be new heavens and a new earth, and new inhabitants in them: the word is also used to recapitulate, or sum up the heads of a discourse; and according to this sense, it may intend the meeting together, and summing up of all things in Christ, that had been before; as of all the promises and blessings of the covenant; of all the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament; of all the types and shadows, and sacrifices of the former dispensation; yea, all the sins of Old Testament saints, and all the curses of the law, met on him: the word is likewise used for the collection of numbers into one sum total; and Christ is the sum total of elect angels and men; or the whole number of them is in him; God has chosen a certain number of persons unto salvation; these he has put into the hands of Christ, who has a particular and personal knowledge of them; and the exact number of them will be gathered and given by him: once more, it signifies to reduce, or bring under one head; and Christ is an head of eminence and of influence, both to angels and men: and there is a collection of these together in one, in Christ; by virtue of redemption by Christ, and grace from him, there is an entire friendship between elect angels and elect men; they are social worshippers now, and shall share in the same happiness of the vision of God and of Christ hereafter: hence it follows, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even

in him; by things in heaven are not meant the souls of saints in heaven; though it is true that the souls of departed saints are in heaven; and that the saints in heaven and on earth were gathered together in Christ, and represented by him, when he hung upon the cross; and that they all make up one body, of which Christ is the head; and that they will be all collected together one day; and that their souls which are in heaven, and their bodies which are in the earth, will come together and be reunited, and dwell with Christ for ever; but rather the angels are meant, whose origin is heaven; where they have their residence, and from whence they never fell; and whose employment is in heaven, and of an heavenly nature: and by things on earth, are not intended every creature on earth, animate and inanimate; nor all men, but all elect men, whether Jews or Gentiles, and some of all sorts, ranks, and degrees; whose origin is of the earth, and who are the inhabitants of it: all these angels in heaven, and elect men on earth, are brought together under one head, even in him, in Christ Jesus, and by him; and none but he was able to do it, and none so fit, who is the Creator of all, and is above all; and was typified by Jacob's ladder, which reached heaven and earth, and joined them together, and on which the angels of God ascended and descended.

Ephesians 1:11

Ver. 11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance,.... Or a part and lot; that is, have obtained one in Christ, in his person, and in his fulness of grace, in the blessings and promises which are in him; or have obtained to be the Lord's clergy, or heritage, to be his portion and inheritance; or rather to have an inheritance in him by lot, meaning the incorruptible and eternal inheritance of glory and happiness in heaven; to which elect men are chosen in Christ, and are begotten to a lively hope of through his resurrection from the dead; and which his righteousness gives a right unto, and his grace a meetness for; and which is now in his hands, and will be given to them through him: and this is said to be obtained by lot, as the word signifies, in allusion to the land of Canaan, which was divided by lot to the children of Israel; and to show that it is not by works of righteousness done by men, but by the sovereign disposal of God; and that everyone shall have his share, and that certainly; for this is not designed to represent it as a casual, or contingent thing. The Alexandrian copy reads, "in whom also we are called"; and so the Vulgate Latin version, "in whom also we are called by lot"; and the Syriac version, "in him", or "by him we are chosen", which agrees with the next clause:

being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: predestination is not only to sonship, but to an inheritance; it not only secures the grace of adoption, but prepares and provides an heavenly portion: and this act of predestination proceeds according to a purpose; according to a purpose of God, which can never be frustrated; and according to the purpose of "that God", as one of Stephens's copies reads, that is the author of all things but sin; of the works of creation and of providence, and of grace and salvation; and who works all these according to his will, just as he pleases, and according to the counsel of it, in a wise and prudent manner, in the best way that can be devised; for he is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working; wherefore his counsel always stands, and he does all his pleasure: and hence the inheritance which the saints obtain in Christ, and are predestinated to, is sure and certain.

Ephesians 1:12

Ver. 12. That we should be to the praise of his glory,.... This is the end of predestination to the inheritance; and the sense is, either that the praise of the glory of God, in his grace and goodness, might be discovered and made known unto the saints, as it is displayed in election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and eternal salvation; or that they should praise and glorify him on account of these things, by ascribing all to his grace, and nothing to themselves; by giving him thanks for all his benefits; by ordering their conversations aright as become the Gospel; and by doing all things with a view to his glory:

who first trusted in Christ; the Jews, the apostle, and others of the Jewish nation;

who before hoped in Christ, as the words may be rendered; who hoped in Christ before the Gentiles did; and indeed the people of Israel hoped for Christ before he came; the promises of the Messiah were made to them, and he was the peculiar hope and expectation of that people; and to them he first came, and to them the Gospel was first preached; and some of them first believed in Christ, and trusted in him, and not in their own righteousness, strength, wisdom, and riches, nor in their own hearts, nor in any mere creature, nor in their carnal privileges; all which they renounced confidence in, and dependence on, when they came to the knowledge of Christ; in whose person they trusted for acceptance, and in his righteousness for justification, and in his blood for pardon, and in his fulness for supply, and in his power for protection and perseverance: this supposes knowledge of him, and a sense of the frailty and vanity of all other objects; and was a betaking themselves to him, a leaning and staying on him, a committing all unto him, and an expectation of all good things from him.

Ephesians 1:13

Ver. 13. In whom ye also trusted,.... The Gentile believers, the Ephesians, whom the apostle now particularly addresses; and who participated of the same grace and privileges with the believing Jews; the promise belonged to all that God called, whether afar off or nigh; and the same common salvation was sent to one as to another; and the same faith was wrought in one as in the other; and they were interested in the same Christ, and were heirs of the same inheritance; the Alexandrian copy reads "we":

after that ye heard the word of truth; the Gospel; and which is so called, on account of its divine original, coming from the God of truth, who cannot lie; and because of the concern which Christ has in it, who is truth itself, and was the author, subject, and preacher of it, and who confirmed it by his miracles, and his death; and on account of the Spirit of God, the dictator of it, and who leads into all truths, and owns and blesses them for conversion and comfort; and because it contains nothing but truth, and particularly that eminent one, salvation alone by Christ, for the chief of sinners; and in contradistinction from the law, which was typical and shadowy; jwvqd hlm, "the word of truth", is a phrase used by the Jews {e}, for sublime and heavenly doctrine: now, by the hearing of this, faith came; and this the Ephesians heard, not only externally, but internally; so as to understand, approve, and believe it, and to put it in practice: and which is also called

the Gospel of your salvation: because it is a declaration and publication of salvation by Christ; and gives an account of the author of salvation, of his ability and willingness to save, and of the nature of this salvation, and describes the persons who shall be saved; and because it is the means of salvation, when attended with the Spirit and power of God; and the instrument, in God's hand, of showing to souls their special and particular interest in salvation:

in whom also after that ye believed; which may refer either to the Gospel of salvation, in which they believed upon hearing it; or rather to Christ, the

Saviour revealed, in whom they believed to the saving of their souls: and this shows, that the sealing work of the Spirit after mentioned, and with which this stands in connection, is a distinct thing from faith, or indeed any other work of the Spirit; as illumination, regeneration, sanctification, &c. it is what follows believing, and is a work that passes upon the soul after it; and so is something over and above, and more than faith, at least than first believing: and from hence it also appears, that there may be true faith, where this is not as yet; and that none but believers in Christ enjoy the following privilege:

ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. This cannot have respect to the Father's sealing his people in election, with the seal of his foreknowledge, **2Ti 2:19** for that is before faith, and is within himself, and not on them, and is distinct from the Spirit's work; and for the same reasons it cannot design the Son's affection to them, setting them as a seal on his arm and heart, **So 8:6**, or his asserting his property in them, and the security and protection of them, **So 4:12**, nor the Spirit's finishing and completing his own work of grace upon the soul, in which sense the word is used, Ro 15:28 for this as yet was not done upon these believing Ephesians; nor the confirming the Gospel, and the saints in it, by the extraordinary effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, or by his extraordinary works which attended the ministry of the word, to the establishing of it, and the faith of men in it; since these were not common to believers, nor did they continue; whereas the believing Ephesians, in common, were sealed; and the Spirit of God continues still as a sealer of his people, and as an earnest and pledge of their inheritance until the day of redemption; but it is to be understood of the confirming, certifying, and assuring the saints, as to their interest in the favour of God, and in the blessings of grace, of every kind, and their right and title to the heavenly glory; See Gill on "2Co 1:22", and the seal of these things is not circumcision, nor baptism, nor the Lord's supper, nor even the graces of the Spirit; but the Spirit himself, who witnesses to the spirits of believers the truth of these things, and that as a "spirit of promise": so called, both because he is the Spirit promised, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, whom the Father and Christ had promised, and who was sent by them; and because he usually seals, or certifies believers of the truth of the above things, by opening and applying a word of promise to them: and which he does also, as the "Holy" Spirit; for this sealing work of his leaves a greater impress of holiness upon the soul, and engages more to acts of holiness; wherefore the doctrine of assurance is no licentious doctrine; no persons are so holy as those who are truly possessed of that grace; and as for such who pretend unto it, and live in sin, it is a certain thing that they in reality know nothing of it.

{e} Zohar in Numb. fol. 76. 3.

Ephesians 1:14

Ver. 14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance,.... The incorruptible and never fading one in heaven, or the heavenly kingdom; this is the Father's gift, his bequest, and belongs only to children; it comes to them through the death of the testator, Christ, and is for ever; and of this the Spirit of God is the pledge and earnest: an earnest, is what confirms an agreement, and assures the right to the thing agreed to, and is a part of it, and lesser than it, and is never returned; so the Spirit of God certifies the right to the heavenly inheritance, as well as gives a meetness for it; he is the firstfruits of eternal glory and happiness, and of the same kind with it; and as he is enjoyed in measure by the saints now, is lesser than the communion which they shall have with him, and with the Father, and the Son, hereafter, for the best things are reserved till last; and being once given into the heart as an earnest, he always continues, he never removes more, or is ever taken away:

until the redemption of the purchased possession, or "of the peculiar people"; see **1Pe 2:9**, for this is not to be understood of heaven, which is never said to be purchased, nor can it with any propriety be said to be redeemed; but of saints, of the church of God, who are bought with a price, and are purchased with his blood; and who, as they were redeemed from sin, Satan, and the law, when they were purchased, so will be redeemed again in the resurrection morn, which is called the day of redemption, **Eph 4:30**, and which will be a redemption of them from the weakness, corruption, and mortality of the body; from their present state of absence and pilgrimage; from the body of sin and death; from all sorrows and afflictions, both inward and outward; from the reproaches and persecutions of men; from a tempting devil, and an unbelieving heart; from all doubts and fears; and from death and the grave; and so the Syriac version very justly renders it, "until the redemption of them that are saved". Now till such time, the Spirit of God abides as an earnest, even until the whole felicity is enjoyed both in soul and body; and this shows the perpetuity of the Spirit's inhabitation, and grace, the final perseverance of the saints, and the security of the inheritance to them.

Unto the praise of his glory; as to the glory of the Father, by whom the saints are chosen and predestinated, **Eph 1:6** and to the glory of the Son, by whom they are redeemed, in whom they obtain the inheritance, and in whom they trust, **Eph 1:12**, so to the glory of the Holy Spirit, by whom they are sealed, and who is their earnest; for he must have his share of glory in the salvation of the elect, as well as the other two persons.

Ephesians 1:15

Ver. 15. Wherefore I also,.... As well as others:

after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus; who is the immediate object of faith, and a very proper and suitable one; having every thing in him that is agreeable to the case and circumstances of those that trust in him. And the grace of faith, which terminates on him, is a seeing him, a beholding the glory of his person, and the fulness of his grace; a going to him, and venturing on him; a laying hold upon him, and embracing of him; a committing all unto him, and a leaning and depending on him, and a living upon him, and a walking on in him.

And love unto all the saints: whether Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, greater or lesser believers, of meaner gifts, or larger abilities; and which love was unfeigned, fervent, active, and laborious; and which is the evidence of regeneration, and without which a profession is in vain. These two graces, faith and love, are inseparable; they always go together, and are to be found in the same persons; and where they are, they cannot be hid, as they were not in these Ephesians; their faith was professed by them, and was made public, and their love showed itself in deeds, as well as in words, to the saints: hence the apostle came to hear of them both, upon the certain relation of others; for these things were come abroad, and were talked of; See Gill on "Col 1:3".
See Gill on "Col 1:4".
See Gill on "Phm 1:4".
See Gill on "Phm 1:5".

Ephesians 1:16

Ver. 16. Cease not to give thanks for you,.... On account of their faith and love; which were gifts of grace bestowed upon them, and not the produce of their own free will and power; and therefore thanks are given to God for them:

making mention of you in my prayers; which shows the apostle to be a praying person, and that he was constant at the throne of grace, where he prayed for others as well as for himself; and it points out the time and way, when, and in which he gave thanks to God for them; and is mentioned, not only to testify his great affection for them, but also to excite them, by his example, to the practice of those duties themselves.

Ephesians 1:17

Ver. 17. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,.... In what sense God the Father is the God of Christ, See Gill on "Eph 1:3"

The Father of glory; or the glorious Father; who is glorious in himself, in the perfections of his nature, and in the works of his hands; and as a father, he is a glorious father to Christ, and is a father to him, as he is to none else; and has been honoured and glorified by Christ, and from whom Christ as man has received much honour and glory: and he is a glorious father to the saints, to whom he has shown inexpressible love, by adopting them into his family; and pities them, as a father does his children; takes care of them, and protects them, and makes a glorious provision for them; not only of good things now, but of an eternal inheritance hereafter: and he may be so called, because he is the author and giver of eternal glory and happiness; and because all glory is due unto him: the Arabic version reads, "God, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory", making all these epithets to belong to Christ:

may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him; this was one part of the apostle's prayers for the saints at Ephesus, that they might increase in divine knowledge; either in the knowledge of God, as the God of Christ, and the Father of glory, and as their God and Father in Christ; or of God, as considered in Christ the Mediator; or else of Christ himself: and designs not a notional and speculative knowledge of Christ, but what is practical and experimental; and which is joined with love of him, faith in him, and obedience to him; and which is not only approbative, but fiducial and appropriating; and though it is but imperfect, yet is progressive; and for the progression of it, the apostle prays; for it is certain, that these saints had a knowledge of Christ, but this was not perfect; and a larger measure of it was desirable: and in order to this, he prays for the Spirit, as a "spirit of wisdom"; who implants spiritual wisdom in the hearts of men, and instructs them in the Gospel, the hidden wisdom of God, leads them into all truths, and opens to them the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which are hid in Christ, the wisdom of God; and as a spirit of "revelation"; who reveals Christ and the things of Christ, at first conversion; and afterwards reveals him and his righteousness, and other benefits of his more largely, even from faith to faith;

and gives a clearer view of interest in them: hence it appears, that the Spirit is the gift of God; and that all spiritual light and knowledge, and the increase of it, are owing to him.

Ephesians 1:18

Ver. 18. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened,.... By the Spirit of God already, to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin; the insufficiency of their own righteousness; the beauty, glory, fulness, and suitableness of Christ, as a Saviour; the excellency, truth, and usefulness of the doctrines of the Gospel; in which their understandings were before dark, but now had light into them: wherefore these words are not to be considered as part of the apostle's petitions, but rather as what was taken for granted by him; and are to be put into a parenthesis, and the following words to be joined in connection with the preceding verse; unless it should be thought, that the apostle prays for greater illuminations, and for more spiritual light, and that the eyes of their understandings might be more and more enlightened; the phrase, lkvh Nye, omma thv dianoiav, "the eye of the understanding", is Rabbinical, and often to be met with in Jewish writings {f}; the Alexandrian copy, and several others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, "the eyes of your heart"; and to, twbblh ynye, "the eyes of the hearts, or minds", is a phrase used by the Jewish writers {g}:

that ye may know what is the hope of his calling; by which is meant, the effectual calling of the saints; which is not a call to an office, or a call merely by the external ministry of the word; but which is internal, special, powerful, high, and heavenly: and this is the calling of God, of which he is the author; who calls with an holy calling, unto eternal glory by Christ Jesus; and which is without repentance: and the hope of this calling, is either eternal happiness, which is the thing hoped for; or Christ, who is the ground and foundation of it; or the grace of hope, which is exercised on both; or all three: for hope of eternal glory, as it is founded on Christ, may be said to be the hope of the calling of God, because it is wrought in the soul at the time of the effectual calling, and what saints are then called to the exercise of; and calling grace, is an encouragement to hope for eternal life; since whom God calls, he justifies and glorifies: and now the apostle prays, that these saints who were called by the grace of God, might know more of Christ, the foundation of their hope; and what that is they are hoping for, and more and more what it is to hope for the same, upon the view of Christ's person, blood, and righteousness:

and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; the saints themselves are the Lord's portion, and the lot of his inheritance, in whom he is, and will be abundantly glorified; but here it rather seems to design the heavenly inheritance before spoken of, of which the Spirit is the earnest; and this is the Lord's, it is of his preparing, and it is his gift, and a very rich and glorious inheritance it is: hence it is not only signified by mansions, and everlasting habitations, by an house, and by a city, but by a kingdom; the riches of grace are preparatory to it, and the riches of glory are comprised in it; and this is in, or among the saints, who only have a right unto it, and a meetness for it; and what this inheritance is, with the riches and glory of it, will not be fully known in this life; and indeed but little of it is known; so that such a petition as this is always proper and pertinent.

{f} Zohar in Deut. fol. 119. 3. Jetzirah, p. 22. 78. Ed. Rittangel. R. Levi ben Gersom in Gen. fol. 14. 3. & Philo de opificio Dei, p. 15. {g} Bechinat Olam, p. 260.

Ephesians 1:19

Ver. 19. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe,.... The objects of the divine power here intended, are believers in Christ; which distinguishes this power from that which was put forth in creation, and from that which will be displayed in the resurrection of the dead, and from the power of divine wrath, which will appear in the damnation of sinners; and shows, that this power is that which is exerted in the implantation of faith, and in the continuance of it, and in the finishing of that work; and that this is a great power, an exceeding great one, a super eminent one; which is attended with energy and efficacy, and is irresistible and insuperable: the greatness of this power as displayed in the work of conversion and faith appears, if it be considered what the work itself is called, a creation, a resurrection from the dead, a regeneration, and a transformation of the man into another man, which must needs require almighty power; as well as what is then done, some things are removed, Satan is dispossessed, the stony heart is taken away, the enmity is slain, the old man is put down from his throne, and put off with his deeds; and there are some things wrought, Christ is formed in the soul, his grace is implanted, his image is stamped on, a new heart is given, and principles of light and life, of grace and holiness are put; the understanding is enlightened, the will is subdued, the affections are set on other objects, and the mind and conscience are cleansed and purified; and the means of this are the ministers, and ministry of the word, which are weak, foolish, and contemptible, in the eyes of men; to which may be added, the opposition made both from within and from without, from a sinful heart, a tempting devil, and an ensnaring, reproaching, and persecuting world: so that this work of faith cannot be ascribed to anything short of the exceeding greatness of divine power; and which is seen in supporting faith when it is wrought, under great discouragements; in delivering believers out of divers temptations; in assisting them to discharge their duty, and in their final perseverance: and to increase the idea of this power it is added,

according to the working of his mighty power, or "according to the energy of the might of his power": the strength of his power, in all the mighty energy of it, is exerted towards and upon believers; and which they should know, own, and acknowledge, to the glory of the grace of God: and this is in proportion, and agreeably to that power.

Ephesians 1:20

Ver. 20. Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead,.... There are many articles of faith contained in this passage; as that Christ died, that he is raised from the dead, that he was raised from the dead by God the Father, and that his resurrection was by the power of God: the resurrection of any person is an instance of great power, but Christ's resurrection from the dead was an instance of peculiar and special power; for he was raised from the dead as a public person, representing all his people, for whom he became a surety; and he was raised again for their justification, and to great glory in himself, after he had been brought into a very low estate indeed: moreover, this passage in connection with the preceding verse suggests, that there is some proportion between the power put forth on Christ in raising him from the dead, and that which is exerted in the work of conversion and faith: there is some likeness between the things themselves, as well as in the display of power in them; Christ's resurrection is called a begetting, and he is styled the first begotten from the dead, and the regeneration of men is signified by a resurrection from the dead; as Christ's body was really dead, lifeless, and without motion, antecedent to his resurrection, so men, previous to conversion, are dead in trespasses and sins, and are destitute of spiritual life and motion; and as Christ's human nature could not help itself, could not raise itself, so neither can dead sinners convert themselves, or bring themselves out of that state and condition, in which they are by nature; and as the resurrection of Christ was the pure work of God, and a display of his almighty power, so the work of faith, of grace and conversion, is the entire work of God, which is begun, carried on, and finished wholly by his power; and as Christ's resurrection was in order to his glorification, so is the regeneration and conversion of men, in order to their enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance, as it follows:

and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly [places]; which is expressive of the great honour conferred upon the human nature of Christ, such as never was given to any of the angels, and of the glory it is exalted to; and shows that he has done his work on earth with acceptance, which he came about; and therefore is set down at his Father's right hand, where he enjoys rest and ease from his labours, and is out of the reach of every enemy; will never die again, but live for ever, to intercede for his people, to assist and protect them, and bring them where he is; and in whom, as their head and representative, they are already set down in the same heavenly places.

Ephesians 1:21

Ver. 21. Far above all principality and power,.... Good angels and bad angels, and civil magistrates, who also may be intended by the following words:

and might and dominion; good angels may be so called, because of their employment under God in the affairs of Providence, and the government of this world; and Christ is not only above them, as he is God, being their Creator, who has made them, and on whom they depend, and is the Lord whom they serve, and is the object of their worship and adoration, and as he is Mediator, to whom they minister, and so is above them in nature, name, and office; but also as he is man, in union with the Son of God; and chiefly he here is said to be above them on account of place, being at the right hand of God, where they are not, **Heb 1:13**. And evil angels may be so called, because of the government which subsists among themselves, and the power and influence they have over mankind; Christ was above them when here on earth, as appears by his resisting the temptations of Satan, and defeating him in them; by his dispossessing devils from the bodies of men; by his spoiling and destroying them and their works at his death; and by his leading them captive, and triumphing over them at his ascension; and by delivering souls out of his hands at conversion, through his power attending the ministration of his Gospel; and his being above them will still be more manifest, in the binding of Satan a thousand years, and in the final condemnation of him, and of all his angels under him: civil magistrates are sometimes called by these names, and Christ is above them; they receive their governments from him, they rule by him, and are accountable to him, and are set up and put down at his pleasure; all these senses may be taken in; but the first seems chiefly designed: it is added,

and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; persons of authority and dignity, of fame and renown, whether in earth or heaven; as emperors, kings, princes, nobles, generals of armies &c. in this world, and cherubim, seraphim, &c. in the other world: this phrase denotes both the extensiveness of Christ's kingdom, and the eternity of it; as reaching to both worlds, and being over everything in them, and as lasting to the end of this, and unto that which is to come.

Ephesians 1:22

Ver. 22. And hath put all things under his feet,.... These words are taken out of **Ps 8:6**.
See Gill on "1Co 15:27".

And gave him to be the head over all things to the church; the Vulgate Latin version reads, "and gave him to be the head over every church", or "all the church"; the Ethiopic version, "the whole church"; which intends not barely professors of religion, or a family of faithful persons, or a particular congregation, in which sense the word is sometimes used; but the whole body of God's elect, the church, which is built on Christ the rock, for which he gave himself, and which is the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven: Christ is an head to this church; in what sense he is so, See Gill on "1Co 11:3". And this headship of Christ is the gift of God; and it is an honourable gift to him, as Mediator; it is a glorifying of him, and a giving him in all things the pre-eminence; and it is a free grace gift to the church, and a very special, valuable, and excellent one, and of infinite benefit and advantage to it; and which is expressed in his being head "over all things" to it; to overrule all things for its good; to communicate all good things to it; and to perform all the good offices of an head for it: the Syriac version reads, "and him who is above all things, he gave to be the head to the church" even him who is God over all, blessed for evermore.

Ephesians 1:23

Ver. 23. Which is his body,.... That is, which church is the body of Christ; as an human body is but one, consisting of various members, united to each other, and set in an exact proportion and symmetry, and in a proper subservience to one another, and which must be neither more nor fewer than they are; so the church of Christ is but one general assembly, which consists of many persons, of different gifts and usefulness, and are all united together under one head, Christ, whose name they bear, and are made to drink of the same Spirit; and these are placed in such order, as throw a glory and comeliness on each other, and to be useful to one another, so that it cannot be said of the meanest member, that there is no need of it; and the number of them can neither be increased nor diminished; and this is Christ's body, his mystical body, which becomes his by the Father's gift to him, and by his own purchase; to which he is united, and of which he is the only head; and which he loves as his own body, and supplies, directs, and defends:

the fulness of him that filleth all in all; besides the personal fulness which Christ has as God, and his fulness of ability and fitness for his work as Mediator, and his dispensatory fulness, which dwells in him for the use of his people, the church is his relative fulness, which fills him, and makes up Christ mystical; and which is filled by him, and is complete in him: and then will the church appear to be Christ's fulness, when all the elect, both Jews and Gentiles, shall be gathered in; and when these are all filled with the grace designed for them; and when they are all grown up to their full proportion, or are arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; which will be a glorious sight to see, and very desirable: and this shows the certainty of the saints' perseverance and salvation: for if anyone member, even the meanest, could be lost, the church would not be the fulness of Christ: and this may be further concluded, from its being his fulness, who

filleth all in all; which may be understood either more extensively; for he fills both worlds with inhabitants; he fills all places with his omnipresence, and all creatures with proper food and sustenance: or with a limitation to the church and people of God; he fills all his churches and ordinances with his gracious presence; and he fills the various societies of his saints with members and with officers; and these with the gifts and graces of his Spirit, suitable to their place and station; he fills all and every of the saints, all the vessels of mercy, whether greater or lesser, all sorts of them, of larger or meaner capacities; he fills all the powers and faculties of their souls, their hearts with joy, their minds with knowledge, their consciences with peace, their wills with spiritual desires, submission and resignation, and their affections with love to himself and people: in short, he fills them with all grace and goodness, and the fruits of righteousness; and so makes them meet for usefulness here, and for happiness hereafter; the fulness of the earth in Ps 24:1 is by the Jews interpreted of the souls of the righteous, and of the congregation of Israel {h}.

{h} Zohar in Gen. fol. 50. 2. & in Exod. fol. 21. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ephesians 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 2

The design of the apostle in this chapter, is to magnify the riches of divine grace, in the effectual calling and salvation of sinners, by Christ Jesus; in order to which, he describes the sad estate they are in by nature, and before conversion, even God's elect among the Jews, and especially among the Gentiles; and then observes how peace is made for and between them both, by Christ the peacemaker; and the various privileges and blessings which both enjoy, in consequence of it: he begins with the Ephesians, and expresses the former state they were in by a death, which is ascribed to trespasses and sins, **Eph 2:1**, and represents their walk and conversation to have been according to the world, and after Satan; who is described by his dominion over other devils that dwell in the air, and by his influence upon disobedient men, **Eph 2:2**, and that it might not be thought that the case of these Gentile Ephesians was worse than others, the apostle observes of himself, and other saints among the Jews, that their conversation before conversion was among the men of the world, and so according to the course of it, as the Gentiles; and that it was a very carnal conversation they had spent, in fulfilling the desires and lusts of the flesh; and that they were as deserving of, and as liable to the wrath of God in themselves, as other persons, **Eph 2:3**, to which former state he opposes their present one; they were not now dead in sin, but were quickened; which is ascribed to God as the efficient cause, and to his rich mercy and great love as the moving cause; and to Christ as the meritorious and procuring cause, by whose grace they were saved, and in whom they were not only quickened, but raised, and made to sit together in heavenly places; and the final cause and end of all this was, to show forth the abundant grace and kindness of God, through Christ, **Eph 2:4**. The doctrine of salvation by grace, the apostle takes up again from **Eph 2:5**, and to the moving cause of salvation, the grace of God, he adds the means, or instrument by which it is received and enjoyed, which is faith; and that is denied to be owing to the power of men, but is said to be a gift of God **Eph 2:8**, and the end in view, in putting salvation upon the foot of grace and not works, is to prevent boasting in the creature, **Eph 2:9**, and that works cannot be the causes of salvation, either efficient, moving, or procuring, is evident; since though they are to be performed as being agreeable to the purposing, as well as commanding will of God, yet they are effects, both of the work of grace upon the soul in time, called a creation, and of the decrees of God from eternity, **Eph 2:10**, when the apostle goes on to put the Ephesians in mind of their former state in unregeneracy, with the same view as before, to magnify the grace of God, but in a different manner; not as common to them with the Jews, but as peculiar to them as Gentiles; as that they were had in contempt by the Jews, and were in a state of alienation, not only from them, but from God and Christ, and the enjoyment of various privileges, **Eph 2:11**, wherefore the grace of God was the more conspicuous in their present state of nearness both to God and his people, brought about by the blood of Christ, **Eph 2:13**, who, as the peacemaker, not only made peace by the blood of his cross between God and them, but between them and the true Israel of God among the Jews; which was done, partly by abolishing the ceremonial law, which occasioned enmity, and kept up a division among them, **Eph 2:14**, and partly by sending, and preaching the Gospel of peace to them both, **Eph 2:17**, and by opening a way of access for them both unto the Father through himself, under the direction and influence of the Spirit, **Eph 2:18**, from all which it appeared, that they were not in a state of distance and alienation as before, but all belonged to the same city and family, and were built on the same foundation, and were united together in the same corner stone, Jesus Christ, **Eph 2:19**, and as the apostle compares Christ to a foundation, and a corner stone, so the church of Christ, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, to a temple; which being fitly put together, becomes, an Holy One in the lord, and a suitable habitation for God through the Spirit, **Eph 2:21**.

Ver. 1. And you hath he quickened,.... The design of the apostle in this and some following verses, is to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and to set forth the sad estate and condition of man by nature, and to magnify the riches of the grace of God, and represent the exceeding greatness of his power in conversion: the phrase

hath he quickened, is not in the original text, but is supplied from **Eph 2:5**, where it will be met with and explained: here those who are quickened with Christ, and by the power and grace of God, are described in their natural and unregenerate estate,

who were dead in trespasses and sins; not only dead in Adam, in whom they sinned, being their federal head and representative; and in a legal sense, the sentence of condemnation and death having passed upon them; but in a moral sense, through original sin, and their own actual transgressions: which death lies in a separation from God, Father, Son, and Spirit, such are without God, and are alienated from the life of God, and they are without Christ, who is the author and giver of life, and they are sensual, not having the Spirit, who is the spirit of life; and in a deformation of the image of God, such are dead as to their understandings, wills, and affections, with respect to spiritual things, and as to their capacity to do any thing that is spiritually good; and in a loss of original righteousness; and in a privation of the sense of sin and misery; and in a servitude to sin, Satan, and the world: hence it appears, that man must be in himself unacceptable to God, infectious and hurtful to his fellow creatures, and incapable of helping himself: so it was usual with the Jews to call a wicked and ignorant man, a dead man; they say {i},

"there is no death like that of those that transgress the words of the law, who are called, Mytm, "dead men", and therefore the Scripture says, "turn and live"."

And again {k},

"no man is called a living man, but he who is in the way of truth in this world.----And a wicked man who does not go in the way of truth, is called, tm, "a dead man"."

And once more {l}

"whoever is without wisdom, lo, he is tmk, "as a dead man";"

See Gill on "1Ti 5:6". The Alexandrian and Claromontane copies, and one of Stephens's, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "dead in your trespasses and sins"; and the Syriac version, "dead in your sins and in your trespasses"; and the Ethiopic version only, "dead in your sins".

{i} Zohar in Gen, fol. 41. 3. {k} Ib. in Num. fol. 76. 1. Vid. ib;. in Exod. fol. 44. 2. {l} Caphtor, fol. 30. 2.

Ephesians 2:2

Ver. 2. Wherein in time past ye walked,.... Sins and transgressions are a road or path, in which all unconverted sinners walk; and this path is a dark, crooked, and broad one, which leads to destruction and death, and yet is their own way, which they choose, approve of, and delight to walk in; and walking in it denotes a continued series of sinning, an obstinate persisting in it, a progress in iniquity, and pleasure therein: and the time of walking in this path, being said to be in time past, shows that the elect of. God before conversion, walk in the same road that others do; and that conversion is a turning out of this way; and that when persons are converted, the course of their walking is altered, which before was

according to the course of this world meaning this world, in distinction from the world to come, or the present age, in which the apostle lived, and designs the men of it; and the course of it is their custom, manner, and way of life; to which God's elect, during their state of unregeneracy, conform, both with respect to conversation and religious worship: great is the force that prevailing customs have over men; it is one branch of redemption by Christ, to deliver men from this present evil world, and to free them from a vain conversation in it; and it is only the grace of God that effectually teaches to deny the lusts of it; and it is only owing to the prevalent intercession and power of Christ, that even converted persons are kept from the evil of it:

according to the prince of the power of the air: which is not to be understood of any supposed power the devil has over the air, by divine permission, to raise winds, but of a posse, or body of devils, who have their residence in the air; for it was not only the notion of the Jews {m}, that there are noxious and accusing spirits, who fly about rywab, "in the air", and that there is no space between the earth and the firmament free, and that the whole is full of a multitude of them; but also it was the opinion of the Chaldeans {n}, and of Pythagoras {o}, and Plato {p}, that the air is full of demons: now there is a prince who is at the head of these, called Beelzebub, the prince of devils, or the lord of a fly, for the devils under him are as so many flies in the air, Mt 12:24 and by the Jews called {q}, ayxwrd Nwhbr, "the prince of spirits"; and is here styled, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; by which spirit is meant, not the lesser devils that are under the prince, nor the spirit of the world which comes from him, and is not of God; but Satan himself, who is a spirit, and an evil, and an unclean one; and who operates powerfully in unbelievers, for they are meant by children of disobedience, or unbelief; just as atwnmyhm ynb, "children of faith" {r}, in the Jewish dialect, designs believers; and over these Satan has great influence, especially the reprobate part of them; whose minds he blinds, and whose hearts he fills, and puts it into them to do the worst of crimes; and indeed, he has great power over the elect themselves, while in unbelief, and leads them captive at his will; and these may be said in their unregeneracy to walk after him, when they imitate him, and do his lusts, and comply with what he suggests, dictates to them, or tempts them to.

{m} Shaare Ora, fol. 4. 1. {n} Laert. Procem. in Vit. Philos, p. 5. {o} lb. in Vit. Pythagor. p. 587. {p} Apuleius de Deo Socratis, p. 331. {q} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 21. 2. {r} Zohar in Gen. fol. 21. 2. & 22. 4. & 27. 4. & 28. 2. & 35. 2. & 44. 1.

Ephesians 2:3

Ver. 3. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past,.... What the apostle says of the Gentile Ephesians before conversion, he says of himself and other Jews; and this he does, partly to show that it was not from ill will, or with a design to upbraid the Gentiles, that he said what he did; and partly to beat down the pride of the Jews, who thought themselves better than the sinners of the Gentiles; as well as to magnify the grace of God in the conversion of them both: the sense is, that the apostle and other Jews in the time of their unregeneracy, had their conversation according to the customs of the world, and to the prince of the air, and among unbelievers, as well as the Gentiles; and that they were equally sinners, and lived a like sinful course of life:

in the lusts of our flesh; by "flesh" is meant, the corruption of nature; so called, because it is propagated by natural generation; and is opposed to the Spirit, or principle of grace; and has for its object fleshly things; and discovers itself mostly in the body, the flesh; and it makes persons carnal or fleshly: and this is called "our", because it belongs to human nature, and is inherent in it, and inseparable from it in this life: and the "lusts" of it, are the inward motions of it, in a contrariety to the law and will of God; and are various, and are sometimes called fleshly and worldly lusts, and the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life: and persons may be said to have their conversations in these, when these are the ground of their conversation, when they are solicitous about them, and make provision for the fulfilling of them, and constantly employ themselves in obedience to them, as follows:

fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind: or the wills of them; what they incline to, will, and crave after: various are the degrees of sin, and its several motions; and universal is the corruption of human nature; not only the body, and the several members of it, are defiled with sin, and disposed to it, but all the powers and faculties of the soul; even the more noble and governing ones, the mind, understanding, and will, as well as the affections; and great is the power and influence which lust has over them:

and were by nature children of wrath, even as others: by which is meant, not only that they were wrathful persons, living in malice, hateful, and hating one another; but that they were deserving of the wrath of God, which comes upon the children of disobedience, among whom they had their conversation; and which is revealed from heaven against such sins as they were guilty of, though they were not appointed to it: and they were such "by nature"; really, and not in opinion, and by and from their first birth: so a Jewish commentator {s} on these words, "thy first father hath sinned", Isa 43:27 has this note;

"how canst thou say thou hast not sinned? and behold thy first father hath sinned, and he is the first man, for man
ajxb ebjwm, "is naturally in sin";"

or by nature a sinner, or sin is naturally impressed in him; and hence being by nature a sinner, he is by nature deserving of the wrath of God, as were the persons spoken of:

even as others; as the rest of the world, Jews as well as Gentiles; and Gentiles are especially designed, in distinction from the Jews, the apostle is speaking of; and who are particularly called in the Jewish dialect Myrxa, "others"; See Gill on "Lu 18:11".

{s} Kimchi in loc.

Ephesians 2:4

Ver. 4. But God, who is rich in mercy,.... Mercy is a perfection of the divine nature, and is essential to God; and may be considered with respect to the objects of it, either as general, extending to all men in a providential way; or as special, reaching only to some in a way of grace; for though mercy is his nature, yet the display and exertion of it towards any object, is the act of his will; and special mercy, with all the blessings and benefits of it, is only exhibited in Christ Jesus: and God is said to be "rich" in it, because he is free and liberal in dispensing it, and the effects of it; and that to a large number of persons, in great abundance and variety, by various ways, and in divers instances; as in the covenant of grace, in the mission of Christ, in redemption by him, in regeneration, in pardon of sin, and in eternal salvation; and yet it is inexhaustible and perpetual; and this sets forth the excellency and glory of it:

for his great love wherewith he loved us; the love of God to his chosen people is very great, if it be considered who it is that has loved them, God and not man; who is an infinite, unchangeable, and sovereign Being; and his love is like himself, for God is love; it has heights and depths, and lengths and breadths immeasurable; it admits of no variation nor alteration; and is altogether free, arising from himself, and not from any motives and conditions in men: and if the persons themselves are considered, who are the objects of it, men, sinful men, unworthy of the divine notice and regard; and that these are loved personally, particularly, and distinctly, and not others; nakedly, and not theirs, or for any thing in them, or done by them, and that notwithstanding their manifold sins and transgressions: to which may be added, that this love is represented as a past act; and indeed it is from everlasting, and is antecedent to their being quickened, and was when they were dead in trespasses and sins; and is the source and spring of the blessing next mentioned: so the divine love is often called in the Cabalistic writings of the Jews {t}, hbr hbha, "great love".

{t} Zohar in Gen. fol. 8. 4. & in Exod. fol. 102. 3. Lex. Cabal. p. 44. 45.

Ephesians 2:5

Ver. 5. Even when we were dead in sins,.... See Gill on "Eph 2:1".

Hath quickened us together with Christ: which may be understood either of regeneration, when a soul that is dead in a moral or spiritual sense, is quickened and made alive; a principle of life is infused, and acts of life are put forth; such have their spiritual senses, and these in exercise; they can feel the load and weight of sin; see their lost state and condition, the odiousness of sin, and the beauty of a Saviour, the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and the fulness and suitableness of Christ's; breathe after divine and spiritual things; speak in prayer to God, and the language of Canaan to fellow Christians; move towards Christ, exercise grace on him, act for him, and walk on in him: and this life they have not from themselves, for previous to it they are dead, and in this quickening work are entirely passive; nor can regenerate persons quicken themselves, when in dead and lifeless frames, and much less unregenerate sinners; but this is God's act, the act of God the Father; though not exclusive of the Son, who quickens whom he will; nor of the Spirit, who is the Spirit of life from Christ; and it is an instance of the exceeding greatness, both of his power and love; and this may be said to be done with Christ, because he is the procuring and meritorious cause of it, by his death and resurrection from the dead; and is the author and efficient cause of it; and he is the matter of it, it is not so much the quickened persons that live, as Christ that lives in them, and it is the same life he himself lives; and because he lives, they shall live also; it is in him as in the fountain, and in them as in the stream: or else this may be understood of justification; men are dead in a legal sense, and on account of sin, are under the sentence of death; though they naturally think themselves alive, and in a good state; but when the Spirit of God comes, he strikes dead all their hopes of life by a covenant of works; not merely by letting in the terrors of the law upon the conscience, but by showing the spirituality of it, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and how incapable they are of satisfying the law, for the transgressions of it; and then he works faith in them, whereby they revive and live; they see pardon and righteousness in Christ, and pray for the one, and plead the other; and also lay hold and live upon the righteousness of Christ, when the Spirit seals up the pardon of their sins to them, and passes the sentence of justification on them, and so they reckon themselves alive unto God; and this is the justification of life, the Scripture speaks of; and this is in consequence of their being quickened with Christ, at the time of his resurrection; for when he rose from the dead, they rose with him; when he was justified, they were justified in him; and in this sense when he was quickened, they were quickened with him:

by grace ye are saved: the Claromontane copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, "by whose grace"; and the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, "by his grace"; either by the grace of him that quickens, or by the grace of Christ with whom they were quickened; the Syriac version renders it, "by his grace he hath redeemed us"; which seems to refer to the redeeming grace of Christ; and so the Ethiopic version, "and hath delivered us by his grace"; and there is a change of the person into "us", which seems more agreeable to what goes before, and follows after; See Gill on "Eph 2:8".

Ephesians 2:6

Ver. 6. And hath raised us up together,.... Which refers either to a spiritual resurrection, to a resurrection from a death in sin, to a spiritual life; and which is the effect of almighty power, and of rich grace and mercy; and in which Christ is concerned: he is the efficient cause of it, he raises the dead in this sense, and quickens whom he will; and his resurrection is the virtual cause of it; and also the exemplar, between which there is a great likeness; both bear the same name; both are a declaration of sonship; and both the first step to glory in Christ and in his people; and both are instances of the exceeding greatness of

God's power: or it may refer to a corporeal resurrection, said to be already, because it is in faith and hope, and because of the certainty of it; and to be together with Christ, because of the conformity of it to his resurrection, and to the influence of which it is owing; and chiefly because that when Christ rose from the dead, all his people rose in him, and with him, as their head and representative, he being the firstfruits of them that slept; so called, in allusion to the firstfruits of the harvest under the law, which represented and sanctified the whole:

and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: Christ is entered into heaven as the forerunner, to take possession of it for his people, in their name; and to prepare mansions of glory for them, and in these they sit; which imports honour, pleasure, rest from labour and weariness, and safety and security: and what adds to the happiness of this is, that it is together with all the saints, and with Christ himself; and in these they are made to sit already; which is so said, because of the certainty of it, for the same glory Christ has, they shall have; and because of their right to such a blessing; and chiefly because Christ their head is set down therein, who sustains their persons, bears their names on his heart, and represents them.

Ephesians 2:7

Ver. 7. That in the ages to come,.... This is the end of God's permitting sin, in which men are morally dead; and of his suffering them to go on in sin, in a state of unregeneracy; and of his quickening them with Christ, and raising them up, and causing them to sit together with him: namely, that

he might show the exceeding riches of his grace: riches being added to grace, denote the valuableness of it, as well as its plenty and abundance; and also the freeness and liberality of God in giving it; and likewise the enriching nature of it: and these riches are exceeding; they exceed the riches of this world, in the immenseness of them, being unsearchable; and in the inexhaustibleness of them, for though such large treasures have been expended upon such numbers of persons, yet there is still the same quantity; and in the duration of them, they last forever; and in the profit and satisfaction they yield, when other riches fade away, are not profitable nor satisfying; and they exceed the conception, knowledge, and comprehension of men; and intend the utmost stretch of the grace of God: and which are evidently and remarkably displayed,

in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus; in providing him as a Saviour for his people; in the mission of him into this world; in not sparing, but giving him up as a sacrifice to justice for their sins; and blessing them with all spiritual blessings in him: all which God designed to show forth, in the ages to come; meaning either the ages following to the end of time, in distinction from the ages that were past: hence it appears, that the world was not expected to be immediately at an end; and that the writings of the New Testament were to be continued, and the Gospel preached unto the end of time, in which the riches of divine grace are held forth to view; and that these ages to come, are seasons and days of grace; for a day of grace will never be over, as long as the Gospel of grace is preached; and that the instances of grace through Christ, and in the times of the apostles, are encouraging to men in ages succeeding; and that the same grace that was displayed then, is shown forth in these: or else the world to come is meant, which will take place at the end of this; and may lead us to observe, that there will be ages in the other world; and that God has not only prepared a great deal of grace and glory for his people, but he has appointed ages enough for them to enjoy it in; and that their riches lie in another world, and are in some measure hid; and that these are the produce of the grace of God; and that the exceeding riches of that will be then manifested, when it will also appear that God's giving grace to men, is not only with a view to his own glory, but is an act of kindness to them; and that eternal happiness will be heartily and freely bestowed upon them, and that through Jesus Christ their Lord: the Syriac version renders it, "that unto ages to come he might show", &c. that is, to men in ages to come; the sense is much the same.

Ephesians 2:8

Ver. 8. For by grace are ye saved,.... This is to be understood, not of temporal salvation, nor of preservation in Christ, nor of providential salvation in order to calling, and much less of being put in a way of salvation, or only in a salvable state; but of spiritual salvation, and that actual; for salvation was not only resolved upon, contrived and secured in the covenant of grace, for the persons here spoken to, but it was actually obtained and wrought out for them by Christ, and was actually applied unto them by the Spirit; and even as to the full enjoyment of it, they had it in faith and hope; and because of the certainty of it, they are said to be already saved; and besides, were representatively possessed of it in Christ their head: those interested in this salvation, are not all mankind, but particular persons; and such who were by nature children of wrath, and sinners of the Gentiles; and it is a salvation from sin, Satan, the law, its curse and condemnation, and from eternal death, and wrath to come; and includes all the blessings of grace and glory; and is entirely owing to free grace: for by grace is not meant the Gospel, nor gifts of grace, nor grace infused; but the free favour of God, to which salvation in all its branches is ascribed; as election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and eternal glory: the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "by his grace", and so some copies; and it may refer to the grace of all the three Persons; for men are saved by the grace of the Father, who drew the plan of salvation, appointed men to it, made a covenant with his Son, in which it is provided and secured, and sent him into the world to obtain it; and by the grace of the Son, who engaged as a surety to effect it, assumed human nature, obeyed and suffered in it for that purpose, and has procured it; and by the grace of the Spirit, who makes men sensible of their need of it, brings it near, sets it before them, and applies it to them, and gives them faith and hope in it: hence it follows,

through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; salvation is through faith, not as a cause or condition of salvation, or as what adds anything to the blessing itself; but it is the way, or means, or instrument, which God has appointed, for the receiving and enjoying it, that so it might appear to be all of grace; and this faith is not the produce of man's free will and power, but it is the free gift of God; and therefore salvation through it is consistent with salvation by grace; since that itself is of grace, lies entirely in receiving grace and gives all the glory to the grace of God: the sense of this last clause may be, that salvation is not of ourselves; it is not of our desiring nor of our deserving, nor of our performing, but is of the free grace of God: though faith is elsewhere represented as the gift of God, **Joh 6:65** and it is called the special gift of faith, in the Apocrypha:

"And blessed is the eunuch, which with his hands hath wrought no iniquity, nor imagined wicked things against God: for unto him shall be given the "special gift of faith", and an inheritance in the temple of the Lord more acceptable to his mind." (Wisdom 3:14)

----- (I asked the following question from a Greek and Hebrew professor:

"In this verse, to what does the word "that" refer to? Adam Clarke, Wesley & company say that it is neuter plural and "Faith" is feminine hence it cannot refer to faith, (Such an admission would destroy their theological system.) However "Grace" is also feminine as is "Salvation"."

His reply was:

"Here you ask a wonderful theological/exegetical question to which I can only give an opinion, and not a definitive answer. The problem is that there is NO precise referent. Grace is feminine. Faith is feminine. And even Salvation (as a noun) is feminine. Yet it must be one of these three at least, and maybe more than one, or all three in conjunction. Since all three come from God and not from man, the latter might seem the more likely. However, it is a tautology to say salvation and grace are "nor of yourselves," and in that case it certainly looks more like the passage is really pointing out that man cannot even take credit for his own act of faith, but that faith was itself created by God and implanted in us that we might believe (i.e. the normal Calvinistic position). In which regard the whole theological issue of "regeneration preceding faith" comes into play. So, that is basically my opinion, though others obviously disagree strenuously, but from an exegetical standpoint, the other positions have to explain away the matter of the tautology."

Whether you accept the reply or not, it is sufficient to show that the Greek is not as definitive in this verse as some scholars would have you believe. Editor)

Ephesians 2:9

Ver. 9. Not of works,.... Of any kind, moral or ceremonial, before or after conversion, done without faith or in it, nor of these in any sense; works are neither the moving causes, nor the procuring causes, nor the helping causes, nor "causa sine qua non", or conditions of salvation; the best works that are done by men, are not done of themselves, but by the grace of God, and therefore can never merit at his hand: and salvation is put upon such a foot,

lest any man should boast; of his works before God, and unto men; wherefore he has denied works any place in justification and salvation, in order to exclude all boasting in man; and has fixed it in a way of grace, and has chosen and called poor sinful worthless creatures to enjoy it, that whoever glories, may glory in the Lord.

Ephesians 2:10

Ver. 10. For we are his workmanship,.... Not as men only, but as Christians; not as creatures merely, but as new creatures; the work of grace upon the soul seems chiefly designed, which like a poem, as the word may be rendered, is a very curious work; the king's daughter is all glorious within, for this is an internal work, and is a good and excellent one; it is not indeed perfected at once, but is gradually carried on, till the finishing stroke is given to it by that hand which begun it; the author of it is God, it is not man's work; nor is it the work of ministers, no, nor of angels, but it is God's work: sometimes it is ascribed to the Spirit, who regenerates and sanctifies; and sometimes to the Son of God, who quickens whom he will; and sometimes to the Father, who reveals his Son, and draws men to him, and who seems to be meant here: the subjects of this divine operation, are the persons described in **Eph 2:1** and include both Jews and Gentiles; and express the distinguishing grace of God, that they and not others, and who were by nature children of wrath as others, should be his workmanship: and this is mentioned to show, that salvation can not be by any works of men, since all their works are either wrought for them, or in them, by God; salvation is a work wrought for them without them; and sanctification is a work wrought in them by God, of his good pleasure; and all their good works are fruits of his grace, as follows:

created in Christ Jesus unto good works; the work of grace is a creation, or a creature, a new creature; not a new vamp of old Adam's principles, but; an infusion of new ones, and is a work of almighty power; and such who have it wrought in them, are said to be created in Christ; because as soon as a man becomes a new creature, he is openly and visibly in Christ; and by these new principles of grace which are created in him, he is fit and ready, and in a capacity to perform good works; the new man formed in him, is formed for righteousness and true holiness; the internal principle of grace both excites unto, and qualifies for, the performance of righteous and holy actions:

which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, or has "before prepared"; for the preparation of good works to be performed by saints, and the preparation of them for the performance of them; are both from the Lord; God has appointed good works to be done by his people and in his word he has declared what they are he would have done; and it is his will not only that they should do them, but continue to do them; not only that they should do a single act or more, but walk in them; their conversation and course of life should be one continued series of good works; but the intention is not that they should be saved by them, but that they should walk in them; and this being the pre-ordination of God, as it shows that predestination is not according to good works, since good works are the fruits and effects of it, so likewise that it is no licentious doctrine; seeing it provides for the performance of good works, as well as secures grace and glory.

Ephesians 2:11

Ver. 11. Wherefore remember, that ye be in time past Gentiles in the flesh,.... This, with what follows in the next verse, the apostle puts the converted Ephesians in mind of, in order to magnify the grace of God in their conversion; and to humble them in a view of their former state and condition; and to teach them that they could never be saved by any works of theirs: particularly he would have them call to mind, that they were in "time past Gentiles"; which does not so much regard the nation and country they were of, for in that sense they were Gentiles still; but their state and condition; they had been very blind and ignorant, were Gentiles that knew not God; they had been very wicked and profligate sinners of the Gentiles; and they had been "Gentiles in the flesh": not according to the flesh, or by birth, for so they were then; but in the time of their unregeneracy they were carnal, and minded the things of the flesh, walked after it, and fulfilled the lusts, and did the works of it; particular respect seems to be had to their uncircumcision in the flesh, to which circumcision in the flesh is opposed in the next clause:

who are called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that is, they were by way of reproach and contempt called uncircumcised persons; than whom none were more abominable to the Jews, and hated by them, who were called circumcised persons from that circumcision which is outward, in the flesh, in a particular part of the body; and which is done by the hands of a man, who was called lhwm, "the circumciser"; which any one might be, except a Gentile {u}; an Israelite adult and skilful was preferred; yet these were not circumcised persons with that circumcision that is inward, and is of the heart, in the Spirit, and is made without the hands of men, and by the Spirit and power of God.

{u} Maimon. Hilchot Milah, c. 2. sect. 1.

Ephesians 2:12

Ver. 12. That at that time ye were without Christ,.... Or separate from him: they were chosen in him and were preserved in him, and were redeemed by him before; but they were without any knowledge of him, faith in him, love to him, communion with him, or subjection to him, his Gospel, government, laws, and ordinances; and particularly they were without any promises of him, or prophecies concerning him, which were peculiar to the Jews; hence the Messiah is called larvyd axyvm, "the Christ of Israel" {w}, and who as he was promised, so he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house, of Israel: hence it

follows,

being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; both from their civil and church state; the Gentiles might not dwell among them, nor have any dealings with them in things civil, unless they conformed to certain laws; nor might the Jews go into any, nor eat or converse with any, that were uncircumcised; so great an alienation and distance were there between these two people; and much less might they eat the passover and join with them in religious worship; the word for "commonwealth" here used, Harpocratian says {x}, is commonly used by Greek writers for a "democracy" though the original constitution of the Israelites was properly a "theocracy":

strangers to the covenants of promise; to the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham; and to the covenant at Mount Sinai, made with Israel; and to the dispensation of the covenant of grace to that people, sometimes called the first covenant and the old covenant, and which peculiarly belonged to them, **Ro 9:4** one copy reads, "strangers to the promises of the covenant"; which is natural enough; the Vulgate Latin version joins the word "promise" to the next clause, and reads,

having no hope of the promise of the promised Messiah: "having no hope"; of the Messiah and salvation by him, of the resurrection of the dead, of a future state, and of eternal life; none that is sure and steadfast, that is purifying, and makes not ashamed; or which is a good hope through grace, is the gift of God, the fruit of his love, and the effect of his power; and this is to be in a miserable condition: Philo, the Jew {y}, observes, that

"the Chaldeans call a man Enos, as if he only was truly a man that expects good things, and supports himself with good hopes; and adds, hence it is manifest that one without hope is not reckoned a man, but a beast in an human form; since he is destitute of hope, which is the property of the human soul;"

and without God in the world; without the knowledge of God in Christ; without the image of God, which was defaced by sin; without the grace and fear of God; and without communion with him, and the worship of him; and while they were so they were in the world, among the men of it, and were a part of it, not being yet called out of it: the word signifies "atheists": so some of the Gentiles were in "theory", as they all were in practice; and they were by the Jews reckoned no other than "atheists"; it is a common saying with them {z} that

"he that dwells without the land (of Israel) is like one
hwla wl Nyav, "who has no God":"

{w} Targum in Isa. xvi. 1. 5. {x} Lex. Decem Orator. p. 246. {y} De Abrahamo, p. 350, 351. {z} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 110. 2. Zohar in Exod. fol. 33. 1. Cosri, par. 2. sect. 22. fol. 85. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 129. 4. & 135. 2. & 153. 3. & 168. 3.

Ephesians 2:13

Ver. 13. But now in Christ Jesus,.... Being openly and visibly in Christ, created in him, and become believers in him; as they were before secretly in him, as chosen and blessed in him before the foundation of the world:

ye who sometimes were far off; who in their state of unregeneracy were afar off from God, and from his law, and from any spiritual knowledge of him and fellowship with him; and from Jesus Christ, and from the knowledge of his righteousness, and the way of salvation by him; and from the Spirit, and any acquaintance with the things of the Spirit, and from minding them, and from walking after him; and from the saints and people of God, and from any love to them, and communion with them; and from any solid hopes of happiness, or real peace and comfort; which distance was owing both to Adam's sin and to their own transgressions: it is an observation of a Jewish writer {a} on **Ge 3:9** "where art thou?" he (God) knew where he was, but he said so to show him that he was pxwrm, "afar off from" God by his sin: see Isa 59:2, and yet

are made nigh by the blood of Christ: so as to have nearness of access to and communion with God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and the saints, in virtue of the blood of Christ; which gives boldness and speaks peace; by which their persons are justified, the pardon of their sins is procured, reconciliation is made, and their garments are washed, and made white; and so they draw nigh with confidence by the faith of him.

{a} R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 7. 2.

Ephesians 2:14

Ver. 14. For he is our peace,.... The author of peace between Jew and Gentile: there was a great enmity of the Jew against the Gentile, and of the Gentile against the Jew; and chiefly on account of circumcision, the one being without it, and the other insisting on it, and branding one another with nicknames on account of it; but Christ has made peace between them by abrogating the ceremonial law, which was the occasion of the difference, and by sending the Gospel of peace to them both, by converting some of each, and by granting the like privileges to them all, as may be observed in the following verses: and Christ is the author of peace between God and his people; there is naturally in man an enmity to God; sin has separated chief friends; nor can man make his peace with God; what he does, or can do, will not do it; and what will, he cannot do; Christ is the only fit and proper person for this work, being a middle person between both, and is only able to effect it, being God as well as man; and so could draw nigh to God, and treat with him about terms of peace, and agree to them, and perform them; and which he has brought about by his blood, his sufferings and death; and which is made on honourable terms, by a full satisfaction to the law and justice of God; and so is a lasting one, and attended with a train of blessings: moreover, Christ is the donor of peace, of external peace in his churches, and of internal peace of conscience, and of eternal peace in heaven: this is one of the names of the Messiah with the Jews {b};

"says R. Jose the Galilean, even the name of the Messiah is called Mwlv, "peace"; as it is said, **Isa 9:6** "the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace";"

see **Mic 5:5** where it is said, "and this man shall be the peace"; which the Jewish {c} writers understand of the Messiah:

who hath made both one; Jews and Gentiles, one people, one body, one church; he united them together, and caused them to agree in one, and made them to be of one mind and judgment by the above methods; as well as he gathered them together in one, in one head, himself, who represented them all:

and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; the ceremonial law, which was made up of many hard and intolerable commands, and distinguished, and divided, and kept up a division between Jews and Gentiles: so the Jews call the law a wall, "if she be a wall", **So 8:9** hrwt wz, "this is the law", say they {d}: and hence we read of hrwth tmwx, "the wall of the law" {e}; and sometimes the phrase, a "partition wall", is used for a division or disagreement; so R. Benjamin says {f}, that between the Karaites and Rabbanites, who were the disciples of the wise men, there was huyxm, "a middle wall of partition"; a great difference and distance; and such there was between the Jew and Gentile, by reason of the ceremonial law; but Christ removed it, and made up the difference: the allusion seems to be to the wall which divided the court of Israel from the court of the Gentiles, in the temple, and which kept them at a distance in worship.

{b} Perek Shalom, fol. 20. 1. Baal Hatturim in Numb. xxv. 12. {c} Vid. Kimchi in loc. {d} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 87. 1. {e} Caphtor, fol. 95. 1. & 101. 1. {f} Itinerar. p. 28.

Ephesians 2:15

Ver. 15. Having abolished in his flesh the enmity,.... The ceremonial law, as appears by what follows,

even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; which consisted of many precepts, and carnal ordinances; and is so called because it was an indication of God's hatred of sin, by requiring sacrifice for it; and because it was an occasion of stirring up the enmity of the natural man, it being a burden and a weariness to the flesh, by reason of its many and troublesome rites; and because it was the cause of enmity between Jew and Gentile: the Jews say {g}, that Sinai, the mount on which the law was given, signifies "hatred"; and that it is so called because from it descended hanv, "hatred" or "enmity" to the nations of the world: now this Christ abolished, "in his flesh", or by it; not by his incarnation, but by the sacrifice of his flesh, or human nature, and that as in union with his divine nature; but not until he had fulfilled it in himself, which was one end of his coming into the world; and then he abolished it, so as that it ought not to be, and so as that it is not, and of no use and service; and that because it was faulty and deficient, weak and unprofitable, as well as intolerable; and because there was a change in the priesthood; and because it was contrary to a spirit of liberty, the great blessing of the Gospel; and that there might be a reconciliation and a coalition between Jew and Gentile, as follows:

for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; which explains what is meant before by making both one; and expresses the strictness of the union between Jew and Gentile, they became as one man; and points at the manner in which they became so strictly united; and that is by being made new men, or new creatures, by having a work of grace upon their souls, and so baptized into one body, and made to drink of one and the same Spirit; the foundation of which union is in himself; for Jew and Gentile, male and female, bond and free, are all one in Christ Jesus; he is the cornerstone in which they all meet, and the head to which the whole body is joined.

{g} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 89. 1. Shemot Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 92. 4.

Ephesians 2:16

Ver. 16. And that he might reconcile both unto God,.... This is another end of the abrogation of the ceremonial law: the Jews had run up a long score against the ceremonial law, as well as against the moral law; and Christ by fulfilling it for them, and thereby abrogating it, reconciled them; and the Gentiles could not be reconciled together with them, without the abrogation of it: and this reconciliation of them is made to God, who was the person offended; and who yet first set on foot a reconciliation, in which his glory is greatly concerned; and reconciliation with others depends upon reconciliation with him: and this is made

in one body by the cross; by which "body" is meant, the human body of Christ, which the Father prepared for him, and he assumed, and that in order to make reconciliation for his people; and is said to be "one" body, because it was in one and the same body, which he reconciled both Jews and Gentiles unto God, and in or by one sacrifice of that body; reconciliation being so effectually made by it that there is no need of a reiteration: or the sense is, he reconciled them into "one body"; into one mystical body, the church, of which he is head; and this he did "by the cross", that is, by his blood shed on the cross, or by his suffering the death of the cross; which shows that reconciliation is made in a way of satisfaction to the law and justice of God, by Christ's bearing the penalty of the law, and suffering the strokes of justice on the cross; and expresses the efficacy of his blood and sacrifice, and the greatness of his condescension and love:

having slain the enmity thereby; the ceremonial law, as before; and the slaying it is the same with abolishing it; unless the enmity between God and man is meant, which was slain by removing the cause of it, sin; and which laid a foundation for the slaying of it in the hearts of his people in regeneration, when sin is made odious to them, and they are reconciled to God's way of salvation; hence being slain in both senses, peace with God can never be broken.

Ephesians 2:17

Ver. 17. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off,.... Which is to be understood not of Christ's coming in the flesh; for when he came in the flesh, he came only to the Jews that were nigh, and preached the Gospel in his own personal ministry to them, and not to the Gentiles, who are the persons afar off; **Eph 2:12** but of his coming by his Spirit in the ministry of his apostles, to whom he gave a commission after he had made peace and reconciliation by the blood of his cross, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in the furthest parts of the earth; and on whom he bestowed gifts, qualifying them for such service, and succeeded them in it by his power and grace: and the subject of their ministry was peace, Christ who is our peace, and peace made by his blood, and the Gospel of peace, which declares both these; and it is the means of making persons of peaceable dispositions; its doctrines and promises, when powerfully applied, give peace to distressed minds, and quiet to doubting saints; and it shows the way to eternal peace:

and to them that were nigh; to the Jews, to whom the Gospel of peace was preached in the first place, not only by Christ and his apostles, before his death; but by his apostles after his resurrection, and after the commission was given to preach it to the Gentiles; though they are mentioned last, because the apostle was speaking to Gentiles; and this also verifies what Christ says, the first shall be last, and the last first: the Alexandrian copy, some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read "peace", in this clause, as in the former; the apostle seems to have respect to Isa 57:19 a like description and distinction of Jews and Gentiles may be observed in the writings of the Jews {h}; so they say,

"the Israelites are near unto the holy King, and the rest of the nations are far from him."

{h} Zohar in Numb. fol. 89. 3.

Ephesians 2:18

Ver. 18. For through him we both have an access, That is, both Jews and Gentiles; the Arabic version reads, "we both factions": being made one, and reconciled unto God, and having the Gospel of peace preached to both, they have through Christ freedom of access and boldness in it:

by one Spirit unto the Father: they may come to God as the Father of spirits, and of mercies, who has made their souls or spirits, and bestowed his mercies on them in great abundance; and as the Father of Christ, and as their God and Father in Christ: and the rather they should consider him in this relation to them, in order to command in them a reverence and fear of him; to secure a freedom and liberty in their approach to him; and to encourage an holy boldness, and a fiducial confidence in him; and to teach them submission to his will: and their access to him is "through" Christ, who has made peace for them, and atonement for their sins; who has satisfied law and justice, and brought in an everlasting righteousness for them; so that there is nothing lies in their way to hinder them; and besides, he takes them as it were by the hand, and leads them into the presence of his Father, and presents their petitions for them, on whose account they have both audience and acceptance with God: and this access is also "by one Spirit"; the "Holy Spirit", as the Ethiopic version reads; and who is necessary in access to God, as a spirit of adoption, to enable and encourage souls to go to God as a father; and as a spirit of supplication, to teach both how to pray, and for what, as they should; and as a free spirit to give them liberty to speak their minds freely, and pour out their souls to God; and as a spirit of faith to engage them to pray in faith, and with holy boldness, confidence, and importunity; and he is said to be "one", both with respect to the persons to and by whom access is had, the Father and Christ, for he is the one and the same Spirit of the Father and of the Son; and with respect to the persons who have this access, Jews and Gentiles, who as they make up one body, are actuated and directed by, and drink into one and the same Spirit: hence this access to God is of a spiritual kind; it is a drawing nigh to God with the heart, and a worshipping him in spirit; and is by faith, and may be with freedom, and should be, with reverence, and ought to be frequent; and is a peculiar privilege that belongs to the children of God; and who have great honour bestowed upon them, to have access to God at any time, as their Father, through Christ the Mediator, and under the influence, and by the direction and assistance of the Holy Spirit: this is a considerable proof of a trinity of persons in the Godhead, of their deity and distinct personality.

Ephesians 2:19

Ver. 19. Now therefore ye are no more strangers..... Alluding to the name yrkn, "a stranger", by which the Jews called the Gentiles; meaning that they were not now strangers to God, to the grace of God, the love of God, and communion with him, nor to the throne of his grace; nor to Christ, to his person, his work and office, to his righteousness, to his voice, and to believing in him; nor to the

Holy Spirit, as an enlightener, a comforter, the spirit of adoption, and as a seal and earnest of future glory; nor to their own hearts, the corruption and deceitfulness of them; nor to the devices of Satan; nor to the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises:

and foreigners: in the commonwealth of Israel, in the church of God;

but fellow citizens with the saints: the city they belong to is either the church below, which is the city of God, of his building, and where he dwells, of which Christ is the foundation, which is strongly fortified with the walls and bulwarks of salvation, is delightfully situated by the river of divine love, and is endowed with various privileges; or heaven above, which is a city of God's preparing and building also, and where he has his residence, and which is the habitation of angels and saints; of this city in either sense saints are citizens; such who are saints by separation, who are set apart by the Father's grace, and by imputation, or through Christ's being made sanctification to them, and by the regenerating grace of the blessed Spirit; and these, as they have a right to a name and a place in the church on earth, have also their citizenship in heaven; and which they have not by birth, nor by purchase, but by the free grace of God, which gives them both a right and a meetness; and believing Gentiles are upon equal foot of grace and privilege with believing Jews:

and of the household of God: and which is sometimes called the household of faith, the church of God consisting of believers, the family in heaven and in earth named of Christ; in which family or household God is the Father, Christ is the firstborn, ministers are stewards; and here are saints of various growth and size, some fathers, some young men, some children: and to this family all believers belong, whether Gentiles or Jews; and which they come into, not by birth, nor by merit, but by adopting grace; and happy are they that belong to this city and house! they are freed from all servitude and bondage; they can never be arrested, or come into condemnation; they have liberty of access to God, and share in the fulness of grace in Christ; they are well taken care of; they are richly clothed, and have plenty of provisions; and will never be turned out, and are heirs of a never fading inheritance.

Ephesians 2:20

Ver. 20. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,.... The prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New, who agree in laying ministerially the one and only foundation, Jesus Christ; for not the persons of the apostles and prophets, nor their doctrines merely, are here meant; but Christ who is contained in them, and who is the foundation on which the church, and all true believers are built: he is the foundation of the covenant of grace, of all the blessings and promises of it, of faith and hope, of peace, joy, and comfort, of salvation and eternal happiness; on this foundation the saints are built by Father, Son, and Spirit, as the efficient causes, and by the ministers of the Gospel as instruments: these lie in the same common quarry with the rest of mankind, and are singled out from thence by efficacious grace; they are broken and hewn by the word and ministers of it, as means; and are ministerially laid on Christ the foundation, and are built up thereon in faith and holiness; yea, private Christians are useful this way to build up one another:

Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; which cements and knits together angels and men, Jews and Gentiles, Old and New Testament saints, saints above, and saints below, saints on earth, in all ages and places, and of every denomination; and which is the beauty and glory, as well as the strength of the building, which keeps all together; and Christ is the chief, the headstone of the corner, and who is superior to angels and men. This phrase is used by the Jews to denote excellency in a person; so a wise scholar is called hnyp Nba, "a cornerstone"; {i} see Ps 118:22. It may be rendered, "the chief cornering-stone"; it being such an one that is a foundation stone, as well as a cornerstone; and reached unto, and lay at the bottom of, and supported the four corners of the building; for the foundation and corner stone in this spiritual building, is one and the same stone, Christ: it is said of the temple of Latona, at Buto, in Egypt, that it was made, ex enov
liyou, "of one stone", as Herodotus {k} an eyewitness of it, attests.

{i} Abot R. Nathan, c. 28. {k} Euterpe, c. 155.

Ephesians 2:21

Ver. 21. In whom all the building fitly framed together,.... This building is to be understood of all the saints, and people of God; of the whole universal church, which is God's building; and is a building of a spiritual nature, and will abide for ever: and this is fitly framed together; it consists of various parts, as a building does; some saints are comparable to beams, some to rafters, others to pillars, &c. and these are joined and united to one another, and are set in an exact symmetry and proportion, and in a proper subserviency to each other; and so as to make for the good, the strength, and beauty of the whole. And it all centres in Christ; he has a great concern in this building; he is the master builder, and the foundation and cornerstone; and it being knit together in him,

groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: it grows by an accession of new stones, or of souls called by grace, and added to it; for this building is not yet openly and visibly completed, as it will be; in order to which the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances are continued; and this will be in the latter day, when the number of God's elect, among Jews and Gentiles, shall be gathered in: and this growth may be understood also of an increase of those, who are openly laid in the building; of their spiritual growth into their head, Christ; and of an, increase of grace in them; which the word and ordinances are means of, under a divine blessing: and this building grows unto an "holy temple", the Gospel church state, called a "temple", in allusion to the temple at Jerusalem; whose materials were stones made ready and hewn, before they were brought thither; and whose magnificence, beauty, and glory, were very great; and it was the place of public worship, and of the divine abode, and was a very significant emblem of the church of God; see **2Co 6:16**, which is an "holy" one, set apart for holy uses, and internally sanctified by the Spirit of God; and which is discovered by external holiness of life, and conversation in the members of it: and this is said to be "in the Lord"; which phrase may refer to the word "groweth", and denotes that growth and increase, both of persons and grace, the church has in, and from the Lord Jesus Christ; or to the word "holy", and intimates, that the holiness of the church, and every member of it, is also in and from the Lord; or to the word "temple", which is built for him to dwell in.

Ephesians 2:22

Ver. 22. In whom you also are builded together,.... As the church universal, so every particular church is a building that is compact together, in and upon Christ, as the church at Ephesus was: God is the builder of it; Christ is the foundation; true believers are the proper materials; the door, or entrance into it, is Christ, and faith in him; the ministers of the Gospel are pillars in it; the ordinances are its windows; its furniture is of various sorts, there are vessels of small, and of great quantity; and its provisions are large and entertaining. A church is a building compact together; it consists of many parts; and these are joined together, by agreement, and are knit and cemented in love; and being thus joined together, they are designed for social worship, and their great concern should be to edify one another. The phrase, "in whom", may either refer to the holy temple before spoken of, the church universal, of which a particular church is a part; or to Christ, who is the master builder, by whom they are built together, and the foundation on whom they are built, and the cornerstone in whom they meet and are united. And the end of their being thus built together is, for an habitation of God through the Spirit; which may be understood of God the Father, since he is distinguished from Christ, in whom, and from the Holy Spirit, through whom, they are built for this purpose, though not to the exclusion of either of them; for a particular church is an habitation of Father, Son, and Spirit: and it being the habitation of God, shows his great grace and condescension, and the great value and regard he has for it; and this makes it a desirable, delightful, and pleasant habitation to the saints; and hence it is a safe and a quiet one, and they are happy that dwell in it; and hither should souls come for the enjoyment of the divine presence: and whereas it is said to be such through the Spirit; hence it appears, that the Spirit is concerned with the other two persons in the building of it; and that hereby it becomes a spiritual house; and is, through his grace, a fit habitation for the holy God to dwell in; and that God dwells in his churches by his Spirit.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ephesians 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 3

In this chapter the apostle hints at his state and condition as a prisoner, and at the afflictions he endured for the sake of the Gospel; and whereas he knew these would be objected to his ministry, and be discouraging to the saints, he chiefly insists on these two things; namely, to assert his office of apostleship, and observe the knowledge of divine mysteries, and gifts of grace bestowed on him, which he does with all modesty and humility; and also to exhort the saints to constancy and perseverance, notwithstanding his tribulations; for which purpose he puts up several petitions for them; and the whole is concluded with a doxology, or an ascription of glory to God. In **Eph 3:1**, he declares himself a prisoner of Christ, for the sake of the Ephesians; and which was no objection to his being an ambassador of Christ, and an apostle of his, seeing he had a commission from him to dispense the word of his grace, **Eph 3:2**, of which, his knowledge in the mystery of Christ, he had by revelation, was an evident proof, **Eph 3:3**, which might easily be understood by what he had written in the former part of his epistle, **Eph 3:4**, and was such as had not been given to the saints in former times, as it was to him, and others, now, **Eph 3:5**, particularly the knowledge of the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles by the Gospel, **Eph 3:6**, of which Gospel to the Gentiles he was made a minister, through the gift of grace, and the energy of divine power, **Eph 3:7**, of which high honour he was unworthy, being, in his own esteem, the meanest of all the people of God; and the grace and favour was the greater, inasmuch as it was the unsearchable riches of Christ he was sent to publish, and that among the Gentiles, **Eph 3:8**, and to give men light into a mysterious affair, which from eternity had been hid, and kept a secret in the heart of God, the Creator of all things, **Eph 3:9**, but was now committed to him with this view, not only to be made known to the church, but by that to the heavenly principalities and powers, even that wise scheme of things which displays the manifold wisdom of God, and was formed according to an eternal purpose in Christ, **Eph 3:10**, through whom a way of access is opened to God, with boldness, faith, and confidence, as the Gospel declares, **Eph 3:12**. Wherefore, though he endured much tribulation for the sake of preaching this Gospel, this should not at all sink their spirits, or move them away from the hope of it; but they should rather glory that they had such a faithful preacher and defender of it, **Eph 3:13**. And as he desired their perseverance, so he prays for it, and for several things in order to it; the posture in which he prayed was by bowing the knee; the person to whom he prayed is described by his relation to Christ, as his Father, of whom, or of Christ, the whole family of God in heaven and earth are named, **Eph 3:14**. The petitions made by him are for internal strength from the Spirit of God, that so they might be enabled to persevere, **Eph 3:16**, and also, that Christ might continue to dwell in their hearts by faith, which would keep them from falling; and likewise, that they might have a lively sense, and a full persuasion of their interest in the love of God; even so as to comprehend with others its breadth, length, depth, and height, which would engage them to press forward, and to hold on, and out, and not faint at tribulations, **Eph 3:17**, And particularly he prays; that they might know more of the love of Christ, which is not fully to be known, and which would constrain them to follow him, and cleave to him with full purpose of heart; and that they might have a full supply of all grace to support, influence, and assist them, **Eph 3:19**, and for his own, and their encouragement, with respect to having the petitions made, the apostle ascribes glory to God by Christ, as it should be done in the church throughout all ages of time, under this consideration, as being able to do for his people abundantly more than they are able to ask of him, or can think of asking of him, or receiving from him, **Eph 3:20**.

Ver. 1. For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ,.... Not actively, whom Christ had apprehended by his grace, and made a prisoner of hope; but passively, who was made a prisoner for Christ, on account of preaching Christ, and his Gospel: he was not a prisoner for any capital crime, as theft, murder, &c. and therefore be was not ashamed of his bonds, but rather glories in them;

and a prison has often been the portion of the best of men in this world: from hence we learn, that this epistle was written when the apostle was a prisoner at Rome; and the consideration of this his condition serves much to confirm the truths he had before delivered, seeing they were such as he could, and did suffer for; and which must engage the attention of the Ephesians to them, and especially since his sufferings were on their account:

for you Gentiles: because he preached the Gospel to the Gentiles, which the Jews forbid, that they might not be saved; and because he taught them, that circumcision and the rest of the ceremonies of the law were not binding upon them; which gave great offence to the Jews, who were the means of bringing of him into these circumstances, and particularly the Asiatic Jews, the Jews of Ephesus; who having seen and heard him there, knew him again when in the temple at Jerusalem, and raised a mob upon him, having bore a grudge against him for his ministry at Ephesus, by which means he became a prisoner; so that he might truly say, he was a prisoner for the sake of them; see Ac 21:27. One of Stevens's copies adds, "am an ambassador", as in **Eph 6:20** and another of them, "glory", or "rejoice"; see **Php 2:16**.

Ephesians 3:2

Ver. 2. If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God,.... Not the free love and favour of God in his heart towards his people; nor internal grace wrought in the heart of the apostle; but either the gift of grace, as in **Eph 3:7** qualifying him for the work of the ministry; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "if ye have heard the gift of the grace of God"; or rather the doctrine of grace, the Gospel, the subject matter of which is the grace of God; it is a declaration of the free grace of God in the salvation of men; and it is the means of conveying the grace of God into their hearts. Now the apostle had a dispensation to preach this Gospel committed to him; he acted by authority, and as a steward of the mysteries of God; and which he faithfully dispensed to the family of Christ, who appointed him to this service: this the Ephesians had heard of, from the relations of the apostle, and others, and knew it themselves, having often heard him preach, for he was with them for the space of three years; wherefore this is not said as if he questioned, whether they had heard or not, but as taking it for granted that they had: "if", or "seeing ye have heard", &c.

which is given me to you-ward; it was not for his own private use, that the Gospel was committed to him, or gifts were given him to qualify him for the dispensation of it, but for the sake of others, especially the Gentiles, and particularly the Ephesians.

Ephesians 3:3

Ver. 3. How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery,.... Or "is made known unto me": so the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version. The Gospel, which is sometimes called a mystery, the mystery of the Gospel, the mystery of godliness, and the mystery of faith: the several doctrines of the Gospel are the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; such as a trinity of persons in the Godhead, the union of the two natures in Christ, the saints' union to Christ, and communion with him, the resurrection of the dead, and the change of living saints, and the whole doctrine of salvation by Christ, of justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice; and this was made known to the apostle, not in a mere notional and speculative way, but in a spiritual and saving manner; not by men, for he was not taught by men, nor did he receive it from them, but had it by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

as I wrote afore in few words: in the two first chapters of this epistle, which are a compendium of the mystery of the Gospel, in its several parts; as predestination, election, redemption, regeneration, and salvation by free grace.

Ephesians 3:4

Ver. 4. Whereby when ye read,.... The above chapters, and seriously consider what is contained in them:

ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ of his person, office, and grace; and which knowledge was very large indeed.

Ephesians 3:5

Ver. 5. Which in other ages was not made known unto, the sons of men,.... That is, which mystery of Christ, and of the Gospel, was not made known to men in general, nor so clearly as under the Gospel dispensation. Some hints were given of it to Adam, immediately after his fall; and the Gospel was before preached to Abraham, Moses, and David, and others knew something of it; and it was still more fully dispensed in the times of the prophet Isaiah, and other following prophets: but then the knowledge of it was not so extensive, nor so clear as now; it lay hid in types and shadows, in obscure prophecies and short hints. Moreover, this may have respect particularly to the calling of the Gentiles, as appears from the following words; this was, in some measure, made known, as that in Christ all the nations of the earth should be blessed; that when Shiloh came, to him should the gathering of the people be; that the Messiah should be an ensign of the people, and to him should the Gentiles seek; that he should be the covenant of the people, and a leader and a commander of them; and that there should be great flockings to him; but then this was not known to many, and the time, mode, and circumstances of it were but little understood, and comparatively speaking, it was not known: however, it was not so known,

as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit. The apostles and prophets were the superior officers in the Gospel dispensation; the former design the twelve apostles of Christ, and the latter such who had the gift of interpreting the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of foretelling things to come, having received gifts from Christ to fit them for such offices, some apostles, some prophets; and to these a revelation was made of the mystery of the Gospel in general, and of the calling of the Gentiles in particular, by the Spirit, who searches the deep things of God, and reveals them, and leads into all truth; and who, by falling upon the Gentiles, as upon Cornelius and his family, and by the success which he gave to the Gospel in the Gentile world, made their calling clear and manifest. The Complutensian edition reads, "by the Holy Spirit"; and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions.

Ephesians 3:6

Ver. 6. That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs,.... With the Jews, of all the blessings of grace, of lasting salvation, and of the eternal, incorruptible, and never fading inheritance in heaven; that they should be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus, and inherit all things: and heirs they are by being Christ's, and on account of their special adoption through him, and their justification by his righteousness; and which appears by their regeneration to a lively hope of the inheritance reserved for them in heaven:

and of the same body: coalesce in one and the same church state, with the believing Jews, under one and the same head, Christ Jesus, and participate of the same grace from him, being all baptized into one body, and made to drink of the same Spirit, and enjoy the same privileges and immunities.

And partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel; as of God, being their covenant God, which is the great promise of the covenant; or of the Spirit, his gifts and graces, called the promise of the Spirit; or of eternal life and happiness, as the gift of grace through Christ. Now all these promises, and all others, are in Christ, yea and amen, safe and secure; and it is through being in Christ that any come to partake of them; and that by the means of the Gospel, as these Gentiles were to do, and did: the Gospel is a declaration of what God has promised in covenant to his people; this was carried among the Gentiles, and was made effectual to their participation of the things contained in it.

Ephesians 3:7

Ver. 7. Whereof I was made a minister,.... That is, of the Gospel, not by men, but by God: and he is a true minister of the Gospel who is called of God to the work of the ministry, and is qualified by him with grace and gifts for it; and who faithfully discharges it according to the ability God has given; and such an one was the apostle:

according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me; not according to his natural capacity, his liberal education, or acquired learning; but according to a gift, a ministerial gift bestowed upon him, for such service: for this gift of grace does not design the grace of God wrought in his soul; nor the doctrines of grace, the subject of the Gospel ministry; nor the efficacious grace of God, which makes that successful and useful to the souls of men; but a gift of interpreting the Scriptures, and of explaining the truths of the Gospel to the edification of men; and which is a distinct thing from natural abilities, human learning, or internal grace; for there may be all these, and yet a man not fit to be a minister of the Gospel; what qualifies men for that is the above gift, which God, of his sovereign good will and pleasure, gives to some of the sons of men:

by the effectual working of his power; the power of God is seen in working grace in the hearts of men, thereby making them believers in Christ; and it is also displayed in the gifts of the Spirit bestowed on men, which is called a being endued with a power from on high; thereby making men, and not angels, and these oftentimes the meanest and weakest, ministers of Christ; and likewise in assisting them in their work, and in carrying them through it, and in making them successful in it, to the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints.

Ephesians 3:8

Ver. 8. Unto me who am less than the least of all saints,.... This is an instance of the great humility of the apostle, and indeed the greatest saints are generally speaking, the most humble souls, as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and others; these have the meanest thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; they rejoice in the grace of God manifested to others; they are willing to receive instruction, nay admonition, from the meanest believer; they have the least opinion of their own works, and are the greatest admirers of the grace of God; and do most contentedly submit to the sovereign will of God: the reasons of their great humility are, because they have the largest discoveries of the love and grace of God and Christ, which are of a soul humbling nature; they are the most sensible of their own sinfulness, vileness, and unworthiness, which keeps them low in their own sight; they are commonly the most afflicted with Satan's temptations, which are suffered to attend them, lest they should be exalted above measure; they are the most fruitful souls, and boughs laden with fruit hang lowest; and they are the most conformable to Christ, who is meek and lowly. The phrase seems to be Jewish: there was one R. Jose "the little", who was so called, it is said, because he was Mydyox Njq, "the least of saints" {l}: but the apostle uses a still more diminutive word, and calls himself less than the least of them; and adds,

is this grace given; that is, the gift of grace, as before, the ministerial gift:

that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; the riches of Christ, as God, lie in the perfections of his nature, in the works of his hands, in his empire and dominion over all, and in the revenues of glory, which result from thence; and these riches are underived and incommunicable, and are ineffable, yea inconceivable: his riches, as Mediator, lie in the persons of the elect, in the grace that is laid up in him for them, called the riches of grace, and in the inheritance he is possessed of for them, called the riches of glory; and these rich things are communicable, as well as solid, satisfying, and lasting; and they are unsearchable to the natural man, and cannot be fully investigated by believers themselves; they will be telling over to all eternity: and they will appear unsearchable, when it is considered what they have procured, and what blessings have been dispensed according to them; what a large family Christ has maintained by them, and how richly and fully he has provided for them, and to what honour and grandeur he raises them all. Now it was great grace to intrust the apostle with such a ministry, to put such treasure into an earthen vessel; it was great grace that qualified him for it; and it was great grace in particular to the Gentiles, that he should be appointed to publish these among them; and so the apostle esteemed it, and himself unworthy of such honour.

{l} T. Hieros. Bava Kama, fol. 3, 4. Misna Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. Juchasin, fol. 79. 2.

Ephesians 3:9

Ver. 9. And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery,.... Or "the dispensation of the mystery" as the Complutensian, and several copies, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read. The mystery is the Gospel; the fellowship of it is the communication of grace by it, a participation of the truths and doctrines of it, communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, which the Gospel calls and leads unto, and that equal concern and interest which both Jews and Gentiles have in the privileges of it. Now men are naturally in the dark about these things, and the ministry of the word is the means of enlightening them, and is indeed the grand design of it; and the ministers of the Gospel do instrumentally enlighten persons, though it is God only that does it efficiently; and for this, gifts of grace were bestowed upon the apostle, even for the enlightening of all men, not every individual person in the world, but some of all sorts, particularly Gentiles, as well as Jews. The word pantav, rendered "all men", is left out in the Alexandrian copy.

Which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God; in the heart of God, in his counsel and covenant; which shows the original and source of the Gospel, and expresses the richness and valuableness of it, as well as its safety and secrecy: here it was hid in some measure from the elect angels, and from Old Testament saints, and altogether from natural men, and especially from the Gentiles, whose times of ignorance God winked at, or overlooked: and this was kept so from ages past, from the beginning of time, till now, and was laid up in the breast of God from all eternity; for it was ordained before the world for the glory, of his people. What the apostle says of the Gospel, the Jews say of the law, that it was hid and treasured up two thousand years before the world was created {m}; yea, they say {n}, that many ages before the creation of the world it was written and left, hb'qh lv wqyxb, "in the bosom of God": and he is here described, as he who created all things by Jesus Christ; not as an instrument, but as a co-efficient cause: and this is to be understood, not of the new creation, but of the old, and of all things in it; for without Christ, was not anything made that is made. The phrase, "by Jesus Christ", is left out in the Alexandrian and Claromontane copies, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

{m} Zohar in Exod. fol. 20. 4. & in Numb. fol. 66. 3. Targ. Jon. & Jeras. in Gen. iii. 24. {n} Abot R. Nathan, c. 31. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 2.

Ephesians 3:10

Ver. 10. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places,.... By whom are meant, not civil magistrates, much less evil angels, but the good angels, the angels in heaven;
See Gill on "Eph 1:21".

might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God; not the perfection of wisdom, nor Jesus Christ the wisdom of God, nor the holy Scriptures; but the Gospel, which is the pure produce of the wisdom of God; which is gloriously displayed in the several doctrines of it; as in election, in choosing men in Christ for the security of their persons, in founding it not upon their works, but his own grace, for the security of his purpose, and in pitching on such persons as he has, for the magnifying of his grace: and in redemption, which is seen in the person of the Redeemer, who is both God and man; and in the manner in which it is effected, being both for the glory of God's grace and mercy, and for the honour of his justice and holiness; and wherein Satan is mortified, sin is condemned, and the sinner saved: and in justification, whereby sinful men become just with God: God is just, and yet the justifier of him that believes; the ungodly is justified, and yet not justified in his ungodliness, but from it: and in the pardon of sin, in which iniquity is forgiven, and yet vengeance is taken on men's inventions; it is an act of mercy, and yet of justice; it is by price, and yet of free grace; and the like may be observed of all other doctrines of the Gospel. And it may be called "manifold", because of its various doctrines and promises and because of the various instances of wisdom in them, and the various persons to whom it is made known, and the various times in which it is displayed: and now under the Gospel this is more clearly known, or made known to the angels by the church of God, through the ministry of the word in it, on which angels attend, being desirous to look more diligently into the mysteries of it; and by the displays of the wisdom and grace of God unto his church and people.

Ephesians 3:11

Ver. 11. According to the eternal purpose,.... The whole of salvation, in which is displayed the great wisdom of God, is according to a purpose of his; the scheme of it is fixed in the council of peace; the thing itself is effected in pursuance of it; Christ, the Redeemer, was set forth in it; his incarnation, the time of his coming into the world, his sufferings and death, with all their circumstances, were decreed by God; and the persons for whom Christ became incarnate, suffered, and died, were appointed unto salvation by him; and the application of it to them is according to his purpose; the time when, the place where, and the means whereby souls are converted, are all settled in the decrees of God; the Gospel itself, the preaching of it by such and such persons, its use to make men see the mysteries of grace, and the fellowship of them, and to make known these things to the angels of heaven, are all according to a divine purpose: and this purpose is eternal, or was in the mind of God from all eternity; for no new will can arise in him; no purpose, resolution, or decree can be made by him in time, which was not in his breast from everlasting; and his purpose concerning the salvation of men must be eternal, since a council of peace was held, a covenant of peace was made, a promise of life was given, persons were fixed upon to be saved, a Saviour was appointed for them, and grace, and the blessings of it were put into his hands before the world began.

Which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord; the constitution of it was in him; God was in Christ contriving the scheme of salvation; eye was upon him, his thoughts centred in him, in him are all his promises, and blessings of grace designed and provided for his people; and the execution of this purpose is by him; though some refer this clause to the church in **Eph 3:10** which he has made in Christ, or by Christ, has built upon him, and united to him; and others, to the manifold wisdom of God displayed in Christ, who is the wisdom of God, and in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid.

Ephesians 3:12

Ver. 12. In whom we have boldness and access,.... Into the holy of holies, to the throne of grace there, and to God the Father, as seated on it: Christ is the way of access; union to him gives right of access; through his mediation his people have audience of God, and acceptance with him, both of person and service: and this access is with boldness; which denotes liberty of coming, granted by God, and a liberty in their own souls to speak out their minds plainly and freely; and an holy courage and intrepidity of soul, being free from servile fear, or a spirit of bondage; which is owing to the heart being sprinkled from an evil conscience, to an act of faith, on the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, and to a view of God, as a God of peace, grace and mercy: and this access may be had

with confidence by the faith of him; with confidence of interest in the everlasting love of God; of relation to him, as a covenant God and Father; of his power, faithfulness, and willingness to fulfil his promises; of his hearing and answering prayer; of the fulness of Christ, the prevalence of his mediation, and of the acceptance of persons and performances through him; and of the work of grace being carried on till the day of Christ; and of entrance at last into the heavenly glory: and this access is not local but spiritual; it is by faith, and so is peculiar to believers; and the confidence with which it may be had, arises from its being by the faith of Christ; not that faith which Christ himself had, and exercised as man, but that of which he is both the object and author; or that by which souls believe in him for acceptance, for righteousness, for pardon, for every supply of grace, and for eternal life and happiness.

Ephesians 3:13

Ver. 13. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you,.... The apostle was a man attended with many tribulations, and great afflictions, which he did not suffer as an evildoer, either from God or men; wherefore he was not ashamed of them, but gloried in them; yea, he took pleasure in them, having much of the presence of God in them; they did not come to him unawares, he always expected them, and was helped to look to the glory which should follow them, the view of which greatly supported him under them; and these tribulations were endured for the sake of the elect, for Christ's body's sake; the church, and among others, for the Ephesians, for the sake of preaching the Gospel among them, and for the confirmation of their faith in it; and yet they were a stumbling to them, they were ready to faint at them; but he desires they would not, since they were on account of the Gospel, which he had such a distinct knowledge of, and so clear a call to; and since they were for their sakes, and since he and they had such nearness of access to God by the faith of Christ, with so much boldness and confidence; and seeing also they turned to their account: which is your glory; meaning either that it was matter of glorying to them, and what they might boast of, that the apostle's afflictions were not for any crime that was found in him, but for preaching the Gospel to them, and that it was an honour to suffer in such a cause; or that their perseverance and constancy in the doctrines of the Gospel, notwithstanding the scandal of the cross, would be an honour to them.

Ephesians 3:14

Ver. 14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,.... That is, pray unto him for the perseverance of the saints; for nothing is more desirable to the ministers of Christ than that; which is the pure gift of God, and is what he has promised, and therefore should be prayed to for it; for what God has designed and promised to his people, he will be sought to; and the apostle's view might be also to stir up these saints to pray for themselves: the gesture he used in prayer was bowing the knees; a man is not tied to any particular gesture or posture in prayer, the main thing is the heart; mere postures and gestures are insignificant things with God; though where the mind is affected, the body will be moved; and this gesture may be expressive of reverence, humility, and submission in prayer: the object he prayed unto is the Father; that is, as follows,

of our Lord Jesus; though these words are wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and Ethiopic version, yet are rightly retained in others; for God is the Father of Christ, not by creation, nor adoption, but by generation, being the only begotten of the Father; and as such he is rightly prayed to, since not only Christ prayed to him as such; but he is the Father of his people in and through Christ; and there is no other way of coming to him but by Christ; and all spiritual blessings come though Christ, and from God, as the Father of Christ.

Ephesians 3:15

Ver. 15. Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. This may refer either to God, the Father of Christ; who is the Father of the whole family in heaven and in earth; not only the Father of Christ, but the Father of spirits, of angelic spirits, as well as of the souls of men; and the Father of all the saints by adopting grace, whether above or below; they are all the household of God: or else to Jesus Christ, who is the everlasting Father, the Son over his own house, and the firstborn among many brethren: and this family consists either of elect angels and elect men, who are both under one head, Christ, and are in one family, only with this difference, the one are servants, the other sons; or else only of elect men, of saints in heaven and in earth, who all make up but one family; and that part of it, which is on earth, consists of persons of various sizes and growth, as fathers, young men, and children, though they are all the children of God, and partake of the same privileges: and this family is named of Christ; they are called Christians from him, and he is the master and governor of them; they have their laws, directions, and instructions from him; and he is the great provider for them, and the support of them; they have their food and clothing from him, as well as are called by his name. Frequent mention is made in the Jewish writings {o} of the family of the holy angels, and of the family above, and the family below, to which here may be some reference.

{o} Targ. in Cant. i. 15. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. Zohar in Exod. fol. 105. 4. Raziel, fol. 42. 1. & 45. 2. Caphtor, fol. 58. 2. Shaare Orn, fol. 14. 3.

Ephesians 3:16

Ver. 16. That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory,.... Or according to, and out of that rich, plenteous, and glorious fulness of grace and strength in Christ Jesus.

To be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; this is the petition which the apostle puts up on his bended knees to the Father of Christ, that he would strengthen these saints, that so they might not faint at the tribulations which either he or they endured. Believers in Christ need fresh supplies of strength to enable them to exercise grace, to perform duties, to resist Satan and his temptations, to oppose their corruptions, and to bear the cross, and undergo afflictions cheerfully, and to hold on and out to the end: this is a blessing that comes from God, and is a gift of his free grace; a "grant" from him who is the strength of the lives of his people, of their salvation, of their hearts, and of the work of grace in their hearts: the means whereby the saints are strengthened by God, is "his Spirit"; who strengthens them by leading them to the fulness of grace and strength in Christ, by shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts, by applying the promises of the Gospel to them, and by making the Gospel itself, and the ordinances of it, useful to them, causing them to go from strength to strength in them: the subject of this blessing is the "inner man", or the Spirit, or soul of man, which is the seat of grace; and this shows that this was spiritual strength which is here desired, which may be where there is much bodily weakness, and for which there should be the greatest concern; and that this strength is not naturally there, it must be given, or put into it. This last phrase,

in the inner man, is joined to the beginning of the next verse in the Arabic, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, "in the inner man Christ may dwell", &c.

Ephesians 3:17

Ver. 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,.... This is another petition put up by the apostle for the Ephesians, which is for the inhabitation of Christ in them: the inhabitant Christ is he who dwells in the highest heavens, who dwells in the Father, and the Father in him, in whom all fulness dwells, the fulness of the Godhead, and the fulness of grace; so that those in whose hearts he dwells cannot want any good thing, must be in the greatest safety, and enjoy the greatest comfort and pleasure; and this inhabitation of Christ prayed for is not to be understood in such sense, as he dwells everywhere, being the omnipresent God; or as he dwells in the human nature; nor of his dwelling merely by his Spirit, but of a personal indwelling of his; and which is an instance of his special grace: he dwells in his people, as a king in his palace, to rule and protect them, and as a master in his family to provide for them, and as their life to quicken them; it is in consequence of their union to him, and is expressive of their communion with him, and is perpetual; where he once takes up his residence, he never totally and finally departs: the place where he dwells is not their heads, nor their tongues, but their hearts; and this is where no good thing dwells but himself and his grace; and where sin dwells, and where he is often slighted, opposed, and rebelled against: the means by which he dwells is faith; which is not the bond of union to Christ, nor the cause of his being and dwelling in the hearts of his people; but is the instrument or means by which they receive him, and retain him, and by which they have communion with him:

that ye being rooted and grounded in love; either in love to God, and one another; for faith and love go together; and love is sometimes weak, and needs establishing; and what serves to root and ground persons in it, are the discoveries of God's love, views of Christ's loveliness, the consideration of blessings received, and the communion they have with God, and Christ, and one another, and a larger insight into the doctrines of the Gospel: or rather in the love of God to them; which is the root and foundation of salvation; this is in itself immovable and immutable; but saints have not always the manifestations of it, and sometimes call it in question, and have need to be rooted and grounded in it; which is to have a lively sense of it, and to be persuaded of interest in it, and that nothing shall be able to separate from it.

Ephesians 3:18

Ver. 18. May be able to comprehend with all saints,.... This is the end of their being rooted and grounded in love, that they, together with the rest of the saints interested in it, might have a larger and more comprehensive view of

what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; not of God himself, who is incomprehensible by finite minds, and is not to be found out to perfection; see Job 11:7 but either of the great mystery of salvation, particularly the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles mentioned in the beginning of the chapter; or of the spiritual building, the church, the dimensions of which are given,
Re 21:15 or rather of the love of God, which in its length reaches from one eternity to another; in its breadth to all the elect, in all ages, places, and nations; and in its depth to saints in the lowest state of life; and in its height to bring them to an exalted state in glory.

Ephesians 3:19

Ver. 19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,.... The love of Christ to his own, to his church and people, is special and peculiar; free and Sovereign; as early as his Father's love, and is durable and unchangeable; the greatest love that ever was heard of; it is matchless and unparalleled; it is exceeding strong and affectionate, and is wonderful and surprising: the instances of it are, his engaging as a surety for them; his espousing both their persons and their cause; his assumption of their nature; his dying in their room and stead; his payment of their debts, atoning for their sins, and bringing in for them an everlasting righteousness; his going to prepare a place for them in heaven; his intercession for them there; his constant supply of all their wants, and the freedom and familiarity he uses them with. The saints have some knowledge of this love, some tastes of it; their knowledge is a feeling and experimental one, fiducial and appropriating, and what influences their faith, and love, and cheerful obedience, but it is but imperfect; though the knowledge they have of it is supereminent, it exceeds all other knowledge, yet this love passes knowledge; not only the knowledge of natural men, who know nothing of it, but the perfect knowledge of saints themselves, in the present life, and of angels also, who desire to look into it, and the mysteries of it; and especially it is so as to some instances of it, such as the incarnation of Christ, his becoming poor who was Lord of all, being made sin, and a curse, and suffering, the just for the unjust. Now the apostle prays, that these saints might know more of this love; that their knowledge, which was imperfect, might be progressive.

That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God; this is the last petition, and is to be understood, not of a full comprehension of the divine Being, nor of a communication of his divine perfections, nor of having in them the fulness of grace, which it has pleased God should dwell in Christ; but either of that fulness of good things, which they may receive from God in this life; as to be filled with a sense of the love and grace of God; with satisfying views of interest in the righteousness of Christ; with the Spirit, and the gifts and graces thereof; with full provisions of food for their souls; with spiritual peace, joy, and comfort; with knowledge of divine things, of God in Christ, of Christ, of the Gospel, and of the will of God; and with all the fruits or righteousness, or good works springing from grace; or else of that fulness which they shall receive hereafter, even complete holiness, perfection of knowledge, fulness of joy and peace, entire conformity to God and Christ, and everlasting communion with them.

Ephesians 3:20

Ver. 20. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly,.... This is the conclusion of the apostle's prayer, in which the power of God is celebrated, a perfection which is essential unto God, and is very large and extensive; it reaches to all things, to every thing that he wills, which is his actual or ordinative power; and to more things than he has willed, which is his absolute power; and to all things that have been, are, or shall be, and to things impossible with men; though there are some things which God cannot do, such as are contrary to his nature, inconsistent with his will, his decrees and purposes, which imply a contradiction, and are foreign to truth, which to do would be to deny himself: but then he can do

above all that we ask or think; he can do more than men ask for, as he did for Solomon: God knows what we want before we ask, and he has made provisions for his people before they ask for them; some of which things we never could, and others we never should have asked for, if he had not provided them; and without the Spirit of God we know not what to ask for, nor how to ask aright; this affords great encouragement to go to God, and ask such things of him as we want, and he has provided; and who also can do more than we can think, imagine, or conceive in our minds.

According to the power that worketh in us: either in believers in common, meaning the Spirit of God, who is the finger and power of God, who begins, and carries on, and will finish the work of grace in them, and which is an evidence of the exceeding greatness of the power of God; or in the apostles in particular, in fitting and furnishing them for their work, and succeeding them in it; which is another proof and demonstration of the abundant power of God, and shows what he can do if he pleases.

Ephesians 3:21

Ver. 21. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus,.... This is a doxology, or an ascription of glory to God, with which the apostle concludes his prayer; glory is to be given to God on account of his perfections, which are to be celebrated; and on account of the works of creation and Providence, which are to be commended and acquiesced in; and on account of temporal mercies, for which thanks should be given; and especially for spiritual mercies, and above all for Jesus Christ: the glory of salvation, from first to last, is to be ascribed to his free grace; and his worship is to be regarded and constantly attended on; faith is to be exercised on him, as a promising and covenant keeping God; and our lives and conversations are to be ordered aright according to his word; and we are cheerfully and patiently to suffer for his cause and interest, in all which instances he is glorified: and the place where this glory is to be given, is the "church"; for the church, and true believers, only know the blessings and mysteries of divine grace; and they only know how to glorify God aright; and besides, glory must be given to God by believers, not only separately and apart, but conjunctly and together, in a church state; because there the Lord appears glorious, grants his presence, and displays his mighty grace: and this is to be done by "Christ Jesus", or "in" him; and may refer either to the church, which is in Christ; or to him as the medium by whom praise and glory are to be given to God; for all blessings are in Christ, and come to us through him, and he is the only way of access to God; nor can our praises and thanksgivings be acceptable unto God, but through him: and this glory is to be given

throughout all ages, world without end, Amen; for the church will abide for ever, in which it is to be given; the blessings of grace will be for ever dispensing, for which it is to be given; and Jesus Christ, the Mediator, will continue for evermore, by whom it is given: to all which is added the word

"Amen", signifying his wish, that so it might be, and his faith, that so it would be.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ephesians 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 4

The apostle having in the three former chapters treated of the doctrines of grace, and explained and established them, proceeds in the three following to exhort to the duties of religion; and in this advises to a becoming conversation in general, and to brotherly concord and unity in particular; and dehorts from several vices, and encourages to the contrary virtues. And inasmuch as these Ephesians were called with an holy calling, he entreats them, if they had any regard for him as a prisoner of Christ, that they would walk worthy of it, **Eph 4:1**, and directs to the manner in which they should act becoming it, with all humility, patience, forbearance, and love; seeking to preserve a spiritual harmony, unity, and peace, one among another, **Eph 4:2**, for the encouragement of which, he makes use of various arguments, taken from the unity of the body, of which they were members; from their being quickened and influenced by one and the same Spirit; from having the same hope of eternal happiness, to which they were called; from their having one Lord over them, who is Christ; from their having the same like precious faith in him; from their being baptized with the same baptism in him; and from their having one, and the same God and Father, **Eph 4:4**, and from all of them having gifts, though different, for mutual usefulness; which gifts are described by the author and donor of them, Christ, **Eph 4:7**, which is proved **Eph 4:8**, out of a passage in Ps 68:18, which is explained of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, of his descent from heaven, and ascension thither; the end of which latter was to fill all things, or persons, with gifts, **Eph 4:9**, of which a particular enumeration is given, **Eph 4:11**, the design of which is, to fit men for the work of the ministry, and by them to convert sinners, and edify saints, **Eph 4:12**, which ministry is to be continued, until all the saints arrive to a perfection of spiritual knowledge, and make up one perfect man, or body of men in Christ, **Eph 4:13**, for the use and end of the Gospel ministry is not, that such who are converted by it should continue children, be in suspense about truth, and under the deceptions of men, **Eph 4:14**, but that through speaking the truth in love, they should grow up into Christ their head; from whom supplies of grace are communicated, for the increase and edification of every member of the body, **Eph 4:15**, and seeing these Ephesians to whom the apostle writes were separated in the effectual calling from the rest of the Gentiles, they ought not to walk as the others did; whose minds were vain, their understandings darkened, and their hearts blinded, hardened, and ignorant; and had no sense of things, but were given up to all manner of wickedness, **Eph 4:17**, whereas they had learned Christ, and through hearing had been taught the truth of the Gospel, as it was in him, **Eph 4:20**, wherefore it became them in their conversation, not to follow the dictates of corrupt nature, called the old man, that being full of lusts, corrupt, and deceitful, but to act becoming the renewing work of the Spirit upon their souls, and agreeably to the new principles of the grace of God created in them, in order to righteousness and holiness, **Eph 4:22**, and in particular it became them to avoid lying, and on the contrary to speak truth to one another; and that for this reason, because they were members of the same body, and of one another, **Eph 4:25**, and likewise to abstain from sinful anger, and not continue a wrathful disposition, **Eph 4:26**, nor was it advisable to yield to the suggestions, solicitations, and temptations of Satan, **Eph 4:27**, nor to commit theft, but on the other hand give themselves to manual labour at some commendable calling, that they might have for their own use, and others too, **Eph 4:28**, and it was also right to be careful not to suffer corrupt and unchaste words to come out of their mouths, but such as would be grateful and useful to others, **Eph 4:29**, and the rather this, and all the rest of the things mentioned, and likewise what follows, should be attended to; since by such evil lusts, words, and actions, the Holy Spirit of God is grieved, who should not, since he is the sealer of the saints unto the day of redemption, **Eph 4:30**. And the chapter is concluded with a dehortation from several vices of the mind and tongue, respecting wrath and revenge; and an exhortation to the contrary virtues, kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness; to which encouragement is given, by the example of God, who forgives for Christ's sake, **Eph 4:31**.

Ver. 1. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you,.... Or "in the Lord"; that is, for the Lord's sake; See Gill on "Eph 3:1". Some connect this phrase, "in the Lord", with the following word, "beseech": as if the sense was, that the apostle entreated the believing Ephesians, in the name of the Lord, and for his sake, to take heed to their walk and conversation, that it be as became the calling by grace, and to glory, with which they were called: and this exhortation he enforces from the consideration of the state and condition in which he was, a prisoner, not for any wickedness he had been guilty of, but for the Lord's sake, which seems to be the true sense of the word; and that, if they would not add afflictions to his bonds, as some professors by their walk did, he beseeches them, as an ambassador in bonds, that they would attend to what he was about to say; and the rather, since such doctrines of grace had been made known to them, which have a tendency to promote powerful godliness; and since they were made partakers of such privileges as laid them under the greatest obligation to duty, which were made mention of in the preceding chapters.

That ye walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called; by which is meant, not that private and peculiar state and condition of life, that the saints are called to, and in: but that calling, by the grace of God, which is common to them all; and is not a mere outward call by the ministry of the word, with which men may be called, and not be chosen, sanctified, and saved; but that which is internal, and is of special grace, and by the Spirit of God; by whom they are called out of darkness into light, out of bondage into liberty, out of the world, and from the company and conversation of the men of it, into the fellowship of Christ, and his people, to the participation of the grace of Christ here, and to his kingdom and glory hereafter; and which call is powerful, efficacious, yea, irresistible; and being once made is unchangeable, and without repentance, and is holy, high, and heavenly. Now to walk worthy of it, or suitable to it, is to walk as children of the light; to walk in the liberty wherewith Christ and his Spirit make them free; to walk by faith on Christ; and to walk in the ways of God, with Christ, the mark, in their view, and with the staff of promises in their hands; and to walk on constantly, to go forwards and hold out unto the end: for this walking, though it refers to a holy life and conversation, a series of good works, yet it does not suppose that these merit calling; rather the contrary, since these follow upon it; and that is used as an argument to excite unto them: but the phrase is expressive of a fitness, suitableness, and agreeableness of a walk and conversation to such rich grace, and so high an honour conferred on saints.

Ephesians 4:2

Ver. 2. With all lowliness and meekness,..... In the exercise of humility, which shows itself in believers, in entertaining and expressing the meanest thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; in not envying the gifts and graces of others, but rejoicing at them, and at every increase of them; in a willingness to receive instruction from the meanest saints; in submission to the will of God in all adverse dispensations of Providence; and in ascribing all they have, and are, to the grace of God: and so to behave, is to walk agreeably to their calling of God; and what the consideration of that may engage them to, when they serve the low estate and condition out of which they are called, in which they were before calling: and that in effectual calling they have nothing but what they have received; and that others are called with the same calling that they are: and to walk humbly before God and man, is to walk according to the will of God that calls; and it is walking as Christ walked, who is meek, and lowly; and is agreeable to the blessed Spirit, one of whose fruits is meekness; and is what is very ornamental to the saints, and is well pleasing in the sight of God.

With longsuffering; bearing much and long with the infirmities of each other; without being easily provoked to anger by any ill usage; and not immediately meditating and seeking revenge for every affront given, or injury done; and so to walk, is to walk worthy of the grace of calling, or agreeable to it, to God that calls by his grace, who is longsuffering both with wicked men, and with his own people.

Forbearing one another in love; overlooking the infirmities of one another, forgiving injuries done, sympathizing with, and assisting each other in distressed circumstances, the spring of all which should be love; by that saints should be moved, influenced, and engaged to such a conduct, and which should be so far attended to, as is consistent with love; for so to forbear one another, as to suffer sin to be on each other, without proper, gentle, and faithful rebukes for it, is not to act in love.

Ephesians 4:3

Ver. 3. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit,.... That is, a spiritual union: there is an union between God and his people, and between Christ and his members, and between saints and saints, and the bond of each union is love; and that it is which knits and cements them together; and it is the last of these which is here intended: the saints are united under one head, and are members of one and the same body, and should be of the same mind and judgment, and of one accord, heart, and affection: and this may be called "the unity of the Spirit"; because it is an union of spirits, of the spirits or souls of men; and that in spiritual affairs, in the spiritual exercises of religion; and it is effected by the Spirit of God, by whom they are baptized into one body. Now to endeavour or study to keep and preserve this, supposes that this union does already exist; that it is very valuable, as making much for the glory of God, the mutual comfort and delight of saints, and is worth taking some pains about; and that it is very difficult to secure, there being so many things which frequently arise, and break in upon it, through the devices of Satan, and the corruptions of men's hearts: but though it is difficult, and may sometimes seem to be impossible, yet it becomes the saints to be diligent in the use of means to keep it up, and continue it; and which they may be said to endeavour after, when they abide with one another, and do not forsake each other upon every occasion; when they perform all offices of love to one another, and stir up each other to the like: and the way and manner in which this is to be kept, is

in the bond of peace: the Arabic version reads, "by the bond of love and peace": by maintaining peace among themselves, and seeking those things which tend to, and make for peace, and spiritual edification; and which is called a bond, in allusion to the Greek word used, which comes from one that signifies to knit, join, and bind together, and because it is of a knitting and uniting nature. Now so to act is to walk worthy of calling grace, or agreeably to it: peace is what the saints are called unto in the effectual calling: and what is suitable to God, who is the God of peace; and to Christ, who is the Prince of peace; and to the Holy Spirit, whose fruit is peace; and to the Gospel, which is the Gospel of peace; and to the character which the saints bear, which is that of sons of peace.

Ephesians 4:4

Ver. 4. There is one body,.... The church; in what sense that is a body, and compared to one, See Gill on "Eph 1:23". It is called "one" with relation to Jews and Gentiles, who are of the same body, and are reconciled in one body by Christ, and are baptized into it by the Spirit; and with respect to saints above and saints below, who make up one general assembly; and with regard to separate societies; for though there are several particular congregations, yet there is but one church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; and saints of different ages, places, states, and conditions, are all one in Christ Jesus, who is the one, and only head of this body: and this is an argument to excite the saints to unity of Spirit; since they are, as one natural body is, members one of another, and therefore should not bite and devour one another; they are one political body, one kingdom, over which Christ is sole King and lawgiver, and a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand; they are one economical body, one family, they are all brethren, and should not fall out by the way.

And one Spirit; the Holy Spirit of God, who animates, quickens, and actuates the body: there is but one Spirit, who convinces of sin, enlightens, regenerates, and makes alive; who incorporates into the body, the church; who comforts the saints; helps them in their access to God through Christ; makes known the things of Christ to them, is a spirit of adoption, and the seal and earnest of the heavenly glory; and the consideration of this should engage to unity, because a contrary conduct must be grieving to the Spirit of God, unsuitable to his genuine fruits, and very unlike the true spirit of a Christian: and by one spirit may be meant the spirit of themselves, who, as the first Christians were, should be of one heart, and of one soul, of the same mind, and having the same affections for one another; which sense is favoured by the Syriac and Arabic versions; the former rendering the words, "that ye may be one body and one spirit", making this to be the issue and effect of their endeavours after union and peace; and the latter reads them as an exhortation, "be ye one body and one spirit"; that is, be ye cordially and heartily united in your affections to one another:

even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; that is, the glory hoped for, and which is laid up in heaven, and will be enjoyed there, to which the saints are called in the effectual calling, is one and the same: there are no degrees in it; it will be equally possessed by them all; for they are all loved with the same love, chosen in the same head, and secured in the same covenant; they are bought with the same price of Christ's blood, and are justified by the same righteousness; they are all equally the sons of God, and so heirs of the same heavenly inheritance; and are all made kings and priests unto God, and there is but one kingdom, one crown, one inheritance for them all; and the holiness and beatific vision of the saints in heaven will be alike; and therefore they should be heartily affected to one another here on earth, who are to be partners together in glory to all eternity. So the Jews say {p}, that in the world of souls, all, small and great, stand before the Lord; and they have a standing alike; for in the affairs of the soul, it is fit that they should be all Mywv, "equal", as it is said Ex 30:15, "the rich shall not give more".

{p} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 154. 2.

Ephesians 4:5

Ver. 5. One Lord,.... The Lord Jesus Christ, who, by right of creation, is Lord of all; and by right of marriage, and redemption, is the one and only Lord of his church and people; he has betrothed them to himself, and is their husband, and so their Lord, whom they are to worship and obey; he has redeemed them, he has bought them with the price of his blood, and therefore they are not their own, but his, and should glorify him both with their bodies and souls, which are his; he is the head of his body the church, the King of saints, and Father and master of the family named of him, and therefore they ought to agree among themselves, and not be many masters, and usurp a domination over one another. The Ethiopic version reads, "one God", but that is expressed in the following verse.

One faith; there is but one grace of faith; there are indeed different sorts of faith; there is the faith of miracles, and an historical, temporary faith, but there is but one true grace of faith; and which, though it is in different subjects, and its degrees and acts are various, yet as to its nature, it is like precious faith in all; and has the same author and object, Jesus Christ, and springs from the same cause, the free grace of God, and has equally in all everlasting salvation connected with it, and consequent upon it: and there is but one doctrine of faith; the Gospel is so called, because it consists of things to be believed, is the means of implanting faith, it proposes the object to be believed in, and requires the exercise of it upon it, and should be mixed with faith whenever heard. Now this is but one, and is all of a piece, and consistent with itself, and so should the professors of it be, and love one another in the faith.

One baptism, there were divers baptisms under the law, but there is but one baptism under the Gospel; for John's and Christ's are the same: there are, besides, figurative or metaphorical ones, which are so in an improper sense, as the baptism of the Spirit, and the baptism of blood, or of sufferings; but there is but one baptism, literally and properly so called, which is water baptism; and which is to be administered in one and the same way, by immersion in water; and on one and the same subjects, believers in Christ; and in one and the same name, the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and to be performed but once, when rightly administered.

Ephesians 4:6

Ver. 6. One God and Father of all,.... That there is but one God is the voice of nature and of revelation; and may be concluded from the perfections of deity, for there can be but one eternal, infinite, immense, omnipotent, all-sufficient, perfect, and independent Being; and from one first cause of all things, and the relations he stands in to his creatures: there is but one God, who is truly, and really, and properly God, in opposition to all nominal and figurative deities, and which are not gods by nature, and to the fictitious deities and idols of the nations; and there is but one God of Jews and Gentiles; nor is the unity of the Godhead inconsistent with a trinity of persons in it: and this one God is the Father of all; the Father of all mercies, and of all spirits, both angels and souls of men; and he is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of all the elect in him: and seeing that they have all one covenant God and Father, who has predestinated them to the adoption of children, and who has put them among the children, and adopted them into his family, and stand in the same relation to him, and enjoy the same privileges, they ought to love as brethren:

who is above all; which may denote the superior excellency of his nature, not above his Son and Spirit, who are of the same nature with him, but above angels and men; and the extensiveness of his government, over all creatures in general, and over his church and people in particular:

and through all; the Arabic version renders it, "taking care of all"; which may have respect to his providence, which is either universal, and reaches to all creatures his hands have made; or special, and concerns his own chosen people, who belong to his family, and to whom he stands in the relation of a covenant God and Father: or this clause may refer to the perfections of his nature, which appear through the whole of the salvation of all the chosen ones; as his wisdom, love, grace, mercy, justice, holiness, truth, and faithfulness:

and in you all; which is to be understood, not of his being in his creatures, by his powerful presence, which is everywhere supporting them; but of the gracious union there is between him and his people, and of his gracious inhabitation in them by his Spirit. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, the Complutensian edition, and some copies, read, "in us all"; and the Alexandrian copy, and the Ethiopic version, read only, "in all".

Ephesians 4:7

Ver. 7. But unto everyone of us is given grace,.... Which may refer to the saints in common, and may be interpreted of justifying, pardoning, adopting, sanctifying, and persevering grace, bestowed upon them all, freely and liberally, not grudgingly, nor niggardly, and without motive and condition in them; or to the ministers of the Gospel, and so design gifts fitting for the ministry, which every one has, though differing one from another, and all of free grace:

according to the measure of the gift of Christ: either according to the gift of grace to Christ before the world began, and the measure of it, which he communicates to them in time, even grace for grace; or according to that measure of gifts which Christ received from men at his ascension: it may be observed that every member of Christ, and minister of his, receive more or less grace and gifts from him; and that what they receive is all of free grace, and in measure; and though they may have gifts differing one from another, yet all are useful; so that there is no room for pride, envy, and contempt, which would break in upon the unity of the Spirit; for what is said from **Eph 4:3** contains so many arguments to stir up the saints to endeavour to preserve that.

Ephesians 4:8

Ver. 8. Wherefore he saith,.... God in the Scripture, Ps 68:18

when he ascended up on high; which is not to be understood of Moses's ascending up to the firmament at the giving of the law, as some Jewish writers {q} interpret it; for though Moses ascended to the top of Mount Sinai, yet it is never said that he went up to the firmament of heaven; nor of David's going up to the high fortresses of his enemies, as another of those writers {r} would have it; nor of God's ascent from Mount Sinai, when he gave the law, of which there is no mention in Scripture; but of the Messiah's ascension to heaven, which may very well be signified by this phrase, "on high"; see Ps 102:19, and which ascension is to be taken not in a figurative, but literal sense, and as real, local, and visible, as Christ's ascension to heaven was; being from Mount Olivet, attended by angels, in the sight of his apostles, after he had conversed with them from the time of his resurrection forty days; and which ascension of his was in order to fulfil the type of the high priest entering into the most holy place; and to make intercession for his people, and to send down the Spirit with his gifts and graces to them, and to make way and prepare mansions of glory for them, and receive the glory promised and due to him: in the Hebrew text it is, "thou hast ascended"; there the psalmist speaks to the Messiah, here the apostle speaks of him; though the Arabic and Ethiopic read there, "he ascended", as here:

he led captivity captive; which is expressive of Christ's conquests and triumph over sin, Satan, the world, death, and the grave; and indeed, every spiritual enemy of his and his people, especially the devil, who leads men captive at his will, and is therefore called captivity, and his principalities and powers, whom Christ has spoiled and triumphed over; the allusion is to the public triumphs of the Romans, in which captives were led in chains, and exposed to open view {s}:

and gave gifts unto men; meaning the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and particularly such as qualify men for the work of the ministry; these he received Mdab, "in

man"; in human nature, in that nature in which he ascended to heaven; hleml ewdyh Mdab, "in the man that is known above" {t}, as say the Jews; and these he bestows on men, even rebellious ones, that the Lord God might dwell among them, and make them useful to others: wherefore the Jews have no reason to quarrel with the version of the apostle as they do {u}; who, instead of "received gifts for" men, renders it, "gave gifts to men"; since the Messiah received in order to give, and gives in consequence of his having received them; and so Jarchi interprets the words, Mttl, "to give them" to the children of men; and besides, as a learned man has observed {w}, one and the same Hebrew word signifies to give and to receive; to which may be added that their own Targum renders it
atbhy, "and hast given gifts to the children of men"; and in like manner the Syriac and Arabic versions of Ps 68:18 render the words; very likely the apostle might use the Syriac version, which is a very ancient one: it was customary at triumphs to give gifts to the soldiers {x}, to which there is an allusion here.

{q} Targum & Jarchi in Psal. lxviii 18. {r} Aben Ezra in loc. {s} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 6. {t} Zohar in Numb. fol. 61. 4. {u} R. Isaac. Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 91. {w} Pocock. not. Misc. p. 24. {x} Alex. ab. Alex. ib. ut supra. (Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 6.)

Ephesians 4:9

Ver. 9. Now that he ascended,.... These words are a conclusion of Christ's descent from heaven, from his ascension thither; for had he not first descended from thence, it could not have been said of him that he ascended; for no man hath ascended to heaven but he that came down from heaven, **Joh 3:13** and they are also an explanation of the sense of the psalmist in the above citation, which takes in his humiliation as well as his exaltation; which humiliation is signified by his descent into the earth:

what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? this the Papists understand of his decent into a place they call Limbus Patrum, which they make to be contiguous to hell; and where they say the patriarchs were detained till Christ's coming; and that he went thither to deliver them out of it; and that these are the captivity he led captive; all which is fictitious and fabulous: for certain it is, that the place where Abraham was with Lazarus in his bosom was not near to hell, but afar off, and that there was a great gulf between them, Lu 16:23 and the spirits or souls of the patriarchs returned to

God that gave them, when separated from their bodies, as the souls of men do now, Ec 12:7 nor did Christ enter any such feigned place at his death, but went to paradise, where the penitent thief was that day with him; nor were the patriarchs, but the principalities and powers Christ spoiled, the captivity he led captive and triumphed over: some interpret this of Christ's descent into hell, which must be understood not locally, but of his enduring the wrath of God for sin, which was equivalent to the torments of hell, and of his being in the state of the dead; but it may rather design the whole of his humiliation, as his descent from heaven and incarnation in the virgin's womb, where his human nature was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth; and his humbling himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, when he was made sin and a curse for his people, and bore all the punishment due to their transgressions; and his being in Hades, in the state of the dead, in the grave, in the heart of the earth, as Jonah in the whale's belly: reference seems to be had to Ps 139:15 where "the lower parts of the earth", is interpreted by the Targum on the place of amad aoyrk, "his mother's womb"; and so it is by Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melec. The Alexandrian copy and the Ethiopic version leave out the word "first" in this clause.

Ephesians 4:10

Ver. 10. He that descended is the same also that ascended,.... It was the same divine Person, the Son of God, who assumed human nature, and suffered in it, which is meant by his descent, who in that nature ascended up to heaven: this proves that Christ existed before he took flesh of the virgin; and that though he has two natures, yet he is but one person; and disproves the Popish notion of the descent of Christ's soul into Limbus or hell, locally taken: and this ascension of his was,

up far above all heavens: the visible heavens, the airy and starry heavens; Christ ascended far above these, and went into the third heaven, the holiest of all; and this is expressive of the exaltation of Christ, who is made higher than the heavens; and the end of his ascension was,

that he might fill all things, or "fulfil all things"; that were types of him, or predicted concerning him; that as he had fulfilled many things already by his incarnation doctrine, miracles, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead; so he ascended on high that he might accomplish what was foretold concerning his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, and answer to the type of the high priest's entering once a year into the holiest of all: or that he might complete, perfect, and fill up all his offices; as the remainder of his priestly office, his intercession for his people; and more finally his prophetic office by the effusion of his Spirit; and more visibly his kingly office, by sending forth the rod of his strength out of Zion, and subduing the people under him: or that he might fill all places; as God he fills all places at once being infinite, immense, and omnipresent; as man, one after another; at his incarnation he dwelt with men on earth at his crucifixion he was lifted up between heaven and earth; at his death he descended into the lower parts of the earth, into hell, "Hades", or the grave; and at his resurrection stood upon the earth again, and had all power in heaven and in earth given him; and at his ascension he went through the airy and starry heavens, into the highest heaven; and so successively was in all places: or rather that he might fill all persons, all his elect, both Jews and Gentiles; and so the Arabic version renders it, "that he might fill all creatures"; as the Gentiles were called; particularly that he might fill each and everyone of his people with his grace and righteousness, with his Spirit, and the fruits of it, with spiritual knowledge and understanding, with food and gladness, with peace, joy and comfort; and all his churches with his gracious presence, and with officers and members, and all with gifts and graces suitable to their several stations and work.

Ephesians 4:11

Ver. 11. And he gave some apostles,.... That is, he gave them gifts by which they were qualified to be apostles; who were such as were immediately called by Christ, and had their doctrine from him, and their commission to preach it; and were peculiarly and infallibly guided by the Spirit of God, and had a power to work miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine; and had authority to go everywhere and preach the Gospel, and plant churches, and were not confined to anyone particular place or church; this was the first and chief office in the church, and of an extraordinary kind, and is now ceased; and though the apostles were before Christ's ascension, yet they had not received till then the fulness of the Spirit, and his extraordinary gifts to fit them for their office; nor did they enter upon the discharge of it in its large extent till that time; for they were not only to bear witness of Christ in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, but in the uttermost parts of the earth:

and some prophets; by whom are meant, not private members of churches, who may all prophesy or teach in a private way; nor ordinary ministers of the word; but extraordinary ones, who had a peculiar gift of interpreting the Scriptures, the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of foretelling things to come; such were Agabus and others in the church of Antioch, Ac 11:27

and some evangelists; by whom are designed, not so much the writers of the Gospels, as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, some of which were also apostles; as preachers of the Gospel, and who yet were distinct from the ordinary ministers of it; they were below the apostles, and yet above pastors and teachers; they were the companions of the apostles, and assistants to them, and subserved them in their work; such were Philip, Luke, Titus, Timothy, and others; these were not fixed and stated ministers in anyone place, as the following officers be, but were sent here and there as the apostles thought fit:

and some pastors and teachers, or doctors; these may be thought to differ, but not so much on account of the place where they perform their work, the one in the church, the other in the school; nor on account of the different subject of their ministry, the one attending to practical, the other to doctrinal points; but whereas the pastors are the shepherds of the flock, the overseers of it, and the same with the bishops and elders, and the teachers may be the gifted brethren in the church, assistants to the pastors, bare ministers of the word; so the difference lies here, that the one has the oversight, and care, and charge of the church, and the other not; the one can administer all ordinances, the other not; the one is fixed and tied to some certain church, the other not: though I rather think they intend one and the same office, and that the word "teachers" is only explanative of the figurative word "pastors" or shepherds; and the rather because if the apostle had designed distinct officers, he would have used the same form of speaking as before; and have expressed himself thus, "and some pastors, and some teachers"; whereas he does not make such a distribution here as there; though the Syriac version reads this clause distributively as the others; and among the Jews there were the singular men or wise men, and the disciples of the wise men, who were their companions and assistants; and it is asked {y},

"who is a singular man? and who is a disciple? a singular man is everyone that is fit to be appointed a pastor or governor of a congregation; and a disciple is one, that when he is questioned about any point in his doctrine, gives an answer:"

wherefore if these two, pastors and teachers, are different, it might be thought there is some reference to this distinction, and that pastors answer to the wise men, and teachers to their disciples or assistants; and so Kimchi in **Jer 3:15** interprets the pastors there of lervyd Myonrp, "the pastors of Israel", which shall be with the King Messiah, as is said in **Mic 5:5** and undoubtedly Gospel ministers are meant: from the whole it may be observed, that as there have been various officers and offices in the Gospel dispensation, various gifts have been bestowed; and these are the gifts of Christ, which he has received for men, and gives unto them; and hence it appears that the work of the ministry is not an human invention, but the appointment of Christ, for which he fits and qualifies, and therefore to be regarded; and that they only are the ministers of Christ, whom he makes ministers of the New Testament, and not whom men or themselves make and appoint.

{y} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 10. 2.

Ephesians 4:12

Ver. 12. For the perfecting of the saints, &c,] The chosen ones, whom God has sanctified or set apart for himself in eternal election: the ministry of the word is designed for the completing the number of these in the effectual calling; and for the perfecting of the whole body of the church, by gathering in all that belong to it, and of every particular saint, who is regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God: for the best of saints are imperfect; for though there is a perfection in them, as that designs sincerity, in opposition to hypocrisy, and as it may be taken comparatively with respect to what others are, or they themselves were; and though there is a perfection of parts of the new man in them, yet not of degrees; and though there is a complete perfection in Christ, yet not in themselves, their sanctification is imperfect, as their faith, knowledge, love, &c. sin is in them, and committed by them, and they continually want supplies of grace; and the best of them are sensible of their imperfection, and own it: now the ministration of the word is a means of carrying on the work of grace in them unto perfection, or "for the restoring or joining in of the saints"; the elect of God were disjointed in Adam's fall, and scattered abroad, who were representatively gathered together in one head, even in Christ, in redemption; and the word is the means of the visible and open jointing of them into Christ, and into his churches, and also of restoring them after backslidings:

for the work of the ministry; gifts are given unto men by Christ to qualify them for it: the preaching of the Gospel is a work, and a laborious one, and what no man is sufficient for of himself; it requires faithfulness, and is a good work, and when well performed, those concerned in it are worthy of respect, esteem, and honour; and it is a ministering work, a service and not dominion:

for the edifying the body of Christ; not his natural body the Father prepared for him; nor his sacramental body in the supper; but his mystical body the church; and gifts are bestowed to fit them for the preaching of the Gospel, that hereby the church, which is compared to an edifice, might be built up; and that the several societies of Christians and particular believers might have spiritual edification, and walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and their numbers be increased, and their graces be in lively exercise.

Ephesians 4:13

Ver. 13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith,.... These words regard the continuance of the Gospel ministry in the church, until all the elect of God come in: or "to the unity of the faith"; by which is meant, not the union between the saints, the cement of which is love; nor that which is between Christ and his people, of which his love, and not their faith, is the bond; but the same with the "one faith", **Eph 4:5** and designs either the doctrine of faith, which is uniform, and all of a piece; and the sense is, that the ministration of the Gospel will continue until the saints entirely unite in their sentiments about it, and both watchmen and churches see eye to eye: or else the grace of faith, which as to its nature, object, author, spring, and cause, is the same; and it usually comes by hearing; and all God's elect shall have it; and the work and office of the ministry will remain until they are all brought to believe in Christ;

and of the knowledge of the Son of God; which is but another phrase for faith in Christ, for faith is a spiritual knowledge of Christ; it is that grace by which a soul beholds his glory and fulness, approves of him, trusts in him, and appropriates him to itself; and such an approbatory, fiducial, appropriating, practical, and experimental knowledge of Christ, is here intended; and which is imperfect in those that have it, and is not yet in many who will have it; and inasmuch as the Gospel ministry is the means of it, this will be continued until every elect soul partakes of it, and arrives to a greater perfection in it: for it follows,

unto a perfect man; meaning either Christ, who is in every sense a perfect man; his human nature is the greater and more perfect tabernacle, and he is perfectly free from sin, and has been made perfect through sufferings in it; and coming to him may be understood either of coming to him now by faith, which the Gospel ministry is the means of, and encourages to; or of coming to him hereafter, for the saints will meet him, and be ever with him, and till that time the Gospel will be preached: or else the church, being a complete body with all its members, is designed; for when all the elect of God are gathered in and joined together, they will be as one man; or it may respect every individual believer, who though he is comparatively perfect, and with regard to parts, but not degrees, and as in Christ Jesus, yet is in himself imperfect in holiness and knowledge, though hereafter he will be perfect in both; when he comes

unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: not of Christ's natural body, but of his mystical body the church, which will be his fulness when all the elect are gathered in; and when they are filled with his gifts and graces, and are grown up to their proportion in it, they will be come to the measure and stature of it: or it may be understood of every particular believer, who has Christ formed in him; who when the work of grace is finished in him, will be a perfect man in Christ, and all this will be true of him; till which time, and during this imperfect state, the Gospel ministry will be maintained: the phrase is taken from the Jews, who among the forms and degrees of prophecy which the prophets arrived to, and had in them the vision of God and angels, make hmwq rwev, "the measure of the stature" {z}, a principal one; and is here used for the perfection of the heavenly state in the vision, and enjoyment of God and Christ.

{z} Maimon. in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1. Cosri, par. 4. sect. 3. p. 213. 2.

Ephesians 4:14

Ver. 14. That we henceforth be no more children,.... Meaning not children of men, for grace does not destroy natural relations; nor children of God, which is a privilege, and always continues; nor indeed children of disobedience, though the saints cease to be such upon conversion; but in such sense children, as they were when first converted, newborn babes, little children: there are some things in which they should be children still, namely, with respect to an ardent and flaming love to God and Christ, and to the saints; and with regard to their eager desire after the sincere milk of the word; and as to pride, malice, envy, evil speakings, guile and hypocrisy; in these things it becomes them to be children: but not in understanding; they should not always remain ignorant, imprudent, or be always fed with milk, and not able to digest meat; nor be unable to go unless led, and be tender and incapable of bearing hardships for Christ and his Gospel, and of defending it, and his cause and interest; but should play the man, and quit themselves as such and be strong, which the Gospel ministry is a means of, and encourages to:

tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine; false doctrine, which may be compared to wind for its lightness and emptiness, and for its swelling and puffing nature, and for the noise and bluster it makes, and for its rapidity and force, with which it sometimes comes and bears all before it, and for its infectiousness, which is the nature of some winds; and to be tossed to and fro, and carried about with it, is expressive of much ignorance and want of a discerning spirit, and implies hesitation, and doubts and scruples, and shows credulity, fickleness, and inconstancy: and which is brought on

by the sleight of men; either through the uncertain and changeable state of things in life; the mind of man is fickle, the life of man is uncertain, and all the affairs of human nature are subject to change, by reason of which men are easily imposed upon; or rather through the tricking arts of false teachers; the word here used is adopted by the Jews into their language, and with them aybwq signifies the game at dice {a}; and owjowybwq, is a gamester at that play, and is interpreted by them, one that steals souls {b}, and deceives and corrupts them; and may be filly applied to false teachers, who make use of such like artifices and juggling tricks, to deceive the hearts of the simple, as the others do to cheat men of their money: hence it follows,

and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; or "unto the deceitful methods or wiles of the devil", as the Alexandrian copy reads; which not only suggests that their principal end in view is to deceive, but their insidious, private, and secret way of deceiving, and their expertness in it, which they have from the devil; and now the ministration of the Gospel is the best and surest guard and antidote against such fluctuations and deceptions.

{a} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 82. 1. Misna Roshhashana, c. 1. sect. 8. & Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect 3. {b} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 91. 2. & Jarchi & Tosephot in ib. & Juchasin, fol. 88. 1.

Ephesians 4:15

Ver. 15. But speaking the truth in love,.... Either Christ himself, who is the truth, and is to be preached, and always spoken of with strong affection and love; or the Gospel, the word of truth, so called in opposition to that which is false and fictitious; and also to the law, which is shadowish; and on account of its author, the God of truth, and its subject matter, Christ, and the several doctrines of grace; and because the spirit of truth has dictated it, and does direct to it, and owns and blesses it: this, with respect to the ministers of the

Gospel, should be spoken openly, honestly, and sincerely, and in love to the souls of men, and in a way consistent with love, in opposition to the secret, ensnaring, and pernicious ways of false teachers; and with respect to private Christians, as they are to receive it in love, so to speak of it to one another from a principle of love, and an affectionate concern for each other's welfare, to the end that they

may grow up into him in all things which is the head, even "Christ": the work of grace upon the soul is a gradual work, and an increase of this in the exercise of faith, hope, love, and spiritual knowledge, is a growth; and this is a growth in all things, in all grace, as in those mentioned, so in others, as humility, patience, self-denial, resignation of the will to the will of God, and especially the knowledge of Christ; for it is a growing into him, from whom souls receive all their grace and increase of it; for he is the head of influence to supply them, as well as the head of eminence to protect them; see **Eph 1:22** and now the preaching of the Gospel, or the sincere speaking of the truth, is the instrumental means of such growth.

Ephesians 4:16

Ver. 16. From whom the whole body fitly joined gether,.... By which is meant, the church; see **Eph 1:23** sometimes it designs all the elect of God in heaven and in earth, but here the church militant, which only can admit of an increase; this body is from Christ, as an head, and the phrase denotes the rise and origin of the church from Christ, her dependence upon him, and union to him, and of its members one to another; she has her being and form, from him, and all her blessings, as her life and light, righteousness and holiness, her grace and strength, her joy, peace, and comfort, her fruitfulness and final perseverance; and her dependence is upon him for subsistence, sustenance, protection and safety, and for grace and glory; and her union to him is very near, strict and close, and indissoluble; and the union between the several members is also very close, and both are very beautiful:

and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part. The Alexandrian copy reads, "of every member"; and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; the author of the union of the members of Christ's body to one another is the Spirit of God, by him they are baptized into one body; the cement or bond of this union is the grace of love wrought in their souls by him; and the means are the word and ordinances, and these convey a supply from Christ the head to every member, suitable to the part it bears in the body, according to the energy of the Spirit, who makes all effectual: and so

maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love; the increase of the body the church, is either in numbers, when persons are converted and added to it; or in the exercise of grace, under the influence of the Spirit, through the ministration of the word and ordinances; and both these tend to the edifying or building of it up; and nothing is of a more edifying nature to the church than love, which bears the infirmities of the weak, and seeks for, and follows after those things which make for peace and godly edification, **1Co 8:1**.

Ephesians 4:17

Ver. 17. This I say therefore and testify in the Lord,.... These words may be considered either as an assertion, and so a testimonial of the different walk and conversation of the saints at Ephesus, from the rest of the Gentiles; or as an exhortation in the name of the Lord to such a walk, the apostle here returning to what he stirs them up to in **Eph 4:1**

that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind; every natural man walks in a vain show; the mind of man is vain, and whoever walk according to the dictates of it, must walk vainly: the phrase is expressive of the emptiness of the mind; it being naturally destitute of God, of the knowledge, fear, and grace of God; and of Jesus Christ, of the knowledge of him, faith in him, and love to him; and of the Spirit and his graces; and it also points at the instability and changeableness of the human mind, in which sense man at his best estate was altogether vanity; as also the folly, falsehood, and wickedness of it in his fallen state: and the mind discovers its vanity in its thoughts and imaginations, which are vain and foolish; in the happiness it proposes to itself, which lies in vain things, as worldly riches, honours, &c. and in the ways and means it takes to obtain it, and in words and actions; and the Gentiles showed the vanity of their minds in their vain philosophy and curious inquiries into things, and in their polytheism and idolatry: to walk herein, is to act according to the dictates of a vain and carnal mind; and it denotes a continued series of sinning, or a vain conversation maintained, a progress and obstinate persisting therein with pleasure: now God's elect before conversion walked as others do, but when they are converted their walk and conversation is not, at least it ought not to be, like that of others: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, leave out the word "other", and only read, "as the Gentiles", &c.

Ephesians 4:18

Ver. 18. Having the understanding darkened,.... Not that the natural faculty of the understanding is lost in men, nor the understanding in things natural and civil, and which is quick enough, especially in things that are evil; but in things spiritual it is very dark and ignorant, as about the nature and perfections of God, his holiness and righteousness; about sin and the consequences of it; about Christ, his person, office, and work, and salvation by him; about the Spirit, and his work of grace upon the soul; and about the Scripture, and the doctrines contained in it; and so it came to be by sin: the understanding of man was at first filled both with natural and divine knowledge; but man was not content with this, and being ambitious of more, even of being as God, lost what he had; for on account of his sin he was banished from the divine presence, which brought not only a darkness upon him, but upon all his posterity; and which is increased by personal iniquity, and oftentimes by Satan the god of this world, who blinds the minds of men; and sometimes men are given up in just judgment by God, to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart; and which issues in utter darkness, in blackness of darkness for evermore:

being alienated from the life of God; not that which God lives in himself, but that which he lives in his people; nor that natural life which men receive from him, but a spiritual life, a life of grace, faith and holiness; and which may be called the life of God, because it is infused by the Spirit of God, and the word of God is the means of it, and it is supported and secured by the power of God, and is according to the will of God, and is directed to his glory: now wicked and unconverted men are alienated from this life; they are estranged from God the fountain of it; and go astray from the law, the rule of an holy life; and are entirely destitute of a principle of life, from whence men can only act and are utterly unacquainted with the pleasures and sweetness of the life of faith and holiness; nor do they approve of such a life, but have the utmost aversion to it:

through the ignorance that is in them; every unregenerate man is an ignorant man, and especially the Gentiles were very ignorant of God, and of divine things; ignorance is natural to men, it comes by sin, and is itself sinful, and is sometimes the punishment of sin, and also the cause of it, as here of alienation from the life of God; for where is ignorance of God, there can be no desire after him, no communion with him, no faith in him, had dependence on him;

no true worship of him, or living according to his will, and to his glory: and this ignorance is,

because of the blindness of their hearts, or "the hardness of it"; there is a natural hardness of the heart, the heart is naturally stony, and so it remains till grace takes away the stony heart, and gives an heart of flesh; it is insensible and inflexible, and not susceptive of any impression; and there is a voluntary hardness of it, men willingly harden themselves against the Lord, and make their hearts like an adamant stone, all sin is of an hardening nature; and there is a judicial hardness, which God gives up men unto; and when and where this is the case, in either sense, it is no wonder men should be so ignorant of God, and so alienated from the life of him:
blh twymo, "blindness of heart" {c}, is a Rabbinical phrase.

{c} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 105. 1.

Ephesians 4:19

Ver. 19. Who being past feeling,.... Their consciences being cauterized or seared as with a red hot iron, which is the consequence of judicial hardness; so that they have lost all sense of sin, and do not feel the load of its guilt upon them, and are without any concern about it; but on the contrary commit it with pleasure, boast of it and glory in it, plead for it and defend it publicly, and openly declare it, and stand in no fear of a future judgment, which they ridicule and despise: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and the Claromontane exemplar read, who "despairing": of mercy and salvation, saying there is no hope, and therefore grow hardened and desperate in sin;

have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness; by "lasciviousness" is meant all manner of lusts, and a wanton and unbridled course of sinning; and their giving themselves over unto it denotes their voluntariness in sinning, the power of sin over them, they being willing slaves unto it, and their continuance in it; and this they do in order

to work all uncleanness; to commit every unclean lust, to live in a continued commission of uncleanness of every sort; and that

with greediness; being like a covetous man, never satisfied with sinning, but always craving more sinful lusts and pleasures.

Ephesians 4:20

Ver. 20. But ye have not so learned Christ,.... Some distinguish these words, and make two propositions of them, "but ye not so", or "ye are not so, ye have learned Christ"; the first of these propositions has respect to what goes before, and suggests that regenerate persons are not as other men: they do not walk in the vanity of their minds as others, their minds are not empty and vain; but are filled with God, with a saving knowledge of God in Christ, with the fear and love of God, and with Christ, with a spiritual knowledge of him, with faith in him and love to him, and with the Spirit, with his graces and fruits of righteousness; and though there is a great deal of vanity, instability, treachery, and sinfulness in them, yet their walk and the course of their conversation is not according to this: nor are their understandings darkened as others; they are enlightened to see their lost state and condition by nature, the plague of their own hearts, the insufficiency of their own righteousness, the way of life and salvation by Christ, and that salvation from first to last is all of grace; they have some light into the doctrines of the gospel, and have some glimpse of glory; and their light is of an increasing nature: they are not alienated from the life of God as others, but live a life of communion with him, a life of faith upon him, and a life of holiness according to his mind; they are not past feeling as others, they are sensible of sin, and are often pressed down with the weight of it, and groan, being burdened by it; they cannot sin with that delight and pleasure as others do, nor will they plead for it, but confess it with shame and sorrow; nor do they give up themselves to it, and continue in it, and in an insatiable pursuit of it: the reason of all which is, they "have learned Christ": so as to know him as God over all blessed for ever; as the Lord and heir of all things; as the Alpha and Omega of the covenant of grace; as intrusted with all that is near and dear to his Father; as the Father's free gift to men, and as the sinner's Saviour; as the way of access to God and acceptance with him; as the church's head and husband; as the saints' prophet, priest, and King, and as the only Mediator between God and men; and so as to receive him, believe in him, and commit their souls unto him; and so as to embrace his truths, and submit to his ordinances: and this lesson they learn, not in the book and school of nature, nor of carnal reason, nor of the law; but in the book of the covenant, and of the Scripture; and in the school of the church, and under the ministry of the Gospel; for the ministers of the Gospel are the instructors, the instruments of teaching; though the Spirit of God is the efficient cause, the anointing which teacheth all things, and leads into all truth, as it is in Jesus: and this lesson being truly learnt, will teach men to walk differently from others; to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly.

Ephesians 4:21

Ver. 21. If so be that ye have heard him,.... Not heard him preach, but heard him preached; and that not merely externally, with the outward hearing of the ear; though oftentimes spiritual conviction and illumination, true faith in Christ, real comfort from him, and establishment and assurance of interest in him, come this way, as to these Ephesians, **Eph 1:13** but internally, so as to know him, understand his word, and distinguish his voice; so as to approve of him and love him, and believe in him; feel the power of his Gospel, relish his truths, and obey his ordinances, and so bring forth fruit to his glory; as such do, who are quickened by him, whose ears are unstopped, and their hearts opened, and their understandings enlightened; and who have hearing ears, and understanding hearts given them:

and have been taught by him: not personally, but by his Spirit and ministers; for Christ is not only the subject of the ministry of the word, and whom the Spirit of God teaches and directs souls to for righteousness, pardon, cleansing, and for every supply of grace; but he is the efficient cause of teaching; and there is none who teaches like him: and those who are taught by him, are taught

as the truth is in Jesus; as the Gospel is in him, as in its original and subject; for he is truth itself, and grace and truth came by him; and as it was preached by him, and so is pure and unmixed.

Ephesians 4:22

Ver. 22. That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man,.... Which is the corruption of nature; why this is called a man, and an old man, See Gill on "Ro 6:6", the putting him off, is not a removing him from the saints, nor a destroying him in them, nor a changing his nature; for he remains, and remains alive, and is the same old man he ever was, in regenerate persons; but it is a putting him off from his seat, and a putting him down from his government; a showing no regard to his rule and dominion, to his laws and lusts, making no provision for his support; and particularly, not squaring the life and conversation according to his dictates and directions; and therefore it is called a putting him off, concerning the former conversation: the change lies not, in the old man, who can never be altered, but in the conversation; he is not in the same power, but he retains the same sinful nature; he is put off, but he is not put out; and though he does not reign, he rages, and often threatens to get the ascendant: these words stand either in connection with **Eph 4:17** and so are a continuation and an explanation of that exhortation; or else they point out what regenerate souls are taught by Christ to do, to quit the former conversation, to hate the garment spotted with the flesh, and to put it off; for the allusion is to the putting off of filthy garments, as the works of the flesh may be truly called, which flow from the vitiosity of nature, the old man:

which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; the old man, or the vitiosity of nature, has its lusts; and these are deceitful; they promise pleasure and profit, but yield neither in the issue; they promise liberty, and bring into bondage; they promise secrecy and impunity, but expose to shame, and render liable to punishment; they sometimes put on a religious face, and so deceive, and fill men with pride and conceit, who think themselves to be something, when they are nothing: and through these the old man is corrupt; by these the corruption of nature is discovered; and the corruption that is in the world is produced hereby; and these make a man deserving of, and liable to the pit of corruption; and this is a good reason, why this corrupt old man, with respect to the life and conversation, should be put off.

Ephesians 4:23

Ver. 23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Or by the Spirit that is in your mind; that is, by the Holy Spirit; who is in the saints, and is the author of renovation in them; and who is the reviver and carrier on, and finisher of that work, and therefore that is called the renewing of the Holy Spirit, **Tit 3:5** or rather the mind of man, which is a spirit, of a spiritual nature, immaterial and immortal, and is the seat of that renewing work of the Spirit of God; which shows, that the more noble part of man stands in need of renovation, being corrupted by sin: and this renewing in it, designs not the first work of renovation; for these Ephesians had been renewed, and were made new creatures in Christ; but the gradual progress of it; and takes in, if not principally intends, a renewal, or an increase of spiritual light and knowledge, of life and strength, of joy and comfort, and fresh supplies of grace, and a revival of the exercise of grace; and in short, a renewal of spiritual youth, and a restoration of the saints to that state and condition they were in, in times past: and the exhortation to this can only mean, that it becomes saints to be concerned for such revivings and renewings, and to pray for them, as David did, Ps 51:10 for otherwise, this is as much the work of the Spirit of God, as renovation is at first; and he only who is sent forth, and renews the face of the earth, year by year, can renew us daily in the Spirit of our minds.

Ephesians 4:24

Ver. 24. And that ye put on the new man,.... Which some understand of Jesus Christ, who is truly and really man, and a new or extraordinary one, Jer 31:22 and as such is God's creature, and is made after his image, and which appears in his perfect holiness and righteousness; and the phrase of putting on well agrees with him,
Ro 13:14 whose righteousness is a garment, pure and spotless, and which is put on by the hand of faith: though rather by the "new man" is meant, the new nature, the new principle, or work of grace in the soul, elsewhere called a new creature; and it bears this name in opposition to, and distinction from the old man, or corruption of nature, before spoken of; and because it is "de noro", or anew, put into the hearts of men; it is not what was in them naturally; nor is it any old principle renewed, or wrought up in another and better form; but it is something that is infused, that was never there before: and because it is new in all its parts; such who have it, have new hearts and new spirits given unto them; they have new eyes to see with, and new ears to hear with, and new hands to handle and work with, and new feet to walk with; and they live a new life and conversation: so the Jews says of a man that truly repents of sin, and does not return to it, that he is vdx xya, "a new man" {d}: now to put on this new man, is not to make ourselves new creatures; for this is not by the power of man, but by the Spirit of God; this is God's work, and not man's; it is he who made us at first, remakes us, and not we ourselves; besides, these Ephesians the apostle writes to, were already made new men, or new creatures; but to put on the new man, is to walk in our lives and conversations agreeably to the new man, or work of grace upon the soul; as to put off the old man, respects the former conversation, or a not walking as formerly, and agreeably to the dictates of corrupt nature, so to put on the new man, is to walk according to the principles of grace and holiness formed in the soul: and of this new man it is further said,

which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness; the principle of the soul is "created", and therefore is not the effect of man's power, which cannot create; it is peculiar to God only to create; it is a creature, and therefore not to be trusted in, and depended on; for not grace, but the author of grace, is the object of trust: it is created "after God"; by his power, according to his mind and will, and after his image, and in his likeness; which greatly consists "in righteousness and true holiness"; called "true", in opposition to the typical and ceremonial holiness of the Jews, and to the pretended holiness of hypocrites; and denotes the truth and genuineness of the Spirit's work of sanctification upon the heart; unless this should rather be considered as the effect of his grace upon the soul; for so the words may be rendered, "unto righteousness and true holiness"; for the new man is of such a nature, and so formed, as to tend to acts of righteousness and holiness, and to engage men to the performance of them: some copies read, "in righteousness, and holiness, and truth"; and so the Ethiopic version seems to have read.

{d} Tzeror Hammor. fol. 156. 4.

Ephesians 4:25

Ver. 25. Wherefore putting away lying,.... Which is one of the deeds of the old man, and a branch of the former conversation agreeable to him: a lie is a voluntary disagreement of the mind and speech, with a design to deceive; it is to speak that which is false, contrary to truth shining in the mind; and it is spoken knowingly and willingly, and with a design to impose upon others; hence a man may speak what is false, and not be a liar, if he does not know it to be so; and hence parables, fables, tropes, figures, hyperboles, &c. are not lies, because they are not used to deceive, but to illustrate and enforce truth: there are several sorts of lies; there is an officious lie, which is told for the service of others, but this is not lawful; for evil is not to be done, that good may come of it; and a man may as well tell a lie to serve himself, as another; and any other sin by the same rule may be allowed of, and tolerated; besides, it is not lawful to lie for God, and therefore not for a creature: and there is a jocose lie; this ought not to be encouraged; all appearance of evil should be abstained from; every idle word must be accounted for; and hereby also an evil habit of lying may be acquired: and there is a lie which is in itself directly hurtful, and injurious; as is every false thing, said with a design to deceive: and there are religious lies, and liars; some practical ones, as those who do not sincerely worship God, and who are dissolute in their lives, and their practice is not according to their profession; and there are others who are guilty of doctrinal lies, as antichrist and his followers, who are given up to believe a lie; and such who deny the deity, incarnation, Messiahship, work, office, grace, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and who profess themselves to be Christians, and are not: the springs and causes of lying are a corrupt heart and the lusts of it, which prompt unto it; such as covetousness, malice, and the fear of men; and also a tempting devil, the father of lies; and who is a lying spirit, in the hearts and mouths of men; this is a vice which ought to be put away, especially by professors of religion; the effects of it are sad; it brings infamy, disgrace, and discredit, upon particular persons; and has brought judgments upon nations, where it has in general obtained; and has been the cause of corporeal diseases and death; and even makes men liable to the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death: it is a sin exceeding sinful; it is a breach of God's law; an aping of the devil; it is against the light of nature, and is destructive of civil society, and very abominable in the sight of God: wherefore

speak every man truth with his neighbour; both with respect to civil and religious affairs, in common conversation, in trade and business, and in all things relating to God and men:

for we are members one of another; as men, are all of one blood, descended from one man, and so are related one to another; and as in civil society, belong to one body politic; and in a religious sense, members of the same mystical body, the church; of which Christ, who is the truth itself, is the head; and therefore should not attempt to deceive one another by lying, since there is such a near relation and close union of one to another.

Ephesians 4:26

Ver. 26. Be ye angry, and sin not,.... There is anger which is not sinful; for anger is fouled in God himself, in Jesus Christ, in the holy angels, and in God's people; and a man may be said to be angry and not sin, when his anger arises from a true zeal for God and religion; when it is kindled not against persons, but sins; when a man is displeased with his own sins, and with the sins of others: with vice and immorality of every kind; with idolatry and idolatrous worship, and with all false doctrine; and also when it is carried on to answer good ends, as the good of those with whom we are angry, the glory of God, and the promoting of the interest of Christ: and there is an anger which is sinful; as when it is without a cause; when it exceeds due bounds; when it is not directed to a good end; when it is productive of bad effects, either in words or actions; and when it is soon raised, or long continues: the Jews have a like distinction of anger; they say {e},

"there is an anger and an anger; there is an anger which is blessed above and below, and it is called blessed, as it is said Ge 14:19 and there is an anger which is cursed above and below, as it is said **Ge 3:14**"

And these two sorts are compared to "Ebal" and "Gerizzim", from the one of which proceeded blessing, and from the other cursing: anger for the most part is not only sinful, but it tends to sin, and issues in it; hence that saying of the Jews, yjxt alw xtrt al, "be not angry, and thou wilt not sin" {f}: the spring of it is a corrupt heart, it is stirred up by Satan, encouraged by pride, and increased by grievous words and reproachful language:

let not the sun go down upon your wrath; there is an allusion to De 24:10 it seems to be a proverbial expression; and the design of it is to show, that anger should not be continued; that it should not last at furthest more than a day; that when the heat of the day is over, the heat of anger should be over likewise; and that we should not sleep with it, lest it should be cherished and increased upon our pillows; and besides, the time of the going down of the sun, is the time of evening prayer, which may be greatly interrupted and hindered by anger. R. Jonah {g} has an expression or two like to this;

"let not the indignation of anyone abide upon thee; and let not a night sleep with thee, and anger be against any one:"

it should be considered, that as God is slow to anger, so he does not retain it for ever; and that to retain anger, is to gratify the devil; wherefore it follows,

{e} Zohar in Gen. fol. 104. 1. {f} T. Bab. Beracot fol. 80. 3. {g} Apud Capell. in Matt. v. 23.

Ephesians 4:27

Ver. 27. Neither give place to the devil. Or "to the accuser", or "slanderer"; that is, to any adversary, that takes delight in slandering and reproaching the saints; give such no room, nor reason, to calumniate the doctrine and ways of Christ, through an unbecoming conversation, by lying and sinful anger, or by other means; or rather the devil, the great accuser of the brethren is meant; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "do not give way to Satan"; which is done, when men indulge any lust or corruption; and when they easily fall in with his suggestions and temptations; when they are off of their watch and guard; and when they do not resist, but quietly yield unto him.

Ephesians 4:28

Ver. 28. Let him that stole steal no more,.... Stealing, or theft, is a fraudulent taking away of another man's goods, without the knowledge and will of the owner, for the sake of gain; to which evil may be reduced, not making good, or not performing payments, all unjust contracts, detention of wages, unlawful usury, unfaithfulness in anything committed to trust, advising, encouraging, and receiving from thieves: theft is a very great evil; it is a breach of the common law of nature, to do to others, as we would be done by; it is contrary to particular laws of God, and is against common justice, and ought not to be continued in, and is punishable by God and man; it springs from a corrupt heart, and often arises from poverty, idleness, sloth, covetousness, and prodigality: the remedy against it follows,

but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good; labouring with diligence and industry, at any manufacture, trade, or business, which is honest, lawful, and of good report, is a proper antidote against theft; and ought to be preferred to such a scandalous way of living, and to be constantly attended to: and that for this end among others,

that he may have to give to him that needeth; and not take away another man's property; needy persons are the objects of charity; and what is given to them, should be a man's own; and what a man gets by his hand labour, he should not prodigally spend, or covetously lay up, but should cheerfully distribute it to indigent persons.

Ephesians 4:29

Ver. 29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,.... As unsavoury speech, foolish talking, light and frothy language, that which is filthy, unprofitable, noxious, and nauseous, and all that is sinful; such as profane oaths, curses, and imprecations, unchaste words, angry ones, proud, haughty, and arrogant expressions, lies, perjury, &c. which may be called corrupt, because such communication springs from a corrupt heart; is an evidence of the corruption of it; the subject matter of it is corrupt; and it conveys corruption to others, it corrupts good manners; and is the cause of men's going down to the pit of corruption: wherefore a restraint should be laid upon the lips of men; men have not a right to say what they please; good men will be cautious what they say, otherwise their religion is in vain; and conscious of their own weakness, they will pray to God to set a watch before their mouth, and to keep the door of their lips, and not suffer anything to come out,

but that which is good for the use of edifying: or "for edification", as the Syriac version renders it; the Arabic version reads, "for the edification of all"; that is, that hear; and the Vulgate Latin version and Claromontane exemplar, "for the edification of faith": for the building up of saints on their most holy faith, and for the encouragement and increase of the grace of faith: in the Greek text it is literally, "for the edification of use"; for useful edification, or what is useful for edification; and is suited to the present want or opportunity, as the word is by some rendered: and that must be "good", which answers such an end; meaning not that the language should be formally and grammatically good, though to speak with propriety is useful and serviceable, and tends the more to instruction and edification; but that which is materially good, or the subject of it is good; that which is true, pure, pleasant, and profitable:

that it may minister grace unto the hearers; may be grateful and acceptable to them, or may minister the grace of God to them; that is, the doctrine of grace, the Gospel of the grace of God; and be a means of conveying the principle of grace into the hearts of the hearers, and of drawing it forth into exercise where it is; and such speech or communication which springs from a gracious heart, and from a principle of grace in the heart, and is upon the subject of the grace of God, is most likely to be thus useful and edifying: agreeably to all this are some sayings of the Jews {h},

"says R. Joshua ben Levi, for ever let not a man suffer any thing hnwgm, "that is filthy", or unseemly, to proceed out of his mouth; says R. Ishmael, for ever let a man discourse hyyqn Nwvlb, "in a pure language";"

not corrupt.

{h} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 3. 1.

Ephesians 4:30

Ver. 30. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,.... Not a believer's own spirit, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, which is grieved by sin; nor the spirit of a good man, that hears our words and sees our actions, and is displeased and troubled at them; but the third person in the Trinity: and this is said of him by an anthropopathy, and supposes something done that is offensive to him; and he may be grieved, not only by unconverted persons, by their stubborn resistance and opposition to the Gospel and means of grace, and by their contempt of his person, office, and grace, but by believers themselves, and who are here spoken to; and which may be done both by their words, lying, angry, and corrupt ones, before cautioned against, **Eph 4:25** and by their actions, their behaviour towards God, their conversation in the world, and by their carriage to one another, which is suggested in the following verse: also he may be grieved by their thoughts, their vain and sinful thoughts, and that they are no better employed; and especially when they entertain any undervaluing ones of Jesus Christ, whose glorifier he is; and by the unbelief of their hearts, and by their unmindfulness of the things of the Spirit; and when they disregard the rules, dictates, and advice of the Spirit, and make no use of him: and his being grieved appears by his departure from them; which is to be perceived by the darkness of their souls, the prevailings of corruption, the weakness of grace, and their backwardness to duty: and now there are many reasons why he should not be grieved; as because he is God, and the author of the new birth, the implanter and applier of all grace, and the finisher of it; because he is the saints' comforter, their advocate, helper, and strengthener; and their constant companion, who dwells in them, and will remain in them, until death: and it follows,

whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption; of the sealing work of the Spirit, See Gill on "Eph 1:13". By "the day of redemption" may be meant, either the day of death, when the saints have a deliverance from the incumbrance of the body; from their present state of exile and banishment; from the body of sin and death; from all sorrows and afflictions; from the reproaches and persecutions of men; from the temptations of Satan; from doubts, fears, and unbelief; and from all fear of death, corporeal, spiritual, and eternal: or the day of the resurrection, when the body will be redeemed from mortality, corruption, weakness, and dishonour; when it will be refined and spiritualized, so that it will not stand in need of natural sustenance; will be endowed with great agility, like that of spirits; and will be subject to the soul, or spirit, and will be suited to spiritual objects; to which may be added, the day of judgment, Lu 21:28 when Christ shall appear in glory, and his saints with him, and he will put them, soul and body, into the possession of everlasting happiness; which will consist in the vision of Christ, in conformity to him, and in that happy company and conversation that will then be enjoyed, and that delightful employment they will be taken up in: and now the saints being sealed up by the Spirit unto this time, shows the perpetual indwelling of the Spirit in them; and that it will continue even after death, who will give them confidence at the day of judgment; and that it is the Spirit which works up the saints, and makes them meet for glory; and gives them the assurance of it, and therefore they should not be grieved.

Ephesians 4:31

Ver. 31. Let all bitterness,.... These words are a dehortation from several vices good men are liable to, by which the Spirit of God is grieved: "bitterness" sometimes designs the corruption of nature, which is the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; and sometimes actual sins and transgressions, even those of God's own people, which are evil and bitter things; and sometimes heretical doctrines, which are roots of bitterness; and sometimes sinful words spoken by the saints, one against another; and here perhaps it signifies, the first offence taken in the mind, against any person, upon any account, which should at once be put away, and not encouraged:

and wrath: heat of spirit, which follows upon bitterness, or upon the spirit being embittered and offended; see **Eze 3:14**.

And anger; a sinful one, cautioned against before, **Eph 4:26**.

And clamour and evil speaking; such as brawlings, contentions, contumelies, reproaches, slanders, &c. arising from an embittered, wrathful, and angry disposition: these should all

be put away from you, with all malice; being the deeds of the old man, unbecoming such as are born again, and grieving to the Spirit of God.

Ephesians 4:32

Ver. 32. And be ye kind one to another,.... Good, affable, courteous; which appears in looks, words, and actions; by looking pleasantly on each other, speaking kindly to one another, and mutually doing every good office that lies in their way, and in their power:

tender hearted: which is opposed to a being hard hearted to them that are in distress, and close at hand to the needy; to cruelty and severity to such who are subject to them, or have injured them; and to a rigid and censorious spirit to them that are fallen:

forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you; whatever offences are given, or injuries done by the saints one to another, and so far as they are committed against them, they should forgive, and should pray to God for one another, that he would manifest his forgiveness of them, as committed against him; and this should be done in like manner as God forgives in Christ, and for his sake; that is, fully and freely, and from their hearts; and so as to forget the offences, and not to upbraid them with them hereafter; yea, they should forgive them before they repent, and without asking for it, and that for Christ's sake, and because they are members of his: the Complutensian edition reads, "even as Christ hath forgiven us": the Arabic version also reads us, and so some copies: the words may be rendered, "giving freely to one another, even as God in Christ has given freely to you"; saints should give freely to one another, for outward support, where it is needful; and should impart spiritual gifts and experience for inward comfort, where it is wanted, and as they have ability; and that from this consideration, that all they have, whether in temporals or spirituals, is freely given by God in Christ, and for his sake; with whom he freely gives them all things; in whom he has given them grace, and blessed them with all spiritual blessings; as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ephesians 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 5

The apostle, in this chapter, goes on with his exhortations to the duties of religion; and such in general as relate to purity of life, and against uncleanness; and particularly treats of the duties of married persons. And whereas in the latter part of the preceding chapter, he had exhorted to kindness and tenderness, and which he enforced by the example of God himself, he here repeats and urges it; and to it adds the example of Christ in loving his people, and giving himself for them a propitiatory sacrifice, acceptable to God, **Eph 5:1**, then follows a dehortation from several vices of the impure kind, some as being filthy actions, and unbecoming saints, and not to be named by them, and much less done, **Eph 5:3**, others, and such as are vices of the tongue, as being inconvenient, and to which thanksgiving is preferred, **Eph 5:4**, and the former especially, as excluding from having any part or portion in the kingdom of God and Christ **Eph 5:5**, and all of them, as bringing the wrath of God upon men, **Eph 5:6**, wherefore professors of religion should avoid such sins, and not join with the children of disobedience in the commission of them, **Eph 5:7**, to which exhortation they should the rather give heed, from the consideration of their present state, illustrated by their former one; who were once darkness, but now light, and therefore should walk as enlightened persons, **Eph 5:8**, and as having the Spirit of God, which is known by its fruits, **Eph 5:9**, studying to know, approve of, and do that which is acceptable to God, **Eph 5:10**, and on the contrary, should have no society and communion with men in the commission of sins, the works of darkness, but should reprove them for them, **Eph 5:11**, since the things done by them were such, that it was a shame to relate them, and much more to commit them, **Eph 5:12**, and the rather this was incumbent upon them, since it was agreeably to their character, as being made light in the Lord; seeing it is the property of light to make manifest and detect what is done in the dark, **Eph 5:13**, which is confirmed by a passage of Scripture pertinently produced, to stir up drowsy and lifeless professors to the discharge of their duty, **Eph 5:14**, and from hence the apostle enforces a wise and circumspect walk and conversation, one part of which lies in redeeming time; and which should be done for this reason, because the present days were evil ones, **Eph 5:15**, and that they might avoid a foolish walk, and order their conversation wisely and aright, he suggests it would be proper to learn what was the will of the Lord, which is the rule of a Christian's walk and conversation, **Eph 5:17**, and whereas drunkenness is oftentimes the cause of all the above mentioned vices, the apostle cautions against that, and on the contrary advises them to be concerned for a larger measure of the Spirit of God; that under his influence they might sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, in a melodious manner, and heartily to the Lord; and so express their thankfulness to him, for all mercies from him; and not abuse their mercies and themselves, spend their time in singing lewd and profane songs, as drunkards often do, **Eph 5:18**, and hence he passes to the special duties of wives and husbands, to which he premises a general exhortation to submission to one another, **Eph 5:21**, and begins with the subjection of wives to their husbands, this being the will of the Lord, **Eph 5:22**, and besides, the relation which the wife stands in to her husband, being her head, requires it; and which is illustrated by Christ being the head and Saviour of his body, the church, **Eph 5:23**, and which is further urged and enforced by the instance and example of the church's subjection to Christ, **Eph 5:24**, and next the apostle exhorts husbands to love their wives, in imitation of Christ, who has loved his church; and as an instance of it, has given himself to death for her; than which, there cannot be a greater instance of love, **Eph 5:25**, the ends of which were, the sanctification and cleansing of the church with his blood, by means of water and the word; and the presentation of her to himself, all glorious and beautiful, **Eph 5:26**, and then another argument is used, to engage the affections of husbands to their wives, they being their own bodies; so that loving them, is loving themselves, **Eph 5:28**, nor was it ever known, and it would be unnatural, for a man to hate his own flesh, but on the contrary, he nourishes and cherishes it; and therefore seeing the wife is a man's own flesh, he ought not to hate her, but to nourish and cherish her; and this is also enforced by the example of Christ, who does not hate his church, but nourishes and cherishes her, **Eph 5:29**, the reason of which is, because the saints which make up the church are members of him, one flesh and blood with him, **Eph 5:30**, which is the case of a man and his wife; and hence it is, that according to the original law of marriage, a man was to leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, **Eph 5:31**, the whole of which is a mystery, and typical of the marriage relation and union between Christ and his church, **Eph 5:32**, and the chapter is closed with a recapitulation of the mutual duties of husband and wife, love in the one, and reverence in the other, **Eph 5:33**.

Ver. 1. Be ye therefore followers of God,.... Not in his works of infinite wisdom and almighty power, which is impossible; but in acts of righteousness and holiness, and particularly in acts of mercy, goodness, and beneficence; as in forgiving injuries and offences, and in freely distributing to the necessities of the saints; as the connection of the words with the preceding chapter, and the instance and example in the following verse show: and this should be done by the saints,

as dear children; and because they are such by adopting grace; being predestinated unto the adoption of children, in the eternal purpose of God, and taken into that relation in the covenant of grace; and which is declared and made manifest in regeneration, and by faith in Christ Jesus: and they are dear, or beloved children, being loved with an everlasting and unchangeable love, and which is the spring and source of their adoption; and their being dear to him is seen by what he is unto them, their covenant God and Father; and by what he has done for them, in giving his Son to them, and for them; as well as in choosing, calling, and quickening them by his grace, and by the account he makes of them, as his jewels, his peculiar treasure, and the apple of his eye; and by the pity and compassion he has for them, and the care he takes of them; and therefore it becomes them to imitate him; for who should they imitate and follow after, but their Father, and especially when they are so dear unto him?

Ephesians 5:2

Ver. 2. And walk in love,.... To God; to which the saints are obliged, not only by the law of God, which requires it, but by the goodness of God, and the discoveries of his love to them; and which shows itself in fearing to offend him, in a conformity to his will, in making his glory the chief end of all actions, and in loving all that belong to him: and also the saints should walk in love to Christ; who is to be loved fervently, constantly, in sincerity, with all the heart, and above all creatures and things; because of the loveliness of his person, the love he bears to them, and the things he has done for them, and the relations he stands in to them; and which is manifested in keeping his commands, in delighting in his presence, and in a concern at his absence: and also they should walk in love to one another, which is chiefly designed; which is Christ's new commandment, and is an evidence of regeneration; and without which a profession of religion is in vain: and to "walk" in love, is not merely to talk of it, but to exercise it; and to do all that is done for God, and Christ, and the saints, from a principle of love; and to advance, increase, and abound in it, and to go on and continue therein: the example to be copied after, and which carries in it an argument engaging to it is,

as Christ also hath loved us; with a love exceeding great and strong, which is wonderful, inconceivable, and unparalleled; and even as the Father has loved him; with a love that is free and sovereign, unchangeable and everlasting, of which he has given many instances; and a principal one is hereafter mentioned: the "as" here is a note of similitude, not of equality; for it cannot be thought that the saints should love God, or Christ, or one another, with a love equal to Christ's love to them, but only that theirs should bear some likeness to his: the Alexandrian copy and Ethiopic version, instead of "us", read "you":

and hath given himself for us; not the world, and the things of it, which are his; not men, nor angels, nor animals, but himself; he gave away his time, service, and strength; his name, fame, and reputation; all the comforts of life, and life itself; his whole human nature, soul and body, and that as in union with his divine person; and that not only for the good of his people, but in their room and stead; not for angels, nor for all men, but for his chosen ones, the church, his sheep, his people, and when they, were sinners; in the following manner, and for the said purpose:

an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour; Christ was both priest and sacrifice; he offered up himself a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of his people, to expiate them, and make reconciliation and satisfaction for them; and this he offered up to God, against whom they had sinned, and whose justice must be satisfied, who called him to this work, and engaged him in it; and which was well pleasing to him, he smelled a sweet savour of rest in it, it being an unblemished sacrifice, and voluntarily offered up; and was complete, full, and adequate to the demands of his justice; by it sin was put away, finished, and made an end of, and his people perfected for ever; see **Ge 8:20**.

Ephesians 5:3

Ver. 3. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness,.... The apostle proceeds to dehort from several vices, which are unbecoming the dear children and followers of God; and which the love of Christ should constrain them to avoid: the first of these, which is simple "fornication", is the sin which is committed between single or unmarried persons; and is contrary to the law of God, is a work of the flesh, and is against a man's own body; it renders persons unfit for church communion, brings many temporal calamities upon them, and exposes them to divine wrath, and excludes from the kingdom of heaven, without repentance; and the reason why it is so often taken notice of is, because it was very frequent among the Gentiles, and not thought criminal: "all uncleanness" takes in adultery, incest, sodomy, and every unnatural lust; and "covetousness" seems not so much to design that sin which is commonly so called, namely, an immoderate desire after worldly things, as a greedy and insatiable appetite after the above lusts:

let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; that is, neither one or other of them; the sense is, that they should not be committed; so that there might be no occasion to speak of them, even though with abhorrence, as if there were no such vices in being; and much less should they be named with pleasure, and pleaded for: for thus it becomes such who are set apart by God the Father, whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ, and whose hearts are sanctified by the Spirit of God; who profess the Gospel of Christ, and have a place and a name in God's house, better than that of sons and daughters.

Ephesians 5:4

Ver. 4. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting,.... The former of these may include all filthy gestures and behaviour, every indecent habit and attire, and all actions which have a tendency to excite lust; and also all impure words, these discover an impure heart, and are the means of corrupting men's minds and manners; filthy speaking, is a verbal commission of the things that are spoken of; and it may include all impure songs and books, and the reading or hearing of them; this is what the Jews call hp lwbn, "filthiness of the mouth", obscene words; which they say they do not use on feast days, as the Gentiles do {i}: "foolish talking" does not so much design every imprudent thing that is said, as that which is wicked, corrupt, unsavoury, light, vain, idle, and unprofitable; and takes in all fabulous stories, and mimicking of fools in words and gestures: and "jesting", when it is with wantonness, and excites unto it, and is inconsistent with truth, and when the Scriptures are abused by it, and not our neighbour's edification, but hurt, is promoted by it, ought not to be used:

which are not convenient; are disagreeable to the will of God, and unsuitable to the characters of the saints, and are very unbecoming them to practise:

but rather giving of thanks; instead of these, as the Syriac version renders it; it is much more suitable and becoming to give thanks to God for temporal and spiritual mercies, and to speak those things which are grateful to good men; this is to use the tongue to much better purpose, than in an obscene, foolish, or jocose way: one of Stephens's copies read, "but only of giving of thanks".

{i} Jarchi in Psal. lxxv. 3. Vid. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 24. fol. 165. 3.

Ephesians 5:5

Ver. 5. For this ye know,.... Or, "know ye this", as the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read:

that no whoremonger, nor unclean person; anyone that is guilty of fornication, adultery, incest, &c.

Nor covetous man, who is an idolater: as every man is, that indulges his lusts, the idols of his own heart; and who serves divers lusts and pleasures, and gives up himself to work all uncleanness with greediness; never having his fill of sin, but is ever craving and coveting it; as well as he who is immoderately desirous of worldly things: the covetous man may be called an idolater, because the idolater and he worship the same in substance, gold and silver, and brass, or what is made of them; the covetous man admires his gold, lays it up, and will not make use of it, as if it was something sacred; and through his over love to mammon, whom he serves, he neglects the worship of God, and the good of his own soul, and puts his trust and confidence in his riches: now no such person hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God; meaning either a Gospel church state, in which persons of such characters, and living in such sins, ought not to be; or else the kingdom of heaven and of glory, which may be called the kingdom of Christ, because it is in his hands, for his people; and it is his righteousness that gives a title to it, and his Spirit and grace which make meet for it; and it is by his power saints are preserved unto it; and he will put them into the possession of it; and which will greatly consist in the enjoyment of him: and this is also the kingdom of God, either of Christ who is God, or of God the Father; it being of his preparing and giving, and which he calls unto, and makes meet for; and this may be said to be an inheritance, because it is peculiar to children, the bequest of their heavenly Father, and is not purchased or acquired by them, but comes to them from the free donation of God, through the death of Christ; and to have an inheritance in it, is to have a right unto it, a meetness for it, and to be possessed of it: now the meaning of these words is, not that all who have been guilty of these sins shall be excluded the kingdom of God, but all such who live and die in them, without the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ.

Ephesians 5:6

Ver. 6. Let no man deceive you with vain words,.... With vain philosophy, vain babblings, with foolish and filthy talking; suggesting that these were not sinful the apostle had condemned; or that they were small sins, the frailties of human life; and that God would take no notice of them, and they might continue in them with impunity: such deceivers there were, doctrinal and practical ones, who lay in wait to deceive men with such vain pretences; and there was danger of being carried away with their error; for the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, and is easily taken in such snares: wherefore the apostle cautions against such deceptions, adding,

for because of these things; fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting:

the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience; in temporal judgments, and in eternal ruin; there have been instances of it; it is usually the case, and always if grace prevents not; this wrath comes down from above, and sometimes suddenly, with great force and power, like a mighty flood; and there is no standing up under it, and against it; and though it falls upon the children of disobedience, such as are disobedient both to law and Gospel, are unbelievers in Christ, and not persuadable by his ministers, are stubborn, obstinate, and rebellious; yet it shows how much these things are displeasing to God, and resented by him, and therefore should be avoided by his people; and the consideration of their not being appointed to this wrath, though deserving of it as others, and of their deliverance from it by Christ, should engage them the more to abstain from these sins.

Ephesians 5:7

Ver. 7. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. In their sins, and acts of disobedience; by keeping needless company with them; by abetting and encouraging sinful practices; by conniving at them, and not reproving for them; or by committing the same things.

Ephesians 5:8

Ver. 8. For ye were sometimes darkness,.... Not only dark, but darkness itself; exceeding blind, dark, and ignorant, respecting spiritual things; so the Gentiles were wont to be called by the Jews, Kvwh, "darkness" {k} itself; of this darkness,
See Gill on "Eph 4:18".

But now [are ye] light in the Lord; either in, or by the Lord Jesus Christ, the light of men, from whom all spiritual light comes; or by the Lord the Spirit, by whom the eyes of their understandings were enlightened, to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, in heart and life; the insufficiency of their own righteousness and moral virtues, to justify them before God; and the true and right way of righteousness, life and salvation by Christ; and to have some light into the several doctrines of the Gospel, and even a glimpse of the invisible glories and realities of another world: and this light is so great, that they are not only said to be enlightened, but to be light itself; and this they have not of, and from themselves, but the Lord; and therefore should

walk as children of light; not in sins, which are works of darkness, but in faith, truth, and holiness.

{k} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 2.

Ephesians 5:9

Ver. 9. For the fruit of the Spirit,.... Either of the spirit of man, as renewed, or rather of the Spirit of God; the allusion is to fruits of trees: the believer is a tree of righteousness; Christ is his root; the Spirit is the sap, which supports and nourishes; and good works, under the influence of his grace, are the fruit: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read "the fruit of light"; which agrees with the preceding words: and the genuine fruit of internal grace, or light,

[is] in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth; the fruit of "goodness", lies in sympathizing with persons in distress; in assisting such according to the abilities men have in a readiness to forgive offences and injuries; and in using meekness and candour in admonishing others: "righteousness" lies in living in obedience to the law of God; in attending the worship and service of him; and in discharging our duty to our fellow creatures; and this as goodness, is very imperfect, and not to be boasted of, or trusted to, nor is salvation to be expected from it: "truth" is opposed to lying, to hypocrisy, to error and falsehood; and where the Spirit of God, and the work of grace are, there will be more or less an appearance of these fruits.

Ephesians 5:10

Ver. 10. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. There are many things that are acceptable to God, as the person of Christ, his righteousness, sacrifice, sufferings, death, and mediation; the persons of his people, their services, sufferings, sacrifices of prayer, and praise to him, and of bounty and liberality to the poor; their graces, and the exercise of them; and the actions of their lives and conversations, when they are becoming the Gospel, are according to the will of God, and are done in faith, and are directed to his glory: and these things which are acceptable to God, as all the truths of the Gospel, and duties of religion are, should be proved, or tried by men; and in order to the trial of spiritual things, it is necessary that the mind be renewed, the understanding be enlightened, the spiritual senses be in exercise, and all be under the influence and directions of the Spirit of God: and the trial is to be made, not according to human reason, which is corrupt and fallible; and besides, there are some things in revelation above it; but according to the Scriptures, which are the word of God, and the rule of faith and practice; and whither the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, always sent men for the trial of divine things; and things being here tried, and found to be right, should be approved of, valued, and esteemed, cleaved to and held fast.

Ephesians 5:11

Ver. 11. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,.... It is not said with the workers of darkness, or with the men of the world, who are in darkness, and are darkness itself; to have fellowship with them in a civil way, or to dwell among them, is not prohibited; it is allowed of, and countenanced by the greatest examples; and especially it is lawful and right, when there is any prospect of doing good to the souls of men; and even when natural right, relation, and necessity require it; and indeed, the contrary is impracticable: conversation with them in things sinful and superstitious should be abstained from; and when it tends to draw off the soul from Christ and his interest, and is infectious; and when weak ones are offended, and sinners are hereby hardened and confirmed in sin; and the name of God is blasphemed, and the Gospel is evil spoken of: but fellowship is not to be maintained "with the works of darkness"; which are sins, so called, because they are opposite to light; to the light of nature, to the light of the divine word, both law and Gospel, to the light of grace, to God the fountain of light, and to Christ the light of the world; and because the source and spring of them are the original darkness of the mind, and Satan the prince of darkness; and because they are generally committed in the dark; and because the effect and consequence of them is utter darkness, and blackness of darkness: and these are "unfruitful"; they are of no profit and advantage, they bring forth no fruit, unless it be guilt, fear, shame, corruption, and death; wherefore no fellowship should be had with them, by committing the same, by assisting in them, by consenting to them, by approving of them, by receiving any worldly advantage from them, and by winking and conniving at them: it is contrary to the character of saints to have fellowship with such, as the apostle says, **2Co 6:14**, where he gives the mystical explanation of the law, in De 22:10; agreeably to which, and to the passage here, is the sense of a Jewish commentators {l} who upon it observes, that that law

"intimates that a righteous man, Pttvy alv, "should have no fellowship" with a wicked man;"

this is to be unequally yoked, signified by the ox and the ass ploughing together:

but rather reprove [them]; both by words and by deeds, by an agreeable life and conversation, which last seems to be the design of the apostle here; because it is not a brother, but such who are in darkness, and live in works of darkness; yea, not sinners, but sins are to be reproved, which can be done no other way; nor are all saints proper to reprove verbally, nor are they qualified for it; but all should, and may by facts; and the light discovers darkness, by its own splendour; and this appears from the apostle's reasoning in the next words.

{l} Baal Hatturira in Deut. xxii. 10.

Ephesians 5:12

Ver. 12. For it is a shame even to speak of those things,.... This is a reason, why persons should walk as children of light; why they should prove what is acceptable to God; why they should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; why the apostle exhorts to reprove them, and yet does not express what they are; and why they should be reproved rather by deeds than by words: and he tacitly intimates, that if it is a shame to speak of those sins

which are done of them in secret, it is much more shameful to commit them; the persons the apostle refers to, are the unconverted Gentiles in general; such who have no inheritance in the kingdom of God, who deceive men with vain words, who are children of disobedience, who are in darkness, and destitute of the Spirit; and it may be that respect may be had to the followers of Simon Magus, the Gnostics, and such like impure professors, by whom the vilest things were done in secret; for sins, works of darkness, will not bear the light; there is a consciousness in men of the evil of sin, unless past feeling, and therefore they do not care that others should know their crimes; and besides, there is an imaginary pleasure in committing sin secretly; but then though these things are secret to men, they are not to God; nor will they always remain secrets, they will be brought to light, and therefore no fellowship should be had with them; and especially when they are of such a scandalous nature, that it is a shame to mention the very names of them.

Ephesians 5:13

Ver. 13. But all things that are reproved,.... As all sins should be, by the ministers of the Gospel, and by other saints, and will be by God; either by his Spirit convincing of them, or by his judgments, and the letting out of his wrath and fury, either here or hereafter, for the punishment of them:

are made manifest by the light: either by the saints, who are made light in the Lord, and detect and reprove the sins of others; or by the word of the Lord, which discovers the heinousness of sins; or by Christ the light of the world, who as Judge will bring to light the hidden things of darkness; or by the omniscience of God, to whom darkness and light are both alike

for whatsoever doth make manifest, is light; this is true in things natural and spiritual, whether of the sun in the firmament, or of Christ the sun of righteousness; or of the divine word, or of good men.

Ephesians 5:14

Ver. 14. Wherefore he saith,.... Either the man that is light in the Lord, who reproves the unfruitful works of darkness; or else the Holy Ghost by Paul, who here speaks after the manner of the prophets; or God, or the Spirit, or the Scripture; see **Jas 4:6**; but where is it said? some think the apostle refers to **Isa 9:2**; others to Isa 26:19; others to Isa 60:1; some are of opinion the words are cited out of an apocryphal book of Jeremy, or from some writing now lost; and some have thought them to be a saying of Christ, that was fresh in memory: it may not be improper to observe what Maimonides says {m}, that

"the blowing of the trumpet in the beginning of the year had an intimation in it, as if was said, Mynyvy wrwe "awake ye that sleep", from your sleep, and ye that slumber rouse up from your slumber, and search into your actions, and return by repentance, and remember your Creator;"

whether any reference may be had to this, may be considered: the words are spoken not to unregenerate men, for though they are asleep, and dead in sin, and need awaking out of sleep, and raising from the dead, yet they are never called upon to awake and arise of themselves; such a sense would countenance the doctrine of man's free will and power, against the quickening and efficacious grace of God; but to regenerate persons, professors of religion, to whom the epistle in general was written; and who are spoken to, and exhorted in the context:

awake thou that sleepest: the children of God are sometimes asleep, and need awaking; of the nature, causes, and ill consequences of such sleeping, and of the methods by which they are sometimes awaked out of it, See Gill on "Ro 13:11".

And arise from the dead; living saints are sometimes among dead sinners, and it becomes them to arise from among them, and quit their company, which is oftentimes the occasion of their sleepiness: besides, the company of dead sinners is infectious and dangerous; it is a means of hardening in sin, and of grieving of the people of God, who observe it; and by abstaining from their company, a testimony is bore against sin, and conviction is struck into the minds of sinners themselves; to which add, that so to do is well pleasing to God, who promises to receive such who come out from among them, and separate themselves from them: and it follows here as an encouragement, and Christ shall give thee light; for such who are made light in the Lord, stand in need of more light; and by keeping close to the word, ways, ordinances, and people of Christ, they may expect more light from Christ: they need fresh light into pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of Christ; they want more to direct them in the way they should go; and they are often without the light of God's countenance; and they may hope for light from Christ, since it is sown in him, and promised through him; and he is given to be a light unto them, and he is the giver of it himself.

{m} Hilchot Heshuba, c. 3. sect 4.

Ephesians 5:15

Ver. 15. See then that ye walk circumspectly,.... The Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, "see then, brethren", it being an exhortation to the saints at Ephesus, upon the foregoing discourse and citation, to take heed to their walk: the believer's walk is both inward and outward; his inward walk is by faith on Christ; his outward walk is his conversation among men: this supposes life; requires strength and prudence; denotes continuance and progression; with patience and courage: this walk should be seen to, and watched over; a man should see to it that he does walk, and to the way in which he walks, and how he walks; that he walks circumspectly, with his eyes about him; that he walks with diligence, caution, accuracy, and exactness, to the uttermost of his strength and power; and with wisdom and prudence, looking well to his going:

not as fools, but as wise; such walk like fools, whose eyes are not upon their ways; who walk in their own ways, which are crooked, and ways of darkness, and lead to destruction; who walk after the flesh, and naked, without the garments of a holy life and conversation; and with lamps, but no oil in them:

and such walk as wise men, who walk according to the rule of God's word, make Christ their pattern, have the Spirit for their guide, and walk as becomes the Gospel of Christ; inoffensively to all men, in wisdom towards them that are without, and in love to them that are within; and as pilgrims and strangers in this world, looking for a better country; and so as to promote the glory of God, and the good of souls.

Ephesians 5:16

Ver. 16. Redeeming the time,.... Or "buying time"; a like expression is used in **Da 2:8**, which we render, gain time: but in the Chaldee text it is, "buy time": and so Jacchiades, a Jewish commentator on the place, renders it, Myrkmn Mta tazh teh, "ye buy this opportunity"; and the Septuagint version uses the same phrase the apostle does here; but there it seems to signify a study to prolong time, to put off the business to another season; but here taking time for a space of time, it denotes a careful and diligent use of it, an improvement of it to the best advantage; and shows that it is valuable and precious, and is not to be trifled with, and squandered away, and be lost, as it may be; for it can neither be recalled nor prolonged: and taking it for an opportunity of doing good to ourselves or others, it signifies that no opportunity of discharging our duty to God and man, of attending on the word and ordinances of the Gospel, and to the private and public exercises of religion, of gaining advantage to our own souls, or of gaining the souls of others, and of doing good either to the bodies or souls of men, should be neglected; but even all risks should be run, and means used to enjoy it: in the Syriac and Chaldee languages, anmz, "time", comes from Nbz, "to redeem": the reason the apostle gives for the redemption of time is,

because the days are evil; as such are, in which iniquity abounds, and many wicked men live, and errors and heresies prevail, and are days of affliction or persecution; see Ge 47:9.

Ephesians 5:17

Ver. 17. Wherefore be ye not unwise,.... No one would be thought to be unwise, but such are, who do not redeem time, and are ignorant of the will of the Lord; believers should not act the unwise part, neither in their talk, nor in their walk and conversation, nor in their use of time:

but understanding what the will of the Lord [is]; or "of God", as read the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions: there is the secret will of God, which is the rule of all his proceedings; and is unknown to men, till facts make it appear; this is always fulfilled, and sometimes by persons who have no regard to his revealed will; to this the wills of the people of God should be always resigned: and there is his revealed will, which lies partly in the Gospel; which declares it to be his will, that Christ should work out the salvation of his people, which is what he came to do; that whoever believes in him shall be saved; that all that are redeemed shall be sanctified; and that they shall persevere to the end, and be glorified; and partly in the law, in the precepts and commands of it, which contain the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God: and the understanding of it is not a mere speculative knowledge of it, but a practical one; when a man not only knows, but does the will of God, and his heart and actions agree with it; and this is to be done in faith, in virtue of grace and strength received, with a view to the glory of God, having no dependence on what is done; and to the right understanding of it, so as to act according to it, as should be, the word of God, and the illuminations, instructions, and grace of the Spirit, are necessary: the Alexandrian copy, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read the words as an exhortation, "understand ye the will of God".

Ephesians 5:18

Ver. 18. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess,.... The sin of drunkenness here dehorted from, is a custom, or habit, of voluntary excessive drinking of any strong liquor, whereby the mind is disturbed, and deprived of the use of reason: though wine is only here mentioned, that being the usual liquor drank in the eastern countries, yet the same holds good of any other strong liquor, as of that; nor is drinking wine for necessary use prohibited, nor for honest delight and lawful pleasure; but excessive drinking of it, and this voluntary, and with design, and on purpose; otherwise persons may be overtaken and intoxicated, through ignorance of the strength of the liquor, and their own weakness; and it is a custom, or habit of excessive drinking, for not a single act, but a series of actions, a course of living in this sin, denominates a man a drunkard; and generally speaking, excessive drinking deprives persons of the use of reason, though not always; and such are criminal, who are mighty to drink wine, and strong to mingle strong drink; as are also such, who though not guilty of this sin themselves, are the means of it in others: the sin is very sinful; it is one of the works of the flesh; it is an abuse of the creature; it is opposed to walking honestly; for it persons are to be excluded from the communion of the church; and, without the grace of true repentance, shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven: many things might be said to dissuade from it; it hurts the mind, memory, and judgment; deprives of reason, and sets a man below a beast; it brings diseases on the body, and wastes the estate; it unfits for business and duty; it opens a door for every sin, and exposes to shame and danger; and therefore should be carefully avoided, and especially by professors of religion:

but be filled with the Spirit; that is, "with the Holy Spirit", as read the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; with the gifts and graces of the Spirit: some have been filled with them in an extraordinary way, as the apostles on the day of Pentecost; and others in an ordinary manner, as common believers; and who may be said to be filled with the Spirit, as with wine, or instead of it, or in opposition to it, when the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit, which is compared to wine, for its antiquity, purity, and refreshing nature; and they are filled with it, who have a comfortable sense of it, and a firm persuasion of interest in it, and are delighted with the views of it, and are as it were inebriated with it; and they are filled with the Spirit, in whom his grace is a well of living water, and out of whose belly flow rivers of it; and who have a large measure of spiritual peace and joy, expressed in the following manner.

Ephesians 5:19

Ver. 19. Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs,.... By psalms are meant the Psalms of David, and others which compose the book that goes by that name, for other psalms there are none; and by "hymns" we are to understand, not such as are made by good men, without the inspiration of the Spirit of God; since they are placed between psalms and spiritual songs, made by men inspired by the Holy Ghost; and are put upon a level with them, and to be sung along with them, to the edification of churches; but these are only another name for the Book of Psalms, the running title of which may as well be the Book of Hymns, as it is rendered by Ainsworth; and the psalm which our Lord sung with his disciples after the supper, is called an hymn; and so are the psalms in general called hymns, by Philo the Jew {n}; and songs and hymns by Josephus {o}; and twxbvwtw twryv, "songs and praises", or "hymns", in the Talmud {p}: and by "spiritual songs" are meant the same Psalms of David, Asaph, &c. and the titles of many of them are songs, and sometimes a psalm and song, and song and psalm, a song of degrees; together with all other Scriptural songs, written by inspired men; and which are called "spiritual", because they are indited by the Spirit of God, consist of spiritual matter, and are designed for spiritual edification; and are opposed to all profane, loose, and wanton songs: these three words answer to Myryv Mylht Myrwmzm the several titles of David's Psalms; from whence it seems to be the intention of the apostle, that these should be sting in Gospel churches; for so he explains speaking to themselves in them, in the next clause:

singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord; singing, as it is a distinct thing from prayer, so from giving of thanks, which is mentioned in **Eph 5:20** as another duty; it is not a mental praising of God, for it is called speaking, and teaching, and admonishing, but it is a praising of God with the modulation of the voice; and is rightly performed, when the heart and voice agree; when there is a melody in the heart, as well as in the tongue; for singing and making melody in the heart, is singing with, or from the heart, or heartily; of as elsewhere, "with grace", and which the Alexandrian copy reads here; that is, either with gratitude and thankfulness, or with grace in exercise; and the end in view should be the glory of God.

{n} De Mutat. Nomin. p. 1062. & alibi. {o} Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 3. {p} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1.

Ephesians 5:20

Ver. 20. Giving thanks always for all things,.... For things temporal, for our beings, and the preservation of them, and for all the mercies of life; for things spiritual, for Christ, and for all spiritual blessings in him; for electing, redeeming, sanctifying, adopting, pardoning, and justifying grace; for a meetness for heaven, and for eternal life itself; for the Gospel, promises, truths, ordinances, and ministry; and this is to be done always, at all times, in times of adversity, desertion, temptation, affliction, and persecution, as well as in prosperity:

unto God, and the Father; to God who is, and as he is the Father of mercies, and of all creatures; and as he is the Father of Christ, and of all the elect in him:

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; for all the mercies of God's people, both temporal and spiritual, come through him, and for his sake; and thanksgivings for them are only acceptable to God as they are offered up by him; nor is there any other way of bringing them to God, but through him: this duty, as it stands connected with the former, shows that praise and thanksgiving are the principal subject matter of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, to be sung; and that the manner of singing is with thanksgiving; and that the end of it is to give thanks to God.

Ephesians 5:21

Ver. 21. Submitting yourselves one to another,.... Which may be understood either in a political sense, of giving honour, obedience, and tribute, to civil magistrates, since they are set up by God for the good of men, and it is for the credit of religion for the saints to submit to them; or in an economical sense; thus the wife should be subject to the husband, children to their parents, and servants to their masters, which several things are afterwards insisted on, as explanative of this rule; or in an ecclesiastic sense, so the Ethiopic version renders it, "subject yourselves to your brethren": thus members of churches should be subject to their pastors, not in the same sense as they are to Christ, the head, nor are they obliged to believe or do everything they say, right or wrong; yet honour and esteem are due to them, and submission and obedience should be yielded to their doctrines, precepts, and exhortations, when they are agreeably to the word of God; since God has set them in the highest place in the church, called them to the highest service, and most honourable work, and bestowed on them the greatest gifts; the younger members should also submit to the elder, and the minority to the majority; one member should submit to another, to the superior judgment of another, and to the weakness of another, and to the admonitions of others, and so as to perform all offices of love: and the manner in which this duty is to be performed, is

in the fear of God; which may be considered as the moving cause of submission, or, as the rule of it; submission should be on account of the fear of God, and so far as is consistent with it; and indeed, the fear of God is that which should influence and engage to every duty; and which should be before our eyes, and in exercise in our hearts, in all concerns, civil and religious: the Alexandrian copy and some others, the Complutensian edition, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, "in the fear of Christ"; who is the head of the church, and King of saints, and as such to be feared and reverenced; and for his sake there should be a submission to one another; the Syriac version reads, in the love of Christ, which should constrain the saints to this duty.

Ephesians 5:22

Ver. 22. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands,.... This is an instance, explaining the above general rule; which subjection lies in honour and reverence, Eph 5:33, and in obedience; they should think well of their husbands, speak becomingly to them, and respectfully of them; the wife should take care of the family, and family affairs, according to the husband's will; should imitate him in what is good, and bear with that which is not so agreeable; she should not curiously inquire into his business, but leave the management of it to him; she should help and assist in caring and providing for the family; and should abide with him in prosperity and adversity, and do nothing without his will and consent: and this subjection is only to her husband; not to any other man, nor to her children, nor to her servants, or any brought into her house; and this consideration should render the subjection more easy, voluntary, and cheerful: and which is but reasonable that it should be; as may be gathered from the time, matter, and end of the woman's creation, she was made after him, out of him, and for him; and from her fall, and being first in the transgression; and from her being the weaker and inferior sex; and from the profitableness and comeliness of it; and the credit of religion requires it, that so the word of God be not blasphemed: wherefore it follows,

as unto the Lord; that is, either as the Lord has commanded, that so it should be, showing a regard to his precepts; or as in the sight of the Lord, and so yielding it sincerely and heartily; or in things pertaining to the Lord, which are consistent with the law of the Lord, and the Gospel of Christ; and in like manner as the church is subject to Christ, her Lord and husband, as follows.

Ephesians 5:23

Ver. 23. For the husband is the head of the wife,....
See Gill on "1Co 11:3".

Even as Christ is the head of the church; all the elect;
See Gill on "Eph 1:22". And he is the Saviour of the body; not "of our body", as the Ethiopic version reads, of that part of man, which is called the body; though that indeed is redeemed and saved by Christ, as well as the soul; but "of his body", as the Vulgate Latin version reads; that is, of the church, which is his body; see Eph 1:23; of which he is the Saviour; he provides everything for it, preserves and protects it, and has wrought out salvation for it, which every member of it partakes of.

Ephesians 5:24

Ver. 24. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ,.... Her head, being wholly dependent upon him, and entirely resigned to him, and receiving all from him; from whom alone is all her expectation of provision, protection, comfort, and happiness; wherefore she has respect to all his commands, and esteems all his precepts concerning all things to be right; and yields a cheerful, voluntary, sincere, and hearty obedience to them; arising from a principle of love to him, and joined with honour, fear, and reverence of him:

so [let] the wives [be] to their own husbands in everything: political, domestic, and ecclesiastic; that is consistent with the laws of God, and the Gospel of Christ.

Ephesians 5:25

Ver. 25. Husbands, love your wives,.... Which consists in a strong and cordial affection for them; in a real delight and pleasure in them; in showing respect, and doing honour to them; in seeking their contentment, satisfaction, and pleasure; in a quiet, constant, and comfortable dwelling with them; in providing all things necessary for them; in protecting them from all injuries and abuses; in concealing their faults, and covering their infirmities; in entertaining the best opinion of their persons and actions; and in endeavouring to promote their spiritual good and welfare: this love ought to be hearty and sincere, and not feigned and selfish; it should be shown in private, as well as in public: it should be chaste and single, constant and perpetual; it should exceed that which is bore to neighbours, or even to parents, and should be equal to that a man bears to himself; though not so as to hinder, and break in upon love to God and Christ: many are the reasons why husbands should love their wives; they are given to be helps unto them; they are companions of them; they are wives of covenant; they are their own wives, yea, their own bodies, their own flesh, nay, as themselves; they are their image and their glory; and especially the example of Christ, in his love to his church and people, should engage to it:

even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it:
See Gill on "Eph 5:2"; the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "his own church"; his bride and spouse, whom he betrothed to himself from all eternity,

the Father having given her to him; and is no other than the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, even all the elect of God.

Ephesians 5:26

Ver. 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it,.... Being defiled, both with original sin and actual transgressions; for God's elect, whom Christ loved and espoused from everlasting, fell in Adam with the rest of mankind; and, in their natural state, live in sin as others do; and so are under the guilt, and in the pollution of it, as others be: Christ gave himself for them, that he might deliver them out of this state; he gave himself a sacrifice for them, that he might expiate their sins and make atonement and satisfaction for them; he shed his blood that he might cleanse them from them; and he wrought out a righteousness that he might justify them from all their iniquities; and which being put upon them, makes them to appear pure and spotless in the sight of divine justice; for this sanctifying and cleansing does not so much refer to the inward work of sanctification of the Spirit, though that is a fruit and effect of the death of Christ, and is brought about by the following means, as to the justification of them by the blood and righteousness of Christ: which is said to be,

with the washing of water; not baptism, which is never expressed by washing; nor does it purify or cleanse from sin; nor is it the means of sanctification and regeneration, which ought to be before it; nor the grace of the Spirit, though that is often compared to water, and regeneration and sanctification are owing to it; yet the saints are not so cleansed from sin by it, as to be without spot or wrinkle; but the blood of Christ, which is the fountain to wash in, and which cleanses from all sin:

by the word; not the form of words in baptism; but either the Gospel, which brings the good news and glad tidings of peace, pardon, atonement, and justification by Christ; or the sentence of justification pronounced upon the conscience by him; see Joh 15:2.

Ephesians 5:27

Ver. 27. That he might present it to himself a glorious church,.... There is a presentation of the church by Christ to his Father at his death, when he gathered the elect together in one, brought them nigh, and reconciled them to

God, and presented them to holy, unblamable, and unreproveable in his sight; and now in heaven, where he represents their persons, appears and makes intercession for them; and at the last day, when he will deliver the whole number of them complete and perfect, in consequence of his suretyship engagements: but this is a presentation of them to himself; and is either in this life, when they are brought to him in raiment of needlework, clothed with his righteousness, and washed in his blood, and he beholds them all fair, and without spot; or at the first resurrection, and during the thousand years' reign; as well as in the ultimate glory, when the open marriage of the Lamb will be come, when his bride will be arrayed with line linen, clean and white; and have the glory of God upon her, and appear in glory with Christ, and will be a glorious church indeed:

not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; the bodies of the saints will be like to Christ's glorious body, and will shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father; and in their souls they will be completely conformed to the image of Christ, and enjoy uninterrupted communion with him, and have perfect knowledge of him; they will be always in his presence, and he will take unspeakable delight and complacency in them, which his presentation of them to himself is expressive of; the church will then be free from all spots and blemishes; from all hypocrites and formal professors; and all heresies and heretics; from all declensions and infirmities, and from all sin and iniquity: the allusion seems to be to the customs and practices of the Jews, in their espousals: if a man espoused a woman on condition that she had no spots in her, and afterwards spots were found in her, she was not espoused; for spots or blemishes, as in priests, so in women, render them unfit; as the one for service, so the other for marriage; and they reckon up eight several spots or blemishes, for which they may be rejected {q}: but Christ's church has no spots or blemishes, nor anything like them; and will never be rejected by him, but will be always pleasing in his sight:

but that it should be holy and without blemish; as it is, being justified by his righteousness, washed in his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit.

{q} Misn. Cetubot, c. 7. sect. 7, 8. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Ephesians 5:28

Ver. 28. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies,.... It is a common saying with the Jews, that a man's wife is wpwgk, "as his own body" {r}; and it is one of the precepts of their wise men, that a man should honour his wife more than his body, wpwgk hbhaw, and "love her as his body" {s}; for as they also say, they are but one body {t}; the apostle seems to speak in the language of his countrymen; however, his doctrine and theirs agree in this point: wherefore

he that loveth his wife loveth himself; because she is one body and flesh with him.

{r} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 24. 1. & Becorot, fol. 35. 2. Maimon. Hilchot Becorot, c. 2. sect. 17. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 18. 2. {s} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 62. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 76. 2. Derech Eretz, fol. 17. 4. Maimon Hilchot Ishot, c. 15. sect. 19. {t} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 3.

Ephesians 5:29

Ver. 29. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh,.... This is unnatural, contrary to the first principles of nature; see Isa 58:7; which the {u} Jews understand of one that is near akin, and there is none nearer than a wife:

but nourisheth and cherisheth it; feeds and clothes it:

even as the Lord the church; who never hated her, but nourishes and cherishes her: Christ never hated his church and people; for his love is not only a love of benevolence, but of complacency and delight: there is a difference between anger and hatred, Christ may be angry with them, but not hate them; and there is a difference between persons and actions, Christ may hate their actions, but not their persons; and there is a difference between desert and fact, they may be deserving of his wrath and hatred, but are not the objects of it in fact; and there is a difference between what is real, and what is imaginary, they may imagine themselves to be hated by him, when they are not; and there is a difference between hatred, and a non-discovery of love, Christ may not manifest his love, and yet not hate; as he never does his own people, for his love is everlasting and unchangeable: and he "nourishes" them, as a father his child, as a shepherd his flock, and as an husband his wife; he feeds them with that which is nourishing, and with himself the bread of life, with his covenant and promises, with the Gospel and the doctrines of it, and with his love and grace; and by his Spirit, ministers, word, and ordinances: and he "cherishes" them, he grants them near and intimate communion with himself, than which nothing is more desirable by them, or joyful to them; nor is there anything that more revives and encourages faith, hope, and love; he clothes them suitable to their dignity and character, as his spouse and bride; and with which they are well contented, and in which they look exceeding comely in his sight: these phrases are expressive of the whole care Christ takes of his church, in furnishing her with everything pertaining to life and godliness; for her comfort and happiness in this world, and that to come: instead of the Lord, the Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, Christ; and the Arabic version reads, "as the Lord loves the church".

{u} Jarchi in loc. & R. Sol. Urbin. in Ohel Moed, fol. 85. 1.

Ephesians 5:30

Ver. 30. For we are members of his body,.... Not of his natural body, for this would make Christ's human nature monstrous; Christ, as man, is of our flesh and of our bones, or a partaker of the same flesh and blood with us; or otherwise, his incarnation would have been of no service to us; and had our human nature been from Christ, it would not have been corrupted; but our bodies, flesh, and bones, are from the first, and not the second Adam, and so corrupt and sinful; Christ indeed, as God, is the former of all human nature, and, as man, was set up in God's thoughts as the pattern of it; but the apostle is here speaking of the saints, not as men, but as Christians, as new creatures in Christ; and of what is peculiar to them; and therefore this must be understood of Christ's mystical body the church; which is his by the Father's gift, and his own purchase; and of which he is the head, and which is united to him; now of this saints are members; see Ro 12:5.

Of his flesh and of his bones: for so the church may be called, his own flesh, his flesh and bones, on account of the marriage relation she stands in to him, and that spiritual union there is between them, which these phrases are expressive of; and which the near relation of man and wife is an emblem of; these words are wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Ethiopic version.

Ephesians 5:31

Ver. 31. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother,.... These words contain the law of marriage, and are cited from **Ge 2:24**; and declare what ought to be, and are a prophecy of what should be; and are observed against polygamy, and to stir up mutual affection; See Gill on "Mt 19:5".

Ephesians 5:32

Ver. 32. This is a great mystery,.... It has something mysterious in it; it is a figure and emblem of the mysterious union between Christ and his people: for so it follows,

but I speak concerning Christ and the church; or mention this law and institution of marriage, with respect to them; for the leaving of father and mother prefigured Christ's coming forth from the Father, and coming into this world in human nature, and his disregard to his earthly parents, in comparison with his people, and his service for them; the man cleaving to the wife very aptly expresses the strong affection of Christ to his church, and the near communion there is between them; and their being one flesh denotes the union of them; and indeed, the marriage of Adam and Eve was a type of Christ and his church; for in this the first Adam was a figure of him that was to come, as well as in being a federal head to his posterity: Adam was before Eve, so Christ was before his church; God thought it not proper that man should be alone, so neither Christ, but that he should have some fellows and companions with him: the formation of Eve from Adam was typical of the church's production from Christ; she was made of him while he was asleep, which sleep was from the Lord, and it was not an ordinary one; which may resemble the sufferings and death of Christ, which were from the Lord, and were not common; and which are the redemption of his church and people; and which secure their comfort and happiness, and wellbeing: she was taken out of his side, and built up a woman of one of his ribs; both the justification and sanctification of the church are from Christ, from the water and the blood which issued out of his side, when on the cross: the bringing and presentation of Eve to Adam has its mystery; it was God that brought her to him; and she was the same that was made out of him; and to the same Adam was she brought of whose rib she was made, and that not against her will: so it is God that draws souls to Christ, and espouses them to him, even the same that he has chosen in him, and Christ has redeemed by his blood; and to the same are they brought, who was wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their sins; and they are made willing in the day of his power upon them, to come and give themselves to him. Adam's consent and acknowledgment of Eve to be his wife, shadow forth Christ's hearty reception and acknowledgment of the saints, as being of him, and his, when they are brought unto him under the influences of his grace and Spirit.

Ephesians 5:33

Ver. 33. Nevertheless, let everyone of you in particular,.... The apostle returns to his former subject, and recapitulates the mutual duties of husband and wife, after he had enforced them from the instance and example of Christ, and his church; and would have every married person in particular take the directions and instructions given, to themselves: as that the husband

so love his wife even as himself; since they two are one flesh:

and the wife [see] that she reverence [her] husband; since he leaves father and mother for her, and is the head of her;
See Gill on "Eph 5:22".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Ephesians 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 6

In this chapter the apostle goes on with his exhortations to relative and domestic duties, and considers those of children and parents, and of servants and masters; and next he exhorts the saints in general to constancy and perseverance in the exercise of grace, and the performance of duty in the strength of Christ, and with the use of the armour of God described by him; entreats them to pray for him; gives the reasons of sending Tychicus, who brought them this epistle, and closes it with his apostolical salutation. He begins with the duties of children to their parents, which are submission and obedience to them, honour, fear, and reverence of them; the arguments engaging thereunto are taken from the light of nature and reason, from the command of God, and the promise annexed to it, **Eph 6:1**. Then follow the duties of fathers to their children, who are exhorted not to use them with too much rigour, and so provoke them to wrath, but to bring them up in a religious manner, that they may serve the Lord, **Eph 6:4**. Next he observes the duties of servants to their masters, which are subjection and obedience, which should be done with reverence of them, with simplicity of heart, as unto Christ, not with eyeservice, as menpleasers, but with the heart, and with good will, as doing the will of God, and as if it was to the Lord, and not men; to which they are encouraged by a promise of reward which is given without respect to bond or free, **Eph 6:5**. And masters, they are exhorted to do what is right and just to their servants, and not terrify them with menaces; to which they are moved by the consideration of their having a master in heaven, who is no respecter of persons, **Eph 6:9**. From hence the apostle passes to a general exhortation to the saints to behave with firmness and constancy of mind, though they had many enemies, and these mighty and powerful, and more than a match for them; relying on the power and strength of Christ, and making use of the whole armour of God, which he advises them to take, that they might stand and withstand in the worst of times, **Eph 6:10**, the several parts of which he enumerates, as the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, whereby the fiery darts of Satan are quenched, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit the word of God, and spiritual prayer of every sort for all saints, attended with watching and perseverance, **Eph 6:14**, which last part of the spiritual armour being mentioned, leads on the apostle to entreat the Ephesians to pray for him, that he might freely and boldly preach the Gospel; which he commends from the mysterious nature and subject of it, from his character as an ambassador for it, or for Christ, the sum and substance of it, and from his being in bonds for it; which showed how great an esteem he had of it, and how heartily concerned he was to preach it without fear, **Eph 6:19**. And then adds, that the reasons of his sending Tychicus, whom he describes by his relation to him as a brother, and his affection for him, and by his office as a minister, and his faithfulness in it, were, that they might be acquainted with his circumstances, in what state and condition he was, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual, and that their hearts might be comforted by him, **Eph 6:21**. And the epistle is concluded with the apostle's salutation; and the persons saluted are the brethren of this church, and all that love Christ Jesus sincerely; and the blessings wished for are peace, love, with faith and grace; the persons from whom they are desired are God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, **Eph 6:23**.

Ver. 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord,.... The persons whose duty this is, "children", are such of every sex, male and female, and of every age, and of every state and condition; and though the true, legitimate, and immediate offspring of men may be chiefly respected, yet not exclusive of spurious children, and adopted ones, and of children-in-law; and the persons to whom obedience from them is due, are not only real and immediate parents, both father and mother, but such who are in the room of parents, as step-fathers, step-mothers, guardians, nurses, &c. and all who are in the ascending line, as grandfathers, grandmothers, &c. to these, children should be subject and obedient in all things lawful, just, and good; in everything that is not sinful and unlawful, by the word of God; and in things indifferent, as much as in them lies, and even in things which are difficult to perform: and this obedience should be hearty and sincere, and not merely verbal, and in show and appearance, nor mercenary; and should be joined with gratitude and thankfulness for past favours: and it should be "in the Lord"; which may be considered either as a limitation of the obedience, that it should be in things that are agreeable to the mind and will of the Lord; or as an argument to it, because it is the command of the Lord, and is wellpleasing in his sight, and makes for his glory, and therefore should be done for his sake:

for this is right; it appears to be right by the light of nature, by which the very Heathens have taught it; and it is equitable from reason that so it should be; and it is just by the law of God, which commands nothing but what is holy, just, and good.

Ephesians 6:2

Ver. 2. Honour thy father and mother,.... This explains who parents are, and points at some branches of obedience due unto them; for they are not only to be loved, and to be feared, and reverenced, their corrections to be submitted to, offences against them to be acknowledged, their tempers to be bore with, and their infirmities covered; but they are to be honoured in thought, word, and gesture; they are to be highly thought of and esteemed; they are to be spoken to, and of, very honourably, and with great veneration and to be behaved to in a very respectful manner; and they are to be relieved, assisted, and maintained in comfortable way when aged, and in necessitous circumstances; and which may be chiefly designed. So the Jews explain dwbk, "the honour" due to parents, by, &c. lykam, "giving them food, drink", and "clothing", unloosing their shoes, and leading them out and in {x}. Compare with this **1Ti 5:4**;
See Gill on "Mt 15:4";

which is the first commandment with promise: it is the fifth commandment in the decalogue, but the first that has a promise annexed to it: it is reckoned by the Jews {y} the weightiest of the weightiest commands of the law; and the reward bestowed on it, is length of days, as follows.

{x} T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 61. 2. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 31. 1, 2. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 7. {y} Debarim Rabba, sect. 6. fol. 241. 3.

Ephesians 6:3

Ver. 3. That it may be well with thee,.... In this world, and that which is to come; see **De 5:16**. The Jews {z} say,

"there are four things, which if a man does, he eats the fruit of them in this world, and the capital part remains for him in the world to come; and they are these, Maw ba
dwbyk; "honouring father and mother", doing acts of beneficence, making peace between a man and his neighbour, and learning of the law, which answers to them all."

And thou mayest live long on the earth: length of days is in itself a blessing; and though men's days cannot be lengthened beyond God's purpose and decree; and though obedient children do not always live long; yet disobedience to parents often brings the judgments of God on children, so that they die not a common death, 2Sa 18:14. On those words in De 32:47, the Jews {a} have this paraphrase;

"because it is your life, Maw ba dwbyk hz, "this is honouring father and mother; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days", this is beneficence."

It may be observed, that the words in this promissory part are not the same as in the decalogue, where they stand thus, "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee",
Ex 20:12, referring to the land of Canaan; for the law in the form of it, in which it was delivered by Moses, only concerned the people of the Jews; wherefore to suit this law, and the promise of it, to others, the apostle alters the language of it.

{z} Misna Peah, c. 1. sect. 1. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 127. 1, & Kiddushin, fol. 40. 1. {a} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 4.

Ephesians 6:4

Ver. 4. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath,.... Neither by words; by unjust and, unreasonable commands; by contumelious and reproachful language; by frequent and public chidings, and by indiscreet and passionate expressions: nor by deeds; preferring one to another; by denying them the necessaries of life; by not allowing them proper recreation; by severe and cruel blows, and inhuman usage; by not giving them suitable education; by an improper disposal of them in marriage; and by profusely spending their estates, and leaving nothing to them: not but that parents may, and ought to correct and rebuke their children; nor are they accountable to them for their conduct; yet they should take care not to provoke them to wrath, because this alienates their minds from them, and renders their instructions and corrections useless, and puts them upon sinful practices; wrath lets in Satan, and leads to sin against God; and indeed it is difficult in the best of men to be angry and not sin; see **Col 3:21**. Fathers are particularly mentioned, they being the heads of families, and are apt to be too severe, as mothers too indulgent.

But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; instructing them in the knowledge of divine things, setting them good examples, taking care to prevent their falling into bad company, praying with them, and for them, bringing them into the house of God, under the means of grace, to attend public worship; all which, under a divine blessing, may be very useful to them; the example of Abraham is worthy of imitation, Ge 18:19, and the advice of the wise man deserves attention, Pr 22:6.

Ephesians 6:5

Ver. 5. Servants, be obedient to them that are [your] masters,.... The apostle enlarges on the duty of servants, as well as frequently inculcates it in his epistles; because, generally speaking, they were more rude and ignorant, and less pains were taken with them to instruct them; they were apt to be impatient and weary of the yoke; and scandal was like to arise from servants in the first ages of Christianity through some libertines, and the licentiousness of the false teachers, who insinuated, that servitude was inconsistent with Christian freedom: the persons exhorted are "servants", bond servants, and hired servants; who are to be subject to, and obey their "masters", of each sex, whether male or female, of every condition, whether poor or rich, believers or unbelievers, good or bad humoured, gentle or froward: such as are their masters

according to the flesh; or "carnal masters", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; even though they are unregenerate men, and are in a state of nature, and only mind the things of the flesh, yet they are to be obeyed in their lawful commands; or "in things pertaining to the flesh", as the Arabic version renders it; in things temporal, which concern the body, and this temporal life; not in things spiritual and religious, or that belong to conscience, and which are contrary to them: or "according to your flesh", as the Ethiopic version renders it; signifying that they are only masters over their bodies, not their consciences; and that their power only extends to corporeal things, and can last no longer than while they are in the flesh; see **Job 3:19**; and obedience is to be yielded to them

with fear and trembling; with great humility and respect, with reverence of them, and giving honour to them, with carefulness not to offend them, with submission to their reproofs and corrections, and with fear of punishment; but more especially with the fear of God, being by that influenced and constrained to obedience;

in singleness of heart; with readiness and cheerfulness, without hypocrisy and dissimulation, and with all integrity and faithfulness:

as unto Christ; it being agreeable to his will, and what makes for his glory, and serves to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Ephesians 6:6

Ver. 6. Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers,.... Doing nothing but when under the master's eye, and then pretending a great deal of diligence and industry, in order to ingratiate themselves into his affections, and neglecting his business when he is absent; whereas they ought to attend his service in his absence, as well as in his presence, and so seek to please him, which is commendable.

But as the servants of Christ; acting in like manner as the servants of Christ, who are not menpleasers; or as if they themselves were serving Christ, as indeed they are, when they are doing that which is the will of Christ:

doing the will of God from the heart; meaning not the will of God in a religious, but in a civil sense, yielding a cheerful and hearty obedience to their own masters.

Ephesians 6:7

Ver. 7. With good will doing service,.... To their masters; not grudgingly, with an ill will; no otherwise, nor longer than when they are forced to it; but of a ready mind, and with a cheerful spirit, taking delight in their work, and reckoning it a pleasure to serve their masters; as an Israelite that is not sold, who does his work wnwurb, "with his good will", and according to his own mind {b}; doing what they do

as to the Lord, and not to men; not merely because it is the will of men, and they are commanded by them, and in order to please them, but because it is the will of the Lord, and is wellpleasing in his sight.

{b} Maimon. Hilchot Abadim, c. 1. sect. 7.

Ephesians 6:8

Ver. 8. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth,.... According to the will of God, from right principles in his heart, and with a view to God's glory:

the same shall he receive of the Lord; that is, he shall receive the fruit and advantage of it, in a way of grace,

whether [he be] bond or free; a bondman or a free man, a master or a servant.

Ephesians 6:9

Ver. 9. And ye masters do the same things unto them,.... This does not refer to service and obedience, but to singleness of heart, benevolence, humanity, and a regard to Christ, and the will of God, and to the doing of good things, and to the performance of their duty, as they would have their servants do theirs; whose duty, if religious masters, is, with respect to their souls, to instruct them in, and use them to religious exercises, to pray with them, and for them, to set them good examples, to prevent them falling into, bad company, and to allow them proper time for religious duties; and with respect to their bodies, and outward concerns, to provide sufficient food and proper raiment for them, or to give them their due wages, to take care of them when sick or lame, and show compassion and humanity to them, to encourage those that are prudent, faithful, and laborious, and to correct the disobedient, and expel the incorrigible:

forbearing threatening; not that they may not in any sense threaten, but not always, nor too often, nor too much, and with great things on light occasions; nor should they be too forward to execute their threatenings, especially when their servants repent and amend; they should then forbear them and forgive; and so the Syriac version renders it, "forgive their offences": this is opposed to all hard rigour, and ill usage, either by words or blows. And this is a rule given by the Jews {c}, that a master should not multiply clamour and anger, but should speak him (his servant) quietly, and in a still manner, and he will hear his objections, or arguments and reasons:

knowing that your master also is in heaven; meaning Christ, who employs, provides for, and uses well all his servants, and to whom masters must be accountable for their usage of servants; for he is the common master of masters and servants; and so the Alexandrian copy, and Vulgate Latin version, read, "their and your master": and the place of his habitation is mentioned, to distinguish him from earthly masters; and the more to move and excite masters to their duty, since he being in heaven overlooks and takes notice of all their actions, as the omniscient God; and being omnipotent, has it in his power to plead and avenge the cause of the injured:

neither is there respect of persons with him; as whether they are of this, or the other nation, Jew or Gentile; whether in this, or that state and condition, or in such and such circumstances of life; whether masters or servants, bond or free, or whether Canaanitish or Hebrew servants; between which the Jews {d} made a difference, and allowed of rigour to be used to the one, but required mercy and kindness to be showed to the other; and so were respecters of persons.

{c} Maimon. Hilchot Abadim, c. 9. sect. 8. {d} Maimon. Hilchot Abadim, c. 9. sect. 8.

Ephesians 6:10

Ver. 10. Finally, my brethren,.... This is the conclusion of the apostle's exhortations, in which he addresses the saints as his brethren; which appellation he uses, not merely as a familiar way of speaking among the Jews, but in regard to them as regenerate persons, and of the same family and household of God with himself; and he calls them so, to show his humility, and as a proof of his affection to them, and with a design to encourage them to their duty, as follows:

be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; which is directed to, partly on account of the things before exhorted to, which could not be performed in their own strength; and partly with respect to their many and potent enemies hereafter mentioned, against whom they had no might nor power of their own; and therefore the apostle points out the Lord Jesus Christ unto them, in whom are strength, power, and might, even everlasting strength, to enable them to perform their duty, and to fight against every enemy, sin, Satan, and the world; for though they are weak, and strength in themselves, and can do nothing of themselves, and without Christ; yet since there is strength in him, which is communicable to them, they may expect it from him, and depend upon it; and they may come at, or strengthen themselves in it, and by it, by meditation on it, by prayer for it, by waiting on Christ in his own ways, by exercising faith upon him, and through the Spirit, who strengthens them from him with might in the inward man.

Ephesians 6:11

Ver. 11. Put on the whole armour of God,.... Not that which God himself is sometimes clothed with, and uses against his enemies; but what he has provided for his people, and furnishes them with; the particulars of which are after mentioned: and it is called "the armour of God", because it is prepared by him for his people, and is bestowed on them by him; and because it is in its own nature divine and spiritual, and not carnal; and because it is provided for fighting the Lord's battles, and is used in them; and because the efficacy of it is from him, and the execution it does is owing to him: and it is whole, complete, and perfect; and all of it is useful, and no part to be neglected, but all to be taken and "put on"; which is not to make and provide this armour, but to take it, as in **Eph 6:13**; as being ready made and provided, and to expect and prepare for battle, and make use of it; and this supposes saints to be in a warfare state, and that they are in the character of soldiers, and have enemies to fight with, and therefore should be accoutred with proper and suitable armour, to meet them:

that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; who is the grand enemy of Christ and his people, and a very powerful and cunning one he is; so that the whole armour of God should be put on, which is proof against all his might and craft, in order to stand against him, oppose him, and fight, and get the victory over him, which in the issue is always obtained by believers; for they not only stand their ground in the strength of Christ, and by the use of their armour confound his schemes, and baffle all his arts and stratagems, but are more than conquerors through him that has loved them.

Ephesians 6:12

Ver. 12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,.... The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and some copies, read "you", instead of "we". This is a reason why saints should be strong in the Lord, and why they should put on the whole armour of God, and prepare for battle, since their enemies are such as here described: not "flesh and blood"; frail mortal men, such as were wrestled against in the Olympic games, to which the apostle alludes. For this wrestling, as Philo the Jew says {e}, concerning Jacob's wrestling, is not of the body, but of the soul; see Mt 16:17; and the meaning is, not with men only, for otherwise the saints have a conflict with men; with profane men, and wrestle against them, by bearing a testimony against their enormities, and by patiently enduring their reproaches, and conquer them by a constant adherence to Christ, and an exercise of faith upon him, which gets the victory over the world; and with heretical men, and maintain a conflict with them, by watching and observing the first appearance of their errors and heresies, and declaring against them, and by using Scripture arguments to confute them, and by rejecting the stubborn and incorrigible from church communion: yet they wrestle not against these only,

but against principalities, against powers; by whom are meant not civil magistrates, or the Roman governors, though these are sometimes so called, **Tit 3:1**, and may be said to be the rulers of the darkness of this world, or of the dark Heathen world, and were in high places, and were of wicked and malicious spirits, against the people of Christ; yet these cannot be opposed to flesh and blood, or to men, since they were such themselves; and though they were in high, yet not in heavenly places; and the connection with the preceding verse shows the contrary, the enemy being the devil, and the armour spiritual; wherefore the devils are here designed, who are described from their power, rule, and government,
See Gill on "Eph 1:21", both in this clause, and in the next:

and against the rulers of the darkness of this world; that is, over wicked men in it, who are in a state of darkness itself; and so Satan is called the prince, and god of the world, Joh 12:31. The Jews use this very word, the apostle does here, of the angel of death; who is called darkness {f}; and the devil is called by them, Kvwx lv rv, "the prince of darkness" {g}; and mention is made by them of amle ykwvx, "the darkness of the world" {h}; from whom the apostle seems to have taken these phrases, as being in common use among the Jews; who also use it of civil governors {i}, and render it, as here, "the rulers of the world", and say it signifies monarchs, such as rule from one end of the world to the other {k}: some copies, and the Ethiopic version, leave out the phrase, of this world. It follows,

against spiritual wickedness in high places; or wicked spirits, as the devils are, unclean, proud, lying, deceitful, and malicious; who may be said to be in "high" or "heavenly places"; not in places super celestial, or in the highest heavens, in the third heaven, where God, angels, and saints are; but in the aerial heavens, where the power or posse of devils reside, and where they are above us, over our heads, overlooking us, and watching every advantage against us; and therefore we should have on our armour, and be in a readiness to engage them; and so the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, "under", or "beneath heaven"; and the Arabic version, "in the air".

{e} Leg. Allegor. l. 2. p. 96, {f} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 18. fol. 160. 1. & Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 25. 4. {g} Pesikta in Kettoreth Hassammim in Targum in Gen. fol. 9. 4. Raziel, fol. 13. 1. {h} Zohar in Lev. fol. 19. 3. {i} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 58. fol. 51. 2. {k} Tanchuma & Aruch in Guidon. Diet. Syr. Chal. p. 169.

Ephesians 6:13

Ver. 13. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God,.... This is a repetition of the exhortation in **Eph 6:11**; which repetition seems necessary by reason of the many powerful enemies mentioned in the preceding verse, and serves to explain what is meant by putting it on: and leads on the apostle to give an account of the several parts of this armour: the end of taking it is much the same as before,

that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day; that is, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles and stratagems of Satan, against his power and might, to oppose his schemes, and resist his temptations: and so the Syriac version renders it, "that ye may be able to meet the evil one"; to face him, and give him battle, being accoutred with the whole armour of God; though the Greek copies, and other versions, read, "in the evil day"; in which sin and iniquity abound, error and heresy prevail, Satan is very busy, trials and afflictions come on, persecution arises because of the word, and God's judgments are in the earth:

and having done all to stand; or having overcome, having routed the enemy, stand as conquerors; or rather, having took and put on the whole armour of God, in order to stand, and withstand the enemy.

Ephesians 6:14

Ver. 14. Stand therefore,.... Keep your ground, do not desert the army, the church of Christ, nor his cause; continue in the station in which you are placed, keep your post, be upon your watch, stand upon your guard:

having your loins girt about with truth; by which is meant the Gospel, and the several doctrines of it; see **Eph 1:13**; and to have the loins girt with it, shows, that it should be near and close to the saints, and never departed from; and that it is a means of keeping them close to God and Christ, and of strengthening them against the assaults and attacks of Satan; and is of great use in the Christians' spiritual conflict with their enemies; the girdle is a part of armour, and so considerable as sometimes to be put for the whole, **Isa 5:27**; and here it is mentioned in the first place:

and having on the breastplate of righteousness; in allusion to Isa 59:17, meaning not works of righteousness done by men, though these are a fence when rightly used against the reproaches and charges of the enemy, as they were by Samuel, 1Sa 12:3, but rather the graces of faith and love, **1Th 5:8**, though faith has another place in the Christian armour, afterwards mentioned; wherefore it seems best to understand this of the righteousness of Christ, which being imputed by God, and received by faith, is a guard against, and repels the accusations and charges of Satan, and is a security from all wrath and condemnation.

Ephesians 6:15

Ver. 15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. The Gospel is so called, because it makes men to be of peaceable tempers and behaviour, and gives peace to distressed minds: it directs the way to eternal peace, and publishes peace made by the blood of Christ; and has a much better claim to this name, and epithet, than the law has, which is often called "peace" by the Jews {l}: the "preparation" of it does not design a promptitude or readiness to preach the Gospel, or to receive it, or profess it, or to give a reason

of faith in it, or to endure reproach and persecution for it; nor that readiness which the Gospel is a means of, as for every good work, for the spiritual warfare, for the Christian's journey heavenward, or for heaven itself: but the word
etoimasia signifies a "base", or foundation; and so it is used by the Septuagint interpreters on **Zec 5:11**; and here it designs a firm and solid knowledge of the Gospel, as it publishes peace by Jesus Christ, which yields a sure foundation for the Christian soldier to set his foot upon, and stand fast on; it being that to him, as the shoe is to the foot, its base or foundation: and for the feet to be "shod with" it, does not mean the outward conversation being agreeably to the Gospel, though such a walk and conversation is very beautiful and safe, and such may walk and war with intrepidity: but it designs the constant and firm standing of believers in the faith of the Gospel, and so striving and contending for it, without being moved from it, that it may continue with them. Shoes or boots, which were sometimes of iron, and sometimes of brass, are reckoned among the armour of soldiers {m}.

{l} Zohar in Numb. fol. 73. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 9. 3. {m} Pausan. l. 6. p. 362, 378. Julian. Orat. 2. p. 105. Alex. ab Alexandro, l. 6. c. 22.

Ephesians 6:16

Ver. 16. Above all, taking the shield of faith,.... Which may be understood either of the grace of faith, which is like a golden shield, precious, solid, and substantial; and like a shield of mighty men, by which mighty things are done, and by which the believer not only repels, but conquers the enemy. The Jews say {n}, that repentance and good works are as a shield against divine vengeance: or rather of the object of faith, that which faith makes use of as a shield; so God himself is a shield, Ge 15:1; his divine perfections, as his power, faithfulness, truth, and immutability, which encompass the saints as a shield, and are opposed by faith to the temptations of Satan; also the love and favour of God, **Ps 5:12**; and particularly God in his word, Pr 30:5, which is a shield against false doctrines, and the wiles of Satan. Moreover, Christ is a shield, Ps 84:11; and faith makes rise of him as a shield, his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; which it holds up and opposes to all the charges and objections of Satan; and who is the saints' protection, and security from the wrath of God, divine justice, and eternal death. The disciples of the wise men are said to be {o} Nwoyrt, "shielded men", who, as the gloss says fight in the war of the law; but they are not like Christ's disciples, who have on the shield, and fight the fight of faith: and this is "above all" to be taken, as being the most useful part of the Christian armour; or "with all", with the rest, this is to be taken, and by no means to be neglected; and it is to be used "in all"; in every temptation of Satan, in every conflict with that enemy, or any other.

Wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; of the wicked one, Satan; who was the first wicked one, and the tempter of others to wickedness; and is emphatically the wicked one, being wickedness itself; and his temptations are "fiery darts": they may be compared to "darts", because they sometimes come suddenly and swiftly and thick and fast, are very numerous, and where they stick are very troublesome and grieving; see Ge 49:23. And they may be said to be "fiery", because they serve to inflame the mind, and excite to sin, as lust, anger, revenge, and the like; and were they not repelled, would be the occasion of bringing into everlasting burnings. The allusion is to belesi pepurwmenoiv, "the fiery darts", cast by enemies into towns, and upon houses, in order to burn them {p}. Mention is also made of avad yryg, "fiery darts", with the Jews {q}, and of Satan's casting a dart at David {r}: from these customs, and ways of speaking, the apostle borrows his phrases; and suggests, that the shield of faith is of use to quench the fiery darts of Satan's temptations; so that they may not have the malignant influence they are designed for; which is chiefly done by faith's dealing with the blood of Christ. And there were ways of quenching the fiery darts alluded to; which was done by skins and hides of beasts made wet, or anointed with alum {s}.

{n} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 11. {o} T. Bab. Becorot, fol. 36. 1. & Gloss. in ib. {p} Apollodorus de Orig. Deorum, l. 2. p. 89. {q} Targum Jon. & Jerus. in Exod. xix. 13. {r} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 95. 1. & 107. 1. {s} Ammian. Marcellin. l. 20. c. 11.

Ephesians 6:17

Ver. 17. And take the helmet of salvation,.... Meaning either Christ himself, the Saviour; and so the Arabic version renders it, "the helmet of the Saviour": or the salvation itself, which he is the author of, and a well grounded hope of it; see **1Th 5:8**; the allusion is to Isa 59:17; and such an hope of salvation by Christ is a defence of the head against false doctrines; for the helmet is a piece of armour for the head; and it is an erecter of the head in times of difficulty, affliction, and distress; and it covers the head in the day of battle, when engaged with Satan, the enemy of souls:

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; the word of God is compared to a "sword", for its two edges, the law and Gospel; the one convicts of sin, and cuts to the heart for it, and the other cuts down all the goodliness of man; and the Scriptures in general are a sharp sword, in convincing of sin, reproving for it, and threatening with wrath and ruin, in refuting error and heresy, and repelling Satan's temptations, and will be used in the destruction of antichrist: and this word may be called "the sword of the Spirit", because it is not carnal, but of a spiritual nature; and is used by the spiritual man; and because the Holy Spirit, as the Ethiopic version here expresses it, is the author of it; and which he furnishes the saints with, and teaches them how to make use of, and makes it powerful and effectual. So the Jews say {t}, the words of the law are like to a sword, and speak of hrwt brx "the sword of the law" {u}

{t} Targum in Cant. 3. 8. {u} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 19. 1.

Ephesians 6:18

Ver. 18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit,.... The last weapon is prayer, and takes in all sorts of prayer, mental and vocal, public and private; and every branch of it, as deprecation of evils, petitions for good things, and thanksgiving for mercies: and which should be used always: this stands opposed to such who pray not at all, or who have prayed, but have left it off; or who pray only in distress, and it suggests, that a man should pray as often as he has an opportunity; and particularly, that he should make use of it in times of darkness, desertion, and temptation: and this, when performed aright, is performed "in the Spirit"; with the heart, soul, and spirit engaged in it; it is put up with a true heart, and a right spirit, and without hypocrisy; in a spiritual way, and with fervency, and under the influence, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God.

And watching thereunto; either to the word, as a direction for prayer, or to prayer itself; for opportunities to pray for the assistance of the Spirit in prayer, for an answer of it, and to return thanks for blessings when bestowed; and against all dependence on it, and against Satan's temptations, and our own corruptions with respect to it:

with all perseverance; in it, notwithstanding what Satan and an unbelieving heart may suggest to the contrary:

and supplication for all saints; of every nation, age, sex, and condition, in all places, and of every denomination. So Christ taught his disciples to pray, saying, our Father, suggesting, that they were not only to pray for themselves, but for all the children of God.

Ephesians 6:19

Ver. 19. And for me,.... This shows the great humility of the apostle, and the sense he had of the greatness of the work of the ministry; and that it is the duty of people to pray for their ministers; and that no man is perfect in this life; and that the more superior members need the assistance of the inferior ones; for this request is made by the apostle not in dissimulation, or as feigning humility and modesty; but in the sincerity of his heart, and from a real sense of his need of fresh supplies of gifts and grace, to fit him for the work and service of Christ:

that utterance may be given unto me, or "that the word"; meaning not the subject matter of the ministry, the word of the Gospel, the word of faith, truth, and reconciliation, for that was committed to him; unless he should mean an increase of light and knowledge in it; but rather a faculty of speaking it freely and aptly, and what is commonly called elocution; not speaking with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but with the words of the Holy Ghost: or else an opportunity of preaching the word, and liberty to do it, as follows;

that I may open my mouth boldly; or "in the opening of my mouth"; the phrase is Rabbinical. The Jews {w} say, that when Moses came to write that passage, "let us make man in our image", &c. **Gen 1:26**, he said before the Lord of the world, why dost thou give hp Nwxtp, "opening of the mouth", to heretics? i.e. an occasion to them of speaking, objecting to us, and of reproving and convincing us with respect to a plurality of persons in the Deity: and a little after they say,

"wherever you hp Nwxtp, "an opening of the mouth to heretics", you will find an answer by its side, or along with it."

Now the apostle desired he might have something to say, to object to, and to reprove and convince the unbelieving Jews; that he might do this with boldness, with all faithfulness with Courage, and intrepidity, and with freedom of speech; or "openly" and "publicly", as the Syriac version renders it:

to make known, the mystery of the Gospel; or the mysterious doctrines of it, such as the doctrines of a trinity of persons, of the union of the two natures in

Christ, justification by his righteousness, regeneration by his Spirit and grace, the saints' union to Christ, and communion with him, the resurrection of the dead, &c. which are called mysteries, because they were hid until revealed; and though revealed, the "modus" and "ratio" of them are not to be accounted for. Now the apostle's work was to make known these mysteries, to prove the truth of them from the word of God, and to defend them against the opposers of them; and that he might be able to do this he entreats the prayers of the saints.

{w} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 7. 1. & Vajikra Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 163. 1. Megillat Esther, fol. 94. 1, 3.

Ephesians 6:20

Ver. 20. For which I am an ambassador in bonds,.... The character the apostle bore was that of an ambassador; and he was an ambassador from and for Christ, in his room and stead; he represented him, he was sent by him, and entrusted by him with the Gospel; he gave him it, and a commission to preach it, and furnished him with qualifications for it; such as knowledge and faithfulness wisdom and prudence, courage and greatness of mind; and made his embassy successful: and he was chiefly an ambassador to the Gentiles, which showed great condescension in Christ to send him to them, and base ingratitude in the despisers and rejecters of the Gospel, for which he was an ambassador; for the embassy Christ's ministers are sent on, is the embassy of the Gospel of peace: their business is to declare that men by nature are enemies to God; that peace is made by the blood of Christ for such; by which means they are made useful to conciliate the minds of men to God's way of salvation and to bring them to submit to his government and laws: and when he adds, "in bonds", or "in a chain", he means, that he was in such circumstances, not for any crime, but for the Gospel, for which he was an ambassador; and therefore was not ashamed of his bonds, or chain, but rather gloried in them; and he makes mention of them to engage persons to a regard to him as an ambassador, and to his embassy; for an ambassador, especially an ambassador of Christ, that comes with his Gospel, and more especially that is suffering for it, ought to be received, heard, and honoured.

That therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak; that is, the apostle beseeches the saints to pray for him, that since he was an ambassador for the Gospel, and in bonds, that he might speak in it, or rather of it boldly and freely; that he might have both liberty from his bonds, and liberty in his soul, and freedom of speech; and that he might use boldness in delivering his message, as became an ambassador of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:21

Ver. 21. But that ye also may know my affairs, [and] how I do,.... Both his temporal and spiritual affairs; as that he was in bonds, and how he was supported under them, and of what use they were to others; how that he preached in his own hired house, and with what success; and what ministering brethren he had with him to assist him; and in what condition was the church at Rome where he now was: the apostle's life and actions would bear the light, and what he did was worthy of imitation, and must be both delightful and useful to know; and the account he sends, by a messenger hereafter named, of whom he gives the following character, that credit might be the more readily given to his relation:

Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things. This Tychicus was of Asia, who accompanied the apostle in his travels, and went with him to Rome, from whence he sent him to several places to relate his case, and to know the state of the churches, **Col 4:7**. He calls him "a beloved brother": he was a "brother", because he was a partaker of the same grace, was of the same family and household of God, and was of the same function, being a minister of the Gospel, and was a "beloved" one: he was beloved of God and Christ, and of all the saints that knew him, and especially a brother beloved of the Apostle Paul; and where there is brotherhood, there should be love: he also styles him a "faithful minister in the Lord"; he was a "minister" in the work and service of the Lord, in things pertaining to him; he was one of his appointing, qualifying, and sending; and he preached Christ, and him crucified; and was a "faithful" one, to his Lord or master, in whose name he ministered, to the Gospel which he ministered, and to the souls of men to whom he ministered; and a greater character he could not well have; and therefore it need not be doubted but that he would faithfully relate all things concerning the apostle, and what he said might be depended on as truth.

Ephesians 6:22

Ver. 22. Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose,.... Which shows the great concern the apostle had for the churches, being willing to inform them of everything that might be for their use and service:

that ye might know our affairs; temporal and spiritual, and not only the apostle's affairs, but the affairs of those that were with him, who were concerned in the same common cause:

and [that] he might comfort your hearts; both by such a relation, and by the ministry of the Gospel to them: believers in Christ are sometimes disconsolate, by reason of indwelling sin, Satan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, afflictions and persecutions, their own sufferings, and those of others; and it is the business of the ministers of Christ to comfort them; their commission is to speak comfortably to them; and they are qualified for it, by inward comforts in their own souls; the Gospel they preach, and the message they bring, is of a comfortable nature; the Spirit of God acts by them, and with them as a comforter; and sad indeed is the state of Zion, or the church of Christ, when it has no comforters.

Ephesians 6:23

Ver. 23. Peace [be] to the brethren,.... The members of the church at Ephesus, who stood in a spiritual relation to each other; meaning all prosperity outward and inward, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; especially peace of conscience under the sprinklings of the blood of Christ, and a view of peace made with God by that blood:

and love with faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, an increase of these graces, and of the exercise of them, is wished for; for otherwise these brethren had both these graces, faith and love; see **Eph 1:15**; which go together; faith works by love, and love discovers faith, and both are imperfect; faith has something lacking in it, and love is apt to grow cold, and need reviving and increasing; and these, and the increase of them, are from God the Father, who is the God of all grace, and from Jesus Christ, in whom all fulness of grace is; and these things are equally desired from the one as from the other, and shows a plurality of persons in the Godhead, and the equality of Christ with the Father; and such a wish expresses the apostle's great love and affection for the brethren, and points out the things they stand in need of; and which, being asked for such, might be expected to be enjoyed.

Ephesians 6:24

Ver. 24. Grace [be] with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ,.... Christ is the object of love, and a lovely object he is: he is to be loved because of the loveliness of his person, and the transcendent excellencies that are in him; because of his suitableness and fulness as a Saviour; and because of his great love shown to his church and people; and because of the relations he stands in to them, and the communion they have with him: love to Christ is a grace of the Spirit, and is in all believers; and though it is imperfect, and sometimes cold, it will abide for ever; it ought to be universal and superlative; all of Christ is to be loved, and he is to be loved above all: and it shows itself in a value for his Gospel, and the truths of it; in an esteem of his ordinances, and a regard to his commands; in parting with all for Christ, when called for; and in bearing all for his sake; in a well pleasedness in his company and presence, and in a concern for his absence, and in an uneasiness until he is enjoyed again: it should be fervent, and constant, and cordial, and, as here said,

in sincerity; from the heart, and with all the heart, and without hypocrisy; not in word only, but in deed and in truth; which appears when he is loved, as before observed: and the apostle wishes "grace" to all such sincere and hearty lovers of him; by which may be meant a fresh discovery of the free grace, love, and favour of God in Christ to them; and a fresh supply of grace from the fulness of it in Christ; and a larger measure of the grace of the Spirit to carry on the good work begun in them; as well as a continuation of the Gospel of the grace of God with them, and an increase of spiritual gifts. Grace may be connected with the word translated "sincerity", and be rendered "grace with incorruption": or incorruptible grace, as true grace is an incorruptible seed; or "grace with immortality": and so the apostle wishes not only for grace here, but for eternal happiness and glory hereafter; and then closes the epistle with an Amen, as a confirmation and asseveration of the truth of the doctrines contained in it, and as expressive of his earnest desire that the several petitions in it might be granted, and of his faith and confidence that they would be fulfilled.

The subscription,

written from Rome to [the] Ephesians by Tychicus, seems to be right; for that this epistle is written to the Ephesians, the inscription shows; and that it was written when the apostle was at Rome, appears from **Eph 3:1**; and that it was sent by Tychicus, seems very likely from **Eph 6:21**.

Philippians 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS

Philippi was a Roman colony, and the chief city of one part of Macedonia, Ac 16:12, it is by Appianus called Datos which was its original name; and by Diodorus Siculus it is called Crenidae {a}, from, the fountains about it; and it took its name Philippi, from Philip king of Macedon, father of Alexander the great, who rebuilt and fortified it; near this place a famous battle was fought, and a victory obtained by Augustus Caesar and Mark Antony, over Brutus and Cassius; it is now called Chrixopolis, properly Chrysopolis, from the plenty of golden mines near it: here the apostle was directed by a vision, to go and preach the Gospel; and which was succeeded, to the conversion of Lydia, and the jailer, and their families; which laid the foundation of a Gospel church in this place, to whom this epistle is written; and which was written by the apostle when he was a prisoner at Rome, as many things in it show; for he more than once makes mention of his bonds, and of these being made manifest in Caesar's palace, and of some of Caesar's household sending their Christian salutations to this church: Dr. Hammond makes the date of this epistle to be the year 59, and Dr. Lightfoot places it in the year 60, and the sixth of Nero; the occasion of it was this, the Philippians, to whom the apostle was very dear, he being the first preacher of the Gospel to them, and the instrument of their conversion, hearing that he was a prisoner at Rome, send their minister and pastor Epaphroditus to him, to visit him, and by him a present to support him under his afflicted circumstances, and who related to him the case of this church; and at his departure he sent by him this letter; the design of which is, to express his love and affection to them; to give them an account of his bonds, and the usefulness of them, and how he was supported under them; to encourage them under all the afflictions and persecutions, they endured for the sake of Christ; to excite them to love, unity, and peace, among themselves; to caution them against false teachers, judaizing Christians, that were for joining Moses and Christ, law and Gospel, works and grace together, in the business of salvation; to exhort them to a holy life and conversation, and to return them thanks for their kind present.

{a} Vid. Ptolom. Geograph. l. 3. c. 13.

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS 1

This chapter contains the inscription of the epistle; the apostle's salutation of the Philippians; an account of his thanksgivings, prayers, and affection for them, and confidence of them; a narrative of his sufferings, and the use of them; and an exhortation to a conversation becoming the Gospel, to abide by it, and suffer cheerfully for it. The inscription is in **Php 1:1**, in which are mentioned by name the persons that subscribed the epistle, Paul and Timothy; and who are described by their character, servants of Jesus Christ; and also the persons to whom the epistle was sent, by the place of their abode, Philippi; the members of the church by their general character, saints in Christ Jesus; and the officers of it, by those that are peculiar to them as such, bishops and deacons: the salutation is in **Php 1:2**, and then follows a thanksgiving for them to God, which was made in prayer, and upon every remembrance of them at the throne of grace, and that for their constant fellowship in the Gospel, **Php 1:3**, and the apostle expresses his strong confidence of the good work of grace being begun in them, and of the performance of it, until the day of Christ; grounded upon a judgment of charity, and a belief of their being partakers of the same grace with himself, **Php 1:6**, and declares the most tender and affectionate love to them, for the truth of which he calls God to witness, **Php 1:8**, and as a proof of it, puts up several petitions for them; that they might have an increase of love, and spiritual knowledge, judgment, and sense, that so they might be capable of trying and approving things that differ, and which are the most excellent of them; that they might be sincere and harmless in their lives, and always doing good works in the strength of Christ, and to the glory of God, **Php 1:9**, next follows an account of his bonds and imprisonment, and the usefulness of them, as that they were for the further spread of the Gospel in many places, and even in Caesar's palace, **Php 1:12**, yea, by means of them several of the ministering brethren were the more emboldened to preach the Gospel without fear of men; though there was a difference among them, some preached Christ of envy, strife, and contention, thinking to add to the apostle's troubles, and others, of good will, and of love to the apostle, who they knew was set for the defence of the Gospel, **Php 1:14**, upon all which the apostle gives his sentiments, and makes his reflections, that whatever were the views of some men in preaching, it was, and ever would be, constant matter of joy to him that Christ was preached, **Php 1:18**, yea, he was satisfied, that the ill designed by some to him would be overruled for his good, by means of the prayers of the saints, and the supply of the Spirit; for he had a pure and well grounded hope and expectation, that he should never be brought to shame and confusion, but that Christ would be magnified in him living and dying; for he knew that both his life, and his death, would be gain to Christ, or that it would be for the glory of Christ for him to live, and his own gain should he die, **Php 1:19**, which put him in a strait what was most eligible in this case, whether, to live in the flesh, or depart out of the world; seeing to live in the flesh, and labour in the ministry, were fruitful and profitable, and more necessary and useful for the churches of Christ, and to die, and be with Christ, were better for himself, **Php 1:22**, but upon maturely weighing things on both sides, like one of a truly noble public spirit, he inclines to the former; nay, is persuaded, that he should continue longer to be an instrument of increasing the faith and joy of the Lord's people, which he knew would abound in Christ on his account, should he be restored again, **Php 1:25**, and then he concludes the chapter with an exhortation to the Philippians, to order their conversation agreeably to the Gospel of Christ, and to continue firm and unanimous in it, and use their utmost endeavours to keep it themselves, and spread it among others, **Php 1:27**, being not daunted and intimidated by the persecutions of men, which to the persecutors was a sign of perdition, looked darkly, and with an ill aspect upon them, but to the persecuted was a token that they had an interest in that salvation which is of God, **Php 1:28**, for as it is a gift of grace to believe in Christ, so likewise to suffer for him, **Php 1:29**, to which the apostle animates them by his own example, that which they were called unto being no other than what they had seen endured by him, and had heard concerning high, **Php 1:30**.

Ver. 1. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ,.... The apostle sets his own name first, as being not only superior to Timothy in age, in office, and in character, but the sole writer of this epistle. The reasons of his joining Timothy with him are, because he was with him when he first preached at Philippi, and so was known unto the Philippians, and respected by them; and because he was about to send him to them again, whose commendations he enlarges on in the epistle itself; and to let them see, that there was a continued agreement between them in affection and doctrine. It shows indeed great humility in the apostle to join with him one so young, and so much inferior to him on all accounts; though it must be observed, that Timothy was not a partner with him in composing the epistle; he only joined in the salutation to this church, and approved of the letter to it, and might be the amanuensis of the apostle; but had no hand in the epistle itself, which was dictated by Paul under divine inspiration. He chooses a character which agreed to them both; he does not say apostles, for Timothy was no apostle, though he himself was, but "servants of Jesus Christ"; not of men; nor did they seek to please men by preaching the doctrines and commandments of men, and which are suited to the carnal reasonings, lusts, and pleasures of men; for then the character here assumed would not belong to them: but servants of Christ; and that not in such sense only as all mankind are, or in right ought to be, since all are his creatures, and therefore ought to serve him; nor merely as all the saints in common are, being bought with the price of Christ's blood, and being effectually called by his grace, and so made willing to serve him from a principle of love, without servile fear, and with a view to his glory; but as ministers of the word, and preachers of the Gospel; they were his servants in the Gospel, they served him under the ministerial character, and as such were the servants of the most high God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; so that this title is far from being mean and despicable, it is high, honourable, and glorious.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons. The persons to whom this epistle is inscribed are here described by the place of their abode, Philippi, and by the various characters they bore in the church; which was at this time very numerous, consisting of many members, and of proper officers, and are both taken notice of here. The members are meant by "all the saints in Christ Jesus"; they were saints or holy persons, not by Moses and his law; not by ceremonial ablutions and sacrifices, which only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, but could not take away sin, or cleanse from it; nor by themselves and their moral righteousness; for though thereby men, nay outwardly appear holy and righteous, yet they remain inwardly unholy and impure; nor by baptism, which has no regenerating nor sanctifying virtue in it; if persons are not saints before that, they are never by it; it leaves them as it finds them, and neither takes away original or actual sin: but these were saints in and by Christ; they were become holy in consequence of being in Christ; men are first in Christ, and then saints in him; they are chosen "in him" before the world began to be holy, and in time are made new men, new creatures, are created in him unto good works by virtue of their being in him; hence he sanctifies his church and people by his blood, they being so nearly related to him, and interested in him, and he in them; hence they being first of God in Christ, he is made sanctification to them; and hence internal holiness is wrought in them from Christ, by his Spirit; which being begun is carried on, and will be performed until the day of Christ; and which was the happy case of these Philippians, as the apostle was confident of. The officers of this church were "the bishops and deacons". The "bishops" were the pastors, elders, and overseers of the church, for a bishop and an elder is one and the same; see Ac 20:17; where the elders of the church at Ephesus are called "overseers" or "bishops"; for the same word is used there as here; and the Syriac version here renders the word by avyvq, "elders": and they design no other than common and ordinary pastors; who have the name of elders from their age, gravity, and seniority; and that of bishops and overseers from the nature of their office, which is to feed, watch, inspect, and take the oversight of the flock, minister sound doctrine to them, and preserve them from error and heresies. It seems by this, and the instance of the church at Ephesus, that there were, and so may be, where there is necessity for it, more pastors or bishops than one in a church; unless it can be thought that there were more churches than one in each of these cities; or that the pastors of adjacent churches are here included; neither of which seem to be a clear case, but the contrary: but then these pastors or bishops were all upon an equal foot; one had not any authority or power over another, or more authority than another; they were not metropolitan or diocesan bishops, but pastors of a particular church; and were neither lords over one another, nor of God's heritage. The "deacons" were such as served tables, the Lord's table, the minister's table, and the poor's table; took care of the secular affairs of the church, received and disbursed moneys, kept the church's accounts, and provided everything necessary for its temporal good. The one sort of these officers were concerned with the souls and spiritual estate of the members of the church; the others with their bodies and temporal estate, by visiting the sick, relieving the poor, &c. and both these exhibit the true primitive plan of church offices and discipline; there being no other order of offices or officers, in a Christian church of divine institution, but pastors and deacons; whatever else is introduced is without warrant, and comes from the man of sin. These officers are mentioned by the apostle, not only to show his respect to them, but to observe to the members of this church, that they ought to esteem them highly for their works' sake; these being offices of great importance and usefulness to the church, which, by having such, was a truly organized church of Christ.

Philippians 1:2

Ver. 2. Grace be unto you,.... This form of salutation is used by the apostle in all his epistles; See Gill on "Ro 1:7";

Philippians 1:3

Ver. 3. I thank my God,.... After the inscription and salutation follows a thanksgiving, the object of which is God; to whom thanks is to be given at the remembrance of his name, and the perfections of his nature, and for all his mercies, temporal and spiritual. The apostle expresses his propriety and interest in him, calling him "my God"; thereby distinguishing him from all others, the nominal and fictitious gods of the Gentiles, and the idols and lusts of men's hearts; he was the God whom he served in the Gospel, by whom he was sent, and from whom he received all his possessions, and to whom he was accountable. He had a special, particular, covenant interest in him, had knowledge of it, and faith in it; and therefore could draw nigh to God with freedom, use confidence, plead promises, expect favours, and do all he did, whether in a way of prayer, or praise in faith, and therefore was acceptable unto God. This work of thanksgiving he was often employed in on account of these Philippians, even, says he,

upon every remembrance of you; that is, as often as I remember you, or make mention of you to God at the throne of grace, it being a customary thing with the apostle to mention by name the several churches, the care of which was upon him, in his prayers to God; see **Ro 1:9**; and so he used to mention this church; and whenever he did, it was with thankfulness. The Arabic version reads it, "for", or "concerning all your remembrance"; meaning of himself, and as if the sense was, that he gave thanks to God for their remembrance of him at all times, and particularly at that time, by sending him relief in his present circumstances. But the former sense is preferable.

Philippians 1:4

Ver. 4. Always in every prayer of mine for you all,.... The apostle was a praying believer, and a praying minister: notwithstanding all his gifts, and graces, and high attainments, he was not above the work and duty of prayer, and in which he was sensible he stood in need of the assistance and direction of the Spirit of God, As soon as he was converted he prayed, and continued to do so without ceasing, as he himself directs; he was constant and assiduous at the throne of grace, and was concerned for others, as well as himself, for all the churches, and for this church, and all the saints in it.

Making request with joy; for what God had done for them, and continued with them. Requests are to be made known to God with thanksgiving. When we request a favour of him, it becomes us to return thanks for what we have received from him. Thanksgiving is a branch of prayer; as we have always mercies to ask for, we have always mercies to be thankful for.

Philippians 1:5

Ver. 5. For your fellowship in the Gospel,.... Or "for your communication unto the Gospel"; that is, to the support of it. These Philippians were one of the churches of Macedonia the apostle so highly commends for their liberality in **2Co 8:1**; they had been very communicative to him, and those that were with him, from the beginning of the Gospel being preached to them: as the instances of Lydia and the jailer show, and which are taken notice of in this epistle, **Php 4:15**; And this same generous spirit still continued, of which their present by Epaphroditus was an evidence; and for this the apostle gives thanks, not only that they had an ability to support the Gospel, and assist Gospel ministers, but that they were willing to communicate, and did communicate, readily and cheerfully, largely and liberally; or this may intend their "participation in the Gospel", as the Arabic version renders it. The Gospel was in a very wonderful and providential manner brought unto them, and it was attended with mighty power to the conversion of them; they received it with joy and gladness, and cheerfully submitted to the ordinances of it; they had much light into it, and spiritual knowledge of it; and were made partakers of the blessings of grace, which are revealed and exhibited in it, and of the exceeding great and precious promises of it, for which the apostle gives thanks to God; for all this was from him, and a wonderful instance of his grace it was. Moreover, through the Gospel being thus brought unto them, and succeeded among them, they became a Gospel church, and had, through the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, fellowship one with another; yea, they had fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, unto which they were called by the Gospel; and in this they remained

from the first day until now; they continued in the Gospel which they were made partakers of, and in fellowship with one another, in breaking of bread, and in prayer, and in hearing the word, which they constantly attended to, and were blessed with communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, to that time; and therefore the apostle continued from the first of their receiving the Gospel, to that moment, to give thanks to God for them on that account: for this last clause may be connected with the words in **Php 1:3**, "I thank my God", as well as with those immediately preceding, "your fellowship in the Gospel"; and shows not only their perseverance in the Gospel, from the first to the present time, as the Ethiopic version renders it, for which he was abundantly thankful; but the continuance of his thankfulness on that account, from his first acquaintance with them to that time.

Philippians 1:6

Ver. 6. Being confident of this very thing,.... The reason of his thanksgiving, and of his making request with joy continually on the behalf of this church, was the confidence and full persuasion he had of this same thing, of which he could be as much assured as of any thing in the world:

that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ: by this good work is not meant the preaching of the Gospel among them, nor a Gospel church state set up in the midst of them: for though the preaching of the Gospel was a good work, and issued well in the conversion of many, in their edification and comfort, and which was still continued; and though a Gospel church state was erected among them, and was now flourishing, yet the apostle could not assure himself of the continuance of either of them, especially until the day of Christ; and both have been removed from thence many hundreds of years ago: nor is their liberal communication to the support of the Gospel intended; for though this was a good work, yet this was not wrought by God, but by themselves, and was not wrought in them, but done by them; nor their good lives and conversations. The Syriac version indeed renders it "good works", but these cannot be designed, for the same reasons as before; for though they are good things, and answer many valuable ends and purposes, yet they are external works done by men, and not internal ones wrought in them by God; wherefore by it is undoubtedly meant the work of grace upon their hearts, sometimes called the work of faith, because that is a principal part of it: this is God's work, and not man's, as may be concluded from the nature of the work itself, which is the transforming of a man by the reviewing of him, a regeneration, a resurrection, and a creation, and therefore requires almighty power; and from the condition man is in by nature, he is dead in sin, and has no power to act spiritually, and much less what is equal to such a work as this; he has no will, desire, and inclination to it, but all the reverse; and if he had, he could no more effect it, than the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision could cause themselves to live. This is the work of God. Sometimes it is ascribed to the Father, who regenerates, calls by his grace, reveals his Son, and draws souls unto him; and sometimes to the Son, who quickens whom he will, whose Spirit is given, whose image is stamped, and out of whose fulness grace is received; but more commonly it is attributed to the Spirit, who is a spirit of regeneration, sanctification, and faith: and this is a "good work", as it must needs be, since it is God's work; he is the efficient cause of it; his good will and pleasure, his grace and mercy are the moving cause of it, and not men's works; and his good word is the means of it. The matter of it is good; it is an illumination of the understanding, a subduing of the will, a taking away of the stony heart, and a giving of an heart of flesh, an infusion of spiritual life, a formation of Christ in the soul, and an implantation of all grace there: it is good in its effects; it makes a man a good man, and fits and qualifies him to perform good works, which without it he cannot do; it makes a man a proper habitation for God, and gives him meetness for the heavenly inheritance. And this is an internal work, a work begun "in" the saints; nothing external is this work; not an outward reformation, which, when right, is the fruit of this good work; nor external humiliation for sin; nor a cessation from the grosser acts of sin; nor a conformity and submission to Gospel ordinances; all which may be where this work is not; but it is something within a man; as appears from the names by which it goes; such as spirit, so called, because it is of a spiritual nature, wrought by the Spirit of God, and has its seat in the spirit of man; it is called the inward man, which is renewed day by day; a seed that remains in him, and a root which is out of sight, and oil in the vessel, the heart, as distinct from the lamp of an outward profession: as also from the several things, which, together, make up the subject of it; it is the understanding which is enlightened; the will which is subdued; the heart and inward parts in which the laws of God are written; the mind and conscience, which are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and cleansed; and the affections, which are set on divine objects. This is a begun work, and but a begun one. It may be said to be begun as soon as light is let into the soul by the Spirit of God; when it sees its lost state, and need of a Saviour, for as the first thing in the old creation was light, so in the new; when the fear of God is put into the heart, which is the beginning of wisdom; when love appears in the soul to God, to Christ, to his people, word, and ordinances; and when there are the seeing, venturing, and relying acts of faith on Christ, though there is a great deal of darkness, trembling, and unbelief; and when it is got thus far, and even much further, it is but a begun work; it is not yet finished and perfect: this appears from the several parts of this work, which are imperfect, as faith, hope, love, knowledge, &c. from the indwelling of sin, and corruption in the best of saints; from their various continual wants and necessities; from their disclaiming perfection in this life, and their desires after it. But the apostle was confident, and so may every good man be confident, both for himself and others, that God who has, and wherever he has begun the good work of grace, will "perform", finish it, or bring it to an end, as the word here used signifies: and this the saints may assure themselves of, from many considerations; as from the nature of the work itself, which is called living water, because it always continues, a well of it, because of its abundance, and is said to spring up to eternal life; because it is inseparably connected with it, where there is grace, there will be glory; grace is the beginning of glory, and glory the perfection of grace; this work of grace is an incorruptible seed, and which remains in the saints, and can never be lost; it is a principle of life, the root of which is hid in Christ, and that itself is maintained by him, and can never be destroyed by men or devils: and also from the concern God has in it, who is unchangeable in his nature, purposes, promises, gifts, and calling; who is a rock, and his work is perfect sooner or later; who is faithful, and will never forsake the work of his hands, and has power to accomplish it; and who has promised his people, that they shall grow stronger and stronger, that they shall not depart from him, and he will never leave them. Moreover, this may be concluded from the indwelling of the Spirit, as a spirit of sanctification, as the earnest and seal of the inheritance, and that for ever; and from the intercession and fulness of grace in Christ, and the saints' union to him, and standing in him; as well as front the impotency of any to hinder the performance of this work, as sin, Satan, or the world: to which may be added the glory of all the three Persons herein concerned; for if this work is not finished, the glory of God the Father in election, in the covenant of grace, in the contrivance of salvation, in the mission of his Son, the glory of Christ in redemption, and of the Spirit in sanctification, would be entirely lost: wherefore it may be depended on, this work will be performed wherever it is begun, and that "until the day of Jesus Christ"; meaning either the day of death, when Christ takes the souls of believers to himself, and they shall be for ever with him, when this work of grace upon the soul will be finished; for God, who is the guide of his people, will be their God and guide even unto death: or else the last day, the day of judgment, the resurrection day, when Christ shall appear and raise the dead, and free the bodies of the saints from all their bondage, corruption, vileness, and weakness, which will be putting the last and finishing hand to this good work; nor will even the bodies of the saints be quitted by the Spirit of God till this is done.

Philippians 1:7

Ver. 7. Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all,.... Some connect these words with **Php 1:3**; as if the apostle's sense was, that it became him to be thus affected to them, and mindful of them in his prayers, to make request for them with joy, and give thanks for their fellowship in the Gospel, and continuance in it; but they seem rather to refer to his confidence of the good work begun in them, being performed until the day of Christ, and which was but just and right in him to entertain and assert; and may be understood either of a judgment of faith, or a judgment of charity: in a judgment of faith the apostle might be confident, and so may every other man, that all that believe in Christ truly, and have a good work begun in them, that shall be finished; for nothing is more certain, nor is there anything that a man can be more confident of, than this, that he that believes in Christ shall be saved; and this the apostle was fully persuaded of with respect to everyone in this church, that was a believer in Christ; and in a judgment of charity, it was meet and proper, just and right, to think, judge, hope, and believe so of everyone of them, since there was nothing in their profession, conduct, and conversation, showing the contrary:

because I have you in my heart; or "you have me in your heart"; and either reading carries in it a reason why it was fit and right that he should so think and judge concerning them; because they were, as the Syriac version renders it, "put" or "laid" upon his heart; whenever he was at the throne of grace, his heart was enlarged on their account, his affections were wonderfully drawn out towards them, and they were ever in his mind, "both in [his] bonds, and in the defence of the Gospel"; whether in the prison, or in the pulpit, or whatever he was about in the cause or affairs of religion, they were in his heart and thoughts; from whence he concluded they must belong to God, the good work must be in them, and would be performed; it is a token for good when the Lord lays the case of any upon the hearts of his ministers, or any of his people; and also, because they had him in their hearts, they were affectionate to him, ever thoughtful and mindful of him; and had lately given a specimen of their love to him, as a servant of Christ, and prisoner of the Lord; and as they, so he might know, that they had passed from death to life, because they loved the brethren, and him in particular for his works' sake, who had been an useful instrument in the hand of God among them: and another reason follows,

inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace; or "partakers with me of grace"; meaning either that they were partakers of the same electing, redeeming, adopting, justifying, pardoning, and regenerating grace, as he was; had obtained the same like precious faith in Christ, and knowledge of him, as he had, though not to the same degree; and therefore might well be assured of the performance of the good work in them, having no more to doubt of their salvation than of his own: or rather by "grace", or as the Vulgate Latin version reads it, "joy", he designs his sufferings for Christ, and the sake of his Gospel; which he so calls, because it was given him by God, as a token of his favour, and a mark of honour and respect, to suffer for Christ, as well as believe in him; and therefore rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. Now these Philippians were partakers with him of this, both in his "bonds", by sympathizing with him, praying for him, sending relief unto him, and by suffering such like things themselves; and "in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel", whether by suffering, preaching, or writing; they stood by him, encouraged and assisted him, when others forsook him, and laid difficulties and discouragements in his way; on account of all which it was but meet and proper he should entertain such sentiments of them as before expressed.

Philippians 1:8

Ver. 8. For God is my record,.... Which is all one as swearing by him; it is in form of an oath, being a solemn appeal to him as the searcher of hearts, for the uprightness of his mind, the sincerity of his expressions, and the strength of his affections:

how greatly I long after you all; the common members, as well as the bishops and deacons, the weak as well as the strong believers, the poor as well as the rich; the apostle's respects were universal, and without distinction: he longed after their spiritual welfare, an increase of gifts and grace among them; he was their spiritual father, and he hankered after them; as parents after their children; he longed to see them, that he might enjoy their company and conversation, have communion with them, and impart some spiritual gift unto them: and this he did

in the bowels of Jesus Christ; not with an human and carnal affection, but with a Christian and spiritual one; with a love which came from Christ, and was in imitation of him, and on account of their being in him, loved by him, belonging to him, and being believers in him: it was in the most tender manner that he loved them, and was affected to them; the phrase denotes, that his love towards them was internal, in his heart, and was most tender and strong; and like to that tender concern Christ had for them, and which he stirred up in him.

Philippians 1:9

Ver. 9. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more,.... As a proof of his great affection for them, he puts up this petition on their account; which supposes that they had love, as they must certainly have, since the good work of grace was begun in them; for wherever the work of the Spirit of God is, there is love, which is a fruit of the Spirit; and where there is not love, there cannot be that good work; for it signifies nothing what a man says, nor what he has, nor what he does, if love be wanting; but this grace was in these Philippians, they had love to God, to Christ, to one another, to all the saints, and to the ministers of the Gospel, and particularly to the apostle, of which they had lately given him a proof: and it also supposes, that this grace, which was implanted in them in regeneration, was in exercise, which is meant by its "abounding"; it was not only a principle in the heart, and expressed by the mouth, but it was in action; it lay not in word, and in tongue, but showed itself towards the objects of it in deed and in truth; and it was in a very larger and lively exercise; it abounded, it flowed and overflowed; it rose up out of the heart, as water out of a fountain; it was as grace is said to be, a well of living water, springing up, and spreading itself various ways; wherefore the apostle did not pray that they might have love, nor merely that their love might abound, but that it might abound "yet", might continue to abound, that there might be no stop put to its flow and exercise, and so concerns the perseverance of it, and its actings; and that it might abound "more and more"; which regards the increase of it, and enlargement of its exercise. The Syriac version reads it, that it "may be multiplied and abound"; intimating, that spiritual love cannot be exceeded in; there is no going to an extreme in the exercise of it; natural love may, but not spiritual; God and Christ can never be loved too much, nor saints, as saints, though they may as men: wherefore let love abound ever so much to these objects, it is capable of abounding more and more, without any danger of excess; and it is to be wished for; for where it is ever so large and abundant in its actings, it is not perfect, nor will it be in this life; so that there is always room for such a petition; besides, the apostle knew how apt love is to grow cold, and saints to sink in their spiritual affections through the prevalence of sin, the cares of the world, and temptations of Satan: he adds,

in knowledge and [in] all judgment; that is, either with knowledge and judgment; and the sense be, that as their love abounded, so their knowledge might be increased, and their judgment in spiritual things be better informed and established. Some Christians are more affectionate, and less knowing; others are more knowing, and less affectionate; it is well when love and knowledge go and keep pace together: or it may be rendered "by knowledge", suggesting, that love is increased thereby, which is true; for the more saints know of God and Christ, the more they love them; and the more they know of one another's grace and experience, the more they love each other: by "knowledge" may be meant the knowledge of God; not that which is general, is by the light of nature, and is very obscure and insufficient to salvation; but that which is special, is of God in Christ, as a God gracious and merciful, as a covenant God and Father in him; and which at best is imperfect, and needs increasing: and also knowledge of Christ; not general, notional, and speculative, as that he is the Son of God, the Messiah, and Saviour of the world in common; but that which is special, spiritual, and saving; and which is a knowledge of approbation, whereby a soul approves of Christ above all others, as a Saviour; a fiducial one, whereby it trusts in him, and commits itself to him; an experimental and practical one, to which is joined a cheerful obedience to his commands and ordinances, and becomes an appropriating one; yet is in this life imperfect, and so needs increasing; and all means should be used in order thereunto: moreover, the knowledge of one another may be included; an increase of which is necessary to promote brotherly love, and make communion with one another delightful and profitable. By all "judgment", or "sense", as in the Greek text, is designed a spiritual apprehension, judgment, and sensation of things. The Syriac version renders it, "all spiritual understanding", and may intend a spiritual perception, and sense of the love of God shed abroad in the heart, an enlarged experience of the grace of God, and particularly faith, which is expressed by all the live senses; as by "seeing" the Son, the glory, fulness, suitableness, and excellency of him, and the unseen glories of another world; by "hearing" the joyful sound, the voice of Christ in the Gospel, so as to understand and distinguish it; by "smelling" a sweet smell in the person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, which are of a sweet smelling savour to faith, as are also the things of God, and of the Spirit of God; and by "tasting" how good the Lord is, how sweet is his word, and delicious his fruit; and by "feeling", laying hold on Christ, embracing and handling him, the word of life: and now a believer having these his spiritual senses exercised, he is capable of discerning between good and evil, and so of approving things most excellent; which is the end of this petition, as appears from the following words.

Philippians 1:10

Ver. 10. That ye may approve things that are excellent,.... Or "try things that differ". There are some things that differ one from other; as morality and grace, earthly things, and heavenly things, carnal and spiritual, temporal and eternal things, law and Gospel, the doctrines of men, and the doctrines of Christ; all which differ as much as chaff and wheat, as gold, silver, precious stones, and wood, hay, stubble. These are to be tried and proved; they are not to be received without distinction, but should be examined, which is right and best to be chosen and preferred; and to such trial and examination it is necessary that a man should be transformed, by the renewing of his mind, that he should have spiritual light, knowledge, and experience, have his spiritual senses exercised to discern the difference of things, and also the guidance, direction, and influence of the Spirit of God: and this trial must be made, not according to carnal reason, and the judgment and dictates of it; for the most excellent things are above it, and out of its sphere, and therefore judged foolish, and rejected by it; but according to the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, in the light of the divine Spirit, and with spiritual judgment and sense; when some things will be found excellent, as Christ, and the knowledge of him in his person, offices, grace, righteousness, blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction, and the several truths of the Gospel relating to peace, pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life; and of the several doctrines of the Gospel, some will appear in their nature and use more excellent than others, more grand and sublime; such as concern the sovereign and distinguishing grace of God, the glory of Christ, and the salvation of the elect; some being milk for babes, others meat for strong men. And these being tried and proved, first by the word of God, and then by the experience of the saints, are to be approved above thousands of gold and silver, and esteemed more than our necessary food; even the sincere milk of the word, as it is by newborn babes, as well as the strong meat of it by the adult, and all to be highly valued and abode by, and held fast.

That ye may be sincere; or "pure", as the Syriac version renders it; pure as the sun, discerned and judged by the light of it, as the word signifies, which discovers motes, faults, and flaws; in which, some think, is a metaphor taken either from the eagle, which holds up its young against the sun, and such as can bear the light of it she retains as her own, but such that cannot she rejects as a spurious brood; or from persons in business, who hold up the goods they are buying to the sun, to see if they can observe any fault in them: so such may be said to be sincere, or pure, who are pure in heart, life, and conversation, whose principles and practices will bear the test of light; such are sincere, who are like honey without wax, and fine flour without leaven, that have no mixture of corruption in doctrine, life, or manners; whose grace is genuine and right; whose faith is unfeigned; whose love to God, and Christ, and one another, is without dissimulation; whose hope is lively, and of a soul purifying nature, and is built on a good foundation; and whose repentance is attended with genuine effects, and proper fruits; whose principles are unmixed; who do not corrupt or adulterate the word of God, but desire and retain the sincere milk of it, and hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience; whose worship is also pure and spiritual, who worship God in spirit and truth, under the influence, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God, and with their whole hearts and spirits, and according to the truth of the Gospel; who keep the ordinances as they were delivered, without any human inventions, corruptions, and mixtures; who are sincere in their hearts, pure and sound in heart, simple, plain hearted, and single eyed; choose to be good, rather than seem to be so; whose desires after God, and divine things, and whose affections for them, are true and real, and proceed from the bottom of their hearts; and who have their conversation in the world by the grace of God, in simplicity and godly sincerity; and such the apostle wishes these saints to be, and adds,

and without offence until the day of Christ; to God, as considered in the righteousness of Christ, in which they are perfectly without offence, and will always continue so; or in their walk and conversation before God, in which, though they may in many things offend, yet not be guilty of any notorious iniquity, and much less of living in it: and to themselves, to their own consciences, exercising a conscience void of offence towards God and men; acting according to that light they have received, and those principles they have embraced and professed; desiring to be kept from all evil, that it might not grieve and wound them; and doing nothing in things of an indifferent nature, with offence, or against the dictates of conscience, and to the violation of it: and also to others, to Jew or Gentile, to the world, or to the church of God, by avoiding every thing that is offensive to either; not good things, but evil ones, and those that are indifferent; that peace may be preserved, and their own good may not be evil spoken of; that the children of God may not be grieved, staggered, and stumbled, nor sinners hardened, or have any occasion to blaspheme. The phrase denotes an harmless life and conversation, and a continuance in it to the end, to the day of death, or coming of our Lord, which is to be loved, longed, wished, and looked for, and to be always had in view; and that to engage to a becoming life and conversation, with sincerity, and without offence, since in that day all hearts and actions will be exposed and laid open.

Philippians 1:11

Ver. 11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness,.... Good works. Some think alms deeds, or acts of liberality and bounty, are here particularly intended; and that respect is had to the generosity of these Philippians to the apostle, and others: and true it is, that these are sometimes so called, as in **2Co 9:10**, but rather good works in general are meant, which are called "fruits", because, like fruits, they spring from a seed, even from the incorruptible seed of grace in the heart, implanted there in regeneration; and because they are owing, as the fruits of the earth are, to divine bounty and goodness, to the dews of grace, the rising and bright shining of the sun of righteousness, and to the south gale of the blessed Spirit, when brought forth aright; and also because they are pleasant and delightful, they are well pleasing to Christ, and are acceptable to God through Christ; and likewise, because they are profitable, not to God, but to men: and they are styled fruits of "righteousness", either of imputed righteousness, the righteousness of Christ imputed without works, the effects of which are good works; for nothing more strongly influences and engages men to the performance of good works, than a view of their free justification by the righteousness of Christ; hence there can be no justification by works, since these are the fruits and effects of justification, and not the cause: or of righteousness and holiness implanted in the soul by the Spirit of God, the new man, which is created unto good works, and in or unto righteousness and true holiness; and which naturally tends thereunto, and which stimulates and qualifies men for the performance of the same: or good works are so called, because they are performed by a righteous man; for as none but a good tree can bring forth good fruit, so none but a tree of righteousness can bear fruits of righteousness; or none but a righteous man do works of righteousness, which are truly such: or because they are such as are done according to the righteous law of God; for this is a necessary requisite of a good work, that it be according to the command and will of God; for otherwise, let it have never such a show of religion and goodness, it is no good work. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, read, "fruit", in the singular number, but other copies and versions, read, "fruits"; and the apostle wishes, that these saints might be "filled" with them; that is, that they might be like trees laden with fruit, which have fruit on every branch, bough, and twig; that they might abound in the performance of them, be ready to, and fruitful in every good work; not doing a few of one sort only, but performing continually all manner of good works; and so be like fruitful trees that yield their fruit in their season, and do not cease from so doing, but still bring forth fruit, and that in large quantities:

which are by Jesus Christ; who is the green fir tree, from whom all fruit, as of grace, so of good works, is found; for all good works, which are truly and properly so, spring from union to Christ, and are owing to his grace: souls are married to Christ, that they may bring forth fruit unto God; they are created in him unto good works, and are ingrafted in him the true vine; and through abiding in him, and deriving life, grace, and strength from him, bear fruit, which otherwise they could not do: without Christ no good work can be performed; it is through him, strengthening his people, they do all they do; for they are insufficient to do anything of themselves, but his grace is sufficient for them, and his strength is made perfect in their weakness. He is the exemplar and pattern, according to which they do their good works; and they are motives drawn and taken from him, from his love, from the doctrines of grace relating to him, which are the most powerful, and do most strongly work upon the saints to perform these things; and which, under his grace, and the influence of it, are directed

unto the glory and praise of God: they are done by believers in Christ, not in order to obtain eternal life and happiness for themselves, which they know is the gift of God, and entirely owing to his free grace and abundant mercy; nor to gain honour and applause from men, but to glorify God; who is glorified when his people bring forth much fruit, and which also is the occasion of others glorifying him likewise: and this end is necessary to a good work, that it be done to the glory of God; for if anything else is in view and not that, let it have ever such an appearance of a good work, it is none at all: and indeed, here we have all the requisites of a good work; as that it should be done according to the righteous law and will of God; that it springs from a principle of grace and holiness; that it be performed in the name, grace, and strength of Christ, and with a view to the honour and glory of God. The Ethiopic version reads, "in" or "to his [Christ's] glory, and the praise of God"; and the Arabic version thus, "to the glory of God and his praise"; and so the design of the clause is to show, either that both the glory of Christ and the praise of God are concerned in every truly good work; or that the glory of God secretly, and his praise openly, are to be sought therein; even all honour and glory, an abundance of it, and that continually; ascribing nothing to ourselves, but attributing all to him, acknowledging, when we have done all we can, we are but unprofitable servants.

Philippians 1:12

Ver. 12. But I would ye should understand, brethren,.... The church at Philippi having heard of the apostle's troubles, he was very desirous that they should have a true and right understanding of them, and especially of the use they had been of, and were like to be of more and more; and that partly that such as were weak among them might not be offended and staggered, and partly that all might be comforted; as also that they might be animated and encouraged hereby to endure, with patience and cheerfulness, whatsoever afflictions might befall them for the sake of Christ: his sufferings are more obscurely expressed in the next clause, and more clearly in **Php 1:13**,

that the things [which happened] unto me; by which he intends, not anything done by him, or his labour in the ministry, which had been greatly succeeded for the spread of the Gospel; as the Syriac version suggests, rendering the phrase, ylyd ynrewod, "that my work makes more abundant progress in the Gospel": but his sufferings on account of the Gospel, which though said to happen, were not things of chance but of appointment; for as all the sufferings of Christ the head, were by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, so are those of all the members of his mystical body, and of his ministers who are appointed to these things, and they for them; of which Christ has given previous notice, so that they do not come unexpected, but are looked for by them; nor are they over distressed with them, being supported with the presence, Spirit, grace, and favour of God; hence they can rejoice in them, in hope of the glory of God; and as the afflictions of Gospel ministers, the quality and quantity of them, are fixed and settled by divine appointment, and which accordingly come upon them, so the use of them is also determined, and which have their sure and certain effect as the apostle's had; for the very things by which men designed to have hindered the spread of the Gospel, he says,

have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel. The Gospel, though it is good news and glad tidings of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; yet is very disagreeable to carnal men, they are enemies to it; and do all they can to stop its progress, to shut the open door of it, and hinder its course by speaking reproachfully of it, and writing against it, and especially by persecuting its professors, and particularly its ministers; which oftentimes proves rather a furtherance than an hinderance of it; for hereby the Gospel, like gold and silver tried in the fire, shines out the more brightly, with more lustre and glory, and has the greater influence on the minds of men; persecution in one place has often been the means of carrying and spreading the Gospel in many others; see **Ac 8:1**; and has been God's ordinance for the conversion of multitudes of souls, where it has been the fiercest and hottest; insomuch that it became a common saying in primitive times, that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church; and hereby also the Gospel has been confirmed, and they that have embraced it have been the more established in it. The apostle's sufferings and bonds were for the confirmation and defence of the Gospel.

Philippians 1:13

Ver. 13. So that my bonds in Christ,.... What he had more darkly hinted before, he more clearly expresses here; the things that happened to him were his bonds; he was now a prisoner at Rome and in chains; though he had the liberty of dwelling alone in his own hired house, and of his friends coming to see him and hear him, yet he was bound with a chain, and under the care and guard of a soldier continually, who held one end of it. These bonds of his were not for debt, which he took care not to run into, but chose rather to work with his own hands, and so ministering to his own and the necessities of others, that he might not eat any man's bread for nought; nor for any capital crime, as murder, or theft, or anything that was worthy of death or of bonds; but his bonds were in Christ, or for Christ's sake, for professing Christ and preaching his Gospel; he was a prisoner in the Lord, or for his sake; see **Eph 4:1**. The use of his sufferings, which is more generally signified in **Php 1:12**, is here and in **Php 1:14** more particularly related, and the several instances of it given, these his bonds for the sake of Christ, he says,

are manifest in all the palace, and in all other [places], or "my bonds are manifest in Christ", as the words may be read; that is, by the means of Christ, he causing them to be taken notice of by men, and some of the first rank: by his bonds being manifest may be meant he himself who was bound; who by his bonds became known to persons, to whom in all probability he would otherwise have remained unknown; as to Felix, and Festus, and King Agrippa, and others in Caesar's court: or the Gospel for the sake of which he was bound; this was made manifest and became known, not barely notionally, but savingly and experimentally; and even Christ himself the substance of it, for whom he was laid in bonds, by this means came to be known, "in all the palace". The Arabic version reads it, "in the palace of the emperor". The word "praetorium", here used, signifies sometimes the judgment hall, or court of judicature belonging to the Roman governors, as Herod and Pilate; see Ac 23:35; and if it designs any such court at Rome, then the sense is, that through the apostle's being sent a prisoner to Rome, and his cause heard in the praetorium, or judgment hall, he and the cause of his bonds came to be known by the judges in that court; and which might be the means of the conversion of some of them: sometimes it signifies the general's pavilion in the camp, and sometimes the emperor's palace at Rome, he being the chief "praetor", or magistrate; and so here it seems to design Nero's house or court, where the Gospel, through the apostle's bonds, had made its way to the conversion of many there; see **Php 4:22**; and in all other places; or as the Arabic version renders it, "with all other men"; for it may be understood either of men or places; and that Christ and his Gospel came to be known through the apostle's sufferings, not only in the court of judicature where his cause was tried, or in Caesar's palace, and to many of his courtiers, but in other places in Rome, and parts of the empire, and to many persons there, both Jews and Gentiles; so that what was intended for the disadvantage of the Gospel, proved for the service of it.

Philippians 1:14

Ver. 14. And many of the brethren in the Lord,.... This is another instance of the usefulness of the apostle's sufferings, and another proof of their being for the furtherance of the Gospel; they were not only the means of the conversion of many that were without, but were very encouraging and strengthening to them that were within the church, and to many that were in the ministry; who are called "brethren", some real, others nominal; being partakers of the grace of God, at least in profession, or otherwise they would not have been fit to have been ministers of the word, nor members of a Gospel church, which was necessary to their being regularly sent forth; and whom the apostle calls and owns as brethren in the ministry, being sent forth by Christ, at least some of them, and having the same commission to preach the Gospel as he had; though they had not equal gifts and qualifications with him: he styles them brethren "in the Lord", to distinguish them from the Jews at Rome, who were his brethren according to the flesh; and to express their spiritual character and relation, and point out the work of the Lord, in which they were jointly concerned with him: now though not all the brethren, yet many of them were greatly affected with, and influenced by the apostle's patient and cheerfully suffering for Christ; insomuch that, as he says,

waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear; or as some read it, "waxing confident in the Lord"; connecting the phrase, "in the Lord", with this word, and so make the ground and object of their confidence the Lord; whose presence, power, grace, and Spirit, emboldened them the more by the apostle's bonds to preach the Gospel with courage and intrepidity; the Lord being on their side, and their helper, they feared not what men could do unto them; or else being animated by the apostle's patience and firmness of mind in suffering, and by the use they saw his bonds were of for the spread of the Gospel, they took heart and courage to "speak the word"; the word "of God", as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read; and so the Alexandrian, Claromontane, and two of Stephens's copies: meaning either the essential word, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the subject of their ministry; or the written word, the writings of Moses and the prophets, the books of the Old Testament, according to which they spoke; or the Gospel, called often the word, and sometimes with an addition, the word of truth, the word of faith, the word of reconciliation, the word of righteousness, the word of life, and the word of our salvation, from the several subjects of it: this they spake boldly and freely, as it ought to be spoken, and "without fear", not without fear and reverence of God, whose word it is; nor of themselves and their own weakness and inabilities, which cause much fear and trembling; but without the fear of man, which brings a snare; they had no regard to the threats and menaces, the reproaches and persecutions of men; none of these things moved them; they feared God and not man, and so went on boldly, preaching the Gospel; which is related with pleasure, as a fruit and effect of the apostle's sufferings, and which he doubted not would be very delightful to the Philippians to hear of.

Philippians 1:15

Ver. 15. Some, indeed, preach Christ,.... That is, some of them, as the Arabic version reads; some of the brethren, that were only so in profession; wherefore these could not be the unbelieving Jews, who preached the Messiah in general, but did not believe Jesus of Nazareth to be he, and opened the prophecies of the Old Testament relating to him, to the Gentiles; at which the apostle is by some thought to rejoice; inasmuch as this might be a means of giving light to them that were without any knowledge of the Messiah, and of leading them into an inquiry concerning him, whereby they might come to know the true Messiah, and believe in him: for these men were brethren, were members of the church, and whom the apostle owned as brethren in the ministry; neither of which could have been admitted had they been unbelievers to Jesus being the Messiah; nor would the apostle have rejoiced in their ministry; and besides, they preached the same Christ as other Gospel ministers, only on different principles and with different views; they preached the pure Gospel of Christ, they did not preach themselves, or any doctrines of their own, but Christ, nor the doctrines of other men; nor did they read lectures of mere morality, as the Gentiles did; nor were they legalists, as the Jews; they did not insist on the doctrine of works, or preach up justification and salvation by the works of the law, a doctrine the apostle always militated against, nor would he ever express any pleasure and satisfaction in it; nor did they preach a mixed Gospel, partly of grace and partly of works; they were not such as joined Moses and Christ, the law and Gospel, works and grace, together in men's salvation; nor did they corrupt and adulterate the word of God, or blend it with their own, or other men's inventions, but they preached Christ clearly and fully; he was the sum and substance of their ministry; they preached up his person as the true God, the Son of God equal with the Father, and possessed of all divine perfections; as truly man, having assumed a true body and a reasonable soul, and as God and man in one person; they preached him in all his offices, as prophet, priest, and King; justification by his righteousness alone, pardon through his blood, atonement and satisfaction by his sacrifice and salvation alone by him; they directed souls to him for all grace, and every supply of it; and assured them that though he died, he rose again from the dead, is ascended on high, is set down at the right hand of God, is an advocate with the Father, and ever lives to make intercession for his people; and when he has gathered them all in, he will come a second time to judge the world in righteousness, and take then, to himself, that they may be ever with him: and yet all this they did,

even of envy and strife; not of "envy" to Christ, whom they preached, but of envy to the apostle; they envied his gifts, his usefulness and success in the ministry; and he being now in bonds, they thought it a proper opportunity to exert themselves, and set up preaching Christ as he had done, in the clearest manner; hoping they should meet with the same success, and gain great honour and applause in the church, and even be able to transfer to themselves that glory which belonged to the apostle: as for their "strife" and "contention", of which they also preached Christ; it was not with other faithful ministers of the word, about the doctrines of the Gospel; for in these they were agreed with them, at least, in appearance and profession, and in their ministry ever did they raise strifes and contentions about words, from which comes envying among the brethren; for this would not have answered their ends, which were vain glory and popular applause; but they strove and contended one with another, who should preach Christ best and clearest, or with the apostle to get his glory and honour from him; they strove to out vie one another, and particularly him in preaching Christ: but there were others of the brethren who were truly such, who preached Christ as well as they, and upon better principles, and with better views;

and some also of good will; or "willingly" and "freely", as the Arabic version renders it; without any selfish end or sinister view of vain glory; not moved unto it by envy or ambition; not doing it in a contentious manner, and with an ill design; but of pure "good will" to the Gospel, having a real liking of it, an hearty love for it, a sincere desire to spread it, and promote the interest of a Redeemer, and the good of souls by it; having in a spiritual and experimental manner felt the power, and tasted the sweetness of it themselves: and so were inwardly affected and truly disposed to preach it, clear of all external motives and ambitious views; and as having a good will to the apostle himself, whose heart they knew was in the Gospel, though he was now hindered from the ministry of it; and therefore to the best of their abilities were desirous of supplying his place without the least injury to his character.

Philippians 1:16

Ver. 16. The one preach Christ of contention,.... That is, those that preached of envy and strife, an not of good will to Christ, to the Gospel, to the souls of men, or to the apostle; and though they preached Christ, yet

not sincerely or "purely"; not but that they delivered the sincere milk of the word, and preached the pure Gospel of Christ, without any mixture and adulteration; but then they did not preach it with a sincere heart, and a pure intention; for this respects not the doctrine they preached, but their views in it, which were not honest and upright; they did not preach Christ from a principle of love to his person, and from an inward experience of the power of his Gospel, and a zealous affection for it, and firm attachment to it, and with a view to the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the good of immortal souls; but were influenced by avarice, ambition, and envy: they had very evil designs upon the apostle,

supposing to add affliction to my bonds; imagining that by their free and bold way of preaching Christ openly in the city without control, and with impunity, it might be thought that the apostle did not lie in bonds for preaching Christ, but for some other crime; or otherwise why were not they laid hold on and put under confinement also? or thinking that by such numbers of them frequently preaching Christ about the city, it would either incense and stir up the Jews, Paul's accusers, to prosecute him more vigorously; or excite Nero to take more cognizance of his case, and either more closely confine him, or hasten the bringing his cause to a hearing, and him to punishment, as the ringleader of this sect, to the terror of others; but this they could not do without exposing themselves to great danger, unless they were determined to recant, as soon as they should be taken up; wherefore it should rather seem that their view was in preaching Christ to carry away the glory of it from the apostle, and take it to themselves; and fancying that he was a man of the same cast with them, desirous of vain glory, they thought it would afflict and distress him, he being in bonds, and not at liberty to exert himself, and make use of his superior gifts and abilities; but in this they were mistaken, he was so far from being made uneasy hereby, that he rejoiced at the preaching of Christ, let their intentions be what they would; and therefore he does not say that they did add affliction to his bonds; but they "supposed", or thought, that the method they took would do it.

Philippians 1:17

Ver. 17. But the other of love,.... Those that were truly brethren in the Lord, who had received the grace of God in truth, to whom the Gospel was come in power, and who had a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ, and of the mysteries of his grace; these preached Christ of love, "out of the love of him", as the Ethiopic version reads; that is, out of love to Christ, who to them was exceeding precious, altogether lovely, the chiefest among ten thousands, and their hearts being hot and burning with love to him, they therefore spoke of him with their tongues; and out of love to the Gospel of Christ, which with them was the pearl of great price, and every truth of it more valuable than gold, silver, and precious stones; and out of love to the church of Christ and the members of it, that their souls might be fed and nourished with the wholesome words of Christ, might be comforted with the doctrines of grace, and be established and built up in their most holy faith; and out of love to the souls of others, knowing their miserable estate by nature, and the danger they were in, and therefore preached Christ as the only way of salvation, whereby they could escape the wrath to come; and out of love to the apostle likewise, which the following clause shows;

knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel; meaning either that they knew he was a chosen vessel, to bear the name of Christ, and preach his Gospel in the world; that he was ordained and appointed a minister of it before the world was; separated to it from his mother's womb, and was called unto, and sent to preach it by Christ, and was set apart for it by the church; and was in a very eminent manner qualified to defend it, by preaching, disputing, writing, and suffering: or that they knew that he was laid, or lay, as the words may rendered, in prison, for defending the Gospel of Christ; yea, they knew that his lying in prison was in defence of the Gospel; and therefore, out of love to him, they joined issue with him to defend the Gospel; as he by suffering for it, so they by preaching it, which they knew full well would be matter of great joy to him.

Philippians 1:18

Ver. 18. What then? notwithstanding every way,.... What follows from hence? what is to be concluded from all this? what is to be thought or said in this case? this, that notwithstanding these brethren acted on those different principles, and with those different views:

whether in pretence: of love to Christ, zeal for the Gospel, and concern for the good of souls; though their real views were their own applause, and detriment to the apostle's character; or atleb, "by occasion", as the Syriac version renders the word, and as many interpreters think is the sense of it; occasionally preaching Christ, and making a handle of this to gain some other points, and get, advantages to themselves as some:

or in truth; as the hearty friends of Christ and the apostle did; they not only preached Christ who is the truth, and the truth as it is in Jesus, and every truth of the Gospel; and especially that fundamental one, salvation alone by a crucified Christ, and that without any adulteration or concealing any part of it; but with great purity of mind, with integrity of heart, and in the uprightness of their souls; as of sincerity, and in the sight of God; without selfish and sinister ends, and any ambitious views and evil designs: whether it was now in the one or the other way, upon the one or the other principles and views, the apostle stood thus affected; and these were his sentiments, reflections, and resolutions, that inasmuch as

Christ is preached; in the glory of his person, in the fulness of his grace, in the suitableness of his offices and great salvation, in the excellency of his righteousness, and the virtue of his blood, and the efficacy of his sacrifice;

and therein I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice; not that it was an indifferent thing with him, whether Christ was sincerely or hypocritically preached; or that he could take any pleasure in the manner of preaching, and in the principles and views of one sort of these preachers; for nothing was more disagreeable to him than envy and ambition, strife and contention, hypocrisy and insincerity; but he rejoiced in the subject matter of their ministry, which was Christ Jesus the Lord, whom he dearly loved, and whose interest, if served by any means, or any sort of persons, was a pleasure to him; and also in the effects and consequences of their ministry, the establishing of the saints, the conversion of sinners, the spread of the Gospel, and the enlargement of the interest of Christ: all which may be answered through the preaching of Christ, by evil designing men; for Christ and his Gospel are the same by whomsoever preached, and God may make use of his own truths to answer his ends and purposes, whoever are the dispensers of them, and though they themselves may be cast away, as Judas and others.

Philippians 1:19

Ver. 19. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation,.... Or "to salvation", to the salvation of others; that is, the preaching of Christ by these men, though designed by them to the hurt of the apostle; yet he knew that by the power and grace of God it should be made useful to the conversion, and for the salvation of many souls; and this was matter of rejoicing to him: or that affliction which they thought to have added to his bonds, should it befall him, he knew either from a divine revelation, or from the word of God in general, which gives reason to believe that all things work together for good to the saints, and from his own experience; that this also would turn to his advantage, and be for his good, either temporal, spiritual, or eternal, and would work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the world to come; and even in this world, he knew that every reproach, indignity, and suffering he endured, did but increase his fame and his honour, and make his name the more illustrious among the saints; which was the very thing these men envied in him, and strove to take from him; yea, he knew that the method they took would, quite contrary to their expectation, be the means of his enlargement and liberty, of his salvation and deliverance from his bonds: see **Php 1:25**; and which he believed would be brought about by the prayers of the saints, and particularly these Philippians:

through your prayer; as Peter was delivered out of prison through the incessant prayer of the church for him. The apostle knew that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much with God, and is very prevalent with him, and much more the prayers of a whole church; wherefore he frequently desired them for him on many accounts; and among others, that he might be delivered out of the hands of unreasonable men; and he firmly believed that he should be delivered by such means:

and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; which he had reason to expect and hope would be given him through their prayers for him; for though God has made large provisions for the supply of the wants of his people, in his Son and in his covenant, to be dispensed unto them by his Spirit, yet for these will he be sought unto by them: the supply of the Spirit is a supply of gifts from Christ, fitting and qualifying men for his service, and which are ministered by the Spirit to them severally as he will; and a supply of grace out of the fulness of Christ, which the Spirit of grace is the applier of; and a supply of strength from the same by him, to enable the saints both to do and suffer whatever he is pleased to call, them to; it is in short a supply of all their need, which the Spirit of God helps them to, according to the riches of grace, in glory by Christ: this the apostle knew would be sufficient for him, to support him under his present troubles, to deliver him out of them, and to fit him for whatever future work and service his Lord and master had for him to do.

Philippians 1:20

Ver. 20. According to my earnest expectation and [my] hope,.... These words are so placed as that they may refer both to what goes before and what follows after; and the sense be either that the apostle had earnest expectation and hope, even a strong confidence of his salvation, or deliverance from his confinement; and also of his having an interest in the prayers of the saints, and that hereby a supply of the Spirit would be given him; for as he knew and was sure that his God would supply the wants of others, he had great reason to believe he would supply his own; and especially since he had been told by Christ that his grace was sufficient for him: or as in connection with what follows; he had a full persuasion that he should not be put to shame on any account;

that in nothing I shall be ashamed; not of his hope, neither the grace of hope, which makes not ashamed; nor the object of hope, Christ Jesus; nor the thing hoped for, eternal life and happiness, or any of the above things about which this grace was conversant; nor of his reproaches and sufferings for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, which he esteemed as an honour to him, as jewels in his crown, as chains of gold about his neck, and as great riches; nor of the Gospel which he preached, so as to retract and deny it, drop the whole, or conceal any part of it, lay down his profession of it, or cease to preach it: "but" his earnest desire and his firm hope and faith were,

[that] with all boldness, as always; that as he had, so he should continue to use boldness in the exercise of faith at the throne of grace, come with freedom thither, and stand before God with intrepidity, through the blood and righteousness of his Son; and that as he had met with afflictions and sufferings for Christ's sake, with cheerfulness and an undaunted spirit, none of these things had moved him, so he believed he never should; and that as he had all along, throughout the whole course of his ministry, preached the Gospel with plainness, openness, and freedom, without any guise or reserve, and that with an holy courage and boldness in the face of all opposition;

[so] now also Christ shall be magnified in my body; for this being Christ's, his great concern was to glorify him in it; and though it was a poor, weak, and crazy body, yet rich treasure being put into this earthen vessel, Christ had been greatly magnified, extolled, and made very high in it; never was there, as the apostle, such a magnifier of Christ, by preaching him in the transcendent glories of his person as the Son of God, in the riches of his grace as Mediator, in all his offices of prophet, priest, and King; and particularly in the justification and salvation of men, where he made him to be all in all. Christ was also magnified by him, by his life and conversation, which influenced by his grace, was in obedience to his will, was directed to his glory, was as became his Gospel, and what adorned his doctrine in all things; and also by enduring such hardships and so great sufferings on his account; the power of Christ was greatly magnified in supporting him under them, and carrying him through them; and as this had been the case ever since he was in the ministry, it being the main thing he had in view, he had a well grounded hope and confidence, that it would ever be so:

whether [it be] by life or by death; that is, should he live longer, should he be delivered from his present confinement, and be spared a little longer among men, he comfortably assured Christ would be magnified by him in his body, and as long as he was in it; for his determination was to preach him and him only, to spend his life in his service, and to seek not his own things, but the things of Christ; or should he be put to death quickly by the order of Nero, he doubted not but Christ would have some glory thereby; he should die calling upon his name with fervency, professing his constant and unshaken faith in him, and sealing the Gospel by his blood, with the greatest cheerfulness.

Philippians 1:21

Ver. 21. For to me to live is Christ,.... Christ was his life "efficiently", the efficient cause and author of his spiritual life; he spoke it into him, produced it in him, and disciplined him with it: and he was his life, objectively, the matter and object of his life, that on which he lived; yea, it was not so much he that lived, as Christ that lived in him; he lived by faith on Christ, and his spiritual life was maintained and supported by feeding on him as the bread of life: and he was his life, "finally", the end of his life; what he aimed at throughout the whole course of his life was the glory of Christ, the good of his church and people, the spread of his Gospel, the honour of his name, and the increase of his interest; and this last seems to be the true sense of the phrase here;

and to die is gain; to himself, for death is gain to believers: it is not easy to say what a believer gains by dying; he is released thereby, and delivered from all the troubles and distresses of this life, arising from diseases of body, losses and disappointments in worldly things; from the oppressions and persecutions of wicked men; from indwelling sin, unbelief, doubts, and fears, and the temptations of Satan; he as soon as dies enters into the presence of God, where is fulness of joy, and is immediately with Christ, which is far better than being here, beholding his glory and enjoying communion with him; he is at once in the company of angels and glorified saints; is possessed of perfect holiness and knowledge; inherits a kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, and wears a crown of life, righteousness, and glory; enters upon an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled; is received into everlasting habitations, into mansions of light, life, love, joy, peace, and comfort; is at perfect rest, and surrounded with endless pleasures. This is the common interpretation, and is countenanced by the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, which read, "to die", or "if I die, it is gain to me": but instead of reading the words as consisting of two propositions, they may he considered as one, and the sense be either this; Christ is gain to me living or dying in life or in death; for Christ is the believer's gain in life; he is all in all, his righteousness, his wisdom, his sanctification, his redemption, his life, his light, his food, his raiment, his riches, his joy, peace, and comfort; he is everything to him he wants, can wish for, or desire: and he is his gain in death; the hope he then has is founded on him, and the triumphs of his faith over death and the grave arise from redemption by him; his expectation is to be immediately with him; and the glory he will then enter into will lie in communion with him, in conformity to him, and in an everlasting vision of him: or thus, for me to live and to die is Christ's gain; his life being spent in his service, in living according to his will, in preaching his Gospel, serving his churches, and suffering for his sake, was for his glory; and his death being for his sake, in the faith of him, and the steady profession of it, would be what would glorify him, and so be his gain likewise; and this seems to be the genuine sense of the words, which contain a reason of the apostle's faith, why he was persuaded Christ would be magnified or glorified in his body, whether by life or by death.

Philippians 1:22

Ver. 22. But if I live in the flesh,.... To be in the flesh sometimes signifies to be in a state of nature and unregeneracy, and to live in and after the flesh, to live according to the dictates of corrupt nature; but here it signifies living in the body, or the life which is in the flesh, as the Syriac version renders the phrase here, and as the apostle expresses it in **Ga 2:20**, and the sense is, if I should live any longer in the body, and be continued for some time in this world:

this [is] the fruit of my labour; or "I have fruit in my works", as the above version renders it:

yet what I shall choose I wot not, or "know not"; whether life or death; since my life will be for the honour and glory of Christ, and though a toilsome and laborious one, yet useful and fruitful: by his "labour", he means his ministerial work and service; the ministry is a work, a good and honourable work, and a laborious one. Christ's faithful ministers are labourers; they labour in the word and doctrine, both in studying and preaching it; and such a labourer was the apostle, who by the grace of God laboured more abundantly than others; the "fruit" of which was the conversion of many sinners, the edification, comfort, and establishment of the saints, their fruitfulness in grace and works, the spread of the Gospel far and near, the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ, and the weakening of Satan's kingdom, and the glorifying of Christ in his person, offices, and great salvation; all which was a strong and swaying argument with him, to desire to live longer in the body, and made it on the one hand so difficult with him what to choose: for as a certain Jew {b} says,

"the righteous man desires to live to do the will of God while he lives;"

but not with that view, he adds,

"to increase the reward of the soul in the world to come."

{b} Kimchi in Psal. vi. 5.

Philippians 1:23

Ver. 23. For I am in a strait betwixt two,.... Life and death; or between these "two counsels", as the Arabic version reads; two thoughts and desires of the mind, a desire to live for the reasons above, and a desire to die for a reason following. The apostle was pressed with a difficulty in his mind about this, as David was when he was bid to choose which he would, either seven years' famine, or three months' flight before his enemies, or three days' pestilence; upon which he said, I am in a great strait, 2Sa 24:14; to which passage it is thought the apostle alludes; the same word as here is used by Christ, Lu 12:50;

having a desire to depart; to die, a way of speaking much in use with the Jews, as expressive of death; thus Abraham is represented by them speaking after this manner on account of his two sons Isaac and Ishmael, the one being righteous and the other wicked {c};

"says he, if I bless Isaac, lo, Ishmael will seek to be blessed, and he is wicked; but a servant am I, flesh and blood am I, and tomorrow Mlweh Nm rjka, "I shall depart out of the world", or "die"; and what pleases the holy blessed God himself in his own world, let him do: rjpnvk, "when Abraham was dismissed" or "departed", the holy blessed God appeared to Isaac and blessed him:"

and again it is said {d},

"iniquities are not atoned for, until amlem rjptad, "a man is dismissed", or "departs out of the world";"

and once more {e},

"when a man Mlweh xzm rjpn, "departs out of this world"; according to his merit he ascends above;"

See Gill on "Joh 13:1"; the same word is used in the Syriac version here; death is departing out of this life, a going out of the body, a removal out of this world; it is like moving from one place to another, from the world below to the world above; with the saints it is no other than a removing from one house to another, from the earthly house of their tabernacle, the body, to their Father's house, and the mansions of glory in it, preparing for them. Death is not an annihilation of men, neither of soul nor body; it is a separation of them, but not a destruction of either; it is a dissolution of the union between them for a while, when both remain in a separate state till the resurrection: now this the apostle had a desire unto, which was not a new and sudden motion of mind; it was a thought that had long dwelt with him, and still continued; and this desire after death was not for the sake of death, for death in itself is a king of terrors, very formidable and terrible, and not desirable; it is an enemy, the last enemy that shall be destroyed; it is contrary to nature, and to desire it is contrary to a first principle in nature, self-preservation; but death is desired for some other end; wicked men desire it, and desire others to put an end to their lives, or do it themselves to free them from some trouble they are in; or because they are not able to support under a disappointment of what their ambition or lust have prompted them to: good men desire death, though always when right, with a submission to the will of God, that they may be rid of sin, which so much dishonours God as well as distresses themselves; and that they may be clothed upon with the shining robes of immortality and glory; and as the apostle here,

to be with Christ: for the former clause is to be strictly connected with this; he did not desire merely to depart this life, but chiefly to be with Christ, and the former only in order to the latter; the saints are in Christ now, chosen in him, set upon his heart, and put into his hands, are created in him, and brought to believe in him, and are in him as branches in the vine; and he is in them, formed in their hearts, lives and dwells in them by faith, and they have sometimes communion with him in private duties and public worship; he comes into them and sups with them, and they with him: but this is only at times, he is as a wayfaring man that continues but for a night; hence the present state of the saints is a state of absence from Christ; while they are at home in the body, they are absent from the Lord, especially as to his bodily presence; but after death they are immediately with him, where he is in his human nature; and their souls in their separate state continue with him till the resurrection morn, when their bodies will be raised and reunited to their souls, and be both for ever with him, beholding his glory, and enjoying uninterrupted communion with him; which will be the completion and full end of Christ's preparations and prayers: hence it appears that there is a future being and state after death: the apostle desires to depart this life, and "be", exist, be somewhere, "with Christ"; for the only happy being after death is with him; if souls are not with him, they are with devils and damned spirits, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: and it is also manifest that souls do not sleep with the body in the grave until the resurrection; the souls of the saints are immediately with Christ, in the enjoyment of his presence, in happiness and glory, hoping, believing, and waiting for the resurrection of their bodies; had the apostle known that he must have remained after death in a state of inactivity and uselessness, deprived of the communion of Christ and of his church, it would have been no difficulty with him to determine which was most eligible, to live or die; and it would have been much better for him, and more to the advantage of the churches, if he had continued upon earth to this day, than to be sleeping in his grave, senseless and inactive; whereas he adds,

which is far better: to depart and be with Christ is better than to live in the flesh in this sinful world, in the midst of a variety of sorrows and troubles, and in which communion with Christ is but now and then enjoyed, though such a life is better than sleeping in the grave; but upon a soul's departure and being with Christ, it is free from sin and sorrow, and in the utmost pleasure, enjoying communion with him without interruption; and this is better than labouring in the ministry: for though no man took more pleasure in the work of the ministry than the apostle did, and no man's ministry was more profitable and useful; yet it was toilsome, laborious, and wearisome to the flesh; wherefore dying and being with Jesus could not but be desirable, since he should then rest from his labours, and his works would follow him; at least it was better for him, and so the Syriac version adds, yl, "to me", far better for me; and so the Arabic: to live longer might be better and more to the advantage of Christ, the glory of his name, the good of his churches, it might be better for others; but leaving the world and being with Christ were better for him; and this was an argument swaying on the side of death, and inclining him to desire that, and made it so difficult with him what to choose.

{c} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 11. fol. 202. 3. {d} Zohar in Numb. fol. 51. 3. {e} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 2. 1.

Philippians 1:24

Ver. 24. Nevertheless to abide in the flesh,.... To continue in the body, not always, but a little longer,

[is] more needful for you; for their comfort, edification, and instruction, their further profiting: and increase in faith, and the joy of it. The Syriac version renders the words thus, "but business for you", or "a good will towards you compels me to abide in the body"; and the Arabic version thus, "notwithstanding I choose to remain in the flesh, and this I think very necessary for you"; so that upon the whole, the argument for living longer on consideration of glorifying Christ, and of being more useful to the good of souls, preponderated with him; inclined him to desire rather to live than die; though the latter was better for him, and more to his personal advantage; and thus, like a brave and good man, he prefers a public good to a private one.

Philippians 1:25

Ver. 25. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide,.... In the flesh, in the body, live a little longer in the world. These words must be understood either of a certain infallible knowledge, arising from a divine revelation, and a firm persuasion and confidence founded upon that which the apostle had, of his being delivered from his bonds, and spared a little longer for further usefulness among the churches; and accordingly some have thought that he was after this set at liberty, and travelled through several countries preaching the Gospel, and after that was committed to prison and suffered death; but of this there is no sufficient proof: or rather therefore of a conjectural knowledge arising from the present state of things, and his view of it; being willing to hope, and persuade himself that he should be delivered from his confinement, and his life be spared for the good of the interest of Christ, and the glory of his name; it being what his heart was set upon, and he was very desirous of:

and continue with you all; not only with the Philippians, but other saints, and other churches, who were dear to him, and he to them; though he may mean more especially these believers:

for your furtherance, or "profiting"; in divine and spiritual things, in the knowledge of Christ, and the truths of the Gospel:

and joy of faith; for the furtherance, or increase of that joy which faith is attended with, and which springs from it; for true solid joy springs from faith in the person, blood, righteousness, and atonement of Christ; and is what may be increased, and is often done by and through the ministry of the word, and the ministers of the Gospel; who do not pretend to a dominion over the faith of men, only to be helpers of their joy, as they sometimes are, as also of their faith, which as it comes by hearing is increased the same way. The phrase is Jewish; mention is made in the writings of the Jews {f} of atwnmyhmd hwdx, "the joy of faith".

{f} Zohar in Gen. fol. 113. 4. & in Exod. fol. 36. 4.

Philippians 1:26

Ver. 26. That your rejoicing may be more abundant,.... They had rejoiced greatly on his account already, blessing God that ever they had seen his face, or heard his voice; as they had great reason to do, he being the happy instrument of first bringing the Gospel to them, and of their conversion; and now he hoped he should be delivered out of prison, and see them again, that their joy might be increased and abound yet more and more, upon his deliverance, they had so earnestly prayed and so much longed for, and at the sight of him they so dearly loved: and yet to show that this their joy was not looked upon by him as a carnal one, or as arising from a natural affection, he observes that it was

in Jesus Christ; though they rejoiced in him as an instrument, and therefore he adds,

for me; yet it was on account of Jesus Christ, the subject of his ministry; their joy did not centre in the apostle, but had Christ for its object, whose person, righteousness, and salvation were held forth by him to their view and comfort; and though they would still more and more rejoice should he return to them once more,

by my coming to you again; yet still it would he in Christ, and because of the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, in which he should come to them.

Philippians 1:27

Ver. 27. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ,.... Or "behave as citizens worthy of the Gospel"; for not so much their outward conversation in the world is here intended, which ought to be in wisdom towards them that are without; so as to give no offence to any, and to put to, silence, the ignorance of foolish men, and them to confusion and: shame, who falsely accuse their good conversation in Christ; though this is what is highly becoming professors of the Gospel; and a moral conversation proceeding from principles of grace, under the influence of the Spirit of God, is very ornamental to the Gospel, being what that requires and powerfully teaches; but the conversation of the saints one with another, in their church state, is here meant. The allusion is to cities which have their peculiar laws and rules, to which the citizens are to conform; and such as behave according to them act up to the character of good citizens, and becoming, and worthy of the charter by which they hold their privileges and immunities. A church of Christ is as a city, and is often so called; the members of it are citizens, fellow citizens, one with another, and of the household of God, and have laws and rules according to which they are to conduct themselves; as such do who walk worthy of their calling, and becoming the charter of the Gospel by which they have and hold their freedom and privileges, as citizens of the new Jerusalem: and such a Gospel walk and conversation lies in such things as these; constant attendance on the preaching of the Gospel, and on the administration of Gospel ordinances; a strict observation of the rules of behaviour towards persons that have given offence, either in public or private; a just regard to the discipline of Christ's house, in admonitions; reproofs, censures and excommunications, as cases require; cultivating love, unity, and peace; keeping the ordinances as they were delivered; retaining and striving for the doctrines of the Gospel; holding the mysteries of it in a pure conscience, and adorning: it by a becoming life and conversation. This the apostle recommends as the "only", the main and principal thing these saints should attend to; and as what would give him the greatest joy and pleasure to hear of, whether he should ever come and see them again or not:

that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs. The Vulgate Latin version reads "hear of you"; and so do the Syriac and Ethiopic versions:

that ye stand fast in one spirit; meaning either the Gospel, which is the Spirit that giveth life; so called because it is from the, Spirit of God, and that by which he is conveyed into the souls of men, and contains spiritual things: this is one, uniform, consistent scheme of truths; find in this believers ought to stand fast, and should abide by it, and never give up, or part with anyone branch of it; and so to do is one part of their Gospel conversation; for the apostle in this and the following things points out the several parts of that conversation he exhorts to: or else the holy Spirit of God is intended, who as he is the beginner of the good work of grace on the soul, is he also who carries it on and will perfect it; and therefore to him should the people of God look for grace and strength, to enable them to stand fast in the profession of their faith, to hold fast without wavering, and to persevere to the end; who is that one Spirit by which they are baptized into one body, and become fellow citizens with the saints: or the spirit of love, unity, and peace is here meant: true Christian love makes the saints to be of one heart and soul; and in this single affection to one another should they stand fast; brotherly love should continue, and all endeavours be used to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; which is another branch of becoming Gospel conversation: the apostle adds,

with one mind, or "soul"; either signifying the same as before, or else that they should be of one judgment in the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, and abide therein; which is necessary to their harmonious walk and conversation together, as citizens of Zion:

striving together for the faith of the Gospel: by the "faith of the Gospel", may be designed the grace of faith, which comes by the Gospel; as the means of it, and by which the Gospel becomes useful and beneficial to the souls of men, and which has the Gospel for its object; for faith comes by hearing the word, and that is only profitable when it is mixed with it, and is that grace which gives credit to every truth of it, upon the testimony of divine revelation: now as the doctrine of faith is that which the saints are to strive for, the grace of faith is that by which they strive for it; by which they resist Satan, oppose false teachers, and overcome the world; and agreeably to this sense the Arabic version reads, "by the faith of the Gospel": though rather the doctrine of faith is intended, that word of faith, or faith, which is the Gospel itself, and which is often so called; and for this, in all its parts and branches, believers should strive; as for all those doctrines of faith, which concern the unity of God, the trinity of persons in the Godhead, the divine sonship of Christ, the proper deity and distinct personality of him and the blessed Spirit; and for all such doctrines as regard the state and condition of men by the fall of Adam, as that the guilt of his sin is imputed to all his posterity, the pollution of nature by it derived and communicated to them, that the bias of man's mind is naturally to that which is evil, and is averse to that which is good, and that he is impotent to everything that is spiritually good; and for all those doctrines which regard the free and distinguishing grace of God; of election, as eternal, personal, and irrespective of faith, holiness, and good works, as motives and conditions of it; of the covenant of grace, as from everlasting, absolute and unconditional, sure and firm; of redemption, as particular, and as proceeding upon a full satisfaction for sin to law and justice; of justification by the righteousness of Christ; of peace and pardon by his blood; of regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, as entirely owing to powerful and efficacious grace, and not to man's free will; of the saints' final perseverance, the resurrection of the dead, a future judgment, and eternal life, as the free gift of God: striving for these, as wrestlers do with one another, to which the allusion is, supposes persons to strive and wrestle against; and they are such as oppose truth and themselves unto it; as all such that deny divine revelation, or the authority of the Scriptures; that say that Jesus is not the Messiah; or that Christ is not the natural and eternal Son of God; or that deny his proper deity, his satisfaction and righteousness; that reject the efficacious grace of God, and the operations of the Spirit as unnecessary, to regeneration and conversion; that advance and plead for the purity of human nature, the power of man's free will, and ascribe justification and salvation to the works of men: all such are to be contended with and strove against, and that not with carnal weapons, but with spiritual ones, with the Scriptures of truth; by which a good warfare with them may be warred, and the good fight of faith fought with much success; and the whole requires great care and solicitude, earnestness, zeal, constancy, and courage: striving together for these, intends either striving with the apostle, and as they had him both as a fellow soldier, and for an example; or rather striving one with another, their ministers with their members, and their members with their ministers; the one by preaching, writing, and disputing more especially, the other by bearing a constant testimony to truth, and praying for the success of it; and both by dying for it when required; and so to do is to have the conversation as becomes the Gospel of Christ.

Philippians 1:28

Ver. 28. And in nothing terrified by your adversaries,.... Not by Satan, though a roaring lion, for Christ is greater than he; nor by the world which Christ has overcome; nor by false teachers, though men of art and cunning; nor by violent persecutors, who can do no more than kill, the body; let not the power, the rage, the cunning, or the violence of one or the other, move, discourage, or affright from a close attachment to the Gospel and the truths of it:

which is to them an evident token of perdition; when men wilfully oppose themselves to the truth, and show a malicious hatred to it, and hold it in unrighteousness, and either turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, or persecute it with rage and fury, it looks as if they were given up to reprobate minds, to say and do things not convenient; as if they were foreordained to condemnation; and were consigned over to destruction and perdition; and very rare it is, that such persons are ever called by grace:

but to you of salvation; when men are reproached and ridiculed, are threatened and persecuted for the sake of the Gospel, and are enabled to take all patiently, and persevere in the truth with constancy, it is a manifest token that such are counted worthy of the kingdom of God; that God has a design of salvation for them, and that they shall be saved with an everlasting one: so that the different effects of the opposition of the one, and the constancy of the other, are made use of as so many reasons why the saints should not be terrified by their enemies: it is added,

and that of God; meaning either that the whole of this is of God, as that there are adversaries, heretics, and persecutors; this is by divine permission, and in order to answer some ends and purpose of God, and the perdition or everlasting punishment of such persons will be righteously inflicted upon them by him; and that the constancy, faith, patience, and perseverance of the saints and their salvation, are all of God: or it particularly respects the latter, the salvation of those who persevere to the end; this is not of themselves, or merited by their constancy, patience, and perseverance, but is God's free gift. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, join this clause to the beginning of **Php 1:29**, thus, "and this is given of God to you", &c.

Philippians 1:29

Ver. 29. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ,.... For the sake of his Gospel, for the good of his interest, and the glory of his name. The Alexandrian copy reads, "to us it is given", &c.

not only to believe in him; for faith in Christ, which is not merely believing that he is the Christ, and all that is said of him, or all that he himself says, but is a seeing of the Son, a going to him, receiving, embracing, leaning, relying, and living upon him, as God's salvation, is a pure gift of grace; it is not in nature, nor in every man, and in whom it is, it is not of themselves, it is the gift of God; the first implantation of it, all its acts and exercise, its increase, and the performance of it at last with power, are all owing to the grace of God; and this is only given to the elect, for it is a distinguishing gift; it is given to them, and them alone, and, therefore called the faith of God's elect:

but also to suffer for his sake; for the sake of Christ personal; for the sake of

Christ mystical, for his body's sake the church; for the sake of his Gospel, and for the sake of his cause and interest in the world: now to suffer in name and character, in estate or person, not as an evildoer, but as a Christian, is a gift of God, as faith in Christ is; all the sufferings of the saints are appointed by God; their being called forth to suffer shame for the sake of Christ, is an high honour conferred upon them; all the grace and strength by which they are supported under sufferings for Christ are given to them; and all the glory consequent upon them is not merited by them, which are by no meant to be compared with it, but is the free gift of God through Christ. The same persons to whom it is given to believe in Christ, to them it is given to suffer for him; and they all do in some shape or another, though some more, others less; yet all are partakers of sufferings for Christ, and so are conformed to him their head, and hereby enter the kingdom: now all this is said, as containing so many reasons to encourage believers to have their conversation as becomes the Gospel of Christ, by a steady adherence to it, and a joint contention and striving for it, without being intimidated by their enemies.

Philippians 1:30

Ver. 30. Having the same conflict,.... For it seems that the Philippians were now under persecution for the Gospel of Christ; but this was no new or strange thing; it was the same the apostle was under formerly, and at that time:

which ye saw in me, and now hear [to be] in me; when he and Silas were at Philippi, and first preached the Gospel there, they were exceedingly ill used, and shamefully entreated; they were dragged to the market place, or court, were beaten and scourged, and put into the inner prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, Ac 16:19; of all this the Philippians were eyewitnesses, and to which he here refers when he says, which ye saw in me; and now he was a prisoner at Rome, as they had heard, hence he says, "and now hear to be in me"; for they had sent Epaphroditus to him with a present, as a token of their love to him, and to support him under his affliction; and which he mentions, in order to animate them to bear their sufferings patiently for Christ's sake, since the same were accomplished in him, as well as in the rest of their brethren and fellow Christians in the world.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Philippians 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS 2

This chapter contains several exhortations to unity, love, and concord, to humility, and lowliness of mind, and to a becoming life and conversation; and concludes with commendations of two eminent ministers of Christ, Timothy and Epaphroditus. The arguments engaging to harmony and mutual affection, are taken from the consolation that is in Christ, the comfort there is in love, the fellowship of the Spirit, and the bowels and mercies which become saints, **Php 2:1**, as also from the joy this would fill the apostle with; and the things exhorted to are expressed by likeness of mind, sameness of love, and unity of soul, **Php 2:2**, and the manner directed to for the preservation of such a spirit, is to do nothing in a contentious and vainglorious way, but in an humble and lowly manner, having a better opinion of others than themselves; and observing their superior gifts and graces, and so submit things unto them, **Php 2:3**, and which humble deportment is further urged, from the instance and example of our Lord Jesus Christ, **Php 2:5**, which is illustrated by the dignity of his person, the glorious divine form in which he was, and his indisputable equality with his Father, **Php 2:6**, and yet such was his great condescension, that he became man, appeared in the form of a servant, and was humbled to the lowest degree, even to die the death of the cross, **Php 2:7**, nevertheless God exalted him as man, and gave him superior honour to all creatures; and will oblige all to be subject to him, and acknowledge his dominion over them, to the glory of his divine Father, **Php 2:9**, hereby suggesting, that in like manner, though not to the same degree, such who are humble and lowly minded shall be exalted by the Lord; and then with the greatest affection to the Philippians, and with high commendations of them, the apostle renews his exhortation to do all the duties of religion with humility and modesty; knowing that all the grace and strength in which they performed them was owing to the internal operation of divine power in them, **Php 2:12**, and therefore should be done without murmuring against God, or disputings among themselves, **Php 2:14**, and next he proceeds to exhort to an unblemished and inoffensive life and conversation, as the end and issue of a modest and humble behaviour; and this he enforces on them, from the consideration of their relation to God, being his children, which would appear hereby; and from the wickedness and perverseness of the people they lived among; and therefore should be careful, lest they be ensnared by them, to the dishonour of God, and the grief of themselves; and from their character as lights in the world, whose business it was to hold forth the word of life; and also from this consideration, that it would be the joy of the apostle in the day of Christ, that his labours among them had not been fruitless, **Php 2:15**, yea, such was his love to them, that if even he was to die on their account, it would be matter of joy and gladness to him; and he desires they would express the same joy with him, **Php 2:17**, and though he could not be with them in person, he hoped in a little time to send Timothy, for this end, that he might know how things stood with them; which if well, would be a comfort to him, **Php 2:19**, the reasons why he picked Timothy as a messenger to them were, because there were none like him, for the sincere regard he had for their spiritual good, **Php 2:20**, and which is illustrated by the contrary disposition and conduct of others, who sought themselves, and not Jesus Christ, his honour and interest, **Php 2:21**, and besides, they themselves were witnesses of his filial affection to the apostle, and of his faithful service with him in the Gospel, **Php 2:22**, and then he repeats his hopes of sending him quickly, as soon as ever he knew how it would go with him, whether he should be released or suffer, **Php 2:23**, the former of which he had some confidence of, and that he should be able to see them himself in a little time, **Php 2:24**, however, in the mean while he thought it proper to send Epaphroditus to them, whom he commends as a brother of his, a co-worker, a fellow soldier, a messenger of theirs, and a minister to his wants, **Php 2:25**, the reasons of sending him were, because he longed to see them, and because he was uneasy that they had heard of his sickness; which was not only true that he had been sick, but his sickness was very dangerous, and threatened with death; however, through the mercy of God to him, he was recovered; and which was a mercy also to the apostle, who otherwise would have had an additional sorrow; wherefore another reason of sending him was, that upon the sight of him they might be filled with joy, and the apostle himself have less sorrow, **Php 2:26**, and then he exhorts them, that when he was returned to them, they would gladly receive him, and highly esteem of him; and the rather, since the dangerous illness he was attended with was brought upon him through his labours in the service of Christ, and also of the apostle, which he performed in their stead, even to the neglect of his health and life, **Php 2:29**.

Ver. 1. If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ,.... Or "exhortation", as the word is sometimes rendered; that is, either if there is any exhortation of Christ to love and unity, as there is in
Joh 13:34, and this is of any weight and value; or if an exhortation hereunto made in the name of Christ, by any of his ministers, messengers, and ambassadors, will be regarded, as it ought to be, then fulfil ye my joy, &c. **Php 2:2**, but as the word is frequently translated "consolation", as it is here in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; the sense may be either, if there is any comfort to be given to them that are in Christ Jesus, as every converted

man is, and as the apostle was, and especially to them that are afflicted and persecuted for the sake of Christ, are prisoners in him, and on his account, which was the apostle's case, then he desired they would attend to his following request: or if there was any consolation for them, and they had had any comfort in and from Christ; as all true, solid, strong, and everlasting consolation is only in Christ, and is founded on the greatness of his person, as God our Saviour, on the fulness of his grace, the efficacy of his blood, the perfection of his righteousness and sacrifice, and on the great salvation he is the author of: agreeably the Syriac version renders it, "if therefore ye have any consolation in Christ"; and the Arabic version, "if therefore ye enjoy any consolation from the grace of Christ"; which is displayed in the Gospel, as undoubtedly they did; and since then all this comfort was enjoyed by them, through the Gospel the apostle preached to them, the argument from hence must be strong upon them, to attend to what he desired of them:

if any comfort of love; in it, or from it; as from the love of God the Father, which is everlasting and unchangeable, and must be comforting, when shed abroad in the heart by the Spirit; and from the love of the Son, which is the same, and equally immovable and lasting, and which passeth knowledge; and from the love of the Spirit, in applying the grace of the Father, and of the Son, whereby he becomes a glorifier of them, and a comforter of his people; and from the love of the saints to one another, which renders their communion with each other comfortable, pleasant, and delightful: or the apostle's sense is, if they had so much love for him, as to wish and desire he might be comforted in his present situation, and that they would be willing to make use of any methods to comfort him, then he desires this; and this is all he desires, mutual love, peace, harmony, and agreement among themselves:

if any fellowship of the spirit: of the spirit of one saint with another; if there is such a thing as an union of spirits, an oneness of souls, a tasting of each other's spirits, and a communion with one another, then care should be taken to keep this unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, **Eph 4:3**: or if there is any fellowship of the Holy Spirit of God, any communion with him, any such thing as a witnessing of him to, and with our spirits, or as fellowship with the Father and the Son by him, and saints are baptized into one body by one Spirit, and have been made to drink of the same Spirit, 1Co 12:13, then it becomes them to be of one mind, and to stand fast in one Spirit, **Php 1:27**:

if any bowels and mercies; as there are in God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, moving towards the saints; or such as become Christians, who, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, ought to put on bowels of mercies to one another;

express the most hearty, inward, tender, and compassionate concern for each other's welfare, temporal and spiritual. Thus the apostle premises the most moving and pathetic arguments, leading on to the exhortations and advice, to love, harmony, and unity, given in **Php 2:2**.

Philippians 2:2

Ver. 2. Fulfil ye my joy,.... The Arabic version adds, "by these things"; meaning not his joy in the Lord Jesus Christ, which arose from views of interest his person, blood, and righteousness; which was had by believing in him, by enjoying communion with him, and living in hope of the glory of God; this in a fruit of the Spirit, **Ga 5:22**, and is called joy in the Holy Ghost; who, as he was the author, must be the finisher of it, and not the Philippians; much less does he mean that fulness of joy in the presence, and at the right hand of God in heaven, which he expected to have; but that which arose from the state, conduct, and mutual respect of the saints to each other; he had much joy in them, on account of the good work being begun, and carrying on in their souls; and because of their steadfastness in the faith, notwithstanding the persecutions they met with; and on account of their continued love to him, and the late fresh instance of it they had given, in sending their minister with a present to him, and who had given him a particular account of their affairs; but his joy was not yet full, there were some things which damped it; as the unbecoming walk and conversation of some, of whom he spoke with grief of heart, and tears in his eyes; and the inclination of others to listen to the false teachers, those of the concision, or circumcision; and the murmurings, disputings, and divisions of others among them, that were contentious and quarrelsome; wherefore to crown his joy, and fill it brimful, he signifies that their unity in affection, judgment, and practice, would do it, for so he explains it as follows:

that ye be likeminded, or "equally affected to one another"; that since they were but as one man, were one body, and had but one head, and one Spirit, that quickened and comforted them, and had but one faith and one baptism, they ought to be one in affection, practice, and judgment; this is the general, of which the following are the particulars:

having the same love; both for quality, being hearty, sincere, and unfeigned; and for quantity, returning the same that is measured to them; and with respect to objects, loving the same Christ, the same doctrines of Christ, the same ministers of the Gospel, and all the saints, rich and poor, high and low, weak or strong believers, without making any difference, by which means unity is preserved: for if one loves Christ, and another antichrist; one loves one doctrine, and another the opposite to it; one loves a teacher of the law, and another a preacher of the Gospel, one loves one Gospel minister, and one loves another, in distinction from, and opposition to the other; one loves the rich and not the poor, men of great gifts and grace, and neglects the meaner saints; when this is the case, they cannot be said to have the same love, nor can there be harmony, concord, and agreement:

[being] of one accord, or "being alike in soul"; having the same soul, not in substance and number, as some philosophers have asserted, but having the same affection, judgment, and will, as the first Christians are said to be of one heart and of one soul; or "unanimous" in their sentiments about doctrines and ordinances, being all of a piece in their practices; and agreeing in all their counsels, debates, acts, and votes, in their church meetings:

of one mind; in the doctrines of grace, in the ordinances of the Gospel; and in the discipline of the church: the means of preserving and increasing such affection, unity, and agreement, are next directed to.

Philippians 2:3

Ver. 3. [Let] nothing [be done] through strife,.... About words merely; otherwise they were to strive for the faith of the Gospel, the purity of Gospel ordinances, worship and discipline; but the apostle would not have them strive merely to carry a point determined on, without having any regard to reason and truth, or yielding to the infirmities of the weak; which is the case and conduct of contentious persons; than which nothing can be more contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, or the peace of churches: the apostle adds,

or vain glory; for where this is predominant, persons will always be singular in their sentiments, and never relinquish them, let what reason soever be given against them; nor will they give way to the judgment of others, but right or wrong will have their own wills; Diotrephes like, loving to have the preeminence in all things, **3Jo 1:9**; and such persons and conduct are very injurious to the comfort and harmony of the saints:

but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves; not as to the things of the world, in respect of which one man may be a better man than another, and he must know and think himself so; nor with respect to the endowments of the mind, and acquired abilities, which one man may have above another; and the difference being so great in some, it must be easily discerned, that one is more learned and knowing, in this or the other language, art, or science; but with regard to, grace, and to spiritual light, knowledge, and judgment: and where there is lowliness of mind, or true humility, a person will esteem himself in a state of grace, as the great apostle did, the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints; one in whom this grace reigns will pay a deference to the judgment of other saints, and will prefer their experience, light, and knowledge, to his own; and will readily give way, when he sees such that are of longer standing, of greater experience, and more solid judgment, as he has reason to think, than himself, are on the other side of the question; and so peace, love, and unity, are preserved. This grace of humility is an excellent ornament to a Christian, and wonderfully useful in Christian societies.

Philippians 2:4

Ver. 4. Look, not every man on his own things,.... Not but that a man should take care of his worldly affairs, and look well unto them, and provide things honest in the sight of all men, for himself and his family, otherwise he would be worse than an infidel; but he is not to seek his own private advantage, and prefer it to a public good; accordingly the Syriac version reads it, "neither let anyone be careful of himself, but also everyone of his neighbour"; and the Arabic version thus, "and let none of you look to that which conduces to himself alone, but let everyone of you look to those things which may conduce to his friend"; but this respects spiritual things, and spiritual gifts: a Christian should not seek his own honour and applause, and to have his own will, and a point in a church carried his own way, but should consult the honour of Christ, the good of others, and the peace of the church; he should not look upon his own gifts, he may look upon them, and ascribe them to the grace of God, and make use of them to his glory, but not to admire them, or himself for them, and pride himself in them, and lift up himself above others, neglecting and taking no notice of the superior abilities of others:

but every man also on the things of others; not on their worldly things, busying himself with other men's matters, and which he has nothing to do with, but on the sentiments and reasons of others; which he should well weigh and consider, and if they outdo and overbalance his own, should yield unto them; he should take notice of the superior gifts of others, and own and acknowledge them; which is the way to submit to one another in the fear of God, and to promote truth, friendship, and love.

Philippians 2:5

Ver. 5. Let this mind be in you,.... The Arabic version renders it, "let that humility be perceived in you". The apostle proposes Christ as the great pattern and exemplar of humility; and instances in his assumption of human nature, and in his subjection to all that meanness, and death itself, even the death of the cross in it; and which he mentions with this view, to engage the saints to lowliness of mind, in imitation of him; to show forth the same temper and disposition of mind in their practice,

which also was in Christ Jesus; or as the Syriac version, "think ye the same thing as Jesus Christ"; let the same condescending spirit and humble deportment appear in you as in him. This mind, affection, and conduct of Christ, may refer both to his early affection to his people, the love he bore to them from everlasting, the resolution and determination of his mind in consequence of it; and his agreement with his Father to take upon him their nature in the fulness of time, and to do his will, by obeying, suffering, and dying in their room and stead; and also the open exhibition and execution of all this in time, when he appeared in human nature, poor, mean, and abject; condescending to the lowest offices, and behaving in the most meek and humble manner, throughout the whole of his life, to the moment of his death.

Philippians 2:6

Ver. 6. Who being in the form of God,.... The Father; being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. This form is to be understood, not of any shape or figure of him; for as such is not to be seen, it is not to be supposed of him; or any accidental form, for there are no accidents in God, whatever is in God, is God; he is nothing but nature and essence, he is the to on, the Jehovah, I am what I am; and so is his Son, which is, and was, and is to come, the fountain of all created beings nor does it intend any outward representation and resemblance of him, such as in kings; who, because of the honour and dignity they are raised unto, the authority and power they have, and because of the glory and majesty they are arrayed with, are called gods: nor does it design the state and condition Christ appeared in here on earth, having a power to work miracles, heal diseases, and dispossess devils, for the manifestation of his glory; and so might be said to be in the form of God, as Moses for doing less miracles is said to be a God unto Pharaoh; since this account does not regard Christ; as he was on earth in human nature, but what he was antecedent to the assumption of it; or otherwise his humility and condescension in becoming man, and so mean, will not appear: but this phrase, "the form of God", is to be understood of the nature and essence of God, and describes Christ as he was from all eternity; just as the form of a servant signifies that he was really a servant, and the fashion of a man in which he was found means that he was truly and really man; so his being in the form of God intends that he was really and truly God; that he partook of the same nature with the Father, and was possessed of the same glory: from whence it appears, that he was in being before his incarnation; that he existed as a distinct person from God his Father, in whose form he was, and that as a divine person, or as truly God, being in the glorious form, nature, and essence of God; and that there is but one form of God, or divine nature and essence, common to the Father and the Son, and also to the Spirit; so that they are not three Gods, but one God: what the form of God is, the Heathens themselves {g} say cannot be comprehended nor seen, and so not to be inquired after; and they use the same word the apostle does here {h}: and now Christ being in this glorious form, or having the same divine nature with the Father, with all the infinite and unspeakable glories of it,

thought it no robbery to be equal with God; the Father; for if he was in the same form, nature, and essence, he must be equal to him, as he is; for he has the same perfections, as eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, immutability, and self-existence: hence he has the same glorious names, as God, the mighty God, the true God, the living God, God over all, Jehovah, the Lord of glory, &c. the same works of creation and providence are ascribed to him, and the same worship, homage, and honour given him: to be "in the form of God", and to be "equal with God", signify the same thing, the one is explanative of the other: and this divine form and equality, or true and proper deity, he did not obtain by force and rapine, by robbery and usurpation, as Satan attempted to do, and as Adam by his instigation also affected; and so the mind of a wicked man, as Philo the Jew says {i}, being a lover of itself and impious, oiomenov isov
einai yew, "thinks itself to be equal with God", a like phrase with this here used; but Christ enjoyed this equality by nature; he thought, he accounted, he knew he had it this way; and he held it hereby, and of right, and not by any unlawful means; and he reckoned that by declaring and showing forth his proper deity, and perfect equality with the Father, he robbed him of no perfection; the same being in him as in the Father, and the same in the Father as in him; that he did him no injury, nor deprived him of any glory, or assumed that to himself which did not belong to him: as for the sense which some put

upon the words, that he did not "affect", or "greedily catch" at deity; as the phrase will not admit of it, so it is not true in fact; he did affect deity, and asserted it strongly, and took every proper opportunity of declaring it, and in express terms affirmed he was the Son of God; and in terms easy to be understood declared his proper deity, and his unity and equality with the Father; required the same faith in himself as in the Father, and signified that he that saw the one, saw the other, Mr 14:61 **Joh 5:17**. Others give this as the sense of them, that he did not in an ostentatious way show forth the glory of his divine nature, but rather hid it; it is true, indeed, that Christ did not seek, but carefully shunned vain glory and popular applause; and therefore often after having wrought a miracle, would charge the persons on whom it was wrought, or the company, or his disciples, not to speak of it; this he did at certain times, and for certain reasons; yet at other times we find, that he wrought miracles to manifest forth his glory, and frequently appeals to them as proofs of his deity and Messiahship: and besides, the apostle is speaking not of what he was, or did in his incarnate state, but of what he was and thought himself to be, before he became man; wherefore the above sense is to be preferred as the genuine one.

{g} Socraticus, Xenophon, & Aristo Chius, apud Minuc. Felic. Octav. p. 20. & Hostanes apud Caecil. Cyprian. de Idol. van. p. 46. {h} Laertii proem. ad Vit. Philosoph. p. 7. {i} Leg. Alleg. l. 1. p. 48, 49.

Philippians 2:7

Ver. 7. But made himself of no reputation,.... Or "nevertheless emptied himself"; not of that fulness of grace which was laid up in him from everlasting, for with this he appeared when he was made flesh, and dwelt among men; nor of the perfections of his divine nature, which were not in the least diminished by his assumption of human nature, for all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily; though he took that which he had not before, he lost nothing of what he had; the glory of his divine nature was covered, and out of sight; and though some rays and beams of it broke out through his works and miracles, yet his glory, as the only begotten of the Father, was beheld only by a few; the minds of the far greater part were blinded, and their hearts hardened, and they saw no form nor comeliness in him to desire him; the form of God in which he was, was hid from them; they reputed him as a mere man, yea, as a sinful man, even as a worm, and no man: and to be thus esteemed, and had in such account, he voluntarily subjected himself, though infinitely great and glorious; as he did not assume deity by rapine, he was not thrust down into this low estate by force; as the angels that sinned when they affected to be as God, were drove from their seats of glory, and cast down into hell; and when man, through the instigation of Satan, was desirous of the same, he was turned out of Eden, and became like the beasts that perish; but this was Christ's own act and deed, he willingly assented to it, to lay aside as it were his glory for a while, to have it veiled and hid, and be reckoned anything, a mere man, yea, to have a devil, and not be God: O wondrous humility! astonishing condescension!

and took upon him the form of a servant; this also was voluntary; he "took upon him", was not obliged, or forced to be in the form of a servant; he appeared as one in human nature, and was really such; a servant to his Father, who chose, called, sent, upheld, and regarded him as a servant; and a very prudent, diligent, and faithful one he was unto him: and he was also a servant to his people, and ministered to men; partly by preaching the Gospel to them, and partly by working miracles, healing their diseases, and going about to do good, both to the bodies and souls of men; and chiefly by obtaining eternal redemption for his chosen ones, by being made sin and a curse for them; which though a very toilsome and laborious piece of service, yet as he cheerfully engaged in it, he diligently attended it, until he had finished it: so he was often prophesied of as a servant, in Isa 42:1, in which several places he is called in the Targum, axyvm ydbe, "my servant the Messiah": put these two together, "the form of God", and "the form of a servant", and admire the amazing stoop!

and was made in the likeness of men; not of the first Adam, for though, as he, he was without sin, knew none, nor did any; yet he was rather like to sinful men, and was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was traduced and treated as a sinner, and numbered among transgressors; he was like to men, the most mean and abject, such as were poor, and in lower life, and were of the least esteem and account among men, on any score: or he was like to men in common, and particularly to his brethren the seed of Abraham, and children of God that were given him; he partook of the same flesh and blood, he had a true body, and a reasonable soul, as they; he was subject to the like sorrows and griefs, temptations, reproaches, and persecutions; and was like them in everything, excepting sin: a strange and surprising difference this, that he who was "equal to God", should be "like to [sinful] men!"

Philippians 2:8

Ver. 8. And being found in fashion as a man,.... Not that he had only the show

and appearance of a man, but he was really a man; for "as" here, denotes not merely the likeness of a thing, but the thing itself, as in Mt 14:5, wv here, answers to the Hebrew
k, which is sometimes by the Jews {k} said to be Nwymdh Pk, and signifies likeness, and sometimes twtmah Pk, and designs truth and reality; which is the sense in which the particle is to be taken here: though he was seen and looked upon as a mere man, and therefore charged with blasphemy when he asserted himself to be the Son of God, he was more than a man; and yet found and known by men in common to be no more than a man, than just such a man as other men are; and so far is true, that his scheme, his habit, his fashion, his form, were like that of other men; though he was not begotten as man, but conceived in an extraordinary manner by the power of the Holy Ghost, yet he lay nine months in his mother's womb, as the human foetus ordinarily does; he was born as children are, was wrapped in swaddling bands when born, as an infant is; grew in stature by degrees, as men do; the shape and size of his body were like other men's, and he was subject to the same infirmities, as hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, grief, sorrow, and death itself, as follows:

he humbled himself: by becoming man, and by various outward actions in his life; as subjection to his parents, working at the trade of a carpenter, conversing with the meanest of men, washing his disciples' feet, &c. and the whole of his deportment both to God and man, his compliance with his Father's will, though disagreeable to flesh and blood, his behaviour towards his enemies, and his forbearance of his disciples, showed him to be of a meek and humble spirit; he humbled himself both to God and man:

and became obedient unto death, or "until death"; for he was obedient from the cradle to the cross, to God, to men, to his earthly parents, and to magistrates; he was obedient to the ceremonial law, to circumcision, the passover, &c. to the moral law, to all the precepts of it, which he punctually fulfilled; and to the penalty of it, death, which he voluntarily and cheerfully bore, in the room and stead of his people:

even the death of the cross; which was both painful and shameful; it was an accursed one, and showed that he bore the curse of the law, and was made a curse for us: this was a punishment usually inflicted on servants, and is called a servile punishment {l}; and such was the form which he took, when he was found in fashion as a man: this is now the great instance of humility the apostle gives, as a pattern of it to the saints, and it is a matchless and unparalleled one.

{k} Vid. Kimchi in Josh. iii. 4. {l} Lipsins de Cruce, l. 1. c. 12.

Philippians 2:9

Ver. 9. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him,.... The apostle proceeds to observe the exaltation of Christ, for the encouragement of meek and humble souls; that whereas Christ, who so exceedingly demeaned himself, was afterwards highly exalted by God, so all such who, in imitation of him, behave to one another in lowliness of mind, shall be exalted in God's due time; for whoso humbleth himself, shall be exalted. The first step of Christ's exaltation was his resurrection from the dead, when he had a glory given him as man; his body was raised in incorruption, in glory, in power, and a spiritual one; it became a glorious body, and the pledge and exemplar of the saints at the general resurrection, of which his transfiguration on the mount was an emblem and prelude; and he was also glorified then as Mediator, he was then justified in the Spirit, and acquitted and discharged from all the sins of his people, he took upon him and bore, having satisfied for them; and all God's elect were justified in him, for he rose as a public person, as their head, for their justification; yea, in some sense he was then glorified, as a divine person; not that any new additional glory was, or could be made to him as such; but there was an illustrious manifestation of his natural, essential, and original glory; he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead: the next step of his high exaltation was his ascending on high up to the third heaven, where he is made higher than the heavens; when he was accompanied by an innumerable company of angels, and by those saints whose bodies rose out of their graves after his resurrection; and was received and carried up in a bright glorious cloud; and passing through the air, the seat of the devils, he led captivity captive, and triumphed over principalities and powers, having before spoiled them on his cross; and then entering into heaven, he sat down at the right hand of God, which is another branch of his exaltation; and shows that he had done his work, and that it was approved and accepted of; and had that glory and honour bestowed on him, which never was on any mere creature, angels or men, to sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; which as it is the highest pitch of the exaltation of the human nature of Christ, so by it there is a most illustrious display of the glory of his divine person as the Son of God; who was with God, as one brought up with him from all eternity; and was so likewise when here on earth, but not so manifestly; but now he is openly and manifestly glorified with himself, with that glory he had with him before the world began: moreover, Christ's exaltation lies in his having the gifts of the Spirit without measure, to bestow on his ministers and churches, in all succeeding generations, for the carrying on of his interest, and the enlargement of his kingdom; in having all power in heaven and in earth, to complete his work and great designs; in having dominion and authority over all creatures and things, which are made to be subservient to the execution of his mediatorial office; and in having the right and power of judging the world at the last day, when there will still be a more glorious display of his eternal deity and divine sonship; for he will come in his Father's glory, and in his own, and with his holy angels: now the causes of Christ's exaltation are these: the efficient cause is God; though he made himself of no reputation, and humbled himself, these were voluntary acts of his own; yet he did not exalt himself, but God exalted him, even God the Father; with him the covenant of grace and redemption was made, in which glory was promised Christ, in consideration of his obedience, sufferings, and death; and which he prayed to him for, and pleaded for with him, having done his work; and which exaltation of Christ is always ascribed to God, even the Father; see **Ac 2:33**; the impulsive or moving cause, and indeed the meritorious cause, were the humiliation of Christ; because he, though he was originally so great and glorious, yet made himself as it were nothing, humbled himself to become man, and was contented to be accounted a mere man, and went up and down in the form of a servant; and because he became so cheerfully obedient to the whole law, and to death itself, for the sake of his people, and out of love to them, "therefore" God exalted him: the exaltation of Christ was not only a consequence of his obedience and death, and his humiliation merely the way to his glory; but his high and exalted estate were the reward of all this; it was what was promised him in covenant, what was then agreed upon, what he expected and pleaded, and had as a recompense of reward, in consideration of his having glorified God on earth, and finished the work he undertook to do: it follows as an instance of the exaltation of Christ,

and [hath] given him a name which is above every name. The Syriac version renders it, "which is more excellent than every name"; and the Arabic version translates it, "which is more eminent than every name"; and the Ethiopic version thus, "which is greater than every name": by which is meant, not any particular and peculiar name by which he is called; not the name of God, for though this is his name, the mighty God, and so is even the incommunicable name Jehovah, and which may be truly said to be every name; but neither of these are given him, but what he has by nature; and besides were what he had before his exaltation in human nature: it is true indeed, upon that this name of his became more illustrious and manifest unto men; it is a more clear point, that he is God over all blessed for evermore; and it will still be more manifest at his glorious appearing, that he is the great God, as well as our Saviour: to which may be added, that the name Jehovah in the plate of gold on the high priest's forehead, was set above the other word; so says Maimonides {m},

"the plate of gold was two fingers broad, and it reached from ear to ear; and there was written upon it two lines, "holiness to the Lord"; vdq, "holiness", was written below, and hlemlm hwhyl, "to the Lord", or "to Jehovah", above:"

whether here may not be an allusion to this, I leave to be considered: nor do I think that the name of the Son of God is meant; this is indeed a name of Christ, and a more excellent one than either angels or men have; for he is in such sense the Son of God, as neither of them are; but this is a name also which he has by nature, and is what he had before his exaltation; and was before this attested by his Father, and confessed by angels, men, and devils; though indeed upon his exaltation, he was declared more manifestly to be the Son of God, as he will be yet more clearly in his kingdom and glory: much less is the name Jesus intended, which was given him by the angel before his conception and birth, and was a name common to men among the Jews; but it seems to design such fame and renown, honour, glory, and dignity, as were never given unto, and bestowed upon creatures; as his rising from the dead as a public person, his ascending on high in the manner he did, his session at the right hand of God, his investiture with all gifts, power, dominion, authority, and with the judgment of the world; and whatever name of greatness there is among men or angels, Christ has that which is superior to it. Was a priest a name of honour and dignity among the Jews? Christ is not only a priest, and an high priest, but a great high priest; a priest not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek, **Heb 7:11**, and a greater than he himself. Is a king a great name among men? Christ has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Is a deliverer of a nation a title of great honour? Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour of men of all nations; nor is there any other name but his, that is given among men, whereby we must be saved. Is a mediator between warring princes and kingdoms accounted a name of greatness and glory? Christ is the one only Mediator between God and man, and of a new and better covenant. Are angels, seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, great names in the other world? Christ is the Angel of God's presence, an eternal one, the Angel of the covenant, the head of all principality and power. These are all subject to him, and he is set at God's right hand far above them.

{m} Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 9. sect. 1.

Philippians 2:10

Ver. 10. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,.... Which is to be understood, not of the outward act of bowing the knee upon hearing the name, and the syllables of the mere name Jesus pronounced; for in the bare name there can be nothing which can command such a peculiar respect; it was a name common with the Jews: Joshua is so called in **Heb 4:8**; and the name of Elymas the sorcerer was Barjesus: that is, the son of Jesus, Ac 13:6; Now, how monstrously ridiculous and stupid would it be, for a man, upon hearing these passages, and upon the pronouncing of this word, to bow the knee? Moreover, the words ought not to be rendered at, but "in the name of Jesus"; that is, in and by reason of the power, authority, and dignity of Jesus, as exalted at God's right hand, every creature is to be subject to him: add to this, that there are several creatures included in the following account, who, in a corporeal sense, have not knees to bow with, as angels, the souls of men departed, and devils; and therefore an external corporeal bowing of the knee cannot be meant. The Jews indeed, upon hearing the name Jehovah pronounced by the high priest, in the holy of holies, used to bow: they say {n},

"that the priests, and the people, that stand in the court, when they hear Shemhamphorash (i.e. the name "Jehovah") pronounced by the high priest, Myerwk wyh, "bowed", and worshipped, and fell upon their faces, and said, blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom, for ever and ever:"

though it can hardly be thought there is any reference to this here. But inasmuch as this action is a token of reverence, worship; and subjection, it is used for those things themselves; and the sense is, that Christ is exalted as before described, that every creature may give him reverence, worship, and adoration, submit and be subject to him, as all do, and shall, either freely or forcedly. Some really and heartily trust in his name, are baptized in his name, and ascribe honour, and glory, and blessing to him from their whole hearts; and others feignedly, and whether they will or not, are subject to him, and sooner or later shall acknowledge his authority over them: and he shall be owned to be Lord

of [things] in heaven: the angels there, and the souls of departed saints, with those who are already clothed with their bodies:

and [things] in earth; both good men, and bad men:

and [things] under the earth; or "in the abyss", as the Ethiopic version renders it; meaning either the devils in the bottomless pit; or rather the dead bodies of men in the grave, which shall come forth and stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

{n} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 66. 1. Maimon. Yom Haccippurim, c. 2. sect. 7.

Philippians 2:11

Ver. 11. And [that] every tongue should confess,.... Whether of angels or men, or of men of whatsoever nation. Confession is either true and hearty, as when the mouth and heart agree in confessing, and which is made only by true believers; or verbal only, or in mere outward form, and by force, as in hypocrites, wicked men, and devils themselves; who all either have confessed, or will confess,

that Jesus Christ [is] Lord: the holy angels confess him to be Lord, and their Lord truly, and are unfeignedly subject to him; and true believers heartily own him as their Lord, and cheerfully submit to his commands and ordinances; and the foolish virgins, and the goats on Christ's left hand, will, at the last day, call him Lord, Lord; and the worst of men, yea, even devils, will be obliged to own his lordship and dominion; which will be

to the glory of God the Father. The Syriac reads, "his Father", who has chose and constituted him as the Mediator, invested him with his office, ordained him to be Judge of quick and dead, and given him all power and authority, and exalted him at his own right hand; so he that honoureth the Son, honoureth the Father also. The Vulgate Latin version renders the words, "because the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father": being in the form of God, of the same nature and essence with him, and equal to him; as he will appear to be at his second coming, for then he will come in the glory of his Father.

Philippians 2:12

Ver. 12. Wherefore, my beloved,.... This is an inference from the instance and example of Christ; that since he, who was God over all, blessed for ever, made himself so low in human nature, in which he is now so highly exalted, having done the work and business he came about with such condescension, humility, and meekness; therefore it becomes those who profess to be his followers, to do all their affairs as men and Christians, with, and among one another, in all lowliness of mind. The apostle calls the saints here, "my beloved", he having a strong affection for them, which he frequently expresses in this epistle; and he chooses to make use of such an endearing appellation, that it might be observed, that what he was about to say to them sprung from pure love to them, and a hearty desire for their welfare, and from no other end, and with no other view; and to encourage them to go on in a course of humble duty, he commends them for their former obedience,

as ye have always obeyed; not "me", as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions supply; but either God, acting according to his revealed will, they had knowledge of; or Christ, by receiving him as prophet, priest, and King, by submitting to his righteousness, and the sceptre of his grace; or the Gospel, by embracing the truths of it, professing them, and abiding in them, and by subjecting to the ordinances of it, and doing all things whatsoever Christ has commanded: and this they did "always"; they were always abounding in the works of the Lord, doing his will; they abode by Christ, and continued steadfastly in his doctrines, and kept the ordinances as they were delivered to them, and walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless.

Not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence; which clause may either be referred to the foregoing, which expresses their obedience; and so signifies that that was carefully and cheerfully performed, not only while the apostle was with them, but now when he was absent from them, and much more when absent than present:, which shows, that they were not eye servants, and menpleasers, but what they did they did sincerely and heartily, as to the Lord: or to the following exhortation, that they would attend to it; not only as they had done when he was among them, of which he was witness, but that they would much more do so now he was absent from them, namely,

work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; which is to be understood not in such a sense as though men could obtain and procure for themselves spiritual and eternal salvation by their own works and doings; for such a sense is contrary to the Scriptures, which deny any part of salvation, as election, justification, and calling, and the whole of it to be of works, but ascribe it to the free grace of God; and is also repugnant to the perfections of God, as his wisdom, grace, and righteousness; for where are the wisdom and love of God, in forming a scheme of salvation, and sending his Son to effect it, and after all it is left to men to work it out for themselves? and where is the justice of God in admitting of an imperfect righteousness in the room of a perfect one, which must be the case, if salvation is obtained by men's works? for these are imperfect, even the best of them; and is another reason against this sense of the passage; and were they perfect, they could not be meritorious of salvation, for the requisites of merits are wanting in them. Moreover, was salvation to be obtained by the works of men, these consequences would follow; the death of Christ would be in vain, boasting would be encouraged in men, they would have whereof to glory, and their obligations to obedience taken from the love of God, and redemption by Christ, would be weakened and destroyed: add to all this, that the Scriptures assure us, that salvation is alone by Christ; and that it is already finished by him, and not to be wrought out now by him, or any other; and that such is the weakness and impotence of men, even of believers, to whom this exhortation is directed, that it is impossible for them ever to affect it; therefore, whatever sense these words have, we may be sure that this can never possibly be the sense of them. The words may be rendered, "work about your salvation"; employ yourselves in things which accompany salvation, and to be performed by all those that expect it, though not to be expected for the performance of them; such as hearing of the word, submission to Gospel ordinances, and a discharge of every branch of moral, spiritual, and evangelical obedience for which the apostle before commends them, and now exhorts them to continue in; to go on in a course of cheerful obedience to the close of their days, believing in Christ, obeying his Gospel, attending constantly to his word and ordinances, and discharging every duty in faith and fear, until at last they should receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls: agreeably the Syriac version renders the words, Nwkyyxd anxlwp wxwlp, "do the work", or "business of your lives"; the work you are to do in your generation, which God has prescribed and directed you to, which the grace of God teaches, and the love of Christ constrains to. Do all that "with fear and trembling"; not with a slavish fear of hell and damnation, or lest they should fall away, or finally miscarry of heaven and happiness; since this would be a distrust of the power and faithfulness of God, and so criminal in them; nor is it reasonable to suppose, that the apostle would exhort to such a fear, when he himself was so confidently assured, that the good work begun in them would be performed; and besides, the exhortation would be very oddly formed, if this was the sense, "work out your salvation with fear" of damnation: but this fear and trembling spoken of, is such as is consistent with the highest acts of faith, trust, confidence, and joy, and is opposed to pride and vain glory; see **Ps 2:11**; and intends modesty and humility, which is what the apostle is pressing for throughout the whole context; and here urges to a cheerful and constant obedience to Christ, with all humility of soul, without dependence on it, or vain glorying in it, but ascribing it wholly to the grace of God, for the following reason.

Philippians 2:13

Ver. 13. For it is God which worketh in you,.... Which is both an encouragement to persons conscious of their own weakness to work, as before exhorted to; see **Hag 2:4**; and a reason and argument for humility and meekness, and against pride and vain glory, since all we have, and do, is from God; and also points out the spring, principle, and foundation of all good works; namely, the grace of God wrought in the heart, which is an internal work, and purely the work of God: by this men become the workmanship of God, created unto good works, **Eph 2:10**, and are new men, and fitted for the performance of acts of righteousness, and true holiness; and this grace, which God works in them, is wrought in a powerful and efficacious manner, so as not to be frustrated and made void. The word here used signifies an inward, powerful, and efficacious operation; and the "king's manuscript", mentioned by Grotius and Hammond, adds another word to it, which makes the sense still stronger, reading it thus, "which worketh in you", dunamei, "by power"; not by moral persuasion, but by his own power, the power of his efficacious grace. The Alexandrian copy reads, dunameiv, "powers", or "mighty works": God works in his people

both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure; God works in converted men a will to that which is spiritually good; which is to be understood, not of the formation of the natural faculty of the will; or of the preservation of it, and its natural liberty; or of the general motion of it to natural objects; nor of his influence on it in a providential way; but of the making of it good, and causing a willingness in it to that which is spiritually good. Men have no will naturally to come to Christ, or to have him to reign over them; they have no desire, nor hungerings and thirstings after his righteousness and salvation; wherever there are any such inclinations and desires, they are wrought in men by God; who works upon the stubborn and inflexible will, and, without any force to it, makes the soul willing to be saved by Christ, and submit to his righteousness, and do his will; he sweetly and powerfully draws it with the cords of love to himself, and to his Son, and so influences it by his grace and spirit, and which he continues, that it freely wills everything spiritually good, and for the glory of God: and he works in them also to "do"; for there is sometimes in believers a will, when there wants a power of doing. God therefore both implants in them principles of action to work from, as faith and love, and a regard for his glory, and gives them grace and strength to work with, without which they can do nothing, but having these, can do all things: and all this is "of [his] good pleasure"; the word "his" not being in the original text, some have taken the liberty to ascribe this to the will of man; and so the Syriac version renders it, "both to will and to do that", Nwtna Nybud, "which ye will", or according to your good will; but such a sense is both bad and senseless; for if they have a good will of themselves, what occasion is there for God to work one in them? no; these internal operations of divine power and grace are not owing to the will of men, nor to any merits of theirs, or are what God is obliged to do, but what flow from his sovereign will and pleasure; who works when, where, and as he pleases, and that for his own glory; and who continues to do so in the hearts of his people; otherwise, notwithstanding the work of grace in them, they would find very little inclination to, and few and faint desires after spiritual things; and less strength to do what is spiritually good; but God of his good pleasure goes on working what is well pleasing in his sight.

Philippians 2:14

Ver. 14. Do all things,.... Not evil things, these are to be abhorred, shunned, and avoided, even all appearance of them, they are not to be done, even the sake of good; nor all indifferent things at all times, and under all circumstances, when the peace and edification of others are in danger of being hurt by so doing; but all good things, all that are agreeable to the righteous law and good will of God; all those good things which accompany salvation, as hearing the word, and attendance on ordinances: all church affairs relating to public worship, private conference, everything at church meetings, and which concern the discipline and laws of Christ's house; and all things that are civilly, morally, spiritually, and evangelically good; even all things that God would have done, or we would desire should be done to us by fellow creatures and fellow Christians: let all these be done

without murmurings; either against God and Christ, as if anything hard and severe was enjoined, when Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden light, Mt 11:30, and none of his commands grievous; and because their presence is not always enjoyed, and that communion and comfort in ordinances had, which may be desired: or against the ministers of the Gospel, in whose power it is not to give grace, comfort, and spiritual refreshment; any more than it was in Moses and Aaron to give bread and water to the Israelites in the wilderness, for which they murmured against them, and in so doing against God himself, Ex 16:2; or against one another, because of superior enjoyment in nature, providence, and grace; but all things, both of a moral, civil, and religious nature, with respect to God, and one another, should be done readily, freely, cheerfully, and heartily; and also without

disputings; or "without hesitations", as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it. Whatever appears to be agreeable to the will of God, should be done at once without dispute upon it, or hesitation about it, however disagreeable it may be to carnal sense and reason; the will of God is not to be disputed, nor flesh and blood to be consulted, in opposition to it; nor should the saints enter into any carnal reasonings, and contentious disputations, either at their public or private meetings, but do all they do decently, and in order, and in the exercise of brotherly love.

Philippians 2:15

Ver. 15. That ye may be blameless,.... This, and what follows, show the end to be answered, by observing the above exhortation. This respects not their being blameless in the sight of God, which the saints are not in themselves, being not without sin, though they are, as considered in Christ, clothed with his righteousness, and washed in his blood; but their being blameless before men: and this may be understood both actively and passively; actively, that they might be without blaming others; some are so unhappy in their disposition and conduct, as to be always finding fault with, and blaming all persons they are concerned with, and all things in them, and done by them, right or wrong, without any just reason; and this ought not to be, and may be prevented by doing all things, as before directed: or passively, that they might not be blamed by others justly; for no man can escape the blame and censure of everyone; our Lord himself did not, nor this our apostle; but doing, as before exhorted to, will, in a great measure, preclude any just reason for blame and complaint: it is added,

and harmless; that is, that they might be, and appear to be so; harmless as doves, in imitation of Christ, who was holy in his nature, and harmless in his conversation, as his followers should be; doing no injury to any man's person or property, behaving in an inoffensive manner to all men, to Jew and Gentile, and to the church of God: it follows,

the sons of God; not that they might be sons by so doing; but be "as the sons of God", as the Syriac version renders it, be like them, and behave as such; for they were the sons of God already; not by creation only, as angels, and all men are, not merely by profession of religion, but by adopting grace; they were predestinated to the adoption of children, and were taken into this relation in the covenant of grace, Christ had redeemed them from under the law, that they might receive this blessing, and it was actually bestowed upon them by him in conversion: but the sense is, that they might appear to be the children of God, by acting as becomes such; not that they might appear so to themselves, for they were openly and manifestly to themselves the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, and through the testimony of the Spirit, witnessing to their spirits that they were in such a relation to God; but that they might appear so to others, that they were the adopted sons of God, and also begotten again by him, and made partakers of the divine nature; by their being followers of God as dear children, and by their being obedient ones to him in all holiness and godly conversation, yielding a ready and cheerful obedience to his will, without repining at it, or disputing about it; and to be

without rebuke; not without the rebuke of their heavenly Father, for whom he loves he rebukes, and every son that he receives into his family he scourges and chastises, not in wrath and anger, or with rebukes of fury, but of love; but without the rebuke of men, both of the churches and ministers of Christ, whose business it is to reprove and rebuke, publicly and privately, as cases and their circumstances require; and of the men of the world, who when they have any occasion, make use of it to speak reproachfully, as a railing Rabshakeh did, when it is a time of rebuke and blasphemy, and to be shunned and guarded against as much possible: especially since the saints live

in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation: or age and generation, as every age is; saints are like lilies in the valleys, liable to be trampled upon by the foot of every wild beast; like roses among thorns, to be scratched and torn; and like Lots in the midst of Sodom, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: the whole world lies in sin, and the saints are enclosed on every side with wicked men. Philippi, where these saints lived, was a place of wickedness, and so no doubt was the whole region of Macedonia; the inhabitants were evil for the most part; their ways were crooked, and their works perverse, being contrary to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; and therefore the following exhortation to the saints there was very suitable.

Among whom ye shine; or "shine ye", as it may be rendered,

as lights in the world. This world is, in a moral sense, what the original chaos was in a natural sense, covered with darkness; the darkness of ignorance and unbelief, of impiety and superstition, has spread itself over the far greater part of the world; the men of it are children of the night, and of darkness; their works are works of darkness, and they are going on in darkness, not knowing where they are going. The saints are the lights of the world, they were once darkness itself, but are made light in and by the Lord; they are called into marvellous light, and are filled with light spiritual and evangelical; they are like the moon and stars, that give light to the world in the night; and as they receive their light from the sun, and communicate it to the world, so do the saints receive theirs from Christ, the sun of righteousness, and show it forth to others, both by doctrine and practice: or rather the churches of Christ are as candlesticks, in which the light of the Gospel is put, and held forth to men, as follows, see **Mt 5:14**.

Philippians 2:16

Ver. 16. Holding forth the word of life,.... By which may be meant, either Christ the essential Word, in whom life was, and is, and who is called the quick or living Word, **Joh 1:1**; and here may be styled the Word of life, because he has all life in him; he has a divine life in him, as God, he is the living God; and it is given to him to have life in himself, as Mediator, for all his people; and he ever lives as man to make intercession for them: and because he is the author of life in every sense, of natural life to all men, of spiritual and eternal life to as many as the Father has given him: or else the Gospel is intended, and the doctrines of it; and which are sometimes called the words of eternal life, and of this life, **Joh 6:68**; and that because they are a means of quickening dead sinners, they are a savour of life unto life, **2Co 2:16**, and the Spirit that giveth life, and of enlivening and comforting living saints; they treat of Christ who is the life; by the Gospel, life and immortality are brought to light; that gives an account of everlasting life; points out Christ as the way to it, shows that meetness for it lies in regenerating grace, and a right unto it is in the righteousness of Christ. Now this Word of life is held forth, partly by the preaching of it to a dark world, as by some; and partly by professing it publicly, as it should be by all who are enlightened with it; and also by living lives and conversations becoming and suitable to it.

That I may rejoice in the day of Christ. The apostle having observed the advantages that would accrue to themselves, and the benefit they might be of to the men of the world, by regarding the several exhortations he had given them, and which ends he mentions as reasons and arguments to enforce them, closes with taking notice of the use and service it would be to himself; it would give him joy and pleasure when Christ should come a second time to judge the world; and when dead in Christ would be raised, and set at his right hand, and these among the rest, to whom the apostle had been useful; and who continued to bear an honourable testimony in the world to Christ, and his Gospel, to the end:

that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain; being blessed with such converts under his ministry, as were a credit to religion, an honour to the Gospel, and a crown of rejoicing to him. He expresses his ministerial function, and the discharge of it, by running in a race, as the ministry of a person is sometimes called his course, Ac 13:25; in allusion to the Olympic games, which the apostle often refers to, when the conqueror obtained a crown; and it was enough for our apostle, and a crown of rejoicing to him, that his spiritual children walked in the truth, and as became it, to the end: and also by labour, and hard service, as the ministerial work is, when faithfully performed; and especially as his was, which was attended with so many difficulties, and yet with such constancy, diligence, and indefatigableness, all which was not in vain; and he could look back upon it with pleasure, when his followers stood fast in the faith, and adorned the doctrine of Christ.

Philippians 2:17

Ver. 17. Yea, and if I be offered,.... Or "poured out", as the drink offerings of wine or oil were; meaning the effusion of his blood, which he compares to a libation, or drink offering, which was poured upon the sacrifice; and the laying down of his life for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel: which he knew not how soon might be, though he was in some hopes of a deliverance for the present, and therefore speaks of it in an hypothetical way: yet he expected it sooner or later; and that whenever it was, it would be as the libation upon the offering.

Upon the sacrifice and service of your faith; he had been the means of bringing them to the faith of Christ, in which they were an offering acceptable to God, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost; see Ro 15:16; and should he suffer and shed his blood in the cause of Christ, it would be as a libation on them, as a sacrifice; it would be for the sake of preaching the doctrine of faith, by which they were brought to believe on Christ; and it would be for the further confirmation of their faith, and as a drink offering acceptable unto God; upon all which accounts it would be matter of joy to him.

I joy and rejoice with you all; meaning at his sufferings and death, and the advantages thereof to Christ, to his churches, and to himself.

Philippians 2:18

Ver. 18. For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me. He would not have them be sorrowful, should they hear of his death for the sake of the Gospel, and of his blood being poured out in such a cause, since it was as a libation on their faith, and for the confirmation of it, and would be gain to Christ, and his interest, and to the apostle also: and therefore they should be so far from indulging grief and sorrow on that account, that they should rather joy and rejoice with him, who was ready to be offered up, or poured out; since he had run out his race, and that not in vain, but to so good a purpose, and especially among them.

Philippians 2:19

Ver. 19. But I trust in the Lord Jesus,.... Or "hope"; not in himself, his wisdom, will, resolutions, and purposes; nor in an arm of flesh, in any human aid and power; nor in princes, nor in Nero, the Roman emperor, as expecting a release from bonds by him, when he could the more easily part with Timothy; but in the Lord Jesus, in the Lord whom every tongue shall confess to be so; and in that Jesus, in whose name every knee shall bow; who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and the only Saviour and Deliverer of his people; who has the hearts of all men in his hands, and all power in heaven and in earth: he hoped and trusted, that through the goodness and power of Christ, opening a way for him, he should be able

to send Timotheus shortly unto you; one that had known the Scriptures from his youth, and was very early converted to the Christian faith, was an eminent preacher of the Gospel, and well known to the Philippians. The apostle hoped to send him to them "shortly", in a very little time; this he said in order to encourage them, and thereby suggesting, that he thought his own deliverance was at hand: this hope did not arise from a sure and certain persuasion of the thing, but from love to these saints; he had a very great affection for them; he knew that a Gospel minister, and particularly Timothy, would be of great comfort and service to them; wherefore, from that love which hopes all things, he hoped he should, in a short time, be able to serve them in love that way: the end he proposed in it is next expressed,

that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state; not their worldly estate, their secular affairs, and whether they prospered in their trades and business, and increased in riches; nor their corporeal estate, or state of health, and whether they prospered in their bodies, not but that the knowledge of each of these would be welcome to the apostle; nor everyone's personal spiritual estate, what was the particular case and state of each member; for though it is the business of a pastor of a church to look diligently to the state of his flock, and learn the case of every particular member, the apostle could not be thought to come at such an exact knowledge of things, who had the care of all the churches upon him; but their ecclesiastical state, their church state in general; how the Gospel stood with them, and they in that; whether they held it fast, and strove for it, and what ground the false teachers got among them; how the ordinances of the Gospel were regarded and attended on by them; with what life and light, and liberty and zeal, their ministers preached the word; and what success they had to the conversion of sinners, and comfort of saints; and how they behaved towards them, in honouring, obeying, and submitting to them, and esteeming them highly for their works' sake; what an increase of gifts, grace, and numbers there was among them; and what harmony, love, peace, and concord subsisted between them; and what afflictions and persecutions they endured for the sake of Christ; and with what patience, faith, and cheerfulness they bore them. By the return of Timothy he hoped to have knowledge of these things, that so he might "also be of good comfort"; as they would be by the coming of Timothy to them, by his preaching among them, and relating to them the case and circumstances of the apostle, how cheerful he was under his afflictions, and of what use they were to the cause of Christ. The comfort and pleasure of Gospel ministers lie in the good of the churches of Christ; it puts them in good heart and soul, as the word here used signifies, when they hear of their steadfastness in the faith of Christ, of their love to one another, and all the saints, and of their patience under sufferings.

Philippians 2:20

Ver. 20. For I have no man likeminded,.... With myself; as my soul, so the Syriac version renders it. Timothy had a soul like the apostle's, which none that were with him, besides him, had; he was of the same judgment with him in the doctrines of grace; he received and preached the same Gospel as he did; he preached the same Christ, the Son of God, without yea and nay; he had the same affection for the apostle, and the souls of men, as he had; his soul was knit to his, and they had, as it were, but one soul in two bodies; he was engaged in the same work of the Lord, and pursued it with the same zeal and diligence: he was a second Paul in the pulpit; and there was no man likeminded as he, or so well disposed to the Philippians as he was, that had their good and cause at heart, and was willing to take so long a journey to do them service; for he had a particular affection for them, having been among them with the apostle, when he first preached the Gospel to them:

who will naturally care for your state. There were none like him that would; many were like the shepherds of Israel, that fed themselves and not the flock; but he was one that was diligent to know the state of the flock, and looked well to the herd under his care; and had an anxious care and solicitude, as the word signifies, for the good of souls. The work of a faithful Gospel minister is a work of care; one of his characteristics is, that he cares for the church of God; and though anxious care in worldly things is forbidden, yet in the affairs of Christ's house it is highly commendable, and especially when it is natural, or genuine and sincere, as Timothy's was: he had a sincere love, an hearty and real concern for their good; and which he would show by delivering to them the sincere milk of the word, by preaching the Gospel in the power and purity of it, with all sincerity and uprightness, with a single eye to the glory of Christ, and the good of their souls; and which is the apostle's reason for sending him unto them.

Philippians 2:21

Ver. 21. For all seek their own,.... Meaning not every individual, but the greatest part; and not merely such as were manifestly false teachers, but such as were with the apostle, as ministers of the word; and we may suppose him to be stripped, by one means or another, of the more valuable preachers of the Gospel, and to be in much such a case as he describes himself to be, in **2Ti 4:10**. He had none with him, excepting a very few, but such as he speaks of in the preceding chapter, that preached Christ of envy, strife, and contention; and these chiefly sought their own worldly interest and advantage; they sought great things for themselves, and looked every man for his gain from his quarter, Demas like, loving this present world, **2Ti 4:10**; they sought for dominion and authority over men, and their faith, to lord it over God's heritage, as Diotrephes, who loved to have the preeminence, **3Jo 1:9**; they sought for popular applause, for honour and glory of men, as the Pharisees of old did; and particularly their own ease and health, and did not choose to undertake such a fatiguing journey as from Rome to Philippi:

not the things which are Jesus Christ; they had no true regard to the Gospel of Christ, to the continuance, establishment, and spread of it in the world, or in any particular place; nor any hearty affection for the ordinances of Christ, and the retaining and preserving of them in their purity and simplicity; nor for the churches of Christ, and their spiritual good and welfare, as the Jews formerly, they cared not if the house of God lay waste, provided they dwelt in their ceiled houses; nor had they any concern for the honour and glory of Christ. But Timothy was a man of a quite different spirit and complexion; and which is another reason of the apostle's sending him to this place and people.

Philippians 2:22

Ver. 22. But ye know the proof of him,.... They had had an experiment of him, a trial of his spirit, and a proof of his gifts and ministry, when he was among them with the apostle at his first preaching the Gospel to them, to the conversion of Lydia, and of the jailer, and their households, which laid the foundation of a Gospel church state among them, see Ac 16:3. The Vulgate Latin version reads in the imperative, "know ye the proof of him"; but the former reading is to be preferred:

that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the Gospel; he served not the apostle, but with him; he served God as the apostle did, in the Gospel of his Son; he served Jesus Christ, whose Gospel he preached, the interest and spread of which he greatly laboured in with him, as a fellow servant or work fellow; see Ro 16:21; which expresses the modesty of the apostle, and the great honour put upon Timothy, and which was not abused by him; for as a son honours, obeys, and imitates his father, so did he honour the apostle, and give him all respect and reverence that was due to him on account of his office, age, and usefulness; and obeyed his orders cheerfully, going wherever he sent him, and doing whatever he bid him; and imitated him in his ministry, in his constancy, diligence, and zeal, having a true filial affection for him.

Philippians 2:23

Ver. 23. Him therefore I hope to send presently,.... For the reasons now given:

so soon as I shall see how it will go with me; whether he should be released from his bonds or not; whether he should live or die; whether he should be set free, or be called to suffer martyrdom for the sake of Christ; for he expected, that the matter would be determined in a very short time, when, be it at it would, Timothy would be spared.

Philippians 2:24

Ver. 24. But I trust in the Lord,.... The Syriac version reads, "in my Lord":

that I also myself shall come shortly: this he adds, partly to let them see, that he still retained a secret hope and persuasion in his own mind of a deliverance, though he could not be certain of it, how things would go with him; and partly, that he might not be thought to put them off with sending Timothy to them; for notwithstanding that, his intention still was, should he be released, to pay them a visit himself. The Alexandrian copy adds, "to you": so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Philippians 2:25

Ver. 25. Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus,.... In the mean while, before either he or Timothy could come to them. This man was sent by the Philippians to the apostle with a present, and had been detained at Rome for some time, partly through business, and partly through sickness; but now the apostle thought it proper, he being recovered, to send him to them, who was one of their ministers. One of this name lived at Rome about this time, and was one of Nero's freemen {o}, but not the same person here intended. This person has a very high character. The apostle calls him,

my brother; not in a natural relation, or as being his countryman, and so according to a way of speaking with the Jews, and himself, his brother and kinsman according to the flesh; for by his name and country he seems to be a Greek; but in a spiritual relation, being born again of the same Father, belonging to the same household and family, and also a brother in the ministry, as it follows:

and companion in labour; in the laborious work of preaching the Gospel. The ministry of the word is a work; it is called the work of the ministry; and it is a laborious one when diligently and faithfully performed: the apostle was a workman that needed not to be ashamed, a labourer in Christ's vineyard, and one that laboured more abundantly than others; and he was not alone, he had companions in his work, and this good man was one of them: he adds,

and fellow soldier; the life of every believer is a warfare; he is always engaged in a war with sin, and Satan, and the world; and is often called to fight the fight of faith, to contend earnestly against false teachers for the faith once delivered to the saints, to stand up for it, and fast in it; and is provided for with the whole armour of God, with weapons of warfare, which are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty, being enlisted as a volunteer under the great Captain of his salvation, Jesus Christ, under whose banner he fights, and is more than a conqueror through him: but though this is the common case and character of all the saints, it more especially belongs to ministers of the Gospel; who are set for the defence of it, and at the front of the battle, and are called to meet the enemy at the gate, and endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; and such an one was the apostle; and he had other fellow soldiers, and this person among the rest, who were engaged in the same common cause with the same enemies, under the same Captain, and would enjoy the same crown:

but your messenger; or "apostle"; meaning either that he was the pastor of them, a preacher to them, a minister among them; for ordinary ministers of the word were sometimes called apostles, as well as extraordinary ones, see Ro 16:7; or rather, that he was their messenger to him, to relieve, comfort, and assist him in his bonds; and such persons were called the messengers of the churches, **2Co 8:23**, which sense is strengthened by what follows:

and he that ministered to my wants: to his personal wants in prison, and to the wants of the poor saints, which the apostle reckoned as his own, and which he used to supply; but now not able; and to his ministerial wants, filling up his place in preaching the Gospel to the saints at Rome.

{o} Artinn. Epictet. l. 1. c. 1, 19, 26. & Aurel. Victor. Epitome Rom. Imp. in Nerone.

Philippians 2:26

Ver. 26. For he longed after you,.... This verse and **Php 2:28** contain the reasons of the apostle's sending him; and the first is, because he had a very vehement and longing desire after all of them; to see them, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions add, and as it is read in the Alexandrian and Claromontane copies, and in others: it was not the city of Philippi he longed to see, which might be his native place, nor his natural relations and family, but the church there; and not the officers of it only, the bishops and deacons, but all the members of it, rich and poor, high and low, strong and weak believers:

and was full of heaviness: almost pressed down, quite disheartened and dispirited, ready to sink and die away, not so much with his own disorder and illness, as with sorrow on account of the church at Philippi:

because that ye had heard that he had been sick: he understood that the news of his sickness had reached them, and he knew how distressing it would be to them, that it would cut them to the heart, and press them heavily, fearing they should never see his face, nor hear his voice more. We have here an instance of that mutual love, tender affection and sympathy; which were in the first churches, and what subsisted between ministers and people; see how they loved one another! but, alas! this first love is left.

Philippians 2:27

Ver. 27. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death,.... It was not a mere rumour, or a false alarm, but was real matter of fact; and it was not a light disorder, a slight indisposition, but a very dangerous illness; though the sickness was not unto death, yet near it. Good men, such as Christ loves, as he did Lazarus, are sometimes sick; though their spiritual diseases are healed, and their sins forgiven, so that the inhabitants of Zion have no more reason to say that they are sick, since Christ has took their infirmities, and bore their sickness, yet they are not exempt from bodily disorders; and which are sometimes such as bring them to the brink of the grave, and, as it were, to the gates of death; and such was this good man's case:

but God had mercy on him: his disorder was such as was out of the reach of man; his recovery was not by man, but by God, and owing to his power, mercy, and goodness; and indeed, whenever means are made rise of, and they succeed to the restoration of health, it ought to be ascribed to the divine blessing on them. The raising up of this man is reckoned as an instance of mercy to him; as it was the removing of a grievous affliction, a return of him to his delightful work of the ministry, and the continuation of an useful life for the good of others; and so a mercy to him, and to the churches of Christ, and to the apostle also: who adds,

and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow: one affliction added to another; the death of this brother of his to his bonds: moreover the sickness of this companion of his filled him with sorrow: and had he died, it would have greatly increased it, and which would have had a fresh addition by the loss this church would sustain, and the grief and trouble they would be overwhelmed with: grace, and the doctrine of grace, though they regulate the passions, and restrain them from immoderate sorrow, they do not destroy them, nor deny the proper use of them. Christianity does not countenance a stoical apathy, but requires and encourages a Christian sympathy, and directs us to weep with them that weep within due bounds.

Philippians 2:28

Ver. 28. I sent him therefore the more carefully,.... Or in greater haste, and as soon as possible:

that when ye see him again ye may rejoice; for this must greatly increase their joy, to see him again after he had been so long from them, and under such a disorder, which had made them to fear they should never see him more. The Syriac version renders it, "that when ye see him ye may rejoice again"; as they had done heretofore in his conversation and ministry, when among them:

and that I may be the less sorrowful; when he should hear of his safe arrival among them, and of their joyful reception of him to their mutual satisfaction, which would be an alleviation of the apostle's sorrow in his present circumstances; for he did not expect to be wholly without sorrow while in this life.

Philippians 2:29

Ver. 29. Receive him therefore,.... Not only into their houses, where such as bring the doctrine of Christ should be admitted, and not others; but into their bosoms, into their hearts and affections, as he had reason to believe they would, and into their fellowship and communion, and to the exercise of his office among them, as their minister: and that

in the Lord; or "for the Lord", as the Arabic version renders it; for his sake, because he was one that was put into the ministry by him, was called unto it, and qualified for it, and sent forth to minister in it by him; or in the name of the Lord, as an ambassador of his, as representing him, and as if he himself was present; for he that receives a minister of Christ, receives Christ himself; see
Lu 10:16;

with all gladness; with sincere affection, undissembled joy, perfect pleasure, and with all demonstrations of respect unto him, and delight in him at his return to them.

And hold such in reputation: account such as he precious and valuable; highly esteem of them for their works' sake; reckon them worthy of double honour, and give it to them.

Philippians 2:30

Ver. 30. Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death,.... Meaning either the work the church sent him about, and which he cheerfully undertook, and faithfully performed in carrying of a present to, and visiting the apostle in prison; which is called the work of Christ, because taken by Christ as if it was done to himself; and which, what with the long and fatiguing journey from Philippi to Rome, and the frequent visits he made to the apostle, and the much business besides that lay upon his hands, brought upon him a disorder which greatly threatened his life, and had almost issued in his death: or else the work of preaching the Gospel so frequently and constantly, and with so much zeal and vehemency at Rome; and which may be called the work of Christ, because it is what he calls unto, and qualities for, and in which his glory is greatly concerned; and on which this good man was so intent, gladly spending himself, and being spent in it, that he was brought through it to the brink of the grave:

not regarding his life: he was careless of that, and of his health; he loved not his life, nor counted it dear to himself; he rather despised it, and made no account of it, being very willing to deliver it up, and sacrifice it in such a good work and cause:

to supply your lack of service towards me; to do that in their name, room, and stead, which they, through absence, could not do in person; signifying, that what was done to him, and for him, was but a piece of service and duty to him; and which this good man and faithful minister and messenger of theirs having done for them to the hazard of his life, he ought therefore to be received by them with great joy, and to be highly honoured and respected.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Philippians 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS 3

In this chapter the apostle cautions the Philippians against false teachers, whom he describes as evil men, and exhorts them to walk as they had him, and other faithful ministers for an example. And whereas these judaizing teachers were for drawing them off from Christ, and weakening their joy and glorying in him, he exhorts them in the first place to rejoice in Christ, **Php 3:1**, and to beware of them, whom he describes as dogs, as evil workers, as the concision, **Php 3:2**, and opposes to them the characters of real saints, who are truly what they vainly boasted of, really circumcised persons in a Gospel sense, spiritual worshippers of God, joyful believers in Christ, and such as placed no confidence in outward things, **Php 3:3**, This the apostle illustrates in his own case, who had as much reason for trusting in such things as any man whatever, **Php 3:4**, of which he gives an enumeration in several particulars, **Php 3:5**, upon which he passes his judgment, and shows of what account, and in what esteem they were with him before, and now; that formerly they were reckoned gain, but now loss, **Php 3:7**, and which he explains as referring to every thing short of Christ, and in comparison of the knowledge of him, and which he preferred to everything; and this he confirms by his willingness to suffer the loss of all things for him; his ends in which were, that he might win him, and be found in him, without his own righteousness, that legal one the false teachers extolled, and with the righteousness of God which faith receives, and is the only justifying one; and that he might know more of him, feel more of his power, have more fellowship with him, and conformity to him, **Php 3:8**. His view in all which was, that he might attain to that glorious and happy state of the resurrection of the dead in Christ, **Php 3:11**, and to prevent mistakes, and anticipate an objection that might be made to him, as if he ascribed perfection to himself in the present state, he owns he had not arrived to it: all he meant was, that it was his desire to enjoy that which Christ had laid hold on him for; in order to which he buried in oblivion what was past, looking and pressing to things before hint, even to Christ, and the glory he was called unto, which was with him, **Php 3:12**. Next follow various exhortations, as to be of the same mind with the apostle in pressing after spiritual and heavenly things, to which he exhorts those that had a greater knowledge of them than others; and who, though otherwise minded, the apostle was persuaded would have, the same revealed to them, **Php 3:15**, and both he exhorts, according to their different attainments, to walk by the same rule and mind the same thing, **Php 3:16**, and to be followers of him, and of them that walked after his example, **Php 3:17**, giving this as a reason, because there were men who walked otherwise, to the grief of him, to the dishonour of Christ, and to their own shame and destruction, whom he describes as sensual and earthly minded men, **Php 3:18**, and to engage them to follow him, and others, and not such persons, he draws a character of them opposite unto them; that whereas the minds of those others were carnal and earthly, their minds were spiritual and heavenly;

their conversation was in heaven, and they were waiting for Christ from hence, **Php 3:20**, and the blessedness they expect from him then, is the resurrection of their bodies, which is illustrated by the efficient cause of it, Christ; the subject of it, their vile bodies, as in this lifts, and in the grave; the exemplar and pattern of it, the glorious body of Christ; and the means by which it will be effected, the energy and power of Christ, who is omnipotent, **Php 3:21**.

Ver. 1. Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord,.... The Syriac version reads, "in our Lord", i.e. Christ. The apostle seems as if he was about to conclude his epistle; and therefore, as if he was taking his farewell of this church, and giving his last advice to them, he exhorts them in a most affectionate manner, as his dear brethren in a spiritual relation, that they would make Christ their chief joy; that whatever sorrow they might have on account of his bonds, or the sickness of Epaphroditus, yet, he observes they had reason to rejoice in their Lord and Saviour; and however, it might be matter of rejoicing to them to hear of his hope of coming once more to them, and of the recovery of their minister and his return to them, yet Christ should be the principal object of their joy. A believer has always reason to rejoice in Christ; in the greatness of his person, he being in the form of God, and equal to him, and therefore able to save his to the uttermost by his obedience and death, and has interest enough in heaven to make his intercession prevalent and successful and power to keep safe all that are committed to him; and in the fitness of his person to be a Mediator, and daysman, to take care of things pertaining to the glory of God, and to make reconciliation for sin; and in the fulness of his person, he having all grace in him for his people, which is all theirs, and with joy may they draw water out of the full wells of salvation in him; and in the beauty of his person which surpasses all others, a sight of which fills with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. They may, and should rejoice, as they sometimes do, in his salvation; in the contrivance of it by infinite wisdom; in the impetration of it by himself; and in the application of it by his spirit; and that because hereby justice is satisfied, the law is magnified and made honourable, sin is finished, and an everlasting righteousness brought in. Also they are called upon to rejoice in his resurrection, which is for their justification; in his ascension, seeing he then received gifts for men; and in his session at the right hand of God, which is in their nature; and in his intercession which is to their advantage; and in all the relations he stands in to them, as head, husband, father, brother, friend; and in everything that is his, and that belongs unto him, as his Gospel, ordinances, ways, and worship.

To write the same things to you. The apostle finding he had more time on his hands, or fresh thoughts occurred to him, writes on, and makes an apology for writing the same things, which he had either wrote to other churches, or which he had delivered when first among them, or which he had since wrote to them. For sometimes it is necessary to say and write the same things over and over again, partly that they may be the better understood, and partly that they may be more strongly fixed in the memory; as also, that the saints may be the more established in the present truth: and which he says,

to me indeed [is] not grievous; or troublesome; he found no backwardness to it, nor sluggishness in it; he was not loath to do it, nor was it wearisome to him; or made him slothful, as the Arabic renders it; nor was he afraid to repeat what he had wrote, or again to warn them against false teachers, of whom he stood in no fear:

but for you [it is] safe; or "necessary", as the Vulgate Latin version reads, being a means of preserving them from the error of the wicked; for though the saints are safe in Christ, and can never finally and totally be deceived, yet the Gospel, and the frequent ministration of it, are a means of keeping them from the deception of evil men; for as the Syriac version renders it, "they make you more cautious"; when truth is repeated, and afresh confirmed, it guards against falling in with damnable heresies. And so the Arabic version renders it, "is a guard", or "garrison to you".

Philippians 3:2

Ver. 2. Beware of dogs,.... By whom are meant the "judaizing" teachers, who were for imposing the works and ceremonies of the law upon the Gentiles, as necessary to salvation; and they have the name retorted on them they used to give to the Gentiles; see Mt 15:26; nor should they think it too severe, since the Jews themselves say {p},

"the face of that generation (in which the Messiah shall come) shall he, blkh ynpk, "as the face of a dog"."

The apostle calls them so, because they returned to Judaism, as the dog to its vomit, **2Pe 2:22**; and because of the uncleanness in which many of them lived, and the impudence they were guilty of in transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ, and putting themselves upon an equal foot with them; as also for their calumny and detraction, their wrangling with the apostles, snarling at their doctrines, and biting them with the devouring words of reproach and scandal: likewise, they may be styled dogs for their covetousness, being such greedy ones as in Isa 56:10, with feigned words making merchandise of men; and for their love of their, bellies, which they served, and not Christ, and made a god of, **Php 3:19**. Moreover, because they were without, as dogs are, Re 22:15; having gone out from the communion of the saints, because they were not of them; or if among them, yet not true members of Christ, nor of his mystical body; all which are so many arguments why the saints should beware of them, and why their persons, conversation, and doctrine should be avoided.

Beware of evil workers: meaning the same persons, who were deceitful workers, did the work of the Lord unfaithfully, walked in craftiness, and handled the word of God deceitfully, endeavoured to subvert the Gospel of Christ, and the faith of men in it; who worked from bad principles, and with evil views; and notwithstanding their large pretensions to good works, teaching that justification and salvation were by them, which notion the apostle tacitly refers to in this character; yet were of bad a character, and such as Christ will reject another day as workers of iniquity; a character they deservedly bear, if there was no other reason for it than their preaching the doctrine of salvation by men's own works of righteousness, and who, and their ministry, are by all means to be shunned.

Beware of the concision; the men of the circumcision, as the Arabic version renders it; they chose to be called so, but the apostle would not give them that name, but calls them the "concision"; or "the concision of the flesh", as the Syriac version renders it; referring either to the cuttings in the flesh, forbidden Le 21:5; or to the circumcision of the flesh rather, which they valued themselves upon, and were for introducing among the Gentiles, whereby they made sad divisions, and cutting work among the churches; and were some of them at least "cut" off, as the Ethiopic version renders it, from the churches; and who, as much as in them lay, cut themselves off from Christ, and rendered him unprofitable to them; see **Ga 5:2**.

{p} Misn. Sota, c. 9. sect. 15.

Philippians 3:3

Ver. 3. For we are the circumcision,.... And not they; they have the name, and we the thing, or that which legal circumcision was a shadow of, namely, circumcision of the heart; which lies in being pricked to the heart under a true sense of sin; in having the hardness of the heart removed, and the iniquity of it laid to open view; in pain and contrition of heart about it, joined with shame for it, and loathing of it, the consequence of which is, a putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, **Col 2:11**, according to the former conversation; and also in a renouncing a man's own righteousness in point of justification before God, and acceptance with him. All which is the work of God, and not man, and is therefore called the circumcision made without hands, **Col 2:11**; it has God, and not man, for its author; and its praise is of God, and not of men; and its seat is in the heart and spirit, and not in the flesh; and such whose hearts are circumcised to love the Lord their God, and fear him, are the true circumcision:

which worship God in the spirit. The object of worship is "God", and him only; not a creature animate or inanimate, stocks or stones, beasts, birds, men, or angels; only God, Father, Son, and Spirit: that the Father is to be worshipped, is not disputed, see **Joh 4:21**; and the Son is to be worshipped with the same worship the Father is; since he is in the form of God, and equal to him, is the Creator of all the Lord of angels and men, and is to be, and is worshipped by both; prayer is made unto him, baptism is administered in his name, and trust and confidence are placed in him; and so is the Holy Ghost, he being equally God with the Father and the Son, and therefore the same homage is to be given to him as to them: and so some indeed read the words here, "which worship God the Spirit"; or the Spirit, who is God. "Worship" is either inward or outward; inward worship lies in the exercise of grace on God, as of faith, hope, love, fear, &c. outward worship is the performance of certain external actions required by God, and both are to be performed: and it is also either private or public; private worship is in the closet, or in the family, and consists of praying, singing of praises, &c. public worship lies in tire observance of the outward ordinances of preaching, praying, hearing singing, &c. in the church of God; even all such ordinances as God has appointed, which are recorded in the Scriptures, and are confirmed by the authority of Christ. The manner in which worship is to be performed, is "in the Spirit"; either in and with the Spirit of God, without whose grace and assistance no part of it can be performed well. And the Alexandrian copy reads, "which worship in the Spirit of God"; and so the Complutensian edition, and several copies. Or in and with our own hearts and spirits, which should be engaged in every part of religious worship with much attention, diligence, and fervency; or in a spiritual manner, in opposition to the carnal worship of the Jews, and the bodily exercise of formal professors; and which lies in drawing nigh to God with true hearts, sincere and fervent ones, with grace in them, and that in exercise:

and rejoice in Christ Jesus; or "glory in" him, and make their boast of him; for a different word is here used from that in **Php 3:1**. Such who have a true sense of themselves, and a spiritual sight of Christ, will not glory in themselves, in their wisdom, strength, riches, or righteousness, but in Christ, in his wisdom and strength, in his riches and righteousness, and in his person and grace only:

and have no confidence in the flesh; in any carnal descent, or birth privilege, as to be of the seed of Abraham, of the of Israel, or of such a tribe, or family, or born of such a parent; nor in circumcision, or any of the carnal ordinances of the ceremonial law; nor in any civil, moral, legal, and external righteousness, for so to do is but to make flesh an arm; or indeed to trust in anything out of Christ, or short of him; and all this makes up the character and description of a true believer in Christ.

Philippians 3:4

Ver. 4. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh,.... This he says, lest it should be objected to him, that the reason why he had no confidence in the flesh, and did not boast of it, was, because he could not; he had nothing to glory of, and put his confidence in, and therefore acted the common part of such persons, who despise what either they have not, or are ignorant of: but this was not the apostle's case, he had as much reason, and as good a foundation for trust in himself, his privileges and attainments, as any man had, and more; and his meaning here is not, that he might lawfully have confidence in the flesh, for that is criminal in every one, but that he had as good pretensions to it; and were it lawful, might with greater appearance of truth do it than some other persons, or indeed any other:

if any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: the sense is, if there were any other person besides the false teachers he speaks of in **Php 3:2**; that were of the judaizing sect, or any whatever of the Jewish nation, be he who he will, who thought within himself he had, or seemed to others to have (for all such confidence, and the grounds of it, are only in show and appearance, and in imagination, not in reality), reasons for boasting and trusting in himself and in his carnal privileges and performances, the apostle had more, and which he enumerates in **Php 3:5**; not but that he might be exceeded by some in some one particular or another; as for instance, he was not of the tribe of Levi: nor of Judah; he was neither of the house of Aaron, nor of David; neither of the priestly line, nor of the blood royal; but taking all together, there was not a man in whom so many reasons met, for boasting and confidence in the flesh, as in himself.

Philippians 3:5

Ver. 5. Circumcised the eighth day,.... Circumcision was an appointment of God to Abraham, and his male issue; to him and them God gave the covenant of circumcision: this to Abraham personally was a sign and seal, that the righteousness of faith, which he had while he was an uncircumcised person, should come upon the uncircumcised Gentiles in the times or the Messiah, when the Gospel should come among them; and it was a distinguishing character of the Jews from the Gentiles, until the coming of Christ; it was typical of the effusion of his blood to cleanse from all the impurity of original and actual sin, and represented the circumcision of the heart. The Jews valued themselves much upon it, and treated the Gentiles with contempt for the want of it; and would neither converse with them in a civil or religious way, because they were uncircumcised: but the apostle was no Gentile, or an uncircumcised person; he had this mark in his flesh to glory in as well as others, if it had been lawful to trust in it; he was the subject of this ordinance while it was a standing one, and before it was abolished by Christ; and it was performed on him at the precise time fixed in the original institution of it, which was not always observed; for not to take notice of Jewish proselytes; who were circumcised at any age, when they became such, whether in youth, manhood, or old age; and which by the way shows, that the apostle was no proselyte, but a natural Jew; Gershom, the son of Moses, was not circumcised till some years after his birth; and all the while the children of Israel were in the wilderness this ordinance was neglected, till Joshua had led them into Canaan's land, and then he circumcised all that generation that was born in the wilderness, some of whom must be near forty years of age; and in after times it was usual with the Jews, for one reason or another, to put off circumcision to a longer time. Take the following story as an illustration of this {q}:

"it is a tradition of R. Nathan; once, says he, I went to the cities of the sea, and a woman came to me who had circumcised her first son, and he died; the second, and he died; the third she brought to me; I saw him that he was red, I said unto her, my daughter, "wait a while" for him till his blood is swallowed up in him; she waited for him a while, and circumcised him, and he lived; and they called him Nathan the Babylonian, after my name. And again another time I went to the province of Cappadocia (the Jerusalem Talmud {r} has it Caesarea of Cappadocia), a certain woman came to me, who had circumcised her first son, and he died; the second, and he died; the third, (the above Talmud adds, and he died, the fourth,) she brought to me, I saw that he was green, I inspected him, and the blood of the covenant was not in him, I said unto her, my daughter, wnytmh, "tarry a while" for him; (the Jerusalem Talmud has it, Nmz rxal whwxynh, "let him alone to another time";) till his blood fall in him, she waited for him, and circumcised him, and he lived; and they called him Nathan the Babylonian, after my name."

The Jewish canon, with regard to the time of circumcision, runs thus {s}:

"an infant may be circumcised at eight days, or at nine, or at ten, or at eleven, or at twelve, neither less nor more (not less than eight, nor more than twelve), how? according to its course at eight. If it is born between the two evenings, it is circumcised on the ninth day; if between the two evenings of the sabbath eve, it is circumcised on the tenth day; if on a feast day after the sabbath, it is circumcised on the eleventh; if on the two days of the beginning of the year, it is circumcised on the twelfth. An infant that is sick, they do not circumcise him until he is recovered."

And in the last case, they reckon seven days from the time of the recovery of the child, as Maimonides {t} observes; with whom may be read other cases, in which circumcision was not always performed on the eighth day, but sometimes was deferred, and sometimes it was done the same day the child was born. But circumcision on the eighth day was reckoned most valid and authentic, and according to rule; and therefore it is not without reason, that the apostle mentions the time of his circumcision, and puts an emphasis upon it.

Of the stock of Israel; this is said to distinguish him from an Ishmaelite, or an Edomite, who were circumcised, and from the son of a proselyte, who might be circumcised on the eighth day; but he was a natural Israelite, to whom the various privileges belonged, mentioned in **Ro 9:4**; and therefore had as much reason to trust in the flesh as any Israelite whatever.

[Of] the tribe of Benjamin; who was a genuine and legitimate son of Jacob, whom he had by his lawful and beloved wife Rachel. Of which tribe was the first king of Israel, whose name was Saul, **1Sa 9:1**, and which was the apostle's first and Jewish name, and which perhaps was common in that tribe on that account. In this tribe stood the city of Jerusalem, and the temple of the Lord; this tribe retained the true worship of God with Judah, when the ten tribes revolted and worshipped the calves at Dan and Bethel, and returned with Judah from captivity, when the others did not. And the apostle was not only able to make himself appear to be of the stock Israel, but could name the tribe to which he belonged, which many of the Jews, that were of one, or rather of the ten tribes, were not able to do, and may be his chief reason for mentioning this circumstance.

An Hebrew of the Hebrews; not so called only because he could trace his pedigree from Abraham the Hebrew, or understood, and could speak the Hebrew language, which the Hellenistic Jews could not, or was an illustrious one among them, but because both his parents were Hebrews; he was an Hebrew by the father and mother's side both; he was a genuine Hebrew. The Arabians have the same way of speaking; and with them a genuine Arab is called an Arab of the Arabs {u} as here. Some there were whose mothers were Hebrews, and their fathers Gentiles; such an one was Timothy, Ac 16:1; and there were others whose fathers were Hebrews, and their mothers Gentiles; and these are thought by some to be the same the Talmudists {w} call, Myllx, "profane": they not being reckoned so holy as such whose fathers and mothers were both Hebrews; of which the latter gloried over the other.

As touching the law, a Pharisee: with respect to the interpretation and observance of the law, which was according to the traditions of the elders, and not the literal and genuine sense of it, he followed; and was of the sect of the Pharisees, which was strictest sect among the Jews, and in the greatest esteem among the people: and though they had put many false glosses on the Scripture, and held many erroneous principles, and were very tenacious of human traditions, yet they were preferable to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and other things; and were more zealous in their devotion and religion, and more strict in their morals, and external holiness of life and conversation. They separated and distinguished themselves hereby from other people, and hence they had their name; See Gill on "Mt 3:7". Now the apostle was not only a Pharisee, but the son of one; he was always brought up in that strict sect and severe way, Ac 23:6.

{q} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 47. 2. {r} T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 7. 4. {s} Misn. Sabbat, c. 19. sect. 5. Vid. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. & Misn. Eracin, c. 2. sect. 2. & Bartenora in ib. {t} Hilch. Mila, c. 1. 16. {u} Pocock. Specim. A. ab. Hist. p. 3, 9. {w} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 69. 1.

Philippians 3:6

Ver. 6. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church,.... The Vulgate Latin version adds, "of God", as in **Ga 1:13**. The apostle was very zealous of the traditions of the elders, and for the law of God, and towards God also; though his zeal was not according to knowledge, but blind, ignorant, and furious; which pushed him on to persecute the followers of Christ, and the church of Christ at Jerusalem more especially, in a very violent and outrageous manner; he held the clothes of those that stoned Stephen, **Ac 7:58**; he consented unto his death, **Ac 8:1**; he made havoc of the church at Jerusalem, haling men and women to prison, **Ac 8:3**; he continued breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ, **Ac 9:1**; gave his voice against them when put to death, punished them frequently in the synagogues by scourging them, Ac 26:10, and compelled them to blaspheme the name of Christ; was exceeding mad against them, pursued them to strange cities, Ac 26:11, and persecuted the church of God exceedingly, more than anyone single person besides.

Touching the righteousness which is in, the law, blameless. This he mentions last, as including the whole of his righteousness, civil, ceremonial, and moral; and which he fancied was so perfect, that whatever righteousness was in the law, or required by it, he had it, and to such a degree, that he was blameless before God and men; that he was justified by it in the sight of God, and could not justly be found fault with by any, or be charged with any defect in his obedience, either to the moral or ceremonial law; which must arise from great ignorance of the righteousness of God, and the strictness of his justice, and of the law of God, and the purity, spirituality, and extent of it, which reaches to the thoughts of the heart, and the first motions of sin; and of himself, the plague of his own heart, of the sin of lust, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, in every instance of it.

Philippians 3:7

Ver. 7. But what things were gain to me,.... As circumcision, and the observance of the ceremonial law, which he thought were necessary to salvation; and his natural and lineal descent from Abraham, which he supposed entitled him to the favour of God, and eternal life, as well as to outward privileges; and his being of that strict sect of religion, a Pharisee, which he doubted not, being brought up and continued in, would secure to him everlasting happiness; and his zeal in persecuting the church of Christ, in which he thought he did God good service, and merited heaven for himself; and his legal righteousness, which he fancied was perfect, and so justified him in the sight of God, and rendered him acceptable to him: for the apostle's meaning is, not only that these things were judged by him, while in an unconverted state, good in themselves, and in some respects useful, but that they were really gainful, and meritorious of happiness in another world. But being converted, he saw all those things in a different light, and had a different opinion of them:

those I counted loss for Christ; circumcision he saw was now abolished, and was nothing, and that the circumcision of the heart was the main thing; and that the other was so far from being useful and necessary to salvation, that it was hurtful, was a yoke of bondage, bound men over to keep the whole law, and made Christ of none effect to them; and the same opinion he had of the whole ceremonial law: as for natural descent, which he once valued and trusted in, he now rejected it, well knowing it signified not whether a man was a Greek, or a Jew, a Barbarian, or Scythian, provided he was but a believer in Christ, **Col 3:11**; and as for any outward form or sect of religion, he knew there was no salvation in it, nor in any other name but that of Christ, **Ac 4:12**; and he was so far from thinking, that on account of his zeal in persecuting the church he was deserving of heaven, that for that reason he was not worthy to be called an apostle of Christ; and as for his legal righteousness, he now saw it to be as filthy rags, Isa 64:6; that many things in it were really evil in themselves, such as his observance of the traditions of the elders, whereby the commands of God were transgressed, and his mad zeal in persecuting the followers of Christ; and other things, which had the appearance of good works, were not truly so, did not spring from love, were not done in faith, and with a view to the glory of God; and that the best of them were very imperfect, and exceeding blamable; yea, that if they had been perfect, they could not have been meritorious of eternal life, as he once thought them to be; he saw now they were of no use in justification and salvation; nay, that they were hurtful and pernicious, being trusted to, as keeping persons off from Christ, and his righteousness: wherefore, he gladly suffered the loss of all his legal righteousness, and renounced and disclaimed it, and all pretensions to justification and salvation by it, for the sake of Christ; of life and salvation by him, and in comparison of him; of the knowledge of him, and of his justifying righteousness, as the following verses show. Hence, what before he pleased himself much with, and promised himself much from, he could not now reflect upon with any pleasure and satisfaction of mind; which is the sense of this phrase with Jewish writers {x}: so it is observed of a drunken man, when he comes to himself; and it is told him what he did when in liquor, he grieves at it, xwyr alw doph lkh bvxyw, "and counts all loss and not gain"; i.e. can take no pleasure in a reflection on it.

{x} Sepher Cosri, p. 3, sect. 16. fol. 152. 1.

Philippians 3:8

Ver. 8. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things [but] loss,.... Not only the things before mentioned, but anything, and everything else but Christ, or that stood in competition with him, or were short of him; as his natural and acquired parts; the whole compass of learning he had attained to; all that honour, credit, reputation, and popularity he was in for knowledge and devotion; all worldly substance, the comforts of life, and life itself; and all his righteousness since conversion, as well as before; of this no doubt could be made by those who knew him, his principles and his practices: and all this

for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: "by the knowledge of Christ" is not meant subjectively the knowledge that is in Christ, or which he has of others, either as God or man; but objectively, that knowledge which believers have of him, who know him not only in his person, as God over all, but as a Saviour and Redeemer, and as theirs; they know him in all his relations, and particularly as their Lord, not by creation only, but by redemption and grace, as the apostle did, putting an emphasis on these words, "my Lord"; thereby expressing his faith of interest in him, his great affection for him, and cheerful subjection to him. And this knowledge is not general, but special, spiritual, and saving; it is a knowledge of approbation of Christ above all others; a fiducial one, which has faith in him joined with it, and is both experimental and, practical, and, at least at times, appropriating; and though imperfect, it is progressive and capable of being increased, and will at last be brought to perfection. It is attained to, not by the light of nature, nor by the help of carnal reason, nor by the law of Moses, but by the Gospel of the grace of God, as a means; and the efficient cause of it is Father, Son, and Spirit; the Father reveals Christ in his saints; the Son gives them an understanding to know him; and the Spirit is a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; and this knowledge is very excellent: a spiritual knowledge of Christ is more excellent than a general and notional one, or than a knowledge of Christ after the flesh; and the knowledge of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, though the same in nature, is more excellent than that which was under the legal dispensation, by promises, prophecies, and the ceremonial law, in degree, extensiveness, and clearness; but the most excellent knowledge of Christ is that of the saints in heaven; yea, even there is an excellency in what the saints have here on earth, and a superior one to all other knowledge, if the author and original of it is considered: it is not of ourselves, nor by the assistance of men; it is not in the book of nature, nor in the schools of the philosophers; it is not of earth, nor earthly, but it comes from afar, from above, from heaven, from God the Father of lights; it is a free grace gift, a distinguishing one, and is very comprehensive, unspeakable, and unchangeable: and as to the object of it, it is Christ, the chiefest among ten thousands; who made the heavens, earth, and seas, and all that in them are, the sun, moon, and stars, men and beasts, birds and fishes, fossils, minerals, vegetables, and everything in nature; and therefore the knowledge of him must be superior to the knowledge of everything else; and, which adds to its excellency, it makes Christ precious, engages faith and confidence in him, influences the life and conversation, humbles the soul, and creates in it true pleasure and satisfaction; when all other knowledge fills with self-love, pride, and vanity, and increases sorrow; whereas this is not only useful in life, but supports, as under afflictions, so in the views of death and eternity; through it grace is received now, and by it glory hereafter; for it is the beginning, earnest, and pledge of eternal life. Well may the believer count all things but loss for it, as the apostle did; who adds, for further confirmation of what he had asserted,

for whom I have suffered the loss of all things; he dropped all confidence in his carnal privileges, and civil, ceremonial, and moral righteousness, for Christ and his righteousness; he parted with all for this pearl of great price; he lost his good name, credit, and reputation among men, and suffered afflictions and persecutions in various shapes; he lost the comforts of life, being often in cold and nakedness, in hunger and thirst, and was ready to suffer the loss of life itself for professing and preaching Christ:

and do count them [but] dung; or dog's meat; see **Php 3:2**; what is fit only to be cast to dogs, as the word signifies; and intends every thing that is base, mean, and worthless; as the faeces of men, the dregs and lees of liquor, the falling of fruit, chaff, stubble, the dross of metals, dung, and what not: so he esteemed his carnal descent; his form and sect of religion, and zeal in it; his ceremonial and moral righteousness before and after conversion; and everything of the creature, or what was his own, and but flesh; being of the same opinion with the church of old, who reckoned her righteousnesses, the best, and the whole of them, as "filthy rags". The apostle next expresses his end and views in this,

that I may win Christ; not get an interest in him, for this he had already, and he knew he had, and that he should never lose it; and besides, an interest in Christ is not a thing that begins in time, but commenced from all eternity; and is not gotten at all, not by good works, nor repentance, nor faith; for these, if right and genuine, are the fruits and effects of an interest in Christ, but is what is freely given. The apostle's meaning is, either that he might gain or acquire a larger knowledge of Christ; and he cared not what pains he took, what expenses he was at, nor what loss he sustained for what he esteemed the most excellent, and for which he had already suffered the loss of all things; and if he had had more to lose, he could willingly part with it for more of this knowledge; compare **Php 3:10**; or his sense is, that he might gain by Christ, or that Christ might be gain to him, as he found him to be, and as he is to every believer; who by parting with all for Christ, gains much by him, as a justifying righteousness, acceptance with God, peace, pardon, life, grace, and glory.

Philippians 3:9

Ver. 9. And be found in him,.... This is another end the apostle had in view, in counting all things loss and dung, and suffering the loss of all for Christ. Calvin, different from other interpreters, reads the words actively, "and may find in him"; and thinks the sense is, that the apostle renounced all things for Christ, that he might recover all in him: and true it is, that for the loss of carnal privileges, he found in Christ spiritual blessings; and for the loss of his own righteousness, another, and a better, even the righteousness of God; and in lieu of external goods, or worldly substance he was stripped of, true and lasting riches; and in the room of outward credit, peace and plenty, true honour, real peace, and spiritual pasture; and instead of the comforts of life, and life itself, spiritual and eternal life; though it is best to read the words passively, "and be found in him"; that is, "be in him", as the Ethiopic version renders it; so the word found is used in **Ga 2:17** **Php 2:8**; and he means not a nominal being in Christ, or a being in him by profession, but a real one; and watch is either secret or open: a secret being in Christ he had from everlasting, being chosen in him, given to him, loved by him, betrothed unto him, preserved in him, and represented by him; and an open one he had at conversion, when he became a new creature, and was created in Christ Jesus unto good works: and here he intends a more clear and evident manifestation of his being in Christ; and his desire is, that he might appear to be in him, in life and at death, and at the day of judgment, and in the following manner:

not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law; by which he means his obedience to the moral, as well as the ceremonial law; for the one was as much his own as the other, and more properly his righteousness: this he calls his "own", because performed by him, and wrought out in his own strength; and which he had an high opinion of, as if it was perfect and blameless; and which he had before put his trust and confidence in; as also to distinguish it from another's righteousness, even that which he had in Christ: he moreover calls it, "the righteousness which is of the law"; which the law required, and he performed in obedience to it, seeking for justification by it; this character distinguishes it from the righteousness of God, which is revealed in the Gospel, and is manifested without the law: and this his own legal righteousness he did not desire to "have", and to be found in; not but that he desired to live soberly and righteously, to have, and do works of righteousness, but not depend on them; he would not have, and account this his moral righteousness, as a justifying one; he knew it was imperfect, filthy, and unprofitable, and that by it he could not be justified and saved, therefore he desired to have another.

But that which is through the faith of Christ; not through that faith which Christ himself, as man, had and exercised on God, as his God; but that which he is the author and finisher of, and which has him and his righteousness for its object; not through faith, as the cause of it; for the moving cause of justification is the free grace of God, and the efficient cause is God himself: and it appears from hence, that faith is not the matter of our justification, or is not our righteousness; for faith and righteousness are two distinct things, otherwise righteousness could not be said to be "through" faith. The righteousness of Christ is here meant, and which is the sole matter of justification, and comes to us through faith apprehending, receiving, and embracing it; and which shows, that it must be before faith, or it could not be through it; as water that runs through a bridge must be before and after that bridge through which it runs. This righteousness is further described, as

the righteousness which is of God by faith; that righteousness which Christ, who is the true God, is the author of, hence it is a pure and perfect one, infinite, and serves for many; which God the Father approves of, and is well pleased with, because his law is magnified, and made honourable by it; and what he graciously gives, and freely imputes without works, to his people: and this is "by faith", which beholds the excellency of it, acknowledges its sufficiency, renounces its own righteousness, and submits to, and lays hold on this, and rejoices in it; and thus men are justified openly and manifestly by faith, receiving the justifying righteousness of Christ: or the words may be rendered "upon faith". This righteousness is as a garment put upon faith, or put upon him by God, who has true faith in Christ; see **Ro 3:22**. This last clause, "by faith", is omitted in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, and seems to be read by them as belonging to the beginning of **Php 3:10**. Now this righteousness the apostle desired to have, and be found in; and this he says not, as supposing that a person may be found in Christ, and yet not have his righteousness; nor as if he himself had not this righteousness, and an interest in it; but to show his value for it, and his desire to be continually exercising faith on it, and the trust and confidence he placed in it; well knowing that in this he was safe and secure from all condemnation; this would answer for him in a time to come; being found in this he should not be naked nor speechless, and should have a right and an admission into the kingdom and glory of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:10

Ver. 10. That I may know him,.... The Ethiopic version reads "by faith"; and to the same sense the Syriac. The apostle did know Christ, and that years ago; he knew whom he had believed; he knew him for himself; he knew his personal interest in him; nor did he know any but him in the business of salvation: but his knowledge of Christ, though it was very great, it was, imperfect; he knew but in part, and therefore desired to know more of Christ, of the mystery and glories of his person, of the unsearchable riches of his grace, of his great salvation, and the benefits of it, of his love, which passes perfect knowledge, and to have a renewed and enlarged experience of communion with him. The apostle here explains what he means by winning Christ, for the sake of which he suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung; it was, that he might attain to a greater knowledge of the person and grace of Christ:

and the power of his resurrection; not that power which was put forth by his Father, and by himself, in raising him from the dead; but the virtue which arises from it, and the influence it has on many things; as on the resurrection of the saints: it is the procuring cause of it, they shall rise by virtue of union to a risen Jesus; it is the firstfruits, which is the earnest and pledge of their resurrection, as sure as Christ is risen, so sure shall they rise; it is the exemplar and pattern of theirs, their bodies will be raised and fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ; and this the apostle desired to know, experience, and attain unto. Christ's resurrection has an influence also on the justification of his people; when Christ died he had the sins of them all upon him, and he died for them, and discharged as their public head and representative, and they in him: hence it is said of him, that "he was raised again for our justification", **Ro 4:25**. Now, though the apostle was acquainted with this virtue and influence of Christ's resurrection, he desired to know more of it, for the encouragement of his faith to live upon Christ, as the Lord his righteousness. Moreover, the regeneration of men is owing to the resurrection of Christ; as to the abundant mercy of God, as the moving cause, so to the resurrection of Christ, as the means or virtual cause; and therefore are said to be "begotten again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead", **1Pe 1:3**. This power and virtue the apostle had had an experience of, yet he wanted to feel more of it, in exciting the graces of the spirit to a lively exercise, in raising his affections, and setting them on things above, and in engaging him to seek after them, and set light by things on earth, and in causing him to walk in newness of life, in likeness or imitation of Christ's resurrection, to all which that strongly animates and encourages; see **Col 3:1**.

And the fellowship of his sufferings; either his personal sufferings, and so signifies a sharing in, and a participation of the benefits arising from them; such as reconciliation for sin, peace with God, pardon, righteousness, nearness to God, &c. or the sufferings of his members for him, and with him, and which Christ reckons his own: these the apostle was willing to take his part in, and lot of, knowing, that those that are partakers of his sufferings in this sense, shall reign with him, and be glorified together. What the Jews deprecated, the apostle was desirous of; namely, sharing in the sorrows and sufferings of the Messiah, and which they reckon the greatest happiness to be delivered from.

"The disciples of R. Eleazar {y} asked him, what a man should do that he may be delivered xyvm lv wlbxm, "from the sorrows of the Messiah?" he must study in the law, and in beneficence."

And elsewhere they say {z},

"he that keeps the three meals on the sabbath day shall be delivered from three punishments, xyvm lv wlbxm, "from the sorrows of the Messiah", and from the damnation of hell, and from the war of Gog and Magog."

But our apostle rejoiced in his sufferings for Christ, and was desirous of filling up the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for his body's sake, the church:

being made conformable unto his death; either in a spiritual sense dying daily unto sin, 1Co 15:31, having the affections, with the lusts, crucified, **Ga 5:24**, and the deeds of the body mortified, **Ro 8:13**, and so planted in the likeness of his death, **Ro 6:5**; or rather in a corporeal sense, bearing always in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, **2Co 4:10**, and being continually exposed to death for his sake, and ready to suffer it whenever called to it.

{y} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2. {z} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 1. See Cetubot, fol. 111. 1.

Philippians 3:11

Ver. 11. If by any means I, might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not in a figurative sense, the resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace, of which Christ is the efficient cause, for this the apostle had attained to; unless the consummation of that spiritual life, in perfect holiness, should be intended, than which nothing was more desirable by him; nor in a representative sense, for this also he enjoyed in Christ his head, being risen with him, and in him, when he rose from the dead; but in a literal sense and designs not the general resurrection of the just and unjust, which he believed; for he knew that everyone must, and will attain to this, even Pharaoh, Judas, and the worst of men; but the special and particular resurrection of the righteous, the better resurrection, which will be first, and upon the personal coming of Christ, and by virtue of union to him, and in a glorious manner, and to everlasting life and happiness: and when the apostle says, "if by any means" he might attain to this, it is not to be understood as if he doubted of it, which would be inconsistent with his firm persuasion, that nothing should separate him from the love of God, and with his full assurance of faith, as to interest in Jesus Christ; but it denotes the difficulty of attaining it, since through various afflictions and great tribulations a believer must pass, before he comes to it; and also the apostle's earnest desire of it, and strenuous endeavour for it; not caring what scenes of trouble, or sea of sorrow what fiery trials, severe sufferings, or cruel death he went through, so be it he obtained as he believed he should, the glorious and better resurrection; he counted not his life dear to himself, he loved it not unto death, having in view the blissful and happy state after it.

Philippians 3:12

Ver. 12. Not as though I had already attained,.... Or "received"; he had received much grace out of the fulness of it in Christ; he had received the gift of righteousness, the forgiveness of his sins, and the adoption of children; he had attained to a lively hope of the incorruptible inheritance, and had received a right unto it, and had a meetness for it; but as yet he had not received the thing itself, nor was he come to the end of his race, and so had not received the crown of righteousness laid up for him; he had not yet attained to perfect knowledge, nor perfect holiness, nor perfect happiness: wherefore he adds,

either were already perfect; he was perfect in comparison of others, that were in a lower class of grace, experience, and knowledge, in which sense the word is used in **Php 3:15**, and in **1Co 2:6**; he was so, as perfection intends sincerity, uprightness, and integrity; the root of the matter, the truth of grace was in him; his faith was unfeigned, his love was without dissimulation, his hope was without hypocrisy, his conversation in the world was in godly simplicity, and his preaching and his whole conduct in his ministry were of sincerity, and in the sight of God: he was perfect as a new creature with respect to parts, having Christ formed in him, and all the parts of the new man, though not as to degrees; this new man not being as yet grown up to a perfect man, or to its full growth, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; he was perfect with respect to justification, being perfectly justified from all things, by the righteousness of Christ, but not with respect to sanctification; and though his sanctification was perfect in Christ, yet not in himself; his knowledge was imperfect, something was wanting in his faith, and sin dwelt in him, of which he sometimes grievously complained: now this he says, lest he should be thought to arrogate that to himself, which he had not:

but I follow after; Christ the forerunner, after perfect knowledge of him, perfect holiness from him, and perfect happiness with him: the metaphor is taken from runners in a race, who pursue it with eagerness, press forward with all might and main, to get up to the mark, in order to receive the prize; accordingly the Syriac version renders it,
ana jhr, "I run", and so the Arabic: the apostle's sense is, that though he had not yet reached the mark, he pressed forward towards it, he had it in view, he stretched and exerted himself, and followed up very closely to it, in hope of enjoying the prize:

if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus; he was apprehended of Christ, when he met him in his way to Damascus, stopped him in his journey, laid him prostrate on the ground, and laid hold on him as his own, challenged and claimed his interest in him, **Ac 9:3**, as one that the Father had given him, and he had purchased by his blood; he entered into him, and took possession of him, and took up his residence in him, having dispossessed the strong man armed, and ever since held him as his own; and he apprehended, or laid hold on him, to bring him as he had engaged to do, to a participation of grace here, and glory hereafter; that he might know him himself, and make him known to others; that he might be made like unto him, have communion with him, and everlastingly enjoy him: and these things the apostle pursued after with great vehemence, that he might apprehend them, and be in full possession of them; and which he did, in the way and manner hereafter described.

Philippians 3:13

Ver. 13. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended,.... That for which he was apprehended of Christ: he had not attained to perfect knowledge, was not come to the mark, had not received the prize, or laid hold on eternal life; though he had received so much grace, and such gifts, as had qualified him for an apostle; and he had been so many years in that office, and had so great a knowledge in the mystery of the Gospel, and had laboured in it more abundantly than others, and with great success; and even though he had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard unspeakable words, not lawful to be uttered, 2Co 12:2, yet he had no such opinion of himself, as if he was perfect: by which way of speaking, he tacitly strikes at the arrogance and vain confidence of false teachers, that pretended to perfection; and in this way led the brethren to conclude, that they could never have arrived to it, since so great an apostle had not; some copies read not "yet", and so the Ethiopic version:

but this one thing [I do]; which he was intent upon, constantly attended to, and earnestly pursued; it was the main and principal thing he was set upon, and which he employed himself in; and which engrossed all his thoughts, desires, affections, time, and labour; see Ps 27:4. The Syriac version reads, "this one thing I know"; signifying that whatever he was ignorant of, and however imperfect his knowledge was in other things, this he was full well apprized of, and acquainted with. The Arabic version renders the whole thus, "I do not think that I have now obtained and received anything, but the one thing"; namely, what follows;

forgetting those things which are behind, meaning not the sins of his past life, which were indeed forgotten by God, and the guilt of which was removed from him, by the application of the blood of Christ, so that he had no more conscience of them; yet they were remembered and made mention of by him, partly for his own humiliation, and partly to magnify the grace of God: nor earthly and worldly things, which believers are too apt to have respect to, to look back upon, and hanker after, as the Israelites did after the fleshpots in Egypt, Ex 16:3; though these were forgotten by the apostle, so as not anxiously to care for them, and seek after them, to set his affections on them, or trust in them: nor his fleshly privileges, and legal righteousness, which he pursued, valued, and trusted in before conversion, but now dropped, renounced, disregarded, and counted as loss and dung, **Php 3:7**; but rather his labours and works of righteousness since conversion, which though he times took notice of for the magnifying of the grace of God, for the defence of the Gospel, and to put a stop to the vain boasting of false teachers, yet he forgot them in point of dependence on them, and trust to them; and having put his hand to the plough, he did not look back, nor desist, but went on in his laborious way, not thinking of what he had done and gone through, nor discouraged at what was before him; as also he intends all his growth in grace, and proficiency in divine knowledge, which was very, great; and though he was thankful for these things, and would observe them to the glory of the grace of God, yet he trusted not in them: nor did he sit down easy and satisfied with what he had attained unto, and therefore was

reaching forth unto those things which are before; to perfection of knowledge, holiness, and happiness, which were before him, and he as yet had not attained unto; but was desirous of, and pursued after with great vehemence and eagerness; the metaphor is taken from runners in a race, who did not stop to look behind them, and see what way they have run, and how far they are before others, but look and move forwards, and stretch themselves out to the uttermost, and run with all their might and main to the mark before them; and so the apostle did in a spiritual sense.

Philippians 3:14

Ver. 14. I press toward the mark,.... The allusion is to the white line, or mark, which the runners in the Olympic games made up to, and to which he that came first received the prize; and by which the apostle intends the Lord Jesus Christ, who is skopov, "the scope", or "mark", of all the thoughts, purposes, and counsels of God, to which they all aim, and in which they all centre; and of the covenant of grace of which he is the sum and substance, the Mediator, surety, and messenger, in whom are all the blessings and promises of it; and of the Scriptures of truth, the writings of the Old and New Testament, which all testify of him, and agree in him; and of both law and Gospel, he is the end of the law, and the substance of the Gospel; and of all the graces of the Spirit, in the hearts of his people, faith looks at him, hope is concerned with him, and love has him for its object; and of all the duties believers are concerned in, they all point at him, they are done in his name and strength, through faith in him, and from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory; and so he is of their thoughts, affections, and desires: and to this mark they press, or "run", as the Syriac version renders it; they look to Jesus, while they are running their Christian race; they keep him in their view, and follow after him, because he is their forerunner, **Heb 6:20**, and the Captain of their salvation, **Heb 2:10**; they set him before them as their guide to direct them, according to whom they steer their course, that so they may not lose their way, nor move out of it, to the right hand or the left; and from whom they take great encouragement to go on, and press through the difficulties they do; and besides, they know that there is no coming at the prize, but through the mark, for there is salvation in no other, **Ac 4:12**; and that whoever comes up to the mark, or believes in Christ, shall enjoy the prize of eternal life, which is next mentioned:

for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus: by which is meant, the incorruptible crown; the crown of life, righteousness, and glory, that fadeth not away, **Jas 1:12**, styled "the prize of the calling of God"; because it is what God in the effectual calling calls his people to, even to a kingdom and glory, and to eternal glory and happiness; of which they have a sight, though but a glimmering view of it, and are blessed with hope in it; in which they rejoice, and see their right unto it, in the righteousness of Christ, and have a meetness for it: this is named "the high calling of God", because God is on high, who calls them to it, in allusion to the judge in the Olympic games, who was placed in an exalted situation, near the mark, with the crown in his hand, which he gave to him that came first; and because the grace by which the saints are called is from above, as every good and perfect gift is, **Jas 1:17**; and because the prize they are called unto consists of things above, where Jesus is, and is the hope laid up in heaven, **Col 1:5**, and the inheritance reserved there, **1Pe 1:4**; and expresses the great honour and dignity of called ones, who are called to a crown and kingdom, are raised from the dunghill, to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory, and are made kings and priests unto God: and may also denote, that the calling to such high honour is from above, and not below; and is owing to the special grace and favour of God, and not to any merits of men; nor is the prize to which they are called, of him that willeth and runneth, but of God's grace and mercy, **Ro 9:16**: and moreover, this calling is said to be "in Christ Jesus"; for both the purpose and grace, according to which men are called, are in him; the grace by which they are called, and which is implanted in them when called, is all in and from Christ; the blessings of grace, which they then in person enjoy, are spiritual blessings in him; and even the glory they are called unto is in his hands; not only the promise of eternal life, but that itself; the gift of it is with him, and it comes through him; yea, they are called by him, and said to be the called of Christ Jesus; now the prize of this calling, which is what God has prepared from all eternity, which Christ has in his hands, and will give to all his, and which is of immense richness and eternal duration, and shall be bestowed on all Christian runners, or true believers, is what the apostle was pressing for, pursuing after, with much difficulty, through great toil and labour, diligent searching of the Scriptures, frequent wrestling with God in prayer, and constant attendance on the means of grace, and ordinances of the Gospel.

Philippians 3:15

Ver. 15. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect,.... Not absolutely, but comparatively, with respect to other believers, in a lower class of knowledge and experience; and not with respect to degrees, but parts; and regards such who were not children, but of riper age in divine things, unless the words are spoken ironically:

be thus minded; as the apostle was, to count what were gain to him, loss for Christ; to reckon all things but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; to be willing to suffer the loss of all things, to win him, **Php 3:8**; to desire to be found in him, and in his righteousness, and not a man's own, **Php 3:9**; to know more of him in his person, righteousness, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead, **Php 3:10**; and to attain to such a state, and yet to disclaim all perfection, and acknowledge their imperfection, **Php 3:11**; and to forget things behind, and reach to those before, **Php 3:13**; and press towards the mark, Christ, for the prize of eternal glory, **Php 3:14**:

and if in anything ye be otherwise minded; as to seek for justification by the works of the law, or partly by Christ and partly by the law, and to imagine and expect perfection in this life:

God shall reveal even this unto you; such errors will be made manifest sooner or later; the day will declare them, and such wood, hay, and stubble, will be burnt up by the fire, which will reveal every man's work, **1Co 3:12**.

Philippians 3:16

Ver. 16. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained,.... Whatever degree of knowledge of Christ, and the truths of his Gospel, is attained to, let it be retained, and not departed from:

let us walk by the same rule; either the doctrine of justification by Christ's righteousness in particular, which is a rule of judgment concerning other things; for so far as they agree or disagree with this, they are to be received or rejected; or the Scriptures of truth, which are the rule of faith and practice, and the standard and test, to which all are to be brought and tried:

let us mind the same thing; be of one heart and affection to each other, Ro 12:10, and of the same judgment in the doctrines of the Gospel, **1Co 1:10**, and pursue the same measures; particularly press towards the same mark, and for the same prize the apostle did, **Php 3:14**, and be followers of him, as is exhorted to in **Php 3:17**.

Philippians 3:17

Ver. 17. Brethren, be followers together of me,.... Not that the apostle set up himself as the head of a party, which is what he always blamed in others; he did not assume a dominion over the faith of men, or seek to lord it over God's heritage; nor did he desire any to be followers of him, any further than he was a follower of Christ; and in what he was, whether in doctrine or practice, he desires to be followed in: and here he has a particular regard to what went before, concerning reckoning what was gain loss; accounting all things but dung, in comparison of the knowledge of Christ, looking to his righteousness alone for justification, **Php 3:9**; disclaiming perfection, yet forgetting things behind; reaching towards things before, and pressing to the mark for the prize, **Php 3:13**; and walking according to the rule of God's word; in which things he had some that followed him, who were his spiritual children, and to whom he had been useful in conversion and edification; see **1Co 4:15**; and he would therefore have these Philippians followers of him, "together" with them; and which contains in it an encouraging reason, or argument, since others were followers of him; or together with one another, he was desirous, that one and all of them might follow him; that they might all go in the same way, profess the same truth, be found in the practice of the same things, worship the Lord with one consent, pursue the same ends, and draw all the same way; and so be as the church was, like a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot, **So 1:9**;

and mark them which walk so; as the apostle did, and those that were followers of him; these he would have them mark, observe, attentively look to; not as others, who cause offences and divisions, and obey not the word, in order to shun, avoid, and keep no company with; but to imitate and follow, and next to Christ, the mark, to make use of them as inferior ones:

as ye have us for an ensample, or "type"; believers should be ensamples one to another, especially ministers of the word; pastors of churches are not to be lords over God's heritage, but to be ensamples to the flock, **1Pe 5:3**, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit; in faith, in purity, as the apostle exhorts Timothy, **1Ti 4:12**, and in these things they are to be followed by believers.

Philippians 3:18

Ver. 18. For many walk,.... tyaynrxa, "otherwise", as the Syriac version adds; and which truly explains the words, and gives the sense; they walked not as the apostle and his followers; they walked as men, as carnal men, **1Co 3:3**, according to the course of the world, after their ungodly lusts, **Eph 2:2**; or according to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation, and not uprightly, and according to the truth of the Gospel: and there were many that walked so; the road both of profaneness and error is a broad one, and many walk therein, which makes it the more dangerous; the examples of many have great force, though a multitude is not to be followed to do evil; the conversation of a great part of professors is not to be imitated; the few names in Sardis that have not defiled their garments with error or immorality should be marked for ensamples, **Re 3:4**, and the majority shunned:

of whom I have told you often; both when present among them by word of mouth, and when absent from them by writing; for the apostle was a faithful watchman and monitor to this church, and to all the churches, the care of which lay upon him; and diligent he was to warn them against false teachers, whose doctrines and practices he knew were of pernicious consequence:

and now tell you even weeping; partly on account of those evil men, whose state and condition, notwithstanding their profession, was very bad; and partly on account of the glory of God and Christ, and the honour of religion, which suffered much through them; and also on account of the Philippians, lest they should be drawn aside by them; and because they had taken so little notice of his frequent cautions and advice: and that they might the better know the men he spoke of, and avoid them, he describes them by the following characters,

[that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ; not that, though they might be Jews, they were like the unbelieving Jews, who were open and implacable enemies of a crucified Christ, called Jesus accursed, and anathematized him and his followers, and to whom the preaching of Christ crucified was an offence and stumblingblock, **1Co 1:23**; for these were professors of Christ, and pretended to preach Christ, and him crucified: nor were they such heretics that denied that Christ really assumed human nature, and was really crucified and died; and affirmed that all this was only in appearance, or that an image was hung upon the cross for him, or Simon the Cyrenian was crucified in his room, as some have thought, which was the heresy of Simon Magus, and his disciple Basilides: nor is the sense that they were averse to the crucifixion of the affections with the lusts, though this seems to be their true character, since they were sensual, and minded earthly things; but the meaning is, that they disliked the cross of Christ; they were unwilling to take it up for his sake, and follow him; they studied all ways and means to shun it; they ingratiated themselves into the affections of the unbelieving Jews, by complying with the ceremonies of the law, and bearing hard upon the apostle and his ministry, that so they might not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ; and besides, by enjoining circumcision and an observance of the law as necessary to salvation, they, as much as in them lay, made void the efficacy of the cross and death of Christ, and made that and him unprofitable, and of no effect to the souls of men; and were both doctrinally and practically enemies of the cross of Christ: and so all such professors of Christ, who walk not according to the Gospel, though they are not open and direct enemies to the Gospel, which is the preaching of the cross, yet they are secret and indirect ones, and oftentimes do more mischief to it by their lives, than the keenest adversaries of it can by their pens.

Philippians 3:19

Ver. 19. Whose end [is] destruction,.... Everlasting destruction, the destruction of both body and soul in hell, Mt 10:28; and this is the end, the reward and issue of bad principles and practices; the broad roads of sin and error lead to destruction, **Mt 7:13**; however pleasing such ways may be to men, the end of them is eternal death; destruction and misery are in all the ways of profaneness and heresy; not only immoralities, but heresies, such as strike at the efficacy of Christ's cross, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, are damnable ones, and bring upon men swift destruction, **2Pe 2:1**; and how should it otherwise be, for there is no salvation but by the cross of Christ? and if men are enemies to that, and the efficacy of it, and the way of salvation by it, there is no more, nor any other sacrifice for sin, Heb 10:26, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, Heb 10:27; and this will be the case of all barren and unfruitful professors, who are like the earth, that brings forth briers and thorns, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned, **Heb 6:8**; for what will the hope of such an one, founded on his profession, though he may have got credit and reputation among men, avail, when God takes away his soul?

whose god [is their] belly; the belly was the god of the Cyclops, they sacrificed to none but to themselves, and to the greatest of the gods, their own belly {a}; as money is the covetous man's god, whom he loves, adores, and puts his confidence in, so the belly is the god of the sensualist, the epicure, and voluptuous person; he has more regard for the service of that, than for the service of God? and of this complexion were these professors; they were lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God, **2Ti 3:4**; all their pretensions to religion, to Christ, and his Gospel, were only to serve themselves, their own bellies, and not the Lord Jesus Christ, and to do good to the souls of men: or their belly may be said to be their god, because they placed religion in the observance of meats and drinks, either allowed or forbidden in the law of Moses, which profited not those that were occupied therein, **Heb 9:10**; for the kingdom of God, the Gospel dispensation, internal religion, and the exercise of it, lies not in these things, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, Ro 14:17:

and whose glory [is] in their shame; in their evil practices committed in secret, of which it was a shame to speak; in their hidden things of dishonesty, crafty walking, and deceitful handling of the word of God, which were vile and scandalous, **2Co 4:2**; in corrupting the Gospel, and the churches of Christ, with their false doctrine; in observing and urging the ceremonies of the law, which were dead, and ought to be buried; and particularly circumcision in the flesh, in that part of the body which causes shame, and in this was their glory, **Ga 6:13**. The idol Baal Peor, and which is no other than the Priapus of the Heathens, is called by this name, **Ho 9:10**; so the prophets of Baal are in the Septuagint on 1Ki 18:19 called the prophets, thv aiscunhv, "of that shame"; it may be the apostle may have a regard to the secret debaucheries of these persons; or because they made their belly their god, he calls it their shame in which they gloried, and which was the name given to the idols of the Gentiles:

who mind earthly things. The Arabic version renders it, "who entertain earthly opinions"; and some by, "earthly things" understand the ceremonies of the law, called the elements and rudiments of the world, which these false teachers were fond of, and were very diligent to inculcate and urge the observance of; though rather worldly things, such as honour, glory, and popular applause, and wealth, and riches, are meant; for they sought their own things, and not the things of Christ; through covetousness, with feigned words, they made merchandise of men, and amassed to themselves great sums of money; and yet were greedy dogs, could never have enough, everyone looking for his gain from his quarter, Isa 56:11: and now persons of such characters as these were by no means to be followed, but such who are hereafter described.

{a} Euripides.

Philippians 3:20

Ver. 20. For our conversation is in heaven,.... The Ethiopic version renders it, "we have our city in heaven"; and the words may be truly rendered, "our citizenship is in heaven"; that is, the city whereof we are freemen is heaven, and we behave ourselves here below, as citizens of that city above: heaven is the saints' city; here they have no continuing city, but they seek one to come, which is permanent and durable; a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God, Heb 11:10: as yet they are not in it, though fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God; they are pilgrims, strangers, and sojourners on earth, Le 25:23; but are seeking a better country, an heavenly one, and God has prepared for them a city, Heb 11:16; they have a right unto it through the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ, and a meetness for it in him; and their conversation is here beforehand, while their commoration, or temporary residence, is below; their thoughts are often employed about it; their affections are set upon it, **Col 3:2**; their hearts are where their treasure is, **Mt 6:21**; the desires of their souls are towards it, and they are seeking things above, and long to be in their own city, and Father's house, where Christ is; and to be at home with him, and for ever with him. This is the work and business of their lives now, and what their hearts are engaged in. The Syriac version renders it, "our work is in heaven"; the business, the exercise of our lives, and of our graces, tend that way:

from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; Christ is now in heaven, at the Father's right hand, **Ac 2:33**, appearing in the presence of God for his people, and making intercession for them, **Heb 7:25**; and so will remain, until the time of the restitution of all things; when he will descend from heaven, and be revealed from thence: and this the saints look for, and expect; they have good reason for it; from his own words, from the words of the angels at the time of his ascension, **Ac 1:11**, and from the writings of the apostles and they expect him not merely as a Judge, under which consideration he will be terrible to the ungodly, but as a Saviour; who as he has already saved their souls from sin, and the dreadful effects of it, from the bondage and curse of the law, from the captivity of Satan, and from eternal ruin and wrath to come, so he will save and redeem their bodies from the grave, corruption, mortality, and death, as follows.

Philippians 3:21

Ver. 21. Who shall change our vile body,.... Which is defiled with sin, attended with frailty, and is mortal; and being dead, is sown and laid in the grave in corruption, weakness, and dishonour: in the Greek text it is, "the body of our humility"; sin has subjected the body to weakness, mortality, and death; and death brings it into a very low estate indeed, which is very humbling and mortifying to the pride and vanity man: now this vile body, in the resurrection morn, shall be stripped of all its vileness, baseness, and meanness; and be changed, not as to its substance, nor as to its form and figure, which shall always remain same, as did the substance and form of our Lord's body after his resurrection; but as to its qualities, it shall be changed from corruption to incorruption, 1Co 15:42, from mortality to immortality, from weakness to power, from dishonour to glory, and be free from all sin: so the Jews say {b}, that

"the evil imagination, or corruption of nature, goes along with man in the hour of death, but does not return with him when the dead arise:"

and this change will be made by the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall descend from heaven; who as he is the pledge, the first fruits, the exemplar, and meritorious cause, so he will be the efficient cause of the resurrection of the saints; who will be raised and changed by him, by his power, and by virtue of union to him:

that it might be fashioned like unto his glorious body; or "the body of his glory", as it is now in heaven, and of which his transfiguration on the mount was an emblem and pledge; for glory, power, incorruption, and immortality, the bodies of the saints in the resurrection shall be like to Christ's, though not equal to it, and shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The Jews {c} have a notion, that

"the holy blessed God will beautify the bodies of the righteous in future time, like the beauty of the first Adam:"

but their beauty and glory will be greater than that, it will be like the glory of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, whose image they shall then bear: and whereas this requires almighty power, of which Christ is possessed, it will be done

according to the working, the energy of his power and might; or as the Syriac version renders it, "according to his great power"; which was put forth in raising himself from the dead, and whereby he was declared to be the Son of God: and

whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself; not only sin, Satan, and the world, but death and the grave; and so consequently able to raise the dead bodies of his saints, and to change the qualities of them, and make them like unto his own: and now who would but follow such persons, who are citizens of heaven, have their conversation there, look for Christ the Saviour from thence, **Php 3:20**, who when he comes will raise the dead in Christ first, put such a glory on their bodies as is on his own, **1Th 4:16**, and take them to himself, that where he is they may be also? see
John 14:3 Heb 6:12.

{b} Midrash Tillim apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. l. 12. c. 2. {c} Midrash Hanneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Philippians 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS 4

This chapter contains exhortations to various duties becoming Christians, the apostle's thankfulness to the Philippians for their present to him, and the conclusion of the epistle with the salutations of the brethren: in **Php 4:1**; the apostle exhorts the saints with great affection to perseverance in the doctrine and faith of Christ; and in **Php 4:2**; mentions some persons by name, and to whom he recommends unity and agreement; and in **Php 4:3**; entreats others to assist them therein; and in **Php 4:4**; exhorts them all in general to joy in the Lord, and to moderation, enforced by this argument, the Lord being at hand, **Php 4:5**; and to calmness and quietness of mind, and to prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving, **Php 4:6**; to which they are encouraged, by the promise of having the peace of God, keeping their minds through Christ, **Php 4:7**; and to conclude, he exhorts them to everything that is virtuous had commendable; to which he stimulates them, from the consideration of the nature of the things themselves, from his own example, and from the presence of God with them, they might expect to enjoy, **Php 4:8**; and then he proceeds to take notice of the kindness of the Philippians to him, declares his joy on account of it, and expresses it by their care of him again; which he corrects, by observing that it was not for want of care in them before, but of opportunity of showing it, **Php 4:10**; nor did he take notice of this present of theirs, with so much exultation on account of his own penury, for he had learnt the great lesson of contentment in every state, **Php 4:11**; which he enlarges upon and explains; namely, that he had been taught, and knew how to behave in fulness and want, in prosperity and adversity; though this was not owing to himself, but to the power and strength of Christ, **Php 4:12**; however, he commends the Philippians for their communicating to him in his affliction, both at the first preaching of the Gospel to them, and at several times since, **Php 4:14**, the reason of which commendation was not because he was covetous of gifts and presents from them, but to encourage them to bring forth fruit, which would turn to their own advantage, **Php 4:17**; as for himself he had enough, and therefore said not this on his own account, but because such communication was a sacrifice well pleasing to God, and a return would be made by him; who, as he was able to supply all their need, would; of which he assures them, and for which he prays, **Php 4:17**, and to whom he gives the glory of what they had given, and he had received, **Php 4:20**; and then the epistle is concluded with the salutation of the apostle, and the saints, and brethren with him, and with his usual benediction, **Php 4:21**.

Ver. 1. Therefore, my brethren,.... Not in a natural but spiritual relation; having the same Father, being of the same family, and household of faith: seeing that on the one hand there were false teachers, who stand described by various characters in the preceding chapter, by whom they were in danger of being carried away from the simplicity of the Gospel; and on the other hand, such were the conduct and conversation of the apostle, and other true believers, and such were their expectations of Christ from heaven, and of happiness from him as there expressed; therefore he exhorts to steadfastness in him, and that under the most tender, affectionate, and endearing appellations; given in the uprightness of his soul, without any manner of flattery, to signify his strong affection for them, and to engage them to attend the more to what he was about to exhort them to; and which arose from pure love to them, an hearty concern for their good, and the honour of Christ Jesus:

dearly beloved: as belonging to Christ, interested in him, members of him, redeemed by him, and bearing his image; and as his brethren, and so not loved with a carnal, but spiritual love:

and longed for; to see them, converse with them, and impart some spiritual gift to them; being the excellent in the earth, as other saints, towards whom was his desire, and with whom was all his delight. These epithets are joined with the word "brethren", in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and read thus, "my dearly beloved, and longed for brethren"; and in the Ethiopic version, "our beloved brethren": to which are added,

my joy and crown; they were matter of joy to him, as he had reason to hope well of them; yea, to be confident that the good work was begun, and would be carried on in them; and that they had hitherto continued in the doctrine of the Gospel, and walked worthy of it; and they were his "crown", as they were seals of his ministry; and whom he valued more, and reckoned a greater honour and ornament to him, than the richest diadem, set with the most costly jewels and precious stones, and which he hoped and believed would be his crown of rejoicing another day; when he, with them, should stand at the hand of Christ triumphing, as victors crowned, ever sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell:

so stand fast in the Lord; or "by the Lord"; by his power and strength, which is only able to make to stand fast; saints are liable to failing, and would fall, were they not upheld with his right hand, and kept by his power; they only stand fast, as they stand supported by his strength, trusting in his might, and leaning on his arm. Christ is the only foundation where they can stand safe and sure; and such as are rooted and grounded, and built up in him, are established and stand; though they are still in need of being exhorted to hold the head, abide by him, and cleave unto him; to stand fast in his grace, exercising the graces of faith, hope, and love upon him; in the liberty of Christ, in opposition to the bondage of the law, false teachers were for bringing them into; and in the doctrine of faith, and not depart from it in any degree, nor give way in the least to the opposers of it, but continue steadfast in it without wavering, and which is chiefly intended here: so the Arabic version renders it, "so stand in the faith of the Lord"; both in the grace faith, and in the doctrine of it, and in the profession of both: see 1Co 16:13. The apostle bids them so stand fast; that is, either as they had hitherto done, or as they had him and others for an example; whose views, conversation, and behaviour, are described in the foregoing chapter:

[my] dearly beloved; this, which otherwise would be a repetition of what is before said, is by some connected with the former clause, and read thus, "so stand fast my dearly beloved in the Lord"; and contains a reason, both why they were dearly beloved by the apostle, because beloved in and by the Lord; and why it became them to stand fast in him, and abide by him, his truths, ordinances, cause, and interest.

Philippians 4:2

Ver. 2. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche,.... Two women, who were members of this church at Philippi, and who seem to have been at variance; either with each other, on account of some temporal and civil things, as often is the case of the dear children of God, who fall out by the way; and it becomes a very hard and difficult task to reconcile them, though as here entreated in the most tender and importunate manner to agree: or else with the church, having entertained some sentiments in religion different from it; being drawn aside by false teachers from the simplicity of the Gospel, and their steadfastness in the faith; and this may rather be thought to be the meaning, since the apostle would scarcely take notice of a private difference in so public a manner, and since this exhortation follows so closely the former:

that they be of the same mind in the Lord; either that they agree together, and be reconciled to each other, considering the relation they stood in to one another, and to the Lord; or that they become of the same mind, and embrace the same truths, and profess and maintain the same principles the church did; and so the Arabic version renders it, "that ye entertain one and the same opinion concerning the faith of the Lord".

Philippians 4:3

Ver. 3. And I entreat thee also, true yoke fellow,.... Not his wife, as some think {d}, for he had none, as appears from **1Co 7:7**, at the writing of which epistle he was at Ephesus, where he stayed some little time, and then went to Jerusalem; where he was quickly apprehended, and sent a prisoner to Rome, and where he now was as such; and therefore it is not likely that he should marry a wife within this compass of time, and much less that he should have one at Philippi; besides, the word used is of the masculine gender, and designs a man and not a woman: some think it is the proper name of a man, who was called "Syzygus", and so the Arabic interpreter seems to understand it; and by the apostle, true "Syzygus", signifying that as was his name, so was he, really and in truth, a companion and fellow labourer, that drew in the same yoke with him; the Syriac version renders it, "the son of my yoke", and the Ethiopic version, "my brother and my companion": some think this person was the husband or brother of one of the above women; and therefore is entreated to use his interest, and compose the difference between them, or endeavour to reconcile them to the church; and others that it was the jailer, that was converted by the apostle: but it seems most likely to have been one that was under the same yoke of the Gospel, and who had been employed with him in preaching of it, a fellow labourer; such an one as Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy, and might be one of those; or rather Epaphroditus, who was minister in this church, and by whom the apostle sent this letter, and whom he might address and importune in this manner; the word may very well be thought to answer to the Hebrew word rbx, often used in Jewish writings, for an associate, a colleague, and a disciple of the wise men, to which the apostle may allude; see **Php 2:25**;

help those women; Euodias and Syntyche. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read "them", referring to the above women; and the Arabic version reads, "help both"; that is, both those women; not by relieving their temporal wants, which it does not appear they were in; but either by composing their differences, or by assisting them with good counsel and advice; and giving them proper instructions in the doctrines of the Gospel, that they might be brought to think the same things the church did: and the rather such pains should be taken with them, since they were such, says the apostle,

which laboured with me in the Gospel; not in preaching it, for he suffered not a woman to teach in the church, **1Ti 2:12**; but by professing it, and bearing reproach and persecution for it; and by supporting and encouraging, and spreading it with their worldly substance:

with Clement also; which some think is the same with Clemens Romanus, who was afterwards bishop of Rome, and whose epistle to the Corinthians is still extant; other writings are ascribed to him, but are spurious; however, by his name he seems to be a Roman; and from his being joined with the apostle, as one with whom these women also laboured in the Gospel, he appears to be a preacher of it at Philippi:

and [with] other my fellow labourers; in the work of the ministry, as Timothy, who was with him at Philippi, when he first preached the Gospel there, Ac 16:1, and some others:

whose names [are] in the book of life; the book of God's eternal purposes and decrees, divine predestination to eternal life; and this being called a "book", and the names of persons being said to be in it, denote the love of God to his elect, his care of them, his value for them, his remembrance of them, and the exact knowledge which he has of them; as well as imply, that his eternal election of them is personal and particular, is well known to him, and is sure and unchangeable; being more so than the writing of Pilate on the cross, who said, what I have written, I have written, Joh 19:22; and is called the "book of life", because those whose names are written in it, have a spiritual life here, and an eternal one hereafter; to both which they are afore written in this book, or pre-ordained in God's counsels, and certainly and infallibly enjoy it: now the apostle's knowledge of these persons being written in this book, did not arise from any special revelation, as being shown the book of life, and the names of the elect in it, when he was caught up into the third heaven, 2Co 12:2; nor was his knowledge of this matter peculiar and limited to these persons only, but common to all that he had reason to hope and believe had received the grace of God in truth, and walked worthy of the calling wherewith they were called, **Eph 4:1**; such persons in a judgment of charity, which hopes and believes all things, he concluded were in this book of life; and the same judgment, faith, and hope, ought all believers to form and entertain one of another, nothing appearing contrary to it, in their faith and conversation.

{d} Vid. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 30.

Philippians 4:4

Ver. 4. Rejoice in the Lord alway,.... This is a repetition of the exhortation in the preceding chapter; See Gill on "Php 3:1"; with this addition "alway"; for there is always cause and matter for rejoicing in Christ, even in times of affliction, distress, and persecution; since he is always the same; his grace is always sufficient; his blood has a continual virtue in it, and always speaks for peace and pardon; his righteousness is an everlasting one, and so is his salvation, and such is his love; though some join this word with what follows,

[and] again, I say, rejoice; this is what was continually inculcated by him, as being of great importance and use for the comfort of believers, and the honour of Christ.

Philippians 4:5

Ver. 5. Let your moderation be known unto all men,.... The Vulgate Latin reads, "your modesty". The Syriac and Arabic versions, "your meekness", or "humility"; graces which accompany moderation, and are very necessary to it, but not that itself. The Ethiopic version renders it, "your authority", which by no means agrees; for moderation lies not in exerting authority and power to the uttermost, at least with rigour, but in showing clemency and lenity; not dealing with men according to the severity of laws and strict justice, but according to equity, and with mildness and gentleness; giving up strict and proper right, receding from what is a man's due, and not rigidly insisting on it; putting up with affronts and injuries, and bearing them with patience; and interpreting things in the best sense, and putting the best constructions on words and actions they will bear; and in using inferiors and equals with all humanity, kindness, and respect: and this is what is here intended, which the apostle would have made "known"; exercised and practised publicly, that it might be seen and known of all, and God might be glorified, by whose name they were called, though their agreeable conversation among men; see **Mt 5:16**; and he would not only have this known unto, but exercised towards "all men"; not only to believers, the members of the church, by ruling with gentleness, by bearing the infirmities of the weak, and by forgiving offences; but also to unbelievers, to the men of the world, by not avenging themselves, but giving way to wrath; by patient suffering for well doing, without making any returns of ill, either by words or deeds: this is the moderation here meant, and not moderation in eating and drinking, and in apparel, and in the love and use of, and care for the things of this world; though such moderation highly becomes professors of religion; and much less moderation in religion, or towards the false teachers, thinking and speaking well of them; and interpreting their notions in the best sense, hoping they may mean otherwise than they say, and therefore should treat their persons with great respect, and their principles with tenderness; but this can never be thought to be the apostle's sense, after he had himself given them such names and characters, as in **Php 3:2**; and besides, though we may, and many times ought, as men and Christians, to give way, and yield up what is our right and due, for the sake of peace, yet we cannot, nor ought to give up anything, that of right belongs to God and Christ, in matters of doctrine or worship; nor in the least abate of our zeal for the same, or give way to false teachers in any respect, nor for any time: moreover, moderation in religion is nothing else but lukewarmness and indifference, than which nothing is more detestable, or abhorred by Christ. The argument or reason enforcing moderation in the above sense of it follows,

the Lord [is] at hand. The Syriac version reads, "our Lord": and the Ethiopic version, "God is at hand". The sense is, either the Lord is near, he is omnipresent, and sees and observes the conduct of his people, their deportment in the world, and to one another; and therefore, as in his presence, and under his eye, they should behave according to equity, and with kindness and tenderness towards their fellow creatures and fellow Christians: or the Lord is nigh unto them, as he is to all that call upon him in truth, Ps 145:18; he is a present help in time of trouble, Ps 46:1; he is in the midst of them, and will help, and that right early, Ps 46:5; and will avenge his elect, and vindicate their cause, and right all their wrongs in his due time; and therefore they should take all things patiently, and not avenge themselves: or in a little while Christ will come to judgment, when he will plead the cause of his people, and convince ungodly sinners of their ungodly deeds, and hard speeches against him and his, **Jude 1:15**; and therefore they should leave all to that time, and commit themselves to him that judgeth righteously, **1Pe 2:23**.

Philippians 4:6

Ver. 6. Be careful for nothing,.... This must be understood not in the most extensive sense, but with a limitation and restriction. There are many things that saints are to be careful for, as men and Christians; they are to be careful of their bodies, as well as of their souls; of the health of them, which is to be preserved by all lawful means, and not exposed to unnecessary danger; and for their families, to provide things honest for them, proper food and raiment, and the necessaries of life; for whoever does not do that, denies the faith, and is worse than an infidel; and even for the things of this world in a moderate way, using all diligence and industry in obtaining them; men ought to be careful to discharge the duties of their calling in civil life, and to care and concern themselves for the honour of God, the interest of religion, and the support of the Gospel; and that they offend not God, by sinning against him: but the carefulness the apostle speaks of, is an anxious solicitude for worldly things, an immoderate concern for the things of life, arising from diffidence, or negligence, of the power, providence, and faithfulness of God: saints should not be anxiously, or in a distressing manner concerned for the things of this world, but be content, whether they have less or more; nor be over much pressed with what befalls them, but should cast their care upon the Lord, and carry every case to him, and leave it there:

but in everything. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, "in every time": always, constantly, every day, as often as there is opportunity, and need requires. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions join it with the following clause, "in every prayer and supplication"; but the grammatical construction of the words will not admit of such a version; it is best to understand it of every thing, or case, which should be brought to God; whether it be of a temporal or spiritual kind, relating to body or soul, to ourselves or others, to our families, relations, and acquaintance, the church, or the world:

by prayer and supplication: which may include all sorts of prayer, mental or vocal, private or public, ordinary or extraordinary, and every part of prayer:

prayer may design petition, or asking for good things that are wanted; and "supplication", a deprecating of evils that are feared; though these two are often used together for the same thing, for prayer in general: which ought always to be accompanied

with thanksgiving; for mercies received; for a man can never come to the throne of grace, to ask for grace and mercy, but he has mercies to bless God for, and so to do is very acceptable to God; nor can a person expect to succeed in the enjoyment of future mercies, when he is not thankful for past and present ones: in this manner therefore, at all times, upon every occasion, in a way of humble petition and supplication, joined with thankfulness for all favours,

let your requests be made known to God; not to men; fly not to an arm of flesh, but to God, to him only, and that in the most private mariner, as not to be known by men; and put up such requests, as there may be reason to hope and believe God will "know" and approve of; such as are agreeable to his will, to the covenant of his grace, and the declaration of his word: use familiarity with God, tell him as you would do a friend, freely and fully, all your case, pour out your souls and your complaints before him. This God would have his people do, and he expects it from them; and though he knows all their wants, and what are their desires before they express them, yet he will seem not to know them, or take any notice of them, until they open them to him in some way or other; either by vocal prayer, or mental; by ejaculations, or sighs and groans, by chattering as a crane or a swallow, all which he understands: and be the case made known in what way or manner soever, with ever so much weakness, so be it, it is made known, it is enough, it shall be regarded and not despised.

Philippians 4:7

Ver. 7. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding,.... Not that peace which God calls his people to among themselves in their effectual calling; and which he requires of them to cultivate and maintain; and which he encourages in them by the promise of his gracious presence among them; and which indeed he is the author of, and therefore is so called, **Col 3:15**; and which may be said to surpass or exceed all speculative knowledge, and understanding; for the one puffs up and profits nothing, but the other edifies; and much less that peace which God has in himself, who is all peace and love, and which passes all understanding, human and angelic; but either that peace which is made with God by the blood of Christ, and is published in the Gospel of peace, which passes and surprises all understanding of men and angels, that it should be; that the thoughts of God should be concerning it from everlasting; that a council of peace should be called and held between the eternal Three, and a covenant of peace entered into; that Christ should be appointed the peace maker, and the chastisement of it laid on him; that he should make it by the blood of his cross, and for men, while enemies to God and to himself: or else that peace of conscience, which arises from a view of peace made by Christ; of justification by his righteousness, and atonement by his sacrifice; and which may be called "the peace of Christ", as the Alexandrian copy reads; both because it is founded upon, and springs from him, and is what he is the donor of: and this is what passes the understanding of every natural man; he knows nothing of this peace, what this tranquillity of mind means; he intermeddles not with this joy; it is unaccountable to him how it should be, that such then should have peace, who have so much trouble, are so much reproached, afflicted, and persecuted, and yet have peace in Christ, while they have tribulation in the world; which

shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ, or "in Christ Jesus": some read these words prayer wise, or as a wish, "let it", or "may it keep", so the Vulgate Latin; but they are rather a promise, encouraging the saints to the discharge of the above duties; as rejoicing always in the Lord, showing their moderation to all men, avoiding anxious care, and betaking themselves at all times, on all occasions, to prayer to God; in which way they may expect peace, and such as will be of that see vice to them, as here expressed; that is, be a means of their final perseverance; for the peace of God, in either sense, is a preservation of the saints: peace made with God secures them in Christ from all condemnation by the law, sin, Satan, the world, or their own hearts; and peace in their own souls, on so good a foundation as it is, keeps them through Christ as in a garrison, from being overset with the troubles of the world, or the temptations of Satan; and is a means of preserving them from being carried away with the errors and heresies of the wicked, having a witness to truth within themselves; and from every evil way and work, from profaneness and immorality; the grace of God teaching them, and the love of Christ constraining them, which is shed abroad in their hearts, to live and act otherwise.

Philippians 4:8

Ver. 8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true,.... To close all with respect to the duties of Christianity incumbent on the professors of it, the apostle exhorts to a regard to everything that is true; that is agreeable to the Scriptures of truth, to the Gospel the word of truth, or to the law and light of nature; and whatever was really so, even among the very Heathens, in opposition to falsehood, lying, and hypocrisy

whatsoever things [are] honest; in the sight of men; or grave, or "venerable" in speech, in action or attire, in opposition to levity, frothiness, or foppery:

whatsoever things [are] just; between man and man, or with respect both to God and men; giving to God what belongs to him, and to man what is his due; studying to exercise a conscience void of offence to both, in opposition to all impiety, injustice, violence, and oppression:

whatsoever things [are] pure; or "chaste", in words and deeds, in opposition to all filthiness and foolish talking, to obscene words and actions. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it, "whatsoever things are holy"; which are agreeable to the holy nature, law, and will of God, and which tend to promote holiness of heart and life:

whatsoever [are] lovely; which are amiable in themselves, and to be found even among mere moral men, as in the young man whom Christ as man is said to love, Mr 10:21; and which serve to cultivate and increase love, friendship, and amity among men; and which things also are grateful to God and lovely in his sight, in opposition to all contention, strife, wrath, and hatred:

whatsoever things [are] of good report; are well spoken of, and tend to get and establish a good name, which is better than precious ointment, **Ec 7:1**; for though a good name, credit, and reputation among men, are to be sacrificed for the sake of Christ when called for; yet care is to be taken to preserve them by doing things which may secure them, and cause professors of religion to be well reported of; and which beautiful in all, and absolutely necessary in some:

if [there be] any virtue; anywhere, among any persons whatever, in opposition to vice:

and if [there be] any praise; that is praiseworthy among men, and deserves commendation, even though in an unjust steward, Lu 16:8, it should be regarded. The Vulgate Latin adds, "of discipline", without any authority from any copy. The Claromontane manuscript reads, "if any praise of knowledge":

think on these things: meditate upon them, revolve them in your minds, seriously consider them, and reason with yourselves about them, in order to put them into practice.

Philippians 4:9

Ver. 9. These things which ye have both learned,.... Meaning from himself, in a doctrinal way:

and received; not only into their heads but hearts, had embraced cordially, with great affection, in the love thereof, as well as given a full assent to:

and heard; either publicly or privately, from the pulpit, or in conversation; or had heard of him when absent, or from him when present:

and seen in me: in his life and conversation, which were well known, and were a pattern to them that believe; and therefore he adds,

do; practise the same things which they had learned from him as their duty, and had heard him urge as such, and had seen exemplified in himself:

and the God of peace shall be with you; to give that peace which is beyond the conception of a natural man, and the expression of a spiritual one, and is the great preservative through Christ; and to enable to do and to continue to do the above things, and to keep them from all harm, and every enemy of their souls; to favour them with his gracious presence here, and with endless peace hereafter.

Philippians 4:10

Ver. 10. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly,.... The apostle proceeds to the last part of this epistle, and to take notice of the present which these Philippians had sent him, on account of which this his rejoicing was; and which was not small but great, and was not of a carnal but spiritual kind; it was a joy in the Holy Ghost, which is opposed to meats and drinks, and earthly enjoyments; it was a joy in the Lord; "in our Lord", as the Syriac version renders it; it was not so much on account of the nature, substance, quantity or quality of the things sent him, and the suitableness of them to his present necessity; but because this thing was of the Lord, he had put it into their hearts to do it, and had given them not only ability, but a willing mind, and had wrought in them both to will and to do; and because what they did they did for the sake of Christ, and to him as an apostle of his, and in obedience to Christ, and with a view to promote his cause and interest, honour and glory:

that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; which supposes that they had formerly, at the first preaching of the Gospel, showed great respect to him, and took great care of him, as appears from **Php 4:15**, but that for some time past, and it seems for a considerable while, they had dropped it, or at least had not shown it; but that now it revived again, and was seen in the present they had now sent him. The allusion is to trees, which in the summer season bear much fruit, in autumn cast their leaves, and in the winter are entirely bare, and in the spring of the year revive again, and put forth leaves and fruit: and just so it is with the saints, they are compared to trees, and are called trees of righteousness, Isa 61:3, and are fruitful ones, Jer 23:3; but they have their winter seasons, when they are barren and unfruitful, and look as if they were dead; but when it is a spring time with them they revive again, as in the exercise of their faith and hope in Christ, so of their love to him, and to one another, and the ministers of the Gospel; when the south wind of the Spirit blows, the sun of righteousness arises, and, the dews of divine grace fall upon them; and such a revival was now in this church; and this was what the apostle so much rejoiced in, not so much for the gift bestowed on him, as for the fruit that appeared in them; see **Php 4:17**; but whereas he had said that this care of him flourished again, "at last"; lest this should be thought as finding fault with them, and bringing a charge against them, he corrects himself by adding,

wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity; signifying that he believed they had entertained the same sentiments of him, had the same affection and inward care for him all along; but they had no opportunity of showing it, he being at such a distance, and they having no convenient or proper persons to send to him; or were hindered through multiplicity of business on their hands, that they could not attend to him; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "but ye were busied", or taken up and employed in business; or it was for want of ability; for the words will bear to be rendered, "but ye lacked ability"; and to this sense does the Syriac version render it, Nwtywh Nyqpo al ala, "but ye were not sufficient"; or had not a sufficiency, were not able to do it, and therefore to be easily excused.

Philippians 4:11

Ver. 11. Not that I speak in respect of want,.... Either of want of will in them;

of their slowness and backwardness in their care of him, postponing him to others, caring for him last of all; this gave him no uneasiness, he did not take it ill, knowing and owning himself to be less than the least of all saints: or of his own want before this present came; and his sense is, that he did not express himself with so much joy, because of the penury and distress he was in before the things came to him which they sent; for he was not in want; though he had nothing, he possessed all things, and was as happy, and in as comfortable a frame, and in as much content then as now:

for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, [therewith] to be content; or "to be sufficient", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; or that that is sufficient for me which I have, as the Syriac version renders it; for the word here used signifies to be self-sufficient, or to have a sufficiency in one's self, which in the strict sense of the phrase is only true of God, who is "El-shaddai", God all-sufficient; but, in a lower sense, is true of such who are contented with their present state and condition, with such things as they have, be they more or less, and think that they have enough, as old Jacob did, Ge 33:11; and such persons have a sort of an all-sufficiency in them; they are thankful for every thing they have, be it little or more, and in every state, whether of adversity or prosperity; and quietly and patiently submit to the will of God, and cheerfully take and bear whatever is assigned them as their portion; and such an one was the apostle: he was not only content with food and raiment, and such things as he had, but even when he had nothing at all; when he had neither bread to eat nor clothes to wear; when he was in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, as was sometimes his case; and therefore he does not say here, that he had learnt to be content with such things as he had, but en oiv eimi, "in what I am": and this he had not by nature, but by grace; it was not natural, but adventitious to him; it was not what he had acquired by his industry, but what he had "learned"; and that not in the school of nature and reason, while an unregenerate man; nor at the feet of Gamaliel, while he was training up under him in the law of Moses, and in the traditions of the elders; but he learned it of God, and was taught it by the revelation of Christ, and under the teachings of the Spirit of God, and that in the school of affliction, by a train of experiences, of many sorrows, afflictions, and distresses; for this lesson is learned quite contrary to all the rules and reasons among men, not by prosperity, but by adversity: many are the things that may excite and encourage to the exercise of this heavenly grace, where it is wrought; as the consideration of the unalterable will of God, according to which every man's state and condition is settled, and therefore what God has made crooked can never be made straight; and of our case when we came into the world, and what that will be when we go out of it, naked and bare of this world's things; and of our unworthiness of the least mercy at the hand of God: add to which, the consideration of God being our portion and exceeding great reward; of having an interest in Christ and all things in him; and of the profits and pleasures of a life of contentment; and of the promises which God has made to such; and of the future glory and happiness which will shortly be enjoyed: so that a believer may say, who has the smallest pittance of earthly enjoyments, this, with a covenant God, with an interest in Christ, with grace here and heaven hereafter, is enough.

Philippians 4:12

Ver. 12. I know both how to be abased,.... Or "humbled"; to be treated with indignity and contempt, to be trampled upon by man, to suffer hardships and distress, to be in a very mean and low condition, to work with his own hands, and minister to his own and the necessities of others in that way; yea, to be in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, and have no certain dwelling place; and he knew how to behave under all this; not to be depressed and cast down, or to fret, repine, and murmur:

and I know how to abound; or "to excel"; to be in the esteem of men, and to have an affluence of the things of this world, and how to behave in the midst of plenty; so as not to be lifted up, to be proud and haughty, and injurious to fellow creatures; so as not to abuse the good things of life; and so as to use them to the honour of God, the interest of religion, and the good of fellow creatures, and fellow Christians:

every where; whether among Jews or Gentiles, at Jerusalem or at Rome, or at whatsoever place; or as the Arabic version renders it, "every time": always, in every season, whether of adversity or prosperity:

and in all things; in all circumstances of life:

I am instructed; or "initiated", as he was by the Gospel; and, ever since he embraced it, was taught this lesson of contentment, and inured to the exercise of it, and was trained up and instructed how to behave himself in the different changes and vicissitudes he came into:

both to be full, and to be hungry; to know what it was to have plenty and want, to have a full meal and to want one, and be almost starved and famished, and how to conduct under such different circumstances:

both to abound and to suffer need; which the apostle repeats for confirmation sake; and the whole of what he here says is an explanation of the lesson of contentment he had learned; and the knowledge he speaks of was not speculative but experimental, and lay not merely in theory, but in practice; and now lest he should be thought guilty of arrogance, and to ascribe too much to himself, he in **Php 4:13** attributes all to the power and grace of Christ.

Philippians 4:13

Ver. 13. I can do all things,.... Which must not be understood in the greatest latitude, and without any limitation; for the apostle was not omnipotent, either in himself, or by the power of Christ; nor could he do all things that Christ could do; but it must be restrained to the subject matter treated of: the sense is, that he could be content in every state, and could know how to behave himself in adversity and prosperity, amidst both poverty and plenty; yea, it may be extended to all the duties incumbent on him both as a Christian and as an apostle, as to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and men; to take the care of all the churches; to labour more abundantly than others in preaching the Gospel; and to bear all afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions for the sake of it; yea, he could willingly and cheerfully endure the most cruel and torturing death for the sake of Christ: all these things he could do, not in his own strength, for no man was more conscious of his own weakness than he was, or knew more of the impotency of human nature; and therefore always directed others to be strong in the Lord, and in, the power of his might, and in the grace that is in Christ, on which he himself always depended, and by which he did what he did; as he adds here,

through Christ which strengtheneth me. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the word "Christ", and only read "him"; and so the Alexandrian copy and others; but intend Christ as those that express it: strength to perform duty and to bear sufferings is in Christ, and which he communicates to his people; he strengthens them with strength in their souls, internally, as the word here used signifies; by virtue of which they can do whatever he enjoins them or calls them to, though without him they can do nothing.

Philippians 4:14

Ver. 14. Notwithstanding ye have well done,.... This he says lest they should think he slighted their kindness, and lest they should be discouraged from doing any such thing of this kind another time, either to himself or others; for though he was so well contented with his state, and knew how to be abased and to suffer need, and could do all things through the strength of Christ, yet he observes they did well in communicating to him; for communicating to poor saints or ministers is a considerable branch of well doing; it is a good work when it is done in faith, and from love, and with a view to the glory, honour, and interest of Christ; it is what is agreeable to the will of God, and is an odour of a sweet smell, and acceptable to him:

that ye did communicate with my affliction; by which is meant, not any affliction of mind, for he was in as comfortable a frame, had as clear views of his interest in God, as his covenant God, and was as contented and satisfied as ever he was in his life; nor any disorder or distemper of body; but he was in prison and penury: these Philippians communicated with him in it, both by sympathizing with him in his tribulation, and by sending their minister to visit him, and with him a present for his relief and support; in doing which they did well.

Philippians 4:15

Ver. 15. Now ye Philippians know also,.... As well as the apostle did, that they not only communicated now, but also had done formerly, and when none else beside them did; wherefore he not only commends them for their present kindness to him, but for their past favours:

that in the beginning of the Gospel; of the preaching of it by the apostle in the parts of Macedonia, particularly at Philippi; as soon as ever the Gospel was preached to them, they showed a grateful and beneficent spirit; of which we have an instance in Lydia, the first person we read of converted there, and also in the jailer, who was the next; see Ac 16:12; yea, not only while he was with them they communicated to him, but when he was gone from them:

when I departed from Macedonia; when he went to Corinth and other places, to preach the Gospel in other parts and to other people, they sent the brethren after him with presents which supplied what was lacking to him, and in which other churches were deficient; see
2Co 11:8; the Ethiopic version reads, "when ye went from Macedonia with me": but is not supported by any copy or other version:

no church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only; the phrase, "giving and receiving", is the same with Ntmw avm, which is often used by the Jews for trading and commerce {e}; and the allusion is to the keeping of accounts by men in business, by debtor and creditor, in a book, putting down in one column what is delivered out, and in the other what is received, whereby accounts are kept clear: the apostle's meaning is, that whereas he and his fellow ministers had delivered out spiritual things to this church, they had in return communicated their carnal things; so that there was a proper account kept, which was not observed by other churches, and which was greatly to the commendation of this.

{e} Vid. Kimchi in Psal. xv. 3. & Targum in Isa. ix. 4.

Philippians 4:16

Ver. 16. For even in Thessalonica,.... When the apostle was there; for from Philippi he went to Thessalonica; see Ac 17:1;

ye sent once and again unto my necessity; for his use and service, to support him while he was at that place, and relieve and assist him in his necessities; for the people at Thessalonica were either not able to communicate, or were not of a beneficent disposition, or the apostle did not care to be chargeable to them; and they seem many of them to have been idle and lazy, and therefore he wrought among them with his own hands to set them an example; and the Philippians hearing and knowing that this was the case, sent frequently, while he was here, some of the brethren with gifts unto him.

Philippians 4:17

Ver. 17. Not because I desire a gift,.... This commendation of them he entered into, not because he desired another present to be made to him, either by them or others; he was not a man of such a disposition, he was not like one of those that could never have enough; he was fully satisfied and highly contented with what he had; he was not like the false teachers, that made merchandise of men; he sought not theirs, but them:

but I desire fruit that may abound to your account; he had planted them, or had been an instrument in planting of them, as trees of righteousness, Isa 61:3; and his great desire was to see fruits of righteousness grow upon them, **Php 1:11**;

by which sometimes are meant acts of beneficence, as in **2Co 9:10**; and that these might be abundant and turn to their profit and advantage, as such fruit does; for God does not forget to recompence acts of bounty, and labours of love, but if even a cup of cold water is given to a prophet or minister of Christ, on account of his being so, it shall have its reward in the issue of things, upon the casting up of accounts, Mt 10:42; for the apostle still has reference unto that; his view was, that the balance might be on their side, and that much might be received by them; so that it was not for himself, but for their encouragement and future good, he said this; for as for himself he adds,

Philippians 4:18

Ver. 18. But I have all things, and abound,.... Or "I have received all things", as the Syriac version renders it; all that they had sent by Epaphroditus; and for which he now gives a receipt; and by virtue of which he now abounded; and which abundance of his was not so much owing to the largeness of their presents, as to the peace of his mind; looking upon this gift of theirs, though it might be but small in itself, a fulness to him; for he adds,

I am full; as much as he desired, he wanted no more, he had enough:

having received of Epaphroditus the things [which were sent] from you: and which he acknowledged, that the character of this good man might stand clear, who had been intrusted with this affair:

an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God, this is said in allusion to the sacrifices under the former dispensation, in which God smelled a sweet savour, **Ge 8:21**, in reference to which, as the sacrifice of Christ is said to be of a sweet smelling savour, **Eph 5:2**, and as the spiritual sacrifices of the saints, as praises and prayers, are called odours, **Re 5:8**, and are said to be acceptable unto God, **1Pe 2:5**; so acts of beneficence are called sacrifices, with which he is well pleased, Heb 13:16.

Philippians 4:19

Ver. 19. But my God shall supply all your need,.... Or "fulfil all your need": the Jews, when they would comfort any, under the loss of any worldly enjoyment, used to say, Knwrox Kl almy Mwqmh, "God fulfil", or "will fulfil thy need" {f}. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read these words as a wish or prayer, "but may my God supply" or "fulfil all your need"; I am not able to make you any returns, but I pray that my God would recompence it to you, that as you have supplied my want, he would supply all yours; but we with others, and as the Ethiopic version, read, "shall" or "will supply"; as an assertion by way of promise, though he could not, yet his God would; he who was his God, not only as the God of nature and providence, or as the God of the Israelites, but as the God of all grace; who had loved him as such, had chosen, adopted, regenerated, and sanctified him; who was his God in Christ, and by virtue of the covenant of grace, and which was made known in the effectual calling; whose ambassador he was, and whom he had faithfully served in the Gospel of his Son; this God, who had been his God, was and would be so unto death, in whom he had an interest, and because he had an interest in him, and was thus related to him, be firmly believed, and fully assures these saints, that he would supply their wants who had been so careful of him: believers, though they need nothing as considered in Christ, being complete and filled full in him, having in him all grace, and all spiritual blessings, and under believing views of this at times, see themselves complete and wanting nothing; yet, in themselves, they are poor and needy, and often want fresh discoveries of the love of God to them, fresh supplies of grace from Christ, stand in need of more light from him, and to be quickened according to his word; they want fresh supplies of strength from him answerable to the service and work they are daily called to; and as their trials and afflictions abound, they have need of renewed comfort to support under them; and have also need of fresh manifestations and applications of pardoning grace to their souls, and fresh views of the righteousness of Christ, as their justifying righteousness before God; and, in a word, need daily food for their souls as for their bodies: now God, who is also their God, is able and willing to supply their wants; and he does so, he withholds no good thing from them, nor do they want any good thing needful for them, for he supplies "all" their need; and this they may expect, since he is the God of all grace, and a fulness of grace is in his Son; and this grace is sufficient for them, and a supply of it is given them by the Spirit;

according to his riches; God is rich not only in the perfections of his nature, which are inconceivable and incommunicable; and in the works of his hands, of creation and providence, the whole earth is full of his riches, Ps 104:24, and according to these riches of his goodness he supplies the wants of all creatures living; but he is also rich in grace and mercy, **Eph 2:4**, and it is according to the riches of his grace he supplies the spiritual wants of his people, and he does it like himself, according to the riches he has; he gives all things richly to enjoy, plenteously and abundantly:

in glory: in a glorious manner, so as to show himself glorious, and make his people so, to the glory of his rich grace; and "with glory", as it may be rendered, with eternal glory; he will not only give grace here, and more of it as is needful, according to the abundance of it in himself and in his Son, but glory hereafter: and all

by Christ Jesus; and through him, who is full of grace and truth; who is the Mediator in whom the fulness of it lies, and through whose hands, and by whom, it is communicated to the saints: or "with Christ Jesus"; along with him God gives all things freely, all things pertaining to life and godliness: or "for the sake of Christ Jesus"; not for any worth or merit in men, but for the sake of Christ, in whom they are accepted, and on whose account respect is had to their persons, and so to their wants.

{f} T. Bab. Betacot, fol. 16. 2. Debarim Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 239. 4.

Philippians 4:20

Ver. 20. Now unto God and our Father,.... To God, who is our Father in Christ,

[be] glory for ever and ever, Amen; for all the grace he gives now, and for all the glory and happiness expected hereafter; for the supply of every want both temporal and spiritual; seeing every good gift comes from him, and is to be ascribed to his free grace and favour, and not to any deserts of men: and particularly he may mean for what they had sent him, and he had received from them.

Philippians 4:21

Ver. 21. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus,.... Meaning at Philippi, whether rich or poor, lesser or greater believers, common saints, as well as the officers of the church, bishops and deacons; who were in Christ by electing grace, and as their covenant head, and representative from everlasting, and which was manifested and made known by their conversion and the effectual calling:

the brethren which are with me greet you; such as Timothy; see **Php 2:19**; and Epaphras, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, and Lucas; see **Phm 1:23**; he makes no mention of Peter anywhere, when he writes from Rome or to it, which shows he was not there then, or a bishop of that place, as the Papists say.

Philippians 4:22

Ver. 22. All the saints salute you,.... The members of the church at Rome,

chiefly they that are of Caesar's household; for by means of the apostle's bonds, which were made manifest in the emperor's palace, Christ was made known to some there likewise; though Nero, the then reigning emperor, was a very wicked prince, and his court a very debauched one, yet the grace of God reached some there: who these were cannot be said; as for the conjecture that Seneca the philosopher, Nero's master, was one of them, it is without foundation; the eight letters of his to the Apostle Paul, and the six letters of the apostle to him, are spurious, though of ancient date, being made mention of by Austin and Jerom {g}: a like groundless conjecture is that, that Lucan the poet, Seneca's brother's son, was another; for there is nothing in his writings, or in any account of him, any more than in the former, that shows him to be a Christian. Torpes, a man in great favour and dignity in Nero's court, and Evellius his counsellor, who both suffered martyrdom under him, according to the Roman martyrology, are also mentioned.

{g} Vid. Fabricii Bibliothec. Latin, p. 69.

Philippians 4:23

Ver. 23. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you all,.... The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, "with your spirit", as in **Ga 6:18**; and so the Alexandrian copy and some others read. This is the apostle's token in all his epistles of the genuineness of them, and which he wrote with his own hand, **2Th 3:17**;
See Gill on "Ro 16:22",
See Gill on "Ro 16:24".

Amen: with which all the epistles are concluded;
See Gill on "Ro 16:27".

The subscription is,

[it was] written [to] the Philippians from Rome, by Epaphroditus; that this

epistle was written to the Philippians by the Apostle Paul, when he was a prisoner at Rome, and sent to them by Epaphroditus their minister, when he returned from him to them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Colossians 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS

The Colossians, to whom this epistle is written, were not the Rhodians, by some called Colossians, from Colossus, the large statue of the sun, which stood in the island of Rhodes, and was one of the seven wonders of the world; but the inhabitants of Colosse, a city of the greater Phrygia, in the lesser Asia, near to which stood the cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis, mentioned in this epistle. Pliny {a} speaks of it as one of the chief towns in Phrygia, and {b} Herodotus calls it the great city of Phrygia; it is said to have perished a very little time after the writing of this epistle, with the above cities, by an earthquake, in the year of Christ 66, and in the tenth of Nero {c}; though it was afterwards rebuilt; for Theophylact says, that in his time it was called Chonae. When the Gospel was brought hither, and by whom, is not known, nor who was the founder of the church in this place; for the Apostle Paul was not, since his face had never been seen by them, **Col 2:1**, though it is said that Epaphras, the same name with Epaphroditus, was fixed by him pastor of this church; and others say Philemon was set over it by him. The occasion of this epistle was this, Epaphras, who had preached the Gospel to the Colossians, and very likely was the first that did, came to Rome, where the Apostle Paul was a prisoner, and gave him an account of them, how they had heard and received the Gospel, and of their faith Christ, and love to the saints; and also declared to him in what danger they were through some false teachers that had got among them, who were for introducing the philosophy of the Gentiles, the ceremonies of the law of Moses, and some pernicious tenets of the followers of Simon Magus, and the Gnostics; upon which the apostle writes this epistle to them, to confirm them in the faith of the Gospel Epaphras had preached unto them, and which was the same he himself preached; and to warn them against those bad men, and their principles; and to exhort them to a discharge of their duty to God, and men, and one another. It was written by the apostle, when in bonds at Rome, as many passages in it show, and about the same time with those to the Philippians and Ephesians; and the epistle to the latter greatly agrees with this, both as to subject and style. Dr. Lightfoot places it in the year of Christ 60, in the second of the apostle's imprisonment, and in the sixth of Nero's reign.

{a} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 32. {b} Polymnia, l. 7. c. 30. {c} Eusebius in Chron.

INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS 1

This chapter contains the inscription of the epistle; the apostle's usual salutation; his thanksgiving to God on behalf of the Colossians for grace received; his prayers, that more might be given them; an enumeration of various blessings of grace, which require thankfulness, in which the glories and excellencies of Christ are particularly set forth: and it is concluded with an exhortation to a steadfast adherence to the Gospel, taken from the nature, excellency, and usefulness of the ministry of it. The inscription, and the salutation, are in **Col 1:1**, and are the same with those in the epistle to the Ephesians, only Timothy is joined with the apostle here, and the Colossians have the additional character of brethren given them. The thanksgiving is in **Col 1:3**, the object of it is God, the Father of Christ; the time when made, when in prayer to him; its subject matter, the faith and love of the saints; to which is added, their happiness secured for them in heaven, their hope was conversant with: and whereas the Gospel was the means by which they came to the hearing and knowledge of it, this is commended from the subject of it, the doctrine of truth; from the spread of it in the world; and from its efficacy in bringing forth fruit in all, to whom it came in power, and that with constancy, **Col 1:5**, and also from the testimony of Epaphras, a faithful minister of Christ, and theirs, who was dear to the apostle, and of whom he had the above account of them, **Col 1:7**. And then follow his prayers for them, that they might have an increase of spiritual knowledge, and that they might put in practice what they knew; and for that purpose he entreats they might be blessed with strength, patience, and longsuffering, **Col 1:9**. And in order to excite thankfulness in himself and them, he takes notice of various blessings of grace; of the Father's grace in giving a meetness for eternal glory and happiness, by delivering from the power of darkness, and translating into the kingdom of his Son, **Col 1:12**, and of the Son's grace in obtaining redemption by his blood, and procuring the remission of sins, **Col 1:14**, which leads the apostle to enlarge upon the excellencies of the author of these blessings, in his divine person, as the image of God, and the first cause of all created beings, **Col 1:15**, which he proves by an enumeration of them, as created by him, and for his sake, by his pre-existence to them, and their dependence on him, **Col 1:16**, and in his office capacity, as Mediator, being the head of the church, the governor of it, and the first that rose from the dead; by all which it appears that he has, and ought to have the pre-eminence, **Col 1:18**. And this is still more manifest from his having all fulness dwelling in him, to supply his body the church, of which he is the head, **Col 1:19**, and from the reconciliation of all the members of it to God by him, **Col 1:20**, which blessing of grace is amplified partly by the subjects of it, who are described by their former state and condition, aliens and enemies, and by their present one, reconciled by the death of Christ in his fleshly body; and partly by the end of it, the presentation of them holy, blameless, and irreprovable in the sight of God, **Col 1:21**. Wherefore it is a duty incumbent on such to abide by the Gospel of Christ, which brings the good tidings of peace and reconciliation, and is the means of faith and hope; and the rather, since they had heard it themselves, and others also, even every creature under heaven; and the apostle was a minister of it, **Col 1:23**, and on his ministration of it he enlarges, by observing his sufferings for the church on account of the Gospel, which he endured with pleasure; and therefore they should, by his example, be encouraged to continue in it, **Col 1:24**. Moreover, he argues the same from his commission of God to preach it for their sakes, **Col 1:25**, and from the nature and subject matter of it, being a hidden mystery, and containing riches and glory in it; yea, Christ himself, the foundation of hope of eternal glory, **Col 1:26**, and from the end of preaching it, which was to present every man perfect in Christ; which end the apostle laboured and strove to obtain through the power and energy of divine grace, which wrought in him, and with him, **Col 1:28**.

Ver. 1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ,.... The apostle puts his name to this epistle, by which he was known in the Gentile world, as he usually does in all his epistles; and styles himself "an apostle", as he was, having seen Christ in person, and received his commission, doctrine, and qualifications immediately from him, with a power of doing miracles to confirm the truth of his mission. This he chose to make mention of, partly because the false teachers everywhere insinuated that he was not an apostle; and partly to give the greater sanction and authority, and command the greater regard and credit to what he should say; as well as to excuse his freedom in writing to them whom he had never seen, since he was an apostle of the Gentiles, and so to them; see Ro 11:13; he calls himself an apostle "of Jesus Christ"; not of men, he was not sent out by men, but by Christ, who appeared to him, made him a minister of his, gave him his Gospel by revelation, abundantly qualified him for the work, sent him forth unto the Gentiles, in whose name he went as an ambassador and messenger of his, and whom he preached, and by whom he was greatly succeeded, to the conversion of many souls, who were seals of his apostleship in every place, **1Co 9:2**: into which office he came

by the will of God; not by the will of men, for he derived no authority and power, nor received any doctrine from men; nor by his own will, of his own head, by any usurpation of his; he did not take this office upon him of himself, but was invested with it, according to the secret will and purpose of God, from everlasting, who had ordained and appointed him to this service, and according to his will of command made known to him in time, when he told him what he should do, and openly separated, and sent him forth to do the work he had called him to; and which arose not from any merits or worthiness of the apostle, but from the sovereign good will and pleasure, free grace and favour, of God, to which the apostle continually ascribes it in all his epistles:

and Timotheus [our] brother; who joined with the apostle in this epistle, and whom he calls a "brother"; partly because of the Christian relation he stood in to him, and them, they being all brethren, children of the same Father, partakers of the same grace of regeneration, belonging to the same family, and so should own and love one another as brethren; and partly and chiefly because of his being a brother, companion, fellow soldier, and a fellow labourer in the Gospel. He mentions him, either because he was known unto them, or that he might be so; and to show the agreement there was between them in the doctrine of Christ, which might have the greater weight with them to abide in it.

Colossians 1:2

Ver. 2. To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ,.... This is the inscription of the epistle, in which the persons wrote unto are described as "saints", or holy men; not by birth, for all are unholy and unclean by nature; nor by baptism, for that neither takes away sin, nor gives grace; nor merely externally, by an outward reformation; but by separation, being by an act of eternal election set apart for God, for holiness, and happiness; and by imputation, Christ being made sanctification to them; and by the sanctifying grace of the Spirit of God in regeneration, being called with an holy calling, and having principles of grace and holiness wrought in them, and they formed as new men in righteousness and true holiness: and as "brethren"; being born of God, having him for their Father, and being of his household, and a part of the family in heaven and earth named of Christ, and heirs together of the grace of life, and of the heavenly glory: and as "faithful" ones; true and sincere believers in Christ, constant and persevering in the faith of him; faithful to the Gospel, and their profession of it, and to Christ, whose name they bore, and to one another, to whom they stood in the relation of brethren: and all this "in Christ"; and by, and through him; they were saints in him; they were chosen in him, and sanctified in him their head, and received all their holiness from him; they were brethren in him the firstborn of them; his God being their God, and his Father their Father; and had their faith and faithfulness from him, as well as it was exercised towards, and on him: and they are further described by the place of their abode,

which are at Colosse: a city of Phrygia:

grace [be] unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the salutation, and which stands in this form in most of Paul's epistles; See Gill on "Ro 1:7". The Syriac version puts "peace" before "grace", and leaves out the last clause, "and the Lord Jesus Christ"; as does also the Ethiopic version.

Colossians 1:3

Ver. 3. We give thanks to God,.... Meaning himself and Timothy. This is the beginning of the epistle, which is introduced with a thanksgiving to God; to whom praise and thankfulness are always due as a Creator and preserver, as the author of all good things, as the Father of mercies, temporal and spiritual, and as the covenant God and Father of his people through Christ: wherefore it follows,

and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the sense of which either is, that God the Father, who is the object of praise and thanksgiving, is both the God of Christ, and the Father of Christ, the God of Christ, as Christ is man, and the Father of Christ, as Christ is God; or the latter is exegetical of the former, and may be rendered thus, "God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ": and very properly are thanks given to him under this character, because it is as he is the Father of Christ that he blesses his people with all spiritual blessings; and because he is their God, as well as his God; and their Father, as well as his Father, though in a different sense, his by nature, theirs by adoption. Moreover, as all their blessings come from God, as the Father of Christ, and through Christ, and for his sake, so it is very proper that thanks should be returned unto him under that character; and through Christ, by whom alone such sacrifices of praise are acceptable to God: it is added,

praying always for you; which, as it is expressive of the constant discharge of the duty of prayer, and the continual remembrance of these saints in it, and shows the affection the apostle had for them; so it points out the time when, and the way and manner in which Paul and Timothy gave thanks to God on account of them; it was when they were at the throne of grace, and in their frequent prayers to God; thankfulness for mercies received, both by ourselves and others, being a branch of the duty of prayer.

Colossians 1:4

Ver. 4. Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus,.... This expresses the matter of their thankfulness, or what it was they gave thanks to God for, their faith in Christ; by which is not only meant their hearty assent to the whole doctrine of faith, concerning the person, offices, and grace of Christ, their soundness and steadfastness in it, and their sincere and constant profession of it; but the grace of faith in them, the operation of the Spirit of God in their souls, which had not Moses, nor any mere man, but Christ for its object; by which they looked unto him as a Saviour, went unto him as such, ventured on him, committed themselves unto him, leaned and relied upon him; that grace which comes from him, has him for its author and finisher, and returns unto him, and lives on him. This Paul and Timothy had heard of by their minister Epaphras; and it shows that they made no secret of it, did not keep it to themselves, but declared, confessed, and published it to others, as is the duty of all believers to do; and thanks being given for it to God, makes it a clear point that it was not of themselves, but was the gift of God, otherwise there would have been no need of thankfulness for it; as also, that it is a very eminent grace, and of great use and service to such who are possessed of it.

And of love [which ye have] to all the saints; this is another thing for which thanks are given to God. The object of this grace are "saints"; all men indeed are to be loved, and even our very enemies; and good is to be done to all, but especially to holy and good men, to the household of faith; and these are "all" to be loved and respected; nor is any respect or difference of persons to be made on account of country, or natural relation, as Jews or Gentiles, or of outward state and condition, as rich or poor, bond or free, or of greater or lesser gifts and grace, weak or strong believers, or of different sentiments in the lesser matters of religion. It denotes both the grace of love itself, which is a fruit of the Spirit implanted in regeneration, and is an evidence of the new birth, and always is where true faith in Christ is, for faith works by it; and also the effects of it, which lies not in bare words, in expressions of spiritual affection and friendship, but in deeds, by serving one another in love, by relieving in necessity, sympathizing in distress, praying with and for one another, and the like; all which these saints were famous for.

Colossians 1:5

Ver. 5. For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven,.... These words may be considered either in connection with the foregoing, and express the reason or motive which encouraged these saints to believe in Christ, and to go on believing in him, and hold fast the profession of their faith in him, and to love the saints, and show it upon all occasions, and in every case; because of the rich treasure of glory and happiness in reserve for them in heaven, which they were hoping and waiting for; this encouraged their faith in Christ, and enlarged their love and beneficence to the saints: or else with the thanksgiving of the apostle, and so contains fresh matter of it, that as thanks were given for faith and love, so for "hope"; by which is meant, not the grace of hope, for that is not in heaven, though it enters within the vail, and is conversant with heavenly things, but is in the heart; and though it supposes it, and which these persons had; they were not without it; they had a good hope through grace of eternal glory, for faith, hope, and love, always go together: nor Christ the foundation of hope; there are many things in him, which are a ground of hope of happiness, as his sufferings, and death, and redemption thereby; his resurrection from the dead, his intercessions and preparations; the promise of life in him, and the thing itself being in his gift; his righteousness and grace, which, give a title to it, and meetness for it; and he is also in heaven, but then he cannot be said to be laid up there: but the thing hoped for, everlasting happiness, is intended; see **Tit 2:13** **Ga 5:5**; which is so called, because it is the object of hope; is not yet possessed; is future; is not seen; is difficult, and yet possible to be enjoyed: this is said to be "laid up"; which denotes the preciousness and valuableness of it, it is a treasure, an inheritance, a kingdom, and riches of glory; and the secrecy and hiddenness of it, it consists of things invisible to the bodily eye, and which are out of the reach of carnal sense and reason, of which faith only has some small glimpse; and also the safety of it, it is hid in Christ, it is reserved "in heaven", and cannot be come at, and spoiled by men or devils; and likewise the free grace and goodness of God in laying up and providing things of such a nature for his children and friends: the place where it is, in heaven, where moth and rust corrupt not, and thieves cannot break through and steal; and so is safe, and must be of an heavenly nature, as it is for heavenly persons: "for you"; the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, for those who were chosen in Christ, for whom it was prepared from the foundation of the world; for this is not laid up for any, for everyone, but for the chosen of God, and precious; whom God has distinguished by his grace, Christ has redeemed by his blood, and the Spirit regenerates and sanctifies, and who have faith, hope, and love, given unto them; and this was not only laid up for them, but they knew of it, they were made acquainted with it:

whereof ye heard before; before the writing of this epistle, under the ministry of their faithful teacher Epaphras:

in the word of the truth of the Gospel; or in the true word of the Gospel; which comes from the God of truth, is indited by the Spirit of truth, is concerning Christ the truth, and which contains nothing but truth, and lies in the Scriptures of truth: or "in the word of truth", even the Gospel; which explains what word of truth is meant. The law is the word of truth; and many of the words of men, of the philosophers, were words of truth; but it was not in either of them they had heard of eternal life laid up in heaven; of which there were hopes to be entertained by sinful creatures, enjoying it through Christ: this is what only the Gospel brings an account of; life and immortality are only brought to light by the Gospel; which not only speaks of it, but lays that before men, which give them ground and encouragement to hope for it.

Colossians 1:6

Ver. 6. Which is come unto you,.... That is, the Gospel, which came to them from God, from heaven, from Christ, out of Jerusalem, from whence the word of the Lord was to come, by the ministers of the Gospel, who being sent, came to Colosse, and there preached it; and so the Syriac version renders the words tzrktad yh, "which is preached unto you". And a wonderful instance of the free grace of God this was; they did not seek, inquire for, and go after the Gospel, but it came to them; and so Christ was found of them by it, who sought him not, and made manifest in his person, grace, and righteousness to them that asked not after him: for this Gospel came not to them in, word only, but with the power of the Holy Spirit: it was come, eiv umav, "into you", as the phrase may be rendered, into their very hearts, and wrought effectually there, enlightening, convincing, comforting, and instructing them; where it had a place, and remained; for the words may be read, as they are by the Arabic version, "which is present with you". The Gospel is always in one place or another, and will be to the end of the world; but it is not always in the same place; but as yet it was not removed from Colosse; it was still with them in the external ministry of it, and it remained in their hearts in the powerful and comfortable experience of it:

as [it is] in all the world; as it was come into, and preached to all the world, and was made useful, and continued in all the world at that time. Christ gave his disciples a commission to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; it was no more to be restrained to a particular nation, but was made general and common to all the nations of the world, and accordingly they preached it to all; and by this time had delivered the joyful message to the greater part of the world, which is sometimes meant by all the world, and the whole world; or it had been now preached in all the known and habitable parts of the world by one apostle and another, some being sent into one part, and some into another; so that the grace of God appeared to all men, and the doctrine of it had been preached to every creature under the heaven, according to Christ's commission; the Gospel of the kingdom was to be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations, before the end of the Jewish state came, or before the destruction of Jerusalem, which was not many years after the writing of this epistle. Now this shows, that it was the same Gospel which had been preached at Colosse by their faithful minister there, as had been preached in other areas, and in all parts of the world by the apostles; which is said in the commendation of the Gospel, it being one, uniform, consistent, and all of a piece in every place, and as preached by every faithful minister, and might serve greatly to confirm the Colossians in their faith of it:

and bringeth forth fruit: by which is meant, either the conversion of sinners, the fruit of the Gospel ministry, when attended with a divine blessing and power; or the graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, love, repentance, humility, self-denial, &c. with all the effects thereof, in new obedience, and a godly conversation, which come from Christ, the green fir tree, and are produced by the Spirit, through the preaching of the Gospel. The Vulgate Latin adds, "and increaseth"; the Syriac version has the same; and it is so read in some Greek copies, as in the Alexandrian copy, two of Stephens's, and in the Complutensian edition; and may intend the spread of the Gospel among others, besides those who first received it, and the growing fruitfulness of the professors of it under its influence:

as [it doth] also in you, since the day ye heard [of it]; as soon as ever it came among them they hearkened to it, they were inclined to hear it externally, and a divine power going along with it, giving them hearing ears, and understanding hearts, they heard it, so as to know it, love it, and believe it; and from that time it brought forth fruit, and increased in them, and they continued in the faith and profession of it; so that as the Gospel is commended both from the large spread and efficacy of it, as well as its uniformity in every place, these Colossians also are commended for their hearing of it, both externally and internally, and for their perseverance in it: and which is further illustrated in the following clause, and knew the grace of God in truth: by "the grace of God" may be meant the love and favour of God, in the mission and gift of his Son, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners, displayed in the Gospel, of which they had a comfortable experience, it being shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit; or the blessings of grace revealed in the Gospel, as free justification by the righteousness of Christ, full pardon of sin, according to the riches of grace, and adoption of children, arising out of the love and free favour of God, of which they had had a real application made to them through the Gospel, by the Spirit of God; or rather the doctrine of grace itself, so called because it is a declaration of the free grace of God in the salvation of sinners and the means of implanting grace in the heart. This they knew not merely in a notional and speculative manner, but experimentally; for the Gospel was not only come to them, but into them; they had a spiritual knowledge of it, and affection for it; they felt the power of it in their hearts, and tasted and relished the sweetness of it; and owned and "acknowledged" it, as the word here used may be rendered; for as with the heart they believed it so with the mouth they made public profession of it: and this they did "in truth"; they came by the knowledge of the love of God, and the blessings of grace, and the doctrines of it, by the Gospel, the word of truth; in and through that they became acquainted with these things; and having known and embraced the doctrine of the Gospel of the grace of God, in the truth of it, without any mixture of error, as it had been purely, and without adulteration, truly and faithfully preached by their minister, they professed it truly heartily, and sincerely, and without hypocrisy; which is another part of their commendation, and involves in it the praise of their minister also, which is enlarged upon in the following verses.

Colossians 1:7

Ver. 7. As ye also learned of Epaphras,.... To know the grace of God, believe the truth of the Gospel, and to own and profess it sincerely.

Our dear fellow servant; a "servant" of Christ he was, and a "fellow" servant of the apostles, jointly engaged with them in preaching the Gospel; which character, as it greatly commends Epaphras, and shows him to be a very considerable preacher of the word, so it expresses the great humility and condescension of the apostle, in putting him upon a level with himself, though he was not in that high office of the apostleship he was. And "dear" this precious servant of Christ was to him, and his fellow ministers, on account of the grace and gifts bestowed on him, because of his usefulness in the ministry, and his faithfulness and integrity in the discharge of it; and whose company and conversation in the prison greatly endeared him to them, for he was a fellow prisoner, as well as a fellow servant, **Phm 1:23**. It follows,

who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; one whom Christ had made a "minister" and not man, who was qualified, and sent forth, and made successful by him in his service; and who preached none but Christ, and him crucified, in the business of salvation: and he was a "faithful" one; one that sought not his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him; nor to please men, but his master; who concealed no part of his message, but freely and fully declared the whole; he was faithful to Christ, who put him into the ministry, and to the souls of men, to whom he ministered: and therefore it is said, he was such an one "for you"; for them, not for himself; for their spiritual good and advantage; he sought not theirs, but them; he had a great zeal for them, dearly loved them, and spent his time and strength, and made use of his gifts and talents while among them, for their use and benefit.

Colossians 1:8

Ver. 8. Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. Not only their love to God, and Christ, and to all the saints, which is before mentioned, but their love to the apostle; though they had only heard of him, and of his great capacity for, and faithfulness and usefulness in preaching of the Gospel, which had greatly endeared him to them. This, he says, was in the Spirit; it was spiritual love, to distinguish it from a carnal and worldly one; they loved him for the spiritual grace that was in him, the spiritual gifts bestowed on him, the spiritual service he was engaged in, and the spiritual usefulness he was of: or they loved him in, and with their spirits, with all their hearts, sincerely, and without dissimulation; and though they had never seen him in the flesh, yet being, as it were, present with him in spirit, their affections were knit unto him: or this their love was "in the Holy Spirit", as the Ethiopic version reads it; it was a fruit of the Spirit of God, which he had implanted in their hearts in regeneration, as is also love to God, and likewise to Christ.

Colossians 1:9

Ver. 9. For this cause we also,.... Not merely for their love to the apostle, and the rest that were with him; which sense is too much contracted, and carries some appearance of meanness and selfishness; but because of their faith in

Christ, their love to all the saints, and the good hope they had of eternal happiness; and because they had heard the Gospel, and truly knew it, and sincerely professed it: therefore,

since the day we heard [it], do not cease to pray for you, and to desire; which shows that the apostles prayed without ceasing; not that they were every moment praying, without intermission, but that they were frequent and constant every day at the throne of grace; and as often as they were there, they were mindful of these Colossians, even ever since they heard of their reception of the Gospel, of their profession of it, and of the fruit it brought forth in them; and in their petitions "prayed" and "desired", earnestly and importunately entreated God on their behalf:

that ye might he filled with the knowledge of his will; the will "of God", as the Syriac version reads it, by which is meant, not the secret will of God, according to the counsel of which he does all things in nature, providence, and grace, but his revealed will; and that either as it is signified in the law, which declares the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God, relating to what he would have done, or avoided by his creatures; or rather, as it is exhibited in the Gospel, which contains the will of God respecting the salvation of his chosen ones; as that it is his will that Christ should obtain eternal redemption for them, to do which he voluntarily substituted himself in their room, came into this world, and has accomplished it; and that all those that are redeemed by Christ should be regenerated by the Spirit; and that whoever sees the Son, and believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life; as also, that all those whom he has chosen in Christ, and given to him, and he has redeemed by his blood, and who are sanctified by his Spirit, none of them should be lost, but that they should be all saved with an everlasting salvation. Now the apostle does, not pray that they might have a "knowledge" of this will of God, for some knowledge of it they had already; they had heard of the hope laid up in heaven, in the truth of the word of the Gospel; they had not only had the external, revelation, and had heard the Gospel outwardly preached, but they had known truly the grace of God; and therefore what he asks for is, that they might be "filled" with the knowledge of it; which supposes that they had knowledge, but it was not full and complete; it was imperfect, as is the knowledge of the best of saints in this life; and that they might have a larger measure of it, and such a fulness of it as they were capable of in the present state, and not such an one as the saints will have in heaven, when they shall know even as they are known. He adds,

in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; his meaning is, that they might be led into all the wisdom of God, which is so largely displayed in the revelation of his will concerning the salvation of his people, which is made in the Gospel; which is the manifold wisdom of God, wherein he has abounded in all wisdom and prudence; and contains such a scheme of things, so wisely contrived and formed, that angels desire to look into it; and that they might have a "spiritual understanding" of the mysteries of grace, without which they cannot be discerned to spiritual advantage, nor indeed without the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of them: and the Ethiopic version renders it, by "the prudence of the Holy Ghost": who searches the deep things of God, and reveals them to the saints, and improves and increases their spiritual and experimental knowledge of them, which is what is here intended.

Colossians 1:10

Ver. 10. That ye might walk worthy of the Lord,.... The Vulgate Latin version reads, "of God"; to which the Ethiopic version agrees; but rather the Lord Jesus Christ seems to be designed: and to "walk worthy" of him, is to walk by faith in him; to walk after his Spirit, and according to his word, and in his ordinances; to have the conversation as becomes his Gospel, and worthy of that calling wherewith the saints are called by grace to the obtaining of his kingdom and glory. The apostle prays that their knowledge might issue in practice; for knowledge, without practice, is of no avail: he first asks for knowledge, and then practice, for how should men act according to the will of God, or Christ, unless they know it? and when they know it, they should not rest in their knowledge, but put it in practice:

unto all pleasing. The Syriac reads it, "that ye may please God in all good works": an unregenerate man cannot please God in anything; without faith in Christ it is impossible to please him by anything man can do; Christ only could, and did always the things that pleased his Father; there are many things done by believers which are displeasing to God; nor is there anything they can do that is pleasing to God but through Christ, in whom their persons and, services are accepted; good works being done in faith, and from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, are acceptable unto him through Christ; and therefore are to be carefully maintained, and studiously performed by all those that have a spiritual understanding of the will of God, and believe in Christ their Lord and Redeemer:

being fruitful in every good work; saints are trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord; good works are the fruit, which, under the influence of divine grace, they bring forth; and this is not of one sort only, as trees usually do, but of every kind; being ingrafted into Christ the true vine, and deriving life, sap, and nourishment from him, they are filled with the fruits of righteousness by him, which they bring forth and bear, to the glory of his heavenly Father; and being such, they are pleasant plants to him, as fruit bearing trees are to the owner of them: wherefore, in order to the saints walking in their lives and conversations unto all pleasing, or pleasing in all things, the apostle prays they might be fruitful in good works, and that in everyone, in every kind of good works:

and increasing in the knowledge of God; not barely of his nature and perfections, as they are displayed in the works of creation; but of his mind, and will, and the mysteries of his grace, as they are revealed in the Gospel; of the knowledge of him in Christ, as the God of all grace, and as a covenant God and Father. The apostle had before prayed for an increase of the knowledge of the will of God, previous to his request, for the putting of it in practice; and now suggests, that an increase of the knowledge of God himself may be expected in a practical use of means, an attendance on the ordinances of Christ, and a diligent performance of good works: from the whole of these petitions, it may be observed by the apostle's asking for them, that all our knowledge, and the increase of it, and all our fruitfulness in good works, are all from the Lord; and therefore we have no reason to boast of our knowledge, nor depend upon our works, but frankly to own, that notwithstanding all we know, and do, we are but unprofitable servants.

Colossians 1:11

Ver. 11. Strengthened with all might,.... This is still a continuation of the apostle's prayer for these believers; for having prayed for an increase of spiritual knowledge, and that this might be put into practice, he proceeds to pray for strength for them, that they might be enabled to practise what they had knowledge of; to walk worthily, to please God in all things, to bring forth fruit with patience, to persevere in knowledge, practice, fruitfulness, and in an increase thereof. It implies, that believers are weak in themselves, and insufficient to do or bear anything of themselves, but stand in need of strength from above, even of "all might"; of all kind of spiritual might and strength, proportionate to the various kinds of services, temptations, and trials they are called unto, and exercised with: they have need of every kind, degree, and supply of strength, to enable them to resist the temptations of Satan, to stand against them, and bear up under them; to oppose the corruptions of their own nature, that great company which comes upon them, wars against them, threatens to carry them captive, and destroy them, and against which they have no power of their own; to bear the cross, which, without the presence and grace of Christ, is very heavy, and all afflictions and adversities of every sort, which are grievous to the flesh, and at which it recoils; to perform the various duties of religion, and the whole of the work of their generation; which though they have a will unto, yet often know not how to perform, they want renewed strength their souls; and also to persevere in faith and holiness, and hold on and out to the end: and which strength they cannot expect to have from themselves, or from any creature, but

according to his glorious power; the glorious power of God. Power belongs to God, is a perfection of his nature, and has been, and is gloriously displayed in many things; as in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the upholding of all things in their being; in the redemption and salvation of sinners; in their faith and conversion; in supporting the saints under various trials and exercises; and in the safe keeping them through faith unto salvation: from this glorious power of God saints may hope to be supplied with all might, or a sufficient supply of strength for every service, and for every difficulty; as also from the grace that is in Christ, who has strength as well as righteousness for his people, who is the glorious power and arm of the Lord, without whom they can neither do, nor bear anything, but through him strengthening them, they can do, and bear all things; as likewise from the Spirit of the Lord, who is the finger of God, by whom Christ wrought his miracles; and is that glorious power from on high, with which the apostles being endued, did the wondrous things they did; and it is by the same Spirit that believers are strengthened with might in the inner man:

unto all patience; to bring forth fruit with patience; to run with patience the race set before them; to bear patiently all afflictions and tribulations; to wait patiently for the things promised by God, and for the coming and appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the heavenly glory or hope laid up for them in heaven:

and longsuffering; to be slow to anger, and not easily provoked to wrath; to be ready to forgive injuries; and to bear long, and with patience, all reproaches and persecutions for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; all which require daily fresh supplies of grace and strength, especially to endure all

with joyfulness, as well as with patience and longsuffering, with a cheerful spirit, or with joy in the Holy Ghost; to esteem reproach for Christ's sake above the riches and honours of this world; to rejoice when counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. This requires strength above that of nature, and a renewed supply of that of grace. This last clause, "with joyfulness", the Syriac version connects with the following verse, reading it, "with joy do ye give thanks", &c.

Colossians 1:12

Ver. 12. Giving thanks unto the Father,.... To God the Father, as the Vulgate Latin and the Syriac versions read the clause; and the Complutensian edition, and some copies, "God and the Father"; who is both the Father of Christ by nature, and of all his people by adoption. The Ethiopic version renders it, as an exhortation or advice, "give ye thanks to the Father"; and so the Syriac version: but the words rather seem to be spoken in the first, than in the second person, and are to be considered in connection with **Col 1:9**. So when the apostle had made an end of his petitions, he enters upon thanksgiving to God:

which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; by the "inheritance", or "lot", is meant not the common lot of the children of God to suffer persecution for the sake of Christ, and through much tribulation to enter into the kingdom, which they are by God the Father counted and made worthy of, with the rest of saints called out of darkness into light; nor their present state and condition, having a power to become the children of God, and to be fellow citizens with the saints, to enjoy communion with them, under the Gospel dispensation, called "light", in opposition to Jewish and Gentile darkness, to be brought into which state is an high favour of God; but the heavenly glory, so called, in allusion to the land of Canaan, which was divided by lot to the children of Israel, according to the will and purpose of God; and because it is not acquired by the works of men, but is a pure free grace gift of God, and which he, as the Father of his people, has bequeathed unto them; and which they enjoy through the death of the testator Christ; and of which the Spirit is the earnest; and because this glory is peculiar to such as are the children of God by adopting grace. It is no other than that inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and which fades not away, reserved in the heavens; and designs that substance, or those solid and substantial things they shall possess hereafter; that kingdom, salvation, and glory, they are heirs of; and includes all things they shall inherit, and even God himself, who is their portion, their inheritance, their exceeding great reward, and of whom they are said to be heirs. This is the inheritance "of the saints", and of none else; who are sanctified or set apart by God the Father in eternal election; who are sanctified by the blood of Christ, or whose sins are expiated by his atoning sacrifice; who are sanctified in Christ, or to whom he is made sanctification; and who are sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, or have the work of sanctification begun upon their souls by him; in consequence of which they live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world. And this inheritance of theirs is "in light"; unless this clause should be read in connection with the word "saints", and be descriptive of them; they being called and brought out of darkness into light, and made light in the Lord, light being infused into them; in which light they see light, sin to be exceeding sinful, and Christ to be exceeding precious: or this phrase should be thought to design the means by which the Father makes meet to partake of the inheritance; namely, in or by the light of the Gospel, showing the way of salvation by Christ, and by the light of grace put into their hearts, and by following Christ the light of the world, which is the way to the light of life: though it rather seems to point out the situation and nature of the heavenly inheritance; it is where God dwells, in light inaccessible to mortal creatures, and who is light itself; and where Christ is, who is the light of the new Jerusalem; and where is the light of endless joy, and uninterrupted happiness; and where the saints are blessed with the clear, full, and beatific vision of God in Christ, and of Christ as he is, seeing him, not through a glass darkly, but face to face. This may be said in reference to a notion of the Jews, that the "light" which God created on the first day is that goodness which he has laid up for them that fear him, and is what he has treasured up for the righteous in the world to come {d}. Now the saints meetness for this is not of themselves; by nature they are very unfit for it, being deserving of the wrath of God, and not of an inheritance; and are impure and unholy, and so not fit to partake of the inheritance of saints, or Holy Ones, and much less to dwell and converse with an holy God; and being darkness itself, cannot bear such light, or have communion with it: but God the Father makes them meet, which includes all the acts of his grace towards them, upon them, and in them; such as his choosing them in Christ, and their inheritance for them; in preparing that for them, and them for that; blessing them with all grace, and all spiritual blessings in Christ; putting them among the children by an act of adoption, of his own sovereign will and free grace, and thereby giving them a goodly heritage, and a title to it; justifying them by the righteousness of his Son, and so making them heirs according to the hope of eternal life, and forgiving all their trespasses for Christ's sake; cleansing them from all in his blood, so that being the undefiled in the way, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, they are fit for the undefiled inheritance; regenerating them by his Spirit, and implanting principles of light and life, grace and holiness, in them, without which no man shall see the Lord, or enter into the kingdom of heaven. One copy, as Beza observes, reads it, "which hath called us to be partakers", &c. and so does the Ethiopic version. And all such as the Father has thus called, and made meet, shall certainly be partakers of the inheritance; they partake of it already in Christ their head, and in faith and hope, having the Spirit as an earnest and pledge of it, and will wholly and perfectly enjoy it hereafter: for though, like Canaan's land, it is disposed of by lot, by the will, counsel, and free grace of God, yet will it not be divided into parts as that was; there is but one undivided inheritance, but one part and portion, which all the saints shall jointly and equally partake of, having all and each the same right and title, claim and meetness. For which they have abundant reason to give thanks to the Father, when they consider what they were, beggars on the dunghill, and now advanced to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory; were bankrupts, over their head in debt, owed ten thousand talents, and had nothing to pay, and now all is frankly, forgiven; and besides, a title to, and meetness for, the heavenly inheritance, are freely bestowed on them; and particularly when they consider they are no more worthy of this favour than others that have no share in it, and also how great the inheritance is.

{d} Zohar in Gen. fol. 6. 3. & in Exod. fol. 32. 3. & in Lev. xiv. 4. & xxxvii. 4. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 3. 2.

Colossians 1:13

Ver. 13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness,.... That is, from the power of Satan; see Ac 26:18, who, though once an angel of light, is now darkness itself, and is reserved in chains of darkness; he is a ruler of the darkness of this world; his kingdom is a kingdom of darkness; and he blinds the minds of them that believe not, keeps them in darkness, and increases the natural darkness of their minds; he delights in works of darkness, and tempts men to them; and his everlasting state and portion will be blackness of darkness: his power over men, in a state of unregeneracy, which he usurps, and is suffered to exercise, is very great; he works effectually in them, and leads them captive at his will; and nothing less than the power of God, who is stronger than the strong man armed, can deliver out of his hands; and which is at least one part of the mercy for which thanks are here given; See Gill on "Lu 22:53"; with the Jews, one of the names of Satan is Kvx, "darkness" {e}. Moreover, the darkness of sin, ignorance, and unbelief, with which God's elect, while in a state of nature, are surrounded, and, as it were shut up and imprisoned, so that they have not the least spark of true spiritual light and knowledge, may be also meant; under the power of which they are to such a degree, that they know nothing of God in Christ, of the way of salvation by him, or of the work of the Spirit on their souls, or of the doctrines of the Gospel in an experimental manner; and so they continue, till, by an almighty power, they are turned from darkness to light; when, by powerful grace, they are plucked as brands out of the burning, and delivered from wrath to come, and from that utter darkness of misery and destruction their ways of sin and darkness led and exposed them to. This deliverance is wrought out for them in the effectual calling, when they are internally called, and powerfully brought out of this darkness, by introducing light into them, revealing Christ in them, causing the prince of darkness to flee from them, and the scales of darkness and blindness to fall from their eyes; and which is both an instance or the wonderful grace of God, and of his almighty power, and in which lies in part the saints' meetness for the inheritance; for these words are, in some sort, explanative of the former; for so long as a person is under the power of darkness, he cannot be meet for an inheritance which is in light: it follows, as another branch of this mercy, for which thanks are given,

and hath translated [us] into the kingdom of his dear Son; not into the kingdom of glory; for though the saints are heirs of it, and rejoice in hope of it, they have not yet an entrance into it; which they will have abundantly when Christ shall introduce them into it, not only as his Father's, but as his own kingdom and glory: but the kingdom of grace is here meant, or that state of grace, light, and life, which such are brought into, when rescued out of Satan's hands, and recovered out of their former state of ignorance and infidelity; when they are by the drawings of the Father, by his powerful and efficacious grace, brought to Christ, and, in the day his power on their souls, are made willing to submit to his righteousness, and to embrace him as the alone Saviour and Redeemer, and be subject to him as King of saints, observing his commands, keeping his ordinances, and walking in his statutes and judgments with other saints, in a Gospel church state; which is Christ's kingdom here on earth, where he reigns as King over God's holy hill of Zion, being set there by his Father, from whom he has received this kingdom, and will deliver it to him, when it is complete and perfect. Now those whom Jehovah the Father snatches out of Satan's hands, and breaks in upon their souls with divine light and knowledge, he brings into such a state, and into this kingdom of Christ, who is called "his dear Son": or "the Son of his love"; or "his Son of love"; who being his Son by nature, of the same nature with him, and equal to him, always was, is, and will be, the object of his love, complacency, and delight; as he cannot be otherwise, since he is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; and even as this Son of his is in an office capacity, as the Mediator between God and man, he is his elect, in whom his soul delights; and he is always well pleased with all the chosen ones in him, who are the sons of God through him, and always beloved in him. This clause is added, partly to distinguish the kingdom of Christ, into which the saints are brought in this life, from the kingdom of the Father, or the ultimate glory they shall possess hereafter; and partly to express the security of the saints, and their continuance in the love of God, being in the kingdom, and under the care and government of the Son of his love; and also to make way for what the apostle has further to discourse concerning the person, office, and grace of Christ, in the following verses.

{e} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 25. 4.

Colossians 1:14

Ver. 14. In whom we have redemption,.... Which is an excellent and wonderful blessing of grace saints have in and by Christ; and lies in a deliverance from sin, all sin, original and actual, under which they are held captive, in a state of nature, and by which they are made subject to the punishment of death; but through the sacrifice of Christ it is taken, and put away, finished, and made an end of; and they are freed from the damning power of it, or any obligation to punishment for it; and in consequence of this are delivered from the enslaving governing power of it by his grace and Spirit, and will hereafter be entirely rid of the very being of it: it consists also of a deliverance from the law, the curse and bondage of it, under which they are held on account of sin, the transgression of it; but being delivered from sin, they are also from the law, its accusations, charges, menaces, curses, and condemnation; as likewise out of the hands of Satan, by whom they are led captive; for through the ransom price paid by Christ they are ransomed out of the hands of him that was stronger than they, the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered by him that has led captivity captive: in short, this redemption is a deliverance out of the hands of all their enemies, and from all evils and misery, the effects of sin, from death, and hell, and wrath to come. The author of it is Christ, the Son of God, the Son of his love, his dear Son: he was called to this work in the council of peace, in which the affair of redemption was consulted; and he agreed to undertake it in the covenant of grace, of which this is a principal article; and being in his constitution, as Mediator, every way fit and proper for it: as man, the right of redemption belonged to him, being the near kinsman of his people, and, as God, he was mighty and able to perform it; as man he had something to offer, and, as God, could make that sacrifice valuable and effectual to all saving purposes; as man, he had compassion on human nature, and, as God, was concerned for things pertaining to his honour and glory. And thus being every way qualified, he was sent, and came on this errand, and has obtained a redemption, which is precious, plenteous, complete and eternal: it is now with him, and "in him"; and he is made this, and everything else to his people, that they want. The subjects of this blessing are, not angels, but men; and not all men, but some that are redeemed from among men, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; who are called by the name of Jacob, the people of Christ, a peculiar people, and the church of God; and evidentially are such, who have faith in Christ, love to the saints, and good hope of eternal life; who know the grace of God in truth, are made meet to be partakers of the eternal inheritance, being delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ, and are designed by the we in this text: the means by which this blessing is procured, is

through his blood. This phrase is left out indeed in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, and in the Complutensian edition, and in some copies; but rightly stands here, as it does in **Eph 1:7**, where there is another clause added, which is here omitted, at the end of the verse, "according to the riches of his grace". This is the blood of Christ, his own blood, and not the blood of bulls and goats, and the same with that of the persons he redeems, but untainted with sin; the blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot and blemish, of original or actual sin, otherwise it would not have been a sufficient redemption price for his people; nor even then, were it not as it was the blood of the Son of God, of one that was God as well as man, whereby it came to have a proper value and efficacy in it to obtain this blessing: Christ's shedding his blood freely on this account is a proof of his great love to his redeemed ones; the efficacy that was in it to answer this purpose shows the dignity and greatness of his person; and it not being to be effected without it, demonstrates the strictness of divine justice, and that the redemption of men is brought about in a way entirely consistent with the righteousness and holiness of God. A particular branch of this blessing follows, and which serves, in some sense, to illustrate and explain it,

[even] the forgiveness of sins; of all sin, original and actual; of heart, lip, and life, secret and open, past, present, and to come; which lies in a non-imputation of sin, a remembrance of it no more, a removing of it entirely out of the way, a covering and blotting it out of sight, so as to be no more visible and legible: this is in Christ, where all spiritual blessings are; nor is it to be had or expected from an absolute God, but from God in Christ, and through him, through his propitiatory sacrifice; for as redemption, so forgiveness of sin is through his blood, which was shed for it; so that it proceeds upon the foot of satisfaction made to the justice of God by a price paid, and is an act of justice as well as

grace, and belongs to the same persons as redemption does; hence those that are redeemed are represented as without fault before the throne; and indeed, the reason why their iniquities are blotted out, and will be remembered no more against them, is, because they are redeemed.

Colossians 1:15

Ver. 15. Who is the image of the invisible God,.... Not of deity, though the fulness of it dwells in him; nor of himself, though he is the true God, and eternal life; nor of the Spirit, who also is God, and the Spirit of the Son; but the Father, called "God", not to the exclusion of the Son or Spirit, who are with him the one God: "and he is invisible"; not to the Son who lay in his bosom, and had perfect and infinite knowledge of him; nor, in some sense, to angels, who always behold his face, but to men: no man hath seen him corporeally with the eyes of his body, though intellectually with the eyes of the understanding, when enlightened; not in his essence and nature, which is infinite and incomprehensible, but in his works of creation, providence, and grace; nor immediately, but mediately, in and through Christ, in whom he gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of his person and perfections; and this not perfectly now, but in the other state, when the saints shall see him face to face. But chiefly the Father is said to be invisible, because he did not appear to Old Testament saints; as his voice was never heard, so his shape was never seen; he never assumed any visible form; but whenever any voice was heard, or shape seen, it was the second person that appeared, the Son of God, who is here said to be his "image", and that, as he is the Son of God; in which sense he is the natural, essential, and eternal image of his Father, an eternal one, perfect and complete, and in which he takes infinite complacency and delight: this designs more than a shadow and representation, or than bare similitude and likeness; it includes sameness of nature and perfections; ascertains the personality of the Son, his distinction from the Father, whose image he is; and yet implies no inferiority, as the following verses clearly show, since all that the Father hath are his. Philo, the Jew {f}, often speaks of the logov, or Word of God, as the image of God. Also, this may be understood of him as Mediator, in whom, as such, is a most glorious display of the love, grace, and mercy of God, of his holiness and righteousness, of his truth and faithfulness, and of his power and wisdom:

the firstborn of every creature; not the first of the creation, or the first creature God made; for all things in **Col 1:16** are said to be created by him, and therefore he himself can never be a creature; nor is he the first in the new creation, for the apostle in the context is speaking of the old creation, and not the new: but the sense either is, that he was begotten of the Father in a manner inconceivable and inexpressible by men, before any creatures were in being; or that he is the "first Parent", or bringer forth of every creature into being, as the word will bear to be rendered, if instead of prwt¢tokov, we read prwtot¢kov; which is no more than changing the place of the accent, and may be very easily ventured upon, as is done by an ancient writer {g}, who observes, that the word is used in this sense by Homer, and is the same as prwtogonov, "first Parent", and prwtoktisthv, "first Creator"; and the rather this may be done, seeing the accents were all added since the apostle's days, and especially seeing it makes his reasoning, in the following verses, appear with much more beauty, strength, and force: he is the first Parent of every creature, "for by him were all things created", &c. **Col 1:16**, or it may be understood of Christ, as the King, Lord, and Governor of all creatures; being God's firstborn, he is heir of all things, the right of government belongs to him; he is higher than the kings of the earth, or the angels in heaven, the highest rank of creatures, being the Creator and upholder of all, as the following words show; so the Jews make the word "firstborn" to be synonymous with the word "king", and explain it by rvw lwdg, "a great one", and "a prince" {h}; see Ps 89:27.

{f} De Mund. Opific. p. 6. de Plant. Noe, p. 216, 217. de Coufus. Ling. p. 341. de Somniis, p. 600. de Monarch. p. 823. {g} Isidior. Pelusiot. l. 3. Ep. 31. {h} R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 50. 1.

Colossians 1:16

Ver. 16. For by him were all things created,.... This is a reason proving Christ to be before all creatures, to be the common Parent of them, and to have the government over them, since he is the Creator of them. The creation of all things, by him, is not to be understood of the new creation, for whenever that is spoken of, the word "new" is generally used, or what is equivalent to it, or some clause or phrase added, which determines the sense, and is not the case here: besides, all things that are in heaven are said to be created here: which, to say nothing of the sun, moon, and stars, which are not capable subjects of the new creation, to restrain them to angels, cannot be true of them; for as for those who were once in heaven, but kept not their first estate, and quitted their habitation, these find no place there any more; they never were, nor will be renewed and restored by Christ; and as for the good angels, since they never sinned, they stand in no need of renovation. Moreover, all things that are on earth are also said to be created by him, and are, but not anew: for to confine these only to men, all men are not renewed in the spirit of their minds; all have not faith, nor a good hope through grace, nor love to God and Christ, the greater part of the world lies in open wickedness; and all that profess religion are not new creatures, these are a chosen generation, and a peculiar people: wherefore these words must be understood, not metaphorically, but literally; in which sense all things are created by Christ, not by him as an instrument, but as the efficient cause; for the preposition "by" does not always signify the former; but sometimes the latter; see **1Co 1:9**; nor to the exclusion of the Father and Spirit, who, with the Son, were jointly concerned in the creating of all things out of nothing: and these "all things" can only refer to the things that are made: eternal things can never be said to be created; this is a contradiction in terms; the Father is not created by him, nor he himself as the Son of God, nor the Spirit; but everything that is made is created by him: hence it follows, that he himself is no creature, otherwise he must create himself, which also is a contradiction, since every creature is made by him; and consequently he must be God, for he that made and built all things is God. These are divided as to the subject of them, or place where they are, into things

that are in heaven, and that are in earth. The things that are in heaven, are the things that are in the airy and starry heavens, and in the heaven of heavens. The things in the airy heavens, the fowls thereof, were on the fifth day created by him; and the things in the starry heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, were on the fourth day ordained by him; and the inhabitants of the third heaven, the angels, were made by him, **Heb 1:7**; and, as the Jewish writers {i} say, on the second day of the creation, though some say on the fifth. The earth comprehends the whole terraqueous globe, consisting of land and sea; and the things in it are all that are in the seas, the fishes and other things in it; and all that are in the bowels of the earth, as well as on the surface of it, all metals and minerals, all plants, herbs, and trees, every beast of the forest, the cattle on a thousand hills, the fowls on the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field, and all human creatures. Again, these all things are, as to the quality of them, distributed into

visible and invisible, both in heaven and in earth: the visible things in heaven are the fowls that fly in the airy heaven, the sun, and moon, and stars in the starry heaven, and the bodies of those saints that have been either translated, or raised, in the third heaven; the visible things in the earth are all creatures, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, all bodies, all corporeal and material beings: the invisible things in earth are not only those that are in the innermost parts of it, but the spirits or souls of men; and those in heaven are not the invisible God, Father, Son, and Spirit, but the angels, who are incorporeal and immaterial spirits, and so invisible: and which,

whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, are all made by him; by these some understand civil magistrates among men, and the various degrees and orders of them. By "thrones" they think kings, or monarchs, are meant, who sit on thrones; and by "dominions", little petty kings, or lords, dukes, and earls; and by "principalities", governors of provinces and cities; and by "powers", interior magistrates; and indeed, political governors are sometimes called dominions, dignities, principalities, and powers; and there are different orders of them, the king as supreme, and governors under him; see **Jude 1:8**. But since these seem rather to be said of the invisible things in heaven, and to be an explanation of them, angels may rather be thought to be intended; and are so called, not as denoting different orders and degrees among them, which some have rashly ventured to describe, but because of the use that God makes of them in the government of the world, and the executions of the various affairs of Providence relating to particular persons and kingdoms; though these several names are not so much such as the apostle chose to call them by, as what they were called by others; the three latter are indeed elsewhere used by himself, **Eph 1:21**; but not the former, "thrones", which yet are used by Jewish writers, and given to angels. Thus, in a book of theirs, which they esteem very ancient, and ascribe to the patriarch Abraham, it is said {k},

"there is no angel in which the name Jehovah is not found, which is everywhere, as the soul is in every member; wherefore men ought to allow Jehovah to reign in all the members, Nyork lkbw, "and in all the thrones", and in all the angels, and in every member of men."

And elsewhere, speaking of the garments of God,

"by these (say they {l}) Nyyork "hbq arb, "the holy blessed God created the thrones", and the angels, and the living creatures, and the "seraphim", and the heavens, and the earth, and all that he created."

And the thrones in **Da 7:9**; are interpreted {m}, of

"the superior princes, Myynxwr Mykalml, "the spiritual angels", who sit first in the kingdom; and they are called in the words of the Rabbins, "the throne of glory"; for so is the way of kings, that their princes sit before them, everyone on his throne, according to their dignity."

Now the apostle's sense is, that the angels, the invisible inhabitants of the upper world, are all created by Christ, let them be called by what names they will, that the Jews, or the false teachers, or any sort of heretics of those times thought fit to give them, whether they called them thrones or dominions, &c. And so the Arabic version, rather interpreting than translating the words, renders them thus, "whether you say thrones, or whether you mention dominions, or whether you understand princes, or whether you say powers"; speak of them under what title or appellation you please, they are all the creatures of the Son of God. The apostle seems to have in view, and to oppose some notions of some heretics of his time, the followers of Simon Magus, who held, that the angels were created by his Helena; or, as others, by what they call "Ennea", and that these angels created the world, and are to be worshipped; but he here affirms, that

all things were created by him, by Christ, even all the angels; and therefore he, and not they, are to be worshipped, a notion he afterwards takes notice of in the following chapter: and as all things are affirmed to be created by him, which demonstrates the dignity and deity of his person, so likewise

for him; that is, for his pleasure, that he may take delight and complacency in them, and in his own perfections displayed by them; and for his service and use, as the angels, to worship him and minister to him and for others, he sends them to: elect men are made to serve and glorify him with their bodies and spirits, which are his; and even the non-elect are made to subserve his mediatorial kingdom and interest; yea, the whole world is built and kept in being purely on his account, until he has finished the great affair of the salvation of his people, in the application of it to each of them, as he has completed the impetration of it; and then he will dissolve the heavens, and burn up the earth and all the works that are therein: all are made for his glory, and that end is, and will be answered by them in one way or another.

{i} Targum Jon. in Gen. i. 26. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 1. 1. & 3. 3. Menass. ben Israel, Conciliator in Gen. Qu. 12. {k} Sepher Jetzira, p. 17, Ed. Rittangel. {l} Tikkune Zohar in ib. p. 127, 128. & Zohar in Exod. fol. 18. 2. & in Lev. fol. 39. 1. & 47. 2. {m} Abarbinel in Dan. fol. 45. 4. & 46. 4.

Colossians 1:17

Ver. 17. And he is before all things,.... Not only in dignity, being preferable to angels and men in his nature, names, offices, and works, and worthy of more honour than all creatures; but he is before them in existence, as he must needs be, since they are all made by him; he was not only before John the Baptist, his forerunner, before Abraham who saw his day and was glad, before the first man was made, but before the angels were in being, or the heavens and the earth, or any creature were formed; and therefore must be God, who is from everlasting to everlasting:

and by him all things consist; he upholds all things by the word of his power; the heavens have their stability and continuance from him; the pillars of the earth are bore up by him, otherwise that and the inhabitants of it would be dissolved; the angels in heaven are confirmed in their estate by him, and have their standing and security in him; the elector God are in his hands, and are his peculiar care and charge, and therefore shall never perish; yea, all mankind live and move, and have their being in him; the whole frame of nature would burst asunder and break in pieces, was it not held together by him; every created being has its support from him, and its consistence in him; and all the affairs of Providence relating to all creatures are governed, directed, and managed by him, in conjunction with the Father and the blessed Spirit.

Colossians 1:18

Ver. 18. And he is the head of the body, the church,.... By "the church" is meant, not any particular congregated church, as the church at Colosse, or Corinth, or any other; but the whole election of grace, the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven in the Lamb's book of life; the church which Christ has given himself for, and has purchased with his blood, and builds on himself the rock, and will, at last, present to himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; this is compared to an human body, and therefore called "the body"; which is but one, consisting of many members in union with each other, set in their proper places in just symmetry and proportion to each other, and subservient to one another, and are neither more nor fewer; see 1Co 12:12, &c. and of this body, the church, Christ is "the head"; he was the representative head of this body of elect men from all eternity, and in time; he is a political head of them, or in such sense an head unto them, as a king is to his subjects; he reigns in them by his Spirit and grace, and rules them by wholesome laws of his own enacting, and which he inscribes on their hearts, and he protects and defends them by his power; he is an economical head, or in such sense an head of them, as the husband is the head of the wife, and parents and masters are the heads of their families, he standing in all these relations to them; and he is to them what a natural head is to an human body; of all which See Gill on "1Co 11:3". The Messiah is called one head, in **Ho 1:11**; which Jarchi explains by David their king, and Kimchi on the place says, this is the King Messiah:

who is the beginning; which either denotes the eternity of Christ, who was not only in the beginning, and was set up from the beginning, from everlasting, but is also the beginning and the end; and who is, indeed, without beginning of days, or end of life: or his dominion; he is the principality, as the word may be rendered; he is the principality of principalities, the head of all principality and power, the angels; he is the Prince of the kings of the earth; he is King of saints; the kingdom of nature and providence is his, and the government of his people in a special manner is on his shoulders: or this may design his being the first cause of all things; he is the beginning of the creation of God; the efficient cause of all created beings; he is the beginning of the church, of which he is the head; as Eve was from Adam, so is the church from Christ; it is a body of his preparing, and a temple of his building, and where he sits as a priest on his throne, and has the government of it: the second number, wisdom, in the cabalistic tree of the Jews, is called "the beginning" {n}, as is the Logos, or Word, by Philo the Jew {o}:

the firstborn from the dead; the first that rose from the dead by his own power, and to an immortal life; for, though others were raised before him, and by him, yet not to a state of immortality; the path of life, to an immortal life, was first shown to him as man; and who also is the firstfruits of them that sleep, and so the pledge and earnest of the future resurrection of the saints; and is both the efficient and exemplary cause of it; the resurrection of the dead will be by him as God, and according to his own, as man:

that in all [things] he might have the pre-eminence; or might be the first and chief over all persons, angels, and men; having a superior nature, name, and place, than the former, and being the firstborn among many brethren designed by the latter: and in all things he is the first, and has the precedence and primacy; in sonship, no one is a Son in the sense he is; in election, he was chosen first, and his people in him; in the covenant, he is the surety, Mediator, and messenger of it, he is that itself; in his human nature, he is fairer than the children of men; in redemption, he was alone, and wrought it out himself; in life, he exceeded all others in purity, in doctrine, and miracles; and in dying he conquered death, and rose first from it; in short, he died, revived, and rose again, that he might be Lord both of dead and living; and he ought to have the pre-eminence and first place in the affections of our hearts, in the contemplations of our minds, in the desires of our souls, and in the highest praises of our lips.

{n} Cabala denudata, par. 2. p. 7. & Lex. Cabal. p. 679, 681. {o} Philo de Conf. ling. p. 341.

Colossians 1:19

Ver. 19. For it pleased [the Father],.... The phrase, "the Father", is not in the original text, but is rightly supplied; since he is expressly mentioned in the context, as he who makes the saints meet to be partakers of the heavenly glory; who deliver, them from the power and dominion of sin, and translates them into the kingdom of his dear Son; and who, by Christ, reconciles all things to himself, **Col 1:12**, and whose sovereign will and pleasure it is,

that in him should all fulness dwell: by which is meant, not the fulness of the deity, though it is read by some the fulness of the Godhead: which seems to be transcribed from **Col 2:9**; but though all the perfections of God are in Christ, as eternity, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability, independence, and necessary existence, and every other, or he would not be equal with God; nor could all the fulness of the Godhead be said to dwell in him, should anyone be wanting; yet this is a fulness possessed by him, that does not spring from, nor depend upon the Father's good will and pleasure; but what he naturally and necessarily enjoys by a participation of the same undivided nature and essence with the Father and Spirit: nor is the relative fulness of Christ intended, which is his church, so called, **Eph 1:23**; and will be so when all the elect are gathered in, and filled with all the gifts and graces of his Spirit, and are arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; for though every believer dwells in Christ, and Christ in him, yet the church is not said to dwell in Christ, but Christ in the church; moreover, as yet she is not his fulness, at least in the sense she will be, and much less can she be said to be all fulness: nor is this to be understood of Christ's fulness of fitness and abilities, as God-man and Mediator, to perform his work and office as such; though this may be taken into the sense of the text as a part, yet is not the whole; but rather chiefly that dispensatory communicative fulness, which is, of the Father's good will and pleasure, put into the hands of Christ to be distributed to others, is here designed. There is a fulness of nature in Christ; the light of nature is from him, and communicated by him to mankind; the blessings of nature are the blessings of his left hand, which he distributes to his people as he thinks fit; and all things in nature are subservient to his mediatorial kingdom and glory. There is a fulness of grace in him, out of which saints receive, and grace for grace, or a large abundance of it; the fulness of the spirit of grace, and of all the graces and gifts of the Spirit is in him; and of all the blessings of grace, as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, adoption, sanctification, even of all that grace that is implanted in regeneration, that is necessary to carry on and finish the good work upon the soul; there is a fulness of all light and life, of wisdom, and strength, of peace, joy, and comfort, and of all the promises of grace, both with respect to this world and that which is to come; and there is also a fulness of glory in him, not only the grace, but the glory of the saints, is laid up and hid with him, and is safe and secure in him: this is said to dwell in Christ, which implies its being in him; it is not barely in intention, design, and purpose, but it is really and actually in him, nor is it in any other; and hence it comes to be communicated to the saints: and it also denotes the continuance of it with him; it is an abiding fulness, and yields a continual daily supply to the saints, and will endure to the end of time, and be as sufficient for the last as the first believer; it is like the subject of it, the same yesterday, today, and for ever: and it also intends the safety of it: the saints' life both of grace and glory is hid with Christ, and is secure, it is out of the reach of men and devils, and can never be lost, or they deprived of it; and all this is owing not to any merits of men, to their faith and holiness, or good works, which are all the fruits of this fulness, but to the good will of God; "it pleased the Father" to place it here for them; it was owing to his good will to his Son, and therefore he puts all things into his hands; and to his elect in him, for, having loved them with an everlasting love, he takes everlasting care of them, and makes everlasting provision for them; it was his pleasure from all eternity to take such a step as this, well knowing it was not proper to put it into the hands of Adam, nor into the hands of angels, nor into their own at once; he saw none so fit for it as his Son, and therefore it pleased him to commit it unto him; and it is his good will and sovereign pleasure, that all grace should come through Christ, all communion with him here, and all enjoyment of him hereafter; which greatly enhances and sets forth the glory of Christ as Mediator, one considerable branch of which is, that he is full of grace and truth; this qualifies him to be the head of the church, and gives a reason, as these words be, why he has, and ought to have, the preeminence in all things.

Colossians 1:20

Ver. 20. And by him to reconcile all things to himself,.... This depends upon the preceding verse, and is to be connected with that phrase in it, it pleased the Father, **Col 1:19**; and the sense is, that it was the good will and pleasure of God from all eternity, as to lay up all fulness in Christ for his chosen people, so to reconcile them to himself by him; and which is another reason why Christ is, and ought to be considered as the head of the church, whose reconciliation he has procured, and why he ought to have the chief place in all things, and among all persons. Reconciliation supposes a former state of amity and friendship, and in such an one man was originally with God; and a breach of that friendship, which was made and issued in real enmity in the heart of man; and also a restoration to friendship again: and it is to be understood not of a reconciliation of God to men, which the Scriptures nowhere speak of, but of men to God; and is a reconciliation of them, not to the love of God, which his elect always shared in, but to the justice of God, offended by the transgression of a righteous law; and is indeed properly a reconciliation, atonement, and satisfaction for their sins, and so of their persons, and whereby all the perfections of God are reconciled to and agree with each other in the salvation of such sinners: now this takes its first rise from God the Father; it is owing to his sovereign good will and pleasure; he took the first step towards it; he knew what a state of enmity and rebellion his people would fall into; his thoughts ran upon their peace and reconciliation from everlasting; he called a council of peace about it, and in it drew the model of it; he entered into a covenant of peace with his Son, and, in consequence of it, sent him in the fulness of time to effect it, laying on him the chastisement of their peace; it was his pleasure that this affair of reconciliation should be brought about, not by the means of angels, in whom he could put no such trust and confidence, and who, though they rejoice at peace being made on earth, could never have effected it; nor that it should be done by men, who have no knowledge of the way of it, no inclination to it, nor power to make it; but "by him", his Son Jesus Christ, whom he appointed and called to this work, and sent to do it; and who is therefore, in prophecy, before this reconciliation was actually made, styled "Shiloh", the Prince of peace, and the peace: and this, when made, was made "to himself"; meaning either to Christ, in whom all the elect were gathered together, as in one head, and were reconciled in one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, through him; or rather to God the Father, to whom they were enemies, yea, enmity itself, and to whom the satisfaction and atonement were made; it being his law that was broken, and his justice that was injured, and to whom they are always in Scripture said to be reconciled; though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, the one God with the Father: moreover, the sense of this phrase may be, that the reconciliation of the elect made by Christ, in a way of full satisfaction to law and justice, is to the glory of God, the glory of all his perfections; as of his grace and mercy, wisdom, power, and faithfulness, so of his righteousness and holiness: the means by which Christ has enacted it are, his sacrifice, sufferings, and death, expressed in the following clause;

having made peace through the blood of his cross. This was what man could not do, what Christ was appointed and sent to do, and what he was every way qualified for as God and man; as man he had blood to shed, and could make reconciliation for sin in the nature which had sinned, and, as God, could draw nigh to his Father, and treat with him about terms of peace, and perform them; and so a fit daysman and Mediator between, God and man: this peace he has made by his "blood", that is, by the shedding of it, by his death as a sacrifice, which he underwent on the cross; partly to denote the shame, and chiefly to signify the curse he endured in the room of his people: all which shows the malignant nature of sin, the strictness of justice, and that peace is made in a way of full satisfaction, is upon honourable terms, will be lasting, as it is joyful, being attended with a train of blessings:

by him, [I say], whether [they be] things in earth, or things in heaven: by which are intended not the whole universe and fabric of the world, all creatures and things, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, which have been cursed for the sin of man, and have proved unfriendly to him, but, in consequence of redemption and reconciliation by Christ, will, as some think, in the time of the restitution of all things, be restored to their former state, and to their friendly use to mankind; nor elect men and elect angels, and their reconciliation together, for the apostle is not speaking of the reconciling of these things together, but of the reconciling of them to God, which though it is true of elect men, is not of elect angels, who never fell, and though they have confirming grace, yet not reconciling grace from Christ, which they never needed; nor Jews and Gentiles, for though it is true that God was in Christ reconciling the world of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews to himself, and the chosen of God among both are actually reconciled to God by the death of Christ, yet the one are never called things in heaven, or the other things on earth, in distinction from, and opposition to each other; but rather all the elect of God are here meant, the family of God in heaven and in earth; all the saints that were then in heaven, when actual reconciliation was made by the blood of Christ, and who went thither upon the foot of peace, reconciliation, and redemption, to be made by his sacrifice and death; and all the chosen ones that were or should be on the face of the earth, until the end of time; all these were reconciled to God by Christ: and then the apostle proceeds particularly to mention the Colossians, as also being instances of this grace, good will, and pleasure of God by Christ.

Colossians 1:21

Ver. 21. And you that were sometime alienated,.... The general blessing of grace and reconciliation, which belongs to the whole body of Christ, the church universal, all the elect of God, whether in heaven or in earth, is here particularly applied to the saints at Colosse, who were eminent instances of it; and that the free grace of God towards them in it might more illustriously appear, the apostle takes notice of what they were before the coming of Christ in the flesh, before the Gospel came among them, and while in a state of unregeneracy, as that they were "alienated": that is from God, not from his general presence, power, and providence, which reach to all his creatures, but from the life of God; see **Eph 4:18**; from living agreeably to the will of God, being estranged from him who is the fountain of moral and spiritual, as well as natural life; from the law, the rule of life, and from a principle of life in themselves; and altogether disapproving of such a life, as contrary to their carnal affections and lusts: and which alienation from God greatly lay in their forsaking him, the one only and true God, and following and serving strange gods, not attending to the dictates and light of nature; and being destitute of a divine revelation, they went further and further off from God, and from his people, worship, and ordinances; and were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise; the source of all which was sin, and was owing to themselves: God did not alienate himself from them first; they alienated themselves from him; their sins separated between God and them, set them at a distance from him, and at enmity to him, and which very early appeared, for they were estranged from the womb:

and enemies in [your] mind by wicked works. They were enemies to God, the true God, and were lovers and worshippers of idols; they were enemies to the being and perfections of God, as all men in a state of nature are; and more or less show it, by either denying there is a God, or wishing there was none, or fancying him to be such an one as themselves; or they dispute his sovereignty, deny his omniscience, arraign his justice and faithfulness, and despise the riches of his grace and goodness; they are enemies to his purposes, providences, and word; cannot bear that he should determine any thing concerning them or others; their eye is evil to him because he is good to others; they reply against him, they run upon him, and charge his decrees with unrighteousness and cruelty; murmur at and quarrel with the dispensations of his providence, as unequal and unjust; cast away the law of the Lord, will not be subject to it, and condemn the revelation of his will. They are enemies to Christ in one shape or another; either to his person, denying his proper deity, or real humanity; or to his offices, not hearkening to him as a prophet, trampling on his blood and sacrifice as a priest, and unwilling to have him to rule over them as a King; or to the way of salvation by him, of pardon by his blood, atonement by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and acceptance with God through his person; or to his doctrines and ordinances, which are unsuitable to their vicious tastes, carnal affections, and appetites: they are enemies to the Spirit of Christ, by either denying his deity and personality, or by ridiculing the operations of his grace; or treating with contempt, and as foolish, everything of his, the Bible and all the truths contained in it, dictated by him. They are enemies to the people of God, exceeding mad against them, hate them and persecute them, reckon them the faith of the world, and the offscouring of all things, living in malice to them, and hateful and hating one another: and this enmity to everything divine and good is seated "in the mind"; the mind is not the object of this enmity, as some read the words, "to the mind": for the mind of a carnal man is enmity itself against God; but it is the subject of it, where it has its chief place, and from whence it proceeds, and shows itself in evil actions; and though the word "your" is not in the original text, it is rightly supplied; for the meaning is not that they were enemies "of his mind"; of the mind of the Lord, of his counsels and will, as some read and explain the words, though there is a truth in this, but in their own minds: so that not the body but the soul is the seat of this enmity; and not the inferior faculties of the soul only, the sensitive appetite and passions, but the understanding, the judgment and will, the more noble and rational powers of the soul; from hence spring all the malice and enmity expressed in word and actions: where then is man's free will to that which is good? and hence it is that the mind stands in need of being renewed, enlightened, cleansed and sanctified, and renovation begins here, which is the effect of almighty power; for nothing else can remove the rooted enmity in the heart of men; and which, as deep and as secret as it is, sooner or later, in one way or another, shows itself "by wicked works"; and that frequently, as by loving what God hates, and hating what he loves; by omitting what he commands, and committing what he forbids; by maintaining friendship with the world, and by harbouring his professed enemies, and persecuting his dear friends; and by their wicked words, and evil lives and conversations; and by the various works of the flesh, which are manifest, some being more directly against God, others by which they wrong themselves, and others by which they injure their neighbours:

yet now hath he reconciled; which may be understood either of the Father's reconciling them to himself by his Son; and so the words are a continuation of the account of the Father's grace, as to all the elect in general, so to the Colossians in particular, notwithstanding the black characters in which they stand described in their natural estate: or else of Christ's reconciling them to his Father, by the sacrifice of himself, which he voluntarily offered for them, though this was their case, and of enemies made them friends: and may be meant either of the impetration of reconciliation for them by his sufferings and death; or of the virtue and efficacy of it in the application of it; in the former sense the "now" refers to the coming of Christ into the world, and the time of his death, and the offering up of his body once for all, when peace and reconciliation were completely made at once for all God's elect; in the latter sense it refers to the time of the conversion of these Colossians, when Christ by his Spirit, in consequence of reconciliation made in the body of his flesh, through death reconciled them to God; to his mind and will, to the way of salvation by himself, to the saints the excellent in the earth, to the Gospel and the ordinances of it, and to all his ways and worship.

Colossians 1:22

Ver. 22. In the body of his flesh through death,.... Or "through his death", as the Alexandrian copy and some others, and all the Oriental versions, read. These words express the means by which that reconciliation was made, which in the virtue and efficacy of it was applied particularly to these Colossians at their conversion whereby their minds were actually reconciled to God, as "in" or "by the body of his flesh"; that is, by the offering up of his body on the accursed tree, in which he bore the sins of his people, and made reconciliation for them: and it is so called either to distinguish it from his mystical and spiritual body the church, of which he is the head before spoken of; or from his glorious and immortal body, as now raised and exalted at God's right hand; and to denote the truth of his human body, that it was a real fleshly body, consisting of flesh and blood as ours does, and the same with ours, and not an aerial, celestial bony, or a mere phantom; and also to signify the infirmity and mortality of it, being, excepting sin, in all points like to ours, and subject to death; and that it was in that body his Father prepared for him, and he assumed; and as he was clothed with it in the days of his flesh, or mortal state, that he made reconciliation for the sins of his people, and that "through death" in it; even the death of the cross, by which he bore the penalty of the law, the curse of it, made satisfaction to justice, obtained life, abolished death, and destroyed him that had the power of it, and fixed a sure and lasting peace for all his saints; his end in which was,

to present you holy and unblamable, and unreproveable in his sight. This presentation of the saints by Christ is either in his own sight, "before himself", as the Arabic version reads it; and is here in this present state, they being considered by him both as sanctified and as justified; he taking delight in the graces of his Spirit, and the exercise of them on himself, though imperfect, and in them as clothed with his spotless righteousness, in which they are perfectly comely, all fair, and without spot: or in the latter day glory, the New Jerusalem church state; when the church will be as a bride prepared for her husband, will be brought into his presence in raiment of needlework, in fine linen clean and white, the righteousness of the saints, and be presented to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; or in the ultimate glory, when all the saints shall be for ever with him, continually before him, and in his sight; which is what his heart was set upon from everlasting, which he had in view in his sufferings and death, and still has in his prayers and preparations: or else this presentation is what has been or will be made before his Father, and in his sight; and which was partly done, when he gathered together all the elect in himself, and represented them on the cross, in the body of his flesh; and partly is now doing in heaven, where he appears in the presence of God for them, bears their names on his breastplate, presents their persons and their cases; and especially will be done at the last day, when he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and say, lo, I and the children thou hast given me: and who will be presented "holy" by him; he being their sanctification, and they having all their sins expiated by his sacrifice, and their persons washed and cleansed in his blood, and their hearts sanctified by his Spirit; which sanctification though it is imperfect in this life, yet will be completed by the author of it at death; without perfect holiness no man shall see God, or be presented in his sight: and this is in consequence of the death of Christ and reconciliation by it and a fruit of electing grace, by which persons are chosen in Christ, that they should be holy and without blame; and as here, "unblamable and unreproveable": as they are, not now in themselves, but in Christ, as arrayed with his robe of righteousness and garments of salvation, being all glorious within, and their clothing of wrought gold, in which they will be introduced and presented to himself, and to his Father, faultless, with exceeding joy, and stand so before the throne, and that to all eternity.

Colossians 1:23

Ver. 23. If ye continue in the faith,.... In the doctrine of faith which they had received and embraced; and in the grace of faith, and the exercise of it which was implanted in them; and in the profession of faith which they had made: not that the virtue and efficacy of Christ's blood, sufferings, and death, and reconciliation of their persons to God thereby, depended upon their faith, and abiding in it; but that faith and continuance in it were necessary means of their presentation in unblemished holiness and righteousness; for if they had not faith, or did not abide in it or if the good work of grace was not wrought upon their souls, and that performed until the day of Christ, they could not be presented holy and blameless: this shows the necessity of the saints' final perseverance in faith and holiness, and is mentioned with this view, to put them upon a concern about it, and to make use of all means, under divine grace, to enjoy it; and nothing could more strongly incline and move unto it, than the blessed effect of Christ's death, reconciliation and the end of it, to present the reconciled ones blameless; in order to which it is necessary they should hold on and out to the end: hence the Ethiopic version reads the words, not as a condition, but as an exhortation enforced by what goes before; "therefore be ye established in the faith": it follows,

grounded and settled; not on the sandy foundation of man's own righteousness, and peace made by his own performances; but upon the foundation and rock, Christ, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; and so shall never finally and totally fall away, being rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith of him, in the doctrines of faith, respecting peace by his blood, justification by his righteousness, and life by his death; and so continue steadfast and immovable, always abounding in his work:

and [be] not moved away from the hope of the Gospel; the hope of eternal life and happiness, which as set before us in the Gospel; which that gives a good and solid ground and foundation of, in the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and is the instrumental means, in the hand of the Spirit, of begetting to it, and of encouraging and increasing it: the law gives no hopes of eternal life to a poor sinner; it works wrath, and ministers death; there is nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment by it; but the Gospel encourages to hope in the Lord, from the consideration of rich mercy and plenteous redemption in him; and this hope of the Gospel is an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, and not to be let go; this confidence and rejoicing of the hope is to be kept firm unto the end:

which ye have heard; that is, which Gospel they had heard from Epaphras their faithful minister, and that not only externally, but internally; they had heard it and believed it, and it had brought forth fruit in them; for it came to them not in word only, but in power; which is said in commendation of it, and to engage them to continue in it, and abide by it; as is also what follows:

[and] which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; and therefore since it was the same which was everywhere preached, they might

depend upon the truth of it, should have the greater value for it, and by no means relinquish it. This must be understood not of every individual creature, even human and rational, that was then, or had been in, the world; but that it had been, and was preached far and near, in all places all over the world, to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews; who are sometimes styled "every creature", "the creature", "the whole creation", "all men", &c. see Mr 16:15 **Tit 2:11**; and of this, the first preaching of the Gospel by Peter after our Lord's resurrection, was an emblem and pledge, **Ac 2:14**; and some time after that, the sound of all the apostles went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world:

whereof I Paul am made a minister; by Jesus Christ, who appeared unto him, and called, qualified, and sent him forth as such; and this is mentioned to encourage the Colossians to abide by the truths of the Gospel, since what they had heard and received were what were everywhere preached by the faithful ministers of the word; and particularly by the apostle, who was ordained to be a teacher and preacher of it to the Gentiles. The Alexandrian copy reads, "a preacher and an apostle, and a minister"; see **1Ti 2:7**.

Colossians 1:24

Ver. 24. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you,.... The apostle, as soon as he had made mention of his being a minister of the Gospel, thinks and speaks of his "sufferings"; for those are what always more or less attend persons in such an office; they are appointed to them by God; Christ has foretold them of them; they are necessary for them; they must expect them, and patiently endure them: the apostle was under them now at this present time, for he wrote this epistle in his bonds when a prisoner at Rome, not for any immorality, any crime he had committed, but for Christ's sake, for his Gospel's sake, for the sake of the churches of Christ to whom he preached, for the confirmation of them, and so of these Colossians; and therefore he says, "for you"; and which he mentions to animate them to abide by the Gospel, for which he was suffering, that it might continue with them and others: nor was he distressed and discouraged at his afflictions, he "rejoiced" in them, because he had the presence of God in them, the Spirit of God and of glory rested on him, and God was glorified by them; he esteemed it an honour done him that grace was given, and he counted worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ; and as well knowing that he should live and reign with him, since he suffered with him and for him: and what greatly caused and increased his joy was what follows,

and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh; by which are meant not the afflictions or sufferings of Christ in his own person; for these were all over, he was now entered into his glory, was exalted at the Father's right hand, and was crowned with glory and honour: there was nothing left behind of his sufferings, to be undergone by any of his people; he had drank of the cup and all the dregs of it; he had sustained the whole of his Father's wrath, and all the curses of the law, being abated nothing, but was made perfect through sufferings; having perfectly suffered all, he suffered once and once for all, he will suffer no more; nor is there any need of his suffering more or again, for he has finished sin, wrought righteousness, made peace, and obtained eternal redemption; nor had he any partner in his sufferings, nor did he need any, or left any part of his sufferings to be filled up by others; for he endured all and the whole, which the law and justice of God could require in his own body, in the body of his flesh through death; of these sufferings the apostle does not speak, but of such which he filled up in "his" own "flesh"; and design the afflictions of Christ in his members, which are called "his", because of that near union there is between Christ and them; so that what befalls them may be predicated of him; when anyone of them suffers, he suffers with him, as the sufferings of a part of the body are ascribed to the whole person; and because of that sympathy there is between them, he has a fellow feeling with his people in all their infirmities; in all their afflictions he is afflicted: if Saul persecutes his saints, he persecutes him; whatever injury is done to them, he takes it as done to himself, who are to him as the apple of his eye. Moreover, hereby they are conformed unto him, and made like him; as he was, so are they in this world; there is a good deal of likeness between the afflictions of Christ and his people, though in some things there is a great disparity; add to this, that the afflictions of the saints are endured for Christ's sake, for the sake of his Gospel, and the profession of his name, and therefore called his, and the more cheerfully bore by them: now of these there were some remains to be filled up by the apostle; not that all the afflictions of the whole body of Christ were to be, or have been filled up by him; there was a great deal left behind by him to be filled up by others, and which has been filling up ever since, and still is, and yet all is not fulfilled to this day, nor will be till the end of time; but he speaks only of that part and measure of them, which was to be tilled up in his flesh; he had his measure of afflictions allotted to him, great part of which he had endured already, but some remained, the measure was not yet full, though pretty near being completed, which gave him pleasure; it was just filling up, and the time of his departure was at hand, when there would be no more sorrow; for it was only while he was in the flesh he was filling up this measure, and would be quickly up; and what added to his joy was, that as these were the afflictions of Christ, and the measure of them was appointed by his heavenly Father, to be filled up by him in this mortal state, so they were

for his body's sake, which is the church; not in the room and stead of the church, and people of Christ, as were the sufferings of Christ personal; or to exempt them from sufferings who all have their share in this life; nor for their sins to make reconciliation for them, and procure the remission of them; nor to redeem them, or obtain salvation for them, all which is completed by Christ; but for their good and profit, that the Gospel might continue and be blessed to the conversion of many, for the increase of the church and additions to it, and for the furtherance of the Gospel, and that such who professed it might be established and confirmed in it, by the sufferings of the apostle for it: and such good effects did follow upon his sufferings and afflictions; they were for the consolation of many souls, the strengthening of weak believers, and causing even preachers of the Gospel to wax more confident, and more boldly preach the Gospel without fear of man.

Colossians 1:25

Ver. 25. Whereof I am made a minister,.... Not of Christ, or of the Gospel as before, though both were true; but of the churches for whose sake he endured afflictions; and which carries in it a reason of his suffering for them: he was not a saviour of the body, nor a redeemer of the church, nor Lord of it; but a minister, a servant of it, that ministered to it in holy things, in the word and ordinances; not a deacon, as the word, sometimes signifies, nor an ordinary minister, or a pastor of a particular church; but a minister of the church in general, being an apostle sent to preach the Gospel everywhere: he was made a minister of it, not by men, or anything he received from men; nor by himself, not by usurpation, he did not thrust himself into this office, or take it upon him of himself; but was put into it by Christ, who counted him faithful, he appeared to him, and made him a minister, qualified him for this office, called him to it, and sent him to perform it: and which he executed

according to the dispensation of God: or divine economy, which denotes such an authority and administration as is used in a family. The church is God's family, it is called the house and household of God, and the household of faith, part of which is in heaven and part on earth; God is the householder or master of the family; Christ is the Son over his own house; ministers are stewards in it, and their work is to give to everyone their portion of meat in due season; their authority from God to do so, and the exercise of it, are the economy or dispensation of the Gospel committed to them: this is of God and not man, for none but God can give them a power to dispense it, and which is purely of his grace, called therefore the dispensation of the grace of God, **Eph 3:2**; and here said to be given,

which is given to me for you; not according to any merits of his, who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an injurious person to Christ and his Gospel; but according to the pure grace of God, and that not for himself, but for the good of others, for the Gentiles especially, and so for the Colossians:

to fulfil the word of God; either the promises and prophecies contained in the word of God, respecting the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and their conversion by it; which had in a great measure their accomplishment through the ministry of the apostle: or to fill all places with the word of God and Gospel of Christ, as the apostle did from Jerusalem, and round about to Illyricum, diffusing the savour of the knowledge of Christ in every place; and sinners being converted, churches were planted and daily filled with such as should be saved; or to preach fully and faithfully the Gospel, keeping back nothing that was profitable, but declaring the whole counsel of God, continuing faithful to it to the end, as he did: to fill up or fulfil words is an Hebraism, and signifies to confirm them, or act according to them; see **1Ki 1:14** and the Septuagint there.

Colossians 1:26

Ver. 26. [Even] the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations,.... This is said, as explanative of the word of God; signifying that he did not mean the Scriptures in general, which are the word of God, and every part of them; some part of which is historical, another prophetical, another practical, and another doctrinal; nor the law, which also is the word of God, but the Gospel, called "the mystery", as it often is; because it contains things, which, though revealed, are mysteries to a natural man; and even to enlightened persons, who have the clearest view of them, the "modus" of them is not to be accounted for; such as the doctrines of the Trinity, of the union of the two natures in Christ, the incarnation of the Son of God, the union and communion of the church with Christ, the resurrection of the dead, &c. And though perhaps great and special regard may be here had to the calling of the Gentiles, which, though revealed in the prophecies of the Old Testament, was in a great measure hid in them, and not so clearly known in ages and generations past as now, yet the whole may be applied to the Gospel mystery in general; which was first hid in the heart of God, in his thoughts and purposes, in his counsel and covenant, and in his Son, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and then in the ceremonies and shadows of the law, which but few had any insight into, and discerning of; and, during that dispensation, was wholly hid from the Gentiles; and but in part known by the Jews, and but by a few, and comparatively by them very darkly; and not so clearly by the angels themselves, who pry into these mysteries, and now, under the Gospel dispensation, learn from the church the manifold wisdom of God; and indeed it was hidden from all men, Jews and Gentiles, in a state of nature, and even from the wise and prudent of this world:

but now is made manifest to his saints; now under the Gospel dispensation, since the coming of Christ; there is an external revelation of the Gospel by him, more clearly, by whom grace and truth came, called the revelation of Christ; and an internal revelation of it by his Spirit, who is the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him; which is made to saints, the holy apostles and prophets, who are the saints to whom this faith, and the mystery of it, were first delivered with so much power and evidence; and to all the elect of God, whom he has separated for himself in eternal election; whom Christ has sanctified by his blood, and to whom he is made sanctification; and who are called with an holy calling, have principles of grace and holiness wrought in them by the Spirit of God, and therefore called "his" saints; these have only a spiritual discerning of the Gospel, for the natural man neither knows nor receives it.

Colossians 1:27

Ver. 27. To whom God would make known,.... The spring and cause of the manifestation of the Gospel to the saints, and chosen of God, is not their works, for God does not call them with an holy calling according to them, but according to his own grace; nor any preparations and dispositions in them before such manifestation, towards the Gospel and the truths of it, for there are none such naturally in men, but all the reverse; nor a foresight of their better improvement of it, when made known, for this is not the method of divine grace, witness the instances of Sodom and Gomorrha, Tyre and Sidon; nor any holiness in them, or because they were sanctified, for they became so by the power of divine grace, through the Gospel revelation; but it is the pure sovereign good will and pleasure of God; see **Eph 1:9**; as appears from what they were before the Gospel came unto them, what is made known to them in it and by it; and from this, that they and not others, equally as deserving, are favoured with it:

what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles. The apostle, besides calling the Gospel a "mystery", as before, ascribes "glory" to it; it is a glorious mystery, there is a glory in all the mysteries of it; it is a glorious Gospel, as it is often called, in its author, subject, matter, use, and efficacy: and also "riches" of glory, or glorious riches; containing rich truths, an immense treasure of them, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; rich blessings of justification, pardon, reconciliation, adoption, and eternal life; and rich promises, relating both to this life, and that which is to come; all which were opened and made known, not to the Jews only, but "among the Gentiles" also; who before were aliens, enemies, exceeding wicked, poor, blind, and miserable, but now, through the Gospel, were become rich and glorious, wise, knowing, and happy:

which is Christ in you, the hope of glory; this is to be connected with all that goes before: Christ is the riches of the Gospel; the riches of the divine perfections, which the Gospel more clearly displays than the works of creation or providence, are all in Christ, the fulness of them dwells in him; and this is the grace the Gospel reveals, that he, who was rich with all these, became poor to make us rich; the rich promises of the Gospel were all made to Christ, and are all yea and "Amen" in him; the rich blessings of it are all in his hands, righteousness, peace, and pardon, the riches both of grace and glory; the rich treasures of its divine truths are hid in him; and he is the substance of everyone of them: Christ is also the glory of the Gospel, inasmuch as he is the author, preacher, and subject of it; it is full of the glory of his person, both as the only begotten of the Father, and as the only Mediator between God and man; it is the glass through which this is seen: moreover, the glory of God in him is expressed hereby; the glory of his wisdom and power, of his truth and faithfulness, of his justice and holiness, of his love, grace, and mercy, and every other perfection, is eminently held forth in the Gospel; as this is great in the salvation and redemption of his people by Christ, which the Gospel brings the good news of; add to this, that that glory which the saints shall have with Christ, and will lie in the enjoyment of him to all eternity, is brought to light in the Gospel: Christ is also the mystery of the Gospel; he is one of the persons in the mystery of the Trinity; the mystery of his divine sonship, of his divine person, being God and yet man, man and yet God, and both in one person, and of his incarnation and redemption, makes a considerable part of the Gospel: and Christ, who is the sum and substance of it, is "in" his people; not only as the omnipresent God, as the author of the light of nature, as the Creator of all things, in whom all live, move, and have their beings, but in a way of special grace; and the phrase is expressive of a revelation of him in them, of their possession of him, of his inhabitation in them by his Spirit and grace, particularly by faith, and of their communion with him, in consequence of their union to him; and being so, he is the ground and foundation of their hopes of glory. There is a glory which the saints are hoping for, which the glories of this world are but a faint resemblance of; which is unseen at present, and which the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared unto; what is eternal, and which Christ has entered into, and took possession of; and what will greatly consist in beholding his glory, and in everlasting communion with him; this through grace saints have a good hope of, and are waiting for, and even rejoice at times in the hope of it; of which hope Christ is the foundation; for not only the promise of it is with him, but the glory itself is in his hands; the gift of it is with him, and through him; he has made way by his sufferings and death for the enjoyment of it, and is now preparing it for them, by his presence and intercession; his grace makes them meet for it, his righteousness gives them a title to it, and his Spirit is the earnest of it, and the substance of it will be the fruition of himself.

Colossians 1:28

Ver. 28. Whom we preach,.... Under the above considerations; as the riches, the glory, and the mystery of the Gospel; as the hope set before lost sinners to lay hold upon; as the only Saviour and Redeemer, by whose righteousness believers are justified, through whose blood their sins are pardoned, by whose sacrifice and satisfaction atonement is made, and in whose person alone is acceptance with God: Christ and him crucified, and salvation by him, were the subjects of the ministry of the apostles; on this they dwelt, and it was this which was blessed for the conversion of sinners, the edification of saints, the planting of churches, and the setting up and establishing the kingdom and interest of Christ:

warning every man; of his lost state and condition by nature; of the wrath to come, and the danger he is in of it; of the terrors of the Lord, and of an awful judgment; showing sinners that they are unrighteous and unholy, that their nature is corrupt and impure, their best righteousness imperfect, and cannot justify them before God; that they stand guilty before him, and that destruction and misery are in all their ways; and therefore advise them to flee from the wrath to come, to the hope set before them in the Gospel:

and teaching every man in all wisdom; not natural, but spiritual and evangelical; the whole Gospel of Christ, the counsel of God, the wisdom of

God in a mystery, and all the branches of it; teaching them to believe in Christ for salvation, to lay hold on his righteousness for justification, to deal with his blood for pardon, and with his sacrifice for the atonement of their sins; and to observe all things commanded by Christ, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly: by these two words, "warning" and "teaching", the several parts of the Gospel ministry are expressed; and which extend to all sorts of men, rich and poor, bond and free, greater and lesser sinners, Gentiles as well as Jews; and who are chiefly designed here, and elsewhere, by every man and every creature:

that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; not in themselves, in which sense no man is perfect in this life; but in the grace, holiness, and righteousness of Christ, in whom all the saints are complete: or it may regard that ripeness of understanding, and perfection of knowledge, which, when arrived unto, saints become perfect men in Christ; and is the end of the Gospel ministry, and to which men are brought by it; see **Eph 4:13**; and to be understood of the presentation of the saints, not by Christ to himself, and to his Father, but by the ministers of the Gospel, as their glory and crown of rejoicing in the day of Christ.

Colossians 1:29

Ver. 29. Whereunto I also labour,.... In the word and doctrine, by preaching Christ, warning sinners of their danger, teaching them the way of salvation, and their duty; with this view, that, in thee great day of account, he might bring a large number of them, and set them before Christ as the seals of his ministry, as instances of the grace of Christ, and as perfect in him:

striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily; meaning either in his prayers, earnestly entreating of God that he would succeed his labours, and bless them to the conversion of many; which sense is favoured by the Syriac version, which renders it,
Pvktmw, "and make supplication"; that is, with that effectual fervent prayer, which was powerfully wrought in him: or in his ministry, combating with many enemies, fighting the good fight of faith; not in his own strength, but through the power of Christ; which enabled him to preach the Gospel far and near, in season and out of season; which supported his outward man, and strengthened his inward man for that service, and made it effectual to the good of the souls of many: some refer this to the signs, wonders, and miracles, which Christ wrought by him, for the confirmation of the Gospel; but the other

sense, which takes in both the power by which he was assisted in preaching, both in body and soul, and that which went along with his ministry to make it useful to others, is to be preferred.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Colossians 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS 2

In this chapter the apostle expresses his great concern for the Colossians, and others he had never seen; exhorts them to constancy in the faith of Christ; warns them of false teachers, and their tenets; takes notice of various blessings and privileges they had by Christ, and cautions against several superstitions and corruptions, which were obtaining among the churches of Christ: in **Col 2:1** the apostle declares the conflict he had for the persons he writes to, and for others, though they had never seen him, which he was desirous they might be acquainted with; partly for the comfort of their hearts, their cement in love, and the improvement of their knowledge of divine things, the treasures of which are in Christ, **Col 2:2**, and partly that they might not be deceived by the enticing words of the false teachers, **Col 2:4**, and should his absence and distance from them be objected to his professed concern and affection for them, he answers, that notwithstanding that, he was present with them in spirit, and had a discerning of their faith and order, and the steadfastness thereof, with pleasure, **Col 2:5**, wherefore he exhorts them to perseverance in the faith of Christ, and to an abounding: in it, **Col 2:6**, and to take heed of being hurt by the vain philosophy and traditions of the Jews, but to keep close to Christ, and the truths of his Gospel, seeing all fulness is in him, and they were full in him, who is over all, and superior to all, and therefore had no need to have recourse unto, and hearken to any other, **Col 2:9**, nor did they need any Jewish ordinances, particularly circumcision, since they were partakers of another and better circumcision in Christ; and besides, were buried in baptism with him; and even though they had been dead in sin, and in their fleshly uncircumcision, yet they were alive, quickened with Christ, and had the forgiveness of all their sins for his sake; who had freed them from the ceremonial law, and had rid them of all their former lords and masters, and had brought them into the liberty of the Gospel, **Col 2:11**, wherefore he concludes, by way of exhortation and advice, first with respect to Jewish ceremonies, not to suffer them to be imposed upon them, or to regard the censures of men for the non-observance of them, since these were but shadows, of which Christ is the substance, **Col 2:16**, and next with respect to the worship of angels, under a notion of humility, some were for introducing; who are described as bold intruders, vain, proud, and conceited persons, and as not holding the head Christ, to whom the body the church is joined, and by whom it is nourished and increased, **Col 2:18**, and seeing now they that are Christ's are dead with him to the ceremonial law, and that dead to them, the apostle argues that they should not be subject to the ordinances, commands, and doctrines of men; some of which he instances in, as if they were still under the rudiments of the world; and the rather, since these things had no true wisdom in them, only a show of it, and were no other than will worship and superstition, and lay in a negligence of the body, and were dishonourable and unsatisfying, **Col 2:20**.

Ver. 1. For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you,.... This is occasioned by what he had said in **Col 1:29**, that he laboured and strove according to the energy of divine power in him, to present every man perfect in Christ; and lest these Colossians should think that these labours and strivings of his were only for all and every of those persons among whom he was, and to whom he personally preached, he would have them know, observe, and assure themselves, that the great conflict, strife, and agony, in which he was engaged, was for them also; by which he means, his fervent prayers and wrestlings with God, the conflicts he had in his own mind, with his own spirit, about the good of the churches of Christ, the care of which were upon him, and even of those to whom he was by face unknown, sometimes hoping, sometimes fearing, sometimes rejoicing, at other times weeping, at what he heard concerning them; also his combats with the false apostles, striving and earnestly contending for the faith of the Gospel, giving no place to them, no, not for an hour, defending truth, refuting error, and fighting the good fight of faith, by preaching, writing, and disputing; likewise the various persecutions, great afflictions, and hardships he met with from men, for the sake of the Gospel; add to all this, the frequent battles he had with the enemy of souls, his wrestlings against principalities and powers, the many temptations of Satan with which he was attacked, to draw him off from the service of Christ, to weaken his hands, and hinder his success in it; all which he endured and went through with a greatness of mind, and that for the good of the churches of Christ, and the glory of his name, which were the great things he had in view and among others, for the good of these Colossians,

and [for] them at Laodicea; the saints of that place, the church of Christ which was there; and is the rather mentioned, because near to Colosse: it was a famous city by the river Lycus, first called Diospolis, and then Rhoas {p}, and afterwards Laodicea; it was the metropolis of Phrygia, in which Colosse stood: hence this epistle is ordered to be read to them also, they being infested with false teachers, and in the same situation and circumstances as the Colossians were; and though the apostle was unknown to both of them, having never been at either place, yet was heartily concerned for each of their welfare, and he strove for them as he did for others; one of Stephens's copies adds, "and them in Hierapolis"; see **Col 4:13**.

And [for] as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; meaning the churches in Christ, and believers in him; such as had never heard him preach, nor had any personal knowledge of him, and conversation with him, which tend to knit the hearts of Christians more firmly together; yet his heart was towards them, he laboured for them, by praying for them, writing to them, suffering all things for their sakes, for the confirmation of them, and of the Gospel of Christ. Christian love and care, and the benefit of the labours and sufferings of Gospel ministers, extend and reach to persons that never saw them.

{p} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 29.

Colossians 2:2

Ver. 2. That their hearts might be comforted,.... Here follow the reasons why the apostle had so great a conflict, on account of the above persons, and why he was so desirous they should know it; one is, the consolation of their hearts. The hearts of God's people often need comfort, by reason of indwelling sin, the temptations of Satan, the hidings of God's face, and afflictive providences; and by reason of false teachers, who greatly trouble them, unsettle their minds, weaken their faith, and fill them with doubts and perplexities, and which was the case with these churches: now the business of Gospel ministers is to comfort such; this is the commission they are sent with; the doctrines of the Gospel are calculated for this very purpose, such as full redemption, free justification, complete pardon of sin, peace and reconciliation; and the bent of their ministry is to comfort distressed minds, upon what account soever; and it must be a comfort to these churches, when they found that they were regarded by so great an apostle; and it might tend to confirm them in the doctrine they had received at first, and deliver them from the scruples the false apostles had injected into their minds, and so administer comfort to them, when they perceived that the apostle approved of the Gospel they had heard and embraced, and rejected the notions of the false teachers:

being knit together in love: as the members of an human body are, by joints and bands; as love is the bond of union between God and his people, Christ and his members, so between saints and saints; it is the cement that joins and keeps them together, and which edifies and builds them up, and whereby they increase with the increase of God; it makes them to be of one heart and one soul; it renders their communion with one another comfortable and delightful, and strengthens them against the common enemy, who is for dividing, and so destroying; and is what is the joy of Gospel ministers, and what they labour at and strive for, and which is another reason of the apostle's conflict:

and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding; that is, spiritual knowledge and understanding, or the understanding of spiritual things; for the understanding of things natural and civil is not designed; nor a mere notional knowledge of spiritual things, which persons may have, and yet not charity, or love, with which this is here joined; and such an one also, which is sure and certain: for as there is such a thing as the assurance of faith, and the assurance of hope, so likewise of understanding of the Gospel, and the truths of it; concerning which there ought to be no doubt, being to be received upon the credit of a divine testimony: moreover, such a knowledge and understanding of divine things is intended, as is large and abundant, signified by "all riches"; for though it is not complete and perfect in this life, yet it takes a vast compass, and reaches to all the deep things of God; to whatever relates to the person and grace of Christ; to all the things of the Spirit of God; to all the blessings and promises of the covenant of grace; to the riches both of grace and glory, to the things of time and eternity, and which is more clearly explained by the following clause:

to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; that is, to a greater and more perfect knowledge, approbation, and confession of the Gospel, which he had in the preceding chapter called the mystery; see **Col 1:26**, and here "the mystery of God", which he is both the author and subject of: it is by him as the efficient cause, ordained by him, and hid in him before the world was; and it is of him, as the subject matter of it; not as the God of nature and providence, which the works of both declare; but as the God of all grace, as God in Christ, which is the peculiar discovery of the Gospel: and "of" him as "the Father" of Christ, which is not discoverable by the light of nature, nor known by natural reason, but is a point of divine revelation; and "of" him as the Father of his people by adoption; and of all his grace, in election to grace and glory; in predestination to sonship, and in the council and covenant of grace; in the scheme of salvation and redemption; in the mission of his Son, and the gift of him as a Saviour and Redeemer. The copulative "and" before "the Father", is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, which read "the mystery of God the Father"; and with it, it may be rendered, as it sometimes is, God, "even the Father": though the word "God" may be considered essentially, and as after distinguished into two of the persons of the Godhead; "the Father" the first person, so called, in relation to his Son, which is no small part of the mystery of the Gospel; and "Christ" the second person, who is equally God with the Father; and the Spirit, who, though not mentioned, is not excluded from this adorable mystery: and which is the mystery "of Christ", he being both the efficient cause and the subject matter of it; it treats of his deity and personality; of his offices, as Mediator, prophet, priest, and King; of his incarnation and redemption; of his grace, righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction; of justification by him, pardon through him, and acceptance in him.

Colossians 2:3

Ver. 3. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. This may be understood either of the mystery of the Gospel, which contains the rich mines and hidden treasures of all divine truths; so called, because of the richness and intrinsic value and excellency of them; and because of their variety and abundance, being the unsearchable riches of Christ: or of Christ himself; and not so much of his personal wisdom, either as God, being the all-wise God, the wisdom of God, an omniscient Being, that knows all persons and things whatever, within the whole circle of wisdom and knowledge; or as man, whose wisdom and knowledge, though created, was very large and abundant; or as Mediator, on whom the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and of knowledge, rests; but of that fulness of truth as well as grace, which dwells in him as in its subject and fountain; by whom it comes, and from whom it is derived unto us; and our highest wisdom and knowledge lies in knowing him, whom to know is life eternal; and the excellency of whose knowledge surpasses everything else; it is the greatest riches, and most valuable treasure; nor is there anything worth knowing but what is in Christ, all is laid up in him: and being said to be "hid" in him, shows the excellency of the wisdom and knowledge that is in him only valuable things being hid, or compared to hid treasure; that this cannot be had without knowing him; that it is imperfect in the present state, and is not yet fully and clearly revealed; and therefore should be inquired after, and searched for, and Christ should be applied unto for it: atmkx yznn, "treasures of wisdom", is a phrase used by the Targumist {q}.

{q} Jonathan ben Uzziel in Exod. xl. 4.

Colossians 2:4

Ver. 4. And this I say,.... That he had such a conflict for them, and had told them of his care and fear on their account, and had signified his great desire that they might arrive to a more large and certain knowledge of the mysteries of grace, and had asserted that all solid spiritual wisdom and knowledge were in Christ; all which he said, to show his affection for them; to observe unto them, that there was no need to seek for wisdom and knowledge elsewhere, since there was such a fulness of it in Christ, and the Gospel; and to put them upon their guard against false teachers:

lest any man should beguile you with enticing words; by which are meant, not apt and pertinent words, such as are suited to the minds of men, and proper to convey right ideas of divine truth, poignant expressions, sound speech, and strong reasonings; for such the apostle himself used, and yet not enticing words of men's wisdom; and which design mere words, great swelling words of vanity, which like bubbles look big, and make a great noise, but contain nothing but wind and emptiness; fair speeches, specious pretences, false colourings, fallacious reasonings, a show of probability, and appearance of science, falsely so called; whereby deceitful workers, such as the followers of Simon Magus and the Gnostics, used, whom the apostle had in view; beguiled unstable souls, and deceived the hearts of the simple: wherefore the apostle said the above things, showing that all true wisdom was in Christ, and all spiritual knowledge was in the pure and unmixed Gospel; which was not to be parted with for other things, which through art and management, and the cunning craftiness of men, might at first sight carry in them a show of probability, and appearance of truth. The gold, the silver, and precious stones of divine truths, which have been proved by the standard, are not to be given up for such as only look like them, being wrought up through the fallacy of men; who by a set of unmeaning words, paralogisms, and false reasonings, lie in wait to deceive.

Colossians 2:5

Ver. 5. For though I be absent in the flesh,.... Or body, as the Ethiopic version reads it, and as it is expressed in **1Co 5:3**; here the apostle anticipates an objection which might be made, how he could have such a conflict and concern for them, and express so much affection for them, and know so much of their affairs, in what condition and situation they were, and how liable to be deceived by false teachers, when he was absent from them, and had never been among them. That he had never been corporeally present with them, nor was he then, he owns; but this did not hinder but that he might be in another sense present with them, and so have cognizance of them and their state, and be affected towards them, and concerned for them:

yet am I with you in the spirit; as he was with the Corinthians in the place above cited, judging the incestuous person, determining concerning his case, and delivering him up to Satan, and so he was with these Colossians; for as he was a member of the same body with them, he was actuated by the same spirit; and by virtue of their union to each other in their common head, his spirit went out towards them, his heart was knit unto them; he had the same affection for them, and care of them, though he had never seen them with his bodily eyes, as he had for those whom he had seen: moreover, this may regard that extraordinary discerning and presence of his spirit which he had; and which was of the same kind with that of Elisha, when his servant Gehazi went after Naaman the Syrian, and took a present of him, to whom on his return he said, upon his denying that he had been anywhere, "went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?" **2Ki 5:26**. Elisha's spirit went, and was present with him, and saw and knew all that passed, being under the impulse and inspiration of the Spirit of God, who made all known unto him: so the spirit of the Apostle Paul was at the church at Colosse, and saw: and discerned their whole estate; this being made known by the Spirit of God, under whose inspiration he wrote this letter, suitable to their case:

joying and beholding your order; or as the Syriac version renders it, "I rejoice that I can see your order": that is, with pleasure observe, consider it, and contemplate on it; and that partly from the relation of Epaphras, and chiefly from the intimations of the Spirit of God in an extraordinary way: by their "order" is meant, either their orderly walk and conversation, which being as becomes the Gospel of Christ, was very pleasing and delightful to the apostle; or rather the order of their church discipline, they having regular officers, pastors, and deacons, ordained among them; who rightly performed their offices, and had respect and subjection yielded to them; the ordinances of the Gospel were duly administered, and constantly attended on; the members of the church were watched over, admonitions given, and censures laid where they were necessary, and everything was done decently and in order; which was a beautiful sight, and gave the apostle an uncommon pleasure. The word used signifies a military order, such as is observed in armies, in battle array; suggesting, that these Christians were good soldiers of Christ, were enlisted under his banners, and kept in due order, in rank and file; stood fast in one spirit, contended and strove together for the faith of the Gospel, fought the good fight of faith, nor could any hardship move them from their station; so that they were, in the apostle's eye, beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners, **So 6:4**; and so may denote their attachment to the Gospel, and to one another; they were united to, and abode by each other; they served the Lord with one consent, and kept the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, **Eph 4:3**, which is a pleasant thing to behold, as well as what follows;

and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ; either in the grace of faith, and the exercise of it on Christ, in opposition to doubtings and unbelief; whereby God is honoured, and with which he is well pleased; souls are filled with peace and joy; Satan is resisted and overcome; and the hearts of others, particularly ministers of the Gospel, are comforted: or in the doctrine of faith respecting Christ, in which they stood fast; notwithstanding there was a majority against it, the wise and learned, the rich and mighty, did not receive it; and though it was opposed by false teachers, persecuted by profane men, and loaded with reproach and obloquy; and also in the profession of it, which they held without wavering: now to see a set of Christians, a church of Christ walking together in Gospel order, steady in their faith on Christ, abiding by the doctrine of faith, and maintaining an honourable profession, how beautiful and delightful is it!

Colossians 2:6

Ver. 6. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord,.... Receiving Christ is believing in him: faith is the eye of the soul, that sees the beauty, glory, fulness, and suitableness of Christ; the foot that goes to him, and the hand that takes hold on him, and the arm that receives and embraces him; so that this is not a receiving him into the head by notion, but into the heart by faith; and not in part only, but in whole: faith receives a whole Christ, his person as God and man; him in all his offices, as prophet, priest, and King; particularly as a Saviour and Redeemer, he being under that character so exceeding suitable to the case of a sensible sinner; and it receives all blessings of grace along with him, from him, and through him; as a justifying righteousness, remission of sins, adoption of children, grace for grace, and an inheritance among all them that are sanctified; and both Christ and them, as the free grace gifts of God; which men are altogether undeserving of, and cannot possibly give any valuable consideration for: so these Colossians had received Christ gladly, joyfully, willingly, and with all readiness; and especially as "the Lord", on which there is a peculiar emphasis in the text; they had received him and believed in him, as the one and only Lord and head of the church; as the one and only Mediator between God and man, to the exclusion of angels, the worship of which the false teachers were introducing; they had received the doctrines of Christ, and not the laws of Moses, which judaizing preachers were desirous of joining with them; they had heard and obeyed the Son, and not the servant; they had submitted to the authority of Christ as King of saints, and had been subject to his ordinances; wherefore the apostle exhorts them to continue and go on, believing in him, and holding to him the head:

[so] walk ye in him; not only in imitation of him as he walked, in the exercise of grace, as love, patience, humility, and meekness, and in the discharge of duty; but by faith in him, going on in a way of believing in him, always looking to him, leaning on him, and deriving grace and strength from him: to walk in Christ, is to walk in and after the Spirit of Christ, under his influence, by his direction, and through his assistance; and to walk in the doctrine of Christ, abiding by it, and increasing in the knowledge of it; and to walk in the ordinances of Christ, which with ills presence and spirit, are ways of pleasantness and paths of peace: particularly here it may signify, to make use of Christ, and walk on in him, as the way, truth, and the life; as the only way of access to God, and acceptance with him; as the way of salvation, as the only true way to eternal life and happiness, in opposition to every creature, angels, or men; the worshipping of the one, or works done by the other.

Colossians 2:7

Ver. 7. Rooted and built up in him,.... By these metaphors, the apostle expresses the safe and happy state of these believers; and which he makes use of as arguments, to engage them to walk on in Christ, and as pointing out the manner in which they should. Believers are sometimes compared to trees, and are trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord; and their root is Christ, from whence as such they spring, and by whom they are filled with the fruits of righteousness; in him they are to abide, keep close unto him, and walk in him; deriving all their life, nourishment, fruitfulness, grace, and perseverance in it, from him as their root: they are also sometimes compared to a building, to an house, a temple, an habitation for God; and Christ is the sure and only foundation on which they are laid, and where they are safe and secure; and, being fitly joined together, grow up as an holy temple to the Lord; and this being their case, they are to go on laying the whole stress of their salvation on him, building their faith and hope of eternal glory entirely upon him; and building up one another also on their most holy faith, of which he is the substance, as it follows:

and stablished in the faith: that of Christ, or in the doctrine of faith which respects Christ: the apostle here expresses the same thing without a figure, which he had signified by the two foregoing metaphors, and explains what he means by them; namely, that they were well settled and grounded in their faith in Christ, and thoroughly instructed and established in the doctrines of the Gospel; and a very good thing it is to have the heart established with grace, both as a principle and a doctrine; which is God's work, and was the happy case of these persons; wherefore it became them to act as such, and not be like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, or carried about with divers and strange doctrines, but abide by those which had been preached to them by the faithful ministers of Christ, and they had received: as

ye have been taught: by Epaphras their minister, and others; and therefore should not listen to false teachers, and to a contrary doctrine taught by them; considering of whom they had learnt the true doctrine, what evidence it carried with it, and what use it had been of to them, in convincing, converting, comforting, instructing, and establishing them: and therefore should be

abounding therein with thanksgiving; that is, in the faith; as in the grace, so in the doctrine of faith; for as saints are to abound in the work of the Lord, and in every good work, and in the exercise of every grace, so in the knowledge of truth; see **2Co 8:7**; and to make use of all means for the increase of, and growth in Gospel grace and light, and the knowledge of a crucified Christ, which is meant by abounding: for all which there is great reason for thanksgiving; both for the unspeakable gift of Christ, who is received as such by faith, and in whom believers are rooted and built up; and for faith itself, which is the gift of God; and also for the Gospel, and the truths of it; and for every degree of spiritual light in it, and knowledge of it.

Colossians 2:8

Ver. 8. Beware lest any man spoil you,.... Or despoil you; rob you of the rich treasure of the Gospel, strip you of your spiritual armour, take away from you the truths and doctrines of Christ, and divest you of your spiritual privileges and blessings; suggesting, that the false teachers were thieves and robbers, and men of prey: or drive and carry you away as spoils, as the innocent harmless sheep are drove, and carried away by wolves, and by the thief that comes to steal, to kill, and destroy; intimating, that such as these were the heretics of those times; wherefore it became them to be upon their guard, to watch, look out, and beware, lest they should be surprised by these deceitful workers, who lay in wait to deceive; were wolves in sheep's clothing, who transformed themselves into the apostles of Christ; and therefore it became them to take heed, lest any man hurt them, be he ever so wise and learned, or be thought ever so good, religious, and sincere; since men of this cast put on such masks and false appearances, on purpose to beguile. The things by which they imposed upon weak minds are as follow, and therefore to be shunned, avoided, and rejected:

through philosophy: not right philosophy, or true wisdom, the knowledge of God, of the things of nature, of things natural, moral, and civil; which may be attained unto by the use of reason, and light of nature. The apostle does not mean to condemn all arts and sciences, as useless and hurtful, such as natural philosophy in its various branches, ethics, logic, rhetoric, &c. when kept within due bounds, and in their proper place and sphere; for with instances of these the Scriptures themselves abound; but he means that philosophy, or science, which is falsely so called, the false notions of philosophers; such as the eternity of matter, and of this world, the mortality of souls, the worshipping of demons and angels, &c. and also such principles in philosophy, which in themselves, and in the things of nature, are true, but, when applied to divine things, to things above nature, the mere effects of divine power and grace, and of pure revelation, are false; as that out of nothing, nothing can be made, which in the things of nature is true, but not to be applied to the God of nature, who has made the world out of nothing; as also that from a privation to an habit there is no return, which is naturally true, but not to be applied to supernatural things, and supernatural agency; witness the miracles of Christ, in restoring sight to the blind, life to the dead, &c. and therefore is not to be employed against the resurrection of the dead: philosophy may be useful as an handmaid; it is not to be a mistress in theological things; it may subserve, but not govern; it is not to be made use of as a judge, or rule in such matters; the natural man, on these principles, neither knows nor receives the things of the Spirit of God; judgment is not to be made and formed according to them; as of a trinity of persons in the Godhead; of the sonship of Christ, and his incarnation; of man's redemption by him, of reconciliation and satisfaction by his blood and sacrifice, of the pardon of sin, of a sinner's justification, of the resurrection of the dead, and such like articles of faith: that philosophy which is right, can only be a rule of judgment in things relating to it, and not in those which are out of its sphere: in a word, the apostle here condemns the philosophy of the Jews, and of the Gnostics; the former had introduced natural philosophy into the worship and service of God, and the things appertaining to their religion; and had made the tabernacle and temple, and the most holy place, and the things belonging thereunto, emblems and hieroglyphics of natural things; as of the sun, moon, and stars, and their influences, and of the four elements, and of moral virtue, &c. as appears from the writings of Josephus {r}, and Philo {s}; when they were types and representatives of spiritual things under the Gospel dispensation; and the latter had brought in the philosophy of Pythagoras and Plato, concerning abstinences, purgations, sacrifices, and ceremonies of worship, given to demons and angels: in short, the apostle's meaning is, that philosophy is not to be mixed with the pure Gospel of Christ; it has always been fatal to it; witness the school of Pantaenus in Alexandria, in the early times of Christianity, by which the simplicity of the Gospel was greatly corrupted; and the race of schoolmen a few centuries ago, who introduced the philosophy of Aristotle, Averrois, and others, into all the subjects of divinity: to observe no more, such kind of philosophy is here meant, which may be truly called

vain deceit: that is, that which is vain and empty, and has no solid foundation, even in nature and reason itself; and which being applied to divine things and religious observances, is deceitful and delusory:

after the tradition of men; either of the Gentiles, who had their traditions in religion; or of the Jews, called the traditions of the elders, and of the fathers, which the Pharisees were fond of, by which they transgressed the commandments of God; which the apostle was brought up in, and was zealous of formerly, but now was delivered from, and rightly condemned as idle, trifling, and pernicious:

after the rudiments of the world, or "the elements of the world"; not the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water; or the worship of the sun, moon, and stars, &c. among the idolatrous Gentiles, but the ceremonial laws of the Jews; see **Ga 4:8**; which were that to them in religion, as the A B C, or letters, are in grammar, the elements and rudiments of it; and though these were to them, when children, useful, but now under the Gospel dispensation are weak, beggarly, and useless, and not to be attended to:

and not after Christ; what he has taught and prescribed, the doctrines and commandments of Christ, the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are in him; and therefore all such vain and deceitful philosophy, human traditions, and worldly rudiments, are to be rejected; Christ and his Gospel, the revelation he has made, are the standard of doctrine and worship; he only is to be heard and attended to, and whatever it contrary thereunto is to be guarded against.

{r} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 4. 7. {s} De Congressu quaerend. Erud. p. 440. 441. de Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 665, &c. quod deterius pot. p. 184.

Colossians 2:9

Ver. 9. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. This is to be understood, not of the doctrine, or Gospel of Christ, as being a perfect revelation of the will of God; but of Christ, and particularly of his human nature, as consisting of a true body and a reasonable soul, in which the Godhead dwells in a most eminent manner: God indeed is everywhere by his powerful presence, was in the tabernacle and temple in a very singular manner, and dwells in the saints in a way of special grace; but resides in the human nature of Christ, in the highest and most exalted manner; that is to deity what the human body is to an human soul, it is the house in which it dwells: so Philo the Jew {t} calls the "Logos" the house of God, who is the soul of the universe; and elsewhere says {u}, that God himself has filled the divine Logos wholly with incorporeal powers. The Godhead dwells in Christ as in a tabernacle, in allusion to the tabernacle of Moses, which looked mean without side, but glorious within; where God granted his presence, and accepted the sacrifices of his people; the human nature of Christ is the true antitypical tabernacle, which God pitched, and not man; and sometimes is called a temple, in allusion to Solomon's; and which is filled with the train of the divine perfections, signified by fulness here: for not the fulness of grace, or a communicative fulness, is here meant; nor the relative fulness, the church; but the fulness of the divine nature, of all the perfections of deity, such as eternity, immensity, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, immutability, necessary and self existence, and every other; for if anyone perfection was wanting, the fulness, much less all the fulness of the Godhead, would not be in him. The act of inhabitation denotes the union of the two natures in Christ, and expresses the distinction of them; and is to be understood of the Godhead, as subsisting in the person of the Son of God, and not as subsisting in the person of the Father, or of the Spirit; and shows the permanency of this union, it is a perpetual abiding one; and this fulness is not dependent on the Father's pleasure; it is not said of this as of another fulness, Col 1:19; that it pleased the Father that it should dwell in him: the manner in which it dwells, is "bodily"; not by power, as in the universe; nor by grace, as in the saints; nor by any glorious emanations of it, as in heaven; nor by gifts, as in the prophets and eminent men of God; nor by signs symbols, and shadows, as in the tabernacle and temple; but essentially and personally, or by personal union of the divine nature, as subsisting in the Son of God to an human body, chosen and prepared for that purpose, together with a reasonable human soul; which is the great mystery of godliness, the glory of the Christian religion, and what qualified Christ for, and recommends him to us as a Saviour; and is a reason why, as these words are, that the Gospel should be abode by, continued in, and that with thankfulness: nor should any regard be had to vain and deceitful philosophy, to the traditions of men, or rudiments of the world: Christ only is to be looked to, attended, and followed, who has all fulness in him.

{t} De migr. Abraham, p. 389. {u} De Sommiis, p. 574.

Colossians 2:10

Ver. 10. And ye are complete in him,.... Or "filled up", or "filled full" in him; that is, are perfect in him: saints are in Christ, and all fulness being in him, they are full too, of as much as they stand in need, and are capable of containing: for these words are not an exhortation to perfection, as the Arabic version reads then, be ye complete in him, like those in Ge 17:1; but are an affirmation, asserting not what the saints shall be hereafter, or in heaven, but what they now are; not in themselves, for in themselves none are perfect, not even those who are truly sanctified; for though all grace is seminally implanted in them, and they have a perfection of parts, of all the parts of the new man, or new creature, and are perfect in comparison of what they sometimes were, and of profane persons and hypocrites, and with respect to weaker believers, yet none are absolutely perfect; the good work of grace is not yet finished in them, sin dwells in them, they are full of wants and complaints; the best of them disclaim perfection as attained to by them, and express their desires of it; but they are perfect in Christ their head, who has all fulness in him, in whom they are chosen and blessed: they are complete and perfect in him as to sanctification; he having all fulness of grace and holiness for them, they have it in him; and he is made perfect sanctification to them: and as to justification, he has perfectly fulfilled the law for them, he has made full atonement for sin, has obtained eternal redemption, brought in a complete and perfect righteousness, by which they are justified from all things; are freed from sin, and made perfectly comely, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: and as to knowledge, though it is imperfect in them in their present state, yet in Christ all the treasures of it are, and they have no need to go elsewhere for any; they are filled with the knowledge of God and of his will, and are complete therein in Christ; and what knowledge they have, is eternal life, the beginning, pledge, and earnest of it; so that they have no reason to be beholden to angels or men, only to Christ:

which is the head of all principality and power; not only of the body the church, and who is to be held unto as such, from whom all light, life, grace, and strength, are to be derived; but of all others, though in a different sense; and not only of the kings, princes, and potentates of this world, who hold their kingdoms, and receive their crowns from him, and rule by him; but also of the angels, good and bad, often called principalities and powers; especially the former is here meant, of whom Christ is head, being their Creator, Governor, and upholder; who not only maintains them in their beings, but has confirmed them in their state of holiness; so that they are dependent upon him, and beholden to him for all they have and are: with the Jews, "Metatron", which with them is the name of the angel in Ex 23:20 and seems to be a corruption of the word "mediator", and to design the Messiah, is said {w} to be King over all the angels. This is mentioned, partly to set forth the glory and excellency of Christ; and partly against worshipping of angels, making use of them as mediators, or applying to them on any account, since Christ is the head of these, and of every creature; therefore no creature is to be looked and applied unto, trusted and depended on: unless rather should be meant the Jewish rulers, Scribes, and Pharisees, their doctors, wise men, and Rabbins, called the princes of this world; the Jews' tutors and governors, to whom Christ is superior; he is the only master and Father, and in whom perfection of wisdom is, and not in them; and therefore should not regard them, their vain philosophy, worldly rudiments and traditions.

{w} Zohar in Deut. fol. 120. 8.

Colossians 2:11

Ver. 11. In whom also ye are circumcised,.... This is said to prevent an objection that might be made to the perfection of these Gentile believers, because they were not circumcised; for the Jews thought that perfection lay in circumcision, at least that there could be no perfection without it:

"great is circumcision (say they {x}), for notwithstanding all the commands which Abraham our father did, he was not called perfect until he was circumcised; as it is written, Ge 17:1; "walk before me, and be thou perfect:""

which objection the apostle anticipates, by observing, that they were circumcised in Christ their head, who is made unto them sanctification; and by him as the meritorious and efficient cause of their regeneration and conversion, or internal circumcision, the antitype and perfection of circumcision in the flesh; for the former, and not the latter, is here meant: these believers were circumcised in Christ, or by him; not with external circumcision, which was peculiar to the Jews, the natural seed of Abraham, prefigured Christ, and had its accomplishment in him, the body and substance of all the shadows of the ceremonial law; and so was now nothing, either to Jew or Gentile: as for the Gentiles, they never were obliged unto it; and as for the Jews, it was an insupportable yoke to them, binding them to keep the whole law of Moses, which they could not do, and so it made nothing perfect; but Christ the substance of that, and the end of the whole law, has, the head of the body the church, in whom all the members of it are complete, and are circumcised:

with the circumcision made without hands: which is that of the heart, in the spirit; every man, though he may be circumcised in the flesh, is uncircumcised in heart, until he is circumcised by Christ and his Spirit; which is done, when he is pricked to the heart, and thoroughly convinced of sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of it; when the callousness and hardness of his heart is taken off and removed, and the iniquity of it is, laid open, the plague and corruption in it discerned, and all made naked and bare to the sinner's view; and when he is in pain on account of it, is broken and groans under a sense of it, and is filled with shame for it, and loathing and abhorrence of it: now this is effected not "by the hand of man", as the Ethiopic version reads it, as outward circumcision was; this is not done by any creature whatever; not by angels, who rejoice at the repentance of sinners, but cannot produce it; nor by ministers of the Gospel, who at most are but instruments of regeneration and conversion; nor by men themselves; this is not by might or power of man, by the strength of his free will, but by the Spirit of God: for though men are sometimes exhorted to circumcise themselves, as in De 10:16, in order to convince them of the corruption of their nature, and the need they stand in of spiritual circumcision; yet whereas there is an utter disability in them to effect it, and they need the power and grace of God for that purpose, the Lord has graciously promised his people to do it himself for them, De 30:6; so that this circumcision is in the name sense made without hands, as the human nature of Christ is said to be a tabernacle not made with hands, that, is of men, but of God, being what God has pitched, and not man; and it stands opposed to circumcision in the flesh, which was made with hands, **Eph 2:11**; and by some instrument, as a sharp knife or stone:

in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh. The Vulgate Latin version leaves out the word "sins", and so the Alexandrian copy and some others; and the Syriac version the word "body": by "the flesh" is meant corrupt nature, which is born of the flesh, and propagated in a carnal way, and is the source and spring of all sin; by "the sins" of it are intended the works of the flesh, the inward motions of sin in the members, and the outward actions of it: these are said to be a "body", because sin consists of various parts and members, as a body does; and these united together, and which receive frequent and daily additions; and which are committed and yielded to by the members of the natural body; and which body and bulk of sins arising from the corruption of nature are compared to a garment, and a very filthy one it is; in the putting off of which lies spiritual circumcision: this is done several ways; partly by Christ's wrapping himself in the sins of his people, bearing them in his body, and becoming a sacrifice for them, whereby the old man was crucified, and the body of sin destroyed; and by an application of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, to the consciences of his people, whereby their iniquities are caused to pass from them, and they are clothed with change of raiment; and by the power of his Spirit, laying sin under the restraints of grace, not suffering it to have dominion, but causing grace to reign through righteousness; and by the saints themselves, under the influence of grace, who put off the old man with his deeds, according to the former conversation:

by the circumcision of Christ; not that with which Christ was circumcised at eight days old, that he might appear to be truly man, and a son of Abraham, and under the law, and to fulfil all the righteousness of it, but that which he by his Spirit is the author of, and what is before expressed.

{x} Misn. Nedarim, c. 3. sect. 11.

Colossians 2:12

Ver. 12. Buried with him in baptism,.... The apostle goes on to observe how complete and perfect the saints are in Christ; that they are not only circumcised in him in a spiritual sense, and the body of the sins of their flesh is put off, and removed from them, in allusion to the cutting off and casting away of the foreskin in circumcision; but that they and all their sins were buried with Christ, of which their baptism in water was a lively representation: Christ having died for their sins, was laid in the grave, where he continued for a while, and then rose again; and as they were crucified with him, they were also buried with him, as their head and representative; and all their sins too, which he left behind him in the grave, signified by his grave clothes there; and baptism being performed by immersion, when the person baptized is covered with water, and as it were buried in it, is a very significant emblem of all this; it is a representation of the burial of Christ, and very fitly holds him forth to the view of faith in the state of the dead, in the grave, and points out the place where the Lord lay; and it is also a representation of our burial with him, as being dead to sin, to the law, and to the world, by him. This shows now, that baptism was performed by dipping, or covering the whole body in water, for no other form of administration of baptism, as sprinkling, or pouring water on the face, can represent a burial, or be called one; and this is what many learned interpreters own, and observe on this place:

wherein also ye are risen with [him]; Christ is risen from the dead as the head and representative of his people, and they are risen with him; and their baptism is also an emblem of his and their resurrection, being administered by immersion, in which way only this can be signified; for as the going down into the water, and being under it, represents Christ's descending into the state of the dead, and his continuance in it, so the emersion, or coming up out of the water, represents his rising from the dead, and that of his people in him, in order to walk in newness of life; for the apostle's meaning is, that in baptism saints are risen with Christ, as well as in it buried with him: and this

through the faith of the operation of God; that is, it is through faith that saints see themselves buried and risen with Christ, to which the ordinance of baptism is greatly assisting, where there is true faith; for otherwise, without faith, this ordinance will be of no use to any such end and purpose; and it is not any faith that will avail, but that which is of God's operation; faith is not naturally in men, all men have it not; and those that have it, have it not of themselves, it is the gift of God; it is what be works in them, and by his power performs:

who hath raised him from the dead; this is a periphrasis of God the Father, to whom the resurrection of Christ from the dead is generally ascribed; though not to the exclusion of Christ, and of the Spirit, who were also concerned; and is here added, partly to show in what respect faith, which is God's work, has him for its object, as having raised Christ from the dead, who was delivered for offences, but is risen again through the power of God for justification, and whoever with his heart believes this shall be saved; and partly to show, that the same power is exerted in working true faith in the heart, as was put forth in raising Christ from the dead.

Colossians 2:13

Ver. 13. And you being dead in your sins,.... Not corporeally, though sin had subjected them to a corporeal death, and their bodies were really mortal, and in a little time must die; but morally, sin had brought a death upon them in a moral sense, they were separated from God, as at death the body is from the soul, and so were alienated from the life of God, and consequently must be dead; they had lost the image of God, which consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; and were dead as to the understanding of what was good, as to their affections for it, or will and capacity to do it; and, like dead men, were insensible of their state, their sin, and misery; and altogether inactive and helpless in spiritual things, being destitute of spiritual life, strength, and motion; and were moreover in themselves deserving of eternal death, and according to the law of works, under the sentence of it, and so liable and exposed unto it; and all this for, and on account of their sins, their actual sins and transgressions here meant; which separated them from God, deformed his image in them, and hardened their hearts, that they had no true sight and sense of themselves; as also on account of the corruption of their nature, signified in the next clause:

and the uncircumcision of your flesh; which is to be taken not literally, for the prepuce, or foreskin of their flesh, which was a sign and token of the corruption of nature, but figuratively that itself; it being usual with the Jews to call the vitiosity of nature
lre, "uncircumcision"; which, they say {y}, is one of the seven names of er ruy, "the evil imagination", or corrupt nature, denoting the pollution, loathsomeness, and abominableness of it:

hath he quickened together with him; that is, with Christ; this may be understood either of the quickening of them in conversion and sanctification; for as they were dead in sin in a moral sense, in conversion a principle of life was implanted in them, or grace, as a living principle, was wrought in their souls by the Spirit of life from Christ; so that they could see their lost state, their need of Christ, the glory of his person and righteousness, the fulness and suitableness of his grace; feel their burdens, and handle the word of life; could hear the Gospel, speak the language of Canaan, breathe in prayer and spiritual desires, walk in Christ, and do all things through him; and this was God's act and not theirs, and owing to his rich mercy and great love: and this may be said to be done "with Christ", because this is in consequence of his being quickened, or raised from the dead; and by it they were made partakers of the life of Christ, they became one spirit with him; and it was not so much they that lived, but Christ lived in them; and besides, they were quickened, in order to live a life of grace and communion with him here, and of glory hereafter: or it may be interpreted of the quickening of them in justification; and the rather, because of what is said in the next clause; and that either openly, as when a sinner is convinced that he is dead in a legal sense, and faith is wrought in him to behold pardon and righteousness in Christ; upon which he prays for the one, and pleads the other; and the Spirit of God seals unto him the pardon of his sins, brings near the righteousness of Christ, enables him to lay hold on it as his, and pronounces him justified by it; and may well be called justification of life, for he is then alive in a legal sense, in his own comfortable view and apprehension of things: or secretly in Christ, as the head and representative of all his people; who when he was quickened, they were quickened with him; when he rose from the dead, they rose with him; and when he was justified, they were instilled in him, and this seems to be the true sense of this passage:

having forgiven you all trespasses. This was a past act, being done and over; not only at first conversion, when a discovery of it was made, but at the death of Christ, whose blood was shed for the remission of sin; yea, even as early as Christ became a surety, when the sins of his people were not imputed to them, but to him: and this was a single act, and done and complete at once; forgiveness of sin is not done by piecemeals, or at different times, or by divers acts, but is done at once, and includes sin past, present, and to come; and is universal, reaches to all sin, original and actual, before and after conversion; sins of thought, word, and action: and this is God's act, and his only; not men, nor ministers, nor angels, can forgive sin; this is the peculiar prerogative of God, and is owing to his abundant mercy and free grace, and which is signified by the word here used. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "having forgiven us all our trespasses"; and so the Alexandrian copy, and some others, read "us" instead of "you".

{y} Zohar in Exod. fol. 106. 1. Caphtor, fol. 52. 2.

Colossians 2:14

Ver. 14. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances,.... Various are the senses interpreters give of these words; some think by the handwriting is meant the covenant God made with Adam, **Ge 2:17**, which being broken, obliged him and all his posterity to the penalty of death, but is cancelled and abolished by Christ; others, the agreement which the Israelites made with God at Mount Sinai, when they said, "all that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient", Ex 24:7; which was as it were setting their hands, and laying themselves under obligation to obedience, and, in case of failure, to the penalty of the law;

others, God's book of remembrance of the sins of men, out of which they are blotted when pardoned; others, the book of conscience, which bears witness to every debt, to every violation and transgression of the law, which may be said to be blotted out, when pacified with an application of the blood and righteousness of Christ; rather with others it signifies the ceremonial law, which lay in divers ordinances and commands, and is what, the apostle afterwards speaks of more clearly and particularly; and may be called so, because submission to it was an acknowledgment both of the faith and guilt of sin; every washing was saying, that a man was polluted and unclean; and every sacrifice was signing a man's own guilt and condemnation, and testifying that he deserved to die as the creature did, which was offered in sacrifice: or rather the whole law of Moses is intended, which was the handwriting of God, and obliged to obedience to it, and to punishment in case of disobedience; and this the Jews {z} call bwx
rjv, "the writing of the debt", and is the very phrase the Syriac version uses here: now this was as a debt book, which showed and testified the debts of men; that is, their sins, how many they are guilty of, and what punishment is due unto them: and may well be said to be that

that was against us, which was contrary to us; its nature being holy, just, good, and spiritual, is contrary to the unholy and carnal heart of man, and its commands disagreeable to his mind and will; nor can he perform what it requires; nor can he be subject to it without the grace of God, any more than he can like its precepts; and besides, it is contrary to him, and against him, as it charges him with debts, and proves them upon him, so that he has nothing to say in his defence; yea, it proceeds against him, and curses and condemns, and kills him: but God has "blotted" it out, Christ having engaged as a surety for his people, to pay off all their debts; and this being done by him, God has crossed the debt book of the law, has blotted it out, so that this book is of no force; it does not stand against these persons, it cannot show or prove any standing debt, it cannot demand any, or inflict any penalty: nay, he has

took it out of the way; it is not to be seen or looked into as a debt book; it is abolished and done away; it is no more as administered by Moses, as a covenant of works, or as to its rigorous exaction, curse, and condemnation; this is true of the whole law of Moses, as well as of the ceremonial, which is utterly abolished and disannulled in every sense, because of the weakness and unprofitableness of it:

nailing it to his cross: to the cross of Christ, showing that the abolition of it is owing to the cross of Christ; where and when he bore the curse and penalty of the law for his people, as well as answered all the types and shadows of it: it is thought to be an allusion to a custom in some countries, to cancel bonds, or antiquate edicts and decrees, by driving a nail through them, so that they could not be legible any more: or it may be to the writing of Pilate, which contained the charge and accusation against Christ; and which was placed over his head upon the cross, and fastened to it with nails {a}; every nail in the cross made a scissure in this handwriting, or bond of the law, that lay against us, whereby it was so rent and torn, as to be of no force: thus the Holy Ghost makes use of various expressions, to show that there is nothing in the law standing against the saints; it is blotted out, and cannot be read; it is took away, and cannot be seen; it is nailed to the cross of Christ, and is torn to pieces thereby, that nothing can ever be produced from it to their hurt and condemnation.

{z} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 87. 1, 3. {a} Nonnus in Joh. xix. 19. Vid. Niccqueti Titulus S. Crucis, l. 1. c. 18. p. 128.

Colossians 2:15

Ver. 15. [And] having spoiled principalities and powers,.... Principalities of hell, the infernal powers of darkness, the devil that had the power of death, the accuser of the brethren, who often objected their debts, with all his works and posse: these Christ has divested of their armour, wherein they trusted to have ruined men, as sin, the law, and death; he has ransomed his people from him that was stronger than they, and taken the prey out of the hands of the mighty; he has bruised the serpent's head, demolished his works, destroyed him himself, and all his powers, and defeated all their counsels and designs against his elect: some render the word apekdusamenov, "having put off", or "unclothed": and which some of the ancient writers apply to the flesh of Christ, and understand it of his putting off the flesh by death, whereby he gave the death blow to Satan and his powers, **Heb 2:14**, to which sense agrees the Syriac version, which renders the words, hrgp xlvbw, "and by the putting off of his body, he exposed to shame principalities and powers": but it may be better interpreted of unclothing, or stripping principalities and powers of their armour, with which they were clothed; as is usually done to enemies, when they fall into the hands of their conquerors: unless rather this is to be understood of Christ's taking away the power and authority of the Jewish ecclesiastical rulers and governors, by abolishing the ceremonial law, and the ordinances of it; declaring himself to be the alone King and Lawgiver in his house, and requiring subjection to his institutions and appointments, which sense agrees with the context:

he made a show of them openly; when being raised from the dead, he ascended on high, and led captivity captive; he led Satan and his principalities and powers captive, who had led others, as he passed through the air, the territories of the devil, in the sight of God and the holy angels:

triumphing over them in it; which some understand of the cross, as if where and by what he got the victory, there he triumphed; the cross, where his enemies thought to make a show of him, expose him to public scorn and contempt, and to triumph over him, was as it were the triumphant chariot, in which he triumphed over all the powers of hell, when he had conquered them by it: but the words may be rendered "in himself", as they are by the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; and the sense be, that as he by himself got the victory, his own arm brought salvation to him, so he alone shared the glory and honour of the triumph: or it may be rendered "in him", and the whole in this and the preceding verse be applied to God the Father, who, as in **Col 2:12**; is said to raise Christ from the dead, to quicken sinners dead in sins, and to forgive all their trespasses; so he may be said to blot out the handwriting of ordinances, and to spoil principalities and powers, expose them to public view and shame, and triumph over them, "in him", in and by his Son Jesus Christ: the whole is an allusion to the victories, spoils, and triumphs, of the Roman emperors, who when they had obtained a victory, a triumph was decreed for them by the senate; in which the emperor was drawn in an open chariot, and the captives being stripped of their armour, and their hands tied behind them, were led before him and exposed to public view and disgrace; while he was shouted and huzzaed through the city of Rome, and had all the marks of honour and respect given him {b}: now all that is said in the preceding verses show how complete the saints are in and by Christ; and stand in no need of the philosophy of the Gentiles, or the ceremonies of the Jews; nor have anything to fear from their enemies, sin, Satan, and the law, for sin is pardoned, the law is abolished, and Satan conquered.

{b} Vid. Lydium de re Militari, l. 6. c. 3.

Colossians 2:16

Ver. 16. Let no man therefore judge you,.... Since they were complete in Christ, had everything in him, were circumcised in him; and particularly since the handwriting of the law was blotted out, and torn to pieces through the nails of the cross of Christ, the apostle's conclusion is, that they should be judged by no man; they should not regard or submit to any man's judgment, as to the observance of the ceremonial law: Christ is the prophet who was to be raised up like unto Moses, and who only, and not Moses, is to be heard; saints are to call no man master upon earth but him; they are not to be the servants of men, nor should suffer any yoke of bondage to be imposed upon them; and should they be suffered and condemned by others, as if they were transgressors of the law, and their state bad, for not observing the rituals of the former dispensation, they should not regard such censures, for the judaizing Christians were very censorious, they were ready to look upon and condemn a man as an immoral man, as in a state of damnation, if he did not keep the law of Moses; but such rigid censures were to be disregarded, "let no man judge", or "condemn you"; and though they could not help or hinder the judgment and condemnation of men, yet they could despise them, and not be uneasy with them, but set light by them, as they ought to do. The Syriac version renders it, Nwkdwdn, "let no man trouble you", or make you uneasy, by imposing ceremonies on you: the sense is, that the apostle would not have them submit to the yoke they would lay upon them, nor be terrified by their anathemas against them, for the non-observation of the things that follow:

in meat or in drink; or on account of not observing the laws and rules about meats and drinks, in the law of Moses; such as related to the difference between clean and unclean creatures, to abstinence in Nazarites from wine and strong drink, and which forbid drinking out of an uncovered vessel, and which was not clean; hence the washing of cups, &c. religiously observed by the Pharisees. There was no distinction of meats and drinks before the law, but all sorts of herbs and animals, without limitation, were given to be food for men; by the ceremonial law a difference was made between them, some were allowed, and others were forbidden; which law stood only in meats and drinks, and such like things, but is now abolished; for the kingdom of God, or the Gospel dispensation, does not lie in the observance of such outward things, but in internal ones, in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; it is not any thing that goes into the man that defiles, nor is anything in its own nature common or unclean, but every creature of God is good, so be it, it be used in moderation and with thankfulness:

or in respect of an holyday; or feast, such as the feast of the passover, the feast of tabernacles, and the feast of Pentecost; which were three grand festivals, at which all the Jewish males were obliged to appear before the Lord; but were never binding upon the Gentiles, and were what the Christians under the Gospel dispensation had nothing to do with, and even believing Jews were freed from them, as having had their accomplishment in Christ; and therefore

were not to be imposed upon them, or they condemned for the neglect of them. The phrase en merei, which we render "in respect", has greatly puzzled interpreters; some reading it "in part of a feast"; or holyday; as if the sense was, that no man should judge or condemn them, for not observing some part of a festival, since they were not obliged to observe any at all: others "in the partition", or "division of a feast"; that is, in the several distinct feasts, as they come in their turns: some {c} think the apostle respects the Misna, or oral law of the Jews, in which are several treatises concerning a good day, or an holyday, the beginning of the new year, and the sabbath, which treatises are divided into sections or chapters; and that it is one of these sections or chapters, containing rules about these things, that is here regarded; and then the sense is, let no man judge you or condemn you, for your non-observance of feast days, new moons, and sabbaths, by any part, chapter, or section, of bwj Mwy, or by anything out of the treatise "concerning a feast day"; or by any part, chapter, or section, of
hnvh var, the treatise "concerning the beginning of the year"; or by any part, chapter, or section, of tbv, the treatise "concerning the sabbath"; and if these treatises are referred to, it proves the antiquity of the Misna. The Syriac version renders it, adaed aglwpb, "in the divisions of the feast": frequent mention is made of gxh owrp, "the division", or "half of the feast", in the Jewish writings: thus for instance it is said {d},

"three times in a year they clear the chamber (where the half-shekels were put), owrpb, "in the half", or middle of the passover, in the middle of Pentecost, and in the middle of the feast."

again {e}

"there are three times for tithing of beasts, in the middle of the passover, in the middle of Pentecost, and the middle of the feast;"

that is, of tabernacles: and this, the Jewish commentators say {f}, was fifteen days before each of these festivals: now whether it was to this, owrp, "middle", or "half space", before each and any of these feasts the apostle refers to, may be considered:

or of the new moon; which the Jews were obliged to observe, by attending religious worship, and offering sacrifices; see Nu 28:11 **2Ki 4:23**.

Or of the sabbath [days], or "sabbaths"; meaning the jubilee sabbath, which was one year in fifty; and the sabbath of the land, which was one year in seven; and the seventh day sabbath, and some copies read in the singular number, "or of the sabbath"; which were all peculiar to the Jews, were never binding on the Gentiles, and to which believers in Christ, be they who they will, are by no means obliged; nor ought they to observe them, the one any more than the other; and should they be imposed upon them, they ought to reject them; and should they be judged, censured, and condemned, for so doing, they ought not to mind it. It is the sense of the Jews themselves, that the Gentiles are not obliged to keep their sabbath; no, not the proselyte of the gate, or he that dwelt in any of their cities; for they say {g}, that

"it is lawful for a proselyte of the gate to do work on the sabbath day for himself, as for an Israelite on a common feast day; R. Akiba says, as for all Israelite on a feast day; R. Jose says, it is lawful for a proselyte of the gate to do work on the sabbath day for himself, as for an Israelite on a common or week day:"

and this last is the received sense of the nation; nay, they assert that a Gentile that keeps a sabbath is guilty of death {h};
See Gill on "Mr 2:27". Yea, they say {i}, that

"if a Gentile sabbatizes, or keeps a sabbath, though on any of the days of the week, if he makes or appoints it as a sabbath for himself, he is guilty of the same."

It is the general sense of that people, that the sabbath was peculiarly given to the children of Israel; and that the Gentiles, strangers, or others, were not punishable for the neglect and breach of it {k}; that it is a special and an additional precept, which, with some others, were given them at Marah, over and above the seven commands, which the sons of Noah were only obliged to regard {l}; and that the blessing and sanctifying of it were by the manna provided for that day; and that the passage in **Ge 2:3**; refers not to the then present time, but dyteh le, "to time to come", to the time of the manna {m}.

{c} Vid. Casaubon. Epist. ep. 24. {d} Misn. Shekalim, c. 3. sect. 1. {e} Misn. Becorot, c. 9. sect. 5. {f} Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {g} T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 9. 1. Piske Tosaphot Yebamot. art. 84. Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 20. sect. 14. {h} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 58. 2. {i} Maimon. Hilch. Melachim, c. 10. sect. 9. {k} T. Bab. Betza, fol. 16. 1. Seder Tephillot, fol. 76. 1. Ed. Amtst. {l} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 56. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, p. 17. & Zuta, p. 101. Ed. Meyer. {m} Jarchi & Baal Hatturim in Gen. ii. 3. Pirke Eliezer, c. 18.

Colossians 2:17

Ver. 17. Which are a shadow of things to come,.... By Christ, and under the Gospel dispensation; that is, they were types, figures, and representations of spiritual and evangelical things: the different "meats and drinks", clean and unclean, allowed or forbidden by the law, were emblems of the two people, the Jews and Gentiles, the one clean, the other unclean; but since these are become one in Christ, the distinction of meats is ceased, these shadows are gone; and also of the different food of regenerate and unregenerate souls, the latter feeding on impure food, the ashes and husks of sensual lusts, or their own works, the former on the milk and meat in the Gospel, the wholesome words of Christ; and likewise the clean meat was a shadow of Christ himself, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed. The "holy days", or "feasts" of the Jews, the feasts of tabernacles, of the passover and Pentecost, were types of Christ; the feast of tabernacles, though it was in remembrance of the Israelites dwelling in tents and booths when they came out of Egypt, yet was also a representation of the people of God dwelling in the earthly houses of their tabernacles here on earth; and particularly of Christ's dwelling, or tabernacling in human nature, and who likewise was born at the time of this feast; See Gill on "John 1:14". The passover, as it was a commemoration of the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt, and of God's passing over their houses when he smote the firstborn of the Egyptians, so it was a type of Christ our passover sacrificed for us, and was kept by Moses in the faith of him, Heb 11:28; there is a very great resemblance, in many particulars, between Christ and the paschal lamb; See Gill on "1Co 5:7". The feast of Pentecost, or the feast of harvest and firstfruits, was a shadow of the firstfruits of the Spirit, which Christ having received, gave to his disciples on that day; and of the harvest of souls to be gathered under the Gospel dispensation, of which the conversion of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost was an earnest and pledge. The "new moon" was typical of the church, which is fair as the moon, and receives all her light from Christ the sun of righteousness; and of the renewed state of the church under the Gospel dispensation, when the old things of the law are passed away, and all things relating to church order, ordinances, and discipline, are become new. The "sabbaths" were also shadows of future things; the grand sabbatical year, or the fiftieth year sabbath, or jubilee, in which liberty was proclaimed throughout the land, a general release of debts, and restoration of inheritances, prefigured the liberty we have by Christ from sin, Satan, and the law, the payment of all our debts by Christ, and the right we have through him to the heavenly and incorruptible inheritance. The seventh year sabbath, in which there was no tilling of the land, no ploughing, sowing, nor reaping, was an emblem of salvation through Christ by free grace, and not by the works of men; and the seventh day sabbath was a type of that spiritual rest we have in Christ now, and of that eternal rest we shall have with him in heaven hereafter: now these were but shadows, not real things; or did not contain the truth and substance of the things themselves, of which they were shadows; and though they were representations of divine and spiritual things, yet dark ones, they had not so much as the very image of the things; they were but shadows, and like them fleeting and passing away, and now are gone:

but the body [is] of Christ: or, as the Syriac version reads it, "the body is Christ"; that is, the body, or sum and substance of these shadows, is Christ; he gave rise unto them, he existed before them, as the body is before the shadow; not only as God, as the Son of God, but as Mediator, whom these shadows regarded as such, and as such he cast them; and he is the end of them, the fulfilling end of them; they have all their accomplishment in him: and he is the body of spiritual and heavenly things; the substantial things and doctrines of the Gospel are all of Christ, they all come by him; all the truths, blessings, and promises of grace; are from him and by him, and he himself the sum of them all. The allusion seems to be to a way of speaking among the Jews, who were wont to call the root, foundation, substance, and essence of a thing, apwg, "the body of it" {n}: so they say {o},

"the constitutions concerning the sanctification of the offerings and the tithes, are, both the one and the other,
hrwt ypwg, "the bodies", or substantial parts of the law:"

and again {p}, that

"the constitutions or rules about the sabbath, the festivals and prevarications, they are as mountains that hang by an hair; for the Scripture is small, and the constitutions are many; the judgments and the services, the purifications and uncleannesses, and the incests, they have, upon which they can support themselves, and these, and these, are hrwt ypwg, "the bodies of the law":"

they say {q} of a small section, or paragraph, that all the bodies of the law depend upon it: once more {r},

"the sabbaths, and the good days (the feasts or holy days) are Npwg, "the bodies" of the sign;"

which the phylacteries or frontlets were for; but our apostle says, that Christ is the body and substance of all these shadows, in opposition to these sayings and notions of the Jews: some connect this last clause with the former part of the following verse, rendering it as the Arabic version thus, "because of the communion of the body of Christ, let no man condemn you"; and the Ethiopic version thus, "and let no man account you fools, because of the body of Christ", but there is nothing in the text to support these versions.

{n} Vid. Misn. Abot, c. 3. sect. 18. & Bartenora in ib. & Halicot Olam, par. 2. c. 1. p. 48. {o} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 32. 1. {p} Misn. Chagiga, c. 1. sect. 8. T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 11. 2. {q} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 63. 1. {r} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 36. 2. Vid. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 1.

Colossians 2:18

Ver. 18. Let no man beguile you of your reward,.... Or prize; the allusion is to the Olympic games, one of which was running races; in which the stadium, or race plot was fixed, a mark set up to look and run unto, a corruptible crown proposed to be run for, and which was held by one who sat as judge, and determined who got the victory, and to whom the crown belonged; these judges sometimes acted the unfair part, and defrauded the victors of their proper right, and to such the apostle compares the false teachers: the Christian's reward, or prize he is running for, is the incorruptible and never fading crown of glory, life, and righteousness; the race plot is the Christian life, spent in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, and in holding fast, and holding out in a profession of faith unto the end; the mark he looks at, and presses towards, is Jesus Christ; and his great concern, the apostle by this metaphor suggests should be, lest by false teachers he should be defrauded of the prize of the high calling of God, through their removing the mark Christ from him, by denying his person and Godhead; or by intercepting his sight of him, placing other objects before him, such as angels, to be worshipped and adored; or by darkening of it, joining Moses and Christ, law and Gospel, works and grace together, in the business of salvation; whereby he might seem to come short, or be in danger of coming short of the heavenly glory:

in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels; these things the apostle instances in, as in what lay their danger of being beguiled of their reward, or prize. True humility is an excellent grace; it is the clothing and ornament of a Christian; nor is there anything that makes a man more like Christ, than this grace; but in these men here respected, it was only the appearance of humility, it was not real; it was in things they devised and willed, not in things which

God commanded, Christ required, or the Scriptures pointed at; they would have been thought to have been very lowly and humble, and to have a great consciousness of their own vileness and unworthiness to draw nigh to Christ the Mediator immediately, and by him to God; wherefore in pretence of great humility, they proposed to make use of angels as mediators with Christ; whereby Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, would be removed out of sight and use; and that humble boldness and holy confidence with God at the throne of grace, through Christ, which believers are allowed to use, would be discouraged and destroyed, and the saints be in danger as to the outward view of things, and in all human appearance of losing their reward: "worshipping of angels" was a practice which very early prevailed among some that were called Christians, and for a long time continued in Phrygia and Pisidia; some make Simon Magus, and others Cerinthus, the author of this idolatry; but was not only a branch of the Platonic philosophy, and so a part of that philosophy and vain deceit before mentioned, **Col 2:8**, which these men might have borrowed from the Gentiles, but was a notion and practice of the Jews: before the Babylonish captivity, the names of angels were not known, nor are they ever mentioned by name in Scripture; hence they say {s}, that

"the names of angels came up with them, or by their means from Babylon:"

after this they began to talk much of them, and to have too high a veneration for them, and ascribe too much to them; and observing that the law was ordained, spoken, and given by them, and that the administration of things under the former dispensation was greatly by their means, they fell to worshipping of them {t}; and the believing Jews were hereby in great danger of falling into the same practice: hence the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, writing to the Jewish church, largely insists on the proof of Christ being superior to angels; showing that he has a more excellent name than they had; that he was the Son of God in such sense as they were not the sons of God; that they were worshippers of him, yea, that they were creatures made by him, and even ministering spirits to his saints, the heirs of salvation: and very rightly, is worshipping of angels condemned here by the apostle, since God only is the object of worship; since these are creatures, and so not to be adored; are worshippers of God and Christ themselves, and have refused adoration when it has been offered to them: that the Jews did, and do worship angels, and make use of them as mediators and intercessors, is clear from their liturgy, or prayer books, where they say {u}

"Mymxr ykalm, "O ye angels of mercies", or ye merciful angels, ministers of the most High, entreat now the face of God for good:"

and elsewhere {w},

"they say three times, let Juhach keep us, let Juhach deliver us, and let Juhach help us:"

now Juhach was the name of an angel, who they supposed had the care of men, and is taken from the final letters of those words in Ps 91:11, "for he shall give his angels charge over thee": so they speak of an angel whom they call Sandalphon, who they say is appointed over the prayers of the righteous {x}: with this notion the judaizing and false teachers seem to have been tinctured, and against which the apostle here cautions the saints, lest, under a show of humility, they should be drawn into it: and to preserve them from it, he observes, that such an one who should spread and propagate such a notion, was one that was

intruding into those things which he hath not seen; thrusting himself in a bold and daring manner into an inquiry and search after, debate upon, and affirmation of things he could have no certain knowledge of; as of angels, whose nature, qualities, works, and ministrations, he had never seen with his bodily eyes; nor could ever discern with the eyes of his understanding any such things in the Scriptures, which he ascribed to them; but they were the birth of his own mind, the fruits of his own fancy and imagination, things devised in his own brain: being

vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind; judging of things not according to the word of God, and with a spiritual judgment, and according to a spiritual sense and experience, but according to his own carnal reason, and the vanity of his mind; being puffed and swelled with an high opinion of himself, of his great parts and abilities, of his knowledge of things above others, and of his capacity to penetrate into, and find out things which were not seen and known by others: this shows that his humility was forced, and only in outward appearance, and was not true and genuine.

{s} T. Hieros. Roshhashanah, fol. 56. 4. {t} Vid. Clement. Alex Stromat. l. 6. p. 635. {u} Seder Tephillot, Ed. Basil fol. 222. 2. {w} Ib. fol. 335. 1. {x} Zohar in Gen. fol. 97. 2. & in Exod. fol. 24. 3.

Colossians 2:19

Ver. 19. And not holding the head,.... Christ, as some copies express it; for by making use of angels as mediators and intercessors, Christ the only Mediator, the Lord and head of angels, and of the church, was dropped and laid aside; which is another reason the apostle gives, why such men, and their principles and practices, should be shunned and avoided by all those that had a regard for Christ the head:

from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God: by "all the body", or the whole body, is meant the church, the mystical body of Christ; which, like an human body, consists of various members, all in union with one another, and with Christ the head: and "by joints and bands" are intended, either the grace of Christian charity, or love, the bond of perfectness; which is that in Christ's mystical body, as joints and bands are in an human body; for by this the members of Christ are joined, united, and knit together, and make increase: or else the ordinances of the Gospel, by which the saints are kept together in order, and through which is spiritual "nourishment ministered", from Christ the head to them; who hates not his own flesh, the members of his body, but nourishes and cherishes them, with the wine of divine love, with the water of life, with himself the bread of life, with his flesh which is meat indeed, and with his blood which is drink indeed; with his own wholesome words, even the words of faith and sound doctrine: and it is from him, that the saints "are knit together": both to one another in him the cornerstone, and also to him, being made one body and one spirit with him; and so from and through him, this body "increaseth with the increase of God": that which God has appointed for his church, and which he gives; and which it will arrive unto, when all the elect are gathered in, and they are filled with all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and these are brought to their proper pitch and full degree; all which is had from, and owing to Christ: for if Christ the head is not held, the body will have no nourishment, but soon become a skeleton; the members of it will soon loosen from one another and fall into pieces, and there will be no spiritual increase or edification: all which are so many reasons, why the saints should be upon their guard against these false teachers, and judaizing Christians, and which argument and exhortation the apostle further pursues in the following verses.

Colossians 2:20

Ver. 20. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ,.... Or "seeing ye are dead with Christ"; for these words do not signify any doubt about it, but suppose it, and press what is taken for granted. They were dead with Christ by virtue of union to him; they being one with him, and considered in him as their head and representative, died in him, and with him; they were crucified with him, as they are said to be buried with him, and risen with him; they were dead with him, by having communion with him in his death; they partook of the benefits of it, as redemption, pardon, justification, and reconciliation; and they were planted together with him in the likeness of his death, not merely partakers of his sufferings, or suffered with him, and were conformable unto his death, by undergoing such like things as he did, but as he died unto sin, and lived unto God, so did they; and through the virtue and efficacy of his death were dead to sin, so as that it was not imputed to them, so as to be freed and discharged from it, that it could not damn and destroy them; yea, so as that itself was crucified with him, and destroyed by him: and also to the law, to the moral law; not but that they lived according to it, as in the hands of Christ, in their walk and conversation, but did not seek for life, righteousness, and salvation by it; they were dead unto it as to justification by it, and even to obedience to it in a rigorous and compulsive way; and to all its terrors and threatenings, being moved to a regard to it from a principle of love to Christ; and to all its accusations and charges, its curses and condemnation, and as a ministration of death, fearing neither a corporeal, nor an eternal one: they were dead also to the ceremonial law, and were free

from the rudiments, or "elements"

of the world: the ordinances of a worldly sanctuary, the rites and ceremonies of the world, or state of the Jews, in opposition to, and distinction from, the Gospel dispensation, or times of the Messiah, called, and that by them, abh Mlwe, "the world to come": these were like letters to a language, or like the grammar, which contains the rudiments of it; these were the first principles of the oracles of God, which led to Christ, and had their accomplishment and end in him; and so believers were dead unto them, and delivered from them, as they were also to the world, the Jewish state, and were entered into the world to come; and even to this present evil world, and to the men and things of it, being by Christ crucified to it, and that to them: upon all which the apostle thus reasons,

why, as though living in the world; since ye are dead unto it, and from the rudiments of it, why should ye be as though ye lived in it? his meaning is not, that they should not live in the world, nor among the men of it, for then they must needs go out of the world; saints may live in the world, though they are not of it, and among the inhabitants of it, though they do not belong to them, but to another and better country: nor does he suggest, that they lived according to the course of the world, as they did in their unregenerate state; but what he seems to blame them for, and reason with them about, was, that they acted as if they sought for life and righteousness in the rudiments of the world, or by their obedience to ceremonial rites, or human inventions: for he adds,

are ye subject to ordinances? not civil and political ones, which are for the better and more orderly government of kingdoms, states, and cities, for these the saints ought to be subject to, both for the Lord's sake, and conscience sake; nor Gospel ordinances, as baptism, and the Lord's supper, for such all believers ought to submit unto; but either legal ones, the weak and beggarly elements, the yoke of bondage, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, the handwriting of ordinances, which some were desirous of conforming to; or rather the ordinances and appointments of the Jewish fathers, the traditions of the elders, their constitutions and decrees, which are collected together, and make up their Misna, or oral law; and so the argument is from the one to the other, from the greater to the less, that if they were delivered by Christ from the burdensome rites of the ceremonial law, which were originally appointed by God, it must be great weakness in them to be subject to the ordinances of men; or both the institutions of the ceremonial law, and the decrees of the Jewish doctors about them, which were devised by them, and added to them, and imposed as necessary to be observed, may be intended; of which the apostle gives some particulars in **Col 2:21**.

Colossians 2:21

Ver. 21. Touch not, taste not, handle not. This the apostle says, not of himself, but in the person of the Jewish doctors; who urging the use of the ceremonial law, to which they added decrees and constitutions of their own, said, "touch not" the dead body of any man, the bone of a man, or a grave, any man or woman in their uncleanness; not only their flesh, but the bed they lay on, or the seat they sat on; or any creature that was by the law unclean; of a Gentile, or any notorious sinner, or common man: hence the Pharisees used to wash themselves when they returned from market, lest they should have been by any means accidentally defiled by touching any thing unclean. There is a treatise in their Misna, called Oholot, which gives many rules, and is full of decrees about things egmb
Myamjm, "that defile by touching". And so they likewise said, "taste not", neither the fat, nor the blood of any creature which might be eaten itself, nor swine's flesh, nor the flesh of any creature that chewed the cud, or divided the

hoof; nor might the Nazarites taste wine, or strong drink, or vinegar made of either, or moist grapes, or even the kernels and husks; and if a man ate but the quantity of an olive of any of the above things, he was, according to the Jewish canons, to be cut off, or beaten {x}: and they also said, "handle not"; or, as the Syriac and Arabic read, "do not come near", or "draw not nigh", to a Gentile, to one of another nation, or any unclean person, to whom they forbid any near approach or conversation; or "handle not" any of the above things. Some think that these several rules have respect only to meats; as "touch not", that is, do not eat of things forbidden ever so little; nay, "taste not", do not let anything of them come within your lips; yea, "handle not", do not so much as touch them with your fingers. Others think that touch not regards abstinence from women; see **1Co 7:1**; and respects the prohibition of marriage by some in those times; and "taste not", the forbearance of certain meats, at certain times, which God had not restrained any from; and "handle not", that is, make no use of, or enjoy your own goods, and so designs that voluntary poverty which some entered into under the direction of false teachers.

{x} Maimon. Maacolot Asurot, c. 7. sect. 1. & c. 14. sect. 2. & Nezirut, c. 5. sect. 3.

Colossians 2:22

Ver. 22. Which all are to perish with the using,.... Meaning either the ordinances concerning touching, tasting, and handling, which bring destruction and death on them that use them, and comply with them, in order to obtain righteousness and life; for instead of enjoying salvation through them, they were the cause of damnation to them. Or rather the meats not to be touched, tasted, or handled; these are in their own nature perishing things, and perish by being used; they are only of service to the body, and can be of none to the soul; the using of them cannot defile the man, nor an abstinence from them sanctify him, or commend him to God; they only relate to this present life, and will cease with it, and can have no manner of influence on the spiritual and eternal concerns of men: and besides, the ordinances concerning them are not of God, but are

after the commandments and doctrines of men; for so even the ceremonial law, being now abolished, though originally of God, yet the imposition of it, as necessary to salvation, was a commandment and doctrine of man's; and particularly the traditions of the elders, and the various rules and decrees, which the doctors among the Jews obliged men to regard, were human inventions and devices: and this is another reason the apostle makes use of to dissuade from any regard unto them; for whatever is of man, and not of God, in religious worship, ought to be rejected.

Colossians 2:23

Ver. 23. Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom,.... The authors of them set up for men of wisdom, and were esteemed such, and are often styled Mymkx, "wise men"; and their scholars that received their traditions, and explained and enforced them on others, Mymkxh
ydymlt, "the disciples of the wise men": and they pretended, that these constitutions of theirs were "a hedge for the law", and for the honour of it, and to preserve it, and keep men from transgressing it; and this carried in it some appearance of wisdom: and their pretensions to it lay in the following things,

in will worship; being what was over and above that which was commanded by God, and so, like the freewill offerings under the law, must be acceptable to him; this was one of their colours, which had some show of wisdom, religion, and zeal:

and humility: in worshipping of angels, and not coming directly, and with boldness, to God or Christ; or rather in subjecting themselves to the yoke of the law, and submitting to the decrees of the fathers and doctors of the church, who were more wise, and learned, and knowing than they, and so had the appearance of prudence, gentleness, and goodness:

and neglecting of the body; by fastings and watchings, whereby they seemed to be very religious and devout, holy and mortified persons, who kept under their bodies, subdued their unruly appetites, and fulfilled not the lusts of the flesh: but then this was only a show of wisdom and godliness; there was no truth nor reality in these things; they were only a mere form, an outside show, a mere pretence; there was no true devotion nor religion in them: and so

not in any honour; or to be had in any esteem; for if the rites of the ceremonial law itself were weak and beggarly elements, much more must these additions to it, and corruptions of it, be such; and at most only regarded things external, that were

to the satisfying, of the flesh; either the body, or the carnal mind, in which they were vainly pulled up: though some consider this last clause as explanative of the former, "neglecting of the body", or not sparing it, but afflicting it with austerities of life; depriving it of its proper right, what is necessary for it, not taking due care of it, so as to satisfy nature; whereby instead of honouring, they dishonoured it: for though the body is not to be pampered, and the lusts of it indulged, or luxury and intemperance to be encouraged; yet since the body is the work of God's hands, is the habitation of the soul, and by which it performs its offices, and is the purchase of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and will be raised a glorious body at the last day, it ought not to be neglected and dishonoured; but should have a sufficiency of food and clothing, whereby it may be comfortably and honourably nourished and supported.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Colossians 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS 3

This chapter contains exhortations to several duties, some more general, which relate to all Christians, and others more particular, which belong to saints in such and such a state of life. The apostle begins with an exhortation to seek things heavenly, and not earthly, and to set the affections on the one, and not on the other: the arguments used to enforce it are taken from the saints being risen with Christ; from Christ being in heaven at the Father's right hand; from their being dead to sin, the law, and the world; from their having life in Christ safe and secure; yea, from Christ being their life, and their appearance with him in glory, **Col 3:1**. And next he proceeds to an exhortation to the mortification of sin, and the deeds of it, which he urges from the wrath of God coming upon men for these things, and from the consideration of their former state and condition, expressed by walking and living in them, **Col 3:5**, and by a metaphor taken from the putting off and on of garments, he exhorts to the putting off of the old man, with his deeds, several of which are mentioned, **Col 3:8**, and to the putting on of the new man, and to the exercise of various graces, as mercy, meekness, forbearance, forgiveness, charity, and peace, **Col 3:10**. And then he proceeds to exhort to such duties as relate to the word and worship of God; as that the word of Christ should have an abiding place in them, and that they should teach and instruct one another by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and do all they did in a religious way, in the name of Christ, with thankfulness to God by him, **Col 3:16**. And closes the chapter with the duties of wives to their husbands, and of husbands to their wives, and of children to their parents, and of parents to their children, and of servants to their masters, **Col 3:18**.

Ver. 1. If ye then be risen with Christ,.... The apostle having observed in the former chapter, that the believing Colossians were dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, were buried with him in baptism, and were risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, argues from hence how much it became them to regard a new and spiritual life, and to seek after superior and heavenly things, and treat with neglect and contempt carnal and earthly ones. For he does not here call in question their being risen with Christ, but takes it for granted that they were, and makes use of it as an argument for his present purpose. They were risen with Christ as their head, and as members in union with him representatively, when he rose from the dead; and emblematically in their baptism, when having gone down into the water, and being baptized, they emersed from it; and spiritually in conversion, when they were raised from a death of sin, to a life of grace, by Christ, as the resurrection and the life, the efficient cause of it, and in virtue of his resurrection from the dead: wherefore being thus raised again in every sense, it highly became them to

seek those things which are above; the better and heavenly country, the continuing city, which is above the heavens, whose builder and maker is God; Christ, who is in heaven, and salvation alone by him without the works of the law; all spiritual blessings, such as pardon, peace, righteousness, life, and glory, which are in heavenly places in him; doctrines and ordinances, which come from heaven, and are the means of supporting a spiritual and heavenly life; especially that bread of life which came down from heaven, and gives life unto the world, and of which if a man eats, he shall never die, but live for ever; and particularly glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life, the crown of righteousness laid up above, the kingdom of God, and the righteousness of it; which are to be sought for in the first place with all affection, earnest desire, care, and diligence, not by or for works of righteousness, but in Christ, and as the gifts of God's grace through him.

Where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God: which contains other reasons and arguments to engage believers to look upwards, and seek after heavenly things; that as Christ, when he died and rose again from the dead, did not stay long on earth, nor minded the things of the world, but ascended up to heaven, where he now is, and will remain until his second coming; so they, being dead and risen with him, should, in their thoughts, desires, and affections, in the exercise of the graces of faith, hope, and love, ascend heavenwards, like pillars of smoke perfumed with frankincense; and the more should their hearts be where he is, and intent on things above there, from the consideration of that great honour and dignity in which he is. He is "on the right hand of God"; in human nature, an honour which none of the angels were ever admitted to: here he "sitteth", as having done the work of redemption, and entered into his rest, beholding the travail of his soul with satisfaction, though he continues to be an advocate, and to make intercession for his people; which is another reason enforcing this exhortation.

Colossians 3:2

Ver. 2. Set your affections on things above,.... For unless the affections are set on them, they will never be sought after in a proper manner. The word signifies to mind them, and think on them, to favour and approve of them, to be affectionately desirous of them, and concerned for them; for where the treasure is, the heart should be; and as the saints' best things are above, their minds and affections should be there likewise; their contemplation should be on those things, and their conversation should be in heaven; nor should they regard anything but what is there, or comes from thence, for they belong not to this world, but to another and better country: their citizenship is in heaven, and there, in a short time, they must have their everlasting residence; and therefore should seek after, and highly prize and value heavenly things, and set their affections on them, and

not on things on the earth; not mind earth and earthly things, temporal enjoyments, riches, and honours; and though food and raiment, and the necessaries of life, are to be sought after, and cared and provided for, yet not with anxiety and perplexity of mind, in an over thoughtful and distressing manner; nor should the heart be set on those outward things, or happiness placed in the possession of them. Moreover, worldly lusts, the members which are on the earth, earthly pleasures that are sinful, may be here meant. Worldly lusts are to be denied, the deeds of the body are to be mortified, carnal desires are not to be gratified and indulged, provision is not to be made for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts; and particularly the vain philosophy of Jews and Gentiles, the traditions of the elders, the ceremonies of the law, which lay in earthly things, in worldly observances, the difference of meats and drinks, keeping of days, months, and years, new moons, feasts, and sabbath days; the rudiments of the world, the commandments and doctrines which were of the earth, and lay in not touching, tasting, and handling certain things that are on earth, and which perish with the using, as opposed to the doctrines of the Gospel, and ordinances of Christ, which are from above, and come from heaven, and have a spiritual and heavenly use: and which is the sense chiefly intended, though it is best to understand the words in their largest compass.

Colossians 3:3

Ver. 3. For ye are dead,.... Not in a natural or corporeal sense, for they were living in the world; nor in a moral sense, for though they had been dead in sins, they were quickened by the grace of God; nor in a legal sense, for all their trespasses were forgiven them; see **Col 2:13**; but they were dead to the law, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, by the body of Christ; and to sin, as to its damning power, through his bearing it in his own body on the tree; and to the world by his cross: and therefore as dead men have nothing to do with the world, and the things of it, so believers being dead with Christ, should have no regard to the rudiments of the world, the ceremonies of the law, and the ordinances of men; to worldly lusts, and to the things that are in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; but should be dead as to their desires after, affections for, and subjection to these things:

and your life is hid with Christ in God; which is another reason why they should not mind things on earth, but things in heaven. The saint's "life" is either spiritual, and is a life of grace from Christ, a life of faith on him, and a life of communion with him, and may be distinguished into a life of sanctification, both internal and external, and into a life of justification; or eternal, which is a life free from all the sorrows of this, both outward and inward; a life of perfection and pleasure, of vision and enjoyment of God and Christ, and of fellowship with Father, Son, and Spirit, angels and saints, and which will never end. This is "theirs", what they have a right unto, and shall everlastingly enjoy: it is not only promised to them, and prepared and laid up for them, but it is given unto them in Christ; and who has made way for their full possession of it, into which he himself will put them, having power, as Mediator, so to do; and even now they have it, the beginning, pledge, and earnest of it. This is said to be "hid", which denotes the secrecy of it, and is true both of spiritual and eternal life. The spiritual life of the saints is hid from the men of the world, who are alienated from the life of God, are ignorant of the Lord of life, and know nothing of the spirit of life; they are strangers to the nature of this life, and to the food on which believers live, the hidden manna; and to the doctrines of the Gospel, by which they are nourished, these are hid to them that are lost; and to all the joys and pleasures of it: and this is sometimes hid from the saints themselves, when temptations are violent, corruptions prevail, grace is low, and seems to be gone, and God hides his face. Eternal life is also an hidden one from natural men; the things that are eternal, are things unseen by the carnal eye, and not to be conceived of by a carnal heart; and can only be beheld, and that in a very glimmering and imperfect manner, by an eye of faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, the clearest one saints have in this life; for eternal glory and happiness is in part hid from the saints themselves; they see it but through a glass darkly; nor does it appear to themselves, as yet, what that felicity is in its fulness and perfection they shall enjoy. Moreover, this phrase is expressive of the safety, as well as of the value and preciousness of this life, things of worth being hid for security. It is hid, and it is hid "with Christ"; spiritual life is with him, as the head, root, and fountain of it, and so is safe, and can never be lost; because he the head lives, the members shall live also; and as long as it is in him, as the fountain, the streams and supplies of it shall not be wanting to his people; nor can the communication between him and them be ever cut off: eternal life is deposited in his hands by the Father; it is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord God, and is in him for ever safe: nay, it is not only with Christ, where it is secure enough, but it is with Christ "in God"; Christ is in God, the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father; they are one in nature, and so in power and glory; and this union between them, which is natural and perfect, is the foundation of the security both of the persons, and of the life, spiritual and eternal, of God's elect; see Joh 10:28. Moreover, this life itself is in God. Not only our natural life is in him; we live and move, and have our being in him; but our spiritual and eternal life: he is the spring of it; it arises originally from him; it was purposed in him; it was promised by him; the scheme of it, or what is called the fellowship of the mystery, was hid in him; it was given by him; he is the fountain of it, and that itself; and therefore the saints can never perish, nor need they fear any enemy.

Colossians 3:4

Ver. 4. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear,.... The Vulgate Latin version, and some copies, read, "your life". Christ is the author of spiritual life, the fountain from whence it springs, the object on which the saints live, yea, their very life itself; it is not so much they that live, as Christ that lives in them: and he is their eternal life; it is in him, and given forth by him; to know him now is the beginning of it; and its perfection hereafter will lie in the vision of him, communion with him, and conformity to him. The Jews have a saying {y},

"that lives depend upon the son of Jesse,"

all sorts of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal. At present, Christ, the life of his people, is, as it were, hid; when he had done the work he came into this world about, and which he was manifest in the flesh, he departed out of it, ascended up into heaven, and went to his God and Father, where he is, and will be retained, until the time of the restitution of all things; and though he appears in the presence of God, and on the behalf of his redeemed ones, yet he is now out of sight, and not to be seen with their bodily eyes; but, ere long, he will be revealed from heaven, and come in the clouds of it, and be seen by all, to the terror and confusion of some, and to the joy and salvation of others; when his appearance will be exceeding glorious, not only in his glorified body, or exalted human nature, and as the Judge of the whole earth, clothed with majesty, authority, and power, but as the Son of God, God equal with the Father, in all the perfections and glory of deity, which will be manifest and apparent to everyone:

then shall ye also appear with him in glory: the dead bodies of the saints will then be raised and united to their souls, which he will bring with him, when he appears; and living saints shall be changed, and be caught up together with the raised ones, into the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so they all shall be with him together, wherever he is, whether in the air, or on earth, or in heaven, and while he is in either; and shall be for ever with him, enjoy communion with him, be made like unto him, and behold his glory: yea, they shall "appear in glory" too; with a glory on their bodies, which will be raised in glory like unto the glorious body of Christ; and on their souls, being in perfect holiness, having on the wedding garment, or robe of Christ's righteousness, being clothed upon with their house from heaven, and appearing in the shining robes of immortality, incorruption, and glory; having the glory of God upon them in soul and body, and such a glory revealed in them, as the sufferings of this present life, and all the enjoyments of it, are not to be compared with. All which furnish out strong arguments and reasons, enforcing the above exhortations to seek for, and set the affections on things in heaven, and not on earth.

{y} Zohar in Gen. fol. 2. 3.

Colossians 3:5

Ver. 5. Mortify therefore your members,.... Not your bodies, as the Ethiopic version reads, nor the members of the natural body, but of the body of sin, indwelling sin; which as a body consists of various members, which are parts of it, rise out of it, and are used by it, as the members are by the body; and intend the sins of the flesh, or sinful actions, which are generally performed by the members of the natural body, in which the law of sin is, and by which it operates; so that the mortification the saints are here exhorted to, in consideration of having a spiritual life in them, and a hope of eternal life in Christ, from whence the apostle argues, is not a mortification or destruction of the body of sin itself, or of the being and principle of it in the soul, where it is, and lives, and dwells, and will as long as the saints are in this tabernacle, but of the deeds of the body, or of sinful actions, as to the life and conversation; and signifies a denial of them, an abstinence from them, and a non-performance of them; See Gill on "Ro 8:13". These members, or deeds of the body, or acts of sin, are called "your": for as the old man is ours, the vitiosity of nature is what we bring into the world with us, and is rooted and incorporated into us; so the actions that flow from it, and are done by it, are not to be ascribed to God, nor even to Satan, but they are our own actions, and which are performed by the members of our mortal body, or by the faculties of our souls: and are,

which are on earth: or earthly; are concerned about earthly things, the things of the world, worldly lusts and pleasures, which rise out of earthly mindedness, and incline unto it, and are only what are done here on earth, and will have no place in heaven. The particulars of which follow:

fornication; the sin of uncleanness committed by single persons, or out of the state of marriage, and which the Gentiles did not account sinful: hence so much notice is taken of it, with a censure, and so often, by the apostle, in almost all his epistles, and dehorted from, as a sin against the body, as what disqualified for church communion, and was not to be named among the saints, who should be dead to that, and that to them, as to the commission of it.

Uncleanness; of every sort, all other impure actions, as adultery, incest, sodomy, and every other unnatural lust; all which should be abstained from, and never committed by those who profess to be alive unto God.

Inordinate affection; which may intend the passions, or first motions of sin, stirred up by the law, and which work in, and operate by the members of the body, and bring forth fruit unto death, and therefore to be opposed by such as have a life in Christ; and also those vile affections, which some in a judicial way are given up unto, and prevail with those who are effeminate, and abusers of themselves with mankind, and which are to be abhorred and denied by all who are heirs of the grace of life, and expectants of an heavenly one.

Evil concupiscence; so called to distinguish it from that natural concupiscence, or desire after things lawful and necessary, and which is implanted in nature by God himself; and from that spiritual concupiscence or desire after spiritual things, and that lusting against the flesh and carnal things, which is formed in the heart of a regenerate man by the Spirit of God. It is the same with erh ruy, "the evil imagination", or corruption of nature so much spoken of by the Jews. This here is what is forbidden by that law, "thou shalt not covet", Ex 20:17; and includes every fleshly lust and inordinate desire, or every desire after that which is not lawful, or does not belong to a man; as what is another's property, his wife, or goods, or anything that is his; and so very naturally follows,

covetousness; an immoderate love of money, the root of all evil, an insatiable desire of having more, and of having more than a man's own; and is enlarged as hell, and as death is not satisfied, but still craves more, without making any good use of what is possessed:

which is idolatry. The covetous man, and the idolater, worship the same for matter and substance, even gold and silver; the covetous man lays up his money, makes no use of it, as if it was something sacred; he looks at it, and adores it, and puts his trust and confidence in it, and his heart is so much set upon it, that he neglects the worship of the true God; and indeed no man can serve God and mammon. Some think, that by this pleonexia rendered "covetousness", is meant, that greedy desire after the commission of all uncleanness, and impure actions, which were perpetrated by the followers of Simon Magus in their religious assemblies, and under the notion of worship, and as acceptable to God, and therefore called idolatry; and which ought not to be once named, much less practised, among the living members of Christ. Moreover, such filthy actions were performed by the Gentiles in the worship of their deities.

Colossians 3:6

Ver. 6. For which things' sake,.... Those sins above mentioned, **Col 3:5**:

the wrath of God; the effects of it in temporal judgments, and eternal ruin and destruction, the wrath to come, which all are deserving of, and there is only deliverance from by Christ:

cometh upon the children of disobedience: who are disobedient both to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ: who are unbelievers in him, are rebellious and gainsaying, reject his calls, the persuasions of his ministers, set at nought his counsel, and will have none of his reproof. There have been already instances of God's displeasure at sin, his indignation against it, and his judgments on account of it: his wrath is revealed from heaven, and it will come down from thence on disobedient and rebellious sinners, and that suddenly, and with great power, like a mighty torrent, that there will be no standing before it. This is a reason why such who have life in Christ should mortify, repress, and abstain from the above sins; for though this regards sinners, and ungodly persons, yet the effects of God's wrath on such show how much such sins are displeasing to him, and detested by him, and therefore to be avoided by the saints.

Colossians 3:7

Ver. 7. In the which ye also walked some time,.... Either in or among the children of disobedience, **Col 3:6**, or rather in the afore mentioned sins, **Col 3:5**. Sin is a road or path, in which sinners walk a way of their own, or of their own choosing and approving, though a dark and crooked one, and which leads to destruction: walking herein denotes a continued series of sinning, a persisting in it, a progress therein, a proceeding from evil to evil, taking pleasure, and going on securely in it; and which is the case and state of God's elect before conversion, which is a turning of them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, and out of the ways of sin, into the paths of righteousness, when the course of their walk, of their lives and conversations, is altered; and which is suggested here, and made use of as another reason for the mortification of the deeds of the body of sin, taken from their former state, and their deliverance out of it; and therefore the time past of their lives, when they walked in these things, should suffice, and they should now cease from sin, from a series and course of sinning:

when ye lived in them; in sins, and were dead in them; for to be dead in sin, and to live in sin, is the same thing; living in sin is the death of sin. To live in sin is to live after the flesh, after the dictates of corrupt nature, to live a sinful course of life; it is for a man to give up himself to sin, be wholly bent upon it, take delight in it, and make it his work and business. This had been the case of these believers, but now they were dead to sin, and it became them to live no longer therein, but to mortify it by denying it, and abstaining from it, and living soberly, righteously, and godly.

Colossians 3:8

Ver. 8. But now you also put off all these,.... Intimating, that now since they were converted and delivered out of the former state in which they were once, and professed not to walk and live in sin, it became them to separate, remove, and put at a distance from them all sins, and every vice, to lay them aside as dead weights upon them, and put them off as filthy garments; for such sins are never to be put on, and cleaved to again as formerly; and that not only those, the above mentioned, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, but the following also,

anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, or "evil speaking"; what vices are here intended, See Gill on "Eph 4:31"; to which is added,

filthy communication, which comes

out of the mouth: and is to be removed and put out of it, or abstained from; and which is to be understood also of blasphemy, or evil speaking of one another, whereby the credit and reputation of each other may be hurt. "Filthy communication" is the same with that which is said to be corrupt, **Eph 4:29**; and which, though it is applicable to all speech that is unsavoury, unedifying, idle, and useless, and may be properly enough said of flattery, lying, cursing, and swearing; yet chiefly regards obscene language, unchaste words, and filthy talking, which tend to encourage and cherish the sin of uncleanness in any of its branches, flattery, lying, cursing, and swearing; yet chiefly regards obscene language, unchaste words, and filthy talking, which tend to encourage and cherish the sin of uncleanness in any of its branches.

Colossians 3:9

Ver. 9. Lie not one to another.... Which is another vice of the tongue, and to which mankind are very prone, and ought not to be done to any, and particularly to one another; since the saints are members one of another, and of the same body, which makes the sin the more unnatural; of this vice, See Gill on "Eph 4:25", and is another sin that is to be put off, or put away; that is to be abstained from, and not used. The arguments dissuading from this, and the rest, follow,

seeing that ye have put off the old man, with his deeds. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read this as an exhortation, as they do the next verse also. Who is meant by the old man,

See Gill on "Ro 6:6", and what by putting him off,
See Gill on "Eph 4:22", and as for "his deeds", they are the same with the deceitful lusts there mentioned, and the works of the flesh in **Ga 5:19** and with the members of the body of sin in the context, **Col 3:5**. Some, as Beza, think, that here is an allusion to the rite of baptism in the primitive church; which, as he truly observes, was performed not by aspersion, but immersion; and which required a putting off, and a putting on of clothes, and when the baptized persons professed to renounce the sins of the flesh, and their former conversation, and to live a new life.

Colossians 3:10

Ver. 10. And have put on the new man,.... Concerning which, and the putting it on, See Gill on "Eph 4:24",

which is renewed in knowledge; this man, or principle of grace in the soul, is a new one, which never was there before; and there is a daily renovation of it in the spirit of the mind, by the Spirit of God; for as the outward man decays, the inward man, which is the same with this new man, is renewed day by day, increases in holiness and righteousness, grows in grace, and particularly in "knowledge"; light and knowledge of a man's self, of his lost state and condition by nature, of his need of Christ, and of his salvation, is what appears at the first formation of this new man; and the daily renovation of him lies in an increase of spiritual, experimental, and saving knowledge of God, and Christ, and divine things; and indeed, until a man becomes a new creature, he neither knows, nor is he capable of knowing, the things of the Spirit of God; so that this new man, or principle of grace, begins with spiritual knowledge, and is formed in order to it, and its increase lies in it:

after the image of him that created him; the new man; for this is a creation work, and so not man's, but God's; and is made not after the image of the first man, no not as innocent, and much less as fallen; but after the image of Christ, to which the elect of God are predestinated to he conformed, and which is stamped in regeneration; and more and more appears by every transforming view of Christ, and will be perfected in heaven, when they shall see him as he is, and be perfectly like him, who is not only the pattern, but the Creator of it, even the author and finisher of faith.

Colossians 3:11

Ver. 11. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew,.... That is, either in Christ, after whose image the new man is created; see **Ga 5:6** or in the new man, and with respect to

regeneration; or in the whole business of salvation: it matters not of what nation a man is; this has no influence on his new birth, either to forward or hinder it; for he is never the more a new creature, a regenerate man, and interested in salvation, because he is a Jew, which he may be outwardly, and not inwardly; and he may be born again, though he is a Greek or Gentile, as the Syriac version reads; for God of his own will, and abundant mercy, and not out of respect to nations and persons, begets souls again to a lively hope of the heavenly inheritance:

circumcision or uncircumcision; a man's being circumcised in the flesh signifies nothing; this he may be, and not a new creature; for that is not true circumcision, but that which is of the heart, and in the spirit: and, on the other hand, it is no objection to a man's being born again, that he is uncircumcised in the flesh; this may be his case, and yet may be circumcised with the circumcision made without hands; neither one nor the other is of any account with God, nor makes the man either better or worse.

Barbarian, Scythian; all such were Barbarians to the Romans, that did not speak their language; and as were such also to the Greeks, who were not of their nation, and therefore Greeks and Barbarians are opposed to each other, see **Ro 1:14** and so they are here in the Syriac version, which reads "Greek" and "Barbarian". The Arabic version, instead of "Barbarian", reads "Persian", because it may be, a Persian is so accounted by the Arabians; and because the Scythians were, of all people, the most barbarous and unpolished {z}, and were had in great disdain by others, therefore the apostle mentions them, as being within the reach of the powerful and efficacious grace of God; nor were the fierceness of their dispositions, and the impoliteness of their manners, any bar unto it. Remarkable is the saying of Anacharsis the Scythian, who being reproached by a Grecian, because he was a Scythian, replied {a},

"my country is a reproach to me, but thou art a reproach to thy country."

It matters not of what nation a man is, so be it he is but a good man; especially in Christianity, all distinctions of this kind cease. It is added,

bond or free; the grace of God in regeneration is not bestowed upon a man because he is a free man, or withheld from another because he is a bond servant. Onesimus, a fugitive servant, was converted by the Apostle Paul in prison; and whoever is called by grace, if he is a free man in a civil sense, he is Christ's servant in a religious one; and if he is a servant of men, he is, in a spiritual sense, the Lord's free man. It is not nation, nor outward privileges, nor the civil state and condition of men, which are regarded by God, or are any motive to him, or have any influence upon the salvation of men:

but Christ is all, and in all; he is "all" efficiently; he is the first cause of all things, the beginning of the creation of God, the author of the old, and of the new creation, of the regeneration of his people, and of their whole salvation: he is all comprehensively; has all the fulness of the Godhead, all the perfections of deity in him; he is possessed of all spiritual blessings for his people; and has all the promises of the covenant of grace in his hands for them; yea, all fulness of grace dwells in him, in order to be communicated to them: and he is all communicatively; he is their light and life, their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, their food and clothing, their strength and riches, their joy, peace, and comfort, who gives them grace here, and glory hereafter, So, with the Jews, the Shekinah is called lk, "all" {b}: and this likewise, with the Cabalists {c}, is one of the names of the living God, and well agrees with Christ, who has all things in him; and is the reason they give for this divine appellation: and Christ is "in all"; in all places, being infinite, immense, and incomprehensible, as God, and so is everywhere by his power, upholding all things by it; and in all his churches, by his gracious presence, and in the hearts of all his regenerate ones, of whatsoever nation, state, and condition they be: he is revealed in them, formed within them, and dwells in their hearts by faith; and is all in all to them, exceeding precious, altogether lovely, the chiefest among ten thousands, and whom they esteem above all creatures and things. The Arabic version reads, "Christ is above all, and in all".

{z} Vid. Justin. l. 2. c. 1, 2, 3. Plin. l. 4. c. 12. & 6. 17. Herodot. l. 4. c. 46. {a} Laertius in Vita Anacharsis. {b} Tzeror Hammot, fol. 28. 2. {c} Shaare Ora, fol. 6. 1. & 22. 2. & 25. 3.

Colossians 3:12

Ver. 12. Put on therefore,.... As the apostle had argued for the putting off of the members of the body, from their having put off the old man himself; so he now argues from their having put on the new man, to their putting on of his members; that is, to the exercise of the various graces of the Spirit, and the discharge of the several duties of religion; which though they would not be a robe of righteousness, or garments of salvation to them, yet would be very becoming conversation garments, such as would be adorning to themselves, to the doctrine of Christ, and their profession of it, without which they would be naked in their walk, and exposed to shame, hvwdq xwrb avblthl, "to be clothed with the Holy Spirit", is a phrase used by the Cabalistic doctors {d}; and is indeed a Scripture phrase, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon", hvbl, clothed Zechariah, 2Ch 24:20 and so Esther is said, by the Jewish writers {e}, to be "clothed with the Holy Ghost" Here the metaphor is taken from the putting off of clothes; and what is here directed to, is like Joseph's coat, a coat of many colours. The arguments made use of lie in the characters under which the saints are addressed,

as the elect of God, holy and beloved; that is, "as becomes the elect of God", as the Arabic version renders it; as such who were chosen in Christ from eternity, according to the sovereign will and pleasure of God, and his free grace unto salvation and eternal life; which carries in it a strong argument to enforce the performance of good works, since men are hereby chosen unto holiness, and good works are what God has foreordained that they should walk in, and especially to mercy, and acts of it; since hereby their salvation appears to be not of man's will and works, but of God, that shows mercy; and such who are the objects of this grace are vessels of mercy. The apostle calls all the members of this church by this name, though every individual of them might not be chosen of God; but because they were all under a visible profession of faith and holiness, and the greater part of them were truly believers, he in a judgment of charity gives them all this appellation, and upon the same foot, the next, "holy"; not by birth, for they were by nature unclean and filthy, conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; nor by baptism, which takes away neither original nor actual sin, but leaves men as it finds them, and who ought to be holy before they partake of that; but in Christ imputatively, as he was made of God unto them sanctification; and by him efficaciously, in virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, by which he sanctifies his people; and by his spirit inherently and internally, who is the author of the work of sanctification in the heart; and they were likewise so externally in a professional way, and therefore it highly became them to exercise and practise the following graces and duties, to which they were still more obliged, inasmuch as they were "beloved"; that is, of God, as appeared both from their election and sanctification. God had loved them, and therefore had chosen them in his Son, and had given his Son to die for them, that he might sanctify them; and because of his great love to them, had quickened them when dead in sin, and sanctified them by his spirit: wherefore, since God had so loved them, they ought to show love again to him, and to one another, and put on

bowels of mercies; a sympathizing spirit with saints in distress, weeping with them that weep, suffering with them that suffer, being touched, as their high priest is, with a feeling of their sorrows and weaknesses: it denotes inward pity and compassion to distressed objects, the most tender regard to persons in misery, and such compassion as is free from all hypocrisy and deceit, and therefore is expressed by "bowels"; and what is very large, and reaches to multitudes of objects, and is displayed and exerted various ways, and therefore signified by "mercies". Now such a spirit is a very beautiful one; the apostle begins with the innermost of these garments, adding to it

kindness, which is this inward, tender, unfeigned, and abundant mercy put into act and exercise; this is doing good to all men, especially to the household of faith, distributing to the necessities of the saints, and a showing mercy with cheerfulness, and is very ornamental to a Christian professor: as is also

humbleness of mind; which lies in the saints entertaining mean thoughts of themselves, looking upon themselves as the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints; as inferior to others in knowledge, experience, gifts, and graces; in esteeming others better than themselves; in ascribing all they have, and are, to the grace of God; in doing works of mercy and righteousness without ostentation, and boasting of them, or depending on them; owning, that when they have done all they can, they are but unprofitable servants; and this is a beautiful dress for a believer to appear in: be ye clothed with humility; see **1Pe 5:5**. And of the like nature is

meekness; which shows itself in not envying the gifts and graces, the usefulness and happiness of others, but rejoicing therein; in quietly submitting to the will of God in all adverse dispensations of Providence, and patiently bearing what he is pleased to lay on them; and in enduring all the insults, reproaches, and indignities of men with calmness. This ornament of a meek and quiet, spirit is in the sight of God of great price, **1Pe 3:4**. And what follows is natural to it, and explanative of it,

longsuffering: whereby a person patiently bears the evil words and actions of others, and is not easily provoked to wrath by them, but puts up with injuries, and sits down contented with the ill usage he meets with.

{d} Sepher Jetzirah, Nethib, 17. p. 136, {e} T. Megilla, fol. 14. 2. & 15. 1. Zohar in Numb. fol. 70. 3. & 76. 2. & Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 38.

3.

Colossians 3:13

Ver. 13. Forbearing one another,.... Not only bearing one another's burdens, and with one another's weaknesses, but forbearing to render evil for evil, or railing for railing, or to seek revenge for affronts given, in whatsoever way, whether by words or deeds:

and forgiving one another; all trespasses and offences, so far as committed against themselves, and praying to God to forgive them, as committed against him:

if any man have a quarrel against any; let him be who he will, high or low, rich or poor, of whatsoever age, state, or condition, and let his quarrel or complaint be what it will, ever so great, or ever so just and well founded, yet let him put up with it, and forgive it:

even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye; what God is said to do for Christ's sake, See Gill on "Eph 4:32", what here Christ is said to do: as Mediator, he has procured the remission of sins by the shedding of his blood; and as God he forgives sins freely, fully, forgetting the injuries done, not upbraiding with former offences, and that too without asking, and before there is any appearance of repentance; and so should the saints forgive one another, as they expect to have an application and manifestation of forgiveness to themselves.

Colossians 3:14

Ver. 14. And above all these things,.... Bowels of mercies, kindness, &c.

put on charity, or brotherly love, for without this all is nothing; they will only be done in show and appearance, in mere guise and hypocrisy, if love is wanting; this actuates and exercises all the rest; it is only from this principle that true sympathy, real kindness, undisguised humility, and meekness, patient longsuffering, and forbearance, and hearty forgiveness proceeds: this is greater, and more excellent, than all the other, and adds a glory, lustre, and beauty to them; this is the upper garment that covers all the rest, for so the words may be rendered, "upon all these things put on charity"; whereby a disciple of Christ is visible, and distinguished, and is known to be what he is;

this is like a strait and upper garment, keeps close all that is under it, and within it: and it is called

the bond of perfectness; either of the law, and the duties of religion, which it is said to be the fulfilling of; or rather of the saints, for this is the bond of union between them, which knits and cements them together, so that they are perfectly joined together, and are of one mind and one heart: it is the bond of peace among them, of perfect unity and brotherly love; and a most beautiful and pleasant thing it is for brethren to live and dwell together in unity; such are beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem among themselves, and terrible to their enemies as an army with banners, being not to be divided or broken by them. The Claromontane exemplar reads, "the bond of unity".

Colossians 3:15

Ver. 15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts,.... By "the peace of God" is meant, either the peace believers have with God, which is his gift, and passes all understanding, and flows from a comfortable apprehension of interest in the blood, righteousness, and atonement of Christ; or rather that peace which does, or should subsist among the saints themselves, which God is the author of, calls for, and requires, and encourages in them. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and, Ethiopic versions, read, "the peace of Christ"; and so the Alexandrian copy, and some others. This may be said to "reign" in their hearts, when it is the governing principle there; when it restrains the turbulent passions of anger, wrath, and revenge, allays undue heats, moderates the spirits, and composes differences. The metaphor is taken from the judge in the Olympic games, who was the umpire, the moderator, and who determined whose the victory was, and to whom the crown belonged; the apostle would have no other umpire among the saints than the peace of God: and the arguments he uses follow,

to the which also you are called in one body; the saints in their effectual calling are called to peace by God, who is the God of peace; by Christ, who is the Prince of peace; and by the Spirit, whose fruit is peace; and through the Gospel, which is the Gospel of peace, and into a Gospel state, which lies in peace, righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost: and they are not only called to this, but they are called "in one body"; though they are many members, yet they are but one body; and therefore ought to be in peace, and that should bear the sway in them, seeing it is unnatural for members of the same body to quarrel with each other.

And be ye thankful; which intends either gratitude to men, to fellow creatures, for any service or kindness done by them, especially to the saints, the members of the same body, who are placed in a subservience, and in order to be useful to each other; or else to God, for all spiritual blessings in Christ, and particularly the peace he gives, for the effectual calling, and a place in the body, the church; and "to Christ", as the Syriac version reads, for all those graces which come from him, and strength to exercise them, and for himself, and an interest in him, who is all in all; and a grateful spirit, both for spiritual and temporal mercies, is a very becoming and beautiful one, and is another part of the ornament of a Christian: this last is added to make way for what follows.

Colossians 3:16

Ver. 16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you,.... The Alexandrian copy and Arabic version read, "the word of God"; by which may be meant the whole Scripture, all the writings of the Old and New Testament, which are by inspiration of God, were endited by the spirit of Christ, speak and testify of him, and were written for his sake, and on his account, and therefore may be called his word; and are what should be searched into, carefully attended to, diligently read, and frequently meditated upon; and which are able, under a divine blessing, to furnish with all spiritual wisdom, or to make men wise unto salvation: or by the word of Christ may be meant more especially the Gospel, which Christ is the author of as God, the preacher of as man, and the subject matter of as God-man and Mediator: it is the word concerning him, his person and offices; concerning peace and pardon by his blood, justification by his righteousness, and complete salvation through his obedience, sufferings and death. The exhortation to let it

dwell in them, supposes that it had entered into them, and had a place in them through the spirit and power of Christ; and that it should have a constant and fixed place there, and not be like a stranger or wayfaring man, that tarries but for a night, or like a sojourner, that continues but for a while; but as an inhabitant that takes up its residence and abode, never more to depart; and intends not only a frequent reading, and hearing of, and meditating upon the word of God but continuance in the doctrines of the Gospel, with a steady faith in them, and a hearty affection for them; for such an inhabitation imports a very exact knowledge of the Gospel, and familiarity with it, and affectionate respect for it; as persons that dwell in a house, they are well known by those of the family, they are familiarly conversed with, and are treated with love and respect by them: and so the word of Christ, when it has a fixed and established abode in a man's heart, he has an inward, spiritual, experimental knowledge of it; he is continually conversant with it; this word of Christ is his delight, and the men of his counsel his guide, his acquaintance, with whom he takes sweet counsel together, and esteems it above the most valuable things in the world, and receives and retains it as the word of God. The manner in which the apostle would have it dwell is

richly; that is, largely, plentifully, in an abundant manner, as this word signifies; see **1Ti 6:17** and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it here, "abundantly"; and to the same sense the Arabic version. His meaning is, that not one part of the Scripture only should be regarded and attended to but the whole of it, every truth and doctrine in it, even the whole counsel of God; which as it is to be declared and preached in its utmost compass, so all and every part of it is to be received in the love of it, and to be abode in and by; there is a fulness in the Scriptures, an abundance of truth in the Gospel, a large affluence of it; it is a rich treasure, an invaluable mine of precious truths; all which should have a place to their full extent, in both preacher and hearer: and that

in all wisdom; or, "unto all wisdom"; in order to attain to all wisdom; not natural wisdom, which is not the design of the Scriptures, nor of the Gospel of Christ; but spiritual wisdom, or wisdom in spiritual things, in things relating to salvation; and which is, and may be arrived unto through attendance to the word of Christ, reading and hearing of it, meditating on it; and especially when accompanied with the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and which is to be desired and prayed for.

Teaching and admonishing one another. The Syriac version renders it, "teach and instruct yourselves"; and may regard not only publicly teaching Christ, his Gospel, the truths and doctrines of it, and all his commands and ordinances, for which he qualifies men, and sends them forth in his name; but private teaching, by conference, prayer, and singing the praises of God, according to the measure of the gift of grace bestowed on everyone: and so admonishing may not only respect that branch of the public ministry, which is so called, and intends a putting into the mind, or putting persons in mind both of their privilege and duty; nor only that part of church discipline which lies in the admonition of a delinquent, but private reproofs, warnings, and exhortations; and as by other ways, so, among the rest,

in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; referring very probably to the title of several of David's psalms, lykvm; "Maschil", which signifies giving instruction, or causing to understand; these psalms, and the singing of them, being appointed as an ordinance, of God to teach, instruct, admonish, and edify the saints; for the meaning of these three words, and the difference between them,
See Gill on "Eph 5:19".

singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord; that is, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; and what is meant by singing of them, see the note on the above place: the manner in which they are to be sung is, "with grace"; meaning either by the assistance of the spirit and grace of God, without which no ordinance can be performed aright, to the glory of God, and to spiritual profit and edification, see 1Co 14:15, or with grace in the heart in exercise, particularly faith, without which it is impossible to please God, see Heb 11:6 or with gratitude to God, with thankfulness of heart for his mercies, and under a grateful sense of them; or in such a manner as will minister grace unto the hearers, be both amiable and edifying, see **Col 4:6** all these senses may be taken in: that the phrase, "in your hearts"; does not mean mental singing, or what is opposed to singing with the voice, See Gill on "Eph 5:19". The object here, as there, is "to the Lord"; the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory, of his person and grace: the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "to God": and indeed God, in the three divine Persons, and in all his perfections and works, is the object of praise, and his glory is the end of singing praise.

Colossians 3:17

Ver. 17. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed,.... Whether in preaching the word of Christ, in hearing the Gospel, in singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and in conference and conversation with each other; or in whatsoever action, civil or religious throughout the whole life and conversation, in the performance of things natural, moral, and evangelical, relating to God or man, or one another, in the world or church:

do all in the name of the Lord Jesus; both in the strength of Christ, without whom nothing can be well said or done; and according to the mind and will of Christ declared in the Gospel, which is his name; and calling upon his name for assistance in the ministration of his word, administration of his ordinances, and in the performance of every duty, directing all to, and having solely in view his honour and glory:

giving thanks to God, and the Father by him; this shows, that singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, is a distinct thing from giving of thanks, mentioned in the preceding verse. The things for which thanks are to be given, are "all things"; and the time when, always, as in See Gill on "Eph 5:20". The person to whom they are to be given is God the Father, the Father of our spirits, and of our mercies, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of us in him; and the person by whom they are to be given, is Christ, which is just and proper, since all mercies come from, and through him; nor is there any other way of bringing and offering the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to God; nor are they, nor can they be acceptable to God by, and through any other, but by him alone.

Colossians 3:18

Ver. 18. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands,.... The apostle proceeds from those duties which related to them as church members one towards another, for their mutual good and edification, and the glory of God, to such as concerned them in their own houses and families, as in a natural relation to each other; as husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants; showing hereby, that the Gospel does not at all break in upon, but establishes the duties of common and civil life. Concerning the duty wives to their husbands, here exhorted to, See Gill on "Eph 5:22". The reason urging to a regard to it is,

as it is fit in the Lord; that is, Christ, as the Syriac version reads it. Subjection of wives to their own husbands is "fit" and proper in its own nature, by reason of the original creation of man, and of the woman from him: man was made first, and then the woman; and the woman was made out of the man, out of one of his ribs; and so, though not to be trampled under his feet, but to be by his side, and an help meet to him, yet not to be head, or to rule over him. Moreover, the woman was made for the man, and not the man for the woman; add to this, that the woman was in the transgression, and the means of the fall of man, which gave a fresh reason for, and made the obligation to subjection to him the stronger: and it is also a "decent" and becoming thing for wives to be subject to their husbands; for as it is giving honour to them, it is a real ornament to themselves, and is one of those good works which women professing godliness should adorn themselves with; and makes more comely and beautiful than broidered hair; gold, pearls, or costly array, yea, than their natural favour and beauty: it is what is fitting "in the Lord": it is what he requires, not only what the law of God requires, see 1Co 14:34 and which was enjoined originally, see **Ge 3:16** and was charged as a duty under the legal dispensation; but is what is commanded by Christ under the Gospel dispensation, and is to be observed by all those that are "in" him, that profess to be new creatures, converted persons, that so the word of God be not blasphemed, and the enemy have no occasion to reproach, see **Tit 2:5** though this phrase may also be considered as a restriction and limitation of this subjection; that though it reaches to all things, yet only to such as are agreeable to the will of the Lord, and not contrary to the Gospel of Christ; for in these they are not to be subject to them, but to Christ the Lord; but in all other things they are, even as the church is subject to Christ: and when this is the case, such subjection is regarded by Christ as if it was done to himself; and indeed his honour and glory should be the governing view in it; see **Eph 5:22**.

Colossians 3:19

Ver. 19. Husbands, love your wives,.... See Gill on "Eph 5:25".

and be not bitter against them; turning love into hatred of their persons; ruling with rigour, and in a tyrannical manner; behaving towards them in a morose, churlish, and ill natured way; giving them either bitter words, or blows, and denying them their affection, care, provision, protection, and assistance, but using them as servants, or worse. All which is barbarous, brutish, and unchristian, and utterly unbecoming the Gospel.

Colossians 3:20

Ver. 20. Children, obey your parents,.... Both father and mother;
See Gill on "Eph 6:1".

in all things; not in things sinful, which are contrary to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; in things repugnant to the duties of religion, the ordinances of the Gospel, and the doctrines of Christ, parents are to be neglected and disobeyed. God is to be regarded, and not men; but in all things good and lawful, and in all things that are of an indifferent nature, which may, or may not be done, in these things the will of earthly parents is to be attended to; of which there is a considerable instance in the Rechabites, see
Jer 35:6 and even they are to be obeyed in things that are hard and difficult to

be complied with, and which are disagreeable to flesh and blood, as the cases of Isaac and Jephthah's daughter show.

For this is well pleasing unto the Lord; and is a reason sufficient to engage to the performance of the duty; for whatever is grateful and well pleasing to God ought to be done with pleasure by us, from a principle of love to him, by faith in him, and with a view to his glory; and then such an action is acceptable in his sight through Jesus Christ our Lord. The Alexandrian copy reads, "in the Lord"; and so the Vulgate Latin version.

Colossians 3:21

Ver. 21. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger,....
See Gill on "Eph 6:4".

lest they be discouraged; or disheartened and dispirited; their spirits be broke through grief and trouble, and they become indolent, sluggish, and unfit for business; or, despairing of having any share in the affections of their parents, disregard their commands, instructions, and corrections, and grow obdurate, stubborn, and rebellious.

Colossians 3:22

Ver. 22. Servants, obey in all things your masters,.... That is, in all things relating to the body, and bodily service; not to the conscience, and religious worship; in things worldly, and not spiritual; in all things that are within a master's power, and it is lawful for him to command; and in all things that are fitting and proper that a servant should do; and even in such things as may be difficult, troublesome, and disagreeable to the flesh unto them; see Lu 17:7 who those servants are that are to obey, and who their masters, said to be according to the flesh, to whom they are to be subject, See Gill on "Eph 6:5".

not with eyeservice, as menpleasers, but in singleness of heart;
See Gill on "Eph 6:5",
See Gill on "Eph 6:6".

fearing God; who sees and knows all things, what servants do when their masters are absent from them, and to whom they are accountable; and a servant that fears God will make conscience of discharging his service faithfully, will not misspend his master's time, nor embezzle his goods, or waste his substance; but from a principle of reverential affection for God, and fear of him, with a concern for his name, and a view to his glory, will with all diligence, uprightness, faithfulness, and sincerity, do his duty, seek his master's good and interest, and cheerfully obey all his lawful commands. The Alexandrian copy reads, "fearing the Lord"; and so the Syriac version, "in the fear of the Lord".

Colossians 3:23

Ver. 23. And whatsoever ye do,.... Some have thought that these words, and the two following verses, regard the Colossians in general, and the performance of any, and all good works by them; but by their connection with the preceding verse, and with the beginning of the next chapter, they appear to concern servants only, and what they do under that character, and under the discharge of their duty:

do it heartily, not by mere force and necessity, grudgingly, and with murmurings, but from the heart, and with good will, having a true, real, and hearty affection for their masters, having their good and interest at heart, and a delight in their service; like the Hebrew servant, that loved his master, as also his wife and children, and therefore would not depart from him, see Ex 21:5,

as to the Lord, and not unto men; See Gill on "Eph 6:7".

Colossians 3:24

Ver. 24. Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance,.... This is said for the encouragement of Christian servants, who, though they may receive little or nothing from their earthly and carnal masters; yet they shall be used and treated as children by the Lord, and by whom they will be possessed of an eternal inheritance, after their work and labour is over: by "the reward of the inheritance" is meant the heavenly glory, called a reward, because the apostle is speaking to servants and therefore uses language agreeable to them; and who, though they may have no reward in this world, yet as there is a God that judgeth in the earth, there is verily one for them in the world to come: and though it is not given for working, yet it is given to those that do good, and continue in well doing; whose works follow, though they do not go before them; and is enjoyed after their work is over, as the servant receives his wages at evening and when he has done his work; though this will not be received as a reward of debt, but of grace; it cannot be of merit, as is clear from the nature of good works themselves, which are all due, to God, prior to the performance of them; and when done in the best manner, are no more than a man's duty, and are done not in his own strength, but by the grace of God; and in many things, yea in everything, he comes short of performing what is incumbent on him; and besides, there is no manner of proportion between: the best services of the saints, and eternal glory: to which may be added, that eternal life is the free gift of their heavenly Father to them, and is here called an inheritance, which never becomes the property of servants in a way of merit, but is the portion of children, from their Father's good pleasure. Wherefore the heavenly glory is such a reward as that it is an "inheritance"; or, as the Syriac version renders it, "in an inheritance"; it lies in an inheritance, an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fades not away, reserved in the heavens; and which is not got by industry, or obtained by the works of the law, nor bought with a price, but is a free bequest of God as a Father to his children; for an inheritance is peculiar to children, and this to the children of God, as these believing servants were; and which comes to them by and through the death of the testator; and it may be called an inheritance, because the heavenly glory is substantial, it is substance, a better and a more enduring substance than any inheritance in this world; and is a very plentiful possession and estate, it consists of all things, yea, God himself is the portion of his people, and they that are his children are heirs of God; there is not only a glory, but riches of glory, a plenty, a fulness of it in this inheritance; the way in which they come by it, is receiving it from Christ; "of the Lord ye shall receive it". It is in a way of receiving, and so by gift, as a man can receive nothing but what is given him; and as all grace is in a way of receiving, and therefore boasting in it is excluded, so glory is enjoyed in the same way, and from the same hands, even from Christ, the righteous Judge, that will give it; it is in him they obtain this inheritance, and are in him chosen and predestinated unto it; it is by his resurrection from the dead, and in consequence of it, that they through the power of his Spirit and grace are begotten unto it; it is his grace that makes them meet for it; and he has it in his hands for them; he is a feoffee in trust on their behalf, and is able to give it to them; and will at the last day introduce them into the full possession of it. Now these Christian servants "knowing" all this, having a lively hope of this inheritance, a full persuasion, and a firm faith of right unto it, and meetness for it, and having the Spirit of God as an earnest and pledge of it; the consideration of it must greatly tend to make them quiet and easy in their present servitude, and to encourage them, to the discharge of their duty with diligence, faithfulness, and cheerfulness: since they might assure themselves of the inheritance hereafter, how small soever their reward was now:

for ye serve the Lord Christ; who is a good master, and faithful to all his engagements and promises, all whose servants are respected by him, and honoured by his Father, and shall be for ever where he is.

Colossians 3:25

Ver. 25. But he that doth wrong,.... Which may be understood, both of servants that do wrong to their masters through sloth and idleness, neglecting their business, embezzling their masters' goods, and defrauding them of their substance; and of masters that injure their servants by withholding from them proper food, and raiment; by cheating them of their wages, either giving them none at all, or too little, or detaining them too long, and by giving them bad language, and hard blows, and such like severe usage:

shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; either in this world, or in the other; God will avenge all such injuries, sooner or later; so that these words may be considered either as said with a view to deter servants from evil practices, or to comfort them under the maltreatment they may meet with from cruel masters:

and there is no respect of persons. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic Versions add, "with God"; which undoubtedly is the sense; he regards not the rich more than the poor; he makes no difference between bond and free, the servant and the master; he will not take the part of the one, because he is a master, nor neglect, the other, because he is a servant, but will do that which is just and right with regard to them both; See Gill on "Eph 6:9".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Colossians 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS 4

This chapter begins with an exhortation to masters to behave towards their servants in a just and equitable manner, from the consideration of their having a master in heaven, which should have concluded the preceding one; and in it the apostle gives some general exhortations, and some particular instructions about reading this, and another epistle, and stirring up their minister to his duty; and great part of it is taken up in expressing his love to the Colossians, and in the salutations of others, and of himself. The general exhortations are to prayer, with watchfulness and thankfulness, not only for themselves, but especially for the ministers of the Gospel, **Col 4:2** and next to a wise behaviour towards them that were of the world, **Col 4:5** and also to a prudent conversation, particularly in language, with everyone, **Col 4:6**. And then the apostle proceeds to declare his great affection for them, and care of them, which he showed by sending two proper persons to them from him, partly to make known his affairs to them, and partly to know the state and condition they were in, and comfort them, **Col 4:7** and next follow the salutations of various persons to them, who are mentioned by name, and whose characters are given, **Col 4:10**. And then he orders them to read this epistle in the church of Laodicea, and also that which came from that place, **Col 4:16** and to admonish Archippus to take heed to, and fulfil his ministry, since it was what he had received in the Lord, **Col 4:17**. And then closes the epistle with his own salutation and benediction, entreating a remembrance of him and his bonds, **Col 4:18**.

Ver. 1. Masters, give unto your servants,.... This verse properly belongs to the preceding chapter, with which it should have been concluded. It is indeed strange, that those who made the division of chapters and verses should separate this from the former chapter, to which it so manifestly belongs, and begin a new one with it, when it has no connection with what follows; for the apostle having observed the duty of servants to their masters, proceeds to direct masters to the discharge of their duty to their servants, by giving them

that which is just and equal: proper food and raiment, which is sufficient and fitting for them; the wages due unto them by law or contract; using them with gentleness and humanity, taking care of them when under affliction, and in sickness; encouraging the diligent and laborious by an addition to their salaries; correcting the disobedient within just bounds, not with too much rigour and severity; and carrying it with an even hand to all, not preferring or indulging one before another, without any reason:

knowing that ye also have a master in heaven:
See Gill on "Eph 6:9".

Colossians 4:2

Ver. 2. Continue in prayer,.... This is not said particularly to masters, as in the foregoing verse, but to all the members of the church in general; for the apostle having taken notice of some special duties relating to persons in different stations of life, returns to such as were common to them all; as this of prayer to God is, for such prayer is intended; for though the object is not expressed here, he is in the following verse, and the Mediator Christ is supposed, and also the Holy Spirit, whose assistance is necessary to it. The things exhorted to, and required in prayer, are, first, as in this clause, continuance in it, which does not mean that men should be always formally praying to God; nor can it be thought that saints are always in praying frames of soul, though such are always desirable; but it intends frequency and constancy in prayer, in opposition to an entire restraint and omission of it, and to a performance of it but now and then, or very rarely; for though Christians are not, as the Jews were, bound to certain stated hours of prayer, so many times in a day, yet a day should not pass without prayer to God; for their daily cases call for it; their lives, their health, their daily bread, and all their temporal enjoyments, which depend on his daily goodness, providence, and power; their spiritual affairs, the renewing of the inward man day by day, fresh supplies of grace for new service; their daily trials and afflictions, their continued enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, all fully show the necessity of daily prayer: besides, God does not always immediately answer the prayers of his people, he will be sought unto time after time, even for a blessing he intends to give; and therefore the saints should not be discouraged, but continue in prayer till they receive the mercy, and their importunity is a means of enjoying it, as in the case of the poor widow; and which is an encouraging reason why men should pray always, and not faint. Add to this, that constant prayer is a means of keeping up a spiritual acquaintance, intercourse, and familiarity with God, and of the soul alive in the vigorous exercise of the graces of the Spirit, and of preserving the saints from temptations and sin; for, generally speaking, restraining prayer before God, and casting off his fear, go together. The next things requisite in prayer are watchfulness and thankfulness:

and watch in the same with thanksgiving. There is not only a watchfulness unto it, previous to a man's entrance on it, as in **Eph 6:18** but a watchfulness in it, which is opposed both to sleepiness of body, and to coldness and indifference of mind, to all careless airs and negligent manner of performing it; and designs an intenseness of mind, an application of thought, and fervency of devotion, and affection in it. It lies in a concern, that the heart be lift up, with the hands to God; in a care, that what is asked is according to the will of God, and that the whole be performed in sincerity, faith, and fear. This is what the Jews call hlpt Nwye, "the attention of prayer" {f}, and blh tnwk, "the intention of the heart"; and which, they say {g}, is the root of prayer, the main and principal thing in it; and that every prayer which is not with intention, is no prayer {h}; and which, they observe, lies in this, that a man turns his heart from all (other) thoughts, and seems to himself as if he stood before the divine Majesty. To this

thanksgiving must be added; see **Php 4:6** for this is well pleasing to God; and the contrary, an ungrateful spirit, is highly resented by him. Besides, a believer has always mercies to bless God for, as well as favours to ask at his hands; nor is he ever in such a situation, either in temporals or spirituals, but he has something to bless God for. Moreover, how should it be expected that a person should succeed in a present request, who is not thankful for a former kindness?

{f} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 164. 2. & Sabbat, fol. 127. 1. {g} R. Aben Ezra in Psal. lxxviii. 37. {h} Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 4. sect. 15, 16.

Colossians 4:3

Ver. 3. Withal, praying also for us,.... The persons to be prayed for are next directed to; and these are not only themselves, though their concern is very near and great, but others also, all the saints and people of God, yea, all men, and in particular the ministers of the Gospel. The apostle desires they would pray for him, and his fellow ministers, and which he says not in dissimulation, under a guise of humility, but in true humility and lowliness of mind; being sensible of the greatness of the ministerial work, which this shows, and of his own imperfection and weakness, and of what advantage the prayers, even of the meanest in the church, might be unto him: and this shows, that it is the duty of churches, and of particular believers, to pray for their ministers, and, among the rest, as follows,

that God would open to us a door of utterance; or "of the word"; so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic; and Ethiopic versions; meaning, either the word of the Gospel, that the door of that might be opened, that it might have a free course, and be glorified; for though he was bound, that was not; nor does he desire that the door of the prison might be opened, but the door of the word; that there might be an opportunity of preaching it; in which sense this phrase is used, 1Co 16:9 that whereas he could not go abroad to preach it, the hearts of men might be inclined to come to him, and hear it from his mouth; and that the door of their hearts might be opened, that they might attend unto it; that it might have an entrance into them, and a place in them: or else the door of his own speech and words is intended, and the sense be, that God would not only set before him an open door for the preaching of the Gospel, and make it effectual for the conversion of many souls; but that, as he would furnish him with all abilities, and every gift for that service, so that with enlargement of heart, and liberty of mind, he would give him elocution, a mouth and wisdom to speak, utterance and freedom of speech; that the door of the Gospel being opened, or an opportunity given to preach it, and the door of men's hearts opened to receive it, the door, of his lips might be also opened to show forth the praise of the grace of God. The Alexandrian copy adds, "with boldness", or "boldly", as in **Eph 6:19**

to speak the mystery of Christ; the Gospel, of which Christ is the author, preacher, sum, and substance; the whole of which is a mystery; the wisdom of God in a mystery; all the doctrines of it are mysteries; and particularly those, and which are here more especially designed, which regard the person, offices, and grace of Christ, as the mystery of his divine and eternal sonship, of his incarnation, of the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his person, of redemption by his blood, justification by his righteousness, and satisfaction by his sacrifice, things dear to the apostle, and which his soul was full of, and he wanted to speak out; and therefore desires prayer, to be made for him, that a door might be opened, and way made for his speaking of these things with freedom:

for which, says he,

I am also in bonds; this he adds, partly to show how dear the Gospel was to him, that he was willing to suffer, and did suffer cheerfully for the sake of it; and what an honour he esteemed it to lie in chains for it, of which, nor of that, was he in the least ashamed; and partly to stir them up the more to prayer for him, for his liberty in every respect.

Colossians 4:4

Ver. 4. That I may make it manifest,.... It being a mystery, a secret, which was hid in God from everlasting, and, during the legal dispensation, was wrapped up in types, and shadows, and sacrifices, and is still hidden unto the natural man. Wherefore the apostle was desirous of making it manifest in a ministerial way; for God only, by his Spirit, makes it manifest in a spiritual, experimental, and saving way.

As, says he,

I ought to speak. The Arabic version adds, "concerning it", the Gospel, the mystery of Christ. The apostle's meaning is, that he might deliver it with that clearness and evidence, and use that plainness of speech which became the Gospel, and him as a minister of it, and not ambiguous expressions, equivocal phrases, words of double meanings, on purpose to hide things from men, but by manifestation of the truth, to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. As also to speak it faithfully, declaring the whole counsel of God, keeping back nothing that might be profitable to the churches; and with all constancy and certainty, with all boldness and intrepidity of soul, and freedom of mind; not seeking to please men, aiming at vain glory, and popular applause, or being afraid of their faces, menaces, and reproaches.

Colossians 4:5

Ver. 5. Walk in wisdom,.... Or wisely, circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise men; See Gill on "Eph 5:15".

Towards them that are without; so the Jews used to call the Gentiles, all that were out of their own land, that were not of their nation or religion, who were aliens from them, and strangers to their privileges; and sometimes the unbelieving. Jews bear the same character, see **Mr 4:11**. Here it may design such who were not members of this church; so the distinction of those that are without, and such as are within, is used by the apostle in **1Co 5:12**. A church is an house or family, and such as belong to it are called the household of faith, and those that do not are they that are, without; it is as a city, and, those that are of it are fellow citizens with the saints, but others are strangers and foreigners; it is a garden enclosed, they that are planted in it are those that are within, and such as lie in the wide open field of the world are those that are without: but inasmuch as there are some who are not members of churches, and yet have the grace of God, this phrase may chiefly regard all unregenerate men, profane sinners, such as have not faith in Christ, nor hope in God, who are entirely destitute of the grace of God. Now it becomes saints to walk wisely towards them; all communication with them is not cut off, or correspondence and conversation with them forbidden; the saints indeed are not to have their conversation among them as in times past; they are to have no fellowship with them in immoral actions, and superstitious practices; but they may be concerned with them in things civil, with respect to trade and commerce, and the common business of life; on these accounts they may keep company with them; otherwise, as the apostle elsewhere says, they must needs go out of the world. But then it is incumbent upon them to behave wisely towards them, with the simplicity of the dove to join the wisdom of the serpent; they should walk inoffensively towards them, and do nothing to provoke them, to injure and persecute them, but take all prudent methods to gain their affections, escape their resentment and wrath, and obtain their liberty of worshipping God without disturbance; they should give to all their due, tribute, custom, fear, and honour, to whom they are due, and owe no man anything but love; they should submit to every ordinance of men and be subject to the higher powers, not only to escape wrath, but for conscience sake, and should give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; they should pray for kings, and all in authority; for the prosperity of the nation, city, and place where they are, for their carnal relations and neighbours, and even their very entities, and do them all the good, both for soul and body, that lies in their power, and as they have opportunity; and by so doing, they will heap up coals of fire on their heads. Such a prudent walk, and wise conduct, is necessary on account of the Gospel, that the public ministration of it may be continued, that it may spread and get ground, and that it may not be reproached and blasphemed; and on the account of them that are without, that they may not have any stumblingblocks laid in their way, and they be hardened in their impiety and irreligion, and be more set against the truths of the Gospel; and also on account of believers themselves, who ought so to converse with the men of the world, that they are not partakers with them in their sins, and have their manners corrupted by them, or the vital heat of religion damped, and they become dead, lifeless, lukewarm, and indifferent to divine things, which is often the case through an indiscreet and imprudent walk with such men: the apostle adds,

redeeming the time; as an instance of prudent walking towards them that are without; See Gill on "Eph 5:16".

Colossians 4:6

Ver. 6. Let your speech be always with grace,.... "In grace, or concerning grace": let grace be the subject matter of your speech and conversation. When saints meet together they should converse with each other about the work of grace upon their souls, how it was begun, and how it has been carried on, and in what case it now is; they should talk of the great things and wonders of grace, which God has done for them, which would be both comfortable and edifying to them, and make for the glory of the grace of God; and also, they should confer together about the doctrines of grace, and so instruct, establish, and build up one another in them; and at least their conversation should always turn on things graceful and acceptable, such as may minister grace unto the hearer, and be useful and edifying; wherefore all obscene words, unchaste expressions, filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting, ought not to be used. Or this may regard the manner of the speech, and language of the saints; it should be in the exercise of grace; it should be in truth, faithfulness, and sincerity, without lying, dissimulation, and flattery; it should be in consistence with the grace of love, therefore evil should not be spoken one of another; nor should there be whisperings, backbitings, or anything said that is injurious to the character, credit, and reputation of another; for this is contrary to love, and so not with grace: and whatever is said should be spoken in the fear of God; the reason why so many evil things proceed out of the mouths of men is, because the fear of God is not before their eyes. Moreover, the speech of the saints ought to be in a graceful way, with a cheerful and pleasant countenance, in an affable and courteous manner, and not after a morose, churlish, and ill natured fashion: and this should be "alway" the case; not that they should be always talking, for there is a time to keep silence, as well as a time to speak; but the sense is, that when they do speak, it should be both graceful things, and in a graceful manner; so that there is never any room and place for vain discourse, unprofitable talk, and idle words, which must all be accounted for in the day of judgment.

Seasoned with salt. The Syriac version adds, Kya, "as" and reads it, "as if it was seasoned with salt": grace being that to speech, as salt is to meat; as salt makes meat savoury and agreeable to the palate, so grace, prudence, and holiness, which may be meant by salt, see **Mr 9:50**, make discourse savoury, pleasant, and acceptable to a spiritual man, who savours the things that be of God, as all such things are that relate to the grace of God, the work or doctrines of it; and as salt preserves flesh from putrefaction and corruption, so when grace goes along with speech, it makes it pure and incorrupt, sound speech which cannot be condemned: and the apostle's view is, in this exhortation, that nothing unsavoury and corrupt proceed out of the mouths of believers; see **Eph 4:29**,

that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "and know ye how", &c. and make it to be a fresh exhortation to the saints to be concerned for such a share of spiritual knowledge, that they may be able to give a proper and pertinent answer, with meekness and fear, to such as shall ask a reason of the hope that is in them; and to make suitable returns to persons according to their age, sex, capacities, and circumstances; for everyone is not to be answered alike, nor the same man under different circumstances; a fool is sometimes to be answered according to his folly, and sometimes not; and this seems to be a better reading than ours, which makes this to be the end of gracious, savoury, and incorrupt speech; whereas knowledge is not acquired by speaking, but ought to go before it; though indeed a person that uses himself to speaking with prudence, purity, and grace, is at all times ready to give an agreeable answer, in a graceful and acceptable manner, to everyone.

Colossians 4:7

Ver. 7. All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you,.... This Tychicus was an Asian by birth; see Ac 20:4. His name signifies "fortunate", and is the same with "Fortunatus" in Latin, which name is mentioned in 1Co 16:17 whether he is the same person may be inquired. It is said that this Tychicus was one of the seventy disciples, and was afterwards bishop of Chalcedon. However, he was employed by the apostle as a messenger to Colosse, as he also was to Ephesus, see **Eph 6:21**, to inform the members of the church of his state and condition, how it was with him; as that he was in prison at Rome, for the sake of the Gospel, which he continued to abide by, and held fast the profession of, not being in the least moved and intimidated by what he suffered, being supported by the presence of Christ, and the discoveries of his love; and therefore, though his outward state was very mean and uncomfortable, yet the inward state of his soul was right and good; the inward man was renewed day by day. He might also send word by him what his thoughts were about his deliverance, or his dissolution, and what expectation he had of either of these: and that they might give the greater credit to what Tychicus should relate from him, he gives him the following character,

who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister: the same character is given of him in **Eph 6:21**
See Gill on "Eph 6:21" to which is here added,

and fellow servant in the Lord; he was a "brother" in Christ, being a partaker of the same grace, and in the same spiritual relation; and "beloved" of God, and Christ, of all the churches and saints that knew him, and especially by the apostle; and was also a "minister" of the Gospel, a preacher of Jesus Christ, and a "faithful" one to Christ, to his Gospel, and the souls of men; than which a greater character cannot well be given: and though the apostle was endued with such superior gifts, grace, and usefulness; yet he calls this ministering brother a "fellow servant in the Lord"; he having a commission to preach from the same Lord, and having the same Gospel intrusted with him, and being engaged in the same good work, and having the same ends in view, the glory of Christ, and the good of souls; though he had not equal abilities and qualifications, and was not in the same high post and office as an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 4:8

Ver. 8. Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose,.... That is, to relate to them his affairs both temporal and spiritual; and also,

that he might know your estate. The Arabic version renders it, "that I may know your estate" by him when he returned again; as whether they continued steadfast in the Gospel, and observed the order, ordinances, and discipline of it; how it prospered, and was succeeded among them, to their comfort and edification, and to the conversion of others; and what reception the false teachers had among them; and what love, concord, and harmony were among themselves; or what were their afflictions and distresses from their enemies. The Ethiopic version renders it, "that ye may know the history of me"; which agrees with a manuscript mentioned by Grotius, which reads, "that ye may know the things concerning us", as does the Alexandrian copy; and with **Eph 6:22** where it is added, as here, and "comfort your hearts"; who might be greatly cast down upon hearing of the sufferings of the apostle, and also with those they themselves endured both from within and from without, from sin, Satan, and the world; see on Gill "Eph 6:22".

Colossians 4:9

Ver. 9. With Onesimus,.... Who had been Philemon's servant, ran away from him, and was met with and converted by the Apostle Paul, of whom he says many things in his epistle to his master. According to the Apostolic Constitutions, he was afterwards bishop of Beyrhoea; and some say he suffered martyrdom under Domitian; a servant of this name is mentioned by Suetonius {i}, Ignatius {k} speaks of one Onesimus as bishop of Ephesus, but not the same with this,

a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you; either one of their ministers, as Epaphras was, **Col 3:12** or one of their city, who was originally a native of that place; and which the apostle mentions, the more to recommend him; though this is the least part of his commendation; he calls him a "brother", being both a converted man, and in the ministry; and being faithful in his work to Christ, and greatly beloved, by the saints; and particularly highly in the esteem and affections of the apostle:

they shall make known unto you all things which are done here; at Rome, either to him in prison, or in the church; and being two of them, were a proper number to bear a testimony, and which ought to be received.

{i} In Vit. Galbae, c. 13. {k} Ep. ad Ephes. p. 17. & ad Antioch. ascript. p. 89.

Colossians 4:10

Ver. 10. Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth you,.... This man was a man of Macedonia, and a Thessalonian; Ac 19:29 which hinders not but that he might be of the circumcision, or a Jew, as is suggested in the following verse; for he might be born at Thessalonica, and yet be of Jewish parents; nor is his Greek name any objection to it, for the Jews themselves say, that the greatest part of the Israelites that were out of the land, their names are as the names of strangers {l}: he was a constant companion of the apostle, and one of his fellow labourers, as in **Phm 1:24** and now a prisoner with him at Rome; and who having some knowledge of the members of the church at Colosse, takes this opportunity of sending his Christian salutation to them:

and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas; the same with John Mark, whose mother's name was Mary, said here to be sister to Barnabas, Ac 12:12 concerning whom there was a difference between Paul and Barnabas, Ac 15:37, and is the same Mark that wrote the Gospel, and was converted by the Apostle Peter, **1Pe 5:13** and who is said to have received his Gospel from him; he is also mentioned **2Ti 4:11**
#Phm 24. The Arabic version calls him here, the "brother's son of Barnabas": and the Syriac version, hdd rb, "his uncle's son": however, Barnabas being so great a man as he was, and so well known, it added some credit to Mark, that he was a relation of his:

touching whom ye received commandments; not concerning Barnabas, but Mark, concerning whom they had had letters of commendation, either from Barnabas or from Paul, to this purpose:

if he come unto you, receive him; for this was either the substance of those letters, or what the apostle now adds of his own, for the further confirmation of them; and that they might more readily and honourably receive him, when he should come unto them.

{l} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 11. 2.

Colossians 4:11

Ver. 11. And Jesus, which is called Justus,.... The former of these names is the same with Joshua, and was very frequent with the Jews, and the later a surname that was sometimes given to men remarkable for holiness and righteousness: so Joseph, called Barsabas, is surnamed Justus, **Ac 1:23** and James, the brother of our Lord, was called by the Jews James the Just {m}: whether this man was not the same with Justus of Corinth, whose house joined to the synagogue, and into which Paul entered, Ac 18:7 is not certain, but is likely: who are of the circumcision; were Jews, were circumcised persons, though not now sticklers for circumcision, and the rest of the ceremonies, as appears by what follows: this is to be understood of all the above persons, that sent their salutations to this church; though some confine it to Marcus, Barnabas's sister's son, and to Jesus, called Justus:

these only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God; who assisted him in preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and in promoting the honour and interest of Christ. These were the only persons of the Jewish nation that were then at Rome under that character; from whence it appears that Peter was not there at that time: the apostle adds,

which have been a comfort unto me; under his afflictions and sufferings, by visiting him, conferring with him, praying for him, communicating to him, and labouring in the Gospel in his room and stead.

{m} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 1.

Colossians 4:12

Ver. 12. Epaphras, who is one of you,.... A native of Colosse, and one of their faithful ministers; see **Col 1:7**.

A servant of Christ; not merely in the same sense as every believer is, but as he was a preacher of the Gospel, in which he faithfully served his Lord and master, Christ:

saluteth you; sends his Christian respects to you, for whom he bore a sincere love and hearty affection, as appears by what follows:

always labouring fervently for you in prayers; in all his prayers, which were many and frequent, he never forgot his dear flock at Colosse, of which he was pastor, but strove with God for them, even to an agony, as the word signifies; he wrestled with the Lord as Jacob did, nor, as he, would he let him go without a blessing for this church; he was incessant, importunate, and fervent in prayer for them: and what he prayed in particular for them was,

that ye may stand perfect; in Christ Jesus their head, and in his spotless righteousness; see **Col 1:28** and continue believing in him, and looking to him for righteousness and strength, in whom all the fulness, the perfection of grace dwells; and where the saints only are, and can continue to be perfect:

and complete in all the will of God; or "be filled" in it, have a perfect knowledge of the revealed will of God, both as to doctrine and practice, and be enabled to act according to it.

Colossians 4:13

Ver. 13. For I bear him record,.... The apostle was an eye and ear witness of his fervent prayers, his labour of love, and zealous affection for these saints and others; and therefore, as he judged he ought, he bears a testimony for him,

that he hath a great zeal for you; for their spiritual welfare, that the Gospel might continue with them, and they in that, against false teachers, and their attempts to subvert them; that they might grow in the grace of the Gospel, and walk worthy of it, and be at peace among themselves:

and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis; cities in Phrygia, which lay near to Colosse, the one being situated by the river Lycus, and the other by the Maeander; here were many believers, for whom Epaphras had a like zeal and affections as for the Colossians, and to whom very likely he had been useful, either in conversion or edification, or both. The apostle takes no notice to the Colossians of Epaphras being his fellow prisoner, as, he does in his epistle to **Phm 1:23** it may be for this reason, lest they should be over much distressed and cast down with it.

Colossians 4:14

Ver. 14. Luke, the beloved physician,.... Luke the Evangelist, though some doubt it, is here intended, who was a constant companion of the apostle in his troubles, and went with him to Rome, as the Acts of the Apostles wrote by him show, and as from **2Ti 4:11** it appears; so Jerom {n} calls the Evangelist Luke, the physician of Antioch, for from thence he was; and being converted by the Apostle Paul, as is very probable, though some make him to be one of the seventy disciples, he became of a physician of bodies, a physician of souls: some say {o} he was a scholar of Galen, the famous physician, and others that he was his sister's son; who having heard of Christ's miracles, set out with his master Galen for Judea, to know the truth of them, of which they doubted; Galen died by the way, Luke came to Christ, and being taught by him, became one of the seventy disciples. The apostle calls him "beloved", not on account of his profession, in which he might be useful to many, but as he was a brother in Christ, a minister of the Gospel, and a fellow labourer of his. This is the same person as Lucas, mentioned along with Demas, and others, as here, in **Phm 1:24**. The name perhaps is Roman, but was, however, well known among the Jews; for they say {p}, the

"witnesses that sign a divorce, and their names are as the names of strangers, what is to be done with it? there is none comes into our hands (is received) but owqwl "Lukus" and "Lus", and we allow it to be right:"

upon which the gloss says, because these were famous names:

and Demas greet you; the same who, through the love of the present world, forsook the apostle, **2Ti 4:10** which he did either after the writing of this epistle, or if before it, he was now returned again to him: his name seems to be the same with the Roman Dama, unless it should be a contraction of Demetrius, or rather of Demarchos; though the Jews make frequent mention of R. ymyd, "Dimi", or "Demi", in their writings {q}, which perhaps is the same name with this.

{n} Catalog. Script. Eccles. p. 91. Vid. Nicephor. Hist. l. 2. c. 43. {o} Vid. Castell. Lex. Polyglott. col. 1894. {p} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 11. 2. {q} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 19. 2. Nazir, fol. 36. 1. Sota, fol. 43. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 43.

Colossians 4:15

Ver. 15. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea,.... Where there was a church mentioned in the following verse, of which
see on Gill "Re 2:10".

And Nymphas; which some, unskilful in the Greek language, have took for a woman; whereas it is the name of a man, as the following words show; and is a contraction of Nymphios, or Nymphidios, or Nymphodoros:

and the church which is in his house. This man seems to have been an inhabitant of Laodicea, and that the church there met at his house to worship God, to pray unto him, sing his praise, hear his word, and attend on all ordinances: or his own family was brought up so strictly to the observance of these things, that they looked like a little church of themselves.

Colossians 4:16

Ver. 16. And when this epistle is read amongst you, &c,] Which the apostle was now writing, and sent unto them; and which was to be read publicly, before the whole church; being sent not to any particular person, or persons, but to the whole body, and for their general good and instruction:

cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; his will was, that after it had been read to the church at Colosse, it should be sent, or at least a copy of it, to the church of the Laodiceans, in order to be read there: his reason might be, not only because this church was near them, but because it was in much the same situation, being infested with the same sort of false teachers; and therefore what was said to the one, was pertinent to the other:

and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea; which was not an epistle of the apostle to the Laodiceans, as some have thought, but one that was "written from" thence, as the Syriac version renders it. Marcion, the heretic, called the epistle to the Ephesians, the epistle to the Laodiceans, but without any reason; and others have forged an epistle which bears this name, and appears to be a collection out of others, and chiefly from the epistle to the Philippians; and which being short, and may gratify the curious who cannot otherwise come at it, I shall transcribe it, and is as follows {r}.

"Paul an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ; to the brethren which are of Laodicea, grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to Christ in every prayer of mine, that ye continue and persevere in good works, expecting the promise in the day of judgment: neither let the vain speeches of some that pretend to truth disturb you, so as to turn you from the truth of the Gospel which is preached by me; and now the Lord cause that those who belong to me may be serviceable for the furtherance of the truth of the Gospel, and doing kind actions, which are of salvation unto eternal life: and now my bonds are manifest which I suffer in Christ, in which I am glad and rejoice; and this is to my perpetual salvation which is done by your prayers, the Holy Ghost supplying, whether by life or by death; for me to live is life in Christ, and to die is joy; and he will do his own mercy in you, that ye may have the same love, and be unanimous: therefore, most beloved, as ye have heard of the presence of the Lord, so think ye, and do in fear, and you shall have life for ever; for it is God that worketh in you; and whatsoever ye do, do without sin; and what is best, most beloved, rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, and take heed of all filth in all gain; let your petitions be openly with God, be ye steadfast in the sense of Christ: and whatsoever things are sound and true, and chaste and just, and lovely, do; and what ye have heard and received retain in the heart, and peace shall be with you. Salute all the brethren with an holy kiss; all the saints salute you; the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Cause this to be read to the Colossians, and that which is of the Colossians to you."

Every one on reading it will easily see that it is a spurious piece, a collection out of other epistles, and very ill put together: however, the apostle here does not speak of any epistle written to the church of Laodicea, but of one that was written from thence; which some think was written by himself, and that he means his first epistle to Timothy, which is said to be written from Laodicea; and the rather, because in that the qualifications of the ministers of the Gospel are given; and also suitable instructions for the discharge of their work, and so very proper to be read in the presence of Archippus; who, from the following verse, seems to have been remiss and negligent, and needed stirring up to the performance of his office: but from **Col 2:1** it appears, that the apostle had not been at Laodices when he wrote this, and had not so much as seen any of the faces of the brethren there in the flesh; it therefore seems rather to be an epistle which was sent from Laodicea to him, or to the Colossians; which having something in it very instructive and useful, the apostle desires it might be publicly read.

{r} Jachasin, fol. 87. 2. & 117. 1.

Colossians 4:17

Ver. 17. And say to Archippus,.... A name common among the Grecians. This person the apostle calls his fellow soldier, in **Phm 1:2** and who was now the minister of the Gospel at Colosse, his fellow minister, or co-pastor Epaphras, being at Rome, and a prisoner there; though by some he is said to be the first bishop of the Laodiceans, but it seems most likely that he now resided at Colosse, and was their minister: who being negligent in his office, they are called upon to say unto him,

take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord,
that thou fulfil it. The "ministry" he had, was not that of the office of a deacon, as some have thought, but of a preacher of the word; and this he had "received" gifts for, and was called unto it, and installed in it; and that "in", and "by the Lord" himself, and to whom he was accountable for it: and therefore it was incumbent on him to "fulfil it"; by constantly preaching the word, and faithfully administering the ordinances; by defending truth, detecting error, reproving vice, visiting the sick, and comforting the feeble minded; taking heed in all things to himself and doctrine, that he feed the whole flock of God with wholesome food; and, as a wise and faithful steward, give to everyone their portion of meat in due season: hence it appears, that when ministers are negligent in the discharge of their duty, the church has a power to admonish and exhort them to a diligent performance of it.

Colossians 4:18

Ver. 18. The salutation by the hand of me Paul,.... After his amanuensis had finished the epistle, he added his usual salutation to it with his own hand, to prevent all counterfeits and impositions, and that the churches to whom he wrote might be sure of the genuineness of his epistles; but before he added it to it, he either wrote with his own hand, or ordered to be written the following words,

remember my bonds; this he says, partly that they might be animated to abide by the Gospel, for which, as he had told them before, **Col 4:3** that he was in bonds; and partly to encourage them, by his example, patiently to endure what afflictions and persecutions soever they should meet with, for the sake of it; as also that they might be moved hereby, to remember him in their prayers, that, if it was the will of God, he might be released, and be yet further useful in preaching the Gospel; or however, that he might be supported in his bonds, and cheerfully bear them, and remain steadfast in his faith in Christ unto the end: and then follows the salutation,

grace be with you, Amen; which is common to all his epistles, and well suits them; in which he so much displays the grace of God, as it is expressed in the Gospel; and which his heart was full of, and earnestly desired might be more largely manifested to, and bestowed upon the saints. This epistle is said to be

written from Rome to the Colossians, by Tychicus and Onesimus; and though the subscriptions of the epistles are not always to be depended on, yet this seems to be right; that it was inscribed to the Colossians, there is no doubt; and that it was written from Rome is clear enough, since by several expressions it is plain that he was now a prisoner, and in bonds; and that it was sent by Tychicus and Onesimus is more than probable, from **Col 4:7**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Thessalonians 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 THESSALONIANS

Thessalonica was a very large, populous, and flourishing city, it was "liberae conditionis", as Pliny says {a}, a free city, and the metropolis of Macedonia; it was formerly called Halis {b}, and had the name of Thessalonica given it by Philip king of Macedon, on account of his conquest of Thessalia, which this name signifies; and some say he gave this name to a daughter of his on that occasion, who was afterwards the wife of Cassander; who, others say, called this place by his wife's name {c}, which before was Therme: its name with the Italians is Salonichi, and is now in the hands of the Turks, as all Greece is: here the Apostle Paul came after he had been at Philippi, and stayed about three weeks, and preached every sabbath day, and his ministry was blessed to the conversion of some Jews, a multitude of devout Greeks, and many of the chief women of the place, which laid the foundation of a Gospel church; to which the apostle wrote this epistle, and is the first of all the epistles he wrote: the occasion of it was this; the unbelieving Jews, vexed to see the apostle's success, raised a mob of the baser sort of people, and assaulted the house of Jason, where the apostle and his companions were; but Paul and Silas were sent away by night to Berea, which the rabble understanding, followed them thither; when Paul was sent as if he was going to the sea, but was conducted by the brethren to Athens, who gave orders that Silas and Timothy should come to him with all speed, as they did; and Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica to establish and comfort the young converts there; and returning with good news of their faith, and charity, to the apostle at Corinth, he sent them from thence this epistle, and not from Athens, as some have thought: the design of which is to encourage them under their afflictions and sufferings; to exhort them to stand fast in the Lord, to abide by his truths and ordinances, and to live an holy life and conversation, and to regard the several duties of religion, towards God and one another, and those that were set over them; and in it he instructs them concerning the resurrection of the dead, and the coming of Christ, articles of very great importance and concern: the writing of this epistle is placed by Dr. Lightfoot in the 51st year of Christ, and in the 11th of Claudius Caesar.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 THESSALONIANS 1

This chapter contains the inscription of the epistle; the apostle's salutation of the persons it is written to; his thanksgiving for blessings received by them; an account of the manner in which the Gospel came to them, how they behaved when it was preached to them, and of the success of it in their conversion. The inscription which expresses the names of the persons concerned in the epistle, and describes those to whom it is written, and also the salutation, which is the same as in other epistles, are in **1Th 1:1** and then follows a thanksgiving to God made in prayer to him for the special graces of the Spirit bestowed on them, as faith, hope, and love, and the lively exercise of them in which they were; the source and spring of which was the electing love of God, **1Th 1:2** and the evidence of their election of God to the apostle, was the manner in which the Gospel came to them; not merely in the external ministry of it, but in the internal efficacy of it, through the power of the Holy Ghost, **1Th 1:5** and the effects of it upon them; it found an hearty reception among them, in much affliction, and with joy of the Holy Ghost; so that they not only professed it, and became the followers of Christ and his apostles, but were examples unto others, **1Th 1:6** for the fame of the Gospel being preached unto them, and of their faith, were spread everywhere, so that the apostle had no need to say anything about it, **1Th 1:8** the manner of their entrance among them, and the issue of it, their conversion, were so manifest to all; which is described by what they were turned from, idols; and by what they were turned to, the living God; and by the ends of it, which were to serve God, and wait for Jesus Christ; the arguments engaging to which are, his relation to God as his Son, his being raised from the dead by him; his being in heaven, exalted at his right hand there, from whence he is expected; and his having, by his sufferings and death, delivered his people from wrath to come, **1Th 1:9**.

Ver. 1. Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus,.... These are the persons concerned in this epistle, and who send their greetings and salutations to this church; Paul was the inspired writer of it, and who is called by his bare name, without any additional epithet to it, as elsewhere in his other epistles; where he is either styled the servant, or apostle, or prisoner of Christ, but here only Paul: the reason for it is variously conjectured; either because he was well known by this church, having been lately with them; or lest these young converts should be offended and stumble at any pompous title, which they might imagine carried an appearance of arrogance and pride; or because there were as yet no false apostles among them, who had insinuated anything to the disadvantage of Paul, as in other places, which obliged him to assert his character and magnify his office; or rather because this was the first epistle he wrote, and he being conscious to himself of his own meanness, and that he was the least of the apostles, and unworthy to be called one, chose not to use the title. Silvanus is the same with Silas, who was with the apostle at Thessalonica and at Corinth, when he wrote this epistle; he was originally a member of the church at Jerusalem, and was one of the chief of the brethren there, and a prophet; see Ac 17:4, Timothy was also with the apostle at the same place, and was sent back by him from Athens to know their state, and returned to Corinth to him with Silas; he stands last, as being the younger, and perhaps was the apostle's amanuensis, and therefore in modesty writes his name last: the reason of their being mentioned was because, having been with the apostle at this place, they were well known by the church, who would be glad to hear of their welfare; as also to show their continued harmony and consent in the doctrines of the Gospel; they stand in the same order in **2Co 1:19**,

unto the church of the Thessalonians: which consisted of several of the inhabitants of Thessalonica, both Jews and Gentiles;
See Gill on "Ac 17:4", who were called under the ministry of the word by the grace of God, out of darkness into marvellous light, and were separated from the rest of the world, and incorporated into a Gospel church state. This was a particular congregated church of Christ. Some have thought it was not as yet organized, or had proper officers in it; since no mention is made of pastors and deacons, but the contrary is evident from **1Th 5:12**, where they are exhorted to know, own, and acknowledge them that laboured among them, and were over them in the Lord, and esteem them highly for their works' sake. This church is said to be

in God the Father; were interested in his love and free favour, as appears by their election of God, **1Th 1:4**, and they were in the faith of God the Father, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the profession of it, and so were distinguished from an assembly of Heathens that were in the faith of idols, and not of the one true and living God, and especially as the Father of Christ; they were in fellowship with God the Father, and they were drawn by the efficacy of his grace to himself and to his Son, and were gathered together and embodied in a church state under his direction and influence; he was the author of them as a church, and they were plants of Christ's heavenly Father's planting, not to be plucked up; and they were, as the Arabic version renders it, "addicted" to God the Father; they were devoted to his service; they had his word among them, which they had received not as the word of men, but as the word of God; and his ordinances were duly and faithfully administered among them, and attended on by them:

and in the Lord Jesus Christ; they were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; they were chosen in him as their head and representative; they were in him as members of his body, and as branches in the vine; they were openly in him by the effectual calling and conversion, were in the faith of him, and in the observance of his commands, and in communion with him; and so were distinguished from a Jewish synagogue or congregation: all this being true, at least of the far greater part of them, is said of them all, in a judgment of charity, they being under a profession of the Christian religion:

grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the apostle's usual salutation and wish in all his epistles to the churches; See Gill on "Ro 1:7", the words "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" are left out in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; and the Arabic version omits the last clause, "and the Lord Jesus Christ"; and the Ethiopic version only reads, "peace be unto you and his grace".

{a} Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 10. {b} Ptolom. l. 3. c. 13. {c} Strabe, l. 7.

1 Thessalonians 1:2

Ver. 2. We give thanks to God always for you all,.... For all the members of this church, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, greater or lesser believers, officers or private Christians; for their being a church, for the gifts bestowed on them, for the graces hereafter mentioned that were wrought in them and exercised by them; the glory of all which is given to God, and thanks for the same, which shows them to be gifts of his, and not in the least owing to any merits of men: the apostle ascribes nothing to their free will, previous dispositions and qualifications, diligence and industry; nor does he attribute anything to himself and to his companions, who were only ministers by whom these believed; but he refers all to God, to his grace and goodness: and he returned thanks to him for it, and that "always"; whenever he thought of it, made mention of it, or was at the throne of grace, as follows,

making mention of you in our prayers; to God, daily, both in private and in public, at which times thanksgivings to God were made on their account; for thanksgiving is a part of prayer, and requests are always to be made known unto God with thanksgiving. The Ethiopic version renders this clause in the singular number, "and I am mindful of you always in my prayer"; and leaves out the word "all" in the former clause.

1 Thessalonians 1:3

Ver. 3. Remembering without ceasing,.... The phrase "without ceasing", is, by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, joined to the last clause of the preceding verse; and the remembrance the apostle speaks of is either a distinct thing from the mention made of them in prayer, and suggests that they bore them on their minds at other times also; or it is the same with it; or rather a reason of their mentioning of them then, because they remembered them, and the following things of theirs:

as your work of faith; by which is meant not the principle of faith, for as such that is God's work, the product of his grace, and the effect of his almighty power; but the operative virtue and exercise of it under the influence of the grace of God: the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, "the work of your faith"; and so some copies, and the Syriac version, "the works of your faith". The Targumist in **Hab 1:12** represents God as holy atwnmyh ydbweb, "in works of faith": faith is a working grace, it has a deal of work to do, it has its hands always full, and is employed about many things; it is the grace by which a soul goes to God, as its covenant God, lays hold on him as such, pleads his promises with him, asks favours of him, and is very importunate, and will have no denial; and by which it goes to Christ as at first conversion, afterwards for fresh supplies of grace, out of that fulness of grace that is in him; it receives him and all from him, and through him pardon, righteousness, adoption of children, and an eternal inheritance; and it is that grace which carries back all the glory to God and Christ, and to free grace; it glorifies God, exalts Christ, humbles the creature, and magnifies the grace of God, it has much work to do this way; and it works by love, by acts of love to God, to Christ, and to the saints; and it puts the soul upon a cheerful obedience to every ordinance and command, and hence obedience is styled the obedience of faith; and indeed all good works that are properly so are done in faith, and faith without works is dead; it is greatly engaged against the world and the devil; it is that grace by which Satan is opposed and overcome, and by which the believer gets the victory over the world; so that he is not discouraged by its frowns, and cast down by the trials and afflictions he meets with in it, nor drawn aside by its snares and allurements; something of this kind the apostle had observed and remembered in these believers: he adds,

and labour of love; love is a laborious grace when in lively exercise; love to God and Christ will constrain a believer to engage in, and go through, great hardships, difficulties, toil, and labour, for their sakes; and love to the saints will exert itself, by serving them in things temporal and spiritual, ministering cheerfully and largely to their outward wants, for which reason the same epithet is given to love in **Heb 6:10** as here; regarding and assisting them in their spiritual concerns; praying for them and with them; building them up in their most holy faith; communicating their experiences, and speaking comfortable words unto them; reproving them for sin in love, and with tenderness; restoring them when fallen in a spirit of meekness; and stirring them up to love and good works: love has much toil and labour, not only in performing the several duties of religion, both towards God and man; but in bearing all things, the burdens of fellow Christians; the infirmities of weak believers, forbearing them in love, forgiving their offences, and covering their sins:

and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, or "of our Lord Jesus Christ". These persons had a good hope through grace given unto them, and which was founded in Christ Jesus, in his person, blood, and righteousness, and so was as an anchor sure and steadfast; and it had him for its object, it was an hope of interest in him, of being for ever with him, of his, second coming and glorious appearance, and of eternal life and happiness through him; and this was attended with patience, with a patient bearing of reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, for the sake of Christ, and a patient waiting for his coming, his kingdom and glory; and this as well as the others were remembered by the apostle, and his fellow ministers, with great pleasure: and that

in the sight of God and our Father; or before God and our Father; which may be read in connection either with the above graces, which were exercised, not only before men, but before God, and in his sight, who sees not as man seeth, and who cannot be deceived and imposed upon; and so shows that these graces were true and genuine, faith was unfeigned, love was without dissimulation, and hope without hypocrisy: or with the word remembering, as it is in the Syriac version, which reads, "remembering before God and our Father"; that is, as often as we appear before God, and lift up our hands and our hearts unto him in prayer, we bear you upon our minds before God; and particularly remember your operative faith, laborious love, and patient hope of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:4

Ver. 4. Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. Which intends not an election to an office, for this epistle is written not to the officers of the church only, but to the whole church; nor to the Gospel, the outward means of grace, since this was common to them with others, and might be known without the evidence after given; nor does it design the effectual calling, sometimes so called for this is expressed in the following verse as a fruit, effect, and evidence of the election here spoken of, which is no other than the eternal choice of, them to everlasting life and happiness: this is of God, an act of God the Father, made in Christ Jesus before the world began, and which springs from his sovereign will, and is the effect of his pure love and free favour; and therefore these persons who are the objects of it are said to be "beloved of God"; for so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read the words, and which agree with **2Th 2:13** for this choice does not arise from the merits of men, or any conditions in them, or from the foresight of their faith, holiness, and good works, but from the free grace and good pleasure of God; and is the source and spring of all grace, and the blessings of it, and even of good works; and is a sure, immutable, and irreversible act of God, being founded on his own will, and not on the works of men; the knowledge they had of this was not what the Thessalonians themselves had, though they might have, and doubtless had the knowledge of this grace, and which may be concluded with certainty from the effectual calling; and is a privilege which many particular believers may, and do arrive unto the knowledge of, without any extraordinary revelation made unto them: but here it intends the knowledge which the apostle and his companions had of the election of the members of this church; not by inspiration of the Spirit of God, but by the manner of the Gospel's coming unto them, and the effects it had upon them, as expressed in the following verses; and from their faith, hope, and love, mentioned in the preceding verse; and which was the ground and foundation of their thanksgiving for them; see on Gill "2Th 2:13".

1 Thessalonians 1:5

Ver. 5. For our Gospel came not unto you,.... The apostle calls the Gospel "our Gospel", not because he and his fellow ministers were the authors of it; for in this respect it is solely of God, being the produce of his wisdom and grace, and by the revelation of Jesus Christ, hence he calls it the Gospel of God in **1Th 2:2** nor because they were the subject of it, for they preached not themselves, but a crucified Christ, and him only, though it was a stumblingblock to some, and foolishness to others; but because it was committed to their trust, and they were the preachers of it, and agreed in the ministration of it; and it is opposed to, and is distinct from, that which was preached by the false teachers; and here intends not barely the Gospel itself, but chiefly their preaching of it: and this came unto them being sent of God, for wherever the Gospel comes, it comes with a mission and commission from God; and being brought unto them by the apostles, who were bringers and publishers of the good tidings of good things, it came unthought of, unsought and unasked for by them; and that not only externally, which to have is a great blessing, but internally,
eiv umav, "into you"; it came not barely into their ears vocally, and into their heads notionally; but into their hearts, and worked effectually there; it was mixed with faith, and was profitable; it became the ingrafted word, and dwelt richly in them: for it came to them not

in word only; it did come in word, it could not come without words, there is no interpreting of Scripture, no preaching of the Gospel, nor hearing of it without words, without articulate sounds; but not only with these, nor with wisdom of words, with enticing words of man's wisdom, with words which man's wisdom teacheth; as also not in the mere notion and letter of the Gospel, which when it comes in that manner is a dead letter, and the savour of death unto death:

but in power; not merely preached in a powerful way, or attended with miraculous operations, though doubtless both were true; for the apostle was a powerful preacher, and his ministry was confirmed by signs and wonders and mighty deeds; but from neither of these could he conclude the election of these people: but the preaching of the Gospel was accompanied with the powerful efficacy of the grace of God, working by it upon them; so that it became the power of God unto salvation to them; it came to them in the demonstration of the Spirit of God, and of power, quickening them who were dead in trespasses, and sin, enlightening their dark understandings, unstopping their deaf ears, softening their hard hearts, and delivering them from the slavery of sin and

Satan; from whence it clearly appeared that they were the chosen of God, and precious:

and in the Holy Ghost; the Gospel was not only preached under the influence, and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and attended with his extraordinary gifts for the confirmation of it, which it might be, and be no proof of the election of these persons to eternal life; but it came by the power of the Holy Spirit to their souls, working and implanting his graces in them, as faith, hope, and love, and every other; and he himself was received along with it, as a spirit of illumination and conviction, of regeneration, conversion, and sanctification, and of faith and adoption; all which gave full evidence of their election:

and in much assurance; not on the preacher's side, as if the Gospel was preached by him with great assurance, boldness, and confidence; or with great strength of evidence, giving clear and full proof of what was delivered sufficient to ascertain it, and persuade anyone to the belief of it; or with "much fulness", as some render the words, that is, of the Gospel of Christ, and of the gifts of the Spirit, and to a multitude of persons; all which might be, and yet be no proof of the choice of these persons in Christ to eternal salvation; but the Gospel preached to them was blessed to produce in them much assurance, or a large assurance, if not a full one, of the grace of faith in Christ, and of hope of eternal life by him, and of understanding of the doctrines of the Gospel, and of interest in the blessings of grace held forth in them; and this being a fruit, was an evidence of electing grace:

as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. The apostle appeals to themselves for the truth of what he had said; who must have observed, and could not but remember, with what meanness they appeared, with what fear and trembling, with what plainness and simplicity, without the enticing words of man's wisdom; what a contemptible figure they made, how they wrought with their own hands, and endured reproach and persecution for their sakes, that they might obtain salvation by Christ with eternal glory; and had nothing to recommend them to them, to win upon them, and engage their attention, and strike their affection; or persuade them to receive their persons, and believe their doctrines; wherefore the effects their ministry had upon them were not owing to the charms of words, the force of language, and power of oratory; or to any external thing in them, or done by them; but must be ascribed to the Spirit of God, and to the power and efficacy of his grace.

1 Thessalonians 1:6

Ver. 6. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord,.... So far followers of them as they were of Christ, in embracing the Gospel, submitting to the ordinances of it, professing the name of Christ, and suffering for his sake; the Alexandrian copy reads, "of God", and others, "of Christ":

having received the word; the Gospel, the word of truth, peace, and righteousness, and of salvation by Christ; which they received not as the word of man, but of God; and that

in much affliction; referring to the uproar made by the baser sort of people, instigated by the unbelieving Jews, and the trouble they gave to Jason and other brethren, mentioned in Ac 17:1 and this is a considerable commendation of them, that at a time when others were offended and fell off from hearing the word, and a profession of the Gospel, they should receive it, and that

with much joy of the Holy Ghost; not with a carnal joy, or with a mere flash of natural affection, as in the stony ground hearers, and in the Jews, who rejoiced for a while in John's ministry, and in Herod, who sometimes heard him gladly; but with a spiritual joy of the Holy Ghost's producing in them, applying the word with power to them, giving them a spiritual gust of it, and pleasure in it, raising in their souls a joy upon the most solid foundation.

1 Thessalonians 1:7

Ver. 7. So that ye were ensamples to all that believe,.... They were not only followers of Christ and his apostles, whom they took for examples of faith, holiness, courage, meekness, and patience; but they were patterns of good works; and of suffering afflictions to other believers, even to all that knew them, or heard of them, particularly

in Macedonia; as at Philippi and other places: though the Gospel was first preached there, and they had received it, and a Gospel church state was formed there; yet these were more forward in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty, and were even ensamples to them to copy after; so the first are sometimes last, and the last first:

and Achaia; another part of Greece, the metropolis of which was Corinth, where there also was a very considerable church; but these saints at Thessalonica set them an example in many things, and particularly in acts of beneficence and liberality, being one of the churches of Macedonia spoken of in **2Co 8:1**.

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Ver. 8. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord,.... By which is meant the Gospel, and is so called because it is from the Lord, as the author of it: and it is of the Lord, as the subject of it; and it is by the Lord, as the minister or dispenser of it; and it is owing to the efficacy of his grace that it is useful and successful, and ought to be attended to, received, and obeyed, not as the word of man, but as the word of the Lord. This is said to have "sounded out", alluding to the blowing of a trumpet, to which the Gospel is sometimes compared, as to the silver trumpet under the law, for the gathering of the people of Israel; or to the trumpet blown in the years of jubilee, which proclaimed liberty, release of debts, and restoration of inheritances, as the Gospel in a spiritual sense does; or to the trumpet used in war to prepare for the battle, and therefore should not give an uncertain sound; or as used musically, the Gospel being a joyful sound; and this sounding of it may denote the clear publication and open declaration, and large spread of it far and near: though, when it is said to sound forth from the Thessalonians, it is not to be understood as if the Gospel first began to be preached among them, and from thence went to other places; it was preached at Philippi before it came to them, and at many other places before it was there; the word of the Lord, according to the prophecy of **Isa 2:2** came from Jerusalem; Christ and his apostles first preached there, and from thence their words and sound went to the ends of the earth; but not so much the preaching of the Gospel, as the fame and report of its being preached in this place, is here meant: and so the Latin translation of the Syriac version renders it, "for from you went the report of the word of our Lord"; the fame of its being preached and received at Thessalonica, in the manner it was, spread itself,

not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place; not only at Philippi, Berea, Athens, and Corinth, and other cities and towns in those countries, but also in other parts of the world; and what greatly contributed to it were the uproar that was made at Thessalonica, and continued at Berea upon the first preaching of the Gospel in those parts by the unbelieving Jews; as also the large numbers both of Greeks and Jews, and of devout women of considerable families, that were converted: to which may be added, that Thessalonica was the metropolis of Macedonia, and a city of great trade, and much frequented from all parts both by sea and land; and by this means it came to pass, that not only the fame of the preaching of the word among them went abroad everywhere; but, as the apostle adds,

your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; meaning the grace of faith bestowed on them, by which they received the Gospel in the love of it, assented to it, and professed it, and which has God for its object, and is very valuable, since such public notice is taken of it; and which shows that it was not kept to themselves, and lay hid in their own breasts; but they declared it both by words and by deeds, by making a profession of it, and by walking agreeably to it:

so that we had no need to speak anything; the Syriac version adds, "concerning you"; concerning the preaching of the Gospel among them, their faith in it and profession of it, all being so well known in the several places where they came; for it seems it was usual with the apostles, when they came to any place, to speak of their success in others, and of the faith, and hope, and joy of other Christians, for the encouragement of, and as ensamples to those to whom they minister; but with relation to the Thessalonians this was unnecessary.

1 Thessalonians 1:9

Ver. 9. For they themselves show of us,.... Either the above reports of the preaching of the Gospel to the Thessalonians, and of their faith in God; or rather the persons to whom these reports were brought, openly and publicly, and largely declared concerning

the apostles, what manner of entering in we had unto you; under what difficulties they laboured, what contention they had with the unbelieving Jews, what reproaches were cast upon them, and what persecutions they endured when they first entered their city and synagogue, and preached the Gospel to them; and in what manner they did preach it, with what boldness, sincerity, uprightness and affection, and without flattery, covetousness, and vain glory; and with what power it came to them, and what success attended it, and how readily, cheerfully, and reverently both they and that were received by them:

and how ye turned to God from idols; immediately and at once, upon the preaching of the Gospel to them, being first turned by the powerful and efficacious grace of God; for the first work of conversion is God's work; then they themselves, under the influence of the same grace, turned to the one God, from their internal idols, their sins and lusts, and from their external idols, their many false and fictitious deities: for the Thessalonians before the Gospel came among them were idolaters; here the "Dii Cabiri", the great and chief gods of the Gentiles, were worshipped; as Jupiter and Bacchus, Ceres and Proserpina, Pluto and Mercury, Castor and Pollux, and Esculapius; these the Macedonians, and particularly the Thessalonians, worshipped with great devotion and reverence {d}: but now they turned from them and forsook them,

to serve the living and true God; who is called the living God, because he has life in and of himself, and is the fountain of life to others; from whom all living creatures have their life, and are supported in it by him; and in opposition to the above idols, which were inanimate things made of wood or metal, and were images of men that had been dead long ago: and the "true" God, because he is truth itself, and cannot lie, who faithfully performs all his promises, and is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth; and in opposition to the nominal and fictitious deities of the Gentiles, which were only in name, not in truth and reality, or by nature gods: now though these Thessalonians had before done service to these idols, they now turned from them to serve the one living and true God; not only externally, by embracing and professing his Gospel, submitting to his ordinances, and walking according to the rules prescribed by him; but also internally, in the exercise of faith, hope, love, and every other grace.

{d} Gutherlothus de mysteriis Deor. Cabirorum, c. 15. p. 94, 95. Jul. Firmicus. de errore prof. relig. p. 18.

1 Thessalonians 1:10

Ver. 10. And to wait for his Son from heaven,.... The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the natural, essential, and eternal Son of God; and whoever is truly converted, is not only turned to God the Father, and believes in him; but also believes in, receives, embraces, and professes his Son Jesus Christ; who became incarnate, and, in the human nature he assumed, obeyed, suffered, and died and rose again, and ascended into heaven, where he now is, and will be till the time of the restitution of all things; when he will descend from thence, and come and judge the world in righteousness; and from thence the saints expect him, and look and wait by faith for eternal glory and happiness by him, and with him at his appearance and kingdom; so that many articles of faith are contained in this expression, which these Thessalonians were acquainted with, believed, and acted upon: and Christ the Son of God is further described as that person

whom he raised from the dead; that is, God the Father raised from the dead, and whereby he was declared to be the Son of God; and which supposes his dying for the sins of his people, as it expresses his rising again for their justification; things which the faith of these believers was led unto, and in which light they viewed him:

even Jesus, which delivered us from wrath to come; which is revealed from heaven against sin, and comes upon the children of disobedience; which all men are deserving of, even God's elect themselves, but shall not partake of, because they are not appointed to it, but to salvation; and because they are justified by the blood and righteousness of Christ, and so are saved from it; not from all fears about it, and apprehensions of it, which they are filled with, especially under first awakenings, and sometimes afterwards when under afflictive providences; but they are delivered from the thing itself, by which is meant vindictive punishment, even from all punishment in this life, for there is no wrath mixed with any of their mercies or their chastisements; and from all punishment in the world to come, which will fall heavy on others; and that because Christ has bore their sins, and the wrath of God and curse of the law, due unto them, in their room and stead.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Thessalonians 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 THESSALONIANS 2

The apostle in this chapter gives a further account of his ministry among the Thessalonians, of the nature, manner, and success of it, and of his regard to them, and conduct and conversation when with them; and commends their readiness in receiving the Gospel, and excuses his present absence from them. He appeals to them themselves for the truth of it, that his entrance to them, or preaching among them, was not in vain and without success, **1Th 2:1** that it was with all boldness and intrepidity of mind, notwithstanding what he had suffered before for it, **1Th 2:2** and with all integrity and faithfulness to the trust reposed in him by the Lord, without deceit and guile, or seeking to please men, but God the searcher of hearts, who had committed this trust unto him, **1Th 2:3** and that neither then, nor at any other time, he had used flattery, or showed covetousness; which he calls God to witness, **1Th 2:5** nor of them or others sought glory and honour, even that which was due unto him by virtue of his office, **1Th 2:6** but had showed all gentleness, humanity, and, affection; which he illustrates by the simile of a nurse cherishing her children **1Th 2:7** and by the willingness he showed not only to preach the Gospel to them, but to lay down his life for them, had it been necessary; so great was his affection for them, **1Th 2:8** and, as a proof of this, he puts them in mind of his labours, both in preaching the word, and in working with his own hands; because he would not be burdensome and chargeable to them, **1Th 2:9** and as for his conversation among them, he appeals both to God and them, how holy, just, and unblemished it was, **1Th 2:10** and reminds them of his tenderness, diligence, and faithfulness, in exhorting, comforting, and charging them, particularly to walk worthy of God; since he had called them to his kingdom and glory, **1Th 2:11** and then he expresses his thankfulness to God for their reception of the worth of the Gospel; not as an human invention, but as of God, which wrought effectually in them, **1Th 2:13** the evidence of which were partly their imitation of the churches of Christ in Judea, in doctrine and practice; and partly their suffering the same things they did, of the Jews, **1Th 2:14** who are described by their ill usage of, and cruelty to, Christ, their own prophets, and his apostles, by their not pleasing God, and by their opposition to men; an instance of which is given in prohibiting the apostles to preach to the Gentiles, whose end in so doing with respect to the Gentiles, was that they might not be saved; but God's end in suffering them so to do, was with respect to them that they might fill up their iniquity, and so entire wrath and ruin come upon them, as had been foretold, **1Th 2:15** and then the apostle concludes the chapter, by expressing his affectionate concern in parting with them, which was not in heart but in body; by declaring his earnest desire and endeavour to see them again; and by observing to them the reason he had not and could not come unto them, because Satan hindered him, **1Th 2:17** the cause of his being so desirous to see them, was their being his hope, joy, glory, and crown of rejoicing, both now and hereafter, **1Th 2:19**.

Ver. 1. For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you,.... The apostle having observed in **1Th 1:9** that those persons to whom the report of the Gospel being preached at Thessalonica, and the success of it there was made, showed everywhere both what manner of entrance he and his fellow ministers had in that place, and the conversion of many souls there; he enlarges upon the latter, and here reassumes the former, and appeals to the Thessalonians themselves, who must know full well, and better than others, what an entrance it was; and which is to be understood not merely of a corporeal entrance into their city and synagogue, but of their coming among them, by the preaching of the Gospel, as the ministers of the word and ambassadors of Christ:

that it was not in vain; it was not a vain show with outward pomp and splendour, as the public entrances of ambassadors into cities usually are; but with great meanness, poverty, reproach, and persecution, having been lately beaten and ill used at Philippi; nor was it with great swelling words of vanity, with the enticing words of man's wisdom, to tickle the ear, please the fancy, and work upon the passions of natural men, in which manner the false teachers came: but the apostle came not with deceit and guile, with flattering words or a cloak of covetousness, or with a view to vain glory and worldly advantage; nor was the message they came with, from the King of kings, a vain, light, empty, and trifling one; but solid and substantial, and of the greatest importance; the doctrine they taught was not comparable to chaff and wind; it was not corrupt philosophy and vain deceit, the traditions and commandments of men, but sound doctrine, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ: nor was it fruitless and without effect; the word did not return void and empty; but was powerful and efficacious to the conversion of many souls. Christ was with them both to assist them in their ministry, and to bless it to the salvation of men; nor was their coming to Thessalonica an human scheme, a rash enterprise, engaged in on their own heads, on a slight and empty foundation; but upon good and solid grounds, by divine direction and counsel; see Ac 16:9.

1 Thessalonians 2:2

Ver. 2. But even after that we had suffered before,.... Before they came to Thessalonica, which they would not have done, had their ministry been a light and empty one in itself, and unprofitable to others; and especially had this been the case, they would never have rashly engaged in it again, and exposed themselves to fresh sufferings and dangers, as they did:

and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi; being beaten with many stripes, and put into prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, at the instigation of the masters of the damsel that had a spirit of divination, by whom they got much gain, and which Paul dispossessed; see Ac 16:16

we were bold in our God to speak unto you the Gospel of God with much contention: and which still made it more manifestly appear, that the errand they came upon was a matter of importance, and that they did not proceed on a slight foundation: what they spoke was "the Gospel", salvation by Christ, and not by the works of the law; the pure Gospel, and not a mixed one, free from the mixture of all human doctrines and inventions of men, without any adulteration and inconsistency; the whole of the Gospel, and not a part of it only; they declared the whole counsel of God, and kept back nothing that might be profitable: and this is styled the Gospel of God, to distinguish it from the Gospel of men, or that which the false teachers taught, and which was called the Gospel, though it was not so; and to express the excellency of it, from the author of it, who is God, it being the produce of his wisdom and grace; and from the matter of it, it containing the good will of God to men, setting forth the grace of God in election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and glorification, and expressing things relating to the kingdom of God, a meetness for it, and a right unto it; and it being so called shows it to be something divine, a message sent from God to sinful men; and gives a reason why the apostles were so bold to speak it, because it was not of men, but God. The Syriac version renders it the "Gospel of Christ"; see **Ro 1:16** and it being so, they "were bold to speak it"; or they spoke it both with liberty of mind, the Spirit of God being with them, and with freedom of speech, a door of utterance being opened for them; as also with great courage and intrepidity, notwithstanding what they had suffered before, and the ill treatment they had met with at Philippi; and though they knew that the Gospel they spoke was contrary to the Jews, was a stumblingblock to them, and they had an inveterate prejudice against it; and was foolishness to the Greeks, and was derided by them, and they were sure to meet with reproach and persecution on account of it: yet they boldly and faithfully preached it, fearing not the face of men, nor their revilings: though it was

with much contention; referring to the tumult raised by the baser sort, who, instigated by others, assaulted Jason and the brethren, where the apostles were, Ac 18:5 or to the disputes which they had with the unbelieving Jews, who contradicted and blasphemed what they said; or to the division the Gospel made, as through the corruption of nature it makes wherever it comes, between the nearest relations and friends, some being for it, and others against it; or this may be expressive of the zeal with which the apostles preached, who earnestly contended for it, as persons in a combat or agony; they fought the good fight of faith valiantly, they endured hardness as good soldiers of Christ, and gave not way to the enemy, no, not for an hour: and all this was "in our God"; or "by the confidence" of our God, as the Syriac version renders it; trusting in him and relying upon him, being assisted by his grace, and strengthened by his power, and receiving much encouragement from a view of him as a covenant God; faith in God as a covenant God, will make a man bold in his cause; see **Da 3:17**.

1 Thessalonians 2:3

Ver. 3. For our exhortation,.... Or "consolation"; for the ministry of the Gospel, which is here meant, consists of doctrines full of comfort to distressed minds, such as free justification by the righteousness of Christ, full pardon by his blood, and complete satisfaction by his sacrifice; as well as of exhortations to the exercise of grace and discharge of duty: and this was

not of deceit; or "error", was not "fallacious", as the Ethiopic version renders it; it consisted of nothing but truth, it was the word of truth, and the truth as it is in Jesus; nor did it proceed from any intention to deceive and impose on persons; it was no imposture:

nor of uncleanness; it did not spring from any impure affection for any sin, for popular applause, or worldly interest; nor did the ministers of it connive at uncleanness in others, or practise it themselves, as did the false teachers; but bore their testimony against it, both by word and example, and taught no doctrine that encouraged to it; but, on the contrary, the doctrine which is according to godliness, and which teaches men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts:

nor in guile; as there was no deceitful design in the ministry of the word, nor anything impure and immoral in the matter of it; so there was no artifice used in the dispensing of it; it was plain and simple, without any colour and guile, without the hidden things of dishonesty, without craftiness and handling the word deceitfully; and this is a reason why the apostles preached it with so much freedom and boldness, because there was nothing false, impure, or artful in it.

1 Thessalonians 2:4

Ver. 4. But as we were allowed of God,.... Or, "approved of God"; not that there were any previous fitness and worthiness in them to be ministers of the word; but such was the good will and pleasure of God, that he from all eternity chose and appointed them to this work; and in his own time by his grace called them to it, and by his gifts qualified them for it, who otherwise were unworthy of it, and insufficient for it:

to be put in trust with the Gospel; which is of great worth and value, a rich treasure, and of the last importance; which to be trusted with is a very great honour; and the discharge of such a trust requires great faithfulness, and which the apostles had:

even so we speak; the Gospel as delivered to them, both as to matter and manner; neither taking from it nor adding to it, nor mixing it with anything of their own, nor disguising it with any artifice:

not as pleasing men; to gain favour and affection, esteem, applause, and honour from them; to escape reproach and persecution, and obtain worldly advantages by dropping, concealing, or blending of truths to make them more agreeable to the taste of natural men:

but God, which trieth our hearts; studying to approve themselves to God, whose Gospel was committed to them, from whom they received gifts to preach it, and to whom they were accountable for all; and who being the searcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children of men, knows the intentions and designs of men, and the springs of all actions; and sees through all artifices, and from whom nothing can be hidden, and who will, in his own time, bring to light the hidden things of darkness; under a sense of which faithful ministers act, as of sincerity, and as in the sight of an omniscient God.

1 Thessalonians 2:5

Ver. 5. For neither at any time used we flattering words,.... To introduce them into the affections, and gain the esteem and good will of men; they did not in their ministry deliver such things as flattered men with a good opinion of themselves: they did not preach up the purity of human nature, but on the contrary the doctrine of original sin, the imputation of Adam's transgression to his posterity, and the corruption of all human nature; they asserted the universal pollution of it, of all men, and of all the powers and faculties of their souls, that they are all under the power and dominion of sin, are involved in the guilt of it, and are all guilty before God, and liable to everlasting wrath and punishment; and that unless they repented of their sins and believed in Christ, they would perish eternally; thus they dealt roundly and freely with men's consciences, and plainly, openly, and faithfully told them their case as it was: nor did they cry up the power of man's free will, which would have been grateful to Jews and Gentiles; but they declared the reverse, they asserted the weakness and impotency of man, to anything that is spiritually good; and represented him as a weak and strengthless creature, and unable to do anything, even to think a good thought of himself; and ascribed all that a man is, or has, or does, that is good, to the grace and power of God, who works in him both to will and to do: nor did they plead for the sufficiency of man's righteousness to justify him before God, a doctrine very pleasing to human nature; but, on the contrary, they gave out that there was none righteous, no, not one of the sons of Adam, in and of themselves, or by virtue of any righteousness of their own; so far from it that they were full of all unrighteousness, and were not capable of working out a righteousness, or of attaining to the righteousness of the law; that what they did pretend to was not a justifying righteousness, and would give no right and title to eternal glory; and that the righteousness of Christ was the only righteousness, by which a man could be justified from all things, and in which he could be found safe. They did not blend and mix their doctrine to suit with the tastes of different men, but with all sincerity and plainness preached the truth, as it is in Jesus; they did not connive at the sins of men, cry Peace, Peace, when there was none, or sow pillows under their armholes, or promise them life, though they should not return from their wicked way; but they with great freedom inveighed against the sins of men, and exhorted them to repentance and reformation, as well as to faith in Christ for pardon and righteousness; nor did they wink at the sins of professors, or of one another, the Apostle Paul withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed; and when they praised men for their gifts and graces, and the exercise of them, they took care to ascribe them to the grace of God, and give him the glory, and prevent men from boasting in themselves; in short, they acted the reverse of the false teachers, who had men's persons in admiration because of advantage, and by good words and fair speeches deceived the hearts of the simple; but so did not the apostles of Christ, no, never, not "at any time": when they first came to Thessalonica during their stay there, either in public or in private: and though this was true of any other time and place, yet here must be confined to this, since the apostle appeals to this church for the truth of what he said,

as ye know; for flattering words may be discerned; a flatterer is known by his words; though in general such is the weakness of human nature, that men love to be flattered, though they know they are:

nor a cloak of covetousness; or "an occasion of" it, they did not take the opportunity or advantage by the ministry of the word, to indulge a covetous disposition, or to amass wealth and riches to themselves; or an "excuse" for covetousness, which covetous men are never at a loss to make, always pretending one thing or another to hide and cover their evil; but the apostles made no excuses, nor used any cloak, nor needed any to cover their covetousness, because they had not the thing; they did not pretend one thing and mean another; they did not, as the false apostles did, pretend to serve Christ, preach his Gospel, seek the glory of God and the good of souls, and mean themselves, and design their own worldly advantage; they did not make these a "pretence" for covetousness, they sincerely served Christ, faithfully preached his Gospel, truly sought the glory of God, and were heartily concerned for the good of souls without any mercenary and selfish views; for the truth of which they could appeal to the heart searching and rein-trying God, as the apostle here does, saying,

God is witness; which is properly an oath, a solemn appeal to God; for since covetousness is an internal and secret sin, and may be so coloured and disguised as not easily to be discerned, as flattering words may, the apostle therefore calls God to witness the truth of what he had said.

1 Thessalonians 2:6

Ver. 6. Nor of men sought we glory,.... Honour, esteem, and popular applause; for though there is an honour that is due to the faithful ministers of the word, who are highly to be esteemed for their works' sake, and as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God; and especially there was an honour and glory that belonged to the apostles of Christ as such, who were set in the highest office and place in the church; yet they did not seek after it as the Pharisees and false teachers did, who received honour one of another, and sought not that which comes from God only: but so did not the apostles; they took no steps this way to procure glory and esteem among men, but all the reverse; they preached doctrines which were not of men, nor according to men, nor agreeable to them; and these they delivered in a disagreeable way, not with enticing words of men's wisdom, they did not seek to please men, but spoke and did everything that rendered them mean and despicable in their eyes; so that they looked upon them as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things: nor was this any disappointment to them, for to gain the favour of men was not their end and view; they did not seek for glory neither of the men of the world,

neither of you; the church at Thessalonica, and the inhabitants of that place:

nor yet of others; of other men, and churches elsewhere:

when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ: or "have used authority", which was given them, though not for destruction, but for edification; put on a magisterial air, and made use of the apostolic rod; appeared with some severity and rigour, and so have commanded awe, respect, and reverence: or "have been in honour"; insisted upon being treated in an honourable way, as the apostles of Christ, his ambassadors, who were sent and came in his name, and represented his person; and therefore to be received as he himself; though the phrase may rather have regard to an honourable maintenance, as in 2Co 11:9 which as the apostles of Christ they might have required as their due, but they chose rather to relinquish their right, and labour with their own hands, that they might not be chargeable: and so "glory" in the former clause may mean the same, even great and glorious things for themselves, a maintenance answerable to their high character and office, which they did not seek; but were content with a poor pittance, and such as they could get with their own hand labour; in which sense the phrase, "double honour", seems to be used in **1Ti 5:17** as appears by the reason given in the next verse.

1 Thessalonians 2:7

Ver. 7. But we were gentle among you,.... Meek and humble, mild and moderate; not using severity, or carrying it in a haughty imperious manner; assuming power and dominion, lording it over God's heritage, and commanding persons to do homage and honour to them, and forcing themselves upon them, and obliging them to maintain them. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, instead of "gentle", read, "little children"; as the word signifies, by adding a letter to it, and expresses much the same as the other, that they were harmless and modest, and disinterested; and sought not themselves neither honour nor wealth, but the real good of others, and were kind and tender, and affectionate to them:

even as a nurse cherisheth her children: or "the children of her own self"; her own children, and so designs a nursing mother, one whose the children are, has bore them as well as nurses them, and therefore has the most tender concern for them; she lays them in her bosom, and hugs them in her arms, and so warms and cherishes them; gives them the breast, bears with their frowardness, condescends to do the meanest things for them; and that without any self-interest, from a pure parental affection for them: and such were the apostles to these Thessalonians; they were their spiritual parents, of whom they travailed in birth, till Christ was formed in them; they used them with the greatest kindness and tenderness; they fed them with the sincere milk of the word; they bore patiently all the slighting and ill treatment they met with; and condescended to men of low estates, and did them all the good offices they could, without any selfish views or sinister ends: a like simile is used by the Jews {e}, who say, "he that rises in the night to study in the law, the law makes known to him his offences; and not in a way of judgment, but amak, as a mother makes known to her son, "with gentle words":"

but the ministration of the Gospel is much more gentle.

{e} Zohar in Lev. fol. 10. 2.

1 Thessalonians 2:8

Ver. 8. So being affectionately desirous of you,.... Not of theirs but them; not of glory from them, nor a maintenance by them, but of their spiritual and eternal welfare; were as fond of them as a nursing mother is of her children, who, when absent from them but ever so little a while, longs to see them; see **1Th 2:17** and **1Th 3:1**,

we were willing: took the utmost pleasure, delight, and complacency:

to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only; the sincere milk of the word, which they did freely, fully, and for their spiritual good and profit, without any regard to any advantage of their own:

but also our own souls, or "lives"; which is the highest expression and strongest proof of love that can be given; and respect is still had to the similitude of the nursing mother, who may be said to impart her blood, for such it her milk diversified, for the nourishment of her children: and such was the great concern of the apostles for the interest of Christ, the spread of the Gospel, and the good of souls, that their lives were not dear unto them, so that these ends might he answered: because ye were dear unto us; both because they were loved by God, redeemed by Christ, regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, and had the image of Christ stamped upon them; and also because that they were their spiritual children; and as children are dear to their parents, so were these to them, even to such a degree, as that, were there a necessity for it, they could freely have laid down their lives for them.

1 Thessalonians 2:9

Ver. 9. For ye remember brethren, our labour and travail,.... The great pains they took, even to weariness. The Vulgate Latin version renders the last word, "weariness"; and the Arabic version, "anxiety"; and the Ethiopic version, "affliction"; it is to be understood both of corporeal and spiritual labour, working with their hands and preaching the Gospel; this could not but be remembered by them, since it was not a year ago they were with them:

for labouring night and day; at our handicraft, or "at the work of our hands", as the Syriac version renders it; which they continually attended to, even night and day, when they were not preaching the Gospel, or disputing with the Jews, or praying and conversing with those that believed, or refreshing themselves with food and rest. The apostle's business was making of tents, See Gill on "Ac 18:3",

because we would not be chargeable to any of you; neither to the whole body, nor to any single person; which shows that they did not seek their own ease and worldly interest; and proves what is before asserted, that they did not use a cloak of covetousness, but chose to forego, and not insist on what they had a right to, lest the Gospel should be hindered or reproached:

we preached unto you the Gospel of God; freely and with great application and diligence; for this is the other part of their labour and travel; for the ministry of the word is a work, and a laborious one, when closely attended to; a preparation for it by prayer, reading, meditation, and much study, are wearisome and fatiguing; and to preach the word in season and out of season, with all longsuffering and doctrine, is very laborious; to which no man is sufficient of himself, and is a work which requires great faithfulness, application, and industry; and is oftentimes made the more heavy through the malice and opposition of enemies, and the weakness of friends.

1 Thessalonians 2:10

Ver. 10. Ye are witnesses, and God also,.... Not so much to what goes before as to what follows after, relating to their holy walk and conversation among them, the more open part of which they were witness of; and for the more secret part God is appealed to, who is acquainted with the springs of actions, as well as with actions themselves:

how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe. The Syriac version joins the last clause of the preceding verse with this, and reads the whole thus, "ye are witnesses, and God also, how purely and justly we preached unto you the Gospel of God, and how unblamable we were among all that believed"; referring the former part to the purity and integrity in which they preached the Gospel, and the latter to their unblemished conduct among the saints; but the whole of it refers to their conversation, which was holy, externally holy, arising from internal principles of holiness in their hearts, and free from that impurity and filthiness with which the false teachers were polluted; and confirms what is before said, that their exhortation was not of uncleanness: and it was likewise "just", they were righteous in the sight of God through the justifying righteousness of Christ, and in consequence of this lived righteously before men, and were injurious to no man's person nor property: and their conversation was also "unblamable"; not that they were, without sin, and so without blame in themselves, or without the commission of sin by them, or that they passed without censure in the world, for they went through honour and dishonour, through good report and bad report, and had all manner of evil spoken of them falsely for Christ's name's sake; but by the grace of God, they had their conversation among them that believed so, that there was nothing material to be alleged against them, or any just cause of blame to be laid either on their persons or their ministry; and which is mentioned for imitation.

1 Thessalonians 2:11

Ver. 11. As you know,.... This is added to the end of the last verse in the Arabic version, and which begins this verse thus, "as one of you, and as a father comforting his sons, so we", &c. but for what is said in the former verse, an appeal is made both to God and to the Thessalonians, so that there is no need of adding such a clause there; it properly stands here in connection with what follows,

how we exhorted; to flee from wrath to come, and to Christ for refuge; to look to, and believe in him, as the only Saviour of lost sinners; to perform the duties of religion, and to continue in the faith; to cleave to Christ, and walk on in him as they had received him, and to abide by the truths and ordinances of the Gospel they had embraced:

and comforted; under a sense of sin, with the soul comforting doctrines of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, of full pardon by his blood, and of a plenary satisfaction and atonement by his sacrifice; and under all their afflictions and persecutions for the sake of Christ, with exceeding great and precious promises of the presence, grace, and strength of Christ here, and glory hereafter:

and charged everyone of you; not only publicly, but privately, going from house to house; not in an austere and domineering way, but with the greatest tenderness, and yet faithfulness: even

as a father doth his children; not only in an authoritative, but in an affectionate way, and also with solid wisdom and judgment; for in such a relation, in a Spiritual sense, did the apostle and his fellow ministers stand in to them; see **1Co 4:15** and the substance of the charge is as follows:

1 Thessalonians 2:12

Ver. 12. That ye would walk worthy of God,.... In imitation of him; not of his perfections, which are inimitable, but of his works; and these not of his power and wisdom, but those of kindness and beneficence, and of righteousness and holiness; and in conformity to his revealed will, which is good, perfect, and acceptable; and agreeably to his Gospel, that that may be adorned, and not blasphemed; and particularly, in a manner worthy of the calling wherewith saints are called by him: since it follows,

who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory; which instance of the grace of God carries in it many arguments, and lays many obligations on the persons interested in it, to walk in their lives and conversations worthy of God; which may be taken from the nature of this call, which is not a mere external one by the outward ministry of the word, but an internal and effectual one, by the powerful and efficacious grace of God; it is a call of persons out of darkness into light, and therefore it becomes them to walk as children of the light, and honestly, as in the daytime; and from a state of bondage to sin and Satan, unto liberty, and therefore ought not to walk after the dictates of corrupt nature, nor the suggestions of Satan, but after the Spirit of God, who is a spirit of liberty; and from fellowship with the world, and the men of it, to communion with Christ, and therefore should not walk as other Gentiles do, nor run with them in the same excess of riot; in short, such are called with an holy calling, and to holiness, and have in their effectual calling principles of holiness implanted in them, and therefore should be holy in all manner of conversation: moreover, arguments may be taken from the consideration of him that calls, God, who is a holy Being, and therefore as he that hath called them is holy, so should they be likewise; he is the God of all grace that has called them, and he has called them by his grace, and to special blessings of grace, and that according to his sovereign will and pleasure; and has called them the most unworthy, base, mean, and despicable, and not others, which greatly enhances the obligation to walk worthy of him: to which add, that he that calls is God that dwells on high in heaven, and changes not, and such is his call; hence it is styled the high calling of God, and the heavenly calling, and said to be without repentance; and therefore the saints should live and walk as pilgrims and strangers here, and be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord: likewise the consideration of what they are called to should engage them to a becoming walk, being called "to his kingdom"; to the kingdom of grace, which lies in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and which cannot be moved, and where they are kings and priests unto God; and unto a Gospel church state, and to all the privileges and immunities of it; and unto the kingdom of heaven, prepared by God for them from the foundation of the world, their Father's free gift to them, of which they are born heirs apparent in regeneration, and have both a meetness for it, and a right unto it; and therefore ought to behave suitable to this high honour and dignity which belong unto them: and this latter sense is the rather to be chose, since it follows, "and glory": or "to his glory", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; to the glory of God, to the beholding of the glory of God through Christ, and the glory of Christ himself; and to a participation of that glory which God has provided, and is in the hands of Christ for them, where it is hid, who when he shall appear, they will appear with him in glory; which will be both upon their souls and bodies; and this will be an eternal glory, a glory that fades not away, and not like the glory of this world, which is transient, and soon passes away, but this will abide for ever; and therefore since the saints are called to the obtaining of this, it is a reason why their conversation should be in heaven now, and as becomes God and his Gospel.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Ver. 13. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing,.... As for their election of God, **1Th 1:4** so for their effectual calling by his grace, to his kingdom and glory, just now mentioned, as well as for their reception of the word of God as such, hereafter expressed; since their having it and receiving it, and the effectual operation of it in them, were owing to the goodness and grace of God, and therefore required a constant sense of the favour, and thankfulness, without ceasing, for it. The apostle having at large considered the manner of his and his fellow ministers' entrance among them without guile, flattery, covetousness, or any sinister view, and with all simplicity, integrity, labour, diligence, affection, and tenderness, returns to observe the reception their ministry met with, and the influence and effect it had upon them:

because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us; or "the word of hearing of God", as the Vulgate Latin version from the Greek text literally renders it; that is, the Gospel which was preached by the apostles, and was heard and received by these Thessalonians: and it is called the word of God, because God is the author of it; it comes from him, and is ministered by his authority, and is a part of that written word which is given by his inspiration; and because his grace in choosing, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, adopting, regenerating, and giving eternal life to men, and the declaration of his will concerning saving them by his Son Jesus Christ, are the subject matter of it; and because he owns and blesses it, for the conversion and comfort of his people: and it may be called the word of hearing of God, because coming from him, and containing his will, and preached by his order, and succeeded by his power, hearing comes by it; it is divinely breathed by him; he speaks in it by his ministers, and he is heard of in it by his people; as he was by these believers, who heard his word both externally and internally; and received it into their understandings, so as to know it spiritually and experimentally; into their minds, not merely notionally, and so as to assent to the truth of it, and give credit to it, but so as to believe in Christ revealed in it; and into their affections, in the love of it, and with joy in the Holy Ghost; they received it gladly, and with meekness and readiness, so that it became the ingrafted word, and brought forth fruit in them: the manner in which they received it follows,

ye received it not as the word of men: which is often fallacious and deceitful, at least dubious and uncertain, and not to be depended on; nor did they receive it as the words of wise men are received, and because it was clothed with the wisdom, eloquence, and oratory of men, for it was destitute of these; nor upon the credit and authority of men, no, not of the apostles themselves:

but as it is in truth the word of God: it appearing to be agreeably to the perfections of his nature, and to the Scriptures of truth, and it bearing his impress and divine authority, they received it with much assurance and certainty, as infallible truth; and which was inviolably to be adhered to, without any alteration, without adding to it or taking from it; and to be had and retained in the greatest esteem and reverence, and never to be departed from: and that they received it in this manner, appears from its operation in them,

which effectually worketh also in you that believe: the Vulgate Latin version reads, "who worketh"; referring it to God, as indeed it may be referred to him, as well as to his word; but the sense is much the same, for God works by and with his word, and his word only effectually works when it comes in power; or is the power of God unto salvation to them that believe; and when it does come with a divine commission and power, it effectually works to the quickening of dead sinners, the enlightening of dark minds, the unstopping of deaf ears, the softening of hard hearts, producing faith which works by love, encouraging hope, delivering from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law, and comforting and establishing the hearts of the saints under all afflictions, trials, and persecutions.

1 Thessalonians 2:14

Ver. 14. For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God,.... As of the Lord and of the apostle, **1Th 1:6** so of the churches of God that were before them, who were gathered out of the world by the grace of God; and who were united in the fear of God, and assembled together for his worship, to bear a testimony to his truth and ordinances, and for the glory of his name: these they followed in the faith and order of the Gospel, and "became like" them, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render the word; or "equal" to them, were upon an equal foot with them, as the Arabic; that is, in suffering reproach and persecution for the Gospel, as the latter part of the verse shows; and their bearing these with patience, courage, and constancy, was a proof that the word of God had a place, and wrought effectually in them; otherwise they would never have endured such things as they did, and as other churches did:

which in Judea are in Christ Jesus; for besides the church at Jerusalem, there were many churches in Judea and Galilee; see **Ac 9:31** which shows that the primitive churches were not national, but congregational: and these were in Christ Jesus; "in the faith" of Jesus Christ, as the Arabic version renders it; which distinguishes them from the synagogues, or congregations of the Jews, which did not believe in Christ; See Gill on "1Th 1:1".

For ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen; the inhabitants of Thessalonica, the baser sort of them, who were stirred up by the unbelieving Jews of that place, to make an uproar in the city, and assault the house of Jason, in order to seize upon the apostles; see Ac 17:6.

Even as they have of the Jews; in like manner as the churches of Judea suffered by the Jews their countrymen; see **Ac 8:1**
Heb 10:32.

1 Thessalonians 2:15

Ver. 15. Who both killed the Lord Jesus,.... For though Pilate condemned him to death, and the Roman soldiers executed the sentence, yet it was through the malice and envy of the Jews that he was delivered to him, who brought charges against him, and insisted upon the crucifixion of him; and who are therefore said to have taken him with wicked hands, and crucified and slain him; and to have killed the Prince of life, and to have been the betrayers and murderers of him; and therefore it is no wonder that such persons should persecute the followers of Christ, whether in Judea or elsewhere:

and their own prophets; whom God sent unto them; these they not only mocked and misused, and persecuted, but many of them they put to death, as Isaiah and others; and though this was done by their fathers, yet the present generation were the children of them that killed the prophets; and showed themselves to be of the same principles, and by their practices approved of what they had done: hence our Lord addresses the city of Jerusalem thus, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets", Mt 23:31. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the phrase "their own", and so does the Alexandrian copy; but it stands in the Syriac and Arabic versions, and is rightly retained, it having an emphasis in it; these prophets being of their own nation, born among them, and raised up in the midst of them, and sent unto them particularly, and yet were so used; and therefore it need not seem strange that they should treat in an ill manner persons of a lower character, that did not agree with them; the consideration of which serves to support under reproach and persecution; see **Mt 5:12**.

And have persecuted us; the apostles of Christ; have drove us out of our own country, and pursued us from place to place, and caused us to flee from one city to another:

and they please not God: though they reckoned themselves his chosen people, the favourites of heaven, and whom God delighted in; but neither their persons nor their actions were pleasing to him, their carnal minds being enmity to him, to his law and to his Gospel; and they in the flesh, or in an unregenerate estate, and without faith in Christ, without which it is impossible to please God, and their actions such as before described:

and are contrary to all men; not only Christians, but Heathens; to all the Gentiles, who are called all men, the nations of the world, the world, and the whole world; they were contrary to these, both in their religious and civil principles, and had an aversion to them, of which the following is a full instance.

1 Thessalonians 2:16

Ver. 16. Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved,.... Speaking or preaching the Gospel is the ordinary means of saving souls, or of acquainting them with the way of salvation, the necessity of it, and of the application of it to them, and with this end and view it is preached: now though the Jews disbelieved the Gospel, and despised the ministry of it, and disavowed any such use and end of it, yet such was their envy at the Gentiles, and their hatred of them, that could they have believed it to be the means of salvation, they would have forbidden the preaching of it to them, as they now did; and it is certain, that even the believing Jews, through ignorance, did at first disapprove of the ministry of the word to the Gentiles; see Ac 11:1 such was the aversion of that nation to all others, and which perfectly agrees with their general sentiments, which forbid the explanation of the law to the Gentiles; and therefore it need not be wondered at, that they should do all that in them lay to hinder the entrance and spread of the Gospel among them, of which take the following proof {f}:

"whoever has not the holy name sealed and bound in his flesh (i.e. is not circumcised) atyrwad hlm hyl aedwal
ryoa "it is forbidden to make known to him a word of the law", and much less to study in it--and whoever is not circumcised, and they give to him atyrwad ryuz ta, "the least thing in the law", it is as if he destroyed the world, and dealt falsely with the name of God--Hillell and Shammai did not make known to Onkelos a word of the law, until he was circumcised--and the traditions are, that even though a man is circumcised, yet if he does not do the commands of the law, lo, he is as a Gentile in all things, and "it is forbidden to teach him the words of the law":"

nay, it is a rule with the Jews {g}, that

"if a Gentile studies in the law, he is guilty of death:"

and thus were they left in providence, to judicial blindness and hardness of heart, to fill up their sins alway; the measure of their own and their fathers' iniquities; see Mt 23:32 a phrase expressive of the abounding of their sins, and of their being under a divine appointment, and of their being limited and restrained by a divine power, and overruled by infinite wisdom, to answer some ends and purposes of God's glory;

for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost: which is to be understood, not of their wrath and fury being come to its highest degree and pitch against the followers of Christ, but of "the wrath of God", as the Vulgate Latin version and Beza's ancient copy express it; and designs not so much "eternal punishment", as the Ethiopic version renders the phrase, or everlasting wrath and damnation on the reprobate part of that people, as temporal ruin and destruction, which was now near at hand, and hung over their heads; and therefore is said to be come to them, and which in a little time fell upon their nation and city, and temple, even to the uttermost, to the last degree; and was, as the Arabic version renders it, "wrath consuming"; or "the consummation, and that determined poured upon the desolate", spoken of in **Da 9:27** and which, as it is come upon them, will remain "unto the end", as the phrase may also be rendered; unto the end of the world, until the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in, and then God's elect among the Jews shall obtain mercy, and be called, and so all Israel shall be saved, Ro 11:25.

{f} Zohar in Lev. fol. 30. 2, 3. {g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 59. 1. Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 10. sect. 9.

1 Thessalonians 2:17

Ver. 17. But we, brethren, being taken from you,.... Here more properly should begin the third chapter, in which the apostle having before observed the manner of his entrance among these people, the nature of his ministry, the reception the word of God met with among them, and the powerful effect it had upon them, insomuch that they patiently and cheerfully bore persecution for the sake of it; he excuses his not having been with them again as yet, which he knew was proper and necessary, as he was their apostle and spiritual father; and expresses an affectionate concern at his parting with them in the manner he did, which was not his own choice and voluntary act, but was obliged to it, being hurried away at once, at an unawares in the night, by reason of the uproar made in the city by the baser sort of people, instigated by the unbelieving Jews; so that he and his fellow ministers had not the opportunity of taking their leave of them, as they would have done: hence he says, we being taken from you; they were, as it were, passive in it; they were forced away on a sudden, they did not go of themselves; the word used is very uncommon and emphatical, and may be literally rendered, "we being orphanized from you"; which represents this parting to be like the separation made by death, between parents and children; when either parents are deprived of their children, or children of their parents, and are left orphans or fatherless; and just in such a destitute and desolate condition were the apostle and his companions in, in their account; nor need it to be wondered at, when they are before compared to a nursing mother and a tender father, as they were to these their spiritual children: and he further observes, that this removal from them, was

for a short time, or "for the time of an hour"; which may either denote the suddenness of it, being as it were at an hour's warning, having no more notice of it than for the space of an hour; or it may express the great affection he and his fellow ministers had for them, insomuch that they could not bear an absence from them, though but for an hour; or it may be said by way of comfort, that this parting was but for a short time, and that in a little while they might hope to see them again; and if not in this life, yet in the future state, when they should meet and never part more, and which would be but in a short time at longest: moreover, this separation was only

in presence; in person, in face, in sight, in body, it was but a corporeal one: not in heart; the apostle's heart was with them, as much as if present; they were always in his mind, and remembered by him, at the throne; he had as it were the images of them continually before him, as parents have of their children when at a distance from them; his heart was after them, and his affections moved strongly towards them: and the effect this distance had on him, and those that were with him, was this, that they

endeavoured the more abundantly, he observes,

to see your face with great desire; it made them but the more desirous of seeing them face to face again, and put them upon attempting with more abundant earnestness and diligence to come and see them.

1 Thessalonians 2:18

Ver. 18. Wherefore we would have come unto you,.... They not only had a will, and purposed in themselves, and entered into some resolutions to come unto them, but endeavoured to put them into execution:

even I Paul: as well as Silas and Timothy; the latter of which had been with them, and the others had as good a will, and especially Paul: and that

once and again: or "once and twice" so the Jews used {h} to speak xyynvw hnwvar Mep, "one time and a second"; that is, several times:

but Satan hindered us. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "hindered me"; by moving the mob which rose at Thessalonica, to go to Berea, and disturb the apostle there; which obliged him, contrary to his will, to go to Athens instead of returning to Thessalonica, as he intended; and when at Athens, from whence also he might purpose to return thither, he was hindered by the disputes the Jews and the Stoics, and Epicurean philosophers, had with him; and after that, might be prevented by the lying in wait of the Jews for him, of which he might be informed; or by disturbances raised in the church, or churches where he was, by the false teachers; which required his stay with them, to oppose and refute error and heresy and to make up differences that arose among true Christians, fomented by Satan and his emissaries; see **Ro 1:13**. Satan does all he can to hinder the preaching of the Gospel, the hearing of the word, the profession of religion, and the saints coming together, and having spiritual conversation with each other; being, as his name "Satan" signifies, an enemy to Christ and his interest, and to the souls of men: indeed he can do nothing but by divine permission, nor can he hinder the will of God, and the execution of that, though he often hinders the will of man, or man from doing his will; he hindered the apostle from doing what he willed and purposed, but he did not hinder the will of God, which was that Paul should be employed in other work elsewhere.

{h} Maimon. in Hilch. Chobel, c. 5. sect. 10.

1 Thessalonians 2:19

Ver. 19. For what is our hope, or joy,.... The apostle here gives a reason why they were so concerned at parting with the Thessalonians, and were so desirous of seeing them again, and attempted it so often, cause they were their "hope"; not the foundation of it, which was Christ; nor the thing hoped for, which was eternal life; nor the ground of their hope, which was the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; but they were persons whom they hoped well of, and of whom their hope was steadfast; as of their election of God, of their redemption by Christ, of their effectual calling, of their perseverance in faith and holiness, notwithstanding all reproach and persecution; and of meeting the Lord, and being together with him for ever: and they were also their "joy"; their conversion was a matter of joy to them, because of the glory of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, displayed therein; because of the abundant grace bestowed on these persons; and because that hereby the kingdom of Satan was weakened, and the kingdom of Christ enlarged and his churches increased and beautified; and their own ministry was blessed and confirmed, and their hearts and hands strengthened, and they encouraged to go on in it: and they continued to be their joy, inasmuch as they stood fast in the Lord, walked on in the truth, and had their conversations as became the Gospel of Christ; and they were persuaded would be their joy hereafter, at the second coming of Christ; when they should give up their account of them with joy, and not with grief: and it is added,

or crown of rejoicing; or of "glorying", or "boasting"; not that they gloried in them, for they gloried not in men, but in the Lord, in his righteousness, riches, wisdom, strength, and grace, in the person, blood, and cross of Christ; but they gloried of them, as trophies of divine grace, as a prey taken out of the hand of the mighty, and as lawful captives delivered from the power of Satan, and of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ. The Alexandrian copy reads, as we render it,

crown of rejoicing: which is but a stronger phrase, to press the joy they had in their conversion and perseverance, in allusion to crowns wore at times of rejoicing, as at marriage feasts, and the like: hence we read {i} of the crowns of the bridegrooms, and of the brides, which were forbidden the use of in the war of Vespasian; the latter were made of gold, in the form of the city of Jerusalem, and from thence called golden cities {k}; and the former, some say, were made of salt and sulphur, to put them in mind of the destruction of the Sodomites, for their unnatural lusts {l}; others of a salt stone as clear as crystal, or of the stone Bdellium, painted in the colour of sulphur {m}; and some were made of myrtles and roses, but in the war of Vespasian only those made of reeds were used {n}; these crowns at weddings seem to be the "beautiful crowns" in
Eze 23:42 where the Septuagint use the same phrase as here,
stefanon kauchsewv, "a crown of rejoicing", or "glorying": the Hebrew phrase trapt trje, may be rendered "a crown of glory", as the phrase here is by the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions; but does not mean the crown of glory, life, righteousness, and immortality, the apostle expected at the hands of Christ

another day; nor that his being an instrument of the conversion of these persons was the ground of such an expectation, or was what entitled him to such a crown; since he knew that conversion work was owing to the powerful grace of God, and the crown of eternal life was his free gift; but that it would be an honour to him, and give him abundant joy and pleasure at the coming of Christ, to be encircled with such a number of souls he had been useful to, and who were his spiritual children; just as children's children are the crown of old men, Pr 17:6 all this is put by way of question, which strongly affirms,

are not even ye; or "ye also", as well as others, as the Corinthians and Philippians; see **2Co 1:7**.

In the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? to judge the quick and dead, when both they and these should meet him, and stand before him with confidence, being clothed with his righteousness, and clad with robes of immortality and glory.

{i} Misna Sota. c. 9. sect. 14. {k} Maimon. in Misna Sota, & in Sabbat, c. 6. sect. 1. {l} Ez Hechaim M. S. apud Wagenseil in Sota ib. {m} Bartenora in Misna Sota, c. 9. sect. 14. {n} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 49. 2.

1 Thessalonians 2:20

Ver. 20. For ye are our glory and joy. Or "our joy", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; this is a repetition, and a confirmation of what is before said; and signifies that these saints were then the glory of the apostles, being the seals of their ministry; and whom they gloried of and rejoiced in, and hoped and believed they would be such, as would be their joy and crown in time to come, and for ever.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Thessalonians 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 THESSALONIANS 3

In this chapter the apostle expresses his great love to the Thessalonians, by sending Timothy to then, to establish and comfort them; and declares his satisfaction with the things he brought of them, and concludes the chapter with fervent prayers for them: such was his affection for them, that he chose rather to be left alone at Athens, and send Timothy to them, though so very dear and useful to him, as his characters show, to the end that they might be established and comforted, **1Th 3:2** and not be shaken with the afflictions the apostles met with, seeing these were no other than what God had appointed them to; and besides, they had been apprized of them before hand by the apostle, **1Th 3:3** but however, lest Satan should get an advantage of them, the apostle could not be easy without sending to know how things stood with them, **1Th 3:5** next he proceeds to give an account of the success of this mission, and the satisfaction it gave him and his fellow ministers to hear of their faith and charity, their remembrance of them, and desire to see them, **1Th 3:6** which comforted them under their afflictions, made them lively and cheerful, filled them with joy and thankfulness, and put them upon praying to God to see their face, and perfect what was lacking in their faith, **1Th 3:7** and then follow the petitions themselves, which are made both to God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that their way might be directed to them, that they might increase and abound in love to one another, and to all men, as they did to them, and that God would establish them in holiness in his sight, at the coming of Christ, **1Th 3:11**.

Ver 1. Wherefore when we could no longer forbear,.... Or "bear", as the word properly signifies; or "bear that", as the Ethiopic version reads; that is, "that desire", as the Arabic version renders it; that ardent and longing desire of seeing them again, expressed in the latter part of the preceding chapter; which was as fire in their bones, and was retained with great pain and uneasiness; but now they could hold it no longer, and like Jeremiah, Jer 20:9 were weary with forbearing, and could not stay; or it was like a burden, which they stood up under as long as they could, even Paul, Silas, and Timothy, but now it became insupportable:

we thought it good to be left at Athens alone: that is, Paul and Silas, or Paul only, speaking of himself in the plural number; for he seems to have been alone at Athens, at least at last; he considering everything, thought it most fit and advisable when at Athens, where he waited for Silas and Timothy, having ordered them to come thither to him from Berea, Ac 17:14 either to send orders to Berea for Timothy to go from thence to Thessalonica, to know the state of affairs there, and Silas elsewhere; or if they came to him to Athens, of which Luke gives no account, he immediately dispatched Timothy to Thessalonica, and Silas to some other part of Macedonia, for from thence they came to him at Corinth, Ac 18:5 such was his desire of knowing how things were at Thessalonica, that he chose rather to be left alone at Athens, disputing with the unbelieving Jews, and Heathen philosophers of the Epicurean and Stoic sects, sustaining all their scoffs and jeers alone; and was content to be without his useful companions, Silas and Timothy, who might have been assisting to him at Athens, in hope of hearing of his dear friends at Thessalonica.

1 Thessalonians 3:2

Ver. 2. And sent Timotheus our brother,.... In a spiritual relation, having the same heavenly Father, and belonging to the same Jerusalem, which is free, and the mother of us all; of the same household and in the same relation to Christ, the firstborn among many brethren; or their brother in the ministry, who was employed in the same business, and did the same work they did; or he is so called, on account of that strict and intimate friendship which subsisted between them, by virtue of which they stuck as close as brethren, or closer to one another than brethren usually do:

and minister of God; of his making, and not man's; of his calling and sending, and of his blessing and succeeding; and who was a minister of the things of God, of the mysteries of God, of the truths of his Gospel; and who ministered according to the ability God gave him, and was faithful to him:

and our fellow labourer in the Gospel of Christ; he was a labourer, and not a loiterer in the Lord's vineyard; one that laboured in the word and doctrine, that studied to show himself a workman, that gave himself wholly to meditation, reading, exhortation, and doctrine, and preached the word in season and out of season and was a fellow labourer with him who laboured more abundantly than any of the apostles; and not in the law, but in the Gospel, even in the Gospel of Christ, of which he is the sum and substance, author and preacher. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out these words, and so do Beza's ancient copy and the Alexandrian manuscript, "and our fellow labourers", reading the latter part of the clause in connection with the former thus, "a minister of God in the Gospel of Christ", as the former of these versions, "in the doctrine of Christ", as the latter. These characters are given of Timothy, partly to show what honour was done the Thessalonians, in sending such a messenger to them; and partly that they might receive him with the greater respect, and treat him according to his character, office, and dignity; and chiefly to observe to them the apostle's great affection for them, in parting with so dear and useful a minister for their good and advantage, as follows:

to establish you; which though the work of God, it is usually done by the ministry of the word; and then is the end of the Gospel ministration answered to the churches, when they are established by it; for notwithstanding the saints are in a stable condition, as in the arms of love, and in the hands of Christ, and in the covenant of grace, and upon the rock of ages, and in a state of regeneration, justification, and adoption, from whence they can never fall totally and finally; yet they are often very unstable in their hearts and frames, in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, and in their adherence to the cause and interest, Gospel and ordinances of Christ, through the prevalence of corruption, the temptations of Satan, and the reproaches and persecutions of men: and these Thessalonians were young converts, and just planted together as a church; and at their first setting out, sustained a considerable shock of afflictions, which made the apostle concerned for their establishment in the faith which they had received:

and to comfort you concerning your faith. This is another end of the Gospel ministry, to comfort afflicted minds, and distressed consciences; it is the will of God that his people should be spoke comfortably to; the doctrines of the Gospel are calculated for that purpose, and the ministers of it should be Barnabases, sons of consolation. These saints might be in some doubt about the grace of faith, whether it was right or not, or about the doctrine of faith they had received; and therefore Timothy is sent to comfort them under their afflictions, which might have created these doubts, and to remove them, by showing them that their faith was like precious faith with the apostles; and that the doctrine of faith they embraced was the faith once delivered to the saints, and was the true faith of Christ: the words will bear to be rendered, "to exhort you concerning your faith", as the Vulgate Latin version renders them; that is, to exhort you to continue in the faith, to stand fast in it, in the exercise of the grace of faith, and in the doctrine of faith, and in the profession of both. The Syriac version renders it, "to ask", or inquire of you concerning your faith, being willing to know how it stood, since they left them, as in **1Th 3:5**.

1 Thessalonians 3:3

Ver. 3. That no man should be moved by these afflictions,.... Which the apostle endured for the sake of preaching the Gospel among them, and which he feared might be a means of troubling their minds, of shaking their faith, and moving them from the hope of the Gospel; for though none of these things moved him, who was an old soldier of Christ, and used to hardness, and an apostle of Christ; yet these were young converts, and not used to such things, and therefore might be staggered at them, and be offended, as stony ground hearers are; and though the apostle hoped better things of them, yet was he concerned for them, that no one among them might be unhinged by them, or succumb under them:

for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto; by the immutable decree of God: afflictions, as to their nature, measure, and duration, are appointed for the people of God, and they are appointed for them; this is the case of all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, and especially of Gospel ministers; of which these saints had been apprized by the apostle, and therefore was nothing new, unheard of, and unexpected, or to be looked upon as a strange thing; and seeing this was the appointment of heaven, and the will of God, they should be patiently endured, and quietly submitted to.

1 Thessalonians 3:4

Ver. 4. For, verily, when we were with you,.... In presence, in person, as they then were in heart and affection; when they were first among them, and preached the Gospel to them:

we told you before; before it came to pass;

that we should suffer tribulation: which they might say by virtue of Christ's prediction to all his disciples, that they should have tribulation in the world; and upon its being the common case of God's people, and the usual way through which they enter the kingdom; and the Apostle Paul might foretell this, upon the discovery that was made to him how many things he should suffer for the sake of Christ, and which therefore he always, and in every place expected; and he might have a particular revelation of the disturbance and opposition he was to meet with at Thessalonica:

even as it came to pass, and ye know; referring to the tumult and uproar in Ac 17:5, and which should be considered so far from being a discouragement, that it was a great confirmation of the truth of their mission and ministry; nor could it be so surprising to them as it might have been had they had no previous taste of it.

1 Thessalonians 3:5

Ver. 5. For this cause, when I could no longer forbear,.... Or "bear" the above vehement desire of seeing them, or of hearing from them. Here the apostle speaks in the singular number, and seems to intimate, as if what was said before of the like kind is to be understood singly of him; for these words are a repetition and summary of the foregoing, with some diversity:

I sent to know your faith; how it stood, whether it was staggering through these afflictions, or firm; whether it was weak or strong, what was wanting in it; and whether it grew and increased. The Arabic version adds, "and charity"; for of this, as well as of faith, Timothy brought an account, as appears from the following verse.

Lest by some means the tempter; Satan, so called from his common and constant employ in tempting men to sin; see **Mt 4:3**

have tempted you with success, and got an advantage over them, improving these afflictions to such a purpose as to move them from the hope of the Gospel, and relinquish the profession of it; for otherwise there was no question to be made but he had tempted them, or solicited them to it; for none of the saints are free from his temptations; the apostle himself was not, nor indeed our Lord Jesus Christ: but the apostle's fears were, lest he should so have tempted them as to have gained upon them, and have persuaded them to have turned their backs upon the Gospel, and not expose their name and credit, and hazard the toss of worldly substance, and even life itself, for the sake of it.

And our labour be in vain: in preaching the Gospel among them; not with respect to God, to whom the word never returns void and empty; nor with regard to the apostles, whose judgment was with the Lord, and their work with their God, who will of his own grace reward them; but with respect to the Thessalonians, to whom, should Satan gain his point, it would be of no use and service, for which the concern was. The Ethiopic version reads, "and your labour be in vain": in receiving the apostles, embracing and professing the Gospel, and suffering for it; see **Ga 3:4** but the common reading is best, and agrees with what the apostle elsewhere says, **Ga 4:11**.

1 Thessalonians 3:6

Ver. 6. But now when Timotheus came from you unto us,.... At Corinth, as appears from Ac 18:5 which shows that this epistle was not written from Athens, as the subscription to it asserts, but from Corinth; for as soon as ever Timothy came from Thessalonica, to the apostle at Corinth, and made the report to him, he immediately sent them this epistle which is here suggested:

"but, now", &c. just now; "lately", as the Syriac version renders it, a very little while ago, Timothy was just come:

and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity; of their faith, the grace of faith, that it was of the right kind; as far as could be judged, it was the faith of God's elect, like precious faith with theirs; an unfeigned one, strong and lively, operative and growing: or of the doctrine of faith, as received and embraced by them; as that they were greatly led, and had much light into it, and had, for the time, made considerable proficiency in it; that they held it fast, and stood fast in it, and contended for it, notwithstanding all the afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions which they either saw in the apostles, or endured themselves for the sake of it; and likewise of the profession of both the grace and doctrine of faith, which they held fast, and without wavering, and that in a pure conscience, which was good news indeed. Timothy also brought an account of their "charity", or love, which faith works by; these two graces are always found together; they are wrought in the soul by one, and the same hand, and at the same time; where the one is, the other is; and as the one flourishes and increases, so does the other. And by this grace is meant love to God, to Christ, to his truths, ordinances, ways, and worship, and to one another, and even to all men; and which was without dissimulation, in sincerity, in deed, and in truth, and was constant and fervent: and this was not the whole of the report, for it follows,

and that ye have a remembrance of us always they bore in memory the persons of the apostles; and when they made mention of their names, it was with the greatest respect and reverence; nor were they forgetful hearers of the word, but remembered with great affection and pleasure the truths, the doctrines, and exhortations they delivered to them, so as to put them in practice, and longed for another visit from them, to have their memories refreshed by them:

desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you, they had an equal desire to see their spiritual fathers, as they had to see their spiritual children. Now such a report as this concerning their steady faith in Christ, their fervent love to one another, and their affectionate regard to the ministers of the word, was a sort of a Gospel, as the word used signifies; or it was good news and glad tidings to the apostle, and those that were with him.

1 Thessalonians 3:7

Ver. 7. Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over, you,.... Or "in you", as the Vulgate Latin version; or "from you", as the Arabic; or "by you", as the Syriac; or "for you", as the Ethiopic; that is, on account of them, either by what they had heard was in them, or had heard from them. This gave abundant consolation

in all our affliction and distress: which they met with at Corinth, where the apostle laboured with his own hands, and ministered to his own, and the necessities of others, and was greatly opposed, reproached, and persecuted; see Ac 18:3, but the news of the good estate and condition the Thessalonians were in, was a great relief and comfort to him, particularly their faith:

by your faith: by the report of it, that it grew exceedingly, and that they walked in the truth; see **1Jo 5:4**. The Alexandrian copy reads, "in all your distress and affliction, and by your faith."

1 Thessalonians 3:8

Ver. 8. For now we live,.... Before they were dead men, lifeless, disconsolate, dispirited, carrying about with them the dying of the Lord Jesus, and death working in them, and they, as it were, under the sentence of that, being killed all the day long for Christ's sake; but now, upon this news, in the midst of all their sore trials and troubles, their spirits revived, and they became alive and cheerful; see Ps 22:26, it was like life from the dead unto them:

if ye stand fast in the Lord: or "our Lord", as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; that is, "in the faith of the Lord", as the Arabic version renders it: they were in the Lord secretly by electing grace, and openly by regenerating grace, and they abode in him; and by persevering grace, they were rooted and built up in Christ, and established in the faith of him, of his person, office, and grace; they were steady in the exercise of grace upon him, and stood fast in the liberty wherewith he had made them free, and continued steadfastly in the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel; for the "if" here is not expressive of doubting, but of reasoning, "seeing ye stand fast in the Lord"; of which they were assured by Timothy: and this gave them fresh spirit and life amidst the deaths in which they often were.

1 Thessalonians 3:9

Ver. 9. For what thanks can we render to God again or you,.... They had given thanks to God for them before, for their faith, love, and patience; see **1Th 1:2** and now having received a further account of them, they looked upon themselves bound to give fresh thanks to God for them, for the increase of their faith and love, and for their perseverance, as they did; see **2Th 1:3** since these are gifts of God's grace; but they knew not where to begin, what to render, and when to end: the phrase is much like that in Ps 116:12 "what shall I render unto the Lord", &c.

for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God: the joy they had was all joy, perfect and complete in its kind; see **Jas 1:2** and it was not for themselves, on their own account, because of any worldly interest or advantage they had therein, but for the sake of these Thessalonians, whose spiritual welfare they rejoiced at: nor was their joy of a carnal nature, but spiritual; it was a joy in the Holy Ghost, and which was hearty and sincere: it was "before God our" God, their covenant God and Father; it was in his sight and presence, who sees and knows all things, all actions, and the principles of them. Though this last clause, "before our God", is in the Syriac version, placed at the beginning of the next verse, according to which, it refers, not to thanks or joy before God, but to prayer before him.

1 Thessalonians 3:10

Ver. 10. Night and day praying exceedingly,.... This good news, not only comforted their hearts, and revived their spirits, and filled them with joy and thankfulness, but also sent them to the throne of grace to pray without ceasing, continually, night and day, and as often as they went thither, and that with great fervency and earnestness, in a multitude of petitions; or, as the Arabic version renders it, "with prayers exceeding a multitude"; with innumerable requests:

that we might see your face: once more, and converse face to face:

and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith? in the grace of faith; for though they remembered their work of faith with pleasure, and had had good tidings of it very lately, and were thankful that it grew exceedingly as it did, yet they knew it was not perfect, there was unbelief attending them: and though it is God's work to increase faith, as well as to produce it, yet, as the ministry of the word is the means of the first planting of it, so it also is of the increase of it. This may likewise be understood of the doctrine of faith, which though they had received in the love of it, and had made considerable progress in their knowledge of it; yet they knew but in part, and needed to be taught the way of God, and truths of the Gospel more perfectly; and the ministry of the word is for the perfecting of the saints in the knowledge of the Son of God, and of other truths; wherefore the apostle desired greatly to see them, that he might be an instrument of instructing them, more perfectly in the knowledge of divine things; and in this, and in the following epistle, he does particularly instruct them about the rise and fall of antichrist, the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead, articles of faith in which they seemed to have been deficient: but now, though these saints had deficiencies in their faith, yet they were not what the Jews call {o} hnma yrowxm, "such as are deficient in faith", or want faith entirely, a phrase somewhat like this which is here used.

{o} Maimon. Hilch. Mechira, c. 7. sect. 8, 9.

1 Thessalonians 3:11

Ver. 11. Now God himself, and our Father,.... The Oriental versions leave out the copulative "and", and read, "God himself, our Father" the first person in the Trinity, who is God himself, truly and properly so; and who is a God that hears prayer; and who is omnipotent, and able to do more than the saints can ask or think; and omniscient, and knows their persons and cases, and what is proper for them, and how and when to help and supply them; and he is also the God of all grace, the author and giver of it, and who is able to make it abound, and increase it, and so a very proper object of prayer: and who is likewise the Father of Christ, and of all the saints, not only by creation, in which sense he is the Father of all men, but by adopting grace; and which is mentioned to encourage freedom and boldness in prayer, which children may use with a father, and to raise an expectation of succeeding and receiving an answer; for if earthly parents hear their children, and give good things to them, how much more will not our heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit, and all other good gifts, unto his children? And this shows that the apostle prayed to God in the manner Christ directed, **Mt 6:9**

and our Lord Jesus Christ: who is equally the object of prayer with God his Father and ours; who is sometimes distinctly prayed unto, as in **Ac 7:59** and often in conjunction with his Father, as in all those places in the epistles, where grace and peace are wished for from them both; see **Ro 1:7**, and sometimes he is set before the Father, as in **2Th 2:16** to show the entire equality between them, and that he is equally addressed as he, being truly and properly God, who knows all things, and is the Almighty, and whose grace is sufficient for us, and therefore rightly applied unto, as here: the petition put up to them both is, that they would

direct our way unto you: a journey is not to be taken without the will of God, without seeking to know it, without submission to it, and dependence on it; nor is there any prosperous one, but by it; see **Jas 4:13**. Men may devise their own ways, but God directs their goings; especially a good man's steps are ordered by the Lord, and particularly ministers; who, as they are often directed to subjects and matter, in a very providential way, so to places, and are ordered both where and when to go; see
Ac 16:6. The apostle was aware, that there were obstacles in his way of coming to Thessalonica, for he had attempted it once and again, but Satan, and his emissaries, hindered; and therefore he desires that God and Christ would remove them out of the way, and make his way straight and plain, as the word signifies, that he might once more see their faces.

1 Thessalonians 3:12

Ver. 12. And the Lord make you to increase,.... That is, the Lord the Spirit; so that the object of prayer, addressed by the apostle, is Father, Son, and Spirit, as in **Re 1:4**. The Alexandrian copy reads "God". The Spirit is God, equally with the Father and the Son, and so a fit object of prayer with them, which otherwise he would not be. The request is, that he would cause these saints to increase in number, as the first churches greatly did: and in the gifts of the Spirit, which he divides to men severally as he will; and in his graces, as in faith, in hope, in holiness, in humility, in knowledge, in spiritual joy and strength, an increase in all which is from him:

and abound in love one towards another; for though they were taught of God to love one another, and did do so, and the apostle had had good tidings of their love; yet it was not perfect, there was room for a further exercise of it, by serving each other by it, in things spiritual and temporal; and he had his request, for it did abound in everyone of them towards each other, **2Th 1:3**

and towards all men; the men of the world, who were without, were not members of the church, nor professors of the Christian religion, but enemies to that, and to Christ, and to them; and yet they were to love them as men, and pray for them, and do them all the good that lay in their power:

even as we do towards you; for the love of the apostle, and those with him, abounded more and more towards these saints, and was so far from being weakened, that it was increased by their absence from them; and they were more abundantly desirous of seeing them, and were even quite impatient until they sent to them, and heard of them.

1 Thessalonians 3:13

Ver. 13. To the end he may stablish your hearts,.... Which are very unstable and inconstant in their frames, and in the exercise of grace, and have need to be established in the love of God, against the fears of men, the frowns of the world, the temptations of Satan, and in, and with the doctrines of grace; See Gill on "1Th 3:2",

unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father. There is no holiness in men naturally; what is in them without the grace of God is only a show; true holiness is from the Spirit of God; and this is a stable thing in itself, and can never be removed or taken away; but the acts of it, through the prevalence of corruption, the force of Satan's temptations, and the snares of the world, are fickle and inconstant; and the saints need to be established in the discharge of duty, as well as in the exercise of grace: and whereas the apostle prays, that they might be "unblamable in holiness", the Alexandrian copy reads, "in righteousness" so one of Stephens's; it must be observed, that no man is perfectly holy in this life; no man is without sin in himself, or lives without the commission of it; holiness in the best is imperfect; no man, as yet, is in himself sanctified wholly; there is no unblamable holiness but in Christ; and in him the saints are without spot and blemish, who is their sanctification and their righteousness; but in themselves they are full of spots and stains; yet through the grace of God their hearts may be so established with principles of holiness, and they may be so assisted in the acts of it daily, as to give no just cause of blame to men, and so to behave as to approve themselves "before God", who sees the heart, and knows from what principles all actions flow: and this the apostle desires may be at the coming of our Lord Jesus; or unto the coming of him, as in **1Th 5:23** Either at death, when he comes into his garden, and gathers his lilies, and takes his to himself to be for ever with him; or at the day of judgment, when he comes to judge the quick and dead; and which coming of his is certain, and will be quickly and suddenly, and with great glory and power: and, as it is here added,

with all his saints; meaning either his holy angels, or rather the souls of his people, whom he will bring with him, and will raise their dead bodies, and reunite them to their souls, when they shall be for ever with him; and then shall they be unblamable in holiness, both in soul and body, and shall be presented by him, first to himself, and then to his Father, faultless, and without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, "Amen"; and so does Beza's ancient copy, and the Alexandrian manuscript.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Thessalonians 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 THESSALONIANS 4

In this chapter the apostle proceeds to exhort in general to the performance of good works, particularly to purity of life, to brotherly love, to quietness, diligence, and industry in the several callings of life, and not to mourn in an excessive and immoderate manner for deceased friends; which leads him to say some things concerning the second coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead. The general exhortation to holiness is in **1Th 4:1** which is pressed in a way of entreaty for the sake of Christ; and the duties urged to were the commandments of Christ, and which the apostles had given them, and they had received, and were well acquainted with; and besides, a walk according to these commands was well pleasing to God, and sanctification in general was his will: and in particular the apostle exhorts to abstain from fornication, and all uncleanness; since it is a dishonouring the body of man; acting the part of the ignorant Gentiles that know not God; a defrauding another man, as is uncleanness with another man's wife; the vengeance of God will light on such; it is contrary to that calling with which the saints are called, that being to holiness, and not uncleanness; and to despise this exhortation, is casting contempt, not upon man, but God himself, **1Th 4:4**. Brotherly love is the next thing exhorted to, which seemed needless to write about, since, in regeneration, these saints were taught to exercise it, and had exercised it towards all the brethren throughout Macedonia, though it was necessary to exhort them to abound more and more in it, **1Th 4:9** and to study peace and quietness, and be industrious in their business, that so they might live an honest life among their carnal neighbours, and not be in want of anything from them, **1Th 4:11** and whereas some of them had lost some of their dear friends and relations by death, and were ready to exceed due bounds in their sorrow for them, he dehorts from such immoderate sorrow, as being like that of those that had no hope of a resurrection from the dead; whereas, seeing it was an article of their faith, that Christ was risen from the dead, they might assure themselves that those that sleep in him shall be brought along with him when he shall appear a second time, **1Th 4:13** which will not be prevented by those that are alive when Christ comes; for as they will be changed, the dead in Christ will be raised at his coming; which coming of his will be in person, from heaven, with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and trump of God; and then both shall be caught up together to meet him in the air, and be for ever with him; and therefore they had no need to sorrow as others, since they should meet again, and never part more, and with which words they should comfort one another under their present loss, **1Th 4:15**.

Ver. 1. Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren,.... Or request of you in the most kind and tender manner, from real and hearty love and affection for you, and with a view to your good, and the glory of God:

and exhort you: or beseech and entreat you. The apostle does not lay his commands upon them as he might have done, and sometimes does, but endeavours to work upon them by way of entreaty, and which he doubtless thought the most effectual method to win upon them, and gain them; for some minds are more easily wrought upon by entreaty than by authority: and this he does in the most moving and powerful manner, even

by the Lord Jesus; or "in the Lord Jesus"; in his name and stead, as personating him, and as though he did beseech and entreat them by him, and his fellow ministers; or for his sake, intimating, that if they had any regard to him, any value for his name, if that had any weight with them, or they had any concern for his honour and interest, then he begs their attention to the following exhortation; or by the Lord Jesus, by all that is in him, or done for them by him; in whom they were chosen, by whom they were redeemed, in whom they were made new creatures, to whose image they were to be conformed, whose followers they professed to be, whose Gospel they embraced, and by whose name they were called.

That as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God. The walk of believers is twofold, either internal or external. Their internal walk is by faith, which is the going out of the soul by faith to Christ for every supply of grace. Their external walk is not as it was before conversion, according to the course of this world, or as other Gentiles walk, but in a holy religious life and conversation; and this requires spiritual life, strength and direction from Christ; for neither dead men, nor, if alive, yet weak, can walk; nor is it in a spiritual man, that walketh to direct his steps; and such a walk also denotes continuance, in well doing, and a progression or going on in it, and supposes ways to walk in. Christ, he is the chief and principal way, and there are other paths which regard him, or relate and lead unto him; as the way of truth, the path of ordinances, and of religious worship, both public and private, and the ways of righteousness, holiness, and good works: the manner in which saints are to walk is as Christ himself walked, after the Spirit, and not after the flesh, according to the rule of the word, which is the standard of faith and practice, with prudence, wisdom, circumspection, and worthy of God, and of that calling wherein they are called: and of such a walk there is a necessity; it "ought", it must be both on the account of God, it being his will, and for his glory, and the contrary would show great ingratitude to him; and on the account of the saints themselves, to adorn them, and their profession, and preserve them from shame and disgrace, to show their faith, and demonstrate their calling and election to others; and likewise on account of others, partly for the winning of some, by recommending in this way the Gospel to them, and partly for the bringing of others to shame and silence, who falsely accuse their good conversation. Now when the apostle, and those that were with him, were at Thessalonica, they gave these saints directions and instructions about their walk and conversation, to order it in such a manner as might "please God"; which is not to be understood of rendering their persons acceptable to God hereby, for the saints' acceptance with God is only in Christ the beloved; nor of their gaining the love and favour of God by such means, for the love of God is from everlasting, and is free, and sovereign, and does not arise from, or depend upon the holiness and obedience of men; or of making peace with God by such a walk, for peace is only made by the blood of Christ; but of doing those things, and in such a way God approves of: unregenerate men cannot please God, nor anything they do, because they are destitute of the Spirit of God, and are without Christ, and his grace and have not faith in him, without which it is impossible to please God; but what a believer does in faith, from a principle of love, in the name and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God, is approved of by God, and is acceptable to him through Christ, and for his sake; and there are many things of this kind, as prayer, praise, acts of beneficence to the poor, and indeed every good work and holy action: and inasmuch as they had been thus taught and instructed how to behave and conduct in their outward walk and conversation, they are entreated and exhorted to go on and abound in the work of the Lord:

so ye would abound more and more: that is, be more and more in the exercise of every grace, and in the discharge of every duty, making advances in holiness of life, and perfecting it in the fear of God. Beza's ancient copy, and another manuscript, as also the Alexandrian copy, and some others, add between the preceding, and this last clause, "as ye also walk"; and so the

Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions seem to have read; commending them for their present and past walk and conversation, in order to persuade and encourage them to go forward.

1 Thessalonians 4:2

Ver. 2. For ye know what commandments we gave you,.... When among them; such as those of faith and love, the ordinances of the Gospel, baptism, and the Lord's supper, and all such as relate to the worship and service of God, to the discipline of Christ's house, to their behaviour one towards another, and their conduct in the world: and which were delivered to them, not as from themselves, and by their own authority, but

by the Lord Jesus; in his name, and by his authority, and as ordered by him; for their commission ran to teach men all things, whatsoever Christ commanded: now since they knew what these commandments were, and whose they were, and the obligation they lay under to regard them, the apostle makes use of it as a reason or argument to engage them to obedience to them; for he that knows his Lord's will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes, Lu 12:47.

1 Thessalonians 4:3

Ver. 3. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification,.... Which is another reason to enforce the above exhortation. "Sanctification" is internal or external. Internal sanctification is the work of the Spirit of God, and is a principle of spiritual life in the soul, a divine and spiritual light in the understanding, a flexion of the will to the will of God, and a settlement of the affections on divine things, and is an implantation of every grace in the heart. External sanctification arises from this, and lies in holiness of life and conversation; and is what is chiefly designed, as appears both by what goes before, and follows after: and this is "the will of God"; the will of his purpose and decree; for in the same decree that he wills the salvation of any by Jesus Christ, he also wills their sanctification in heart and life, and here and hereafter: and this is his approving will, or what is well pleasing in his sight, being agreeable to his nature, and divine perfections, particularly his holiness, in which he is glorious; and it is his will of command, and what he requires in his law, which is holy, just, and good, and perfectly agrees with the sound doctrine of the Gospel, and the revelation of his will in both.

That ye should abstain from fornication: which is particularly mentioned, abstinence from it being a branch of external holiness; and because that this sin was common among the Gentiles, and not esteemed a sin by them; as also to observe to these Christians, that as simple fornication was not to be allowed of, much less other acts of uncleanness, as adultery, incest, sodomy, and the like, which were iniquities that greatly prevailed among the Heathens. The Syriac version renders it, "from all fornication"; on this subject the apostle enlarges in some following verses.

1 Thessalonians 4:4

Ver. 4. That everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel,.... By which may be meant, either a man's wife, or his body, and it is not very easy to determine which, for the Jews call both by this name. Sometimes they call {p} a woman Mlwg, which the gloss says is a "vessel" unfinished. It is reported {q}, that when R. Eleazar died, Rabbenu Hakkadosh would have married his widow, and she would not, because she was hvwdq lv ylk, "a vessel of holiness", greater than he. Moreover, it is said {r}, that

"he that forces (a young woman) must drink wuyueb, "in his own vessel" how drink in his own vessel? though she be lame, though she be blind, and though she is stricken with ulcers."

The commentators {s} on the passage add,

"in the vessel which he has chosen; that is to say, whether he will or not, he must marry her;"

see **Pr 5:15**. And again, they sometimes call a man's wife his tent: hence that saying {t},

"wtva ala wlha Nya "there is no tent but his wife", as it is said, **De 5:30**, go, say to them, get you into your tents again."

And certain it is, that the woman is called the "weaker vessel" in **1Pe 3:7**, between which passage and this there seems to be some agreement. The same metaphor of a "vessel" is made use of in both; and as there, honour to be given to the weaker vessel, so here, a man's vessel is to be possessed in honour; and as there, husbands are to dwell with their wives according to knowledge so here, knowledge is required to a man's possessing his vessel aright. Now for a man to possess his vessel in this sense, is to enjoy his wife, and to use that power he has over her in a becoming manner; see **1Co 7:4**, and which is here directed to "in sanctification and honour"; that is, in a chaste and honourable way; for marriage is honourable when the bed is kept undefiled; and which may be defiled, not only by taking another into it, and which is not possessing the wife in sanctification and honour, it is the reverse, for it is a breaking through the rules of chastity and honour; but it may even be defiled with a man's own wife, by using her in an unnatural way, or by any unlawful copulation with her; for so to do is to use her in an unholy, unchaste, wicked, and dishonourable manner; whereas possessing of her according to the order and course of nature, is by the Jews, in agreement with the apostle, called {u}, wmue vdqm, "a man's sanctifying himself", and is chaste, and honourable. And it may be observed, that the Jews use the same phrase concerning conjugal embraces as the apostle does here. One of their canons runs thus {w}:

"though a man's wife is free for him at all times, it is fit and proper for a disciple of a wise man to use himself
hvwdqb, "in", or "to sanctification"."

When these thing's are observed, this sense of the words will not appear so despicable as it is thought by some. The body is indeed called a "vessel"; see **2Co 4:7**, because in it the soul is contained, and the soul makes use of it, and its members, as instruments, for the performance of various actions; and, with Jewish writers, we read of wpwg ylk, "the vessel of his body" {x}; so then, for a man to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour, is to keep under his body and bring it into subjection, and preserve it in purity and chastity; as the eyes from unchaste looks, the tongue from unchaste words, and the other members from unchaste actions; and to use it in an honourable way, not in fornication, adultery, and sodomy; for, by fornication, a man sins against his own body; and by adultery he gets a wound, and a dishonour, and a reproach that will not be wiped away; and by sodomy, and such like unnatural lusts, men dishonour their own bodies between themselves: particularly by "his vessel", as Gataker thinks, may be meant the "membrum virile", or the genital parts, which, by an euphemism, may he so called; see 1Sa 21:5

{p} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol 22. 2. {q} Juchasin, fol. 48. 2. Shalsheleth Hakkabala, fol. 23. 1. {r} Misna Cetubot, c. 3. sect. 4, 5. {s} Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. {t} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 7. 2. & 15. 2. {u} Maimon. in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 4. {w} Maimon. Hilch Deyot, c. 5. sect. 4. {x} Caphtor, fol. 57. 2.

1 Thessalonians 4:5

Ver. 5. Not in the lust of concupiscence,.... Or "passion of lust"; for the mere gratifying and indulging of that; for a man so to possess his vessel, is to cherish the sin of concupiscence, the first motions of sin in the heart, by which a man is drawn away, and enticed; to blow up the flame of lust, and to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof:

even as the Gentiles which know not God; for, though they knew him, or might know him with a natural knowledge, by the light and works of nature, yet they knew him not savingly and spiritually, as he is revealed in the word, of which they were destitute; or as the God of all grace, and the God and Father of Christ, or as he is in Christ: and though by the light of nature they might know there was a God, yet they knew not who that God was; nor did they act up to that light and knowledge they had; they did not glorify him as God, by ascribing to him what was his due; nor were they thankful for the mercies they received from him; nor did they fear, love, worship, and serve him; nor did they like to retain him in their knowledge, and therefore were given up to judicial blindness and hardness, to a reprobate mind, and to vile affections, and so did things very inconvenient, unnatural, and dishonourable. Wherefore, for a man to use either his wife or his body in any unchaste and dishonourable manner, for the gratifying of his lusts, is to act an Heathenish part; a like argument, dissuading from things unlawful, is used in **Mt 6:32**.

1 Thessalonians 4:6

Ver. 6. That no man go beyond, and defraud his brother in any matter,.... Or "in this matter", as the Syriac version. This is commonly understood of transgressing the bounds of justice and equity between men and men; and of cheating and defrauding in trade and business, by increasing or lessening the value and prices of goods by the buyer and seller, by not keeping to the bargain, contract, covenant, or sample, by false weights and measures, and by taking the advantage of the weakness and ignorance of men; all which is aggravated by dealing thus with a brother; see **1Co 6:8** and this hint is thought the rather necessary, since Thessalonica was a place of great trade and business. But the matter, or business referred to, is not trade, but the subject of chastity or uncleanness the apostle is speaking of, both before and after; and the phrases used either design the act of adultery, coveting a brother's wife, and lying with her, and so a defrauding and wronging of him by defiling his bed; or rather sodomitical practices, an unnatural lust and desire in men after men, and copulation with them; for uperbainein, rendered, "go beyond", answers to le ab, "to go upon", or "lie with", so often used in Jewish writings for lying with women, men, and beasts, in an unlawful way. Thus, for instance {y},

"these are to be burned, hva le abh, "he that lies with a woman", and her daughter, &c."

And again {z},

"these are to be beaten, le abh, "he that lies with" his sister, or his father's sister, &c."

And the word pleonektein, translated "defraud", signifies a greedy, insatiable, and unnatural lust and desire after a man, a brother, or the committing of sodomitical practices with greediness: see **Eph 4:19** which abominable iniquities are dissuaded from by the following reasons,

because that the Lord is the avenger of all such; or "with respect to all these things", as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; or "for all these things", as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; as fornication, adultery, lasciviousness, and all sorts of abominable uncleanness. The person that commits these things the Lord avenges, either in this life, by the hand of the civil magistrate, who is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath on him that does evil; or by a violent death, as in the case of Zimri and Cozbi, and twenty four thousand more at the same time; or by some awful judgment from heaven, as in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah; or in the world to come; for the law of God is made and lies against such persons; these living and dying in such sins God will judge, to whom vengeance belongs; these shall not inherit the kingdom of God, but have their part and portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

As we have also forewarned you and testified; not by a former epistle, as if this was the second to them, and what follows the first, as Grotius thought; but they did this when they were in person with them, knowing that these abominable vices greatly prevailed in their city; therefore they bore their testimony against them, and exposed the evil of them, and warned them of the danger by them, so that they could not now plead ignorance. The Ethiopic version reads in the first person singular, "as I have before said unto you, and testified to you".

{y} Misna Sanhedrim, c. 9. sect. 1. {z} Misna Maccot, c. 3. sect. 1.

1 Thessalonians 4:7

Ver. 7. For God hath not called us,.... The Syriac version reads "you". This is another reason to enforce the above exhortations, and to caution them against the above unclean practices, taken from the end of the effectual calling by the efficacious grace of God, which is not

unto uncleanness of any sort, as before specified. This they had lived in before their calling, and were now called from it into communion with Christ, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; and by the Gospel, which teaches to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to forsake all impurity, both of flesh and spirit:

but this call is

unto holiness of life and conversation in general, and to chastity in thought, look, word, and actions in particular; for God that calls is holy, and therefore those who are called ought to be so; the calling with which they are called is an holy calling, principles of grace and holiness are wrought in their souls, when they are called; and the end of their calling is to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and then, and then only, do they walk worthy of that calling wherewith they are called, and of God who has, by his grace, called them to his kingdom and glory.

1 Thessalonians 4:8

Ver. 8. He therefore that despiseth,.... The Vulgate Latin adds, "these things"; these exhortations now delivered, the commandments given by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the will of God above declared; he that rejects these things with contempt, takes no notice of them, and acts not according to them,

despiseth not man; not men only, the apostles of Christ, and ministers of the Gospel; for, by despising these exhortations, they themselves were despised, though not alone: but God; Father, Son, and Spirit; God the Father, whose will was their sanctification, even to abstain from fornication, and every act of uncleanness, which, if not attended to, was a despising of him; and the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom, and for whose sake they were entreated and exhorted, and in whose name, and by whose authority the apostle gave them these commandments; wherefore to slight them, was to slight Jesus Christ himself; and, by the way, this is a proof of the true and proper deity of Christ. Moreover, such despisers also, in some sense, do despite unto the spirit of grace, by whom the apostles spake, or who spoke in them these things, as follows,

who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit; as he did to the prophets of the Old Testament, and therefore what they said was equally by divine inspiration of God; and hence despising them, was despising the Spirit of God that spake by them. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "who hath given unto you his Holy Spirit"; and so all Stephens's copies; which furnishes out a fresh reason or argument, dissuading from uncleanness, since God had given them his "Spirit" to convince them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, so that they were not ignorant of the things warned against; and he had given them his Spirit as an "holy" Spirit, as a Spirit of sanctification, to begin and carry on that work in them, to which uncleanness was very opposite; and he had given his Spirit unto, or "into" them, to dwell in them, as in his temple, and therefore should be careful not to defile it; and to cause them to walk in his statutes, and to assist them to keep his judgments, and do them, and as an earnest of their inheritance, and a sealer of them up unto the day of redemption; wherefore it became them not to grieve him by an impure life; and they were laid under obligations to live in the Spirit, and to walk after him, and not after the flesh.

1 Thessalonians 4:9

Ver. 9. But as touching brotherly love,.... Another branch of sanctification; which is distinct from love to God and Christ, though it always accompanies it, and from love to all mankind; and is what is peculiar to brethren in a spiritual relation, and ought to be universal, fervent, and sincere, and as Christ has loved them: concerning which the following things are said,

ye need not that I write unto you. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "we have no need to write unto you"; and so some copies. It seems that it was needful to write unto them about other things, as to refresh their memories with the instructions they had given them, when with them, how they should walk and please God; and to put them in mind of the commandments given them by Christ, and that their sanctification was the will of God; and particularly it was necessary to write unto them about chastity, and purity of life, whether in or out of the conjugal state; but as for brotherly love, there was no immediate absolute necessity to write about that, either about the nature of it, or to describe the objects of it, or point out instances of it, or to exhort to it in a pressing manner: the reason is,

for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another; not merely by the light of nature, which teaches men to be kind, courteous, affable, and beneficent; nor by the law of Moses, which obliges men to love their neighbours as themselves; nor only doctrinally by the ministry of the Gospel, which frequently inculcates the exercise of this grace as a matter of great importance and consequence; nor only by the new commandment, and example of Christ; but by the Spirit of God internally in regeneration, who, according to the tenor of the new covenant, writes this law of love, and of Christ, upon the heart; and this being written upon the hearts of the Thessalonians, by the finger of the Spirit of God, whereby they were dearly directed, and powerfully taught to exercise this grace, and discharge this duty, and under the influence of the same spirit did exercise it, it was unnecessary for the apostle to write about it, and press them to it.

1 Thessalonians 4:10

Ver. 10. And indeed ye do it towards all the brethren,.... Whether high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, greater or lesser believers, and whether related in the bonds of nature or not; they exercised this grace of love without respect of persons, to all, and not only to all the brethren in the particular community at Thessalonica, but

which are in all Macedonia; throughout the whole country, particularly at Philippi and Berea, and other places:

but we beseech you, brethren. The Alexandrian copy reads, "beloved brethren"; and the Syriac version, "I beseech you, my brethren: that ye increase more and more"; in showing love to the brethren; which may be done both by administering to them in things temporal, by assisting them in distress, by sympathizing with them, and by giving them counsel and advice; and in things spiritual, by bearing their burdens, forbearing with them, and forgiving them; by admonishing them in love, by stirring them up to love and good works, by praying with them and for them, and by instructing and building them up in their most holy faith; and this increase, and abounding in the exercise of this grace, may respect not only the more frequent and fervent use of it, but also the larger extent of it to other objects; as not only to all the brethren in their own church, and to all that were in Macedonia, to which it did extend, but likewise to all the brethren in other parts of the world, and which are more distant and remote; and even to the poor saints at Jerusalem in particular; and accordingly we find that their love did abound unto them; see Ro 15:25, this shows, that though brotherly love was much practised by these saints, yet it was not perfect; nor is any grace perfect as to degrees; nor is any saint perfect in the discharge of duty in this life.

1 Thessalonians 4:11

Ver. 11. And that ye study to be quiet,.... To live peaceably in their own families, and to give no disturbance to other families, by talebearing, whispering, and backbiting; to behave with quietness in the neighbourhood, town, or city, they dwell in, and to seek the peace thereof; and to lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty, in the commonwealth, and under the government to which they belong; and not to create and encourage factions, divisions, animosities, and contentions, in their own church, or in any of the churches of Christ; and it becomes saints to make this their study, to be very solicitous for it, to strive for it, and pursue after it: the word used signifies to be ambitious of it, as what is a man's glory and honour, to emulate and strive to outdo each other, as who shall have the honour of being the quietest person, and the most peaceable member in the community:

and to do your own business: or private business, or what is proper and peculiar to a man's self; to abide every man in his own calling wherein he is called, and attend the business of it, and not thrust himself into other families, and officiously take upon him, under a pretence of zeal, affection, and friendship, to inspect, direct, or manage the business of others: in short, he should not meddle with other people's business, but mind his own: and this is what the Jews call Ura Krd, "the way of the earth", or the business of life:

"there are four things, (they say {a}) in which a man should employ himself continually, with all his might, and these are they, the law, and good works, and prayer, and the business of life;"

upon which the gloss has this note by way of explanation,

"if a man is an artificer (let him attend) to his art; if a merchant to his merchandise, and if he is a soldier to war;"

and which may serve to illustrate the apostle's sense:

and to work with your own hands; the reason of this is, because there were some among them, who would not work at all; see **2Th 3:11** and by this instruction it appears, that the members of this church, in common, were such as were brought up to handicraft trades and businesses, and were poor and mean; and this was the general case of the primitive churches: it pleased God to choose and call the poor of this world, to whom the Gospel was preached, and they received it; few of the rulers among the Jews believed in Christ, and not many mighty, rich, or noble among the Gentiles were called; some there were, and in this church there were some of the chief women of the city, Ac 17:4, and though these and others of the better sort, as well as ministers of the Gospel among them, who laboured in the word and doctrine, were not obliged by this to perform manual work and labour, yet were not exempted from all concern in the exhortation; it being proper and necessary, that all sorts of persons be employed in one sort of business or another, and to use diligence and application in it: the apostle's view being chiefly to inveigh against sloth and idleness, and to exhort to labour and industry as the most effectual method to preserve peace and quietness, and to keep persons from being troublesome and hurtful, in families, churches, and commonwealths: the reasons enforcing this follow in this and the next verse,

as we commanded you; and the command of an apostle carries weight and authority with it, and ought to be obeyed; yea, they not only strictly enjoined a diligent application to business, but set them an example themselves, see **1Th 2:9**.

{a} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 32. 2.

1 Thessalonians 4:12

Ver. 12. That ye may walk honestly,.... Decently, in good credit and reputation, providing things honest in the sight of all men, for themselves and families, and honestly paying every man his own; on which account it became them to mind their own business, and work at their trades; otherwise their walk and conversation would be scandalous, and not honest and honourable:

toward them that are without: the men of the world, who were without the church; see **1Co 5:12** profane sinners, unconverted Gentiles, that were without Christ and hope, and God in the world, and were aliens and strangers; and yet care should be taken that no occasion be given to such to reproach the name of God, the ways of Christ, and the doctrines of the Gospel:

and that ye may have lack of nothing; but have wherewith to supply the necessaries of life, and give to them also that stand in need, which is more blessed and honourable than to receive; or might not need any such instruction and exhortation, or any reproof for sloth and idleness; or not stand in need of "any man", as the Syriac version renders it; of the help and assistance of any, of any of those that are without, which would be dishonourable; or of them that are within, of the church, which might be burdensome. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "that ye may not desire anything of anyone"; as the slothful man covets greedily all the day long what is another's, and this desire kills him, Pr 21:25 he covets an evil covetousness, and craves in a scandalous way the bread of others; when it would be more honourable for him to work with quietness, and eat his own bread got by honest labour, and not be beholden to another.

1 Thessalonians 4:13

Ver. 13. But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren,.... As they seem to have been, about the state of the pious dead, the rule and measure of mourning for them, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, the second coming of Christ, and the future happiness of the saints; wherefore the apostle judged it necessary to write to them upon these subjects: the Alexandrian copy and others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "we would not have you to be ignorant", &c.

concerning them which are asleep; that is, dead: it was in common use among the Eastern nations, when they spoke of their dead, to say they were asleep. This way of speaking is used frequently both in the Old and the New Testament; see **1Ki 2:10**
1Co 15:20 and very often with the Targumists; so the Targum on **Ec 3:4** "a time to weep", paraphrases it,

"a time to weep abykv le, "over them that are asleep":"

and in **Ec 4:2**.

"I praised abykv ty, "those that are asleep"," the dead: the reason of this way of speaking was, because there is a likeness between sleep and death; in both there is no exercise of the senses, and persons are at rest, and both rise again; and they are common to all men, and proper and peculiar to the body only. The apostle designs such persons among the Thessalonians, who either died a natural death, or were removed by violence, through the rage and fury of their persecutors, for whom their surviving friends were pressed with overmuch sorrow, which is here cautioned against:

that ye sorrow not, even as others that have no hope; the apostle's view is not to encourage and establish a stoical apathy, a stupid indolence, and a brutal insensibility, which are contrary to the make of human nature, to the practice of the saints, and even of Christ and his apostles, and our apostle himself; but to forbid excessive and immoderate sorrow, and all the extravagant forms of it the Gentiles ran into; who having no notion of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, had no hope of ever seeing their friends more, but looked upon them as entirely lost, as no longer in being, and never more to be met with, seen, and enjoyed; this drove them to extravagant actions, furious transports, and downright madness; as to throw off their clothes, pluck off their hair, tear their flesh, cut themselves, and make baldness between their eyes for the dead; see
De 14:1 practices forbidden the Jews, and which very ill become Christians, that believe the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead: the words are to be understood not of other Christians, who have no hope of the eternal welfare of their deceased friends; not but that the sorrow of those who have a good hope of the future Well being of their dear relatives, must and ought to be greatly different from that of others, who have no hope at all: it is observed by the Jews {b} on those words in Ge 23:2 and "Abraham came to mourn for Sarah", &c. that

"it is not said to weep for Sarah, but to mourn for her; "for such a woman as this, it is not fit to weep", after her soul is joined in the bundle of life, but to mourn for her, and do her great honour at her funeral; though because it is not possible that a man should not weep for his dead, it is said at the end, "and to weep for her":"

but here the words are to be understood of the other Gentiles that were in a state of nature and unregeneracy, who had no knowledge of the resurrection of the dead, or and hope of a future state, and of enjoying their friends in it: they are called oi loipoi, "the rest"; and the Syriac version renders it, "other men".

{b} Tzeror Hamnaor, fol. 23. 4.

1 Thessalonians 4:14

Ver. 14. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again,.... As every Christian does, for both the death and resurrection of Christ are fundamental articles of faith; nothing is more certain or more comfortable, and more firmly to be believed, than that Christ died for the sins of his people, and rose again for their justification; on these depend the present peace, joy, and comfort of the saints, and their everlasting salvation and happiness: and no less certain and comfortable, and as surely to be believed, is what follows,

even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. The saints that are dead are not only represented as asleep, as before, but as "asleep in Jesus"; to distinguish them from the other dead, the wicked; for the phrase of sleeping in death is promiscuously used of good and bad, though most commonly applied to good men: and so say the Jews {c},

"we used to speak of just men, not as dead, but as sleeping; saying, afterwards such an one fell asleep, signifying that the death of the righteous is nothing else than a sleep."

To represent death as a sleep makes it very easy and familiar; but it is more so, when it is considered as sleeping in Jesus, in the arms of Jesus; and such as are asleep in him must needs be at rest, and in safety: some join the phrase "in", or "by Jesus", with the word bring, and read the passage thus, "them that are asleep, by Jesus will God bring with him"; intimating, that God will raise up the dead bodies of the saints by Christ, as God-man and Mediator; and through him will bring them to eternal glory, and save them by him, as he has determined: others render the words, "them which sleep through", or "by Jesus"; or die for his sake, and so restrain them to the martyrs; who they suppose only will have part in the first resurrection, and whom God will bring with Jesus at his second coming; but the coming of Christ will be "with all his saints"; see **1Th 3:13** wherefore they are best rendered, "them that sleep in Jesus"; that is, "in the faith of Jesus", as the Arabic version renders it: not in the lively exercise of faith on Christ, for this is not the case of all the saints at death; some of them are in the dark, and go from hence under a cloud, and yet go safe, and may be said to die, or sleep, in Jesus, and will be brought with him; but who have the principle, and hold the doctrine of faith, are, and live and die, true believers; who die interested in Christ, in union with him, being chosen and blessed, and preserved in him from everlasting, and effectually called by his grace in time, and brought to believe in him; these, both their souls and bodies, are united to Christ, and are his care and charge; and which union remains in death, and by virtue of it the bodies of the saints will be raised at the last day: so that there may be the strongest assurance, that such will God bring with him; either God the Father will bring them with his Son, or Jehovah the Son will bring them with himself; he will raise them from the dead, and unite them to their souls, or spirits, he will bring with him; the consideration of which may serve greatly to mitigate and abate sorrow for deceased friends.

{c} Shebet Juda, p. 294. Ed. Gent.

1 Thessalonians 4:15

Ver. 15. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord,.... The apostle having something new and extraordinary to deliver, concerning the coming of Christ, the first resurrection, or the resurrection of the saints, the change of the living saints, and the rapture both of the raised and living in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, expresses himself in this manner; either in allusion to the prophets of old, to whom the word of the Lord is said to come, and who usually introduced their prophecies with a "Thus saith the Lord"; or in distinction from his own private sense, sentiment, and opinion of things; signifying, that what he was about to say, was not a fancy and conjecture of his own, the fruit and produce of his own brain, but what he could assert upon a sure foundation, upon the best and greatest authority, even the word of the Lord; and has respect either to some particular word of Christ, as some think, such as Mt 24:30 or rather to a particular and peculiar revelation, and special instruction in these things, he had immediately from Christ; and it may be when he was caught up into the third heaven himself, and had an experience in himself of somewhat of that which both the living and raised saints shall feel, when they are caught up together in the clouds; since the change of the living saints, at the time of the resurrection of the dead, is a mystery which seems to have been first made known unto, and discovered by the Apostle Paul; see 1Co 15:51.

That we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord: not that the apostle thought that he and the saints then in the flesh should live and continue till the second coming of Christ; for he did not imagine that the coming of Christ was so near, as is manifest from **2Th 2:1** though the Thessalonians might take him in this sense, which he there corrects; but he speaks of himself and others in the first person plural, by way of instance and example, for illustration sake; that supposing he and others should be then in being, the following would be the case: and moreover, he might use such a way of speaking with great propriety of other saints, and even of those unborn, and that will be on the spot when Christ shall come a second time; since all the saints make up one body, one family, one church and general assembly; so that the apostle might truly and justly say, "we which are alive"; that is, as many of our body, of our family, of our church or society, that shall be living at the coming of Christ; and he might choose the rather to speak in this form, person, and tense, to awaken the care, circumspection, diligence, and watchfulness of the saints, since it could not be known how soon the Lord would come: however, from hence it appears, that there will be saints alive at Christ's second coming; he will have a seed to serve him till he comes again; he always had in the worst of times, and will have, and that even in the last days, in the days of the son of man, which are said to be like those of Noah and of Lot: and these are said to "remain", or to be "left", these will be a remnant, the residue and remainder of the election of grace, and will be such as have escaped the fury of antichrist and his followers, or of the persecutors of the saints: now these

shall not prevent them that are asleep; that is, that are dead, so the Ethiopic version; the reason why the dead are so called, see in the note on the preceding verses: the sense is, either they "shall not come up to them that are asleep, or dead", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render the words; they shall not come into the state of the dead, they shall undergo a change equivalent to death, but not death itself; see 1Co 15:51 or rather they "shall not go before" them; they shall not get the start of them, and be in the arms of Jesus, and enjoy his presence when he comes, before the dead in Christ, which might be thought, but this will not be the case; for the dead saints will rise before the living ones are changed, and both will be caught up together to meet the Lord, as is said in the following verses; so that the one shall not come or go before the other, or come at, or into the enjoyment of Christ first, but both together.

1 Thessalonians 4:16

Ver. 16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven,.... Not by proxy, or by representatives; not by the ministry of angels, as on Mount Sinai; nor by the ministers of the word, as under the Gospel dispensation; nor by his spirit, and the discovery of his love and grace, in which sense he descends in a spiritual manner, and visits his people; but in person, in his human nature, in soul and body; in like manner as he went up to heaven will he descend from thence, so as to be visible, to be seen and heard of all: he will come down from the third heaven, whither he was carried up, into which he was received, and where he is retained until the time of the restitution of all things, and from whence the saints expect him: and this descent will be

with a shout; the word here used is observed by many to signify such a noise or shout as is made either by mariners, when they pull and row together; and shout to direct and encourage one another; or to an army with the general at the head of it, when about to undertake some considerable action, to enter on a battle, and make the onset; Christ will now appear as the King of kings, and Lord of lords, as the Judge of the whole earth, attended with the host, or armies of heaven, and the shout of a king will be among them: perhaps the same is intended, as by the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and of mighty thunderings upon the coming of Christ, the destruction of antichrist, and the marriage of the Lamb, in Re 19:1. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions render it, "in", or "with command"; and the Arabic version, "with his own government", or "authority"; that is, he shall descend, either by the command of his Father, as man and Mediator, having authority from him, as the son of man, to execute judgment; or with his commanding power and authority over the mighty angels, that shall descend with him: it follows,

with the voice of the archangel; so Michael is called, in **Jude 1:9** with which compare Re 12:7 and who perhaps is no other than Christ himself, who is the head of all principality and power; and the sense be, that Christ shall descend from heaven with a voice, or shall then utter such a voice, as will show him to be the archangel; or as the Syriac version renders it, "the head", or "prince of angels"; and which whether, it will be an articulate voice, such as was expressed at the grave of Lazarus; or a violent clap of thunder, which is the voice of God; or the exertion of the power of Christ, is not certain: it is added,

and with the trump of God; called "the last trump", 1Co 15:52 because none will be blown after it, and may be the same with the seventh trumpet, Re 11:15 and here the trump of God, because blown by his order; or by Christ himself, who is God, and so be the same with the voice of the archangel; and these figurative expressions are used, to set forth the grandeur and magnificence in which Christ will come; not in that low, mean, and humble form in which he first came, but with great glory, and marks of honour and respect; with angels shouting, trumpets blowing, and saints rejoicing. This is said in allusion to the trumpet which was heard on Mount Sinai at the giving of the law, and of

which the Jews say {d}, that it aytym
axam, "quickened the dead"; for they have a notion, that, when the Israelites first heard the voice of the Lord, they died; but upon hearing it the second time, they returned to life {e}: and they suppose also in the time, to come, at the resurrection of the dead, a trumpet will be blown, which will quicken the dead {f}, and the day of judgment {g}; and this is reckoned by them as one of the signs of the Messiah's coming {h}:

"Michael shall shout with a great shout, and the graves of the dead shall be opened at Jerusalem, and the holy blessed God will restore the dead to life, and Messiah the son of David shall come," &c.

And the dead in Christ shall rise first; the same with those that are asleep in Jesus, **1Th 4:14** not only the martyrs that died for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; nor merely those who die in the lively exercise of faith in Christ; but all that die interested in him, and in union with him: and these shall "rise", in consequence of their being his; being given to him, made his care and charge, and engaged for by him, and in virtue of their union to him; and shall rise to an entire conformity to his glorious body, and in order to enjoy eternal life and glory with him: and these will rise "first", before the wicked, which is the first resurrection, Re 20:5 even a thousand years before them; the righteous will rise in the morning of the resurrection, and so will have the dominion in the morning, Ps 49:14 even at the beginning of the thousand years, as soon as Christ will come; but the wicked will not rise till the evening of that day, or till the close of the thousand years: and this agrees with the notions of the Jews, who thought that some will rise before others;

"Wheresoever thou findest the dead, take them and bury them, and I will give thee the first place in my resurrection." (2 Esdras 2:23)

Having mentioned those words in Ps 116:9 "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living", it is asked {i},

"is there no land of the living but Tyre and its neighbours, and Caesarea, and its neighbours, where is cheapness and fulness? says R. Simeon ben Lekish, in the name of Bar Kaphra, the land in which the dead live, hlyxt, "first", in the days of the Messiah:"

and on the same place elsewhere {k} they observe, that

"our Rabbins say two things, or give two reasons, why the fathers loved to be buried in the land of Israel, because the dead in the land of Israel hlyxt Myyx, "live", or "rise first", in the days of the Messiah, and shall enjoy the years of the Messiah:"

and in another place {l} they take notice of what is written in
Isa 26:19 "and the earth shall cast out the dead": says R. Jochanan,

"the dead which are in the land (i.e. of Israel), they shall "live first"; as it is said, "thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise": these are they that are without the land; "awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust", these are they that die in the wilderness:"

and again {m},

"as it is said, Isa 40:26 "that bringeth out their host by numbers", come see, it is said, all that die in the land of Israel atymdqb Nwmwqy, "shall rise first", because the holy blessed God shall awake them, and raise them, according to Isa 26:19."

Once more they say {n},

"they that study in the law as they ought, these are they that shall "rise first" to everlasting life, as it is said
Da 12:2, "and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life", &c. and these are for everlasting life, because they study in everlasting life, which is the law:"

to which may be added the following passage {o},

"they that are worthy to be buried in the land of Israel, shall "be raised first"--and they shall be raised and quickened before the rest of the children of the world, who draw the waters of the law; and they draw, because they study to draw out of the waters of the law; and they are strengthened by the tree of life, and they shall go out "first", because the tree of life is the cause why they shall "rise first":"

they sometimes endeavour to fix the time, how long they will rise before the rest {p};

""many of those that sleep", &c. these are the righteous that shall "go before" others in life, and how many years shall they go before them? R. Judah says, two hundred and ten years; R. Isaac says, two hundred and fourteen; according to others, the righteous shall go (or be raised) a year before the rest of men; says R. Nachman, it will be according to the computation (of time) that the carcass has been in the dust; R. Jose replies, if so, there will be many resurrections."

These instances may suffice to show, that the Jews had a notion of some persons rising before others, to which the apostle may have some reference; though his sense is not only this, but also that the dead in Christ shall rise before the living saints are changed, and taken up to be with Christ, and so shall not go before to him; which illustrates and proves what he had before asserted.

{d} Targum Jon. in Exod. xx. 18. {e} Kettoreth Hassamamim in ib. {f} Mechilta in ib. & Abarbinel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 11. 4. {g} Zohar in Lev. fol. 42. 2. 4. {h} Abkath Rocel, p. 138. Ed. Huls. {i} T. Hieros. Kilaim, fol. 32. 3. & Cetubot, fol. 35. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 74. fol. 65. 1. {k} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 96. fol. 83. 4. & 84. 1. & Shemot Rabba, sect. 32. fol. 135. 2. {l} Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 4. {m} Zohar in Gen. fol. 79. 3. {n} Ib. fol. 100. 3. {o} Ib. fol. 103. 1. {p} Ib. fol. 83. 1.

1 Thessalonians 4:17

Ver. 17. Then we which are alive and remain,....
See Gill on "1Th 4:15".

shall be caught up; suddenly, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and with force and power; by the power of Christ, and by the ministry and means of the holy angels; and to which rapture will contribute, the agility which the bodies both of the raised and changed saints will have: and this rapture of the living saints will be

together with them; with the dead in Christ, that will then be raised; so that the one will not come before the other, or the one be sooner with Christ than the other; but the one being raised and the other changed, they will be joined in one company and general assembly, and be caught up together:

in the clouds; the same clouds perhaps in which Christ will come, will be let down to take them up; these will be the chariots, in which they will be carried up to him; and thus, as at our Lord's ascension a cloud received him, and in it he was carried up out of the sight of men, so at this time will all the saints ride up in the clouds of heaven:

to meet the Lord in the air; whither he will descend, and will then clear the regions of the air of Satan, and his posse of devils, which now rove about there, watching all opportunities, and taking all advantages to do mischief on earth; these shall then fall like lightning from heaven, and be bound and shut up in the bottomless pit, till the thousand years are ended: here Christ will stop, and will be visible to all, and as easily discerned by all, good and bad, as the body of the sun at noonday; as yet he will not descend on earth, because it is not fit to receive him; but when that and its works are burnt up, and it is purged and purified by fire, and become a new earth, he will descend upon it, and dwell with his saints in it: and this suggests another reason why he will stay in the air, and his saints shall meet him there, and whom he will take up with him into the third heaven, till the general conflagration and burning of the world is over, and to preserve them from it; and then shall all the elect of God descend from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband, and he with them, and the tabernacle of God shall be with men; see Re 21:1. The resurrection by the Mahometans is called hlla aql {q}, "a meeting of God", or a going to meet God:

and so shall we ever be with the Lord; now the saints are with him at times, and have communion with him, but not always; but then they shall be ever with him; wherever he is; first in the air, where they shall meet him; then in the third heaven, where they shall go up with him; then on earth, where they shall descend and reign with him a thousand years; and then in the ultimate glory to all eternity: and this will be the issue and accomplishment of the counsel and covenant of grace, of the sufferings and death of Christ, and of his preparations and prayers.

{q} Alkoran, Surat. 6. v. 31. p. 113. Ed. Hinckelman.

1 Thessalonians 4:18

Ver. 18. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. Or doctrines; as that the saints, when they die, do not cease to be, but are asleep, and asleep in Jesus; that their souls are with him, and their bodies sleep in his arms, and are his care; that these will be as soon with Christ, as the saints that will be alive when he comes; that the coming of Christ will be with great power and glory; that the righteous will rise first in the morning of the resurrection, and before the living saints are changed, and are with Christ; that they will both be taken up together to meet him; and that they shall all be with him, and that for ever, and never part more; than which nothing can yield more true and solid comfort, under all the trials and troubles of this life, under all diseases and distempers of body, under all afflictions and persecutions for Christ's sake, under the loss of near and dear relations, and in a view of death and eternity: some copies read, "with these words of the spirit"; and so the Arabic version, "with these spiritual words": for such they are, being the word of God, as in **1Th 4:15**.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Thessalonians 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 THESSALONIANS 5

In this chapter the apostle discourses concerning the suddenness of Christ's coming, and the necessity of sobriety and watchfulness, and being on our guard with respect unto it, and then proceeds to exhort to several duties of religion, and closes the epistle with prayers for the saints, salutations of them, advice unto them, and with his usual benediction. Having spoken of the coming of Christ in the preceding chapter, the apostle signifies he had no need to write of the time and season of it; since it was a well known thing that it would be sudden, and at an unawares, like the coming of a thief in the night, and the travail of a woman with child, though certain and inevitable; and would bring sure destruction on wicked men, unthought of by them, **1Th 5:1** but such was the state and condition of the saints, being not in the night of nature's darkness and unregeneracy, but enlightened by the spirit of God, that they were not ignorant of these things, nor liable to be surprised unawares hereby, **1Th 5:4**, however, in consideration of their being in the light, and not in darkness, it became them to behave accordingly, and not indulge themselves in sleep and sloth, but be watchful and sober, and on their guard, having on their spiritual armour, **1Th 5:6** and the rather, since they were not appointed to the wrath they deserved, but to salvation by Christ; whose end in dying for them was, that they might live together with him, and therefore should exhort and comfort, and edify one another, **1Th 5:9** and then follow various exhortations, some, which respect their ministers, their knowledge of them, love to them, and esteem for them, on account of their dignity, office, work, and usefulness, **1Th 5:12** others, which concern themselves and one another, as church members, **1Th 5:13** others, which regard also them that are without, **1Th 5:14** and others which relate to joy and thanksgiving, to prayer and praise;

to the gifts of the spirit, and the ministry of the word; and to a trial and examination of what is good, and an abiding by it, and an abstinence from all evil, and every appearance of it, **1Th 5:16** and the whole is concluded with prayers for them, for their perfect sanctification, and entire preservation to the coming of Christ; which were put up in faith, grounded upon the faithfulness of God who had called them to grace and glory, **1Th 5:23** and with a request to them to pray for him, and other ministers of the Gospel, and to salute all the brethren, **1Th 5:25** and with a charge to read this letter to them all, **1Th 5:27** and with his usual benediction, **1Th 5:28**.

Ver. 1. But of the times and the seasons, brethren,.... Of the coming of Christ, his "appointed time" and "his day", as the Ethiopic version renders it; of the resurrection of the dead in Christ first, and of the rapture of all the saints in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, things treated of in the preceding chapter: and which might excite a curiosity to know the times and seasons of them; as in what year they would come to pass; in what season of the year, whether winter or summer; in what month, and on what day of the month; and whether in the night season, or in the daytime; and in what hour, whether at midnight, cockcrowing, morning, or noonday: to repress which the apostle observes,

ye have no need that I write unto you; to write to them concerning the things themselves was necessary and useful, to stir up and encourage their faith, hope, and expectation of them; to allay their grief for departed friends, and to comfort one another under the various trials and exercises of life; but to write to them about the time of these things would be trifling and unnecessary, would be an idle speculation, and an indulging a vain curiosity; and, besides, was impracticable: for of that day and hour knows no man; the times and seasons the Father hath put in his own power; for these things are equally true of Christ's second coming, as of the kingdom of Christ coming with power and glory, and of the destruction of Jerusalem, Mt 24:36. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, "ye have no need that we write unto you"; the reason follows;

1 Thessalonians 5:2

Ver. 2. For yourselves know perfectly,.... With great exactness and accuracy, with great clearness and perspicuity, as a certain truth, which was made plain and evident to them, and about which there could be no question; and which perfect knowledge they had, either from the words of Christ, Mt 24:42, or from the ministration of the apostle and his fellow labourers, when among them:

that the day of the Lord; of the Lord Jesus, when he will show himself to be King of kings, and Lord of lords, and the Judge of the whole earth; and which is sometimes styled the day of the Son of man, and the day of God, for Christ will appear then most gloriously, both in his divine and human nature; the day of redemption, that is, of the body from the grave, and from corruption and mortality; and the last day in which will be the resurrection of the dead, and the day of judgment, in which Christ will come to judge the quick and dead: and which

so cometh as a thief in the night; at an unawares, and the Lord himself in that day will so come, **Re 3:3** respect is had not to the character of the thief, nor to the end of his coming; but to the manner of it, in the dark, indiscernibly, suddenly, and when not thought of and looked for; and such will be the coming of Christ, it will be sudden, and unknown before hand, and when least thought of and expected: and since the Thessalonians knew this full well, it was needless for the apostle to write about the time and season of it; which they were sensible of, could no more be known and fixed, than the coming of a thief into anyone of their houses.

1 Thessalonians 5:3

Ver. 3. For when they shall say,.... Or men shall say, that is, wicked and ungodly men, persons in a state of unregeneracy:

peace and safety; when they shall sing a requiem, to themselves, promise themselves much ease and peace for years to come, and imagine their persons and property to be very secure from enemies and oppressors, and shall flatter themselves with much and long temporal happiness:

then sudden destruction cometh upon them; as on the men of the old world in the times of Noah, and on the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Lot; for as these, will be the days of the Son of man, as at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, so at the last day; see Lu 17:26 and as was the destruction of literal Babylon, so of Babylon in a mystical sense, or antichrist and his followers: and which will be

as travail upon a woman with child; whose anguish and pains are very sharp, the cause of which is within herself, and which come suddenly upon her, and are unavoidable; and so the metaphor expresses the sharpness and severity of the destruction of the wicked, thus the calamities on the Jewish nation are expressed by a word which signifies the sorrows, pangs, and birth throes of a woman in travail, Mt 24:8, and likewise that the cause of it is from themselves, their own sins and transgressions; and also the suddenness of it, which will come upon them in the midst of all their mirth, jollity, and security; and moreover, the inevitableness of it, it will certainly come at the full and appointed time, though that is not known:

and they shall not escape; the righteous judgment of God, the wrath of the Lamb, or falling into his hands; to escape is impossible, rocks, hills, and mountains will not cover and hide them; before the judgment seat of Christ they must stand, and into everlasting punishment must they go.

1 Thessalonians 5:4

Ver. 4. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness,.... In a state of unregeneracy, which is a state of darkness, blindness, and ignorance, and which is the condition of all men by nature; they are born in darkness, and are brought up in it, and willingly, walk in it; they are covered with it, as the earth was covered with darkness in its first creation; and dwell in it, as the Egyptians did for some days, in thick darkness, darkness which might be felt; their understandings are darkened with respect to the true knowledge of God, the nature of sin, the way of salvation by Christ, the work of the spirit of God upon the soul, and the necessity of it, the Scriptures of truth, and the mysteries of the Gospel; and which is the case of God's elect themselves, while unregenerate: but now these persons were called out of darkness, turned from it, and delivered from the power of it; and therefore knew that the day of the Lord comes as above described, by the metaphors of a thief in the night, and a woman with child, and needed not to be informed about that matter: or

that that day should overtake you as a thief; or seize and lay hold upon you as a thief who comes in the dark, and lays hold upon a person suddenly; but these saints were not in the dark, but in the light, and so could see when the day of the Lord came; and would not be surprised with it, as a man is seized with terror and fright, when laid hold on by a thief; since they would be, or at least should be on their watch, and be looking out for, and hasting to the coming of the day of God.

1 Thessalonians 5:5

Ver. 5. Ye are all children of light,.... Or enlightened persons, whose understandings were enlightened by the spirit of God, to see their lost state by nature, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the insufficiency of their righteousness to justify them before God, the fulness, suitableness, and excellency of Christ's righteousness, the way of salvation by Christ, and that it is all of grace from first to last; to understand in some measure the Scriptures of truth, and the mysteries of the Gospel; to have knowledge of some things that are yet to be done on earth, as the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles, the conversion of the Jews, the destruction of antichrist, the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the change of living saints, and the rapture of both up into the air to meet Christ, the burning of the world, and the new heavens and new earth, where Christ and his saints will dwell; as also to have some glimpse of the heavenly glory, of the unseen joys, and invisible realities of the other world: and this the apostle says of them all, in a judgment of charity, as being under a profession of the grace of God, and in a church state, and nothing appearing against them why such a character did not belong to them:

and the children of the day; of the Gospel day, in distinction from the night of Jewish darkness; and of the day of grace which was come upon their souls, in opposition to the night of ignorance and infidelity, which was past; and of the everlasting day of glory, being heirs of, and having a right unto, and a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light:

we are not of the night, nor of darkness; that is not the children of darkness, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; and the former changes the person, and reads, "ye are not the children of the night", &c. of the night of the legal dispensation, or of Gentile ignorance; or of a state of natural darkness, in unregeneracy and was no need to write unto them concerning the time and season of Christ's coming, and lays a foundation for the following exhortations.

1 Thessalonians 5:6

Ver. 6. Therefore let us not sleep as do others.... As the rest of the Gentiles, as unconverted persons, who are in a state of darkness, and are children of the night; let us not act that part they do, or be like them; which professors of religion too much are, when they indulge themselves in carnal lusts and pleasures, and are careless and thoughtless about the coming of the day of the Lord; and get into a stupid, drowsy, and slumbering frame of spirit; when grace lies dormant as if it was not, and they grow backward to, and slothful in the discharge of duty, and content themselves with the bare externals of religion; and become lukewarm and indifferent with respect to the truths and ordinance of the Gospel, the cause of God, the interest of religion, and glory of Christ; and are unconcerned about sins of omission or commission: and are willing to continue in such a position, being displeased at every admonition and exhortation given them to awake; but this is very unbecoming children of the light, and of the day:

but let us watch; over ourselves, our hearts, thoughts, affections, words and actions; and over others, our fellow Christians, that they give not into bad principles and evil practices; and against sin, and all appearance of it; against the temptations of Satan, the snares of the world, and the errors of wicked men, who lie in wait to deceive; and in the word and ordinances, and particularly in prayer, both unto it, in it, and after it; and for the second coming of Christ, with faith, affection, and patience; and the rather, because of the uncertainty of the time of it;

and be sober; not only in body, abstaining from excessive eating and drinking, using this world, and the good things of it, so as not to abuse them, or ourselves with them; but also in mind, that the heart be overcharged with the cares of this world; for men may be inebriated with the world, as well as with wine; and the one is as prejudicial to the soul as the other is to the body; for an immoderate care for, and pursuit after the world, chokes the word, makes it unfruitful, and runs persons into divers snares and temptations, and hurtful lusts. The Arabic version renders it, "let us repent"; and the Ethiopic version, "let us understand"; as intending the sobriety of the mind, repentance being an after thought of the mind, a serious reflection on past actions with sorrow and concern; and thinking soberly, and not more highly than a man ought to think of himself, his gifts, his attainments and abilities, in opposition to pride, vanity, and self-conceit, is very becoming; and shows a true and well informed understanding and judgment, and that a man is really sober and himself.

1 Thessalonians 5:7

Ver. 7. For they that sleep, sleep in the night,.... The night is the usual season for sleep, and sleep is only for such who are in darkness, and are children of the night; and not proper to be indulged by such who are children of the day, and of the light:

and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night; drunkenness is a work of darkness, and therefore men given to excessive drinking love darkness rather than light, and choose the night for their purpose. To be drunk at noon is so shameful and scandalous, that men who love the sin, and indulge themselves in it, take the night season for it; and equally shameful it is, that enlightened persons should be inebriated, either with the cares of this life, or with an over weening opinion of themselves.

1 Thessalonians 5:8

Ver. 8. But let us, who are of the day, be sober,.... As in body, so in mind; let us cast off the works of darkness, and have no fellowship with them; since the day of grace has passed upon us, the darkness is gone, and the true light shines, let us walk as children of the light, living soberly, righteously, and godly:

putting on the breastplate of faith and love; this is the coat of mail, 1Sa 17:5 which was made of iron or brass; and the Ethiopic version here calls it, "the iron coat." The allusion seems to be to the high priest's breastplate of judgment, in which were put the Thummim and Urim, which signify perfections and lights; faith may answer to the former, and love to the latter: these two graces go together, faith works by love, and love always accompanies faith; as there can be no true faith where there is no love, so there is no true love where faith is wanting: "faith" is a considerable part of the Christian soldier's breastplate, and answers the end of a breastplate, it being that grace which preserves the vitals of religion, and keeps all warm and comfortable within; and secures the peace and joy of the saints, as it has to do with Christ and his righteousness; wherefore this breastplate is called "the breastplate of righteousness", **Eph 6:14**, it fortifies the soul, and preserves it from Satan's temptations, from his fiery darts entering, and doing the mischief they would; it defends the heart against the errors of the wicked, for a man that believes has a witness in himself to the truths of the Gospel, and therefore cannot be easily moved from them; and strengthens a man against the carnal reasonings of the mind, for faith in the promises of God surmounts all the difficulties that reason objects to the fulfilling of them; and secures from the fears of death, the terrors of the law, and dread of the wrath of God: and love is the other part of the breast plate; love to God and Christ is a means of keeping the believer sound both in faith and practice; for a soul that truly loves God and Christ cannot give in to principles that depreciate the grace of God, and derogate from the glory and dignity of the person and office of Christ, or the work of the Spirit; and such love the ordinances and commands of Christ, and hate every false way of worship, or invention of men; and love to the saints is the bond of perfectness, knits them together, preserves unity and peace, and fortifies against the common enemy:

and for an helmet, the hope of salvation; the helmet is that part of armour which covers the head, and was made of brass, 1Sa 17:5 and used to be anointed with oil, that it might shine the brighter, last the longer, and more easily repel blows; to which this grace of the Spirit, hope of salvation by Christ, is fitly compared: for by "salvation" is meant salvation by Christ, spiritual salvation, and that as complete in heaven; and hope is a grace wrought in the soul by the spirit of God, which has for its foundation Christ and his righteousness, and for its object the heavenly glory; it covers the head in the day of battle, and preserves from being overcome by sin and Satan, when one that is destitute of it says there is no hope, and we will walk every man after the imagination of his own evil heart; it erects the head in time of difficulty, amidst tribulation and afflictions; it defends it from fears of divine wrath which is revealed from heaven, and sometimes in appearance seems to hang over it; and it preserves from Satan's temptations, and being carried away with the error of the wicked, from the hope of the Gospel: and thus a Christian clothed and armed with these graces, faith, hope, and love, should be so far from indulging himself in sin and sloth, that he ought always to be sober and watchful, and prepared to meet the enemy in the gate; and be ready, always waiting for his Lord's coming.

1 Thessalonians 5:9

Ver. 9. For God hath not appointed us to wrath,.... To destruction and ruin, the effect of wrath; though there are some that are vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, of old ordained to condemnation, and who are reserved for the day of evil; but there are others who are equally children of wrath, as deserving of the wrath of God in themselves as others, who are not appointed to it; which is an instance of wonderful and distinguishing grace to them:

but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ; salvation is alone by Christ, he alone has wrought it out; it is in him, and in no other; he was appointed to this work, was called and sent, and came to do it, and has done it; and God's elect, who were chosen in him, are appointed in the counsel and purpose of God, to obtain, possess, and enjoy this salvation; and which, as this appointment may be known, as it was by these Thessalonians; the Gospel having come to them, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as it is an encouragement to faith and hope, so it excites to sobriety and watchfulness, and the discharge of every duty. The doctrine of predestination does not lead to despair, but encourages the hope of salvation; and it is no licentious doctrine, for election to salvation by Christ is through sanctification of the Spirit, and unto holiness; and good works are the fruits of it, and are what God has foreordained his people should walk in.

1 Thessalonians 5:10

Ver. 10. Who died for us,.... The elect of God, who are not appointed to wrath, but to salvation by Christ, on which account he died for them; not merely as a martyr to confirm his doctrine, or only by way of example, but as a surety, in the room and stead of his people; as a sacrifice for their sins, to make atonement for them, and save them from them; so that his death lays a solid foundation for hope of salvation by him:

that whether we wake or sleep: which phrases are to be understood, not in the same sense in which they are used in the context; as if the sense was, whether a man indulges himself in sin, and gives way to sleep and sloth, and carnal security, or whether he is awake and on his watch and guard, he shall through the death of Christ have eternal life secured to him; not but that there is a truth in this, that eternal life and salvation by Christ, as it does not depend on our watchfulness, so it shall not be hindered by the sleepy, drowsy frame of spirit, the children of God sometimes fall into: but rather natural sleep and waking are intended; and the meaning is, that those for whom Christ died are always safe, sleeping or waking, whatever they are about and employed in, and in whatsoever situation and condition they are in this world; though it may be best of all to interpret the words, of life and death; and they may have a particular regard to the state of the saints at Christ's second coming, when some will be awake, or alive, and others will be asleep in Christ, or dead; and it matters not which they are, whether living or dead; see Ro 14:7 for the end of Christ's dying for them, and which will be answered in one as well as in another, is, that

we should live together with him: Christ died for his people, who were dead in trespasses and sins, that they might live spiritually a life of sanctification from him, and a life of justification on him, and by him; and that they might live a life of communion with him; and that they might live eternally with him, in soul and body, in heaven, and reign with him there, and partake of his glory; and this all the saints will, whether they be found dead or alive at his coming;

for the dead will immediately arise, those that sleep in the dust will awake at once, and they that are alive will be changed, and both will be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and be for ever with him: now the consideration of the death of Christ, and this end of it, which will certainly be answered, serves greatly to encourage hope of salvation by him, and faith in him, and an earnest expectation of his second coming.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Ver. 11. Wherefore comfort yourselves together,.... Either with the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, the second coming of Christ, and the thoughts of being for ever with him, and one another, and so may be a repetition of the advice in **1Th 4:18** or with this consideration, that they were not in a state of darkness, ignorance, and infidelity, but were children of the light, and of the day, being called out of darkness into marvellous light, and should enjoy the light of life; and with the doctrine of predestination, they being appointed not to that wrath they were deserving of, but to be possessed of salvation by Jesus Christ, of which they could never fail, since the purpose of God according to election always stands sure, not upon the foot of works, but upon his own sovereign and unchangeable grace; or with the doctrine of Christ's sufferings and death, in their room and stead, whereby the law was fulfilled, justice satisfied, their sins atoned for, pardon procured, an everlasting righteousness brought in, and their salvation fully accomplished, things the apostle had spoken of in the context: the words will bear to be rendered, "exhort one another"; that is, not to sleep, as do others, or indulge themselves in sin and sloth; but to be sober, and upon their watch and guard, and in a posture of defence against the enemy; to put on the whole armour of God, and particularly the plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation:

and edify one another; by praying together, conversing with each other about the doctrines of the Gospel, and the dealings of God with their souls; abstaining from all corrupt communication, which has a tendency to hurt each other's principles or practices, or to stir up wrath and contention; attending only to those things which are for the use of edifying, whereby their souls might be more and more built upon Christ, and their most holy faith; and be a rising edifice, and grow up unto an holy temple in the Lord, and for an habitation of God through the Spirit:

even as also ye do; which is said in their commendation, and not through flattery, but to encourage them to go on in this way; and from whence it may be observed, that mutual consolation, exhortation, and edification, are things the saints should be stirred up to frequently, even though they are regarded by them, and much more then should these be pressed upon them who are careless and negligent of them.

1 Thessalonians 5:12

Ver. 12. And we beseech you, brethren,.... Not in a natural or civil, but spiritual relation; and what follows relating to the ministers of the word, the apostle addresses this church on their behalf, not in an imperious and authoritative manner, but by way of entreaty, with great humility and strong affection:

know them that labour among you; who were not non-residents, but were upon the spot with them; and where indeed should pastors be, but with their flocks? and husbandmen and vinedressers, but in their fields and vineyards? and stewards, but in the families where they are placed? and parents, but with their children? nor were they loiterers in the vineyard, or slothful servants, and idle shepherds, but labourers; who laboured in the word and doctrine; gave up themselves to meditation, reading, and prayer; laboured hard in private, to find out the meaning of the word of God; and studied to show themselves workmen, that need not be ashamed; and preached the word in season and out of season; faithfully dispensed all ordinances, and diligently performed the duties of their office; and were willing to spend and be spent, for the glory of Christ, and the good of souls, and earnestly contended for the faith of the Gospel; and all this they did, as among them, so for them, for their spiritual good and welfare: some render the words, "in you"; they laboured in teaching, instructing, and admonishing them; they laboured to enlighten their understandings, to inform their judgments, to raise their affections, and to bring their wills to a resignation to the will of God; to refresh their memories with Gospel truths; to strengthen their faith, encourage their hope, and draw out their love to God and Christ, and the brethren: and what the apostle directs them to, as their duty towards these persons, is to "know" them; that is, not to learn their names, and know their persons, who they were; for they could not but know them in this sense, since they dwelt and laboured among them, and were continually employed in instructing them; but that they would make themselves known to them, and converse freely and familiarly with them, that so they might know the state of their souls, and be better able to speak a word in season to them; and that they would take notice of them, show respect to them, and an affection for them; acknowledge them as their pastors, and account of them as stewards of the mysteries of God, and own them as ministers of Christ; and reckon them as blessings to them, and acknowledge the same with thankfulness; and obey them, and submit unto them in the ministry of the word and ordinances, and to their counsel and advice, so far as is agreeable to the word of God: the Arabic version renders it, "that ye may know the dignity of them that labour among you"; and so conduct and behave towards them accordingly:

and are over you in the Lord; are set in the highest place in the church, and bear the highest office there; have the presidency and government in it, and go before the saints, and guide and direct them in matters both of doctrine and practice, being ensamples to the flock; the Syriac version renders it, "and stand before you"; ministering unto you in holy things, being servants to you for Jesus' sake: and this "in the Lord"; or by the Lord; for they did not take this honour to themselves, nor were they appointed by men, but they were made able ministers of the word by God; received their gifts qualifying them for this work from Christ, and were placed as overseers of the church by the Holy Ghost: and it was only in things pertaining to the Lord that they were over them; not in things civil, which distinguishes them from civil magistrates; nor in things secular and worldly, they had nothing to do in their families, to preside there, or with their worldly concerns, only in the church of Christ, and in things pertaining to their spiritual welfare; and though they were over them, yet under Christ, and in subjection to him, as their Lord and King; governing not in an arbitrary and tyrannical way, lording it over God's heritage, usurping a dominion over the faith of men, coining new doctrines, and making new laws; but according to the word of God, and laws of Christ, in the fear of the Lord, and with a view to the glory of God, and in love to souls: hence the Arabic version renders it, in the love of the Lord; the phrase, "in the Lord", is omitted in the Syriac version:

and admonish you; or instruct you, put into your minds good and wholesome things, and put you in mind of the doctrines of the Gospel, of the duties of religion, of former experiences; and give warning of sin and danger, and reprove and rebuke with faithfulness; and as the case requires, either in public or private, and with sharpness or tenderness.

1 Thessalonians 5:13

Ver. 13. And to esteem them very highly,.... Or, as the Ethiopic version renders it, "honour them abundantly"; for such are worthy of double honour, and to be had in reputation; they should be honourably thought of, and be high in the affections of the saints, who should esteem them better than themselves, or others in the community; and should be spoke well of, and their characters vindicated from the reproach and obloquy of others; and should be spoke respectfully to, and be honourably done by; should be provided for with an honourable maintenance, which is part of the double honour due to them in **1Ti 5:17** and this should be

in love; not in fear, nor in hypocrisy and dissimulation; not in word and in tongue only, but from the heart and real affection: the Syriac version renders it, "that they be esteemed by you with more abundant love"; with an increasing love, or with greater love than is shown to the brethren in common, or to private members: and that for their works' sake; for the sake of the work of the ministry, which is a good work as well as honourable; is beneficial to the souls of men, and is for the glory of God, being diligently and faithfully performed by them; on which account they are to be valued, and not for an empty title without labour.

And be at peace among yourselves. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "with them"; and so the Syriac version, connecting the former clause with this, "for their works' sake have peace with them"; that is, with the ministers of the word; do not disagree with them upon every trivial occasion, or make them offenders for a word; keep up a good understanding, and cultivate love and friendship with them; "embrace them with brotherly love", as the Ethiopic version renders the words, understanding them also as relating to ministers; a difference with them is of bad consequence, and must render their ministry greatly useless and unprofitable to those who differ with them, as well as render them very uncomfortable and unfit for it. The Arabic version renders it, "in yourselves"; as referring to internal peace in their own souls, which they should be concerned for; and which only is attained to, enjoyed, and preserved, by looking to the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ: or else it may regard peace among themselves, and with one another as brethren, and as members of the same church; which as it is for their credit and reputation without doors, and for their comfort, delight, and pleasure within, in their church state and fellowship, so it tends to make the ministers of the Gospel more easy and comfortable in their work: thus the words, considered in this sense, have still a relation to them.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

Ver. 14. Now we exhort you, brethren,.... This is said either to the ministers of the word that laboured among them, presided over them, and admonished them; and the rather, because some of these things here directed to are pressed upon the members of the church in **1Th 5:11** and which otherwise must make a repetition here; or to the members in conjunction with their pastors:

warn them that are unruly; or disorderly, idle persons, working not at all, busying themselves with other men's matters, and living upon the church's stock, reprove them for their sloth, exhort them to work with their own hands, to do their own business, and with quietness eat their own bread; or such who keep not their places in the church, but are like soldiers that go out of their rank, desert their companies, and fly from their colours, or stand aside, rebuke these, and exhort them to fill up their places, to abide by the church, and the ordinances of Christ; or such who are contentious and quarrelsome, turbulent, headstrong, and unruly, that cause and foment animosities and divisions, check them, admonish them, lay them under censure, for such a custom and practice is not to be allowed of in the churches of Christ.

Comfort the feebleminded: such as are not able to bear the loss of near and dear relations; are ready to stagger under the cross, and at the reproaches and persecutions of the world; and are almost overset with the temptations of Satan; and are borne down and discouraged with the corruptions of their hearts, speak a comfortable word to them, encourage them with the doctrines of grace, and the promises of the Gospel.

Support the weak; who are weak in faith and knowledge, strengthen them, hold them up; or as the Syriac version renders it, "take the burden of the weak" and carry it, bear their infirmities, as directed in Ro 15:1,

be patient towards all men; towards the unruly, the feebleminded, and the weak as well as to believers; give place to wrath, and leave vengeance to him to whom it belongs; exercise longsuffering and forbearance with fellow creatures and fellow Christians.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

Ver. 15. See that none render evil for evil unto any man,.... Not an ill word for an ill word, railing for railing, nor an ill action for an ill action; no, not to any man whatever, not to an enemy, a persecutor, a profane person, as well as not to a brother, a believer in Christ; and this the saints should not only be careful of, and guard against in themselves, but should watch over one another, and see to it, that no such practice is found in each other.

But ever follow that which is good; honestly, morally, pleasantly, and profitably good; even every good work, which is according to the will of God, is done in faith, from love, and to the glory of God; and particularly acts of beneficence and liberality to the poor; and which are not to be once, or now and then done, but to be followed and pursued after, and that always;

both among yourselves, and to all men; not only to the household of faith, though to them especially, and in the first place, but to all other men, as opportunity offers, even to our enemies, and them that persecute us, and despitefully use us; do good to their bodies, and to their souls, as much as in you lies, by feeding and clothing the one, and by praying for, advising, and instructing the other.

1 Thessalonians 5:16

Ver. 16. Rejoice evermore. Not in a carnal, but in a spiritual way, with joy in the Holy Ghost; and which arises from a view of pardon by the blood of Christ, of justification by his righteousness, and atonement by his sacrifice; not in themselves, as the wicked man rejoices in his wickedness, and the hypocrite and formalist in his profession of religion, and the reputation he gains by it; and the Pharisee and legalist in his morality, civility, negative holiness, and obedience to the rituals of the law; for such rejoice in their boastings, and all such rejoicing is evil; but in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the greatness, fitness, fulness, and glory of his person, in his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, in what he is in himself, and is made unto his people, and in what he has done, and is still doing for them, and particularly in the salvation he has wrought out; and not in the things of this life, and the attainments of it, either of body, or of mind, or of estate, as in strength, wisdom, or riches; but in things spiritual, that our names are written in heaven, and we are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and called by his grace, and shall be glorified together with him; and not only in prosperity, but in adversity, since all things work together for good, and afflictions serve for the exercise of grace; and especially, since to suffer reproach and persecution for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, is a great honour, and the Spirit of God, and of glory, rests on such, and great will be their reward in heaven: and there is always reason, and ever a firm ground and foundation for rejoicing with believers, let their circumstances or their frames be what they will; since God, their covenant God, is unchangeable, and his love to them is from everlasting to everlasting invariably the same; the covenant of grace, which is ordered in all things, and sure, is firm and immovable; and Jesus, the Mediator of it, is the same today, yesterday, and for ever.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Ver. 17. Pray without ceasing. Not that saints should be always on their knees, or ever lifting up their hands, and vocally calling upon God; this is not required of them, and would clash with, and break in upon other parts of religious worship, and the duties of civil life, which are to be attended to, as well as this, and besides would be impracticable; for however willing a spiritual man might be to be engaged in this work always, yet the flesh is weak, and would not be able to bear it; and it requires food and drink, sleep and rest, for its refreshment and support; for all which there must be time allowed, as well as for other actions of animal life, and the business of a man's calling. But the meaning is, that believers should be daily, and often found in the performance of this duty; for as their wants daily return upon them, and they are called to fresh service, and further trials and exercises, they have need of more grace, strength, and assistance, and therefore should daily pray for it; and besides certain times both in the closet, and in the family, in which they should attend the throne of grace, there is such a thing as mental prayer, praying in the heart, private ejaculations of the soul, which may be sent up to heaven, while a man is engaged in the affairs of life. The Ethiopic version renders the words, "pray frequently"; do not leave off praying, or cease from it through the prevalence of sin, the temptations of Satan, or through discouragement, because an answer is not immediately had, or through carelessness and negligence, but continue in it, and be often at it; see Lu 18:1. These words are opposed to the practice of such, who either pray not at all, or, having used it, have left it off, or who only pray in a time of trouble and distress, and bear hard on those who think they should not pray but when under the influences of the Spirit, and when his graces are in a lively exercise: the reason for this rule of praying with frequency and constancy is, because the saints are always needy, they are always in want of mercies of one kind or another, and therefore should continually go to the throne of grace, and there ask for grace and mercy to help them in time of need.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Ver. 18. In everything give thanks,.... That is, to God the Father, in the name of Christ; see **Eph 5:20** thanks are to be given to him for all things, as the Ethiopic version renders it; for all temporal good things; for our beings, the preservation of them; for food and raiment, and all the mercies of life; for the means of grace, the word and ordinances, and the ministers of the Gospel; for spiritual blessings, for electing, redeeming, regenerating, adopting, pardoning, justifying, and persevering grace: for a meetness for heaven, a right unto it, and a good hope of it; and especially for Jesus Christ, for such an husband, such an head, such a surety and Saviour, and advocate with the Father, as he is; and for life, peace, joy, comfort, righteousness, and salvation in him: and thanks should be given to God in every circumstance of life; in adversity, as Job did; when not in so comfortable and agreeable a frame of soul as to be wished for, since it might be worse, and is not black despair; even under the temptations of Satan, since they might be greater and heavier, and since the grace of God is sufficient to bear up under them, and deliver out of them, and since there is such a sympathizing high priest and Saviour; and in afflictions of every kind, since they are all for good, temporal, or spiritual, or eternal.

For this is the will of God; which may refer either to all that is said from **1Th 5:11** to this passage, or particularly to this of giving thanks; which is the revealed and declared will of God, is a part of that good, perfect, and acceptable will of his, and what is well pleasing in his sight, and grateful to him; see Ps 69:30 and is

in Christ Jesus concerning you; either declared in and by him, who has made known the whole of the will of God, and so the Arabic version, "which he wills of you by Jesus Christ"; or which is exemplified in Christ, who for, and in all things, gave thanks to God, and had his will resigned to his in every circumstance of life; or, which being done, is acceptable to God through Christ. The Alexandrian copy reads, "for this is the will of God towards you in Christ Jesus"; that is, with respect to you who are in Christ secretly by election, and openly by the effectual calling; and who, of all men in the world, have reason to be thankful for everything, and in every circumstance.

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Ver. 19. Quench not the spirit. By which is meant, not the person of the Spirit, but either the graces of the spirit, which may be compared to light, and fire, and heat, to which the allusion is in the text; such as faith, which is a light in the soul, a seeing of the Son, and an evidence of things not seen; and love, which gives a vehement flame, which many waters cannot quench; and zeal, which is the boiling up of love, the fervency of it; and spiritual knowledge, which is also light, and of an increasing nature, and are all graces of the spirit: and though these cannot be totally extinguished, and utterly put out and lost, yet they may be greatly damped; the light of faith may become dim; and the flame of love be abated, and that wax cold; the heat of zeal may pass into lukewarmness, and an indifference of spirit; and the light of knowledge seem to decline instead of increasing; and all through indulging some sin or sins, by keeping ill company, and by neglecting the ordinances of God, prayer, preaching, and other institutions of the Gospel; wherefore such an exhortation is necessary to quicken saints, and stir them up to the use of those means, whereby those graces are cherished and preserved in their lively exercise; though rather the gifts of the Spirit are intended. The extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, bestowed on the apostles at the day of Pentecost, are represented under the symbol of fire, to which perhaps the apostle may here have respect; and the more ordinary gifts of the Spirit are such as are to be stirred up, as coals of fire are stirred up, in order that they may burn, and shine the brighter, and give both light and heat, **2Ti 1:6** and which may be said to be quenched, when they are neglected, and lie by as useless; when they are wrapped up in a napkin, or hid in the earth; or when men are restrained from the use of them; or when the use of them is not attended to, or is brought into contempt, and the exercise of them rendered useless and unprofitable, as much as in them lies. And even private persons may quench the Spirit of God, his gifts of light and knowledge, when they hold the truth in unrighteousness, imprison it, and conceal it, and do not publicly profess it as they ought.

1 Thessalonians 5:20

Ver. 20. Despise not prophesyings. Or "prophecies"; the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the first coming of Christ, concerning his person, office, and work, his obedience, sufferings, and death, his resurrection from the dead, ascension and session at God's right hand; for though all these are fulfilled, yet they have still their usefulness; for by comparing these with facts, the perfections of God, his omniscience, truth, faithfulness, wisdom, &c. are demonstrated, the authority of the Scriptures established, the truths of the Gospel illustrated and confirmed, and faith strengthened; and besides, there are many prophecies which regard things to be done, and yet to be done under the Gospel dispensation, and therefore should not be set at nought, but highly valued and esteemed: also the predictions of Christ concerning his own sufferings and death, and resurrection from the dead, and what would befall his disciples afterwards, with many things relating to the destruction of Jerusalem, his second coming, and the end of the world, these should be had in great esteem; nor should what the apostles foretold concerning the rise of antichrist, the man of sin, and the apostasy of the latter days, and the whole book of the Revelations, which is no other than a prophecy of the state of the church, from the times of the apostles to the end of the world, be treated with neglect and contempt, but should be seriously considered, and diligently searched and inquired into. Yea, the prophecies of private men, such as Agabus, and others, in the apostle's time, and in later ages, are not to be slighted; though instances of this kind are rare in our times, and things of this nature should not be precipitantly, and without care, given into: but rather prophesyings here intend the explanation of Scripture, and the preaching of the word, and particularly by persons who had not the gift of tongues, and therefore men were apt to despise them; see 1Co 13:2. Just as in our days, if persons have not had a liberal education, and do not understand Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, though they have ministerial gifts, and are capable of explaining the word to edification and comfort, yet are set at nought and rejected, which should not be.

1 Thessalonians 5:21

Ver. 21. Prove all things,.... That are said by the prophets, all the doctrines which they deliver; hear them, though they have not the gift of tongues, and all desirable advantages; do not reject them on that account, and refuse to hear them, for so, many useful men may be laid aside, and the Spirit of God in them be quenched; try their gifts, and attend to their doctrines, yet do not implicitly believe everything they say, but examine them according to the word of God the test and standard of truth; search the Scriptures, whether the things they say are true or not. Not openly erroneous persons, and known heretics, are to be heard and attended on, but the ministers of the word, or such who are said to have a gift of prophesying; these should make use of it, and the church should try and judge their gift, and accordingly encourage or discourage; and also their doctrines, and if false reject them, and if true receive them.

Hold fast that which is good; honest, pleasant, profitable, and agreeable to sound doctrine, to the analogy of faith, and the Scriptures of truth, and is useful and edifying, instructive both as to principle and practice; such should be held fast, that no man take it away; and be retained, though a majority may be against it, for the multitude is not always on the side of truth; and though it may be rejected by men of learning and wealth, as Christ and his doctrines were rejected by the Scribes and Pharisees, and rulers of the people; and though it may be reproached as a novel, upstart notion, or a licentious one, since these were charges against the doctrine of Christ, and his apostles; and though it may be attended with affliction and persecution, yet none of these things should move from it, or cause to let it go.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

Ver. 22. Abstain from all appearance of evil. Of doctrinal evil. Not only open error and heresy are to be avoided, but what has any show of it, or looks like it, or carries in it a suspicion of it, or may be an occasion thereof, or lead unto it; wherefore all new words and phrases of this kind should be shunned, and the form of sound words held fast; and so of all practical evil, not only from sin itself, and all sorts of sin, lesser or greater, as the {w} Jews have a saying,

"take care of a light as of a heavy commandment,"

that is, take care of committing a lesser, as a greater sin, and from the first motions of sin; but from every occasion of it, and what leads unto it, and has the appearance of it, or may be suspected of others to be sin, and so give offence, and be a matter of scandal. The Jews have a saying very agreeable to this {x},

"remove thyself afar off (or abstain) from filthiness, and from everything, wl hmwdh, "that is like unto it"."

{w} Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 1. {x} Apud Drusium in loc.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Ver. 23. And the very God of peace,.... Or "the God of peace himself". The apostle follows his exhortations with prayer to God, knowing the weakness and impotency of the saints to receive them, and act according to them, and his own insufficiency to impress their minds with them; and that unless the Lord opened their ears to discipline, and sealed instruction to them, they would be useless and in vain: wherefore he applies to the throne of grace, and addresses God as "the God of peace"; so called, because of the concern he has in peace and reconciliation made by the blood of Christ, and because he is the giver of peace of conscience, and the author of peace, concord, and unity among the saints, and of all happiness and prosperity, both in this world, and in that which is to come; See Gill on "Ro 15:33". And the apostle might choose to address God under this character, partly to encourage boldness, freedom, and intrepidity at the throne of grace, and partly to raise hope, expectation, and faith of having his requests answered, since God is not an angry God, nor is fury in him, but the God of peace: and the petitions he puts up for the Thessalonians are as follow: and first, that God would

sanctify you wholly; or "all of you", as the Arabic version; or "all of you perfectly", as the Syriac version. These persons were sanctified by the Spirit of God, but not perfectly; the Gospel was come to them in power, and had wrought effectually in them, and they were turned from idols to serve the living God, and had true faith, hope, and love, implanted in them, and which they were enabled to exercise in a very comfortable and commendable manner; but yet this work of grace and sanctification begun in them was far from being perfect, nor is it in the best of saints. There is something lacking in the faith of the greatest believer, love often waxes cold, and hope is not lively at all times, and knowledge is but in part; sin dwells in all; the saints are poor and needy, their wants continually return upon them, and they need daily supplies; the most holy and knowing among them disclaim perfection in themselves, though desirous of it. Their sanctification in Christ is perfect, but not in themselves; there is indeed a perfection of parts in internal sanctification, every grace is implanted, there is not one wanting; the new creature, or new man, has all its parts, though these are not come to their full growth; there is not a perfection of degrees, and this is what the apostle prays for; for sanctification is a progressive, gradual work, it is like seed cast into the earth, which springs up, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, and is as light, which shines more and more to the perfect day. Sanctified persons are first as newborn babes, and then they grow up to be young men, and at last become fathers in Christ; and this work being begun, is carried on, and will be performed, fulfilled, and made perfect: and it is God's work to do it; he begins, and he carries it on, and he will finish it; and therefore the apostle prays to him to do it; this is his first petition: the second follows,

and I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. A like division of man is made by the Jews: says one of their writers {y}

"a man cannot know God, unless he knows wpwgw wtmvnw wvpn, "his soul, his breath, or his spirit, and his body"."

Says {z} R. Isaac,

"worthy are the righteous in this world, and in the world to come, for lo, they are all holy; their body is holy, their soul is holy, their spirit, and their breath is holy"

See Gill on "Heb 4:12". Some by "spirit" understand the graces and gifts of the Spirit in a regenerate man; and by "the soul", the soul as regenerated, and as it is the seat and subject of these graces; and by the body, the habitation of the soul, which is influenced by the grace that is last; and this is a sense not to be despised. Others by "the spirit" understand the rational and immortal soul of man, often called a spirit, as in Ec 12:7 and by the soul, the animal and sensitive soul, which man has in common with brutes; see **Ec 3:21** and by the "body", the outward frame of flesh and blood, and bones; but rather "spirit" and "soul" design the same immaterial, immortal, and rational soul of man, considered in its different powers and faculties. The "spirit" may intend the understanding, Job 32:8 which is the principal, leading, and governing faculty of the soul; and which being enlightened by the Spirit of God, a man knows himself, Christ Jesus, and the things of the Spirit, the truths of the Gospel, and receives and values them. The "soul" may include the will and affections, which are influenced by the understanding; and in a regenerate man the will is brought to a resignation to the will of God, and the affections are set upon divine things, and the body is the instrument of performing religious and spiritual exercises: and these the apostle prays may be

preserved blameless; not that he thought they could be kept from sinning entirely in thought, word, or deed; but that they might be preserved in purity and chastity from the gross enormities of life, and be kept from a total and final falling away, the work of grace be at last completed on the soul and spirit, and the body be raised in incorruption, and glory; and both at the coming of Christ be presented faultless, and without blame, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, first to himself, and then to his Father.

{y} Aben Ezra in Exod. xxxi. 18. {z} Zohar in Lev. fol. 29. 2.

1 Thessalonians 5:24

Ver. 24. Faithful is he that calleth you,.... Into the fellowship of his Son, and to his kingdom and glory, and who continues to do so, not only externally by his word, but internally by his Spirit and grace.

Who also will do it. Two things the apostle mentions as the ground of confidence that the above petition, would be heard and answered; that is, that God would wholly sanctify them, and preserve the whole of them blameless to the coming of Christ; and they are the faithfulness of God, and the effectual calling of his saints. God is faithful to his word, his covenant and promises; he has promised to sanctify and cleanse his people from all their sins, and to preserve them safe to his kingdom and glory; agreeably the Arabic version renders this last clause, "and will execute his promise": and the effectual calling is a sure pledge of glorification; whom God calls he justifies and glorifies; as sure as he gives grace, he will give glory; and whom he calls to his eternal glory, he will make perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle. The Complutensian edition reads, "who also will make your hope firm"; that is, with respect to the above things.

1 Thessalonians 5:25

Ver. 25. Brethren, pray for us. Which is added with great beauty and propriety, after the apostle had so earnestly and affectionately prayed for them; and this is directed, not to the pastors of the church only, but to all the members of it, whom the apostle styles "brethren" in a spiritual relation, as he often does; and of whom he requests, that they would pray for him, and the rest of his fellow ministers and labourers in the word, that God would more and more qualify and fit them for their work, assist in private studies and meditations, give them freedom of thought, liberty of expression, and a door of utterance, and follow their ministrations with a divine blessing and success, and deliver them out of the hands of unreasonable men; See Gill on "Heb 13:18".

1 Thessalonians 5:26

Ver. 26. Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss. In opposition, to an unchaste and hypocritical one. His meaning is, that they would salute the members of the church in his name, and give his Christian love and affections to them. And his view is to recommend to them brotherly love to each other, and to stir them up to the mutual exercise of it more and more.

1 Thessalonians 5:27

Ver. 27. I charge you by the Lord,.... Or "I adjure by the Lord"; by the Lord

Jesus: it is in the form of an oath, and a very solemn one; and shows that oaths may be used on certain and solemn occasions:

that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren; to all the members of the church, who are called "holy", because they were sanctified or set apart by God the Father in election; and were sanctified by the blood of Christ, or their sins were expiated, or atoned for by the sacrifice of Christ in redemption; and were sanctified or made holy by the Spirit of God in regeneration; and were enabled by the grace of God to live holy lives and conversations. Now this epistle being directed only to some of the principal members of the church, it may be to one or more of their elders; lest he or they should be tempted on any account to conceal it, the apostle in a very solemn manner adjures, that it be read publicly to the whole church whom it concerned, that all might hear, and learn, and receive some advantage from it; from whence we may learn, as is observed by many interpreters, that the sacred Scriptures, neither one part nor another, nor the whole of them, are to be kept from private Christians, but may be read, and heard, and used by all.

1 Thessalonians 5:28

Ver. 28. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, Amen. This is the apostle's usual salutation in all his epistles, and the token of the genuineness of them, **2Th 3:17**.
See Gill on "Ro 16:20",
See Gill on "1Co 15:23",
See Gill on "2Co 13:14".

The subscription to this epistle is not genuine, which runs thus, "The first Epistle unto the Thessalonians was written from Athens"; whereas it appears from **1Th 3:1** compared with Ac 18:1 that it was written from Corinth, and not from Athens; nor are these last words, "from Athens", in Beza's Claromontane copy; though they stand in the Syriac and Arabic versions of the London Polygot Bible, which add, "and sent by Timothy", and in the Alexandrian copy, and Complutensian edition.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Thessalonians 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 THESSALONIANS

This second epistle was written, not from Athens, as the subscription testifies, nor from Rome, as Athanasius {a} supposes; but from Corinth, from whence was sent the former, and where the apostle and Timothy, and Silvanus met; and which was sent about half a year after the other. The design of which is to comfort and support the Thessalonians under the afflictions and persecutions they endured for the sake of the Gospel; and to rectify a mistake they had gone into, and which might be occasioned by what the apostle had said in his former epistle, concerning the second coming of Christ, as though it was just at hand; which might lead them to neglect their worldly business, and duties of civil life, and give the enemies of the Gospel an advantage against the whole of it as false, should not this prove true; as also to exhort this church to take notice of disorderly persons such as were idle, and busy bodies, and withdraw from them, and remove them from their communion, as being not only burdensome to them, but a reproach to their profession.

{a} Synopsis Sacr. Script. Tom. ii. p. 129.

INTRODUCTION TO 2 THESSALONIANS 1

This chapter, besides the inscription and salutation, contains a thanksgiving for the flourishing condition in which the graces of the Spirit were in these saints, and consolation for them under their suffering circumstances. The inscription and salutation are in **2Th 1:1** and are as usual: the thanksgiving is in **2Th 1:3** for the growth of their faith, the abounding of their love, and their constant patience under persecutions and afflictions, insomuch that the apostle also gloried of them for these things among other churches, **2Th 1:4** and as an encouragement to them to continue patient under sufferings, he observes that this was a token of the righteous judgment of God, and that they were reckoned worthy of his kingdom for which they suffered, **2Th 1:5** and of which righteous judgment they might be assured, from the nature of God himself, whose justice required a retribution of vengeance to their persecutors, and rest to them with the apostles, **2Th 1:6** the time of which rest and ease is pointed at, as that it will be at the coming of Christ; which is described by the place from whence he comes, heaven; by his retinue, his mighty angels; by the manner in which he shall come, in flaming fire; and by the vengeance he will execute: the objects of which are also described, by their ignorance of God, and by their disobedience to the Gospel of Christ; and by the nature of the punishment inflicted on them, which will lie in an expulsion from the presence, power, and glory of God, and in an everlasting destruction of soul and body, **2Th 1:7** but as for them, the persecuted saints, and which is mentioned for their comfort, Christ shall at this day be glorified and admired in them, and by them, **2Th 1:10** wherefore the apostle prays for this perseverance of them, that the good work of faith might be performed in them, and they enjoy the glory they were called unto; and that Christ might be glorified in them, and they in him; not according to their works, but according to the grace of God through him, **2Th 1:11**.

Ver. 1. Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus,....
See Gill on "1Th 1:1".

2 Thessalonians 1:2

Ver. 2. Grace be unto you, and peace,....
See Gill on "Ro 1:7".

2 Thessalonians 1:3

Ver. 3. We are bound to thank God,.... Since all blessings, temporal and spiritual, come from him: and that always: seeing he is ever giving out fresh favours, or continuing former ones; and because those, especially which are of a spiritual nature, always abide, such as faith and love; which the apostle particularly takes notice of, the members of this Church had, and were increasing in them: for it was not for himself, but for them he gives thanks,

for you, brethren: who were so, not in a natural or civil relation, but in a spiritual one, being the children of God, and brethren of Christ; and to do this for them, he looked upon himself with others under an obligation:

as it is meet; just, proper, and fitting; it not only becomes the persons who have received mercies from God to be thankful for them; but it is very right for others to join with them in it, and especially the ministers of the Gospel, who are bound, and whom it becomes: it is agreeable to their office and profession to give God the praise and glory of all the grace, and the increase of it, which those, who attend their labours, are favoured with, since this is not of them, but of God; and it was for an increase of grace the apostle here gives thanks, as he judged he was obliged to do, and it was fit he should.

Because that your faith groweth exceedingly. Their faith was not a faith of miracles, nor a mere historical faith, or a counterfeit and temporary one, but the faith of God's elect; which is the evidence of things not seen, of an unseen Christ, and the glories of another world; that grace by which a man goes out of himself to Christ for righteousness, life, and salvation; by which he is justified, and by which he lives on Christ, and walks on in him as he has received him. This was theirs; it was not of themselves, the produce of nature, or the fruit of their natural power and free will; but it was the gift of God, and of his operation; a fruit of the Spirit of God, and of which Christ was the author and finisher; and was only theirs, as being given unto them, implanted in them, and exercised by them under the influence of the Spirit of God, and for their use, comfort, and advantage. This was, at first, but like a grain of mustard seed, very small, but gradually increased, and grew exceedingly; and from seeing of Christ, and looking at him, and which at first might be very dim and obscure, it proceeded to going or coming to him; and which might be in a very feeble manner, and was not without being drawn and led, and great encouragements, many invitations, and large assurances; and from thence to a laying hold upon him, though it may be but in a trembling way, and not without being called to stretch forth the hand of faith, and be no more faithless, but believing; and from thence to a leaning and relying on him, trusting in him with all, and for all; and from thence to claiming an interest in him, saying, my Lord, and my God, which is the full assurance of faith; and when it is come to this, it is grown exceedingly, which might be the case of these Thessalonians; which the apostle knew by the aboundings of their love, for faith works by love; and by their patience, firmness, and resolution in suffering for Christ; all which are in proportion to faith, and the growth of it; and for this he gives thanks to God, for faith is a precious thing; and as that itself, so the increase of it is from God, and therefore to him the praise belongs:

and the charity of everyone of you towards each other aboundeth; as their faith in Christ, so their love to one another was increasing, and showed itself in serving one another both in temporals and spirituals; and this was not the case of a few only, or of the greater part, but of everyone of them; which made their communion with one another very comfortable and delightful. For what is more pleasant than for brethren to dwell together in unity?

2 Thessalonians 1:4

Ver. 4. So that we ourselves glory in you,.... Or "of you"; for though they were the subject concerning which, yet not the object in which they gloried; the apostle elsewhere advises not to glory in men, but only in the Lord; nor was this his practice contrary to his advice, for he did not boast of these persons with respect to their carnal things; he did not glory in their flesh, nor in their riches, nor wisdom, nor strength, nor any external gift; he gloried indeed of their graces, and of the exercise and increase of them; but of these not as of themselves, or as owing to him, and his fellow ministers, but as instances of the grace of God, and for which he gives thanks to him: and besides, he did not glory of these in the presence of God, in whose presence none should glory, but

in the churches of God; the other churches in Macedonia and Achaia, as Philippi, Berea, Corinth, &c. he gave thanks to God for them, and gloried of them before men, or among the saints, to the glory of the grace of God in them, and in order to stir up other churches to an emulation and imitation of them. And the particulars he gloried of them for were as follow,

for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: many and sore were the reproaches, the afflictions, and persecutions that befell them for the sake of Christ, and their profession of him, and his Gospel; and which is more or less the case of everyone that will live godly in Christ Jesus: and these they endured, they bore and stood up under, they were not shocked, and staggered, and moved from the hope of the Gospel by them; which shows that the truth of grace was in them; for where there is not the root of the matter, when tribulation and affliction arise because of the profession of the word, such are offended, stumbled, and quickly gone; but these saints endured their afflictions, and with great patience, without murmuring and repining, and with great constancy, firmness, and resolution of mind. They stood fast in the grace and doctrine of faith, and in the profession of both, which they held without wavering, and none of the things they met with could move them from it. The apostle had mentioned their faith before, and he takes notice of it again, because their patience, constancy, and perseverance in sufferings, arose from it; for the trying of faith works patience, **Jas 1:3**. The Ethiopic version leaves out the word "faith", but very wrongly.

2 Thessalonians 1:5

Ver. 5. Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God,.... That is, according as some think, that God should glorify those that are persecuted, and punish their persecutors: this sense indeed may seem to agree with what follows; but the apostle is speaking not of something future, but of something present; not of what God will do hereafter, but of the present sufferings of the saints. According to others the sense is, that God's suffering affliction and persecution to befall his own people, as a chastisement of them, that they may not be condemned with the world, is an evidence of his strict justice, that he will not suffer sin in any to go unobserved by him; and is a manifest token how severely and righteously he will punish the wicked hereafter, see **1Pe 4:17**. But rather the meaning of the words is this, that whereas good men are afflicted and persecuted in this life, they have now their evil things, and bad men prosper and flourish, and have their good things, so that justice does not seem to take place; which seeming inequality in Providence has been sometimes the hardening of wicked men, and the staggering of the righteous, which should not be; this is now a manifest token, and a clear case, that there will be a righteous judgment, in which things will be set aright, and justice will take place; for God is neither unrighteous nor careless, or negligent; and this is observed to support the saints under their sufferings, and to animate them to bear them patiently:

that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer; either of the Gospel, which is sometimes so called, and for which they suffered, and so judged themselves worthy of it; as those that put it away from them, and care not to suffer the least reproach for it, show themselves to be unworthy of it, and of eternal life also: or of a Gospel church state, and a name, and a place in it, for which the people of God likewise suffer; and those who shun reproach and sufferings for it are not worthy to have a place, or their names there: or rather of the heavenly glory; for the hope of which saints suffer much here, whereby their graces are tried, and so they are counted worthy, not by way of merit of it, but meetness for it; many tribulations are the way, or at least lie in the way to this kingdom. In the school of afflictions the saints are trained up for it; and though these are not worthy to be compared with their future happiness, yet they work for them an eternal weight of glory; by the means of these the graces of the Spirit of God are exercised and increased, their hearts are weaned from the world; and coming up out of great tribulations, they wash their garments, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, and are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light.

2 Thessalonians 1:6

Ver. 6. Seeing it is a righteous thing with God,.... That which is righteous in itself, is righteous in the sight of God, but it is not always so with men; men may think it a righteous thing that they should be rewarded for persecuting the followers of Christ, supposing they hereby do God good service; but on the contrary, with God, and in his sight and account, it is a righteous thing, or a point of justice,

to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you: persecution is an affliction, or a trouble to the saints; persecutors trouble them in their minds and bodies, in their persons and property; they trouble their minds by casting reflections and reproaches upon them, by severe revilings, and cruel mockings, which all are not alike able to bear; and they trouble and afflict their bodies by imprisonment and bonds, by scourging and beating, and various cruel and torturing deaths; and they disturb them in the possession of their estates, by spoiling their goods, and confiscating them to their own use; and it is but according to "lex talionis", the law of retaliation, to render tribulation to such troublers of God's Israel; and to them it is recompensed, either in this world, or in the world to come: sometimes in this world persecutors are manifest instances of God's judgments and wrath upon them, as Herod, who stretched out his hands to vex certain of the church, killed James the brother of John, and imprisoned Peter, and was smitten by the angel of the Lord, and was eaten of worms; and the Jews, who were now the only and the implacable persecutors of the saints, in a short time had the wrath of God come upon them to the uttermost, even upon their nation, city, and temple, upon their persons and property. And if not in this life, it is a certain thing that hereafter such shall have indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish; they shall be cast into outward darkness, into the lake of fire; and the hottest place in hell will be their portion, even devouring flames, and everlasting burnings; and are what is designed by tribulations here.

2 Thessalonians 1:7

Ver. 7. And to you who are troubled, rest with us,.... This is another branch of the justice of God, in rendering to them who are afflicted and persecuted for righteousness sake, "rest"; a relaxation or rest from persecutions, for a while at least; as the churches of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had, from that persecution raised at the death of Stephen, **Ac 9:31** and as the Christians had at the destruction of Jerusalem; which though it was a day of vengeance to the unbelieving Jews, were times of refreshing to the saints, who were now delivered from their persecutors: or rather this designs a rest which remains for the saints after death in the grave, and at the coming of the Lord, and to all eternity; when they shall rest from all their toil and labour, and be freed from sin, and all disquietude by it, and from the temptations of Satan, and likewise from the persecutions of men; see **Job 3:17**. And this will be enjoyed in company with the apostles, and other believers; and as it is some alleviation to the sufferings and afflictions of saints now, that the same are accomplished in others, so it will enhance the heavenly glory, rest, and felicity, that they will be partners and sharers in it with the apostles of Christ Jesus, and have the same crown of glory they have; and indeed their company and conversation will be a part of their happiness.

When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven; then will the justice of God take place in both the above branches and instances of it, rendering tribulation to persecutors, and rest to the persecuted. Christ, ever since a cloud received him out of the sight of the apostles up to heaven, has been, as it were, hid, and has not been seen with corporeal eyes by men on earth ever since, but by a very few, as Stephen, and the Apostle Paul; he has only been seen by an eye of faith; at his second coming there will be a revelation of him, and every eye shall see him: and this revelation of him will be "from heaven": thither he was received at his ascension, and there he now is; and here he is received, and will be retained until the end of all things; and from hence the saints expect him, and from hence will he descend in person, and then he will be revealed, and appear to the view of everyone: and that

with his mighty angels; which will add to the glory, majesty, and solemnity of that appearance: these are called his angels, because he is the Creator of them, and the object of their worship and adoration, and he is the Lord and head of them, and they are ministering spirits to him and his; and "mighty" angels, because they excel all other creatures in strength; a remarkable instance of the might and strength of angels is in 2Ki 19:35. The words from the original text may be rendered, "with the angels of his power"; as they are by the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, for they will be the ministers of the power of Christ in gathering the elect from the four winds, and all nations, before Christ; and in taking out of his kingdom all that offend, and do iniquity; and in severing the righteous from the wicked; and in casting the latter into the furnace of fire. The Syriac version reads the words, "with the power of his angels".

2 Thessalonians 1:8

Ver. 8. In flaming fire,.... Which may either refer to Christ, who will be revealed from heaven in such a manner; and whose coming will be as the lightning, not only sudden, but glorious, illustrious, and visible; he will be seen and easily discerned; there will be such a light and flaming fire about him, which, as it will serve to make him visible, will greatly add to the majesty of his appearance, and strike terror to his enemies, and burn them up round about; see **Da 7:7** or else it may refer to the angels, who shall descend in fiery forms, which is agreeably to their nature, Ps 104:4 and so they appeared in the forms of horses of fire, and chariots of fire, when Elijah was carried up to heaven. And it is a tradition of the Jews {z}, that the angel Gabriel descended avad abwhlvb, "in a flame of fire", to burn Moses, as he was in the inn, when upon his journey from Midian to Egypt: or this clause may be read in construction with the following, as it is in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, "in flaming fire taking vengeance"; and so expresses the manner in which vengeance will be taken on the wicked by Christ, the Judge of all, to whom it belongs: and the punishment of ungodly men is often signified by fire, and flames of fire, by the fire of hell, and a lake which burns with fire and brimstone, by a furnace of fire, everlasting fire, and fire that cannot be quenched, to set forth the endless torture and inconceivable misery of the damned; and it may be, some regard is had to the general conflagration, which will be at the coming of Christ, when the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and all that is in it, shall be burnt up, when the bodies of the wicked, then living, will be consumed in flames of fire, and their souls feel the wrath of the Almighty. The persons who will then be punished, and on whom vengeance will be taken, are described as follows,

on them that know not God; which is a periphrasis, or common character of the Gentiles, **1Th 4:5** who know not the one, true, and living God; or know him not so as to glorify him as God, and be thankful to him for the mercies they receive from him, and still less know him in Christ Jesus; which ignorance of theirs is not without sin, nor will it excuse from punishment; for though vengeance will not be taken on them, because they have not a spiritual saving knowledge of God, in the Mediator Jesus Christ, who never was revealed to them; yet forasmuch as they had the light and law of nature, by which the being of God, and the invisible perfections of his nature might be seen and understood, and much of his will, with respect to moral good and evil, be known, against both which they have rebelled, and having sinned, will perish without law: though it may also include all such persons, who having been favoured with an external revelation, have professed to know God, and yet in works have denied him:

and that obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; of which Christ is the author, was the preacher, and is the sum and substance; which is good news and glad tidings of the grace of, God, of peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation by Christ; which may be said to be obeyed, when it is received and embraced by faith, with and from the heart, and confession is made of it with the mouth, and the ordinances of it are submitted to; and which is called the obedience of faith, because faith without obedience is not right, and obedience without faith is of no avail: but all that hear the Gospel do not obey it; there are some that disbelieve and reject the doctrines and ordinances of it, and others that, do profess it, and do not yield a cordial and cheerful obedience to it; both may be reckoned among the disobeyers of it: and though the unbelieving Jews may be chiefly designed here, yet deists of every age and place, where the Gospel revelation has come, and carnal professors, and profane despisers everywhere, may be included; whose condemnation will be aggravated by the external light which has shone around them, and they have hated; the severest punishment will be inflicted on them; it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, than for such persons; see **1Pe 4:17**.

{z} Zohar in Gen. fol. 63. 2.

2 Thessalonians 1:9

Ver. 9. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction,.... With destruction both of soul and body, though not with the annihilation of either; their gnawing worm of conscience will never die, and the fire of divine wrath will never be quenched; the smoke of their torment will ascend for ever. Sin being committed against an infinite and eternal Being, will be infinite in its duration; nor will it cease to be in the persons punished, who will not be in the least reformed or purged from sin by punishment; which will make the continuance of it just and necessary. And these will be driven

from the presence of the Lord; as the former clause may express the punishment of sense the wicked will feel in their own breasts, this may intend the punishment of loss; or what they will be deprived of, the presence of the Lord, in which the happiness of angels, and of glorified saints lies; and may also signify how sudden and terrible their destruction will be. As soon as the Lord appears, they will perish at his presence like wax before the fire; and so awful will be his appearance, they will flee from it with the utmost terror, and call to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of the Lord, and to screen them from his wrath:

and from the glory of his power; or his glorious power, in which he shall come, and which will be exerted, and shown in raising the dead, and gathering all nations before him, in passing sentence on them, and in executing it. For he has power, as to save, so to destroy, as to glorify the bodies and souls of his saints, so to destroy the wicked, both body and soul, in hell; and the glory of his power will be seen in the one, as well as in the other. And now it will be, that tribulation will be rendered to the troublers of the Lord's people.

2 Thessalonians 1:10

Ver. 10. When he shall come to be glorified in his saints,.... Or by them who are set apart for holiness and happiness by God the Father; whose sins are expiated by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; to whom he is made sanctification; and who are sanctified by the Spirit and grace of God; and in whom Christ has a peculiar interest, through his Father's gift, his own purchase, and the power of his grace: and when he comes a second time he will be glorified in these persons; he will appear glorious to them; he will come in his own glory both as God and man; and in his Father's glory, authority, and majesty, conferred on him as the Judge of the whole earth; and with the glory of his angels, who will accompany him. And he will also bestow a glory on them; their souls will be endowed with perfect knowledge and holiness; and their bodies will be made like to his glorious body; and both will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father; and this glory on the members of Christ will redound to the glory of him their head. And as he will then, in the most full and clear manner, display the glory of his person and perfections, of his wisdom, power, faithfulness, and goodness, set off the glory of his offices, and, the administration of them, and open the riches both of his grace and glory to them; so they will, in return, ascribe honour, praise, and glory, to him, and give him the glory of their salvation to all eternity:

and to be admired in all them that believe; who are the same with the saints; these are convertible terms; for no man can be a saint, unless he is a believer in Christ, let him make what pretensions to holiness he will: and no man can be a true believer in Christ, unless he is a saint; for true faith works by love, and in a way of holiness; and in those, or by those that are sanctified by faith in him, will he be admired when he appears a second time. He is admired by them now; he is with them the chiefest among ten thousands, and altogether lovely: they wonder at the glory and beauty of his person, and the fulness of his grace; and are amazed that such as they are should be admitted to communion with him; and how much more will they wonder, when they shall see him as he is? and he will be admired by others on the account of them, when they shall see those that they have despised, and persecuted, and accounted as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things, received into the arms of Jesus with all the expressions of tenderness and love; placed at his right hand, and set down with him on his throne, clothed with white robes, and crowns on their head, and palms in their hands: and he himself will be admired with them, when they shall see him whom they took to be a mere man, and who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, and was loaded with reproach and ignominy, and at last suffered a shameful death, coming in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory as the Judge of quick and dead; thus will he be admired by them, in them, and with them.

(Because our testimony among you was believed) in that day; the phrase, "in that day", belongs to all that goes before, as that Christ shall take vengeance on wicked men, and they shall be punished by him, and he shall be glorified and admired in and by his people in that day, when he shall be revealed from heaven, and come to judge both quick and dead. Though some versions read it in construction with the clause immediately preceding, "because our testimony among you was believed in that day"; or concerning that day; that is, you gave credit to the testimony we bore, when among you, concerning this illustrious day of the Lord; or our testimony, the ministry of the word by us, in which we bore a testimony to the person and grace of Christ, to his first, and to his second coming, was received and embraced by you with a view to this day, and to the enjoyment of the glory of it. The Arabic version renders it, "for our testimony will be true in that day"; that is, it will appear to be so, everything we have said will be accomplished then. The Syriac version is very remote, "that our testimony concerning you may be believed in that day": but it is best to read this clause in a parenthesis, as in our version; which is an application of what is said to the Thessalonians, who might conclude, that since they had embraced the testimony of the Lord Jesus, borne unto him by his apostles, they would be found among the number of the saints and believers, in whom Christ would be glorified and admired; the consideration of which might animate and encourage them to endure afflictions and persecutions with patience, and to hold out to the end, and at last enjoy the heavenly glory, for which the apostle next prays.

2 Thessalonians 1:11

Ver. 11. Wherefore also we pray always for you,.... Not only observe the above things to your comfort, to support you under sufferings, but we add our prayers, and not only now, but always, that you may be among them in whom Christ will be glorified and admired; in order to which we most sincerely pray, that our God would count you worthy of this calling. The Syriac version reads, "your calling", as in **1Co 1:26**. The Vulgate Latin reads, "his own calling", meaning their effectual calling. This is indeed of God, and not of man; and is owing, not to any previous worthiness in man, as appears from the instances of Matthew the publican, Zacchaeus, the Apostle Paul, the Corinthians, and others, but entirely to the free grace of God, who counts them worthy, not for any worthiness there is in them; but "vouchsafes", as the word may be rendered, this blessing of grace, their effectual calling, of his own good will and pleasure: but this cannot be meant here, because these persons were partakers of that grace, God had called them to his kingdom and glory; unless the sense of the petition is, that God would cause them to walk worthy of the calling with which they were called, which becoming walk is owing to the grace of God: or else the meaning may be, that God would grant unto them perseverance in the grace, by and to which they were called, that so they might enjoy eternal glory; which though certain, should be prayed for by saints, both for themselves and others: the words may be rendered, "that our God would count you worthy of the call"; of the call of Christ when he shall be revealed from heaven, and come a second time; for then will he first call the saints out of their graves, as he did Lazarus, and they shall hear his all powerful voice, and come forth to the resurrection of life, the first and better resurrection, which those that have part in will be secure from the second death; this the apostle was desirous of attaining to himself, and prays that God would vouchsafe it to others; of this Job speaks in Job 14:15. And next Christ will call the righteous, when raised and set at his right hand, to inherit the kingdom and glory prepared by his Father for them; and happy are those who by the grace of God will be counted worthy of this call or rather by calling here is meant, the ultimate glory itself, which the saints are called unto; this God gives a right unto in the justifying righteousness of his Son, and makes meet for by his own grace; and the thing itself is a free grace gift of his through Jesus Christ. In this sense calling seems to be used in **Eph 4:4** and to this agrees the Ethiopic version here, "that God may impart unto you that to which he hath called you"; and that is eternal glory, which though certainly and inseparably connected with the effectual calling, may, and should be prayed for:

and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness; not providential, but special goodness; not the good pleasure of his strict justice in the condemning of the wicked, denying his grace to them, and hiding from them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which is a part of his good pleasure, even of the good pleasure of his righteousness; but this is the good pleasure of his grace and kindness in Christ Jesus, and intends the whole of his gracious designs towards his people: and to express the free, rich, sovereign grace of God in them, the apostle uses a variety of words, calling them "his pleasure", "his good pleasure"; and, as if this was not enough, "the good pleasure of his goodness"; and desires that all of it might be fulfilled; it consisting of many things, some of which were fulfilled, and others remained to be fulfilled. It consists of the choice of persons in Christ, and the predestination of them to the adoption of children, which is according to the good pleasure of the will of God; the redemption of them by Christ, in which are displayed the exceeding riches of his grace; the free justification of them by the righteousness of Christ; the full pardon of all their sins, and their adoption into the household of God, and their regeneration, of rich grace, and abundant mercy; all these instances of the good pleasure of divine goodness were fulfilled in these persons; what remained were the carrying on and finishing the work of grace upon their souls, and their enjoyment of the heavenly glory: and for the former, in order to the latter, the apostle prays in the next clause,

and the work of faith with power; faith is not only an operative grace, See Gill on "1Th 1:3" and is attended with good works; but it is a work itself, not of man's, for he cannot produce it in himself, nor exercise it of himself; but it is the work of God, of his operation which he works in his people; it has not only God for its object, and therefore the Arabic version reads, "the work of faith on him"; but it has God for its author: and this now, though it had grown exceedingly in these believers, was not as yet fulfilled or perfect; something was still lacking in it; wherefore the apostle prays that he who was the author would be the finisher of it: and this will be done "with power"; not of man's, for this work is neither begun, nor carried on, nor will it be finished by the might and power of men; but the same hands which laid the foundation of it, raise it up, carry it on, and give the finishing stroke to it; it is done by the power of God, and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "by his own power": which is greatly displayed in the production of faith at first; for a poor sensible sinner, in a view of all his sins, and the just deserts of them, to venture his soul on Christ alone for salvation; for a man to go out of himself and renounce his own righteousness, and trust to the righteousness of Christ for his justification before God, and acceptance with him, is owing to the exceeding greatness of God's power to them that believe; and the same power is seen in enabling faith to do the things it does; see Heb 11:1 and in encouraging, supporting, and maintaining it under the most difficult circumstances, as in the case of Abraham; and to make it stand fast under the severest persecutions, and at the hour of death, and in the view of an awful eternity, when it receives its full completion.

2 Thessalonians 1:12

Ver. 12. That the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you,.... This is the end of the apostle's prayer, and which is answered by the fulfilment of the things prayed for; as the name of Christ and his Gospel are dishonoured, by the unbelief, cowardice and the unworthy walk of professors; so they are glorified in and by the saints, by their faith, patience, and good works in this world; which not only themselves adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, but cause others to glorify him likewise; and Christ will be glorified in them hereafter, by the glory which will be conferred upon them, and which will reflect glory upon him; when all the gracious designs of God are accomplished on them and the work of faith is finished in them; for should not these be completed, Christ would lose the glory of redemption and salvation, which by means of these will be given by the saints to him to all eternity:

and ye in him; that is, that ye may be glorified; the saints are now glorified in him as their head and representative, being raised together and made to sit together in heavenly places in him; and when the work of grace is finished upon their souls, they will be glorified together with him and by him; and in the resurrection morn shall appear in glory with him both in soul and body, and shall be made like him, and everlastingly enjoy him and see him as he is; the Alexandrian copy reads and us "in him"; and all this will be as it is wished for, "according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ"; according to the grace and free favour of God in election, and of Jesus Christ in, redemption, and of the blessed Spirit in sanctification; for election, redemption, calling, justification, pardon, adoption, and the whole of salvation from first to last are of grace and not of works; and according to this, all these things must be prayed for the application of, and must be expected only on such a foot; and to this must all be ascribed, the glory of which is the ultimate end of God, in all he has done, does, or will do for his people.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Thessalonians 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 THESSALONIANS 2

In this chapter the apostle guards against a notion, as if the second coming of Christ was at hand; declares that, previous to it, there must be a great apostasy, and a revelation of antichrist; comforts the saints against fears of being included in this defection; exhorts them to stand fast in the faith, and closes this chapter with petitions for them. He entreats them in a most tender and solemn manner not to imagine that the day of Christ was at hand, and that they would not be disturbed and moved at it; and points unto the several ways, and cautions against them, they might be imposed upon and deceived by men with respect to it, **2Th 2:1** and assigns his reasons why it could not be yet, because before this time there was to be a general apostasy, and antichrist must appear; whom from his character, he calls the man of sin, and from his end, the son of perdition; and describes him as an opposer of God, an exalter of himself above all that is called God, as sitting in the temple of God and declaring himself to be God, **2Th 2:3** of which things he had told them before, **2Th 2:5** nor were they ignorant of what at present hindered the revelation of the man of sin, who was then in being, and was working and growing up apace; only there was something (the Roman empire) which hindered, and would continue to do so, until the fixed time of his revelation was up, **2Th 2:6** when be should be manifest; though he should not always continue, being to be consumed and destroyed by the breath of Christ's mouth, and the splendour of his coming, **2Th 2:8** and the appearance of antichrist in the world, being a matter of considerable importance, it is described by being after the working of Satan, and as attended with lying and false miracles, and with all deceitful and unrighteous doctrines and practices; which reprobate men would be left to give into, as a punishment of their not receiving cordially the truth of the Gospel; upon which account God would give them to such judicial blindness, as to give credit to a lie, which would bring on their final damnation, they not believing the truth, but taking pleasure in unrighteousness, **2Th 2:9**, but lest this account of things should be discouraging to the saints at Thessalonica, the apostle styles them brethren; asserts them to be the beloved of the Lord; gives an instance of it, for which he gives thanks, namely, their election of God; the date of which was from everlasting; the means sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; the end salvation by Jesus Christ; and the evidence of which was their effectual calling by the Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of Christ, **2Th 2:13** and then he exhorts them to stand fast in the doctrines that had been taught them, either in an epistolary way, or by the ministry of the word, **2Th 2:15** and concludes the chapter with petitions for them made to God the Father, and to Christ who had loved and comforted them, and given them good hope of everlasting things; that they might be comforted more and more, and be established in every good doctrine and practice, **2Th 2:16**.

Ver. 1. Now we beseech you, brethren,.... The apostle having finished his first design in this epistle, which was to encourage the saints to patience under sufferings, proceeds to another view he had in writing it, and that is, to set the doctrine of Christ's coming, as to the time of it, in its proper light; and this is occasioned by what he had said concerning it in the former epistle, which was either misunderstood or misrepresented; and as he addresses the saints with a very affectionate appellation as his "brethren", so by way of entreaty "beseeching", and yet in a very solemn manner:

by the coming of our Lord Jesus: which is to be understood not of the coming of Christ in the flesh, to procure the salvation of his people; nor of his coming in his kingdom and power to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, for their rejection of him as the Messiah; but of his coming to judge the quick and dead, than which nothing is more sure and certain, being affirmed by angels and men, by prophets and apostles, and by Christ himself, or more desirable by the saints; wherefore the apostle entreats them by it, that whereas they believed it, expected it, and wished for it, they would regard what he was about to say: so that the words, though an entreaty, are in the form of an adjuration; unless they should be rendered as in the Ethiopic version, as they may, "concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and so express subject matter of the discourse now entering upon, with what follows:

and by our gathering together unto him; which regards not the great gatherings of the people to Christ the true Shiloh upon his first coming, and the preaching of the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, when there were not only great flockings to hear it, but multitudes were converted by it; nor the greater gatherings there will be in the latter day, at the time of the conversion of the Jews, and when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in; nor the conversion of particular persons, who are gathered in to Christ, and received by him one by one; nor the assembling of the saints together for public worship, in which sense the word is used in Heb 10:25 but the gathering together of all the saints at the last day, at the second coming of Christ; for he will come with ten thousand of his saints, yea, with all his saints, when their dead bodies shall be raised and reunited to their souls, and they with the living saints will be caught up into the air, to meet the Lord there and be ever with him; when they will make up, complete and perfect, the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven: this will be the gathering together of all the elect of God; and so the Arabic version reads, "the gathering of us all"; and which, as it is certain, is greatly to be desired; it will be a happy meeting and a glorious sight; by this the apostle entreats and adjures them to regard what follows.

2 Thessalonians 2:2

Ver. 2. That ye be not soon shaken in mind,.... Or "from your mind or sense", as the Vulgate Latin version; or "from the solidity of sense", as the Arabic version; that is, from what they had received in their minds, and was their sense and judgment, and which they had embraced as articles of faith; that they would not be like a wave of the sea, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine; or be moved from the hope of the Gospel, from any fundamental article of it, and from that which respects the second coming of Christ particularly; and especially, that they would not be quickly and easily moved from it; see **Ga 1:6**

or be troubled; thrown into consternation and surprise, for though the coming of Christ will not be terrible to saints, as it will be to sinners; yet there is something in it that is awful and solemn, and fills with concern; and to be told of it as at that instant might be surprising and shocking: the several ways in which their minds might be troubled and distressed with such an account are enumerated by the apostle, that they might guard against them, and not be imposed upon by them:

neither by spirit; by a prophetic spirit, by pretensions to a revelation from the Spirit, fixing the precise time of Christ's coming, which should not be heeded or attended to; since his coming will be as a thief in the night:

nor by word: by reason and a show of it, by arguments drawn from it, which may carry in them a show of probability; by enticing words of man's wisdom; by arithmetical or astronomical calculations; or by pretensions to a word, a tradition of Christ or his apostles, as if they had received it "viva voce", by word of mouth from any of them:

nor by letter, as from us; by forging a letter and counterfeiting their hands, for such practices began to be used very early; spurious epistles of the Apostle Paul were carried about, which obliged him to take a method whereby his genuine letters might be known; see **2Th 3:17** or he may have respect in this clause to his former epistle, wherein he had said some things concerning the Coming of Christ, which had been either wrongly represented, or not understood; and as if his sense was, that it would be while he and others then living were alive and on the spot: wherefore he would not have them neither give heed to any enthusiastic spirits, nor to any plausible reasonings of men, or unwritten traditions; nor to any letters in his name, or in the name of any of the apostles; nor even to his former letter to them, as though it contained any such thing in it, as that the day of Christ is at hand; or is at this instant just now coming on; as if it would be within that year, in some certain month, and on some certain day in it; which notion the apostle would have them by no means give into, for these reasons, because should Christ not come, as there was no reason to believe he would in so short a time, they would be tempted to disbelieve his coming at all, at least be very indifferent about it; and since if it did not prove true, they might be led to conclude there was nothing true in the Christian doctrine and religion; and besides, such a notion of the speedy coming of Christ would tend to indulge the idle and disorderly persons among them in their sloth and negligence: and now for these, and for the weighty reasons he gives in the next verse, he dissuades them from imbibing such a tenet; for though the coming of Christ is sometimes said to be drawing nigh, and to be quickly, yet so it might be, and not at that instant; besides, such expressions are used with respect to God, with whom a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years; and because the Gospel times, or times of the Messiah, are the last days, there will be no other dispensation of things until the second coming of Christ; and chiefly they are used to keep up the faith, and awaken the hope and expectation of the saints with respect to it. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, "the day of the Lord"; and so the Vulgate Latin version; and accordingly the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, "the day of our Lord".

2 Thessalonians 2:3

Ver. 3. Let no man deceive you by any means,.... By any of the above means; by pretending to a revelation from the Spirit; or to have had it from the mouth of anyone of the apostles; or to have a letter as from them, declaring the day of Christ to be instant; or by any other means whatever; do not be imposed upon by them for the following reasons, for there were things to be done before the coming of Christ, which were not then done, and which required time: for that day shall not come,

except there come a falling away first; either in a political sense, of the nations from the Roman empire, which was divided into the eastern and western empire; for which, way was made by translating the seat of empire from Rome to Byzantium, or Constantinople; the former of these empires was seized by Mahomet, and still possessed by the Turks; and the latter was overrun by the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, and torn to pieces; Italy particularly was ravaged by them, and Rome itself was sacked and taken: or rather in a religious sense, of the falling of men from the faith of the Gospel, from the purity of Gospel doctrines, discipline, worship, and ordinances; and this not of some Jews who professed faith in Christ, and departed from it, or of some Christians who went off to the Gnostics; but is to be understood of a more general defection in the times of the Papacy; when not only the eastern churches were perverted and corrupted by Mahomet, and drawn off to his religion, but the western churches were most sadly depraved by the man of sin, by bringing in errors of all sorts in doctrine, making innovations in every ordinance, and appointing new ones, and introducing both Judaism and Paganism into the churches; which general defection continued until the times of the reformation, and is what the apostle has respect to in **1Ti 4:1** where he manifestly points out some of the Popish tenets, as forbidding marriage to priests, and ordering abstinence from meats on certain days, and at certain times of the year: this was one thing that was to precede the coming of Christ, another follows, which should take place at the same time;

and that man of sin be revealed; who was now hid, though secretly working; by whom is meant not only any particular person or individual; not the devil, for though he is the wicked one, a damned spirit, an opposer, an adversary of God and Christ, and his people, and who has affected deity, and sought to be worshipped, and even by Christ himself; yet the man of sin is here distinguished from Satan, **2Ti 2:9** nor is any particular emperor of Rome intended, as Caius Caligula, or Nero, for though these were monsters of iniquity, and set up themselves as gods, yet they sat not in the temple of God; nor is Simon Magus designed, who was a very wicked man, a sorcerer, and who gave out himself to be some great one, and was called the great power of God, before big profession of faith in Christ; and afterwards affirmed that he was God, the Father in Samaria, the Son in Judea, and the Spirit in the rest of the nations of the world; and, because of his signs and lying wonders, had a statue erected by the Roman emperor with this inscription, "to Simon the holy god"; but then this wicked man was now already revealed: nor is this to be understood of a certain Jew, that is to be begotten by the devil on a virgin of the tribe of Dan, and who is to reign three years and a half, and then to be destroyed by Christ, which is a fable of the Papists; but a succession of men is here meant, as a king is used sometimes for an order and succession of kings, De 17:18 and an high priest for that whole order, from Aaron's time to the dissolution of it, **Heb 9:7** so here it intends the whole hierarchy of Rome, monks, friars, priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and especially popes, who may well be called "the man of sin", because notoriously sinful; not only sinners, but sin itself, a sink of sin, monsters of iniquity, spiritual wickednesses in high places: it is not easy to reckon up their impieties, their adulteries, incest, sodomy, rapine, murder, avarice, simony, perjury, lying, necromancy, familiarity with the devil, idolatry, witchcraft, and what not? and not only have they been guilty of the most notorious crimes themselves, but have been the patrons and encouragers of others in sin; by dispensing with the laws of God and man, by making sins to be venial, by granting indulgences and pardon for the worst of crimes, by licensing brothel houses, and countenancing all manner of wickedness; and therefore it is no wonder to hear of the following epithet,

the son of perdition; since these are not only the Apollyon, the king of the bottomless pit, the destroyer, the cause of the perdition of thousands of souls, for the souls of men are their wares; but because they are by the righteous judgment of God appointed and consigned to everlasting destruction; the devil, the beast, and the false prophet, will have their portion together in the lake that burns with fire, Re 20:10 the same character as here is given of Judas, the betrayer of Christ, Joh 17:12.

2 Thessalonians 2:4

Ver. 4. Who opposeth,.... Or is an opposer, an adversary of Christ, the antichrist; who opposes him in his kingly office, styling himself the head and spouse of the church, assuming to himself all power in heaven and in earth, taking upon him to dispense with the laws of Christ, and to make new ones; who opposes him in his priestly office, by pretending to offer him up again in the sacrifice of the mass, and by making angels and saints departed, intercessors and advocates; and also in his prophetic office, by teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and setting up unwritten traditions before the word of God, requiring the worshipping of images, angels, and saints, when Christ requires that the Lord God only should be worshipped and served; and by introducing the doctrine of works and of merit instead of grace, and with a multitude of other things, in which he most manifestly appears to be diametrically opposite and contrary to Christ:

and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped. The Syriac version renders the last clause,
alxdw, "and religion"; and the Greek word does signify religion, worship, or devotion, as it is translated, in Ac 17:23 but here the act of worship is put for the object, and is rightly rendered, "or that which is worshipped"; as it is in the Vulgate Latin version, and in the Arabic version, "or that which is to be worshipped"; and it was usual with the Jews to call God the object of worship, by the name of worship itself, and by which they used to swear: it is said {c}

of R. Benjamin the just, that he was appointed over the alms chest; one time a woman came to him and said, Rabbi, relieve me; he replied to her, hdwbeh, "by the worship" (that is, by God who is worshipped) there is nothing in the alms chest: and elsewhere {d} it is said by one, concerning two that were fatherless, for whom the collectors of alms gathered, hdwbeh, "by the worship", they go before my daughter: and a little after, hdwbeh, "by the worship", these things are holy to thee; where the gloss says, it is an oath: and so here the word is to be understood of Deity itself; and the meaning is, that antichrist would exalt himself above all the gods of the Gentiles, who are only nominally, and not by nature, gods; to these were ascribed, some one thing, to some another; one had the government of heaven, another of hell, another of the seas, and an other of the winds, &c. but this haughty creature antichrist assumes to himself all power, both in heaven, earth, and hell. Angels are sometimes called gods, **Ps 8:4** because they are sent of God, and sometimes represent him; the popes of Rome have exalted themselves above these; Pope Clement VI. proclaimed a jubilee, and promised forgiveness of sins to all that should come to Rome; and in his bull for it says, that

"if any that was confessed should die by the way, he should be free from all his sins; "and we do command the angels", that they take such a soul out of purgatory entirely absolved, and introduce it into the glory of paradise:"

and in a manuscript in the library at Helmsted are these words,

"we command the angels that they carry such a soul into Abraham's bosom, as soon as it has left the body:"

kings and civil magistrates are called gods, Ps 82:6 and this monster of iniquity and firstborn of Satan, the popes of Rome, have exalted themselves above these; they have not only took upon them to excommunicate emperors and kings, but to depose them, and take away their crowns from them, and give their kingdoms to others, and absolve their subjects from allegiance and fidelity to them; an emperor has held a pope's stirrup while he alighted from his horse, and was severely reprimanded for holding the left instead of the right stirrup; and the same emperor held another pope's stirrup while he got on his horse, and who set his foot upon his neck when he absolved him, being before excommunicated by him, using these words in Ps 91:13 "thou shall tread upon the lion", &c. An emperor and an empress waited at a pope's gates three days barefoot; another emperor and empress were crowned by the Pope with his feet; he took the crown with his feet, and, they bowing down, put it upon their heads, and then kicked it off; and one of our own kings resigned his crown and the ensigns of his royalty to the Pope's legate, who kept them five days; and when he offered a sum of money to the legate as an earnest of his subjection, to show his master's grandeur, he spurned at it; a king was thrown under a pope's table to lick the bones like a dog, while he was eating: so truly has this passage had its accomplishment in that impious and insolent set of men. Rome is by the Jewish {e} writers called "Magdiel", which signifies "magnifying itself"; the reason is, ldgtyv, "because it magnifies itself" above all these {f}; that is, above all kingdoms and states: but what is worse, and most dreadfully blasphemous, follows,

so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God; not in the temple of Jerusalem, which was to be destroyed and never to be rebuilt more, and was destroyed before this man of sin was revealed; but in the church of God, so called, **1Co 3:16** the Ethiopic version renders it, "in the house of God"; for antichrist rose up out of, and in the midst of the church; and it was a true church in which he first appeared, and over which he usurped power and authority; though it has been so corrupted by him, as now to be only nominally so; here he sits, and has homage done him by his creatures, as if he was a god, and is not only styled Christ's vicar, but a god on earth, and our Lord God the Pope; so in the triumphal arch at the entry of Pope Sixtus IV, these lines were put, "oraculo vocis, mundi moderaris habenas, et merito in terris crederis esse Dens"; the sense is, that he governed the world by his word, and was deservedly believed to be God on earth; and their canon law {g} says,

"it is clearly enough shown, that the Pope cannot be loosed or bound by any secular power; since it is evident that he is called God by that pious prince, Constantine, and it is manifest that God cannot be judged by men:"

and Pope John XXII is expressly called {h} "our Lord God the Pope": the Ethiopic version reads, "he shall say to all, I am the Lord God"; see Eze 28:2, the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, leave out the phrase, "as God", but the Syriac retains it: however, the same blasphemy is expressed in the next clause,

shewing himself that he is God; by usurping a power over the consciences and souls of men; by dispensing with the laws of God and man; by assuming to himself all power in heaven and in earth; by taking upon him to open and shut the gates of heaven at pleasure; and by pardoning sin, which none but God can do; this is the mouth speaking blasphemies, Re 13:5.

{c} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 11. 1. {d} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 24. 1. {e} Jarchi in Gen. xxxvi. 43. {f} Abarbinel in Dan. fol. 42. 3. {g} Gratian. Decret. dist. 96. can. "satis". {h} Extrarag. "cum inter".

2 Thessalonians 2:5

Ver. 5. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you,.... At Thessalonica, for the apostle had been there in person, and had preached there with great boldness and success; he had declared the whole counsel of God, and the Gospel came in power and worked effectually in them, and yet there was too great a forgetfulness of it; with which the apostle tacitly charges them, and rebukes them gently for it; and as a faithful monitor, stirs up their pure minds by way of remembrance, and reminds them of former truths delivered to them:

I told you these things: or "words" as the Arabic version; concerning the coming of Christ as that it would not be yet, that there, must be a defection from the faith, and antichrist must be revealed; which shows that these were things of moment and importance, and were useful and profitable to be insisted on; and therefore the apostle had told them of them, and spoke freely and largely about them, at his first preaching among them, and were what he inculcated everywhere; and also that his doctrine was all of a piece at one time as another; it was not yea and nay, or contradictory; what he now said was no other than what he had said before; and therefore it was the more inexcusable in them, to be shaken or troubled by any means with another doctrine.

2 Thessalonians 2:6

Ver. 6. And now ye know what withholdeth,.... Or hinders the revelation of the man of sin, or antichrist; by which is meant not the Apostle Paul, though he by his ministry was a very great hinderance of the growth of error, and the spread of evil practices in the churches, and so of the more open appearance of the man of sin in his forerunners; and after his departure from Ephesus, and imprisonment at Rome, and suffering death, there was a great falling off in the churches, and among professors of religion, which made way for the manifestation of antichrist in due time: nor the preaching of the Gospel, in its power and purity, in the several parts of the world; though so long as this obtained, got ground, and gained success, the man of sin could not show his head; and therefore it must, as it did, decline, and was gradually taken away that he might appear: nor the Spirit of God, as the spirit of truth and holiness, though as long as he continued in his gifts and operations of grace in the churches, they were preserved from antichristian doctrine and worship; but when he removed from them, this enemy and adversary of Christ and his Gospel came in like a flood: nor the general defection in **2Th 2:3** though that was to be previous to the revelation of antichrist, and was to be what would usher him in; nor could he appear until the wickedness of men was come to a pitch, that they would be ready to receive him, and pay homage and worship to him: nor is the decree of God meant, though till the time came fixed by God for his appearance, the decree must be a bar in his way; since as there is a time for every purpose, nothing can come to pass till that time comes: but by that which withheld, let or hindered the open appearance of antichrist, were the Roman empire and emperors; these stood in his way, and while this empire lasted, and the emperors wore the imperial crown, and sat on the throne, and held the government in their hands, the popes could not come at the height of their ambition, dignity, and authority, nor shine in their glory; nor could the whore of Babylon take her seat, and sit upon the seven hills of Rome until the Roman emperor was taken out of the way: this therefore hindered,

that he might be revealed in his time. The Ethiopic version renders it, "until his time appointed came": wherefore till the time that God had fixed for the appearance of this monster of iniquity, this son of perdition, the Roman empire must continue, and Roman emperors must keep their place and dignity to prevent his appearance sooner: the reason why the apostle expresses this not in plain words, but in an obscure manner, and with so much caution, was, that he might not offend the Roman emperors, and provoke them to a severe persecution of them as seditious persons, that sought the destruction of the empire: the word here used, which is rendered "withholdeth", or "letteth", as in the next verse, signifies a ruler or governor, and answers to the Hebrew word rue, "to keep back, or restrain"; and which is used of kings, who by their laws and government restrain and withhold people from doing what they would; see **1Sa 9:17** to which the apostle, who well understood the Hebrew language, doubtless had reference; so rue vrwy, is rendered, "a magistrate", in Jud 18:7.

2 Thessalonians 2:7

Ver. 7. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work,.... Or "the mystery of that wicked one", as the Syriac; meaning either antichrist himself, and the spirit of antichrist, which were already in the world, **1Jo 2:18**, "mystery" being one of the names of antichrist, Re 17:5 and anciently this word was engraven on the mitres of the popes of Rome: or the evil doctrines and practices of antichrist may be intended; for as the doctrine of the Gospel is called a mystery, and the mystery of godliness; so the doctrines and practices of antichrist may be called the mystery of iniquity, especially as they were now secretly spread, imbibed, and practised: the foundations of it were now laying in the church by false teachers; for errors and heresies of every sort, respecting the person and offices of Christ, and in opposition to them, were now broached; idolatry, and holding communion with idolaters, now obtained; worshipping of angels was used by some; and superstition and will worship, worship after the commandments of men, were practised; days, and months, and years, distinguished by Jews and Pagans, and difference of meats, were observed; celibacy and virginity began to be admired and commended; dominion and magistracy were despised, and church authority contemned, and many, as Diotrephes, loved to have the pre-eminence; and the doctrine of justification by the works of the law was industriously spread, and zealously preached and received; all which laid the foundation, and are the life and soul of popery:

only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way; that is, the Roman empire and Roman emperors, and which were by degrees entirely removed, and so made way for the revelation of this wicked one: and which was done partly by Constantine the emperor receiving the Christian faith, whereby the Roman empire as Pagan ceased; and by increasing the riches of the church, and feeding the pride, ambition, and covetousness of the bishops, especially the bishop of Rome; and next by removing the seat of the empire from Rome to Byzantium, which he called Constantinople: here the Greek emperors continued in succession, and neither they themselves, nor even their exarchs, resided at Rome, but at Ravenna; so that way was made for antichrist to come to his seat, and there was nothing to rival and eclipse the grandeur, power, and glory of the Roman popes: and that which let was also taken out of the way, by the division of the empire, by Theodosius, giving to his elder son Arcadius, the eastern, and to the younger, Honorius, the western parts of it: the eastern empire was in process of time seized upon and possessed by Mahomet and the Saracens; and the western empire was overrun by the Goths, Vandals, and Huns, and became extinct about the year 476, in Augustulus, the last of the Roman emperors, who was obliged to abdicate the government by Odoacer king of the Heruli; when the kingdom of the Lombards took place in Italy, and afterwards that was translated to Charles the great, king of the French; so that there was nothing more of the Roman empire remaining than the bare name, as at this day; and by this means the popes of Rome got to the height of their power and glory, which is meant by the revelation of the man of sin.

2 Thessalonians 2:8

Ver. 8. And then shall that wicked be revealed,.... That lawless one, who sets himself above the laws of God and man, and dispenses with them at pleasure, who judges all men, but is judged by no man; as he was in his ecclesiastical power, when Phocas, who murdered the Emperor Mauritius, granted to Boniface III. to be called universal bishop; and in his civil power in succeeding popes, who took upon them the power over kings and emperors, to crown, depose, and excommunicate at pleasure:

whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth: that is, the "Lord Jesus", as the Alexandrian copy, and Vulgate Latin version read; and the Syriac version, "our Lord Jesus": who is Lord of lords, and God over all; and so able to do what he is here said he shall do: and which he will do

with the Spirit of his mouth; meaning either the Holy Spirit, the third person which proceeds from him, as in Ps 33:6, and so the Ethiopic version, "whom the Spirit of our Lord Jesus shall cast out"; Christ will by his Spirit blow a blast upon antichrist and his kingdom, which he shall never recover again, but ever after consume and waste away: or else by his spirit is meant his Gospel; the Scriptures in general are the breath of God, being divinely inspired by him, and are the sword of the Spirit, the twoedged sword of law and Gospel, which proceeds out of Christ's mouth; the Gospel contains the words of Christ, which are spirit and life; these come out of his mouth, and are sharper than any twoedged sword; and as hereby sinners are cut to the heart, hewn and slain, convicted and converted, so by this likewise antichrist will be consumed, and is consuming; for this phrase denotes the beginning of his destruction, which took place at the time of the reformation by the preaching of the Gospel by Luther and others; by which this man of sin received his deadly wound, and has been in a consumption ever since, and is sensibly wasting in his power and glory every day, and will ere long come to utter destruction:

and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming; either in a spiritual way, when he shall come in his spiritual kingdom and glory, by the light of his Gospel and the illuminations of his Spirit; when at eventide it shall be light; when he the sun of righteousness shall arise; when latter day light and glory shall appear, and latter day darkness, the gross darkness of Popery, Paganism, and Judaism, which cover the people, shall, be removed, and antichrist in every form shall disappear: or in a personal manner, when he shall come to judge the quick and dead, which will be in flaming fire and great glory; and then will antichrist and his followers, the beast and those that have worshipped him, be cast with the devil and the false prophet into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; and this will be the last and utter end of him. In this passage there is a manifest reference to Isa 11:4, "with the breath of his mouth shall he slay the wicked": which the Targumist paraphrases,

"with the words of his lips he shall slay aeyvr owlymra, "Armillus the wicked":"

and which the Jews say will be done by the Messiah at his coming;

"for so {i} (say they) that phrase in De 22:8 "if a man fall from thence", has respect to Armillus the wicked, who at the coming of our Messiah will be slain, as it is said in Isa 11:4'

This Armillus, the Jews say {k}, is the head of all idolatry, the tenth king who shall reign at Rome, the city of Satan; that he shall rise up after Gog and Magog, and shall go up to Jerusalem, and slay Messiah ben Joseph, and shall himself be slain by Messiah the son of David; yea, they say expressly {l}, it is the same whom the Gentiles call antichrist: it is the same with Romulus the first king of the Romans, and designs a Roman, the Roman antichrist; and it may be observed, that the Targumist interprets "the breath of his mouth", by his word; and so says another of their writers {m},

"the meaning is by the word of his lips, for the word goes out of the mouth with the vapour and breath:"

such an expression as this is said {n} to be used by Moses, when he was bid by God to answer the angels who objected to his having the law given him;

"I am afraid (says he) they will slay (or burn me),
Mhypbv lbhb, "with the breath of their mouth":"

much more may this be feared from the breath of Christ's mouth.

{i} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 148. 2. {k} Apud Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. col. 221, 222, 223. {l} Abkath Rochel, par. 1. sign. 7. p. 52. {m} In Ohel Moed. fol. 19. 1. {n} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 2.

2 Thessalonians 2:9

Ver. 9. Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan,.... That is, as a deceiver, a liar, and a murderer; for such was the working of Satan with our first parents; he seduced Eve, not only by subtlety, but by lying; he abode not in the truth, is the father of lies, and a murderer from the beginning: and such is the working of antichrist his firstborn; he comes in a deceitful way, under a profession of Christ, and a pretension of faith in him, and love to him; but speaks lies in hypocrisy, for such are his doctrines and tenets; and is not only a murderer of the bodies of the saints, but of the souls of men; which are the wares the whore of Babylon deals in:

with all power; not omnipotence, for that is peculiar to God, and is not in Satan nor in antichrist, though the latter assumes to himself all power in heaven and in earth, and claims a jurisdiction both temporal and spiritual over men; but rather this means great power, or all kind of power of doing miracles, as follows:

and signs, and lying wonders; that is, such signs and miracles as are not real, but reigned, only in appearance, not in truth, like those that were done by the magicians of Egypt; and these were done to countenance lies, and to induce persons to believe them; and how many miracles and lying wonders the church of Rome pretends to, everybody knows.

2 Thessalonians 2:10

Ver. 10. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness,.... Not that he deceives, or goes about to deceive, or thinks to deceive by open unrighteousness; but by unrighteousness, under a pretence of righteousness and holiness; as with the doctrines of justification and salvation by a man's own righteousness, with the doctrines of merit and of works of supererogation, which are taking to men, and by which they are deceived, and are no other than unrighteousness with God, and betray ignorance of his righteousness, and a non-submission to it; as also with practices which carry a show of holiness, religion, and devotion, when they are no other than acts of impiety, superstition, and will worship; as their litanies and prayers, their worship of images, angels, and saints departed, their frequent fasts and festivals, their pilgrimages, penance, and various acts of mortification and the like: but then these deceptions only have place

in them that perish; whom the god of this world has blinded, from whom the Gospel is hid, and to whom it is foolishness: all men indeed are in a lost perishing condition, through original and actual sin; but all shall not perish, there are some that God will not have perish, whom Christ is given for that they should not perish, and whom he has redeemed by his blood, and to whom he gives eternal life; but there are others that are vessels of wrath afore ordained to condemnation, reprobate men left to themselves, and given up to their hearts' lusts; and these, and only these, are finally and totally deceived, by the signs and lying wonders, and false appearances of antichrist; see Mt 24:24

because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; by the "truth" is meant either Christ the truth of types, the sum of promises, in whom the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are, and by whom grace and truth came; or the Gospel, often called truth, and the word of truth, it coming from the God of truth, has for its subject Christ the truth, is dictated and directed into by the spirit of truth, and contains nothing but truth: and by "the love" of it is meant, either the loveliness of it, for truth is an amiable, lovely thing, in its nature and use; or an affection for it, which there is, where true faith in it is, for faith works by love: there may be a flashy affection for the truths of the Gospel, where there is no true faith in Christ, or the root of the matter is not, as in the stony ground hearers; and there may be an historical faith in the doctrines of the Gospel, where the power of them is denied, and there is no true hearty love for them; and in these persons there is neither faith nor love; the truths of the Gospel are neither believed by them, nor are they affected with them, that so, they might be saved; for where there is true faith in the Gospel of Christ, and in Christ the substance of it, there is salvation; the reason therefore of these men's perishing is not the decree of God, nor even want of the means of grace, the revelation of the Gospel, but their rejection and contempt of it.

2 Thessalonians 2:11

Ver. 11. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion,.... Or "efficacy of error", which God may be said to send; and the Alexandrian copy reads, "does send"; because it is not a bare permission but a voluntary one; or it is his will that error should be that truth may be tried, and be illustrated by its contrary, and shine the more through the force of opposition to it; and that those which are on the side of it might be made manifest, as well as that the rejecters of the Gospel might be punished; for the efficacy of error is not to be considered as a sin, of which God cannot be the author, but as a punishment for sin, and to which men are given up, and fall under the power of, because they receive not the love of the truth, which is the reason here given: and this comes to pass partly through God's denying his grace, or withholding that light and knowledge, by which error may be discovered and detected; and by taking from men the knowledge and conscience of things they had, see **Ro 1:28**. So that they call evil good, and good evil, and do not appear to have the common sense and reason of mankind, at least do not act according to it; and by giving them up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart, and to the god of this world, to blind their minds; and without this it is not to be accounted for, that the followers of antichrist should give into such senseless notions as those of transubstantiation, works of supererogation, &c., or into such stupid practices as worshipping of images, praying to saints departed, and paying such a respect to the pretended relics of saints, &c., as they do; but a spirit of slumber is given them, and eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, because of their rejection of the Gospel: and

that they should believe a lie; that the pope is Christ's vicar on earth, and has power to forgive sins; that the bread and wine in the Lord's supper are transubstantiated into the very body and blood of Christ; with other lying tenets spoken in hypocrisy concerning good works, merit, pardon, penance; &c. with a multitude of lying wonders and false miracles, of which their legends are full; and this is the first and more near end of strong delusion or efficacious error being sent them; the more remote and ultimate one follows.

2 Thessalonians 2:12

Ver. 12. That they all might be damned,.... Or judged, discerned and distinguished from true Christians and real believers, or rather that they might be condemned and punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and have their portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; where the devil, the false prophet, and the beast, whose followers they are, will be cast; and it is but a righteous thing with God to give them up to such delusion,

that they may be damned, since they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved; and the following character of them justifies the divine procedure:

who believed not the truth; neither the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation, nor Christ, who is truth itself; and therefore were righteously given up to believe a lie; and whose damnation is just, according to the declaration of Christ, he that believeth not shall be damned:

but had pleasure in unrighteousness; in sin, as all unrighteousness is; in sinful ways and works, and in unrighteous doctrines; as the doctrines of merit, of works of supererogation, and of justification by works, being derogatory to the justice of God, and to the righteousness of Christ; and in the unrighteous persecution and bloodshed of the saints, the martyrs of Jesus; in which the followers of antichrist take as much delight and pleasure, as an intemperate man does in drinking wine or strong drink to excess; and therefore the whore of Babylon is said to be drunk with the blood of the saints; and it is but just she should have blood to drink, or be punished both with temporal and eternal destruction.

2 Thessalonians 2:13

Ver. 13. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you,.... Lest the saints should be discouraged by the above account of antichrist, and his followers, and fear they should be left to the same deceptions, and damnation be their portion; the apostle being persuaded better things of them, gives their character, and represents their case in a quite different light; and signifies, that he and his fellow ministers were under obligation to be continually thankful to God for what he had done for them; for as God is the Father of mercies, whether spiritual or temporal, thanks are to be given to him; and saints are not only to bless his name for what they themselves receive from him, but for what others enjoy also, and that continually; because spiritual blessings, especially such as are afterwards instanced in, are permanent and durable, yea, everlasting: the characters which show them to be different from the followers of antichrist, are

brethren, beloved of the Lord or "of God", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read: they were the brethren of Christ, being the dear children of God, born of him, and belonging to his family, and of the apostles, and of one another, being of the household of faith; and they were beloved by God the Father, as the instances of their election to salvation by him, and their calling to eternal glory, show; and by the Lord Jesus Christ, who had wrought out for them the salvation they were chosen to; and by the Lord the Spirit, by whom they were regenerated, called, sanctified, and brought to the belief of the truth; and since they had interest in the everlasting love of the three divine Persons, there was no danger of their falling away and perishing. The reason of the apostle's thanksgiving for the persons thus described is, because God hath from, the beginning chosen you to salvation; which is to be understood, not of an election of them, as a nation, for they were not a nation, only a part of one; nor of them as a church, for they were not so from the beginning; nor to the outward means of grace, the ministry of the word and ordinances, for the choice is unto salvation; nor to any office, for they were not all officers in the church, only some; nor does it intend the effectual calling, for that is distinguished from it in the following verse; but an eternal appointment of persons to grace and glory: and this is an act of God the Father, in Christ, from eternity; and which arises from his sovereign good will and pleasure, and is an instance of his free grace and favour, for the glorifying of himself; and is irrespective of the faith, holiness, and good works of men; all which are the fruits and effects, and not the motives, conditions, or causes of electing grace. This act is the leading one to all other blessings of grace, as justification, adoption, calling, and glorification, and is certain and immutable in itself, and in its effects. The date of it is "from the beginning": not from the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel to them, and the sense be, that, as soon as the Gospel was preached, they believed, and God chose them; for what was there remarkable in them, that this should be peculiarly observed of them? The Bereans are said to be more noble than they were: nor from the beginning of their calling, for predestination or election precedes calling; see **Ro 8:30** nor from the beginning of time, or of the creation of the world, but before the world began, even from eternity; and in such sense the phrase is used in **Pr 8:23** and that it is the sense of it here, is manifest from **Eph 1:4** where this choice is said to be before the foundation of the world. The end to which men, by this act, are chosen, is "salvation": not temporal, though the elect of God are appointed to many temporal salvations and deliverances, and which they enjoy both before and after conversion; yet salvation here designs the salvation of the soul, though not exclusive of the body, a spiritual and an eternal salvation, salvation by Jesus Christ, as is expressed in **1Th 5:9** and the same decree that appoints men to salvation, appoints Christ to be the Saviour of them; and there is salvation in and by no other. The means through which this choice is made, are

through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth by sanctification is meant, not anything external, as reformation of life, obedience to the law, or outward submission to Gospel ordinances; but internal holiness, which lies in a principle of spiritual life in the soul, and in a principle of spiritual light on the understanding; in a flexion of the will to the will of God, and the way of salvation by Christ; in a settlement of the affections on divine and spiritual things, and in an implantation of all grace in the heart; and is called the sanctification of "the spirit", partly from the spirit or soul of man being the principal seat of it, and chiefly from the Spirit of God being the author of it; and this being a means fixed in the decree of election to salvation, shows that holiness is not the cause of election, yet is certain by it, and is necessary to salvation; and that the doctrine of election is no licentious doctrine, since it provides for and secures true and real holiness. "Truth" designs either the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the truth of types and promises, and the substance of the truth of the Gospel, in whom it lies, and by whom it comes; or the Gospel itself, which comes from the God of truth, lies in the Scriptures of truth, is dictated and directed into by the spirit of truth; the sum of it is Christ the truth, and has nothing in it but truth. The "belief" or "faith" of this intends, not an historical faith, or a mere assent to truth; but a cordial embracing of it, a receiving of the love of the truth, a feeling of the power of it unto salvation, and a believing in Christ, the substance of it; which is a seeing of him spiritually, and a going out of the soul to him in acts of hope; reliance, trust, and dependence; and this being also a means settled in the choice of men to salvation, makes it appear, that faith is no cause of election, but the effect of it; that it is necessary to salvation, and therefore appointed as a means; that it is certain to the elect by it, and that they therefore cannot be finally and totally deceived, or be carried away with the error of the wicked, or with the deceivableness of unrighteousness with which antichrist works.

2 Thessalonians 2:14

Ver. 14. Whereunto he called you by our Gospel,.... Salvation being appointed as the end in the decree of election, and sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, as means; the elect in the effectual calling are called to the participation of each of these; first to the one, and then to the other; to grace here, and glory hereafter: and the means by which they are called is the Gospel, which the apostle calls "our Gospel", not because they were the authors, or the subject of it; for with regard to these it is styled the Gospel of God, and the Gospel of Christ; but because they were intrusted with it, and faithfully preached it, and in opposition to another Gospel published by false teachers. And by this they were called

to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; not his essential glory, though he will be seen and known in the glory of his person as he is, so far as creatures in a state of perfection will be capable of; nor his mediatorial glory, though it will be one part of the saints' happiness in heaven to behold this glory of Christ; but rather the glory which shall be personally put upon the saints, both in soul and body, in the resurrection morn, is here intended: and which is called the glory of Christ, because it is in his hands for them; and is what he is preparing for them, and for which he gives them both a right and a meetness; and which he at last will introduce them into; and it will lie greatly in conformity to him, and in the everlasting vision and enjoyment of him: and now God's elect are called by the ministry of the word to "the obtaining" of this, not by any merit of theirs, or by any works of righteousness done by them, but to the "possession" of it, as the word used properly signifies. The Syriac version renders it, "that ye may be a glory to our Lord Jesus Christ": as the saints will be at the last day, and to all eternity, when they shall be raised again, and have the glory of God upon them, and be forever with the Lord.

2 Thessalonians 2:15

Ver. 15. Therefore, brethren, stand fast,.... In the doctrine of the Gospel in general, and in the article of Christ's second coming in particular, and not in the least waver about the thing itself, nor be shaken in mind, and troubled as if it was just at hand; and the rather it became them to be concerned that they stood fast in the truth, and persevered unto the end, since there was to be a falling away, and the mystery of iniquity was already working, and antichrist would shortly appear, whose coming would be with all deceivableness, of unrighteousness; and they had the greater encouragement to continue firm and unmoved, seeing they were chosen from eternity unto salvation through sanctification and belief of the truth, and were called in time by the Gospel to the enjoyment of the glory of Christ in another world.

And hold the traditions which ye have been taught: meaning the truths of the Gospel, which may be called traditions, because they are delivered from one to another; the Gospel was first delivered by God the Father to Jesus Christ, as Mediator, and by him to his apostles, and by them to the churches of Christ; whence it is called the form of doctrine delivered to them, and the faith once delivered to the saints: and also the ordinances of the Gospel which the apostles received from Christ, and as they received them faithfully delivered them, such as baptism and the Lord's supper; as well as rules of conduct and behaviour, both in the church, and in the world, even all the commandments of Christ, which he ordered his apostles to teach, and which they gave by him; see **2Th 3:6**. And so the Syriac version here renders it, "the commandments": and these were such as these saints had been taught by the apostles, under the direction of Christ, and through the guidance of his Spirit; and were not the traditions of men or the rudiments of the world, but what they had received from Christ, through the hands of the apostles:

whether by word, or our epistle, that is, by "our" word, as well as by our epistle, and so the Arabic version reads; these doctrines, ordinances, and rules of discipline were communicated to them, both by word of mouth, when the apostles were in person among them, and by writing afterwards to them; for what the apostles delivered in the ministry of the word to the churches, they sent them in writing, that they might be a standing rule of faith and practice; so that this does not in the least countenance the unwritten traditions of the Papists; and since these were what were taught them, "viva voce", and they received them from the mouth of the apostles, or by letters from them, or both, it became them to hold and retain them fast, and not let them go, either with respect to doctrine or practice.

2 Thessalonians 2:16

Ver. 16. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself,.... The apostle having exhorted the saints to perseverance, closes this second part of his epistle, relating to the coming of Christ, with a prayer for the saints, that they might be comforted and established. The objects addressed are Christ and the Father. And in each of their characters are reasons contained, encouraging to believe the petitions will be regarded; for it is "our Lord Jesus Christ himself" who is prayed unto; who is our Lord, not by creation only, in which sense he is Lord of all, but by redemption, and through a marriage relation; and he is our Jesus, our Saviour, and Redeemer; and our Christ, the anointed prophet, priest, and King; even he himself, who stands in these relations and offices; and what may not be expected from him?

and God, even our Father; not by creation, but by adoption; and as it is in his power, he has a heart to give, and will give good things unto his children: and inasmuch as Christ is equally addressed as the object of prayer as the Father, and is indeed here set before him, or first mentioned, it may be concluded that there is an entire equality between them, and that Christ is truly and properly God; otherwise religious worship, of which prayer is a considerable branch, would not be given him, nor would he be set upon an equal foot with the other, and much less before him. The Arabic version reads, "our Lord Jesus Christ, our Father"; and the Ethiopic version also, "our Lord Jesus Christ, God our Father"; as if the whole of this, or all these epithets and characters, belong to Christ, and he was the only person addressed; but the common reading is best: which hath loved us; this refers both to the Father and to Christ. The Father had loved them with an everlasting and unchangeable love, as appeared by his choosing them unto salvation by Christ, securing them in his hands, and making an everlasting covenant with him, on their account; by sending his Son to be the Saviour of them; by regenerating, quickening, and calling them by his grace, adopting them into his family, pardoning all their sins, justifying their persons, and giving them both a meetness for, and a right unto eternal glory. And Christ, he had loved them with the same love; and which he showed by undertaking their cause in the council of peace; by espousing their persons in the covenant of grace; by assuming their nature in the fulness of time; by dying in their room and stead; and by his continued intercession and mediation for them, and by many other instances. And since they had such a share in the affection both of the Father and the Son, it need not to have been doubted but that what was prayed for would be granted: to which is added,

and hath given us everlasting consolation: all true solid consolation is from God and Christ: God is called the God of all comfort; and if there be any real consolation, it is in, by, and from Christ; and it is the gift of God, an instance of his grace and favour, and not a point of merit; the least degree of consolation is not deserved, and ought not to be reckoned small: and it is everlasting; it does not indeed always continue, as to the sensible enjoyment of it, in this life, being often interrupted by indwelling sin, the hidings of God's and the temptations of Satan, yet the ground and foundation of it is everlasting; such as the everlasting love of God, the everlasting covenant of grace, the everlasting righteousness of Christ, and everlasting salvation by him, and he himself, who is the consolation of Israel, as well as the blessed Spirit, the Comforter, who ever abides as the earnest and pledge of future happiness. And the present spiritual joy of the saints is what no man can take away from them, and what will eventually issue in everlasting consolation, without any interruption in the world to come, when sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and all tears be wiped from their eyes:

and good hope through grace. The Syriac version reads, "in his grace"; and the Ethiopic version, "a good hope; and his grace", hope, as well as faith, is the gift of God, a free grace gift of his: and it may be called a good one, because God is the author of it; and it is built on a good foundation, the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and is of good things to come, and therefore called the blessed hope; and is what is sure and certain, and will never deceive, nor make ashamed; and since consolation is given here, and hope of happiness hereafter, it may be concluded the following requests will be regarded.

2 Thessalonians 2:17

Ver. 17. Comfort your hearts,.... That is, apply the comfort given, and cause it to be received, which unbelief is apt to refuse; and increase it, by shedding abroad the love of Christ, and of the Father; by the discoveries of pardoning grace; by the application of Gospel promises; by the word and ordinances, which are breasts of consolation; and by indulging with the gracious presence, and comfortable communion of Father, Son, and Spirit. The Arabic version reads, "comfort your hearts by his grace", joining the last clause of the preceding verse to this. This petition stands opposed to a being troubled and distressed about the sudden coming of Christ, as the following one does to a being shaken in mind on that account, **2Th 2:2**.

And stablish you in every good word and work; that is, in every good word of God, or truth of the Gospel, which contains good tidings of good things, so as not to waver about them, or stagger in them, or to depart from them; in practice of every duty, so as to be steadfast, and immoveable, and always abounding therein; good words and good works, principles and practices, should go together, and the saints stand in need of stability in both. For though, as to their state and condition, they are established in the love of God, in the covenant of grace, in the arms of Christ, and in him the foundation, so as they can never be removed; yet they are often very unstable, not only in their frames, and in the exercise of grace, but in their attachment and adherence to the Gospel and interest of Christ, and in the discharge of duty.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Thessalonians 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 THESSALONIANS 3

In this chapter the apostle requests of the Thessalonians, that they would pray for him, and other Gospel ministers; and he puts up prayers for them, gives them rules about dealing with disorderly persons, and concludes the epistle with his usual salutation. The request to pray for ministers is in **2Th 3:1** the petitions to be made for them are, that their ministry might be succeeded, and their persons preserved and delivered from evil minded men, destitute of faith in Christ, **2Th 3:1** and, for the consolation of the saints, observes the faithfulness of God engaged in their behalf to establish them in the faith they had, and to preserve them from everything and person that is evil, **2Th 3:3** and expresses his confidence in them with respect to their walk and conversation, **2Th 3:4** and then prays for them that their hearts might be directed into the love of God, and patience of Christ, **2Th 3:5**. And next follows an order to withdraw from every disorderly walker, particularly idle and slothful persons, **2Th 3:6** and from such a lazy idle life the apostle dissuades by his own example, who behaved not disorderly, nor ate the bread of others, but wrought with his own hands, though he had a right to a maintenance without it, but did this to set an example to them, **2Th 3:7**. He puts them in mind of a precept of his when among them, that such who would not work should not eat, **2Th 3:10** and the order he now gave, and the precept he reminds them of, were not without reason; seeing there were disorderly idle persons, and busy bodies, among them, whom the apostle exhorts and beseeches, in the name of Christ, to be industrious, and eat their own bread, as the fruit of their labours, **2Th 3:11** and as for the other members of the church, he exhorts them to diligence and constancy in well doing, and to mark those that were incorrigible, and have no conversation with them, yet dealing with them not as enemies, but admonishing them as brethren, **2Th 3:13**. And closes all with prayers, that the Lord would give them peace, and grant his presence to them, and with his usual salutation, written with his own hand, as a token of this being a genuine epistle of his, and by which every epistle of his might be known, **2Th 3:16**.

Ver. 1. Finally, brethren, pray for us,.... The apostle now proceeds to the last and closing part of the epistle, which respects church discipline, and the removing of disorderly persons from their communion; and introduces it with a request to pray for him, and the rest of his fellow ministers, particularly Silvanus and Timothy, who joined with him in this epistle: he signifies that nothing more remained; this was the last he had to say, that they, "the brethren", not the preachers of the word only, but the members of the church, would be solicitous for them at the throne of grace; as it becomes all the churches, and the several members of them, to pray for their ministers: with respect to their private studies, that they might be directed to suitable subjects; that their understandings might be opened to understand the Scriptures; that their gifts might be increased, and they be more and more fitted for public service: and with respect to their public ministrations, that they be brought forth in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; that they have a door of utterance given them to preach the Gospel freely and boldly, as it ought to be spoken; and that their ministry be blessed to saints and sinners: and with respect to the world, and their conduct in it, that they be kept from the evil of it, and so behave as to give none offence, that the ministry be not blamed; and that they be not allured by the flatteries, nor intimidated by the frowns of the world, but endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ: and with respect to their persons and state, that their souls may prosper, and that they may have much of the presence of God, and much spiritual joy, peace, comfort, and strength of faith; and that they may enjoy bodily health, and their lives be spared for further usefulness. This request is frequently urged by the apostle; which shows his sense of the importance of the work of the ministry, the insufficiency of men for it, the necessity of fresh supplies of grace, and the great usefulness of prayer. The particular petitions he would have put up follow,

that the word of the Lord may have free course. By "the word of the Lord", or "of God", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, is meant the Gospel; which is of God, and not of man, comes by the Lord Jesus Christ, and is concerning him, his person and offices, and concerning peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation by him, as the subject matter of it: and the request is, that this might "have free course": or "might run": be propagated and spread far and near: the ministry of the word is a course or race, and ministers are runners in it, having their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; which is the message they are sent with, and the errand they run upon: which comes from heaven, and is to be carried into all the world, and spread: Satan and his emissaries do all they can to hinder the progress of it; God only can remove all obstructions and impediments; when he works none can let; all mountains become a plain before Zerubbabel. Wherefore the apostle directs to pray to him for it, with what follows,

and be glorified, even as it is with you; the Gospel is glorified when it is attended upon by large numbers, and is heard with a becoming reverence; when it is received in the love of it, is greatly prized and highly esteemed; when it is cordially embraced, and cheerfully obeyed. It is glorified when sinners are converted by it, and the lives of the professors of it are agreeably to it; and thus it was glorified in these several instances at Thessalonica; and therefore the apostle puts them upon praying, that it might be so elsewhere, as there; even "everywhere", as the Syriac version adds.

2 Thessalonians 3:2

Ver. 2. And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men,.... Either from the unbelieving Jews, see Ro 15:30 who were the avowed enemies of the Gospel, and did all they could to hinder the spread of it; and who were the implacable and constant adversaries of the apostle; who often lay in wait for him, and opposed him, and gave him trouble in all places, stirring up the people against him: or from the false teachers, and those of their party, who are the false brethren by whom he often was in perils; who were enemies of the cross of Christ, and great hindrances to the spread of the Gospel; being men of absurd principles, and of wicked lives and conversations, whereby they perverted the Gospel of Christ, brought a reproach upon it, stumbled some, and overthrew the faith of others; and from these the apostle desires to be delivered:

for all men have not faith: no man has faith of himself, it is the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit; and it is only given to the elect of God, who are ordained unto eternal life, and therefore it is called the faith of God's elect; all mankind have it not, none but Christ's sheep; and the reason why others have it not is, because they are not of his sheep. This is a truth; but rather the true sense of the words is, that all that are professors of religion, and members of churches, and even all that are preachers of the word, have not faith. They may have an historical and temporary faith and the faith of miracles, and even all faith but the true faith; they may profess to believe, and yet not believe, as Simon Magus, and his followers seem to be intended here; for this is given as a reason why the apostle desired to be delivered from the above men. The Jews say {o}, that

"he that studies not in the law, atwnmyhm hyb wal, "there is no faith in him"-- and it is forbidden to come near him, or to trade with him, or to walk with him, "because there is no faith in him"."

The apostle seems to allude to this custom.

{o} Zohar in Lev. fol. 33. 2.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

Ver. 3. But the Lord is faithful,.... Or "God" as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, as do also the Alexandrian and Claromontane copies. This is said for the comfort of the saints, lest they should be discouraged upon hearing that all professors of faith in Christ had it not, who might be ready to take it to themselves, and fear, that either they had it not, or if they had, that they might lose it, and fall from it. Wherefore the apostle observes to them the comfortable attribute of God's faithfulness, which he will not suffer to fail. He has promised many things, and he is faithful that has promised, who also will do them, nor will any good thing he has promised ever fail.

Who shall stablish you: in the doctrines of the Gospel, so as not to be moved away from them, or be finally and totally seduced by those unreasonable and wicked men; and also in the grace of faith, which though it may be weakened, and there may be a falling from a degree of the steadfastness of it, as to its act and exercise, yet it shall never finally and totally fail, he who is the author will be the finisher of it; and likewise in the profession both of the doctrine and grace of faith, which true believers shall hold fast unto the end; for God will not suffer the righteous to be moved, or to depart from him; he has promised them perseverance, and he is faithful to give it to them.

And keep you from evil: from the evil of sin; not from the being and commission of it entirely, which is not to be expected in this life; but from the dominion of it, at least from its reigning unto death, and from the damning power of it: and also from that evil one Satan; from his snares and temptations, so as to be entangled and overcome by them; for God is faithful, who will not suffer his to be tempted beyond their strength, but will enable them to bear it, and make way for their escape, and deliver out of it; and likewise from evil men, unreasonable and wicked men, so as not to be drawn aside by them, by their principles and practices, by their frowns or flatteries.

2 Thessalonians 3:4

Ver. 4. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you,.... The ground of confidence concerning them was not in themselves, in their grace, and strength, and wisdom, and conduct, and good behaviour; but in the Lord, in his grace and strength, and in the power of his might, without whom they could do nothing, but through him strengthening them, could do all things.

That ye both do, and will do the things which we command you; referring both to the commandments, which they had already given them by Christ, and they had showed, and continued to show a proper regard unto, see **1Th 4:1** and also to what would be observed to them, as in **2Th 3:6**.

2 Thessalonians 3:5

Ver. 5. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God,.... By which may be meant either the love with which God is loved. This is the sum and substance of the first and chief commandment in the law, and is what every man in a state of nature is destitute of; it is implanted in the heart in regeneration, and is a fruit of the Spirit of God; and where it is it oftentimes grows cold, and needs to be stirred up and reinflamed, by the Spirit of God, which may be intended, by a directing of the heart into it, that is, to a lively exercise of it: or else the love with which God loves his people is designed, which is free, sovereign, unchangeable, and from everlasting to everlasting; and to have the heart directed into this, is to be led into it directly; or by a straight line, as the word signifies, and not in a round about way, by works and duties, as the causes or conditions of it; and to be led further into it, so as to wade into these waters of the sanctuary, from the ankles to the knees, and from thence to the loins, and from thence till they become a broad river to swim in; or so as to comprehend the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of this love, and to be rooted and grounded in it, and firmly persuaded of interest in it; and that nothing shall separate from it; and so as to have the heart sensibly affected with it. The phrase of directing the heart to God, and to seek him, is used in the Septuagint, in 2Ch 19:3. And this is not to be done by a believer himself, nor by the ministers of the Gospel: the apostle could not do it, and therefore he prays "the Lord" to do it; by whom is meant the Spirit of God, since he is distinguished from God the Father, into whose love the heart is to be directed, and from Christ, a patient waiting for whom it is also desired the heart may be directed into; and since it is his work to shed abroad the love of God in the heart, and to lead unto it, and make application of it; and which is a proof of his deity, for none has the direction, management, and government of the heart, but God, Pr 21:1, and in this passage of Scripture appear all the three Persons; for here is the love of the Father, patient waiting for Christ, the Spirit and the Lord. For it follows, as another branch of the petition,

and into the patient waiting for Christ; or "patience of Christ", as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it; and may intend either that patience, of which Christ was the subject; and which appeared in his quiet submission to all that outward meanness he did in his state of humiliation; in bearing the insults and reproaches of men, and the frowardness of his own disciples, in suffering himself to be tempted by Satan; and in bearing the sins of his people, the wrath of God, and strokes of justice in the manner he did: and for the saints to have their hearts directed into this patience of Christ, is of great use unto them, to endear Christ unto, them; to lead them into the greatness of his love, and also of his person; and to make them more patient under the cross, when they consider him, and have him for an example. Or else it may respect the grace of patience, which he is the author of, for all grace comes from him; and he from hence may be called the God of patience, as his word, which is the means of it, is the word of his patience; and it is by his strength that saints are strengthened unto all patience, and longsuffering: and to be directed into this, or to the exercise of it, is of great use under afflictions from the hand of God, and under the reproaches and persecutions of men, and under divine desertions, and want of an answer of prayer, and under the temptations of Satan, and in an expectation of the heavenly glory. And the heart is never more in the exercise of this, than when it is directed into the love of God; see **Ro 5:2**. Or this may refer to that patience of which Christ is the object, and be understood, either of a patient bearing the cross for his sake; for every believer has a cross to take up and bear for Christ, and which is to be borne constantly, cheerfully, and patiently; and nothing more strongly animates to such a patient bearing of it, than a sense of the love of God; so that a being directed into that, leads also to this: or as our version points out the sense, it may be understood of a patient waiting for the second coming of Christ. Christ will certainly come a second time, though when he will come is uncertain; and his coming will be very glorious in itself, and of great advantage to the saints: hence it becomes them, not only to believe it, hope for it, love it, and look for it, but to wait patiently for it; which being directed to by the Spirit of God, is of great use unto them in the present state of things.

2 Thessalonians 3:6

Ver. 6. Now we command you, brethren,.... The apostle is now come to the main thing itself he has in view in this part of the epistle, which is to encourage a regard to the discipline of God's house; and to exhort this church to excommunicate, or remove from communion, all disorderly persons; and those who are to do this he points out, and calls upon, and even commands; and these are the fraternity, the "brethren", the society of believers, all the members of the church; for to them to whom belongs the power of receiving members, to them only belongs the power of excluding offenders: the executive power lies in the hands of the elders or pastors of churches; they are the persons by whom the church receives or casts out members; but the power of judgment, or of determining who shall be received into, or who shall be removed from communion, lies in the church, and not in the pastors and elders only; whoever therefore take upon them to receive, or refuse, or cast out members of themselves, and at their own pleasure, act the part of Diotrephes, **3Jo 1:9**. The authority for removing disorderly persons from communion is an apostolical command, "we command you"; who are the apostles of Christ, immediately sent by him, who had their mission and commission from him, and which were confirmed by miracles; these had a greater power and authority than the ordinary ministers of the word; they were the ambassadors of Christ, stood in his stead, represented him, and acted in his name; what they said, he spake by them; and it was all one as if he had spoke it himself: and that this might appear not to be of them, but of him, it is added,

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; that is, by his power and authority, if they had any regard to that, or to his honour and glory:

that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly; by a brother is meant, not one in a natural or civil sense, who is so by blood, or by neighbourhood, by being of the same country, or of the same human species, since all are of one blood; but one in an ecclesiastical sense, a church member, who is called a brother, though he may not be really a child of God, one of the brethren of Christ, or born of the Spirit; yet being a fellow citizen with the saints, and of the household of God externally, he bears this character; and such an one only is cognizable by a church, who have nothing to do to judge them that are without, only them that are within: and "every brother" in this sense falls under their notice; everyone that is a member, whether male or female, for this word includes both; and as the sisters, as well as the brethren, stand in the same relation, are in the same church state, partake of the same ordinances, and enjoy the same privileges, they are obliged to regard the same rules of the Gospel, and duties of religion, and, in case of disorder, to be withdrawn from: and this also regards every brother, of whatsoever state or condition, bond or free, high or low, rich or poor; no partiality is to be used, no preference to be given to one above the other; a poor member in a disorder is not to be bore hard upon, while a rich one is winked and connived at: and it also respects the brethren, whether private members, or officers of the church; for not only the former, but also the latter, when they walk disorderly, whether in the discharge of their office, or in any other part of their conduct, are liable to the notice and censure of the church: and which is only to be done when any of them "walk disorderly"; not for every disorder they are guilty of; there is no man lives without sin; and church members have their infirmities, and will have, as long as they are in the flesh, or in the body; and they are not to be made offenders for a word, or for a single disorder, or for the common infirmities of life; nor are the just to be set aside for a thing of nought, or a small offence, and that not continued in: it is one thing to be guilty of a disorder, and another thing to walk disorderly; which denotes a way, a course, a series of disorder, and proceeding on in it, a going from evil to evil, an increasing to more ungodliness; for walking is a progressive action, and disorderly persons do not stop, but grow worse and worse; for they take pleasure in their disorders; they choose their own ways, and delight in their abominations; the paths of sin are pleasant paths to them: and they are disorderly walkers, who pertinaciously and stubbornly continue in their disorders, notwithstanding the admonitions of private persons, and of the whole church; and of this sort there are such that walk disorderly in the world, in the commission of notorious and scandalous sins, such as uncleanness, intemperance, covetousness, &c. and that walk disorderly in families; as husbands that are not affectionate to their wives, and provide not for their household; and wives that are not in subjection to their husbands; parents that provoke their children to wrath; and children that are disobedient to their parents; masters who give not that which is fit and equal to their servants; and servants that despise their masters because they are brethren, when they should serve them the more cheerfully, because faithful and beloved: and also that walk disorderly in churches, that fill not up their places, but neglect attendance with the church, on the word and ordinances; and who are contentious and quarrelsome, and will not submit to the sentiments of those who are superior to them in number and sense; and likewise such who entertain bad notions and principles, derogatory to the grace of God, the person and offices of Christ, and the operations of the Spirit; who walk, not in the truth, nor according to the standard of the word of God; and especially such are designed here, who are busy bodies, and idle persons, who work not at all, but live at the tables, and upon the substance of others, as appears from **2Th 3:11**. These act contrary to the order and decorum of nations, towns, and families, and to that which God has fixed among mankind; and to the example of God, and Christ as God, who work hither to and jointly together in Providence, and in the government of the world; and to the example which Christ, as man, has set, and to the example of the apostles, and to their commands: wherefore it follows,

and not after the tradition which he received of us; meaning either the Gospel of Christ, which being, preached was received, but the walk and conversation of some was not agreeably to it; or the ordinances of the Gospel, and the precepts of religion which the apostles delivered, and were received, and yet due attendance to them was not given; See Gill on "2Th 2:15", or rather that particular injunction concerning quietness, and doing their own business, and working with their own hands, **1Th 4:11**. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "which they received of us": the sense is the same; and the Ethiopic version, "and not according to the constitution we appointed them". Now what is commanded to be done to such disorderly persons, by the church, even the whole fraternity, is to "withdraw" themselves from them; by which is meant, not only to distinguish themselves from them by an orderly and regular conversation, and a strict observance of Gospel discipline, which to do is very right; nor barely to curb and restrain the affections towards such persons, lest by carrying it as heretofore, in a kind, tender, and affectionate manner, they should take encouragement from hence to continue in their disorders, as tender parents keep in their affections, and from showing them to their children, when in disorder, and under their corrections, that they might not seem to countenance them in that which is evil, though this is also very proper; nor also merely to contract or shut up the hand to such persons, and refuse to distribute to then, living such an idle life, and in such a disorderly way, though this is what ought to be done; nor does this phrase only intend a forbidding such persons their houses and their tables, not suffering them to sit at the one, nor even to come into the other, not allowing any company and conversation with them, that they may have no opportunity of indulging their laziness and tale bearing, though so to serve them is highly just and reasonable; nor does it design only a suspension, or a debarring of them from the Lord's table, which ought not to be done to any persons, while they continue in relation to the church, and members of it; but a removal of them from church communion, or an excommunication of them; which is sometimes expressed by rejecting persons, casting them out of the church, and putting them away, and here by withdrawing from them; which are all synonymous phrases, and intend exclusion from the communion of the church. And so the Ethiopic version here renders it, "that ye remove every brother", &c. From this passage we learn who they are that are to be excommunicated or removed from the communion of churches, all disorderly walkers; what the act of excommunication is, it is a withdrawing from them, a separating them from the church, and its communion; and who they are that have the power to do it, the whole fraternity or body of the church; and also the authority for it, an apostolical command, in the name of Christ.

2 Thessalonians 3:7

Ver. 7. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us,.... The apostle goes on to dissuade from that which denominates persons disorderly walkers, and exposes them to the censure of the church, and that partly by the example of the apostles, and partly by their command. He appeals to them, to their knowledge and judgment, it being a thing well known to them, that they ought to walk as they had the apostles for ensamples; for who should they follow but their spiritual fathers, shepherds, and guides? and especially so far as they were followers of Christ, as they were, in the case referred unto, working with their own hands:

for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; they could appeal to them as witnesses, and God also, how holily, justly, and unblamably they walked among them; see **1Th 2:10** and particularly, that they did not live an idle and inactive life among them.

2 Thessalonians 3:8

Ver. 8. Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought.... Or freely, at free cost, without paying for it; he signifies, that what they ate, they bought with their own money, and lived on no man, without giving him a valuable consideration for what they had; though if they had not paid in money for their food, they would not have ate it for nought, since they laboured among them in preaching the Gospel to them; and such labourers are worthy of their maintenance, Lu 10:7 though the former sense is the apostle's here:

but wrought with labour and travail night and day: not only laboriously preaching the Gospel to them, as often as they could have opportunity, but working very hard and incessantly with their hands, at the occupations and trades they had been brought up to; and that of the Apostle Paul's was a tentmaker, at which he sometimes wrought, thereby ministering to his own, and the necessities of others, Ac 18:3, nor was this inconsistent with his learning and liberal education. It was usual with the Jewish doctors to learn a trade, or follow some business and calling of life; See Gill on "Mr 6:3". The apostle's end in this was,

that we might not be chargeable to any of you; or burdensome to them, they being for the most part poor; and the apostles being able partly by their own hand labour, and partly by what they received from Philippi, **Php 4:16** to support themselves, chose to that they might not lie heavy upon them, and any ways hinder the spread of the Gospel among them, at its first coming to them. And so Maimonides says the ancient Jewish doctors behaved, and with a like view: wherefore, says he {p},

"if a man is a wise man, and an honourable man, and poor, let him employ himself in some handicraft business, even though a mean one, and not distress men (or be burdensome to them); it is better to strip the skins of beasts that have been torn, than to say to the people, I am a considerable wise (or learned) man, I am a priest, take care of me, and maintain me; and so the wise men have ordered: and some of the greatest doctors have been hewers of wood, and carriers of timber, and drawers of water for the gardens, and have wrought in iron and coals, and have not required anything of the congregation; nor would they take anything of them, when they would have given to them."

{p} Hilchot Mattanot Anayim, c. 10. sect. 18.

2 Thessalonians 3:9

Ver. 9. Not because we have not power,.... To forbear working, or require a maintenance from the churches to whom we minister, since Christ has ordained, that they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel; see **1Co 9:4**. This the apostle says to preserve their right of claim, when and where they should think fit to make use of it; and lest other ministers of the word, who could not support themselves as they did, should be hurt by such an example; and lest covetous men should make use of it to indulge their sin, and improve it against the maintenance of Gospel ministers: wherefore the apostle observes to them, that they did not do this, as conscious that they had no right to demand a supply from them,

but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us; for it seems there were many idle lazy persons among them, who either had no callings or trades, or did not attend to them; wherefore the apostles wrought with their own hands, to set an example, who could not for shame but work, when they saw persons in so high an office, and of such a character, working with labour and travail, night and day, among them.

2 Thessalonians 3:10

Ver. 10. For even when we were with you,.... At Thessalonica in person, and first preached the Gospel to them,

we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat; the Ethiopic version reads in the singular number, "when I was with you, I commanded you"; using the above words, which were a sort of a proverb with the Jews, and is frequently used by them, lyka al yad, or oygn al yel, "that if a man would not work, he should not eat" {q}. And again {r},

"he that labours on the evening of the sabbath (or on weekdays), he shall eat on the sabbath day; and he who does not labour on the evening of the sabbath, from whence shall he eat (or what right and authority has he to eat) on the sabbath day?"

Not he that could not work through weakness, bodily diseases, or old age, the necessities of such are to be distributed to, and they are to be taken care of, and provided with the necessaries of life by the officers of the church; but those that can work, and will not, ought to starve, for any assistance that should be given them by the members of the church, or the officers of it.

{q} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 13. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 48. 4. & Midrash Koholet, fol. 65. 4. {r} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 1.

2 Thessalonians 3:11

Ver. 11. For we hear that there are some,.... This is the reason of the order or command given in **2Th 3:6** for withdrawing from disorderly persons. When the apostle was with them, he observed that there were idle persons among them, and therefore gave orders then, that if they would not work, they should not eat; and in his former epistle, having intelligence that there were still such persons among them, he exhorts them to their duty, and puts the church upon admonishing them; and still information is given him, that there were some such persons yet among them; for as the apostle had the care of all the churches upon him, so he kept a correspondence with them, and by one means or another, by sending messengers to them, or by receiving letters from those he corresponded with, he learned the state of them; and his information was generally good, and what might be depended upon; see **1Co 1:11** as it was in this case relating to some persons: which walk among you disorderly; and who they were, and which also explains **2Th 3:6**, are immediately observed: working not at all; at their callings, trades, and businesses in which they were brought up, but lived an idle and lazy life: and this was walking disorderly indeed, even contrary to the order of things before the fall, when man was in a state of innocence; for before sin entered into the world, Adam was put into the garden of Eden to keep and dress it; man was created an active creature, and made for work and business; and to live without, is contrary to the order of creation, as well as to the order of civil societies, and of religious ones, or churches, and even what irrational creatures do not.

But are busy bodies; though they work not at all at their own business, yet are very busy in other men's matters, and have the affairs of kingdoms, and cities, and towns, and neighbourhoods, and churches, and families, upon their hands; which they thrust themselves into, and intermeddle with, though they have no business at all with them: these wander from house to house, and curiously inquire into personal and family affairs, are tattlers, full of prate and talk, and, like the Athenians, spend all their time in telling or hearing new things; and they also speak things which they should not; they carry tales from one to another, and privately whisper things to the disadvantage of their fellow creatures and Christians, and backbite and slander them. These are the pests of nations and neighbourhoods, the plagues of churches, and the scandal of human nature; see **1Ti 5:13**.

2 Thessalonians 3:12

Ver. 12. Now them that are such,.... For this was not the case and character of them all. Did such practices generally obtain, no community, civil or religious, could subsist. And the apostle wisely distinguishes them from others, that the innocent might not be involved in the charge.

We command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ; using both authority and entreaty; taking every way to reclaim them, commanding in the name of Christ and beseeching for the sake of Christ

that with quietness they work: with their own hands, at their proper callings, and so support themselves, provide for their families, and have something to give to them that are in need; by which means they will live peaceable and quiet lives, in godliness and honesty, and not disturb the peace of neighbourhoods, churches, and families:

and eat their own bread; got by their own labour, and bought with their money, and not the bread of others, or that of idleness.

2 Thessalonians 3:13

Ver. 13. But ye, brethren,.... The rest of the members of the church, who were diligent and industrious in their callings, minded their own business, and did not trouble themselves with other men's matters, took care of themselves, and their families, and were beneficent to others:

be not weary in well doing; which may be understood generally of all well doing, or of doing of every good work; which is well done when done according to the will of God, in faith, and from a principle of love, and in the name and strength of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God: or particularly of acts of beneficence to the poor; for though the idle and lazy should not be relieved, yet the helpless poor should not be neglected. This the apostle observes, lest covetous persons should make an handle of this, and withhold their hands from distributing to any, under a notion of their being idle and disorderly; or lest the saints should be tired, and become weary of doing acts of charity through the ingratitude, moroseness, and ill manners of poor people; see **Ga 6:9**.

2 Thessalonians 3:14

Ver. 14. And if any man obey not our word,.... Of command, to work quietly, and eat his own bread, now signified "by this epistle", particularly in **2Th 3:12**,

note that man; some read this clause in connection with the preceding phrase, "by this epistle", or by an epistle; and so the Ethiopic version, "show", or "signify him by an epistle"; that is, give us notice of it by an epistle, that we may take him under our cognizance, and severely chastise him, according to the power and authority given us by Christ; but that phrase rather belongs to the preceding words: and the clause here respects the notice the church should take of such a person; not in a private way, or merely by way of admonition and reproof, such as is given before rejection from communion; but by the black mark of excommunication; lay him under censure, exclude him from your communion, put a brand upon him as a scabbed sheep, and separate him from the flock; and so the Syriac version renders it, vrpty, "let him be separated from you" and this sense is confirmed by what follows,

and have no company with him; as little as can be in common and civil conversation, lest he should take encouragement from thence to continue in his sin, and lest others should think it is connived at; and much less at the Lord's table, or in a sacred and religious conversation, or in a way of church fellowship and communion:

that he may be ashamed; that he may have his eyes turned in him, as the word signifies, and he may be brought to a sight and sense of his sin, and be filled with shame for it, and loath it, and himself on the account of it, and truly repent of it, and forsake it; and this is the end of excommunication, at least one end, and a principal end of it, to recover persons out of the snare of the devil, and return them from the error of their ways: so the Jews say {s},

"in matters of heaven (of God or religion), if a man does not return privately, Nymylkm, they "put him to shame" publicly; and publish his sin, and reproach him to his face, and despise and set him at nought until he returns to do well."

{s} Maimon, Hilch. Deyot, c. 6. sect. 8.

2 Thessalonians 3:15

Ver. 15. Yet count him not as an enemy,.... As an enemy of Christ, and the Christian religion, as the Jews and Pagans were; or as an enemy of all righteousness, as Elymas the sorcerer was; as one that has an implacable hatred to good men, and a persecutor of them, and has an utter aversion to them and their principles; nor deal with him in an hostile, fierce, furious, and passionate manner, as if you were seeking his destruction, and not his restoration. This seems to be levelled against the Jews, who allowed of hatred to incorrigible persons: they say {t},

"an hater that is spoken of in the law, is not of the nations of the world, but of Israel; but how shall an Israelite hate an Israelite? does not the Scripture say, "thou shall not hate thy brother in thine heart?" the wise men say, when a man sees him alone, who has committed a transgression, and he admonishes him, and he does not return, lo, it is wanwvl hwum, "a commandment to hate him" until he repents and turns from his wickedness."

But admonish, or "reprove" him

as a brother; as one that has been called a brother, and a member of the church, and who, though criminal, has no bitterness in him against the church, or against the name of Christ, and the doctrines of Christ; and therefore should not be treated in a virulent manner, but with a brotherly affection, meekness, compassion, and tenderness; and who indeed is to be reckoned as a brother, while the censure is passing, and the sentence of excommunication is executing on him; for till it is finished he stands in such a relation: though this also may have respect, as to the manner of excommunicating persons, so to the conduct of the church to such afterwards; who are not to neglect them, and much less to treat them as enemies, in a cruel and uncompassionate manner; but should inquire, and diligently observe, what effect the ordinance of excommunication has upon them, and renew their admonitions and friendly reproofs, if possible, to recover them.

{t} Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 13. sect. 14.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

Ver. 16. Now the Lord of peace himself,.... The Prince of peace, who is peaceable himself, and the author of peace in all his churches, and who requires peace, calls for it, and encourages it:

give you peace always by all means; both a conscience peace, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, and faith in them, which passes all understanding, and which, when he gives, none can take away; and a church peace, being freed from all such disorderly persons and their abettors, the disturbers of it: and indeed, the way to have true peace and prosperity in churches is to keep up the discipline of God's house. The apostle prays for it in faith, upon an observance of the rules he had given; he prays for constant and perpetual peace, which is greatly to be desired; and that it might be had by all means, and in every way through praying, preaching, administering the ordinances, laying on censures, when necessary, and Christian conversation. Some copies, and the Vulgate Latin version, read "in every place"; as well as at Thessalonica.

The Lord be with you all; by his presence, to comfort and refresh; by his power, to keep and preserve; by his grace, to assist; and by his Spirit, to counsel, advise, and direct.

2 Thessalonians 3:17

Ver. 17. The salutation of Paul with mine own hand,.... In writing his epistles, the body and substance of them he used an amanuensis, but the salutation he wrote with his own hand:

which is the token in every epistle; by which they might be known to be true and genuine, and be distinguished from counterfeit ones: and the rather he mentions this, that they might be troubled neither by word, nor by spirit, nor by epistle, as from them, as they had been, **2Th 2:2** for it seems that this wicked practice of counterfeiting the epistles of the apostles, or carrying about spurious ones, under their name, began so early; to prevent which, the apostle took this method,

so I write, as follows:

2 Thessalonians 3:18

Ver. 18. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. This was the sign or token; See Gill on "Ro 16:20" The subscription to this epistle is, "The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens"; though it seems rather to be written from Corinth. In the Syriac version it is said,

"the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, which is written from Laodicea of Pisidia, and sent by the hands of Tychicus."

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Timothy 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 TIMOTHY

Timothy, to whom this epistle is written, was eminent for his early piety and acquaintance with the sacred Scriptures; his mother was a Jewess, and his father a Greek, which was the reason why he was not circumcised in his infancy. Mention is made in the second epistle to him of his mother Eunice, and grandmother Lois, as believers, and of his knowledge of the Scriptures from a child: this excellent person the apostle meeting with at Lystra, and having a good report of him from the brethren there, he chose him to be his companion in his travels, and to assist him in the spread of the Gospel; and knowing that it would be very disagreeable to the Jews to hear the word of God from the lips of an uncircumcised person, he took him and circumcised him, becoming all things to all, that he might gain some. This being done, he went along with him into several parts, and he made great use of him, in preaching the word, planting churches, and writing epistles; he sent him to various places with messages from him, to Corinth, Philippi, and Thessalonica; and now had left him at Ephesus, where he besought him to abide for a while; for that he was the bishop, pastor, or overseer of that church is not likely, since his residence here was not constant, and was afterwards called away from hence by the apostle, who desired his stay there, under whom, and by whose directions, he acted while there; and seeing that this church had elders, bishops, or overseers, whom the Holy Ghost had set over them, whom the apostle called to him at Miletus, and gave them some advice and instructions. The design of Timothy's continuance there was to check growing errors and heresies, and to take care of, and preserve the discipline of God's house; and to charge him with these things was the design of this epistle; in which he teaches him how to behave himself in the church of God, by taking heed to his doctrine and conversation; and gives rules relating to the qualifications of bishops and deacons, and to the care of widows, and with regard to church censures, and the becoming walk and conversation of all sorts of persons of every office, age, sex, rank, and order. This epistle is thought to be written about the year 55.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 TIMOTHY 1

In this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle having entreated Timothy to abide at Ephesus, observes, that his end was, that he might check the false teachers there, whom he describes; and then he gives an account of his apostleship, and also of his conversion, to the encouragement of sinners, and to the glory of the grace of God; and closes with an exhortation to Timothy to constancy and perseverance in his Christian warfare. The inscription and salutation are in **1Ti 1:1** and much in the common form; and whereas, when he went into Macedonia, he desired Timothy to continue at Ephesus, his end was, to restrain the false teachers from preaching the doctrine they did, which was contrary to the Gospel, fabulous, useless, and unedifying, **1Ti 1:3** for though these men set up for teachers of the law, they went off, and strayed from its general end, which was love with faith, through their ignorance of it, **1Ti 1:5** not but that the law itself was good, as Gospel ministers full well knew; which is said to prevent an objection against them, as laying it aside as useless; but the abuse of it is what is complained of, it being made for some persons, and not for others who are mentioned, between which, and the sound doctrine of the Gospel, there is an agreement, **1Ti 1:8** which leads on the apostle to observe his call to the office of a preacher of it by Christ, his qualification for it, and investiture with it, for which he gives thanks, **1Ti 1:12** And in order to illustrate the grace of God in converting him first, and then making him a minister of the word, he takes notice of his state and condition before conversion, what a vile sinner he had been, and of the abundant grace God bestowed on him in it, **1Ti 1:13** And that this case of his might not seem strange and incredible, he observes, that this is the sum of the Gospel, that Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners, such an one as he was, **1Ti 1:15**. And besides, the end of the Lord in his conversion was, by the pattern of longsuffering he showed in him, that others might be encouraged to believe in Christ also, **1Ti 1:16** and then for all this grace bestowed on him, he ascribes honour and glory to God, **1Ti 1:17** and renews his charge to Timothy to fight manfully against the false teachers, to which he should be the more induced by the consideration of the prophecies that went before of him, **1Ti 1:18** and to hold faith and good conscience, which had been dropped by some professors; of which instances are given in Hymenaeus and Philetus, **1Ti 1:19**.

Ver. 1. Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ,.... His name was well known to Timothy, and very dear to him; and so was his office as an apostle, and which he mentions, not so much for Timothy's sake, but for the sake of others, that what he delivers in this epistle might come with its proper weight and authority, and be regarded: of this his office, as well as name, See Gill on "Ro 1:1". How he came into this office next follows, not of himself, nor by men, but

by the commandment of God; the appointment and decree of God, by which he was separated to this office, even from eternity, and is the same with the counsel or will of God, **Eph 1:1** or it may refer to the order given by the Holy Ghost to the church; to set apart him and Barnabas, to the work of the ministry, Ac 13:2 though this commandment is called the commandment of God

our Saviour; by whom is meant God the Father; and this character of him is mentioned, to show that the embassy the apostle was sent on as such, and in which the discharge of his office greatly lay, was the affair of salvation, to publish and declare that to the sons of men; and also to show the concern which God the Father has in that work: he resolved upon it, and appointed his people to it, and determined upon saving them by his Son, whom he pitched upon to be his salvation; he drew the scheme of it by his infinite wisdom, and sent his Son into the world to execute it; and he sends his ministers to publish the Gospel of it, and his Spirit to reveal and apply it to the hearts of his chosen ones; and keeps them by his power unto it, and will at last put them into the full possession of it; so that this character well suits with him, to whom it is also given, **Tit 3:4** as well as with his Son Jesus Christ, to whom it is more commonly ascribed, and from whom he is here distinguished: for it follows,

and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; who is both the author, and the ground and foundation of the grace of hope of salvation, and eternal life; not earthly enjoyments, nor any external thing whatever; not birth privileges, carnal descent, religious education, morality and civility, obedience to the law of Moses, moral or ceremonial; nor a profession of Christ, nor a bare subjection to his ordinances, but he himself: and there is good ground to hope for pardon through his blood, which was shed for it; and for justification by his righteousness, which is freely wrought out, and freely imputed; and for salvation by him, since it is in him, and in no other, and is completely effected by him, and that for the worst of sinners, and is wholly of free grace, and which everyone that believes in him shall enjoy; and so for eternal life, which hope is conversant with; and good reason there is for it in Christ, seeing it is in him, and in his gift; what his grace gives a meetness for, and his righteousness a title to; and which he is possessed of in the name of his people, prepares for them, and will introduce them into. The Complutensian edition reads, "of the Father, and, our Saviour Jesus Christ"; and so the Ethiopic version, "of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ".

1 Timothy 1:2

Ver. 2. Unto Timothy my own son in the faith,.... Not in the flesh, or by natural descent, but in a spiritual sense, in the faith of Christ; for Timothy was not related to the apostle according to the flesh, as some have thought, but the relation was spiritual; though the apostle was not properly his spiritual father, or the instrument of his conversion; for Timothy was a converted person, and a disciple of Christ, and well reported of by the brethren, when the apostle first met with him, Ac 16:1 but he calls him his son, either because of his age, being a young man; or because of his affection for him, so the Vulgate Latin version reads, "a beloved son"; or rather, because he was instructed more largely by the apostle into the doctrine of faith; and as a son, with a father, served with him in the Gospel of Christ. It may be rendered "a true or genuine son in the faith", in distinction from nominal Christians, formal professors and hypocrites. Timothy was a real Christian, a true believer, and an hearty and upright professor and preacher of the faith of Christ, as well as truly regenerated by the Spirit of God.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord; the Arabic version reads, "and Lord Jesus Christ our Lord". The form of salutation is the same as in all the epistles of the apostle, only that "mercy" is here inserted; and when he wishes "grace" to Timothy, he may mean a fresh discovery of the love and free favour of God unto him, and an increase of grace in him, and of the gifts of the Spirit upon him; and by "mercy" he may intend a fresh application of the pardoning mercy of God, through Christ, and all assistance, and success in his work as a minister, and all succour and support under every trial and exercise, and mercy at the last day, or the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life; and by "peace" he may design peace of conscience through the blood of Christ, and all prosperity, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. And all this being wished for equally from Christ, as from God the Father, is a proof of the proper deity of our Lord.

1 Timothy 1:3

Ver. 3. As I besought thee to abide, still at Ephesus,.... Where it seems he now was, being left here by the apostle, and where he was desired by him to continue:

when I went into Macedonia; not when he went his first journey there, for Timothy was then along with him, Ac 16:3 and so he seems to be in his journey through it, in Ac 20:3. It may be this may refer to a journey which Luke has given no account of:

that thou mightest charge some, that they teach no other doctrine; than the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; than what had been preached by the apostle at Ephesus, and the saints there had received; than what was agreeably to the Scriptures of truth, and was according to godliness; for all other doctrines must be divers and strange ones: nor would he have them teach in another way, in new words, but hold fast the form of sound words; for new words often produce new doctrines: the apostle perhaps by other doctrine chiefly respects the doctrine of justification by the works of the law. It seems as if there were some teachers in this place the apostle was suspicious of, or he had heard that they began to innovate in the doctrine of faith; wherefore he desires Timothy to continue a while, in order to be a check on these persons, and to charge them not to introduce any new doctrine; for it was only "some", and not all that taught there, he was so to charge. Some refer this to hearers; and render, the words, "that they follow no other doctrine"; but it seems best to understand it of teachers; the Syriac and Arabic versions render the words as we do.

1 Timothy 1:4

Ver. 4. Neither give heed to fables,.... Old wives' fables, **1Ti 4:7** or Jewish fables, **Tit 1:14** the traditions of the elders; anything that was not true; or if it was, yet idle, vain, trifling, and unprofitable:

and endless genealogies; not of deities, as the Theogony of the Gentiles, or the ten Sephirot or numbers in the Cabalistic tree of the Jews, or the Aeones of the Gnostics and Valentinians, which are said to proceed from one another, as some have thought; but both the public and private genealogies of the Jews, which they kept to show of what tribe they were, or to prove themselves priests and Levites, and the like; of which there was no end, and which often

produced questions and debates. By reason of their captivities and dispersions, they were much at a loss to distinguish their tribes and families. Some care Ezra took of this matter, when the Jews returned from the Babylonish captivity. It is said {a}, that Nyoxwy
hrve,

"ten genealogies (or ten sorts of persons genealogized) came out of Babylon; priests, Levites, Israelites, profane (or unfit for the priesthood, though they sprung from priests) proselytes, freemen (servants made free), bastards, Nethinim or Gibeonites, such whose father was not known, and those that were took up in the streets."

These Ezra brought up to Jerusalem thus distinguished, that they might be taken care of by the sanhedrim, and kept distinct; but these would often intermix and cause disputes; and sometimes these mixtures were connived at through partiality or fear {b}

"Says R. Jochanan, by the temple, it is in our hands, (the gloss adds, to discover the illegitimate families of the land of Israel,) but what shall I do? for lo, the great men of this age are hid (or impure): in which he agreed with R. Isaac, who said, the family that is hid, let it be hid. Abai also saith, we have learned this by tradition, there was a family of the house of Tzeriphah, beyond Jordan, and a son of Zion, (a famous man, a man of authority,) set it at a distance, (proclaimed it illegitimate,) by his authority. And again, there was another, and he made it near (or pronounced it right) by his power. Again, there was another family, and the wise men would not discover it."

By which we may see what management there was in these things, and what a foundation was laid for questions and debates. Of these public and private genealogies, See Gill on "Mt 1:16", to which may be added what R. Benjamin says {c} of some Jews in his time, who were the Rechabites, and were very numerous, and had a prince over them of the house of David; and, adds he, they have a genealogical book,
twlav twrgvmw, "and extracts of questions", which I should be tempted to render "clusters of questions", which are with the head of the captivity; and this comes very near to what our apostle here says. And when it is observed, that Herod, that he might hide the meanness of his descent and birth, burnt all the genealogical writings in the public archives {d}, it must be still more difficult to fix the true account of things; and for the loss of the genealogical book, the public one, the Jews express a very great concern: for they say {e}, that

"from the time the book of genealogies was hid, the strength of the wise men was weakened, and the light of their eyes grew dim. Says Mar Zutra, between Azel and Azel, (that is, between **1Ch 8:38** and **1Ch 9:44**) there is need of four hundred camel loads of commentaries."

So intricate an affair, and such an endless business was this. And this affair of genealogies might be now the more the subject of inquiry among judaizing Christians, since there was, and still is, an expectation among the Jews, that in the times of the Messiah these things will be set aright. Says Maimonides {f},

"in the days of the King Messiah, when his kingdom shall be settled, and all Israel shall be gathered to him, Mlwk
woxyyty, "they shall all of them be genealogized", according to his word, by the Holy Ghost, as it is said, **Mal 3:3** he shall purify the sons of Levi, and say, this is a genealogized priest, and this is a genealogized Levite; and shall drive them away who are not genealogized (or related) to Israel, as it is said, **Ezr 2:63**. Hence you learn, that by the Holy Ghost they shall be genealogized, those that arrogate and proclaim their genealogy; and he shall not genealogize Israel but by their tribes, for he shall make known that this is of such a tribe, and this is of such a tribe; but he shall not say concerning such an one he is a bastard, and this is a servant; for so shall it be, that the family that is obscure shall be obscure."

Or else the genealogical account of their traditions may be meant, which they trace from Moses to Joshua, from Joshua to the elders, from the elders to the prophets, from the prophets to the men of the great synagogue, and from one doctor to another {g}, which to pursue is endless, tedious, and tiresome:

which minister questions; as the traditions of the elders, and the genealogical account of them did; the Talmud is full of the questions, debates, contentions, and decisions of the doctors about them:

rather than godly edifying, which is in faith; and which is the principal end of preaching, hearing, and conversation; and that may be called "godly edifying, or the edification of God", as it may be rendered, which he is the author of, and which he approves of, and is by, and according to his word; or that in which souls are built up an habitation for God, and are built up in faith and holiness, and by an increase of every grace: and this is "in faith", not only in the grace of faith, but by the doctrine of faith, on which the saints may build one another, and by which they are edified through the faithful ministration of it by the ministers of the word; when fabulous stories and disputes, about genealogies, are useless and unedifying: not that the apostle condemns all genealogies, such as we have in the writings of the Old Testament, and in the evangelists, nor all inquiries into them, and study of them, which, rightly to settle, is in some cases of great importance and use, but the private and unprofitable ones before mentioned. Some copies read, "the dispensation of God, which is in faith"; meaning the dispensation of the mysteries of grace, which are in the doctrine of faith, which becomes a faithful steward of them, and not fables and genealogies, which issue in questions, quarrels, and contentions.

{a} Misn. Kiddnshin, c. 4. sect. 1. {b} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 71. 1. & Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 65. 3. {c} Massaot, p. 83. {d} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 7. {e} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 62. 2. {f} Hilchot Melacim, c. 12. sect. 3. {g} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1, &c.

1 Timothy 1:5

Ver. 5. Now the end of the commandment is charity,.... By the "commandment" may be meant, the order given to Timothy, or the charge committed to him; see **1Ti 1:18** to forbid the teaching of another doctrine, and to avoid fables and endless genealogies; the end and design of which was to cultivate peace, to maintain and secure brotherly love, which cannot long subsist, when a different doctrine is introduced and received; and to promote godly edification, which is brought about by charity or love, for charity edifies; but is greatly hindered by speculative notions, fabulous stories, and genealogical controversies and contentions: or by it may be intended the ministration of the Gospel, called the commandment, **1Ti 6:14**, because enjoined the preachers of it by Christ; the end of which is to bring persons to the obedience of faith, or to that faith which works by love, to believe in Christ, to love the Lord, his truths, ordinances, people, and ways; or rather the moral law is designed, which is often called the commandment, **Ro 7:8** since of this the apostle treats in some following verses; the end and design, sum and substance, completion and perfection of which law are love to God, and love to one another; see Mt 22:36, which charity or love, when right,

springs out of a pure heart; which no man has naturally; every man's heart is naturally impure; nor can he make it pure; by the strength of nature, or by anything that he can do: there are some that are pure in their own eyes, and in the esteem of others, and yet are not cleansed from their filthiness, and are inwardly full of all manner of impurity; though there are some that have pure hearts, and they are such, who have clean hearts created in them by the Spirit of God; who are regenerated and sanctified by him; whose hearts are purified by faith; and who have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Christ; and who are not double minded, speak with a heart and a heart, but whose hearts are sincere and upright, and without hypocrisy; so that charity or love, from such a heart, is love without dissimulation, which is not in tongue and words only, but in deed and in truth; it is an unfeigned love, or loving with a pure heart fervently.

And of a good conscience; there is a conscience in every man, that accuses or excuses, unless it is cauterized or seared: but this conscience is naturally evil and defiled, and does not perform its office aright; either it takes no notice of, and is not concerned about sin, and has no remorse for it, or it takes notice of little things, and lets pass greater ones, or speaks peace when destruction is at hand: a good conscience is a conscience purified by the grace of God, and purged from dead works by the blood of Christ; under the influence of which a man acts uprightly in the discharge of his duty, and exercises a conscience void of offence towards God and man; and charity, proceeding from such a conscience, is of the right kind: and of faith unfeigned; with which a man really, and from the heart, believes what he professes; so did not Simon Magus, and all other temporary believers, whose faith is a feigned faith, a dead and inactive one; whereas true faith is an operative grace, it is attended with good works, and particularly it works by love: and that charity or love, which springs from faith unfeigned, is unfeigned love also, such as answers the design, and is the substance of the commandment. These words may be considered in a gradation, or as a spiritual genealogy, in opposition to the endless ones before mentioned, thus; that charity which is the end of the commandment comes out of a pure heart, out of which proceeds a good conscience, and from thence faith unfeigned. But the other way of interpreting seems best.

1 Timothy 1:6

Ver. 6. From which some having swerved,.... The apostle, in this verse and the next, describes the persons he suspected of teaching other doctrines, and of introducing fables and endless genealogies; they were such who departed from the above things; they erred from the commandment, or law, notwithstanding their great pretensions to a regard unto it; at least they missed the mark, the end and design of it; they went astray from that, and instead of promoting charity or love, created feuds, contentions, and divisions in the churches; and were far from having a pure heart, being filthy dreamers, and sensual persons, destitute of the Spirit of God, and were such who put away a good conscience, and made shipwreck of faith: such were Hymenaeus, Philetus, Alexander, and others, of whom he also says, they

have turned aside to vain jangling; which he elsewhere calls empty talk, and vain babblings, **1Ti 6:20**, from the solid doctrines of the Gospel, and a solid way of handling them, they turned to vain, idle, useless, and unprofitable subjects of discourse, and to treating upon subjects in a vain, jejune, and empty manner; entertaining their hearers with foolish and trifling questions and answers to them about the law, and with strifes about words, which were unserviceable and unedifying; they were unruly and vain talkers, **Tit 1:10**.

1 Timothy 1:7

Ver. 7. Desiring to be teachers of the law,.... They were very fond of being called Rabbi, Rabbi, and styled doctors of the law, and of being thought to have skill in interpreting the law, and good talents in expounding it, and preaching upon it; which was now most in vogue, and gained the greatest applause, when the preaching of the Gospel was treated with contempt, not only by the unbelieving Jews, but by judaizing Christians, and carnal professors.

Understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm: they did not understand the law, the nature and end, the purity and spirituality, and perfection of it, which they were so fond of teaching, and went into many foolish and unlearned questions about it; see **2Ti 2:23**, and which they as foolishly answered: these are the ignorant and unlearned men, who, notwithstanding their vain show of learning, and pretence to skill in interpreting the law, wrested the Scriptures to their own destruction, and that of others; they were ignorant of the things they talked of, and knew not by what arguments to confirm them, and yet were very bold and confident in their assertions: and generally speaking so it is, that those who can prove least assert most, and that with the greatest assurance.

1 Timothy 1:8

Ver. 8. But we know that the law is good,.... The apostle says this to prevent an objection that might be made to him, that seeing he bore so hard on such who were fond of being teachers of the law, he was himself against the law, and the preaching and proper use of it; but this he would not have concluded, for he and his fellow labourers in the ministry, and all true believers know, from the Scriptures of truth, from the agreement of the law with the Gospel, and from their own experience, that the law is good, provided it be used in a lawful way, and to lawful purposes: and this is to be understood not of the ceremonial law, which was now disannulled, because of the weakness and unprofitableness of it, so that there was no lawful use of that; but of the moral law, which must needs be good, since the author of it is God, who is only good; and nothing but good can come from him: the law, strictly moral, is a copy of his nature, transcribed out of himself, as well as with his own hands; and is a declaration of his will, and is stamped with his authority, and therefore must be good: the matter of it is good, it contains good, yea, great and excellent things; the matter of it is honestly and morally good, as to love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly with God: and it is pleasantly good to a regenerate man, who loves it, and delights in it after the inner man, and serves it with his spirit; though the carnal mind cannot be subject to it, but rejects it, and rebels against it: and it is also profitably good; for though obedience to it is not profitable to God, yet it is to men; and though eternal life is not obtained hereby, nor any reward given for keeping it, yet in keeping it there is a reward; and that peace is enjoyed, which the transgressors of it are strangers to: it is good in the uses of it, both to sinners and to saints. To sinners it is useful for the knowledge of sin, to convince of it, and bring them to a sense of it, and concern for it, which is effectually done, when the Spirit of God sets in with it, or brings this commandment home to the heart; and if it has not this use, it is sometimes a means of restraining men from sin, which is the use of civil laws among men; and if it has not this, it is of use however to accuse men rightly of sin, and to pronounce justly guilty before God for it, to curse them as they deserve it, and to sentence to condemnation and death: and to believers it is of use, though they are not under it as in the hands of Moses, and as a covenant of works, and are freed from its curse and condemnation, and under no obligation to seek for life and righteousness by it; to them it is of use, to point out to them what is the will of God, and what should be done, and not done; and it is a rule of walk and conversation to them, as in the hands of Christ; and is as a glass to them to behold their own deformity, the impurity of their nature, the plague of their own hearts, and the imperfection of their obedience; by which they see the insufficiency of their own righteousness, how far they are from perfection, and what carnal creatures they are, when compared with this law: and as this serves to put them out of conceit with themselves, so it tends to make Christ and his righteousness more lovely and valuable in their esteem; who has wrought out a righteousness as broad and as long as the law is, and by which it is magnified and made honourable, and has delivered them from its curse and condemnation. And this law is good as it is holy, in its author, nature, and use; and as it is just, requiring just things, and doing that which is just, by acquitting those who are interested in Christ's righteousness, and in condemning those that have no righteousness; and as it is a spiritual and perfect law, which reaches the spirit and soul of man, and is concerned with inward thoughts and motions, as well as outward actions; and especially the end of it, the fulfilling end of it is good, which is Jesus Christ, who was made under it, came to fulfil it, and has answered all the demands of it: so that it must be good, and which cannot be denied,

if a man use it lawfully; for if it is used in order to obtain life, righteousness, and salvation by the works of it, or by obedience to it, it is used unlawfully: for the law does not give life, nor can righteousness come by it; nor are, or can men be saved by the works of it; to use the law for such purposes, is to abuse it, as the false teachers did, and make that which is good in itself, and in its proper use, to do what is evil; namely, to obscure and frustrate the grace of God, and make null and void the sufferings and death of Christ. A lawful use of the law is to obey it, as in the hands of Christ, the King of saints, and lawgiver in his church, from a principle of love to him, in the exercise of faith on him, without any mercenary selfish views, without trusting to, or depending on, what is done in obedience to it, but with a view to the glory of God, to testify our subjection to Christ, and our gratitude to him for favours received from him.

1 Timothy 1:9

Ver. 9. Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man,.... No man is naturally righteous since Adam, excepting the man Christ Jesus: some that are righteous in their own opinion, and in the esteem of others, are not truly and really so; none are righteous, or can be justified in the sight of God by the works of the law; those only are righteous men, who are made so through the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them: and such a righteous man is here intended, who believes in Christ with the heart unto righteousness, who lays hold on Christ's righteousness, and receives it by faith; in consequence of which he lives soberly, righteously, and godly, though not without sin, since there is no such just man upon earth. Now for such a man the law was not made; which must be understood not of its original constitution and make, for it was certainly made for, and given to Adam, who was a righteous man, and was written upon his heart in a state of innocence; and who had a positive law made also for him, and given to him as a trial of his obedience to this: it was also delivered to the Israelites on Mount Sinai, who were, many of them, at least, righteous men; and besides all this, the law was made for Jesus Christ; he was the end, the mark, and scope at which it aimed, and for whose sake it was given to Israel, that he might be made under it, and fulfil it. Nor does this expression deny all use of the law to a righteous man, which has been pointed out on the preceding verse, but only removes an unlawful use, and a wrong end of the law: it never was made with any such view as to obtain righteousness by it; for, a righteous man, as Adam, in innocence, and all that are justified by Christ's righteousness, need it not for such a purpose, because they are already righteous; and sinners can never attain to righteousness by it, since it cannot give life unto them: it is made therefore not for the former with the view now mentioned, but for the latter, and that both for the restraining of sin, and punishing of sinners. The words dikaiw nomov ou keitai, may be rendered, "the law does not lie upon a righteous man", or against him. It does not lie as a weight or burden on him; its precept does not lie on him, as a task to be performed; nor does its penalty, the curse, lie on him as a punishment to be bore by him: it does not lie upon him, nor against him, as an accusing law, its mouth is stopped by the righteousness of Christ, by which he is denominated a righteous man; nor as a terrifying law, and bringing into bondage by its threats and menaces; nor as a rigorous law, obliging to obedience in a forcible and compulsive way; seeing there is no need of it, the righteous man delights in it, and cheerfully serves it, and the love of Christ constrains him to obey it freely. And much less does it lie on him, or against him as a cursing or condemning law, since Christ has redeemed him from the curse of it.

But for the lawless and disobedient; by the "lawless" are meant, not the Gentiles, which were without the written law, but such who have it, and despise and reject it, and live not according to it, but transgress it: and "the disobedient" design such who are not subject to it: who are sons of Belial, children without the yoke; who cast the law of the Lord behind their backs; who are not, nor can they be subject to it, without the powerful and efficacious grace of God. Now the law lies upon, and against such persons, as an accusing, terrifying, cursing, and condemning law.

For the ungodly, and for sinners; by the "ungodly" are intended, such as are without God in the world, who neither fear God, nor regard man, who neglect and despise the worship of God, and say to him, depart from us, Job 21:14 and by "sinners" are designed notorious ones, who are exceeding great sinners, always sinning, making sin their constant business and employment; on and against these the law lies:

for unholy and profane: such are unholy persons, who are destitute of inward principles of truth and holiness, and who live unholy lives and conversations; and "profane" persons are those who profane the name of the Lord by cursing and swearing, and who profane his day, doctrines, and ordinances, and live dissolute and profane lives, being abandoned to all sin and wickedness; these three couples of wicked men, expressed in general terms, seem to have respect greatly to the moral part of the four precepts of the decalogue, as the following particulars do to the other six:

for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers; though there is no law that expressly mentions this, yet is beyond all doubt a breach both of the fifth and sixth commands; and if cursing parents, and disobedience to them, were punishable by the law with death, then much more the murder of them; see Le 20:9 though the words will bear to be rendered, "for strikers of fathers, and strikers of mothers"; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions render them, and against this there was an express law, Ex 21:15. According to the Pompeian law, one guilty of parricide was to be sewed up in a sack with a dog, a cock, a viper, and an ape, and cast into the sea, or into a river {h}:

for manslayers, guilty of the murder of any man, which was always punishable with death, and was a breach of the sixth command; see **Ge 9:6**.

{h} Pompon. Laetus de Leg. Rom. p. 156.

1 Timothy 1:10

Ver. 10. For whoremongers,.... Fornicators and adulterers, who were transgressors of the seventh command, Ex 20:14 these God will judge, and such shall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone:

for them that defile themselves with mankind; who are guilty of sodomy; such, according to the law, were to die, Le 18:22 the wrath of God was revealed from heaven in a very visible and remarkable manner against this abomination, by raining fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and upon the cities of the plain, who defiled themselves in this way:

for men stealers; who decoyed servants or free men, and stole them away, and sold them for slaves; see the laws against this practice, and the punishment such were liable to, in Ex 21:16. This practice was condemned by the Flavian law among the Romans {i}, and was not allowed of among the Grecians {k}; the death with which such were punished was strangling, according to the Jews {l}:

for liars; who speak what is false, against their own knowledge and conscience, and with a design to deceive; who lie against their neighbours, and act falsely and deceitfully in trade and merchandise, as well as speak that which is not true; see **Le 6:2**

for perjured persons; who take a false oath on any account, and bear false witness against their neighbour. Now upon, and against all, and each of these, the law lies, as an accusing, threatening, and cursing law:

and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; the law lies against it, takes notice of it, charges with it, condemns and punishes for it: by "sound doctrine" is meant the doctrine of the Gospel, which is in itself pure and incorrupt, and is the cause of soundness and health to others; it is health to the navel, and marrow to the bones; its doctrines are the wholesome words of Christ, and by them souls are nourished up unto eternal life; when the errors and heresies of men are in themselves rotten and corrupt, and also eat as do a canker. Here it may be observed, that there is an entire harmony and agreement between the Gospel and the law, rightly understood and used; what is contrary to the one, is also to the other; the Gospel no more countenances sin than the law does; and whatever is repugnant to the Gospel is liable to be punished by the law.

{i} Pompon. Laetus de Leg. Rom. p. 154. {k} Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 8. c. 3. {l} Misna Sanhedria, c. 10. sect. 1. & Maimon. Hilch. Geniba, c. 9. sect. 1.

1 Timothy 1:11

Ver. 11. According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God,.... For no doctrine is sound, but what is agreeable to that: this is a very great encomium of the Gospel. The doctrine preached by the apostles was not only Gospel, or good news, and glad tidings, but the Gospel of God; of which he is the author, and which relates to his glory, the glory of all his perfections; which reveals his purposes, shows his covenant, and exhibits the blessings and promises of it; and is the Gospel of the blessed God, who is blessed in himself, and is the fountain of blessedness to others; and particularly he blesses his chosen ones with spiritual blessings, and which are set forth and declared in the Gospel; for which reason this epithet seems to be given to God here: and it is a glorious one; it discovers the glory of God, of his wisdom, grace, and love in the salvation of men; its doctrines of peace and pardon, righteousness and salvation by Jesus Christ, are glorious ones; and so are its promises, being great and precious, all yea and amen in Christ, absolute, unconditional, unchangeable, and irreversible; its ordinances also are glorious ones, being amiable and pleasant, and not grievous and burdensome to believers; and it is glorious in its effects, being the power of God unto salvation, the means of enlightening the blind, of quickening the dead, of delivering men from bondage and servitude, of turning men from sin and Satan to God, and of refreshing and comforting distressed minds, and of reviving the spirits of drooping saints, of establishing and strengthening them, and nourishing them up to eternal life. The apostle adds,

which was committed to my trust: to distinguish this Gospel from another, from that of the false teachers, which was an inglorious one, and he had nothing to do with; and to show the excellency and worth of it; it being valuable, was deserving of care and keeping, and was a depositum the person intrusted with was faithfully and carefully to keep and preserve.

1 Timothy 1:12

Ver. 12. And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, &c. 1 The subject matter of this thanksgiving being the apostle's call to the ministry of the word, and his furniture and fitness for it, shows, that while others were fond of being teachers, and called doctors of the law, he esteemed it an high honour and special favour bestowed upon him, that he was a preacher of the Gospel; and that all his gifts and abilities for it were not of himself, nor from men, but were owing to the free grace of God, and favour of Christ; wherefore he gloried not in them, as if he had not received them, but gives Christ the glory of them, and thanks to him for them;

who hath enabled me; who gave him all his abilities for the preaching of the Gospel, and all that strength to perform the various parts of labour and service he was called unto, and all that firmness, resolution, and fortitude of mind he was endued with, to bear and suffer what he did for the sake of Christ and his Gospel.

For that he counted me faithful; not that he was so antecedent to the grace and gifts bestowed on him by Christ, or that Christ foresaw that he would be so, and therefore chose him for his service; but he counted him faithful, having made him so by his grace, and thus he kept him; faithfulness being a necessary requisite and qualification for a Gospel minister, he having a great trust committed to him, being made a steward of the manifold grace and mysteries of God:

putting me into the ministry. The ministry of the word, the work of the ministry, or preaching of the Gospel, the dispensation or administration of it to the sons of men; this he did not thrust himself into, nor take this honour to, and of himself; nor was he put into it by men, but was chosen to it of God, and called unto it by the Spirit, and was placed in it by Christ himself, who in person appeared to him, and made a minister of him; see **Ro 1:1** Ac 13:2. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "his ministry", the ministry of Christ.

1 Timothy 1:13

Ver. 13. Who was before a blasphemer,.... Of the name of Christ, contrary to which he thought he ought to do many things; and he not only blasphemed that name himself, calling him an impostor and a deceiver, but he compelled others to blaspheme it also, Ac 26:9. This, as well as what follows, is said, to illustrate the grace of God in his conversion, and call to the ministry:

and a persecutor: for not content to speak evil of Christ, of his person, people, truths, and ordinances, he acted against them; not only breathed out against the disciples threatenings and slaughter, but did many evil things to them, and destroyed them which called on the name of Christ; persecuted Christ in his members, and them beyond measure, even unto death, **Ac 9:1**

And injurious; not barely using contumelious and reproachful words of Christ, and his people, which is the sense of some versions, and seems to be included in the first character; but using force and violence, and doing injury, not only to the characters, but persons and properties of the saints, making havoc of the church, haling men and women out of their houses, and committing them to prison; and now it was that Benjamin ravined as a wolf, the apostle being of that tribe; see **Ac 8:3**.

But I obtained mercy: the Vulgate Latin version reads, "the mercy of God"; God had mercy on him, unasked and unsought for, as well as unmerited; God had mercy on him when he was in the career of his sin, and stopped him; and of his abundant mercy begat him again to a lively hope of forgiveness and eternal life; and through his great love quickened him, when dead in trespasses and sins; and according to the multitude of his tender mercies, forgave and blotted out all his iniquities; and put him openly among his children, his family and household; and to all this added the grace of apostleship: he put him into the ministry, and, of a blaspheming and injurious persecutor, made him a laborious, faithful, and useful preacher of the Gospel.

Because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. This is said, not as an extenuation of this sin, or as an excuse for himself; for this was not the apostle's method, since in the next verse he calls himself the chief of sinners; besides, ignorance is not an excuse but an aggravation of sin, especially when there are means of knowledge, and these are not attended to; and when persons are not open to conviction, and reject the fullest evidence, which was the case here: nor can unbelief be pleaded in such a man's favour, who heard what Stephen had to say; and though he could not resist his wisdom, received not the truth spoken by him, but consented to his death; moreover, all sins spring from ignorance, and are aggravated by unbelief: but this phrase describes the apostle's state and condition; he was a poor, blind, ignorant bigot, an unbelieving and hardened creature, and so an object of mercy, pity, and compassion; and he who has compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way, had compassion on him. He indeed did not know that Jesus was the Christ, or that his followers were the true church of God; he really thought he ought to do what he did, and that, in doing it, he did God good service; he had a zeal, but not according to knowledge; and therefore did not sin wilfully and maliciously against light, and knowledge, and conscience, and so not the sin against the Holy Ghost; as some of the Pharisees did, and therefore died without mercy, and were not capable subjects of mercy, and proper objects of it; nor is it ever extended to such: but this not being the case of the apostle, mercy was of sovereign good will and pleasure vouchsafed to him; his ignorance and unbelief were not a reason or cause of his obtaining mercy, which is always shown in a sovereign way; but a reason, showing, that that was mercy that was vouchsafed to him, since he was such an ignorant and unbelieving creature. It is a good note of Beza's on the place, "en merita preparationis quae profert apostolus"; "what works, merits, previous qualifications and preparations were there in the apostle, fitting him for the grace and mercy of God", seeing in the midst of his sins, and in the full pursuit of them, the grace of God laid hold upon him, and mercy was shown him? there is nothing between his being a blasphemer, a persecutor, an injurious person, an ignorant unbeliever, and his obtaining mercy.

1 Timothy 1:14

Ver. 14. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant,.... That is, the love of Jehovah the Father; so the Ethiopic version reads, "the grace of God"; of God the Father, since he is distinguished in the text from Jesus Christ. God is abundant in grace and goodness; he is rich and plenteous in mercy; there is an overflow of love in his heart to his chosen people, and in conversion it flows out, and abounds and superabounds; see **Ro 5:20**

with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus; these are the effects of the love and favour of God displayed in conversion, or which the grace of God brings along with it, and implants in the soul at that time, as it did in the apostle; for by "faith" is not meant the faithfulness of God to his Son, and to his covenant, oath, and promise, which now began visibly to be made good; nor the faith of the Gospel committed to the apostle's trust, which was an high favour; but the grace of faith, which is a pure gift of God, and a distinguishing instance of his grace; for all men have it not, only his elect; and is a most precious and excellent grace, and of great use and importance: it receives every blessing from Christ, and gives him all the glory; through it much peace, joy, and comfort are enjoyed here, and with it is connected eternal life and salvation hereafter: and by "love" also is meant, not the love with which God loves his people, for that is designed by the grace of our Lord, though there is a very great display of that in conversion, which is a time of love; but the internal grace of love, even love to God, to Christ, and to his people, which the apostle was before destitute of; but now instead of unbelief he had faith, and instead of rage and madness against Christ, and the saints, his soul was filled with love to both. The Arabic version reads, "with my faith, and my love". The phrase, "which is in Christ Jesus", denotes either that the spring of these graces is in Christ, and that they come from him, in whom all fulness dwells; or that he is the object of them, in which they centre, and on whom they are exercised, and particularly that love to the saints was shown for his sake.

1 Timothy 1:15

Ver. 15. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation,.... This is said, lest it should be thought strange, or scarcely credible, that so great a sinner should be saved; as well as to give a summary of the glorious Gospel the apostle was intrusted with; and in opposition to fables, endless genealogies, and vain jangling, and contentions about the law. The doctrine of Christ's coming into the world, and of salvation by him, as it is the sum and substance of the Gospel, so it is a "faithful saying"; in which the faithfulness of God is displayed to himself, and the perfections of his nature, his holiness, justice, love, grace, and mercy; to his law, which is magnified, and made honourable; to his word of promise hereby fulfilled; and to his Son in carrying him through the work: and the faithfulness of Christ is discovered herein, both to his Father with whom, and to his friends for whom, he engaged to obtain salvation; and the faithfulness of ministers is shown in preaching it, and of other saints in professing it, and abiding by it: it is a true saying, and not to be disputed or doubted of, but to be believed most firmly; it is certain that God the Father sent his Son into the world for this purpose; and Christ himself assures us, that he came for this end; his carriage to sinners, and his actions, testified the same; his works and miracles confirm it; and the numberless instances of sinners saved by him evince the truth of it: and it is "worthy of all acceptation"; or to be received by all sorts of persons, learned, or unlearned, rich or poor, greater or lesser sinners; and to be received in all ways, and in the best manner, as the word of God, and not man; with heartiness and readiness, and with love, joy, and gladness, and with meekness, faith, and fear, and by all means; for it is entirely true, absolutely necessary, and suitable to the case of all, and is to be highly valued and esteemed by those who do approve and accept of it. It is the Christian Cabala, or the evangelical tradition, delivered by the Father to Christ, by him to his apostles, and by them to the saints, by whom it is cordially received. The apostle seems to allude to the Cabala of the Jews, their oral law, which they say {m} was delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, and by him to Joshua; and by Joshua to the elders; and by the elders to the prophets; and so from one to another to his times: but here he suggests, that if they would have a Cabala, here is one, that is firm, and true, and certain, and worthy to be received, whereas the Jewish one was precarious, yea, false and untrue. Indeed, sometimes the words of the prophets are so called by them; so that passage in **Joe 2:13** is called hlbq, "Cabala" {n}, some thing delivered and received; upon which one of their commentators {o} has these words,

"whatever a prophet commands the Israelites, makes known unto them, or exhorts them to, is a Cabala."

And if a prophetic command or admonition, then surely: such an evangelical doctrine, as follows, is entitled to this character,

that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; Christ came into the world, being sent by his Father, but not against his will, but with his free consent: he came voluntarily in the fulness of time into this sinful world, where he was ill treated; and this was not by local motion, or change of place, but by assumption of nature; and the end of it was, that he might be the Saviour of lost sinners, as all men are, both by Adam's sin, and their own transgressions; though he came not to save all, for then all would be saved, whereas they are not; and if he came to save them, he must have then so far lost his end; but he came to save sinners, of all sorts, even notorious sinners, the worst and chief of sinners: and the apostle instances in himself,

of whom I am chief; or "first"; not that he was the first in time; Adam was the first man that sinned, though Eve was before him in the transgression: it is a most stupid notion, that some gave into from this passage, as if the soul of Adam passed from one body to another, till it came to Paul, and therefore he calls himself the first of sinners: but his meaning is, that he was the first in quality, or the greatest and chiefest of sinners, not only of those that are saved, but of all men, Jews or Gentiles; and this he said not hyperbolically, nor out of modesty, but from a real sense or apprehension he had of himself, and his sins, which were made exceeding sinful to him; or he was the chief of sinners, and exceeded all others in his way of sinning, in blaspheming the name of Christ, and persecuting his saints, otherwise his conversation was externally moral, and in his own, and in the opinion of others, blameless: he was no fornicator, adulterer, thief, extortioner, &c. but in the above things he went beyond all others, and was a ringleader in them; and the remembrance of these sins abode with him, and kept him humble all his days; he was always ready to acknowledge them, and express his vileness and unworthiness on account of them: hence he here says, not "of whom I was", but "of whom I am chief". Now such sinners, and all sorts of sinners, Christ came to save from all their sins, original and actual; from the law, its curse and condemnation; from the bondage of Satan, the evil of the world, and wrath to come, and from every enemy; and that, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, by fulfilling the law, bearing its penalty, offering himself a sacrifice for sin, thereby finishing it, making reconciliation for it, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness: and a great Saviour he is, and an only one; a full, suitable, able, and willing Saviour; a Saviour of the soul, as well as of the body, and of both with an everlasting salvation.

{m} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1. {n} Misn. Taanith, c. 2. sect. 1. {o} Jarchi Misn. Taanith, c. 2. sect. 1.

1 Timothy 1:16

Ver. 16. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy,.... Though so great a sinner, and even the chief of sinners:

that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering; not that the apostle was the first that was converted upon Christ's coming to save sinners; for there were many converted before him, and very great sinners too, and he speaks of himself as one born out of due time; unless it can be thought that he was the first of the persecutors of the church, upon the death of Stephen, that was converted: but the word "first" is not an "adverb" of time, but a "noun" expressing the character of the apostle, as before; and the sense is, that in him, the first or chief of sinners, Jesus Christ exhibited an instance of his abundant longsuffering exercised towards his elect for their salvation; he waiting in the midst of all their sins and rebellions to be gracious to them; and of this, here was a full proof in the Apostle Paul: what longsuffering and patience were showed, while he held the clothes of them that stoned Stephen, when he made havoc and haled men and women to prison, and persecuted them to death? and this was done,

for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting; either to those of his fellow persecutors, or of others in that age, who should be made sensible of their sins, and by this instance and example of grace be encouraged to believe in Christ for life and salvation; or to all awakened and convinced sinners then, and in every age, who from hence may conceive hope of salvation in Christ for themselves, though ever so great sinners; since such patience and longsuffering were exercised towards, and such grace bestowed upon, one that had been a sinner of the first rank and size, yea, the chief of sinners: in him was delineated the grace of God, and in his conversion it was painted in its most lively colours; and a just representation is given of it, for the encouragement of the faith and hope of others in Christ. Christ is here represented as the object of faith; and true faith regards him, looks unto him, and deals with him for eternal life and salvation. Our countryman, Mr. Mede, thinks that the sense is, that the conversion of the Apostle Paul was a pattern of the conversion of the Jews in the latter day; and his thought seems to be a very good one: the apostle's conversion is a pledge and earnest of theirs, and showed that God had not cast away all that people; and carries in it some likeness and agreement with theirs: as his, theirs will be in the midst of all their blindness and unbelief; and when they have filled up the measure of their sins; and they will be a nation born at once, suddenly, and by the immediate power and grace of God, without the ministry of the word, which they will not hear: thus they will be converted as he was, and become as hearty lovers and friends of the Gentile churches.

1 Timothy 1:17

Ver. 17. Now unto the King eternal,.... This doxology, or ascription of glory to God, on account of the grace bestowed upon the apostle, may be considered, either as referring to all the three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, who are the one and only God; and to whom all the attributes of wisdom, power, eternity, immortality, or incorruptibleness, and invisibility, belong; and who are jointly concerned in the grace bestowed upon any of the sons of men. Or else to God the Father, in agreement with a parallel place in Ro 16:27 who is the only true God, in opposition to nominal and fictitious deities, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and to whom the several epithets here used may be unquestionably given: he has shown his wisdom in the works of creation, providence, and grace; he is the everlasting King, or the King of ages, or of worlds; he is Maker of the worlds, and the Governor of them throughout all ages and generations; he only has immortality, and is the incorruptible God, and who is invisible, whose shape has never been seen, nor his voice heard: or else this may be thought to belong to Jesus Christ, since it is to him the apostle gives thanks for putting him into the ministry; and from him he obtained mercy, and received abundant grace; and he it was who came into the world to save sinners, and who showed forth all longsuffering in him, see **1Ti 1:12**, upon which the apostle breaks out into this attribution of glory and honour, and which agrees with **Jude 1:25**. And everything here said is applicable to him; he is the eternal King, whose is the kingdom of nature, providence, and grace; his throne is for ever and ever, and of his kingdom and government there is no end; he is the "King of ages", as the phrase may be rendered, and so his kingdom is called Mymlwe lk twklm, "the kingdom of all ages", Ps 145:13 and which endures throughout all generations; and this distinguishes him from all other kings. Scarce any king ever reigned an age, but Christ has reigned, and will reign throughout all ages. No regard is here had, as some have thought, to the Aeones of the Gnostics and Valentinians; but rather the apostle adopts a phrase into his doxology, frequently used by the Jews in their prayers, many of which begin after this manner;

"blessed art thou, O Lord our God, Mlweh Klm "the king of the age, or world", &c."

and Mymlweh lk Nwbr, "Lord of all ages, or worlds", &c. {p}. Other attributes and epithets follow, as immortal or "incorruptible". Christ is the living God, and the living Redeemer; and though he died as man, he will die no more, but ever lives to make intercession for his people, and to reign over them, and protect them: who also may be said to be "invisible", who was so in his divine nature, till manifest in the flesh; and now in his human nature he is taken out of the sight of men, and is not to be beheld with bodily eyes by men on earth: and he is

the only wise God; he is "the only God", so the Alexandrian copy, the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions, read; not to the exclusion of the Father or Spirit, but in opposition to all false deities, or those who are not by nature God: and he is the only wise God; who is wisdom itself, and of himself; and is the fountain of wisdom, both natural and spiritual, unto others; wherefore to him be

honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen. Christ is crowned with honour and glory, and he is worthy of it; and it becomes all men to honour the Son, as they do the Father: he is the brightness of his glory, and equal to him; and the glory of deity, of all the divine perfections, and works, and also worship, should be given him; as well as the glory of salvation, and of all the grace the sons of men partake of; and that not only now, but to all eternity.

{p} Seder Tephillot, fol. 2. 2. & 3. 2. & 37. 1, 2. Ed. Basil. fol. 2. 1, 2. & 3. 1. & 4. 1. & 5. 2. & passim, Ed. Amsterdam.

1 Timothy 1:18

Ver. 18. This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy,.... After a digression the apostle had made concerning himself, his conversion, and call to the ministry, he returns to his former subject, and original design, and renews the charge he gave to Timothy; and which was not only an order to charge others to teach no other doctrine than that of the Gospel; but includes the charge of preaching it himself, and intends the glorious Gospel of the blessed God committed to his trust, and the whole form of sound words he had heard of him, and which he had charged him to keep pure and incorrupt: and this was done,

according to the prophecies which went before on thee; by which are meant, not the prophecies of the Old Testament, though of these Timothy had a considerable share of knowledge from a child, and was hereby greatly qualified to have such a charge committed to him; but then these were not prophecies concerning him, but the Messiah, his person, office, kingdom, and grace: nor are any particular revelations made unto the Apostle Paul concerning Timothy intended, of which there is no account; the revelations and visions he had, related not to men, and their characters, but to doctrines; rather the testimonies of the brethren at Lystra and Iconium, and the good reports they made of him to the apostle, which promised and foreboded future usefulness, are designed; though it seems best of all to understand these prophecies of such as were delivered out by the prophets in the church, for such there were in those times; who, when Timothy was a child, or a youth, foretold that he would have great gifts bestowed upon him, and would be a very useful, diligent, laborious, and successful preacher of the Gospel; and therefore the apostle mentions these to stimulate him the more to the discharge of his work, that he might answer the prophecies concerning him: for he adds,

that thou by them mightest war a good warfare: that is, that in consideration of the charge committed to him, and the prophecies that went before of him, might be the more industrious to fulfil his ministry, is signified by a warfare, in allusion to the service of the Levites, which is so called, **Nu 8:24** with zeal and courage, faithfulness and integrity: for not that warfare is intended, which is common to all believers; who being enlisted as volunteers under Christ, the Captain of their salvation, and having on the whole armour of God, fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil; and are more than conquerors through him that has loved them: but that warfare, which is peculiar to the ministers of the word; whose business it is more especially to fight the good fight of faith, and as good soldiers of Christ, to endure hardness for the sake of him, and his Gospel; and who, besides the other enemies, have to do with false teachers; and their warfare lies in publishing and defending the Gospel of Christ, and in contending for it, and in the weakening of Satan's kingdom, and enlarging the kingdom of Christ; and for which the weapons of their warfare are peculiarly made, and are eminently succeeded; and when they are used to such good purposes, by the ministers of the Gospel, they war a good warfare.

1 Timothy 1:19

Ver. 19. Holding faith, and a good conscience..... By "faith" is meant, not the grace of faith, but the doctrine of faith, a sense in which it is often used in this epistle; see **1Ti 3:9** and the "holding" of it does not intend a mere profession of it, and a retaining of that without wavering, which is to be done by all believers; but a holding it forth in the ministry of the word, in opposition to a concealing or dropping it, or any part of it; and a holding it fast, without wavering, and in opposition to a departure from it or any cowardice about it and against all posers: to which must be added, a good conscience; the conscience is not naturally good, but is defiled by sin; and that is only good, which is sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and thereby purged from dead works; the effect of which is an holy, upright, and becoming conversation; and which seems to be chiefly intended here, and particularly the upright conduct and behaviour of the ministers of the Gospel, in the faithful discharge of their work and office: see **2Co 1:12**.

Which some having put away; that is, a good conscience; and which does not suppose that they once had one, since that may be put away which was never had: the Jews, who blasphemed and contradicted, and never received the word of God, are said to put it from them, Ac 13:46 where the same word is used as here; and signifies to refuse or reject anything with detestation and contempt: these men always had an abhorrence to a good conscience among men, and to a good life and conversation, the evidence of it; and at length threw off the mask, and dropped the faith they professed, as being contrary to their evil conscience: though admitting it does suppose they once had a good conscience, it must be understood not of a conscience cleansed by the blood of Christ, but of a good conscience in external show only, or in comparison of what they afterwards appeared to have: and, besides, some men, destitute of the grace of God, may have a good conscience in some sense, or with respect to some particular facts, or to their general conduct and behaviour among men, as the Apostle Paul had while unregenerate, Ac 23:1 and which being acted against, or lost, is no instance of falling from the true grace of God, which this passage is sometimes produced in proof of:

concerning faith have made shipwreck; which designs not the grace, but the doctrine of faith, as before observed, which men may profess, and fall off from, and entirely drop and lose. Though supposing faith as a grace is meant, the phrase, "have made shipwreck of it", is not strong enough to prove the total and final falling away of true believers, could such be thought to be here meant; since persons may be shipwrecked, and not lost, the Apostle Paul was thrice shipwrecked, and each time saved; besides, as there is a true and unfeigned, so there is a feigned and counterfeit faith, which may be in persons who have no true grace, and may be shipwrecked, so as to be lost.

1 Timothy 1:20

Ver. 20. Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander,.... The former of these is mentioned in **2Ti 2:17** and that part of faith he made shipwreck of, or erred in, was the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, whereby the faith of some nominal believers was overthrown; and this was attended with the putting away of a good conscience, he seemingly before had; for his profane and vain babblings increased to more ungodliness: the latter seems to be the same with Alexander the coppersmith, who did the apostle much evil, **2Ti 4:14** and it may be is the same with him who was at Ephesus when the apostle was, there, Ac 19:33 and where he might be now with Hymenaeus, with whom he might agree in his erroneous opinions, and therefore are particularly mentioned, Ephesus being the place where Timothy now was. It seems by their names that they were both Greeks; Alexander is a known name among the Greeks, since the times of Alexander the great, and even became common among the Jews; See Gill on "Ac 4:6", and Hymenaeus was a name among the Grecians, from Hymen, the Heathen god of marriage: one of this name is mentioned among those said to be raised from the dead by Aesculapius {q}; there was also a bishop of Jerusalem of this name {r}.

Whom I have delivered to Satan; not by excommunication, which is the act of a church, and not of a single person; but by an apostolical power he had of delivering the bodies of men into the hands of Satan, by him to be tortured and afflicted, in order to bring them to a sense of their sins, and as a chastisement and correction for them, and a token of God's displeasure at them; See Gill on "1Co 5:5".

That they may learn not to blaspheme; or "that being chastised", corrected, or disciplined, "they might not blaspheme", as they had before done; either by words, contradicting, reviling, and scoffing at the doctrine of the resurrection; or by their unbecoming lives and conversations, giving themselves great liberty in sinning, supposing there was no truth in that doctrine; whereby they not only blasphemed the Christian religion themselves, but caused it to be evil spoken of by others.

{q} Apollodorus de Orig. Deor. l. 3. p. 172. {r} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 7. c. 14. 30.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Timothy 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 TIMOTHY 2

In this chapter the apostle exhorts to prayer for all sorts of men, gives rules and directions about the dress of women, and their subjection to their husbands; and concludes with some comfort to them. The apostle exhorts to prayer in the first place, directs to the several parts and branches of prayer, and points to the persons to be prayed for, and what should be prayed for on their account, **1Ti 2:1**. And next follow the reasons or arguments engaging to it, which are taken from the agreeableness of it in the sight of God; from the will of God, that all men should be saved: from there being but one God of all, and one Mediator between God and men; from Christ's giving himself a ransom price for all; and from the apostle being a preacher of the Gospel to the Gentiles, as well as Jews, **1Ti 2:3** wherefore he concludes and determines, according to his apostolical power and authority, that prayer be made in any place, provided there were faith and purity, and wrath and doubting were laid aside, **1Ti 2:8**. Also, he exhorts women to appear, especially in public service, in a modest and becoming dress, and to adorn themselves with good works, **1Ti 2:9**, and that they should be silent learners, and not teachers, and be in subjection to their husbands, **1Ti 2:11**. The reasons of which subjection are taken from the formation of Adam before Eve, and from Eve's being deceived, and not Adam, **1Ti 2:13**. However, for the comfort of women, it is observed, that though in sorrow they bring forth children, yet through the birth of a Son, the promised Messiah, they shall be saved, who continue in faith, charity, and holiness, with sobriety, **1Ti 2:15**.

Ver. 1. I exhort therefore, that first of all,.... The two principal parts of public worship, being the ministry of the word and prayer; and the apostle having insisted on the former, in the preceding chapter, in which he orders Timothy to charge some that they teach no other doctrine than that of the Gospel, gives an account of his own ministry, and call to it, and of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to his trust, and stirs up Timothy to the faithful and diligent discharge of his work and office; now proceeds to the latter, to prayer, and exhorts unto it; either Timothy in particular, for so read the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, "I exhort thee", or "desire thee"; or else the church in general; unless it should rather be thought to be a charge to Timothy to exhort, and so Beza's Claromontane copy reads, "exhort thou therefore": but it is commonly considered as an exhortation of the apostle's, which he was very urgent in: it was what lay much upon his mind, and he was greatly desirous that it should be attended unto; for so the words may be read, "I exhort first of all", or before all things; of all things he had to say, this was the chief, or it was what he would have principally and chiefly done by others: for this does not so much regard the order of time, that prayer should be made early in the morning, in the first place, before anything else is done, and particularly before preaching, which seems to have been the custom of the primitive saints, **Ac 4:31** but the pre-eminence and superior excellency of it; though the words may be rendered, "I exhort, that first, the supplications of all be made": and so may regard public prayer, the prayer of the whole church, in distinction from private prayer, or the prayer of a single person; which is expressed by different words,

supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks: the first of these, "supplications", signifies such petitions for things that are wanted by men, either by themselves or others; and that either for their bodies or souls, as food and raiment for the one, and discoveries of pardoning love, supplies of grace, spiritual peace, comfort, &c. for the other: and the second word, "prayers", signifies good wishes and desires, directed and expressed to God for things that are in themselves to be wished for, and desired of God, either for ourselves or others: and the next word, "intercessions", intends either complaints exhibited in prayer against others that have done injuries; or prayers put up for others, either for the averting of evil from them, or for the bestowing some good thing on them: and the last word, "thanksgivings", with which requests should always be made known to God, designs that branch of prayer in which thanks are given to God for mercies received, whether temporal or spiritual: and these are to

be made for all men; not only for all the saints, for all the churches of Christ, and, ministers of the Gospel; nor only for near relations and friends, according to the flesh; but for all the inhabitants of the country and city in which men dwell, the peace and prosperity of which are to be prayed for; yea, for enemies, and such as reproach, persecute, and despitefully use the saints, even for all sorts of men, Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, high and low, bond and free, good men and bad men: for it cannot be understood of every individual that has been, is, or shall be in the world; millions of men are dead and gone, for whom prayer is not to be made; many in hell, to whom it would be of no service; and many in heaven, who stand in no need of it; nor is prayer to be made for such who have sinned the sin unto death, **1Jo 5:16** besides, giving of thanks, as well as prayers, are to be made for all men; but certainly the meaning is not, that thanks should be given for wicked men, for persecutors, and particularly for a persecuting Nero, or for heretics, and false teachers, such as Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom the apostle had delivered to Satan. But the words must be understood of men of all sorts, of every rank and quality, as the following verse shows.

1 Timothy 2:2

Ver. 2. For kings, and for all that are in authority,.... For supreme governors, as the emperor of Rome, and kings of particular nations; and for all sub-governors, or inferior magistrates, as procurators or governors of provinces, and proconsuls, and the like; all that were in high places, and acted under the authority of those that were supreme; these are particularly mentioned, the then governors, whether supreme or subordinate, who were avowed enemies, and violent persecutors of the saints; and it might be a scruple with some of them, whether they should pray for them, and therefore the apostle enjoins it; and this in opposition to the notions and practices of the Jews, who used to curse the Heathens, and pray for none but for themselves, and those of their own nation:

that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty; which does not merely design the end of civil government by kings and magistrates, which is to preserve the peace and quiet of the commonwealth; to protect the persons and properties of men, that they may possess their own undisturbed; and to secure to them their civil and religious rights and liberties, that they may have the free use and exercise of religion, signified by "all godliness"; and to encourage morality and virtue, expressed by "honesty"; and so is an argument for prayer, taken from the advantage of civil government: nor does this clause only point out the duty of saints to live peaceably under the government they are, and not disturb it; to mind only their religious exercises among themselves, and behave honestly and morally among men, as they generally speaking are, the quiet in the land; but also expresses the thing to be prayed for; and the sense is, that since the hearts of kings are in the hands of the Lord, and he can turn them as he pleases, prayer should be made to him for them, that he would either convert them, and bring them to the knowledge of the truth, they now persecuted; or at least so dispose their hearts and minds, that they might stop the persecution, and so saints might live peaceably under them, enjoy their religious liberty, and be encouraged in their moral conversation. The Arabic version renders it, "that they may be preserved": that is, kings, and all in authority. It is a saying of R. Hananiah, or Ananias, the sagan of the priests {s},

"pray for the peace or safety of the kingdom (one of their commentators on it adds {t}, even of the nations of the world, which is remarkable, and agrees with the exhortation of the apostle); for if there was no fear of that, men would devour one another alive."

{s} Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 2. {t} Bartenora in Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 2.

1 Timothy 2:3

Ver. 3. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. Not only to live peaceably and quietly under the government men are, since that is the ordination of God, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, which his grace teaches; but to pray for all sorts of men, and for those who are set in the highest place of government, even though enemies and persecutors: this is good in itself, and in the sight of an omniscient God, who sees not as man seeth; and it is acceptable unto him through Jesus Christ, by whom every sacrifice of prayer or praise is so; for by God our Saviour is meant God the Father, who is the Saviour of all men, in a way of providence, and the Saviour of all the elect in a way of special grace; See Gill on "1Ti 2:1".

1 Timothy 2:4

Ver. 4. Who will have all men to be saved,.... The salvation which God wills that all men should enjoy, is not a mere possibility of salvation, or a mere putting them into a salvable state; or an offer of salvation to them; or a proposal of sufficient means of it to all in his word; but a real, certain, and actual salvation, which he has determined they shall have; and is sure from his own appointment, from the provision of Christ as a Saviour for them, from the covenant of grace, in which everything is secured necessary for it, and from the mission of Christ to effect it, and from its being effected by him: wherefore the will of God, that all men should be saved, is not a conditional will, or what depends on the will of man, or on anything to be performed by him, for then none might be saved; and if any should, it would be of him that willeth, contrary to the express words of Scripture; but it is an absolute and unconditional will respecting their salvation, and which infallibly secures it: nor is it such a will as is distinguishable into antecedent and consequent; with the former of which it is said, God wills the salvation of all men, as they are his creatures, and the work of his hands; and with the latter he wills, or not wills it, according to their future conduct and behaviour; but the will of God concerning man's salvation is entirely one, invariable, unalterable, and unchangeable: nor is it merely his will of approbation or complacency, which expresses only what would be grateful and well pleasing, should it be, and which is not always fulfilled; but it is his ordaining, purposing, and determining will, which is never resisted, so as to be frustrated, but is always accomplished: the will of God, the sovereign and unfrustrable will of God, has the governing sway and influence in the salvation of men; it rises from it, and is according to it; and all who are saved God wills they should be saved; nor are any saved, but whom he wills they should be saved: hence by all men, whom God would have saved, cannot be meant every individual of mankind, since it is not his will that all men, in this large sense, should be saved, unless there are two contrary wills in God; for there are some who were before ordained by him unto condemnation, and are vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; and it is his will concerning some, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned; nor is it fact that all are saved, as they would be, if it was his will they should; for who hath resisted his will? but there is a world of ungodly men that will be condemned, and who will go into everlasting punishment: rather therefore all sorts of men, agreeably to the use of the phrase in **1Ti 2:1** are here intended, kings and peasants, rich and poor, bond and free, male and female, young and old, greater and lesser sinners; and therefore all are to be prayed for, even all sorts of men, because God will have all men, or all sorts of men, saved; and particularly the Gentiles may be designed, who are sometimes called the world, the whole world, and every creature; whom God would have saved, as well as the Jews, and therefore Heathens, and Heathen magistrates, were to be prayed for as well as Jewish ones. Moreover, the same persons God would have saved, he would have also

come to the knowledge of the truth: of Christ, who is the truth, and to faith in him, and of all the truth of the Gospel, as it is in Jesus; not merely to a notional knowledge of it, which persons may arrive unto, and not be saved, but a spiritual and experimental knowledge of it; and all that are saved are brought to such a knowledge, which is owing to the sovereign will and good pleasure of God, who hides the knowledge of Gospel truths from the wise and prudent, and reveals them to babes: whence it appears, that it is not his will with respect to every individual of mankind; that they should thus come to the knowledge of the truth; for was it his will they should, he would, no doubt, give to every man the means of it, which he has not, nor does he; he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, and overlooked their times of ignorance, and sent no message nor messenger to inform them of his will; he gave his word to Jacob, and his statutes unto Israel only; and the Gospel is now sent into one part of the world, and not another; and where it does come, it is hid to the most; many are given up to strong delusions to believe a lie, and few are savingly and experimentally acquainted with the truths of the Gospel; though all that are saved are brought to the knowledge of such truths as are necessary to salvation; for they are chosen to it through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:5

Ver. 5. For there is one God,.... This does not so much regard the unity of God, with respect to himself, or his divine essence, though that is a truth; but does not carry in it any apparent and forcible reason why all men should be prayed for, for which it is produced; but the unity of God with respect to men, as that there is but one God, who is the Creator of all men, and who, in a providential way, is the Saviour of all men; and in a way of special grace is the one God, the one covenant God of all sorts of men, of Jews and Gentiles; for he has taken of the latter into the covenant of his grace, as well as the former, and has loved them with a special and distinguishing love, has chosen them in Christ to salvation, and has sent his Son to redeem them; and of these he calls by his grace, regenerates, sanctifies, adopts, pardons, and justifies; see **Ro 3:29** and therefore all sorts of men, Gentiles as well as Jews, are to be prayed for: another argument follows,

and one Mediator between God and men; a Mediator is of more than one, and has to do with two parties; and these at variance among themselves, between whom he stands as a middle person; his business is to bring them together, and make peace between them; and such an one is Christ: the two parties are God and his elect, who in their natural state are at a distance from God, and at enmity to him, and who have broken his law, and affronted his justice; Christ stands as a middle person, a daysman between them, and lays his hands upon them both; has to do with things pertaining to the glory of God, and makes reconciliation for the sins of the people; brings them that were afar off nigh to God, and makes peace for them by the blood of his cross, by fulfilling the law, and satisfying justice for them; in consequence of this he appears for them in the court of heaven, intercedes and pleads for them, is their advocate, and sees that all covenant blessings, of which he is the Mediator, are applied unto them, and preserves their persons, which are committed to his care and charge, safe to everlasting happiness; and this Mediator is

the man Christ Jesus; not that he is a mere man, for he is truly and properly God; or that he is a Mediator only according to the human nature: it was proper indeed that he should be man, that he might have something to offer, and that he might be capable of obeying, suffering, and dying, and so of making satisfaction in the nature that had sinned; but then, had he not been God, he could not have drawn nigh to God on the behalf of men, and undertook for them, and much less have performed; nor would his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, have been available to cleanse from sin, to procure the pardon of it, justify from it, make atonement for it, or make peace with God: the reason why he is particularly mentioned as man, is, with a view to the argument in hand, praying for all men; since he who is the Mediator between God and man, has assumed a nature which is common to them all: and this Mediator is said to be one, not so much in opposition to other mediators, angels or saints departed, though it is a truth, and stands full against them, but with respect to men; there is but one Mediator between God and all sorts of men, through whom both Jews and Gentiles have an access to God, and peace with him; and therefore prayer through this Mediator should be made for all. So the Jews say of the Messiah {u}, that he is yeuma la, "a Mediator, God", a middle person between God and men. And they call him atyeumad adwme, "the Pillar of mediation" {w} or the middle Pillar; that is, the Mediator or Reconciler. And Philo {x} the Jew speaks of the word, as mesov, a "middle" person, and standing in the middle between the dead and the living, and between God and men. The Ethiopic version here renders it, "there is one elect of God"; which is one of the characters of the Messiah, Isa 42:1.

{u} R. Albo, Sepher Ikkarim, orat 2. c. 28. {w} Sepher Jetzira, p. 126. {x} Quis rerum divin. Hares, p. 508, 509, 510.

1 Timothy 2:6

Ver. 6. Who gave himself a ransom for all,.... What the Mediator gave as a ransom for men is "himself", his body and his soul, which were both made an offering for sin; and his life, which is the result of union between soul and body; his whole human nature as in union with his divine person, and so might be truly said to be himself: this he gave into the hands of men, of justice and of death; and that voluntarily, which shows his great love to his people; and also as a "ransom", or a ransom price for them,
antilutron, in their room and stead; to ransom them from the slavery of sin, and damnation by it, from the captivity of Satan, and the bondage of the law, and from the grave, death, hell, ruin, and destruction: and this ransom was given for "all"; not for every individual of mankind, for then all would be delivered, freed, and saved, whereas they are not; or else the ransom price is paid in vain, or God is unjust to receive a sufficient ransom price from Christ, and yet not free the captive, but punish the person for whom he has received satisfaction; neither of which can be said. But the meaning is, either that he gave himself a ransom for many, as in

Mt 20:28 for the Hebrew word lk, to which this answers, signifies sometimes many, a multitude, and sometimes only a part of a multitude, as Kimchi observes {y}: or rather it intends that Christ gave himself a ransom for all sorts of men, for men of every rank and quality, of every state and condition, of every age and sex, and for all sorts of sinners, and for some out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, for both Jews and Gentiles; which latter may more especially be designed by all, as they are sometimes by the world, and the whole world; and so contains another argument why all sorts of men are to be prayed for, since the same ransom price is given for them; as that for the children of Israel was the same, for the rich as for the poor. We {z} read, that when the people of Israel comforted the high priest upon the death of his wife, or any relation, they used to say to him, Ktrpk wna, "we are thy atonement", expiation, or ransom; that is, as the commentators {a} explain it, by us thou shalt be atoned, for we will be in thy room and stead, with respect to all things that shall come upon thee; but here the High priest and Mediator is the atonement and ransom for the people:

to be testified in due time; or "a testimony in his own times"; that is, the sum and substance of what is before said is the Gospel, which is a testimony concerning the person, office, and grace of Christ, exhibited in the times of the Messiah, or the Gospel dispensation. Some copies read, "the mystery", which is another word often used for the Gospel; for that that is intended, appears by what follows.

{y} Sepher Shorash. rad. llk {z} Misna Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1. {a} Jarchi & Bartenona in ib.

1 Timothy 2:7

Ver. 7. Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle,.... He was ordained or appointed to be a preacher of the Gospel from all eternity, and was separated or set apart unto it in time, and was put into the ministry of it by Christ himself, and was not a common or ordinary preacher of the word, but an apostle, an extraordinary officer in the Gospel church.

I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not; which are a sort of an oath, or an appeal to Christ the omniscient God, for the truth of what he said, concerning his ordination to the Gospel; see a like phrase in **Ro 9:1**. The phrase, "in Christ", is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in three of Beza's ancient copies, and in some others, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions;

a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity; the Gospel of the uncircumcision, or which was to be preached to the uncircumcised Gentiles, was committed to this apostle; and his work and ministry lay among them, and therefore he is called the apostle of the Gentiles: and so he was in faith and verity; which may regard the subject matter of his teachings and ministry; it was the faith and truth of the Gospel, even the whole of it, the faith which was once delivered to the saints, and the truth as it is in Jesus; or else the character of the apostle, as a teacher, that he was a true and faithful one, who with all integrity and veracity, fully and faithfully preached the Gospel; and since he was appointed a teacher of it to the Gentiles, this is another argument why they, as well as the Jews, should be prayed for.

1 Timothy 2:8

Ver. 8. I will therefore that men pray everywhere,.... In this declaration of the apostle's will concerning prayer, he only takes notice of "men"; not but that it is both the duty and privilege of women, as well as men, to pray in their houses and closets; but because he is speaking of public prayer in the church, which only belongs to men, he speaks only of them; and his will is, that prayer should be performed by them everywhere, or in any place, in any part of the world where they lived. Now was the prophecy in **Mal 1:11** fulfilled, and now was the time come our Lord refers to, **Joh 4:21**. This seems to be said in opposition to a Jewish notion, that the temple at Jerusalem was the only place for prayer, and that prayer made elsewhere ought to be directed towards that. The Jews say {b}, that

"there is no way for the prayer of the nations of the world to ascend, seeing the gates of heaven are only opened in the land of Israel.--And again, that the prayers without the land have no way to go up before the Lord, but the Israelites send them without the land opposite Jerusalem; and when they come to Jerusalem, from thence they remove and ascend above.--No prayer ascends above from that place in which it is made, till it come to the land of Israel, and from thence to Jerusalem, and from thence to the sanctuary, and then it ascends above."

They have also many rules concerning places of private prayer, as that care should be taken that it be not in a place where there is any filth; or any bad scent {c}.

Lifting up holy hands; lifting up of hands was a prayer gesture among the Heathens {d}, and so it was among the Jews {e}. R. Simeon lift up his hands in prayer to the blessed God, and prayed his prayer. Yea, they {f} say,

"it is forbidden a man to lift up his hands above, except in prayer, and in blessings to his Lord, and supplications, as it is said, Ge 14:22 which is interpreted of lifting up of hands in prayer."

And this was an emblem of the elevation of the heart in prayer to God, without which the former would be of little avail. It is an observation of the Jews {g}, we have found prayer without lifting up of hands, but we never found lifting up of hands without prayer. And these hands must be holy and pure; there must be purity of heart, and cleanness of hands, or a freedom from any governing sin, which renders prayer unacceptable unto God; see **Isa 1:15**. The apostle alludes to a custom of the Jews, who always used to wash their hands before prayer;

"Then Holofernes commanded his guard that they should not stay her: thus she abode in the camp three days, and went out in the night into the valley of Bethulia, and washed herself in a fountain of water by the camp. And when she came out, she besought the Lord God of Israel to direct her way to the raising up of the children of her people." (Judith 12:7,8)

So it is said {h} of the Septuagint interpreters, that after the Jewish manner they washed their hands and prayed. The account Maimonides gives {i}, is this:

"cleanness of hands, how is it done? a man must wash his hands up to the elbow, and after that pray; if a man is on a journey, and the time of prayer is come, and he has no water, if there is between him and water four miles, which are eight thousand cubits, he may go to the place of water, and wash, and after that pray. If there is between him more than that, he may rub his hands, and pray. But if the place of water is behind him, he is not obliged to go back but a mile; but if he has passed from the water more than that, he is not obliged to return, but he rubs his hands and prays; they do not make clean for prayer but the hands only, in the rest of prayers, except the morning prayer; but before the morning prayer a man washes his face, his hands and feet, and after that prays."

But, alas! what does all this washing signify? Unless, as Philo the Jew {k}, expresses it, a man lifts up pure, and, as one may say, virgin hands, to heaven, and so prays.

Without wrath and doubting; or reasoning, or disputation in a contentious way: the former of these, some think, has reference to "murmuring", as the Ethiopic version renders it, impatience and complaint against God in prayer, and the other to doubt and diffidence about being heard, and having the petitions answered; for prayer ought to be with praise to God, and faith in him: or rather "wrath" may intend an angry and unforgiving temper towards men, with whom prayer is made, which is very unbecoming; see **Mt 5:23** and both that and doubting, or disputation, may have regard to those heats and contentions that were between the Jews and Gentiles, which the apostle would have laid aside, and they join together in prayer, and in other parts of public worship, in love and peace. Maimonides {l} says,

"men may not stand praying, either with laughter, or with levity, nor with confabulation, "nor with contention, nor with anger", but with the words of the law."

And it is a saving of R. Chanina,

"in a day of "wrath", a man may not pray {m}."

{b} Shaare Ors, fol. 24. 2, 3. {c} Maimon. Hilchot Tephilla, c. 4. sect. 8, 9. {d} Apuleius de Mundo, p. 276. {e} Zohar in Exod. fol 4. 2. {f} lb. in Numb. fol. 79. 1. {g} T. Hieros. Taaniot, fol. 67. 2. {h} Arist. Hist. 70. p. 98. {i} Hilch. Tephilla, c. 4. sect. 2, 3. {k} De Charitate, p. 698. Vid. ib. de Victim. Offerent. p. 848. {l} Hilch. Tephilla, c. 4. sect. 18. {m} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 65. 1.

1 Timothy 2:9

Ver. 9. In like manner also,.... Let the women pray likewise; though they are not to lead in prayer, or be the mouth of the church, which would be indecent, yet they are to join with the church in public prayer; see **Ac 1:14** and in like manner as the men, with purity of heart and hand, without murmuring and impatience towards God, and without wrath and anger towards others, and in faith, without doubting and distrust: and the apostle proceeds to point out what sort of dress he would have them appear in at the time of prayer, and at any part of public worship; and thus the Ethiopic version renders it, "so let the women be clothed in prayer", namely, as follows;

that women adorn themselves in modest apparel: the word rendered "apparel" signifies a long robe, which reaches down to the feet; and the word translated "modest" signifies that which is clean, neat, and decent, yea, beautiful and ornamental; and the sense of the apostle is, that he would not have them to come to public worship in rags, and in dirty and filthy garments, but that their bodies should be covered with clean and decent raiment; so the Israelites washed their clothes that they might be ready to meet the Lord at Mount Sinai, Ex 19:14. The Jews always appeared in their best clothes on the sabbath day; this is one of their rules: {n}

"for the honour of the sabbath, every man must be clothed,
hyyqn twok, "with clean or neat apparel" and clothing on the weekday must not be as clothing on the sabbath day; and if a man can make no change, he must let down his talith (or upper garment, his cloak); so that his clothing may not be as the clothing of the weekdays, when that was girt up about him."

The apostle adds,

with shamefacedness and sobriety: these are the two general rules by which dress is to be regulated; it is right and proper, when it is consistent with chastity, when it is not immodest and impudent, and more like the attire of an harlot than of a woman professing godliness; and when it is moderate as well as modest, and suitable to a person's age and station, and is not beyond the circumstances of life in which they are. There is no religion or irreligion in dress, provided pride and luxury are guarded against, and modesty and moderation preserved.

Not with broidered hair, or plaited, as in **1Pe 3:3**,
See Gill on "1Pe 3:3". The Jews had women on purpose for this business; Mary Magdalene is thought to have her name from hence;
See Gill on "Mt 27:56". Or gold, or pearls, or costly array: not that the apostle forbids all use or wear of such things by proper persons, whose circumstances would admit of it, and upon proper occasions, and at proper times: certain it is, that earrings and bracelets of gold, and jewels set in silver and gold, and raiment, costly raiment, were sent by Abraham, and given to Rebekah, and wore by her, who was a woman professing godliness so the church in
Ps 45:9 though in figurative expressions, yet in allusion to what is literal, and honourable, and commendable, is said to be in gold of Ophir, and her clothing to be of wrought gold, and to be brought to the king in raiment of needlework: but however justifiable such a dress may be at other seasons, the apostle

judged it very improper at the time of public prayer, or at the time of public worship; seeing it might swell the heart of the wearer with pride, so as to forget herself and the business she was come about, and draw the eyes of others upon her; and so cause a general inattention. It was a complaint of Chrysostom's many hundreds of years ago, that some who came to public worship, appeared in such a dress, as if they came rather to dance than to pray; such apparel should be avoided: it is said of Pythagoras {o}, that he taught the inhabitants of Crotona, the men literature, and the women chastity and modesty; and by his disputations so far prevailed upon the latter, as to lay aside their garments of gold and other ornaments of their dignity, as instruments of luxury; all which they brought into the temple of Juno, and dedicated them to that goddess; declaring, that shamefacedness or chastity, and not garments, are the true ornaments of matrons.

{n} Maimon. Hilch. Subbat. c. 30. sect. 3. {o} Justin. ex Trogo. l. 20. c. 4.

1 Timothy 2:10

Ver. 10. But (which becometh women professing god likeness),.... By which is meant not any particular grace, was it, the fear of God might be designed, and so the Syriac version renders it; nor the whole of internal religion only; nor the form of godliness, or the whole scheme of Gospel truth, which is according to godliness; nor only outward holiness of life and conversation; but the whole of all this, all religion, internal and external, the whole of godliness, both in a doctrinal and in a practical way. All this, these women the apostle gives directions unto, had made a profession of, and had been baptized upon it, and received members of churches; and as yet held their profession: and such persons, it best became them not so much to adorn themselves with any outward adornings, as

with good works; such as are mentioned in **1Th 5:10** Good works are like good clothes, to which the apostle alludes; they do not make persons men and women, but they adorn them as such; so good works, they do not make men and women Christians, or believers, but they adorn them as such; they are ornaments to their persons, and to their profession, and to the Gospel they profess. See **Tit 2:10**.

1 Timothy 2:11

Ver. 11. Let the woman learn in silence,.... The apostle goes on to give some other instructions to women, how they should behave themselves in public worship, in the church of God; he would have them be learners and not teachers, sit and hear, and learn more of Christ, and of the truth of the Gospel, and to maintain good works; and he would have them learn in silence, and not offer to rise and speak, under a pretence of having a word from the Lord, or of being under an impulse of the Spirit of the Lord, as some frantic women have done; and if they should meet with anything, under the ministry of the word, they did not understand, or they had an objection to, they were not to speak in public, but ask their own husbands at home; see 1Co 14:34. And thus, they were to behave

with all subjection; both to the ministers of the word, and to their own husbands; obeying from the heart the form of doctrine delivered to them; and submitting cheerfully to the ordinances of Christ; the whole of which is a professed subjection to the Gospel, and which becomes all professing godliness.

1 Timothy 2:12

Ver. 12. But I suffer not a woman to teach, &c,] They may teach in private, in their own houses and families; they are to be teachers of good things, **Tit 2:3**. They are to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; nor is the law or doctrine of a mother to be forsaken, any more than the instruction of a father; see **Pr 1:8**. Timothy, no doubt, received much advantage, from the private teachings and instructions of his mother Eunice, and grandmother Lois; but then women are not to teach in the church; for that is an act of power and authority, and supposes the persons that teach to be of a superior degree, and in a superior office, and to have superior abilities to those who are taught by them:

nor to usurp authority over the man; as not in civil and political things, or in things relating to civil government; and in things domestic, or the affairs of the family; so not in things ecclesiastical, or what relate to the church and government of it; for one part of rule is to feed the church with knowledge and understanding; and for a woman to take upon her to do this, is to usurp an authority over the man: this therefore she ought not to do,

but to be in silence; to sit and hear quietly and silently, and learn, and not teach, as in **1Ti 2:11**.

1 Timothy 2:13

Ver. 13. For Adam was first formed,.... Immediately by God, out of the dust of the earth; and the breath of life was breathed into him, and he became a living soul; thus wonderfully and fearfully was he made; after this he was put into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and all creatures were brought to him, to give them names; and still an help meet or a companion was not found for him. All this while Eve was not as yet formed, but after this,

then Eve. She was formed out of him, was made out of one of his ribs; and was formed for him, for his use, service, help and comfort; and here lies the strength of the apostle's reason, why the woman should be in subjection to the man; not so much because he was made before her; for so were the beasts of the field before Adam; and yet this gave them no superiority to him; but because she was made out of him, and made for him, see 1Co 11:8. So that the woman's subjection to the man is according to the laws of nature and creation; and was antecedent to the fall; and would have been, if that had never been; though that brought her into a lower, and meaner, and more depressed estate; which the apostle next mentions. The words may be rendered, "the first Adam", or "Adam the first was formed, and then Eve". See 1Co 15:45.

1 Timothy 2:14

Ver. 14. And Adam was not deceived,.... There is no need to say with interpreters, that he was not deceived first; and that he was not deceived immediately by the serpent, but by Eve; and that he is never said in Scripture to be deceived, as Melchizedek is never said to have a father or mother. The apostle's positive assertion is to be taken without any such limitations or qualifications; Adam never was deceived at all; neither by the serpent, with whom he never conversed; nor by his wife, he knew what he did, when he took the fruit of her, and ate; he ate it not under any deception, or vain imagination, that they should not die, but should be as gods, knowing good and evil. He took and ate out of love to his wife, from a fond affection to her, to bear her company, and that she might not die alone; he knew what he did, and he knew what would be the consequence of it, the death of them both; and inasmuch as he sinned wilfully, and against light and knowledge, without any deception, his sin was the greater: and hereby death came in, and passed on all men, who sinned in him:

but the woman being deceived was in the transgression: and the serpent really beguiled her; she owned it herself, **Ge 3:13**. And this is elsewhere said of her, 2Co 11:3 which never is of Adam. She really thought the serpent spoke truth, that she and her husband should not die, if they ate of the fruit; but that it was good to make them wise; and that, upon eating it, they should be as gods, knowing good and evil; and under this deception she fell into the transgression, and was the cause and means, by her persuasions and example, of bringing her husband into the same sin; which involved him and all his posterity in ruin and destruction. And therefore she is called by the Jews {p} Nweh Ma, "the mother of iniquity and sin"; to which they refer, Ps 51:5. And they say, {q} she was the cause of death to Adam, and to all the world: See Gill on "Ro 5:12". And they observe {r} the order of the punishment of the serpent, Eve, and Adam, as of their sin; the serpent was first accursed, then Eve, and last of all Adam. They say

"{s} Samael (the devil) could not subvert Adam, till the serpent came and turned the heart of Eve, and Eve turned his heart, and they both sinned; wherefore it is said, "the woman which thou gavest me"; Samael had no power to turn him, till Eve came, and she was the cause of his eating."

Now inasmuch as the serpent did not attack Adam, he being the stronger and more knowing person, and less capable of being managed and seduced; but made his attempt on Eve, in which he succeeded; and since not Adam, but Eve, was deceived, it appears that the man is the more proper person to bear rule and authority, as in civil and domestic, so in ecclesiastic affairs; and it is right for the woman to learn, and the man to teach: and seeing that Eve was the cause of transgression to Adam, and of punishment to him and his posterity, the subjection of the woman to the man was confirmed afresh: and she was brought into a more depressed state of dependence on him, and subjection to him; see **Ge 3:16**. The Ethiopic version renders the text, "Adam hath not deceived, the woman hath deceived and prevaricated".

{p} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 141. 3. {q} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 5. 2. Zohar in Gcn. fol. 27. 3. Caphtor, fol. 37. 2. {r} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 18. 1. & Taanith, fol. 15. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 17. 1. {s} Midrash Ruth in Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 3.

1 Timothy 2:15

Ver. 15. Notwithstanding she shall be saved,.... Not Eve, though no doubt she is saved; since she had a sense of her sin, and shame for it, a revelation of the Messiah to her, and faith in him; see **Ge 3:7**. But rather any woman, particularly such as profess godliness, who shall be saved

in childbearing; which is to be understood not of a temporal salvation, or being saved through childbearing, through the perilous time, and be delivered out of it; for though this is generally the case, yet not always, nor always the case of good women. Rachel died in childbed: the Jews say {t}, for three transgressions women die in childbearing; because they do not take care of their menstrues, and of the cake of the firstfruits, and of lighting the lamp (when the sabbath approaches). But spiritual and eternal salvation is here meant; not that bearing children is the cause, condition, or means of salvation; for as this is not God's way of salvation, so it confines the salvation of women to childbearing ones; and which must give an uneasy reflection to maidens, and women that never bore any; but rather the meaning is, that good women shall be saved, notwithstanding their bearing and bringing forth children in pain and sorrow, according to the original curse, in **Ge 3:16**. And so the words administer some comfort to women, in their present situation of subjection and sorrow; though they may be rendered impersonally thus, "notwithstanding there is salvation through the birth of a son": and the sense is, that notwithstanding the fall of man by the means of the woman, yet there is salvation for both men and women, through the birth of Immanuel, the child born, and Son given; at whose birth, the angels sung peace on earth, good will to men; through the true Messiah, the deed of the woman, through the incarnate Saviour, who was made of a woman, there is salvation for lost sinners: he was born of a woman, and came into the world in order to obtain salvation for them; and he has effected it, and it is in him, for all such who apply to him for it; and with it all true believers, men and women, shall be saved through him,

if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness, with sobriety. The Vulgate Latin version reads in the singular, "if she continues", &c. but the sense is the same; for the "she", or woman, is to be taken in a collective sense, as it is in the context, for many women; even for such as profess faith and godliness. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render the words, "she shall be saved by her children", if they continue, &c. i.e. she shall be saved by bearing of children, and bringing of them up in a religious way; if they, the children, continue as they were brought up; which is a very strange rendering of the words, and is as strange an interpretation of them; and yet is what many have given into, but needs no confutation. The meaning of the words is, that there is salvation through the incarnate Messiah, for all sorts of persons; for all men and women who believe in him, with that faith which works by love, and shows itself in holiness and sobriety; provided that they continue herein. For there are some that profess these things, that have only a temporary faith, and feigned love, and not true holiness; and these fall away, and are not saved; but such who have these graces in truth, as they do, and shall continue in them, so they shall certainly be saved.

{t} Misn. Sabbat, c. 2. sect. 6.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Timothy 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 TIMOTHY 3

In this chapter the apostle treats of the qualifications of officers of churches, bishops and deacons, and of their wives; and points at the principal reason of writing this epistle to Timothy: and first, he commends the office of a bishop, as a good and desirable one; and asserts it to be such in the strongest manner, **1Ti 3:1** and then follow the qualifications for it, some of which are of the economical or domestic kind, and regard him as an husband and parent, and the head of the family; others of a moral nature, and relate to sobriety, hospitality, temperance, patience, and liberality; and others of the ecclesiastical sort, as aptness to teach, and that he should not be a novice in religion; and in general, that he should be a man of a blameless life, and of good report in the world, **1Ti 3:2**, next an account is given of the qualifications of deacons; some which concern their moral character; others their soundness in the faith; and others their domestic affairs, and their conduct in their families; about which they should be first examined, before they were put into their office; the characters of their wives are also given; and for their encouragement in the faithful performance of their office, it is observed, that they hereby obtain a good degree of honour and boldness in the faith of Christ, **1Ti 3:8**. And the end of the apostle's writing this epistle, and particularly of giving Timothy this account of the qualifications of the officers of the church of God, is, that he might know whom to appoint over it, and how to conduct himself in it; which he commends from its being the house of God, the church of the living God, and the pillar and ground of truth, **1Ti 3:14**. Of which truth he gives a summary, in several particulars of it, which open the great mystery of godliness, **1Ti 3:16**.

Ver. 1. This is a true saying,.... Some think this clause belongs to the last verse of the preceding chapter; and then the sense is, this is a doctrine that is true, and to be believed, that there is salvation through the birth of a Son, or through the incarnate Son of God, for men and women that believe in him, and continue in the faith of him, and love to him, joined with works of righteousness and holiness. And so the same phrase seems to belong to what goes before in **1Ti 4:8**. Though it regards what follows in **1Ti 1:15** and so it seems that it should be considered here; and is used to excite attention, and suggests that what was about to be said was of moment and importance, and what was without controversy, and unquestionably true. The apostle, having denied to women the work and office of teaching, proceeds to observe, that though this belonged to men, yet not to every man; and therefore he gives the qualifications of such; which might serve as a direction to churches, in the choice of them; as well as be a means of stirring up persons in such an office, to a proper regard to themselves and their work:

if a man desire the office of a bishop; which is the same with that of a pastor or elder; and so here the Syriac version renders it, "if a man desires presbytery, or eldership"; and it lies in preaching the word, administering the ordinances of the Gospel, and taking care of the discipline of the church, and in the visiting, inspection, and oversight of it; as the word episkoph, "episcopacy", here used, signifies; and this work and office may be lawfully and laudably desired, with a view to the glory of God, and the good of immortal souls. Nor should any undertake it, but such who find in themselves an hearty desire, and inclination to it, on such principles, and a real delight and pleasure in it; and such an one

he desireth a good work: the office of a bishop, elder, or pastor of a church, "is a work", and a very laborious one; wherefore such are called labourers in the word and doctrine: it is not a mere title of honour, and a place of profit, but it is a business of labour and care; yet a good one, a famous and excellent one; it being an employment in things of the greatest excellency in themselves, and of the greatest usefulness for the good of men, and the honour of God; as the doctrines, ordinances, and discipline of the Gospel; and so must be excellently, honestly, pleasantly, and profitably a good work.

1 Timothy 3:2

Ver. 2. A bishop then must be blameless,.... Or "an elder", as the Syriac version renders it; not that it can be expected that such an one should be entirely free from sin, or be blameless in the sight of God; but that he should be one, who is so before men, and has not been guilty of any notorious and flagitious crime; and particularly, is not chargeable with the vices hereafter mentioned or hinted at. So the priests under the law were to be without blemish, even in their bodies, Le 21:17 to which the apostle may here allude.

The husband of one wife; which is not to be understood in a mystical and allegorical sense of his being the pastor of one church, since the apostle afterwards speaks of his house and children, that are to be ruled and kept in good order by him, in distinction from the church of God; but in a literal sense of his conjugal estate; though this rule does not make it necessary that he should have a wife; or that he should not marry, or not have married a second wife, after the death of the first; only if he marries or is married, that he should have but one wife at a time; so that this rule excludes all such persons from being elders, or pastors, or overseers of churches, that were "polygamists"; who had more wives than one at a time, or had divorced their wives, and not for adultery, and had married others. Now polygamy and divorces had very much obtained among the Jews; nor could the believing Jews be easily and at once brought off of them. And though they were not lawful nor to be allowed of in any; yet they were especially unbecoming and scandalous in officers of churches. So the high priest among the Jews, even when polygamy was in use, might not marry, or have two wives, at once; if he did, he could not minister in his office until he divorced one of them {u}. For it is written, Le 21:13, "he shall take a wife", Mytv alw txa, "one, and not two" {w}. And the same that is said of the high priest, is said of all other priests; see Eze 44:22, likewise the Egyptian priests might not marry more wives than one, though others might have as many as they pleased {x}: and so the Flamines among the Romans {y}. An elder or pastor must also be one that is

vigilant; or wakeful and watchful, who is diligent in his business, and attends to his care and charge; is watchful over himself, his words, and actions; and watches for the souls of men, to do them all the good he can; and is sober in body, is temperate, and uses moderation in eating and drinking; and in mind, is modest, humble, and prudent; and so the Vulgate Latin Version renders the word "prudent": and the Ethiopic version, "a wise man", one of a sound judgment, a good understanding, and prudent conduct; is not wise above what is written, but thinks soberly of himself, as he ought. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "chaste", as free from intemperance, so from uncleanness: and

of good behaviour: neat and decent in his apparel; modest in his whole deportment and conduct, and affable and courteous to all; beautiful in his life and conversation, being adorned with every thing that is graceful and comely:

given to hospitality: to the love of strangers, and to the entertainment of them; and especially the saints and fellow ministers, who are exiled, or are travelling for the sake of spreading the Gospel, or upon some lawful and laudable account. These he is to assist by his advice and counsel, and with the necessaries of life, according to his abilities. Abraham and Lot are noted instances of this virtue.

Apt to teach; who has a considerable store of knowledge; is capable of interpreting the Scripture to the edification of others; is able to explain, lay open, and illustrate the truths of the Gospel, and defend them, and refute error; and who is not only able, but ready and willing, to communicate to others what he knows; and who likewise has utterance of speech, the gift of elocution and can convey his ideas of things in plain and easy language, in apt and acceptable words; for otherwise it signifies not what a man knows, unless he has a faculty of communicating it to others, to their understanding and advantage.

{u} Maimon. lssurc Bia, c. 7. sect. 13. & Cele Hamikdash. c. 5. sect. 10. {w} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 59. 1. {x} Diodor. Sicul. l. 1. p. 51. vide Tertull. de monogamia, c. 17. & Exhort. castitat. c. 13. {y} Alex. ab. Alex. Genial Dier. l. 6. c. 12.

1 Timothy 3:3

Ver. 3. Not given to wine,.... One that does not sit at it, or is continually drinking it, and is intemperate in the use of it; otherwise it is lawful for persons in such an office to drink wine, and sometimes absolutely necessary; see **1Ti 5:23** it signifies one that is not given to much wine, as in **1Ti 3:8** is not addicted to it, or a follower of it; the Syriac version renders it, "who does not transgress over wine", or go beyond due bounds in the use of it, who is not immoderate in it; the Arabic version renders it, "not insolent through wine", as one that is heated with it is fierce and furious, and wrangling and quarrelsome, and often very mischievous and injurious; and this sense is followed by some.

No striker; either with his hands, so the Syriac version, "whose hand is not swift to strike"; not one who is nimble and ready at it, who no sooner is abused or injured, but he lifts up his hands and strikes; is but a word and a blow: or with his tongue; so the Arabic version, "not wounding with his tongue"; being too sharp and severe in the admonitions and reproofs of weak brethren, or fallen believers; and especially, he ought not to use scurrilous, reproachful, and contumelious language to any; see Jer 18:18.

Not greedy of filthy lucre; not covetous of getting money, of amassing wealth and riches together; or desirous of popular applause and glory from men. This clause is not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in five of Beza's manuscripts and other copies, nor is it in the Vulgate Latin version, nor in any of the Oriental versions; it seems to be transcribed from **Tit 1:7**. And indeed it is unnecessary here; since the same is expressed by the word "covetous", at the end of the verse, and makes that a tautology; and moreover, by leaving out this clause, the opposition appears more manifest, between "no striker" and what follows,

but patient; one who patiently bears all reproaches and injuries, puts up with affronts, and gives up what is his right and due, rather than contend, quarrel, and strike; who is patient towards all men, and does not bear hard on those that have offended, but is moderate and mild, and gentle in his censures, reproofs, and admonitions:

not a brawler; not a quarrelsome litigious person, given to fighting, either with the fist or sword, or any other weapon:

not covetous; or a lover of money in an immoderate way, greedy of worldly substance and riches, and insatiable in his desires after them; niggardly, sordid, and illiberal; acting a mercenary part; seeking his own things, and not the things of Christ; his gain from his quarter, and not the good of souls; and withholding from himself, from his family, and the poor, what ought to be enjoyed by them. Whereas, on the other hand, he ought to be generous and liberal, hospitable and charitable, and ready to communicate on all occasions, according to his abilities.

1 Timothy 3:4

Ver. 4. One that ruleth well his own house,.... His family, wife, children, and servants; and is not to be understood of his body, and of keeping of that under, and of preserving it chaste and temperate, as appears from what follows:

having his children in subjection with all gravity; keeping a good decorum in his family; obliging his children to observe his orders, and especially the rules of God's word; and not as Eli, who did not use his authority, or lay his commands upon his sons, nor restrain them from evil, or severely reprove them for their sins, but neglected them, and was too mild and gentle with them; 1Sa 2:23 3:13 but like Abraham, who not only taught, but commanded his children and his household, to keep the way of the Lord; Ge 18:19 and so should those act who are in such an office as is here treated of; and should not only rule well in their families, preside over them, go before them, and set an example to them, and keep their children in obedience and subjection; but this should be "with all gravity": not only in the master of the family, but in the children; who as their father is, or should be, should be brought up in, and used to gravity in words and in dress; and in the whole of their deportment and conversation. This may he observed against the Papists, who forbid marriage to the ministers of the Gospel.

1 Timothy 3:5

Ver. 5. For if a man know not how to rule his own house,.... Which is an affair of less importance, and more easy to be done; not requiring so much resolution, prudence, care, and thought:

how shall he take care of the church of God? preside over it, rule in it, provide for it, and see that everything is in its proper place, and done according to the will of God. The argument is from the lesser to the greater.

1 Timothy 3:6

Ver. 6. Not a novice,.... Or one newly planted, the Arabic version adds, "in the faith"; meaning not a young man, for so was Timothy himself; but a young professor and church member; one that is lately come to the knowledge of the truth, and has just embraced and professed it, and become a member of a church, a new plant there: so the Hebrew word ejn, "a plant", is by the Septuagint in Job 14:9 rendered by this very word. The reason why such a person should not be a bishop, elder, or pastor of a church, is,

lest being lifted up with pride; through the dignity of the office he is advanced to, and the high opinion of men he stands in, and the great gifts qualifying him for such a place, he is supposed to have: for pride on account of these is apt to creep in, and swell and elate the minds of young professors especially; so that there is danger that he fall into the condemnation of the devil; or "of the slanderer", as the word is rendered in **1Ti 3:11** and the sense then is, lest he should be censured and condemned by such who are given to calumny and detraction, and are glad of any opportunity to reproach and vilify the ministers of the word: but it is better to understand it of Satan; and then the meaning is, either lest such an one fall under the censure and condemnation of the accuser of the brethren; or rather lest he fall into the same condemnation and punishment the devil is fallen into, their crimes being alike. For it seems from hence, that pride was the first sin of the devil, and the cause of his apostasy from God; being elated with his own knowledge, strength, and dignity; and not being able to bear it, that the human nature should be advanced above that of angels.

1 Timothy 3:7

Ver. 7. Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without, &c,] That is, "without the church", as the Arabic version reads; for wicked men, though they dislike the principles and profession of godly ministers, and despise their office, yet cannot but speak well of their becoming life and conversation. And this part of their character is necessary to invite persons to hear them, and to recommend their ministry to them, as well as for the reasons that follow:

lest he fall into reproach; into the reproach of men; not only of the world, but of professors of religion; who may be apt to upbraid him with his past sins; especially such that may fall under his censures, admonitions, and reproofs, which hereby will become in a great measure useless and ineffectual:

and the snare of the devil; lest Satan should take encouragement from hence to tempt him to other and greater sins; or lest finding himself slighted and despised by the people of God, because of his former sins, he should break out into anger and revenge against them; or into despondency and despair in himself; or should be negligent of his duty, and timorous of exhorting and reproving others, lest they should retort upon him, and reproach him with his former crimes. The Jews have a regard to the wisdom, prudence, gravity, and manners, of a man they appoint as a minister of a congregation. Their rule is this {z}:

"they do not appoint a messenger or minister of a congregation, but he who is the greatest in the congregation for wisdom and works; and if he is an elderly man, it is the better; and they take care that the messenger or minister of the congregation be a man whose voice is pleasant, and he is used to read: but he whose beard is not full grown, though he is a very considerable man, he may not be a minister of the congregation, because of the honour of the congregation."

{z} Maimon. Hilchot Tephilla, c. 8. sect. 11.

1 Timothy 3:8

Ver. 8. Likewise must the deacons be grave,.... The apostle proceeds to give the qualifications, and so the rules for choosing another sort of officers in the church, deacons; whose work and business is, not to preach the Gospel, and administer ordinances; but to take care of the secular affairs of the church, and particularly to serve tables; to provide the bread and wine for the Lord's table, to attend at it, and distribute the elements from the minister to the people, to collect for it, defray the charges of it, and divide what remains among the poor; and they are to take care of the minister's table, that he is provided for in a comfortable way, and to stir up the members to their duty in this respect; and to take care of the poor's table, and distribute what the church collects for them, with simplicity and cheerfulness; and are to be helps to the pastor, in observing the walk of members, in composing differences between them, in visiting the sick and poor, and in preparing matters for church meetings. Their characters are, that they be "grave"; in their speech, gesture, and dress; honest, and of good report among men; and chaste in their words and actions; all which may be signified by the word here used; and the latter may be rather hinted at, because of Nicholas, one of the first deacons, who was charged with uncleanness:

not doubletongued; whose hearts and tongues do not agree together; and who, being a sort of middle persons between the pastor and the members of the church, say one thing to one, and another to the other; which to do is of bad consequence: or who speak well to the poor when they apply to them, and promise them to do them all the service they can, and when it comes to the upshot speak against them:

not given to much wine; which impairs the health, stupefies the mind, and so renders unfit for any such office, as well as wastes the temporal estate; and may lead them to embezzle and consume the church's stock:

not greedy of filthy lucre; for such would withhold from the poor that which is meet for them, and make use of money in their hands, to their own advantage.

1 Timothy 3:9

Ver. 9. Holding the mystery of the faith,.... The doctrine of the Gospel, called the "faith", because it contains things to be believed; proposes Christ the object of faith; is the means by which faith comes, and is unprofitable without it: it is called "the mystery", because it is of divine revelation, and could have never been discovered by human reason; and now it is revealed, the modus of many things contained in it remains a mystery; several of the doctrines of it are mysterious ones, particularly the doctrine of the Trinity; and which the ancient Jews call by this very name, {a}
atwnmyhmd azr, "the mystery of faith"; the incarnation of the Son of God, the union of the saints to Christ, and their communion with him, and the resurrection of the dead, with others. Now this mysterious doctrine of faith is to be held by deacons; they are to profess it, and to hold fast the profession of it and that

in a pure conscience; with a conscience sprinkled by the blood of Christ; with a conscience void of offence both towards God and man; with a suitable life and conversation; a conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ, and by which it is adorned: and this part of their character is necessary, that such may be able to instruct and establish those who are weak in the faith, and oppose and refute the erroneous, and also recommend the Gospel by their own example; otherwise should their principles or practices be bad, their influence on others might be very pernicious and fatal.

{a} Zohar in Gen. fol. 12. 4. & 13. 1, 2. & in Exod. fol. 66. 3.

1 Timothy 3:10

Ver. 10. And let these also first be proved,.... Not that they should be tried in any part of the deacon's office, to see how capable they are of performing it; but their internal and external characters are to be looked into and examined, and if they appear, to be right, then they are to be approved of, chosen and called unto, and invested with the office:

then let them use the office of a deacon; let them be employed and minister in the several parts and branches of that office:

being found blameless; not without sin, but free from any gross and enormous one; not before God, but in the sight of men;
See Gill on "1Ti 3:2".

1 Timothy 3:11

Ver. 11. Even so must their wives be grave,.... Some instead of "wives" read "women", and understand them of deaconesses, such as were in the primitive churches; whose business it was to visit the poor and sick sisters of the church, and take care of things belonging to them; but it is better to interpret the words of the wives of the deacons, who must be as their husbands, "grave" in speech, gesture, and dress, of an honest report, a good behaviour, and chaste conversation; which will reflect honour and credit to their husbands:

not slanderers; or accusers, and so act like devils, as the word is sometimes rendered; for should they act such a part, and accuse either the poor, or any of the members of the church wrongfully, or on any trifling occasion, as persons addicted to this vice are wont to do, it would be of bad consequence: and they also should be

sober, temperate, not given to wine; excessive drinking is very scandalous in the female sex; and is the rather mentioned here, because women in the eastern countries were too frequently addicted to it:

faithful in all things; as in the marriage bed, so with whatsoever else they are intrusted with in the family, and civil concerns of their husbands; and this is the rather observed, because the wives of deacons may be sometimes intrusted with the church's stock in their husband's absence, to impart to the poor.

1 Timothy 3:12

Ver. 12. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife,.... See Gill on "1Ti 3:2"

ruling their children and their own houses well. These qualifications are the same with those of the bishop or elder;
See Gill on "1Ti 3:4".

1 Timothy 3:13

Ver. 13. For they that have used the office of a deacon well,.... With diligence and faithfulness, with simplicity and cheerfulness; taking good care of the minister and poor, and of the discipline of God's house:

purchase to themselves a good degree; not an higher office, as that of presbytery or episcopacy, which is a sense calculated to serve a hierarchy; nor a degree in glory and happiness hereafter; but rather an increase of gifts and grace; or a degree of respect and honour in the church: or the sense is, they possess and enjoy, which is the meaning of the word rendered "purchase", a very honourable office in the church; and which is so to them, they using it well, and discharging it in an honourable manner; unless the apostle should design what the Jews called atwnmyhmd agrd, "a degree of faith": {b} but that is expressed in the next clause:

and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus: either in the exercise of the grace of faith at the throne of grace; or in asserting the doctrine of faith before men; and in reproving either for error or immorality: all which may be boldly done by those who use this office well.

{b} Zohar in Exod. fol. 36. 3.

1 Timothy 3:14

Ver. 14. These things write I unto thee,.... Concerning the offices of bishops and deacons, their several qualifications, and the rules of judging of persons fit for such service:

hoping to come unto thee shortly; at Ephesus. He could not tell whether he could come or not, and therefore makes no promise, but hoped he should; and since it was uncertain, he thought fit to write the above things for his instruction and use.

1 Timothy 3:15

Ver. 15. But if I tarry long,.... Or should long delay coming, defer it longer than may be expected; let it be observed that these things are written, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God; that is, the church of God, as it is afterwards explained; called a house, in allusion either to an edifice, it being a spiritual house built of lively stories, or true believers, upon the foundation Jesus Christ, and who also is the door into it; the pillars of it are the ministers of the Gospel; and the windows are the ordinances, and which also are the entertainment in it: or else to a family, as this is sometimes called the household of God, and of faith; the family named of Christ, of which he is the master; and in which are fathers, young men and children; in which ministers are stewards; and which is regulated by good and wholesome laws: and it is called the house of God, because as an edifice, it is of his building and repairing, and in which he dwells; and as a family, is what he provides for. Now the above things were written to Timothy, that he might know bow to order and manage things in this house and family; what became him to do himself, in the character he was; and what persons to direct in the choice of to be officers in it. And of this house it is said,

which is the church of the living God; in opposition to, and distinction from the houses and temples of idols, which are inanimate and senseless creatures; whereas the true God is the living God, has life in himself, essentially, originally, and independently, and is the author and giver of life to others. It is added,

the pillar and ground of the truth; which holds forth the truth to be seen and read of all, as pillars that bear inscriptions; and which supports and maintains truth, as every true church of Christ does so long as it remains so; though truth is the pillar and ground of the church; for if once truth is gone, a church is no more so: rather therefore Timothy himself is here designed; and the sense is, that what was written to him was with this view, that he might the better know how to conduct himself in the church of God, as a pillar and ground of truth, to hold it forth and to secure it: ministers of the Gospel are called pillars, **Ga 2:9** and that with greater propriety than the church itself, which is before called an house: though it may be best of all to understand it of Christ as incarnate, the great mystery of godliness; who as he is the ground and foundation of the church, and all believers, so he is the foundation of all true doctrine; and particularly the doctrine of his person, as truly God and truly man, is the pillar and ground which supports all other truths, and without which they fall to the ground: and so this clause may be read in connection with the following words, thus; "the pillar and ground of the truth, and without controversy, is the great mystery of godliness, &c". And this way of speaking is used by the Jews, both of persons and things; so Zebulun is said {c} to be
hrwth dwme, "the pillar of the law"; and it is said {d} of

"the great sanhedrim in Jerusalem, they are the root of the oral law; and they are harwhh ydwme, "the pillars of doctrine"; and from them go forth the statutes and judgments unto Israel;"

and the same is said of things as of persons. Maimonides says {e},

"the foundation of foundations and the pillar of wisdom, is to know that there is a first Being, that gives being to all beings;"

and R. Sangari, another of their writers, says, {f}

"there are two things which are hrwth ydwme, "the pillars of the law"; the one is, that the law is from God; the other is, that it is received with a faithful (or sincere) heart, from the congregation:"

to which may be added, that it is said {g} that

"the mystery of faith is "amwyqw arqe, "the root and ground" of the world";"

all which may serve to illustrate this passage.

{c} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 152. 1. {d} Maimon. Hilchot Memarim, c. 1. sect. 1.
{e} Hilchot Yesode Hattora, c. 1. sect. 1. {f} Cosri, par. 3. sect. 23. fol. 159. 2.
{g} Zohar in Gen. fol. 124. 1.

1 Timothy 3:16

Ver. 16. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness,.... What follows is so, the incarnation of Christ, his birth of a virgin, the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his person; this is a mystery, which though revealed, and so to be believed, is not to be discerned nor accounted for, nor the modus of it to be comprehended by reason: and it is a great one, next, if not equal, to the doctrine of a trinity of persons in the divine essence; and is a mystery of godliness, which tends to encourage internal and external religion, powerful and practical godliness in all the parts and branches of it; and is so beyond all dispute and doubt.

God was manifest in the flesh; not God essentially considered, or Deity in the abstract, but personally; and not the first nor the third Person; for of neither of them can this or the following things be said; but the second Person, the Word, or Son of God; see **1Jo 3:8** who existed as a divine Person, and as a distinct one from the Father and Spirit, before his incarnation; and which is a proof of his true and proper deity: the Son of God in his divine nature is equally invisible as the Father, but became manifest by the assumption of human nature in a corporeal way, so as to be seen, heard, and felt: and by "flesh" is meant, not that part of the body only, which bears that name, nor the whole body only, but the whole human nature, consisting of a true body and a reasonable soul; so called, partly to denote the frailty of it, and to show that it was not a person, but a nature, Christ assumed; and the clause is added, not so much to distinguish this manifestation of Christ from a spiritual manifestation of him to his people, as in distinction from all other manifestations of him in the Old Testament, in an human form for a time, and in the cloud, both in the tabernacle and temple. This clause is a very apt and full interpretation of the word "Moriah", the name of the mount in which Jehovah would manifest himself, and be seen, Ge 22:2.

Justified in the Spirit; either by the Spirit of God, making his human nature pure and holy, and preserving it from original sin and taint; and by descending on him at his baptism, thereby testifying that he was the Son of God; and by the miracles wrought by his power, which proved Jesus to be the Messiah against those that rejected him; and by his coming down upon the apostles at Pentecost; and who in their ministry vindicated him from all the aspersions cast upon him: or else it is to be understood of the divine nature of Christ, in distinction from his flesh or human nature; in the one he was manifest and put to death for the sins of his people, which were put upon him, and bore by him; and by the other he was quickened and declared to be the Son of God; and being raised from the dead, he was justified and acquitted from all the sins of his people, and they were justified in him; he having made full satisfaction to justice for them.

Seen of angels; meaning not ministers of the Gospel, and pastors of churches, who are sometimes so called; but the blessed spirits, the inhabitants of heaven: by these he was seen at his birth, who then descended and sung praise to God on that account; and in the wilderness, after he had been tempted by Satan, when they ministered unto him; and in the garden upon his agony and sweat there, when one appeared and strengthened him; and at his resurrection from the dead, who rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and told the women he was risen from the dead; as also at his ascension to heaven, when they attended him thither in triumph; and now in heaven, where they wait upon him, and worship him, and are ministering spirits, sent forth by him to do his pleasure;

and he is seen by them the ministry of the Gospel; into the truths of which they look with pleasure, and gaze upon with unutterable delight and admiration; especially those which respect the person and offices of Christ. Some copies read, "seen of men", but that is implied in the first clause:

preached unto the Gentiles; the worst of men, and that by the express orders of Christ himself; and which was foretold in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and yet was a mystery, hid from ages and generations past:

believed on in the world; among the Jews, and in the nations of the world, so that he was preached with success; and faith in Christ is the end of preaching; though this is not of a man's self, but is the gift of God, and the operation of his power: and it was a marvellous thing, considering the reproach and ignominy Christ lay under, through the scandal of the cross, that he should be believed on as he was. This can be ascribed to nothing else but to the power of God, which went along with the ministry of the word.

Received up into glory; he was raised from the dead, and had a glory put upon his risen body; he ascended in a glorious manner to heaven, in a cloud, and in chariots of angels, and was received there with a welcome by his Father; and is set down at his right hand, and crowned with glory and honour, and glorified with the glory he had with him before the world was.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Timothy 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 TIMOTHY 4

In this chapter the apostle foretells a dreadful apostasy which should happen in the last times, the particulars of which he gives; and on occasion of one branch of it, discourses of Christian liberty in eating all sorts of food fit for use; and delivers out exhortations to Timothy to various duties relating to himself, his doctrine, and his charge. The prophecy is in 1Ti 4:1, the author of this prophecy is the Spirit of God; the manner in which it was delivered was very clear and express; the time when it should be fulfilled, the last days; the thing itself, a departure of some from the faith; the means whereby it would come about are, some giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, and the hypocrisy and hardened consciences of others, who would forbid marriage, and order an abstinence from certain meats; the evil of which last is exposed by their being the creatures of God, and by their being made for this purpose to be received with thankfulness by all believers, and who know the truth: and the reasons why they should be received and used follow; because they are all good, as they are the creatures of God; and because there is nothing to be refused, provided it be received with a thankful heart; and because every creature is sanctified by the word of God, and prayer, **1Ti 4:4**. And then Timothy is exhorted to put the brethren in mind of those things, by which he would show himself to be a faithful minister of Christ, and well instructed in the doctrines of the Gospel, **1Ti 4:6**, and to reject things profane and fabulous, but use himself to internal and powerful godliness, since outward worship signifies little, but the former has the promise of this, and the other world annexed to it; which is a true saying, and to be depended on, **1Ti 4:7** and which is confirmed from the practice and experience of the apostles, and therefore should be taught with authority, **1Ti 4:10**. And then the apostle gives Timothy some advice, which being taken, would prevent his being despised, on account of his youth; as with respect to his life and conversation, so to behave as to be a pattern to others, **1Ti 4:12**, and with respect to the exercise of his ministry, to make use of such means, as reading and meditation, that his profiting might be manifest to all, **1Ti 4:13** and with respect to the doctrines he preached, to abide by them, whereby he would be a means of saving himself, and others, **1Ti 4:16**.

Ver. 1. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly,.... The prophecy hereafter mentioned was not an human conjecture, but, as all true prophecy, it came from the Spirit of God, who spoke or delivered it; either in the prophets of the Old Testament, who, as they spoke of the Gospel dispensation, so of the defection that should be in it; and particularly of antichrist, and of the apostasy through him, which is what is here intended, especially in Daniel's prophecies, under the names of the little horn, and vile person, **Da 7:1** and Da 11:1, or in the Lord Jesus Christ, who foretold that false prophets would arise and deceive many; or in some of the prophets in the Christian church, such as Agabus, and others, who might in so many words foretell this thing; or rather in the apostle himself, at this time, since this prophecy was delivered not in dark sayings, in an enigmatical way, in an obscure manner, as prophecies generally were, but in plain language, and easy to be understood, and wanted no interpreter to unriddle it; and seeing that it is nowhere to be found in so many express words elsewhere: and moreover, the apostle does not say the Spirit "hath spoken", but the Spirit "speaketh"; then, at the time of the writing of these words, in and by him. The prediction follows,

that in the latter times some should depart from the faith; that is, from the doctrine of faith, notwithstanding it is indisputably the great mystery of godliness, as it is called in the latter part of the preceding chapter; for from the true grace of faith there can be no final and total apostasy, such as is here designed; for that can never be lost. It is of an incorruptible nature, and therefore more precious than gold that perishes; Christ is the author and finisher of it; his prevalent mediation is concerned for it; it is a gift of special grace, and is without repentance; it springs from electing grace, and is secured by it; and between that and salvation there is an inseparable connection; it may indeed decline, be very low, and lie dormant, as to its acts and exercise, but not be lost: there is a temporary faith, and a persuasion of truth, or a mere assent to it, which may be departed from, but not that faith which works by love: here it intends a profession of faith, which being made, should be dropped by some; or rather the doctrine of faith, which some would embrace, and then err concerning, or entirely quit, and wholly apostatize from. And they are said to be some, and these many, as they are elsewhere represented, though not all; for the elect cannot be finally and totally deceived; the foundation of election stands sure amidst the greatest apostasy; and there are always a few names that are not defiled with corrupt principles and practices; Christ always had some witnesses for the truth in the darkest times: and now this defection was to be "in the latter times"; either of the apostolic age, which John, the last of the apostles, lived to see; and therefore he calls it the last time, or hour, in which were many antichrists, **1Jo 2:18**. And indeed in the Apostle Paul's time the mystery of iniquity began to work, which brought on this general defection; though here it has regard to some later times under the Gospel dispensation; to the time when the man of sin, and the son of perdition, was revealed, and when all the world wondered after the beast: and indeed, such will be the degeneracy in the last days of all, that when the son of man comes, as the grace, so the doctrine of faith will be scarcely to be found in the world: the means by which this apostasy will obtain and prevail will be through men's

giving heed to seducing spirits; either to doctrines which are of a deceiving nature; or to men who profess to have the Spirit of God, and have not, but are evil men and seducers, deceiving, and being deceived; that lie in wait to deceive, and handle the word of God deceitfully; and by attending on the ministry of such persons, through hearing them, and conversing with them, the defection was to begin and spread; and therefore such should be carefully avoided, and their ministry shunned; nor should they be received, nor bid God speed.

And doctrines of devils; such as are devised by devils, as all damnable doctrines be; and all lying ones, for the devil is the father of them; and as are all the false doctrines introduced by antichrist, for his coming was after the working of Satan; and particularly those doctrines of his concerning worshipping of angels, and saints departed, may be called the doctrines of devils, or of "demons"; being much the same with the demon worship among the Heathens, of which the devil was the inventor: unless by doctrines of devils should be meant the doctrines of men, who for their cunning and sophistry, for their lies and hypocrisy, for their malice, and murdering of the souls of men, are comparable to devils.

1 Timothy 4:2

Ver. 2. Speaking lies in hypocrisy,.... Or "through the hypocrisy of those that speak lies"; for the apostle is still speaking of the means by which the apostasy should rise, and get ground; and it should be by the means of persons that should deliver lying or false doctrine under the colour of truth, and make great pretensions to religion and holiness, which would greatly take with men, and captivate and lead them aside: and this plainly points at the abettors of antichrist, the Romish priests, who deliver out the lying doctrines of merit, purgatory, invocation of saints, fastings, pilgrimages, &c. and the fabulous legends of saints, and the lying wonders and miracles done by them, and all under a show of godliness, and the promoting of religion and holiness:

having their conscience seared with a hot iron; which exactly describes the above mentioned persons, whose consciences are cauterized and hardened, and past feeling; and have no regard to what they say or do, make no conscience of anything, but under a cloak of sanctity commit the most shocking impieties; and are men of the most infamous characters, and of the most enormous and scandalous lives and conversations; so that the metaphor may be taken either from the searing of flesh with an iron, or cauterizing it, whereby it grows callous and hard; or from the stigmas or marks which used to be put on malefactors, or such who have been guilty of notorious crimes.

1 Timothy 4:3

Ver. 3. Forbidding to marry,.... Which points out not the Encratites, Montanists, and Manichees, who spoke against marriage; but the Papists, who forbid it to their priests under a pretence of purity and holiness, and at the same time allow them to live in all manner of debauchery and uncleanness; for these are the persons that forbid marriage in an authoritative way, and in hypocrisy: for that phrase is to be joined to all the sentences that follow it; as through the hypocrisy of those whose consciences are seared; and through the hypocrisy of those that forbid marriage to their priests, this being, by the common people, taken as an instance of great purity and holiness, and hereby they are drawn into the deception; as well as also through the hypocrisy of those that command

to abstain from meats: not from some certain meats forbidden by the law of Moses, as did some judaizing Christians; but from all meats at some certain season of the year, as at what they call the Quadragesima or Lent, and at some days in the week, as Wednesdays and Fridays; and this all under an hypocritical pretence of holiness, and temperance, and keeping under the body, and of mortification; when they are the greatest pamperers of their bodies, and indulge themselves in all manner of sensuality: the evil of this is exposed by the apostle, as follows,

which God hath created; and therefore must be good, and ought not to be abstained from: and besides, the end of his creation of them is,

to be received: to be taken, and used, and eaten; and therefore it is wicked to command men to abstain from them, and evil in those that do it: and the manner in which they should be received is

with thanksgiving; since they are the creatures of God, and useful to men, and men are unworthy of them, having forfeited them by sin; and since they are the bounties of Providence, and a free use of them is allowed; so far then should men be from abstaining from them, that they ought to take them, and use them with all thankfulness: and especially this should be done

of them which believe and know the truth: that is, who believe in Christ, and know the truth of the Gospel, which frees from every yoke of bondage, and from the burdensome rites, ceremonies, and inventions of men; for these have the good creatures as the fruits of divine love, through Christ the Mediator, and as blessings indeed; and who have the best right, claim, and title to them through Christ, being in him heirs of the world, and for whose sake all things are; and therefore these, as they know how to use them, and not abuse them, are to receive them at the hands of God, with thanksgiving, and not put them away, or abstain from them under a pretence of religion and holiness.

1 Timothy 4:4

Ver. 4. For every creature of God is good,.... For food; and should be taken and used for that purpose, at all times, without distinction; even every creature which is made for food, and which is easy to be discerned by men:

and nothing to be refused; or rejected as common and unclean, or to be abstained from at certain times:

if it be received with thanksgiving: if not, persons are very ungrateful, and very unworthy of such favours; and it would be just in God to withhold them from them; and this they may expect at his hands, who reject them with contempt, or receive them with unthankfulness, or abstain front them in a religious way he never enjoined.

1 Timothy 4:5

Ver. 5. For it is sanctified,.... Or set apart for use, and may be lawfully used at all times:

by the word of God; which declares that there is nothing in itself common, or unclean, or unfit for use, and that nothing that goes into a man defiles him; so that by virtue of this word of God, every creature may be made use of, that is fit for food: or else this designs the word of God, which gives a blessing to what is eaten; for it is not by bread or meat only, but through the word of God commanding a blessing on what is eaten, that man lives, **Mt 4:4** and therefore this blessing upon our food should be asked for: wherefore it follows,

and prayer; this being used before eating for a blessing on the food, and after it, in a way of thanksgiving for it, sanctifies every creature of God, or gives men a free use of any, or all of them. So the Israelites, when they had eaten, and were full, were to bless the Lord, **De 8:10**. And thus our Lord Jesus Christ, at meals, used to take the food, and bless it or ask a blessing on it, Mt 14:19. And so did the Essenes among the Jews {h}, and the Christians in Tertullian's {i} time; and the practice is highly necessary and commendable, nor ought it to be disused.

{h} Porphyr. de Abstinentia, l. 4. sect. 12. {i} Apolog. c. 39.

1 Timothy 4:6

Ver. 6. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things,.... Either of all the main and principal things already mentioned in the preceding chapters; as that the end of the commandment is love; that Christ's coming into the world to save the chief of sinners is a faithful saying, and worthy of acceptation; that prayers should be made for all sorts of men, for the reasons given; and that there is salvation for men and women through the incarnate Son of God; that such and such are the qualifications of elders and deacons; and that the incarnation of Christ is, without controversy, the great mystery of godliness: or of the things which are particularly hinted at in the prophecy delivered in the beginning of this chapter; as that there should be a falling off from the doctrine of faith in the latter days; that this should come to pass through attending to erroneous spirits, and doctrines of "demons", and through the lies of hypocritical, hardened, and infamous men; whose particular dogmas, by which they might be known, would be, to forbid marriage to certain persons, which is of divine institution and honourable, and to order an abstinence from meats at certain times, contrary to the will and providence of God. These the apostle would have Timothy propose, and subject to consideration, and from time to time refresh the memories of the saints with, who are apt, through negligence and inattention, and the weakness of the natural faculty, to be forgetful hearers of the word; that whenever such persons should arise, they might be on their guard against them. It is one part of the business of Gospel ministers to put the churches in mind of what they have received and known, and are established in. By "the brethren" are meant the members of the church at Ephesus; whom the apostle accounted as brethren, being of the same family and household, and would have Timothy reckon and use as such, and not as subjects and servants, to be lorded over.

Thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ; a minister of Jesus Christ is one of his making, qualifying, calling, and sending; and who makes Christ, the doctrines respecting his person and offices, his grace, righteousness, and salvation, the subject of his ministry; and he is a good one, who, besides having a good work of grace wrought in him, has good gifts and abilities from Christ, and who makes a good use of them, and freely and fully imparts them for the good of others; and being employed in a good work, he abides in it, and nothing can deter or remove him from it; and such an one was Timothy, and so would it be manifest by doing what the apostle hints unto him; as well as he would appear to be

nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine: by which are meant the truths of the Gospel, called the words of faith, because they are things to be believed, hold forth the object of faith, Christ, and are the means by which faith comes, and is increased: and good doctrine, being the doctrine of the Scriptures, and of Christ, and of his apostles, and according to godliness; and contain good things, which make for the glory of the grace of God, and the comfort and welfare of immortal souls. These are of a nourishing nature; they are the wholesome and salutary words of Christ; they have in them milk for babes, and meat for strong men; by which both grow and thrive, when error eats as does a canker. So Philo the Jew {k} speaks of the soul, being "nourished with sciences", and not with food and drink, which the body needs; and a little after he says, you see the food of the soul what it is, it is the continual word of God. Now Timothy, by discharging his work aright, would show to the brethren, that as he had been nourished and trained up, first under his religious parents, and then under the Apostle Paul; so he still continued in the same truths, and to live and feed upon them, and to be nourished by them: or the words may be rendered actively,

nourishing; that is, either himself, as the Syriac version renders it, or others; for though all nourishment comes from Christ the head, yet it is ministered by joints and bands to the members; it is conveyed by the means of the word and ordinances, ministered by the preachers of the Gospel, who feed the church with knowledge, and with understanding; and none but those who are nourished themselves are fit to be the nourishers of others; and such an one was this evangelist: for it follows,

whereunto thou hast attained; he had arrived to a considerable degree of knowledge of Gospel truths, and was still pursuing and following on to know more of them, and was exhorted to continue in them, knowing of whom he had learned them. All this is said by way of encouragement to him to do as the apostle directs.

{k} Allegor. l. 2. p. 90, 92.

1 Timothy 4:7

Ver. 7. But refuse profane and old wives' fables,.... Either Jewish ones, the traditions of the elders; or those of the Gnostics, concerning God, angels, and the creation of the world; or those doctrines of demons, and which forbad marriage, and commanded abstinence from meats before mentioned; which are called profane, because impious and ungodly, and old wives' fables, because foolish and impertinent; and which were to be rejected with abhorrence and contempt, in comparison of the words of faith and good doctrine.

And exercise thyself rather unto godliness; either to the doctrines which are according to godliness, and tend to godly edification, which the above fables did not, study these, meditate on them, digest them, and deliver them to others; or to a godly life and conversation, exercise thyself, to have a conscience void of offence to God and men; or to internal religion, inward godliness, the exercise of the graces of faith, hope, love, fear, reverence, humility, &c. or rather to the spiritual worship of God, according to his will, not in a formal, cold, and customary way, but with the heart, in truth and sincerity, in faith, and with fervency and purity.

1 Timothy 4:8

Ver. 8. For bodily exercise profiteth little,.... Meaning not the exercise of the body in the Olympic games, as by running, wrestling, &c. which profited but little, for the obtaining of a corruptible crown at most; though since a word is used here, and in the preceding verse, borrowed from thence, there may be an allusion to it: much less exercise of the body for health or recreation, as riding, walking, playing at any innocent diversion; which profits but for a little time, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; and the latter renders the phrase "bodily recreation": nor is the exercise of the body in the proper employment of trade and business, to which a man is called, and which profits for the support of life for a little while, intended; nor any methods made use of for the mortification of the body, and the keeping of it under, as watchings, fastings, lying on the ground, scourging, &c. but rather mere formal external worship, as opposed to godliness, or spiritual worship. There ought to be an exercise of the body, or a presenting of that in religious worship before God; there should be an outward attendance on the word and ordinances; but then, without internal godliness, this will be of little advantage: it is indeed showing an outward regard to public worship, and may be a means of keeping persons out of bad company, and from doing evil things; but if this is trusted to, and depended on, it will be of no avail to everlasting life; see Lu 13:26

but godliness is profitable unto all things; to the health of the body, and the welfare of the soul; to the things of this life, and of that which is to come; to themselves and others, though not to God, or in a way of merit:

having promise of the life that now is; of the continuance of it, of length of days, of living long in the earth, and of enjoying all necessary temporal good things, the mercies of life; for God has promised to his spiritual worshippers, to them that fear him, and walk uprightly, that their days shall be prolonged, that they shall want no good thing, nor will he withhold any from them that is for their good, that is proper and convenient for them:

and of that which is to come; even of eternal life; not that eternal life is received or procured hereby; for it is the free gift of God, and is not by any works of men, for otherwise it would not be by promise; for its being by promise shows it to be of grace: there is nothing more or less in it than this, that God promises glory to his own grace; for internal godliness, which animates and maintains spiritual worship, is of God, is of his own grace, and every part of it is a free gift of his, as faith, hope, love, fear, &c.

1 Timothy 4:9

Ver. 9. This is a faithful saying,.... A true one, and to be believed, that godliness has such promises annexed to it; see **1Pe 3:10**.

and worthy of all acceptation; by all godly persons, to encourage them to the exercise of godliness.

1 Timothy 4:10

Ver. 10. For therefore we both labour,.... Not in the word and doctrine, though they did; nor in the exercise of internal godliness, though there is a work in faith, and a labour in love; nor with their own hands, at their trades and business, to support themselves, and others; but by enduring hardships and afflictions, as stripes, imprisonment, weariness, pain, watchings, fastings, hunger, thirst, cold, and nakedness; see 2Co 11:23.

And suffer reproach; with patience and cheerfulness. The Alexandrian copy, and another manuscript, read, "we strive"; or contend even to an agony, combating with sin, Satan, and the world, with profane men, and with false teachers; and to all this they were animated by the promises made to godliness; and therefore they showed it by their practices, or rather by their sufferings, that they believed it to be a true and faithful saying; and which is further conferred by what follows:

because we trust in the living God; for the accomplishment of the said promises, who has power, and therefore can, and is faithful, and therefore will, make good what he has promised; and since it is life he has promised, faith is the more encouraged to trust in him, since he is the living God, in opposition to, and distinction from, lifeless idols; he has life in himself, essentially, originally, and independently, and is the author and giver of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal, unto others. Wherefore there is good reason to trust in him for the fulfilling of the promises of the present and future life, made unto godliness.

Who is the Saviour of all men; in a providential way, giving them being and breath, upholding them in their beings, preserving their lives, and indulging them with the blessings and mercies of life; for that he is the Saviour of all men, with a spiritual and everlasting salvation, is not true in fact.

Specially of those that believe; whom though he saves with an eternal salvation; yet not of this, but of a temporal salvation, are the words to be understood: or as there is a general providence, which attends all mankind, there is a special one which relates to the elect of God; these are regarded in Providence, and are particularly saved and preserved before conversion, in order to be called; and after conversion, after they are brought to believe in Christ, they are preserved from many enemies, and are delivered out of many afflictions and temptations; and are the peculiar care and darlings of providence, being to God as the apple of his eye: and there is a great deal of reason to believe this, for if he is the Saviour of all men, then much more of them who are of more worth, value, and esteem with him, than all the world beside; and if they are saved by him with the greater salvation, then much more with the less; and if he the common Saviour of all men, and especially of saints, whom he saves both ways, then there is great reason to trust in him for the fulfilment of the promises of life, temporal and eternal, made to godliness, and godly persons. This epithet of God seems to be taken out of Ps 17:7 where he is called Myowx eyvwm, "the Saviour of them that trust", or believe.

1 Timothy 4:11

Ver. 11. These things command and teach. What are to be commanded, command, and what are to be taught, teach; command to refuse and reject all profane and fabulous doctrines, and exhort to the exercise of true godliness, and teach the profitableness of that, and declare the promises made unto it, and assert the truth and acceptableness of them; command, order, and encourage believers to labour and suffer reproach for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, in hope of enjoying the said promises, and teach them to trust in the God of their lives, and the Saviour of all men; and whereas to this authoritative way of teaching, Timothy's youth might be objected by himself, and others; it follows,

1 Timothy 4:12

Ver. 12. Let no man despise thy youth,.... Timothy was now a young man; some think he was about three and twenty years of age; but he might be older, and yet be so called. Saul is said to be a young man, when he held the clothes of them that stoned Stephen, when he must be at least thirty years of age, some say thirty five; since thirty years after that he styles himself Paul the aged, when he must be sixty years of age and upwards, **Ac 7:58**. Young men are sometimes honoured by God with great gifts, for usefulness both in church and state, as Samuel, David, Solomon, Daniel, and his companions: nor should they be despised on account of their age, when they have gifts suitable to their office, and behave well in it, but, on the contrary, ought to be esteemed for their works' sake; and such should take care that no man has an opportunity or reason to treat them with contempt on that account: the apostle's sense is, either that Timothy, being in office, should not suffer any man to use him contemptuously; but exert his power and authority, and magnify his office, and not allow men to trample upon him, or use him ill, though he was a young man; which sense suits with the preceding words: or rather his meaning is, that he would have him so conduct and behave himself, as he had taught him to behave, in the house and church of God, and so fill up his place and office, and live such an exemplary life and conversation, that there might be no occasion for any to despise his age, or him, on the account of it: and this agrees with what follows,

but be thou an example of the believers; the members of the church, before called brethren, from their relation to one another, and here believers, from their concern with Christ, the object of their faith; a more honourable character cannot be given of men, though treated with great contempt in this age of infidelity. The Mahometans would engross this character to themselves, calling themselves the believers, and reckoning all others infidels; but to them only it belongs, who believe in Christ unto righteousness and life everlasting. Now sometimes young men may be examples to older ones; and all that are in office in the church, especially in the ministry, whether old or young, should be ensamples to the flock, and that in the following things: "in word"; meaning either the word of truth, the doctrine of the Gospel; by delivering that which is according to the rule of God's word, showing in it uncorruptness, gravity, and sincerity, and by holding it fast; all which may for the imitation of others, to receive the pure doctrine and retain it: or rather this may respect common discourse; which should not be corrupt, filthy, nor foolish; but should be always with grace, Seasoned with salt, or should be grave and serious, wise and prudent, pleasant, profitable, and edifying.

In conversation; in the family, church, and world; which should be as becomes the Gospel of Christ, in all godliness and honesty, with simplicity and godly sincerity; so as to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, recommend it to others, stop the mouths of gainsayers, and obtain a good report of them that are without.

In charity; in love to God, to Christ, and one another; without which, if a man has the tongue of men and angels, or ever such great and excellent gifts, he is nothing.

In spirit; in the exercise of spiritual gifts; in spiritual talk and conversation; and in fervency of spirit, or true zeal for the honour of God, the glory of the Redeemer, the spread of his Gospel, truths, and ordinances, and the support of the same. This clause is wanting in the Alexandrian and Claromontane copies, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

In faith; in the exercise of the grace of faith; in holding fast the profession of faith; and in retaining the doctrine of faith, with all integrity, faithfulness, and constancy, standing fast in it, striving and contending for it.

In purity; or chastity of body, in opposition to all impurity of the flesh, by fornication, adultery, and the like; which was very proper to be suggested to a young man: though this may also have respect to all that is before said, as to purity of language, conversation, love, zeal, and faith.

1 Timothy 4:13

Ver. 13. Till I come,.... To Ephesus; where the apostle hoped to be shortly, but was prevented; he afterwards came to Miletus, and sent for the elders of Ephesus thither, when he took his final leave of them. He mentions this circumstance, not as if Timothy was to attend to the following things no longer, but to quicken him to an attendance to them from the consideration of his being shortly with him.

Give attendance to reading; that is, of the Scriptures, which the Jews call arqm, "reading". {l}

"Says R. Tanchum Bar Chanilai, for ever let a man divide his years or life into three parts; one third (let him spend) in the Mikra, (the Scriptures, and the reading of them,) another third in the Misna, and the other third in the Talmud."

And this is to be understood, not of the reading of the Scriptures in public, for the advantage of others, a custom which obtained in the Jewish synagogues; see Ac 13:15 but in private, for his own use and service, that he might be more perfect, and more thoroughly furnished to the work and office to which he was called; for the Scriptures are the fund of spiritual knowledge, as well as the test and standard of doctrine, out of which all must be fetched, and by which it must be tried; and if Timothy, who had known the Scriptures from a child, had been trained up in them, and was always conversant with them, had need to give diligent attention to the reading of them, then much more others: as also

to exhortation, to doctrine; as he was privately to read the Scriptures, for his own benefit, he was publicly to expound them, or preach from them, to the advantage of others; for these two, exhortation and doctrine, are branches of the ministerial work, which reading furnishes and qualifies for. "Exhortation" intends the stirring up of believers to the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty; and is a considerable part of the work of the ministry, and on which a minister of Christ should much insist; and it becomes the saints to suffer every word of exhortation from them, and receive it kindly, 2Ti 4:2 Ro 12:8. Heb 13:22. The word signifies also "consolation", and which is another branch of the ministry. Believers are oftentimes disconsolate through the prevalence of corruptions, the power of Satan's temptations, and the hidings of God's face, and need comfort; when the ministers of the Gospel should be Barnabases, sons of consolation, and should speak comfortably to them; for which they are qualified by the God of all comfort, who comforts them in all their tribulations, that they might be capable of speaking good and comfortable words to others. "Doctrine" designs the teaching and instructing of the church in the mysteries of the Gospel; opening and explaining the truths of it; defending them against all opposers, and refuting errors and heresies contrary to them. This is the evangelic Talmud; and these three, "reading", "exhortation", and "doctrine", may answer to the above three things the Jew advises men to divide their time among, the Mikra, Misna, and Talmud: reading answers to the Mikra, and indeed is no other; and exhortation to the Misna, or oral law; and doctrine to the Talmud, and which also that word signifies: but the apostle would have Timothy spend his time in, and give his attention to that which might be truly beneficial to himself, and profitable unto others.

{l} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 19. 2.

1 Timothy 4:14

Ver. 14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee,.... What qualifies men for the work of the ministry is a gift from God: it is not of nature, nor is it mere natural abilities and capacity; nor is it any thing acquired, it is not human learning, or the knowledge of languages, arts, and sciences; nor is it special saving grace; for a man may have all these, and yet not be apt to teach, or fit for the ministry; but it is a peculiar and distinct gift, it is a gift of interpreting the Scriptures, and of dispensing the mysteries of grace to the edification of others; which, when it meets in a man with all the rest before mentioned, makes him very considerable: and this gift is in a man; it is a treasure put into earthen vessels, a good treasure in the heart, out of which a good minister of Christ brings forth many good things, things new and old, both for the delight and profit of men: and this gift is by no means to be neglected; this talent should not be hid in the earth, or wrapped up in a napkin; it should not lie dormant and useless, but should be stirred up, cultivated, and improved, as it may by reading, meditation, and prayer. And in order to enforce this exhortation on Timothy, the apostle adds,

which was given thee by prophecy; that is, it was prophesied of before hand, by some of the prophets in the church, that a very extraordinary gift should be bestowed upon this young man, which would make him a very useful person in the church of God; see **1Ti 1:18** and since it was now given, he ought not therefore to neglect it: or it was given him, as some read it, with prophecy, that he should use it, and it should be of great advantage to many souls; or, together with this gift of preaching, he had also a gift of foretelling things to come; or it may be, the words may be better rendered, "for prophecy": that is, for preaching, for prophesying is frequently used for preaching; see 1Co 13:2 and then the sense is, that this gift was given him to qualify him for the interpreting of the Scriptures, the explaining of the prophecies of the Old Testament, and for the preaching of the Gospel; and therefore he should not neglect it, but use it for this purpose: and he adds, that it was given him

with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery; or "of the eldership", or elders. So gerousia, "eldership", is used by the Septuagint on **Ex 3:16** for the elders of Israel. Now of these elders Paul was one, **2Ti 1:6** nor is it unusual to call the apostles elders; see **1Pe 5:1**. Who joined with the apostle, in the imposition of hands on Timothy, is not certain; I should think only apostles, since here was a gift of the Holy Ghost came along with it; and it was only through the laying on of the hands of the apostles that the Holy Ghost was given. Philip, an evangelist, laid not hands on the believing Samaritans; but Peter and John, apostles, were sent down from Jerusalem to Samaria to do it, whereby many received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, fitting them to take the care of those new converts, and to spread the Gospel further in those parts, **Ac 8:5**. And since gifts have ceased being conveyed this way, the rite of laying on of hands in ordinations seems useless, and of no avail. The apostle in calling those that joined with him, in putting hands on Timothy, the "presbytery or eldership", may have some reference to hdeh ynqz, "the elders of the congregation", which laid hands on the bullock for a sin offering, **Le 4:15** by whom some understand the great sanhedrim {m}; others {n}, not all the elders, but some particular persons, in number three; and so the ordination of a Rabbi was by three {o}; hence we read of Mynyqzb hkymo, "imposition of hands by the elders" {p}.

{m} Bartenora in Misn. Menachot, c. 9. sect. 3. {n} Siphri in Maimon. in Misn. ib. c. 9. sect. 7. {o} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 3. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {p} T. Hieros. Horayot, fol. 46. 2.

1 Timothy 4:15

Ver. 15. Meditate on these things,.... Not only on those instructions, advices, and exhortations, which the apostle had given him, throughout this chapter, which might be very useful to him, often to think of, and revolve in his mind, and seriously consider and reflect upon; but upon the Scriptures, the reading of which he had recommended to him, and the doctrines contained therein; it becomes every man not only to read, but meditate on the word of God, and much more ministers of the Gospel. The Scriptures should be read with care, and be industriously and laboriously searched into, as men dig in mines for silver or golden ore; and passages in it should be carefully compared together, the more obscure with those that are more plain and easy; and the whole is to be studied with great attention and application:

give thyself wholly to them: to the reading of the Scriptures, meditation upon them, and preaching the doctrines contained in them, clear of all secular affairs, or worldly business and employment. The apostles threw off the branch of deaconship, or ministering to the poor, that they might give themselves up wholly to the ministry of the word, and prayer; and much more should worldly business be cast off, where the circumstances of ministers and churches will admit of it; a Christian soldier, or minister of the Gospel, ought not, if possible, to be entangled with the affairs of this life; he finds enough to do without, in the discharge of his ministerial function; and though the apostles sometimes wrought with their own hands, yet it was not because they had so much leisure from the ministry, or time on their hands, or because they had not a power of forbearing working, but out of necessity, see Ac 20:34, or these words may be rendered,

be thou in these things; let thine heart be in them; for if a minister's heart is not in his work, if he does not take delight in it, it will be a slavery and drudgery to him; spend all the time and strength in them, give thyself continually to them, and be always diligent and laborious in them:

that thy profiting may appear to all; that it may be manifest to all that attend the ministry of the word that there is an increase in gifts, a growing in spiritual knowledge, an improvement of the talents bestowed: or that this profiting or increase might appear in all things; in every branch of the ministry, both in exhortation or consolation, and in doctrine; or that it might be manifest among all; that is, all that hear might receive some profit, might learn, and be comforted and edified; faith might be increased, and the joy of it be furthered; and all under the ministry visibly thrive and flourish.

1 Timothy 4:16

Ver. 16. Take heed unto thyself,.... Not as a man, or a Christian only, but as a minister; and as every minister should take heed to his life and conversation, that it be exemplary, as in 1Ti 4:12 to his gifts, that they be not lost, or neglected, but used and improved; to the errors and heresies abroad, that he be not infected with them; and to his flock, which is the other part of himself, that he feed it with knowledge and understanding: and to thy doctrine: preached by him, that it be according to the Scriptures, be the doctrine of Christ, and his apostles, and according to godliness; that it tend to edification, and is pure, incorrupt, and all of a piece; and that it be expressed in the best manner, with all boldness and plainness; and that he defend it against all opposition:

continue in them; or "with them"; the members of the church at Ephesus; or rather in the doctrines of the Gospel; which should be done, though a majority is against them; though rejected by the wise, learned, and rich; though not to be comprehended by carnal reason; and though loaded with reproach and scandal; and though persecuted, yea even unto death for them:

for in doing this, thou shall both save thyself; a minister by taking heed to himself, and doctrine, saves himself from the pollutions of the world, from the errors and heresies of false teachers, from the blood of all men, and from all just blame in his ministry.

And them that hear thee; by being an example to them in doctrine and conversation, a minister is the means of saving and preserving those that attend on him, from erroneous principles, and immoral practices; and by faithfully preaching the Gospel to his hearers, he is instrumental in their eternal salvation; for though Jesus Christ is the only Saviour, the only efficient and procuring cause of salvation, yet the ministers of the Gospel are instruments by which souls believe in him, and so are saved; the word preached by them, being attended with the Spirit of God, becomes the ingrafted word, which is able to save, and is the power of God unto salvation; and nothing can more animate and engage the ministers of the word to take heed to themselves and doctrine, and abide therein, than this, of being the happy instruments of converting sinners, and saving them from death; see **Jas 5:20**

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Timothy 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO I TIMOTHY 5

In this chapter the apostle lays down rules about the manner of rebuking persons, suitable to their several ages; gives directions concerning widows, both old and young; and instructs Timothy how to behave towards elders in office on different accounts. The rules for giving reproof to old men, as fathers; to young men, as brethren; to elder women, as mothers; and to the younger, as sisters, are in **1Ti 5:1**. Next follow the directions about taking care of widows, who are to be honoured and maintained by the church, that are widows indeed, **1Ti 5:3** not such who have relations that are capable of taking care of them, who ought to do it, and not burden the church; since so to do is an act of piety, a requiting parents for their former care and kindness, and is good and acceptable in the sight of God, **1Ti 5:4** but such who are desolate and alone, and have no husbands nor children, nor any to support their wants, but wholly depend on the providence of God, and are constant at the throne of grace crying for help and relief, which shows they are living Christians;

whereas such who spend their time in sinful lusts and pleasures, are dead while they live; wherefore if members of churches, with respect to this business, would be blameless, they ought to take care of the former, and reprove the latter, **1Ti 5:5**. And as for those persons who cast their poor widows upon the church, and will not provide for them, when they are able, they are to be looked upon as deniers of the faith, and to be worse than the Heathens themselves, **1Ti 5:8**. The qualifications of widows to be taken care of by the church, besides those before mentioned, are, that they be sixty years of age, having been the wife of one man, and well known for their good works, some of which are particularly mentioned, **1Ti 5:9** but those who are under the age fixed, and especially are fit for marriage, and the procreation of children, should be rejected, because of their lasciviousness, idleness, tattling, and busying themselves about other people's matters; these, on the contrary, should be directed to marry, bear children, take care of household affairs, and give no occasion to the enemy to reproach and blaspheme; and the rather such advice should be taken, since there had been some sad instances of apostasy in such persons, **1Ti 5:11**. And then the apostle repeats his order to believers, to take care of their poor widows, who were able to do it themselves, that so the church might not be burdened, and might be able to relieve such as were real and proper objects, **1Ti 5:16**. And then follow rules with respect to elders in office, as that those that rule well, and labour in the ministry of the word, should be honourably maintained; which is confirmed by a passage of Scripture in the Old Testament, and by a saying of Christ's in the New, **1Ti 5:17**, that an accusation should not be received against one of such a character, but by two or three witnesses, **1Ti 5:19** and that such of them that fell into any notorious sin should be publicly rebuked, in order to make others afraid to sin, **1Ti 5:20**. And these things the apostle, in the most solemn manner, charges Timothy, in the sight of God, Christ, and the angels, to observe, without partiality, **1Ti 5:21**. To which he adds, that he would not have him be hastily concerned in the ordination of anyone as an elder, lest he should involve himself in his sin, whereas by acting otherwise he would be free, **1Ti 5:22** and then inserts some advice to himself, to take care of his health, **1Ti 5:23** and concludes the chapter with observing, on occasion of what he had said, **1Ti 5:22** that some men's sins were open, and their characters were easily discerned, and others were private, and such were also the good works of others; which made the case either more easy or more difficult to determine what was to be done; and therefore nothing should be done suddenly and rashly, **1Ti 5:24**.

Ver. 1. Rebuke not an elder,.... By whom is meant, not an elder in office, but in age; for elders by office are afterwards spoken of, and particular rules concerning them are given, **1Ti 5:17**. Besides, an elder is here opposed, not to a private member of a church, but to young men in age; and the apostle is here giving rules to be observed in rebuking members of churches, according to their different age and sex, and not according to their office and station; and this sense is confirmed by a parallel text in **Tit 2:2**. Now an ancient man, a member of a church, is not to be rebuked in a sharp and severe way; the word here used signifies to smite or strike; and so the Arabic version renders it, "do not strike an elder"; meaning not with the hand, but with the tongue, giving hard words, which are as heavy blows; reproof is a smiting, and there is a gentle and a sharp one, Ps 141:4. It is with the former, and not the latter, that man in years is to be reproved, when he is in a fault, whether with respect to doctrine or practice, as such persons may be as well as younger ones; and when they are observed to err, they should not be roughly and sharply dealt with:

but entreat him as a father; as a child should entreat a father, when he is going out of the way; give him honour and respect, fear and reverence, and persuade him to desist; entreat and beseech him to return to the right path of truth and holiness; use him as a father in Christ, that has known him that is from the beginning, and as of long standing in the church: this must be understood of lesser crimes, and not of atrocious and flagitious ones, obstinately continued in, to the great scandal of religion, and dishonour of the Gospel; for then severer methods must be used; see Isa 45:20. But though this is the sense of the passage, yet the argument from hence is strong, that if an elder in years, a private member, who is ancient, and in a fault, is not to be roughly used, but gently entreated, then much more an elder in office.

And the younger men as brethren; the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "as thy brethren". Timothy was a young man himself; and as he was to consider an elderly man as his father, and use him accordingly; so he was to consider young men as equal with him, at least in age, and take the more freedom with them, in reproving them for their faults, and use somewhat more authority with them; and yet consider them as brethren in Christ, and reprove them in a brotherly way, and with brotherly love.

1 Timothy 5:2

Ver. 2. The elder women as mothers,.... When they offend in any point, they are to be reasoned, and argued, and pleaded with, as children should with their mothers; see **Ho 2:2** and are to be considered as mothers in Israel, and to be treated with great tenderness and respect.

The younger as sisters; using the freedom as a brother may with a sister; and considering them as sisters in Christ, and in a way becoming the relation, tell them their faults freely and privately, but

with all purity: in such manner as to preserve chastity in looks, in words, and actions.

1 Timothy 5:3

Ver. 3. Honour widows that are widows indeed. Who those are, see in **1Ti 1:5**. The honour to be given them is not a putting of them into the office of a deaconess, in the church; which office, some think, is referred to in **Ac 6:1**, and did obtain in some of the primitive churches; and it might be that some of these widows, the apostle here and hereafter speaks of, might be preferred to the rest, and be set over them, and have the care of such, who were more infirm; but then this could only be the case of some, whereas the honour here spoken of is what is to be given to all that are really widows; and therefore rather regards some external honour and respect to be shown them, by words and actions; and especially it designs an honourable provision for them, and maintenance of them; in which sense the word is used in **1Ti 5:17**. So, with the Jews, giving gifts to persons, and making presents to them, is called honour. When Manoah asked the angel's name, that he might do him honour, when his saying came to pass, Jud 13:17 the sense, according to them, is {q},

"that I may inquire in what place I may find thee, when thy prophecy is fulfilled, and give thee Nwrwd, "a gift"; for there is no honour but what signifies a gift, as it is said, Nu 22:17, "honouring I will honour thee"."

So giving gifts to the poor, or providing for their maintenance, is doing them honour; and that this is the sense here, appears by what follows in the context.

{q} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 10. fol. 199. 4.

1 Timothy 5:4

Ver. 4. But if any widow have children or nephews,.... Such are not widows indeed; they are not desolate, or alone, or without persons to take care of them;

their children or nephews should, and not suffer the church to be burdened with them. Wherefore it follows,

let them learn first to show piety at home; which some understand of the widows, who, instead of casting themselves upon the church for a maintenance, or taking upon them the office of a deaconess, to take care of others, should continue in their own families, and bring up their children and nephews in like manner as they have been brought up by their parents, which will be more pleasing and acceptable unto God; but it is better to interpret it of their children; and so the Ethiopic version expresses it, "let the children first learn to do well to their own house", or family. It is the duty of children to take care of their parents in old age, and provide for them, when they cannot for themselves: this is a lesson they ought to learn in the first place, and a duty which they ought principally to observe; they should not suffer them to come to a church for relief, but first take care of them themselves, as long as they are in any capacity to do it; and these should be their first care before any others; so to do is an act of piety, a religious action, a pious one; it is doing according to the will and law of God, and is well pleasing to him:

and to requite their parents; for all the sorrow, pain, trouble, care, and expenses they have been at in bearing and bringing them forth into the world, in taking care of them in their infancy, in bringing them up, giving them an education, providing food and raiment for them, and settling them in the world; wherefore to neglect them in old age, when incapable of providing for themselves, would be base ingratitude; whereas to take care of them is but a requital of them, or a repaying them for former benefits had of them:

for that is good and acceptable before God; it is good in itself, and grateful, and well pleasing in his sight; it is part of the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; and which, as other actions done in faith, is acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 5:5

Ver. 5. Now she that is a widow indeed,.... A real widow, whom the Jews {r} call hrwmg, "a perfect one", in opposition to one that is divorced, or a brother's widow, that has had the shoe plucked off for her: and such an one as the apostle means, is one that is

desolate, or "alone": who has neither husband to take care of her, nor children or nephews to show kindness to her, nor any worldly substance to subsist upon:

but trusteth in God: not in man, nor in an arm of flesh, but in the living God, the giver of all good things, the Judge of widows; who vindicates their cause, avenges the injuries done them, protects and defends them, and relieves their wants, and gives all encouragement to them, to trust in him; see Jer 49:11.

and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day; as the widow Anna did, **Lu 2:36**. A Widow indeed is one that has no outward dependence, betakes herself to the Lord, puts her confidence in him, and cries to him continually for a daily supply; and such an one, amidst all her poverty and meanness, is a living believer, one that lives by faith on the Lord; and is profitable, and useful to the church by her prayers and supplications made for them, as well as for herself; whereas she that is in the next verse described is just the reverse.

{r} Jarchi in Exek. xliv. 22.

1 Timothy 5:6

Ver. 6. But she that liveth in pleasure,.... Voluptuously, and deliciously; lives a wanton, loose, and licentious life, serving divers lusts and pleasures:,

is dead while she liveth; is dead in trespasses and sins, while she lives in them; is dead morally or spiritually, while she lives a natural or corporeal life. There is a likeness between a moral and a corporeal death. In a corporeal death, the soul is separated from the body; and in a moral death, souls are separated from God, and are alienated from the life of God; and are without Christ, who is the author and giver of spiritual life; and have not the Spirit, which is the Spirit of life: death defaces and deforms the man, and a moral death lies in the defacing of the image of God, first stamped on man, and in a loss of original righteousness; for as death strips a man naked of all, as he was when he came into the world, so sin, which brings on this moral death, has stripped man of his moral righteousness, whereby he is become dead in law, as well as in sin: and as in death there is a privation of all sense, so such who are dead, morally or spiritually, have no true sense of sin, and of their state and condition; are not concerned about sin, nor troubled for it, but rejoice in it, boast of it, plead for it, and declare it: between such persons and dead men there is a great similitude; as dead men are helpless to themselves, so are they; they can do

nothing of, nor for themselves, in matters of a spiritual nature; and as dead men are unprofitable unto others, so are they to God, and man; and as dead men are hurtful and infectious to others, so they by their evil communications corrupt good manners; and as dead bodies are nauseous and disagreeable, so are such persons, especially to a pure and holy Being; and as dead men are deprived of their senses, so are these: they are blind, and cannot see and discern the things of the Spirit of God; they have not ears to hear the joyful sound of the Gospel, so as to understand it, approve of it, and delight in it; they have no feeling, nor are they burdened with the weight of sin; nor have they any taste and savour of the things of God, but only of the things of men; so that in a spiritual sense they are dead, while they are alive. It is a common, saying to be met with in Jewish writers, Mytm Nyywrq Nhyyxb
Myevr, "the wicked while alive are said to be dead" {s}. And they say {t} also, that men are called Mytm, "dead", from the time they sin; and that he that sins is accounted tmk, "as a dead man" {u}.

{s} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 18. 2. & Hieros. Beracot, fol. 4. 4. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 78. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 58. 3. Caphtor, fol. 79. 1, 2. & 84. 1. Jarchi in Gen. xi. 32. & Baal Hatturim in Deut. xvii. 6. {t} Tzeror Hammer, fol. 5. 9. {u} lb. fol. 6. 2. & 127. 2.

1 Timothy 5:7

Ver. 7. And these things give in charge,.... Concerning rebuking persons of a different age and sex, and concerning the maintenance of widows; and particularly that children provide for their parents when helpless; and that widows trust in God, and give themselves to prayer and supplication, and not live in sin:

that they may be blameless; before men, and in the view of the world, and not be chargeable with any notorious crime; though none are without blame in themselves, and before God, but as considered in Christ Jesus.

1 Timothy 5:8

Ver. 8. But if any provide not for his own,.... Not only for his wife and children, but for his parents, when grown old, and cannot help themselves:

and specially for those of his own house; that is, who are of the same household of faith with him; see **Ga 6:10**, and so the Syriac version renders it, "and especially those who are the children of the house of faith"; for though the tie of nature obliges him to take care of them, yet that of grace makes the obligation still more strong and binding; and he must act both the inhuman and the unchristian part, that does not take care of his pious parents: wherefore it follows,

he hath denied the faith; the doctrine of faith, though not in words, yet in works; and is to be considered in the same light, and to be dealt with as an apostate from the Christian religion.

And is worse than an infidel; for the very Heathens are taught and directed by the light of nature to take care of their poor and aged parents. The daughter of Cimon gave her ancient father the breast, and suckled him when in prison. Aeneas snatched his aged father out of the burning of Troy, and brought him out of the destruction of that city on his back; yea, these are worse than the brute creatures, and may be truly said to be without natural affections; such should go to the storks and learn of them, of whom it is reported, that the younger ones will feed the old ones, when they cannot feed themselves; and when weary, and not able to fly, will carry them on their backs. The Jews {w} have a rule or canon, which obliged men to take care of their families, which runs thus:

"as a man is bound to provide for his wife, so he is hound to provide for his sons and daughters, the little ones, until they are six years old; and from thenceforward he gives them food till they are grown up, according to the order of the wise men; if he will not, they reprove him, and make him ashamed, and oblige him; yea, if he will not, they publish him in the congregation, and say such an one is cruel, and will not provide for his children; and lo, he is worse than an unclean fowl, which feeds her young."

{w} Maimon. Hilchot Ishot, c. 12. sect. 14.

1 Timothy 5:9

Ver. 9. Let not a widow be taken into the number,.... That is, of widows, to be maintained by the church; though some choose to understand these words of the number of such who were made deaconesses, and had the care of the poor widows of the church committed to them; and so the Arabic version renders it, "if a widow be chosen a deaconess"; but the former sense is best, for it appears

from **1Ti 5:1** that the apostle is still speaking of widows to be relieved: now such were not to be taken under the church's care for relief, under threescore years old: for under this age it might be supposed they would marry, and so not be desolate, but would have husbands to provide for them; or they might be capable of labour, and so of taking care of themselves. The age of sixty years was by the Jews {x} reckoned
hnqz, "old age", but not under.

Having been the wife of one man; that is, at one time; for second marriages are not hereby condemned, for this would be to condemn what the apostle elsewhere allows, **Ro 7:2**. Nor is the sense only, that she should be one who never had more husbands than one at once; for this was not usual for women to have more husbands than one, even where polygamy obtained, or where men had more wives than one: this rather therefore is to be understood of one who had never put away her husband, and married another, which was sometimes done among the Jews; see Mr 10:12, and this being a scandalous practice, the apostle was willing to put a mark of infamy upon it, and exclude such persons who had been guilty of it from the number of widows relieved by the church.

{x} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21.

1 Timothy 5:10

Ver. 10. Well reported of for good works,.... Both by the members of the church, and by them that were without:

particularly if she have brought up children; that is, "well", as the Arabic version adds; in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; commanding them, as Abraham did, to keep the way of the Lord, and to do justice and judgment; training them up in the paths of religion and virtue, from which they will not so easily depart when grown up.

If she have lodged strangers; as Abraham and Lot did, who entertained angels unawares: this may be understood of strangers in common, but especially of the brethren, ministers, and others, who came from distant parts, and travelled about to spread the Gospel of Christ. The {y} Jews say many things aynoka dwbkb, "in honour of hospitality" or entertaining of strangers, especially of receiving into their houses the disciples of the wise men, and giving them food and drink, and the use of their goods; this was what gave persons a very great character with them, and highly recommended them.

If she have washed the saints' feet; which was usual in those hot countries, where they wore sandals only, partly for refreshment, and partly for the removal of dust and filth, contracted in walking; instances of this we have in several places of Scripture, Ge 18:4. It was such a common piece of civility, that our Lord complains of the neglect of it towards him, **Lu 7:44**. It was what he did to his own disciples, and in so doing set them an example of what they should do to one another, Joh 13:14 and being a mean and low office, and which very likely was done by the servants of the house; the sense may be, if she has condescended to do the meanest office for the saints.

If she have relieved the afflicted; either in body, with her purse; or in mind, by visiting them, and speaking comfortably to them: in general,

if she have diligently followed every good work; not only have done good works at certain times, but has followed that which is good; has closely pursued it, and that with great eagerness and diligence; has been constant and indefatigable in the performance of it.

{y} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 63. 2.

1 Timothy 5:11

Ver. 11. But the younger widows refuse,.... To admit them into the number of widows relieved by the church; partly because they are fit for labour, and so can take care of themselves; and partly because they may marry, as the apostle afterwards advises they should, and so would have husbands to take care of them:

for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ; that is, being at ease, and without labour, live a wanton, loose, and licentious life, and in carnal lusts and pleasures, contrary to the commands of Christ, and to the reproach and dishonour of his name:

they will marry; not that it would be criminal for them to marry, or that second marriages are unlawful; for the apostle afterwards signifies that it was right, fit, and proper that such should marry; but his sense is, that marriage being the effect of wantonness, would not be so honourable in them, and especially after they had made application to the church for relief, and had declared themselves widows indeed, and desolate, and such as trusted in God, and gave themselves up to supplication and prayer; wherefore it would be much better for them, and more to the credit of religion, to marry first, than afterwards and it would be best not to apply at all to the church; and if they should, it would be most advisable to reject them for the said reasons.

1 Timothy 5:12

Ver. 12 Having damnation, &c.] Not for their second marriage, but for their wantonness against Christ, or their sinful and luxurious way of living, contrary to the Gospel of Christ: and this is to be understood not of eternal damnation, which cannot, with propriety, be said to be had now; but either of the reproach and scandal cast upon them, and religion, for their wantonness; or the judgment and censure of the church for the same; or having sin, and the guilt of sin upon them, in which sense the word is used, **Ro 5:16**.

Because they have cast off their first faith; or that faith which they first professed, even the doctrine of faith; which they may be said to cast off, because they walked not according to it, their conversation was not becoming their profession of it; and though they continued to profess the same faith they did in words, yet in works they denied it, or cast it off; for which reason they fell under the notice, judgment, and condemnation of the church, as well as exposed themselves to the reproach of men.

1 Timothy 5:13

Ver. 13. And withal they learn to be idle,.... Being at ease, and without labour, living at the expense of the church: "wandering about from house to house"; having nothing else to do: such an one is what the Jews {z} call tybbwv hnmla, "the gadding widow"; who, as the gloss says,

"goes about and visits her neighbours continually; and these are they that corrupt the world."

Of this sort of women must the Jews be understood, when they say {a}, it is one of the properties of them to be twynauwy "going out", or gadding abroad, as Dinah did; and that it is another to be
twyrbd, "talkative", which agrees with what follows:

and not only idle, but tattlers also; full of talk, who have always some news to tell, or report to make of the affairs of this, or the other person, or family:

and busy bodies; in the matters of other persons, which do not concern them:

speaking things which they ought not; which either are not true, and, if they are, are not to be spoken of, and carried from place to place: this is a very great inconvenience, the apostle observes, arising from the admission of such young widows to be relieved and maintained at the church's charge.

{z} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 22. 1. {a} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 45. fol. 40. 3.

1 Timothy 5:14

Ver. 14. I will therefore that the younger women marry,.... Or "the younger" widows rather; and so some copies read; for this is not the apostle's advice to young women in general, though it will suit with them, but with younger widows in particular, of whom he is speaking:

bear children; and bring them forth, and feed, and nourish them, and bring them up in a religious way:

guide the house; manage domestic affairs, direct, order, or do what is proper to be done for the good of the family; which is much more commendable than to throw themselves upon the church, and live an idle and wanton life, and after that marry: and so

give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully; that is, either that Satan, the grand adversary of the saints, might have no opportunity to reproach them, and cast in their teeth their unbecoming walk, or accuse them before the throne; or that any enemy of the Christian religion might have no room nor reason to speak evilly of Christ, his Gospel, truths, and ordinances, on account of the disorderly conversation of any that profess his name; or that the o antikeimenov, the great opposer of Christ, the man of sin, and son of perdition, even antichrist, **2Th 2:4**, might have no handle from hence to speak reproachfully of marriage, and forbid it, under a pretence of sanctity, as **1Ti 4:3**.

1 Timothy 5:15

Ver. 15. For some are already turned aside after Satan. Meaning some of those younger widows, whom the apostle knew, and had observed to have departed from the faith they first professed, and turned their backs on Christ, and gave themselves up to carnal lusts and pleasures, and an idle and impure life and conversation, walked according to the course of this world, and the prince of it, by whom they were led captive at his will; for so everyone that apostatizes from a profession of Christ, and follows either false teachers, and their doctrines, as the Gnostics, that condemned marriage, or any sinful and impure way of life, may be said to turn aside after Satan; and as that apostle knew this to be fact, from his own observation, he therefore gives the above advice.

1 Timothy 5:16

Ver. 16. If any man or woman that believeth have widows,.... That is, if any member of a church, whether a brother or a sister, have mothers or grandmothers, or any near relations widows, in mean circumstances, and incapable of taking care of themselves:

let them relieve them; out of their own substance; which is what the apostle before calls showing piety at home, and requiting their own parents:

and let not the church be charged; or burdened with the maintenance of them:

that it may relieve them that are widows indeed; that the church may be in a better capacity, its stock not being expended on others, to supply the wants of those who are really widows; who have neither husbands, nor children, nor any relations, to provide for them; nor anything in the world to support themselves with.

1 Timothy 5:17

Ver. 17. Let the elders that rule well,.... By whom are meant not elders in age; though such ought to be honoured and respected, and to have a proper maintenance either from their children or the church, when reduced, and incapable of helping themselves; but then this is what should be done to all such persons, whereas the elders here are particularly described as good rulers and labourers in the word and doctrine; besides, elders in age are taken notice of before; nor are civil magistrates intended, such as were called the elders of Israel; for though such as discharge their office well are worthy of honour, yet it does not belong to any of them to labour in preaching the doctrine of the Gospel: nor are deacons designed, for they are never called elders in Scripture; nor is their work ruling, but serving of tables; nor does the ministry of the word belong to them as such; nor is any maintenance allowed them from the church on account of their office: nor are lay elders meant, who rule, but teach not; since there are no such officers appointed in the churches of Christ; whose only officers are bishops or elders and deacons: wherefore the qualifications such are only given in a preceding chapter. There are no other that rule in churches, but such who also speak to them the word of God; wherefore by him that rules, and the labourer in word and doctrine, are not meant two distinct orders, but different persons of the same order; some of these ruling well, but do not take so much pains in the ministry of the word; while others of them both rule well and labour in the word, and who are to be reckoned deserving of the honour hereafter mentioned. These are called "elders", because they are commonly chosen out of the senior members of the churches, though not always, Timothy is an exception to this; and because of their senile gravity and prudence, which were necessary in them: and they may be said to "rule", because they are set in the highest place in the church, and over others in the Lord, who are to submit themselves to them, and obey them. Christ's church is a kingdom, he is King of it, and his ministering servants are rulers under him; and who rule "well" when they rule not with force and cruelty, or lord it over God's heritage; but when they govern according to the laws which Christ the King and lawgiver has prescribed; when they explain and enforce those laws, and show them to the people, and see that they are put in execution and when they discharge this part of their work with diligence and prudence. Now let such be

counted worthy of double honour; which some understand of honour in this world, and in the world to come, and which they have; they are honoured now by Christ, though reproached by the world, by being called unto, qualified for, and succeeded in the work of the ministry; and when they have faithfully discharged it, they will be honoured by him hereafter, and be introduced into his joy with commendation, and shine as the stars for ever and ever. But rather this is to be understood both of that outward respect that is to be shown them by words and actions; and of a sufficient maintenance that is to be provided for them; in which sense the word "honour" is used in this chapter before; See Gill on "1Ti 5:3", and some think that the comparison is between the widows before mentioned, and these elders; that if poor widows in the church are to be honoured and maintained, then much more the officers of it; these are worthy of more honour, even of double honour, or, a larger and a more honourable main tenant: and indeed this seems to be the meaning of the word "double" when used both in an ill and in a good sense; see Re 18:6 and is an allusion to the firstborn among the Jews, who was to have a double portion of his father's goods, De 21:17 and so may here signify, that the ministers of the Gospel ought not to have a short and scanty, but a large and honourable maintenance.

Especially they who labour in the word and doctrine; which lies in a constant reading of the Scriptures, the word of God, and diligently searching into them, and comparing them together, in order to find out the mind and will of God in them; in a daily meditation upon them, and study of them; and in frequent and fervent wrestling with God, or prayer to him, to give an understanding of them; and in endeavouring to find out the sense of difficult passages, which are hard to be understood; and in providing for the different cases and circumstances of hearers, that everyone may have a portion; and in the choice of apt and proper words to express truth in, to the capacities of all: this is labouring in the word in private; besides which there is labouring in doctrine, in public; in preaching the Gospel constantly, boldly, and faithfully; in holding it fast against all opposition, and in defending it by argument, both by word and writing. The phrase seems to be Jewish, a like one is often to be met with in Jewish writings: Rabbenu was sitting atyyrwab yel,

""and labouring in the law" before the congregation of the Babylonians at Tzippore {b};"

and again {c},

"R. Jonah gave tithes to R. Acha bar Alia, not because he was a priest, but because he atyrwab yel, "laboured in the law";"

and they say {d},

"there is no greater reward for a man in the world, as for him atyrwab yeld, "who labours in the law";"

hence we read {e} of hrwt lme, "the labour of the law", which they say the mouth is made for, and of labourers in the law {f}; and such persons they judged worthy of the greatest respect, and to be preferred to others. For, they say {g},

"if a congregation is obliged to give a salary to a doctor (or ruler of the synagogue), and to a minister of the congregation, and it is not in their power to give to both; if the ruler is a famous man, and great in the law, and expert in doctrine, he is to be preferred, but if not the minister of the congregation is to be preferred."

{b} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 33. fol. 28. 3. {c} T. Hieros. Masser, Sheni, fol. 56. 2. {d} Zohar in Gen. fol. 60. 4. & pasira. {e} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 2. {f} Derech Eretz, fol. 17. 4. {g} Jore Des, Tit. 251. sect. 13.

1 Timothy 5:18

Ver. 18 For the Scripture saith,.... In De 25:4

thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn;
See Gill on "1Co 9:9".
See Gill on "1Co 9:10". The ox, for its strength and labour, is a fit emblem of a Gospel minister; and its treading the corn out of the husk and ear aptly represents the beating out, as it were, of Gospel truths, by the ministers of it, their making the doctrines of the Gospel clear, plain, and evident to the understandings of men; wherefore, as the ox was not muzzled when it trod out the corn, but might freely and largely feed upon it, so such who labour in the preaching of the Gospel ought to have a sufficient and competent maintenance: for which purpose this citation is made, as also the following:

and the labourer is worthy of his reward; which seems to be taken from Lu 10:7 which Gospel was now written, and in the hands of the apostle; who here, by two testimonies, the one from Moses, and the other from Christ, supports the right of the honourable maintenance of the ministers of the Gospel.

1 Timothy 5:19

Ver. 19. Against an elder receive not an accusation,.... A charge of any crime:

but before two or three witnesses; good sufficient ones, who are capable of well attesting the fact: a charge against a pastor of a church is not to be easily received; it should not be listened to privately, unless it clearly appears by such a number of witnesses; nor should it be brought publicly before the church, until it is privately and previously proved, by a sufficient number of credible witnesses, that it is really fact. The sense is, not that judgment shall not pass against him but by such a number of witnesses, or that the evidence upon his trial shall consist of such a number; for this is no other than what ought to be in the case of a private member, and of every man, according to De 19:15. But the sense is, that the affair of an elder shall not be put upon a trial, much less sentence pass, until it has been privately proved against him, by proper testimonies, beyond all exception; only in such a case, should a church admit a charge against its elder. The reason of this rule is, because of his high office and the honour of the church, which is concerned in his, as well as of religion; for it carries in it some degree of scandal for such a person to be charged, even though he may be cleared; as also because of his many enemies, who through envy, malice, and the instigation of Satan, would be continually pestering the church with charges, could they be easily admitted.

1 Timothy 5:20

Ver. 20. Them that sin rebuke before all,.... This the apostle adds to the above rule, to show that he was far from screening wicked ministers, or elders, guilty of flagitious crimes, and gross enormities: for these words, though they may be applied unto, and may hold good of all offenders, that are members of churches; yet they seem chiefly to regard elders, even such who sin, who continue to sin, who live in sin, in some notorious sin or another; which is evident and known, to the great scandal of religion, and dishonour of the Gospel: and so some read the words, "them that sin before all, rebuke"; not only admonish once and again, but degrade them from their office, and withdraw from them, as from other disorderly persons, and cut them off, and cast them out of the church, and that in a public manner; and so the Arabic version renders it, "before the congregation": which was done only in case of notorious offences: and which rule is observed by the Jews, and runs thus {h};

"a wise man, an elder in wisdom, and so a prince, or the father of the sanhedrim, that sins, they do not excommunicate him (with Niddui) always ayohrpb, "publicly", unless he does as Jeroboam the son of Nebat and his companions; but when he sins other sins, they chastise him privately."

The end is,

that others also may fear; that other elders, or other members of the church, or both, may fear to do the same evil things, lest they incur the same censure and punishment: the Syriac version reads, "other men"; and the Arabic version, "the rest of the people". The phrase seems to be taken out of De 13:11.

{h} Maimon. Talmud Tora, c. 7. sect. 1.

1 Timothy 5:21

Ver. 21. I charge thee before God,.... Who sees and knows all things, and is a righteous and most impartial Judge; with whom there is no respect of persons, and in whose place and stead, the judges of the earth, both civil and ecclesiastical, stand; and to whom they are accountable for the judgment they pass on men and things; and in whose house or church Timothy was, whose business he was doing, and which ought to be done, with a view to his glory; wherefore the apostle gives him this solemn charge as in his sight:

and the Lord Jesus Christ: who also is God omniscient; and is Jesus Christ the righteous, the Head of the church, and the Judge of quick and dead; before whose judgment seat all must appear; where there will be no respect of persons, nor any partiality used.

And the elect angels; by whom are meant not some of the angels, the more choice, excellent, and principal among them; as the seven angels in the Apocryha:

"I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." (Tobit 12:15)

among whom Raphael is said to be one. But this is a spurious account, and not to be credited; nor was it an ancient tradition of the Jews, that there were seven principal angels; See Gill on "Re 1:4". The Chaldee paraphrase on Ge 11:7 is mistaken by Mr. Mede, where not "seven", but "seventy" angels are spoken of: but here all the good angels are designed, called sometimes the holy angels, and sometimes the angels in heaven; and here, by the Syriac version, "his angels"; either the angels of God, as they are sometimes styled; or the angels of Jesus Christ, being made by him, and being ministers to him, and for him; and also "elect", because chosen to stand in that integrity and holiness, in which they were created; and to enjoy everlasting glory and happiness, while others of the same species were passed by and left to fall from their first estate, and appointed to everlasting wrath and damnation: so that it may be observed that God's election takes place in angels as well as in men; and which flows from the sovereign will and pleasure of God; and was made in Christ, who is their head, and by whom they are confirmed in their happy state; and in which they must be considered in the pure mass, since they never fell; and which may

serve to illustrate and confirm the doctrine of election with respect to men. Now before these the apostle charges Timothy; since they are near to the saints, encamp about them, minister unto them, and are concerned for their good; are spectators of their actions, and witnesses of what is done in churches, since they frequently attend the assemblies of the saints, and will descend with Christ, when he comes to judge the world in righteousness: the mention of them in this, charge gives no countenance to the worshipping of angels, since they are not set upon a level with God and Christ; nor is the charge delivered before them as judges, but as witnesses; nor are the words in the form of an oath, but of a charge; the angels are not sworn by, or appealed unto; only in their presence is this solemn charge given; and it may be observed, that even inanimate creatures, the heavens and the earth, are sometimes called upon as witnesses; and besides, it was usual with the Jews to make such kind of obtestations, So Agrippa {i}, in his speech to the Jews, exhorting them to fidelity to the Romans, beseeches them by their holy things, kai touv ierouv
aggelouv tou ueou, "and the holy angels of God", and their common country, that is, the good of it, that they would remain steadfast. What is the amount of this charge follows,

that thou observe these things; either all that are contained in the epistle, or more particularly the rules prescribed in this chapter; concerning rebuking members of a different age and sex, providing for poor widows, and taking care of the ministers of the Gospel, and chiefly what regards the discipline of the church with respect to the elders of it; as not to admit an accusation against them, unless it is sufficiently evident, and yet not connive at notorious sinners, but rebuke them publicly; and this charge belongs not only to Timothy, but to the whole church, and to all succeeding ministers and churches in all ages. The manner in which these things are to be observed is,

without preferring one before another; or, as the words may be rendered, "without prejudgment"; that is, without prejudging a case, or determining, before hearing, how it shall be; or as the Syriac version renders it, "in nothing let thy mind be prepossessed"; the sense is, that he should attend to any case that should come before him in the church, without prejudice or prepossession, and hearken to what is said on both sides; and judge impartially, and not in haste, but weigh well and consider the evidence that is given, and then determine as the case appears; so the Arabic version renders it, "without haste", or precipitancy; to which agrees the advice of the men of the great congregation, or Ezra's congregation, who were in his time, and succeeded him; Nydb Mynwtm wwh, "be slow in judgment" {k}, or long at it; that so by strict and close examination, things not known at first may be discovered: and when judgment is passed, it should not be through affection to one party, and disrespect to another; which is called in Scripture a respect of persons, and here a preferring one to another; and which is further explained by adding,

doing nothing by partiality; or by inclining to one side more than to another. A judge should not preponderate to either side, but should hold the balance of justice even, and do nothing to turn the scale one way or another, but as the weight and truth of the evidence direct; and such a rule should be observed in all church affairs.

{i} Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 4. {k} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1. Vid. Maimon in ib.

1 Timothy 5:22

Ver. 22. Lay hands suddenly on no man,.... Which is not to be understood of removing censures from off offenders, upon their repentance, which should not be suddenly and hastily done; and which it seems in later times has been done by imposition of hands; but since no such custom obtained in the apostle's time, and a taking off of censures is never in Scripture signified by this phrase, it cannot be intended here; but rather the admission of persons into the work of the ministry, and the installing of them into the office of an or pastor; upon whom, in these early times, hands were laid by the apostles, whereby gifts were conveyed, as on Timothy;
See Gill on "1Ti 4:14".

And from this rite this act was so called, as it might be when it was laid aside; just as, with the Jews, an ordination of one of their doctors is called hkymo, "imposition of hands", though they performed it by words, and not by laying on of hands; which now by them is not judged necessary {l}: and then the sense is, do not hastily and at once admit any person into the sacred work of the ministry, or constitute him an elder, or pastor, over a church of Christ; but let him be first proved, and let it plainly appear, that he has the grace of God in him, and has gifts for public service bestowed on him; that he is sound in faith, and of a good life and conversation; and a man of uprightness and fidelity;

neither be partaker of other men's sins; of any of the members of the church; by doing the same, joining with them therein, or by consenting to them and taking pleasure in them, as done by others; by conniving at them, and not restraining them, nor reproving for them: or rather this refers to rash and hasty ordinations of ministers; and either regards the sins of those who lay hands suddenly on men, and with whom the apostle would not have Timothy join, that he might not be a partner in their sins; or else the sins of those that are ordained, and these, whether before or after their ordination; which such involve themselves in, who either rashly and ignorantly ordain such persons; and much more if they do it, knowing them to be such: and these sins may include both immorality and error; see #2Jo 10,11. Keep thyself pure; not from his own sins, the sin of nature, indwelling sin, and actual transgressions; no man is, or can be pure, from either of these; nor can any man keep himself; Christ only is able to keep them from falling. But the apostle's meaning is, that he should keep himself pure from the sins of others, by not rashly and suddenly admitting any into the ministry; just as the apostle was pure from the blood of all men, by faithfully preaching the Gospel; so he suggests that Timothy would be pure from partaking of other men's sins, by observing a strict discipline in the house of God. Some refer this to chastity of body, in opposition to the sin of uncleanness, which his youthful age and the temptations about him might expose him to the danger of; and which is scandalous and infamous in a minister of the word. Which sense serves to show the connection of the following words, which otherwise seem to stand unconnected.

{l} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 3. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. Juthasin, fol. 60. 1. & Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 1, 2.

1 Timothy 5:23

Ver. 23. Drink no longer water,.... Though it was commendable in him to keep under his body, as the apostle did, by abstemious living, and not pamper the flesh and encourage the lusts of it, and so preserve purity and chastity; yet it was proper that he should take care of his health, that it was not impaired by too much severity, and so he be incapable of doing the work of the Lord. And it seems by this, that his long and only use of water for his drink had been prejudicial to his health: wherefore the following advice was judged proper:

but use a little wine; some, by "a little wine", understand not the quantity, but the quality of the wine; a thin, small, weak wine, or wine mixed with water; and so the Ethiopic version renders the words, "drink no more simple water", (or water only,) "but mix a little wine"; though rather the quantity is intended, and which is mentioned. Not as though there was any danger of Timothy's running into an excess of drinking; but for the sake of others, lest they should abuse such a direction, to indulge themselves in an excessive way; and chiefly to prevent the scoffs of profane persons; who otherwise would have insinuated that the apostle indulged intemperance and excess: whereas this advice to the use of wine, was not for pleasure, and for the satisfying of the flesh, but for health,

for thy stomach's sake; to help digestion, and to remove the disorders which might attend it: the Ethiopic version renders it, "for the pain of the liver", and "for thy perpetual disease"; which last might be a pain in his head, arising from the disorder of his stomach: the last clause we render,

and thine often infirmities; or weaknesses of body, occasioned by hard studies, frequent ministrations, and indefatigable pains and labours he endured in spreading the Gospel of Christ.

1 Timothy 5:24

Ver. 24. Some men's sins are open before hand,.... Some men are such open and notorious sinners, that there is no need of any inquiry about them, or any examination of them; or any witnesses to be called to their character, in order to pass judgment concerning them; they even prevent and supersede any formal process about them. With such persons, the apostle intimates, Timothy could have no difficulty upon him, what to do with them; should they be proposed for the ministry, he would know at once what to do with them; namely, reject them. There would be no danger of his laying hands suddenly on such; for the following phrase,

going before to judgment, is not to be understood of God's judgment, or of the last and future judgment of the great day, but of human judgment: it is true indeed that some men's sins are manifest and barefaced, before that day comes; while others are so private, that they will not be known till that day declares them, and brings to light the hidden things of darkness: and much such a way of speaking is used by the Jews; who say {m},

"whoever committeth one transgression, (a notorious one,) in this world, it joins to him, "and goes before him"
Nydh Mwyl "to the day of judgment"."

But this sense agrees not with the context; and with what propriety soever it may be said, of some men's sins going before to judgment, it cannot be said with any, that others follow after judgment; since at the general judgment, every work, both good and bad, with every secret thing, will be brought into it; and nothing will follow after that: wherefore the next clause,

and some [men] they follow after; that is, some men's sins follow after, is to be understood of their following after human judgment; or of their appearing in the light after judgment has been passed upon them, which before were hid: and the sense of the whole is this, that the characters of some men are so well known, and it is so plain a case, that they are destitute of the grace of God; have not ministerial gifts; or are unsound in the faith; or are men of immoral lives and conversations; so that there can be no dispute about them, whether they are to be admitted into the ministry of the word or rejected. But there are other persons who may be proposed, whose sins or errors are so private, that they may not be known; and yet may appear afterwards; wherefore it is proper to take time, and not be too hasty, or lay hands suddenly on men.

{m} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 3. 2. Vid. Avoda Zara, fol. 5. 1.

1 Timothy 5:25

Ver. 25. Likewise also the good works [of some] are manifest before hand,.... The characters of some men, on the other hand, are so fair and bright; and it is so clear a point, that they have received the grace of God in truth; and have a rich furniture for the ministry; and are sound in the doctrine of faith; and are men of such godly lives and conversations, that they prevent any formal inquiry, examination, and judgment; and there can be no difficulty in admitting them at once: and therefore the above rule is not designed for such persons, but to guard against those with whom things do not appear so very clear and manifest:

and they that are otherwise cannot be hid; if they are men of bad principles or practices, they will be discovered in time; for there is nothing hid that shall not be revealed; time will make all things manifest; their errors and sins will break out, and be exposed: and therefore it is right to wait a while, and not to be quick in the reception of them into the Gospel ministry; for otherwise, much mischief may be done to the souls of men, and much dishonour brought on the ways and doctrines of Christ.

1 Timothy 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO I TIMOTHY 6

In this chapter the apostle gives some instructions to servants; lays down some rules, by which to judge of false teachers; advises to contentment; exposes the sin of covetousness; exhorts Timothy to avoid sin, and follow after things that are good, to be constant in his warfare, the issue of which would be eternal life; gives him a charge with respect to himself, and orders him what he should enjoin others, particularly the rich, and what he should do himself; and wishes grace unto him, to enable him to discharge his duty. The instructions to servants are of two sorts; first, to such who had unbelieving masters, whom they ought to honour and obey; that the name and doctrine of Christ be not evil spoken of: and then to such as had believing masters, that they despise them not being brethren, but should the more cheerfully serve them; because believers in Christ, beloved of God, and partakers of his grace; which duties are worthy to be insisted upon in the Gospel ministry, **1Ti 6:1**, and such who teach not these things are to be accounted false teachers, whose characters are given in several particulars; as men unsound, proud, ignorant, quarrelsome, and covetous, and to be withdrawn from, **1Ti 6:3**. And from hence the apostle exhorts to contentment; and argues for it, partly from the gain of it along with godliness; and partly from the consideration of what men are, when they come into the world, and what they will be, when they go out of it; and also from having food and raiment, which include all the necessaries of life, **1Ti 6:6**. And then he exposes the folly and danger of covetousness, being the root of all evil; an enemy to true religion and godliness; and the cause of ruin and destruction, **1Ti 6:9**. Wherefore he addresses himself to Timothy, in particular, to avoid everything of this kind; and to follow the reverse of those things that were in the false teachers; to fight the good fight of faith, and then lay hold on eternal life; to which he encourages him, from his calling, and the profession he had made, in a very public manner, **1Ti 6:11**. And then follows a solemn charge unto him, given him before God and Christ; that he would observe what had been commanded him in the most perfect manner, until the appearance of Christ; which is certain, and may be concluded will be, from the various epithets of God; who will make him manifest in his own time, **1Ti 6:13**. To which is added an injunction on Timothy to charge rich men not to be elated with their riches, nor trust in them, since they are uncertain things; but in God, from whom they have received such a plentiful measure of them; that they be beneficent to others, which will turn to their own advantage in the issue, **1Ti**

6:17. And to close all, he is very urgent upon Timothy, to keep the Gospel pure and uncorrupt, he was intrusted with; and avoid everything that was opposite to it, as profane and mere babbling, and having only a show of knowledge, but not that itself; and the rather, since some profane teachers and professors of the Gospel had erred from it: and concludes with wishing him grace, to enable him to attend to the several instructions which had been given him, **1Ti 6:20**.

Ver. 1. Let as many servants as are under the yoke,.... Not under the yoke of the law of God, or under the yoke of Christ; though the servants here spoken of were under both; but "under the yoke of government", as the Arabic version renders it; that is, under the yoke of men, in a state of servitude, under the government of masters, and in their service; being either apprentices to them, or bought with their money, or hired by them:

count their own masters worthy of all honour; and give it to them; which includes subjection to them; obedience to all their lawful commands, which are consistent with religion and reason, with the laws of God, and with the light of nature; and all reverence of them, and respect unto them, expressed by words and gestures: and all this is to be given to their own masters to whom they belong; who have a property in them; whose money or goods they are; and that be they what they will, as to their religion and temper; whether they be believers or unbelievers; or whether they be good and gentle, kind and humane; or whether they be froward, peevish, and ill natured:

that the name of God and [his] doctrine be not blasphemed; by unbelieving masters, who, should their believing servants be refractory, disobedient, rebellious, or disrespectful, would be apt to say, what a God do these men serve? is this their religion? is this the Gospel they talk of? does their doctrine teach them such things, to be disobedient to their masters, and carry it disrespectfully to them? does it disengage them from the laws of nature, and dissolve the bonds of civil society, and destroy the relation that subsists between man and man? If this be the case, away with their God and their doctrine too. Wherefore the apostle exhorts, that if believing servants have any regard to that name they are called by, and call upon, and to the doctrine of the Gospel they have embraced and professed; that they would be obedient and respectful to their masters; that they may have no occasion to speak reproachfully of God, and of the Gospel.

1 Timothy 6:2

Ver. 2. And they that have believing masters,.... That believe in one God, in opposition to the Gentiles, that held many gods, and in Jesus Christ, in distinction from the Jews; who believed in him with the heart, and professed him with their mouths, and held the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. What is said before, is said to servants that had unbelieving masters; who would be ready to blaspheme, should they act amiss. Servants were under a snare both ways, through the insinuations of false teachers; who suggested, that their servitude was not consistent with their Christian liberty; that they ought not to serve wicked men, because being called of God, they were advanced above them; nor good men, because they were upon a level with them. But the apostle teaches another doctrine;

let them not despise [them], because they are brethren; of the same family named of Christ, and of the same household of God, and of faith, and have the same father; for though with regard to spiritual blessings, privileges, and ordinances, they were equal; yet not with regard to temporal and civil affairs; and therefore should not treat them with less respect, or be more backward to obey their lawful commands, on that account:

but rather do [them] service; more heartily, and with a greater good will, as to the Lord; these masters belonging to him, and being engaged in his cause; which they, their servants, by yielding a cheerful obedience to them, are assisting in: and the rather,

because they are faithful; in lesser things, in giving to them, their servants, what is just and equal, proper food and suitable raiment, and their just wages; and in using their wealth and riches in a good way, for the interest of Christ, the assistance of the poor saints, and the spreading of the Gospel; and so in greater things, by holding fast the profession of their faith, adhering to Christ, his truths and ordinances: or "because they are believing, or believers"; it is the same word as before used; and therefore they should be precious to them, and high in their esteem; for faith is a precious grace, and such as have it are chosen of God, and precious:

and beloved; of God, who had chosen them to salvation; and of Christ, who had redeemed them by his blood; and of the saints, who are taught of God to love one another; and this is another reason why they should be served, and not despised; and a third follows:

partakers of the benefit; of the free grace of God; of redemption and salvation by Jesus Christ, and of all spiritual blessings in him; and therefore should serve them the more cheerfully. The Syriac version renders it, "such as enjoy rest in", or "are refreshed by their service"; or "by their service to them", as the Arabic version: the sense is, that when believing servants serve their believing masters readily and faithfully, their masters are well pleased with them, delight in their service, and consider it as a benefit to them, and a kindness done them; and which therefore should animate and encourage them to serve them. Some understand these characters of

faithful and beloved, of the servants' themselves; that because they are such; therefore they should serve, and not despise their believing masters; and particularly the last clause, which may be rendered, "who in return receive a benefit from them", as food, raiment, and wages; and besides, they are used with humanity and kindness, and in a manner becoming Christians; to which agrees the Ethiopic version, which renders it, "who will receive and help you"; will take care of you, and assist you, and supply you with what is proper and necessary:

these things teach and exhort; the Syriac and Arabic versions add them; the servants. The apostle was not above instructing and exhorting persons of such a capacity, and in so low a state of life; and it became Timothy to do so likewise; and every minister of the word.

1 Timothy 6:3

Ver. 3. If any man teach otherwise,.... Or another doctrine, as the Syriac version renders it; a doctrine different from what the apostle had now taught, concerning the duty of servants to their masters; as did the false teachers, who despised dominion or government; not only civil government, and so spoke evil of rulers and magistrates; and church government, and therefore reviled the apostles, elders, and pastors of churches; but family government, and encouraged disobedience to parents and masters; see **2Pe 2:10**

or teach another doctrine, from that of the Bible, of Christ and his apostles:

and consent not to wholesome words: such as the doctrines of the Gospel; they are food to the saints, milk for babes, and meat for strong men; they are sweet and savoury food to a spiritual taste; they are nourishing, and the means of a spiritual growth; they are salutary and healthful; they have no corruption, taint, or poison in them:

[even] the words of our Lord Jesus Christ; the doctrines which he preached when on each, who was anointed with the Spirit of God without measure, to preach the Gospel, and by whom all the doctrines of grace and truth came; or the doctrines relating to Christ, to his person, offices, grace, righteousness, sacrifice and satisfaction; to what he is, has done, does, and will do.

And to the doctrine which is according to godliness. The whole Gospel is the mystery of godliness; it is the truth that is after it, and it has a tendency to promote true godliness in heart and life: even such is the nature of the more distinguishing doctrines of it, which are charged with licentiousness; as the doctrine of eternal and personal election; for though it is not of works, but of grace, yet holiness is a means fixed in election, and an end secured by it; it is the source and spring of all real holiness; holiness of heart is an evidence of it to believers themselves; and holiness of life is an evidence of it to the world; nor can anything more powerfully engage men to it than the consideration that they are chosen of God to grace and glory. The covenant of grace, which is absolute and unconditional, provides for both internal and external holiness; and the promises of it, under the influence of grace, powerfully operate in the minds of believers, to the cleansing of them from all impurity of flesh and spirit, and to the perfecting of holiness in the fear of the Lord: and so the doctrines of free justification, by the righteousness of Christ, which does not make void the law, nor discourage good works; and of Christ's bearing the sins of his people, and making satisfaction for them, that they being dead to sin might live unto righteousness; and of redemption of them by the blood of Christ from sin, Satan, and the law, which is done that they might be a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and of the effectual calling of them, which is with an holy calling; and of their final perseverance in grace and holiness, are all of them doctrines according to godliness, and greatly encourage and promote it: now, whoever does not accede to these truths, and acquiesce in them, but differs from them, and teaches the reverse of them, he is a false teacher, and is all that the apostle says in the next words.

1 Timothy 6:4

Ver. 4. He is proud,.... Or swelled and puffed up with a vain conceit of himself and his own notions, and treats with an haughty air the faithful ministers of the word. The doctrines of grace are of an humbling nature, especially when they are spiritually and experimentally understood and received; but notional knowledge, knowledge of natural things, and the doctrines of men, such as are of their own invention, fill the mind with pride and vanity:

knowing nothing; as he ought to know; not anything that is solid and substantial; nothing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: he may have knowledge of natural and civil things, but not of spiritual ones; he may have collected a medley of knowledge together, but what will be of no real use either to himself or others:

but doting about questions and strifes of words: or he is "sick or diseased"; his mind is distempered; he is like one in a fever, that is delirious; his head is light and wild; his fancy is roving, and he talks of things he knows not what; his head runs upon "questions"; foolish and unlearned ones, about the law and works, and the necessity of them to justification and salvation; concerning genealogies, and other fruitless and unprofitable subjects:

and strifes of words; mere logomachies; contending and quarrelling more about words than things, which tend to no profit, but to the subverting and confounding of hearers. The ill effects of which are as follow:

whereof cometh envy: at the superior gifts and talents of others; at their success, and any little degree of honour and respect they have from others; which shows that such men, in whom this vice is a governing one, are carnal men, for this is a work of the flesh; and that they are destitute of charity, or the grace of love, which envieth not: also from hence comes

strife; contention, quarrelling; the peace and comfort of particular persons, and even of whole communities, are broken and destroyed hereby; for foolish and unlearned questions gender strifes, **2Ti 2:24** which are very unbecoming the servants of the Lord, and very uncomfortable to the churches of Christ: yea, these also produce

railings; at one another, and especially at the faithful ministers of the Gospel; for when the false teachers cannot overcome them by Scripture and argument, they fall to railing and reviling of them: or entertain

evil surmises; groundless suspicions: or from hence follow, as the words may be rendered, "wicked opinions": concerning the being, perfections, purposes, and providence of God; concerning the person and offices of Christ; concerning the law and Gospel, grace and good works; and so the Syriac version renders it, "an evil opinion of the mind".

1 Timothy 6:5

Ver. 5. Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds,.... Who being corrupt in their principles, and corrupters of the word of God, dispute in a very froward and perverse way, rubbing and galling one another, and so provoke, to wrath and anger, and, every evil work:

and destitute of the truth of Christ, who is the truth, knowing nothing of him spiritually and savingly; and of the Gospel, the word of truth; and also of the truth of grace, being carnal, sensual, and having not the Spirit of God.

Supposing that gain is godliness; such were Simon Magus and his followers, and other false teachers, who made merchandise of men, looked everyone for his gain from his quarter, and acted as if there was nothing in religion but worldly profit and gain; these served themselves, their own bellies, and selfish interests, and not the Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore the apostle gives the following advice to Timothy, and through him to all ministers and churches,

from such withdraw thyself: do not come near them; have nothing to do with them; do not lay hands on them, or admit them into the ministry; do not suffer them to preach, or encourage them by hearing them: if in the church, cast them out; have communion with them, neither in a civil nor in a religious way; avoid all conversation with them. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions omit this clause; it is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in Beza's Claromontane Exemplar, but is in other copies.

1 Timothy 6:6

Ver. 6. But godliness with contentment is great gain. By "godliness" is not meant any particular grace, but all the graces of the Spirit of God; as faith, hope, love, fear, &c. the whole of internal religion, as it shows itself in outward worship, and in all acts of holiness of life and conversation; and which the doctrine that is according to godliness teaches and engages to; and this is gain, very great gain indeed. A man possessed of true godliness is a gaining, thriving, man: such as are godly, or truly gracious, they are come into good and happy circumstances, and are possessor of the true, solid, satisfying, durable, and unsearchable riches of grace; all their debts are paid, they are richly clothed, and deliciously fed, and are in a good family, even the household of God, who before were in debt, arrayed in rags, were in a starving

condition, and strangers and foreigners; yea, they are heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, and have both a right and a meetness for the heavenly inheritance; they are now made kings and priests to God, and, in the present state of things, have God to be their portion, and exceeding great reward; they have an interest in Christ, and in all spiritual blessings in him, and have the Spirit as the earnest of their future inheritance; they are rich in faith, and in good works; their souls, which were lost, are gained, and shall be saved with an everlasting salvation; and ere long they will be possessed of all the riches of glory, signified by a house not made with hands, a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God, an incorruptible inheritance, and a kingdom and glory: how great is the gain of godliness! And what adds to this gain, and now goes along with it, is "contentment"; for this is not to be considered as the condition of godliness being great gain, as if it was not so without it; but as the effect of godliness, what that produces, and as a part of its gain. The word here used signifies "sufficiency"; and so it is rendered in the Vulgate Latin version: it designs a competency of the good things of this life; and what that is, is expressed in
1Ti 6:8 and such God gives to them that fear him, his godly ones, who shall lack no good thing convenient for them; for godliness has the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come; and God does give to such all things pertaining to life and godliness, even all things richly to enjoy. The word indeed properly signifies "self-sufficiency", which in its strict sense, only belongs to God, who is "El-Shaddai", God all-sufficient and self-sufficient; but here it intends such a sufficiency as a man himself judges to be so; for this phrase does not so much design the thing itself, which is a sufficiency, as the opinion, the sense which the godly man has of it, who himself judges it, as Jacob did, to be enough; and such a man is content with what he has, and thankful for it, submits quietly to the will of God, and patiently bears every adverse providence: and this is now the fruit and effect of godliness, or true grace, and is a considerable part of that gain which godliness brings with it; and such a man is a happy man indeed, let his circumstances be what they will. The Jews have a saying {n}, that

"he is a rich man whose spirit rests in, or is contented with his riches;"

that is, as the gloss explains it.

"who rejoices in his portion, be it little or much: thus, though godliness is not gain, nor gain godliness, in the sense of the false teachers, yet is it true gain in a spiritual sense."

{n} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 25. 2.

1 Timothy 6:7

Ver. 7. For we brought nothing into this world,.... Which is a reason both clearly showing that godliness is great gain, since those who have it brought nothing into the world with them but sin, and yet are now in such happy circumstances as before described; and that godly persons should be content with what they have, even of worldly things, seeing they are so much more than they had when they came into the world, into which they came naked; and which should be a quieting consideration under the most stripping providences; see **Job 1:21**

and it is certain we can carry nothing out: as men come into the world, so will they go out of it; nor will they need their worldly substance after death, any more than they did before they were born; and what they now have, and use not, will then be lost to them, whatever gain it may be to others: wherefore it becomes them cheerfully to use what they have, and be content therewith; see **Ec 5:15**. The Jews have a saying like this {o}, that

"as a man comes (into the world), Nyjylxb, "simply" or "nakedly", so he goes out in like manner."

{o} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 36. 3.

1 Timothy 6:8

Ver. 8. And having food and raiment,.... "Food" includes all things necessary to be ate and drank, of which there is a great variety, and is here expressed in the plural number; and "raiment" every necessary covering, as the word used signifies, and includes an habitation, which is a cover and shelter from the inclementencies of the weather. And now having all these comforts and necessaries of life, food to eat, and drink to extinguish thirst and refresh, raiment to put on, and a house to dwell in,

let us be therewith content: there is very good reason why the saints should be content; since more than these things cannot be enjoyed; and these they have with a blessing, and as a fruit and token of the love of God to them; these were all that Jacob desired, Agur petitioned for, and Christ directs his disciples daily to pray for; and which to have, is to have enough, a proper sufficiency and competency: the words may be rendered, "we shall be content with them"; which the apostle could say for himself, Timothy, and others, who had been content, even when they wanted these things. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, "we are content"; and the Syriac version, "food and raiment are sufficient for us"; and so the apostle sets himself, and others, as examples of contentment to be imitated and followed.

1 Timothy 6:9

Ver. 9. But they that will be rich,.... Not they that are rich; for some rich men are good men; and do much good with their riches; and are as free from temptations and snares, and foolish and hurtful lusts, as other persons, as Abraham, Joseph of Arimathea, Gaius, and others were; but such that would be rich, who labour after, make haste for it, and are resolved upon it, at any rate, right or wrong, as there be thousands, who never attain to it; so that the apostle does not point at rich men particularly, but at such who are determined to be rich, whether they ever are so or not: these

fall into temptation; not in such sense in which the phrase is used in **Jas 1:2** but in such sense as Christ uses it, **Mt 6:13** namely, a falling into temptation to sin, so as to be drawn away by it, and overcome with it:

and a snare; the Vulgate Latin version reads, "the snare of the devil", and so Beza's Claromontane copy; which perhaps is taken from **1Ti 3:7**, and though this seems not to be the genuine reading, yet it may give the true sense: Satan may be compared to a fowler; his temptations to sin are his nets and snares; and they that will be rich, are the birds that are caught and entangled therein, out of which sometimes it is impracticable to extricate themselves:

and into many foolish and hurtful lusts; carnal and worldly lusts, the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, which are the things that are in the world and draw the affections to them; yea, what sin is there but such persons may, and do fall into; as defrauding of the neighbour, oppressing the poor, lying, perjury, theft, murder, rapine, violence, and injustice of every kind? so that they may be said to be "many", and some of them are "foolish". All sin is folly, and every wicked man is a foolish one, and acts a part quite contrary to reason; but some evil ways are notoriously silly, weak and foolish, and which they that will be rich make use of to get money; though others of them are sly and artful enough, and all of them are "hurtful" to their credit and reputation, or to the health of their bodies, and especially to the welfare of their immortal souls. So the phrase avpj Nwhyruy, "their foolish lust", is used by the Targumist in Eze 20:25 and the corruption of nature in general is by the Jews called the old and foolish king, in **Ec 4:13**. They ask {p},

"why is he called a king? because all obey him; why is he called old? because he is joined to him (a man) from his birth to his old age; and why is he called lyok, "foolish?" because he teaches him an evil way, which he knows not how to warn him of again."

Which drown men in destruction and perdition; that is, in utter ruin, in the ruin both of soul and body; and which is irrecoverable, like that of the drowning of a man in the sea, with a millstone about his neck; such folly and danger do those expose themselves to, who will be rich at any rate.

{p} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 70. 2.

1 Timothy 6:10

Ver. 10. For the love of money is the root of all evil,.... Of all the evils before mentioned, and of others; not money itself, as silver and gold, which are God's creatures, and his gifts, and may be used to, and answer many good purposes; but the love of it, and not any love of it; for there may be a lawful love of it, and desire after it, so far as it is requisite to the necessaries of life, to answer the calls of Providence, the duties we owe to God and men, to serve the interest of Christ, and do good to fellow creatures and fellow Christians: but it is an immoderate insatiable desire after it, and an inordinate love of it, which is here meant, such as is properly idolatry: as when a man loves it, not only besides, but above God; serves it as if it was God, and places his trust and confidence in it, independent of God, and his providence; such love of it is the source and spring of all iniquity, as above; it was the sin of Judas, and the root of all his iniquity. The phrase is Jewish. So idolatry is said to be twnwe lk rqye, "the root of all iniquities" {q}; see Heb 12:15

which while some coveted after; in a greedy and insatiable way:

they have erred from the faith; the doctrine of faith. Observing that the professors of it are generally poor, they have declined that path, and have not so much as heard the word; and if they have heard and embraced it, yet when persecution arises because of it, they drop their profession of it; or else their minds are so filled with worldly cares, and deceitful riches, that the word is choked, and becomes unprofitable, and by and by, Demas like, they forsake it, having loved this present world.

And pierced themselves through with many sorrows; riches are therefore fitly compared to thorns, which give great trouble and uneasiness, both in getting and keeping them; and oftentimes the reflection upon the unlawful ways and means made use of to obtain them, gives very pungent pain and distress; see Job 20:15. The apostle seem to allude to the Hebrew word eub, used for a covetous man, which signifies one that pierces, cuts, and wounds, as such an one does both himself and others.

{q} R. David Kimchi in Isa. xxvii. 9.

1 Timothy 6:11

Ver. 11. But thou, O man of God,.... Not only by creation, as every man is; nor merely by special grace, as everyone is, that is chosen of God, redeemed by Christ, and regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit; but by his peculiar office, as an evangelist and minister of the word, being qualified for, and devoted to, and employed in the service of God. The phrase is taken out of the Old Testament, where the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, are so called, **2Ki 1:9**,

flee these things; the Arabic version reads "these abominations"; namely, all questions and strifes of words, from whence so many evils follow, **1Ti 6:4** and all worldly gain, selfish interest, and mercenary views in religion; a wicked resolution to be rich, at any rate, and an immoderate love of the things of the world, and an eager pursuit after them, which expose to great danger, and even utter ruin; things very unbecoming any professor of religion, but much more a minister of the Gospel.

And follow after righteousness; not for justification before God, that he had followed after, and attained unto, which is the righteousness of Christ, and not of the law; but for the honour of religion before men; and intends the doing of justice between man and man, giving everyone their own, which in undue affection for the world sometimes leads men from:

godliness; spiritual religion, holiness of heart, and conversation, which has the promise of this life, as well as of the other, and with contentment is great gain; wherefore to pursue this is much better than greedily to run after the riches of this world, or with the false teachers to suppose that godliness lies in worldly gain, or in securing to a man his worldly interest:

faith; the grace of faith, which looks not to things seen, which are temporal, but to things not seen, which are eternal; and leads off the mind from sublunary enjoyments to God, and Christ, and the glories of another world; and is the leading grace to all others, and the foundation of good works, without which there is no pleasing in acts of moral righteousness, or in any acts of religious worship, which may be called godliness:

love; to God, which is inconsistent with serving mammon, or with an immoderate love of money; and to Christ, which will put a man on seeking, not his own things, but the things of Christ; and to the saints, which will direct him to serve them by acts of beneficence and liberality:

patience; in bearing reproaches and indignities; in suffering injuries, loss of goods, imprisonment, and every sort of persecution, for the sake of the Gospel; which a covetous disposition will not admit of: last of all,

meekness; or humility, not seeking great things, but being content with a lower station of life; for generally it is pride that puts men upon a determination to be rich at any rate: it may also design meekness in instructing the ignorant, in refuting error, and in reproving offenders.

1 Timothy 6:12

Ver. 12. Fight the good fight of faith,.... The apostle suggests to Timothy, that he had other business to do than to mind the things of this world; his life was a state of warfare; he was a soldier, and was not to entangle himself with the things of this life; he had many enemies to engage with, as Satan, and his principalities and powers; sin, and the lusts of the flesh; the world, and the men of it, and a great fight of afflictions to endure with them; as also false teachers, with, whom particularly he was to fight the good fight of faith, that so the truth of the Gospel, which they resisted, might continue with the saints. This fight is called "the fight of faith"; partly in opposition to the law, and to hrwt lv htmxlm, "the fight", or "war of the law" the Jews {r} so much talk of; and in which the false teachers, in the apostle's time, were so much engaged, and against whom the apostles set themselves; and partly because the doctrine of faith, the faith of the Gospel, the faith once delivered to the saints, is what they earnestly contended, strove, and fought for; and because the grace of faith, as conversant with the Scriptures of truth, was the weapon they fought with: and this may be called a "good fight", because it is in a good cause, the cause of God and truth; and under a good Captain, Jesus Christ the Captain of our salvation; for which good weapons are provided, even the whole armour of God, and which are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty; to which may be added, that those who are engaged in this fight may be sure of victory, and the crown of glory, life, and righteousness: so that when they have done fighting they have nothing else to do but to

lay hold on eternal life; as Timothy for his encouragement is here bid to do. Eternal life is the prize of the high calling of God, which is held up, and held forth to those who are fighting the Lord's battles; and this they should look unto as the recompense of reward; and this they may lay hold upon, even now by faith, believing their interest in it, their right unto it, and that they shall enjoy it; of which they may be the more assured, because of their effectual calling:

whereunto thou art also called; not barely by the external ministration of the Gospel, in which sense many are called, but few chosen and saved; but internally, by the special grace and power of the Spirit of God; and such who are so called, are not only called to grace, but to eternal glory; and the God of all grace, who has called unto it, of his sovereign good will and pleasure, is faithful, and will bestow it. The word "also" is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, and in all the Oriental versions; but it seems to be emphatic, and is used to strengthen Timothy's faith, as to the enjoyment of eternal life; since it was not only the reward of grace, following upon the good fight of faith, but was that also to which he was called by the grace of God:

and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses; both before the brethren at Lystra, at his baptism and admission into the church, before whom he gave an account of his faith, and made a profession of it; and who, upon this, and his agreeable life and conversation, gave a good report of him to the Apostle Paul, Ac 16:1 and before the apostle, and the rest of the elders, when they laid their hands on him, whereby an extraordinary gift was conveyed unto him, **1Ti 4:14** or it may be before the men of the world, some violent persecutors, before whom he bravely, and with great intrepidity, professed his faith in Christ Jesus; and which he continued constantly to do, in every place wherever he came; and which being done so often, and so publicly, is a reason why he should keep on till the battle was over.

{r} Zohar in Numb. fol. 99. 4. T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 69. 2. & Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 1. Megilia, fol. 15. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 2. & 111. 2. Midrash Ruth, fol. 31. 4. Echa Rabbati, fol. 53. 2. Caphtor, fol. 93. 2. & Seder Olam Rabba, c. 25. & Jarchi in Cant. iii. 8.

1 Timothy 6:13

Ver. 13. I give thee charge in the sight of God,.... Who is omniscient and omnipotent:

who quickeneth all things; all creatures, for all animate creatures have their life, motion, and bring in him; and who quickeneth all his people, at first conversion, when dead in sin, and afterwards when dull and lifeless; and who will quicken the dead at the last day. This seems to be mentioned to strengthen Timothy against the fears of death, that should he die in fighting the Lord's battles, he was able to raise him from the dead, and would do it.

And [before] Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; or rather "under Pontius Pilate"; or, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, "in the time of Pontius Pilate"; for this may refer not only to the confession Christ made in his presence, at his examination by him, when he owned himself to be a King, declared the nature of his kingdom, and signified that the end of his incarnation was to bear a testimony to the truth; but it may also refer to the faithful, plain, and open witness Christ bore to truth throughout the whole of his ministry, under Pontius Pilate, by his doctrine and miracles, and at last by his sufferings and death, which he endured under him; and this is mentioned for Timothy's imitation, and to encourage him, and all other saints, to hold fast the profession of their faith to the end.

1 Timothy 6:14

Ver. 14. That thou keep this commandment,.... Meaning either what he had now last of all enjoined him, to fight the good fight of faith; or the whole of the orders he had given him throughout the epistle, relating both to the doctrine and discipline of the house of God; or rather the work and office of preaching the Gospel, which was committed to him by the Holy Ghost, and enjoined him by the commandment of the everlasting God: and this the apostle, before God and Christ, charges him to observe and keep, in the following manner,

without spot, and unrebukeable; the sense is, that he would discharge his ministerial function with all faithfulness and purity; that he would sincerely, and without any adulteration, preach the pure Gospel of Christ; and that he would so behave in his life and conversation, that his ministry might not be justly blamed by men, or he be rebuked by the church here, or by Christ hereafter: and this he would have him do,

until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; to judge the quick and dead at the last day, and which will be very illustrious and glorious. Now Christ is hid from the eyes of men, but to them that look for him he will appear a second time in great glory; in the glory of his Father, and of his own, and of the holy angels; and when his saints will appear with him in glory: and this the apostle the rather mentions, since every man's work and ministry will then be made manifest; this bright day of Christ's appearing will declare it, and everyone must give an account of himself, and his talents, unto him: and this shows that the apostle did not design this charge, and these instructions, for Timothy only, but for all other ministers of the Gospel, till the second coming of Christ; though this was then, as now, so much unknown, when it would be, that it could not be said but Timothy might live unto it.

1 Timothy 6:15

Ver. 15. Which in his times he shall show,.... For though the time of Christ's appearing is unknown, yet the thing itself is certain; God will bring it about, and make it manifest in his own time, in the time that is fixed and appointed by him; and which is only known unto him, and which he keeps in his own power, and has reserved in his own breast:

who is the blessed; the Syriac version reads, "the blessed God"; who is blessed in himself, in his Son and Spirit, in the perfections of his nature; who is God all-sufficient, has enough in himself for himself, and for all his creatures; who is the fountain and the author of all blessedness, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, which any of them are, or shall be possessed of:

and only Potentate; or Governor of the whole world, which can be said of none but himself: he is the Governor among the nations, and over all the nations of the earth; his kingdom rules over all other kingdoms; and he has his power and government from himself, whereas all other potentates have their power from him, as follows:

the King of kings, and Lord of lords; from whom they receive their sceptres,

crowns, and kingdoms; by whom they reign, and are continued in their power; for he sets up kings, and removes kings at his pleasure, and to him they must be accountable for all their administrations another day; and at present they are under his influence, and at his control; he has their hearts, and their counsels, as well as kingdoms, in his hands, and under his overruling providence; and causes all to answer his wise and eternal purposes. These titles are used by the Jews, who style him,
Myklmh lk le Klm Mynwdah lk Nwda, "Lord of all lords, King over all kings" {s}. The same name is given to Christ, Re 19:16 which shows him to be equal with the Father.

{s} Zohar in Numb. fol. 100. 2.

1 Timothy 6:16

Ver. 16. Who only hath immortality,.... Angels are immortal, and so are the souls of men, and so will be the bodies of men after the resurrection; but then neither of these have immortality of themselves, they have it from God; who only has it, of himself, originally, essentially, and inderivatively.

Dwelling in that light which no man can approach unto; in this present, frail, and mortal state; yea, angels themselves cannot bear the lustre of it, but cover their faces with their wings; for God is light itself, as well as clothes himself with light, as with a garment; and is the Father and fountain of lights to all his creatures.

Whom no man hath seen, nor can see: nowhere but in Christ, at least spiritually and savingly; and that but very imperfectly in the present state: the sin, frailty, and mortality of human nature must be taken away, in order to inherit the kingdom of God, and enjoy the beatific vision of him; which saints in heaven have, who see him as he is, and in such sort as no man now does, or can see him:

to whom [be] honour and power everlasting, Amen. Which may be considered either as a wish, that such honour, power, and glory might be ascribed unto him, as we supply it; or as an assertion that it is given to him, as it is by the angels, and by the saints in heaven and in earth.

1 Timothy 6:17

Ver. 17. Charge them that are rich in this world,.... Or in the things of this world. The Arabic version reads, "in this present world": in distinction from the world to come: some are poor in this world, and rich in another; others are rich in this world, and poor, and wretched, and miserable in the world to come: some are rich in both worlds, and such were at least some of those the apostle here refers to, who were members of the church at Ephesus, which was a rich city, and some rich men in it were called by the grace of God; and to distinguish these from others, who, though poor in this world, were rich in grace and in spiritual gifts, he so calls them; as well as to observe that their riches were like the world they were in, deceitful, empty, unsatisfying, and perishing: these the apostle would have not only spoke to, instructed, exhorted, and entreated, but strictly charged and commanded, without paying any regard to their worldly grandeur and riches,

that they be not high minded; the Ethiopic version reads, "that they be not lifted up in this world"; with their wealth and worldly substance, and look down from the height of their honour and riches with contempt upon the poor, entertaining high thoughts of themselves, as if their bodies were of another matter and make, when they have all one Maker, are of one blood, and of the earth, earthly, and must return to it; or as if their souls were more large and capacious, and they were wiser and more knowing, whereas riches are not always to men of understanding, a fool may be rich, and a wise man poor; or as if they were the peculiar favourites of heaven, when, for the most part, God chooses and calls the poor of this world; or as if others were unworthy of their looks, company, and conversation. Riches produce pride; rich men are apt to be proud of themselves, and despise others; and therefore this evil is taken notice of, as what they are to be cautioned against, and charged to the contrary:

nor trust in uncertain riches; or "in the uncertainty of riches"; they are here today, and gone tomorrow; no man that is possessed of them can be sure of them a moment; they make themselves wings and flee away; he that gives them, can take them away at pleasure: and there are various ways by which they are suddenly, and at once taken from the owners of them; as by loss in trade, by shipwreck, by inundations, by fire, by thieves, &c, and yet men are apt to promise themselves a continuance of them, and to have their dependence upon them, and place their trust and confidence in them, yea, even good men; and that very much to the neglect of, and disregard to the providence of God, which is always best and safest in every circumstance and station of life to depend upon, as follows:

but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; almost every word carries in it an argument or reason why he should be trusted, because he is God, and not a creature; the "living" God, who has life in himself, essentially and originally; is the author, giver, and maintainer of life in others; and who always is, ever continues unchangeably the same: and "giveth all things"; every good gift comes from him; all the gifts of nature, and bounties of Providence; and as he gives, he can take away, and therefore should be only regarded; and he gives all things "richly", largely, and plenteously; what is necessary and convenient, and abundantly more than men deserve: and that "to enjoy"; not to lay up, but to use for support, refreshment, and pleasure, though not to abuse.

1 Timothy 6:18

Ver. 18. That they do good,.... Rich men sometimes do much ill to themselves, to the hurt of their bodies, by luxury, intemperance, and debauchery, and to their souls, to the ruin of them; and to others by fraud, oppression, and violence; for it is in the power of their hands to do much evil, and also to do much good, as they should; and much is required of them, since much is given them to do good with, and for which they are accountable: it becomes them, and especially such as believe in Christ, to do every good work in general, and to do acts of beneficence in particular, both to all men, and to the household of faith.

That they be rich in good works; or abound in the performance of them, as Dorcas is said to be full of good works and alms deeds; and to reckon that their true riches lie more in the exercise of grace, and in the fruits of it, doing good works, than in their worldly enjoyments. The phrase seems to be Rabbinical. Frequent mention is made of hrwtb ryve, "rich in the law", and twumb ryve, "rich in the commandments" {t}; and it is said {u}, no man is poor but he that is without the law, and good works, for the riches of a man are the law, and good works.

Ready to distribute; unasked; and when they are asked, do not turn away, and put off, but give at once, and without grief, and with cheerfulness; want no arguments to press them to it, nor use any against it.

Willing to communicate; of their good things to the necessities of the poor, making them common to them, and them partakers of them. Some render the word "sociable", in opposition to that moroseness, stillness, and those haughty and forbidding airs, with which rich men are apt to treat the poor, when they should be affable and courteous to them, and admit them to a free conversation with them.

{t} Zohar in Numb. fol. 91. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 34. fol. 173. 4. & Tzeror Hammaor, fol. 15. 2. {u} Raya Mehimna in Exod. fol 48. 3. Vid. T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 11. 1.

1 Timothy 6:19

Ver. 19. Laying up in store for themselves..... Laying up a treasure in heaven, which will be for themselves to enjoy to all eternity; whereas what they lay up here is for others, for their children or friends, and sometimes for strangers, and they know not who, whether for a wise man or a fool, yea, even for enemies: so it is said of King Munbaz, when he dispersed his father's treasures to the poor, his brethren and friends came about him, complaining of it; to whom he said {w}

"my fathers treasured up below, I treasure up above. My fathers treasured "up for others", I treasure up ymuel, "for myself"; my fathers treasured up for this world, I treasure up for the world to come."

So it follows here,

a good foundation against the time to come; by which is meant, not a foundation of happiness, for that is laid already, and by God himself; and much less by doing acts of beneficence is that foundation laid; for there is no other foundation of happiness, life, and salvation, that can be laid, besides what is laid, which is Jesus Christ: nor is the apostle speaking of laying a foundation here, to build upon, but of laying up a foundation in heaven, by which he intends happiness itself; and which he calls a "foundation", because it is solid and substantial, permanent and durable, in opposition to the uncertain, precarious, transitory, and perishing enjoyments and treasures of this life; and

good, because profitable, when the laying up of worldly riches is often to the hurt of its owners, and will be useful, when they will not profit; and besides, will always continue, and be a foundation that will always support them, and never give way: now to lay up this is no other than to seek those things which are above, to show a concern for them, and to set the affections on them, and live in the comfortable hope and expectation of enjoying them. The phrase is the same with that in **Mt 6:19** and takes in a regard to spiritual riches, the riches of grace flow, such as sanctifying, justifying, and pardoning grace through Christ; which will be a good foundation

against the time to come; and will give both a right and meetness for the enjoyment of the heavenly treasures, which will be for futurity, even to all eternity.

That they may lay hold on eternal life; not by way of merit, but as the free gift of God, which the riches of grace give a title to, and a fitness for; and which shall be laid hold upon, and enjoyed by all that seek the true riches. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, "true life"; for the present life is rather a show, an appearance of life, than life itself.

{w} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 11. 1.

1 Timothy 6:20

Ver. 20. Keep that which is committed to thy trust,.... That is, the Gospel, see **1Ti 1:11** which is a rich treasure put into earthen vessels, and ought to be kept pure and uncorrupt, and faithfully dispensed, and diligently preserved, that so it may be continued genuine and sincere, and not be either adulterated and depraved, or be taken away by false teachers. And it may also include his gifts for the ministration of it, which were to be kept in use, and stirred up, and not neglected, but cultivated and improved to the advantage of the church, and of the interest of Christ:

avoiding profane and vain babblings; about the law, and circumcision, and other things, which the false teachers insisted much on, and amused their hearers with; and which were vain, empty, useless, and unprofitable talk. Some copies, and so the Vulgate Latin version, read, "profane newnesses of words"; or new words, which ought not to be introduced, for they often bring in new doctrines: the form of sound words, the wholesome words, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, should be held fast; and especially all new words should be avoided, which are contrary to them, or in the least weaken them, or detract from them.

And oppositions of science falsely so called; the false teachers boasted of their science and knowledge, but it was not true, solid, spiritual, and saving; it was not an experimental knowledge of the Gospel; it was not the excellent knowledge of Christ, which has eternal life connected with it; it was merely notional and speculative; it was idle, empty, and useless, mere Pagan philosophy, and vain deceit, upon which they formed antitheses, or oppositions and objections to the truths of the Gospel; and even opposed themselves, and the word of God, as well as the faithful ministers of it.

(Knowledge is not determined by a "show of hands". Even though the majority of people believe something, that does not make it true. The majority today do not believe in Noah's flood, **2Pe 3:4**. It was so in Noah's day also, but the unbelievers all drowned! Many fervently believe in evolution and try to compromise the scriptures with it. This verse stands as a stark warning to those who do not try everything through God's Word. **Isa 8:20** Editor.)

1 Timothy 6:21

Ver. 21. Which some professing,.... Pretending to be masters of the above science, boasting and making great show of it, and valuing themselves upon it:

have erred concerning the faith: have wandered from the way of truth, and gone into the path of error; have fallen from the doctrine of faith, and made shipwreck of it, and become entire apostates: from the danger attending vain jangling, the use of new words, the profession of a false science, and making objections from it against the truth, does the apostle dissuade Timothy from them, since they generally issue in apostasy.

Grace be with thee. Amen. This the apostle wishes to him, that he might be enabled to discharge every branch of his duty he had pointed to him in this epistle, and to keep him from all evil, and every false way, and preserve him safe to the kingdom and glory of God. And which he doubted not but would be his case, and therefore puts his "Amen" to it. The Alexandrian copy and Arabic version read, "grace be with you. Amen".

The first to Timothy was written from Laodicea, which is the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana. This last clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy and Syriac version; and indeed, in the apostle's time, Phrygia was not known by such an appellation as "Pacatiana", which was given it some years after by the Romans; and which shows, that the subscriptions to the epistles are not only of human authority, but of later date, at least some of them. The Arabic version calls it the metropolis of Phrygia, and leaves out "Pacatiana"; and one of Beza's manuscripts, instead of "Laodicea", reads "Macedonia", from whence, as from Philippi, or some other city there, he thinks it was written; and several learned men have been of opinion that it was written from Philippi.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Timothy 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO II TIMOTHY

That this epistle was written to Timothy, while he was at Ephesus, where the apostle in his former epistle had desired him to stay, is evident from his making mention of some persons in it, who were Ephesians; as Onesiphorus, whom he commends, and Alexander the coppersmith, of whom he complains: and that this epistle was written by the apostle, when he was at Rome, is no less evident; for he expressly calls himself a prisoner, **2Ti 1:8** and speaks of being then in trouble, and in bonds, **2Ti 2:9** and the persons that send their salutations in it to Timothy were Romans, **2Ti 4:21** but at what time it was written is not so certain: it seems by **2Ti 4:7** that it was but a little time before his martyrdom; though those words may only signify, that he was now very much on the decline of life, was now grown an old man, and in continual expectation of death, and was in a constant readiness for it, come when it would; having faithfully discharged his duty, and his warfare being as good as accomplished, and his race almost run out; for he afterwards presses Timothy to come to him, and that before winter; and desires him to bring with him his cloak, books, and parchments, which one would think he would have little occasion for, if just upon his martyrdom: besides, he says he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, that by him the preaching of the Gospel might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear it; and expresses his confidence, that he should be again delivered, **2Ti 4:9**. And it looks as if this epistle was written before the epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, since it appears that Timothy did come to him at Rome; as here desired, and is joined with the apostle in those epistles. Some, therefore, have placed this epistle in the year 58, or 59, about the fourth or fifth of Nero's reign. The design of it is to stir up Timothy to the faithful and diligent discharge of his duty, as a minister of the Gospel; to abide constantly by the truths of it, and to animate him to suffer patiently, cheerfully, and courageously for the sake of it; and to warn him against false teachers, and their errors, who were already risen, and would afterwards arise, and be followed by such who had itching ears, and could not bear sound doctrine; but this should be no discouragement to him in the prosecution of his work; and lastly to desire his presence with him at Rome, being now destitute of his several assistants.

INTRODUCTION TO II TIMOTHY 1

In this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle expresses his great affection for Timothy, and highly commends him; exhorts him to various things relating to his office, as a preacher of the Gospel; and concludes with taking notice of the kindness shown him by Onesiphorus. The inscription and salutation are in **2Ti 1:1** and then follows the preface to the epistle, in which the apostle testifies his great love to Timothy, and commends him; by declaring his thankfulness to God, that he had reason always to remember him in his prayers; by his desire to see him again, who had shed so many tears for him, that his joy might be filled; and by taking notice of his unfeigned faith, the same with that which had dwelt in his ancestors, **2Ti 1:3**. And then he proceeds to exhort him to the exercise and improvement of his ministerial gift; to show a fortitude of mind, and a manly spirit in the cause of Christ; and to suffer cheerfully for the sake of it, **2Ti 1:6** and in order to animate and encourage him to the same, he gives a summary of the Gospel, as containing in it the great doctrines of salvation, and eternal life, according to the free grace of God through Jesus Christ, **2Ti 1:9** and observes, that he himself was appointed a preacher of it to the Gentiles, **2Ti 1:11** and instances in himself, as suffering for it, without being ashamed; and as having a strong confidence in Christ, as able to keep him, and what he had committed to him, **2Ti 1:12** and then returns to his exhortation to Timothy to hold fast the Gospel of Christ; to which he urges him from the consideration of the nature and value of it, being a form of sound words, and that famous good thing, and of the means and manner in which he came to the knowledge of it; and chiefly from its being committed to him by the Holy Ghost, that dwelt in him; and also because of the general defection of the Asian professors from it, **2Ti 1:13** but he excepts one person, Onesiphorus by name, whom he commends for his kindness to him both at Ephesus and at Rome; and therefore entreats of the Lord mercy, both for him and his house, at the great day, **2Ti 1:16**.

Ver. 1. Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ,.... Not of men, nor by men, but by Jesus Christ, from whom he was sent; by whom he was qualified; in whose name he came, and ministered; and whom he preached. Of his name Paul, and of his office, as an apostle,
See Gill on "Ro 1:1" into which office he came

by the will of God; not by the will of man, no, not of the best of men, of James, Cephas, or John, or any of the other apostles; nor by his own will, he did not thrust himself into this office, or take this honour upon himself; nor was it owing to any merits of his, which he always disclaims, but to the will and grace of God; it was by the secret determining will of God, that he was from all eternity separated unto the Gospel of Christ; and it was by the revealed will of God to the church, that he, with Barnabas, was set apart to the ministry of the word; see **Ro 1:1**.

According to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus; or "with respect unto it"; this points at the sum and substance, or subject matter, and end of his apostleship, for which this grace was given to him, which was to publish the free promise of life and salvation by Jesus Christ. By "life" here is meant, not this corporeal life, which, and a continuation of it, were promised in the covenant of works, on condition of man's obedience to it; but eternal life, the promise of which is a free promise made by God, of his own free sovereign will and pleasure, in the covenant of grace, from everlasting; and is an absolute and unconditional one, not at all depending upon the works of the law, or obedience to it; see Ro 14:16 and this promise is "in Christ", in whom all the promises are yea and arisen: for it was made before the world began, **Tit 1:2** when the persons on whose account it was made were not in actual being; but Christ, their head and representative, then existed; and to him it was given, and into his hands was it put for them, where it is sure to all the seed; and not only the promise, but the life itself is in him, and which is here intended. Christ, as Mediator, asked it of his Father for all his people, and he gave it to him, where it is hid safe and secure. Christ is the Prince or author of life; he is the procuring cause of it; he was sent, and came, that his sheep might have it; he gave his flesh, his human nature for it; and by his sufferings and death removed all obstructions which sin had thrown in the way, and opened the way for their enjoyment of it; and he is the giver of it to as many as the Father has given him; nor is it to be had in any other way, or of any other; but of him; and it lies in the knowledge of him, communion with him, and conformity to him. Now it is the business, of Gospel ministers, not to direct persons to work for life, or to seek to obtain eternal life by their own works of righteousness, but to hold forth the word of life, or to show men the way of life and salvation by Christ alone.

2 Timothy 1:2

Ver. 2. To Timothy, my dearly beloved son,.... Not in a natural, but in a spiritual sense; and not on account of his being an instrument of his conversion, but by reason of that instruction in the doctrines of the Gospel which he gave him, it being usual to call disciples children; and he calls him so, because as a son, he, being young in years, served with him, and under him, as a father, in the Gospel of Christ; for whom he had a very great affection, on account of his having been a companion with him in his travels, and very useful to him in the ministry, and because of his singular and eminent gifts, great grace, religion, and holiness: Grace, mercy, and peace, &c. See Gill on "1Ti 1:2".

2 Timothy 1:3

Ver. 3. I thank God,.... After the inscription and salutation follows the preface to the epistle; which contains a thanksgiving to God upon Timothy's account, and has a tendency to engage his attention to what he was about to write to him in the body of the epistle. God is the object of praise and thanksgiving, both as the God of nature and providence, and as the God of all grace; for every good thing comes from him, and therefore he ought to have the glory of it; nor should any glory, as though they had not received it: and he is here described, as follows,

whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience; the apostle served God in the precepts of the law, as in the hands of Christ, and as written upon his heart by the Spirit of God, in which he delighted after the inward man, and which he served with his regenerated mind; and also in the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, in which he was very diligent and laborious, faithful and successful: and this God, whom he served, was the God of his "forefathers", of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of Benjamin, of whose tribe he was, and also of his more immediate ancestors. The Ethiopic version renders it, "from my original"; for though he preached the Gospel of Christ, and asserted the abrogation of the ceremonial law, yet he worshipped the one, true, and living God, the God of Israel, and was not an apostate from the true religion, as his enemies would insinuate: and this service of his was performed with a "pure conscience": every man has a conscience, but the conscience of every natural man is defiled with sin; and that is only a pure one, which is sprinkled and purged with the blood of Christ; and whereby a person is only fitted to serve the living God, without the incumbrance of dead works, and slavish fear, and with faith and cheerfulness; and such a conscience the apostle had, and with such an one he served God. For this refers not to his serving of God, and to his conscience, while a Pharisee and a persecutor; for however moral was his conduct and conversation then, and with what sincerity and uprightness soever he behaved, his conscience was not a pure one. He goes on to observe what he thanked God for,

that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; that God had laid him upon his heart, and that he had such reason to remember him at the throne of grace continually. We learn from hence, that the apostle prayed constantly night and day; and if so great a man as he stood in need of continual prayer, much more we; and that in his prayers he was not unmindful of his friends, though at a distance from him; and in both these he is to be imitated: it becomes us to pray without ceasing: to pray always, and not faint and give out, to pray every day and night; and to pray for others as well as for ourselves, for all the saints, yea, for our enemies, as well as for our friends.

2 Timothy 1:4

Ver. 4. Greatly desiring to see thee,.... In his former epistle he had desired him to stay at Ephesus, there being some work for him to do, which made it necessary he should continue; but now having answered the apostle's purpose, and he standing in need of him at Rome, being without any assistant there, some having left him, and others were left by him in other places, and others were sent by him elsewhere; and it having been some time since he saw Timothy, he longed for a sight of him:

being mindful of thy tears; shed either at the afflictions and sufferings of the apostle, of which Timothy, being his companion, was an eyewitness, and he being of a truly Christian sympathizing spirit, wept with those that wept; or at their parting from each other, as in Ac 20:37

that I may be filled with joy; at the sight of him, and not at the remembrance of his tears; for the last clause is to be read in a parenthesis, and these words stand not connected with that, but with the preceding part of the text. The apostle intimates, that a sight of his dearly beloved son Timothy would fill him with joy amidst all his troubles and afflictions he endured for the Gospel: this is an instance of hearty, sincere, and strong affection.

2 Timothy 1:5

Ver. 5. When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee,.... This caused him to give thanks to God for it, whose gift it is and made him the more desirous of seeing one, who was a true believer, and an Israelite indeed. This is to be understood of the grace of faith, which was implanted in the heart of Timothy by the Spirit of God, and was genuine and sincere; he believed with the heart unto righteousness; his faith worked by love to God, and Christ, and to his people, and was attended with good works;

which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois: who was his grandmother, not by his father's side, who was a Greek, but by his mother's side; and so the Syriac version renders it, "thy mother's mother"; who, though she might not know that the Messiah was come in the flesh, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he, yet believed in the Messiah to come, and died in the faith of it, and in a dependence upon righteousness and salvation by him; and so her faith was of the same kind with Timothy's; and which dwelt in her, and continued with her to the last:

and thy mother Eunice: who was a Jewess, and a believer in Christ, Ac 16:1 though her name is a Greek one, and so is her mother's name; hers signifies "good victory", and is the name of one of the Nereides, the daughters of Oceanus {a}; and her mother's signifies "better", or "more excellent". She lived, it seems, if her mother did not, to know that Christ was come, and that Jesus, the son of Mary, was he; and she believed in him for righteousness, life, and salvation; and in her this faith dwelt and abode to the end.

And I am persuaded that in thee also; not only that faith was in him, and that that was unfeigned, but that it also dwelt, remained, and would continue with him to the end of life; for true faith is an abiding grace, it is a gift of God, that is irrevocable, and without repentance; Christ is the author and finisher of it, and prays that it fail not, whose prayers are always heard; it is begun, carried on, and performed by the power of God, and has salvation inseparably connected with it. Now when the same faith is said to dwell, first in his grandmother, and in his mother, and in him, this is not to be understood as if this grace was conveyed from one to another by natural generation; for grace comes not that way, only sin; men are not born of blood, but of God; but the sense is, that the same like precious faith was obtained by one, as by another. This was a rich family mercy, and deserved special notice, as being a thing uncommon, and required a particular thanksgiving; and is designed as a motive and encouragement to stir up Timothy to the exercise of that grace, and every other gift God had bestowed upon him, as in the following verse.

{a} Hesiod. Theogonia, Apollodorus de Deor. Orig. l. 1. p. 5. Vid. Theocrit. Idyll. 13.

2 Timothy 1:6

Ver. 6. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance,.... Because of the great affection the apostle had for Timothy, and because of that confidence he had of him, that unfeigned faith dwelt in him, as well as because this had had a place in his relations before him; he therefore acts the part of a kind monitor to him, and, upon these considerations, doubts not of succeeding in his following admonition:

that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee; by "the gift" is meant his ministerial gift; for what qualifies men for the ministry, is not anything natural in them, nor acquired by them, but what is given unto them, and that of God: and this was "in" him; it continued with him; it was not lost by him, nor taken from him, as gifts may be, when they are not used; and yet it seems as if there was some decline, some backwardness and indifference as to the exercise of it: he might be too remiss, negligent, and forgetful of it; wherefore the apostle puts him in mind to "stir" it up: there is in the word used a metaphor taken from coals of fire covered with ashes, as if almost extinct, and need to be blown up into a flame, and a very apt one it is; since the gifts of the Spirit, especially his extraordinary ones, such as ministers in those times had, are compared to fire: see **Mt 3:11** and these may be reinflamed or increased, when they seem on the decline, by reading, meditation, prayer, and the frequent exercise of them. Agreeably to this the Arabic version renders it, "that thou kindle the fire of the gift of God which is in thee"; and the rather the apostle took this freedom with Timothy, not only because of his superior age and office, but because this gift was through his means;

by the putting on of my hands; though not alone, but with the rest of the presbytery; See Gill on "1Ti 4:14".

2 Timothy 1:7

Ver. 7. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear,.... A pusillanimous, cowardly spirit, so as to be afraid of men or devils, of what they will say or do; and so as to be discouraged in, sink under, or be deterred from the work of the Lord, the preaching of the Gospel, opposing the errors of false teachers, and reproving men for their sins, and doing other parts of the ministerial function; such a spirit is not from God, and such a fear brings a snare:

but of power, and such is the Spirit of God, who is called "power from high"; Lu 24:49 by which the minds of Christ's servants are fortified against reproaches and persecutions for his sake, and are strengthened to resist Satan's temptations, to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ, to quit themselves like men, in opposition to false teachers, and to do the will and work of God:

and of love; to God, and Christ, and his church, and which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit; and such who have it seek not their own ease and credit, but the glory of God, the interest of Christ, and the good of souls; and having such a spirit, and fired with such love, they are not easily intimidated by the adversary;

and of a sound mind: in the principles and doctrines of the Gospel; and which shows itself in a prudent conduct and behaviour; in sobriety, moderation, temperance, purity, and honesty; all which may be signified by the word here used: and these who have such dispositions and qualities from God, will not easily give way to the enemies of religion, or decline their duty for fear of them.

2 Timothy 1:8

Ver. 8. Be not then therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord,.... Either that testimony which Christ bore personally by his doctrine and miracles, and by his sufferings and death; or rather the Gospel so called, because it comes from Christ, and because it is a testimony concerning him; concerning his person, his offices, his righteousness, blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction; concerning his obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand, intercession for his people, and second coming to judgment; and concerning life and salvation by him: and which no preacher or professor of Christ has reason to be ashamed of, it being so true in itself, so great, so glorious, and so useful; and whoever is, Christ will be ashamed of him another day:

nor of me his prisoner; for Paul was now a prisoner at Rome, but not for any capital crime, or for any immorality, but for the sake of Christ, and for preaching his Gospel; wherefore none of his friends had any reason to be ashamed of him; he was suffering in a glorious cause, and setting a noble example to others; it looks as if Timothy was somewhat blameworthy in this respect.

But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel; the Gospel is here represented as a person suffering afflictions, and the apostle would have Timothy suffer them as that did, and along with it; he means those afflictions which come upon men for preaching and professing the Gospel; for though the Gospel is a Gospel of peace, yet, through the corruption and depravity of men, it brings a sword, division, and trouble. Tribulation arises on account of it; and this should be endured patiently, and constantly, for the sake of it:

according to the power of God; which is only sufficient to enable persons to bear them; and is mentioned for the encouragement of Timothy and others, to endure them cheerfully.

2 Timothy 1:9

Ver. 9. Who hath saved us, and called us,.... And therefore should not be ashamed of his Gospel, but should readily partake of the afflictions of it, depending on his power to support under them. There is a salvation previous to calling: there is a temporal salvation; a special providence attends the elect of God, as soon as born; God's visitation in a very special manner preserves their spirits; they are kept from many imminent dangers, and some of them from the grosser immoralities of life; and there is a chain of providences, as the fixing of their habitations, bringing to such a place, and under such a ministry, with various other things, ways and methods, which lead on to the effectual calling: and there is a preservation of them in Christ Jesus, antecedent to calling, **Jude 1:1**. God had a mind to save some; he pitched on his own Son to be the Saviour of them; he put those persons into his hands, where they are safely preserved; so as not to be damned, and everlastingly perish, notwithstanding their fall in Adam, their original corruption, and actual transgressions, until called by grace: yea, that spiritual and eternal salvation, which is by Jesus Christ, is before calling; this was resolved upon from eternity; a council of peace was formed; a covenant of grace was made; a promise of life given; persons were fixed upon to be saved; a Saviour was appointed, and blessings of grace were put into his hands; and all according to an eternal purpose. Salvation was not only resolved upon, but the scheme of it was contrived from eternity, in a way agreeable to all the divine perfections, in which Satan is most mortified, the creature abased, and the elect effectually saved; nay, salvation is obtained before calling, Christ being called to this work, and having undertook it, was in the fulness of time sent to effect it, and is become the author of it: the thing is done, and all that remain are the application of it, which is in the effectual calling, and the full possession of it, which will be in heaven. The calling here spoken of is not to an office, nor a mere call by the external ministry of the word, but a call by special grace, to special privileges, to grace and glory; and is an high and heavenly one, and is here called holy, for it follows,

with an holy calling. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, "with his holy calling": the author of it is holy; it is a call to holiness, and the means of it are holy; and in it persons have principles of grace and holiness implanted in them; and are influenced to live holy lives and conversations:

not according to our works; neither salvation nor calling are according to the works of men: not salvation; works are not the moving cause of it, but the free love and favour of God; nor the procuring cause of it, but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor the adjuvant or helping cause of it, for his own arm brought salvation alone: nor calling; which must be either according to works before, or after; not according to works before calling, for such are not properly good works, being destitute of faith in Christ, and proceeding neither from a right principle, nor to a right end; not according to works after calling, as they are after it they are the fruits of calling grace, and cannot be the cause, or rule, and measure at it:

but according to his own purpose and grace; salvation is according to both: it is according to the purpose of God; God resolved upon the salvation of some; in pursuance of this resolution, he set up Christ as the Mediator; and it being necessary that he should be man, this was agreed to, and a body was prepared him; the time of his coming was fixed, called the fulness of time; and his sufferings and death, with all the circumstances of them, were determined by God. And it is according to grace; the resolution for it, and the contrivance of it, are owing to the grace of God; and which also appears in the making of a covenant; in setting up Christ as the Mediator of it; in the mission of him into this world; and in all the parts and branches of salvation: in the choice of persons to it; in the redemption of them by Christ; in their justification by his righteousness; in the pardon of their sins through his blood; in their adoption, regeneration, sanctification, and eternal glory; and the end of it is the glory of the grace of God. Vocation is also according to both the purpose and grace of God: it is according to his purpose; the persons called are fixed upon by him; whom he predestinates he calls; none are called, but whom God purposed to call; and for their calling no other reason can be assigned but the sovereign will of God, nor can any other reason be given why others are not called; the time of their calling is fixed in the decrees of God; and the place where, and means whereby, and occasion whereof, all are predetermined by him: and this is also according to grace; the author of it is the God of all grace; and in it is made the first discovery of grace to sinners; nothing out of God could move him to do it, and so it is sovereign grace; it is of some men, and not all, and so is distinguishing grace; it is of sinners, and so is free grace; and it is both to grace and glory, and so is rich grace: and it is according to grace

which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; it is a gift, and a free gift, not at all depending upon any conditions in the creature, and entirely proceeding from the sovereign will of God; and it was a gift from eternity; there was not only a purpose of grace in God's heart, and a promise of it so early, but there was a real donation of it in eternity: and though those to whom it was given did not then personally exist, yet Christ did, and he existed as a covenant head and representative of his people; and they were in him, as members of him, as represented by him, being united to him; and this grace was given to him for them, and to them in him; in whom they were chosen, and in whom they were blessed with all spiritual blessings. The Ethiopic version reads, "in Christ Jesus, who before the world [was]"; but without any foundation.

2 Timothy 1:10

Ver. 10. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ,.... The grace according to which the elect of God are saved and called; though it was given to them in Christ, before the world was, yet lay hid in the heart of God; in his thoughts, council and covenant; and in Jesus Christ; and in the types, shadows, sacrifices, prophecies, and promises of the Old Testament; but is now made manifest in the clearness, freeness, and abundance of it by the appearance of Christ, as a Saviour in human nature; who is come full of grace and truth, and through whom there is a plentiful exhibition of it to the sons of men:

who hath abolished death; the law of sin and death, which is the cause of death; and has destroyed him which has the power of it, the devil; he has abolished corporeal death with regard to his people, as a penal evil, he has took away its sting, and removed its curse, and made it a blessing to them; and he has utterly, with respect to them, abolished the second death, so as that it shall have no power over them, or they ever be hurt by it; all which he did by dying, and rising again: for though he died, yet he continued not under the power of death; but rose again and triumphed over it, as having got the victory of it; and the keys of it are in his hand:

and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Christ was the first that rose again from the dead to an immortal life; the path of life was first shown to him, and brought to light by him; and though the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was known by the Old Testament saints, yet not so clearly as it is now revealed in the Gospel; and in which is so fully attested the resurrection of Christ, and of many of the saints with him, as well as the general resurrection at the last day: and besides, eternal life, which is the free gift of God, lay hid in his purpose, promise, and covenant, and in his Son Jesus Christ, into whose hands it was put; and which he has brought to light in a more clear manner than ever it was before; by his appearance in human nature, by his personal ministry, by his death and resurrection from the dead, and through the Gospel, as preached by his ministers; which gives an account of the nature of it, shows the way unto it, and points out and describes the persons that shall enjoy it.

2 Timothy 1:11

Ver. 11. Whereunto I am appointed a preacher,.... Both from eternity, in the counsel and purpose of God, **Ac 9:15** and in time, by the church at Antioch, and the prophets in it, according to the express order of the Holy Ghost, Ac 13:2. And if ever there was a preacher of the Gospel, Paul was one; he preached purely, powerfully, publicly, constantly, boldly, and with all faithfulness and integrity:

and an apostle; that is, of the Gentiles, as follows, and as he elsewhere styles himself, Ro 11:13 for it does not run so smooth and easy to connect this with the word Gospel. In **2Ti 1:1**, he is called the apostle of Jesus Christ, because he was sent by him; and here the apostle of the Gentiles, because, he was sent to them; and this by the same appointment, by which he became a preacher:

and a teacher of the Gentiles; though all the apostles, by their commission, were sent to teach all nations, or the Gentiles in the several parts of the world, as well as Jews; yet the apostle was eminently a teacher of them; his work chiefly lay among them; the Gospel of the uncircumcision, or the ministration of the Gospel to the uncircumcised Gentiles, was committed to him; and he was a teacher of them in faith and verity, as in **1Ti 2:7**. The Alexandrian copy only reads, "and a teacher".

2 Timothy 1:12

Ver. 12. For the which cause I also suffer these things,.... The present imprisonment and bonds in which he now was; these, with all the indignities, reproaches, distresses, and persecutions, came upon him, for the sake of his being a preacher of the Gospel; and particularly for his being a teacher of the Gentiles: the Jews hated him, and persecuted him, because he preached the Gospel, and the more because he preached it to the Gentiles, that they might be saved; and the unbelieving Gentiles were stirred up against him, for introducing a new religion among them, to the destruction of their idolatry and superstition; and the sufferings which he endured were many; and he was appointed to them, as well as to the Gospel, which he preached.

Nevertheless I am not ashamed; neither of the Gospel, and the truths and ordinances of it, for which he suffered; but he continued to own and confess it constantly, and to preach it boldly; none of these things moved him from it: nor of the sufferings he endured, for the sake of it; since they were not for murder, or theft, or sedition, or any enormity whatever, but in a good cause; wherefore he was so far from being ashamed of them, that he took pleasure in them, and gloried of them. Nor was he ashamed of Christ, whose Gospel he preached, and for whom he suffered; nor of his faith and hope in him. For it follows,

for I know whom I have believed. A spiritual knowledge of Christ is necessary to faith in him: an unknown Christ cannot be the object of faith, though an unseen Christ, as to bodily sight, may be, and is. Knowledge and faith go together: they that truly know Christ, believe in him, and the more they know him, the more strongly do they believe in him: such who spiritually and savingly know Christ, have seen the glories of his person, and the fulness of his grace; and they approve of him, as their Saviour, being every way suitable to them, and disapprove of all others; they love him above all others, and with all their hearts; and they put their trust in him, and trust him with all they have; and they know whom they trust, what an able, willing, suitable, and complete Saviour he is. This knowledge which they have of him, is not from themselves, but from the Father, who reveals him to them, and in them; and from himself, who gives them an understanding that they may know him; and from the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: and be it more or less, it is practical, and leads to the discharge of duty, from a principle of love to Christ; and is of a soul humbling nature, and appropriates Christ to a man's self; and has always some degree of certainty in it; and though it is imperfect, it is progressive; and the least measure of it is saving, and has eternal life connected with it: and that faith which accompanies it, and terminates on the object known, is the grace, by which a man sees Christ in the riches of his grace; goes to him in a sense of need of him; lays hold upon him as a Saviour; receives and embraces him; commits its all unto him; trusts him with all; leans and lives upon him, and walks on in him till it receives the end of faith, even eternal salvation.

And I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. By that which he had committed to him is meant, not the great treasure of his labours and sufferings for Christ, as if he had deposited these in Christ's hands, in order to be brought forth at the great day of account to his advantage; for though his labours and sufferings were many, yet he always ascribed the strength by which he endured them to the grace of God; and he knew they were not worthy to be compared, nor made mention of, with the glory that was to be revealed in him. Rather this may be understood of the souls of those he had been instrumental in the converting of, whom he had commended to Christ, hoping to meet them as his joy and crown of rejoicing another day; though it seems best of all to interpret it either of his natural life, the care of which he had committed to Christ, and which he knew he was able to preserve, and would preserve for usefulness until the day appointed for his death; or rather his precious and immortal soul, and the eternal welfare and salvation of it: and the act of committing it to Christ, designs his giving himself to him, leaving himself with him, trusting in him for eternal life and salvation, believing he was able to save him to the uttermost; even unto the day of death, when he hoped to be with him, which is far better than to be in this world; and unto the day of the resurrection, when both soul and body will be glorified with him; and to the day of judgment, when the crown of righteousness will be received from his hands. And what might induce the apostle, and so any other believer, to conclude the ability of Christ to keep the souls of those that are committed to him, are, his proper deity, he having all the fulness of the Godhead, or the perfections of deity dwelling in him; his being the Creator and upholder of all things; his having accomplished the great work of redemption and salvation, by his own arm; his mediatorial fulness of grace and power; and his being trusted by his Father with all the persons, grace, and glory of the elect, to whom he has been faithful. And now the consideration of all this, as it was a support to the apostle, under all his afflictions, and sufferings for the Gospel, and in a view of death itself, so it may be, as it often has been, a relief to believers, under all the sorrows of this life, and in a prospect of death and eternity. Philo the Jew {b} speaks in like manner as the apostle here of parakatayhkh quchv, "the depositum of the soul": though he knew not where to commit it for safety, as the apostle did, and every true believer does.

{b} Quis rer. Divin. Haeres. p. 498, 499.

2 Timothy 1:13

Ver. 13. Hold fast the form of sound words,.... By "words" are meant, not mere words, but doctrines; for the servants of the Lord should not strive about words, to no profit, or be too tenacious of them. Indeed when words have long obtained, and have been very useful to convey just ideas of truth to the mind, they are not to be easily parted with, though they are not syllabically expressed in Scripture, unless other and better words can be substituted in their room; and especially they are to be tenaciously abode by, when the apparent design by dropping or changing them is to set aside the truths signified by them; such as trinity, unity, essence, person, imputed righteousness, satisfaction, &c. But here words design doctrines, the words of faith and good doctrine, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ; and which are said to be "sound", in opposition to the words and doctrines of false teachers, which are corrupt and unsound, and are pernicious, and eat as do a canker; and because they are so in themselves; they are not only sweet and pleasant, but salutary and nourishing; they are milk for babes, and meat for strong men; they are food for faith, and nourish up to eternal life. The "form" of them either intends the manner of teaching them, which should be it, apt and acceptable words, plain and easy to be understood, and not with the enticing words of men's wisdom; or a brief summary, a compendium of Gospel truth. It was usual with both Jews and Christians to reduce the principles of their religion into a narrow compass, into a short form or breviary. The Jew had his "form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law", **Ro 2:20**, which was a rule to himself, and an instruction to others; and such a form, or Jewish creed, may be seen in **Heb 6:1**. The Apostle Paul gives a summary of the Gospel, which he preached, and which he reduces to two heads; repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, Ac 20:20 and an excellent compendium and abridgment of the Gospel, and a glorious form of sound words, we have in **Ro 8:29** and such an one Timothy had heard and received from the apostle, as a "pattern" for him hereafter to preach by, as this word signifies; and as it is rendered in **1Ti 1:16**. There seems to be an allusion to painters, who first make their outlines, and take a rough draught before they lay on their colours and beautiful strokes; and which rough draught and first lines are the rule and pattern of their after work; and which they never exceed, but keep within the compass of: so there is a set of Gospel truths, which may be called the analogy or proportion of faith, which are a rule and pattern, as for hearers to judge by, so for ministers to preach according to, **1Ti 6:3** And such a form or pattern was the apostle's doctrine to Timothy, and which he full well knew: and this form includes the doctrines concerning the trinity of persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit, and the proper deity and distinct personality of each of them; concerning the everlasting love of the three Persons to the elect, the covenant of grace, and the transactions in it relating to them; their personal and eternal election in Christ, and his suretyship engagements for them; the state and condition of men by the fall, and through, sin, as that Adam's sin is imputed to all his posterity, and a corrupt nature propagated from him, and that man is altogether impure, and entirely impotent all that is spiritually good; as also such doctrines as concern particular redemption by Christ, satisfaction for sin by his sacrifice, free and full pardon by his blood, and justification by his imputed righteousness: regeneration and sanctification by the powerful and efficacious grace of the Spirit of God; and the final perseverance of the saints to eternal glory, as the free gift of God. And this is a form never to departed from, but to be held fast, as Timothy is exhorted; which supposes that he had it, as he had, not only in his head, but in his heart; and that there was danger of dropping it through the temptations that surrounded him, the reproach and persecution the Gospel lay under, and through the sleight of false teachers, who lay in wait to deceive, and to take every opportunity of wringing it out of his hands; and therefore it became him, as he had it, not only to hold it forth, and publish it, but to hold it fast, in opposition to any wavering about it, or cowardice in it, or departure from it in any degree. And the argument to hold it fast follows,

which thou hast heard of me; both in private conversation, and in the public ministry of the word; and which the apostle had not from men, but by the revelation of Christ; and therefore was to be depended upon, and to be abode by, or held fast, in the manner next directed to:

in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus; in the exercise of faith, and from a principle of love; which two graces always go together, and have Christ, as here, for their object: though this clause, may be connected with the word "heard", and the sense be, either that Timothy had heard Paul preach these sound doctrines with great faith and faithfulness, and with much fervency and affection to Christ, and the souls of men; or Timothy had heard them himself, and embraced and mixed them with faith, and received them in love: or it may be read in connection with "the form of sound words"; the sum of which is faith in Christ, and love to him; the Gospel is the doctrine of faith; and it puts men on discharging their duty from love to Christ.

2 Timothy 1:14

Ver. 14. That good thing which was committed to thee,.... By which he means either his ministerial work and office, which is a good work, the dispensation of which was committed to him, and which it became him so to observe, as that the ministry might not be blamed; or else the good and excellent gifts of the Spirit, which qualified him for the discharge of that work, and which were not to be neglected, but to be stirred up, exercised, and improved, lest they should be lost, or took away; or rather the Gospel, which was committed to his trust, to preach: and this may be called a good thing, from the author of it, who is good, whence it is named the Gospel of God, and the Gospel of Christ; and from the matter of it, it consists of good things come by Christ, the High priest, and which it publishes, such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal salvation by him; and from the end and use of it, it being both for the glory of God, the magnifying the riches of his grace, and the exaltation of Christ; and also is the power of God in regeneration and sanctification unto salvation to everyone that believes. And it being said to be "committed to" Timothy, denotes the excellency of it; that it is a treasure, as indeed it is a rich one, it contains the riches of grace, even the unsearchable riches of Christ, is more valuable than thousands of gold and silver: and that it is a trust, and requires faithfulness in ministers, who are the stewards of it; and that it is to be accounted for. Wherefore great care should be had in dispensing and keeping it:

keep by the Holy Ghost. It should be kept pure and incorrupt, free from all the adulterations and mixtures of men; and safe and sound, that it be not snatched away from the churches by false teachers. And whereas the apostle knew, that neither Timothy, nor any other, were sufficient of themselves, for these things, he directs to the keeping of it by the Holy Ghost; who makes men overseers of churches, bestows gifts upon them, to fit them for their work, and leads them into all the truths of the Gospel; and under his influence and teachings, and by the assistance of his grace, are they enabled to discharge their trust, abide by the Gospel, and persevere in the ministration of it to the end.

Which dwelleth in us; in all believers, who are the temples of the Holy Ghost; and in all the churches, which are built up by him, an habitation for God; and in all the ministers of the word, to direct, instruct, support, and uphold them; and who dwells with them, and continues in them, and that for ever, Joh 14:16.

2 Timothy 1:15

Ver. 15. This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia,.... Either those that followed the apostle from Asia to Rome; or who came from thence thither, upon business, and were upon the spot when the apostle was in his greatest troubles, and yet all forsook him and no man stood by him; or else the churches and ministers in Asia, that is, a great number of them; for it cannot be said of every minister and church, and of all the members of churches there, what follows,

be turned away from me; were ashamed of him, because of his chain, and despised him under his afflictions, and had him in abhorrence and contempt, and revolted from his doctrine; though the defection was very general, and the apostle appeals to Timothy for the truth of it, as a fact well known to him: "this thou knowest"; Timothy being at Ephesus, which was in Asia; and since there was so great an apostasy in the country where he was, the above exhortations were very seasonable, to hold fast the form of sound words, and keep the good thing committed to him; seeing so many were falling off from the truth of the Gospel:

of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes: who very likely were ministers of the word, and who had shone for a while, but were now stars fallen from heaven, had erred from the faith, and were become apostates, and proved men of corrupt minds, and deceivers of the people; and it may be that these were more open and infamous than some others, or might be more known to Timothy, and therefore are particularly mentioned. They are both of them said to have been of the seventy disciples; See Gill on "Lu 10:1" and afterwards followers of Simon Magus. The name of the first of these signifies a "fugitive", and such was he from the cause of Christ. Pliny {c} makes mention of a town in Asia, called Phygella, from the fugitives which built it; and the latter signifies born of Mercury; there was one of the name in Tertullian's time, against whom he wrote.

{c} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 29.

2 Timothy 1:16

Ver. 16. The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus,.... Who seems to have been one of Asia, and of Ephesus, and is an exception from the general apostasy, or from those that turned away from the apostle; and therefore he prays that the Lord would show mercy to his family; that he would give regenerating grace and mercy to such of them as were without it, or pardoning grace and mercy, or the great mercy of eternal life and salvation by Christ; and this doubtless was a prayer in faith, upon the promises of God, and upon instances and examples, in which God has remarkably shown mercy to the families of good men, who have faithfully served him, and abode in his interest in times of trouble; thus the house of Obed Edom was blessed for the sake of the ark, that was taken care of by them; the reasons of this prayer and good wishes follow:

for he oft refreshed me; both with his Christian visits, and spiritual conversation, which to the apostle, in the heat of his affliction and persecution, were like a fan in hot weather, cooling and reviving, as the word signifies; and also by supplying him with the necessaries of life, as food and raiment, or money to purchase them with. He answered to his name, which signifies, "one that brings profit": he is said to be one of the seventy disciples;
See Gill on "Lu 10:1" and afterwards to be bishop of Corone:

and was not ashamed of my chain; the Syriac version adds, "with which I am bound"; in which he lay, or by which he was held, and led by a soldier; see Ac 28:16. Onesiphorus was not ashamed of the apostle, though he was bound with a chain; nor was he ashamed of the cause for which he suffered: and the apostle proposes him to Timothy, as an example worthy of imitation, in those times of defection. See **2Ti 1:8**.

2 Timothy 1:17

Ver. 17. But when he was in Rome,.... Upon some business or another, where the apostle was a prisoner:

he sought me out very diligently, and found me; as there might be many prisons in Rome, he went from one to another, till he found him; and was one of those to whom Christ will say hereafter, "I was in prison and ye came unto me", Mt 25:36 or the reason of his going from place to place in quest of him was this; the apostle was not in any particular place of confinement, but had a lodging where he was kept by a soldier, and which with some difficulty Onesiphorus found out: the manner of his bonds was this; he had a long chain fastened at one end to his right arm, and at the other to the left arm of the soldier that kept him, who constantly attended him in this form, wherever he went; and it is possible that in this way he might have liberty to go about and visit his friends; and this might still make it more difficult for Onesiphorus to find him.

2 Timothy 1:18

Ver. 18. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day;.... In return for his diligent seeking till he found the apostle. By "mercy", he means the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life; or that crown of righteousness and everlasting glory and happiness, which will be a grant from the Lord, or a free gift through Jesus Christ; the effect of pure grace and mercy, and not of merit. The apostle does not propose to requite him himself; he knew it was out of his power; but he had an interest in the Lord, and at the throne of grace; and he makes use of that in his favour, and prays the Lord that he might find mercy of him: and the meaning is either, that he prayed to God, that he might find mercy of him; or he prayed particularly to the Lord Jesus Christ to act the part of a Mediator for him with his Father, that he might enjoy eternal life through him; or he prayed to God the Father, that he would grant that he might find mercy at the hands of Jesus Christ his Son, the Judge of quick and dead, who, at the great and last day, will give the crown of righteousness to all that love him, and his appearance:

and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well: or "better". Timothy being at Ephesus, of which city Onesiphorus seems to have been, and that when the apostle was there, he very freely communicated to him, as Timothy, who was with him there, knew very well: the apostle does not forget, but remembers former kindnesses, as well as takes notice of present favours, and which shows a grateful mind. The phrase, "unto me", is not in the Greek copies, though it is in the Vulgate Latin and in all the Oriental versions; wherefore the words may be understood of the things which Onesiphorus had ministered to Timothy, and to the church at Ephesus, and to the poor saints there; which Timothy was "better" acquainted with than the apostle could be, he being on the spot: and now since there were so many fallen off, and so few that remained hearty and faithful, but one Onesiphorus to all them that were in Asia; the apostle exhorts to firmness and constancy, in a dependence on the Spirit and grace of God, as follows.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Timothy 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO II TIMOTHY 2

In this chapter the apostle continues his exhortations to Timothy, with respect both to his office and his conversation, and closes with the character of a minister of the Gospel. The apostle having exhorted Timothy, in the former chapter, to abide by the Gospel, notwithstanding whatsoever he might suffer for it, here points out to him that grace and strength in Christ, which he would have him have recourse unto, to enable him to discharge his duty, 2Ti 2:1 and that the Gospel might continue, he advises him to take care of a succession, and to commit the Gospel preached by him to others, whose qualifications for it are faithfulness and aptitude to teach,
2Ti 2:2 and in order to animate him to labour diligently in the Gospel, and suffer cheerfully for it, he observes to him that he was a soldier, and must endure hardships, and not indulge to the ease and pleasures of life; was a runner in a race, and therefore must strive before he received the crown; and was as an husbandman that must first labour before he partakes of the fruit: which things he would have him seriously consider; and desires that the Lord would give him understanding in them, **2Ti 2:3**, and then with the same view, to encourage him to suffer for the Gospel of Christ, he puts him in mind of the incarnation and resurrection of Christ, as a summary of the Gospel, and a specimen of what he had heard of him, **2Ti 2:8** and instances in his own sufferings for it, the nature, use, and end of them, by way of example and imitation, **2Ti 2:9**, and for the same purpose mentions several useful sayings and pithy sentences, as true and, to be depended on, **2Ti 2:11** which he would have Timothy put his hearers in mind of, and especially those to whom he committed the Gospel to preach; charging them, in a solemn manner, not to strive about words, which is not only unprofitable, but hurtful, **2Ti 2:14** and with respect to himself, he exhorts him to diligence and study, in interpreting and explaining the word of God, that so he might be approved unto God, and not be ashamed before men, **2Ti 2:15** and on the contrary, to avoid false doctrines, as being profane, empty, and mere babble; and as tending to greater impiety; and as being dangerous and threatening, like the spreading canker; of which he gives instances in Hymenaeus and Philetus, **2Ti 2:16** whose error was, that the resurrection was already past; and succeeded in the spreading of it, to the subversion of the faith of some, **2Ti 2:18**. However, for the comfort of real believers, it is observed, that notwithstanding such errors, and the success of them, the foundation stands sure; God has a certain knowledge of his own people, and will keep them; and therefore it becomes such who either call on the name, or are called by the name of Christ, to depart from such evil

doctrines, **2Ti 2:19** and that such things happening in the world, and in churches, should not be thought strange, the apostle illustrates the case by a simile of a great house, which has vessels of all sorts in it, and for different uses and purposes, **2Ti 2:21**. Wherefore, to conclude his exhortations to Timothy, he advises him to flee those lusts which are incident to youth; to follow things that are good, and to avoid foolish and unlearned questions, which tend to strife, **2Ti 2:22** which leads him on to give the character of a servant of the Lord, or a preacher of the Gospel; that he must not strive, but be gentle, patient, and meek, in instructing adversaries; for which he should have an aptness; and is encouraged to act this part, from the consideration of success under a divine blessing; namely, bringing such persons to repentance, and to own the truth, and the recovery of them out of the snare of the devil, **2Ti 2:24**

Ver. 1. Thou therefore, my son,.... The illative particle, "therefore", shows the connection between this and the preceding chapter; the appellation, "thou, my son", expresses the apostle's tender affection for Timothy, and is the rather used to engage his attention to the advice he was about to give him; which is, that since he had received the true grace of God, and unfeigned faith dwelt in him; and since he had such gifts, qualifying him for the work of the ministry; and since so good a thing as the glorious Gospel of the blessed God was committed to his trust; and since there were so many who had departed from it, and so few that abode by it, he would have him

be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; by which may be meant either the free favour and love of God in Christ, **Ro 8:39** which is in itself always strong, immovable, and unalterable; and is the strength and security of the saints, though they have not always the same strong believing views of it; and to be strong in it, is to be rooted and grounded in it, and to have a strong sense and firm persuasion of interest in it, and that nothing can separate from it: or else the Gospel, which is a declaration of grace, and is in Christ, and comes by him; and to be strong in it, is to preach it boldly, to defend it bravely, and courageously oppose every error and heresy, and every abettor thereof; and it also becomes every private believer to hold it fast, stand fast in it, abide by it, and earnestly contend for it; and so the phrase may stand opposed to atyrwab Pyqt, or rbg, "one strong in the law", which is so often used by the Jews {d}: or rather by grace is meant the fulness of grace which is in Christ, for the supply of his people; for in that grace which is in him, and not in that which is in themselves, should their dependence be. It is very agreeable to be strong in grace received, in point of exercise, but not in point of contentment; so as to rest satisfied with the present measure of it, without growing in it, and going on to perfection; and much less in point of consolation, so as to derive peace and comfort from it; and still less in point of trust and confidence in it; for it is but a creature, though a very glorious one, being the workmanship of God, and very variable as to its exercise, and as yet imperfect; and not that, but the object of it, is to be trusted in: though indeed a person's enjoyment of everlasting glory and happiness may be strongly concluded from the work of grace which is begun in him; that being an immortal seed, and a well of living water springing up into eternal life; and with which glory is inseparably connected. But grace in Christ is what believers should always have recourse unto, and exercise faith on; and not only believe that there is such a fulness of grace in Christ, which they have both heard of and seen, and which they know is laid up for them, and given to them, and is sufficient for them; but they should go forth out of themselves unto it, and draw water with joy out of the full wells of salvation in Christ: and this grace is of a strengthening nature, both to ministers of the word, to enable them to fulfil their ministry, to bear reproaches, afflictions, and persecution for the Gospel, and the infirmities of weak brethren; and to private believers, to strengthen them against every corruption, temptation, and snare, to exercise every grace, and discharge every branch of duty.

{d} Targum in Ruth ii. 1. & in Psal. lxxxii. 1. & cxii. 2. & in Eccl. x. 17. & in Cant. viii. 10, vid. T. Bab. Sota, fol. 14. 1. & Tzeror Hammor, fol. 9. 3.

2 Timothy 2:2

Ver. 2. And the things that thou hast heard of me,.... Meaning the doctrines of the Gospel, the form of sound words. The Arabic version renders it, "the secrets, or mysteries that thou hast heard of me"; the mysteries of the grace of God, which he had often heard him discourse of, unfold and explain:

among many witnesses; or by them; which some understand of the testimonies out of Moses, and the prophets, with which the apostle confirmed what he delivered; for the doctrines of justification, pardon of sin, &c. by Christ, were bore witness to by the prophets; though rather the many persons, who, with Timothy, heard the apostle preach, and were and would be sufficient witnesses for Timothy, on occasion, that what he preached and committed to others were the same he had heard and received from the Apostle Paul; unless reference should be had here to the time of imposition of hands upon him, when he received some ministerial gifts, or an increase of them; at which time the apostle might deliver to him the form of doctrine he was to preach, and that in the presence of the presbytery, who joined in the action, and so were witnesses of what was said to him:

the same commit thou to faithful men; who not only have received the grace of God, and are true believers in Christ, but are men of great uprightness and integrity; who having the word of God, will speak it out boldly, and faithfully, and keep back nothing that is profitable, but declare the whole counsel of God, without any mixture or adulteration; for the Gospel being committed to their trust, they would become stewards, and of such it is required that they be faithful; and therefore this is mentioned as a necessary and requisite qualification in them; and not only so, but they must be such

who shall be able or sufficient

to teach others also. No man is sufficient for these things, of himself, but his sufficiency is of God; it is he who makes men able ministers of the word, by giving them gifts suitable for such work; so that they have a furniture in them, a treasure in their earthen vessels, an understanding of the sacred Scriptures, a gift of explaining them, and a faculty of speaking to edification; and so are apt to teach men, to their profit and advantage, The Ethiopic version renders it, "who are fit to teach the foolish".

2 Timothy 2:3

Ver. 3. Thou therefore endure hardness,.... "Or afflictions"; as in **2Ti 4:5**. The same word is used there as here, and properly signifies, "suffer evil"; and means the evil of afflictions, as persecutions of every kind, loss of name and goods, scourging, imprisonment, and death itself, for the sake of Christ and the Gospel:

as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Christ is the Captain of salvation, the Leader and Commander of the people, who are made a willing people in the day of his power; or when he raises his forces, and musters his armies, these are volunteers, who willingly enlist themselves into his service, and under his banners fight his battles; and such who manfully behave against sin, Satan, and the world, are his good soldiers; such are all true believers in Christ, and particularly the ministers of the word, whose ministry is a warfare, and who fight the good fight of faith; and besides the above enemies, which they have in common with other saints, have to do with teachers, who are wolves in sheep's clothing.

2 Timothy 2:4

Ver. 4. No man that warreth,.... Who is a soldier, and gives himself up to military service, in a literal sense: the Vulgate Latin version, without any authority, adds, "to God"; as if the apostle was speaking of a spiritual warfare; whereas he is illustrating a spiritual warfare by a corporeal one; and observes, that no one, that is in a military state,

entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; with civil affairs, in distinction from military ones. The Roman soldiers might not follow any trade or business of life, or be concerned in husbandry, or merchandise of any sort, but were wholly to attend to military exercises, and to the orders of their general; for to be employed in any secular business was reckoned an entangling of them, a taking of them off from, and an hindrance to their military discipline: and by this the apostle suggests that Christ's people, his soldiers, and especially his ministers, should not he involved and implicated in worldly affairs and cares; for no man can serve two masters, God and mammon; but should wholly give up themselves to the work and service to which they are called; and be ready to part with all worldly enjoyments, and cheerfully suffer the loss of all things, when called to it, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel:

that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier; his captain, or general, who has enlisted him, enrolled and registered him among his soldiers; whom to please should be his chief concern; as it should be the principal thing attended to by a Christian soldier, or minister of the Gospel, not to please men, nor to please himself, by seeking his own ease and rest, his worldly emoluments and advantages, but to please the Lord Christ, in whose book his name is written.

2 Timothy 2:5

Ver. 5. And if a man also strive for masteries,.... In the Olympic games, by running, wrestling, leaping, &c.

yet is he not crowned; with a corruptible, fading crown, a crown made of herbs and leaves of trees, as parsley, laurel, &c.

except he strive lawfully; according to the laws and rules fixed for those exercises; so no man that calls himself a Christian, minister, or any other, can expect the crown of life, the prize of the high calling of God, except he runs the race set before him, in the right way; looking to Christ, the mark, pressing through all difficulties, towards the prize, and holds on and out unto the end.

2 Timothy 2:6

Ver. 6. The husbandman that laboureth,.... In manuring his ground, in ploughing, in sowing, in weeding, in reaping, &c.

must be first partaker of the fruits; of his labour, before others; and the design may be to observe that the ministers of the word ought first to be partakers of the grace of God, the fruits of the Spirit, and of the Gospel, and rightly and spiritually understand it, before they preach it to others; or that such who labour in the word and doctrine, ought in the first place to be taken care of, and have a sufficient maintenance provided for them, **1Co 9:7** or that as they shall have in the first place some seals and fruits of their ministry, in the conversion of souls, so they shall shine in the kingdom of heaven as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever. Though the words may be rendered, and which seems more agreeable to the context, and to the apostle's argument, "the husbandman must first labour before he partakes of the fruits"; so a minister of the Gospel must first labour, and endure hardships in this life, before he sits down in the kingdom of heaven, and takes his rest, and enjoys the crown of glory, which fades not away, which the chief Shepherd shall give unto him.

2 Timothy 2:7

Ver. 7. Consider what I say,.... The advice given by the apostle to Timothy, to be strong in the grace of Christ; to commit the doctrines of the Gospel to faithful and able men; and to endure hardness for the sake of it: as also the characters which he bore as a soldier, a runner in a race, or a wrestler, and an husbandman; and therefore must not expect ease and rest, but war, difficulties, toil, and labour; and likewise under what titles Christ was to be regarded; as his General, and Captain of salvation, that commanded him; as the righteous Judge, that held the prize and crown for which he was running; and the chief Shepherd, who would reward all his labours; and moreover, the glorious reward of grace itself, he might expect, as eternal life, when he had fought the good fight the crown of righteousness, when he had finished his course, or run his race; and a crown of glory that fades not away, when the chief Shepherd should appear: and by putting him upon the consideration of these things, he suggests, that they were matters of moment and importance, and would be of great use to him in assisting and encouraging his faith, amidst all trials and exercises; and whereas they were expressed in figurative terms, taken from the soldier, the runner in a race, and the husbandman, they might not at first view be so easy to be understood; and therefore he would have him think of them, and meditate upon them, and weigh them in his mind; as well as he would not have him take things upon trust from him, but examine them whether they were right or not; though he doubted not but that they would be found to be agreeable to the standard of truth: wherefore he prays as follows,

and the Lord give thee understanding in all things; in all the above things, and in all others; in all the doctrines and mysteries of grace, and in all the rules of conduct in life. No man has of himself an understanding in spiritual things; this is the gift of God; and where it is given there is need of an increase of it, and always of such a prayer for it. The Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, read, "the Lord will give thee", &c, and so the words are a promise, an encouragement to Timothy, to consider well of these things; for he might assure himself, that, in so doing, God would give him more understanding in them.

2 Timothy 2:8

Ver. 8. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David,.... This is said either as an encouragement to suffer hardness in the cause of Christ; since he, who though he was of the seed of David, of the blood royal, and heir to his crown, yet suffered and died; and whereas he rose again from the dead, those who suffer for his sake shall rise also, and live and reign with him for ever: or else as a specimen of the form of sound words, or of the things which Timothy had heard of the apostle; for this, with what follows, is a summary of them: Christ being of the seed of David, according to the flesh, or human nature, is expressive of his incarnation; shows that he was really come in the flesh, and was truly man; and that he assumed human nature with all its frailties and infirmities, excepting sin, and was, like David, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; and it includes his whole life, and his righteousness, and obedience to the law of works, and points him out as the true Messiah, who was well known to the Jews by the name of the son of David. And now the apostle puts Timothy in mind, that he

was raised from the dead; which implies that he died; and so includes all the doctrines relating to his death; as that he died to make reconciliation, atonement, and satisfaction for the sins of his people, and to procure peace for them, and the full remission of all their iniquities; and to obtain redemption for them, from sin, Satan, the law, and its curses; as well as it expresses his resurrection from the dead, for their justification: and this being his first step to glory, has connected with it his ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of God, intercession for the saints, and his second coming to judgment; and is therefore particularly mentioned, because it is an article so comprehensive, and is a fundamental one, and of the greatest importance to faith, and was what was struck at in those times: the apostle adds,

according to my Gospel; meaning not the Gospel of Luke, in which there is a clear account given of the resurrection of Christ, said to be written by him, at the instigation, and under the direction of the apostle, and published with his approbation, as some think; but the doctrine of the Gospel, and which he calls his, not because he was the author, or the subject of it; for in these respects it is the Gospel of God, and of Christ; but because it was committed to him, and he was intrusted with it, and fully and faithfully preached it; and in distinction from another Gospel, that of the false teachers; and agreeably to this doctrine, which the apostle everywhere taught, Christ was raised from the dead; so the Ethiopic version renders it, "as I have taught".

2 Timothy 2:9

Ver. 9. Wherein I suffer trouble as an evildoer,.... As a malefactor, as if guilty of some capital crime; an enemy to the law of Moses, a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition everywhere, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, Ac 24:5. The Ethiopic version renders it, "as a thief". The "trouble" he suffered were reproaches, persecutions, whipping, beating, stoning, imprisonment: for he adds,

even unto bonds; for he was now a prisoner, and in chains; nor was it the first time, he was in prisons frequent; and all this for the sake of the Gospel, which he preached, concerning the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ:

but the word of God is not bound; for the apostle, while a prisoner at Rome, had the liberty of dwelling by himself, in his own hired house, though held in chains, and guarded by a soldier, and of receiving his friends, and of preaching the Gospel to as many as would come to hear him, Ac 28:16 as well as of sending letters to the churches; for several of his epistles were written by him when a prisoner, as those to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians; and this to Timothy, and also that to Philemon: so that the Gospel was not restrained, or the apostle restrained from publishing it, both by word of mouth, and by writing; which was a great support to him under his troubles. Moreover, the Gospel was the more spread through the bonds of the apostle, and met with great success; it became known in Caesar's palace, and was the means of the conversion of some of his household; and many of the brethren, through his bonds, became bolder to preach the Gospel of Christ; so that it had a free course, and was glorified: and sometimes so it is, that persecution is a means of the greater spread of the Gospel; which was an effect that followed upon the persecution raised against the church at Jerusalem, upon the death of Stephen, **Ac 8:1**. And indeed, when God opens an effectual door, none can shut it, though there be many adversaries; and when he gives the word a commission, there is no stopping it; when it comes in power, it bears down all before it; it cannot be fettered and bound by men, though men may be fettered and bound for the sake of it.

2 Timothy 2:10

Ver. 10. Therefore I endure all things for the elects' sakes,.... There is a certain number of persons whom God has chosen in Christ from everlasting unto salvation, who shall certainly be saved; for these Jesus Christ suffered and died; and on their account is the Gospel sent, preached, and published to the world; for their sakes are ministers fitted and qualified for their work, and have their mission and commission to perform it, and suffer what they do in the execution of it; and since it was for the sake of such, whom God had loved and chosen, that the apostle endured all his reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, he was the more cheerful under them; and the consideration of it was a support unto him:

that they may also obtain; as well as himself, and other chosen vessels of salvation, who were called by grace already; for the apostle is speaking of such of the elect, who were, as yet, in a state of nature:

the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory; salvation is only by Christ Jesus, and in him; and this is only for the elect of God; and it is published in the Gospel, that they might obtain it; and in all ages they do obtain it, or enjoy it: the thing itself is obtained by Christ for them, through his obedience, sufferings, and death; and it is published in the everlasting Gospel, that they might come to the knowledge of it; and in the effectual calling it is brought near by the Spirit of God, and applied unto them; and they have now both a meetness for it, and a right unto it, and shall fully enjoy it in heaven; for it has "eternal glory", or "heavenly glory", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, "annexed to it"; or rather the full enjoyment of it will consist in an eternal and heavenly glory, which will be put upon the saints, both in soul and body, and remain to all eternity.

2 Timothy 2:11

Ver. 11. It is a faithful saying,.... This may refer either to what goes before, that all things, all reproaches and sufferings, through the ministration of the Gospel, are endured for the elects' sake; and that shall certainly obtain salvation in Christ, and eternal glory, to which they are predestinated: or to what follows, which being of moment and importance, and difficult to be believed, as that death led to life, and sufferings were the way to the kingdom; the apostle prefaces it in this manner, affirming the truth of it, that it was sure and certain, and to be believed, and depended on as such.

For if we be dead with him; with Christ, as all his people are, by virtue of union to him; they are dead with him, he and they being one, in a legal sense; when he died, they died with him; being crucified with him, as their head and representative, their old man, their sins, were also crucified with him, being imputed to him, and laid upon him; and through the efficacy of his death, they became dead to sin, both to its damning and governing power, and so are planted together in the likeness of his death; so that as he died unto sin once, and lives again to die no more, they die unto sin, and are alive to God, and shall live for ever. Moreover, this, agreeably to what follows, may be understood of the saints dying for Christ's sake, and the Gospel, whereby they are conformed unto him, and feel the fellowship of his sufferings, and so may be said to be dead with him: and such may assure themselves of the truth of what follows,

we shall also live with him; as many as were crucified with Christ, and buried with him, rose with him from the dead, and were justified in him, as their head and representative; the free gift came on them to justification of life; and they that are dead to sin, through the efficacy of his death, live a life of sanctification, which they have from him, and is maintained and supported by him, and is to his glory; and they live a life of communion with him, in whose favour is life; and though they die, and for his sake, they shall rise again; and because he lives, they shall live also, even a life of glory, happiness, and endless pleasure. And this is part of the faithful saying, and to be believed, and is believed by the saints: see **Ro 6:8**. Moreover, since the word "him" is not in the original text, and the elect are spoken of in the preceding verse, what if the sense should be this, this is true doctrine, and a certain matter of fact, if we and the elect of God die together in the same cause, and for the sake of Christ, and the Gospel, we shall live together in everlasting bliss and glory?

2 Timothy 2:12

Ver. 12. If we suffer,.... With him, with Christ, as in **Ro 8:17** all the elect suffered with Christ when he suffered; they suffered in him the whole penalty of the law, all the righteousness, strictness, and severity of it; and they are partakers of the benefits of his sufferings, as peace, pardon, righteousness, redemption, and everlasting salvation. And such being called by grace, and having made a profession of Christ, they suffer shame and reproach, loss of credit and reputation, and sometimes loss of goods, and corporeal punishment, and even death itself: but though they do, and if they should, they may be satisfied of the truth of this,

we shall also reign with him; they reign with him now in the kingdom of grace; grace reigns in their hearts, where Christ, the King of glory, has entered, and has set up his throne, and where he dwells by faith, they being made kings and priests unto God by him; and they shall reign with him in his kingdom here on earth, for the space of a thousand years; and they shall reign with him in glory to all eternity: this is certain, for this kingdom is prepared for them, it is given to them, they are called unto it, and have both a right unto, and meetness for it; see **Ro 8:17**,

if we deny him, he also will deny us: there is a denying of Christ in words; so it is denied by the Jews that Christ is come in the flesh, and that Jesus is the Messiah; and some that have bore the Christian name, though very unworthily, have denied his true deity, his real humanity, proper sonship, and the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, for pardon, justification, and atonement: and there is a denying of him in works; so some that profess to know him, and do own him in his person and offices, yet in works deny him; their conversation is not becoming their profession of him; they have the form of godliness, but deny the power of it: there is a secret and silent denying of him, when men are ashamed of him, and do not confess him; and there is an open denying of him, by such who set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh throughout the earth; there is a partial denying of Christ, which was Peter's case, though his faith in him, and love to him, were not lost; and there is a total denying of him, a thorough apostasy, and from which there is no recovery; and if there be any such apostates among those who have named the name of Christ, he will deny them, he will not own them for his another day; he will set them at his left hand; he will declare he knows them not, and will banish them from his presence for evermore. This is another branch of the faithful saying; this will certainly be the case; Christ himself has said it, Mt 10:33.

2 Timothy 2:13

Ver. 13. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful,.... The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "if we believe not him". This may be understood, either of such who are altogether destitute of faith, who do not believe in Christ at all; and particularly do not believe what was just now said concerning his denying such that deny him, but mock and scoff at his coming, and at a future judgment: this unbelief of theirs will not make void his faith or faithfulness; see **Ro 3:3**, he will abide faithful to his word of threatening; and what he says in Mr 16:16 will be found to be an everlasting truth: or it may be understood of true believers, whose faith sometimes is very low, as to its exercise on Christ, and with reference to their future glory and happiness; but Christ is faithful to all his, covenant engagements for them, to bring them to glory, and to every word of promise concerning their happiness, and to every branch of the faithful saying above mentioned; and he is ever the same in his love to them, and in the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and his salvation is an everlasting and unchangeable one; nor do the saints' interest in it, and security by it, depend upon their acts of believing, or their frames, but upon the firmness and unchangeableness of Christ, the object of faith.

He cannot deny himself; he cannot go contrary to his word; that would be to act contrary to his nature and perfections, and would be a denying of himself, which is not possible; wherefore his faithfulness will never fail, even though, the faith of his people does, as to the exercise of it.

2 Timothy 2:14

Ver. 14. Of these things put them in remembrance,.... Meaning either his hearers, or those to whom he was to commit the things he had heard of the apostle, and who must expect to suffer afflictions, and endure hardships, for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; wherefore to remind them of the above sayings might be of use and comfort to them. This clause is wanting in the Arabic version.

Charging them before the Lord; the omniscient God, as in his sight, as they will answer it to him another day; see **1Ti 5:21**,

that they strive not about words; it became them to strive and contend for the form of sound words, for the wholesome words or doctrines of our Lord Jesus, but not about mere words, and especially such as were

to no profit; to no advantage to truth, nor to themselves nor others; were not to edification, to spiritual edification, to godly edifying, which is in faith:

but to the subverting of the hearers; the confounding of their minds, misleading their judgments, and overthrowing their faith; and therefore were not only unprofitable, but hurtful and pernicious, and by all means to be avoided.

2 Timothy 2:15

Ver. 15. Study to show thyself approved unto God,.... The Alexandrian copy reads, "to Christ"; see Ro 16:10. Not unto men, as pleasing them; for such who study to please men, are not the servants of Christ; and sometimes those that are approved to and by men, are disapproved of by God and Christ: but unto God, showing all fidelity and uprightness; speaking out the Gospel openly, and freely, with all sincerity, as in the sight of God; commending themselves to him, and to every man's conscience, by manifestation of the truth; and such will hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant" another day.

A workman that needeth not to be ashamed; the ministry of the word is a work, and it is a good work; and those that perform it aright are worthy of honour and esteem; and it requires industry, diligence, and application, and for which no man is sufficient without the grace of God; and those who are employed in it are workmen, workers together with God, and labourers in his vineyard: and such who are faithful and diligent ones, "need not to be ashamed"; such do not cause shame, neither in themselves nor in others, as false teachers do, who foam out their own shame, and as negligent ministers of the word, and such whose lives are not agreeable to the doctrines they preach; nor have they any reason to be ashamed, neither of the Gospel, which they preach, nor of their sufferings, which they endure for the sake of it, nor of their upright ministrations of the word; and as they are not afraid to suffer shame for the sake of Christ now, they will not be ashamed before him at his coming.

rightly dividing, or "cutting"

the word of truth; that is, the Scriptures of truth, Da 10:21 which come from the God of truth, are concerning Christ, who is the truth, and are dictated and led into by the spirit of truth, and contain in them nothing but truth: to divide the word, is not merely to divide the text into its proper parts, though care should be taken that this be done aright; and some think that the allusion is to the verses of the Hebrew Bible, which are called Myqwop, "divisions", sections, or cuttings, from the word qop, "to cut" or "divide", being cut or divided one from another; hence those that were employed in the law, and were conversant with the sacred writings, and exercised therein, were called trwtb Myqowp, "cutters", or "dividers of the law" {e}; and so qwop leb is one that is well versed in the Bible, and knows every part of it, and readily uses it, in speaking or writing; and such an one was Timothy, **2Ti 3:15** though I rather think the apostle refers to a wrong way of dividing the Scriptures by the Jews, to which he opposes the right dividing of them. They had used not only to take away a letter out of one word, and add it to another, and so expound the text, but to remove words in it, and make that which went before to go behind, and that which was behind to go before; and this they call a sharp knife, which bwtkh qyopmw Ktwx, "cuts and divides the Scriptures" {f}: but this way, which his countrymen used, the apostle would not have Timothy, and other Gospel ministers, make use of; for this is not rightly to divide, but to mangle and tear in pieces the word of truth. Moreover, to divide the word of truth, or to cut it, is to cut it open, and dissect its several parts, and search and look into the inside and bottom of it, for to find out every truth contained in it, and lay them open to others; and may be, as some have thought, an allusion to the cutting open the sacrifices, and laying the parts of them aright, and in a decent manner: to which may be added, that since ministers of the Gospel are stewards, and who, when wise and faithful, give to everyone of the household their portion of meat in due season; the metaphor may be taken from such, and from masters and governors of families, who cut up the food, and distribute it to each, according to their age and appetite; and so the ministers of the Gospel are to distribute the spiritual food of the word to babes in Christ, and to grown Christians, according to their capacities, and suitable to their cases and circumstances, dividing to everyone what is proper for him: in short, one that divides the word of truth rightly, is, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, one that "rightly handles"; or, as the Syriac version, that "rightly preaches the word of truth"; who gives the true sense of Scripture, does not pervert and wrest it, and take from it, or add to it; who points out the truth in it, and shows unto men the way of salvation, and plainly and faithfully preaches the Gospel contained in it, without keeping back anything that is profitable, but declares the whole counsel of God. This same Greek word is used by the Septuagint in **Pr 3:6** where it answers to the Hebrew word rvy, which signifies to direct the way, and make it plain; and may here design a plain and open interpretation of the word of God: and to answer these several characters in the text should be the studious concern of every Gospel minister; and study is necessary thereunto; it requires great care that a man take heed to himself, and to his doctrine; and great industry, diligence, and application, and much reading, meditation, and prayer.

{e} Vid. Fuller Miscell. Saora, l. 3. c. 16. {f} Halichot Olim, port. 4. c. 3. p. 192.

2 Timothy 2:16

Ver. 16. But shun profane and vain babblings,.... The ministry of false teachers is mere babbling; a voice, and nothing else, as the man said of his nightingale; a sound of words, but no solid matter in them; great swelling words of vanity, like large bubbles of water, look big, and make a great noise, but have nothing in them; contain nothing but vain, empty, idle, and trifling stuff; what is unprofitable and unedifying, yea, what is profane, contrary to the nature and perfections of God, and not agreeable to the doctrine which is according to godliness; and being palmed upon the Holy Scriptures, is a profanation of them. And all such wicked and empty prate, and babbling, is to be shunned, avoided, and discouraged, refused, and rejected; and, as much as can be, a stop should be put to it, both by ministers and hearers of the word.

For they will increase unto more ungodliness meaning either that such babblings, if used and encouraged, will grow more and more profane and wicked; or the persons that use them, the unruly and vain talkers, will grow more daring, bold; and impudent, will wax worse and worse, and from one error will proceed to another, for such seldom stop; and having abused one passage of Scripture, will go on to attack another, and will not cease, till they have wrested the whole Scripture to their own destruction, and that of others.

2 Timothy 2:17

Ver. 17. And their word will eat as doth a cancer,.... Or "gangrene", which gnaws and feeds upon the flesh, inflames and mortifies as it goes, and spreads swiftly, and endangers the whole body; and is therefore to be speedily taken notice of, and stopped. It is better rendered "gangrene", as in the marginal reading, than "cancer".

"The word "gangrene" is Greek {g}, and is derived by some authors from the Paphlagonian "gangra", a goat; it being the character of a goat to browse the grass all around without shifting. It is more correct, perhaps, to derive it from the Greek word graw, grainw, "manduco", "consumo", I eat, I consume. The "gangrene" is a disease in the flesh of the part which it corrupts, consumes, and turns black, spreading and seizing itself of the adjoining parts, and is rarely cured without amputation. By the microscope, a gangrene has been discovered to contain an infinite number of little worms engendered in the morbid flesh; and which continually producing new broods, they swarm, and overrun the adjacent parts: if the gangrene proceed to an utter sphacelation (or mortification), and be seated in any of the limbs, or extreme parts, recourse must be had to the operation of amputation"

And so the errors and heresies of false teachers worm and spread, and feed upon the souls of men, and eat up the vitals of religion, or what seemed to be such, and even destroy the very form of godliness; and bring destruction and death, wherever they come; and when they get into Christian churches, threaten the ruin of them; and therefore are to be opposed in time, and those infected with them to be cut off.

Of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; these were some of the principal among the false teachers, the chief authors and spreaders of error and heresy: the former of these is mentioned before in **1Ti 1:20** along with Alexander, as guilty of blasphemy, and as delivered up to Satan for it. Philetus is a Greek name as well as the other, though it is sometimes found in Roman inscriptions {h}: it is very likely that these were both in Asia, and probably in Ephesus, or near to it, since the apostle mentions them by name to Timothy, that he might beware of them.

{g} See Chambers's Cyclopedia in the word "Gangrene". {h} Vid. Kirchman. de Funer. Roman. l. 3. c. 10. p. 390.

2 Timothy 2:18

Ver. 18. Who concerning the truth have erred,.... That is, the two persons just mentioned; they fell from the truth, wandered and departed from it; they did not keep to the Scriptures of truth, but deviated from them; they missed that mark, and went astray into gross errors and mistakes; rejected the Gospel, the word of truth, in general, and particularly in

saying, that the resurrection is past already; and no other is to be expected; or that there was no future resurrection of the dead: their error was, as some think, that there is no other resurrection than that of parents in their children, who, though they die, live in their posterity; or than the resurrection of Christ, and of the saints, that rose at the same time; or rather, that there is no other resurrection than the spiritual one, or regeneration, which is a quickening of dead sinners, or the resurrection of them from the death of sin, to a life of grace; which seems to be the truest account of their principle, seeing this is what has been received and propagated by others since; though some have thought that they gave into the Palingenesia of the Pythagoreans, who supposed that when men die, their souls go into other bodies; and that these men imagined, that this is all the resurrection that will be: and others have been of opinion, that their notion was, that whereas the deliverance of the Jews out of the Babylonish captivity is signified by a resurrection of them, in Eze 37:1 that this is the resurrection they meant was past, and no other to be looked for; but that which has been fixed upon seems to be the truest account:

and overthrow the faith of some; the Ethiopic version reads, "of many"; that is, of nominal professors of religion; not of true believers, for true faith cannot be overthrown. Hence it follows,

2 Timothy 2:19

Ver. 19. Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure,.... That faith, which is the faith of God's elect, is of the operation of God, and is the gift of his grace, and of which Christ is the author and finisher, is firm and immovable as a foundation; it is solid and substantial; it is the substance of things hoped for; and it is permanent and abiding; it stands sure, being supported by the power of God, and prevalent mediation of Jesus Christ; and so cannot be overthrown by false teachers, when an historical faith, or the faith of temporary believers may: or the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is here meant, which was said to be past by the above false teachers; which is a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, without which the preaching of it is vain, and faith is vain; and which is a doctrine of God, of pure revelation; and this will be effected by his power: this stands sure upon the testimony of the patriarchs, prophets, and of Christ, and his apostles; upon the sure word and writings both of the Old and New Testament; and will stand its ground against all opposition, and will have its certain effect; for the Lord Jesus knows who are his distinctly and perfectly; nor will he lose them, nor anything that belongs to them; not their bodies, any more than their souls, nor any dust of theirs, but will raise it up at the last day. Or else the doctrine of eternal election may be here designed; which is the foundation of all spiritual blessings, of faith and of holiness, of joy and comfort here, and happiness hereafter, and even of complete and everlasting salvation; and is of God's laying, and is owing to his sovereign pleasure and free rich grace; and stands sure, not on the foot of works, but upon the unchangeable and unfrustrable will of God; and this secures from a final and total deception by false teachers: and also into the account may be taken the persons of God's elect themselves; who are of God's founding, and are as immovable as the firmest foundation whatever, even as rocks and mountains, and stand sure upon the rock of ages, Christ Jesus, and shall never perish; nor can they be deceived by false Christs and false prophets, but will remain safe and sound, when the faith of ever so many is subverted by them.

Having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his: faith is sealed and insured to God's elect, by his foreknowledge and predestination of them; so that they certainly have it, and shall never lose it: and their election is according to God's foreknowledge of them; which designs not a foresight of their faith, holiness, and good works, as the motives of his choosing them; nor a bare prescience of their persons; but such a foreknowledge as includes special love to them, which is distinguishing, unchangeable, and everlasting; and this being a seal affixed to all the elect, shows the distinguishing grace of God in their election, the secrecy of it, and its firmness and irrevocableness, and also the safety of the chosen ones; things being sealed, to distinguish one thing from another, and to keep things secret, or to render them firm and authentic. So, among the Jews, seals were used in buying and selling, that it might be known what was bought, and to confirm the purchase {i}. The inference from this comfortable doctrine is,

and let everyone that nameth the name of Christ; "or of the Lord", as the Alexandrian copy, and others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read; that is, whoever either are called by the name of Christ, or Christians, or whoever call upon his name: let them depart from iniquity; both from doctrinal iniquity, the errors and heresies of the above false teachers, which increased to ungodliness, and ate as a gangrene, and were the subversion of the faith of some; and from all practical iniquity, which those men, and their followers, especially the Gnostics, were guilty of; and, generally speaking, when men make shipwreck of faith, they put away a good conscience: and the apostle may also mean, that all such should depart from iniquitous men, from men whether of bad principles or practices, or both, and have no fellowship with them, it being unworthy of the name by which they were called. Some reference seems to be had to Nu 16:5 and so the false teachers, and their followers, may be compared to Korah, and his company, and the elect of God to Moses, and the Lord's people, who were bid to depart from the tents of those wicked men; and who stood firm, sure, and safe, when the earth opened, and swallowed up the others.

{i} Maimon. Hilchot Mechira, c. 7. sect. 6, 7, 8.

2 Timothy 2:20

Ver. 20. But in a great house,.... This simile the apostle makes use of, to show that it need not seem strange, nor should it be distressing to anyone's mind, to hear that men of such wicked principles and practices should be in the church of God, who are before mentioned; since in every great house or palace, the house of a nobleman, or palace of a king, there is a variety of vessels of different matter, and for different uses, and some are mean, despicable, and dishonourable; and so it is in the church of God: for by this great house, in the application of the simile, is not meant the world, as some think; for though that is a house built by God, who built all things; and is a very large one, and full of inhabitants, comparable to vessels; and there are in it both good and bad, as always have been; yet it is no startling thing to any man, that there should be bad men in it; rather the wonder is, that there should be any good; but by this house is meant the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth, **1Ti 3:15**
See Gill on "1Ti 3:15".

There are not only vessels of gold and of silver; persons who are members of the visible church, who are comparable to gold and silver, for their worth and value, and preciousness in the sight of Christ, who accounts them his jewels, and peculiar treasure; and for their excellency and usefulness in the church, by reason of those differing gifts bestowed upon them; and for their lustre and purity, both of doctrine and of life; and for their solidity and duration:

but also of wood, and of earth: there are others in a visible church state, who are like to dry wood, destitute of the grace of God, and are fit matter for Satan to work upon, and by them raise and increase the flames of contention and division, and will be fit fuel for everlasting burnings; and there are others who are sensual, and carnal, and worldly, who mind earth, and earthly things, and have no spirituality, nor spiritual mindedness in them:

and some to honour; who are designed for honourable service, and behave honourably, and are worthy of honour in the church; are honourable officers, or members in it; and are to the honour of Christ, and the Gospel; and shall at last enjoy honour, glory, immortality, and eternal life.

And some to dishonour; who are to the disreputation of the church, the dishonour of religion, and scandal of the Gospel; by them God is dishonoured, his ways evil spoken of, his doctrines blasphemed, and his name reproached; and who are themselves dishonourable among men now, and will be covered with shame and everlasting contempt hereafter.

2 Timothy 2:21

Ver. 21. If a man therefore purge himself from these,.... That is, if a man clears himself, and keeps himself clear from such men as Hymenaeus and Philetus, who are comparable to wooden and earthen vessels, and are dishonourable ones; if he shuns their defiling company, and polluting principles; if he keeps clear of their heresies, and is not carried away with the errors of these wicked men, and is not drawn aside by them into immoral practices, but stands fast in the faith, and departs from iniquity:

he shall be a vessel unto honour; he will be made manifest, and appear to be a vessel chosen to honour; and will be an honourable member of the church here, and will be honoured by Christ hereafter:

sanctified: he will appear to be one that is set apart by God the Father, and whose sins are purged away by the blood of Christ, and who is sanctified internally by the Spirit of God; for external holiness springs from internal holiness, and is, an evidence of it:

and meet for the master's use: the use and service of Christ, who is the master of the house; either for the ministry of the word, the administration of ordinances, or for some service or another, which he calls him to, and employs him in.

And prepared unto every good work; which an unregenerate man is not; he is to every good work reprobate; he is not capable of performing good works; he is not prepared for them, nor ready at them; but a true believer, one that is regenerated, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, he is created in Christ Jesus unto good works; and has in the performing of them right principles, aims, and ends, as well as a supply of grace, by which he is enabled to do them.

2 Timothy 2:22

Ver. 22. Flee also youthful lusts,.... Meaning not lusts of uncleanness, lasciviousness, and filthiness; nor any of those follies and vanities which the youthful age usually lusts and desires after, to which Timothy was not inclined; but such lusts as are apt to prevail with young ministers of the Gospel, such as vain glory, popular applause, seeking to have the pre-eminence, contentions with, and contempt of others, and the like.

But follow righteousness; the righteousness of Christ; or doing that which is just between man and man, and as one man would choose another should do to him; or rather integrity and faithfulness, in the ministry of the word, without seeking honour from men:

faith; both as a doctrine and grace; or veracity and truth in preaching the Gospel, striving for that, and not through ambition, and for the pre-eminence:

charity; or love, to God and Christ, and to his people; without which all gifts and works are of no avail; and which will engage a man to bear much, and to hope and believe all things:

peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart; peace is to be pursued and followed after with all men, as much as possible, but especially with the saints, the true worshippers of God; who draw nigh to him with true hearts, and call upon him in the sincerity of their souls: great care should be taken that peace be maintained with them; for they have great interest at the throne of grace; and God is nigh unto them, and hears their prayers. The Alexandrian copy reads, "with all that love the Lord".

2 Timothy 2:23

Ver. 23. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid,.... Such as have no solid wisdom in them, and are foreign from the Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, and are not useful and unedifying; such ought to be avoided, publicly and privately; they should not be started in the public ministry, nor attended to in private conversation; as being unworthy of the notice of a minister of the Gospel wise and learned, and useless to the church, and to his hearers.

Knowing that they do gender strife; about words, and contentions, which break the peace of churches, and hinder the profit of souls, and the progress of the Gospel.

2 Timothy 2:24

Ver. 24. And the servant of the Lord must not strive,.... By "the servant of the Lord" is not meant any believer in common, but a minister of the word, as Timothy was; such an one ought not to strive about words to no profit, about mere words, and in a litigious, quarrelsome manner, and for mastery and not truth; though he may, and ought to strive for the faith of the Gospel; this is praiseworthy in him:

but be gentle unto all men; not only to troubled minds, and wounded consciences, by supplying them with the precious promises and truths of the Gospel; and to backsliders, by restoring them in a spirit of meekness; but even to those who contradict the truth, and themselves, by mild and kind instructions.

Apt to teach, showing a willingness to instruct the ignorant and obstinate, and making use of abilities given for that purpose, notwithstanding all discouragements; for it follows,

patient, or "bearing evil"; not only the infirmities of weak brethren in the church, and the reproaches and persecutions of profane men in the world; but also the contradictions and oppositions of the adversaries of truth, so as not to be irritated and provoked, or to be discouraged, and desist from the defence of the Gospel.

2 Timothy 2:25

Ver. 25. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves,.... To the truth; resist it and deny it; or contradict some other tenets and principles of theirs, or the Scriptures, which they themselves allowed to be the word of God, and the rule of faith and practice, and so are self-convinced and self-condemned. These are to be instructed, being ignorant, and in a tender and gentle manner, though very perverse and obstinate.

If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth: repentance here designs a repentance of errors in principle, a change of mind upon conviction, and such as issues in a free and ingenuous confession, and acknowledgment of the truth before opposed; and such a repentance is the gift of God: it is he that opens the eyes of the understanding, and works conviction in the mind, and leads into all truth, as it is in Jesus; and induces men to repent of their errors, confess their mistakes, and own the truth; even as repentance of evil practices is not owing to the power of men, nor to the bare influence of means, but to the efficacious grace of God, it being a grant from him. And though this is not certain, that God will give repentance to such contradictors and blasphemers of his Gospel; yet as it is his will, that all his chosen ones should come to repentance, and that some of all sorts should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; and seeing these things have been brought about under and by the ministry of the word, it is an encouragement to the ministers of the Gospel to continue their instructions in the manner here directed.

2 Timothy 2:26

Ver. 26. And that they may recover themselves,.... Or "awake", and come to themselves, and appear to be sober, and in their right mind: the metaphor is taken from drunken men, who are overcharged, and are not in their senses, and being stupified fall asleep; and like these are persons intoxicated with errors and heresies, who when their minds are enlightened, and they are convinced of their evil tenets, repent of them, come to themselves, and acknowledge the truth, and so escape

out of the snare of the devil; for as carnal lusts and pleasures are the snares and nets, in which Satan, who may be compared to a fowler, catches some; so errors and heresies are those with which he ensnares others: "who are taken captive", or "alive", by him at his will; such are taken in his nets and snares, as creatures are taken alive, by fowlers, and huntsmen; and they are held fast, and become his captives, and his slaves, and do his will, being led by him to whatsoever he pleases; he works powerfully in them, and they readily comply with him, and obey his lusts. Though some understand this, not of the will of the devil, but of the will of God; and that the sense is, that such persons are held captive by Satan, as long as it is the pleasure of God, and no longer; when the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive is delivered; and so it is an encouragement to the ministers of the word to go on in instructing, hoping this may be the case. Others connect this phrase, "to his will" or "according to his will", as they differently render it, with the word, "recover": and then the meaning is, that such, repenting of their errors, might escape out of the snare of Satan, in which they were taken alive; that so they might do the will of God, by professing and holding fast his truths; or that their repentance, recovery, and escape out of Satan's snare and captivity, are according to the will of God, and his sovereign good pleasure.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Timothy 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO II TIMOTHY 3

In this chapter the apostle delivers out a prophecy of the last days, showing how perilous the times will be, describing the persons that will live in them, and what will be their end; and in opposition to these men, proposes himself an example in doctrine and sufferings; and encourages Timothy to persevere, and highly commends the sacred writings. The prophecy begins **2Ti 3:1** the description it gives of hypocrites, formal professors, and false teachers, that should rise up in the last days, and perilous times spoken of, is in **2Ti 3:2**. And these are compared to the magicians of Egypt for the corruption of their minds, the badness of their principles, and their opposition to truth, and for their exit, and the issue of things; they will be stopped in their progress, and their folly exposed, **2Ti 3:8** and as the reverse of these men, the apostle gives an account of his own doctrine, conversation, and sufferings; which he proposes to Timothy for imitation, as being well known to him, and as also the common state of all godly persons in this life, being a suffering one, **2Ti 3:10** nor can it be expected that it should be otherwise, since false teachers, who are wicked and deceitful men, grow worse and worse, **2Ti 3:13**. And then the apostle exhorts Timothy to abide by, and continue in the doctrines of the Gospel, from the assurance he had of the truth of them, from the consideration of his having learned them of the apostle, and especially from their agreement with the holy Scriptures, which he had knowledge of from a child, **2Ti 3:14** which Scriptures are commended, partly from the useful effect of them, making men wise unto salvation; and chiefly from the author of them, being by the inspiration of God; and also from the profitableness of them, both for doctrine and manners, and especially to furnish a Gospel minister for the work he is called unto, **2Ti 3:15**.

Ver. 1. This know also,.... That not only men of bad principles and practices are in the churches now, as before described in the preceding chapter, but that in succeeding ages there would be worse men, if possible, and the times would be still worse; this the apostle had, and delivered by a spirit of prophecy, and informed Timothy, and others of it, that he and they might be prepared for such events, and fortified against them:

that in the last days perilous times shall come; "or hard" and difficult times to live in; not by reason of the outward calamities, as badness of trade, scarcity of provisions, the ravages of the sword, &c. but by reason of the wickedness of men, and that not of the profane world, but of professors of religion; for they are the persons afterwards described, who will make the times they live in difficult to others, to live soberly, righteously, and godly; the days will be evil, because of these evil men: or they will be "troublesome" times, very afflicting and distressing to pious minds; as the places and times, and men and customs of them were to Lot, David, Isaiah, and others: and also "dangerous" ones to the souls of men; who will be beguiled by their fair speeches, and specious pretences, to follow their pernicious ways, which will bring destruction upon them; their doctrines will eat as a gangrene, and their evil communications will corrupt good manners, before observed. And these times will be "in the last days" of the apostolic age, and onward to the end of the world: the Jews generally understand by this phrase, when used in the Old Testament, the days of the Messiah; and which are the last days of the world, in comparison of the times before the law, from Adam to Moses, and under the law, from thence to Christ; and even in the times of the apostles, at least towards the close of them, great numbers of men rose up under the Christian name, to whom the following characters well agree, as the Gnostics, and others; and who paved the way for the man of sin, the Romish antichrist, whose priests and votaries are here likewise described to the life: so that these last days may take in the general defection and apostasy of the church of Rome, as well as those times, which followed the apostles, and those which will usher in the second coming of Christ. The Ethiopic version renders it, "in the latter days will come an evil, or bad year".

2 Timothy 3:2

Ver. 2. For men shall be lovers of their own selves,.... Not in a good sense, as men may be, and as such are who love their neighbours as themselves, and do that to others they would have done to themselves; and who take all prudent and lawful care to preserve the life and health of their bodies, and seek in a right way the salvation of their immortal souls: but in a bad sense, as such may be said to be, who only love themselves; their love to God, and Christ, and to the saints, being only in pretence, not in reality; and who do all they do in a religious way, from a principle of self-love, and to selfish and mercenary ends; either to gain glory and applause from men, or to merit something for themselves at the hands of God, without any view to the glory of God, the honour and interest of Christ, and the good of others; and ascribe all they have and do to themselves, to their industry, diligence, power, free will, worth, and merit, and not to the grace of God: and this character may be seen in the principles and practices of the church of Rome, in their doctrines of merit and free will, in works of supererogation &c. "Coveteous"; lovers of silver, greedy of filthy lucre, doing nothing but for money; everyone looking for his gain from his quarter; making merchandise of the souls of men; and which are reckoned among the wares of Babylon, the Romish antichrist, Re 18:13. "No penny, no pater noster".

Boasters; of their wealth and riches, of their honour and grandeur; I sit a queen, &c. Re 18:7, of their numbers, of their holiness, of the infallibility of their popes, of their having the true knowledge, and certain sense of the Scriptures, and of having all power in heaven and in earth.

Proud; as have been the popes of Rome; exalting themselves above all that is called God, above all princes, kings, and emperors of the earth; deposing one, excommunicating another, treading upon their necks, obliging them to hold their stirrups while they mounted their horses; the pride of the popes, cardinals, priests, and the whole clergy of the church of Rome, is notorious.

Blasphemers; of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ; sitting in the temple as God, as antichrist does, showing himself that he is God; assuming that to himself which belongs to God only, which is to forgive sin; calling himself Christ's vicar on earth; taking upon him to enact new laws, and to dispense with the laws of God, and Christ; and has a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies against God, his name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven, **2Th 2:4**.

Disobedient to parents: as many of the votaries of the antichristian church have been; who have withdrew themselves from under the care of their parents, and their fortunes too out of their hands, when they have been in their power; and have shut themselves up in cloisters, monasteries, and nunneries, without the leave and consent, or knowledge of their parents.

Unthankful: to God, for what is enjoyed by them, ascribing all to themselves, and to their merit and good works; and to men, to the princes of the earth, by whom they were first raised to, and supported in their dignity; as the popes of Rome were by the Roman emperors, and whom they in return tyrannized over, and dethroned at pleasure.

Unholy; notwithstanding his holiness the pope at the head of them their holy father, and holy mother church, and holy priests, and holy orders they talk of; yet are without the fear of God, or any regard to him, living most unholy lives and conversations, Da 11:37.

2 Timothy 3:3

Ver. 3. Without natural affection,.... To parents, or children, or wife; parents thrusting their children into religious houses, cloisters, &c. against their wills; children leaving their parents without their knowledge or consent; married bishops and priests being obliged to quit their wives, and declare their children spurious; with many other such unnatural actions.

Trucebreakers; or covenant breakers; stirring up princes to break through their treaties and covenants with one another; dissolving the allegiance of subjects to their sovereigns, and moving them to rebellion against them; loosing the marriage bond between husband and wife; making void all oaths, contracts, and agreements, among men, which stand in the way of their designs; teaching that no faith is to be kept with heretics.

False accusers; or devils, being like Satan, the accuser of the brethren, charging all that depart from their communion with schism and heresy.

Incontinent; though they pretend to the gift of continency, yet give themselves up to all lasciviousness, and work all uncleanness with greediness; or "intemperate" in eating and drinking, indulging themselves in rioting and drunkenness: "she hath lived deliciously", Re 18:7.

Fierce; like beasts of prey; such was Rome Pagan, in the times of the ten persecutions; and such has been Rome Papal, exercising the greatest cruelties and barbarities on the saints, being drunk with their blood.

Despisers of those that are good; or without love to good; both to good works, to which they are reprobate, notwithstanding all their pretensions to them, and bluster about them; and to good men, whom they hate.

2 Timothy 3:4

Ver. 4. Traitors,.... To their princes and sovereigns, whose deaths they have contrived and compassed, and whom they have assassinated and murdered; and have been betrayers of the secrets of persons, which they have come at by auricular confession to them; and of their best and nearest friends, to preserve and secure themselves.

Heady; rash, daring, bold, and impudent, fit to say and do any thing, though ever so vile and wicked.

High, minded; puffed and swelled up with a vain conceit of themselves, and speaking great swelling words of vanity;

lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; lovers of sinful pleasures, or the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, and not God; serving divers lusts and pleasures, and not God; making a god of their belly; sensual idolaters, delighting themselves in their carnal lusts, and not in the service of God.

2 Timothy 3:5

Ver. 5. Having a form of godliness,.... Either a mere external show of religion, pretending great piety and holiness, being outwardly righteous before men, having the mask and visor of godliness; or else a plan of doctrine, a form of sound words, a scheme of truths, which men may have without partaking of the grace of God; and which, with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, the church of Rome has; or else the Scriptures of truth, which the members of that church have, and profess to hold to, maintain and preserve; and which contains doctrines according to godliness, and tend to a godly life and godly edification:

but denying the power thereof; though in words they profess religion and godliness, the fear of God, and the pure worship of him, yet in works they deny all; and though they may have a set of notions in their heads, yet they feel nothing of the power of them on their hearts; and are strangers to experimental religion, and powerful godliness: or though they profess the Scriptures to be the word of God, yet they deny the use, the power, and efficacy of them; they deny the use of them to the laity, and affirm that they are not a sufficient rule of faith and practice, without their unwritten traditions; and that they are not able to make men wise, or give them a true knowledge of what is to be believed and done, without them; and that the sense of them is not to be understood by private men, but depends upon the infallible judgment of the church or pope:

from such turn away; have no fellowship with them, depart from their communion, withdraw from them, and come out from among them: this passage sufficiently justifies the reformed churches in their separation from the church of Rome.

2 Timothy 3:6

Ver. 6. For of this sort are they which creep into houses,.... Privily and unawares, in a clandestine manner, and insinuate themselves into families, by fawning and flattering, and under specious pretences to knowledge and virtue. The Syriac version uses a word, from whence comes adlwx, "Chulda", which signifies "a weasel"; suggesting, that their entrance into houses was like to the way of that creature, which is sometimes covered, and sometimes open: there was also a gate of the temple, which was called "Huldah"; whether there is any allusion in the word to that, may be inquired {k}.

And lead captive silly women; the coming of antichrist is after the working of Satan; as Satan attacked the woman, and not the man, and beguiled Eve and not Adam, so these his instruments and emissaries, work themselves into the affections of the weaker vessel, and into the weaker sort of women, as the diminutive word here used signifies; and gain upon them, instil their principles into them, attach them to their interests, captivate them to them, and lead them as they please:

laden with sins; covered with them, full of them, and so ready to receive any set of principles that would encourage them to continue in them; or else were pressed down with a sense of them, their consciences being awakened, and they under some concern on account of them, and so fit persons for such deceivers to gain upon, by pretending to great sanctity and religion, and by providing them with pardons and indulgences, and putting them upon penance, &c. though the former sense seems most agreeable, and is confirmed by what follows,

led away with divers lusts. The Alexandrian copy adds, "and pleasures"; that is, sinful ones; though this may be understood, not of unclean lusts, but of the itch and desire after new teachers, and new doctrines, and practices, which prevail in weak women, and by which they are governed and led away.

{k} Vid. L. Empercur in Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 3.

2 Timothy 3:7

Ver. 7. Ever learning,.... Some new notion and practice or another: and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; partly because of the teachers, which they heap up to themselves, who are unapt to teach, are blind and ignorant guides, and know not the truth, but are enemies to it, and resist it; and partly because of themselves, the sins they are laden, and the lusts they are led away with, which hinder them from coming to the knowledge of the truth.

2 Timothy 3:8

Ver. 8. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses,.... These were not Jews, who rose up and opposed Moses, as Dathan and Abiram did, as some have thought; but Egyptian magicians, the chief of those that Pharaoh sent for, when Moses and Aaron came before him, and wrought miracles; and who did in like manner by their enchantments, **Ex 7:11** upon which place the Targum of Jonathan has these words:

"and Pharaoh called the wise men and the magicians; and Janis and Jambres, the magicians of the Egyptians, did so by the enchantments of their divinations."

And the same paraphrase on **Ex 1:15** calls them by the same names; and this shows from whence the apostle had these names, which are not mentioned in any place in the Old Testament; namely, from the traditions and records of the Jews, with which he was well acquainted: there is no need to say he had this account by divine revelation, for some of the Heathens had knowledge of this story some such way. Numenius; the philosopher, speaks of Jannes and Jambres as Egyptian scribes, and famous for their skill in the magic art; and who opposed themselves to Moses when the Jews were driven out of Egypt {l}. Pliny also makes mention of Janme and Jotape as magicians; though he wrongly calls them Jews, and places Moses with them {m}, as Jannes likewise is by Apuleius {n}. It is commonly said by the Jews {o}, that these were the two sons of Balaam, and they are said to be the chief of the magicians of Egypt {p}; the latter of these is called in the Vulgate Latin version Mambres; and in some Jewish writers his name is Mamre {q} by whom also the former is called Jochane or John; and indeed Joannes, Jannes, and John, are the same name; and R. Gedaliah {r} says, that their names in other languages are John and Ambrose, which is not unlikely. Mention is made of the sons of Jambri in the Apocrypha:

"But the children of Jambri came out of Medaba, and took John, and all that he had, and went their way with it." (1 Maccabees 9:36)

whom Josephus {s} calls the sons of Amaraeus. These are said to be the persons that told Pharaoh, that a child should be born among the Israelites, by whom the whole land of Egypt should be destroyed, and which was the reason of Pharaoh's giving such a charge to the Hebrew midwives {t}; also the making of the golden calf is ascribed to them {u}; for, according to the Jews, they afterwards became proselytes; but these things are not to be depended on: however, certain it is, that they withstood Moses by their enchantments, and hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that, for a while, he would not let the children of Israel go. Now between these magicians, and the Papists before described, there is a very great agreement; as these men were Egyptians, so the Papists may be called, since Rome is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, Re 11:8 as the one were, so the other are idolaters, who worshipped devils, idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, **Re 9:20** and both sorcerers, using the magic art; **Re 9:21** and they both pretended to miracles; though what they did were no other than lying wonders, **2Th 2:9** and both agreed to keep the people of God in bondage, as much, and as long as they could: and particularly, as the magicians of Egypt withstood Moses,

so do these also resist the truth; the truth of one God, by their worshipping of images; and of one Mediator, by making use of angels, and saints departed, to intercede with God for them; and of justification by the righteousness of

Christ, by introducing the doctrine of works, of merit, and supererogation; and of pardon and cleansing by the blood of Christ, and atonement by his sacrifice, by their pardons, indulgences, penance, purgatory, and the sacrifice of the Mass; yea, they resist the Scriptures of truth, not allowing them to be a sufficient rule without their unwritten traditions, and even Christ, who is truth itself, in all his offices, prophetic, priestly, and kingly.

Men of corrupt minds, of bad principles, holding antichristian tenets, derogatory to the grace of God, and glory of Christ; giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; like Jannes and Jambres, who were given to magic arts, and were under the influence of Satan:

reprobate concerning the faith; men of no judgment in the doctrine of faith; who have not their senses exercised to discern good and evil, to try things that differ, and approve the more excellent, but call good evil, and evil good: or as those who are disobedient and wicked in their lives, are said to be to every good work reprobate, **Tit 1:16** so these are said to be reprobate to the faith; that is, to have no liking of it, or value for it, but despise it, hate it, and reject it; and upon that account, as they are like reprobate silver, whom God has rejected, they ought to be rejected by men.

{l} Apud Euseb. Praeparat. Evangel. l. 9. p. 411. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 30. c. 1. {n} Apolog. p. 248. {o} Targum Jon. in Numb. xxii. 22. & Zohar in Numb. fol. 78. 3. & Chronicon Mosis, fol. 6. 2. {p} Targum Jon. in Exod. i. 15. & vii. 11. & Zohar in Exod. fol. 75. 1. {q} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 85. 1. Midrash Shemot Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 97. 3. & Aruch. in voce. {r} Shalsheleth Hakabala, fol. 7. 1. {s} Antiqu. l. 13. c. 1. sect. 2. {t} Targum Jon. in Exod. i. 15. {u} Zohar in Exod. fol. 75. 1. & in Numb. fol. 78. 3. Shalsheleth, ib.

2 Timothy 3:9

Ver. 9. But they shall proceed no further,.... They may proceed to more ungodliness, and wax worse and worse in error; but they shall proceed no further than the magicians of Egypt, who did lying wonders, hardened Pharaoh's heart, and deceived him and the Egyptians; but could not destroy the Israelites, nor hinder their departure out of Egypt, when their time was come: so these wicked men do false miracles, harden the popes of Rome, and deceive the nations subject to them; but they cannot deceive the elect of God, nor destroy the church of God, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; nor could they hinder the reformation, or the departure of the Lord's people out of

Babylon.

For their folly should be manifest unto all [men], as theirs also was; as the folly of Jannes and Jambres was, when Aaron's rod devoured theirs; and when they could not produce lice, but was obliged to own to Pharaoh, that that plague was the finger of God; and when they could not stand before Moses, because of the boils that were upon them, **Ex 7:12**. And so the Arabic version renders it, "as is manifest the folly, or madness of these two"; and it is notorious in how many instances the frauds, impostures, tricks, and villanies of the church of Rome, and its votaries, have been detected and exposed; which have been the means of hindering them from proceeding any further than they have. The Alexandrian copy reads, "their understanding"; that which they pretended to have of divine things.

2 Timothy 3:10

Ver. 10. But thou hast fully known my doctrine,.... This, with what follows, is said in opposition to the characters, principles, and practices of the above wicked men, and for the imitation and encouragement of Timothy, and of others, whether ministers or private believers: the apostle calls the doctrine he delivered, "my doctrine": not because he was the author of it, or that it was a scheme of principles formed and contrived by him; but because it was the doctrine which he had received from God, which was given him to preach, and which he did preach purely and faithfully; otherwise it was the doctrine of Christ, and the same with that which was preached by the rest of the apostles; and which was the doctrine of the Scriptures, and was according to godliness; and as preached by him, was all of a piece, and without any adulteration, or mixture, and was open and manifest, and well known to Timothy, and others; for he used no hidden things of dishonesty, nor did he conceal his principles, or keep back anything that was profitable. And as well known was his

manner of life; both his civil life, how he spent his time, not in ease and idleness, but oftentimes in labour with his own hands; nor did he live in a sensual and voluptuous manner, but frequently was in hunger, and thirst, and nakedness; and likewise his religious life, and conversation, not only in the church, which was spent in the ministry of the word, and ordinances; but in the world, which, by the grace of God, was in simplicity and godly sincerity, in a very just, holy, and unblamable manner: his life was agreeable to his doctrine, and ornamental to his profession: and even the secrets of his mind, his views, his aims and ends in all he did, which are signified by his purpose, were open and manifest; and which were not to obtain glory and applause from men, nor to gather wealth and riches for himself; but that God might be glorified in the salvation of men; that Christ might be magnified both in his life and death; that his Gospel might be spread, his kingdom be enlarged, and that many souls might be converted and brought to the knowledge of him; and hence he became all things to all, that he might gain some. And as the doctrine of

faith, embraced, professed, and preached by him, was well known, so no less conspicuous was the grace of faith in him, with respect to his interest in God's everlasting love, in salvation by Jesus Christ, and in eternal glory and happiness; of which be had a full assurance, and which remained constant and firm in him to the end. Unless rather his faithfulness in the discharge of his ministerial work should be here designed, for which he was very remarkable; as also for his

longsuffering both towards those that were without, the open enemies and persecutors of the Gospel, and towards them that were within, the brethren, whose infirmities he bore; and also for the success of the Gospel as the husbandman has long patience, and waits long for the former and latter rain to which is added

charity; which suffers long, and is kind; and may include his love to God, to Christ, and to the souls of men; which was very great, and particularly to his countrymen, the Jews, and also to the Gentiles; and especially to the churches he was more immediately concerned with, and even to all the saints: this is left out in the Alexandrian copy: it follows,

patience; in bearing all indignities, reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; by which he was not in the least moved, but persevered with, great courage and constancy to the end.

2 Timothy 3:11

Ver. 11. Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch,.... In Pisidia; where the Jews that contradicted and blasphemed his doctrine, and envied his success, stirred up the chief of the city, both men and women, against him, and Barnabas; who persecuted them and expelled them out, of their coasts, Ac 13:45 and also at Iconium; where both Jews and Gentiles made an assault upon them, to use them ill, and stone them, Ac 14:5 and likewise at Lystra; where the apostle was stoned, and drawn out of the city, and left for dead, Ac 14:19. And these instances are the rather mentioned because they were done in those parts, where Timothy had lived, Ac 16:1 and so knew the truth of these things, not only from the apostle's mouth, but from the testimonies of others; and perhaps he might have been a witness to some of them himself;

what persecutions I endured: not only in the above places, but elsewhere; see a detail of them in 2Co 11:23,

but out of them all the Lord delivered me; see **2Co 1:10** **2Ti 4:17**, this he says to the glory of the grace and power of God, to whom he ascribes all his deliverances; and for the encouragement of Timothy, and other saints, under sufferings, who may hope and believe that the Lord will deliver them in his own time and way, Ps 34:19.

2 Timothy 3:12

Ver. 12. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus,.... All that live according to the will of God revealed in his word; and to the glory of God, as the end of all their actions; and which the grace of God in the Gospel, and in their own hearts, teaches them; and who have the principles of a godly life from Christ, and derive the fresh supplies of grace and life from him, to maintain it; in whom their life is hid, and who live by faith upon him; all such that live, and that will live so, are desirous of living after this manner; in whom God has wrought in them both to will and to do, and are concerned when it is otherwise with them: these

shall suffer persecution; it is the will of God, and the appointment of heaven; Christ has foretold it, that so it shall be; and he the head has suffered it himself, and it is necessary that his members should, that they may be conformed unto him; it is the way Christ himself went to glory, and through many tribulations his people must enter the kingdom; and this is the common lot and certain case of all the saints, in one shape or another; for though all do not suffer confiscation of goods, beating, scourging, imprisonment, or a violent death; yet all are more or less afflicted and distressed by wicked men, and are subject to their reproaches and revilings, which are a branch of persecution; and that for professing Christ, and living a godly life in him and under his influence: and since such suffer as Christians, and not as evildoers; and this is the common condition of the people of God, in this world, it should not be thought strange, but be cheerfully endured; to encourage to which is the apostle's view in this passage.

2 Timothy 3:13

Ver. 13. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse,.... By "evil men" are meant, not sinful men in common, as all are by nature and practice; nor only open profane sinners but rather wicked men under a form of godliness, as before; and who are full of wickedness and malice against truly godly persons, even as the devil himself, of whom the same word is used, when he is called the wicked one; and this is a reason why true professors of religion must expect persecution, seeing as there ever were, so there ever will be such sort of men, who will not grow better, but worse and worse. The word for "seducers", signifies sorcerers, enchanters, a sort of jugglers; and as the other, it well suits with the ecclesiastics of the church of Rome, who pretend to miracles, and do lying wonders, and by their sorceries deceive all nations, Re 18:23 and these "shall wax worse and worse"; in principle and in practice, in ungodliness, and in error, in wickedness and malice against the saints, and in the arts of deceiving; so the church of Rome is never to be expected to be better, but worse; at the time of the fall of Babylon she will be an habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird, Re 18:2

deceiving: not God, but themselves and others even all nations, excepting the elect of God; which they do by their good words and fair speeches, and by their show of devotion and religion, and by their pretended miracles and lying wonders:

and deceived by the old serpent, the devil, under whose power and influence they are, in whose snare they are taken, and by whom they are led captive, and will at last share the same fate with himself, and be cast into the same lake of fire and brimstone.

2 Timothy 3:14

Ver. 14. But continue thou in the things,.... That is, in the doctrines of the Gospel, and not be moved away from them, either through the malice or persecutions, or the cunning sleight of men that lie in wait to deceive; and which is an exhortation suitable to the godly in all ages: and what follow are so many reasons enforcing it:

which thou hast learned: not merely in a theoretical way, as arts and sciences are learned, but in a spiritual and experimental manner; a comfortable knowledge and experience of which he had attained unto; and were not like those in **2Ti 3:7**, who had been ever learning, and yet could not come to the knowledge of the truth: and since therefore he had learned the truths of the Gospel, and had attained to a good understanding of them, it was his duty, as it is the duty of all such, to abide by them:

and hast been assured of: the doctrines of the Gospel are certain things; they are truths without controversy; there is a full assurance of understanding of them, which men may arrive unto, and which ministers should, since they are to affirm them with certainty. Scepticism is very unbecoming one that calls himself a minister of the Gospel; and when a man is assured of the truth and reality of Gospel doctrines, it would be shameful in him to drop them, or depart from them:

knowing of whom thou hast learned them. The apostle means himself, though he modestly forbears the mention of himself: and it is another argument why Timothy should continue steadfastly in the doctrines of the Gospel, seeing he had learned them of so great an apostle of Christ; whose mission, as such, was abundantly confirmed by miracles and success, and who had received these doctrines by immediate revelation from Christ; so that it was all one as if Timothy had learned them from Christ himself. The Alexandrian copy reads the word "whom", in the plural number, as if the apostle referred to more teachers of Timothy than himself; however, he doubtless was the principal one.

2 Timothy 3:15

Ver. 15. And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures,.... And therefore must know that the doctrines he had learned were agreeable to them; and so is another reason why he should continue in them. The Jews very early learned their children the holy Scripture. Philo the Jew says {w}, ek prwthv hlikiav "from their very infancy"; a phrase pretty much the same with this here used. It is a maxim with the Jews {x}, that when a child was five years of age, it was proper to teach him the Scriptures. Timothy's mother being a Jewess, trained him up early in the knowledge of these writings, with which he became

very conversant, and under divine influence and assistance, arrived to a large understanding of them; and it is a practice that highly becomes Christian parents; it is one part of the nurture and admonition of the Lord they should bring up their children in: the wise man's advice in
Pr 22:6 is very good. From hence the apostle takes occasion to enter into a commendation of the sacred writings; and here, from the nature and character of them, calls them the

holy Scriptures; to distinguish them from profane writings; and that because the author of them is the Holy Spirit of God; and even the amanuenses of him, and the penmen of them, were holy men of God; the matter of them is holy, both law and Gospel; and the end of writing them is to promote holiness; the precepts, promises, and doctrines contained in them are calculated for that purpose; and even the account they give of the sins and failings of others, are for the admonition of men: and next these Scriptures are commended from the efficacy of them:

which are able to make thee wise unto salvation. Men are not wise of themselves; they are naturally without an understanding of spiritual things; and the things of the Spirit of God cannot be known by natural men, because they are spiritually discerned; particularly they are not wise in the business of salvation, of which either they are insensible themselves, and negligent; or foolishly build their hopes of it upon their civility, morality, legal righteousness, or an outward profession of religion: but the Scriptures are able to make men wise and knowing in this respect; for the Gospel is one part of the Scriptures, which is the Gospel of salvation, and shows unto men the way of salvation. The Scriptures testify largely of Christ, the Saviour; and give an ample account both of him, who is the able, willing, suitable, complete, and only Saviour, and of the salvation which is wrought by him; and describe the persons who do, and shall enjoy it: not that the bare reading of the Scriptures, or the hearing of them expounded, are able to make men wise in this way; but these, when accompanied with the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, are; when he who endited the Scriptures removes the veil from their eyes, opens their understandings, and gives them light and knowledge in them: and then may persons be said to be wise unto salvation, when they not only have a scheme of it in their heads, but are in their hearts sensible of their need of it, and know that there is salvation in no other but in Christ; and when they look to him for it, to his righteousness for justification, to his blood for peace, pardon, and cleansing, to his sacrifice for atonement, and to his fulness of grace for a continual supply, and to him for eternal life and glory; when they rejoice in him and his salvation, and give him all the glory of it: the apostle adds,

through faith which is in Christ Jesus: wisdom to salvation lies not in the knowledge of the law the Jew boasted of; nor in the works of it, at least not in a trust and confidence in them for salvation; for by them there is no justification before God, nor acceptance with him, nor salvation: but true wisdom to salvation lies in faith, which is a spiritual knowledge of Christ, and a holy confidence in him; and that salvation which the Scriptures make men wise unto, is received and enjoyed through that faith, which has Christ for its author and object; which comes from him, and centres in him, and is a looking to him for eternal life.

{w} De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1022. {x} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21.

2 Timothy 3:16

Ver. 16. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,.... That is, all holy Scripture; for of that only the apostle is speaking; and he means the whole of it; not only the books of the Old Testament, but of the New, the greatest part of which was now written; for this second epistle to Timothy is by some thought to be the last of Paul's epistles; and this also will hold good of what was to be written; for all is inspired by God, or breathed by him: the Scriptures are the breath of God, the word of God and not men; they are "written by the Spirit", as the Syriac version renders it; or "by the Spirit of God", as the Ethiopic version. The Scriptures are here commended, from the divine authority of them; and which is attested and confirmed by various arguments; as the majesty and loftiness of their style, which in many places is inimitable by men; the sublimity of the matter contained in them, which transcends all human understanding and capacity ever to have attained unto and discovered; as the trinity of persons in the Godhead, the incarnation of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, &c. The purity and holiness of them before observed, show them to be the word of him that is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; as also their harmony and agreement, though wrote by different persons, in different places, and ages, and at sundry times, and in divers manners; what seeming inconsistencies are observed in them may, with labour and industry, by divine assistance, be reconciled. The predictions of future events in them, as particularly concerning Josiah and Cyrus, by name, long before they were born, and especially concerning Jesus Christ, and which have had their accomplishment, and many others in the New Testament both by Christ and his apostles, are a proof that they could not be the writings of men, but must have the omniscient God for their author; the impartiality of the writers of them, in not concealing the mean extract of some of them, the sins of others before conversion, and even their sins and failings afterwards, as well as those of their nearest relations and dearest friends, strengthens the proof of their divine authority; to which may be added, the wonderful preservation of them, through all the changes and declensions of the Jewish church and state, to whom the books of the Old Testament were committed; and notwithstanding the violence and malice of Heathen persecutors, particularly Dioclesian, who sought to destroy every copy of the Scriptures, and published an edict for that purpose, and notwithstanding the numbers of heretics, and who have been in power, as also the apostasy of the church of Rome; and yet these writings have been preserved, and kept pure and incorrupt, which is not the case of other writings; nor are there any of such antiquity as the oldest of these: to which may be subjoined the testimony of God himself; his outward testimony by miracles, wrought by Moses and the prophets, concerned in the writings of the Old Testament, and by the apostles in the New; and his internal testimony, which is the efficacy of these Scriptures on the hearts of men; the reading and hearing of which, having been owned for the conversion, comfort and edification of thousands and thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand: and

is profitable for doctrine; for the discovering, illustrating, and confirming any doctrine concerning God, the being, persons, and perfections of God; concerning the creation and fall of man; concerning the person and offices of Christ, redemption by him, justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, reconciliation and atonement by his sacrifice, and eternal life through him, with many others. The Scripture is profitable for ministers to fetch doctrine from, and establish it by; and for hearers to try and prove it by:

for reproof; of errors and heresies; this is the sword of the Spirit, which cuts all down. There never was, nor is, nor can be any error or heresy broached in the world, but there is a sufficient refutation of it in the Scriptures; which may be profitably used for that purpose, as it often has been by Christ and his apostles, and others since in all ages:

for correction; of vice; there being no sin, but the evil nature of it is shown, its wicked tendency is exposed, and the sad effects and consequences of it are pointed out in these writings: for instruction in righteousness; in every branch of duty incumbent upon men; whether with respect to God, or one another; for there is no duty men are obliged unto, but the nature, use, and excellency of it, are here shown: the Scriptures are a perfect rule of faith and practice; and thus they are commended from the usefulness and profitableness of them.

2 Timothy 3:17

Ver. 17. That the man of God may be perfect,.... By the man of God may be meant everyone that in a special relation belongs to God; who is chosen by God the Father, redeemed by the Son, and called by the Spirit; but more especially a minister of the Gospel; for as it was usual to call a prophet under the Old Testament by this name, it seems to be transferred from thence to a minister of the New Testament, see **1Ti 6:11** and the design of the Scriptures and the end of writing them are, that both preachers of the word, and hearers of it, might have a perfect knowledge of the will of God; that the former might be a complete minister of the Gospel, and that nothing might be wanting for the information of the latter:

thoroughly furnished unto all good works, or "every good work"; particularly to the work of the ministry, which is a good one; and to every part and branch of it, a thorough furniture for which lies in the holy Scriptures; from whence, as scribes well instructed in the kingdom of heaven, do Gospel ministers bring forth things new and old, both for delight and profit: though this may be also applied to all good works in common, which the Scriptures point unto, give directions about, as well as show where strength is to be had to perform them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Timothy 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO II TIMOTHY 4

In this chapter the apostle charges Timothy to perform his office as an evangelist with great diligence, constancy, and faithfulness, with reasons for it; gives some hints of several particular persons mentioned, which made him very desirous that Timothy would come quickly to him; relates how things were with him when he made his first defence at Rome; and concludes the epistle with salutations, and his usual blessing. The charge is made in the most solemn manner in the sight of God; and of Christ, as Judge of quick and dead; and directs to the several parts of the ministerial work, and the manner in which they should be performed, **2Ti 4:1**. The reason of which charge is, because the time was hastening on that sound doctrine would not be endured, and men would depart from the truth to fables and false teachers, **2Ti 4:3**.

Wherefore the apostle repeats his charge and exhortation to Timothy, though in other words, to be vigilant, patient, courageous, and faithful in the discharge of his office, **2Ti 4:5** adding a fresh reason moving to it, taken from the apostle's death being at hand; which is expressed by a sacrifice, and by a departure out of the world, **2Ti 4:6** which leads him to give an account of his past conduct in fighting the good fight, finishing his course, and keeping the faith, **2Ti 4:7** and of his firm belief of eternal glory and happiness, **2Ti 4:8** and next he desires Timothy to use all diligence to come quickly to him, **2Ti 4:9** his reasons for which were, because he had scarce anybody with him: one had forsook him through love of the world; another was gone to Thessalonica; a third to Galatia, and a fourth to Dalmatia; only Luke the evangelist was with him; and as for Tychicus, he had sent him to Ephesus: he therefore desires he would bring Mark with him, and his cloak, books, and parchments he had left at Troas, **2Ti 4:10** and then takes notice of persons that had used him ill, particularly Alexander the coppersmith; he wishes justice might be done him; and advises Timothy to beware of him, because of his opposition to the doctrines of the Gospel, **2Ti 4:14** and also of others that neglected him, who forsook him when he defended himself: however, he prays that this might not be charged upon them; and observes the goodness of God in standing by him and delivering him; and expresses his faith and confidence that he should be delivered and preserved safe to eternal glory, **2Ti 4:16** and next follow the apostle's salutations of some persons at Ephesus, and an account of two others, one at Corinth, and another at Miletum; and a repetition of his request to Timothy, to come quickly to him, and before winter; and then some salutations of persons at Rome, sent by Timothy; and the whole is concluded with the apostle's usual benediction, **2Ti 4:19**.

Ver. 1. I charge thee therefore before God,.... Whose word the Scriptures are, and by whom they are inspired; who had made Timothy an able minister of the New Testament, and to whom he was accountable for his ministry:

and the Lord Jesus Christ; who is equal with God, and bestows ministerial gifts on men, and from whom Timothy had his; whose Gospel he preached; in whose cause he was embarked; and before whom he must appear, to give an account of his ministry, talents, and souls under his care:

who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; it is certain there will be a general judgment; the day is appointed, and Christ is ordained the Judge of all men; all judgment is committed to him, and he is ready to exercise it; for which he is abundantly qualified, being God omniscient and omnipotent; and which he will execute in the most righteous and impartial manner. The persons that will be judged by him are, "the quick and the dead"; by which are meant, not the different parts of men, their souls which are living and immortal, and their bodies which die and will be raised from the dead, though they will be judged in their whole persons; nor the different sorts of men, as good men, who are made alive by the Spirit and grace of God, and evil men, who are dead in trespasses and sins, and die in their sins; though this is a truth that God will judge both the righteous and the wicked: but rather by the "quick", are meant, such as will be found alive at Christ's coming; and by the "dead", such as having been dead, will be raised by him; and in short, the characters include all mentioned; who must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The time when this will be, is,

at his appearing, and his kingdom; which may be considered as an hendyadis, expressive of one and the same thing; and so the Syriac version renders it, "at the revelation of his kingdom"; or as two things, the one as antecedent and preparatory to the other; the former refers to the appearance of Christ at the last day. He appeared frequently to the Old Testament saints in an human form; and he really appeared in human nature in the fulness of time; and after his resurrection to his apostles and others, and even after his ascension to some; and he appears in a spiritual manner to believers in all ages; but to them that look for him, he will appear a second time in person, in a most glorious manner: for the present he is received up into heaven, where he is as it were hid, and is unseen to corporeal eyes; but in his due time he will be manifested in his own and his Father's glory, and in the glory of his angels; and this appearance will be greatly to the advantage of the saints, who will then appear in glory, and be like him, and see him as he is, and hence they look for it, and love it; and at this time will be the judgment, and then will the kingdom of Christ take place. Christ has a kingdom now, and ever had, which is not of this world, but is of a spiritual nature; and which will be more manifest in that latter day, by the spread of the Gospel, the numerous instances of conversion, and the revival of powerful religion and godliness, which we commonly call the spiritual reign of Christ; but the kingdom here designed, is the personal reign of Christ, for a thousand years: at the beginning of which will be the judgment of the saints, who having the crown of righteousness given them by the Judge, will reign with him as kings and priests; and at the end of this period will be the judgment of the wicked. The charge made before these two divine Persons, God and his Son Jesus Christ, follows.

2 Timothy 4:2

Ver. 2. Preach the word,.... Either Christ the essential Word, who is the sum and substance of the Gospel ministry; or the word of truth and faith, the Gospel of salvation, the word of righteousness, peace, and reconciliation by Christ; which is to be preached, or published, in like manner as heralds proclaim the will of their princes; openly, publicly, and with a loud voice, without adding to it, or taking from speaking out the whole, and keeping back no part of it; and that with all courage and boldness: some copies read, "the word of God"; and the Ethiopic version, "his word"; that is, the word of Christ:

be instant in season, out of season; that is, be constant and assiduous in the work of the ministry; be always and wholly in it, either preparing for it, or performing it; or doing those things which are annexed to it, or follow upon it; redeem time, and take every opportunity of dispensing the mysteries of grace, as a faithful steward of them; not only make use of the common and stated seasons for the ministration of the word and ordinances, but embrace every other that offers; make use not only of those seasons which may seem commodious and advantageous both to preacher and hearer, and promise usefulness and success, but even such as may seem incommodious and disadvantageous to flesh and blood; such as times of persecution and opposition; but none of these things should deter and move from the preaching of the Gospel. Several parts of the ministerial function to be insisted on and attended to are next mentioned, as being within the solemn charge given before God and Christ:

reprove; errors, and men for their errors and heresies; make use of convincing arguments taken out of the Scriptures, which are profitable for reproof of this kind; and which reproof sometimes is to be given with sharpness, as the case requires, that men may be sound in the faith.

Rebuke; or chide for sin; some privately, others more publicly, according to the nature and circumstances of the offence; some more gently, others more roughly, as is needful.

Exhort; to all the duties of religion respecting God and man; to show love, and to do good works; to hold fast the profession of faith, and walk as becomes the Gospel of Christ; and to persevere in faith and holiness: or "comfort", as the word may be rendered; for as the ministers of the Gospel are in some cases to be "Boanergeses", sons of thunder, so other cases they should be Barnabases, sons of consolation; and comfort distressed minds, by preaching the comfortable doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness and salvation by Jesus Christ:

with all longsuffering: or patience. The success of the Gospel ministry should be patiently waited for as husbandmen do for the fruits of the earth. Those that give into error, and oppose themselves to the truth, should be instructed in meekness; and those who are overtaken in a fault should be gently rebuked, and restored in such a spirit; and every exhortation should be pressed as persons are able to bear it:

and doctrine; in a way that is instructive and teaching, and in agreement with the doctrine of the Scriptures, which are profitable for that purpose.

2 Timothy 4:3

Ver. 3. For the time will come,.... This is a reason of the solemn charge above given: the time referred to was future, when the apostle wrote, but quickly came on; and the characters of it have appeared more or less in all ages since; and in none more than in ours:

when they will not endure sound doctrine; the Gospel which contains the wholesome words of Christ, and is sound itself, having no corruption in it, and salutary in its effects to the souls of men; and yet such is the depravity of some men, both in principles and practice, that they cannot receive it, nor bear to hear it, turn their backs on it, express their indignation at it, and treat it not only with neglect, but with ridicule and contempt:

but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers; not being content with the ministry of one man only, or of a few, though of their own sort; but must follow many, and have heaps of them; which seems to express not only the number of false teachers which they accumulate to themselves, but the confused and indiscreet choice they make of them; and that after their own lusts; choosing to hear such as either indulge them in their sinful lusts and pleasures; or are agreeable to their private corrupt sentiments, in opposition to the generally received doctrine of faith. It is a blessing to have pastors and teachers after God's heart, and who preach according to the word of God; these feed men with knowledge and understanding, **Jer 3:15** but it is a curse upon a people, when they are left to choose teachers after their hearts' lusts:

having itching ears; always desirous of new things, as the Athenians of old; or loving to have their ears scratched and tickled with smooth things; that are pleasing and agreeable to natural men, and carnal minds; as the purity of human nature, the power of man's free will, the excellency of his righteousness, and the merit of his works, and the like; see Isa 30:9. Now, this being the case, should not discourage, but rather animate the ministers of the Gospel to preach it; for should they desist, in all likelihood the Gospel would soon be gone.

2 Timothy 4:4

Ver. 4. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth,.... The solid truths of the Gospel, not being able to bear the hearing of them:

and shall be turned unto fables; things idle, trifling, useless, and, unprofitable; and which are no better than old wives' fables; some respect may be had either to Jewish fables, or to the miraculous mythologies of the Gentiles, or of the Gnostics, and others: but in general, it includes everything that is vain, empty, and senseless; and this is to be considered as a just judgment upon them; that since they like not to retain the knowledge of the truth, but turn away their ears from it, God gives them up to a reprobate mind, a mind void of sense and judgment, to attend to things idle and fabulous.

2 Timothy 4:5

Ver. 5. But watch thou in all things,.... Relating to himself, his doctrine, and conversation; and to others, to feed the flock of God under his care, to know the state of them, and care for them; to give the time of night, and notice of approaching danger, and see the laws of Christ put in execution; either in allusion to shepherds, who watch over their flocks night and day; or to watchmen that are upon the walls of cities, or go about them; or to the priests and Levites in the temple:

endure afflictions; the Alexandrian copy adds, "as a good soldier of Jesus Christ", as in **2Ti 2:3** meaning reproaches and persecutions for the sake of the Gospel, from without, and all trials and exercises from within, through the infirmities and ill conduct of the saints themselves; all which are to be endured patiently, cheerfully, and courageously; so as not to be moved by them to desist from the work of the ministry:

do the work of an evangelist; which may design either an officer, then in the church, distinct from apostles and prophets on the one hand, and pastors and teachers on the other; and was below the former, and above the latter; and was aiding and assisting to the apostles, and such an one Timothy may be thought to be: or it may intend a preacher of the Gospel in common; and to do the work of such an one is not to read lectures of morality, or to preach up justification and salvation by the works of the law; or to mix law and Gospel together, and confound them both; but to preach peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation alone by Jesus Christ, and through the free grace of God:

make full proof of thy ministry: the work of the ministry, which lies in preaching the Gospel, and administering ordinances, and doing all the duties belonging to it, which is to fulfil it, or discharge it; and which gives full proof of a man's being a true and faithful minister of the word; particularly when he diligently and constantly attends to his work; seeks not his own things, but the things of Christ; cheerfully and patiently suffers for Christ and his Gospel, and lives an agreeable life and conversation.

2 Timothy 4:6

Ver. 6. For I am now ready to be offered,.... Or poured out, as a libation, or a drink offering; or as the blood was poured out at the bottom of the altar; which is expressive of martyrdom, and shows that the apostle knew what death he should die; for which he was habitually ready; and this sacrifice of himself was not to atone for sin, his own, or others; Christ's death was the only sacrifice for sin, and that is a complete one, and needs no other to be added to it; but this was in the cause of Christ, and for the confirmation of the Gospel, and the faith of the saints in it: so covenants have been confirmed by libations or drink offerings of wine; and this was an offering acceptable unto God, in whose sight the death of his saints is precious; as the wine in the drink offering is said to cheer God, that is, to be acceptable to him:

and the time of my departure is at hand; death is not an annihilation of man, neither of his body, nor of his soul; the one at death returns to dust, and the other to God that gave it; death is a dissolution of soul and body, or a dissolving of the union that is between them, and a resolution of the body into its first principles; hence the Syriac version renders it, "the time in which I shall be dissolved"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "the time of my resolution". Death analyzes men, and reduces them to their first original earth; it is a removing of persons from one place and state to another; from an house of clay, from this earthly house of our tabernacle, to an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, to everlasting habitations, and mansions in

Christ's Father's house. This phrase, "a departure", is an easy representation of death, and supposes an existence after it; See Gill on "Php 1:23". Now there is a "time" for this; saints are not to continue here always; this is a state of pilgrimage, and a time of sojourning, and which is fixed and settled; the time for going out of this world, as well as for coming into it, is determined by God, beyond which there is no passing; the number of men's days, months, and years, is with him; and the apostle knew partly from his age, and partly from his situation, being in bonds at Rome, and it may be by divine revelation, that his time of removing out of this world was very near; and which he mentions, to stir up Timothy to diligence, since he would not have him long with him, to give him counsel and advice, to admonish him, or set him an example.

2 Timothy 4:7

Ver. 7. I have fought a good fight,.... The fight of faith; the same as in **1Ti 6:10** See Gill on "1Ti 6:10":

I have finished my course, or race; the race of life set before him, his course of years; his days were extinct, the grave was ready for him, and he for that; his last sands were dropping, and he was just going the way of all flesh; or else he means the course of his ministry, which he desired to finish with joy, and was now finishing;
Ac 13:25 he was now got to the end of his line, to Rome, where he was to be a martyr for Christ, Ac 23:11 so that he now concluded his work was done, and his warfare accomplished:

I have kept the faith; by which he means, not so much the grace of faith, that was kept by Christ, the object, author, and finisher of it, and through his effectual grace and powerful intercession; but rather the profession of faith, which he had held fast without wavering; and chiefly the doctrine of faith, which was committed to his trust, which he had kept pure and incorrupt against all opposition; unless his faithfulness and integrity in the ministerial work should be thought rather to be intended; and which sense is favoured by the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, which render it, "I have kept my faith"; or have been faithful to my trust, as a good steward of the mysteries of God; not concealing and keeping back any thing that was profitable, but declaring the whole counsel of God; and now what remained for him was the crown of righteousness; and this he says for the comfort and encouragement and imitation of Timothy and others. The phrase seems to be Jewish; it is said {y} by the Jews, that he that does not keep the feast of unleavened bread, is as he who does not atwnmyhm ryjn, "keep the faith of the holy blessed God".

{y} Zohar in Exod. fol. 51. 2.

2 Timothy 4:8

Ver. 8. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,.... The happiness of the future state of the saints is signified by a crown, on account of the glory and excellency of it; and in perfect agreement with the character of the saints, as kings; and who are raised to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory, and have a kingdom prepared for them; and this is called a crown "of righteousness", because it comes through the righteousness of Christ; it is that which gives a right unto it, and without which it cannot be enjoyed; and because it is obtained and possessed in a righteous way, and not by force and usurpation, as crowns sometimes are: it is God the Father's free gift unto his children, what they are born heirs unto, and have a meetness for, through regenerating and sanctifying grace, and have a legal title to it through the righteousness of Christ. Moreover, this may be expressive of the perfect holiness and righteousness of the heavenly state, and of the saints in it, wherein will dwell none but righteous persons, and who will be entirely without sin. And this happiness, signified by a crown, is "laid up"; in the covenant of grace for the saints, which is ordered in all things and sure; and in Christ, in whose hands their persons are, and their grace is, and with him also is their life of glory hid and secured: and this also is laid up in heaven, and reserved there, and that

for me, and thee; for particular persons, for all the vessels of mercy, for all that are chosen in Christ Jesus, and redeemed by his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit;

which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day. By the Lord is meant the Lord Jesus Christ; as is evident from his character, as a Judge, for the Father judgeth no man; and from mention being made hereafter of his appearing: Christ is ordained Judge of quick and dead, for which he is abundantly qualified, and a "righteous" one he will be; he is righteous as God, and as man, and as Mediator, in the discharge of all his offices, and so he will be as a Judge, in the administration of that office; righteousness will be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins; and from Christ, under this character, the apostle expected to receive all his future glory and happiness; and that both in a way of gift, as a free grace gift from him, and through him, and in a way of righteousness; and this seems to be a Jewish way of speaking. One of the Septuagint interpreters, whom Ptolomy king of Egypt sent for from Judea, to translate the law of Moses into Greek, in answer to a question put to him by the king, uses this phrase of stefanov dikaiosunhv, "a crown of righteousness"; and which he represents as the gift of God {z}:

at that day; either at the day of death, the time of his dissolution, which was at hand; or at the day of the resurrection, and of the last judgment, when Christ will appear under the above character: and the apostle further observes, to the comfort and encouragement of Timothy, and others, that this happiness was not intended and prepared for himself only, but for others:

and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing; that is, his appearing at his second coming; which is to be loved, and so looked for by the saints, not only because it will be glorious in itself, in its attendants and consequences, but will be of great advantage to the saints; Christ will appear unto salvation to them, and so to their joy; they will appear with him in glory, and be like him, and enjoy the everlasting vision of him. The devils believe this appearance of Christ, but tremble at it; wicked men will behold him, and fear; saints know, believe, and love both Christ and his appearing; and such will wear that crown: the Ethiopic version renders it, "who love him at his coming"; all that love him now, will love him then.

{z} Aristeae Hist. 72. Interpr. p. 91, Ed. Oxon.

2 Timothy 4:9

Ver. 9. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. From Ephesus, where Timothy was, to Rome, where the apostle was; and this request did not arise purely from a desire of seeing Timothy, as in **2Ti 1:4** but rather because he had some things to say to him, relating to the care of the churches and the good of the interest of Christ, which he chose not to write with ink and paper; and he desires the rather that he would use diligence, and hasten his coming to him; partly because winter was coming on, when travelling would not be so safe and comfortable, **2Ti 4:21** and partly because the time of his death was at hand, **2Ti 4:7** and also because he was almost alone.

2 Timothy 4:10

Ver. 10. For Demas hath forsaken me,.... Of this person,
See Gill on "Col 4:14". It does not appear by what is said in this clause, and in the following, that he entirely apostatized; he might forsake the apostle, and yet not forsake Christ and his interest, or make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience: his faith might be right, though low, and his love sincere, though not fervent; and through a fear of persecution, and loss of life, he might be tempted to leave the apostle, and withdraw from Rome, for his own safety; which though it was far from being commendable in him, yet may be accounted for in this state of frailty and imperfection, consistent with the grace of God; and it should seem that he afterwards was delivered from this temptation, and returned to the apostle, **Col 4:14** for when those epistles were written, both Timothy and Mark, who are here wrote for, **2Ti 4:9** were with the apostle, **Col 1:1** and **Phm 1:1** and especially he ought to be thought very well of after all this, if Demas is only a contraction of Demetrius, and he is the same who is so much commended many years after this, in **3Jo 1:12**,

having loved this present world, not the sins and corruptions of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; such a love is inconsistent with the love of the Father and the grace of God; nor an immoderate love of worldly substance, or of money, which is the root of all evil; but a love of life, or of a longer life in this present world; he was desirous of living longer in this world, and chose not to hazard his life by staying with the apostle, a prisoner at Rome; and therefore left him, and provided for his own safety and security: and is departed unto Thessalonica: which perhaps was his native country; and however he was at a sufficient distance from Rome, where he might judge himself safe; and if he was a worldly and earthly minded man, this was a fit place for him, being a place of trade and business: and this doubtless gave rise to a tradition, that he afterwards became a priest of the idol gods among the Thessalonians. Epiphanius {a} places him among the heretics Ebion and Cerinthus, as if he was one of them.

Crescens to Galatia; he might not depart on the same account as Demas, but might be sent by the apostle to Galatia, to visit the churches there, to set things in order, and establish them in the faith, and bring an account of their state. Epiphanius {b}, instead of Galatia, reads Gallia, or France; and so does Eusebius {c} and the Ethiopic version; and Jerom asserts, {d}, that Crescens preached in France, and was there buried; though others say he was bishop of Chalcedon in Galatia, and put him among the seventy disciples;
See Gill on "Lu 10:1". The Syriac version calls him "Crispus", and the Arabic version "Priscus".

Titus to Dalmatia; who Titus was is well known; the place he went to, Dalmatia, is a country in Europe, a part of Illyricum, where the apostle had preached, See Gill on "Ro 15:19". Pliny says {e}, that part of Pannonia, which lies to the Adriatic sea, was called Dalmatia; it had its name from Dalmius, a city in it. The Alexandrian copy reads "Dermatia". Here the apostle had doubtless been useful for the conversion of souls, and planting of churches, and therefore sent Titus thither, to assist them in their state and condition, and bring him an account of them. For in the "second" and "third" centuries we read of churches in Dalmatia; and likewise in the "fourth" century; for there were bishops from Dalmatia in the synod at Sardica; and in the "fifth" century, Glycerius was bishop of Salo, a city in this country; and in the "sixth" century, one Malchus was bishop of the Dalmatian church {f}.

{a} Contra Haeres, Haeres. 51. {b} Ibid. {c} Hist. Eccl l. 3. c. 4. {d} Catalog. Script. Eccles. sect. 13. p. 90. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 3. c. 25. {f} Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg, cent. 2. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 6. c. 9. p. 425. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 7. cent 6. c. 2. p. 8.

2 Timothy 4:11

Ver. 11. Only Luke is with me,.... The beloved physician, who wrote the Gospel that bears his name, and "the Acts of the Apostles", and was a constant companion of Paul's in his travels and sufferings:

take Mark, and bring him with thee; who might be at Ephesus, or somewhere in Timothy's way as he came to Rome. This seems to be the same with John Mark of Jerusalem, the son of Mary, the sister of Barnabas, and who was with Paul and Barnabas in their travels, and who parted from them at Pamphylia; on whose account, and for that reason, there was so great a difference between Paul and Barnabas, as to separate upon it; but now the apostle had entertained a better opinion of him, and was reconciled unto him, and was very desirous of his company and assistance; and which he had, **Col 4:10**.

For he is profitable to me for the ministry; that is, of the Gospel, to assist in preaching it.

2 Timothy 4:12

Ver. 12. And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. To supply the place of Timothy, while he came to Rome, and continued there: so careful was the apostle of the church there, that they might not be without the ministry of the word during his absence; see **Eph 6:20**.

2 Timothy 4:13

Ver. 13. The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus,.... About the word here rendered a "cloak", interpreters are not agreed: some take it for a garment, and about this they differ; some would have it to be a dignified robe, such as the Roman consuls and senators of Rome wore; which is not likely, this being not suitable to the apostle's character, state, and circumstances. Others take it to be a courser and meaner garment, wore in cold and rainy weather, to preserve from the inclementencies of it; and winter now coming on, **2Ti 4:21** the apostle sends for it; which he perhaps had left at Troas in the summer season, as he came: but others take it to be a kind of desk or scrutoire, to put papers in, or a chest for books, a book press; and so the Syriac version renders it; and which agrees with what follows. Jerom understands it of a book itself, of the Hebrew volume of the Pentateuch {g}. Troas, where this cloak, or book press, or book was, was a city in Asia Minor, that stood upon, or near the same place where old Troy stood, and from whence it seems to have had its name, and lay in Timothy's way from Ephesus to Rome;
See Gill on "Ac 16:8" see Gill on "Ac 20:7" and as for Carpus, he was Paul's host when he was at Troas. Some make him to be first bishop of Laodicea, and then of Crete; he is reckoned among the seventy disciples, and is said to be bishop of Berytus in Thrace; See Gill on "Lu 10:1".

When thou comest, bring with thee; he would have him call for it at Troas as he came by, and bring it with him:

and the books; that were in it, or were there, besides the Hebrew Pentateuch: the apostle was a great reader of books, of various sorts, both Gentile and Jewish, as appears by his citations out of the Heathen poets, and his acquaintance with Jewish records, Ac 17:28. And though he was now grown old, and near his exit, yet was mindful and careful of his books, and desirous of having them to read; and herein set an example to Timothy and others, and enforced the exhortation he gave him, **1Ti 4:13**.

But especially the parchments: which might contain his own writings he had a mind to revise before his death, and commit into the hands of proper persons;

or some observations which he had made in his travels, concerning persons and things; though it is most likely that these were the books of the Old Testament, which were written on parchments, and rolled up together; and hence they are called the volume of the book; and these the apostle had a special regard for, that whatever was neglected, he desired that these might not, but be carefully brought unto him.

{g} Epist. ad Damas. qu. 2. p. 12. Tom. 3.

2 Timothy 4:14

Ver. 14. Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil,.... This seems to be the same person that was at Ephesus in the tumult, when the apostle was there, Ac 20:33 and whom he afterwards delivered to Satan, along with Hymenaeus, for blasphemy, **1Ti 1:20**. It was very likely he had lately been at Rome, though now returned to Ephesus, and had done great injury to the apostle's character, and had reproached and reviled him as a man of bad principles and practices; his business is mentioned, to distinguish him from any other of that name, and to show the insolence of the man, that though he was an illiterate person, and in such a mean station of life, yet took upon him to resist the apostle and his doctrine.

The Lord reward him according to his works; which may be considered either as an imprecation upon him, as knowing him to be a wicked blasphemer, and a reprobate person; and which arose, not from private resentment, and on account of the private injury he had done to him; but from a pure zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his name, without mingling his own spirit and passions with it: or as a prophecy, or declaration of what would be; and so the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read, "the Lord will render to him", &c.

2 Timothy 4:15

Ver. 15. Of whom be thou ware also,.... For he was now at Ephesus; and since he was such a malicious, ill natured, and troublesome person, as well as a blasphemer, an heretic, and had been delivered up to Satan, it was very advisable to shun his company, and have no conversation with him, and be upon the guard against him, that he might have no opportunity of doing hurt to him, or to the church at Ephesus:

for he hath greatly withstood our words: or doctrines; the truths of the Gospel preached by Paul and Timothy, which he opposed himself to, and resisted with all his might, and endeavoured to confute and overthrow; and wherein he was deficient in argument, he made up with railing and blasphemy; and this was the true reason of the apostle's imprecations on him, and why he would have Timothy beware of him, and avoid him, and not the personal injury he had done him.

2 Timothy 4:16

Ver. 16. At my first answer no man stood with me,.... Meaning, that when he made his first defence against the charges laid unto him in one of the courts of judicature in Rome, no man appeared in his cause, to speak to his character, to be a witness for him, or plead his cause:

but all men forsook me; all his friends, all that came with him from Judea, or from Asia; see **2Ti 1:15** being timorous of coming into danger, and of the loss of their lives; as the disciples of Christ were, when he was apprehended, who all at that time forsook him and fled:

[I pray God] that it may not be laid to their charge; that this sin may not be imputed to them, or they be punished for it, but that it might be pardoned; so differently does he express himself on the account of these, than on the account of the coppersmith; he sinning through malice, wilfully and obstinately, these through surprise, temptation, and weakness.

2 Timothy 4:17

Ver. 17. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me,.... Either personally appearing to him, as in Ac 23:11 or by the ministry of an angel, Ac 27:23 or else by granting him his gracious presence, which was what Christ had not when he was forsaken by his disciples: the presence of God or Christ is more than all friends whatever, and is often enjoyed by the believer, when they drop him; and is a bulwark against all enemies and fears of them; if God is with him, and on his side, though friends fail, and enemies rage, he has nothing to fear:

and strengthened me; inwardly with strength in his soul, with might in his inward man, unto all longsuffering with joyfulness: he was weak in himself, and could do nothing without Christ; Christ was his strength, in him it lay, and to him he looked for it; of which he often had experience, and now afresh; he strengthened him to plead his own cause, to make his defence without fear; he gave him presence of mind, boldness, courage, and intrepidity, freedom of thought and expression; and put it into his heart what he should say, and gave him a mouth and wisdom, which his adversaries could not resist. All which he takes notice of with thankfulness, admiring the divine goodness to him, and taking nothing to himself: and the end of this was,

that by me the preaching might be fully known; that is, that the doctrine of the Gospel, preached by him, might be made fully known by him; as to the author and original of it, to be of God, and not of men; and as to the matter of it, to be spiritual, and not concerning the things of the world; and as to the effects and consequences of it, to have no tendency to raise sedition and disturbances in commonwealths, but, on the contrary, promote peace and love:

and that all the Gentiles might hear; in Caesar's palace, or in the courts of judicature at Rome, and all over Rome, and from thence in other parts of the empire, what a Gospel it was that was preached by the apostle; and if not by his personal ministry, at least by his epistles he afterwards wrote in prison: however, the effect of his defence, the Lord being with him, and strengthening him, was his deliverance:

and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion; from death he was threatened with, which, like a lion, gaped upon him to devour him; or from Satan the roaring lion, who desired to have had him, and sought to have intimidated him, and brought him to have denied his Lord, to have deserted his cause, and blasphemed his name; or else from Nero the Roman emperor, so called from his power and fierceness. So Tiberius is called by Marsyas, Agrippa's freeman, when he brought the news of his death to his master {g}; and Ahasuerus by Esther {h}; and Nero himself is called a civil beast by Apollonius Tyanaeus {i}; though some think that not Nero, but Helius, whom he had appointed governor in his room, he being at this time in Greece, is here meant, before whom Paul was tried, and out of whose hands he was delivered.

{g} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 7. sect. 10. {h} Apocryph.

"Give me eloquent speech in my mouth before the lion: turn his heart to hate him that fighteth against us, that there may be an end of him, and of all that are likeminded to him:" (Esther 14:13) {i} Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 4. c. 12.

2 Timothy 4:18

Ver. 18. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work,.... From wicked and unreasonable men, and all their attempts upon him, and from all afflictions by them; not but that he expected afflictions as long as he was in the world, but he knew that God would support him under them; and in his own time and way deliver out of them; and at last entirely by death, when he should be no more attended with them; and from all the temptations of Satan, and his evil designs upon him, and from sin and iniquity; not that he expected to live free of Satan's temptations, or without sin, but he believed that he should be kept from sinking under the former, and from being under the dominion of the latter; and should not be left to deny his Lord, desert his cause, blaspheme his name, and apostatize from him:

and will preserve [me] unto his heavenly kingdom, the ultimate glory and happiness of the saints in heaven; so called, both because of its nature and place, and to distinguish it from the church, which is Christ's kingdom in this world, though it is not of it; and from his personal reign with his saints on earth, for the space of a thousand years; whereas this will be for ever: and unto this the apostle believed he should be preserved, as all the saints will be, notwithstanding the persecutions of the world, the temptations of Satan, and their own corruptions; for they are secured in an everlasting covenant, and in the hands of Christ; and have not only angels to encamp about them, and salvation, as walls and bulwarks to them, but God himself is a wall of fire around them, and they are kept by his power unto salvation: and besides, this heavenly kingdom is prepared for them, and given to them; they are chosen to be heirs and possessors of it; they are called unto it, and Christ is gone to receive it in their name, to prepare it for them, and will come again and introduce them into it:

to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen: of the present deliverance, and of all others he had, or should receive, as well as of the provision of the heavenly kingdom for him, and of his preservation to it.

2 Timothy 4:19

Ver. 19. Salute Prisca and Aquila,.... The same with Priscilla and Aquila: and so the Complutensian edition, and some copies, read here; who were of the same occupation with the apostle, and with whom he wrought at Corinth, and whom he left at Ephesus; and who seem by this salutation to have continued there, Ac 18:2.

And the household of Onesiphorus: who also lived at Ephesus, and whose kindness to the apostle, when he was at Rome, is before mentioned, **2Ti 1:16**.

2 Timothy 4:20

Ver. 20. Erastus abode at Corinth,.... He was chamberlain of that city, Ro 16:23 who being sent along with Timothy into Macedonia, Ac 19:22 very probably went from thence into Achaia, to Corinth, his native place, where he stayed.

But Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick. Trophimus was an Asian, of the city of Ephesus, the same that is spoken of in Ac 20:4. Some say he suffered martyrdom the same day the Apostle Paul did; but others say, that after that time he was bishop of Arles in France. This man went with the apostle into Asia, and from thence to Jerusalem, and came along with him in his voyage to Rome, but falling sick by the way, was left at Miletum. Some, instead of Miletum, would read Melita, that being the island Paul, and the ship's company, escaped to, when they were shipwrecked, Ac 28:1 here it is supposed Trophimus was left sick. Others have observed, that there was a city called Miletus in the island of Crete, under which Paul sailed, Ac 27:7, see footnote {j}, and is the place intended; but there is no need to suppose either of these; no doubt Miletum, near to Ephesus, is meant; and as the apostle sailed by the coast of Asia, Ac 27:7, on which shore Miletum was, there is no difficulty in supposing him put ashore there. The Alexandrian copy reads "Melotus".

{j} Plin. l. 4. c. 12.

2 Timothy 4:21

Ver. 21. Do thy diligence to come before winter,.... When travelling would not be so safe and comfortable: the apostle consults Timothy's good, as well as his own advantage.

Eubulus greeteth thee. Eusebius {k} makes mention of one of this name of Manganaea, who suffered martyrdom with one Adrian at Caesarea; but he cannot be thought to be the same with this, since he suffered in the times of Dioclesian.

And Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia; the first of these is said to be a person of note at Rome, and of the senatorial order, and the father of two pious virgins, Praxis and Pudentiana. He is put among the seventy disciples; See Gill on "Lu 10:1". Mention is made by Pliny the younger {l}, of Servilius Pudens, a Roman; and Martial, a poet of those times, speaks {m} of the marriage of Pudens and Claudia, and of Aulus Pudens. Linus is said to be the first bishop of Rome after the martyrdom of Peter and Paul {n}. Though some will have it, that he was bishop of Rome in the time of Peter, and that he and one Cletus were co-pastors with Peter; and Platina, who wrote the "Lives of the Popes", first makes Peter to consecrate Clement his successor, and to commend the chair, and the church of God, to him, and yet afterwards places Linus, and not Clement, as his immediate successor; yea, puts Cletus also before Clement; so much are the Papists at a loss about, and so little account can they give of the boasted succession of their popes from Peter, that they are not agreed about his immediate successor. This Linus is said to be born at Volterra in Tuscany, and to be of the family of the Moors, whose father was one Herculaneus, who sent him at twenty two years of age to Rome, for the sake of his studies; at which time, as is pretended, Peter came thither, by whom he was converted, and with whom he continued as a fellow helper in the Gospel. He is moreover said to be bishop of Rome ten years, (Platina says eleven,) three months, and twelve days, and to have suffered martyrdom under Saturninus the consul, whose daughter he had delivered from a diabolical possession, and was buried in the Vatican. He is reckoned among the seventy disciples of Christ, but very wrongly;
See Gill on "Lu 10:1". The name is a Latin one, and is often mentioned by Martial the poet. And Claudia is the name of a woman, very likely of considerable note. Some think she was the wife of Pudens, the same Martial speaks of, and is said to be a Briton.

And all the brethren: that is, of the church of Rome, these all sent greeting to Timothy.

{k} Eccl. Hist. l. 8. de Martyr. Palestin. c. 11. {l} L. 10. ep. 10. {m} Epigram. l. 4. ep. 10. 23. 1. 6. ep. 45. l. 7. ep. 10. {n} Iren. adv. Haeres. l. 3. c. 3. Euseb. Ec. Hist. l. 3. c. 2, 4. & l. 5. c. 6.

2 Timothy 4:22

Ver. 22. The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit,.... To counsel and advise in every difficult matter; to comfort under every distress; to supply with all grace in every time of need; and to strengthen and fit for every part and branch of duty.

Grace be with you, Amen: which is the apostle's common salutation in all epistles. The Syriac version renders it, "grace be with thee"; but the Greek copies read in the plural, "with you"; which shows that the epistle was designed for the use of the whole church, as well as of Timothy. The subscription follows, which is not in many ancient copies, and is not to be depended on.

The second epistle unto Timotheus; so far is right; this is certainly the second epistle to Timothy:

ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians: this is omitted in the Syriac version; nor is it likely, much less certain, that he ever was bishop of Ephesus, or ordained as a bishop of any place, but was rather an evangelist, **2Ti 4:5**,

was written from Rome: this is evident from his being a prisoner when he wrote it, **2Ti 1:8**. And yet in the Alexandrian copy it is said to be written from Laodicea:

when Paul was brought before Nero the second time; but whether he was before Nero at all is a question, or only before a Roman governor or judge.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Titus 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS

Titus, to whom this epistle is inscribed, was a Greek, an uncircumcised Gentile, and so remained; nor did the apostle circumcise him, as he did Timothy, when he became his companion; nor did the apostles at Jerusalem oblige him to be circumcised, when Paul took him with Barnabas along with him thither, **Ga 2:1**. He was a man of great grace, and large gifts, and very dear to the apostle: he calls him his brother, his partner, and fellow helper, and says he walked in the same spirit, and in the same steps, **2Co 2:13**. He was employed by the apostle much, and sent into various parts, on different occasions: he sent him to Corinth, to finish there the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, **2Co 8:6** and to Dalmatia, to know the state of the saints there, and to confirm them in the faith, **2Ti 4:10**. As he was a Greek, so his name is a Greek name, yet used among the Romans, as Titus Vespasian, and others {a}; and among the Jews, so we read of R. Chijah bar ojyj, "Titas" {b}, and of R. Judah ben Titas {c}: when and where this epistle was written, is not very easy to determine; some think it was written between the first and second time the apostle was in bonds at Rome; and certain it is, that he was not in bonds when he wrote it, for he desires Titus to meet him at Nicopolis, **Tit 3:19** from whence some have supposed it to be written, as the subscription shows; but others think it was wrote much earlier, and when the apostle was at Ephesus, towards the close of his three years stay there, before he went into Macedonia; but it seems rather that it was written when he returned from Macedonia into Greece: he left Titus at Crete, and staying in Greece three months, he intended to have sailed to Syria, but was prevented by the Jews lying in wait for him, upon which he steered his course to Macedonia again; and as he was going there, or when there, writes this letter to Titus, to come to him at Nicopolis. The occasion of it was partly the judaizing preachers, and false teachers, that got into that island, and were corrupting the principles of the people; and partly the unbecoming conversation and practices of some professors of religion: and whereas the apostle had left Titus in Crete, to finish what he had begun, and to put the churches in order, and see that they had proper officers, particularly pastors over them, that they might be taken care of, both with respect to doctrine and practice; the design of this epistle is to lay before Titus the several qualifications of a pastor, which might be instruction to him, and to the churches, in the choice and ordination of them; and to stir him up to zeal and diligence in refuting false teachers, and dealing with heretics; and to put him upon exhorting the saints to the discharge of their duty, in every branch of it, from the best principles, by arguments taken from the grace of God, and the doctrines of it. This epistle is supposed to be written about the year 55.

{a} Vid. Martial. Epigram. l. 1. ep. 18. l. 7. ep. 48. {b} T. Hieros. Trumot, c. 8. fol. 45. 3. {c} T. Hieros. Trumot Biccurim, fol. 65. 4. & Succa, fol. 55. 4.

INTRODUCTION TO TITUS 1

This chapter contains the inscription of the epistle, the apostle's salutation and preface to it; an account of the qualifications of an eider, or pastor of a church; a description of these teachers; and a charge to Titus to rebuke the Cretians for their errors and immoralities. The inscription and salutation are in **Tit 1:1**, in which the writer of the epistle is described by his name and office; by the faith and hope he had; and by the ministration of the Gospel, committed to him by the order of Christ: and the person to whom it is written is mentioned by name; and is described by the spiritual relation he stood in to the apostle, and to whom he wishes grace, mercy, and peace: the preface to the epistle is in **Tit 1:5** which gives the reason of the apostle's leaving Titus in Crete, which was to set things in order there, and to ordain elders in all the churches; which leads him to point at the necessary qualifications of them for his direction; some of which respect their moral life and conversation, and others their doctrine, and are in **Tit 1:6** and on occasion of the latter, and which is a reason why the elders should be sound in the faith, and hold it fast, the apostle takes notice of the false teachers that were in Crete, whom he describes by their noisy, vain, and deceitful talk; by their being pernicious and hurtful to whole families; and by their covetousness and sensuality, which is confirmed by a testimony out of one of the Cretian poets, **Tit 1:10** wherefore he charges Titus sharply to rebuke either these false teachers, or those they had corrupted, that they regard sound doctrine, and not Jewish fables, and the commandments of erroneous men, **Tit 1:13** and instances in things forbidden in the law of Moses as unclean, which were not now to be attended to by those who were pure in heart, and sound in faith, to whom all things were pure and lawful; and as for others that were impure, whose minds and consciences were defiled, and were unbelieving, nothing was pure to them, **Tit 1:15** and who are further described as professors in words of the true knowledge of God, and yet practically were deniers of him; and as abominable in their nature and actions, disobedient to law and Gospel, and unfit for any good work whatever, **Tit 1:16**.

Ver. 1. Paul, a servant of God,.... So James styles himself, **Jas 1:1** and others of the apostles, as Peter and Jude, call themselves the servants of Jesus Christ; and as does the Apostle Paul also; and both seem to be esteemed by them as high characters and titles of honour, by which they chose to be described and known. Paul, before his conversion, was a servant of sin, of divers lusts and pleasures, and which he owns in this epistle, **Tit 3:3** but being called by grace, he became free from the vassalage of sin, and became a servant of God, and of righteousness; and henceforward, from a principle of grace, and being constrained by love, served the Lord, and yielded obedience to his commands and ordinances, with all readiness and cheerfulness: though this character belongs to him in a higher sense than it does to believers in common; and respects his ministerial service, or his serving God in the Gospel of his Son; in which he, and others, were eminently the servants of the most high God, whose business greatly lay in showing unto men the way of salvation.

And an apostle of Jesus Christ: constituted, qualified, and sent by him to preach his Gospel; and who had his mission, commission, and doctrine from him; and was an ambassador of his, who represented him, and preached him; and had a power of working miracles to confirm his mission and ministry; and so had all the signs and proofs of an apostle in him; See Gill on "Ro 1:1".

And according to the faith of God's elect: which may either denote the agreement there was between the ministry of the apostle, and the faith of the choice and eminent saints of God, under the former dispensation; he saying no other things than what Moses, and the prophets did; and laying no other foundation of salvation than they did, and which is therefore called the foundation of the apostles and prophets; and directing souls to the righteousness, sacrifice, and blood of Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, to which the faith of Old Testament saints looked, and by whose grace they were justified, pardoned, and saved, as we are: or else the way and manner in which he became an apostle; it was "by, in, or through the faith of God's elect", as the Syriac version renders it; he was chosen of God, and brought as such to believe in Christ, and then called to be an apostle: or rather this may regard the end of his apostleship, and be rendered, "unto the faith of God's elect"; that is, either he was appointed an apostle, to preach the doctrine of faith, which once he destroyed, and which is but one, and is common to all the elect, and what is commonly received, and embraced by the elect of God, in all ages; or to be a means and instrument of bringing the elect of God to that faith in Christ, which is peculiar to them; see **Ro 1:5**. There are some persons who are styled the elect of God; these are not all men, some are vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, ungodly men, foreordained to condemnation and given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned; nor the Jews only, nor all of them, for though, as a nation, they were chosen, above all others, to many outward privileges, yet they were not chosen to special grace, and eternal glory; only a remnant, according to the election of grace: but these are some of both, Jews and Gentiles; some of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; these were chosen in Christ from eternity, and are the peculiar objects of the affection and care of God, whom he calls, justifies, and glorifies: and there is a special "faith" that belongs to these; which is a spiritual looking to Christ, a going to him, a laying hold and leaning on him, and trusting in him for salvation; and this faith is peculiar to the elect of God; all men have it not, and those that have it, have it through the free gift of God; nor is it given to any but to the chosen ones. The reason why the Jews did not believe in Christ, was, because they were not of this number, Joh 10:26. And this faith is secured and, made sure to them by their election; they are chosen to it, and through it to salvation; they believe in consequence, and by virtue of it; and certainly obtain it in all ages, as well as righteousness, life, and salvation; and it is that by which they are known to be the elect of God: and the apostle mentions it in this form, and manner, to distinguish it from other faith; the faith of devils, and of reprobates, and the historical and temporal faith of hypocrites, and nominal professors.

And the acknowledging of the truth; by which is meant the Gospel, often called the truth, and the word of truth; in distinction from that which was shadowy, the ceremonies of the law; and in opposition to that which is false, it being from the God of truth, concerning Christ, who is the truth; and containing nothing but truth, and what is led into by the Spirit of truth. Now to preach, spread, and defend this, was the apostle constituted in his office as such; and which he did preach with all clearness and faithfulness, to bring souls to a spiritual and experimental knowledge of it, and so to an acknowledgment, a public owning and professing of it:

which is after godliness; the Gospel is a doctrine according to godliness; the truths of it have an influence, both on internal and external godliness; they direct to, and promote the worship and fear of God, and a religious, righteous, sober, and godly life and conversation.

Titus 1:2

Ver. 2. In hope of eternal life,.... Or "for the hope of eternal life"; in order to bring souls to the hope of it. This is another end of the Gospel ministry, as to bring God's elect to faith in Christ, and to the knowledge and acknowledgement of the truth, as it is in Jesus, so to the hope of eternal glory and happiness: in a state of nature, they are without the grace of hope, or any true ground and foundation of it; and though it is the gift of God's grace, and is implanted on the soul by the Spirit of God in regeneration; yet the Gospel is the means of producing it at first, as well as afterwards encouraging and increasing it; for in it, Christ the foundation of hope is proposed, and set forth before awakened and convinced sinners: the object of this hope is "eternal life"; not anything now seen and enjoyed, for that is not hope; not anything in this present life, but something future; a life of perfect bliss and happiness with Christ to all eternity; which is a hope laid up in heaven, an inheritance reserved there; a life which is secured in the hands of Christ, which he has a power to give, and does give to all his sheep, and is the gift of God through him: and of which it is further said,

which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; eternal life is a "promise", and so of free grace, and not by the works of the law, which is inconsistent with a promise: it is the promise of God, who is faithful to his word, and "can not lie"; being the God of truth, that can neither deceive, nor be deceived: this does not contradict his omnipotence, but argues the perfection of his nature, which cannot admit of anything that implies weakness and mutation: and this promise was made before the world was, as early as the choice of God's elect in Christ, and the gift of grace to them in him; as early as the covenant was made with him, and he was set up as the Mediator of it; who was present to receive this promise as their head and representative for them, and to whom it was made as federally considered in him, and in whom it was secured for them; see **2Ti 1:1**.

Titus 1:3

Ver. 3. But hath in due times manifested his word,.... Either Christ, his essential Word; or the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation; or rather his word of promise of eternal life in Christ Jesus:

through preaching; through the ministry of the word by the apostles; in which Christ is revealed in the glory of his person, and the fulness of his grace, and in the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and in which the Gospel, that was ordained before the world was, and is the fellowship of the mystery which was hid in God, is published; and in which the promise of eternal life, which lay in God's heart, in the covenant of grace, and in the hands of Christ, and which with Christ, and his Gospel, were hid under the dark types, shadows, and sacrifices of the law, is clearly made known: "in due times"; appointed by God, agreed between the Father and the Son, and suitable to the state, case, and condition of men; when the law of Moses, and the light of nature, legal sacrifices, and moral power, had been sufficiently tried, the one in the Jewish, the other in the Gentile world; and after that the Son of God was become incarnate, which was in the fulness of time; and when he had suffered for the ungodly, which was in due time; see **1Ti 2:6**.

Which is committed unto me; that is, which preaching or ministry of the word, the Gospel, and the dispensation of it, which, as a trust, was deposited in the hands of the apostle, and of which he was a faithful steward: according to the commandment of God our Saviour; either God the Father, so called, **Tit 3:4** compared with **Tit 1:6** and who is the Saviour of all men in a providential way, and of all the elect in a way of special grace, by his Son Jesus Christ; and by whom the apostle was appointed and separated to the preaching of the Gospel; and by whom this was committed to his trust: or rather the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly and properly God, the great God, and our Saviour, **Tit 2:13** and who is the only Saviour of lost sinners; and he it was that personally appeared to Paul, and made him a minister of the word, committed the Gospel to him, and gave him a commandment, and orders to preach it among the Gentiles, Ac 26:15.

Titus 1:4

Ver. 4. To Titus, mine own son after the common faith,.... Not in a natural, but in a spiritual sense; the apostle being the instrument of his conversion, as he was of the conversion of Onesimus, and of many of the Corinthians, and therefore is said to beget them, **Phm 1:10** and so was their spiritual father, and they his children: Titus was, in this sense, his "own son", or a true son, a legitimate one; a true convert; one really born again; a sincere believer, an Israelite indeed: and this he was "after the common faith"; either the doctrine of faith, which is but one, and is common to all the saints; or the grace of faith, which though different in degrees, yet is alike precious faith in all; the same for nature, kind, object, operation, and effects: and this phrase is used to show in what sense Titus was son to the apostle; as he was a believer, and no otherwise.

Grace, mercy, and peace, &c. which is the apostle's usual salutation; see **1Ti 1:2**. The word "mercy" is left out in the Claromontane copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

Titus 1:5

Ver. 5. For this cause left I thee in Crete,.... Not in his voyage to Rome, Ac 27:7 but rather when he came from Macedonia into Greece, Ac 20:2. Crete is an island in the Mediterranean sea, now called Candy; See Gill on "Ac 2:11". Here Paul preached the Gospel to the conversion of many; but not having time to finish what he begun, left Titus here for that purpose:

that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting; that is, form the young converts into Gospel order, into a regular Gospel church state; settle a proper discipline among them; instruct them more largely into the doctrines of the Gospel; and correct their manners, and direct them in everything, both with respect to faith and practice:

and ordain elders in every city: for this island, though it was not above fifty miles in breadth, and two hundred and seventy in length, yet had an hundred cities in it {d}; and it seems as if the Gospel had been preached in most, if not all of them, and churches were formed: however, in as many of them as there were churches, the apostle would have Titus see to it, and take care that they had proper officers fixed in them, particularly elders, pastors, or overseers, to preach the Gospel, and administer the ordinances to them, to watch over them in the Lord, and put the laws of Christ's house in execution, and keep up a strict discipline in it, according to the will of God. What Titus was to do in this affair, was to put the churches upon looking out, and choosing from among themselves proper persons for such service, and to direct, assist, and preside at the elections and ordinations of them: for we are not to suppose, that the ordination of elders was the sole act of Titus, or alone resided in him; but in like manner as Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every church, by the suffrages of the people, signified by the stretching out of their hands; in which they directed, presided, and also assisted in prayer, with fasting, Ac 14:23

as I had appointed thee; when he left him at Crete; when he gave him orders and instructions, both with respect to the persons, and their qualifications, whom he would have ordained, and with respect to the manner in which it should be done: the former of these he repeats in the following verses. From all which it clearly appears, that there were churches in Crete, and pastors placed over those churches; very probably the Cretes, who were at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, **Ac 2:11**, and heard Peter's sermon, and were converted by him, some of them returning to their own country, might first bring the Gospel to this island, and lay the foundation of a Gospel church state here. It seems by what is said in this text, that the Apostle Paul was in this island himself, and preached the Gospel, and after him Titus, whom he left behind; and if any credit is to be given to the subscription of this epistle, he was the first bishop of the church in it: and it is certain, that in the "second" century there were churches in this island, particularly at Gortyna, and other places, to whom Dionysius {e}, bishop of Corinth, wrote letters, in which he greatly extols Philip their bishop; and in another letter of his to the Gnossians, or to the church at Gnossus, another city in Crete, he makes mention of Pinytus as their bishop, and whom he commends for his orthodox faith, great knowledge of divine things, and care of his flock; and both these lived in the times of the Emperors Antoninus Verus and Commodus {f}; which churches, no doubt, continued in the "third" century, since in the "fourth" we read of bishops sent from Crete to the synod at Sardica: and in the "fifth" century, a bishop of Gortyna in Crete is reckoned among the bishops in the council of Chalcedon: and in the "sixth" century, Theodorus, bishop of the same place, subscribed in the fifth synod at Constantinople: and in the "seventh" century, Paul archbishop of Crete, Basil bishop of Gortyna, with several other bishops of churches in the island, were present at the sixth synod at Constantinople: and in the "eighth" century, as appears from the acts of the Nicene synod, Helias was bishop of Crete, Anastasius bishop of Gnossus, a city in it, and Melito, Leontins, and Galatas, bishops of other places in the same island: and in the "ninth" century, a bishop of Gortyna, in defence of the cause of Christ, became a martyr {g}; so far churches, and bishops, bearing the Christian name, are to be traced in this island.

{d} Plin. l. 4. c. 12. Mela, l. 2. c. 14. Solin, c. 16. {e} Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 24. {f} Sophronius in Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccl. c. 38. 40. {g} Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 5. c. 9. p. 425. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 255. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 6. cent. 9. c. 2. p. 4.

Titus 1:6

Ver. 6. If any be blameless,.... In his outward life and conversation, not chargeable with any notorious crime;
See Gill on "1Ti 3:2",

the husband of one wife; See Gill on "1Ti 3:2":

having faithful children; legitimate ones, born in lawful wedlock, in the same sense as such are called godly and holy, in **Mal 2:15** **1Co 7:14** for by faithful children cannot be meant converted ones, or true believers in Christ; for it is not in the power of men to make their children such; and their not being so can never be an objection to their being elders, if otherwise qualified; at most the phrase can only intend, that they should be brought up in the faith, in the principles, doctrines, and ways of Christianity, or in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Not accused of riot; or chargeable with sins of uncleanness and intemperance, with rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness; or with such crimes as Eli's sons were guilty of, from which they were not restrained by their father, and therefore the priesthood was removed from the family: "or unruly" not subject, but disobedient to their parents; See Gill on "1Ti 3:4". See Gill on "1Ti 3:5".

Titus 1:7

Ver. 7. For a bishop must be blameless,.... This shows that a bishop and an elder is the same; and the Syriac version here renders it, "an elder"; the character or qualification necessary to him is the same as before, and in like manner to be understood; unless it should more particularly refer to his faithfulness in the discharge of his office: since it follows,

as the steward of God; one appointed by God over his household and family, the church, to give to everyone their portion of meat in due season; one that dispenses the manifold grace, or various doctrines of the grace of God, and mysteries of Christ; and of such an one it is required, that he be faithful, both to his Lord and master, to the trust committed to him, and to the persons under his care.

Not selfwilled; not doing things in the worship and house of God, in the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances, according to his own will, but according to the will of God, revealed in his word; otherwise what he does will come under the name of will worship: or obstinate, stubborn, and inflexible, conceited of his own sense and judgment, and resolute to have his own will and way in all things relating to the affairs of God's house. The word signifies one that is pleased with himself, has an over weening opinion of himself, is proud and haughty, and despises others:

not soon angry: but slow to wrath, which shows a man to be a man of understanding, and fit to teach others, which an angry man is not. It is a saying of R. Hillell {h}, that

"neither one that is ashamed (to ask questions) learns well, nor one that is "angry" teaches well"

And the Jews say {i}, that

"the law is not rightly explained but by one that is not angry."

Hence, that direction {k},

"for ever let a man be meek as Hillell, and not angry as Shammai;"

who were two of their principal doctors, the heads of their schools, in the times of Christ: a man that rules his own spirit, and has the command of his temper and passions, is fit to govern in the church of God.

Not given to wine, no striker, nor given to filthy lucre;
See Gill on "1Ti 3:3".

{h} Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 5. {i} Buxtorf. Lex. Talmud. col. 2026. {k} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 30. 2.

Titus 1:8

Ver. 8. But a lover of hospitality,.... See Gill on "1Ti 3:2"

a lover of good men, or "of good"; the Syriac version renders it, "of good things"; as prayer, preaching, reading, meditation, spiritual conversation, and every religious exercise: or "of good men"; for such an elder or bishop has chiefly to do and converse with; and if he is not a lover of them, their company will be disagreeable to him, and he will be of no advantage to them; and if he does not love the souls of men, he will not naturally care for their state, or be concerned for their good.

Sober: in body, using moderation in diet and dress; and in mind, being prudent, modest, and humble, and thinking soberly of himself, and others, as he ought.

Just; righteous in his dealings with men, giving to everyone their due; upright and sincere in his conversation with the saints; and faithful in his counsel, admonitions, and reproofs.

Holy; devout towards God, constant in all religious exercises in the closet, family, and church; and living soberly, righteously, and godly in the world.

Temperate; in eating and drinking; continent from the lusts of the flesh; and even abstaining from those things which might be lawfully used, though inexpedient, for the sake of the weak, the peace of the church, and the glory of God.

Titus 1:9

Ver. 9. Holding fast the faithful word,.... The doctrine of the Gospel, so called because it is true, and to be believed; it is the word of truth, and truth itself, and contains nothing but truth; and because it never deceived any, that gave credit to its doctrines, and its promises; and because it is pure, unmixed, and unadulterated, and is the sincere milk of the word; and because in it is a glorious display of the faithfulness of God to his perfections, to his holiness and justice, to his law, and to his covenant, word, and oath; and of the faithfulness of Christ, to him that appointed him and to his covenant engagements, and which has appeared in the discharge of his various offices: and this is not only to be held forth by the elder, but to be held fast, and tenaciously abode by; in opposition to all wavering about it, departure from it, dropping or concealing any part of it, and pusillanimity concerning it; whatever temptations there may be to the contrary, through popular applause on the one hand, and reproaches and persecutions on the other; and though there may be many that may endeavour to wring it out of his hands; see **2Ti 1:13**,

as he hath been taught; or "according to doctrine": that is, according to the doctrine of the Scriptures, Christ, and his apostles; according to the doctrine that lies in the Scriptures that was delivered by Christ, and preached by his apostles; whatever is according to that should be held fast:

[or] which is for doctrine, which tends to teach, instruct, and edify the minds of men, that ought to be constantly abode by: or as the elder himself has been taught, not by men, in a theoretical way, as logic, rhetoric, and other arts and sciences are taught; for such who are only taught the faithful word in this way, are not likely to hold it fast, in a time of temptation; but as he has been taught it experimentally by the Spirit of God; and such an one, who has not only the knowledge of it in his head, but the experience of it in his heart, will hold it, and hold it fast against all opposition:

that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers; sound doctrine is the faithful word, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, which being retained, qualify an elder to discharge the following branches of his office; to "exhort" the members of churches to their duty, according to their age, sex, state, and condition, as in chapter 2 to which the doctrines of grace influence and engage; or to comfort them, as the word also signifies, and the Alexandrian copy reads, "to comfort them in all tribulation"; and this is one considerable part of the elder's work, to comfort souls under affliction, whether of body or mind; and sound doctrines, or the doctrines of the Gospel, are wonderfully suited to such a purpose: and the other part of his work is, "to convince gainsayers"; such who resist the truth, oppose themselves to it, cavil at it, and object against it; these are to be refitted, and convinced by the Scriptures, and arguments taken from them, as the Jews were by Apollos, Ac 18:28 and nothing is so powerful to do it as sound doctrine, and holding fast the faithful word.

Titus 1:10

Ver. 10. For there are many unruly,.... Persons who are not subject to the law of God, or Gospel of Christ; whose spirits are not subject to the prophets; and who will not submit themselves to them that have the rule over them, nor attend to the admonitions of the church, nor be brought into any regularity and order; and there were many of this sort, who were not sent forth by Christ, or his churches, but went forth of themselves, and were corrupters of the word; and therefore Christ's ministers ought to hold fast the faithful word, and convince such opposers by sound doctrine;

and vain talkers; who deliver out in their discourses empty, trifling, superficial, and frivolous things; which have no solidity and substance in them, nor do they tend to edification; only great swelling words of vanity, vain jangling and babbling about things to no profit.

And deceivers; both of themselves and others; who lie in wait to deceive, and are deceitful workers; and by their good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple; and so are dangerous persons, and of pernicious consequence:

especially they of the circumcision; or "of the Jews", as the Ethiopic version renders it; that is, not the unbelieving Jews, but such as professed Christianity, judaizing Christians, who joined Moses and Christ and blended the law and Gospel together; who taught that circumcision, and the observance of other ceremonies of the law, were necessary to justification and salvation; and hereby did a great deal of mischief among the churches.

Titus 1:11

Ver. 11. Whose mouths must be stopped,.... Or they be silenced, by reasons and arguments fetched out of the word of God; as were the Sadducees and Pharisees by Christ, so that they durst ask him no more questions; and as the Jews at Damascus were by Saul, who confounded them, proving in the clearest and strongest manner, that Jesus was the very Christ:

who subvert whole houses; into which they creep; that is, whole families, whose principles they corrupt, whose faith they overthrow, and carry them away with their own errors; and therefore, since this was the case not of a single person, or of a few, but of whole families, it was high time to attempt to convince them, and stop their mouths, that they might proceed no further:

teaching things which they ought not; which were not agreeable to the perfections of God, to the Scriptures of truth, to sound doctrine, and which were hurtful and pernicious to the souls of men: and that only

for filthy lucre's sake; having no regard to the glory of God, the honour and interest of Christ, or the good of immortal souls; only seeking to gain popular applause and honour from men, and to gather and increase worldly substance. Covetousness was a sin which the Cretians were remarkably guilty of {l}.

{l} Cornel. Nepos, l. 23. c. 9.

Titus 1:12

Ver. 12. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own,.... This was Epimenides, in whose poems stand the words here cited; the apostle rightly calls him "one of themselves", since he was a Cretian by birth, of the city of Gnossus; it is reported of him, that being sent by his father to his sheep in the field, he by the way, at noon, turned aside into a cave, and slept fifty seven years {m} and he is very properly called a "prophet" of their own; for in Crete Jupiter had his prophets {n}, and he might be one of them: the priests among the Heathens were called prophets; so Baal's priests are called the prophets of Baal, and the prophets of the groves, 1Ki 18:19. Besides, Epimenides was thought to be inspired by the gods: he is called by Apuleius {o}, a famous fortune teller; and is said by Laertius {p} to be very skilful in divination, and to have foretold many things which came to pass; and by the Grecians were supposed to be very dear to the gods; so Balaam, the soothsayer and diviner, is called a prophet, **2Pe 2:16**. Add to this, that the passage next cited stands in a poem of this writer, entitled, "Concerning Oracles"; and it is easy to observe, that poets in common were usually called "vates", or prophets; so that the apostle speaks here with great propriety. Now concerning the inhabitants of Crete, Epimenides, a native of the place, and a person of great character and repute among them,

said, the Cretians are always liars: living is a sin common to human nature, and appears in men as early, or earlier than any other; and all men are guilty of it, at one time or another; but all are not habitually liars, as it seems these Cretians were: lying was a governing vice among them; they were not only guilty of it in some particular instances, but always; not only for saying that Jupiter's sepulchre was with them, when it was the sepulchre of Minos his son, which they had fraudulently obliterated; and for which {q} Callimachus charges them with lying, and uses these very words of Epimenides; though he assigns a different reason from that now given, which is, that Jupiter died not, but always exists, and therefore his sepulchre could not be with them: but this single instance was not sufficient to fasten such a character upon them; it was a sin they were addicted to: some countries are distinguished by their vices; some for pride; some for levity, vanity, and inconstancy; some for boasting and bragging some for covetousness; some for idleness; some for effeminacy; some for hypocrisy and deceit; and others, as the Cretians, it seems, for lying; this was their national sin {r}; and this is said by others, as well as Epimenides. Crete is, by Ovid {s}, called "mendax Creta", lying Crete. Hence, with the Grecians, to "cretize", is proverbially used for to lie; this is a sin, than which nothing makes a man more like the devil, or more infamous among men, or more abominable to God. The Ethiopic version, instead of Cretes, or Cretians, reads "hypocrites". Other characters of them, from the same Heathen poet, follow,

evil beasts: slow bellies; by evil beasts are meant beasts of prey, savage and mischievous ones; see Ge 37:20 and are so called, to distinguish them from other beasts, as sheep, and the like, which are not so; and perhaps Crete might abound with such evil beasts; for the Cretians are said {t} to excel in hunting; and to these they themselves are compared, by one of their own prophets, for their cruelty, and savage disposition: so cruel persecutors are compared to beasts, 1Co 15:30 and the false teachers, the apostle has respect to in citing this passage, were cruel, if not to the bodies, yet to the souls of men, whom they poisoned and destroyed. And the Cretians are called, by the poet, slow bellies partly for their intemperance, their gluttony and drunkenness: which suited with the false teachers, whose god was their belly, and which they served, and not the Lord Jesus; and partly for their sloth and idleness, eating the bread of others without working.

{m} Laert. l. 1. Vita Epimenidis. {n} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier, l. 4. c. 17. {o} Florida, sect. 15. {p} Ib. {q} Hymn. l. in Jovem, v. 8. {r} Alex. ab Alex. l. 4. c. 13. {s} De Arte Amandi, l. 1. {t} Alex. ab Alex. ib.

Titus 1:13

Ver. 13. This witness is true,.... The apostle confirms what the poet had said; he knew it to be fact from his own experience, and by the observation he had made when in the island: he does not say, that all that Epimenides had said, in the poem referred to, was true; but this character, which he had given of the Cretians, and which he cites, and uses to a good purpose; from whence it may be observed, that the writings of the Heathen poets may be read with profit, and be used to advantage, if carefully and prudently attended to; for what is truth, let it come from whom, or by what means it will, ought to be received.

Wherefore rebuke them sharply: not merely upon the testimony of the poet, but upon the confirmation of it by the apostle; and not because of these general and national characters, but because these things personally and particularly belonged to the persons before described; whom the apostle would have rebuked, both for their bad principles, teaching things that they ought not; and for their immoralities, their lying and deceit, their intemperance, luxury, and idleness, things very unbecoming the Christian name; and therefore since their offences were of an heinous nature, and they lived in them, and were hardened and obstinate, and were like to have a bad influence on others, they must be rebuked "sharply": rebukes ought to be given according to the nature of offences, and the circumstances of them, and the offenders; some are to be given privately, others publicly; some should be reproved with gentleness and meekness, and be used in a tender and compassionate way; others more roughly, though never in a wrathful and passionate manner, yet with some degree of severity, at least with great plainness and faithfulness; laying open the nature of the evils guilty of in all their aggravated circumstances, without sparing them in the least; doing, as surgeons do by wounds, though they take the knife, and use it gently, yet cut deep, to the quick, and go to the bottom of the wound, and lay it open: and so the phrase may be rendered here, "rebuke them cuttingly"; cut them to the quick, and spare them not; deal not with them as Eli with his sons, 1Sa 2:23 but speak out, and expose their crimes, severely reprove them, that others may fear: and that they may be sound in the faith; that they may be recovered from their errors, to the acknowledgment of the truth; that they may receive the sound doctrine of faith, the wholesome words of Christ, and speak the things which become them, and use sound speech, which cannot be condemned; and that they may be turned from their evil practices, and appear to be sound, as in the doctrine, so in the grace of faith; or that that by their works may appear to be genuine, true, and unfeigned; and that they may be strong and robust, hale and healthful, and not weak and sickly in the profession of their faith. Rebukes being to persons infected with bad principles and practices, like physic to sickly constitutions, a means of removing the causes of disorder; and in rebukes, admonitions, and censures, this always ought to be the end proposed, the good of the persons rebuked, admonished, and censured.

Titus 1:14

Ver. 14. Not giving heed to Jewish fables,.... Concerning God himself, the angels, and the creation of man; concerning the giving of the law at Mount Sinai; concerning the Messiah and his earthly kingdom, and the feast that will be made for the righteous in his days, which will consist of flesh, fish, and fowl, Behemoth, Leviathan, and Zuz, and of wine kept in the grape from the foundation of the world; and concerning the rolling of the dead through the caverns of the earth at the resurrection, with a multitude of other things which were traditionally received.

And commandments of men: the traditions of the elders, which the Jews charged the disciples of Christ with the transgression of; and he, on the other hand, very justly reproached them with breaking the commands of God, by attending to them, Mt 15:1. These were the laws and traditions of the fathers, which the Apostle Paul was brought up in, and was zealous of, before his conversion, Ac 22:3 and which these judaizing preachers and professors, he here has respect to, were fond of, though they were made by men,

that turn from the truth; or "hate it", as the Syriac version renders it; who were enemies unto it, as Hillell and Shammai, the heads of the traditional doctors, and as the Jews, and their Rabbins in general were; and therefore their commandments, of all men, should not be given heed to, by those that bear the Christian name.

Titus 1:15

Ver. 15. Unto the pure all things are pure,.... The apostle having made mention of Jewish fables, and the traditions of the elders, takes notice of some darling notions, that these judaizing Christians had imbibed or retained; that there were some things, which being touched, or handled, or tasted, occasioned uncleanness, and which the apostle denies to them that are "pure"; by whom are meant, not such who are so in their own eyes, who yet may not be cleansed from their filthiness; nor do any become pure through ceremonial, moral, or evangelical performances, done by them; they are only pure, who are justified from all sin by Christ's righteousness, and are clean through the word or sentence of absolution spoken by him; and who are washed from their sins in his blood, and have that sprinkled upon their consciences, by which they are purged and cleansed from all sin; and who have the clean water of sanctifying grace sprinkled upon them, and have clean hearts, and right spirits created in them; and whose hearts are purified by faith, and have true principles of grace and holiness formed in them; whose graces are pure and genuine, their faith is unfeigned, their love is without dissimulation, and their hope without hypocrisy; and who, in consequence of all this, love pureness of heart, speak the pure language of Canaan, hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, and follow after purity of life and conversation: to these "all things are pure"; whatever they touch, or handle, or eat, nothing can defile them; for it is not what enters into man that can pollute him; nor is any creature unclean of itself, but good, and to be received with thanksgiving; see Mt 15:11.

But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; all mankind are defiled with sin; they are altogether become filthy; there is none good, no, not one; and all of them, or that belong to them, are unclean; the members of their body, and the powers and faculties of their soul, their mind and conscience, understanding, will, and affections; there is no place clean: they are originally so, from their first conception and birth; and they are actually defiled by their own evil thoughts, words, and doings: some are openly impure, like the dog and the swine, who wallow in their impieties, such are the profane part of the world; others are more secretly so, as those of a pharisaical complexion, nominal Christians, and formal professors; and such the apostle has here in view: and who, notwithstanding their profession of the Christian religion, were "unbelieving"; they had not true faith in Christ, though they professed it; they were not indeed unbelieving, as the Jews, who rejected Jesus as the Messiah: yet they did not purely and cordially embrace the doctrines of the Gospel, nor yield a spiritual and cheerful subjection to the ordinances of it; but were for mixing the ceremonies of the law with the institutions of Christ: and to these were "nothing pure"; right and lawful to be done, or not done, even in the case supposed, about eating things forbidden by the ceremonial law; to eat them would be to eat with offence, to their own consciences, on their principles, and so be evil, Ro 14:20 and to abstain from them on account of laws not in force, would be superstition and will worship, and so criminal, **Col 2:21**. There is nothing that defiled persons can do, but what is unclean; as are their persons, so are their offerings and works, **Hag 2:14**, and being destitute of true faith, whatever they do is sin, and not anything they do can be acceptable and well pleasing to God, Ro 14:23. There were some things among the Jews, which were prohibited to them that were defiled, and were free to them that were pure: thus, for instance {u},

"the flesh of the most holy things, and the flesh of those which are lightly holy, boiled with flesh of delight, (or common flesh,) are forbidden Myamjl, "to the defiled", but are free Myrwhjl, "to the pure"."

Which one of their commentators {w} thus explains;

"the flesh of the most holy things is forbidden to strangers, though pure; the flesh of things lightly holy is free to strangers that are pure, but forbidden to them that are defiled."

Whether there may be any allusion to this, may be considered: however, the reason the apostle gives why nothing is pure to the impure, is, because of the pollution of the superior powers and faculties of their soul:

but even their mind and conscience is defiled; there is nothing in them, or that belongs to them, that is pure; their mind or understanding, which conceives and judges of things, and forms notions of them; and the conscience, which draws conclusions from them, are both defiled with sin; and what then must the thoughts, the words and actions of such persons be? it matters not what they do, or abstain from, what they touch, taste, or handle, or if they do not, they sin in all they do.

{u} Minn. Orla, c. 2. sect. 17. {w} Bartenora, in Misn. Orla, c. 2. sect. 17.

Titus 1:16

Ver. 16. They profess that they know God,.... That there is a God; that there is but one, only, true, and living God, the God of Israel, as professed by the Jews; and that this God is Father, Son, and Spirit, as believed by the Christians: for the persons the apostle speaks of were judaizing Christians. Yet this knowledge was but notional; it lay in theory and profession only; they had not a spiritual experimental knowledge of God in Christ, which only has eternal life connected with it:

but in works they deny him. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "in their own works"; they were not professed, but practical atheists; they owned there was a God, and boasted of their knowledge of him; but their lives and conversations showed that they had no true knowledge of him, and that the fear of him was not before their eyes; these gave the lie to their profession; they practically denied that faith they professed to hold, and the power of godliness, of which they had the form.

Being abominable; in the sight of God, however esteemed by men; and notwithstanding the vizor and mask of sanctity and religion they put on, which could not screen them from the omniscience of God, who will one day declare he knows them not, and will bid them depart from him, being workers of iniquity.

And disobedient; to God; to his law, and Gospel; to his ministers and churches; and even to parents and civil magistrates; for of this cast were the false teachers, and their followers, as maybe learned from many passages.

And unto every good work reprobate: or "unaccustomed", unused to them, as the Arabic version renders it; or rather "without judgment", and understanding, concerning them; there was no good in them, nor was it in them to do good; to do good they had no knowledge, nor any inclination; they were unfit for it, and had not a capacity to perform it; they were not good themselves, and therefore could not do good; the tree must first be made good, ere its fruit will be good; they were without Christ, and without his Spirit, and grace, without which no man can do anything that is spiritually good; they had no true faith, and therefore what they did was sinful; they had neither right principles, from which, nor right ends to which they acted, and therefore were not qualified for the performance of good works; which require that men should be good men, created in Christ Jesus, be believers in him, and have principles of truth and love, and views to the glory of God.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Titus 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO TITUS 2

In this chapter the apostle exhorts Timothy to the discharge of his office with respect to all sorts of persons, of every age, sex; and condition, he was concerned with, giving reasons for it, taken from the nature of the Gospel of Christ: he exhorts him in general to insist in his public ministry on those things, which were agreeable to sound doctrine, **Tit 2:1** and particularly what became aged men and aged women, and young men and young women, **Tit 2:2** in all which, both with respect to doctrine and practice, he desires him to be a pattern to them, that so even his very adversaries may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of him, **Tit 2:7**. And next he charges him to exhort servants, to obey their masters, and seek to please them, and not contradict them, and to be faithful to them; that so the doctrine of God their Saviour, professed by them, might be adorned in all things, **Tit 2:9**. And the reasons why the apostle would have duty urged on persons of every age, sex, and state, are taken from the nature of the Gospel being a doctrine of grace and salvation, which was preached to all sorts of persons, **Tit 2:11**, and from the efficacy of it, in teaching men to deny sin, and live a holy life and conversation, **Tit 2:12** and from an expectation of eternal glory and happiness at the appearance of Christ, which the Gospel encourages to, **Tit 2:13**; and from the end of Christ's giving himself for his people, and redeeming them from sin, the sum and substance of the Gospel, which was, that they might be purified, and be zealous of good works, **Tit 2:14** and these exhortations were to be delivered by Titus with authority, and in such a manner, that he might not be despised, **Tit 2:15**.

Ver. 1. But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine. Concerning sound doctrine, and the form of it, See Gill on "2Ti 1:13". The things which become it are a good life and conversation, the various duties incumbent on professors of religion, according to their different station, age, and sex, which are observed in some following verses; these become the Gospel of Christ, and are ornamental to the doctrine of God our Saviour; and these are to be spoken of by the ministers of Christ, in their proper places, and at proper times; who ought not to be dumb, and keep silence at any time, but especially when there are many unruly and vain talkers: sound doctrine ought to be spoken out openly and publicly, fully and faithfully, with great plainness and evidence, that it may be understood and known by all; and with much certainty, without hesitation, as being, without controversy, undoubted truth; and with all boldness, not fearing men, or seeking to please them; and it should be constantly and continually spoken, in season, and out of season; and care should be taken that it be spoken consistently, and in an uniform manner, that there be no clashing and contradiction; and the duties of religion, which become sound doctrine, should be set in their true light, and proper place, as fruits of the grace of God, and to glorify him; these should be spoken out plainly, frequently insisted upon, and warmly and zealously urged, as being decent things, for the honour of God, the recommending of religion, the good of mankind, and the service of one another: as particularly,

Titus 2:2

Ver. 2. That the aged men be sober,.... Or "vigilant", and watchful over themselves, their conduct and conversation, lest being evil, it should be drawn into an example by younger persons: this is to be understood not of men in office, of presbyters or elders; for their characters are described in the preceding chapter; but of men in years, of ancient men, that are professors of religion, and members of churches: who should also be

grave; in their behaviour, speech, and dress; levity of conversation, frothy language, and airy dress, are very unbecoming aged persons: and who ought to be

temperate; in eating and drinking, especially the latter, to which old age is most addicted, and care should be taken that they be not over charged with it, and that day overtake them unawares, since they are upon the brink and borders of eternity: the word is rendered "discreet" in **Tit 2:5** and sober in **1Ti 3:2** and both are characters suitable to men in years.

Sound in faith, in charity, in patience; though they may be unhealthful in their bodies, and become decrepit through age, they should be sound in their minds; in the doctrine of faith, lest they should lead others into error; and their faith in Christ should appear to be right and genuine; and their love to God, to Christ, and to his people, should be real and sincere, and be taken off from the things of the world, of time and sense; an affection for which is an evil that frequently cleaves to old age: and patience should have its perfect work; not only to bear the infirmities of body, brought on by age; but whatsoever sufferings they may be called unto for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, in their last day; and to run out the race that is set before them.

Titus 2:3

Ver. 3. And the aged women likewise,.... Speak also to them the things which become their profession, and what is right for them to be, and do: these aged women design not persons in office, who were ancient widows, and had some care of the poor; or presbyteresses, as some call them, the wives of presbyters or elders, as being distinct from deaconesses; but godly women in years, who are to be instructed and exhorted:

that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness; or "holy women", sanctified by the Spirit of God; and who are priestesses unto God, as the word may signify, being made so by Christ unto the Father, as men are made kings and priests by him; such ought to be in their clothing, and in their speech, and in the whole of their conduct and conversation, as become the character which they bear, and the profession they make:

not false accusers; of the brethren, and sisters, which is to act the part of the devil; and indeed, the same word is here used which is commonly given to him; not raising false reports of, bringing false charges against members of churches, and so making differences and divisions among them.

Not given to much wine; or serving it, or being enslaved by it, which is very scandalous in any, especially in the female sex, and yet was what was too common in the eastern countries.

Teachers of good things; both by example and by instruction, but in their own houses privately; for they were not suffered to teach publicly, or to speak in the church; these should be teachers, not of old wives' fables, of superstitious customs, rites, and ceremonies, of the intrigues of love, and of things filthy and obscene, which are too often handed down to posterity by such persons; but of things that are solid and substantial, useful and improving, honest and honourable, chaste and pure. Particularly,

Titus 2:4

Ver. 4. That they may teach the young women to be sober,.... Or to be chaste, modest, and temperate; or to be wise and prudent in their conduct to their husbands, and in the management of family affairs, who have had a large experience of these things before them.

To love their husbands; to help and assist them all they can; to seek their honour and interest; to endeavour to please them in all things; to secure peace, harmony, and union; to carry it affectionately to them, and sympathize with them in all afflictions and distresses; for this is not so much said in opposition to placing their affections on other men, and to the defilement of the marriage bed, as to moroseness and ill nature.

To love their children; not with a fond, foolish, loose, and ungoverned affection; but so as to seek their real good, and not only their temporal, but spiritual and eternal welfare; to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and to use and keep proper discipline and government over them; for otherwise, amidst all the fondness of natural affection, a parent may be said to hate a child, Pr 13:24.

Titus 2:5

Ver. 5. To be discreet,.... Or temperate in eating and drinking, so the word is rendered in **Tit 2:2** or to be sober both in body and mind; or to be wise and prudent in the whole of their conduct, both at home and abroad:

chaste; in body, in affection, words and actions, having their love pure and single to their own husbands, keeping their marriage bed undefiled.

Keepers at home: minding their own family affairs, not gadding abroad; and inspecting into, and busying themselves about other people's matters. This is said in opposition to what women are prone unto. It is reckoned among the properties of women, by the Jews, that they are twynauwy, "gadders abroad" {x}: they have some rules about women's keeping at home; they say {y},

"a woman may go to her father's house to visit him, and to the house of mourning, and to the house of feasting, to return a kindness to her friends, or to her near relations--but it is a reproach to a woman to go out daily; now she is without, now she is in the streets; and a husband ought to restrain his wife from it, and not suffer her to go abroad but about once a month, or twice a month, upon necessity; for there is nothing more beautiful for a woman, than to abide in the corner of her house; for so it is written, Ps 45:13 "the king's daughter is all glorious within"."

And this they say {z} is what is meant by the woman's being an helpmeet for man, that while he is abroad about his business, she is tybb tbvwy, "sitting at home", and keeping his house; and this they observe is the glory and honour of the woman. The passage in

Isa 44:13 concerning an image being made "after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house" is by the Targum thus paraphrased:

"according to the likeness of a man, according to the praise of a woman, to abide in the house."

Upon which Kimchi, has this note.

"it is the glory of a woman to continue at home, and not go abroad."

The tortoise, which carries its house upon its back, and very rarely shows its head, or looks out of it, was, with the ancients, an emblem of a good housewife. These also should be instructed to be "good" or "kind" to their servants, and beneficent to the poor, and to strangers, towards whom, very often, women are apt to be strait handed, and not so generous and liberal as they should be:

obedient to their own husbands; See Gill on "Eph 5:22",
See Gill on "Eph 5:24".

that the word of God be not blasphemed; by unbelieving husbands, who, by the ill conduct of their wives, would be provoked to speak ill of the Gospel, as if that taught disaffection and disobedience to them.

{x} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 45. fol. 40. 3. {y} Maimon. Hilchot Ishot, c. 13. sect. 11. {z} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 5. 4.

Titus 2:6

Ver. 6. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. Temperate, chaste, modest, moderate, wise, and prudent in all things: this is said to Titus, as being his province to instruct and exhort the young men; as it were proper and convenient for aged women to teach the young women how they should behave and conduct themselves.

Titus 2:7

Ver. 7. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works,.... It was not enough for Titus, and so neither for any other Gospel minister, to deliver out sound doctrine, and to exhort persons of different ages and sexes to the things which become it, but he should through the whole of his conversation be a pattern of every good work unto them; for they that are the shepherds of the flock, are not only to feed them with knowledge, and with understanding, but to be ensamples to them, as well as they who are under their care ought to walk, as they have them for an example; see **1Ti 4:12**.

In doctrine, showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity; the apostle here either returns again to his advice about doctrine, that it should be delivered out pure and incorrupt, free from error and heresy, and every mixture and invention of man's; and with all gravity of speech and countenance, without levity in expression, and airiness of gesture; and that it be the sincere milk of the word that is given forth, and that with all integrity and uprightness of soul: or else this refers to the life and conversation of the teacher, as answering to his doctrine, and going along with it; and the sense is, in, or with doctrine, along with the doctrine preached, let the conversation be pure and incorrupt, free from the pollutions of the world, and from any governing vice; and let it be attended with gravity in word, gesture, look, and dress; and with all sincerity, faithfulness, and simplicity, in all our dealings, either with the saints, or with the men of the world.

Titus 2:8

Ver. 8. Sound speech that cannot be condemned,.... In the public ministry, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus should be used, and the doctrines of the Gospel be expressed, as near as can be, in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, and not in the enticing words of man's wisdom; such speech or language should be chosen, that is plain, easy, and acceptable, and conveys just ideas of things; and which being agreeable to the Scriptures of truth, and the analogy of faith, cannot be justly found fault with: or this may refer to private conversation, in which no rotten speech, or corrupt communication should proceed out of the mouth; nothing but what is pure, sound, graceful, and edifying; no filthiness, nor foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient, and are rightly condemned.

That he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed: that is, that he who is on the other side of the question, who opposes the truths of the Gospel, and is an adversary to them; whether he be an Heathen philosopher, or a Jewish Rabbi, or a judaizing teacher, or an heretical man, under the Christian name, may be put to shame and confusion; partly on account of that uncorruptness in doctrine and conversation, which he observes in the true and faithful ministers of the word, and is wanting in himself; and so being convinced, may be converted and brought to repentance, and to the acknowledgment of the truth; and partly on the account of the false charges and accusations brought by him against such:

having no evil thing to say of you; whether with respect to doctrine or practice. The Vulgate Latin version, and all the Oriental versions, read "us", instead of "you". The whole body is reproached for the sake of one or more.

Titus 2:9

Ver. 9. [Exhort] servants to be obedient to their own masters,.... And not others, whether they be believers, or unbelievers, gentle or froward, all their lawful commands ought to be obeyed; See Gill on "Eph 6:5" and to please [them] well in all things; not only to obey and serve them, and do what they order, but to seek and endeavour to do it in such a way as may be grateful, acceptable, and well pleasing to them, whereby an interest in their affection, esteem, and commendation, may be gained: and this should be done always, and in all things, that are not contrary to a good conscience and to the Christian religion, and to the laws of God and nature. Or "that they may be well pleased in all things"; that is, be satisfied and contented with such things as they have, and in their state and condition as servants, and cheerfully abide in the calling wherein they are called:

not answering again; replying to their masters' orders, or complaints, either in a pert, or saucy, or grumbling manner; an evil very incident to servants, and which greatly provokes.

Titus 2:10

Ver. 10. Not purloining..... Or stealing, embezzling their master's substance, taking away, and making use of what is their property, keeping back part of money or goods committed to their trust: the word is used in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. **Ac 5:2**,

but showing all good fidelity; approving themselves to be faithful servants in everything they are intrusted with:

that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; Christ is our alone Saviour, and he is truly and properly God, and so fit and able to be a Saviour; and the Gospel is his doctrine, not only what he himself preached, when on earth, but it is a doctrine concerning him; concerning his deity, and the dignity of his person, and concerning his office as Mediator, and the great salvation by him; and which are so many reasons why it should be adorned by a suitable life and conversation; for this is what becomes the Gospel of Christ, throws a beauty upon it, and is ornamental to it; and in this way the doctrine of Christ may be, and ought to be, adorned by servants, as well as others: to adorn the Gospel, is first to believe and receive it, then to profess it, and hold fast that profession, and walk worthy of it. Two of Stephens's copies read, "in", or "among all men".

Titus 2:11

Ver. 11. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation,.... By which is meant, not the free love and favour of God, which lies in his own heart; for though that is productive of salvation, and is the source and spring of it, and what brings it forth, and is far from encouraging licentiousness, but instructs in real piety, and constrains to obedience to the will of God; yet this does not appear, nor has it been, nor is it made manifest unto all men, but is peculiar to the Lord's own people; nor does it design the grace of God wrought in the hearts of believers; for though salvation is strictly connected with it, and it powerfully influences the lives and conversations of such, who are partakers of it; yet it has not appeared to, nor in all men; all men have not faith, nor hope, nor love, nor any other graces of the Spirit: but by the grace of God is intended the doctrine of grace, the Gospel of the grace of God; called so, because it is a declaration of the grace of God, and of salvation by it: and is the means, in the hand of the Spirit, of conveying grace to the heart, and implanting it in it; in which sense the phrase is used in Ac 20:24 and this is called the Gospel of salvation, the word of salvation, and salvation itself, and so may be said to bring it; it brings and publishes the good news of it; it shows unto men the way of salvation; it gives an account of the Saviour himself, that he is the great God, and so fit to be a Saviour; that he was appointed by God the Father to be his salvation; that he was sent, and came to work out salvation; and that he is become the author of it; and that he is the only Saviour, and an able, willing, and complete one: it gives an account of the salvation itself; that it is the salvation of the soul; that it is a great one, and includes both grace and glory; that it is everlasting, and all of free grace; and it points out the persons who are interested in it, and shall enjoy it, even all those that are chosen to it, and are redeemed, reconciled, and justified by the blood of Christ, and are brought to believe in him: and the Gospel not only brings the news of all this to the ear, in the external ministration of it; but it brings it to the heart, and is the power of God unto salvation, when it comes, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost; or when it comes under the powerful influences and application of the Spirit of God. Some read this clause thus, "that bringeth salvation to all men"; to which agrees the Syriac version, which renders it, lk tyxm, "that quickeneth" or "saveth all"; and so the Arabic version: but then this cannot be understood of every individual person; for the Gospel has not brought salvation to everyone in any sense, not even in the external ministry of it; there have been multitudes who have never so much as heard the outward sound of salvation by Jesus Christ, and fewer still who have an application of it to their souls by the Spirit of God; to many to whom it has come, it has been an hidden Gospel, and the savour of death unto death: it follows indeed,

hath appeared to all men; which supposes it to have been hid, as it was, in the thoughts, purposes, and counsels of God; and in Jesus Christ, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid; and in the covenant of grace, of which the Gospel is a transcript; and in the types and shadows of the ceremonial law: it was in some measure hid from angels, who desire to look into it, and from the Old Testament saints, to whom it was not known as it is now, by the apostles and prophets; and it was entirely hid from the Gentiles, the times of whose ignorance God overlooked: and it suggests, that it now appeared or shone out more clearly, and more largely. The Gospel had been like a candle lighted up in one part of the world, only in Judea, but now it shone out like the sun in its meridian glory, and appeared to all men; not to every individual person; it has neither shined upon, nor in everyone: it did not in the apostle's time, when it appeared the most illustrious, and shone out the most extensively, as well as the most clearly; nor has it in ages since, nor does it in ours; there are multitudes who know nothing of it, and are neither under its form nor power: but this is to be understood of all sorts of men, of every nation, of every age and sex, of every state and condition, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, masters and servants; which sense well agrees with the context, **Tit 2:2** and the words are a reason why the apostle would have duty urged on all sorts of persons, because the Gospel was now preached to all; and it had reached the hearts of all sorts of men; particularly the Gentiles may be intended from whom the Gospel was before hid, and who sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death; but now the great light shined upon them, and the Gospel was no more confined to one people only, but was preached to every creature under heaven, or to the whole creation; namely, to the Gentiles, pursuant to the commission in Mr 16:15.

Titus 2:12

Ver. 12. Teaching us,.... Not all men, to whom the Gospel appears in its outward ministry; for there are many who externally receive the Gospel, and profess it, who are never influentially taught by it to deny sin, or love holiness of life; they profess in words to know it, but in works deny it; they have a form of godliness, but deny its power: but the persons effectually taught by the Gospel are the "us", to whom it was come, not in word only, but in power; and so taught them, not only doctrinally, but with efficacy, both negative and positive holiness, as follows:

that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts; all impiety, or sin more immediately against God; or which is a violation of the first table of the law, as idolatry, will worship, superstition, perjury, and the like; and all sinful lusts, as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; which fill the world, and are reigning lusts in it, and which are common to the men of the world; and they are under the power of: to "deny" these, is to abhor and detest them, and to abstain from them, and have nothing to do with them: and this lesson of self-denial, or of the denial of sinful self, the Gospel teaches, and urges upon the most powerful motives and arguments; and when attended by the Spirit of God, does it effectually: so that

we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; not, only "temperately", but wisely and prudently, as children of the light, on whom, and into whom the Gospel has shined; and "righteously" among men, giving to every man his due, and dealing with all according to the rules of equity and justice; as being made new men, created unto righteousness and true holiness; and as being dead to sin, through the death of Christ, and so living unto righteousness, or in a righteous manner; and as being justified by the righteousness of Christ, revealed in the Gospel: and "godly"; in a godly manner, according to the Word of God, and agreeably to the will of God; and in all godly exercises, both public and private, and to the glory of God: and that as long as

in this present world: which lies in wickedness, and in which there are so many strong temptations to a contrary way of living. The Gospel then is no licentious doctrine; it is according to godliness, and teaches and promotes it; it is an holy faith, yea, a most holy faith; wherefore it is a vile slander to charge it with leading to looseness of life and conversation.

Titus 2:13

Ver. 13. Looking for that blessed hope,.... Not the grace of hope; though that being a good hope through grace, and a hope of blessedness, may be called a blessed hope; yet this the saints have already implanted in their hearts in regeneration, and cannot be said to look for it: rather Christ, the object and ground of hope, who is our hope, and Christ in us the hope of glory, who is blessed for evermore; and in the enjoyment of whom the happiness of the saints hereafter will greatly consist; and whom they look for, and expect from heaven, and who is expressly mentioned in the next clause: but as this may be something distinct from that, it may be best, by this blessed hope, to understand the thing hoped for, eternal glory and happiness; called elsewhere the hope of righteousness, and the hope laid up in heaven, **Ga 5:5** and which will lie in the beatific vision of God and Christ; in a perfect knowledge of them, in communion with them, and conformity to them; and in the society of angels and glorified saints; and in a freedom from all evil, outward and inward, and in the possession of all good: and to be looking for this, is to be desiring it with the heart and affections set upon it, longing to be in the enjoyment of it, and yet waiting patiently in the exercise of faith and hope; for looking includes all the three graces, faith, hope, and love; and particularly the former, which is always attended with the latter; for it is such a looking for this blessedness, as that a man firmly believes he shall partake of it: and there is good reason for a regenerate man so to look for it; since it is his Father's gift of free grace, and is laid up for him; Christ is gone to prepare it by his presence, mediation, and intercession; yea, he is gone, as the forerunner, to take possession of it in his name: this man is begotten again to a lively hope of it; he is called by the grace of God unto it; he is a child of God, and so an heir of it; he has a right unto it, through the justifying righteousness of Christ, and has a meetness for it through the sanctifying grace of the Spirit; and who is in him as the earnest and pledge of it: now such a firm expectation of the heavenly glory does the Gospel, the doctrine of the grace of God, teach, direct, and encourage to; for these words must be read in connection with the preceding, as a further instruction of the Gospel, as well as what follows:

and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; not two divine persons, only one, are here intended; for the word: rendered "appearing", is never used of God the Father, only of the second person; and the propositive article is not set before the word "Saviour", as it would, if two distinct persons were designed; and the copulative "and" is exegetical, and may he rendered thus, "and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ"; who, in the next verse, is said to give himself for the redemption of his people: so that here is a very illustrious proof of the true and proper deity of Christ, who will appear at his second coming; for of that appearance are the, words to be understood, as the great God, in all the glories and perfections of his divine nature; as well as a Saviour, which is mentioned to show that he will appear to the salvation of his people, which he will then put them in the full possession of; and that the brightness of his divine Majesty will not make them afraid: and this appearance will be a glorious one; for Christ will come in his own glory, in the glory of his deity, particularly his omniscience and omnipotence will be very conspicuous; and in his glory as Mediator, which will be beheld by all the saints; and in his glory as a Judge, invested with power and authority from his Father, which will be terrible to sinners; and in the glory of his human nature, with which it is now crowned; and in his Father's glory, in the same he had with him before the world was, and which is the same with his, and in that which he will receive from him as man and Mediator, and as the Judge of the whole earth; and in the glory of his holy angels, being attended with all his mighty ones: to which may be added, that saints will be raised from the dead, and with the living ones appear with Christ in glory, and make up the bride, the Lamb's wife, having the glory of God upon her; so that this will be a grand appearance indeed. Now this the Gospel directs, and instructs believers to look for, to love, to hasten to, most earnestly desire, and yet patiently wait for, most firmly believing that it will be: and this the saints have reason to look for, with longing desire and affection, and with pleasure, since it will be not only glorious in itself, but advantageous to them; they will then be glorified with Christ, and be for ever with him.

Titus 2:14

Ver. 14. Who gave himself for us,.... Not another, or another's, but himself; not merely his own things, but his own self; not the world, and the riches of it, not gold and silver, and such like corruptible things, as the price of redemption; not the cattle on a thousand hills for sacrifice; not men nor angels, but himself; all that belong to him, all that is near and dear, his name, fame, credit, and reputation; his time, strength, and service: all the comforts of life, and life itself; his whole manhood, soul, and body, and that as in union with his divine person; which he gave into the hands of men, and of justice, and to death itself, to be a ransom price of his people, and for a propitiation and sacrifice for their sins, to be paid and offered in their room and stead: not for all mankind, but for many; for us, for all the elect of God, for the church; and who are represented when he gave himself, or died for them, as ungodly, sinners, and enemies: this was a free and voluntary gift, and is an unspeakable one; who can say all that is contained in this word "himself?" it is an instance of the greatest love, of love that passeth knowledge; God, because he could swear by no greater, swore by himself; and Christ, because he could give no greater gift, nor any greater instance of his love, gave himself, for the following ends and purposes:

that he might redeem us from all iniquity: sin brings into bondage and, slavery, redemption is a deliverance from it; sin binds guilt upon the sinner, and lays him under obligation to punishment, and renders him liable to the curse and condemnation of the law; Christ was made sin, and a curse for his people, that he might redeem them from both, and deliver them from the punishment due to sin; which he has done by bearing it in his own, body on the tree, whereby he has redeemed them from all iniquity, that so it shall not be their ruin, or they come into condemnation on account of it; even from original sin, and from all actual transgressions; from all which his blood cleanses, and his righteousness justifies, and which God, for his sake, freely and fully forgives. Christ was called to this work by his Father, to which he agreed; and the plan of redemption being drawn in the everlasting council, and the whole adjusted and fixed in the covenant of peace; promises and prophecies were given out of it, and in the fulness of time Christ was sent, and came to effect it; and he has obtained eternal redemption for us, through the price of his own blood, which could have never been wrought out by any creature; and wherein all the divine perfections are glorified and is a plenteous and complete one; it includes in it, or connects with it, the blessings of justification, peace, pardon, adoption, and eternal life. It follows as another end of Christ's giving himself, or what is a branch of redemption, or consequent upon it,

and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; all mankind are filthy and unclean by nature, in all the powers and faculties of their souls; nor can they cleanse themselves from their impurity of flesh and spirit, by anything that they can do: Christ has a peculiar people among these, a church whom he loves, and for whom he has given himself, that he might sanctify and cleanse them from their sins; which he has done by shedding his blood for them, and washing them in it, which cleanses from all sin, and he has purified them unto himself, for his own use and service, for his pleasure and delight, and to his glory; that they might be a proper habitation for him now; and that they might be made ready for him, to have the marriage between, him and them consummated; and that they might be presented to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, and be with him, both in the new Jerusalem state, into which nothing that defiles, or is defiled, enters, and in heaven, to all eternity. Now these people, for whom Christ has given himself, and whom he has redeemed and purifies, are a "peculiar people"; for whom Christ has a peculiar love, in whom he takes a peculiar delight, and to whom he grants peculiar nearness to himself, and bestows peculiar blessings on them, and makes peculiar provisions for them, both for time and eternity; these are Christ's own, his possession, his substance, what he has a special right to by his Father's gift, his own purchase, and the conquest of his grace; and they are a distinct and separate people from all others, in election, redemption, effectual calling, and in Christ's intercession, and will be in the resurrection morn, at the day of judgment, and to all eternity; and they are, as the word also signifies, an excellent and valuable people; they are Christ's portion and inheritance; they are his peculiar treasure, his jewels, whom, as such, he values and takes care of. The Syriac version renders it, "a new people". And they who are redeemed and purified by Christ, through the power of his grace upon them, become a people "zealous of good works"; not in order to their justification and salvation, but in obedience to the will of God, and to testify their subjection and gratitude to him, and for his honour and glory, and for the credit of religion, and the good of men, These not only perform them, but perform them from principles of truth and love, and with a zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his Gospel; and with an holy emulation of one another, striving to go before, and excel each other in the performance of them.

Titus 2:15

Ver. 15. These things speak and exhort,.... Sound doctrine, the doctrine of grace, the doctrines of salvation and redemption by Christ, of peace, pardon, and cleansing by his blood; these speak out clearly, plainly, publicly, boldly, and faithfully: and the things which become sound doctrine; the duties of religion suitable to every age and sex, a denying of ungodliness and worldly lusts, a sober, righteous, and godly life and conversation, exhort unto; and encourage the saints to be zealous of good works, and comfort them with the expectation of the blessed hope, and glorious appearance of Christ.

And rebuke with all authority; such as imbibe errors and heresies, or indulge to vice and wickedness, with the authority both of Christ and his church, in the name of the one, and by the order and vote of the other, that the reproof may come with the greater weight; and in a grave and solemn manner, suitable to the dignity of the ministerial office and character, and with that sharpness and severity the offence requires.

Let no man despise thee; as negligent in the discharge of his office, or as doing it in a pusillanimous manner, or as behaving in his life and conversation unworthy of the character he bore, and so is a direction to himself; or else it may be considered as designed for the churches in Crete, and the professors of religion, and to be an instruction to them to value Titus, and treat him with respect, and not with contempt; which shows that this epistle was not written for Titus only, or for his own use, but for the service of others. The Ethiopic version reads, "let no man deceive thee".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Titus 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO TITUS 3

In this chapter the apostle exhorts Titus to press various duties incumbent on Christians, with arguments engaging to them; gives him some directions about dealing with heretics, and some instructions about private matters, and particular persons, and closes it with salutations. And first, he charges him to put his hearers in mind of their duty, to be subject to civil magistrates, and readily perform whatever is right and proper for them to do; and to abstain from blaspheming and brawling, and to exercise gentleness and meekness to all men, **Tit 3:1**. The arguments inducing thereunto are taken partly from their former state and condition, while unregenerate: when they were as ignorant and as wicked as other men, they are exhorted to behave well to; and partly from the consideration of the salvation they were now partakers of, **Tit 3:3** which leads on the apostle to give an account of its causes and means: the moving cause of it is the love and mercy of God; the way and means in which it is brought about, are not works of righteousness done by men, but the regenerating and renewing grace of the Spirit, which is plentifully bestowed through Jesus Christ the Saviour, and justification by the free grace of God, by virtue of which men become heirs unto, and have an hope of eternal life, **Tit 3:4** which several blessings of grace should be constantly insisted on in the ministry of the word, in order to engage believers carefully to perform good works; and because such doctrines are good in themselves, and profitable to men; whereas questions, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law, are foolish, vain, and unprofitable, and to be avoided, **Tit 3:8**, wherefore an heretical man should be rejected from all Christian conversation and communion, after he has been admonished at least twice, seeing he is off of the foundation, has sinned, and is self-condemned, **Tit 3:10**. Next the apostle desires Titus to meet him at Nicopolis, where his design was to pass the winter, upon sending two ministering brethren to Crete, who are mentioned by name, **Tit 3:12** and that he would accommodate two others, who are also named, with everything convenient for their journey, **Tit 3:13** and charges him to exhort the brethren under his care to learn to be diligent and industrious in the performance of good works, which have their necessary uses, and prevent unfruitfulness, **Tit 3:13**. And the epistle is concluded with salutations, and the apostle's usual benediction, **Tit 3:15**.

Ver. 1. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers,.... Not angels, good or bad, which are sometimes so called, but men in high places; the higher powers ordained of God, as the apostle elsewhere calls them; and which the Apostle Peter distinguishes into the king as supreme, and into governors under him: the Roman emperor and senate, the consuls, and proconsuls, deputies and governors of provinces and islands, are here meant; particularly such who were appointed over the island of Crete. Now the reasons why the apostle exhorts Titus to put in remembrance those that were under his care, to yield a cheerful subjection to their superiors, were, because the Jews, from whom the Christians were not distinguished by the Romans, were reckoned a turbulent and seditious people; which character they obtained, partly through the principles of the Scribes and Pharisees, which they at least privately entertained, as not to give tribute to Caesar, or be under any Heathen yoke; and partly through the insurrections that had been made by Judas of Galilee, and Theudas, and others; and besides, there were many Jews in the island of Crete, and the Cretians themselves were prone to mutiny and rebellion: to which may be added, that the false teachers, and judaizing preachers, that had got among them, despised dominion, and were not afraid to speak evil of dignities, according to the characters which both Peter and Jude give of them, and taught the saints to abuse their Christian liberty, and use it for a cloak of maliciousness, to the great scandal of the Christian religion.

To obey magistrates; inferior ones; in all things that are according to the laws of God, and right reason, that do not contradict what God has commanded, or break in upon the rights and dictates of conscience; in all things of a civil nature, and which are for the good of society, and do not affect religion, and the worship of God: hence it follows,

to be ready to every good work; which may be taken in a limited and restrained sense, and design every good work enjoined by the civil magistrate; and all right and lawful obedience that belongs to him, as giving to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, tribute, custom, fear, and honour to whom they are due; and which should be done readily and cheerfully: or it may be understood more comprehensively of good works in general, which wicked men are reprobate to, and unfit for; and which they that are sanctified are meet for, and ready to; though this may not only intend their capacity, fitness, and qualifications, for the performance of good works, but their alacrity, promptitude, and forwardness unto them.

Titus 3:2

Ver. 2. To speak evil of no man,.... As not of one another, so not of the men of the world, to the prejudice of their names and characters, which are tender things, and ought to be gently touched; nor of magistrates, principalities, and powers, of persons in dignity and authority, which the false teachers were not afraid to speak evil of, and by their principles and practices taught others to do the same:

to be no brawlers; or "fighters", either by blows or words; not litigious and quarrelsome, wrangling and striving about things to no profit, and to the detriment and disturbance of civil government, churches, neighbourhood, and families; which is very unbecoming the followers of Jesus, who strove not, nor cried, nor was his voice heard in the streets. But gentle, showing all meekness to all men; yielding and giving way, rather choosing to suffer wrong than to brawl, contend, and litigate a point; taking the advice of Christ in **Mt 5:39**, carrying it in a meek and humble manner to men of all ranks and degrees, whether superior or inferior, rich or poor, bond or free, Jews or Gentiles, members of the church, or men of the world.

Titus 3:3

Ver. 3. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish,.... Nothing has a greater tendency to promote humility, and check pride in the saints, than to reflect upon their past state and condition, what they themselves once were; and this is a reason why magistrates, though evil men, should be obeyed in things good and lawful, and why no man should be spoken evil of, and why every man should be treated in a gentle manner, and used with mildness and meekness; since the apostle himself, and Titus, and other saints, whom he designed this as an instruction for, were formerly, in their unregenerate state, just such persons themselves; and therefore should not glory over them, and treat them in a contemptuous manner: and besides, the same grace that had made a difference in them, could make one in these also, and which might be made in God's own time: and particularly, whereas they observed great ignorance in these men, they should consider that they also had been "foolish", and without understanding of things, divine and spiritual, and neither knew their own state and condition, nor the way of salvation by Christ; yea, the apostle himself, though he had a zeal for God, yet not according to knowledge; he did not know lust, nor the exceeding sinfulness of sin, until he was enlightened by the Spirit of God; he was ignorant of the righteousness of God, and went about to establish his own, which he imagined to be blameless; and thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus:

disobedient; both to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; disbelieving the truths of the Gospel, and not subjected to the ordinances of it, notwithstanding the evidence with which they came, and the miracles by which they were confirmed.

Deceived; by the old serpent Satan, who deceives the whole world; and by an evil heart of unbelief, as well as by false teachers and leaders; and so, as the word signifies, were wandering about in darkness and ignorance, and were as sheep going astray, until they were returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of souls.

Serving divers lusts and pleasures; the lusts of the flesh are many and various, which promise pleasure to them that obey them, though that is but imaginary, and very short lived, and which subjects persons to bondage and slavery; for such who indulge to these things, are overcome by them, led captive, and brought into bondage, and are the servants of sin, vassals and slaves to their own corruptions; and such these saints had been, here spoken of:

living in malice and envy; they had not only malice and envy in their hearts against their fellow creatures, but practised it in their lives; yea, their lives were a continued series of malice and envy; particularly this was true of the apostle, who haled men and women out of their houses, and committed them to prison; breathed out slaughter and threatenings against the saints; was exceedingly mad against them, persecuted them to strange cities, and compelled them to blaspheme, and gave his vote for punishing them with death.

Hateful, and hating one another; abominable in the sight of God, as considered in themselves, and on account of their nature and practices; and to be abhorred by all good men; and who, by their continual feuds, quarrels, and animosities among themselves, showed an hatred, an abhorrence of one another.

Titus 3:4

Ver. 4. But after that,.... After all this series and course of wickedness; notwithstanding all this foolishness, disobedience, deception, bondage to sin, envy, malice, and malignity; or "when" all this was, as the word may be rendered, amidst all this iniquity; when these persons were in the full career of sin, and so had done no preparatory works, or had any previous qualifications and dispositions for the grace of God:

the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; unto them; and the Ethiopic version adds, "unto us". The apostle takes the advantage of the above character of himself, and others in their former state, to set off and magnify the grace of God in their conversion; so contraries, as black and white, illustrate each other. By "God our Saviour" is not meant the Lord Jesus Christ, though he is commonly designed by our Saviour, and is several times called God our Saviour in this epistle; see **Tit 1:3** and who is truly God, and the only Saviour of lost sinners; and whose kindness and love towards them has appeared in many instances; as in his suretiship undertakings for them, in his assumption of their nature, and in his suffering and dying in their room and stead: and yet it appears from **Tit 3:6** that God our Saviour here, is distinguished from Jesus Christ our Saviour there; and therefore here must be understood of God the Father; who contrived the scheme of salvation, appointed Christ to be his salvation, and made a covenant with him, in which it secured, and sent him in time to obtain it, and through his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, saves all his people: it is his kindness and love to men that is here spoken of; and which designs not his general and providential goodness and kindness, which extends to the whole human nature, and to all the individuals of it; but his special love and grace shown in his kindness in Christ Jesus; that good will to men the angels sung of at Christ's incarnation; or that free favour and love of God towards elect men, which is sovereign and special, from everlasting to everlasting, unchangeable and unspeakable, which is better than life; the excellency of which cannot be expressed, and which has shown itself in various instances: it is said to have "appeared"; because it was hid from all eternity in the heart of God, in the thoughts of his heart, in his purposes, counsel, and covenant, and has been made manifest in time; particularly, it has broke forth and showed itself in the mission of Christ into this world, and in redemption and salvation by him; wherein God has manifested and commended his love, and shown forth the exceeding riches of his grace; and also in the effectual calling, which being a time of life, is a time of love, and is owing to the great love of God, and is a fruit and evidence of his everlasting and unchangeable love; and it is this instance and appearance of it, which is here meant, since it follows the account of the state and condition of the saints by nature; and is what was made to them when in this state, by which means they were brought out of it.

Titus 3:5

Ver. 5. Not by works of righteousness which we have done,.... The great instance of the kindness and love of God our Saviour is salvation; which the apostle denies that it is brought about by any works, even the best works of men; for "works of righteousness" are works done according to a righteous law, and in obedience to it; and in a righteous manner, from right principles of grace, in faith, and with a view to the glory of God; or otherwise they are not righteous actions, or works of righteousness; wherefore not works before, but after conversion, are here meant; for works before conversion are not properly works of righteousness: besides, these are such which we have done, who formerly were as before described, but now are regenerated and renewed by the Holy Ghost, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Now salvation, neither in whole, nor in part, is by these, either as causes; conditions, or means; See Gill on "2Ti 1:9"; hqdu Myvem, "works of righteousness", is a Jewish phrase used for righteous or good works {z}

but according to his mercy he saved us; the mercy of God is natural and essential to him, but the actings and exercise of it, towards this or the other objects, are sovereign and free, and according to his will; the effects of it are many, he is rich and abundant in it; and they are channelled in, and flow forth through the blood and righteousness of Christ; and this is the moving cause of salvation: this moved God to make a covenant with his Son, the blessings of which are the sure mercies of David, and in which God is merciful to the sins and unrighteousnesses of his people; it is owing to the tender mercy of God, that Christ, the dayspring from on high, has visited the earth; and the glory of it is very conspicuous in the affair of redemption by him; the pardon of sin is according to the multitude of God's tender mercies; and regeneration springs from the abundance of it; and even eternal life is the effect of it. Now according to this, God has "saved" his people; salvation is not only a thing determined, and resolved on in the mind of God, but is actually and completely accomplished by Jesus Christ, and an application of it is made to the saints in

effectual calling; and because of the certain enjoyment of the whole of it, even eternal glory, the saints are said to be saved already; as they are also in faith and hope, as well as in Christ, their head and representative;
See Gill on "Eph 2:8". It follows, as the means of salvation,

by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; by the former is meant, not the ordinance of water baptism; for that is never expressed by washing, nor is it the cause or means of regeneration; the cause being the Spirit of God, and the means the word of God: and besides, persons ought to be regenerated before they are baptized; and they may be baptized, and yet not regenerated, as Simon Magus; nor is it a saving ordinance, or a point of salvation; nor can it be opposed to works of righteousness, as this washing is; for that itself is a work of righteousness; see **Mt 3:15** and if persons were saved by that, they would be saved by a work of righteousness, contrary to the text itself: but regenerating grace is meant, or a being born of water, and of the Spirit; that is, of the grace of the Spirit, comparable to water for its purity and cleansing virtue: hence such who are regenerated and sanctified, are said to be washed and cleansed, having their hearts purified by faith, and their consciences purged from sin by the blood of Christ: by the latter,

the renewing of the Holy Ghost, is meant either the fruit and effect of the former, even newness of life and conversation, under the influence of the Holy Spirit; or else the gradual increase and progress of the work of grace upon the soul, renewed day by day in the spirit of the mind, by the Holy Ghost; or rather it means the same thing with regeneration, and is added partly as explanative of the washing of regeneration, showing that that is no other than the new creature, the new man, the new heart, and new spirit, formed in the soul, in the effectual calling; and partly to observe that the Holy Ghost is the author of it. Now it is in this way God saves his people, namely, by regenerating and renewing them; in this is the first appearance and discovery of the love of God to them; this is their open passage into a state of grace, and without this there is no entrance into glory; this is the foundation of all grace and good works, and by which saints appear to be heirs of the heavenly inheritance.

{z} Seder Tephillot, Ed. Amsterdam, fol. 46. 2.

Titus 3:6

Ver. 6. Which he shed on us abundantly,.... "Or richly"; either which love he shed abroad in the hearts of those whom he regenerated and renewed by his

Spirit; or which water of regeneration, that is, grace, comparable to water, he plentifully shed, and caused to abound where sin had done; or rather whom, or which Holy Spirit, with his gifts and graces, such as faith, hope, and love, and every other, he poured forth in great abundance on them; see Isa 44:3

through Jesus Christ our Saviour; the love and kindness of God the Father our Saviour, comes through him; the mercy of God streams through him; the salvation itself is by, and through him; the grace communicated in regeneration and renovation is out of his fulness; the Spirit himself is given forth from him; and every supply of grace, by which the work is carried on, comes out of his hands; and everything wrought in us, that is well pleasing in the sight of God, is through him; and even the gift of God, eternal life itself.

Titus 3:7

Ver. 7. That being justified by his grace,.... This is another way and means, as well as regeneration, by which God saves his people; for he saves no unjustified ones; no unrighteous persons shall inherit the kingdom of heaven; such as are without the wedding garment, and robe of Christ's righteousness, shall be cast into outer darkness: whom God saves, he justifies by the righteousness of his Son; and whomsoever he justifies, them he saves. The justification here spoken of is a declarative one, which takes place in regeneration; and which that is in order to, as here expressed, "that being justified": regeneration does not justify any, but makes the justified to appear to be such; justification is an act of God's gracious will conceived in his mind from eternity, by which he wills not to impute sin to his people, but to Christ their surety; and that they should be accounted righteous through the righteousness of his Son; in which act of his will the whole essence of justification in his sight lies: this was pronounced on Christ, as their head and representative at his resurrection, when he, as such, was justified, acquitted, and discharged, and they in him; and this is declared in the conscience of a sinner, by the Spirit of God, at his regeneration, when he passes from death to life; and this declaration is here intended, and which is the same with justification by faith; and is here said to be by the grace of God, as justification in every view is, and stands opposed to works of righteousness done by men, by which no man can be justified in the sight of God; in what sense justification is by the free grace of God, See Gill on "Ro 3:24".

We should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life; or "according to hope we should be made heirs of eternal life". Eternal life is an inheritance, and so is not acquired by labour and industry, nor purchased, but is a free gift; it is a bequest of God the Father to his children, of his own free good will and pleasure; and it belongs only to children; they only are heirs, and they become such by adopting grace; neither regeneration, nor justification, make them the children of God, and heirs of the grace of life, but make them appear to be so: God, by his gracious act of adoption puts them among the children, and gives them the goodly heritage; and this adoption lies in eternal predestination in Christ, in whom the inheritance is obtained on that account, **Eph 1:5**. Regeneration shows them to be the adopted ones, and gives them the nature of children, and a meetness for the inheritance; and justification gives them a right unto it, upon the foot of justice, and opens a way for their enjoyment of it, consistent with the justice and holiness of God; see **Ga 4:4**, wherefore such as are washed with the washing of regeneration, and are renewed in the spirit of their minds, and justified by the grace of God; these are manifestly heirs of eternal life, of salvation, of a kingdom and glory, of all things, even of God himself, who is their portion, and exceeding great reward; and such in regeneration are begotten to a lively hope of it, and by this they are saved, **Ro 8:24**. And thus the apostle makes regeneration by the free mercy of God, and justification by his grace, and special adoption, and heirship, with a good hope through grace, the way and means in which God saves his people, who were like others by nature, and brings them to the enjoyment of eternal happiness.

Titus 3:8

Ver. 8. This is a faithful saying,.... Meaning the whole of what is before expressed, concerning the state and condition of God's elect by nature; the appearance of the love and kindness of God to them in the effectual calling; the salvation of them, according to the mercy of God, and not by works of righteousness; regeneration, and renovation by the Spirit of God, in which such an abundance of grace is communicated; and justification by the free grace of God, as God's way of salvation; and by which men are made to appear to be heirs of eternal life, and to have hope of it: now all, and each of this is a faithful saying, is true doctrine, and to be believed, professed, and published: wherefore it follows,

and these things I will that thou affirm constantly; that is, the above doctrines; the Arabic version renders it, "I will that thou be firm in these things"; and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, "I will that thou confirmest them": the sense of the apostle is, that he would have Titus be assured of those truths himself; be at a point about them, and without any doubt or hesitation concerning them; and abide firm and constant in them, and speak of them with certainty, boldness, and confidence to others; and endeavour to confirm and establish them in them: for which purpose he would have them be frequently inculcated and insisted on; and that with this further view,

that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works; for "that", does not design the subject matter of the charge, or what the apostle would have constantly affirmed, but the end, and final event and issue of it; and nothing can more strongly engage to a studious concern for the performance of good works than the frequent insisting upon the above doctrines of grace: "by good works", are meant, not merely honest trades, and the lawful occupations and businesses of life, which should be carefully attended to, and diligently followed, in order to be useful and profitable to themselves, their families, and others; but every good work, every branch of duty, moral, civil, and religious: to "maintain" these according to the signification of the word used, is to excel in them; to outdo others; to go before others, by way of example, and so to provoke to love and to good works; and to make them the employment and business of men's lives; for which there should be a thoughtfulness, a carefulness, a studious concern, especially in those who "have believed in God"; who are regenerated and renewed by the Spirit of God, and are justified by faith in the righteousness of Christ; who believe in him for peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation: these are under great obligations to perform good works; the love of Christ should constrain them to them; and they are the only persons that are capable of doing them well, for they are sanctified, and made meet, and ready for every good work; they are created in Christ Jesus to them; they have the Spirit of Christ in them, and the strength of Christ with them, without which they cannot be performed well; and they have faith in Christ, without which it is impossible to please God.

These things are good and profitable unto men: which is to be understood not of good works, though these are good in themselves, and profitable to men in their effects; being done among them, and before them, they set them an example of doing good likewise, when evil communications corrupt good manners; and many of them issue in their temporal good, profit, and advantage: but rather the doctrines of the Gospel are here designed, which are before briefly treated of, and are said to be a faithful saying; and which the apostle would have affirmed with, certainty and constancy, in order to engage believers to the performance of good works; and that for this reason, because these doctrines are "good", excellent, valuable, and precious, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones: the author, matter, end, and use of them are good; they come from God; they are concerning Jesus Christ, and his grace; they contain good tidings of good things; and are exceeding useful to influence faith, hope, love, and a cheerful obedience to the will of God: they are profitable in the hands of the Spirit of God for conviction, conversion, comfort, and edification; for the quickening and enlightening of dead and dark sinners; for the reviving, establishing, and building up of the saints; they are the wholesome words of Christ, and are according to godliness, and are nourishing, when other doctrines eat as a canker: and this sense is confirmed, not only by what goes before, but by what follows after in the next verse; where insipid notions and controversies are opposed unto them, as unprofitable and vain.

Titus 3:9

Ver. 9. But avoid foolish questions,.... Such as were started in the schools of the Jews; see **2Ti 2:23**

and genealogies; of their elders, Rabbins, and doctors, by whom their traditions are handed down from one to another, in fixing which they greatly laboured; see **1Ti 1:4** and contentions and strivings about the law; the rites and ceremonies of it, and about the sense of it, and its various precepts, as litigated in the schools of Hillell and Shammai, the one giving it one way, and the other another; and what one declared to be free according to the law, the other declared forbidden; which occasioned great contentions and quarrels between the followers of the one, and of the other, as both the Misna and Talmud show: and agreeably to this sense, the Syriac version renders it, "the contentions and strifes of the scribes"; the Jewish doctors, who were some on the side of Hillell, and others on the side of Shammai; as well as went into parties and strifes among themselves, and oftentimes about mere trifles; things of no manner of importance; wherefore it follows,

for they are unprofitable and vain; empty things, of no manner of use, to inform the judgment, improve the mind, or influence the life and conversation.

Titus 3:10

Ver. 10. A man that is an heretic,.... An heretic, according to the notation of the word, is either one that makes choice of an opinion upon his own judgment, contrary to the generally received sense of the churches of Christ, and prefers it to theirs, and obstinately persists in it; separates from them, forms a party, and sets himself at the head of them, whom he has drawn into the same way of thinking with himself: or he is one that removes and takes away a fundamental doctrine of Christianity, which affects particularly the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity, and personality of Father, Son, and Spirit, and especially the doctrines relating to the person, office, and grace of Christ; one that brings in, or receives damnable doctrines; speaks or professes perverse things, and draws away disciples after him; or is among such disciples: for though schism and heresy do differ, and every schismatic may not be an heretic, yet every heretic is a schismatic; he makes a rent in the doctrine of Christ, and makes parties and divisions in his church; and such are not always to be contended and disputed with, but to be avoided and rejected:

after the first and second admonition reject; have nothing to do with him; have no society with him; admit him not to private conversation; and eject him from church communion, after he has been publicly admonished twice by the order of the church; for this is not to be understood of private admonition, by a particular person or persons; as in the case of private offences, Mt 18:15 but of public admonition, in the name of the church. An admonition with the Jews did not continue less than seven days {a}; some say {b} thirty; that is, there were so many days before it was out, or between one and another.

{a} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 16. 1. {b} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 33. fol. 28. 3.

Titus 3:11

Ver. 11. Knowing that he that is such is subverted,.... Or overturned and demolished; he is like an edifice, that is not only decaying, and falling, but is entirely everted, and pulled down; so that there is no hopes of a restoration or recovery; he is in a desperate condition, having opposed the person, or office, or sacrifice of Christ; having either trodden the Son of God underfoot, or counted his blood common, or done despite unto the spirit of grace; in either of which cases there is no more sacrifice for sin:

and sinneth; not practically, but doctrinally, and wilfully after he has received the knowledge of the truth; by denying the truth he received, in which he continues, notwithstanding the evidence of the word of God is against him; and; notwithstanding the arguments taken from it by the ministers of the Gospel, to convince him; and notwithstanding the admonitions of the church to recover him out of the snare of the devil:

being condemned of himself; not that an heretic is one that is convinced in his own conscience that he is in an error, and that that is a truth which he opposes; and yet he obstinately persists in the one, and continues to set himself against the other; for then, none but an hypocrite, that conceals his true sentiment, can be an heretic; nor can any man be known to be one unless he accuses himself; since no man can know the heart of another; and it would be impracticable in a church to deal with heretics, or reject and excommunicate them: but either the meaning is, that he is such an one, who by his own practice has condemned himself; for whereas he has separated himself not only from the faith of the church, but from the church itself; by so doing he practically condemns himself, or judges himself unworthy of the communion of the church, and so justifies the church in their rejection and exclusion of him: or rather, an heretic is one who having professed Christianity, and received the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice, and still professes to abide by the same, and that all doctrine is to be tried by them, and to be approved or condemned as that agrees or disagrees with them, stands condemned by those Scriptures, which he himself allows to be the rule of decision and determination; and so may be said to be self-condemned.

Titus 3:12

Ver. 12. When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus,.... These were both of them ministers of the Gospel; there is no mention of Artemas anywhere else; some say he was one of the seventy disciples, and that he was afterwards bishop of Lystra; but these are uncertain things; See Gill on "Lu 10:1"; the name is a contraction of Artemidorus. Tychicus is often spoken of; and a very great character is given of him by the apostle, in **Eph 6:21**,

be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis; which was a city, not in Epirus, but in Thrace, situated by the river Nessus, and had its name from a victory obtained there: hither the apostle would have Titus come to him, after one or other of the above ministers were come to Crete; for as the apostle had the care of all the churches upon him, he would not remove a minister from one place to another, without making a provision in their room: his reasons for having Titus come to him, might be either to know the state of the churches in Crete; or because he stood in need of his assistance; or to send him elsewhere:

for I have determined there to winter; that is, to continue there all the winter; not without labour, but to preach the Gospel, and administer the ordinances to the saints there: and whereas he says "there"; this shows that this epistle was not written from thence, as the subscription asserts; for then he would have said "here", and not "there".

Titus 3:13

Ver. 13. Bring Zenas the lawyer,.... Whether he was brought up to the civil law, either among the Greeks or Romans, is not certain; it may be he was a Jewish lawyer, or scribe, an interpreter of Moses's law among the Jews; for with them a lawyer and a scribe were one and the same, as appears from Mt 22:35 compared with Mr 12:28 and the Syriac version here calls him "a scribe", and the Ethiopic version "a scribe of the city"; which looks as if it was a civil office he bore; but however, be he what he will, he seems to have been now a preacher of the Gospel, being joined with Apollos, who certainly was one: he is said to have been one of the seventy disciples of Christ, and afterwards bishop of Diospolis; See Gill on "Lu 10:1"; his name is the contraction of Zenodorus: him the apostle would have Titus bring,

and Apollos, on their journey diligently; who was a Jew born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures; who had preached at Corinth, but was now at Crete; and whom the apostle, with Zenas, would have provided with everything necessary for their journey:

that nothing be wanting unto them; which might be proper for them in their travels, to make them comfortable, and their journey pleasant and easy.

Titus 3:14

Ver. 14. And let ours also learn to maintain good works,.... By which are not only meant honest trades, as some choose to render the words: it is true, that a trade is a work; and an honest lawful employment of life is a good work; and which ought to be maintained, attended to, and followed, and to be learnt, in order to be followed. The Jews say, that he that does not teach his son a trade, it is all one as if he taught him to rob or steal; hence their doctors were brought up to trades; See Gill on "Mr 6:3"; as was the Apostle Paul, though he had an education under Gamaliel: and such an one is to be learned and maintained for necessary uses, for the good of a man's self, and for the supply of his family; for the assistance of others that are in need; for the support of the Gospel, and the interest of Christ; and for the relief of poor saints; that such may not be unfruitful and useless, in commonwealths, neighbourhoods, churches, and families. The Jews say {c}

"there are four things which a man should constantly attend to with all his might, and they are these; the law, "good works", prayer, Ura Krdw, and "the way of the earth", or "business"; if a tradesman, to his trade; if a merchant, to his merchandise; if a man of war to war."

But though this may be part of the sense of these words, it is not the whole of it; nor are acts of beneficence to the poor of Christ, to the household of faith, to strangers and ministers, to whom good is especially to be done, only intended; though they, may be taken into the account, in agreement with the context; but all good works in general, which are done in conformity to the revealed will of God, in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God, are meant: to maintain them, is to endeavour to outdo others in them, not only the men of the world, but one another; and to set examples of them to others, and to provoke one another, by an holy emulation, to them; and to be constant in the performance of them: and which believers may "learn" partly from the Scriptures, which contain what is the good and perfect will of God; these show what are good works, and direct unto them, and furnish the man of God for them; and also the grace part of the Scripture, the doctrines of the grace of God, teach to deny sin, and to live sober, righteous, and godly lives; and from the examples of the apostles and followers of Christ; and above all from Christ himself, the great pattern and exemplar of good works: and this lesson of good works is to be learnt by ours; meaning not only those of the same function, who were in the same office, ministers of the Gospel, as were the apostle and Titus; but all that believed in God, who were of the same Christian community and society, professors of the same religion, and partakers of the same grace; and were not only nominally, but really of the same number, even of the number of God's elect, the redeemed from among men, the family of Christ, sharers in the common faith, and heirs of the grace of life; who lie under the greatest obligations to learn to do good works: "for necessary uses"; not to make their peace with God, or to atone for their sins, or to procure the pardon of them, or to cleanse them from them, or for their justification before God, or to obtain salvation and eternal life; but to glorify God, testify their subjection to him, and gratitude for mercies received; to show forth their faith to men; to adorn the doctrine of Christ, and a profession of it; to recommend religion to others; to stop the mouths of gainsayers, and put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: and "that they be not unfruitful"; in them, and in the knowledge of Christ; good works are the fruits of the Spirit, and of his grace; they are fruits of righteousness; and such as are without them are like trees without fruit, useless and unprofitable.

{c} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 32. 2. & Gloss. in. ib.

Titus 3:15

Ver. 15. All that are with me salute thee,.... All the apostles, fellow labourers, and the ministers of the Gospel that were with him; and all the members of the church where he was, sent their Christian salutation to Titus; he being a person greatly esteemed, and whose praise was in all the churches:

greet them that love us in the faith; not merely as men, as their countrymen, as related to them in the flesh; or on account of any external things, but as believers; because of the doctrine of faith, professed and preached; and because of the grace of faith obtained and possessed; or who love us faithfully, sincerely, and uprightly, from their hearts, and not in word and tongue only:

grace be with you all, Amen; which is the common concluding salutation in all Paul's epistles. This shows that this epistle was not designed for Titus only, but for the saints at Crete.

It was written to Titus the first bishop of the church of the Cretians. But this subscription, as many others, is not to be depended upon; it is not very likely that Titus was bishop of this church at all; since his stay there was but short, nor indeed elsewhere, seeing he was an evangelist; though this is asserted both by Eusebius {d}, and Sophronius {e}, who adds, that he died and was buried here: and what follows, that it was written

from Nicopolis of Macedonia, does not seem to be just, as may be concluded from **Tit 3:12**. Many learned men think it was written from Colosse, or some neighbouring place; though when he wrote his epistle to the Colossians it looks as if he had never been there before: the Syriac version adds, "sent by the hands of Zenas and Apollos"; which is not unlikely, since he desires they might be accommodated by Titus with what was necessary for the remaining part of their journey, **Tit 3:13**.

{d} Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 4. {e} In Hieron. Eccl. Script. Catalog. sect. 12.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Philemon 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO PHILEMON

This epistle was written by the Apostle Paul, when a prisoner at Rome, as appears from its inscription and subscription; and seems to have been written at the same time, in the year 60, and sent by the same hand, as the epistle to the Colossians; seeing the same persons were with the apostle at the writing of both, and send their Christian salutations in the one, as in the other; compare **Phm 1:23** with **Col 4:10** and Archippus, the minister in Colosse, is made mention of in both, **Phm 1:2** and it is very probable that Philemon, to whom it was written, was a Colossian, since Onesimus, his servant, on whose account, and by whom it was sent, is said to be one of the Colossians, **Col 4:9**. Philemon is said to be one of the seventy disciples, and afterwards Bishop of Gaza;
See Gill on "Lu 10:1". The occasion of the epistle was this; Philemon's servant, Onesimus, having either embezzled his master's goods, or robbed him, ran away from him, and fled to Rome, where the apostle was a prisoner in chains in his own hired house, under the custody of a soldier, and where he received all that came, and preached the Gospel to them, Ac 28:30 and among those that went to hear him, this fugitive servant was one, and was converted under his ministry; and who not only received the grace of God, but had such gifts bestowed on him as qualified him to be a preacher of the word. Now the design of this epistle is to reconcile Philemon to his servant, and to entreat him to receive him again, not only as a servant, but as a brother in Christ; and the most proper and prudent methods and arguments are used to engage him to it. The epistle, though it is a familiar one, and short, is very instructive; it shows great humility in the apostle, and that he did not think it below him to be concerned in doing such an office as to reconcile a master to his servant, and which is worthy of imitation; as also it teaches the right that masters have over their servants, which is not lost by their becoming Christians, and even ministers of the Gospel; and that recompense should be made unto them for injuries done by them: it likewise displays the riches of the grace of God, in the conversion of such a vile creature: and the wonderful providence of God in overruling that which was sinful in itself, running away from his master, to the greatest good, even the conversion of him; and is an instance of surprising grace: and from hence may be learned, that there is salvation in Christ for the chief of sinners; and that the conversion of them is not to be despaired of. The authority of this epistle was not questioned by the ancient writers, and stands always in their catalogues of the canon of the Scripture; and Marcion the heretic, who either rejected, or changed, or mutilated the rest of the epistles,

could not lay his hands on this, because of the brevity of it, as Tertullian {a} and Jerom {b} observe.

{a} Advers. Marcion. l. 5. c. 21. {b} Proaem. in Philem.

INTRODUCTION TO PHILEMON 1

This epistle has an inscription, salutation, and preface, the same with others, which are in **Phm 1:1**, the principal view of it is to persuade Philemon to receive his servant Onesimus; the arguments used are taken from the general character he had for love to the saints, and people of God, and therefore it was hoped he would act up to it in this instance, **Phm 1:5**, from the consideration of the person who made the suit to him, who could have used authority, but chose rather to entreat him in love; and also of his age, and the condition in which he was, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, **Phm 1:8** from the spiritual relation Onesimus was in to the apostle, who had begotten him in his bonds, **Phm 1:10** from the present usefulness of him, both to Philemon and the apostle, who before was useless, **Phm 1:11**, from the strong affection the apostle had for him, being as his own bowels, **Phm 1:12** from his unwillingness to do anything without his consent, though he could have detained him upon the foot of equity and justice, to have served him in his stead, **Phm 1:13**, from the overruling providence of God, which had so ordered it, that he should depart from him for a time, that he might be received for ever, **Phm 1:15** from the character under which he could now be received, not as a servant, but as a beloved brother, **Phm 1:16** from the partnership and association in which the apostle and Philemon were, **Phm 1:17** from the assurance he gave him of repaying him whatever his servant owed him, and making good whatever he had injured him in, **Phm 1:18** and from that pleasure, delight, and refreshment he should have, should he receive him, **Phm 1:20**. And, upon the whole, the apostle expresses his confidence that he would grant his request, obey his commands, and even do more than he had mentioned to him, **Phm 1:21**. And then gives him some hope of his being delivered from prison, through the prayers of Philemon, and others, and of seeing him shortly; and therefore desires he would prepare a lodging for him, **Phm 1:22** and closes with the salutations of several friends to him, mentioned by name, with their characters, **Phm 1:23** and with his own common salutation, **Phm 1:25**.

Ver. 1. Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ,.... Not made a prisoner by Christ, though he was apprehended, laid hold on, and detained by Christ as a prisoner of hope, at his conversion; but this is not intended here: but he was a prisoner at Rome for the sake of Christ, on account of professing him, and preaching in his name; his bonds were for the sake of the Gospel of Christ; and therefore they are in this epistle called the bonds of the Gospel. He was not a prisoner for any capital crime, and therefore had no reason to be ashamed of his chain, nor was he; but rather gloried in it, as his taking this title and character to himself, and prefixing it to this epistle shows; and which he chooses to make use of rather than that of a servant of God, or an apostle of Christ, as he elsewhere does, that he might not by constraint, or authority, but by love, move the pity and compassion of Philemon to grant his request, and receive his servant; which, should he deny, would be to add affliction to his bonds: and that this is his view in the choice of this character, is manifest from **Phm 1:8**

and Timothy our brother, not according to the flesh, or as being of the same country, for he was the countryman of neither of them; nor only on account of his being a regenerate than, born of God, a child of God, and of the same family; but chiefly because he was of the same function, was a minister of the Gospel: him the apostle joins with himself in the epistle, and so in the request, because he might be well known to Philemon, and be much respected by him; and to show that they were united in this affair, and both desired this favour of him; hoping that by their joint application it would be obtained:

unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow labourer: the name of Philemon is Greek; there was a Greek poet of this name, and a Greek historian that Pliny made use of in compiling his history: there is indeed mention made in the Jewish writings {a}, of a Rabbi whose name was wmylp, "Philemo"; but this our Philemon seems to have been an inhabitant of Colosse, and rather to have been a Gentile than a Jew; he was a rich and hospitable man, and greatly respected, and therefore here called, "our dearly beloved"; that is, dearly beloved by the apostle and Timothy, not only as being a believer, but as being also generous and useful in his station, and likewise as he was a minister of the Gospel; for so the next phrase, "and fellow labourer", seems to import; for though such are sometimes said to be labourers and fellow helpers with the apostle, who assisted in carrying on the interest of Christ, with their purses, and prayers, and private conversation; yet as it is used in this same epistle, of such who were in the work of the ministry, **Phm 1:24** it is very probable it is so to be understood here: and now though these expressions of affection and respect were without dissimulation; nor were they mere compliments; yet the intention of them was to work upon the mind of Philemon, to reconcile him to his servant; suggesting, that as he had an interest in the affections of the apostle and others, this would be a means of establishing it, and would be acting agreeably to his character, as a minister of the Gospel.

{a} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 4. 1. & Menachot, fol. 37. 1. & Juchasin, fol. 101. 1. 108. 1. & 159. 2.

Philemon 1:2

Ver. 2. And to our beloved Apphia,.... The Alexandrian copy reads, "to sister Apphia"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "to the beloved sister Apphia"; for this is a woman's name; and it is thought that she was the wife of Philemon, since she is placed next to him, and before Archippus, a minister of the word; and very prudently is she wrote to, and justly commended, in order to engage her to use her interest with her husband to receive his servant again, who otherwise might have stood against it, and been a very great hinderance to a reconciliation: this clause is wanting in the Ethiopic version:

and Archippus our fellow soldier; that this Archippus was a preacher of the Gospel at Colosse is manifest from Col 4:17 wherefore the apostle styles him a fellow soldier; for though this character belongs to private Christians, who are enlisted as volunteers under Christ, the Captain of salvation, and fight under his banners, against sin, Satan, and the world, being accoutred with the whole armour of God, and are more than conquerors through Christ that has loved them; yet it very eminently belongs to the ministers of the Gospel, who are more especially called upon, to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ; to war a good warfare, to fight the good fight of faith; and besides the above enemies common to all believers, to engage with false teachers, and earnestly contend for the faith of the Gospel, that so it may continue with the saints. Now this man was in the same company, and in the same service, engaged in the same common cause, against the same enemies, and under the same Captain, and was expecting the same crown of immortality and glory, and therefore he calls him his fellow soldier; and he wisely inscribes his epistle to him, that he might make use of the interest he had in Philemon, and his wife, to bring this matter to bear, the apostle writes about:

and to the church in thy house: not in the house of Archippus, but in the house of Philemon; and designs not the church at Colosse, as though it met at his house; but his own family, which for the great piety and religion which were among them, and for the good order and decorum in which they were kept, were like a church of themselves; and here again the apostle acts the wise part, in order to gain his point, by taking notice of them, who might some of them have been injured or affronted by Onesimus, when with them; and so entertained some resentment against him, and might put a bar in the way of his reception into the family again.

Philemon 1:3

Ver. 3. Grace to you and peace, from God,.... Which is the same form of salutation used in the other epistles; See Gill on "Ro 1:7" for though this epistle is but a very small one, yet it is introduced in the same form as the larger epistles are; and has an inscription in the former verse, a salutation in this, and a preface in the three following.

Philemon 1:4

Ver. 4. I thank my God,.... Meaning on account, of Philemon, for the grace bestowed upon him, thereafter mentioned; See Gill on "Ro 1:8" making other saints, **Ro 1:9**, the apostle was a man much in prayer, frequent at the throne of grace; and he prayed not for himself only, but for all the saints, for all the churches and ministers of the Gospel; whom he not only bore upon his mind and heart, but made mention of them, it may be by name; however, he remembered them, and put up petitions, with thanksgivings, for them; and so he did for Philemon; and which he takes notice of with the same view as before: the word, "always", is so placed in the original text, as to be put either to his thanks to God, or his prayers, and may be true of both; the Syriac and Arabic versions join it to the former; and the Vulgate Latin and the Ethiopic versions place it to the latter.

Philemon 1:5

Ver. 5. Hearing of thy love and faith,.... Those two spring from the free favour and love of God, and are the pure gifts of his grace; and therefore thanks are to be given for them to God; nor are they to be ascribed to the power and will of man; they are the fruits of the Spirit of God; and are the principal ingredients in sanctification, which is entirely his work; and they are in all regenerate persons; and are the evidences of regeneration; by which it is known that men are passed from death to life; and they always go together, and are inseparable from each other: there cannot be true faith where love is wanting, for faith works by love; and there cannot be real love, where there is not faith; they only love the saints aright, who love them in the faith, and because of it; and these graces are visible, and to be known by their fruits, whereby they come to be heard of, and talked of, as these in Philemon were. Faith in the heart is confessed by the mouth; and love, both to Christ and to his people, shows itself, as well as faith, in works of righteousness. Sometimes faith is put before love, it being a leading grace, and the great receiver of all the blessings of grace; and here love is placed before faith, because of its being more excellent on account of its continuance and duration; or there may be no design at all in it; but rather, as sometimes one, and sometimes another is mentioned first, it shows that they are upon an equal foot, and both have their proper place and usefulness; the objects of them follow:

which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; which are either to be considered as equally objects of the same grace, or as distinct ones; that is, either that Christ is the object both of faith and love, and the saints are the object both of faith and love; or else these graces are to be distinguished by their respective objects; as that faith is toward Christ, and love toward all the saints: that Christ is both the object of faith and love is certain; nor is there any difficulty to consider him as such; faith is equally to be exercised on him, as on God the Father; and he is indeed the immediate object of faith, and by whom men believe in God; and he is to be loved, and is loved by his people above all things, and at all times, and in sincerity: and that the saints are the objects of the love of all truly gracious souls, is a plain case; but the greater difficulty is, how they should be the objects of their faith; and yet there are instances of this, Ex 14:31 and indeed, true love believes all things, and hopes all things, 1Co 13:7. But it seems better to divide these objects according to the different graces, and to consider faith as being towards our Lord Jesus; which is a looking towards Christ, a moving towards him, a laying hold upon him, and embracing him, a staying and leaning on him, a living upon him, and walking in him; and which in Philemon might be a strong one, as well as unfeigned, and operative: and love may be considered as being toward all saints; for though all men are, in a sense, to be loved, and kindness to be shown to them, and that even to enemies, yet more especially the saints; who are set apart by God the Father, whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ, and who are internally sanctified by the Spirit, and are enabled to live soberly and righteously: and all of these are the objects of love, whether rich or poor, greater or lesser believers, of meaner or larger abilities; for they are all equally loved by God, redeemed by Christ, and regenerated by his Spirit; are justified by his righteousness, are all the children and heirs of God, and are called in one hope of their calling; and love to them should be unfeigned, fervent, active, and laborious, and as Christ has loved us; and such was Philemon's love, as well as it was universal and this distribution of these graces to their respective objects may be confirmed from a parallel place in **Col 1:4** which epistle was written and sent at the same time with this.

Philemon 1:6

Ver. 6. That the communication of thy faith,.... The grace of faith itself cannot be communicated from one to another; a believing parent cannot communicate it to his children, nor a master to his servants, nor a minister to his hearers; but an account of it, of its actings and exercises, of the joy of it, and of the peace a soul is filled with through believing, may be given to the mutual comfort and edification of saints; and it may be shown forth to others by the fruits of it, works of righteousness: but here it seems to design acts of beneficence, communicating to the necessities of others, as flowing from faith; and these words are to be connected with **Phm 1:4** as a part of the apostle's prayers, as what is contained in the preceding verse is the matter of his thanksgiving. And his prayer is, that such a communication of good things, which springs from faith,

may be effectual; to answer some very good purposes, the good of others, and the service of the interest of Christ, and the glory of God; or, as the Vulgate Latin version reads, only by the change of one letter, that it "may be evident"; to which the Syriac version seems to incline, rendering it, that it "may be fruitful in works"; or show itself in fruits of righteousness, in works of mercy and kindness; and the apostle's sense is, that it might be more and more so:

by the acknowledging of every good thing that is in you in Christ Jesus; the meaning is, that every good thing that is in the saints, or among them, should be acknowledged to come to them in and through Christ Jesus, in whom all fulness of grace dwells, and from whom all is imparted; and that every good thing that is communicated, or done in faith, which is effectual to any good purpose, should be owned as done by the grace and strength of Christ, and be done to his saints, as if done to himself, and be directed to his glory: the phrase, "in you", respects not Philemon only, but Apphia, Archippus, and the church in Philemon's house; the Arabic version reads, in us.

Philemon 1:7

Ver. 7. For we have great joy and consolation in thy love,.... In the expressions and acts of it to the poor saints; for which reason the apostle gives thanks for it before; and it is a pleasure and comfort to an ingenuous mind, though it is not in his power to do good to the poor saints himself, to see that others have both abilities, and a heart to relieve them:

because the bowels of the saints are, refreshed by thee, brother; meaning, not only that their bellies were filled with food, for the phrase is used in **Phm 1:20** where that cannot be intended; but their hearts were filled with gladness, the load upon their spirits, the pressures upon their minds were removed, and they had an inward pleasure in their souls, and rest, refreshment, and comfort, through the liberal communications of Philemon to them; who did what he did cheerfully, that so it did their souls good, as well as their bodies; and in doing which, he acted the part of a brother in Christ.

Philemon 1:8

Ver. 8. Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ,.... Or use much freedom of speech in the name of Christ, as an ambassador of his, and great authority as his apostle, which was given him for edification:

to enjoin thee that which is convenient; which became him as a believer in Christ, and a minister of the Gospel; which was his duty, and was obligatory upon him, agreeable to the doctrines of Christ; who taught men to love their enemies, to be reconciled to their brethren, that had offended them, especially when they repented; and therefore it was fit and proper that he should receive his servant again, since God had called him by his grace, and given him repentance for his sins: upon this foot the apostle could have commanded him, as he did in other cases, **2Th 3:6**, but he chose not to address him in an authoritative way, but by way of entreaty, as follows.

Philemon 1:9

Ver. 9. Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee,.... Either for the sake of the great love which the apostle bore to Philemon, being, as he calls him, his dearly beloved, he took this method; or because of Philemon's great love to all the saints before mentioned, he was encouraged to proceed in this manner, hoping on that account to have success; or it may be, it was for the sake of that love with which God had loved him, and which he puts him in mind of, to engage him to grant his request; that seeing God the Father had loved him, and chosen him in Christ; and Christ had loved him, and redeemed him by his blood; and the Holy Spirit had loved him, and sanctified him by his grace, that therefore he would receive his servant again for the sake of this love; who also was the object of it; see Ro 15:30. The Alexandrian copy reads, "for", or "through necessity", as if necessity obliged him to this request.

Being such an one as Paul the aged; or "the elder"; meaning either in office, which he might mention with this view, that his request might have the greater weight and influence; or else in years, and which he might observe partly to move compassion in Philemon, and that he might not grieve him in his old age, as he would, should he deny his request; and partly to suggest to him, that the advice he was about to give him, to receive his servant, did not come from a raw young man, but from one well stricken in years, with whom were wisdom and understanding; and therefore not to be treated with neglect or contempt: how old the apostle was at this time, is not certain; he could not be less than sixty years of age, or he would not have called himself an old man; for no man was so called by the Jews, but he that was at the age of sixty {b}. Some editions of the Vulgate Latin version, as that of the London Polyglot Bible, read, "seeing thou art such an one as Paul the aged"; as if Philemon was an old man, as the apostle was, and therefore he would not lay his commands upon him, as an ancient man might upon a young man, but rather entreat him as equal to him in years: but then it follows, which does not appear to be true of Philemon, or that he was in the like case,

and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ; which is observed with the same view as in **Phm 1:1**.
See Gill on "Phm 1:1".

{b} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 1.

Philemon 1:10

Ver. 10. I beseech thee for my son Onesimus,.... Now he comes to the request itself, and mentions by name the person on whose account he makes it, and whom he calls his son; not merely because of his affection to him, but because he really was his spiritual father; he had been the happy instrument of his conversion, and he was his son according to the common faith, or in a spiritual sense: hence it follows,

whom I have begotten in my bonds: which is to be understood of a begetting again, or of regeneration; not as if the apostle was the efficient cause of it, as the nature of it shows, it being expressed by men's being born from above; by their being quickened, when dead in trespasses and sins; by being made new creatures, and transformed in the renewing of their minds; by Christ being formed in them, and by a partaking of the divine nature; and who is sufficient for these things? besides it is expressly denied to be of man, but is always ascribed to God, Father, Son, and Spirit; but as being the instrument and means of it, through the preaching of the Gospel, the word of truth, by which God of his own will, and by the power of his grace, regenerated this person; and this is said to be done "in his bonds": by which it appears, that the word of God was not bound, but had a free course, and was glorified, and the bonds of the apostle were the means of the spread of it; and that it was attended with great power, to the conversion of souls: and this circumstance is mentioned to engage Philemon to regard the entreaty of the apostle; he had been the instrument of begetting many souls to Christ; but this man was begotten by him in his bonds, when he was a prisoner, and so was peculiarly dear to him.

Philemon 1:11

Ver. 11. Which in time past was to thee unprofitable,.... Yea, injurious and hurtful; one that was an eye servant, that loitered away his time, and set an ill example to fellow servants; and not only so, but embezzled his master's goods, and robbed him, and run away from him. So every man, in his state of unregeneracy, is an unprofitable man, **Ro 3:12** unprofitable to God, to men, and to themselves; their sins will not profit them, though they may promise them liberty and pleasure; nor will their riches, should they lose their own souls: nor their own righteousness, in the business of justification and salvation; nor even an outward profession of religion: yea, they are not only said to be unprofitable, but are represented as good for nothing; hence they are compared to dishonourable and unserviceable vessels; to briers and thorns, and the earth which brings them; to the salt that has lost its savour, and is fit neither for the land, nor for the dunghill; to rotten figs, to chaff, and dross of metals: yea, they are hurtful and injurious to themselves, on whom they bring ruin and destruction; to others, to wicked men, whom they more and more corrupt, and harden in sin; and to good men, whom they grieve; and also to the interest and glory of God, whose laws they transgress, and against whom they sin, affront his justice, and provoke the eyes of his glory.

But now profitable to thee and to me; that is, he was now likely to be so, to be profitable to Philemon, as a servant, and to the apostle as a ministering brother. Some think there is in this an allusion to his name Onesimus, which signifies "profitable"; before he did not answer to his name, but now he was a true

Onesimus, really a profitable person; grace, of an unprofitable man, makes a profitable one. Such an one is profitable to himself; his godliness is gain unto him, it having both the promise of this life, and of that which is to come; and he is profitable to others, if he has gifts qualifying him for the public work of the ministry, as Onesimus seems to have had; then he is made and becomes very useful to many for conviction, conversion, comfort, and edification; and if only a private believer, he is often profitable to others, by relating the work of God upon his soul; he is serviceable to the interest of Christ, for the support of the ministry, and supply of the poor; he is useful by his good examples, and prayers, in the neighbourhood, town, city, or nation, in which he dwells. This argument from profit, the apostle knew would be an engaging one.

Philemon 1:12

Ver. 12. Whom I have sent again,.... From Rome to Colosse, or to Philemon, wherever he was, along with this epistle:

thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels; meaning his son, who, in a spiritual sense, came out of his bowels, to whom he stood in the relation of a spiritual father; so the Syriac version renders it, as my son, so receive him; see Ge 15:4 and for whom he had a most strong affection, and tender regard; his bowels yearned for him, and he suggests by this expression, that should he reject him, it would give him the utmost pain and uneasiness; and he should be obliged to cry out as the Prophet Jeremy did, "my bowels, my bowels, I am pained at the very heart"; **Jer 4:19** wherefore he entreats him to receive him again into his house and family, into his service, and into his heart and affections, where the apostle had received him.

Philemon 1:13

Ver. 13. Whom I would have retained with me,.... At Rome, where the apostle was a prisoner:

that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the Gospel; the apostle was in bonds, not for any crime, for any immorality he had been guilty of, but for the sake of the Gospel, for professing and preaching that; for this he was an ambassador in bonds, as he elsewhere says, **Eph 6:20**. Now he would have kept Onesimus with him, either to have waited upon him, in his bonds, and to have provided for him the necessaries of life; or to have assisted him in the ministration of the word, in the room of Philemon, who, had he been there, would have been employed in such service; so that if the apostle had retained him, he would have been acting not for himself, but in the room of his master, and doing what he should have done, had he been on the spot. This the apostle observes to prevent an objection that might have been made; that since Onesimus was become so profitable to him, why did he send him back? why did he not keep him for his own service? this he obviates and removes, by signifying he should have done it, but for the following reason.

Philemon 1:14

Ver. 14. But without thy mind would I do nothing,.... Which shows great modesty and humility in the apostle, that though as such he had an authority, which he could have used, as well as had understanding and judgment how to have used it without consulting Philemon, or having his sense of this affair, yet chose to consult him: and it also shows the strict regard the apostle had to equity and justice, that he would do nothing with another man's servant without his consent; he would not seem to alienate, or engross another man's right and property, whatever power he might have, as an apostle, to have retained Onesimus as a minister to him.

That thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly; that is, that his goodness in forgiving his servant, and renouncing all claim and property in him, and admitting him to continue in the service of the apostle, might not look like a forced thing; but that it might appear to be a voluntary action, when he should of himself return him, after he had been thus sent to him, and received by him.

Philemon 1:15

Ver. 15. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season,.... The apostle in this clause seems to soften this business of Onesimus in running away from his master; he calls it not a running away, but a departure, an absence from him, and that but for a little while; and suggests that the hand of God might be in it; that there was an overruling providence that attended it, such as was in Joseph's going down into Egypt; and that this separation of Onesimus from his master, for a short time, was in order that they should come together again, and never part more, as follows:

that thou shouldest receive him for ever; or during life, referring to the law in Ex 21:6 or to all eternity, since they were in the same spiritual relation, partakers of the same grace, and had a right to the same heavenly inheritance, and should be together with Christ for evermore.

Philemon 1:16

Ver. 16. Not now as a servant,.... That is, not only as a servant, for a servant he was, and was to be received as such; his call by grace had not dissolved the civil relation that was between him and his master, though it had added to it something that was above it, and greater than it:

but above a servant; in a higher condition, as the Arabic version renders it, than a servant; not barely considered in that relation, but as being in one much preferable to it:

a brother beloved, specially to me; a brother in Christ, and to be beloved on that account, as he was especially by the apostle, who had been the instrument of his conversion; see **Col 4:9**.

But how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord? both in a natural and civil sense, as being of the same nation and country, and as being part of his family, his servant, and now become an useful and profitable one; and, in a spiritual sense, being in the Lord, belonging to the Lord Jesus, to that family which is named of him, being a fellow citizen with the saints, and of the household of God, and therefore must be doubly dear to him.

Philemon 1:17

Ver. 17. If thou count me therefore a partner,.... A companion and friend, who reckon each other's affairs and interest their own: the word answers to rbx, a word often used in Talmudic writings, for an associate of the doctors or wise men: here it may mean also a partner both in grace, and in the ministry; one that shared in the same gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, and one that was to be a partaker of the inheritance with the saints in light: now if Philemon reckoned the apostle such an one, as he doubtless did, as being engaged in the same common cause, and a partaker of the same common faith, and interested in the same common salvation; then he entreats him on account of Onesimus, in the following manner, receive him as myself; intimating, that he was as dear to him as himself; that he loved him as his own soul; and that he should take whatever respect and affection were shown to him as done to himself; and that he would have him receive him into his house, his heart and affections, as he would receive him the apostle himself, should he come to him.

Philemon 1:18

Ver. 18. If he hath wronged thee,.... By squandering away his time, spoiling his work, or corrupting his fellow servants:

or oweth thee ought; by embezzling his master's goods, robbing him of his money, and running away from his service:

put that on mine account; Signifying that he would be answerable for all, and make good all debts and damages.

Philemon 1:19

Ver. 19. I Paul have written it, with mine own hand,.... Meaning either this epistle, which being short, he used no amanuensis, but wrote it all himself, and which might be taken as an engagement to do what he promised; or else a bill, a promissory note, written with his own hand, which he sent along with Onesimus, by which he laid himself under obligation to give Philemon full satisfaction in every thing, in which he had been injured by his servant; adding,

I will repay it: this was not an ironical expression, nor a piece of vanity in the apostle; he spoke seriously, and heartily, and meant what he said; and though his circumstances were often so mean, that he was forced to work with his own hands to minister to his necessities; yet such was his interest in the churches, and such their obligation to him, on account of his personal and useful ministrations to them, that he could easily raise a sum of money among them, upon any emergent occasion; so that Philemon had a good surety and paymaster of the apostle: and this shows his great humility to be a bondsman for a servant, and to make good damages and debts brought on in a scandalous manner; as also that suretyship in some cases is lawful, though it ought to be cautiously, and for very good reasons, entered into: and this engagement of the apostle for Onesimus bears some resemblance with, and may serve to illustrate the suretyship of Christ, for his people, they, and Onesimus, being much in a like condition; as he was an unprofitable and run away servant, so they are all gone out of the way, and together become unprofitable; and Christ engaged with his Father to bring them back again, and set them before him; and by his sufferings and death has brought them nigh, which were afar off; as he had wronged his master and was indebted to him, so they have injured the law of God, affronted his justice, and incurred his displeasure; and having owed to him more than ten thousand talents, and having nothing to pay, Christ engaged to satisfy law and justice, to make reconciliation for them, and pay all their debts; all which he has accordingly done; their sins have been placed to his account, imputed to him, and charged upon him; and he has bore them, and the punishment due to them, and so has satisfied for them, and restored that which he took not away.

Albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides; having respect to his conversion, which he was the happy instrument of the apostle was his spiritual father, and he was his son, according to the common faith; he had been the instrument of saving his soul from death; he had been the means of that in the hand of God, which all his riches, and the riches of his friends and relations, could never have procured: the salvation of his soul, his better part, was instrumentally owing to him, and so his whole self; and therefore, what favour might he not ask of him? and what was it he could, or should deny him? this the apostle introduces in a very artificial manner, and does not insist upon it, but suggests, that should he forgive the injuries and debts, he had took upon him to make satisfaction for, it would not be an equivalent to the debt he owed to him. From hence may be observed, how greatly obliged regenerated persons are to those, who have been the means and instruments of their conversion.

Philemon 1:20

Ver. 20. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord,.... Through the apostle was his spiritual father, having been the instrument of his conversion, yet he calls him his brother, as being a partaker of the same grace, and a minister of the same Gospel; and intimates to him, that should he grant his request, and receive his servant again, it would give him great joy and pleasure, and that not of a carnal, but of a spiritual kind, even joy in the Lord; he should rejoice in the presence of the Lord, and before him, concerning him; he should rejoice in his faith in the Lord, and love for him, and obedience to him; all which would be discovered in such a conduct: the Syriac version renders it, as an assurance to himself,

I shall be refreshed by thee in our Lord; not doubting but that he would gratify him in the thing he asked of him, which would be a refreshment to him; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "may I enjoy thee in the Lord": meaning not his company and presence, either in this world, or in the world to come; but that he might enjoy or receive the favour from him he had petitioned him for, for the Lord's sake; the Arabic version renders it, as a reason why he should do it, "I have been profitable to thee in the Lord"; confirming what he had said before, that he owed himself to him; he having been useful to him in bringing him to the knowledge of Christ, and faith in him; and the Ethiopic version refers it to a promise, "I will repay in our Lord"; in spiritual things in our Lord, if not in things temporal:

refresh my bowels in the Lord; or "in Christ"; as the Alexandrian copy, the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, read; and by his "bowels", he either means Onesimus, as in **Phm 1:12** who, in a spiritual sense, came forth out of his bowels; or else himself, his soul, his spirit, his inward parts; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "refresh my soul"; and the sense is, that he desired in the Lord, and for his sake, that he would receive Onesimus again, which would give him an inward pleasure, and refresh his spirit; and indeed he intimates, that nothing could be more cheering and reviving to him.

Philemon 1:21

Ver. 21. Having confidence in thy obedience,.... In his obedience of faith to Christ, and his Gospel; he having been made willing in the day of his power to serve him, as well as to be saved by him; and being constrained by his love, and the Spirit of Christ having wrought in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure:

l wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say; the knowledge the apostle had of Philemon's cheerful obedience to Christ in all the parts of duty, encouraged him to write to him, on this head; believing that he would even do more than he had desired of him.

Philemon 1:22

Ver. 22. But withal prepare me also a lodging,.... Not that the apostle expected or desired any grand apartment to be fitted up for him; a room with such furniture as the Shunamite provided for the man of God was sufficient for him, and what he would have been entirely contented with; but his view in this was, to let Philemon know that he hoped to be released from his bonds, and that he might expect to see him; and this he hinted to him, in order to stir him up to receive his servant sooner, and the more readily; who otherwise might have been indifferent to it, and negligent of it, thinking he should never see the apostle's face any more.

For I trust, that through your prayers I shall be given you; to minister in the Gospel again among them: the apostle was a man of prayer himself, and he had a very great regard to the prayers of others, and often desired an interest in them; that he might perform his ministerial work as it should be; that he might have success in it; and that he might be delivered from the unbelieving Jews, and from wicked and unreasonable men; and he had some secret hope and trust in his own mind, that through the prayers of the saints he should be delivered from his bonds, and go up and down preaching the Gospel as heretofore: he doubtless was acquainted with the case of Peter, for whom prayer was made incessantly by the church, when in prison, and he had deliverance; however, he knew that the prayers of the saints availed much with God; but whether this hope and expectation of his were answered, is a matter of doubt and question: some think he was released, and went into several parts, and preached the Gospel, and then was taken up again, and committed to prison, and suffered under Nero, some years after; and others think not.

Philemon 1:23

Ver. 23. There salute thee Epaphras,.... Who was a Colossian, and minister of the church at Colosse, and so might be well known to Philemon, who seems to have been of the same place and church; see **Col 1:7** his name is omitted in the Ethiopic version:

my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus; this good man, and minister of Christ, might have been sent by the Colossians, as Epaphroditus was by the Philippians, to the apostle at Rome, to pay him a visit, and comfort and assist him under his afflictions; and staying and preaching the Gospel there, was committed to prison, or was laid in bonds, as the apostle was, and upon the same account; namely, for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel. For by this time Nero began to persecute the Christians, which he did in the better and more moderate part of his reign; for among several things for which he is commended by the historian {b}, this is one;

""Afficti suppliciis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novae ac maleficae"; the Christians were punished, a sort of men of a new and bad religion:"

and Epaphras being at Rome, when this persecution broke out, was taken up and put in prison, as were also Aristarchus, **Col 4:10** and Timothy, Heb 13:23.

{b} Suetonius in Vita Neronis, c. 16.

Philemon 1:24

Ver. 24. Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas,.... Marcus was Barnabas's sister's son, the son of that Mary, in whose house the church met, and prayed for Peter when in prison; whose name was John Mark, whom Saul and Barnabas took along with them to Antioch, and from thence, in their travels, to other parts; but he leaving them at Pamphylia, was the occasion of a contention between Saul and Barnabas afterwards, when returned to Antioch; the latter insisting on his going with them again, and the former refusing it on account of his departure from them; which contention rose so high that they parted upon it, Ac 12:12 though after this the apostle was reconciled to him; he approving himself to be a faithful and useful minister of the Gospel; and therefore he desires Timothy to bring him along with him, **2Ti 4:11** and if this epistle was written after that, he was now come to him; however, he was now with him, whether before or after: Aristarchus was a Macedonian of Thessalonica; or very likely the apostle had been the instrument of converting him there, and who followed him from thence, and attended him wherever he went; he was with him in the uproar raised by Demetrius at Ephesus, and accompanied him into Asia; went with him in his voyage to Rome, and was now a fellow prisoner there,
Ac 19:29. Demas is the same with him who is mentioned in **2Ti 4:10** and if this epistle is later than that, it should seem that he was restored from his fall, and was returned to the apostle. Lucas is the same with Luke the Evangelist, the beloved physician, the brother whose praise was in all the churches, and a constant companion of the apostle, in his travels; and who wrote the book called, "The Acts of the Apostles": these the apostle styles, "my fellow labourers", being all ministers of the Gospel; and this shows the apostle's great humility, so to call them, when they were far from being on an equal foot with

him in office, gifts, or usefulness: and the Christian salutations of these persons are sent to Philemon, with this view, to engage him the more to attend to the apostle's request, in which they all joined.

Philemon 1:25

Ver. 25. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Not with his spirit only, but with the spirit of Apphia and Archippus, to whom also the epistle was sent; and therefore the word is in the plural number; and the Syriac version adds pertinently enough, "my brethren": the salutation is the same as in all the epistles; the form of it agrees with **Ga 6:18** the subscription of the epistle is,

written from Rome, to Philemon, by Onesimus, a servant; that is, it was written by the Apostle Paul when at Rome, and sent to Philemon by the hands of Onesimus, who was his servant, and upon whose account the letter was written.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hebrews 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS

That this epistle was written very early appears from hence, that it was imitated by Clement of Rome, in his epistle to the Corinthians, who took whole sentences out of it; and therefore it could not be a new work, as Eusebius {a} observes: it has been denied to be authentic by some heretics, as the Marcionites and Arians, but has been generally received as such by the orthodox: some indeed doubted of it, because it was not received by the Roman church, as an epistle of the Apostle Paul {b}; though others, who have thought it was not his, as Origen, yet looked upon it as genuine {c}. It has been ascribed to different persons, as to Barnabas, to Apollos, to Luke the Evangelist, and to Clement of Rome, but without any just reason. Clement of Alexandria, a very ancient writer, asserts it to be the Apostle Paul's {d}; and his name stands in the title of it, in all R. Stephens's exemplars, and in all Beza's copies, excepting one, and so it does in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions; and that it is his, is highly probable from the agreement there is between this, and other epistles of his; compare **Heb 1:2** with **Col 1:15** and **Heb 5:12** with **1Co 3:1** and Heb 12:1 with **1Co 9:24** and Heb 13:7 with **1Th**

5:11, and
Heb 13:9 with **Eph 4:14** and Heb 13:18 with **2Co 1:12** and Heb 13:20 with Ro 15:13 and many other places; and also from the order and method of it, first treating of doctrines, and then proceeding to practical exhortations, which is the common form of Paul's epistles: to which may be added various circumstances; as that it was written from Italy, where Paul was a prisoner; and the mention the author of it makes of his bonds, and of Timothy, as well known unto him, who was Paul's companion; besides, the token of his epistles appears in this, namely, his usual salutation to the churches; see Heb 13:23. But above all, the testimony of the Apostle Peter is greatly in favour of its being his, **2Pe 3:15** from whence it clearly appears, that the Apostle Paul did write an epistle to the Hebrews; for to them Peter wrote; see **1Pe 1:1** and what epistle could it be but this? and what Peter refers to is to be found in it; see Heb 10:25 and which is written with great wisdom; in none of Paul's epistles is there a greater discovery of his knowledge of divine mysteries than in this; and in it also are things hard to be understood, **Heb 5:11**. The common objections to its being his are, its not bearing his name, the diversity of its style, and the author of it seeming to be not an apostle, but a disciple of the apostle's: as to his not setting his name to it, the reasons might be, because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and not so much of the Jews; and because of the prejudice of the Jews against him, both believers, and unbelievers; wherefore had his name been to it, it might have prevented the usefulness of it to the one, and have stirred up the rage of the other: as to the difference of style, different subjects require a different style; and yet in many things there is a likeness, as before observed: and as to the author's not being an apostle, which is concluded from **Heb 2:3** the word "us" there is to be understood of the believing Hebrews, the disciples of the apostle, and not inclusive of the author, by a figurative way of speaking often used by Paul; and besides, the apostle received a confirmation of the Gospel from Ananias, who might have been an hearer of Christ, though he was at first taught it by Christ himself; add to this, that whoever was the writer of it, it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and when several of the apostles were living, and therefore he could never design by those words to put himself in a succeeding generation. The persons to whom this epistle was written were Hebrews, or Jews; so called, as some think, from the name of Abraham, the father of them; or, as others, from his passing over the river Euphrates, when he came out of Chaldea into Palestine. So Abram the Hebrew, in Ge 14:13 is by the Septuagint rendered, perathv, "one that passes over", taking it to come from the word rbe, which signifies to "pass over"; with this compare Jos 24:3 and this is the opinion of some of the Jewish Rabbins {e}; though it seems rather that they were called so from Heber, who lived at the time of the confusion of languages; see

Ge 10:21. And this is the sense of many Jewish writers, ancient and modern, of Josephus {f}, of Jonathan ben Uzziel {g}, of R. Nehemiah {h}, of Aben Ezra {i}, and Kimchi {k}, and others;
See Gill on "2Co 11:22". And these were the Hebrews that dwelt in the land of Judea, and particularly at Jerusalem; nor were they the unbelieving inhabitants of those parts, but believers in Christ, who were embodied in a Gospel church state, It was a tradition of the ancients {l}, that this epistle was written originally in Hebrew, and was translated into Greek, either by Luke the Evangelist, or by Clement of Rome. But for this there is no foundation; no Hebrew copy can be produced; Munster's edition of it in Hebrew is a translation from the Greek, in which it was, no doubt, originally written, that being the common language, and well known to the Jews; and which appears from the citations in it out of the Old Testament, which are made, not from the Hebrew text, but from the Greek version; and besides, had it been written in Hebrew, the writer would not have interpreted the Hebrew words, Melchizedek and Salem, as he does, in **Heb 7:1**. The time of its writing was before the destruction of Jerusalem, which in this book is signified by the coming of the Lord, and the day approaching; and after Timothy was released from prison, and some time within the two years of his own imprisonment at Rome; when he hoped for a release, as his epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon show. Dr. Lightfoot places it in the year 62, and in the eighth of Nero. And the occasion and design of it is, to set forth the superior excellency of Christ to angels and men, to Moses, to Joshua, to Aaron, and his sons, and the preferableness of his priesthood and sacrifice to the Levitical priesthood and its sacrifices; to teach the Hebrews the true knowledge of the mysteries of their law; to point out to them the design, use, and abrogation of its ceremonies; and to prepare them for what afflictions and persecutions they would be called to endure for Christ; and to exhort them to perseverance, and to strengthen them against apostasy, as well as to instruct them in the various duties of religion.

{a} Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 38. {b} lb. c. 3. & l. 6. c. 20. {c} Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 25. {d} Ib. c. 14. {e} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 3. Jarchi in Gen. x. 21. & xiv. 13. {f} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4. {g} Targum in Gen. x. 21. {h} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 3. {i} In Gen. x. 21. & in Jonam, 1. 9. {k} Sepher Shorashim, rad. rbe {l} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 14. Hieronymi Catalog. Script. Eccl. sect. 15. fol. 91. Tom. 1.

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 1

The intention of this epistle being to demonstrate the superior excellency of the

Gospel revelation to the legal one, the apostle begins with the divine author of it, in which they both agree, and observes that in other things they differ. The revelation under the law was made in times past, the Gospel revelation in these last days; the former was made to the Jewish fathers that were of old, the latter to the then present apostles; the one was made at sundry times, and in divers manners, the other was made at once, and in one way; the one was made by the prophets of the Lord, the other by his own son, **Heb 1:1** and therefore the latter must be the more excellent; in proof of which the author enlarges on the character of the Son of God, with respect to his person, office, and glory; showing that he is heir of all things, the Maker of the worlds, of the same nature and glory with his Father; is omnipotent, and upholds all things by the word of his power; is the High Priest of his people, who has made satisfaction for their sins, and purged them from them, and is now at the right hand of God, **Heb 1:2** He goes on to prove that he is more excellent than the angels, by a variety of arguments, and these supported by testimonies from the Scriptures; as that he has a more excellent name than any of them, being called the Son of God, **Heb 1:4** which is proved from **Ps 2:7** that he is the object of the worship of angels, **Heb 1:6** which is required of them,
Ps 97:7 that he is their Maker and Creator, **Heb 1:7** which appears from Ps 104:4 that he has an everlasting kingdom, is a righteous King, and is richly anointed above his fellows, **Heb 1:8** which is the sense of some passages in Ps 45:6 and that he is the founder and former of the heavens, and of the earth, and will endure when they shall not, **Heb 1:10** which is confirmed by testimonies out of Ps 102:25 that he sits at the right hand of God, where none of the angels were ever admitted, **Heb 1:13** as is clear from Ps 110:1 and besides, the angels, as they are ministers made by him, they are sent out from him to wait on his people, the heirs of salvation, and minister to them, and therefore he must be greater than they, **Heb 1:14**.

Ver. 1. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners,.... The apostle begins the epistle with an account of the revelation God has made of his mind and will in former times: the author of this revelation is God, not essentially, but personally considered, even God the Father, as distinguished from his Son in the next verse; for the revelation under the Old Testament is divine, as well as that under the New; in this they both agree, in whatsoever else they differ: and this revelation was made at several times, at different seasons, and to different persons; and consisted of a variety of things relating to doctrine and worship, and concerning the Messiah, his person and office; of whom, at different times, there were gradual discoveries made, both before and after the giving of the law, from the beginning of the world, or the giving forth of the first promise, and in the times of the patriarchs, of: Moses, David, Isaiah, and other prophets: and this was delivered in various manners; sometimes by angels; sometimes in a dream; at other times by a vision; and sometimes by Urim and Thummim: and this he

spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets; by Moses, and other succeeding prophets, as David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Zechariah, Malachi, and others; who were sent to the Jewish fathers, the ancestors of the people of the Jews, to whom they prophesied and declared the will of God, as they were moved and inspired by the Holy Ghost: and the apostle suggests, by this way of speaking, that it was a long time since God spake to this people; for prophecy had ceased ever since the times of Malachi, for the space of three hundred years; and this time past includes the whole Old Testament dispensation, from the beginning to the end of it, or of prophecy in it.

Hebrews 1:2

Ver. 2. Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,.... This is the Gospel revelation, or the revelation in the Gospel dispensation; which though it comes from the same author the other does, yet in many things differs from it, and is preferable to it; and indeed the general design of this epistle is to show the superior excellency of the one to the other; the former was delivered out in time past, but this "in these last days"; the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and several other copies, read, "in the last of these days": perfectly agreeable to the phrase Mymyh tyrxab, used in Ge 49:1 to which the apostle refers, and in which places the days of the Messiah are intended; and it is a rule with the Jews {m}, that wherever the phrase, "the last days", is mentioned, the days of the Messiah are designed: and they are to be understood not of the last days of the natural world, but of, the Jewish world and state; indeed the times of the Messiah, or Gospel dispensation, may be called the last days of the natural world, according to the tradition of the house of Elias; which teaches, that the duration of the world will be six thousand years, and divides it into three parts, the last of which is assigned to the Messiah, thus; two thousand years void, (or without the law,) two thousand years the law, and two thousand years the days of the Messiah {n}: but it is best to understand this of the last days of the Mosaic economy, or Jewish dispensation; for the Messiah was to come before the Jewish civil and church states were dissolved; before the sceptre departed from Judah, and before the second temple was destroyed; and he was to come at the end, or toward the close of both these states; and which is called the end, or ends of the world, **Hab 2:3** and quickly after Jesus, the true Messiah was come, an end was put to both these: from whence it may be observed, that the Messiah must be come; that the Mosaic economy, and Jewish worship, will never be restored again; that the Gospel revelation being made in the last days, ought to be regarded the more, it being the last revelation God will ever make. Moreover, this differs from the former in this respect, that was made to the fathers, this "to us"; meaning either the apostles in particular, or the Jews in general, to whom the apostle is writing: this shows that the Gospel revelation was first made to the Jews; and it being made to them personally, they were under great obligation to regard it; and that God had not cast off his people; and that though he had greatly indulged their fathers, he had showed greater favour to them, having provided some better thing for them: and there is a difference between these two revelations in the manner in which they were made; the former was at sundry times, and in divers manners, the latter was made at once, and in one way; that was delivered out in parts, and by piece meal, this the whole together; the whole mind and will of God, all his counsel, all that Christ heard of the Father; it is the faith that was once, and at once, delivered to the saints; and it has been given out in one way, by the preaching of the word: to which may be added, that formerly God spoke by many persons, by the prophets, but now by one only, "by his Son"; who is so not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature; being his own Son, his proper Son, begotten of him, of the same nature with him, and equal to him; and so infinitely preferable to the prophets: he is a Son, and not a servant, in whom the Father is, and he in the Father, and in whom the Spirit is without measure; and God is said to speak by him, or in him, because he was now incarnate; and what he says from God should be attended to, both on account of the dignity of his person, as the Son of God, and because of the authority he came with as Mediator: whom he hath appointed heir of all things; which must be understood of him not as God, and Creator; for as such he has a right to all things; all that the Father has are his; the kingdom of nature and providence belongs to him, he being the Former and Maker of all things; but as Mediator, who has all things committed to him, to subserve the ends of his office; and has a kingdom appointed him, and which he will deliver up again the word all may refer either to persons or things; to persons, not angels, good or bad, though both are subject to him, yet neither are called his inheritance; but elect men, who are his portion, and the lot of his inheritance; and to things relating to these persons, and for their use and service, in time, and to all eternity; as all temporal things, and all spiritual ones, the blessings and promises of the covenant of grace, the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and eternal glory and happiness, the saints' inheritance, who are joint heirs with Christ.

By whom also he made the worlds; this is said in agreement with the notions of the Jews, and their way of speaking, who make mention of three worlds, which they call, the upper world (the habitation of God), the middle world (the air), and the lower world {o} (the earth); and sometimes they call them the world of angels (where they dwell), the world of orbs (where the sun, moon, and stars are), and the world below {p} (on which we live); and it is frequent in their writings, and prayer books {q}, to call God Mymlweh lk Nwbr, "Lord of all worlds"; See Gill on "Heb 11:3", these God made by his Son, not as an instrument, but as an efficient cause with him; for by him were all things made, whether visible or invisible; and the preposition "by" does not always denote instrumentality, but sometimes efficiency; and is used of God the Father himself, and in this epistle, **Heb 2:10**.

{m} Kimchi & Aben Ezra in Isa. ii. 2. {n} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. {o} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 4. & 3. 2, 3. Caphtor, fol. 79. 1. {p} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 83. 2. Caphtor, fol. 90. 1. {q} Seder Tephillot, fol. 5. 2. & 40. 2. Ed. Amstelod.

Hebrews 1:3

Ver. 3. Who being the brightness of his glory,.... Or "of glory"; of God the Father, the God of glory, and who is glory itself; so called on account of his glorious nature and perfections and because of the glorious manifestations of them in his works of creation and providence, and in the various dispensations of his grace, and especially in his Son; and because he is the author of all glory, in the creatures, in the whole world, in Christ as man and Mediator, and in his own people. Now Christ is the "brightness" of this, as he is God; he has the same glorious nature and perfections, and the same glorious names, as Jehovah, the Lord of glory, &c. and the same glory, homage, and worship given him: the allusion is to the sun, and its beam or ray: so some render it "the ray of his glory"; and may lead us to observe, that the Father and the Son are of the same nature, as the sun and its ray; and that the one is not before the other, and yet distinct from each other, and cannot be divided or separated one from another: so the phrase hyrqy Nyz, "the brightness of his glory", is used of the divine Being, in the Chaldee paraphrases {r}; see the Apocrypha.

"For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness." (Wisdom 7:26)

And the express image of his person; this intends much the same as the other phrase; namely, equality and sameness of nature, and distinction of persons;

for if the Father is God, Christ must be so too; and if he is a person, his Son must be so likewise, or he cannot be the express image and character of him; See Gill on "Col 1:15".

And upholding all things by the word of his power; the Syriac version renders it, "by the power of his word", to the same sense, only inverting the words. The Targumist on **2Ch 2:6** uses a phrase very much like this, of God, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain; because, adds he, hytrwbg erdb alk lybo, "he bears", or "sustains all things by the arm of his power"; and the words are to be understood not of the Father, upholding all things by his essential and powerful Word, his Son; but of the Son himself, who upholds all creatures he has made; bears up the pillars of the universe; preserves every creature in its being, and supports it, and supplies it with the necessaries of life; rules and governs all, and providentially orders and disposes of all things in the world, and that by his all powerful will; which makes it manifest, that he is truly and properly God, and a very fit person to be a priest, as follows:

when he had by himself purged our sins; the Arabic and Ethiopic versions seem to refer this to God the Father, as if he, by Christ, made the expiation of sin, and then caused him to sit down at his right hand; but it belongs to the Son himself, who of himself, and by himself alone, and by the sacrifice of himself, made atonement for the sins of his people; which is meant by the purgation of them: he took their sins upon himself, and bore them, and removed them far away, and utterly abolished them, which the priests under the law could not do: and when he had so done,

he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; by "Majesty" is meant God the Father, to whom majesty belongs; who is clothed with it, and which is before him: and his "right hand" designs his power, greatness, and glory, and is expressive of the high honour Christ, as man, is possessed of; for his sitting here denotes the glorious exaltation of him in human nature, after his sufferings, and death, and resurrection from the dead; and shows that he had done his work, and was accepted, and was now enjoying rest and ease, honour and glory, in which he will continue; and the place of his session, as well as of the habitation of God, at whose right hand he sits, is on high, in the highest heavens.

{r} Targum in 2 Sam xxii. 13. & in Cant. v. 10.

Hebrews 1:4

Ver. 4. Being made so much better than the angels,.... Christ is so much better than the angels, as the Creator, than the creature; as an independent being, than a dependent one; as he that blesses, than he that is blessed; as he that is worshipped, than he that worships: as a king, than his subjects; as a master, than his servants; and as he that sends, than he that is sent: and Christ may be said to be "made so", when he was manifested and declared to be so; and he was actually preferred to them, and exalted above them in human nature, after he had expiated the sins of his people, and when he was set down at the right hand of God, as in the latter part of the preceding verse, with which these words stand connected; for in his state of humiliation, and through his sufferings and death, he was made lower than they; but when he was risen from the dead, and ascended to heaven, he was placed at the right hand of God, where none of them ever was, or ever will be: besides, the phrase, "being made", signifies no more than that "he was"; and so the Syriac version renders it, "and he was so much better than the angels"; and so the Ethiopic version, "he is so much better": and this is observed, to prove him to be more excellent than any creature, since he is preferred to the most excellent of creatures; and to show, that the Gospel dispensation is superior to the legal dispensation, which was introduced by the ministration of angels; and to take off the Jews from the worship of angels, to which they were prone: and this doctrine of his could not be well denied by them, since it was the faith of the Jewish church, that the Messiah should be preferred to the angels: for in their ancient writings they say of him, he shall be exalted above Abraham, he shall be lifted up above Moses, and be higher than the ministering angels {s}; and that he is above them, appears from what follows,

as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they; which is that of the Son of God, a name peculiar to him; and which belongs to him in such a sense as it does not to angels, as is evident from the following verse: and though this name is not founded on his office, as Mediator, but arises from his nature and relation to God; yet he was declared to be the Son of God, and it was made manifest, that this name of right belonged to him, upon the discharge of his office, at his resurrection and ascension to heaven; and therefore he is said to obtain it by inheritance; or he appeared to inherit it of right, and that it was his possession for evermore.

{s} Tanchuma spud Huls. p. 321.

Hebrews 1:5

Ver. 5. For unto which of the angels said he at any time,.... That is, he never said to any of the angels what he has said to Christ; namely, what follows,

thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee for though angels are called the sons of God, **Job 1:6** yet are never said to be begotten by him; or, with this clause annexed to it, "this day have I begotten thee"; nor are they ever so called in a proper sense, or in such sense as Christ is: this is said to Christ, and of him, in **Ps 2:7** and that agreeably to the sense of the Jewish church at this time, or the apostle would never have produced it to the Hebrews in such a manner; and not only the whole psalm in general, but this verse in particular, is owned by Jewish writers {t}, both ancient and modern, to belong to the Messiah. Christ is the Son of God, not by Creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature; he is the true, proper, natural, and eternal Son of God; and as such is owned and declared by Jehovah the Father, in these words; the foundation of which relation lies in the begetting of him; which refers not to his nature, either divine or human: not to his divine nature, which is common with the Father and Spirit; wherefore if his was begotten, theirs must be also, being the same undivided nature, common to all three; much less to his human nature, in which he is never said to be begotten, but always to be made, and with respect to which he is without Father; nor to his office, as Mediator, in which he is not a Son, but a servant; besides, he was a Son, previous to his being a prophet, priest, and King; and his office is not the foundation of his sonship, but his sonship is the foundation of his office; or by which that is supported, and which fits him for the performance of it: but it has respect to his divine person; for as, in human generation, person begets person, and like begets like, so it is in divine generation; though care must be taken to remove all imperfection from it, as divisibility and multiplication of essence, priority and posteriority, dependence, and the like; nor can the modus, or manner of it, be conceived, or explained by us: the date of it, today, designs eternity, as in Isa 43:13, which is one continued day, an everlasting now; and this may be applied to any time and case, in which Christ is declared to be the Son of God; as at his incarnation, his baptism, his transfiguration on the Mount, and his resurrection from the dead, as in Ac 13:33 and at his ascension to heaven, when he was made Lord and Christ, and his divine sonship more manifestly appeared; which seems to be the time, and case, more especially referred to here. And again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a Son: which words are taken from **2Sa 7:14** and the sense is, not that he should be his son by adoption; or that he would be instead of a father to him; or that he should be as dear to him as a son is to a father; but that he was really and properly so; and he would make it manifest, and own him as such, as he did at Jordan's river, upon the Mount, and at his resurrection and ascension; though the words are spoken of Solomon, as a type of Christ, they properly belong to the antitype, who is greater than Solomon.

{t} Zohar in Numb. fol. 82. 2. Maimon. in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. 1. & Abarbinel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 37. 4. & 38. 1.

Hebrews 1:6

Ver. 6. And again, when he bringeth the first begotten into the world;.... By "the first begotten" is meant Christ. This is a name given him in the Old Testament, and is what the Hebrews were acquainted with, and therefore the apostle uses it; it is in
Ps 89:27 from whence it seems to be taken here, and which the ancient Jews {u} acknowledge is to be understood of the Messiah; who, as the Son of God, is the only begotten of the Father, and was begotten from eternity, as before declared, and before any creature had a being, and therefore called the firstborn of every creature, **Col 1:15** and is sometimes styled the first begotten from the dead; he rose the first in time, and is the first in causality and dignity: and he may be called the firstborn, with respect to the saints, who are of the same nature with him, and are partakers of the divine nature, and are adopted into the family of God, though they are not in the same class of sonship with him; and the bringing of him into the world may refer to his second coming, for this seems agreeable from the natural order of the words, which may be rendered, "when he shall bring again", &c. that is, a second time, and from Ps 97:1 from whence the following words are cited; and from the glory he shall then have from the angels, who will come with him, and minister to him; and not to his resurrection from the dead, when he was exalted above angels, principalities, and powers; though, as we read the words, they seem to regard his first coming in to this habitable world, at his incarnation and birth, when he was attended with angels, and worshipped by them, according to the order of God the Father, as follows:

he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him; these words are cited from Ps 97:7 where the angels are called Elohim, gods. So Aben Ezra on the place observes, that there are some (meaning their doctors) who say, that "all the gods are the angels"; and Kimchi says, that the words are not imperative, but are in the past tense, instead of the future,

all the angels have worshipped him; that is, they shall worship him; as they have done, so they will do. According to our version, they are called upon to worship God's firstborn, his only begotten Son, with a religious worship and adoration, even all of them, not one excepted; which shows, that Christ, as the first begotten, is the Lord God, for he only is to be served and worshipped; and that if angels are to worship him, men ought; and that angels are not to be worshipped, and that Christ is preferable to them; and the whole sets forth the excellency and dignity of his person. Philo the Jew {w} often calls the Logos, or Word of God, his first begotten.

{u} Shemot Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 104. 4. {w} De Agricultura, p. 195. De Confus. Ling. p. 329, 341. Somniis, p. 597.

Hebrews 1:7

Ver. 7 And of the angels he saith,.... Or "to the angels", as in the following verse, "to the Son", which stands opposed to this; and the words said to them, or of them, are found in Ps 104:4

who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire: this cannot be understood of the wind and lightning, and of God's making these his messengers and ministers to do his will; for such a sense is not suitable to the scope of the psalm, from whence they are taken, nor to the order of the words in which they stand; for it is not said he makes spirits, or winds, his angels, and flaming fire his ministers, but the reverse; and is contrary to the design of the apostle in citing them, which is to show the superiority of Christ to angels, of whom it is said, that they are made spirits: they are "spirits", created ones, and so differ from God the Creator: they are incorporeal ones, and so differ from men; they are immaterial, and so die not; they are spiritual substances subsisting in themselves: and they are "made" such by God the Father, and by the Son the Lord Jesus Christ, within the six days of the creation, and all at once; for it is not to be supposed that the Lord is daily making them; and this proves the Son to be God, as well as more excellent than the angels; unless this is to be understood of the daily disposal of them in providence, in causing winds, thunder, lightning, and the like. Some choose to supply the word with "as", and read, who maketh his angels as winds; for invisibility, velocity, power, and penetration: "and his ministers as a flame of fire"; and these are the same with the angels, for they are ministers to God; they attend his presence; are ready to perform any service for him; they sing his praise, and are his chariots in which he rides: and they are ministers to Christ; they attended at his incarnation: were solicitous for his preservation, ministered to him in distress, assisted at his resurrection, and accompanied him in his ascension, and will be with him at his second coming: and they are as a flame of fire, so called from their great power, force, and swiftness; and from their burning love, and flaming zeal, hence named seraphim; and because they are sometimes the executioners of God's wrath, and will descend in flaming fire, when Christ shall be revealed from heaven: angels sometimes appear in fiery forms; the chariots and horses of fire, by which Elijah was carried up to heaven, were no other than angels, in such forms: so the Jews {x} say of the angels,

"all the angels, their horses are horses of fire, and their chariots fire, and their bows fire, and their spears fire, and all their instruments of war fire."

And they have a notion, that an angel is half water, and half fire {y}.

{x} Sepher Jetzirah, p. 16. Ed. Rittangel. {y} T. Hieros. Roshhashana, fol. 58. 1.

Hebrews 1:8

Ver. 8. But unto the Son, he saith,.... What he does not to angels, and which sets him infinitely above them; which shows him to be a Prince and King, and not a servant, or minister; and which even ascribes deity to him:

thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: this, with what follows in this verse, and the next, is taken out of Ps 45:6 which psalm is not spoken of Solomon, to whom many things in it will not agree; he was not fairer than other men; nor was he a warrior; nor was his throne for ever and ever; and much less a divine person, and the object of worship; but the Messiah, and so the ancient Jews understand it: the Targum applies it to him, and mentions him by name in **Heb 1:2** and some of their modern writers {z} affirm it is said of the Messiah; though Aben Ezra seems doubtful about it, saying, it is spoken concerning David, or Messiah his Son, whose name is so, Eze 37:25. Deity is here ascribed to the Son of God; he is expressly called God; for the words will not bear to be rendered, "thy throne is the throne of God, or thy throne is God"; or be supplied thus, "God shall establish thy throne": nor are the words an apostrophe to the father, but are spoken to the king, the subject of the psalm, who is distinguished from God the Father, being blessed and anointed by him; and this is put out of all doubt by the apostle, who says they are addressed "to the Son", who is not a created God, nor God by office, but by nature; for though the word "Elohim" is sometimes used of those who are not gods by nature; yet being here used absolutely, and the attributes of eternity, and most perfect righteousness, being ascribed to the person so called, prove him to be the true God; and this is the reason why his throne is everlasting, and his sceptre righteous, and why he should be worshipped, served, and obeyed. Dominion and duration of it are given to him; his throne denotes his kingly power, and government; which is general, over angels, good and bad; over men, righteous and wicked, even the greatest among them, the kings and princes of the earth: and special, over his church and people; and which is administered by his Spirit and grace in the hearts of his saints; and by his word and ordinances in his churches; and by his powerful protection of them from their enemies; and will be in a glorious manner in the latter day, and in heaven to all eternity; for his throne is for ever, and on it he will sit for ever: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; he will have no successor in it, nor can his government be subverted; and though he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, it will not cease.

A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom; the sceptre is an ensign of royalty; and a sceptre of righteousness, or rightness, is expressive of the justice of government; the Syriac version renders it, "a sceptre stretched out"; which is a sceptre of mercy, as the instance of Ahasuerus stretching out his sceptre to Esther shows; and such is the Gospel of Christ, which holds forth and declares the mercy, grace, and love of God to men through Christ; and which may be called a sceptre of righteousness, since it reveals and directs to the righteousness of Christ, and encourages to works of righteousness; but here it designs the righteous administration of Christ's kingly office; for just and true are, have been, and ever will be his ways, as King of saints.

{z} Kimchi & R. Sol. ben Melech in loc. & R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 49. 2.

Hebrews 1:9

Ver. 9. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity,.... Christ loves righteous persons and righteous works, faithfulness and integrity, and a just administration of government, everything that is holy, just, and good; which has appeared in the whole course of his life on earth, in working out a righteousness for his people, and in encouraging righteousness in them, which he leads them in the way of; and his love of justice will still more appear at the last day, when he will judge the world in righteousness, and give the crown of righteousness to proper persons: and he hates iniquity; or "unrighteousness", as the Alexandrian copy and another read; as being contrary to his nature, both as God and man, and to the righteous law of God; which has appeared by his inveighing against it, and dehorting from it; by his severity exercised towards delinquents; by his suffering for it, and abolishing of it; and by chastising his own people on account of it; and his abhorrence of it will still more appear at the day of judgment, when all workers of iniquity, professors and profane, will be bid to depart from him:

therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows: the anointer is the God of Christ; that is, God the Father, who is the God of Christ, as man; and is so called, because he prepared and formed the human nature of Christ, and supported it under all its sufferings, and has glorified it; and as such Christ prayed unto him, believed in him, loved him, and obeyed him: the anointed is the Son of God, the Son spoken to, and is called God in the preceding verse; though he is not anointed as God, but as Mediator, to be prophet, and priest, and King: what he is anointed with is not material oil, but spiritual, the Holy Ghost, as it is explained in Ac 10:38 called the oil of gladness, in allusion to the use of oil at feasts and weddings, for the delight and refreshment of the guests; and because of the spiritual effects of joy and gladness, both on Christ, as man, and on his people. Now Christ was anointed as Mediator from all eternity; that is, he was invested with his office as such; and at his conception and birth he was filled with the Holy Ghost; who also descended on him at his baptism, after which he went about doing good, and healing diseases; but here it seems to refer to the time of his ascension, when he was declared to be Lord and Christ, the anointed one; and received gifts for men, the fulness of the Spirit without measure, and with which he was anointed above his "fellows"; by whom are meant, not the angels, nor the kings and princes of the earth; but the saints, who are so called, because they are of the same nature, and are of the same family, and are partakers of the same spirit, and grace; and having received the unction from him, are also kings, priests, and prophets, and will be companions with him to all eternity. Now the reason of his being anointed, or exalted, and made Lord and Christ, is, because he loves righteousness; see **Php 2:7** or rather, because he is anointed with the Holy Spirit without measure, therefore he loves righteousness; for the words may be rendered, "thou lovest righteousness--because God, thy God, hath anointed thee".

Hebrews 1:10

Ver. 10. And thou Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the

earth,.... The person here addressed, as the Lord or Jehovah, and as the Maker of the heavens and the earth, is the same with the Son spoken to, and of, before; for the words are a continuation of the speech to him, though they are taken from another psalm, from
Ps 102:25. The phrase, "thou, Lord" is taken from Ps 102:12 and is the same with, "O my God", Ps 102:24 and whereas it is there said, "of old", and here, in the beginning, the sense is the same; and agreeably to the Septuagint, and the apostle, Jarchi interprets it by hlyxtm, "at", or "from the beginning"; and so the Targum paraphrases it, zywrv Nm, "from the beginning", that the creatures were created, &c. that in the beginning of the creation, which is the apostle's meaning; and shows the eternity of Christ, the Lord, the Creator of the earth, who must exist before the foundation of the world; and confutes the notion of the eternity of the world: and the rounding of it shows that the earth is the lower part of the creation; and denotes the stability of it; and points out the wisdom of the Creator in laying such a foundation; and proves the deity of Christ, by whom that, and all things in it, were made:

the heavens are the works of thine hands: there are more heavens than one; there are the airy heaven, and the starry heaven, and the heaven of heavens, the third heaven; and they were created the beginning, as the earth was, **Ge 1:1** and are the immediate work of Christ; they were made by himself, not by the means of angels, who were not in being till these were made; nor by any intermediate help, which he could not have, and which he did not need: the phrase is expressive of the power of Christ in making the upper parts of the creation, and of his wisdom in garnishing them, in which there is a wonderful display of his glory; and the whole serves to set forth the dignity and excellency of his person.

Hebrews 1:11

Ver. 11. They shall perish,.... That is, the heavens and the earth; not as to the substance of them, but as to the quality of them; the present form and fashion of them shall pass away; the curse will be removed from them, and they will be renewed and purified, but the substance of them will continue; otherwise there would be no place, either for the righteous or the wicked,

But thou remainest; without any change or alteration, neither in his natures, divine or human, as God or man, nor in his office as Mediator; as a priest, he has an unchangeable priesthood, and ever lives to make intercession; as a King, his kingdom is an everlasting one, and of it there will be no end; and as a prophet, he will be the everlasting light, of his people.

They all shall wax old as doth a garment; garments in time wax old, and lose their beauty and usefulness, unless when a miracle is wrought, as in the case of the children of Israel in the wilderness. Now the heavens, and the light thereof, are as a garment and a curtain, Ps 104:2 and these, together with the earth, will in time come to their end of usefulness, in the present form of them; see Isa 51:6.

Hebrews 1:12

Ver. 12. And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up,.... In order to lay them aside, and make no use of them in the manner they now are; just as clothes, when they are grown old, or out of fashion, are folded up, and laid aside from use at present, or are put into another form. In the Hebrew text it is, "as a vesture shalt thou change them"; but the sense is the same, for a garment is changed by folding it, or turning it; agreeably to which Jarchi interprets the Hebrew phrase thus,

"as a man turns his garment to put it off;"

the Vulgate Latin version reads as the Hebrew does, and one of the manuscripts of New College, Oxford.

And they shall be changed; as to their form and use, not as to their being; for a change, and an annihilation, are two things:

but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail; which is expressive of the immutability of Christ, in his nature and perfections, in his person, and offices, in the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and of his duration or continuance, in opposition to the fading and transitory nature of the heavens and earth, and of all outward enjoyments: and this may serve to take off the heart from the one, and set it upon the other; and to strengthen our faith in Christ, and encourage us to expect a continuance of blessings from him; all supplies of grace now, and eternal glory hereafter.

Hebrews 1:13

Ver. 13. But to which of the angels said he at any time,.... That is, he never said to any of them in his council, or covenant; he never designed to give them any such honour, as hereafter expressed; he never promised it to them, or bestowed it on them; he never called up any of them to so high a place, or to such a dignity:

sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool; yet this he said to his Son, Ps 110:1 for to him, the Messiah, are they spoken, and have had their fulfilment in him: See Gill on "Mt 22:44"; and therefore he must be greater than the angels.

Hebrews 1:14

Ver. 14. Are they not all ministering spirits,.... Servants to God, to Christ, and to his people, and therefore must be inferior to the Son of God. The phrase is Rabbinical; frequent mention is made in Jewish writings {a} of trvh ykalm, "the angels of ministry", or "the ministering angels"; this is their common appellation with the Jews; and the apostle writing to such, uses a like phrase, well known to them, and appeals to them, if the angels were not such spirits.

Sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation? the persons they minister to, and for, are those, who shall be the heirs of salvation; that is, of eternal glory, which will be possessed by the saints, as an inheritance: hence it belongs to children, being bequeathed to them by their Father, and comes to them through the death of Christ, of which the Spirit is the earnest; and this shows that it is not of works, and that it is of an eternal duration, and takes in all kind of happiness: and of this the saints are heirs now; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "who are heirs of salvation"; nor should it be rendered, "who shall be heirs", but rather, "who shall inherit salvation"; for this character respects not their heirship, but their actual inheriting of salvation: and the ministry of angels to, and for them, lies in things temporal and spiritual, or what concern both their bodies and their souls; in things temporal, in which they have often been assisting, as in providing food for their bodies, in curing their diseases, in directing and preserving them in journeys, in saving and delivering them from outward calamities, in restraining things hurtful from hurting them, and in destroying their enemies; in things spiritual, as in making known the mind and will of God to them, in comforting them, and suggesting good things to them, and in helping and assisting them against Satan's temptations; and they are present with their departing souls at death, and carry them to heaven, and will gather the elect together at the last day. And they are "sent forth" to minister to them in such a way; they are sent forth by Christ, the

Lord and Creator of them, who therefore must be superior to them; they do not take this office upon themselves, though, being put into they faithfully and diligently execute it, according to the will of Christ: and this shows the care of Christ over his people, and his kindness to them, and the great honour he puts upon them, to appoint such to minister to them; and since they are of so much use and service, they ought to be respected and esteemed, though not worshipped.

{a} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 12. 2. & 14. 1, 2. & 16. 1. Taanith, fol. 11. 1. & Megilia, fol. 15. 2. & in Zohar passim.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hebrews 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 2

In this chapter the apostle, from the superior excellency of Christ, by whom the Gospel revelation is come, discoursed of in the preceding, urges the believers he writes to, to a more diligent attention to the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; to which he adds another motive inducing thereunto, lest those things should be let slip, and be lost, **Heb 2:1** and then, by another argument from the less to the greater, that if the law, which was given by angels, could not be broken with impunity, then how should such escape divine punishment that neglected and despised the Gospel, which is a doctrine of salvation, was delivered by the Lord himself, and confirmed by various testimonies and miracles, **Heb 2:2**. And besides the Gospel dispensation is not put into the hands of angels, but into the hands of Christ, to whom all things are subject, which is proved out of **Ps 8:4** and which proof shows, that though Christ, on account of his sufferings and death, was for a while made lower than the angels, yet being now crowned with glory and honour, he is above them, and they are subject to him, since all things are, **Heb 2:5**. And this anticipates an objection that might be taken from hence against what the apostle had asserted in the foregoing chapter, concerning the superiority of Christ to angels; and this leads him on to observe the reason of the sufferings and death of Christ, and also of his incarnation; that the moving cause of Christ's sufferings and death was the grace and good will of God; that he did not suffer for himself, but for others, for everyone of those described in the context; that inasmuch as he was the surety of those persons, it was agreeable to the justice of God, and it could not be otherwise, but he must be made perfect through suffering; and this was the way to bring many sons to glory, **Heb 2:9** and as for his incarnation, or his becoming man, that was necessary, that the sanctifier and the sanctified might be of the same nature, that he might be able to call them brethren and children, **Heb 2:11** as he does, for which are cited Ps 22:22 and because the children he engaged to bring to glory were partakers of flesh and blood; and also that he might be capable of dying, and by dying destroy the devil, and deliver his timorous people, who, through fear of death, lived in a continual state of bondage, **Heb 2:14** for which reason he did not take upon him the nature of angels, but of the seed of Abraham, **Heb 2:16** And besides, it was necessary he should be in all things like unto his brethren, that he might be merciful to them, and faithful to God, and be in a state and condition capable of sympathizing with them, and succouring them under their temptations, which he was able to do by suffering through temptation himself, **Heb 2:17**.

Ver. 1. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed,.... This is an inference from the apostle's discourse in the preceding chapter; since he, by whom God has spoke in these last days, is his Son, who is infinitely above the angels, they being his creatures, and worshippers of him, and ministers to him, and his; therefore the greater regard should be had to the Gospel spoken by him: even to the things which we have heard; which are no other than the truths of the Gospel, which had been preached unto them, and which were heard by the apostles, who had preached them to them; and they had heard them from them, or from Christ himself, and were what their forefathers had desired to hear, and which the carnal ear has not heard; for there is an internal and an external hearing of the Gospel. Now it becomes the hearers of it to give heed, or attend unto it, to beware of that which is pernicious and hurtful, and to regard that which is good and profitable; and this giving heed takes in a close consideration of Gospel truths, a diligent inquiry into them, a valuable esteem of them, a strict adherence to them, and a watchfulness to retain what is heard, and to conform unto it: and this was to be done "more earnestly" than their forefathers had, or than they themselves had; or this may be put for the superlative degree, and signify, that they should give the most earnest heed; for they had the most abundant reason to give heed, since what they heard was not from Moses, and the prophets, to whom they did well to take heed, but from Christ the Son of God, who was greater than they: "lest at any time we should let them slip": and this either respects persons; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "lest we should run out"; and the Syriac version, "lest we should fall"; and the Arabic version, "lest we should fall from honesty": which may intend partial slips and falls, to which the people of God are subject; and which are oftentimes owing to inadvertency to the word; for the Gospel, duly attended to, is a preservative from falling: or it may respect things, even the doctrines of the Gospel, lest we should let them slip out of us, through us, or besides us: the metaphor seems to be taken either from leaking vessels, which let out what is put into them; or to strainers, which let the liquor through, and it falls on the ground, and cannot be gathered up, and so becomes useless; and which is expressive of unprofitable hearing of the word, through inattention, negligence, and forgetfulness, and the irrecoverableness of it, when it is gone: the Gospel may be lost to some that hear it, as to any real benefit and advantage by it; and some who hear the Gospel may be lost and perish; but the grace of the Gospel can never be lost.

Hebrews 2:2

Ver. 2. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast,.... This is a description of the law, from whence the apostle argues to a stricter regard to the Gospel, as from the lesser to the greater: this is called "the word", and a terrible one it was; it was a voice of words, which they that heard entreated they might hear no more; it was the word "spoken" with an articulate voice, and was heard by the Israelites, and it was spoken "by angels". Jehovah the Father's voice was never heard; when he came to give the law, ten thousand angels came along with him; and the ministry of these he used in the delivery of the law; by them he spoke it; they formed in the air the voices heard; it was ordained by them, and given by the disposition of them; see **Ac 7:53**. To which agree those words of Herod, spoken to the Jews, recorded by Josephus {b}; that we learn of God, di' aggelwn, "by angels", the best of doctrines, and the most holy things in the law. And this was "steadfast"; firm, and sure, being the word of God, which cannot pass away, until it be fulfilled: it was confirmed by terrible signs attending it, and by the people's assent unto it; the penalty of it is sure and certain, in case of disobedience; and as to the form and ministration of it, it remained until Christ, the end of it, came; and as to the matter of it, so far as of a moral nature, it still remains: the judicial and ceremonial parts of it are abrogated; and the whole of it is abolished, as in the hands of Moses, and as a covenant of works, and as to the curse and condemnation of it, and with respect to justification by it; but it still continues as a cursing law to all that are under it; and as a means of conviction to sinners in the hands of the Spirit; and as a rule of walk and conversation to saints, as in the hands of Christ:

and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; every precept of the law had a penalty annexed to it; and every breach of it was punished as that penalty required; and that according to the strict justice of God, and the just demerit of sin; and none escaped, but suffered the punishment due to the violation of the precept either in themselves, or in their surety; so steadfast and immovable was this law.

{b} Antiqu. l. 15. c. 5. sect. 3.

Hebrews 2:3

Ver. 3. How shall we escape,.... The righteous judgment of God, and eternal punishment:

if we neglect so great salvation? as the Gospel is, which is called salvation; in opposition to the law, which is the ministration of condemnation; and because it is a declaration of salvation by Christ; and is the means of bringing it near, and of the application of it in conversion, and so is the power of God unto it: and it is a "great" salvation; the Gospel which reveals it is great, for the author of it is Christ; it has been confirmed by miracles, and attended with great success; and has in it great things, great mysteries, and exceeding great and precious promises: and the salvation which it declares is great; it is the produce of great wisdom; it is wrought by a great person, by a Saviour, and a great one, and who is the great God, and our Saviour; it has been procured at great charge and expense, even at the expense of the blood and life of the Son of God; and has been obtained through great difficulties; and is the salvation of the soul, the more noble part of man; and it is a complete and everlasting one: to "neglect" this, is to be careless of it; to condemn it, and to despise the ministers of it; and to make anything else but Christ the way of salvation: and the danger such are in is very great; it is not possible that they should escape divine vengeance, since their sin is so great, and attended with such aggravating circumstances; for it is a contempt of the grace and wisdom of God in providing such a Saviour, and a trampling under foot the Son of God, and a counting his blood as a common thing; and besides, there is no more sacrifice for sin, they can have nothing to atone for it; and that God, whom they offend hereby, is both omniscient and omnipotent, and there will be no escaping out of his hands: to which must be added, that this Gospel of salvation is that

which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord; by the Lord Jesus Christ himself; the Gospel was preached by him, and he was extraordinarily qualified for it; and he spake it as never man did: it was preached by John indeed, and by all the prophets before him, and to the Israelites in the wilderness, and to Abraham before them, and even to Adam in Eden's garden, which was the first time it was spoken; but then it was spoken to him by the Lord; by the Word of the Lord, the essential Word, the Son of God, as the ancient Chaldee paraphrases, which express the sense of the old Jewish church, show {c}: besides, it began most fully and clearly to be preached by him in the days of his flesh, so as it never was preached before, nor since; grace and truth, the doctrines of grace and truth came by him, in all their fulness and glory: and

was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; the Gospel is in itself firm and stable; nor did the words of Christ need any confirmation, who is truth itself, the "Amen", and faithful witness; but in condescension to human weakness, and by reason that Christ, as man, was not everywhere, and that by the mouth of more witnesses it should be established, he sent forth his apostles to preach it; who heard it from him, and they published it to the Jews first, as these were to whom the apostle writes, and then to the Gentiles. And though the apostle had it first by revelation from Christ himself, **Ga 1:11** it was confirmed to him by Ananias.

{c} Targum Onkelos & Jon. in Gen. iii. 8. & Hieros. in v. 9.

Hebrews 2:4

Ver. 4. God also bearing them witness,.... The apostles of Christ; God testifying to their mission and commission, and the truth of the doctrine they preached:

both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles; such as taking up serpents without hurt, healing the sick, causing the lame to walk, and raising the dead, and casting out devils, and the like; all which were for the confirmation of the Gospel preached by them: a sign, wonder, or miracle, for these signify the same thing, is a marvellous work done before men, by the power of God, to confirm a divine truth; God is the sole author of miracles; and they were done in the first ages of Christianity, when they were necessary, to give evidence of the truth of it, and to establish men in it; and these were various, as before observed: and gifts of the Holy Ghost; such as besides gifts of healing and working miracles, gifts of foretelling things to come, discerning of spirits, speaking with divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues, 1Co 12:8 according to his own will; either according to the will of God, who bore testimony by these miracles and gifts; or according to the will of the Holy Spirit, who distributed them to men severally as he pleased, 1Co 12:11.

Hebrews 2:5

Ver. 5. For unto the angels,.... Though angels were concerned in the giving of the law, and were frequently employed under the former dispensation, in messages to men, and in making revelations of God's mind and will to them, yet to them

hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak: by which is meant, not the future state of eternal glory and happiness in heaven, as opposed to this world, and the present state of things; though there may be much truth in this sense, as that the present world is in subjection to angels, and the world to come is not; the present world is much in subjection, though it is not put into subjection, to evil angels, who usurp a power over it, hence Satan is called the god and prince of this world; and it is in some sense in subjection to good angels, as they are used by God in the execution of his providential care and government, in influencing and assisting at the councils of princes, in inflicting God's judgments on kingdoms and nations, and in the special care of his own people: but the world to come, as opposed to this, is not at all subject to them; they are employed in carrying the souls of departed saints thither, and shall be with them there, and join with them in their service; but they will not be as kings, nor even as children, but as servants; much less is heaven at their dispose to give to whomsoever they please; it is only in this sense in subjection to Christ, the Prince of life, who has power to give eternal life to as many as the Father has given to him: but it is not of this world the apostle is speaking; he is speaking of something now, which bears this name, and in proof of it cites a passage out of **Ps 8:1** where mention is made of sheep, and other things, which cannot refer to the world of glory: rather it designs the new heavens and new earth at the resurrection, and day of judgment, for these will not be put in subjection to angels; though of these the apostle is not speaking in the context: it seems therefore to intend the Gospel, and the Gospel dispensation and church state, in opposition to the Jewish state, and legal dispensation, which was called a world, and had in it a worldly sanctuary, and worldly ordinances, which is now at an end; and at the end of which Christ came, and then another world took place, here called "the world to come", as the times of the Messiah are frequently called by the Jews abh Mlwe, "the world to come", the Gospel dispensation, the apostle was treating of in the preceding verses, in distinction from the law, the word spoken by angels; for the Gospel was not spoken by them, but by the Lord: the Gospel state is very properly the world to come, with respect to the Old Testament saints, who were looking for it, and in which old things are past away, and all things are become new; angels desire to look into the mysteries of it, and learn from the church the manifold wisdom of God; but not they, but men, are the dispensers of the doctrines of it; and Christ, he is the Head, King, Governor, and Father of this new world: so instead of "everlasting Father", the Septuagint render the clause pathr tou mellontov aiwnov, in **Isa 9:6** "the Father of the age", or "world to come"; and hence mention is made in the Jewish writings of axyvmd ytad amle, "the world to come of the Messiah" {d}.

{d} Targum in 1 Kings iv. 33.

Hebrews 2:6

Ver. 6. But one in a certain place testified,.... That is, David, for he is the penman of the psalm, out of which the following words are taken; and though his name is not mentioned by the apostle, nor the particular place, or the psalm pointed at, as in Ac 13:33 yet this was not through ignorance of either, nor out of disrespect to the penman; but because the apostle is writing to Jews, who were conversant with the Scriptures, and knew full well who said the words, and where they were: and it is usual with the Jews to cite passages in this manner; and the form by which the passage is introduced, by the word testified, is quite agreeable to their way of citing Scripture, of which there is another instance in **Heb 7:17** and I think that this form is only used in this epistle to the Hebrews, with which they were acquainted: it is common with them to say, hdyeh hrwth, "the law testified" {e}, as it is said in such or such a place; and here the apostle produces a passage, as a witness and testimony of the truth of what he had said, that the Gospel dispensation is not put in subjection to angels, but to the Messiah: the passage stands in **Ps 8:4** which psalm belongs to the times of the Messiah, as appears from the non-application of it to others; and from the application of a passage in it to the children in his time,
Mt 21:16 by Christ himself, and of the passage here by the apostle; nor in any other time was the name of the Lord excellent in all the earth, with which the psalm begins and concludes:

Saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? this is not to be understood of mankind in general: not of man in a state of innocence; there were no babes nor sucklings in paradise, nor enemies to restrain; "Enosh", the word for man, signifies a frail mortal man, which Adam then was not; nor could he be called the son of man; nor can it so well suit with him, to be said to be made a little lower than the angels, and then crowned with glory and honour: nor of man as fallen, for all things are not subjected unto him; but of Christ, with whom everything agrees, as the name by which he is called, "Enosh", a frail man; for he was a man encompassed with infirmities; of no note and esteem among men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; was subject to death, and did die; and is often called the son of man: what is said of him suits with him, as that God was "mindful of him"; which may be expressive of his love and delight in, and choice of his human nature, to be taken into union with his divine person; and of his counsel and covenant in preparing it for him; and of his uniting it to his person; and of his providential care of it, and great affection for it; of his unction of it, and of his great regard to it in its sufferings, by supporting it, and in raising it from the dead: and also that he "visited" him; not in a way of wrath, but of favour, with his presence, with the gifts and graces of his Spirit, with divine supports, and spiritual peace and joy; all which in itself it was not deserving of, nor could it claim; and therefore these things are spoken of as favours, and in a way of admiration.

{e} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 37. 1. Maimon. Hilchot Yesode Hattorsh, 3. 7. sect. 6. & Melachim, c. 11. sect. 1. Vid. Aben Ezra in Lev. xvi. 8.

Hebrews 2:7

Ver. 7. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels,.... In the Hebrew text it is, "than Elohim", which some render, "than God"; but it is rightly rendered by the apostle, "than angels"; and so the Targum, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it. Christ was made a little lower than the angels, through the assumption of the human nature, which is inferior to angels, especially the corporeal part of it, and in this Kimchi makes the lessening to be; and more especially as that was assumed by Christ, with the infirmities of it; and by reason of the straits and indigencies he was brought into in it; besides, he was in it made under the law, which was given by angels, and to some parts of which they are not subject; and sometimes he stood in need of the ministry and support of angels, and had it; particularly he was made lower than they, when he was deprived of the gracious presence of God, and in the time of his sufferings and death; and which seem chiefly to be respected, as appears from **Heb 2:9** and the word "little" may not so much intend the degree of his humiliation, as the duration of it; for it may be rendered, "a little while"; in which sense it is used in **Ac 5:34** as the Hebrew word jem is in Ps 37:10 and so may respect the time of his suffering death; and at most the time from his incarnation to his resurrection; for he could not continue long in this low estate, which is matter of joy to us; he could not be held by the cords of death, but must rise, and be exalted above angels, as he is: and he was made so low by God, Jehovah the Father, whose name is excellent in all the earth, **Ps 8:1** he preordained him to this low estate; he prepared a body for him, and had a very great hand in his sufferings and death; though neither of these were contrary to his will:

thou crownest him with glory and honour; with that glory he had with the Father before the world was, and which followed upon his sufferings and death; for through them he entered into it, and upon his resurrection had it, and he is ascended on high, where he has the honour to sit at the right hand of God, which none of the angels have; and therefore is now above them, though once for a while below them, and they are now subject to him:

and didst set him over the works of thy hands: over angels, principalities, and powers; over the kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of it, and all things in it, and made him higher than the heavens, and gave him a name above every name.

Hebrews 2:8

Ver. 8. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet,.... Good angels, men and devils, all things in heaven, earth, and sea; see **1Pe 3:22**

for in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him; there is no one person or thing that is not subject to Christ; the subjection is the most universal, either voluntary or involuntary; whether they will or not, they are, and must be subject; God has left nothing but what he has put under his power:

but now we see not yet all things put under him; this seems to be an objection, and even a contradiction to what is before said; which may be removed by observing, that though this general subjection is not seen by us, it does not follow that it is not; and though it is not as yet visible, yet it will be: and besides, the apostle's sense may be, that no such general subjection to any mere man has ever been seen and known; as not to Solomon, nor Ahasuerus, nor Cyrus, nor Alexander the great, nor Julius, nor Augustus Caesar, nor any other; and this he may observe, to show the non-application of this passage to any but to Jesus Christ; and this sense is confirmed by what follows.

Hebrews 2:9

Ver. 9. But we see Jesus,.... Not with bodily eyes, but with the eyes of the mind, and understanding; that he is Jesus, as the Syriac version reads; and that he is designed in the above words; and that he has all things made subject unto him; and that he was humbled, and now exalted, as follows:

who was made a little lower than the angels; in his state of humiliation; See Gill on "Heb 2:7"

for the suffering of death: this clause may be considered either as connected with the preceding; and then the sense is, that Jesus became lower than the angels, by, or through suffering death; in that respect he was lower than they, who die not; this proved him to be in a condition below them, and showed how pertinent the above words were to him, and how they were fulfilled in him: or with the following; and then the meaning is, that because Jesus suffered death in the room and stead of his people; humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, when he was very low indeed, therefore he is

crowned with glory and honour; see **Php 2:8** and
See Gill on "Heb 2:7".

that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man; that is, Christ was made a little lower than the angels by becoming man, and assuming a body frail and mortal, that he might die for his church and people: to "taste death", is a Jewish phrase, often to be met with in Rabbinical writings; See Gill on "Mt 16:28" and signifies the truth and reality of his death, and the experience he had of the bitterness of it, it being attended with the wrath of God, and curse of the law; though he continued under it but for a little while, it was but a taste; and it includes all kinds of death, he tasted of the death of afflictions, being a man of sorrows all his days, and a corporeal death, and what was equivalent to an eternal one; and so some think the words will bear to be rendered, "that he by the grace of God might taste of every death"; which rendering of the words, if it could be established, as it is agreeable to the context, and to the analogy of faith, would remove all pretence of an argument from this place, in favour of the universal scheme: what moved God to make him lower than the angels, and deliver him up to death, was not any anger towards him, any disregard to him, or because he deserved it, but his "grace", free favour, and love to men; this moved him to provide him as a ransom; to preordain him to be the Lamb slain; to send him in the fulness of time, and give him up to justice and death: the Syriac version reads, "for God himself through his own grace tasted death for all"; Christ died, not merely as an example, or barely for the good of men, but as a surety, in their room and stead, and that not for every individual of mankind; for there are some he knows not; for some he does not pray; and there are some who will not be saved: the word "man" is not in the original text, it is only uper pantov, which may be taken either collectively, and be rendered "for the whole"; that is, the whole body, the church for whom Christ gave himself, and is the Saviour of; or distributively, and be translated, "for everyone"; for everyone of the sons God brings to glory, **Heb 2:10** for everyone of the "brethren", whom Christ sanctifies, and he is not ashamed to own, and to whom he declares the name of God, **Heb 2:11** for everyone of the members of the "church", in the midst of which he sung praise, **Heb 2:12** for every one of the "children" God has given him, and for whose sake he took part of flesh and blood, **Heb 2:13** and for everyone of the "seed" of Abraham, in a spiritual sense, whose nature he assumed, **Heb 2:16**.

Hebrews 2:10

Ver. 10. For it became him, for whom are all things,.... This is not a periphrasis of Christ, who died, but of God the Father, who delivered him to death; and who is the final cause of all things, in nature, and in grace, all things being made for his pleasure and for his glory; and he is the efficient cause of all things, as follows:

and by whom are all things; all the works of creation, providence, and grace:

in bringing many sons to glory; not to worldly glory, but to the heavenly glory, which they are undeserving of; and which was long ago prepared for them; is at present hid; is weighty, solid, durable, yea, eternal: the persons whom God, of his rich grace, brings to this, are "sons"; who are predestinated to the adoption of children; are regenerated by the Spirit of God; believe in Christ; and have the spirit of adoption given them, and so being children, are heirs of glory: and these are "many"; for though they are but few, when compared with others, yet they are many, considered by themselves; they are many that God has ordained to eternal life, and given to Christ, and for whom he has given himself a ransom, and whom he justifies; and accordingly there are many mansions of glory provided for them in their Father's house, whose act it is to bring them thither: he has chosen them to this glory, and prepared it for them; he sent his Son to redeem them; he reveals his Son in them, the hope of glory;

he calls them to his eternal glory, and makes them meet for it, and gives them an abundant entrance into it: and

him it became--to make the Captain of their salutation perfect through sufferings; Christ is "the Captain of salvation", and is so called, because he is the author of it; and he is the Prince and Commander of these sons, who are committed to his charge, and are under his care; and is their guide and leader; and who is gone before them to prepare their mansions of glory for them: and he is made "perfect through sufferings"; he suffered all that the law and justice of God could require; and hereby he became perfectly acquainted with the sufferings of his people, and a perfect Saviour of them; and in this way went to glory himself: and it "became" God the Father, the first cause, and last end of all things, since he had a design to bring all his adopted sons to glory, that his own Son should perfectly suffer for them; this was agreeable to, and becoming the perfections of his nature, his wisdom, his veracity, his justice, grace, and mercy.

Hebrews 2:11

Ver. 11. For both he that sanctifieth,.... Not himself, though this is said of him, Joh 17:19 nor his Father, though this also is true of him, **Isa 8:13** but his people, the sons brought to glory, whose salvation he is the Captain of; they are sanctified in him, he being made sanctification to them; and they have their sanctification from him, all their grace and holiness; and they are sanctified by him, both by his blood, which expiates their sins, and removes the guilt of them, and by his Spirit, working internal principles of grace and holiness in them, who are by nature, and in their unregenerate state, guilty and unclean:

and they who are sanctified; the sons brought to glory; they are not naturally holy, nor so of themselves, they are made holy; all that are sons are made holy; whom God adopts into his family, he regenerates: sanctification is absolutely necessary to their being brought to glory; and between the sanctifier and the sanctified there is a likeness, as there ought to be: they are

all of one: they are both of one God and Father, Christ's God is their God, and his Father is their Father; they are of one body, Christ is the head, and they are members; they are of one covenant, Christ is the surety, Mediator, and messenger of it, and they share in all its blessings and promises; they are of one man, Adam, Christ is a Son of Adam, though not by ordinary generation, they descend from him in the common way; they are all of one nature, of one blood; Christ has took part of the same flesh and blood with them:

for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren; Christ, and these sons that are sanctified, stand in the relation of brethren to each other; Christ is the firstborn among many brethren; he is a brother born for the day of adversity, and one that sticks closer than a brother: and this relation is founded both upon the incarnation of Christ, who thereby became his people's "Goel"; or near kinsman, yea, brother, **So 8:1** and upon their adoption unto his Father's family, which is made manifest by their regeneration, and by their doing his Father's will under the influence of his grace and Spirit, Mt 12:49 and this relation Christ owns; he called his disciples brethren, when God had raised him from the dead, and given him glory; and so he will call all his saints, even the meanest of them, in the great day, Mt 28:10, and "he is not ashamed" to do it; he does not disdain it, though he is God over all, and the Son of God, and is also in his human nature made higher than the heavens; which shows the wonderful condescension of Christ, and the honour that is put upon the saints; and may teach them not to despise the meanest among them: such a relation the Jews own will be between the Messiah and the Israelites. The Targumist on **So 8:1** paraphrases the words thus;

"when the King Messiah shall be revealed to the congregation of Israel, the children of Israel shall say unto him, Come, be thou with us, xal, for "a brother", or "be thou our brother"."

Nor can they say this will reflect any discredit upon Christ, when they make such a relation to be between God and them. The Israelites, they say {f}, are called, hbqhl Myxa "the brethren of the holy blessed God"; in proof of which they often produce
Ps 122:8 as being the words of God to them; and again, interpreting those words in Le 25:48 "one of his brethren may redeem him", this, say {g} they, is the holy blessed God.

{f} Zohar in Exod. fol. 23. 3. & in Lev. fol. 3. 3. & 9. 3. & 32. 2. {g} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 106. 3.

Hebrews 2:12

Ver. 12. Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren,.... These words, with the following clause, are cited from Ps 22:22 as a proof of what the apostle had before asserted; and that this psalm is to be understood, not of the

Jewish nation, or people of Israel, nor of Esther, nor of David, but of the Messiah, appears from the title of it, "Aijeleth, Shahar", which signifies "the morning hind"; from the particular account of Christ's sufferings in it; from his several offices herein pointed to; from the conversion of the Gentiles it prophesies of; and from several passages cited from hence, and applied to Christ; see Mt 27:35. And these are the words of Christ addressed to his Father; whose name he promises to declare to his brethren; meaning not the Jews, in general, his brethren according to the flesh; but his disciples and followers, particularly the twelve apostles, and the five hundred brethren to whom he appeared after his resurrection; and indeed all the saints and people of God may be included: and by his name he would declare to them, is not meant any particular name of his, as Elohim, El-shaddai, Jehovah, or the like; but rather he himself, and the perfections of his nature, which he, the only begotten Son, lying in his bosom, has declared; though the Gospel seems chiefly to be designed; see Joh 17:6 and this Christ declared with great exactness and accuracy, with clearness and perspicuity, and with all integrity and fidelity: he spoke it out plainly, and concealed no part of it; as he received it from his Father, he faithfully made it known to his people; this is expressive of Christ's prophetic office, of his preaching of the Gospel, both in his own person, and by his ministers:

in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee; or "a hymn"; this is to be understood not of the church above, but of the church below; and not of the synagogue of the Jews, but of the disciples of Christ, and of his singing an hymn to God, with and among them, as he did at the institution of the supper, Mt 26:30 for though the number of the apostles was but small, yet they made a congregation or church, and which was a pure and glorious one. With the Jews {h}, ten men made a congregation.

{h} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 6.

Hebrews 2:13

Ver. 13 And again, I will put my trust in him,.... These words are taken not from **Isa 8:17** where, in the Septuagint version, is a like phrase; for they are not the words of the Messiah there, but of the prophet; and besides, the apostle disjoins them from the following words, which stand there, by saying, "and again"; but they are cited from Ps 18:2 in which psalm are many things which have respect to the Messiah, and his times; the person spoken of is said to be made the head of the Heathen, to whom unknown people yield a voluntary submission, and the name of God is praised among the Gentiles, Ps 18:43. The Targum upon it makes mention of the Messiah in Ps 18:32 and he is manifestly spoken of under the name of David, in Ps 18:50 and which verse is applied to the Messiah, by the Jews, both ancient and modern {i}: and these words are very applicable to him, for as man he had every grace of the Spirit in him; and this of faith, and also of hope, very early appeared in him; he trusted in God for the daily supplies of life, and that he would help him in, and through the work of man's salvation; see Ps 22:9 he committed his Spirit into his hands at death, with confidence, and believed he would raise his body from the dead; and he trusted him with his own glory, and the salvation of his people: and this is a citation pertinent to the purpose, showing that Christ and his people are one, and that they are brethren; for he must be man, since, as God, he could not be said to trust; and he must be a man of sorrows and distress, to stand in need of trusting in God.

And again, behold I and the children which God hath given me; this is a citation from **Isa 8:18** in which prophecy is a denunciation of God's judgments upon Israel, by the Assyrians, when God's own people among them are comforted with a promise of the Messiah, who is described as the Lord of hosts; who is to be sanctified, and be as a sanctuary to the saints, and as a stone of stumbling to others; and the prophet is ordered to bind and seal up the doctrine among the disciples, at which he seems astonished and concerned, but resolves to wait; upon which Christ, to encourage him, speaks these words; for they are not addressed to God, as the Syriac version renders them, "behold I and the children, whom thou hast given me, O God"; in which may be observed, that the saints are children with respect to God, who has adopted them, and with respect to Christ, who is their everlasting Father; that they were given to Christ as his spiritual seed and offspring, as his portion, and to be his care and charge; and that this is worthy of attention, and calls for admiration, that Christ and his people are one, and that he is not ashamed to own them before God and men.

{i} Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 47. 3.

Hebrews 2:14

Ver. 14. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood,.... By the children are meant, not the children of this world, or the men of it; nor the children of the flesh, or Abraham's natural seed; nor visible professors of religion; nor the apostles of Christ only; but all the children of God, the children given to Christ; all the sons that are brought to glory: these "are partakers of flesh and blood"; of human nature, which is common to them all, and which is subject to infirmity and mortality; and the sense is, that they are frail mortal men: and this being their state and case,

he also himself took part of the same; Christ became man also, or assumed an human nature like theirs; this shows that he existed before his incarnation, who of himself, and by his own voluntary act, assumed an individual of human nature into union with his divine person, which is expressive of wondrous grace and condescension: Christ's participation of human nature, and the children's, in some things agree, in others they differ; they agree in this, that it is real flesh and blood they both partake of; that Christ's body is not spiritual and heavenly, but natural as theirs is; and that it is a complete, perfect, human nature, and subject to mortality and infirmity like theirs: but then Christ took his nature of a virgin, and is without sin; nor has it any distinct personality, but from the moment of its being subsisted in his divine person: and now the true reason of Christ's assuming such a nature was on account of the children, which discovers great love to them, and shows that it was with a peculiar view to them that he became man; hence they only share the special advantages of his incarnation, sufferings, and death: and his end in doing this was,

that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; the devil is said to have the power of death, not because he can kill and destroy men at pleasure, but because he was the first introducer of sin, which brought death into the world, and so he was a murderer from the beginning; and he still tempts men to sin, and then accuses them of it, and terrifies and affrights them with death; and by divine permission has inflicted it, and will be the executioner of the second death. The apostle here speaks in the language of the Jews, who often call Samael, or Satan,
twmh Kalm, "the angel of death", in their Targums {k}, Talmud {l}, and other writings {m}; and say, he was the cause of death to all the world; and ascribe much the same things to him, for which the apostle here so styles him: and they moreover say {n}, that he will cease in the time to come; that is, in the days of the Messiah: and who being come, has destroyed him, not as to his being, but as to his power; he has bruised his head, destroyed his works, disarmed his principalities and powers, and took the captives out of his hands, and saved those he would have devoured: and this he has done by death; "by his own death", as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; whereby he has abolished death itself, and sin the cause of it, and so Satan, whose empire is supported by it.

{k} Targum Jon. in Gen. iii. 6. & in Hab. iii. 5. {l} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 53. 1. & Avoda Zara, fol. 5. 1. & 20. 2. {m} Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 1, 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 2. & 22. 4. Caphtor, fol 26. 2. & alibi. {n} Baal Hatturim in Numb. iv. 19.

Hebrews 2:15

Ver. 15. And deliver them, who through fear of death,.... This is another end of Christ's assuming human nature, and dying in it, and thereby destroying Satan, that he might save some out of his hands:

[who] were all their lifetime subject to bondage; meaning chiefly God's elect among the Jews; for though all men are in a state of bondage to the lusts of the flesh, and are Satan's captives; yet this describes more particularly the state of the Jews, under the law of Moses, which gendered unto bondage; which they being guilty of the breach of, and seeing the danger they were exposed to on that account, were subject, bound, and held fast in and under a spirit of bondage: and that "through fear of death"; through fear of a corporeal death; through fear of chastisements and afflictions, the forerunners of death, and what sometimes bring it on; and through fear of death itself, as a disunion of soul and body, and as a penal evil; and through fear of what follows it, an awful judgment: and this the Jews especially were in fear of, from their frequent violations of the precepts, both of the moral, and of the ceremonial law, which threatened with death; and this they lived in a continual fear of, because they were daily transgressing, which brought on them a spirit of bondage unto fear: and, as Philo the Jew {o} observes, nothing more brings the mind into bondage than the fear of death: and many these, even all the chosen ones among them, Christ delivered, or saved from sin, from Satan, from the law, and its curses, from death corporeal, as a penal evil, and from death eternal; even from all enemies and dangers, and brought them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

{o} Quod omnis Probus Liber, p. 868.

Hebrews 2:16

Ver. 16. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels,.... Good angels; for they are all along spoken of in this book; and it would have been impertinent to have said this of evil angels: and this is to be understood not of a denying help and assistance to the angels; for though they have not redemption from Christ, which they needed not, yet have they help from him; they are chosen in him, and are gathered together under him; and he is the head of them, and they are upheld and sustained by him in their being, and well being: but of a non-assumption of their nature; there was no need of it with respect to good angels, and there was no salvation designed for evil ones; and to have assumed the nature of angels, would have been of no service to fallen man; an angelic nature is not capable of death, which was necessary to atone for sin, save men, and destroy Satan: this negative proposition is very strongly put, "he never took", as the Vulgate Latin version more rightly renders it; at no time, in no place; nor is it said in any place of Scripture that he did; this is a certain truth, and not to be disputed. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "he took not of, or from angels"; he took not any individual from among them:

but he took on him the seed of Abraham; not all his posterity, but some individual, as the word seed is sometimes used, **Ge 4:25**. Christ assumed human nature as derived from Abraham; for the Messiah was to spring from Abraham, and is promised, as that seed of his, in whom all nations should be blessed; and he was particularly promised to the Jews, the seed of Abraham, to whom the apostle was writing; and it was with a view to Abraham's spiritual seed, the children of the promise, that Christ partook of flesh and blood: the word here used signifies to catch hold of anyone ready to perish, or to lay hold on a person running away, and with great vehemence and affection to hold anything fast, that it be not lost, and to help persons, and do good unto them; all which may be observed in this act of Christ's, in assuming an individual of human nature, in Abraham's line, into union with his divine person; whereby he has saved those that were gone out of the way, and were ready to perish, and done them the greatest good, and shown the strongest affection to them: and from hence may be learned the deity and eternity of Christ, who was before Abraham, as God, though a son of his as man; and his real humanity, and that it was not a person, but a seed, a nature he assumed; and also the union and distinction of natures in him: and Christ's taking human, and not angelic nature, shows the sovereignty of God, and his distinguishing grace and mercy to men.

Hebrews 2:17

Ver. 17. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren,.... The adopted sons of God, who were brethren before Christ's incarnation, being from all eternity predestinated to the adoption of children:

Christ's incarnation was in time, and after that many of the brethren existed; and it was only for their sakes that he assumed human nature; and therefore it was proper he should be like them in that nature, in all things: in all the essentials of it; it was not necessary that he should have it by natural generation; nor that it should have a subsistence in itself as theirs: and in all the properties and affections of it, that are, not sinful; for it did not behove him to be like them in sin, nor in sickness, and in diseases of the body: and in all temptations; though in some things his differ from theirs; none of his arose from within; and those from without could make no impression on him: and in sufferings, that there might be a conformity between the head and members; though there is in some things a difference; his sufferings were by way of punishment, and were attended with wrath, and were meritorious, which cannot be said of theirs; but that he should have an human nature, as to its essence and perfection, like to theirs, was necessary: it was proper he should be truly and really man, as well as truly God,

that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest; he could not be an high priest, offer sacrifice for sin, and make intercession, unless he was man; nor could he be a "merciful" and compassionate one, sympathize with his people in their sorrows, temptations, and sufferings, unless he was like them in these; nor would he be a "faithful", that is, a true and lawful one otherwise, because every high priest is taken from among men:

in things [pertaining] to God; in things in which God has to do with his people, as to preside in his name over them, to declare his will unto them, and bless them; and in things in which the people have to do with God, to offer to God a sacrifice for their sins, to present this sacrifice to him, to appear in his presence for them, to carry in their petitions, and plead their cause as their advocate:

to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; of God's covenant people, the people he has chosen for himself, and given to his Son; and whom Christ saves from their sins, by making satisfaction for them, to the law and justice of God, which is here meant by reconciliation: and in order to this, which could not be done without blood, without sufferings and death, it was proper he should be man, and like unto his brethren: the allusion seems to be to the two goats on the day of atonement, one of which was to be slain, and the other let go; which were to be, as the Jews say {p},
Nywv, "alike", in colour, in stature, and in price; and so were the birds to be alike in the same things, that were used at the cleansing of the leper {q}: and the Jews tell us {r}, that the high priest was to be greater than his brethren, in beauty, in strength, in wisdom, and in riches; all which is true of Christ.

{p} Misna Yoma, c. 6. sect. 1. {q} Misna Negaim, c. 14. sect. 5. {r} T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 9. 1. Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 1.

Hebrews 2:18

Ver. 18. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted,.... By Satan, at his entrance on his public ministry, and a little before his death; which was done, not by stirring up sin in him, for he had none, nor by putting any into him, which could not be done, nor could Satan get any advantage over him; he solicited him one thing and another, but in vain; though these temptations were very troublesome, and disagreeable, and abhorrent to the pure and holy nature of Christ, and so must be reckoned among his sufferings, or things by which he suffered: and as afflictions are sometimes called temptations, in this sense also Christ suffered, being tempted, with outward poverty and meanness, with slight and neglect from his own relations, and with a general contempt and reproach among men: he was often tempted by the Jews with ensnaring questions; he was deserted by his followers, by his own disciples, yea, by his God and Father; all which were great trials to him, and must be accounted as sufferings: and he also endured great pains of body, and anguish of mind, and at last death itself. And so

he is able to succour them that are tempted; as all the saints, more or less, are, both with Satan's temptations, and with afflictions in the world, which God suffers to befall them, on various accounts; partly on his own account, to show his grace, power, and faithfulness in supporting under them, and in delivering out of them; and partly on his Son's account, that they might be like unto him, and he may have an opportunity of succouring them, and sympathizing with them; and also on their own account, to humble them, to try their faith, to excite them to prayer and watchfulness, and to keep them dependent on the power and grace of God: and these Christ succours, by having and showing a fellow feeling with them; by praying for them; by supporting them under temptations; by rebuking the tempter, and delivering out of them: and all this he is able to do; he must be able to succour them as he is God; and his conquering Satan is a convincing evidence to the saints of his ability; but here it intends his qualification, and fitness, and readiness to help in such circumstances, from the experience he himself has had of these things.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hebrews 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 3

The apostle having discoursed, in the preceding chapters, concerning the dignity of Christ's person, and his wondrous grace in the assumption of human nature, and suffering in the room and stead of his people, exhorts the Hebrews in this to a serious consideration of him, attention to him, and faith in him, and constancy in it; the arguments he uses to engage them to these things are taken from the grace and benefit they themselves were partakers of through him, from the office in which he was, and his faithfulness to his Father in the discharge of it, **Heb 3:1** which is illustrated in the case of Moses, who was faithful in the house of God, and whom Christ excelled, and therefore was worthy of more honour; partly, because he is the builder of the house; and partly, because he is a Son in it, when Moses was only a servant; which house is Christ's own, and consists of true and steadfast believers in him, **Heb 3:2**, wherefore the exhortation to regard him is renewed, enforced, and expressed in the words of the Holy Ghost, **Heb 3:7** which are taken out of Ps 95:7 and applied to the present case: hence the apostle cautions against unbelief, as being a great evil in itself, and bad in its consequence, causing persons to depart from the living God, **Heb 3:12**, in order to prevent which he advises to a daily exhortation of each other to their duty, that so they might not be hardened in sin through the deceitfulness of it, **Heb 3:13** and the rather it became them to be concerned to hold fast their faith in Christ to the end, since this is the grand evidence of being a partaker of him, **Heb 3:14**. And then the exhortation in the above passage of Scripture is recited, **Heb 3:15** to show, that though not all the persons spoken of, yet some did provoke the Lord by their unbelief, and unbecoming carriage, **Heb 3:16** wherefore, by the example of punishment being inflicted on such, of which instances are given in the forefathers of these people, such as their carcasses falling in the wilderness, and their not entering into the land of Canaan, which they could not, because God swore they should not, being grieved and provoked by them, and because of their unbelief, they are dissuaded from the same evils, lest they should be punished in like manner, **Heb 3:17**.

Ver. 1. Wherefore, holy brethren,.... The apostle calls the Hebrews "brethren", not because they were of the same natural stock and lineage, but because they were in the same spiritual relation; they all had the same Father, belonged to the same family, were the adopted sons of God, the brethren of Christ, of one another, and of the apostle; and they were "holy", not by birth, nor by their external separation from other nations, but through sanctification of the Spirit;

and they were so by profession, and in the opinion of the apostle:

partakers of the heavenly calling; by which is meant not any business, or employment of life; nor a call to any office in church or state; nor a mere external call by the ministry of the word; but an internal special call of grace, to the enjoyment of the blessings of grace here, and to glory hereafter; and which is not according, to works, but according to the grace of God, and is by powerful, efficacious, and irresistible grace: and this is said to be "heavenly", because the grace by which the saints are called is from heaven, and it is to heaven they are called; and the means of their calling, the Gospel, is from heaven; and this epistle epithet is used to show the excellency of their calling, and to distinguish it from all others: and this the Hebrews are said to be "partakers of"; which shows, that God had not utterly cast off that people, and yet that they were not the only persons that enjoyed the grace of the effectual calling, they were but partners with others; and that the saints are alike sharers in this blessing, they are called in one hope of their calling; and it denotes the truth and reality of it: the duty they are exhorted to is,

to consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read, only "Jesus"; who is called "the apostle", because he was sent of God to preach the Gospel, work miracles, and do the will of God, particularly to obtain redemption and salvation for his people, which mission does not suppose any inequality of persons, or change of place, or any compulsion or disrespect to Christ, but love to men; and is to be understood of him as in office as Mediator, and shows his authority, and that he was no impostor. The high priest among the Jews was, on the day of atonement, considered as xylv, "an apostle", or "messenger" {s}; for so the elders of the sanhedrim address him on that day, saying,

"Lord high priest, we are the messengers of the sanhedrim, and thou art wnyxwlv, "our apostle", or "messenger", and the messenger of the sanhedrim."

And it follows here, and "the high priest of our profession"; which may be understood either objectively, whom they professed, both by words or deeds; for a profession of him should be public, visible, and sincere; or efficiently, he being the author, sum, and substance of the religion, faith, and Gospel which was professed by them: and he is to be "considered" in the greatness and dignity of his person, as the Son of God; and in his wondrous grace and love in assuming human nature, and dying for his people; and in the relations he stands in to them as a Father, husband, brother, friend; and in his several offices, as Mediator, and particularly as sent of God, to be the Saviour of sinners; and as the high priest, who has offered himself a sacrifice, and ever lives to make intercession; and all this to encourage the saints to hold fast their profession of him.

{s} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5.

Hebrews 3:2

Ver. 2. Who was faithful to him that appointed him,.... Or "made him"; Christ, as man, was made, but not as God; nor is the apostle speaking of the divine nature of Christ, but of his offices: wherefore this phrase designs the constitution and settlement of him in office; which may take in the eternal appointment of him as Mediator; the open promise of him in time; his mission, unction, and attestation from God; and his manifestation and declaration as such, at his ascension and session at God's right hand, when he was made Lord and Christ. Now, as Mediator, he had a trust reposed in him; as the persons of all God's elect, and a fulness of all grace for them; the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and eternal life and happiness; and also the glory of God in their salvation: which trust he has faithfully discharged as an apostle, and high priest; in a declaration of the whole will of God; in acknowledging it was his Father's doctrine he brought, and in seeking not his own, but his Father's glory; in redeeming and saving the persons committed to him; in distributing his grace to them; and in bringing them safe to glory; and in taking care of things pertaining to God:

as also Moses was faithful in all his house; the passage referred to is in Nu 12:7 and which seems not so much to intend the fidelity of Moses in managing the affairs of God's house, as the largeness of the trust reposed in him, the dignity and honour conferred on him, and the power and authority he was invested with, in having the whole house of Israel committed to his care and charge, in which he exceeded all other prophets; and so the faithfulness of Christ is not so much to be understood of the discharge of his trust, as of the trust itself; and the sense is, that he was trusted much by God the Father, who constituted him Mediator, even as Moses was; and this sense best agrees with **Heb 3:5**. And De Dieu has observed, that the Hebrew word Nman, in Misnic writings {t}, signifies, as it does, one that is trusted, or is fit to be trusted, as Christ and Moses were; though the former is much more worthy than the latter, as follows.

{t} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect. 2.

Hebrews 3:3

Ver. 3. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses,.... Moses was counted worthy of glory and honour, and had it given him, both by God and by men; by God, as appears from the work he called him to, to deliver his people Israel, to reveal his mind and will to them, and to rule and govern them; and from the favours he showed him, as the miracles he did by him, the near converse he admitted him to, and the view he gave him of his glory, which he made to pass before him, and his regard to him at his death and burial, as well as the testimony he gave of him; and he was counted worthy of honour by men, and who gave it him, as Pharaoh and his people, and the Israelites. The Jews give very great commendations of him; they call him a father in the law, a father in wisdom, and a father in prophecy {u}; and say, that he is the father, master, head, and prince of all the prophets {w}; yea, the great prophet expected in the last days, they say, will be but next to Moses, their master {x}: they observe, that there were more miracles wrought by, and for him, than were wrought by, and for all the prophets that have been since the world began {y}; so that he not only exceeded them in the excellency and sublimity of prophecy, but in the multitude of miracles; but Christ is worthy of more glory than Moses, and has it given him by God, angels, and men: he is a greater Saviour than Moses; Moses was but a temporal saviour, but he is the author of spiritual and eternal salvation: he is a greater prophet than Moses, being the only begotten Son of God, who lay in the bosom of the Father, and has declared him, his mind and will, his Gospel, grace, and truth, as Moses never did: he is a greater King than he, being made higher than the kings of the earth: he did more miracles than Moses, and had a greater testimony from God than he had, as that he was his beloved Son, and to be heard; he was also raised, from the dead, and is set down at the right hand of God, and is appointed Judge of all; he is ministered to, and worshipped by angels, is believed on by men, who ascribe the whole glory of their salvation to him.

Inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house; this "house", or "temple", as the Arabic version renders it, is the church, of which Christ is the builder; though not to the exclusion of the Father and the Spirit, who are coefficient builders with him, nor of ministers of the Gospel as instruments, nor of believers in a private capacity, who build up one another; but he has the chief concern in the building, which lies in the conversion of souls, and in the edification of them, and is carried on by his Spirit in the ministry of the word and ordinances, and from hence he has a glory; see **Zec**

6:12 a greater glory than Moses, seeing he was but a part of this house, at most but a pillar in it; but Christ is the builder, foundation, and cornerstone.

{u} T. Bab. Megilia, fol. 12. 1. {w} Shemot Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 106. 3. Maimon. Yesode Hattorah, c. 7. sect. 6. Obede Cochabim, c. 1. sect. 3. & in Misn Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 18. 3. {x} Maimon. Teshubah, c. 9. sect. 2. {y} Menasseh ben Israel, Conciliat. in Deut. qu. 11.

Hebrews 3:4

Ver. 4. For every house is built by some man,.... Or by some one; for a house does not build itself: this is true of houses properly taken, or improperly, as nations, tribes, families, and kindred, of the whole church in general, of particular congregations, and of individual believers; the greatest saints, even apostles and prophets, such an one as Moses, are built by and upon Christ; their persons are built on him; they receive all their gifts for edification from him, and their success is owing to him; though they are to be esteemed of in their proper places: the apostle's design is to bring down the high esteem the Jews had of Moses, that they might rightly value Christ.

But he that built all things is God; Christ has built all things, and therefore he is God, and must be infinitely above Moses; for this is not to be understood of God and of the creation of the world, and of all things in it by him; but of Christ, and of his building the church, and of his ordering and managing of that, and all affairs relating to it; such as the constitution of it, settling the worship of God, and the ordinances in it, the redemption and salvation of the members of it, and its rule and government; all which prove him to be God, and above Moses.

Hebrews 3:5

Ver. 5. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant,.... Moses was not only a servant to the Israelites, but he was also the Lord's servant, a servant of his choosing, sending, and approving; he was a servant in holy things, and served the Lord heartily, sincerely, and ingenuously, with all becoming fear and reverence, respect, and honour, and with all ready and cheerful obedience; the house in which he was a servant, was not his own, but belonged to God, even the Son of God, as appears from the following verse; he was not a servant in the world, and with respect to civil things, and the affairs of Providence, but in the church of God, and in divine things; and he was faithful here, and that in all things; he did all things exactly according to the pattern showed him in the Mount; and the apostle strongly affirms all this, as well he might, since there was full proof of it, and God himself had bore a testimony to it: and the end of his being a servant here was,

for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; these words may regard his faithful testification of God's will to the people of Israel, after he was fixed as a servant in God's house; or what he said afterwards concerning the Messiah, of whom he spake and wrote, and of whom he bore an honourable testimony, De 18:1 or they may have respect to the things spoken after Moses's time, by the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, which agreed with the testimony of Moses; or to the things afterwards spoken of in this epistle; to which may be added, that Moses in his office was typical of things to be spoken and done by the Messiah, when he came; as his deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt; his leading them through the Red sea and wilderness, to Canaan's land; his giving them the law from Mount Sinai; the erection of the tabernacle, with all its furniture, and the institution of sacrifices and the like.

Hebrews 3:6

Ver. 6. But Christ as a Son over his own house,.... As Moses was not, though the Jews say that he was tybd hyram {a} and tybh leb {b}, "lord and master of the house"; yea, and tyb Nb, "the Son of the house" {c}; but this he was not: Christ is the Son and heir, the Lord and master; he is a Son, not by creation, or by adoption, or by office, but by nature: hence it appears that he is God, and is equal with God; and this his sonship is the foundation of his office, and he becomes the heir of all things: and when he is said to be "as a Son", it does not intend mere resemblance; but is expressive of his right to heirship and government, and of the esteem and reverence he had in his house, and of his fidelity as a Son there; and though he was a servant, as man and Mediator, and had a great piece of service to perform, and which he has performed with diligence and faithfulness, yet he was also a Son, Lord and heir, as Moses was not; and he is over the house of God, as King, priest, and prophet in it, and as the firstborn, Son and heir, and as the master and governor of it; and which is called his own, because given him by the Father, purchased by himself, and which he has built, and in which he dwells:

whose house are we; believers in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles; who, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, in whom Christ dwells by faith, and over whom he presides and reigns:

if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. These words are not to be understood as a condition of the former assertion; nor is a final falling away from grace to be inferred from hence, for the supposition proves not such an inference, but the contrary; namely, that they that have true faith, hope, and confidence, shall keep them to the end; and therefore are the house of Christ: besides, the doctrine of apostasy is quite repugnant to the apostle's argument; according to which, Christ might have no house, and can have none till men have persevered: but the apostle's design is to give a word of exhortation to himself and others, to hold fast the confidence; and so the words are rather descriptive of the persons, who are the house of Christ; such who have a good hope, through grace, wrought in them, and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and can use freedom of speech and boldness at the throne of grace; and have an holy confidence of interest in the love of God, and salvation by Christ, and go on in the exercise of these graces to the end of their days.

{a} Zohar in Lev. fol. 2. 2. {b} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 35. 2. {c} Lexic. Cabalist. p. 203.

Hebrews 3:7

Ver. 7. Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith,.... In Ps 95:7

today if you will hear his voice; either the precepts of Christ, to hear which is to obey them; and this is an acknowledgment to Christ as King of saints, and is a testimony of love to him, and is wellpleasing in his sight; and in which the saints find pleasure themselves, and profit also: or the Gospel of Christ, which is a voice of love, grace, and mercy; of peace and reconciliation; of pardon and righteousness; of liberty, redemption, and salvation by Christ; and to hear it, is not only to hear it externally, but internally, so as to understand it, and distinguish it from the voice of a stranger, and to approve of it, and believe it, and put in practice what is heard: and "today" may intend some festival day in David's time, when, and on account of which, this psalm was penned; as the feast of tabernacles, which was a type of Christ tabernacling in human nature; or it may regard the time of man's life, while it is day, or the present instant of life: or rather the whole Gospel dispensation. The psalm from whence these and some following words are taken, belongs to the Messiah; for the person the subject of it, is called the rock of our salvation; and every thing in it is applicable to him; as the ascription of deity, and divine worship; the creation and preservation of the universe; yea, he is represented as a shepherd, and the saints as his sheep; which plainly points at the office of Christ; and these very words are often made use of by the Jews, and applied to the Messiah, showing that if the Jews would repent but one day, or keep the sabbath but one day, the son of David, the Messiah, would come; since it is said, "today if you will hear his voice" {d}; which the Chaldee paraphrase renders hyrmym, "his Word", his essential Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

{d} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. Shemot Rabba, sect. 25. fol. 109. 3. & Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 19. 3.

Hebrews 3:8

Ver. 8. Harden not you hearts,.... There is a natural hardness of the heart; the heart of man is like a stone, destitute of spiritual life, motion, and activity; it is senseless, stupid, impenitent, stubborn, and inflexible, on which no impressions can be made, but by powerful grace: and there is an acquired, habitual, and voluntary hardness of heart, to which men arrive by various steps; as entertaining pleasing thoughts of sin; an actual commission of it, with frequency, till it becomes customary, and so habitual; an extenuation or justification of it, and so they become hardened against all reproofs and sermons, and to all afflictions and judgments; are insensible and past feeling, and openly declare for sin, and glory in it: and there is a hardness which God's people are liable to, and should guard against; and which is brought on by a neglect of private and public worship, and by keeping bad company, and through the ill examples of others, and by giving way to lesser sins; for all sin is of an hardening nature:

as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness; the Jews provoked God in the wilderness by their unbelief, murmurings, ingratitude, and idolatry; and they tempted him there by distrusting his power and goodness; hence one of the places in which they murmured against him was called Massah and Meribah, Ex 17:7 and it is an aggravation of their sin, that it was in the wilderness, after they had been just brought out of bondage into liberty, and had lately had such an instance of the power and goodness of God, in bringing them through the Red sea; and where they could have no human supplies, and therefore should have been entirely dependent on God, and trust in him.

Hebrews 3:9

Ver. 9. When your fathers tempted me,.... This the apostle cites and repeats, to expose the glorying of the Jews in their ancestors; to dissuade them from following their sinful practices; to deter them from the same by observing both their sin and punishment; and to heighten their regards to the voice and Gospel of Christ:

proved me; this is either an explication of the former phrase; or it may design the experience this people had of the power and goodness of God, notwithstanding their tempting and provoking the Lord by a distrust of them; which is an aggravation of their sin and ingratitude, and shows the forbearance of God, and that wicked men may partake of outward favours:

and saw my works forty years; that is, God's works of providence, in furnishing them with the necessaries of life, in guiding, protecting, and supporting them for the space of forty years, in the wilderness; and his miracles, and the punishment of their enemies; yet they saw and perceived not, but all this time sinned against the Lord, see
De 29:2 the space of time, forty years, is in the psalm placed to the beginning of the next verse, and is joined with God's grief and indignation at the people, as it is also by the apostle, in **Heb 3:17** but the people's sin, and God's grief at it, being of equal duration, it matters not to which it is placed, and therefore to both; perhaps, one reason of its being repeated, and so much notice taken of it is, because there was just this number of years from Christ's sufferings, to the destruction of Jerusalem; which the apostle might have in view.

Hebrews 3:10

Ver. 10. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation,....
rbdmh rwd, "the generation of the wilderness", as the Jews often call them; and which they say was more beloved than any generation {e}; and yet they will not allow them a part in the world to come;
See Gill on "Heb 3:11". When God is said to be grieved with them, it is to be considered as an anthropopathy, as speaking after the manner of men, as in **Ge 6:5**. The word signifies, that he was wearied by them, and weary of them; that he loathed them, and was displeased with them; it shows the notice God took of their sin; the heinousness of it, his displicency at it, and determination to

punish it: the cause of his grief and indignation were their unbelief, ingratitude, and idolatry:

and said, they do alway err in their heart; all sins are errors, or aberrations from the law of God; all men err in this sense: these people erred in their hearts, for there is error in the understanding, and will, and affections, as well as in life and actions; and they may be said to err in their hearts, because their sins not only sprung from the heart, but they were done heartily, or with their hearts, and that continually; which shows the sottishness of this people: their stubbornness and rebellion; their want of integrity, and their constancy in sinning: heart sins, as well as others, are taken notice of by God:

and they have not known my ways; they did not take notice of God's ways of providence towards them; nor did they approve of, and delight in his ways of worship and duty, or in his commands.

{e} T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 39. 2.

Hebrews 3:11

Ver. 11. So I sware in my wrath,.... Swearing is ascribed to God, to show the certainty of the thing spoken of; as of mercies, when he swears in love, and by his holiness; so here, of punishment, when he swears in wrath, in indignation, in sore displeasure, and the threatened evil is irrevocable and inevitable:

they shall not enter into my rest; into the land of Canaan, called God's rest, because he promised it, and gave it to the Israelites as their rest; and where he himself had a place of rest; and where he gave the Messiah, the author of peace and rest; and which was a type of heaven, that rest from toil and labour, which remains for the people of God; and into which it is said this generation did not enter; for the Jews say {f},

"the generation of the wilderness have no part in the world to come:"

but this seems too harsh, for doubtless there were many who died in the wilderness, that went safe to heaven, notwithstanding all their sins and provocations.

{f} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 118. 1.

Hebrews 3:12

Ver. 12. Take heed, brethren,.... This exhortation is grounded upon the state and case of their ancestors before given, as a warning and caution to the then present Hebrews; and whom the apostle styles "brethren", to show that he had no hard thoughts of them, and that his jealousy was a godly one, and not an evil suspicion; and may teach us that all exhortations, admonitions, and reproofs should be given in love:

lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief; or such an evil heart, in which unbelief prevails, and is predominant: there is in every man, whether a profane sinner, or an hypocritical professor, an evil heart, and an unbelieving one; and there is unbelief in regenerate persons, which when cherished and encouraged by them is a great evil, and should be avoided; and this sin is aggravated by the many instances of God's grace, and by the many declarations of it, and by the exceeding great and precious promises God has made, and by the great discoveries of his love to their souls in times past: and this sin, when it gets ahead, has a very great influence on the heart, to make it evil; and unbelief was the first sin of man, at least it very early appeared; it is the mother sin, and puts persons upon every sin; it defiles the conscience, hardens the heart, renders the word unprofitable, unfit for duty and makes men unstable, and therefore to be shunned; and especially because of the dreadful effect following:

in departing from the living God; that is, from Christ, who is the Son over his own house, and whose voice is to be heard; for of no other is the apostle speaking in the context; and who is not only the Son of the living God, but he is himself the living God; he is life in himself, and is the fountain and author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal. This is mentioned to exalt the person of Christ, the apostle and high priest of our profession; and to discover the greatness and heinousness of the sin of such as depart from him and his Gospel, and to deter men from it: there is a final and total departure from Christ, from his Gospel and ordinances, from his people, and from a former profession of faith, which is never to be found in true believers; for they are as Mount Zion, which can never be removed; but there is a partial departure, and for a while, which they are liable to, and is attended with bad effects to them, and should be guarded against: saints should take heed of themselves, and of their hearts, and of the unbelief of them, that they do not in the least depart from Christ, by letting go their hold of him, or by a non-exercise of faith upon him; and this should be the care and concern of every individual member of the church, and at all times; unbelief is very dishonourable to God and Christ; contradicts the word and promises of God; is uncomfortable to the saints; it is a sin that very easily besets, and is very provoking to God, and is highly resented by him.

Hebrews 3:13

Ver. 13. But exhort one another daily,.... In order to prevent unbelief and apostasy. The phrase is sometimes rendered, "comfort one another", or, "yourselves together", as in **1Th 5:11** which the saints may do, by discoursing together about divine things; by praying together; by instructing one another in the doctrines of the Gospel; by putting one another in mind of the covenant of grace, and its promises; and by observing the near approach of everlasting happiness with Christ. And though the business of exhortation greatly belongs to ministers of the word, yet it ought not to be neglected by private believers; who ought, when it becomes necessary, to exhort one another to prayer; to an attendance on the word and ordinances; to a regard to their conversations; to a close adherence to their profession; and to a believing view and consideration of Christ, the apostle and high priest of it; and to a due concern for his truth and interest: and this should be done in love, with good and consolatory words, and in things, in which the saints are concerned, and do themselves regard; and it is an affair which requires prudence and faithfulness; and supposes that God's own people may be dull, heavy, and sluggish; and this is to be done "daily", every day, as often as there is an occasion, and an opportunity for it; and

while it is called today; while the Gospel dispensation continues; or while the time of life lasts. This shows that the phrase "today", in Ps 95:7 did not respect David's time only. The Syriac version renders it, "until that day which is called today": until the everlasting day appears, when there will be no need of such exhortations, nor any danger of what follows:

lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; actual sin, which is a transgression of the law; every sin is of an hardening nature, and by being often committed, an habit is contracted, and a callousness brought upon the heart and conscience; or the corruption of nature, indwelling sin, may be meant; an evil and a corrupt heart, which deceives through promises of pleasure, or profit to a man's self, or of secrecy and impunity; it suggests the power a man has to repent at pleasure, and the mercy of God, by which means the man is drawn in to it, and by frequent repeating it, grows hardened in it.

Hebrews 3:14

Ver. 14. For we are made partakers of Christ,.... Being loved by him, given to him, and chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and so participate of all spiritual blessings in him; for this respects something past, and may be rendered, "we have been made". The phrase is expressive of union to Christ, which is not by faith on man's part, and by the Spirit on Christ's part, but by his everlasting love, taking his people into an oneness with himself; thereby becoming their head, surety, and representative, which is the ground and foundation of all the blessings of grace being imparted to them: hence arises communion; as this is a conjugal union, there is communion of names, of persons, of goods, of honour and dignity, and of everlasting glory; as it is a federal or representative union, hence a non-imputation of sin, justification, and freedom from condemnation; and as it is an union of head and members; hence a communication of life, and the security of it, and of all grace and strength; hence holiness, fruitfulness, and perseverance, and everlasting happiness both of soul and body:

if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; by "confidence" is meant faith, which is an hypostasis, or subsistence, which is the word here used; and is so called, because it gives a kind of subsistence, substance, or being, to things it is concerned with, Heb 11:1 and because it is a great support to believers, under their various exercises; and is that by which they have an open, spiritual, and comfortable subsistence, and abiding in Christ: the "beginning" of it, which is to be held fast, is either Christ himself, who is the arch, "the beginning", the author, and finisher of faith; and so this shows from whom, and in what way, this grace is distributed; and is expressive of communion with Christ, and is an evidence of the participation of him: or else the Gospel, which is the means of implanting faith, and directs to that which is the ground and foundation of it; and this is to be held fast, and never to be departed from: or else the grace of faith itself, which is a grace but begun, not yet finished, but shall continue, and is to be held fast, and constantly exercised; and perseverance in believing on Christ is an evidence of union to him.

Hebrews 3:15

Ver. 15. While it is said today,.... Exhort one another, and hold fast Christ and his Gospel, and faith and confidence therein; what follows is a repetition of the citation in **Heb 3:7** in order to make a further improvement of it; which shows, that the words belong to the present times of the Gospel, and contain in them matter of moment, and great concern; and that Scripture instructions and exhortations are of perpetual use.

Hebrews 3:16

Ver. 16. For some, when, they had heard,.... The Arabic version adds, "his voice"; the law on Mount Sinai; the voice of words, with the voices and thunderings that attended it; the book of the covenant read; the whole system of laws and ordinances delivered to Moses, and by him to them; and also the Gospel, for that was preached to the Israelites in the wilderness, and heard by them; as appears from **Heb 4:2** and which seems chiefly intended: and yet some of the hearers of it

did provoke; not only Moses, to speak unadvisedly with his lips; but they provoked Jehovah himself, and the angel of his presence, and his Holy Spirit, by their idolatry, ingratitude, and unbelief: and the aggravation of their sin is, that they did it when they had heard the Gospel, and while they were hearing it; which shows that the Gospel may be heard to no advantage; as when it is heard in a careless and indifferent manner; when it makes no impression, takes no place, and has no root; when the world and the things of it are the great concern of the mind, while hearing it; when it is not attended with the power and Spirit of God; when it is not received in love, nor mixed with faith, nor put in practice: and hence the Gospel heard, comes to be an aggravation of men's condemnation:

howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses; that is, they did not all provoke, but some did; which is another aggravation of their sin; they were just come out of Egyptian bondage; brought out of it by the Lord, with the mighty and outstretched arm of his power; and yet they provoked him: and this was done by Moses; by the hand of Moses, as the Syriac version renders it; by his means, by him as an instrument; and yet they provoked him: but however all did not, yet these were but few; it seems only Caleb and Joshua, out of six hundred thousand; God will have a few to serve him in the worst of times.

Hebrews 3:17

Ver. 17. But with whom was he grieved forty years?.... As is said in Ps 95:10, See Gill on "Heb 3:10",

was it not with them that had sinned; not merely by committing personal iniquities, and particular provocations, which all men are guilty of, but by committing public sins; they sinned as a body of men; they joined together in the commission of sin; every sin is grieving to God, because it is contrary to his nature, is an act of enmity to him, is a transgression of his righteous law, and a contempt of his authority; but especially public sins, or the sins of a multitude, and when they are persisted in, which was the case of the Israelites; they sinned against him during the forty years they were in the wilderness; and so long was he grieved with them: the Alexandrian copy reads, "with them that believed not"; which points out the particular sin these men were guilty of, and which was so grieving to God, and suits well with the apostle's design:

whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? and so never entered into the land of Canaan. They died in the wilderness; and they did not die common and natural deaths, at least not all of them; their deaths were by way of punishment; in a way of wrath; in a judicial way: the Syriac version renders it, "their bones fell in the wilderness"; they lay scattered and unburied, and exposed to view, as an example of divine vengeance, see Nu 14:29.

Hebrews 3:18

Ver. 18. And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest,.... As in Ps 95:11,

but to them that believed not? the Lord; notwithstanding the signs and wonders he showed among them, they would not be persuaded by Moses and Aaron, by Joshua and Caleb, to be still and quiet, to cease murmuring, and submit to the will of God, and believe in him; they were disobedient, stubborn, and rebellious, and would go up, when they were bid not to go up; for which reason God swore in his wrath that they should not enter into the good land. Unbelief is a source of sin, and cause of judgment, being greatly provoking to God.

Hebrews 3:19

Ver. 19. So we see that they could not enter in,.... To God's rest, the land of

Canaan, for they died by the plague before the Lord, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness, before they came to it,
Nu 14:37 and the reason was,

because of unbelief; their distrust of God, his power, and his providence; this instance is produced by the apostle, to show the evil nature of unbelief, and the sad effects of it; to deter persons from it, and that they might take heed of encouraging it; and which instance he further improves in the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hebrews 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 4

From the punishment inflicted on the unbelieving Hebrews, who died in the wilderness, and entered not into the land of rest made mention of in the preceding chapter, the apostle proceeds to caution the present Hebrews of his time, and who professed faith in Christ, lest seeing there was a rest, and a promise of entering into it, they should seem to come short of it, **Heb 4:1**, and the rather, since they that fell in the wilderness had the Gospel preached to them as well as they; and the reason why it did not profit was, because it was not received by faith, **Heb 4:2** as also seeing it is by faith that believers now enter into rest, **Heb 4:3** which rest is not the rest of the seventh day, on which God rested; nor, the rest of the land of Canaan, which Joshua led the Israelites into; for if he had entered them into the rest the apostle means, David, so many hundred years after him, would not have made mention of another rest, **Heb 4:4** wherefore it follows that there is another rest for the people of God, which he that enters into ceases from his own works, as God did from his, **Heb 4:9** and this is the rest that everyone that professes faith in Christ, should be solicitous and diligent to enter into, lest he should fall short of it through unbelief; as the unbelieving Israelites did of their rest, **Heb 4:11** and the arguments engaging to such a concern are taken from the properties and perfections of Christ, the essential Word of God; particularly from his omnipotence and his omniscience, **Heb 4:12**. And seeing he is by nature the Son of God, and by office a great high priest that is entered into heaven for his people, the encouragement is great to hold fast the profession of faith in him they have made, **Heb 4:14** and the rather since he is a sympathizing high priest, as he must needs be, since he has been tempted, afflicted, and has suffered every way as his people, and is in all respects like them, excepting that he has no sin, **Heb 4:15** and this consideration should engage believers to come to the throne of grace with all boldness, and in expectation of having grace and mercy bestowed on them for the supply of their daily wants, **Heb 4:16**.

Ver. 1. Let us therefore fear,.... Not with a fear of wrath and damnation; nor with a fear of diffidence and distrust of the power, grace, and goodness of God; but with a cautious fear, a godly jealousy, a careful circumspection, and watchfulness:

lest a promise being left [us] of entering into his rest; not the land of Canaan, the type of heaven, but rather heaven itself, the ultimate glory: there is a rest of the body in the grave, from work, service, and labour, and from distempers and diseases, where it rests under the guardianship of the Spirit, until the resurrection morn; and there is a rest of the soul before the resurrection, in the arms of Christ, with whom it immediately is, upon its departure from the body; and there is a rest both of soul and body after the resurrection, from sin, from afflictions, from Satan's temptations, from unbelief, doubts, and fears, and from all enemies: and this may be called the rest of God, because he is the author and giver of it; and it will lie much in communion with him; and besides, heaven is the place of God's rest, Isa 66:1 and the possession and enjoyment of the heavenly glory is often signified by an entering into it: and there is a promise of this, which is left in Christ's hands, and shall never fail; though some who have hoped for it may come short of it, or at least seem to do so: but rather a rest under the Gospel dispensation is here intended, since it is a rest believers enter into now, **Heb 4:3** and since the Gospel church is represented as a state of peace and rest, Isa 11:6 and which lies in a more clear and comfortable application of the blood and righteousness of Christ to the saints; in a freedom from a spirit of bondage to fear, and from the yoke of carnal ordinances, and in the enjoyment of Gospel privileges and ordinances; and this is God's rest, which he has provided for New Testament saints, and into which they enter by faith, and a profession of it; and the Gospel is the promise or declaration which was left among these Hebrews, and in the world, to encourage them so to do: lest

any of you should seem to come short of it; either of the promise, or the rest promised; which if understood of the heavenly glory, the sense is, that though true believers shall not come short of that, yet they may "seem" to others to do so; and therefore should be careful of their lives and conversations, that they might not seem to come short; and this they should do, for the glory of God, the honour of Christ and his Gospel, and the good of others; but if the rest, and the promise of it, intend the Gospel and its dispensation, the meaning is, that saints should be concerned so to behave, that they might not seem to fail of the doctrine of the grace of God, and to be disappointed of that rest and peace promised in it. One of Stephens's copies read, lest "any of us"; which seems most agreeable both to what goes before, and follows.

Hebrews 4:2

Ver. 2. For unto us was the Gospel preached,.... The Gospel is the good news and glad tidings of salvation by Christ; and this may be said to be preached, when men preach not themselves, nor read lectures of morality, nor mix law and Gospel together, nor make justification and salvation to be by works, nor set persons to make their peace with God, or get an interest in Christ; but when they preach Christ and salvation alone by him; and so it was preached to the Hebrews, and that more fully, and with more clearness, power, and success than formerly; and which is a privilege and blessing; and is sometimes blessed for the conviction of sinners, for regeneration, for the implanting of faith, and the comfort of believers. The words may be rendered, we were evangelized; as such may be said to be, who have a spirit of liberty, in opposition to a spirit of bondage; who live by faith on Christ alone; who derive their peace and comfort, not from their works, but from him; whose repentance and obedience are influenced by the love of God; and who desire to perform all duties aright, and depend on none: now though this was true of the apostle and others, yet is not the sense here, because of what follows,

as well as unto them, or "even as they"; for though the Gospel was preached to the Israelites in the wilderness, in the ministry of Moses, and by types and sacrifices; yet they were not evangelized by it, or cast into a Gospel mould, or brought into a Gospel spirit: however, it was preached unto them; which shows the antiquity of it; the sameness of the method of salvation in all ages; the necessity of salvation by Christ, and the unity of Christ's church under different dispensations:

but the word preached did not profit them; that is, the Gospel, which is here called the word of hearing, as it may be rendered; because it is and may be heard; and there is a necessity of hearing, in order to faith in Christ: the word signifies a rumour, or report: the Gospel is a report of Christ, his person and offices; of his great love to sinners, and of what he has done for them; but though it is a word of hearing, a report made, and the word preached, yet to some it is unprofitable; it has no good effect upon them; yea, it is the savour of death unto death to them, and the aggravation of condemnation; and the reason of the inefficacy and unprofitableness of the word to the Israelites was, its

not being mixed with faith in them that heard it; the Gospel is as food, and faith is the hand that receives it, and takes it, and tastes of it, and eats it, and concocts and digests it; and when this is the case, it is profitable and nourishing; but when it is otherwise, it is not. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and five of Beza's ancient copies, and as many of Stephens's, with others, read, "they were not mixed" referring it not to the word, but to persons; and so read the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: and the sense is, that the generality of the Israelites did not join themselves in faith, in believing in God, to Caleb and Joshua; who hearkened to the Lord, and received and obeyed his word; and so the word became useless to them: there ought to be an union or conjunction of the saints, and the bond of this union is love; and the thing in which they unite is faith, believing in Christ, and the doctrine of faith, which is but one; and though the word may be profitable to others who are not in the communion of the saints; yet forsaking the assembly of the saints, and not constantly attending with them, or not mixing with them continually in public worship, is one reason of the unprofitable hearing of the word when it is preached to them.

Hebrews 4:3

Ver. 3. For we which have believed do enter into rest,.... Not eternal rest; all believers shall enjoy this, and they only; but this is not now, or at present enjoyed, unless things future may be said to be present, because of faith in them, and the certainty of them but spiritual rest in Christ under the Gospel dispensation, which is a rest from the burden of the law of Moses, and from all toil and labour for life, and salvation by works, and lies in an enjoyment of much inward peace of soul, notwithstanding the world's troubles and Satan's temptations; and such who believe the word or Gospel preached, and Christ in it, not with a general and historical high, or only in profession, but with the heart, and in truth, these enjoy this rest; they are kept in perfect peace, and have much spiritual ease and comfort: this character distinguishes them from the unbelieving Israelites of old, and from present hypocrites and formal professors:

as he said, as I have sworn in wrath, if they shall enter into my rest; the words are in Ps 95:11, and are before cited in **Heb 3:11**
See Gill on "Heb 3:11": they entered not in because of unbelief; none but

believers enter into spiritual rest. The apostle applies this proof to his design, by removing all other rests, and particularly by showing that does not mean God's rest from the works of creation:

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world; that is, though the works of creation, that God designed to make, were finished and perfected within the first six days of the world, and then God rested, or ceased to work in a creative way; yet this is not the rest designed in the passage of Scripture cited, nor is it that rest which believers enter into.

Hebrews 4:4

Ver. 4. For he spake in a certain place,.... **Ge 2:2** that is, Moses, the penman of that book spoke, or God by him:

of the seventh day on this wise; of the seventh day of the world, or from the creation of the heavens and the earth:

and God did rest the seventh day from all his works: of creation, but not of providence; for in them he works hitherto; nor does this rest suppose labour with fatigue and weariness, and ease and refreshment from it; only cessation from working in a creative way, and the utmost delight, complacency and satisfaction in what he had done. The Alexandrian copy leaves out the phrase, "the seventh day".

Hebrews 4:5

Ver. 5. And in this place again,.... In Ps 95:11 he speaks again of another rest distinct from that on the seventh day; which, and not the latter, is what believers under the Gospel dispensation enter into:

if they shall enter into my rest: that is, unbelievers shall not enter into it; as the unbelieving Israelites did not enter into the typical rest, so neither shall any unbeliever enter into the Gospel rest, the antitype of the former.

Hebrews 4:6

Ver. 6. Seeing therefore it remaineth,.... It follows by just consequence, that some must enter therein; for God's swearing concerning some, that they should not enter into his rest, supposes that others should: and

they to whom it was first preached; to whom the Gospel was first preached, namely, the Israelites in the wilderness: entered not in because of unbelief; See **Heb 3:19**.

Hebrews 4:7

Ver. 7. Again he limiteth a certain day,.... Since the seventh day of the creation was a day of rest which God entered into, and not man; and since the land of Canaan was a typical rest, which the unbelieving Israelites did not enter into, because of unbelief; and yet there must be persons, and there must be a time for them to enter into the true rest which God has left a promise of; therefore he has limited, fixed, and appointed a certain day, the Gospel dispensation, for believers to enter into it:

saying in David; or by David, who was the penman of the 95th psalm, as may be learned from hence; and this is agreeably to, and confirms a rule which the Jews give, that those psalms which are without a title were written by David {g}; the Spirit of God spake in him and by him, and plainly pointed out another day of rest from the above mentioned:

today, after so long a time; as two thousand five hundred years from the first seventh day to the time of Moses, and five hundred years from the times of Moses and Joshua, to his:

as it is said; the Alexandrian copy reads, "as it is before said", or, "above said", as the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; that is, in Ps 95:7 before cited, **Heb 3:7**

today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;
See Gill on "Heb 3:7",
See Gill on "Heb 3:8".

{g} Aben Ezra & Kimchi Praefat. in Tillim.

Hebrews 4:8

Ver. 8. For if Jesus had given them rest,.... That is, Joshua; for Hosheah, Joshua, and Jesus, are one and the same name; or Jesus himself, as two of Stephens's copies read; and so Joshua is called Jesus by the Septuagint interpreters on Ex 17:10 and other places where he is mentioned; and also, by Josephus {h}, and Philo {i} the Jew. The Syriac version, lest any should mistake this for Jesus Christ, adds, "the son of Nun": who is certainly the person designed, as the apostle's reasoning shows; who was an eminent type of Jesus Christ: there is an agreement in their names, both signify a saviour, Joshua was a temporal saviour, Christ a spiritual one; and in their office they were both servants; and in their qualifications for their office, such as wisdom, courage, faithfulness, and integrity. Joshua was a type of Christ in many actions of his life; in the miracles he wrought, or were wrought for him; in the battles he fought, and the victories he obtained; in saving Rahab and her family; in receiving the Gibeonites, who came submissively to him; and in leading the children of Israel into Canaan's land, which he divided to them by lot: but though he brought them into a land of rest, into the typical rest, where they had rest for a while from their temporal enemies, yet he did not give them the true spiritual rest: had he,

then would he not afterward have spoken of another day; that is, God, in David's time, and by him, would not have so long after appointed another day of rest; meaning, not any particular day of the week, but the whole Gospel dispensation, in the times of the Messiah; wherefore the apostle concludes as follows.

{h} Antiqu. Jud. l. 4. c. 7. sect. 2. c. 8. sect. 46, 47, 48. & l. 5. c. 1. sect. 1. & passim. {i} De Charitate, p. 698, 699, 700.

Hebrews 4:9

Ver. 9 There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God.] Not all mankind; nor the people of the Jews only; rather the people of God, both Jews and Gentiles, under the New Testament; the people whom God has loved with a special love, has chose in Christ, and given to him, with whom he has made a covenant in him, and whom Christ saves from their sins, and calls by his grace; and the rest which remains for them is not a new sabbath day, but a sabbatism: and this does not so mush design eternal rest in heaven; though the Jews often call that a sabbath; the 92nd psalm they say is a psalm for the time to come, tbv wlkv, "which is all sabbath", and the rest of eternal life {k}: but rather this intends the spiritual rest believers have in Christ under the Gospel dispensation, which they now enter into, and of which the apostle had been treating; and as for the word "remaineth", this does not denote the futurity of it, but the apostle's inference or consequence from what he had said; and the sense is, it remains therefore, and is a certain fact, a clear consequence from what has been observed, that there is another rest distinct from God's rest on the seventh day, and from the rest in the land of Canaan; which were both typical ones of the present rest the saints now enjoy: so the Jews call the world to come the times of the Messiah, lwdgh tbv, "the great sabbath" {l}.

{k} Misn. Tamid, c. 7. sect. 4. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1, Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 16. 3. Massecheth Sopherim, c. 18. sect. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 3. 1. {l} Zohar in Gen. fol. 31. 4. Shaare Orn, fol. 17. 1. Caphtor, fol. 64. 1.

Hebrews 4:10

Ver. 10. For he that is entered into his rest, &c] This is to be understood not of believers, nor of their entrance into the Gospel rest, or into eternal rest, but of the Lord Jesus Christ; for a single person is only spoken of, and not many, as in **Heb 4:3** and the rest entered into is his own, which cannot be said of any other; and besides, a comparison is run between his entrance into rest, and ceasing from his works, and God's resting the seventh day, and ceasing from his, which can only agree with him; and besides, Christ is immediately spoken of, and at large described in **Heb 4:12**. Now he entered into his rest, not when he was laid in the grave, but when he rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God, as having done his work; and this is the ground and foundation of the saints' rest under the Gospel dispensation; for these words are a reason of the former, as appears by the causal particle "for": and now being at rest,

he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his; Christ had works to do, as preaching the Gospel, performing miracles, and obtaining the redemption and salvation of his people: these were given him to do, and he undertook them, and he has finished them; and so ceases from them, as never to repeat them more; they being done effectually, stand in no need of it; and so as to take delight and complacency in them; the pleasure of the Lord prospering in, his hand, the effects of his labour answering his designs; just as God ceased from the works of creation, when he had finished them.

Hebrews 4:11

Ver. 11. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest,.... Not eternal rest; this is not to be entered into now; nor is an entrance into it to be obtained by labour; salvation is not by works; eternal life is a free gift; good works do not go before to prepare heaven for the saints, but follow after: nor is the saints' entrance into it a precarious thing; God has promised it, and provided it for his people; Christ is in the possession of it, and is preparing it for them; and the Spirit of God is working them up for the self same thing, and Christ will give them an abundant entrance into it: but the Gospel rest is here meant, that rest which believers now enter into, and is at this present time for them, **Heb 4:3** and though true believers are entered into it, yet their rest, peace, and joy in Christ, is not full; they enter by degrees into it, and by believing enjoy more of it: and this is to be laboured for by prayer, hearing the word, and attendance on ordinances; and this requires strength, diligence, and industry; and supposes difficulties and discouragements, through the corruptions of the heart, and the temptations of Satan; and this is designed to quicken and awaken a godly jealousy in God's people, over themselves:

lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief; into the sin of unbelief, and into punishment through it, as the Israelites did; who sinning, their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and they entered not into God's rest, as he swore they should not: true believers may fall into sin, and from a degree of the exercise of grace, and of the steadfastness of the Gospel; but they cannot finally and totally fall away, because they are kept by the power of God; yet they may so fall, as to come short, or at least seem to come short of enjoying the rest and peace of the Gospel state: external professors may fall from the Gospel, and the religion they have professed, and come short of the glory they expected; and fall into just and deserved punishment, in like manner as the unbelieving Israelites did.

Hebrews 4:12

Ver. 12. For the word of God is quick and powerful,.... This is to be understood of Christ, the essential Word of God; for the Word of God was a known name of the Messiah among the Jews; See Gill on "Joh 1:1" and therefore the apostle makes use of it when writing to them: and the words are introduced as a reason why care should be taken, that men fall not off from the Gospel, because Christ, the author, sum, and substance of it, is the living God, omnipotent and omniscient; for not a thing, but a person is spoken of, who is a

Judge, and a critical discerner of the secrets of men's hearts: and certain it is, that this Word is spoken of as a person, and is said to be a priest in the following verses; to which may be added, that the several things said of the Word exactly agree with Christ: he is "the Word of God"; as the word is the birth of the mind, he is the only begotten of the Father; he is the Word that spoke for the elect in the council and covenant of grace, and that spoke all things out of nothing in creation; he is the Word that has been promised, and spoken of by the prophets from the beginning of the world; and is the interpreter of his Father's mind, and our Advocate with the Father: he is

quick, or, as it may be better rendered, "living"; he has life in himself as God, he is the living God; he is the living Redeemer and Mediator, and he lives for ever as man; he is the author and giver of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal: and he is powerful, as he appears to be in the creation and sustaining of all things; in his miracles and ministrations; in the work of man's redemption; in the preservation of his people, and in his advocacy and intercession:

and sharper than any twoedged sword; or "more cutting than one", by the words of his mouth, by the power of his Spirit, and the efficacy of his grace; for his mouth itself is as a sharp sword, and out of it comes forth one, Isa 49:2 by which he pierces the hearts of men, cuts them to the quick, and lays them open. Jehovah is called a twoedged sword with the Jews {m}; and Philo the Jew speaks of the flaming sword of the Logos {n}.

Piercing even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; the like property Philo the Jew ascribes to the "Logos", or Word; he calls him tomeuv, "a cutter", and says he cuts and divides all things, even all sensible things, yea, atoms, and things indivisible {o}; the apostle seems here to have respect to the several names with which the soul of man is called by the Jews,
hmvnw xwr vqn, "soul, spirit, and breath" {p}; the latter of these, they say, dwells between the other two. Some by the soul understand the natural and unregenerate part in man, and by the spirit the renewed and regenerate part, which though sometimes are not so easily distinguished by men, yet they are by Christ; others think the soul designs the inferior faculties, the affections; and the spirit the superior ones, the mind and understanding; but the apostle's meaning seems to be this, that whereas the soul and spirit are invisible, and the joints and marrow are covered and hid; so sharp and quick sighted, and so penetrating is the divine Word, that it reaches the most secret and hidden things of men: and this sense is confirmed by what follows,

and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; Christ knows what is in man; he is the searcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children of men; and this will be more apparent at the last day, when he will make manifest the counsels of the heart, and will critically inquire, and accurately judge of them.

{m} Zohar in Cab. Lex. p. 364. {n} De Cherubim, p. 112. {o} Onis rerum divin. Haeres, p. 499, 500, 510, 511, 513. {p} Zohar in Gen. fol. 55. 2. & 113. 1, 2. & is Exod. fol. 58. 3, 4. & in Lev. fol. 29. 2. T. Hieros. Celaim, fol. 31. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 2. 1.

Hebrews 4:13

Ver. 13. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight,.... Christ is the Lord God omniscient; there is no creature, in general, rational, or irrational, animate or inanimate, but what are known to him, and seen by him; for all creatures are made, and upheld by him, and he is omnipresent; and in particular, there is no man but is manifest to him; so hyrb, "creature", is often used by the Rabbins for "man"; all men, openly profane men, who are enemies to Christ, and his people, are under his eye and notice; he knows their persons, he sees their actions, even those that are most secretly devised and performed against him, and his saints; and he takes such notice of them, as to bring them into judgment for them; he knows formal professors of religion, and upon what foot they have taken up their profession, and how they keep their lusts with their profession; he can distinguish between profession and grace; and he knows and observes the springs and progress of their apostasy: and as for true believers, he knows their persons, and knows them to be his; he sees their sins and their weaknesses; he takes notice of their graces, and observes their wants; and there is nothing in them, or belongs to them, but what is before him, even the secret desires of their souls. So Philo the Jew says {q} the divine Word reaches to, and comprehends all things, nothing escapes him: and this phrase is very commonly used of the divine Being by the Jews, wynpl ywlg lkh, "all things are manifest before him" {r}; and this being used of Christ, is no inconsiderable proof of his proper deity:

but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. The words are an allusion to wrestlers, who exercised naked, and took each other by their necks and collars; and when one was thrown upon his back, as the word rendered "opened" is by some translated, he was publicly exposed and known: or to the putting of a creature in such a posture when sacrificed; or rather to the cutting of it up, and laying open its entrails: and especially to the manner of doing it among the Jews, with which these persons, the apostle writes to, were acquainted: and it was this; when the lamb for the daily sacrifice was slain, the priest hung it up by the foot, and skinned it; and when he came to the breast, he cut off the head; and having finished the skinning of it, he divided the heart, and took out the blood; then he cut off the shoulders; and when he came to the right leg, he cut it off, and then cut it down through the chine bone, and wynpl ywlg wlwk, "all of it was manifest before him" {s}. The very phrase before used. The word here used seems to answer to Pre, which, with the Arabians, signifies, "to know", or make known; and Pyrem, with the Rabbins; is used for a companion, a familiar one that is well known; the theme in the Hebrew, is, Prwe, the "neck". The last clause, "with whom we have to do", manifestly points at the person here spoken of, Jesus Christ: saints have a concern with him now, as their way to the Father, as their Saviour and Redeemer; they have to do with his blood for pardon and cleansing, and with his righteousness for justification, and with his fulness for every supply of grace; and with him as their King to rule over them, protect and defend them, and as their prophet to teach them, and their high priest to intercede for them. Moreover, the words may be rendered, "to whom we must give an account"; and so the Syriac version renders them, "to whom they give an account"; as all men must at the great day: and all this that is said of the Word of God should engage to care, watchfulness, and circumspection in the course of a profession of religion.

{q} De Sacrif. Abel, p. 140. {r} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 122. 2. Vid. Seder Tephillot, fol. 281. 1. Ed. Basil. {s} Misna Tamid, c. 4. sect. 2.

Hebrews 4:14

Ver. 14. Seeing then that we have a great high priest,.... That Christ is a priest, and an high priest, has been observed already, in **Heb 2:1** but here he is called a great one, because of the dignity of his person, as follows, and the virtue of his sacrifice; and because of the place where he now officiates as a priest, heaven and with respect to the continuation of his priesthood; and likewise because he makes others priests unto God; and this great high priest is no other than the Word of God before spoken of: so the divine Logos, or Word, is often called a priest, and an high priest, by Philo the Jew {t}. This great high priest believers "have", and have an interest in him; he is called to this office, and invested with it; he has been sent to do his work as a priest; and he has done the greatest part of it, and is now doing the rest; and saints receive Christ as such, and the blessings of grace from him, through his sacrifice and intercession:

that is passed into the heavens; he came down from thence, and offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people; and having done this, he ascended thither again, to appear for them, and to make intercession for them; whereby he fully answers to his character as the great high priest: and what makes him more fully to appear so is what follows,

Jesus, the Son of God: the former of these names signifies a Saviour, and respects his office; the latter is expressive of his dignity, and respects his person; who is the Son of God in such sense as angels and men are not; not by creation, nor adoption; but by nature; not as man and Mediator, but as God, being of the same nature with his Father, and equal to him; and it is this which makes him a great high priest, and gives virtue and efficacy to all he does as such: wherefore,

let us hold fast our profession: of faith, of the grace and doctrine of faith, and of Christ, and salvation by him, and of the hope of eternal life and happiness; which being made both by words and deeds, publicly and sincerely, should be held fast; which supposes something valuable in it, and that there is danger of dropping it; and that it requires strength, courage, and greatness of mind, and an use of all proper means; and it should be held without wavering; for it is good and profitable, it recommends the Gospel; and it has been made publicly before witnesses; and not to hold it fast is displeasing to God, and resented by him: and the priesthood of Christ is an argument to enforce this duty, for he is the high priest of our profession; he has espoused our cause, and abode by it; he has bore witness to the truth of the Gospel himself; he prays for the support of our faith; he pities and succours; and he is passed into the heavens, where he appears for us, owns us, and will own us.

{t} Alleg. 1. 2. p. 76. De Profugis, p. 466. & de Somniis, p. 597.

Hebrews 4:15

Ver. 15. For we have not an high priest,.... That is cruel and unmerciful; the saints have an high priest, but not such an one:

which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; such as bodily diseases and wants, persecutions from men, and the temptations of Satan;

under all which Christ sympathizes with his people; and which sympathy of his arises from his knowledge and experience of these things, and the share he has had of them, and from that union there is between him and his people: and it is not a bare sympathy, but is attended with his assistance, support, and deliverance; and the consideration of it is of great comfort to the saints:

but was in all points tempted like as we are: of the temptations of Christ, and of the saints, See Gill on "Heb 2:18"

yet without sin; there was no sin in his nature; though he was encompassed about with infirmities, yet not with sinful infirmities, only sinless ones; nor was there any sin in his temptations; though he was solicited to sin by Satan, yet he could find none in him to work upon; nor could he draw him into the commission of any sin.

Hebrews 4:16

Ver. 16. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace,.... Either to Christ, who is before spoken of as an high priest, and who was typified by the mercy seat, to which there seems to be an allusion; and coming to him as a priest upon his throne is very proper: to him saints come for pardon and cleansing, and for a justifying righteousness, for the acceptance of their persons, and the presentation of their services, and for every supply of grace; and to him they may come "boldly", since he stands in the relations of a Father, husband, and brother, and from him they may expect receive mercy, since it is kept for him, and with him, and is only dispensed through him; and in him they may hope to find grace, since all fulness of it dwells in him; and help in every time of need, since their help is laid on him. Or else to God the Father, since Christ, the high priest, is the way of access to God, and it is by him the saints come unto the Father; who is represented as on a "throne", to show his majesty, and to command reverence; and as on a "throne of grace", to encourage distressed souls to come unto him; and to express his sovereignty in the distribution of his grace: and this coming to him is a sacerdotal act, for every believer is a priest; and is not local, but spiritual, and with the heart, and by faith; and chiefly regards the duty of prayer, and a drawing nigh to God in that ordinance with spiritual sacrifices to offer unto him: and this may be done "boldly"; or "with freedom of speech"; speaking out plainly all that is in the heart, using an holy courage and intrepidity of mind, free from servile fear, and a bashful spirit; all which requires an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, faith, in the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, a view of God, as a

God of peace, grace, and mercy, and a holy confidence of being heard by him; and such a spirit and behaviour at the throne of grace are very consistent with reverence of the divine Majesty, with submission to his will, and with that humility which becomes saints. The Jews often speak of Nydh aok, "a throne of judgment", and Mymxr aok, "a throne of mercy" {u}; and represent God as sitting upon one or other of these, when he is dispensing justice or mercy {w}; and the latter they sometimes call, as here, Mymxrw dox aok, "a throne of grace and mercy" {x}: and so they make the first man Adam to pray to God after this manner {y};

"let my prayer come before the throne of thy glory, and let my cry come before Kymxr aok, "the throne of thy mercy"."

The end of coming hither is,

that we may obtain mercy; the sure mercies of David, the blessings of the everlasting covenant; particularly pardoning mercy, and the fresh application of it, and every other blessing of grace that is needful: and there is reason to expect it, since there is mercy with God; and it is with Christ, as the head of the covenant; and it is ready for those that ask it; and it has been obtained by many, and is everlasting.

And find grace to help in time of need; the Syriac version renders it, "in time of affliction"; which is a time of need, as every time of distress is, whether from the immediate hand of God, or through the persecutions of men, or the temptations of Satan: and help at such times may be expected; since not only God is able to help, but he has promised it; and he has laid help on Christ; and gives it seasonably, and at the best time; and it springs from grace, yea, it is grace that does help; by which may be meant, the discoveries of God's love, and the supplies of grace from Christ: which may be hoped for, seeing God is the God of all grace; and he is seated on a throne of grace; and all fulness of grace dwells in Christ: to find grace often, signifies to find favour with God, to be accepted by him, as well as to receive grace from him.

{u} Targum in Psal. xxix. 10. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. Zohar in Gen. fol. 38. 3. & in Numb. fol. 91. 2. & 93. 2. {w} Megillat Esther, fol. 95. 1. {x} Raziel, fol. 32. 1. {y} Ibid. fol. 3. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hebrews 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 5

The apostle having made mention of Christ as an high priest, in the preceding chapter, proceeds in this to give an account of an high priest, and applies the character of him to Christ; and shows that he is of another order of priesthood than that of Aaron, even of the order of Melchisedec; of whom he could say many things, but the Hebrews were dull of hearing them; which leads him to blame them for their rudeness, and non-proficience. The description of the high priest is taken from his relation to men, separation from them, and ordination for them; from his oblation of their gifts and sacrifices; from his sympathy with them, and from his call of God, **Heb 5:1** all which are accommodated to Christ; as his vocation of God, **Heb 5:5** confirmed by two testimonies out of **Ps 2:7** his being a man, and having infirmities, though sinless ones, and his sympathy with men, and compassion on them, **Heb 5:7** his obedience and sufferings, and the oblation of himself, whereby he became the author of salvation to his people, which is the main thing in his priesthood, **Heb 5:8** and which was not of the order of Aaron, though in some things there was an agreement with it, but of the order of Melchizedek, **Heb 5:10** of whom the apostle could say many surprising things; but these Hebrews were dull of apprehension, and incapable of receiving them, **Heb 5:11**. And then he proceeds to blame them for their dulness, which he aggravates by the time they had been in the school of Christ, when it might have been expected they would have been teachers of others; by their being yet scholars, and of the lowest class, who had need to be taught the first rudiments of the Christian religion; yea, by their being as babes that stood in need of milk, and could not bear meat, **Heb 5:12**. And then follows a description both of babes, and of adult persons; such as are unskilful in the word of righteousness are babes, and use milk; but those who exercise their spiritual senses, to discern between good and bad doctrine, are adult, and can digest strong meat, **Heb 5:13**.

Ver. 1. For every high priest taken from among men,.... Every one that was an high priest under the law was a man, and not an angel; and it was proper he should be so, that he might be a priest for men, have compassion on them, and offer for them; and he was among the number of common men, and was taken out from them, and chosen and separated from the rest of men, as Aaron and his sons were from the children of Israel, Ex 28:1. And such an one

is ordained for men; in their room and stead, and for their good; and above them, as the word sometimes signifies; he was exalted unto, and invested with a superior office, to which he was ordained according to the law of a carnal commandment, by anointing with oil, and without an oath.

In things pertaining to God; in things in which God had to do with men; and so he presided over them in the name of God, and declared the will of God unto them, and blessed them; and in things in which men had to do with God; and so he appeared in their name, and represented their persons, and presented their sacrifices to God, as follows:

that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; freewill offerings, peace offerings, burnt offerings, sin and trespass offerings, all kind of sacrifice.

Hebrews 5:2

Ver. 2. Who can have compassion on the ignorant,.... Who have committed sins of ignorance, and bring their sacrifices for them; these he does not insult and upbraid, nor break out into anger and indignation against; but pities them, and sympathizes with them; has a just measure of compassion suitable to their condition, and bears with them with great moderation and temper:

and on them that are out of the way; of God's commandments; who are like sheep going astray, and turn to their own way; who transgress the law of God, and err from it; perhaps such who sin knowingly and wilfully, and through infirmity, are meant:

for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity; not of body only, but of mind, sinful infirmity; he had much of it, it beset him all around; he was "clothed" with it, as the Syriac version renders it; as Joshua the high priest was with filthy garments, **Zec 3:3**.

Hebrews 5:3

Ver. 3. And by reason hereof,.... Because of his sinful infirmity:

he ought, as for the people, so also for himself to offer for sins; as he offered sacrifice for the sins of the people, so he was obliged to offer for his own sins; in this Christ differed from the high priest, for he had no sin of his own to offer for, **Heb 7:27** but he had, and therefore offered for them, Le 16:11 and made a confession of them: the form of which, as used on the day of atonement, was this;

"he put both his hands upon the bullock, and confessed, and thus he said: I beseech thee, O Lord, I have done wickedly, I have transgressed, I have sinned before thee, I and my house; I beseech thee, O Lord, pardon the iniquities, transgressions, and sins, which I have done wickedly, transgressed, and sinned before thee, I and my house."

And this he did a second time on that day {z}.

{z} Misna Yoma, c. 3. sect. 8. & c. 4. sect. 2.

Hebrews 5:4

Ver. 4. And no man taketh this honour to himself,.... That is, the honour of the priesthood: the office of the high priest was a very honourable one; it was a peculiar honour to Aaron, and his sons, to be separated unto it; their instalment into it was very grand and solemn; at that time they were anointed with oil, and clothed with glorious garments, and sacrifices were offered for them; they had an honourable maintenance assigned them, and a large retinue of priests and Levites to attend them; great respect and reverence were shown them: but their principal honour lay in the work they performed; in representing the whole body of the people; in offering gifts and sacrifices for them; in blessing them; and in the resolution of difficult cases brought unto them; in all which they were types of Christ, the high priest. Now no man might take this honourable office upon himself, or intrude himself into it, or obtain it by any unjust method, or in any other way than by a call from God; nor did any man dare to do it, until of late, when some got into it of themselves, and were put in by the Roman governors, and even purchased it of them {a}: so Joshua ben Gamla became an high priest {b}; and some have thought the apostle has some respect to these wicked practices, and tacitly reproves them, as what ought not to be: for no one ought to be in this office,

but he that is called of God, as [was Aaron]; whose call was immediately from the Lord, and was unquestionable: Moses was ordered to separate him, and his sons, from the children of Israel, and install them into this office; they were destroyed by fire, or swallowed up by the earth, that disputed his call; and this was confirmed by a miracle, by his dry rod budding, blooming, and bringing forth almonds: and the apostle instances in him, because his call was so remarkable and authentic; and because he was the first high priest of the Jews, and from whence the rest descended, who were lawful ones.

{a} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2. Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1. & Maimon. in ib. sect. 3. {b} Misn. Yebamot, c. 6. sect. 4. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 18. 1.

Hebrews 5:5

Ver. 5. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest,.... It was a glorifying of Christ, to make him an high priest; not as God, for as such no addition can be made to his glory; yea, it was a condescension in him to become a priest: but as man; it was an honour to the human nature to be united to the Son of God; and to be separated from others to this office; and to be called unto it, qualified for it, and invested with it; and to be of the order he was, and to do the work; and the very assistance he had in it, for the accomplishment of it, was a glorifying of him, for which he prayed; and the work being done, he had glory given him by his Father; and an ascription of glory is made to him by angels and saints: but Christ did not take this high and honourable office to himself, nor the glory of it; indeed, he did not receive it from man, nor was he made a priest according to the ceremonial law; yet he did not intrude himself into this office:

but he that said unto him, thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee; he appointed him to this office; he sent him to execute it; he anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows; he consecrated and established him in it with an oath; and prescribed to him what he should do, suffer, and offer; and declared to him what he might expect as the reward thereof. These words are taken out of **Ps 2:7**,
See Gill on "Heb 1:5", and they are not to be considered as constitutive of Christ's priesthood, as if that was intended by the begetting of him as a Son; but as descriptive of the person, who called him to it, who stood in the relation of a Father to Christ, and Christ in the relation of a Son to him; therefore the one was very proper to call, and the other a very fit person to be called to this office, being every way capable of executing it, to the glory of God, and to the good of men.

Hebrews 5:6

Ver. 6. As he saith also in another place,.... Or psalm; namely, in

Ps 110:4 that is, the same person, even God the Father; who spake the words before cited, also expressed the following:

thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec; that the psalm, from whence these words are taken, belongs to the Messiah,
See Gill on "Mt 22:44" and this very passage is applied unto him by the Jewish writers {c}; and had not this been the general sense of the Jewish church at this time, the apostle writing to Hebrews would not have produced it; and it very clearly expresses the priesthood of Christ, the eternity of it, and the order according to which it was; and it being not according to the order of Aaron, but of another, shows the change of the priesthood, and so of the law; of Melchizedek, See Gill on "Heb 7:1"

{c} Moses Hadarsan apud Galatin. l. 10. c. 6. Abot R. Nathan, c. 34.

Hebrews 5:7

Ver. 7. Who in the days of his flesh,.... Or "of his humanity", as the Arabic version renders it; or "when he was clothed with flesh", as the Syriac version; in the time of his humiliation, when he was attended with the sinless infirmities of the flesh, or human nature; it may take in the whole course of his life on earth, especially the latter part of it: it is not to be concluded from hence, that he has not flesh now, or is not in the flesh; for it is certain that he had flesh after his resurrection; only now he is free from all the infirmities of the flesh, the pains, and sorrows, and griefs of it, which he endured when here on earth:

when he had offered up prayers and supplications; as he often did in many parts of his life, particularly in the garden, and upon the cross, when he offered up himself: and as the days of Christ's flesh were filled up with prayers and supplications, so should ours be also: the word for "supplications" signifies branches of olive trees, covered with wool {d}; which such as sued for peace carried in their hands, and so came to signify supplications for peace: the manner in which these were offered up by Christ was

with strong crying and tears; with a most vehement outcry, with a loud voice, as when on the cross; and though there is no mention of his tears at that time, or when in the garden, no doubt but he shed them: all that Christ did, and said, are not written; some things were received by tradition, and by inspiration; Christ wept at other times, and why not at these? and there are some

circumstances in his prayers which intimate as much, Mt 26:38 which shows the weight of sin, of sorrow, and of punishment, that lay upon him, and the weakness of the human nature, considered in itself: and it may be observed to our comfort, that as Christ's crying and tears were confined to the days of his flesh, or to the time of his life here on earth, so shall ours be also. Mention is made of
twqzx twlpt, "strong prayers" {e}, in Jewish writings. The person to whom Christ offered his prayers is described in the following words,

unto him that was able to save him from death; from a corporeal death, as he could, but that it was otherwise determined; or rather to raise him from the dead, to deliver him from the state of the dead, from the power of death, and the grave, as he did; and so the Syriac version renders it, "to quicken him from death"; to restore him from death to life:

and was heard in that he feared; or "by fear"; by God, who was the object of his fear, and who is called the fear of Isaac, Ge 31:42 he was always heard by him, and so he was in the garden, and on the cross; and was carried through his sufferings, and was delivered from the fear of death, and was saved from the dominion and power of it, being raised from the dead by his Father: or "he was heard because of his fear", or "reverence"; either because of the dignity and reverence of his person, in which he was had by God; or because of his reverence of his Father.

{d} Harpocration. Lex. p. 152. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. sect. 5. c. 3. {e} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 37. 4.

Hebrews 5:8

Ver. 8. Though he were a Son,.... The Son of God, as the Vulgate Latin version reads; not by creation, nor by adoption, nor by office, but by nature, being the only begotten of the Father, having the same nature and perfections with him:

yet learned he obedience; not to his parents, or civil magistrates, though that is true; nor merely to the precepts of the law, which he did; but unto death: through sufferings he became obedient to death, even the death of the cross: and this he learnt; not that he was ignorant of the nature of it; nor was he destitute of an obedient disposition to it; but the meaning is, he had an experience of it, and effected it; and which was voluntary, and done in our room and stead; and is the rule and the measure of our righteousness before

God: and this he learned,

by the things which he suffered; from men, from devils, and from the justice of God. Christ's sonship did not exempt him from obedience and sufferings; this shows the dignity of Christ's person, that he is the Son of God, not as Mediator, for as such he is a servant; and it would be no wonder that he should learn obedience as a servant; and this shows also the great humility and condescension of Christ in obeying and suffering for us; though so great a person; and likewise the vile nature of sin, and the strictness of divine justice: and we may learn from hence, not to expect to be exempted from sufferings on account of sonship; nor to conclude we are not sons, because we suffer; and that afflictions are instructive, and by them experience is learned.

Hebrews 5:9

Ver. 9. And being made perfect,.... In his obedience, through sufferings; having completed his obedience, gone through his sufferings, and finished his sacrifice, and being perfectly glorified in heaven:

he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; the salvation Christ is the author of is "eternal"; it was resolved upon from eternity, and contrived in it; it was secured in the everlasting covenant, in which not only a Saviour was provided, but blessings both of grace and glory: and it is to eternity; and stands distinguished from a temporal salvation, and is opposed to eternal damnation; it is the salvation of the soul, which is immortal; and it takes in both grace and glory, which are of a durable nature; and the continuance of it is owing to the abiding and lasting virtue of Christ's person, blood, and righteousness: and Christ is the cause or author of this salvation, by his obedience and sufferings; by obeying the precept, and bearing the penalty of the law; by the price of his blood, and by the power of his arm; by his death and by his life; by his sacrifice on the cross, and by his intercession in heaven; by bestowing grace here, and glory hereafter: this shows that salvation is done, and that Christ is the sole author of it, and that all the glory of it should be given to him; and those to whom he is the author of salvation, are such as hearken to the voice of his Gospel, and obey hin in his ordinances. Christ is not the author of salvation to all men; all men do not obey him; all those whom Christ saves, he brings them to an obedience to himself; for his obedience for them does not exempt them from obedience to him, though their obedience is no cause of their salvation; Christ himself is the alone author of that.

Hebrews 5:10

Ver. 10. Called of God an high priest, after the order of Melchisedec. ytrbd le, according to what is said of him,
Ps 110:4 there is a resemblance between Melchizedek and Christ; many things that are said of the one, agree with the other: there is a likeness in Melchizedek to Christ; in his person, and what is said of him, that he was without father and mother; and in his office as a priest, and in the manner of his instalment into it; and in the antiquity, dignity, and perpetuity of it: and this is repeated for the further confirmation of Christ's priesthood, and is a conclusion of the truth of it from sufficient evidence: this does not so much design the constitution of Christ as priest, nor the call of him to that office, as the denomination or surnaming of him a priest of Melchizedek's order, because of the agreement between them; and contains a reason of Christ's being the author of eternal salvation, because he is a priest for ever; and prevents any objections against Christ's priesthood, and opens a way to discourse more largely concerning it.

Hebrews 5:11

Ver. 11. Of whom we have many things to say,.... Either of Melchizedek, or of Christ, or of his priesthood or of all of these; since the apostle does largely treat of them in the following chapters: he says many things concerning Melchizedek in the seventh chapter, and many things of Christ, and his priesthood, in those that follow; Christ is a large and inexhaustible subject in the Gospel ministry, and what a Gospel minister delights to dwell on; and it is a fund and stock from whence he is furnished with things of the greatest usefulness, and of the utmost importance:

and hard to be uttered; as were many things respecting Melchizedek, mentioned in **Heb 7:3** and also concerning Christ, and his priesthood: abstruse and difficult things are to be looked into, considered, searched after, and insisted on: the whole Scripture is profitable, and the whole counsel of God is to be declared, and things hard to be explained should be attempted; this is the way to an increase of light and knowledge; though it becomes ministers to consult their own abilities, and the capacity of their hearers, that they do not go beyond them:

seeing ye are dull of hearing; this dulness of hearing is thought by some to arise from their afflictions; or from their attachment to the law of Moses; or rather from their sluggishness, indocility, and want of industry; and often times this arises from pride and prejudice, and irreverence of the word of God; and frequently from the deceitfulness of riches, and the cares of this life.

Hebrews 5:12

Ver. 12. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers,.... These Hebrews had had great advantages; they were not only descended from Abraham, and had the law of Moses, and the writings of the Old Testament, but some of them had enjoyed the ministry of Christ, and however of his apostles; and it was now about thirty years from the day of Pentecost, in which the gifts of the Holy Ghost were bestowed in such an extraordinary manner, and a large number were converted, and a church state settled among them; and therefore considering the length of time, the opportunities and advantages they had enjoyed, it might have been expected, and indeed it is what should have been, that they would have been teachers of others, some in a private, and some in a public way: from whence it may be observed, that to have time for learning, and yet make no proficiency, is an aggravation of dulness; moreover, that men ought to be hearers, and make some good proficiency in hearing, before they are fit to be teachers of others; also, that persons are not only to hear for their own edification, but for the instruction of others, though all hearers are not designed for public teachers; for to be teachers of others, requires a considerable share of knowledge: to which may be added, that the churches of Christ are the proper seminaries of Gospel ministers. But this was so far from being the case of these Hebrews, that the apostle says of them,

ye have need that one teach on again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; by the oracles of God are meant the Scriptures, not the law of Moses only, but all the writings of the Old Testament, which were given by the respiration of God, and are authoritative and infallible; and by the "first principles" of them are intended, either the first promises in them, concerning the Messiah; or the institutions, rites, and ceremonies of the law, which are sometimes called stoiceia, elements, **Ga 4:3** where the same word is used as here; and which were the alphabet and rudiments of the Gospel to the Jews: or else the apostle designs the plain doctrines of the Gospel, which were at first preached unto them, in which they needed to be again instructed, as they were at first; so that instead of going forward, they had rather gone back:

and are become such as have need of milk; of the types, shadows, and figures of the law, which were suited to the infant state of the church, who by sensible objects were directed to the view of Gospel grace; or of the plain and easier parts of the Gospel, comparable to milk for their purity, sweetness, nourishing nature, and being easy of digestion:

and not of strong meat: such as the deep things of God, the mysteries of the Gospel; those which are more hard to he understood, received, and digested; such as the doctrines of the Trinity, of God's everlasting love, of eternal election and reprobation, of the person of Christ, the abrogation of the law, &c.

Hebrews 5:13

Ver. 13. For everyone that useth milk,.... And sits down contented with the first principles of the Gospel, such as are easily taken in and digested; or makes use of the ceremonial law, as a schoolmaster to teach him the Gospel:

is unskilful in the word of righteousness; the Gospel, which is a doctrine of righteousness; not of works of righteousness done by men, and of justification by them, or of a man's own righteousness; but of the pure, perfect, and everlasting righteousness of Christ: and it is called so, because it is the means of stripping a man of his own righteousness; and of revealing the righteousness of Christ unto him; and of working faith in him to lay hold upon it; and of discovering the agreement there is between the righteousness of Christ, and the justice of God; and of teaching men to live soberly, righteously, and godly: and such are unskilful in it, who either have no knowledge of the doctrine of justification; of the matter of it, Christ's righteousness; of the form of it, by imputation; and of the date of it, before faith: or have a very confused notion of it, joining their own works with Christ's righteousness, for justification, as many judaizing professors did; or who, if they have a notional knowledge of it, have no practical concern in it; do not believe with the heart unto righteousness; have not the experience, sweetness, and power of this doctrine upon them; and do not live lives agreeable to it:

for he is a babe. This word is used sometimes by way of commendation, and is expressive of some good characters of the saints; such as harmlessness and inoffensiveness, humility, and meekness, a desire after the sincere milk of the word, freedom from rancour and malice, hypocrisy and guile; but here it is used by way of reproach, and denotes levity and inconstancy, ignorance and non-proficiency, want of digestion of strong meat, and incapacity to take care of themselves, as standing in need of tutors and governors.

Hebrews 5:14

Ver. 14. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age,.... Or perfect; see 1Co 2:6. This does not intend a perfection of justification; for though some have a greater degree of faith than others, and a clearer discovery of their justification, yet babes in Christ are as perfectly justified as more grown and experienced believers; nor a perfection of sanctification, for there is no perfection of holiness but in Christ; and though the work of sanctification may be in greater perfection in one saint than in another, yet all are imperfect in this life; and as to a perfection of parts, babes have this as well as adult persons: but it designs a perfection of knowledge; for though none are entirely perfect, yet some have arrived to a greater degree of the knowledge of Gospel mysteries than others, and to these the strong meat of the Gospel belongs; they are capable of understanding the more mysterious parts of the Gospel; of searching into the deep things of God; and of receiving and digesting the more sublime truths of the Christian religion:

even those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil; that is, their spiritual senses, the internal senses of the understanding and judgment, signified by external ones; as by seeing the Son; hearing the voice of Christ; savouring or smelling a sweet odour in the things of God, and Christ; tasting that the Lord is gracious; feeling and handling the word of life, as these are held forth in the everlasting Gospel: and these being exercised on their proper object, by use, an habit is contracted; and such are qualified for discerning, as between moral good and evil, and the worse and better state of the church, and between law and Gospel, so between the doctrines of Christ, and the doctrines of men; who find they differ: the doctrines of Christ such experienced persons find to be good, wholesome, nourishing, and salutary; and the doctrines of men to be evil, to eat, as does a canker, and to be pernicious, poisonous, and damnable; and the discernment they make, and the judgment they form, are not according to the dictates of carnal reason, but according to the Scriptures of truth, and their own experience.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hebrews 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 6

In this chapter the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews not to rest in the rudiments of the Christian religion they had learned; and much less to lay them again in the foundation after the Jewish manner, of which he instances in six particulars; but to seek after a perfect knowledge of evangelic truths, which, under a divine permission, was his determination to do, **Heb 6:1** which was the best method to prevent apostasy, he dissuades from; by giving the characters of apostates, showing how far they may go in the knowledge of divine things, and yet fall away; by asserting the impossibility of their repentance and recovery, with the reason of it, taken from the blackness of their crimes, **Heb 6:4** and the difference between them, and true believers, he illustrates by two sorts of earth, the one takes in the rain that comes down from heaven, and brings forth herbs for the use of its dresser, and is blessed of God: such are true believers in Christ, **Heb 6:7** the other bears thorns and briers, and is rejected and cursed, and in the issue burned; and to such earth the above apostates may be compared, **Heb 6:8** but lest the believing Hebrews, such as were truly gracious among them, should conclude that this was their case, and that it was desperate; and lest they should think the apostle had an ill opinion of them, he declares he was otherwise persuaded of them, and hoped and believed they were interested in the things of salvation, **Heb 6:9** the reasons of which persuasion are taken from the work of grace, which was wrought in them; from their laborious love they showed to the name of God, and to his people, and which they continued to show: and from the righteousness of God in not forgetting all this, **Heb 6:10**. And then he proceeds to exhort them to diligence in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, that so they might arrive to a full assurance of hope, **Heb 6:11** and not to indulge slothfulness, but to be followers of the saints that were gone before them; whose character is, that through faith, and patience, they had inherited the promises, things the apostle would have those believers imitate them in, **Heb 6:12** and particularly instances in Abraham, the father of this people, and of all believers; who having a promise from God, to which an oath was annexed, patiently waited for it, and obtained it, **Heb 6:13** and having made mention of an oath, the apostle takes notice of the nature and use of one among men, **Heb 6:16** and of the design of God in making use of one himself, which was to confirm his promise, and show its immutability to the heirs of it; and that by observing these two immutable things, which could never fail, they might have solid and abiding comfort: even all such, who, under a sense of danger, flee to Christ for refuge, who is the ground of hope proposed to them in the Gospel, to lay hold upon, **Heb 6:17** and because of the firmness of the grace of hope, as it is conversant with Christ, and is cast on him, the good ground of it, it is compared to an anchor; and is said to be sure and steadfast, and to enter within the vail, where Christ is gone as a forerunner; and which is an encouragement to that grace to enter in after him; who is further described by his name Jesus, by his office as an high priest, and by the order of which he is, that of Melchizedek, **Heb 6:19** which is mentioned, to lead on to what the apostle had to say concerning him, in the next chapter.

Ver. 1. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ,.... The Gospel is the doctrine of Christ, and is so called, because Christ, as God, is the author of it; as Mediator, he received it from his Father; as man, he was the preacher of it; and he is also the sum and substance of it: the principles of this doctrine are either the easier parts of the Gospel, called milk in the latter part of the preceding chapter; which are not to be left with dislike and contempt, nor so as to be forgotten, nor so as not to be recurred to at proper times; but so as not to abide in and stick here, without going further: or rather the ceremonies of the law, which were the elements of the Jews' religion, and the beginning, as the word may be here rendered, of the doctrine of Christ; which were shadowy and typical of Christ, and taught the Jews the truths of the Gospel concerning Christ: in these the believing Jews were very desirous of sticking, and of abiding by them, and of continuing them in the Gospel church; whereas they were to be left, since they had had their use, and had answered what they were designed for, and were now abolished by Christ.

Let us go on to perfection: in a comparative sense, to a more perfect knowledge of things, which the clear revelation and ministry of the Gospel lead unto; and which the rites and ceremonies, types and figures of the law, never could:

not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works; the Syriac version reads this by way of interrogation, "do ye lay again, &c." and makes the third verse to be an answer to it: the phrase, "not laying again the foundation", is to be read in connection, not only with this article of repentance, but with each of the other five articles, the foundation of which is no more to be laid again than this: and not laying it again, either means not teaching it, and so refers to the apostle, and other ministers of the word, who should not insist upon the following things, at least not stick there, but go on to deliver things more sublime and grand; or not hearing it, and so refers to the Hebrews, who should seek after a more perfect knowledge of evangelic truths than the following articles exhibited to them: and the several parts of this foundation, which; are not to be laid again ministerially, by preachers, or attended to by hearers, design either the first things, with which the Gospel dispensation was ushered in; or rather, and which I take to be the true sense, the general principles and practices of the Jews under the former dispensation;

for these are not the six principles of the Christian religion, as they are commonly called, but so many articles of the Jewish creed; some of which were peculiar to the Jews, and others common to them, with us Christians: thus,

repentance from dead works, does not intend evangelical repentance, the doctrine of which is to be ministerially laid, and the grace itself to be exercised over and over again; but a repentance which arose from, and was signified by the sacrifices of slain beasts; for by them the Jews were taught the doctrine of repentance, as well as remission of sin; and in and over them did they confess their iniquities; yea, every beast that was slain for sacrifice carried in it a conviction of sin, an acknowledgment of guilt; and it was tacitly owning, that they, for whom the creature was slain, deserved to be treated as that was, and die as that did. So the Jews {f} say,

"when a man sacrifices a beast, he thinks in his own heart, I am rather a beast than this; for I am he that hath sinned, and for the sin which I have committed I bring this; and it is more fitting that the man should be sacrificed rather than the beast; and so it appears that,
jrxy awh wnbrq ydy le, "by the means of his offering he repents"."

But now, under the Gospel dispensation, believing Jews, as these were to whom the apostle writes, were not to learn the doctrine of repentance from slain beasts, or to signify it in this way; since repentance and remission of sins were preached most clearly to them in the name of Christ: nor were they to lay again another part of this foundation, or a second article of the Jewish creed,

and of faith towards God; which article is expressed in language agreeable to the Jewish dispensation; whereas evangelical faith is usually called the faith of Christ, or faith in Christ, or towards our Lord Jesus Christ; but this respects faith in God, as the God of Israel: hence says our Lord to his disciples, who were all Jews, "ye believe in God": ye have been taught, and used to believe in God, as the God of Israel; "believe also in me", as his Son and the Messiah, and the Mediator between God and man, Joh 14:1, so that now they were not only to have faith towards God, as the God of Israel, and to teach and receive that doctrine; but to have faith in Christ as the Saviour of lost sinners, without the intermediate use of sacrifices.

{f} Nizzachon Vet. p. 11. Ed. Wagenseil.

Hebrews 6:2

Ver. 2. Of the doctrine of baptisms,.... Some read this divisively, "baptism and doctrine", as the Ethiopic version; as if the one respected the ordinance of baptism, and the other the ministry of the word; but it is best to read them conjunctively: and by which most understand the Gospel ordinance of water baptism, so called by a change of number, the plural for the singular, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, who render it baptism; or because of the different persons baptized, and times of baptizing, as some; or because of the trine immersion, as others; or because of the threefold baptism of spirit, blood, and water, which have some agreement with each other; or because of the baptism of John, and Christ, though they are one and the same; or because of the inward and outward baptism, the one fitting and qualifying for the other; and so the doctrine of it is thought to respect the necessity, use, and end of it; but since there is but one baptism, and the above reasons for the plural expression are not solid, and sufficiently satisfying, it is best to interpret this of the divers baptisms among the Jews, spoken of in **Heb 9:10** which had a doctrine in them, to that people; teaching them the cleansing virtue of the blood of Christ, and leading them to it, to wash in for sin, and for uncleanness; but now, since this blood was shed, they were no more to teach nor learn the doctrine of cleansing by the blood of Christ this way; nor any more to be led unto it through these divers baptisms, ablutions, and purifications.

And of laying on of hands; the foundation of this was to be no more laid, nor the doctrine of it to be any longer taught and learned in the way it had been; for not the rite, but the doctrine of laying on of hands is here intended; and it has no reference to the right of laying on of hands by the apostles, either in private persons, or officers of churches; for what was the doctrine of such a rite, is not easy to say; but to the rite of laying on of hands of the priests, and of the people, upon the head of sacrifices; which had a doctrine in it, even the doctrine of the imputation of sin to Christ, the great sacrifice. It was usual with the Jews {g} to call the imposition of hands upon the sacrifice, simply, hkymo, "laying on of hands"; and they understood by it the transferring of sin from the persons that laid on hands, to the sacrifice, on which they were laid; and that hereby, as they express it, sins were separated from them, and, as it were, put upon the sacrifice {h}; but now believers were no longer to be taught and learn the great doctrine of the imputation of sin, by this rite and ceremony, since Christ has been made sin for them, and has had sins imputed to him, and has bore them in his own body on the tree:

and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment: articles of faith, which distinguished the Jews from the Gentiles, who were greatly strangers to a future state, the resurrection of the dead, and judgment to come: these are doctrines of pure revelation, and were taught under the Old Testament, and were believed by the generality of the Jews, and are articles which they hold in common with us Christians; yet the believing Hebrews were not to rest in the knowledge of these things, and in the smaller degrees of light they had in them, under the former dispensation; but were to go on to perfection, and bear forward towards a greater share of knowledge of these, and other more sublime doctrines of grace; since life and immortality are more clearly brought to light by Christ through the Gospel.

{g} Misn. Kiddushin, c. 2. sect. 8. & Bartenora in ib. {h} R. Levi ben Gersom in Exod. fol. 109. 1. & in Lev. fol. 117. 2.

Hebrews 6:3

Ver. 3. And this will we do, if God permit. That is, leave the rites and ceremonies of the law, which were the rudiments, or first principles of the Gospel, and go on to a more perfect knowledge of Gospel truths; and, not lay again as the foundation of the ministry, or insist upon them as if they were the main things, even the above articles of the Jewish creed, especially in the, way and manner in which they had been taught and learnt: the sense is, that the apostle and his brethren, in the ministry were determined to insist upon the more solid and substantial parts of the Gospel, and which tended to bring on their hearers to perfection; and that it became the believing Hebrews to seek after a greater degree of knowledge under the ministry of the word. It is, or at least should be, the determination of a Gospel minister, to preach Christ, and the great truths of the Gospel; and wheresoever God has called him to it, though there may be many adversaries, and though he may be reproached, calumniated, and deserted: resolution in preaching the Gospel, and adhering to it, is very commendable in a minister; and it is very laudable in hearers to attend to it, stand by it, and search further into it; and which both should determine upon with a regard to the will of God, "if God permit": God's permission is much to be observed in the ministry of the word, in giving gifts to men, in placing them out here and there, where they shall exercise them, in directing them to subjects, and in making their ministry useful and successful: and it may be observed in general, that nothing can be done, or come to pass, good or bad, but what God permits or wills to be done; no good things, no actions, civil, natural, moral, or spiritual; no evil things, the evil of punishment, afflictions, the persecutions of wicked men, the temptations of

Satan, heresies, and even immoralities.

Hebrews 6:4

Ver. 4. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened,.... The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, "baptized"; and the word is thought to be so used in Heb 10:32. And indeed baptism was called very early "illumination" by the ancients, as by Justin Martyr {i}, and Clemens Alexandrinus {k}, because only enlightened persons were the proper subjects of it; and the word once here used seems to confirm this sense, since baptism, when rightly administered, was not repeated; but then this sense depends upon an use of a word, which it is not certain did as yet obtain; nor does the apostle take notice of baptism in a parallel place, Heb 10:26. This gave rise to, and seems to favour the error of Novatus, that those who fall into sin after baptism are to be cut off from the communion of the church, and never more to be restored unto it; contrary to the promises of God to returning backsliders, and contrary to facts, as well as to the directions of Christ, and his apostles, to receive and restore such persons; and such a notion tends to set aside the intercession of Christ for fallen believers, and to plunge them into despair: it is better therefore to retain the word "enlightened", in its proper sense, and to understand it of persons enlightened with Gospel knowledge; there are some who are savingly enlightened by the Spirit of God, to see the impurity of their hearts and actions, and their impotency to perform that which is good, the imperfection of their own righteousness to justify them, their lost state and condition by nature, and to see Christ and salvation by him, and their interest in it; and these being "once" enlightened, never become darkness, or ever so fall as to perish; for if God had a mind to destroy them, he would never have shown them these things, and therefore cannot be the persons designed here; unless we render the words, as the Syriac version does, "it is impossible"---- Nwjxy bwtd, "that they should sin again"; so as to die spiritually, lose the grace of God, and stand in need of a new work upon them, which would be impossible to be done: but rather such are meant, who are so enlightened as to see the evil effects of sin, but not the evil that is in sin; to see the good things which come by Christ, but not the goodness that is in Christ; so as to reform externally, but not to be sanctified internally; to have knowledge of the Gospel doctrinally, but not experimentally; yea, to have such light into it, as to be able to preach it to others, and yet be destitute of the grace of God:

and have tasted of the heavenly gift; either faith, or a justifying righteousness, or the pardon of sin, or eternal life; which are all spiritual and heavenly gifts of grace, and which true believers have real tastes of; and hypocrites please themselves with, having some speculative notions about them, and some desires after them, arising from a natural principle of self-love. Some think the Holy Ghost is intended; but rather Christ himself, the unspeakable gift of God's love, given from heaven, as the bread of life. Now there are some who have a saving spiritual taste of this gift; for though God's people, while unregenerate, have no such taste; their taste is vitiated by sin, and it is not changed; sin is the food they live upon, in which they take an imaginary pleasure, and disrelish every thing else; but when regenerated, their taste is changed, sin is rendered loathsome to them; and they have a real gust of spiritual things, and especially of Christ, and find a real delight and pleasure in feeding by faith upon him; whereby they live upon him, and are nourished up unto eternal life, and therefore cannot be the persons here spoken of: but there are others who taste, but dislike what they taste; have no true love to Christ, and faith in him; or have only a carnal taste of him, know him only after the flesh, or externally, not inwardly and experimentally; or they have only a superficial taste, such as is opposed to eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Christ, by faith, which is proper to true believers; the gust they have is but temporary, and arises from selfish principles.

And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost; not his person, nor his special grace; there are some who so partake of him, as to be united to him, in whom he becomes the principle of spiritual life, and motion: such have the fruits of the Spirit, and communion with him; they enjoy his personal presence and inhabitation in them; they have received him as a spirit of illumination and conviction, of regeneration and sanctification, as the spirit of faith, and as a comforter; and as a spirit of adoption, and the earnest and seal of future glory; but then such can never so fall away as to perish: a believer indeed may be without the sensible presence of the Spirit; the graces of the Spirit may be very low, as to their exercise; and they may not enjoy his comforts, gracious influences, and divine assistance; but the Spirit of God never is, in the above sense, in a castaway; where he takes up his dwelling, he never quits it; if such could perish, not only his own glory, but the glory of the Father, and of the Son, would be lost likewise: but by the Holy Ghost is sometimes meant the gifts of the Spirit, ordinary or extraordinary,
1Co 12:4 and so here; and men may be said to be partakers of the Holy Ghost, to whom he gives wisdom and prudence in things natural and civil; the knowledge of things divine and evangelical, in an external way; the power of working miracles, of prophesying, of speaking with tongues, and of the interpretation of tongues; for the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost seem chiefly designed, which some, in the first times of the Gospel, were partakers

of, who had no share in special grace, **Mt 7:22**.

{i} Apolog. 2. p. 94. {k} Paedagog. l. 1. c. 6. p. 93.

Hebrews 6:5

Ver. 5. And have tasted the good word of God,.... Not the Lord Jesus Christ, the essential Word of God, who seems to be intended before by the heavenly gift; but rather, either the Scriptures of truth in general, which are the word of God, endited by him, and contain his mind and will; which he makes use of for conviction, conversion, instruction, and comfort; and which are preserved by him: and these are a good word; they come from him who is good; they are a revelation of good things; they make known things true, pleasant, and profitable: or else the Gospel in particular, of which God is the author; and in which is a wonderful display of his wisdom and grace; and which he owns and blesses for his own glory, and the good of others: and this is a "good word", the same with bwj rbd, "good matter", or "word", in Ps 45:1 ybwj Mgtp, "my good word", or "the word of my goodness", in the Targum on Isa 55:11 for it is the word of righteousness, reconciliation, peace, pardon, life, and salvation. And there is a special and spiritual taste of this good, word, which is delightful, relishing, and nourishing; and such who have it can never totally and finally fall away; because they who taste it, so as to eat and digest it, and be nourished by it, to them it becomes the ingrafted word, which is able to save them: but there is such a taste of this word as is disrelishing, as in profane sinners, and open opposers and persecutors of the word, or as in hypocrites and formal professors; which is only an assent to the Scriptures, as the revelation of God, or a superficial knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel without the experience of them, and a temporal faith in them, and a natural affection for them, and pleasure with them for a time; as the Jews, and Herod with John's ministry, and the stony ground hearers.

And the powers of the world to come; meaning either the state of the church, and the glorious things relating to it, after the first resurrection, which they might have some notional apprehensions of; or the ultimate state of glory and happiness, the powers of which are the immortality, incorruption, and glory of the body, the perfect holiness and knowledge of the soul, entire freedom from all evils of every kind, full communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, and a complete enjoyment of all happiness for ever; which hypocrites may have a notional knowledge of, a natural desire after, and delight in the contemplation and hope of, as Balaam had; or rather the dunameiv, miracles and mighty works in the former part of the Gospel dispensation, or times of the Messiah, the Jews' world to come, See Gill on "Heb 2:5", are intended; which many, as Judas and others, were able to perform, who were not sincere Christians, or true believers.

Hebrews 6:6

Ver. 6. If they shall fall away,.... This is not supposed of true believers, as appears from **Heb 6:9** nor is it to be supposed of them that they may fall totally and finally; they may indeed fall, not only into afflictions and temptations, but into sin; and from a lively and comfortable exercise of grace, and from a degree of steadfastness in the Gospel; but not irrecoverably: for they are held and secured by a threefold cord, which can never be broken; by God the Father, who has loved them with an everlasting love, has chosen them in Christ, secured them in the covenant of grace, keeps them by his power, has given them grace, and will give them glory; and by the Son, who has undertook for them, redeemed and purchased them, prays and makes preparations in heaven for them, they are built on him, united to him, and are his jewels, whom he will preserve; and by the Holy Ghost, whose grace is incorruptible, whose personal indwelling is for ever, who himself is the earnest and seal of the heavenly inheritance, and who having begun, will finish the good work of grace: but falling away, so as to perish, may be supposed, and is true of many professors of religion; who may fall from the profession of the Gospel they have made, and from the truth of it, and into an open denial of it; yea, into an hatred and persecution of what they once received the external knowledge of; and so shall fall short of heaven, and into condemnation: for,

to renew them again unto repentance, is a thing impossible: by "repentance" is meant, not baptism of repentance; nor admission to a solemn form of public repentance in the church; nor a legal repentance, but an evangelical one: and so to be "renewed" unto it is not to be baptized again, or to be restored anew to the church by repentance, and absolution; but must be understood either of renovation of the soul, in order to repentance; or of the reforming of the outward conversation, as an evidence of it; or of a renewing of the exercise of the grace of repentance and to be renewed "again" to repentance does not suppose that persons may have true repentance and lose it; for though truly penitent persons may lose the exercise of this grace for a time, yet the grace itself can never be lost: moreover, these apostates before described had only a show of repentance, a counterfeit one; such as Cain, Pharaoh, and Judas had; and consequently, the renewing of them again to repentance, is to that which

they only seemed to have, and to make pretensions unto; now to renew them to a true repentance, which they once made a profession of, the apostle says is a thing "impossible": the meaning of which is not only that it is difficult; or that it is rare and unusual; or that it is unsuitable and improper; but it is absolutely impossible: it is impossible to these men to renew themselves to repentance; renovation is the work of the Holy Ghost, and not of man; and repentance is God's gift, and not in man's power; and it is impossible for ministers to renew them, to restore and bring them back, by true repentance; yea, it is impossible to God himself, not through any impotence in him, but from the nature of the sin these men are guilty of; for by the high, though outward attainments they arrive unto, according to the description of them, their sin is the sin against the Holy Ghost, for which no sacrifice can be offered up, and of which there is no remission, and so no repentance; for these two go together, and for which prayer is not to be made; see
Mt 12:32 and chiefly because to renew such persons to repentance, is repugnant to the determined will of God, who cannot go against his own purposes and resolutions; and so the Jews {l} speak of repentance being withheld by God from Pharaoh, and, from the people of Israel; of which they understand **Ex 9:16** and say, that when the holy blessed God withholds repentance from a sinner, bwvl lwky wnya, "he cannot repent"; but must die in his wickedness which he first committed of his own will; and they further observe {m}, that he that profanes the name of God has it not in his power to depend on repentance, nor can his iniquity be expiated on the day of atonement, or be removed by chastisement:

seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh; who is truly and properly God, begotten of the Father, and of the same nature with him, in whom he greatly delights; this is Christ's highest name and title; and it was for asserting himself to be the Son of God that he was crucified; and his being so puts an infinite virtue in his sufferings and death; and it heightens the sin of the Jews, and of these apostates, in crucifying him. He was once crucified, and it is both impossible and unnecessary that he should be, properly speaking, "crucified afresh", or "again"; it is impossible, because he is risen from the dead, and will never die more; it is unnecessary, because he has finished and completed what he suffered the death of the cross for; but men may be said to crucify him again, when, by denying him to be the Son of God, they justify the crucifixion of him on that account; and when they lessen and vilify the virtue of his blood and sacrifice; and when both by errors and immoralities they cause him to be blasphemed, and evil spoken of; and when they persecute him in his members: and this may be said to be done "to themselves afresh"; not that Christ was crucified for them before, but that they now crucify him again, as much as in them lies; or "with themselves", in their own breasts and minds, and to their own destruction. Now this being the case, it makes their renewal to repentance impossible; because, as before observed, the sin they commit is unpardonable; it is a denial of Christ, who gives repentance; and such who sin it must arrive to such hardness of heart as to admit of no repentance; and it is just with God to give up such to a final impenitence, as those, who knowingly and out of malice and envy crucified Christ, had neither pardon nor repentance; and besides, this sin of denying Christ to be the Son of God, and Saviour of men, after so much light and knowledge, precludes the way of salvation, unless Christ was to be crucified again, which is impossible; for so the Syriac version connects this clause with the word "impossible", as well as a foregoing one, rendering it, "it is impossible to crucify the Son of God again, and to put him to shame"; and so the Arabic version. Christ was put to open shame at the time of his apprehension, prosecution, and crucifixion; and so he is by such apostates, who, was he on earth, would treat him in the same manner the Jews did; and who do traduce him as an impostor and a deceiver, and give the lie to his doctrines, and expose him by their lives, and persecute him in his saints.

{l} Maimon. Hilchot. Teshuba, c. 6. sect. 3. {m} Vid. R. David Kimchi in Isa. xxii. 14.

Hebrews 6:7

Ver. 7. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it,.... Here the apostle illustrates what he had before been speaking of, by a simile taken from the earth, to which men in general answer, who are of the earth; earthy and unregenerate men and carnal professors are of earthly minds; they are like the earth when it was rude and without form, and cursed by God; and are as insensible as the earth: but the earth is particularly distinguished into that which is fruitful, and which is unfruitful; and the former is spoken of in this verse, to which true believers in Christ agree; who are the good ground, into which the seed of God's word is received, and brings forth fruit; these are God's tillage or husbandry: and the "rain" that comes upon them may signify either the grace of Christ, which, like rain, is an instance of his sovereignty, and what he alone can give, and not the vanities of the Gentiles; and which he gives to persons undeserving of it; and which refreshes, revives, and makes fruitful: or else Christ himself,
Ps 72:6 whose first coming was like rain much desired, and long expected; and so is his spiritual coming very desirable, delightful, refreshing, and fructifying:

or rather his Gospel,
De 32:2 which comes from above, and is the means of softening hard hearts, of reviving distressed and disconsolate minds, and of making barren souls fruitful; which is done by coming "oft" upon them, at first conversion, and afterwards, alluding to the former and latter rain; and may refer to the receiving of more grace, even grace for grace, out of Christ's fulness, through the ministration of the word, which is drank in by faith, under the influence of the Spirit of God:

and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed; God the Father, who is the husbandman, and ministers of the Gospel, who arc labourers under him; and where the Gospel comes in power, it brings forth the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of righteousness, the fruits meet for repentance; and which are to the glory of God the Father, and are answerable to the means be makes use of, the ministry of the word and ordinances; and no man can bring forth fruit without Christ, his Spirit, and grace: and such earth, or those signified by it,

receiveth blessing from God; both antecedent to all this, and which is the cause of fruitfulness; and as consequent upon it, for such receive more grace, even all the blessings of grace, and at last the blessing of glory; and all this being in a way of receiving, shows it to be of gift, and of pure grace.

Hebrews 6:8

Ver. 8. But that which beareth thorns and briers,.... To which wicked men answer; who are unfruitful and unprofitable, and are hurtful, pricking and grieving, by their wicked lives and conversations, by their bitter and reproachful words, and by their violent and cruel persecutions; and particularly carnal professors, and especially apostates, such as before described; for to such earth, professors of religion may be compared, who are worldly, slothful, defrauding and overreaching, carnal and wanton; as also heretical men, and such as turn from the faith, deny it, and persecute the saints: and the things or actions produced by them are aptly expressed by "thorns and briers"; such as errors, heresies, and evil works of all kinds; and which show that the seed of the word was never sown in their hearts, and that that which they bear, or throw out, is natural to them: and such earth is

rejected; as such men are, both by the church, and by God himself; or "reprobate", as they are concerning the faith, and to every good work; and are given up by God to a reprobate mind: and is "nigh unto cursing"; and such men are cursed already by the law, being under its sentence of curse and condemnation; and are nigh to the execution of it; referring either to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was near at hand; or to the final judgment, when they shall hear, Go, ye cursed:

whose end is to be burned; with everlasting and unquenchable fire, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

Hebrews 6:9

Ver. 9. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you,.... The apostle addresses the believing Hebrews, as "beloved"; being beloved by the Lord, not as the descendants of Abraham, but as the elect of God, and so as loved with an everlasting love; and which might be known to themselves, by its being shed abroad in their hearts, and by their being called by grace, and by their love to him, and to his people: and from hence they might conclude they should not fall away, as the apostates before spoken of; since, in consequence of being beloved by God, they were chosen in Christ unto salvation; Christ was given to die for them; they had the Spirit sent down into their hearts; they were justified, pardoned, and adopted; nor could they be separated from the love of God: and the apostle also so calls them, because they were beloved by him, not merely as being his countrymen, but as saints: and this he says to testify his affection to them; to show that what he said was not from hatred of them, or prejudice to them; and that his exhortations, cautions, and reproofs, might be better taken; and particularly that they might credit what he here says, that he was "persuaded better things" of them, than what he had said of others in **Heb 6:4** even such as are expressed in **Heb 6:10** he was persuaded they had the true grace of God; whereas the above mentioned persons had only gifts, when in the height of their profession; and the least degree of grace is better than the greatest gifts men can be possessed of: grace makes a man a good man, not gifts; a man may have great gifts and not be a good man; grace is useful to a man's self, gifts are chiefly useful to others; grace makes men fruitful, when gifts leave them barren in the knowledge of Christ; grace is lasting, when gifts fail, and cease and vanish away; grace will abide the fire of persecution, when gifts will not; grace is saving, gifts are not:

and things that accompany salvation; which enter into salvation; are ingredients in it, and parts of it, and with which salvation is connected; such as faith, love, &c. or which mutually touch or follow one another in the chain of salvation; as to be predestinated, justified, called, adopted, sanctified, and, at last, glorified:

though we thus speak; concerning others, as in the preceding verses: the hard things spoken by him of some, were consistent with such persuasions in general; for there might be some among them to whom the aforesaid characters belonged; and saying such things might be a means to make others watchful and careful.

Hebrews 6:10

Ver. 10. For God is not unrighteous,.... He is just and true, righteous in all his ways and works; there is no unrighteousness nor unfaithfulness in him; and this the apostle makes a reason of his strong persuasion of better things concerning the believing Hebrews; because he was well satisfied of the good work upon them, and he was assured that God was not unrighteous and unfaithful:

to forget your work: which is not to be understood of any good work done by them, for these are generally expressed in the plural number; and besides, these, if at all, are designed in the next clause; moreover, external good works, or such as appear to men to be so, are performed by hypocrites; nor can they be said to be better things, at least, not such as men are saved by: men may fall from these; and supposing them intended, the merit of works cannot be established, as is attempted from hence by the Papists; for the apostle could only consider them as fruits, not as causes of salvation; they are imperfect, and cannot justify, and therefore cannot save; they do not go before to procure salvation, but follow after, and, at most, but accompany; and though God does remember and not forget them, this is owing to his grace, and not to their merit; God's righteousness in remembering them regards not a debt of justice, but a point of faithfulness: but this is to be understood of the work of God upon them, called in Scripture a good work, and the work of faith; and is elsewhere joined, as here, with the labour of love; see **1Th 1:3** and this might be called their work, not because wrought by them, but because it was wrought in them; and the grace that came along with it was exercised by them: now from hence the apostle might be persuaded of better things of them, even such as accompany salvation; since this work is a fruit of everlasting and unchangeable love, and is itself immortal, and the beginning of eternal life; and particularly faith is the effect of electing grace; shall never fail; is the means of the saints' preservation; and is connected with everlasting salvation: it follows, and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name; the word "labour" is omitted in the Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions: this may be understood either of love to God, the name of God being put for himself; who is to be loved for his own sake, on account of the perfections of his nature, as well as for the works of his hands; and which is to be showed for the sake of glorifying him: and this love is laborious; it sets a man to work for God; nor are any works to be regarded but what spring from love to God, and to his name; and from hence the apostle might entertain a good hope of these persons, since their love to God was an effect of God's love to them, is a part of the work of grace, and cannot be lost; all things work together for good to such as love God; and these have a crown of life promised unto them: or else it may be understood of love to the saints, as follows,

in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister; in seeking both their temporal and spiritual good; and though all men in general are to be loved, yet especially the saints, who are set apart by God, whose sins are expiated by Christ, and who are sanctified by the Spirit; and love to them being laborious, and appearing in many instances, and this shown for the Lord's sake, for his name's sake, might lead the apostle more strongly to conclude better things of them, even things of a saving nature; since charity or love to the saints is better than gifts, and is the evidence of grace, of passing from death to life, and of being the disciples of Christ; see 1Co 13:1.

Hebrews 6:11

Ver. 11. And we desire that everyone of you do show the same diligence,.... In the constant exercise of the graces of faith and love, and in ministering to the necessities of the saints: there is a spiritual labour, diligence, and industry to be used by the saints; and former diligence is a motive to future; and is a means of attaining to full assurance, as appears by what follows; and this is to be shown for the glory of God, for the evidence of the above graces, and for an example and encouragement to other saints: and the persons addressed being "everyone", this shows the apostle's impartiality in his exhortations, and served to remove all groundless suspicions in particular persons; and the manner of his addressing them shows his hearty concern for their welfare, his mildness and gentleness towards them, and his design to encourage them to go forward; and that his exhortation might have the greater weight, he uses the plural "we"; and this exhortation, put in this form, moreover shows that what he had said before had no tendency in some things to encourage despair, or in others carelessness and indolence: and what he had in view in the whole was, that they might arrive

to the full assurance of hope unto the end; not only that they might keep up an hope, but attain to the full assurance of it; as to interest in the love and grace of God; in the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises; in God, as a covenant God and Father; in Christ, as a Saviour and Redeemer; and as to the truth of the work of grace upon their souls, and their right and meetness for the possession of eternal glory and happiness: the phrase, "unto the end", may either respect the continuance of the grace of assurance; or refer to the showing forth of their diligence and industry in ministering to the saints, as they had done, to the end of their lives.

Hebrews 6:12

Ver. 12. That ye be not slothful,.... With respect to hearing the word, and attendance on every ordinance; with respect to the use of means for the increase of knowledge, faith, and hope; and with respect to ministering to the saints; but on the contrary, should take every opportunity of improvement and doing good:

but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises; or things promised; not the land of Canaan, nor the coming of the Messiah; but either grace and salvation by Christ; or eternal Life, which is expressed by a promise, to show that it is not by any works, or merits of men; that it is wholly of grace, and shall certainly be enjoyed: and it is expressed in the plural number, "promises", because it is the grand promise, which is inclusive of all others; and because it has been given out at various times, and in different manners: and the possession of it being signified by "inheriting", it shows that this is their Father's gift and legacy, which they have as children; and which comes to them through the death of Christ, and of which the Spirit is the seal; and comes not by works of righteousness done by them: and the means through which saints that are gone before are come to the enjoyment of this happiness, are "faith and patience"; not that "faith" is the cause of, or what gives right to the inheritance, but it designs a course and walk of believing, at the end of which, saints come to glory; and faith is connected with salvation, and salvation with that; and through faith believers are preserved unto it: and "patience" is joined with faith, as a fruit and evidence of it; and supposes troubles which are patiently endured before men come to the possession of the inheritance: now the apostle exhorts these Hebrews to be followers and imitators of such, in diligence, faith, and patience, when they need not doubt of inheriting the same promised blessedness they do.

Hebrews 6:13

Ver. 13. For when God made promise to Abraham,.... The apostle proposes Abraham as a pattern, because he was the father of these Hebrews, and of all believers; and because they were interested in the promise made to him, and had a right to the same blessing with him; and because he was remarkable for his faith and patience: the promise made to him is not that in Ge 12:1 nor that in
Ge 15:1 but that in Ge 22:16 for that only had an oath annexed to it: and this was made by Jesus Christ, there called the Angel of the Lord, and here God; and who is truly and properly so; and than whom there is none greater; and who elsewhere, as here, is said to swear by himself, Isa 45:23 as follows:

because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself; swearing is ascribed to a divine person after the manner of men, and in condescension to them; and who is never introduced swearing, but in matters of moment and of great importance; the note of Philo the Jew {n} on the passage in Ge 22:16 from whence the following words are cited, is worthy of observation, being very near the apostle's words;

"well does he (God) confirm the promise with an oath, and with an oath that becomes God; for you see that God does not swear by another, for nothing is better than himself, but by himself, who is the best of all; but some have suggested as if it was inconvenient to swear, for an oath is taken for the sake of faith; but God alone is faithful, &c."

{n} Leg. Allegor. l. 2. p. 98.

Hebrews 6:14

Ver. 14. Saying, surely blessing I will bless thee,.... Which is expressive of the certainty of the blessings; the reality and substantiality of them; the abundance of them, and the continuance of the same: and of this nature are all spiritual blessings; as to be chosen of God; to have God to be a covenant God and Father; to be justified, pardoned, adopted, and sanctified, and so have a right and title to eternal happiness:

and multiplying I will multiply thee; meaning both in his natural and spiritual seed, which has had its accomplishment.

Hebrews 6:15

Ver. 15. And so, after he had patiently endured,.... He waited long for a son, from whom the Messiah was to spring, after he had had the promise of one; and he endured many afflictions with patience, in his journeys from place to place, throughout his life to the end:

he obtained the promise; he was greatly blessed in temporal things; he lived to see the son of the promise, and his sons; he saw the day of Christ by faith, and now inherits the heavenly glory, which is the thing chiefly designed.

Hebrews 6:16

Ver. 16. For men verily swear by the greater,.... These words contain a reason why God swore by himself, and why his promises, having an oath annexed to them, ought to be believed. Men when they swear, they swear by the greater; not by themselves, as God does, because there is one greater than they; not by any of the creatures on earth, nor by the angels in heaven, but by God; because he is the God of truth, the searcher of hearts, and who can take vengeance on perjurers: and an oath may lawfully be taken, when it is truth that is sworn to, and is just and good; and in cases of weight and moment; and in what is possible and right to perform; and when it is done with deliberation, in the fear of God, with a view to his glory, and the good of men: for an oath is of a moral nature, what God has commanded, and he himself has taken; it has been used by Christ, and by the saints of the Old and New Testament; and is prophesied of the New Testament saints, as what they should practise; and is a part of religious worship:

and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife; it is used to confirm things that are doubtful, and in dispute; and to put an end to strife and contention; so Philo {o} the Jew says,

"by an oath things doubtful are determined, and things uncertain are confirmed, and what were not believed receive credit."

The manner in which an oath was taken among the Jews, to which, the apostle writing to such, must be thought to have respect, was this;

"he that swore took the book of the law in his hand, and he stood and swore by the name (of God), or by his surnames; and the judges did not suffer anyone to swear but in the holy tongue; and thus he said, behold I swear by the God of Israel, by him whose name is merciful and gracious, that I do not owe this man anything {p}."

The Hebrew word hebv, used for an oath, is of the root ebv, which signifies to "fill, satiate, satisfy": for an oath being taken about matters in controversy, not clear but doubtful give content unto and satisfy the minds of men; and the same word also signifies "seven", a number of fulness and perfection; an oath being for the perfecting and finishing an affair in debate; agreeably, when covenants were made by oaths, seven witnesses were used, Ge 21:28 and Herodotus says {q} as Cocceius {r} observes, that the Arabians, when they swore at making covenants, anointed the stones with blood.

{o} De Somniis, p. 567. {p} Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Torah, pr. Affirm. 123. {q} Thalia, l. 3. c. 8. {r} Lexic. Rad. ebv col. 848.

Hebrews 6:17

Ver. 17. Wherein God, willing,.... Or "wherefore", as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it; that is, whereas an oath is used among men to confirm anything that might be doubted; therefore God, in condescension to the weakness of men, made use of one; being very desirous and determined,

more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel; by which is meant, not the Gospel nor the ordinances of it, though these are sometimes called the counsel of God; but the decree of God, concerning the salvation of his people by Jesus Christ, which is immutable; as appears from the unchangeableness of his nature, the sovereignty of his will, the unsearchableness of his wisdom, the omnipotence of his arm, and the unconditionality of the thing decreed, and from that and the purpose of it being in Christ: and the immutability of this, God was willing to show "more abundantly" than in other purposes, though all God's purposes are unchangeable; or than had been shown to the Old Testament saints; and more than was necessary, had it not been for man's weakness: even to "the heirs of promise"; not any earthly temporal promise, but the promise of grace and glory; the promise of eternal life; the heirs of which are not only Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or God's elect among the Jews, but all that are Christ's; who are justified by his righteousness, believe in him, and are the children of God; for as many as are such are heirs of eternal glory, and of the promise of it: and that the unchangeableness of God's purpose in saving them by Christ might be manifest to them, and be out of all doubt, he "confirmed it by an oath"; his counsel and purpose; he not only determined in his mind that he would save them, and promised it in his covenant; but he also, to confirm it the more to the persons concerned in it, if possible, annexed his oath to it; or "he interposed or acted the part of a Mediator by an oath"; which some refer to Christ's mediation between God and Abraham, when he swore unto him, as before observed; but rather it expresses the interposition of the oath between God's purpose and promise, and man's weakness: God did as it were bind himself by his oath, or lay himself under obligation, or become a surety, for the fulfilment of his purpose and promise; which shows the super-abounding grace of God, the weakness of man, and what reason the heirs of promise have to believe.

Hebrews 6:18

Ver. 18. That by two immutable things,.... God's counsel and oath, which never change and alter, and from which he never varies:

in which it was impossible for God to lie; fail or deceive, nor, indeed, in anything else, besides his counsels, promises, and oath, see **Tit 1:2**

we might have a strong consolation; the saints often stand in need of consolation, by reason of sin, Satan, and the world; and it is the will of God that they should be comforted; and he would have them have

strong consolation; that which is solid and an abundance of it; and this much depends on the immutability of God's counsel and oath:
who have fled for refuge; either in allusion to mariners, as some think; who make all the haste they can to their port and haven, and are glad when they arrive there, and there cast anchor; of which mention is made in the next verse: or to runners in a race, who make up to the mark, in order to lay hold on the prize; hence Christ is afterwards spoken of as a forerunner: or rather to such as fled to the cities of refuge, which were a type of Christ; the names of these cities were, Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Romath, and Golan; Jos 20:7 and the situation of them, according to the Jews {s}, was like two rows in a vineyard. Hebron in Judah was over against Bezer in the wilderness; Shechem

in Mount Ephraim was over against Ramoth in Gilead; Kedesh in Mount Naphtali was over against Golan in Bashan: the names of these several cities agree with Christ; Kedesh signifies "holy", as Christ is, both as God and man, and is made sanctification to his people; Shechem is "the shoulder", and Christ has not only bore the sins of his people in his own body, on the tree, but he bears and carries their persons, and has the government of them on his shoulders, where they are safe and secure; Hebron may be interpreted "fellowship", and the saints have not only fellowship with Christ; but with the Father through him; Bezer may be rendered a "fortified place"; Christ is a stronghold, a tower, a place of defence, whither the righteous run, and are safe; Ramoth signifies "exaltations"; and may fitly be applied to Christ, who is exalted at God's right hand, and who will exalt those that trust in him in due time: Golan may be translated "manifested"; Christ the Son of God has been manifest in the flesh, to destroy the works of the devil; and he will be revealed from heaven in a glorious manner at the last day: these cities were known to be such; and they were open to all Israelites and proselytes, that killed any person at unawares; and they were open at all times; and the way to them was made plain and large; every year care was taken to make the way good, to remove every hillock, or anything that hindered; if there was a river in the way, to make a bridge over it; and where more ways met, to set up pillars with a hand to them, and these words written on it, jlqm jlqm, "refuge, refuge"; nor was the road to be less in breadth than thirty two cubits {t}; and there was always room in these cities; and whoever fled there was safe; but those that were found without died: thus Christ is known to be a refuge for distressed sinners; and he is open to all that come unto him, and at all times; the way of life and salvation by him is plainly pointed out in the Gospel, and by the ministers of it; who are appointed to direct unto him, and to remove all impediments and discouragements from such who are seeking to him; and though so many have been received and saved by him, still there is room for more; and whoever betake themselves to him are safe, but those that are without him die and perish: so Philo the Jew {u} makes the divine Word, or Logos, to be the chief and most profitable refuge to fly unto, of all the six which he takes notice of; and the Jews have a notion that in the time to come, in the days of the Messiah, three other cities of refuge will be added {w}. There is in some things a difference between Christ and these cities of refuge; there were six of these, but there is no other than Christ; the cities of refuge were only for such who shed blood ignorantly, but Christ is a refuge for all sorts of sinners; they were in a kind of exile who fled to them, but in Christ is complete liberty; it was possible that such might die in them, but those that are in Christ never die the second death; and at best those who fled thither were only saved from a temporal death, whereas those who betake themselves to Christ are saved with an everlasting salvation. Now "fleeing" to Christ, implies danger in the persons that flee, as such are in danger, in themselves, of the curse and condemnation of the law, of the wrath of God, and eternal death; it supposes a sense of this danger, which when right comes from the Spirit of God; it shows guilt of conscience, and a consciousness of the insufficiency of other refuges, and a knowledge of Christ; as a suitable one; and is expressive of haste and hearty desire to be there:

to lay hold on the hope set before us; by which is meant, not the grace of hope, but either heaven hoped for, or rather Christ the object of hope; who is not only set down at God's right hand, but is set forth in the Gospel and in the ordinances, both by the Spirit of God, and by the ministers of the word; that men may look and go to him, and trust and believe in him, to the saving of their souls; where he is in sight, near at hand, accessible to; the way to him is straightforward; and here he abides: and he is set before us to be laid hold upon, which intends an act of faith; which grace lays hold on the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and is done in a view of fulness and safety in him, and under a sense of danger otherwise; it supposes grace, and that in exercise and somewhat strong; and some degree of resolution and courage of faith, and the steadfastness and continuance of it; the soul determining, if it perishes it will perish here; and it shows that Christ and his grace are to be touched and laid hold upon by faith.

{s} T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 9. 2. {t} T. Hieros. Maccot, fol. 31. 4. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 232, 3. 4. Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 5. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Torah, pr. Affirm, 76, Bartenora in Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 6. {u} De profugis, p. 464. {w} T. Hieros. Maccot, fol. 32. 1. Maimon. ut supra, (Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8.) sect. 4.

Hebrews 6:19

Ver. 19. Which [hope] we have as an anchor of the soul,.... This world is as a sea; the church in it, and so every believer, is as a ship; the port that is bound unto is heaven; Christ is the pilot, and hope is the anchor: an anchor is cast on a bottom, out of sight; and when the ship is in a calm, or in danger of a rock, or near the shore; but is of no service without a cable: and when cast aright, keeps the ship steady: so hope is cast on Christ; whence he is often called hope itself, because he is the ground and foundation of it, and who is at present unseen to bodily eyes; and the anchor of hope without the cable of faith is of little service; but being cast aright on Christ, keeps the soul steady and immovable:

in some things there is a difference between hope and an anchor; an anchor is not of so much use in tempests as in a calm, but hope is; the cable may be cut or broke, and so the anchor be useless, but so it cannot be with faith and hope; when the ship is at anchor, it does not move forward, but it is not so with the soul, when hope is in exercise; the anchor of hope is not cast on anything below, but above; and here it is called the anchor of the soul, to distinguish it from any other, and to show the peculiar benefit of it to the soul. Pythagoras makes use of the same metaphor {x};

"riches (he says) are a weak anchor, glory: is yet weaker; the body likewise; principalities, honours, all these are weak and without strength; what then are strong anchors? prudence, magnanimity, fortitude; these no tempest shakes."

But these philosophical moral virtues are not to be compared with the Christian's grace of hope, which is

both sure and steadfast; it is in itself a grace firm and stable; it is permanent and can never be lost: and it is still more sure and steadfast, by virtue of what it is fixed upon, the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and by the immutability, faithfulness, and power of God it is concerned with; and through the aboundings and discoveries of divine love, grace, and mercy; and from the instances of grace to the vilest of sinners:

and which entereth into that within the vail; the holy of holies, heaven itself; in allusion to the vail which divided between the holy and the holy of holies: the things within the vail, or in heaven, which hope entering into fixes upon, are the person of Christ, who is entered there, and appears in the presence of God for his people; his blood which he has carried along with him, and by which he is entered there; his justifying righteousness, by which the law is fulfilled, the two tables of stone in the ark of the testimony; the sweet incense of his mediation, which is continually offered up by him; the mercy seat, or throne of grace, on which Jehovah sits as the God of grace; and all the glories of heaven; all which hope is concerned with, and receives strength and rigour from: and their being within the vail, is expressive of their hiddenness and invisibility at present, and of their safety and security, as well as of their sacredness; and this shows a difference between the hope of believers and others, whose hope fixes upon things short of these; and likewise the great privilege of a believer, who being made a priest unto God, has liberty and boldness to enter into the holiest of all. The Jews {y} speak of a vail in the world to come, which some are worthy to enter into.

{x} Apud Stobaeum, Serm. I. {y} Zohar in Gen. fol. 73. 3.

Hebrews 6:20

Ver. 20. Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus,.... Christ was a runner; he had a race to run, which lay in going about to heal diseases, in preaching the Gospel, in obeying the law, and in suffering death for his people; which race was run by him with great swiftness, strength, and courage, with patience, cheerfulness, and joy, and is now ended; as appears from the accomplishment of salvation, from his entrance into heaven, and session at the right hand of God; from the glorification of his human nature, and its everlasting freedom from the dominion of death: and this race is run out, as a "forerunner"; Christ is the most excellent runner; there is none like him; there is none that can come up to him; he has out ran and exceeded all others; he has performed in the best manner; he has run out his race first, and has entered into heaven first by his own blood; and he has cleared the way thither, and opened the gates of heaven for his people; and is a guide and pattern for them to follow: and he is the forerunner for them, as well as entered for them; for he was born, and he lived, and died for them, for their good and service; and he is entered into heaven for them, as man and Mediator, and as their high priest; where he represents their persons, appears and intercedes for them, takes care of their affairs, and presents their services; prepares mansions of glory for them, and takes possession of heaven in their name, and opens the way for them to follow him thither; all which gives great encouragement to hope to enter now, where Jesus is: who is

made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec; see **Heb 5:6**. This is repeated here, to lead on to what the apostle had to say concerning Melchizedek in the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hebrews 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 7

The apostle having made mention of Melchizedek in the latter part of the preceding chapter, proceeds in this to give some account of him, and of the excellency of his priesthood, and to show that Christ is a priest of his order, and is superior to Aaron and his sons. He first declares what Melchizedek was, that he was both king and priest; he names the place he was king of, and tells whose priest he was, even the priest of the most high God; and goes on to observe what he did, that he met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, that he blessed him, and took tithes of him, **Heb 7:1** and then interprets his name, and royal title, the one signifying king of righteousness, the other king of peace; that for anything that can be learned from the Scriptures, it is not known who was his father or his mother; what his lineage and descent; when he was born, or when he died; and that he is like to the Son of God, and continues a priest, **Heb 7:2** upon which the apostle calls upon the Hebrews to consider the greatness of his person; and as it appears from that single instance of his receiving tithes from the patriarch Abraham, **Heb 7:4** by which it is evident, that he is greater than the Levites; and which is demonstrated in the following particulars: the Levites received tithes of their brethren that came out of Abraham's loins, as they did, but Melchizedek, whose descent was not from them, received tithes from Abraham himself, and besides blessed him; and it is a clear case, that the lesser is blessed of the greater, **Heb 7:5** the Levites were mortal men that received tithes, but a testimony is bore to Melchizedek, that he lives, **Heb 6:8** yea, Levi himself paid tithes to Melchizedek, since he was in the loins of his father Abraham when Melchizedek met him, and took tithes of him; and therefore must be greater than Levi, **Heb 7:9**. And next the apostle proves the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood from this consideration, that there is another priest risen up, not of the order of Aaron, but of the order of Melchizedek, of which there would have been no need, if the Levitical priesthood had been perfect; nor would it have been changed, as it is, and which has also made a change of the law, by which it is established, necessary, **Heb 7:11** that the priest that is risen up is not of the order of Aaron, is clear, because he is of another tribe, even of the tribe of Judah, to which the priesthood did not belong, **Heb 7:13**, and that he is of the order of Melchizedek, and so not according to the ceremonial law, but after the power of an endless life, is manifest from the testimony of the sacred Scripture, **Heb 7:15** which lies in Ps 110:4 and that the ceremonial law, on which the Levitical priesthood stood, is changed and abrogated, is strongly asserted, and the reasons of it given, because it was weak and unprofitable, and made nothing perfect; and this was disannulled by Christ, the better hope brought in, who has made something perfect, and through whom we have access to God, **Heb 7:18**. Moreover, the superior excellency of Christ's priesthood to the Levitical one is shown in several particulars; the priests of Aaron's order were made without an oath; Christ was made with one, as is evident from the above cited testimony, **Heb 7:20** they were many, he but one; they were mortal, and did not continue, he continues ever, having an unchangeable priesthood, **Heb 7:23** wherefore, as they were not suffered to continue by reason of death, their priesthood was ineffectual; they could not take away sin, and save sinners; but Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that draw nigh to God by him, as a priest, and that because he ever lives to complete his office by intercession, **Heb 7:25** wherefore such an high priest as he is, must become men, and be suitable to them, especially since he is pure and holy, and in such an exalted state, **Heb 7:26** and this is another difference between him and the priests under the law; they were men that had infirmity, and were guilty of sins themselves, and so had need to offer for their own sins, and then for the sins of others; but Christ, the Son of God, who was consecrated a priest for evermore, by the word of the oath, had no sin of his own to offer sacrifice for, only the sins of his people, which he did once, when he offered himself, **Heb 7:27**.

Ver. 1. For this Melchisedec, king of Salem,.... Various have been the opinions of writers concerning Melchizedek; some have thought him to be more than a man; some, that he was an angel; others, that he was the Holy Ghost; and others, that he was a divine person superior to Christ, which needs no refutation; others have supposed that he was the Son of God himself: but he is expressly said to be like unto him, and Christ is said to be of his order; which manifestly distinguish the one from the other; besides, there is nothing said of Melchizedek which proves him to be more than a man: accordingly others take him to have been a mere man; but these are divided; some say that he was Shem, the son of Noah, which is the constant opinion of the Jewish writers {z}: but it is not true of him, that he was without father, and without mother, an account of his descent being given in Scripture; nor is it probable that he should be a king of a single city in Ham's country, and Abraham be a stranger there: others say, that he was a Canaanitish king, of the posterity of Ham; others affirm him to be a perfect sinless man, and that all that is said of him in Genesis, and in this context, is literally true of him; but that he should be immediately created by God, as Adam, and be without sin as he, are things entirely without any foundation: others take him to be a mere man, but an extraordinary one, eminently raised up by God to be a type of the Messiah; and think it most proper not to inquire curiously who he was, since the Scripture is silent concerning his genealogy and descent; and that as it should seem on purpose, that he might be a more full and fit type of Christ; and this sense appears best and safest. Aben Ezra says, his name signifies what he was, the king of a righteous place: Salem, of which he was king, was not Shalem, a city of Shechem, in the land of Canaan, Ge 33:18 afterwards called Salim, near to which John was baptizing, **Joh 3:23** where is shown the palace of Melchizedek in its ruins, which cannot be, since that city was laid to the ground, and sowed with salt by Abimelech, **Jud 9:45** but Jerusalem is the place; which is the constant opinion of the Jews {a}, and is called Salem in Ps 86:2. The interpretation of this word is given in the next verse; some of the Jewish writers referred to say, that it was usual for the kings of Jerusalem to be called Melchizedek and Adonizedek, as in Jos 10:3 just as the kings of Egypt were called Pharaoh. This king was also

priest of the most high God, as he is said to be, Ge 14:18 for he was both king and priest, in which he was an eminent type of Christ; and his being a king is no objection to his being a priest, since it was usual for kings to be priests; and though the Hebrew word "Cohen" sometimes signifies a prince, it cannot be so understood here, not only because the word is rendered "priest" by the Septuagint, and by the apostle, but because he is called the priest of God; and Christ is said to be of his order: and he is styled the priest of God, because he was called and invested by him with this office, and was employed in his service; who is said to be the most high God, from his dwelling on high, and from his superior power to all others, and to distinguish him from idol gods; this is a character of great honour given to Melchizedek;

who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings; the four kings, whose names are mentioned in Ge 14:1 whom Abraham slew, and over whom he got an entire victory, with only three hundred and eighteen men of his own house, after they had conquered the kings of Sodom, Gomorrha, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela: which shows that war is lawful; that enemies may be slain in war; that kings may fall as well as other men; and that those who have conquered others, may be conquered themselves: and as he was returning with his spoils, Melchizedek met him; not alone, which is not to be supposed of so great a person; nor empty, for he brought with him bread and wine, not for sacrifice, as the Papists would have it; but as Jarchi, a Jewish interpreter on the place observes, they used to do so to such as were fatigued in war; for this is to be considered as a neighbourly action, done in point of interest and gratitude, and was a truly Christian one, and very laudable and commendable; and doubtless had something in it typical of Christ, who gives to hungry and weary saints the bread of life, and refreshes them with the wine of divine love and grace:

and blessed him; Abraham, and the most high God also: the form of blessing both is recorded in Ge 14:19. This was not a mere civil salutation, nor only a congratulation upon his success, nor only a return of thanks for victory, though these things are included; nor did he do this as a private person, but as the priest of the most high God, and blessed him in his name authoritatively, as the high priest among the Jews afterwards did, **Nu 6:23** and in this he was a type of Christ, who blesses his people with all spiritual blessings, with redemption, justification, pardon, peace, and all grace, and with eternal glory.

(Gill changed his mind on the location of Salam when he later wrote the Old Testament portion of the Expositor. See Gill on "Ge 14:18". Ed.)

{z} Targum in Jon. & Jerus. Jarchi, Baal Hatturim, Levi ben Gersom & Abendana in Gen. xiv. 18. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 182. 4. Pirke Eliezer, c. 8. Juchasin, fol. 135. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 16. 2. Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 1. 2. Peritzol. Itinera Mundi, p. 17. {a} Targ. Onk. Jon. & Jerus. Levi ben Gersom, Aben Ezra & ben Melec in Gen. xiv. 18. Tosaphot T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 16. 1.

Hebrews 7:2

Ver. 2. To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all,.... Or tithes, as in Ge 14:20. Philo the Jew {b} renders the Hebrew phrase, lkm rvem, just as the apostle does dekathn apo pantwn, "a tenth part of all", or "out of all"; not of all that he brought back, as Lot's goods, or the king of Sodom's, or any others; only of the spoils of the enemy, as in **Heb 7:4** which is no proof of any obligation on men to pay tithes now to any order of men; for this was a voluntary act, and not what any law obliged to; it was done but once, and not constantly, or every year; it was out of the spoils of the enemy, and not out of his own substance, or of the increase of the earth; nor was it for the maintenance of Melchizedek, as a priest, who also was a king, and was richly provided for; but to testify his gratitude to God, for the victory obtained, and his reverence of, and subjection to the priest of God.

First being by interpretation king of righteousness; or a "righteous king", as Melchizedek was; not the king of a righteous place, as Aben Ezra thought, a place wherein dwelt righteousness, or righteous persons; but it was his proper name, which so signifies, and in which he was a type of Christ; who is righteous, not only as God, and as man, and as Mediator, but particularly in the administration of his kingly office: his kingdom lies in righteousness, as well as peace; the subjects of it are righteous persons, and all his ways are just and true; his Gospel, by which he rules, is a declaration of righteousness; and he himself is the author of righteousness to all his people:

and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace; and may respect his peaceable government; and is very applicable to Christ, the Prince of peace;

whose kingdom is a kingdom of peace; his sceptre is a sceptre of peace; his royal proclamation is the Gospel of peace; and his subjects are the sons of peace; and he himself is the author of peace, not only between Jew and Gentile, but between God and his people; and he is the donor of peace, external, internal, and eternal. So Philo the Jew {c} interprets this name, "king of peace", just as the apostle does.

{b} De Congressu, p. 438. {c} Leg. Alleg. l. 2. p. 75.

Hebrews 7:3

Ver. 3. Without father, without mother, without descent,.... Which is to be understood not of his person, but of his priesthood; that his father was not a priest, nor did his mother descend from any in that office; nor had he either a predecessor or a successor in it, as appears from any authentic accounts: or this is to be interpreted, not of his natural, but scriptural being; for no doubt, as he was a mere man, he had a father, and a mother, and a natural lineage and descent; but of these no mention is made in Scripture, and therefore said to be without them; and so the Syriac version renders it; "whose father and mother are not written in the genealogies"; or there is no genealogical account of them. The Arabic writers tell us who his father and his mother were; some of them say that Peleg was his father: so Elmacinus {d}, his words are these; Peleg lived after he begat Rehu two hundred and nine years; afterwards he begat Melchizedek, the priest whom we have now made mention of. Patricides {e}, another of their writers, expresses himself after this manner

"they who say Melchizedek had neither beginning of days, nor end of life, and argue from the words of the Apostle Paul, asserting the same, do not rightly understand the saying of the Apostle Paul; for Shem, the son of Noah, after he had taken Melchizedek, and withdrew him from his parents, did not set down in writing how old he was, when he went into the east, nor what was his age when he died; but Melchizedek was the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Salah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah; and yet none of those patriarchs is called his father. This only the Apostle Paul means, that none of his family served in the temple, nor were children and tribes assigned to him. Matthew and Luke the evangelists only relate the heads of tribes: hence the Apostle Paul does not write the name of his father, nor the name of his mother."

And with these writers Sahid Aben Batric {f} agrees, who expressly affirms that Melchizedek was glap Nba, "the son of Peleg": though others of them make him to be the son of Peleg's son, whose name was Heraclim. The Arabic Catena {g} on Ge 10:25, "the name of one was Peleg", has this note in the margin;

"and this (Peleg) was the father of Heraclim, the father of Melchizedek;"

and in a preceding chapter, his pedigree is more particularly set forth:

"Melchizedek was the son of Heraclim, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber; and his mother's name was Salathiel, the daughter of Gomer, the son of Japheth, the son of Noah; and Heraclim, the son of Eber, married his wife Salathiel, and she was with child, and brought forth a son, and called his name Melchizedek, called also king of Salem: after this the genealogy is set down at length. Melchizedek, son of Heraclim, which was the son of Peleg, which was the son of Eber, which was the son of Arphaxad, &c. till you come to, which was the son of Adam, on whom be peace."

It is very probable Epiphanius has regard to this tradition, when he observes {h}, that some say that the father of Melchizedek was called Eracla, and his mother Astaroth, the same with Asteria. Some Greek {i} writers say he was of the lineage of Sidus, the son of Aegyptus, a king of Lybia, from whence the Egyptians are called: this Sidus, they say, came out of Egypt into the country of the Canaanitish nations, now called Palestine, and subdued it, and dwelled in it, and built a city, which he called Sidon, after his own name: but all this is on purpose concealed, that he might be a more apparent of Christ, who, as man, is "without father"; for though, as God, he has a Father, and was never without one, being begotten by him, and was always with him, and in him; by whom he was sent, from whom he came, and whither he is gone; to whom he is the way, and with whom he is an advocate: yet, as man, he had no father; Joseph was his reputed father only; nor was the Holy Ghost his Father; nor is he ever said to be begotten as man, but was born of a virgin. Some of the Jewish writers themselves say, that the Redeemer, whom God will raise up, shall be without father {j}. And he is without mother, though not in a spiritual sense, every believer being so to him as such; nor in a natural sense, as man, for the Virgin Mary was his mother; but in a divine sense, as God: and he is "without descent or genealogy"; not as man, for there is a genealogical account of him as such, in **Mt 1:1** and his pedigree and kindred were well known to the Jews; but as God; and this distinguishes him from the gods of the Heathens, who were genealogized by them, as may be seen in Hesiod, Apollodorus, Hyginus, and other writers; and this condemns the blasphemous genealogies of the Gnostics and Valentinians. It follows,

having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; that is, there is no account which shows when he was born, or when he died; and in this he was a type of Christ, who has no beginning of days, was from the beginning, and in the beginning, and is the beginning, and was from everlasting; as appears from his nature as God, from his names, from his office as Mediator, and from his concern in the council and covenant of peace, and in the election of his people; and he has no end of life, both as God and man; he is the living God; and though as man he died once, he will die no more, but lives for ever. It is further said of Melchizedek,

but made like unto the Son of God: in the above things; from whence it appears, that he is not the Son of God; and that Christ, as the Son of God, existed before him, and therefore could not take this character from his incarnation or resurrection:

abideth a priest continually; not in person, but in his antitype Christ Jesus; for there never will be any change of Christ's priesthood; nor will it ever be transferred to another; the virtue and efficacy of it will continue for ever; and he will ever live to make intercession; and will always bear the glory of his being both priest and King upon his throne: the Syriac version renders it, "his priesthood abides for ever"; which is true both of Melchizedek and of Christ.

{d} In Hottinger. Smegma Orientale, l. 1. c. 8. p. 269, 254. {e} In ib. p. 305, 306, 254. {f} In Mr. Gregory's Preface to his Works. {g} In ib. {h} Contra Haeres. Haeres. 55. {i} Suidas in voce Melchisedec, Malala, l. 3. Glycas, Cedrenus, & alii. {j} R. Moses Hadarsan apud Galatin. l. 3. c. 17. & l. 8. c. 2.

Hebrews 7:4

Ver. 4. Now consider how great this man was,.... Melchizedek, of whom so many great and wonderful things are said in the preceding verses: and as follows,

unto whom the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils; of Abraham's giving tithes to him, See Gill on "Heb 7:2" and Melchizedek's greatness is aggravated, not only from this act of Abraham's, but from Abraham's being a "patriarch", who did it; he was the patriarch of patriarchs, as the sons of Jacob are called, **Ac 7:8** he is the patriarch of the whole Jewish nation, and of many nations, and of all believers, the friend of God, and heir of the world; how great then must Melchizedek be, to whom he paid tithes? and how much greater must Christ, the antitype of Melchizedek, be?

Hebrews 7:5

Ver. 5. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi,.... Or Levites; who are of the tribe of Levi, whose descent is from him:

who receive the office of the priesthood; as some of them were priests, though not all; and the Levites therefore are sometimes called priests. R. Joshua ben Levi says, that in twenty four places the priests are called Levites; and this is one of them, Eze 44:15 "and the priests and Levites", &c. {k}

these have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law; the ceremonial law, Nu 18:20, these they took of all the people of Israel in the rest of the tribes, by the commandment of God, on account of their service in the tabernacle; and because they had no inheritance in the land; and to show that the Israelites held their land of God himself:

that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham; who are their brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, though of different tribes; and from these they receive, notwithstanding they are the sons of Abraham: but here a difficulty arises, how the Levites that were priests can be said to receive tithes from the people, when they received the tenth part of the tithes, or the tithe of tithes from the Levites, Nu 18:26, but it should be observed, that it was not necessary that the Levites should give these tithes to the priests themselves; an Israelite might do it, and so give the Levites the less; on which account the priests may be said to receive from the people; besides, Ezra in his time ordered, that the first tithe should not be given to the Levites, but to the priests, because they would not go up with him to Jerusalem {l}.

{k} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 86. 2. & Becorot, fol. 4. 1. {l} Maimon. Hilchot Maaser, c. 1. sect. 4.

Hebrews 7:6

Ver. 6. But he whose descent is not counted from them, &c] That is, Melchizedek, whose genealogy or pedigree is not reckoned from the Levites, nor from any from whom they descend; his lineal descent is not the same with theirs; and so did not receive tithes by any law, as they did, but by virtue of his superiority: received tithes of Abraham; not from the people, or his brethren, but from Abraham, the father of the people of Israel, and of Levi himself:

and blessed him that had the promises; of a Son, and of the Messiah, that should spring from him, in whom all nations should be blessed, and of the land of Canaan, and of the blessings of grace and glory. This shows that Melchizedek had a descent, though it was not known; and that, since his descent was not the same with the Levites, he was a more proper type of Christ, who belonged not to that, but another tribe.

Hebrews 7:7

Ver. 7. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the greater. This is a self-evident truth, and is undeniable; it admits of no controversy, and cannot be gainsaid, that he that blesseth is greater in that respect than he that is blessed by him; as the priests were greater in their office than the people who were blessed by them; and so Melchizedek, as a priest of the most high God, and as blessing Abraham, was greater than he; and so must be greater than the Levites, who sprung from him; and his priesthood be more excellent than theirs; and consequently Christ, his antitype, and who was of his order, must be greater too; which is the design of the apostle throughout the whole of his reasoning.

Hebrews 7:8

Ver. 8. And here men that die receive tithes, &c,] The priests and Levites were not only men, and mortal men, subject to death, but they did die, and so did not continue, by reason of death, **Heb 7:24**

but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth; which is to be understood of Melchizedek; who is not opposed to men, as if he was not a man, nor to mortal men, but to men that die; nor is he said to be immortal, but to live: and this may respect the silence of the Scripture concerning him, which gives no account of his death; and may be interpreted of the perpetuity of his priesthood, and of his living in his antitype Christ; and the testimony concerning him is in Ps 110:4.

Hebrews 7:9

Ver. 9. And as I may so say,.... With truth, and with great propriety and pertinence:

Levi also who receiveth tithes; or the Levites, who receive tithes according to the law of Moses from the people of Israel:

paid tithes in Abraham; that is, to Melchizedek; and therefore Melchizedek must be greater than they, and his priesthood a more excellent one than theirs; since they who receive tithes from others gave tithes to him.

Hebrews 7:10

Ver. 10. For he was yet in the loins of his father,.... Abraham; namely, Levi and his whole posterity; which is to be understood seminally, just as all mankind were in the loins of Adam, when he sinned and fell, and so they sinned and fell in him; and so Levi was in Abraham's loins,

when Melchisedec met him; which, as it proves Melchizedek to be greater than Levi, and much more Jesus Christ, who is a priest of his order, which is the grand thing the apostle has in view; so it serves to illustrate several points of doctrine, in which either of the public heads, Adam and Christ, are concerned, with respect to their seed and offspring; such as personal election in Christ, an eternal donation of all blessings of grace to the elect in him, eternal justification in him, the doctrine of original sin, and the saints' crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and session in Christ, and together with him.

Hebrews 7:11

Ver. 11. If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood,.... The priesthood which was established in the tribe of Levi; so called, to distinguish it from that which was before this institution, from the times of Adam, as well as from the priesthood of Melchizedek, and from the priesthood of Christ, and from that of his people under the Gospel, who are all priests; as well as to restrain it to the subject of the apostle's discourse: the design of which is to show, that there is no perfection by it; as is clear from the priests themselves, who were but men, mortal men, sinful men, and so imperfect, and consequently their priesthood; and from their offerings, between which, and sin, there is no proportion; and at best were but typical of the sacrifice of Christ; and could neither make the priests nor the worshippers perfect, neither in their own consciences, nor in the sight of God: moral actions are preferred before them, and yet by these there is no perfection, justification, and salvation; to which may be added, that the sacrifices the priests offered did not extend to all kind of sins, only to sins of ignorance, not to presumptuous ones; and there were many under that dispensation punished with death; and at most they only delivered from temporal, not eternal punishment, and only entitled to a temporal life, not an eternal one.

For under it the people received the law: not the moral law, which was given to Adam in innocence, and as it came by Moses, it was before the Levitical priesthood took place; but the ceremonial law, and which was carnal, mutable, and made nothing perfect: the Syriac version renders it, "by which a law was imposed upon the people"; to regard the office of priesthood, and the priests in it, and bring their sacrifices to them; and the Arabic version reads, "the law of a the priest's office"; which office was after the law of a carnal commandment, and so imperfect, as is manifest from what follows: for had perfection been by it,

what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? that there was another priest promised and expected, and that he should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and who was to make his soul an offering for sin, is certain, **Ezr 2:63** and such an one is risen, even Jesus of Nazareth; and yet there would have been no need of him, and especially that he should be of a different order from Aaron's, had there been perfection by the Levitical priesthood.

Hebrews 7:12

Ver. 12. For the priesthood being changed,.... Not translated from one tribe, family, or order, to another, but utterly abolished; for though it is called an everlasting priesthood, yet that is to be understood with a limitation, as the word "everlasting" often is, as relating to things under that dispensation; for nothing is more certain than that it is done away: it was of right abrogated at the death of Christ, and it is now in fact; since the destruction of Jerusalem, the daily sacrifice has ceased, and the children of Israel have been many days without one, and without an ephod. And the Jews themselves own, that the high priesthood was to cease in time to come {m}, and which they say Azariah the son of Oded prophesied of in 2Ch 15:3.

There is made of necessity a change also of the law; not the moral law, that was in being before the priesthood of Aaron, nor do they stand and fall together; besides, this still remains, for it is perfect, and cannot be made void by any other; nor is it set aside by Christ's priesthood: though there is a sense in which it is abolished; as it is in the hands of Moses; as it is a covenant of works; as to justification by it; and as to its curse and condemnation to them that are Christ's; yet it still remains in the hands of Christ, and as a rule of walk and conversation; and is useful, and continues so on many accounts: but either the judicial law; not that part of it which is founded on justice and equity, and was a means of guarding the moral law, for that still subsists; but that which was given to the Jews as Jews, and some parts of which depended on the priesthood, and so ceased with it; as the laws concerning the cities of refuge, raising up seed to a deceased brother, preserving inheritances in families, and judging and determining controversies: or rather the ceremonial law, which was but a shadow of good things to come, and was given but for a time; and this concerned the priesthood, and was made void by the priesthood of Christ; for that putting an end to the Levitical priesthood, the law which related to it must unavoidably cease, and become of no effect. This the Jews most strongly deny; God, they {n} say, will not change nor alter the law of Moses for ever. The nineth article of their creed, as drawn up by Maimonides, runs thus {o};

"I believe with a perfect faith that this law tplxwm aht al "shall not be changed", nor shall there be another law from the Creator, blessed be his name."

But the reasoning of the apostle is strong and unanswerable.

{m} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 160. 4. {n} Seder Tephillot, Ed. Amsterd. fol. 2. 1. {o} Apud Seder Tephillot, Ed. Basil. fol. 86. 2.

Hebrews 7:13

Ver. 13. For he of whom these things are spoken,.... In Ps 110:4 and in the type of him Melchizedek, in the preceding verses; for not Melchizedek is here meant, but the Lord Jesus Christ, as appears by what follows; the antitype of Melchizedek, the Lord our righteousness, the Prince of peace, the priest of God, that lives for ever, without father, without mother, &c.

pertaineth to another tribe; the tribe of Judah, and not the tribe of Levi:

of which no man gave attendance at the altar; either of burnt offering or of incense; that is, no man waited there, or took upon him and exercised the priest's office that was of the tribe of Judah: no man might lawfully do it; Uzziah, indeed, thrust himself into the priest's office, who was of that tribe, and went into the temple and burnt incense upon the altar of incense; but then he had no right to do it, and was punished for it.

Hebrews 7:14

Ver. 14. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah,.... Out of the tribe of Judah; it is certain that the Messiah was to spring from that tribe, Ge 49:10 he was to be of the family of Jesse, and of the house of David; and hence he is sometimes called David himself; and so the Jews expect that he will come from the tribe of Judah, and not from any other {p}; and it is evident that Jesus, who is our Lord by creation, redemption, and the conquest of his grace, sprung from this tribe: this is clear from the place of his birth, Bethlehem of Judah; and from his reputed father Joseph, and real mother Mary, being both of the house of David; and this was known to the Jews, and it is owned by them that he was near to the kingdom {q}, which he could not be if he was not of that tribe; and hence he is called the lion of the tribe of Judah;

of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood: he said many things of it in De 33:8 and relates many things concerning it as spoken by Jacob, but nothing about the priesthood, as if it belonged to that, or that any that should spring from it should exercise that office, The Alexandrian copy, the Claromontane manuscript, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "concerning the priests"; whence it follows that there is a change of the priesthood, and that the Messiah, as he was not to be, so he is not a priest of Aaron's order, not being of the same tribe.

{p} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 49. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 62. 2.
{q} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.

Hebrews 7:15

Ver. 15. And it is yet far more evident,.... From a fact which cannot be denied;

for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest; or another has risen, even Jesus the son of David, of the tribe of Judah; another from Aaron, one that is not of his family or tribe, but one like to Melchizedek: hence we learn that Melchizedek and Christ are not the same person; and that the order and similitude of Melchizedek are the same; and that Christ's being of his order only imports that there is a resemblance and likeness between him and Melchizedek, in many things, which are observed in the beginning of this chapter: and this "arising" does not intend Christ's setting up himself, only his appearance in this form; and being expressed in the present tense, denotes the continual being, and virtue of his priesthood.

Hebrews 7:16

Ver. 16. Who was made,.... Not as man, much less as God; but as a priest, constituted and appointed one:

not after the law of a carnal commandment: either the ceremonial law in general, which was a carnal one, if we consider the persons to whom it belonged, the Israelites according to the flesh; it was incumbent upon, and might be performed by such who were only carnal; and it was performed by and for men that were in the flesh, or mortal; and if we consider the matter of it, the subject on which various of its rites were exercised was the flesh or body, and which were performed by manual operation; and the sacrifices of it were the flesh of beasts; and these were for the sins of the flesh, and for the removing the ceremonial uncleanness of it; and the virtue of them reached only to the purifying of the flesh; and the whole of it is distinct from the moral law, which is spiritual, and reaches to the spirit or soul of man; whereas this only was concerned about temporal and external things: or else the law of the priesthood is particularly intended; or that commandment which respected the priesthood of Aaron; which law regarded the carnal descent of his sons; enjoined a carnal inauguration of them, and provided for their succession and continuance in a carnal way; after which, Christ the great high priest did not become one:

but after the power of an endless life; this may be understood either of the Gospel, according to which Christ is a priest; and which is called "life", in opposition to the law which is the ministration of death; and because it is the means of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving drooping saints; and points out Christ the way of life, and has brought life and immortality to light: and may be said to be "endless", in distinction from the law, which is temporary;

and because it is itself permanent and everlasting; contains in it the promise of eternal life, and is the means of bringing souls unto it: and there is a "power" goes along with it; which distinguishes it from the weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law, which is abolished, because of the weakness of it; for it is attended with the power of the Spirit of God, and is the power of God unto salvation: or else this intends the endless life which Christ has, in and of himself; and which qualifies him for a priest; and stands opposed to the mortality of the priests, and to that law which could not secure them from it: the priests died, and the law by which they were priests could not prevent their death; Christ is the living God, the Prince of life, he had power to lay down his life as man, and power to take it up again; and his life, as man, is an endless one, which qualifies him for that part of his priestly office, his intercession and advocacy: or it may design that power, which his Father has given him as Mediator, of an endless life, both for himself and for all his people; and regards his ever living as a priest, and the perpetuity of and the continual virtue and efficacy of it.

Hebrews 7:17

Ver. 17. For he testifieth,.... That is, either David, the penman of the psalm, or rather the Holy Ghost, the enditer of it, or God in the Scripture, in Ps 110:4 of this form of citing Scripture,
See Gill on "Heb 2:6".

thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec; see **Heb 5:6**.

Hebrews 7:18

Ver. 18. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment,.... Not the moral law; though what is here said of the commandment may be applied to that; that is sometimes called the commandment, **Ro 7:12** it went before the promise of the Messiah, and the Gospel of Christ, and the dispensation of it; it is in some respects weak; it cannot justify from the guilt of sin, nor free from the power of it, nor secure from death, the punishment of it, nor give eternal life; though it has a power to command, accuse, convince, and condemn: and it is also unprofitable in the business of justification and salvation; though otherwise it is profitable to convince of sin, to show what righteousness is, and to be a rule of conversation to the saints in the hand of Christ; yet not this, but the ceremonial law is meant, which is the commandment that respected the

Levitical priesthood, and is called a carnal one, and is inclusive of many others, and, which distinguishes that dispensation from the Gospel one: and this may be said to be

going before; with respect to time, being before the Gospel state, or the exhibition of the new covenant of grace; and with respect to use, as a type or shadow of good things to come; and as it was a schoolmaster going before, and leading on to the knowledge of evangelical truths: and this is now disannulled, abrogated, and made void; the middle wall of partition is broken down, and the law of commandments contained in ordinances is abolished:

for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof; the ceremonial law was weak; it could not expiate or atone for sin, in the sight of God; it could not remove the guilt of sin from the conscience, but there was still a remembrance of it; nor could it cleanse from the filth of sin; all it could do was, to expiate sin typically, and sanctify externally to the purifying of the flesh; and all the virtue it had was owing to Christ, whom it prefigured; and therefore, being fulfilled in him, it ceased: and it was "unprofitable"; not before the coming of Christ, for then it was a shadow, a type, a schoolmaster, and had its usefulness; but since his coming, who is the body and substance of it, it is unprofitable to be joined to him; and is of no service in the affair of salvation; and is no other than a grievous yoke of bondage; yea, is what renders Christ unprofitable and of no effect, when submitted to as in force, and as necessary to salvation; and because of these things, it is abolished and made null and void. The Jews, though they are strenuous assertors of the unalterableness of the law of Moses, yet sometimes are obliged to acknowledge the abrogation of the ceremonial law in the times of the Messiah; the commandment, they say {r}, meaning this, shall cease in the time to come; and again,

"all sacrifices shall cease in the future state, or time to come, (i.e. the times of the Messiah,) but the sacrifice of praise {s}."

{r} T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 61. 2. {s} Vajikra Rabba, scct. 9. fol. 153. 1. & sect. 27. fol. 168. 4.

Hebrews 7:19

Ver. 19. For the law made nothing perfect,.... Or no man; neither any of the priests that offered sacrifices, nor any of the people for whom they were offered: it could not perfectly make atonement for sin; nor make men perfectly holy or righteous; it could neither justify nor sanctify; neither bring in a perfect righteousness, nor bring men to perfect holiness, and so to eternal life and salvation:

but the bringing in of a better hope did; not the grace of hope; that is not something newly brought in, the saints under the Old Testament had it; nor is it better now than then, though it has greater advantages and more encouragement to the exercise of it: nor heaven and eternal glory, the thing hoped for; the saints under the legal dispensation hoped for this, as well as believers under the present dispensation; nor is what the latter hope for better than that the former did: nor is God the author and object of hope intended; the phrase of bringing in will not suit with him; besides, he is distinguished from it, in the next clause: to understand it of the Gospel, the means of hope, and of encouraging it, is no ill sense; that standing in direct contradistinction to the law: but the priesthood of Christ, of which the apostle is treating in the context, is generally understood, which is the ground of hope; for all promises respecting eternal life are confirmed by it, and all blessings connected with it procured; and it is better than the Aaronic priesthood, under the law; and a better ground of hope than the sacrifices of that law were: Christ himself may be designed, who is often called hope, being the object, ground, and foundation of it; and is a better one than Moses, or his law, Aaron, or his priesthood; and it is by him men draw nigh to God; and the bringing in of him or his priesthood shows that Christ's priesthood was not upon the foot of the law, and that he existed as a priest, before brought in, and as a better hope, though not so fully revealed; and it may have respect to his coming in the flesh, being sent, or brought in by his father: now the bringing in of him and his priesthood did make something perfect; it brought to perfection all the types, promises, and prophecies of the Old Testament, the whole law, moral and ceremonial; it brought in perfect atonement, reconciliation, pardon, righteousness, and redemption; it perfected the persons of all God's elect; and perfectly provided for their holiness, peace, comfort, and eternal happiness: some read the words "but it", the law, "was the bringing in of a better hope": the law led unto, made way for, and introduced. Christ, the better hope; and so the Arabic version, "seeing it should be an entrance to a more noble hope"; the Syriac version renders it, "but in the room of it entered a hope more excellent than that"; than the law:

by the which we draw nigh unto God; the Father, as the Father of Christ, and of his people in him, and as the Father of mercies, and the God of all grace and this drawing nigh to him is to be understood not locally but spiritually; it includes the whole worship of God, but chiefly designs prayer: and ought to be done with a true heart, in opposition to hypocrisy; and in faith, in opposition to doubting; and with reverence and humility, in opposition to rashness; and with freedom, boldness, and thankfulness: and it is through Christ and his priesthood that souls have encouragement to draw nigh to God; for Christ has paid all their debts, satisfied law and justice, procured the pardon of their sins, atonement and reconciliation for them; he is the way of their access to God; he gives them audience and acceptance; he presents their prayers, and intercedes for them himself.

Hebrews 7:20

Ver. 20. And inasmuch as not without an oath,.... Our version supplies as follows,

he was made priest; which well agrees with what is said in the next verse; the Syriac version renders it, "and which he confirmed to us by an oath"; that is, the better hope, Christ and his priesthood, said to be brought in, and by which men draw nigh to God; this is established by the oath of God himself referring to Ps 110:4 afterwards cited in proof of it.

Hebrews 7:21

Ver. 21. For these priests were made without an oath,.... The priests of the tribe of Levi, and of the order of Aaron, were installed into their office, and invested with it, without an oath; no mention is made of any when Aaron and his sons were put into it in Moses's time; nor was any used afterwards, neither by God, nor by the priests, nor by the people; it is true indeed that after the sect of the Sadducees arose, the high priest on the day of atonement, was obliged to take an oath that he would not change any of the customs of the day {t}; but then this regarded not his investiture, but the execution of his office; and was an oath of his and not of the Lord's, which is here designed:

but this with an oath; that is, Christ was made an high priest with an oath, even with an oath of God; which gives his priesthood the preference to the Levitical priesthood, which was without one: and this oath was made,

by him that said unto him: the Syriac version reads, "as he said to him by David"; that is, in Ps 110:4. David being the penman of that psalm, in which stand the following words of the Father to Christ:

the Lord sware and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec; which proves that Jehovah swore that Christ should be a priest, and continue so: swearing, when ascribed to God, is after the manner of men, and is always by himself, and never upon any trivial account; but either to confirm his love to his people, or his covenant with them, or the mission of his Son to be the Redeemer, or, as here, his priestly office: and this oath was made not so much on Christ's account, as on account of the heirs of promise, for their consolation; and shows the dignity, validity, importance, and singularity of Christ's priesthood, as well as the durableness of it; and of this oath God will never repent: repentance cannot properly fall upon God, on any account; for it is contrary to his holiness and righteousness, and to his happiness, to his unchangeableness, omniscience, and omnipotence; it is indeed sometimes ascribed to him improperly, and after the manner of men; and only regards a change of his outward conduct according to his immutable will; and the change that is made is in the creature, and not in God himself: but God will not repent in any sense of the priesthood of Christ, nor of his oath, that it should continue for ever according to the order of Melchizedek; for he was every way qualified for it, and has faithfully performed it, not his investiture, but the execution of his office; and was an oath of his and not of the Lord's, which is here designed:

but this with an oath; that is, Christ was made an high priest with an oath, even with an oath of God; which gives his priesthood the preference to the Levitical priesthood, which was without one: and this oath was made,

by him that said unto him: the Syriac version reads, "as he said to him by David"; that is, in Ps 110:4. David being the penman of that psalm, in which stand the following words of the Father to Christ:

the Lord sware and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec; which proves that Jehovah swore that Christ should be a priest, and continue so: swearing, when ascribed to God, is after the manner of men, and is always by himself, and never upon any trivial account; but either to confirm his love to his people, or his covenant with them, or the mission of his Son to be the Redeemer, or, as here, his priestly office: and this oath was made not so much on Christ's account, as on account of the heirs of promise, for their consolation; and shows the dignity, validity, importance, and singularity of Christ's priesthood, as well as the durableness of it; and of this oath God will never repent: repentance cannot properly fall upon God, on any account; for it is contrary to his holiness and righteousness, and to his happiness, to his

unchangeableness, omniscience, and omnipotence; it is indeed sometimes ascribed to him improperly, and after the manner of men; and only regards a change of his outward conduct according to his immutable will; and the change that is made is in the creature, and not in God himself: but God will not repent in any sense of the priesthood of Christ, nor of his oath, that it should continue for ever according to the order of Melchizedek; for he was every way qualified for it, and has faithfully performed it.

{t} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5.

Hebrews 7:22

Ver. 22. By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. Or "covenant", for the word signifies both; and what is intended may be called both a testament and a covenant; a testament, because it is founded in the good will and pleasure of God, and respects an inheritance bequeathed by God the Father to his children, which was confirmed and comes to them by the death of Christ the testator; and a covenant, it being a compact or agreement made by the Father with Christ, as the representative of all the elect; in which promises and blessings of all sorts are provided and secured for them in him; and is called in Scripture a covenant of life and peace, because these are things concerned in it; and is commonly by men called the covenant of grace, because it springs from the grace of God, the subject matter of it is grace, and the end of it is the glory of God's grace: now this is better than the covenant of works broken by man, and which exposes him to the curse and condemnation of the law; or than the covenant of the Levitical priesthood, by which was no perfection; and the form of administration of it under the Gospel dispensation is better than that under the law, for it is now revealed more clearly, and administered without types, shadows, and sacrifices; and the extent of its administration is larger, reaching to Gentiles as well as Jews; and besides, it is now actually ratified and confirmed by the blood of Christ, which is therefore called the blood of the everlasting covenant: and of this testament or covenant Christ is the "surety"; the word signifies one that draws nigh: Christ drew nigh to his Father in the council of peace, and undertook to be the Saviour and Redeemer of his people he substituted himself in their place and stead; he interposed between the creditor and the debtor, and became surety for the payment of the debts of the latter, and so stood engaged for them, and in their room: Christ is not the surety for the Father to his people, but for them to the Father; as to satisfy for their sins, to work out a righteousness for them, to preserve and keep them, and make them happy; which is an instance of matchless love.

Hebrews 7:23

Ver. 23. And they truly were many priests,.... There were many common priests at a time; and though there was but one high priest at a time, yet there were many of them in a line of succession from Aaron down to the apostle's time. The Jews say {u}, that under the first temple eighteen high priests ministered, and under the second temple more than three hundred: this shows the imperfection of this priesthood, since it was in many hands; no one continuing and being sufficient to execute it; but Christ is the one and only high priest; there is no other, nor is there any need of any other: the reason why there were so many under the law was,

because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; death has a power to forbid a long continuance in this world, and no man does continue long here: death puts a stop to men's works, and to the exercise of their several callings; no office, even the most sacred, exempts from it; no, not the office of high priests: these were but men, sinful men, and so died; and their discontinuance by reason of death shows the imperfection of their priesthood: there was another reason besides this which the apostle gives, why the high priests were so many, and especially about this time; and that is, the office was bought for money, and men that would give most were put into it: hence there were frequent changes; the Jews themselves say, they changed every twelve months {w}.

{u} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 9. 1. Piske Tosephot Zebachim, Art. 72. {w} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2.

Hebrews 7:24

Ver. 24. But this man, because he continueth ever,.... Though he died, death did not forbid him to continue, as it does other men; he was not forced to die, he died voluntarily; and he continued but for a small time under the power of death; besides, his death was a branch of his priestly office: so that he not only continued in his divine nature, which still had the human nature in union with it, but he continued in his office as a priest, and quickly rose from the dead; and the virtue of his sacrifice always remains, and he himself ever lives as an intercessor: wherefore he hath an unchangeable priesthood; which will never be antiquated, and give place to another; nor does it, or ever will it pass from him to another, for it is needless, seeing he lives, and no other is sufficient for it; and it would be injustice to pass it to another; the glory of it is due to him; and this is matter of comfort to the saints, that he sits a priest upon his throne, and that his priesthood always continues.

Hebrews 7:25

Ver. 25. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost,.... Because he continues ever, and has an unchangeable priesthood. This is to be understood not of temporal salvation, nor of providential favours, but of spiritual and eternal salvation; and includes a deliverance from all evil, here and hereafter, and an enjoyment of all good in this world, and in that to come: Christ was called to this work by his Father; he was promised by him to do it, and was sent by him to effect it, and has accomplished it; and this is the reason of his name Jesus, and was the end of his coming into this world, and which the Gospel always represents as such: this work required ability; here was a law to be fulfilled; justice to be satisfied; sin to be bore, removed, and atoned for; many enemies to engage with, and a cursed death to undergo: it was a work no creature, angels, or men, were able to undertake and perform; the priests under the law could not; men cannot save themselves, nor can any creature work out salvation for them: but Christ is able; as appears from the help his Father laid on him, who knew him to be mighty; from his own undertaking it, being mighty to save; and from his having completely effected it; and he must needs be able to do it, since he is the mighty God: and he is able to save to the uttermost; "to the utmost perfection", as the Arabic version renders it; so as nothing can be wanting in the salvation he is the author of, nor anything added to it; or "for ever", as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions render it; to the utmost of time, even to eternity, as well as to the utmost of men's wants: the persons he is able to save, are such

that come to God by him; Christ is able to save all the world, were it his will; but not his absolute power is designed by his ability, but that power which by his will is put into act; and reaches not to all men, for all are not saved; and those that are, are described by special characters, as here; they are such who come to God, not essentially considered, but personally, or in the person of the Father; and not as an absolute God, but as in Christ; not as on a throne of justice, but as on a throne of grace and mercy; not only as Christ's Father, but as theirs; and not only as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of grace: and this act of coming to him is a fruit of his everlasting love; an effect of Christ's death; is peculiar to regenerate persons; takes in the whole service of God, especially prayer; is not local but spiritual, it is by faith; and supposes spiritual life, and implies a sense of need, and of God's ability and willingness to help: the medium, or mean, by which such come to God, is Christ. Man had access to God in his state of innocence, but sinning, was not admitted; there is no approaching now unto him without a middle person; Christ is the Mediator, who having made peace, atoned for sin, satisfied justice, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, introduces his people into God's presence; in whom their persons and services are accepted, and through whom all blessings are communicated to them:

seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them; Christ ever lives as God, he is the living God; and though he died as man, he is risen from the dead, and will not die again, but live for evermore; and he lives as Mediator and Redeemer, and particularly as a priest; one branch of whose office it is to intercede for his people: this he does now in heaven; not by vocal prayer and supplication, at least not as in the days of his flesh; or as if he was supplicating an angry Judge; nor as controverting, or litigating, a point the court of heaven; but by the appearance of his person for them; by the presentation of his sacrifice, blood, and righteousness; by declaring his will, that such and such blessings be bestowed on such and such persons; and by recommending the prayers of his people, and removing the charges and accusations of Satan: the things he intercedes for are, the conversion of his that are in a state of nature; the consolation of distressed ones; fresh discoveries of pardoning grace to fallen believers; renewed strength to oppose sin, exercise grace, discharge duty, and bear up under temptations, and deliverance out of them; perseverance in faith and holiness, and eternal glorification; and he intercedes for these things; not for all the world, but for all the elect, even though transgressors; and he is very fit for this work, as the following verse shows; he is the one and only Mediator; and he is a very prevalent intercessor, he always succeeds; and he does this work readily, willingly, cheerfully, and freely; and all this proves him to be able to save; for though the impetration of salvation is by his death, the application of it is owing to his interceding life; had he died and not lived again, he could not have saved to the uttermost; his life is the security of his people's, and he lives for them, and as their representative; the blessed, effects of which they constantly enjoy.

Hebrews 7:26

Ver. 26. For such an high priest became us,.... Is suitable to us, answers to our cases and necessities, is every way such an one as is wanted:

[who] is holy; by nature, originally and underivatively, perfectly and completely, internally as well as externally; he was typified by the high priest, who had holiness to the Lord written on his forehead, and far exceeds any of the priests in holiness; and such an one becomes us, for had he not been holy he could not have entered into the holy place for us, or have appeared there on our account, or have been our sanctification; so Philo the Jew speaks of the true priest as being not man, but the divine Word, and as free from all sin voluntary and involuntary {x}

harmless; without any vitiosity in his nature, without guile in his mouth, or malice in his heart; doing no injury to any man's person or property: the character chiefly regards the innocence and holiness of his life and conversation; and in which he exceeded the priests under the law; and is a suitable one for us, for hereby he was fit to be made sin, and to take it away:

undefiled; with the sin of Adam, with which all mankind are defiled; with the blood of slain beasts, with which the priests under the law were sprinkled; with the filthy conversation of the wicked, which affects good men: hence he was more excellent than the priests under the law; and one that becomes us, since his blood is the blood of a lamb, without spot and blemish: the high priests under the law, according to the Jews {y}, were to excel their brethren in knowledge, beauty, and riches; but the distinguishing character of our high priest is purity and holiness:

separate from sinners; not but that he took the nature of sinners, though not a sinful nature; and he was often in the company of sinners, when on earth, and was reckoned among them, and as one of them; but he was separated from them in Adam; he was not among the individuals of human nature that sinned in him; and he was brought into the world in a different manner from them, not descending from Adam by ordinary generation; and he had no communion with them in sin; nor did he encourage them to it in the days of his flesh; and now he is removed far from them; and herein he exceeds the priests under the law, and is suitable to us: the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "separate from sins"; the allusion seems to be, to the separating of the high priest from his own house to one of the courts of the temple seven days before the day of atonement {z}, and so before the burning of the heifers {a}:

and made higher than the heavens; than the visible heavens, the airy and starry heavens, and than the angels in heaven; and so preferable to the high priests, and exceedingly agreeable to us, **Heb 4:14** the allusion may be to the carrying of the high priest on the day of atonement to an upper chamber in the temple, called the chamber of Abtines {b}: this may be understood either of Christ's exaltation in heaven, where angels are subject to him, and his priesthood is completed; or of his excelling the angels in the holiness of his nature, which agrees with the other characters in the text, and stands opposed to the infirmities of the priests.

{x} De Profugis, p. 466, 467. & de Victimis, p. 843. {y} Maimon, & Bartenora in Misn, Yoma, c, 1. sect. 3. {z} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1. {a} Misn. Parah, c. 3. sect. 1. {b} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5.

Hebrews 7:27

Ver. 27. Who needeth not daily, as those high priests,.... They being sinners, and he not:

to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins and then for the people's; as they did on the day of atonement; see Le 16:6 upon which place the Jews {c} make the same remark the apostle does here;

"he (the high priest, they say) offers sacrifices for the sins of the people, for his own atymdqb, "first", rtblw, "and afterwards for the sins of the people":"

which was one reason of the imperfection and insufficiency of their sacrifices; but Christ needed not to offer for his own, nor could he, for he had none of his own; what he had was by imputation; wherefore he only needed to offer, and he only did offer, for the sins of the people; not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, even of all God's covenant people; nor did he need to do this daily, as they did; they offered sacrifice daily, the common priests every day, morning and evening, and the high priest on a stated day once a year, on the day of atonement:

for this he did once, when he offered up himself; and in this also he differed from them; they offered not themselves, but what was inferior to themselves, and what could not take away sin, and, therefore, was repeated; but Christ offered himself, his whole human nature, soul and body, and both as in union with his divine nature; and this being offered to God freely and voluntarily, in the room and stead of his people, was acceptable to God: hereby justice was satisfied; the law fulfilled; sin taken away, and complete salvation obtained; so that there never was since any need of his offering again, nor never will be; which shows the perfection and fulness of his priesthood, and the preference of it to the Levitical one.

{c} Zohar in Lev. fol. 26. 4.

Hebrews 7:28

Ver. 28. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity,.... Every word has an emphasis on it, and shows the difference between Christ and these priests: they were many; they were made priests by the law, the law of a carnal commandment, which made nothing perfect, and was disannulled; they were men that were made priests by it, and could not really draw nigh to God, and mediate with him for themselves, or others, nor atone either for their own or others' sins; and they were men that had infirmity, not natural and corporeal, for they were to have no bodily blemishes and deficiencies in them, but sinful ones; and especially such were they who bore this office under the second temple, and particularly in the times of Christ and his apostles {d}:

but the word of the oath, which was since the law; that word which had an oath annexed to it, which declared Christ an high priest after the order of Melchizedek, was since the law of the priesthood of Aaron; for though Christ was made a priest from eternity, yet the promise which declared it, and had an oath joined to it, was afterwards in David's time, Ps 110:4 and this word of the oath maketh the son; not a son, but a priest; publishes and declares him to be so: Christ, though a man, yet he is not mere man; he is the Son of God, and as such opposed to men; and therefore is not the Son of God as man; and this shows that he was a son before he was a priest, and therefore is not so called on account of his office; and it is his being the Son of God which gives lustre and glory to his priestly office, and virtue and efficacy to his sacrifice and intercession, and gives him the preference to all other priests:

who is consecrated for evermore; or "perfected", or "perfect"; he is perfect in his obedience and sufferings, in his sacrifice, and as he is now in heaven, in complete glory; the law made men priests that did not continue, but Christ is a priest for evermore, and absolutely, perfect.

{d} Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 8. 2. & 9. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hebrews 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 8

The apostle observing that the priesthood of Christ is the sum of what he had treated of in the preceding chapter, proceeds to show the superior excellency of it in other instances, particularly in the place where Christ now officiates, which is in heaven; he being set down at the right hand of God there, and so was a minister of the sanctuary, and true tabernacle pitched by God, and not man; whereas the priests of Aaron's line only ministered on earth, and in the typical sanctuary and tabernacle, **Heb 8:1** and after he had observed that Christ must have something to offer, meaning his body, to answer to the gifts and sacrifices priests were ordained to offer, **Heb 8:3** he proves the necessity of his ministering in heaven, because if he was on earth he would not be a priest, a complete one, and would have been useless and needless, **Heb 8:4** and besides, it was proper that he should go up to heaven, and minister there, as the antitype of the priests, who, to the example and shadow of heavenly things, served in the tabernacle which was made by Moses, by the order of God, and according to the pattern showed him in the Mount, **Heb 8:5** and that the ministry of Christ in the true sanctuary is much more excellent than the ministry of the priests in the shadowy one, is evident from his being the Mediator of a better covenant, **Heb 8:6** and that the covenant he is the Mediator of is the better covenant, appears froth the better promises of which it consists, and from the faultiness of the former covenant, **Heb 8:6** and that that was faulty, and succeeded by another, he proves from a passage in Jer 31:31 in which mention is made of a new covenant, and as distinct from that made with the Jewish fathers, and violated by them; and several of the promises of this new and second covenant are rehearsed, and which manifestly appear to be better than what were in the former, **Heb 8:8** from all which the apostle concludes, that a new covenant being made, the old one must be antiquated; and that whereas it was decaying and waxing old, it was just ready to vanish away, **Heb 8:13**.

Ver. 1. Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum,.... The scope and drift, the compendium and substance; or the principal of what has been said in or from Ps 110:4 and has been discoursed of in the three preceding chapters, is the priesthood of Christ:

we have such an high priest; as is described in the foregoing discourse, and in the following words: Christ is a priest, an high priest, and the saints' high priest; they are not without one under the Gospel dispensation; and Christ is he, and always continues, in whose sacrifice and intercession they have a share:

who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; he is "set", whereas the Levitical priests stood; which shows that he has done his work, and that with acceptance; and is in a state of ease and rest; and is possessed of honour, glory, majesty, and authority, and which continue: the place where he is set is, "on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty"; the same with the right hand of God; for by the throne of the Majesty is meant God the Father, in his royal glory and dignity; so Tiphereth, one of the ten numbers in the Jews' Cabalistic tree, whose name is Jehovah, is called dwbkh aok, "the throne of glory" {c}; so angels are called thrones, **Col 1:16** but God is a throne of majesty superior to them; and at his right hand sits Christ the great high priest; which is expressive of his high honour, glory, and power, and even of his equality with God: the phrase, "in the heavens", may refer both to God the throne of majesty, who is there, and to Christ the high priest, who is passed into them, and received by them, and sits there.

{c} Lex. Cabal. p. 483.

Hebrews 8:2

Ver. 2. A minister of the sanctuary,.... The heavenly one, so called, in allusion to the holy of holies, the type of it; and because it is truly an holy place; and which Christ sanctifies and prepares for his people by his presence and intercession: or "of the Holy Ones", or "saints"; who are sanctified or set apart by God, the Father, to whom Christ is made sanctification, and who are made holy by the Spirit of God; to these Christ is a minister; he was so in his prophetic office, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and in his priestly office, to all the chosen ones, when on earth, offering himself a sacrifice for them, and now he is a minister to them in heaven, interceding for them; and in his kingly office, governing, protecting, and defending them: or "of holy things"; to his people, such as the gifts of his Spirit, grace, and all supplies of it, and at last glory; and for them, presenting their sacrifices of prayer and praise to God, which become acceptable to him through his powerful mediation:

and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man; by which is meant, not heaven, the same with the sanctuary, for this would be an unnecessary tautology, and an explanation of a word by another more obscure; nor is there any reason why it should be added, "which the Lord pitched, and not man"; since everyone must believe that heaven is made by God alone; but rather the church of Christ, which is sometimes called a tabernacle, and is a true one, of which the tabernacle of Moses was a type, and is of God's building, and where Christ ministers, being the high priest over the house of God; though it is best to interpret it of the human nature of Christ, in which he tabernacled among men, and which was typified by the tabernacle of Moses, and therefore is called the "true" one, in distinction from that; for as there God dwelt, and his glory was seen, and he granted his presence to his people, and the sacrifices were brought and offered up there, and to this the people looked when at a distance, and this appeared very coarse without, but within full of holy things; so in Christ's human nature the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily; here the glory of God is seen, even in the face of Jesus; and through him God vouchsafes communion with his people; and by him the sacrifices of prayer and praise are offered up; and to him do the saints look for the acceptance of them; and though in the days of his flesh he looked very mean and despicable, yet was full of grace and truth, and of all the gifts of the Spirit: and the human nature of Christ was not of man; it was not propagated by human generation, but was produced through the power of the Holy Ghost; and in this tabernacle Christ ministered when on earth, and now ministers in heaven.

Hebrews 8:3

Ver. 3. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices,.... See Gill on "Heb 5:1"

wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer; or this person; for the word "man" is not in the text, and seems not so proper a word to be supplied, since it was his human nature that it was necessary he should have to offer; he was a person, and existed as a divine person antecedent to his assumption of human nature: as God, he had nothing to offer, or that was capable of being offered; something to offer as a sacrifice was necessary to him as a priest, but not any thing was proper to him; Levitical sacrifices would not do, these could not take away sin; besides, the great high priest was not of the tribe of Levi, nor of the order of Aaron, and therefore could not offer these.

An angelic nature would have been improper, that is not capable of dying; and the offering up of such an one would have been of no service to men, for whom priests are ordained; but an human nature is meant, and which it was necessary Christ should have, and offer, for it is for men that he became an high priest; it was human nature that had offended God, and satisfaction must be made in that nature; and this was capable of suffering and dying; yet not human nature under any consideration was necessary for him to have and offer; not merely as in a state of innocence, without any infirmity, nor as sinful, yet as perfect as to parts and qualities; and a nature, and not a person, was necessary to be had, and to be taken into close and inseparable union to his divine person; and of this there was a necessity, not absolute, or a necessity of coaction and force: Christ was not forced unto it; but on the foot of his suretyship engagements, and because of making satisfaction for the sin of man, it was necessary; otherwise Christ voluntarily engaged to be a priest, and willingly became man, and freely offered himself, soul and body, in the room and stead of his people.

Hebrews 8:4

Ver. 4. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest,.... The Socinians from hence attempt to prove that Christ was not a priest, and did not offer sacrifice on earth; whereas his coming into the world, and his appearance in human nature, was in the character of a priest, and to qualify himself for one; his death was his sacrifice, which was on earth; and he never offered but one sacrifice; and it was after he had offered himself that he went to heaven; so the sacrifices under the law were first offered, before their blood was carried within: but the meaning is, either if "that" was on earth, namely, what it was necessary he should have to offer; if his human nature had been earthly, had been of men, had come by ordinary generation, he had not been properly, only typically a priest, at most; and had been no better than the typical ones; yea, he would have been needless, nay, might not have offered, not being of Levi's tribe, and could not have existed as a priest with the sons of Aaron; but he had his human nature in another way, through the power of the Holy Ghost from above, and therefore is said to come from above, from heaven, and to be the Lord from heaven: or the sense is, if he was on earth, and had not died, he had not been a priest; and if he had died and remained under the power of death, he had been a priest of no account and use; and had he rose again and remained on earth, without going to heaven, with his blood and sacrifice, he had not been a perfect priest; if Christ had remained on earth, the Levitical priesthood had remained, and so he would have been no priest, since two priesthoods could not have subsisted together. The Levitical priesthood was in force while Christ was on earth; Christ's priesthood was not perfected on earth; the Levitical priesthood remaining while he was on earth, proves he was not then a perfect priest, or had not completed his priesthood; had he been so, that would not have subsisted; it was necessary therefore that Christ should enter into the holy place, to put an end to the Levitical priesthood: moreover, if he had remained on earth, he had been needless;

seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law; there were priests when Christ was upon earth; their work was to offer gifts the people brought, and sacrifices for sin, and that according to the law of Moses, which till the death of Christ was in full force.

Hebrews 8:5

Ver. 5. Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things,.... Things respecting the person, office, and grace of Christ; the priests themselves were types of him; the places they ministered in were an exemplar of the heavenly places, as the word may be rendered, where Christ is; and the things they ministered were shadows of the good things which are by Christ; and the shadows were mere representations; dark, obscure, glimmering ones, and were fleeting and transitory:

as Moses was admonished of God; by an oracle; he was a peculiar favourite of God, and was the mediator between God and the people of Israel, and what he received was oracle wise; what he delivered to the people was what he received from God; and what was thus delivered ought to be received as from God: and this admonition or oracle was given him

when he was about to make the tabernacle; the Levitical one, with everything appertaining to the worship of God in it: this is ascribed to Moses, though it was made by others, because it was by his direction, and under his care and oversight; and he had this admonition at the beginning of it; and at the finishing of it he looked upon it, and saw that it was all done as the Lord had commanded; Ex 25:40,

for see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the Mount; Moses was taken up into a mountain with God, even Mount Sinai; and while he was there, a pattern was given him of the tabernacle and all its utensils; this was not a device of his own, but was shown him by God; and this pattern reached to every particular thing; and great care and circumspection were used that the most minute thing answered to it. The Jews think this pattern was given him by the ministry of angels; Gabriel, they say {f}, girt himself with a girdle, and showed to Moses the work of the candlestick; and they further say, that an ark of fire, and a table of fire; and a candlestick of fire, descended from heaven, and Moses saw them, and made according to them: from whence it may be observed that the tabernacle, and tabernacle worship, were of divine institution; the ceremonious rites of the Jews were not, as some have affirmed, borrowed from the Egyptians; nor were they given as diversions to that people, nor only to preserve them from idolatry, and keep them separate from others, but were designed to lead them to Christ, whom they were typical of; wherefore the abuse, and not the use of them, were condemned under the former dispensation; though they were to continue no longer than till Christ came, and suffered and died; and now they are abolished: moreover, it may be gathered from hence, that whatever is done in a way of religious worship, should be according to a divine rule; a church of Christ ought to be formed according to the primitive pattern, and should consist, not of all that are born in a nation, province, or parish; nor should all that are born of believing parents be admitted into it; no unholy, unbelieving, and unconverted persons, only such as are true believers in Christ, and who are baptized according as the word of God directs; the officers of a church should be only of two sorts, bishops, elders, pastors or overseers, and deacons; the ordinances are baptism, which should only be administered to believers, and by immersion, and the Lord's supper, of which none should partake, but those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious; and this should be performed as Christ performed it, and as the Apostle Paul received it from him; the discipline of Christ's house should be regarded, and all the laws of it carefully and punctually in execution; and a conversation becoming the Gospel should be attended to.

{f} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29. 1.

Hebrews 8:6

Ver. 6. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry,.... Christ has a ministry, he is the minister of the sanctuary, **Heb 8:2** he has "obtained" this ministry of his Father; he was called unto it and engaged in it by him; and he has "now" obtained it; for though he was called to it from eternity, it was in time he came an high priest of good things, to come; and his ministry is a more excellent one than that of the priests, who offered gifts according to the law and served to the example and shadow of heavenly things; as abundantly appears from the preceding chapter, and from this, as well, as from what follows:

by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant; the covenant of grace, as administered under the Gospel dispensation; which is not only better than the covenant of works, that being conditional, this absolute; that stood on the foot of works, this on the foot of grace, and is established in Christ; that being broken and made void, this continues; and not only better than the covenant of the Levitical priesthood, which was but a typical one, and is now ceased, but also than the covenant of grace, as administered under the legal dispensation; being better than that, as to the manner of its manifestation, which is more full and clear; and as to the extent of its administration, reaching to Gentiles as well as Jews; and as to the ratification of it by the blood of Christ, called from thence the blood of the everlasting covenant; and as to the promises of it, here said to be better:

which was established upon better promises; which are not now delivered out as before, under the figure of earthly and temporal things; nor under a condition to be performed nor confined to a particular people and nation; and which are attended with a greater measure of the Spirit, to open and apply them; and are all secured in Christ Jesus, and confirmed by his blood: and now of this covenant Christ is the "Mediator"; a mediator is of more persons than one, and of these at variance; and he is a middle person between both; and his business is to bring both parties together, and make peace between them: the two parties in this case are God and man, set at a distance from each other by the sin of man, whereby man is become enmity to God; Christ is the Mediator between God and man, a middle person between both, being both God and man, the daysman, who lays his hands on both; who brings men to God that were afar off, and makes peace for them by the blood of his cross, and satisfies the justice of God, which he has done by the sacrifice of himself; and now appears in the presence of God for them, and intercedes for them, and applies the blessings of the covenant to them by his Spirit, and keeps and preserves them safe to his everlasting kingdom; and for this office he is every way fit, and in this he excels the Levitical priests, and has a ministry superior to theirs, since he is such a Mediator, and a Mediator of such a covenant,

Hebrews 8:7

Ver. 7. For if that first covenant had been faultless,.... Not the covenant of works; that was made in paradise, this on Mount Sinai; that was made with Adam and his posterity, this with the Jews only; that had no mediator, this had one, Moses; that was not dedicated with blood, this was; that had no forgiveness of sin in it, this had; under that saints are not, but they were under this; to be under that was no privilege, but to be under this it was, as to the Israelites, who on this account were preferable to all other nations: nor is the pure covenant of grace as administered under the Gospel, meant; for though that was first made, yet is the second in administration; that includes the elect of God among the Gentiles, this only the Jews; that is made only with them, and is made known to them whom God calls by his grace in time, this was made with good and bad; that was of pure grace, this required works in order to life and the enjoyment of its blessings; that is an everlasting covenant, this is done away; and the one is manifestly distinguished from the other in this chapter: but the covenant here designed is the covenant of grace, as administered under the legal dispensation, and which was a typical one; the people with whom it was made were typical of the true Israel of God; the blessings promised in it were shadows of good things to come; the works it required were typical of Christ's obedience to the law, in the room and stead of his people, by which he fulfilled it; the sacrifices on which it was established were types of the sacrifice and death of Christ; the mediator of it. Moses, was a type of Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant; and it was confirmed by the blood of beasts, which was typical of the blood of Christ: this covenant was not "faultless", but was faulty or blameworthy; not that there was anything sinful and criminal in it, but it was deficient; there was a weakness in it; its sacrifices could not make men perfect, nor take away sin; there wanted a larger supply of the grace of the Spirit to write the law of God upon the heart, and to enable men to keep it; there was not in it so full a revelation of the mind and will of God, and of his love and grace, as has since been made; nor did it exhibit a free and full pardon for all sins, unclogged of every condition; the persons that were under it were faulty; hence it follows, that God found fault with them, they could not answer the requirements and end of it: had it been faultless,

then should no place have been sought for the second; the covenant of grace unveiled in the Gospel dispensation, called the better testament, the better covenant, and the new covenant; in order to, introduce which, the first was removed, that this might succeed it; just as because there was no perfection by the Levitical priesthood, it became necessary that another priest should arise, of another order.

Hebrews 8:8

Ver. 8. For finding fault with them,.... Both with the covenant, which had its faults, and with the people who continued not in it, and were therefore disregarded by the Lord, **Heb 8:9**

he saith, behold, the days come (saith the Lord) when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; the words are cited from Jer 31:31 in which God promises a "new covenant"; so called, not because newly made; for with respect to its original constitution, it was made from eternity; Christ the Mediator of it, and with whom it was made, was set up from everlasting; and promises and blessings of grace were put into his hands before the world began: nor is it newly revealed, for it was made known to Adam, and in some measure to all the Old Testament saints, though it is more clearly revealed than it was; but it is so called in distinction from the former administration of it, which is waxen old, and vanished away; and with respect to the order of succession, it taking place upon the former being removed; and on account of the time of its more clear revelation and establishment being in the last days; and because of its mode of administration, which is different from the former, in a new way, and by the use of new ordinances; and because it is always new, its vigour and efficacy are perpetual; it will never be antiquated, or give place to another; and it provides for, and promises new things, a new heart, a new spirit, &c. to which may be added, that it is a famous, excellent covenant, there is none like it; just as an excellent song is called a new song. The persons with whom this covenant is promised to be made, are the houses of Israel and Judah; which being literally taken, had its fulfilment in the first times of the Gospel, through the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, by whom this covenant was made known to God's elect among the twelve tribes; but being mystically understood, includes both Jews and Gentiles, the whole Israel of God; Israel not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; such as were Jews inwardly; God's elect of every nation: the word suntelesw, rendered, "I will make", signifies, I will consummate, or finish, or end, or fulfil it; which shows the perfection of this covenant, and the imperfection of the former; and that what was typified in the first is fulfilled in this; and that it is now established and ratified by Christ; and is so finished, as to the manifestation and administration of it, that there will be no alteration made in it, nor any addition to it: the time of doing all this is called "the days to come"; the last days, the days of the Messiah, which were future in Jeremiah's time: and a "behold" is prefixed to the whole, as a note of attention, this being an affair of great moment and importance; and as a note of demonstration, or as pointing to something that was desired and expected; and as a note of admiration, it containing things wonderful and marvellous.

Hebrews 8:9

Ver. 9. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers,.... The ancestors of the Jews at Mount Sinai:

in the day when I took then, by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; which is mentioned, not only to observe the time when the former covenant was made with the Israelites, which was just upon their deliverance out of Egypt; but also to show their weakness and inability to have delivered themselves, and the tenderness of God towards them; they were like children, they could not help themselves when God took them by the hand, and brought them forth with an outstretched arm; and likewise to expose their ingratitude, and vindicate his conduct towards them:

because they continued not in my covenant; though they promised, at the reading of it, that all that the Lord had said, they would hear and do; but their hearts were not right with God, and they were not steadfast in his covenant, and therefore their carcasses fell in the wilderness:

and I regarded them not, saith the Lord; the words in Jer 31:32 are very differently rendered in our translation, "although I was an husband unto them": and so it becomes an aggravation of their sin of ingratitude, in not continuing in his covenant: in the margin it is rendered interrogatively, "should I have continued an husband unto them?" that is, after they had so treated him, no; as if he should say, I will not behave towards them as such; I will reject them, and disregard them. The Chaldee paraphrase is just the reverse of the apostle's translation, "and I was well pleased with them": some render them, "I ruled over them", as a lord over his servants, in a very severe manner. Others, observing the great difference there is between the Hebrew text, and the apostle's version, have supposed a different Hebrew copy from the present, used by the Septuagint, or the apostle, in which, instead of ytleb, it was read either ytlxb, or ytleg; but there is no need of such a supposition, since Dr. Pocock {g} has shown, that leb, in the Arabic language, signifies to loath and abhor, and so to disregard; and Kimchi {h} relates it as a rule laid down by his father, that wherever this word is used in construction with b, it is to be taken in an ill part, and signifies the same as ytlxb, "I have loathed"; in which sense that word is used in Zec 11:8 and so here, I have loathed them, I abhorred them, I rejected them, I took no care of them, disregarded them, left their house desolate, and suffered wrath to come upon them to the uttermost.

{g} Not. Miscell. in Port. Mesis, p. 9. {h} In Jer. xxxi. 32. & Sepher Shorashim, rad. leb

Hebrews 8:10

Ver. 10. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel,.... That is, this is the sum and substance of the covenant, which God promised to make with, or to make manifest and known to his chosen people, the true Israelites, under the Gospel dispensation; or the following are the several articles of that covenant, he proposed to consummate or finish, as before:

after those days, saith the Lord; after the times of the Old Testament, when the Messiah shall be come, and the Gospel day shall take place. So the Jews {i} apply these days, when they represent the Israelites saying to Moses, O that he (God) would reveal (himself or will) to us a second time! O that he would kiss us with the kisses of his mouth, and that the doctrine of the law was fixed in our hearts; when he (Moses) said to them, this is not to be done now, but abl dytel, in the time to come, (i.e. in the times of the Messiah,) as it is said, Jer 31:33.

I will put my law, &c. and so {k} they are elsewhere applied to the same times. And the first article in it is,

I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; by the laws of God are meant not the precepts of the ceremonial law, which were now abrogated, but either the moral law, and its commands; which is a transcript of the divine nature, was inscribed on Adam's heart in innocence, and some remains of it are even in the Gentiles, but greatly obliterated through the sin of man; and there is in men naturally a contrary disposition to it; in regeneration it is reinscribed by the Spirit of God; and great respect is had to it by regenerate persons, in which lies one part of their conformity to Christ: or else, since the word "law" signifies sometimes no other than a doctrine, an instruction, the doctrines of grace, of repentance towards God, of faith in Christ, and love to him, and every other doctrine may be intended; and the tables where, according to the tenor of this covenant, these are put and written, are two tables, as before, the "mind" and "heart"; but not two tables of stone, on which the law of Moses was written, partly that it might not be lost, through defect of memory, and partly to denote the firmness and stability of it, as also to point at the hardness of man's heart; but the fleshly tables of the heart; not that part of our flesh that is called the heart; but the souls of men, such hearts as are regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God, and such minds as are renewed by him: and the "putting" of them into the mind, designs the knowledge of them, which God gives; as of the moral law, of its spirituality and perfection, showing that there is no life and righteousness by it, that it is fulfilled by Christ, and is a rule of conversation to the saints; and of all other laws, ordinances, and doctrines of Christ: and the "writing" them in, or on the heart, intends a filling the soul with love and affection to them, so that it regards them singly and heartily; and a powerful inclination of the heart to be subject to them, through the efficacious grace of God; and which is done not with the ink of nature's power, but with the Spirit of the living God, **2Co 3:3**.

And I will be to them a God; not in such sense as he is the God of all mankind, or as he was the God of Israel in a distinguishing manner, but as he is the God of Christ, and of all the elect in him; and he is their God, not merely as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of all grace; he is so in a covenant way, and as in Christ, and by virtue of electing grace, and which is made manifest in the effectual calling; and as such, he has set his heart on them, and set them apart for himself; he saves them by his Son, adopts and regenerates them, justifies and sanctifies them, provides for them, protects and preserves them; and happy are they that are interested in this blessing of the covenant, which is preferable to everything else; they have everything, and can want no good thing; they need fear no enemy; all things work together for their good; and God continues to be their God in life and in death; so that they may depend on his love, be secure of his power, expect every needful supply of grace, and to be carried through every duty and trial, and to share in the first resurrection, and to enjoy eternal happiness:

and they shall be to me a people; not in such sense as all mankind are, or the Jews were in a more peculiar respect, but as all God's elect are, whether Jews or Gentiles; and who are such whom God has loved with a special love, has chose in Christ, and given to him, and with whom he has made a covenant in him; whom Christ saves from their sins by his blood, and calls them by his grace and Spirit, and who give up themselves to him; these are a distinct and peculiar people, a people near unto the Lord, and who are all righteous in Christ, and are made willing in the day of his power on their souls.

{i} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 3. 2. {k} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 64. 3.

Hebrews 8:11

Ver. 11. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour,.... The Alexandrian copy reads, "citizen"; that is, fellow citizen; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions: "and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord": this is not to be understood, so as to set aside the external and public ministry of the word, which is a standing ordinance of God under the Gospel dispensation; or even the, private instructions of saints one to another, in Christian conversation, whereby they may build up one another in their most holy faith; but the sense is, that men should not only teach, but the Spirit of God should teach with them, and by them; and it stands opposed to particular and pretended revelations, and especially to magisterial dictates; and denotes the abundance of knowledge that should be in Gospel times, which should not be restrained to particular persons, and sets of men, but should be shared by all believers, more or less:

for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest; from babes to fathers in Christ; not with a natural, but with a spiritual knowledge; not with general knowledge of him, that he is, but with a special knowledge of him, that he is theirs; not with a legal, but with an evangelical knowledge; not with the knowledge of him in, and through the creatures, but in Christ; and that not speculative, but experimental; such as is attended with faith in him, fear of him, love to him, and a cheerful obedience to his will: the knowledge of the Lord, under the New Testament dispensation, is greater than under the former dispensation; the subject matter of it is more distinct; God is more known in the persons of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in the perfections of his nature, in his titles and characters, and in his Son; the manner of it is more clear, open, and perspicuous; the persons to whom it is communicated are more numerous; it is not restrained to Jews, but is given to the Gentiles; and all this owing to a greater effusion of the Spirit; see **1Jo 2:27**.

Hebrews 8:12

Ver. 12. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness,.... That is, sin; for all unrighteousness is sin, being contrary to the justice of God, and his righteous law: and the phrase is expressive of God's forgiveness of it, which is a very considerable article of the covenant of grace; mercy is the spring and original of pardon; it is what God delights in, and therefore he pardons freely; it is large and abundant, and hence he pardons fully; and this lays a foundation for hope in sensible sinners: and the way and means, in and by which God pardons, is the propitiatory sacrifice of his Son; and the word here rendered "merciful", signifies "propitious"; God pardons none but those to whom he is pacified, or rendered propitious by Christ; there is no mercy, nor pardon, but through him; he pardons on the foot of reconciliation and satisfaction for sin by Christ; so that forgiveness of sin is an act of justice, as well as of mercy; or it is an act of mercy streaming through the blood and sacrifice of Christ.

And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more; by which are meant all kind of sin, original and actual; sins before and after conversion; every sin but that against the Holy Ghost, and that God's covenant people are never guilty of; these God remembers no more; he casts them behind his back, and into the depths of the sea, so that when they are sought for, they shall not be found; God will never charge them with them, or punish them for them: this is another phrase to express the forgiveness of sins, and distinguishes the new covenant from the old one, or the former dispensation; in which, though there were many typical sacrifices, and a typical removal of sin, yet there was a remembrance of it every year.

Hebrews 8:13

Ver. 13. In that he saith a new covenant,.... In the above prophecy, **Heb 8:8**

he hath made the first old; this naturally follows from hence; if the second is new, the first must be old; which is called so, not on account of its date and duration; for the covenant of grace itself is older than this mode of administration of it, and the manifestation of that to the patriarchs was before this covenant, and so was the covenant of works before it; but on the account of its faultiness and deficiency, its weakness, and unprofitableness, and especially its being antiquated, and made to give way to another.

Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away; the apostle argues from the first covenant, being old, to its being near to dissolution, or a disappearance; and the dissolution or disappearance of this covenant was gradual; it began when the Chaldeans seized the land of Canaan; and the ark, an eminent type of Christ, being wanting in the second temple, gave a hint of its waxing old; and both the civil and ecclesiastical government of the Jews were in great confusion under the second temple, at least towards the close of it; and even before the times of Christ, John the Baptist came, and proclaimed the near approach of the Messiah, and his kingdom: this covenant was of right abolished at the time of Christ's death; upon his ascension the Spirit was given, and the Gospel published among all nations, by which it more and more disappeared; and in fact it quite vanished away, when the city and temple of Jerusalem were destroyed, which was in a little time after the writing of this epistle; so that the apostle, with great propriety, says, it is "ready to vanish away".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hebrews 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 9

The apostle having, in the former chapter, taken notice of the first covenant, in this proceeds to show what belonged to it, that it had service performed under it, and a place in which it was performed, **Heb 9:1** and he begins with the latter, which he distinguishes into two parts, and shows what was in each of them; in the first, which was the holy place, were a candlestick, table, and shewbread; in the second, which was the holiest of all, were a golden censer, the ark of the covenant, the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod, the tables of the covenant, and the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat, **Heb 9:2**. And next he speaks of the service performed in these places; in the first, the holy place, the common priests entered every day, doing service, as offering sacrifice, &c. **Heb 9:6** and in the second, the holy of holies, only the high priest entered into, and that but once a year, with blood of slain beasts, which he offered for his own sins, and the sins of the people, **Heb 9:7** and this being shut up, and entered into but once a year, was an indication from the Holy Ghost, that the way into the holiest of all, which this was then a figure of, was not yet made manifest, while the tabernacle or temple was standing, in which sacrifices were offered, which could not perfect the offerer of them, or remove guilt from his conscience, **Heb 9:8** which shows the imperfection of that priesthood, it consisting of meats, drinks, baptisms, and carnal ordinances imposed on the Jewish nation until the times of the Messiah, **Heb 9:10** which are now come, and in which there is an accomplishment of all those types and figures; Christ was typified by the high priest; and he is come as such, and the good things, the law was a shadow of, are come by him; who came into the world by the assumption of human nature, a more perfect tabernacle than the type of it was; and now having obtained eternal redemption for his people, he is gone into heaven, the most holy place, not as the high priest, with the blood of slain beasts, but with his own blood, **Heb 9:11** the efficacy of which blood is argued from the lesser to the greater, that if the blood of beasts, and water of separation, sanctified and purified externally, then much more must the blood of Christ purge the conscience from sin, that it may serve God, since Christ offered himself to God without spot, through the eternal Spirit, **Heb 9:13**. The necessity of Christ's shedding his blood, or of his death, is proved from his being the Mediator of the new covenant, which required the redemption of transgressions under the first testament, that called ones might have the promise of the eternal inheritance, **Heb 9:15**. And this is reasoned from the nature of testaments or wills among men, which make the death of the testator necessary, they being of no force while he lives, only after his death, **Heb 9:16**. And this is further illustrated by the first testament being dedicated by blood, and everything belonging to it purged by it, the book, the people, the tabernacle, and all the vessels of it; nor is there any remission of sin, whether typical or real, without shedding of blood, **Heb 9:18** wherefore, as it was necessary that the patterns and types of heavenly things should be purified in this manner; it must be more so, that the antitypes should be purified with better sacrifices, even with the sacrifice of Christ, **Heb 9:23** and accordingly Christ is entered into heaven itself, of which the holy places in the tabernacle were figures, there to present and plead his sacrifice on account of his people, **Heb 9:24** not that it was necessary that he should offer up himself again, or often, as the high priest, his type, went every year into the holy place with the blood of others; for then he must have often suffered since the world began, of which there was no need, since his appearing once in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, is sufficient, **Heb 9:25** for as it is the appointment of God, that men should die but once, and then come to judgment, so it was only necessary that Christ should be offered once to bear the sins of all his people, and then appear a second time without any sin at all upon him, to the salvation of those that look for him, **Heb 9:27**.

Ver. 1. Then verily the first covenant had ordinances of divine service,.... The design of the apostle in this chapter, as it stands in connection with what goes before, is to show the pre-eminence of Christ, from the tabernacle, and the things in it; as well as from the priesthood and covenant; and as also the abrogation of the Levitical ceremonies in particular, as well as the first covenant in general; and that they were all types and figures of Christ, and had their fulfilment in him: the word "first", here used, designs not the tabernacle, but the covenant; therefore it is rightly thus supplied in our version, as it is in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: which is said to have "ordinances of divine service"; belonging to the service of God, which was performed both by the priests, and by the people; and these ordinances were no other than the carnal ordinances, or rites of the ceremonial law: the word used signifies "righteousnesses"; and they are so called, because they were appointed by a righteous God; and were imposed on the people of the Jews in a righteous way; and by them men became externally and typically righteous; for they were figures and types of justification by the righteousness of Christ, though no complete, perfect, real righteousness, came by them.

And a worldly sanctuary. Philo the Jew says {l}, it was a type of the world, and of the various things in it; though it was rather either a type of the church, or of heaven, or of Christ's human nature: the better reason of its being so called is, because it consisted of earthly matter, and worldly things; it was in the world, and only had its use in the world, and so is opposed to the heavenly sanctuary; for the Jews often speak of hlemlv vdqm, "a sanctuary above", and hjmlv vdqm, "a sanctuary below" {m}, and of alyeld ankvm, "a tabernacle above", and attld ankvm, "a tabernacle below" {n}; which answered to one another: the words may be rendered "a beautiful sanctuary", a well adorned one; and such especially was the temple, or sanctuary built by Solomon, rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and repaired and adorned by Herod, Lu 21:5. And the Jews say, that he that never saw Herod's building, meaning the temple, never saw a beautiful building; see Lu 21:5.

{l} De Vita Mosis, p. 667. {m} Jarchi in Gen. xxviii. 17. {n} Zohar in Exod. fol. 65. 4. & 94. 4. & 96. 2. & in Lev. fol. 1. 3.

Hebrews 9:2

Ver. 2. For there was a tabernacle made,.... By the direction of Moses, according to the pattern showed him in the Mount:

the first; that is, the first part of the tabernacle, called the holy place, in distinction from the holy of holies, which was the second part of the tabernacle; for otherwise there were not a first and a second tabernacle; there never was but one tabernacle:

wherein was the candlestick; that this was in the tabernacle, and on the south side of it, and without the vail, where the apostle has placed it, is plain from Ex 26:35. This was wanting in the second temple {o}: it was a type of Christ mystical, or the church; in the general use of it, to hold forth light, so the church holds forth the light of the Gospel, being put into it by Christ; in the matter of it, which was pure gold, denoting the purity, worth, splendour, glory, and duration of the church; in the parts of it, it had one shaft in the middle of it, in which all the parts met and cemented, typical of Christ the principal, and head of the church, whose situation is in the midst of the church, and who unites all together, and is but one: the six branches of it may intend all the members of the church, and especially the ministers of the word; the seven lamps with oil in them, may have a respect to the seven spirits of God, or the Spirit of God with his gifts and graces, and a profession of religion with grace along with it: and it was typical of the church in its ornaments and decorations; its bowls, knops, and flowers, may signify the various gifts of the Spirit, beautifying ministers, and fitting them for usefulness; and in the appurtenances of it, the tongs and snuff dishes may signify church discipline, censures, and excommunications.

And the table and the shewbread; the table, with the shewbread on it, was also in the tabernacle, on the north side of it, and without the vail, Ex 26:35. This was also wanting in the second temple {p}: the table was typical of Christ, and of communion with him; of the person of Christ; in the matter of it, which was Shittim wood overlaid with gold, whereby were signified the two natures of Christ in one person; the human nature by the Shittim wood, which is incorruptible, for though he died he saw no corruption, and is risen again, and lives for ever; and the divine nature by the gold, all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him; and in the decorations of it, as the border, golden crown, &c. which may respect the fulness of his grace, and the honour and glory he is crowned with, which render him exceeding valuable and precious: and it may be typical of communion with him, either hereafter, when the saints shall sit with him as at a table, and eat and drink with him in the kingdom of his Father; or here, to which Christ admits them, and than which nothing is more honourable, comfortable, and desirable; and it may be significative of the ministration of the word and ordinances, of which Christ is the sum and substance, and in which he grants his people fellowship with him: to this table belonged rings and bars to carry it from place to place, which was done by the priests; where the church is, there Christ is, and there is the ministration of his word and ordinances; and which are sometimes moved from one place to another, by the ministers of the word, according to divine direction. The "shewbread", on the table, was typical either of the church of Christ, the saints, who may be signified by the unleavened cakes, being true and sincere, and without the leaven of malice and hypocrisy; and by twelve of them, which may represent the twelve tribes of Israel, the whole spiritual Israel of God; and by bread of faces, as the word for shewbread may be rendered, since they are always before the Lord, and his eyes are continually upon them; they are set upon the pure table, Christ, on whom they are safe, and by whom they are accepted with God: and the shewbread being set in rows, may denote their order and harmony; and their being removed every sabbath day, may signify the succession of saints in the church, as one is removed, another is brought in; and the frankincense put upon each row, shows them to be a sweet savour to God: or else the shewbread was typical of Christ himself, who is the bread of life, the food of his people; and may be signified by the shewbread for its fineness and purity, being made of fine flour, Christ is the finest of the wheat, bread from heaven, and angels' food; for its quantity, twelve cakes, with Christ, is bread enough, and to spare, for all the elect; for its continuance, Christ always abides, and such as feed upon him live for ever; for its gratefulness, Christ's flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; and for its being only for the priests, as only such who are made priests to God, live by faith on Christ; see Le 25:5. Moreover, the intercession of Christ may be prefigured by the shewbread, or bread of faces, he being the angel of God's presence or face, who appears in the presence of God for his people; and this consisting of twelve loaves, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, shows that Christ represents the whole Israel of God in heaven, and intercedes for them; and whereas the shewbread always continued, no sooner was one set of loaves removed, but another was put in their room; this may point at the continual intercession of Christ for his people; and the frankincense may denote the acceptableness of it to God.

Which is called the sanctuary; or "holy"; this refers either to the first part of the tabernacle, which was called the holy place, in which the priests in common ministered; or else to the things which were in it, now mentioned, the candlestick table, and shewbread; to which the Ethiopic version adds, and the golden censer, which it leaves out in the fourth verse; which version renders these words, "and these they call holy"; and so the Arabic version, "which are called holy things", as they were, as well as the place in which they were; so the candlestick is called the holy candlestick in the Apocrypha,

"As the clear light is upon the holy candlestick; so is the beauty of the face in ripe age." (Sirach 26:17)

and the ark, candlestick, table, censer, and altar, are called skeuh iera, "holy vessels", by Philo the Jew {q}; but the former sense seems best, when compared with the following verse.

{o} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 4. 1. {p} Menasseh ben Israel Conciliat. in Gen. qu. 41. {q} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 668.

Hebrews 9:3

Ver. 3. And after the second vail,.... Were there more vails than one? the Scripture speaks but of one, Ex 26:31 there was indeed an hanging for the door of the tent, but that is not called a vail; nor was there more than one vail in the tabernacle, nor in the temple of Solomon; but in the second temple, under which the apostle lived, there were two vails, which divided between the holy place, and the holy of holies; and the innermost of these the apostle means: and so the Jewish writers {r} constantly affirm, that there were two vails between the said places, and that two new ones were made every year {s}. So on the day of atonement, when the high priest went into the most holy place, with the incense, it is said {t}, that

"he walked in the temple till he came between twkwrph ytv, "the two vails", which divide between the holy, and holy of holies, and there was the space of a cubit between them."

The reason of these two vails may be seen in the account Maimonides gives of this matter {u}:

"in the first temple there was a wall which divided between the holy, and holy of holies, the thickness of a cubit; but when they built the second temple, it was doubted by them, whether the thickness of the wall was of the measure of the holy place, or of the measure of the holy of holies; wherefore they made the holy of holies twenty cubits complete, and the holy place forty cubits complete, and they left the space of a cubit between the holy, and the holy of holies; and they did not build a wall in the second temple, but they made twkwrp ytv, "two vails", one on the side of the holy of holies, and the other on the side of the holy place, and between them a cubit answerable to the thickness of the wall, which was in the first temple; but in the first temple there was but one vail only, as it is said, Ex 26:33 and the vail shall divide unto you, &c."

And to this account other Jewish writers {w} agree; and the space between the two vails is called by them Nyoqrj {x}, taraxiv, from the trouble and perplexity this affair gave them. This vail, or vails, might represent the sin of man, which separates between God and men, excludes from heaven; but is removed by the death of Christ, when the vail was rent in twain; so that now there is an open way to heaven; Christ has entered into it by his own blood; and saints have boldness to enter there by faith and hope now, and shall hereafter personally enter into it: or else this vail may signify the ceremonial law, which separated between Jew and Gentile, and is abolished by the death of Christ: or rather it was typical of the flesh, or human nature of Christ, called the vail of his flesh, Heb 10:20. Now within this second vail was

the tabernacle, or that part of it, the second part,

which is called the holiest of all; which was either typical of Christ, who is called the most Holy, **Da 9:24** he being so in both natures, divine and human; or of heaven, for the holy places, made with hands, were figures of heaven, **Heb 9:24** for its holiness, it being the habitation of the holy God, holy angels, and spirits of just men made perfect; and for its invisibility, and the unseen things which faith and hope, which enter within the vail, are the evidence of; and for the things that are in it, typified by the following ones.

{r} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 54. 1. & Cetubot, fol. 106. 1. Vid. Philo de Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 667. {s} Misn. Shekalim, c. 8. sect. 5. Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 16. {t} Misna Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 10. fol. 8. 3. {u} Hilchot Beth Habbechira, c. 4. sect. 2. {w} Gloss. & Tosephot in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 51. 2. & Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1. & in Middot, c. 4. sect. 7. {x} Misn. Middot ib. & T. Bab. Yoma ib. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 106. 1.

Hebrews 9:4

Ver. 4. Which had the golden censer,.... There were various censers used by the priests in the daily service, but this was a peculiar one, which was used by the high priest on the day of atonement; on other days he used a silver censer, but on that day a golden one, and with it he entered into the holy of holies {y}; and though Moses does not call it a golden one, Le 16:12 yet Josephus does {z}; and so do the Jewish doctors in the place referred to, with whom the apostle agrees, and to this the allusion is in **Re 8:3** but here a difficulty arises, how this can be said to have been in the holy of holies, and within the vail, when, according to Moses, it was without the vail, and was only carried within on the day of atonement; and so Philo the Jew {a} places it in the other part of the tabernacle; and it seems as if it was to avoid this difficulty, that the Ethiopic version has removed it from this verse to verse the second, and put it among the things that were in the holy place; but there is no need of this, nor to say that the altar of incense is intended, for that is never so called, and, besides, was without the vail too. It should be observed, that the apostle does not say, that the golden censer was laid up in the holy of holies, and kept there, but that it "had" it; as it had it on the day of atonement, when it was carried in there by the high priest, who there made use of it; and it was for the use of it in that place, that it was peculiarly designed. What was done by it was this, burning coals were with it taken off from the altar before the Lord, and were brought in within the vail, where incense was put upon them, which covered the mercy seat, that so the high priest died not. The burning coals signify the very great sufferings of Christ, not only the sufferings of his body, which were very painful, but those of his soul, when the wrath and hot displeasure of God was poured out upon him; and those coals being taken off from the altar before the Lord, show that the sufferings of Christ were according to the will of God, were grateful to him, and always before him; and their being brought within the vail, does not denote that Christ is now in a suffering state, though he is in the midst of the throne, as a lamb that had been slain; but the continued virtue and efficacy of his sufferings, and that our faith and hope, which enter within the vail, have to do with his blood and sacrifice thither carried. And the incense, which was carried in with those coals, typified the intercession of Christ in heaven, which is pure and holy, sweet, fragrant, and perpetual; and the priest having his hands full of it, expresses the fulness of Christ's intercession for all his elect, and for all things for them, and his fulness of merit to plead, which makes his intercession efficacious and prevalent; and hence, through his much incense, the prayers of his people become odorous and acceptable: and the incense being put upon the burning coals in the censer, shows that Christ's intercession proceeds upon the foot of his blood and sacrifice, his sufferings and death; and hence it becomes grateful, and has its influence; the smoke of it covers the mercy seat, or throne of grace, and makes that accessible; and as the priest, who offers it, never dies, so none of those for whom he intercedes.

And the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold; this is called the ark of the covenant, because the tables of the covenant, afterwards mentioned, were put into it; and that it was overlaid with gold round about, is certain from Ex 25:11 where it is said to be overlaid with pure gold, within and without; and that the ark was within the vail, and in the most holy place, is manifest from
Ex 40:21 that this was wanting in the second temple, is generally agreed {b}; but who took it away, where it was put, or what became of it various are the sentiments of the Jewish writers: some say {c}, it was carried away by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylon, and is meant by the goodly vessels of the house of the Lord,
2Ch 36:10 others say {d}, that Jeremiah the prophet took it, and hid it in a cave on Mount Nebo; but the more generally received opinion is, that it was hid by King Josiah in some hidden and deep place, which Solomon had built for that

purpose under ground, knowing, that the temple would be destroyed {e}; and it is often said, that it was hid under the pavement of a room in the temple, called Myueh ryd tkvl, "the wood room" {f}. The ark is, by some, thought to be a type of the church, which is the ark of God, of his building, and where he dwells; the ark of the covenant, or testimony, where the oracles of God, his word and ordinances, are: its being made of Shittim wood may denote the incorruption and duration of it: and its being covered with gold within and without is expressive of its glory; and its being portable, and carried from place to place, shows that the church is not always in one place; its rings, staves, and priests that bore it, may point at the Gospel, and the ministers of it, the instruments of moving it; and its moving from place to place, and falling into the hands of enemies, were emblematical of the church's afflictions; as its rest at last, in Solomon's temple, may signify the church's rest here and hereafter: but the ark is rather to be considered as a type of Christ; its various names agree with Christ, as the ark of God, the ark of his strength, the glory of God, the face of God, the holy ark, the ark of the covenant, or testimony, yea, Jehovah, and God himself: the time of its making is observable, it was made before the tabernacle, and the tabernacle for the sake of it; Christ is before all creatures, and was set up as Mediator before anything existed, and all things are for his sake; it being made of Shittim wood, covered with gold, may denote both the incorruption and glory of Christ; and its several decorations, the graces with which he was adorned, as man and Mediator; its staves and rings may design the word, ordinances, and ministers, whereby he is carried into the several places of the world; here God granted his presence, and counsel was asked of him, and it was brought forth in time of war, as a security from enemies, all which is applicable to Christ; by it wonders were done, as the dividing of Jordan for the Israelites to pass into the land of Canaan, the falling of the walls of Jericho, and the fall of Dagon; so Christ has opened the way for his people to heaven, has spoiled principalities and powers, and his Gospel is powerful to the pulling down the strongholds of sin and Satan; the moving of the ark from place to place, and its rest in the temple, may signify the rest of Christ, after his many fatigues in this world.

Wherein was the golden pot that had manna; which Aaron filled with manna by the direction of Moses, who gave it at the appointment of God, that it might be preserved to future ages, as a memorial of the goodness, care, and power of God in feeding the Israelites with it in the wilderness, Ex 16:33. This pot held an omer, which was more than three pints and a half; some say six pints: and though Moses does not call it a golden pot, yet it is so called, not only by the Septuagint in Ex 16:33 but also by Philo the Jew {g}; nor is it reasonable to think, with some Jewish writers {h}, that it should be made of earth, which was to continue for ages to come: this also was wanting in the second temple {i}; and this, with Aaron's rod, after mentioned, and other things, is said to be hid when the ark was, and along with it {k}: but how this pot, as well as Aaron's rod, can be said to be in the ark, when it is asserted, at the bringing of the ark into the temple, at the dedication of it by Solomon, that there was nothing in it but two tables of stone, **1Ki 8:9** and both the pot of "manna", and Aaron's rod, are said to be before the testimony, Ex 16:34 and not in it, is a difficulty. Some, in order to remove it, observe, that the phrase, "wherein", refers not to the ark, but to the tabernacle; but since the tables of the covenant were in the ark, and these are mentioned with it, and the phrase, "over it", in the next verse, cannot be understood of the tabernacle, but of the ark, this solution is not satisfactory. Others have observed, that they might be in the ark in Moses's time and in Jeremiah's time, when they are said to be hid, though they were not in Solomon's: and others have taken notice, that the preposition en sometimes signifies "at", or "with", as in **Col 3:1** and so the sense is, that these were near unto it in the most holy place, and might be in the sides of it, though not within it; for there were places in the sides of the ark to put things into, De 31:26. And certain it is from the above account from Scripture, that they were near it; and so, by the Jewish writers, they are always mentioned along with it: when that was carried away, and hid, they were hid with it; but what a certain Jewish commentator {l} observes on **1Ki 8:9** is so express, as if it was designed to vindicate our apostle: his remark is this:

"the intention of this is not to deny that there were not the things mentioned in the law, for they were wb Myxnwm, "left in it", as Aaron's "rod", and "the pot of manna", only to deny, hereby, that there was not anything of the law, save the decalogue."

And it should be observed, that it is not said of these, that they were put before the ark, but "before the testimony"; that is, before the tables of the covenant, which were within the ark. The "manna", in this pot, was typical of Christ; in the signification of its name, whether it comes from hnm, "manah", which signifies to appoint, prepare, and distribute, Christ being appointed, prepared, and distributed, as food for his people; or from wh Nm, "man hu", what is it? the words said by the Israelites, when they first saw it, not knowing what it was; so Christ is unknown to his people until revealed to them, and remains unknown to all natural and unregenerate men: the manna came from heaven, from God, and was a free gift of his, and so Christ: it was round in form, and may be expressive of Christ's perfection, and eternity: it was in colour white, which may signify his purity and innocence; it was sweet in taste, and so is Christ, his fruits, his word and ordinances: it was small in quantity, which may denote the meanness and despicableness of Christ in the eyes of the world: the people went out and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in mortars, and baked it, and ate, which may be typical of the apprehension, sufferings, and death of Christ, in order to be fit food for the faith of believers. The persons that were fed by it were the Israelites, who were brought out of Egypt, and then in the wilderness, a large number, and men of all sorts, rich, and poor, and who had an equal portion, though very undeserving; so those who are fed by Christ, and nourished with him, the bread of life, are the spiritual Israel of God, whom Christ has redeemed from worse than Egyptian bondage and darkness, though they are yet in the wilderness of this world; and they are a large number, the whole family of God, who receive out of Christ's fulness grace for grace; and there is no difference of high and low, rich and poor, bond or free, male or female; they are all one in Christ, and Christ is all in all; and they have all a whole Christ, though they are very undeserving, being by nature children of wrath as others. And as the Israelites had the manna every day, and all the while they were in the wilderness, so Christ is the daily bread of believers; by him, in his word and ordinances, is his church nourished in the wilderness, to whom he gives to eat of the hidden manna, the food of the wilderness. The "pot", in which this manna was kept, was typical of the ordinances of the Gospel; in its matter, being made of gold, denoting the preciousness and duration of them; in the size of it, holding an "omer", showing that these contain plenty of good things to satisfaction; in the situation of it before the ark, signifying the presence of Christ with his ordinances; and in its use to hold manna, and be a memorial of it to ages to come, as the ordinances have in them food for souls, and are the means of remembering Christ in future generations, till his second coming.

And Aaron's rod that budded; and not only budded, but bloomed; blossomed, and yielded almonds, Nu 17:8. This also was laid before the ark of the testimony, **Heb 9:10**, and may be said to be in it, or with it, in the same sense as the pot of manna was; it was likewise wanting in the second temple {m}, and is said to be hid with the pot of manna, and other things, as before observed: it was a type of Christ: it is affirmed by the Jews, that in the days of the Messiah, the priesthood shall return, and the rod of Aaron shall flourish {n}; it was, very probably, as some have thought {o}, an almond tree stick, as that in **Jer 1:11**. The almond tree has its name, in Hebrew, from a word which signifies haste and vigilance; it being, as Pliny says {p}, the first of trees that buds and blossoms, and is very hasty in putting them forth. An almond tree rod may be a proper emblem of Christ's speedy incarnation in the fulness of time; and Aaron's almond tree rod, of his right to the priesthood, and his vigilance in it: this was first a dry rod or stick, and may design the mean descent and appearance of Christ, being born of mean parents, living a mean and obscure life; his entrance on his public ministry, and continuance in it, were without any pomp or grandeur; he was as a root out of a dry ground; and though he did many miracles, these were treated with contempt; and he was at last apprehended, arraigned, and condemned as a malefactor, and died a shameful and an accursed death: it looked very unlikely and unpromising, that he should be the King Messiah; that he should have all power in heaven and in earth; that he should have the wisdom he had, and do the miracles he did; and that he should be the author of eternal salvation; and that such fruits of grace, peace, pardon, and righteousness, should spring from him, as that Aaron's dry rod should bud, blossom, and bear almonds, in which it was a lively figure of Christ; that lying among other rods, and perhaps being like them, may denote Christ's assuming the common nature of men, or an individual of human nature in all things like to man: and this being cut off from the tree, and being a dry stick, may represent the death of Christ; and its budding and blossoming may point at the resurrection of Christ from the dead; and as Aaron's priesthood was confirmed by the budding and blossoming of his rod, so the deity and Messiahship of Christ are confirmed by his resurrection; and its bringing forth almonds may design the fruits of Christ's death and resurrection; and moreover, the almond tree being, as Philo the Jew says {q} the first of trees that buds and blossoms in the spring, and the last that casts its leaves, it may be, as he observes, a symbol of the priestly tribe; and it may be a figure of the perpetuity of Christ, and his priesthood:

and the tables of the covenant; the same with the testimony which was ordered to be put into the ark, and accordingly was,
Ex 25:16. About this there is no controversy; though it is a matter of dispute with the Jews, whether the book of the law was in the ark or not: some say it was in the side of it, and others within it {r}; but Maimonides {s} says, that Moses wrote the whole law with his own hand before he died, and gave a book (or copy) to every tribe, and one copy he put Nwrab, "in the ark": so Jarchi says {t}, that the book of the law of Moses was put into the midst of the ark, and the ark was glorious and beautiful by that which was wkwtb, "within it". These tables were made of stone, an emblem of the hardness of man's heart, which is destitute of spiritual life and motion, senseless and stupid, impenitent, stubborn, and inflexible, and on which no impressions can be made but by powerful and efficacious grace; and also of the stability and duration of the law, as moral, which is not antiquated by another, nor made void by the Gospel, nor altered in its nature and terms, but remains the same as to the matter of it; though it is now no covenant of works to believers, and they are freed from the curse and condemnation of it: the number of these tables is two;

the whole law is reduced by our Lord to two grand precepts of it, Mt 22:37 and the fleshly tables, on which it is reinscribed in regeneration, are the heart and mind, **2Co 3:3**. The place where these tables were put is the ark, which was typical of the law being in Christ, not only in his hands, but in his heart, Ps 40:8 and in his keeping of which he is the fulfilling end; for he being the surety of his people, and becoming man, answered every part of the law; in the holiness of his nature, in the perfect obedience of his life, and in his sufferings and death, in which he bore the penalty of it: and these tables are called the tables of the covenant, because the law on Mount Sinai was a covenant made with the people of Israel; and was typical of the covenant, of which Christ is the surety and Mediator, and which is ratified by his blood.

{y} Misn. Yoma, c. 4. sect. 4. Maimon. Yom Hacippurim, c. 2. sect. 5. {z} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 3. {a} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 668. {b} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 27. 2. & Yoma, fol. 21. 2. Menasseh ben Israel Concil. in Gen. qu. 41. Kimchi in Hagg. i. 8. {c} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 53. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 25. T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 49. 3. {d} Joseph ben Gorion, l. 1. c. 17. 2 Maccab. ii. 4, 5. {e} T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 22. 3. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 2. Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 4. sect. 1. {f} Misn. Shekalim, c. 6. sect. 1, 2. T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 49. 3. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 54. 1. {g} De Cong. Quaer. Erud. Gratia, p. 438. {h} Mechilta, fol. 20. 1. & Tanchuma, fol. 29. 4. {i} Menasseh ben Israel Conciliat. in Gen. qu. 41. {k} T. Hieros. Shekalim, fol. 49. 3. & Sota, fol. 22. 3. T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 2. & Horayot, fol. 12. 1. Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 4. sect. 1. {l} R. Levi ben Gersom in 1 Kings viii. 9. so others in Laniado Celi, Yekar in loc. {m} Menasseh ben Israel Conciliat. in Gen. qu. 41. {n} Baal Hatturim in Numb. xvii. 5. {o} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 4. c. 4. sect. 2. Aben Ezra in Numb. xvii. 8. {p} Nat. Hist. l. 16. c. 25. {q} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 681. {r} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 1, 2. Jarchi in Deut. xxxi. 26. {s} Praefat. in Yad Chazaka in principio. {t} Gloss. on T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 24. 2.

Hebrews 9:5

Ver. 5. And over it the cherubim of glory,.... Or "glorious cherubim", where the Shechinah, or divine glory, dwelt, Ps 80:1. These were over the ark, and were in number two, as were the cherubim which God placed at the garden of Eden, **Ge 3:24** according to the opinion of the ancient Jews {u}; and very likely these were made after the form of them. Some have thought them to be birds of a very terrible aspect, which were set there to deter Adam and Eve from coming to the tree of life; and both Philo {w} and Josephus {x} say, they were winged fowls; but the generality of the Jewish writers take them for angels {y}; and some of them say they were destroying angels, or noxious spirits {z}, which is not probable; but why angels should be so called, and what was their appearance, there are different opinions. Jerom says {a} the word signifies a multitude of knowledge; and indeed Philo the Jew {b} observes, that the Greeks would interpret the Hebrew word, much knowledge and understanding; and another Jewish writer {c} affirms, that the word "cherubim" is a name for separate intelligences, as if angels were so called from their great knowledge, and that the word is the same as "cerabbim", as "Rabbins", doctors, or teachers; but for the most part they interpret it, "as young men" {d}, because that angels have appeared in the form of young men. So in the Talmud {e} it is asked,

"what does cherub signify?" says R. Abhu, aybrk, "as a young man", for so in Babylon they call a young man aybr."

Some think that the word "cherub" is the same with bwkr, "Recub", the letters transposed, which signifies "a chariot", because God is said to ride upon a "cherub" and the angels are called the chariots of the Lord, Ps 18:10 to which may be added, that Ezekiel's vision of the "cherubim" is frequently, by the Jews {f}, called hbkrm, "Mercabah", or "the chariot"; and mention is made of the chariot of the cherubim, in 1Ch 28:18 to which reference may be had in **Hab 3:8** though I rather think, with others, that the word is derived from brk, "Carab", which in the Syriac and Arabic languages signifies "to plough", and so in the Talmud {g}; and a cherub took its name from hence, because of the ox, whose face it had, that being a creature made use of in ploughing; and that the face of an ox, and the face of a cherub, is the same, may easily be concluded from **Eze 1:10**. And now because that Ezekiel's cherubim had four faces, the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle; and the "cherubim" in the temple were in the same form, as may be gathered from Eze 41:18 those that were placed at the garden of Eden may be thought to be in the same form also: and some of late have fancied, that they were an hieroglyphic of the trinity of persons in the Godhead, signified by the ox, the lion, and eagle; and of the incarnation of the Son of God, the face of a man being added to them; to support which notion it is further observed, that the word Mybwrk should be pronounced "ce-rubbim", and interpreted, "as the mighty ones". But it should be known, that the word is also used in the singular number, Ps 18:10 and every single cherub had these four faces, so that each of them must be a representative of the Trinity, and of the incarnate Saviour, of which only the word in the singular number can be used; and then it can only be said of it, "cerub", as "the mighty one" which observation

greatly weakens what is brought to support the fancy: besides, if the cherubim were an emblem of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, they would rather be an emblem of a quaternity, and not of a trinity of persons, since each had four faces, and those distinct from each other; for the face of a man is as much a distinct face as any of the rest. Now the human nature of Christ is no distinct person, much less one in the Godhead; and besides is the inferior nature of Christ, whereas the face of the man, in the "cherubim", is superior to the rest, which are the faces of irrational animals. Moreover, this would give us a similitude of the divine Being, and of that in him which is most incomprehensible by us, the trinity of persons in the Godhead; and so an answer may be given to such questions, the sense of which suggests, that no answer can be returned to them, Isa 40:18 and though the second Person often appeared in human form, and in the fulness of time became incarnate, and the Holy Ghost once descended as a dove, yet the Father's shape was never seen at any time, **Joh 5:37** to which may be added, that this notion seems contrary to the second command, "thou shall not make unto thee any likeness of anything that is in heaven above", Ex 20:4 for allowing that the cherubim at the garden of Eden were figures made by the Lord himself, it is not credible he should make such, he afterwards forbid others to make; besides, the "cherubim" in the tabernacle and temple were the same figures with those in Eden, as is owned; and these were ordered of God to be made by men, and therefore surely cannot be thought to be figures, emblems, and representations of God himself in his three divine persons; likewise the cherubim are not only distinguished from him, but instead of being figures of him, they are always represented as vehicles on which he sits or rides, Ex 25:22. Once more, it may deserve some little consideration, that the prince of Tyre, a type of antichrist, the man of sin, is called a "cherub",
Eze 28:14 which surely cannot be in allusion to the divine Being, and the persons in the Godhead, but very well in allusion to angels, the sons of God, as civil magistrates, good and bad, are sometimes called. No doubt there was something signified by the "cherubim" in the tabernacle and temple; but that this should be the mystery of them, is not easy of belief. Philo the Jew makes the "cherubim" to signify the two powers of God, his creative and governing powers {h}; and the Jews frequently speak of Mybwrkd azr, "the mystery of the cherubim" {i}: the "cherubim" over the ark, here spoken of, are sometimes allegorized of the two Testaments, the Old and New; the matter of them being of gold may denote the excellency, purity, simplicity, and duration of them; their number is two, as were the "cherubim"; and as they were alike, and of one measure and size, this may intend the agreement between them; the doctrines, promises, prophecies, types, and figures of the Old Testament agree with the New; and the account that the one gives of the person and offices, and

grace of Christ, agrees with the other; their situation and position, being placed at the two ends of the mercy seat, and looking towards it, may denote their being full of Christ, from one end to the other, and their pointing at him, and bearing witness to him; here God also reveals himself, as he did between the "cherubim"; and these are glorious as they were, full of glory, containing the glorious Gospel of the blessed God: though rather the "cherubim" on the mercy seat were symbols and representations of angels, since to these the Apostle Peter seems to allude, in **1Pe 1:12**, their being made of gold may denote their excellency, purity, and simplicity; their being on the mercy seat shows their dependence on Christ, their confirmation by him, and ministration to him; their having wings, expresses their readiness to do his will; and their looking one to another, signifies their unity and concord among themselves; and their looking to the mercy seat, their inspection into the mysteries of grace; and their being over the ark, and God being in the midst of them, declares the presence of God with them, whose face they always behold; and as these "cherubim" of glory, they are very glorious creatures, and in the glory of them will Christ come a second time:

shadowing the mercy seat; that is, with their wings, as in
Ex 25:20 which was typical of Christ; its name agrees with him, a mercy seat; for in him God shows himself merciful to his people; all the stores of mercy are laid up in him; the mission of him into this world is owing to the mercy of God; and the mercy of God was glorified by him in the redemption of his people; and he himself is the way through which they obtain and receive mercy; and he is also a merciful high priest to them: the Hebrew word for the mercy seat,
trwpk, signifies "a covering": nor is our English word in sound very different from it; and it was so called, as Kimchi {k} observes, because it covered the ark: Christ is a covering to his people; their persons are clothed with his righteousness, and all their sins are covered by it; and they are secured from the curse and condemnation of the law, and wrath to come: the Septuagint interpreters render it by ilasthrion, the word used here by the Apostle Paul, in **Ro 3:25**, there rendered "propitiation", and applied to Christ, who has made reconciliation for sin, and through whom God is propitious to his people. The matter, of which the mercy seat was made, was pure gold, denoting the excellency and preciousness of Christ; the make of it, in its length and breadth, was just the same with the ark, in which the two tables were,
Ex 25:10. Christ is the fulfilling end of the law, and exactly answers to all its requirements; his nature, to the holiness and spirituality of it; his righteousness, to all the obedience it commands; and his sufferings and death, to the penalty it enjoins: its situation above the ark shows that there is no

mercy but in a way of righteousness, and that Christ stands between God and the law, and, by fulfilling it, covers all the transgressions of it; and being above it, is able to suppress all its accusations and charges: from off the mercy seat, God communed with his people; the way to communion with God is by Christ; the encouragement to go to God is from him; and the enjoyment of him is through him: on the day of atonement the mercy seat was sprinkled with blood, typical of the blood of Christ, whereby peace is made, and a way opened into the holiest of all:

of which we cannot now speak particularly; not only of the mercy seat, but of all the things before mentioned; for the word "which" is in the plural number, and refers to all the preceding things; to discourse of which, largely and particularly, required more time than the apostle had, and must have exceeded the bounds of an epistle. The Ethiopic version renders it in the singular number; "of this".

{u} Targum Jon. &. Hieros. in Gen. iii. 24. {w} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 668. {x} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 5. {y} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 19. 1. & Mattanot Cehunah in ib. Aben Ezra in Gen iii. 24. {z} Jarchi & Baal Hatturim in loc. {a} Ep. Paulino, Tom. III. fol. 3. F. {b} Ut supra. (De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 668.) {c} R. Samuel Tzartzah, Sepher Meker Chayim, fol. 8. 3. {d} Zohar in Gen. fol. 122. 3. & Imre Binah in ib. Aben Ezra in Gen. iii. 24. Kimchi Sepher Shorash. in rad. bwrb, & R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 58. 2. {e} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 13. 2. & Succa, fol. 5. 2. {f} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 14. 2. {g} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 32. 2. Bava Kama, fol. 96. 2. {h} De Cherubim, p. 112. de Profugis, p. 465. & de Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 669. {i} Zohar in Gen. fol. 99. 1. & 122. 4. {k} Sopher Shorash. rad. rpk.

Hebrews 9:6

Ver. 6. Now when these things were thus ordained,.... Or prepared and got ready; that is, when the tabernacle was finished, and set up, and provided with all its vessels and furniture:

the priests went always into the first tabernacle; the first part of the tabernacle, which was called the holy place, **Heb 9:2** here the common priests went continually every day, morning and evening; the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "the outward tabernacle", in distinction from the innermost part of the tabernacle, or the most holy place:

accomplishing the service of God; by offering sacrifices, burning incense, and trimming the lamps, which they did every day: the priests entered into the holy place every day for service; but they might not go in at any other time but the time of service {l} the phrase, "of God", is not in the text, but is a supplement; and it was usual with the Jews to call the worship of the temple, and especially that part of it which lay in sacrifices, hdwbe, "the service": Simeon the just used to say, the world stands upon three things; upon the law, hdwbeh lew, "and upon the service", and upon beneficence {m}; by "the service", the commentators {n} on the passage understand sacrifices; and again it is said {o}, no man enters into the court hdwbel, "for service", though he is clean, until he has dipped himself: the word here used in the Greek text is in the plural number, and may be rendered the services, because there were several sorts of services performed every day, as before observed, and several sacrifices offered; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "the offices of sacrifices"; and the Ethiopic version, "their offerings"; and the Arabic version, "offices": and the service which the high priest performed in the holiest of all once a year, was divers, which is mentioned in the following verses, and is called "service", **Heb 9:8** it is said, that on the day of atonement there were five twdwbe, "services" of the morning daily sacrifice {p}, in which the high priest ministered in his golden garments: but here the service of the common priests is meant, which was every day; and it becomes such who are employed in sacred service; both to be constant in it, and to do it fully and completely.

{l} Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 2. sect. 1, 2. {m} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 2. {n} Maimon & Bartenora in ib. {o} Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 3. {p} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 32. 1.

Hebrews 9:7

Ver. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone, once every year,.... Though this is not expressed in so many words in
Le 16:2 only it is said that "Aaron came not at all times into the holy place within the vail"; yet it is the constant and generally received sense of the Jewish writers, in agreement with the apostle here, that the high priest went into the holy of holies but once a year {q}, on the day of atonement, which was on the tenth of the month Tisri, and answers to part of September; not but that he went in more than once on that day, for he went in no less than four times {r}; the first time he went in to offer incense; the second time with the blood of the bullock, to sprinkle it; the third time with the blood of the goat; and the fourth time to bring out the censer {s}; and if he entered a fifth time, they say

he was worthy of death; wherefore Philo the Jew {t} seems to be mistaken when he affirms that, if he went in three or four times on the same day, he suffered death, nor was there any pardon for him; and as it was but one day in a year he might enter, so when he did, no other man, either Israelite or priest, might go in along with him; he went in alone without any attendance: the Jews say {u}, that a cord or thong was bound to the feet of the high priest when he went into the holy of holies, that if he died there, the rest might be able to draw him out; for it was not lawful for another priest to go in, no, not an high priest, none besides him on the day of atonement. Pausanias {w} makes mention of a temple of Minerva into which the priests entered once every year; which very likely was observed in imitation of this custom of the Jewish high priest; who in it was a type of Christ, and of his entrance into heaven, and of his constant and continued intercession there:

not without blood; for he went in with the blood of the bullock and the blood of the goat; which was typical of the blood of Christ, by which he entered in once into the holy place, into heaven, when he had obtained eternal redemption by it, **Heb 9:12** which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people; the bullock was offered by the high priest for himself and his family; and the goat for the sins of the people of Israel, even all their iniquities, transgressions, and sins, Le 16:11, but Christ the antitype having no sin, had no need to offer for himself, only for the sins of the people; See Gill on "Heb 7:27".

{q} T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 42. 4. & 43. 1. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 86. 1. {r} Bemidbar Rabba, sect 7. fol. 188. 4. Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 2. sect. 3. Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 303. {s} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misna Celim, c. 1. sect. 9. {t} De Legatione ad Caium, p. 1035. {u} Zohar in Lev. fol. 43. 3. & Imre Binah in ib. {w} Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 531.

Hebrews 9:8

Ver. 8. The Holy Ghost this signifying,.... This shows that the Holy Ghost existed under the Old Testament; that he is a distinct person in the Godhead, a personal act being here ascribed to him; that he is truly and properly God, the God whose service the priests accomplished in the tabernacle; and by whom Moses was admonished to make all things in it according to the pattern, and by whom the high priest was warned not to come at all times within the vail; moreover, that the Levitical ordinances were of God, and that they had a spiritual signification; that the Old Testament saints were not without some knowledge of the spiritual meaning of them; and that the Holy Ghost was the author of that knowledge; particularly by enjoining the high priest to enter within the vail but once a year, he gave a plain and strong intimation,

that the way into the holiest of all was not yet manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing; by which is meant, not only the first part of the tabernacle, as in **Heb 9:2** but the whole of it; and not only that, but the temple built in its room, and also the whole Levitical service is included; and the sense is, that while the tabernacle and tabernacle worship, the temple and temple service, were in being, "the way into the holiest of all was not yet manifest": the Vulgate Latin and all the Oriental versions render it, "the way of the saints"; of the priests who ministered in holy things, and were holy to the Lord, and of all the saints that lived before Christ; not that they did not go to heaven, but their way to it was not so manifestly known; life and immortality were not so clearly brought to light, as now by the Gospel; though rather it designs holy places, even heaven itself, which was typified by the holy place within the vail; and may be called the holiest of all, it being the residence of the holy God, holy angels, and holy men, and is sanctified by the presence of Christ, for his people, and where perfect holiness will be the glory of it: the way to it is not by works of righteousness done by men, which being imperfect cannot justify, and so not save, though this is the way men naturally seek and take; but Christ is the only way, and he is the plain, pleasant, and safe one: now let it be observed, that heaven was not shut to the Old Testament saints; there was a way into it for them, and they went the same way New Testament saints do; and that way was in some measure known, but it was not fully manifested; it lay hid in obscure prophecies, types, shadows, and sacrifices; hence being more clearly revealed under the Gospel dispensation, in comparison, of its former obscurity, and with respect to the manifestation of it, it is called a "new way".

Hebrews 9:9

Ver. 9. Which was a figure for the time then present,.... The tabernacle in general was a figure of Christ's human nature, **Heb 8:2** and the most holy part of it was a figure of heaven itself, **Heb 9:24** the whole service of it was typical and shadowy; but it was but a temporary figure; it was for that present time only; the things of it were suited to that dispensation, and are now abolished, and ought not to be revived, the ordinances of the Gospel being greatly preferable to them; and while it did continue, it was only a parable, as the word here used signifies; it was like a dark saying; it had much obscurity and darkness in it; or as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, it was a "figure of the present time"; that is, of the Gospel dispensation; it was a shadow of good things to come under that; it prefigured what is now accomplished; or rather it was a "figure unto, or until the present time"; till Christ came, when all figures, types, and shadows fled away, and were of no more real use and service:

in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices; that is, in which tabernacle, or at which then present time, or kay' hn, "according to which figure or parable", as the Alexandrian copy and Vulgate Latin version read, gifts and sacrifices were offered by the priests; see **Heb 5:1**,

that could not make him that did the service perfect; neither the priest that offered them, nor the people whom he represented, and for whom he did the service; they could not make real and perfect expiation for sin, nor justify from it, nor cleanse and sanctify; the spiritual worshippers had their sins expiated by the sacrifice of Christ; and their persons were justified by his righteousness, and they were cleansed by his blood: the particular instance in which, legal sacrifices did not make perfect is, "pertaining to the conscience"; there is in every man a conscience, and when sin is charged home upon it, that is filled with a sense of divine wrath; nor can it be pacified with anything short of what will answer the law and justice of God, and which is only done by the blood and righteousness of Christ.

Hebrews 9:10

Ver. 10. [Which stood] only in meats and drinks,.... That is, along with the gifts and sacrifices offered, there only were meat offerings and drink offerings; things which only respect the body, and cannot therefore make perfect, as to the conscience; to which may be added, that while the tabernacle was standing, and typical service was in being, there was a prohibition of certain meats, as unclean, and an allowance of others, as clean, Le 11:2 and there were certain drinks which were unlawful to certain persons, at certain times, as to the priests and Nazarites, Le 10:9 and which, for the above reason, could make no man perfect:

and divers washings or "baptisms": the doctrine of which, the apostle would not have laid again, **Heb 6:2** these were the washings of the priests and of the Israelites, and of sacrifices, and of garments, and of vessels and other things; and which, because they were performed by immersion, they are called "baptisms": and now since these only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, or what was outward, they could not reach the conscience, or make perfect with respect to that: and

carnal ordinances: which belonged to the flesh, and not the spirit or soul, and therefore could not affect that; besides, these were only

imposed on them until the time of reformation; they were enjoined the Jews only, though by God himself; and were put upon them as a burden, or a yoke, and which was on some accounts intolerable, but were not to continue any longer than the time of the Gospel, here called "the time of reformation", or of "correction", and emendation; in which, things that were faulty and deficient are amended and perfected, and in which burdensome rites and ceremonies are removed, and better ordinances introduced: or rather of direction: in which saints are directed to Christ, the sum and substance of all types, shadows, and sacrifices, and in whom alone perfection is.

Hebrews 9:11

Ver. 11. But Christ being come an high priest,.... Christ is come, as appears from the cessation of civil government among the Jews, which was not to be till Shiloh came; from the destruction of the second temple, into which the Messiah was to come, and did; from the expiration of Daniel's weeks, at which he was to appear, and be cut off; from the coming of John the Baptist, his forerunner, and from the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and the calling and conversion of them, and the effusion of the Spirit upon them: and he is come an high priest; he was called to be one, and was constituted as such in the council and covenant of peace; and he agreed to do the work of one; he was typified by the high priest under the law; and he came as such into this world, and has done the work of an high priest, by offering himself a sacrifice for sin, and by his entrance into the holiest of all, with his own blood: and he is come an high priest of good things to come; such as peace, reconciliation, and atonement, a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, eternal life and salvation, which the law was a shadow and figure of; and which under the former dispensation were to come, as to the actual impetration of them by Christ; who is called the high priest of them, to distinguish him from the high priests under the law, who could not bring in these good things, nor make the comers to them and to their offerings perfect; but Christ is the author and administrator of them; and these things are owing to the performance of his priestly office; and such rob Christ of his glory, as a priest, who ascribe these good things to their own merits, or the merits of others: and the way in which he is come is, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; meaning the human body of Christ, which was greater than tabernacle of Moses; not in bulk and quantity, but in value, worth, and dignity; and was more perfect than that, that being only an example, figure, shadow, and type, this being the antitype, the sum and substance of that; and by it things and persons are brought to perfection, which could not be, in and by that; and this is a tabernacle which God pitched, and not man; which was reared up without the help, of man: Christ was not begotten by man, but was conceived in the womb of a virgin, under the power of the Holy Ghost; he came not into the world in the way of ordinary generation, but in a supernatural manner; and so his human body is a tabernacle, not of the common building, or creation, as the word may be rendered, as other human bodies are.

Hebrews 9:12

Ver. 12. Neither by the blood of goats and calves,.... With which the high priest entered into the holy place, within the vail, on the day of atonement, Le 16:14 for Christ was not an high priest of the order of Aaron, nor could the blood of these creatures take away sin, nor would God accept of such sacrifices any longer:

but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place; which shows the truth of his human nature, and the virtue of its blood, as in union with his divine Person; by which he opened the way into the holiest of all, as the surety of his people, and gives them boldness and liberty to follow him there; he carried his blood not in a basin, as the high priest carried the blood of goats and calves, but in his veins; and by it, having been shed by him, he entered not into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself; and that not every year, as the high priest, but "once" for all, having done his work; or as follows,

having obtained eternal redemption; for us, from sin, Satan, the law, and death, to which his people were in bondage, and which he obtained by paying a ransom price for them; which was not corruptible things, as silver and gold but his precious, blood: in the original text it is, "having found eternal redemption"; there seems to be an allusion to Job 33:24. This was what was sought for long ago by the, Old Testament saints, who were wishing, waiting, and longing for this salvation; it is a thing very precious and difficult to find; it is to be had nowhere but in Christ, and when found in him, is matter of great joy to sensible sinners; God found it in him, and found him to be a proper person to effect it; and Christ has found it by being the author of it: this is called an eternal redemption, because it extends to the saints in all ages; backwards and forwards; it includes eternal life and happiness; and such as are sharers in it shall never perish, but shall be saved with an everlasting salvation; it is so called in opposition to the carnal expiations of the high priests, and in distinction from temporal redemptions, deliverances, and salvations. Remarkable is the paraphrase of Jonathan ben Uzziel on Ge 49:18.

"Jacob said, when he saw Gideon the son of Joash, and Samson the son of Manoah, who should be redeemers; not for the redemption of Gideon am I waiting, nor for the redemption of Samson am I looking, for their redemption is a temporal redemption; but for thy redemption am I waiting and looking, O Lord, because thy redemption is Nymle
Nqrwp, "an everlasting redemption":"

another copy reads, for the redemption of Messiah the son of David; and to the same purpose is the Jerusalem paraphrase on the place; in Talmudic language it would be called tymlwe hyydp {x}

{x} T. Shebuot, fol. 11. 2.

Hebrews 9:13

Ver. 13. For if the blood of bulls and of goats,.... Shed either on the day of atonement, or at any other time: the former of thee, Pausanias {y} relates, was drank by certain priestesses among the Grecians, whereby they were tried, whether they spoke truth or no if not, they were immediately punished; and the latter, he says {z}, will dissolve an adamant stone; but neither of them can purge from sin:

and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean; the apostle refers to the red heifer, Nu 19:1 which being burnt, its ashes were gathered up and put into a vessel, and water poured upon them, which was sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop on unclean persons; the ashes and the water mixed together made the water of separation, or of sprinkling; for so it is called by the Septuagint, udwr rantismou, "the water of sprinkling", and in the Targum in a following citation: this was the purification for sin, though it only

sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; the body, or only in an external and typical way, but did not really sanctify the heart, or purify and cleanse the soul from sin. The Jews say, that the waters of purification for sin were not waters of purification for sin, without the ashes {a}; and to this the Targumist, on Eze 36:25 and on Zec 13:1 refers, paraphrasing both texts thus;

"I will forgive their sins as they are cleansed with the water of sprinkling, and with the ashes of the heifer, which is a purification for sin."

{y} Achaica, sive l. 7. p. 450. {z} Arcadica, sive l. 8. p. 485. {a} Misn. Temura, c. 1. sect. 5. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

Hebrews 9:14

Ver. 14. How much more shall the blood of Christ,.... Which is not the blood of a mere man, but the blood of the Son of God; and the argument is from the lesser to the greater; that if the ashes of the burnt heifer, which was a type of Christ in his sufferings, mixed with water, typically sanctified to the purifying of men externally, in a ceremonial way, then much more virtue must there be in the blood of Christ, to cleanse the soul inwardly:

who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God; Christ is a priest, and the sacrifice he has offend up is "himself"; not his divine nature, but his human nature, soul and body, as in union with his divine person; which gives his sacrifice the preference to all others; and is the reason of its virtue and efficacy, and is expressive of his great love to man: and this sacrifice was offered up "to God", against whom his people had sinned, and whose justice must be satisfied, and which is of a sweet smelling savour to him; besides, he called him to this work, and engaged him in it, and is well pleased with this offering, as he must needs be, since it is offered up "without spot"; which expresses the purity of Christ's nature and sacrifice, and the perfection of it, which is such, that no fault can be found in it by the justice of God; and hence, the saints, for whom it is offered, are unblamable and irreprovable, There is an allusion in the clause, both to the priests and to their sacrifices, which were neither of them to have any spot or blemish on them; and this unblemished sacrifice was offered unto God by Christ,

through the eternal Spirit; not the human soul of Christ; for though that is a spirit, yet not eternal, and besides, was a part of the sacrifice; but rather the divine nature of Christ, which is a spirit, and may be so called in distinction from the flesh, or human nature, as it sometimes is, and this is eternal; it was from everlasting, as well as is to everlasting; and this supported him under all his sufferings, and carried him through them, and put virtue unto them; and Christ was a priest, in the divine, as well as human nature: though by it may be better understood "the Holy Ghost"; and so the Vulgate Latin version reads, and also several copies; since the divine nature rather acts by the human nature, than the human nature by the divine; and Christ is often said to do such and such things by the Holy Spirit; and as the Holy Ghost formed and filled the human nature of Christ, so he assisted and supported it under sufferings. This whole clause is inserted by way of parenthesis, showing the efficacy of Christ's blood, and from whence it is:

to purge your conscience from dead works; that is, "from the works of sin", as the Ethiopic version renders it; which are performed by dead men, separate and alienated from the life of God, are the cause of the death of the soul, and expose to eternal death, and are like dead carcasses, nauseous and infectious; and even duties themselves, performed without faith and love, are dead works; nor can they procure life, and being depended on, issue in death; and even the works of believers themselves are sometimes performed in a very lifeless manner, and are attended with sin and pollution, and need purging: the allusion is to the pollution by the touch of dead bodies; and there may be some respect to the sacrifices of slain beasts, after the sacrifice and death of Christ, by believing Jews, who were sticklers for the ceremonies of the law, and thereby contracted guilt; but immoralities are chiefly designed, and with these the conscience of man is defiled; and nothing short of the blood of Christ can remove the pollution of sin; as that being shed procures atonement, and so purges away the guilt of sin, or makes reconciliation for it, so being sprinkled on the conscience by the Spirit of God, it speaks peace and pardon, and pacifies and purges it, and removes every incumbrance from it: the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, read, "our conscience". The end and use of such purgation is, "to serve the living God"; so called to distinguish him from the idols of the Gentiles, and in opposition to dead works; and because he has life in himself, essentially and independently, and is the author and giver of life to others; and it is but the reasonable service of his people, to present their souls and bodies as a living sacrifice to him; and who ought to serve him in a lively manner, in faith, and with fervency, and not with a slavish, but a godly filial fear; and one that has his conscience purged by the blood of Christ, and is sensibly impressed with a discovery of pardoning grace, is in the best capacity for such service. The Alexandrian copy reads, "the living and true God".

Hebrews 9:15

Ver. 15. And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament,.... See Gill on "Heb 7:22",
See Gill on "Heb 8:6",
See Gill on "Heb 8:8". This may refer both to what goes before, and what follows after; for Christ, that he might offer himself to God, and by his blood purge the consciences of his people from dead works, that so they might serve the living God, became the Mediator of the New Testament, or covenant; and also he took upon him this character and office,

that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance; Christ became the Mediator of the New Testament, and assumed human nature that he might die, and by dying might obtain redemption for his people; not only for those that were then in the world, or should be in it, but also for all those that had been in it. "The first testament" is the first dispensation of the covenant of grace, reaching from the first promulgation of it to Adam after the fall, to the death of Christ; "the transgressions" that were under it are the sins of the saints who lived under that dispensation, froth Adam to Moses, and from Moses to Christ, and takes in all their iniquities of every kind: and the "redemption" of these, or from these, by Christ, at and through his death, does not suppose that there was no remission of sins, or justification from them, under that dispensation; or that the Old Testament saints did not go to heaven, but were detained in a prison, till redeemed by the death of Christ; or that their sins were only redeemed, not their persons; for transgressions may stand for transgressors; and so the Syriac version renders it, "that by his death he might be a redemption for them who transgressed the first testament"; so the Jews say, that the Messiah must die twba ta twdpl "to redeem the fathers" {b}: but the sense is, that though legal sacrifices could not atone for sin, nor ceremonial ablutions cleanse from them; yet the sins of Old Testament saints were expiated, their iniquities pardoned, and they justified and saved, through the blood of Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; whose death is a redemption from transgressions past, present, and to come; whose blood is the ransom price for them, and was shed for the remission of them, even of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; who took the surety's word for the performance of all this, which in the fulness of time he strictly fulfilled, to the satisfaction of law and justice; see **Ro 3:25** and the ultimate end of Christ's being a Mediator, and dying for such purposes, was, that called ones might receive the promised inheritance: by the "eternal inheritance", is meant heaven, which is by gift and bequest, belongs to children only, and comes through the death of Christ; and is a very substantial, plentiful, and glorious one; it is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away, and as here, "eternal"; it was prepared from the foundation of the world, and will continue for ever; and it may be so called, to distinguish it from the inheritance of the land of Canaan, or any temporal one: "the promise" of this was made before the world began, and was put into the hands of Christ, the surety of the better testament, by whose death the heirs of it come to enjoy both the promise, and the thing promised; and they are such who are "called", not merely externally, but internally and effectually; by whom were meant, not Abraham and his natural seed, nor the Old Testament saints only, but all that are called with an holy calling, whether Jews or Gentiles, and who will enjoy both the promise of the inheritance, and that itself, in a way of "receiving": every word shows this affair to be all of grace; it is an "inheritance", and therefore the Father's gift; it is by "promise", and so of grace; and it is "received", and so freely given, and not merited; and only such who are "called" by grace possess it; and yet it is through the death of Christ, that so it might be received in a way consistent with the justice of God.

{b} R. Moses Haddarsan apud Galatin. l. 8. c. 20.

Hebrews 9:16

Ver. 16. For where a testament is,.... The covenant of grace, as administered under the Gospel dispensation, is a testament or will. The Jews have adopted the Greek word, here used, into their language, and pronounce it yqytyyd, and by it understand a dying man's last will and testament {d}. Some of them make it to be of Hebrew derivation; as if it was said, Mqyml yht ad, "this shall be to confirm" {e}, or this shall be stable and firm; though others own it to be the same with this Greek word diayhkh {f}. The covenant of grace, is properly a covenant to Christ, and a testament or will to his people: it is his and their Father's will, concerning giving them both grace and glory; it consists of many gifts and legacies; in it Christ is made heir of all things, and his people are made joint heirs with him; they are given to him as his portion; and they have all things pertaining to life and godliness bequeathed to them, even all spiritual blessings; the witnesses of it are Father, Son, and Spirit; and the seals of it are the blood of Christ, and the grace of the Spirit; and this is registered in the Scriptures by holy men as notaries; and is unalterable and immutable: and this being made,

there must also of necessity be the death of the testator; who is Christ; he has various parts in this will or testament; he is the surety and Mediator of it; and he is the executor of it; what is given in it, is first given to him, in order to be given to others; all things are put into his hands, and he has a power to give them to as many as the Father has given him; and here he is called the "testator": Christ, as God, has an equal right to dispose of the inheritance, both of grace and glory; and as Mediator, nothing is given without his consent; and whatever is given, is given with a view to his "death", and comes through it, and by virtue of it: hence there is a "necessity" of that, and that on the account of the divine perfections; particularly for the declaration of God's righteousness, or by reason of his justice; and also because of his purposes and decrees, which have fixed it, and of his promises, which are yea and amen in Christ, and are ratified by his blood, called therefore the blood of the covenant; and likewise on account of the engagements of Christ to suffer and die; as well as for the accomplishment of Scripture prophecies concerning it; and moreover, on account of the blessings which were to come to the saints through it, as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, peace and reconciliation, adoption and eternal life.

{d} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 17. 4. & T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 152. 2. {e} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 19. 1. Maimon & Bartenora in Misn. Moed Katon, c. 3. sect. 3. & in Bava Metzia, c. 1. sect. 7. & in Bava Bathra, c. 8. sect. 6. {f} Cohen de Lara Ir David, p. 30.

Hebrews 9:17

Ver. 17. For a testament is of force after men are dead,.... The necessity of Christ's death is here urged, from the nature and force of a testament or will, among men, which does not take place, and cannot be executed, till a man is dead.

Otherwise it is of no strength at all whilst the testator liveth; no claim can be made by the legatees for the part they have in it, nor can any disposition be made by the executor of it; not that hereby is suggested, that the testament or will of God was uncertain and precarious till the death of Christ, and subject to change and alteration as men's wills are till they die; nor that the inheritance could not be enjoyed by the Old Testament saints; for it is certain, it was entered upon by them before the death of Christ; but the sense is, that there was a necessity of it, that the saints right unto it, upon the foot of justice, might be evident by it.

Hebrews 9:18

Ver. 18. Whereupon neither the first testament,.... Or the first administration of the covenant of grace under the law:

was dedicated without blood; or "confirmed" without it, that dispensation being a typical one; and that blood was typical of the blood of Christ, by which the new covenant or testament is ratified; see Ex 24:7.

Hebrews 9:19

Ver. 19. For when Moses had spoken every precept,.... Contained in the decalogue, in the book of the covenant, everyone of the precepts in Ex 22:1 for this is to be understood of the written law, and not of the oral law the Jews talk of, which they say Moses first delivered by word of mouth to Aaron, then to his two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, then to the seventy elders of Israel, and then to the whole congregation; so that Aaron heard it four times, his sons thrice, the seventy elders twice, and all Israel once {g}: but this is the written law which he spoke audibly, and in a known language,

to all the people according to the law; which God gave him on the Mount: this may instruct persons concerned in the public ministry, to speak out plainly and clearly the whole counsel of God, to all to whom they are sent, according to the word of God, which is the rule of faith and practice:

he took the blood of calves, and of goats; in the relation of this affair in Ex 24:5 which is referred to, only mention is made of oxen, bullocks, or heifers, here called calves, which were sacrificed for peace offerings, and not of goats; though perhaps they may be intended by the burnt offerings there spoken of, since they were sometimes used for burnt offerings, **Le 1:10**. The Syriac version only reads, "he took the blood of an heifer"; and the Arabic version, "he took the blood of calves"; but all the copies, and other versions, read both. "With water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop"; neither of these are mentioned in Ex 24:1, but since sprinkling is there said to be used, and blood and water mixed together, and scarlet and hyssop were used in sprinkling, as in sprinkling the leper, and the unclean house, Le 14:5 the apostle justly concludes the use of them here; the blood, with water, was typical of the blood and water which sprung from the side of Christ pierced on the cross, the one signifying justification by him, the other sanctification; the scarlet wool, which is originally white, but becomes scarlet by being dyed, may denote the native purity of Christ, and his bloody sufferings and death; the hyssop may signify his humility, and the purging virtue of his blood, and the sweet smelling savour of his person, righteousness, and sacrifice. The apostle calls scarlet, scarlet wool; though whenever the word is used in the Jewish laws of the Old Testament, wool is not expressed, but it is always intended; for it is a rule with the Jews {h}, that

"the blue, which is spoken of in every place, is wool dyed of a sky colour; purple is wool dyed red, and scarlet is wool dyed in scarlet."

And sprinkled both the book, and all the people. In Ex 24:8 no mention is made of the sprinkling of the former, only of the latter, which the apostle either concludes from the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar, upon which the book might lie, or from tradition, or from divine revelation: some think it does not necessarily follow from the text, that the book was sprinkled; and repeating the word
labwn, "he took", read the words, "and he took the book and sprinkled all the people"; but this seems not natural, but forced; and besides, all the Oriental versions are express for the sprinkling of the book: the book of the law was sprinkled, not because of any impurity in it, but to show the imperfection of it, and its insufficiency to justify men; or rather the imperfection of man's obedience to it, and to point out what the law requires in case of disobedience, even the blood and life of men; and what it would be, was it not sprinkled with blood, or satisfied by the blood of Christ, namely, an accusing, cursing, and condemning law: the people, all of them, being sprinkled with the blood, were typical of God's peculiar people, even all the elect of God, being sprinkled with the blood of Christ, called the blood of sprinkling, by which they are redeemed, and which speaks peace and pardon to them. Some have thought only the seventy elders were sprinkled, as representing the whole congregation; and others, that the twelve pillars were only sprinkled, as representing the twelve tribes of Israel; but Moses and the apostle agree, that they were the people that were sprinkled.

{g} Maimon. Praefat. ad Yad Chazaka. {h} Ib. Hilchot Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 13.

Hebrews 9:20

Ver. 20. Saying, this is the blood of the testament,.... The first testament or covenant; this proves what the apostle had asserted in **Heb 9:18** that it was dedicated with blood, or confirmed by it; compare with this Mt 26:28

which God hath enjoined unto you; the people of Israel, to observe, and which they promised to do; see Ex 24:7.

Hebrews 9:21

Ver. 21. Moreover, he sprinkled likewise both the tabernacle,.... Not at the same time that he sprinkled the book and the people, for then there was no tabernacle; but afterwards, at the time that it was set up, when it was anointed with oil, Ex 40:9 and though no mention is there made of blood, yet Josephus, in agreement with the apostle, asserts {i}, that the tabernacle, and its vessels, were not only anointed with oil, but sprinkled with the blood of bulls and goats, as well as the garments of Aaron, and his sons: the tabernacle was typical of the church, in which God dwells, being purified and cleansed by the blood of Christ; and this shows, that there is no coming into the presence of God, the place where he dwells, without blood.

And all the vessels of the ministry; which were used in the service of the tabernacle these may denote the vessels of grace and mercy, the elect of God, whose hearts are sprinkled by the blood of Christ from an evil conscience, and whose garments are washed in it, and made white by it.

{i} Antiq. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 6.

Hebrews 9:22

Ver. 22. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood,.... All "except a few things", as the Arabic version renders it; for some things were cleansed by water, and others purged by fire, Nu 31:23. Some join the word almost with the word purged, as if the sense was, that all things were purged by blood, but not perfectly, only almost; but the former sense is best.

And without shedding of blood is no remission; that is, of sin; there was no typical remission without it; and there can be no real remission but by, the blood of Christ; no instance can be given of pardon without it; if it could have been otherwise, the blood of Christ had not been shed; for so it would seem to be shed in vain, and his satisfaction to be unnecessary; nor is it agreeable to the justice of God to forgive sin without satisfaction; nor is it consistent with his veracity, and faithfulness to his word, **Ge 2:17**. It is a common saying with the Jews, and often to be met with in their writings, Mdb ala hrpk Nya, "there is no atonement but by blood" {k}; by the shedding of blood; not by the shedding of it, as it flows out of the body of the sacrifice, but as it is poured out on the altar; for the pouring of the blood at the four corners, and at the bottom of the altar, were the chief rites required in sacrifices; nor did they reckon expiation to be expiation, unless the altar was moistened by the blood of the sacrifice {l}.

{k} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 5. 1. Zebachim, fol. 6. 1. & Menachot, fol. 93. 2. {l} Reland. Heb. Antiqu. par. 3. c. 2. sect. 8.

Hebrews 9:23

Ver. 23. It was therefore necessary,.... On account of the divine appointment, and that types and antitypes might correspond; and especially it was necessary with respect to the Messiah, the substance and body of all types. So Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases the text in Ex 40:9:

"and thou shalt take the anointing oil, and thou shalt anoint the tabernacle, and all that is in it; and thou shall sanctify it, lwjm, because of the crown of the kingdom of the house of Judah, and the King Messiah, who shall redeem Israel in the latter days."

Upon his account it was necessary,

that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; that is, that all the people, and the book of the covenant, and the tabernacle, and its vessels, which were types and patterns of persons and things in Gospel churches, should be purified with blood and water, and with scarlet wool and hyssop.

But the heavenly things themselves, with better sacrifices than these; the sum and substance of the above patterns, shadows, and examples, such as heaven itself; which though not impure in itself, yet some think it, may be said to be purified, because saints are made meet for it, by being purged with the blood of Christ; others observe, that sin reaches to heaven, and provokes God that dwells there; hence atonement for it may be called a purification of heaven:

but rather this may be said of it, inasmuch as by the blood of Christ an entrance and preparation is made for the saints into it. Likewise, the human nature of Christ is among these heavenly things; not that it is heavenly, as to the matter and substance of it, but may be so called, because of its wonderful formation; and which has been purified, not from any real internal pollution that was in it, but from what was imputed to it, the sin of his people. Also the whole church, triumphant and militant, may be intended by heavenly things: the Old Testament saints went to heaven before Christ came; and though they were not impure, but were the spirits of just men made perfect, yet their iniquities were purged by the blood and sacrifice of Christ, after they were gone to heaven; see **Heb 9:15**. The church militant, or believers on earth, may be said to be heavenly, since they are partakers of an heavenly birth and calling; their head is in heaven, and their conversation is there; and they have a right unto it, and are making meet for it; and they are in themselves defiled with sin, and are purified by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the offering up of his body once for all: to which may be added, that spiritual blessings are heavenly things; they are from heaven, and saints are blessed with them in heavenly places and these come to them through the blood and sacrifice of Christ; yea, the Gospel, which is from heaven, and the doctrines of it, are sealed and confirmed by the blood of Christ: his sacrifice is expressed in the plural number; not that there has been a repetition of it, for it is but one sacrifice, and but once offered up, and will never be reiterated; but to show the excellency of it, being usual with the Jews to use the plural number of things the most excellent; so Christ is called "Wisdoms", **Pr 1:20** besides, respect may be had to the many sacrifices under the law, which were types of it, and were answered and fulfilled by it; and to the many persons on whose account it was offered; and to the parts of it, the soul and body of Christ: and this is a better sacrifice than the legal ones, in its own nature and in its use and efficacy to take away sin, and make perfect, which they could not.

Hebrews 9:24

Ver. 24. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands,.... The most holy place in the tabernacle of Moses, or in the temple built by Solomon, and rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and repaired by Herod,

which are the figures of the true; that is, the most holy place in the tabernacle and temple, was a figure of the truth of that type; see **Heb 9:9** as follows. Josephus {m} suggests the same, when speaking of the most holy place; he says, that it was inaccessible to the priests, that it might be as heaven to God.

But into heaven itself; not the visible heavens, the airy and starry ones, through which he passed, but the third heaven, the habitation of God, angels, and glorified saints: this shows that heaven is a place; that Christ, as man, was out of it when on earth; and that at his ascension he entered into it, having done the work he came about, and that with acceptance: the end of his entrance was

now to appear in the presence of God for us; Christ, as God, was always in his presence, from everlasting; as Mediator, he was with him in the council of peace; while he was here on earth his Father was with him, he was not alone; but now in his human nature he is at his right hand, where he appears before him, as a favourite before his Prince, on the behalf of another, or as an advocate on the behalf of his client: Christ appears in the court of heaven for his elect, by representing their persons; by presenting himself, his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness, before God on their account; by introducing them into the presence of God, and offering up their prayers with the incense of his mediation; by presenting them to himself, and to his Father, and obtaining every blessing for them. And this he does "now", since his entrance; not that he did not appear before God for the saints of the Old Testament, for he was the angel of God's presence then, though he did not appear then in the manner he does now, as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, as if it had been slain; but it denotes the continuance and perpetuity of his appearance for his people; he is ever interceding for them.

{m} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 5. sect. 4. & c. 7. sect. 8.

Hebrews 9:25

Ver. 25. Nor yet that he should offer himself often,.... Or at all again; which shows the perfection of his sacrifice, for justice was satisfied, the law fulfilled, sin done away, and complete salvation obtained at once; which lies against the errors of the Socinians, who say he offers himself now in heaven; and of the Papists, who pretend to offer the body of Christ daily in their mass:

as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; not his own, nor other men's, but the blood of goats and calves; but Christ entered into heaven with his own blood, he having been altar, priest, and sacrifice: the high priest went into the most holy place every year, but Christ has entered into heaven once for all, where he sits down and continues, having done his work effectually.

Hebrews 9:26

Ver. 26. For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world,.... For if it was necessary that he should often offer up himself now, which is the same as to suffer, since the sacrifice of himself, the same was necessary before; seeing sin was in the world from the beginning, and the saints from the foundation of the world had their sins expiated by the sacrifice of Christ; but the truth is, Christ's sufferings were but once, though the virtue of them is always, both before and after; nor can he suffer more, or again, because of his power over death and the grave, and because he has effectually obtained what he suffered for:

but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; this is to be understood, not of his appearance in heaven, of which mention is made in **Heb 9:24** but of his incarnation on earth, called an appearance; not as though his human nature was a mere phantom or apparition, for it was a real thing; or as if he was then manifested to be what he really was before; for before his incarnation he was not truly and actually man; but this is said with respect to the manifestation of his invisible deity; or of him as the Son of God in human nature; and in regard to the types of the old law, under which he was hid; and with respect to the prophecies of his coming; and it designs the same thing with his descent from heaven, and coming into this world, in which he appeared in fashion as a man, as a mean man, as an afflicted one; yea, he looked like a sinful man, bearing the infirmities and sins of his people; his appearance was but to a very few, and for a little time; and the time of it was, "in the end of the world"; the same with the last days; the last age of the world; the end of the Jewish economy; at the close of their civil and ecclesiastical state, according to **Hab 2:3** & so the Jews expect their Messiah Mymyh Uql, "at the end of days" {n}: and this appearance was but "once"; there were many appearances of him in an human form, under the Old Testament dispensation; and there were many after his resurrection; but this is said to be but once, in opposition to the many types and sacrifices under the law, and agrees with his one oblation, and once suffering: the end of his appearance was, to put away sin; the filth of it, by his blood; the guilt of it, by his atoning sacrifice; and the punishment of it, by his sufferings and death, the penalty of the law; and in consequence of all this, the dominion of it by the power of his grace, and the very being of it hereafter: and this putting it away is signified by his bearing, carrying, and taking it away; by removing it as far as the east is from the west; by finishing and making an end of it; by crucifying the old man, destroying the body of sin, and by an utter disannulling and abolishing it, as a debt, and as a law; and all this is done by the sacrifice of himself; by the offering up of his body and soul an offering for sin; as in **Heb 9:14**.

{n} Seder Tephillot, Ed. Amstelod. fol. 2. 1.

Hebrews 9:27

Ver. 27. And as it is appointed unto men once to die,.... Not a moral, or what is commonly called a spiritual death, nor an eternal one, but a corporeal one; which does not arise from the constitution of nature, but from the sin of man, and God's decree on account of it; by which it is fixed that men shall die, and how long they shall live, and when they shall die; so that they cannot die sooner nor later; all things antecedent to death, which lead on to it, and issue in it, are appointed by God, and so is death itself, with all its circumstances; men's days can neither be lengthened nor shortened, either by Christ himself, or others: and this statute and appointment of God concerns men, not angels, and reaches to all men, wicked and righteous; and though there have been some exceptions, as Enoch and Elijah; and all will not sleep, or die, some will be found alive at Christ's appearing; yet such will undergo a change which is equivalent to death, as Enoch and Elijah have done: and generally speaking men die but once; it is not usual for men to die, and live again, and then die again; there have been some extraordinary instances of this kind, but they are rare; it is the statute law of heaven in common for men to die and that but once; so Cicero {o} the Heathen says, "omnibus definitam esse mortem": Christ died once, he will die no more; and it is the comfort of the saints, that though they die the first death, they shall not be hurt of the second death; and the consideration of this decree should excite to diligence and industry: death is certain to God, but uncertain to us, as to the time, nor should we curiously inquire into it, but patiently wait for it, and quietly submit unto it:

but after this the judgment; the last and general judgment, which will reach to all men, quick and dead, righteous and wicked, and in which Christ will be Judge. There is a particular judgment which is immediately after death; by virtue of which, the souls of men are condemned to their proper state of happiness or woe; and there is an universal judgment, which will be after the resurrection of the dead, and is called eternal judgment, and to come; this is appointed by God, though the time when is unknown to men; yet nothing is more certain, and it will be a righteous one.

{o} Pro Sextio

Hebrews 9:28

Ver. 28. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many,.... As man dies but once, Christ was offered but once, or he suffered and died but once; and that was not on his own account, or for his own sins, "but to bear the sins of many": not of angels but of men, and these not a few, but "many"; which is said to magnify the grace of God, to exalt the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ, and to encourage souls to hope in him: hence many are brought to believe in him, and many are justified by him, have their sins forgiven them, and are glorified; though Christ bore not the sins of all men; for as all men have not faith, all are not justified, pardoned, and saved: what he bore were "sins"; all kind of sin, every act of sin, and all that belongs to it; its filth, guilt, and punishment, even the iniquity of all his people; which must be a prodigious weight, and than which nothing could be more nauseous: his bearing them supposes they were upon him, though not in him, imputed, though not inherent; that he did not sink under them; that he made an entire satisfaction for them, and bore them wholly away, both from the persons of his people, and from the sight of justice. The way in which he came to bear them was this; he became a surety for all the elect; his Father imputed to him all their sins, and he voluntarily took them upon himself; where justice found them, and demanded satisfaction of him for them, and he gave it; which is an instance both of his great love, and of his great strength:

and unto them that look for him: with affection, faith and patience:

shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation; this is to be understood of Christ's visible and personal appearance on earth, which will be a glorious one; he will appear in his own glory, and in his Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels, and in the glory of his power, to the joy of saints, and to the terror of the wicked; for every eye shall see him: and this is said to be "the second time"; that is, that he appears on earth, and personally; for though he often appears to his people, it is in a spiritual way; and though he appeared to Stephen and to Paul, yet not on earth, but in heaven; and this is called the second time, with reference to his first appearance in human nature at his incarnation, and after that he ascended to heaven; and as this will be the second, it will be the last: the manner in which he will appear, will be, "without sin"; without sin itself; without any thing like it: without any infirmities, which though not sinful are the effects of sin; without sin imputed to him, with which he appeared before; without being a sacrifice for sin; and without sin upon his people that come with him, or he shall meet whom he shall raise, or change, and take to himself: and the end of his appearance with respect to them, will be "unto salvation"; the end of his first appearance was to obtain salvation for his people, and he has obtained it, and there is a comfortable application of it made unto them by the Spirit of God; but the full possession of it will be hereafter, and into this will Christ put them, when he shall appear: the Alexandrian copy adds, "by faith", and also some other copies.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hebrews 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 10

In this chapter the apostle pursues his argument, showing the weakness and imperfection of the Levitical priesthood, and the superior excellency of Christ's, which he closes with suitable exhortations to faith on Christ, as the alone high priest, and to a constant profession of him. The imperfection of the Levitical priesthood is proved, from the law by which it was established, being only a shadow of good things to come; from the insufficiency of annual sacrifices to perfect the comers to them, or to purge the consciences of the worshippers from sin; and from the non-cessation of these sacrifices which would have been, if the above ends could have been answered by them, Heb 10:1, but on the contrary, by the annual return of these sacrifices, sins are afresh remembered, and very good reason there is for it, since it is an impossible thing that the blood of slain beasts should take away sin, Heb 10:3 moreover, the apostle proves the insufficiency of such sacrifices, by a divine testimony, out of Ps 40:6 by which it appears, that they are not agreeable to the will of God, and are rejected by him as useless, Heb 10:5 and this leads the apostle to discourse of the excellency of Christ's sacrifice above them; that they are taken away, and his is substituted in their room; that as they are not agreeable to the will of God, his is a fulfilment of it; that though they could not expiate sin, yet by the offering up of the body of Christ, once for all, his people are sanctified, or their sins are expiated, Heb 10:9 and this is further illustrated by a comparison between the priests under the law, and Christ; they were many, he but one; they daily offered the same sacrifices, he offered but one sacrifice; theirs could not take away sin, by his offering he has perfectly expiated the sins of his people; they stood daily ministering, their work being never at an end; he is set down at the right hand of God, expecting his enemies to be made his footstool, having done his work to perfection, Heb 10:11 and that legal sacrifices are ceased, and no more to be used, is proved by a testimony of the Holy Ghost, out of Jer 31:33 relating to the covenant of grace, among the promises of which stands that of the forgiveness of sin; from whence the apostle justly concludes, that where remission of sin is, there is, and there needs no more offering for it, Heb 10:15 and from hence, the apostle passes to exhortations to the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, which he strongly urges from the consideration of Christ's priesthood, and the efficacy of it: and first, he presses them to the duty of prayer, to draw nigh to God to the throne of his grace. The manner in which he would have them approach to God, is in the sincerity of their hearts, in a plerophory of faith, an high and full exercise of it, and impurity of soul and body: the motives or encouragements to it are taken from their having boldness and liberty to enter by faith into heaven itself with their prayers, through the blood of Jesus; from there being a new and living way opened for them through, the flesh of Christ; and from their having such an high priest over the house of God as he is, Heb 10:19, and next he exhorts them to a constant and steadfast profession of their faith, to which he animates them by the faithfulness of a promising God, who will never leave nor forsake his people, Heb 10:23 and then to consider one another in their church relation, and to stir up one another to the exercise of the grace of love, and to the performance of good works, Heb 10:24, and also not to forsake their public assemblies, as was the custom of some, but to exhort each other to greater diligence in attending there, especially since they might observe that a time of great tribulation was at hand, Heb 10:25 and in order to deter from apostasy, which is expressed by a sinning wilfully, after a man has received and professed the knowledge of the truth, the apostle observes that the destruction of such is inevitable; since there never will be another propitiatory sacrifice offered up, and therefore there can be no other than a dreadful expectation of an awful judgment, and of the wrath of God, which, like a consuming fire, will destroy such adversaries of Christ, Heb 10:26 the justice of which is argued from the less to the greater; that if the transgressors of the law of Moses had no mercy shown them, but died when there were proper and sufficient witnesses of their crimes, then such must be deserving of a far greater punishment, who treat with the greatest rudeness the person of the Son of God, and his precious blood, and with the greatest contempt the person and grace of the Holy Spirit, Heb 10:28, and such persons have reason to expect the vengeance of God will fall on them, since it is threatened them in the word of God, De 32:35 and a dreadful thing it is to fall into his hands, Heb 10:30. But in order to encourage these believing Hebrews to hold on and out unto the end, the apostle puts them in mind of their good beginning, how well they set out, and how bravely they behaved, by bearing afflictions and reproaches themselves; by being the companions of those that were afflicted and reproached; by having compassion on the apostle when in bonds; and by cheerfully suffering the loss of their goods upon this consideration, that they had in heaven a better and a more enduring substance, Heb 10:32 wherefore it would be exceeding wrong and very unbecoming, after all this, to drop their faith and a profession of it, which otherwise would issue in the enjoyment of the great recompense of reward, Heb 10:35 and as patience is necessary, it is right to exercise it under sufferings for Christ's sake, partly because it is doing the will of God, and partly because that after that is done, such shall receive the promised happiness; and what may serve the more to engage to the exercise of it is, it is but a little while and Christ will come and put an end to all the sufferings of his people, Heb 10:36 and that faith should be in exercise, is proved from a divine testimony, **Hab 2:4** and so must be pleasing to God, when the contrary is highly resented by him, Heb 10:38 and now, lest the believing Hebrews should conclude from all this that the apostle suspected them as going into apostasy, he declares his belief, that he and they were not in the number of apostates, but of believers, whose souls would be saved, Heb 10:39

Ver. 1. For the law having a shadow of good things to come,.... By which is meant not the moral law, for that is not a shadow of future blessings, but a system of precepts; the things it commands are not figuratively, but really good and honest; and are not obscure, but plain and easy to be understood; nor are they fleeting and passing away, as a shadow, but lasting and durable: but the ceremonial law is intended; this was a "shadow", a figure, a representation of something true, real, and substantial; was dark and obscure, yet had in it, and gave, some glimmering light; and was like a shadow, fleeting and transitory: and it was a shadow of good things; of Christ himself, who is the body, the sum and substance of it, and of the good things to come by him; as the expiation of sin, peace and reconciliation, a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, and eternal life; these are said to be "to come", as they were under the former dispensation, while the ceremonial law was in force, and that shadow was in being, and the substance not as yet.

And not the very image of the things; as it had not neither the things themselves, nor Christ, the substance of them, so it did not give a clear revelation of them, as is made in the Gospel, nor exhibit a distinct delineation of them, such as an image expresses; it only gave some short and dark hints of future good things, but did not exactly describe them: and therefore can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually: namely, the sacrifices of bullocks and goats, which were offered on the day of atonement, year after year, in successive generations, from the first appointment of that day, to the writing of this epistle: sacrifices of such a kind, and so often repeated, could never

make the comers thereunto perfect; either the people that came to the temple, and brought them to the priests to offer them for them, or the priests that offered them; so the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, "perfect them that offer"; and if not one, then not the other: legal sacrifices could not make perfect expiation of sin; there is no proportion between them and sin: nor did they extend to all sin, and at most only typically expiated; nor could they justify and cleanse from sin. Contrary to this, the Jews {p} say,

"when Israel was in the holy land, there was no iniquity found in them, for the sacrifices which they offered every day stoned for them;"

but spiritual sacrificers and worshippers were expiated, justified, and cleansed another way, even by the blood of Christ, slain from the foundation of the world in purpose, promise, and type, and to which their faith had respect in every sacrifice.

{p} Zohar in Gen. fol. 107. 1.

Hebrews 10:2

Ver. 2. For then would they not have ceased to be offered,.... The Complutensian edition, and the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions, leave out the word "not"; and the sense requires it should be omitted, for the meaning is, that if perfection had been by the legal sacrifices, they would have ceased to have been offered; for if the former ones had made perfect, there would have been no need of others, or of the repetition of the same; but because they did not make perfect, therefore they were yearly renewed; unless the words are read with an interrogation, as they are in the Arabic version, "for then would they not have ceased to be offered?" yes, they would; they are indeed ceased now, but this is owing to Christ and his sacrifice, and not to the efficacy of these sacrifices; for yearly sacrifices were offered for former sins, as well as for fresh ones, as appears from the following verse.

Because the worshippers, once purged, would have had no more conscience of sins; there are external and internal worshippers; the latter are such who worship God in Spirit and in truth: but here ceremonial worshippers are meant, who, if they had been really purged from sin by legal sacrifices, and purifications, would have had no more conscience of sins, and so have had no need to have repeated them; as such spiritual worshippers, who are once purged from sin by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; not that they have no sin, or no sense of sin, or that their consciences are seared, or that they never accuse for sin, or that they are to make no confession and acknowledgment of sin; but that they are discharged from the guilt of sin, and are not liable to condemnation for it; and through the application of the blood of Christ to them, have peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Hebrews 10:3

Ver. 3. But in those sacrifices,.... The Arabic version reads, "but in it"; that is, in the law; but the Syriac version reads, and supplies, as we do, Nwhb axbdb, "in those sacrifices", which were offered every year on the day of atonement:

there is a remembrance of sins made again every year; of all the sins that were committed the year past, and even of those that were expiated typically by the daily sacrifice, and others that had been offered; which proves the imperfection and insufficiency of such sacrifices: there was a remembrance of sins by God, before whom the goats were presented, their blood was sprinkled, and the people cleansed, Le 16:7 and there was a remembrance of them by the people, who, on that day, afflicted their souls for them, Le 16:29 and there was a remembrance of them by the high priest, who confessed them over, and put them upon the head of the goat, Le 16:21 by which it was owned, that these sins were committed; that they deserved death, the curse of the law; that the expiation of them was undertook by another, typified by the goat; that this was not yet done, and therefore there was no remission, but a typical one, by these sacrifices; but that sins remained, and required a more perfect sacrifice, which was yet to be offered up. Legal sacrifices were so far from inducing an oblivion of sins, that they themselves brought them to remembrance, and were so many acknowledgments of them. Though Philo the Jew thinks the contrary, and gives this as a reason why the heart and brain were not offered in sacrifice, because

"it would be foolish, that the sacrifices should cause, not a forgetfulness of sins, but a remembrance of them {q}."

{q} De Victimis, p. 841.

Hebrews 10:4

Ver. 4. For it is not possible,.... There is a necessity of sin being taken away, otherwise it will be remembered; and there will be a conscience of it, and it must be answered for, or it will remain marked, and the curse and penalty of the law must take place: but it is impossible

that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins; which was shed on the day of atonement: sin is a breach of the moral law, but these sacrifices belong to, the ceremonial law, which are less acceptable to God than moral duties; sin is committed against God, and has an objective infiniteness in it, and therefore can never be atoned for by the blood of such creatures; it leaves a stain on the mind and conscience, which this blood cannot reach; besides, this is not the same blood, nor of the same kind with the person that has sinned; yea, if this could take away sin, it would do more than the blood of the man himself could do; such blood shed can never answer the penalty of the law, satisfy divine justice, or secure the honour of divine holiness: but what the blood of these creatures could not do, the blood of Christ has done, and does: that takes away sin from the sight of justice, and from the consciences of the saints. Compare with this the Septuagint version of Jer 11:15.

"what, has the beloved committed abomination in my house? shall prayers, and the holy flesh take away thy wickednesses from thee, or by these shall thou escape?"

Hebrews 10:5

Ver. 5. Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith,.... In Ps 40:7. This was said by David, not of himself, and his own times, for sacrifice and offering were desired and required in his times; nor was he able to do the will of God; so as to fulfil the law, and make void legal sacrifices; nor did he engage as a surety to do this; nor was it written of him in the volume of the book that he should: besides, he speaks of one that was not yet come, though ready to come, when the fulness of time should be up; and who is here spoken of as coming into the world, and who is no other than Jesus Christ; and this is to be understood, not of his coming into Judea, or the temple at Jerusalem; or out of a private, into a public life; nor of his entrance into the world to come, into heaven, into life eternal, as the Targum on Ps 40:7 paraphrases it, after he had done his work on earth, for the other world is never expressed by the world only; nor did Christ go into that to do the will of God, but to sit down there, after he had done it; besides, Christ's entrance into heaven was a going out of the world, and not into it. To which may be added, that this phrase always signifies coming into this terrene world, and intends men's coming into it at their birth; See Gill on "Joh 1:9" and must be understood of Christ's incarnation, which was an instance of great love, condescension, and grace; and the, reason of it was to do what the law, and the blood of bulls and goats, could not do. For it follows,

sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not; or didst not desire and delight in, as the word Upx, used in Ps 40:6 signifies; meaning not the sacrifices of wicked men, or such as were offered up without faith in Christ; but the ceremonial sacrifices God himself had instituted, and which were offered in the best manner; and that not merely in a comparative sense, as in **Ho 6:6** but the meaning is, that God would not have these continue any longer, they being only imposed for a time, and this time being come; nor would he accept of them, as terms, conditions, and causes of righteousness, pardon, peace, and reconciliation; but he willed that his Son should offer himself an offering, and a sacrifice for a sweet smelting savour to him.

[But a] body hast thou prepared me; or "fitted for me"; a real natural body, which stands for the whole human nature; and is carefully expressed, to show that the human nature is not a person. This was prepared, in the book of God's purposes and decrees, and in the council and covenant of grace; and was curiously formed by the Holy Ghost in time, for the second Person, the Son of God, to clothe himself with, as the Syriac version renders it, "thou hast clothed me with a body"; and that he might dwell in, and in it do the will of God, and perform the work of man's redemption: in Ps 40:6 it is, "mine ears thou hast opened"; digged or bored, the ear being put for the whole body; for if he had not had a body prepared, he could not have had ears opened: besides; the phrase is expressive of Christ's assuming the form of a servant, which was done by his being found in fashion as a man, **Php 2:7** and of his being a voluntary servant, and of his cheerful obedience as such, the opening, or boring of the ear, was a sign, Ex 21:5. And thus by having a true body prepared for him, and a willing mind to offer it up, he became fit for sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:6

Ver. 6. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin,.... Which were the principal kinds of offerings under the law:

thou hast had no pleasure; not only in comparison of moral duties, or spiritual sacrifices, such as those of praise and thanksgiving,
Ps 69:30 but so as to accept of the offerers for the sake of them, and smell a sweet savour in them; for these could not satisfy his justice, appease his anger, or expiate sin; and when they were in full force, and offered in the most agreeable manner, they were no otherwise well pleasing to God, than as they were types of, and had respect unto the sacrifice of his Son. In the Hebrew text it is, "thou didst not require, or ask for"; for them, when the time was up that Christ should come into the world.

Hebrews 10:7

Ver. 7. Then said I, lo, I come,.... Christ observing that legal sacrifices were not acceptable to God; that there was a body prepared for him; and that it was written of him in the book of God, that he should come; and the time being now come, with a note of attention and admiration, the matter being of great moment and concern, he cheerfully expresses his readiness to come, immediately, without any compulsion, even he himself, and not another.

In the volume of the book it is written of me; in the book of the law, as the, Targum and Kimchi on Ps 40:7 interpret it; and which may design the Bible in general, the whole book of the Scriptures of the Old Testament: so rpo, "the book", is used for the whole Bible {r}, and it is said {s}, all the whole law, that is, all Scripture, is called hlygm, "a volume"; accordingly there are things written of Christ in all the writings of the Old Testament, in the law, and in the prophets, and in the psalms. Jarchi interprets it of the law of Moses, and so it may design the pentateuch, or the five books of Moses; and there are several places therein, in which it is written of Christ, and particularly in Genesis, the first of these books, and in the head, the beginning, the frontal piece, the first part of that book; namely, **Ge 3:15** which may be principally designed. Books were formerly written in rolls of parchment, and hence called volumes; See Gill on "Lu 4:17",
See Gill on "Lu 4:20". The end of his coming is next expressed by him,

to do thy will, O God; which, when he came, he set about with the utmost delight, diligence, and faithfulness, in preaching the Gospel, performing miracles, doing good to the bodies and souls of men, and in finishing the great work of man's redemption, which was the main part of his Father's will he came to do; and which he did, by fulfilling the law in its precept and penalty; by offering himself a sacrifice to God; by suffering death, the death of the cross; by destroying all his and our enemies, and so working out everlasting salvation.

{r} T. Hieros, Megilla, fol. 73. 4. {s} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 60. 1.

Hebrews 10:8

Ver. 8. Above when he said, ... In the afore cited place,
Ps 40:7

Sacrifice and offering, and burnt offerings, and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; this is a recapitulation of what is before said; and all kind of sacrifices are mentioned, to show that they are all imperfect, and insufficient, and are abolished; and the abrogation of them is expressed in the strongest terms, as that God would not have them, and that he took no pleasure in them:

which are offered by the law; according as that directs and enjoins: this clause is added, to distinguish these sacrifices from spiritual ones, under the Gospel dispensation, and which are well pleasing to God; and to prevent an objection against the abolition of them, taken from hence, that they are according to the law; and yet, notwithstanding this, God will not have them, nor accept of them.

Hebrews 10:9

Ver. 9. Then said he, [lo], I come to do thy will, O God,....
See Gill on "Heb 10:7"

he taketh away the first, that he may establish the second; the sense is, either that God has taken away, and abolished the law, that he might establish the Gospel; or he has caused the first covenant to vanish away, that place might be found for the second, or new covenant; or he has changed and abrogated the priesthood of Aaron, that he might confirm the unchangeable priesthood of Christ; or rather he has taken away that which was first spoken of in the above citation, namely, sacrifice, offering, burnt offerings, and sin offerings; these he has removed and rejected as insignificant and useless, that he might establish what is mentioned in the second place; namely, the will of God, which is no other than the sacrifice of Christ, offered up according to the will of God, and by which his will is done.

Hebrews 10:10

Ver. 10. By the which will we are sanctified,.... That is, by the sacrifice of Christ, which was willingly offered up by himself, and was according to the will of God; it was his will of purpose that Christ should be crucified and slain; and it was his will of command, that he should lay down his life for his people; and it was grateful and well pleasing to him, that his soul should be made an offering for sin; and that for this reason, because hereby the people of God are sanctified, their sins are perfectly expiated, the full pardon of them is procured, their persons are completely justified from sin, and their consciences purged from it: even

through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all; this is said, not to the exclusion of his soul; it designs his whole human nature, and that as in union with his divine person; and is particularly mentioned, in allusion to the legal sacrifices, the bodies of slain beasts, which were types of him, and with a reference to his Father's preparation of a body for him, for this purpose, Heb 10:5. Moreover, his obedience to his Father's will was chiefly seen in his body; this was offered upon the cross; and his blood, which atones for sin, and cleanses from it, was shed out of it: and this oblation was "once for all"; which gives it the preference to Levitical sacrifices; destroys the Socinian notion of Christ's continual offering himself in heaven; and confutes the error of the Popish mass, or of the offering of Christ's body in it.

Hebrews 10:11

Ver. 11. And every priest standeth daily ministering,.... The Alexandrian copy, one of Stephens's, the Complutensian edition, the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, read, "every high priest"; who might minister daily, if he would; but since the daily sacrifice was generally offered by the common priests, these are rather designed. The apostle passes from the anniversary sacrifices offered by the high priest on the day of atonement, having shown the insufficiency and imperfection of them, to the lambs of the daily sacrifice, which were offered morning and evening, and whatsoever else might be daily offered on other accounts; and which he also shows are equally ineffectual to take away sin;

almost every word he uses shows the imperfection of the priesthood of Aaron, and serves to illustrate the priesthood of Christ. When he says "every priest", it supposes there were more than one, as indeed there were many, not only in succession to one another, but together, having different parts of service to perform; and everyone of them "standeth" at the altar, showing that his work was not done; and the present tense is used, because sacrifice in fact had not ceased at the writing of this epistle, though of right it ought to have done; and he stood "daily ministering"; every day, and sometimes often in a day, and always morning and night, Ex 29:38 The priest always stood to minister, De 18:5. Hence the Jews say {t}, there is no ministration or service, dmwem ala, "but standing"; and perhaps some reference may be had to twdmem, the "stations" {u}, or stationary men, who were always upon the spot at Jerusalem, to offer for such as were at a distance.

And offering oftentimes the same sacrifices; as a lamb in the morning, and another at evening; and if it was a burnt offering, or a sin offering, or an offering for the purification of a woman, or for the cleansing of the leper, they were always the same: and this frequent offering, and the offering of the same things, show that they were such

which can never take away sins; for notwithstanding these many and repeated offerings, even the sins of Old Testament saints remained to be atoned for by Christ; see **Ro 3:25**.

{t} Jarchi in Deut. xviii. 5. Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 16. {u} Misn. Taanith, c. 4. sect. 2.

Hebrews 10:12

Ver. 12. But this man,.... Jesus Christ, for he is a man, though not a mere man; or this great high priest, who came to do the will of God, and whose body was offered once for all:

after he had offered one sacrifice for sins; the sacrifice of himself, body and soul, and this but once:

for ever sat down on the right hand of God; as having done his work effectually, and that with acceptance; and therefore is placed as a token of honour at the right hand of God, where he sits enjoying rest, ease, and pleasure, and that for ever; all which is opposed to the priests under the law;

they were many, he but one; they offered many sacrifices, he but one; they offered theirs often, every day, he but once; they stood ministering, he sat down; his sacrifice being effectual to take away sin, when theirs was not.

Hebrews 10:13

Ver. 13. From henceforth expecting,.... According to God's promise and declaration to him, Ps 110:1.

Till his enemies be made his footstool, See Gill on "Heb 1:13".

Hebrews 10:14

Ver. 14. For by one offering,.... The same as before; himself, body and soul; this is a reason why he is set down, and will continue so for ever, and why he expects his enemies to be made his footstool; because by one sacrifice for sin, which he has once offered,

he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; that is, who are sanctified by God the Father, **Jude 1:1** or, who are set apart by him in eternal election, from the rest of the world, for his own use, service, and glory, to a state of grace and holiness here, and happiness hereafter; for this is not to be understood either of their being sanctified in Christ, though the Syriac version reads, "that are sanctified" in him, or by his Spirit, though both are true of the same persons; these Christ, by his sacrifice, has perfected, and has perfectly fulfilled the law for them; he has perfectly expiated their sins; he has obtained the full pardon of all their sins, and complete redemption; he has perfectly justified them from all things, and that for ever; which shows the continued virtue of Christ's sacrifice, in all generations, to all the elect of God, and the fulness and duration of their salvation; and so Christ by his one sacrifice did what the law, and all its sacrifices, could not do, Heb 10:1.

Hebrews 10:15

Ver. 15. Wherefore the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us,.... In Jer 31:33. This preface to the following citation shows that the books of the Old Testament are of divine original and authority; that the penmen of them were inspired by the Holy Ghost; that he existed in the times of the Old

Testament; that he is truly and properly God, the Lord, or Jehovah, that speaks in the following verses; and that he is a distinct divine Person, and the author of the covenant of grace; and in what he says in that covenant, he bears testimony to the truths before delivered, concerning the insufficiency and abolition of legal sacrifices, and of full and perfect remission of sin, by the blood and sacrifice of Christ:

for after that he had said before; what is expressed in the following verse.

Hebrews 10:16

Ver. 16. This is the covenant that I will make with them,....
See Gill on "Heb 8:10".

Hebrews 10:17

Ver. 17. And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.
See Gill on "Heb 8:10". The words are cited to a different purpose here than there; the principal thing for which they are cited here, is to observe God's promise of non-remembrance of sin; which is no other than remission of sin, and which is not consistent with legal sacrifices, in which there is a remembrance of sin every year, Heb 10:3 and consequently, since this new covenant has taken place, legal sacrifices must be abolished, as the apostle argues in the next verse. In one of Beza's copies are inserted, at the, beginning of this verse, these words, "then he said", which seem necessary to answer to the last clause of Heb 10:15.

Hebrews 10:18

Ver. 18. Now where remission of these is,.... That is, of these sins; and that there is remission of them, is evident from this promise of the covenant, just now produced; from God's gracious proclamation of it; from the shedding of Christ's blood for it; from his exaltation at the Father's right hand to give it; from the Gospel declaration of it; and from the several instances of persons favoured with it:

there is no more offering for sin; there may be other offerings, as of praise and thanksgiving, but none for sin; "there is no need", as the Syriac version; or there is not required, as the Arabic version; there is no need of the reiteration of Christ's sacrifice, nor will he be offered up any more, nor of the repetition of legal sacrifices, nor ought they to continue any longer. The Jews themselves say {w}, that

"in the time to come (i.e. in the times of the Messiah) all offerings shall cease, but the sacrifice of praise."

And one of their writers says {x}, when

"the King Messiah, the son of David, shall reign, there will be no need of hrpk, "an atonement", nor of deliverance, or prosperity, for all these things will be had;"

{w} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 153. 1. {x} R. Abendana Not. in Miclol Yophi in Psal. lxxii. 20.

Hebrews 10:19

Ver. 19. Having therefore, brethren,.... As they were to the apostle, in a natural and civil sense, being Hebrews, as well as in a spiritual relation, being believers in Christ; which is observed, to testify his affection to them, and to engage their regard to the duties hereafter urged, particularly brotherly love, and to signify their common and equal right to the privilege next mentioned, which is

boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus: the place saints have boldness to enter into is heaven, called "the holiest", in reference to the holy of holies, in the tabernacle; which was a type of it, for the sacredness and invisibility of it, and for what was in it, went into it, or was brought thither; as the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, which resided there; the high priest who went into it once a year; the blood of sacrifices which was carried into it; the sweet incense; the ark of the testimony, in which was the law; and the mercy seat; all which were typical of Christ, his person, blood, sacrifice, righteousness, intercession, and the grace and mercy which come through him. Heaven was symbolically shut by the sin of man, when he was drove out of the garden of Eden; it was typically opened by the entrance of the high priest into the holy of holies, on the day of atonement; Christ has in person entered into it by his blood, and opened the way for his people; and believers in him may "enter" now, and they do, when they exercise grace on him, who is there, and when they come and present their prayers and praises to God by him; and they have now an actual right to enter into the place itself, and will hereafter enter in person: and the manner of their present entrance is, "with boldness"; which signifies their right unto it, the liberty granted them by God, and the liberty which they sometimes have in their own souls, and great courage and intrepidity of mind; which arises from a sense of remission of sins, as may be concluded from the connection of these words with the preceding; and is found to be true by experience; and such boldness is consistent with reverence, humility, and submission. The way of entrance is "by the blood of Jesus"; and which gives both entrance and boldness; for hereby sin is removed both from the sight of God, and the conscience of the believer; peace is made with God, and spoken to him; pardon is procured, law and justice satisfied, and neither to be feared, and the everlasting covenant confirmed.

Hebrews 10:20

Ver. 20. By a new and living way,.... Which is Christ, the God-man and Mediator; who is called the "new" way, not as to contrivance, revelation, or use; for it was contrived before the world was, and was revealed to our first parents, immediately after the fall, and was made use of by all the Old Testament saints; but in distinction to the old way of life, by the covenant of works; and because newly revealed with greater clearness and evidence; see Heb 10:8 and because it is always new, it never will be old, nor otherwise, there never will be another way: some render it, "a new slain way"; because Jesus was but newly slain, and his blood lately shed, by which the way is, and entrance is with boldness: and Christ is a "living way"; in opposition to the dead carcasses of slain beasts, and to the dead and killing letter of the law; Christ gives life to all his people; and all that walk in him, the way, live; and none in this way ever die; it leads to eternal life, and infallibly brings them thither:

which he hath consecrated for us; either God the Father, and so it intends the designation of Christ to be the way to life and happiness, and the qualification of him for it, by preparing a body, an human nature for him, and anointing it with the Holy Spirit, and the instalment of him into his priestly office, called a consecration,
Heb 10:28 or else Christ himself, and so designs his compliance with his Father's will, and his devoting of himself to this service; his preparation of himself to be the way, by the shedding of his blood, and by his entrance into heaven, and by giving a clearer discovery of this way in the Gospel, by which

life and immortality are brought to light: and this is

done through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; the human nature of Christ, through which the way to heaven is opened, renewed, and consecrated, is compared to the vail of the tabernacle,
Ex 26:31 the matter of which that was made, was fine twined linen, which the Jews {y} say was of thread six times doubled; which may denote the holiness of Christ's human nature; the strength, courage, and steadfastness of it, under all its sorrows and sufferings; and the purity and duration of his righteousness; the colours of it were blue, purple, and scarlet, which may signify the sufferings of the human nature; the preciousness of Christ's blood, and the dignity of his person, and his royalty; purple and scarlet being wore by kings: the vail was of cunning work, which may intend the curious workmanship of Christ's human nature, and the graces of the Spirit, with which it is adorned; and it was made with "cherubim", pointing to the ministration of angels, both to Christ, and to his people. The pillars of it may signify the deity of Christ, the support of his human nature, in which it has its personal subsistence; and being of Shittim wood, may denote his eternity: and being covered with gold, his glory: its hooks and sockets may be symbolical of the union of the two natures in him.

{y} Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 14. Jarchi in Exod. xxvi. 1. Kimchi in Sepher Shorash. rad. rzv.

Hebrews 10:21

Ver. 21. And [having an] high priest over the house of God. The church of God, over which Christ is as prophet, priest, and King, and as the Son and owner of it; See Gill on "Heb 3:6";
See Gill on "Heb 4:14". In the Greek text it is, "a great priest"; so the Messiah is called by the Targum on **Zec 6:12** br Nhk, "a great priest", as he is; even a great high priest, as in **Heb 4:14**, and greater than Aaron, and any of his sons.

Hebrews 10:22

Ver. 22. Let us draw near with a true heart,.... Either to the holiest of all, into which the saints have boldness to enter; or to Christ the high priest, who is entered there; or to the house of God, over which he is an high priest; or rather to God himself, as on a throne of grace, on the mercy seat in heaven, the most holy place: to "draw near" to him is a sacerdotal act, common to all the saints, who are made priests to God; and includes the whole of divine worship, but more especially designs prayer; to which believers are encouraged from the liberty and boldness they may have and use, of entering into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; from Christ's being the new and living way into it, and from his being an high priest over the house of God: the manner of drawing near is, "with a true heart"; not with the body only, but with the heart principally; with a renewed one, one that is right with God, and is single and sincere, is hearty in its desires, and upright in its ends.

In full assurance of faith; in God, Father, Son, and Spirit; without faith, drawing near to God can neither be acceptable to him, nor of service to men; and a full assurance of faith, with respect to the object drawn nigh unto, and of the way unto him, and of acceptance with him through Christ, and of having the petitions put up to him granted, is very comfortable to believers, greatly becomes them, and is well pleasing to God:

having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; which is blind, inactive, partial, stupid, or guilty; and it is the blood of Christ, which being sprinkled on it by the Spirit of God, purges it from dead works, cleanses it from all sin, and speaks peace and pardon to it; and such may draw near with freedom and boldness, with readiness and cheerfulness, and with reverence and godly fear:

and our bodies washed with pure water; not baptismal water, but the grace of the Spirit, which is often compared to water, in Scripture: the body, as well as soul, needs washing, and renewing; internal grace influences outward, actions, which adorn religion, and without which bodies cannot be presented holy to God. The allusion is to a custom of the Jews, who were obliged to wash their bodies, and make them clean, when they prayed. So Aben Ezra observes on Ge 35:2

"that every Israelite, when he went to pray at a fixed place, was obliged to have yqn wpwg, "his body pure", and his garments pure."

So a priest might not enter into the court for service, though clean, until he had washed himself all over {z}; and it is to sacerdotal acts that the reference is here.

{z} Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 3. Vid. Philo de Victimas Offerent. p. 848.

Hebrews 10:23

Ver. 23. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering,.... Either in the grace or doctrine of faith, or in the profession of both; See Gill on "Heb 4:14".

For he [is] faithful that promised; that is God; and it is true of Father, Son, and Spirit; but God the Father may be more especially designed: he is a promising God, and is known to be so by his people; he is eminently and emphatically the Promiser; and all other promisers, and the promises made by them, signify little; but the promises of God are exceeding great and precious, very ancient, free, and unconditional, irrevocable and immutable, and are admirably suited to the cases of his people, and will be fulfilled everyone of them: they include in them things temporal, spiritual, and eternal; things temporal, as that his people shall not want, that their afflictions shall work for good, and that he will support them under all their troubles; things spiritual, as that he will be their God, which takes in his everlasting love to them, and his gracious presence with them, and his protection of them; and that all grace shall be wrought in them, and every blessing of grace bestowed on them: and things eternal; as everlasting glory and happiness; the promise of eternal life was in God's heart, made in the covenant, and put into Christ's hands before the world began, and is declared in the Gospel: now God is faithful to all his promises, nor can he fail, or deceive; he is all wise and foreknowing of everything that comes to pass; he never changes his mind, nor forgets his word; and he is able to perform, and is the God of truth, and cannot lie; nor has he ever failed in anyone of his promises, nor will he suffer his faithfulness to fail; and this is a strong argument to hold fast a profession of faith.

Hebrews 10:24

Ver. 24. And let us consider one another,.... Saints should consider one another as men, that they are but men, of like passions and infirmities; they should consider their different tempers, and make allowance for them, and their outward state and condition in the world: they should consider one another as saints, partakers of the same grace; as that they are all loved with the same love, all conceived and brought forth in the womb of God's eternal electing grace, interested in the same covenant, redeemed by the same blood, and have the same graces and privileges, and an equal right to glory; having one and the same Spirit, the same grace of faith, the same righteousness, the same fountain to wash in, the same fulness to partake of, the same throne of grace to go to, and the same inheritance to enjoy: they should consider one another as church members, the grace and gifts of the another, their different age and standing in the church, their relation to each other as brethren; they should consider them under suffering or sorrowful circumstances, under afflictions, temptations, desertions, declensions, and as attended with infirmities and sins: and the end of such consideration should be,

to provoke unto love; to brotherly love, to stir it up, and stir up to it, which is apt to wax cold, that so it may be rekindled, and give a most vehement flame; for this is Christ's new commandment, the bond of perfection, the evidence of regeneration, that which makes the saints' communion comfortable and delightful, and without which a profession of religion is in vain.

And to good works; not for justification before God, and in order to procure salvation; but that God may be glorified, the Gospel adorned, the mouths of gainsayers stopped, faith evidenced to the world, and gratitude to God for his benefits shown, and for the profit and advantage of fellow creatures, and fellow Christians.

Hebrews 10:25

Ver. 25. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,.... Or the episynagogue of one another; which word is used to distinguish Christian assemblies from Jewish synagogues, and to denote the coalition of Jews and Gentiles in one church state, and to express the saints' gathering together to Christ; see **2Th 2:1** and their act of meeting together in some one place to attend his worship, word, and ordinances. Now to "forsake" such assembling, signifies a great infrequency in attending with the saints, a rambling from place to place, and takes in an entire apostasy. It is the duty of saints to assemble together for public worship, on the account of God, who has appointed it, who approves of it, and whose glory is concerned in it; and on the account of the saints themselves, that they may be delighted, refreshed, comforted, instructed, edified, and perfected; and on account of others, that they may be convinced, converted, and brought to the knowledge and faith of Christ; and in imitation of the primitive saints. And an assembling together ought not to be forsaken; for it is a forsaking God, and their own mercies, and such are like to be forsaken of God; nor is it known what is lost hereby; and it is the first outward visible step to apostasy, and often issues in it.

As the manner of some is; or custom; and this prevailing custom among these

Jews might arise from contempt of the Gentiles, or from fear of reproach and persecution: and in our day, this evil practice arises sometimes from a vain conceit of being in no need of ordinances, and from an over love of the world, and from a great declension in the exercise of grace; the consequence of it is very bad. The Jews {a} reckon among those that go down to hell, and perish, and have no part in the world to come, rwbu ykrdm Myvrwph, "who separate from the ways of the congregation"; that is, who do not do the duties thereof, attend with it, and fast when that does, and the like:

but exhorting one another; to prayer, to attend public worship, to regard all the duties of religion, to adhere to Christ, and a profession of him, and to consider him, and walk on in him: or "comforting one another"; by meeting privately together, and conferring about experience, and the doctrines of grace; and by observing to one another the promises of God, relating to public worship; and by putting each other in mind of the bright day of the Lord, that is coming on:

and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching; either of death, or the last judgment, or rather of Jerusalem's destruction; which at the writing of this epistle was near at hand; and was an affair that greatly concerned these Hebrews; and by various symptoms might be observed by them, as approaching; and which was no inconsiderable argument to engage them to a diligent discharge of their duty; unless the day of darkness, infidelity, and blasphemy in the last days of the world, should be intended, after which will succeed the latter day glory.

{a} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 17. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Teshuba, c. 3. sect. 6, 11.

Hebrews 10:26

Ver. 26. For if we sin wilfully,....] Which is not to be understood of a single act of sin, but rather of a course of sinning; nor of sins of infirmity through temptation, or even of grosser acts of sin, but of voluntary ones; and not of all voluntary ones, or in which the will is engaged and concerned, but of such which are done on set purpose, resolutely and obstinately; and not of immoral practices, but of corrupt principles, and acting according to them; it intends a total apostasy from the truth, against light and evidence, joined with obstinacy.

After that we have received the knowledge of the truth; either of Jesus Christ, or of the Scriptures, or of the Gospel, or of some particular doctrine, especially

the principal one, salvation by Christ; of which there may be a notional knowledge, when there is no experimental knowledge; and which is received not into the heart, but into the head: and whereas the apostle speaks in the first person plural, we, this is used not so much with regard to himself, but others; that so what he delivered might come with greater weight upon them, and be more readily received by them; when they observed he entertained no hard thoughts or jealousies of them, which would greatly distress the minds of those that were truly gracious. Moreover, the apostles use this way of speaking, when they do not design themselves at all, but others, under the same visible profession of religion, and who belonged to the same community of believers; see **1Pe 4:3** compared with
Ac 22:3. Besides, these words are only hypothetical, and do not prove that true believers could, or should, or do sin in this manner: to which may be added, that true believers are manifestly distinguished from these persons, Heb 10:38,

there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; meaning, not typical sacrifice; for though the daily sacrifice ought to have ceased at the death of Christ, yet it did not in fact until the destruction of Jerusalem; but the sacrifice of Christ, which will never be repeated; Christ will die no more; his blood will not be shed again, nor his sacrifice reiterated; nor will any other sacrifice be offered; there will be no other Saviour; there is no salvation in any other, nor any other name whereby we must be saved. These words have been wrongly made use of to prove that persons sinning after baptism are not to be restored to communion again upon repentance; and being understood of immoral actions wilfully committed, have given great distress to consciences burdened with the guilt of sin, committed after a profession of religion; but the true sense of the whole is this, that after men have embraced and professed the truths of the Gospel, and particularly this great truth of it, that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of men by his blood and sacrifice; and yet after this, against all evidence, all the light and convictions of their own consciences, they wilfully deny this truth, and obstinately persist in the denial of it; seeing there is no more, no other sacrifice for sin, no other Saviour, nor any salvation in any other way, the case of these men must be desperate; there is no help for them, nor hope of them; for by this their sin they shut up against themselves, in principle and practice, the way of salvation, as follows.

Hebrews 10:27

Ver. 27. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment,.... Either of some outward visible judgment in this life, which sometimes falls on such persons;

or of the particular judgment which immediately follows after death; or of the universal judgment, after the resurrection, and the dreadful sentence of condemnation which will then pass, and be immediately executed; and which will be done by Christ, and according to truth, and in strict justice; it is certain, and there will be no escaping it, for it will be general. Now there is in this life an expectation in men of a future judgment, and in wicked men it is a fearful one; it is dreaded by them, and more especially in such men before described, when their consciences are awakened; it is a very dreadful one, inexpressibly so:

and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries; which is to be understood, not of the fire of purgatory, for this is after judgment, that is pretended to be before it; this devours, that only purges, according to the Papists; this is for adversaries, that, as is supposed, is for friends: but perhaps some fiery judgment, expressive of the wrath and indignation of God, such as befell Sodom and Gomorrah, the two sons of Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the men that rose up with Korah against Moses and Aaron: or rather the fire of hell, which is not corporeal and material, but is the wrath of God let down into the conscience; which shows the vile nature of sin, the strictness of God's justice, and the intolerableness of future punishment: and this is said to "devour the adversaries"; not only open ones, but secret, underhanded enemies, as the word here signifies; as such apostates are, before described, to God, and Christ, and the Spirit; to the Gospel, its doctrine, discipline, and ordinances; and to the children of God, and to the power of godliness in them: and with the fire of God's wrath they shall be devoured; not so as to be annihilated, but shall be eternally destroyed, both soul and body; that is, everlastingly punished, or punished with everlasting destruction.

Hebrews 10:28

Ver. 28. He that despised Moses' law,.... By breaking it wilfully, and presumptuously, for which there was no sacrifice; meaning the law which Moses was the minister of not the author; and it respects the whole body of laws given by him, from God; and is instanced in for the sake of the comparison between him and Christ, and between the law and the Gospel, and for the illustration of the case in hand. Now one that transgressed that law, either in whole, or in part, by denying it entirely, or by breaking any particular precept of it presumptuously,

died without mercy; a corporeal death; there was no atonement nor sacrifice for him, nor pity to be shown him, De 13:8.

Under two or three witnesses; who "stood by", or were present, as the Arabic version renders it, when the transgression was committed; or that "accused him", as the Ethiopic version; that were witnesses against him, and plainly and fully proved the fact, De 17:6.

Hebrews 10:29

Ver. 29. Of how much sorer punishment,.... Than a mere corporeal death, which was the punishment inflicted on the transgressors of the law of Moses.

Suppose ye; the apostle appeals to the Hebrews themselves, and makes them judges of what punishment

shall he be thought worthy; who is described as follows:

who hath trodden under foot the Son of God: this seems to be a stronger expression than crucifying him again, **Heb 6:6** and is to be understood, not of what was in fact committed, but in will by persons; who, could they have had their will of him, would have pulled him from his throne, and trampled upon him: it is a phrase expressive of the utmost scorn, contempt, and ill usage; and which such are guilty of, who deny his deity, and eternal sonship; who render him useless in his offices, undervalue his sacrifice, despise his righteousness, and strip him of the glory of his person, office, and grace. And this is aggravated by his being the Son of God who is thus used, who became the son of man for the sake of men, is superior to men, and equal with God:

and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing; or "common thing"; putting it upon a level with the blood of a bullock, or at most counting it vnlkd Kya, "as that of another man"; as the Syriac version renders it; yea, reckoning it as unclean and abominable, as the blood of a very wicked man: this is aggravated by its being "the blood of the covenant"; of the covenant of grace, because that is ratified and confirmed by it, and the blessings of it come through it; and from sanctification by it: either of the person, the apostate himself, who was sanctified or separated from others by a visible profession of religion; having given himself up to a church, to walk with it in the ordinances of the Gospel; and having submitted to baptism, and partook of the Lord's supper, and drank of the cup, "the blood of the New Testament", or "covenant": though he did not spiritually discern the body and blood of Christ in the ordinance, but counted the bread and wine, the symbols of them, as common things; or who professed himself, and was looked upon by others, to be truly sanctified by the Spirit, and to be justified by the blood of Christ, though he was not really so: or rather the Son of God himself is meant, who was sanctified, set apart, hallowed, and consecrated, as Aaron and his sons were sanctified by the sacrifices of slain beasts, to minister in the priest's office: so Christ, when he had offered himself, and shed his precious blood, by which the covenant of grace was ratified, by the same blood he was brought again from the dead, and declared to be the Son of God with power; and being set down at God's right hand, he ever lives to make intercession, which is the other part of his priestly office he is sanctified by his own blood to accomplish. This clause, "wherewith he was sanctified", is left out in the Alexandrian copy:

and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace; by denying his being, deity, and personality; despising his powerful operations as enthusiasm; treating his extraordinary gifts as illusions; and ascribing his miracles to Satan, and representing the Gospel dictated by him as a fable, or a lie: and this is aggravated by his being "the spirit of grace"; the author, giver, and applier of all grace to the saints; and who therefore ought not to be in the least slighted, but highly esteemed and honoured; nor will such affronts go unpunished.

Hebrews 10:30

Ver. 30. For we know him that hath said,.... That is, God, whom the apostle and the Hebrews knew; not merely by the works of creation and providence, but by the Scriptures, which they were favoured with, and by which they were distinguished from the Gentiles, and by which they knew his being, nature, and perfections; particularly, that what he said he was able to perform, and that he was true and faithful to every word of his, and to what he has said, De 32:35

vengeance [belongeth] unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord. Vengeance belongs to God, not as to the affection, as if there was any such passion in him; but as to the effect, there being that produced by him, which answers to the effect of such a passion among men, namely punishment: and punishment for sin belongs to God, against whom it is committed; and not to Heathen deities, one of which goes by the name of Vengeance, Ac 28:4 nor to Satan, and his spiteful angels; nor to men, to exercise it in a private and personal way; though civil magistrates, being in God's stead, are allowed to exercise it in a public way, according to the laws of God: and there is good reason to believe, that what the Lord here says, "I will recompence", or revenge sin, shall be done; which may be concluded from his hatred of sin; from his purity, holiness, and justice; from his faithfulness to his word; from his omnipotence; from the notice he takes of sin, in his own people, in a way of chastisement, and correction; and from the vengeance he has poured on his own Son, as their surety.

And again, in De 32:36 the Lord shall judge his people; such as are truly so, his chosen and covenant people, his redeemed and called ones; these he judges by chastising them in a fatherly way, that they may not be condemned with the world; and by governing and protecting them; and by vindicating and pleading their cause, and avenging them on their enemies: or else such as are only his people by profession; on these he will write a "Lo-ammi"; he distinguishes them from his own, and judges between them and his people, and will condemn them; nor will their profession screen them from his wrath and vengeance.

Hebrews 10:31

Ver. 31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. For this is to be understood not in a good sense; so in general all mankind may be said to fall into, or be in the hands of God, as they are the work of his hands, the care of his providence, and are subject to his sovereignty; and in especial manner, believers, whose times and persons are in God's hand, which bespeaks his great affection for them, their nearness to him, the support they have by him, and protection from him; and they choose to fall into the hands of him as a chastising Father, rather than into the hands of men, and at death commend themselves into his hands: but here it is taken in a bad sense, and signifies to be arrested by justice as a criminal, and be brought to the bar of God, and receive the sentence of condemnation; when such will feel the weight of his hand, and the fierceness of his wrath; and this is "a fearful thing": it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of men, injured and affronted, and that have power, and will show no mercy; it is very tremendous to fall into the hands of God, in the way of his judgments in this world; the apprehensions of a future judgment are terrible before hand; and the apparatus of the judgment, when it comes, will be very striking and surprising; but to stand before the Judge, charged with sin, naked, and without righteousness, speechless, and no one to speak in favour of them; to hear the dreadful sentence pronounced, and feel the wrath of God to the uttermost, how horrible must this be! the aggravations of this are, that it is into the hands "of God" that such fall, and not into the hands of men, or mere creatures; but of God, who is omniscient, and sees through all pretences; omnipotent, and none can rescue out of his hands by force; omnipresent, and so no escaping from him; just and faithful, and not to bribed, inexorable, immutable, and unalterable: and that he is "the living God"; in opposition to the lifeless deities of the Gentiles, and to mortal men; and is expressive of his eternity, and so of the duration of the sinner's punishment, that falls into his hands.

Hebrews 10:32

Ver. 32. But call to remembrance the former days,.... The words may be considered either as a declaration of what they had done, and be read, "but ye do call to remembrance", &c. or as an exhortation to remember the days of their espousals, the times of their first conversion: and the apostle's design in this is, to mitigate the terror the preceding words might strike them with; and to aggravate the disgrace of turning back, when they had behaved so bravely in former times; and to encourage their faith and trust in God:

in which after ye were illuminated, by the Spirit of God, to see their impurity, impotence, and unrighteousness, and their lost and miserable state by nature; and to behold Christ and salvation by him; and to have some light into the doctrines of the Gospel; and some glimmering of the glories of another world. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it "baptized"; now such as are converted, and are brought to make a public profession of their faith, and submit to the ordinances of Christ, are, in common, immediately called to suffer reproach and persecution of one kind or another; so Christ, after his baptism, was led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil: Satan is spiteful and malicious, and God suffers afflictions to befall his people to try their graces, and to inure them to troubles early, as follows;

ye endured a great fight of afflictions; meaning some violent persecution from their own countrymen, either at the death of Stephen, in which the apostle, being then unconverted; was concerned himself; or rather some other time of trouble, after the apostle was converted, to which he seems to have respect in **1Th 2:14**, these Hebrews, being enlisted as soldiers under Christ, the Captain of their salvation, were quickly engaged in a warfare, and were called forth to fight a fight of afflictions, and a very great one; and which they endured with patience, courage, and intrepidity.

Hebrews 10:33

Ver. 33. Partly whilst ye were made a gazing stock,.... Brought upon the stage or theatre, and made a spectacle to the world, angels, and men, **1Co 4:9**

both by reproaches and afflictions; suffering both in their characters and reputations, and in their persons and substance:

and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used; they maintained their communion with them, relieved them in distress, and sympathized with them.

Hebrews 10:34

Ver. 34. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds,.... When he was bound at Jerusalem, by the chief captain Lysias, with two chains, Ac 21:33 or when he was in bonds elsewhere; which they did by sympathizing with him in their hearts; by their prayers for him, and in their letters to him; and by sending presents to him for his relief and support. The Alexandrian copy, and two of Stephens's, the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read, "had compassion on the prisoners"; or "them that were bound"; meaning prisoners in general, remembering them that were in bonds, as bound with them; or particularly such as were prisoners for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; and it may be some of them, which the apostle himself committed to prison, in his state of unregeneracy:

and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods; the furniture of their houses, their worldly substance, of which they were stripped by their persecutors; and this they took quietly and patiently, yea, joyfully; rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer the confiscation of their goods for the sake of Christ: the reason of which joy was,

knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance: that which is laid up for the saints in heaven is "substance"; it is signified by an house, a city, a kingdom; and so it is rendered here in the Ethiopic version; and by riches, true, glorious, and durable; and by a treasure and an inheritance: and this is "better" than anything in this world; as to the quality of it, it being celestial; and as to the quantity of it, it being all things; and as to the place where it is, "in heaven"; though this clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; and as to the company with whom it is enjoyed, saints in light; yea, God himself is the portion of his people: and this is an "enduring" substance; it cannot be wasted by the saints themselves; nor taken away from them by others; nor can it decay in its own nature; and the saints will always endure to enjoy it: and this they may be said to "have": it is promised to them, and prepared for them; they have a right unto it, and the earnest of it; and they have it already in Christ, their head and representative; so that it is, upon all accounts, sure unto them: and this they know in themselves; from what they find and feel in their own hearts; from the sealing testimony and earnest of the Spirit, and from the promise of Christ, **Mt 5:10**.

Hebrews 10:35

Ver. 35. Cast not away therefore your confidence,.... The same word is used here, as in Heb 10:19 where it is translated "boldness"; and may design here, as there, an holy boldness in prayer, free from a servile and bashful spirit; and which appears in a liberty of speaking to God, and in a confidence of being heard; prayer itself should not be left off, nor should freedom, boldness, and confidence in it be slackened, or laid aside: or else a profession of faith is intended, which ought to be free and open, bold and courageous, firm and constant; and which ought by no means to be let go and dropped: or the grace of faith in its full assurance, with respect to interest in God, as a covenant God and Father, and in his love; and with respect to interest in Christ, and in his grace, and a right to the glorious inheritance, the better and enduring substance: and this shield of faith is by no means to be cast away; it was reckoned infamous and scandalous in soldiers to lose or cast away their shield; with the Grecians it was a capital crime, and punished with death {b}; to which the apostle may here allude. There are two sorts of believers, nominal and real; and there are two sorts of faith; an historical one, which may be in persons destitute of the grace of God, and is in devils; and a true and unfeigned one, which has salvation connected with it; the former may be cast away and lost; the latter, though it may be remiss and weak in its exercise, yet it cannot be wholly and finally lost; and this exhortation may be designed as a means of continuing it, and of perseverance in it: the reason urging it follows,

which hath great recompence of reward; freedom and boldness in prayer has its reward, for such that ask in faith shall have; and so has a firm and constant profession of religion, for he that endures to the end shall be saved; and so has a true and strong faith in Christ; everlasting salvation is connected with it; the reward of the inheritance follows upon it; and this reward is the recompense of

God's own grace: and it is a very great one; it is the fruit of great love and grace; yea, it is no other than God himself, who is the exceeding great reward of his people; it is Christ and his glory, and the riches of it; it is a reward exceeding, and beyond all deserts of men, and beyond all thought and expression.

{b} Alex. ab. Alexand. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 13.

Hebrews 10:36

Ver. 36. For ye have need of patience,.... Not that they were destitute of the grace of patience; for where God is the God of all grace, he is the God of patience; and such, who are called by grace, are conformed to the image of Christ, and, among other things, are like him in this; and those who are born of the Spirit, have the fruits of the Spirit, and this, among the rest; to whom the word of God is effectual, this fruit is produced in them, that being the word of patience; and such who are brought into the kingdom of Christ, are also in the patience of Jesus; where there is one grace, there is every grace; saints are immediately called to sufferings and trials, which require patience; and, without this, there can be no enjoyment of a man's self: but the meaning is, that they needed the continuance, exercise, and increase of it; in general, to run the race set before them; to bear afflictions from the hand of God, and reproaches and persecutions from men; to wait for God, when he hides his face, and for answers of prayer, when they are deferred; and to bear up, and not to sink under temptations; and to live in the constant expectation of heaven and happiness: and, in particular, it is necessary for the following,

that after ye have done the will of God: there is the purposing will of God, which is done by himself; and there is his revealed will, touching the salvation of men, which is done by his Son; and there is his will of precept to be done by men; and which, when done aright, is done according to the rule of his word, in faith, from love, through the strength of Christ, and by the assistance of his Spirit and grace, with a view to his glory, and without any dependence on what is done: and the will of God regards suffering, as well as doing; for to that the saints are also called, to which patience is necessary:

ye might receive the promise; that is, of eternal life; not the promise itself, which they had received already, but the thing promised; which is the sense, in which this word is often used in this book, **Heb 6:12** which is so called, to show that it is not of works, for promise and merit do not agree together; but that it is of grace, and will certainly be enjoyed, but must be patiently waited for.

Hebrews 10:37

Ver. 37. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come,.... That the person spoken of is the Lord Jesus Christ, is evident from the prophecy in **Hab 2:3** here referred to, and from the character of him that is to come, Mt 11:3 and from parallel places, **Jas 5:7** and this is to be understood, not of his coming in the flesh, for he was come in the flesh already; though Habakkuk indeed refers to his first coming, yet not to that only, but including his second coming also; but of his coming in his kingdom and power to destroy Jerusalem, and take vengeance on the Jews, for their rejection of him: the kingdom of Christ was at hand, when he began to preach; upon his ascension to heaven, it began to appear more visible; but still the temple was standing, and that worship continued, which stood in the way of the glory of his kingdom; during which time the saints suffered much: but in a little while from the writing of this epistle, he, who was to come, did come, even within about ten years after this, and showed his power and his glory, in delivering his people, and destroying his enemies; see
Mt 16:28. It may be applied to his coming to help his people in time of need; the afflictions of the saints are many; they are all for an appointed time, and but for a while; and Christ has promised to come, and visit them; and which he does often, and speedily, and seasonably: it may also be accommodated to Christ coming to take his people to himself by death; Christ may be said to come in this sense, and he will certainly come; and this will be in a little while; man is but of few days; death is certain, and should be patiently expected: and it may likewise be suitably improved, with respect to Christ's coming to judgment; that he will come is certain, from prophecies, particularly from the prophecy of Enoch, from his own words, from the testimony of angels, from the institution of the Lord's supper, till he comes, and from the general expectation of the saints; and this coming of his is desirable, because it will be the marriage of the Lamb, and the redemption of the saints, and because of the grace and glory that will be brought unto them, and because they shall then be for ever with him; and this will be quickly, in a little time, in comparison of the time that went before his first coming, and of the eternity that will follow after this; and though it may seem long, yet with God it is but a little while, with whom a thousand years are as one day; and however, since it is certain that he will come,

and will not tarry, beyond the appointed time, patience should be exercised.

Hebrews 10:38

Ver. 38. Now the just shall live by faith,.... The "just" man is one not in appearance only, but in reality; not by his obedience to the law, but by the obedience of Christ; and he is evidently so by the Spirit, and by faith: and he is one, who lives soberly and righteously; and the life he lives, and shall live, at present, is, not eternal life; for though he shall live that life, yet this is not intended; for it is a living by faith that is spoken of, and as antecedent to the coming of Christ; but a spiritual life is meant, a life of justification in Christ, a life of communion with Christ, and a life of holiness from Christ, with peace, joy, and comfort through him: and the manner of this just man's living is "by faith"; not upon his faith, but upon Christ, the object of it; and by "his faith", as in **Hab 2:4** his own, and not another's; or by the faith of Christ: the Syriac version here renders it, "by the faith of myself"; that is, by the faith of Christ, who speaks, and who is the author and object of faith: the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, "my just man shall live by faith"; and this life is to be now, in the mean while, until Christ comes, and because he will certainly come:

but if [any man] draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. The Hebrew word hlpe, used in **Hab 2:4** and which, by the Septuagint there, and by the apostle here, is translated by uposteilhtai, and rendered "draw back", according to R. David Kimchi {c} signifies, pride and haughtiness of heart; and, according to R. Sol. Jarchi {d} it signifies impudence; R. Moses Kimchi {e} takes it to be the same with lpe, which is used for a tower, or fortified place; and thinks it designs one who betakes himself to such a place for safety from the enemy, and seeks not to God for deliverance: so that such a person seems to be designed, who swells with pride and confidence in his own righteousness; who betakes himself to some fortress of his own for safety; who withdraws from the assembly of the saints, through fear of reproach and persecution; who withholds the truth, shuns to declare it, or maintain a profession of it; plays the hypocrite, and deals deceitfully in religious things; and, in short, it may intend one, who finally and totally apostatizes from the doctrine of faith, and the profession of it: and in such persons God has no pleasure, never had, nor never will have; but, on the contrary, they are abominable to him, and will lie under his sore displeasure, and feel the keen resentments of it; such stand opposed to the just man, that lives by faith, walks humbly with God, in a dependence, not on his own righteousness, but on the righteousness of Christ, in which he is safe from condemnation, and secure of the divine favour; for drawing back is not supposed of the just man, but of any man, as we, with the Ethiopic version, rightly supply; and is to be understood of anyone of the external professors of religion, who forsake the assembling of the saints, Heb 10:25 and is denied of the truly righteous in the following words.

{c} In Hab. ii. 4. {d} In ib. {e} Apud R. David Kimchi in ibid. & in Sepher Shorashim, rad. lpe.

Hebrews 10:39

Ver. 39. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition,.... There is a drawing back which is not unto perdition; persons may be attended with much unbelief, may be very cold and indifferent to Gospel ordinances, may fall into great sins, and may greatly backslide, and yet be recovered, as David, Peter, and others: and there is a drawing back to perdition; when Christ is rejected as the alone Saviour; when he is not held to as the head; when false doctrines and damnable heresies are given into; and when men draw back, and never return, nor are they, nor can they be returned, and their apostasy is total, and final: but true believers do not, and cannot draw back in this sense; because they are held fast in the arms, and with the cords of everlasting love, are chosen of God unto salvation, are given unto Christ, and secured in him; they are redeemed and purchased by him; they are united to him, and built upon him; they are interested in his prayers and preparations, and are his jewels, and his portion; they are regenerated, sanctified, inhabited, and sealed by the Spirit of God, and have the promises and power of God, on their side.

But of them that believe to the saving of the soul; or "of faith, to the salvation of the soul"; not of faith of miracles, nor of an historical faith; but of that faith, which is the faith of God's elect, is the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit; by which a soul sees Christ, goes to him, lays holds on him, commits all to him, and expects all from him: this stands opposed to drawing back; for by faith a man lives, walks, and stands; and with this is connected the salvation of the soul, as opposed to perdition; not as though it is a cause of salvation, but as a means of God's appointing to receive the blessings of salvation, and which is entirely consistent with the grace of God; and since salvation and faith are inseparably connected together, so that he that has the one shall have the other, it follows, that true believers can never perish. The nature and excellency of this grace is largely treated of in the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hebrews 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 11

The apostle having, in the preceding chapter, spoken in commendation of the grace, and life of faith, and of its usefulness to preserve from apostasy, proceeds in this to give some account of the nature and actings of it; and which he illustrates by the examples of many of the Old Testament saints: he begins with a definition of it, which consists of two parts, Heb 11:1 and with an account of the usefulness of it to the elders in general, who by it obtained a good report, Heb 11:2 and of the service it is of in understanding the creation of the worlds, the author and original of them, Heb 11:3 and then goes on to give particular instances and examples of faith among the elders, or ancient believers, which are reduced into several classes; and the first is of the saints before the flood, Abel, Enoch, and Noah. Abel's faith lay in offering a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, in obtaining a testimony from God that he was righteous, and in yet speaking, though dead, Heb 11:4. Enoch's faith is evidenced by his translation of God, that he should not see death, and by the testimony he received from him before it, that he was acceptable to him; by which it is clear he had faith, since, without it, it is impossible to please God; nor can any come aright unto him, without believing that he is, and has a gracious respect to all that diligently seek him, Heb 11:5. Noah's faith was seen in preparing an ark, by the order of God, for the saving of his family, and in condemning the world by so doing, and by becoming an heir of righteousness through faith, Heb 11:7. The next class is that of the saints from the flood, to the times of Moses, in which are Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Abraham's faith is celebrated for his obedience to the divine call, quitting the country where he was, and going he knew not where; and for his sojourning in the promised land, as in a strange one, in which Isaac and Jacob dwelt with him in tents; and for looking by faith for the heavenly city built by the Lord; and for his offering up his son at the command of God, who was the son of promise, believing God was able to raise him from the dead, from whence he received him by faith,
Heb 11:8. Sarah's faith lay in receiving strength through it to conceive, bear, and bring forth a child when past age, which was, founded upon the faithfulness of a promising God; hence from Abraham, by her, sprung a large posterity, like the stars of the sky, and the sand on the sea shore, Heb 11:11.

Now all these patriarchs, both before and after the flood, as they lived by faith, they died in it; who, though they had not received the things promised, yet by faith saw them at a distance, were very well persuaded they would come to pass, and so, in some sense, enjoyed them; hence, while they lived, they lived like pilgrims and strangers, showing that they had no regard to the country they came from, and had no mind to return thither, but sought another, a better, and an heavenly one; so that God is not ashamed to be called their God, he having prepared a city for them,
Heb 11:13. Isaac's faith is commended in blessing his two sons with respect to things future, Heb 11:20 and Jacob's faith is well spoken of for blessing both the sons of Joseph in his last moments, worshipping on the top of his staff, Heb 11:21 and Joseph's faith is instanced in two things; in making mention of the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, as a certain thing; and in giving them strict orders to carry his bones along with them, when they went from thence,
Heb 11:22 the third class of men, famous for faith, is that of such from the times of Moses to the judges, in which are the parents of Moses, Moses himself, the Israelites in general, and the harlot Rahab. The parents of Moses showed their faith in hiding him three months, seeing him to be a lovely child, contrary to the king's edict,
Heb 11:23. Moses's faith lay in refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; in preferring afflictions to the pleasures of sin, and the reproach of Christ to the riches of Egypt; he having, by faith, a respect to the heavenly glory, another instance of it; and by forsaking Egypt, without fear of the king's displeasure, by faith seeing a King who is invisible; and by keeping the passover, with the sprinkling of blood, that so the destroyer of the firstborn of Egypt might not touch the Israelites, Heb 11:24. The instances of the faith of the Israelites are their passage through the Red sea, as on dry land, when the Egyptians, who attempted it, were drowned; and their compassing the walls of Jericho seven days, believing they would fall, as accordingly they did, Heb 11:29. The faith of Rahab, the harlot, is commended for two things; for peaceably receiving the spies that came to her; and for the salvation she believed she should have, and had, when the unbelieving inhabitants of Jericho perished,
Heb 11:31. And the last class of heroes for faith, includes the times of the judges, kings, prophets, and the Maccabees; the judges, kings, and prophets, are lumped together, and only a few of their names are observed as a specimen of the rest, the apostle not having time to mention particular one, Heb 11:32 and various instances of without reference to particular persons to whom they belong, are recorded; some which lay in doing things greatly heroic, and even miraculous,

Heb 11:33 and others in suffering things the most cruel and torturing, and death itself in divers shapes, Heb 11:35. And thus, by an induction of particulars, the apostle proves both his definition of faith, Heb 11:1 and the usefulness of it to the elders, Heb 11:2 they by it obtaining a good report, though they did not receive the thing promised, Heb 11:39 wherefore New Testament saints have great encouragement, and much more reason, to exercise this grace; since God has provided for them the better thing he promised to others, that the one without the other might not be perfect, Heb 11:40.

Ver. 1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,.... The "faith" here spoken of is not a mere moral virtue, which is a branch of the law; nor a bare assent to anything revealed, declared, and affirmed in the Gospel; nor a faith of doing miracles; nor an implicit one; nor a mere profession of faith, which sometimes is but temporary; nor the word or doctrine of faith; but that which is made mention of in the preceding chapter, by which the just man lives, and which has the salvation of the soul annexed to it: and it does not so much design any particular branch, or act of faith, but as that in general respects the various promises, and blessings of grace; and it chiefly regards the faith of Old Testament saints, though that, as to its nature, object, and acts, is the same with the faith of New Testament ones; and is a firm persuasion of the power, faithfulness, and love of God in Christ, and of interest therein, and in all special blessings: it is described as "the substance of things hoped for"; and which, in general, are things unseen, and as yet not enjoyed; future, and yet to come; difficult to be obtained, though possible, otherwise there would be no hope of them; and which are promised and laid up; and in particular, the things hoped for by Old Testament saints were Christ, and eternal glory and happiness; and by New Testament ones, more grace, perseverance in it, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. Now faith is the "substance" of these things; it is the ground and foundation of them, in which there is some standing hope; in which sense the word
upostasiv is used by Septuagint in Ps 69:2. The word of promise is principal ground and foundation of hope; and faith, as leaning on the word, is a less principal ground; it is a confident persuasion, expectation, and assurance of them. The Syriac version renders it, the "certainty" of them; it is the subsistence of them, and what gives them an existence, at least a mental one; so with respect to the faith and hope of the Old Testament saints, the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, his resurrection, ascension, and session at God's right hand, are spoken of, as if they then were; and so are heaven, and glory, and everlasting salvation, with regard to the faith and hope of New Testament saints: yea, faith gives a kind of possession of those things

before hand, **Joh 6:47**. Philo the Jew {e} says much the same thing of faith;

"the only infallible and certain good thing (says he) is, that faith which is faith towards God; it is the solace of life, plhrwma crhstwn elpidwn, "the fulness of good hopes", &c."

It follows here,

the evidence of things not seen; of things past, of what was done in eternity, in the council and covenant of grace and peace; of what has been in time, in creation, and providence; of the birth, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; of things present, the being, perfections, love, &c. of God; of the session of Christ at God's right hand, and his continual intercession; and of the various blessings of grace revealed in the Gospel; and of future ones, as the invisible realities of another world: faith has both certainty and evidence in it.

{e} De Abrahamo, p. 387.

Hebrews 11:2

Ver. 2. For by it the elders obtained a good report. By whom are meant, not merely old men, or elders in age, but such who lived in ancient times; some before the flood, and to a great age, and others who were in office, civil or ecclesiastical, and were the ancestors and predecessors of the Hebrews; who in general obtained or received a good report from God; that they were the chosen of God, and were justified and accepted with him; that they were the children and friends of God, and should be glorified; and from men, from good men, for their faith and holiness; and from evil men, for their good works: and these also believed the report of the Gospel, and gave a good report of God, and of the good land, and adorned their profession; particularly, Abel received a good report, that he was righteous; and Enoch, that he pleased God, and walked with him; and Noah, that he was a just man, perfect in his generation, and also walked with God; and Abraham, that he was a believer, a friend of God, and one that feared and obeyed him; and Job, that he was a man that feared God, and shunned evil; and Moses, that he was a meek man, and a faithful one; and David, that he was a man after God's own heart, and fulfilled his will; and so others: and they received this report by faith, and as a fruit of it; which shows that faith is no new thing, and that the character of a believer is an old and honourable one. The apostle mentions this, to take off the

Hebrews from any esteem of their traditionary elders, who had got a name, not by their faith, but by their traditions; and to engage their imitation of men of antiquity, authority, and wisdom superior to them; and to let them know, unless they had the same faith with their ancestors, it would be a vain thing to boast of descent from them.

Hebrews 11:3

Ver. 3. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God,.... The celestial world, with its inhabitants, the angels; the starry and ethereal worlds, with all that is in them, the sun, moon, stars, and fowls of the air; the terrestrial world, with all upon it, men, beasts, &c. and the watery world, the sea, and all that is therein: perhaps some respect may be had to the distinction of worlds among the Jews; See Gill on "Heb 1:2", though the apostle can scarce be thought to have any regard to their extravagant notions of vast numbers of worlds being created: they often speak of three hundred and ten worlds, in all which, they say, there are heavens, earth, stars, planets, &c. {f}; and sometimes of eighteen thousand {g}; but these notions are rightly charged by Philo {h} with ignorance and folly. However, as many worlds as there are, they are made "by the Word of God"; by Christ, the essential Word of God, to whom the creation of all things is ascribed in **Joh 1:1**. And this agrees with the sentiments of the Jews, who ascribe the creation of all things to the Word of God, as do the Targumists {i}, and Philo the Jew {k}. And these are "framed" by the Word, in a very beautiful and convenient order; the heavens before the earth; things less perfect, before those that were more so in the visible world, or terraqueous globe; and things for men, before men, for whom they were; and it is by divine revelation and faith that men form right notions of the creation, and of the author of it, and particularly of the origin of it, as follows:

so that things which are seen: as the heaven, earth, and sea, and in which the invisible things of God, the perfections of his nature, are discerned:

were not made of things which do appear; they were not made from pre-existent matter, but out of nothing, out of which the rude and undigested chaos was formed; and from that invisible mass, covered with darkness, were all visible things brought into a beautiful order; and all from secret and hidden ideas in the divine minds; and this also is the faith of the Jews, that the creation of all things is Nyam, "out of nothing" {l}. There seems to be an allusion to the word arb, used for creation, which signifies to make appear a thing unseen;

and is rendered in the Septuagint version by deiknumi, Nu 16:30 and katadeiknumi, Isa 40:26 to show, or make appear; and thus God created, or made to appear, the heavens and earth, which before were not in being, and unseen, **Ge 1:1** and created to make, as in **Ge 2:3** that is, made them to appear, that he might put them into the form and order they now are.

{f} Misn. Oketzim, c. 3. sect. 12. Targum Jon. in Exod. xxviii. 30. Kettoreth Hassamim in Targum Jon. in Gen. fol. 4. 4. Lex. Cabel. p. 60, 61. {g} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 3. 2. Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 50. 4. {h} De Opificio, p. 39. {i} Targum Oak. in Deut. xxxiii. 27. & Ben Uzziel in Isa. xlviii. 13. {k} De Opificio, p. 4. & Leg. Alleg. l. 1. p. 44. {l} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 1. Kettoreth Hassamim in Targ. Jon in Gen. fol. 5. 1, 2.

Hebrews 11:4

Ver. 4. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,.... The apostle proceeds to examples of faith, and begins with Abel: it may seem strange that Adam and Eve are not mentioned; this omission is not because they were not believers; but either because of the fall and ruin of mankind by them; or because the apostle speaks only of such who had received some eminent testimony by faith, and therefore passes by many believers, and hastens to Abraham, the father of the Jews. The superior excellency of Abel's sacrifice to Cain's, lay both in the matter, and in the manner of it; the one was offered heartily to the Lord, the other only in show; the one was offered in faith, the other not; Abel looked through his sacrifice to the sacrifice of Christ, not so Cain. Abel's sacrifice was a lamb, a type of Christ, the Lamb of God; a firstling, a figure of him who is the firstborn of every creature; one of the fattest of his flock, expressive of the excellency of Christ; and this was offered up at the end of days, as Christ at the end of the world; and the superior excellency of the sacrifice of the one to that of the other, appears from God's regard to the one, and not to the other, **Ge 4:3** from whence it may be observed, that sacrifices were of divine institution, and were very early types of Christ; and that there always were two sorts of worshippers, spiritual and carnal ones, whom God can distinguish, for he seeth not as man seeth; that the acceptance of persons is in Christ, and is previous to their offerings; that whatsoever works do not spring from faith are unacceptable to God; that no dependence is to be had on birth privileges, or outward actions; and that electing and distinguishing grace very early took place, and appeared.

By which he obtained witness that he was righteous; not righteous by his offering, nor by his faith, but by the righteousness of Christ, which his faith in his sacrifice looked unto; though it was by his faith that he obtained, or received a witness in his own conscience, from the Spirit of God, testifying that he was a justified person; and in consequence of this, he had an outward testimony bore to him in the Scriptures, that he was a righteous person hence he is called righteous Abel, Mt 23:35.

God testifying of his gifts: not of his own gifts, temporal or spiritual, but of Abel's gifts, which he offered to the Lord; that is, his sacrifices; of these he testified, when he showed respect either by an audible voice, declaring his acceptance of them; or by sending down fire from heaven, upon his sacrifice, which in later times was a symbol of acceptance.

And by it, he being dead, yet speaketh; good men die, and some of them die a violent death, as did Abel, yet he speaks in the Scriptures, which have a voice in them, Lu 16:29 or by his blood, which calls for vengeance; or rather by, or because of his faith, though he is dead, "he is yet spoken of", as the word may be rendered.

Hebrews 11:5

Ver. 5. By faith Enoch was translated,.... Which is to be understood, not of a spiritual translation from the power of darkness, into the kingdom of Christ, as all converted, persons are translated, and doubtless Enoch was; nor of a rapture, or removal from one part of the earth to another, or from one part of a country to another, as Philip was caught away by the Spirit, after the baptism of the eunuch; but of a translation from earth to heaven; and not for a while only, as Paul was caught up to the third heaven; but as Elijah was, there to continue, and as the living saints will be at the last day; and this was a translation of him, soul and body, to heaven, to eternal glory and happiness, by a change from mortality to immortality, which passed upon him; and which is a pledge of the resurrection of the dead, and a proof of the Old Testament saints knowing, expecting, and enjoying eternal life. And with this agrees the sense of some of the Jewish writers concerning this affair. Jonathan ben Uzziel, in his paraphrase on **Ge 5:24** has these words:

"and Enoch worshipped in truth before the Lord; and behold he was not with the inhabitants of the earth, dygnta, "he was translated", and ascended to the firmament (or heaven), by the Word before the Lord."

And the Jerusalem Targum to the same purpose;

"and Enoch worshipped in truth before the Lord; and lo, he was not, for he was translated by the Word from before the Lord;"

or by the Word of the Lord, which went out from him; for this translation was of God, as our apostle afterwards asserts. R. Eleazar says {m}:

"the holy blessed God took Enoch, and caused him to ascend to the highest heavens, and delivered into his hands all the superior treasures, &c"

He is said {n} to be one of the seven which entered into paradise in their life; and some of them say {o}, that God took him, vpnw Pwgb, body and soul; see the Apocrypha:

"He pleased God, and was beloved of him: so that living among sinners he was translated." (Wisdom 4:10)

"Enoch pleased the Lord, and was translated, being an example of repentance to all generations." (Sirach 44:16)

And this translation is said to be "by faith"; not through any virtue and efficacy in that grace to procure it; nor through faith, in that particular point; but God put an honour upon the faith of Enoch, and on him as a believer, this way.

That he should not see death; meaning not a spiritual or moral death; nor an eternal one, though some have suggested this to be the sense; and which is favoured by the character some of the Jewish writers give of Enoch, which will be hereafter taken notice of; but a corporeal death, which he died not; to which agrees the Targum of Oukelos on **Ge 5:24**,

"and Enoch walked in the fear of the Lord, and he was not, for the Lord, tymh al, "did not kill him", or cause, or suffer him to die:"

though an exemplar of that paraphrase is cited {p}, without the negative particle, thus,

"and he was not, for the Lord killed him,"

or inflicted death on him: and it is the sense of several of the Jewish commentators, that he did die a common death, as Jarchi, Eben Ezra, and others; who by the phrase, "God took him", understand death, for which they cite the following places, 1Ki 19:4.

and was not found, because God had translated him; that is, he was not found among men, in the land of the living; he appeared no more there, for God had removed him from earth to heaven; so Elijah, after his rapture and translation, was sought for, but could not be found, **2Ki 2:16**

for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God: he did those things which pleased him; he walked with God before, **Ge 5:22** which the Targumists explain by worshipping in truth, and walking in the fear of the Lord, which are things well pleasing to God; he walked with God by faith in the ways of his worship and service; and he was acceptable to him in Christ; the same phrase is used in the Apocrypha:

"He pleased God, and was beloved of him: so that living among sinners he was translated." (Wisdom 4:10)

"Enoch pleased the Lord, and was translated, being an example of repentance to all generations." (Sirach 44:16)

This testimony he received from God, from men, and in his own conscience, and which now stands in the sacred Scriptures, **Ge 5:24**. Some of the Jewish writers very wickedly, and without any ground and foundation, give a different character of him; some of them say that he was a hypocrite, sometimes righteous, and sometimes wicked, and that the holy blessed God removed him, while he was righteous {q}; and others {r}, that allow him to be a righteous and worthy man, yet represent him as fickle and inconstant; and, therefore, God, foreseeing that he would do wickedly, and to prevent it, made haste, and took him away, by death, before his time: and which is not only contrary to what the apostle here says, but to the account of Moses, concerning him; from whence it appears, that he was a walker with God; that the course of his conversation was holy and upright; and which was the reason of his being taken, or translated; and which was an high honour bestowed upon him: and upon the whole, he has obtained a better testimony than those men give him.

{m} Zohar in Gen. fol. 44. 3. {n} Derech Eretz Zuta, c. 1. fol. 19. 1. {o} Juchasin, fol. 134. 2. {p} In Tosaphta in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 16. 2. & in not. ad triplex Targum in Gen. v. 24. Ed. Hanov. {q} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 25. fol. 21. 3. {r} Zohar in Gen. fol. 44. 2. 3. Jarchi in Gen. v. 24. Wisd. c. iv. 11, 12, 13, 14.

Hebrews 11:6

Ver. 6. But without faith it is impossible to please him,.... Or do things well pleasing in his sight; or any of the duties of religion, in an acceptable way; as prayer, praise, attendance on the word and ordinances, or any good works whatever; because such are without Christ, and without his Spirit; and have neither right principles, nor right ends: for this is not to be understood of the persons of God's elect, as considered in Christ; in whom they are well pleasing to him before faith; being loved by him with an everlasting love; and chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world;
See Gill on "Ro 8:8".

for he that cometh to God; to the throne of, his grace, to pray unto him, to implore his grace and mercy, help and assistance; to the house of God, to worship, and serve him, and in order to enjoy his presence, and have communion with him; which coming ought to be spiritual and with the heart; and supposes spiritual life; and must be through Christ, and by faith: wherefore such a comer to God,

must believe that he is; or exists, as the Arabic version; and he must not barely believe his existence, but that, as it is revealed in the word: he must believe in the three Persons in the Godhead; that the first Person is the Father of Christ; that the second Person is both the Son of God, and Mediator; and that the third Person is the Spirit of them both, and the applier of all grace; for God the Father is to be approached unto, through Christ the Mediator, by the guidance and assistance of the Spirit: and he must believe in the perfections of God; that he is omniscient, and knows his person and wants; is omnipotent, and can do for him, beyond his thoughts and petitions; is all sufficient, and that his grace is sufficient for him; that he is immutable, in his purposes and covenant; that he is true and faithful to his promises; and is the God of grace, love, and mercy: and he must believe in him, not only as the God of nature and providence, but as his covenant God and Father in Christ:

and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; who are such, as are first sought out by him; and who seek him in Christ, where he is only to be found; and that with their whole hearts, and above all things else: and, of such, God is a rewarder, in a way of grace; with himself, who is their exceeding great reward; and with his Son, and all things with him; with more grace; and, at last, with eternal glory, the reward of the inheritance.

Hebrews 11:7

Ver. 7. By faith Noah, being warned of God,.... In the Greek text, Noah is called "Noe", and so the Septuagint interpreters of the Old Testament call him; but Josephus calls him "Noeos": or "having received an oracle from God"; in which he was admonished, how to make an ark, as Moses was, in like manner, how to make a tabernacle, **Heb 8:5**. This oracle or warning is extant, in **Ge 6:13** and it was

of things not seen as yet; as the universal deluge; the building of an ark or ship, which was the first that ever was in the world; the entrance of all creatures into it; their preservation in it, and the destruction of all without it: and this divine warning, or oracle, concerning things of such a nature, delivered to Noah, and received by him, shows that he was a favourite of God; that his faith rested in the word of God; and that it agreed with the apostle's definition of faith, Heb 11:1,

moved with fear; not with a fear of his own damnation; nor with a distrust of the salvation of himself and his family in the ark; but with an awful sense of the judgments of God upon the wicked; and with reverence of God, from whom he received the oracle; and with a religious fear, with which he worshipped God, and which he discovered by a regard to his word and ordinances; and which fear does not arise from nature, but from grace; and is increased by the discoveries of divine love; and is consistent with faith, goes along with it, and is a fruit of it: hence he

prepared an ark for the saving of his house. Immediately, and without delay, he set about the building of the ark, and made it exactly according to the pattern which was given him; and his end in it was to secure his family, himself and his wife, his three sons and their wives, from the flood, which he believed would shortly come upon the world, according to the word of God; and in this his faith was seen: and from hence it may be observed, that, though God can save without means, yet, generally speaking, it is his will to save by them; and that as God saved Noah and his family in the waters, so he can, and does, save his people in afflictions; and also, that true faith is attended with obedience:

by the which he condemned the world: the inhabitants of the world, the world of the ungodly: as a preacher, he declared they would be condemned, in case of impenitence and unbelief; and his words heard, and his actions seen by them, were aggravations of their condemnation; for by his works, as well as by his words, he reproved, and condemned them; by building the ark, as he declared his own faith, so he condemned their unbelief; See Gill on "Mt 12:41"

and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith: not of the law, but of the righteousness of Christ, and of eternal life through that; for he was not only heir of this world, as Abraham, but of that which is to come; and not through works of righteousness done by him, but through the righteousness of Christ received by faith, or through faith in Christ, the antitype of the ark.

Hebrews 11:8

Ver. 8. By faith, Abraham, when he was called,.... The Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, "by faith he who was called Abraham"; but this call is not to be understood of his name; for though his first name Abram might be given him, in the faith of his being a great man, and his second name Abraham, when he himself was a believer; yet this change was made some years after the call referred to; which is that in Ge 12:1 when he was called out of his own country, kindred, and father's house; which was an emblem of the call of God's people out from among the men of the world, and from their friends, relations, and acquaintance, and even out of themselves; and as Abraham was called from "Ur" of the Chaldees, so they from darkness, bondage, idolatry, and communion with wicked men; that, as he, they might not perish with idolaters, being chosen vessels, and for whom God has peculiar blessings in store: and so the grace of God is seen in calling them, without any respect to their deserts, as in calling Abraham: and the care and goodness of God may be observed, in raising up fit instruments to propagate his cause and interest. Now Abraham, being called

to go out into a place; from Ur of the Chaldees, to the land of Canna;

which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance; not in his own person, but in his seed and posterity, unless after the resurrection, in the New Jerusalem church state, and which inheritance was typical of heaven;

obeyed the divine call; and which was a fruit and evidence of his faith, and may he called the obedience of faith:

and he went out, not knowing whither he went: for though he went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan he came, Ge 12:5, yet, when God called him to go forth, and he prepared to obey his call, he knew not what land he was to go into; for it is only said, Ge 12:1,

unto a land that I will show thee: upon which words a Jewish commentator {r} has this note;

"he (God) did not immediately make known the land unto him, that so it might be lovely in his eyes;"

and it is, elsewhere, said by the Jews {s}, that Abraham

"came from Aspamia (i.e. Mesopotamia), and its companions,
Nkyh edwy hyh alw, "and he knew not where" he was, as a man that is in the dark;"

all which agrees with our apostle: and, from hence, it may be observed, that God sometimes leads his people in ways they have not known, though they are known to him, and are always right; and that it is the property of faith to follow God, when it cannot see its way; and a great mercy it is to have God for a guide. This also shows, that Abraham's faith agrees with the apostle's definition of it, Heb 11:1.

{r} Jarchi in Gen. xii. 1. {s} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 60. fol. 52. 3.

Hebrews 11:9

Ver. 9. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise,.... The land of Canaan, so called, because it was promised to Abraham and his seed; and is typical of heaven, which is not by the works of the law, but by the free promise and grace of God: here Abraham sojourned for a while,

as in a strange country; which was not his native place, and not his own, but another's; see **Ac 7:5** and an idolatrous one; here he sojourned by faith, believing that as it was promised, it would be given to him, and his seed: so all God's people are sojourners in this world, strangers and pilgrims in it; this is not their dwelling place; they do not belong to it, but to another; their stay in it is but for a while; and, while they are in it, do not look upon themselves at home, but are looking out for another, and better country; they are unknown to the men of the world, and the men of the world are strangers to them; though they have a civil conversation with them, they separate from them, both as to profaneness and superstition, and live by faith, in the expectation of the heavenly country, as Abraham also did:

dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; the same promised land, the same promised blessings, and the same promised seed, the Messiah; see
Ge 12:3 with these Abraham dwelt, for he lived until Isaac was seventy five years of age, and Jacob fifteen; he was an hundred years old when Isaac was born, Ge 21:5 and he lived one hundred and seventy five years, Ge 25:7 and Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob was born, Ge 25:26 and Abraham dwelt with them in tabernacles, or tents, which they pitched at pleasure, and moved from place to place. So true believers, as they are Abraham's seed, they are heirs with him, according to the promise; and are heirs together of the grace of life; and dwell in earthly tabernacles, in houses of clay, which are erected for a while, and then taken down.

Hebrews 11:10

Ver. 10. For he looked for a city which hath foundations,.... Not the city of Jerusalem, nor the Gospel church state; but either the city of the new Jerusalem, said to have twelve foundations,
Re 21:14 and in which glorious state, Abraham, with the rest of the saints, being raised from the dead, will in person possess the promised land; or else the ultimate glory of the saints in heaven, where God dwells, and keeps his palace; and which will be the dwelling place of the saints, and will have in it many habitations; and which will be both peaceable and safe, and full of glory, riches, joy, and pleasure; and into which none but holy and righteous persons will enter; the "foundations" of which are the everlasting love of God, eternal election, the covenant of grace, the promise and preparation of it by God, from the foundation of the world, and the Lord Jesus Christ, his blood and righteousness; which show the immovableness of it, it being opposed to the tabernacles Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dwelt in, and to the transitory enjoyments of this world: and for this sure, immovable, and comfortable state of things, Abraham was "looking" by faith; he looked through, and above temporal things, to spiritual things; he went through difficulties with cheerfulness, did not greedily covet earthly things, but looked with disdain upon them, and to heaven with faith, affection, and earnest desire; and this proves his faith to be, as that is defined, Heb 11:1

whose builder and maker is God: God the Father has prepared this glory from the foundation of the world, and has promised before the world began, and has chosen his people to it; the Spirit of God makes it known, and prepares them for it; and the Lord Jesus Christ is the forerunner entered, who is gone to get it ready for them, and will put them into the possession of it: this shows the superior excellency of this city, or glorious state; and that God has the sole right to dispose of it.

Hebrews 11:11

Ver. 11. Through faith also Sarah herself,.... Some copies add "being barren"; and so read the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; which is a circumstance which makes her faith appear the greater: but it is a question whether the apostle speaks of the faith of Sarah, or of Abraham; some think he speaks of Abraham's faith; and that it was through his faith that Sarah conceived; and observe, that the last clause may be rendered, "because he judged him faithful", &c. and the rather, because the apostle, both before and after, is speaking of Abraham's faith, Heb 11:8. And in Heb 11:12 mention is made only of one, even of Abraham; and in **Ro 4:17** only notice is taken of Abraham's faith, respecting this matter; nor is Sarah's faith observed in the history of it, but her diffidence: but why may not Sarah be joined with Abraham, in this commendation, as well as Isaac and Jacob? and though, at first, she distrusted, yet she afterwards feared, and believed: other women are mentioned in this catalogue of believers; and they share in the same grace and privileges as men: and Sarah, being a believer, as well as Abraham,

received strength to conceive seed: sometimes "strength" itself signifies seed, as in Pr 31:3 and so to receive strength is to receive seed; which the female does from the male; hence that saying of the Jews {t}, the male does not receive strength from another, but the female xk tlbqm "receiveth strength" from another; but here it is to be understood of receiving power from God to retain seed, received from men, and conceive by it; which Sarah, in her circumstances, without the interposition of the almighty power, could never have done. The nymph Anobret is so called, in imitation of this conception of Sarah's; or as she is called in the Phoenician language, trbne Nx, which signifies "conceiving by grace": as this conception must be entirely ascribed to the power and grace of God:

and was delivered of a child when she was past age; of bearing and bringing forth children, being ninety years of age, Ge 17:17. Now though the conception, bearing, and bringing forth of children are things natural, ordinary, and common, yet here was a particular promise respecting this matter; and there were great difficulties in nature attending it, and such as to reason were insuperable; but these were got over, through the power and grace of God, and which is ascribed to faith in the faithfulness of a promising God:

because she judged him faithful who had promised; that she should have a son at the time of life; See Gill on "Heb 10:23".

{t} Caphtor, fol. 21. 2.

Hebrews 11:12

Ver. 12 Therefore sprang there even of one,.... That is, Abraham: the Arabic version has here a strange interpolation;

"this faith Isaac and Rebecca conceived in mind, and so there were born of one, Esau and Jacob."

And him as good as dead; being an hundred years of age;
See Gill on "Ro 4:19". The Ethiopic version reads, "the bodies of both were like a dead carcass"; both of Abraham and Sarah:

so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable; as was promised to Abraham,
Ge 15:5 which has been fulfilled, Isa 10:22 and will still have a further fulfilment, **Ho 1:10**.

Hebrews 11:13

Ver. 13. These all died in faith,.... Not all the seed of Abraham, but all the believers in the preceding verses, excepting Enoch, particularly the three patriarchs, with Sarah; these died a corporeal death, which is common to all, to the righteous, and to the wicked; and yet saints die not as other men; they die in faith, having the grace itself, which being once implanted, can never be lost; and sometimes in the exercise of it, as these believers did: they died in the faith of their posterity inheriting the land of Canaan, and in the faith of the promised Messiah, and in the believing views of the heavenly glory; and so to die is comfortable to themselves, and a confirmation of the truth of religion to others, and is very precious, desirable, and gainful. It may be rendered, "according to faith"; they died according to the life of faith they lived, and the doctrine of faith they professed, being the Lord's both living and dying.

Not having received the promises; the things promised, the land of Canaan, the Messiah, and the blessings of the Gospel dispensation; they had the promises of these things, and though they were not fulfilled in their days, they believed they would be fulfilled, and died in the faith of them:

having seen them afar off; the things themselves in the promise; as Abraham saw the going forth of his posterity out of Egypt, after they had been afflicted four hundred years, and saw the day of Christ at a greater distance still, Ge 15:13.

And were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them]; they had a full assurance of faith, that what was promised would be fulfilled; and they took a kind of possession of them before hand, as Abraham did of the land of Canaan, by sojourning in it; as did also Isaac and Jacob; and all of them by faith embraced the Messiah, and dealt with, and laid hold upon his blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and grace, by which they were saved, as New Testament saints are.

And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth; for they sojourned in the land of Canaan, as in a strange land, as the saints do in this world; see Heb 11:9. And they were pilgrims, travelling through this world to the heavenly country, and they confessed themselves to be such, Ge 47:9 nor are believers ashamed to own and confess their mean estate in this world; for it is only with respect to earth, and earthly things, that they are strangers and pilgrims, and only while they are on earth; and it is therefore but for a little time that they are so, ere long they will be at home, and know as they are known.

Hebrews 11:14

Ver. 14. For they that say such things,.... That they are strangers and pilgrims on earth:

declare plainly that they seek a country; heaven, so called, for the largeness of it; it is a good land, a land of uprightness; a pleasant land, a land of rest, though a land afar off; here the Father of Christ, and Christ himself, and all his people dwell: the Syriac version renders it, "their own city"; the place of their nativity, of which they were citizens: the act of "seeking" it supposes some things, with respect to the place where they were, as that they were in a strange land, had no settlement there, nor satisfaction in it, and that they sat loose to the world, and the things of it; and some things respecting the country sought after, as that they were not in it; that it was at a distance from them; that they had some knowledge of it, and of the way to it; that their desires were after it, and that they had a strong affection and value for it: the right way to this country is not mere civility and morality, nor legal righteousness, nor birth privileges, nor submission to outward ordinances, nor a mere profession of religion, but the Lord Jesus Christ; he is the true way to eternal life; it is his righteousness which gives a title to it, and on account of which believers expect it, though not without holiness, nor without trouble. The right manner of seeking it is, in the first place, above all things else, with the whole heart, by faith, and by patient continuance in well doing. Many are the reasons which may induce believers to seek it; it is their own, and their Father's country; it is a better one than that in which they are; and because of the company they shall there enjoy, and the work they shall be employed in; and because of the happiness they will be possessed of; and because their inheritance, riches, and treasures, lie here.

Hebrews 11:15

Ver. 15. And truly if they had been mindful of that country,.... Chaldea, which was Abraham's country:

from whence they came out; as Abraham and Sarah did, in person, and their posterity in them:

they might have had opportunity to have returned: for the way from Canaan or Egypt, where they sojourned, was short and easy: and though Abraham sent his servant thither to take a wife for his son Isaac, yet he would not go thither himself, nor suffer his son; nay, made his servant swear that he would not bring him thither, if even the woman should refuse to come; so unmindful was he of that country; so little did he regard it; yea, so much did he despise it: so when men are called by grace, and converted, they come out of a country, this world, which is a land of sin and iniquity, of great folly and ignorance, of darkness, and of the shadow of death; a desert, a mere wilderness; a country where Satan reigns, full of wicked and ungodly men; and which is the land of their nativity, as to their first birth: and they may be said to come out of it, not in a natural and civil sense, but in a spiritual one; and it is the character of a converted man, or one that is come out of the world, and is separated from it, to be unmindful of it; not so as not to consider from whence he came out, as owing to rich grace; nor so as not to lament the iniquities of it; nor so as not to pray for the conversion of the inhabitants of it; but he is unmindful of it, so as to be desirous of the company of the men of it, or to have the affections set upon it, and the heart tickled with the pleasures of it, or so as to desire to return to it, for which there is a great deal of reason: for this country is not worth minding; and there is much in it to set a gracious mind against it; a good man has better things to mind; and it is below, and unworthy of a Christian, to mind the world; and besides, worldly mindedness is attended with bad consequences. Moreover, though the saints have opportunities of returning, yet they do not; they are near it, and the country they are seeking is afar off: many things in it are alluring and ensnaring; a corrupt and deceitful heart often lingers after them, and Satan is not wanting to tempt unto, and by them. And yet they do not return; some that bear the name of Christians, but are not truly such, may wholly return, and never come back more; and true believers may strangely go back again in some instances; but they shall not return finally and totally: for they are held and drawn with the cords of love; they are in the hands of Christ, and are secured in the covenant of grace; they are returned to Christ, in the effectual calling, who will keep them; they are of the household of God, and shall be no more foreigners; should they return in such sense, they would be condemned with the world, which cannot be.

Hebrews 11:16

Ver. 16. But now they desire a better country,.... Which is not to be understood of the then present time, in which the apostle wrote; for the patriarchs, of whom he speaks, were not then on earth, nor in any third place between heaven and earth; they were then in heaven; and though there are indeed in heaven desires after perfect happiness, in soul and body; yet this intends the desires of these saints when on earth, and which are common to all believers in the present state of things; who, as the patriarchs desired a better country than Chaldea, or even Canaan itself, so they desire a better country than this world; and such is heaven: it is on high; here are no noxious and pestilential vapours, no mists or fogs beclouding, no storms and tempests, but it is full of light and glory; having the delightful breezes of divine love, and the comfortable gales of the blessed Spirit; here is no heat of persecution, nor coldness, nor chills of affection; here is plenty of most delicious fruits, no hunger nor thirst; and here are riches, which are solid, satisfying, durable, safe and sure: many are the liberties and privileges here enjoyed; here is a freedom from a body subject to diseases and death, from a body of sin and death, from Satan's temptations, from all doubts, fears, and unbelief, and from all sorrows and afflictions; the inhabitants of it are the spirits of just men made perfect, angels, God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and Christ in human nature; upon all which accounts it is abundantly the better country, and as it is explained,

that is, an heavenly; an inheritance in heaven, an house eternal in the heavens, the kingdom of heaven; and it is no wonder that it should be desired by such who know it, and the nature of it: the word denotes a vehement desire; and it is such, that the saints desire to depart from this world, and go unto it; which shows that they are weaned from this, and have seen something glorious in another. Remarkable is the saying of Anaxagoras {u} who, when one said to him, hast thou no regard to thy country? answered, I have, and that the greatest, pointing with his fingers towards heaven; and, says Philo the Jew {w}, the soul of every wise man has heaven for his country, and the earth as a strange place:

wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; their covenant God and Father; See Gill on "Heb 8:10", even though he is the God of the whole earth;

for he hath prepared for them a city; in his council and covenant, and by his Son; See Gill on "Heb 11:10". This proves that he is not ashamed of the relation he stands in to them, since he has made a provision for them to dwell with him to all eternity.

{u} Laert. in Vit. Anaxag. p. 92. {w} De Agricultura, p. 196. Vid. ib. de Confus. Ling. p. 331.

Hebrews 11:17

Ver. 17. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, ... Or tempted; that is, by God, Ge 22:1. This temptation or trial respects the command given by God to Abraham, to offer up his son Isaac; which lays no foundation for a charge against God, either of sin or cruelty; for God's will is the rule of justice and goodness, and whatever he requires is just and good; and though his creatures are bound by the laws he prescribes them, he himself is not: besides, he is the Lord of life, the giver and preserver of it; and he has a right to dispose of it, and to take it away, when, and by what means, and instruments, he thinks fit; to which may be added, that the secret will of God was not that Isaac should die, but a command was given to Abraham to offer him up, for the trial of his faith and love; this was a temptation of probation, not of seduction, or to sin, as are the temptations of Satan; for God tempts no man with sin. The Jews speak {x} of ten temptations, with which Abraham was tried, and in all which he stood; and say, that this of the binding of Isaac was the tenth and last.

Offered up Isaac; he showed great readiness to do it; as soon as he had the command given him, he travelled three days' journey in order to it; took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it on his son; took fire, and a knife in his hand, with the one to burn the wood, with the other to slay his son; he built an altar, laid the wood in order on it; and bound his son, and laid him on that; and took the knife, and stretched forth his hand to slay him, and fully intended to do it, had he not been prevented: and all this he did by faith; he believed the equity, justice, and wisdom of the divine command; he was fully assured of the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises, however contrary this might seem thereunto; and he was strongly persuaded of the power of accomplishing them in some way or another. This was great faith, and it was greatly tried, as follows:

and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son; he had a promise made him that he should have a son, and that a numerous issue should spring from him, which should inherit the land of Canaan; yea, that the Messiah himself should be of his seed: and he had received these promises; given credit to them, and firmly believed them, and fully expected the performance of them; as he had reason to do, since the first was fulfilled, the son was born; and yet now he is called to offer him up, on whom his expectation was placed; everything was trying; it was an human creature he was called to offer, whose blood is not to be shed by man; a child of his own, a part of himself; a son, an own son; an only begotten son; a son whom he loved; an Isaac, a son of joy; a son of promise; and his heir, the son of his old age, and who was now a grown up person. The Jews are divided about the age of Isaac at his binding: Josephus {y} says he was twenty five years of age; others say twenty six {z}; some say {a} thirty six: but the more prevailing opinion is {b}, that he was thirty seven years of age; only Aben {c} Ezra makes him to be about thirteen; rejecting the more commonly received account, as well as that he was but five years old, that being an age unfit to carry wood. Some Christian writers have thought he might be about three and thirty years of age, the age of Christ when he suffered, of whom he was a type.

{x} Targum in Cant. vii. 8. Pirke Eliezer, c. 26. & c. 31. Maimon. Jarchi & Bartenora in Misn. Abot, c. 5. sect. 3. {y} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 13. sect. 2. {z} Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 6. 1. {a} Targum Jon. in Gen. xxii. 1. {b} Zohar in Gen. fol. 68. 2. & 74. 4. & 76. 2. Targ. Hieros. in Ex. xii. 42. Pirke Eliezer, c.

31, Juchasin, fol. 9. 1. Prefat. Echa Rabbati, fol. 40. 2. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 1. p. 3. Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 3. 1. {c} In Gen. xxii. 4.

Hebrews 11:18

Ver. 18. Of whom it is said,.... That is, of Isaac, Abraham's own son, whom he offered up; or rather, "to whom it was said", as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; that is, to Abraham, for to him was this said, Ge 21:12

that in Isaac shall thy seed be called; that numerous natural seed of his, which should inherit the land of Canaan; and his special famous seed, the Messiah, to whom the promises were made;
See Gill on "Ro 9:7".

Hebrews 11:19

Ver. 19. Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead,.... Abraham did not go about this affair without thought; and yet he did not consult with flesh and blood; his reasoning was the reasoning of faith; and the conclusion of it was, not that he believed that God would raise his son from the dead, but that he was able to do it. He knew that he had received him at first, as it were, from the dead; he sprung from his own dead body, and out of Sarah's dead womb; and though his faith did not prescribe to God, yet as he believed the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, he might believe that God would raise his son from the dead, rather than that his promise should fail; and this conclusion proceeded upon the power and faithfulness of God:

from whence also he received him in a figure; or for an "example" of faith and obedience; or for a "parable or proverb", that such a proverbial expression might be made use of, for the comfort and encouragement of saints in distressed and difficult circumstances, as is in Ge 22:14 or as a type of the death and resurrection of Christ, whose type he was in other things, as well as in this; as in his birth, and the circumstances of it; he was long promised and expected, as Christ, was; his birth was beyond the ordinary course of nature, and attended with great joy; he was circumcised the eighth day; at his weaning a great feast was made, typical of the Gospel feast; and as he was persecuted by Ishmael, so was Christ by Herod, in his infancy: and he was a figure of him in his oblation; they were both sons of Abraham; both only begotten and beloved sons; both heirs; both carried the wood on which they were offered;

both were offered on a Mount, and by their father, by whom neither of them were spared; and both by the command of God, and alone, none were with them: and Isaac prefigured him in his deliverance; Abraham stretched out his hand, but was restrained, and not a bone of Christ must be broken; not Isaac, but the ram was slain, not the divine, but the human nature suffered; both were delivered on the third day, the one as from death, the other really from death; and both returned to their father's house. Moreover, Abraham received his son in the similitude of a resurrection; it was as life from the dead; it was like the return of the prodigal, Lu 15:32. Abraham, looked upon him as dead to him, and Isaac thought himself a dead man; so that he that was accounted as one dead, was received alive. The Jews speak of this matter agreeably to the apostle; they say, a man has two breaths or souls, one in this world, and another in the world to come; and of Isaac they say {d}, that

"in the time that he was offered upon the altar, his soul (or "breath"), which he had in this world, "went out"; and when it was said to Abraham (or by him) blessed be he that quickeneth the dead, his soul (or breath), which he had in the world to come, returned to him--for tmk bvxta, "he was accounted as dead"."

They speak of him as if he was just dead; they say {e},

"when he saw the sword over his neck, his breath fled from him, and came to the place of the soul, hyh wlyak, "as if he was at the point of giving up the ghost"."

So that a Jew cannot find fault with the apostle for expressing himself in this manner.

{d} Tosaphta in Zohar in Gen. fol. 46. 21. {e} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 58. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 31.

Hebrews 11:20

Ver. 20. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau,.... The history of this is in Ge 27:33. The former of these was a good man, and, though the youngest son, he is set before, and was blessed before the eldest; and the latter was a wicked man, and yet had a blessing; for temporal blessings are enjoyed in common: and this blessing was prophetic, it was concerning things to come. Jacob's blessing was plenty of temporal things, and under which may be signified the dews of divine grace, the fatness of God's house, the bread of life, and wine of divine love, which true Israelites partake of; also dominion over his brother, and government over nations, which had their accomplishment in his posterity; and may be expressive of the spiritual reign of the saints, and their dominion, by grace; and of the kingdom that shall hereafter be put to their hands; and of the extensiveness of Christ's kingdom in the latter day, who was to spring front him. Esau's blessings were merely temporal ones, and respected things future, which were fulfilled in his posterity; and these several blessings Isaac pronounced upon them by faith, believing they would be bestowed upon them; and so his faith answered to the account of faith in Heb 11:1. It may be asked, how Isaac can be said to have blessed Jacob by faith, when he was deceived by him? It is certain he took him to be Esau, when he blessed him, wherefore it was not the design of Isaac, though it was the will of God that he should bless him, Ge 27:18, but yet notwithstanding this, Isaac might do it in faith, believing that the person he blessed would be blessed, though he was mistaken in him; and which he confirmed when he did know him, Ge 27:33 to which the apostle may have respect; and besides, he blessed him after this, Ge 28:1.

Hebrews 11:21

Ver. 21. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying,.... Which was the usual time of blessing with the patriarchs; and the reason of it was, that what was said might be more attended to and regarded, and more strongly impressed upon the mind; and this is a proof that it was done in faith by Jacob, when there was no appearance of the fulfilment of these things, and it was not likely that he should see them; and this shows the truth of what the apostle says in Heb 11:1, blessed both the sons of Joseph; whose names were Ephraim and Manasseh; the form of blessing them is recorded in Ge 48:15 and which was done in faith, and under the direction and inspiration of the Spirit of God, as appears by his setting Ephraim before Manasseh, Ge 48:13 and when he delivered the blessing he firmly believed it would be fulfilled, though they were then in a strange land:

and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff; not that he "worshipped the top of his staff", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, either his own, or Joseph's, or any little image upon the top of it; which would be an instance of idolatry, and not faith, contrary to the scope of the apostle; nor is there any need to interpret this of civil worship and respect paid to Joseph, as a fulfilment of his dream, and with a peculiar regard to Christ, of whom Joseph

was a type; whereas, on the contrary, Joseph at this time bowed to his father, as was most natural and proper, Ge 48:12 nor is there any necessity of supposing a different punctuation of
Ge 47:31 and that the true reading is not "mittah", a bed, but "matteh"; a staff, contrary to all the Targums {f}, and the Talmud {g}, which read "mittah", a bed, seeing it is not that place the apostle cites or refers to; for that was before the blessing of the sons of Joseph, but this was at the same time; and the apostle relates what is nowhere recorded in Genesis, but what he had either from tradition, or immediate revelation; or else he concludes it from the general account in Ge 48:1 and the sense is, that Jacob, having blessed the two sons of Joseph, being sat upon his bed, and weak, he leaned upon the top of his staff, and worshipped God, and gave praise and glory to him, that he had lived to see not only his son Joseph, but his seed also, see Ge 48:2.

{f} Onkelos, Jonathan & Jerusalem in Gen. xlvii. 31. {g} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 16. 2.

Hebrews 11:22

Ver. 22. By faith Joseph, when he died,.... The riches and honours of Joseph, as they could not secure him from death, so they did not make him unmindful of it; nor was he afraid of dying, or uneasy about it; nor did his prosperity make him proud, or above speaking to his brethren, nor revengeful to them, nor unthoughtful of their future afflictions; nor did his affluence of temporal things take off his regards to divine promises, nor weaken his faith in them, which is here commended in the following instances; as that at the time of his death,

he made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; that is, out of the land of Egypt: he remembered it himself, and put his brethren in mind of it, by speaking of it to their comfort, with great assurance; he knew they were well situated in the land of Egypt, and yet speaks of their departure out of it; he foresaw, and firmly believed they would be greatly afflicted in it, and that God would look upon them, and visit them, and bring them out of it, into the land of Canaan; all which shows the strength of his faith, and that it was about things not seen.

And gave commandment concerning his bones; and the command was a very strict one when he gave it; he took an oath of his brethren to fulfil it; it was concerning his bones, not his body, which shows that he believed their departure out of Egypt was at a great distance, when his flesh would be consumed, and only his bones left, as it was about two hundred years after his death; it respects the carrying them out of Egypt with them, and burying them in the land of Canaan, when they came there; and this is an instance of his humility, in choosing to lie with his fathers, rather than with the kings, and great men in Egypt, and of his care to prevent idolatry, which he might observe the Egyptians would be prone unto: and this command was a great instance of Joseph's faith, that the children of Israel would return to Canaan, and which might serve greatly to confirm their faith in it; it also shows his belief of the resurrection of the dead, and of his enjoying the heavenly inheritance, signified by the land of Canaan; See Ge 50:24, the Papists, from hence, plead for the relics of saints; but it should be observed, that it was at the request, and by the command of Joseph, that his bones were preserved, which is not the case of the saints, whose relics are pleaded for; besides, these were the true and real bones of Joseph, whereas the relics of the saints are only pretended; to which may be added, that the bones of Joseph, were ordered to be buried, not to be showed for a sight, much less worshipped, as Popish relics are. Joseph's coffin, the Jews say {h}, was put into the river Nile; and so says Patricides {i}, an Arabic writer: others say it was in the buryingplace of the kings, until it was taken up and removed by Moses.

{h} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 13. 1. {i} Apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 379.

Hebrews 11:23

Ver. 23. By faith Moses, when he was born,.... Which is to be understood, not of the faith of Moses, but of the faith of his parents, at the time of his birth; which was when Pharaoh had published an edict, ordering every male child to be cast into the river; but instead of obeying this order, Moses was hid three months of his parents; that is, in his father's house, as it is said in **Ac 7:20** and is here expressed in the Ethiopic version. According to the Targumist {k}, his mother went with him but six months, at the end of which he was born, and that she hid him three months, which made up the nine, the time in which a woman usually goes with child; and after that she could conceal him no longer: the hiding of him is here ascribed to both his parents, though in **Ex 2:2** it is represented as the act of his mother; which, no doubt, was done, with the knowledge, advice, and consent of his father; and the Septuagint there renders it, eskepasan, "they hid him"; though the order of the history makes it necessary that it should be read in the singular. Parents ought to take care of their children; and persons may lawfully hide themselves, or others, from the cruelty of tyrants, and that as long as they can, for their safety; and this was so far from being wrong in the parents of Moses, that it is commended, as an instance of faith: they believed the promise in general, that God would deliver the people of Israel; they believed this to be about the time of their deliverance, and had some intimation, that this child in particular would be the deliverer, because they saw he was a proper child; not only of a goodly and beautiful countenance, but that he was peculiarly grateful and acceptable to God; they perceived something remarkable in him, which to them was a token that he would be the deliverer of God's people, and therefore they hid him; See Gill on "Ac 7:20".

And they were not afraid of the king's commandment; nor did they observe it, for it was contrary to nature, and to the laws of God, and to the promise of God's multiplying of that people, and to their hopes of deliverance: there is a great deal of courage and boldness in faith; and though faith may be weakened, it cannot be lost; and a weak faith is taken notice of, as here; for though they feared not at first, they seem to be afraid afterwards; but when God designs to work deliverance, nothing shall prevent.

{k} Jonathan ben Uzziel in Exod. ii. 2.

Hebrews 11:24

Ver. 24. By faith Moses, when he was come to years,.... Or "was great"; a nobleman in Pharaoh's court; or when he was arrived to great knowledge, being learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; or rather when he was well advanced in years, being full forty years of age, **Ac 7:22**

refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; by whom Moses was taken up out of the water; by whom he was named, and provided for; she reckoned him as her own son, and designed him for Pharaoh's successor, as Josephus reports {l}: he refused all this honour, both in words, and by facts; he denied that he was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, as the words will bear to be rendered; for to be "called", often signifies only to "be"; and by taking part with the Israelites, and against the Egyptians, he plainly declared that his descent was from the former, and not the latter: and this discovered great faith; and showed that he preferred being called an Israelite to any earthly adoption, and the care of the church, and people of God, to his own worldly honour and interest; and that he believed the promises of God, before the flatteries of a court; and esteemed afflictions and reproaches, with the people of God, and for his sake, better than sinful pleasures, and earthly riches, as in the following words. Of Pharaoh's daughter, See Gill on "Ac 7:21".

{l} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 9. sect. 7.

Hebrews 11:25

Ver. 25. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God,.... The Israelites, who were God's chosen and peculiar people, and were the true worshippers of him; Moses chose to be with those: the company and conversation of such is most eligible to every good man, because God is with them; his word and ordinances are with them; there are large provisions of grace in the midst of them; so that it is profitable, delightful, and honourable, to be among them, and is attended with comfort, peace, and satisfaction: but then those are a poor, and an afflicted people; affliction is with them, for the sake of God, and Christ, and the truths which they profess, and the worship and service they are engaged in; and their afflictions are many and grievous: and now Moses chose to suffer these with them, to suffer the same afflictions they did, and to sympathize with them: and this was more eligible to him,

than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: meaning, either the pleasures, honours, and riches in Pharaoh's court, attended with sin; as indulging himself in the luxury of a court, when his brethren were in distress; approving Pharaoh's cruelty and persecution, at least conniving at it, and not opposing it, which could not be without sin; carrying himself as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, when he was an Hebrew; and preferring his own ease to the deliverance of his people; and now these, had he continued at court, would have been but for a short season: or else sinful lusts in general are intended, in which men promise themselves much pleasure, when it is only imaginary, and lasts but for a while neither; and both may be intended, and are what the Jews call {m} egr ygwnet, "pleasures for a moment", or momentary ones. And the reasons which might induce Moses, and so every good man, to such a choice, may be taken partly from the nature of afflictions themselves, which are such that God has chosen for them, and appointed them unto, and which he gives them to suffer for his name, and which are an honour to them, and issue in their good, and in the glory of God; and partly from the nature of sinful pleasures; there is no solidity, nor satisfaction, in the best of worldly enjoyments; there can be no true pleasure in sin; there is always bitterness in the end, and it issues in death, if grace prevent not: now it was by faith Moses made this choice, for it is manifestly contrary to flesh and blood: it showed him to be a man thoroughly acquainted with the nature of sin; and that he looked beyond the things of sense and time, to those of eternity.

{m} Aben Ezra in Psal. xxiii. 4.

Hebrews 11:26

Ver. 26. Esteeming the reproach of Christ,.... That is, either Christ personal; meaning not any reproach that lay upon Christ, as the immediate object of it; nor upon the people of Israel for the delay of his coming; but rather for the sake of Christ: Christ was made known to the Old Testament saints, and they believed in him; he was typified by sacrifices which they offered; and they were reproached for his sake, for the sacrifices they offered, and for the worship they performed, for their faith in the Messiah, and their expectation of him: or this may be understood of Christ mystical, the church; called Christ, because of the union, communion, sympathy, and likeness there is between them, insomuch that what is done to the one, is done to the other: when the saints are reproached, Christ himself is reproached; and therefore all reproaches of this nature should be bore willingly, cheerfully, courageously, patiently, and constantly: and such Moses reckoned

greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; he counted reproach itself riches; that is, he esteemed that riches for which he was reproached, as Christ, his word, and ordinances, and communion with the saints in them; all which are comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; yea, are more valuable and desirable than thousands of gold and silver, or than the treasures in Egypt, which were very large; money, cattle, and lands coming into the hands of the king, through the seven years' famine in it, Ge 47:14 and for which immense treasure, treasure cities were built, **Ex 1:11** which would have become Moses's, had he been Pharaoh's successor, to which he bid fair, before he discovered himself.

For he had respect unto the recompence of the reward; by which is meant, either the deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage, which he judged a sufficient recompence for all his afflictions and reproaches he endured, as the Apostle Paul did for the elect's sake, for the sake of Christ's body the church, **Col 1:24** or the enjoyment of the land of Canaan, promised for an inheritance to the seed of Abraham; or the enjoyment of God's presence among his people, who is their shield, and exceeding great reward; or rather eternal glory, which is the reward of the inheritance, and is a reward of grace, and not of debt; this he had respect unto, looked for, and believed he should enjoy; so that his faith was of things unseen; and this caused him to prefer even afflictions with the saints, and reproaches for Christ, to all worldly riches and grandeur.

Hebrews 11:27

Ver. 27. By faith he forsook Egypt,.... Either when he fled to Midian; this was before the eating of the passover, and so it stands in its proper order; whereas, his going out of Egypt with the children of Israel was after it, and mentioned in Heb 11:29. The word "forsook" implies fleeing; and then it was when Pharaoh's wrath was kindled against him: but it may be said, that Moses seemed then to be afraid of it, seeing he fled: to which it may be answered, that he showed great courage and intrepidity in slaying the Egyptian; and he took no methods to gain the king's favour, when the thing was known; his fleeing was consistent with courage, and was a point of prudence, and in obedience to the will of God: his departure shows, that he would not desist from the work he was called unto; but that he waited God's time, when he should be again employed; wherefore he endured affliction and meanness in Midian, and waited, patiently, till God should call him again to service: or this is to be understood of the time when he led the children of Israel out of Egypt; when he had many difficulties on the part of that people: they were seated and settled in the land of Egypt; they knew nothing of Canaan, nor of the way to it; and, besides, that was in the possession of others; they were a very morose, impatient, stiffnecked, and an ungovernable people, whom he led into a wilderness, without food or arms; and their number was very large; and he had many difficulties, on the part of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The Israelites were in the midst of them; he brought them out from among them, with the spoil of them in their hands; he knew the changeableness and fury of Pharaoh's mind, and yet he led them out, and left Egypt,

not fearing the wrath of the king; of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; though it was as the roaring of a lion: so such as are called by grace, from a state of darkness and bondage, and out of a strange land, forsake this world, and leave their situation in it, their sinful lusts and pleasures, the company of wicked men, and everything that is near and dear, when it is in competition with Christ; not fearing the wrath of any temporal king or prince; nor of Satan, the prince of this world:

for he endured; afflictions, reproach, and menaces, with patience and courage;

his mind was not broken with them, nor overborne by them; he expected divine help, and persevered; and so do such, who are called by the grace of God:

as seeing him who is invisible; that is God, as the Syriac version expresses it; who is not to be seen corporeally, though intellectually; not in his essence, though in his works of creation and providence; not immediately, though mediately in and through Christ; not perfectly now, though face to face hereafter. Moses saw him visionally, and symbolically in the bush; he saw him by faith, and with the eyes of his understanding; and so believing in his power, faithfulness, &c. did what he did.

Hebrews 11:28

Ver. 28. Through faith he kept the passover,.... Which Moses made, or appointed by divine direction; he kept it, with all its rites and ceremonies, and caused the people of Israel to observe it; and which he did, in faith of the speedy deliverance of the children of Israel, from the house of bondage; and in the faith of the Messiah, of whom the passover was a type; See Gill on "1Co 5:7". The Syriac version reads, "through faith they kept the passover"; that is, the Israelites:

and the sprinkling of blood; of the paschal lamb; which was received into a basin, and was sprinkled upon the lintel, and two side posts of the doors of the houses, in which the Israelites dwelt; which was done with a bunch of hyssop dipped into it:

lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them; for the Lord, seeing the blood sprinkled, as above, when he smote the firstborn of Egypt, passed by the houses of the Israelites, so distinguished; and they were all safe within, and not one of them touched: this was typical of the blood of Christ being sprinkled upon the hearts and consciences of his people; whereby they are purified through faith; which blood is looked upon by Jehovah, so that justice passes by them; and they are all safe and secure, and will be, when others are destroyed; nor can they be hurt by the second death.

Hebrews 11:29

Ver. 29. By faith they passed through the Red sea, as by dry land,.... Not through a river, but through the sea, the Red sea, the sea of Suph, or weeds; See Gill on "Ac 7:36". Some say they came out on the same side they went in; but it should seem rather, by the phrase here used, that they passed through it, from one side to the other; and that all one as if it had been on dry ground; even Moses, and all the children of Israel: and this they did by faith, believing, that God would make a passage quite through it for them, and deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, who were closely pursuing them:

which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned. These were Pharaoh, and his numerous army; who, observing the Israelites march on through the sea, as on dry land, thought they could do the same; and so made an attempt, but were everyone of them drowned; in just retaliation for the cruel edict for drowning the male infants of the Israelites, as soon as they were born.

Hebrews 11:30

Ver. 30. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down,.... Of themselves, not from any natural cause: the Jews say {n} they sunk right down into the ground, and were swallowed up; even the whole wall fell round about, as the Septuagint version in **Jos 6:20** expresses it: or, it may be, only that which was over against the camp of Israel, as Kimchi observes; since Rahab's house was built upon the wall, and yet fell not. And this was by the faith of Joshua, and the Israelites, who believed the walls would fall, at the sound of the rams' horns, as God said they should: after they were compassed about seven days; which was a trial of their faith and patience: the Jews say {o} it was on the sabbath day that they fell: this was a preternatural act, and cannot be ascribed to any second cause; nothing is impossible with God; no defences, ever so strong, are anything against him; unlikely means are sometimes made use of by him; faith stops at nothing, when it has the word of God to rest upon; and what God does, be does in his own time, and in his own way. This may be an emblem of the fall of the walls of the hearts of unregenerate men; of their unbelief, hardness, enmity, and vain confidence; and of the conversion and subjection of them unto Christ, through the preaching of the Gospel; which, in the eyes of men, is as mean and despicable, and as unlikely to bring about such an event, as the sounding of the rams' horns might be to the inhabitants of Jericho: and it may be also an emblem of the fall of Babylon, and other antichristian cities, Re 16:19.

{n} Targum Jon. Jarchi & Kimchi in Josh. vi. 5. {o} Jarchi & Kimchi in ver. 15.

Hebrews 11:31

Ver. 31. By faith the harlot Rahab,.... The Targum on **Jos 2:1** calls her atyqdnwp atta, "a woman, that kept a victualling house": this paraphrase is taken notice of by Jarchi and Kimchi on the place, who interpret it, "a seller of food": and even the Hebrew word hnwz, is so explained by a considerable Jewish writer {p}; and this may rather seem to be the sense of the word, and to be her proper business, from the spies going to her house, as being an house of entertainment; and from Salmon's marrying her, which might be thought strange that a prince of Israel would, had she been a person of ill fame; to which may be added, the encomiums of her for her faith and works, both by our apostle, and by James: but yet, the constant use of the word, in this form, the testimonies of two apostles, and her making no mention of her husband and children, when she agreed with the spies, confirm the generally received character of her, that she was an harlot. Some Jewish writers say {q} that she was ten years of age when the Israelites came out of Egypt; and that all the forty years they were in the wilderness,
htnz, "she played the harlot"; and was one and fifty years of age when she was proselyted. She is called an harlot; not with respect to her present, but past life. In the Greek text, she is here called Raab, as also in **Jas 2:25** and so in the Septuagint in **Jos 2:1**. Rachab, which exactly answers to the Hebrew word bxr, **Jos 2:1** and by Josephus {r} "Rachabe". This woman was a wonderful and singular instance of the free, sovereign, distinguishing, powerful, and efficacious grace of God; being one that sprung from Canaan, and was of the nations that were abhorred; but, being called by grace, became an eminent believer: she believed that the God of the Israelites was God in heaven and on earth; that he had given the land of Canaan to them; she received the spies, and hid them through that faith; she caused them to swear by the Lord, that they would show mercy to her, and her family; and gave credit to them; and observed their instructions: and so she

perished not with them that believed not; the inhabitants of Jericho, who were unbelievers, and disobedient, and all perished by the sword: but Rahab perished not, neither temporally, nor eternally; her temporal salvation was an emblem and type of her spiritual salvation; her receiving the spies was an emblem of a soul's receiving the Gospel, and the ministers of it; the scarlet thread, that was hung out, was an emblem of the blood of Christ, by which sins, though as scarlet, are made white as wool; and the saving of her whole family is an emblem of the complete salvation of all the elect, soul and body, by Christ:

when she had received the spies with peace; and had hid them, for some time, in her house, and then let them down by the wall; and who, at the taking of the city, saved her, and hers, according to their promise and oath: the number of these spies were two, according to **Jos 2:1**. The Jews {s} say one of them was Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the high priest; and others {t} of them say they were Phinehas and Caleb.

{p} R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 24. 1. {q} T. Bab. Zebachin. fol. 116. 2. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2. {r} Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 2. {s} Laniado in Josh. ii. 1. {t} Tanchuma apud Masum in ib.

Hebrews 11:32

Ver. 32. And what shall I more say,.... Intimating he had said enough to prove the definition of faith he had given; and that the elders, by it, had obtained a good report; and yet he had not said all he could; and that he had so much to say, that he could not say all:

for the time would fail me; either the time of life, and so it is an hyperbolical expression; or the time convenient for the writing this epistle; to enumerate all the instances of faith, and enlarge upon them, would take up too much of his time, and make the epistle prolix and tedious: this form of speech is often used by Philo the Jew {u}, and by Julian the emperor {w}. It may be observed, that many, who are not mentioned by name, do not stand excluded from being believers; and that the number of believers, under the Old Testament, was very large:

to tell of Gedeon; so Gideon is called in the Septuagint version of **Jud 6:11** and other places; and by Josephus {x}, and Philo {y} the Jew, as here: he was a man, but of a mean extract, and had his infirmities; and even in the exercise of that particular grace, for which he is mentioned; but was, no doubt, a good man, and is commended for his faith; which appeared in ascribing former mercies and present afflictions to the Lord; in destroying the altar of Baal; in crediting the word of the Lord, that Israel should be saved by him; which he showed by the preparation he made, and in marching against a numerous army, with only three hundred men, and they but weak: all which may be seen in the book of Judges, **Jud 6:1** and of Barak; who was before Gideon, as Jephthah was before Samson, and Samuel before David; for the apostle does not observe strict order, reciting these in haste. Barak, when the word of the Lord came to him, showed some diffidence, yet acted in obedience to it, under the sole direction and counsel of a woman; he engaged Sisera's vast army with a small number, and gave the glory of the victory to the Lord, **Jud 4:1**.

and of Samson: who was a child of promise, and devoted to the Lord; he was famous for his great strength; he had his infirmities, but was, without doubt, a good man: the last act of his life seems to be a great instance of faith; he did it with calling upon the Lord; he was strengthened for it by the Lord; he acted, not as a private person, but as the judge of Israel; nor did he act from private revenge, but from zeal for God, and love to his country; and his intention was not to destroy himself, but his enemies; in which he acted as a type of Christ:

and of Jephthah; the Syriac version calls him "Nepthe", and the Arabic version "Naphtah"; he was base born; and, for a time, joined himself to vain men, but became a believer; and is marked for his faith, in ascribing the conquests of Israel in the wilderness to the Lord; in fighting with the Ammonites, whom he conquered; and in his conscientiousness, in observing his vow, Jud 11:30.

of David also; a man after God's own heart, raised up to fulfil his will; whose faith appeared in his dependence on God, when he fought with Goliath; in encouraging himself in the Lord his God, when in exile and distress; and in believing his interest in the covenant of grace, when his house and family were in a disagreeable situation, and he just going out of the world:

and Samuel; a child of prayer, and early devoted to the Lord, who ministered to him, when a child; was always ready to hearken to his voice; was used very familiarly by him, and behaved with great uprightness, all his days; and had a good report of God and man:

and of the prophets; from Samuel to John the Baptist, who were famous for their trust in God, their faith in the Messiah, and for their honourable walk and conversation.

{u} De Creat. Princip. p. 735. Merced. Meret. p. 863. De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1037. De Somniis, p. 1116. {w} Orat l. p. 50, 62, 75. {x} Antiqu. Jud. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 2. &c. {y} De Confusione Ling. p. 339.

Hebrews 11:33

Ver. 33. Who through faith subdued kingdoms,.... As David did particularly; who subdued Syria, Moab, Ammon, Amalek, Edom, and the Philistines, 2Sa 8:12. War, in some cases, is lawful; and kingdoms may be subdued; and faith makes use of means to do it: these kingdoms, though subdued by faith, yet not without fighting. Believers have no reason to be afraid of kings, or kingdoms; and this should encourage the saints, in their combats with the powers of darkness.

Wrought righteousness; exercised vindictive justice, in taking vengeance on the enemies of God, and his people; civil righteousness, in the discharge of their offices; and moral righteousness, in their conversation before God and men; which, being imperfect, was not justifying: wherefore they stood in need of another, and better righteousness, which is perfect and durable; and, in consequence of which being known, embraced, and received, men work righteousness: it may be observed, that to do works of righteousness in faith, and by it, is something very considerable; it is reckoned here among actions of the greatest fame; and that true faith is an operative grace, it works by love, and is always attended with works of righteousness; and that righteousness is a fruit and evidence of faith; and that faith is not the believer's righteousness; and that the righteousness of faith is not that which faith works, but which it receives.

Obtained promises; the promise of the land of Canaan; particular promises of victory over their enemies; promises concerning the Messiah, and of everlasting life and happiness: their faith was not the cause of promises being made, nor of their being fulfilled; but was the grace by which these believers received them, believed them, and waited for the accomplishment of them; and, in some sense, enjoyed the things promised before hand; their faith realizing things future and invisible to them: to obtain a promise from God is a great and marvellous thing; it is an instance of rich grace; and there is never a promise, but what is great in itself, and precious to the saints: all God's promises are obtained; they are sure, and are certainly fulfilled; and it is the work and business of faith to receive, and enjoy them.

Stopped the mouths of lions: a lion was slain by Samson, and another by David; but the most remarkable instance of stopping the mouths of lions, was in the den, into which Daniel was cast; and this may encourage the faith of God's people, when they are in the midst of men, comparable to lions; and may animate them not to fear the devouring lion, Satan.

Hebrews 11:34

Ver. 34. Quenched the violence of fire,.... Which may be said to be done, when a believer, or a righteous man, is delivered out of it, as Lot from Sodom, when God rained fire and brimstone on it; when, by prayer, it is stopped, as by Moses, at Taberah, Nu 11:1 when persons are not hurt by it, as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, when cast into Nebuchadrezzar's fiery furnace; and many of the martyrs have triumphed in the flames: so believers are delivered out of the fire of afflictions, and are not consumed thereby; and quench the fiery darts of Satan, thrown at them; and are untouched by the fire of God's wrath, in every state and case; and shall not be hurt of the second death, which is a lake of fire, burning with brimstone.

Escaped the edge of the sword; and were not destroyed by it; as Lot, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, the Judges, David, Elijah, Elisha, and others.

Out of weakness were made strong; being recovered from bodily diseases, as David, Hezekiah, &c. by an increase of bodily strength, as Samson; by being filled with courage, and strength of mind; when before timorous, as Barak, &c. so believers, when they have been weak in the exercise of grace, have been made strong:

waxed valiant in fight; as Barak, Gideon, David, &c. so believers, in the spiritual fight of faith, have waxed valiant; being engaged in a good cause, and under a good Captain; being well provided with armour, and assured of victory, and a crown.

Turned to fight the armies of the aliens: such as the Canaanites, the Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and others; who were put to flight by Joshua, the Judges, David, and others.

Hebrews 11:35

Ver. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again,.... As the widow of Zarephath, and the Shunammite, 1Ki 17:22. Their sons were really dead, and they received them alive gain, from the hands of the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, in the way of a resurrection, and by faith; by the faith of the prophets:

and others were tortured; racked, or tympanized; referring to the sufferings of seven brethren, and their mother, in the times of Antiochus, recorded in 2 Maccabees 7 as appears from the kind of torment endured by them; from the offer of deliverance rejected by them; and from their hope of the resurrection: for it follows,

not accepting deliverance; when offered them by the king, see the Apocrypha:

"24 Now Antiochus, thinking himself despised, and suspecting it to be a reproachful speech, whilst the youngest was yet alive, did not only exhort him by words, but also assured him with oaths, that he would make him both a rich and a happy man, if he would turn from the laws of his fathers; and that also he would take him for his friend, and trust him with affairs. 25 But when the young man would in no case hearken unto him, the king called his mother, and exhorted her that she would counsel the young man to save his life." (2 Maccabees 7)

that they might obtain a better resurrection; which they died in the faith of, see the Apocryha:

"7 And him he sent with that wicked Alcimus, whom he made high priest, and commanded that he should take vengeance of the children of Israel. 11 And said courageously, These I had from heaven; and for his laws I despise them; and from him I hope to receive them again. 14 So when he was ready to die he said thus, It is good, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God to be raised up again by him: as for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection to life. (2 Maccabees)

The resurrection of the saints, which is unto everlasting life, is a better resurrection than mere metaphorical, and figurative ones, as deliverances from great afflictions, which are called deaths; or real ones, which were only to a mortal state, and in order to die again, as those under the Old Testament, and under the New, before the resurrection of Christ; or than the resurrection of the wicked: for the resurrection the saints will obtain will be first, at the beginning of the thousand years; the wicked will not live till after they are ended; it will be by virtue of union to Christ, whereas the wicked will be raised merely by virtue of his power; the saints will rise with bodies glorious, powerful, and spiritual, the wicked with base, vile, and ignoble ones; the righteous will come forth to the resurrection of life, the wicked to the resurrection of damnation. The consideration of the better resurrection is of great use to strengthen faith, under sufferings, for righteousness sake, and this is obtained by suffering; not that suffering is the meritorious cause of it, but saints in this way come to it; it is promised to such, and it will be attained unto, and enjoyed by such; for all that live godly, do, and must suffer persecution in one way or another.

Hebrews 11:36

Ver. 36. And others had trial of cruel mockings,.... As Samson by the Philistines; Elisha by the children, whom the bears devoured; Jeremiah by Pashur, and others; the Jews by Sanballat and Tobiah, when building the temple; the prophets, whom God sent to the Jews, as his messengers, Jud 16:25.

and scourgings; or smitings, as Jeremiah and Micaiah,
Jer 20:22.

yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment; as Joseph, Samson, and Jeremiah, Ge 39:20. Now of these things they had trial, or experience; their graces were tried by them, and they patiently endured them.

Hebrews 11:37

Ver. 37. They were stoned,.... As Naboth, by the order of Ahab,
1Ki 21:13, Zachariah in the court of the Lord's house;
2Ch 24:21 and the character of Jerusalem is, that she stoned the prophets that were sent unto her, Mt 23:37.

They were sawn asunder; to which there seems to be an allusion in
Mt 24:51. There is no instance of any good men being so used in Scripture: perhaps reference is had to some that suffered thus in the time of Antiochus. The Jews have a tradition, that the Prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder in the times of Manasseh, and by his order; which some think the apostle refers unto; though it seems to be all fictitious, and ill put together. The tradition is in both Talmuds: in the one, the account is this: {z} that

"Manasseh sought to kill Isaiah, and he fled from him, and fled to a cedar, and the cedar swallowed him up, all but the fringe of his garment; they came and told him (Manasseh), he said unto them, go and saw the cedar,
wronw, "and they sawed the cedar", and blood was seen to come out."

And in the other {a} thus,

"says R. Simeon ben Azzai, I found a book of genealogies in Jerusalem, and in it was written that Manasseh slew Isaiah."

And after relating the occasion of it, being some passages in Isaiah Manasseh was displeased with and objected to; and the prophet not thinking it worth his while to return an answer, or attempt to reconcile them with other passages, objected, knowing that the king would use him contemptuously; he is made to say,

"I will swallow (or put myself into) a cedar, they brought the cedar, wronw, "and sawed it asunder", and when it (the saw) came to his mouth, he expired."

Another Jewish writer {b} out of the Midrash, reports it thus;

"Manasseh sought to slay him, and Isaiah fled, and the Lord remembered him, and he was swallowed up in the middle of a tree; but there remained without the tree the fringe of his garment; and then Manasseh ordered the tree to be cut down, and Isaiah died."

And it is become a generally received opinion of the ancient Christian writers, that Isaiah was sawn asunder; as of Justin Martyr {c}, Origen {d}, Tertullian {e}, Lactantius {f}, Athanasius {g}, Hilary {h}, Cyril of Jerusalem {i}, Gregory Nyssene {k}, Jerom {l}, Isidorus Pelusiota {m}, Gregentius {n}, Procopius Gazaeus {o}, and others; but more persons seem to be designed:

were tempted; either by God, as Abraham, and Job; or by the devil, as all the saints are; or rather by cruel tyrants, to deny the faith, and renounce the worship of God, as Eleazar, and the seven brethren with their mother; at least some of them were, 2 Maccabees 6,7. Some think the true reading is eprhyhsan, "were burned"; as one of the seven brethren were in the Apocrytha,

"Now when he was thus maimed in all his members, he commanded him being yet alive to be brought to the fire, and to be fried in the pan: and as the vapour of the pan was for a good space dispersed, they exhorted one another with the mother to die manfully, saying thus," (2 Maccabees 7:5)

and as Zedekiah and Ahab were roasted in the fire, by the king of Babylon, Jer 29:22 though they were lying prophets, and cannot be referred to here; see Da 11:33. This clause is wanting in the Syriac version:

were slain with the sword; as the priests at Nob, by the order of Saul; 1Sa 22:18. The prophets of the Lord by Jezebel,
1Ki 18:22 and many in the times of the Maccabees;
Da 11:33 and in the Apocrypha:

"And there were destroyed within the space of three whole days fourscore thousand, whereof forty thousand were slain in the conflict; and no fewer sold than slain." (2 Maccabees 5:14)

they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; with the wool or hair upon them; and with such Elijah and Elisha might be arrayed; since the former is said to be a hairy man, or covered with a hairy garment, as John the Baptist was, who came in his spirit and power, and also in his form; and the latter, wore the mantle of the other; **2Ki 1:8** and to these reference may be had, who were obliged to wander about, because of those who sought their lives; and was the case of others who were forced, by reason of persecution, to quit their habitations, and wander abroad; and some clothed themselves in this manner, to show their contempt of the world, and their contentment with mean apparel; and others, because they could get no other raiment:

[being] destitute; of bodily food, as Elijah, who was fed by ravens, and by the widow of Zarephath; 1Ki 17:6,

afflicted; pressed, drove to the greatest straits, despairing of, life, and weary of it, as the same prophet, 1Ki 19:4,

tormented; or evilly treated, reproached, vilified, persecuted, and made the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things.

{z} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 28. 3. {a} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 49. 2. {b} Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 12. 2. {c} Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 249. {d} In Jer. Homil. 19. p. 197. in lsa. Homil. 1. fol. 101. & in Matt. Homil. 26. fol. 51. {e} De Patientia, c. 14. Scorpiace, c. 8. {f} De vera sapientia, l. 4. c. 11. {g} Vol. I. de Incarnat. p. 55, 65. Vol. II. dicta & Interpret. Parab. p. 325, 353. {h} Contr. Constant, p. 199. & enarrat. in Psal. cxviii. p. 465. {i} Cateches. 2. sect. 9. p. 29. & Cateches. 13. sect. 3. p. 169. {k} Vol. II. de Castigat. p. 749. {l} In Isa. lvii. 2. {m} L. 4. Ep. 205. {n} Disputat. cum Herbano Judaeo, p. 19. {o} In Reg. l. 4. c. 21. 16.

Hebrews 11:38

Ver. 38. Of whom the world was not worthy,.... These words are inserted in a parenthesis, to remove or prevent such objections as these; that they were restless and unquiet persons, that made disturbance in the world, and so unfit to live in it; and that they were deservedly punished for crimes they were guilty of; and to show the great worth and inestimable value of the people of God, which exceeds that of the whole world; and to intimate the removal of them out of the world, or from dwelling among the men of it, is by way of punishment to it:

they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth; as Elijah did; 1Ki 18:4, and many in the times of the Maccabees;

"And they kept the eight days with gladness, as in the feast of the tabernacles, remembering that not long afore they had held the feast of the tabernacles, when as they wandered in the mountains and dens like beasts." (2 Maccabees 10:6)

Hebrews 11:39

Ver. 39. And these all having obtained a good report through faith,.... This may either be limited to the sufferers in the preceding verses, who were martyred, or suffered martyrdom for the faith, as the words may be rendered; and who are called martyrs or witnesses, in Heb 12:1 and so the Ethiopic version renders the clause, "and all these were witnesses concerning the faith": or it may be extended to all the instances of faith throughout the chapter; and so the apostle reasserts what he had said, Heb 11:2, having proved it by a variety of examples; See Gill on "Heb 11:2".

received not the promise; not that they did not receive the promise of the land of Canaan, for so did Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, &c. nor that they did not receive the promise of deliverance and victory, for so did Joshua, the Judges, and others; or that they did not receive the promise of eternal life, for that they all did; but the promise of the Messiah, that is, the Messiah promised: for they had the promise, but not the thing; who is called "the Promise", emphatically, because he is the first and grand promise; and because in him all the promises centre, and are yea, and amen: him the Old Testament saints received not; they, greatly desired to see him in the flesh; they saw him by faith; they believed in him, and rejoiced in the expectation of his coming; but he was not exhibited to them incarnate. Now since these saints so strongly believed, and so cheerfully suffered before Christ came; the apostle's argument is, that much more should the saints now, since Christ is come, and the promises received, go on believing in him, and readily suffering for his sake; see Heb 12:1.

Hebrews 11:40

Ver. 40. God having provided some better thing for us,.... Not a better state of the church, in such respect, as to be free from suffering reproach and persecutions; for this is the case of saints under the New Testament as under the Old; nor the felicity of the soul after death; nor any greater degree of happiness in the other world; nor the perfection of blessedness in soul and body; things common to all believers; but Christ, as now exhibited in the flesh: Jesus Christ was the same in the yesterday of the Old Testament, as he is in the present day of the Gospel dispensation; he was slain from the foundation of the world; and the saints then were saved as now, by his grace and righteousness: only with this difference between them and us; they had Christ in the promise, we have him himself that was promised; they had him in type and shadow, we have him in reality and truth; they believed in, and were saved by Christ, who was to come; we believe in him, and are saved by him, as being come. Hence our case is, with respect to these circumstances, better than theirs; we have a better covenant, or a better administration of the covenant of grace; we have a better priesthood, and a better sacrifice; the Gospel is dispensed in a better manner, more dearly and fully: our condition is better than theirs; they were as children under tutors and governors, and were under a spirit of bondage; but we are redeemed from under the law, and are clear of its burdensome rites, as well as of its curse and condemnation; and have the spirit of liberty and adoption. And this God has provided for us in his council and covenant: for this denotes God's determination, designation, and appointment of Christ, to be the propitiatory sacrifice for sin; and has respect to the nature and circumstances of his death, which were fixed in the purposes of God; as well as the time of his coming into the world, and the season of his death; and in all this God has shown his great goodness, his amazing love, and the riches of his grace: and his end herein is,

that they without us should not be made perfect; the Old Testament saints are perfectly justified, perfectly sanctified, and perfectly glorified; but their perfection was not by the law, which made nothing perfect, but by Christ, and through his sacrifice, blood, and righteousness; and so were not made perfect without us; since their sins and ours are expiated together by the same sacrifice; their persons and ours justified together by the same righteousness; they and we make up but one church, and general assembly; and as yet all the elect of God among the Jews are not called, and so are not perfect in themselves, or without us. Jews and Gentiles will incorporate together in the latter day; and besides, they and we shall be glorified together, in soul and body, to all eternity.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hebrews 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 12

In this chapter the apostle presses to a constant exercise of faith and patience, amidst the various afflictions the saints are exercised with; delivers out several exhortations useful in the Christian life; and shows the difference between the legal and Gospel dispensations. Having in the preceding chapter given many illustrious instances and examples of faith, he makes use of this cloud of witnesses, as he calls them, to engage the Hebrews to drop their unbelief, and run with faith and patience the race set before them, Heb 12:1, and which he further urges from the example of Christ; from his concern in faith, being the author and finisher of it; from what he suffered when here on earth, both the contradiction of sinners, and the death of the cross, for the joy of having his people with him in heaven; and from his glorious state, being set down at the right hand of God. Whereas, as yet, they had not been called to shed their blood in their warfare against sin, Heb 12:2. And that they must expect chastisement, and should bear it patiently, he cites a passage of Scripture out of **Pr 3:11** which suggests, that those who are the children of God, and are loved and received by him, are chastened and scourged, Heb 12:5. Wherefore this was no other than dealing with them as children; and should they not be thus dealt with, it would be an argument that they were bastards, and not sons, Heb 12:7. And next the apostle argues from the right of parents to chastise their children, and the subjection that is yielded to them; that if the corrections of them, who were the fathers of their bodies, were quietly submitted to; then much more should those of the Father of their souls; and the rather, since the chastenings of the former are only for temporal good, and according to their fallible judgments; whereas the latter are for spiritual profit, and an increase of holiness, Heb 12:9. And though it must be allowed, that no chastening, for the present time, is matter of joy, but of grief; yet the effects of them are the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to them that are exercised by them,

Heb 12:11. Wherefore the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews to encourage themselves and others under afflictions; and to behave in such manner, and carry it so evenly, that they might not be an occasion of stumbling to weak believers, Heb 12:12. He exhorts them in general to follow peace with all men, and particularly holiness; which is absolutely necessary to the beatific vision of God, Heb 12:14, and to take care that no heresy or immorality spring up among them, and be connived at, and cherished by them, to the troubling of some, and defiling of others,
Heb 12:15, and particularly, lest the sin of uncleanness, or any sort of profaneness, should be found among them; of which Esau, the brother of Jacob, from whence they sprung, was guilty; whose profaneness lay in selling his birthright for a morsel of meat, and whose punishment was, that he should be deprived of the blessing; which decree was irrevocable, notwithstanding his tears,
Heb 12:16 and to enforce these exhortations, the apostle observes to these believers, that they were not now under the law, but in a Gospel church state. The terror of the legal dispensation they were delivered from is described by the place where the law was given, a mount burning with fire; by circumstances attending it, blackness, darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet; by the matter of it, a voice of words, which they that heard, entreated they might hear no more; and by the effect the whole had upon. Moses himself, who quaked and trembled at what he saw and heard, Heb 12:18. The happiness of the Gospel dispensation, or of the Gospel church state, is expressed by the names of it, called Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the new Jerusalem; and by the company the saints have there, and their fellowship with them; angels innumerable; elect men, whose names are written in heaven, and whose spirits are made perfectly just; God the Judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant; whose blood being sprinkled on their consciences, spoke peace and pardon to them; such as neither Abel's blood nor sacrifice could speak, Heb 12:22. From whence the apostle argues, that care should be taken not to neglect and despise the voice of Christ, who is now in heaven, and speaks from thence in his Gospel and ordinances; seeing they escaped not who rejected him that spoke on earth, at Mount Sinai, which was shaken by his voice; and the rather, since it appears from a prophecy in **Hag 2:6**, that under the Gospel dispensation, not only the earth but the heavens would he shaken, Heb 12:25 which is an emblem of the shaking and removing the ordinances of the ceremonial law, that Gospel ordinances might take place, and remain for ever,
Heb 12:27. Upon the whole, the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews, that seeing they had received the immovable kingdom of grace, and were admitted into the Gospel dispensation, or church state; that they would hold fast the

Gospel of the grace of God, and serve the Lord, according to his revealed will, with reverence and godly fear, which would be acceptable to him; or otherwise he would be a consuming fire; as he is to all the despisers and neglecters of his Gospel and ordinances, Heb 12:28.

Ver. 1. Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about,...., As the Israelites were encompassed with the pillar of cloud, or with the clouds of glory in the wilderness, as the Jews say; See Gill on "1Co 10:1", to which there may be an allusion, here, since it follows,

with so great a cloud of witnesses; or "martyrs", as the Old Testament saints, the instances of whose faith and patience are produced in the preceding chapter: these, some of them, were martyrs in the sense in which that word is commonly used; they suffered in the cause, and for the sake of true religion; and they all bore a noble testimony of God, and for him; and they received a testimony from him; and will be hereafter witnesses for, or against us, to whom they are examples of the above graces: and these may be compared to a "cloud", for the comfortable and reviving doctrines which they dropped; and for their refreshing examples in the heat of persecution; and for their guidance and direction in the ways of God; and more especially for their number, being like a thick cloud, and so many, that they compass about on every side, and are instructive every way. Hence the following things are inferred and urged,

let us lay aside every weight; or burden; every sin, which is a weight and burden to a sensible sinner, and is an hinderance in running the Christian race; not only indwelling sin, but every actual transgression, and therefore to be laid aside; as a burden, it should be laid on Christ; as a sin, it should be abstained from, and put off, with respect to the former conversation: also worldly cares, riches, and honours, when immoderately pursued, are a weight depressing the mind to the earth, and a great hinderance in the work and service of God, and therefore to be laid aside; not that they are to be entirely rejected, and not cared for and used, but the heart should not be set upon them, or be over anxious about them: likewise the rites and ceremonies of Moses's law were a weight and burden, a yoke of bondage, and an intolerable one, and with which many believing Jews were entangled and pressed, and which were a great hinderance in the performance of evangelical worship; wherefore the exhortation to these Hebrews, to lay them aside, was very proper and pertinent, since they were useless and incommodious, and there had been a disannulling of them by Christ, because of their weakness and unprofitableness. Some observe, that the word here used signifies a tumour or swelling; and so may design the tumour of pride and vain glory, in outward privileges, and in a man's own righteousness, to which the Hebrews were much inclined; and which appears in an unwillingness to stoop to the cross, and bear afflictions for the sake of the Gospel; all which is a great enemy to powerful godliness, and therefore should be brought down, and laid aside. The Arabic version renders it, "every weight of luxury": all luxurious living, being prejudicial to real religion:

and the sin which doth so easily beset us; the Arabic version renders it, "easy to be committed"; meaning either the corruption of nature in general, which is always present, and puts upon doing evil, and hinders all the good it can; or rather some particular sin, as what is commonly called a man's constitution sin, or what he is most inclined to, and is most easily drawn into the commission of; or it may be the sin of unbelief is intended, that being opposite to the grace of faith, the apostle had been commending, in the preceding chapter, and he here exhorts to; and is a sin which easily insinuates itself, and prevails, and that sometimes under the notion of a virtue, as if it would be immodest, or presumptuous to believe; the arguments for it are apt to be readily and quickly embraced; but as every weight, so every sin may be designed: some reference may be had to **La 1:14** where the church says, that her transgressions were "wreathed", wgrtvy, "wreathed themselves", or wrapped themselves about her. The allusion seems to be to runners in a race, who throw off everything that encumbers, drop whatsoever is ponderous and weighty, run in light garments, and lay aside long ones, which entangle and hinder in running, as appears from the next clause, or inference.

And let us run with patience the race that is set before us. The stadium, or race plot, in which the Christian race is run, is this world; the prize run for is the heavenly glory; the mark to direct in it, is Christ; many are the runners, yet none but the overcomers have the prize; which being held by Christ, is given to them: this race is "set before" the saints; that is, by God; the way in which they are to run is marked out by him in his word; the troubles they shall meet with in it are appointed for them by him, in his counsels and purposes; the mark to direct them is set before them in the Gospel, even Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, whom they are to look unto; the length of their race is fixed for them, or how far, and how long they shall run; and the prize is determined for them, and will be given them, and which is held out for their encouragement, to have respect unto: and it becomes all the saints, and belongs to each, and everyone of them, to "run" this race; which includes both doing and suffering for Christ; it is a motion forward, a pressing towards the mark for the prize, a going from strength to strength, from one degree of grace to another; and to it swiftness and agility are necessary; and when it is performed aright, it is with readiness, willingness, and cheerfulness: it requires strength and courage, and a removal of all impediments, and should be done "with patience"; which is very necessary, because of the many exercises in the way; and because of the length of the race; and on account of the prize to be enjoyed, which is very desirable: the examples of the saints, and especially Christ, the forerunner, should move and animate unto it.

Hebrews 12:2

Ver. 2. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,.... Not with bodily eyes, for at present he is not to be looked upon in this manner, but with the eye of the understanding, or with the eye of faith; for faith is a seeing of the Son; it is a spiritual sight of Christ, which is at first but glimmering, afterwards it increases, and is of a soul humbling nature; it is marvellous and surprising; it transforms into the image of Christ, and fills with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: a believer should be always looking to Christ, and off of every object, as the word here used signifies. Christ is to be looked unto as "Jesus", a Saviour, who being appointed and sent by God to be a Saviour, came, and is become the author of eternal salvation; and to him only should we look for it: he is able and willing to save; he is a suitable, complete, and only Saviour; and whoever look to him by faith shall be saved; and he is to be considered, and looked unto, as "the author and finisher of faith": he is the author or efficient cause of it; all men are by nature without it; it is not in the power of man to believe of himself; it is a work of omnipotence; it is an instance of the exceeding greatness of the power of God; and it is the operation of Christ, by his Spirit; and the increase of it is from him, Lu 17:5 and he is the finisher of it; he gives himself, and the blessings of his grace, to his people, to maintain and strengthen it; he prays for it, that it fail not; he carries on the work of faith, and will perform it with power; and brings to, and gives that which is the end of it, eternal life, or the salvation of the soul.

Who for the joy that was set before him; the word anti, rendered "for"; sometimes signifies, in the room, or stead of, as in **Mt 2:22** and is so rendered here in the Syriac and Arabic versions; and then the sense is, that Christ instead of being in the bosom of the Father, came into this world; instead of being in the form of God, he appeared in the form of a servant; instead of the glory which he had with his Father from eternity, he suffered shame and disgrace; instead of living a joyful and comfortable life on earth, he suffered a shameful and an accursed death; and instead of the temporal joy and glory the Jews proposed to him, he endured the shame and pain of the cross: sometimes it signifies the end for which a thing is, as in **Eph 5:31** and may intend that, for the sake of which Christ underwent so much disgrace, and such sufferings; namely, for the sake of having a spiritual seed, a numerous offspring with him in heaven, who are his joy, and crown of rejoicing; for the sake of the salvation of all the elect, on which his heart was set; and for the glorifying of the divine perfections, which was no small delight and pleasure to him. And to this agrees the Chaldee paraphrase of Ps 21:1.

"O Lord, in thy power shall the King Messiah ydxy, "rejoice", and in thy redemption how greatly will he exult!"

And also because of his own glory as Mediator, which was to follow his sufferings, and which includes his resurrection from the dead, his exaltation at the right hand of God, and the whole honour and glory Christ has in his human nature; see Ps 16:8 and with a view to all this, he endured the cross; which is to be taken not properly for that frame of wood, on which he was crucified; but, improperly, for all his sufferings, from his cradle to his cross; and particularly the tortures of the cross, being extended on it, and nailed unto it; and especially the death of the cross, which kind of death he endured to verify the predictions of it,
Ps 22:16 and to show that he was made a curse for his people; and this being a Roman punishment, shows that the sceptre was taken from Judah, and therefore the Messiah must be come; and that Christ suffered for the Gentiles, as well as Jews: and this death he endured with great courage and intrepidity, with much patience and constancy, and in obedience to the will of his Father: despising the shame; of the cross; for it was an ignominious death, as well as a painful one; and as he endured the pain of it with patience, he treated the shame of it with contempt; throughout the whole of his life, he despised the shame and reproach that was cast upon him; and so he did at the time of his apprehension, and when upon his trial, and at his death, under all the ignominious circumstances that attended it; which should teach us not to be ashamed of the reproach of Christ, but count it an honour to be worthy to suffer shame for his name.

And is set down at the right hand of the throne of God; Which is in heaven; and is expressive of the majesty and glory of God; and of the honour done to Christ in human nature, which is not granted to any of the angels: here Christ sits as God's fellow, as equal to him, as God, and as having done his work as man, and Mediator; and this may assure us, that when we have run out our race, we shall sit down too, with Christ upon his throne, and be at rest.

Hebrews 12:3

Ver. 3. For consider him,.... In the greatness of his person, as God, the Son of God, the heir of all things; and in his offices of prophet, priest, and King, as the Saviour of lost sinners, the Leader and Commander of the people, as the apostle and high priest of our profession: consider him in his human nature, his conversation on earth, and what he did and suffered for men; how that in his nature he was pure and holy, in his conversation harmless and innocent, in his deportment meek and lowly; who went about doing good to the souls of men, and at last suffered and died, and is now glorified: consider the analogy between him and us, and how great is the disproportion; and therefore if he was ill treated, no wonder we should consider him under all his reproaches and sufferings:

that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself; against his person, they denying his deity, and speaking against his sonship, and against his offices; mocking him as a King, deriding him as a prophet, and treating him with the utmost contempt as a priest and Saviour; and against his actions, his works of mercy to the bodies of men, when done on the sabbath day; his conversing with sinners for the good of their souls, as if he was an encourager of them in sin, and a partner with them; his miracles, as if they were done by the help of the devil; and against the whole series of his life, as if it was criminal. Now we should analogize this contradiction, and see what proportion there is between this, and what is endured by us: we should consider the aggravations of it, that it was "against himself"; sometimes it was against his disciples, and him through them, as it is now against his members, and him in them; but here it was immediately and directly against himself: and this he endured "from sinners"; some more secret, as the Scribes, Sadducees, and Pharisees; some more open, as the common people; some of them the vilest of sinners, the most abandoned of creatures, as the Roman soldiers, and Herod's men of war: and this should be considered, that we cannot be contradicted by viler or meaner persons; and it is worthy of notice, with what courage and bravery of mind, with what patience and invincible constancy he endured it: this should be recollected for imitation and encouragement,

lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds; contradiction is apt to make persons weary and faint, as Rebekah was, because of the daughters of Heth, and as Jeremiah was, because of the derision of the Jews, Ge 27:46 but a consideration of Jesus, and of what he has endured, tends to relieve the saints in such a condition; See Mt 10:25.

Hebrews 12:4

Ver. 4. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood,.... They had resisted sin, and Satan, and the world, the men of it, and the lusts of it, and its frowns and flatteries, and also false teachers, even every adversary of Christ, and their souls; but they had not, as yet, resisted unto blood, or to the shedding of their blood, as some of the Old Testament saints had done; as some in the times of the Maccabees, and as James the apostle of Christ, and as Christ himself: wherefore the apostle suggests, that they ought to consider, that they had been indulged; and what they had been engaged in, were only some light skirmishes; and that they must expect to suffer as long as they were in the world, and had blood in them; and that their blood, when called for, should be spilled for the sake of Christ:

striving against sin; which is the principal antagonist the believer has, and is here particular pointed out: sin is here, by some, thought to be put for sinful men; or it may design the sin of those men, who solicited the saints to a defection from the truth; or the sin of apostasy itself; or that of unbelief; or rather indwelling sin, and the lusts of the flesh, which war against the soul. Now this is said, to sharpen and increase the saints resentment and indignation against it, as being their antagonist, with whom they strive and combat, and which is the cause of all the evils in the world, exposes to wrath to come, and separates from communion with God; and to encourage them to bear their sufferings patiently, since they are not without sin, as Christ was; and since their afflictions and sufferings are for the subduing of sin, and the increase of holiness.

Hebrews 12:5

Ver. 5. And ye have forgotten the exhortation,.... Or consolation, the consolatory word or doctrine, in **Pr 3:11**. This, by their conduct, the apostle feared they had forgotten, and therefore puts them in mind of it; or it may be read by way of question, "and have ye forgotten?", &c. do not ye remember? it would be right to call it to mind:

which speaketh unto you as unto children; not as the children of Solomon, but as the children of God, or of Christ, the wisdom of God: here, by a prosopopeia, the word of exhortation is introduced as a person speaking, my son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord; by which is meant, not vindictive punishment; this would not be speaking to them, nor dealing with them as children, and would be contrary to the love of God towards them; besides, chastisement in this sense has been upon Christ for them, and it would be unjust to lay it on them again; but a fatherly correction is designed, and which is given in love by God, as a Father, and for the instruction of his children, as the word used signifies: and it is called not the chastening of men, but of the Lord; every chastening, or afflictive providence, is appointed by God, and is looked upon by believers, when grace is in exercise, as coming from him; and it is directed, and governed, and limited by him, and is overruled by him for his own glory, and their good: and this is not to be despised, as something nauseous and loathsome, or as not useful and unprofitable, or as insignificant and unworthy of notice, but should be esteemed for the good ends, which are sometimes answered, by it:

nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; God has various ways of rebuking, reproving, and convincing, sometimes by his Spirit, sometimes by his word and ministers, and sometimes by afflictive providences; by these he rebukes his people for their sins, convinces them of them, and brings them to acknowledgment and confession; he makes them hereby sensible of their duty, in which they have been remiss, and brings them to a more constant and fervent discharge of it; he reproves them for, and convinces of their folly in trusting in the creature, or loving it too much, and of every wrong way they have been walking in; and these rebukes are not in a way of wrath, but love, and therefore saints should not faint at them: there are two extremes they are apt to run into, under such a dispensation; either to take no notice, and make light of an affliction, or else to be overwhelmed by it, and sink under it; both are guarded against in this exhortation.

Hebrews 12:6

Ver. 6. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,.... All men are not the objects of God's love, only a special people, whom he has chosen in Christ; for whom he has given his Son, when they were sinners and enemies; whom he quickens and calls by his grace, justifies, pardons, and accepts in Christ; and whom he causes to love him; these he loves with an everlasting and unchangeable love, and in a free and sovereign way, without any regard to any motive or condition in them. Now these are chastened by him, and loved while they are chastened; their chastening is in love, as appears from the nature of God's love to them, which changes not; from the nature of chastening itself; which is that of a father; from the divine supports granted under it; from the ends of it, which are, among others, that they might be more and more partakers of holiness, and not be condemned with the world; and from the issue of it, which is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. So the Jews {p} often speak of hbha lv Nyrwoy, "chastisements of love", in distinction from evil "chastisement", or vindictive ones:

and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth; by whom are meant, not any of the angels, nor all the sons of men, but such whom God has predestinated to the adoption of children, and in the covenant of his grace has declared himself a father to; for whom Christ has a special regard, as children, and therefore partook of human nature, and died to gather them together, and redeemed them, that they might receive the adoption of children; and who appear to be the children of God by faith in Christ; and who have the spirit of adoption, witnessing their sonship to them; this is a valuable blessing of grace, and springs from love: and such are received by God into his heart's love and affection, with complacency and delight; and into the covenant of his grace, to share all the blessings and promises of it; and into his family, to enjoy all the privileges of his house, and into communion with himself; and they will be hereafter received by him into glory: now these he scourges; he suffers them sometimes to be scourged by men, and to be buffeted by Satan; and sometimes he scourges them himself with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men, but always in love.

{p} Zohar in Gen. fol. 39. 3. & 102. 4. & in Exod. fol. 98. 2. & 102. 2. & in Lev. fol. 19. 3.

Hebrews 12:7

Ver. 7. If ye endure chastening,.... In faith, with patience, with courage and constancy, with humility and reverence: there are many things which may encourage and animate the saints to endure it in such a manner; as that it is but a chastening, and the chastening of a father; it should be considered from whence it comes, and for what ends; that it comes from the Lord, and is for his glory, and their good; the example of Christ, and of other saints, should excite unto it. The Jews have a saying {q}, that

"the doctrine of chastisements is silence;"

that is, they are to be patiently bore, and not murmured at. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read the words as an exhortation; the former of these renders it, "persevere in discipline"; the Syriac version, "endure correction"; the Arabic version, "be ye patient in chastisement"; and the Ethiopic version, "endure your chastening": but then the word, "for", should be supplied in the next clause, as it is in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, making that to be a reason, enforcing this,

for God dealeth with you as with sons: chastening is owning of them for his children, and it discovers them to be so, and shows that they continue such; he does not chasten them but when it is necessary; and whenever he does, it is in love and mercy, and for good, and in the best time, seasonably, and in measure:

for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? no one can be named, not the Son of God himself; he had the chastisement of our peace upon him; nor the more eminent among the children of God, as Abraham, David, and others; nor any in any catalogue, or list of them, such as in the preceding chapter; not one in any age or period of time whatever, in any bodies, societies, or communities of them, either under the Old or New Testament.

{q} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 62. 1.

Hebrews 12:8

Ver. 8. But if ye be without chastisement,.... Or have no affliction:

whereof all are partakers; that is, all the children of God; they are all alike children; they are all in a state of imperfection, and prone to sin; God has an impartial respect unto them: and though they are not all alike chastened, nor chastened at all times, yet none are exempted from chastisement, but have it in some way or another, and at some time or another.

Then are ye bastards, and not sons; all are not sons that are under a profession of religion; all that are under a profession of religion are not chastised; but then those are not the children of God, but the children of the world, of Satan, and of the antichristian harlot; for though all that are chastised are not children, yet all that are children are chastised: hence we learn, that outward peace and prosperity is not a note of a true church; and that such have reason to distrust their state, who know not what it is to have the chastising rod of God upon them; and that afflictions are rather arguments for than against sonship.

Hebrews 12:9

Ver. 9. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh,.... Earthly parents; who are so called, because they are the immediate causes and instruments of the generation of their children, and of their fleshly bodies and worldly beings; and to distinguish them from the Father of spirits: and this shows, that they have not the spirit or soul from them, only the flesh or body, and which is frail and corrupt; and therefore goes by this name.

Which corrected us; early, and at proper seasons, in love, and for instruction, and to prevent ruin, and death:

and we gave them reverence; by submitting to their correction, and hearkening to it; by taking shame to themselves, and acknowledging the offence committed; by retaining the same affection for them; and, by a carefulness not to offend for the future.

Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? that is, to God, who is so called; not because he is the Creator of angels, who are spirits; but because he is the Creator of the souls of men; the soul is the more noble and excellent part of man: it bears a resemblance to God; it is, the life of man, and is immortal; it is exceeding precious, and the redemption of it; this was at first immediately created by God; and he still continues to create souls, which he preserves in their being, and has the power of saving and destroying them. Besides, God may be so called, because he is the author and donor of all spiritual gifts, and particularly of regenerating grace; it is he who renews a right spirit in them, and puts a new spirit into them: now such ought to be in "subjection" to him; not only as creatures to a Creator, and as subjects to their prince: but as children to a father, and particularly to him, as and when correcting; they should bow to his sovereignty, resign to his will, be humble under his mighty hand, be still and quiet, and bear all patiently; the advantage arising from such a subjection is life: "and live"; or "that ye may live"; or "and ye shall live": more comfortably, and more to the glory of God, in communion and fellowship with him here, and in heaven to all eternity.

Hebrews 12:10

Ver. 10. For they verily for a few days chastened us,.... Which respects not the minority of children, during which time they are under the correction of parents, and which is but a few days; nor the short life of parents; but rather the end which parents have in chastening their children, which is their temporal good, and which lasts but for a few days; which sense the opposition in the latter part of the text requires: and this they do

after their own pleasure: not to please and delight themselves in the pains and cries of their children, which would be brutish and inhuman; though corrections are too often given to gratify the passions; nor merely in an arbitrary way, and when they please; but the sense is, they correct as seems good unto them; in the best way and manner; to the best of their judgments, which are fallible:

but he for our profit; saints are no losers by afflictions; they lose nothing but their dross and tin; they do not lose the love of God; nor their interest in the covenant of grace; nor the presence of God; nor grace in their own hearts; nor spiritual peace and comfort: on the contrary, they are real gainers by them; their graces gain by them fresh lustre and glory; they obtain a greater degree of spiritual knowledge; and a larger stock of experience; and are hereby restored to their former state, duty, and zeal; and become more conformable to Christ; yea, their afflictions conduce to their future glory; many are the profits arising from them. The Alexandrian copy reads in the plural number, "profits": particularly God's end in chastening of his children is,

that we might be partakers of his holiness; not the essential holiness of God, which is incommunicable; but a communicative holiness of his, which it is his determining will his people should have: it comes from him, from whom every good and perfect gift does; it is in Christ for them, and is received out of his fulness; and is wrought in them by the Spirit; and it bears a resemblance to the divine nature: now men are naturally destitute of this holiness; they have it not by nature, but by participation; as God's gift; and they first partake of it in regeneration; and here an increase of it is designed, a gradual participation of it; and it may include perfect holiness in heaven: afflictions are designed as means to bring persons to this end; to bring them to a sense of sin, an acknowledgment of it, an aversion to it, and to a view of pardon of it; to purge it away; to wean the saints from this world; to increase their grace, and lead them on to a perfect state of glory, where there will be no more sin, and no more sorrow.

Hebrews 12:11

Ver. 11. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous,.... These words anticipate an objection, taken from the grief and sorrow that comes by afflictions; and therefore how should they be for profit and advantage? The apostle answers, by granting that no affliction "seemeth" to be joyous, in outward appearance to flesh and blood, and according to the judgment of carnal sense and reason; in this view of afflictions, it must be owned, they do not appear to be matter, cause, or occasion of joy; though they really are, when viewed by faith, and judged of by sanctified reason; for they are tokens of the love of God and Christ; are evidences of sonship; and work together either for the temporal, or spiritual, or eternal good of the saints: and so likewise indeed "for the present time", either while under them, or in the present state of things, they seem so; but hereafter, either now when they are over; or however in the world to come, when the grace, goodness, wisdom, and power of God in them, in supporting under them, bringing out of them, and the blessed effects, and fruits of them, will be discerned, they will be looked upon with pleasure: but for the present, and when carnal sense and reason prevail, it must be allowed, that they are not matter of joy,

but grievous; or matter, cause, and occasion of grief; they cause pain and grief to the afflicted, and to their friends and relations about them; and especially, they are very grieving, and occasion heaviness, and are grievous to be borne, when soul troubles attend them; when God hides his face, and the soul is filled with a sense of wrath, looking upon the chastening, as being in wrath and hot displeasure; when Satan is let loose, and casts his fiery darts thick and fast; and when the soul has lost its views of interest in the love of God, and in the grace of Christ, and in eternal glory and happiness.

Nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby: who are used unto afflictions; "trained" up and instructed in the school of afflictions, as the word may signify; in which many useful lessons of faith and hope, patience and experience, humility, self-denial; and resignation of will, are learned: and to such afflictions yield "the fruit of peace"; external peace and prosperity sometimes follow upon them; and oftentimes internal peace is enjoyed in them; and they always issue to such in eternal peace and everlasting happiness; and this peace arises from the "righteousness" of Christ, laid hold upon by faith, which produces a true conscience peace, and entitles to that everlasting joy and rest which remains for the people of God. Moreover, the fruit of holiness may be designed, which saints by afflictions are made partakers of, and the peace enjoyed in that; for there is a peace, which though it does not spring from, yet is found in the ways of righteousness; and though this peace may not be had for the present, or while the affliction lasts, yet it is experienced "afterwards"; either after the affliction is over in the present life, or however in eternity, when the saints enter into peace; for the end of such dispensations, and of the persons exercised by them, is peace,

Hebrews 12:12

Ver. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down,.... These words may be considered as spoken to the Hebrews, with respect to themselves; accordingly, the Syriac version reads, "your hands", and "your knees"; who were sluggish, and inactive in prayer, in hearing the word, in attendance on ordinances, in holding fast their profession, and in the performance of those things which adorn it; they were weary and fatigued with weights and burdens of sins and afflictions; and were faint, fearful, and timorous, through distrust of the promised good, because of their persecutions, being in present distress, and in a view of approaching danger, with which they might be surprised, as well as affected with their present afflictions: and then the exhortation to "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees", is to be active in every duty; to be courageous against every enemy: to bear patiently every burden; to take heart, and be of good cheer under every afflictive providence: or else they may be considered as an exhortation to them with respect to others, which seems to be most agreeable to
Isa 35:3 from whence they are taken; and then what is signified in them is done by sympathizing with persons in distress; by speaking comfortably to them, and by bearing their burdens.

Hebrews 12:13

Ver. 13. And make straight paths for your feet,.... By "feet" are meant the walk and conversation of the saints, both in the church, and in the world, **So 7:1** and there are paths made ready for these feet to walk in; as the good old paths of truth, of the word and worship of God, of faith and holiness: and to make these paths "straight", is to make the word of God the rule of walking; to avoid carefully joining anything with it as a rule; to attend constantly on the ordinances of Christ; to go on evenly in a way of believing on him; to walk in some measure worthy of the calling wherewith we are called, and by way of example to others.

Lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; a lame member, as the Syriac version, a lame member of the body of Christ, the church; or a lame person, as the Arabic version, a weak believer; one that is ready to halt, either through the corruption of nature, or through the weakness of grace, or through want of light and judgment, and through instability and inconstancy; lest such an one should, through the irregular walk and conversation of others, be stumbled and offended, and go out of the way, and leave the paths of righteousness and truth. God takes care of, and has a regard to such, and he would have others also, **Mic 4:6**. The Ethiopic version reads, "that your halting may be healed, and not offended": that you yourselves may not halt and stumble.

But let it rather be healed; the fallen believer be restored, the weak brother be confirmed, the halting professor be strengthened, and everyone be built up and established upon the most holy faith, and in the pure ways of the Gospel.

Hebrews 12:14

Ver. 14. Follow peace with all men,.... That are in a natural and domestic relation to one another, being of the same family; and that are in a civil and political one, being of the same nation, city, or society; and that are in a spiritual one, being members of the same church; or, if not, yet being saints, and though in some things different in judgment; yea, even peace is to be followed with enemies, as much as in us lies: and perhaps by "all men", the Gentiles may be more especially designed, whose peace the Hebrews thought they were not to seek, De 23:6 mistaking the sense of the text, by applying it to the Gentiles in general: to "follow peace", signifies an eager pursuit after it, in the use of proper means; exerting the utmost of a man's power to attain it, in all things possible: many things serve to enforce this upon the saints; this is most agreeable to all the three divine Persons; to God, who is the God of peace; to Christ, the Prince of peace; and to the Spirit, one of whose fruits is peace; and to the characters of the saints, who are sons of peace, and who are called to peace, and who make a profession of the Gospel of peace; and to the privileges they enjoy, being interested in the covenant of peace, partaking of spiritual peace now, and being entitled to eternal peace hereafter: and this agrees with the sayings and counsels of the ancient Jews. It was a saying of Hillell {r}, who lived about the times of Christ;

"be thou one of the disciples of Aaron, who loved peace,
Mwlv Pdwrw, "and followed peace"."

This is said of Aaron in the Talmud {s}, that

"he loved peace, and followed peace, and made peace between a man and his neighbour, as is said, **Mal 2:6**."

They recommend peace on many accounts, and say, great is peace, and among the rest, because it is one of the names of God {t}:

and holiness: this being added to peace, shows that peace is no further to be followed than is consistent with holiness; and holiness here does not design any particular branch of holiness, as chastity of the body and mind, but the whole of holiness, inward and outward; and intends true holiness, in opposition to ceremonial holiness, which the Hebrews were fond of, and pursued after: it means even perfect holiness; for though holiness is not perfect in this life, yet it will be in heaven; and there is a perfection of it in Christ; and it is to be followed after, by going to Christ for more grace, and exercising faith upon him, as our sanctification; and by eager desires that the Spirit of God would sanctify us more and more, and enable us, by his grace and strength, to walk in the way of holiness, till we get safe to heaven:

without which no man shall see the Lord; or "God", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; that is, with the beatific vision in heaven: or the Lord Jesus Christ, "our Lord", as the Syriac version reads; even in this life, so as to have communion with him; and hereafter, so as to behold his glory, both intellectually and corporeally: to such a sight holiness is necessary; for God is holy, and Christ is holy, and so is heaven, and so are the angels, and the souls of men in it.

{r} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 12. {s} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 6. 2. & Gloss. in T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 71. 2. {t} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 153. 1, 2.

Hebrews 12:15

Ver. 15. Looking diligently,.... Acting the part of bishops, or overseers, as the word signifies; and so this exhortation either respects officers of the church of the Hebrews, whose business it was more especially to inspect into the principles and practices of the members of it, and take care that they did not imbibe false doctrines, or live immoral lives; or rather the several members of the church, whose business it is to watch over one another, since this epistle seems to be written to the whole church.

Lest any man fail of the grace of God; not the free favour and love of God in Christ, which is everlasting, unchangeable, and from whence there is no separation; nor the grace of God implanted in the heart in regeneration, which is incorruptible, never failing, but always remains, as do faith, hope, and love; but either the whole doctrine of the Gospel, which is a declaration of the grace of God; or particularly the doctrine of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, which men may receive in vain, and fall from, **2Co 6:1** to which these Hebrews might be prone: and such "fail" of it, who either come short of it, do not come up to it, receive and embrace it; or who having professed it, drop it and deny it: now such should be looked after, and such a case should be diligently looked into; because the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the good of souls, and the well being, and even the continuance of the church state are concerned:

lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, [and] thereby many be defiled; the Alexandrian copy reads oi polloi, "the many", the common people, the private members of the church; though it may intend either things or persons: it may design things; and these either the corruption of nature in general, which is a root that lies hidden in a man's heart; and is a root or gall of bitterness; and is apt to spring up, and bring forth bitter fruit, and gives trouble both to a man's self and others; and is of a defiling nature, in particular sins; such as malice, strife, and contention, covetousness, lust, pride, oppression, idleness, &c. which make bitter work, and occasion great trouble in churches, oftentimes: or errors and heresies, which sometimes, like roots, lie under ground, secret and undiscovered; and are bitter ones in their effects, bringing ruin and swift destruction on the souls of men; and these sometimes spring up in churches, while ministers and members are asleep, or not so diligent and watchful as they should be; and occasion great trouble, and are very infectious, and defiling: moreover, persons may be designed; which agrees well with De 29:18 from whence this phrase is taken; and with the instance in the following verse, such as all immoral persons, and false teachers, particularly self-justiciaries, that preach the doctrine of justification by the works of the law: this was the capital mistake, and rooted error of the Jewish nation; and a bitter one it was; it produced many bitter fruits of pride and vain glory; and this sprung up in the church, and troubled and defiled many there and elsewhere, being spread by the abettors of it; see Ac 15:24. Now, care should be taken, that no such person be in churches, holding such an error; because of the glory of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; the comfort of souls; the peace of the church, and the growth and increase of it, which must be hurt by such men and doctrines; so riza amartwlov, "a sinful root", is used for a "wicked man", in the Apocrypha:

"In those days went there out of Israel wicked men, who persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us: for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow." (1 Maccabees 1:11)

and yrmh vrwv, "a root of bitterness", signifies, in Jewish writings {u}, an error, or heresy, in opposition to a root of faith, or a fundamental doctrine.

{u} Cosri, Orat. 1. fol. 35. 1.

Hebrews 12:16

Ver. 16. Lest there be any fornicator or profane person,.... The first of these is guilty of a sin against the second table of the law, as well as against his own body; and which is opposed to the holiness the apostle had before exhorted to; such who are guilty of it, are not to be continued in the communion of the church; and it is a sin, which, lived in not repented of, excludes from the kingdom of heaven: the latter is one who is a transgressor of the first table of the law; who is an idolater, a swearer, a despiser of public worship and ordinances, and who behaves irreverently in divine service, and mocks at the future state, as Esau; to whom both these characters seem to belong: and this agrees with what the Jews say concerning him: they have a tradition {w}, that he committed five transgressions on the day he came out of the field weary.

"He committed idolatry: he shed innocent blood; and lay with a virgin betrothed; and denied the life of the world to come (or a future state); and despised his birthright."

It is elsewhere {x} a little differently expressed.

"Esau, the wicked, committed five transgressions on that day: he lay with a virgin betrothed; and killed a person; and denied the resurrection of the dead; and denied the root, or foundation, (i.e. that there is a God,) and despised his birthright; and besides, he desired his father's death, and sought to slay his brother."

It is common for them to say of him, that he was an ungodly man; and particularly, that he was a murderer, a robber, Pawnw, "and an adulterer" {y};

and that he has no part in the world to come {z}: who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright; the account of which is in Ge 25:29 this includes all the privileges which he had a right unto by being the firstborn; as a peculiar blessing from his father; a double portion of goods; and dominion over his brethren: and it is commonly said by the Jews, that the priesthood belonged to the firstborn, before the Levitical dispensation; and that for this reason, Jacob coveted the birthright {a}, Esau being a wicked man, and unfit for it. The birthright was reckoned sacred; it was typical of the primogeniture of Christ; of the adoption of saints, and of the heavenly inheritance belonging thereunto; all which were despised by Esau: and so the Jewish paraphrases {b} interpret the contempt of his birthright, a despising of his part in the world to come, and a denial of the resurrection of the dead: and his contempt of it was shown in his selling it; and this was aggravated by his selling it for "one morsel of meat"; which was bread, and pottage of lentiles, Ge 25:34. The Jewish writers speak of this bargain and sale much in the same language as the apostle here does; they say {c} of him, this is the man that sold his birthright Mhl rkk deb, "for a morsel of bread"; and apply to him the passage in Pr 28:21 "for a piece of bread that man will transgress".

{w} Targum Jon. ben Uzziel in Gen. xxv. 29. {x} Shemot Rabba, sect. I. fol. 89. 3. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 16. 2. {y} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 27. 1. {z} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 26. 3. {a} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 63. fol. 56. 2. {b} Targum Hieros. & Jon. in Gen. 25. 34. Bereshit Rabba, ib. {c} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 26. 4. & 27. 1.

Hebrews 12:17

Ver. 17. For ye know how that afterwards,.... After he had had his pottage; after he had sold his birthright for it, and the blessing with it; after his father had blessed Jacob: this the apostle relates to the Hebrews, as a thing well known to them; they having read the books of Moses, and being conversant with them, in which the whole history of this affair is recorded:

how that when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; by his father, who refused to give him the blessing, but confirmed what he had given to Jacob; and also by God, he being the object of his hatred; concerning whom he had said, even before his birth, the elder shall serve the younger, **Ro 9:11**,

for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears, Ge 27:34 though he was very solicitous for the blessing, and shed many tears to obtain it, yet he had no true repentance for his sin in soiling the birthright. Tears are not an infallible sign of repentance: men may be more concerned for the loss and mischief that come by sin, than for the evil that is in it; and such repentance is not sincere; it does not spring from love to God, or a concern for his glory; nor does it bring forth proper fruits: or rather, the sense of the words is, that notwithstanding all his solicitude, importunity, and tears, he found no place of repentance in his father Isaac; he could not prevail upon him to change his mind; to revoke the blessing he had bestowed on Jacob, and confer it on him, Ge 27:33 for he plainly saw it was the mind of God, that the blessing should be where it was; whose counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. This latter seems to be the better interpretation of the words, though the former agrees with the Targum on Job 15:20

"all the days of Esau the ungodly, they expected that he would have repented, but he repented not."

Hebrews 12:18

Ver. 18. For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched,.... The design of the apostle in the following words is, in general, to engage the Hebrews to adhere closely to the Gospel, from the consideration of the superior excellency of it to the law; and in particular, to enforce his former exhortations to cheerfulness under afflictions; to an upright walk in the ways of God; to follow peace with all men, even with the Gentiles, and holiness both of heart and life; and to value the doctrine of the Gospel; and to take heed that none fail of it, or act unbecoming it: and here the apostle observes, what the believing Hebrews were not come to, being delivered from it, namely, the legal dispensation, which was their privilege; the happiness of which as expressed by a detail of particular circumstances, which attended the giving of the law to the Jews: it was given on a "mount which might be touched"; that is, by God, who descended on it, and by, touching it caused it to smoke, quake, and move, Ex 19:18. Compare with, Ps 68:8 for it was not to be touched by the Israelites, nor by their cattle,
Ex 19:12, that is, at the time that the law was given, and Jehovah was upon it, otherwise it might be touched; and the meaning is, that it was an earthly mountain, that might be approached to, and be seen and felt, and not of a spiritual nature, as Sion, or the church of God; and so may be expressive of the carnality of the law, and also of the movableness of it:

and that burned with fire; as Mount Sinai did, Ex 19:18 **De 4:11** which set forth the majesty of God, when upon it, at whose feet went forth burning coals; and also the wrath of God, as an avenging lawgiver and Judge; and the terror of that law, which strikes the minds of the transgressors of it with an expectation of fiery indignation; and so points out the end of such transgressors, which is, to be burnt:

nor unto blackness and darkness; which covered the mount when God was upon it, Ex 19:16 and which also may express the majesty of God, round about whom are clouds and darkness; and also the horror of the legal dispensation, and the obscurity of it; little being known by the Jews of the spirituality of the law, of the strict justice of God, and of the righteousness which the law requires, and of the end and use of it; and especially of the way of salvation by Christ; and so dark were they at last, as to prefer their own traditions before this law: it is added,

and tempest; there being thunderings and lightnings, which were very terrible, Ex 19:16 and though there is no express mention made of a tempest by Moses, yet Josephus {d} speaks not only of very terrible thunderings and lightnings, but of violent storms of wind, which produced exceeding great rains: and the Septuagint on **De 4:11** use the same words as the apostle does here, "blackness, darkness, and tempest". This also may denote the majesty of God, who was then present; the terror of that dispensation; the horrible curses of the law; and the great confusion and disquietude raised by it in the conscience of a sinner.

{d} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 5. sect. 2.

Hebrews 12:19

Ver. 19. And the sound of a trumpet,.... Ex 19:16, which made it still more awful, as the sound of the trumpet will at the last day:

and the voice of words; of the ten words, or decalogue; which was as an articulate voice, formed by angels; and, therefore, the law is called the word spoken by angels, **Heb 2:2** and is represented, as the voice of God himself, Ex 20:1 who made use of the ministry of angels to deliver the law to Moses; "which" voice is called
Myrbd lwq, "the voice of words", in **De 4:12**, and this voice,

they that heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: fearing that they should die; wherefore they desired Moses to be their mediator, and draw nigh to God, and hear his words, and speak them to them, from him, Ex 20:19.

Hebrews 12:20

Ver. 20. For they could not endure that which was commanded,.... In the law; not that they disliked and despised the law, as unregenerate men do; but they could not endure it, or bear it, as a yoke, it being a yoke of bondage; nor as a covenant of works, it requiring perfect obedience, but giving no strength to perform; and as it showed them their sins, but did not direct them to a Saviour; as it was an accusing, cursing, and condemning law; and, as a fiery one, revealing wrath, and filling the conscience with it; unless this should have any respect to the following edict, more particularly:

and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart; and, if a beast, much more a man: and, how easily, through inadvertence, might this be done? and how terrible was the punishment? nothing less than death, by stoning, or being shot: and this they could not bear to hear, or think of: the last clause, "or thrust through with a dart", is wanting in the Alexandrian and Beza's Claromontane copies, in the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions; and yet is necessary to be retained, being in the original text, in Ex 19:12.

Hebrews 12:21

Ver. 21. And so terrible was the sight,.... Of the smoke, fire, and lightnings; or of God himself, who descended on the mount; with which agrees the Arabic version, which renders the words, "and so terrible was he who vouchsafed himself to be seen"; not in the bush burning with fire; at which time Moses was afraid to look upon God, **Ex 3:6** but on Mount Sinai, when the law was given:

[that] Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake: perhaps he might say this, when he spake, and God answered him, Ex 19:19. These words are nowhere recorded in Scripture; wherefore the apostle had them either by divine revelation, or from tradition, confirmed by the former: for the Jews have a notion that Moses did quake and tremble, and when upon the mount; and that he expressed his fear and dread. They have such a tradition as this {e};

"when Moses ascended on high, the ministering angels said before the holy blessed God, Lord of the world, what has this man, born of a woman, to do among us? he said unto them, to receive the law he is come; they replied before him, that desirable treasure, which is treasured up with thee, nine hundred, and seventy, and four generations, before the world was created, dost thou seek to give to flesh and blood? "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him? who hast set thy glory above the heavens!" The holy blessed God said to Moses, return them an answer; he said, before him, Lord of the world, ane aryytm, "I am afraid", lest they should burn, (or consume) me, with the breath of their mouth."

Compare this last clause with **2Th 2:8** and elsewhere {f} those words being cited, he called unto Moses, Ex 25:16 it is observed:

"this Scripture comes not, but wyle Myyal "to terrify him"; that so the law might be given with fear, fervour, and trembling; as it is said, **Ps 2:11**"

Once more {g},

"at the time that the holy blessed God said to Moses, "go, get thee down, for thy people have corrupted themselves",
Ex 32:7 hvm ezedza, "Moses trembled"; and he could not speak, &c."

And again, it is said {h}, that when Moses was on Mount Sinai, supplicating for the people of Israel, five destroying angels appeared, and immediately hvm aryytn, "Moses was afraid". Now this circumstance is mentioned by the apostle, to aggravate the terror of that dispensation; that Moses, a great and good man; and who had much familiarity with God; the general of the people of Israel; their leader and commander; a man of great courage and presence of mind; and was their mediator between God and them; and yet feared, and quaked: the best of men are not without sin; and the most holy man on earth cannot stand before a holy God, and his holy law, upon the foot of his own righteousness, without trembling: it is an awful thing to draw nigh to God; and there is no such thing as doing it without a Mediator; and that Mediator must be more than a creature: and it is our happiness that we have such a Mediator, who never feared, nor quaked; who failed not, nor was he discouraged.

{e} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 2. Yalkut, 2. par. 2. fol. 92. {f} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 4. 2. {g} Zohar in Exod. fol. 84. 4. {h} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 69. 4.

Hebrews 12:22

Ver. 22. But ye are come unto Mount Sion,.... The Alexandrian copy reads, as in Heb 12:18 "for ye are not come"; which may seem to favour that interpretation of this passage, which refers it to the heavenly state; to which saints, in this present life, are not, as yet, come: but, by "Mount Sion", and the other names here given, is meant the church of God, under the Gospel dispensation, to which the believing Hebrews were come; in distinction from the legal dispensation, signified by Mount Sinai, from which they were delivered: and this is called Mount Sion, because, like that, it is beloved of God; chosen by him; and is the place of his habitation; here his worship is, and his word and ordinances are administered; here he communes with his people, and distributes his blessings and this, as Mount Sion, is a perfection of beauty the joy of the whole earth; is strongly fortified by divine power, and is immovable; and is comparable to that mountain, for its height and holiness: and to come to Sion is to become a member of a Gospel church, and partake of the ordinances, enjoy the privileges, and perform the duties belonging to it:

and unto the city of the living God; the Gospel church is a city, built on Christ, the foundation; and is full of habitants, true believers, at least it will be, in the latter day; it is pleasantly situated by the river of God's love, and by the still waters of Gospel ordinances; it is governed by wholesome laws, of Christ's enacting, and is under proper officers, of his appointing; and is well guarded by watchmen, which he has set upon the walls of it; and it is endowed with many privileges, as access to God, freedom from the arrests of justice, and from condemnation, adoption, and a right to the heavenly inheritance: and this may be called "the city of God", because it is of his building, and here he dwells, and protects, and defends it; and who is styled "the living God", to distinguish him from the idols of the Gentiles, which are lifeless and inanimate, no other than sticks and stones.

The heavenly Jerusalem: the church of God goes by the name of Jerusalem often, both in the Old and in the New Testament; with which it agrees in its name, which signifies the vision of peace, or they shall see peace: Christ, the King of it, is the Prince of peace; the members of it are sons of peace, who enjoy a spiritual peace now, and an everlasting one hereafter: like that, it is compact together, consisting of saints, cemented together in love, in the order and fellowship of the Gospel; and is well fortified, God himself, and his power, being all around it, and having salvation, for walls and bulwarks, and being encamped about by angels; and it is a free city, being made so by Christ, and, through him, enjoying the liberty of grace now, and having a title to the liberty of glory in the world to come; as Jerusalem was, it is the object of God's choice, the palace of the great King, and the place of divine worship: it is called "heavenly", to distinguish it from the earthly Jerusalem; and to express the excellency of it, as well as to point out its original: the members of it are from heaven, being born from above; their conversation is now in heaven; and they are designed for that place; and its doctrines and ordinances are all from thence.

And to an innumerable company of angels; which are created spirits, immaterial and immortal; very knowing, and very powerful; and swift to do the will of God; they are holy, and immutably so, being the elect of God, and confirmed by Christ: and saints now are brought into a state of friendship with them; and into the same family; and are social worshippers with them; and they have access into heaven, where angels are; and with whom they shall dwell for ever: and, in the present state of things, they share the benefit and advantages of their kind offices; who have, sometimes, provided food for their bodies; healed their diseases; directed and preserved them on journeys; prevented outward calamities; delivered them out of them, when in danger; restrained things hurtful, and cut off their enemies: and, with regard to things spiritual they have, sometimes, made known the mind and will of God unto the saints; have comforted them under their distresses; helped them against Satan's temptations; are present at their death, and carry their souls to glory; and will gather the saints together, at the last day: and, as to the number of them, they are innumerable; they are the armies of heaven; and there is a multitude of the heavenly host; there are more than twelve legions of angels; their number is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands: and this makes both for the glory and majesty of God, whose attendants they are; and for the comfort and safety of saints, to whom they minister, and about whom they encamp: a like phrase is used in the Apocrypha:

"Before the fair flowers were seen, or ever the moveable powers were established, before the innumerable multitude of angels were gathered together," (2 Esdras 6:3)

Hebrews 12:23

Ver. 23. To the general assembly,.... A "panegyris", the word here used, was a public and solemn assembly of the Greeks, either at their games, or feasts, or fairs, or on religious accounts; and signifies a large collection and convention of men; and sometimes the place where they met togethers {i}; and is here used, by the apostle, for the church of God, consisting of all his elect, both Jews and Gentiles, and the meeting of them together: they met together, in the infinite mind of God, from all eternity; and in Christ, their head and representative, both then and in time; and at the last day, when they are all gathered in, they will meet together personally; and a joyful meeting it will be; and a very general one, more so than the assembly of the Jews, at any of their solemn feasts, to which the apostle may have some respect; since this will consist of some of all nations, that have lived in all places, and in all ages of time:

and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven; by the "church", is not meant any particular, or congregational church, nor any national one; but the church catholic, or universal, which consists only of God's elect, and of all of them, in all times and places; and reaches even to the saints in heaven: this church is invisible at present, and will never fail; of which Christ is the head, and for which he has given himself: now the persons, that belong to this church, are styled the "firstborn"; who are not the apostles only, who received the first fruits of the Spirit; nor the first converts among the Jews, who first trusted in Christ; but also the chosen of God, who are equally the sons of God, and born of him; are equally loved by him, and equally united to Christ, and interested in him: they have the same privileges, honours, and dignity, and shall enjoy the same inheritance; they are all firstborn, and are so called, with respect to the angels, the sons of God, as Christ is with respect to the saints, the many brethren of his: and these are said to be "written in heaven"; not in the earth, Jer 17:13, such writing abides not; nor in the book of the Scriptures, for the names of all are not written there; nor in the general book of God's decrees, which relate to all mankind; but in the Lamb's book of life, kept in heaven; and is no other than their election of God: and this way of speaking, concerning it, shows it to be personal and particular; that it is firm, sure, and constant; that it is out of the reach of men and devils to erase it; it denotes the exact knowledge God has of them, and expresses their right to heaven, and the certainty of their coming there: now all such, who are truly come to Sion, are openly come to this assembly and church, and appear to be a part thereof, and are among the firstborn, and have their names written in heaven:

and to God the Judge of all: the Ethiopic version reads, "the Judge of righteousness", or the righteous Judge: some think that Christ is here meant; who is truly and properly God, and is the Judge: all judgment is committed to him; he is Judge of all; he is ordained Judge of quick and dead; for which he would not have been fit, had he not been God: true believers come to him by faith, and that, as their Judge, King, and Governor; and it is their privilege, that Christ is and will be the Judge of all at the last day and hence is his coming to judgment desirable to them. But since Christ is spoken of in the next verse, as a distinct person, to whom the saints come, God the Father seems rather to be designed here: and it is one of the privileges of the saints, in the present life, that they have access to God: all men are at a distance from him, in a state of nature; and they naturally run further and further from him, and have no desire after him; and, when they are made sensible of sin, they are afraid and ashamed to come to him; nor is there any coming to God, but through Christ; and this is a fruit of God's everlasting love, what follows upon electing grace, is an effect of Christ's death, and owing to the quickening grace of the Spirit; it is performed in a spiritual way, and is by faith; it is a coming to the throne of God, even to his seat, to communion with him, and to a participation of his grace: and it is their privilege that they have access to him as the Judge of all; not only as a Father, and as the God of all grace, but as a Judge, and a righteous one, to whom they can come without terror; for though he is just, yet he is a Saviour, and the justifier of his people, on account of the righteousness of his Son; whose sins he pardons in a way of justice, through the blood of Christ; and is their patron, protector, and defender, who will right their wrongs, and avenge their cause:

and to the spirits of just men made perfect; which may be understood of the saints on earth, who are "just men"; not naturally, for so no man is, but the reverse; nor in opinion only, or merely externally, as the Scribes and Pharisees were; nor by the deeds of the law; nor by obedience to the Gospel; nor by faith, either as wrought in them, or done by them, though by the object of it; nor by an infusion of righteousness into them; but by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto them: and these are "made perfect"; not as to sanctification, unless in Christ, or in a comparative sense, and with respect to the parts of the new man, but not as to degrees; for no man is without sin, and the best stand in need of fresh supplies of grace; but as to justification, Christ has perfectly fulfilled the law for them, and has perfectly expiated their sins, and perfectly redeemed them from all sin, and has procured a full pardon of them; and they are completely righteous through his righteousness; and the "spirits", or souls of these are only mentioned, because the communion of saints in a Gospel church state lies chiefly in the souls and spirits of each other, or in spiritual things relating to their souls; and their souls are greatly affected, and knit to each other: though the saints in heaven may be here intended, at least included; whose spirits or soul's are separate from their bodies; and they are the souls of just men, for none but such enter into the kingdom of heaven; where they are made perfect in knowledge and holiness, in peace and joy;

though they have not their bodies, nor as yet all the saints with them. Now, believers, in the present state of things, may be said to be come to them, being come to the Church below, which is a part of that above; as also in hope, expectation, and desire. The apostle seems to have respect to some distinctions among the Jews: they divide mankind into three sorts; some are perfectly wicked; and some are perfectly righteous; and there are others that are between both {k}: they often speak of Myrwmg Myqydu, "just men perfect" {l}; and distinguish between a just man perfect, and a just man that is not perfect {m}; as they do also between penitents and just men perfect;
See Gill on "Lu 15:7".

{i} Vid. Philostrat. Vita Apollen. l. 8. c. 7. {k} T. Hieros. Roshhashanah, fol. 57. 1. & T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 16. 2. Derech Eretz, fol. 19. 4. {l} Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 2. & 29. 1. & 39. 3. T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 18. 2. & Roshbahanah, fol. 4. 1. Pesachim, fol. 8. 1. 2. {m} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 6. 2. & Avoda Zora, fol. 4. 1.

Hebrews 12:24

Ver. 24. And to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant,.... Of the new covenant, and, of Christ's being the Mediator of it,
See Gill on "Heb 8:6".
See Gill on "Heb 8:8". Coming to Christ is by faith; and is different from a corporeal coming to him in the days of his flesh; and from an outward attendance on ordinances; it is a coming to him under a sense of want, and upon a sight of fulness; and is the produce of God's efficacious grace; and souls must come to Christ as naked sinners; and without a Mediator, without anything of their own to ingratiate them; and it is free to all sensible sinners to come to him, and is the great privilege of saints: it is the blessing of blessings; such are safe, and settled, and at peace, who are come to Jesus; they can want no good thing, for all are theirs; they have free access to God through him, and a right to all privileges:

and to the blood of sprinkling: that is, the blood of Christ; so called, either in allusion to the blood of the passover, which was received in a basin, and with a bunch of hyssop was sprinkled upon the lintel and two side posts of the doors of the houses, in which the Israelites were; which being looked upon by Jehovah, he passed over them, and all were safe within, so that the destroyer did not touch them, when the firstborn in Egypt were destroyed, Ex 12:1 which is the case of all such as are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus: or else to the blood of the covenant, sprinkled by Moses on the book, and on all the people, Ex 24:8 or to the several sprinklings of blood in the legal sacrifices: and the phrase may denote the application of Christ's blood to his people, for justification, pardon, and cleansing, which is their great mercy and privilege:

that speaketh better things than that of Abel; either "than Abel", as the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions render it, who being dead, yet speaks; and who was a type of Christ in his death, and the punishment of it; for as he was slain by his own brother, who was punished for it, so Christ was put to death by his own nation and people, the Jews, for which wrath is come upon them to the uttermost: but the efficacy of Christ's blood for the procuring pardon, peace, reconciliation, and the redemption and purchase of his church and people, shows him to be greater than Abel; and it speaks better things than he did, or does: or else, "than the blood of Abel", as the Arabic version renders it; Abel's blood cried for vengeance; Christ's blood cries for peace and pardon, both in the court of heaven, where it is pleaded by Christ, and in the court of conscience, where it is sprinkled by his spirit: or than the sprinkling of the blood of Abel's sacrifice, or than Abel's sacrifice; which was the first blood that was sprinkled in that way, and the first sacrifice mentioned that was offered up by faith, and was typical of Christ's; but then Christ's sacrifice itself is better than that; and the sprinkling of his blood, to which believers may continually apply for their justification, remission, and purgation, and by which they have entrance into the holiest of all, is of greater efficacy than the sprinkling of blood in Abel's sacrifice; and calls for and procures better things than that did; which sense may the rather be chosen, since the apostle's view, in this epistle, is to show the superior excellency of Christ's sacrifice to all others, even to the more excellent of them, as Abel's was, Heb 11:4.

Hebrews 12:25

Ver. 25. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh,.... Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, whose blood speaks better things than Abel, or than his blood and sacrifice: he was the speaker in the council and covenant of grace, that spoke for the elect; in the creation of all things out of nothing, that said, and it was done; in giving the law to the Israelites, in the wilderness, for he is the angel which spake to Moses in Mount Sinai, he spoke to God for the Old Testament saints, and was the angel of God's presence to them; he spoke in his own person, as the prophet of the church, in the days of his flesh; and he now speaks in heaven, by appearing in the presence of God for his people, and by presenting his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; he speaks by his Spirit, in and to the hearts of his saints; and by his ministers in the Gospel, and the ordinances of it: nor should he be refused, as he is, when his Gospel is made light of, and neglected; when men excuse themselves from an attendance on it; when they will not hear it; or, when they do, and contradict and blaspheme, despise and reproach it, or leave off hearing it. Care should be taken that Christ is not refused in the ministry of the word; which may be enforced from the greatness and excellency of the person speaking, who is God, and not a mere man; from the excellency of the matter spoken, the great salvation: and the rather diligent heed should be had unto him, since there is a backwardness to everything that is spiritual and heavenly; and since Satan is vigilant and industrious to put off persons from hearing the Gospel, or to steal the word from them:

for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth: the Ethiopic version renders it, "who appeared to them on the mount"; that is, on Mount Sinai; meaning either God himself, who descended on the mount, and spoke the ten commandments to the children of Israel; or Christ, the Angel that spoke to Moses in it; or rather Moses himself, who was on the earth, and of the earth, earthly; who spake from God to the people, being their mediator; him the Jews refused, would not obey him, but thrust him away, **Ac 7:39**, though they promised to hear and do all that was said to them; wherefore they did not escape divine vengeance and punishment; their carcasses fell in the wilderness at several times, in great numbers, and were not suffered to enter into Canaan's land: much more

shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven; that is, Christ, who came from heaven originally; is the Lord from heaven; whose doctrine is from heaven; and who, having done his work, is gone to heaven; where he now is, and from whence he speaks; and from hence he will come a second time, as Judge of all. There have been, and are some, that turn away from him; from a profession of him, and his Gospel and ordinances, and draw back unto perdition; such shall not escape divine wrath and vengeance; the sorest punishment shall be inflicted on them; see Heb 10:29.

Hebrews 12:26

Ver. 26. Whose voice then shook the earth,.... That is, at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai: Christ was then present; his voice was then heard; which was either the voice of thunder, or the voice of the trumpet, or rather the voice of words: this shook the earth, Sinai, and the land about it, and the people on it;

which made them quake and tremble, even Moses himself; see Ex 19:18

but now he hath promised, saying in **Hag 2:6**

yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven; not only the land of Judea, and particularly Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it, who were all shaken, and moved, and troubled at the news of the birth of the Messiah, the desire of all nations, the prophet Haggai speaks of, **Mt 2:2** but the heaven also; by prodigies in it, as the appearance of a wonderful star, which guided the wise men from the east; and by the motions of the heavenly inhabitants, the angels, who descended in great numbers, and made the heavens resound with their songs of praise, on account of Christ's incarnation, **Mt 2:2**. How the apostle explains and applies this, may be seen in the next verse.

Hebrews 12:27

Ver. 27. And this word yet once more,.... Or as it is in **Hag 2:6** "yet once it is a little while"; which suggests, that as something had been done already, so in a very little time, and at once, something very marvellous and surprising would be effected: and it

signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made; which some understand of what will be done at Christ's coming to judgment; as the passing away of the heavens and the earth, which are things that are made, or created, by the power of God; when there will be a shaking of them, so as that they shall be removed, and pass away with a great noise; and so they interpret the next clause, of the permanency of the new heavens and the new earth, and of the immovable kingdom of glory, and the never fading inheritance of the saints; and of their fixed, unalterable, and unshaken state: but rather this is to be understood of Christ's coming to the destruction of Jerusalem; when there was an entire removal of the Jewish state, both political and ecclesiastical; and of the whole Mosaic economy; and of things appertaining to divine worship, which were made with hands, as the temple, and the things in it; and which were made to be removed; for they were to continue no longer than the time of reformation: and this removing of them designs the abolition of them, and entire putting an end to them; at which time, not only their civil government was wholly put down, but their ecclesiastic state also; for the place of their worship was destroyed, the daily sacrifice ceased, and the old covenant, and the manner of administering it, vanished away; and all the legal institutions and ordinances, which were abolished by the death of Christ, were no more performed in Jerusalem; the temple and temple service perishing together:

that those things which cannot be shaken may remain: the kingdom and priesthood of Christ, which are everlasting; and the good things which come by him, as remission of sins, justification, adoption, sanctification, and the heavenly inheritance; as also the Gospel, and the doctrines and ordinances of it, baptism, and the Lord's supper, and the mode of Gospel worship; all which are to continue until Christ's second coming.

Hebrews 12:28

Ver. 28. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved,.... Not the kingdom of glory; eternal glory is a kingdom, and it is an immovable one; and is a free gift of God, and may be said to be now received; God's people are called unto it, and are made meet for it, and have a right unto it, and have it in faith and hope, and in Christ their head and representative: but the kingdom of grace, under the Gospel dispensation, is meant: there are several things in this dispensation which are called a kingdom; as a Gospel church, the Gospel itself, and the privileges and blessings of grace bestowed, especially spiritual and internal ones, Mt 25:1 and the whole dispensation is called the kingdom of heaven, **Mt 3:2**. Christ he is King, believers are his subjects, the Gospel is his sceptre, and the ordinances are his laws and appointments, and all are immovable; and a man may be said to receive this kingdom, when he is delivered from the power of darkness, is regenerated, and has the blessings of grace actually bestowed on him, and is brought to Zion:

let us have grace; by which is meant, not thankfulness for so great a blessing, though this is highly requisite and necessary; nor the favour of God, though, as the reception of the kingdom springs from hence, a sense of it ought to abide; nor the habit or principle of grace in the heart, unless particularly the grace of faith, and the exercise of it, should be designed; but rather the doctrine of grace, the Gospel, is intended; and the sense is, ecwmen, "let us hold it", as the Ethiopic version renders it; let us hold the Gospel fast, and a profession of it: the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, "we have grace"; this goes along with the immovable kingdom; all that have truly received the one, have the other:

whereby we may serve God; God is to be served, and not a creature, nor the elements of this world, the ceremonial law, and its rites: nor is he to be served in any form, only in a spiritual way; and without holding to the Gospel, there is no serving him in an evangelic manner; the true and right way of serving him is as follows:

acceptably; in Christ, in the Gospel of his Son, and by faith in him, without which it is impossible to please God:

with reverence; of the majesty of God, with shame for sin, and with a sense of unworthiness:

and godly fear; which has God for its author and object, and which springs from his grace, and is increased by discoveries of his goodness; and which is consistent with faith, and spiritual joy; see **Ps 2:11**.

Hebrews 12:29

Ver. 29. For our God is a consuming fire. Either God personally considered, God in the person of Christ; so the Shechinah, with the Jews, is called a consuming fire {n}. Christ is truly God, and he is our God and Lord; and though he is full of grace and mercy, yet he will appear in great wrath to his enemies, who will not have him to reign over them: or rather God essentially considered; whose God he is, and in what sense, and how he comes to be so, See Gill on "Heb 8:10", what is here said of him, that he is a consuming fire, may be understood of his jealousy in matters of worship, **De 4:23**, and so carries in it a reason why he is to be served acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. God, and he only, is to be worshipped; and he is to be worshipped in a way suitable to himself; and he has the sole right of fixing the manner of worship, both as to the external and internal parts of it: under the legal dispensation, he was worshipped in a way he then pitched upon, and suitable to it; and under the Gospel dispensation he is to be worshipped in an evangelical way; and he is to have all the glory in every part of worship; and the ordinances of Gospel worship are immovable; nor are they to be altered, or others put in their room, without recurring his displeasure. Moreover, this phrase may be expressive of the preservation of his people, and of the destruction of their enemies, **De 9:1**. We commonly say, that God out of Christ is a consuming fire; meaning, that God, as an absolute God, is full of wrath and vengeance; and it is a truth, but not the truth of this text; for here it is our God, our covenant God, our God in Christ; not that he is so to the saints, or to them that are in Christ: he is indeed as a wall of fire in his providences, to protect and defend them, and as fire in his word to enlighten and warm them, to guide and direct them, but not a consuming fire to them; this he is to their enemies, who are as thorns, and briers, and stubble before him: and so the Jews interpret **De 4:24** of a fire consuming fire {o}; and observe, that Moses says, thy God, and not our God {p}; but the apostle here uses the latter phrase.

{n} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 21. 4. {o} Zohar in Gen. fol. 35. 3. & 51. 1. & in Exod. fol. 91. 1. & in Lev. fol. 11. 1. {p} Lexic. Cabalist, p. 111.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Hebrews 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS 13

The apostle having finished the doctrinal part of this epistle, closes it with practical exhortations to these Hebrews, puts up prayers for them, and sends salutations to them. The exhortations are to brotherly love, and the continuance of it, Heb 13:1 to hospitality, by which some have entertained angels unawares,
Heb 13:2, to sympathy with those that are in bonds, and in, afflictions, Heb 12:3 to purity and chastity in the honourable state of marriage, urged by the judgment of God on unclean persons,
Heb 13:4 to avoid covetousness, and to be content with present things, enforced by the promises of God, which give boldness and strength to faith,
Heb 13:5, to remember their spiritual guides and governors, the preachers of the Gospel to them; to follow their faith, and consider the end of their conversation, which is Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and for ever,
Heb 13:7. And then he cautions them from being carried about with the doctrines of men, which are divers and strange; which he urges from the profitable effect of the Gospel to establish the heart, and from the unprofitableness of meats to legal worshippers, and from the Christians having an altar, which is Christ, which those who are seeking life by the service of the law have nothing to do with,
Heb 13:9. And this he illustrates in the type of burnt offerings, which were burnt without the camp, and there was nothing left for the priests to eat of, Heb 13:11. In like manner Christ, the antitype, suffered without the gates of Jerusalem, for the sanctification of his people, by his blood; and who only, and not those who seek for righteousness by the law, have an interest in,
Heb 13:12. However, it becomes the saints to quit everything, and all dependence on themselves, and fellowship with others, and go forth to Jesus, believing in him, whatsoever reproach they suffer on his account; for here is

nothing permanent and durable in this world; but there is a state of happiness to come, which will last for ever,
Heb 13:13. And since Christ has offered himself for his people, they ought to offer up the sacrifices of praise to God by him, and to do acts of beneficence and goodness, which are sacrifices well pleasing to God through him, Heb 13:15. And to these exhortations apostle adds others; as to obey their spiritual rulers and governors, and submit unto them; since they watch for their souls, and must give an account, which to do with joy, and not with grief, is best and profitable, Heb 13:17 and to pray for the apostle, and other ministers, since they had a good conscience, and were willing to live honestly; and the rather, that he might be restored to them the sooner, Heb 13:18 and to engage them to this their duty, he sets them an example, by putting up prayers for them, Heb 13:20 and desires them to take in good part the letter he had wrote unto them, Heb 13:22 and acquaints them that Timothy was set at liberty, with whom he hoped to see them in a short time, Heb 13:23 and then closes the epistle with his own, and the salutations of others, and with his usual benediction,
Heb 13:24.

Ver. 1. Let brotherly love continue. The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions add, "in you"; or among you, as a church and society of Christians; for this is not to be understood of love to all mankind, or to those of the same nation, or who are in a strict natural relation brethren, though they are all in a sense brethren, and to be loved; but of love to those who are in the same spiritual relation to God, as their Father, to Christ, as the firstborn among many brethren; and are in the same church state, at least partakers of the same grace: and which love ought to be universal, and reach to all the saints, and be fervent and unfeigned, and as Christ hath loved us; and when it is genuine, it is active and laborious; and shows itself in praying with and for one another; in bearing one another's burdens; in forbearing and forgiving one another; in admonishing one another in love; in building up each other in the most holy faith; and in stirring up one another to the several duties of religion: and without this excellent and useful grace, a profession of religion is in vain; this is an evidence of regeneration; it is the bond of perfectness, and what renders the saints' communion delightful and edifying: many are the arguments moving to the exercise of it; as the love of God, and Christ; the new commandment of Christ; the relation saints stand in to one another; the comfort and joy of Gospel ministers, and our own peace and edification: and this should continue; for the love of God and Christ continues; the relation between the saints continues; and without this, churches cannot continue long: the apostle means, not the grace itself, the internal principle, for that, where it once is, always continues, and can never be lost; but the exercise and increase of it, an abounding in it yet more and more. One of the Jewish prayers is to this purpose {q};

"he that dwells in this house, let him plant among you
hbhaw hwxa, "brotherhood and love", (or brotherly love,) peace and friendship."

{q} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 3.

Hebrews 13:2

Ver. 2. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers,.... By whom are meant, not unconverted men, who are strangers to God and Christ, and the covenants of promise; nor saints, who are as pilgrims and strangers in this world; but such as are of another country, and are unknown; and even though wicked men, they are not excluded; though such as are obliged to quit their own country for righteousness sake are chiefly designed; all strangers in distress are meant, and hospitality is to be exercised towards them; which lies negatively in doing nothing to distress them, and positively in providing food, raiment, lodging, &c. for them, and in comforting, counselling, and directing them in all matters in which they may stand in need thereof: and that this is a duty, appears from the light of nature, and practices of the Heathens, Ac 28:2, from the express law of God, De 10:19 and many others made in favour of strangers, binding on the Jews; from the sundry exhortations to it in the New Testament, Ro 12:13 and from the exhortation here not to forget it; and from the great regard which Christ will show to such as mind it, and his disregard to others at the last day: the persons who are to exercise it are not only the ministers of the Gospel, who should be given to hospitality; but all the saints, even the meaner sort are not exempted, but should use it according to their ability; though it is chiefly binding on those that are rich. And this should not be forgot, but pursued and followed after; it should be frequently performed; men should be given, and used to it; it should be done without grudging, and in a friendly and loving manner:

for thereby some have entertained angels unawares; as Abraham, Ge 18:1, he knew them not to be angels at first; they appeared as men, and he treated them as such; but they were angels, yea, one of them was Jehovah himself; and hereby he received many favours, Ge 18:10, and Lot, Ge 19:1 who knew not that they were angels he took into his house; but they were, and he was delivered by them from the burning of

Sodom; yea, some have unawares, this way, entertained Christ himself, Lu 24:15 and indeed, entertaining of his members is entertaining him, Mt 25:38. It is an observation of a Jewish writer {r} upon the first of these instances;

"from hence we learn (says he) how great is the strength (or virtue) of the reception of travellers (or hospitality), as the Rabbins of blessed memory say, greater is Myxrwa tonkh, "hospitality", than the reception of the face of the Shechinah."

And this is said to be one of the six things which a man enjoys the fruit of in this world, and for which there remains a reward in the world to come {s}.

{r} R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 18, 4. {s} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 127. 1.

Hebrews 13:3

Ver. 3. Remember them that are in bonds,.... Not for criminal actions, or for debt, though such should be remembered, and pity showed them, especially the latter; but such as are in bonds for the sake of Christ, and the Gospel. This has been often the lot of God's people, who should be remembered, by praying for them, sending comfortable letters to them, personally visiting them, and relieving them under their distresses:

as bound with them; as if it were so, as if in the same condition, and circumstances; by sympathizing with them; by considering themselves liable to the same bonds; by dealing with them as it would be desirable to be dealt with in the same case: and

them which suffer adversity; outward afflictions of body, distress for want of temporal mercies, food and raiment, and persecution by enemies; or spiritual adversity, as the prevailings of corruptions, and particularly unbelief, the hidings of God's face, and the temptations of Satan.

As being yourselves also in the body; as if in their bodies, enduring the same things; or as being afflicted in the body with diseases, necessities, and persecutions; or as being in the body, the church, of which these afflicted ones are a part, and therefore should have a fellow feeling with them; or rather as being in this world, in the flesh, or in a body and state subject to the like adversities, temporal and spiritual.

Hebrews 13:4

Ver. 4. Marriage is honourable in all,.... Some read these words as an exhortation, "let" it "be so"; others as an assertion, it is so. "Marriage" is the union of one man and one woman in wedlock, whereby they become one flesh; it is a joining together of male and female in this relation, and of two only, and of such as are not within the degrees of blood forbid by the law, Le 18:6 and of such as are fit for marriage: and this is "honourable", as it was instituted by God, and has been honoured with the presence of Christ, **Ge 2:22**. And it is so in the ends of it, being to procreate children, multiply the earth, build up families, preserve a legitimate offspring, and prevent fornication and all uncleanness; and it is so, when the duties of the relation are performed on both sides: and it is honourable "in all"; in all things, in all respects, upon all accounts; "every way", as the Arabic version renders it; or as the Ethiopic version, "everywhere"; it has been honourably esteemed of among all nations; it becomes persons of all ranks and degrees, quality, and order; and it is honourable in all that are lawfully married, and do not violate the marriage contract, or defile the marriage bed: hereby are condemned such who despise marriage, that they may give a loose to their wandering and insatiable lusts; and such who, under a pretence of greater sanctity and perfection, reject it as unlawful; and the Papists, who deny it to men employed in sacred work:

and the bed undefiled: the Arabic version reads, "his bed"; and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, "their bed"; the bed of such whose marriage is honourable; which is not polluted by admitting others into it, or by acts of fornication and adultery: "but", or "for", as the Alexandrian copy reads,

whoremongers and adulterers God will judge; the former of these may be rendered "fornicators", as it is by the Vulgate Latin version: fornication is a sin committed by single persons, unmarried ones; and though it was reckoned among the Gentiles a thing indifferent, yet is contrary to the law of God, and is a work of the flesh, and makes unfit for the kingdom of God, and brings down the judgments of God both here and hereafter. And this is in opposition to marriage, which is appointed to prevent it. The sin "adulterers" are guilty of, is a sin committed by persons, who are either one or both in a married state, and so is directly a pollution of the marriage bed: this was punishable with death by the law of God, and light of nature; and though men may make light of it, God will judge and punish such as commit it, both in this life, with diseases, poverty, and disgrace, and in the world to come, at the great day of account;

for however secretly it may be committed, God, who is omniscient, sees it, and will bring it into judgment; nor shall any be able to escape the righteous judgment of God, for he is omnipotent, as well as omniscient. The Jews say,

"whoever lies with another man's wife, shall not escape
hnyd, "the judgment", or damnation of hell {t}"

{t} T. Bab. Sota. fol. 4. 2.

Hebrews 13:5

Ver. 5. Let your conversation be without covetousness,.... Which is an immoderate desire, of riches, an over anxious care for worldly things, attended with dissatisfaction, and discontent with their present state: it discovers itself many ways; in preferring the world to religion; in laying up treasure for a man's own self, without being any ways useful to others; in withholding from himself the necessaries of life, and in making no use of his substance for the glory of God, and the interest of religion: this is a very great evil; it is called idolatry, and is said to be the root of all evil; and is very pernicious to true religion: a believer's conversation should be without it; in his family, for whom he should provide things convenient and honest; and in the world, where he should deal uprightly, and not defraud and overreach; and in the church, where he should be liberal, and generously communicate, upon all occasions; and such a conversation is becoming the Gospel, which is a declaration of things freely given to us of God. The reason of the apostle's mentioning this sin of covetousness is, because the Jews were prone to it, and these believing Hebrews might be inclined to it, and be dissatisfied with their present condition, in which they suffered the spoiling of their goods; and besides, unless this was avoided, the above mentioned duties could not be performed aright, as brotherly love, hospitality, remembering and relieving persons in bonds, and adversity.

And be content with such things as ye have; or with present things; with present riches, or with present poverty; with present losses and crosses; with present reproaches and afflictions; and contentment with these things shows itself by thankfulness for every mercy, and by submission to the will and providence of God in every state of life: and there are many things which may move and engage unto it; as the consideration of the state and condition men are in, when they come into the world, and will be when they go out of it; the will of God, and the disposition of his providence according to it, which is unalterable; a sense of: their own unworthiness; a view of interest in God and Christ; and an eye to the recompense of reward; as well as the many promises of God to support and supply his: and among the rest, what follows,

for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; which is a promise made to Joshua, and belongs to all believers, **Jos 1:5** which may regard things temporal, as that God will not leave his people in the hands of their enemies, nor forsake them in distress, nor withhold any good thing from them needful for them, but will supply them with the necessaries of life, with which they should be content: and this passage is very pertinently cited for this purpose, and could be easily understood in this sense by the Hebrews; for the Jews explain such places as speak of God's not forsaking men, of the sustenance of them, as Ps 37:25 and observe that the word hbyze, "forsaking", is never used but with respect to
honrp, "sustenance" {u}; though the words may also relate to things spiritual, as that God will not leave them to themselves, to their own corruptions, which would overpower them; nor to their own strength, which is but weakness; nor to their own wisdom, which is folly; nor to Satan, and his temptations, who is an over match for them; nor to the world, the frowns and flatteries of it, by which they might be drawn aside; nor will he leave them destitute of his presence; for though he sometimes hides his face, and withdraws himself, yet not wholly, nor finally; nor will he forsake the work of his own hands, in them, but will perform it until the day of Christ; he will not leave or forsake them, so as that they shall perish; he will not forsake them in life, nor at death, nor at judgment.

{u} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 69. fol. 61. 4. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 35. fol. 175. 2. Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 103. 2.

Hebrews 13:6

Ver. 6. So that we may boldly say,.... Or confidently assert; for nothing is more true than this,

the Lord is my helper; he is able to help, and does help, when none else can; he has promised to be the helper of his people; he has laid help for them on Christ, who is mighty; and he has helped him as man, that he might help them; he has set up a throne of grace for them to come to, where they may find help; and experience confirms the truth of this assertion; every believer can set up an Ebenezer, and say, hitherto hath the Lord helped me: the people of God are of themselves helpless ones; there is no help for them in man; their help is only in the Lord; who helps them out of the pit of sin and misery; out of the hands of all their enemies; out of all their afflictions, and "out" of all the dangers they are exposed unto by Satan and his temptations, by reason of a body of sin and death, and no account of the world, and the men of it: he helps them "in" the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty; in bearing the cross; in fighting the Lord's battles; and in their journeying through the wilderness: he helps them "to" temporal blessings, and spiritual ones; to spiritual food and raiment, and to all needful supplies of grace, and, at last, to eternal glory and happiness: and the help he now affords is quick and present, suitable and seasonable, and is what is sufficient; and is sometimes with, and sometimes without means.

And I will not fear what man shall do unto me. There is a becoming fear and reverence which is due to men that are our superiors, whether in civil or religious affairs; but men are not to be feared, when opposed to God; not a single man only is not to be feared, but even all men; and not they only, but all that they can do; the utmost of which is to kill the body; the ground of this fearlessness in believers are the infinite power, grace, and goodness of God. The words seem to be taken out of Ps 54:4.

Hebrews 13:7

Ver. 7. Remember them which have the rule over you,.... Christ's church is a kingdom, and he is King in it; pastors of churches are subordinate governors; who rule well when they rule not in an arbitrary way, according to their own wills, but according to the laws of Christ, with all faithfulness, prudence, and diligence. The word may be rendered "guides" or "leaders"; for such point out the way of peace, life, and salvation to men, and direct them to Christ; and guide them into the understanding of the Scriptures, and the truths of the Gospel; and lead them in the paths of faith and holiness, and are examples to them. The Greek word, here used, is what the Jews call Christian bishops by; and hgemonia, is, by Maimonides {w}, said to be the same as twdyqp, "a bishopric": to "remember" them is to know, own, acknowledge, and respect them as their governors; to obey them, and submit to them; to treasure up in memory their doctrines and exhortations; to be mindful of them at the throne of grace, to pray for them; and to take care of their maintenance and outward supply of life:

who have spoken unto you the word of God; of which God is the author, being agreeably to the Scriptures, given by inspiration of God; the subject of which is the love and grace of God in Christ; and which God makes useful for conversion and comfort; and which, when spoken aright, is spoken freely, boldly, and faithfully:

whose faith follow; or "imitate"; meaning either their faithfulness, by owning the truths and ordinances of the Gospel before men; by reproving fellow Christians in love; by discharging the several duties of their place in the church; and by performing the private duties of life: or the grace of faith, their strong exercise of it, together with its fruits and effects, love, and good works; also the profession of their faith, which they hold fast unto the end; and the doctrine of faith, by embracing the same, as it appears agreeably to the word; by abiding by it, standing fast in it, striving for it, and persevering in it to the end.

Considering the end of their conversation; which may intend the whole of their conduct in the discharge of the several duties of their office; the end of which designs either the manner of it, as De Dieu explains it, agreeably to the sense of the Hebrew word,
twauwt in Ps 68:20 or the drift and scope of it, which was Christ, his honour and glory, as in connection with the following verse; or the event of it in life, being for the glory of God, and the good of men; or rather the issue of it in death, or what a comfortable end they made; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "considering" their "last manner of living, in their exit out of the world"; and this is to be considered for imitation and encouragement.

{w} In Misn. Gittin, c. 1. sect. 1.

Hebrews 13:8

Ver. 8. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever. Who is the substance of the word spoken by the above mentioned rulers, the author and object of their faith, and the end in which their conversation terminated. These words may be expressive of the duration of Christ: he was "yesterday", which does not design the day immediately foregoing, nor some little time past, but ancient times, formerly, of old; and though it does not extend to eternity, which is true of Christ, yet may be carried further than to the days of his flesh here on earth, even to the whole Old Testament dispensation; yea, to the beginning of the world, when he existed not only as the eternal Word, the everlasting "I am", but as the Saviour and Redeemer of his people; during which dispensation he frequently appeared in an human form, and was the sum of all promises and prophecies, and the substance of all types and shadows, and the spiritual food of his people: and he is "today" under the Gospel dispensation; in his person as God-man, and in his offices as prophet, priest, and King: and will be so "for ever": he will never die more; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his priesthood an unchangeable one. Moreover, these words may regard the immutability of Christ; who is unchangeable in his person, perfections, and essence, as God; and in his love to his people; and in the fulness of his grace, and in the efficacy of his blood, and in the virtue of his sacrifice and righteousness: it may be observed, that o autov, translated "the same", answers to awh, "he", a name of God, Ps 102:27 and which is used in Jewish writings {x} for a name of God; and so it is among the Turks {y}: and it is expressive of his eternity, immutability, and independence; and well agrees with Christ, who is God over all, blessed for ever.

{x} Seder Tephillot, fol. 2. 1. & 4. 1. Ed. Basil. fol. 6. 2. & 7. 1. Ed. Amstelod. Zehar in Exod. fol. 35. 4. Maimonides in Misn. Succa, c. 4. sect. 5. {y} Smith de Moribus Turc. p. 40.

Hebrews 13:9

Ver. 9. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines,.... The word "divers" may denote the variety and multitude of other doctrines; referring either to the various rites and ceremonies of the law, or to the traditions of the elders, or to the several doctrines of men, whether Jews or Gentiles; whereas the doctrine of the Scriptures, of Christ, and his apostles, is but one; it is uniform, and all of a piece; and so may likewise denote the disagreement of other doctrines with the perfections of God, the person and offices of Christ, the Scriptures of truth, the analogy of faith, and even with themselves: and "strange" doctrines may design such as were never taught by God, nor are agreeable to the voice of Christ, nor to be found in the word of God; and which are new, and unheard of, by the apostles and churches of Christ; and appear in a foreign dress and habit: wherefore the apostle exhorts the believing Hebrews not to be "carried about with them"; as light clouds and meteors in the air, by every wind: for so to be, is to be like children; and discovers great ignorance, credulity, levity, inconstancy, uncertainty, fluctuation, and inconsistency:

for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; with the doctrine of grace, which is food for faith, and does not leave men at uncertainties about things; but establishes the heart, with respect to the love and favour of God, and builds souls upon the foundation, Christ; so that they are not at a loss about the expiation of sin, justification, and salvation; but firmly look for, and expect eternal happiness by Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God:

not with meats; referring to the distinction of meats among the Jews; or the sacrifices ate both by the priests and by the people; or the whole ceremonial law which stood in divers meats and drinks:

which have not profited them that have been occupied therein; they were only profitable to the body; and could be of no other use to the soul, when they were in force, than as they led to Christ, and were regarded by believers; for they were of no advantage to hypocrites and carnal men; they could not sanctify, nor justify, nor cheer the spirits, nor establish the heart; and are of no manner of service at all, since the death of Christ, whereby the whole ceremonial law is abolished.

Hebrews 13:10

Ver. 10. We have an altar,.... By which is meant, not the cross of Christ, on which he was crucified; nor the Lord's table, where his flesh and blood are presented to faith, as food, though not offered; but Christ himself, who is altar, sacrifice, and priest; he was typified by the altar of the burnt offering, and the sacrifice that was offered upon it; the altar was made of Shittim wood, and covered with brass, denoting the incorruptibleness, duration, and strength of Christ: the horns of it, at the four corners, were for refuge; whoever fled to it, and laid hold on them, were safe; so Christ is a refuge to his people, that come from the four corners of the earth; and who believe in him, and lay hold on him, are preserved and protected by his power and grace: the use of it was for sacrifice to be offered upon it; which being a male, without blemish, and wholly burnt with fire, was a sweet savour to God; and which was typical of Christ's human nature, offered on the altar of his divine nature; which was pure and holy, suffered the fire of divine wrath, and was for a sweet smelling savour to God: this altar was but one, and most holy, and sanctified what was put upon it; all which is true of Christ: now this altar the saints have, and have a right to eat of it; even all Christ's friends and beloved ones; all that are made priests unto God by him; all that know him, believe in him, have a spiritual discerning of him, and hunger and thirst after him:

whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle: there is something of this altar, or that was offered up upon this altar, that is to be eaten, even the flesh and blood of Christ; and to "eat" of it is to believe that Christ is come in the flesh, and is become an offering for sin, and for us that eat; it is to receive, embrace, and possess the blessings procured by it; which is done by faith, with spiritual joy and gladness, and with sincerity and singleness of heart: now those, who served the tabernacle, or adhered to the service of the ceremonial law, they had no right to eat of this altar: the allusion is to the priests' eating of the sacrifices, and to some sacrifices, of which they might not eat, **Le 2:10** and this is not to be understood of believers, before the coming of Christ, who did attend tabernacle service; for they ate the same spiritual meat, and drank the same spiritual drink, as believers do now; but of such, who obstinately persisted in the ceremonies of the law, when they were abolished; and so cut off themselves from all right to the substance of these shadows. See **Ga 5:2**.

Hebrews 13:11

Ver. 11. For the bodies of those beasts,.... Not the red heifer, Nu 19:1 nor the sin offering in general, **Le 6:30** nor those for the priest and people, **Le 4:11** but the bullock and goat, on the day of atonement, Le 16:11 which were typical of Christ, in the bringing of their blood into the most holy place, by the high priest, for sin; and in the burning of them, without the camp: these beasts were slain, their blood was shed, and was brought into the most holy place, by the high priest; and was sprinkled on the mercy seat, and the horns of the altar of incense; and, by it, atonement was made for the priest, his house, and all Israel; which was a type of the death of Christ; the shedding of his blood; the carrying of it into heaven; the sprinkling it upon the throne of grace and mercy; by which reconciliation is made for the sins of all God's people:

whose blood is brought into the sanctuary: that is, into the holy of holies, as the Ethiopic version renders it:

by the high priest for sin; to make atonement for it, for his own, and for the sins of his family, and of all Israel:

are burnt without the camp, Le 16:27 even their skins, flesh, and dung; and the men that burnt them were unclean, though, upon being washed, were received: which was typical of the dolorous sufferings of Christ without Jerusalem, as the next verse shows; and points out the extent of his sufferings, reaching to all parts of his body, and even to his soul; and expresses not only the pains, but the shame and reproach he endured, signified by the burning of the dung; and hints at the pardon of the wicked Jews, who were concerned in his sufferings;

which was applied unto them upon their repentance.

Hebrews 13:12

Ver. 12. Wherefore Jesus also,.... In order to answer the type of him;

that he might sanctify the people with his own blood: by "the people" are meant the people who are the objects of divine love and favour; a chosen and covenant people; a distinct and peculiar people; Christ's own special people, by the gift of his Father to him: and the sanctification of them does not design the internal sanctification of them, though this is from Christ, and in consequence of his blood; nor does it so much regard the cleansing of the filth of sin, though Christ's blood sanctifies, in this sense; but rather the expiation of the guilt of sin, which Christ has fully took away; complete pardon being procured, and a perfect righteousness brought in: and this by "his own blood"; the priests sanctified, to the purifying of the flesh, with the blood of others, with the blood of bulls and goats; but Christ with his own blood, which he was, really, a partaker of; and his human nature, being in union with his divine person, as the Son of God, it had a virtue in it, to sanctify and cleanse from all sin, and to make full expiation of it; in shedding of which, and sanctifying with it, he has shown great love to his people: and, that he might do this agreeably to the types of him on the day of atonement, he

suffered without the gate; that is, of Jerusalem: the Syriac version reads, "without the city"; meaning Jerusalem; which answered to the camp of Israel, in the wilderness; without which, the bodies of beasts were burnt, on the day of atonement: for so say {z} the Jews;

"as was the camp in the wilderness, so was the camp in Jerusalem; from Jerusalem to the mountain of the house, was the camp of Israel; from the mountain of the house to the gate of Nicanor, was the camp of the Levites; and from thence forward, the camp of the Shechinah, or the divine Majesty:"

and so Josephus {a} renders the phrase, without the camp, in Le 16:27 by en toiv proasteioiv; "in the suburbs"; that is, of Jerusalem, where Christ suffered,

{z} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 7. fol. 188. 3. 4. Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 7. sect. 11. {a} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 10. sect. 3.

Hebrews 13:13

Ver. 13. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp,.... Either of legal ceremonies, which are to be quitted; or of this world, which may be compared to a "camp"; for its instability, a camp not being always in one place; and for its hostility, the world being full of enemies to Christ and his people; and for the noise and fatigue of it, it being a troublesome and wearisome place to the saints, abounding with sins and wickedness; as also camps usually do; and for multitude, the men of the world being very numerous: and a man may be said to "go forth" from hence, when he professes not to belong to the world; when his affections are weaned from it; when the allurements of it do not draw him aside; when he forsakes, and suffers the loss of all, for Christ; when he withdraws from the conversation of the men of it, and breathes after another world; and to go forth from hence, "unto him", unto Christ, shows, that Christ is not to be found in the camp, in the world: he is above, in heaven, at the right hand of God; and that going out of the camp externally, or leaving the world only in a way of profession, is or no avail, without going to Christ: yet there must be a quitting of the world, in some sense, or there is no true coming to Christ, and enjoyment of him; and Christ is a full recompence for what of the world may be lost by coming to him; wherefore there is great encouragement to quit the world, and follow Christ: now to go forth to him is to believe in him; to hope in him; to love him; to make a profession of him, and follow him:

bearing his reproach; or reproach for his sake: the reproach, which saints meet with, for the sake of Christ, and a profession of him, is called "his", because of the union there is between them, and the sympathy and fellow feeling he has with them in it; he reckons what is said and done to them as said and done to himself; and besides, there is a likeness between the reproach which Christ personally bore, and that which is cast upon his followers; and this is to be bore by them willingly, cheerfully, courageously, and patiently.

Hebrews 13:14

Ver. 14. For here have we no continuing city,.... Neither for religious worship, the city of Jerusalem being quickly to be destroyed, nor for civil life to dwell in; and so may have a peculiar regard to the Hebrews, whose temple and city would, in a short time, become desolate; though it was the general case of the saints, in those times, to be obliged to flee from one city to another, having no certain dwelling place: and it may respect the common instability of this world, and of the state of the saints in it: this world, and all things in it, are unstable and transitory, the riches, honours, pleasures, and profits of it, and the persons in it, and even the world itself; the fashion of it passes away: the saints have no settlement and abiding here; they are not of it, though in it; and though they are in it, it is but for a time; and, when they have done the will of God, they are taken out of it; another place is prepared for them: they are but sojourners, and strangers, and pilgrims; and this they are sensible of, and own, and acknowledge: and it is their mercy, that they are not to continue here; since, while in it, they are exposed to a great many sorrows and afflictions, both of soul and body; are often disturbed with Satan's temptations; and are liable to the snares, insults, and reproaches of the world; and, seeing they have no continuance here, they will be the sooner at home: and they have that to support them, under the instability of worldly things, which others have not; they are interested in an unchangeable God, and in his love; and in an unchangeable Saviour; and in an unchangeable covenant; and have a right to eternal glory and happiness, a city which has foundations, as follows:

but we seek one to come; heaven; which is compared to a city; is future, yet to come; though certain, being built and prepared by God; and is continuing, will abide, being well founded: hence the saints seek for it; See Gill on "Heb 11:10".

Hebrews 13:15

Ver. 15. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise,.... For temporal and spiritual mercies; particularly for sanctification, or expiation of sin, by the blood of Christ; and for heaven, the continuing city, that is to come: this sacrifice is not a proper, nor a propitiatory one, but spiritual and evangelical; it is enjoined by God, is well pleasing to him, and glorifies him; and is our reasonable service, that believe in Christ; for being made priests by him to God, and having faith in him, such are capable of offering it aright; to do which, they are under the greatest obligations: and it is to be offered up by Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and for ever; and who has suffered without the gate, that he might sanctify the people by his blood; it is to be done in imitation of him, and by his assistance; and for him, and blessings in him; and on him, as the altar, which sanctifies the gift; and through him, as the high priest and Mediator; for, as there is no coming to God but by Christ, and all our mercies come to us through him, and our thanksgivings are only acceptable to God on his account, it must be right to offer them up by him: and that, to God continually: as the Creator and Preserver of us, in our beings; as the Father of mercies; as the Father of Christ; and as our covenant God and Father in him; since he is always bestowing mercies on us, of one kind or another; and, therefore, should be continually praised, even in times of adversity, affliction, and temptation; in the midst of reproach and persecution; even when unsettled in mind, body, and estate; since there is a continuing city to come; nor can a believer be in any state of life but he has something to be thankful for:

that is, the fruit of our lips; the sacrifice of praise is so called, in allusion to the offering of the firstfruits under the law; and to distinguish it from legal sacrifices; and to show in what way and manner we are to praise God, namely, with our lips: in
Ho 14:2 which is thought to be referred to here, it is, "the calves of our lips"; sacrifices of praise being instead of calves: and the apostle interprets it in great agreement with the Jewish writers; the Chaldee paraphrase explains it by antwpo ylm, "the words of their lips": and so Jarchi, wnytpv yrbd, "the words of our lips"; and Kimchi, wnytpv ywdyw, "the confession of our lips": and it may be observed, that there is a great nearness in Myrp, "calves", and yrp, "fruit"; though perhaps rather the phrase is borrowed from Isa 57:19 where it is expressly had; the Septuagint indeed have it in Ho 14:2 & the apostle adds, for further explanation,

giving thanks to his name; to the name of God; to the glory of his name; to the honour of his divine perfections; for mercies of every kind: the word signifies "a speaking together"; and may design not only the conjunction of the heart and tongue together in praise, but a social giving thanks to God by the saints, as a body together: the phrase yusia ainesewv, "the sacrifice of praise", is used by the Septuagint in 2Ch 29:31. The apostle having shown that legal sacrifices were all superseded and abolished by the sacrifice of Christ, which is the design of this epistle, points out what sacrifice believers should offer up to God, under the Gospel dispensation; and the Jews themselves say, that

"in future time (i.e. in the days of the Messiah) all sacrifices shall cease, but hdwt Nbrq, "the sacrifice of praise" shall not cease {b}."

{b} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 153. 1. & sect 27. fol. 168. 4.

Hebrews 13:16

Ver. 16. But to do good and to communicate forget not,.... Which is to be understood, not of doing good works in general, but of acts of beneficence, or communicating to "the poor", as the Syriac version renders it: the apostle proceeds to take notice of another sort of sacrifice, which continues under the Gospel dispensation; and that is, alms; which should be attended to: alms should be given, or beneficence be exercised to all men in need, even to our enemies, as well as to our friends and relations; and especially to poor saints, and ministers of the Gospel: and this believers should not "forget"; which shows that it is a duty of importance; and that men are too apt to neglect it, and should be stirred up unto it:

for with such sacrifices God is well pleased; not that they are meritorious of the favour of God and of eternal life; for what a man gives in a way of charity is but what God has given him, and cannot be profitable to God, though it is to a fellow creature; nor is there any proportion between what is given, and grace and glory which the saints receive; yet doing good in this way, when it is done in faith, springs from love, and is directed to the glory of God, is well pleasing to him; yea, these sacrifices are preferred by him to legal ones, **Ho 6:6** and the Jews also say, that

"greater is he who does alms than (if he offered) all sacrifices {c}."

{c} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 49. 2.

Hebrews 13:17

Ver. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you,.... Not the ecclesiastical rulers among the Jews, for to these they were no longer obliged, they being no longer under such tutors and governors; nor civil magistrates, though it was their duty to obey them, even Heathen ones; for as for Christian magistrates, as yet there were none; but their spiritual guides and governors, the same that are mentioned Heb 13:7 these the apostle exhorts them to "obey": by constantly tending upon the word preached by them, and hearkening to it; by receiving it with faith and love, as it appears agreeable to the Scriptures; for a contrary behaviour is pernicious to souls, and highly resented by God; and by being present at, and joining with them in the ordinances of Christ, as administered by them; and by regarding their admonitions, counsels, and advice:

and submit yourselves; to the laws of Christ's house, as put in execution by them; and to their censures and reproofs, as delivered by the authority of the church; for they are spiritual fathers, and children should obey their parents, and submit to them; they are the ambassadors of Christ, stand in his stead, and represent him, wherefore their authority is great; and they are pastors or shepherds of the flock, whom the sheep should follow:

for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account: they watch not for themselves, for their worldly gain and advantage, and for the estates of men; but for the souls of men, to do them good, to comfort and edify them, to feed them with knowledge and understanding, and for the salvation of them; as such that must give an account to their own consciences, that they discharge their work aright, or they cannot be satisfied; and to the church, to whom they minister, to whom they are accountable, if they are dilatory and negligent; and especially as such as must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and give an account to him of their ministry, of their use of talents committed to them, and of souls that are put under their care and charge; how they have discharged their duty to the souls of men, and how these have behaved towards them under the ministry of the word: the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, "for they watch, as those that must give an account for your souls": the sense is much the same:

that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; either do their work with joy, cheerfully; which they do, when they are obeyed and submitted to; when men attend upon the word and ordinances administered by them, and receive advantage, and grow in grace and spiritual knowledge; when they abide by the Gospel, and walk worthy of it; otherwise they do their work heavily, and with sorrow: or else give up their account with joy, and not with grief; either at the throne of grace, where they either rejoice or complain; or at the great day, when they will be witnesses, either for or against those that have been committed to them:

for that is unprofitable unto you; for whose souls they watch; that is, the latter would be so, either to do their work sorrowing, or to give up their account by way of complaint; either of them must be to the disadvantage of such persons that occasion grief and sorrow.

Hebrews 13:18

Ver. 18. Pray for us,.... Who are in the ministry; your guides and governors; since the work is of so much moment, and so arduous and awful, and you have such a concern in it; See Gill on "2Th 3:1".

for we trust we have a good conscience; there is a conscience in every man, but it is naturally evil: a good conscience is a conscience sanctified by the Spirit of God, and sprinkled by the blood of Jesus; here it chiefly respects the upright discharge of it in the ministerial work: this the apostle often asserts, and appeals to, and which he here expresses with modesty, and yet with confidence; and which he uses as an argument for prayer for them:

in all things willing to live honestly; not only as men, but as ministers; faithfully dispensing the word of truth, without any regard to the favour or frowns of men, as good stewards of the mysteries of God; which contains in it another reason for prayer: the phrase, "in all things", is so placed, that it may be read in connection with either clause; and the sense is either that they exercised a good conscience in all things, in which they were concerned with God, or man, and among all persons, Jews and Gentiles; or that they were willing to live honestly in every respect, as men, Christians, and ministers.

Hebrews 13:19

Ver. 19. But I beseech you the rather to do this,.... To pray earnestly; to strive together in their prayers for them,
Ro 15:30

that I may be restored to you the sooner: Christ's ministers are sometimes hindered from being with their people, through Satan, or his emissaries, creating troubles, or casting them into prison; which might be the apostle's case now; but God can make their way through all; and for this he should be prayed unto.

Hebrews 13:20

Ver. 20. Now the God of peace,.... This is the concluding part of the epistle, which is ended with a prayer, made up of very suitable petitions for the Hebrews; and as the apostle desires them to pray for him and other ministers, he, in turn, and by way of example, prays for them: and he addresses God, as "the God of peace"; who is so called, because of his concern in the peace and reconciliation of his people; because he is the giver of conscience peace to them; because he is the author of all felicity and prosperity, temporal and spiritual; the promoter of peace and concord among saints, and at last brings them to eternal peace; See Gill on "Ro 15:33", a consideration of this gives boldness at the throne of grace; furnishes out a reason why blessings asked for may be expected; has a tendency to promote peace among brethren; may bear up saints under a sense of infirmity and imperfection, in prayer and other duties; and be an encouragement to them under Satan's temptations, and all afflictions. The Arabic version makes the God of peace to be Christ himself; whereas Christ is manifestly distinguished from him in the next verse; and even in that version, reading the words thus, "now; the God of peace raised from the dead Jesus the Shepherd of the sheep, magnified by the blood of the everlasting covenant; Jesus, I say, our Lord confirm you, &c. through Jesus Christ"; for which version there is no foundation in the original text. The God of peace is manifestly God the Father, who is distinguished from Christ his Son:

that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus; who died for the sins of his people; was buried, and lay under the power of death for some time; but was raised from the dead by his Father; though not exclusive of himself, and the Spirit of holiness; in the same body in which he suffered and died; as the firstfruits of his people, and as their Lord and Saviour, head and surety, for their justification, and as a pledge of their resurrection. The apostle addresses the God and Father of Christ in prayer, under this consideration, to observe his power and ability to help in the greatest distress, and in the most difficult and desperate case; to encourage faith and hope in him, when things are at the worst, and most discouraging; to comfort the saints under afflictions, in a view of their resurrection; to engage them to regard a risen Christ, and things above, and to expect life and immortality by him:

that great Shepherd of the sheep: the people of God, whom the Father has chosen, and given to Christ; for whom he has laid down his life; and whom the Spirit calls by his grace, and sanctifies; to whom Christ has a right, by his Father's gift, his own purchase, and the power of grace: these being partakers of his grace, are called "sheep", because they are harmless and inoffensive in their lives and conversations; and yet are exposed to danger; but meek and patient under sufferings; are weak and timorous of themselves; are clean, being washed in the blood of Christ; are sociable in their communion with one another; are profitable, though not to God, yet to men; are apt to go astray, and are liable to diseases: they are also called sheep, and are Christ's sheep before conversion; see
Joh 10:16 and Christ, he is the Shepherd of them, who in all respects discharges the office of a shepherd to them, diligently and faithfully; See Gill

on "Joh 10:16", here he is called, "that great Shepherd"; being the man, God's fellow, equal to him, the great God and our Saviour; and having a flock which, though comparatively is a little one, is a flock of souls, of immortal souls, and is such a flock as no other shepherd has; hence he is called the Shepherd and Bishop of souls: and his abilities to feed them are exceeding great; he has a perfect knowledge of them; all power to protect and defend them; a fulness of grace to supply them; and he takes a diligent care of them: and this great Person so described was raised from the dead,

through the blood of the everlasting covenant: for the sense is not, that God is the God of peace, through that blood, though it is true that peace is made by it; nor that Christ becomes the Shepherd of the sheep by it, though he has with it purchased the flock of God; nor that the chosen people become his sheep through it, though they are redeemed by it, and are delivered out of a pit wherein is no water, by the blood of this covenant; but that Christ was brought again from the dead through it; and it denotes the particular influence that it had upon his resurrection, and the continued virtue of it since. The "covenant" spoken of is not the covenant of works made with Adam, as the federal head of his natural seed; there was no mediator or shepherd of the sheep that had any concern therein; there was no blood in that covenant; nor was it an everlasting one: nor the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham; though possibly there may be some reference to it; or this may be opposed to that, since the blood of circumcision is often called by the Jews tyrb Md, "the blood of the covenant" {d}: nor the covenant on Mount Sinai, though there may be an allusion to it; since the blood which was then shed, and sprinkled on the people, is called the blood of the covenant, Ex 24:8 but that was not an everlasting covenant, that has waxed old, and vanished away; but the covenant of grace is meant, before called the new and better covenant, of which Christ is the surety and Mediator; see **Heb 7:22**. This is an "everlasting one"; it commenced from everlasting, as appears from the everlasting love of God, which is the rise and foundation of it; from the counsels of God of old, which issued in it; from Christ's being set up from everlasting, as the Mediator of it; from the promises of it which were made before the world began; and from the spiritual blessings of grace in it, which were given to God's elect in Christ before the foundation of it: moreover, it will endure for ever; nor will it be succeeded by any other covenant: and the blood of Christ may be called the blood of it, because the shedding of it is a principal article in it; by it the covenant is ratified and confirmed; and all the blessings of it come through it, as redemption, peace, pardon, justification, and even admission into heaven itself; and Christ, through it, was brought again from the dead, because by it he fulfilled his covenant engagements, satisfied divine justice, and abolished sin, yea, death itself.

{d} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 135. 1. & T. Hieros. Yebamot, fol. 9. 1.

Hebrews 13:21

Ver. 21. Make you perfect in every good work to do his will,.... The Alexandrian copy reads, "in every good work and word"; as in **2Th 2:17** every good work is to be done: a good work is what is done in obedience to the command of God, and in faith, and from a principle of love, in the name and strength of Christ, and with a view to the glory of God; and every such work should be diligently attended to; such as concern God, and are of a moral nature, or of positive institution; and such as concern each other, whether as men or Christians: and the will of God is the rule of every good work, both as to matter and manner; whatever is not agreeably to the revealed will of God, let it have ever such a show of religion and holiness in it, it is not a good work; continuance in the performance of good works, and the perfection of them, are things to be desired of God; it requires grace to perform good works, and more grace to abound in them, and to keep men from being weary of well doing; and though the best of works are imperfect, yet perfection in them is desirable, and it is God alone that can make the saints perfect in any sense; see **1Pe 5:10**. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, "strengthen you", or "confirm you"; saints need to be strengthened with spiritual strength, to perform good works; for they are weak and feeble, and unable of themselves to do anything spiritually good; without Christ they can do nothing, but through him strengthening them, they can do all things; and they have need to be confirmed in them, that they are the will of God, and that it is their duty to regard them. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "fit you": men are naturally unfit for good works; in order to do them aright, it is necessary that they should have knowledge of the will of God; that they be regenerated and created in Christ; that they be sanctified and cleansed, and so meet for the master's use; that they have the Spirit of God, and strength from Christ; and that they be believers in him: nor is there always a fitness in saints themselves, or a readiness to good works, only when God gives both will and power to do them; wherefore such a petition as this is very proper and pertinent; another follows, or the same carried on, and more largely expressed; though it rather seems to be a distinct one, and that in order to the former:

working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; the good work of grace being necessary to the performance of good works; nor

can any man do a good work well, unless he has the good work of grace wrought in him: grace is a work not of man, but of God; it is an internal work, something in a man's heart, and not anything without him, or done by him; and it is a gradual and progressive work; it is carried on by degrees, and is not yet perfect, though it will be. God is continually working in his people, carrying on his work, and will at length perform it;
See Gill on "Php 1:6", and this is "well pleasing in his sight"; it is in his sight; it is obvious to his view, when it is not to others, nor to themselves, being the hidden man of the heart; and it is very agreeable to him; it makes men like unto him; hereby they become a suitable habitation for him, and are put into a capacity of serving him; to such he gives more grace, and on that grace he entails glory: and all this is

through Jesus Christ; all the grace necessary for the beginning and carrying on, and finishing of the good work of grace, and for the performance of every good work, comes through the hands of Christ, in whom all fulness of it dwells; and through the blood and intercession of Christ, by virtue of which it is communicated; and all become acceptable to God through him, as the persons of the Lord's people, so the grace that is wrought in them, and the works that are done by them:

to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen; either to God the Father of Christ, and the Father of mercies, and God of salvation; and as he is the God of peace, and the bringer of Christ from the dead; the appointer, provider, and giver of the great Shepherd; the author and finisher of all good in his people: or to Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through whom all grace and good things come; to him does this doxology of right belong; he has a glory both as God, and as Mediator; and the glory of both is to be given to him: the glory of his deity, by asserting it; by attributing all divine perfections and works unto him; by worshipping of him, and by ascribing the efficacy of his mediatorial actions to it: and the glory of salvation and redemption is to be given to him, who alone has obtained it; by discarding all other Saviours; by trusting alone in him; by looking to him alone for peace, pardon, justification, sanctification, and eternal life: and this glory should be ascribed continually, for ever and ever, as it will be by angels, and saints to all eternity, The word "Amen" is added, to show that the apostle assented to it, and wished it might be, and that he firmly believed it, and so asserted that it would be; for it is expressive of assent, asseveration, and prayer.

Hebrews 13:22

Ver. 22. And I beseech you, brethren,.... The apostle closes his epistle to the Hebrews in a very tender and affectionate manner, calling them "brethren", as he often does; and speaking to them, not in an authoritative way, nor by way of advice, but by entreaty: the reason may be, because he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and because the Jews were not so well pleased with him, on account of his preaching down the ceremonies of the law; though such language is used by him in other epistles; he became all things to all, that he might gain some. The subject matter of his entreaty is, that they would

suffer the word of exhortation; either from one another, as to prayer, to attendance on the word and ordinances, to a regard to their lives and conversations, and to a close adherence to the Gospel, and the profession of it; or from their ministers, their guides, and governors, whose business it was to exhort them to the several duties of religion; or rather from himself; and it designs either the particular exhortation in Heb 12:5 or the continued exhortation to various duties in this chapter; or any, and everyone throughout the epistle: and this shows that the children of God are sometimes heavy and sluggish, and need stirring up; and that there are some things often in exhortations and reproofs which are not so agreeable to the flesh, and yet ought to be taken kindly, and patiently endured: the word may be rendered "consolation", or "solace", as it is by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and may refer to the whole of this epistle, which is of a consolatory nature: this may suggest that these Hebrews were under afflictions, and needed comfort; and yet through unbelief might be tempted to refuse the comfort administered to them; which is too often the case with God's people:

for I have written a letter unto you in few words; or, "I have sent, or, wrote to you in brief"; meaning either the exhortatory part of the epistle, which lay in few words, and chiefly in this chapter; or the whole of the epistle, which was but short in comparison of the length he might have carried it, and as the subject matter of it might seem to require; it treating on the great doctrines of the Gospel, and mysteries of grace; things of the greatest moment and importance, and which might have been largely insisted on; but he had contracted things, and had wrote much in a little; and this he makes a reason why they should suffer or bear with the exhortation given, since it was not pressed with a multitude of words, wearing out their patience.

Hebrews 13:23

Ver. 23. Know ye that [our] brother Timothy is set at liberty,.... This is the same person to whom the Apostle Paul wrote two epistles, and whom he often calls his son, though sometimes his brother, as here, **Col 1:1** of him he says, that he was set at liberty, or "dismissed"; either by the apostle, by whom he was sent into some parts, upon some business; or rather was loosed from his bonds, having been a prisoner for the sake of Christ and the Gospel; and, it may be; a fellow prisoner with the apostle, at Rome, as Aristarchus and others were; and this very great and useful person being known, very likely, to the Hebrews, since his mother was a Jewess, and he himself was well reported of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium, Ac 16:1 it was a piece of good news to them to hear of his release:

with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you; by which it seems that Timothy was now absent from the apostle, but that he expected him to come in a short time; when, if he should, they would both come together, and visit the Hebrews; which looks as if the apostle was at liberty himself, or at least had some hopes of his deliverance from prison; but whether he ever had his liberty after this, and saw the Hebrews any more, cannot be said; the contrary seems most probable.

Hebrews 13:24

Ver. 24. Salute all them that have the rule over you,.... The pastors and officers of the church of the Hebrews, the same with those in Heb 13:7 and all the saints; the several members of the church, who were set apart to holiness by God; whose sins were expiated by Christ; to whom Christ was made sanctification; and who were internally sanctified by the Spirit of God, and lived holy lives and conversations; to these the apostle wished all prosperity, inward and outward, spiritual and temporal; and he uses the word "all" in both clauses; and, including every officer and member, expresses his universal love to them, whether high or low, rich or poor, greater or lesser believers:

they of Italy salute you; that is, the brethren, as the Vulgate Latin version reads; the Italian brethren; such as were at Puteoli, and other places, in that country; see Ac 28:13. Italy is a famous and well known country in Europe; a very fruitful and delightful one; of which Rome, where the apostle very likely now was, is the chief city: it has been called by different names, as Saturnia from Saturn; and Ausonia, Aenotria, and Hesperia Magna; and it had its name Italy, some say, from Italus, the son of Penelope and Telegonus; others, from Italus, a king of the Arcadians, or, as some say, the Sicilians; but, according to

Timsaeus and Varro {e}, it was so called from the multitude of oxen in it, which in the old Greek language were called italoi, "Italoi", to which comes near in sound the Latin word "vituli", used for "calves"; and Italy is frequently, by Jewish writers {f} called Nwy lv ayljya, "Italy of Greece"; and formerly it was inhabited by Greeks, and was called Great Greece {g}: it is bounded on the east with the Adriatic sea; and on the west by the river Var, with the Alps, which separate France from Italy; and on the south with the Tyrrhene, or Tuscan sea, called the lower, and on the north, partly with the Alps, which are on the borders of Germany, and partly with the Adriatic sea, called the higher. There were Christians in this country before the Apostle Paul came to Rome, both at Rome, and other places, as before observed. It is said {h}, that Barnabas was first at Rome, and planted the church there; that he went round Lombardy, and lived at Milain; that in the "first" century, Apollinaris preached at Ravenna, and Hermagoras at Aquileia; and there were Christian churches in the "second" century, not only at Rome, but in many other cities and places; and so likewise in the "third" century, as at Verona, Spoletum, Beneventum, &c. and in the "fourth" century, there were great numbers of churches in this country; as at Verona, and Capua, in Calabria, Campania, and Apulia; and which might be traced in following centuries.

{e} Apud Aul. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 11. c. 1. Vid. Apollodor. de Orig. Deorum, l. 2. p. 101. {f} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 67. fol. 59. 4. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 56. 2. R. Sol. Jarchi in Gen. xxvii. 39. {g} lsidor. Hispal. Origin. l. 14. c. 4. {h} Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 1. l. 2. c. 2. p. 17. cent. 2. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 6.

Hebrews 13:25

Ver. 25. Grace be with you all, Amen. Which is the apostle's usual salutation in all his epistles, **2Th 3:17** in which he wishes renewed discoveries of the love and favour of God; fresh communications of grace from Christ; an abundant supply of the spirit of grace; an increase of internal grace and external gifts; and a continuance of the Gospel of the grace of God. Of "Amen",
See Gill on "Heb 13:21". The subscription of this epistle is,

written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy; in the Alexandrian copy it is, "written to the Hebrews from Rome"; which is very probable, since the Italian brethren send their salutations in it; and the words, "by Timothy", are left out; nor is it likely that it should, since it is clear, from Heb 13:23 that he was absent from the apostle; and if he had sent it by him, what need was there to inform them that he was set at liberty?

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

James 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES

This epistle is called "general", because not written to any particular person, as the epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon are; nor to any particular churches, as the epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, &c. but to the believing Jews in general, wherever they were. The author of it is James; and whereas there were two of this name, who were the apostles of Christ; some have thought it was written by one, and some by another: some think it was written by James the son of Zebedee, and brother of John, which is favoured by the Syriac version, which to this epistle, and the following, premises these words;

"the three epistles of the three apostles, before whose eyes our Lord transfigured himself, that is, James, and Peter, and John."

Now, that James, who was present at the transfiguration of Christ, was James the son of Zebedee: but neither the time, nor occasion, nor matter of this epistle, seem to agree with him, for he was put to death by Herod, about the year 44, Ac 12:1, whereas this epistle was written, as some think, about the year 60, or as others, 63; and it seems pretty manifest that it must be written after the Gospel had been spread in the Gentile world, and was received by the Jews, who were scattered abroad in it; and after many hypocrites had crept into the churches, and many false teachers, and vain boasters, and wicked men, had arisen among them: it seems therefore more agreeable to ascribe this epistle to James, the son of Alphaeus, sometimes called the brother of our Lord, and who was present at the assembly at Jerusalem, when the necessity of the Gentiles' circumcision was debated, Ac 15:1 and is the same whom Eusebius {a} calls James the just, and Oblias; and who seems to have resided at Jerusalem, and to have been the bishop, or overseer of the church there; and therefore in character writes this epistle to the Jews, in the several parts of the world: nor need there be any doubt of the authenticity of it. Eusebius indeed says {b}, that it had been accounted spurious by some, and that not many of the ancient writers had made mention of it: but he himself says, that it was publicly read in most churches; and certain it is, that some very early writers have respect unto it. Irenaeus {c} manifestly refers to it, and so does Tertullian {d}; and it is expressly mentioned by Origen {e} among the canonical books of Scripture. The objections against it are of no weight, which are taken from the seeming disagreement between the Apostle Paul, and the writer of this epistle, concerning the doctrine of justification; and from his calling the law the perfect law of liberty, and insisting so much on the doctrine of works; all which will be seen to be agreeable to the other parts of Scripture, and easily reconciled with them; nor is there anything in it unworthy of an apostle and an inspired writer. The occasion of it seems to be partly the troubles and persecutions which attended the saints for the sake of Christ and the Gospel; and the design of it is to encourage them to patience under them, and to wait and hope for the speedy coming of Christ; and partly the evil practices of some that boasted of their faith and knowledge, though they lived very dissolute lives: and the view of the apostle is to show, that faith, without the fruits of righteousness, is not genuine; and he very largely in it exhorts to several duties very becoming Christians, and inveighs against several vices, which were scandalous to them.

{a} Eccles. Hist. l. 2. c. 23. {b} Ib. & l. 3. c. 25. {c} Adv. Haeres. l. 5. c. 1. {d} Adv. Judaeos, c. 2. {e} Homil. 7. in Josuam, fol. 156. E.

INTRODUCTION TO JAMES 1

In this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle instructs the saints he writes to, how to behave under afflictions, and in every state of life; teaches them not to impute their sins to God, but to themselves; directs them in hearing the word, and cautions against self-deception in religion. The inscription and salutation are in **Jas 1:1** in which the author of the epistle is described by his name and office; and the persons it is written to, by the tribes of Israel they belonged to, and by the condition in which they were scattered about in the world, to whom the apostle wishes all grace. And as they were in an afflicted state, he begins with an exhortation to rejoice in their afflictions; because hereby faith was tried, and that produced patience, and patience being perfect, is the way to be complete, and want nothing, **Jas 1:2**, but if any wanted wisdom, how to behave under such exercises, he advises to apply to God for it, from whom it may be expected, since he is the giver of it, and gives it to all, and that liberally, and does not upbraid with the former conduct, **Jas 1:5** but then such should ask in faith, or otherwise it cannot be thought they should receive, and besides would justly deserve the characters of fluctuating and unstable persons, **Jas 1:6**. And the exhortations the apostle had given, he observes, suited all sorts of persons, poor and rich; the one who is exalted amidst his poverty, and the other who is mean, and frail, and mortal, amidst all his riches; which is illustrated by the flower of the grass falling off and perishing, **Jas 1:9**. And upon the whole, he concludes the blessedness of the man that endures affliction patiently, since a crown of life is promised him, and he will receive it, **Jas 1:12** and from external temptations or afflictions, the apostle proceeds to internal ones, temptations to sin; and denies them to be of God, and imputes them to the lusts of men, and gives a very accurate account of the beginning, progress, and finishing of sin by man; and observes, that to place sin to the account of God, and not man, is a very great error, **Jas 1:13**, which he proves from the pure and holy nature of God; and from the good and perfect gifts, which all, and only, come from him; and instances in regeneration, which is of his will, and by his word, and is the beginning and spring of all good in man, **Jas 1:17**. And having mentioned the word, as a means of that grace, he gives some rules about hearing it; that it should be heard with eagerness, and received with meekness; and whatsoever is contrary thereunto should be avoided; as a forwardness to be teachers of it: wrath and anger at the doctrines of it, which do not work the righteousness of God; and all impurity and naughtiness of the mind, which must render it inattentive to it; and the rather all this should be regarded, since the word is the ingrafted word, and able to save the souls of men, **Jas 1:19** and particular care should be had, that what is heard is put in practice, or otherwise it will be a self-deception; and such will be like a man that beholds his face in a glass goes away, and forgets what sort of a man he is; whereas, if a man looks into the glass of the Gospel hears the word attentively, remembers what he hears, and continues in it, he finds many blessed advantages in so doing, **Jas 1:22** and then the apostle distinguishes between a vain religion, and a pure one; a vain religion is only a seeming one, and may be known to be so by a man's having no guard upon his tongue; wherefore if he thinks himself religious, he is mistaken and his heart deceived, **Jas 1:26** but pure and undefiled religion, which is so in the sight of God, shows itself in a holy life and conversation in general, and particularly in visiting and assisting widows and orphans in distress, **Jas 1:27**.

Ver. 1. James, a servant of God,.... That is, of God the Father; not by creation only, as every man is; nor merely by calling grace, as is every regenerate person; but by office, as a preacher of the Gospel, being one that served God in the Gospel of his Son, and was an apostle of Christ; nor is this any sufficient objection to his being one, since others of the apostles so style themselves:

and of the Lord Jesus Christ; the Ethiopic version reads this in connection with the former clause, without the copulative "and", "James, the servant of God, our Lord Jesus Christ": and so some consider the copulative as explanative of who is meant by God, even the Lord Jesus Christ: but it seems best to understand them as distinct; and that this apostle was not only the servant of God the Father, but of his Son Jesus Christ, and that in the same sense, referring to his office as an apostle of Christ, and minister of the word:

to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad; by whom are meant believing Jews, who were of the several tribes of Israel, and which were in number "twelve", according to the number and names of the twelve patriarchs, the sons of Jacob; and these were not the Christian Jews, who were scattered abroad upon the persecution raised at the death of Stephen, **Ac 8:1** but they were the posterity of those who had been dispersed in former captivities, by the Assyrians and others, and who remained in the several countries whither they were carried, and never returned. The Jews say {f}, that the ten tribes will never return, and that they will have no part nor portion in the world to come; but these the Gospel met with in their dispersion, and by it they were effectually called and converted, and are the same that Peter writes to, **1Pe 1:1** **2Pe 1:1**. And thus we read of an hundred and forty and four thousand sealed of all the tribes of Israel, **Re 7:4** and to these the apostle here sends greeting; that is, his Christian salutation, wishing them all happiness and prosperity, in soul and body, for time and eternity; and it includes all that grace, mercy, and peace, mentioned in the usual forms of salutation by the other apostles. The same form is used in Ac 15:23 and since it was James that gave the advice there, which the rest of the apostles and elders came into, it is highly probable that the epistles sent to the Gentiles were dictated by him; and the likeness of the form of salutation may confirm his being the writer of this epistle.

{f} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 110. 2.

James 1:2

Ver. 2. My brethren,.... Not only according to the flesh, he being a Jew as they were; but in a spiritual sense, they being born again of the same grace, belonging to the same family and household of faith, and having the same Father, and being all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus:

count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; not the temptations of Satan, or temptations to sin; for these cannot be matter of joy, but grief; these are fiery darts, and give a great deal of uneasiness and trouble; but afflictions and persecutions for the sake of the Gospel, which are so called here and elsewhere, because they are trials of the faith of God's people, and of other graces of the Spirit of God. God by these tempts his people, as he did

Abraham, when he called him to sacrifice his son; he thereby tried his faith, fear, love, and obedience; so by afflictions, God tries the graces of his people; not that he might know them, for he is not ignorant of them, but that they might be made manifest to others; and these are "divers": many are the afflictions of the righteous; through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom; it is a great fight of afflictions which they endure, as these believers did; their trials came from different quarters; they were persecuted by their countrymen the Jews, and were distressed by the Gentiles, among whom they lived; and their indignities and reproaches were many; and their sufferings of different sorts, as confiscation of goods, imprisonment of body, banishment, scourgings, and death in various shapes: and these they "fall" into; not by chance, nor altogether at an unawares, or unexpectedly; but they fell into them through the wickedness and malice of their enemies, and did not bring them upon themselves through any crime or enormity they were guilty of: and when this was their case, the apostle exhorts them to count it all joy, or matter of joy, of exceeding great joy, even of the greatest joy; not that these afflictions were joyous in themselves, but in their circumstances, effects, and consequences; as they tried, and exercised, and improved the graces of the Spirit, and worked for their good, spiritual and eternal, and produced in them the peaceable fruit of righteousness; and as they were attended with the presence and Spirit of God, and of glory; and as they made for, and issued in the glory of God; and because of that great reward in heaven which would follow them; see **Mt 5:11**. The Jews have a saying {g},

"whoever rejoices in afflictions that come upon him, brings salvation to the world."

{g} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 8. 1.

James 1:3

Ver. 3. Knowing this,.... By experience; as everyone that is trained up in the school of affliction does: the apostle appeals to the saints, to whom he writes, for the truth of what he was about to say; and which he gives as a reason why they should rejoice in afflictions, because it is a known fact,

that the trying of your faith worketh patience: two things afflictions do when sanctified; one is, they try faith, the truth of it, and make it appear to be true, genuine, and precious, like gold tried in the fire; see **1Pe 1:6** and the other is, that they produce patience: saints being inured to afflictions, become by degrees more patient under them; whence it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth: this phrase may be understood, both of faith, which being tried by afflictions, produces patience; for where the one is in exercise, the other is also, and both are necessary under afflictive providences; and also of afflictions, which try faith, and being sanctified by the Spirit of God, work patience, which is a fruit of the Spirit; for otherwise the effect of them is impatience; and this agrees with the Apostle Paul in **Ro 5:3**.

James 1:4

Ver. 4. But let patience have her perfect work,.... Or effect; or be brought unto perfection; which may denote both the sincerity and continuance of it unto the end, with constancy: patience may be said to be perfect, when it appears to be real and sincere, and not dissembled; for as there may be a feigned faith, a dissembled love, and an hypocritical hope, so likewise a mere show of patience: and certain it is, that as there is a patience which is commendable, there is one that is not, **1Pe 2:20**. And this phrase may also design the constant exercise of this grace to the end; for he that endures, or is patient, and continues so unto the end, shall be saved, and enjoy that perfection of glory and happiness expressed in the next clause:

that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing; which cannot be understood of the saints in this present life; only as they are in Christ, and in a comparative sense; or as perfection may denote sincerity, and uprightness; or of a perfection of parts, but not of degrees; for the saints are very imperfect in themselves, and are very far from being complete in soul, body, and spirit; and want many things, and are wanting in many things, both in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty; but when patience has had its perfect work, and has been tried to the uttermost, and is found right, and has held out to the end; then shall the saints be perfect in holiness and happiness, and be entire, whole, and complete; as they will be in the resurrection morn, both in soul and body, and will want no good thing, and will be free from every sorrow, nor will they be deficient in any service; and to this sense agrees **Jas 1:12**.

James 1:5

Ver. 5. If any of you lack wisdom,.... This shows that the perfection before spoken of is not to be understood as in this life, since the apostle immediately supposes lack of wisdom in them; for this is not said in a form of doubting, whether they wanted it or not, but rather as supposing, and taking it for granted that they did; and in the first, and primary sense of the words, it intends wisdom to behave aright under temptations or afflictions. Saints often want wisdom to consider God as the author of them, and not look upon them as matters of chance, or impute them merely to second causes; but to regard them as coming from the hand of God, and as his hand upon them, as Job did; who does not ascribe his calamities to the thieving Chaldeans and Sabeans, to the boisterous wind, and to the malice of Satan, but to God: they want wisdom to observe the sovereignty of God in them, and bow unto it, and be still, and know that he is God, who does all things well and wisely; and likewise to see and know that all are in love, and in very faithfulness, and for good; as well as to see his name, to hear his rod, and him that has appointed it, his voice in it, his mind and meaning, and what he designs by it; as likewise to learn the useful lessons under it, and particularly to take the cross well, to bear it patiently, and even to count it all joy, and reckon it to be right, necessary, and useful: it requires much wisdom to learn all this, and act up to it. Moreover, this may be applied to all other cases, in which wisdom is wanted; men want wisdom to conduct them in the common affairs of life, and especially the people of God; for the children of the world are wiser in their generation, for themselves and posterity, and in the management of worldly affairs, than the children of light; and also to observe the providences of God, and the footsteps of Providence, and to follow them; and likewise to make a right use of providences, and behave suitably under them, and not be lifted up too much in prosperity, nor be cast down, and too much distressed in adversity; but to consider, that the one is set against the other, and both work together for good. Saints have need of wisdom in things spiritual; they want more grace, which is the truest wisdom, and a larger knowledge of the Gospel, which is the wisdom of God, the hidden wisdom of God; and they lack wisdom to know how to walk towards them that are without, and towards them that are within, so as becomes the Gospel of Christ: and as this is more or less the case of everyone

let him ask of God wisdom; of God the Father, who is the only wise God, who has abounded in creation, in providence, and, above all, in redemption and grace, in all wisdom and prudence; and of his Son Jesus Christ, who is the wisdom of God, and has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him; and of the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and all divine things:

that giveth to all men liberally; God is the giver of all good things, in nature, providence, and grace; every good and perfect gift comes from him, and therefore he, and he only, should be applied unto: and he gives to "all men" the bounties of his providence; and to all that ask, and call upon him in sincerity, the riches of his grace; even to Jews and Gentiles, high and low, rich and poor, greater or lesser sinners; all which he gives "liberally", readily, and at once, freely and cheerfully, and largely and abundantly; not grudgingly, sparingly, and with a strait hand, but with an open one, and in a very extensive manner.

And upbraideth not; with former sins and transgressions, with former miscarriages and misconduct; or with former kindnesses, suggesting that he had given largely already, and his favours had been despised or abused; or he had been treated with ingratitude and neglect; in which manner sometimes men put off those that apply unto them, but so does not God; wherefore every word here used is encouraging to go to God for wisdom: yea, it follows,

and it shall be given him; God has said it, Christ has promised it, and the apostle might, with certainty, say it after them, and all experience confirms the truths of it; See **Mt 7:7**.

James 1:6

Ver. 6. But let him ask in faith,.... Not only in the faith of the divine Being that God is; but in the faith of the promises he has made; and in the faith of his power and faithfulness to perform them; and in the faith of this, that whatever is asked, according to the will of God, and is for his glory, and his people's good, shall be given.

Nothing wavering; about the thing asked for, whether it is right or no to ask for it; for that should be settled before it is asked for; nor about the power of God to do it; nor about his will, in things he has declared he will do; nor about his faithfulness to his promises; nor at all questioning but what is proper, suitable, and convenient, will be given in God's own time and way.

For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed; he is troubled, restless, unquiet, and impatient; and he is fickle, inconstant, unstable, and unsettled; and is easily carried away with every wind of doctrine, temptation, and lust.

James 1:7

Ver. 7. For let not that man think,.... Imagine, conclude, or please himself with such thoughts,

that he shall receive anything from the Lord; wisdom, or anything else, he is seeking after; for wanting faith, he has nothing to receive with; faith is the grace, which receives the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and all grace from him; which receives a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, adoption of children, and even the everlasting inheritance, at least, the right unto it; wherefore those who have not faith, as the wavering man, cannot receive any thing.

James 1:8

Ver. 8. A double minded man,.... A man of two souls, or of a double heart, that speaks and asks with an heart, and an heart, as in Ps 12:2 who halts between two opinions, and is at an uncertainty what to do or say, and is undetermined what to ask for; or who is not sincere and upright in his requests, who asks for one thing, and means another, and asks amiss, and with an ill design; does not call upon God in truth, and in the sincerity of his soul; draws nigh to him with his mouth, and honours him with his lips, but his heart is far from him. Such an one is

unstable in all his ways; he is confused in his mind; restless in his thoughts, unsettled in his designs and intentions; inconstant in his petitions; uncertain in his notions and opinion of things; and very variable in his actions, and especially in matters of religion; he is always changing, and never at a point, but at a continual uncertainty, both in a way of thinking and doing: he never continues long either in an opinion, or in a practice, but is ever shifting and moving.

James 1:9

Ver. 9. Let the brother of low degree,.... By "the brother" is meant, not one in a natural, but in a spiritual relation; one of Christ's brethren, and who is of that family that is named of him; of the household of faith, and is in church communion: and whereas he is said to be of "low degree", or "humble", this regards not the affection of his mind, or his conduct and deportment, he being meek and lowly, and clothed with humility, as every brother is, or ought to be; but his outward state and condition, being, as to the things of this world, poor, and mean in his outward circumstances, and so humbled and afflicted. This appears from the rich man, who, in the next verse, is opposed unto him, and

distinguished from him; see
Ps 62:9 such an one is advised to

rejoice in that he is exalted; or to "glory in his exaltation"; in that high estate, to which he is advanced; for a person may be very low and mean, as to his worldly circumstances, and yet be very high, and greatly exalted in a spiritual sense: and this height of honour and grandeur, of which he may boast and glory, amidst his outward poverty, lies in his high birth and descent, being born from above, and of God, and belonging to his family; in being an adopted Son of God, and so an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ, and of the heavenly inheritance and kingdom; in the present riches of grace he is possessed of, as justifying, pardoning, and sanctifying grace; and in the high titles he bears, as besides the new name, the name better than that of sons and daughters of the greatest potentate, even that of a Son of the Lord God Almighty, his being a King, and a priest unto God, and for whom a kingdom, crown, and throne are prepared; and also in the company he daily keeps, and is admitted to, as of God, and Christ, and the holy angels: and this height of honour have all the saints, be they ever so poor in this world, who can vie with the greatest of princes for sublimity and grandeur.

James 1:10

Ver. 10. But the rich, in that he is made low,.... That is, the rich brother; for there were rich men in the churches in those times, and which James often takes notice of in this epistle. Such an one should rejoice or glory in his lowness, or low estate; in the consideration of the low estate, out of which he was raised, by the good providence of God, and was not owing to any merit of his; and in the low estate into which he may be at present reduced, through the violence of persecution being stripped of all his riches for Christ's sake, of which he might make his boast, and count it his greatest glory; or in that low estate he may quickly expect he shall be brought into, either in the above manner, or by some calamity or another, and at least by death, which will put him upon a level with others: or this may have respect to the temper of his mind, which he has, through the grace of God, and the station he is in, in the church of God, being a brother, and no more than a brother, and upon an equal foot with the meanest member in it; and which yet is matter of rejoicing, that he is one, and that he is so blessed with the grace of humility, as not to lift up himself above others, not to mind high things, but to condescend to men of low estate; and such a deportment the apostle exhorts rich saints unto, from the consideration of the instability and inconstancy of worldly riches.

Because, as the flower of the grass he shall pass away; shortly, and suddenly; either he himself by death, or his riches at death, or before, and therefore are not to be gloried in; nor should the possessors of them be proud and haughty and elate themselves with them, but should behave humbly and modestly to their fellow creatures and Christians, as knowing that in a short time they will all be upon a par, or in an equal state; See Job 14:2. The metaphor here used is enlarged upon in the following verse, for the further illustration of the fickleness, perishing, and transitory nature of earthly enjoyments.

James 1:11

Ver. 11. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat,.... As it is about the middle of the day, when it shines in its full strength, and its heat is very great and scorching, especially in the summer season, and in hot climates:

but it withereth the grass; strikes it with heat, causes it to shrivel, and dries it up;

and the flower thereof falleth; drops off from it to the ground:

and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth; its form and colour, its glory and beauty, which were pleasant to the eye, are lost, and no more to be recovered. This shows, that earthly riches, like the flower of the field, have an outward show and glory in them, which attract the mind, and fix an attention to them for a while; they are gay and glittering, and look lovely, are pleasant to behold, and desirable to enjoy; but when the sun of persecution, or any other outward calamity arises, they are quickly destroyed, and are no more.

So also shall the rich man fade away in his ways; riches are uncertain things now, they often make themselves wings and flee away; they are things that are not, that are not solid and substantial they are a vain show; they sometimes fade away in a man's lifetime, before he dies; and he fades away, and comes to decay, amidst all the ways and means, designs and schemes, he forms and pursues, and all the actions and business he does; and if not, when he fades away, and dies amidst all his riches, his glory does not descend after him, but falls off from him, as the flower of the field before the heat of the sun.

James 1:12

Ver. 12. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation,.... Or affliction, which is designed by temptation, as in **Jas 1:2** and the man that endures it is he that so bears it, and bears up under it, as not to be offended at it, and stumble in the ways of Christ, and fall away from the truth, and a profession of it, as temporary believers in a time of temptation do; but manfully and bravely stands up under it, and does not sink under the weight of it, or faint on account of it; and endures afflictions in such manner as not to murmur and repine at them, but is quiet and still, and bears them patiently and constantly, and so endures to the end. Such expect afflictions, and when they come, they are not moved by them, but, notwithstanding them, continue in the ways and work of the Lord; and such are happy persons; they are happy now, and shall be hereafter. Saints are happy under afflictions, and even on account of them, for they are tokens of God's love to them, and evidences of their sonship; and especially they are happy under them, when they enjoy the presence of God in them, when they are instructive to them, and are saner, lifted, when they learn from them the useful lessons of faith, patience, humility, and resignation to the will of God, and are made more partakers of his holiness; and they will be happy hereafter, as follows. The Jews have a saying {h} much like this,

""blessed" is the man, wnwyonb dmwe awhv, "who stands in his temptation", for there is no creature whom the holy blessed God does not tempt."

For when he is tried; by the fire of afflictions, as gold is tried in the fire; when God hereby has tried what is in his heart, and the truth of grace in him, as faith, love, patience, &c. and has purged away his dross and tin, and has refined and purified him, as gold and silver are refined and purified in the furnace, or refining pot: and when being thus tried and proved, and found genuine, and comes forth as gold, after this state of temptation and affliction is over,

he shall receive the crown of life, eternal happiness, called a "crown", because of the glory of it, which will be both upon the bodies and souls of believers to all eternity; and as suitable to their character, they being kings, and having a kingdom and thrones prepared for them; and in allusion to the crown that was given to the conquerors in the Olympic games: and it is called a "crown of life", because it is for life, which an earthly crown is not always; and because it lies in eternal life, and is an everlasting crown; it is a crown of glory that fadeth not away, an incorruptible one; and differs from the corruptible crown given to the victors in the above mentioned games, which were made of fading herbs, and leaves of trees: and now the man that bears up under afflictions, and holds out unto the end, shall have this crown put upon him, and he shall "receive it"; not as merited by him, by his works or sufferings, for neither of them are worthy to be compared or mentioned with this crown of life and glory; but as the free gift of God, as it will be given him by the righteous Judge, as a reward of grace, and not of debt:

which the Lord hath promised to them that love him; either the Lord Jesus Christ, as in **Mt 5:10** or else God the Father; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, "God"; and the Alexandrian copy leaves out the word "Lord", which may be supplied by the word God; see **Jas 2:5** and this promise he made before the world was, who cannot lie, nor deceive, and who is able to perform, and is faithful, and will never suffer his faithfulness to fail; so that this happiness is certain, and may be depended upon: besides, the promise of this crown of life is in Christ, where all the promises are yea and amen; yea, the crown itself is in his hands, where it lies safe and secure for "them that love him"; either the Lord Jesus Christ, his person, his people, his truths, and ordinances, and his glorious appearing, **2Ti 4:8** or God the Father; not that their love is the cause of this crown of life, or eternal life, for then it would not be the free gift of God, as it is said to be; nor of the promise of it, for that was made before the world was, and when they had no love unto him; but this phrase is descriptive of the persons to whom God manifests his love now, admits to near communion and fellowship with himself, makes all things, even their afflictions, to work for their good, and whom he will cause to inherit substance, and will fill their treasures.

{h} Shemot. Rabba, sect. 34. fol. 133. 3.

James 1:13

Ver. 13. Let no man say when he is tempted,.... Here the apostle uses the word "tempted", in another sense than he did before. Before he speaks of temptations, as matter of joy and boasting, here of temptations, which are criminal, and issue in shame and death; the temptations he before makes mention of, being patiently endured, denominate men happy, but here such are designed, which are to be deprecated, and watched against; before he treats of temptations, which were the means of trying and exercising grace, and of purging away the dross of sin and corruption, but here of temptations to sin, and which are in themselves sinful; before he discourses of temptations in which God was concerned; but here of temptations which he removes from him, and denies of him, as being unworthy of him: wherefore, when any man is tempted to sin, whether when under adversity, or in prosperity, let him not say,

I am tempted of God; for God is holy, and without iniquity, nor does he delight in sin, but hates and abhors it; nor can he commit it, it being contrary to his nature, and the perfections of it; whereas no one can tempt another to sin, unless he is sinful himself, and delights in sin, and in those that commit it, nor without committing it himself; and yet sinful men are apt to charge God with their sins, and temptations to them, in imitation of their first parent, Adam, when fallen, **Ge 3:12** who, to excuse himself, lays the blame upon the woman, and ultimately upon God, who gave her to him; and suggests, that if it had not been for the woman, he should not have ate of the forbidden fruit, nor should he have had any temptation to it, had not God given him the woman to be with him, and therefore it was his fault; and in this sad manner do his sons and daughters reason, who, when, through affliction, they murmur against God, distrust his providence, or forsake his ways, say, if he had not laid his hand upon them, or suffered such afflictions to befall them, they had not been guilty of such sin: he himself is the occasion of them; but let no man talk at this wicked rate,

for God cannot be tempted with evil; or "evils", He was tempted by the Israelites at Massah and Meribah, from which those places had their names, who by their murmuring, distrust and unbelief, proved and tried his patience and his power; and so he may be, and has been tempted by others in a like way; he may be tempted by evil men, and with evil things, but he cannot be tempted "to evil", as the Ethiopic version renders it; he is proof against all such temptations: he cannot be tempted by anything in himself, who is pure and holy, or by any creature or thing without him, to do any sinful action:

neither tempteth he any man; that is, to sin; he tempted Abraham, to try his faith, love, and obedience to him; he tempted the Israelites in the wilderness, to try them and humble them, and prove what was in their hearts; and he tempted Job, and tried his faith and patience; and so he tempts and tries all his righteous ones, by afflictions, more or less: but he never tempts or solicits them to sin; temptations to sin come from another quarter, as follows.

James 1:14

Ver. 14. But every man is tempted,.... To sin, and he falls in with the temptation, and by it, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed; the metaphor is taken either from fishes, who are enticed by the bait, and drawn out by the hook; or from a lascivious woman, who meeting with a young man, entices him, and draws him away after her to commit iniquity with her: by "lust" is meant the principle of corrupt nature, which has its residence in the heart of man; is natural and hereditary to him, and therefore is called his own; he is conceived and shapen in it; he brings it into the world with him, and it continues in him, and is called his own heart's lust, **Ro 1:24**. Now this meeting with some bait, which entices and draws it out, or with some external object, which promises pleasure or profit, a man is allured, and ensnared, and drawn away by it, and so the temptation begins: thus, for instance, covetousness was the predominant lust in Judas; this meeting with an external object, or objects, which promised him profit, he is at once enticed and drawn away to betray his Lord and master for the sake of it: so sin often promises pleasure, though it is but an imaginary, and a short lived one; which takes with a man's own lust, and corruption within him, and so he is allured and drawn aside; and to this, and not to God, should he attribute temptation to sin.

James 1:15

Ver. 15. Then when lust hath conceived,.... A proposal of pleasure or profit being made, agreeable to lust, or the principle of corrupt nature, sinful man is pleased with it; and instead of resisting and rejecting the motion made, he admits of it, and receives it, and cherishes it in his mind; he dallies and plays with it; he dwells upon it in his thoughts, and hides it under his tongue, and in his heart, as a sweet morsel, and forsakes it not, but contrives ways and means how to bring it about; and this is lust's conceiving. The figure is used in **Ps 7:14** on which Kimchi, a Jewish commentator, has this note;

"he (the psalmist) compares the thoughts of the heart
Nwyrhl, "to a conception", and when they go out in word, this is "travail", and in work or act, this is "bringing forth"."

And so it follows here,

it bringeth forth sin; into act, not only by consenting to it, but by performing it:

and sin, when it is finished: being solicited, is agreed to, and actually committed:

bringeth forth death; as the first sin of man brought death into the world, brought a spiritual death, or moral death upon man, subjected him to a corporeal death, and made him liable to an eternal one; so every sin is deserving of death, death is the just wages of it; yea, even the motions of sin work in men to bring forth fruit unto death. Something like these several gradual steps, in which sin proceeds, is observed by the Jews, and expressed in much the like language, in allegorizing the case of Lot, and his two daughters {i};

"the concupiscent soul (or "lust") stirs up the evil figment, and imagines by it, and it cleaves to every evil imagination, trbetmv, "until it conceives a little", and produces in the heart of man the evil thought, and cleaves to it; and as yet it is in his heart, and is not "finished" to do it, until this desire or lust stirs up the strength of the body, first to cleave to the evil figment, and then herh Mwlvt, "sin is finished"; as it is said, Ge 19:36."

{i} Midrash Haneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 67. 4.

James 1:16

Ver. 16. Do not err, my beloved brethren. For to make God the author of sin, or to charge him with being concerned in temptation to sin, is a very great error, a fundamental one, which strikes at the nature and being of God, and at the perfection of his holiness: it is a denying of him, and is one of those damnable errors and heresies, which bring upon men swift destruction; and therefore to be guarded against, rejected, and abhorred by all that profess any regard unto him, his name and glory.

James 1:17

Ver. 17. Every good gift and every perfect gift,.... Whether of nature, providence, or grace, and especially the latter; spiritual gifts given along with Christ, or spiritual blessings in him; every such gift is; as the Vulgate Latin version reads, the "best" gift; better than those which only relate to the present life: and is "perfect" such as the gifts of righteousness, remission of sins, adoption, regeneration, and eternal life. The Jews say {k}, that the good things of this world are not truly good, in comparison of the good things of the world to come, and are not bwj rwmg, "a perfect good." And every such an one is from above; is not from a man's self, from the creature, or from below, but from heaven, and from God who dwells there:

and cometh down from the Father of lights; or author of lights; of all corporeal light; as the sun, moon, and stars; of all natural, rational, and moral light, in angels and men; of all spiritual light, or the light of grace in regenerate persons; and of eternal light, the light of glory in the spirits of just then made perfect:

with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning: as there is in that great luminary, the sun in the firmament, which has its parallaxes, eclipses, and turnings, and casts its shadow; it rises and sets, appears and disappears every day; and it comes out of one tropic, and enters into another at certain seasons of the year: but with God, who is light itself, and in him is no darkness at all, there is no change, nor anything like it; he is changeable in his nature, perfections, purposes, promises, and gifts; wherefore he being holy, cannot turn to that which is evil; nor can he, who is the fountain of light, be the cause of darkness, or admit of any in him; and since every good and perfect gift comes from him, evil cannot proceed from him, nor can he tempt any to it.

{k} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 23. 2, 3.

James 1:18

Ver. 18. Of his own will begat he us,.... The apostle instances in one of those good and perfect gifts, regeneration; and he pitches upon a very proper and pertinent one, since this is the first gift of grace God bestows upon his people openly, and in their own persons; and is what involves other gifts, and prepares and makes meet for the gift of eternal life; and therefore may well be reckoned a "good" one, and it is also a "perfect one"; it is done at once; there are no degrees in it, as in sanctification; a man is born again, at once, and is born a perfect new man in all his parts; no one is more regenerated than another, or the same person more regenerated at one time than at another: and this comes from above; it is called a being born from above, in **Joh 3:3** as the words there may be rendered; and it comes from God the Father, even the Father of our Lord Jesus, as well as of all lights, **1Pe 1:3** and who in it produces light, in darkness, and whose gifts of grace bestowed along with it are without repentance. And since this comes from him, he cannot be the author of evil, or tempt unto it. This is a settled and certain point, that all the good that is in men, and is done by them, comes from God; and all the evil that is in them, and done by them, is of themselves. This act of begetting here ascribed to God, is what is elsewhere called a begetting again, that is, regeneration; it is an implantation of new principles of light and life, grace and holiness, in men; a quickening of them, when dead in trespasses and sins; a forming of Christ in their souls; and a making them partakers of the divine nature; and this is God's act, and not man's. Earthly parents cannot beget in this sense; nor ministers of the word, not causally, but only instrumentally, as they are instruments and means, which God makes use of; neither the ministry of the word, nor the ordinance of baptism, can of themselves regenerate any; nor can a man beget himself, as not in nature, so not in grace: the nature of the thing shows it, and the impotent case of men proves it: this is God's act, and his only; see **Joh 1:13** and the impulsive or moving cause of it is his own will. God does not regenerate, or beget men by necessity of nature, but of his own free choice; Christ, the Son of God, is begotten of him by necessity of nature, and not as the effect of his will; he is the brightness of his glory necessarily, as the beams and rays of light are necessarily emitted by the sun; but so it is not in regeneration: nor does God regenerate men through any consideration of their will, works, and merits: nor have these any influence at all upon it; but he begets of his own free grace and favour, and of his rich and abundant mercy, and of his sovereign will and pleasure, according to his counsels and purposes of old. And the means he makes use of, or with which he does it, is

with the word of truth; not Christ, who is the Word, and truth itself; though regeneration is sometimes ascribed to him; and this act of begetting is done by the Father, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead; but the Gospel, which is the word of truth, and truth itself, and contains nothing but truth; and by this souls are begotten and born again; see **Eph 1:13** and hence ministers of it are accounted spiritual fathers. Faith, and every other grace in regeneration, and even the Spirit himself, the Regenerator, come this way: and the end is,

that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures; either of his new creatures, and so it has respect to such, as James, and others; who received the firstfruits of the Spirit, who first hoped and trusted in Christ, and were openly in him, and converted to him before others; or of his creatures, of mankind in general, who, with the Jews, are usually called creatures; See Gill on "Mr 16:15", and designs those who are redeemed from among men, and are the firstfruits to God, and to the Lamb, as their regeneration makes appear: and this shows that such as are begotten again, or regenerated, are separated and distinguished from others, as the firstfruits be; and that they are preferred unto, and are more excellent than the rest of mankind, being made so by the grace of God; and that they are by regenerating grace devoted to the service of God, and are formed for his praise and glory.

James 1:19

Ver. 19. Wherefore, my beloved brethren,.... Since the Gospel, the word of truth, is the means and instrument which God makes use of in regeneration, and in forming people for himself:

let every man be swift to hear; not anything; not idle and unprofitable talk, or filthy and corrupt communication; but wholesome advice, good instructions, and the gracious experiences of the saints, and, above all, the word of God; to the hearing of which men should fly, as doves to their windows; should make haste, and be early in their attendance on it, as well, as constant; and receive it with all readiness, and with a sort of greediness of mind, that their souls may be profited, and God may be glorified: the phrase is Jewish; things easy and smooth, a man is Nemvl ryhm, "swift to hear them {l}: slow to speak"; against what is heard, without thoroughly weighing and considering what is said; and this may regard silence under hearing the word, and is also a rule to be observed in private conversation: or the sense may be, be content to be hearers of the word, and not forward to be preachers of it; and if called to that work, think before you speak, meditate on the word, and study to be approved to God and men. Silence is not only highly commended by the Pythagoreans, among whom it was enjoined their disciples five years {m}; but also by the Jews: they say, nothing is better for the body than silence; that if a word is worth one shekel, silence is worth two, or worth a precious stone; that it is the spice of speech, and the chief of all spices; that it is the hedge of wisdom; hence it is the advice of Shammai; "say little, and do much" {n}: and they cry up, as a very excellent precept, "be silent, and hear"; and as containing more than persons are aware of {o}:

slow to wrath; in hearing; when admonitions and reproofs are given, sin is exposed, and vice corrected, and the distinguishing doctrines of grace, are preached; which are apt to fill natural men with wrath, and which must greatly hinder the usefulness of the word; see **Lu 4:28**. This is omitted in the Ethiopic version.

{l} Gloss. in T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 21. 1. {m} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 25. {n} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 15. 17. & 3. 13. T. Bab. Megilla. fol. 18. 1. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 16. fol. 158. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 71. 1. {o} Philo Zuis Rer. Divin. Haeres. p. 482. Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 7. 1.

James 1:20

Ver. 20. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. This is so far from engaging persons to do that which is right and acceptable in the sight of God, that it puts them upon doing that which is evil. The Alexandrian copy reads, "with the wrath of men do not work the righteousness of God"; do not attend upon the word and ordinances of God with a wrathful spirit. Compare, with this, **1Ti 2:8**.

James 1:21

Ver. 21. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness,.... All manner of filthiness, both of flesh and spirit; all pride, vanity, wrath, malice, and evil speaking, under hearing the word: the allusion seems to be to a boiling pot, which casts up scum and filth, which must be taken off: and such is the spirit of wrathful men; it throws up the filth of haughtiness and pride, of anger, wrath, and wickedness, which must be taken off, and laid aside; or the word will not be heard to any profit, or advantage:

and superfluity of naughtiness, or "malice"; the abundance and overflow of it, which arises from such an evil heart, where wrath prevails, and governs: see **1Pe 2:1**. There seems to be an allusion to the removing of the superfluous foreskin of the flesh, in circumcision, typical

of the foreskin of the heart, spoken of in **Jer 4:4** which the Targum, in that place, calls Nwkbl evr, "the wickedness", or "naughtiness of your hearts" to be removed:

and receive with meekness the ingrafted word; which becomes so when it is received; when it is put into the heart by the Spirit of God, and is mixed with faith by them that hear it; so that it is, as it were, incorporated into them, and becomes natural to them, which before was not; and taking deep root in them, brings forth much fruit: and where it comes with power, it reduces every high thought into the obedience of Christ, and makes men meek and humble; and only such receive the truth in the love of it; and to such is the Gospel preached, Isa 61:1, and none but such hear it with profit and edification:

which is able to save your souls; even your whole persons, both soul and body: but the soul is only mentioned, as being the more excellent part of man: this must not be understood of the word, as if it was the author or cause of salvation, but as an instrument; it being a declaration of salvation by Christ, or what shows unto men the way of salvation by him; and is the power of God unto salvation to them, when it is attended with the energy of the Spirit, and the efficacy of divine grace. See **2Ti 3:15**.

James 1:22

Ver. 22. But be ye doers of the word,.... And they are such, who spiritually understand it; gladly receive it; and from the heart obey it, and make a sincere and ingenuous profession of it; and who submit to the ordinances it directs to, and keep them as they have been delivered; and live, and walk, becoming their profession of it. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "be ye doers of the law"; and so one of Stephens's copies, as in **Ro 2:13**

and not hearers only; though the word should be heard swiftly and readily, and received with meekness; yet it should not be barely heard, and assented to; but what is heard should be put in practice; and especially men should not depend upon their hearing, as if that would save them; this is deceiving your own selves; such as rest upon the outward hearing of the word will be sadly deceived, and will find themselves miserably mistaken, another day; see Lu 13:25. Arguments taken from hence are like the sophisms, paralogisms, and false reasonings of sophisters, which carry a fair show, and ensnare and deceive.

James 1:23

Ver. 23. But if any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer,.... The Arabic version here again reads, "a hearer of the law", and so some copies; not hearing, but practice, is the main thing; not theory, but action: hence, says R. Simeon, not the word, or the searching into it, and the explanation of it, is the root, or principal thing, hvemh ala, "but the work" {p}: and if a man is only a preacher, or a hearer, and not a doer,

he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; or, "the face of his generation"; the face with which he was born; his true, genuine, native face; in distinction from any counterfeit one, or from the face of his mind: it means his own corporeal face. The Ethiopic version renders it, "the lineaments of his face".

{p} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 17.

James 1:24

Ver. 24. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way,.... He takes a slight glance of himself, and departs:

and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was; he forgets either his spots, blemishes, and imperfections; or his comeliness and beauty; the features of his face, be they comely or not: so a bare hearer of the word, who is not concerned to practise what he hears, while he is hearing, he observes some things amiss in himself, and some excellencies in Christ; but, when the discourse is over, he goes his way, and thinks no more of either.

James 1:25

Ver. 25. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty,.... By which is meant, not the moral law, but the Gospel; for only of that is the apostle speaking in the context: this is no other than the word of truth, with which God begets men of his own will; and is the ingrafted word which is able to save, and of which men should be doers, as well as hearers, **Jas 1:18**, and this is compared to a glass by the Apostle Paul, **2Co 3:18**, and the word here used for looking into it is the same word the Apostle Peter uses of the angels, who desired to look into the mysteries of the Gospel, **1Pe 1:12** all which serve to strengthen this sense; now the Gospel is called a law; not that it is a law, strictly speaking, consisting precepts, and established and enforced by sanctions penalties; for it is a declaration of righteousness and salvation by Christ; a publication of peace and pardon by him; and a free promise of eternal life, through him; but as it is an instruction, or doctrine: the law with the Jews is called hrwt, because it is teaching and instructive; and everything that is so is by them called by this name: hence we find the doctrine of the Messiah, which is no other than the Gospel, is in the Old Testament called the law of the Lord, and his law, **Isa 2:2** and in the New Testament it is called the law, or doctrine of faith, **Ro 3:27** and this doctrine is perfect, as in Ps 19:7, it being a perfect plan of truths, containing in it all truth, as it is in Jesus, even all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and because it is a revelation of things perfect; of the perfect righteousness of Christ, and of perfect justification by it, and of free and full pardon of sins through him, and of complete salvation by

him; and because it directs to Christ, in whom perfection is: and it is a law or doctrine of liberty;
ton thv eleuyhriav, "that which is if liberty"; which has liberty for its subject, which treats of it, even of the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free: the Gospel proclaims this liberty to captive souls; and is the word of truth, which makes them free, or is the means of freeing them from the slavery of sin, from the captivity of Satan, and from the bondage of the law; and is what gives souls freedom and boldness at the throne of grace; and is that which leads them into the liberty of grace here, and gives them a view and hope of the glorious liberty of the children of God hereafter. This doctrine is as a glass to look into; in which is beheld the glory of Christ's person and office, and grace; and though by the law is the knowledge of sin, yet a man never so fully and clearly discovers the sin that dwells in him, and the swarms of corruption which are in his heart, as when the light of the glorious Gospel shines into him, and when in it he beholds the beauty and glory of Jesus Christ; see **Isa 6:5** and looking into this glass, or into this doctrine, is by faith, and with the eyes of the understanding, opened and enlightened by the Spirit of God; and the word here used signifies a looking wistly and intently, with great care and thought, and not in a slight and superficial manner; and such a looking is designed, as is attended with effect; such an one as transforms into the same image that is beheld, from glory to glory; and happy is the man that so looks into it.

And continueth therein; is not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, nor carried about with divers and strange doctrines; but is established in the faith, stands fast in it, and abides by it; or continues looking into this glass, and to Christ, the author and finisher of faith, who is beheld in it; and keeps his eye upon it, and the object held forth in it; and constantly attends the ministration of it:

he being not a forgetful hearer; but takes heed to the things he hears and sees, lest he should let them slip; and being conscious of the weakness of his memory, implores the divine Spirit to be his remembrancer, and bring to his mind, with fresh power and light, what he has heard:

but a doer of the work; of the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, and of every work and ordinance the Gospel ministry points unto; doing and being subject to all in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God and Christ.

This man shall be blessed in his deed; or "doing", and while he is doing; not that he is blessed for what he does, but "in" what he does; see Ps 19:11 he

having, in hearing the word, and looking into it, and in submitting to every ordinance of the Gospel, the presence of God, the discoveries of his love, communion with Christ, and communication of grace from him by the Spirit; so that Wisdom's ways become ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; see
Ps 65:4, moreover, in all such a man does, he is prosperous and successful; in all he does he prospers: and so he is blessed in his deed, by God, whose blessing makes rich, both in spirituals and temporals: there seems to be an allusion to the blessed man in **Ps 1:1**.

James 1:26

Ver. 26. If any man among you seem to be religious,.... By his preaching, or praying, and hearing, and other external duties of religion, he is constant in the observance of; and who, upon the account of these things, "thinks himself to be a religious man", as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it; or is thought to be so by others:

and bridleth not his tongue; but boasts of his works, and speaks ill of his brethren; backbites them, and hurts their names and characters, by private insinuations, and public charges without any foundation; who takes no care of what he says, but gives his tongue a liberty of speaking anything, to the injury of others, and the dishonour of God, and his ways: there seems to be an allusion to
Ps 39:1.

But deceiveth his own heart; with his show of religion, and external performances; on which he builds his hopes of salvation; of which he is confident; and so gives himself to a loose way of talking what he pleases:

this man's religion is vain; useless, and unprofitable to himself and others; all his preaching, praying, hearing, and attendance on the ordinances will be of no avail to him; and he, notwithstanding these, by his evil tongue, brings a scandal and reproach upon the ways of God, and doctrines of Christ.

James 1:27

Ver. 27. Pure religion and undefiled,.... That which is sincere and genuine, and free from adulteration and hypocrisy:

before God and the Father; or in the sight of God the Father of Christ, and all his people; that which is approved of by him, who is the searcher of hearts, and the trier of the reins of men, "is this": not that the apostle is giving a full definition of true religion; only he mentions some of the effects of it, by which it is known, and without which it cannot be true and genuine; and they are these:

to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction; and not only to see them, and speak a word of comfort to them, but to communicate to them, and supply their wants, as they may require, and according to the ability God has given: where there is true religion in the heart, there is love to God; and where there is love to God, there is love to the saints; and this will show itself to them, in times of affliction and distress; and where this is wanting, religion itself is not pure and undefiled:

and to keep himself unspotted from the world: from the men of the world, who defile by their evil communications; and "from the vices of the world", as the Arabic version renders it, which are of a defiling nature; and, where religion is in its power and purity, and the Gospel of the grace of God comes with efficacy, it teaches to separate from the rest of the world, and to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

James 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO JAMES 2

In this chapter the apostle dissuades from a respect of persons, on account of outward circumstances; shows that the law is to be fulfilled, and that mercy is to be exercised, as well as justice done; and exposes the folly of such who boast of faith without works: he dissuades the saints from all partiality to the rich and poor, from their relation to one another, as brethren, and from their common faith, of which Christ, the Lord of glory, is the object, **Jas 2:1** supposes an instance of it, either in a court of judicature, or a religious assembly, **Jas 2:2** and then makes an appeal unto them, and expostulates with them about it, **Jas 2:4** and makes use of an argument against it, taken from the divine conduct, and an instance of his grace in the choice of persons to eternal life, **Jas 2:5** a conduct very different from some persons here blamed, **Jas 2:6**, and other arguments follow, dissuading from a respect of persons, taken from the characters of rich men, as oppressors of the poor, litigious and quarrelsome with their neighbours, and blasphemers of the name of God, **Jas 2:7** and from the law of God, which requires the love of the neighbour, and which to fulfil is to do well, **Jas 2:8** and from the breach of it, by having respect to persons, whereby its penalty is incurred, **Jas 2:9** for which a reason is given; because whoever offends in one point of the law, is guilty of the whole, **Jas 2:10** as is a clear case, since the same lawgiver that forbids one sin, forbids another; so that he that is guilty of either of them is a transgressor of the law, **Jas 2:11** wherefore it is right both to speak and act according to it, since men will be judged by it, **Jas 2:12** and he will have no mercy shown him that has shown none to the poor, but merciful ones will escape damnation, **Jas 2:13** and then the apostle argues from the unprofitableness of faith itself without works, **Jas 2:14** and which he exemplifies in the case of a poor brother or sister who are wished well, but nothing given them; which good words, without deeds, are of no profit, **Jas 2:15** so in like manner, faith without works is a dead faith, **Jas 2:17** nor indeed can it be made out that a man has faith, if he has not works, **Jas 2:18** at least such a faith as has justification and salvation connected with it; his faith, at most, is no better than that of the devils, who are damned, **Jas 2:19** and that such a faith is a dead faith, **Jas 2:2** and that true faith is attended with, and evidenced by works, the apostle proves by two instances; the one is that of Abraham, whose faith appeared to be genuine, and he to be a justified person, by the works he did; particularly by offering up his son Isaac; in which way his faith operated, and showed itself to be sincere and hearty; and the Scripture was fulfilled that Abraham was a believer; and had righteousness imputed to him, and was a friend of God, and a justified person, **Jas 2:21** and the other instance is that of Rahab, whose faith was also shown by her works, and so a justified person, by receiving the spies with peace, and dismissing them with safety, **Jas 2:25**, and then the apostle explains what he means, by saying more than once, that faith without works is dead; which he illustrates by the simile of a man's body being dead, without the spirit or soul in it, **Jas 2:26**.

Ver. 1. My brethren,.... As the apostle is about to dissuade from the evil of having respect to persons, this is a very fit introduction to it, and carries in it an argument why it should not obtain; since the saints are all brethren, they are children of the same Father, belong to the same family, and are all one in Christ Jesus, whether high or low, rich, or poor:

have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the] Lord of glory, with respect of persons: that is, such as have, and hold, and profess the faith of Christ, ought not along with it to use respect of persons, or to make such a distinction among the saints, as to prefer the rich, to the contempt of the poor; and in this exhortation many things are contained, which are so many arguments why such a practice should not be encouraged; for faith, whether as a doctrine or as a grace, is alike precious, and common to all; and is the faith of Christ, which, as a doctrine, is delivered by him to all the saints, and as a grace, he is both the author and object of it; and is the faith of their common Lord and Saviour, and who is the Lord of glory, or the glorious Lord; and the poor as well as the rich are espoused by him, as their Lord and husband; and are redeemed by him, and are equally under his government and protection, and members of his body: the Syriac Version reads, "have not the faith of the glory of our Lord Jesus", &c. meaning either the glory which Christ is possessed of, whether as the Son of God, in the perfections of his nature, or as man and Mediator, being now crowned with glory and honour, and which is seen and known by faith; or else that glory which Christ has in his hands, to bestow upon his people, and to which they are called, and will appear in, when he shall appear, and about which their faith is now employed: and since this glory equally belongs to them all, no difference should be made on account of outward circumstances, so as to treat any believer with neglect and contempt.

James 2:2

Ver. 2. For if there come unto your assembly,.... The place of religious worship where saints are assembled together for that purpose; though some think a civil court of judicature is intended, and to which the context seems to incline; see **Jas 2:6**

a man with a gold ring; on his finger, which shows him to be a man of dignity and wealth; so those of the senatorian and equestrian orders among the Romans were distinguished from the common people by wearing gold rings; though in time the use of them became promiscuous {q}; the ancients used to wear but one {r}, as here but one is mentioned; and only freemen, not servants, might wear it: however, by this circumstance, the apostle describes a rich man, adding,

in goodly apparel; gay clothing, bright shining garments, glistering with gold and silver, very rich and costly, as well as whole, neat, and clean:

and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; mean and despicable, filthy and ragged: in the courts of judicature with the Jews, two men, who were at law with one another, might not have different apparel on while they were in court, and their cause was trying: their law runs thus {s};

"two adversaries (at law with each other), if one of them is clothed "with precious garments", (Myrqy Mydgb, "goodly apparel",) and the other is clothed with Nyywzb Mydgb, "vile raiment", (the judge) says to the honourable person, either clothe him as thou art, while thou contendest with him, or be clothed as he is, that ye may be alike, or on an equal foot."

{q} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 29. {r} Isidor. Hispal. Originum, l. 19. c. 32. p. 171. {s} Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 21. sect. 2.

James 2:3

Ver. 3. And ye have respect to him that wears the gay clothing,.... Take notice of him, and show favour to him, to the neglect and contempt of the other. This is an instance of respect of persons condemned and dissuaded from:

and say unto him, sit thou here in a good place; the best place; whether it be in a religious assembly, or in a civil court of judicature:

and say to the poor, stand thou there; or in a lower and meaner place:

or sit thou here under my footstool; this also was contrary to the Jewish canons {t}, that one should sit, and another stand, while their cause was trying; the law runs thus:

"one shall not sit, and another stand, but both shall stand; but if the sanhedrim, or court, please to let them sit, they sit; but one does not sit above, and the other below; but one by the side of the other."

{t} Maimon. ib. sect. 3. vid. T. Bab. Shebuot, fol. 30. 1.

James 2:4

Ver. 4. Are ye not then partial in yourselves,.... That is, guilty of such partiality as must appear to yourselves, and your own consciences must accuse you of; or do not ye distinguish, or make a difference among yourselves, by such a conduct, towards the rich and the poor:

and are become judges of evil thoughts; or "are distinguishers by evil thoughts"; that is, make a distinction between the rich and the poor, by an evil way of thinking, that one is better than the other, and to be preferred before him.

James 2:5

Ver. 5. Hearken, my beloved brethren,.... As to a matter of importance, and worthy of attention and regard; being an instance of the divine conduct towards the poor, and carries in it a strong argument against respect of persons:

hath not God chosen the poor of this world? this interrogative is equal to a strong affirmative; and the sense is, that God has chosen the poor of this world; and which is to be understood, not of the choice of them to an office, either in church or state; though sometimes this has been the case, as the instances of David, and the apostles of Christ, show; nor merely to the Gospel, and the outward means of grace, though the poor have the Gospel preached unto them; nor of the effectual calling, though this is true; but of eternal election, which is the act of God the Father, and passed before the foundation of the world; and is an act of sovereign grace, and is irrespective of faith, holiness, and good works; and is the source of all grace, and remains immutable and irrevocable: now the objects of this are, "the poor of this world"; that is, who are poor with respect to the things of this world, but not with respect to the things of another world; for they are chosen to be heirs of a kingdom, and shall enjoy it; though these are not all chosen by God, nor are they the only persons that are chosen; there are some poor men that are not chosen, and are miserable here and hereafter; and there are some rich men that are chosen; but for the most part, or generally speaking, they are not many mighty, nor noble, but the poorer sort, which God has made choice of to partake both of grace and glory. It may be the apostle has some peculiar respect to the poor among the Gentiles, whom God had chosen; it was usual with the Jews to call the Gentiles the world, and they were Jews the apostle now writes to, and who were scattered abroad among the Gentiles; and therefore he might very aptly call them "this world", among whom they lived; and suggest to them, that God had chosen some of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews, and even some of the poorer sort of them; and it was usual with the Jews to distinguish between
larvy yyne, "the poor of Israel", and Mlwe yyne, "the poor of the world", or Mlweh twmwa yyne "the poor of the nations of the world" {u}: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, leave out the word "this", and so the Syriac and Arabic versions, which makes the phrase more agreeable to the

Jewish way of speaking. The Gentiles, in common, were despicable with the Jews, and especially the poor of them; and yet God chose these:

rich in faith; not that they were so, or were considered as such, when chosen, and so were chosen because of their faith; for then also they were, or were considered as heirs of the kingdom, which would be monstrously absurd; and yet there is as much reason, from the text, for the one, as for the other; but the sense is, that they were chosen "to be rich in faith"; and so the Syriac version supplies in the next clause, "that they might be heirs"; which if it had been placed before this clause also, would have been right; election to grace is signified in the one, and election to glory in the other: men are chosen, not because they do believe, or shall believe, but that they might believe; and which faith they have in consequence of election; and which when they have, they are rich: faith is a rich precious grace itself; it is a part of the riches of grace, and is more worth than thousands of gold and silver; and it is the means of receiving and enjoying much riches, as Christ the pearl of great price himself, and all spiritual blessings along with him; such as the rich robe of his righteousness, full pardon of sin, which is according to the riches of his grace, and adoption, which makes men heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and even the eternal inheritance itself, both the promise of it, and a right unto it; all which are said to be received by faith; and therefore believers, how poor soever they may be, to this world's goods, are truly rich men:

and heirs of the kingdom; of glory, which is prepared for all the chosen ones, from the foundation of the world; and is freely given to them by their Father, and to which they are called in the effectual calling; and hence they are made kings and priests unto God, and have crowns and thrones provided for them: the Alexandrian copy reads, "heirs of the promise which he hath promised to them that love him"; that is, which God has promised them, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read; not that their love to God is the cause of this kingdom, or of their choice to it, or of the promise of it to them; all which flow from the love of God to them; but this is descriptive of the persons who shall enjoy it, and may expect to enjoy it, as in **Jas 1:12**.

{u} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 30. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 10. 2.

James 2:6

Ver. 6. But ye have despised the poor,.... Or dishonoured, and reproached them, by showing respect of persons, in preferring the rich to them, and in distinguishing them in such a manner as was to their contempt and injury; which is a reproaching not only of them, but their Maker; and is in effect saying, that God has done either a weak or a wrong thing, in choosing them to be rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom, it being directly contrary to his conduct:

do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? which may be understood either of rich men that were unbelievers; and these either the Heathen magistrates, who ruled over them in a tyrannical way, and with rigour, and often summoned them before them, and persecuted them with violence; or their own countrymen, the Jews, who stirred up the chief men of the Gentiles against them, and drew them to their judgment seats, as they drew Paul to the judgment seat of Gallio, Ac 13:50 or else of rich professors of religion, who assumed a despotic power over the poor brethren of the church, and loved to have the pre-eminence over them, as Diotrephes did, and set up tribunals in the churches, and tried and condemned them in an arbitrary way; or else upon civil accounts had them before heathen magistrates, and went to law with them in their courts, before unbelievers, which is a practice condemned in **1Co 6:1**, and seeing now rich men used them so ill, the apostle mentions this as an argument to dissuade them from respect of persons; seeing they had but little reason to show so much regard unto them, who had treated them in so evil a manner: this is not to be understood of all rich men; nor is the apostle's design to destroy that natural and civil order there is among men, by reason of their different stations, offices, and circumstances; it being highly proper that honour should he given to whom honour is due, but not to the dishonour of another.

James 2:7

Ver. 7 Do they not blaspheme that worthy name,.... Of Christ, or Christians;

by the which ye are called? and which, as before, may design either unbelieving rich men, whether among Jews, or Gentiles, who blasphemed and cursed the name of Christ, and compelled others to do so likewise; or such who professed the Christian religion, who by their supercilious and disdainful treatment of their poor brethren, and by their dragging of them to the tribunals of the Heathens, and distressing them with vexatious law suits there, caused the name of Christ, after which they were called Christians, to be blasphemed and evil spoken of, among the Gentiles.

James 2:8

Ver. 8. If ye fulfil the royal law,.... Which is the law of love to men, without distinction of rich and poor, high and low, bond and free; and is so called, because it is the law of the King of kings; hence the Syriac version renders it, "the law of God", it is the law of Christ, who is King of saints; and because it is a principal law, the chief of laws; as love to God is the sum of the first and great commandment in the law, and may be called the king of laws; so love to the neighbour is the second and next unto it, and may very well bear the name of the queen of laws, and so has royalty in it; and indeed this last is said to be the fulfilling of the law,
Ro 13:8 and it is also submitted to, and obeyed by such who are made kings and priests to God; and that in a royal manner, with a princely spirit, willingly, and with all readiness: the same word, in the Hebrew language, Mybydn, signifies "princes", and to be willing. The Jews frequently ascribe royalty to the law, and often speak of hrwt rtk, "the crown of the law" {w}; and they suppose the Israelites had crowns upon their heads, when the law was given them on Mount Sinai, in which were engraven the name of God, and which they were stripped of when they made the golden calf {x}: now this royal law is fulfilled, when it is regarded without respect of persons,

according to the Scripture, in Le 19:18

thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself; and which is to be understood of every nation, without distinction of Jews and Gentiles, and of persons of every state and condition, rich and poor, without any difference: and when this law is so observed, it is commendable:

ye do well: that which is right, and which is a man's duty to do; this, when done from right principles, and to a right end, is a good work, and is doing a good work well.

{w} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 13. & Abot R. Nathan, c. 41. T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 28. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 183. 2. & sect. 14. fol. 215. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 73. 4. Targum Jon in Deut. xxxiv. 5. {x} Vid. Targum. Jon. & Jerus. in Exod. xxxii. 25. & xxxiii. 4.

James 2:9

Ver. 9. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, &c] This is not doing well, but is a transgression of the law, as every sin is; hence it follows,

and are convinced of the law as transgressors; which carries on a formal process against such persons; it accuses them of sin, and charges them with it; it proves it upon them, and convicts them of it; it pronounces them guilty, and curses them for it; and passes the sentence of condemnation and death upon them; wherefore care should be taken not to commit this sin, and so fall under the convictions and reproofs of the law.

James 2:10

Ver. 10. For whosoever shall keep the whole law,.... Or the greatest part of it, excepting only in one point, as follows: Adam, in a state of innocence, was able to keep the whole law, but by sin he lost that power, nor can any of his posterity now keep it perfectly: they are all transgressors of it, and liable to its penalty; unregenerate men are not obedient to it, and have an aversion to it, and despise it, and cast it behind their backs; regenerate persons, who love it, and delight in it, after the inner man, do not keep it perfectly; the several parts of the law may be indeed kept by a believer, and that sincerely, but not to a perfect degree, for in many things they all offend; Christ only has perfectly kept it, and is the fulfilling end of it for righteousness; men of a pharisaical disposition may fancy they have kept it wholly, as the young man in the Gospel, and Saul, before his conversion; but this is but a fancy, and a sad mistake: the case in the text is only a supposed one, and, as it is here put, implies perfection; for it follows,

and yet offend in one point; sin, which is a transgression of the law, is an offense to God the Father, who is of purer eyes than to behold it; to Jesus Christ, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; and to the blessed Spirit who is grieved and vexed by it; and to the justice of God, which being injured by it, demands satisfaction; and to the law of God, which accuses, convinces, reproves, and condemns for it. The word used signifies to "fall", and designs more than stumbling, even an open breach and violation of the law; and which being made, by any, in a single instance,

he is guilty of all: this seems to agree with some common sayings of the Jews, that he that is suspected in one thing, is suspected in the whole law {y}; and he that keeps this or the other command, keeps the whole law; and he that breaks this, or the other command, breaks the whole law; as whether it respects the sabbath, or adultery, or that command. Thou shall not covet, or any other {z}: and this must be understood, not of every particular command in the law, as if he that is guilty of murder is in that instance also guilty of adultery; or he that is guilty of adultery is in that instance guilty of murder; but the sense is, that he is guilty of the breach of the whole law, though not of the whole of the law; as he that breaks anyone condition of a covenant, which may consist of many, though he does not violate every condition, yet breaks the whole covenant; so he that transgresses in anyone point of the law, breaks the whole, commits sin, and is deserving of death, and is treated by the law as a transgressor of it, let it be in what instance it will. But it does not follow from hence, that all sins are equal, as the Stoics say {a}, for there are greater and lesser sins, Joh 19:11 though not some venial, and others mortal, for the wages of every sin is death; nor that the punishment of sin will be alike, as all sins were punishable alike by Draco's laws, but not by the law of God, Mt 11:22 but this may be fairly concluded from hence, that there can be no justification in the sight of God, by an imperfect obedience to, the law, or by a partial righteousness: the law requires perfect obedience, and in failure of that, though but in one point, curses and condemns; and likewise it may be inferred from hence, that a man is not at liberty to obey and neglect what commandments of the law he pleases, but should have respect to them all; which seems greatly the design of the apostle, as appears by what follows.

{y} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 69. 1. {z} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 192. 3. Zohar in Exod. fol. 20. 2. & 37. 1. & in Lev. fol. 32. 3. Shemot Rabba, sect. 25. fol. 109. 3. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 39. 2. & Menachot, fol. 43. 2. & Abkath Rochel, par. 1. p. 3. {a} Zeno & Chrysippus apud Laert. Vit. Zeno, p. 510.

James 2:11

Ver. 11. For he that said, Do not commit adultery,.... That same lawgiver, who is but one, and is God, that gave out the seventh command, and forbids adultery,

said also, Do not kill; delivered the sixth command, which forbids murder.

Now if thou commit no adultery; do not break the seventh command;

yet if thou kill, break the sixth command,

thou art become a transgressor of the law; not of that particular precept of the law, the seventh command, for the contrary is supposed before, but of the sixth only; and yet by so doing, a man becomes a violator of the whole law; for the law is but one, though it consists of various precepts; and the breach of one precept, as well as of another, is the breach of the law: and besides, there is but one lawgiver, who has enjoined one command, as well as another, and whose legislative power and authority is despised and trampled upon by the violation of one command, as of another. This is the apostle's argument, and way of reasoning, proving the above assertion, that he that breaks the law in one particular instance, is guilty of the breach of the whole law.

James 2:12

Ver. 12. So speak ye, and so do,.... Both words and actions should be taken care of; it becomes men to observe what they say, and what they do; for both sinful words and works are transgressions of the law, and will be brought to judgment; every idle word, as well as every evil work, both open and secret, men must give an account of in the day of judgment: wherefore it is incumbent on them so to behave,

as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty:
See Gill on "Jas 1:25" with which compare **Ro 2:12**. Heathens will be judged by the law of nature, Jews by the law of Moses, and those who live under the Gospel dispensation, according to the Gospel of Christ.

James 2:13

Ver. 13. For he shall have judgment without mercy,.... Strict justice, and no mercy shown him:

that hath showed no mercy; to the poor brethren, and distressed members of Christ, but has shown respect of persons to the hurt of the poor, and has despised and oppressed them, instead of relieving and comforting them; so the rich man, that neglected Lazarus at his gates, is refused a drop of water to cool his tongue; and the servant that cruelly insisted on his fellow servant's paying him all he owed, justly incurred the displeasure of his Lord, and was by him delivered to the tormentors; and that servant that beats his fellow servants will be cut asunder, and, have his portion with hypocrites; and such who have seen any of the brethren of Christ hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, and in prison, and have showed no regard for them, will hear, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire":

and mercy rejoiceth against judgment; that is merciful men, who have shown mercy to the poor saints, will not be afraid of the awful judgment, but rather rejoice or glory, as the word signifies, in the view of it, since they will obtain mercy at that day, and hear, Come, ye blessed of my Father, &c. Mt 25:34 so the Ethiopic version renders it, he only shall glory in the day of judgment, who hath showed mercy; the Alexandrian copy reads in the imperative, "let mercy glory", &c. and the Syriac version, "be ye exalted by mercy over judgment".

James 2:14

Ver. 14. What doth it profit, my brethren,.... The apostle having finished his discourse on respect of persons, and the arguments he used to dissuade from it, by an easy transition passes to treat upon faith and works, showing that faith without works, particularly without works of mercy, is of no profit and advantage:

though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? it is clear that the apostle is not speaking of true faith, for that, in persons capable of performing them, is not without works; it is an operative grace; it works by love and kindness, both to Christ, and to his members; but of a profession of faith, a mere historical one, by which a man, at most, assents to the truth of things, as even devils do, **Jas 2:19** and only says he has faith, but has it not; as Simon Magus, who said he believed, but did not.

Can faith save him? such a faith as this, a faith without works, an historical one, a mere profession of faith, which lies only in words, and has no deeds, to show the truth and genuineness of it. True faith indeed has no causal influence on salvation, or has any virtue and efficacy in itself to save; Christ, object of faith, is the only cause and author of salvation; faith is only that grace which receives a justifying righteousness, the pardon of sin, adoption, and a right to the heavenly inheritance; but it does not justify, nor pardon, nor adopt, nor give the right to the inheritance, but lays hold on, and claims these, by virtue of the gift of grace; and it has spiritual and eternal salvation inseparably connected with it; but as for the other faith, a man may have it, and be in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; he may have all faith in that sense, and be nothing; it is no other than the devils themselves have; and so he may have it, and be damned.

James 2:15

Ver. 15. If a brother or sister,.... A Christian man or woman, a fellow member of a church of Christ; for this relation is to be understood in a spiritual sense, though it does not exclude such who are in this relation in a natural sense:

be naked; or clothed in rags, or in very mean and sordid apparel, such as will neither keep them warm, nor clean and decent; for they must not be supposed to be entirely naked, but to be in a very uncomfortable and indecent garb:

and destitute of daily food; have not food sufficient for the day; or aught to support nature with, and yield them proper refreshment and nourishment.

James 2:16

Ver. 16. And one of you say unto them,.... That is, one of the same faith, and in the same communion and church fellowship.

Depart in peace; wishing them all prosperity and happiness, inward and outward:

be ye warmed and filled; clothed and fed; signifying, that they wished them all the accommodations of life:

notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body; neither clothes to wear, nor food to eat; nothing to warm their bodies, or fill their bellies:

what doth it profit? the Ethiopic version reads, "what doth it profit them?" either the poor brother, or sister, to whom these good words are given, and nothing else; for these will neither warm them, nor fill them; or the persons themselves, that say these tidings to them: and the apostle, by this instance, shows, that as that charity which lies only in words, and in tongue, and not in deed, and in truth, is unprofitable, and good for nothing, even to them that profess it; so that faith, which a man says he has, and yet is without works, is alike unprofitable unto him.

James 2:17

Ver. 17. Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. It is like a lifeless carcass, a body without a soul, **Jas 2:26** for as works, without faith, are dead works, so faith, without works, is a dead faith, and not like the lively hope and faith of regenerated persons: and indeed, such who have no other faith than this are dead in trespasses and sins; not that works are the life of faith, or that the life of faith lies in, and flows from works; but, as Dr. Ames observes {b}, good works are second acts, necessarily flowing from the life of faith; to which may be added, and by these faith appears to be living, lively and active, or such who perform them appear to be true and living believers.

{b} Medulla Theolog. l. 2. c. 7. sect. 35.

James 2:18

Ver. 18. Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works,.... That is, a true believer in Christ may very justly call upon a vain boaster of his faith, who has no works, to give proof and evidence of it, and address him after this manner; you say you have faith, be it so that you have; I have works, you see I have, I say nothing about my faith at present; now,

shew me thy faith without thy works, if thou canst; see what ways, means, and methods thou canst make use of, to make it appear to me, or any other, that you have the faith you talk of: the words are a sort of sarcasm and jeer upon the man, and yet very just, calling upon him to do that which is impossible to be done, and thereby exposing his vain boast; for faith is an inward principle in the heart; an hidden thing, and cannot be seen and known but by external acts; and where it is right, it is operative, and shows itself by works, which is not practicable in those who have none:

and I will show thee my faith by my works; there may be indeed an appearance of good works, where there is no faith, as in the Heathens, in the Scribes and Pharisees, and in the Papists, and others; and on the other hand, there may be the principle of faith implanted, where there is not an opportunity of showing it by a series of good works, or a course of godly living, as in elect infants dying in infancy, and in those who are converted in their last moments, as the thief upon the cross; wherefore works are not infallible proofs and evidences of faith, yet they are the best we are capable of giving of it to men, or they of receiving. In short, works may deceive, and do not infallibly prove truth of faith, yet it is certain, that where they are not, but persons live in a continued course of sinning, there cannot be true faith.

James 2:19

Ver. 19. Thou believest that there is one God,.... These words are a continuation of the address of the man that has works, to him that boasts of his faith without them, observing to him, that one, and a main article of his faith, is, that there is one God; which is to be understood in the Christian sense, since both the person speaking, and the person spoken to, were such as professed themselves Christians; so that to believe there is one God, is not merely to give into this article, in opposition to the polytheism of the Gentiles, or barely to confess the God of Israel, as believed on by the Jews, but to believe that there are three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, and that these three are the one God; wherefore this article of faith includes everything relating to God; as to God the Father, his being and perfections, so to Christ, as God, and the Son of God, and the Messiah, &c. and to the Holy Spirit; and to believe all this is right:

thou doest well; for that there is but one God, is to be proved by the light of nature, and from the works of creation and providence, and has been owned by the wisest of the Heathens themselves; and is established, by divine revelation, in the books both of the Old and of the New Testament; what has been received by the Jews, and is well known by Christians, to whom it is set in the clearest light, and who are assured of the truth of it: but then

the devils also believe; the Arabic version reads, "the devils likewise so believe"; they believe the same truth; they know and believe there is but one God, and not many; and they know that the God of Israel is he; and that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are the one God; they know and believe him to be the most high God, whose servants the ministers of the Gospel are; and they know and believe that Jesus is the Holy One of God, the Son of God, and the Messiah,
Ac 16:17.

And tremble; at the wrath of God, which they now feel, and at the thought of future torments, which they expect, **Mr 5:7** and which is more than some men do; and yet these shall not be saved, their damnation is certain and inevitable, **2Pe 2:4** wherefore it follows, that a bare historical faith will not profit, and cannot save any; a man may have all faith of this kind, and be damned; and therefore it is not to be boasted of, nor trusted to.

James 2:20

Ver. 20. But wilt thou know, O vain man,.... These are the words of the apostle reassuming the argument, that faith without works is dead, useless, and unprofitable; and the man that boasts of his faith, and has no works to show it, he calls a "vain man", an empty one, sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal; empty vessels make the greatest sound; such are proud boasters, vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind; but are empty of the true knowledge of God, and of the faith of Christ, and of the grace of the Spirit: the Syriac version renders it, "O weak", or "feeble man", as he must needs be, whose faith is dead, and boasts of such a lifeless thing; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "O foolish man", for such an one betrays his ignorance in spiritual things, whatever conceit he has of his knowledge and understanding: the character seems levelled against the Gnostics, who were swelled with a vain opinion of their knowledge, to whom the apostle addresses himself thus. The phrase, "vain man", is a proper interpretation of the word
aqyr, "Raca", or Reka, used in **Mt 5:22**,
See Gill on "Mt 5:22", which though not to be said to a man in an angry way, yet may be applied to men of such a character as here described; who were empty of solid good, and yet boasted of their knowledge. "Wilt thou know?" dost thou require proofs,

that faith, without works, is dead? as in **Jas 2:17** and that true faith has always works accompanying it, and is shown and known by it? then take the following instances.

James 2:21

Ver. 21. Was not Abraham our father justified by works,.... Not as the causes of his justification, that is denied, **Ro 4:2** but as effects of it, showing the truth of his faith, and the reality of his justification: he had both faith and works, and the former were known by the latter; and even the faith which he had expressed years ago was manifested, demonstrated, and confirmed to be true and genuine, by the instance of his obedience to God, here produced; by which it appeared he was a true believer, a justified person, approved of God, and loved by him. Now if this was the case of Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, yea, the father of the faithful, of all that believe, he is, and must be a vain man, that talks of faith without works; and his faith must be a dead one, and he be very unlike the father of them that believe: the good work instanced in is the offering up of Isaac;

when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar: for when he was bid to take his son, his only and beloved son, Isaac, and offer him up on one of the mountains, that should be shown him, he made haste to do it; he provided everything for it; he split the wood, and carried it with him, and fire in his hand; he built an altar, laid the wood on it, bound his son, laid the wood on the altar, and his son on the wood, and stretched out his hand, with his knife in it, to slay him; so that it was all one, with respect to his intention and will, as if he had actually offered him, and was a full trial and proof of his obedience to God. This was not the only act of obedience, or good work, which he performed; but this being a very eminent one, the apostle instances in it, as a very considerable evidence of his faith in God, and love to him; and which showed him to be a justified person, as he was long before he performed this action, even before Isaac was born; see Ge 15:6 and therefore it can never be the apostle's meaning, that he was justified before God by this, or any other good work or works, as cause or causes of it; but only that he was declared to be so; or, in other words, that his faith was attended with good works, and evidenced by them.

James 2:22

Ver. 22. Seest thou how faith wrought with his works,.... Not to justify him before God; for neither faith nor works are ever said in Scripture to justify any man; but his faith being of the right kind, a faith which works by love, it put him upon doing this work, and many others; for this was done in faith, Heb 11:17 as all good works are, which are properly such; and where there is true faith, it will influence and engage a man to do good works, as it did Abraham.

And by works was faith made perfect? not with an absolute perfection; for though Abraham's faith was very great, yet there were things lacking in it, and he had his fits and times of unbelief; and had he lived till now, his faith, in this sense, would not have been perfect; and he would have had reason to have used the apostle's petition, Lu 17:5 much less would it have been made thus perfect by works; but the sense is, that hereby his faith was declared to be sincere, unfeigned, true, and genuine; just as love is said to be perfected, **1Jo 4:17**.

James 2:23

Ver. 23. And the Scripture was fulfilled,.... Ge 15:6 which speaks of Abraham's faith, and the imputation of to him for righteousness; for the above action of Abraham, in offering up his son, was a clear proof of the truth of his faith, there commended: by this it was made known what a strong faith he had in God, and what reason there was to believe that he was a justified person.

Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness;
See Gill on "Ro 4:3" which shows both that Abraham was justified before he wrought this work, and therefore that could not be the cause or matter of his justification, but only an effect and evidence of it; and that his justification was by faith, or that object which his faith regarded, and had to do with, was his justifying righteousness:

and he was called the friend of God, 2Ch 20:7 he was loved by God with an everlasting love, who showed acts of friendship to him; called him by his grace, and blessed him with spiritual blessings, and increased him with the increase of God; favoured him with near communion with him, honoured him with high characters, and distinguished him by peculiar marks of his favour, and reckoned his enemies and friends as his own; Ge 12:8 and Abraham, on the other hand, loved God, and showed himself friendly to him; trusted in him, and believed every word of his; readily complied with his will, and not only yielded a cheerful obedience to his commands, but enjoined his children after him to observe them: this was a name which Abraham was well known by among the eastern nations; hence he is called by the Mahometans, hlla lylx, "Khalil Allah", the friend of God; and Mahomet says himself {c},

"God took Abraham for his friend."

{c} Koran, Sura 4:125.

James 2:24

Ver. 24. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified,.... Not as causes procuring his justification, but as effects declaring it; for the best works are imperfect, and cannot be a righteousness justifying in the sight of God, and are unprofitable in this respect; for when they are performed in the best manner, they are no other than what it is a man's duty to perform, and therefore cannot justify from sin he has committed: and besides, justification in this sense would frustrate the grace of God, make void the death of Christ, and encourage boasting in men. Good works do not go before justification as causes or conditions, but follow it as fruits and effects:

and not by faith only: or as without works, or a mere historical faith, which being without works is dead, of which the apostle is speaking; and therefore can bear no testimony to a man's justification; hence it appears, that the Apostle James does not contradict the Apostle Paul in **Ro 3:28** since they speak not of the same sort of faith; the one speaks of a mere profession of faith, a dead and lifeless one; the other of a true faith, which has Christ, and his righteousness, for its object, and works by love, and produces peace, joy, and comfort in the soul. Moreover, the Apostle Paul speaks of justification before God; and James speaks of it as it is known by its fruits unto men; the one speaks of a justification of their persons, in the sight of God; the other of the justification and approbation of their cause, their conduct, and their faith before men, and the vindication of them from all charges and calumnies of hypocrisy, and the like; the one speaks of good works as causes, which he denies to have any place as such in justification; and the other speaks of them as effects flowing from faith, and showing the truth of it, and so of justification by it; the one had to do with legalists and self-justiciaries, who sought righteousness not by faith, but by the works of the law, whom he opposed; and the other had to do with libertines, who cried up faith and knowledge, but had no regard to a religious life and conversation; and these things considered will tend to reconcile the two apostles about this business, but as effects declaring it; for the best works are imperfect, and cannot be a righteousness justifying in the sight of God, and are unprofitable in this respect; for when they are performed in the best manner, they are no other than what it is a man's duty to perform, and therefore cannot justify from sin he has committed: and besides, justification in this sense would frustrate the grace of God, make void the death of Christ, and encourage boasting in men. Good works do not go before justification as causes or conditions, but follow it as fruits and effects:

and not by faith only: or as without works, or a mere historical faith, which being without works is dead, of which the apostle is speaking; and therefore can bear no testimony to a man's justification; hence it appears, that the Apostle James does not contradict the Apostle Paul in **Ro 3:28** since they speak not of the same sort of faith; the one speaks of a mere profession of faith, a dead and lifeless one; the other of a true faith, which has Christ, and his righteousness, for its object, and works by love, and produces peace, joy, and comfort in the soul. Moreover, the Apostle Paul speaks of justification before God; and James speaks of it as it is known by its fruits unto men; the one speaks of a justification of their persons, in the sight of God; the other of the

justification and approbation of their cause, their conduct, and their faith before men, and the vindication of them from all charges and calumnies of hypocrisy, and the like; the one speaks of good works as causes, which he denies to have any place as such in justification; and the other speaks of them as effects flowing from faith, and showing the truth of it, and so of justification by it; the one had to do with legalists and self-justiciaries, who sought righteousness not by faith, but by the works of the law, whom he opposed; and the other had to do with libertines, who cried up faith and knowledge, but had no regard to a religious life and conversation; and these things considered will tend to reconcile the two apostles about this business.

James 2:25

Ver. 25. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot,....
See Gill on "Heb 11:31" justified by works; this woman was an instance of the grace of God in calling the chief of sinners, and was a true believer; and what she did, she did in faith, Heb 11:31 and her faith was shown by her works to be true and genuine; and it was manifest that she was a justified person. This instance is produced with the other, to show, that wherever there is true faith, whether in Jew or Gentile, in man or woman, in greater or lesser believers, or in such who have been greater or lesser sinners, there will be good works; and therefore that person is a vain man that talks and boasts of his faith, and depends upon it, and slights and rejects good works as unnecessary to be done.

When she had received the messengers: the spies that Joshua sent, into her house, with peace and safety:

and had sent them out another way; than they came in, even through the window upon the town wall, **Jos 2:1**.

James 2:26

Ver. 26. For as the body without the spirit is dead,.... This simile is made use of to illustrate what the apostle had asserted in **Jas 2:17** that as a body, when the spirit or soul is departed from it, or the breath is gone out of it, is dead, and without motion, and useless; which the Jews {d} express in like manner, xwr alb Pwg rgp, "the body without the spirit", or "breath, is a carcass".

So faith without works is dead also: a vain thing, useless and unprofitable, can neither justify, nor save, nor prove that a man is justified, or will be saved.

{d} Ohel. Moed, fol. 15. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

James 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO JAMES 3

In this chapter the apostle cautions against censoriousness, and reproving others with a magisterial air; advises to bridle the tongue, and guard against the vices of it; and shows what true wisdom is, and from whence it comes. He advises the saints not to arrogate too much to themselves, and take upon them to be the censorious reprovers of others; which he dissuades from, by the consideration of the greater damnation such shall receive, and by the frailty of all men, and a common proneness to offend by words; for he must be a very singular man indeed that does not offend by words, **Jas 3:1** wherefore he exhorts them to watch over their words, and bridle their tongues; which he illustrates by the methods used with horses to keep them in subjection, and with ships, to turn them as occasion serves, and the master pleases, **Jas 3:3** and though the tongue is a little member, and not comparable to a horse, or ship, for its bulk; yet it boasts of great things, has a world of iniquity in it, and much mischief is done by it, being influenced by the powers of hell; therefore care, and all possible means, should be used to restrain it, **Jas 3:5** though it is not tameable by man, only by the Lord, when all sorts of creatures are, even the most fierce and savage, and therefore are worse than they, being an unruly evil, and full of deadly poison, **Jas 3:7**. And what is the most monstrous and shocking, blessing and cursing come out of the same mouth, are pronounced by the same tongue, which is used in blessing God, and cursing men made after his image, which by no means ought to be done, **Jas 3:9** and which is not to be paralleled in nature; no instance like it can be given, no fountain sending forth, in the same place, water sweet and bitter, salt and fresh, or any fig tree bearing olives, or vine figs, **Jas 3:11**. And because all this evil springs from a vain opinion men have of their own wisdom, the apostle proceeds to give an account of true wisdom; and observes, that that shows itself in good works, in a holy conversation, attended with meekness and humility, and not in envying, strife, and lies, **Jas 3:13**. Such sort of wisdom is not from heaven, but of the earth; it is not rational; it is no better than that of brutes; yea, no other than that of devils, since where the above sins prevail, it is a hell on earth, there is nothing but confusion, and everything that is vile and wicked, **Jas 3:15** but, on the other hand, true wisdom is of an heavenly original, of a pure, peaceable, gentle, and tractable nature, and is full of good fruits or works in its effects, particularly mercy, and is clear of partiality and hypocrisy, **Jas 3:17** and as one of its fruits is righteousness, that is sown in peace by the peacemaker, and produces it, **Jas 3:18**.

Ver. 1. My brethren, be not many masters,.... The apostle having dispatched the subject of faith and good works, which constitute the pure and undefiled religion mentioned in **Jas 1:27** which gave rise to this discourse, he proceeds to consider the evidence of a religious man, suggested in **Jas 1:26** who is one that bridles the tongue; and enters into an account of the use and abuse of the tongue: and which is introduced by this exhortation; and which seems to be opposed to an affectation among the Jews, to whom James writes, of being called "Rabbi, Rabbi", or "Mori, Mori", master, master, condemned by Christ, Mt 23:8. The words may be rendered, "be not many teachers"; or be not fond, and forward, and ambitious of being preachers of the word, but rather choose to be hearers of it, agreeably to the advice in **Jas 1:19**, "be swift to hear, slow to speak"; not but that the office of a teacher is a good work, and a very desirable one; and spiritual gifts, qualifying for it, are to be coveted with a view to the glory of God, and the good of souls; and to have many teachers is a blessing to the churches of Christ and a large number of them is often not only proper, but absolutely necessary: but then this office should not be entered upon without suitable gifts, a divine mission, and a regular call by a church; and when entered into, should not be performed in a magisterial way, as lords over God's heritage, and as claiming a dominion over the faith of men, but as helpers of their joy, peace, and comfort; nor according to the commandments of men, but according to the oracles of God. Or it may be, this exhortation may have respect to censorious persons, rigid and severe reprovers of others, who take upon them, in a haughty manner, to charge and rebuke others for their faults; reproof for sin ought to be given; sin should not be suffered upon the brethren; to reprove is not blameworthy, but commendable, when it is done in a right manner, with a good spirit, and to a good end: in case of private offences, it should be privately given, and for public ones, men should be rebuked before all; but then this ought to be done in a gentle manner, and in a spirit of meekness; and when it is a clear case, and plain matter of fact, and which ought not to be exaggerated and aggravated; mole hills are not to be made mountains of, or a man be made an offender for a word, or a matter of human frailty; and reproof should be given by persons not guilty of the same, or worse crimes, themselves, and always with a good end; not to screen and cover their own vices, or to be thought more holy and religious than others, or to satisfy a revengeful spirit, but for the glory of God, and the restoring of the person that has sinned.

Knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation: should men enter into the office of teaching others without a call, or perform it negligently, or live not according to the doctrine they teach others, such would be judged out of their own mouths, and by their own words, and their condemnation would be aggravated; and should men judge rash judgment, they themselves will be judged at a higher tribunal; and should they be too censorious, and bear too hard on others, they will have judgment without mercy.

James 3:2

Ver. 2. For in many things we offend all,.... Or "we all offend", slip and fall; no man lives without sin; in many, in most, if not in all things, a good man himself does, he sins; and this extends to the most solemn services, and best works of a good man; there is sin in his holy things, imperfections in all his performances; his righteousnesses are as filthy rags; hence no man can be justified by his works before God, nor is any man perfect in this life, so as to be without sin in himself: the apostle includes himself in this account, and that not out of modesty merely, or in a complaisant way, but as matter of fact, and what he found in himself, and observed in the conduct of his life: and now this is given as a reason why persons should not be anxious of teaching others, since in many instances, in common speech and conversation, men are apt to offend, and much more in a work which requires a multitude of words; or why men should be careful how they charge, censure, and reprove others, in a rash, furious, and unchristian manner; since they themselves are in the body, and may be tempted, and are attended with many infirmities, slips, and falls in common life.

If any man offend not in word; from slips and falls in general, the apostle proceeds to the slips of the tongue, and to the use and abuse of that member; and his sense is, that if a man has so much guard upon himself, and such a command over his tongue, and so much wisdom to use it, as to give no offence by it, to his fellow creatures, and fellow Christians:

the same is a perfect man; not that he is perfect in himself, and without sin, that is denied before; unless this is considered as a mere hypothesis, and by way of concession; that could there be found out a man that never, for instance, offends in word in anyone part of life, that man may be allowed, and be set down to be a perfect man; but no such man is to be found, and therefore none perfect: but rather the sense is, that he who in common is so careful of his speech, as not to offend his brethren, may be looked upon as a sincere and truly religious man; See **Jas 1:26** or he may be accounted a wise and prudent man, such an one as in **Jas 3:13** he is not a babe in understanding, a child in conduct, but a grown man; at full age; a perfect man; in which sense the word is used in **1Co 2:6**.

And able also to bridle the whole body; either to govern the whole body, the church, to teach a society of Christians, and to feed them with knowledge, and with understanding; or rather, as he appears to be able to bridle that member of the body, the tongue, so likewise to be able, through the grace of God, to keep under the whole body, that sin shall not reign in it, or the lusts of it be in common obeyed.

James 3:3

Ver. 3. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths,.... By this, and the following simile, the apostle not only expresses the smallness of that member of the body, which is like the bit in the horse's mouth, and the helm of a ship, but the good use of it, and the great influence it has over the whole body. Horses are without understanding, and need direction in what path to go, and are strong, and would be truly and ungovernable unless bits and bridles were put into their mouths:

that they may obey us; and go in the way we would have them:

and we turn about the whole body of the horse, this way, and that way, as is thought best, by the help of the bit and bridle; and of such use is the tongue to the natural body, that being bridled itself, bridles, directs, and governs the whole body; and its influence on bodies, and societies of men, and Christians, is like that of the bit in the horse's mouth; who, like horses, would be unruly and ungovernable, were it not for the force of language, the power of words, and strength of argument.

James 3:4

Ver. 4. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great,.... Of so large a bulk, of such a prodigious size, and are such unwieldy vessels:

and are driven of fierce winds; with great vehemence, rapidity, and swiftness:

yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth; the helm, or tiller of a ship, is a beam or piece of timber fastened into the rudder, and so coming forward into the steerage, where he that stands at helm steers the ship {e}, who is here called the governor; or "he that directs", as the word may be rendered; that is, that steers; the word for "helm" is translated rudder in Ac 27:40, and the helm or tiller is sometimes, though improperly, called the rudder itself {f}; and this is very small, in comparison of the bulk of the ship that is guided by it {g}. Aristotle calls it phdalion mikron, "a small helm", as the apostle here does, and accounts for it how large ships should be moved and steered by it. And so, though the tongue is to the rest of the body as a small helm to a large ship, yet, like that, it has great influence over the whole body, to check it when it is carrying away with the force of its appetites and passions; and so churches, societies, and bodies of Christians, which are large and numerous, and are like ships upon the ocean, tossed to and fro with tempests, driven by Satan's temptations and the world's persecution, and ready to be carried away with the wind of false doctrine, yet are influenced and directed aright by those that are at the helm, the faithful ministers of the word, who say to them, this is the way, walk in it.

{e} Chambers's Cyclopedia, in the word "Helm". {f} lb. in the word "Rudder". {g} Quaest. Mechanic. c. 5.

James 3:5

Ver. 5. Even so the tongue is a little member,.... Like the bit in the horse's mouth, or like the helm of a ship.

And boasteth great things: and does them; for this word may be taken in a good sense: a bridled and sanctified tongue, that is influenced by the grace of God, and directed by the Spirit of God, as it speaks great and good things, it has great power, weight, and influence: the tongue of the just is as choice silver, and the lips of the righteous feed many, Pr 10:20, the Gospel, as preached by Christ's faithful ministers, who are the church's tongue, when it comes not in word only, but in power, is the power of God unto salvation: faith comes by hearing it, and hearing by this word; by it souls are convinced, converted, and comforted, enlightened, quickened, and sanctified.

Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth; what vast quantities of wood, large forests, stately buildings, and populous towns and cities, are at once seized on by a little fire, a few sparks, and in a short time burnt down, and utterly destroyed. One of the proverbs of Ben Syra is,

"burning fire kindles great heaps;"

suggesting, that an evil tongue does great mischief, as did the tongue of Doeg the Edomite, as the gloss upon it observes: from hence the apostle passes to consider the abuse or vices of the tongue.

James 3:6

Ver. 6. And the tongue is a fire,.... It is like to fire, very useful in its place, to warm and comfort; so is the tongue in Christian conversation, and in the ministry of the word; the hearts of God's children burn within them, while they are talking together, and while the Scriptures of truth are opening to them; but as fire should be carefully watched, and kept, so should men take heed to their ways, that they sin not with their tongue, and keep their tongue from evil, and their lips from speaking guile; for as fire kindles and rises up into a flame, so unchaste, angry, and passionate words, stir up the flame of lust, anger, envy, and revenge; and as fire is of a spreading nature, so are lies, scandal, and evil reports vented by the tongue; and as fire devours all that comes in its way, such are the words of an evil tongue; and therefore are called devouring words, Ps 52:4 they devour the good names of men, and corrupt their good manners, and destroy those who make use of them; and what wood is to fire, and coals to burning coals, that are whisperers, tale bearers, backbiters, and contentious persons to strife, Pr 26:20

a world of iniquity; that is, as the world is full of things, and full of sin, for it lies in wickedness, so is the tongue full of iniquity; there is a world of it in it; it abounds with it; it cannot well be said how much sin is in it, and done, or occasioned by it; as blasphemy against God, Father, Son, and Spirit; cursing of men, imprecations on themselves, their souls, and bodies, and on others, with a multitude of profane and dreadful oaths; obscene, filthy, and unchaste words; angry, wrathful, and passionate ones; lies, flatteries, reproaches, backbitings, whisperings, tale bearings, &c. And the Jews say, that he that uses an evil tongue multiplies transgression, and that it is equal to idolatry, adultery, and murder {h}, and the cause of all sin; and which they express by way of fable, in this manner {i}:

"when Adam sinned, God laid hold on him, and slit his tongue into two parts, and said unto him, the wickedness which is, or shall be in the world, thou hast begun with an evil tongue; wherefore I will make all that come into the world know that thy tongue is the cause of all this."

The Syriac version renders this clause thus, "and the world of iniquity is as wood"; or the branch of a tree; the tongue is fire, and a wicked world is fuel to it.

So is the tongue amongst our members, that it defileth the whole body: the body politic, a whole nation, filling it with contention, strife, division, and confusion; and the ecclesiastical body, the church, by sowing discord, fomenting animosities, making parties, and spreading errors and heresies, whereby the temple of God is defiled; and the natural body, and the several members of it, even the whole person of a man, soul and body, bringing upon him a blot of infamy and reproach never to be wiped off; as for instance, the vice of the tongue, lying, does; and oftentimes through the tongue, the actions done in the body, which seem good, are quite spoiled:

and setteth on fire the course of nature, or "wheel of nature": the natural body, as before, in which there is a continual rotation or circulation of the blood, by which it is supported; this is the wheel broken at the cistern at death, in Ec 12:6 or the course of a man's life and actions, yea, of all generations, and the vicissitudes and changes which have happened in them, on which the tongue has a great influence; and so the Syriac version renders it, "and sets on fire the series of our genealogies, or our generations, which run like wheels": or it may intend the frame of nature, the whole fabric of the universe, and the general conflagration of it, which will be owing to the tongue; or because men's tongues are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory, because of the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Christ and his people, of which they will be convinced by flames of fire about them:

and it is set on fire of hell; that is, by the devil; for as heaven sometimes is put for God, who dwells in heaven, Mt 21:25 so hell is put for the devil, whose habitation it is; see Mt 16:18, and the sense is, that the tongue is influenced, instigated, and stirred up by Satan, to speak many evil things, and it will be hereafter set on fire in hell, as the tongue of the rich man in Lu 16:24. To which purpose are those words of the Talmud {k};

"whoever uses an evil tongue, the holy blessed God says to hell, I concerning him above, and thou concerning him below, will judge him, as it is said, Ps

120:3. "What shall be done to thee, thou false tongue? sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper", there is no arrow but the tongue, according to **Jer 9:8** and there is no mighty one but God, Isa 42:13 "coals of juniper", Mnhyg wnyyh, these are hell."

{h} T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 15. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 100. 1. {i} Otiot R. Aquiba in Ketoreth Hassammim in Gen. fol. 12. 4. {k} T. Bab. Erachin, fol. 15. 2. Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 127. 2.

James 3:7

Ver. 7. For every kind of beasts, and of birds,.... Or the "nature" of them, as it is in the Greek text; however fierce, as beasts of prey are, or shy, as the fowls of the air be:

and of serpents and things in the sea; the fishes there:

is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind, or "by human nature": by the wit and industry of man; by the various ways, means, and methods devised by man. So Pliny {l} relates, that elephants lions and tigers among beasts, and the eagle among birds, and crocodiles, asps, and other serpents, and fishes of the sea, have been tamed: though some think this is only to be understood of their being mastered and subdued, by one means or another; or of their being despoiled of their power, or of their poison: and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, "subjected to human nature".

{l} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 9. 16, 17. & 10. 5, 44.

James 3:8

Ver. 8. But the tongue can no man tame,.... Either his own, or others; not his own, for the man that has the greatest guard upon himself, his words and actions; yet, what through pride or passion, or one lust or another in his heart, at one time or another, bolts out vain, idle, angry, and sinful words: and he that does not may be set down for a perfect man indeed: nor can he tame or restrain the tongues of others from detraction, calumnies, backbitings, and whisperings; who say, their lips are their own, and who is Lord over us? no man can, by his own power and strength, tame or subdue his tongue, or restrain it from evils it is habituated to, be it lying, cursing, swearing, or what else: God, by his Spirit, power, and grace, can, and often does, change the note of the curser, swearer, liar, and blasphemer; but no man can do this, though he can tame beasts, birds, serpents, and fishes; which shows the tongue to be worse than anything to be found in the whole compass of nature:

[it is an] unruly evil: an evil it is, for it is a world of iniquity; and an unruly one, being more so than the horse and mule, which are without understanding, who are kept in and governed, and turned any way by the bit and bridle: but though in nature the tongue is fenced by a double fence of the lips and teeth, this is not sufficient to restrain it; it breaks all bounds, and is not to be kept in by nature, art, or argument: nothing but the grace of God can in any measure govern it, or lay an embargo on it:

full of deadly poison, which, privately, secretly, and gradually, destroys the characters, credit, and reputation of men; and is of fatal consequence in families, neighbourhoods, churches, and states.

James 3:9

Ver. 9. Therewith bless we God, even, the Father,.... Of Jesus Christ, and of spirits, and of mercies: this is the instrument that is used in blessing God daily every meal that is eaten; and in joining with the saints, though only verbally and outwardly, in blessing God for all spiritual blessings in Christ, both in prayer, and in singing psalms:

and therewith curse we men: make imprecations, and wish evils upon them:

which are made after the similitude of God as man was originally, **Ge 1:26** and though sin has greatly defaced it, yet there are still some remains of it: and now, what an absurd and monstrous thing is this, that one and the same instrument should be used in blessing God, the Father of all creatures, and in cursing his children, his offering, as all men are by creation, and bear some resemblance to him.

James 3:10

Ver. 10. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing,.... Which is not only a contradiction, but unnatural, as well as wicked and sinful:

my brethren, these things ought not so to be: in any, and much less in professors of religion: such things are unbecoming men, are a scandal upon human nature, and exceeding unworthy of the Christian name; see Ps 50:16.

James 3:11

Ver. 11. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place,.... "Or hole"; for at divers places, and at different times, as Pliny {m} observes, it may send forth

sweet [water] and bitter: and it is reported {n}, there is a lake with the Trogloditae, a people in Ethiopia, which becomes thrice a day bitter, and then as often sweet; but then it does not yield sweet water and bitter at the same time: this simile is used to show how unnatural it is that blessing and cursing should proceed out of the same mouth.

{m} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 103. {n} Isodor. Hispal. Originum, l. 13. c. 13. p. 115.

James 3:12

Ver. 12. Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries?.... Every tree bears fruit, according to its kind; a fig tree produces figs, and an olive tree olive berries; a fig tree does not produce olive berries, or an olive tree figs; and neither of them both:

either a vine, figs? or fig trees, grapes; or either of them, figs and grapes:

so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. The Alexandrian copy reads, "neither can the salt water yield sweet water"; that is, the sea cannot yield sweet or fresh water: the Syriac version renders it, "neither can salt water be made sweet": but naturalists say, it may be made sweet, by being strained through sand: the design of these similes is to observe how absurd a thing it is that a man should both bless and curse with his tongue.

James 3:13

Ver. 13. Who is a wise man. Meaning, not in things natural and civil, or merely moral, but in things spiritual: and he is a wise man, who is both wise to do good, and wise unto salvation; who has learned to know his own ignorance, folly, and stupidity; for the first lesson in the school of spiritual wisdom is for a man to know that he is a fool: and he is a wise man who considers his latter end, thinks of a future state, and what will become of him in another world; and who builds his faith and hope of eternal salvation on the sure and only foundation, the rock Christ Jesus; and who takes up a profession of religion upon principles of grace, and with views to the glory of God, and, upon mature deliberation, reckoning the cost, and what he must expect to meet with; and which he holds fast, without wavering, and yet does not depend upon it; and who walks circumspectly, and with wisdom, towards them that are without; and who observes both providences and promises, for the encouragement of his faith; and keeps looking to the mark for the prize, preferring heavenly things to earthly ones.

And endued with knowledge amongst you? as he is, who is endued with the knowledge of himself; of the impurity of his nature, and the plague of his heart; and of his impotency and inability to do any thing that is spiritually good of himself; and of the imperfection and insufficiency of his righteousness to justify him before God; and of his lost state and condition by nature, how deserving of the wrath of God, and obnoxious to the curses of the law; and how miserable he must be without the grace of God and righteousness of Christ: and who is also endued with the knowledge of Christ, so as to see a fulness, suitableness, and ability in him as a Saviour; so as to love him, approve of him, as such, and trust in him; which knowledge is always practical and soul humbling; and the least degree of it saving; and though it is imperfect, it is growing, and will at last come to perfection: now such a man is a Gnostic, in the best sense; for this question is put with a view to the Gnostics of those times, who valued themselves upon their knowledge, and despised practical religion and godliness: hence it follows,

let him show out of a good conversation his works, with meekness of wisdom; such an one ought to perform good works, and he will perform them; and it is right in him to show them forth, that they may be a means of others glorifying God upon the sight of them; and that they may be evidences of the truth of faith in themselves to others; and that they may be for the imitation of others; and that they may put to silence, and stop the mouths of false accusers, and adorn the Gospel, and recommend religion: and these should be shown forth "out of a good conversation"; not in a single act or two, but in a series and course of living; which may be said to be good, when it is ordered aright, according to the word of God, and is honest among the Gentiles, and upright and holy; and is as becomes the Gospel of Christ, and is worthy of the calling of God to grace and glory; and when it is influenced by the grace of God: and the works shown out of it, and in it, are done in faith, from love in the strength of Christ, and are directed to the glory of God: and all this should be "with meekness of wisdom"; in a wise and humble manner, without trusting to, and depending upon, such works for justification and salvation; and without glorying in them, and boasting of them; acknowledging the deficiency and imperfection of them, and his own weakness in the performance of them; and ascribing them to the power and grace of God, by the assistance of which they are performed.

James 3:14

Ver. 14. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts,.... Though these may not be expressed by words, or actions: envy at the happiness of others, whether at the external blessings of Providence, as riches and honours, or at the internal endowments of their minds, as their wisdom and knowledge, their parts and abilities, is a root of bitterness in the heart, which bears wormwood and gall, and produces bitter effects in the persons in whom it is; it embitters their minds against their neighbours and friends; it is rottenness in their bones, and slays and destroys those who are so silly as to be governed by it; and also in the persons the objects of it; for who can stand before it? and strife in the mind, or an intention to strive end quarrel with others, who are the objects of envy, is very sinful, and of pernicious consequence: and if these be fomented and cherished in the minds and breasts of men, though they may not outwardly show themselves, yet

glory not; let not such boast of their being Gnostics, wise men, and endued with knowledge; they are far from deserving such a character; and such boasting is contrary to truth, yea, is lying against it, as follows:

and lie not against the truth; for, for a man to assert himself to be a wise and knowing man, and yet cherishes bitterness in his heart, and quarrelling and contention in his mind, arising from envy, at the equal or superior knowledge of others, he lies both against the truth of God's word and his own conscience, which condemn such things as ignorance, folly, and madness.

James 3:15

Ver. 15. This wisdom descendeth not from above,.... If it must be called wisdom, as it ought not; an envious, quarrelsome, and contentious spirit, does not deserve such a name; yet if any will call it so, or can think that a man of such a disposition is a man possessed of wisdom; it is such wisdom as does not come from above, from heaven, from the Father of lights, from Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and from the spirit of wisdom and revelation: what the Jews say {o} of the wisdom of Egypt, may be said of this, that it is hatt hmkx "wisdom from below", or inferior wisdom, as it follows:

but is earthly, sensual, and devilish; it is "earthly", or of the earth, and springs from thence; and it is only conversant about earthly things, and is only suitable to earthly minds: it is sensual, or natural; what a natural man, one destitute of the Spirit of God, and without the knowledge of the things of the Spirit, may have; it is what is acquired by the mere strength of nature, and only relates to natural things; and is only agreeable to corrupt nature, or to a natural and unregenerate man: yea, it is devilish, or such as the devil himself has; and which comes from him, and being used, serves only his kingdom and interest.

{o} Zohar in Gen. fol. 119. 2.

James 3:16

Ver. 16 For where envying and strife is,.... Where these are cherished in the heart, and especially where they break out into action, in families, neighbourhoods, states, or churches:

there is confusion and every evil work; these occasion disturbances, raise uneasiness, make disquietude, and cause tumults whenever they appear; and put persons upon doing everything that is wicked, to gratify such insatiable lusts.

James 3:17

Ver. 17. But the wisdom that is from above,.... Which has God for its author; which is infused into the soul by the Spirit of God; and leads into the knowledge of things that are above, of heavenly things; and which only is true wisdom and knowledge; and those who are possessed of it are the only true Gnostics; for which,
See Gill on "Jas 3:13" namely, the grace of God: this wisdom

is first pure; it is pure in itself, it is free from everything that is earthly, carnal, or sensual, or devilish; it produces purity of heart, of life, and conversation; and is the means of keeping persons pure and chaste, and free from impure lusts, lusts of uncleanness, pride, envy, wrath, &c. which prevail in carnal and unregenerate men:

and then peaceable; it inclines and engages those who have it to live in peace with the saints, and even with all men; with those of their own household, with their neighbours, yea, with their enemies: it is also "gentle"; or makes men gentle, moderate, and humane, so as that they bear, and forbear; they bear with the infirmities of the weak; readily forgive injuries done them; do not rigidly exact what is their due, but recede from their just right for the sake of peace and love; and do not bear hard upon others for their failings, but cover them with the mantle of love: and it is

easy to be treated; or those who have it readily yield to the superior judgments and stronger reasonings of others; and are easily induced to hope and believe all things, and entertain a good opinion of men, and their conduct; and are far from being proud, arrogant, obstinate, and overbearing:

full of mercy and good fruits; of compassion and beneficence to the poor; feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the widows and fatherless in their affliction; and doing all other good works and duties, both with respect to God and man, as fruits of grace, and of the Spirit:

without partiality: to one another; or making a difference between them; showing no respect to persons; bestowing upon the poor and indigent, without any distinction: and

without hypocrisy; either with respect to God or man; not making show of that which they have not, or do not intend.

James 3:18

Ver. 18. And the fruit of righteousness,.... Which is either eternal life, which is the fruit of Christ's righteousness, and shall be enjoyed by all those who are justified by it; and who, in consequence of it, through the grace of God, live soberly, righteously, and godly; see **Ro 6:22** or else what is enjoyed in this life, as the fruit and effect of a righteous and holy conversation, which is peace of conscience; and may be truly called the peaceable fruit of righteousness; see

Isa 32:17

is sown in peace of them that make peace; that is, either such as are possessed of that wisdom which is peaceable, and makes them so; that peace which they make, pursue after, exercise, and maintain, is a seed, which, being sown by them, will, in the issue, be followed with eternal happiness and felicity; see **Mt 5:9** or such who live a godly life and conversation, and are filled with the fruits of righteousness, and, among the rest, with this of making and preserving peace among men, shall enjoy, as what will spring up from such good seed sown, much conscience peace and spiritual pleasure of mind: righteousness and peace promise a large and comfortable harvest both here and hereafter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

James 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO JAMES 4

In this chapter the apostle gives the true cause of contentions and strifes; and cautions against intemperance, covetousness, pride, detraction, and vain confidence. Having, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, inveighed against strife and contention, he here shows from whence they spring, from a covetous desire of riches and honour; and which yet are not obtained, because they did not ask these things of God with submission to his will; or they asked with a wrong view, namely, to gratify their lusts, **Jas 4:1** and he dissuades from such unlawful desires, partly because they were no other than adultery; and partly because indulging them was declaring themselves enemies of God, **Jas 4:4** and he deters from pride, under the name of envy, proud men being generally envious; from the sense of the Scripture, which says, not in vain, that the spirit lusts unto it; and from the consequence of it, such as are proud being resisted by the Lord, when he gives more grace to humble ones, **Jas 4:5** hence follow several exhortations, and various duties relating to humility; as to submit to God, and resist the devil, encouraged thereunto by this motive, he will flee, **Jas 4:7**, to draw nigh to God in a way of religious worship, who will draw nigh in a way of grace to his people; to purity of action, and of heart, or to that which is outward and inward, **Jas 4:8** to be humbled, mourn, and weep, instead of joy and laughter, **Jas 4:9** to lie low before the Lord, who will raise such up, **Jas 4:10** and not to speak evil of anyone, since this is judging a brother; nay, a speaking evil of the law, and a judging of that; which is to invade the prerogative of God, the lawgiver, who is able to save, and to destroy; and therefore one man should not take upon him to judge another, **Jas**

4:11 and as another instance of great neglect of God, and his providence, and disrespect unto it, the apostle takes notice of a common practice among men, and even professors of religion, who resolve to go to such a place, and continue so long, and there make merchandise, and promise themselves success; not considering what frail short lived creatures they are, and how much all depends upon the will of God; and which they should consider, submit to, and be determined by, Jas 4:13 and he reproves them for their boastings and joy in them, as evil, Jas 4:16, and observes, that it is not enough to know what is right and good, unless it is done; and that such knowledge is but an aggravation of the evil of sin committed, Jas 4:17.

Ver. 1. From whence come wars and fightings among you?.... Which are to be understood, not of public and national wars, such as might be between the Jews and other nations at this time; for the apostle is not writing to the Jews in Judea, as a nation, or body politic, but to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, and to such of them as were Christians; nor were Christians in general as yet increased, and become such large bodies, or were whole nations become Christians, and much less at war one against another, which has been the case since; and which, when it is, generally speaking arises from a lust after an increase of power; from the pride and ambitious views of men, and their envy at the happiness of other princes and states: nor do these design theological debates and disputes, or contentions about religious principles; but rather lawsuits, commenced before Heathen magistrates, by the rich, to the oppression of the poor; see Jas 2:6 though it seems best of all to interpret them of those stirs and bustlings, strifes, contentions, and quarrels, about honours and riches; endeavouring to get them by unlawful methods, at least at the expense of their own peace, and that of others:

[come they] not hence, [even] of your lusts that war in your members? as pride, envy, covetousness, ambition, &c. which, like so many soldiers, are stationed and quartered in the members of the body, and war against the soul; for in the believer, or converted man, however, there is as it were two armies; a law in the members, warring against the law of the mind; the flesh against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and from this inward war arise external ones; or at least from the corruption of nature, which militates against all that is good, all quarrels and contentions, whether public or private, of a greater or lesser nature, and consequence, spring.

James 4:2

Ver. 2. Ye lust, and have not,.... The apostle proceeds to show the unsuccessfulness of many in their desires and pursuits after worldly things; some might be like the sluggard, whose soul desireth all good things, and yet he has nothing, Pr 13:4 because he does not make use of any means, even of such as are proper and necessary, and ought to be used:

ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; some, instead of kill, which seems not so agreeable, read envy; and then the sense is, they envy at the good and happiness of others, and covet after another's property, but cannot enjoy it; all such envy and covetousness are fruitless, as well as sinful:

ye fight and war, yet ye have not; go to law one with another about each other's property; or rather, make a great stir and hustle to get the things of the world; rise early, and sit up late; strive who should get most, and quarrel about what is gotten, and seek to get all advantages of one another; and yet still have not, what at least is desired and strove for:

because ye ask not; of God, whose blessing only makes rich: instead of all this worldly stir and bustle, and these strivings and quarrellings with one another, it would be much more advisable, and, in the issue, be found to turn to more account, to pray to God for a blessing on your endeavours; and to ask of him the good and necessary things of life, in submission to his will, and with thankfulness for what he has bestowed.

James 4:3

Ver. 3. Ye ask, and receive not,.... Some there were that did ask of God the blessings of his goodness and providence, and yet these were not bestowed on them; the reason was,

because ye ask amiss; not in the faith of a divine promise; nor with thankfulness for past mercies; nor with submission to the will of God; nor with a right end, to do good to others, and to make use of what might be bestowed, for the honour of God, and the interest of Christ: but

that ye may consume it upon your lusts; indulge to intemperance and luxury; as the man that had much goods laid up for many years did, to the neglect of his own soul, Lu 12:19 or the rich man, who spent all upon his back and his belly, and took no notice of Lazarus at his gate; Lu 16:19.

James 4:4

Ver. 4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses,.... Not who were literally such, but in a figurative and metaphorical sense: as he is an adulterer that removes his affections from his own wife, and sets them upon another woman; and she is an adulteress that loves not her husband, but places her love upon another man; so such men and women are adulterers and adulteresses, who, instead of loving God, whom they ought to love with all their hearts and souls, set their affections upon the world, and the things of it: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the word "adulteresses": these the apostle addresses in the following manner;

know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? that an immoderate love for the good things of the world, and a prevailing desire after the evil things of it, and a delight in the company and conversation of the men of the world, and a conformity to, and compliance with, the sinful manners and customs of the world, are so many declarations of war with God, and acts of hostility upon him; and show the enmity of the mind against him, and must be highly displeasing to him, and resented by him:

whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God; whoever is in league with the one must be an enemy to the other; God and mammon cannot be loved and served by the same persons, at the same time; the one will be loved, and the other hated; the one will be attended to, and the other neglected: this may be known both from reason and from Scripture, particularly from **Mt 6:24**.

James 4:5

Ver. 5. Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain?.... Some think that the apostle refers to a particular passage of Scripture in the Old Testament, and that he took it from **Ge 6:3** as some; or from Ex 20:5, as others; or from **De 7:2** or from **Job 5:6** or from Pr 21:10 others think he had in view some text in the New Testament; either Ro 12:2 or **Ga 5:17** and some have imagined that he refers to a passage in the apocryphal book:

"For into a malicious soul wisdom shall not enter; nor dwell in the body that is subject unto sin." (Wisdom 1:4) and others have been of opinion that it is taken out of some book of Scripture then extant, but now lost, which by no means can be allowed of: the generality of interpreters, who suppose a particular text of Scripture is referred to, fetch it from Nu 11:29 but it seems best of all to conclude that the apostle has no regard to any one particular passage of Scripture, in which the following words are expressly had, since no such passage appears; but that his meaning is, the sense of the Scripture everywhere, where it speaks of this matter, is to this purpose: nor does it say this, or any thing else in vain; whatever is written there is to answer some end, as for learning, edification, and comfort, for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness; neither with respect to what is before suggested, that what is asked in a right manner, and for a right end, shall be given; and that the love of the world, and the love of God, are things incompatible; nor with respect to what follows:

the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? that is, the depraved spirit of man, the spirit of an unregenerate man; that as it is prone to every lust, and prompts to every sin, the imagination of the thought of man's heart being evil, and that continually, so it instigates to envy the happiness of others; see **Ge 6:5** or this may be put as a distinct question from the other, "does the spirit that dwelleth in us lust to envy?" that is, the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the hearts of his people, as in his temple: the Ethiopic version reads, "the Holy Spirit": and then the sense is, does he lust to envy? no; he lusts against the flesh and the works of it, and envy among the rest; see **Ga 5:17** but he does not lust to it, or provoke to it, or put persons upon it; nor does he, as the Arabic version renders it, "desire that we should envy"; he is a spirit of grace; he bestows grace and favours upon men; and is so far from envying, or putting others upon envying any benefit enjoyed by men, that he increases them, adds to them, and enlarges them, as follows.

James 4:6

Ver. 6. But he giveth more grace,.... The Arabic version adds, "to us"; the Ethiopic version, "to you"; and the Syriac version reads the whole thus; "but our Lord gives more grace to us"; or "greater grace"; than the world can give, whose friendship is courted by men; the least measure of grace, of faith, and hope, and love, and of a spiritual knowledge of Christ, and interest in him, and of peace, joy, and comfort, is more worth than all the world, and everything in it: or greater grace, more favours than the saints are able to ask or think; so Solomon had more favours given him than he could think of asking for: or greater grace, and larger measures of it, even of spiritual light and knowledge, under the Gospel dispensation, than under the former dispensation; or where God bestows gifts qualifying for service and usefulness, and these are made use of and employed for such purposes, he gives more: or this may refer to internal grace wrought by the Spirit of God, in the hearts of his people; more of which he may be said to give, when he causes it to abound, as to its acts and exercises; when faith grows exceedingly, hope revives, and is lively, and abounds through his power and influence, and love to God and Christ, and one another, abounds yet more and more; when there is a growth in every grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, so that this grace becomes a well of living waters, springing up into eternal life, which at last will have its perfection in glory:

wherefore he saith; either the Spirit that gives more grace, or the Scripture, or God in the Scripture, in **Pr 3:34**,

God resisteth the proud: or scorns the scorners; he rejects them that trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others; that say, Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou; that are proud of themselves, their enjoyments, their gifts, their external righteousness, and holiness, and are full, and rich, and increased with goods, and stand in need of nothing; these he opposes, he sets himself against, he thrusts them away from him, he sends them away empty, and scatters them in the imagination of their own hearts; and in the things in which they deal proudly, he is above them; he sits in the heavens and laughs at them, and frustrates all their schemes:

but he giveth grace unto the humble; who are sensible of their own vileness and meanness, and acknowledge it; who think the meanest of themselves, and the best of others; and do not envy the gifts and graces of God bestowed upon others, but rejoice at them; and ascribe all they have, and are, to the free grace of God; and ingenuously confess the deficiency of their duties, and the insufficiency of their righteousness to justify them before God; and that when they have done all they can, or are assisted to do, they are but unprofitable servants: now to these God gives grace; he not only gives grace at first, to make them humble, but he gives them more grace, or increases what he gives: grace is God's gift; he gives all the grace that is in Christ, and all the blessings of grace that are in the covenant, and all the grace that is in the hearts of his people; as faith, hope, love, repentance, humility, patience, self-denial, resignation to his will, and every degree of spiritual knowledge; and grace is only his gift; men cannot give it to themselves, nor can the best of men give it to others; not godly parents to their children; nor ministers to those to whom they preach; no, nor the angels in heaven; nor is it to be obtained by the works of men: it is a free gift; it is given of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God, to whom, and when, and in what measure he pleases; to which he is not induced by any motives in men, for they have nothing in them to move him to it; and it is given by him absolutely, without conditions, not suspending it till the performance of them; and he gives it cheerfully and not grudgingly, largely, bountifully, and in great abundance.

James 4:7

Ver. 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God,.... To the will of God, with respect to worldly things, and be content with such things as are enjoyed, and be satisfied with the portion that is allotted; it is right and best for the people of God to leave themselves with him, to choose their inheritance for them, since by all their anxious cares, their striving and struggling, their impatient desires, wars and fightings, as they cannot add one cubit to their stature, so nothing to their worldly substance; and it becomes them to submit to God in all afflictive dispensations of his providence, and be still and know that he is God; as well as to submit to his way and method of salvation by Christ, and particularly to the righteousness of Christ, for justification; and to depend upon him for supplies of grace in the discharge of every duty, and the exercise of every grace:

resist the devil, [and] he will flee from you; Satan is to be looked upon as an enemy, and to be opposed as such, and to be watched and guarded against; the whole armour of God should be taken and made use of, particularly the weapon of prayer, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and the shield of faith; and also the grace of humility, than which nothing is more opposite to him: he is a proud spirit, and he endeavours to swell men with pride of themselves; and when he has worked them up to such a pitch, he is then master of them, and can manage them as he pleases; but a poor humble believer, with whom God dwells, to whom he gives more grace, and who comes forth not in his own strength, but in the strength of the Lord God, as David against Goliath, and who owns his vileness and sinfulness, and flies to the grace of God, and blood of Christ, Satan knows not what to do with him, he is puzzled, baffled, and confounded; such he leaves, from such he flees; he does not like the power of prayer, nor the strength of faith, nor the sharpness of the twoedged sword, the word of God, nor the humble believer's staff, bag, scrip, and sling.

James 4:8

Ver. 8. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you,.... This must be understood consistently with the perfection of God's immensity and omnipresence: the saints draw nigh to God when they present their bodies in his sanctuary; when they tread in his courts, and attend his ordinances; where they always find it good for them to draw nigh unto him; and blessed is the man that approaches to him in faith and fear: they draw nigh to him when they come to the throne of his grace, for grace and mercy to help them; when they draw near to him in prayer with true hearts, and lift them up with their hands to God; when in the exercise of faith and hope they enter within the vail, and come up even to his seat; and lay hold on him as their covenant God and Father; and he draws nigh to them by granting them his gracious presence, by communicating his love to them, by applying the blessings of his grace, by helping them in times of need and distress, and by protecting them from their enemies; the contrary to which is expressed by standing afar off from them. Now this is not to be understood as if men could first draw nigh to God, before he draws nigh to them; for as God first loves, so he first moves; he takes the first step, and, in conversion, turns and draws men to himself; though this does not respect first conversion, but after acts in consequence of it; nor is it to be considered as a condition of the grace and favour of God, in drawing nigh to his people, but is expressive of what is their duty, and an encouragement to it:

cleanse [your] hands, ye sinners, and purify [your] hearts, ye double minded; the persons addressed are not the profane men of the world, but sinners in Zion, formal professors, hypocritical persons; who speak with a double tongue to men, and who draw nigh to God with their mouths, but not with their hearts; who halt between two opinions, and are unstable in all their ways: cleansing of their hands and hearts denotes the purity of outward conversation, and of the inward affections; and supposes impurity both of flesh and spirit, that the body and all its members, the soul and all its powers and faculties, are unclean; and yet not that men have a power to cleanse themselves, either from the filth of an external conversation, or from inward pollution of the heart; though a man attempts the one, he fails in it; and who can say he has done the other? **Job 9:30**. This is not to be done by ceremonial ablutions, moral services, or evangelical ordinances; this is God's work only, as appears from his promises to cleanse his people from their sins, by sprinkling clean water upon them; from the end of Christ's shedding his blood, and the efficacy of it; and from the prayers of the saints, that God would wash them thoroughly from their iniquity, and cleanse them from their sin, and create clean hearts in them: and yet such exhortations are not in vain, since they may be useful to convince men of their pollution, who are pure in their own eyes, as these hypocritical, nominal professors, might be; and to bring them to a sense of their inability to cleanse themselves, and of the necessity of being cleansed elsewhere; and to lead them to inquire after the proper means of cleansing, and so to the fountain of Christ's blood, which only cleanses from all sin.

James 4:9

Ver. 9. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep,.... Not in a bare external way; not by afflicting the body with fastings and scourgings, by renting of garments, and clothing with sackcloth, and putting ashes on the head, and other such outward methods of humiliation; but afflicting the soul is meant, an inward mourning and weeping over the plague of the heart, the impurity of nature, and the various sins of life; after a godly sort, and because contrary to a God of infinite love and grace; in an evangelical way, looking to Jesus, and being affected with the pardoning grace and love of God in Christ.

Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness; meaning their carnal joy, on account of their friendship with the world, and their enjoyment of the things of it, since they consumed them on their lusts, and which betrayed enmity to God.

James 4:10

Ver. 10. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord,.... Which is done, when men, before the Lord, and from their hearts, and in the sincerity of their souls, acknowledge their meanness and unworthiness, their vileness, sinfulness, and wretchedness, and implore the grace and mercy of God in Christ, as did Abraham, Jacob, Job, Isaiah, Paul, and the publican; and when they walk humbly with God, acknowledging they can do nothing without him; owning their dependence on his grace, and ascribing all they have, and are, unto it:

and he shall lift you up; this is God's usual way to lift up the meek, and exalt those that humble themselves; he lifts them from the dunghill, to set them among princes; he gives them a place, and a name in his house, better than sons and daughters; he adorns them with his grace; he clothes them with the righteousness of his Son, he grants them nearness to himself; and at last will introduce them into his kingdom and glory.

James 4:11

Ver. 11. Speak not evil one of another, brethren,.... The apostle here returns to his former subject, concerning the vices of the tongue, he had been upon in the preceding chapter, **Jas 3:6**, and here mentions one, which professors of religion were too much guilty of, and that is, speaking evil one of another; which is done either by raising false reports, and bringing false charges; or by aggravating failings and infirmities; or by lessening and depreciating characters, and endeavouring to bring others into discredit and disesteem among men: this is a very great evil, and what the men of the world do, and from them it is expected; but for the saints to speak evil one of another, to sit and speak against a brother, and slander an own mother's son, is barbarous and unnatural.

He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law; he that is a talebearer and backbites his brother, his fellow member, and detracts from his good name and character, and takes upon him to judge his heart, and his state, as well as, to condemn his actions, he speaks evil of the law; and judges and condemns that, as if that forbid a thing that was lawful, even tale bearing and detraction, Le 19:16, or by speaking evil of him for a good thing he does, he blames and condemns the law, as though it commanded a thing that was evil; and by passing sentence upon his brother, he takes upon him the province of the law, which is to accuse, charge, convince, pronounce guilty, and condemn:

but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law; as is a duty, and would best become:

but a judge; and so such a person not only infringes the right of the law, but assumes the place of the Judge and lawgiver himself; whereas, as follows,

James 4:12

Ver. 12. There is one lawgiver,.... The Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Syriac, Ethiopic, and Vulgate Latin versions, add, "and judge". Who is the one only Lord God, Isa 33:22. This is a character that may be applied to God the Father, who gave the law to the people of Israel, both the judicial and ceremonial law, and also the moral law; from his right hand went a fiery law, and to him belongs the giving of it; and also to the Son of God, the Lord Jesus who is King of saints, and lawgiver in his house; who has given out commandments to be observed, and laws of discipline for the right ordering of his house, and kingdom, to be regarded; and particularly the new commandment of love, which is eminently called the law of Christ; and which is most apparently broke, by detraction and speaking evil one of another: now there may be inferior and subordinate lawgivers, as Judah is said to be God's lawgiver, and Moses is said to command the Jews a law; yet there is but one supreme, universal, and perfect lawgiver, who is God; and though there may be many lawgivers in things political, whose legislative power is to be obeyed, both for the Lord's sake, and for conscience sake; yet in things religious, and relating to conscience, God is the only lawgiver, who is to be hearkened unto:

who is able to save, and to destroy; this is true of God the Father, who is able to save, and does save by his Son Jesus Christ, and even persons that have broken the law he has given, and are liable to the curse and condemnation of it; and he is able to save them according to that law, in perfect consistence with it, and with his justice and holiness, since Christ, by whom he saves, was made under it, and has fulfilled it; and that Christ is mighty to save, able to save to the uttermost, is certain from the Scripture, and all experience; and God, the lawgiver, is able to destroy both body and soul in hell, for the transgressions of his law; and even Christ the Lamb is also the lion of the tribe of Judah, who will break his enemies in pieces, as a potter's vessel, and punish the contemners of his Gospel with everlasting destruction, from his presence and glory: in a word, God, the lawgiver, is sovereign, and can destroy, or save, whom he pleases; he is able to save the brother that is spoken against, and to destroy him that speaks against him:

who art thou that judgest another? another man's servant, as in Ro 14:4 or "thy neighbour", as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; or "the neighbour", as the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version; that is, any brother, friend, or neighbour, in the manner as before observed in the preceding verse.

James 4:13

Ver. 13. Go to now, ye that say,.... The apostle passes from exposing the sin of detraction, and rash judgment, to inveigh against those of presumption and self-confidence; and the phrase, "go to now", is a note of transition, as well as of attention, and contains the form of a solemn and grave address to persons, who either think within themselves, or vocally express, the following words, or the like unto them:

today, or tomorrow, we will go into such a city; in such a country, a place of great trade and merchandise; as Tyre then was in Phoenicia, Thessalonica in Macedonia, Ephesus in Asia, and others: some render this as an imperative, or as an exhortation, "let us go", which does not alter the sense.

And continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; as is customary for merchants to do; nor does the apostle design by this to condemn merchandise, and the lawful practice of buying and selling, and getting gain; but that men should not resolve upon those things without consulting God, and attending to his will, and subjecting themselves to it; and without considering the uncertainty and frailty of human life; as well as should not promise and assure themselves of success, of getting gain and riches, as if those things were in their own power, and had no dependence upon the providence and blessing of God.

James 4:14

Ver. 14. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow,.... Whether there would be a morrow for them or not, whether they should live till tomorrow; and if they should, they knew not what a morrow would bring forth, or what things would happen, which might prevent their intended journey and success: no man can secure a day, an hour, a moment, and much less a year of continuance in this life; nor can he foresee what will befall him today or tomorrow; therefore it is great stupidity to determine on this, and the other, without the leave of God, in whom he lives, moves, and has his being; and by whose providence all events are governed and directed; see Pr 27:1

for what is your life? of what kind and nature is it? what assurance can be had of the continuance of it? by what may it be expressed? or to what may it be compared?

it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away; which rises out of the earth, or water, and expires almost as soon as it exists; at least, continues but a very short time, and is very weak and fleeting, and carried about here and there, and soon returns from whence it came: the allusion is to the breath of man, which is in his nostrils, and who is not to be accounted of, or depended on.

James 4:15

Ver. 15. For that ye ought to say,.... Instead of saying we will go to such and such a place, and do this, and that, and the other thing, it should be said,

if the Lord will, and we shall live, and do this and that; the last "and" is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; and the passage rendered thus, "if the Lord will, and we shall live, we will do this": so that here are two conditions of doing anything; the one is, if it should be agreeable to the determining will and purpose of God, by which everything in the world comes to pass, and into which the wills of men should be resolved, and resigned; and the other is, if we should live, since life is so very uncertain and precarious: and the sense is, not that this exact form of words should be always used, but what is equivalent to them, or, at least, that there should be always a sense of these things upon the mind; and there should be a view to them in all resolutions, designs, and engagements: and since the words are so short and comprehensive, it might be proper for Christians to use themselves to such a way of speaking; upon all occasions; we find it used by the Apostle Paul frequently, as in
Ac 18:2, and even by Jews, Heathens, and Turks. It is a saying of Ben Syra, the Jew {p},

"let a man never say he will do anything, before he says
Mvh rzwg Ma, "if God will""

So Cyrus, king of Persia, when, under pretence of hunting, he designed an expedition into Armenia, upon which an hare started, and was caught by an eagle, said to his friends, this will be a good or prosperous hunting to us, hn yeov yelh, "if God will" {q}. And very remarkable are the words of Socrates to Alcibiades, inquiring of him how he ought to speak; says Socrates, eav yeov eyelh, "if God will" {r}; and says he, in another place {s},

"but I will do this, and come unto thee tomorrow, "if God will"."

And it is reported of the Turks {t}, that they submit everything to the divine will; as the success of war, or a journey, or anything, even of the least moment, they desire to be done; and never promise themselves, or others, anything, but under this condition, "In Shallah", if God will.

{p} Sentent. 11. {q} Xenophon. Cyropaed. l. 2. c. 25. {r} Plato in Aleibiade, p.

135. {s} Plato in Laches. {t} Smith de Moribus Turc. p. 74.

James 4:16

Ver. 16. But now ye rejoice in your boastings,.... Of tomorrow, and of the continuance of life, and of going to such a place, and abiding there for such a time, and of trading and trafficking with great success, to the obtaining of much gain and riches; see
Pr 27:1

all such rejoicing is evil; wicked and atheistical, as expressing a neglect of and independence on Providence; arrogating and ascribing too much to themselves, their power and will, as if they had their lives and fortunes in their own hands, and at their own dispose, when all depend upon the will of God. The Syriac version renders it, "all such rejoicing is from evil"; from an evil heart, and from the evil one, Satan.

James 4:17

Ver. 17. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good,.... This may regard not only the last particular of referring all things to the will of God, the sovereign disposer of life, and all events, which some might have the knowledge of in theory, though they did not practise according to it; but all the good things the apostle had exhorted to, and the contrary to which he had warned from, in this epistle; and suggests, that a Gnostic, or one that knows the will of God, in the several branches of it, revealed in his word,

and doth it not, to him it is sin: it is a greater sin; it is an aggravated one; it is criminal in him that is ignorant of what is good, and does that which is evil, nor shall he escape punishment; but it is much more wicked in a man that knows what is right and good, and ought to be done, and does it not, but that which is evil, and his condemnation will be greater; see Lu 12:47. The omission of a known duty, as well as the commission of a known sin, is criminal.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

James 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO JAMES 5

In this chapter the apostle reproves the vices of rich men, and denounces the judgments of God upon them; exhorts the saints to patience under sufferings; warns them from vain and profane swearing, and presses to various duties and branches of religious worship, private and public, and to the performance of several good offices of love to one another. He represents the miseries of wicked rich men as just at hand, **Jas 5:1** because they made no use of their riches, either for themselves, or others, and because of the trust they put in them, heaping them up against a time to come, **Jas 5:2**, and because of their injustice in detaining the hire of labourers from them, **Jas 5:4** and because of their wantonness and luxury, **Jas 5:5** and because of their cruelty to the innocent, **Jas 5:6** and such who suffer at their hands are exhorted to exercise patience, from the instance of the husbandman waiting patiently for the fruit of the earth, and the rain to produce it; and from the consideration of the coming of Christ, the Judge, being near at hand, **Jas 5:7** and from the example of the prophets of the Lord, who suffered much, and were patient, and so happy; and particularly from the instance of Job, his patience, the end of the Lord in his afflictions, and his pity and compassion towards him, **Jas 5:10**. But of all things the apostle entreats them, that they would take care of profane swearing, and all vain oaths, since these bring into condemnation, **Jas 5:12** and from hence he passes to various exercises of religion; the afflicted he advises to prayer; and those in comfortable circumstances of body and mind to singing of psalms, **Jas 5:13**, and such that are sick, to send for the elders of the church to pray over them, and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, whereby not only the sick man would be delivered from his sickness, the Lord raising him up, but even his sins would be declared to be forgiven, **Jas 5:14**. And not only it became the elders to pray for sick persons, but also the saints in general, one for another, and to acknowledge their faults to each other, since the fervent prayer of every righteous man is of great avail with God, **Jas 5:16** of which an instance is given in Elias, whose prayer, though a man subject to like passions as other men, against, and for rain, was very successful, **Jas 5:17**. And Christians should not only be concerned for the health of each other's bodies, but also for the good of their souls; wherefore, whenever it is observed that any are straying from the path of truth, methods should be taken to restore them, and turn them from the error of their ways; and whoever is the happy instrument of such a restoration is the means of saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins, **Jas 5:19**.

Ver. 1. Go to now, ye rich men,.... All rich men are not here designed; there are some rich men who are good men, and make a good use of their riches, and do not abuse them, as these here are represented; and yet wicked rich men, or those that were the openly profane, are not here intended neither; for the apostle only writes to such who were within the church, and not without, who were professors of religion; and such rich men are addressed here, who, notwithstanding their profession, were not rich towards God, but laid up treasure for themselves, and trusted in their riches, and boasted of the multitude of their wealth; and did not trust in God, and make use of their substance to his glory, and the good of his interest, as they should have done:

weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you; meaning, not temporal calamities that should come upon them at the destruction of Jerusalem, in which the rich greatly suffered by the robbers among themselves, as well as by the Roman soldiers; for the apostle is not writing to the Jews in Judea, and at Jerusalem; but to the Christians of the twelve tribes scattered in the several parts of the world, and who were not distressed by that calamity; but eternal miseries, or the torments of hell are intended, which, unless they repented of their sins, would shortly, suddenly, and unavoidably come upon them, when their present joy and laughter would be turned into howling and weeping.

James 5:2

Ver 2. Your riches are corrupted,.... Either through disuse of them; and so the phrase is expressive of their tenaciousness, withholding that from themselves and others which is meet, and which is keeping riches for the owners thereof, to their hurt; or these are corrupted, and are corruptible things, fading and perishing, and will stand in no stead in the day of wrath, and therefore it is great weakness to put any trust and confidence in them:

and your garments are moth eaten; being neither wore by themselves, nor put upon the backs of others, as they should, but laid up in wardrobes, or in chests and coffers, and so became the repast of moths, and now good for nothing.

James 5:3

Ver. 3. Your gold and silver is cankered,.... Or grown rusty like iron, by lying long without use; this is not easily and quickly done, but in length of time gold and silver will change, and contract a rustiness; and so this conveys the same idea of hoarding up riches and laying up money, without making use of it in trade, for the support of the poor, and without distributing it to their necessities:

and the rust of them shall be a witness against you: at the day of judgment; which will be a proof that they have not been employed to such services, and for such usefulness, for which they were designed and given.

And shall eat your flesh as it were fire; that is, a remembrance of this, a sense of it impressed upon them, shall be like fire in their bones; shall distress their minds, gnaw their consciences, and be in them the worm that never dies, and the fire that shall never be quenched:

ye have heaped treasure together for the last days; either for many years, as the fool in the Gospel, for the times of old age, the last days of men, for fear they should then want; or for the last days of the world, or of time, as if they thought they should live for ever: the Vulgate Latin version reads, "ye have treasured up wrath for yourselves in the last days"; instead of riches, as they imagined; and that by their covetousness and wickedness, by a wicked disuse of their riches, and an unrighteous detention of them; but this supplement seems to be taken from **Ro 2:5** though the sense is confirmed by some copies which connect the phrase, "as it were fire", in the preceding clause, with this, "ye have treasured up as it were fire"; and the Syriac version renders it, "ye have treasured up fire"; the fire of divine wrath; this is the fruit of treasuring up riches in an ill way, and without making a proper use of them.

James 5:4

Ver. 4. Behold the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields,.... The wages agreed for by the day, with the labourers in their fields, particularly their reapers; which one instance serves for many others; and is the rather mentioned, because reaping is a laborious work, and those who are employed in it have nothing to live upon but their hand labour; and especially because they are made use of in cutting down the corn when it is fully ripe, and in great plenty; wherefore, to detain their just wages from them argues great inhumanity and wickedness; and yet this was what was done by rich men:

which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; unto God for vengeance, as the blood of Abel did; and shows that such an evil, however privately and fraudulently it may be done, will be made public, and is a crying one:

and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth; that is, the Lord of hosts; of angels, and of men; of the host of heaven, and of the inhabitants of the earth; of Jews and Gentiles, and of rich and poor; and who has power to vindicate the cause of the latter against their rich oppressors, and will do it; his ears are open to their cries, he takes notice of them, and regards them, and will take vengeance on those that injure them. The reference is to De 24:15.

James 5:5

Ver. 5. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth,.... This is said of other rich men; for all that is here said is not to be understood of the same individuals, but some things of one, and some of another; some made no use of their riches, either for themselves, or others; some did make use of them, and employed the poor, and then would not give them their wages; and others lived a voluptuous and luxurious life, indulged themselves in carnal lusts and pleasures, and gratified the senses by eating, drinking, gaming, and so were dead while they lived. The phrase suggests, that their pleasures were but short lived, but for a season, even while they were on earth; and that hereafter they would not live in pleasure:

and been wanton; through the abundance and plenty of good things, their delicious way of living, and the swing of pleasures which they took; the allusion is to fatted beasts, which being in good pastures, grow fat and wanton:

ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter, when beasts were slain for some extraordinary entertainment, or for the solemn festivals and sacrifices the Jews, when they lived more deliciously than at other times; and then the sense is, that these rich men fared sumptuously every day; every day was a festival with them; they indulged themselves in intemperance; they ate and drank, not merely what was necessary, and satisfying, and cheering to nature, but to excess, and gorged, and filled themselves in an extravagant manner: the Syriac version, instead of "hearts", reads "bodies" and one copy reads, "your flesh": and the last phrase may be rendered, as it is in the same version, "as unto", or "for the day of slaughter"; and so the Arabic version, "ye have nourished your hearts, as fattened for the day of slaughter": like beasts that are fattened in order to be killed, so were they preparing and fitting up by their sins for destruction.

James 5:6

Ver. 6. Ye have condemned and killed the just,.... Meaning not Christ, the Just One, as some have thought; whom the Jewish sanhedrim condemned as guilty of death, and got the sentence passed upon him, and him to be crucified by Pontius Pilate, on the day of slaughter, at the time of the passover, as some connect the last clause of the preceding verse with this; since the apostle is not writing to the Jerusalem Jews, nor to unbelievers, but to professors of religion; though he might say they did it, because their nation did it: but rather this is to be understood of the poor saints, who were just, through the imputation of Christ's righteousness to them, and lived soberly, righteously, and godly, and were harmless and inoffensive in their conversation: who were evil spoken of, censured, and judged, and condemned in a rash and uncharitable manner by their brethren; or were drawn to the judgment seats by the rich, who obtained a judicial process against them, and procured a sentence of condemnation to pass upon them unrighteously; and who killed them, by taking away their good names from them, and by withholding from them their supplies of life, the fruit of their own labour, whereby their lives were embittered and made miserable:

and he doth not resist you; it being neither in his power, nor in his inclination; but takes it patiently, quietly submits, and makes no opposition: or God does not resist you, as yet; he will do it shortly.

James 5:7

Ver. 7. Be patient therefore, brethren,.... The apostle here addresses himself to the poor who were oppressed by the rich men, and these he calls "brethren" of whom he was not ashamed; when he does not bestow this title upon the rich, though professors of the same religion: these poor brethren he advises to be patient under their sufferings, to bear them with patience,

unto the coming of the Lord; not to destroy Jerusalem, but either at death, or at the last, judgment; when he will take vengeance on their oppressors, and deliver them from all their troubles, and put them into the possession of that kingdom, and glory, to which they are called; wherefore, in the mean while, he would have them be quiet and easy, not to murmur against God, nor seek to take vengeance on men, but leave it to God, to whom it belongs, who will judge his people:

behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth; ripe fruit, which arises from the seed he sows in the earth; and which may be called "precious", because useful both to man and beast; see De 33:14 and between this, and the sowing of the seed, is a considerable time, during which the husbandman waits; and this may be an instruction in the present case:

and hath patience for it until he receive the early and latter rain; the Jews had seldom rains any more than twice a year; the early, or former rain, was shortly after the feast of tabernacles {u}, in the month Marchesvan, or October, when the seed was sown in the earth; and if it did not rain, they prayed for it, on the third or seventh day of the month {w}; and the latter rain was in Nisan, or March {x}, just before harvest; and to this distinction the passage refers.

{u} Bartenora in Misn. Taanith, c. 1. sect. 2. {w} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 4. 2. & 6. 1. & 10. 1. & Bava Metzia, fol. 28. 1. Maimon. Tephilla, c. 2. sect. 16. {x} Targum, Jarchi, Kimchi, & Miclol Jophi in Joel ii. 23. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 35. fol. 175. 3.

James 5:8

Ver. 8. Be ye also patient,.... As well as the husbandman, and like him; and wait for the rains and dews of divine grace to fall, and make fruitful, and for the ripe fruit of eternal life; and in the mean while cheerfully and patiently bear all injuries, and oppressions:

stablish your hearts; though the state of the saints is stable, they being fixed in the everlasting love of God, in the covenant of grace, in the hands of Christ, and on the rock of ages; yet their hearts are very unstable, and so are their frames, and the exercise of grace in them, and need establishing, which God's work; which is often done by the means of the word and ordinances; and these the saints should make use of, for the establishing of their hearts: the sense may be, take heart, be of good cheer, do not be dismayed, or faint, or sink under your pressures, but be of good courage, pluck up your spirits, lift up your heads: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh; when he will render tribulation to them that trouble them, free them from all their sorrows and afflictions, and enter them into the joy of their Lord; which will be either at death, which was not very far off, or at the last day, which was drawing nearer and nearer, and which with God was near; with whom a thousand years are as one day.

James 5:9

Ver. 9. Grudge not one against another, brethren,.... On account of any happiness, temporal or spiritual, which another enjoys; do not inwardly repine at it; or secretly sigh and groan in an envious manner at it, though nothing may be said, as the word used signifies; much less complain of, accuse, and condemn one another, or meditate and seek revenge:

lest ye be condemned; hereafter, at the bar of Christ, by the Judge of the whole earth, who is privy to the secret murmurings and grumblings, and the envious sighs and groans of men; see **Mt 7:1**

behold the judge standeth before the door; there is another that judgeth, who is the Lord, and he is at hand; he is just at the door; a little while and he will come, and not tarry; which may refer not to Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem, but to his second coming to judgment, which will be quickly; for the Gospel times are the last times; there will be no other age; at the end of this, Christ will come.

James 5:10

Ver. 10. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord,.... Men who have been highly honoured of God, with a gift of prophesying, or foretelling things to come; to whom God revealed his secrets, doing nothing without acquainting them with it; and who were sent forth by him, and prophesied in his name what were made known unto them; and yet, though these were his favourites, they suffered much; as cruel mockings, scourgings, imprisonment, famine, nakedness, and death in various shapes; some being stoned, others sawn asunder, and others killed by the sword; all which they endured with incredible patience. And therefore the apostle proposes them to be taken,

for an example suffering affliction, and of patience; their afflictions were many and great, and yet they were very patient under them; and through faith and patience they went through them, and now inherit the promises; and so are a very proper example and pattern for New Testament saints to follow and copy after.

James 5:11

Ver. 11. Behold, we count them happy which endure,.... Affliction, with courage, constancy, and patience, and hold out to the end; for such shall be saved; theirs is the kingdom of heaven; they are happy now, and will be so hereafter: the Spirit of God, and of glory, now rests upon them; and it is an honour done them that they are counted worthy to suffer for Christ; and they will be glorified with him to all eternity; the consideration of which may serve to encourage and increase patience.

Ye have heard of the patience of Job; from the account which is given of him, and his patience, in the book that bears his name; how he behaved under every trial, which came one upon the back of another; as the plundering of his substance, the loss of his children, and of the health of his body; and yet in all this Job sinned not, nor murmured against God, nor charged him foolishly, and was a mirror of patience; and though he afterwards let fall some expressions of impatience, yet he was humbled for them, and brought to repentance: this shows, that as the Apostle James, so the Jews, to whom he writes, believed that there had been really such a man as Job; and that the book which bears his name is an authentic piece of holy Scripture, and contains a narrative of matters of fact; or otherwise this reference to him would have been impertinent. How long Job endured the chastenings of the Lord cannot be said. The Jews {y} say they continued on him twelve months, which they gather from **Job 7:3**.

And have seen the end of the Lord; that is, the happy end, or exodus, out of all his troubles; which the Lord gave "to him", as the Oriental versions add; for he gave him twice as much as he had before, and blessed his latter end more than his beginning, Job 42:10. Some understand this of the Lord Jesus Christ, both of his great patience in sufferings, in which he is an example to his people, and they would do well to look to, and consider him; and of the end of his sufferings, his glorious resurrection from the dead, and session at the right hand of God, where he is crowned with glory and honour; but the former sense is best:

that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy; as to Job, so to all his people; his paternal relation to them engages his pity towards them; nor does he willingly afflict them; and when he does, he sympathizes with them; he is afflicted with them, and in his pity redeems them; his heart moves towards them, and he earnestly remembers them, and works deliverance for them in his own time and way; and therefore it becomes them to be patient.

{y} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 3. p. 9.

James 5:12

Ver. 12. But above all things, my brethren, swear not,.... As impatience should not show itself in secret sighs, groans, murmurings, and repinings, so more especially it should not break forth in rash oaths, or in profane swearing; for of such sort of swearing, and of such oaths, is the apostle to be understood; otherwise an oath is very lawful, when taken in the fear and name of God, and made by the living God, and is used for the confirmation of anything of moment, and in order to put an end to strife; God himself, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and angels, and good men, are in Scripture sometimes represented as swearing: and that the apostle is so to be understood, appears from the form of swearing prohibited,

neither by the heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; of the like kind; such as are forbidden, and cautioned, and reasoned against by our Lord, in **Mt 5:34** to which the apostle manifestly refers; See Gill on "Mt 5:34",
See Gill on "Mt 5:35",
See Gill on "Mt 5:36".

But let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that is, whenever there is an occasion for affirming, or denying anything, let it be done nakedly, simply, and absolutely, without any form of oath annexed to it; for whatever addition of that kind is made comes from evil, and tends to it, and is evil:

lest ye fall into condemnation; by the Lord; for either false, or rash, or profane swearing; for he will not suffer it to go unpunished; see Ex 20:7. Some copies read, "lest ye fall into hypocrisy"; or dissimulation, and get into a habit and custom of lying and deceiving, as common swearers do; and so reads the Arabic version.

James 5:13

Ver. 13. Is any among you afflicted?.... As the people of God generally are; they are commonly a poor, and an afflicted people; at least there are many among them that are so, and many are their afflictions: those whom Christ loves, as he did Lazarus, are not free from sicknesses and diseases; and these are rather signs of love than arguments against it; and when this is the case of any of the saints, what is to be done?

let him pray; to God that can save him; in the name of Christ; under the influence of the Spirit; believing in the word of promise. Times of afflictions are proper times for prayer; there is then more especially need of it; and God sometimes lays his afflicting hand upon his people, when they have been negligent of their duty, and he has not heard of them for some time, in order to bring them near to him, to seek his face, pay him a visit, and pour out a prayer before him; see Ps 50:15.

Is any merry? in good heart and spirit, in a good frame of mind, as well as in prosperous circumstances, in soul, body and estate:

let him sing psalms; let him not only be inwardly joyful, as he should be in prosperity, and be thankful to God for his many mercies, temporal and spiritual, he enjoys; but let him express it vocally, and melodiously, by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs: not that these are the only persons that are to sing psalms, or this the only time, any more than that afflicted persons are the only ones that are to pray, or the time of affliction the only time of prayer; but as affliction more especially calls for prayer, so spiritual joy, and rejoicing in prosperous seasons, for singing of psalms: weeping, and singing of psalms, were thought, by the Jews, inconsistent. Kimchi, on the title of the third psalm, observes, that their Rabbins say, that when David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, he wept; and if he wept, why is this called a psalm? and if a psalm, hkb hml, "why did he weep?"

James 5:14

Ver. 14. Is any sick among you?.... Which is often the case; the bodies of the saints, as well as others, are liable to a variety of diseases; they are sick, and sometimes nigh unto death, as Epaphroditus was: and then,

let him call for the elders of the church; in allusion to the elders of the congregation of Israel, **Le 4:15**. By these may be meant, either the elder members of the church, men of gravity and soundness in the faith, persons of long standing and experience; who have the gift and grace of prayer, and are not only capable of performing that duty, but of giving a word of counsel and advice to the sick. It was a kind of proverbial saying of Aristophanes the grammarian;

"the works of young men, the counsels of middle aged persons, and eucai gerontwn, "the prayers of ancient men" {z}:"

or rather officers of churches are meant, particularly pastors, who are so called in Scripture; these should be sent for in times of sickness, as well as physicians; and rather than they, since their prayers may be the means of healing both soul and body: so in former times, the prophets of God were sent to in times of sickness, for advice and assistance. It is a saying of R. Phinehas ben Chama {a} that

"whoever has a sick person in his house, let him go to a wise man, and he will seek mercy for him."

And it follows here,

and let them pray over him; or for him, for the recovery of his health:

anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord; which some think was only done in a common medicinal way, oil being used much in the eastern countries for most disorders; and so these elders used ordinary medicine, as well as prayer: or rather this refers to an extraordinary gift, which some elders had of healing diseases, as sometimes by touching, and by laying on of hands, or by expressing some words, and so by anointing with oil; see **Mr 6:13** which extraordinary gifts being now ceased, the rite or ceremony of anointing with oil ceases in course: however, this passage gives no countenance to the extreme unction of the Papists; that of theirs being attended with many customs and ceremonies, which are not here made mention of; that being used, as is pretended, for the healing of the souls of men, whereas this was used for corporeal healing; that is only performed when life is despaired of, and persons are just going out of the world; whereas this was made use of to restore men to health, and that they might continue longer in it, as follows.

{z} Apud Harpocratian. Lex. p. 125. {a} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 116. 1.

James 5:15

Ver. 15. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick,.... That is, the prayer of the elders, being put up in faith by them, and in which the sick person joins by faith; such a prayer is a means of bringing down from God a blessing on the sick man, and of restoring him to his former health:

and the Lord shall raise him up; from his bed of sickness, on which he is laid, and bring him forth to praise his name, and to fear and glorify him.

And if he have committed sins; not that it is a question whether he has or not, for no man lives without sin, nor the commission of it; but the sense is, if he has been guilty of any sins, which God in particular has taken notice of, and on account of which he has laid his chastising hand upon him, in order to bring him to a sense of them, and to acknowledge them; which is sometimes the case, though not always, at the same time that his bodily health is restored:

they shall be forgiven him; he shall have a discovery, and an application of pardoning grace to him: and indeed the removing the sickness or disease may be called the forgiveness of his sins, which is sometimes the sense of this phrase in Scripture, as in **1Ki 8:34**.

James 5:16

Ver. 16. Confess your faults one to another,.... Which must be understood of sins committed against one another; which should be acknowledged, and repentance for them declared, in order to mutual forgiveness and reconciliation; and this is necessary at all times, and especially on beds of affliction, and when death and eternity seem near approaching: wherefore this makes nothing for auricular confession, used by the Papists; which is of all sins, whereas this is only of such by which men offend one another; that is made to priests, but this is made by the saints to one another, by the offending party to him that is offended, for reconciliation, whereby a good end is answered; whereas there is none by the other, and very often bad consequences follow.

And pray for one another, that ye may be healed; both corporeally and spiritually:

the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Not any man's prayer; not the prayer of a profane sinner, for God heareth not sinners; nor of hypocrites and formal professors: but of the righteous man, who is justified by the righteousness of Christ, and has the truth of grace in him, and lives soberly and righteously; for a righteous man often designs a good man, a gracious man, one that is sincere and upright, as Job, Joseph of Arimathea, and others;

though not without sin, as the person instanced in the following verse shows; "Elias, who was a man of like passions", but a just man, and his prayer was prevalent: and not any prayer of a righteous man is of avail, but that which is "effectual, fervent"; that has power, and energy, and life in it; which is with the Spirit, and with the understanding, with the heart, even with a true heart, and in faith; and which is put up with fervency, and not in a cold, lukewarm, lifeless, formal, and customary way: it is but one word in the original text; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "daily"; that prayer which is constant and continual, and without ceasing, and is importunate; this prevails and succeeds, as the parable of the widow and the unjust judge shows. Some translate the word "inspired": the Spirit of God breathes into men the breath of spiritual life, and they live, and being quickened by him, they breathe; and prayer is the breath of the spiritual man, and is no other than the reverberation of the Spirit of God in him; and such prayer cannot fail of success: it may be rendered "inwrought"; true prayer is not what is written in a book, but what is wrought in the heart, by the Spirit of God; who is the enditer of prayer, who impresses the minds of his people with a sense of their wants, and fills their mouths with arguments, and puts strength into them to plead with God, and makes intercession for them according to the will of God; and such prayer is always heard, and regarded by him: this has great power with God; whatever is asked, believing, is received; God can deny nothing prayed for in this manner; it has great power with Christ, as Jacob had over the angel, when he wrestled with him; and as the woman of Canaan, when she importuned him, on account of her daughter, and would have no denial: such prayer has often been of much avail against Satan, who has been dispossessed by it; even the most stubborn kind of devils have been dislodged by fasting and prayer: it has often been the means of preserving kingdoms and nations, when invaded by enemies, as the instances of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah show; and of removing judgments from a people, as was often done, through the prayers of Moses, as when fire and fiery serpents were sent among them; and of bringing down blessings as rain from heaven by Elijah; and of delivering particular persons from trouble, as Peter was delivered from prison, through the incessant prayer of the church for him: and this power, and efficacy, and prevalence of prayer, does not arise from any intrinsic worth and merit in it, but from the grace of the Spirit, who influences and endites it, directs to it, and assists in it; and from the powerful mediation, precious blood, and efficacious sacrifice of Christ; and from the promise of God and Christ, who have engaged, that whatever is asked according to the will of God, and in the name of Christ, shall be done. The Jews have had formerly a great notion of prayer: the power of prayer, they say {b}, is strong; and extol it above all other services: they say {c}, it is better than good works, or than offerings and sacrifices; and particularly, the prayer of righteous men: says R. Eliezar {d}

"to what is Myqydu lv Ntlpt, "prayer of righteous men" like? it is like a shovel: the sense is, that as the shovel turns the corn on the floor, from one place to another, so prayer turns the holy blessed God from wrath to mercy."

{b} Zohar in Exod. fol. 100. 1. {c} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 32. 2. {d} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 14. 1. & Yebamot, fol. 64. 1.

James 5:17

Ver. 17. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are,.... The apostle gives an instance of earnest and fervent prayer, and of the efficacy of it in Elias; who is the same with the prophet Elijah, or Elijah the Tishbite; who, by the Septuagint in **Mal 4:5** is called Elias, as here, and elsewhere, in the New Testament: of him James says, that he was a "man", contrary to the notion of some of the Jewish writers, who affirm, that Elijah was not born of a father and mother, but was an angel, who was clothed with the four elements of the world {e}; but he was not only born, but born in sin, as others are, and was by nature no better than others; and he himself confesses that he was no better than his fathers, 1Ki 19:4. And the apostle further observes; concerning him, that be was "subject to like passions as we are"; both in body and soul; he was subject to hunger and weariness, and was fed by ravens, and by the widow of Zarephath, and by an angel; and he was subject to reproach, affliction, and persecution, being charged by Ahab as a troubler of Israel, and persecuted by Jezebel, who sought his life; he was a mortal man, and liable to death, and requested to die, and must have died, had it not been for the wonderful power of God, which translated him, that he should not see death; and he was not free from sinful passions, as impatience, fear, and unbelief,
1Ki 17:20. And he prayed earnestly; or prayed in prayer; an Hebraism: it is said {f} of one, that hytwlu ylu, "he prayed his prayer"; and of others, that Nytwlu Nalu, "they prayed prayers"; though the phrase here seems to design something more than bare praying; a praying, not merely externally, or formally, and with the lip only, but with the Spirit, and with the understanding, and with the heart engaged in it, with inwrought prayer. The prophet prayed with much earnestness, with great vehemence and intenseness of Spirit, as this Hebraism denotes; his prayer was fervent, and it was constant, and importunate, and was continued till he had an answer: he may be thought to have prayed each of the seven times he sent his servant to look out for a sign of rain, 1Ki 18:43, he first prayed,

that it might not rain; this is not recorded in express words, but may be gathered from 1Ki 17:1 where he says, "as the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew, nor rain, these years, but according to my word"; so the passage is understood by the Jewish interpreters: the phrase, "before whom I stand", is paraphrased by one of them {g} thus; before whom I am used to stand, hlyptb, "in prayer"; and it is a common saying with the Jews, there is no standing ever mentioned, but prayer is intended;
See Gill on "Mt 6:5" And the other phrase, "according to my word", is, by another {h}, interpreted to this sense, that the rain should not descend naturally, according to the custom of the world, but it should descend when Elijah wyle llpty, "prayed for it", and so it was:

and it rained not on the earth: on the land of Israel, which is only meant; it rained in other parts of the world, for the drought in those times was not universal: and this was,

by the space of three years and six months; which exactly agrees with the words of Christ, **Lu 4:25** and this was in judgment upon the land of Israel, for the idolatry it was filled with in the times of Ahab: and this instance of prayer is mentioned, not with a view that it should be imitated; we are not to pray for judgments, unless we have a divine order for it, as Elijah had; but to show the efficacy of prayer made according to the will of God.

{e} Zohar in Gen. fol. 31. 1. & Imre Binah in ib. {f} Ib. in Exod. fol. 4. 2. & in Numb. fol. 79. 2. {g} R. David, Kimchi in loc. {h} Vid. Laniado in loc.

James 5:18

Ver. 18. And he prayed again,.... 1Ki 18:42. Here also is no express mention of his prayer, but it may be concluded from his gestures; and so the Jewish interpreters understand these words, "Elijah went up to the top of Carmel", llpthl, "to pray, and he cast himself down upon the earth", Mymvgh le llpthl, "to pray for rain; and he put his face between his knees", llpthw, "and prayed, and said to his servant, go up now, look toward the sea"; and this he said while he was wtlyptb, "in his prayers" {i}: and the effect of this his prayer was,

and the heaven gave rain; see 1Ki 18:45.

And the earth brought forth her fruit: which for the years past it had not; hence there was a sore famine in the land, 1Ki 18:2. Now the apostle chose to give this example, because it was a common thing for the Jews to ask for rain: we often read of such a doctor, that he prayed for rain, and it came; and of another, that he asked for the rains, and they descended {k}: and his view is to observe, that the weakness and infirmities of the saints ought not to discourage them from prayer; and that they should be earnest and fervent in it, as was Elias, a man of like passions with themselves.

{i} Jarchi, Kimchi, Ralbag, & Laniado in loc. {k} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 28. 1. & Taanith, fol. 19. 1. 23. 1. 24. 2. 25. 2. & Yoma, fol. 53. 2.

James 5:19

Ver. 19. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth,.... Either from Christ, who is the truth, by departing from him, forsaking his ways, worship, and ordinances; or from the Scriptures of truth, not speaking according to them, and embracing notions that are contrary unto them; or from the Gospel, the word of truth, from the doctrine of faith, and from uprightness of life and conversation, after having made a profession of Christianity; for this is to be understood of one who has embraced the Christian religion, become a member of a church, and has walked in the path of truth and holiness, but now fallen into error, either in principle, or in practice, or both:

and one convert him; or turn him from his error, to truth again; for this designs not first conversion, or the turning of a sinner from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, and from the evil of a man's heart and ways and from a dependence on his own righteousness, to the Lord Jesus Christ, to look to him for righteousness, life, and salvation, which is wholly and entirely God's work, and not man's; but conversion after backslidings; for a restoration from a fallen condition is sometimes so called,
Ps 51:1 and which one brother may be an instrument of to another, by showing him, and setting before him, the evil of his errors, whether in principle or practice; and by instructing him in the doctrines of the Gospel, and in the duties of religion; and by reproving him in meekness, and according to the rules of Christ; which means are sometimes blessed for the gaining of such; and which may be called conversion: and also, this is sometimes done by praying for him; and which seems chiefly to be intended here; for from praying for the healing of the diseases of the body, the apostle proceeds to encourage the saints to pray for one another, for the healing of the diseases of

the mind; and suggests, that if prayer avails to the one, it may to the other; and which is the most desirable, and the greatest blessing, as follows.

James 5:20

Ver. 20. Let him know,.... And observe it for his encouragement:

that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way; who is the instrument of restoring a backsliding professor, for such an one is meant by a sinner, and not a profane person; or of turning a poor bewildered believer, who is got out of the way of truth and holiness, into the right way again; or of convincing him of the error of his way, whether it be in point of doctrine, or of duty; and so of bringing him to the fold of Christ again, from whence he has strayed:

shall save a soul from death; not efficiently, but instrumentally, as in **1Ti 4:16** for otherwise Christ is the only Saviour; and he will be the means of saving "a soul", which is of more worth than a world; and that from death, the second death which lies in the separation of the soul from God, and in a sense of his wrath; which apostasy threatens with, and leads unto, if grace prevents not. The Alexandrian copy and others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "his soul"; but the common reading is more emphatic; the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "his own soul"; and the Ethiopic version, "himself", as respecting him that is the instrument of the conversion of the other, and not the person converted:

and shall hide a multitude of sins; either "his own", as the same versions read; and then the sense is, he shall be blessed with a discovery and application of the forgiveness of all his sins, though they have been many and great; or rather the sins of the person converted. Sin is only covered by the blood and righteousness of Christ; and thereby it is so covered, as not to be seen by the eye of vindictive justice and in such manner as that the persons of those who are covered therewith are all fair, without fault and unreproveable in the sight of God; and though their sins are many, even a multitude, they are blotted out as a thick cloud, and are abundantly pardoned; yea, all their sins are covered, be they ever so many, for God forgives all trespasses, for Christ's sake; and the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, and his righteousness justifies from all: and whoever is an instrument of bringing a backslider to a sense of the evil of his ways, and to true repentance for the same; as he, upon such repentance, has his iniquities caused to pass from him, or, in other words, to be covered, as from the sight of God, so from his own; he may be said to be the instrument of this also.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Peter 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST PETER

That Simon, called Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, was the writer of this epistle, is not questioned by any; nor was the genuineness and authenticity of it ever made a doubt of. Eusebius says {a}, that it had been confessed by all, and received without controversy; and that the ancients, without any scruple, had made use of it in their writings. It is called his "general", or catholic epistle, because it was not written to any particular person, or to any particular church, but in general, to a number of Christians dispersed in several places. The time when this epistle was written is not certain; some place it in the year of Christ 44 or 45, and so make it to be the most ancient of all the epistles, and which is the more commonly received opinion; but Dr. Lightfoot {b} places it in the year 65, because in it the apostle speaks of the end of all things being at hand, and of the fiery trial just coming on them, and of judgment beginning at the house of God, **1Pe 4:7** all which he applies to the destruction of Jerusalem; though others fix it to 61, in the seventh year of Nero {c}. The place from whence it seems to be written was Babylon, **1Pe 5:13** which is to be understood not figuratively, either of Rome or Jerusalem, but properly of Babylon, the metropolis of Chaldea, or Assyria. The persons to whom it is written were Jews, at least chiefly; for there might be some Gentiles among them, who may be taken notice of in some parts of the epistle; but the principal part were Jews, as appears from their being called the strangers of the dispersion, or, as James calls them, "the twelve tribes scattered abroad"; from the mention of the tradition of their fathers; from their having their conversation honest among the Gentiles, and their past life among them; from urging subjection to the civil magistrates among the Heathens, and the right use of their Christian liberty as to the ceremonies of the law; and from the near destruction of Jerusalem, which could only affect them; and from the use made of the writings of the Old Testament, and the authority of the prophets; see **1Pe 1:1** as well as from the second epistle, which was written to the same; see **2Pe 1:19** in which he seems to refer to the epistle to the Hebrews, written by Paul, as to these. And besides, Peter was the minister of the circumcision, or of the circumcised Jews, as Paul was of the Gentiles; and even those passages in this epistle, which seem most likely to concern the Gentiles, may be understood of the Jews, as which speak of their ignorance, idolatry, and having not been a people, **1Pe 1:14** which were true of them before conversion, and as living among Gentiles. The occasion of writing it was this; Peter meeting with Sylvanus, a faithful brother, and who had been a companion of the Apostle Paul, he takes this opportunity of sending a letter by him to the converted Jews, dispersed among the Gentile countries, where he, with Paul, and others, travelled: the design of which is to testify of the true doctrine of grace, in which they were agreed; see **1Pe 5:12**. And accordingly in it he does treat of the doctrine of electing grace, of redeeming grace, of regenerating and sanctifying grace, and of persevering grace; and exhorts believers to the exercise of grace, of faith, hope, and love, and to the discharge of such duties becoming their several stations, whereby they might evidence to others the truth of grace in themselves, and adorn the doctrine of the grace of God, and recommend it to others: and particularly he exhorts them patiently to bear all afflictions and persecutions they should meet with, for their profession of the true grace of God, in which he encourages them to stand steadfast: and this is the general scope and design of the epistle.

{a} Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 3. {b} Harmony, &c. Vol. I. p. 335. {c} Fabricii Bibliothec. Graec. l. 4. c. 5. sect. 10. p. 164.

INTRODUCTION TO I PETER 1 In this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle gives thanks to God for various blessings of grace bestowed, or to be bestowed upon the persons he writes to; and then, with the best of arguments and motives, urges them to the performance of several duties of religion. In the inscription, the person who is the writer of the epistle is described, both by his name, and by his office; and also the persons to whom it is sent, by their outward condition, strangers dispersed through several countries particularly mentioned, and by their spiritual estate, elect men; the source and spring of which election is the foreknowledge of God the Father; the means, the sanctification of the Spirit; and the end, obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ; and to these the apostle wishes a multiplication of grace and peace, **1Pe 1:1** and then he gives thanks to God for the regeneration of them; the efficient cause of which is God the Father; the moving cause, his abundant mercy; the means, the resurrection of Christ from the dead; the end, a lively hope of a glorious inheritance, **1Pe 1:3** and next follows a description of regenerate ones; they are such who are kept by the power of God through faith, unto salvation; who rejoice in hope of that salvation, though now for a little while are sorrowful, by reason of afflictions, which are for the trial of their faith; they are believers in Christ, lovers of him, and rejoice in him, and shall at last receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls, **1Pe 1:5** the excellency of which salvation is set forth from the concern the prophets had in it, the scrutiny they made into it, and the revelation of it made to them; from the concern the apostles had in it, and their report of it, and from the desire of angels to look into it, **1Pe 1:10** upon which the apostle exhorts to the exercise of various graces and duties, to attention of mind, to sobriety, to a constant hope of eternal glory, and to holiness of life and conversation, **1Pe 1:13** the arguments engaging to which are taken from the nature of God, who had called them by his grace, **1Pe 1:15** from their concern with him, as a Father and a judge; from their state and condition, as sojourners in this world, and from their redemption by the blood of Christ from a vain conversation, **1Pe 1:17** and of Christ, the Redeemer of them, many things are said, as that he was ordained before the foundation of the world to be the Redeemer; was manifested in human nature in these last days, for the sake of such that believe; was raised from the dead, and glorified, that there might be a sufficient foundation for the exercise of faith and hope in God, **1Pe 1:20** and next the apostle exhorts to brotherly love, in purity, and with fervency; from the consideration of the internal purification of them by the Spirit, through obedience to the truth; and from their regeneration, the cause of which was not corruptible, but incorruptible seed; and the means, the living and abiding word of God, **1Pe 1:22** which is illustrated by a passage out of Isa 40:6 setting forth the frailty and mortality of men, and the transitoriness of all outward enjoyments; to which is opposed the duration of the everlasting Gospel, the means of regeneration, **1Pe 1:24**.

Ver. 1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,.... The writer of this epistle describes himself first by his name, Peter, the same with Cephas, which signifies a rock, or stone; a name given him by Christ at his first conversion, and which respected his after firmness, solidity, resolution, and constancy; for his former name was Simeon, or Simon, as sometimes called; see **Mt 4:18** and he further describes himself by his office, as

an apostle of Jesus Christ; being one of the twelve apostles, and the first of that number; who saw Christ in the flesh, was conversant with him, had his call and commission immediately from him, and was qualified by him to preach the Gospel; and was sent out first into Judea, and then into all the world to publish it, with a power of working miracles to confirm it; and this his character he makes mention of, in order to give the greater weight and authority to his epistle; and it is to be observed, that he does not style himself, as his pretended successor does, the head of the church, and Christ's vicar on earth; nor does he call himself the prince of the apostles, but only an apostle, as he was upon an equal foot with the rest. The persons he writes to are the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia: these Jews here intended are called strangers; not in a metaphorical sense, either because they were, as the wicked are, estranged from the womb, and alienated from the life of God, as all unconverted men are, and as they were before conversion; for now they were no more strangers in this sense: or because of their unsettled state and condition in this life; having no continuing city, and seeking one to come, an heavenly country; and living as pilgrims and strangers, in which respect they are indeed so styled, **1Pe 2:11** but in a civil sense, and not as the Gentiles were, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, for these were Jews; but on account of their not being in their own land, and in a foreign country, and therefore said to be "scattered", or "the strangers of the dispersion"; either on account of the persecution at the death of Stephen, when multitudes of the converted Jews were scattered abroad, not only throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, but as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch; see **Ac 8:1** and so it may be afterwards throughout the places here mentioned; or else these were some remains of the ten tribes carried captive by Shalmaneser, and of the two tribes by Nebuchadnezzar; or rather the dispersion of the Greeks, mentioned in **Joh 7:35** under the Macedonians, by Ptolemy Lagus: however, there were Jews of Pontus, who inhabited that place, and of such we read in **Ac 2:9** who came to worship at the feast of Pentecost, some of which were converted to the Christian faith, and being mentioned first, has occasioned this epistle to be called, both by Tertullian {a}, and Cyprian {b}, "the epistle to the Pontians". Perhaps these Jews converted on the day of Pentecost, on their return hither, laid the first foundation of a Gospel church state in this country: it is a tradition of the ancients, mentioned by Eusebius {c}, that Peter himself preached here, and so, very likely, formed the Christians he found, and those that were converted by him, into Gospel churches; and it appears by a letter of Dionysius, bishop of Corinth {d}, that there were churches in Poutus in the "second" century, particularly at Amastris, the bishop of which was one Palma, whom he commends, and Focas is said to be bishop of Syncope, in the same age; and in the "third" century, Gregory and Athenodorus, disciples of Origen, were bishops in this country {e}; the former was a very famous man, called Gregory Thaumaturgus, the wonder worker, and was bishop of Neocaesarea: in the "fourth" century there was a church in the same place, of which Longinus was bishop, as appears from the Nicene council, at which he and other bishops in Pontus were present; and in this age, in the times of Dioclesian, many in this country endured most shocking sufferings, related by Eusebius {f}; and in the same century Helladius is said to govern the churches of Pontus; and in the "fifth" century we read of churches in Pontus, reformed by Chrysostom; in this age Theodorus was bishop of Heraclea, and Themistius of Amastris, both in this province, and both these bishops were in the Chalcedon council; and in the "sixth" century there were churches in Pontus, whose bishops were in the fifth synod held at Rome and Constantinople; and so there were in the "seventh" and "eighth" centuries {g}

Galatia, next mentioned, is that part of the lesser Asia, called Gallo Graecia, in which were several churches, to whom the Apostle Paul wrote his epistle, called the epistle to the Galatians; See Gill on "Ac 16:6" see Gill on "Ga 1:2".

Cappadocia, according to Ptolomy {h}, was bounded on the west by Galatia, on the south by Cilicia, on the east by Armenia the great, on the north by part of the Euxine Pontus; it had many famous cities in it, as Solinus {i} says; as Archelais, Neocaesarea, Melita, and Mazaca. The Jews oftentimes talk {k} of going from Cappadocia to Lud, or Lydda; so that, according to them, it seems to be near to that place, or, at least, that there was a place near Lydda so called; of this
See Gill on "Ac 2:9". From this country also there were Jews at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, some of whom were converted; and here likewise the Apostle Peter is said to preach, as before observed of Pontus, and who probably founded a church or churches here in the "first" century; and in the "second" century, according to Tertullian {l}, there were believers in Christ dwelling in this country; and in the "third" century, Eusebius {m} makes mention of Neon, bishop of Larandis, and Celsus, bishop of Iconium, both in Cappadocia; there was also Phedimus of Amasea, in the same country, in this age, and at Caesarea, in Cappadocia, several martyrs suffered under Decius; and in this century, Stephen, bishop of Rome, threatened to excommunicate some bishops in Cappadocia, because they had rebaptized some that had been heretics: in the "fourth" century there were churches in Cappadocia, of one of which, namely, at Sasimi, the famous Gregory Nazianzen was first bishop, and afterwards of Nazianzum, as was also the famous Basil of Caesarea, in the same country; hither the persecution under Dioclesian reached, and many had their thighs broken, as Eusebius relates {n}; from hence were sent several bishops, who assisted at the council of Nice, under Constantine, and at another held at Jerusalem: in the "fifth" century there were churches in Cappadocia, in several places, the names of whose bishops are on record; as Firmus, Thalassius, Theodosins, Daniel, Aristomachus, Patricius, and others: in the "sixth" century there were many famous churches in this country, whose bishops were in the fifth synod held at Rome and Constantinople; and in the "seventh" century there were several of them in the sixth synod of Constantinople; and in the "eighth" century mention is made of bishops of

several churches in Cappadocia, in the second Nicene synod; and even in the "ninth" century there were Christians in these parts {o}.

Asia here intends neither the lesser nor the greater Asia, but Asia, properly so called; and which, according to Solinus {p}, Lycia and Phrygia bounded on the east, the Aegean shores on the west, the Egyptian sea on the south, and Paphlagonia on the north; the chief city in it was Ephesus, and so it is distinguished from Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and Bithynia, in Ac 16:6 as here from Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia, and from Pontus and Cappadocia, in **Ac 2:9** though they were all in lesser Asia. Here also were Jews converted on the day of Pentecost; and here likewise Peter is said to preach; and by him, and by the Apostle John, who also lived and died in this country, churches were planted; and churches there were here, even in the "seventh" century, as distinct from the other Asia, greater or less; for out of it bishops were sent to, and were present at, the sixth council at Constantinople, whose names are recorded; yea, in the "eighth" century there were churches and bishops, one of which persuaded Leo to remove images from places of worship; and another was in the Nicene synod {q}. The last place mentioned is

Bithynia, of which See Gill on "Ac 16:7". And though the Apostle Paul, and his compassions, were not suffered at a certain time to go into Bithynia, and preach the Gospel there, yet it is certain that it was afterwards carried thither; and as Peter is said to preach in Pontus, Asia, and Capadocia, so likewise in Bithynia; here, according to the Roman martyrology, Luke, the evangelist, died; and, according to tradition, Prochorus, one of the seven deacons in **Ac 6:5** was bishop of Nicomedia, in this country; and Tychicus, of whom the Apostle Paul makes frequent mention, was bishop of Chalcedon, another city in it; and who are both said to be of the seventy disciples;
See Gill on "Lu 10:1", and it is certain, from the testimony of Pliny {r}, an Heathen writer, in a letter of his to Trajan the emperor, written about the year 104, that there were then great numbers of Christians in Bithynia; not only the cities, but the towns and villages were full of them; and in the "third" century, the persecution under Dioclesian raged, particularly at Nicomedia, where Anthimus, the pastor of the church in that place, had his head cut off as Eusebius {s} relates: in the beginning of the "fourth" century, Nice, in Bithynia, became famous for the council held there under Constantine, against Arius; and in this century, bishops from Bithynia assisted at a synod held at Tyre, in Phoenicia; and in the "fifth" century was held a synod at Chalcedon, a city in this country, against the Nestorinn heresy; and the names of several bishops of Chalcedon, Nicomedia, and Nice, who lived, in this age, are on

record; and in the "sixth" century there were bishops from these several places, and others, who were present in the fifth synod at Constantinople; as there were also in the "seventh" century, at the sixth synod held at the same place, whose names are particularly mentioned; and in the "eighth" century bishops from hence were in the Nicene synod; and even in the ninth century there were some that bore the Christian name in Bithynia {t}. In these places however, it seems, dwelt many Jews, who were converted to Christ, to whom the apostle inscribes this epistle, and whom he further describes in the following verse.

{a} Scorpiace, c. 12. {b} Testimon. ad Quirin. l. 3. c. 36, 37, 39. {c} Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 1. {d} Apud Euseb. ib. l. 4. c. 23. {e} Ib. l. 7. c. 14. Hieron. Script. Eccles. Catalog. sect. 75. {f} Ib. l. 8. c. 12. {g} Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 2. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 289. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 4. c. 1O. p. 602. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5. {h} Geograph. l. 5. c. 6. {i} Polyhist. c. 57. {k} Zohar in Gen. fol. 51. 3. & in Exod. fol. 33. 2. & 35. 4. {l} Adv. Judaeos, c. 7. ad Scapulam, c. 3. {m} Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 19. {n} lb. l. 8. 12. {o} Eccl. Hist. Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 2. c. 3. p. 11. c. 7. p. 117. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 4. c. 9. p. 350, 390. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 605, 859. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 5. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5. cent. 9. c. 2. p. 3. {p} C. 53. {q} Ib. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5. {r} Epist. l. 10. ep. 97. {s} Eccl. Hist. l. 8. c. 5, 6. {t} Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. c. 9. p. 390. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 4. c. 10. p. 601, 602. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 5. cent. 9. c. 2. p. 3.

1 Peter 1:2

Ver. 2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,.... Not to any office, as to that of bishops or presbyters; for though the apostle writes to some of them under this character, **1Pe 5:1** yet not all; nor were they so called, as a nation, for they were persons scattered about in several countries; nor as a church, for they are not wrote to as such; nor does this character merely design their effectual calling; though as that is a fruit and evidence of election, it is sometimes so styled, and the saints called by grace are said to be chosen; Joh 15:19 but it intends the eternal election of those persons both to grace and glory; which the apostle knew of, not by divine revelation, or any particular discovery made to him; but he concluded it in a judgment of charity, they being all under a profession of faith in Christ, and he having reason to believe that the greater part of them were truly partakers of that faith which demonstrated them to be the elect of God: the cause, spring, and source of their election was, "the foreknowledge of God the Father": to whom election is

commonly ascribed, agreeably to the order of the divine Persons in the Trinity, and their distinct parts in the economy of salvation, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit: and by this his "foreknowledge" is meant, not his eternal, universal, and infallible knowledge, and which is infinite, and reaches to all things and persons, present, future, or possible, for this has for its objects persons whom God never predestinated and chose: though certain it is that he knows and foreknows all whom he does predestinate and choose; nor does it intend the mere decree of election, or God's eternal purpose and resolution to choose, but the spring and source of that act of his: and much less does it mean a bare prescience of men, and choice of them, upon a foresight of faith, holiness, good works, and perseverance therein; for these are all, when genuine, the fruits and effects of election, which are included in it, and secured and brought about by it; but the sovereign grace, good will, and pleasure of God, or the everlasting love of God the Father, which is the cause of, and has given birth to the act of election, is meant by foreknowledge, joined with affection, delight, and approbation; knowledge, and foreknowledge, as ascribed to the divine Being, often signify such things; see **Ps 1:6**
Ro 11:1 and such a knowledge God the Father had of the persons of the elect from all eternity; and which is the ground and foundation of his choosing them to grace and glory, and not anything in them, or done by them, or anything out of himself; no other reason can be given of it than his own grace, his pure love, and sovereign good will and pleasure: the means follow, through which they were chosen,

through sanctification of the Spirit; as in **2Th 2:13**.
See Gill on "2Th 2:13". The ends to which the saints are chosen are,

unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; by "obedience" is meant either the obedience of elect men to Christ, which lies in obeying the truth of the Gospel, called the obedience of faith; and so is the same with the "belief of the truth", which goes along in election with the sanctification of the Spirit, in **2Th 2:13** and in submission to Gospel ordinances, and doing all good works in the name, faith, and strength of Christ; and which also are fruits and effects, and so not causes of divine predestination; see **Eph 2:10** and also follow upon the sanctification of the Spirit; or else the obedience of Christ is intended; and so the Arabic version renders it, "unto the obedience of Jesus Christ"; which lay in his performing the precepts of the law, and bearing the penalty of it, death; and by which the chosen seed are justified, or made righteous in the sight of God, and have a title to eternal life and glory, and are safe from wrath to come; and to the enjoyment of this grace, they are chosen of God the Father; and between these two, predestination and justification, there is a close and inseparable connection; so that they that are interested in the one, are in the other; see **Ro 8:30**, the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; does not denote a small quantity of it, for it was shed and poured out in great abundance; but is said in allusion to the sprinkling of the blood of the passover lamb. Ex 12:22 or to the sprinkling of the blood on the book of the covenant, and on the people at Mount Sinai, Ex 24:8 or to other sprinklings of blood in their legal sacrifices: the application of the blood of Christ to the heart, by the Spirit of God, for cleansing, pardon, and justification, is meant; which affords true, solid, conscience peace and joy now, and entitles to eternal happiness and glory; all which are secured by electing grace. The salutation of these persons follows:

grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied; which is much the same that is used by the Apostle Paul in all his epistles;
See Gill on "Ro 1:7", only Peter adds the word "multiplied"; which makes it more express, and the sense more clear: he means an enlarged view of interest in the love of God, an increase of grace out of the fulness of it in Christ, and of Gospel light, and of the several gifts of the Spirit; and also of all prosperity outward and inward, of a conscience peace through the blood of Christ, which passeth all understanding, and a more established and well grounded hope of enjoying eternal peace hereafter. The phrase is Jewish, and is used in their salutations in this form, ygoy Nwkmlv, "let your peace be multiplied" {t}.

{t} T. Hieros. Masser Sheni, fol. 56. 3. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 11. 2.

1 Peter 1:3

Ver. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,.... The epistle begins here with thanksgiving to God, or an ascription of blessing, praise, and glory to him; for this does not mean an invoking or conferring a blessing on him; neither of which can be, for there is not a greater than he to be invoked, nor can anything be added to his blessedness: but God may be blessed by his creatures when they speak well of him, and his wonderful works of creation, providence, and grace; when they ascribe all their mercies, spiritual and temporal, to him; give him the glory of them, and express their thanks for them in heart, lip, and life; and such a blessing of God for a special and spiritual favour, the grace of regeneration, is intended here: by "God" is meant, not God essentially, but personally considered, even God the Father, as is clearly expressed: the words are rendered in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions without the copulative "and", thus, "blessed be God the Father"; and if that is retained,

they, may be rendered thus, "blessed be God, even the Father"; as in **2Co 1:3** and so the latter be exegetical of the former; though both are true of Christ, in different senses; God is the God of Christ, as Christ is man; and he is the Father of Christ, as Christ is God; for, as man, he had no father, nor is he a son by office, but by nature;
See Gill on "Eph 1:3".

which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again: regeneration is the blessing thanks are given for; and if we are to be thankful to God, and bless his name, because he hath made us creatures, and hath given us a natural being; much more should we praise him for making us new creatures, and giving us a spiritual being. To be "begotten again", and so to be born again, is opposed unto, and distinguished from our first birth, when we were conceived, and shapen in sin; and designs a birth, spiritual, holy, and heavenly; it is signified by a being quickened, or made alive; so as in a spiritual sense, to see, and hear, and breathe after divine things, and to live a life of faith and holiness; by Christ being formed in the heart; by a partaking of the divine nature, and by being made new men, or new creatures: God, and not man, is the efficient cause of this, which is sometimes ascribed to the Spirit, and sometimes to the Son, and here to the Father; and it is not men's works, but his own good will and pleasure, his great love and free favour, his rich grace and abundant mercy, are the impulsive, or moving cause of it; and abundance of grace and mercy indeed is displayed in the regeneration and conversion of sinners: what they are regenerated to is,

unto a lively hope; meaning either the grace of hope, which is implanted in regeneration, and not before; for then, and then only, is a good hope through grace given; and it may be said to be "lively", or "living", inasmuch as it is fixed, not on dead works, but on a living Christ, on his person, blood, and righteousness; and is not the hope of a dead sinner, of a lifeless hypocrite, and formal professor, that has a name to live, and is dead, but of a living believer, one made truly alive by the spirit of life, from Christ; and is what is sometimes, at least, in lively exercise, and makes the heart of a believer cheerful, brisk, and lively; and is what is lasting and durable, and will never be lost, but will be held fast unto the end: or else the thing hoped for is intended, the hope laid up in heaven; the blessed hope regenerate ones are born unto, and are looking for, even eternal life and happiness; and the Syriac version renders it, "unto hope of life": that is, or eternal life; and so reads one of Stephens's copies. Saints are both begotten again to the grace of hope, and to the glory which that grace is waiting for: the means is, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; which may be connected either with the act of begetting again; for Christ's resurrection is the virtual cause of regeneration, or regeneration is in virtue of Christ's resurrection; had he not risen from the dead, none would have been quickened, or made to live, or have been raised to newness of life: his resurrection is the exemplar of regeneration; there is a likeness between them; as his resurrection was a declaration of his sonship, so regeneration is a manifestation of adoption; and as Christ's resurrection was his first step to glory, so is regeneration to eternal life; and both are wrought by the same almighty power: or the clause may be connected with the foregoing, "unto a lively hope"; for the resurrection of Christ is what is the means of, and lays a solid foundation of hope, both of the saints' resurrection from the dead, of which Christ is the meritorious cause, pledge, and pattern, and of eternal glory and happiness, since he rose for our justification, with which glorification is inseparably connected.

1 Peter 1:4

Ver. 4. To an inheritance incorruptible,.... This is a further explanation of the "lively hope", or hope laid up in heaven, which regenerate ones are begotten to: it is an "inheritance"; a large estate, and rich possession, they are born heirs apparent to; what is not to be got by industry, or obtained by the works of the law; for they that are of the law are not heirs; but what is the pure bequest and free gift of God, as a Father to his children; for an inheritance is proper and peculiar to children, nor does it belong to any but them; and it comes to them through the death of the testator, Christ, and of it the Holy Spirit is the pledge and earnest: and here it is said to be

incorruptible; it is free from corruption in itself; nor can it be corrupted by others, by moth, or rust, or other things, as gold, silver, and garments may, which are a part of earthly inheritances; nor can it be enjoyed by corrupt persons, either corrupted with sin, or clothed with frailty and mortality; wherefore, in order to inherit it, corruption must put on incorruption, in every sense; other epithets and commendations of it follow:

and undefiled; it is in its own nature pure and holy, and free from any defilement of sin; nor are there any of those impurities in it which Jews and Mahometans dream of in their vainly expected earthly paradise; nor will it be possessed by any but undefiled persons, such as are made so through the blood and righteousness of Christ:

and that fadeth not away; as do world, and the glory of it, and all inheritances and possessions in it; here is no continuing city, but there is one to come; in this inheritance are durable riches, everlasting habitations, an house eternal in the heavens, glories in it that will never wither and die, and pleasures which will never end, and which will be enjoyed without decrease or loathing:

reserved in heaven for you; the Alexandrian copy reads, "for us"; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "for us and you"; for all the saints; for all who are the elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, and who are begotten again to a lively hope; for these this inheritance is prepared, laid up, and secured in the hands or Christ their feoffee, who has it in trust for them, and with whom they are co-heirs; and it is safe for them "in heaven"; out of the reach of men and devils: this serves both to commend the inheritance, to set forth the excellency of it, lying in such a place as heaven; for the situation of an inheritance adds oftentimes to the valuableness of it; and also the safety and security of it; it is safe, being in heaven, and more so as it is in Christ's hands there. The Jews are wont to call the future state an inheritance of the land of the living: they say {u}

"this is called hlxn, "an inheritance"; and add, but in this world a man has no inheritance, nor continuance;"

so they interpret that phrase, "by the God of thy father", in
Ge 49:25 thus {w}

"this is anoxa, "the inheritance" of the superior place, which is called "heaven";"

and sometimes they style it hale atnoxa, "the superior inheritance", or "the inheritance above" {x}; all which agrees with Peter's language.

{u} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 150. 3. {w} Zohar in Gen. fol. 131. 2. {x} Zohar in Exod. fol. 34. 3.

1 Peter 1:5

Ver. 5. Who are kept by the power of God,.... This is a description of the persons for whom the inheritance is reserved in heaven; they are not only chosen to salvation, and begotten again to an inheritance, but they are preserved unto it; their happiness is very great; their inheritance is safe in heaven for them, and they are kept below, amidst a thousand snares and difficulties, till they safely arrive to the possession of that: they are kept, not in and by themselves, the way of man is not in himself; nor in the hands of angels, for no such trust does God put in them; but in the hands of Jesus Christ, where they are safe, and out of which none can pluck them; on him, as a foundation, and in him, as a strong hold; they are kept in the love of God, and on his heart, from whence they can never be separated, and in the covenant of grace, out of which they will never be put; and in a state of justification, and shall never enter into condemnation; and in the family of God, for, being sons, they are no more servants; and in a state of grace and holiness, in the fear of God, and faith of Christ, and love to both; and in the path of truth, from whence they can never finally and totally fall: for though they are not kept from the being of sin, and the workings of it, and slips and falls into it, yet from being destroyed by it; and though not from Satan, and his temptations, yet from being overcome by them; and though not entirely from unbelief, doubts, and fears, yet from final unbelief; for Christ prays for them, that their faith fail not; and from a final and total falling away from grace into sin: and they are kept thus, not by their own power and might, or that of any mere creature, but "by the power of God"; meaning, not the Gospel, nor the Spirit of God, but the perfection of his power; by which they are kept, as with a guard, or in a garrison, as the word here used signifies; not only angels encamp about them, and salvation is for walls and bulwarks, all around them; but God himself, in the perfection of his power, is a wall of fire to them; he is round about them from henceforth and for ever; their place of defence is the munition of rocks; his name is a strong tower, where they run and are safe: it is added,

through faith; some versions read it, "and by faith", as the Syriac and Ethiopic; by that faith which is of the operation of God, of which Christ is the author and finisher, and shall never fail, it being supported by the same power the saints are kept; through faith in the power and faithfulness of God; through faith looking to Christ, leaning on him, and living upon him; by faith getting the victory over the world, and every other enemy, and being more than conquerors, through Christ. That to which the saints are kept is, "unto salvation"; salvation is already obtained for them, by the obedience and sufferings of Christ, and is applied to them in conversion, by the Spirit of Christ; but the full enjoyment of it, which is here intended, is reserved for them in heaven; and to this they are kept, being heirs of it, and shall certainly possess it: and which

is ready to be revealed in the last time; it is "ready", being a kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world, and a salvation obtained by the blood of

Christ, and a mansion of glory made fit for them, through the presence and intercession of their Redeemer: and it is ready "to be revealed"; in a short time it will be made manifest; at present it is much out of sight; eye has not seen, nor ear heard the full glories of it; saints themselves as yet do not know what they shall be, and have: but "in the last time", when Christ shall come a second time to judge the world, he will raise the dead bodies of his saints; and then this salvation shall be fully manifested to them; and they shall enjoy it both in soul and body to all eternity.

1 Peter 1:6

Ver. 6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice,.... The Vulgate Latin version reads, "in which ye shall rejoice": and so the Syriac version, adding, "for ever"; and refer these words to the "last time"; or, times spoken of in the preceding verse; when the saints will greatly rejoice, being in full possession of eternal salvation; in distinction from the present time, in which they are in heaviness; but it is better to read the words in the present tense, and as expressive of the saints in this life, who are blessed with that fruit of the Spirit, joy, and have always reason to rejoice, and greatly rejoice. The connection is with the whole that goes before; and the sense is this, that regenerated persons rejoice, in that they are the elect of God, according to his everlasting love towards them, and free grace, and good will; in their regeneration, which is an evidence of their election of God; in the abundant mercy of God displayed in their regeneration; and in that lively hope of eternal life which is the effect of it; and in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which secures their justification of life, and their resurrection from the dead; and in the inheritance they are born heirs unto; and in their preservation to it by the power of God through faith; and in that complete salvation which is ready for them, and in a short time will be revealed, to which they are kept:

though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations. This seems to be a contrast, but is no real contradiction; for the character of the saints in this world is, that they are as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, **2Co 6:10** rejoicing even in their tribulations and temptations; yea, for them, and on account of them, in some respects, which in others make them sorrowful, and heavy, or "heavy" with sorrow: the cause of this heaviness is not only indwelling corruptions, the hidings of God's face, and the temptations of Satan, but afflictions and persecutions, which are here meant by "manifold temptations"; for not the temptations or to sin, are here intended, but the temptations with which God tempts and tries his people: so he sometimes does, by calling them to hard service, to do things difficult and disagreeable to flesh and blood, in which way he tempted Abraham; and by laying afflictions, or suffering afflictions to come upon them, by which he tried Job; and by permitting wicked men to reproach and persecute them, and to injure them in their characters, persons, and properties; and which was the case of the primitive Christians, and has been more or less the case of the saints ever since: now such exercises are called, from the quality of them, temptations, or trials; because they try the hearts, principles, and graces of them that believe, and particularly their faith hereafter mentioned; and from the quantity of them, they are said to be various; they are of different sorts; as reproach, imprisonment, loss of goods, and death itself in divers shapes; and are more or less at different times and ages; and are exercised on various persons: and are sometimes very heavy, and grievous to be borne, and cause great heaviness and sorrow of heart; and yet there are things, and circumstances, and which are here hinted at, that greatly mitigate the heaviness occasioned by them; as, that these afflictions, and the heaviness that comes by them, are but little, and light, in comparison of the eternal weight of glory; though they are great tribulations in themselves, through and out of which the people of God come to the kingdom; and so the Syriac version renders it, "though at this time" lylq, "ye are a little made sorrowful"; and then it is only "now", for the present time, and but for a short time; for a little season, even for a moment, comparatively speaking; and also, "if need be", which the Syriac version omits, though by all means to be retained: afflictive dispensations, in whatsoever form, are necessary, by the will of God, who has appointed them, and therefore must be, and ought to be, quietly submitted to, and patiently borne, on that consideration; and are also necessary, on account of Christ the head, to whom there must be a conformity of his members; and likewise on their own account; for the humbling of their souls; for the weaning of them from the things of this world; for the restraining, subduing, and keeping under the corruptions of their nature; and for the trial of grace: and it is only "if", and when there is a necessity for them, that they are in heaviness by them; otherwise God does not delight to afflict and grieve the children of men, and much less his own; see **La 3:33** so the Jews say {y}, that Kruwh, "there was a necessity" of God's tempting Abraham as he did, to humble and purify him.

{y} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 22. 1.

1 Peter 1:7

Ver. 7. That the trial of your faith,.... This is the principal end which God has in afflictive providences, to try the faith of his people; so the faith of Abraham, Job, Habakkuk, and others, have been tried:

being much more precious than of gold that perisheth: the grace of faith is much more precious than gold; since that perisheth by using, but faith does not; and since it is so valuable as not to be obtained by it; and since those that have it, though poor in this world, are rich, and heirs of a kingdom: but the trying of it is abundantly more precious than gold; for not only as gold being tried in the fire is purged from its dross, and is proved to be genuine and shines the brighter, so faith, being tried in the fire of afflictions, is purged from unbelief; and the believer is purged from his dross and tin, and his iniquity is purged, and the fruit of all is to take away sin; and he is tried and proved to be a true believer, and his faith shines the more illustriously, as in the above instances; yea, the very trying of it has an influence on other graces, for great usefulness; for the trying of faith works patience, and that, experience, and that, hope:

though it be tried with fire: either though gold be tried with fire, and so is greatly refined, yet it is more precious than that; or though faith be tried with the fire of afflictions, yet it is precious, and more precious than gold: and it is tried for this purpose,

that it might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ; who is now in the highest heavens, and out of sight, but will appear a second time without sin unto salvation, and every eye shall see him; and when the believer will be found in him, and his faith be found unto praise by him, he will have praise of him himself; it will be said unto him, "Well done, good and faithful servant"; his faith will be praised for its steadiness and constancy, notwithstanding all persecutions and tribulations; and his good works, the fruits of faith, will be taken notice of by him with commendation; he will be honoured, by being placed on the right hand of Christ, and by being set down with him in his throne, and having a crown of righteousness given to him; and he will be glorified both in soul and body; his body will be made like to Christ's glorious body, and his soul will have a glory revealed in it; and in his whole person he shall appear, when Christ does, with him in glory.

1 Peter 1:8

Ver. 8. Whom having not seen, ye love,.... That is, Jesus Christ, whom they had never seen with their bodily eyes, being Jews, who dwelt not in Judea, when Christ was upon earth, but were scattered about in several parts of the Gentile world; and yet Christ being made known to them, through the preaching of the Gospel, they received and embraced him, and their affections were strongly set upon him: they loved him because of his excellencies and perfections, because of the loveliness of his person, and because he first loved them; they loved him because of the fulness of grace that was in him, because of what he had done for them, and was unto them, and because of the offices he sustained on their account, and the relations he stood in to them; they loved him above all creatures and things, and all of him, and that belong unto him, his people, truths, ordinances, ways, and worship; they loved him with all their hearts, and in the sincerity of their souls, though they had never seen his face in the flesh; whereas sight often begets and increases love: their love was not carnal, but spiritual; it was a fruit of the Spirit of God in their souls; was accompanied with faith in Christ, and proceeded upon the report the Gospel made of him:

in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing; the Arabic version adds, "in him": that is, in Christ, who was then received up into heaven, and must be retained there until the time of the restitution of all things; and therefore not now to be beheld with corporeal sight: and yet these regenerate ones, and lovers of Christ, believed in him; see Joh 20:29 not with a notional, historical, and temporary faith, believing not merely what he said, or did, or does, or will do; but looking on him, and to him, for life and salvation; going out of themselves to him, embracing of him, leaning upon him as their Saviour and Redeemer; venturing their souls upon him, committing their all unto him, expecting all from him, both grace and glory: and so

rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; with a joy in believing on him, which is better experienced than expressed; a joy that not only strangers intermeddle not with, know nothing of, which entirely passes their understanding, but is such as saints themselves cannot speak out, or give a full and distinct account of; they want words to express it, and convey proper ideas of it to others: and it is a joy that is glorious; there is a rejoicing that is evil and scandalous; but this is honourable, and of which none need be ashamed; it is solid and substantial, and the matter of it always abiding, when the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment; it is a joy on account of the glory of God, which the believer lives in the hope and faith of; and it is a beginning, a presage and pledge of it; it is a glory begun here; it is the firstfruits, and a part also of it; and by it saints may know a little what heaven itself will be.

1 Peter 1:9

Ver. 9. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Which is a just and sufficient ground of joy and rejoicing. "Salvation" intends spiritual and eternal salvation; that which God appointed his people to from all eternity, which is obtained by Christ, applied by the Spirit, and will be fully enjoyed in heaven: this is the salvation "of souls": which are of more worth than a world; and the redemption of which is precious, and requires a great price, and for which a great price is paid, as in **1Pe 1:18**. It is rightly supplied in our version by "your", as in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; though the Vulgate Latin version only reads, "the salvation of souls"; and which is to be understood, not to the exclusion of bodies, for God has designed the salvation of them; and Christ has procured the redemption of them; and these will be preserved unto the coming of Christ, being united to him; and will be raised by him, and with their souls enjoy everlasting happiness with him; though, in the present state of things, salvation rather takes place in the soul than in the body, which is exposed to various labours, afflictions, and diseases; but the chief design of the phrase is, to distinguish this salvation from a corporeal and temporal one: and so the Jews use the phrase
vpnh tewvt, "the salvation of the soul" {z}, in opposition to, and distinction from, a mere bodily one; and it intends a salvation from sin, Satan, the law, and its curses; from hell, the second death, and wrath to come, and every spiritual enemy: which is the end of faith; or, as the Syriac version renders it, anerwp, "the reward of faith"; not that faith is the cause of salvation, or meritorious of it; for that itself is the gift of God, and is rather a part of salvation, and, at most, but the means of perceiving an interest in it, and of enjoying the comfort of it; and is what will issue in it, and in the full enjoyment of it; when faith will both have its end and scope, and be at an end, being exchanged for fruition; just as a reward is given at the end of a man's labours: hence it is called
tyrxa, "the end", Pr 23:18 and even now salvation is the end of faith, in like sense as Christ is the end of the law: as the law has its full accomplishment, and all its ends answered in Christ, so faith has its end, and all it looks for, desires, and wants, in salvation by Christ: and which is now "receiving"; for the saints not only shall receive, and enjoy the full possession of it hereafter, but they have it now; it is not only appointed to them, and wrought out for them, but is brought near, set before them, and applied to them, and put into the hands of faith by the Spirit of God; they have it in faith and hope, by which they are already saved; and in Christ their head and representative, in whom they are set down in heavenly places; and besides, they have the beginning, firstfruits, earnest, and pledge of it in their own hearts, as well as a right unto,

and a meetness for the perfect possession of it hereafter; all which is matter of joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

{z} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 168. 4.

1 Peter 1:10

Ver. 10. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired,.... They greatly desired the coming of the Saviour, and to see him; they longed after the salvation to be accomplished by him, and expressed their wishes for him, and that; and inquired into the nature of it, and gave an account thereof, according to the measure of light and knowledge communicated to them; they pointed out Christ as a Redeemer of his people, and his salvation as spiritual and eternal:

and searched diligently; in the use of means; by prayer and supplication; by reading the prophecies that went before; by observing the types, shadows, and sacrifices of the law; and by waiting upon the Lord for the inspiration of his Spirit. This last clause is omitted in the Syriac version, but rightly retained in all others:

who prophesied of the grace; [that should] come unto you; Jews, and also the Gentiles. They prophesied both of Christ, who is the unspeakable gift of God's free grace, who is full of grace, and by whom it comes; and also of the several blessings of grace through Christ, as of redeeming grace from sin, Satan, death, and the grave; of justifying grace, through his righteousness, he being the Lord our righteousness, in whom all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and glory; for though his righteousness is revealed without the law, yet it is witnessed to by law and prophets; of pardoning grace, as with God, and as a blessing of the new covenant, and as received through faith in Christ, to which give all the prophets witness; of adopting grace, both to Jews and Gentiles, signifying, that where they were not called the people of God, they should be called the sons of God; of regenerating and sanctifying grace, in giving a new heart and Spirit, in sprinkling with clean water, in writing the laws of God in the inward parts, and pouring out the Spirit in a plenteous manner on all sorts of men; of persevering grace, intimating that they that fear the Lord shall not depart from him, and that his loving kindness shall never depart from them; and of eternal life and glory, as God's free gift, which is that everlasting salvation, they say, Israel shall be saved in the Lord with.

1 Peter 1:11

Ver. 11. Searching what, or what manner of time,.... The prophets made a very diligent inquiry into the exact time when Christ should come to work out the salvation of his people; to whom it was made known that his coming should be before the sceptre, or tribe of Judah, and all civil government in it, ceased; and before the second temple was destroyed, into which the Messiah, the messenger of the covenant, was to come, as the Lord and proprietor of it; and that it should be seventy weeks, or 490 years, from a date given in **Da 9:24** as it was revealed to the Prophet Daniel; who particularly inquired, and diligently searched into this matter, and was eminently a man of desires this way, as he is styled, **Da 9:23** and they not only searched into the exact time, but into the manner and quality of the time when the Saviour should come; and foretold that it would be, with respect to the nations of the world, a time of profound peace; with respect to the Jews, that it would be a time of great blindness, ignorance, unbelief, and hardness of heart; that such would be that generation, or age, for wickedness and barbarity, as could not be declared and expressed; and that few would believe the report of the Gospel; and that the Messiah would be rejected of men, and be wounded, bruised, and put to death; and with respect to the Gentiles, that the Gospel would be preached to them, and that they should seek to Christ, be gathered to him, and hope and trust in him; and that the followers of the Messiah should be persecuted, and greatly distressed, and yet comforted and sustained; and this should be the face of the times, and the state of things, when the salvation should be revealed: and all this, and much more,

the Spirit of Christ in them did signify; or "make manifest": from whence it appears, that Christ then existed, as he did before there were any prophets, and even from everlasting, being the eternal God; and that the Spirit is from him, as well as from the Father; and as here, so he is often by the Jews {a} called axyvm axwr, "the Spirit of the Messiah", or "Christ"; and that the Spirit is truly God, since he could declare beforehand the exact time of Christ's coming, and the finality of the age in which he came, as well as bear a previous testimony to his sufferings and glory; as also, that he was in the prophets, and they were inspired by him, and spake as he moved and directed them:

when, it testified before hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. The "sufferings of Christ" are what the Jews call {b} xyvm ylbx, "the sorrows of the Messiah". These are particularly testified of in Ps 22:1. The glory, or "glories", as it may be rendered, design his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to heaven, his session at the right hand of God, and having all power, authority, and judgment committed to him; and which are eminently and distinctly prophesied of in Ps 16:10.

{a} Zohar in Gen. fol. 19. 3. & passim. {b} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 118. 1. & passim.

1 Peter 1:12

Ver. 12. Unto whom it was revealed,.... The salvation they searched and inquired into, and the grace of it; the time of its being wrought out, and what sort of times they would be when Christ should come, both to the church, and to the world, among Jews and Gentiles; as also what cruel sufferings the Messiah should undergo, and what great glory should be put upon him afterwards:

that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read "unto you"; and so do some copies. Not that they were ignorant of the things they searched into, and were revealed unto them, and they prophesied of; as the Jews sometimes say {c} of them,

"that they prophesied, and knew not what they prophesied of;"

though it is not to be supposed that they had such clear and distinct ideas of things as saints have now under the Gospel dispensation; yet they knew much of the grace of the Gospel, and had the comfort of it, and a view of interest in the great salvation, and saw the day of Christ afar off with pleasure: nor that they did not minister, and were not useful to the saints of the age in which they lived; for their prophecies concerning Christ, and salvation by him, were particularly calculated for their spiritual refreshment and comfort, and the support of their faith and hope under afflictive circumstances; but then they were not to have their accomplishment in their times; for though they sometimes speak of them, because of the certainty of them, as if they were already done, yet they knew they were not to be brought about until the last days; and therefore what was written by them, was written for our learning and instruction chiefly and principally, on whom the ends of the world are come; and though they were both profitable to themselves, and others that lived with them, yet they are more so to the saints under the Gospel dispensations, who are able to compare prophesies and facts together: even

the things which are now reported unto you; as accomplished facts; such as relate to the person and offices of Christ, and salvation wrought out by him; to his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, and session at the right hand of God; of all which there is a true and faithful report made in the Gospel:

by them that have preached the Gospel unto you; meaning himself, and the rest of the apostles, who had been called, and qualified, and sent out by Christ to preach glad tidings, and publish peace, which they had done in the several parts of the world, both to Jew and Gentile:

with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; by Christ from the Father, particularly at the day of Pentecost, when the apostles had an extraordinary and plentiful effusion of the Spirit, qualifying them to preach the Gospel to which they were called and sent: and thus, as the great salvation is commended, from the concern that the prophets of old had in it, so from the preaching of it by the apostles, who were influenced and guided by the same Spirit of Christ as they were, and in a far greater manner; and this salvation is still more commended from the great regard the blessed angels have unto it:

which things the angels desire to look into. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "into whom"; either into the Holy Spirit, and the things of the Spirit, which he testified in the prophets, and published by the apostles; or rather into Christ, his person, offices, and grace, the allusion being to the cherubim on the mercy seat, a type of Christ, which looked to one another, and to the mercy seat, Ex 25:20 and was true of them in the days of Christ's flesh, when they ascended and descended on the son of man, **Joh 1:51** and when he rose from the dead, and went to heaven; for then was he seen and gazed on by angels, as he now is, **1Ti 3:16** or "into which things": so the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; namely, the sufferings of Christ, and the glories following; the great mystery of redemption and salvation by Christ; the several doctrines of the Gospel, in which the glory of the grace, wisdom, righteousness, truth, and power of God is displayed; things they are highly delighted with, take pleasure in the contemplation of, and desire to have a greater knowledge of, and acquaintance with: they sung glory to God in the highest at the incarnation of Christ; they rejoice at the conversion of a sinner; and disdain not to be ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation; and learn of the church the manifold wisdom of God; which may serve greatly to commend the excellency of Gospel truths, and engage us in the study of them.

{c} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 119. 2.

1 Peter 1:13

Ver. 13. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind,.... With the girdle of truth; see **Eph 6:14** since angels desire to look into the mysteries of grace, do you apply your minds, and diligently attend unto them, in opposition to all loose and vagrant thoughts of the mind, about other things: give yourselves up wholly to them, meditate upon them, employ yourselves in them, and about them; seeing they are the study and inquiry of angels, and what the prophets have prophesied of, and searched into and ministered, and the apostles of Christ have preached; and besides, are things which relate to the person, office, sufferings, and glory of Christ, and the salvation of immortal souls. Though the phrase is sometimes used to denote preparation and readiness, and to be in a fit position to do anything, as the Israelites were at the eating of the first passover, to march at the least notice out of Egypt; and so to go a journey, to run a race, to serve another, to wait on him, and for him, and also be prepared for battle; and is a metaphor taken from the custom of the eastern nations, who used to wear long garments, which they gathered up close to them, and girt about them, when they were about any of the above things, that they might be no hinderance to them, and that they might perform them with more expedition and dispatch; and so may be expressive of the readiness of believers, as pilgrims and travellers, for their journey towards the heavenly country, and to run the race set before them, and also to do every good work, according to the station they are placed in, to serve their Lord and master Jesus Christ in whatsoever he calls them to, and to wait for his coming; see Lu 12:35 and also to fight his battles, to quit themselves like men, and be strong in defence of his Gospel, and against every enemy of his and theirs.

Be sober; which is not only opposed to intemperance in eating and drinking, which greatly disqualifies for the above readiness and attention, but also to a being inebriated with the cares of this life, which choke the word, and make it unfruitful, and lead men into temptation, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, and from the faith of Christ; and likewise to a being intoxicated with errors, and false doctrine, which lull men asleep, and render them incapable of serving Christ, and his church; and turn their heads from faith to fables, and are contrary to the words of truth and soberness; so that to be sober, is not only to be moderate in eating and drinking; but to be disengaged from the anxious cares of the world, and to be disentangled, recovered, or awaked from the error of the wicked:

and hope to the end; or "perfectly", as the Greek word may be rendered, and as it is in the Syriac version, which joins it with the other phrase, and renders it, "be ye perfectly awaked". The Arabic version renders it, "trusting with a perfect confidence"; so that it designs either the nature of that lively hope, to which they were begotten again, and are here exhorted to exercise, it being perfect, sincere, and without hypocrisy; not like the hope of the hypocrite, which shall perish, and stand him in no stead, but an undissembled one; for as there is faith unfeigned, and love without dissimulation, so hope without hypocrisy; and also the full assurance of it, for as there is a plerophory of faith and love, and of understanding, so of hope; see **Heb 6:11** or it intends the duration of this grace, and the exercise of it: it is a grace that does, and will remain, and it ought to be continually exercised, and the rejoicing of it to be kept firm, to the end; to the end of life, and until the saints come to the enjoyment of what they are hoping for; even

for the grace that is to be brought unto you as the revelation of Jesus Christ; and which may be rendered for the grace that is brought unto you, in or by the revelation of Jesus Christ: and the sense may be, that there is grace that is now brought to light by the Gospel, and that is brought home to the souls of God's people through it; as electing grace, redeeming grace, justifying grace, pardoning grace, adopting grace; and, in short, salvation, as all of grace; which Gospel is the revelation of Jesus Christ: it is a revelation that is made by him; and it is a revelation that is made of him; it is a revelation of the glory of his person and offices; herein is his righteousness revealed from faith to faith; and here the riches of his grace are made manifest, and laid to open view; life and immortality are brought to light by Christ in it; and the way to eternal life, glory, and salvation, as being by Christ, is pointed out by it; and all this grace that is brought, and set before the saints in the Gospel, they ought to hope for, and comfortably believe their interest in; and continue thus hoping, believing, and trusting to the end of their days: or if our version, and which is that of others also, be retained, the meaning is, that eternal glory and happiness, which is called "grace", because it is the free gift of God through Christ, to his children and flock, and is the finishing of the grace that is bestowed on them, and wrought in them, and is future, "is to be brought"; is a glory that shall be revealed in them, and a salvation ready to be revealed to them; and which will be done when Christ shall be revealed from heaven, when he shall appear a second time, and in glory; and is, and ought to be, the object of their hope, for it is laid up, and reserved for them; and they have the earnest of it in them, as well as the promise of it to them. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions, instead of "grace", read "joy"; and is the same with eternal glory, the joy of the Lord prepared for them, and which they shall enter into.

1 Peter 1:14

Ver. 14. As obedient children,.... Or "children of obedience". This may be connected either with what goes before, that seeing they were children of God, by adopting grace, and in regeneration brought to the obedience of faith, to whom the inheritance belonged, therefore they ought to continue hoping for it; or with what follows, that since they were manifestly the children of God by faith in. Christ Jesus, being begotten again to a lively hope, they ought to be followers of him, and imitate him in holiness and righteousness, and show themselves to be obedient ones to his Gospel and ordinances, as children ought to honour, and obey, and imitate their parents:

not fashioning yourselves to the former lusts in your ignorance. The phrase is much the same with that in Ro 12:2 "be not conformed to this world"; for to be conformed, or fashioned to the world, is to be fashioned to the lusts of it; and to be fashioned to the lusts of it is to indulge them, to make provision for them, to obey them, to live and walk in them; which should not be done by the children of God, and who profess themselves to be obedient ones to the Gospel, which teaches otherwise; and that because they are lusts, foolish, hurtful, and deceitful ones, ungodly ones; the lusts of the devil, as well as of the world, and of the flesh, and which war against the soul; and because they are "former" ones, which they served in a time of unregeneracy, and were now convinced and ashamed of, and therefore should no longer live to them; the time past of life being sufficient to have walked in them: and because they were lusts in ignorance, which they had indulged in a state of ignorance; not of Gentilism, though this might be the case of some, but of Judaism; when they knew not God, especially in Christ, and were ignorant of his righteousness, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, as committed against a law that was holy and spiritual; nor did they know Christ, and the way of salvation by him, but thought they ought to do many things contrary to his name; nor the work of the Spirit in regeneration, saying with Nicodemus, how can these things be? nor the true sense of the Scriptures, the sacred oracles, that were committed to them; much less the Gospel, which was hidden from them, and they were enemies to: but now it was otherwise with them; they were made light in the Lord, and had knowledge of all these things; and therefore, as their light increased, and the grace of God, bringing salvation, appeared unto them, and shone out on then, it became them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and not to walk as they had done before, since they had not so learned Christ.

1 Peter 1:15

Ver. 15. But as he which hath called you is holy,.... Which is a periphrasis of God the Father, who had called them, not merely in an external way, by the outward ministry of the word; but internally, powerfully, and efficaciously, by his Spirit and grace; and who had called them to holiness of life and conversation, as well as in calling had implanted principles of holiness in them, and therefore is said to call them with an holy calling; and who himself is holy, naturally, perfectly, and originally, and in such sense as no creature is, angels or men; and is glorious in holiness, and is the source and fountain of holiness in others: therefore

[so] be ye holy in all manner of conversation; which respects not internal holiness, but supposes it; for that is God's work, and not the creature's act; it is the sanctification of the Spirit, of which he is the author; this they were chosen unto from the beginning, and made partakers of in regeneration; but external holiness, holiness of life and conversation, in all the parts and branches of it, both with respect to God and men, in matters both of religion and civil life: and to be holy in this sense is an imitating of God, a copying after him, though he is far from being equalled by a sinful creature, or even by an angel in heaven; however, the arguments to it, taken from the nature of God, and of his effectual calling to grace and holiness, are very strong and powerful; for it is walking worthy of him, who has called us to his kingdom and glory; and walking worthy of that calling wherein we are called; and a following of God, as dear and obedient children; and what is according to his will, and what he directs unto, and requires, as appears from what follows.

1 Peter 1:16

Ver. 16. Because it is written,.... In Le 11:44

be ye holy, for I am holy: an argument the apostle knew must have weight with these persons, who were chiefly Jews, scattered abroad among the Gentiles, and had a value for the Scriptures of truth; and therefore, as the argument for holiness of life, from the nature and perfections of God, is strong, it must receive additional strength from this being the declared will of God, even their sanctification on this account; and though holiness, equal to God, is never to be attained to by a creature, yet so far as it is capable of it, it is desirable, because agreeable both to the nature and will of God, by all such who are truly his children, who love his name, adore his perfections, give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness, fear his goodness, and obey his will.

1 Peter 1:17

Ver. 17. And if ye call on the Father,.... Of Christ, and of all the saints; or "seeing" ye do. This is a fresh argument, engaging to holiness of life and conversation. Invocation of God includes the whole worship of him, the performance of every outward duty, and the exercise of every inward grace, particularly it designs prayer; and whoever are concerned in one, or the other, God will be sanctified by all them that draw nigh unto him: or the phrase may here intend an asserting God to be their Father, under the influence of the spirit of adoption; and all such that do claim so near a relation to God ought to honour and obey him, and to be followers of him: whoever call God their Father, and themselves his children, ought to be careful that they do not blaspheme, or cause to be blasphemed, that worthy name by which they are called:

who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work. This is another reason why men should be holy, taken from the general judgment; for this God that is a Father, is also a judge. There is a judgment after death, which is sure and certain, and reaches to all persons and things; and though the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, yet he will judge everyone by that man Christ, whom he has ordained to be the Judge of quick and dead: before his judgment seat all must stand, where they will be impartially, and without respect of persons, tried; no account will be had of what nation and place they are, whether Jews or Gentiles, or of this, or the other country, unless to aggravate or lessen their condemnation; for it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for such who have been favoured with a Gospel revelation, and believe it not; nor from what parents they have descended, for the soul that sins, that shall die; nor of what age and sex they are, small and great shall stand before him; nor of what state and condition, rich or poor, high or low, bond or free; or of what religious sect and denomination, or whether they have conformed to some external things or not; no regard will be had to any outward appearance or profession. The Judge will not judge according to the sight of the eyes, and outward view of things; for he looks on the heart, and knows the secret springs of all actions; and according thereunto will he judge and pass the sentence; and therefore what manner of persons ought men to be, in all holy conversation and godliness? Hence it follows, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; the people of God in this world are "sojourners", as all their fathers were; they are not natives of the place in, which they are; though they are in the world, they are not of it; they were natives of it by their first birth, but by their second they are born again from above, and so, belong to another place; they are of another country, even an heavenly one; are citizens of another city, a city which, has foundations, whose builder and maker is God, their citizenship is in heaven; and there is their Father's house, which is not made with hands, and is eternal; and there lies their estate, their inheritance; and though they dwell here below, neither their settlement nor their satisfaction are here; they reckon themselves not at home while they are on earth, and are strangers in it, to the men of the world, and they to them; with whom they have not, or at least ought not to have, any fellowship. It is indeed but for a "time", that they are sojourners, not an eternity; which time is fixed, and is very short, and will be quickly gone; it is but a little while, and Christ wilt come and take them home to his Father's house, where they shall be for ever with him; for it is only here on earth that they are pilgrims and strangers: and while they are so they should spend their time "in fear"; not of men nor of devils, nor of death and judgment, hell and eternal damnation; for such a fear is not consistent with the love of God shed abroad in the heart, and is the effect of the law, and not encouraged by the Gospel; is in natural men, yea, in devils themselves; but in the fear of God, and which springs from the grace of God, and is increased by it; is consistent with the strongest acts of faith, and with the greatest expressions of spiritual joy; is opposite to pride and self-confidence, and includes the whole worship of God, external and internal, and a religious conversation, in humility and lowliness of mind.

1 Peter 1:18

Ver. 18. Forasmuch as ye know,.... From the Scriptures of truth, by the testimony of the Spirit, by his work upon the soul, and by the application of the benefits of redemption, such as justification, pardon, adoption, and sanctification; see Job 19:25,

that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold. The redemption of a soul, which is of more worth than a world, requires a greater price than gold and silver; and those who have the largest share thereof, can neither redeem their own souls with it, nor the souls of others. The soul is immortal and incorruptible, but these are corruptible things, which may be cankered, or wear away, and perish by using; and therefore, seeing redemption is not obtained by anything corruptible, nothing corrupt in principle, or practice should be indulged. The allusion is to the redemption of the people of Israel, and of the firstborn, by shekels, Ex 30:12. Gold and silver do not mean pieces of gold and silver, but gold and silver coined; for only by such could redemption of anything be obtained {d} but these are insufficient for the redemption of the soul; which is a deliverance from the slavery of sin, the bondage, curse, and condemnation of the law, the captivity of Satan, and from a state of poverty, having been deep in debt, and sold under sin. It here follows,

from your vain conversation [received] by tradition from your fathers; meaning not the corruption of nature, which is propagated from father to son by natural generation, and lies in the vanity of the mind, and is the spring and source of an evil conversation; though the saints, as they are redeemed from all sin, so from this, that it shall not be their condemnation; not Gentilism, which lay in vain philosophy, in idolatry and superstition, and in evil and wicked conversation, encouraged by the example of their ancestors; but Judaism, and either regards the ceremonial law, which was delivered by Moses to the Jewish fathers, and by them handed down to their posterity; and which was vain, as used and abused by them, and was unprofitable to obtain righteousness, life, and salvation by, and therefore was disannulled by Christ, who has redeemed and delivered his people from this yoke of bondage; or rather the traditions of the elders, which our Lord inveighs against, Mt 15:3 &c. and the Apostle Paul was brought up in, and zealous of, before conversion, **Ga 1:14** as the Pharisees were. These were the inventions and decrees of them they called twba, "fathers", to whose dogmas and decisions they paid the utmost respect. These made up their oral law, which the Jews say {e} Moses received from Sinai, and delivered to Joshua; and Joshua to the elders; and the elders to the prophets; and the prophets to the men of the great synagogue, the last of which was Simeon the just; and from him it was delivered to another; and so from one to another to the times of Christ and his apostles and afterwards; and which consisted of many vain, useless, and unprofitable things; to walk according to which must be a vain conversation; and the saints now being redeemed by a greater price than that of silver and gold, and which is after mentioned, they ought not therefore to be the servants of men, no, not of these fathers, but of God and Christ.

{d} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Beracot, c. 7. sect. 1. {e} Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2, &c.

1 Peter 1:19

Ver. 19. But with the precious blood of Christ,.... Christ was prophesied of as a Redeemer under the Old Testament, Isa 59:20 and the Jews frequently ascribe redemption to the word of the Lord God {f}; and which the apostle here attributes to the blood of Christ; whose blood is the same with ours, only not tainted with sin; the blood of an innocent person, and of one who is God, as well as man, and was freely shed in the room and stead of his people, and so a sufficient price for their redemption: and it may truly be said to be "precious": as it is to God, to whom it is a sweet smelling sacrifice, and with which he is well pleased; not that he takes delight in the mere effusion of his blood, but as this is the ransom price, and the atonement of his chosen ones; and so it is to all them that believe, since by it they are justified; through it they have the forgiveness of their sins; their peace and reconciliation with God is made by it; and by it they are sanctified, and have boldness to enter into the holiest of all: and this blood of Christ, by which they are redeemed, is

as of a lamb without spot and blemish; Christ is comparable to any lamb, for the innocence of his nature, the meekness of his disposition and deportment, and for his patience under sufferings and in death; and to the lambs of the daily sacrifice, which were typical of the continual and constant virtue and efficacy of his sacrifice to take away sin; and particularly to the paschal lamb, he being the true passover sacrificed for us; and which, as also the lambs of the daily sacrifice, and all others, were to be without spot and blemish: and in which they prefigured Christ, who is without the stain of original, and the spot and blemish of actual sin; and so was a very fit person to be a sacrifice for sin, and a Redeemer of his people. The Jews have a notion, that the redemption of the Israelites out of Egypt, when a lamb without blemish was taken, and sacrificed and eaten, had a respect to the future redemption by the Messiah; and which, they say {g}, was to be in the same time of the year; that as they were redeemed in Nisan, the month in which the passover was kept, so they were to be redeemed in the same month: and indeed at that time, and in that month, was redemption obtained by the blood of Christ. Of the former, the Targumist in **Ho 3:2** says,

"I have redeemed them by my word, on the fifteenth day of the month Nisan, and have given silver shekels, the atonement of their souls."

It is observable that the Hebrew word Md signifies both "blood" and "money", or price; whether some reference may not be had to this here, since both are included here, may be considered.

{f} Targum in Hos. i. 7. & iii. 2. & in Joel ii. 17. {g} Zohar in Numb. fol. 102. 3.

1 Peter 1:20

Ver. 20. Who verily was foreordained,.... Or "foreknown"; that is, by God; and which intends, not barely his prescience of Christ, of what he should be, do, and suffer; but such a previous knowledge of him, which is joined with love and affection to him; not merely as his own Son, and the express image of his person, but as Mediator; and whom he loved before the world was, and with a love of complacency and delight, and which will last for ever. It includes the choice of him as the head of the election, and the pre-ordination of his human nature, to the grace of union to his divine Person, and the pre-appointment of him to various things. The Syriac version adds, "to this"; that is, to be the lamb for a sacrifice, to be a propitiation for the sins of his people, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of them by his precious blood. The allusion is to the taking of the passover lamb from the sheep, or from the goats, and keeping it separate, from the tenth to the fourteenth day of the month, before it was slain; so Christ, as man, was chosen out from among the people; and as Joseph's antitype was separated from his brethren, and that

before the foundation of the world; for all God's decrees and appointments, relating either to Christ, or his people, are eternal; no new thoughts, counsels, and resolutions, are taken up by him in time. The affair of redemption by Christ is no new thing; the scheme of it was drawn in eternity; the persons to be redeemed were fixed on; the Redeemer was appointed in the council and covenant of peace; and even the very Gospel which proclaims it was ordained before the world, for our glory. A Saviour was provided before sin was committed, and the method of man's recovery was settled before his ruin took place; and which was done without any regard to the works and merits of men, but is wholly owing to the free and sovereign grace of God, and to his everlasting love, both to the Redeemer and the redeemed. The Jews {h} reckon the name of the Messiah among the seven things that were created before the world was; in proof of which they mention, Ps 72:17 but was manifest in these last times for you; he was before, he existed from everlasting; he lay in the bosom of his Father from all eternity: and was veiled and hid under the shadows of the ceremonial law, during the legal dispensation; but in the fulness of time was manifest in the flesh, and more clearly revealed in the Gospel, and to the souls of men; his manifestation in human nature is principally intended, and which was in the last times of the legal dispensation, at the end of the Jewish world or state, when a new world, or the world to come, took place. It is a rule with the Jews {i}, that whenever the last days or times are mentioned, the times of the Messiah are designed: and this manifestation of Christ was for the sake of some particular persons, even for all God's elect, whether among Jews or Gentiles, and who are described in the following verse. The Alexandrian copy reads, "for us"; and the Ethiopic version, "for him".

{h} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 59. 1. & Nedarim, fol. 89. 2. {i} Kimchi in Isa. ii. 2.

1 Peter 1:21

Ver. 21. Who by him do believe in God,.... Christ, as God, is the object of faith; as Mediator, he is the way to the Father, by which men come to him, believe in him and lay hold upon him, as their covenant God and Father; and is also the author of that faith by which they believe in him; and all their encouragement to believe is taken from him; and such who do come to God by Christ, and stay themselves upon him, trusting in him, may know, and comfortably conclude, that Christ, who was foreordained from all eternity to be the Redeemer of his people, was manifest in the flesh for their sakes, and to obtain eternal redemption for them, which he was sent to do, by him

that raised him up from the dead: mention being made of his blood, as the price of redemption, **1Pe 1:19**, supposes that he died; and lest it should be thought that he was held by the pains of death, and under the power of it, which it was impossible he should, considering the dignity of his person, as the Son of God, and the fulfilment of his engagements, as the surety of his people; his resurrection from the dead is asserted, which was not only foretold by himself, but predicted by the prophets, and was punctually accomplished; and which, as here, is usually ascribed to God the Father, though not to the exclusion of Christ himself, who had power to lay down his life, and take it up again; and which is a very great encouragement to faith in God, both with respect to justification in his sight, and acceptance with him, since Christ rose again for our justification, and with regard to a future resurrection:

and gave him glory; by raising him from the dead, when his body became a glorious one, being raised, spiritual, powerful, and incorruptible; and by his ascension to heaven, being received up in a cloud, attended by thousands of angels, and triumphing over the powers of darkness; and by placing him at his own right hand, which is an honour never bestowed on any mere creature; and by possessing him with the gifts of the Spirit for men, and giving him all power in heaven and in earth, and authority to exercise judgment on all, and a name above every name in this, or the world to come:

that your faith and hope might be in God; which are graces that go together, and much resemble and assist, each other; they are both the gifts of God, and have him for their object, and meet in the same persons; and are greatly encouraged by the resurrection of Christ, and the glory he now enjoys, since because he lives, those that believe in him shall live also, and appear with him in glory.

1 Peter 1:22

Ver. 22. Seeing ye have purified your souls,.... The apostle passes to another exhortation, namely, to brotherly love; the ground of which he makes to be, the purification of their souls; and which supposes that they had been impure; and indeed, their whole persons, souls and bodies, were so by nature; even all the members of their bodies, and all the powers and faculties of their souls: it is internal purity, purity of the heart, that is here particularly respected; though not to the exclusion of outward purity, for where there is the former, there will be the latter; but there may be an external purity, where there is not the inward one: this the apostle ascribes to the saints themselves, but not without the grace of God, the blood of Christ, and the operations of his Spirit; as appears by a following clause; but they are said to purify themselves, inasmuch as having the grace of faith bestowed on them, they were enabled, under the influences of the Spirit of God, to exercise it on the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin:

in obeying the truth; of the Gospel, by receiving, believing, and embracing it in the love of it; which teaches outward purity, and is a means in the hand of the spirit of inward purity, and of directing to the purifying blood of Jesus, who sanctifies and cleanses by the word:

through the Spirit; this clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, but is in the Arabic version, and ought to be retained; for, as Christ died to purify to himself a peculiar people, the Spirit of Christ does from him purify the heart by faith in his blood; by sprinkling that on the conscience, and by leading the faith of God's people to the fountain of it, to wash it for sin, and for uncleanness; even both their consciences and their conversation, garments; whereby they obtain inward and outward purity:

unto unfeigned love of the brethren; which is the end of sanctification, and an evidence of it; when the saints are loved as brethren, and because such; and with a love without dissimulation, not in word and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth: this being the case, the exhortation follows:

[see that ye] love one another with a pure heart fervently: this is Christ's new commandment, and the evidence of regeneration; a distinguishing badge of Christianity, and without which all profession of religion is a vain and empty thing: this should he mutual and cordial; should proceed from the heart, and from an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience; and should be with warmth and fervency, and not with coldness and indifference; though the word here used, ektenwv, may not only design the intenseness of it, but the extensiveness of it also; as that it should reach to all the saints, the poor as well as the rich, and the lesser as well as the greater and more knowing believers; and likewise may denote the continuance of it; it ought to be continually exercised, and to last always; and so the Arabic version renders it, "with a perpetual love".

1 Peter 1:23

Ver. 23. Being born again,.... As they were of God, according to his abundant mercy, by the resurrection of Christ, to a lively hope of a glorious inheritance; as in **1Pe 1:3** and therefore seeing they were brethren in a spiritual relation, they ought to love as brethren; being children of the same Father, belonging to the same family and household, having the same spirit, and the same nature and disposition, and being members one of another, and heirs of the same grace and glory; and not only so, but were taught of God their Father, in regeneration, to love one another: it became them highly, therefore, to exercise that grace, and particularly since they were born,

not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible; referring not to seed cast into the earth, which first corrupts and dies, and then is quickened, and rises, and brings forth fruit; but to human seed, and which the Jews call hxwro hpj, "the filthy drop" {k}; which is in itself corrupt, and is corrupted, and whereby the corruption of human nature is propagated; for whatsoever is born of the flesh is carnal and corrupt; and so the apostle has reference to the first birth, or natural generation of men, in which they are polluted and depraved, and confirms what the evangelist says, **Joh 1:13** that regenerate persons are not "born of blood"; or become new creatures, and holy men, by their natural descent, or first birth, be it from whom it will; for all men are of one blood originally, and that is tainted with sin; nor by the will of fallen creatures, of corruptible men, themselves or others; but of water, and of the Spirit, of the grace of the Spirit of God, which is seed pure and incorruptible, having no mixture or taint of sin, nor any degree of pollution in it, and which remains so; nor can it be corrupted by all the wickedness there is in man's heart; nor by all the pollutions of the world, or temptations of Satan; and this seed is conveyed into the heart by the Spirit of God, in regeneration, and it contains all grace in it;

by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever; for the incorruptible seed, and the ever living and abiding word, are two distinct things; though interpreters generally confound them: and by "the word of God" is either meant the essential Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; who is concerned in regeneration as well as the Father and the Spirit; by whose resurrection, and in consequence of it, the elect of God are begotten again; and who, as the Word, is able to build up all the sanctified ones, and give them the inheritance they are born heirs unto: or the Gospel, the word of truth, which is made use of as a means of begetting souls again; and the rather, since it seems to be so interpreted, **1Pe 1:25** the phrases, "which liveth and abideth forever", may be either read in connection only with "God", and as descriptive of him, who is the living God, is from everlasting to everlasting, in distinction from idols; and here added, to show that he can give power and efficacy to his word, to regenerate and quicken, and will continue to preserve and make it useful to all his saving purposes; so Jarchi explains the passage in
Isa 40:8 after referred to, "the word of our God shall stand for ever";

"because he lives and abides, and it is in his power to confirm it therefore it follows, "O Zion, that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain"; for because he lives forever, this promise is published."

Or else with the word of God, and is true both of Christ, and of the Gospel. Christ is the Word which lives; in him, as such, is life; he has life in himself as God, as man, and as Mediator; and is the author of life, natural, spiritual, and, eternal; and abides for ever in his person, without any change; and in his offices and grace, and righteousness; he abides a priest continually, has an unchangeable priesthood, and ever lives to make intercession, and of his kingdom there is no end: the same is said of the "Memra", or Word of God, in the Chaldee paraphrase on Ho 11:9 "I am God", yrmym, "my word abideth for ever": compare Joh 12:34. The Gospel also may be said to live, in opposition to the law, which is the killing letter; and because it points out the way of life and salvation to sinners; and is a means of quickening dead sinners, and of ingenerating that faith by which men live on Christ; and of revealing to them that righteousness which is unto justification of life; and of supporting and maintaining spiritual life in them; and of reviving drooping saints; the Syriac version renders it, "the living Word of God": and it remains, and will abide; all its promises, blessings, doctrines, and ordinances, are lasting; it will continue in the world until all the elect of God are gathered in, until the second coming of Christ, and to the end of the world; notwithstanding all the persecutions of men, and cunning, craft of false teachers, and all the ridicule and contempt it is treated with by mockers and scoffers: and will abide in the effects of it, in the hearts of the saints, to all eternity.

{k} Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 1. & Bartenora in ib. Zohar in Exod. fol. 62. 1. & 78. 2.

1 Peter 1:24

Ver. 24 For all flesh is as grass,.... All men, as born of corruptible seed, are frail, mortal, and perishing; they spring up like grass, and look beautiful for a while, but are very weak and tender, and in a little time they are cut down by death, and wither away; and while they live, are, in a good measure, nothing but grass in another form; the substance of their life is greatly by it; what is the flesh they eat, but grass turned into it? and this mortality is not only the case of wicked men, as the Jews {l} interpret the word, but of good men; even of the prophets, and preachers of the Gospel; and yet the word of God spoken by them continues for ever: the passage referred to is in Isa 40:6

and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass; all outward things which are in esteem with men, and render them glorious to one another, as riches, honour, wisdom, strength, external righteousness, holiness, and goodness; all which are fading and transitory, like the flower of the field; but the Gospel continues, and reveals durable riches, and honour with Christ; and true wisdom and strength with him, and spiritual knowledge, in comparison of which, all things are dross and dung; and an everlasting righteousness; and true holiness in him: some have thought respect may be had to the legal dispensation, and to all the glory and stateliness and goodliness of the worship and ordinances of it, which were to endure but for a time, and are now removed; and the Gospel dispensation has taken place of them, which will continue to the end of the world:

the grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away; and so fading are all the above things.

{l} Targum, Jarchi, & Kimchi, in Isa. xl. 6.

1 Peter 1:25

Ver. 25. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever,.... Though men die, and ministers of the word too, and everything in the world is uncertain, unstable, fleeting, and passing away, and whatever change has been in the ordinances of divine service; yet the word of the Lord, the Gospel of Christ, is settled for ever, and will never pass away:

and this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you; this is the apostle's application of the passage in Isaiah, showing that the word of the Lord there is the same with the Gospel preached by him, and the other apostles, at that present time; and is no other than that good tidings Zion is said to bring; see Isa 40:9 the selfsame Gospel the Prophet Isaiah preached the apostles did, though with greater clearness, and more success; see Ro 10:8.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Peter 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO I PETER 2.

This chapter consists of exhortations, in general, to a holy life; and, in particular, to obedience to superiors. It begins with an exhortation to lay aside various vices, which were unbecoming regenerate persons, **1Pe 2:1** and, agreeably to their character, as new born babes, to express a desire after the Gospel, which is commended from its nature, being comparable to milk; and from its quality, being reasonable, sincere, and unmixed; and from the end and usefulness of it, a spiritual growth; and the argument engaging to such a desire is the experience they had of the grace of Christ in it, **1Pe 2:2** whose excellency is declared, under the metaphor of a stone, said to be living, to be chosen of God, and precious to him, though rejected by men; to whom the saints are encouraged to come, as lively stones built up, a spiritual house, for the exercise of the holy office of the priesthood, by offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ, **1Pe 2:4** and that Christ is such a precious stone, is proved from Isa 28:16 and not only to God, but to all them that believe; though to them that believe not, he is the stone of rejection, stumbling, and offence; to stumble at which, and the doctrine of it, through disobedience, they were of old appointed by God, **1Pe 2:6** but the character of the persons the apostle writes to was very different, quite the reverse, being chosen and called, and manifestly the people of God, and sharing in his grace and mercy, **1Pe 2:9** and these he exhorts, suitable to their state and condition, to abstain from sin, as an enemy to their souls, and to live an honest life and conversation among the Gentiles, that they, instead of speaking evil of them, might, by beholding their good works, glorify God, **1Pe 2:11**. And particularly he exhorts them to obedience to civil magistrates, both superior and inferior; partly from the author of them, they being of the Lord; and partly from the usefulness of them to punish wicked men, and to encourage good men; and also from its being the will of God, by such obedience, to silence the cavils of foolish men, **1Pe 2:13**. And whereas it might be objected, that they were made free by Christ, and therefore should not be the servants of men; it is granted, that they were free; but then it is denied, that they should use their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness: and besides, it should be observed, that they were the servants of God, and therefore ought to do what he enjoined them; and, among other things, yield obedience to civil magistrates, **1Pe 2:16**. And to this purpose are various exhortations in **1Pe 2:17**, and another particular one is added, which is to servants, to be subject to their masters, and fear them, whether they be good or bad, **1Pe 2:18** and then he comforts such that had bad masters, and encourages them to bear the injuries they received from them patiently; because so to do was grateful to God, and acceptable in his sight; and because they were called unto it by him; and because of the example Christ had left them in suffering for them, **1Pe 2:19**. And this is further urged from the character of Christ, who was without sin, and yet suffered, and from his conduct, who, when reviled, made no return, but left his cause with God, **1Pe 2:22** which leads on the apostle take notice of the nature of Christ's sufferings in his body on the cross, and the ends of them, which were expiation of sin, healing diseases, and holiness of life, as a consequent thereof, **1Pe 2:24** previous to which conversion, which is illustrated by the former state and condition men are in, being as sheep going astray; and by their present one, being returned to Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, **1Pe 2:25**.

Ver. 1. Wherefore, laying aside all malice,.... Since the persons the apostle writes to were born again, and therefore ought to love one another, he exhorts them to the disuse of such vices as were disagreeable to their character as regenerate men, and contrary brotherly love; he dissuades them from them, and advises to "lay them aside", either as weights and burdens, which it was not fit for new born babes to carry; see Heb 12:1 or rather as old worn out clothes, as filthy rags, which should be put off, laid by, and never used more, being what were very unsuitable to their character and profession to wear: the metaphor is the same as in **Eph 4:22** and the first he mentions is malice; to live in which is a mark of an unregenerate man, and very unbecoming such who are born again; and is not consistent with the relation of brethren, and character of children, or new born babes, who are without malice, and do not bear and retain it: "all" of this is to be laid aside, towards all persons whatever, and in every shape, and in every instance of it:

and all guile; fraud, or deceit, in words or actions; and which should not be found, and appear in any form, in Israelites indeed, in brethren, in the children of God; who ought not to lie one to another, or defraud each other, nor express that with their lips which they have not in their hearts; which babes are free from, and so should babes in Christ:

and hypocrisies; both to God and men: hypocrisy to God is, when persons profess that which they have not, as love to God, faith in Christ, zeal for religion, fervent devotion, and sincerity in the worship of God; and do all they do to be seen of men, and appear outwardly righteous, and yet are full of all manner of iniquity: hypocrisy to men is, pretence of friendship, loving in word and tongue only, speaking peaceably with the mouth, but in heart laying wait; a sin to be abhorred and detested by one that is born from above; and is contrary to that integrity, simplicity, and sincerity of heart, which become regenerate persons, the children of God, and brethren one of another:

and envies; at each other's happiness and prosperity, riches, honours, gifts temporal or spiritual; for such are works of the flesh, show men to be carnal, are unbecoming regenerated persons, and contrary to the exercise of Christian charity, or love, which envieth not the welfare of others, either respecting body, soul, or estate:

and all evil speakings; backbitings, whisperings, detractions, hurting one another's characters by innuendos, false charges, and evil surmises; which is not acting like men that are made new creatures, and are partakers of the divine nature, nor like brethren, or as Christ's little ones, and who are of God, begotten again to be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

1 Peter 2:2

Ver. 2. As new born babes,.... The Syriac version renders it, "be ye simple as infants"; and as if it was a distinct exhortation of itself, and from that which follows; though it seems rather to be descriptive of the persons spoken to, and a character of them, under which the apostle addresses them; which carries in it a reason strengthening the exhortation after given: he takes it for granted that they were begotten again, according to the abundant mercy of God, and born of incorruptible seed, by the word of God, and that they were just, or lately born; and which is to be understood of them all in general, and not of younger converts among them, who might be called little children with respect to others who were young men or fathers; but that, comparatively speaking, those that had been of the longest standing were but as it were newly born, it being at most but a few years since they were called by grace: and they were as "babes", not on account of their want of knowledge, or unskilfulness in the word of righteousness; or of nonproficiency in the learning of divine truths, and their great dulness, backwardness, and imperfection; or because of their incapacity in taking in, and digesting the strong meat and sublimer doctrines of the Gospel; or for their instability and simplicity, being easily deceived and beguiled; nor for their weakness in faith, not being able to walk alone, and their insufficiency to defend, or provide for themselves; but because of their harmlessness and innocence, meekness and humility; and for the sincerity of their faith and love, obedience and profession. The proselytes to the Jews' religion are often said {m} to be ymd dlwnv Nwjqk, "as an infant just born", or a new born babe; to which the allusion may here be made:

desire the sincere milk of the word; this is not a declaration that these new born souls did do so, though that might be true, but an exhortation to them so to do, as it became them: by "the sincere milk of the word" is meant the Gospel, even the whole of it, and not, as elsewhere, the more plain and easy truths of it; which is compared to milk for its purity in itself, for every word of God is pure and for its purifying nature, as used by the Spirit of God; and for its sweetness and agreeable taste to a regenerate man; and because easy of digestion to a spiritual one; and because it is nutritive to him, by it he is nourished up unto eternal life; and because, as milk is of a cooling nature, so the Gospel is a means, in the hand of the Spirit of God, of assuaging those inflammations, and of allaying that wrath and fiery indignation, raised in the conscience of a sinner by the law; and because as milk, medicinally used, is a restorative in consumptive disorders, so the Gospel is not only the means of helping a declining person, and who is wasted and consumed by sin, but even of quickening such as are dead in sin; it is the savour of life unto life. The

Jewish writers speak of hrwt lv blx, "the milk of the law" {n}, of which they generally interpret {o} the passage in Isa 55:1 but it is much better applied to the Gospel, which is the milk of the word, or "rational milk": not that the Gospel is a scheme according to the carnal reason of men; it is contrary to that, and above sound reason, though not repugnant to it; but it is what is calculated for faith, the spiritual reason of men, and for such who have their spiritual senses exercised, to discern between good and evil; it is a spiritual drink, and is made up of spiritual things, and suited to the spiritual man; it is milk, not in a natural, but in a mystic and spiritual sense: the Syriac version renders it, "the word which is as milk, pure and spiritual": and it is "sincere"; without mixture, unadulterated with the inventions and doctrines of men, Jews or heretics: or "without deceit"; being neither deceitfully handled by the faithful ministers of it, nor causing deceit, or deceiving those that cordially receive it. Now, this it becomes regenerate person, to "desire"; and vehemently long after, as a new born babe does after its mother's milk; for the Gospel is that to one that is born again, as the breast is to a babe: desire after it supposes knowledge of it; and where there is an experimental knowledge, there will be a value and esteem for it, even above necessary food, and, at times, an hungering and thirsting after it, an impatient longing for, and desire of it; when such souls will labour after it, and diligently observe and attend every opportunity of enjoying it, and think long ere the seasons of meeting with it return; for it is suitable food for them, savoury food, such as their souls love, and which indeed they cannot live without: now the end of this exhortation, and of such a desire, and of feeding on the words of faith and sound doctrine, is,

that ye may grow thereby: regenerate persons are not at their full growth at once; they are first children, then young men, and then fathers in Christ; the Gospel is appointed as a means of their spiritual growth, and by the blessing of God becomes so, and which they find to be so by good experience; and therefore this milk of the word is desirable on this account, for the increase of faith, and the furtherance of the joy of it; for their growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and in an experience of spiritual strength from him, and unto him, as their head in all things; not merely in the leaves of a profession, but in the fruits of grace, righteousness, and holiness. The Alexandrian copy, and several others, and also the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, add, "unto salvation": that is, until they come to a perfect knowledge of Christ, and to be perfect men with him, being arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and in the possession of that salvation he has obtained for them.

{m} T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 22. 1. & 48. 2. & 62. 1. & 97. 2. Maimon. Hilch.

Issure Bia, c. 14. sect. 11. & Eduth, c. 13. sect. 2. {n} Jarchi in Cant. 5. 12. {o} Jarchi, Aben Ezra, & Kimchi, in Isa. lv. 1. Abarbinel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 26. 1.

1 Peter 2:3

Ver. 3. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Reference is had to Ps 34:8, "O taste and see that the Lord is good"; and the Syriac version here adds, "if ye have seen": by the Lord is meant, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the following words show, who is gracious and amiable, and lovely in his person; who has a fulness of grace in him for his people; has displayed his grace towards them, in engaging for them as a surety, in assuming their nature, obeying, suffering, and dying in their stead; he is gracious in his word and promises, truths and ordinances, and in all his offices and relations; and regenerate persons have tasted that he is so: an unregenerate man has no spiritual taste; his taste is vitiated by sin, and not being changed, sin is a sweet morsel in his mouth, and he disrelishes everything that is spiritual; but one that is born again savours the things of the Spirit of God; sin is exceeding sinful to him, and Christ exceeding precious; he, and his fruit, his promises, and blessings of grace, his word and ordinances, are sweet unto his taste: and the taste he has is not a mere superficial one, such as hypocrites may have of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; but such a taste of Christ, and of his grace, as, by a true faith, to eat his flesh, and drink his blood, and so have everlasting life; such have a saving and experimental knowledge of Christ, an application of him, and his saving benefits to them, a revelation of him in them, so that they find and feel that he dwells in them, and they in him; such receive out of Christ's fulness, and grace for grace, and live by faith upon him, and receive nourishment from him; and of this the apostle made no doubt concerning these persons, but took it for granted that they had had such tastes of Christ, and therefore could not but desire the Gospel, which is a revelation of Christ, and sets forth the glory of his person, and the riches of his grace: and whereas, such as have truly tasted of his grace cannot but desire to have more, and fresh tastes of it; where should they have them, but in his word and ordinances? and therefore, would they grow in grace, and know more of Christ, and taste more of his goodness, it is their interest, as it is their spiritual nature, to desire the Gospel, in the purity and sincerity of it.

1 Peter 2:4

Ver. 4. To whom coming, as unto a living stone,.... Christ here, as often elsewhere, is compared to a "stone"; and Peter, by the use of this metaphor, shows that he is not the rock, but Christ is the rock on which the church is built, and he is the foundation stone on which every believer is laid; and it is chiefly with respect to the usefulness of a stone in building, that Christ is compared to one, who is the foundation and cornerstone, as well as for strength and duration; and he is called a "living" one, because he has life in himself, as God, as Mediator, and as man; and communicates life to others, as natural life to all creatures, and spiritual and eternal life to his people, whose great privilege it is to come to him: and by coming to him is meant believing in him; and it does not design the first act of faith on Christ, or a soul's first coming to Christ, but an after and continued exercise of faith on him; and it supposes Christ to be come at, notwithstanding he is in heaven, and saints on earth, for their faith and hope can enter into, and reach him within the vail, and notwithstanding their many transgressions and backslidings; it supposes life in them, or they could not come; and a sense of their need of him, of his righteousness to justify them, of his blood for pardoning and cleansing, of his fulness to supply their want of food, rest, peace, comfort, and salvation in him; and a persuasion of his ability and willingness to relieve them: and they are encouraged to come to him under the above considerations, as a stone, a foundation stone; believing that he is laid as a foundation, and that he is the only foundation, and therefore they lay the whole stress of their salvation, and build all their hopes of happiness on him; and as a living stone, deriving grace, life, and strength from him; exercising faith on him for all the mercies, blessings, and comforts of a spiritual life, and looking to his mercy for eternal life.

Disallowed indeed of men; by the Jewish builders, high priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, and the body and bulk of that nation; who rejected him as the Messiah, and stone of Israel, refused him as a foundation stone, and left him out of the building; and laid another foundation, even their own works of righteousness, on which sandy foundation they built themselves, and directed others to do so likewise; and set him, at nought, as a living stone, would not come to him for life, but sought it in the law, the killing letter, and among their dead works; but though Christ was thus disallowed and disesteemed of by men, yet was he highly valued and esteemed by God:

but chosen of God, and precious; his human nature was "chosen" from among, and above all other individuals of mankind; to be united to the Son of God; as God-man and Mediator, he was chosen to that high office, to be the head of the church, and the Saviour of the body; to be the foundation in the spiritual building, and to be the author and giver of spiritual and eternal life to as many as were given him. Moreover, this phrase denotes the superior excellency of Christ to angels and men in the account of God; being the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, the Son of his love, in whom he was always well pleased, and in whom he took infinite delight, considered both as his Son, and the surety of his people; and to whom he was

precious, and by him highly honoured, made higher than the kings of the earth, than the angels in heaven, than the heavens themselves, being set down at God's right hand, and a name given him above every name in this world, or that to come; and who is precious to the saints too, more so than rubies, or any precious stones, or any thing or creature whatever; his person is precious, and so are his name, his blood, his righteousness, his truths, his ordinances, and his people.

1 Peter 2:5

Ver. 5. Ye also, as lively stones,.... Saints likewise are compared to stones; they lie in the same quarry, and are the same by nature as the rest of mankind, till dug out and separated from thence by the powerful and efficacious grace of God, when they are hewn, and made fit for the spiritual building; where both for their ornament, beauty, and strength, which they receive from Christ, they are compared to stones, and are lasting and durable, and will never perish, nor be removed out of the building: and because of that life which they derive from him, and have in him, they are called "lively", or "living stones"; the spirit of life having entered into them, a principle of life being implanted in them, and coming to Christ, the living stone, they live upon him, and he lives in them; and his grace in them is a well of living water, springing up into eternal life. It was usual with poets and philosophers to call stones, as they lie in the quarry before they are taken out of it, "living" ones: so Virgil {p}, describing the seats of the nymphs, says, "intus aquae dulces vivoque sedilia saxo, nympharum domus", &c. but here the apostle calls such living stones, who were taken out from among the rest: the stones which Deucalion and Pyrrha cast over their heads after the flood are called {q} zwoyentev liyoi, "quickened stones", they becoming men, as the fable says. "Are built up a spiritual house"; these living stones being laid, and cemented together, in a Gospel church state, become the house of God in a spiritual sense, in distinction from the material house of the tabernacle, and temple of old, to which the allusion is; and which is built up an habitation for God, by the Spirit, and is made up of spiritual men; such as have the Spirit of God, and savour the things of the Spirit, and worship God in Spirit and in truth; among whom spiritual services are performed, as prayer, praise, preaching, and hearing the word, and administering ordinances. Some read these words in the imperative, as an exhortation, "be ye built up as lively stones; and be ye spiritual temples and holy priests", as the Syriac version. A synagogue with the Jews is called ygxwr tyb, "a spiritual house" {r}; and so is the third temple which the Jews expect in the times of the Messiah; of which one of their writers {s} thus says:

"it is known from the ancient wise men, that the future redemption, with which shall be the third ynxwr, "spiritual" sanctuary, is the work of God, and will not be as the former redemptions: "I will fill this house with glory"; this is ynxwr, "a spiritual" one, for even the walls shall be Myynxwr, "spiritual"--for even all this "house" shall be "spiritual"; for that which was then built, which is the second, shall be turned into another a "spiritual" one:"

and which has been already done, and is what the apostle means here, the church, under the Gospel dispensation, or the Gospel church state, in opposition to the worldly sanctuary, and carnal worship of the Jews.

An holy priesthood; in allusion to the priests under the law, who were set apart, and sanctified for that office; but now, under the Gospel, all the saints are priests unto God, and are all appointed and directed

to offer up spiritual sacrifices; their whole selves, souls, and bodies, as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice; their prayers and praises, and all good works done in faith, and from love, and to the glory of God; particularly acts of kindness and beneficence to poor saints; these are called spiritual, in distinction from legal sacrifices, and because offered in a spiritual manner, under the influence, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God, and with their spirits. So the Jews speak of spiritual sacrifices, as distinct from material ones:

"the intellectual sacrifice (they say {t}) is before the material sacrifices, both in time and excellency.--Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the earth, and behold the intellectual attention did not agree with it, which is ynxwrh Nbrq, "the spiritual sacrifice"."

Now such are

acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; through whom they are offered up; for it is through him the saints have access to God, present themselves to him, and their services; and both persons and services are only accepted in Christ, and for his sake, and in virtue of his sacrifice, which is always of a sweet smelling savour to God.

{p} Aeneid. l. 1. {q} Eustathius in Homer. Iliad. 1. {r} Neve Shalom apud Caphtor, fol. 14. 1. {s} R. Alshech. in Hagg. ii. 7, 8, 9, 10. {t} Neve Shalom apud Caphtor, fol. 88. 2. Vid. Raziel. fol. 33. 1.

1 Peter 2:6

Ver. 6. Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture,....
Isa 28:16. This is produced as a proof of the excellency of Christ, as compared to a stone; and of his usefulness in the spiritual building; and of his being chosen of God, and precious, though rejected by men; and of the happiness, comfort, and safety of those that believe in him. That this prophecy belongs to the Messiah, is the sense of some of the Jewish writers: the Targum on it applies it to a mighty king; it does not mention the King Messiah, as Galatinus {u} cites it; but Jarchi expressly names him, and interprets it of him:

behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; Christ is here called a chief corner stone, as in **Eph 2:20** because he not only adorns and strengthens the building, but unites the parts, and keeps them together, even all the saints, Jews or Gentiles, in all ages and places, whether in heaven or earth; and he, as such, is chosen of God for that purpose, and is precious both to God and man, on that account; and is a stone, not of men's laying, but of God's laying in his council, covenant, promises, and prophecies, in the mission of him into this world, and in the Gospel ministry; the place where he is laid is in Sion, the Gospel church, of which he is both the foundation and corner stone: and this account is introduced with a "behold", it being something very wonderful, and worthy of attention: to which is added,

he that believeth on him shall not be confounded: or "ashamed"; of the foundation and cornerstone Christ, nor of his faith in him; and he shall not be confounded by men or devils, neither in this world, nor in that to come; he shall have confidence before Christ, and not be ashamed at his coming; he shall be safe now, being laid on this stone; nor shall he be removed from it, or intimidated by any enemy, so as to flee from it; nor shall he make haste, as it is in
Isa 28:16 to lay another foundation; and he shall be found upon this hereafter; so that his person and state will be safe, though many of his works may be burnt up.

{u} De Aroan. Cathol. Ver. l. 3. c. 21.

1 Peter 2:7

Ver. 7. Unto you therefore which believe,.... And such are not all they that can say their creed, or give their assent to the articles of it; nor all that believe a divine revelation, and that the Scriptures are the word of God, and give credit to all that is contained in the sacred oracles; or who believe the whole Gospel, and all the truths of it; as that there is one God; that there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit; that Christ is the Son of God, and truly God; that he is the Mediator between God and man; that he is the Messiah, is become incarnate, has obeyed, suffered, and died for men, and is the Saviour of them: that he rose again, ascended to heaven, is set down at the right hand of God, intercedes for his people, and will come a second time to judge the world in righteousness; together with all other truths which arise from, depend upon, and are connected with these; nor all that say they believe, or profess to do so; but such who have seen themselves lost and undone by sin, their need of a Saviour, and Christ as the only one; who have seen the Son, the beauty of his person, the fulness of his grace, and the necessity and suitableness of salvation by him; who have beheld him as able to save them, as every way proper for them, and desirable by them, for faith is a sight of Christ; who also come to him under the drawings of efficacious grace, as perishing sinners, encouraged by his invitations and declarations, and venture on him; who likewise lay hold upon him, as their Saviour, and will have no other; give up themselves to him, and commit their all into his hands; who rely and stay themselves upon him, trust him with all they have, and for all they want, expecting grace and glory from him; who live upon him, and walk on in him, go on believing in him, till they receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. Now to these, in proof of what is asserted in the above passage out of Isaiah, Christ is

precious; he is so in all his names and titles, as Immanuel, God with us, and that cluster of them in **Isa 9:6** and particularly his name Jesus, a Saviour, which is as ointment poured forth, and draws the love of believers to him; and so he is in both his natures, divine and human; the perfections of deity in him, his being in the form of God, and equal to him, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, render him very amiable in the view of believers; who rightly conclude from hence, that all he has done, and does, must answer the purposes for which they are designed; and his having a perfect human nature, like to theirs, excepting sin, in which he wrought salvation for them on earth, and is now glorified in heaven, makes him a delightful object to them: he is also precious to them in all his offices; in his priestly office, his blood is precious, as it must needs be, since by it they are purchased and redeemed; they are justified and sanctified by it; through it they have the forgiveness of sin, and boldness to enter into the holiest of all: his righteousness is precious to them, it being the best robe, the wedding garment, fine linen, clean and white, every way suitable to them, and answerable to the demands of the law; is pure, perfect, and everlasting; that by which they are justified from all things, and which will answer for them in a time to come, and entitles them to eternal life. His sacrifice is precious, of a sweet smelling savour to them, as well as to God; by which their sins are fully expiated, put, and taken away; full satisfaction being made for them, and they themselves thereby perfected for ever. And so he is in his prophetic office. His word is precious, and all the truths of the Gospel, which are comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; the promises of it are exceeding great and precious, being suited to the cases of all believers: and he is also precious in his kingly office; his commands are not grievous; his yoke is easy, and burden light; believers love his commandments above gold, yea; above fine gold, and esteem his precepts concerning all things to be right, and delight in his ways and ordinances: moreover, he is precious to them in all his relations, as he is the head of eminence and influence, their kind and loving husband, their everlasting Father, their affectionate brother, and faithful friend; his whole person, in every view, is precious to them that believe; the church of Christ, the members of his body, the sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, in these is all the delight of saints; everything that is in Christ, that is of him, or belongs to him, is precious to such souls: some read the words, "to you therefore that believe, he is honour"; as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; and so the word is rendered in Ro 13:7, he is both an honour to them, that they are related to him; and he is honoured by them, by believing in him, and obeying him; and he is the cause of all their true honour, both in this and the other world. The Syriac version renders it, "to therefore is this honour given"; namely, that such a stone is laid, and that they were built upon it, and should not be confounded or ashamed, either here or hereafter; connecting the words with the preceding. The Septuagint use the word the apostle here does, in Isa 11:10 where it is prophesied of the Messiah, that his rest shall be glorious; they render it timh, "honour", or "precious". The Jewish writers have adopted the word ymyj into their language, and use it for profit and gain {w}; in which sense it is applicable to Christ, who is gain to believers, both in life and in death; they being blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, and he being all in all to them: and also they use it, as denoting the intrinsic price and value of anything {x}, and which is a right sense of the word; and to believers the price of wisdom, or Christ, is far above rubies, and all the things that can be desired; to them he is precious as a stone, as a foundation and corner stone, and more precious than the most precious stones or things in nature; this he is to them that believe: next follows, in this and the other verse, the account of what he is to them that believe not:

but unto them which be disobedient; who are not persuadable, unbelieving, and are children of disobedience; who neither obey God and his righteous law, nor Christ and his Gospel:

the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner; reference is manifestly had to Ps 118:22 which is a passage that clearly belongs to the Messiah, and which is suggested by Christ himself, See Gill on "Mt 21:42"; and is by our apostle, in **Ac 4:11** applied unto him: by the builders are meant the rulers of the Jews, both civil and ecclesiastical, and especially the latter, the Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests; who set up for builders of the church of God, but were miserable ones; they built themselves, and taught others to build, on the observance of the ceremonial law, and the traditions of the elders; on their carnal privileges, and moral righteousness; and these disallowed of Christ in the building, rejected him as the Messiah, refused him as the Saviour and Redeemer, and set him at nought, had him in the utmost derision, and reckoned him as a worm, and no man; but, to their great mortification, he is not only laid and retained as the foundation and cornerstone, but made the head of the building, and is exalted at God's right hand above angels and men; he is the head of the body, the church; he is higher than the kings of the earth, and angels are subject to him.

{w} Targum in Esther iii. 8. & v. 13. & vii. 4. {x} Targum Hierosol. in Gen. xxi. 33. Targum Jon. in Gen. xxiii. 15. Targum in Prov. xxxi. 10. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 2. 3. & sect. 11. fol. 9. 3.

1 Peter 2:8

Ver. 8. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence,.... The apostle alludes to **Isa 8:14** and which is a prophecy of the Messiah;
See Gill on "Ro 9:33" and had its accomplishment in the unbelieving and disobedient Jews; who stumbled at his birth and parentage; at the manner of his birth, being born of a virgin; at the meanness of his parents, his supposed father being a carpenter, and his mother, Mary, a poor woman, when they expected the Messiah would have sprung from some rich and noble family;

and at the place of his birth, which they imagined was Galilee, from his education and conversation there; they stumbled also at his education, and could not conceive how he should know letters, and from whence he should have his wisdom, having never been trained up in any of their schools and academies, or at the feet of any of their doctors and Rabbins; but, on the other hand, was brought up and employed in the trade of a carpenter; they stumbled at his outward meanness and poverty, when they expected the Messiah would be a rich, powerful, and glorious monarch; and so at the obscurity of his kingdom, which was not of this world, and came not with observation, when they dreamt of an earthly and temporal one, which should be set up in great splendour and glory; and they stumbled likewise at the company he kept, and the audience that attended him, being the poorer sort of the people, and the more illiterate, and also such who had been very profane and wicked, as publicans and harlots; moreover, they stumbled at his ministry, at the doctrine he preached, particularly at the doctrine of his divinity, and of spiritual communion with him, by eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, and at the doctrines of distinguishing grace; and so at his miracles, by which he confirmed his mission and ministry, some of these being wrought on the sabbath day, and others they imputed to diabolical influence and assistance, in a word, they stumbled at his death, having imbibed a notion that Christ abideth for ever, and especially at the manner of it, the death of the cross; wherefore the preaching of Christ crucified always was, and still is, a stumbling block unto them:

even to them which stumble at the word; either the essential Word, Christ Jesus, as before; or rather at the doctrine of the Gospel, at that part of it which respects a trinity of persons in the Godhead; because their carnal reason could not comprehend it, and they refused to submit to revelation, and to receive the witness of God, which is greater than that of men; and at that part of it which regards the deity of Christ, and that for this reason, because he was a man, and in order to enervate the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and fearing too much honour should be given to him; and also at that part of the word which concerns the distinguishing grace of God, as eternal personal election, particular redemption, and efficacious grace in conversion; against which the carnal mind of man is continually cavilling and replying, and, in so doing, against God himself, charging him with cruelty, injustice, and insincerity; and particularly at that part of the word which holds forth the doctrine of free justification, by the righteousness of Christ; this was the grand stumbling block of the Jews, who sought for righteousness, not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and of the spirituality of the law, and of themselves, and their own righteousness, of which they had an overweening opinion:

being disobedient; to the Gospel revelation, and unwilling to submit their carnal reason to it; this is the source and cause of their stumbling at Christ and his Gospel: it is worth while to compare this with the paraphrase of **Isa 8:14** which passage is here referred to; and the paraphrase of it runs thus;

""if ye obey not", his word shall be among you for revenge, and for a stone smiting, and for a rock of offence to both houses of the princes of Israel, and for destruction and offence to those who are divided upon the house of Judah, &c."

whereunto also they were appointed; both to stumble at the word of the Gospel, and at Christ, the sum and substance of it, he being set in the counsel and purpose of God, as for the rising of some, so for the stumbling and falling of others; and also to that disobedience and infidelity which was the cause of their stumbling; for as there are some whom God appointed and foreordained to believe in Christ, on whom he has determined to bestow true faith in him, and who have it as a pure gift, in consequence of such appointment; so there are others, whom he has determined to leave in that disobedience and infidelity into which the fall brought and concluded them, through which they stumble at Christ, and his word, and, in consequence thereof, justly perish; but this is not the case of all; there are some who are the objects of distinguishing grace and favour, and who are described in the following verse.

1 Peter 2:9

Ver. 9. But ye are a chosen generation,.... Or "kindred"; the phrase is to be seen in the Septuagint, on Isa 43:20, to which, and the following verse, the apostle refers here, and in another part of this text. The allusion is throughout to the people of Israel in general, who, in an external way, were all that is here said; but was only true in a spiritual sense of such as were chosen and called among the Jews: and who were a "generation or kindred"; being regenerate, or through abundant mercy begotten, and of an incorruptible seed born again; and were akin to God, he being their Father, and they his children by adopting grace, and which was made manifest by their new birth; and also akin to Christ, he being their head, husband, Father, and brother, and they his members, spouse, children, and brethren; and to the saints, being of the same household and family in heaven and in earth; having the same Father, Lord, Spirit, faith, baptism, and they all brethren: and they were a "chosen" generation or kindred; being famous, and in high esteem with God, and accounted by him for a generation; he having chosen them above all kindreds, tongues, people, and nations, and that from all eternity; and of his own sovereign good will and pleasure; and not on account of their faith, holiness, and good works; and to special benefits, to the relation and kindred they are in, to grace here, and glory hereafter; to regeneration and sanctification, and to salvation and eternal life; just as Israel, as a nation, were chosen above all others, because of the love of God to them, and for no other reason, to many external privileges and favours, which others did not enjoy: now the apostle mentions this character first, because God's eternal election is the source and spring of all spiritual blessings, which provides and secures them, and according to which they are bestowed, and with which they are inseparably connected:

a royal priesthood; referring to Ex 19:6, where the Israelites are called a "kingdom of priests"; which the Chaldee paraphrase renders, kings, priests; see **Re 1:6** a character which one of the Jewish commentators says {y} shall return to the Jews abl dytel, "in time to come"; and well agrees with all the people of Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, who are all of them kings, through their relation to Christ; and at the present time have a kingdom which cannot be moved, or taken away from them; being not only brought into the Gospel dispensation, the kingdom of the Messiah, and having a right to all the privileges and immunities of it, but have also the kingdom of grace set up within them, or grace, as a reigning principle, implanted in them; which lies not in anything external, but in righteousness and true holiness, in inward peace, and spiritual joy; and they have the power of kings over sin, Satan, and the world; and the riches of kings, being possessed of the riches of grace now, and entitled to the riches of glory in another world; they live like kings, they wear royal apparel, the robe of Christ's righteousness; they sit at the king's table, and feed on royal dainties; and are attended on as kings, angels being their life guards, and ministering spirits to them; and hereafter they shall reign with Christ on earth, and that for the space of a thousand years, and, after that, for ever: being raised up from a low estate, to inherit the crown of glory, to wear the crown of life and righteousness, and possess the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, of which they are now heirs: and they are "priests", as well as kings; being made so by Christ, and through his priestly office; are anointed with the Holy Ghost, and sanctified by his grace, and allowed to draw near to God, and offer up by Christ their spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise; and are enabled and assisted to offer up the sacrifice of a broken heart, and their bodies also, and even their lives when called to it; the allusion is to the kingdom and priesthood being formerly together, and which met in Christ, **Zec 6:13** and in his people. The Jews were wont to call the priestly dignity and office hnhk rtk, "the crown of the priesthood" {z}:

an holy nation; referring to the same place in Ex 19:6 where the Israelites are so called, being separated by God from other nations, and legally and externally sanctified by him; as all the true Israel of God are sanctified, or set apart by God the Father, in eternal election, to real and perfect holiness; and are sanctified or cleansed from sin, by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and are internally sanctified by the Spirit of God; have principles of holiness wrought in them, from whence they live holy lives and conversations:

a peculiar people; as the Israelites are called a "peculiar treasure", Ex 19:5 to which the reference is: God's elect are a peculiar people, to whom he bears a peculiar love; they are chosen by him to be a special people above all others, and have peculiar blessings bestowed on them, and peculiar care is taken of them; they are the Lord's, hlgo, his treasure, his jewels, his portion and inheritance, and therefore he will preserve and save them; they are a people for acquisition, purchase, and possession, as the words may be rendered; whom God has obtained, procured, and purchased for himself, with the precious blood of his Son; hence the Syriac version renders them, aqyrp avnk, "a redeemed company": the same with the church God has purchased with his blood, Ac 20:28 and the purchased possession, **Eph 1:14** and which are redeemed and purified to be, and appear to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works, **Tit 2:14** the end of all which grace being bestowed upon them in election, redemption, and regeneration, is,

that ye should show forth the praises of him; that is, God, who has chosen them into a spiritual kindred and relation, made them kings and priests, sanctified them by his Spirit, and redeemed them by his Son, as a peculiar people; all which laid them under obligation to show forth with their lips, and in their lives and conversations, his "virtues": we read, "praises"; and so the Syriac version; that is, the power, wisdom, goodness, love, grace, and mercy of God, and the commendations of them, displayed in the above instances: the apostle seems to have his eye on Isa 43:21, where the Septuagint use the same word for "praise", as here: next follows a periphrasis of God, and in it an argument, or reason for speaking of his virtues, and showing forth his praise:

who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; which is to be understood, not of an external call by the ministry of the word only; for many are called in this sense, who are not chosen, redeemed, and sanctified; but of an internal, special, powerful, holy, and heavenly calling, by the Spirit and grace of God: and this is, "out of darkness"; out of the darkness of the law, under the former dispensation, which was as night, in comparison of the Gospel day; and out of that darkness which the Jews were particularly in, in and about the coming of Christ, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and the spirituality of the law; having lost all right notions of the Messiah, and the true sense of the Scriptures, and were carried away with the traditions of the elders, and led by blind guides, the Scribes and Pharisees; out of this darkness, as well as what is common to men, in a state of unregeneracy, having no sight of themselves, their sin, and misery, nor knowledge of divine things, of God in Christ, and of salvation by him, and of the work of the Spirit upon the heart, they were called,

into his marvellous light: by which they saw the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the insufficiency of their righteousness, their need of Christ, and salvation by him; and astonishing it was to them, that they who were born blind, and were brought up in darkness, and were darkness itself, should be made light in the Lord; and the objects they saw were amazing to them; everything in a spiritual way was marvellous in their eyes; especially the sun of righteousness, the light of the world, and also the wonderful things out of the law, or doctrine of Christ, the Gospel, and the surprising love and grace of God, in the whole, and in the several parts of their salvation: it was with them, as if a child, from the moment of its birth, was shut up in a dungeon, where there was not the least crevice to let in the least degree of light, and should continue here till at years of maturity, and then be brought out at once, at noonday, the sun shining in its full strength and glory, when that particularly, and all objects about him, must strike him with wonder and surprise. The Syriac version renders it, "his most excellent light"; the apostle seems to refer to the form of praise and thanksgiving used by the Jews, at the time of the passover; who say {a},

"we are bound to confess, to praise, to glorify, &c. him who hath done for our fathers, and for us, all these wonders; he hath brought us out of bondage to liberty; from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to a good day, lwdg rwal hlypamw, "and out of darkness into great light"; and from subjection unto redemption."

This was also part of their morning prayer {b};

"I confess before thee, O my God, and the God of my fathers, that thou hast brought me out of darkness into light."

And it is to be observed, that the third Sephira, or number, in the Jewish Cabalistic tree, which answers to the third Person in the Trinity, among other names, is called, "marvellous light" {c}.

{y} Baal Hatturim in loc. {z} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 13. Tzeror Hammot, fol. 78. 3. {a} Misn. Pesachim, c. 10. sect. 5. Haggada Shel Pesach, p. 23. Maimon. Hilchot Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 5. {b} T. Hieros. Beracot, c. 4. fol. 7. 1. {c} Cabala Denudata, par. 2. p. 8.

1 Peter 2:10

Ver. 10. Which in time were not a people,.... A "Loammi" being put upon them; see **Ho 1:9** to which the apostle here refers: God's elect, whether among Jews or Gentiles, were, from eternity, his chosen people, and his covenant people; and, as such, were given to Christ, and they became his people, and his care and charge; and he saved them by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and redeemed them to himself, a peculiar people: but then, before conversion, they are not a people formed by God for himself, and his praise; nor Christ's willing people, either to be saved by him, or to serve him; nor are they, nor can they be truly known by themselves, or others, to be the people of God: the Syriac version gives the true sense of the phrase, by rendering it "these who before were not" Nwbvx, "reckoned or accounted a people"; that is, by others:

but are now the people of God; being regenerated, called, and sanctified, they are avouched by God to be his people; they have the witness of the Spirit to their spirits, that they are the people of God; they can then claim their relation to God, and are known, acknowledged, and called the people of God, by others:

which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy; being called formerly, Loruhamah, **Ho 1:6** which passages the apostle has in view: before conversion there is mercy in God's heart towards his elect, and so there is in the covenant of grace, and which was shown in the provision of his Son, as a Saviour, in the mission of him, and redemption by him; but this is not manifested to them, until they are begotten again, according to abundant mercy, and then they obtain mercy; having in their regeneration an evident display of the mercy of God towards them, and an application of his pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of his Son, unto them.

1 Peter 2:11

Ver. 11. Dearly beloved, I beseech you,.... The apostle, from characters of the saints, and which express their blessings and privileges, with great beauty, propriety, and pertinency, passes to exhortations to duties; he addresses the saints under this affectionate appellation, "dearly beloved", to express his great love to them, and to show that what he was about to exhort them to sprung from sincere and hearty affection for them, and was with a view to their real good; nor does he in an authoritative way command, as he might have done, as an apostle, but, as a friend, he entreats and beseeches them:

as strangers and pilgrims; not in a literal sense, though they were in a foreign country, in a strange land, and sojourners there, but in a spiritual and mystical sense; they were "strangers", not to God and Christ, and to the Spirit, to themselves, to the saints, and to all that is good, as they had formerly been, but to the world, the men of it, and the things in it; and therefore it became them to separate from it, and not conform to it; to abstain from all appearance of evil, to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts: and they were "pilgrims"; whose habit is Christ and his righteousness; whose food is Christ and his fulness; whose staff is Christ and the promises; whose guide is the blessed Spirit; the place for which they are bound is heaven, the better country, where is their Father's house, their friends, and their inheritance; this world not being their country, nor their resting place, it became them to have their conversation in heaven, and to

abstain from fleshly lusts; which spring from the flesh, and are concerned about fleshly things, and are exercised in and by the members of the flesh, or body; hence, in the Syriac version, they are called, "the lusts of the body": these are to be abstained from; not that the apostle thought that they could be without them; for while the saints are in the body, flesh, or corrupt nature will be in them, and the lusts thereof; but then these are not to be indulged, or provision to be made for them, to fulfil them; they are not to be obeyed and served, or lived unto, but to be denied and crucified, being unsuitable to the character of strangers and pilgrims, and also because of their hurtful and pernicious nature:

which war against the soul; see **Ro 7:23**, these are enemies to the spiritual peace, comfort, and welfare of the soul; and being of a man's household, and in his heart, are the worst enemies he has; and are to be treated as such, to be shunned and avoided, watched and guarded against; for though they cannot destroy the souls of true believers, they may bring much leanness upon them, and greatly distress them, and spoil them of their inward joy, and spiritual pleasure.

1 Peter 2:12

Ver. 12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles,.... To have the conversation honest, is to provide things honest in the sight of men; to live and walk honestly before all; to do those things which are right and honest in the sight of God, and among men; to order the conversation aright, according to the law of God, which is a rule of walk and conversation, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ; and which was the more, and rather to be attended to, because these converted Jews were "among the Gentiles", that knew not God; idolaters, and unbelievers, profane sinners, who were watching for their halting, and that they might take an advantage against them, and the Gospel, and the religion they professed, from their conversations:

that whereas they speak against you as evildoers: charging them with the grossest immoralities, as the Heathens did the Christians in the first ages; which appears evidently from the apologies of Tertullian, Jnstin Martyr, and others; though it seems that the Jewish converts are here intended, who were accused by the Gentiles of seditious principles and practices, and of acting contrary to the laws of civil government, refusing to yield subjection to Gentile magistrates, and obedience to Heathen masters; and hence the apostle, in some following verses, enlarges on those duties, and which he exhorts them to attend unto, that they might put to silence the ignorance of such foolish accusers: and

that they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation; or "trial", or "examination", as the Syriac version renders it; which may be understood either of human or divine visitation; if of the former, then the sense is, let the saints attend to all the duties of civil life, that when Heathen magistrates come to visit their several districts, and inquire and examine into the conduct of men, and seeing and finding that the Christians behave well and orderly, instead of persecuting them, they will bless God that they are such good subjects; if of divine visitation, which seems most likely, this must either design a visitation by way of judgment, or of mercy; for as the Jews say {d}, there is hdyqp, "a visitation", for good, and a visitation for evil: God sometimes visits in a way of punishment for sin, and sometimes in away of grace, for the good and welfare of men; and then the sense is, that when wicked men take notice of and observe the good works of the saints, their civil, honest, and orderly conversation, they shall glorify God on that account, who has enabled them to perform them; and acknowledge the goodness of them, and the wrong judgment they have passed upon them, and the ill measure they have measured out to them; and this will be, either when God visits them in a way of wrath, as at the day of judgment, or at the time of some temporal calamity before, or when he visits them in a way of mercy, calls them by his grace, and effectually works upon them by his Spirit: the same argument for the performance of good works is used by Christ, in **Mt 5:16**.

{d} Zohar in Gen. fol. 93. 3.

1 Peter 2:13

Ver. 13. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man,.... Or, "to every human creation", or "creature"; not to "all the sons of men", as the Syriac version renders it; or to all the individuals of mankind; for there are some that are in such stations and circumstances, that they are not to be submitted to, but to be ruled over, and governed: so kings are not to submit to their subjects, nor are parents to be subject to their children, nor husbands to their wives, nor masters to their servants, which would be preposterous; but submission is limited and restrained to persons in such a place and situation: "the human creature", or "creation", here designs the Gentiles, who are elsewhere called the creature, the whole creation, every creature, and every creature under heaven, **Ro 8:19** and particularly Heathen magistrates, styled creation, or creature: not as men, for all men, as such, are creatures; but as magistrates, being created, constituted, and appointed such, and installed into, and invested with such an office: and "human"; not only because they were men, and were taken out from among men that bore the office of magistrates, and governed over men, and were for the good and advantage of mankind, but because they were created and placed in such a station by men; though government itself is of God, is a divine institution, yet this and that particular form of government is of man; and especially the forms of government among the Gentiles were human; and are here so called, in distinction from the form of government among the Jews, which was a theocracy, and was divine; wherefore the Jews, and so these converted ones, scrupled yielding obedience to Heathen magistrates; on which account they were spoken against, as evildoers; hence the apostle, in the first place, and as a principal part of their honest conversation among the Gentiles, exhorts them to submission to civil magistrates, though they were creatures of men; and to everyone of them, though a Gentile, an unbeliever, and a wicked man: and this he urges, for the Lord's sake; for the sake of Christ Jesus the Lord, because of his command, who ordered to give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and in imitation of him, who paid tribute to whom tribute was due; and for the sake of his honour and glory, who was ill thought and spoken of by the Gentiles, because of the disregard of the converted Jews to their magistrates; and which served to prejudice them against Christ and his Gospel: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, "for God's sake"; because civil government is of God; magistracy is of divine appointment; the powers that he are ordained of God, though this or the other form is of man's prescription: it is the command of God that magistrates should be obeyed; and it makes for his glory, as well as for the good of men, when they are submitted to in things that do not contradict the revealed will of God; for otherwise, not man, but God, is to be obeyed:

whether it be to the king; to Caesar, the Roman emperor; and the then reigning one seems to be Nero, who, though a wicked man, was to be submitted to in things civil and lawful; and it holds good of any other king that has the supreme government of a nation: the Syriac version reads it in the plural number, "to kings"; and though the name of king was odious to the Romans, from the times of Tarquin, nor did they call their chief governor, or governors, by this name, yet other nations did; see Joh 19:15 and subjection was to be yielded to him, "as supreme"; for the sake, and in consideration of his being in so high and exalted a station, having the supreme power and government of the people in his hands. The Syriac version renders it, "because of their power"; and the Arabic version, "because of his power"; and the Ethiopic version, "because all things are his"; the Roman emperors were absolute monarchs; see Ro 13:1.

1 Peter 2:14

Ver. 14. Or unto governors,.... Inferior magistrates, such as were under the Roman emperor; as proconsuls, procurators, &c. such as Pontius Pilate, Felix, and Festus, who had under the emperor the government of particular nations, provinces, and cities:

as unto them that are sent by him; either by the king, the Roman emperor, by whom they were sent, from whom they received their commission, and derived their authority, under whom they acted, and to whom they were accountable; or by God, by whom they are ordained, and whose ministers they are, and for the ends hereafter mentioned; so that this contains an argument or reason why they should be submitted to:

for the punishment of evildoers; the breakers of the laws of God and men, on whom punishment is to be inflicted, by the civil magistrates, for the breach of them, by lines, scourgings, imprisonment, and death itself, according as the crimes are:

and for the praise of them that do well; who behave according to the laws of God and nations, and are obedient to magistrates, and subject to every ordinance; these have praise of men, of magistrates, and are rewarded by them; by protecting their persons, defending their properties, and preserving them in the peaceable enjoyment of their estates and possessions; see Ro 13:3.

1 Peter 2:15

Ver. 15. For so is the will of God,.... Which refers not so much to what goes before; though it is a truth, that it is the will of God that men should be subject to magistrates, and that magistrates should encourage virtue, and discourage vice, reward the obedient, and punish delinquents; but to what follows:

that with well doing; by doing good works, and those well; by living soberly, righteously, and godly; by having the conversation honest among the Gentiles, agreeably to the law of God, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ; particularly, by living according to the laws of civil society, so far as is consistent with, and not contrary to the commands of God; and by being subject to every civil magistrate, and ordinance of man:

ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: or, as the Syriac version renders it, "that ye may stop the mouths of those foolish men who know not God"; or, as the Ethiopic version has it, "who know not these things"; who are ignorant of God, of his righteousness, of his law, his Gospel, and ordinances. The Gentiles were very ignorant of these things, and very foolish in their imaginations about religious affairs; and from this their ignorance and folly arose calumnies, reflections, and censures upon the people of God; they neither knew God, nor them, nor true religion, and reproached what they understood not, and for want of knowing it: now the apostle signified, that it was the declared will of God that his people should so behave in civil life, that their enemies should be entirely confounded, and silenced, and have nothing to say against them; the word signifies to be muzzled, to have the mouth shut up, as with a bit or bridle; it is used in Mt 22:12.

1 Peter 2:16

Ver. 16. As free,.... These converted Jews might value themselves on their freedom, partly as the descendants of Abraham, and so freeborn, and not to be brought into bondage to other people; and chiefly because of their liberty which they had in and by Christ Jews. The apostle allows that they were freemen, that they were Christ's freemen, were free from sin, its damning and domineering power, and from the curses and condemnation of the law, and had freedom of access to God, and a right to all the privileges and immunities of the house of God; but then they were not free to sin, and to live in the contempt of the laws of God and men, to despise government, speak evil of dignities, and break in upon the rules of civil society:

and not using your liberty as a cloak of maliciousness; under a pretence of Christian liberty, to hurt the persons, properties, and estates of men, without looking upon themselves accountable for their conduct to their superiors: some think the apostle alludes to the ancient custom of servants, who, when they were made free, walked with a cap, or covering on their heads, in token of it: it follows,

[but] as the servants of God; for they that are free are the servants of God and Christ, and show themselves to be so by submitting to and obeying those that are under them, and ordained by them; and which is no ways inconsistent with, and contrary to their Christian liberty, which never was designed to thwart and subvert the principles of natural religion, laws of a moral nature, or the rules of civil government; some instances of which are next mentioned.

1 Peter 2:17

Ver. 17. Honour all men,.... To whom honour is due, according to the place, station, and circumstances in which they are, the gifts of providence and grace bestowed on them, and the usefulness they are of, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, rich or poor, believers or unbelievers: it is a saying of Ben Zoma {e},

"who is to be honoured, or is worthy of honour?
twyrbh ta dbkm, "he that honoureth creatures";"

meaning men in general, or the Gentiles particularly, who were sometimes so called by the Jews; See Gill on "Mr 16:15", and may be meant by "all men" here:

love the brotherhood; or "your brethren", as the Syriac version renders it: the whole company of the brethren in Christ, who are born of God, are members of Christ, and of the same body, and have the same spirit, belong to the same family, and are of the household of faith, let them be of whatsoever nation, or in whatsoever circumstances of life. The Jews had not that good opinion of, nor that affection for the Gentiles, but were ready to treat them with indifference, neglect, and contempt; and not only those that knew not God, but even believing Gentiles themselves; and which is the reason of these exhortations, that they should despise no man, but honour all; and especially should express their love, both by words and deeds, to those that were in the same spiritual relation with them, and that without any difference, on account of their being of another nation:

fear God; not with a servile, but a filial fear, the new covenant grace of fear; which springs from the goodness of God, has that for its object, and is increased by the fresh instances and discoveries of it; and which shows itself in a reverential affection for God, a strict regard to his worship and ordinances, and a carefulness of offending him. This is placed between what goes before, and follows after, to show the influence it has on each of them; for where the fear of God is, there will be due respect shown to all men, more or less, and an hearty and affectionate love to all the saints, as brethren, and a proper regard to those that are set in high places of dignity and power:

honour the king; Caesar, the Roman emperor, though a wicked, persecuting Nero, and so any other king or governor; who, so far as he acts the part of a civil magistrate, preserves the peace, the property, and liberty of his subjects, is a terror to evil works, and an encourager of good ones, and rules according to the laws of God, and civil society, is deserving of great honour and esteem from men; and which is to be shown by speaking well of him; by a cheerful subjection to him; by an observance of the laws, and by payment of tribute, and doing everything to make him easy, and honourable in his government: advice much like this is given by Isocrates {f};

"fear God, honour parents, revere friends, and obey the laws."

{e} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 1. {f} Paraen. ad Demos Orat. 1.

1 Peter 2:18

Ver. 18. Servants, be subject to your masters,.... This was another notion of the Jews, that because they were the seed of Abraham, they ought not to be the servants of any; and particularly such as were believers in Christ thought they ought not to serve unbelieving masters, nor indeed believing ones, because they were equally brethren in Christ with them; hence the Apostle Peter, here, as the Apostle Paul frequently elsewhere, inculcates this duty of servants to their masters; see **1Co 7:20** **2Ti 2:9** the manner in which they are to be subject to them is,

with all fear; with reverence to their persons, strict regard to their commands, faithfulness in any trust reposed in them, diligence in the discharge of their duty, and carefulness of offending them: and all this,

not only to the good and gentle; those that are good natured, kind, beneficent, and merciful; that do not use them with rigour and severity; are moderate in their demands of service; require no more to be done than what is reasonable; allow them sufficient diet, give them good wages, and pay them duly:

but also to the froward; the ill natured, morose, and rigorous; who exact more labour than is requisite; give hard words, and harder blows; withhold sufficiency of food from them, and keep back the hire of their labours.

1 Peter 2:19

Ver. 19. For this is thankworthy,.... Or "grace"; this is a fruit and effect of grace, an instance of it, in which it shows itself: the Syriac version adds, "with God"; and so it is read in one of Beza's copies, and in the Alexandrian copy, and some others; that is, this is grateful to God, and acceptable with him; as in **1Pe 2:20**,

if a man for conscience towards God; or, "for a good conscience", as the Syriac version reads it; for acting according to his conscience, in matters of religion, in the things of God; "for the knowledge of God", as the Arabic version renders it; for the knowledge of God in Christ; for the Gospel of Christ, and a profession of it: or, "for God", as the Ethiopic version; for the cause of God and truth, and for the sake of things appertaining to God, and that make for his glory:

endure grief; what occasions grief, as severe words, bitter reproaches, hard censures, and heavy blows; and that with patience, and without murmuring, and with resignation to the will of God:

suffering wrongfully; there being no just cause for an ill look, word, or blow, to be given.

1 Peter 2:20

Ver. 20. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults,.... Which ye have committed, and are guilty of, and are truly such:

ye shall take it patiently? to be silent, and not murmur when beaten, within measure, for real faults, is no great honour, nor does it deserve any praise; it is the least that can be done:

but if, when ye do well; either in their master's service, or rather in the business of religion, and the things of God; as when what they do is according to the will of God, and from love to him, and in faith, and in the name and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God; without all which there is no well doing:

and suffer for it; reproach and persecution, by words or blows, in person or property:

ye take it patiently; without grieving and repining, or answering again, and making any returns:

this is acceptable with God; is agreeably to his will, and grateful in his sight, what he is well pleased with, is reckoned grace with him; and though it is his own grace, and of his own bestowing, he will reward it with glory.

1 Peter 2:21

Ver. 21. For even hereunto were ye called,.... Both to well doing, of which none but those who are called with an holy and effectual calling are capable; and which they are fitted for, and are under obligation to perform, and to suffer for so doing, which they must always expect, and to patience in suffering for it, which highly becomes them. This being then one end of the saints' effectual calling, is made use of as an argument to engage them to the exercise of the grace of patience in suffering for well doing; and another follows:

because Christ also suffered for us; in our room and stead, to fulfil the law, satisfy the justice of God, and make reconciliation for sin; and not only for our good, or merely as a martyr, to confirm the truth of his doctrine, or barely as an example to us, though this also is true: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, "for you"; for you servants, as well as others, and therefore should cheerfully and patiently suffer for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; and the rather, because he suffered,

leaving us, or "you", as the same copies, and the Vulgate Latin version read,

an example that ye should follow his steps: Christ is an example to his people in the exercise of grace, as of faith, love, zeal, meekness, and humility; and in the discharge of duty, in his regard to the commands of the moral law, and positive institutions of religion; in his constancy in prayer; in frequent attendance on public worship; in his submission to the ordinance of baptism, and his celebration of the supper; and likewise in his sufferings; and in his meekness, patience, courage, and resignation to the will of God, which is what is here intended, and in which his people are to fellow and imitate him.

1 Peter 2:22

Ver. 22. Who did no sin,.... He was in the likeness of sinful flesh; he looked like a sinful man, being born of a sinful woman, and keeping company with sinful men, being himself a man of sorrows, greatly afflicted, and at last put to death. He was traduced as a sinner by his enemies, and had all the sins of his people on him, which he bore, and made satisfaction for, and were the reason of his sufferings; but he had no sin in his nature, nor did he commit any in his life:

neither was guile found in his mouth; though it was diligently sought for, by the Scribes and Pharisees; there was no deceit in his lips, no falsehood in his doctrine, any more than there was immorality in his conversation; he was an Israelite indeed on all accounts, and in the fullest sense of that phrase; reference is had to Isa 53:9 and this is observed, partly to show that Christ suffered not for himself, or for any sins of his own, but for the sins of others, for which he was very fit, since he had none of his own; and partly as an argument for patience in suffering; for since Christ suffered, who had no sin, nor did any, nor could any be found in him, charged upon him, and proved against him; and which sufferings of his he bore with patience; then how much must it become sinful men to bear their sufferings patiently, though they may not be criminal with respect to the things for which they suffer, but yet are so in other things, whereas Christ was not criminal, nor blameworthy in anything?

1 Peter 2:23

Ver. 23. Who when he was reviled, reviled not again,.... When he was reproached as a glutton, a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, all the reply he made was, that Wisdom is justified of her children; and when he was charged with casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils, he defended himself, not with bad language, but with strong reasonings; and when he was said to be a Samaritan, and had a devil, his only answer was, that he had not, that he honoured his Father, and they dishonoured him; and when he was reviled on the cross, by those that passed by, by the chief priests, and Scribes, and the thieves that were crucified with him, he made no return, he opened not his mouth, and much less in a recriminating way.

When he suffered he threatened not; when he endured buffetings, and scourgings in his body, when the officers in the palace of the high priests spit in his face, buffeted him, and smote him with the palms of their hands, and bid him prophesy who smote him, all which were very provoking; yet he said not one word to them, much less threatened them with what he would do to them for such usage another day, when he would let them know, with vengeance, who it was that smote him; no, he took all patiently from them, and from Pilate, and the Roman soldiers, when scourged by them; he gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and when he suffered crucifixion, and was put to such distressing pains and agonies, he did not threaten his crucifiers with a future judgment, when he would take vengeance, and execute his wrath upon them, but prays to his Father for the forgiveness of their sins: and, as it follows;

but committed [himself] to him that judgeth righteously; he commended his Spirit, or soul, to God his Father, and committed his cause to him, to vindicate it in what way he should think fit, who he knew was the Judge of all the earth, that would do right; and so the Syriac version supplies it with hynyd, "his judgment": which he left with God, the righteous Judge, to whom vengeance belongs; and which is an example, and an instruction to the saints to do so likewise; not to render railing for railing, or to seek revenge, but to leave their cause with their God, who will, in his own time, avenge the wrongs and injuries done them. The Vulgate Latin version reads, contrary to all the Greek copies, and other versions, "but delivered himself to him that judgeth unjustly"; the sense of which is, that Christ delivered himself into the hands of Pilate, who unjustly condemned him to death; but is neither the reading, nor sense of the text.

1 Peter 2:24

Ver. 24. Who his own self bare our sins,.... As was typified by the high priest bearing the sins of the holy things of the people of Israel, when he went into the most holy place, and by the scape goat bearing the iniquities of all the people unto a land not inhabited, and as was foretold by the Prophet Isaiah. The apostle here explains the nature and end of Christ's sufferings, which were to make atonement for sins, and which was done by bearing them. What Christ bore were "sins", even all sorts of sin, original and actual, and every act of sin of his people; and all that is in sin, all that belongs to it, arises from it, and is the demerit of it, as both filth, guilt, and punishment; and a multitude of sins did he bear, even all the iniquities of all the elect; and a prodigious load and weight it was; and than which nothing could be more nauseous and disagreeable to him, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity: and these sins he bore were not his own, nor the sins of angels, but of men; and not of all men, yet of many, even as many as were ordained to eternal life, for whom Christ gave his life a ransom, whom he justifies and brings to glory; our sins, not the sins of the Jews only, for Peter was a Jew, and so were those to whom he writes, but of the Gentiles also, even the sins of all his people, for them he saves from their sins, being stricken for them. His "bearing" them was in this manner: he becoming the surety and substitute of his people, their sins were laid upon him by his Father, that is, they were imputed to him, they were reckoned as his, and placed to his account; and Christ voluntarily took them upon himself; he took them to himself, as one may take the debt of another, and make himself answerable for it; or as a man takes up a burden, and lays it on his shoulders; so Christ took up our sins, and "carried" them "up", as the word here used signifies, alluding to the priests carrying up the sacrifice to the altar, and referring to the lifting up of Christ upon the cross; whither he carried the sins of his people, and bore them, and did not sink under the weight of them, being the mighty God, and the man of God's right hand, made strong for himself; and so made entire satisfaction for them, by enduring the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and all that punishment which was due unto them;

and thereby bore them away, both from his people, and out of the sight of God, and his vindictive justice; and removed them as far as the east is from the west, and made a full end of them; and this he himself did, and not another, nor by another, or with the help of another; not by the means of a goat, as the high priest, but by himself; though he was assisted in bearing his cross, yet he had no help in bearing our sins; angels could not help him; his Father stood at a distance from him; there was none to help; his own arm brought salvation to him; but

his own self, who knew no sin, nor did any, he by himself purged away our sins, and made reconciliation for them, by bearing them: and which he did

in his own body, and not another's; in that body which his Father prepared for him, and which he took of the virgin, and was free from sin; though not to the exclusion of his soul, which also was made an offering for sin, and in which he endured great pains and sorrows for sin: and all this

on the tree; the accursed tree, the cross; which is expressive both of the shame and pain of his sufferings and death. The end of which was,

that we being dead to sin; "to our sins", as the Alexandrian copy, and the Ethiopic version read; as all the elect are, through bearing their sins, and suffering death for them, so as that sin shall not be imputed to them; it is as though it never was; it is dead to them, and they to that, as to its damning power and influence; so as that they are entirely discharged from it, and can never come into condemnation on account of it, and can never be hurt, so as to be destroyed by it; nor by death, either corporeal or eternal, since the sting of death, which is sin, is taken away, and the strength of sin, which is the law, is dead to them, and they to that: in short, through the death of Christ they are so dead to sin, that it is not only finished, made an end of, and put away, but the body of it is destroyed, that it should not be served; which is an end subordinate to the former, and expressed in the next clause:

should live unto righteousness; live, and not die the second death, and live by faith on the righteousness of Christ, for justification of life, and soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world; which the grace of God teaches, and the love of Christ in bearing sin constrains to, and the redemption by his precious blood lays under an obligation to do; for those whose sins Christ has bore are not their own, but being bought with the price of his blood, they are bound to live to him who has a property in them, and a right to claim all obedience from them:

by whose stripes ye were healed; the passage referred to is in Isa 53:5 which is a prophecy of the Messiah, as is acknowledged by the Jews {g}, who say {h},

"this is the King Messiah, who was in the generation of the ungodly, as it is said, Isa 53:5 "and with his stripes we are healed"; and for this cause God saved him, that he might save Israel, and rejoice with them in the resurrection of the dead."

Sin is a disease, a natural and hereditary one, an epidemic distemper, that reaches to all men, and to all the powers and faculties of their souls, and members of their bodies; and which is nauseous and loathsome, and in itself mortal and incurable; nor can it be healed by any creature, or anything that a creature can do. Christ is the only physician, and his blood the balm and sovereign medicine; this cleanses from all sin; through it is the remission of sin, which is meant by healing; for healing of diseases, and forgiving iniquities, is one and the same thing; see Ps 103:3 on which latter text a learned Jew {i} has this note,

"this interpreters explain hxylo Nwvl, "as expressive of forgiveness";"

and the Jews say, there is no healing of diseases but it signifies forgiveness {k}: it is an uncommon way of healing by the stripes of another. Some think the apostle alludes to the stripes which servants receive from their masters, to whom he was now speaking; and in order to encourage them to bear them patiently, observes, that Christ himself suffered stripes, and that they had healing for their diseases and wounds, by means of his stripes, or through his being wounded and bruised for them.

{g} Zohar in Exod. fol. 85. 2. Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 53. 3. & 90. 1. {h} R. Moses Haddarsan apud Galatin. de Areanis Cathol. Verit. l. 6. c. 2. {i} R. Sol. Urbin Ohel Moed, fol. 64. 1. {k} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 43. 1.

1 Peter 2:25

Ver. 25. For ye were as sheep going astray,.... This is a proof of their being healed, namely, their conversion; in which an application of the blood of Christ, and pardon, and so healing by it, was made to their souls. The apostle has still in view the prophecy of Isa 53:6. God's elect are sheep before conversion; not that they have the agreeable properties of sheep, as to be meek, harmless, innocent, clean, and profitable, for they are the reverse of all this; nor can some things be said of them before conversion, as may be after, as that they hear Christ's voice, and follow him; nor are they so called, because unprejudiced against, and predisposed unto the Gospel, for the contrary is true of them; but they are so in electing grace, and were so considered in the Father's gift of them to Christ, and when made his care and charge, and hence they are called the sheep of his hand; and when Christ laid down his life, and rose again, which he did for the sheep, and as the great Shepherd of them; and when called by grace, for their being sheep, and Christ's own sheep by the Father's gift, and his own purpose, is the reason why he looks them up, calls them by name, and returns them: but then they are not yet of his fold; they are lost sheep, lost in Adam, and by his fall, and by their own actual transgressions; they are as sheep going astray from the shepherd, and from the flock, going out of the right way, and in their own ways; and are, like sheep, stupid and insensible of their danger; and as they never return of themselves, until they are sought for, and brought back: hence it follows,

but are now returned; not returned themselves, but were returned by powerful and efficacious grace: saints are passive, and not active in first conversion; they are turned, not by the power of their own free will, but by the power of God's free grace; they are returned under the illuminations and quickenings of the blessed Spirit, and through the efficacious drawings of the Father's love, unto Christ:

unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls; by whom Christ is meant, who bears the office of a Shepherd, and fully performs it by feeding his sheep, providing a good fold and pasture for them; by gathering the lambs in his arms, and gently leading those that are with young; by healing their diseases, and preserving them from beasts of prey; hence he is called the good, the great, and chief Shepherd: and he is the "Bishop" or "Overseer" of the souls of his people, though not to the exclusion of their bodies: he has took the oversight of them willingly, and looks well to his flock, inspects into their cases, and often visits them, and never forsakes them; nor will he leave them till they receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls; which he has undertook and effected by his obedience, sufferings and death. Philo the Jew {l} observes, that

"to be a shepherd is so good a work, that it is not only a title given to kings and wise men, and souls perfectly purified, but to God the governor of all---who, as a Shepherd and King, leads according to justice and law, setting over them his right Logos, "the first begotten Son", who has taken the care of this holy flock, as does the deputy of a great king."

{l} De Agricultura, p. 194, 195.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Peter 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO I PETER 3

In this chapter the apostle instructs wives how to behave towards their husbands, and husbands how to behave towards their wives; and then exhorts to various things common to all Christians, and particularly to suffer patiently for righteousness sake; to which he encourages them from the sufferings of Christ, and the benefits resulting from them, on which he enlarges to the end of the chapter. He begins with the duty of wives to their husbands, even unbelieving ones, which is subjection to them, urged from the profitable effect of it; since hereby they might be won over to the Christian religion, without the use of the word, as a means, by their conversation, which is explained of chastity and fear, **1Pe 3:1**. And he proceeds to give some advice about their apparel, that they should have a greater regard to internal ornaments; particularly meekness and quietness of spirit, which is highly esteemed of by God, rather than to outward adorning; and which he enforces by the examples of godly women in former times, who were so adorned, and were subject to their husbands, particularly Sarah, the wife of Abraham, **1Pe 3:3**. And next the apostle directs husbands how to conduct towards their wives, to dwell with them, and honour them, because vessels, and weaker vessels, and also heirs of the same grace of life; and besides, to use them ill would be an hinderance of their praying together, **1Pe 3:7**. And then follow various exhortations to unity of judgment, compassion, brotherly love, pity, courteousness, and patience under the reproaches and revilings of men, which is the way to inherit a blessing they are called unto, **1Pe 3:8** and that these are incumbent on the saints, and that they shall be blessed, who are helped to regard them, is proved by some passages out of
Ps 34:12, which passages are cited, **1Pe 3:10**. And in order to encourage to the exercise of the above things, the apostle suggests, that they that so behaved should not be hurt by any; and if they did suffer for righteousness sake from wicked men, yet still they would be happy; nor should this deter them from making a public confession of their faith; to which should be added a good

conscience and conversation, to the shame and confusion of them that spoke evil of them, and accused them, **1Pe 3:13**. And though they were distressed and injured by men, they should not be cast down, nor murmur, since it was the will of God it should be so; and since it was better to suffer for doing well than for doing ill; and especially the example of Christ should animate to patience, since he, an innocent person, suffered for the sins of unjust men, to reconcile them to God; and he is now glorified and happy, and so will his people be, **1Pe 3:17**. And having made mention of his being quickened by the Spirit, the apostle takes occasion from hence of observing, that by the same Spirit Christ preached in the times of Noah to disobedient persons, whose spirits were now in hell; and he takes notice of the longsuffering of God in that dispensation towards them, and of the goodness of God in saving Noah, and his family, in the ark, which was a figure of baptism; of which some account is given what it is, and is not, and which saves by the resurrection of Christ, **1Pe 3:19** who is described by his ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of God, and dominion over angels, authorities, and powers, **1Pe 3:22**.

Ver. 1. Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands,.... As well as subjects to princes, and servants to masters; though not with the same sort of subjection, but what is suitable to the relation they stand in to their husbands; See Gill on "Eph 5:22".
See Gill on "Col 3:18".

that if any obey not the word; any husband who is an unbeliever, has no love for the Gospel, and gives no credit to it, but despises, disbelieves, and rejects it, the word of truth, of faith, of righteousness, reconciliation, and salvation. The apostle, though he includes all wives, and exhorts them in general to subjection to their own husbands, yet has a particular regard to such as had unbelieving husbands, and who, on that account, were scrupulous of living with them, and of being in subjection to them; and therefore, as the Apostle Paul also did, he advises them to abide with them, and behave well to them, using much the same argument as he does in **1Co 7:10**.

they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; for though the ordinary way and means of conversion is the word, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word; yet it may be sometimes done without it; or however by the agreeable conversation of professors, and so of religious wives, the hearts of such as were averse to Christianity, and the Gospel, as unbelieving husbands, may be so softened, and wrought upon, as to entertain a better opinion of it, and in process of time be inclined to hear and attend it; the consequence of which may prove their conversion, which is a gaming, or winning of souls; and which, as it is for their good, is for the glory of Christ; for as every soul that is delivered from the power of darkness, and is translated into the kingdom of Christ, is a loss to Satan, it is a gain to Christ, and to his church. The Syriac version, instead of "without the word", reads, "without labour"; as if the winning of unbelieving husbands was easily obtained by the conversation of their wives.

1 Peter 3:2

Ver. 2. While they behold your chaste conversation,.... Cheerful subjection, strong affection, and inviolable attachment to them, and strict regard to the honour of the marriage state, and to the preserving of the bed undefiled with lusts and adulteries:

coupled with fear; with reverence of their husbands, giving them due honour, and showing all proper respect; or with the fear of God, which being before their eyes, and upon their hearts, engages them to such an agreeable conversation.

1 Peter 3:3

Ver. 3. Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning,.... Or that only and principally; let not that be solely or chiefly attended to, nor anxiously sought after, nor ever in order to allure and ensnare others, or to fill with pride and vanity; nor should it be indecent and luxurious, immodest and immoderate, and unsuitable to the age, character, and station of persons; otherwise clothing is both convenient and necessary; and a decent garb, neat and modest apparel, and what is suitable to the years, rank, and quality of persons, is very commendable: nor are we to suppose that the apostle forbids the use of what follows, but only when used in a luxurious and extravagant manner, and to feed pride and vanity, and encourage, lasciviousness and wantonness:

of plaiting the hair; folding it up in curls, tying it up in knots, and putting it into the form of horns and towers, made by their crisping pins, with their cauls and round tires, like the moon, as was the custom of those times, and still is. There were women among the Jews, whose business it was to plait women's hair; Mary Magdalene is thought to have her name from thence, and that to be her business. The Jews often speak of one Miriam or Mary, by whom they seem to mean the mother of our Lord, who, they say {m} was

ayyvn reyv aldgm, "a plaiter of women's hair";
See Gill on "Mt 27:56".

And of wearing of gold; or "golden things"; golden ornaments, as bracelets, chains, and rings, or pieces of gold stuck in the plaitings and folds of the hair. The Jewish women used to wear a crown of gold on their head, in the form of the city of Jerusalem, called a golden city {n}; and which they wore, after its destruction, in memory of it; but with those they might not go out on a sabbath day. R. Akibah, it is said {o}, made a golden city for his wife, and the wife of Rabban Gamaliel envied her, for it seems this was reckoned a grand dress. Not that the sense is, that every thing of this kind is forbidden, but when used to excess and extravagance; otherwise the daughters of Abraham and Sarah were decked with ear rings, bracelets, and jewels of gold; see Ge 24:22.

or of putting on of apparel; that is "excellent", or precious, as the Syriac version adds; or "of great price", as the Ethiopic; that is beyond a person's ability or rank; the apostle means such apparel as is unbecoming and unsuitable, for he cannot be thought to forbid the putting on of any apparel; but his sense is, that women should not so much regard, and be so intent upon the outward adorning of their bodies, with any sort of clothing, and especially such as does not become them, as the inward adorning of their minds, next mentioned;

{m} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 104. 2. Chagiga, fol. 4. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 67. 1. {n} Misn. Sabbat, c. 6. sect. 1. {o} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 7. 4.

1 Peter 3:4

Ver. 4. But [let it be] the hidden man of the heart,.... By which is meant internal grace; which gives a beauty and ornament to the soul, far preferable to that which plaiting of the hair, wearing of gold, or any costly apparel, can give to the body: and this is called a man, as it is elsewhere the new man, **Eph 4:24** because it has that which answers to what is in man, to his soul, and the powers and faculties of it: this man, or new creature, has a new heart and Spirit; it has a will to that which is spiritually good, and an understanding of divine things, and affections for Christ, for his Gospel, ordinances, ways, and people, and for things above: it has what answers to all the five senses; there is in it a seeing of the Son of God in the glories of his person and the fulness of his grace, and of the invisible things of another world; an hearing of the word, of the voice of Christ, so as to understand it, and live, and to distinguish it from the voice of a stranger; a smelling a sweet savour in the things of God, and of his Spirit, and in the person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; a tasting that the Lord is gracious, his fruits pleasant, and his word sweeter than the honey, or the honeycomb; and a feeling of the burden of sin, an handling of the word of life, a laying hold on Christ, and retaining him: and it has what answers to the parts and members of the body; it has eyes to see with, ears to hear with, hands to receive from Christ, and work with, to his glory, and feet to walk with: it has, in short, all the parts of a man, though these are not yet grown up to perfection; and so that is not yet a perfect man, or arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; but a man it is: and "a man of the heart"; it has its seat there; it is an inward principle in the soul; hence it is called the "inner" and "inward man"; and nothing outward is it, as external humiliation for sin, abstinence from it, reformation of life and manners, a profession of religion, and conformity to Gospel ordinances; but it is something inward, as appears from its names, both here and elsewhere; it is called spirit, seed, the root of the matter, and oil in the vessels; and from the seat and subject of it, the heart, the spirit, the understanding and will, the mind, conscience, and affections: and it is the "hidden man"; it is wisdom in the hidden part; it is hidden from the men of the world; they do not know what it is, nor what it means, nor how it is, or can be; the life of it is hidden from them, and the food it lives upon is hidden manna to them, and so are both its joys and sorrows: it is sometimes hidden from the saints themselves; when they walk in darkness, and see no light, they are at a loss to know whether this principle is in them or not; and it is hidden from other believers, till they give an account of it to them, when by comparing it with the word of God, and their own experience, they perceive it is the grace of God in them; and it is hidden from Satan, it is out of his reach, he cannot touch it; though he can touch the old man, and stir up the corruptions of it, yet he cannot touch the new man, that which is born of God, nor hurt or destroy it; but it is not hidden from God; he sees it where men cannot, being covered with a variety of infirmities and sins, and knows it is not where men sometimes think it is. The nature of this hidden man is further expressed by what follows,

in that which is not corruptible; it is opposed to corruptible things, as the outward adorning consists of, such as plaited hair, silver and gold, golden chains, rings, &c. and costly apparel; nor is it corrupt in itself; the old man is corrupt according to its deceitful lusts, but this new man, the hidden man of the heart, has no corruption in it, nor cleaving to it: it is the workmanship of God, and is created in righteousness and holiness; though it is as yet imperfect, there is nothing impure in it; nor can it ever perish, or be lost; it is an incorruptible seed, and will always remain when gold will perish, and the best of garments be moth eaten, and decay:

[even the ornament] of a meek and quiet spirit; this is one, and a principal part of the inward adorning, or hidden man of the heart; and those that are possessed of such a spirit are not easily provoked to anger; patiently bear, and put up with injuries; carry themselves affably and courteously unto all; entertain the meanest thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; do not envy the gifts and graces of others, and are willing to be instructed and admonished by the meanest saint; quietly submit to the will of God, in all adverse dispensations of Providence; and ascribe all they have, and are, to the free grace of God, and reckon that when they have done all they can, they are but unprofitable servants. This grace of meekness, humility, and quietness, is a fruit of the Spirit, and so a part of the hidden man, and is what is very ornamental to a believer; it is his clothing, his inward adorning, and what makes him lovely in the sight of God, and of his people; see **1Pe 5:5** and it is very useful to him in hearing the word, in giving a reason of the hope that is in him, in restoring others, and in showing forth a good conversation; and particularly it greatly becomes, and exceedingly beautifies women professing godliness; who ought to bear much with their husbands, and be in silence, which is what the apostle has a principal regard unto: and to encourage the more to the exercise of it, adds,

which is in the sight of God of great price; which may refer to the whole adorning, to the hidden man of the heart, which is incorruptible, in opposition to the outward adorning, which may be esteemed by men, and be precious in their sight; and particularly to the ornament of meekness and quietness of spirit; for God has a great regard to the meek, humble, and quiet souls; he lifts them up, when cast down; he causes glad tidings to be preached to them; he increases their joy in the Lord; he feeds them, when hungry, to their satisfaction; he guides them in judgment, and teaches them his ways; he will rise up in judgment for them, and reprove with equity for their sake; he gives more grace unto them, and beautifies them with salvation, and will cause them to inherit the earth.

1 Peter 3:5

Ver. 5. For after this manner in the old time,.... In ages past, the years of many generations, since the time that God created man upon earth; in the times before the flood, and after it; in the times of the patriarchs, judges, kings, and prophets of Israel, under the Old Testament dispensation. The apostle exhorts and encourages to this inward dress and ornament, from the antiquity of it: for in this way, and after this fashion,

the holy women also: who were sanctified by the Spirit of God, and lived holy lives and conversations, such as Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, Ruth, Hannah, and others:

who trusted in God; that he would send the Messiah, and make good all his promises, judging and believing him to be faithful to his word, and able to fulfil whatever he had promised, as Sarah, Heb 11:11. Such holy and believing women as these are worthy of imitation in their adorning and dress, and who, in the manner before described by the apostle, adorned themselves; or this was the adorning which they sought after, valued, and chiefly regarded; not what was external, but internal: and which lay in meekness and humility, and in a quiet deportment, and in

being in subjection unto their own husbands; according to their original make, and natural relation, and the laws of God, and of creation; which is more becoming and adorning than plaiting of hair, wearing of gold, or costly raiment, and recommends them more, both in the sight of God and men; nothing being a more indecent and uncomely sight than a woman not in subjection to her husband.

1 Peter 3:6

Ver. 6. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham,.... Going along with him wherever he went, as from Chaldea to Canaan, and into Egypt, and the land of the Philistines, saying the words he put into her mouth, Ge 12:5 and doing the things he bid her do, Ge 18:6 "calling him lord"; or "my lord", as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, and as it appears she did from Ge 18:12. The Jews use this instance to the same purpose the apostle does, saying {p},

"the wife ought to take care of the family, to educate her children, to serve and minister to her husband in all things, "calling him her own lord"; which is what we learn from the example of Sarah, who called Abraham her lord, saying, "my lord is old"."

Whose daughters ye are; meaning not by natural descent, though they were, these being Jews the apostle writes to, but by grace, and in a spiritual sense; just as those are the children of Abraham, who walk in the steps of his faith, whether they be Jews or Gentiles; so such are the daughters of Sarah, the children of the free woman, who imitate her in faith and obedience; that is, they appear, and are declared to be so:

as long as ye do well: do acts of beneficence and hospitality to strangers, and proper objects, as Sarah did, and all and every good work, according to the will of God, from love, and in faith, and with a view to his glory; and particularly obey and live in subjection to their husbands, as she did: and are not afraid with any amazement; are not deterred from doing well, nor scared by the terrors and menaces of wicked men, either their own husbands, or others; or who with fortitude and intrepidity of mind continue in the discharge of their duty to God and men, and particularly to their husbands, following them, and obeying their lawful commands, as Sarah did in Egypt, and in Gerar, though she exposed herself to great danger: this is said, because women are timorous, and apt to be frightened at everything, from the performance of their duty.

{p} Sepher Musar apud Drus. de Quaesitis, Ep. 54. & in loc.

1 Peter 3:7

Ver. 7. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them,.... "With your wives", as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; which not only included dwelling together in the same house, and bedding together in the same bed, but the whole of conjugal conversation, and all the offices and duties incumbent on men in a married state:

according to knowledge; of themselves, and their wives, and the duties belonging to the conjugal state, and the laws of God and man respecting it; and according to their knowledge of the Gospel, and the Christian dispensation, which no ways breaks in upon, but strengthens and encourages to the observance of things belonging to natural religion, and civil life; and according to that superior knowledge of things, which, generally speaking, men have to women; as also wisely, prudently, becoming their characters as men and Christians:

particularly giving honour to the wife; by speaking well of her, and respectfully to her, and by deeds as well as words; not only by clothing her in a decent and becoming manner, suitable to her station; but by providing everything honest and comely for her, food and raiment, a suitable maintenance, all the necessaries, conveniences, and delights of life, that are laudable and proper; in which sense the word honour is used in **1Ti 5:3** and this was agreeably to the doctrine of the Jews {q}, who say,

"let a man always take care wtva dwbkb, "of the glory of his wife"; for there is no blessing found in a man's house, but for the sake of his wife, as it is said, Ge 12:16 "and he entreated Abraham well for her sake": and Rabba used to say to the citizens, wkyyvnl wryqwa, "honour your wives", that ye may be rich."

And indeed this is what they promised in their marriage contract, which runs thus {r}:

"be thou unto me for a wife, according to the law of Moses and Israel, and I, by the word of heaven, or God, will worship, ryqwaw, "and honour", and nourish, and take care of thee, according to the custom of the Jews, who worship, and "honour", and nourish, and take care of their wives."

As unto the weaker vessel; so in **1Th 4:4** the wife is called a vessel, See Gill on "1Th 4:4", and here "the weaker"; being so for the most part, both as to strength of body, and endowments of mind; and therefore to be used gently and tenderly, and not be treated with neglect and contempt, or with inhumanity and severity; but as, in every state and condition, the strong are to bear the infirmities of the weak; so a man should bear with, and accommodate himself to the infirmities of his wife, and hide them as much as he can, and not expose them, nor despise her on account of them. It is a saying of the Jews {s},

"if thy wife be short of stature, bow thyself, and whisper to her."

The meaning of the proverb is, that he ought to suit himself to her capacity and weakness:

and as being heirs together of the grace of life; not of a natural life, and the good things of it; though husbands and wives partake of the same kind of life, and have a right unto, and share in the same necessaries of life; so Adam and Eve were partakers of the same life, and sharers of the same benefits; and which is a reason indeed why they ought to live lovingly together: but something more is intended; not the external gifts of the Spirit, which, unless in some few instances, are bestowed on men, and not on women; nor the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, which are the means of grace and life; though men and women, called by grace, have an equal right to them, and enjoy them; see **Ga 3:28** but grace here, and glory hereafter, are here meant. Some copies, as the Alexandrian, and others, read, "heirs together of the manifold grace of life"; God's own people, without any difference as to sex, as men and women, equally share in grace, as it signifies the love and favour of God; which is the same to all the objects, as to the date of it, which is from everlasting, one not being loved before another; and as to the quality of it, which is free, sovereign, special, discriminating and unchangeable, one being loved not with one sort of love, another with another; and as to the quantity of it, it not admitting of more or less; and as to the duration, which is for ever: and so they are heirs of it, as it denotes the blessings of grace; being equally heirs of, and sharers in electing, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace: and as it may intend the internal graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love; which as to their principles are the same in all the saints, though different as to the degree of the exercise of them: and which may be called "the grace of life"; or "living grace", as some copies and the Complutensian edition read, and so the Arabic version, because by it men and women, who were dead in trespasses and sins, are quickened; and in distinction to counterfeit grace, which differs as much from true grace, as the picture of a man from a living man; and because it lives for ever, and never dies, and gives a meetness for eternal life, which it springs up to, issues in, and is inseparably connected with. Moreover, by it may be meant eternal life and salvation, of which the saints, without any difference as to sex, are heirs of: so some copies read, "heirs of manifold grace, and life"; by the former, meaning grace here, and by the latter, glory hereafter; which is a life of vision of God, and uninterrupted communion with him; of perfection and pleasure, and which will last for ever; and may be called

the grace of life, because it is the free gift of God's grace: and agreeably the Syriac version renders it, "the gift of eternal life"; and the Ethiopic version, glorious life: and this is represented as an inheritance, being what belongs only to the children; and which they have not by their own works, as an acquisition of theirs, but by the free grace of their heavenly Father, and as his gift and bequest unto them. Now all the saints, of whatever state, condition, or sex, are equally heirs of this inheritance; for there is but one inheritance, one kingdom, one crown of glory, which all shall enjoy; and whatever disparity there may be, particularly between husband and wife, in their natural relation, there is none in the things of grace, and with regard to the kingdom of glory; and which is an argument why husbands should dwell peaceably and comfortably with their wives, and give all due honour to them, since they are upon a par in spiritual things, there being neither male nor female in Christ Jesus, and because they are now joint heirs of, and shall equally share in eternal life and happiness.

That your prayers be not hindered: as they would be were they not to dwell together; or should not the husband give honour to his wife, and take care of her as he ought to do: hence would arise strifes and quarrels, when they could not cordially, and to edification, join together in prayer; nor would such prayers, put up in wrath, be acceptable unto God, who requires that men should lift up holy hands everywhere, whether in public, or in private, in God's house, or in their own houses, without wrath and doubting. From hence we may observe, that family prayer is a duty incumbent on professors of religion, and great care should be taken that it be not neglected and hindered.

{q} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 59. 1. & Sepher Musar apud Drusium in loc. {r} Apud. Buxtorf. Chald. Gram. p. 389. {s} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 59. 1.

1 Peter 3:8

Ver. 8. Finally, be ye all of one mind,.... Not that the apostle was about to conclude his epistle; but having finished his exhortations respecting the obedience of subjects to magistrates, and of servants to their masters, and the duties incumbent on husbands and wives, he proceeds to sum up what he had further to say, in general rules; which regarded all sorts of Christians, magistrates and subjects, masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children, old and young, rich and poor, of whatsoever state, age, sex, or condition; and so the Arabic version renders it, "the sum of the commandment is"; and the Ethiopic version, "the sum of all is this"; namely, what follows; "be ye all of one mind"; whatever difference there might be in their natural and civil relation and character; and which is to be understood not of the sameness of affection to one another, or of an humble and condescending spirit, disposition, and carriage to each other, for these are expressed in some following exhortations; but of sameness of judgment with respect to the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, in which saints should be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; for as the church is but one body, of which Christ is the head, there should be but one mind in it; even as there is but one Spirit of God, who convinces, enlightens, and leads into truth; and but one heart and way, given to fear the Lord; and there is but one hope of our calling, or to which we are called; and one way to it, and therefore ought to agree in everything respecting the way, the truth, and the life; though in things which do not, should bear with one another; and there is but one Lord, who gives the same laws and ordinances to one as to another, and which are to be kept alike by all; and there is but one faith, one doctrine of faith, which is uniform and all of a piece, and but one rule and standard of faith, the sacred Scriptures, and but one baptism, to be administered in the same way, and upon the same sort of subjects, and in the same name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; and but one God and Father of all; all belong to the same family, and therefore should preserve a unity of spirit and mind, and speak the same things; which is necessary to carry on the worship of God, honourably and regularly, to the glorifying of him, and for the peace, comfort, and safety of the churches of Christ:

having compassion one of another; or sympathizing with each other, both in prosperity and adversity, whether in temporal or spiritual things; rejoicing with them that rejoice in Christ, make their boast of him, and have communion with him, and who are also blessed with health of body, and a competency of the good things of this life; and weeping with them that weep for the loss of goods, relations, &c. and being in bonds and afflictions; or because of sin, the absence of Christ, and the temptations of Satan; and being concerned also for such who are fallen into immorality, or error, and heresy; endeavouring to restore them out of the one or the other, in a spirit of meekness and tenderness: to all which they should be engaged by the example of Christ, the sympathizing high priest; by the consideration of the divine compassion to them, both in a providential way, and in a way of grace; and on account of their union and relation to each other, as members of the same body:

love as brethren; not in a natural and civil, but in a spiritual relation, being children of God, and brethren of Christ, and in a Gospel church state; and whose love to each other ought to be universal, fervent, without dissimulation, and as Christ has loved them; and which should show itself in praying for each other, in bearing one another's burdens, in forgiving each other, in admonishing in love, and building up one another on their most holy faith, and communicating to each other both in temporals and spirituals: and of a very excellent nature is it; it is the bond of perfectness, and evidence of regeneration; the glory and ornament of a profession, and without which it is nothing; and what renders the communion of the saints with each other pleasant and profitable, comfortable to themselves, and honourable in the eyes of others; and to which they should be induced from the consideration of the love of God and Christ unto them, and from their relation to each other, as brethren:

be pitiful; to those that are in distress; put on bowels of mercy, and relieve and succour them, distributing cheerfully to their necessities:

be courteous; gentle and affable, carrying it friendly to one another, seeking those things which may be most agreeable to each other, shunning all moroseness, stiffness, and incivility. The Vulgate Latin version renders it by two words, "modest, humble": not proud, haughty, and overbearing, but condescending to each other, and to men of low estates; and so the Syriac version renders it, "kind and meek".

1 Peter 3:9

Ver. 9. Not rendering evil for evil,.... Doing an ill thing in return to one that has done ill to you, and in a way of revenge for it; which is contrary to what is before advised to, and which is taking God's prerogative and work out of his hands, whose vengeance is, and which is to be overcome of evil:

or railing for railing; returning ill language to such as have given it, but rather should imitate Christ, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, **1Pe 2:23** and whose advice is, instead of returning injuries, blows, or words, to turn to him that smites on the right check the other also and to bless them that curse, do good to them that hate, and pray for them that persecute, **Mt 5:39** and which is here directed to:

but contrariwise blessing; praying for a blessing on them; for if we are to do so for our enemies, for them that hate us, despitefully use and persecute us, as did Christ, Stephen the protomartyr, and the apostles, then much more our fellow Christians who may do us an injury or speak evil of us, or to us: who seem to be chiefly intended: the argument to persuade to it follows,

knowing that ye are thereunto called; referring either to what goes before being called by grace to the discharge of all the above duties exhorted to, and particularly to suffer patiently all injuries and affronts; and instead of making returns in the same way, to bless and pray for those that have hurt us, either by words or deeds; see **1Pe 2:20** or to what follows, that ye should inherit a blessing; temporal blessing or blessings; for godliness has the promise of this life and godly persons shall not want any good thing; and even while the blessings of others are cursed they have their outward mercies with a blessing, and they are blessings indeed to them; wherefore, the little they may have is better than the large affluence of others: and also spiritual blessing, or blessings; such as peace of conscience, the pardon of all their sins a justifying righteousness adopting grace, all supplies of grace from Christ, his presence and communion with him: and also an eternal one, even life for evermore; called so, because it springs from the free favour, good will, and blessing of

God, and which its being an inheritance also shows; and because such that enjoy it are eternally and unspeakably happy.

1 Peter 3:10

Ver. 10. For he that will love life,.... This, with what follows here and in the two next verses, are taken out of Ps 34:12 and are produced as a proof of what is before said; that it is a good man's duty not to do or speak evil in return for what is done or said to him; but on the contrary, it becomes him to avoid evil, do good, and seek peace as much as possible, and leave it with a righteous God to vindicate him and his cause, who will not fail to do it; and that such shall inherit the blessing both here and hereafter: in the psalm, these words are put by way of question, "what man is he that desireth life?" that wills it with pleasure, that loves it with a love of complacency and delight? and which is to be understood, not of natural life; for what man is there that do not love that? love of a natural life is natural to men; it is a first principle in nature to desire life, and a preservation of it, and to a great length; a man will give all that he has for it, as Satan said, **Job 2:4**, but both of a spiritual life, a life of faith on Christ, communion with him, and holiness from him; the life of God, or to live soberly, righteously, and godly, which carnal men are alienated from, and enemies to, and cannot desire, only spiritual men; and of an eternal one; and so some of the Jewish interpreters {u} understand by life and good days, in the psalm, such as are both in this world, and in that which is to come:

and see good days; not the days of this life, which are evil, even the days of a good man, Gen 47:9 and the more so, the longer he lives; for the days of old age are evil days, in which there is no pleasure, Ec 12:1, unless such days are meant, in which much good is done to the honour and glory of God, and in which gracious souls enjoy much of God, and see and taste of his grace and goodness in the land of the living; though, rather, the good days of eternity, even length of days for ever and ever, which holy men of God shall see, and enjoy in the other world, when they shall be possessed of fulness of joy, and of pleasure for evermore: in the psalm it is, "and loveth [many] days, that he may see good"; desires a blessed eternity of good things:

let him refrain his tongue from evil; bridle that unruly member, which has a world of iniquity in it; let him keep it as with a bit, from the vices incident to it; from all obscene words, filthy and corrupt communication, whatever is unsavoury and unedifying; from lying, cursing, swearing, and particularly from railing and evil speaking, in return for such language, which is chiefly meant; as well as from belching out blasphemies against God, and damnable heresies among men; for whoever would be thought a religious man, and lays no restraint on his tongue, his religion is a vain thing, **Jas 1:26** and his lips that they speak no guile; as flatterers do, who speak that with their mouth which does not agree with their heart, and so beguile and deceive persons; and as false teachers, who use dishonest arts, walk in craftiness, handle the word of God deceitfully, use ambiguous phrases, and words of double meaning, and with their good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple but such things do not become persons that seek for glory, honour, and immortality; that profess to be Israelites indeed; in these guile should not be found in their lips, nor in their lives.

{u} Kimchi in Psal. xxxiv. 17.

1 Peter 3:11

Ver. 11. Let him eschew evil,.... Avoid all kinds of evil, hate it, abstain from the appearance of it, and have no fellowship with it; and particularly should avoid rendering evil for evil, or taking revenge on persons for doing him ill:

and do good; everything that is good, all good works, according to the will of God, in the exercise of faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God; and without trusting to them, and depending upon them for life and salvation; and particularly do good for evil; do good to all men, acts of kindness and beneficence, even to enemies, and especially to them that are of the household of faith. The Jewish interpreters {w} on the psalm from whence these words are taken observe, that in the first of these clauses are contained all the negative precepts, whose number with them is three hundred, sixty, and five; and in the latter of them, all the affirmative precepts, which amount to two hundred and forty eight:

let him seek peace and ensue it: "or pursue it"; let him seek after it, in the world, and with all men, as much as possible, yea, with his very enemies; and live a peaceable and quiet life, in the kingdom, city, town, and neighbourhood where he is; and particularly in the church of God, and with the saints; which he should seek with all diligence and eagerness, and pursue with all rigour to the utmost of his power; and endeavour to cultivate all he can, and follow the things which make for it. The note of one of the Jewish commentators {x} on this passage is, "seek peace", in thine own place; "and pursue it", in another place.

{w} Aben Ezra & Kimchi in Psal. xxxiv. 14. {x} Jarchi.

1 Peter 3:12

Ver. 12. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous,.... Who are so not merely in the sight of men, but of God; nor in their own account, and by their own works, but in the esteem of God, through the imputation of the righteousness of his Son unto them: and because he loves this righteousness, and is well pleased with it, seeing by it his law is magnified and made honourable, therefore his countenance beholds with pleasure and delight those righteous ones who are clothed with it; his eyes of omniscience, love, care, and protection, are always upon them, watching over them, delighting in them, running to and fro in the earth on behalf of them; he sees every injury done them, and in his own time and way will do them justice; which is a reason why they should not take vengeance themselves, but leave it with him, whose it is:

and his ears are open to their prayers; or "prayer"; in the Hebrew text, "to their cry"; he is a God hearing prayer, and his righteous ones have his ear; he hears them while they are speaking, and will sooner or later answer, and avenge his elect, who cry unto him day and night; for as he has an ear to hear their cries, which is not heavy, he has an arm to save them, which is not shortened; and this is another reason why they should behave as before directed, and which is still strengthened by what follows;

but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil; it is added in the psalm, "to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth": by "the face of the Lord" is meant, as the Jewish writers {y} interpret it, the anger of the Lord; it intends, not his kind, pleasant, and loving countenance, but his angry one with the former he beholds the upright, and with it he looks upon his righteous ones; but the latter is upon and against the wicked, and is dreadful and intolerable, and the consequence of it is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

{y} Jarchi & Menachem apud ib. & Aben Ezra in loc.

1 Peter 3:13

Ver. 13. And who is he that will harm you,.... Or "can harm you". God will not; for his eyes are upon the righteous, to protect and defend them, and, his ears are open to their cries, to avenge them; he is on their side, and he is the only lawgiver that is able to save, and to destroy. Christ will not; for when he came the first time, it was not to condemn, but to save; and when he comes a second time, though he will rule the wicked with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel; yet his people, who are his jewels, he will spare, as a man spares his only son. Good angels will not; these rejoice at the conversion, and in the salvation of sinful men, encamp about the saints, and are ministering spirits to them: nor the devil; though he would devour, he cannot; for greater is he that is in the saints, than he that is in the world: nor can sin; for though it wars against them, it shall not have the dominion over them; and though it often breaks in upon their peace and comfort, it cannot damn and destroy their souls: nor the law; for though it pronounces guilty, and curses those that are under it, and are of the works of it, yet since Christ has fulfilled it for his people, by obeying its precepts, and bearing its penalty, the curse, it lies not against them, nor can it inflict any punishment on them: nor the men of the world; who hate and persecute the saints; these can do them no real harm; they cannot hurt their grace, which shines the brighter, being tried and proved in the furnace of affliction; they cannot destroy their peace and comfort by all the trouble they give them; all the harm they can do them is to their bodies; they can do none to their souls; and even all the evil things they do to their bodies work together for their good; and they must be very wicked men that will do harm in any respect to such as behave well in states, cities, towns, or neighbourhoods:

if ye be followers of that which is good; of God, who is essentially, originally, and infinitely good, and does good to all his creatures, by imitating him in holiness and righteousness, in kindness, mercy, and beneficence; and of Christ, the good Shepherd, following him in the exercise of grace, as of humility, love, patience, &c. and in the discharge of duty; and of good men, the apostles of Christ, the first churches, faithful ministers, and all such who through faith and patience have inherited the promises, and that both in doctrine and practice; and of all good things, whatever is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, particularly righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness. Some copies, as the Alexandrian, and others, read, "zealots", or "zealous of good"; of good works, as in **Tit 2:14** and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

1 Peter 3:14

Ver. 14. But and if ye suffer for righteousness sake,.... For the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, which was the great stumbling block to the Jews, and on account of which they persecuted the Christians; it being not after man, nor according to the carnal reason of men, and was contrary to the method they had fixed on, and what excluded boasting in them, and was thought to be a licentious doctrine; and for a righteous cause, for professing Christ and his Gospel; for vindicating both which, whoever did must expect to suffer persecution; and also for living soberly, righteously, and godly; for by a religious life and conversation the saints are separated from the world, and are distinguished from them, which in effect sets a mark of infamy and reproach upon them; and saints, by an agreeable life, reprove others, and condemn them; all which irritate and provoke them to hate and persecute them: now these words prevent an objection that might be made to what is before said; that none can, or will harm such as are followers of good; whereas it is a clear case, that saints for righteousness sake are hurt, and do suffer in their persons, characters, and estate; they are reproached and reviled, and often suffer confiscation of goods, imprisonment, and even death itself; to which the apostle answers, by granting it, and supposing that this should be the case, as it sometimes is; yet no hurt is done them, they are still happy persons: happy are ye; since suffering on such an account is a gift of God, even as believing in Christ itself is, and is a real honour done to a person, and to be so accounted; moreover, such generally enjoy much of the presence of God, and the comforts of his Spirit; the Spirit of God and of glory rests upon them; hereby the graces of the Spirit of God in them are exercised, tried, and proved, and shine out the brighter; the faith and hope of other Christians are strengthened, and God is glorified; and besides, the kingdom of heaven, the crown of life, and eternal glory, with which their sufferings are not to be compared, are theirs, and which they shall certainly enjoy: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; referring to a passage in **Isa 8:12** and the meaning is either, be not afraid with the same sort of fear as wicked men are; with a worldly slavish fear of men, and of the loss of worldly things, and of life itself: or, afraid of them, as the Syriac version renders it; who inject fear into you; do not be afraid of their revilings and reproaches, of their threatenings and menaces, and even of death itself by them, which is the utmost they can do; do not be troubled at anything they say or do to you; since nothing can harm you, since God is on your side, Christ has delivered you from this present evil world, and saved you out of the hands of every enemy; and since the love of God, which casteth out fear, is shed abroad in your hearts, and you are encompassed with it, and nothing can separate you from it.

1 Peter 3:15

Ver. 15. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts,.... Still referring to **Isa 8:13** not by making him holy, which need not, nor cannot be, he being essentially, infinitely, and perfectly holy; but by declaring and proclaiming his holiness, as the seraphim in Isaiah's prophecy, and the four living creatures in the Revelation did; and by glorifying of him, praising and applauding all his perfections, and among the rest, this of his holiness, and giving thanks at the remembrance of it; which he has so much displayed in the works of creation, providence, redemption, and grace; hence the Arabic version renders it, bless the Lord God in your hearts: the Lord God is sanctified by his people externally, when they regard his commands, attend his ordinances, and call upon his name, and praise him; but here an internal sanctification of him, a sanctification of him in their hearts, is intended, and what is opposed to the fear of men, and unbelief, and lies in the exercise of the grace of fear upon him; see **Isa 8:13** and which has for its object his goodness, and is a fruit of the covenant of his grace, and is a child like and godly fear; and in the exercise of faith upon him, upon his covenant and promises, his faithfulness, and power to help, assist, and preserve; whereby glory is given to him, a witness borne to his truth, and he is sanctified: some copies, as the Alexandrian, and one of Stephens's, read, sanctify the Lord Christ; and so read the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; and certain it is that he is intended in **Isa 8:13** as appears from **1Pe 3:14** compared with **Ro 9:33**

and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear; by the hope that is in the saints, is not designed the grace of hope itself, which is given to them, and implanted in them in regeneration; the reason, ground, and foundation of which are, the love, grace, and mercy of God, through Christ, and his person, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and redemption; but the Gospel, the whole Christian doctrine, the doctrine of faith, and which the Syriac version here calls the "hope of faith"; and the profession of Christianity, called in Heb 10:23, the profession of hope; in which persons profess their hope of eternal life and happiness through Christ, as doctrine of the Gospel directs them to. Now, a "reason" of this is to be given; not that they are to account for the Gospel, upon the foot of carnal reason; for that is not of men, nor according to the carnal reason of men; nor is it to be thought that every Christian should be capable of defending the Gospel, either in whole, or in part, by arguments and reasons, in a disputatious way, or to give a reason and argument for every particular truth; but that he should be well acquainted with the ground and foundation of the Christian religion; at least, with the first principles of the oracles of God, and be conversant with the Scriptures, and be able to point out that in them, which is the reason of his holding this and the other truth, though he is not able to give a gainsayer satisfaction, or to stop his mouth: and this is to be done with meekness and fear; with meekness, before men; in an humble modest way; not with an haughty air, and in a morose and surly manner, which serves only to irritate and provoke: and with fear; either of God, and so the Ethiopic Version renders it, with the fear of the Lord; considering the subject of the argument, and the importance of it, and how much the honour of God is concerned in it; and taking care lest the answer should be delivered in a light, trifling, and negligent manner, and that no part of truth be dropped or concealed, in order to please men, and be screened from their resentments; or with all due reverence of, and respect to men, to superiors, to the civil magistrates, who may ask the reason; for they are to be treated with honour and esteem, and to be answered in an handsome and becoming manner, suitable to the dignity of their persons and office; as the sanhedrim was by Stephen; and as Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, by the Apostle Paul: and this answer, or reason, is to be given to every man; that has authority to ask, and that asks in a modest manner, and with a reverence suitable to the subject; for the phrases, "with meekness and fear", may respect him that asks the reason, as well as him that gives the answer; for that which is holy is not to be given to dogs, to impudent persons, mockers and scoffers, nor are pearls to be cast before swine, filthy and irreverent persons; see **Mt 7:6** the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and so the Vulgate Latin version, read, "but with meekness and fear"; for if it is not asked in such a way, there is no obligation to give an answer: and this is to be given "always"; whenever it is asked in such a manner, and by proper persons; when there is a necessity of it, and as opportunity offers: and saints should be always "ready to" give and therefore it becomes them daily and diligently to search the Scriptures, meditate on them, and get all the help and assistance they can, to lead them into an acquaintance with them, that they may be so; for though the apostles had extraordinary assistance promised them, and therefore were bid not to consider beforehand what they should say, when brought before kings and princes; yet this is not to be expected by ordinary persons, nor in ordinary cases. Agreeably to this is the advice of R. Eleazar {z};

"be diligent to learn the law, and know what thou shouldest answer to an Epicure,"

or heretic: says R. Jochanan {a},

"in every place where the Sadducees object, Ndyub Ntbwvt their answer is at their side,"

or ready; that is, in the same Scriptures on which they form their objections.

{z} Pirke Abot, c. 2. sect. 14. {a} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 38. 2.

1 Peter 3:16

Ver. 16. Having a good conscience,.... Meaning not the faculty of the conscience itself, which is naturally evil, and defiled with sin, and is only made good by the sanctification of the Spirit, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, by which the heart is sprinkled from it, and that itself purged from dead works; but a life and conversation according to the dictates of such a conscience, in the uprightness and sincerity of it, and by the grace of God, and according to the Gospel, and whereby the doctrines of it are adorned; for, as besides internal sanctification of God, or a fearing of him, and believing in him with the heart, there must be a profession of him with the mouth, and a reason of faith and hope given verbally, when there is an occasion for it; so to both must be added a conscientious discharge of duty, both to God and men, which is one way of defending and recommending the doctrines of the Gospel:

that whereas they speak evil of you as of evildoers; as vain, proud, haughty, and arrogant persons, as seditious men, enemies to order and civil magistracy; as such that speak evil of dignities, and despise government; when they shall see your modest and humble deportment in the world, and before them, and with what reverence and esteem you treat them:

they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ; which was in consequence of their being in Christ, and made new creatures by him, and was as became his Gospel, and by and under the influence of his grace and Spirit.

1 Peter 3:17

Ver. 17. For it is better, if the will of God be so,.... For all things are ordered by the will of God, even all the sufferings and afflictions of the saints; and which is a reason why they ought to be patiently submitted to, and bore: and "better" it is, more honourable and profitable, that ye suffer for well doing; for believing in Christ, professing him and his Gospel, giving a free and open reason for so doing, and for exercising a good conscience, and living godly in Christ Jesus:

than for evil doing; as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or a busy body in other men's matters, **1Pe 4:15**.

1 Peter 3:18

Ver. 18. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins,.... Not his own, for he committed none, but for the sins of his people; in order to obtain the remission of them, to make reconciliation for them, and to take and put them away, and finish and make an end of them; which sufferings of his, on account of them, were many and great: he suffered much by bearing the griefs, and carrying the sorrows of his people, whereby he became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, from his cradle to his cross; and from the temptations of Satan, being in all points tempted, as his members are, though without sin; and from the contradiction of sinners against him, in his name, credit, and character, abusing him as the worst of men; and he suffered in his soul, from the wrath of God, and curses of the law, which lay upon him; and in his body, by many buffetings, scourges, wounds, and death itself, even the death of the cross; and which being the finishing part of his sufferings, is chiefly here meant. The Alexandrian copy reads, "died for you"; and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "died for our sins"; and this he did once, and but once; he died once, and will die no more; he was offered up once, and will be offered up no more; there is no more offering, or sacrifice for sin; the reason is, because his one offering is sufficient to take away sin, which the legal sacrifices were not, and therefore were often offered; and the reason why this his one offering, or once suffering and dying, is sufficient, is, because of his divine nature, or eternal Spirit, by which he offered himself, and gave infinite virtue to his sacrifice and satisfaction: now, this is an argument for suffering patiently; since Christ, the head, has also suffered, and therefore, why not the members? and since he has suffered for their sins, therefore they should not grudge to suffer for his sake; and seeing also their sufferings are but once, in this life only, and as it were but for a moment, and not to be compared with his sufferings for them; and especially when it is considered what follows:

the just for the unjust; Christ, the holy and just one, who is holy in his nature, and righteous in his life and actions, which were entirely conformable to the righteous law of God, and upright and faithful in the discharge of his office, and therefore called God's righteous servant; he suffered, and that not only by unjust men, by the Jews, by Pilate, and the Roman soldiers, but for and in the room and stead of unjust men, sinners, and ungodly, who were destitute of righteousness, and full of all unrighteousness; and since he did, it need not be thought hard, or strange, that sinful men should suffer at the hands of others; and still it should be borne with the greater patience, since Christ not only suffered for them, but since an end is answered by it, as is here suggested:

that he might bring us to God; nigh to God, who, with respect to communion, were afar off from him; and in peace and reconciliation with him, who were enemies to him by wicked works; and that they might have freedom of access, with boldness, unto God, through his precious blood, and the vail of his flesh; and that he might offer them unto God, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; as a sacrifice acceptable unto God, presenting them to him unblamable and unreproveable in his sight; that he might bring them into his grace and presence here, and, as the great Captain of their salvation, bring them to him in glory hereafter:

being put to death in the flesh; in the human nature: flesh includes the whole of human nature, both body and soul; for though the body only dies, yet death is the dissolution of the union between them both; and such was Christ's death; for though the union between the two natures continued, yet his body and soul were disunited; his body was left on the cross, and his soul, or Spirit, was commended to God, when his life was taken from the earth, and he was put to death in a violent manner by men:

but quickened by the Spirit; raised from the dead by his divine nature, the Spirit of holiness, the eternal Spirit, by which he offered himself, and by virtue of which, as he had power to lay down his life, so he had power to take it up again; when he was also justified in the Spirit, and all the elect in him. Now, as the enemies of Christ could do no more than put him to death in the flesh, so the enemies of his people can do no more than kill the body, and cannot reach the soul; and as Christ is quickened and raised from the dead, so all his elect are quickened together, and raised with him, representatively, and shall, by virtue of his resurrection, be raised personally, and live also; which is no inconsiderable argument to suffer afflictions patiently, and which is the design of this instance and example of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ.

1 Peter 3:19

Ver. 19. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison. Various are the senses given of this passage: some say, that Christ, upon his death, went in his human soul to hell; either, as some, to preach to the devils and damned spirits, that they might be saved, if they would; and, as others, to let them know that he was come, and to fill them with dread and terror; but though hell may be meant by the prison, yet the text does not say that he went unto it, or preached in it; only that the spirits were in it, to whom he sometimes went, and preached; nor is his human soul, but his divine nature meant, by the Spirit, by which he went and preached to them: and as for the ends proposed, the former is impracticable and impossible; for after death follows judgment, which is an eternal one; nor is there any salvation, or hope of salvation afterwards; and the latter is absurd, vain, and needless. Others, as the Papists, imagine the sense to be, that Christ, at his death, went in his human soul, into a place they call "Limbus Patrum", which they suppose is meant by the prison here, and delivered the souls of the Old Testament saints and patriarchs from thence, and carried them with him to heaven; but this sense is also false, because, as before observed, not the human soul of Christ, but his divine nature, is designed by the Spirit; nor is there any such place as here feigned, in which the souls of Old Testament saints were, before the death of Christ; for they were in peace and rest, in the kingdom of heaven, in Abraham's bosom, inheriting the promises, and not in a prison; besides, the text says not one word of the delivering of these spirits out of prison, only of Christ's preaching to them: add to all this, and which Beza, with others, observes, the apostle speaks of such as had been disobedient, and unbelievers; a character which will not agree with righteous men, and prophets, and patriarchs, under the former dispensation: others think the words are to be understood of Christ's going to preach, by his apostles, to the Gentiles, as in **Eph 2:17** who were in a most miserable condition, strangers to the covenants of promise, and destitute of the hope of salvation, and sat in darkness, and the shadow of death, and, as it were, at the gates of hell; were in the bonds of iniquity, and dead in sin, and had been for long time past foolish and disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures, to which they were in bondage. This is, indeed, a more tolerable sense than the former; but it will be difficult to show, that men, in the present state of life, are called "spirits", which seems to be a word that relates to the souls of men, in a separate state from their bodies; and especially that carnal and unconverted men are ever so called; and besides, the apostle is speaking of such who were disobedient in the times of Noah; and therefore not of the Gentiles, in the times of the apostles: add to which, that the transition from the times of the apostles, according to this sense, to the days of Noah, is very unaccountable; this sense does not agree with the connection of the words: others are of opinion, that this is meant of the souls of the Old Testament saints, who were en fulakh, "in a watch", as they think the phrase may be rendered, instead of "in prison": and said to be in such a situation, because they were intent upon the hope of promised salvation, and were looking out for the Messiah, and anxiously desiring his coming, and which he, by some gracious manifestation, made known unto them: but though the word may sometimes signify a watch, yet more commonly a prison, and which sense best suits here; nor is that anxiety and uneasiness, which represents them as in a prison, so applicable to souls in a state of happiness; nor such a gracious manifestation so properly called preaching; and besides, not believers, but unbelievers, disobedient ones, are here spoken of; and though it is only said they were sometimes so, yet to what purpose should this former character be once mentioned of souls now in glory? but it would be tedious to reckon up the several different senses of this place; some referring it to such in Noah's time, to whom the Gospel was preached, and who repented; and though they suffered in their bodies, in the general deluge, yet their souls were saved; whereas the apostle calls them all, "the world of the ungodly", **2Pe 2:5** and others, to the eight souls that were shut up in the ark, as in a prison, and were saved; though these are manifestly distinguished in the text from the disobedient spirits. The plain and easy sense of the words is, that Christ, by his Spirit, by which he was quickened, went in the ministry of Noah, the preacher of righteousness, and preached both by words and deeds, by the personal ministry of Noah, and by the building of the ark, to that generation who was then in being; and who being disobedient, and continuing so, a flood was brought upon them which destroyed them all; and whose spirits, or separate souls, were then in the prison of hell, so the Syriac version renders it, lwyvb, "in hell", see Re 20:7 when the Apostle Peter wrote this epistle; so that Christ neither went into this prison, nor preached in it, nor to spirits that were then in it when he preached, but to persons alive in the days of Noah, and who being disobedient, when they died, their separate souls were put into prison, and there they were when the apostle wrote: from whence we learn, that Christ was, that he existed in his divine nature before he was incarnate, he was before Abraham, he was in the days of Noah; and that Christ also, under the Old Testament, acted the part of a Mediator, in his divine nature, and by his Spirit discharged that branch of it, his prophetic office, before he appeared in human nature; and that the Gospel was preached in those early times, as unto Abraham, so before him.

1 Peter 3:20

Ver. 20. Which sometime were disobedient,.... To all the instructions and warnings which God gave them, to all the strivings of his Spirit, and to the ministry of Christ, by Noah; they continued in their profaneness and impiety, and to corrupt their ways, and fill the earth with violence and wickedness; not believing what they were threatened with, or that ever a flood would come upon them, and destroy them: and this "sometime" refers to the time of their being upon earth, who were now in hell; "to the days of Noah"; hereafter mentioned; and which the Syriac version connects with this clause, reading it thus, "who of old were disobedient in the days of Noah"; at which time it was, that Christ, by his Spirit in Noah, went and preached to them: when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah: that is, when God, who is longsuffering and patient, waited on these disobedient ones, in Noah's time, for the space of an hundred and twenty years:

while the ark was preparing; by Noah, according to the directions which God gave him, **Ge 6:14** and which, as R. Tanchuma says {b}, was fifty two years a building; others say {c} an hundred years; but Jarchi says {d} it was an hundred and twenty; and which seems most likely, that being the term of time in which God's longsuffering waited on them; during which time Noah was preaching to them, and building the ark:

wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water; the eight persons were, Noah, and his wife, and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, and their three wives. It is a common tradition with the Jews {e}, that besides these, Og, king of Bashan, escaped the flood; and who, they say, is the same that escaped, and told Abraham of Lot's being carried captive by the kings {f}; the manner of his escape at the flood they relate thus {g};

"Og came, who was delivered from the men that died at the flood; and he rode upon the ark, and he had a covering upon his head, and was fed with the food of Noah; but not for his worthiness was he delivered, but that the inhabitants of the world might see the power of the Lord;"

and elsewhere {h}, after this manner, citing those words, "and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark", **Ge 7:23** they add,

"except Og, king of Bashan, who sat on a certain piece of wood which belonged to the scaffolding of the ark, and he swore to Noah, and his sons, that he would be their servant for ever. What did Noah do? he bored an hole in the ark, and every day reached out food to him, and he remained alive, according to what is said, **De 3:11** "only Og, king of Bashan", &c."

But this is all a mere fiction; and equally fabulous is the account the Arabians give, who say {i} that eighty persons, together with Noah, were taken into the ark, among whom was Jorham, their father; for there were no more than eight persons saved; and this is the apostle's sense; and agreeably the Syriac version renders it, "and eight souls" dwxlb, "only entered into it, and were saved by water"; and we are told by some of the eastern writers {k}, that when these eight went out of the ark, they built a city, which they called Themanin, which, in the Arabic language, signifies "eight", according to their number. The ark was a type of Christ, into whom whoever enters by faith, or in whom whoever believes, shall be saved; but as they that entered into the ark were but few, so are those that enter in at the strait gate, or believe in Christ; and they that went into the ark were saved by the water bearing up the ark, even by that by which others were destroyed; as the very same thing, for different reasons, is the cause or means of destruction and salvation; so Christ is set, for the fall and rising of many, is a stumblingblock to some, and the power and wisdom of God to others; and the Gospel, and the ministers of it, are the savour of life unto life to some, and the savour of death unto death to others. This instance of the dispensation of the providence of God to the old world is very appropriately, though by way of digression, introduced by the apostle; showing, that in times past, as then, God's usual method has been to afford the outward means to ungodly men, and to bear with them long, and then bring down his vengeance upon them, and save his own people; and this suffering saints might depend upon would be their case, and therefore should bear their afflictions patiently.

{b} In Pirke Eliezer, c. 23. {c} Elmacin. Hist. apud Hottinger. Smegma Orient. l. 1. c. 8. p. 249. {d} In Gen. vi. 15. {e} Targum Jon. in Deut. iii. 11. T. Bab. Nidda, fol. 61. 1. {f} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 42. fol. 37. 2. Targum Jon. & Jarchi in Gen. xiv. 13. {g} Targum Jon. in Gen. xiv. 13. {h} Pirke Eliezer, c. 23. {i} Pocock. Specim. Hist. Arab. p. 38. {k} Eutychii Annal. p. 43. Elmacin. Hist. l. 1. c. 1. p. 12. Patricides, p. 10. Apud Hottinger, Smegma Orient. l. 1. c. 8. p. 251, 252.

1 Peter 3:21

Ver. 21. The like figure whereunto [even] baptism doth also now save us,.... The ark, and deliverance by it, as it was a type of Christ, and salvation by him, so it was a figure of baptism, and baptism was the antitype of that; or there is something in these which correspond, and answer to, and bear a resemblance to each other: as the ark was God's ordinance, and not man's invention, so is baptism, it is of heaven, and not of men; and as the ark, while it was preparing, was the scorn and derision of men, so is this ordinance of the Gospel; it was rejected with disdain by the Scribes and Pharisees, as it still is by many; and as the ark, when Noah and his family were shut up in it by God, represented a burial, and they seemed, as it were, to be buried in it, it was a lively emblem of baptism, which is expressed by a burial, **Ro 6:4** and as they in the ark had the great deep broke up under them, and the windows of heaven opened over them, pouring out waters upon them, they were, as it were, immersed in, and were covered with water, this fitly figured baptism by immersion; nor were there any but adult persons that entered into the ark, nor should any be baptized but believers; to which may be added, that as the one saved by water, so does the other; for it is water baptism which is here designed, which John practised, Christ gave a commission for, and his disciples administered: it saves not as a cause, for it has no causal influence on, nor is it essential to salvation. Christ only is the cause and author of eternal salvation; and as those only that were in the ark were saved by water, so those only that are in Christ, and that are baptized into Christ, and into his death, are saved by baptism; not everyone that is baptized, but he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, Mr 16:16, for baptism

is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh; the design of it is not to take off the sordid flesh, as circumcision did; or in a ceremonious way, outwardly, to sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, as the Jewish baptisms did; see **Heb 9:10**, or to take away either original or actual sin; this only the blood of Christ can do; and it is not a mere external cleansing of the body:

but the answer of a good conscience towards God; the Vulgate Latin renders it, "the interrogation of a good conscience"; referring, it may be, to the interrogations that used to be put to those who desired baptism; as, dost thou renounce Satan? dost thou believe in Christ? see **Ac 8:36**, others render it, "the stipulation of a good conscience"; alluding also to the ancient custom of obliging those that were baptized to covenant and agree to live an holy life and conversation, to renounce the devil and all his works, and the pomps and vanities of this world; and baptism does certainly lay an obligation on men to walk in newness of life; see **Ro 6:4**, the Ethiopic version renders it, "confession of God"; and to this the Syriac version agrees, rendering it, "confessing God with a pure conscience"; for, to baptism, profession of faith in Christ, and of the doctrine of Christ in a pure conscience, is requisite; and in baptism persons make a public confession of God, and openly put on Christ before men: the sense seems plainly this; that then is baptism rightly performed, and its end answered, when a person, conscious to himself of its being an ordinance of Christ, and of his duty to submit to it, does do so upon profession of his faith in Christ, in obedience to his command, and "with" a view to his glory; in doing which he discharges a good conscience towards God: and being thus performed, it saves,

by the resurrection of Jesus Christ; being a means of leading the faith of the baptized person, as to the blood of Christ, for pardon and cleansing, so to the resurrection of Christ, to justification; see **Ac 2:38**, moreover, the sense of the passage may be this, that baptism is a like figure as the ark of Noah was; that as the entrance of Noah and his family into the ark was an emblem of a burial, so their coming out of it was a figure of the resurrection; and just such a figure is baptism, performed by immersion, both of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and of the resurrection of saints to walk in newness of life. The Arabic version renders the whole verse thus; "of which thing baptism is now a type saving us, not by removing the filth of the flesh only, but by exhilarating a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ".

1 Peter 3:22

Ver. 22. Who is gone into heaven,.... After he had been risen forty days, where he is received, and will remain, until the restitution of all things; and where he appears in the presence of God for his people, and ever lives to make intercession for them; and is entered as their forerunner, and is preparing mansions of glory for them; and will come again, and take them to himself, to be for ever with him, and from hence they expect him:

and is on the right hand of God; where Stephen saw him; and which is an honour never conferred on any angel, or man; and shows that Christ had done his work, and that in a way acceptable to God; the Vulgate Latin version here adds "swallowing up death, that we might be made heirs of eternal life"; but is not supported by any copy or version:

angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him; by "angels" may be meant angels both good and bad, who are all in subjection to Christ; and by authorities and powers, the kings, princes, and governors of this world, who hold their dominions from and under the Lord Jesus Christ; and which is an argument why believers should patiently bear all their sufferings and afflictions, since Christ has the government in his hands, and he rules and overrules all things for good; and when he pleases, he can put a stop to the rage and persecutions of men; and so the apostle returns to his former argument, in the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Peter 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO I PETER 4

In this chapter the apostle goes on to exhort to an holy life and conversation, and to the several duties of religion, and to suffer cheerfully for the sake of Christ. From the consideration of Christ's sufferings, he exhorts the saints to arm themselves with the same mind, and cease from sin, and live no longer to the lusts of men, but to the will of God, **1Pe 4:1** the reason, or argument engaging to it, is taken from the past time of life, in which they walked in all manner of sin, and which ought to suffice, though they should be spoken evil of by wicked men, for not continuing therein, **1Pe 4:3** and to fortify their minds against such abuses, the apostle takes notice of the general judgment, when such persons must give an account for their evil speaking to the Judge of quick and dead; and that though those to whom the Gospel is preached, and embrace it, suffer death for it, being judged of men in their bodies, yet they live to God in their souls, **1Pe 4:5** and seeing the end of all things is near, he exhorts to various things, as to sobriety, watchfulness unto prayer, and especially to fervent charity, since that covers a multitude of sins, **1Pe 4:7** and to hospitality, without grudging, and to a communication of all good things, as faithful stewards of them, **1Pe 4:9** and particularly to the dispensation of the Gospel, according to the word of God; and to a ministration to the poor, according to a man's ability, with a view to the glory of God, by Christ, **1Pe 4:11** and next, the apostle proceeds to comfort the saints under reproaches and persecutions, and to instruct them how to behave under such circumstances; as that they should not think such things strange, though grievous, since they were for the trial of their graces, **1Pe 4:12** but should rather rejoice, since they were partakers of the sufferings of Christ now, and should share in his glory when revealed, which would make them exceeding glad, **1Pe 4:13** yea, inasmuch as it was for the name of Christ they suffered reproach, they ought to reckon themselves happy persons; since the glorious Spirit of God rested on them, and since the issue of it was, the glorifying of God by them, though he was evil spoken of by those that reproached them, **1Pe 4:14** indeed, they ought not to suffer as persons guilty of capital crimes; should they, they would have reason to be ashamed, but not since they suffered as Christians; but, on the contrary, should give glory to God for it, who had done them so much honour as to call them to it, **1Pe 4:15**, and to reconcile their minds to sufferings, he observes, that the time was come, that afflictions should begin with the people of God, on account of which, the righteous are scarcely saved, though certainly; and that, therefore, sad must be the state of the disobedient and ungodly, even of their wicked persecutors, **1Pe 4:17** wherefore, upon the whole, seeing it was the will of God they should suffer, they ought to suffer patiently, and, in well doing, commit the care of their souls to their faithful Creator, **1Pe 4:19**.

Ver. 1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh..... The apostle having finished his digression concerning Christ's preaching in the ministry of Noah, to men whose spirits were now in prison, and concerning the salvation of Noah's family in the ark, by water, and concerning its antitype, baptism, its nature and effect, returns to the sufferings of Christ he had before made mention of; and argues from thence to holiness of life, and patience in sufferings, after this manner; seeing then Christ, the eternal Son of God, the Lord of glory, the holy and Just One, suffered such indignities, reproaches, and persecutions from men, the wrath of God, the curses of the law, and death itself; and that not for himself, nor for angels, but for men, and those not all men, otherwise his death, with respect to some, must be in vain; but for a particular number of men, in distinction from others, described in the beginning of this epistle, as elect, according to the foreknowledge of God; and these sufferings he endured in the room and stead of those persons, in the days of his flesh, while here on earth, and in his human nature, both soul and body, and was crucified through the weakness of his flesh, and for the sins of our flesh, and which he bore in his own:

arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; that was in Christ; as he suffered for you, do ye likewise suffer for him, in his cause, for righteousness sake, for the sake of him and his Gospel; and bear all reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions on his account, willingly and cheerfully, with meekness and patience, as he did, and with the same view; not indeed to make satisfaction for sin, which was his principal design, but that being dead unto sin, you might live unto righteousness. The apostle speaks to the saints, in this exhortation, as to soldiers, and who had many enemies to engage with, and therefore should put on their armour, and be in a readiness to meet any attack upon them:

for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin: meaning either Christ, who having suffered in human nature for the sins of his people, whereby he has made satisfaction for them, is now clear of them; the sins that were imputed to him being took and bore away, finished and made an end of, and he justified from them, and freed from all the effects of them, and punishment for them, as from all the infirmities of human nature, from mortality and death: or the person that has suffered in and with Christ, his head and representative, which is all one as if he had suffered himself, in person; by virtue of which his sin ceases, and he ceases from being chargeable with it, as if he had never sinned; which is the case of every criminal, when he has suffered the penalty of the law for his crime: or else the person that is dead to sin, by virtue of the death of Christ, and, in imitation of it, who has been baptized into Christ's death, and planted in the likeness of it; whose old man is crucified with Christ, and he is dead with him; who has crucified the affections with the lusts, and through the Spirit has mortified the deeds of the body; which way the generality of interpreters go: such a man has ceased from sin; not from the being and indwelling of it in him; nor from the burden of it on him; nor from a continual war with it in him; nor from slips and falls by it, and into it; no, nor from it in the most solemn and religious services; but as from the guilt of it, and obligation to punishment by it, through the death of Christ; so from the servitude and dominion of it, through the power of divine grace, in consequence of Christ's death: or rather, the believer that suffers death in his body, for the sake of Christ, such an one immediately ceases from the very being of sin, and all commission of it; he becomes at once perfectly pure and holy, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and a noble argument this is to meet death without fear, and to suffer it cheerfully and willingly, since the consequence of this will be an entire freedom from sin, than which nothing can be more desirable by a believer: to this agrees the Syriac version, which renders the words thus: "for whoever is dead in his body hath ceased from all sins"; but the Arabic version more fully confirms this sense, and is the best version of the text, and is this; "be ye armed with this (same) thought, that (not for) he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin"; that is, fortify your minds against all the fears of sufferings, and of death, for the sake of Christ, with this single thought; that he that has suffered martyrdom for Christ, in his body, or has suffered death for his sake, or dies in the Lord, is free from sin, and so from sorrow, and is the most happy person imaginable; so that this last clause is not a reason of the former, but points out, and is explanative of what that same mind or thought is Christians should arm themselves with, against the fears of death; and it is the best piece of armour for this service, a saint can make use of.

1 Peter 4:2

Ver. 2. That he no longer should live,.... The Arabic version reads, "that ye no longer should live". This expresses the end of being armed with the above thought, that a suffering saint after death is clear of sin; and the use that is to be made of it in the present time of life, and the remainder of it, that such a person who so thinks, and is thus guarded and fortified against the fears of death, should no more, or any longer live,

the rest of [his] time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God: the phrase, "his time in the flesh", means the present time of life, in the body, and is the same with those phrases, in the days of his flesh, to abide in the flesh, and be at home in the body; and the words of the text suppose the former part of this time to have been spent in sinful lusts and pleasures, as the former part of the time of God's elect, even that before conversion, is; and that the remaining part of it, be it longer or shorter, ought to be spent otherwise: "not to the lusts of men"; of wicked and unregenerate men, unconverted Gentiles; which they are addicted to, immersed in, and serve; and which they are desirous others should live in; and which are sometimes called divers worldly and fleshly lusts; and are foolish, and hurtful, and deceitful, and drown men in perdition, and therefore not to be lived unto: "but to the will of God"; revealed in his word, and which is good, acceptable, and perfect; one part of which is sanctification, holiness of heart, life, and conversation, as also patient suffering all reproach, injury, and persecution, for the sake of the Gospel; to live soberly, righteously, and godly, to study to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and men, and to suffer patiently for his name's sake, is to live to the will of God; and nothing more strongly should engage to this than the consideration of a sinless life after death; see **2Pe 3:11**. The lusts of men, and the will of God, being opposed to each other, shows that the nature of man is sadly corrupted, and is opposite to God; and that the will of man is depraved, and that the desires of it are not to that which is good, but are contrary to the will of God.

1 Peter 4:3

Ver. 3. For the time past of our life may suffice us,.... The word "our" is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions. The Arabic version reads, "the time of your past life"; and to the same purpose the Ethiopic version; and which seems to be the more agreeable reading, since it can hardly be thought that the apostle would put himself among the Jews dispersed among the Gentiles, who had walked with them in their unregeneracy, in all the sins hereafter mentioned, and best agrees with the following verse:

to have wrought the will of the Gentiles; or "when ye wrought", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions;

when we walked, or "were walking in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries". These converted persons, in the past time of their life, before conversion, "walked" in sin; which denotes a series and course of sinning, a persisting and progress in it, with delight and pleasure, promising themselves security and impunity: the particular sins they walked in are reducible to these three heads, unchastity, intemperance, and idolatry:

in lasciviousness, lusts; which belong to the head of uncleanness, and take in all kinds of it; as fornication, adultery, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts:

excess of wine, revellings, banquetings; which refer to intemperance of every sort, by eating or drinking: as gluttony, drunkenness, surfeitings, and all luxurious feasts and entertainments, attended with riotings, revellings, and obscene songs; and which are here mentioned in the Syriac and Arabic versions, and which lead to lasciviousness, and every unclean lust:

and abominable idolatries; which some understand of worshipping of angels; but they seem rather to intend the idolatries the Jews were led into by the feasts of the Gentiles, either at their own houses, or in the idol's temple; by which means they were gradually brought to idolatry, and to all the wickedness and abominations committed by them at such times: and it is easy to observe, that the two former, uncleanness and intemperance, often lead men into idolatry; see
Ex 32:6. Now when they walked in these things, they "wrought the will of the Gentiles"; they did the things which the sinners of the Gentiles, the worst of men, that knew not God, took pleasure in, and what they would have others do; and therefore, since the past time of their life had been spent in such a way, it was sufficient, and more than sufficient; see Eze 44:6, for no time is allowable for sin; and therefore it became them for the future, and in the remaining part of life, to behave in another manner; not to do the will of the Gentiles, but the will of God; to which that grace of God obliged them, that had made a difference between what they were themselves formerly, and themselves now, and between themselves, and others.

1 Peter 4:4

Ver. 4. Wherein they think it strange,.... Here the apostle points out what the saints must expect from the men of the world, by living a different life; and he chooses to mention it, to prevent discouragements, and that they might not be uneasy and distressed when they observed it; as that they would wonder at the change in their conversations, and look on it as something unusual, new, and unheard of, and treat them as strangers, yea, as enemies, on account of it:

that you run not with them into the same excess of riot; to their luxurious entertainments, their Bacchanalian feasts, and that profusion of lasciviousness, luxury, intemperance, and wickedness of all sorts, which, with so much eagerness of mind, and bodily haste, they rushed into; being amazed that they should not have the same taste for these things as before, and as themselves now had; and wondering how it was possible for them to abstain from them, and what that should be that should give them a different cast of mind, and turn of action:

speaking evil of you; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions supply "you" as we do; but in the Greek text it is only, "speaking evil of, or blaspheming"; God, Christ, religion, the Gospel, and the truths of it, and all good men; hating them because different from them, and because their lives reprove and condemn them; charging them with incivility, unsociableness, preciseness, and hypocrisy.

1 Peter 4:5

Ver. 5. Who shall give account to him,.... "To God himself", as the Syriac version reads; of all their blasphemies, and hard speeches spoken by them against God, Christ, the Gospel, and good men, and receive their just punishment. This the apostle says, to calm the minds of God's people, and make them to sit easy under all censures, reproaches, and calumnies, and not think of avenging themselves, but commit themselves to him that will judge righteously; even to him,

that is ready to judge the quick and the dead; that is, all men, such as will be found alive when he comes, and those that have died before, who will then be raised from the dead, to receive their judgment; and by whom is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all judgment is committed; and who is ordained to be the Judge of quick and dead, and will judge both at his appearing and kingdom; yea, the day is appointed when this judgment will proceed by him, and he is at the door; so that he may be truly said to be ready for it, as he is every way equal to it, and will finish it with righteousness.

1 Peter 4:6

Ver. 6. For, for this cause was the Gospel preached also,.... Not for what goes before, because Christ was ready to judge quick and dead; and because wicked men must give an account to him, and therefore the Gospel is preached to them also, that they may be left without excuse; but for what follows, and which does not so much design the reason of the preaching of it, as the event consequential upon it. By the Gospel is meant the good news of the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, and salvation by him: and includes all the doctrines of grace, as of pardon, righteousness, and eternal life; and by its being "preached" is meant the publishing of it openly, freely, and boldly, with faithfulness and consistence: the persons to whom it was preached are

to them that are dead; not in a figurative sense, dead in trespasses and sins; though this is the case of all mankind, and of God's elect, in a state of nature, whether Jews or Gentiles; and the Gospel is preached to such, as it is ordered to be preached to all nations, to every creature, and is the means of quickening dead sinners; and this follows upon it, that such as receive it are judged and condemned by men, and live spiritually here, according to the will of God, and an eternal life hereafter; but the word "dead" is used in the same sense as in the preceding verse, where it manifestly signifies such who had been alive, but were now dead in a natural sense, whom Christ would judge as well as those that will be found alive when he comes; wherefore the Gospel has been preached also to them that are already dead, as well as to those who are now alive. And by these are meant, not the dead, whose souls are in hell, for to them, there, the Gospel never was, nor never will be preached, nor they saved, as Origen, and his followers, have vainly thought: nor the deceased patriarchs, before the coming of Christ, whose souls, by the Papists, are said to be in "Limbus", whither Christ, they say, went upon his death, and preached to them, and delivered them; but these never were in any such place, but in peace and rest; nor did Christ, in his human soul, descend thither, but went to paradise: nor the dead in general, before the apostle's writing of this epistle; for though the Gospel had been preached from the beginning, from the fall of Adam, to certain persons, and at certain periods of time, yet not to all the individuals of mankind who were then dead, especially in the Gentile world; nor the Old Testament saints in general, who were now dead, though they had the Gospel preached to them in types and figures, in promises and prophesies; nor the men in the times of Noah, to whom the Gospel was preached by him, and who, some of them, as supposed, though they were judged and punished in their bodies in the view of men, being drowned in the waters of the flood, yet repenting and believing, upon Noah's preaching to them, they live in their spirits in eternal life, according to the free mercy and grace of God; but though the Gospel was preached to them, yet they remained disobedient to it, even all of them, but Noah's family, for anything that appears; and are styled the world of the ungodly, and are now spirits in the prison of hell, and therefore cannot be said to live according to God in the Spirit: but such are intended, to whom the Gospel had been preached, and to whom it had been effectual unto salvation; who had received it in the love of it, had sincerely professed it, and had suffered for it even death itself; such are designed who had suffered in the flesh, or were dead in their bodies, **1Pe 4:1** who either were dead in the Lord, or especially had suffered death for his sake, as Stephen and others: and this, with what follows, is mentioned with a general view to encourage the saints to patient suffering for Christ; to fortify them against the ill opinion and judgment the world have formed of them; and to assure them, that Christ will judge his people, both quick and dead, and avenge their cause, since the Gospel has been preached to one as well as to another, and attended with the same power: the effect and consequence of which is,

that they might be judged according to men in the flesh; meaning, either that such persons that receive and profess the Gospel, and suffer for it, are judged according to the judgment of men that are in the flesh, in an unregenerate estate, that is, carnal men, to be a strange and unaccountable sort of people, as in **1Pe 4:4** to receive such a strange set of notions, so strenuously to contend for them, and so constantly to abide by them, and to debar themselves of so many pleasures of life, and expose themselves to so much reproach and shame, to such dangers, and even to death itself: while they are judged to be by these men enthusiasts, madmen and fools; and at other times to be knaves and villains, hypocrites and deceivers; and this is the common effect of the Gospel being preached and coming with power to any; see **1Co 4:3** or the sense is, that such persons, according to men, or in their apprehensions, are judged of God, or have the judgments of God inflicted on them in their flesh, in their bodies, for some sins of theirs; and therefore they suffer what they do in the flesh, vengeance pursuing them; being ignorant that when they are judged, as they reckon it, they are only chastened by the Lord in a fatherly way, that they might not be eternally condemned with the world, 1Co 11:32 or else to complete the sense, for all may be taken into it, these persons, who were formerly alive, but now dead, and had embraced and professed the Gospel preached to them, were judged and condemned, and put to death in the flesh, according to the will of wicked men, and which was all that they were capable of;

but though this was their case, though they were thus judged, censured, and condemned, yet

live according to God in the Spirit; while they were here on earth, the Gospel preached to them had such an effect upon them, as to cause them to live spiritually, to live by faith on Christ, to live a life of holiness from him, and communion with him, and to live according to the will of God, in righteousness and true holiness; and now, though dead in their bodies, they live in their spirits or souls an eternal life of comfort, peace, pleasure, and happiness with God, according to his eternal purpose, unchangeable covenant, promise, grace, and love.

1 Peter 4:7

Ver. 7. But the end of all things is at hand,.... With respect to particular persons, the end of life, and which is the end of all things in this world to a man, is near at hand; which is but as an hand's breadth, passes away like a tale that is told, and is but as a vapour which appears for a while, and then vanishes away. Or this may be said with regard to the Jews, the end of their church and civil state was near at hand, of their sacrifices, temple, city, and nation; or with respect to the whole universe, to the scheme and fashion of this world, which will soon be gone, though the substance will abide; when the heavens shall pass away, and the earth and all therein will be burnt up; when there will be an end of all the purposes and promises of God respecting the present state of things concerning his church and people, and of the judgments of God upon his enemies here; when the man of sin will be destroyed, and the wickedness of the wicked will be come to an end, and the sorrows, afflictions, and persecutions of the saints, will be no more; and when will be an end put to the present dispensation of things; there will be an end of the ministry of the word, and of the administration of ordinances; time will be no more, and the final state of both good and bad men will take place: this may be said to be at hand in the apostle's time, though so long ago, because that was the last time, and the last dispensation of things; and whereas they knew not the exact time when it would be, they frequently spoke of it as near, in order to stir up the saints to the more diligent discharge of duty, and fervent exercise of grace, as here:

be ye therefore sober, or "temperate", as the Arabic version renders it; and so is opposed to intemperance in eating and drinking, which is an abuse of the creatures of Gods, and unfits a man for the duties of religion; when Satan easily gets an advantage, and is often the cause of other sins, and is frequently dissuaded from, for the same reason as here; see **1Co 7:31** or chaste, as the Syriac version; and so is opposed to immodesty in words, actions, or apparel, in which sense sobriety is used in **1Ti 2:9** or "prudent", as the Vulgate Latin version; and is opposed to all self-conceit and vanity of mind, and imprudence in conduct and conversation; see Ro 12:3 and to all immoderate care of the world, which has the same effect upon the soul as surfeiting and drunkenness on the body: it hinders the soul in the service of God, chokes the word, and makes it unprofitable, and runs men into many sins, snares, and temptations; and the consideration of the end of all things being at hand should draw off from it. It may also signify soundness of mind and judgment in the doctrines of faith, which are words of truth and soberness; and the rather this may be exhorted to, since towards the close of time there will be little of the doctrine of faith in the earth, and men will not be able to endure sound doctrine: it follows,

and watch unto prayer; watch all opportunities of praying, or of attendance on that ordinance, both in private and in public; watch and observe both your present wants, and present mercies, that ye may know what to pray for, and what to return thanks for; and that you have a due reverence of the divine Majesty, in whose presence you are entering. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it, "watch", or "be awake in prayers"; be careful that you lift up your hearts with your hands to God; that you pray for such things as are agreeable to the revealed will of God;, that you pray in faith, and lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting; and watch for the Spirit of God to enlarge your hearts in prayer, and to assist you both as to the matter and manner of praying. And persons should also watch after prayer for a return of it; and that they do not depend upon the duty performed; and that they are not negligent to return thanks for the mercy prayed for, when received. Very rightly does the apostle join the above exhortation with this, since a man that is not sober is neither fit to watch nor pray; and a drunken man, according to the Jewish canons, might not pray {l}:

"one that is a drinker, or in drink, let him not pray, or if he prays, his prayer is deprecations; a drunken man, let him not pray, and if he prays his prayer is blasphemies."

Or, as it is elsewhere {m} expressed,

"let not a drunken man pray, because he has no intention; and if he prays, his prayer is an abomination, therefore let him return and, pray when he is clear of his drunkenness: let no one in drink pray, and if he prays, his prayer is prayer (unless the word hlpt should rather be rendered "folly", as it may); who is a drunken man? he that cannot speak before a king; a man in drink can speak before a king, and not be confounded; even though he drinks but a fourth part, or a quarter of wine, let him not pray until his wine is departed from him."

{l} T. Hieros. Terumot, fol. 40. 4. {m} Maimon. Hilch Tephilla, c. 4. sect. 17.

1 Peter 4:8

Ver. 8. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves,.... Not but that charity, or love, is to be exercised towards all men, even towards enemies, but more especially towards the saints, and that under such a consideration in which it cannot be exercised towards others; namely, as their brethren in Christ, and as belonging to him, as the children of God, as redeemed by Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit; and these not only such as are of the same nation, and belong to the same particular church and community, or of the same denomination, but all the saints everywhere, whether Jews or Gentiles, or of whatsoever name, and in whatsoever state and condition: and this love ought to be mutual and reciprocal, and to be warm and fervent, and not lukewarm and indifferent, as it too often is; and should be constant, "continued", and "perpetual", as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions here read: and this the apostle exhorts to above all things else; since outward sobriety, and watchings, and prayer, and all other duties, are nothing without this; this is the sum and substance of the law, and the fulfilling of it; and without this a mere knowledge of the Gospel, and a profession of it, are in vain, and therefore in the first place to be attended to. And especially for the following reason,

for charity shall cover the multitude of sins; referring to Pr 10:12 not a man's own sins, but the sins of others; and not from the sight of God, for from that only the blood and righteousness of Christ cover sins, even all the sins, the whole multitude of the sins of God's elect; but from the sight of men, both of those against whom they are committed, and others; since charity, or true love, thinks no ill, but puts the best constructions upon the words and actions of fellow Christians, and does not take them up, and improve and exaggerate them, but lets them lie buried in oblivion: it takes no notice of injuries, offences, and affronts, but overlooks them, bears with them, and forgives them, so that they are never raked up, and seen any more; which prevents much scandal, strife, and trouble. The Alexandrian copy, and some

others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, "covereth", as in
Pr 10:12.

1 Peter 4:9

Ver. 9. Use hospitality,.... Or, "be lovers of strangers", as the phrase may be rendered, and as it is in the Syriac version; that is, such as are of a distant country, or come from afar, and are unknown by face, especially good men, that are obliged to remove from their native country for the sake of religion, or by one providence or another; and these are to be loved: and love is to be shown them, both negatively, by not vexing them, and making them uneasy in body or mind; by not oppressing them by violence and injustice, and making any exorbitant demands upon them; or by not perverting judgment with respect to them; and positively, by directing, counselling, and advising them, and if need be, by giving them food, and raiment, and lodging: and it is what men have been led to by the very light of nature, as in the instances of Jethro the Midianite towards Moses, and the inhabitants of Melita with Publius, the chief man of the island, towards the Apostle Paul and his company; and is what God enjoined the Israelites by divers laws, since they had been strangers in the land of Egypt; and various are the exhortations to it in the New Testament; and some, by the practice of it, have entertained angels unawares, as Abraham, and Lot; and even Christ himself, as the two disciples travelling to Emmaus; and is what is highly regarded and commended by Christ, and the contrary is resented by him; and therefore it ought to be used and practised frequently; saints should inure themselves to it, be given to it, pursue and follow hard after it;
See Gill on "Ro 12:13",
See Gill on "Heb 13:2". The apostle adds here, one to another; which clause is left out in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; the reason of which may be, because the authors of these versions might think this not so consistent with the duty exhorted to, since the objects of it are strangers; but it should be observed, that so were these persons the apostle writes to; see **1Pe 1:1**, they were scattered about, and lived in different countries, and were strangers to one another, and therefore the clause is pertinent enough; and the sense is, that as they were in foreign countries, and at a distance one from another, whenever by any providence they were brought where each other were, that they would be hospitable to one another: and that

without grudging: food, raiment, and lodging, or what they want, whether direction or advice, thinking it no trouble to give them either; or without murmurings, as it may be rendered, as if they were burdensome, and they were too chargeable to them, and their stay too long; and without complaints of them, finding fault, and picking quarrels with them, and laying charges against them, in order to get rid of them. This is one branch of charity before recommended.

1 Peter 4:10

Ver. 10. As every man hath received the gift,.... That is, from God, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions add. This is a general rule laid down by the apostle, according to which, distribution of every kind, whether in things temporal or spiritual, is to be made, even according to the nature, quality, and quantity of the gift received: the greatest gift God bestows on men, next to himself, Son, and Spirit, and received by them in this life, is special grace; which God gives of his sovereign will and pleasure, liberally, abundantly, without the deserts of men, or conditions to be performed by them; of this kind are faith, repentance, hope, and love: the next to this is the ministerial gift, or what qualifies men for the work of the ministry; which is not anything in nature, or what is acquired by art and industry, but is a gift of grace, which is bestowed on some in a higher, on others in a lower degree: and besides these, there are the gifts of nature and providence, as human wisdom, and the knowledge of things natural and civil, riches and wealth, and the various good things of life; for there is nothing a man has in nature and in grace but what is a gift to him, and what he has received: and according to the measure of the gift received, be it what it will, the exhortation is,

even so minister the same one to another; or to, and among yourselves; to your neighbours or companions, as the Syriac, version renders it; if the gift be special grace though that itself cannot be imparted from one to another, yet the knowledge of it may; and it becomes such who have an experience of the grace of God upon their hearts to make it known, both to particular friends in private conversation, and to the church of God in public, for the use and edification of others, and the glory of God's grace: if the gift be a ministerial one, whether it be greater or less, for it is not in all alike, it is not to be wrapped up in a napkin, and hid in the earth, or to lie neglected, but to be stirred up, and used for the benefit of the souls of men: and if it is a temporal one, the good things of this life, according to the measure of them, that a man has, he is to minister to the supply of the poor; and as God has prospered him, he is to distribute to the necessities of others; as men freely receive, be it what it will, they should freely minister it, according to the nature and measure of it:

as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; for they are but stewards of whatsoever gifts they have; and therefore, if they would approve themselves good stewards, they should minister the same in proportion to their reception of them. Manifold and various are the graces of the Spirit of God, and the rich experiences communicated to men, which are not only for themselves, but for the good of others also: gifts for public usefulness are different one from another; one man has one gift, and another has another; or the same gift is not alike in all, in some greater, and in others less; and all are but stewards: they are accountable for them, and the use of them, to their great Lord and master: and various are the doctrines of the grace of God; of the grace of the Father in election, in the everlasting covenant, in the mission of his Son, in the free justification of sinners by his righteousness, in the free and full pardon of all their sins, in the adoption of any into his family, and in the gift of eternal life; and of the Son of God, in engaging as the surety of his people from everlasting, in assuming their nature in time, in obeying, suffering, and dying in their room and stead; and of the Spirit of God in regeneration and sanctification; and of all these mysteries of grace the ministers of the Gospel are stewards; and it is required of them that they be faithful. Temporal good things are given to men, not for their own use only, but for others; and they are but stewards of them; the original proprietor is God, and to him they must give an account of their stewardship, and how they have used and disposed of the manifold gifts which God of his goodness has put into their hands; so that this last clause contains a reason or argument enforcing the above rule.

1 Peter 4:11

Ver. 11. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God,.... This is an application of the above general rule to a particular case, the public ministry of the word, for that is here meant: "if any man speak"; not in any manner, or on any subject; not in a private way, or about things natural and civil; but in public, and concerning divine things: "let him speak": this is rightly supplied in our translation; and in which it is supported and confirmed by the Syriac and Arabic versions, who both supply the same way: "as the oracles of God"; by which are meant the writings of the Old Testament, the sacred Scriptures; see **Ro 3:2** so called, because they come from God, are breathed and spoken by him, and contain his mind and will, and are authoritative and infallible; and according to these he is to speak who speaks in public on divine subjects, both as to the matter and manner of his speech: the matter of it must be agreeably to the divinely inspired word of God, must be fetched out of it, and confirmed by it; and he is to speak every thing that is in it, and keep back nothing, but declare the whole counsel of God, and only what is in it, without mixing his own chaff, or the doctrines of men with it; and it should be spoken in a manner agreeably to it, not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but in the words of the Holy Ghost; and with all boldness, for so the Gospel ought to be spoken; and with all certainty and assurance, constantly affirming the things of it, for nothing is more sure than they are; and with all openness, plainness, and freedom, making truth manifest, laying it plain and open before men, as it ought to be; and that with all reverence and godly fear, which becomes both speaker and hearer. The apostle next proceeds to mention another case, to which the above rule is applicable;

if any man minister, [let him do it] as of the ability which God giveth; that is, if any man minister in temporal things to the supply of the poor; if a private man, and in a private way, let him do it in proportion to his ability, as God has prospered him in the world; or if an officer of the church, a deacon; and which seems to be the sense, for so the word used signifies, diakonei, if any man perform the office, or act the part of a deacon, let him do it according to what God, in his providence, has put into his hands; that is, of the church's stock, which he should minister with simplicity and cheerfulness. A like division of church offices into public preaching of the word, and ministering to the wants of the poor, is here made, as in Ro 12:6. The end of all this is,

that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ; or by all means, as the Arabic version renders it; by all ways and methods proper; for the glory of God should be the principal view in every action of life: hence the Syriac version adds to the phrase, "in all things", for the sake of explanation, "which ye do"; by sobriety, by prayer, by watching unto it; by exercising fervent charity, and using hospitality one to another; by ministering the gift as it is received; by the public ministration of the word; and by supplying the wants of the poor, whether in a personal or in a church way: or in all gifts, whether private or public, temporal or spiritual; since they all come from God, and men are accountable to him for them; and therefore should be used so as to glorify him by them, and give him the glory of them; and not glory in them, as if not received from him: or in all the members of the church, whether officers, as pastors and deacons, or private Christians; all should so behave in their respective stations, as God may have glory: "through Jesus Christ": through whom all grace is communicated, by whom all gifts are bestowed, and by virtue of grace and strength received from him every good work is performed to the glory of God:

to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever; meaning either to God the Father, from whom every good gift comes; who is the God of all grace, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things; and therefore the praise and glory of all belongs to him; and who has the dominion over all creatures and things, and has the disposal of all in nature, providence, and grace: or to Jesus Christ, out of whose fulness manifold grace, grace for grace, is received; and who having ascended on high, has received gifts for men, and gives them to them, and so is worthy of all praise; and who, as God, has the kingdom of nature and providence equally with the Father, and, as Mediator, the kingdom of grace, the government of the church; and whose dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth; and of whose kingdom there will be no end.

Amen; so let it be, so shall it be.

1 Peter 4:12

Ver. 12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial,.... By which may be meant either the destruction of Jerusalem, which was at hand, and of which the apostle may be thought to give the Jews he writes to notice of before hand; that they might be prepared for it, and not be overwhelmed with consternation and amazement when they should hear of it; who, though in other countries, must be affected with it, and would be a trying dispensation to them: or else the afflictions and persecutions which daily come upon them, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; signified by "fire" or "burning", because grievous to the flesh, and gave great uneasiness, distress, and pain to it; and because of the fury of men, and the violence and fierceness of their rage, expressed thereby; as also because the people of God under them are sometimes ready to conceive that the wrath of God is poured out, like fire, upon them. But the apostle would not have these saints entertain any such thoughts, and therefore he calls them "beloved"; that is, of God, as they were notwithstanding all the fiery trials and afflictions which were brought upon them; or he means, that they were beloved by him, and dear unto him, and other saints, though they were ill treated and reproached by the world: the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "my beloved"; and the Ethiopic version, "our brethren": and the apostle exhorts them not to look upon their afflictions that either did or should attend them as strange and uncommon things; since afflictions, of whatsoever kind, are not things of chance, and do not rise up out of the dust, but are by the appointment, and according to the will of God; and are also the common lot of the people of God in all ages, from the beginning of the world, the same afflictions are accomplished in others; yea, Christ himself endured the same hatred, reproach, and contradiction of sinners, against himself; and they are what he has given his people reason to expect, having told them of them before hand, that they might not be offended at them; and as they lay in his way to glory, it need not seem strange that the saints also should, through many tribulations, enter the kingdom. Moreover, this fiery dispensation, be it what it will, was not to destroy them, but to try them, and that for their good, profit, and advantage; just as gold and silver are tried in the fire, and lose their dross, and become purer and brighter:

which is to try you; afflictions try the graces of the saints; as their faith in Christ, which becomes thereby much more precious than of gold that perisheth; and their love to him, by which it appears that no tribulation can separate them from it, nor many waters and floods of afflictions drown it; and their hope of eternal life, which grows more lively and strong, and is as an anchor, sure and steadfast, amidst the greatest storms. These try a man's profession of religion, whether it is took up on good principles, and without sinister views; since, if it is not, when persecution, because of the word, comes, he is offended and gone; and likewise what a man's principles are, whether worth suffering for or not; and whether they will bear him up, and he abide by them, when called to suffer for them; and therefore, since such ends are answered by fiery trials, they should not be looked upon as strange and unusual things: as though some strange thing happened unto you; which was never known and heard of before; and as if useless, and of no service, and as foreign to the characters, cases, and circumstances of the saints in this world. The apostle in this verse returns to his former argument, to animate and encourage the saints in suffering afflictions patiently for righteousness sake.

1 Peter 4:13

Ver. 13. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings,.... Not of his personal sufferings; though they were partakers of the benefits and blessings which come through them, and result from them, such as justification, peace, and pardon, and which are matter and ground of rejoicing; but of the sufferings of his body, the church, which is mystically himself; and are called his, because of the union between him and his people, and the sympathy he bears to them, and because they are endured for the sake of him and his Gospel, and conform the saints, and make them like unto him; and therefore suffering saints should rejoice in this, that their sufferings are accounted by Christ as his own, who in all their afflictions is afflicted; and that they are honoured to suffer for his name's sake, and are hereby made like unto him:

that when his glory shall be revealed; the glory of his divine nature, as the only begotten Son of God, in which he will come and appear at the last day; and which, though incommunicable, will be more manifest to all men, and especially to the saints, who will know more of him, as the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and when the glory of his office, as Mediator, will be more conspicuous, and shall be beheld by all that the Father has given to him; and also the glory of his human nature, which is now crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of God; and likewise the glory which he has in his hands for his people, even eternal glory and happiness: this is now, in a great measure, unseen, but it will then be revealed, both to the saints and in them; they will appear with Christ in glory, and have a glory both upon their souls and bodies. As they suffer with him, and for his sake, they will be glorified with him, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's glory, and in the glory of his holy angels: the consideration of which, as it must greatly encourage to suffer for his sake, so must be matter of great joy; as follows:

ye may be glad also with exceeding joy; a joy unspeakable, and full of glory, being made partakers of the glory of Christ, either in beholding, or in possessing it.

1 Peter 4:14

Ver. 14. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ,.... For being called by his name; for bearing the name of Christians; for believing in him, and professing him; and for the sake of his Gospel, which is sometimes called his name, **Ac 9:15** not that the apostle makes any doubt of this, for nothing is more certain than that the saints shall be reproached, and all manner of evil spoken of them falsely for Christ's name sake; but he supposes it, and takes it for granted, that they are, and will be reproached, and yet pronounces them blessed persons:

happy are ye; some supply it, "shall ye be", as the Vulgate Latin version; that is, in the other world, because the kingdom of heaven, the crown of life and glory, belongs to such persons; they will be happy at death, in judgment, and to all eternity: others, with our translators, supply, "are ye", as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; for such are happy now in themselves, being both comfortable in their frames, and honourable in their persons and characters, however uncomfortable, miserable, and dishonourable they may appear to the men of the world:

for the Spirit of glory, and of God, resteth upon you; alluding to Isa 11:2 that is, the glorious Spirit of God, as the Syriac version renders it; who is glorious in himself, in the perfections of his nature, being possessed of the same glorious divine essence with the Father and Son; and in his works both of nature, being equally concerned with the other Persons in the Godhead in the works of creation and providence, and also of grace, especially the latter; and in all his gifts and graces with which he adorns the saints, and makes them glorious: and his resting on them denotes his inhabitation in them, and his abiding with them, and remaining in them; and which appears by the comfort they enjoy in their souls amidst all the reproaches and revilings of men, and by the strength which they have to bear up under and endure shame and persecution for the sake of Christ; and which casts an honour upon them, and makes them both glorious and cheerful. The Jews have a saying {n}, that the Holy Ghost does not dwell on any, but on him that has a cheerful heart:

on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified: on the part of the revilers, the person, office, work, and grace, the operations and influences of the Spirit are blasphemed and ridiculed; the power of the Spirit, with which the saints speak, the experiences of grace they express, the comforts of the Spirit they declare that they enjoy under suffering circumstances, as well as their courage, patience, and cheerfulness he gives them, are generally bantered by persecutors; and indeed all the reproaches they cast upon the people of God fall upon the Spirit of God, by whom they are animated and influenced: but on the part of the sufferers he is glorified; inasmuch as they continue to bear a testimony to his grace, depend upon his strength, and ascribe all their comfort and gracious experience unto him. This clause is wanting in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, but is in all Beza's Greek copies, excepting one; and is also in the Arabic version.

{n} T. Hieros. Succa, fol. 55. 1.

1 Peter 4:15

Ver. 15. But let none of you suffer as a murderer,.... The punishment for murder was death by the law of God, **Ge 9:6** or as a thief; whose fine or mulct, according to the Jewish law, was a fivefold or fourfold restitution, according to the nature of the thing that was stolen, Ex 22:1

or as an evildoer; a breaker of any of the laws of God or men, which are of a moral nature, and for the good of civil society:

or as a busybody in other men's matters; "or as a bishop in another man's diocese"; that concerns himself in things he has nothing to do with, and neglects his own affairs, and lives in idleness, and upon the spoil of others; or takes upon him to manage, direct, order, and command other men's servants, or persons that do not belong to him, to do his business, or whatsoever he pleases. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "a desirer of other's goods"; and the Ethiopic version, "a covetous desirer of other's things"; and so is led on by an insatiable thirst for them, to obtain them in an evil way, either by secret fraud, or open violence and oppression. To suffer in any such cases is scandalous and dishonourable, and unbecoming the character of a Christian. This last clause is left out in the Syriac version.

1 Peter 4:16

Ver. 16. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian,.... Because he is one, and professes himself to be one. This name was first given to the disciples at Antioch, either by themselves, or by the Gentiles; however, it being agreeable to them, was retained; it is only mentioned here, and in Ac 11:26,

let him not be ashamed; neither of Christ, and his Gospel, for which he suffers, nor of the name he bears, nor of the punishment he endures, however ignominious and shameful it may be among men; but let him, as his Lord and master did, endure the cross, and despise the shame, Heb 12:2

but let him glorify God on this behalf: that he bestows this gift upon him to suffer for Christ, as well as to believe in him; and that he does him so much honour to call him to such service, and to strengthen him in it, so as to take it joyfully, and endure it patiently and cheerfully. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and also the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, instead of "in this behalf", read "in this name"; that is, of a Christian.

1 Peter 4:17

Ver. 17. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God,.... By the house of God is either meant the temple at Jerusalem, which is often so called, because it was built for God, and where were the symbol of his presence, and his worship; and now the time was come, or at hand, that God would begin at his sanctuary, and leave this house desolate, and not one stone should be left upon another, as Christ had foretold: or else the church of God, which is frequently called the house of God, because it is of his building, where he dwells, and grants his gracious presence, and which he beautifies, fills, repairs, and defends; and so may design believers in Christ, those that are of the household and family of God: and by judgment is meant, not punishment for sin, strictly speaking, because Christ has endured this in the room and stead of his church and people, and therefore in justice cannot be inflicted on them; but afflictions and persecutions, and which are fatherly chastisements, and different from God's judgment on the world, and condemnation with it; see 1Co 11:32 and these may be said to "begin" with them, because it is only in this life the saints have their afflictions; and which are in love to them, and therefore are early brought upon them to try them, and purge them, and make them partakers of his holiness: besides, wicked men are often made use of as instruments, by which God chastises his people; upon which account they are reserved till last, to be the objects of his vengeance, when they have filled up the measure of their sins; and then what is begun in love at the house of God, will end in wrath and severe punishment on them: and whereas it is said, "the time" is come, or at hand, it may be observed, that as God has his set time to favour his Zion, so likewise to chastise her; all his people's times are in his hand, as of comfort, so of temptation, affliction, and persecution. The first times of Christianity, or of the preaching of the Gospel, were times of trouble and distress; for as it was necessary the Gospel should be confirmed by signs and wonders, so that it should be tried and proved by the sufferings of the saints for it: and the phrase also suggests, that these sufferings and afflictions were but for a time, and even as it were for a moment, for a little while; and is a reason why the saints should glorify God, as these words imply, being introduced with the causal particle, "for"; that they have their sufferings now, and not with the wicked in the world to come, which will have no end:

and if [it] first begin at us; either us Jews, for Peter, and those he writes to, were such; or us Christians, who believe in Christ, have embraced his Gospel, and profess his name:

what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? of which God is the author, and which contains things relating to him; as the grace of God, the righteousness of God, peace with him, pardon from him, justification before him, and acceptance with him; and which he commits to men, and qualifies them for preaching it, and succeeds the ministry of it; and it being his Gospel, as it makes it the more valuable in itself, so it is to be had in the greatest reverence and esteem; and the greater is the sin of such who despise and reject it, as did the unbelieving Jews, who seem chiefly designed, here; it was first preached to them, but they disbelieved the doctrines of it, and submitted not to its ordinances, and rejected Christ, the Saviour, the sum and substance of it; and put it away from them, judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life: and what shall the end of such be? in this world wrath came upon them to the uttermost, ruin upon their nation, city, and temple; and in the world to come everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and eternal vengeance in flames of fire. The Jews have various phrases, and frequent expressions in their writings, which resemble these, and serve to illustrate them. When Noah told the old world of the flood, and called upon them to repent, they are represented as saying to him {o},

"where does punishment begin? hytyb Nm, "at the house" of that man does it "begin?" when Methuselah died, they said unto him, does not punishment begin at the house of that man?"

and elsewhere {p}, says R. Jonathan,

"punishment does not come into the world, but in the time that the wicked are in the world; and it does not begin (i.e. at them) hlxt Myqyduh Nm ala, but it begins at the righteous;"

and again {q}

"when God executes judgment on the righteous, he is praised; for if he executes this on them, how much more on the ungodly?"

see Isa 10:11.

{o} Midrash Kohelet, fol. 79. 4. {p} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 60. 1. Caphtor, fol. 70. 2. {q} Jarchi in Numb. 179. apud Grotium in loc.

1 Peter 4:18

Ver. 18. And if the righteous scarcely be saved,.... Reference is had to Pr 11:31 where in the Septuagint version are the same words as here: the "righteous" are such, not who are so in their own opinion, or merely in the esteem of others, nor on account of their vility, morality, and external righteousness before men, or by the deeds of the law; but who are made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them: and such are "scarcely saved"; not as if they were but in part saved, for they are completely saved; Christ has wrought out and finished a complete salvation for them; and they are saved from all enemies, and everything that might hurt them; from sin, Satan, the law, the world, hell, and death; and they are completely justified, and have all their sins pardoned, and shall be perfectly saved: nor as if their salvation was doubtful; for though they are scarcely, yet certainly saved; for they are chosen to salvation, and Christ has obtained it for them, and they have the application of it already made to them by the blessed Spirit; and being justified, or made righteous persons, nothing is more certain than that they shall be glorified: but they are said to be "scarcely" saved, because of the difficulty of it, both with respect to Christ, who met with difficulties in working out their salvation; by reason of the strictness of divine justice, and the demands of the righteous law, which would make no abatement; the sins of his people he had to bear, and make atonement for; the many enemies he had to grapple with, and the accursed death of the cross, he had to undergo; though they were such he was able to surmount, and did: and especially with respect to the saints themselves; for though their salvation is certain and complete, being finished by Christ, yet their enjoyment of it is attended with many difficulties; by reason of the corruptions of nature, a law in their members warring against the law of their minds; the frequent temptations of Satan, who seeks to devour them, and their wrestlings with principalities and powers, which are above their match; and also by reason of various afflictions and persecutions, and many tribulations, which make their way to eternal life a strait way, and through which they must enter into the kingdom of heaven: and if this be their case, as it is,

where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? the profane sinner, the Christless, impenitent, unbelieving, and unregenerate man; otherwise all men are sinners, in themselves; but here it means such as are destitute of the sanctifying grace of the Spirit, and the justifying righteousness of Christ, and that live and die in their sins: where shall such appear? not in the congregation of the righteous; nor at the right hand of Christ; nor in heaven, into which no defiled sinner shall enter; nor even on earth, among and under the rocks and mountains, which will not be able to hide them from the face of the Judge, and his wrath, when he shall come; but at Christ's left hand, and in hell, and among the devils and damned there.

1 Peter 4:19

Ver. 19. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God,.... This is the conclusion made from the foregoing premises; that seeing the state and condition of the saints in this world, at worst, and which is but for a time, is infinitely preferable to the dreadful state and condition of disobedient persons, ungodly men, and sinners, and which will endure to all eternity; they should not think strange of their sufferings, or complain of them, but patiently endure them; and especially when they consider that these are not the effects of chance, or merely owing to the malice and wickedness of men, or to any second cause only; but they are the will of God, are by his appointment, under his direction, and by his order, and for their good, and his own glory; and therefore it becomes them to

commit the keeping of their souls [to him], in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator: and which is not only their duty, but their privilege: and the sense is, that when they are called to suffer for Christ, they should commit their cause to God, who, as he is the Creator, is the Governor of the universe, and will judge righteously; and when they are even called to lay down their lives for his sake, they shall not lose them; though their bodies are killed, they may and should commit their souls, when departing from their bodies, into the hands of God; as Stephen, the first martyr, committed his into the hands of Christ, in imitation of him; where he that made them, as he is able to keep them, will faithfully preserve them in happiness and glory, till the resurrection morn, when their bodies shall be raised and reunited to them: and this is to be performed, in "well doing"; for which they suffer, and in which they should continue to the last; not rendering evil for evil, but blessing; and in imitation of Christ, and his servant Stephen, pray for their worst enemies, and wish them all the good, and do them all the acts of kindness that lie in their power.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 Peter 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO I PETER 5

In this chapter the apostle first exhorts pastors and members of churches to their respective duties as such; and then to those which were common to them all, as Christians; and closes the epistle with prayers for them, salutations of them, and with his apostolic benediction. He begins with the pastors or elders, and describes himself as a fellow elder, an eyewitness of Christ's sufferings, and a partaker of his glory, **1Pe 5:1**, and these he exhorts to feed the flock of God, where they were; to take the charge and oversight of them, freely, readily, and willingly, and not through force or covetousness; and not to exercise a tyrannical dominion over them, but to be examples to them, **1Pe 5:2**, and the argument made use of to encourage them to all this is, that at the appearance of Christ, the chief Shepherd, they should receive a never fading crown of glory, **1Pe 5:4** and next, the members of the churches are exhorted to submit to the rule and government of their pastors, being according to the word of God; and to be subject to one another; and particularly to put on humility, as a garment very ornamental to them; and the rather, since God opposes himself to men that are proud, but gives more grace to the humble, **1Pe 5:5** and especially he exhorts them to be humble under the hand of God, since that is a mighty one, and this is the way to be exalted in due time; and also to cast their care upon him, seeing he cared for them, **1Pe 5:6** and then the apostle proceeds to the common duties of Christians, and to exhort them to sobriety and watchfulness, since Satan their adversary was a cruel and indefatigable one, and ever seeking the ruin of men; and to resist him in the steadfast exercise of faith, and patiently bear all afflictions, seeing the same were accomplished in their brethren in the world, **1Pe 5:8** and then he puts up some petitions for them, that they might be perfected, stablished, strengthened, and settled, **1Pe 5:10** and ascribes glory and dominion for ever to the God of grace, to whom he prays, **1Pe 5:11** after which he names the person by whom he sends this epistle, giving a summary of it; that it was an exhortation and a testimony to the true doctrine of grace wherein they stood, **1Pe 5:12**, and next follow the salutations of the church at Babylon, and of his son Marcus, to them, **1Pe 5:13**, and lastly, he desires they would salute one another with a kiss of love, and gives them his benedictory wish, **1Pe 5:14**.

Ver. 1. The elders which are among you I exhort,.... The apostle returns to particular exhortations, after having finished his general ones, and which chiefly concern patient suffering for Christ; and having particularly exhorted subjects to behave aright to civil magistrates, servants to their masters, and husbands and wives mutually to each other, here proceeds to exhort "elders" to the discharge of their office and duty; by whom are meant, not the elder in age, or the more ancient brethren in the churches, though they are distinguished from the younger, in **1Pe 5:5** but men in office, whose business it was to feed the flock, as in **1Pe 5:2** and though these might be generally the elder men, and whose office required, at least, senile gravity and prudence, yet they were not always so; sometimes young men, as Timothy, and others, were chosen into this office, which is the same with that of pastors, bishops, or overseers; for these are synonymous names, and belong to persons in the same office: and these are said to be "among" them, being members of the churches, and called out from among them to the pastoral office, and who were set over them in the Lord, and had their residence in the midst of them; for where should elders or pastors be, but with and among their flocks? they were fixed among them; and in this an elder differs from an apostle; an elder was tied down to a particular church, whereas an apostle was at large, and had authority in all the churches; and these the Apostle Peter does not command in an authoritative way, though he might lawfully have used his apostolic power; but he chose rather to exhort, entreat, and beseech, and that under the same character they bore:

who also am an elder; or, "who am a fellow elder"; and so the Syriac version renders it; and which expresses his office, and not his age, and is entirely consistent with his being an apostle; for though that is an higher office than a pastor, or elder, yet it involves that, and in some things agrees with it; as in preaching the word, and administering ordinances; and is mentioned to show the propriety and pertinency of his exhortation to the elders; for being an elder himself, it was acting in character to exhort them; nor could it be objected to as impertinent and unbecoming; and since he was still in an higher office, on which account he could have commanded, it shows great humility in him to put himself upon a level with them, and only entreat and beseech them; he does not call himself the prince of the apostles and pastors, and the vicar of Christ, as his pretended successor does, but a fellow elder:

and a witness of the sufferings of Christ; as he was even an eyewitness of many of them; of his exceeding great sorrow in his soul, of his agony and bloody sweat in the garden, and of his apprehension, and binding by the officers and soldiers there; and of the contumelious usage he met with in the high priest's hall, where was mocked, blindfolded, buffeted, and smote upon the face; if not of his sufferings on the cross; since it is certain John was then present; and quickly after we read of Peter and he being together, Joh 19:26 and therefore a very fit person to exhort these elders to feed the churches under their care with the preaching of a crucified Christ; since he, from his certain knowledge, could affirm his sufferings and his death: moreover, he was a witness, that is, a minister, and preacher of the sufferings of Christ, and of the doctrines of peace, pardon, justification, and salvation through them; as appears from all his sermons recorded in the "Acts of the Apostles", and from these his epistles: and besides, he was a partaker of the sufferings of Christ; he bore witness to him, by suffering for him; and as the Apostle Paul did, filled up the afflictions of Christ in his flesh; he, with other apostles, were put into the common prison by the Jewish sanhedrim, for preaching Christ, as he afterwards was by Herod; and had, doubtless, by this time, gone through a variety of sufferings for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, as he afterwards glorified God by dying that death, which his Lord and master signified to him before hand; and therefore a very proper person to exhort these elders to discharge their work and office, and persevere in it, whatever they were called to suffer for it:

and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; which some think has reference to the transfiguration of Christ upon the mount, where Peter was present, and saw the glory of Christ, and of those that were with him, Moses and Elias, and enjoyed their company, and heard their conversation with so much pleasure and delight, that he was for continuing there; and which was an emblem and pledge of the glory of Christ, that was afterwards to be revealed, and still is to be revealed, and so the Syriac version renders it, "a partaker of his glory": of the glory of Christ, see **1Pe 4:13** or it regards the eternal glory and happiness of the saints, which is at present hid, and unseen, but shall be revealed at the last time, at the coming of Christ, when he shall appear in his glory, both to the saints, in them, and upon them; a glory which shall be both upon body and soul; and this the apostle calls himself a partaker of, as in Christ, his head and representative, and because of his interest in it, his assurance of right unto it, and meetness for it, and the certainty of enjoying it; nothing being more sure than this, that those that suffer with Christ, and for his sake, shall be glorified with him. Now, the exhortation of a person in such an office, as before expressed, and of one that was an eyewitness of Christ's sufferings, and had endured so much for Christ, and had had so large an experience of his grace, and such full assurance of glory, must carry great weight and influence in it, and is as follows.

1 Peter 5:2

Ver. 2. Feed the flock of God which is among you,.... Some read, "as much as in you is"; that is, to the utmost of your power, according to your abilities, referring to the manner of feeding the flock, doing it in the best way they are capable of; but the phrase is rather descriptive of the flock to be fed, which points it out, and distinguishes it from all others, and for which they should have a particular regard; it being the flock, as the Syriac version renders it, which "is delivered unto you"; which was committed to their care, and they were made overseers of, and stood in a special relation to; wherefore it was incumbent on them to regard them, so as they did not, and were not obliged to regard, any other distinct flock: by "the flock of God"; or, "of Christ", as some copies read, is meant, not the whole world, which Philo the Jew {r} calls the greatest and most perfect, tou ontov yeou poimhn, "flock of the true God"; but the church of God, over which they were elders or pastors, consisting of Christ's sheep and lambs, he ordered Peter to feed, as he now does his fellow elders; and because they are the flock of God, which he has chosen, distinguished, and separated from the rest of the world, and has made the care and charge of Christ; put them into his hands, whence they are called the sheep of his hand; which he has purchased with his blood, and effectually called by his grace, and returned them to himself, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, who before were as sheep going astray, and folded them together in a Gospel church state; all this is a reason, and a strong one, why they should be fed; not with every wind of doctrine, which blows up the pride of human nature, and swells men with vain conceits of themselves; nor with the chaff of human doctrines; nor with trifling and speculative notions; but with knowledge and understanding of divine and evangelical truths, with the words of faith and sound doctrine, with the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ; with the Gospel of the grace of God, which contains milk for babes, and meat for strong men; and with a crucified Christ himself, who is the bread of life, and whose flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; by directing them to his person, blood, and righteousness, to live by faith on; by preaching the doctrines of peace and pardon by his blood, atonement and satisfaction by his sacrifice, and justification by his righteousness, and complete salvation by his obedience and death: in short, feeding includes the whole of the pastor's work, the ministry of the word, the administration of ordinances, and the rule and government of the church, in the several branches of it; for the same word signifies to rule as to feed; and which work is further expressed by

taking the oversight thereof; that is, of the flock; or "take the care of it", as the Syriac version renders it, and adds, "spiritually"; in a spiritual manner; which is an interpretation of the phrase: an acting the part of a bishop or overseer of it, as the word signifies; looking diligently to it, inspecting into the various cases of the members of the church; using diligence to know the state of the flock, and performing all the offices of a careful shepherd; as feeding the flock; and not themselves; strengthening the diseased; healing the sick; binding up that which was broken; bringing again that which was driven away, and seeking that which was lost; watching over them that they go not astray; and restoring of them in the spirit of meekness, when they are gone out of the way; and overlooking both their practices and their principles; admonishing, reproving them for sin, as the case requires; and preserving them, as much as in them lies, from wolves, and beasts of prey; from false teachers, and from all errors and heresies: all which is to be done,

not by constraint; or with force, in a rigorous and severe manner; for this may be understood actively of pastors not forcing their flock, over driving them, or ruling them with force and cruelty, complained of in Eze 34:4 or passively, of their being forced to feed the flock, and superintend it; as such may be said to be, who enter into the ministry, and continue in it, because obliged to it for want of a livelihood, and not knowing how to get one any other way; or through the pressing instances of relations, acquaintance, and friends; this ought not to be a matter of necessity, but of choice; they should be induced to it by no other necessity than what Christ has laid upon them, by calling them to the work, and furnishing them for it with the gifts of his Spirit; and should engage and continue in it by no other constraint than that of his love; wherefore it follows,

but willingly. The Vulgate Latin version adds, "according to God", and so some copies; according to the will of God, and agreeably to his word; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "with equity for God"; with all uprightness and integrity, for the sake of the honour and glory of God; this should be done with all a man's heart and soul, and should spring from pure love to Christ; for no man is fit to feed Christ's lambs and sheep but those who sincerely love him; see Joh 21:15, and from a cordial and affectionate concern for the good of souls; and from, an hearty desire unto, and delight in, the work itself; otherwise all he does will be as a task and burden; he will do it grudgingly, and with negligence, and will murmur under it, at least secretly. The Arabic version renders it, "watching, not forced watches, but willing ones". This contrast of phrases seems to be Jewish, or Rabbinical {s}; it is a tradition of the Rabbans;

"blood which is defiled, and they sprinkle it ignorantly, it is accepted; presumptuously, not accepted; of what things are these said? of a private person; but of a congregation, whether ignorantly or presumptuously, it is accepted; and of a stranger, whether ignorantly or presumptuously, Nwurb Nyb onwab Nyb, "whether by constraint or willingly", it is not accepted:"

it follows here,

not for filthy lucre; not from a covetous disposition, which is a filthy one; and for the sake of gaining money, and amassing wealth and riches, as the false prophets in Isaiah's time, who were never satisfied; and the false teachers in the apostle's time, who, through covetousness, made merchandise of men, and supposed that gain was godliness; whereas there is no such thing as serving God and mammon; and as the work of the ministry should not be entered upon, and continued in, with any such sordid view; so neither for the sake of gaining glory and applause, a presidency, and chief place in the churches, and a name among the ministers of the Gospel, and credit and esteem among men:

but of a ready mind; or, "from the whole heart", as the Syriac version renders it; and in a cheerful view of reproaches and persecutions, of the loss of credit and reputation, of worldly substance, and of life itself; and with a sincere concern for the glory of God, and the good of immortal souls; being ready to do everything with cheerfulness, that may contribute to either of these. The Ethiopic version renders it, "in the fulness of your heart with joy".

{r} De Agricultura, p. 195. {s} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 25. 1. Vid. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 54. 1. & Maimon. Hilch. Issure Mizbeach, c. 4. sect. 5, 6.

1 Peter 5:3

Ver. 3. Neither as being lords over God's heritage,.... Or "clergy"; meaning not ecclesiastical persons, as presbyters, and deacons, who are supposed to be under the government of bishops, though not to be governed with tyranny, and in a haughty, imperious, and arrogant manner; to which sense the Arabic version inclines, rendering the words thus; "not as those who domineer over such that are appointed in the dignities of the priesthood"; but such cannot be designed, because they are presbyters, or elders, which are here exhorted not to use such tyrannical power and authority; wherefore the flock, or church of God, the people of Christ, and members of churches, in common, are here intended: the Ethiopic version renders it, "his own people"; who are the lot, portion, and inheritance of God, and Christ; and moreover, the several churches are the parts, portions, and heritages, for the word is in the plural number, which are assigned to the care of their respective pastors, and elders, in allusion to the land of Canaan, which was distributed by lot: the word "clergy" is common to all the saints, and not to be appropriated to a particular order of men, or to officers of churches; and these are not to be lorded over by their elders, in a domineering and arbitrary way; for though they are set over them in the Lord, and have the rule over them, and should be submitted to, and obeyed in their right and lawful ministrations of the word and ordinances, and are worthy of double honour when they rule well; yet they are not to take upon them an absolute authority over the consciences of men; they are not to teach for doctrines the commandments of men; nor to have the dominion over the faith of men, but to be helpers of their joy; and are not to coin new articles of faith, or enact new laws, and impose them on the churches; but are to teach the doctrines of Christ, and rule according to the laws he has given:

but being ensamples to the flock. The Ethiopic version reads, "to his own flock"; that is, the flock of God; and the Vulgate Latin version adds, "heartily"; the meaning is, that they should go before the flock, and set an example to believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity; and be patterns of good works to them, and recommend the doctrines they preach, and the duties they urge, by their own lives and conversations; and particularly should be ensamples to the saints, in liberality and beneficence, in lenity and gentleness, in meekness and humility, in opposition to the vices before warned against.

1 Peter 5:4

Ver. 4. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear,.... This is the encouraging motive and argument to engage the elders and pastors of churches to discharge their office faithfully, cheerfully, and in an humble manner: by "the chief Shepherd" is meant Christ, who may well be called so, since he is God's fellow, and in all respects equal with him, and is the Shepherd and Bishop of the souls of men; all other bishops, pastors, and elders, are under him; they receive their commissions from him to feed his lambs and sheep; are made pastors and overseers by him; and have their gifts, qualifying them for such offices, from him; and have their several flocks assigned unto them by him; and from him have they all the food with which they feed them, and are accountable to him for them, and the discharge of their office; so that Christ is the chief Shepherd, in the dignity of his person, he being God over all, blessed for ever; in his qualifications for his office, having all power, grace, and wisdom in him, to protect his flock, supply their wants, guide and direct them; and in the nature and number of his flock, being rational creatures, the souls of men, even elect men; and though they are, when compared with others, but a little flock, yet, considered by themselves, are a great number; and especially the general assembly will be, in comparison of the little bodies and societies of saints under pastors and teachers, of Christ's setting over them, with respect to whom, principally, he is called the chief Shepherd: the allusion is to the principal shepherd, whose own the sheep were, or, however, had the principal charge of them; who used to have others under him, to do the several things relating to the flocks he directed, and were called "little shepherds"; so Aben Ezra says {s}, it was customary for the shepherd to have under him
Mynjq Myewr, "little shepherds": the same perhaps with the hirelings, whose own the sheep are not, Joh 10:12 who are retained, or removed, according to their behaviour; these, in the Talmudic language, are called ylzrb {t}, or ylzrk; though, according to Guido {u}, the word, pronounced in the latter way, signifies a "chief shepherd", who takes care of men, and has other shepherds, servants under him; and such an one used to be called lwdgh hewrh, "the great", or "chief shepherd"; so Maimonides {w} says, it was the custom of shepherds to have servants under them, to whom they committed the flocks to keep; so that when lwdgh hewrh, "the chief shepherd", delivered to other shepherds what was under his care, these came in his room; and if there was any loss, the second shepherd, who was under the "chief shepherd", was obliged to make good the loss, and not the first shepherd, who was the chief shepherd; and to the same purpose says another of their commentators {x}; it is the custom of lwdgh hewrh, "the chief shepherd", to deliver (the flock) to the little shepherd that is under him; wherefore the shepherd that is under him is obliged to make good any loss: now, such a shepherd is Christ; he has others under him, whom he employs in feeding his sheep, and who are

accountable to him, and must give up their account when he appears: at present he is out of the bodily sight of men, being received up to heaven, where he will be retained till the time of the restitution of all things; and then he will appear a second time in great glory, in his own, and in his Father's, and in the glory of his holy angels: and when he thus appears,

ye shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away; in distinction from those crowns which were given to the conqueror, in the Olympic games; which were made of divers flowers, of the olive, wild olive, pine tree, and of parsley, and inserted in a branch of the wild olive tree {y} and which quickly faded away; or in allusion to crowns made of amaranthus {z}, the plant "everlasting", so called, from the nature of it, because it never fades: the eternal glory and happiness, which is here meant by a crown of glory, or a glorious crown, never fades away, but ever shines in its full lustre; and this faithful ministers shall receive at the hands of the chief Shepherd, as a gift of his, as a reward of grace; when they have finished their work, they will enter into the joy of their Lord, and shine as the stars for ever and ever; they shall reign with Christ, as kings, on a throne of glory, wearing a crown of glory, and enjoying a kingdom and glory to all eternity.

{s} Comment. in Zech. xi. 8. {t} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 56. 2. {u} Dictionar. Syr. Chald. p. 102. {w} In Misn. Bava Kama, c. 6. sect. 2. {x} Bartenora in Misn. Bava Kama, c. 6. sect. 2. {y} Vide Paschalium de Coronis, l. 6. c. 1. p. 339. c. 16. p. 391. c. 18. p. 399. c. 19. p. 413. {z} Ib. l. 3. c. 11. p. 178.

1 Peter 5:5

Ver. 5. Likewise ye younger,.... Not in office, as if inferior officers to bishops were here intended, who ought to be subject to them; for elders and pastors are the same with them, nor is there any other office but that of deacons; nor younger pastors and overseers, such an one as Timothy was; not but that a deference is to be paid, and proper respect had to such who are of greater age, and longer standing and experience, by younger brethren in the ministry; nor such as are only younger in years, who ought to rise up unto, and honour hoary hairs, which may be done where subjection is not required, as here; nor such as are young in grace and experience, since there are little children, young men, and fathers in the church; but all the members of churches in common are here intended, as distinguished from their officers; for as pastors and overseers were, for the most part, chosen from among those that were senior in age, so the members generally consisted of the younger sort; and besides, as it was usual to call chief men and rulers, whether in church or state, fathers, so those that were subjects, the younger; see Lu 21:26. These the apostle exhorts as follows,

submit yourselves unto the elder; not merely in age, but in office, as before; for as he had exhorted the elders to a discharge of their work and office, he proceeds, in the next place, and which is signified by the word "likewise", to stir up the members of the churches to their duty to their elders, or pastors, who had the oversight of them; and that is to "submit" themselves to them, as in

Heb 13:17, which is done by attending constantly on the word preached by them, and receiving it, so far as it agrees with the Scriptures of truth; and by joining with them in all the ordinances of Christ, and their administrations of them; by being subject to the laws of Christ's house, as put in execution by them; by taking their counsel and advice, regarding and hearkening to their admonitions and reproofs, and taking them in good part, looking upon them, and behaving towards them, as their spiritual guides and governors. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "to your elders"; such as were particularly set over them in the Lord, and had taken the care of them, for to no others are they obliged to submit themselves.

Yea, all [of you] be subject one to another; that is, all the members of the churches should not only submit themselves to their pastors, but to their fellow members, as in **Eph 5:21**, they should submit to the superior judgments of one another, esteeming each other better than themselves, and not be tenacious of their own way of thinking and judging of things; yea, condescend to men of low estates and weaker minds, bear the infirmities of the weak, and take all admonitions and reproofs given in a friendly manner kindly; and cheerfully perform all offices of love, and by it serve one another in things temporal and spiritual; doing the meanest services for the good of each other, such as washing the feet of one another, in imitation of their Lord and master.

And be clothed with humility; without which there will be no subjection, either to the elders, or one another. This is a grace which shows itself in a man's thinking and speaking the best of others, and the worst of himself; in not affecting places and titles of eminence; in being content with the lowest place, and patiently bearing the greatest contempt; in not aspiring to things too high for him, always acknowledging his own meanness, baseness, and unworthiness, ascribing all he is, and has, to the grace and goodness of God, whether it be gifts of nature, providence, or grace: and this is a believer's clothing, not the robe of his justifying righteousness before God, but is a considerable part of his inward garment of sanctification, which is in the sight of God of great price; and makes a large show in his outward conversation garments before men, and renders him lovely and amiable: it is an ornament to him, which is precious with God, and recommends him to the esteem of men, and the religion and Gospel he professes, and his profession of it. Some think there is a metaphor in the words, taken from knots of ribbons, and such like things, wore by women on their heads, or breasts, for ornament; and that the apostle's advice to the saints is, that their breast knot, or ornament, should be humility. Others think it is taken from a sort of badge which servants wore over their garments, by which they were distinguished; and so saints are directed to put on this badge, by which they may be known to be the servants of Christ: the former seems more agreeable: but as the word signifies to bind, or fasten anything, by tying of knots, it may denote the retaining of this grace in constant exercise, so as never to be without it; and to be clothed or covered with it, is always to have it on, and in exercise, in every action of life, in all our deportment before God and men, in all public and religious worship, and throughout the whole of our conversation, in the family, in the world, or in the church. The phrase seems to be Jewish, and is to be met with in the writings of the Jews. It is said {a}, "he that has fear, hwneb vbltnw, "and is clothed with humility"; humility is the most excellent, and is comprehended in all, as it is said, Pr 22:4. He who has the fear of God is worthy of humility, and everyone that hath humility is worthy of kindness or holiness."

And it is a saying of R. Meir {b},

"he that loves God loves men; he that makes God glad makes men glad; and it (the law) hwne wtvblm, "clothes him with humility and fear"."

For he resisteth the proud; or "scorneth the scorners", as it is in **Pr 3:34**, from whence these words are taken: the Lord treats them as they treat others; as they despise all other men and things, he despises them; he is above them, in that they have dealt proudly, and has them in derision; he eludes all their artifices, and frustrates their schemes, and disappoints their ambitious views, and scatters them in the imagination of their hearts, and brings their counsels to confusion, and opposes himself to them, and as their adversary; and a dreadful thing it is for persons to have God stand up against them, and resist them. This is a reason dissuading from pride, and exciting to humility, as is also what follows: and giveth grace to the humble; that is, more grace; see **Jas 4:6**. The first grace cannot be intended, for no man is truly humble before he has received the grace of God, it is that which makes him so; or it may design larger gifts of grace, which God bestows on those who acknowledge him to be the author and giver of what they have, and who make a proper use of them to his glory; when he takes away from the vain and ostentatious that which to themselves and others they seemed to have. Moreover, God grants his gracious presence to such as are of an humble, and of a contrite spirit; and at last he gives them glory, which is a free grace gift, and the perfection of grace; the poor in spirit, or humble souls, have both a right and meetness for, and shall enjoy the kingdom of heaven.

{a} Zohar in Numb. fol. 60. 3. {b} Pirke Abot, c. 6. sect. 1.

1 Peter 5:6

Ver. 6. Humble yourselves therefore,.... Or be ye humbled before God, and in his sight; quietly submit to his will; patiently bear every affliction without murmuring, repining, or replying against him; be still under the rod, and despise not the chastening of the Lord; mourn over sin as the cause, acknowledge your vileness and unworthiness, and stand in awe of his majesty, considering yourselves as

under the mighty hand of God a phrase expressive of his omnipotence which cannot be stayed, and it would be madness to oppose it; and which is able to cast down the proud, and dash them to pieces, as well as to exalt the humble. His hand, upon men, in a way of chastisement, presses sore, and, in a way of punishment, presses down, and crushes to pieces; but to be under it in an humble manner is safe and profitable; such are hid as in the hollow of his hand, and are safe as in a pavilion, and comfortable under the shadow of his wings; and such humiliation and submission to him, and putting themselves under his mighty hand and care, is the way to exaltation:

that he may exalt you in due time: the Arabic version reads, "in the time of exaltation": when his time to exalt is come, either in this world, or more especially at the appearance of Christ and his kingdom. The Vulgate Latin version, and two copies of Beza's, one of Stephens's, and the Alexandrian, read, "in the time of visitation"; and so the Ethiopic version, "when he shall have visited you"; which seems to be taken out of **1Pe 2:12** sooner or later such who are humbled shall be exalted; it is the usual way and method which God takes to abase the proud, and exalt the humble; for humble souls honour him, and therefore such as honour him he will honour; and this he does in his own time, in a time that makes most for his glory, and their good; oftentimes he does it in this life, and always in that which is to come.

1 Peter 5:7

Ver. 7. Casting all your care upon him,.... "Upon God": as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read. The words are taken out of, or at least refer to Ps 55:22, where, instead of "cast thy burden upon the Lord", the Septuagint have it, "cast thy care upon the Lord"; the care of the body, and of all the affairs of life, concerning which saints should not be anxiously thoughtful, but depend upon the providence of God, though in the diligent use of means, which is not forbidden, nor discouraged by this, or any such like exhortation; as also the care of the soul, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of it, which should be committed into the hands of Christ, on whom help is laid, and who is become the author of eternal salvation; nor should this slacken and make persons negligent in the use of means, for the good, comfort, and advantage of their souls:

for he careth for you; for the bodies of his people, and their outward concerns of life, for food and raiment for them, and for the preservation of them, who will not suffer them to want, nor withhold any good thing from them, or ever leave them and forsake them; and for their souls, for which he has made provision in his Son, and in the covenant of his grace has laid help upon a mighty Saviour; and who has obtained an eternal redemption for them, bestows his grace upon them, and gives every needful supply of it to them, and keeps them by his power through faith unto salvation.

1 Peter 5:8

Ver. 8. Be sober, be vigilant,.... The apostle had exhorted to each of these before; see **1Pe 1:13** but thought fit to repeat them; sobriety and watchfulness being exceeding necessary and useful in the Christian life; and the one cannot well be without the other: unless a man is sober in body and mind, he will not be watchful, either over himself or others, or against the snares of sin, Satan, and the world; and if he is not on his watch and guard, he is liable to every sin and temptation. The Syriac version renders the words, "watch", and "be ye mindful", or "remember"; watch with diligence, care, and industry, keeping a good lookout, minding and observing everything that presents, and remembering the power and cunning of the enemy; and the Ethiopic version renders them thus, "be ye prudent, and cause your heart to understand"; referring them not to temperance of body, but sobriety of mind, and to a prudent conduct and behaviour, as having a subtle as well as a malicious enemy to deal with:

because your adversary the devil; he who is a defamer and calumniator; who accuses God to men, and men to God, and is therefore styled the accuser of the brethren; he is the saints' avowed and implacable enemy. Satan is an enemy to mankind in general, but more especially to the seed of the woman, to Christ personal, and to Christ mystical, to all the elect of God: the word here used is a forensic term, and signifies a court adversary, or one that litigates a point in law, or opposes another in an action or suit at law. The Jews {c} have adopted this word into their language, and explain it by Nyd leb, "a law adversary", or one that has a suit of law depending against another. Satan accuses men of the breach of the law, and pleads that justice might take place, and punishment be inflicted, and which he pursues with great violence and diligence:

as a roaring lion; so called, both on account of his strength, and also because of his rage, malice, and cruelty, which he breathes out against the saints, who, though he cannot destroy them, will do all he can to terrify and affright them; so the young lions in Ps 104:21 are, by the Cabalistic Jews {d}, understood of devils; to which, for the above reasons, they may be truly compared:

walketh about; to and fro in the earth; see **Job 1:7** as a lion runs about here and there, when almost famished with hunger; and it also denotes the insidious methods, wiles, and stratagems Satan takes to surprise men, and get an advantage of them: he takes a tour, and comes round upon them, upon the back of them, at an unawares, so that they have need to be always sober, and upon their guard:

seeking whom he may devour; this is the end of his walking about: and the like is expressed in the Targum on **Job 1:7**

"and Satan answered before the Lord, and said, from going about in the earth ydbweb qdbml, "to search into the works" of the children of men, and from walking in it;"

that so he might have something to accuse them of, and they fall a prey into his hands. This is the work he is continually employed in; he is always seeking to do mischief, either to the souls, or bodies, or estates of men, especially the former; though he can do nothing in either respect without a permission, not unless he "may"; and though this, with respect to body and estate, is sometimes granted, as in the case of Job, yet never with respect to the souls of any of God's elect, which are safe in Christ's hands, and out of his reach; this hinders not but that saints should be sober and watchful.

{c} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 41. 4. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 82. fol. 41. 4. & Jarchi & Aruch in Mattanot Cehuna in ib. {d} Lex. Cabal. p. 231, 417.

1 Peter 5:9

Ver. 9. Whom resist,.... By no means give way to him, by indulging any sin, or yielding to any temptation, but oppose him, and stand against his wiles, his cunning and his power:

steadfast in the faith; both in the doctrine of faith, which Satan endeavours to remove from, or cause to stagger in; and in the grace of faith, exercising it on the promises of God, and his perfections, particularly his power and faithfulness concerned in them, and in the blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and person of Christ, which faith is capable of making use of, as a shield, to good purpose, against all the fiery darts of Satan; as also in a profession of faith, which, as it should be held fast without wavering, and which the devil is very busy to keep persons from making, or to cause them to drop it when they have made it, by violent suggestions, strong temptations, and a flood of reproaches and persecutions; all which should be disregarded:

knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world; and therefore should not be surprised and staggered by them, nor think them strange, but endure them without murmuring, and with patience and cheerfulness; since they are the "same afflictions" and trials which others have been exercised with in all ages: the same which the fraternity, or "brotherhood", as the word signifies, see **1Pe 2:17** who stand in the same relation to God and Christ as they do, endure; yea, the same which Christ himself, who stands in this relation to them, has endured: and which must be expected while they are "in the world"; but this is the great mercy, that they are only endured in this world; there will be none in the world to come; they will be "accomplished" and finished here; and every believer has his measure, which must be filled up; and so has the whole of Christ, his church, and when they are fulfil they will be no more.

1 Peter 5:10

Ver. 10. But the God of all grace,.... Who has riches of grace, an immense plenty of it in himself, has treasured up a fulness of grace in his Son; is the author of all the blessings of grace, of electing, adopting, justifying, pardoning, and regenerating grace; and is the giver of the several graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, love, repentance, &c. and of all the supplies of grace; and by this character is God the Father described as the object of prayer, to encourage souls to come to the throne of his grace, and pray, and hope for, and expect a sufficiency of his grace in every time of need; as well as to show that the sufferings of the saints here are but for a while; that they are in love and kindness; and that they shall certainly enjoy the glory they are called unto by him; and which is the next thing by which he stands described,

who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ. This "call" is not a mere external one by the ministry of the word, which is not always effectual and unto salvation; but an internal, special, and efficacious one, and which is high, holy, heavenly, and unchangeable. The persons who are the subjects of it are us, whom God has chosen in Christ, and are preserved in him, and redeemed by him; and who are a select people, and distinguished from others, and yet in themselves no better than others; nay, often the vilest, meanest, and most contemptible. Some ancient copies read "you", and so do the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: what they are called to is "his eternal glory"; that which is glorious in itself, and is signified by what is the most glorious in this world, as a kingdom, crown, throne, inheritance, &c. and lies in constant and uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit; in a complete vision of the glory of Christ, and in perfect conformity to him; in a freedom from all evil, and in a full enjoyment of all happiness: and this is "his", God the Father's; which he has prepared and provided for his people of his own grace, and which he freely gives unto them, and makes them meet for: and it is "eternal"; it will last for ever, and never pass away, as does the glory of this world; it is a continuing city, a never fading inheritance, an eternal weight of glory: and to this the saints are called "by", or "in Jesus Christ"; the glory they are called to is in his hands; and they themselves, by being called unto it, appear to be in him, and as such to belong unto him, or are the called of Christ Jesus; and besides, they are called by him, by his Spirit and grace, and into communion with him, and to the obtaining of his glory.

After that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you; some copies, and also the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read these words in the future tense, not as a prayer, but as a promise, "shall make you perfect", &c. the sense is the same; for if it is a prayer, it is a prayer in faith, for what shall be done; for God will make his people "perfect": and which respects not their justification; for in that sense they are perfect already in Christ, their head, who has perfectly fulfilled the law for them, and fully expiated their sins; has completely redeemed them, and procured for them the pardon of all their trespasses; and has justified them from all their iniquities: but their sanctification; for though all grace is implanted in them at once, yet it is gradually brought to perfection; there is a perfection of parts, of all the parts of the new man, or creature, but not of degrees; and there is a comparative perfection with respect to themselves, before conversion, or with respect to hypocrites; for perfection oftentimes means no other than integrity and sincerity; or with respect to other Christians, who are weaker in knowledge and experience: and there is a perfection of holiness in Christ, who is their sanctification, but not in themselves; for every part of the work of grace is imperfect, as faith, love, knowledge, &c. and sin dwells in them, and they stand in need of fresh supplies of grace; and even the best of them disclaim perfection, though they greatly desire it, as here the apostle prays for it; and which shows that, as yet, they had it not, though they will have it hereafter in heaven, where there will be perfect knowledge, and perfect holiness, and perfect happiness. He also prays that God would "stablish" them, or believes and promises that he would. The people of God are in a safe and established state and condition already; they are in the arms of everlasting love, and in the hands of Christ, and in a sure and inviolable covenant of grace, and are built on the rock of ages; and are in a state of grace, of justifying, adopting, and sanctifying grace, from whence they can never finally and totally fall; and yet they are very often unstable in their hearts and frames, and in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, and in their adherence to the doctrines of the Gospel; and need to be established, and to have a more firm persuasion of their interest in the love of God, and a more steady view of their standing in Christ, and the covenant of his grace, and a more lively and comfortable exercise grace on him, and a more constant discharge of duty, and a more firm and closer adherence to the truths and ordinances of the Gospel; and they will have a consummate stability in heaven, where are sure dwelling places. Another petition, or promise, is, that God would "strengthen" them; which supposes them to be weak and feeble, not as to their state and condition, for their place of defence is the munition of rocks; nor in the same sense as natural men are, or as they themselves were before conversion; nor are they all alike weak, some are weaker in faith and knowledge, and of a more weak and scrupulous conscience than others, and are more easily drawn aside by corruptions and temptations, and are in greater afflictions: and this is to be understood, not of bodily, but spiritual strength; that God would strengthen their souls, and the work of his grace in them, their faith, hope, and love; and strengthen them to perform their duties, to withstand temptations, oppose their own corruptions, bear the cross, reproaches, and persecutions, and do their generation work: and he further adds, and "settle" you, or "found" you; not that God would now lay the foundation, Christ, for he had been laid by him ready in his counsels and decrees, and in the covenant of his grace, in the mission of him into this world, and by his Spirit in their hearts; nor that he would afresh lay them on Christ, the foundation, for they were there laid already, and were safe; but that he would build them up, and settle their faith on this foundation, that they might be rooted and grounded in the love of God, have a lively sense and firm persuasion of their interest in it, and be grounded and settled in the faith of the Gospel; be settled under a Gospel ministry, have a fixed abode in the house of God, enjoy the spiritual provisions of it, and have fellowship with Christ, and his people here; and at last enter and dwell in the city which has foundations, where they will be never more subject to wavering, instability, and inconstancy, and from whence they will never be removed; this will be their last and eternal settlement: and this will be "after" they have "suffered awhile"; in their bodies, characters, and estates, through the malice and wickedness of men; and in their souls, from their own corruptions, the temptations of Satan, and the hidings of God's face; which will be but for a very little while, for a moment, as it were; these are only the sufferings of this present time, and in the present evil world; nor are they inconsistent with God being the God of all grace unto them, or with their being called to eternal glory, the way to which lies through them; and they are the means of perfecting, establishing, strengthening, and settling them.

1 Peter 5:11

Ver. 11. To him be glory, and dominion, for ever and ever, Amen. The Syriac version begins this doxology in the preceding verse, reading the words thus, "to the God of grace", and then putting what follows, "who hath called us", &c. into a parenthesis, connects them with these, "be glory, and power, and honour", &c. "glory" is due to God for all the grace he bestows on men; and to give it to him shows a sense of divine goodness, and a grateful heart; and to him very fitly is "dominion" ascribed, whose kingdom rules over all, and who dispenses his grace, as well as his providential favours, in a sovereign way; and whom the saints are in a peculiar manner under obligation to obey; to which is added, "Amen", signifying that so the apostle prayed it might be, and believed it would be.

1 Peter 5:12

Ver. 12. By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you,.... Silvanus is the same with Silas, so often mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, as a companion of the Apostle Paul; whom Peter met with in his travels, and sent this letter by him, or used him as his amanuensis, or both: his character is, that he was "a faithful brother" to those persons to whom this epistle is written; that is, he was a faithful minister of the Gospel to them, who with great sincerity and integrity preached the word unto them, as the apostle was well informed, and had reason to believe; for what follows,

as I suppose, does not suggest any doubt of it, but, on the contrary, a firm belief; for the word used signifies to repute, to reckon, to conclude a thing upon the best and strongest reasons; though some connect this phrase, as that "also unto you", with the following clause,

I have written briefly; as does the Syriac version, which renders the whole thus, "these few things, as I think, I have written unto you, by Silvanus, a faithful brother"; and then the sense is, this short epistle, as in my opinion it is, I have wrote and sent to you by Silvanus, who is faithful and upright, as a brother, a minister, and a messenger. The Arabic version seems to refer the above clause, "as I suppose", neither to the character of Silvanus, nor to the brevity of the epistle, but to the matter of it, rendering it thus, "these things, in a few words, I have written unto you, according to my sense"; according to my judgment and reason, as I think, by which you will see and know my real sentiments and thoughts of things; for what I have written is according to the best of my understanding and knowledge:

exhorting, and testifying, that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand; or "have stood", and still continue to do so: the Syriac version renders it, "I am persuaded and testify"; expressing his great confidence and assurance, that the Gospel of the grace of God, which springs from the grace of God, is full of it, and declares it, and which he had delivered in this epistle, and they had formerly received, and had stood fast in, and abode by, was the true Gospel. The Arabic version gives another sense, rendering the words thus, "entreating and beseeching, that this grace of God, in which ye stand, may be true and firm"; that is, that ye may still continue truly to embrace and profess it, and firmly abide by it; though the meaning rather is, that the apostle bears a testimony to the truth of the Gospel, and of the Christian religion, as held and professed by them with constancy hitherto; and exhorts them unto the consideration of the truth of it, which might be depended upon, to cleave unto it with full purpose of heart.

1 Peter 5:13

Ver. 13. The church that is at Babylon,.... The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, supply the word "church", as we do. Some, by "Babylon", understand Rome, which is so called, in a figurative sense, in the book of the Revelations: this is an ancient opinion; so Papias understood it, as {e} Eusebius relates; but that Peter was at Rome, when he wrote this epistle, cannot be proved, nor any reason be given why the proper name of the place should be concealed, and a figurative one expressed. It is best therefore to understand it literally, of Babylon in Assyria, the metropolis of the dispersion of the Jews, and the centre of it, to whom the apostle wrote; and where, as the minister of the circumcision, he may be thought to reside, here being a number of persons converted and formed into a Gospel church state, whereby was fulfilled the prophecy in Ps 87:4 perhaps this church might consist chiefly of Jews, which might be the reason of the apostle's being here, since there were great numbers which continued here, from the time of the captivity, who returned not with Ezra; and these are said by the Jews {f} to be of the purest blood: many of the Jewish doctors lived here; they had three famous universities in this country, and here their Talmud was written, called from hence {g} Babylonian. The church in this place is said to be

elected together with you; that is, were chosen together with them in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to grace here, and glory hereafter; or were equally the elect of God as they were, for as such he writes to them, **1Pe 1:2** and this the apostle said in a judgment of charity of the whole church, and all the members of it, being under a profession of faith in Christ; and nothing appearing to the contrary, but that their faith was unfeigned, and their profession right and sincere. This Church, he says,

saluteth you; wishes all peace, happiness, and prosperity of every kind,

and so doth Marcus, my son; either, in a natural sense, his son according to the flesh; since it is certain Peter had a wife, and might have a son, and one of this name: or rather in a spiritual sense, being one that he was either an instrument of converting him, or of instructing him, or was one that was as dear to him as a son; in like manner as the Apostle Paul calls Timothy, and also Titus, his own son. This seems to be Mark the evangelist, who was called John Mark, was Barnabas's sister's son, and his mother's name was Mary; see **Col 4:10**. He is said {h} to be the interpreter of Peter, and to have wrote his Gospel from what he heard from him; and who approved of it, and confirmed it, and indeed it is said to be his.

{e} Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 15. {f} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 69. 2. & 71. 2. & Gloss. in ib. {g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 24. 1. {h} Papias apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 39. Tertullian. adv. Marcion, l. 4. c. 5. Hieron. Catalog. Script. Eccl. sect. 2. 18.

1 Peter 5:14

Ver. 14. Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity,.... The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, "with an holy kiss"; and so some copies, as in Ro 16:16 and elsewhere;

See Gill on "Ro 16:16"; and intends such a kiss, as is not only opposite to everything that is lascivious and impure, but is expressive of true love and affection, and is hearty and sincere: and such a love the Jews call, as the apostle does here, wmyxrd hqyvn, "a kiss of love" {i}; for as Philo the Jew {k} observes, a kiss and love differ, the one may be without the other, a mere compliment, a show of friendship, and not arise from sincere love.

Peace with you all, that are in Christ Jesus; who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and appeared to be in him by the effectual calling; and were at least by profession in him, and were in Christ mystical, and incorporated in a Gospel church; the Arabic version reads, "who are in the love of Jesus Christ". To these the apostle wishes peace, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. The Vulgate Latin reads "grace", which is most usual in Paul's epistles. The epistle is closed with

Amen, as is common; the apostle wishing that this might be the case, and believing that it would be.

{i} Zohar in Exod. fol. 60. 3, 4. {k} Quis rerum divin. Haeres. p. 486, 487.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Peter 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO II PETER

Though there was, among the ancients, a doubt concerning the authority of this epistle, which is first mentioned by Origen {a}, and afterwards by Eusebius {b} and Jerom {c}, yet it prevailed not among the churches, nor hindered the diligent reading and use of it, together with other Scriptures; it appearing to be useful and profitable, as Eusebius declares; and in process of time this doubt was entirely removed, and it was universally received by fathers and councils into the canon of the Scriptures, where it is justly retained, it having plain signatures of its divine original. Nor is there anything in it unworthy of so great an apostle, whose name it bears; but the whole of it is agreeable to the analogy of faith, to the rest of the sacred writings, particularly to the epistle of Jude, between which, and the second chapter of this, there is a great likeness. The only reason of the doubt of the genuineness of this epistle, and whether it was written by the Apostle Peter, is the difference of its style from the former; but the Holy Ghost, the dictator of the sacred writings, is not limited to a man's natural style, but could vary it as he pleased: besides, a man's style is not the same at different times, and when writing on different subjects; add to which, that this objection can only regard the second chapter, for the first and third agree with the former epistle. And some have thought that the second chapter is an extract out of some ancient Hebrew book, describing the characters of the old false prophets; which book Peter and Jude having before them, took the characters of the old prophets, and, under divine direction, applied them to the false teachers of the present age; and if so it is not to be wondered at that the style of the epistle should differ from the former, and even from itself in this part. But that it was written by the Apostle Peter, not only the inscription shows, which, if false, would indeed discredit the genuineness of the book, but the account that is given of the writer of it, as one that was with Christ at his transfiguration, **2Pe 1:16**. Now there were only the three following disciples there, Peter, John, and, James. The last of these had been dead some time when this epistle was written, and it was never ascribed by any to the Apostle John, and therefore it remains that Peter must be the writer of it. As for Simeon, bishop of Jerusalem, that succeeded James, whom Grotius would suggest as the author of it, the character does not agree with him; he was not with Christ on the holy mount, nor heard the voice from heaven, asserting the sonship of Christ, and the divine complacency in him: moreover, this epistle is called a "second epistle", **2Pe 3:1** and supposes a first, and manifestly refers to the former epistle of Peter's, about which there never was any doubt, as the authors before mentioned observe. It was written by the apostle in his old age, when upon the decline of life, just as he was about to put off his tabernacle, **2Pe 1:13** a little before his martyrdom, in the year 68, though Dr. Lightfoot places it in 66; and it is sent to the same persons as his first, namely, to the believing Jews scattered throughout several parts of Asia, he being the minister of the circumcision; see **1Pe 1:1** compared with **2Pe 3:1**. The scope and design of it are, to put them upon a concern for a larger increase of grace and spiritual knowledge; to confirm and establish them in the present truth of the Gospel; to warn them against false teachers, which he largely describes; and he puts them in mind of the dissolution of all things, and of what will precede and follow it; from whence he draws several useful hints and inferences.

{a} Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 25. {b} Ib. l. 3. c. 3. 25. {c} Catalog Script. Eccles. sect. 2.

INTRODUCTION TO II PETER 1

In this chapter, after the inscription and salutation, the apostle takes notice of gifts of grace bestowed; and exhorts to the exercise of holiness and good works; and gives the reasons why he was so pressing to them; and endeavours to establish the saints in the Gospel that had been preached among them. In the inscription, the writer of the epistle describes himself by his names, the one given him by his parents, the other by his Lord and master, and by his character and office; and the persons to whom he writes are described as having faith, and that of the same kind with the apostles, and which they obtained through the righteousness of Christ, **2Pe 1:1**. The salutation is the same with that in the former epistle, only here is added a wish for an increase of divine knowledge, **2Pe 1:2** and which might be expected, since, by the power of living grace, everything necessary to a spiritual and godly life bad been given them in the effectual calling, through the knowledge of Christ; even exceeding great and precious promises, whereby they partook of the divine nature, and escaped the vices which prevailed in the world, **2Pe 1:3** upon which he exhorts not to rest where they were, but to go on in the exercise of grace, and performance of duties, many of which he enumerates, **2Pe 1:5** to enforce which he adds several arguments, as that through an abounding in these things they would appear not to have a superficial and speculative knowledge of Christ, **2Pe 1:8** or otherwise it would be evident that they were blind and ignorant, and in an unrenewed state, **2Pe 1:9** whereas by these things they would make their calling and election sure and manifest to men, and would never fall totally and finally, and in the issue have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Christ, **2Pe 1:10** and then he gives the reasons of his conduct, why he so much urged a regard to these things, and put them in mind of them; namely, the usefulness of them for their establishment, the duty of his office, which required it, the short time he had to live, and the profitableness of such exhortations to them, after his decease, **2Pe 1:12** and in order to establish them in the truths of the Gospel, and particularly in that which concerns the coming of Christ in power and glory, on which he enlarges in the latter part of this epistle; he observes, that this was not a cunningly devised fable, but was what he and others were eyewitnesses of, even of that which was an emblem and pledge of it; namely, the transfiguration of Christ on the mount, when they saw the glory he received from God his Father, and heard the voice from heaven which declared him to be his well beloved Son, **2Pe 1:16**, and besides, they had a surer proof of the certainty of his coming; namely, the prophecies concerning it, which should be regarded and given heed to, being as a lamp to direct in the present state of darkness and imperfection, until the illustrious day of Christ's coming appears, **2Pe 1:19** and the rather this should be attended to, since no scriptural prophecy is an invention and device of men; nor was it formerly given out at the pleasure of men, but by saints, who were influenced and moved unto it by the Holy Ghost, **2Pe 1:20**.

Ver. 1. Simon Peter, a servant, and an apostle of Jesus Christ,.... The writer of this epistle is described first by his names, Simon Peter; the first of these was the name by which he was called from his infancy by his parents, and by which he was known when Christ called him to be a disciple and follower of him, and is the same with Simeon; and so it is read in most copies; see Ac 15:14 a name common with the Jews; the latter is what was given him by Christ at his conversion, **Joh 1:4**, and answers to Cephas in the Syriac language; and both signify a rock or stone, because he was built upon Christ, the rock and foundation, and chief corner stone, and with a view to his future solidity, firmness, and constancy: and he is next described by his character as a servant, not of sin, nor Satan, nor man, but Jesus Christ, whose servant he was, not only by creation, but by redemption and grace; and not merely a servant of his, in common with other believers, but in a ministerial way, as a preacher of the Gospel, which this phrase sometimes designs. The use of it shows the apostle's humility, his sense of obligation to Christ, and acknowledgment of him as his Lord, and that he esteemed it an honour to stand in such a relation to him: but to distinguish him from a common servant of Christ, and an ordinary minister of the word, it is added, "an apostle of Jesus Christ": one that was immediately sent by Christ, had his commission and doctrine directly from him, and a power of working miracles, in confirmation of his mission and ministry being divine, and an authority at large to go everywhere and preach the Gospel, plant churches, and put them in due order, and place proper persons over them. This is said to give weight and authority to his epistle: and further, in this inscription of the epistle, the persons are described to whom it is written, as follows,

to them that have obtained like precious faith with us; they were believers in Christ, who had a faith of the right kind; not a faith of doing miracles, which was not common to all, nor was it saving; nor an historical faith, or a mere assent to truths, nor a temporary one, or a bare profession of faith; but that faith which is the faith of God's elect, the gift of his grace, and the operation of his power; which sees the Son, goes to him, ventures on him, trusts in him, lives upon him, and works by love to him. This is said to be "precious", as it is in its own nature, being a rich and enriching grace, of more worth and value than gold that perisheth, or than thousands of gold and silver; it is not to be equalled by, nor purchased with the riches of the whole world; it is precious in its object, it being conversant with the precious person, precious blood, and precious righteousness and sacrifice of Christ, and is that grace which makes Christ, and all that is his, precious to souls; it is precious in its acts and usefulness; it is that grace by which men go to God and Christ, receive from them, and give all glory to them, and without which it is not possible to please God: to which add the durableness of it; it is an abiding grace, and will never fail, when the most precious things in nature do: and it is "like precious" with that the apostles had; for there is but one faith, and which is called a common faith, even common to all the elect; and which is the same in all, not as to degrees, for in some it is strong, and in others weak; or as to the actings of it, which are not in all alike, nor in the same persons at all times; in some it is only a seeing of the Son, his glory, fulness, and suitableness, and longing for views of an interest in him; in others a reliance on him, and trusting in him; and in others a holy confidence, and full assurance of being his: but then it is alike with respect to its nature, as it is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; and as it works by love to Christ and his people; it springs from the same cause, the love and favour of God, and has the same object, Jesus Christ, and is followed with the salvation; for though it is but as a grain of mustard seed, yet, being genuine, the person that has it shall certainly be saved: wherefore, for the comfort and encouragement of these scattered believers, the apostle assures them, that their faith was the same as their brethren that dwelt at Jerusalem and in Judea, who believed in Christ, and even with them that were the apostles of Christ; and this he says they had obtained, not by their own merits or industry, but by the grace of God; for faith is not of a man's self, it is the gift of God, and the produce of his grace and power. Some have rendered it, "obtained by lot"; not by chance, but by the all wise, good, and powerful providence of God, ordering, directing, assigning, and giving this grace unto them. And which came to them

through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; or "of our God, and Saviour Jesus Christ", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; that is, of Christ Jesus, who is our God and Saviour: so that here is a testimony of the deity of Christ, as well as of his character as a Saviour, who is an able and a willing one, a full, complete, suitable, and only Saviour: and the reason why he is so is because he is truly and properly "God"; and why he is so to us, because he is "our" God: wherefore by "righteousness" here, cannot be meant the goodness and mercy of God, as some think, though faith undoubtedly comes through that; nor the faithfulness of God making good his purpose and promise of giving faith to his elect, as others think: but the righteousness of Christ, which is not the righteousness of a creature, but of God; that is wrought out by one that is God, as well as man, and so answerable to all the purposes for which it is brought in. Now faith comes "in", or "with" this righteousness, as the phrase may be rendered; when the Spirit of God reveals and brings near this righteousness to a poor sensible sinner, he at the same time works faith in him to look to it, lay hold upon it, and plead it as his justifying righteousness with God: or it comes "through" it; hence it appears that faith and righteousness are two distinct things; and that faith is not a man's righteousness before God, for it comes to him through it; as also that righteousness is before faith, or otherwise faith could not come by it; and, moreover, is the cause and reason of it; faith has no causal influence upon righteousness, but righteousness has upon faith: the reason why a man has a justifying righteousness is not because he has faith; but the reason why he has faith given him is because he has a justifying righteousness provided for him, and imputed to him.

2 Peter 1:2

Ver. 2. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you,.... By a multiplication of grace may be meant a larger discovery of the love and favour of God; which though it admits of no degrees in itself, being never more or less in God's heart, yet, as to the manifestations of it, it is different, and capable of being increased, and drawn out to a greater length; or else an increase of the internal graces of the Spirit of God, as to the actings and exercise of them; or a larger measure of the gifts of the Spirit, for greater usefulness among them; or a clearer view, and a more enlarged knowledge of the Gospel of the grace of God, and the truths of it; and indeed, the word grace may take in all these senses: and by a multiplication of peace, which the apostle in this salutation also wishes for, may be designed an affluence of all kind of prosperity, temporal, and spiritual, external and internal; and more especially an increase of spiritual peace, a fulness of joy and peace in believing, arising from a sense of free justification by Christ's righteousness, and full pardon and atonement by his blood and sacrifice:

through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord; which is to be understood, not of a natural, but of a spiritual and evangelical knowledge; of a knowledge of God, not as the God of nature and providence, but as the God of all grace, as in Christ, and a covenant God in him, and of the person, offices, and grace of Christ; and which designs true faith in him, by which means larger discoveries of the grace of God are made, and a greater enjoyment of spiritual peace is had: or it may be rendered, "with the knowledge of God", &c. and the sense then is, that the apostle prays, as for a multiplication of grace and peace, so along with it, an increase of spiritual and evangelical knowledge; which in the best is imperfect, but may be increased by the blessing of God on those means which he has appointed for that end, such as the word and ordinances. The Syriac version renders this clause, "through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ", leaving out the word "God", and the copulative "and", and adding the word "Christ"; and the Ethiopic version reads, "in the knowledge of our God, Christ Jesus our Lord", without any distinction. After the inscription and salutation begins the epistle, with an account of various special favours bestowed upon these persons; and are mentioned by the apostle to encourage his faith and theirs, in expectation of enjoying what he here wishes unto them, since already such great and good things had been bestowed upon them.

2 Peter 1:3

Ver. 3. According as his divine power,.... Meaning either the power of God the Father, to whom belong eternal power and Godhead; and he is sometimes called by the name of power itself; see Mt 26:64 being all powerful and mighty; or rather the power of Christ, since he is the next and immediate antecedent to this relative; and who, as he has the fulness of the Godhead in him, is almighty, and can do all things; and is "El-shaddai", God all-sufficient, and can communicate all things whatsoever he pleases, and does, as follows: for he

hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness; referring not so much to a temporal life, though he gives that and preserves it, and furnishes with all the mercies and comforts of it; and which come to us, from him, in a covenant way, as his left hand blessings, and in great love; but rather a spiritual life, which he is the author and maintainer of, all the joys, pleasures, blessings, and supports of it, being given by him; as also eternal life, for that, and everything appertaining to it, are from him; he gives a meetness for it, which is his own grace, and a right unto it, which is his own righteousness; and he has power to give that itself to as many as the Father has given him, and he does give it to them; and likewise all things belonging to "godliness", or internal religion; and which is the means of eternal life, and leads on to it, and is connected with it, and has the promise both of this life, and of that which is to come; and everything relating to it, or is in it, or it consists of, is from Christ: the internal graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, and love, which, when in exercise, are the principal parts of powerful godliness, are the gifts of Christ, are received out of his fulness, and of which he is the author and finisher; and he is the donor of all the fresh supplies of grace to maintain the inward power of religion, and to assist in the external exercise of it; all which things are given

through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. The call here spoken of is not a bare outward call, by the ministry of the word, but an internal, special, and powerful one, which springs from the grace, and is according to the purpose of God, and is inseparably connected with justification and glorification; and is either of God the Father, who, as the God of all grace, calls to eternal glory by Christ; or rather of Christ himself, who calls by his Spirit and grace; and hence the saints are sometimes styled, the called of Jesus Christ, **Ro 1:6** what they are called unto by him is, "glory and virtue"; by the former may be meant, the glorious state of the saints in the other world, and so answers to "life", eternal life, in the preceding clause; and by the latter, grace, and the spiritual blessings of grace here, and which answers to "godliness" in the said clause; for the saints are called both to grace and glory, and to the one, in order to the other. Some render it, "by glory and virtue"; and some copies, as the Alexandrian and others, and so the Vulgate Latin version, read, "by his own glory and virtue"; that is, by his glorious power, which makes the call as effectual, and is as illustrious a specimen of the glory of his power, as was the call of Lazarus out of the grave; unless the Gospel should rather be intended by glory and virtue, which is glorious in itself, and the power of God unto salvation, and is the means by which persons are called to the communion of Christ, and the obtaining of his glory: so then this phrase, "him that hath called us to glory and virtue", is a periphrasis of Christ, through a "knowledge" of whom, and which is not notional and speculative, but spiritual, experimental, fiducial, and practical, or along with such knowledge all the above things are given; for as God, in giving Christ, gives all things along with him, so the Spirit of Christ, which is a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, when he makes him known in the glory of his person, grace, and righteousness, also makes known the several things which are freely given of God and Christ: and this is what, among other things, makes the knowledge of Christ preferable to all other knowledge, or anything else.

Ver. 4. Whereby are given unto us,.... Or "by which", that is, glory and virtue; by the glorious power of Christ, or by the glorious and powerful Gospel of Christ; and so the Arabic version renders it, "by both of which"; or "by whom", as the Vulgate Latin version reads; that is, by Christ; for as in him are all the promises of God, so they are at his dispose, and by him are given unto the saints:

exceeding great and precious promises; meaning the promises of the new and everlasting covenant, of which Christ is the Mediator, surety, and messenger; and which are "exceeding great", if we consider the author of them, who is the great God of heaven and earth, and who was under no obligation to make promises of anything to his creatures; and therefore must arise from great grace and favour, of which they are largely expressive, and are like himself; are such as become his greatness and goodness, and are confirmed by his oath, and made good by his power and faithfulness: and they are also great, as to the nature and matter of them; they are better promises than those of the covenant of works; they are not merely temporal ones, nor are they conditional and legal; but as they relate to things spiritual and eternal, to grace here and glory hereafter, so they are absolute, free, and unconditional, and are irreversible and unchangeable; and they answer great ends and purposes, the glory of God, and the everlasting good and happiness of his people; and therefore must be "precious", of more value and worth than thousands of gold and silver, and to be rejoiced at more than at the finding of a great spoil, being every way suited to the cases of God's people, and which never fail. The end of giving them is,

that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature; not essentially, or of the essence of God, so as to be deified, this is impossible, for the nature, perfections, and glory of God, are incommunicable to creatures; nor, hypostatically and personally, so as the human nature of Christ, in union with the Son of God, is a partaker of the divine nature in him; but by way of resemblance and likeness, the new man or principle of grace, being formed in the heart in regeneration, after the image of God, and bearing a likeness to the image of his Son, and this is styled, Christ formed in the heart, into which image and likeness the saints are more and more changed, from glory to glory, through the application of the Gospel, and the promises of it, by which they have such sights of Christ as do transform them, and assimilate them to him; and which resemblance will be perfected hereafter, when they shall be entirely like him, and see him as he is:

having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust; not the corruption and depravity of nature, which is never escaped by any, nor got rid of so long as the saints are in the world; but the corrupt manners of the world, or those corruptions and vices which, are prevalent in the world, and under the power and dominion of which the world lies; and particularly the sins of uncleanness, adultery, incest, sodomy, and such like filthy and unnatural lusts, which abounded in the world, and among some that called themselves Christians, and especially the followers of Simon Magus. Now the Gospel, and the precious promises, being graciously bestowed and powerfully applied, have an influence on purity of heart and conversation, and teach men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly; such are the powerful effects of Gospel promises, under divine influence, as to make men inwardly partakers of the divine nature, and outwardly to abstain from and avoid the prevailing corruptions and vices of the times.

2 Peter 1:5

Ver. 5. And besides this, giving all diligence,.... "Or upon this", as the Syriac and Arabic versions read, bestow all your labour, diligence, and care; namely, on what follows, and that from the consideration of what goes before; for nothing can more strongly animate, and engage to the diligent exercise of grace and discharge of duty, than a consideration of the high favours, and free grace gifts of God, and the exceeding great and precious promises of his Gospel:

add to your faith virtue; or "with your faith", so the Arabic version renders it, and the like, in the following clauses. They had faith, even like precious faith with the apostles, not of themselves, but by the gift of God, and which is the first and principal grace; it leads the van, or rather the "chorus", as the word rendered "add" signifies; and though it is in itself imperfect, has many things lacking in it, yet it cannot be added to, or increased by men; ministers may be a means of perfecting what is lacking in it, and of the furtherance and joy of it, but it is the Lord only that can increase it, or add unto it in that sense, and which is not the meaning here: but the sense is, that as it is the basis and foundation of all good works, it should not stand alone, there ought to be virtue, or good works along with it, by which it may be perfected, not essentially, but evidentially, or might appear to be true and genuine; for by virtue may be either meant some particular virtue, as justice towards men, to which both the grace and doctrine of faith direct; and indeed pretensions to faith in Christ, where there is not common justice done to men, are of little account; or, as others think, beneficence to men; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "proceed to bounty by your faith"; and faith does work by love and kindness to fellow creatures and Christians; but this seems rather designed by brotherly kindness and charity, in **2Pe 1:7** or boldness, courage, constancy, and fortitude, which ought to go along with faith. Where there is true faith in Christ, there should be a holy boldness to profess it, and constancy in it, and courage to fight the good fight of faith, and firmness of mind to stand fast in it, notwithstanding all difficulties and discouragements; or virtue in general here meant, not mere moral, but Christian virtues, which are the fruits of the Spirit of God, and of his grace; and differ from the other, in that they spring from the grace of God, are done in faith, by the assistance of the Spirit of Christ, and by strength received from him, and in love to him, and with a view to the glory of God; whereas moral virtues, as exercised by a mere moral man, spring from nature, and are performed by the mere strength of it, and are destitute of faith, and so but "splendida peccata", splendid sins, and proceed from self-love, from sinister ends, and with selfish views:

and to virtue, knowledge; not of Christ, mentioned **2Pe 1:8** and which is included in faith, for there can be no true faith in Christ, were there not knowledge of him; but of the will of God, which it is necessary men should be acquainted with, in order to perform it; or else though they may seem zealous of good works, their zeal will not be according to knowledge; they ought to know what are virtues or good works in God's account, and what are the nature and use of them, lest they should mistake and misapply them; or of the Scriptures of truth, and of the mysteries of the Gospel, which should be diligently searched, for the increase and improvement of knowledge in divine things, and which has a considerable influence on a just, sober, and godly living; or by knowledge may be meant prudence and wisdom, in ordering the external conversation aright towards those that are without, and in showing good works out of it, to others, by way of example, and for the evidence of the truth of things, with meekness of wisdom.

Ver. 6. And to knowledge, temperance,.... Avoiding all excess in eating and drinking, and all impure and unclean lusts; for it signifies nothing what a man knows, or professes to know, if his life is a scene of intemperance and debauchery: this seems to be levelled against the followers or Simon Magus, who ascertained salvation to knowledge, though the life was ever so impure, Moreover, this may include abstinence, not only from hurtful lusts, but from the use of things indifferent, when the peace and comfort of a weak brother are endangered; for then to knowledge must be added love, otherwise that knowledge will not be right, at least not rightly used; see **1Co 8:1**,

and to temperance, patience; which is necessary to the running of the Christian race, which is attended with many difficulties and exercises; and under affliction from the hand of God, that there be no murmuring nor repining; and under reproaches and persecutions from men, that they faint not, and are not discouraged by them; and in the expectation of the heavenly glory: this is proper to be superadded to the former, because there may be intemperance in passion, as well as in the use of the creatures; a man may be inebriated with wrath and anger, and overcome with impatience, as well as with wine and strong drink:

and to patience, godliness; either internal, which is distinguished from bodily exercise, or outward worship, and lies in the inward and powerful exercise of grace, as faith, hope, love, fear, &c. and the Syriac version here renders it, "the fear of God": or rather external, and intends the whole worship of God, as prayer, praise, hearing of the word, and attendance on all ordinances.

2 Peter 1:7

Ver. 7 And to godliness, brotherly kindness,.... Without which, godliness, or external worship, or a profession of religion, is a vain show; for this is both the evidence of regeneration, and of the truth and power of real godliness; and also the beauty, comfort, and security of Christian society and worship, and without which they cannot be maintained with peace, profit, and honour:

and to brotherly kindness, charity: or "love"; that is, to all men, enemies, as well as to the household of faith; and to God and Christ, to his house, worship, ordinances, people and truths. Charity is more extensive in its objects and acts than brotherly kindness or love. As faith leads the van, charity brings up the rear, and is the greatest of all.

2 Peter 1:8

Ver. 8. For if these things be in you,.... Are wrought in you by the Spirit of God, and exercised and performed by his assistance, who works in his people both to will and do:

and abound; increase in their acts and exercises by the frequent performance of them: they make you; both by way of influence and evidence,

[that ye shall] neither [be] barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is a knowledge of Christ which is barren and fruitless; and those that have it are so in their conversations, and it will be of no avail to them another day: and this is a mere notional and speculative knowledge, such as is not attended with any inward experience and application of Christ to themselves, or any fruits of righteousness in their lives, and is a bare theory of things relating to his person, offices, and works; but there is a knowledge of him that is spiritual and experimental, by which a soul not only approves of Christ, but places its trust and confidence in him, and appropriates him to himself, and practically observes his commands and ordinances in the faith of him; and in love to him he performs the above duties, and exercises the above graces; from whence it appears, that he is neither barren nor unfruitful himself in the profession of his knowledge of Christ; "or in the acknowledgment of him", as it may be rendered; nor is that a vain, empty, and useless thing: he is not like the barren fig tree, or the earth that bears briers and thorns, and is nigh to cursing and burning, but like a tree planted by a river of water, and is green, flourishing, and fruitful. This is used as an argument to enforce the foregoing exhortation, to add to, that is, to exercise and perform the above graces and duties, in conjunction with each other.

2 Peter 1:9

Ver. 9. But he that lacketh these things,.... Or in, and with whom, they are not; that is, these virtues, as the Arabic version reads, as faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity; where the principles of those things are not, and they are not exercised and performed, such an one

is blind: let him boast ever so much of his light and knowledge, and value himself upon it, and expect to be saved by it, let him live as he will; for he has no true knowledge of God, as in Christ, as the God of all grace, as his covenant God and Father; nor does he know what it is to have communion with him in Christ; he only professes to know him in words, while in works he denies him; nor has he any right knowledge of Christ, only notional and general, not spiritual, experimental, particular, and practical; he does not see the Son, so as truly to believe in him; he has no true sight of his beauty, suitableness, and fulness, and of him for himself; nor any experience of the work of the Spirit of God upon his heart, whom he neither receives, sees, nor knows spiritually, any more than the world itself does; nor does he see the plague of his own heart, the corruptions of his nature, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; nor has he any true spiritual light into the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, only a form of godliness, without the power of it: and therefore, whatever natural understanding of things he has, he is spiritually blind,

and cannot see afar off: at least, not the good land that is afar off, the kingdom of heaven; the invisible glories of the other world; things that are not seen, which are eternal, which one that has true faith has a glimpse and sight of; nor Christ, who is in heaven at the right hand of God, and the things of Christ, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, carried within the vail; nor even what is within himself, the sins of his heart, the pollution of his nature, and the evil that dwells there; he sees not that he is poor, and wretched, and miserable, but fancies himself to be rich, and in need of nothing; he sees nothing but outward things, the things of time and sense, worldly and earthly things, which are near him, and all around him, which he minds, on which his heart is set, and he pursues with rigour. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "trying with the hand", as blind men do, feeling and groping to find the way; see Ac 17:27,

and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins; not by baptism, from the sins committed before it, for that does not purge from any sins, old or new, but that which it leads the faith of believers to, for pardon and cleansing, even the blood of Christ; but this also, and purification by it, is not meant here, though generally interpreters give this as the sense, and understanding it of the sin of ingratitude in such a person, who had received so great a benefit by Christ, and was unmindful of it; since it cannot be thought that one so described as above should ever have had his conscience purged by the blood of Christ from his old sins, or those before conversion, unless it be by profession; and then the sense is, that he has forgotten that he once professed to have been purged from all his sins by Christ; which, if he had, would have made him zealous of good works, and put him upon glorifying Christ both in body and spirit. The Ethiopic version renders it, "and he hath forgot to purge himself from old sins"; which he would have been concerned for, had he had a true and spiritual knowledge of Christ, and his Gospel, and an application of the exceeding great and precious promises of it, or had been made a partaker of the divine nature through them; see **2Co 7:1**, but the words are better rendered agreeably to the original text, "and hath forgotten the purification of his old, or former sins"; or "sins of old"; as they are rendered by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; that is, he does not consider, nor think of it, that he was a sinner of old, a sinner in Adam, that he was conceived and shapen in sin, and went astray, and was called a transgressor from the womb; he does not think that he stands in any need of being purged from former sins; and is entirely unmindful of, and neglects, the purification of them by the blood of Christ.

2 Peter 1:10

Ver. 10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence,.... To exercise the afore mentioned graces, and to perform the above duties, since this is the way

to make your calling and election sure; by calling is not meant a call to any office in the church, nor an external call, either by the voice of nature, or by the ministry of the word; but an internal and effectual call by special grace, to grace here, and glory hereafter; instead of "calling", the Alexandrian copy reads, "comfort": and by "election" is meant, not a national, nor church election, but a particular and personal one, since scattered saints, and particular believers, are here written to, and each called upon to be diligent to make their own, and not another's, calling and election sure; nor is a choice of persons to an office designed, seeing the apostle writes not to officers of churches in particular, but to believers in common; nor a separation of persons from the world by the effectual calling, since these two are both mentioned here, and as distinct from each other, and to be made sure; but an election of particular persons to eternal life and salvation is here intended, which is an eternal act of God, arises from his free grace and favour, and is according to his sovereign will and pleasure; and is absolute, and independent of any condition, foreseen, or required in men, as faith, holiness, and good works; all which are fruits and effects, and not causes and conditions of electing grace. These may be made "sure", not in themselves, or with respect to God, for in this sense they cannot be made surer than they are: effectual calling is according to the purpose of God, which cannot be frustrated, and is, without repentance, irreversible, and irrevocable, and is inseparably connected with eternal glory; and election stands not upon the foot of works, but upon the free grace of God, which cannot be made void, and upon the will of God, which cannot be resisted; and is also closely connected with glorification; see **Ro 8:30** nor are those to be made sure by saints, with respect to themselves; for though they may sometimes be at a loss about them, and may have some scruples and doubts in their minds concerning their interest in them, and an assurance of their being both called and chosen, may be after all attained unto by them; yet this is not their work, but it is the work of the Spirit of God, to certify and make sure unto them, or assure them of their calling and election of God: but the sense is, that diligence is to be used by the saints, to make their calling and election sure to others; not their election by their calling only, which is to themselves; for both are to be made sure, and that to others, and by some third thing; either to their fellow Christians, which they may do by giving them an account of the work of God upon their souls, joined with a testimony of their good lives and conversations; or rather to the world "by good works", as the Vulgate Latin version and two copies of Beza's read; or "by your good works", as the Alexandrian copy and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; or by the exercise of the graces, and the discharge of the duties before mentioned, whereby the men of the world may be certified and assured, by the best evidence the saints are capable of giving to them, or they of receiving, that they are the called and chosen of God, they profess themselves to be; and which is a reason why those things should be done: and another follows,

for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; or "sin", as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it; not that they should never fall at all, or in any sense, for in many things we all offend or fall; or should ever commit any act of sin, or fall into sin, for there is no man that lives, and sins not; or that they should not fall from a degree of the lively exercise of grace, or from a degree of steadfastness in the doctrine of faith, but that they should never sin the sin against the Holy Ghost, or fall totally and finally; for though they fall, they should rise again by faith and repentance, through the grace and power of Christ, who is able to keep them from falling: and besides, while they were exercising those graces, and doing those duties, they should not fall; for these are the means of final perseverance, and therefore the rather to be regarded. Another argument, strengthening the exhortation, follows:

2 Peter 1:11

Ver. 11. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly,.... An abundant supply of grace and strength shall be freely afforded, to carry you through all the duties and trials of life; and when that shall be ended, an admission will be granted

into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; meaning, not the Gospel dispensation, or the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, but lies among his people, who are called out of it, in whom he reigns by his Spirit and, grace, according to laws of his own enacting; nor his personal kingdom on earth with his saints, which will last only a thousand years, and not be for ever; but the kingdom of heaven, or the ultimate glory, which will be everlasting; and is called a kingdom, to denote the glory and excellency of that state; and an everlasting one, because it will never end; and the kingdom of Christ, because it is in his possession, for his people; it is prepared by him, and he will introduce them into it, when they shall be for ever with him, and reign with him for ever and ever. Some copies read, "the heavenly kingdom". There is an entrance of separate souls into this kingdom at death; and which may be said to be ministered "abundantly" to them, or "richly" as the word signifies, when they depart out of this world with joy and comfort; triumphing over death, and the grave, in a full view by faith of their interest in the love of God, the grace of Christ, and the glories of another world; and there is an entrance into it at judgment, and which will be abundantly, when all the saints together, in their souls and bodies, shall be introduced by Christ into the full joy of their Lord. As the saints enter the kingdom through many tribulations, the gate is strait, and the way is narrow, and they are scarcely saved, and many of them so as only by fire; but when the abundant grace given unto them by the way to heaven, the great consolation many enjoy in their last moments, and especially the free and full admission of them, both at death and at judgment, to eternal happiness, are considered, the entrance ministered may be said to be abundantly; or, as the Arabic version renders it, "with a breadth"; the entrance is large and broad.

2 Peter 1:12

Ver. 12. Wherefore I will not be negligent,.... The apostle having made use of proper arguments to excite the saints he writes to regard the exhortation he had given, to the diligent exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, proceeds to give the reasons of his own conduct, why he gave such an exhortation to them, and pressed it, and continued to do so, and determined for the future to go on with it, as particularly the usefulness and profitableness of it; and therefore, seeing it would be attended with so many advantages before mentioned, he was resolved that he would not be careless, nor omit any opportunity that should offer:

to put you always in remembrance of these things; of the exercise of the above graces, and the performance of the above duties, which saints are too apt to forget, and therefore should be reminded of; and it is the duty and business of the ministers of the word frequently to inculcate those things:

though ye know them, and be established in the present truth; for those that know the most, know but in part; and may have their knowledge increased; and those that are the most established in the truths of the Gospel, may be confirmed yet more and more. This the apostle mentions as an apology for himself, and to prevent an objection that might be made, as if he had suggested that they were ignorant and unstable; or which might insinuate that there was no necessity of such frequent putting in remembrance; since they were both knowing and stable: by "the present truth" may be meant, either the whole scheme of the Gospel, which was now come by Christ, in opposition to the exhibition of it under the former dispensation, by promise and type; and it being so called, shows that it is always now, and new; that there will be no alteration in it, nor addition to it, it being like the author of it, the same yesterday, today, and for ever, and will not give place to another scheme of things; or else the particular truth of the coming of Christ, either to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, or to judge the world in righteousness, and introduce his own people into the new heavens, and new earth, **2Pe 3:1**.

2 Peter 1:13

Ver. 13. Yea, I think it meet,.... Or "just". This is the apostle's other reason for his conduct, taken from the duty of his place and office; judging it to be what became him as an apostle and elder, and the minister of the circumcision, and was what was due to God and Christ, whom he served, and the souls of men under his care:

as long as I am in this tabernacle: or "body", as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, and so some copies; for the body is as a tabernacle for the soul to dwell in, pitched for a time, and, ere long, to be taken down; See Gill on "2Co 5:1",

to stir you up; to the lively exercise of grace, and constant performance of duty: by putting you in remembrance: of the said things; for saints are apt to be forgetful of their duty, and backward to it, and sluggish and slothful in it.

2 Peter 1:14

Ver. 14. Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle,.... Which is another reason why the apostle was so pressing in this case, and so much urged the exhortation, and was so diligent in reminding the saints of it, and stirring them to observe it, because he knew he had but a little time to live, and which therefore he was willing to improve for their good. He sets forth his death in a very easy and familiar way, it being not at all terrible and distressing to him; it was but like the putting off of a garment, or unpinning of a tabernacle, or a removing from a tent to a palace. Saints are pilgrims here, they dwell in tents or tabernacles, at death they remove to their own country, and Father's house. Death is not a destruction of man, an annihilation of him, neither of his soul nor body: the soul is not mortal, it dies not with the body; it only removes from this world to another, from a cottage to a kingdom; and the body though it dies, it is not reduced to nothing, it is only like a tabernacle put off, or taken down, which will be put together again in better order than now it is.

Even as our Lord Jesus hath showed me; by some special revelation lately made to him; or by some strong impulse upon his mind; just as the Apostle Paul knew that the time of his departure was at hand, **2Ti 4:7** or this may have respect to the words of Christ to Peter, above thirty years before, in Joh 21:18, which both signified what kind of death he should die, and when it should be; namely, when he was old, as now he was.

2 Peter 1:15

Ver. 15. Moreover, I will endeavour,.... He signifies, that he should not only use all diligence to stir them up to, and put them in remembrance of the necessary duties of their calling while he was alive, but should make it his study to concert some measures, and take some steps,

that you may be able after my decease: or Exodus, meaning his going out of this world by death, in allusion to the Israelites going out of Egypt, and marching for Canaan's land; this world being, like Egypt, a place of wickedness, misery, and bondage; as heaven, like Canaan, a place and state of rest and happiness.

To have these things always in remembrance; by which they might be always put in mind of them, or by recurring to which they might have their memories refreshed; and what he means is, to leave these exhortations and admonitions in writing, which they might read, and be of use to them when he was dead and gone; and indeed by this, and his former epistle, though being dead, he yet speaketh.

2 Peter 1:16

Ver. 16. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables,.... Such as Jewish fables, cautioned against **Tit 1:14** which their traditionary and oral law, their Talmud, and other writings, mention; as concerning the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, the sumptuous feast, and carnal pleasures and entertainments, of that state, with many other things; some of which indeed are not very cunningly put together, but weak enough: or Gentile fables concerning the theogony and exploits of their deities; and which may be meant by fables and endless genealogies in **1Ti 1:4**, and especially reference may be had to the metamorphoses of their gods, and their fables relating to them, devised by Ovid, and others, since the apostle is about to speak of the metamorphosis, or transfiguration of Christ; and also other fables with which their poets and histories abound; and likewise the prophecies of the Sibyls, and the oracles at Delphos, and elsewhere: or the fabulous accounts of the followers of Simon Magus concerning God, angels, the creation of the world, and the several Aeones; or the more artful composures of the false teachers, set off with all the cunning, sophistry, wit, and eloquence they were masters of. Now in order to set forth the nature, excellency, and certainty of the doctrine the apostle taught, especially that part of it which respected the coming of Christ; and to show that it was worth his while to put them in mind of it, and theirs to remember it; he observes, that he and his fellow apostles did not proceed in their account of it on such a foundation, but upon an evidence which they had received, both with their eyes and ears, and also on a word of prophecy surer than that:

when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; not his first coming, though that, and the benefits arising from it, were the subject of their ministry; and that was attended with divine power, which appeared in the incarnation of Christ itself, which was owing to the power of the Highest; and was seen in his doctrine and ministry, which were with great authority; and in the miracles which he wrought, which proved him to have power equal with God, his Father; and in the work of redemption, which he came about and finished; in doing which he made an end of sin, and saved his people from it, redeemed them from the curse of the law, overcame the world, destroyed Satan, and abolished death; and especially in his resurrection from the dead, when he was declared to be the Son of God with power: but notwithstanding his first coming was in great humility, in much meanness and imbecility, he grew up as a tender plant, and was encompassed with infirmities, and at last was crucified through weakness. This therefore was to be understood of an after coming of his, which the apostle had wrote of, and made known in his former epistle, **1Pe 1:7** and which he puts them in mind of in this, **2Pe 3:1**, nor is the word parousia, used of any other coming of Christ, and this will be with power; and it designs his more near coming to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, and deliver his people from the afflictions and persecution they laboured under, and which was with great power; see Mt 14:3, or more remote, namely, at the last day, when there will be a great display of power in raising the dead, gathering all nations before him, separating them one from another, passing the final sentence on each, and executing the same in the utter destruction of the wicked, and the complete glorification of the saints.

But were eyewitnesses of his majesty; meaning, not of the glory of his divine nature by faith, and with the eyes of their understanding, while others only considered him as a mere man; nor of the miracles he wrought, in which there was a display of his glory and majesty, of all which the apostles were eyewitnesses; but of that glory and greatness which were upon him, when he was transfigured on the mount before them; then his face was as the sun, and such a glory on his whole body, that it darted through his clothes, and made them glitter like light, and as white as snow, and so as no fuller on earth could whiten them; at which time also Moses and Elijah appeared in glorious forms: and now this was a prelude and pledge of his power and coming, of his kingdom coming with power, and of his coming in his own, and his Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels. This was a proof that notwithstanding his meanness in his incarnate state, yet he was glorified, and would be glorified again; and this was a confirmation of it to the apostles, and might be to others: see Mt 16:27.

2 Peter 1:17

Ver. 17. For he received from God the Father honour and glory,.... Not as an inferior from a superior, for he was equal in glory with the Father, and was, and is, the brightness of his Father's glory; nor essentially, having the same glory as his Father, and to which nothing can be added; but declaratively, God the Father testifying of his glory, declaring the honour that belonged to him, as the Son of God, at the same time that an external glory was put on him, and received by him, as the son of man:

when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory; from the bright cloud which overshadowed Jesus, Moses, and Elijah and was a symbol of the glory and presence of God, as the cloud in the tabernacle and temple were, Ex 40:35, or from heaven, the habitation of the holiness and glory of God, and where he displays the glory of his being and perfections; or from himself, who is the God and Father of glory, and is glorious in himself, in all his attributes and works. So dwbk, "glory", with the Cabalistic Jews, signifies the Shechinah, or divine presence {d}; and every number in the Cabalistic tree is called by the name of "glory"; the second number, which is "wisdom", is called "the first glory"; and the third number, "understanding", is called Nwyle dwbk, "the supreme", or "chief glory" {e}: so the first path, which is the supreme crown, is sometimes called the first glory, as the Father is here the most excellent glory; and the second path, which is the understanding enlightening, the second glory {f}. And this voice was not that at his baptism; for though that was from heaven, and from God the Father, and expressed the same words as here; yet it was not on a mount, nor from a cloud, nor was it heard by the apostles, who, as yet, were not with Christ, nor called by him; nor that of which mention is made in Joh 12:28, for though that also was from God the Father, and from heaven, and which declaratively gave honour and glory to Christ, yet did not express the words here mentioned; but that voice which came from the cloud, when Christ was transfigured on the mount, and which was heard by his three disciples, Peter, James, and John, when the following words were articulately pronounced, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased": See Gill on "Mt 17:5". The Vulgate Latin version adds here, as there, "hear ye him".

{d} Guido. Dictionar. Syr. Chald. p. 92. {e} Lex. Cabalist. p. 464. {f} Sepher Jetzirah, p. 1. 4.

2 Peter 1:18

Ver. 18. And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard,.... Peter, who wrote this epistle, and James and John, the favourite disciples of Christ; and who were a sufficient number to bear witness of what they then saw and heard:

when we were with him; and saw his glory, and the glory of Moses and Elias, and were so delighted with his company, and theirs, and with communion with him, that Peter, in the name of the rest, desired to stay there:

in the holy mount; the Ethiopic version reads, "in the mountain of his sanctuary"; and so Grotius understands it of Mount Moriah, on which the temple was built, called the holy hill, and the holy hill of Zion; and supposes that this voice was heard in the temple, and that it refers to Joh 12:28, but without any foundation; for the mount on which Christ was transfigured is here meant; and which was either, as is generally said, Tabor, a mountain in Galilee; or it may be Lebanon, which was near Caesarea Philippi, in the parts of which Christ then was: and it is called "holy", from his presence or transfiguration on it, who is the Holy One; just as the land on which Moses was, and the city and temple of Jerusalem, and Mount Sion, and Sinai, are called "holy", from the presence of the holy God there, **Ex 3:5**. Now such a declaration of the honour and glory of Christ, as the Son of God, being made by God the Father, in a voice from heaven, which the apostles heard with their ears, at the same time that they saw with their eyes his human body glorified in an amazing manner, was to them a confirming evidence that he would come again in power and glory; and upon this evidence they declared, and made known to the saints, the power and coming of Christ; though not on this evidence only, but also upon the more sure word of prophecy, which entirely agrees with it.

2 Peter 1:19

Ver. 19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy,.... Though this word of prophecy is generally understood of the writings and prophecies of the Old Testament concerning Christ, yet different ways are taken to fix the comparison: some think the sense is, that they are more sure than the cunningly devised fables, **2Pe 1:16** but as these have no certainty nor authority in them, but are entirely to be rejected, the apostle would never put the sacred writings in comparison with them: and it is most clear, that the comparison lies between this word of prophecy, and the testimony of the apostles, who were eye and ear witnesses of the majesty and glory of Christ; but how prophecy should be a surer evidence of Christ, and the Gospel, than such a testimony, is difficult to understand; and is a sense which all agree to reject, by different methods: some think that a comparative is used for a positive, and that the meaning is, that besides the testimony of the apostles, prophecy is a very sure evidence; and this is countenanced by the Syriac version, which renders it, "and we have also a firm", or "true word of prophecy"; to which the Arabic agrees, "and we have a word of prophecy very true": others choose to retain the comparison, and which indeed ought not to be thrown out; but these are divided about it; some are of opinion that it is to be understood of the Jews to whom the apostle writes, and he himself was one, and the sense to be this; not that prophecy in itself was surer than an apostolical testimony, but that it was surer to the Jews, and more valid with them, who had been trained up in, and long used to the prophetic writings; and who had a greater esteem for the prophets of the Old Testament than for the apostles of the New; but it is scarcely credible that the apostle, who had been an eye and ear witness in the holy mount, would put himself in among them, and say, "we have", &c. for whatever prophecy was to them, it could not be surer to him than what he had seen with his eyes, and heard with his ears. Others suppose that the meaning is, that prophecy was "now" surer to the Christians than it was "before", it being confirmed and established by facts and events, and also by miracles, and even by the attestation of this voice heard on the mount, and by the majesty of Christ seen there; but if this had been the sense of the apostle, he would have used these words, "now" and "before"; and besides, this puts the comparison quite out of its place, which manifestly stands between former prophecy, and the present testimony of the apostles: but the truth of the matter is, that this word of prophecy is not to be understood of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament; for though these are the word of God, and do testify of Christ, and are to be taken heed, and attended to, as proofs and evidence of Gospel truths, and are a light to direct and guide in matters both of faith and practice, yet they are not the only light, and are far from being the clearest, and what are only to be attended to; for the Gospel that came by Christ, and is preached by his apostles, and is contained in the writings of the New Testament, is a much clearer light, and at least equally to be attended to: nor are the prophecies of the Old Testament, which particularly relate to Christ, designed; there are many of this kind, which, put together, may very well be called the word of prophecy, and which were to the Jews a light in a dark place, until Christ came in the flesh; and though they are to be attended to, and compared with facts, to show the truth of the divine revelation, yet they are not a surer evidence, nor so sure an evidence, as the evangelical testimony is, which is of facts, and these supported by miracles; for now the dayspring from on high hath visited us, and Christ, the bright and morning star, has appeared: but the word of prophecy, concerning Christ's second coming, is here intended, whether it lies in the words of the prophets of the Old Testament, as in Ps 96:13 or in the words of Christ, Mt 16:27, which latter is most likely. The Ethiopic version understands this of some particular prophecy, and as if the words were a citation of some prophet, rendering the words thus, "and we have a voice more ancient than this of a prophet, saying, ye do well who take heed", &c. Sir Isaac Newton is of opinion, that the apostle refers to the book of the Revelation of St. John, which would not be unlikely, could it be proved that it was then written. Now this prophecy or prediction, concerning Christ's coming again with power and great glory, was a surer evidence of it than what the apostles saw with their eyes, and heard with their ears upon the mount; nothing was surer to them, nor could anything make it surer to them, that he was honoured and glorified, than what they saw and heard: but then this did not so certainly prove that he would hereafter be glorified, or come again in glory. What they saw and heard was a presumptive proof that it "might" be so, and was a confirming pledge and evidence to them that so it "would" be, and was a glorious representation of it; but Christ's prophecy or prediction, that so it "should" be, more strongly ascertained it, since he said it, to whom all things were known from the beginning, and whose counsel shall stand, and not one word of his shall ever fail.

Whereunto ye do well, that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. The prophecy concerning Christ's second coming is as "as a light"; it is a revelation of that which was in the dark, lay hid as a secret and mystery in the heart of God; and which could not be known by men, had it not been foretold by God; and it is made as prophecy in all other cases is, by throwing light, as to this affair, into the mind of him, or them, to whom it is revealed; and is a light to them to whom it is delivered, and which they should attend unto, as to a lamp or torch to guide and direct them; though in some sense it is but a feeble one, and is as a light "that shineth in a dark place"; meaning not the world, which is a place of darkness, ignorance, and error; nor merely the state of the saints in general in this life, who, at most and best, see but through a glass darkly; but has a particular respect to the darkness which attends the saints, concerning the second coming of Christ, and which will especially attend them a little before that time. Prophecy holds out clearly that Christ will come again; that he will come in great glory, in his Father's, and in his own, and in the glory of his angels, and with great power, to raise the dead, and judge mankind; and though it gives hints, that, upon this, the saints shall be with Christ in the air, on earth, and in heaven; and that there will be new heavens, and a new earth; and that the saints shall reign here with Christ a thousand years, after which the Gog and Magog army will attack them without success; yet these are not so clear, as for saints to be agreed in the sense of them; and much more are they in the dark about the time of his coming. Now prophecy is the surest evidence and best light the saints have concerning this matter, "until the day dawn"; not the Gospel day, so much spoken of by the prophets, that had dawned already; rather a more clear knowledge of Christ, and Gospel truths, which will be in the spiritual kingdom and reign of Christ hereafter; or else the latter day glory, at the personal coming of Christ, when the light of the moon shall be as that of the sun, and that of the sun shall be sevenfold as the light of seven days; yea, when there will be no need of sun or moon, but Christ shall be come, and be the light of his people; see Isa 30:26 after which will follow the everlasting day of glory, when all darkness will be gone, and saints shall see face to face, and know as they are known:

and the day star arise in your hearts; or "the sun", as the Syriac version renders it; not Christ, the morning star, the dayspring from on high, and the sun of righteousness, who was already risen upon them; nor the grace of God implanted in their hearts, by which they were already called out of darkness, and made light in the Lord; but as the day star is the bringer of light, as the word used signifies, or the forerunner of the day, so it here intends the immediate signs and forerunners of the coming of Christ; which when observed in their hearts, and by their understandings, as being come to pass, they may lift up their heads with joy, because their redemption draws near, Lu 21:28 and so the Ethiopic here renders it, "and redemption, arise for you in your hearts". Now till this time the sure word of prophecy concerning Christ's second coming is to be "taken heed unto", as a lamp, light, and torch, to direct us to it, to encourage us to love it, long for it, and hasten to it: and in so doing we shall "do well"; it will be well for the glory of God and Christ, this being setting our seals to them as true; and well for ourselves to keep up our faith, hope, and expectation of it, unmoved.

2 Peter 1:20

Ver. 20. Knowing this first,.... Especially, and in the first place, this is to be known, observed, and considered;

that no prophecy of the Scripture, that is contained in Scripture, be it what it will,

is of any private interpretation: not that this is levelled against the right of private judgment of Scripture; or to be understood as if a private believer had not a right of reading, searching, examining, and judging, and interpreting the Scriptures himself, by virtue of the unction which teacheth all things; and who, as a spiritual man, judgeth all things; otherwise, why are such commended as doing well, by taking heed to prophecy, in the preceding verse, and this given as a reason to encourage them to it? the words may be rendered, "of one's own interpretation"; that is, such as a natural man forms of himself, by the mere force of natural parts and wisdom, without the assistance of the Spirit of God; and which is done without comparing spiritual things with spiritual; and which is not agreeably to the Scripture, to the analogy of faith, and mind of Christ; though rather this phrase should be rendered, "no prophecy of the Scripture is of a man's own impulse", invention, or composition; is not human, but purely divine: and this sense carries in it a reason why the sure word of prophecy, concerning the second coming of Christ, should be taken heed to, and made use of as a light, till he does come; because as no Scripture prophecy, so not that, is a contrivance of man's, his own project and device, and what his own spirit prompts and impels him to, but what is made by the dictates and impulse of the Spirit of God; for whatever may be said of human predictions, or the false prophecies of lying men, who deliver them out how and when they please, nothing of this kind can be said of any Scripture prophecy, nor of this concerning the second coming of Christ; and this sense the following words require.

2 Peter 1:21

Ver. 21. For the prophecy,.... The whole Scripture, all the prophetic writings; so the Jews call the Scriptures hawbnh, "the prophecy" {g}, by way of eminence, and from the subject matter of the sacred word:

came not in old time by the will of man; was not brought into the world at first, or in any period of time, as and when man would, according to his pleasure, and as he thought fit: neither Moses, nor David, nor Isaiah, nor Jeremiah, nor Ezekiel, nor Daniel, nor any other of the prophets, prophesied when they pleased, but when it was the will of God they should; they were stirred up to prophesy, not by any human impulse, but by a divine influence: with this agrees what R. Sangari says,

"that the speech of the prophets, when the Holy Spirit clothed them, in all their words was directed by a divine influence, and the prophet could not speak in the choice of his own words,"

or according to his will:

but holy men of God; such as he sanctified by his Spirit, and separated from the rest of men to such peculiar service; and whom he employed as public ministers of his word: for so this phrase "men", or "man of God", often signifies, **1Sa 2:27**

spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; who illuminated their minds, gave them a knowledge of divine things, and a foresight of future ones; dictated to them what they should say or write; and moved upon them strongly, and by a secret and powerful impulse stirred them up to deliver what they did, in the name and fear of God: which shows the authority of the Scriptures, that they are the word of God, and not of men; and as such should be attended to, and received with all affection and reverence; and that the Spirit is the best interpreter of them, who first dictated them; and that they are to be the rule of our faith and practice; nor are we to expect any other, until the second coming of Christ.

{g} R. Eliahu in Adderet apud Trigland. de Sect Karaeorum, c. 10. p. 153.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Peter 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO II PETER 2

This chapter contains a description of false teachers, that were then in Christian churches, as there had been false prophets among the Jews; and they are described by the doctrines, which they privily introduced; in general, damnable heresies; in particular, denying the Lord that bought them; and by their success, having many followers of them in their pernicious ways; and by the sad effects following hereupon; with respect to the way of truth, that was blasphemed; with respect to their hearers, they, through the covetousness of these false teachers, were made merchandise of; and with respect to themselves, swift and sure destruction would be brought upon them, **2Pe 2:1**, which is illustrated and confirmed by the instances of punishment in the angels, the men of the old world, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, **2Pe 2:4** and whereas, in these instances, notice is taken of the deliverance of some righteous persons, as Noah and Lot, when wicked men were destroyed; the apostle draws this conclusion from the whole, that the Lord knows both how to deliver the saints out of afflictions, and to reserve wicked men until the day of judgment, then to be punished, **2Pe 2:9**, especially such shall be then punished, who are described by their impure course of lift, their contempt of civil government, and their presumption and selfwill, **2Pe 1:10** which sins of theirs are aggravated by the different conduct of angels, superior to them; and by their being like brute beasts, as ignorant as they, and even below them; whose punishment will be to perish in their corruption, as the just reward of their unrighteousness, since they are open in sin, take pleasure in it, and sport themselves with it, and are spots and blemishes in Christian societies, **2Pe 2:11** and these, who are no other than the false teachers before spoken of, are further described by their adulterous eyes, which cannot cease from sin; by their beguiling unstable souls; by the covetous practices their hearts were exercised with; by their just desert, cursed children; by the course they steer, forsaking the right way, going astray from it, and following the way of Balaam in his covetousness, and other wicked practices, for which he was reproved by his ass; and by various metaphors, which express the emptiness of these persons, and which also point at their destruction, and describe their boasts and brags, and the influence they have, through their lasciviousness and uncleanness, on some persons, who have been outwardly reformed, **2Pe 2:14** and this they obtain over them in a very stupid and senseless way, by promising them liberty, when through being overcome by them, and drawn into sin, they were brought into bondage, and become servants of corruption; and so their case is worse than it was before their reformation, and profession of religion; and better it would have been not to have had the knowledge they had, than after it to turn from the paths of truth and holiness, which is illustrated by a true Scripture proverb, which expresses the filthy nature of sin, the character of these men, and their irrecoverable state and condition, **2Pe 2:19**.

Ver. 1. But there were false prophets also among the people,.... As well as holy men of God, who gave out prophecies, by the inspiration and impulse of the Holy Spirit; that is, among the people of the Jews, God's professing people, whose God was the Lord, and who had chosen them to be a special and peculiar people, above all people of the earth; and had distinguished them by his favours from all others: among these, though the Syriac version reads "in the world", there were false prophets, who ran, and were not sent; and who prophesied, and the Lord spake not to them: of these there were many in Jeremiah's time, and in the times of Ezekiel; and in Ahab's time, besides the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, slain by Elijah, there were four hundred that called themselves the prophets of the Lord; among whom went forth a lying spirit, encouraging Ahab to go up to Ramoth Gilead, promising him prosperity and success; Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah, with whom Micaiah, the true prophet, had much contention, was at the head of them; and such there were among that people in all ages, until the times of Christ, and in his likewise; see **Mt 7:15** now from these, by an easy transition, the apostle proceeds to another part of his design in this epistle, to describe the characters of false teachers under the present dispensation, that saints may beware, and avoid their pernicious principles and practices:

even as there shall be false teachers among you; which need not to be wondered at, or stumble any, it being no new or strange thing, but what was always more or less the case of the people of God. This is a prophecy of what should be, and agrees with the prediction of our Lord, Mt 24:11 and which regards not only the times immediately following, in which it had a remarkable fulfilment, for false teachers now began to arise, and appeared in great numbers in the age succeeding the apostles, but to all periods of time from hence, to the second coming of Christ; and these were to spring from, and be among such that bore the Christian name, and so regards not Mahometans and Deists; and it is to be observed, that the phrase is varied in this clause, and these are called not "prophets" but "teachers": because as prophecy was more peculiar to the former dispensation, so is teaching to the present:

who privily shall bring in damnable heresies: errors in the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel; such as relate to a trinity of persons in the Godhead; and to the person of Christ, to his proper deity, distinct personality, eternal sonship, and real humanity; and to his office as Mediator, rejecting him as the true Messiah, and as the only Saviour of sinners; denying his sacrifice and satisfaction, and the imputation of his righteousness; and to the Holy Spirit, his deity, personality, and divine influences and operations: these are "damnable", or "destructive", or "heresies of destruction"; which lead to eternal destruction both those that introduce and propagate them, and those that embrace and profess them; for they remove, or attempt to remove, the foundation of eternal life and happiness: the manner in which these are usually introduced is "privily"; at unawares, secretly, under a disguise, and gradually, by little and little, and not at once, and openly; and which is the constant character and practice of such men, who lie in wait to deceive, creep into churches at unawares, and into houses privately; and insinuate their principles under specious pretences and appearances of truth, using the hidden things of dishonesty, walking in craftiness, handling the word of God deceitfully, and colouring things with false glosses and feigned words: and even denying the Lord that bought them; not the Lord Jesus Christ, but God the Father; for the word kuriov is not here used, which always is where Christ is spoken of as the Lord, but despothv; and which is expressive of the power which masters have over their servants {i}, and which God has over all mankind; and wherever this word is elsewhere used, it is spoken of God the Father, whenever applied to a divine person, as in **Lu 2:29** and especially this appears to be the sense, from the parallel text in **Jude 1:4** where the Lord

God denied by those men is manifestly distinguished from our Lord Jesus Christ, and by whom these persons are said to be bought: the meaning is not that they were redeemed by the blood of Christ, for Christ is not intended; and besides, whenever redemption by Christ is spoken of, the price is usually mentioned, or some circumstance or another which fully determines the sense; see Ac 20:28 whereas here is not the least hint of anything of this kind: add to this, that such who are redeemed by Christ are the elect of God only, the people of Christ, his sheep and friends, and church, and who are never left to deny him so as to perish eternally; for could such be lost, or deceive, or be deceived finally and totally by damnable heresies, and bring on themselves swift destruction, Christ's purchase would be in vain, and the ransom price be paid for nought; but the word "bought" regards temporal mercies and deliverance, which these men enjoyed, and is used as an aggravation of their sin in denying the Lord; both by words, delivering out such tenets as are derogatory to the glory of the divine perfections, and which deny one or other of them, and of his purposes, providence, promises, and truths; and by works, turning the doctrine of the grace of God into lasciviousness, being disobedient and reprobate to every good work; that they should act this part against the Lord who had made them, and upheld them in their beings and took care of them in his providence, and had followed them with goodness and mercy all the days of their lives; just as Moses aggravates the ingratitude of the Jews in De 32:6 from whence this phrase is borrowed, and to which it manifestly refers: "do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise! is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" nor is this the only place the apostle refers to in this chapter, see **2Pe 2:12** compared with De 32:5 and it is to be observed, that the persons he writes to were Jews, who were called the people the Lord had redeemed and purchased, Ex 15:13 and so were the first false teachers that rose up among them; and therefore this phrase is very applicable to them:

and bring upon themselves swift destruction; either in this life, being suddenly cut off in the midst of their days, and by the immediate hand of God, as Arius and other heretics have been; or eternal damnation in the other, which their tenets lead unto, and which will swiftly come upon them when they are promising themselves peace and safety.

{i} Vid. Ammonium peri omoiwn, in voce despothv.

Ver. 2. And many shall follow their pernicious ways,.... Their principles and their practices, which lead to destruction, The Complutensian edition, the Alexandrian copy, and six copies of Beza's, and others, read "their lasciviousnesses"; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "their luxuries"; and all the Oriental versions seem to have read in like manner. The Syriac version renders it, "their impurity"; and the Arabic version, "their unchastities"; and the Ethiopic version, "their lust"; and which seems to have respect to the impure conversation of the followers of Simon Magus, the Nicolaitans, the Gnostics, Carpocratians, and others, who indulged themselves in all unnatural lusts and uncleanness; and generally, when men make shipwreck of faith, they also do of a good conscience, and become immoral in their conversations; and yet, as destructive as their principles, and as dishonourable and scandalous as their practices be, many were, and are their followers; so it was foretold by Christ, Mt 24:11, and so it has been, Re 13:3. The road both of error and wickedness is a broad one, in which many walk; and a multitude is no proof of the truth of a church or of the principles of men, nor to be followed:

by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of; that is, either Christ, who is truth itself, and the true way to eternal life and happiness; or the Gospel, the word of truth, which holds forth Christ the truth, and points to him, and every other truth, and nothing but truth; or the Christian religion, which is the true way, in opposition to all sects and heresies; and is what should be blasphemed and spoken against, either by these men or their followers; for the phrase may be rendered, "by whom", as it is in the Vulgate Latin version, and the meaning be, that they should, in a blasphemous way, speak and write against Christ and his truths, reproach and revile them, and in a virulent manner oppose them, and trample them under foot: "or for the sake of them", as other versions read; and as we do; "by reason of them"; they should be the occasion, by their impure lives, of the name of Christ, and his doctrines, being blasphemed by profane and irreligious men; see **Ro 2:24**. The Alexandrian copy, and one of Stephens's, read "the glory of truth"; and so the Ethiopic version, "the glory of his truth".

Ver. 3. And through covetousness;.... Which is generally a prevailing vice among false teachers, they having no other end in view than themselves; either to gain popular applause and vain glory, which they are always covetous of; or to amass riches to themselves, after which they have an insatiable desire:

shall they with feigned words; made words, words of their own devising, and not which the Holy Ghost teacheth; whereby they cover themselves, and privily introduce their pernicious principles; and therefore new words and phrases are always to be suspected and guarded against, especially in articles of moment and importance: or with flattering words and fair speeches, great swelling words of vanity, having men's persons in admiration, because of worldly advantage; and in this way they gain their point:

make merchandise of you; deal with the souls of men, as merchants do with their goods, carry them to market and sell them; so false teachers deal with the souls of their followers, draw them, and sell them to Satan, and they themselves pay for it; see Zec 11:5 but in the issue, and that in a short time, they will be no gainers by such practices:

whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not: that is, their condemnation, which God in righteousness has determined, "from the creation of the world", as the Ethiopic version reads, or from all eternity, see **Jude 1:4**, to bring them into, for their vile principles and practices, is not retarded and delayed; it does not linger and stay behind, or slacken its pace; it will not tarry, it will come upon them at the appointed time:

and their damnation slumbereth not; an avenging God, who has appointed them to damnation for their sins, slumbers not; the justice of God is not asleep, nor careless and negligent, but is awake, and watches over them, to bring the evil upon them they have deserved, and is in reserve for them, and will hasten to perform it; the determined destruction does not lie dormant, but in a little time will be stirred up, and fall with dreadful weight on such sinners, as may be concluded from the following awful instances.

2 Peter 2:4

Ver. 4. For if God spared not the angels that sinned..... By whom are meant the devil and his angels; who are spirits created by God and as such were good; their first estate which they left was pure and holy, as well as high and honourable; they, were at first in the truth, though they abode not in it; they were once among the morning stars and sons of God, and were angels of light; their numbers are many, and therefore are here expressed in the plural number, "angels", though it cannot be said how large; a legion of them was in one man; one at first might be in the rebellion, and draw a large number with him into it, at least was at the head of it, who is called Beelzebub, the prince of devils: what their first sin was, and the occasion of it, is not easy to say; it is generally thought to be pride, affecting a likeness to, or an equality with God; since this was what man was tempted to by them, and by which he fell, as they are thought to do; and because this is the sin of such who fall into the condemnation of the devil; **1Ti 3:6** and is the sin, that goes before a fall in common; as it did before the fall of man, so it might before the fall of angels, Pr 16:18. The passage in **Joh 8:44** seems most clearly of any to express their sin, which was "not abiding in the truth"; in the truth of the Gospel, particularly the great truth of the salvation of men, by the incarnate Son of God; and which they could by no means brook and which might spring from pride, they not bearing the thought that the human nature should be exalted above theirs; hence the Jews, in opposing Christ as the Messiah and Saviour, are said to be of their father the devil, and to do his lusts; and Judas that betrayed him, and fell from his apostleship, and the truth, is called a devil; and the heresies of men, respecting the person and office of Christ, are styled doctrines of devils; and men that have professed this truth, and afterwards deny it, are represented in the same irrecoverable and desperate case with devils, and must expect the same punishment, **Joh 8:44**, and also it may be observed on the contrary, that the good angels that stand, greatly love, value, esteem, and pry into the truths of the Gospel; particularly the scheme of man's salvation, by the incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ: now these

God spared not; or "had no mercy on", as the Arabic version renders it; he did not forgive their sin, nor provide a Saviour for them; but directly, and at once, notwithstanding the dignity and excellency of their nature, in strict justice, and awful severity, without any mercy, inflicted due punishment on them; wherefore it cannot be thought that false teachers, who, as they, abide not in the truth, but deny and oppose it, should escape the vengeance of God:

but cast them down to hell; they were hurled out of heaven, from whence they fell as lightning, into the "lowest", or inferior places, as the Syriac version renders it; either into the air, as in **Eph 2:2** or into the earth; as in Re 12:9 or into the deep, the abyss, the bottomless pit, where they are detained, as in a prison, **Lu 8:31** though for certain reasons, and at certain times, are suffered to come forth, and rove about in this earth, and in the air: and these, when removed from their ancient seats in heaven, were not merely bid to go away, as the wicked will at the day of judgment; or were "drove" out, as Adam was from the garden of Eden; but "cast down"; with great power, indignation, wrath, and contempt, never to be raised and restored again:

[and] delivered [them] into chains of darkness: leaving them under the guilt of sin, which is the power of darkness, and in black despair; shutting them up in unbelief, impenitence, and hardness of mind; being holden with the cords of their sins, and in the most dreadful state of bondage and captivity to their lusts, in just judgment on them; and in the most miserable and uncomfortable condition, being driven from the realms of light, deprived of the face and presence of God, in the utmost horror and trembling, and fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation to consume them; and in utter darkness, without the least glimmering of light, joy, peace, and comfort; and where there is nothing but weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; and being also under the restraints of the power and providence of God, and not able to stir or move, or do anything without divine permission; and being likewise, by the everlasting, unalterable, and inscrutable purposes and decrees of God, appointed to everlasting wrath and destruction; by which they are consigned and bound over to it, and held fast, that they cannot escape it:

to be reserved unto judgment: to the day of judgment, to the last and general judgment; the judgment of torment, as the Syriac version here calls it; the words may be rendered, "and delivered them to be kept at judgment, in chains of darkness"; when they will be in full torment, which they are not yet in; and then they will be cast into the lake of fire prepared for them, and be everlastingly shut up in the prison of hell from whence they will never more be suffered to go out; till which time they are indeed under restraints, and are held in by Christ, who has the power of binding and loosing them at pleasure; and who then, as the Judge of men and devils, will bring them forth, and pass and execute sentence on them. The Jews give an account of the dejection, fall, and punishment of the angels, in a manner pretty much like this of Peter's, whom they speak of under different names; so of the serpent that deceived Adam and Eve, whom they call Samael, and because of that sin of his, they say {k} that the Lord

"cast down Samael and his company from the place of their holiness, out of heaven;"

and of Aza and Azael, angels, who, they say, sinned by lusting after the daughters of men, they frequently affirm, that God cast them down from their holiness {l}, and that he attl Nwl lypa, "cast them down below in chains" {m}; and that God cast them down from their holiness from above; and when they descended, they were rolled in the air--and he brought them to the mountains of darkness, which are called the mountains of the east, and bound them "in chains" of iron, and the chains were sunk into the midst of the great deep {n}: and elsewhere they say {o}, that God cast them down from their holy degree, out of heaven--from their holy place out of heaven--and bound them in "chains" of iron, in the mountains of "darkness".

{k} Sepher Bahir in Zohar in Gen. fol. 27. 3. {l} Zohar in Gen. fol. 25. 3. {m} lb. fol. 32. 3. {n} Midrash Ruth in Zohar in Gen. fol. 45. 1. 2. vid. fol. 77. 3. {o} Zohar in Numb. fol. 84. 1. vid. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 4. & 9. 4. & Raziel, fol. 14. 2. & 18. 2.

2 Peter 2:5

Ver. 5. And spared not the old world,.... In distinction from the present world, that now is; which was, as it were, formed anew out of that which was destroyed by the deluge. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "the original world"; and the Ethiopic version, "the first world"; it designs the ancient inhabitants of the world, as it was from the beginning, before the flood; who, being wicked, were not spared by God, but had just punishment inflicted on them:

but saved Noah the eighth person; not the eighth from Adam, as Enoch is said to be the seventh from him, **Jude 1:14** for he was the tenth; nor is it to be read with the following clause, "the eighth preacher of righteousness"; but he was the eighth person, or one of the eight persons, saved from the flood; see **1Pe 3:20** hence the Ethiopic version, rather as a paraphrase than a version, renders it, "but caused to remain seven souls with Noah; whom he saved"; Hottinger {p} and Dr. Hammond {q} observe, from the Arabic writers, that the mountain on which the ark rested, and a town near it, were called Themenim; that is, "the eight", from the number of persons then and there saved:

a preacher of righteousness; of the righteousness of God, in all his ways and works, and in case he should destroy the world by a flood, as he had threatened; and of civil and moral righteousness among men, both by words, during the building of the ark, and by works, by his own example, in his righteous life and conversation; and of the righteousness of faith, or of Christ, by which he was justified and of which he was an heir, Heb 11:7, the Jews {r} say that Noah was a prophet; and they represent him also, as a preacher, and even tell us the very words he used in his exhortations to the old world {s}, saying,

"be ye turned from your evil ways and works, lest the waters of the flood come upon you, and cut off all the seed of the children of men:"

but though Noah, a preacher of righteousness, was saved, false teachers cannot expect to escape divine vengeance; who only are transformed as ministers of righteousness, but in truth are ministers of unrighteousness; opposers of the righteousness of Christ, and live unrighteous lives and conversations, and so their end will be according to their works:

bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; or "the ungodly of the world", as aera yevr "the ungodly of the earth" {t}; see Ps 75:8 though here it indeed means a whole world of wicked men, all but a very few, which were destroyed by the flood. This expresses both the wickedness of the men of that generation, the imagination of the thoughts of whose heart were evil continually; and whose lives were filled up with uncleanness, violence, rapine, oppression, injustice, and corruption, of all sorts; and likewise the large numbers of them, there was a whole world of them; and yet this did not secure them from the wrath of God, but served to stir it up the more; wherefore false teachers and their followers must not build upon their numbers, or hope to be screened from just punishment on that account; since a world of ungodly men were, for their wickedness, at once swept away, with a flood of God's bringing upon them; causing that very useful and serviceable element of water to be the means of their destruction; for this was not a casual thing, which came of itself, or by chance, but was of God himself, who broke up the fountains of the great deep, and opened the windows of heaven, and destroyed at once all mankind, men, women, and children, and every living creature, excepting what were with Noah in the ark: and since they were persons of such a character as here described, it is not to be thought their punishment is ended here; it is the general notion of the Jews {u}, that

"the generation of the flood shall have no part in the world to come, nor shall they stand in judgment."

{p} Smegma Orientale, p. 251, 252. {q} In loc. {r} Aben Ezra in Gen. viii. 21. {s} Pirke Eliezer, c. 22. {t} Targum in Psal. xlvi. 8. {u} Misna Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 149. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 89. 2.

2 Peter 2:6

Ver. 6. And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes,.... By raining brimstone and fire upon them from heaven, Ge 19:24 which soon reduced them to ashes, with Admah and Zeboiim, De 29:25, cities delightfully situated, which were as the garden of God, and the land of Egypt, together with the inhabitants of them; and after they had received a signal mercy, in being rescued by Abraham from the kings who had carried them captive; and though Abraham, the friend of God, interceded for them, and righteous Lot dwelt among them. The first of these cities is in the Hebrew language called Sedom; Philo the Jew {w} calls it Sodoma, as in **Ro 9:29** and in the Septuagint on Ge 13:10 here it is said to be a city, and Josephus {x} always calls it the city of the Sodomites, but in Mt 10:15 we read of the land of Sodom; and so Philo {y} the Jew speaks of cwra, the region or country of the Sodomites; here the word is of the plural number, as in Mt 10:15 as it is also in the Septuagint in Ge 10:19 and in Philo the Jew {z}, and so is Gomorrah in some copies of this, place, as in Mt 10:15. Solinus, the historian, gives an account of these cities, in agreement with this;

"a good way off of Jerusalem (he says {a}) is opened a sorrowful gulf, which the black ground, "in cinerem soluta", "reduced to ashes", shows it to be touched by heaven; there were two towns, or cities, the one called Sodom, and the other Gomorrah; where an apple is produced, which, although it has an appearance of ripeness, cannot be eaten; for the outward skin that encompasses it only contains a sort of soot, or embers within, which, ever so lightly squeezed, evaporates into smoke and dust;"

and so the author of the book of Wisdom 10:7 speaking of the five cities, on which fire fell, says,

"of whose wickedness, even to this day, the waste land that smoketh is a testimony; and plants bearing fruit, that never come to ripeness."

Philo the Jew {b} says, that

"there are showed to this day in Syria monuments of this unspeakable destruction that happened; as ruins, ashes, sulphur, smoke, and a weak flame, breaking forth as of a fire burning:"

condemned [them] with an overthrow; by this sad "catastrophe" God condemned the sins of those men of Sodom and Gomorrah, and condemned their persons to everlasting damnation; of which their temporal punishment was an emblem and figure; see **Jude 1:7**, the word "overthrow" is generally used when this destruction is spoken of, De 29:23 and therefore retained by the apostle here:

making them ensamples unto those who after should live ungodly; in the commission of any sins, and be open, bold, and impudent in them, and declare them as they did; and especially that should live in the commission of the same sins, those unnatural lusts and uncleannesses, which to this day go by the name of "sodomy", and "sodomitical" practices; now the punishment of the inhabitants of these cities was an ensample to such wicked conduct, showing what they must expect, and was a representation of those everlasting burnings, which such sinners, as a righteous retaliation for their burning lusts, shall be cast into. The Jews say {c} the same of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah as of the old world;

"the men of Sodom have no part in the world to come, as is said Ge 13:13 "but the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly"; wicked in this world, and sinners in the world to come;"

See Gill on "Jude 1:7".

{w} De Temulentia, p. 272. {x} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 8. sect. 3. c. 11. sect. 3. {y}

De Abrahamo, p. 381. {z} De Temulentia, p. 272. {a} Polyhistor. c. 48. {b} De Vifa Mosis, l. 2. p. 662. {c} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 4. fol. 149. 1.

2 Peter 2:7

Ver. 7. And delivered just Lot,.... Who was a just man, being justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; and having the new man formed in him, which is created in righteousness and true holiness; and living soberly, righteously, and godly, though not without sin: for there is not a just man that lives and sinneth not; this righteous man was delivered from the burning of Sodom by the means of angels, Ge 19:16. The Jews are very injurious to this good man's character, and give a very different one of him from this of the apostle's; they call him a wicked man, a perfect wicked man, as wicked as the inhabitants of Sodom {d}; and say, that because they abounded in sin, therefore Lot chose to dwell among them {e}; and affirm {f}, that all the time he was with Abraham, God did not join himself to him, and did not commune with Abraham on his account; but, when he was separated from him, did; they call him the evil imagination, and the old serpent that was accursed, and cursed Lot {g}; but Philo the Jew {h} speaks better of him, and says that he did not embrace and delight in the iniquities of the inhabitants, though he did not arrive to the perfection of wisdom; and the author of the book of Wisdom calls him the "righteous man",

"When the ungodly perished, she delivered the righteous man, who fled from the fire which fell down upon the five cities." (Wisdom 10:6)

as the apostle does here; and very truly, since it follows:

vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; the inhabitants of Sodom, who had no regard to the laws of God or man, or to the law and light of nature; but as worse than brute beasts, lived daily in the commission of unnatural lusts; and therefore their conversation is rightly said to be filthy, and was a grievous burden to righteous Lot: for to a good man, not only his own sins, but the sins of others, whether professors or profane, are a burden, and make him groan under them, being grievously fatigued with them, as this good man was, and weary of life because of them, as Rebekah was, through the daughters of Heth.

{d} Tzeror Hammot, fol. 14. 4. & 16. 4. & 20. 2. {e} Jarchi in Gen. xiii. 10. {f} Zohar in Gen. fol. 57. 2. Jarchi in Gen. xiii. 13. {g} Zohar in Gen. fol. 56. 1, 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 7. 3. & 14. 3. & 20. 2. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 44. fol. 39. 1. {h} De Vita Mosis, l. 2. p. 662.

2 Peter 2:8

Ver. 8. For that righteous man dwelling among them,.... Which is sometimes the lot of good men, to their great sorrow and grief, Ps 120:5. Upon mentioning those words in Ge 13:12 "and pitched his tent towards Sodom", but the men of Sodom were wicked, &c. says R. Eleazar {i};

"he is a righteous man that dwells between two wicked men, and does not learn their works;"

and such an one was Lot, whatever they are elsewhere pleased to say of him: "in seeing and hearing"; the Vulgate Latin version reads this in connection with the word "righteous", thus, "in seeing and hearing he was righteous": he could not bear to see their filthy actions, and hear their obscene language, but turned away from them, and shut his eyes, and stopped his ears, by which he appears to be a righteous and good man; though rather this belongs to what follows, seeing their wicked practices, and hearing their filthy talk:

vexed his righteous soul from, day today with their unlawful deeds; either "they vexed" him, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read; or rather "he vexed" himself; he fretted and teased himself, and became exceeding uneasy, and was put upon a rack and tortured, as the word signifies, continually, with their wicked actions; see Ps 119:158.

{i} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 38. 2.

2 Peter 2:9

Ver. 9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly,.... That "fear him", as the Syriac version renders it; or that "rightly worship", as the Arabic; such as Noah and Lot, men that know God in Christ spiritually and experimentally; that believe in him, love him, fear him, worship him in spirit and truth, and live soberly, righteously, and godly. This verse is a conclusion from the preceding instances and examples, respecting both the mercy and justice of God; the mercy of God in delivering the godly and righteous "out of temptations"; by which are meant, not the temptations of Satan to sin, distrust, and despondency, though the Lord knows how, and is both able and willing to, and does deliver them from them; but afflictions and tribulations, such as Noah and Lot were exposed to; and which are so called, because they try the graces, particularly the faith and patience of the godly; and to deliver from these is the Lord's work: he grants his presence in them; he supports under them; he sanctifies them to them, and in his own time delivers out of them; for he knows how, and by what means, and when to do it, and is both able and willing: he has determined to do it, for the nature, measure, and duration of afflictions are fixed by him, and in his providence he does do it, as the instances before given prove.

And to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. This is that part of the conclusion from the above premises, respecting the justice of God; and by "the unjust" are designed, persons without a righteousness, and that are full of all unrighteousness, and take pleasure in it, and live unrighteous lives, committing acts of injustice, both with respect to God and men; and the Lord, that has reserved the fallen angels in chains of darkness unto judgment, knows how to reserve "in prison", as the Arabic version renders it, the souls of those in hell, and their bodies in the grave "unto the day of judgment"; of the last and general judgment, when Christ shall judge both quick and dead, and bring every secret thing to light, which that day shall declare, God has appointed to judge the world in; in order "to be punished" in soul and body, with everlasting and complete destruction, which, as yet, is not. This phrase, "the day of judgment", is used in Judith and is a Jewish one.

"Woe to the nations that rise up against my kindred! the Lord Almighty will take vengeance of them in the day of judgment, in putting fire and worms in their flesh; and they shall feel them, and weep for ever." (Judith 16:17)

2 Peter 2:10

Ver. 10. But chiefly them that walk after the flesh,.... Not merely after the dictates of corrupt nature, as all men, and even God's elect do, in a state of unregeneracy; but "after strange flesh", as **Jude 1:7** expresses it, after the flesh of men:

in the lust of uncleanness; not of fornication and adultery, but of sodomy, and sodomitical practices; sins exceeding great, not only contrary to the law and light of nature, but dishonourable to human nature; and are what prevail where idolatry, infidelity, errors, and heresies do; and which, as they are sins of the deepest dye, deserve the greater damnation, and are chiefly and more especially punished by God with great severity:

and despise government: of parents, to whom these proud boasters and blasphemers are generally disobedient; and of masters, pretending it to be contrary to their Christian liberty; and of magistrates on the same account, and as being a restraint upon their lusts; which is to despise the ordinance of God, his representatives, and to introduce anarchy and confusion, and to open a door to all manner of sin; and also the government of Christ, as head of the church, and King of Zion, whom they will not have to reign over them, and therefore reject his laws, and submit not to his ordinances; and likewise the government of the world itself by God; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "despise their Creator"; denying his omniscience and his providence, giving out that he neither sees, observes, and takes notice of what is done in the world; nor does he himself do either good or evil, or concern himself about what is done by men.

Presumptuous [are they]; bold and daring, not fearing to speak against men of the most exalted character on earth, and against God himself in heaven; see Ps 73:8.

Selfwilled; pleased with themselves, and their own conceits, their dogmas and opinions, with their high sense and profound judgment; and being obstinate in their sentiments, and resolutely bent to retain and defend them.

They are not afraid to speak evil of dignities; or "glories"; of the apostles, who were set in the first place in the church, and were the glory of Christ, 1Co 12:28; or of angels, styled thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; or rather of civil magistrates, set in high places, and to whom glory and honour are due; which to do is contrary to the law of God, and of dangerous consequence, Ex 22:28.

2 Peter 2:11

Ver. 11. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might,.... Which is not to be understood of evil angels, or devils; for, besides that they are greatly weakened and impaired by their fall, they are the accusers of men, and railers and slanderers of the best and greatest of men, and the origin of all the blasphemies that are vented against God or men; but of good angels, who excel in strength, who are not only guardians to particular men, and encamp about the saints, but preside over provinces and kingdoms, for which their power and might do abundantly qualify them; and in which they are greater, that is, not than the devils, or than the false teachers, though both are true, but than dominions and dignities, than kings, princes, and civil magistrates: and yet these

bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord; either "against themselves", as the Arabic version and one of Beza's copies read; against one another, against those of their own species, that are in a higher or lower class or office than themselves; and therefore men ought not to despise magistracy, or the higher powers that are over them: or else against the fallen angels, the devils, as should seem from **Jude 1:9**, or rather against civil magistrates, kings, and princes of this world, who, though so much below them, they vouchsafe to take under their care, and protect them, even Heathen princes, Da 10:20; and though there may be oftentimes many things unbecoming in them, yet they do not accuse them, or rail against them before the Lord; and even when, by his orders, they inflict punishment on their persons, as on Sennacherib, and Herod, and others, yet they do not speak evil of their office; and therefore, since angels, who are so much above men, even above the most dignified among them, behave in this manner, it must be an aggravation of the sin of these persons, who are so much below them, to speak evil of them.

2 Peter 2:12

Ver. 12. But these, as natural brute beasts,.... So far are these men from acting like the angels, that they are sunk below their own species, and are like beasts, and become brutish in their knowledge and behaviour; are like the horse and the mule, without understanding, act as if they were without reason; yea, are more stupid and senseless than the ox, or the ass, which know their owner, and their crib; and even in those things which they might, and do know by the light of nature, they corrupt themselves; and being given up to judicial blindness, and a reprobate mind, call good evil, and evil good, and do things that are not convenient, and which even brute beasts do not; and like as they are guided by an instinct in nature, to do what they do, so these men are led and influenced by the force and power of corrupt nature in them, to commit all manner of wickedness: and like them are

made to be taken and destroyed; or, as it may be rendered, "to take and destroy"; as beasts and birds of prey, such as lions, tigers, wolves, bears, vultures, hawks, &c. to which abusers of themselves with mankind, ravishers of women, extortioners, oppressors, thieves, robbers, and plunderers of men's properties, may be compared: or "to be taken and destroyed"; that is, they are made or appointed to be taken in the net and snare of Satan, are vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, and are afore ordained to condemnation and ruin: and this being their case, they

speak evil of the things they understand not; either of angels, of whose nature, office, and dignity, they are ignorant; and blaspheme them, by either ascribing too much to them, as the creation of the world, and divine worship, as were by some ancient heretics; or by speaking such things of them as were below them, and unworthy of them; or of civil magistrates, not knowing the nature and end of magistracy and civil government, and therefore spoke evil of them, when they ought to pray, and be thankful for them, and live peaceable and quiet lives under them; or of the ministers of the word, whose usefulness for the conversion of sinners and edification of saints were not known, at least not acknowledged by these men; hence they were traduced, and went through ill report among them, being as unknown by them; or of the Scriptures of truth, which heretical men do not truly know and understand, but wrest to their own destruction, or deny; and of the Gospel and the mysteries of it, which are things not seen, known, and understood by carnal men, and therefore are blasphemed, reviled, and reproached by them:

and shall utterly perish in their own corruption: of which they are servants, **2Pe 2:19**, in their moral corruption, in their filthy and unnatural lusts, which are the cause of their everlasting perdition and destruction, to which they are righteously appointed of God.

2 Peter 2:13

Ver. 13. And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness,.... Due punishment, both in body and soul, for all their injustice to God and men; which will be a just recompense of reward they shall receive at the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his works: the justice of which appears by what follows,

[as] they that count it pleasure to riot in the daytime; who place all their satisfaction and happiness in sensual delight, in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, day after day; putting away the evil day far from them, supposing that tomorrow will be as this day, and that there will be no future judgment nor state; and therefore do not take the night for their revels, as other sinners do, but being without all shame, declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not:

spots [they are], and blemishes; which defile themselves, their minds and consciences, their souls and bodies, with sin, and defile others by their evil communications, and bring dishonour and disgrace upon the ways, doctrines, and interest of Christ:

sporting themselves with their own deceivings; with their sins and lusts, by which they deceive themselves and others, it being a sport to them to commit sin; and in which they take great pleasure and pastime, and not only delight in their own sins, but in those of others, and in them that do them. Some versions, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic, instead of apataiv, "deceivings", read agapaiv, love feasts, as in **Jude 1:12**, and so the Alexandrian copy; in which they behaved in a very scandalous manner, indulging themselves in luxury and intemperance: to which agrees what follows,

while they feast with you; at the above feasts, or at the Lord's table, or at their own houses, which shows that they were of them, and among them, as in **2Pe 2:1**; and carries in it a tacit reproof for the continuance of them, when they were become so bad in their principles, and so scandalous in their lives.

2 Peter 2:14

Ver. 14. Having eyes full of adultery,.... For the seventh command is not only violated by unclean actions, and obscene words, but also by unchaste looks: and so the Jews explain {k} that precept,

""thou shalt not commit adultery", Ex 20:14; you shall not go after your hearts, nor after "your eyes"; says R. Levi, the heart and the "eye" are sin's two brokers."

Hence we read {l} of wynyeb Pawn, "one that commits adultery with his eyes"; See Gill on "Mt 5:28"; compare Job 31:1. Some read the words, "having eyes full of the adulteress": that is, having a lewd and infamous woman always in mind and sight, continually looking at her and lusting after her:

and that cannot cease from sin: which may be understood either of these wicked men, who are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, but are continually casting up the mire and dirt of sin out of their polluted heart; who live and walk in sin, and are always committing it, their conversation being nothing else but one continued series of sinning; nor can they do otherwise, since they are slaves to their lusts, and are carried away with the force and power of them: or of their eyes, which were always rolling after unlawful objects; their eyes and their hearts were only, and always, for their lust, as the prophet says of others, that they were but for their covetousness, Jer 22:17; a sin also which reigned in these men:

beguiling unstable souls: such as were unsteady in their principles, and unstable in their ways; were like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, not being rooted in Christ, nor established in the faith; these, as the serpent beguiled Eye, they corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ; imposed false doctrines on them, and deceived them by false glosses and outward appearances; and by fair words and good speeches, and by their wanton looks and carnal lusts, they allured them into the sin of adultery; or ensnared them, drew them into the net and snare of Satan, and so they were taken and led captive.

An heart they have exercised with covetous practices; an immoderate love of money, a covetous desire after it, is the root of all evil, the bane of religion, and source of heresy, and is a vice which has always prevailed among false teachers; and the character here given well agrees with Simon Magus, the father of heresies, and his followers: hence care is always taken to insert, among, the characters and qualifications of Gospel ministers, that they be not greedy of filthy lucre, **1Ti 3:3**; this iniquity, when it is a reigning one, and is become an habit, as it was in the persons here described, for it had its seat in their heart, they were habituated to it, and continually exercised it in a multitude of instances and wicked practices, is insatiable and damnable:

cursed children; or "children of the curse"; which may be understood either actively, children that do curse, as children of disobedience are such as commit acts of disobedience; so these were cursing children, who, though their mouths might not be full of cursing and bitterness, as openly profane sinners be, yet they inwardly, and from their hearts, cursed the true followers of Christ, and their principles; or passively, cursed children who were under the curse of the law, and from which there was no redemption for them, but at the last day will have the awful sentence pronounced on them, Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.

{k} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 3. 3. {l} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 165. 1. Vid. A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 3. c. 5.

2 Peter 2:15

Ver. 15. Which have forsaken the right way,.... The right way of the Lord, the way of truth, the Gospel of truth; or Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life; the true way to eternal life, and which is the right way to eternal happiness; the way of life, righteousness, and salvation by Christ, the Christian faith, and the doctrine of it, which they once professed, but now relinquished:

and are gone astray; from the right way, the way of truth and holiness, into the paths of error and profaneness:

following the way of Balaam [the son] of Bosor; which Jude calls his error, **Jude 1:11**, and is the path of covetousness, uncleanness, and idolatry, sins which he was either guilty of himself, or taught, advised, and seduced others to; see **Re 2:14**. The Vulgate Latin version reads "Balaam [out of] Bosor", taking "Bosor" for the name of a place, of which "Balaam" was; but not "Bosor", but "Pethor", was the place of Balaam's residence, Nu 22:5. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions supply, as we do, "the son of Bosor"; and the Syriac version reads, "the son of Beor", as in Nu 22:5; for Beor and

"Bosor" are the same names; the "sheva" being pronounced by "o", as it is by "oa" in "Boanerges", and the "ain" by "s". Moreover, the letters u and e are sometimes used for one another, as in Nau and Nae, Ura and era, and so e and v, especially in the Chaldean dialect; and Peter now being at Babylon in Chaldea, see **1Pe 5:13**; it is no wonder that he so pronounced.

Who loved the wages of unrighteousness: which were the rewards of divination, Nu 22:7; which were brought him for his divining or soothsaying, and may well be called unrighteous wages, since it was for doing unrighteous things, or things in an unrighteous manner; and these he loved, desired, and greedily coveted, and fain would he have taken Balak's gold and silver, and have cursed Israel, but was restrained by the Lord: he showed a good will to it, in going along with the messengers, and in building altars, and offering sacrifice in one place after another, in which there was a great resemblance between him and the men here spoken of.

2 Peter 2:16

Ver. 16. But was rebuked for his iniquity,.... Which was not merely going along with the messengers of Balak, for he had leave from the Lord so to do, Nu 22:20; but going along with them with a desire to curse Israel, when it was the will of God he should go and bless them, in order to get Balak's money; so that his governing iniquity was covetousness, which led him to other sins; and for this he was rebuked by the angel, Nu 22:32, as well as reproved by his ass, Nu 22:28: for

the dumb ass, as it was naturally so, the ass on which he rode,

speaking with man's voice; which was supernatural and miraculous, for it was God that opened the mouth of the ass: the mouth of that ass is said, by the Jews {m}, to be one of the ten things created between the two evenings on the sixth day of the creation; that is, as the gloss on it says, concerning which it was decreed, that its mouth should be opened to speak what this ass said; and the occasion of it may be seen in Nu 22:22. Lactantius {n} observes, that there are two stars in the constellation of Cancer, which the Greeks call the "asses"; and which, the poets feign, are those that carried Liberus over a river, when he could not pass it; to one of which he gave this for a reward, "ut humana voce loqueretur", "that it should speak with man's voice"; a fable, no doubt, hatched from the sacred history, and said in imitation of this ass. Which

forbad the madness of the prophet: and so Balaam, though a diviner and soothsayer, is called by the Jewish writers {o}; who, they say, was first a prophet, and then a soothsayer, from whom Jerom {p} seems to have received the tradition; who says, that he was first a holy man, and a prophet of God, and afterwards, through disobedience, and a desire of gifts, was called a diviner; for his eyes were opened, and he saw the vision of the Almighty; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied many things concerning Israel, and the Messiah, and others, Nu 24:4. His madness lay in going with the messengers of Balak, Nu 22:21, in order to curse Israel, contrary to the will of God, Nu 22:12; and it is madness in any to oppose God in his counsels, purposes, providences, and precepts; and every sin, which is an act of hostility against God, has madness in it; and this of Balaam's was forbid by his ass, and he was convinced of it. Very appropriately is mention made of this dumb ass, when the persons here spoken of were as natural brute beasts, and worse than them, **2Pe 2:12**.

{m} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 6. & Jarchi in ib. Sepher Cosri, par. 2. p. 254. {n} De falsa Religione, l. 1. c. 21. {o} Pesikta, Ilmedenu & Gerundensis apud Drus in loc. T. Bab Sanhedrin fol. 106. 1. Aben Ezra in Numb. xxxii. 28. {p} Tradition. Heb. in Genes. fol. 69. D.

2 Peter 2:17

Ver. 17. These are wells without water,.... Which look large and deep, promise much, and have nothing in them; so these men looked like angels of light, transformed themselves as ministers of righteousness, had a form of godliness, and boasted of their great knowledge; promised great advantages to their followers, but were like deceitful brooks, or dry wells, and so disappointed those that came to them, and attended on them; having nothing but the filth and slime of error and iniquity, being destitute both of the grace of God, comparable to water, and of the truth of heavenly doctrine, which is like the rain that fills the wells, pools, and fountains.

Clouds that are carried with a tempest; these false teachers may be compared to clouds for their number, for many antichrists and false prophets soon came into the world; and for their sudden rise in the churches, into which they crept privily and unawares; and because of the general darkness they spread, for when errors and heresies prevail it is a dark and cloudy day with the churches, a day of gloominess and darkness, of thick darkness, a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy; and because of the height of them, especially light clouds, as these are compared to, who are high in their own conceits and imaginations, and think, and give out themselves to be some great persons; and also because of their sudden destruction, which lingers and slumbers not, but comes upon them in a moment, and their glory passes away like the morning cloud: and these may be said to be as clouds "carried with a tempest": of their own lusts and passions, by which they are governed, and are led, and carried away with the force of them, and have no power to resist them, being under the dominion of them, and captives to them; and of Satan's temptations, who works effectually in them, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, and being taken in his snare, are led captive by him at his will: Jude says, "carried about of winds", **Jude 1:12**, with every wind of false doctrine, like meteors in the air; are never at a point, always unsteady and unsettled, and ready to embrace every new and upstart notion:

to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever; the nature of their punishment is expressed by "darkness", the blackest darkness, the mist of darkness, and which Jude calls blackness of darkness, the same with utter darkness; and which signifies a most forlorn and uncomfortable condition, and is a righteous judgment, and just retaliation upon them who studied to darken counsel by words without knowledge; and the certainty of their punishment is signified by its being "reserved", even as the happiness of the saints, and the safety and sureness of it are represented by an inheritance reserved in heaven: and as God has his treasures, magazines, and stores of grace and mercy, felicity and glory, for his people; so he has his wrath and vengeance reserved, laid up in store with him, and sealed up among his treasures, which he will surely bring forth in his own time: and the duration of this punishment is "for ever"; it is a worm that never dies, a fire that is never quenched, Isa 66:24 **Mr 9:44**; it is everlasting fire and burnings, the smoke of which ascends for ever and ever.

2 Peter 2:18

Ver. 18. For when they speak great swelling [words] of vanity,.... Marvellous things against the God of gods, great things and blasphemies against God, his name, his tabernacle, and his saints; see Da 11:36; or against men, dominions, and dignities, **2Pe 2:10**; or it may design their self-applauses and vain glorying in themselves, and their empty boast of knowledge and learning; and also express the windiness of their doctrines, and the bombast style, and high flown strains of rhetoric in which they were delivered; as likewise the flattering titles they bestowed on men for the sake of their own worldly interest and advantage; see **Jude 1:16** and hereby

they allure, through the lusts of the flesh, [through much] wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error: that is, from those who lived in the error of Heathenism or Judaism, from whom, and which, they were clean escaped; or truly, really, and entirely delivered, being fully convinced of the falsity thereof, and of the truth of the Christian religion; though some copies, as the Alexandrian, and two of Beza's, and two of Stephens's, read, not ontwv, "truly", but oligwv, "a little"; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "a very little"; to which agrees the Complutensian edition; and the Syriac version renders it "in a few words", or "almost"; and according to the Ethiopic version, "a few persons" are designed; but be they more or less, and truly, or but a little, and for a little while, or almost, escaped from their former errors, in which they were brought up, and lived; yet by the carnal lusts and liberties, lasciviousness and wantonness, which these false teachers indulged, they were allured, ensnared, and drawn by them into their wicked principles and practices.

2 Peter 2:19

Ver. 19. While they promise them liberty,.... Not Christian liberty, which lies in a freedom from sin, its dominion, guilt, and condemnation, and in serving God with liberty, cheerfulness, and without fear; but a sinful carnal liberty, a liberty from the law of God, from obedience to it as a rule of walk and conversation, and from the laws of men, from subjection to the civil magistrate, and from servitude to masters, and obedience to parents; a liberty to lay aside and neglect the ordinances of the Gospel at pleasure, and to live in all manner of sin and wickedness; a liberty which is contrary to the nature, will, and work of Christ, to his Spirit, and to the principle of grace in the heart, and to the Gospel, and to the conduct and conversation of real saints. Now this was the snare by which the false teachers beguiled unstable souls; liberty being what is greatly desirable to men, and is suited to their carnal lusts and interests: but a vain promise was this, when

they themselves are the servants of corruption; of sin, which has corrupted all mankind in soul and body; and particularly the lust of uncleanness, which these men walked in, and by which they not only corrupted themselves, but the good manners of others also; and which tended and led them both to ruin and destruction, signified by the pit of corruption: and yet these very preachers, that promised liberty to others, were the servants of sin; they were under the power and government of sin. They were not only born so, and were homeborn slaves to sin, but they sold themselves to work wickedness; voluntarily and with delight, they served divers lusts and pleasures, and were slaves and drudges thereunto; as likewise to Satan, whose lusts they would do, and by whom they were led captive; so that their condition was mean, base, and deplorable, and therefore could never make good their promise, or give that which they had not themselves: and which is confirmed by the following reasoning,

for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage: as this is a certain point in war, that when one man is conquered by another, he is no longer a free man, but the other's prisoner and captive, and is in a state of servitude and bondage; so it is when a man is overcome by sin, which must be understood not of a partial victory or conquest, for a good man may be surprised by sin, and overtaken in a fault, and be overcome and carried captive by it for a time, as was the apostle, see **Ro 7:23**; and yet not be a servant of corruption, or properly in a state of bondage to it; but this is to be understood of a total and complete victory, when a man is wholly under the dominion of sin, it reigns in his mortal body, and he obeys it in the lusts of it, and yields his members instruments of unrighteousness; such a man is neither a free man himself, nor can he much less promise and give liberty to others.

2 Peter 2:20

Ver. 20. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world,.... The sins of it, the governing vices of it, which the men of the world are addicted to, and immersed in; for the whole world lies in wickedness, and which are of a defiling nature: the phrase is Rabbinical; it is said {q},

"he that studies not in the law in this world, but is defiled amle ypwnjb, "with the pollutions of the world", what is written of him? and they took him, and cast him without:"

these, men may escape, abstain from, and outwardly reform, with respect unto, and yet be destitute of the grace of God; so that this can be no instance of the final and total apostasy of real saints; for the house may be swept and garnished with an external reformation; persons may be outwardly righteous before men, have a form of godliness and a name to live, and yet be dead in trespasses and sins; all which they may have

through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, our Lord, and the latter leave out, "and Saviour"; by which "knowledge" is meant, not a spiritual experimental knowledge of Christ, for that is eternal life, the beginning, pledge, and earnest of it; but a notional knowledge of Christ, or a profession of knowledge of him, for it may be rendered "acknowledgment"; or rather the Gospel of Christ, which, being only notionally received, may have such an effect on men, as outwardly to reform their lives, at least in some instances, and for a while, in whose hearts it has no place. Now if, after all this knowledge and reformation,

they are again entangled therein; in the pollutions of the world, in worldly lusts, which are as gins, pits and snares:

and overcome; by them, so as to be laden with them, and led away, and entirely governed and influenced by them:

the latter end, or state,

is worse with them than the beginning; see Mt 12:45. Their beginning, or first estate, was that in which they were born, a state of darkness, ignorance, and sin, and in which they were brought up, and was either the state of Judaism, or of Gentilism; their next estate was an outward deliverance and escape from the error of the one, or of the other, and an embracing and professing the truth of the Christian religion, joined with a becoming external conversation; and this their last estate was an apostasy from the truth of the Gospel they had professed, a reception of error and heresy, and a relapse into sin and immorality, which made their case worse than it was at first; for, generally, such persons are more extravagant in sinning; are like raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; and are seldom, or ever, recovered; and by their light, knowledge, and profession, their punishment will be more aggravated, and become intolerable.

{q} Zohar in Gen. fol. 104. 3. Vid. Bechinot Olam, p. 178.

2 Peter 2:21

Ver. 21. For it had been better for them,.... Not that ignorance is good, or to be excused; but it would have been a lesser evil, and not so much aggravated:

not to have known the way of righteousness; the same with "the way of truth", **2Pe 2:2**, and "the right way", **2Pe 2:15**, the Gospel, which points out the way and method of a sinner's justification before God, which is not by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and received by faith; and which teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and a large, notional, though not an experimental knowledge, these apostates had of the word and doctrine of righteousness, and indeed of the whole of the Christian religion, which may truly go by this name:

than after they have known [it]; owned, embraced, and professed it:

to turn: the Vulgate Latin version, and some copies, as the Alexandrian and others, add, to that which is behind; to their former lusts, or errors, or worse, which they had turned their backs upon externally:

from the holy commandment delivered unto them; by the commandment is meant the Gospel also, see **2Pe 3:2**; called holy, because of its nature and influence, and in opposition to the pollutions of the world; and which is the faith once delivered, **Jude 1:3**, and which they received, as delivered to them; and, particularly, the ordinances of it, which they once submitted to, kept, and observed, as they were delivered to them, but now relinquished, or corrupted: wherefore, it would have been better for them to have been in their former ignorance, either in Judaism, or in Gentilism, since proportionate to a man's light is his guilt, and so his punishment, see **Ro 2:12**.

2 Peter 2:22

Ver. 22. But it is happened unto them, according to the true proverb,.... Which is true, both in fact and in the application of it, and which lies in the Scriptures of truth, at least the first part of it, Pr 26:11.

The dog [is] turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire; which expresses the filthy nature of sin, signified by vomit, mire, and dirt, than which nothing is more abominable and defiling; and also the just characters of these apostates, who are filly compared to dogs and swine and likewise their irreclaimable and irrecoverable state and condition, it being impossible they should be otherwise, unless their natures were changed and altered. In the Hebrew language, a "sow" is called ryzx, from the root rzx, which signifies to "return", because that creature, as soon as it is out of the mire and dirt, and is washed from its filthiness, naturally returns to it again: so such apostates return to what they were before, to their former principles and practices: in this manner the Jews explain the proverb,

"Tobiah returns to Tobiah, as it is said, Pr 26:11; as a dog returneth to his vomit {r}."

{r} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 16. fol. 158. 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

2 Peter 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO 2 PETER 3

In this chapter the apostle makes mention of the end and design of his writing this second epistle; foretells that there would be scoffers at the coming of Christ in the last days; describes the coming of Christ and the burning of the world; and closes with the use saints should make of these things. The end of his writing both this and the former epistle was to put the persons he writes unto in mind of the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, delivered by the prophets and apostles, **2Pe 3:1**; and then, agreeably to what the prophets had said, he predicts that there would be scoffers in the last day; who are described by their sinful course of life, and by their words, what they would say concerning the coming of Christ, and their reasoning about it, **2Pe 3:3**; which arose from their ignorance of the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of the situation of them; and is refuted by showing that things have not remained as they were from the creation; that the earth standing in and out of the water, as it was capable of being overflowed with a flood, so it perished by one; and that the present heavens and earth are reserved and prepared for a general burning at the day of judgment, in which wicked men will be destroyed, **2Pe 3:5**; but let these men scoff as they will, the length of time since the promise of Christ's coming was made should be no objection with the saints to the performance of it; since the longest term of time is nothing with God, however considerable it may be with men, **2Pe 3:8**; besides, the reason of the coming of Christ being deferred, is not owing to any dilatoriness in the performance of the promise, but to the longsuffering of God towards his elect, being unwilling that anyone of them should be lost, but that all should be brought to repentance, **2Pe 3:9**; but as for the coming of Christ, that is certain, and will be sudden; at which time will be the general conflagration, which is described in a very awful manner, **2Pe 3:10**; and the use to be made of such a tremendous dispensation by the saints is to live a holy and godly conversation, **2Pe 3:11**; to be eagerly looking for the coming of Christ, **2Pe 3:12**, and to expect, according to his promise, new heavens and a new earth, in which will dwell righteous persons, **2Pe 3:13**; and to be diligent to be found in peace at that day, **2Pe 3:14**; and to account the longsuffering of God salvation; and the whole of this account, and the use of it, is strengthened by the testimony of the Apostle Paul, of whom, and of his epistles, a character is given, **2Pe 3:15**; and the epistle is concluded with some cautions and exhortations to the saints, to beware lest they should be carried away with the errors of wicked men, and so fall from any degree of steadfastness in the faith; and to be concerned for a growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, to whom glory is to be ascribed for ever and ever, **2Pe 3:17**.

Ver. 1. This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you,.... This is a transition to another part of the epistle; for the apostle having largely described false teachers, the secret enemies of the Christian religion under a profession of it, passes on to take notice of the more open adversaries and profane scoffers of it; and from their ridicule of the doctrine of Christ's second coming, he proceeds to treat of that, and of the destruction of the world, and the future happiness of the saints: he calls this epistle his "second epistle", because he had written another before to the same persons; and that the author of this epistle was an apostle, is evident from **2Pe 3:2**; and which, compared with **2Pe 1:18** shows him to be the Apostle Peter, whose name it bears, and who was an eyewitness to the transfiguration of Christ on the mount, Mt 17:1: he addresses these saints here, as also in **2Pe 3:8**, under the character of "beloved"; because they were the beloved of God, being chosen by him according to his foreknowledge, and regenerated by him, according to his abundant mercy; and were openly his people, and had obtained mercy from him, and like precious faith with the apostles; and were also the beloved of Christ, being redeemed by him, not with gold and silver, but with his precious blood; for whom he suffered, and who were partakers of his sufferings, and the benefits arising from them, and who had all things given them by him, pertaining to life and godliness, and exceeding great and precious promises; and were likewise beloved by the apostle, though strangers, and not merely as Jews, or because they were his countrymen, but because they were the elect of God, the redeemed of Christ, and who were sanctified by the Spirit, and had the same kind of faith he himself had. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "my beloved"; and the Ethiopic version, "my brethren": his end in writing both this and the former epistle follows;

in [both] which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance; that this was his view both in this and the former epistle, appears from **1Pe 1:13**; he calls their minds pure; not that they were so naturally, for the minds and consciences of men are universally defiled with sin; nor are the minds of all men pure who seem to be so in their own eyes, or appear so to others; nor can any man, by his own power or works, make himself pure from sin; only the blood of Christ purges and cleanses from it; and a pure mind is a mind sprinkled with that blood, and which receives the truth as it is in Jesus, in the power and purity of it, and that holds the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Some versions, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic, render the word "sincere", as it is in **Php 1:10**; and may design the sincerity of their hearts in the worship of God, in the doctrines of Christ, and to one another, and of the grace of the Spirit of God in them; as that their faith was unfeigned, their hope without hypocrisy, and their love without dissimulation, and their repentance real and genuine; but yet they needed to be stirred up by way of remembrance, both of the truth of the Gospel, and the duties of religion; for saints are apt to be forgetful of the word, both of its doctrines and its exhortations; and it is the business of the ministers of the word to put them in mind of them, either by preaching or by writing; and which shows the necessity and usefulness of the standing ministry of the Gospel: the particulars he put them in mind of next follow.

Ver. 2. That ye may be mindful,.... This is an explanation of the above mentioned end of his writing this and the other epistle; which was, that those saints might be mindful of two things more especially:

of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets; that is, the prophets of the Old Testament, who were holy men of God, and therefore their words are to be regarded, and retained in memory; the Gospel itself was spoken by them, and so was Christ, and the things relating to his person and offices, and to his incarnation, sufferings, and death, and the glory that should follow; and indeed the apostles said no other than what they did, only more clearly and expressly; and particularly many things, were said by them concerning the second coming of Christ to judge the world, and destroy it, and to prepare new heavens and a new earth for his people, which is what the apostle has chiefly in view; see **Jude 1:14**;

and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour; that is, Jesus Christ, as **Jude 1:17** expresses it, and the Ethiopic version adds here; and which likewise, and also the Syriac version, and some ancient copies, read, "our Lord and Saviour", and omit the us before the apostles; by whom are meant the twelve apostles of Christ, of which Peter was one, and therefore says, "us the apostles"; though the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, and the Complutensian edition, read "your apostles", and so the Alexandrian copy; but the former is the received reading: now "the commandment" of these intends either the Gospel in general, so called because it was the commandment of our Lord to his apostles to preach it; and therefore the word "commandment", in the original, stands between "us the apostles", and "the Lord and Saviour", as being the commandment of the one to the other; unless it can be thought any regard is had to the new commandment of love, or that of faith, inculcated both by Christ and his apostles; Joh 13:34; or rather, particularly the instructions, directions, and predictions of the apostles concerning the second coming of Christ, and what should go before it, as appears from the following words, and the parallel place in **Jude 1:17**, the words of the prophets and apostles being here put together, show the agreement there is between them, and what regard is to be had to each of them, and to anything and every thing in which they agree.

Ver. 3. Knowing this first,.... In the first place, principally, and chiefly, and which might easily be known and observed from the writings of the apostles and prophets; see **1Ti 4:1**;

that there shall come in the last days scoffers, or "mockers"; such as would make a mock at sin, make light of it, plead for it, openly commit it, and glory in it; and scoff at all religion, as the prejudice of education, as an engine of state, a piece of civil policy to keep subjects in awe, as cant, enthusiasm, and madness, as a gloomy melancholy thing, depriving men of true pleasure; and throw out their flouts and jeers at those that are the most religious, for the just, upright man, is commonly by such laughed to scorn, and those that depart from evil make themselves a prey; and particularly at the ministers of the word, for a man that has scarcely so much common sense as to preserve him from the character of an idiot, thinks himself a wit of the age, if he can at any rate break a jest upon a Gospel minister: nor do the Scriptures of truth escape the banter and burlesque of these scoffers; the doctrines of it being foolishness to them, and the commands and ordinances in it being grievous and intolerable to them; yea, to such lengths do those proceed, as to scoff at God himself; at his persons, purposes, providences, and promises; at Jehovah the Father, as the God of nature and providence, and especially as the God and Father of Christ, and of all grace in him; at Jehovah the Son, at his person, as being the Son of God, and truly God, at his office, as Mediator, and at his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, which they trample under foot; and at Jehovah the Spirit, whom they do despite unto, as the spirit of grace, deriding his operations in regeneration and sanctification, as dream and delusion; and, most of all, things to come are the object of their scorn and derision; as the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, a future judgment, the torments of hell, and the joys of heaven; all which they represent as the trifles and juggles of designing men: such as these, according to the prophets and apostles, were to come in "the last days"; either in the days of the Messiah, in the Gospel dispensation, the times between the first and second coming of Christ; for it is a rule with the Jews {s}, that wherever the last days are mentioned, the days of the Messiah are intended; see **Heb 1:1**; when the prophets foretold such scoffers should come; or in the last days of the Jewish state, both civil and religious, called "the ends of the world", 1Co 10:11; a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, when iniquity greatly abounded, Mt 24:11; or "in the last of the days"; as the words may be rendered; and so answer to Mymyh tyrxab, in **Isa 2:2**, and may regard the latter part of the last times; the times of the apostles were the last days, **1Jo 2:18**; they began then, and will continue to Christ's second coming; when some time before that, it will be a remarkable age for scoffers and scorners; and we have lived to see an innumerable company of them, and these predictions fulfilled; from whence it may be concluded, that the coming of Christ is at hand: these scoffers are further described as

walking after their own lusts; either after the carnal reasonings of their minds, admitting of nothing but what they can comprehend by reason, making that the rule, test, and standard of all their principles, and so cast away the law of the Lord, and despise the word of the Holy One of Israel; or rather, after their sinful and fleshly lusts, making them their guides and governors, and giving up themselves entirely to them, to obey and fulfil them; the phrase denotes a continued series of sinning, a progress in it, a desire after it, and pleasure in it, and an obstinate persisting in it; scoffers at religion and revelation are generally libertines; and such as sit in the seat of the scornful, are in the counsel of the ungodly, and way of sinners, **Ps 1:1**.

{s} Kimchi in Isa. ii. 2.

2 Peter 3:4

Ver. 4. And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?.... That is, of the coming of the Lord and Saviour, **2Pe 3:2**; the object of their scorn and derision, and whom they name not, through contempt; and the meaning is, what is become of the promise of his coming? where the accomplishment of it? The prophets foretold he would come; he himself said he would come again, Joh 14:3; the angels, at his ascension, declared he would come from heaven in like manner as he went up, **Ac 1:11**; and all his apostles gave out that he would appear a second time to judge both quick and dead, Ac 10:42 **1Pe 4:5**, and that his coming was at hand, **Php 4:5**; but where is the fulfilment of all this? he is not come, nor is there any sign or likelihood of it:

for since the fathers fell asleep; or "died": which is the language of the Scriptures, and here sneered at by these men, who believe them so fast asleep as never to be awaked or raised more; and by "the fathers" they mean the first inhabitants of the world, as Adam, Abel, Seth, &c. and all the patriarchs and prophets in all ages; the Ethiopic version renders it, "our first fathers":

all things continue as [they were] from the beginning of the creation; reasoning from the settled order of things, the constant revolution of the sun, moon, and stars, the permanency of the earth, and the succession of the inhabitants of it, to the future continuance of things, without any alteration; and consequently, that Christ would not come, as was promised, to raise the dead, judge mankind destroy the world, and set up a new state of things: the fallacy of which reasoning is exposed by the apostle in the following words.

2 Peter 3:5

Ver. 5. For this they willingly are ignorant of,.... Namely, what follows; for as these men were such as had professed Christianity, and had the advantage of revelation, and had the opportunity of reading the Scriptures, they might have known that the heavens and the earth were from the beginning; and that they were made by the word of God; and that the earth was originally in such a position and situation as to be overflowed with a flood, and that it did perish by a general inundation; and that the present heavens and earth are kept and reserved for a general burning; and it might be discerned in nature, that there are preparations making for an universal conflagration; but all this they chose not to know, and affected ignorance of: particularly

that by the word of God the heavens were of old: not only in the times of Noah, but "from the beginning"; as the Ethiopic version reads, and which agrees with the account in **Ge 1:1**; by "the heavens" may be meant both the third heaven, and the starry heavens, and the airy heavens, with all their created inhabitants; and especially the latter, since these were concerned in, and affected with the general deluge; and these were in the beginning of time, out of nothing brought into being, and so were not eternal, and might be destroyed again, or at least undergo a change, even though they were of old, and of long duration: for it was "by the word of God" that they at first existed, and were so long preserved in being; either by the commanding word of God, by his powerful voice, his almighty fiat, who said, Let it be done, and it was done, and who commanded beings to rise up out of nothing, and they did, and stood fast; and so the Arabic version renders it, "by the command of God"; or by his eternal Logos, the essential Word of God, the second Person in the Trinity, who is often in Scripture called the Word, and the Word of God, and, as some think, by the Apostle Peter, **1Pe 1:23**, and certain it is that the creation of all things is frequently ascribed to him; see **Joh 1:16**; wherefore by the same Word they might be dissolved, and made to pass away, as they will:

and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; that is, "by the Word of God"; for this phrase, in the original text, is placed after this clause, and last of all; and refers not only to the being of the heavens of old, but to the rise, standing, and subsistence of the earth, which is here particularly described for the sake of the deluge, the apostle afterwards mentions: and it is said to be "standing out of the water", or "consisting out of it"; it consists of it as a part; the globe of the earth is terraqueous, partly land and partly water; and even the dry land itself has its rise and spring out of water; the first matter that was created is called the deep, and waters in which darkness was, and upon which the Spirit of God moved, **Ge 1:2**; agreeably to which Thales the Milesian asserted {t}, that water was the principle of all things; and the Ethiopic version here renders the words thus, "and the Word of God created also the earth out of water, and confirmed it": the account the Jews give of the first formation of the world is this {u};

"at first the world was Mymb Mym, "water in water"; what is the sense (of that passage **Ge 1:2**;) "and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters?" he returned, and made it snow; he casteth forth his ice like morsels, Ps 147:17; he returned and made it earth; "for to the snow he saith, Be thou earth", Job 37:6, and the earth stood upon the waters; "to him that stretched out the earth above the waters", Ps 136:6;"

however, certain it is, that the earth was first covered with water, when at the word, and by the command of God, the waters fled and hasted away, and were gathered into one place, and the dry land rose up and appeared; and then it was that it "stood out of the water"; see **Ge 1:9**; moreover, the earth consists, or is kept and held together by water; there is a general humidity or moisture that runs through it, by which it is compacted together, or otherwise it would resolve into dust, and by which it is fit for the production, increase, and preservation of vegetables and other things, which it otherwise would not be: and it is also said to stand "in the water", or by the water; upon it, according to Ps 24:2; or rather in the midst of it, there being waters above the firmament or expanse; in the airy heavens, in the clouds all around the earth, called the windows of heaven; and water below the firmament or expanse, in the earth itself; besides the great sea, a large body of waters is in the midst of the earth, in the very bowels of it, which feed rivers, and form springs, fountains and wells, called "the fountains of the great deep", **Ge 7:11**; and in this position and situation was the earth of old, and so was prepared in nature for a general deluge, and yet was preserved firm and stable by the word of God, for a long series of time; so the Arabic version renders it, "and the earth out of the water, and in the water, stood stable, by the command of God"; but when it was his pleasure, he brought the flood on the world of the ungodly, of which an account follows.

{t} Vid. Laert. l. i. in Vit. Thaletis. {u} T. Hieros. Chagiga, fol. 77. 1.

2 Peter 3:6

Ver. 6. Whereby the world that then was,.... The old world, as it is called in **2Pe 2:5**; and as the Ethiopic version here renders it; the world before the flood, that had stood from the creation 1656 years:

being overflowed with water; by the windows of heaven being opened, and the waters over the earth poured down upon it; and by the fountains of the great deep being broken up in it; thus by these waters from above and below, a general inundation was brought upon it; for that the deluge was universal is clear from hence, and from the account by Moses; for as the earth was filled with violence, and all flesh had corrupted its way, God threatened a general destruction, and which was brought by a flood, which overflowed the whole earth; for all the hills that were under the whole heaven were covered with it, and everything that had life in the dry land died, and every living substance was destroyed that was upon the face of the ground; see **Ge 6:11**; and hence it follows, that hereby the then world

perished; not as to the substance of it, whatever alteration there might be in its form and position; but as to the inhabitants of it; for all creatures, men and cattle, and the creeping things, and fowls of the heaven, were destroyed, excepting Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their wives, and the creatures that were with him in the ark; see **Ge 7:23**; and by this instance the apostle shows the falsehood of the above assertion, that all things continued as they were from the beginning of the creation; for the earth was covered with water first, and which, by the command of God, was removed, and, after a long series of time, was brought on it again, and by it drowned; and from whence it also appears, that this sort of reasoning used by those scoffers is very fallacious; for though the heavens and the earth may continue for a long time, as they did before the flood, in the same form and situation, it does not follow from thence that they always will, for the contrary is evident from what follows.

2 Peter 3:7

Ver. 7. But the heavens and the earth which are now,.... In being, in distinction from, and opposition to the heavens that were of old, and the earth standing in and out of the water, and the world that then was when the waters of the flood overflowed it:

by the same word are kept in store; that is, by the word of God, as in **2Pe 3:5**; and the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "by his word"; by the same word that the heavens and the earth were made of old, or in the beginning, are they kept, preserved, and upheld in their being; or "are treasured up"; the heavens and the earth are a rich treasure, they are full of the riches God, as the God of nature and providence; and they are kept with care, as a treasure is, not to be touched or meddled with at present, but must continue in the same position and use; or they are laid up in the stores, and scaled up among the treasures of divine wrath and vengeance, and will be brought out another day, and made use of, to the destruction of the ungodly inhabitants of the world, and to aggravate and increase their misery and ruin: for it is further said of them, that they are

reserved unto fire; for though the world is, and has been preserved a long time without any visible alteration in it, yet it will not be always so preserved: and though it is, and will be kept from being drowned by water again, through the promise and power of God, yet it is kept and reserved for a general conflagration; see **2Pe 3:10**. And as the old world was put into a natural situation, so as to be drowned by water, there are now preparations making in nature, in the present world, for the burning of it; witness the fiery meteors, blazing stars, and burning comets in the heavens, and the subterraneous fires in the bowels of the earth, which in some places have already broke out: there are now many volcanos, burning mountains and islands, particularly in Sicily, Italy, and the parts adjacent, the seat of the beast, and where it is very likely the universal conflagration will begin, as Aetna, Vesuvius, Strombilo, and other volcanos; and even in our own island we have some symptoms and appearances of these fires under ground, as fiery eruptions in some places, and the hot waters at the Bath, and elsewhere, show; from all which it is plain that the heavens and earth, that now are, are not as they always were, and will be, but are reserved and prepared for burning; and that things are ripening apace, as men's sins also are, for the general conflagration. Josephus {w} relates, that Adam foretold that there would be a destruction of all things, once by the force of fire, and once by the power and multitude of water; and it is certain the Jews had knowledge of the destruction of the earth by fire, as by water: they say {x},

"that when the law was given to Israel, his (God's) voice went from one end of the world to the other, and trembling laid hold on all the nations of the world in their temples, and they said a song, as it is said, Ps 29:9, "and in his temple doth everyone speak of his glory": all of them gathered together to wicked Balaam, and said to him, what is the voice of the multitude which we hear, perhaps a flood is coming upon the world? he said unto them, "the Lord sitteth upon the flood, yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever", Ps 29:10. Thus hath the Lord swore, that he will not bring a flood upon the world; they replied to him, a flood of water he will not bring, but va lv lwbm, "a flood of fire" he will bring, as it is said, Isa 66:16, "for by fire will the Lord plead","

or judge: and hence they speak {y} of the wicked being judged with two sorts of, judgments, by water, and by fire: and, according to our apostle, the heavens and earth are kept and reserved to fire,

against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men; the time when God will judge the world is fixed, though it is not known; and it is called a "day", because of the evidence and light in which things will appear, and the quick dispatch of business in it; and the "judgment" spoken of is the future judgment, and which is certain, and will be universal, righteous, and eternal, and when wicked and ungodly men will be punished with everlasting destruction: the bodies of those that will be alive at the general conflagration will be burnt in it, though not annihilated, and will be raised again, and both soul and body will be destroyed in hell.

{w} Antiqu. Jud. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 3. {x} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 1. {y} Zohar in Gen. fol. 50. 4. & 51. 1.

Ver. 8. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing,.... Here the apostle addresses the saints he writes unto, and for whom he had a tender affection and regard, and for whose welfare he was concerned, lest they should be stumbled at the length of time since the promise of the coming of Christ was given, and which these scoffers object; and therefore he would have them know, observe, and consider this one thing, which might be of great use to them to make their minds easy, and keep up their faith and expectation of the coming of Christ:

that one day [is], with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; referring either to Ps 90:4; or to a common saying among the Jews, founded on the same passage, Mynv Pla hb "qh lv wmwy, "the day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years" {z}; suggesting, that though between thirty and forty years had elapsed since the promise was given out that Christ would come again, and should even a thousand, or two thousand years more, run off, before the coming of Christ, yet this should be no objection to the accomplishment of the promise; for though such a number of years is very considerable among men, ye not "with God", as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, with whom a thousand years, and even eternity itself, is but as a day, Isa 43:13. Unless this phrase should be thought to refer, as it is by some, to the day of judgment, and be expressive of the duration of that: it is certain that the Jews interpreted days of millenniums, and reckoned millenniums by days, and used this phrase in confirmation of it. Thus they say {a},

"in the time to come, which is in the last days, on the sixth day, which is the sixth millennium, when the Messiah comes, for the day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years."

And a little after,

""the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man". This is in the time of the Messiah which is in the sixth day."

And elsewhere {b},

"the sixth degree is called the sixth day, the day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years. And in that day the King Messiah shall come, and it shall be called the feast of gathering, for the holy blessed God will gather in it the captivity of his people."

So they call the sabbath, or seventh day, the seventh millennium, and interpret {c}

""the song for the sabbath day", Ps 92:1 title, for the seventh millennium, for one day of the holy blessed God is a thousand years."

To which agrees the tradition of Elias, which runs thus {d};

"it is the tradition of the house of Elias, that the world shall be six thousand years, two thousand years void (of the law), two thousand years the law, and two thousand years the days of the Messiah;"

for they suppose that the six days of the creation were expressive of the six thousand years in which the world will stand; and that the seventh day prefigures the last millennium, in which will be the day of judgment, and the world to come; for

"the six days of the creation (they say {e}) is a sign or intimation of these things: on the sixth day man was created; and on the seventh his work was finished; so the kings of the nations of the world (continue) five millenniums, answering to the five days, in which were created the fowls, and the creeping things of the waters, and other things; and the enjoyment of their kingdom is a little in the sixth, answerable to the creation of the beasts, and living creatures created at this time in the beginning of it; and the kingdom of the house of David is in the sixth millennium, answerable to the creation of man, who knew his Creator, and ruled over them all; and in the end of that millennium will be the day of judgment, answerable to man, who was judged in the end of it; and the seventh is the sabbath, and it is the beginning of the world to come."

{z} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 7. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 19. fol. 160. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 216. 1. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 20. 1. Zohar in Exod. fol. 60. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 157. 1. & Nishmet Chayim Orat. 1. c. 5. fol. 12. 1. {a} Zohar in Gen. fol. 13. 4. {b} Ib. fol. 16. 1. {c} Bartenora in Misn. Tamid, c. 7. sect. 4. {d} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 1. & Avoda

Zara, fol. 9. 1. {e} Ceseph Misna in Maimon. Hilchot Teshuva, c. 9. sect. 2.

2 Peter 3:9

Ver. 9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise,.... The Syriac version reads in the plural, "his promises", any of his promises; though the words seem rather to regard the particular promise of Christ's coming, either to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, of which coming there was a promise made, and is often referred to by Christ, and his apostles; see **Mr 9:1** Heb 10:37; and it now being upwards of thirty years since it was given out, some men began to charge God with slackness and dilatoriness; whereas the true reason of the delay of it was, that there might be time for the gathering in of his elect among them by his angels, or apostles and ministers, sent into the several parts of Judea, that so none of them might perish, but be brought to faith and repentance; and thus as the time of Christ's coming was prolonged more than was thought it would, so when the days of afflictions were come, they were shortened also for these elect's sake: or this promise regards the second coming of Christ, to judge the quick and dead at the last day, of which the former was a prelude, presage, and pledge; that Christ would come again, and appear a second time in person, was promised by himself, and often spoken of by his apostles; and many of the primitive Christians thought it would be very soon, and which might be occasioned by the hints that were given of his coming in the other sense. Now this being deferred longer than was expected, the scoffers or mockers take upon them to charge the Lord with slackness in the fulfilment of his promise:

as some men count slackness; as if he had either changed his purpose, or had prolonged it beyond the appointed time, or was unmindful of his promise, and would never fulfil it; whereas he is in one mind, and none can turn him, nor will he delay the fulfilment of his promise beyond the set time; he has fixed a day for his coming, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, and he will keep it: he is not dilatory,

but is longsuffering to us-ward: not to all the individuals of human nature, for the persons intended by us are manifestly distinguished from "some men" in the text, and from scoffers, mocking at the promise of Christ's coming, in the context, **2Pe 3:3**; and are expressly called beloved, **2Pe 3:1**; and God's longsuffering towards them is their salvation, **2Pe 3:15**, nor is it true of all men, that God is not willing that any of them should perish, and that everyone of them should come to repentance, since many of them do perish in their sins, and do not come to repentance, which would not be the case, if his determining will was otherwise; besides, a society or company of men are designed, to which the apostle himself belonged, and of which he was a part; and who are described, in his epistles, as the elect of God, called out of darkness, into marvellous light, and having obtained like precious faith with the apostles; and must be understood either of God's elect among the Jews, for Peter was a Jew, and they were Jews he wrote to; and then the sense is, that the delay of Christ's coming is not owing to any slackness in him, but to his longsuffering to his elect among the Jews, being unwilling that any of that number among them should perish, but that all of them repent of their sins, and believe in him; and therefore he waits till their conversion is over, when a nation shall be born at once, and they that have pierced him look on him and mourn, and so all Israel shall be saved; or rather of the elect in general, whether among Jews or Gentiles, upon whom the Lord waits to be gracious, and whose longsuffering issues in their conversion and salvation. And upon account of these the Lord stays his coming till their number is complete in the effectual calling; and for their sakes he is longsuffering to others, and bears with a wicked world, with the idolatry, superstition, heresy, profaneness, and impiety, with which it abounds; but when the last man that belongs to that number is called, he will quickly descend in flames of fire, and burn the world, and the wicked in it, and take his chosen ones to himself. The Alexandrian copy reads, "for you", or your sakes; and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions. A passage somewhat like to this is met with in a book of the Jews {f}, esteemed by them very ancient.

"God prolongs or defers his anger with men; and one day, which is a thousand years, is fixed, besides the seventy years he delivered to David the king.--And he does not judge man by his evil works which he continually does, for if so, the world would not stand; but the holy blessed God defers his anger with the righteous, and the wicked, that they may return, by perfect repentance, and be established in this world, and in the world to come."

And it is an observation of theirs {g}, that when God is said to be "longsuffering", it is not written Pa Kra, but Mypa Kra, intimating, that he is longsuffering both to the righteous and the wicked; but then he bears with the latter, for the sake of the former: compare with this passage **Re 6:9**;

not willing that any should perish; not any of the us, whom he has loved with an everlasting love, whom he has chosen in his Son, and given to him, and for whom he has died, and who are brought to believe in him. These, though they were lost in Adam, did not perish; and though in their own apprehensions, when awakened and convinced, are ready to perish; and though their peace, joy, and comfort, may perish for a while, and they may fear a final and total perishing; yet they shall never perish as others do, or be punished with everlasting destruction: and that this is the will of God, appears by his choice of them to salvation; by the provisions of grace for them in an everlasting covenant; by the security of their persons in the hands of Christ; by sending his Son to obtain salvation for them, and his Spirit to apply it to them; and by his keeping them by his power, through faith, unto salvation.

But that all should come to repentance; not legal, but evangelical, without which all must perish; and which all God's elect stand in need of, as well as others, being equally sinners; and which they cannot come to of themselves, and therefore he not only calls them to it, in his word, and by his spirit and grace, but bestows it upon them; he has exalted Christ at his own right hand, to give it to them; and repentance is a grant from him, a free gift of his grace; and the Spirit is sent down into their hearts to work it in them, to take away the stony heart, and give an heart of flesh; without which, whatever time and space may be given, or means afforded, even the most awful judgments, the greatest mercies, and the most powerful ministry, will be of no avail.

{f} Zohar in Gen. fol. 83. 3. {g} T. Hieros, Taanioth, fol. 65. 2. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 50. 2.

2 Peter 3:10

Ver. 10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night,.... That is, the Lord will come in that day, which he has fixed, according to his promise, than which nothing is more certain; and he will come as a thief in the night: he will come "in the night", which may be literally understood; for as his first coming was in the night; see **Lu 2:8**; so perhaps his second coming may be in the night season; or figuratively, when it will be a time of great darkness; when there will be little faith in the earth, and both the wise and foolish virgins will be slumbering and sleeping; when it will be a season of great security, as it was in the days of Noah, and at the time of the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the phrase, "in the night": and the Alexandrian copy uses the emphatic article, "in the night": and he will come, "as a thief", in the dark, indiscernibly; it will not be known what hour he will come; he will come suddenly, at an unawares, when he is not expected, to the great surprise of men, and especially of the scoffers; when the following awful things will be done:

in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise; not the third heaven, the seat of angels and glorified saints, and even of God himself; but the starry and airy heavens, which shall pass away, not as to their matter and substance, but as to some of their accidents and qualities, and the present use of them; and that with a great noise, like that of a violent storm, or tempest; though the Ethiopic version renders it, "without a noise"; and which is more agreeable to his coming as a thief, which is not with noise, but in as still a manner as possible; and some learned men observe, that the word signifies swiftly, as well as with a noise; and, accordingly, the Syriac version renders it "suddenly"; and the Arabic version "presently", immediately; that is, as soon as Christ shall come, immediately, at once, from his face shall the earth and heavens flee away, as John in a vision saw, Re 20:11;

and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: not what are commonly called the four elements, earth, air, tire, and water, the first principles of all things: the ancient philosophers distinguished between principles and elements; principles, they say {h}, are neither generated, nor corrupted; ta te stoiceia kata thn ekpurwsin fyeiresyai, "but the elements will be corrupted, or destroyed by the conflagration"; which exactly agrees with what the apostle here says: by the elements seem to be meant the host of heaven, being distinguished from the heavens, as the works of the earth are distinguished from the earth in the next clause; and design the firmament, or expanse, with the sun, moon, and stars in it, which will be purged and purified by this liquefaction by fire;

the earth also will be purged and purified from everything that is noxious, hurtful, unnecessary, and disagreeable; though the matter and substance of it will continue:

and the works that are therein shall be burnt up; all the works of nature, wicked men, cattle, trees, &c. and all the works of men, cities, towns, houses, furniture, utensils, instruments of arts of all sorts, will be burnt by a material fire, breaking out of the earth and descending from heaven, for which the present heavens and earth are reserved: this general conflagration was not only known to the Jews, but to the Heathens, to the poets, and Platonist and Stoic philosophers, who frequently {i} speak of it in plain terms. Some are of opinion that these words refer to the destruction of Jerusalem; and so the passing away of the heavens may design the removal of their church state and ordinances, Heb 12:26, and the melting of the elements the ceasing of the ceremonial law, called the elements of the world, **Ga 4:3**, and the burning of the earth the destruction of the land of Judea, expressed in such a manner in De 29:23, and particularly of the temple, and the curious works in that, which were all burnt up and destroyed by fire, though Titus endeavoured to prevent it, but could not {k}: which sense may be included, inasmuch as there was a promise of Christ's coming to destroy the Jewish nation, and was expected; and which destruction was a prelude of the destruction of the world, and is sometimes expressed in such like language as that is; but then this must not take place, to the exclusion of the other sense: and whereas this sense makes the words to he taken partly in a figurative, and partly in a literal way; and seeing the heavens and the earth are in the context only literally taken, the former sense is to be preferred; and to which best agrees the following use to be made of these things.

{h} Diog. Laert. l. 7. in Vita Zenonis. {i} Vid. Diog. Laert ib. & l. 9. in Vita Heraclit. & Hesych. de Philos. p. 36. Arrian. Epict. l. 3. c. 13. Phurut. de Natura Deorum, p. 39. Ovid. Metamorph, fab. 7. Min. Felix, p. 37. & Justin. Martyr. Apol. 2. p. 66. {k} Vid. Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 9, 10. & l. 7. c. 14, 16.

2 Peter 3:11

Ver. 11. [Seeing] then [that] all these things shall be dissolved,.... By fire; the heaven with all its host, sun, moon, and stars, clouds, meteors, and fowls of the air; the earth, and all that is upon it, whether of nature, or art; and, since nothing is more certain than such a dissolution of all things,

what manner [of persons] ought ye to be in [all] holy conversation and godliness? not as the scoffers and profane sinners, who put away this evil day far from them, but as men, who have their loins girt, and their lights burning, waiting for their Lord's coming; being continually in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of their religious duties, watching, praying, hearing, reading; living soberly, righteously, and godly; guarding against intemperance and worldly mindedness, and every worldly and hurtful lust.

2 Peter 3:12

Ver. 12. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God,.... The same with the day of the Lord, **2Pe 3:10**, and so the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions here read; and it intends the day of Christ's second coming to judgment, and so is a proof of the deity of Christ; and is called "the day of God", in distinction from man's day, or human judgment, **1Co 4:3**, which is often fallacious; whereas the judgment of God is according to truth; and because in that day Christ will appear most clearly to be truly and properly God, by the manifest display of his omniscience, omnipotence, and other glorious perfections of his; and because it will be, as the day of God is, a thousand years; and also the day in which God will finish all his works, as on the seventh day the works of creation, on this the works of Providence; when all his purposes, promises, and threatenings, relating to the final state of all persons and things, will be fulfilled, and every work be brought to light, and into judgment, and everything will stand in a clear light; for the day will declare it, either respecting God, or men; and there will be a display, as of his grace and mercy, to his church and people; for it will be the day of his open espousals to them, and of the gladness of his heart; so of his wrath and anger towards the wicked: for this great and dreadful day of the Lord shall burn like an oven, and destroy the wicked, root and branch: and it will be the day of Christ's glorious appearing, and of his kingdom, in which he will reign, before his ancients, gloriously; and when it is ended, God, Father, Son and Spirit, will be all in all: now "the coming" of this day saints should be "looking for" by faith; believing that it certainly will come, since the patriarchs, prophets, Christ himself, the angels of heaven, and the apostles of the Lamb, have all declared and asserted the coming of this day; and they should look for it, and love it, as with the strongest affection for it, and most vehement desire of it, since they will then appear with Christ in glory; and they should look out, and keep looking out for it, as what will be quickly; and though it is not as soon as they desire and expect, yet should still look wistly for it, and with patience and cheerfulness wait for it: yea, they should be "hasting unto" it, or "hastening" it; for though the day is fixed for the coming of Christ, nor can it be altered, as his coming will not be longer, it cannot be sooner, yet it becomes the saints to pray earnestly for it, that it may be quickly, and for the accomplishment of all things that go before it, prepare for it, and lead unto it; such as the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles; and by putting him in mind of, and pleading with him, his promises concerning these things, and giving him no rest till they are accomplished; there seems to be some reference to the prayers of the Jews for the Messiah's coming, which they desire may be hryhmb, "in haste"; which will show that they are in haste for the coming of this day; and all which things God will hasten, though it will be in his own time: and moreover, saints should be hasting to it by their readiness for it, having their loins girt, and their lights burning, and their lamps trimmed, and they waiting for their Lord's coming, and going forth in acts of faith and love, and in the duties of religion, to meet him, and not slumber and sleep:

wherein; in which day, as in **2Pe 3:10**; or by which; by which coming of Christ, or of the day of God,

the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; at whose coming and presence, and from whose face the heavens and earth shall flee away, just as the earth shook, and the heavens dropped, and Sinai itself moved, when God appeared upon it; see Re 20:11. This is a repetition of what is said in **2Pe 3:10**, exciting attention to the exhortation given.

2 Peter 3:13

Ver. 13. Nevertheless we, according to his promise,.... Or promises, as the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version; namely those in Isa 65:17;

look for new heavens and a new earth; not figuratively, the world to come in distinction from the Jewish world or state; a new church state, the Gospel dispensation, with new ordinances, as baptism and the Lord's supper, all legal ceremonies and ordinances being gone, and everything new; for these things had taken place already, and were not looked for as future: but these phrases are to be understood literally, as the heavens and the earth are in every passage in the context, **2Pe 3:5**; and designs not new heavens and earth for substance, but for qualities; the heavens and elements being melted and dissolved, and so purged and purified by fire, and the earth and its works being burnt up with it, and so cleared of everything noxious, needless, and disagreeable, new heavens and a new earth will appear, refined and purged from everything which the curse brought thereon for man's sin: and such heavens and earth the saints look for by faith and hope, and earnest expectation, and with desire and pleasure; and therefore are not distressed, as they have no reason to be, with the burning of the present heavens and earth, as awful as these things will be; and they expect them not upon their own fancies and imaginations, or the vain conjectures and cunningly devised fables of men, but according to the promises of God recorded in the above passages, and in which they may be confirmed by the words of Christ, and by the vision of John, Re 20:1. The Alexandrian copy reads, "and his promises"; as if it respected other promises the saints looked for besides the new heavens and earth; namely, the resurrection of the dead, eternal life, the in corruptible inheritance, the ultimate glory and happiness:

wherein dwelleth righteousness; meaning not the heavenly felicity, called sometimes the crown of righteousness, and the hope of righteousness, to which righteousness gives a right, and where it will be perfect, for the apostle is not speaking of the ultimate glory of the saints; nor the righteousness of Christ, as dwelling in the saints, as if the sense was this, we in whom righteousness dwells, look for new heavens and a new earth; for though the righteousness of Christ is unto and upon them that believe, yet it is not in them; it is in Christ, and dwells in him, and not in them; it is not inherent in them, but imputed to them: by "righteousness" is meant righteous men; such as are so not in and of themselves, or by the deeds of the law, or by works of righteousness done by them, but who are made righteous by the obedience of Christ, and are righteousness itself in him; see Jer 33:16; now these, and these only, will be the inhabitants of the new heavens and the new earth; there will be no unrighteous persons there, as in the present world, which lies in wickedness, and is full of wicked men; and they will be stocked with inhabitants after this manner; all the elect will now be gathered in, and Christ, when he comes, will bring all his saints with him from heaven, and will raise their bodies, and reunite them to their souls; and those that are alive will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and will make up together the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; and whereas, upon the coming of Christ, the present heavens and earth will be burnt or purified by fire, and so made new and fit for the spirits of just men made perfect, who being again embodied, will fill the face of them, and shall inherit the earth, and reign with Christ on it for a thousand years, during which time there will not be a wicked man in them; for the wicked that will be alive at Christ's coming will be burnt with the earth, and the wicked dead shall not rise till the thousand years are ended, and who being raised, will, together with the devils, make the Gog and Magog army; wherefore none but righteous persons can look for these new heavens and earth, for to these only are they promised, and such only shall dwell in them; so the Targum on Jer 23:23 paraphrases the words,

"I God have created the world from the beginning, saith the Lord, I God will "renew the world for the righteous":"

and this will be, the Jews say, for the space of a thousand years;

"it is a tradition (they say {l}) of the house of Elias, that the righteous, whom the holy blessed God will raise from the dead shall not return to their dust, as is said, **Isa 4:3**, and it shall come to pass, &c. as the Holy One continues for ever, so they shall continue for ever; and if you should say those years (some editions read, "those thousand years", and so the gloss upon the place) in which the holy blessed God "renews the world": as it is said **Isa 2:11**, and the Lord alone; &c. what shall they do? the holy blessed God will make them wings as eagles, and they shall fly upon the face of the waters:"

and this renovation of the heavens and the earth, they say, will be in the seventh millennium;

"in the seventh thousand year (they assert {m}) there will be found new heavens and a new earth;"

which agree with these words of Peter.

{l} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 1, 2. Ed. Coch. p. 317. {m} Zohar in Gen. fol. 35. 3.

2 Peter 3:14

Ver. 14. Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for these things,.... For the burning of the heavens and the earth, for the coming of Christ, and for the new heavens and new earth,

be diligent that ye may be found of him; Christ, or autw, "in him", as in **Php 3:9**; for such as are in Christ will have an undoubted right to the new heavens and the new earth, and will certainly dwell in them, because they will be found not in their own righteousness, but in the righteousness of Christ: or "before him", as the Arabic version renders it; before him the Judge of all, at whose tribunal they must stand; but being clothed with his righteousness, and so without spot and blemish, they will not be ashamed before him: or "by him"; Christ first finds his in redemption, and next in the effectual calling, and last of all at his coming, when all the elect will be looked up, gathered in, and presented first to himself, and then to his Father, complete and perfect, not one wanting: and thus to be found in him, and before him, and by him, should be the concern of all that look for the glorious things here spoken of, and particularly that they be found in the following situation and circumstances: in peace; interested in that peace Christ has made by the blood of his cross; for such as are reconciled to God by his death, shall be saved by his life, and live with him in the new heavens and new earth, and for ever in the ultimate glory; and in enjoying that peace of conscience which he himself gives, and which flows from his blood, righteousness, and atonement; so that the day of his coming by death, or at judgment, will not be terrifying to them, but they will look for these things with great delight and satisfaction: or

in peace one with another; for peace makers and keepers are called the children of God, and so heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; or in happiness and glory, expressed by peace, which is the end of the righteous man, which he enters into at death, and will rest in to all eternity:

without spot and blemish; no man is so in himself, sanctification is imperfect, and many are the slips and falls of the saints, though their desire is to be harmless and inoffensive, and to give no just occasion for blame or scandal; but the saints are so in Christ Jesus, being washed in his blood, and clothed with his righteousness, and will be found so by him when he comes again, when he will present them to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, and also before the presence of his Father's glory, as faultless, with exceeding joy; and so will they be fit and meet to be the inhabitants of the new heavens and new earth, and reign with him therein, and be with him to all eternity.

Ver. 15. And account [that] the longsuffering of our Lord,.... Not his longsuffering towards the wicked, and his forbearance with them, for that is not the means of, nor the way to, nor does it issue in, their salvation, but in their sorer punishment and greater damnation, see **Ro 2:4**; but towards the elect, as in **2Pe 3:9**; whom he bears much and long with before conversion, while in their sins, and in a state of unregeneracy, and waits to be gracious to them, as he is in their calling, and to make known and apply his great salvation to them; and as with particular persons, so with the whole body of them, till they are all gathered in, and even with the world for their sakes; and particularly the Lord's longsuffering here intends the deferring of his coming, or his seeming slackness in the performance of his promise: the reason of which is,

salvation: the salvation of all his chosen ones, and in that it issues; he waits, he stays, that none of them might perish, but that they might be all brought to faith and repentance, and so be saved: wherefore the apostle would have the saints consider it in this light, and not imagine and conclude, with the scoffing infidels, that he is slack and dilatory, and will not come, but that his view in it is the salvation of all his people, which by this means is brought about: in confirmation of which, and other things he had delivered, he produces the testimony of the Apostle Paul;

even as our beloved brother Paul also; he calls him a "brother", both on account of his being a believer in Christ, one that belonged to the same family with him, and was of the household of faith, born of the same Father, and related to the same Redeemer, the firstborn among many brethren, and likewise on account of his being a fellow apostle; for though he was not one of the twelve apostles, but his call and mission were later than theirs, yet Peter does not disdain to put him among them, and upon an equal foot with them, nor was he a whit behind the chief of them: he styles him a "beloved" brother; expressing his affection for him, which the relation between them called for, and which he bore to him, notwithstanding his public opposition to him, and sharp reproof of him, **Ga 2:11**, and perhaps loved him the more for it; see Ps 141:5; and he makes mention of him, and that under these characters, partly to show their agreement and consent in doctrine; and partly to recommend him to the Jews, to whom he writes, who had, upon report of his doctrine and ministry, entertained an ill, at least a mean opinion, of him; as also to set us an example to speak well of one another, both as ministers and private believers:

according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; meaning not all his epistles, as being written for the general good of all the saints, as well as for those particular churches or men to whom they were sent; for what Peter speaks of is what was particularly written to them, and is distinguished in **2Pe 3:16** from the rest of Paul's epistles; nor does he intend the epistle of Paul to the Romans, for the longsuffering of God spoken of in that, as in **Ro 2:4**, is his longsuffering to the wicked, which issues in their destruction, and not his longsuffering to his elect, which is salvation, as here; but he seems manifestly to have in view the epistle to the Hebrews, for Peter wrote both his first and second epistles to Jews; wherefore, since none of Paul's epistles but that were written particularly to them, it should seem that that is designed, and serves to confirm his being the author of it; in which he writes to the Hebrews concerning the coming of Christ, and of the deferring of it a little while, and of the need they had of patience to wait for it, Heb 10:36; and in it also are some things difficult to be understood concerning Melchizedek, the old and new covenant, the removing of the Aaronic priesthood, and the abrogation of the whole ceremonial law, &c. things not easily received by that nation; and the whole is written with great wisdom, respecting the person and office of Christ, the nature of his priesthood, and the glory of the Gospel dispensation; and in a most admirable manner is the whole Mosaic economy laid open and explained: he was indeed a wise master builder, and whatever he wrote was "according to wisdom"; not fleshly wisdom, the wisdom of this world, nor with enticing words of men's wisdom, but according to the divine wisdom, under the influence of the spirit of wisdom and revelation; for he had not this of himself naturally, nor did he learn it at Gamaliel's feet, but it was what was "given to him"; it came from above, from God, who gives it liberally; and as he himself always owned it to be a free grace gift of God bestowed on him, and that all his light and knowledge were by the revelation of Christ, so Peter ascribes it to the same, that God might have all the glory, and all boasting in man be stopped.

2 Peter 3:16

Ver. 16. As also in all [his] epistles,.... From whence it appears, that the

Apostle Paul had, by this time, wrote several of his epistles, if not all of them; and they were all written according to the same wisdom, and under the influence of the same spirit, as his epistle to the Hebrews:

speaking in them of those things; of the same things, Peter had been speaking of, of the coming of Christ, as that he should appear a second time to them that look for him, and would come as a thief in the night, and that the fashion, scheme, and form of this world should pass away, and that saints should look and wait for his coming, and love it: something of this kind is said in all his epistles; see **Heb 9:28**; and also of mockers, scoffers, seducers, and wicked men that would arise in the last days; see **1Ti 4:1**,

in which are some things hard to be understood. The phrase, "in which", refers either to the epistles, or the things spoken in them. The Alexandrian manuscript, and three of Robert Stephens's copies, read en aiv, "in which" epistles, but the generality of copies read en oiv, "in", or "among which things", spoken of in them, concerning the subject here treated of, the coming of Christ; as the time of Christ's coming, which is sometimes represented by the apostle, as if it would be while he was living; and the manner of his coming in person with all his saints, and his mighty angels, with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and trump of God, things not easily understood; and the destruction of antichrist at his coming, which will be with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming; as also the resurrection of the dead, of the saints that will rise first, and that with spiritual bodies; and likewise the change of the living saints, and the rapture both of living and raised saints together, in the, clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and the standing of them before the judgment seat of Christ, and the account that everyone must give to him, **1Th 4:15** 1Co 15:44;

which they that are unlearned; untaught of God, who have never learned of the Father, nor have learned Christ, nor have that anointing which teacheth all things; who, though they may have been in the schools of men, were never in the school of Christ; and though they have been ever learning, yet will never come to the knowledge of the truth; for men may have a large share of human literature, and yet be unlearned men in the sense of the apostle; and very often it is, that such wrest and pervert the Scriptures to the ruin of themselves, and others:

and unstable; unsettled in their principles, who are like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine; the root of the matter is not in them; nor are they rooted and built up in Christ, and so are not established in the faith; they are not upon the foundation Christ, nor do they build upon, and abide by the sure word of God, or form their notions according to it, but according to their own carnal reasonings, and fleshly lusts; and so

wrest the word of God, distort it from its true sense and meaning, and make it speak that which it never designed; dealing with it as innocent persons are sometimes used, put upon a rack, and tortured, and so forced to speak what is contrary to their knowledge and consciences; and so were the words of the Apostle Paul wrested by ill designing men, as about the doctrines of grace and works, so concerning the coming of Christ; see **Ro 3:8**;

as [they do] also the other Scriptures; the writings of Moses, and the prophets of the Old Testament, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the other epistles of the apostles of the New Testament: and which is eventually

unto their own destruction; for by so doing they either add unto, or detract from the Scriptures, and so bring the curse of God upon them; and they give into doctrines of devils, and into heresies, which are damnable, and bring upon themselves swift destruction, which lingers not, and slumbers not. Now from hence it does not follow, that the Scriptures are not to be read by the common people; for not all the parts of Scripture, and all things in it, are hard to be understood, there are many things very plain and easy, even everything respecting eternal salvation; there is milk for babes, as well as meat for strong men: besides, not the Scriptures in general, but Paul's epistles only, are here spoken of, and not all of them, or anyone whole epistle among them, only some things in them, and these not impossible, only difficult to be understood; and which is no reason why they should be laid aside, but rather why they should be read with greater application and diligence, and be followed with fervent prayer, and frequent meditation; and though unlearned and unstable men may wrest them to their perdition, those that are taught of God, though otherwise illiterate, may read them to great profit and advantage.

2 Peter 3:17

Ver. 17. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know [these things] before,.... As that there will be such mockers and scoffers in the last days, and such unlearned and unstable men that will deprave the Scriptures, and wrest them in such a miserable manner:

beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked; from the simplicity of the Gospel, along with such wicked men, that wax worse and worse, deceivers and being deceived, by giving into any of their errors which respect the grace of God, or the person and offices of Christ, or particularly his second coming; be upon the watch and guard against them, having previous notice of them, for they lie in wait to deceive: lest ye

fall from your own steadfastness; which was proper to them, and which, by the grace of God, they had, and retained, both in the faith of Christ and doctrine of the Gospel; for though the saints can never finally and totally fall into sin, or from the truth, yet they may fall from their steadfastness, both as to the exercise of the grace of faith, and as to their profession of the doctrine of faith; and to be fluctuating, hesitating, and doubting in either respect, must be very uncomfortable and dishonourable.

2 Peter 3:18

Ver. 18. But grow in grace,.... In the gifts of grace, which, under a divine blessing, may be increased by using them: gifts neglected decrease, but stirred up and used, are improved and increase. And though men are to be thankful for their gifts, and be contented with them, yet they may lawfully desire more, and in the use of means seek an increase of them, which may be a means of preserving themselves, and others, from the error of the wicked. Moreover, by "grace" may be meant internal grace. The work of grace is gradual; it is like a grain of mustard seed, or like seed cast into the earth, which springs up, it is not known how, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; saints are first babes, and from children they grow to young men, and from young men to fathers. There is such a thing as growth in grace, in this sense; every grace, as to its act and exercise, is capable of growing and increasing; faith may grow exceedingly, hope abound, love increase, and patience have its perfect work, and saints may grow more humble, holy, and self-denying: this is indeed God's work, to cause them to grow, and it is owing to his grace; yet saint, should show a concern for this, and make use of means which God owns and blesses for this purpose, such as prayer, attending on the word, and looking over the promises of God, for an increase of faith; recollecting past experiences, and looking to the death and resurrection of Christ for the encouragement of hope, and to the love of God and Christ, for the stirring up of love to both, and to the saints; considering the sufferings of Christ, the desert of sin, and the glories of another world, to promote patience and self-denial, and the pattern of Christ, to excite to humility; though "grace" may also intend the Gospel, the knowledge of which is imperfect, and may be increased in the use of means, and which is a special preservative against error, a growth in which saints should be concerned for:

and [in] the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; of his person, office, and grace, than which nothing is more valuable, and is to be preferred to everything; it is the principal thing in grace, and is the beginning and pledge of eternal life, and will issue in it; for an increase of which, and a growth in it, the word and ordinances are designed; and nothing can be a greater security against error than an experimental growing knowledge of Christ. The Syriac version adds, "and of God the Father"; and so some copies read:

to him [be] glory, both now, and for ever; or "to the day of eternity"; that is, to Christ, who is truly God, or otherwise such a doxology would not belong to him, be ascribed the glory of deity, of all divine perfections; the glory of all his offices and work as Mediator; the glory of man's salvation; and the glory of all that grace, and the growth of it, together with the knowledge of himself, which saints have from him; and that both in this world, and that which is to come.

Amen; so be it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 John 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 JOHN

The author of this epistle was John, the son of Zebedee, the disciple whom Jesus loved: he was the youngest of the apostles, and survived them all. He does not indeed put his name to this epistle, as the Apostles Paul, Peter, James, and Jude do to theirs; and it is easy to observe, that when this disciple, in his writings, had any occasion to speak of himself, it was usually by such a circumlocution, as the disciple whom Jesus loved, or the other disciple, studiously concealing his name: so that his not putting his name to this epistle need not create any scruple about his being the author of it, which everywhere breathes the temper and spirit of this great apostle; and whoever compares this epistle, and the Gospel written by him, together, will easily conclude it to be his, both from the style and subject matter of it: besides, as Eusebius asserts {a}, this epistle was generally received without scruple, both by ancient and modern writers. It is called "general", because it was not written and sent to any particular church, or person, and not because it was for the general use of the churches, for so are all the particular epistles but because it was written to the Christians in general, or to the believing Jews in general wherever they were; for that it was written to the Jews seems evident from **1Jo 2:2**. It was called, by some of the ancients, the epistle of John to the Parthians {b}; by whom must be meant not the natives of Parthia but the Jews professing to believe in Christ, who dwelt in that empire. We read of Parthian Jews a the feast of Pentecost, **Ac 2:9**, who at that time might be converted, and, upon their return to their own country, lay the foundation of a Gospel church state there Dr. Lightfoot {c} conjectures from a passage in **3Jo 1:9** that this epistle was written to the Corinthians; but there does not seem to be any sufficient reason for it. As for the time when, and place where, this epistle was written, it is not easy to say: some think it was written at Patmos, whither the apostle was banished in the reign of Domitian, and where he wrote the book of the Revelations; see **Re 1:9**; and here some say he wrote his Gospel, and this epistle, and that a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, and which he calls the last time or hour; and that his design in writing it was to exhort the believing Jews, either in Parthia, or scattered about in other countries, to brotherly love, and to warn them against false Christs and false prophets, which were now gone forth into the world to deceive men; see **1Jo 2:18**. Others think that it was written by him, when a very old man, after his return from his exile to Ephesus, where he resided during his life, and where he died, and was buried. It is called his "first" epistle general, not that it is the first general epistle, for the other two are written to particular persons, but is the first he wrote, and which is general: the occasion, and manifest design of it, is to promote brotherly love, which he enforces upon the best principles, and with the strongest arguments, taken from the love of God and Christ, from the commandment of Christ, and its being an evidence of regeneration, and the truth and glory of a profession of religion: and also to oppose and stop the growth of licentious principles, and practices, and heretical doctrines.

The licentious principles and practices he condemns are these, that believers had no sin in them, or need not be concerned about it, nor about their outward conversation, so be they had but knowledge; and these men boasted of their communion with God, notwithstanding their impieties; and which were the sentiments and practices of the Nicolaitans, Gnostics, and Carpocratians. The heresies he sets himself against, and refutes, are such as regard the doctrine of the Trinity, and the person and office of Christ. There were some who denied a distinction, of persons in the Trinity, and asserted there was but one person; that the Father was not distinct from the Son, nor the Son from the Father; and, by confounding both, tacitly denied there was either, as Simon Magus, and his followers; regard is had to these in **1Jo 2:22** and others, as the unbelieving Jews, denied that Jesus was the Messiah, or that Christ was come in the flesh; these are taken notice of in **1Jo 2:22**. Others, that professed to believe in Jesus Christ, denied his proper deity, and asserted he was a mere man, and did not exist before he took flesh, of the virgin, as Ebion and Cerinthus; these are opposed in **1Jo 1:1**. And others denied his real humanity, and affirmed that he was a mere phantom; that he only had the appearance of a man, and assumed human nature, and suffered, and died, and rose again in show only, and not in reality; of which sort were the followers of Saturninus and Basilides, and which are confuted in **1Jo 1:1**. This epistle is, by Clemens Alexandrinus {d}, called his "greater" or "larger epistle", it being so in comparison of the other two that follow.

{a} Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 24. {b} Augustin. apud Grotium. {c} Hor. Hebr. in 1 Cor. i. 14. {d} Stromat. l. 2. p. 389.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 JOHN 1

In this chapter the apostle gives a summary of the Gospel, and the evidence of it, and from thence presses to a holy life and conversation, The sum of the Gospel is Jesus Christ, who is described both as God and man; his deity is expressed by being that which was from the beginning, the Word of life, life, and eternal life; his humanity by being the life manifested in the flesh, of which the apostles had full evidence by the several senses of seeing, hearing, and handling, and so were capable of bearing witness to the truth thereof, **1Jo 1:1**. And the ends had in view in giving this summary, evidence, and testimony, were, that the saints wrote unto might have fellowship with the apostles, whose fellowship was with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, and that their joy on hearing these things might be full, **1Jo 1:3**. And the amount of the message declared by them was, that God is light, or a pure and holy Being, and that there is no darkness of sin, or unholiness in him; wherefore all such that pretend to communion with him, and live a sinful course of life, are liars; only such have fellowship with him, and with his Son, whose blood cleanses them from all sin, who live holy lives and conversations, **1Jo 1:5**, not, that it is to be expected that men should be clear of the being of sin in this life, only that they should, as often as they sin, be humbled for it, and confess it before God, who will forgive them, and cleanse them from all unrighteousness; but as for those who affirm they have no sin in them, or any done by them, they are self-deceivers, the truth of grace is not in them, nor the word of God, and they make him a liar, **1Jo 1:8**.

Ver. 1. That which was from the beginning,.... By which is meant not the Gospel, as if the apostle's design was to assert the antiquity of that, and clear it from the charge of novelty; for though that is called the word, and the word of life, and is the Spirit which gives life, and is the means of quickening dead sinners, and brings the report of eternal life and salvation by Christ, yet the seeing of it with bodily eyes, and handling it with corporeal hands, do not agree with that; but Jesus Christ is here intended, who in his divine nature was, really existed as a divine person, as the everlasting Jehovah, the eternal I AM, which is, and was, and is to come, and existed "from the beginning"; not from the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel by John only, for he was before the Gospel was preached, being the first preacher of it himself, and before John was; yea, before the prophets, before Abraham, and before Adam, and before all creatures, from the beginning of time, and of the creation of the world, being the Maker of all things, even from everlasting; for otherwise he could not have been set up in an office capacity so early, or God's elect be chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and they have grace and blessings given them in him before the world began, or an everlasting covenant be made with him; see **Joh 1:1**;

which we have heard; this, with what follows, proves him to be truly and really man; for when the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men, the apostles heard, and saw, and handled him; they not only heard a voice from heaven, declaring him to be the Son of God, but they often heard him speak himself, both in private conversation with them, and in his public ministry; they heard his many excellent discourses on the mount, and elsewhere, and those that were particularly delivered to them a little before his death; and blessed were they on this account, Mt 13:16;

which we have seen with our eyes: with the eyes of the body, with their own, and not another's; and they saw him in human nature, and the common actions of life he did, as eating, drinking, walking, &c. and his many miracles; they saw him raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, restore sight to the blind, cause the lame to walk, the dumb to speak, and the deaf to hear; and they saw him transfigured on the mount. John was one that was present at that time, and saw his glory, as he also was when he hung upon the cross, and saw him bleeding, gasping, and dying there; they saw him after his resurrection from the dead, he showed himself to them alive, and was seen of them forty days; they saw him go up to heaven, and a cloud receiving him out of their sight:

which we have looked upon; wistly and intently, once and again, and a thousand times, and with the utmost pleasure and delight; and knew him perfectly well, and were able to describe exactly his person, stature, features, and the lineaments of his body:

and our hands have handled of the Word of life; as Peter did when Jesus caught him by the hand on the water, when he was just ready to sink; and as this apostle did, when he leaned on his bosom; and as Thomas did, even after his resurrection, when he thrust his hand into his side; and as all the apostles were called upon to see and handle him, that it was he himself, and not a spirit, which has not flesh and bones as he had. Now as this is said of Christ, the Word of life, who is so called, because he has life in himself, as God, as the Mediator, and as man, and is the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal, it must be understood as he, the Word, is made manifest in the flesh; for he, as the Word, or as a divine person, or as considered in his divine nature, is not to be seen nor handled: this therefore is spoken of the Word, or of the person of Christ, God-man, with respect to his human nature, as united to the Logos, or Word of God; and so is a proof of the truth and reality of his human nature, by several of the senses.

1 John 1:2

Ver. 2. For the life was manifested,.... That is, the Word of life, who is life itself, the fountain of life, having it as God, in and of himself, without derivation from, and independent of another, originally and eternally, and who is the cause, author, and giver of life in every sense to others; this living God, who from all eternity was invisible, was in the fulness of time manifested in human nature; see **Joh 1:14**.

And we have seen [it]; as before with the eyes of their bodies:

and bear witness; for they were both eye and ear witnesses of the Word, and of the truth of his incarnation, and bore a faithful record to his proper deity, and real humanity:

and show unto you that eternal life; Jesus Christ, the true God, and eternal life, as in **1Jo 5:20**; so called, because he has everlasting life in himself; as he is the living God, and because he has eternal life for all his people; not only the purpose and promise of it are in him, but the thing itself; and it is in his power and gift to bestow it on all the Father hath given to him, and to them he does give it. The beginning of it lies in the knowledge of him, and the consummation of it will be in the lasting vision and enjoyment of him:

which was with the Father; that is, which life, eternal life, and Word of life, was from the beginning, or from all eternity with God the Father; which phrase is expressive of the eternal existence of Christ, as the Word and Son of God, with his Father, his relation to him, his oneness in nature, and equality with him, and his personal distinction from him; see **Joh 1:1**;

and was manifested unto us; in human nature, as before observed, and that to the apostles, as he was not to the patriarchs and prophets; for though they saw him in promise, in prophecy, in type, and figure, and he sometimes appeared in an human form for a short time to them, yet they did not see him incarnate, in actual union with human nature; nor had they him dwelling among them, and conversing with them, as the apostles had; this was an happiness peculiar to them.

1 John 1:3

Ver. 3. That which we have seen and heard,.... This is repeated, both to confirm and illustrate what had been before said, and to carry on the discourse to what follows:

declare we unto you; in the ministry of the word; the person and offices of Christ being the sum and substance of the Gospel ministration, that declares him to be the true God and eternal life, God over all, blessed for ever; and truly man, made of a woman, and made under the law; and to be the only Mediator between God and man, to be prophet, priest; and King, and to be the alone Saviour and Redeemer: this declares the greatness and excellency of his salvation, what an able, proper, and suitable Saviour he is; and what precious promises and spiritual blessings are in him, even all grace and eternal glory. And this declaration of him is made in the Gospel, for the following ends and purposes,

that ye also may have fellowship with us; in hearing, seeing, and handling of Christ in a spiritual sense; and by enjoying the same privileges in God's house and family, the same ordinances and spiritual provisions; joining and partaking with them in all the immunities and advantages of a Gospel church state here; and by being with them to all eternity hereafter.

And truly our fellowship [is] with the Father; the Father of Christ, the covenant God and Father of his people; and which they have with him, when under the influence and witnessings of the spirit of adoption, and can in the strength of faith call him their Father, draw nigh to him through Christ as such, and are indulged with his presence, and the discoveries of his love:

and with his Son Jesus Christ; being in union to him, they become partakers of him, and of his blessings; they receive out of his fulness, and grace for grace; they are admitted to an intimacy and familiarity with him; they are had into his chambers of secret retirement; they are brought into his banqueting house, where his banner over them is love, and where he sups with them, and they with him; and into this fellowship are they called by the grace of God, through the Gospel; as also they have fellowship with the blessed Spirit, though not here mentioned; see 2Co 13:14.

1 John 1:4

Ver. 4. And these things write we unto you,.... Concerning the deity and eternity of Christ, the Word and concerning the truth of his humanity, and the manifestation of him in the flesh; and concerning that eternal life and salvation which is declared in the Gospel to be in him; and concerning the saints' fellowship one with another, and with God the Father, and with Jesus Christ:

that your joy may be full; meaning either their spiritual joy in this life, which has Christ for its object, and is increased by the consideration of his proper deity, his incarnation and mediation by a view of free justification by his righteousness, and atonement by his blood; by a sight of his glorious person by faith, and by intimate communion with him, and a discovery of his love, which passeth knowledge: and which joy, when it is large, and very great, may, in a comparative sense, be said to be full, though not absolutely so, and being as much as can well be enjoyed in this state; and nothing can more contribute to it than a declaration of the above things in the Gospel, and an experimental acquaintance with them, and enjoyment of them: or else it may intend the joy of the saints in the world to come, in the presence of Christ, where are fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore; and so may express the ultimate glory and happiness of God's people, which is the chief end, as of his purposes, promises, and covenant, so of the Gospel, and the declaration of it. The Syriac version renders it, "that our joy, which is in you, may be full"; it is the joy of the ministers of the word, when the saints are established in the faith of Christ's person and offices, and have communion with him, with which view they declare him, and bear record of him. Some copies read, our joy.

1 John 1:5

Ver. 5. This then is the message,.... Of God by his Son the Word, or from Christ by his apostles. The Syriac version renders it, "this is the Gospel"; which is good news from a far country, a message sent from the King of kings to sinful men: or this is the annunciation, or declaration; that is, the thing declared, or showed. Some render it, "this is the promise", that whereas God is light, such who walk in the light shall have communion with him, and others shall not:

which we have heard of him; of Christ, who has declared him, that he is light without any mixture of darkness; that is a pure Spirit, and must be worshipped in a spiritual way; and that only spiritual worshippers are such as he seeks, and admits to communion with him. Moreover, they might hear and learn this of Christ, by his telling them that he himself was light, who is the image of the invisible God, insomuch, that he that has seen the Son, has seen the Father also. Wherefore, if the one is light, the other must be likewise; nor is there any coming to the Father, and enjoying communion with him, but through Christ; all which our Lord told his disciples. The Ethiopic version reads, "which ye have heard", very wrongly; for the words regard the apostles, who made a faithful declaration of the message they heard, and had from Christ, which is as follows:

and declare unto you that God is light; that is, God the Father, as distinguished from "him", Christ, of whom they had heard this message, and from Jesus Christ his Son, **1Jo 1:7**, what is declared of him, agreeably to the report of Christ, is, that he is "light"; that is, as light is opposed to the darkness of sin; he is pure and holy in his nature and works, and of such pure eyes as not to behold iniquity; and so perfectly holy, that angels cover their times before him, when they speak of his holiness: and as light is opposed to the darkness of ignorance, he is wise and knowing; he knows himself, his own nature, being, and perfections, his Son and Spirit, and their distinct modes of subsisting; he sees clearly all things in himself, all things he could do, or has determined shall be done; he has perfect knowledge of all creatures and things, and the darkness and the light are alike unto him, nor can the former hide from him: he is knowable, and to be discerned; he is clothed with light, and dwells in it; he may be known by the works of creation and providence; even the invisible things of him, his eternal power and Godhead, may be clearly seen and understood by them, and especially in his word, and most clearly in his Son; it is owing to the darkness of men, and not to any in and about God, who is light, that he is so little known as he is: and, like the light, he illuminates others; he is the Father of lights, the author and giver of all light; of the light of reason to men in general; and of grace here, and glory hereafter, to his own people, which are both signified by light; in whose light they see light; and he refreshes and delights their souls with the light of his countenance now, and with his glorious presence in the other world:

and in him is no darkness at all; no darkness of sin; nothing is more contrary to him, or more distant from him: nor any darkness of error and ignorance; what is unknown to men, as the times and seasons; what angels were ignorant of, and even Christ, as man, as the day and hour of Jerusalem's destruction, were known to the Father; in him is no ignorance of anything whatever; nor is there any variableness or shadow of turning in him, as there is in the luminous body of the sun; but God is always the same pure and holy, wise and knowing Being. It is usual with the Cabalistic Jews {e}, to call the supreme Being rwa, light the most simple light, hidden light, and infinite light, with respect to his nature, glory, and majesty, and with regard also to his grace and mercy, justice and judgment; though, as R. Sangart says {f}, this is to be understood of him figuratively.

{e} Lex. Cabalist, p. 63, 64. {f} Sepher Cosri, par. 2. sect. 2. fol. 61. 2.

1 John 1:6

Ver. 6. If we say that we have fellowship with him,.... The Alexandrian copy reads, "for if we say": that is, if any profess to be partakers of the divine nature, to be like unto God, and to have communion with him, to have the light of his countenance, and the discoveries of his love:

and walk in darkness; in the darkness of sin, ignorance, and unbelief, or are in a state of unregeneracy and blindness; whose understandings are darkened, and they know not God in Christ, nor have any true sight and sense of themselves, their sin and danger; and are ignorant of Christ and his righteousness, and the way of salvation by him; and are strangers to the Spirit of God, and the work of his grace; and are unacquainted with the truths of the Gospel; and not only so, but go on in darkness more and more; prefer it to the light, love it, and the works of it; have fellowship with them, and choose them; take pleasure in the ways of sin and wickedness, and continue, and walk on in them; if such persons pretend to fellowship with God, they are liars:

we lie; it cannot be, it is a contradiction, the thing is impossible and impracticable; what communion hath light with darkness? or what fellowship can the throne of iniquity, or those in whom sin reigns, have with God? for God is light, and were they partakers of him, or like unto him, or had communion with him, they would consequently be in the light, and not in darkness, and much less walk in it; wherefore they are liars,

and do not the truth: they do not say the truth, nor act according to it; they do not act uprightly or sincerely, but are hypocrites, and pretend to that which they have not; and if they did the truth, they would come to the light, and not walk in darkness; see **Joh 3:21**.

1 John 1:7

Ver. 7. But if we walk in the light,.... Are persons enlightened by the Spirit of God, so as to have a true sight and sense of sin, to know Christ, and the way of salvation by him; and are children of the light, and are going on and increasing in spiritual light and knowledge; walk on in Christ, the light, by faith, and in the light and truth of the Gospel, and as becomes it, and as children of light; and as such who are called out of darkness into marvellous light:

as he is in the light; according to the light which he has given, who is light itself, is in it, and dwells in it. This "as" denotes not equality, but likeness: when this is the case, then it is a clear point, that

we have fellowship one with another; not with the saints, with the apostles, and other Christians, but with God: "we have mutual communion", as the Arabic version renders it; God with us, and we with him. Some copies read, "with him", as in **1Jo 1:6**; and such a reading the sense requires; and agreeably to this the Ethiopic version renders it, "and we are partakers among ourselves with him"; that is, we all jointly and mutually appear to be like him, and partake of his nature, and have communion with him; and not only so, but with his Son Jesus Christ, as appears from our having a share in the cleansing efficacy of his blood:

and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin: there is a pollution on human nature, which is original, natural, universal, and internal, and is such that nothing can remove but the blood of Christ; not ceremonial ablutions and sacrifices, nor moral duties, nor evangelical performances, or submission to Gospel ordinances, and particularly baptism, which is not the putting away the faith of the flesh; nor even the graces of the Spirit, no, not faith, no otherwise than as it has to do with this blood; for this cleansing is not to be understood of sanctification, for that more properly belongs to the Spirit of God, and besides, does not cleanse from all sin; for notwithstanding this, sin is in the saints: but either of the atonement of sin, by the sacrifice of Christ, and so of a complete justification from it by his blood, which is put for both his active and passive obedience, the one being finished in the other; or rather of the pardon of sin, procured by the blood of Christ, and the application of that blood to the conscience, which purges it from dead works, and which has a continued virtue in it for that purpose. Christ's blood, being applied by the Spirit of God, has been always cleansing from sin; it had this virtue in it, and was of this use, even before it was actually shed, to the Old Testament saints; whence Christ is said to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and it has the same efficacy now as when first shed, and will have to the end of the world; and being sprinkled upon the conscience, by the Spirit of God, it takes away the sins of believers, and cleanses from them, as fast as the corruption of nature rises, or sins appear; and removes them out of their sight, and speaks peace to their souls; and which is owing, as to the dignity of Christ's person and the value of his sacrifice, so to his continual intercession, advocacy, and mediation; and which reaches to all sin, original and actual, secret and open sins; sins of heart, thought, lip, and life; sins of omission and commission, greater or lesser sins, committed against light and knowledge, grace and mercy, law and Gospel, all but the sin against the Holy Ghost; and in this Christ was the antitype of the scape goat, of which the Jews say {g}, that

"it atoned for all the transgressions of the law, whether small or great, sins of presumption, or of ignorance, known, or not known, which were against an affirmative or negative command, which deserved cutting off (by the hand of God), or death by the sanhedrim."

The Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, "from all our sins"; and this must be ascribed to the greatness of his person, as the Son of God; wherefore the emphasis lies on these words, "his Son": the Son of God, who is equal with God, and is truly and properly God: as it must be the blood of man that must, according to the law, be shed, to atone for and expiate sin, and cleanse from it, and that of an innocent man, who is holy, harmless, and without sin; so it must not be the blood of a mere man, though ever so holy, but the blood of one that is God as well as man; see Ac 20:28. The divine nature of the Son of God, being in union with the human nature, put virtue into his blood to produce such an effect, which still continues, and will, as long as there is any occlusion for it.

{g} Misn. Shebuot, c. 1. sect. 6.

1 John 1:8

Ver. 8. If we say that we have no sin,.... Notwithstanding believers are cleansed from their sins by the blood of Christ, yet they are not without sin; no man is without sin: this is not only true of all men, as they come into the world, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, and of all that are in a state of unregeneracy, and of God's elect, while in such a state, but even of all regenerated and sanctified persons in this life; as appears by the ingenuous confessions of sin made by the saints in all ages; by their complaints concerning it, and groans under it; by the continual war in them between flesh and spirit; and by their prayers for the discoveries of pardoning grace, and for the fresh application of Christ's blood for cleansing; by their remissness in the discharge of duty, and by their frequent slips and falls, and often backslidings: and though their sins are all pardoned, and they are justified from all things by the righteousness of Christ, yet they are not without sin; though they are freed from the guilt of sin, and are under no obligation to punishment on account of it, yet not from the being of it; their sins were indeed transferred from them to Christ, and he has bore them, and took them and put them away, and they are redeemed from them, and are acquitted, discharged, and pardoned, so that sin is not imputed to them, and God sees no iniquity in them in the article of justification; and also, their iniquities are caused to pass from them, as to the guilt of them, and are taken out of their sight, and they have no more conscience of them, having their hearts sprinkled and purged by the blood of Jesus, and are clear of all condemnation, the curse of the law, the wrath of God, or the second death, by reason of them; yet pardon of sin, and justification from it, though they take away the guilt of sin, and free from obligation to punishment, yet they do not take out the being of sin, or cause it to cease to act, or do not make sins cease to be sins, or change the nature of actions, of sinful ones, to make them harmless, innocent, or indifferent; the sins of believers are equally sins with other persons, are of the same kind and nature, and equally transgressions of the law, and many of them are attended with more aggravating circumstances, and are taken notice of by God, and resented by him, and for which he chastises his people in love: now though a believer may say that he has not this or that particular sin, or is not guilty of this or that sin, for he has the seeds of all sin in him, yet he cannot say he has no sin; and though he may truly say he shall have no sin, for in the other state the being and principle of sin will be removed, and the saints will be perfectly holy in themselves, yet he cannot, in this present life, say that he is without it: if any of us who profess to be cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ should affirm this,

we deceive ourselves; such persons must be ignorant of themselves, and put a cheat upon themselves, thinking themselves to be something when they are nothing; flattering themselves what pure and holy creatures they are, when there is a fountain of sin and wickedness in them; these are self-deceptions, sad delusions, and gross impositions upon themselves:

and the truth is not in us; it is a plain case the truth of grace is not in such persons, for if there was a real work of God upon their souls, they would know and discern the plague of their own hearts, the impurity of their nature, and the imperfection of their obedience; nor is the word of truth in them, for if that had an entrance into them, and worked effectually in them, they would in the light of it discover much sin and iniquity in them; and indeed there is no principle of truth, no veracity in them; there is no sincerity nor ingenuity in them; they do not speak honestly and uprightly, but contrary to the dictates of their own conscience.

1 John 1:9

Ver. 9. If we confess our sins,.... Not to one other; for though it is our duty to confess our faults to our fellow creatures and fellow Christians which are committed against them, yet are under no obligation to confess such as are more immediately against God, and which lie between him and ourselves; or at least it is sufficient to confess and acknowledge in general what sinful creatures we are, without entering into particulars; for confession of sin is to be made to God, against whom it is committed, and who only can pardon: and a man that truly confesses his sin is one that the Spirit of God has convinced of it, and has shown him its exceeding sinfulness, and filled him with a godly sorrow for it, and given him repentance unto salvation, that needeth not to be repented of; and who, under such a sight and sense of sin, and concern for it, comes and acknowledges it before the Lord, humbly imploring, for Christ's sake, his pardoning grace and mercy; and such obtain it:

he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins: forgiveness of sin here intends not the act of forgiveness, as in God, proceeding upon the bloodshed and sacrifice of Christ, which is done at once, and includes all sin, past, present, and to come; but an application of pardoning grace to a poor sensible sinner, humbled under a sense of sin, and confessing it before the Lord; and confession of sin is not the cause or condition of pardon, nor of the manifestation of it, but is descriptive of the person, and points him out, to whom God will and does make known his forgiving love; for to whomsoever he grants repentance, he gives the remission of sin; in doing of which he is faithful to his word of promise; such as in Pr 28:13; "and just";

in being "true", as the Arabic version adds, to his word; and showing a proper regard to the blood and sacrifice of his Son; for his blood being shed, and hereby satisfaction made to the law and justice of God, it is a righteous thing in him to justify from sin, and forgive the sinner for whom Christ has shed his blood, and not impute it to him, or punish him for it; though the word here used may answer to the Hebrew word qydu, which sometimes carries in it the notion and idea of mercy and beneficence; hence mercy to the poor is sometimes expressed by righteousness; and the righteous acts of God intend his mercies and benefits unto men; see **Da 4:27**; and so forgiveness of sin springs from the tender mercies of our God, and is both an act of justice and of mercy; of justice, with respect to the blood of Christ, and of pure grace and mercy to the pardoned sinner: the following clause,

and to cleanse us, from all unrighteousness, is but the same thing expressed in different words; for all unrighteousness is sin, and to cleanse from sin is to remove the guilt of it, by an application of the blood of Christ for pardon. The antecedent to the relative "he" in the text, is either God, who is light, and with whom the saints have fellowship; or his Son Jesus Christ, who is the nearest antecedent, and who, being truly God, has a power to forgive sin.

1 John 1:10

Ver. 10. If we say that we have not sinned,.... Have never sinned, in time past as well as now; deny original sin, and that men are born in sin, but affirm they come into the world pure and holy; and assert that concupiscence is not sin; and so not regarding internal lusts and desires as sinful, only what is external, fancy they have so lived as to have been without sin: but if any of us give out such an assertion,

we make him a liar: that is, God, who in his word declares that the wicked are estranged from the womb, and go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies; that his own people are transgressors from the womb; that all have sinned and come short of his glory; and that there is none that does good, no, not one, but all are under sin, under the power and guilt of it, and become filthy by it, and so obnoxious to the wrath of God:

and his word is not in us; either Christ the Word of God, or rather the word of God which declares these things; no regard is had unto it; it "is not with us", as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it; it is not used and attended to as the rule and standard of truth, but is east away and despised; at least it has no place in the hearts of such, nor does it work effectually; for, was this the case, they would have other notions of themselves than that of sinless creatures. The apostle has regard either to the Gnostics, a set of heretics of this age, who fancied themselves pure, spiritual, and perfect, even in the midst of all their impurities, and notwithstanding their vicious lives; or to judaizing Christians, and it may be to the Jews themselves, who entertained such sort of notions as these of being perfect and without sin {h}.

{h} Vid. T. Bab. Temura, fol. 15. 2. & Bava Kama, fol. 80. 1. T. Hieros. Sota, fol. 24. 1. &. Chagiga, fol. 77. 4.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 John 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 JOHN 2

In this chapter the apostle comforts the saints under a sense of sin; urges them to an observance of the commandments of God, in imitation of Christ, particularly to the new commandment of brotherly love, and gives his reasons for it; dehorts them from the love of the world, and the things of it; cautions them against false teachers and antichrists, and exhorts them to abide in Christ, and persevere in the faith of him. He first declares that the end of his writing was to prevent their sinning; but supposing any should fall into sin through infirmity, he comforts them with the consideration of the advocacy of Christ, and of his being the propitiation for the sins both of Jews and Gentiles, **1Jo 2:1**, and whereas some persons might boast of their knowledge of Christ, and neglect his commands, he observes, that the keeping of them is the best evidence of true knowledge, and of the sincerity of their love to God, and of their being in Christ; and that such who show no regard to them are liars, and the truth is not in them; and such that profess to be in Christ and abide in him, ought to walk as they have him for an example, **1Jo 2:3**, and instances in a particular commandment, to love one another, which on different accounts is called an old and a new commandment, and which has been verified both in Christ and his people; for which a reason is given in the latter, the darkness being past, and the true light shining, **1Jo 2:7**, upon which some propositions are founded, as that he that professes to be in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness to this very moment; and that he that loves his brother is evidently in the light, nor will he easily give or take offence; and that he that hates his brother is not only in darkness, but walks in it, being blinded by it, and so knows not whither he is going, **1Jo 2:9**, and this commandment of love the apostle writes to the saints, as distinguished into the several classes of fathers, young men, and children; and urges it on them from the consideration of the blessings of grace peculiar to them; as ancient knowledge to fathers, strength and victory to young men, knowledge of the Father, and remission of sins, to children, **1Jo 2:12**, and then he dissuades from the love of worldly things, seeing the love of them is not consistent with the love of God; and seeing the things that are in it are vain and sinful, and are not of God, but of the world; and since the world and its lust pass away, when he that does the will of God abides for ever, **1Jo 2:15**, he next observes unto them, that there were many antichrists in the world; which was an evidence of its being the last time; and these he describes as schismatics and apostates from the Christian churches, **1Jo 2:18**, but as for the saints he writes to, they were of another character, they were truly Christians, having an anointing from the Holy One, by which they knew all things; nor did the apostle write to them as ignorant, but as knowing persons, and able to distinguish between truth and error, **1Jo 2:20**, and then he goes on with his description of antichristian liars, showing that they were such who denied Jesus to be the Messiah, and the relation that is between the Father and the Son, **1Jo 2:22**, and closes the chapter with an exhortation to perseverance in the doctrine of Christ; since it was what they had heard from the beginning, and since by so doing they would continue in the Father and in the Son, and besides had the promise of eternal life, **1Jo 2:24**, and indeed this was the main thing in view in writing to them concerning seducers, to preserve them from them, though indeed this was in a great measure needless, since the anointing they had received abode in them; and taught them all things, and according as they regarded its teaching they would abide in Christ, **1Jo 2:26**, to which he exhorts them from the consideration of that boldness and confidence it would give them at his appearance, who they must know is righteous, and so that everyone that doth righteousness is born of him, **1Jo 2:28**.

Ver. 1. My little children,.... The apostle may address the saints under this character, on account of their regeneration by the Spirit and grace of God, in which they were as newborn babes; and on account of his being the instrument of their conversion, and so was their spiritual father, and therefore calls them his own children; and he might the rather use such a way of speaking, because of his advanced age, being now in his old age, and John the elder in age as well as in office; as well as to show his paternal affection for them, and care of them, and that what he had wrote, or should write, was not from any disrespect, but from pure love to them; and it might serve to put them in mind of their weakness in faith, in knowledge, and spiritual strength, that they might not entertain high notions of themselves, as if they were perfect and without infirmities; and it is easy to observe, that this is one of Christ's expressions, Joh 13:33, from whose lips the apostle took it, whose words and phrases he greatly delighted in, as he seems to do in this, by his frequent use of it; see **1Jo 2:18**.

These things write I unto you; concerning the purity and holiness of God, who is light itself; concerning fellowship with him, which no one that lives in sin can have; concerning pardon and cleansing from sin by the blood of Christ, and concerning sin being in them, and they not without it. The Ethiopic version reads, "we write", as in **1Jo 1:4**;

that ye sin not; not that he thought they could be entirely without it, either without the being of it, or the commission of it, in thought, word, or deed, for this would be to suppose that which is contrary to his own words, in **1Jo 1:8**; but he suggests that the end of his writing on these subjects was, that they might not live in sin, and indulge themselves in a vicious course of living, give up themselves to it, and walk in it, and work it with all greediness: and nothing could be more suitably adapted to such an end than the consideration of the holiness of God, who calls by his grace; and of the necessity of light and grace and holiness in men to communion with him; and of the pardoning grace of God and cleansing blood of Christ, which, when savingly applied, sets men against sin, and makes them zealous of good works; and of the indwelling of sin in the saints, which puts them upon their guard against it:

and if any man sin; as every man does, even everyone that is in the light, and walks in it, and has fellowship with God; everyone that believes in Christ, and is justified through his righteousness, and pardoned by his blood; everyone of the little children; for the apostle is not speaking of mankind in general who sin, for Christ is not an advocate for all that sin, but of these in particular; hence the Arabic version renders it, "if any of you sin"; and this, with the following, he says not to encourage in sin, but to comfort under a sense of it:

we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; Christ is an advocate, not for just or righteous persons, for as he came not to call these to repentance, nor to die for them, so such have no need of an advocate, nor is he one for them; but as he came to call sinners, and to save them, and died for them, the just for the unjust, so he is an advocate, and makes intercession for transgressors; and not for all men, though they have all sinned; not for the world, or those so called in distinction from the persons given him by his Father, for these he prays not; but for all the elect, and whatsoever charges are brought against them he answers to them, and for them; and for all that believe in him, be they weak or strong, even for the apostles as well as others; for they were not without sin, were men of like passions as others, and carried about with them a body of sin, and had their daily infirmities, and so needed an advocate as others; and hence John says, "we have an advocate", &c. but then Christ is not an advocate for sin, though for sinners; he does not vindicate the commission of sin, or plead for the performance of it; he is no patron of iniquity; nor does he deny that his clients have sinned, or affirm that their actions are not sins; he allows in court all their sins, with all their aggravated circumstances; nor does he go about to excuse or extenuate them; but he is an advocate for the non-imputation of them, and for the application of pardon to them: he pleads in their favour, that these sins have been laid upon him, and he has bore them; that his blood has been shed for the remission of them, and that he has made full satisfaction for them; and therefore in justice they ought not to be laid to their charge; but that the forgiveness of them should be applied unto them, for the relief and comfort of their burdened and distressed consciences: and for this he is an advocate for his poor sinning people "with the Father"; who being the first Person, and the Son the advocate, and the Spirit sustaining a like character, is only mentioned; and he being God against whom sin is committed, and to whom the satisfaction is made; and the rather, as he is the Father of Christ, and of those for whom he is an advocate; seeing it may be concluded that his pleadings will be with success, since he is not only related to him, and has an interest in him himself, but the persons also, whose patron he is, are related to him, and have a share in his paternal affection and care: moreover, this phrase, as it expresses the distinct personality of Christ from the Father, so his being with him in heaven at his right hand, and nearness to him; where he discharges this office of his, partly by appearing in person for his people in the presence of God; and partly by carrying in and presenting their confessions of sin, and their prayers for the fresh discoveries and applications of pardoning grace, which he offers up to his Father with the sweet incense of his mediation; and chiefly by pleading the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, which are carried within the vail, and are always in sight, and call aloud for peace and pardon; as also by answering and removing the charges and accusations of the court adversary, the accuser of the brethren, the devil; as well as by the declarations of his will, demanding in point of justice, in consideration of his sufferings and death, that such and such blessings be bestowed upon his people, as pardon, righteousness, grace, and supplies of grace, and at last glory; and by applying these benefits to their souls as a "comforter", which the word here used also signifies, and is so rendered, Joh 14:16; and by the Arabic version here. Now the saints have but one advocate, and that is enough for them; the apostle does not say we have advocates, but "an advocate"; not angels, nor saints departed, but Jesus Christ only, who is the one Mediator between God and man, **1Ti 2:5**: and he is a continual one, he ever lives to make intercession; his blood is always speaking, and he always pleading; and therefore it is said "we have", not we have had, or we shall have an advocate and he is a prevalent one, he is always heard, he thoroughly pleads the cause he undertakes, and ever carries it; which is owing to the dignity of his person, his interest with his Father, and the virtue and value of his sacrifice: and he every way fit for such a work, for he is "righteous"; not only in his natures, both divine and human, but in his office, as Mediator, which he faithfully and righteously performs; he is a very proper person to plead for guilty persons, which he could not do if he himself was guilty; but he is so holy and righteous that nothing can be objected to him by God; and it need not be doubted by men that he will act the faithful part to them, and righteously serve them and their cause; and it is moreover his righteousness which he has wrought out, and is imputed to them, that carries the cause for them; and therefore this character of Christ fitly added, as is also the following. The Jews {i} have adopted the word in the text into their language, but have applied it to a different purpose, to alms deeds, repentance, and good works. Much more agreeably Philo the Jew {k} speaks of the son of perfect virtue, paraklhtw, "as an advocate" for the forgiveness of sins, and for a supply of everlasting good things.

{i} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 11. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 32. 1. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 10. 1. {k} De Vita Mosis, l. iii. p. 673.

1 John 2:2

Ver. 2. And he is the propitiation for our sins,.... For the sins of us who now believe, and are Jews:

and not for ours only; but for the sins of Old Testament saints, and of those who shall hereafter believe in Christ, and of the Gentiles also, signified in the next clause:

but also for [the sins] of the whole world; the Syriac version renders it, "not for us only, but also for the whole world"; that is, not for the Jews only, for John was a Jew, and so were those he wrote unto, but for the Gentiles also. Nothing is more common in Jewish writings than to call the Gentiles amle, "the world"; and Mlweh lk, "the whole world"; and Mlweh twmwa, "the nations of the world" {l}; See Gill on "John 12:19"; and the word "world" is so used in Scripture; see **Joh 3:16**; and stands opposed to a notion the Jews have of the Gentiles, that hrpk Nhl Nya, "there is no propitiation for them" {m}: and it is easy to observe, that when this phrase is not used of the Gentiles, it is to be understood in a limited and restrained sense; as when they say {n},

"it happened to a certain high priest, that when he went out of the sanctuary, amle ylwk, "the whole world" went after him;"

which could only design the people in the temple. And elsewhere {o} it is said,

"amle ylwk, "the "whole world" has left the Misna, and gone after the "Gemara";"

which at most can only intend the Jews; and indeed only a majority of their doctors, who were conversant with these writings: and in another place {p},

"amle ylwk, "the whole world" fell on their faces, but Raf did not fall on his face;"

where it means no more than the congregation. Once more, it is said {q}, when

"R. Simeon ben Gamaliel entered (the synagogue), amle ylwk, "the whole world" stood up before him;"

that is, the people in the synagogue: to which may be added {r},

"when a great man makes a mourning, amle ylwk, "the whole world" come to honour him;"

i.e. a great number of persons attend the funeral pomp: and so these phrases, ygylp al amle ylwk, "the whole world" is not divided, or does not dissent {s}; yrbo amle ylwk, "the whole world" are of opinion {t}, are frequently met with in the Talmud, by which, an agreement among the Rabbins, in certain points, is designed; yea, sometimes the phrase, "all the men of the world" {u}, only intend the inhabitants of a city where a synagogue was, and, at most, only the Jews: and so this phrase, "all the world", or "the whole world", in Scripture, unless when it signifies the whole universe, or the habitable earth, is always used in a limited sense, either for the Roman empire, or the churches of Christ in the world, or believers, or the present inhabitants of the world, or a part of them only, **Lu 2:1**; and so it is in this epistle, **1Jo 5:19**; where the whole world lying in wickedness is manifestly distinguished from the saints, who are of God, and belong not to the world; and therefore cannot be understood of all the individuals in the world; and the like distinction is in this text itself, for "the sins of the whole world" are opposed to "our sins", the sins of the apostle and others to whom he joins himself; who therefore belonged not to, nor were a part of the whole world, for whose sins Christ is a propitiation as for theirs: so that this passage cannot furnish out any argument for universal redemption; for besides these things, it may be further observed, that for whose sins Christ is a propitiation, their sins are atoned for and pardoned, and their persons justified from all sin, and so shall certainly be glorified, which is not true of the whole world, and every man and woman in it; moreover, Christ is a propitiation through faith in his blood, the benefit of his propitiatory sacrifice is only received and enjoyed through faith; so that in the event it appears that Christ is a propitiation only for believers, a character which does not agree with all mankind; add to this, that for whom Christ is a propitiation he is also an advocate, **1Jo 2:1**; but he is not an advocate for every individual person in the world; yea, there is a world he will not pray for Joh 17:9, and consequently is not a propitiation for them. Once more, the design of the apostle in these words is to comfort his "little children" with the advocacy and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, who might fall into sin through weakness and inadvertency; but what comfort would it yield to a distressed mind, to be told that Christ was a propitiation not only for the sins of the apostles and other saints, but for the sins of every individual in the world, even of these that are in hell? Would it not be natural for persons in such circumstances to argue rather against, than for themselves, and conclude that seeing persons might be damned notwithstanding the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, that this might, and would be their case. In what sense Christ is a propitiation, See Gill on "Ro 3:25". The Jews have no notion of the Messiah as a propitiation or atonement; sometimes they say {w} repentance atones for all sin; sometimes the death of the righteous {x}; sometimes incense {y}; sometimes the priests' garments {z}; sometimes it is the day of atonement {a}; and indeed they are in the utmost puzzle about atonement; and they even confess in their prayers {b}, that they have now neither altar nor priest to atone for them; See Gill on "1Jo 4:10".

{l} Jarchi in Isa. liii. 5. {m} T. Hieros. Nazir, fol. 57. 3. Vid. T. Bab. Succa, fol. 55. 2. {n} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 71. 2. {o} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 33. 2. {p} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 22. 2. {q} T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 13. 2. {r} Piske Toseph. Megilla, art. 104. {s} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 90. 2. & Kiddushin, fol. 47. 2. & 49. 1. & 65. 2. & Gittin, fol. 8. 1. & 60. 2. {t} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 48. 1. {u} Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 16. {w} Zohar in Lev. fol. 29. 1. {x} Ib. fol. 24. 1. T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 38. 2. {y} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 88. 2. & Erachin, fol. 16. 1. {z} T. Bab. Zebachim, ib. T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 44. 2. {a} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 87. 1. & T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 45. 2, 3. {b} Seder Tephillot, fol. 41. 1. Ed. Amsterd.

1 John 2:3

Ver. 3. And hereby we do know that we know him,.... Either the Father, with whom Christ is an advocate; not as the God of nature, and by the light of it, nor as the lawgiver and Judge of the whole earth, and by the law of Moses; but as the God of all grace, as a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, as the Father of Christ, and as in him by the Gospel; and this not in a mere notional and speculative way, but with love and affection; not with fear and trembling, as devils know him, nor in theory, as formal professors and hypocrites, but with a knowledge, joined with hearty love of him, and cheerful obedience to him: or else Christ, the advocate and propitiation for sin; and him also, not with a mere notional knowledge of his person and offices, which carnal men and devils themselves have of him, but with that which is spiritual, special, and saving, being from the Spirit and grace of God; and regards Christ as a Saviour, as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, and an advocate with God the Father; and by which he is approved as such, to the rejection of all other savours, sacrifices, and advocates; and is trusted, confided, and believed in as such, and affectionately loved, and that above all others, in sincerity and truth; and is readily obeyed in his word and ordinances; for where there is true knowledge of Christ, there is faith in him; and where there is faith in him, there is love to him, for faith works by love; and where there is love to him, there will be an observance of his commands; and this is here made the evidence of the true knowledge of him: for it follows,

if we keep his commandments; not the commandments of men, for the keeping of them arises from ignorance of God, and is a proof of it; nor the commandments of the ceremonial law, which are abolished, particularly circumcision, which is opposed to the keeping of the commandments of God, **1Co 7:19**; but either those of the moral law, and which are more particularly the commandments of God the Father; the observance of which, though it cannot be with perfection, yet being in faith, and from love to God, and with a view to his glory, is an evidence of the true knowledge of him and of his will: or else those commandments, which are more especially the commandments of Christ Jesus; such as the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, which are peculiar to the Gospel dispensation; and which being kept as they were delivered by Christ, and in his name and strength, and to his glory, without depending on them for life and salvation, is an argument and proof of the right knowledge of him; and particularly his new commandment of loving one another may be chiefly designed, that being what the apostle has greatly in view throughout this epistle; now let it be observed, that keeping of the commands of God, or Christ, is not the knowledge of either of them itself, for much may be done in an external way, yet neither God nor Christ be spiritually and savingly known; nor is it the cause of such knowledge, for that is owing to the Spirit and grace of God; but is an effect or consequence of spiritual knowledge, and so an evidence of it; hereby is not the knowledge itself, but the knowledge of that knowledge, that is, that it is true and genuine.

1 John 2:4

Ver. 4. He that saith I know him,.... God or Christ, as the Gnostics did, who pretended to great, even perfect, knowledge of divine things:

and keepeth not his commandments; which the above persons had no regard to, and as many who profess great light and knowledge in our days show no concern for:

is a liar; he contradicts what he says, and gives the lie to it; for though in words he professes to know God, in works he denies him, and which betrays his ignorance of him:

and the truth is not in him; there is no true knowledge of God and Christ in him; nor is the truth of the Gospel in his heart, however it may be in his head; nor is the truth of grace in him, for each of these lead persons to obedience. The Ethiopic version renders it, "the truth of God is not with him"; See Gill on "1Jo 1:8".

1 John 2:5

Ver. 5. But whoso keepeth his word,.... Either the word of the Gospel, and the truths of it, who receives it in love, cordially embraces and retains it, and will by no means part with it, but holds it fast, and stands fast in it; or the precepts and ordinances of the word, who loves these, and esteems them above fine gold, and concerning all things to be right, and observes them as they should be:

in him verily is the love of God perfected: not the love wherewith God loves him, for that is perfect in himself, and admits of no degrees, and cannot be more or less in his heart, and is entirely independent of the obedience of men, or any works of theirs; it is true indeed the manifestations of this love to the saints are imperfect, and may be more and greater, and greater manifestations of love are promised to such that love Christ, and keep his commandments, Joh 14:21; but here it is to be understood not actively, but passively, of the love wherewith God is loved by his people; and intends not the absolute perfection of it in them, in whom it often waxes cold, and is left, or the fervour of it abated, but the sincerity and reality of it; for by keeping the word of God, both his truths and his ordinances, it is clearly seen that their love to him is without dissimulation, and is not in tongue only, but in deed and in truth:, now it is not the keeping of the word of God that causes this love, or makes it perfect or sincere, for it is a fruit of the Spirit, and is owing to the grace of God; but love, on the other hand, is the cause of keeping of the word; and the latter being a consequent and an effect of the former, is the evidence of it, of the truth and sincerity of it:

hereby know we that we are in him: in Christ, not merely nominally, or by profession, as all that name the name of Christ, and are in a Gospel church state, may be said to be; but really, first secretly, through the love of Christ, the election of God, and the covenant of grace, and then openly, in conversion and the effectual calling, through believing in Christ, when the saints appear to be in him as branches in the vine; and which is known by their fruits, as here, by keeping the word, and doing the commandments of Christ, which do not put a man into Christ, but only show that he is there; for a man's being in Christ is owing to the grace of God; this is the first thing done in grace, **1Co 1:30**.

1 John 2:6

Ver. 6. He that saith he abideth in him,.... As all do that are in him; once in Christ, and always in Christ; they are set as a seal on his arm and heart, which can never be removed; they are in his arms, and can never be plucked from thence; and are members of him, and can never be disunited from him: or dwelleth in him, as in **Joh 6:56**; that is, by faith; who under a sense of sin and danger have fled to Christ, as to a strong tower and place of defence, where they dwell safely, peaceably, pleasantly, and comfortably, enjoying whatever is necessary for them. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "he that saith I am in him"; loved by him, chosen in him, united to him, a member of his, and have communion with him:

ought himself also to walk even as he walked; as Christ walked, lived, and acted, so ought he; that is, to imitate him and follow him, as he has him for an example; not in his miraculous works in raising the dead, healing the sick, and walking upon the waters, &c. which were wrought as proofs of his deity and of his Messiahship, and not intended for imitation; nor in his mediatorial performances, as in his propitiatory sacrifice and advocacy; but in the exercise of grace, and duties of religion as a man, and in a private way; and may chiefly regard walking in love, as he walked, see **Eph 5:2**; and is what is in the following verses insisted on, namely, the new commandment of love to the brethren; which should be to all as his was, and, like his, constant and lasting; and, when the case requires, should be shown by laying down life for them. The "as" is not a note of equality, but of likeness; for it cannot be thought that saints should walk in that degree of perfection, in humility, patience, love, and in the exercise of every other grace, and in the discharge of duty, as Christ did; only that they should copy after him, and make his obedience and life the rule of theirs.

1 John 2:7

Ver. 7. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you,.... Some understand this of faith, which this apostle calls a commandment, **1Jo 3:23**; but it rather intends the commandment of love, especially to the brethren, of which the apostle says the same things as here in his second epistle, **1Jo 2:5**; and this sense agrees both with what goes before and follows after, and is a considerable branch of the commandments of Christ to be kept, and of walking as he walked; and the word "brethren", prefixed to this account, may direct to, and strengthen this sense, though the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "beloved"; and so the Alexandrian copy, and others: and this commandment is said to be not a new one,

but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning; it being in its original a part of the eternal law of truth, founded upon the unalterable nature and eternal will of God, who is love itself, and requires it in all his creatures; being what was written on Adam's heart in a state of innocence, and a branch of the divine image stamped upon him; and is what was delivered in the law of Moses, for love to God and men is the sum and substance of that; and was taught by Christ and his apostles from the beginning of the Gospel dispensation; and was what these saints had been acquainted with, and influentially instructed in from their first conversion, being taught of God in regeneration to love one another; so that this was no novel doctrine, no upstart notion, no new law, but of the greatest and most venerable antiquity, and therefore to be regarded in the most respectful manner.

The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning; or this ancient law of love is contained in, and enforced by that word or doctrine which was delivered from the beginning of time; and which these saints had heard of, concerning the seed of the woman's bruising the serpent's head, which includes the work of redemption and salvation by Christ, atonement by his sacrifice, forgiveness of sin through his blood, and justification by his righteousness, than which nothing can more powerfully engage to love God, and Christ, and one another; and which is also strongly encouraged by the word of God and Gospel of Christ, which they had heard, and had a spiritual and saving knowledge of, from the time they were effectually called by the grace of God: the phrase, "from the beginning", is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and others, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; it is omitted in both clauses of the text in the latter.

1 John 2:8

Ver. 8. Again, a new commandment I write unto you,.... Which is the same with the former, considered in different respects. The command of brotherly love is a new one; that is, it is an excellent one, as a new name is an excellent name, and a new song is an excellent one; it is renewed by Christ under the Gospel dispensation; it is newly explained by him, and purged from the false glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees; see **Mt 5:43**; and enforced by him with a new argument, and by a new example of his own, even his own love to his people; and which is observed by them in a new manner, they being made new creatures; and this law being anew written in their hearts, under the renewing work of the Spirit of God, as a branch of the new covenant of grace; see Joh 13:34. The Jews {c} expect hvdx hrwt, "a new law" to be given them by the bands of the Messiah; and a new one he has given, even the new commandment of love, and which is the fulfilling of the law.

Which things is true in him, and in you. The Alexandrian copy reads, "in us"; the sense is either, it is true "in itself", as the phrase will bear to be rendered, and it is verified in you, or in us, to be a new commandment; or it is true in Christ, it is yea and amen in him; it has its full completion in him, who is the fulfilling end of the law, as well as it has been faithfully delivered, truly explained, and warmly and affectionately recommended and urged by him; and he is the great pattern and exemplar of it: and the love which this new commandment requires is really and truly in the saints, implanted in them in regeneration, is a fruit of the Spirit, and which faith works by, and will always continue in them; and should be in its actings like Christ's, true, sincere, cordial, affectionate, constant, and universal: and some think the word esti, or estw, "is", or "let it be", is wanting in the last clause, and may be read, "which thing is true in him, and is", or "let it be in you": that is, as love to the brethren is true and sincere in Christ, so it is, or should be in you; it should be without dissimulation, and so it was, as the reason following shows:

because the darkness is past, or is "passing"; meaning either the darkness of the ceremonial law, which lay in dark types and shadows, and in cloudy sacrifices, and mystical representations of things, and was a shadow of good things to come; and its shadows were now fleeing away apace, in fact as well as in right; and so the Alexandrian copy reads, "because the shadow is passing away"; the night of Jewish darkness was far spent, and the Gospel day was not only broke, but it was, or near noonday, which brought the light of faith, and the heat of love with it: or else the darkness of sin and ignorance, of a state of nature, and of the kingdom of Satan, in which the people of God are before conversion; which then passes away gradually, by little and little, for it is not removed at once, or wholly gone; for though the saints are at once removed out of a state of darkness, and from the kingdom of darkness, and the power of it, yet they are not wholly free from the darkness of sin and ignorance, they still see but through a glass darkly: and the words are better rendered, the darkness passes", or "is passing away", and not is past", or "has passed away"; for as yet it is not entirely gone;

and the true light now shineth; either the Gospel, which is a light, and a true and substantial one, in distinction from the dim light of nature, or the shadowy law of Moses; and which now, under the present dispensation, shines out in a most glorious manner, as the sun in its full strength; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "the light of truth"; the word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation: or Jesus Christ, who is so called, **Joh 1:9**; in distinction from typical lights, as the "Urim" on the high priest's breastplate, the candlestick in the tabernacle and temple, and the pillar of fire by night, which guided the Israelites through the wilderness; and in opposition to all false lights, to the Scribes and Pharisees, to false Christs and false prophets, which are so many "ignes fatui"; but Christ is the sun of righteousness that is risen in our "horizon", and the true light which shines out in a most illustrious manner: or the light of grace is here intended, that light which the Spirit of God illuminates with in conversion; in which a man sees sin in its true colours, and has a spiritual and saving sight of Christ, of pardon, peace, life, righteousness, and salvation by him; which is no other than the light of faith, by which an enlightened person sees the Son, looks to him, and has an evidence of the unseen glories of another world. Now this is a true light, things are seen by the believer in a right light, both his own sins, and the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; this is a shining one, which cannot but be observed by himself, and shines more and more to the perfect day; and it now shines as it did not before, in a state of nature, and continues to shine, and ever will: this light will never be put out, and is the cause of brotherly love, being truly in the saints, and of the continuance of it; before this light shines, men live in malice, but when it comes and shines, as they walk in light, they walk in love.

{c} Yalkut Simconi, par. 2. fol. 461.

1 John 2:9

Ver. 9. He that saith he is in the light,.... Is in Christ the light, or has the true knowledge of the light of the Gospel, or is illuminated by the Spirit of God; for persons may profess to be enlightened ones, and not be so: wherefore the apostle does not say, he that is in the light, but he that says he is,

and hateth his brother; who is so either by creation, as all men are brethren, having one Father, that has made them, and brought them up; or by regeneration, being born of God the Father, and in the same family and household of faith; and so regards such who are in a spiritual relation, whom to hate internally, or not to love, is inconsistent with being in the light, or having faith, which is always naturally and necessarily accompanied with the heat of love; for as light and heat, so faith and love go together: wherefore, let a man's profession of light be what it will, if love to his brother is wanting, he

is in darkness even until now; he is in a state of nature and unregeneracy, which is a state of darkness and ignorance; he is under the power of darkness, and in the kingdom of Satan; who is the ruler of the darkness of this world; he ever was so from his birth; he never was called nor delivered out of it, but is still in it to this moment, and so remains. This seems to be very much levelled against the Jews, who make hatred of the brother in some cases lawful: for they say {d},

"if one man observes sin in another, and reproves him for it, and he does not receive his reproof, wtwanvl rtwm, "it is lawful to hate him";"

See Gill on "Mt 5:43".

{d} Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora, pr. neg. 5.

1 John 2:10

Ver. 10. He that loveth his brother,.... As such, and because he is his brother in Christ, and that cordially and sincerely, without hypocrisy and dissimulation, and by love serves him, both in things temporal and spiritual, and so observes the new, and yet old commandment,

abideth in the light: it is a plain case, that such a man is in the light of grace, and continues in it; for though it is not his love to the brethren which is the cause of his light, of his being and continuing in it, for that is owing to the spirit of light and knowledge, but on the contrary, light is the cause of his love; yet it is an evidence of it, that by which it is known, as the cause is known by the effect; see **Joh 3:14**;

and there is none occasion of stumbling in him, or "there is no scandal" or "offence in him"; he gives no offence to his brother, or at least, as much as in him lies, he takes care that he gives none; he avoids, as much as can be, putting a stumblingblock, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way, by the use of things indifferent, or by any other action; nor will he easily take offence at what is said or done unto him, for charity or love is not easily provoked, it suffers long, and bears all things; see 1Co 13:4; nor does he so much and so frequently transgress the laws of God, and particularly those which regard his neighbour or his brother, and so easily fall into the snares of Satan, because he is in the light, and walks in the light, and sees his way, and what lies in his way, and, so shuns and avoids occasion of stumbling and falling. There is not in him that wrath, and malice, and envy, which lead on to the commission of other sins; for love works no ill, but fulfils the law, and will not suffer him to commit adultery, to kill, to steal, or bear false witness against his neighbour, friend, and brother; see Ro 13:9; and such an one enjoys great peace, tranquillity, and happiness; he has much comfort in himself, and pleasure in the saints, and delight in their company; he walks inoffensively, and in an harmless manner, without hurting himself, or any other, Ps 119:165.

1 John 2:11

Ver. 11. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness,.... As is before expressed in **1Jo 2:9**, to which is added,

and walketh in darkness; he goes on in it, and takes delight in it, as dangerous and uncomfortable as it is:

and knoweth not whither he goeth; he cannot discern between good and evil; he puts darkness for light, and light for darkness; he sees not what is before him, nor what stumblingblocks lie in the way; he is not aware of the snares, pits, and traps he is in danger of falling into; nor does he know and consider what these paths of darkness, of sin, and ignorance, and infidelity, lead unto, even unto utter darkness, where is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth: and the reason is,

because that darkness hath blinded his eyes; either Satan, the god of this world, who blinds the minds of them that believe not, and who is darkness itself, and the cause of darkness in himself and in others, and one of whose names this was with the Jews {e}; See Gill on "Lu 22:53"; or that natural darkness which sin has brought upon the understanding, and has blinded the eyes of it, called the blindness of the heart, **Eph 4:18**, so that a man under the power of it is ignorant of himself, and knows not that he is blind and miserable; is a stranger to the way of peace, and life by Christ, and knows not what he is about, and where he is, or whither he is going, and what his end will be.

{e} Yalkut Simconi, par. 2. fol. 44. 4.

1 John 2:12

Ver. 12. I write unto you, little children,.... By whom the apostle means in common all the saints he writes to, whom he afterwards distributes into fathers, young men, and little children; for the same word is used here as in **1Jo 2:1**; and a different one from that which is rendered little children in **1Jo 2:13**; and besides, the following blessing of pardon of sin is common to all the children of God of different ages: now what the apostle says he writes unto them, intends not the epistle in general, but the new commandment of love in particular; and which he urges and enforces on them all, for this reason,

because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake; these little children had been sinners by nature and practice, and were not now without sin, but they shared in the blessing of the forgiveness of it; which arises from the abundant mercy and rich grace of God, and proceeds on the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and therefore is said to be "for his name's sake"; not for the sake of any merits in men, any services or works of theirs, but for the sake of Christ, his blood, sacrifice and satisfaction; and it reaches to all sins, original and actual, secret and open, past, present, and to come; and here intends the application of it by the Spirit of God, and the reception of it by faith: and which, as it is a reason and argument encouraging love to God, who freely and fully forgives, and to Christ, whose blood was shed for the remission of sin, so to their brethren and fellow Christians; who are equally sharers in the same blessing, and when they should love, because they are loved of God and Christ; and whom they should forgive, because God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven them. It may be, they may be called here "little children", with a view to their interest in this blessing of grace. So the Jews say {f}, that Saul was called

""the son of one year in his reign"; 1Sa 13:1; because all his iniquities were forgiven him, qwnytk "as a sucking child" of a year old."

{f} T. Hieros. Biccurim, fol. 65. 4.

1 John 2:13

Ver. 13. I write unto you, fathers,.... Not merely in age, though they might be men in years who are here intended, or only with respect to their long standing in the church, which might be the case; though persons may be in years, and of a long standing in the church, and yet be children in knowledge and experience: but here it designs such, who, in comparison of others, were perfect, and were spiritual, and judged all things; had a well informed and established judgment in divine things, and were, in understanding, men, fathers, and not babes in Christ; so the Jews used to call their men of wisdom, and knowledge, and understanding, twba, "Abot", "fathers". Hence there is a whole treatise in the Misna called Pirke Abot, which contains the apophthegms, wise sayings, and sentences of their fathers, or wise men. Now the apostle writes the new commandment of love, and urges it on these, for this reason,

because ye have known him [that is] from the beginning; either God the

Father, who is from everlasting to everlasting, the Ancient of days, the eternal I AM, whom to know is life eternal; whose everlasting love to them, whose covenant of grace with his Son for them, before the world was, and the ancient transactions, and settlements of his grace on their account, they were acquainted with: or Jesus Christ, the Logos or Word, which was from the beginning, who existed from all eternity, as a divine person, as the Son of God, co-eternal with the Father; as the eternal choice made in him, and the everlasting covenant with him show; and who in his office capacity, as Mediator, was set up from everlasting; and who, with respect to the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, was from the beginning of the world, and was the same yesterday, today, and for ever; it being by his blood that all the patriarchs, from the beginning of time, were pardoned, and by his righteousness they were justified, and by his grace they were saved; all which, respecting the antiquity of Christ's person, office, and grace, was known to these fathers: they knew him, so as to approve of him, trust in him, and appropriate him to themselves, and which obliged them to the new commandment of love, not only to God and Christ, but to one another; and the reason here given, engaging to it, is exceeding suitable to their character, it being what fathers and aged men delight in, even ancient things, to call them to remembrance, to talk of them as things well known unto them; but nothing is more ancient than what is here instanced in, and nothing so honourable and profitable to know as this, or to be gloried in; and therefore the argument from hence to love those that belong to him, who is the everlasting Father, is very strong and forcible.

I write unto you, young men; who are warm and zealous for God, for his cause and interest, for the glory of a Redeemer, for his truths and ordinances; and are lively in the exercise of grace, and fervent in the discharge of duty; and are active, diligent, and industrious, always abounding in the work of the Lord; and are strong and robust, able to go alone, to walk by faith, being strong in it, and in the grace that is in Christ, and do not need the staff that old age does, nor the hand to lead and teach to go, as children do: to these the apostle writes the new commandment of love, for this reason,

because ye have overcome the wicked one; Satan, who is eminently so, being the first that was, and the worst that is so; for he is wickedness itself, he is wholly, entirely, immutably, and unalterably wicked; and his whole work and employment is in wickedness. Now these young men had overcome him, not only in Christ their head, who has spoiled him, destroyed him, and led him captive in triumph, in whom they were more than conquerors; but in themselves, through the power of divine grace, holding up, and making use of the shield of faith against him, whereby they quenched his fiery darts, and got the victory over him: and this is also said in perfect agreement with the character of young men, who are apt to glory in their strength, and are fond of getting the advantage, or a victory over others; and which is used to teach such as are so in a spiritual sense, not to glory in their strength, but in the Lord; and to love him whom they know, and whose lovingkindness is exercised towards them, and in Christ; and to love him through whom they get the victory, and to bear the infirmities of weaker saints, to whom they should be strongly affected.

I write unto you, little children; or babes in Christ, such as were newborn babes, just born again, not able to go alone, or walk by faith, but were dandled on the knee, and lay at the breasts of divine consolation: could speak but stammeringly, and not plain, it being as much as they could do to say "Abba", Father. To these the apostle writes, and urges the new commandment of love, for this reason,

because ye have known the Father: the Father of Christ, and him, as their Father in Christ, under the witnessings of the spirit of adoption; so as, in some good measure, to hope and believe he was their Father, and to love, honour, and obey him as such, to apply to him for whatever they stood in need of, and always to put themselves under his care and protection: and a consideration of this their relation to him, and interest in him, is a strong and prevailing argument why they should not only love him, their Father, and Christ, who is begotten of him, but also all the saints, who are the children of this their Father, and their brethren; and very aptly does the apostle mention their knowledge of the Father as suitable to their age and character, it being one of the first and most necessary things for a child to know.

1 John 2:14

Ver. 14. I have written unto you, fathers,.... This, with the reason annexed to it, is repeated, to raise the attention of the aged servants of Christ, and to quicken them to a discharge of their duty, who are apt to abate in their zeal, to grow lukewarm and indifferent, to cleave to the world, and to the things of it, which they are cautioned against in **1Jo 2:15**. The whole of this, with the reason,

because ye have known him [that is] from the beginning, is left out in the Vulgate Latin version, and Complutensian edition.

I have written unto you, young men; this repetition to them, with some additions, is also made, to stir them up the more to love the saints, who are too apt to be carried away with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, warned against in **1Jo 2:16**;

because ye are strong; not naturally, for sin has sadly weakened human nature, so that a man, by the strength of nature, can do nothing that is spiritually good: nor in themselves, though regenerated, but in Christ, in whom are righteousness and strength; without whom they can do nothing, though they can do all things through him strengthening them; and so are strong in the exercise of grace on him, and in the performance of every duty, being strengthened by him with strength in their souls:

and the word of God abideth in you; either Christ the Logos, the essential Word of God, who might be said to be in them, and abide in them, because his grace was implanted in their hearts, called Christ, formed there, and because he dwelt in their hearts by faith, and lived in them; and hence they had their strength, or came to be so strong as they were, and also overcame Satan, because he that was in them was greater than he that is in the world: or else the Gospel is meant, which cometh not in word only, but in power, has a place in the heart, and works effectually, and dwells richly there; and this is a means of spiritual strength against sin and temptation, and to perform duty, and to stand fast in the truth against the errors and heresies of men and is that piece of spiritual armour, the sword of the Spirit, by which Satan is often foiled, and overcome: hence it follows,

and ye have overcome the wicked one; See Gill on "1Jo 2:13".

1 John 2:15

Ver. 15. Love not the world,.... The habitable earth, the world in which men live; this is not to be loved by saints, as if it was their habitation, where they are always to be, and so loath to remove from it, seeing they are but sojourners, and pilgrims, and strangers here; this is not their rest, nor dwellingplace, their continuing city, or proper country, that is heaven. Nor should they love the men of the world, who are as they came into it, are of it, and mind the things of it, and lie in wickedness, and are wicked men; for though these are to be loved, as men, as fellow creatures, and their good, both spiritual and temporal, is to be sought, and good is to be done to them, as much as lies in our power, both with respect to soul and body; yet their company is not to be chosen, and preferred to the saints, but to be shunned and avoided, as disagreeable and dangerous; their evil conversation, and wicked communications, are not to be loved, but abhorred, and their works of darkness are to be reproved; nor are their ways to be imitated, and their customs followed, or their manners to be conformed unto:

neither the things [that are] in the world; good men that are in the world, though they are not of the world, are to be loved; and the kingdom of Christ, though it is not of the world, yet it is in the world, and is to be regarded and promoted to the uttermost; and there are the natural and civil things of the world, called this world's goods, which may be loved within due bounds, and used in a proper manner, though they are not to be loved inordinately and abused. This is the character of worldly men; so the Jews call such, hzh Mlweh ybha, "such that love world" {g}. Near relations and friends in the world, and the blessings of life, may be loved and enjoyed in their way, but not above God and Christ, or so as to take up satisfaction and contentment in them, to make idols of them, and put trust and confidence in them, and prefer them to spiritual and heavenly things, and be so taken with them, as to be unconcerned for, and careless about the other; but the evil things of the world, or at least the evil use of them, and affection for them, are here intended, as appears from the following verse. Now it is chiefly with respect to the fathers, and young men, that this exhortation is given; and the repetition of what is said to them before is made, to introduce this; which is exceeding suitable to their age and characters. Old men are apt to be covetous, and love the world and worldly things, just when they are going out of it, and about to leave them; and young men are apt to be carried away with lust, vanity, ambition, and pride: and therefore, from each of these, the apostle dissuades, from the following arguments,

if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; that is, "the love of God", as the Alexandrian copy and the Ethiopic version read; who is the Father of Christ, and of all the elect in him; and who is indeed, by creation, the Father of all men, the Father of spirits, of the souls of men, and of angels, and the Father of mercies and of lights, and by the love of him is meant, either the love with which he loves his people, and which being shed abroad in the heart, attracts the soul to himself, and causes it to love him above the world, and all things in it; and such an one esteems of it, and an interest in it, more than life, and all the enjoyments of it, and is by it loosened to the world, and sets light by it, and can part with all good things in it, and suffer all evil things cheerfully, under the constraints and influence of this love; so that it is a clear case, that when the affections of men are set upon the world, and they are glued to the things of it, their hearts are not warmed with a sense of the love of God, or, that is not sensibly in them, or shed abroad in their hearts: or else by the love of God is meant love to God, which is inconsistent with the love of the world, or with such an inordinate love of mammon, as to serve it; for a man may as soon serve two masters, as serve God and mammon, which he can never do truly, faithfully, and affectionately; and which also is not consistent with friendship with the men of the world, or a conversation and fellowship with them in things that are evil, whether superstition or profaneness; see **Mt 6:24**.

{g} Kimchi in Psal. xlix. 9. Ben Melech in ib. ver. 14.

1 John 2:16

Ver. 16. For all that [is] in the world,.... This is the sum of the evil things in the world; or these following are the objects of sin in the world, or about which wicked men are conversant; even such as are carnal or grateful to the flesh, visible to the eye, and belong to this vain life, or serve to fill with pride and vanity; or these are the main things, which men that love the world most highly value and esteem:

the lust of the flesh; by which is meant, not lust in general, or concupiscence, the corruption of nature, which is the fountain of all sin, or indwelling sin, the flesh, or that corrupt principle which lusts against the Spirit; nor the various lusts of the flesh, fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, and which are many, and are also called worldly lusts; but some particular one, "a lust of the body", as the Syriac version reads; either the lust of uncleanness, which includes all unchaste desires, thoughts, words, and actions, fornication, adultery, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; and which make up a considerable part of the all that is in the world: or else intemperance in eating and drinking, gluttony and drunkenness, excess of wine, surfeitings, rioting, and revellings, and all the sensual pleasures of life, by which the carnal mind, and the lusts of it, are gratified; whereby the soul is destroyed, the body is dishonoured, and a wound, dishonour, and reproach brought on the character, not to be removed; for which reasons the world, and the things of it, are not to be loved: the next follows,

the lust of the eyes: after unlawful objects, and may design unchaste and lascivious looks, eyes full of adultery, and whereby adultery is committed; see **Mt 5:28**; but then this falls in with the other, unless that be confined to intemperance; rather then this may intend a sinful curiosity of seeing vain sights, and shows, with which the eye of man is never satisfied, **Ec 1:8**; and against which the psalmist prays, Ps 119:37, or rather the sin of covetousness is here designed, the objects of which are visible things, as gold, silver, houses, lands, and possessions, with which riches the eyes of men are never satisfied, and which sin is drawn forth and cherished by the eyes; and indeed a covetous man has little more satisfaction than the beholding his substance with his eyes, and in which he takes much sinful pleasure; see **Ec 4:8**; and what a poor vain empty thing is this! therefore, love not the world, since this is a principal thing in it: as is also

the pride of life; by which seems to be meant, ambition of honour, of chief places and high titles, as in the Scribes and Pharisees, Mt 23:6, or of grand living, for the word signifies not so much life as living; living in a sumptuous, gay, luxurious, and pompous manner, in rich diet, costly apparel, having fine seats, palaces, and stately buildings, and numerous attendance; all which is but vanity and vexation of spirit; see **Ec 2:1**. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "the pride of the age"; and every age has some peculiar things in which the pride of it appears. Now neither of these

is of the Father; of God the Father, as the Ethiopic version reads; the things which are desired and lusted after are of God, but not the lust itself; God is not the author of sin, nor is it agreeable to his will:

but is of the world; of the men of it, and agreeable to their carnal minds; and is a reason why things of the world are not to be loved by the saints, who are not of it, but chosen and called out of it; and besides, all these things are mean, base, vile, and contemptible, and unworthy of their love and affection.

Ver. 17. And the world passeth away,.... Not the matter and substance, but the fashion, form, and scheme of it, **1Co 7:31**; kingdoms, cities, towns, houses, families, estates, and possessions, are continually changing, and casting into different hands, and different forms; the men of the world, the inhabitants of it, are continually removing; one generation goes, and another comes, new faces are continually appearing; the riches and honours of the world are fading, perishing, and transitory things; everything is upon the flux, nothing is permanent; which is another argument why the world, and the things of it, are not to be loved:

and the lust thereof; also passes away; and objects of lust are fading and fleeting, as beauty, and riches, and honours; these are continually taking away from men, or men are taken away from them, and will not be hereafter; and even the pleasure of lust itself passes away as soon as enjoyed; the pleasures of sin are but for a season, and a very short one; and are indeed but imaginary, and leave a real bitterness and sorrow behind them, and at length bring a man to ruin and destruction:

but he that doeth the will of God; not perfectly as contained in the law, which is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; for no man can do that in such a manner, though a regenerate man desires to do it, even as it is done in heaven, and serves the law of God with his mind, and under the influence of the Spirit of God; and does walk in his statutes, and keeps his judgments from a principle of love, in faith, and without mercenary views and sinister ends, without depending on what he does for life and salvation; and such an one may be said to be a doer of the will of God: though rather here it intends such an one as believes in Christ, as the propitiation for his sins, and as his advocate with the Father, and who, makes Christ his pattern and example, and walks as he walked; and particularly observes the new commandment of love, loves God, and Christ, and his fellow Christians, and not the world, and the things of it: and such a man is happy, for he

abideth for ever; in the love of God, which will never depart from him, nor shall he be separated from that; and in the hands and arms of Christ, out of which none can pluck him; and in the family and household of God, where he, as a son, abides for ever, and shall never be cast out; and in a state of justification, and shall never enter into condemnation; and in a state of grace and holiness, from whence he shall never fall totally and finally; and in heaven with Christ to all eternity: the reason of this his abiding is not his doing the will of God, which is only descriptive of him manifestatively, and not the cause of his perpetuity and immovableness; but his eternal election of God, which stands sure, not on the foot of works, but of him that calleth; and the covenant of grace in which he is interested, and which is immovable, sure, firm, and inviolable; and the foundation Jesus Christ, on which he is built; and the principle of grace in him, which always remains, and is connected with eternal life.

1 John 2:18

Ver. 18. Little children, it is the last time,.... Or hour; not of the Jewish civil and church state, for that had been at an end for some time; this epistle was written some years after the destruction of Jerusalem; nor the last hour of the Gospel dispensation, or world to come, for this was but the first age of that; and much less the last hour of time, or of the present world itself, for that has been many hundreds of years since; but the last hour of the apostolic age. All the apostles were now dead, John was the last of them; perilous times were now coming on, impostors and heretics were rising apace, against which the apostle cautions his little children; and so still he writes to them, agreeably to their age and character, who, being such, were most likely to be imposed upon by those who lie in wait to deceive.

And as ye have heard that antichrist shall come; or "is coming"; and begins to show himself in the false teachers and deceivers, who were his forerunners; and this they had heard and understood, either from the words of Christ in **Joh 5:43**; or from the account the Apostle Paul gave to the Thessalonians concerning him, **2Th 2:3**; or rather it may be from what, the apostle had said to the elders of the church at Ephesus, where the Apostle John now was, when he met them at Miletus, Ac 20:29,

even now there are many antichrists. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, "false Christs"; but such are not intended here, that set up for Messiahs, whom Christ foretold should arise before the destruction of Jerusalem, Mt 24:24; for that was now over, and those false Christs had arisen and were gone: if this sense could be admitted, Bar Cocab, in Adrian's time, bids fair to be the false Christ, or Messiah, in the preceding clause, as the same versions there read; but such as were adversaries of Christ, as the Arabic version renders it, are meant, who set themselves against Christ, and were opposers of his person, incarnation, and office; who either denied that he was the Christ, or that he was come in the flesh, the truth of his incarnation, or his proper deity, or real humanity, such as Ebion, Cerinthus, and others. The apostle might well say there were many, since in his time were the followers of Simon Magus, the Menandrians, Saturnilians, Basilidians, Nicolaites, Gnostics, Carpocratians, Cerinthians, Ebionites, and Nazarenes, as reckoned up by Epiphanius. And hence we learn, that antichrist is not one single individual, but many; antichrist in the former clause is explained by antichrists in this; see **1Jo 2:22**; and though the popes of Rome are, by way of eminence, the antichrist that should come, and which those deceivers were the forerunners of, and paved the way for; yet they are not the only antichrists, there were others before them, and there are many now besides them.

Whereby we know that it is the last time; the pure apostolic age was now going off, with the doctrines, discipline, and worship of it, which was easy to be discerned by the multitude of antichrists which now appeared; and it may well be thought to be the last time, or near the end of things with us, since almost every heresy is revived among us.

1 John 2:19

Ver. 19. They went out from us,.... Which intends not the persons that went down from Judea to Antioch, Ac 15:1, who preached destructive doctrines to the Gentiles, which the apostles and the church of Judea disowned and censured; by which it appeared, that all the preachers of these doctrines were not of them, and of the same mind with them: for this sense makes these antichrists to be only preachers; whereas, though many of them might be such, yet not all; for whoever, in a private capacity denied the Father and the Son, or that Christ was come in the flesh, was antichrist; and to these private believers are opposed in **1Jo 2:20**; and it also makes the "us" to be the apostles, whereas they were all dead but John; and these antichrists were men that had risen up then in the last time, and therefore could not, with propriety, be said to go out from the apostles; besides, whenever the apostle uses this pronoun "us", he includes with himself all true believers, and may more especially here intend the churches of Asia; or rather the members of the church at Ephesus, where he was; nor is it likely he should have in view the church of Judea, and a case in which that was concerned near forty years ago: moreover, such a sense makes the going out to be merely local and corporeal, and which is in itself not criminal; the persons that went from Judea to Antioch were not blamable for going thither, nor for going out from the apostles thither, but for troubling the disciples with words, to the subverting of their souls; nor was a corporeal departure from the apostles any evidence of not being of the same mind with them; for they often departed one from other, yet continued of the same mind, and in the same faith: but the sense is, that there were some persons in the Apostle John's time, who had made a profession of religion, were members of the church, and some of them perhaps preachers, and yet they departed from the faith, and dropped their profession of it, and withdrew themselves from the church, or churches to which they belonged, and set up separate assemblies of their own:

but they were not of us: they were of the church, and of the same mind with it, at least in profession, antecedent to their going out; for had they not been in communion with the church, they could not be properly said to go out of it; and if they had not been of the same mind and faith in profession, they could not be said to depart from it; but they were not truly regenerated by the grace of God, and so apparently were not of the number, of God's elect: notwithstanding their profession and communion with the church, they were of the world, and not of God; they were not true believers; they had not that anointing which abides, and from which persons are truly denominated Christians, or anointed ones:

for if they had been of us, they would [no doubt] have continued with us; in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the fellowship of the church, as true believers do: if their hearts had been right with God, they would have remained steadfast to him, his Gospel, truths, and ordinances, and faithful with his saints; for such who are truly regenerate are born of an incorruptible seed, and those that have received the anointing which makes them truly Christians, that abides, as does every true grace, faith, hope, and love; and such who are truly God's elect cannot possibly fall into such errors and heresies as these did, and be finally deceived, as they were:

but [they went out]; "they went out from us", so the Syriac version reads;

that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us; the word "all" is left out in the Syriac version. The defection and apostasy of these persons were permitted by God, that it might appear they had never received the grace of God in truth; and their going out was in such a manner, that it was a certain argument that they were not of the elect; since they became antichrists, denied the deity or sonship of Christ, or that he was come in the flesh, or that he was the Christ, and therefore are said to be of the world, and not of God, **1Jo 2:22**, so that this passage furnishes out no argument against the saints' perseverance, which is confirmed in **1Jo 2:20**.

1 John 2:20

Ver. 20. But ye have an unction from the Holy One,.... Meaning the Spirit, and his graces, with which Christ, the head, is anointed without measure, and his members in measure; from whence he is called Christ, and they Christians. These were really the Lord's anointed ones; they were true believers; were the wise virgins who had oil in their vessels with their lamps, which would never go out. The grace of the Spirit is called a chrism, or an ointment, or an anointing, in allusion to the anointing oil under the law;
See Gill on "Mt 25:3"; of which anointing oil the Jews say {h}, that it continues all of it, awbl dytel, "to time to come", (i.e. to the times of the Messiah,) as it is said, Ex 30:31. Now this these saints had, "from the Holy One"; or that Holy One; meaning, not the Holy Spirit of God, though it is true that this anointing, or these graces, were from him; he is the author of them, and may truly be said to anoint with them; nor the Father, who is holy in his nature, and in his works, and is the God of all grace, and is said to anoint the saints too, **2Co 1:21**, but rather the Lord Jesus Christ, who is holy, both as God and man, and from whose fulness all grace is had. This oil, or ointment, was first poured on him without measure, and from him it descends to all the members of his mystical body, as the ointment poured on Aaron's head descended to his beard, and to the skirts of his garments; see **1Jo 2:27**;

and ye know all things; for this anointing is a teaching one; it makes persons of quick understanding; it enlightens their understandings, refreshes their memories, and strengthens all the powers and faculties of the soul; it leads into the knowledge of all spiritual things, into all the mysteries of grace, and truths of the Gospel, into all things necessary for salvation; for these words are not to be taken in the largest sense, in which they are only applicable to the omniscient God, but to be restrained to the subject matter treated of, and to those things chiefly in which the antichrists and deceivers cited; and regard not a perfect knowledge, for those that know most of these things, under the influence of this unction, know but in part. The Syriac version reads, "all men", and so refers to that discerning of spirits, of the Spirit of truth, from the spirit of error; a gift which was bestowed on many in the primitive times, by which they could distinguish hypocrites from true believers, and antichrists and deceivers from the faithful ministers of the word. One of Stephens's copies reads, "and ye all know".

{h} T. Hieros. Horayot, fol. 47. 3.

1 John 2:21

Ver. 21. I have not written unto you,.... Either this epistle, or rather what particularly here regards those apostates from the truth, in order to shun them and not be deceived by them: the apostle here obviates an objection that he saw might be made upon what he last said, that they knew all things; and, if so, why then did he write the things he did, since they knew them before? to which he answers, that he did not write to them as to ignorant, but as to knowing persons:

because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it: the Father, who is the God of truth; Christ, who is truth itself; and the Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth; and the Gospel, which is the word of truth; and the Scriptures, which are the Scriptures of truth, and from whence truth is to be fetched, and by them to be confirmed and defended; and which, if they had not known, it would have been to no purpose for him to have written to them about the antichrists that were come into the world; and though they did know the truth, it was very proper to put them in remembrance of it, and to establish them in it, against these deceivers, which supposes former knowledge of it:

and that no lie is of the truth; either springs from it, or is according to it, but just the reverse. The apostle has respect to the errors and heresies of the above apostates, which were flagrant contradictions to the Gospel, and as distant from it as a lie is to truth; and of such lies, and of those liars, he speaks in the next verses. The Arabic version reads, "and that every liar is not of the truth".

Ver. 22. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?.... Or that very Christ, and true Messiah, who was spoken of by all the prophets, since the beginning of the world, and so much, and so long desired by the Old Testament saints: he that denies that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of the prophets, is not indeed the only liar in the world, but he is the greatest of liars; this is a consummate lie, being opposed to a glaring truth, to a fact clear an indisputable; and which rests not merely on the testimony of Jesus, who is truth itself, and who, in express words, more than once, declared and asserted himself to be the Christ; but all the characters of the Messiah, everything that is said of him in the Prophets, meet in Jesus, and the miracles which were done by him are flagrant proofs and undeniable evidences of his being the Christ of God; and all the apostles believed, and were sure that he was Christ, the Son of the living God: to which may be added the testimony of John, who was sent, and came to bear witness of him, and did; and who was a prophet, and a man of great probity and integrity. But there was a greater witness than he; even God himself, by a voice from heaven, bore a testimony to him; and angels, at his incarnation, declared him to be the Saviour, which is Christ the Lord; yea, the devil himself, who is a liar, and the father of ties in other things, knew and owned Jesus to be the Christ; so that those that deny him are the worst of liars, even worse than the devil himself. This may have regard not only to the Jews, that deny Jesus to be the Messiah, but chiefly to such who went by the name of Christians; who denied either his proper deity, or real humanity, as Ebion and Cerinthus, which was denying him to be the God-man, the Mediator, and Messiah; and is true of all such that deny him in any of his offices, or in things relating to them, as his Gospel, and any of the peculiar doctrines of it, delivered by him, and so deny his prophetic office; or any of his ordinances, institutions, and appointments, as lawgiver in his house, and King of saints, and so deny him in his kingly office; or reject him as the alone Saviour, joining their own works with him, in the business of salvation, and oppose his sacrifice and satisfaction, and despise his imputed righteousness, and so deny him in his priestly office. Now these are some of the liars, and these some of the doctrinal lies, which are not of the truth, as in **1Jo 2:21**.

He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son: that denies the Father of Christ to be the Creator of the world, but asserts that it was made by angels, as some ancient heretics did; or that the Father of Christ is not the God of the Old Testament, as Marcion; or that denies that God is the Father of Christ, and that Christ is the Son of God; who will not allow that there is any such relation in nature between them; who affirm that Christ is only the Son of God by adoption, or because of his love to him, or because of his incarnation and resurrection from the dead; or that he is not his true and proper Son, only in a figurative and metaphorical sense; that he is not the natural and eternally begotten Son of God, only by office, and as Mediator, and that God is only his Father, as having installed him into an office; or he that denies that these two are distinct from each other, but affirms that Father is the Son, and the Son is the Father, and so confounds them both, and, by confounding both, denies that there are either Father or Son; and all such persons are antichrists, or opposers of Christ.

1 John 2:23

Ver. 23. Whosoever denieth the Son,.... Jesus Christ to be the true, proper, natural, essential, and eternal Son of God:

the same hath not the Father; or does not hold the Father; or "believe the Father", as the Syriac version renders it; for there cannot be a father without a son; and he that honours not the Son, by owning him as such, honours not the Father; whatever reflects dishonour on the Son, reflects dishonour on the Father. If Christ is not truly and properly the Son of God, the Father is not truly and properly the Father of Christ; if Christ is only a Son in a figurative and metaphorical sense, the Father is only a Father in a figurative and metaphorical sense; if Christ is a Son only by office, then the Father is a Father only by office, which is monstrously stupid. Such an one does not hold the true doctrine of the Father, and does not appear to have true faith in him, true love unto him, or real interest in him, only by profession:

[but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also]: this clause is left out in many copies, and stands as a supplement in our version; but is in the Alexandrian copy, in four of Beza's manuscripts, and in some others; and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; and confirms and illustrates what is before said; for as he that denies the sonship of Christ cannot hold the paternity of God, so he that owns the sonship of Christ, the second Person, maintains the paternity of the first; for these two are correlates, and mutually put, or take away each other: no mention is made of the Spirit, because, as yet, no controversy had risen concerning him.

Ver. 24. Let that therefore abide in you,.... Meaning the word of God, **1Jo 2:14**; the Gospel of Christ, which there was reason to believe had a place in their hearts, and which they had embraced and professed; and therefore the apostle exhorts them to perseverance in it; and particularly not to let go the doctrine concerning the Father and the Son, and this their relation to each other, which is the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the distinct personality of Father, Son, and Spirit; the contrary to which leaves the three without either name, or distinction from each other: the arguments to enforce this exhortation follow,

which ye have heard from the beginning; they had heard it not externally only, but internally; they had hearkened to it, and from the heart obeyed it; they had mixed it with faith, and received the love of it; they had heard it from the apostles of Christ, who were eye and ear witnesses of the word; and this they had heard at the first preaching of the Gospel to them, at the first of their conversion: the apostles of Christ began their ministry with the sonship of Christ, and greatly insisted on it, in it, and required a profession of it before baptism, and which was made in order to it; and these believers had been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, as standing in such a relation to each other; see **Ac 9:20**; and therefore ought not to relinquish this truth, and receive a new and upstart notion: and for further encouragement to continue in it, it is added,

if that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father; as those that are once in either always will; what is here said is not either the cause or condition of men being in the Father, and in the Son, or of their continuance in them, but is descriptive of the persons that are in them, and is an open and manifest evidence of their being and continuance in them. Such are in union with Christ, and at times enjoy sensible communion with him, and shall never be finally and totally removed from it; they are in the love of Christ, from whence there is no separations, and in the arms and hands of Christ, out of which none can pluck them; and they abide by him in the exercise of faith and love, and cleave unto him with full purpose of heart, and will hold on and out, professing his name to the end: and they are, and abide in the love of God the Father, which is from everlasting to everlasting; and in the covenant of his grace, which is sure and inviolable; and in the participation of all the blessings and promises of it, among which, the following one, eternal life, is a principal one.

1 John 2:25

Ver. 25. And this is the promise that he hath promised us,.... Either God the Father, who is that God that cannot lie, who in the covenant of his grace, before the world began, made this promise unto his people,

[even] eternal life; which promise, with all others, was put into the hands of Christ, where, with them, it is yea and amen; and also the thing itself promised, where it is hid, and lies safe and secure: or the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has promised it in the Gospel; for this is the sum of the Gospel declaration, that whoever believes in him shall have everlasting life; and this lies in the knowledge of the Father, and of the Son, and in the enjoyment of them, and conformity to them; wherefore the doctrine respecting them ought to be retained, and firmly adhered to.

1 John 2:26

Ver. 26. These [things] have I written unto you,.... The little children, who were most likely to be imposed upon by antichrists and deceivers:

concerning them that seduce you. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, "for them that seduce you"; not that they were actually seduced and carried away with the error of the wicked; for though God's elect may be staggered and waver, and be tossed to and fro by false teachers, and their doctrines, yet they cannot be totally and finally deceived: but the sense is, these men endeavoured to seduce them: they lay in wait to deceive, and attempted to deceive them, by walking in craftiness, and handling the word of God deceitfully; and therefore that they might be known, and so shunned and avoided, the apostle points them out, and shows who they are; that they are such who deny that Jesus is the Christ, and do not own neither the Father nor the Son; in doing which he acted the part of a tender Father, a faithful shepherd, and a careful monitor.

Ver. 27. But the anointing which ye have received of him,.... The Spirit, and the grace of the Spirit, which they had received out of the fulness of grace which is in Christ; and is compared to oil or ointment; See Gill on "1Jo 2:20"; for Christ, the anointed, is the fountain of it all, and it is had from him in a way of giving and receiving. So the second "Sephira", or number in the Jews' Cabalistic tree, which is wisdom, has for one of its surnames, the fountain of the oil of unction {i} this

abideth in you; the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "if it abideth", which spoils the text, for the words are not conditional, but affirmative: grace is an internal thing, it is oil in the vessel of the heart, and where it once is, it abides; as does every grace of the Spirit, as faith, hope, love, and every other: grace can never be taken away; God will not take it away, where he has once bestowed it, and men and devils cannot; it can never be lost as to the principle and being of it; it is an incorruptible seed, and a living principle, which can never be destroyed, notwithstanding all the corruptions in a man's hart, the pollutions of the world, and the temptations of Satan:

and ye need not that any man teach you; not that they were perfect in knowledge, for no man is absolutely, only comparatively so, in this life; or that they needed not, and were above and exempt from the instructions of Christ's faithful servants; for John himself taught them, and to teach and instruct them was the end of his writing this epistle to them; but the sense is either that they needed not the teachings of these men before mentioned, the antichrists, liars, and seducers, being better taught, and having an unction by which they knew all things; or they needed not to be taught as if they were babes in Christ, as unskilful in the word of righteousness, but so as to increase in spiritual knowledge, and go on to perfection, and be established in the present truths, at least so as to be put in remembrance of them; or rather they needed not, nor were they to regard any mere human revelation and doctrine, for the whole Gospel was come by Jesus Christ, and no other is to be expected or received by men, nor any doctrine but what is according to the revelation of Christ; wherefore saints under the Gospel dispensation are taught of God by his Spirit, according to the word of truth, and by the ministry of it, and have no need of learning every man from his neighbour, or from his brother, any separate revelation; so that this passage does not militate against the external ministry of the Gospel, or human teachings according to that perfect rule and declaration of the whole mind and will of God by Christ under the Gospel dispensation:

but as the same anointing. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, "his anointing"; that is, God's or Christ's; and so the Syriac version renders it, "that unction which is of God"; meaning the same as before: the Ethiopic version renders it, his Spirit, which, though not a true version, is no improper or impertinent sense of the phrase: and this

teacheth you of all things; truths and doctrines necessary to salvation, as in **1Jo 2:20**;

and is truth, and is no lie; or true and not a liar; which is a just character of the spirit of truth, in opposition to the spirit of error; and holds good of the grace of the Spirit, which is truth in the inward parts, and is genuine and sincere:

and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him; in Christ, from whom they received this anointing, See Gill on "1Jo 2:24"; or in the anointing itself, in the grace of the Spirit, in which they stood. Some versions read in the imperative, abide in him, or it, as in **1Jo 2:28**.

{i} Cabala Denudata, par. 2. p. 8.

1 John 2:28

Ver. 28. And now, little children, abide in him,.... The apostle having finished his separate instructions exhortations to the fathers, young men and children, returns to the whole body of the saints in general, whom he addresses, as in **1Jo 2:1**; under the name of little children; See Gill on "1Jo 2:1"; and whom he exhorts to abide in Christ, that is, in the exercise of faith on him, of hope in him, and love to him; and to hold to him the head, and to hold fast his word and Gospel, and abide by his truth and ordinances, and adhere to his cause and interest, and not to be moved away on any consideration; to which the following encouragement is given:

that when he shall appear; that is, Christ, who is now hid, and out of the sight of bodily eyes, is in heaven, at the right hand of God; but ere long he will appear a second time, and not only to those that look for him, but even every eye shall see him; and his appearance will be a glorious one, and his saints shall appear in glory with him, and shall be like him, and see him as he is:

we may have confidence; boldness or freedom, as now at the throne of grace, so then at the throne of judgment; where the saints will stand with courage and intrepidity, when the wicked will flee to the rocks and mountains, being filled with amazement, terror, and trembling:

and not be ashamed before him at his coming; they will not be put to shame by him; nor will they be ashamed of their confidence, faith, hope, and expectation; their hope will not make them ashamed, for they will now enjoy what they hoped for; and, notwithstanding all their sins and infirmities, they will not be ashamed, for they will have on the wedding garment, the righteousness of Christ, and will stand before the throne without fault, spot, or blemish; nor will Christ be ashamed of them who have not been ashamed of him and his words, but have confessed him, and have been faithful unto death, and have cleaved to him and his cause with full purpose of heart to the end. Some think ministers of the Gospel are here meant, who, when those that are under their care abide faithful, and persevere to the end, will give up their account with joy; and will have what they have expressed confidence in, and will have their expectations answered, and not disappointed, by having such souls as their joy and crown of rejoicing.

1 John 2:29

Ver. 29. If ye know that he is righteous,.... That is, Christ, who is righteous as God in his nature and in his works; and as man in his obedience, life, and conversation; and as Mediator, in faithfully discharging the work he undertook; and is the author of an everlasting righteousness, which is imputed by God, revealed in the Gospel, and received by faith; all which they knew, for this is not said as doubting, but rather as taking it for granted that they did know it; "if", or "seeing ye know", &c. then it follows;

ye know, or "know ye"; ye may assure yourselves,

that everyone that doeth righteousness; not merely works of righteousness, especially in order to justify him before God; for such an one is so far from being born of God, or born again, that he is manifestly in a state of nature, and of opposition to, and enmity against God; he is not subject to him, he does not submit to the righteousness of God, but goes about to establish his own and betrays his ignorance and want grace; but it intends such an one who with the heart believes unto righteousness, and lays hold by faith, and lives upon the righteousness of Christ for justification; and who performs, good, works in faith, and from a principle of love, not to obtain a justifying righteousness, but because he is justified by the righteousness of Christ: and: such an one

is born of him; either of God, or rather, of Christ; being regenerated by his Spirit, having his, grace implanted in him, as appears by his faith in his righteousness and by his works of righteousness, as fruits of faith; and having his image stamped on him, and he himself formed in him, and so made like unto him; by all which it is evident he is one of his spiritual seed and offspring. The Syriac version reads, "is of him"; belongs to him, is one of his; and this makes way for what is said of adoption in the following chapter and which should begin here.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 John 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 JOHN 3

In this chapter the apostle exhorts to a holy life and conversation in general, and to the exercise of brotherly love in particular. The former of these is urged from the consideration of the great blessing of adoption, which springs from the free love and favour of God, is unknown to the men of the world, and indeed, in the present state of things, does not appear to the saints themselves in all its fulness and advantages, as it will do in the future state, when the children of God will be like to Christ, and see him as he is; the hope of which should engage them to purity of life and conversation, **1Jo 3:1**, and this is further enforced from the nature of sin, which is a transgression of the law, **1Jo 3:4**, from the end of Christ's manifestation in the flesh, which was to take away sin, and who was without it, **1Jo 3:5**, from communion with Christ, expressed by abiding in him, seeing and knowing him, which such must be strangers to that live a sinful course of life, **1Jo 3:6**, from this, that only such that do righteousness are righteous persons, and these are righteous as Christ is, **1Jo 3:7**, and from a man's being of the devil, that is, of a vicious conversation, who was a sinner from the beginning, and whose works Christ was manifested in the flesh to destroy, **1Jo 3:8**, and from the nature of the new man, or that which is born of God, which is not to sin, nor can it, **1Jo 3:9**, and from the distinction there is between the children of God and the children of the devil, those not being of God who do not righteousness, nor love their brethren, **1Jo 3:10**, from hence the apostle passes to brotherly love, and excites and engages to that, from its being a message which had been heard from the beginning, **1Jo 3:11**, which is illustrated by its contrary in the instance of Cain, who by the instigation of Satan slew his brother, because his works were righteous, and his own were evil, **1Jo 3:12**, wherefore, it is no wonder that good men should be hated by the world, who, as Cain, are of the same wicked one, **1Jo 3:13**, brotherly love is further urged unto, from its being an evidence of passing from death to life, or of regeneration; whereas he that hates his brother openly continues in a state of death, is a murderer, and so has not eternal life abiding in him, **1Jo 3:14**, and from the great instance of Christ's love, in laying down his life for his people, the saints are incited to lay down their lives for one another; to such a pitch does the apostle carry brotherly love, **1Jo 3:16**, wherefore, he that is rich, and is uncompassionate to his brother in distress, cannot be thought to have the love of God dwelling in him, **1Jo 3:17**, hence he presses the exhortation to brotherly love, that it be not in profession only, but true, real, and cordial, **1Jo 3:18**, and that by observing the advantages of it, as that hereby men know they are of the truth, and can assure their hearts before God; and which is illustrated by the contrary, the condemnation of the heart, **1Jo 3:19**, the advantages of non-condemnation of the heart are confidence before God, and receiving whatsoever we ask of him; the reason of which is, because his commandments are kept, and things done which are pleasing to him, **1Jo 3:21**, the commandments are explained of faith in Christ, and love to one another, **1Jo 3:23**, and the happiness of them that do them is, that Christ dwells in them, and they in him, the evidence of which is, the Spirit that is given unto them, **1Jo 3:24**.

Ver. 1. Behold what manner of love,.... See, take notice, consider, look by faith, with wonder and astonishment, and observe how great a favour, what an instance of matchless love, what a wonderful blessing of grace,

the Father hath bestowed upon us: the Father of Christ, and the Father of us in Christ, who hath adopted us into his family, and regenerated us by his grace, and hath freely given us the new name:

that we should be called the sons of God. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, add, "and we are", or "be"; and the Ethiopic version, "and have been"; for it is not a mere name that is bestowed, but the thing itself in reality; and in the Hebrew language, "to be called", and "to be", are terms synonymous; see **Isa 9:6**; in what sense the saints are the sons of God; See Gill on "Ga 4:6"; this blessing comes not by nature, nor by merit, but by grace, the grace of adoption; which is of persons unto an inheritance they have no legal right unto; the spring of it is the everlasting and unchangeable love of God, for there was no need on the adopter's side, he having an only begotten and beloved Son, and no worth and loveliness in the adopted, they being by nature children of wrath; it is a privilege that exceeds all others, and is attended with many; so that it is no wonder the apostle breaks out in this pathetic manner, and calls upon the saints to view it with admiration and thankfulness:

therefore the world knoweth us not; that is, the greater part of the world, the world that lies in wickedness, the men of the world, who have their portion in this life, whom the god of this world has blinded, and who only mind the things of the world, and are as when they came into it, and have their conversation according to the course of it; these do not know the saints are the sons of God; the new name of sons is what no man knoweth but he that receiveth it; they do not own the saints as theirs, as belonging to them, but reckon them as the faith of the world, and the offscouring of all things; nor do they love them, and that because they are not their own, but hate them and persecute them: the reason is,

because it knew him not; neither the Father, whose sons they are, and who has bestowed the grace upon them; wherefore they know not, and disown and persecute his children; see Joh 17:25; nor the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, the firstborn among many brethren; who, though he made the world, and was in it, was not known by it, but was hated, abused, and persecuted; and therefore it need not seem strange that the saints, who are the sons of God by adoption, should be treated in like manner.

1 John 3:2

Ver. 2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God,.... By adoption, secretly in

God's predestination, and in the covenant of grace; and openly in regeneration, through faith in Christ, and by the testimony of the Spirit:

and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; though they are sons, they do not appear now as such, as they will do, when they shall be introduced into their Father's house, and into the many mansions there prepared for them; when Christ shall publicly own them as the children given unto him, and when they shall be put into the possession of the inheritance they are heirs of; besides, they will appear then not only to be kings' sons, but kings themselves, as they now are; they will then inherit the kingdom prepared for them, and will sit down on a throne of glory, and have a crown of righteousness, life, and glory, put upon them; and will appear not only perfectly justified, their sins being not to be found; and the sentence of justification afresh pronounced, and they placed out of the reach of all condemnation; but they will be perfectly holy and free from all sin, and perfectly knowing and glorious; they have a right to glory now, and glory is preparing for them, and they for that: and they are now representatively glorified in Christ, but then they will be personally glorified: now, though all this shall certainly be, yet it does not now manifestly appear; it appears to God, who calls things that are not as though they were and to Christ, whose delights were with the sons men, these children of God, before the world was, and saw them in all the glory they were to be brought to; but not even to angels, until they are owned and confessed before them; much less to the world, who do not know what they are now, and still less what they will be, seeing them now in poverty, meanness, under many reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions; and even this does not appear to the saints themselves, whose life is a hidden life; and that by reason of darkness, desertion, and diffidence, for want of more knowledge, and from the nature of the happiness itself, which is at present unseen:

but we know that when he shall appear; that is, Jesus Christ, who is now in heaven, and out of sight, but will appear a second time: the time when is not known, but the thing itself is certain:

we shall be like him; in body, fashioned like to his glorious body, in immortality and incorruption, in power, in glory, and spirituality, in a freedom from all imperfections, sorrows, afflictions, and death; and in soul, which likeness will lie in perfect knowledge of divine things, and in complete holiness;

for we shall see him as he is; in his human nature, with the eyes of the body, and in his glorious person, with the eyes of the understanding; not by faith, as now, but by sight; not through ordinances, as in the present state, but through those beams of light and glory darting from him, with which the saints will be irradiated; and this sight, as it is now exceeding desirable, will be unspeakably glorious, delightful, and ravishing, soul satisfying, free from all darkness and error, and interruption; will assimilate and transform into his image and likeness, and be for ever. Philo the Jew observes {k}, that Israel may be interpreted one that sees God; but adds, ouc oiov estin o yeov, "not what God is", for this is impossible: it is indeed impossible to see him essentially as he is, or so as to comprehend his nature, being, and perfections; but then the saints in heaven will see God and Christ as they are, and as much as they are to be seen by creatures; God will be seen as he is in Christ; and Christ will be seen as he is in himself, both in his divine and human natures, as much as can be, or can be desired to be seen and known of him.

{k} De Praemiis. & Paenis, p. 917.

1 John 3:3

Ver. 3. And every man that hath this hope in him,.... Or on him, Jesus Christ; for a true hope of that eternal happiness, which lies in likeness to Christ, and in the vision of him, is only founded on his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice: and this hope every man has not, only he who is born again; for this grace is implanted in regeneration, when men are of abundant mercy begotten unto it, and have it bestowed upon them as a free grace gift; and which is of great service to them both in life and in death; and among the rest it has this influence and effect upon them, that every such person that has it,

purifieth himself even as he is pure; not that any man can purify or cleanse himself from sin, this is only owing to the grace of God and blood of Christ; nor that any man can be so pure and holy as Christ is, who is free from all sin, both original and actual; but this must be understood either of a man that has faith and hope in Christ, dealing by these with the blood of Christ for purity and cleansing, with whom and which these graces are conversant for such purposes; or of such a person's imitating of Christ in the holiness of his life and conversation, making him his pattern and example, studying to walk as he walked; to which he is the more excited and stimulated by the hope he has of being a Son of God, a dear child of his, and therefore ought to be a follower of him, and walk as Christ walked, in humility; love, patience, and in other acts of holiness; and by the hope he has of being like unto him, and with him in the other world to all eternity: but then this "as" is only expressive of some degree of likeness and similitude, and not perfect equality, which is not to be expected in this, or in the world to come; believers indeed, who have faith and hope in the justifying righteousness of Christ, may, and should consider themselves pure and righteous, and free from sin, as Christ is; being clothed upon with his robe of righteousness, in which they stand without fault before the throne, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but this does not seem to be the sense of the place here, the argument being to engage the saints to purity and holiness of life and conversation, from the consideration of the great love of God bestowed upon them in their adoption, and from their hope of eternal happiness, as the context shows; see **2Co 7:1**; other arguments follow.

1 John 3:4

Ver. 4. Whosoever committeth sin,.... This, in connection with what follows, is true of any sin, great or small, but here designs a course of sinning, a wilful, obstinate, persisting in sin:

transgresseth also the law; not of man, unless the law of men is founded on, and agrees with the law of God, for sometimes to transgress the laws of men is no sin, and to obey them would be criminal; but the law of God, and that not the ceremonial law, which was now abolished, and therefore to neglect it, or go contrary to it, was not sinful; but the moral law, and every precept of it, which regards love to God or to our neighbour, and which may be transgressed in thought, word, and deed; and he that committeth sin transgresses it in one or all of these ways, of which the law accuses and convicts, and for it pronounces guilty before God, and curses and condemns; and this therefore is an argument against sinning, because it is against the law of God, which is holy, just, and good, and contains the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God, which is agreeable to his nature and perfections; so that sin is ultimately against God himself:

for sin is a transgression of the law; and whatever is a transgression of the law is sin; the law requires a conformity of nature and actions to it, and where there is a want of either, it is a breach of it; it is concerned with the will and affections, the inclinations and desires of the mind, as well as the outward actions of life; concupiscence or lust is a violation of the law, as well as actual sin; and especially a course of sinning both in heart, lip, and life, is a continued transgression of it, and exposes to its curse and condemnation, and to the wrath of God; and is inconsistent with a true hope of being the sons and heirs of God: but then the transgression of what is not the law of God, whether the traditions of the elders among the Jews, or the ordinances of men among Papists, Pagans, and Turks, or any other, is no sin, nor should affect the consciences of men.

1 John 3:5

Ver. 5. And ye know that he was manifested,.... This is a truth of the Gospel the saints were well instructed in and acquainted with; that Jesus Christ, the Word and Son of God, who is here meant, who was with the Father, and lay in his bosom from all eternity, was in the fulness of time made manifest in the flesh, or human nature, by assuming it into union with his divine person; in which he came and dwelt among men, and became visible to them: the end of which manifestation was,

to take away our sins; as the antitype of the scape goat, making reconciliation and satisfaction for them, through the sacrifice of himself; which was doing what the blood of bulls and goats, or any legal sacrifices or moral performances, could never do: and this he did by taking the sins of his people upon himself, by carrying them up to the cross, and there bearing them, with all the punishment due unto them, in his body; by removing them quite away, and utterly destroying them, finishing and making an end of them: and by causing them to pass away from them, from off their consciences, through the application of his blood by his Spirit:

and in him is no sin; neither original, nor actual; no sin inherent; there was sin imputed to him, but none in him, nor done by him; and hence he became a fit person to be a sacrifice for the sins of others, and by his unblemished sacrifice to take the away; and answered the typical sacrifices under the law, which were to be without spot and blemish: and this shows that he did not offer himself for any sins of his own, for there were none in him, but for the sins of others; and which consideration, therefore, is a strong dissuasive from sinning, and as such is mentioned by the apostle; for, since sin is of such a nature that nothing could atone for it but the blood and sacrifice of Christ, an innocent, as well as a divine person, it should be abhorred by us; and since Christ has taken it away by the sacrifice of himself, it should not be continued and encouraged by us; and since in him is no sin, we ought to imitate him in purity of life and conversation; the end of Christ's bearing our sins was, that we might live unto righteousness, and to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and his love herein should constrain us to obedience to him: so the Jews {l} speak of a man after the image of God, and who is the mystery, of the name Jehovah; and in that man, they say, there is no sin, neither shall death rule over him; and this is that which is said, **Ps 5:4**; neither shall evil dwell with thee.

{l} Sepher Tikkunim, fol. 112. 1. apud Rittangel, de ver. Rel. Christ, p. 68.

1 John 3:6

Ver. 6. Whosoever abideth in him,.... As the branch in the vine, deriving all light, life, grace, holiness, wisdom, strength, joy, peace, and comfort from Christ; or dwells in him by faith, enjoys communion with him as a fruit of union to him; and stands fast in him, being rooted and grounded in him, and abides by him, his truths and ordinances, takes up his rest, and places his security in him, and perseveres through him:

sinneth not; not that he has no sin in him, or lives without sin, but he does not live in sin, nor give up himself to a vicious course of life; for this would be inconsistent with his dwelling in Christ, and enjoying communion with him:

whosoever sinneth; which is not to be understood of a single action, but of a course of sinning:

hath not seen him, neither known him; that is, he has never seen Christ with an eye of faith; he has never truly and spiritually seen the glory, beauty, fulness, and suitableness of Christ, his need, and the worth of him; he has never seen him so as to enjoy him, and have communion with him; for what communion hath Christ with Belial, or light with darkness, or righteousness with unrighteousness? **2Co 6:14**, nor has he ever savingly known him, or been experimentally acquainted with him; for though he may profess to know him in words, he denies him in works.

Ver. 7. Little children, let no man deceive you,.... Neither by these doctrines, nor by wicked practices, drawing into the belief of the one, or into the performance of the other; suggesting, as the Gnostics did, that knowledge without practice was enough, and that it was no matter how a man lived, provided his notions of the Gospel were right:

he that doeth righteousness, is righteous; not that any man is made righteous by the works of the law, or by his obedience to the law of works, for this is contrary to the express word of God; and besides, the best righteousness of man is imperfect, and can never constitute or denominate him righteous before God; and was he justified by it; it would not only lay a foundation for boasting in him, which ought not to be, but would make the death, the sacrifice, and righteousness of Christ, to be in vain; men are only made righteous by the righteousness of Christ, which be has wrought out which is revealed in the Gospel, and received by faith, and which God imputes without works; so that he that doeth righteousness is he that being convinced of the insufficiency of his own righteousness, and of the excellency and suitableness of Christ's righteousness, renounces his own, and submits to his; who lays hold upon it, receives it, and exercises faith on it, as his justifying righteousness; and, in consequence of this, lives in a course of holiness and righteousness, in opposition to, and distinction from one that commits sin, or lives a sinful course of life; which, though it does not make him righteous in the sight of God, yet it shows him to be righteous in the sight of men, and proves that faith to be right which lays hold on the righteousness of Christ, by which he is truly righteous:

even as he is righteous; as Christ himself is righteous; and so the Syriac version reads; not as personal, or as he is personally and essentially righteous as God; but as mystical, every member of his body being clothed with the same robe of righteousness the whole body of Christ is, and indeed justified by the same righteousness that he as Mediator was, when he rose from the dead, as the representative of his people: moreover, as Christ showed himself to be righteous as man, by doing good, so believers in him, by imitating him, and walking as he walked, show themselves to be good and righteous, like, though not equal to him; for as a tree is known by its fruits, so is a good man by his good works, and a righteous man by doing righteousness; and as good fruit does not make a good tree, but shows it to be good, so good works do not make a good man, nor a man's own righteousness make him a righteous man, but show him to be so.

1 John 3:8

Ver. 8. He that committeth sin is of the devil,.... Not everyone that sins, or commits acts of sin, then every man is of the devil, because no man lives without the commission of sin; but he who makes sin his constant business, and the employment of his life, whose life is a continued series of sinning, he is of the devil; not as to origin and substance, or by proper generation, as some have literally understood the words; but by imitation, being like him, and so of him their father, doing his lusts, living continually in sin, as he does, and so resemble him, as children do their parents; and hereby also appear to be under his government and influence, to be led captive by him at his will, and so to belong to him, and such as will have their part and portion with him in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, so living and dying:

for the devil sinneth from the beginning; not of his creation, for he was made by God a pure and holy creature; but from the beginning of the world, or near it, at least from the beginning of man's creation; for he not only sinned by rebelling against God himself, and by drawing in the rest of the apostate angels into the rebellion with him, but by tempting man, as soon as created, to sin against God: what was his first and particular sin is not certain, whether pride or envy, or what; seems to be, his not abiding in the truth, or an opposition to the truth of the Gospel, respecting the incarnation of the Son of God, mentioned in the following clause; see **Joh 8:44**; however, he has been continually sinning ever since: he "sinneth"; he is always sinning, doing nothing else but sin; so that he that lives a vicious course of life is like him, and manifestly of him:

for this purpose the Son of God was manifested; in human nature, as in **1Jo 3:5**; whence it appears that he was the Son of God before his incarnation, and so not by it; he did not become so through it, nor was he denominated such on account of it; he was not made the Son of God by it, but was manifested in it what he was before; and for this end:

that he might destroy the works of the devil; and the devil himself, and all his dominion and power, and particularly his power over death, and death itself; and especially the sins of men, which are the works of the devil, which he puts them upon, influences them to do, and takes delight in; and which are destroyed by Christ, by his sacrifice and death, being taken, carried, removed away, finished, and made an end of by him; See Gill on "1Jo 3:5".

1 John 3:9

Ver. 9. Whosoever is born of God,.... In a figurative and spiritual sense; who are regenerated, or born from above; who are quickened by the grace of God, and have Christ formed in them; who are made partakers of the divine nature, and new creatures in Christ; which spiritual birth is not owing to men, to the power and will of men, but to the grace of God; and is sometimes ascribed to the Father, who of his own will and abundant mercy begets souls again to a lively hope, and saves them by the washing of regeneration; and sometimes to Christ, who quickens whom he will, whose grace is implanted, and image stamped in it, and by whose resurrection from the dead men are begotten again; and chiefly, to the Spirit of God, who is the author of regeneration, and of the whole of sanctification: and such as are born of him are alive through him, the spirit of life entering into them, and live to God and upon Christ, and breathe after divine and spiritual things, and have their senses to discern them; they see, hear, feel, taste, and savour them; and desire the sincere milk of the word, for their nourishment and growth; and have every grace implanted in them, as faith, hope, and love: and of every such an one it is said, he

doth not commit sin; does not make it his trade and business; it is not the constant course of his life; he does not live and walk in sin, or give up himself to it; he is not without the being of it in him, or free from acts of sin in his life and conversation, but he does not so commit it as to be the servant of it, a slave unto it, or to continue in it; and that for this reason:

for his seed remaineth in him; not the word of God, or the Gospel, though that is a seed which is sown by the ministers of it, and blessed by God, and by which he regenerates his people; and which having a place in their hearts, becomes the ingrafted word, and there abides, nor can it be rooted out; where it powerfully teaches to avoid sin, is an antidote against it, and a preservative from it: nor the Holy Spirit of God, though he is the author of the new birth, and the principle of all grace; and where he once is, he always abides; and through the power of his grace believers prevail against sin, and mortify the deeds of the body, and live: but rather the grace of the Spirit, the internal principle of grace in the soul, the new nature, or new man formed in the soul, is meant; which seminally contains all grace in it, and which, like seed, springs up and gradually increases, and always abides; and is pure and incorruptible, and neither sins itself, nor encourages sin, but opposes, checks, and prevents it:

and he cannot sin; not that it is impossible for such a man to do acts of sin, or that it is possible for him to live without sin; for the words are not to be understood in the sense of those who plead for perfection in this life; for though the saints have perfection in Christ, yet not in themselves; they are not impeccable, they are not free from sin, neither from the being nor actings of it; sin is in them, lives in them, dwells in them, hinders all the good, and does all the mischief it can: or in such sense, as if the sins of believers were not sins; for though they are pardoned and expiated, and they are justified from them, yet they do not cease to be sins; they are equally contrary to the nature, will, and law of God, as well as the sins of others; and are oftentimes attended with more aggravated circumstances, and which God in a fatherly way takes notice of, and chastises for, and on the account of which he hides his face from them: nor does the phrase intend any particular single sin, which cannot be committed; though there are such, as sinning wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, or denying Christ to be the Saviour of sinners, and a sacrifice for sin, and hatred of a Christian brother as such, and sinning the sin unto death, or the unpardonable sin; neither of which can be committed by a regenerate man: nor is the meaning only, though it is a sense that will very well bear, and agrees with the context, that such persons cannot sin as unregenerate men do; that is, live in a continued course of sinning, and with pleasure, and without reluctance, and so as to lie in it, as the whole world does: but rather the meaning is, he that is born of God, as he is born of God, or that which is born of God in him, the new man, or new creature, cannot sin; for that is pure and holy; there is nothing sinful in it, nor can anything that is sinful come out of it, or be done by it; it is the workmanship of the Holy Spirit of God; it is a good work, and well pleasing: in the sight of God, who is of purer eyes than to behold sin with delight; and an incorruptible seed, which neither corrupts nor is corrupted; and though it is as yet an imperfect work, it is not impure: the reason of the impeccability of the regenerate man, as such, is because he is born of God: for that which is born of God in him, does, under the influence of the Spirit, power, and grace of God, preserve him from the temptations of Satan, the pollutions of the world, and the corruptions of his own heart; see **1Jo 5:18**; which the Vulgate Latin version there renders, "the generation of God", meaning regeneration, or that which is born of God, "preserveth him": this furnishes out a considerable argument for the perseverance of the saints.

1 John 3:10

Ver. 10. In this the children of God are manifest,.... By regenerating grace, and not sinning, in the sense before explained, in consequence of it: adoption is an act of God's grace and sovereign will; it is secret in his own heart, and is secured in divine predestination, and in the covenant of grace, and is antecedent to regeneration: regeneration and faith do not make men the children of God, but manifest them to be so; adoption makes them the children of God, and entitles them to the inheritance; regeneration gives them the nature of the children of God, and makes them meet for it, and manifests their right unto it; not to the men of the world, but to themselves and other saints:

and the children of the devil; such as imitate him, do his will and his lusts, and are openly under his power and influence; these are distinguishable from regenerate persons, and the children of God, by their lives and conversations; so the people of the nations of the world are called, ywnb, "the children of Samael", and the serpent, by the Jews {m}, which are with them the names of the devil.

Whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God: that is, he does; not appear to be born of God, who does not by faith lay hold on the righteousness of Christ for his justification before God, and acceptance with him; and who does not do works of righteousness in faith from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God; for where regenerating grace is, there will be such graces and such practices:

neither he that loveth not his brother; for as he that loveth God, and Christ, and the brethren, appears manifestly to be born again, and to have passed from death to life, so he that does not is in darkness, in a state of unregeneracy, and walks and continues therein; for was he born again, he would be taught of God to love the saints; see **1Jo 4:7**.

{m} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 34. 2.

1 John 3:11

Ver. 11. For this is the message,.... Sent from God by Christ, or what he in his ministry declared, and is the commandment which was so frequently urged by him, Joh 13:34;

that ye have heard from the beginning; of the preaching of the Gospel to them, and of their conversion; see **1Jo 2:7**;

that we should love one another; to which the command of Christ, the reason with which it is enforced, and the early notice of it, should engage.

1 John 3:12

Ver. 12. Not as Cain,.... That is, let us not be like him, or do as he did, hate the brethren. The apostle illustrates brotherly love by its contrary, in the instance of Cain, who was the first instance and example of hatred of the brethren, and of fratricide, and a very detestable one, by which he would dissuade from so vile and abominable a practice:

[who] was of that wicked one; Satan, a child of his, an imitator of him, one that appeared to be under his influence, and to belong unto him. So the Jews say of Cain {n}, that

"he was of the side of the serpent (the old serpent the devil); and as the way of the serpent is to slay and to kill, so Cain immediately became a murderer."

And again,

"because Cain came from the side of the angel of death, he slew his brother {o};"

though they say that he afterwards repented, and became worthy of paradise {p}.

And slew his brother; see **Ge 4:8**. According to the tradition of the Jews {q} he struck a stone into his forehead, and killed him:

and wherefore slew he him? what was the cause and occasion of it? what moved him to it?

because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous; or "his work", as the Ethiopic version reads: the sacrifice which he offered up, which, though it was not evil as to the matter and substance of it, yet was so, being offered with an evil mind, and with an hypocritical heart, and without faith in the sacrifice of Christ, and so was unacceptable to God; whereas, on the other hand, the sacrifice his brother brought was offered up in the faith of Christ, by which he obtained a testimony that he was righteous, and that the work he did was a righteous work, being done in faith, and so was acceptable to God; which Cain perceiving, was filled with envy, and this put him upon killing him. The Jews {r} relate the occasion of it after this manner;

"Cain said to Abel his brother, come, and let us go out into the open field; and when they were both out in the open field, Cain answered and said to Abel his brother, there is no judgment, nor Judge, nor another world; neither will a good reward be given to the righteous, nor vengeance be taken on the wicked; neither was the world created in mercy, nor is it governed in mercy; or why is thy offering kindly accepted, and mine is not kindly accepted? Abel answered and said to Cain, there is judgment, and there is a Judge, and there is another world; and there are gifts of a good reward to the righteous, and vengeance will be taken on the wicked; and the world was created in mercy, and in mercy it is governed, for according to the fruit of good works it is governed; because that my works are better than thine, my offering is kindly accepted, and thine is not kindly accepted; and they both strove together in the field, and Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."

In the Hebrew text in **Ge 4:8**; there is an extraordinary large pause, as if a discourse of this kind, which passeth between the two brothers, was to be inserted. Philo the Jew says {s}, that in the contention or dispute between Cain and Abel, Abel attributed all things to God, and Cain ascribed everything to himself; so that the controversy was about grace and works, as now; and as then Cain hated his brother upon this account, so now carnal men hate and persecute the saints, because they will not allow their works to be the cause of justification and salvation: and from hence also it may be observed, that a work may be, as to the matter of it, good, and yet as to its circumstances, and the end and view of it, evil.

{n} Midrash Ruth in Zohar in Gen. fol. 42. 4. {o} Zohar in ib. fol. 43. 1. {p} Ib. fol. 41. 1, 2. {q} Targum Jon. in Gen. iv. 8. Pirke Eliezer, c. 21. {r} Targum Hieros. & Jon. in Gen. iv. 8. {s} Quod Det. Potior. p. 161.

1 John 3:13

Ver. 13. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. By "the world" is meant the inhabitants of the world, the wicked part of them; these hate the saints, though without a cause, any just cause, and for no other reason, but because they are chosen and called out of the world, and do not live the wicked life they do: and this hatred of theirs is not at all to be wondered at; so it was from the beginning, and has been in all ages since; immediately upon the fall there was enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, which showed itself in Cain, the instance just given, who hated and murdered his righteous brother; Ishmael, that was born after the flesh, persecuted Isaac, that was born after the Spirit; and as it was then, it is now, the Jews persecuted the prophets of old, and hated Christ and his apostles. This is the common lot of all the saints, of all that will live godly in Christ Jesus; and therefore it should not be reckoned a strange and unusual thing; it always was so, even from the beginning, as soon as ever there were two sorts of persons, good and bad, righteous and wicked. This is a corollary or conclusion drawn from the above instance of Cain.

1 John 3:14

Ver. 14. We know that we have passed from death to life,.... From a death in sin, a moral or spiritual death; which lies in a separation from God, Father, Son, and Spirit; in an alienation from the life of God; in a loss of the image of God, of righteousness, holiness, and knowledge, in which man was created; in a privation of all true sense of sin, and in a servitude to it, which is unto death, and is no other than death: and from a legal death, or death in a legal sense, under the sentence of which all men are, as considered in Adam; and which God's elect are sensible of, when convinced by the Spirit of God, and are in their own apprehension as dead men. Now in regeneration, which is a quickening of sinners dead in sin, a resurrection of them from the dead, the people of God pass from this death of sin, and the law, to a life of sanctification, having principles of grace and life implanted in them; and to a life of justification, and of faith on Christ, as the Lord their righteousness; and to a life of communion with Christ; and to such a life as is to the glory of Christ; and to a right to eternal life. And this passing from the one to the other is not of themselves, it is not their own act; no man can quicken himself, or raise himself from the dead; in this men are passive: and so the words are rendered in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, "we know that we are translated"; that is, by God the Father, who delivers from the power of darkness, and death, and translates into the kingdom of his dear Son, which is a state of light and life; or by Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, who is the author of the resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace; or by the Spirit of life from Christ, by whom souls are quickened, and of whom they are born again: and this passage from death to life, or regeneration, is a thing that may be, and is known by the regenerate man; who, as he knows surely, that whereas he was blind he now sees, so that whereas he was dead in sin, he is now alive; and among other things it may be known by this,

because we love the brethren: this is not the cause of passing from death to life, but the effect of it, and so an evidence of it, or that by which it is known; brotherly love being what the saints are taught of God in regeneration, and is a fruit of the Spirit of God, and is what true faith works by, and is what shows itself as soon as anything in a regenerate man; nor can anyone love the saints, as such, as brethren in Christ, unless he is born again; a man may indeed love a saint, as a natural relative, as a good neighbour, and because he has done him some good offices, and because of some excellent qualities in him, as a man of learning, sense, candour, civility, &c. though he has not the grace of God; but to love him as a child of God, a member of Christ, and because he has his image stamped on him, no man can do this, unless he has received the grace of God; so that this is a certain evidence of it:

he that loveth not [his] brother, abideth in death; in the death of sin, in a state of nature and unregeneracy; under the sentence of condemnation and death; and he is liable to eternal death, which is the wages of sin, under the power of which such a manifestly is. This is said to deter from hatred, as also what follows.

1 John 3:15

Ver. 15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer,.... A soul murderer, as the Ethiopic version renders it; not only of himself, for every sinner, by sinning, wrongs and destroys his own soul; but of his brother whom he hates: he is a murderer of him in his heart, even as he that lusts after a woman hath committed adultery with her in his heart, out of which arise murders, as well as adulteries; it is not only taking away life, but also causeless anger, malice, and hatred, that is a breach of the sixth command; see **Mt 5:21**;

and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him; he has not the grace of life, or the beginning of eternal life in him; he has no meetness for it, being unregenerate; and no right unto it, being unrighteous; nor has he the earnest and pledge of it, being destitute of the Spirit of God; all which a regenerate man has, and has them abiding in him: not but that the sin of murder may be forgiven; a man guilty of it may truly repent, and have pardoning grace applied unto him, and enjoy eternal life, through the grace of the Spirit, and the blood and righteousness of Christ; but without these he is so far from having eternal life, that he is not only punishable with a corporeal death, according to the laws of God and man; but he is exposed unto, and will die the second, or an eternal death.

1 John 3:16

Ver. 16. Hereby perceive we the love [of God],.... The phrase "of God" is not in the Oriental versions, nor in the Greek copies, but is in the Complutensian edition, and in the Vulgate Latin version, and is favoured by the Syriac version, which reads, "by this we know his love to us"; and so the Ethiopic version, "by this we know his love". That is, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly and properly God, the great God, the mighty God, the true God, and God over all, blessed for ever. His love is manifested to his people, and perceived by them in various instances; but in nothing is it more clearly seen than in the following one:

because he laid down his life for us: of the life of Christ, and his laying it down in the room of his people, See Gill on "John 15:13", which shows his love, his free grace and favour; for this arose not from any merit or worth in the persons he died for; not from their love, loveliness, or duty, but from his rich mercy, and the great love wherewith he loved them; and which, though it cannot be equalled, should be imitated:

and we ought to lay down [our] lives for the brethren: not in such sense, or for such ends and purposes, as Christ laid down his life for us; for no man, as by giving his money, so by laying down his life, can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him: but the meaning is, that saints ought to risk their lives, and expose themselves to dangers, for the sake of their brethren, when they are called to it, and the case requires it: as Priscilla and Aquila laid down their necks, or ventured their lives for the Apostle Paul, Ro 16:3; and they should also, when called unto it, freely lay down their lives in the cause of Christ, and for the sake of his Gospel, for the gaining of souls to Christ, and for the confirming of the faith of the brethren in him, as the apostles of Christ, and the martyrs of Jesus, have done; this is an argument for brotherly love, in the highest instance of it, taken from the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, than which nothing is more forcible, or can lay a greater obligation on the saints.

1 John 3:17

Ver. 17. But whoso hath this world's good,.... The possessions of this world, worldly substance, the temporal good things of it; for there are some things in it, which are honestly, pleasantly, and profitably good, when used lawfully, and not abused, otherwise they are to the owner's hurt: or "the living of this world"; that which the men of the world give up themselves to, are bent upon, and pursue after; or on which men live, and by which life is maintained, and preserved, and made comfortable in the present state of things; such as meat, drink, apparel, money, houses, lands, &c. The Ethiopic version renders it, "he that hath the government of this world"; as if it pointed at a person that is in some high office of worldly honour and profit, and is both great and rich; but the words are not to be restrained to such an one only, but refer to any man that has any share of the outward enjoyments of life; that has not only a competency for himself and family, but something to spare, and especially that has an affluence of worldly substance; but of him that has not, it is not required; for what a man distributes ought to be his own, and not another's, and in proportion to what he has, or according to his ability:

and seeth his brother have need; meaning, not merely a brother in that strict and natural relation, or bond of consanguinity; though such an one in distress ought to be, in the first place, regarded, for no man should hide himself from, overlook and neglect his own flesh and blood; but any, and every man, "his neighbour", as the Ethiopic version reads, whom he ought to love as himself; and especially a brother in a spiritual relation, or one that is of the household of faith: if he has need; that is, is naked and destitute of daily food, has not the common supplies of life, and what nature requires; and also, whose circumstances are low and mean, though not reduced to the utmost extremity; and if he sees him in this distress with his own eyes, or if he knows it, hears of it, and is made acquainted with it, otherwise he cannot be blameworthy for not relieving him.

And shutteth up his bowels [of compassion] from him; hardens his heart, turns away his eyes, and shuts his hand; has no tenderness in him for, nor sympathy with his distressed brother, nor gives him any succour: and this shows, that when relief is given, it should be not in a morose and churlish manner, with reflection and reproach, but with affection and pity; and where there is neither one nor the other,

how dwelleth the love of God in him? neither the love with which God loves men; for if this was shed abroad in him, and had a place, and dwelt in him, and he was properly affected with it, it would warm his heart, and loosen his affections, and cause his bowels to move to his poor brother: nor the love with which God is loved; for if he does not love his brother whom he sees in distress, how should he love the invisible God? **1Jo 4:20**; nor that love which God requires of him, which is to love his neighbour as himself.

1 John 3:18

Ver. 18. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue,.... Which though it holds good of love to God, and to Jesus Christ, yet here is to be understood of love to the brethren, as the context shows; and so the Syriac version reads, "let us not love one another in word", &c. that is, without the heart, or with a double heart; speaking one thing with the lip, and designing another thing in the heart; speaking peaceably with the mouth, and with the heart laying wait; or we should not love in this manner "only"; and so the Arabic version of De Dieu adds. It is very lawful, and right to express our love to one another, and to all men in words, to give good words, and use courteous language, and speak in a kind, tender, and affectionate manner, and especially to persons in distress; but this should not be all, it will be of no avail to say to such, be warmed and filled, and give them nothing but these good words, nothing to warm and fill them with; see **Jas 2:15**;

but in deed and in truth; for true love is a laborious and operative grace, hence we read of the work and labour of love; it shows itself by the saints serving one another, in spirituals; as by bearing one another's burdens, forbearing with, and forgiving one another, praying for each other, and building up one another on their most holy faith; exhorting each other to the duties of religion, and not suffering sins upon one another, but admonish in love, and restore with meekness; and in temporals, distributing to the necessities of the saints, ministering: to them of their worldly substance, and supplying their daily wants: and this is loving "in deed", or "in work"; this is actual love, love in fact, and what is apparent and evident: and it is "in truth", when it is in reality, and not in show only; and when it is cordially and heartily done, with cheerfulness, and without grudging.

1 John 3:19

Ver. 19. And hereby we know that we are of the truth,.... By the saints loving one another in deed and in truth, they know, as the cause is known by the effect, that they are of God, who is the true God, the God of truth, and cannot lie, and is truth itself; that they are the children of God, and are born of him, since they love those that are, and every like loves its like; and that they are of Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life; that they belong to him, are his, since they have his Spirit, as appears by his fruits in them, and this, among the rest, love to the brethren; and that they are his disciples, which others, even all men know, as well as themselves, by their mutual brotherly love; and that they are of the Gospel, which is truth, and the word of truth; that they are begotten, and born again, according to the will and grace of God by it, and are on the side of it, and can do nothing against, but all for it; and that they are true, sincere, and upright persons, true believers in Christ, whose faith works by love, and are real lovers of him, and his, since they love not in word only, but in deed and in truth.

And shall assure our hearts before him; or "persuade our hearts": arrive to a full assurance of faith, hope, and understanding, that we are of the truth, do belong to God, are loved by him with an everlasting love, are chosen by him unto salvation, and are his adopted and regenerated ones, having passed from death to life, of which brotherly love is a sure evidence, **1Jo 3:14**. Some render the words "shall pacify", or "make our hearts tranquil": or "quiet"; this only the blood of Christ can do, and does, being sprinkled on the conscience: he only has a quiet mind, or true peace of conscience, that looks to the righteousness of Christ for justification, and deals with his blood for the full and free remission of his sins: it is true indeed, that one that loves his brother heartily and sincerely, has peace of mind in it, though not for it; when, on the other hand, there is no peace to the wicked man, that hates his brother; for where there is envying, malice, hatred, and strife, there is no true peace, pleasure, and comfort, but confusion, uneasiness, distraction, and every evil work. Or this passage may refer to that holy confidence before God, which true believers in Christ, and cordial lovers of the brethren, have; both now at the throne of grace, where they can come with boldness, intrepidity, and freedom, to ask for what they want, and confidently believe they shall receive what is proper and needful for them; and also hereafter, at the throne of judgment, and in the day of judgment, when they shall have boldness, and not be ashamed before the Judge at his coming; who will particularly take notice of their love in feeding, clothing, and visiting the least of his brethren, which he takes as done to himself.

1 John 3:20

Ver. 20. For if our heart condemn us,.... Of want of love to the brethren, and of hypocrisy in it, as well as of any other sin; for the conscience, which is meant by the heart here, is accuser, witness and judge; it accuses of the evil of sin, and is as good as a thousand witnesses; and upon its own testimony pronounces guilty, and condemns.

God is greater than our heart: for he is the Maker of it, and he has the power over it, and the management of it; it is in his hands, and to be turned by him as he pleases; and he is the searcher and trier of it; and besides, is a swifter witness than conscience, and a superior Judge unto it.

And knoweth all things; that are in the heart; the principles of actions, and all the actions of men, for which their hearts condemn them; and all the sinfulness in them, and the aggravations of them; wherefore, as he knows them more perfectly, he judges of them more exactly, and will reprove more sharply, and condemn more severely for them: hence, if the condemnation of men's hearts and consciences be so very great, as sometimes to be intolerable and insupportable, what will be the righteous judgment, and dreadful condemnation of God? how fearful a thing will it be to fall into the hands of the living God! this sense is confirmed by the Syriac version rendering it, "how much greater is God than our hearts?" there is another sense given by some, which is not by way of terror, but comfort, and that is, that if the hearts of believers accuse, reprove, and condemn for sin through unbelief, or want of clear view of pardon and righteousness by Christ, God is greater, as in power, so in knowledge, than the hearts of men; and he knows the thoughts he has towards them, which are of peace, and not of evil; the covenant he has made with his Son, of which he is ever mindful; and what his Son has done, that he has made full satisfaction for sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness: so that let sin, or Satan, or the world, or the law, or their own hearts condemn them, there is no condemnation of any avail unto them. But the former sense seems best to agree with the context.

1 John 3:21

Ver. 21. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not,.... Which must be understood, not of a stupidity of mind, as is in unregenerate men, who have no sense of sin, no sorrow for it, or remorse of conscience on account of it; or as is in them who are past feeling; having their consciences seared as with a red hot iron; such cannot be entitled to the advantages that follow; nor is it of persons the apostle speaks, but of himself, and Christians, the beloved of the Lord, and one another, who had an experience of the grace of God upon their souls, and made a profession of religion: nor does it design such a purity of heart and life in believers, as that their hearts do not smite, reproach, and condemn them for sin at any time, for such a state of perfection is not to be attained to and expected in this life; but rather a conscience purged by the blood of Christ, or an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience by that blood, which speaks peace and pardon, so that there is no more conscience of sin, for the removal of which that is applied; and this gives boldness and confidence at the throne of grace: though it is best of all to confine it to the case of brotherly love; for the sense is not, if our heart condemn us not of anything but of the want of brotherly love, or insincerity in it,

[then] have we confidence towards God; or with him, at the throne of his grace: such can draw nigh to him, and stand before him with an holy and humble confidence, when such as hate the brethren, as Cain did, in whom the apostle instances, and those that go in his way, cannot; whose heart condemned him, his conscience smote him, and he went from the presence of the Lord; but those that love the brethren have confidence of their relation to God; by this they know their regeneration, and by that their adoption, and so that they are the children of God; and can therefore draw nigh to God as their Father, and call him so; they can come with an holy boldness and intrepidity of mind before him, and use a parrhsia, "freedom of speech", with him; can tell him all their mind, pour out their souls unto him, and lay before him their case and wants; they have confidence of his power, faithfulness, and willingness to supply their need, and fulfil all his promises to them, and that their prayers will be heard, answered, and regarded by him in his own time.

1 John 3:22

Ver. 22. And whatsoever we ask we receive of him,.... According to his promise, **Mt 7:7**; that is, whatever is asked according to the will of God, in the name of Christ, and for his sake, and in faith, nothing wavering, but believing in God, in his covenant and promises, for these are provisos in the case; and such as ask in this way may exercise an holy confidence that they shall receive; and indeed they do receive what they ask for; see **1Jo 5:14**;

because we keep his commandments; not that keeping the commands of God is the meritorious cause of receiving anything from him; for when men have done all they can, or are assisted to do, they are but unprofitable servants in point of merit: whatever is received from God, as it is in consequence of asking, so it is entirely owing to his own grace and favour, and for the sake of Christ; but keeping the commands of God is a necessary adjunct, or, as Calvin on the text calls it, an inseparable accident, or what necessarily belongs unto, and enters into the character of such, who are heard and answered by God, and receive at his hands; for there is a great deal of truth in what the Jews say to the blind man, **Joh 9:31**; and which may serve as a comment on these words:

and do those things that are pleasing in his sight; as keeping of his commandments is; not that these things ingratiate into the love and favour of God, or are the causes and conditions of it, for the love of God is prior to anything of this kind; nor are they the causes of men's acceptance with God, for the acceptance both of persons and services is only in Christ the beloved; but these things are what God approves of, when done in faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to his glory: and since he hears such persons that are worshippers of him, and do his will, and has promised good things to them; this is therefore a reason strengthening their confidence in him, that what they ask they shall receive.

1 John 3:23

Ver. 23. And this is his commandment,.... Having mentioned the keeping of the commandments of God, the apostle proceeds to show what they are; that they are faith in Christ, and love to one another; which two are reduced to one, because they are inseparable; where the one is, the other is; faith works by love.

That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ; Christ is the object of faith, and he is no, as he is Jesus, a Saviour; faith deals with him as such, and will have no other Saviour but he: and now to believe in him, is not merely to believe that he is the Son of God, the true Messiah, the Saviour of the world, that he is come in the flesh, has suffered, and died, and rose again from the dead, is ascended into heaven, and is set down at the right hand of God, makes intercession for his people, and will come again to judge the quick and dead; but it is to go forth in special and spiritual acts upon him, such as looking at him, coming to him, venturing on him, trusting in him for life and salvation, committing all into his hands, and expecting all from him. And this is called a "commandment", and comes under the notion of one; not that it is properly a law, or belongs to the law; for faith in Christ Jesus is a fruit of electing grace, and a blessing of the covenant of grace; it is the free gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit, and is peculiar to the elect of God, and sheep of Christ; and so cannot belong to the law of works; but, as the Hebrew words, hrwt, and hwum, both signify any doctrine, and instruction in general; see Ps 19:7; so the word here used designs an evangelical doctrine, a divine instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Gospel, which declares that he that believes in Christ shall be saved; and so the word is used for a doctrine in this epistle, **1Jo 2:7**; and that of the next command or doctrine, which follows,

and love one another as he gave us commandment; that is, as Christ taught and instructed his disciples, Joh 13:34.

1 John 3:24

Ver. 24. And he that keepeth his commandments,.... Attends to those instructions and declarations concerning faith in Christ, and love to the brethren, and acts according to them:

dwelleth in him, and he in them; that is, he dwells in Christ, and Christ dwells in him; the same is said of believing in Christ under the figurative expressions of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, See Gill on "Joh 6:56";

and hereby we know that he abideth in us; or dwelleth in us, as before,

by the Spirit which he hath given us; which if understood of private Christians, as the preceding verses incline to, the sense is, that union to Christ, and the continuance of it, or his indwelling as a fruit of union, and the permanency of that, are evidenced by the Spirit of God; who is given in consequence of union and relation to Christ, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, of faith and love, of adoption, and as the earnest of the heavenly inheritance; but if of the apostles and ministers of the word, it may regard the gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed on them, fitting them for their work and office, and who is a spirit of truth, and not of error; and by having and enjoying these, they knew that Christ abode in them, and had reason to believe, according to his promise, that he would be with them, and with his ministering: servants in succession, to the end of the world; and this sense seems to be encouraged by the former part of the following chapter.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 John 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 JOHN 4

In this chapter the apostle cautions against seducing spirits; advises to try them, and gives rules by which they may be known, and by which they are distinguished from others; and then returns to his favourite subject, brotherly love. He exhorts the saints not to believe every man that came with a doctrine to them, but to try them, since there were many false teachers in the world; and gives a rule by which they may be tried and judged, as that whatever teacher owns Christ to be come in the flesh is of God, but he that does not is not of God, but is the spirit of antichrist that should come, and was in the world, **1Jo 4:1**, but, for the comfort of those to whom he writes, he observes, that they were of God, and had overcome these false teachers, through the mighty power of the divine Spirit in them, who is greater than Satan, and all his emissaries, **1Jo 4:4**. He distinguishes between seducing spirits, and faithful ministers of the word; the former are of the world, speak of worldly things, and worldly men hear them; but the latter are of God, and they that have any spiritual knowledge of God hear them; but such as are not of God do not heal them, by which may he known the spirit of truth from the spirit of error, **1Jo 4:5**. And then the apostle returns to his former exhortation to brotherly love, which he enforces by the following reasons, because it is of God, a fruit of his Spirit and grace, and because it is an evidence of being born of God, and of having a true knowledge of him; whereas he that is destitute of it does not know him, seeing God is love, **1Jo 4:7**, and having affirmed that God is love, he proves it, by the mission of his Son, to be a propitiation for the sins of such that did not love him, and that they might live through him; wherefore he argues, that if God had such a love to men, so undeserving of it, then the saints ought to love one another, **1Jo 4:9**. Other arguments follow, engaging to it, as that God is invisible; and if he is to be loved, then certainly his people, who are visible; and that such who love one another, God dwells in them, and his love is perfected in them; and that he dwells in them is known by the gift of his Spirit to them, **1Jo 4:12**, and that God the Father so loved the world, as to send his Son to be the Saviour of it, before asserted, is confirmed by the apostles, who were eyewitnesses of it; who also declare, that whoever confesses the sonship of Christ, God dwells in him, and he in God; and who had an assurance of the love of God to them, who is love itself; so that he that dwells in God, and God in him, dwells in love, **1Jo 4:14**. And great are the advantages arising from hence, for hereby the saints' love to God is made perfect; they have boldness in the day of judgment, since as he is, so are they in this world, and fear is cast out by it, **1Jo 4:17**, but lest too much should be thought to be ascribed to love, that is said to be owing to the love of God to them, which is prior to theirs to him, and the reason of it, **1Jo 4:19**. And the chapter is closed with observing the contradiction there is between a profession of love to God, and hatred of the brethren, seeing God, who is invisible, cannot be loved, if brethren that are seen are hated; and also the commandment, that he that loves God should love his brother also, **1Jo 4:20**.

Ver. 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit,.... The apostle having mentioned the word "spirit" in the latter part of the preceding chapter, takes an occasion from thence to return to what he had been suggesting in the "second" chapter, concerning the many antichrists that then were, and whom he points out, and here cautions against. By "every spirit" he means, either every doctrine that is pretended to come from the Spirit of God, or every teacher, who professes to be qualified and sent by him, and to have his light, knowledge, and doctrine from him. Every true minister of the Gospel has the Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit, more or less, to qualify him for his work; he is separated, and called to it by him, and receives his spiritual light find knowledge from him; it is he that teaches him sound doctrine, and leads him into all truth, as it is in Jesus, and brings every necessary truth to his remembrance; and who succeeds his ministrations to the good of souls: but there are some who call themselves the ministers of the Gospel, who, though they may have some natural abilities, and a share of human learning, and a notional knowledge of things, yet have never received either grace or gifts from the Spirit; nor have they been ever called by him; nor are their ministrations according to that divine word which is inspired by him, nor attended with his demonstration and power; wherefore, though some professing to have the Spirit of Christ are to be believed, yet not everyone; and though the Spirit is not to be quenched in any, nor prophesying to be despised, yet care should be taken what is heard and received: some persons are so obstinate and incredulous as not to believe anything that is declared, be the evidence what it will; as the Jews would not believe Christ and his apostles, though what they said agreed with Moses and the prophets, and was confirmed by miracles; and others are too credulous; at once receive every teacher, and embrace every upstart doctrine: this they should not do,

but try the spirits whether they are of God; not by human reason, especially as carnal and unsanctified; for though the doctrines of the Gospel are not contrary to true reason, they are above it, and not to be judged of by it, and are disapproved of and rejected by carnal reason; but by the word of God, which is the standard of all doctrine; and whatever agrees with that is to be received, and what does not should be rejected. And so to do is very commendable, as appears from the instance of the Beraeans, who on this account are said to be more noble than those of Thessalonica, Ac 17:11; and from the commendation of the church at Ephesus, **Re 2:2**. And this is what every believer, every private Christian should do; to them it belongs to read and search the Scriptures, and prove all things, and judge for themselves of the truth of doctrine; and to such a probation or trial of the spirits, spiritual light, knowledge, judgment, sense, experience, and divine guidance are necessary, which should be asked of God, and an increase thereof; and all such diligent searchers, and humble inquirers, are capable of making judgment of persons and doctrines, whether they are from the Spirit of God or not, for the Spirit of God never speaks contrary to his word: and the reason why such a trial should be made is,

because many false prophets are gone out into the world: such who pretended either to a revelation of future things, and to foretell things to come; or rather to a gift of prophesying, or preaching in Christ's name, to be "prophets" and spiritual men, and ministers of the word, but were "false" ones; who either predicted what did not come to pass, or rather preached false doctrine, by corrupting the word, and handling it deceitfully, and so imposed upon and ruined the souls of others, as well as deceived their own: and there were not only one, or two, or a few of these, but "many", as our Lord had foretold, Mt 24:11; and which makes the reason the stronger for not believing every spirit, but trying them; and the rather, since they were not sent of God, hot called out by his churches, but were "gone out" of themselves; of their own heads, and without any mission from God or man: and "into the world" too; they were in every part of it, and especially where there were any churches of Christ; into which they first crept in privily, and at unawares, but afterwards became public preachers of the word, and then separating from them, set up openly in the world for themselves.

1 John 4:2

Ver. 2. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God,.... This is a rule by which believers may know whether a man professing to have the Spirit of God, and to be called and sent by him, and whether the, doctrine he preaches, is of him or not:

every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; or of the Spirit of God; that is, every doctrine which carries this truth in it; or every man that owns, and professes, and publishes this doctrine concerning Christ, is on the side of God and truth; and which contains several articles in it, respecting the person and office of Christ; as that he existed before he came in the flesh, not in the human nature, or as man, or as an angel, but as the Son of God, as a divine person, being truly and properly God; so that this confession takes in his divine sonship, and proper deity, and also his true and real humanity; that the Messiah was incarnate, against the Jews, and was God and man in one person; and that he was really man, and not in appearance only, against the heretics of those times: and it also includes his offices, as that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Messiah, which the Jews denied, and that he was the anointed prophet, priest, and King; and so is a confession or acknowledgment of all the doctrines of the Gospel, which came by him, as a prophet; and of his satisfaction, sacrifice, and intercession, as a priest; and of all his ordinances and commands as a King; and that he is the only Saviour and Redeemer of men. Now, whoever owns and declares this system of truth, "is of God"; not that everyone that assents unto this, or preaches it, is born of God; a man may believe, and confess all this, as the devils themselves do, and yet be destitute of the grace of God; but the spirit, or doctrine, which contains these things in it, is certainly of God, or comes from him; or whoever brings these truths with him, and preaches them, he is, so far as he does so, on the side of God and truth, and to be regarded.

1 John 4:3

Ver. 3. And every spirit that confesseth not,.... The proper deity and sonship of Christ, his true and real humanity, and his Messiahship; or any of his offices, doctrines, and ordinances; or his satisfaction and righteousness; or that peace, pardon, justification, life, and salvation, are by him; all which are meant by what follows,

that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh: this clause is left out in the Ethiopic version, and that without hurting the sense, since it is easily supplied from the preceding verse; and the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version, only read "Jesus": and the latter reads the whole thus, "and every spirit that dissolves Jesus"; that separates the two natures, human and divine, in him, and makes two persons of them; or denies either of them, either that he is truly God, or really man, or denies him to be Jesus, the Saviour; who, as much as in him lies, destroys his person, office, and work, and makes void his obedience, sufferings, and death:

is not of God; neither he nor his doctrine are of God; his doctrine cannot come from God, being contrary to the word of God; and he himself is neither born of God, nor on his side.

And this is that [spirit] of antichrist: who is against Christ, or opposes himself to him; as he who denies his sonship, his deity, his humanity, his offices, and his grace, manifestly does; every doctrine that is calculated against these truths is the spirit and doctrine of antichrist:

whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already is it the world; in the false teachers, the forerunners of antichrist; See Gill on "1Jo 2:18".

1 John 4:4

Ver. 4. Ye are of God, little children,.... This, with what follows, is said for the comfort of the saints, and to deliver them from the fears of being drawn aside by the delusions of the false prophets, and antichrists; since they belonged to God, were his elect, and therefore could not be finally and totally seduced; they were the children of God by adopting grace, and could not become the servants of men; they were born of God, and so were kept by the power of God unto salvation, as all that are begotten unto a lively hope are; they were enlightened by the Spirit of God, and had a discerning of truth from error, and therefore could not be imposed upon:

and have overcome them; the false prophets, being in a good cause, fighting the good fight of faith, and having good weapons, particularly the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and invincible arguments from thence; and also gracious assistance from the Spirit of God, who gives a mouth that none can shut, and wisdom that none can resist; as well as an inward experience of the truth, and power of Gospel doctrines: a testimony within themselves, which will stand the whole shock and opposition of the enemy: the Vulgate Latin version reads, "and have overcome him"; antichrist, whose spirit was then in the world; or the world itself, or Satan, the god of the world; and so the Ethiopic version reads, "and have overcome the evil one", as in **1Jo 2:13**; the reason of which victory, and which adds to the comfort and support of saints in their present warfare, is,

because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world; by "he that is in the world" is meant either the devil, the prince and god of the world, and who goes up and down in it, dwells in the hearts of the men of it, under whose influence they are, and in whom he works effectually; or antichrist, whose spirit was now in the world, and whose doctrine was propagated by the false teachers, in whom he began to appear; but he that is in the saints, either God who dwells in them, and their in him, **1Jo 4:15**; is mightier than the man of sin, and his emissaries, to keep and preserve from all corruptions, and every false way; or Christ, who dwells in their hearts by faith, and is stronger than the strong man armed, and able to save and deliver out of his hands; or the Spirit of God; and so the Arabic version reads, "the Spirit that is in you"; who is in the saints, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, as a spirit of adoption, and the earnest of their inheritance; he is able to carry on the work of grace in them, and finish it, and will do it; and he, as a spirit of truth, is more powerful than the spirit of error; and when the enemy comes in like a flood, or pours in a flood of errors and heresies, he lifts up a standard against him, causes him to fly, and secures the saints from being carried away with it: compare with this the Septuagint version of Ps 124:1, "if it had not been the Lord who was on our side"; which render it thus, "if the Lord had not been in us".

1 John 4:5

Ver. 5. They are of the world,.... That is, the false prophets and teachers that were gone into the world, and had the spirit of antichrist in them; these were as they were when they came into the world, under the pollution, guilt, and dominion of sin, in a state of unregeneracy, carnality, and darkness; they properly belonged unto it, and walked after the course of it, and were under the influence of the god of it, who led them into error; and were sensual, and indulged themselves in worldly lusts, and were seeking after worldly things; supposed that gain was godliness, and had men's persons in admiration because of advantage; their nature and disposition, their principles and practices, and their ends and views, were worldly; and were quite different from Christ and his apostles, Joh 17:14,

therefore speak they of the world; they speak the wisdom of the world, or that in which the world thinks wisdom lies, and cry up for true knowledge, and right principles; and this they do with the enticing words of man's wisdom, or in words which man's wisdom teacheth; speaking great swelling words of vanity, which take with vain and carnal minds; and preach doctrines suited to their own taste, and the taste of others, as carnal and worldly men; such as the purity of human nature, in its first conception and birth, its freedom from any original corruption, and from any concern with the sin of Adam, only with actual sin of its own; and the power of it to do that which is good, keep the law of God, and obtain his favour; the non-necessity of any internal work of efficacious grace, a reformation of life and manners being thought sufficient to render a man acceptable to God, and prepare him for eternal happiness; the doctrine of justification and salvation by works; all which are pleasing to carnal men: hence it follows,

and the world heareth them; the wicked of the world; worldly and unregenerate men attend on their ministry, approve of what they deliver, and receive it with pleasure, and believe it: this expresses both the quality of the hearers of false teachers, that they are that part of the world, the worse part of it, which lies in wickedness; and the quantity of them, the greater part of the world, as it was foretold by Christ, and his apostles, that they should deceive many, that many should follow their pernicious ways, and that they should draw many disciples after them; wherefore the numbers that attend such persons, as it need not be wondered at, since both preachers and hearers, and the doctrines preached and heard, are all alike, they are of the world, so it should not be stumbling to the people of God.

1 John 4:6

Ver. 6. We are of God,.... Not only as the chosen of God, the children of God, regenerated ones, and believers, but as ministers of the Gospel; they were chosen, and called, and sent of God to preach the Gospel, and were qualified for it, by gifts received from him, and had their doctrine from him, as well as their commission and mission: they were not of the world, and therefore did not speak of the world, nor things suited to worldly men; but being of God, they spoke the words of God, which were agreeable to him, which made for the glory of the three divine Persons, and were consistent with the divine perfections; which maintained the honour and dignity of the persons in the Godhead; which magnified the grace of God in salvation, and debased the creature:

he that knoweth God; not only as the God of nature and providence, but as in Christ, and that not only professionally, but practically; that has an experimental knowledge of him, that knows him as exercising lovingkindness, having tasted of his grace and goodness; that knows him so as to trust in him, and love him; for such a knowledge of God is meant, as has true real affection to him joined with it; so that it is he that loves his name, his glory, his truths, and his ordinances: he

heareth us: not only externally, constantly attending on the ministry of the word, as such do; but internally, understanding what is heard, receiving it in love, cordially embracing it, and firmly believing it, and acting according to it:

he that is not of God; who is not born of God, but is as he was when born into the world, and is of it: and who does not righteousness, nor loves his brother, nor confesses the divinity, humanity, and offices of Christ, and so is not on the side of truth, nor has the truth of grace in him; see **1Jo 3:10**; such a man

heareth not us; he is a mere natural man, a carnal and unregenerate man; and such an one cannot attend on a Gospel ministry, or receive Gospel doctrines, which are with him senseless, stupid, and foolish notions, yea, foolishness itself; nor can he know and understand them through ignorance, and want, of a spiritual discerning; they are hard sayings, and he cannot hear, nor bear them; and when this is the case, it is a plain token of unregeneracy, and that such persons are not of God; see **Joh 8:47**.

Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error; the difference between truth and error; can distinguish one from another, and discern who are the true ministers of Christ, and who are the false teachers; for not only the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, are the test and standard, the touchstone to bring them to, and try them by; and the doctrines they severally bring show who they are; but even their very hearers distinguish them. Spirits, or men pretending to the Spirit of God, may be known in a great measure by their followers; they who have the spirit of error, and are of the world, they are followed, and caressed, and applauded by the men of the world, by unregenerate persons; they who have the spirit of truth, and are of God, they are heard and approved of, and embraced by spiritual men, by such who know God in Christ, and have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

1 John 4:7

Ver. 7. Beloved, let its love one another,.... The apostle having finished what he proposed to say concerning the trying of spirits, returns to his former exhortation to brotherly love, and which comes with fresh force and strength; for since worldly men follow, hear, embrace, and cleave to the false teachers; such as are of God, and on the side of truth, should love one another, and their faithful ministers, and stand fast in one spirit by the truths of the Gospel, in opposition to every error:

for love is of God: to love one another is the command of God, it is his revealed will, and is well pleasing in his sight; it comes from him, is a gift of his grace, and a fruit of his Spirit, and which he teaches regenerate ones to exercise:

and everyone that loveth God, as the Alexandrian copy reads, or Christ, and the saints, who seem to be particularly meant:

is born of God; for love to the brethren is an evidence of regeneration; See Gill on "1Jo 3:14";

and knoweth God; he knows God in Christ, and therefore loves those who have the grace of God in them, and the image of Christ upon them; he knows the mind and will of God, being taught of God to love the brethren; and he knows the love of God, and has had an experience of the grace of God, which influences him to love the saints.

1 John 4:8

Ver. 8. He that loveth not, knoweth not God,.... If a man loves not the children of God, those that are born of him, he does not know, so as to love God, the Father of them; for to pretend love to God, the begetter of them, whom he sees not, and not love those who are begotten by him, and are visible objects of respect, is a contradiction, and cannot be reconciled: see **1Jo 4:20**. This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version, and is transposed in the Syriac version, which reads the text thus, "for God, is love, and whoever loveth not, knoweth not God". By which reading, the following reason stands in close connection with **1Jo 4:7**.

For God is love; he loves himself; there is an entire love between the three divine Persons, who are in the strictest, and in the most inconceivable and inexpressible manner affected to each other; their love is natural and essential: God loves all his creatures as such, nor does he hate any of them, as so considered; and he bears an everlasting, unchangeable, and invariable love to his elect in Christ Jesus; of which an instance is given in the following verses, and is a reason why the saints should love one another; that they might be like their heavenly Father, by whom they are begotten, and of whom they are born, and whose children they are; seeing he is love itself, and in his breast is nothing else but love. So the Shekinah is, by the Cabalistic Jews {t}, called hbha, "love".

{t} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 15. 1. & Lex. Cabal. p. 43, 44.

1 John 4:9

Ver. 9. In this was manifested the love of God towards us,.... The love of God here spoken of, and instanced in, is not his general love to all his creatures, which is shown in the make of them, and in the support of them in their beings, and in his providential care of them, and kindness to them; but his special love towards his elect, and which was before it was manifested; it was secretly in his heart from everlasting, and did not begin to be at the mission of Christ into the world, but was then in a most glaring manner manifested: there were several acts of it before, as the choice of them in Christ, the appointment of him to be their Saviour, and the covenant of grace made with him on their account; these were more secret and hidden; but now the love and kindness of God appeared, broke forth, and shone out in its glory; this is a most flagrant and notorious instance of it, in which it is exceedingly conspicuous; this is a most clear proof, a plain and full demonstration of it:

because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world; the sender is God the Father, who is distinguished from the Son that is sent; of which act of sending, See Gill on "Ro 8:3" and See Gill on "Ga 4:4"; and for him, who is that God against whom we have sinned, and is that lawgiver that is able to save, and to destroy, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, to send his Son to be the Saviour of sinful men is an amazing instance of love; and which appears the more manifest, when it is observed that it is "his only begotten Son" that is sent; of which See Gill on "Joh 1:14"; and the place he was sent into is the world, where his people are, and where their sins are committed, he came to expiate; and where he was treated with great indignity and contempt, and suffered many things, and at last death itself: the end of his mission was,

that we might live through him; who were dead in Adam, dead in sin, and dead in law, and could not quicken themselves; nor obtain eternal life for themselves, by their performances. Christ came, being sent, that they might have life, and that more abundantly than Adam had in innocence, or man lost by the fall; and accordingly they were quickened together with him; when he was quickened, after he had been put to death, they were virtually and representatively quickened and justified in him; and in consequence of his death and resurrection from the dead, they are regenerated and made spiritually alive, and live unto righteousness; and through his righteousness wrought out for them, and imputed to them, they are in a legal sense alive unto God, and alive and comfortable in their own souls, living by faith on Christ, and have a right and title to eternal life; and which they also have through him, and which is chiefly intended here; for the design is not only that they may live spiritually and comfortably here, but eternally hereafter.

1 John 4:10

Ver. 10. Herein is love,.... The love of God, free love, love that cannot be matched: herein it is manifested, as before; this is a clear evidence of it, an undoubted proof, and puts it out of all question:

not that we loved God: the love of God is antecedent to the love of his people; it was when theirs was not; when they were without love to him, yea, enemies in their minds, by wicked works, and even enmity itself, and therefore was not procured by theirs; but on the contrary, their love to him is caused by his love to them; hence his love, and a continuance in it, do not depend on theirs; nor does it vary according to theirs; wherefore there is good reason to believe it will continue, and never be removed; and this shows the sovereignty and freeness of the love of God, and that it is surprising and matchless:

but that he loved us; that is, God; and so the Syriac version reads, "but that

God himself loved us". The Vulgate Latin version adds, first, as in **1Jo 4:19**; the instance of this love follows:

and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins: this is a subordinate end to the other, mentioned in **1Jo 4:9**; for, in order that sinful men may possess everlasting life and happiness, it is necessary that their sins be expiated, or atonement be made for them, which is meant by Christ's being a propitiation for them; that the justice of God should be satisfied; that peace and righteousness, or love and justice, should be reconciled together; and kiss each other; and that all obstructions be removed out of the way of the enjoyment of life, which are brought in by sin; and that the wrath of God, which sin deserved, be averted or appeased, according to our sense apprehension of it; for otherwise the love of God people is from everlasting, and is unchangeable, never alters, or never changes from love to wrath, or from wrath to love; nor is the love of God procured by the satisfaction and sacrifice of Christ, which are the effects of it; but hereby the way is laid open for the display of it, and the application of its effects, in a way consistent with the law and justice of God. This phrase is expressive of the great love of Christ to his people, and of his substitution in their room and stead; and so it is used among the Jews for a substitution in the room of others, wtbha bwrl, "to express the greatness of love" {u}; See Gill on "Ro 3:25" and See Gill on "Ro 9:3".

{u} Misn. Negaim, c. 2. sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1. & Jarchi & Bartenora in ib. vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 23. 1. & Succa, fol. 20. 1.

1 John 4:11

Ver. 11. Beloved, if God so loved us,.... As to send his Son to be a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, and to obtain eternal life for us through his sufferings and death: the apostle uses the same language his Lord and master did, **Joh 3:16**;

we ought also to love one another; for those who are the objects of God's love ought to be the objects of ours; and if God has loved our fellow Christians and brethren to such a degree, as to send his Son to die for them, we ought to love them too; and if we are interested in the same love, the obligation is still the greater; and if God loved them with so great a love, when they did not love him, but were enemies to him, then surely we ought to love them now they are become the friends of God, and ours also; as God loved them freely, and when unlovely, and us likewise in the same manner, and under the same circumstances, then we ought to love, and continue to love the saints, though there may be something in their temper and conduct disagreeable: God is to be imitated in his love; and his love to us, which is unmerited and matchless, should influence and engage us to the love of the brethren, who have a far greater claim to our love than we can make to the love of God; and which indeed is none at all, but what he is pleased to give us.

1 John 4:12

Ver. 12. No man hath seen God at any time,.... The same is said by the Evangelist John, **Joh 1:18**; but here it is observed with a different view, and upon another account; there it signifies that no man has seen and looked into the counsels and designs of God, and been able to make a discovery and declaration of his mind and will, his love and grace, and which is there ascribed to the Son of God,
See Gill on "Joh 1:18"; but here the sense is, that whereas God is invisible in his nature, and incomprehensible in his being and perfections, so that there is no coming to him, and seeing of him, and conversing with him in a familiar way, and so not of loving him as he is in himself, and ought to be loved, as one friend sees, converses with, and loves another, and finds his love increased by sight and conversation; then we ought to love the saints and people of God, who are visible, may be seen, come at, and conversed with, see **1Jo 4:20**; for this clause stands among the arguments and reasons for brotherly love:

if we love one another God dwelleth in us; not as he does in his Son, by union of nature; nor as in heaven, by the displays of his glory; nor as in the whole world, by his omnipresence and power; but by his Spirit, and the communications of his love, and by his gracious presence and communion, which he indulges the saints with; for such who love one another, as they appear to have the Spirit of God, of which that grace is a fruit, so they are by the Spirit built up a fit habitation for God, and by which Spirit he dwells in them; and such may expect the presence of God, for they who live in peace, the God of love and peace shall be with them:

and his love is perfected in us; not that love of God, with which he loves his people; for that admits of no degrees, and is not more or less in itself, or in his heart; but is always invariably and unchangeably the same, and is full, complete, and perfect in his own breast, as it was from all eternity; and does not pass by degrees, or gradually rise from a love of benevolence to a love of complacency and delight, or increase as our love does to him and to one another, on which it has no dependence: nor is this love perfected in the saints in this life; that is to say, they have not perfect knowledge and enjoyment of it; nor have they all the effects of it bestowed upon them, and applied unto them; the perfection of it, in this sense, will be in heaven: but the love with which God is loved is here designed; and it is called his, because he is both the object and the author of it; and this is no effect as to degrees; yea, sometimes, instead of abounding and increasing, it goes back, it is left, and waxes cold; and it will not have its completion till the saints come to heaven, and then it will be in its full perfection and glory, when faith and hope shall be no more: but the sense is, that this grace of love is sincere and hearty, and without dissimulation; it is unfeigned love; and it is in deed and in truth, and not in word and in tongue only; and this appears to be so, by the love which is shown to the brethren, the children of God; so that love to God in the saints is perfected by love to the brethren, just in such sense as faith is made perfect by works, **Jas 2:22**, that is, is made to appear to be genuine, right, and true.

1 John 4:13

Ver. 13. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us,.... That there is a communion between God and us, and a communication of his love and grace to us, and an exercise of grace upon him; for God dwells in his people by his Spirit and grace, and they dwell in him by the exercise of faith and love upon him: and this is known,

because he hath given us of his Spirit: not of the essence and nature of the Spirit, which is the same with the nature of the Father and of the Son, and is incommunicable; but either of the gifts of the Spirit, which are divided to every man as he pleases, and which being bestowed on men, and used by them, for the profit and advantage of the church of God, show that God is with them, and dwells among them of a truth; or of the graces of the Spirit, such as faith, hope, and love, which are each the gifts of God; and these being bestowed and exercised, are proofs of the mutual indwelling of God and his people; See Gill on "1Jo 3:24".

1 John 4:14

Ver. 14. And we have seen, and do testify,.... This seems to be particularly said of the apostles, who had a clear discerning of the love and grace of God, manifested in the mission of Christ into the world; for though no man had seen his nature and his person, yet they had seen his love, and the exceeding riches of his grace, which he had shown forth in Christ Jesus; and they had also seen Christ, God manifest in the flesh; they had seen his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father; they had seen him with their bodily eyes; they had seen his works and miracles; they had seen him dying and risen again from the dead, and go up to heaven; they were witnesses, and eyewitnesses of him, and bore a faithful testimony of him, and for him, and particularly set their seal to this truth,

that the Father sent the Son [to be] the Saviour of the world; not of every individual person in it, for there are some that will go into everlasting punishment, and even a world that will be condemned; Christ is not in fact the Saviour of all the individuals of human nature, and therefore was not sent to be such; for if he was, the end of his mission is not fully answered; nor of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, and who are chiefly intended by "the world"; See Gill on "1Jo 2:2"; and even of all the elect of God, styled his people, his sheep, his friends, his church, and the sons of God; and it may be said of all that believe in him throughout the whole world, without any distinction of nation, age, sex, state, or condition: and Christ is the Saviour both of the souls and bodies of these, from all their sins, original and actual; from the power of Satan, the bondage and curse of the law, and wrath to come, and he is the only, able, willing, and complete Saviour, and who saves with an everlasting salvation.

1 John 4:15

Ver. 15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God,.... The only begotten of the Father; that he is not a mere man, as the Jews, and Ebion and Cerinthus said, but a divine person, equal with the Father; which contains all that relates to the dignity of his person, and his fitness for his office as a Saviour, and which was the test of faith in those times, and the grand article of belief: not that a bare assent to this had what followed annexed to it; for the devils believed and owned that Jesus was the Son of God; and so might, and did, unregenerate persons, as the centurion at the cross of Christ, who know nothing what communion with God is; but this confession is such as is attended with a believing in Christ from the heart unto righteousness, life, and salvation, and a cheerful obedience to his ordinances and commands, from a principle of love to him, and faith in him, things not to be found in devils and carnal men; see Ro 10:9.

God dwelleth in him, and he in God; See Gill on "1Jo 4:13"; this should encourage to an open and hearty confession of Christ as the Son of God, and Saviour of sinners, and to a public profession of his name, and faith in him, and an holding it fast without wavering.

1 John 4:16

Ver. 16. And we have known and believed,.... Or have a full assurance and knowledge of, and faith in,

the love that God hath to us; shown as in many instances, so more especially in sending his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, to be the Saviour of us, and that we might live through him.

God is love; See Gill on "1Jo 4:8":

and he that dwelleth in love; who dwells by faith upon the love of God as displayed in Christ, and abides in the exercise of love to God and to the saints:

dwelleth in God, and God in him; See Gill on "1Jo 4:13"; the last clause, "and God in him", is left out in the Syriac version.

1 John 4:17

Ver. 17. Herein is our love made perfect,.... Or love with us; which some understand of the love of God towards his people, and which is shed abroad in them: this indeed removes all fear of an awful judgment, and renders that amiable and desirable; and such who are interested in it, shall stand in that day with intrepidity and boldness; and this sense may seem to be favoured by the Syriac version, which reads, "his love with us"; and especially by the Vulgate Latin version, which renders it, "the love of God with us"; but it is best to understand it agreeably to the context, of our love to God, which is with and in our hearts; and which is made, or made to appear to be perfect, true, and genuine, by our love to the brethren; since the love of God to us does not admit of degrees, nor does it, or the reality and sincerity of it, depend upon our love to the saints; See Gill on "1Jo 4:12";

that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; not of men's judgment, when brought before judges, governors, and kings, for the sake of Christ and the Gospel, and stand at their bar, where saints, who have true love to God and Christ and the brethren, have stood with great courage and intrepidity, and shown much boldness, and used great freedom of speech; nor of judgment in this life, which sometimes begins at the house of God, though the saints often have great boldness and presence of mind, and freedom of expression both to God and man in a day of affliction, as Job had; but of the future judgment, which, though it will be very awful and solemn, Christ the Judge will appear with great majesty and glory, and all men will stand before him, and the books will be opened, and the judgment will proceed with great strictness and justice, and will issue in the everlasting perdition of devils and wicked men, yet the saints will have boldness in it: while evil men and devils tremble at the thoughts of it now, they rejoice and are glad; they love it, look for it, long for it, and hasten to it; and will stand fearless, and without the least dread, while others will flee to the rocks, and into the holes of the earth; and they will use freedom of speech with Christ, as the word here signifies; they will sing his new song, and ascribe the glory of their salvation to him, and express their praises of him, and love to him, then and to all eternity: and this boldness the saints may be said to arrive at through a perfect, or sincere, and genuine love of the brethren; for by this they know they are born again, and are born to an inheritance incorruptible, which they have both a meetness for, and a right unto; and knowing hereby that they are passed from death to life, they justly conclude they shall not enter into condemnation, and therefore are not afraid of the awful judgment: hereby they know that their faith is right, and that therefore they are manifestly the children of God; and if children, then heirs, and so shall be saved, and have everlasting life:

because as he is, so are we in this world; which may be understood either of

God, to whom the saints are like; for such who are born again, as those who love the brethren are, they are partakers of the divine nature, and bear a resemblance to God, even in this present state of things; and as it becomes them to be holy in all manner of conversation, as he is holy, and to be merciful to wicked men, as he is merciful, so to love the saints as he does, and to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgive one another, as he for Christ's sake has forgiven them; for as God is love, they should be all love likewise; or of Christ, see **1Jo 3:3**; and that with respect to God; as he is the Son of God, so are they the sons of God; he by nature, they by grace and adoption; as he is loved by God with an everlasting and unchangeable love, with a love of complacency and delight, so are they loved by him with the same kind of love, even while they are in this world; and as he is the chosen of God, and precious, so they are chosen in him, and unto salvation by him. The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, render it, "as he was": and the sense may be, as he was in this world, so are they; and which may regard not so much likeness in nature, though there is an agreement in that, excepting sin, but the sameness of state and condition; as he was a man of sorrows, attended with afflictions, loaded with reproaches, and followed with the persecutions of men, so are they; nor need they wonder that they are the objects of the world's hatred and contempt, since he was also; as he was tempted by Satan, forsaken by his friends, and deserted by his God, so sometimes are they in this world; and as he went through a variety of sufferings, and death itself, to glory, so through many tribulations do they enter the kingdom: moreover, as he now is in heaven, so are they in this world; even as he is in heaven, so are they representatively in him, while in this world; and as he is righteous, being justified and acquitted from all the charge of sin he took upon him, and therefore will appear a second time without sin, so they are completely righteous in him: and once more, as he is, so they are, or should be in this world; they should be holy as he is holy, and be humble, meek, and patient, as he is, and walk as he walked; and particularly love the saints and one another, as he does; and which seems to be greatly intended here, and must be understood not of an equality, but of a likeness. The Arabic version reads the words conditionally, and as depending on the preceding clause, "if as he was, we are in this world"; and then the sense is, that the saints shall have boldness in the day of judgment, provided they are in this world as Christ was.

1 John 4:18

Ver. 18. There is no fear in love,.... In the love of the brethren; where that is, there is no fear: so far as that prevails and gains ground, fear removes; not the filial fear of God, the new covenant grace of fear, which is the beginning of wisdom, and is consistent with faith, hope, love, and spiritual joy; but either the fear of men, which brings a snare: those that truly love Christ, his Gospel, and his people, they are not afraid of men; the spirit of power, love, and of a sound mind, is opposite to a spirit of fear, nor can they stand together; and such strength there is sometimes in brotherly love, that the saints are not afraid of death itself, but freely lay down their lives for one another; see **1Jo 3:16**; or it may be rather, that they are not afraid of the day of judgment, and of hell and damnation; where hatred of the brethren has place, there is a fear and dread of these things, as were in Cain; but those that love the brethren, they know they are passed from death to life, and shall not enter into condemnation, and therefore are in no fear of any of these things:

but perfect love casteth out fear; when love to the brethren appears to be perfect, that is, genuine and sincere, and a man knows that from the bottom of his heart he sincerely loves the saints, he concludes from hence, as he may, the truth of his faith, which works in this way; and this frees him from the fears of men and devils, and of the future judgment and wrath to come. The Jews have a saying {w},

"worthy is his portion that rules over the place of fear, for lo, there is nothing that rules over the degree of "fear" but "love"."

Because fear hath torment: it distresses a man, fills him with anguish, and makes him restless and uneasy, and keeps him in servitude; through the fear of men, of the devil, death, judgment, and hell, he is all his lifetime, or as long as this fear lasts, subject to bondage: or "fear has punishment", as it may be rendered, and is by the Vulgate Latin version; it is a punishment itself to a man; and its being criminal deserves punishment, and is punishable; see Re 21:8;

he that feareth is not made perfect in love; or "by love"; that is, he that is possessed, and under the power of a servile fear of punishment, is one who is not, by the love to the brethren, made to appear to himself to be a sincere lover of God, and true believer in Christ; for was he, he would not be in fear of destruction and death, since whoever truly loves God, and believes in Christ, shall certainly be saved; though such persons, at times, may not be without their doubts and fears.

{w} Zohar in Exod. fol. 87. 1.

1 John 4:19

Ver. 19. We love him, because he first loved us. Lest love to God, and so to one another, should be thought to be of ourselves, and too much be ascribed unto it, the apostle observes, that God's love to us is prior to our love to him; his love is from everlasting, as well as to everlasting; for he loves his people as he does his Son, and he loved him before the foundation of the world; his choosing them in Christ as early, and blessing them then with all spiritual blessings, the covenant of grace made with Christ from all eternity, the gift of grace to them in him before the world began, and the promise of eternal life to them so soon, show the antiquity and priority of his love: his love shown in the mission and gift of his Son was before theirs, and when they had none to him; and his love in regeneration and conversion is previous to theirs, and is the cause of it; his grace in regeneration brings faith and love with it, and produces them in the heart; and his love shed abroad there is the moving cause of it, or what draws it first into act and exercise; and the larger the discoveries and applications of the love of God be, the more does love to him increase and abound; and nothing more animates and inflames our love to God, than the consideration of the earliness of his love to us, of its being before ours; which shows that it is free, sovereign, distinguishing, and unmerited. Some read the words as an exhortation, "let us love him"; and others as in the subjunctive mood, "we should love him", because, &c. some copies read, "we love God", and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and the Alexandrian copy, read, "because God first loved us": and so some others.

1 John 4:20

Ver. 20. If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother,.... Than which profession nothing can be more contradictory, not black and white, or hot and cold in the same degree:

he is a liar; it is not truth he speaks, it is a contradiction, and a thing impossible:

for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen; his person, which might have drawn out his affection to him; and something valuable and worthy in him, which might have commanded respect; or his wants and distresses, which should have moved his pity and compassion:

how can he love God whom he hath not seen? it cannot be thought he should; the thing is not reasonable to suppose; it is not possible he should; See Gill on "1Jo 4:12".

1 John 4:21

Ver. 21. And this commandment have we from him,.... Either "from God", as the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read; and that to love the brethren is a commandment of God, is clear from **1Jo 3:23**; or from Christ, for it is also a command of his, even his new commandment, which he has given, and his people have received from him:

that he who loveth God, love his brother also; see Joh 13:34; which is an argument persuading to attend to the one as well as to the other; for the same command that requires the one, requires the other: and he that transgresses it in one case, is a transgressor of it, as well as in the other.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

1 John 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 JOHN 5

In this chapter the apostle treats of the nature of faith and love; of Christ the object of both, and of the witness that is bore to him; of the necessity of believing the testimony concerning him; of the confidence of prayer being heard, and concerning whom it should be made; of the happiness of regenerate persons, and of their duty to keep themselves from idols. Faith in Christ is the evidence of regeneration, and where that is, there will be love to the author of regeneration, and to them that are regenerated; and love to them is known by love to God, and keeping his commandments; and keeping the commandments of God, and which are not grievous, is a proof of love to God, **1Jo 5:1**; and whereas every regenerate man overcomes the world, it is by his faith, the evidence of his regeneration, that this victory is obtained; nor can any other man be pointed out that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God, **1Jo 5:4**; and Christ, the Son of God, the object of this victorious faith, is described by his coming by water and blood, of which the spirit is witness, who is a true one; and six witnesses of the truth of this and his divine sonship are produced, three in heaven, the Father, Word, and Spirit, who are the one God, and three on earth, the Spirit, water, and blood, who agree in their testimony, **1Jo 5:6**; wherefore this testimony concerning the Son of God ought to be received, since it is the testimony of God, which is greater than that of men; besides, he that believes in Christ has a witness of this in himself, and honours God, whereas he that believes not makes God a liar, not giving credit to his record concerning his Son; the sum of which is, that God has made a grant of eternal life to some persons, which is in his Son, which those that believe in the Son of God have, but those that do not believe in him have it not: all which show the necessity of receiving the above testimony; and the ends proposed in writing these things were, to believe in Christ, and that it might be known they had eternal life in him, **1Jo 5:9**, and from faith in Christ the apostle passes to confidence in prayer, as a particular effect and fruit of it: as, that whatever is asked according to the will of God is heard; and that such who are satisfied of this, that they are heard, may be assured that they have the petitions they desire to have, **1Jo 5:14**, and whereas it is one branch of prayer to pray for others as well as for ourselves, the apostle directs who we should pray for; for the brethren in general, and in particular for such who have sinned, but not unto death, and life shall be given to such: but as for those who have sinned unto death, he does not say prayer should be made for them, for though all unrighteousness in general is sin, yet there is a particular sin which is unto death, and is not to be prayed for, **1Jo 5:16**; but happy are those who are born of God, for they do not sin this sin; and through the use of the armour of God, and the power of divine grace, they keep themselves from the evil one, and he cannot come at them, to draw them into this sin; also they know that they are of God, and are distinguished from the world, which lies in wickedness; yea, they know that the Son of God is come in the flesh, and hath given them an understanding of the true God, by which they know that they are in him, and in his Son Jesus Christ, who is with him, and the divine Spirit, the one true God, and the author and giver of eternal life, **1Jo 5:18**; and the chapter, and with it the epistle, is concluded with an exhortation to these regenerate ones, as they had kept themselves from Satan, that they would also keep themselves from idols of all sorts, **1Jo 5:21**.

Ver. 1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ,.... Or the Messiah that was prophesied of old, was long promised to the Jews, and whom they expected; there was a person spoken of in the writings of the Old Testament under this character, **Ps 2:2**; and the Jews looked for him; and Jesus of Nazareth is he, as appears by all the characteristics of the Messiah in prophecy being found upon him: this the Jews deny, but is the grand article of faith embraced by the apostles and followers of Jesus, and is of very great importance; he that denies it is a liar, and he that does not believe it shall die in his sins: the word signifies "anointed", and includes all the offices of the Son of God, to which he was anointed, as prophet, priest, and King; so that to believe him to be the Christ, is to believe him to be that prophet Moses said should come, and who has declared the whole mind and will of his Father; and that he is that priest that should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and make atonement for sin, and intercession for transgressors; and that he is that King whom God has set over his holy hill of Zion, whose laws are to be obeyed, and his commands observed: but to believe that Jesus is the Christ, or the Messiah, is not barely to give an assent to this truth, or to acknowledge it; so the devils themselves have done, **Lu 4:41**; and whole nations of men, multitudes of which were never born of God; it is not a mere profession of it before men, or an idle, inoperative faith, which is destitute of love to Christ, and obedience to him; but whereas his work and business, as the Christ of God, was to bring in an everlasting righteousness, to procure the remission of sin, and to make peace and reconciliation for it, and to obtain eternal salvation; true faith in him as the Messiah is a believing with the heart unto righteousness, or a looking to, and trusting in the righteousness of Christ for justification; and a dealing with his blood for pardon and cleansing, under a sense of guilt and filth; and a laying hold on his atoning sacrifice for the expiation of sin, and peace with God; and a reception of him as the only Saviour and Redeemer, or a dependence on him for life and salvation; and which faith shows itself in love to him, and in a professed subjection to his Gospel, and cheerful submission to his ordinances: and every such person

is born of God; is a partaker of the divine nature; has Christ formed, and every grace of the Spirit implanted in him, among which faith in Christ is a considerable one; and such an one in consequence is openly a child and heir of God, wherefore, to be born of God is an instance of great grace, and an high honour and privilege, and of the greatest moment and importance. Regeneration is not owing to the power and will of man, but to the abundant mercy and good will of God, and is an instance of his rich mercy, great love, and free favour, and commands love again:

and everyone that loveth him that begat; that is, God the Father, who has begotten them again to a lively hope, according to his abundant mercy and sovereign will; and as he is their Father that has begotten them, they cannot but love him: and such an one

loveth him also that is begotten of him; not only Jesus Christ, who by nature is the only begotten of the Father; for those who know God to be their Father by adoption and regeneration, will love Christ, who is the Son of God by nature; see **Joh 8:42**; but also every regenerate person, all that are born of God; since they are the children of the same Father with them, belong to the same household and family, and bear the image and likeness of their heavenly Father on them.

1 John 5:2

Ver. 2. By this we know that we are the children God,.... The Ethiopic version reads, "by this know that we love God"; which, in connection with what follows, makes a tautology, and is a proving "idem per idem": whereas the apostle's view is to show when love to the saints is right; and that is,

when we love God, and keep his commandments: love to the brethren may arise from such a cause, as may show that it is not brotherly love, or of a spiritual kind; it may arise from natural relation, or civil friendship, or from a benefit or favour received from them, and from some natural external excellency seen in them; and a man may do acts of love and kindness to the brethren, from what may be called good nature in himself, or with sinister views; but true love to the brethren springs from love to God: such who love the saints aright, and by which they may know they do so, they love them because they themselves love God, and in obedience to his command; they love them because they belong to God, and are the objects of his love; because his grace is wrought in them, and his image stamped upon them.

1 John 5:3

Ver. 3. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments,....

Keeping of the commandments of God is an evidence of love to God; this shows that love is not in word and tongue, in profession only, but in deed and in truth; and that such persons have a sense of the love of God upon their souls, under the influence of which they act; and such shall have, and may expect to have, greater manifestations of the love of God unto them:

and his commandments are not grievous; heavy, burdensome, and disagreeable; by which are meant, not so much the precepts of the moral law, which through the weakness of the flesh are hard to be kept, and cannot be perfectly fulfilled; though believers indeed, being freed from the rigorous exaction, curse, and condemnation of the law, delight in it after the inward man, and serve it cheerfully with their spirit; and still less the commands of the ceremonial law, which were now abolished, and were grievous to be borne; but rather those of faith in Christ, and love to the saints, **1Jo 3:23**; or it may be the ordinances of the Gospel, baptism, and the Lord's supper, with others, which though disagreeable to unregenerate persons, who do not care to be under the yoke of Christ, however easy and light it is, yet are not heavy and burdensome to regenerate ones; and especially when they have the love of God shed abroad in them, the presence of God with them, communion with Jesus Christ, and a supply of grace and strength from him; then are these ways ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace, and the tabernacles of the Lord are amiable and lovely.

1 John 5:4

Ver. 4. For whatsoever is born of God,.... Which may be understood either of persons born; of God; or of the new creature, or principle of grace wrought in them, particularly faith hereafter mentioned, which is an heaven born grace, the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit: this

overcometh the world; the god of the world, Satan; the lusts which are in the world; false prophets gone forth into the world; and the wicked men of the world, who by temptations, snares, evil doctrines, threatenings, promises, and ill examples, would avert regenerate ones from observing the commands of God; but such are more than conquerors over all these, through Christ that has loved them:

and this is the victory that overcometh the world, [even] our faith. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "your faith"; great things, heroic actions, and wonderful victories, are ascribed to faith; see Heb 11:33; which must not be understood of the grace itself, as separately considered, but of Christ the object of it, as supported, strengthened, assisted, and animated by him: and then it does wonders, when it is enabled to hold Christ, its shield, in its hand, against every enemy that opposes.

1 John 5:5

Ver. 5. Who is he that overcometh the world,.... This question carries in it a strong affirmation, that no other person is the conqueror of the world:

but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? and this points out what that faith is which obtains the victory over the world; and shows that it is not that trust and confidence which has a man's self, or any mere creature, thing, or person, for its object, but only Jesus Christ, and that as he is the Son of God; and which is not a mere assent to such a proposition, to which devils and unregenerate persons may assent, and do; but it is a seeing of the Son in the glory, fulness, and suitableness of his person, office, and grace; a going to him, being drawn by the Father; and a living upon him as the Son of God, and trusting in him for life, righteousness, and salvation: and this shows, that the victory over the world is not owing to faith itself, but to its object Christ, who has overcome it, and makes true believers in him more than conquerors over it.

1 John 5:6

Ver. 6. This is he that came by water and blood, [even] Jesus Christ,.... By "water" is not meant the ablutions or washings of the ceremonial law; Christ came not by these, but to make an end of them; his blood, which cleanseth from all sin, being the antitype, and so the fulfilling end of them: nor the purity of his nature, life, and conversation; though he came into the world that holy thing which is called the Son of God; and was holy in his nature, and harmless in his life, and did no sin, and so was fit to be a sacrifice for the sins of others: nor does it intend the washing and cleansing of his people from their sins; this is what he came to do, and has done, and not what he came by: but the ordinance of water baptism is designed; and though Christ did not come baptizing with water, he having a greater baptism to administer, yet that he might be made manifest, John came baptizing in that way; and Christ, as the Son of God, came, or was made manifest by John as such, at the waters of Jordan, and at his baptism; there he was declared to be the Son of God by his Father's voice from heaven:

not by water only; he did not come by water only, as Moses did, who was drawn out of it, and therefore so called; or as John, who came administering water baptism externally only:

but by water and blood; by "blood" as well as water; by which is meant, not the blood of bulls and goats; Christ came to put an end unto, and lay aside the shedding of that blood; but his own blood is intended, and not reconciliation and atonement for the sins of his people, which was what he came to do, and has done, and not what he came by: but the sense is, that as at baptism, so at his sufferings and death, he was made manifest to be the Son of God; as he was to the centurion and others, that were with him, when they observed the earthquake, and the things that were done; and at his from the dead he was declared to be the Son of God with power: and this might be seen in the cleansing and atoning virtue of his blood, which is owing to his being the Son of God. There may be here an allusion to the water and blood which came out of his side, when pierced on the cross, which this Apostle John was an eyewitness of. Some copies add here, and in the former clause, "and by the Spirit"; as the Alexandrian copy, three of Beza's copies, and the Ethiopic version: but it seems unnecessary, since it follows,

and it is the Spirit that beareth witness; by which may be meant, either the Gospel, which is the Spirit that gives life, and is so called, because by it the Spirit of God, in his gifts and graces, is received, and which is a testimony of the person, as well as of the offices, and grace of Christ; or rather those miraculous works which Christ did by the Spirit, to which he often appeals, as witnesses of his divine sonship, and equality with the Father, as well as of his being the true Messiah; or else the Holy Spirit, who bore testimony to Christ, by his descent on him at his baptism, and upon his apostles at the day of Pentecost, and by attending, succeeding, and confirming the Gospel, which is the testimony of him; and he is elsewhere, as well as here, and in the context, spoken of as a witness of Christ, **Ac 5:32**;

because the Spirit is truth; he is the Spirit of truth, and truth itself; he is essentially truth; his testimony is most true, and firmly to be believed. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "because Christ is the truth".

Ver. 7. For there are three that bear record in heaven,.... That is, that Jesus is the Son of God. The genuineness of this text has been called in question by some, because it is wanting in the Syriac version, as it also is in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; and because the old Latin interpreter has it not; and it is not to be found in many Greek manuscripts; nor cited by many of the ancient fathers, even by such who wrote against the Arians, when it might have been of great service to them: to all which it may be replied, that as to the Syriac version, which is the most ancient, and of the greatest consequence, it is but a version, and a defective one. The history of the adulterous woman in the eighth of John, the second epistle of Peter, the second and third epistles of John, the epistle of Jude, and the book of the Revelations, were formerly wanting in it, till restored from Bishop Usher's copy by De Dieu and Dr. Pocock, and who also, from an eastern copy, has supplied this version with this text. As to the old Latin interpreter, it is certain it is to be seen in many Latin manuscripts of an early date, and stands in the Vulgate Latin edition of the London Polyglot Bible: and the Latin translation, which bears the name of Jerom, has it, and who, in an epistle of his to Eustochium, prefixed to his translation of these canonical epistles, complains of the omission of it by unfaithful interpreters. And as to its being wanting in some Greek manuscripts, as the Alexandrian, and others, it need only be said, that it is to be found in many others; it is in an old British copy, and in the Complutensian edition, the compilers of which made use of various copies; and out of sixteen ancient copies of Robert Stephens's, nine of them had it: and as to its not being cited by some of the ancient fathers, this can be no sufficient proof of the spuriousness of it, since it might be in the original copy, though not in the copies used by them, through the carelessness or unfaithfulness of transcribers; or it might be in their copies, and yet not cited by them, they having Scriptures enough without it, to defend the doctrine of the Trinity, and the divinity of Christ: and yet, after all, certain it is, that it is cited by many of them; by Fulgentius {z}, in the beginning of the "sixth" century, against the Arians, without any scruple or hesitation; and Jerom, as before observed, has it in his translation made in the latter end of the "fourth" century; and it is cited by Athanasius {a} about the year 350; and before him by Cyprian {b}, in the middle, of the "third" century, about the year 250; and is referred to by Tertullian {c} about, the year 200; and which was within a "hundred" years, or little more, of the writing of the epistle; which may be enough to satisfy anyone of the genuineness of this passage; and besides, there never was any dispute about it till Erasmus left it out in the, first edition of his translation of the New Testament; and yet he himself, upon the credit of the old British copy before mentioned, put it into another edition of his translation. The heavenly witnesses of Christ's sonship are,

the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. The "Father" is the first Person, so called, not in, reference to the creatures, angels, or men, he is the Creator, and so the Father of; for this is common to the other two Persons; but in reference to his Son Jesus Christ, of whose sonship he bore witness at his baptism and transfiguration upon the mount. The "Word" is the second Person, who said and it was done; who spoke all things out of nothing in the first creation; who was in the beginning with God the Father, and was God, and by whom all things were created; he declared himself to be the Son of God, and proved himself to be so by his works and miracles; see Mr 14:61, &c. and his witness of himself was good and valid; see **Joh 8:13**; and because it is his sonship that is, here testified of, therefore the phrase, "the Word", and not "the Son", is here used. "The Holy Ghost" is the third Person, who proceeds from the Father, and is also called the Spirit of the Son, who testified of, Christ's sonship also at his baptism, by descending on him as a dove, which was the signal given to John the Baptist, by which he knew him, and bare record of him, that he was the Son of God. Now the number of these witnesses was three, there being so many persons in the Godhead; and such a number being sufficient, according to law, for the establishing of any point: to which may be added, that they were witnesses in heaven, not to the heavenly inhabitants, but to men on earth; they were so called, because they were in heaven, and from thence gave out their testimony; and which shows the firmness and excellency of it, it being not from earth, but from heaven, and not human, but divine; to which may be applied the words of Job, in Job 16:19; it follows,

and these three are one; which is to be understood, not only of their unity and agreement in their testimony, they testifying of the same thing, the sonship of Christ; but of their unity in essence or nature, they being the one God. So that, this passage holds forth and asserts the unity of God, a trinity of persons in the Godhead, the proper deity of each person, and their distinct personality, the unity of essence in that they are one; a trinity of persons in that they are three, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and are neither more nor fewer; the deity of each person, for otherwise their testimony would not be the testimony of God, as in **1Jo 5:9**; and their distinct personality; for were they not three distinct persons, they could not be three testifiers, or three that bare record. This being a proper place, I shall insert the faith of the ancient Jews concerning the doctrine of the Trinity; and the rather, as it agrees with the apostle's doctrine in words and language, as well as in matter. They call the three Persons in the Godhead three degrees: they say {d},

"Jehovah, Elohenu (our God), Jehovah, **De 6:4**; these are the three degrees with respect to this sublime mystery, in the beginning Elohim, or God, created, **Ge 1:1**, &c."

And these three, they say, though they are distinct, yet are one, as appears by what follows {e}:

"come see the mystery of the word; there are three degrees, and every degree is by itself, yet they are all one, and are bound together in one, and one is not separated from the other."

Again, it is said {f},

"this is the unity of Jehovah the first, Elohenu, Jehovah, lo, all of them are one, and therefore: called one; lo, the three names are as if they were one, and therefore are called one, and they are one; but by the revelation of the Holy Spirit it is made known, and they by the sight of the eye may be known, dxa Nyla atltd, "that these three are one": and this is the mystery of the voice which is heard; the voice is one, and there are three things, fire, and Spirit, and water, and all of them are one in the mystery of the voice, and they are but one: so here, Jehovah, Elohenu, Jehovah, they are one, the three, Nynwwg, forms, modes, or things, which are one."

Once more {g},

"there are two, and one is joined unto them, and they are three; and when the three are one, he says to them, these are the two names which Israel heard, Jehovah, Jehovah, and Elohenu is joined unto them, and it is the seal of the ring of truth; and when they are joined as one, they are one in one unity."

And this they illustrate by the three names of the soul of man {h};

"the three powers are all of them one, the soul, spirit, and breath, they are joined as one, and they are one; and all is according to the mode of the sublime mystery,"

meaning the Trinity.

"Says R. Isaac {i} worthy are the righteous in this world, and in the world to come, for lo, the whole of them is holy, their body is holy, their soul is holy, their Spirit is holy, their breath is holy, holy are these three degrees "according to the form above".--Come see these three degrees cleave together as one, the soul, Spirit, and breath."

The three first Sephirot, or numbers, in the Cabalistic tree, intend the three divine Persons; the first is called the chief crown, and first glory, which essence no creature can comprehend {k}, and designs the Father, **Joh 1:18**; the second is called wisdom, and the intelligence illuminating, the crown of the creation, the brightness of equal unity, who is exalted above every head; and he is called, by the Cabalists, the second glory {l}; see **1Co 1:24 Heb 1:3**. This is the Son of God: the third is called understanding sanctifying, and is the foundation of ancient wisdom, which is called the worker of faith; and he is the parent of faith, and from his power faith flows {m}; and this is the Holy Spirit; see **1Pe 1:2**. Now they say {n} that these three first numbers are intellectual, and are not twdm, "properties", or "attributes", as the other seven are. R. Simeon ben Jochai says {o},

"of the three superior numbers it is said, Ps 62:11, "God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this"; one and two, lo the superior numbers of whom it is said, one, one, one, three ones, and this is the mystery of Ps 62:11."

Says R. Judah Levi {p},

"behold the mystery of the numberer, the number, and the numbered; in the bosom of God it is one thing, in the bosom of man three; because he weighs with his understanding, and speaks with his mouth, and writes with his hand."

It was usual with the ancient Jews to introduce Jehovah speaking, or doing anything, in this form, I and my house of judgment; and it is a rule with them, that wherever it is said, "and Jehovah", he and his house or judgment are intended {q}; and Jarchi frequently makes use of this phrase to explain texts where a plurality in the Godhead is intended, as **Ge 1:26**; and it is to be observed, that a house of judgment, or a sanhedrim, among the Jews, never consisted of less than three. They also had used to write the word "Jehovah" with three "Jods", in the form of a triangle,

y
y y

as representing the three divine Persons: one of their more modern {r} writers has this observation on the blessing of the priest in **Nu 6:24**:

"these three verses begin with a "Jod", in reference to the three "Jods" which we write in the room of the name, (i.e. Jehovah,) for they have respect to the three superior things."

{z} Respons. contr. Arian. obj. 10. & de Trinitate, c. 4. {a} Contr. Arium, p. 109. {b} De Unitate Eccles. p. 255. & in Ep. 73. ad Jubajan, p. 184. {c} Contr. Praxeam, c. 25. {d} Zohar in Gen. fol. 1. 3. {e} Ib. in Lev. fol. 27. 2. {f} Ib. in Exod. fol. 18. 3, 4. {g} lb. in Numb. fol. 67. 3. {h} lb. in Exod. fol. 73. 4. {i} lb. in Lev. fol. 29. 2. {k} Sepher Jetzira, Semit. 1. {l} Sepher Jetzira, Semit. 2. {m} Ib. Semit. 3. {n} R. Menachem apud Rittangel. in Jetzira, p. 193. {o} Tikkune Zohar apud ib. p. 64. {p} Apud ib. p. 38. {q} Zohar in Gen. fol. 48. 4. Jarchi in Gen. xix. 24. Vid. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 6. 1. & Gloss. in ib. & Sanhedrin, fol. 3. 2. {r} R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 113. 2.

1 John 5:8

Ver. 8. And there are three that bear witness on earth,.... To the same truth of the sonship of Christ:

the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; by the "Spirit" is not meant the human Spirit or soul of Christ; for however that may be a witness of the truth of his human nature, yet not of his divine sonship: and moreover cannot be said to be a witness in earth; rather the Gospel, called the Spirit, which is a testimony of Christ's person, office, and graces and is preached by men on earth; or else the gifts of the Spirit bestowed on men on earth, both in an extraordinary and ordinary way, by which they have been qualified to bear witness to this truth; or it may be the Holy Spirit itself is intended, as he is in the hearts of his people here on earth, where he not only witnesses to the truth of their sonship, but also of the sonship of Christ, and is that witness a believer has within himself of it, mentioned in **1Jo 5:10**. By water is designed, not internal sanctification, which though an evidence of regeneration and adoption, yet not of Christ's sonship; but water baptism, as administered on earth in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and which is a noble and standing testimony to the proper, natural, and eternal sonship of Christ: and by "blood" is intended, not justification by the blood of Christ, but rather the blood of the saints, the martyrs of Jesus, who have shed it on earth, in testimony of their faith in the Son of God, and thereby sealing the truth of it; or rather the ordinance of the Lord's supper, which is the communion of the blood of Christ; and represents that blood which was shed for the remission of sins, and has a continual virtue to cleanse from all sin, which is owing to his being the Son of God. The three witnesses on earth seem therefore to be the Gospel, attended with the Spirit and power of God, and the two ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper:

and these agree in one; in their testimony of Christ, the word and ordinances agree together; and the sum and substance of them is Christ; they come from him, and centre in him; they are like the cherubim over the mercy seat, that looked to one another, and to that; and the two ordinances are the church's two breasts, which are equal, and like to one another; there is a great agreement between them, they are like to two young roes that are twins.

1 John 5:9

Ver. 9. If we receive the witness of men,.... The witness of a sufficient number of credible men, of men of good character and report, is always admitted in any case, and in any court of judicature; it was allowed of in the law of Moses; everything was proved and established hereby; upon this men were justified or condemned, cognizance was taken of men's sins, and punishment inflicted, yea, death itself, De 17:6; and even in this case concerning the Son of God, his coming into the world, and the dignity of his person, the testimony of men is credited; as that of the wise men, who declared that the King of the Jews was born, and his star had been seen in the east, which Herod himself gave credit to, and upon it summoned the chief priests, and inquired of them where he should be born; and also of the shepherds, who testified to the appearance of angels, who told them that there was then born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, and who also related that they themselves saw the infant at Bethlehem; and especially of John the Baptist, whose testimony was true, and could not be objected to by the Jews themselves, who sent to him, before whom he bore a plain and faithful witness. Now if an human testimony may be, and is received,

the testimony of God is greater; more valuable, surer, and to be more firmly depended on, since it must be infallible; for God can neither deceive, nor be deceived:

for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son; even the witness of the Spirit, the water, and the blood, is the testimony, not of men, but of God; the Gospel, attended with the Spirit of God, is the testimony of God; and so the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, which bear witness of Christ, are not of men, but of God; and especially the witness of the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, must be the testimony of God, since, though three persons, they are one God; particularly the witness which God the Father testified of his Son Jesus Christ at his baptism and transfiguration, must be allowed to be the testimony of God, and far greater than any human testimony, and therefore to be received.

1 John 5:10

Ver. 10. He that believeth on the Son of God,.... As a divine person who came in the flesh, and obeyed the law, and brought in everlasting righteousness, and obtained life and salvation for men: he that with the heart believes in him for righteousness, and eternal life, he being the Son of God, truly and properly God, and so able to save all that believe in him,

hath the witness in himself; of the need he stands in of Christ, and of the suitableness, fulness, and excellency of him; the Spirit of God enlightening him into the impurity of his nature, his impotence to do anything spiritually good, his incapacity to atone for sin, and the insufficiency of his righteousness to justify him before God; and convincing him that nothing but the blood of the Son of God can cleanse him from sin, and only his sacrifice can expiate it, and his righteousness justify him from it, and that without him he can do nothing; testifying also to the efficacy of his blood, the completeness of his sacrifice and satisfaction, the excellency of his righteousness, and the energy of his grace and strength: so he comes to have such a witness in himself, that if ten thousand arguments were ever so artfully formed, in favour of the purity of human nature, the power of man's free will, and the sufficiency of his righteousness, and against the sacrifice and righteousness of Christ, the dignity of his person, as the Son of God, which gives virtue to his blood, sacrifice, and righteousness, they would all signify nothing to him, he would be proof against them. And such an one very readily receives into him the testimony God gives of his Son, of the glory and excellency of his person, and retains it in him. The Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, "hath the witness of God in him"; to which the Ethiopic, version agrees, and confirm the last observation:

he that believeth not God; does not receive his testimony concerning his Son: the Alexandrian copy, and two of Stephens's, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "he that believeth not the Son"; and the Ethiopic version, his Son; and the Arabic version, "the Son of God"; and so is a direct antithesis to the phrase in the former clause of the verse:

hath made him a liar; not the Son, but God, as the Arabic version renders it, "hath made God himself a liar"; who is the God, of truth, and cannot lie; it is impossible he should; and as nothing can be, more contumelious and reproachful to the being and nature of God, so nothing can more fully expose and aggravate the sin of unbelief, with respect to Christ, as the Son of God:

because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son; at the times and places before observed.

1 John 5:11

Ver. 11. And this is the record,.... The sum and substance of it, with respect to the person of Christ, and the security of salvation in him, who is the true God, and eternal life:

that God hath given to us eternal life; which is a life of glory and happiness hereafter; in the present state is unseen, but will in the world to come be a life of vision, free from all the sorrows and imperfections of this; and will be of the utmost perfection and pleasure, and for ever. This is a pure free grace gift of God the Father, proceeding from his sovereigns good will and pleasure, and which he gives to all his chosen ones, for they are ordained unto eternal life; to as many as he has given to his Son; to all that are redeemed by his blood, and are brought to believe in him: to these he gave it in his Son before the world began; and to the same in time he gives the right unto it, the meetness for it, and the pledge and earnest of it; and will hereafter give them the thing itself, the whole of it, to be possessed and enjoyed by them in person, to all eternity.

And this life is in his Son: not only the purpose and promise of it, but that itself; Christ asked it of his Father in the covenant of peace, and he gave it to him, that he might have it in himself for all his people; and here it is safe and secure, it is hid with Christ in God, it is bound up in the bundle of life with him; and because he lives, this life will never be lost, or they come short of it.

1 John 5:12

Ver. 12. He that hath the Son,.... Has a spiritual and experimental knowledge of him, true faith in him; who has him dwelling in his heart, and living in him:

hath life: not only spiritual life, being quickened by him, and living by faith on him, but eternal life; the knowledge he has of him is eternal life; he has it in faith and hope, and has a right unto it, and the earnest of it, as well as has it in Christ his representative, whom he has, and in whom this life is:

[and] he that hath not the Son of God; no knowledge of him, nor faith in him, nor enjoyment of him:

hath not life; he is dead in sin, he is alienated from the life of God, has no title to eternal life, nor meetness for it, nor shall enjoy it, but shall die the second death.

1 John 5:13

Ver. 13. These things have I written unto you,.... Which are contained in the epistle in general, and particularly what is written in the context, concerning the victory of the world, being ascribed to him who believes that Christ is the Son of God; and concerning the six witnesses of his sonship, and the record bore by God, that the gift of eternal life is in him: and which are especially written to them,

that believe on the name of the Son of God; who not only believed that Christ is the Son of God, which this six fold testimony would confirm them in, but also believed in his name for righteousness, life, and salvation; in which name there is all this, and in no other; and who also professed their faith in him, and were baptized in his name, and continued believing in him, and holding fast their profession of him. The end of writing these things to them was,

that ye may know that ye have eternal life; that there is such a thing as eternal life; that this is in Christ; that believers have it in him, and the beginning of it in themselves; and that they have a right unto it, and meetness for it, and shall certainly enjoy it; the knowledge of which is had by faith, under the testimony of the Spirit of God, and particularly what is above written concerning eternal life, being a free grace gift of God; and this being in Christ, and the assurance of it, that such who have him, or believe in him, have that which might serve to communicate, cultivate, and increase such knowledge:

and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God; which they had done already, and still did; the sense is, the above things were written to them concerning the Son of God, that they might be encouraged to continue believing in him, as such; to hold fast the faith of him and go on believing in him to the end; and that their faith in him might be increased; for faith is imperfect and is capable of increasing, and growing exceedingly: and nothing more tends unto, or is a more proper means of it, than the sacred writings, the reading and hearing them explained, and especially that part of them which respects the person, office, and grace of Christ. The Alexandrian copy, and one of Beza's manuscripts, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, "these things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, who believe in the name of the Son of God".

1 John 5:14

Ver. 14. And this is the confidence that we have in him,.... Either in God, to whom prayer is made; or in the Son of God, through whose blood and righteousness believers in him have confidence with God at the throne of grace; they can come with boldness and intrepidity, and use freedom and liberty of speech, as the word here used signifies; especially when they have the Spirit of Christ with them, and are under the sprinklings of the blood of Christ, and have a comfortable assurance of being heard and answered; and this is what the Jews call hlpt Nwyye, "the consideration", or "attention of prayer" {s}, which they explain thus;

"after a man has prayed, he judges in his heart that the holy blessed God will give him his reward, and will do everything needful for him, and will hear his prayer, because he has prayed with intention;"

but this is much better expressed, and upon a much better foundation, by our apostle here:

that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; to ask anything according to the will of God, is to ask, as to matter, what, and in a manner which, is agreeably to it; by which is meant, not his secret will, or his purposes and decrees, which are unknown, though, so far as these are made known, they are not to be prayed against, for they can never be made void; and therefore, when God had declared it as his purposing will, that the Israelites in the wilderness should not enter into Canaan's land, and that he had rejected Saul from the kingdom, in these cases it would have been wrong for Moses to have prayed for the one, or Samuel for the other; 1Sa 16:1; and though no one person is to be excluded from our prayers on the account of the decree of reprobation, since no man can certainly be known to be a reprobate; yet it does not become us to pray for the conversion and salvation of reprobates in general, since this would be contrary to the decree of God: and such purposes which God has declared by prophecy he has purposed in himself, as the conversion of the Jews, the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, the destruction of antichrist, and the glory of the Gospel church, for these we should pray that God would hasten them in his own time, and we are sure of being heard; but the revealed will of God is here intended, by which it appears that all grace is laid up in Christ, and all spiritual blessings are with him, and that the covenant of grace is ordered in all things, and full of the sure mercies of David, and of exceeding great and precious promises; all which are treasured up for the benefit and use of the people of God; and if, therefore, they ask for any grace, or supply of grace, for any spiritual blessing or mercy laid up in

Christ, in the covenant, or in any of the promises, they ask that for matter which is according to the will of God, and which they may be assured they shall have, sooner or later: and to ask in a manner agreeably to his will, is to come in the name of Christ, and make mention of his righteousness, and ask for his sake; to put up all petitions in faith, with fervency, in sincerity, and uprightness; with reverence, humility, and submission to the divine will, and with importunity; and such askers God hears, even so as to answer, and grant their requests in his own time, though not always in theirs; in some cases sooner, in others later, according to his infinite wisdom, and in his own way, which is always the best, though not in theirs, as in the case of the Apostle Paul, 2Co 12:7. The Alexandrian copy and the Ethiopic version read, "if we ask anything according to", or in his name: that is, of Christ, and which agrees with Joh 14:13.

{s} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 164. 2.

1 John 5:15

Ver. 15. And if we know that he hear us,.... As it may be assured he does hear and answer all such persons that ask according to his will:

whatsoever we ask, we know, or are assured,

that we have the petitions that we desired of him: for as it is the nature of that holy confidence, which believers have in God, to believe whatever they ask according to his will, in general, shall be grappled, so every request in particular; yea, before the mercy desired, or the favour asked for is conferred, they are as sure of having it in God's own time and way, as if they now had it in hand and fact.

1 John 5:16

Ver. 16. If anyone see his brother sin,.... Those who have such an interest at the throne of grace, and such boldness and freedom there, should make use of it for others, as well as themselves, and particularly for fallen believers; for a "brother"; not in a natural or civil sense, but in a spiritual sense, one that is judged to be born again, and belongs to the family and household of God, and is a member of a Gospel church; and so is under the watch, inspection, and care of the saints; and is observed to sin, as the best of men are not without it, nor the commission of it, in thought, word, or deed: and this sin of his is

a sin [which is] not unto death; every sin, even the least sin, is in its own nature mortal, or deserving of death; the proper wages of sin is death, yea, death eternal; yet none of the sins of God's elect are unto death, or issue in death, in fact; which is owing not to any different nature there is in their sins, or to their good works which counterbalance them; but to the grace of God, and to the blood and righteousness of Christ, by which they are pardoned and justified, and freed from obligation to punishment, or eternal death, the just demerits of them: but how should another man know that a brother's sin is not unto death, when it is of the same nature and kind with another man's? it is known by this, that he does not continue in it; he does not live in the constant commission of it; his life is not a course of iniquity; that sin he sins is not a governing one in him; though he falls into it, he rises up out of it through divine grace, and abides not in it; and he has a sense of it, and is sorry for it, after a godly sort, loaths it, and himself for it; is ashamed of it, ingenuously confesses it, and mourns over it and forsakes it: now when any strong believer or spiritual man sees or knows that a brother has sinned, and this is his case,

he shall ask; he shall pray to God for him, that he would administer comfort to him, discover his love, and apply his pardoning grace to him, and indulge him with his presence and the light of his countenance:

and he shall give him life; that is, God shall give the sinning brother life; by which may be meant comfort, that which will revive his drooping spirits, and cause him to live cheerfully and comfortably, that so he may not be swallowed up with over much sorrow; or he shall grant a discovery of the pardon of his sin unto him, which will be as life from the dead, and will give him a comfortable hope of eternal life, of his right unto it, and meetness for it:

for them, or "to them"

that sin not unto death, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; for this phrase is only descriptive of the persons to whom life is given by God, upon the prayers of saints for them, and not that this life is given to him that prays, and by him to be given to the sinning person. The Vulgate Latin version renders the whole thus, "and life shall be given to him that sins not unto death"; which leaves the words without any difficulty: the Ethiopic version indeed renders it, "and he that prays shall quicken him that sins [a sin] not unto death"; and this sense some interpreters incline to, and would have with this text compared **1Ti 4:16**.

There is a sin unto death; which is not only deserving of death, as every other sin is, but which certainly and inevitably issues in death in all that commit it, without exception; and that is the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is neither forgiven in this world nor in that to come, and therefore must be unto death; it is a sinning wilfully, not in a practical, but doctrinal way, after a man has received the knowledge of the truth; it is a wilful denial of the truth of the Gospel, particularly that peace, pardon, righteousness, eternal life, and salvation, are by Jesus Christ, contrary to the light of his mind, and this joined with malice and obstinacy; so that there is no more or other sacrifice for such a sin; there is nothing but a fearful looking for of wrath and fury to fall on such opposers of the way of life; and as the presumptuous sinners under Moses's law died without mercy, so must these despiteful ones under the Gospel; see Mt 12:31. Some think there is an allusion to one of the kinds of excommunication among the Jews, called "shammatha", the etymology of which, according to some Jewish writers, is htym Mv, "there is death" {t}.

I do not say that he shall pray for it; the apostle does not expressly forbid to pray for the forgiveness of this sin, yet what he says amounts unto it; he gives no encouragement to it, or any hopes of succeeding, but rather the reverse; and indeed where this sin is known, or can be known, it is not to be prayed for, because it is irremissible; but as it is a most difficult point to know when a man has sinned it, the apostle expresses himself with great caution.

{t} T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 17. 1.

1 John 5:17

Ver. 17. All unrighteousness is sin,.... All unrighteousness against God or man is a sin against the law of God, and the wrath of God is revealed against it, and it is deserving of death; yet all unrighteousness is not unto death, as the sins of David, which were unrighteousness both to God and man, and yet they were put away, and he died not; Peter sinned very foully, and did great injustice to his dear Lord, and yet his sin was not unto death; he had repentance unto life given him, and a fresh application of pardoning grace:

and there is a sin not unto death; this is added for the relief of weak believers, who hearing of a sin unto death, not to be prayed for, might fear that theirs were of that kind, whereas none of them are; for though they are guilty of many unrighteousnesses, yet God is merciful to them and forgives, **Heb 8:12**, and so they are not unto death.

1 John 5:18

Ver. 18. We know that whosoever is born of God,.... Who is regenerated by his Spirit and grace, and quickened by his power; who has Christ formed in him, and is made a partaker of the divine nature, and has every grace implanted in him:

sinneth not; the sin unto death; nor does he live in sin, or is under the power and dominion of it, though he does not live without it; See Gill on "1Jo 3:9";

but he that is begotten of God; the Vulgate Latin version reads, "the generation of God keeps or preserves him"; that is, that which is born in him, the new man, the principle of grace, or seed of God in him, keeps him from notorious crimes, particularly from sinning the sin unto death, and from the governing power of all other sins; but all other versions, as well as copies, read as we do, and as follows:

keepeth himself; not that any man can keep himself by his own power and strength; otherwise what mean the petitions of the saints to God that he would keep them, and even of Christ himself to God for them on the same account? God only is the keeper of his people, and they are only kept in safety whom he keeps, and it is by his power they are kept; but the sense is, that a believer defends himself by taking to him the whole armour of God, and especially the shield of faith, against the corruptions of his own heart, the snares of the world, and particularly the temptations of Satan:

and that wicked one toucheth him not; he cannot come at him so as to wound him to the heart, or destroy that principle of life that is in him, or so as to overcome and devour him; he may tempt him, and sift him, and buffet him, and greatly afflict and grieve him, but he can not touch his life, or hurt him with the second death; nay, sometimes the believer is so enabled to wield the shield of faith, or to hold up Christ the shield by faith, and turn it every way in such a manner, that Satan, who is here meant by the wicked one, because he is notoriously so, cannot come near him, nor in with him; cannot work upon him at all with his temptations, nor in the least hurt his peace, joy, and comfort: the saints know their perseverance from the promises of God and declarations of Christ; Ps 125:1.

1 John 5:19

Ver. 19. [And] we know that we are of God,.... The sons of God, and regenerated by him; this is known by the Spirit of God, which witnesses to the spirits of the saints that they are the children of God; and by the fruits and effects of regenerating grace, as love to the brethren, and the like:

and the whole world lies in wickedness; that is, the men of the world, the greater part of the inhabitants of it, who are as they were when they came into it, not being born of God; these are addicted to sin and, wickedness; the bias of their minds is to it, they are set upon it, and give themselves up to it, are immersed in it, and are under the power of it: or "in the wicked one"; Satan, the god of this world; they are under his influence, and led according to his will, and they are governed by him, and are at his beck and command; and this is known, by sad experience, it is easy of observation;

"And cannot comprehend the things that are promised to the righteous in time to come: for this world is full of unrighteousness and infirmities." (2 Esdras 4:27)

1 John 5:20

Ver. 20. And we know that the Son of God is come,.... That the second Person in the Godhead, who is equal to the Father, and of the same nature with him, is come from the Father, from heaven into this world, not by local motion, but by assumption of nature; that he is come in the flesh, or is become incarnate, in order to work out salvation for his people, by his obedience, sufferings, and death; and this John and others knew, for they had personal knowledge of him, and converse with him; they saw him with their eyes, heard him, and handled him: he dwelt among them, preached to them, wrought miracles before them, which proved him to be what he was; and it may be known that the Messiah must become, since Daniel's weeks, which fixes the time of his coming, are long ago up; the sceptre is departed from Judah, and the second temple is destroyed, neither of which were to be till the Messiah came; and that Jesus of Nazareth is he who is come may be known by the characters of him, and the works done by him:

and hath given us an understanding; not a new faculty of the understanding but new light into it; a knowledge of spiritual things of himself, and of God in him, and of the truths of the Gospel, and of all divine and heavenly things; for he, the Son of God, is come a light into the world, and gives spiritual light to men:

that we may know him that is true; or "the true God", as the Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; that is, God the Father, who is the true God, in opposition to the false gods of the Heathens, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and the spiritual knowledge of him as the Father of Christ, and as a covenant God and Father in him, is only given to men by Christ, and this is life eternal; see Mt 11:27;

and we are in him that is true, [even] in his Son Jesus Christ; the words "Jesus Christ" are left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin version; however, certain it is, that Jesus Christ is meant by his Son, who is the Son of the true and living God, and is himself "true"; not only true God, as hereafter asserted, but true man, having a true body and a reasonable soul, and was true and faithful in the discharge of his offices, as prophet, priest, and King; he faithfully declared the whole will of God, and taught the way of God in truth; he was faithful to him that appointed him, by securing his glory when he made reconciliation for the sins of the people; and all the administrations of his kingly office are just and true; yea, he is truth itself, the substance of all the types, in whom all the promises are yea and amen, and who has all the truths of the Gospel and treasures of wisdom in him; now his people are in him; they were secretly in him before the world was, being loved by him, chosen in him, put into his hands, preserved in him, and represented by him; and openly, at conversion, when they are anew created in him, brought to believe in him, and live upon him, and he lives in them, and they are in him as branches in the vine; and this is known by his Spirit being given them, by the communication of his grace unto them, and by the communion they have with him.

This is the true God and eternal life; that is, the Son of God, who is the immediate antecedent to the relative "this"; he is the true God, with his Father and the Spirit, in distinction from all false, fictitious, or nominal deities; and such as are only by office, or in an improper and figurative sense: Christ is truly and really God, as appears from all the perfections of deity, the fulness of the Godhead being in him; from the divine works of creation and providence being ascribed to him; and from the divine worship that is given him; as well as from the names and titles he goes by, and particularly that of Jehovah, which is incommunicable to a creature; and he is called "eternal life", because it is in him; and he is the giver of it to his people; and that itself will chiefly consist in the enjoyment and vision of him, and in conformity to him.

1 John 5:21

Ver. 21. Little children, keep yourselves from idols, Amen. From Heathen idols and idolatry, into which the saints in those times might be liable to be drawn, by reason of their dwelling among Heathen idolaters, and being related to them, and by the too great freedom used in eating things sacrificed to idols in their temples; and from all other idols that might be introduced by some who went by the name of Christians, as the Gnostics, who worshipped the images of Simon and Helena; and the passage may be an antidote against the worshipping of images, afterwards introduced by the Papists. Moreover, errors and false doctrines, which are the figments of men's minds, and what they are fond of, may be called idols, and should be guarded against, and abstained from; as also the lusts of men's hearts, and all the evil things that are in the world, which are adored by the men of it; and even every creature that is loved too much is an idol; hence covetousness is called idolatry; nor should any creature or thing be loved more than God or Christ: the one only living and true God, Father, Son, and Spirit, he is only to be worshipped, feared, and loved.

INTRODUCTION TO 2 JOHN

Though this epistle was called in question and gainsaid by some as authentic, as Eusebius says {a}, yet there is no room to doubt of the authority of it; it was very early received into the canon of the Scripture, and is cited as such, and also as the Apostle John's, by Irenaeus {b}, who was a disciple of Polycarp, and an hearer of Papias, who were both disciples of the Apostle John; nor need there be any question as to his being the author of it. Eusebius indeed does say {c}, it was a doubt whether it was the Apostle John's or another of the same name; and some have since asserted, that it was written not by John the Evangelist, but by John the Presbyter of Ephesus, after the apostle; and this is thought to have some confirmation from the author of it being called an elder, or presbyter, which is judged not so agreeable to the Apostle John; though it should be observed, that Peter an apostle styles himself an elder, as John here does, **1Pe 5:1**, moreover, the above ancient writer, Irenaeus, expressly ascribes this epistle to John, the disciple of the Lord; and whoever compares some passages in this epistle with the former, particularly **2Jo 1:5**, with **1Jo 2:7**, will easily conclude, from the likeness of style and matter, that it is a genuine epistle of the Apostle John: the design of which is to exhort and encourage the lady he writes to, to continue in the truth and faith of the Gospel, and in love to God and his people, and to avoid false teachers and their doctrines.

{a} Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 24. {b} Adv. Haeres. l. 1. c. 13. & l. 3. c. 18. {c} Adv. Haeres. l. 3. c. 25.

INTRODUCTION TO 2 JOHN 1

The writer of this epistle describes himself by his office, an "elder", and inscribes it to a certain matron, whom he styles, on account of her honour and riches, a "lady"; and by reason of her grace, "elect"; and to her children, who, as well as herself, were the objects of the apostle's love, and of all that knew the truth, and that for the sake of it, which was common to them all, **2Jo 1:1**, the salutation follows, **2Jo 1:3**, and then a congratulation of the lady, that some of her children walked in the same path of truth with herself, **2Jo 1:4**, and next an exhortation to brotherly love, which is the commandment from the beginning; the evidence of which love is walking according to that, and every other command of God, **2Jo 1:5**, and the rather this should be closely attended to, since many deceivers, who were no other than antichrist, had got into the world, who did not own that Christ was come in the flesh; wherefore it became those that were concerned for his name and glory, as well as their own interest, to take heed lest what was wrought should be lost, and so a full reward be not received, **2Jo 1:7**, and then a description of these deceivers and false teachers is given; that they are transgressors of the rule of God's word, abide not in the doctrine of Christ, and so have not God, any interest in him; whereas he that abides in the doctrine of Christ has an interest both in the Father and in the Son, **2Jo 1:9**, wherefore the apostle gives advice to the lady how to behave towards such; not to receive them into her house, nor wish them success, since so to do would be to join with them in their evil deeds, **2Jo 1:10**, and then he excuses the shortness of his letter, though he had many things to write unto her, yet would not, because he hoped shortly to visit her, and then would personally relate what he had to communicate to their mutual joy, **2Jo 1:12**, and closes the epistle with the salutation of her sister's children to her, **2Jo 1:13**.

Ver. 1. The elder unto the elect lady and her children,.... By the "elder" is meant the writer of this epistle, the Apostle John, who so calls himself either on account of his age, he being now near an hundred years of age, having outlived all the apostles: or on account of his office, being a bishop or overseer, not only of the church at Ephesus, but of all the Asiatic churches, which is the same with an elder; nor is this incompatible with his being an apostle; see **1Pe 5:1**, the elect lady is the person he writes unto; by whom is designed not the church of Christ, since such a way of speaking is unusual; and besides, he speaks of coming to see her face to face, and of the children of her elect sister: but some particular person, some rich, as well as gracious woman of John's acquaintance; and these words, "elect lady", are neither of them proper names of the person: some think that the word "Kyria", rendered "lady", was the name of the person, as "Domina" with the Romans, and answers to the Hebrew word "Martha"; for as rm, "Mar", signifies lord, so atrm, "Martha, lady"; and then the inscription runs, "to the choice" or "excellent Martha"; and the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "to the elect Kyria": and others think that the word rendered elect is a proper name, and that this person's name was "Electa", as "Electus" {d} is a man's name; and then it must read thus, "to the lady Electa"; but her sister also is so called, and it can hardly be thought that two sisters should be both of a name; neither of them are proper names, but characters and titles of respect and honour: she is called a "lady", because she was a person of distinction and substance, which shows that God sometimes calls by his grace some that are rich and noble; and also that titles of respect and honour, where flattery is avoided, may be lawfully given to persons of dignity and wealth; so Nazianzen {e} calls his own mother by the same title; and it was usual to call women by this name from fourteen years of age {f}: and this person also is said to be "elect"; either because she was a choice, famous, and excellent person, not only for her birth, nobility, and riches, but for her virtue, grace, and good works; or because she was chosen unto eternal life and salvation; and which the apostle might know without a special and divine revelation, by the Gospel coming with power to her; by the grace that was wrought in her; by the faith of God's elect, which she appeared to have, seeing it worked by love; and which may be, and ought to be concluded in a judgment of charity, of everyone that professes faith in Christ, and walks according to it; and this also makes it appear that election is of particular persons, and not of nations, communities, and churches, as such; nor is it unusual to salute single persons under this character; see Ro 16:13, this epistle is inscribed not only to this lady, but also to "her children"; who were not infants, but grown up, and had made a profession of the truth, and walked in it, **2Jo 1:4**, and both the mother and the children the apostle represents as the objects of his love:

whom I love in the truth; either as being in the truth and faith of the Gospel; for though all men are to be loved as men, and to be done well to, yet they that are of the household of faith, or are in the faith, are in and especial manner to be loved and respected; see **Ga 6:10**; or the sense is, that the apostle loved this lady and her children sincerely and heartily, without dissimulation; not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth, **1Jo 3:18**:

and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; either the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the truth; not with a notional knowledge, but with the knowledge of approbation and affection; with a fiducial and appropriating one: or the Gospel, the word of truth; not with a speculative, but with a spiritual and experimental knowledge of it: and this is not to be understood of every individual person then living, which had such a knowledge of the truth; for it cannot be reasonably thought that every individual person should know this lady and her children; but of all such persons who had any knowledge of them; for such who are born again by the word of truth, love not only him that begot them, but all those who are begotten of him: this shows in what sense the word "all" is sometimes taken.

{d} Herodian. Hist. l. 1. c. 51, 52, 53, 54. {e} Epist. ad Basil. 4. p. 769. vol. 1. {f} Epictet. Enchirid. c. 62.

2 John 1:2

Ver. 2. For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us,.... Not for her high birth, nobility, or riches; but either for Christ's sake, who is the truth, and who dwells in the hearts of believers by faith, and who is the same that dwells in one as in another; and on his account it is that saints love one another, because they belong to him, he is formed in them, and his image is stamped upon them; and every like loves its like: or for the Gospel's sake, which has a place, and dwells in every saint, and is the same for matter and substance in one as in another; and unity of mind and judgment produces unity of affection: or for the sake of the truth of grace, the inward principle of grace, which dwells in every regenerate person; a communication of the experience of which knits the saints one to another:

and shall be with us for ever; where Christ enters and takes up his abode, from thence he never finally and totally departs, though he may sometimes hide his face with respect to communion, or withdraw his gracious presence; and where the Gospel has once took place in the heart, and is become the ingrafted word, it can never be rooted out, or be removed; and where the truth of grace is, it will remain; it is an incorruptible seed, a well of living water, springing up into eternal life.

2 John 1:3

Ver. 3. Grace be with you, mercy [and] peace,.... This form of salutation, or wish and prayer for the blessings mentioned,

from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, is the same used by other apostles; see **1Ti 1:2** and See Gill on "Ro 1:7". Only it is added here with respect to Christ, that he is

the Son of the Father in truth and love; which is mentioned by the apostle to confirm the deity of Christ, which is plainly implied in wishing for the above things equally from him, as from the Father; and to oppose and confront some heretics of those times, who denied the true and proper sonship of Christ; and therefore he calls him, "the Son of the Father", the only begotten of the Father; and that "in truth", or truly and properly, and not in a figurative and metaphorical sense, as magistrates are called the sons of God, and children of the most High, by reason of their office; but so is not Christ, he is God's own Son, in a true, proper, and natural sense: and he is so "in love"; he is his well beloved Son, his dear Son, the Son of his love; as he cannot otherwise be; since he is not only the image of him, but of the same nature, and has the same perfections with him.

2 John 1:4

Ver. 4. I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children,.... Not all, but some of them; for good parents have not always good children, or at least not all of them; Adam had a Cain, Abraham an Ishmael, and Isaac an Esau: God is pleased to show his discriminating grace in tribes and families, by taking some, and leaving others: it is a great mercy when any are called by grace, and instead of the fathers are the children: and this was the case of some of the children of this elect lady, they were

walking in the truth: in Christ, the truth, by faith, as they had received him; and in the truth of the Gospel, as they had embraced and professed it; they abode in it, and by it, and made a proficiency in the knowledge of it, which may be signified by walking, that being a progressive action: as also they walked according to it, and as became it; and likewise they walked in the truth of Gospel worship, discipline, and ordinances:

as we have received a commandment from the Father; and which has been made known by Jesus Christ, as his mind and will. Now as it is matter of joy and gladness to godly parents when their children walk in the paths of faith, truth, and holiness, so it is also to ministers of the Gospel, as well as to the angels in heaven; it gives them an inward pleasure and joy, and which is not only expressed by them, to such children and their parents, but is also abundant by many thanksgivings unto God.

2 John 1:5

Ver. 5. And now I beseech thee, lady,.... Or "Kyria", which word the Syriac and Arabic versions retain, as if it was a proper name: the apostle having finished the inscription, salutation, and congratulation in the preceding verses, passes to an exhortation and entreaty to observe the commandment of love to one another, which is not a new commandment, but what was from the beginning:

not as though I wrote a new commandment, &c. See Gill on "1Jo 2:7" and See Gill on "1Jo 2:8".

2 John 1:6

Ver. 6. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments,.... By observing them as a rule of conversation, in so doing love is shown to God; and such may expect the fresh discoveries of the love of God to, them; See Gill on "1Jo 5:3";

this is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it; that is, this is the will of God, that his people should walk in the truth of the Gospel, and abide by it, as they heard and received it at their first conversion, from the mouths of the apostles, or other faithful ministers of the word; a reason for which, is given in **2Jo 1:7**.

2 John 1:7

Ver. 7. For many deceivers are entered into the world,.... By whom are meant false teachers, who are described by their quality, "deceivers", deceitful workers, pretending to be ministers of Christ, to have a: value for truth, a love for souls, and a view to the glory of God, but lie in wait to deceive, and handle the word of God deceitfully; and by their quantity or number, "many", and so likely to do much mischief; and by the place where they were, they were "entered into the world"; or "gone out into the world", as the Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read; See Gill on "1Jo 4:1"; and by their tenet,

who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; these were not the Jews who denied that Jesus was the Christ, though they would not allow that Christ was come in the flesh; but these were some who bore the Christian name, and professed to believe in Jesus Christ, but would not own that he was really incarnate, or assumed a true human nature, only in appearance; and denied that he took true and real flesh of the virgin, but only seemed to do so; and these are confuted by the apostle, **1Jo 1:1**; and upon everyone of these he justly fixes the following character.

This is a deceiver and an antichrist; one of the deceivers that were come into the world, and one of the antichrists that were already in it; and who were the forerunners of the man of sin, and in whom the mystery of iniquity already began to work; for antichrist does not design anyone particular individual person, but a set of men, that are contrary to Christ, and opposers of him.

2 John 1:8

Ver. 8. Look to yourselves,.... This is an exhortation to the elect lady, and her children, to look about them, and take care of themselves, and beware of these deceivers, and their doctrines:

that we lose not those things which we have wrought; or as the Alexandrian copy, and many other copies, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "that ye lose not those things which ye have wrought"; in embracing the Gospel, making a profession of it, walking in it, showing a zeal, and contending for it, expressing a love both by words and actions to the ministers of it, and suffering much reproach on the account of it; all which would be lost, and in vain, should they at last drop the Gospel, and embrace the errors of the wicked; see **Ga 3:4**. Moreover, such who do not go such lengths, as to let go the head, Christ, but retain him as the foundation, and the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, yet, among many precious things, may lay much rubbish on this foundation; and therefore should take heed what they build upon it, since, though they themselves may be saved, their works may be destroyed, and so they suffer loss; see **1Co 3:11**; and if we read the words, "that we lose not--which we have wrought"; the sense is the same, it being only a figure which rhetoricians call communion, and it is frequently used when a common duty is exhorted to; see **1Jo 2:28**; unless it should be thought that this has a peculiar reference to the ministers of the Gospel, as it may: for though the Gospel preached by them can never be lost, being the everlasting Gospel, and the word which abides for ever; yet it may be received in vain, and persons may fall from it, and imbibe error, and so the labour of Christ's faithful ministers may be so far in vain, and lost; and likewise, many souls whom they have thought they have gained to Christ, and that they have been instruments of working upon them for good, and have hoped they would be their joy and crown of rejoicing another day; when such are carried away by deceivers, fall off from the truth, ministers of the word lose what they thought they had wrought, which must give them great concern; and this is improved by the apostle into a reason and argument why the persons he wrote to should beware of seducers and their errors:

but that we receive a full reward; in heaven, and which itself is called the recompense of reward, and the reward of the inheritance; not that this is a reward of debt due to the works of men, which are not rewardable in themselves; for they are such as are due to God before they are performed; and when they are done, they are not profitable to him, nothing is given to him, or received by him; when all is done that can be done, men are unprofitable servants; but this is a reward of grace, God has of his own grace promised it to those who love and serve him; and because it will be given them of his grace, after their work is over, as wages are given to a servant when he has done his work, it goes by this name: and whereas it is said to be a "full" one, the meaning is not as if it was different to different persons, for there is but one recompense of reward, or reward of the inheritance common to all the saints; or, as if it might be incomplete in some; it only signifies a large and exceeding great reward; see Ge 15:1; in which last place the same phrase is used as here; and where the Septuagint interpreters use the same words as here; and which is thus paraphrased by the Targumist,

"the Lord give thee a good recompence in this world for thy good work, and let thy reward be amylv, "full", or "perfect", in the world to come."

And the Jews {g} often speak of a full reward, and an equal one, to be received hereafter. Perhaps regard is here had particularly to the ministers of the Gospel, who have their reward in part here, for the workman is worthy of his reward, and they will have it in full hereafter. Moreover, the apostle might here be concerned, that he, and every faithful minister, might have their full number, they expected, that none may be missing, and which he may call a full reward: though the above copies and versions read here, as before, "ye", and "not we".

{g} Targum on Eccl. i. 3. & ii. 11. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 72. 4.

Ver. 9. Whosoever transgresseth,.... Not the law of God, of which everyone is a transgressors and that daily, in thought, word, or deed; but who passes over the rule and standard of doctrine, the word of God, and will not adhere to that, nor walk according to it, but rejects and despises that rule:

and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ; which he received from his Father, and delivered to his apostles, and of which he is the sum and substance; the doctrine which is concerning his person as the Son of God, and as truly God, and the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his one person; and concerning his office, as the Mediator, surety, and messenger of the covenant, and as the prophet, priest, and King of his church; and concerning his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, session at God's right hand, intercession for his people, and second coming to judgment; concerning peace and pardon by his blood, atonement by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and complete salvation by him: this is xyvmh Klm lv wdwmlt, "the doctrine of the King Messiah", or the Messiah's Talmud {h}, to use the Jewish phrase, and which agrees with John's. Now, whoever has embraced and professed this doctrine, but errs concerning it, and rejects it, and abides not in it, as Satan abode not in the truth, appears to be of him:

hath not God; for his Father, but the devil, the father of lies; he has no true knowledge of God, for there is none but in Christ, whose doctrine such an one has denied; nor has he, nor can he, have communion with him, nor any interest in him.

He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ; as he hath received and professed it; neither can anything remove him from it, not the arguments of false teachers, nor the reproaches and persecutions of men, or the snares and allurements of the world:

he hath both the Father and the Son; he has an interest in them both, and has knowledge of each of them, and fellowship with them. The Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version leave out the phrase, "of Christ", in the preceding clause, and only read, "in the doctrine"; and the Syriac version, "in his doctrine"; the sense is the same.

{h} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 98. fol. 85. 3.

2 John 1:10

Ver. 10. If there come any unto you,.... Under the character of a preacher;

and bring not this doctrine; or does not preach the doctrine of Christ, as before explained, but despises it, and preaches a contrary one:

receive him not into [your] house; neither into the house of God, suffer him not to preach there; nor into your own house, give him no entertainment there: false teachers always tried to creep into houses, where they served their own turn every way, both by feeding their bellies, and spreading their pernicious doctrines; and therefore such should: be avoided, both publicly and privately; their ministry should not be attended on in the church, or house of God; and they should not be entertained in private houses, and much less caressed:

neither bid him God speed; or give him the usual civil form of salutation, as a good day to you, all hail, all health and prosperity attend you, the Lord be with you, and the like. The word used by the Jews was rvya, which signifies "happiness"; so it is said {i}, what do they salute with? rvya, "God speed"; which was forbidden to say to one that was ploughing in the seventh year. The meaning is, that with such no familiar conversation should be had, lest any encouragement should be given them; or it should induce a suspicion in the minds of other saints, that they are in the same sentiments; or it should tend to make others think favourably of them, and be a snare and a stumblingblock to weak Christians.

{i} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 35. 2. Vid. Taanith. fol. 64. 2.

2 John 1:11

Ver. 11. For he that biddeth him God speed,.... Wishes him well, and success in his ministry, or in a friendly and familiar way converses with him:

is partaker of his evil deeds; he has fellowship with him, instead of reproving or shunning him, as he ought; he is an abettor of him in his principles, and so far joins in the propagation of them, and helps to spread them, and gives too much reason to think he is one with him in them.

2 John 1:12

Ver. 12. Having many things to write unto you,.... Either on a civil, or on a religious account, concerning the state of the churches of Asia, and particularly Ephesus, and of private families and persons, and concerning the truths and doctrines of the Gospel; not that he had any new one, or any other than what they had heard from the beginning, to communicate to them, by word of mouth, for this he denies, **2Jo 1:5**; wherefore this makes nothing for the unwritten traditions of the Papists, and as if the Scriptures did not contain the whole of doctrine and of the will of God.

I would not [write] with paper and ink; any more than what was written:

but I trust to come unto you; where they were, but where that was is not known; very likely in some parts of Asia, and it may be not far from Ephesus, since any long journey would not have been fit for the apostle to have taken in this his old age:

and speak face to face; that is, freely and familiarly converse together about things omitted in this epistle:

that our joy may be full; in seeing one another's faces, and through hearing the things that may be talked of; and since the conversation would doubtless turn on divine and evangelic things, so fulness, or a large measure of spiritual joy, may be here intended. Instead of "our joy", the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin and the Ethiopic versions, read, "your joy".

2 John 1:13

Ver. 13. The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen. Not the members of a sister church, as some think; but the children of one who was the sister of this lady, according to the flesh; and who, as she was either a very famous and excellent person, or rather one chosen of God likewise unto eternal life and salvation; and whose children also were walking in the truth, and here send their Christian salutation to their aunt; very likely those sister's children lived at Ephesus, where John resided.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

3 John 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO 3 JOHN

This epistle was written by the Apostle John, who calls himself an "elder", as in the preceding, and is inscribed to a friend of his, whom he mentions by name, and expresses a very great affection for, on account of his steady adherence to the truths of the Gospel, **3Jo 1:1**; he wishes him bodily health equal to that prosperity of soul he was indulged with, **3Jo 1:2**; congratulates him upon the testimony the brethren that came from him gave him of the truth being in him, and of his walking in it, and upon hearing that his children also trod in the same path, **3Jo 1:3**; commends him for his hospitality and charity, of which testimonies were given before the church; and encourages him to go on doing the same acts of beneficence, since it was to such persons that went forth for the sake of Christ, and preaching in his name, and had nothing of the Gentiles for so doing; wherefore they ought to be received, and entertained by those of ability, that they might be fellow helpers to the truth with them, **3Jo 1:5**. He complains of Diotrephes as a proud, haughty, and overbearing man in the church, where Gaius was a member, who would neither receive the letters the apostle sent, nor the brethren that came with them; nay, forbid them that would, and cast them out of the church for it, and prated against them with malicious words, whom he threatens to remember when he himself should come thither, **3Jo 1:9**; wherefore he exhorts Gaius not to follow such an ill example, but that which is good in any person; since he that does good appears to be of God, and he that does evil, it looks as if he had never known him, **3Jo 1:11**. And particularly he recommends Demetrius, who had a good report of all men, and of the truth itself, and had a testimony from the apostle, and those that were with him, which was known to be a true one, **3Jo 1:12**. But though he had many things to say, both of one, and of the other, he determines to write no more at present, hoping he should shortly see him, and personally converse together; and closes the epistle with his own good wish, and with mutual salutations of friends, **3Jo 1:13**.

Ver. 1. The elder unto the well beloved Gaius,.... The elder is the writer of the epistle, the Apostle John, who so styles himself on account of his age, and office, as in the preceding epistle. The person to whom he writes is "the well beloved Gaius"; not that Gaius, who was the Apostle Paul's host, Ro 16:23, for though their characters agree, being both hospitable men, yet neither the place nor time in which they lived. The Apostle Paul's Gaius lived at Corinth, this is in some place near to Ephesus, for the apostle in his old age purposed to come and see him shortly; the other was contemporary with Paul, this with John; there were thirty or forty years difference between them: besides, the Corinthian Gaius was baptized by Paul, and was doubtless one of his spiritual children, or converts, whereas this Gaius was one of the Apostle John's spiritual children, **3Jo 1:4**; nor does he seem to be the same with Gaius of Macedonia, Ac 19:29, or with Gaius of Derbe, Ac 20:4, who seem to be two different persons by their country, though both companions in travel of the Apostle Paul; for which reason, as well as the time of their living, neither of them can be this Gaius, who was a settled housekeeper, and resided at some certain place. His name is a Roman name, and the same with Caius, though he seems to have been a Jew, as he might, it being usual with the Jews in other countries to take Gentile names. His character is, that he was "well beloved"; that is, of God, as it appears he was from the grace bestowed on him, from the prosperous estate of his soul, and from the truth that was in him, and his walking in it; and of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the same reasons; and also of all the brethren and saints that knew him; he being a person not only truly gracious, and of faithfulness and integrity, but of great liberality and beneficence, which must gain him much love and esteem among them; and he was well beloved by the Apostle John; and so the Syriac version renders it, "to my beloved Gaius": though his love to him is expressed in the following clause,

whom I love in the truth; as being in it, or for the sake of it, or truly and sincerely; See Gill on "2Jo 1:1".

3 John 1:2

Ver. 2. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper,.... Or succeed in all temporal affairs, in the business of life, in which he was; and as success of this sort depends upon the blessing of God, which maketh rich, it is to be wished and prayed for from him:

and be in health; that is, of body, which above all things above all outward mercies, is the most desirable; for without this, what are the richest dainties, the largest possessions, or the best of friends? without this there can be no comfortable enjoyment of either of them; and therefore of this sort of mercies, it is in the first place, and above all others, to be wished for, and desired by one friend for another. The rule and measure of this wish is according to the prosperity of his soul,

even as thy soul prospereth: the soul is diseased with sin, and may be said to be in good health, when all its iniquities are forgiven; and may be said to prosper, when having a spiritual appetite for the Gospel, the sincere milk of the word, it feeds upon it, is nourished by it, and grows thereby; when it is in the lively exercise of faith, hope, and love; when spiritual knowledge is increased, or it grows in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus; when the inward man is renewed day by day with fresh strength; and when it enjoys communion with God, has the light of his countenance, and the joys of his salvation; and when it is fruitful in every good work.

3 John 1:3

Ver. 3. For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came,.... From the place where Gaius lived, to that where John now resided; these brethren seem to be preachers of the word, who travelled from place to place to spread the Gospel:

and testified of the truth that is in thee; either of Christ, who was formed in him; or of the Gospel, which had a place in his heart; or of the truth of grace that was in him, as well as of that faithfulness, integrity, and sincerity he appeared to be possessed of, being an Israelite indeed, and without guile:

even as thou walkest in the truth: in Christ, and in the Gospel, and as became it, and with all uprightness; see **2Jo 1:4**; and this occasioned great joy in the apostle; as it is matter of joy to every one that truly loves Christ, and his Gospel; or has the true grace of charity in him, which envies not the gifts and graces of others, but rejoiceth in the truth, wherever it is found; and especially to the faithful ministers of the word, when they hear of the truth of grace in any souls, and that such continue walking in the truth of the Gospel, and particularly those who have been wrought upon under their ministry, as follows.

3 John 1:4

Ver. 4. I have no greater joy,.... Nothing that causes greater joy. The Vulgate Latin version reads "grace" or "thanks"; and then the sense is, that he had nothing to be more thankful for:

than to hear that my children walk in truth; meaning his spiritual children, those whose conversion he had been the instrument of; and among these it seems Gaius was one.

3 John 1:5

Ver. 5. Beloved, thou doest faithfully,.... Or a faithful thing, and as became a faithful man, a believer in Christ; in all his beneficence and charity he acted the upright part; he did not do it in an hypocritical way, to be seen of men, and gain applause from them, but from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory of God:

whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; which may design either different persons; and by "brethren" may be meant the poor brethren of the church that. Gaius belonged to, and others that were well known to him; and by "the strangers", not unconverted persons, but such of the saints as came from foreign parts, and travelled about to spread the Gospel, and enlarge the interest of Christ: or else the same persons may be intended, for the words may be read, as they are in the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and in the Vulgate Latin version, "what thou doest to the brethren, and this to strangers"; that is, as the Arabic version renders it, "to strange brethren"; or, as the Syriac version, "to the brethren, [and] especially [them] that are strangers"; so that Gaius was a very hospitable man, one that entertained and lodged strangers, and used them very civilly and courteously, with great liberality, and with much integrity and sincerity.

3 John 1:6

Ver. 6. Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church,.... At Ephesus, where John was; these brethren and strangers coming thither, and being greatly affected with Gaius's kindness and liberality to them, could not forbear speaking of it to his praise, in the presence of the members of the church, as well as acquainted the Apostle John with it; the Syriac version reads, "before the whole church"; they bore testimony of his liberality in a very public manner And this the apostle mentions to encourage Gaius to go on, and continue in his kindness to the same persons, since they retained such a grateful sense of past favours; and whereas they were now returning back, he desires that he would give them some further assistance:

whom if thou bring forward on their journey; the word here used signifies, to send on before, as in Ac 15:3, and is used by the Septuagint in the same sense as here, and in the above places, in Ge 18:16; where it is said, that "Abraham went with them (the angels) to bring them on in the way", Mxlvl, "to send them on", or "send them away"; dismiss them, take his leave of them in a friendly and honourable way. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render it, Nwhyawwlal, "to accompany them"; and so this Greek word, which seems to answer to the Hebrew phrase, signifies an honourable accompanying, leading forth, and taking leave of friends; and so the apostle encourages Gaius to behave in like manner to the brethren and strangers; meaning, either by accompanying them in person, or by sending his servants along with them, both to direct them the way, and to secure them from danger, and chiefly by furnishing them with everything necessary for them; see **Tit 3:13**. And this he would have him do,

after a godly sort; or "worthy of God"; in imitation of God, who is merciful, kind, and beneficent; or as it became him whom God had called by his grace to his kingdom and glory; or as it was fit and proper such servants of God, as those brethren were, should be used; and this would be doing well:

thou shalt do well; what is grateful and well pleasing to God, and beautiful and lovely in the eyes of his people.

3 John 1:7

Ver. 7. Because that for his name's sake they went forth,.... From Judea; either of their own accord to preach the Gospel, or being drove out by the unbelieving Jews, for professing the name of Christ; and be it which it will, there was good reason why they should be regarded, and especially since they did as follows,

taking nothing of the Gentiles; even of those who were converted, though their preaching the Gospel, to whom they ministered, for of others, the unconverted Gentiles, they could not expect to receive; and this they did, as the apostles before them, because they would not be chargeable to them, and lest it should be thought they sought their own worldly interest, and not the good of souls and glory of Christ, and so a stumblingblock be laid in the way of the Gospel, to hinder the progress of it. The Ethiopic version reads this in the singular number, "and I went forth for his name's sake, taking nothing of the Gentiles".

3 John 1:8

Ver. 8. We therefore ought to receive such,.... We who are Jews, that have believed in Christ, for such an one Gaius, it seems, as well, as the apostle, were, ought to receive such preachers of the word into our houses, and entertain them cheerfully, while they continue, and supply them with all necessaries when they depart:

that we might be fellow helpers to the truth; that is, to the Gospel, and the propagation of it in the world: some are helpers to it, in preaching of it, by making use of the ministerial gifts bestowed upon them; and others are fellow helpers with them, to the same good work, by their purses, communicating freely to the support of those, who labour in the word and doctrine; and these latter have the honour to be co-workers, or fellow labourers with the former, as the word here used signifies. The Alexandrian copy reads, "fellow helpers to the church", that so the whole burden of taking care of these ministers might not lie upon them. The Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "fellow helpers of the truth".

3 John 1:9

Ver. 9. I wrote unto the church,.... Where Gaius was a member: those who take Gaius to be the same with Paul's host, and whom he baptized at Corinth, think the church at Corinth is here meant; but it seems rather to be meant of some church in Asia nearer Ephesus; nor is it likely that John's first epistle should be here intended, which makes no mention of relieving the brethren, the ministers of the Gospel, that came from Judea: and that this epistle should not be preserved, need not seem strange; for it cannot be thought that everything that was written by him to particular persons, or churches, should be continued. The Alexandrian copy and one of Stephens's read, "I wrote something to the church"; upon this head, concerning receiving and supporting ministers of the Gospel, and so prevents an objection that Gaius might make, why did he not write to the church about it? The Vulgate Latin version reads, "I should", or "would have wrote": and the Syriac version, "I desired", or "wished to have wrote"; suggesting, that though he had not wrote, yet it was much upon his mind, he had a great desire to it:

but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not; which hindered him from writing, or was the reason why he wrote now to Gaius since Diotrephes gave no heed to what he had wrote, suppressed his letter, and would not suffer it to be read to the brethren. This Diotrephes, by his name, which signifies one "nourished", or "brought up by Jupiter", was a Gentile; there was one of this name, who was one of the kings of Athens {a}; and what may confirm this is, his slighting and rejecting the brethren that came from Judea: it is very likely he was more than a private member in the church, and that he was an officer, and it may be the pastor; and though there is a preeminence, which of right belongs to such an officer, as to preside over the church, to govern, guide, and direct, according to the laws of Christ, he being set over the church, as a ruler, governor, and guide; yet this may be carried too far, as it was by this man, who coveted more than was his due, and lorded it over God's heritage, ruled the flock with force and cruelty, and usurped a tyrannical power over them; whereas every thing in a church ought to be done, by pastor and people, in love, meekness, and with mutual consent. And it may be also, that he sought to have the preeminence over the rest of the elders of the church, for in those large churches there were oftentimes more elders and pastors than one; see Ac 20:17. This ambitious spirit prevailed and obtained among the false teachers, who set up themselves at the head of parties, and above the apostles of Christ, and paved the way for antichrist, who assumed the title of universal bishop, which has introduced all the errors and impieties of the Romish church. Now this man such an ambitious, lordly, and governing spirit, received not the Apostle John, and those that were with him; meaning not their persons, for as yet he and they were not in person where he was; but his letter, his orders, and instructions; these he paid no regard to, concealed them from the church, and would not admit them to be read: or else the apostle's sense is, that he received not the brethren that came from him, and were recommended by him, and whom he affectionately loved, and who were near and dear to him as himself; and therefore not receiving them is interpreted by him as not receiving himself.

{a} Vid. Fabricii Bibliograph. Antiqu. p. 211.

3 John 1:10

Ver. 10. Wherefore, if I come,.... Where both Gaius and Diotrephes lived, as he trusted he should shortly, **3Jo 1:14**;

I will remember his deeds which he doth; meaning, not only that he would tell him of them to his face, but make mention of them, and expose them to the whole church, and reprove him for them: and which are as follow,

prating against us with malicious words; it is a common thing for ministers of the Gospel to be prated against, not only by the men of the world, but by professors of religion, and by such who call themselves preachers also; nor need it be wondered at, since John, an apostle of Christ, the beloved disciple, who was so harmless and inoffensive in his conversation, so kind and loving in his disposition and temper, so meek and humble in his deportment, and now in such an advanced age, was prated against by a Diotrephes: and what is said against Christ's ministers is no other than prating; silly, idle, trifling, and empty stuff, as the word used signifies; for want of greater things, they take up any little matter, and improve it against them; and this is often done with a malicious intent, to hurt their characters, spoil their usefulness, and render their ministry unprofitable.

And not content herewith; with prating against the Apostle John, and the ministers with him, in this wicked way:

neither doth he himself receive the brethren; the meaning is not, that he did not receive them into the church, for they were there, since afterwards mention is made of his casting them out from thence; but he did not receive them into his house, and entertain them as he ought to have done; for a minister of the Gospel, and a pastor of a church, ought to be hospitable, and given to hospitality, and entertain strangers, especially those who are brethren in Christ, and fellow ministers of the word: and the rather these were to be received, since they travelled about to spread the Gospel among the Gentiles, and took nothing of them. And this was not all, he not only did not receive them himself, and reject them, but was not willing that others should receive them:

and forbiddeth them that would; on such who had a heart, as well as ability, to receive and entertain these poor brethren, he laid his injunctions, and gave them strict orders, in his lordly and tyrannical way, not to show any respect unto them;

and casteth [them] out of the church; that is, he excommunicated them, either those that entertained them, or rather the brethren themselves; which was an abuse of the ordinance of excommunication, as that ordinance is abused, when any single person, a pastor, or any other, as here, assumes the power of doing it himself, and does it without the church; whereas it is a punishment or censure, to be inflicted by many, or to be done by the joint suffrage of the church; and when it is done in a wrong cause, for some small trifling matter, or none at all, and not in a case of heresy or immorality, obstinately persisted in; and when it is done from wrong principles, and with wrong ends, as to gratify the pride and passion of some; and not for the good of the person cast out, or to prevent others from falling into the same snare, or for the honour of religion, and the glory of God. The phrase seems to be taken from the Jews, who expressed their excommunication, or putting out of the synagogue, by a casting out; see **Joh 9:34**.

3 John 1:11

Ver. 11. Beloved, follow not that which is evil,.... Follow not evil in general, it being hateful to God, contrary to his nature and will, and bad in itself, as well as pernicious in its consequences; and particularly follow not, or do not imitate the particular evil or evils in Diotrephes; as his pride, ambition, love of preeminence, and tyrannical government in the church, and especially his hard heartedness, cruelty, and inhospitality to the poor saints; and so the Arabic version reads, "do not imitate him in evil"; the examples of persons in office and authority have great influence, especially in cases of charity, when men can be excused thereby, and save their money, or be freed from an expense:

but that which is good; follow and imitate that, be a follower of God, imitate him in acts of kindness and beneficence, be merciful as he is; copy the deeds of Jesus Christ, who went about doing good, and declared it to be more blessed to give than to receive; and tread in the steps of those good men, who have shown love to the name of Christ, by ministering to his saints; for though the apostle may mean everything that is good, which is to be followed and imitated in any, yet he chiefly designs acts of kindness and beneficence to poor saints and ministers: to which he encourages by the following,

he that doeth good is of God; he is a child of God, he appears to be so, in that he is like to his heavenly Father, who is kind and merciful; he is born of God, he is passed from death to life, which his love to the brethren shows; he has the grace of God, and strength from Christ, and the assistance of the Spirit, without either of which he could not do that which is good:

but he that doeth evil hath not seen God; has had no spiritual saving sight of God in Christ; for if he had, he would abhor that which is evil, and, with Job, abhor himself for it, and reckon himself, with Isaiah, as undone, Job 42:6, for such effects has the sight of God on the souls of men; such an one knows not God, nor what it is to have communion with him: for those who live in sin, in whom it is a governing principle, cannot have fellowship with God; nor has such an one ever felt the love of God in his soul, or been made a partaker of his grace, which would teach and constrain him to act otherwise. Compare this text with **1Jo 3:10**, which shows the Apostle John to be the writer of this epistle. The Ethiopic version reads, "shall not see God"; that is, hereafter, in the world to come.

3 John 1:12

Ver. 12. Demetrius hath good report of all [men], This man was of a quite different cast from Diotrephes, and therefore the apostle makes mention of him to Gaius, to be followed by him, and not the other; he was either the same with Demas, which is a contraction of this name, or the person that John sent from Ephesus with this letter: we read of an Ephesian of this name, Ac 19:24; though not the same person; or else one that also was a member of the same church with Gaius and Diotrephes; and he being kind and beneficent, obtained a good report of the generality of men, not only of the brethren, but of those that were without; for a liberal man is universally respected. The Syriac version adds, "and of the church itself"; as distinct from all men, or the generality of the men of the world:

and of the truth itself; that is, whoever speaks truth must give him a good character, for this cannot be understood with any propriety of the Gospel, nor of Jesus Christ:

yea, and we also bear record; or a testimony to the character of Demetrius; that is, I, John, the apostle, and the saints at Ephesus:

and ye know that our record is true; faithful, and to be depended upon. The Alexandrian copy, and several others, read, "thou knowest", as does also the Vulgate Latin version, which seems most agreeable, since this epistle is directed to a single person; compare this with Joh 19:35; and it will give a further proof of this epistle being the Apostle John's.

3 John 1:13

Ver. 13. I have many things to write,.... With regard to churches, and particular persons, and concerning hospitality to the poor brethren:

but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee; suggesting he should take another method of communicating his mind to him, which he next mentions.

3 John 1:14

Ver. 14. But I trust I shall shortly see thee,.... Either at Ephesus, where John was, or rather at the place where Gaius lived, see **3Jo 1:10**;

and we shall speak face to face; freely and familiarly converse together about these things, which were not thought proper to be committed to writing:

peace [be] to thee; which was the usual form of salutation with the Jews, and John was one; See Gill on "Joh 20:19";

[our] friends salute thee; or send their Christian salutation to thee, wishing all health and prosperity in soul and body; meaning the members of the

church at Ephesus: the Arabic version reads, "thy friends"; such at Ephesus as had a particular knowledge of him, and affection for him. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "the friends": the members in general; and the Alexandrian copy reads, "the brethren"; and the Syriac version, our brethren: and then the epistle is closed thus,

greet the friends by name; meaning those that were where Gaius lived, to whom the apostle sends his salutation, and desires it might be delivered to each of them, as if they had been mentioned by name. This and the epistle of James are the only epistles which are concluded without the word "Amen".

<ALIGN="CENTER"John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.
Jude 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO JUDE

That this epistle was written by Jude, one of the twelve apostles of Christ, and not by Jude the fifteenth bishop of Jerusalem, who lived in the time of Trojan, a little before Bar Cocab, the false Messiah, as Grotius thought, is evident from his being called, in the epistle itself, the brother of James, and which is confirmed by all copies; and its agreement with the second epistle of Peter shows it to have been written about the same time, and upon the same occasion. As to Jude's not calling himself an apostle, but a servant of Jesus Christ, it may be observed, that the latter is much the same with the former, and the Apostle Paul sometimes uses them both, as in **Ro 1:1 Tit 1:1**, and sometimes neither, as **1Th 1:1**, and sometimes only servant, as Jude does here, **Php 1:1**, though in some copies of the title of this epistle he is called "Jude the Apostle"; and as to Jude's making mention of the apostles as if he was later than they, and not of their number, **Jude 1:17**, it may be returned for answer to it, that the Apostle Peter expresses himself much in the same manner, **2Pe 3:2**, where some copies, instead of "us the apostles", read "your apostles", See Gill on "2Pe 3:2"; moreover, Jude seems to cite a passage out of Peter, as Peter in the same chapter cites the Apostle Paul, which only shows agreement in their doctrine and writing; and at most it only follows from hence, that Jude wrote after some of the apostles, as Paul and Peter, who had foretold there would be mockers in the last time; and that Jude had lived to be a witness of the truth of what they had said; nor does he exclude himself from their number. And that this epistle is a

genuine one appears from the majesty of its style, the truth of doctrine contained in it, and its agreement with the second epistle of Peter, and from the early reception of it in the churches. Eusebius {a} says, it was reckoned among the seven catholic epistles, and was published in most churches; though he observes, that many of the ancients make no mention of it: but certain it is, that several of the ancient writers before him do make mention of it, and cite it as genuine, as Clemens Alexandrinus {b}, Tertullian {c}, and Origen {d}: and as for the prophecy of Enoch, cited in this epistle, it is not taken out of an apocryphal book, that bears that name, for the apostle makes no mention of any writing of his, but of a prophecy; and had he cited it out of that book, as it was truth, it can no more prejudice the authority of this epistle, than the citations made by the Apostle Paul out of the Heathen poets can affect his epistles: and whereas there is an account also given in this epistle of a dispute about the body of Moses, nowhere else to be met with, supposing it to be understood of his real body, of which
See Gill on "Jude 1:9"; this can be no more an objection to the genuineness of this epistle, than the mention of Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses, by the Apostle Paul, **2Ti 3:8**, is an objection to an epistle of his, whose names are not to be met with in other parts of Scripture; but were what were known by tradition, as might be the case here. The epistle is called "catholic", or "general", because it is not written to any particular person or church, but to the saints in general, and it may be to the same persons that Peter wrote his; see **1Pe 1:1**, and who seem to be chiefly the believing Jews; see **Jude 1:5**, though the Syriac version of **Jude 1:1** reads, "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ"--ammel, "to the nations", or "Gentiles, called", &c. the design of the epistle to both is to exhort them to continue in the faith, and contend for it; and to describe false teachers, to point out their principles, practices, and dreadful end, that so they might shun and avoid them.

{a} Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 23. {b} Paedagog. l. 3. c. 8. p. 239. & Stromat. l. 3. p. 431. {c} De Cultu Foemin. l. 1. c. 3. {d} In Josh. Homil. 7. fol. 156. E. & Comment, in Matth. p. 223. Ed. Huet.

INTRODUCTION TO JUDE 1

The writer of this epistle describes himself by his name, Jude; by his spiritual condition, "a servant of Christ"; and by his natural relation, "a brother of James"; and inscribes it to persons chosen of God, secured in Christ, and called by grace, **Jude 1:1**, whom he salutes, and wishes a multiplication of mercy, peace, and love unto, **Jude 1:2**, and then points at the subject matter of his epistle, "the common salvation"; and his view in writing it, which was to exhort them to contend earnestly for, the Gospel; which exhortation was necessary, since some reprobate and wicked men, abusers of the grace of God, and blasphemers of the person of Christ, had got in among them, **Jude 1:3**, and in order to deter them from following their pernicious ways, he lays before them various instances of divine vengeance on sinners; as the Israelites, whom God delivered out of Egypt, and yet destroyed them for their unbelief; the angels, who not content with their first estate, forsook their habitation, and are reserved in chains of darkness to the day of judgment; and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, and the adjacent cities, who for their uncleanness suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, as an example to others, **Jude 1:5**, in like manner, the apostle observes, these false teachers, who were filthy dreamers, defiled themselves with such sins, and also despised and spoke evil of civil magistrates, **Jude 1:8**, which sin of theirs is aggravated by Michael the archangel not railing at the devil, in a contention with him about the body of Moses, but gently reproving him; by speaking evil of what they were ignorant of, and by their brutish sensuality, in corrupting: themselves in things they had natural knowledge of, **Jude 1:9**, and both their sin and punishment are exemplified in the cases of Cain, Balaam, and Korah; being guilty of hatred of the brethren, of covetousness, and of contradiction, **Jude 1:11**, and by various metaphors are set forth their intemperance, hypocrisy, instability, unfruitfulness, pride, wrath, and lust, for whom the blackest darkness is reserved for ever, **Jude 1:12**, the certainty of which is proved from an ancient prophecy of Enoch, concerning the coming of Christ to judgment, when vengeance will be taken on those men for their ungodly deeds and hard speeches, **Jude 1:14**, who are further described by their murmurs and complaints; by their pride, respect of persons, and covetousness; by their scoffs, and walking after their own lusts, as had been foretold by the apostles of Christ; by separating themselves from the saints, and by their sensuality, and not having the Spirit of God, **Jude 1:17**, and the apostle having thus at large described these false teachers, by reason of whom the saints were in danger, directs them to the use of means by which they might be secured from them; such as building themselves up in their most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost, keeping themselves in the love of God, and looking for the mercy of Christ unto eternal life, **Jude 1:20**, and he teaches them not only to be concerned for themselves, but for others also, who were in danger from these deceivers; to deal with some in a tender and compassionate way, with others more roughly, expressing an hatred to a filthy conversation, **Jude 1:22**, and then the epistle is concluded with a doxology, or an ascription of glory to the only wise God our Saviour, who is able to keep his people from falling into such pernicious principles and practices, and to present them faultless before his glorious presence with exceeding joy, **Jude 1:24**.

Ver. 1. Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ,.... The author of this epistle is the same who is elsewhere called Judas, **Lu 6:16**, who was one of the twelve apostles of Christ, whose name was also Lebbaeus, and whose surname was Thaddaeus, Mt 10:3, the name is the same with Judah, Ge 29:35, which comes from a word that signifies "to praise" or "confess"; and in the Rabbinical dialect is called adwy, "Juda" {e}, as here. He styles himself "the servant of Jesus Christ"; See Gill on "Ro 1:1"; though this is a title common to all believers, yet here, and in some other places, it is peculiar to an apostle, or minister of the Gospel; and therefore is used not merely in humility, and to acknowledge obedience to Christ, but as a title of dignity and honour: and the apostle goes on to describe himself by his natural relation,

and brother of James; not the son of Zebedee, but of Alphaeus, Mt 10:2; and this he mentions partly to distinguish himself from others of that name, as Judas Iscariot, and Judas called Barsabas; and partly for the sake of honour and credit, James being a very great man, a man of great note and esteem, and who seemed to be a pillar in the church, and was called the brother of our Lord, **Ga 2:9**; an account of the persons to whom this epistle is inscribed next follows,

to them that are sanctified by God the Father; which is to be understood not of internal sanctification, which is usually ascribed to the Spirit of God, but of the act of eternal election, which is peculiar to God the Father; in which sense Christ is said to be sanctified by the Father, and men ordained and appointed to an office, and vessels are set apart the owner's use; Joh 10:36 **Jer 1:5**; the language is taken from the ceremonial law, by which persons and things were sanctified, or set apart for sacred use and service; see Ex 13:2; and so the elect of God are by God the Father sanctified and set apart in the act of election, which is expressed by this word; partly because of its separating nature, men being by it separated from the rest of the world, to the use and service of God, and for his glory, so that they are a distinct and peculiar people; and partly because such are chosen through sanctification of the Spirit, and unto holiness both in this world and that which is to come;

so that the doctrine of election is no licentious doctrine; for though holiness is not the cause of it, yet is a means fixed in it, and is certain by it, and an evidence of it; the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read, "to them that are loved by God the Father": election is the fruit and effect of love; those that are sanctified or set apart by the Father in election, are loved by him. The Ethiopic version renders it quite otherwise, "to them that love God the Father"; which flows from the Father's love to them:

and preserved in Jesus Christ; those who are sanctified, or set apart by God the Father in election, are in Christ, for they are chosen in him; they have a place in his heart, and they are put into his hands, and are in him, and united to him as members to an head, and were represented by him in the covenant of grace; and being in him, they are preserved by him, and that before they are called, as well as after; wherefore this character is put before that of being called, though the Syriac version puts that in the first place: there is a secret preservation of them in Christ before calling, from condemnation and the second death; they were not preserved from falling in Adam, with the rest of mankind, nor from the corruption of human nature, nor from actual sins and transgressions; yet, notwithstanding these, were so preserved that the law could not execute the sentence of condemnation on them, nor sin damn them, nor Satan, who led them captive, hale them to prison; and after calling, they are preserved not from indwelling sin, nor from the temptations of Satan, nor from doubts and fears and unbelief, nor from slips and falls into sin; but from the tyranny and dominion of sin, from being devoured by Satan, and from a total and final falling away; they are preserved in the love of God, and of Christ; in the covenant of grace; in a state of justification and adoption; and in the paths of truth, faith, and holiness; and are preserved safe to the heavenly kingdom and glory: their other character follows,

[and] called; not merely externally by the ministry of the word, but internally by the Spirit and grace of God; so that this is to be understood of a special and effectual call, whereby souls are called out of darkness into light, and from bondage to liberty; and from a dependence on themselves to the grace and righteousness of Christ; and from society with the men of the world to fellowship with him; and to eternal glory, so as to have faith and hope concerning it.

{e} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 50. 2.

Jude 1:2

Ver. 2. Mercy unto you, and peace and love be multiplied. In this salutation the apostle wishes for a multiplication of "mercy", from God the Father, by whom these persons were sanctified: mercy is a perfection in God; and shows itself in a special manner towards the elect, in the covenant of grace, in the provision of Christ as a Saviour, in the mission of him into this world, in redemption by him, in the forgiveness of sin, in regeneration, and in their whole salvation; and the multiplication of it intends an enlarged view and fresh application of it, which they sometimes stand in need of, as under desertions, when they want the sense and manifestation of it to them; and under temptations and afflictions, when they need sympathy and compassion; and when they fall into sin they stand in need of the fresh discoveries and application of pardoning mercy to them. Moreover, herein is wished for a multiplication of "peace" from Christ, in whom these chosen ones were preserved; and may design a fresh and enlarged view of peace being made for them by his blood, and an increase of conscience peace in their own hearts, as the effect of it; and may include peace, and an abundance of it, among themselves, as well as all prosperity, both external, internal, and eternal: likewise in the salutation, "love", and a multiplication of it is wished for from the Spirit of God, by whom they were called; and may be understood of the love with which God loved them; and which may be said to be multiplied, when it is gradually shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit, and they are by degrees led into it more and more, and the acts of it are drawn out and set before them one after another, and fresh manifestations of it are made unto them; as in afflictive providences, after the hidings of God's face, and under temptations: and it may design the love with which they love God, which may be increased and made to abound more and more.

Jude 1:3

Ver. 3. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you,.... The apostle calls the persons he writes unto "beloved"; as they were of God, and by him and other saints; and he signifies his diligence in writing to them: and the subject of his writing was, of the common salvation; which designs either the Gospel, sometimes called salvation, in opposition to the law, which is a ministration of condemnation; and because it is a declaration of salvation, and a means of it; and may be said to be "common", because preached to all, Jews and Gentiles: or Jesus Christ the Saviour himself, who is also sometimes called "salvation", because he was called and appointed to it, and undertook it, and is become the author of it; and may be said to be a "common" Saviour, not of all men, but of all his people; of his whole body, the church, and every member of it, and of all sorts of men, in all nations: or else that spiritual and eternal salvation wrought out by him, which is common, not to all men, for all are not saved with it, but to all the elect of God, and true believers in Christ; the love of God is common to them all alike; the choice of them to eternal salvation is the same; the covenant of grace, the blessings and promises of it, are equally shared by them; and they are bought with the same price of Christ's blood, and are justified by the same righteousness, and are regenerated, sanctified, and called by the same grace, and shall possess the same glory: there is but one way of salvation, and that is not confined to any nation, family, community, or sect among men. The Alexandrian copy and two of Beza's, and the Syriac version, read, "our common salvation"; and two other of Beza's copies and the Vulgate Latin version read, "your common salvation"; the sense is the same: it was

needful for me to write unto you, and exhort [you], that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints; by the "faith" is meant the doctrine of faith, in which sense it is used whenever faith is said to be preached, obeyed, departed, or erred from, or denied, or made shipwreck of, or when exhortations are made to stand fast, and continue in it, or to strive and contend for it, as here; and which is sometimes called the word of faith, the faith of the Gospel, the mystery of faith, or most holy faith, the common faith, and, as here, faith only; and designs the whole scheme of evangelical truths to be believed; such as the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity and sonship of Christ, the divinity and personality of the Spirit; what regards the state and condition of man by nature, as the doctrines of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, the corruption of nature, and the impotence of men to that which is good; what concerns the acts of grace in the Father, Son, and Spirit, towards, and upon the sons of men; as the doctrines of everlasting love, eternal election, the covenant of grace, particular redemption, justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, pardon and reconciliation by his blood, regeneration and sanctification by the grace of the Spirit, final perseverance, the resurrection of the dead, and the future glory of the saints with Christ. This is said to be "delivered to the saints": it was delivered by God the Father to Christ as Mediator, and by him to his apostles, who may more especially be meant by "the saints", or holy men; who were chosen to be holy, and to whom Christ was made sanctification, and who were sanctified by the Spirit of God; and this faith, being a most holy faith, is fit for holy men, and only proper to be delivered to them, and preached by them; and by them it was delivered to the churches, both by word and writing; and this delivery of it supposes that it is not an invention of men, that it is of God, and a gift of his, and given in trust in order to be kept, held forth, and held fast; and it was but "once" delivered, in opposition to the sundry times and divers manners in which the mind of God was formerly made known; and designs the uniformity, perfection, and continuance of the doctrine of faith; there is no alteration to be made in it, or addition to it; no new revelations are to be expected, it has been delivered all at once: and therefore should be "earnestly contended for"; for could it be lost, another could not be had; and the whole of it is to be contended for; not only the fundamentals, but the lesser matters of faith; and not things essential only, but also what are circumstantial to faith and religion; every truth, ordinance, and duty, and particularly the purity of faith, and its consistency: and this contention includes a care and solicitude for it, to have it, own it, and hold it fast, and adorn it; and for the preservation of it, and for the spread of it, and that it might be transmitted to posterity: and it denotes a conflict, a combat, or a fighting for it, a striving even to an agony: the persons to be contended with on account of it, are such who deny, or depreciate any of the Persons in the Godhead, the assertors of the purity and power of human nature, and the deniers of sovereign, efficacious, and persevering grace: the persons who are to contend with them are all the saints in general, to whom it is delivered; which they may do by bearing an experimental testimony to it, by praying for the continuance and success of it, by standing fast in one spirit in it, and by dying for it; and particularly the ministers of the Gospel, by preaching it boldly, openly, fully, and faithfully, by disputing for it, and writing in the defence of it, and by laying down their lives, when called for: the manner in which this is to be done, is "earnestly", heartily, in good earnest, and without deceit, zealously, and constantly.

Jude 1:4

Ver. 4. For there are certain men crept in unawares,.... These words contain a reason why the doctrine of faith should be contended for, because of false teachers, who are described as being then upon the spot; the Apostles Peter and Paul had foretold that they would come, but Jude here speaks of them as in being; wherefore present rigour and vigilance were necessary to be used: their names are not mentioned, nor their number, only that there were "certain", or "some men"; which is done to stir up the saints to self-examination, whether they were in the faith; to diligence, in finding out these men; to vigour, in opposing them; and to care, to nip error and heresy in the bud: and they are said to have "crept in unawares": either into private houses, as was the custom of those men; or into the churches, and become members of them being the tares the enemy sows among the wheat; or into the ministry, assuming that office to themselves, without being called and sent of God; and so into the public assemblies of the saints, spreading their poisonous doctrines among them; and also into their affections, until discovered; and so the Ethiopic version reads here, "because ungodly men have entered into your hearts"; and all this was at an unawares, privily, secretly, without any thought about them, or suspicion of them:

who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; or judgment; meaning either judicial blindness of heart, they were given up to, in embracing and spreading errors and heresies; so that these are not casual things, but fall under the ordination and decree of God, which does not make God the author of them, nor excuse the men that hold them; and they are ordained and ordered for many valuable ends; on the part of God, to show his power and wisdom; and on the part of truth, that it might be tried and appear the brighter, and to manifest his people and their graces: or else punishment is designed, even everlasting condemnation, to which some are preordained of God; for this act of preordination respects persons, and not mere actions and events; and is not a naked prescience, but a real decree, and which is sure, certain, and irrevocable; is God's act, and springs from his sovereignty, is agreeably to his justice and holiness; nor is it contrary to his goodness, and is for his glory: the date of this act is "of old"; or as the Syriac version renders it, ayrwv Nm, "from the beginning"; that is, from eternity; see **2Th 2:13**; for reprobation is of the same date with election; if the one is from eternity, the other must be so too, since there cannot be one without the other: if some were chosen before the foundation of the world, others must be left or passed by as early; and if some were appointed unto salvation from the beginning, others must be foreordained to condemnation from the beginning also; for these words cannot be understood of any prophecy of old, in which it was forewritten, or prophesied of these men, that they should be condemned for their ungodliness; not in Mt 24:1, in which no such persons are described as here, nor any mention made of their punishment or condemnation; nor in **2Pe 2:1**; for then the apostle would never have said that they were "of old", a long while ago, before written, or prophesied of, since according to the common calculation, that epistle of Peter's, and this of Jude's, were written in the same year; nor in the prophecy of Enoch, **Jude 1:14**; for Enoch's prophecy was not written, as we know of; and therefore these men could not be said to be before written in it; besides, that prophecy is spoken of as something distinct from these persons being before written, to condemnation; and after all, was a prophecy referred to, the sense would be the same, since such a prophecy concerning them must be founded upon an antecedent ordination and appointment of God; the word here used does not intend their being forewritten in any book of the Scriptures, but in the book of God's eternal purposes and decrees; and the justice of such a preordination appears by the following characters of them,

ungodly men: all men are by nature ungodly, some are notoriously so, and false teachers are generally such; here it signifies such who are destitute of the fear of God, and of all internal devotion, and powerful godliness; and who did not worship God externally, according to his institutions and appointments, and much less sincerely, and in a spiritual manner; and who even separated themselves from the true worshippers of God, and gave themselves up to sensuality, and therefore their condemnation was just:

turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness; not the love and favour of God, as in his own heart, or as shed abroad in the hearts of others; for that can never, be turned to such a purpose, it always working in a contrary way; nor the principle of grace wrought in the soul, which being of a spiritual nature, lusteth against the flesh, and cannot be turned into it; more likely the goodness of God in his providential dispensations, which is despised by some, and abused by others; but rather the doctrine of grace, which though lasciviousness is not in its nature, nor has it any natural tendency to it, yet wicked men turn or transfer it from its original nature, design, and use, to a foreign one: and they may be said to turn it into lasciviousness, either by asserting it to be a licentious doctrine, when it is not; or by treating it in a wanton and ludicrous manner, scoffing at it, and lampooning it; or by making the doctrine of grace universal, extending it equally alike to all mankind, and thereby harden and encourage men in sin.

And denying the only Lord God; God the Father, who is the only sovereign Lord, both in providence and grace; and the only God, not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, but in opposition to nominal and fictitious deities, or Heathen gods; and he was denied by these men, if not in words, yet in works: the word "God" is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin version.

And our Lord Jesus Christ; as his deity, or sonship, or humanity, or that he was the Messiah, or the alone Saviour, or his sacrifice, satisfaction, and righteousness; with respect to either of which he may be said to be denied doctrinally, as he is also practically, when men do not walk worthy of their profession of him; and both might be true of these men, and therefore their condemnation was righteous. The copulative "and" is omitted in the Syriac version, which seems to make this clause explanative of the former.

Jude 1:5

Ver. 5. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once know this,.... The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "knew all things"; but rather it is to be restrained by the following instance of, God's vengeance on unbelievers; which with others is produced, to vindicate the divine conduct in the condemnation of the above persons, and to show that that is certain, and may be expected, since God has always dealt thus with such persons; and this they knew by reading of the Scriptures; at least they had known it once, though it might now be forgotten by them; and they had known it once for all; they had been perfectly acquainted with it; which is said, lest the apostle should be thought to write to persons ignorant, and rude in knowledge, and to show that he wrote nothing new and unheard of, and so should have the more weight and influence upon them; and he thought fit to remind them of it, though they had known it: it is one part of the work of the ministers of the word to put people in mind of what they have known; which is necessary, because of the inattentiveness of hearers, their forgetfulness, and loss of knowledge, and the weakness of some capacities to take in, and retain things; and if the judgment is not more informed hereby, yet the affections may be afresh raised, and grace be drawn out into exercise, and the mind be established and confirmed. The instance follows,

how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt; that is, the people of Israel, who were the chosen people of God, a special people, above all others, and had peculiar privileges; these the Lord brought out of the land of Egypt, with an high hand, and a mighty arm, and saved them out of their bondage, and delivered out of their oppressions and afflictions: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, instead of "the Lord", read "Jesus": and yet, though they were a special people, and notwithstanding this wonderful deliverance, and great salvation, he

afterward destroyed them that believed not; their carcasses fell in the wilderness by one judgment or another upon them; so that of all that came out of Egypt, but two entered into the land of Canaan: this shows the evil nature of unbelief; and that God will not suffer sin to go unobserved in any; no outward privileges and profession will screen any from divine vengeance; God sometimes makes severe examples of mere nominal professors; nor must false teachers, deniers of Christ, and perverters of his Gospel, expect to go free: moreover, it may be observed, that God may do great things for persons, and yet after all destroy them; great riches and honours may be conferred on some, great natural gifts on others; some may seem as if they had the grace of God, and were brought out of spiritual Egypt, and enjoy great mercies and favours, and have many deliverances wrought for them, and yet at last perish.

Jude 1:6

Ver. 6. And the angels which kept not their first estate,.... Or "principality"; that holy, honourable, and happy condition, in which they were created; for they were created in perfect holiness and righteousness, stood in the relation of sons to God, and were, for the lustre of their nature, comparable to the morning stars; they were among the thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; were a superior rank of creatures to men, and who beheld the face, and enjoyed the presence of God; but this estate they kept not, for being mutable creatures, one of them first sinning, the rest were drawn into it by him, and so were not what they were before, nor in the same estate, or place:

but left their own habitation; by attempting to rise higher; or by quitting their station and posts of honour, being unwilling to be subject to God, and especially to the Son of God, who was to assume human nature, and in it be above them, which they could not bear; and by gathering together in a body, in another place, with Satan at the head of them; though this may be considered as a part of their punishment, and they may be said to do what they were forced to; for they were drove out of their native habitation, heaven; they were turned out of it, and cast down to hell; see **2Pe 2:4**. And this their habitation, which they left, or fell from, or they were cast out of, is by the Jews frequently called the place of their holiness, or their holy place {g}.

He hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness; by these "everlasting chains" may be meant the power and providence of God over them, which always abide upon them; or their sins, and the guilt of them upon their consciences, under which they are continually held; or the decrees and purposes of God concerning their final punishment and destruction, which are immutable and irreversible, and from which there is no freeing themselves:, the phrase, under darkness, may refer to the chains, as in **2Pe 2:4**; where they are called "chains of darkness"; either because the power, providence, and purposes of God are invisible; so the Syriac version reads, "in unknown chains"; or because horror and black despair are the effects of sin, and its guilt, with which their consciences are continually filled: or it may denote the place and state where they are, either in the darkness of the air, or in the dark parts of the earth, or in hell, where is utter darkness, even blackness of darkness; or that they are under the power of sin, which is darkness, and without the light of God's countenance, or any spiritual knowledge, or comfort: and they are "reserved" in these chains, and under this darkness; or "in prison", as the Arabic version renders it; which denotes the custody of them, and their continuance in it, in which they are kept by Jesus Christ, who can bind and loose Satan at his pleasure; and it shows that they are not as yet in full torment, but are like malefactors that are kept in prison, until the assize comes: so these are laid in chains, and kept in custody

unto the judgment of the great day; that is, the future and last "judgment" of men and devils, which is certain, and will be universal, and executed with the strictest justice: this is called "a day", which is fixed by God, though unknown to men and angels; and because of the evidence and quick dispatch of things, the matters judged will be as clear as the day, and finished at once; and a great one, for the Judge will appear in great glory; great things will be done, the dead will be raised, and all nations will be gathered together, and the process will be with great solemnity; the thrones will be set, the books opened, the several sentences pronounced, and, all punctually executed; the judgment of the great day is the same the Jews call abr anyd Mwy, "the day of the great judgment" {h}. This account shows the imprisoned state of the devils, that they are not their own lords, and cannot do as they would; they are under restraints, and in chains, and not to be feared; which must be a great mortification to their proud and malicious spirits: and since this is the case of fallen angels, what severity may be expected from God against the opposers of the truths of the Gospel?

{g} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 73. 1. Pirke Eliezer, c. 14, 22, 27. Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 1. & Sepher Bahir in ib. fol. 27. 3. {h} Targum in Psal. l. 3.

Jude 1:7

Ver. 7. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them,.... Admah and Zeboiim, for Zoar was spared. This is a third instance of God's vengeance on sinners; and which, like that of the Israelites, and of the angels, was after great favours had been enjoyed: these places were delightfully situated, and very fruitful, as the garden of God; they were under a form of government, had kings over them, and had lately had a very great deliverance from the kings that carried them captive, being rescued by Abraham; they had a righteous Lot among them, who was a reprover in the gate, and Abraham made intercession for them with God. But they

in like manner giving themselves over to fornication; not as the angels, who are not capable of sinning in such a manner; though the Jews make this to be a sin of theirs, and so interpret **Ge 6:2** {i}, but rather the Israelites, among whom this sin prevailed,
1Co 10:8; though it seems best of all to refer it to the false teachers that turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, and were very criminal this way; and then the sense is, that in like manner as they, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, gave themselves over to the sin of fornication; wherefore these men might expect the same judgments that fell upon them, since their sin was alike; which sin is a work of the flesh, contrary to the law of God, is against the body, and attended with many evils; exposes to judgment here and hereafter, and unfits for the communion of the saints, and for the kingdom of heaven:

and going after strange flesh; or "other flesh"; meaning not other women besides their own wives, but men; and designs that detestable and unnatural sin, which, from these people, is called sodomy to this day; and which is an exceeding great sin, contrary to the light of nature and law of God, dishonourable to human nature, and scandalous to a nation and people, and commonly prevails where idolatry and infidelity do, as among the Papists and Mahometans; and arose from idleness and fulness of bread in Sodom, and was committed in the sight of God, with great impudence: their punishment follows,

are set forth for an example; being destroyed by fire from heaven, and their cities turned into a sulphurous lake, which continues to this day, as a monument of God's vengeance, and an example to all such who commit the same sins, and who may expect the same equitable punishment; and to all who live ungodly lives, though they may not be guilty of the same crimes; and to all that slight and reject the Gospel revelation, with whom it will be more intolerable than for Sodom and Gomorrah; and to antichrist, who bears the same name, and spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt; and particularly to all false teachers, who besides their strange doctrines, go after strange flesh:

suffering the vengeance of eternal fire; which may be understood of that fire, with which those cities, and the inhabitants of it, were consumed; which, Philo the {k} Jew says, burnt till his time, and must be burning when Jude wrote this epistle. The effects of which still continues, the land being now brimstone, salt, and burning; and is an emblem and representation of hell fire, between which there is a great likeness; as in the matter of them, both being fire; in the efficient cause of them, both from the Lord; and in the instruments thereof, the angels, who, as then, will hereafter be employed in the delivery of the righteous, and in the burning of the wicked; and in the circumstance attending both, suddenly, at an unawares, when not thought of, and expected; and in the nature of them, being a destruction total, irreparable, and everlasting: and this agrees with the sentiments of the Jews, who say {l}, that

"the men of Sodom have no part or portion in the world to come, and shall not see the world to come."

And says R. Isaac,

"Sodom is judged Mnhygd anydb, "with the judgment of hell" {m}."

{i} Pirke Eliezer, c. 22. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 1. c. 3. sect. 1. {k} De Abrahamo, p. 370. {l} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 3. {m} Zohar in Gen. fol. 71. 3.

Jude 1:8

Ver. 8. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh,.... Which may be literally understood, either of the Jewish doctors, who pretended to be interpreters of dreams, as R. Akiba, R. Lazar, and others {n}; or of the false teachers in the apostle's time, and of their filthy dreams, and nocturnal pollutions in them; which sense the Arabic and Ethiopic versions confirm; the former rendering the words thus, "so these retiring in the time of sleep, defile their own flesh"; and the latter thus, "and likewise these, who in their own sleep, pollute their own flesh"; as also of their pretensions to divine assistance and intelligence by dreams; and likewise may be figuratively understood of them; for false doctrines are dreams, and the teachers of them dreamers, Jer 23:25, as are all those doctrines of men that oppose the trinity of persons in the Godhead; that contradict the deity and sonship of Christ; that depreciate any of his offices; that lessen the glory of the person and grace of the Spirit; that cry up the purity, power, and righteousness of human nature, and are contrary to the free grace of God. These arise from the darkness of the understanding, and a spirit of slumber upon them; are the fictions of their own brain, and of their roving imagination; are illusory and deceitful, and are in themselves vanities, and like dreams pass away. And the dreamers of these dreams may be said to "defile the flesh"; since they appear to follow and walk after the dictates of corrupt nature; and because by their unclean practices, mentioned in the preceding verse, they defile the flesh, that is, the body: all sin is of a defiling nature, and all men are defiled with it; but these were notoriously so; and often so it is, that unclean practices follow upon erroneous principles.

Despise dominion; either the government of the world by God, denying or speaking evil of his providence; the Ethiopic version renders it, "they deny their own God", either his being, or rather his providence; or the dominion and kingly power of Christ, to which they cared not to be subject; or rather civil magistracy, which they despised, as supposing it to be inconsistent with their Christian liberty, and rejected it as being a restraint on their lusts; choosing rather anarchy and confusion, that they might do as they pleased, though magistracy is God's ordinance, and magistrates are God's representatives:

and speak evil of dignities; or "glories"; the Arabic version reads, "the God of glory": this is to be understood either of angels, those glorious creatures, called thrones, dominions, &c. or ecclesiastical governors, who are set in the first and highest place in the church, and are the glory of the churches; or else civil magistrates, as before, who are the higher powers, and sit in high places of honour and grandeur. False teachers are injurious to themselves, disturbers of churches, and pernicious to civil government.

{n} T. Hieros. Maaser Sheni, fol. 55. 2, 3.

Jude 1:9

Ver. 9. Yet Michael the archangel,.... By whom is meant, not a created angel, but an eternal one, the Lord Jesus Christ; as appears from his name Michael, which signifies, "who is as God": and who is as God, or like unto him, but the Son of God, who is equal with God? and from his character as the archangel, or Prince of angels, for Christ is the head of all principality and power; and from what is elsewhere said of Michael, as that he is the great Prince, and on the side of the people of God, and to have angels under him, and at his command, Da 10:21. So Philo the Jew {o} calls the most ancient Word, firstborn of God, the archangel; Uriel is called the archangel in this passage from the Apocrypha:

"And unto these things Uriel the archangel gave them answer, and said, Even when the number of seeds is filled in you: for he hath weighed the world in the balance." (2 Esdras 4:36)

when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses; which some understand literally of the fleshly and natural body of Moses, buried by the Lord himself, partly out of respect to him; and partly, as some think, lest the Israelites should be tempted to an idolatrous worship of him; but rather it was to show that the law of Moses was to be abolished and buried by Christ, never to rise more: and they think that this dispute was either about the burying of his body, or the taking of it up again; Satan on the one hand insisting upon the taking of it up, in order to induce the Israelites to worship him, and Michael, on the other hand, opposing it, to prevent this idolatry; but then the difficulty is, where Jude should have this account, since the Scriptures are silent about it. Some have thought that he took it out of an apocryphal book, called "the Ascension of Moses", as Origen {p}, which is not likely; others, that he had it by tradition, by which means the Apostle Paul came by the names of the Egyptian magicians Jannes and Jambres; and some passages are referred to in some of their writings {q}, as having some traces of this dispute; but in them the discourse is not concerning the body, but the soul of Moses; not concerning burying or taking up of his body, when buried, but concerning the taking away of his soul, when he was alive; which none of the angels caring to undertake, at length Samael, the chief of devils, did, but without success, wherefore God took it away with a kiss himself: besides, the apostle produces this history as a thing well known; nor is it reasonable to suppose that such an altercation should be between Michael, and the devil, on such an account; or that it was in order to draw Israel into idolatry on the one hand, and on the other hand to prevent it; since never was the custom of the Israelites to worship their progenitors or heroes; nor did they seem so well disposed to Moses in his lifetime; nor was there any necessity of taking up his body, were they inclined to give him honour and worship; yea, the sight of his dead body would rather have prevented than have encouraged it: but this is to be understood figuratively; and reference is had to the history in **Zec 3:1**; as appears from the latter part of this verse: some think the priesthood of Christ is intended, which was the end, the sum and substance, of the law of Moses; and seeing that Joshua, the high priest, was a type of Christ, and the angel of the Lord contended with Satan about him, he might be said to dispute with him about the body of Moses; but this sense makes a type of a type, and Christ to contend about himself; besides, this should rather be called the body of Christ than of Moses, others think that the temple of the Jews is meant about the rebuilding of which the contention is thought to be; and which may be called the body of Moses, as the church is called the body of Christ; though it should be observed, that the temple is never so called, and that not the place where the church meets, but the church itself, is called the body of Christ: but it is best of all to understand it of the law of Moses, which is sometimes called Moses himself, **Joh 5:45**; and so the body of Moses, or the body of his laws, the system of them; just as we call a system of laws, and of divinity, such an one's body of laws, and such an one's body of divinity: and this agrees with the language of the Jews, who say {r}, of statutes, service, purification, &c. that they are hrwth ypwg, "the bodies of the law"; and so of Misnic treatises, as those which concern the offerings of turtle doves, and the purification of menstruous women, that they are ypwg, "the bodies" of the traditions {s}, that is, the sum and substance of them: so the decalogue is said {t} to be "the body of the Shema", or "Hear, O Israel", **De 6:4**, so Clemens of Alexandria {u} says, that there are some who consider the body of the Scriptures, the words and names, as if they were, to swma tou mwsewv, "the body of Moses" {w}. Now the law of Moses was restored in the time of Joshua the high priest, by Ezra and Nehemiah. Joshua breaks some of these laws, and is charged by Satan as guilty, who contended and insisted upon it that he should suffer for it; so that this dispute or contention might be said to be about the body of Moses, that is, the body of Moses's law, which Joshua had broken; in which dispute Michael, or the angel of the Lord, even the Lord Jesus Christ himself,

durst not bring against him a railing accusation; that is, not that he was afraid of the devil, but though he could have given harder words, or severer language, and which the other deserved, yet he chose not to do it, he would not do it; in which sense the word "durst", or "dare", is used in **Ro 5:7**;

but said, the Lord rebuke thee; for thy malice and insolence; see **Zec 3:2**; and this mild and gentle way of using even the devil himself agrees with Christ's conduct towards him, when tempted by him in the wilderness, and when in his agony with him in the garden, and amidst all his reproaches and sufferings on the cross. And now the argument is from the greater to the lesser, that if Christ, the Prince of angels, did not choose to give a railing word to the devil, who is so much inferior to him, and when there was so much reason and occasion for it; then how great is the insolence of these men, that speak evil of civil and ecclesiastical rulers, without any just cause at all?

{o} De Confus. Ling. p. 341. & quis. rer. divin. Haeres. p. 509. {p} peri arcwn, l. 3. c. 2. {q} Debarim Rabba, fol. 245. 3, 4. Abot R. Nathan, c. 12. fol. 4. 2, 3. Petirath Mosis, fol. 57. 1. &. c. {r} Misn. Chagiga, c. 1. sect. 8. {s} Pirke Abot, c. 3. sect. 18. {t} T. Hieros. Beracot, fol. 6. 2. {u} Stromat, l. 6. p. 680. {w} Vid. Chion. Disput. Theolog. par. 1. & 2. De Corpore Mosis, sub Praesidio Trigland. Lugd. Batav. 1697.

Jude 1:10

Ver. 10. But these speak evil of those things which they know not,.... Which may more particularly refer to dignities, **Jude 1:8**; either angels, who are little known, and not at all, but by revelation, and yet were blasphemed, or evil spoken of by these men; either by ascribing too much to them, as the creation of the world; or by saying such things of them, as were below, and unworthy of them, as their congress with women, &c. or civil magistrates; these men were ignorant of the nature, use, and end, of magistracy and civil government, and so treated it with contempt; or the ministers of the Gospel, whose usefulness was not known, at least not acknowledged by them, and so became the object of their scorn and reproach: or it may refer more generally to the Scriptures, which false teachers are ignorant of, and yet speak evil of; either by denying them to be the Word of God, or by putting false glosses on them; and so to the several parts of the Scriptures, as to the law, the nature, use, and end of which they are not acquainted with; and therefore blaspheme it, by not walking according to it, or by denying it to be of God, and to be good, or by making the observance of it necessary to justification and salvation; and also to the Gospel, the doctrines and ordinances of it, which they speak evil of, despise and reject, not knowing the nature, value, and design of them:

but what they know naturally as brute beasts: man originally had a large share of natural knowledge, and there is in man still, notwithstanding the fall, by which his knowledge is impaired, a natural knowledge of God, and of things natural, civil, and moral; and there is a sensitive knowledge in man, which he has in common with the brutes, and which is here meant: and such was the brutish sensuality of these men, that

in those things they corrupt themselves; and act as brute beasts without shame and fear; yea, worse than brute beasts, as in the acts of unnatural lust, mentioned in **Jude 1:7**; whereby they corrupt both their souls and bodies, and so shall be destroyed, and perish in their corruption.

Jude 1:11

Ver. 11. Woe unto them,.... This may be considered as a commiseration of their case, or as a denunciation of deserved punishment, or as a prediction of what would befall them. The Arabic version prefaces these words with an address to the saints, "O my beloved": that what was about to be said might be attended to, as a caution and instruction to them.

For they have gone in the way of Cain; which was a way of envy, for Cain envied the acceptance of his brother's gift, and that notice which the Lord took of him; so these men envied the gifts bestowed on Christ's faithful ministers, and the success that attended their labours, and the honour that was put upon them by Christ, and that was given them by the churches; which shows, that they were destitute of grace, and particularly of the grace of charity, or love, which envies not, and that they were in an unregenerate estate, and upon the brink of ruin and destruction. Moreover, the way of Cain was a way of hatred, and murder of his brother, which his envy led him to; so these men hated the brethren, persecuted them unto death, as well as were guilty of the murder of the souls of men, by their false doctrine: to which may be added, as another of Cain's ways, in consequence of the former, absence from the presence of God, or the place of his worship; so these men separated themselves, and went out from the churches, forsook the assembling together with them, and so might expect Cain's punishment, to be driven from the face of God; yea, to be bid go as cursed into everlasting burnings:

and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward; Balaam's error, which he himself was guilty of, was covetousness, or an immoderate love of money, **2Pe 2:15**; which, as it is the root of all evil, is the bane of religion, and the source of heresy, and what the false teachers were greatly addicted to; and where it prevails, it is insatiable, and not to be checked and stopped, as in these men; and is a damnable sin, and excludes from the kingdom of heaven, as well as is dishonourable to religion; hence such particular notice is taken of it, lest it be found in a minister of the word: this character exactly agrees with the followers of Simon Magus. The error which Balaam led others into, was both idolatry and adultery, **Re 2:14**, which these false teachers were both guilty of themselves, and taught others, and indulged them therein; and which both teachers and people ran greedily after. Balaam is one of the four private persons, who, according to the Jews, shall have no part or portion in the world to come {w}.

And perished in the gainsaying of Core: the same with Korah, Nu 16:1. The Septuagint there call him Core, and so does Philo the Jew {x}, as the apostle does here, and by Josephus he is called {y} "Cores": now the gainsaying or contradiction of these men was like Korah's; as his was against Moses, the ruler of the people, so theirs was against magistracy, **Jude 1:8**; which was gainsaying God's own ordinance, and a contradiction of that which is for the good of men; the ground of which contradiction was love of liberty, and their own lusts; and, generally speaking, men perish in their factions and rebellions against good and lawful magistrates: also, as Korah gainsayed Aaron, the priest of the Lord, so these men contradicted and opposed the ministers of Christ, whom they would have thrust out in order to put in themselves, and whose persons they reviled, and contradicted their doctrines, which to do is of dangerous consequence; and they might be said to perish in his gainsaying, as a type and example of their destruction, which would be swift and sudden, as his was; and to denote the certainty of it. So the Jews {z} say of Korah and his company, that they shall never ascend, or rise up and stand in judgment, and that they shall have no part or portion in the world to come {a}.

{w} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 2. {x} De Profugis, p. 471. {y} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 2. sect. 2. {z} Misn. Sanhedrin, ib. sect. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 89. 3. Sanhed. ib. sect. 3. {a} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 3.

Jude 1:12

Ver. 12. These are spots in your feasts of charity,.... Or "love". The Jews speak atwnmyhmd hytdweo, "of a feast of faith" {b}. These here seem to be the Agapae, or love feasts, of the primitive Christians; the design of which was to maintain and promote brotherly love, from whence they took their name; and to refresh the poor saints, that they might have a full and comfortable meal now and then: their manner of keeping them was this; they began and ended them with prayer and singing; and they observed them with great temperance and frugality; and they were attended with much joy and gladness, and simplicity of heart: but were quickly abused, by judaizing Christians, as observing them in imitation of the passover; and by intemperance in eating and drinking; and by excluding the poor, for whose benefit they were chiefly designed; and by setting up separate meetings for them, and by admitting unfit persons unto them; such as here are said to be spots in them, blemishes, which brought great reproach and scandal upon them, being persons of infamous characters and conversations. The allusion is either to spots in garments, or in faces, or in sacrifices; or to a sort of earth that defiles; or else to rocks and hollow stones on shores, lakes, and rivers, which collect filth and slime; all which serve to expose and point out the persons designed. The Alexandrian copy and some others read, "these are in their own deceivings, spots", apataiv, instead of agapaiv, as in **2Pe 2:13**;

when they feast with you; which shows that they were among them, continued members with them, and partook with them in their solemn feasts, and were admitted to communion; and carries in it a kind of reproof to the saints, that they suffered such persons among them, and allowed them such privilege, intimacy, and familiarity with them:

feeding themselves without fear; these were like the shepherds of Israel, who fed themselves, and not the flock, and were very impious and impudent, open and bare faced in their iniquities, neither fearing God nor regarding man.

Clouds [they are], without water; they are compared to clouds for their number, being many false prophets and antichrists that were come out into the world; and for their sudden rise, having at once, and at an unawares, crept into the churches; and for the general darkness they spread over the churches, making it, by their doctrines and practices, to be a dark and cloudy day, a day of darkness, and gloominess, a day of clouds, and of thick darkness, a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy; and for the storms, factions, rents, and divisions they made; as also for their situation and height, soaring aloft, and being vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind; as well as for their sudden destruction, disappearing at once. And to clouds "without water", because destitute of the true grace of God, and of true evangelical doctrine; which, like rain, is from above, from heaven; and which, like that, refreshes, softens, and fructifies. Now these false teachers looked like clouds, that promised rain, boasted of Gospel light and knowledge, but were destitute of it, wherefore their ministry was uncomfortable and unprofitable.

Carried about of winds; either of false doctrines, or of their own lusts and passions, or of Satan's temptations:

trees whose fruit withereth: or "trees in autumn"; either like to them, which put forth at that season of the year, and so come to nothing; or like to trees which are bare of leaves as well as fruit, it being the time when the leaves fall from the trees; and so may be expressive of these persons casting off the leaves of an outward profession, of their going out from the churches, separating from them, and forsaking the assembling together with them, when what fruit of holiness, and good works, they seemed to have, came to nothing; and so were without fruit, either of Gospel doctrine, or of Gospel holiness and righteousness; nor did they make any true converts, but what they made were like the Pharisees, as bad, or worse than themselves; and from their unfruitfulness in all respects, it appeared that they were not in Christ the true vine, and were not sent forth by him, nor with his Gospel, and that they were destitute of the Spirit of God.

Twice dead; that is, entirely, thoroughly, and really dead in trespasses and sins, notwithstanding their pretensions to religion and godliness; or the sense may be, that they were not only liable to a corporeal death, common to them with all mankind, but also to an eternal one, or to the death both of soul and body in hell. Homer calls {d} those diyaneiv, "twice dead", that go to hell alive: or rather the sense is this, that they were dead in sin by nature, as all men are, and again having made a profession of religion, were now become dead to that profession; and so were twice dead, once as they were born, and a second time as they had apostatized:

plucked up by the roots; either by separating themselves from the churches, where they had been externally planted; or by the act of the church in cutting them off, and casting them out; or by the judgment of God upon them.

{b} Zohar in Exod. fol. 36. 3, 4. {d} Odyss. l. 12. lin. 22.

Jude 1:13

Ver. 13. Raging waves of the sea,.... False teachers are so called, for their, swelling pride and vanity; which, as it is what prevails in human nature, is a governing vice in such persons, for knowledge without grace puffs up; and this shows that they had not received the doctrine of grace in truth, for that humbles; as also for their arrogance, boasting, and ostentation; and for their noisiness, their restless, uneasy, and turbulent spirits, for their furious and wrathful dispositions; as well as for their levity and inconstancy, and for their turpitude and filthiness:

foaming out their own shame: wrathful words, frothy and obscene language, and filthy doctrines; and which expresses the issue of their noisy and blustering ministry, which ends in uncleanness, shame, emptiness, and ruin.

Wandering stars; they are called "stars", because they have the appearance of such, and blaze for a while, in seeming light, zeal, and warmth, and in fame and reputation; and "wandering" ones, not comparable to the planets, which go their regular course, but to fiery exhalations, gliding and running stars; because they wander about from house to house, as well as from one nation to another, and being never settled in their principles, nor at a point in religion; and wander also after their own carnal lusts, and cause others to wander likewise, and at last become falling stars; not from real grace and sanctified knowledge, which they never had; but from truth to error, and from a seemingly holy life and conversation, to a vicious one; and from a profession of religion, to open profaneness; and whose fall is irrecoverable, as that of stars:

to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever; or the blackest darkness, even utter darkness; which phrase not only expresses the dreadful nature of their punishment, their most miserable and uncomfortable condition; but also the certainty of it, it is "reserved" for them among the treasures of divine wrath and vengeance, by the righteous appointment of God, according to the just demerit of their sins; and likewise the duration of it, it will be for ever; there will never be any light or comfort, but a continual everlasting black despair, a worm that dieth not, a fire that will not be quenched, the smoke and blackness of which will ascend for ever and ever; hell is meant by it, which the Jews represent as a place of darkness: the Egyptian darkness, they say, came from the darkness of hell, and in hell the wicked will be covered with darkness; the darkness which was upon the face of the deep, at the creation, they interpret of hell {e}.

{e} Shemot Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 99. 3.

Jude 1:14

Ver. 14. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam,.... This was Enoch the son of Jared; his name signifies one "instructed", or "trained up"; as he doubtless was by his father, in the true religion, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and was one that had much communion with God; he walked with him, and was translated by him, body and soul, to heaven, and did not see death; **Ge 5:18**; he is said to be "the seventh from Adam"; not the seventh man from him that was born into the world, for there were no doubt thousands born before him; but he was, as the Jews express it {f}, yeybv rwd, "the seventh generation" from him; and they have an observation {g}, that all sevenths are always beloved by God; the seventh in lands, and the seventh in generations; Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, as it is written, **Ge 5:24**; and this is said partly to distinguish him from others of the same name, and particularly from Enoch the son of Cain, the third: from Adam in his line, as this was the seventh from Adam in the line of Seth; and partly to observe the antiquity of the following prophecy of his: for it is said, he

prophesied of these; of these false teachers, and such as they; what would be their sad state and condition at the second coming of Christ to judgment: that he had a spirit of prophecy is evident from the name he gave to his son Methuselah, which signifies, "when he dies is the emission", or the sending out of the waters of the flood, which came to pass the very year he did die. The Arabic writers {h} call him Edris the prophet; and the Jews say {i}, that he was in a higher degree than Moses or Elias; they also call {k} him Metatron, the great scribe, a name which they sometimes give to the angel that went before the children of Israel in the wilderness, and which seems to belong to the Messiah: that Enoch wrote a prophecy, and left it behind him in writing, does not appear from hence, or elsewhere; the Jews, in some of their writings, do cite and make mention of the book of Enoch; and there is a fragment now which bears his name, but is a spurious piece, and has nothing like this prophecy in it; wherefore Jude took this not from a book called the "Apocalypse of Enoch", but from tradition; this prophecy being handed down from age to age; and was in full credit with the Jews, and therefore the apostle very appropriately produces it; or rather he had it by divine inspiration, and is as follows:

saying, behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints; by the "Lord" is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, who is ordained the Judge of quick and dead, and for which he is richly qualified, being omniscient and omnipotent, and faithful and righteous, and who will certainly come again to judge the world in righteousness; for not of his first coming, which was not to judge and condemn, but to seek and save, but of his second coming at the last day is this to be understood; and this is expressed in the present tense, "cometh", in the manner of the prophets, who speak of things future as if they already were, as Isaiah does of the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ, and to awaken the attention of persons to it, as if it was near at hand, as also to signify the certainty of it: and when he comes, he will be attended "with ten thousand of his saints": meaning either the souls of glorified saints, even all of them, **1Th 3:13**, which will come with Christ, and meet the living ones, and be reunited to their own bodies, which will then be raised; or else the holy angels, as in De 33:2; and so some copies and the Arabic version read; which will be both for the showing forth of his glory and majesty, and for service in gathering his elect together, as well as for terror to the wicked; and a "behold" is prefixed to all this, to denote the certainty of Christ's coming, and the importance and wonderfulness of it: the ends of his coming follow.

{f} Juchasin, fol. 5. 2. Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 5. 1. {g} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 29. fol. 170. 1. {h} Elmacinus, p. 10. apud Hottinger. Smegma Orient. p. 240. {i} Shalshelet Hakabala, fol. 1, 2. {k} Targum Jon. in Gen. v. 24. Tosephot in T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 16. 2. Juchasin, fol. 5. 2.

Jude 1:15

Ver. 15. To execute judgment upon all,.... Quick and dead, small and great, high and low, rich and poor, good and bad, righteous and wicked, sheep and goats; to pass the definitive sentence on each, that of absolution, life, and happiness, on his own people, and that of condemnation, death, and misery, on the wicked; which will be done in the most strict and righteous manner:

and to convince all that are ungodly among them; those who are without God, the fear of him love to him, or faith in him; who have lived without the worship of him, or in a false worship; and particularly false teachers are here meant, the same as in **Jude 1:4**; who will then be convicted in their own consciences, by that clear evidence, and full light, in which things will be set:

of all their ungodly deeds; both against law and Gospel:

which they have ungodly committed; which they lived in the commission of, and continually practised in a vile manner, publicly, and in defiance of heaven, and with seared consciences:

and of all their hard [speeches], which ungodly sinners have spoken against him; either "against" God, as the Vulgate Latin version reads, against his being, his perfections, his providence, his purposes, his word, and worship; or rather against Jesus Christ the Lord, who will come to judge them, against his person and offices, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; his ministers and people, his truths and ordinances.

Jude 1:16

Ver. 16. These are murmurers,.... That is, at others; secretly, inwardly, in a muttering way, grunting out their murmurs like swine; to which, for their filthiness and apostasy, false teachers may be filly compared: and their murmurs might be both against God and men; against God, against the being of God, denying, or at least wishing there was no God, and uneasy because there is one; against the perfections of God, particularly his sovereignty over all, his special goodness to some, his wisdom, justice, truth, and faithfulness; against his purposes and decrees, both with respect to things temporal, spiritual, and eternal; against the providence of God and his government of the world, and the unequal distribution of things in it; and especially against the doctrines of free grace, and the ordinances of the Gospel: and not only are they murmurers against God, and all divine things and persons, but also against men; particularly against civil magistrates, who restrain them, and are a terror to them; and against the ministers of the Gospel, whose gifts and usefulness they envy; and indeed against all men, their neighbours, and what they enjoy, and at everything that goes besides themselves: it follows,

complainers; some join the above character and this together, and read, as the Vulgate Latin version, "complaining murmurers"; others, as the Syriac version, place not only a comma, but a copulative between them; and as the former may design secret and inward murmuring, this may intend outward complaining in words; not of their own sins and corruptions, nor of the sins of others, with any concern for the honour of religion; or of the decay of powerful godliness in themselves or others; or of the failure of the Gospel, and the decrease of the interest of Christ; but either of God, that he has not made them equal to others in the good things of life, as the Arabic version renders it, "complaining of their own lots"; or that he lays so much affliction upon them more than on others; or of men, that their salaries are not sufficient, and that they are not enough respected according to their merit; and indeed, as the Syriac version reads, "they complain of everything", and are never satisfied and easy:

walking after their own lusts; which are carnal and worldly, See Gill on "2Pe 3:3";

and their mouth speaketh great swelling [words]; both against God and men; and this may point at their boast of knowledge, their great ostentation of learning, their vain and empty doctrines, their high flights, their rhetorical style, and bombast language:

having men's persons in admiration because of advantage; crying up men of their own stamp for the advantage of the party; and giving flattering titles to men of wealth and riches, for the sake of their money: so the Ethiopic version, "they studied to please persons, to make gain of them"; they were respecters of persons; so the phrase is used by the Septuagint in De 10:17, and in Job 22:8, and in Pr 18:5 and in **Isa 9:15**.

Jude 1:17

Ver. 17. But, beloved,.... Or "my beloved", as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; or "our brethren", as the Ethiopic version; the apostle addresses the saints in this manner, to distinguish them from the false teachers, and to show that he had a different opinion of them from them; and that be would have them beware of them, and not be surprised at them, since it was no other than what was foretold; and also to engage their attention and regard to the following exhortation:

remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; these words mean not the doctrines of the apostles in general, but particularly the prophecies delivered out by them, as by the Apostles Paul and Peter, concerning the false teachers that should arise; and these being spoken of before, and by apostles, even by the apostles, of our Lord Jesus Christ, were worthy of regard, and deserved to be remembered; a remembrance of which is a preservative from error, and a relief in the worst of times, whether of persecution, or heresy. This does not suppose that Jude was not an apostle, only that there were other apostles besides him; and that these, some of them at least, had prophesied of these men, and that he had lived to see their predictions verified; nor does he exclude himself from being one of them; yea, the Ethiopic version reads, "which we the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ have formerly declared unto you"; see **2Pe 3:2**.

Jude 1:18

Ver. 18. How that they told you that there should be mockers in the last time,.... See Gill on "2Pe 3:3".

Jude 1:19

Ver. 19. These be they who separate themselves,.... Not from sinners openly profane; such a separation is commendable, being according to the will and word of God, to the mind and practice of Christ, and which tends to the good of men, and to the glory of God; but from the saints and people of God; it is possible that a child of God may for a time leave the fellowship of the saints, but an entire and total forsaking of them, and of assembling with them, looks with an ill aspect; nor did they separate themselves from superstition and will worship, and every false way of worship, which would have been right, but from the pure worship, ordinances, and discipline of God's house, by a perversion of them, and as being above them, or unwilling to be under any notice and government; not from errors and heresies, and persons that held them, with these they herded; but from the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and ministers of the word, and made divisions and separations among the churches, for worldly ends, and through pride and affectation of vain glory, as if they were more knowing, more holy, and more spiritual than other men: when they were

sensual; such as gave themselves up to sensual lusts and pleasures; and at best were but natural men, who had only natural and rational abilities, but without spiritual and experimental knowledge: hence it follows,

having not the Spirit; though they might have some external gifts of the Spirit; or he himself dwelling in them as a spirit of conviction and illumination, as a spirit of regeneration and sanctification, as a spirit of faith and comfort, as a spirit of adoption, and as the earnest and pledge of the heavenly glory; they were not under his influence, nor did they feel the operations of his grace, nor had they communion with him: hence they appeared to be none of Christ's, nor could they claim interest in him, and were without life, and so could not persevere.

Jude 1:20

Ver. 20. But ye, beloved,.... See Gill on "Jude 1:17";

building up yourselves on your most holy faith; some copies, and the Complutensian edition, read, "our most holy faith"; meaning the doctrine of faith in all its branches, which is holy, a most holy doctrine; which displays the holiness of God, and is a means of beginning and increasing internal holiness in the saints, and of encouraging and exciting them to external holiness of life and conversation: this phrase, avydq atwnmyhm, "holy faith", is in use with the Jews {k}: and it becomes the saints to build up one another upon this; the doctrine of faith, is a foundation to build upon, particularly what regards the person, offices, and grace of Christ, and is itself of an edifying nature; and they should not content themselves with their present knowledge of it, but seek for an improvement in it; and though they were passive when first built on Christ and his doctrines, and though ministers are greatly instruments in building of them up more and more; yet they are capable of building up themselves, and one another, by attending on the ministry of the word, and by private conversation, with each other, and particularly by

praying in the Holy Ghost; which is a special means of increase and establishment in the doctrine of faith; the Holy Ghost is the author and enditer of prayer, and an assister in it; without him saints cannot call God their Father, nor pray with faith and fervency, or with freedom and liberty.

{k} Zohar in Gen. fol. 47. 4.

Jude 1:21

Ver. 21. Keep yourselves in the love of God,.... By which may be meant either the grace and favour of God, that love with which God loves his people; and then the exhortation to the saints to keep themselves in it is, to set it always before them, to keep it constantly in view, to exercise faith on it, firmly believing their interest in it; as also to meditate on it, give themselves up wholly to the contemplation of it, and employ their thoughts constantly about it, which is the foundation of all grace here, and glory hereafter; or to preserve themselves by it, for so the words may be rendered, "preserve yourselves by the love of God"; against Satan's temptations, the

snares of the world, and the lusts of the flesh; whenever Satan solicits to sin, and any snare is laid to draw into it, and the flesh attempts to be predominant, saints should betake themselves to the love of God, as to a strong hold and preservative against sin, and reason as Joseph did, Ge 39:9, for the love of God, and continuance in it, do not depend on anything that can be done by men; nor is there any danger of real believers falling from it, or losing it, since it is unchangeable, and is from everlasting to everlasting; or else by the love of God we are to understand that love with which his people love him and of which he is the object,
Lu 11:42; and then the meaning of the exhortation is, that though this grace of love cannot be lost, yet, inasmuch as the fervour of it may be abated, and the people of God grow cold and indifferent in their expressions of it, it becomes them to make use of all proper means to maintain and increase it in themselves and others; such as are mentioned in the context, as conversing together in an edifying way about the doctrines of the Gospel, and praying either separately or together, under the influences of the Holy Spirit, and looking forward for the grace and mercy of Christ unto everlasting life; all which, with many other, things, by the blessing of God, may serve to maintain and revive the grace of love, and blow it up into a flame: though perhaps this phrase may chiefly design that love, peace, and concord, which ought to subsist among saints as brethren, and which they should be careful to preserve; and may be called the love of God, just as the same thing is styled the peace of God, **Col 3:15**, because it is what God requires, what he calls unto, which is of him, and is taught by him in regeneration, and what his, love engages to, and without which there is no true love to him; and he takes, love shown to his people as if shown to himself; and this sense is favoured by the context, both by the words in the preceding verse, and in the following ones:

looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. The mercy of Christ may be considered either as past, which was shown in eternity, in his covenant transactions with his Father, in engaging in the cause of his people, in espousing them to himself, and in the care of their persons, grace, and glory; and in time, in assuming their nature, in his tender concern for the bodies and souls of men, in bearing the sins and sorrows of his people, in the redemption of them, and in their regeneration and calling; and there is the present mercy of Christ, in interceding for his people, in sympathizing with them under all their afflictions, in succouring them under all their temptations, in suiting himself, as the great Shepherd, to all the circumstances of his flock; and there is the future mercy of Christ, which will be shown at death, in the grave, and at the resurrection, at the day of judgment, and in the merciful sentence he will pronounce on his people; and this seems to be designed here; the consequent of which, or what is annexed to it, and in which it issues, is eternal life; which is not owing to the works of men, but to the grace of God, and mercy of Christ; eternal life is in him, and is given through him, and to his mercy should men look for it. Christ himself is to be looked for, who will certainly come a second time; and eternal life is to be looked for by him; and this is only to be expected through his grace and mercy; and this is to be looked for by faith, in the love of it, with delight and pleasure, and cheerfulness, with eagerness, and yet with patience.

Jude 1:22

Ver. 22. And of some have compassion,.... That is, of such who have gone astray, being drawn aside; who are simple and ignorant, and out of the way; who sin through infirmity, and the force of temptation; and who are tractable and open to conviction, and whose mistakes are in lesser matters of religion; as also such who are convicted and wounded in their consciences for their sins and mistakes: and to these compassion is to be shown, by praying with them, and for them, with ardency and affection; instructing them in meekness; giving friendly and brotherly reproofs to them; expressing on all occasions a tender concern for their good; doing them all the good that can be done, both for their souls and bodies: and good reason there is why compassion should be shown them, because God is a God of compassion; Christ is a merciful high priest; a contrary spirit is grieving to the Holy Ghost; saints should consider what they themselves were, and what they now are, and that compassion has been shown to them, and they may want it again. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read, "reprove".

Making a difference; between one and another; using some more tenderly, others more severely, as the nature and circumstances of their case appear to be. The Syriac version renders the whole, "when they repent, have compassion on them".

Jude 1:23

Ver. 23. And others save with fear,.... Meaning false teachers, who lead others into errors, and such as give themselves over unto sin, whether teachers or hearers, and who are obstinate and irreclaimable; even such as these, means should be used to save, if possible, by sharp admonitions and severe language; by denouncing the awful judgments of God, which threaten them; by inflicting on them church censures in a terrible manner; by declaring the terrors of the Lord, and of hell, and of everlasting damnation:

pulling [them] out of the fire; of their soul destroying doctrines, and of their filthy and unnatural lusts, and as it were out of the fire of hell, of which they are in great danger:

hating even the garment spotted, by the flesh; by which may be meant the conversation of those men, even their filthy conversation, which is to be hated, though their persons are not; but all ways and means should be used to save them; and this is one way, by showing a dislike unto, and a resentment at their wicked way of living, excluding them from church communion for it, and shunning all conversation with them. The allusion is not to garments defiled by profluvious persons, or menstruous women, as some think, but to garments spotted with nocturnal pollutions, or through unnatural lusts, which these persons were addicted to {l}. It was reckoned very dishonourable for religious persons, in the time of divine service, or on a sabbath day, to have on a garment spotted with any thing; if a priest's garments were spotted, and he performed service in them, that service was not right {m}; and if a disciple of a wise man had any grease on his garments (on a sabbath day), he was guilty of death {n}.

{l} Vid. Sueton. in Vita Neronis, c. 28. {m} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 65. 2. & Zebachim, fol. 18. 2. & Piske Tosephot in Yoma, art. 9. & Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 8. sect. 4. {n} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 114. 1.

Jude 1:24

Ver. 24. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling,.... The people of God are liable to falling into temptation, into sin, into errors and mistakes, from an exercise of grace, or from a degree of steadfastness in Gospel truths, and even into a final and total apostasy, were it not for divine power; and they are not able to keep themselves. Adam, in his state of innocence, could not keep himself from falling; nor could the angels, many of whom fell, and the rest are preserved by the grace of God; wherefore, much less can imperfect sinful men keep themselves, they want both skill and power to do it; nor can any, short of Christ, keep them, and it is his work and office to preserve them; they were given to him with this view, and he undertook to do it; and sensible sinners commit themselves to him, as being appointed for that purpose; and this is a work Christ has been, and is, employed in, and he is every way qualified for it: he is "able" to do it, for he is the mighty God, the Creator and upholder of all things; and as Mediator, he has all power in heaven and in earth; instances of persons kept by him prove it; and there is such evidence of it, that believers may be, and are persuaded of it: and he is as willing as he is able; it is his Father's will he should keep them, and in that he delights; and as he has undertook to keep them, he is accountable for them; besides, he has an interest in them, and the greatest love and affection for them; to which may be added, that the glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit, in man's salvation, depends on the keeping of them: and what he keeps them from is, from falling by temptations, not from being tempted by Satan, but from sinking under his temptations, and from being devoured by him; and from falling by sin, not from the being or commission of sin, but from the dominion of it, and from the falling into it, so as to perish by it; and from falling into damnable heresies; and from the true grace of God, and into final impenitence, unbelief, and total apostasy. Instead of "you", the Alexandrian copy reads "us", and some copies "them":

and to present [you] faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to himself, in this present state of things, as washed in his blood, and justified by his righteousness, and hereafter in the millennium state, and in the ultimate glory; and also to his Father, and this he died to do, and in some sense did it at his death, even in the body of his flesh, through death, and now as the representative of his people in heaven; and will at the last day, when he will deliver them up complete and perfect; all which is in consequence of his suretyship engagements: and this presentation is made "before the presence of his glory"; either before the glorious presence of Christ, or Christ himself, who is glorious, and will appear in glory, in his own, and in his Father's, and in his holy angels; or else before the glorious presence of God the Father, and who is glory itself: and the condition in which the saints are, and will be presented, is "faultless"; though they have sinned in Adam, and were so wretchedly guilty and filthy in their nature state, so prone to backslidings, and guilty of so many after conversion, and though a body of sin and death is carried by them to the grave; yet they will at last be presented by Christ in perfect holiness, in complete righteousness, and in the shining robes of immortality and, glory. The manner in which they will be presented is "with exceeding joy"; in themselves, for what they shall be delivered from, from sin and sorrow, and every enemy, and for the glory and happiness they shall then enjoy; and also in the ministers of the Gospel, who will then bring their sheaves with joy, and then will their converts be their joy and crown of rejoicing; and likewise this presentation will be with the joy of angels, for if they rejoice at the conversion of men, much more at their glorification; and even with the joy of Father, Son, and Spirit.

Jude 1:25

Ver. 25. To the only wise God our Saviour,.... By whom is meant, not the Trinity of Persons in general, nor the Father in particular; but the Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly God, though not to the exclusion of the Father and Spirit; and is the wisdom of God, and the author of all wisdom, natural and spiritual; and is the only Saviour of his people; and to him may be, as is ascribed, the

glory of his deity, and divine sonship, of his mediatorial works, and of salvation:

and majesty: which belongs to him as God, and which he has in his human nature, being crowned with glory, and honour, and enthroned and set down at the right hand of God:

dominion; both natural, the kingdom of nature and providence belonging to him, and mediatorial, which is above all, reaches far and wide, and will last for ever:

and power; in making and upholding all things; in redeeming his people; in protecting and defending them, and in destroying his and their enemies; in raising the dead, and judging the world. Though the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "to the only God our Saviour, by Jesus Christ our Lord", and leave out the word "wise"; and so they are to be understood of God the Father; but the Ethiopic version reads, "this is the only God our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom", &c. And all this is to be attributed to him,

both now, and ever; in the present life, and to all eternity.

Amen: which is an assent unto it, that so it should be; and a wish that so it may be; and an expression of faith, and strong asseveration, that so it shall be.

Revelation 1:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATIONS

That this book was written by the Apostle and Evangelist John, is clear not only from the express mention of his name, and from his office, a servant of Jesus Christ, **Re 1:1**; but also from the character this writer gives of himself, **Re 1:2**; as being an eyewitness of the essential Logos, or Word of God, and who bore a faithful record of him as such, as John did in his Gospel, in a very peculiar and remarkable manner, and from this writer's being in the isle of Patmos when he wrote, **Re 1:9**; for of what other John can this be said? to which may be added the testimonies of the ancient writers, as Justin Martyr {a}, who lived within fifty years of the apostle, and Irenaeus {b}, who was the disciple of Polycarp, an hearer of this apostle, and Clemens Alexandrinus {c}, Tertullian {d}, Origen {e}, and others, who ascribe it to him. It was a most monstrously stupid notion of Caius, Dionysius of Alexandria mentions {f}, that it was written by Cerinthus the heretic, when his heresies concerning the divinity and humanity of Christ are most strongly refuted in it. What seems to have led to such a thought is, that the account of the thousand years' reign, and the descent of the new Jerusalem from heaven, seemed to favour the judaism of this man, and his carnal notions of an earthly paradise, whereas they have no such tendency. And as for its being written by another John, who is said to be presbyter at Ephesus, after the apostle, it is not certain there ever was such a man; and if there was, he must be too late to be the writer of this book; nor to him can the above characters agree. What is observed in favour of him, that the penman of this book is called, in the title, John the divine, and not the evangelist, or apostle, will do him no service; for to whom does this character so well agree, as to the Evangelist John, who wrote of divine things in so divine a manner, and particularly concerning the divinity of Christ? hence this book was sometimes called yeologia, "Divinity" {g}: besides, the title of the book is not original, but is what has been affixed to it by others, and varies; for in the Complutensian edition it runs thus,

"the Revelation of the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Divine."

In the Vulgate Latin version it is called the Apocalypse of the blessed John the Apostle; and in the Syriac version, the Revelation which was made to John the Evangelist; and in the Arabic version, the Vision of John, the Apostle and Evangelist, to wit, the Apocalypse. All which acknowledge the Apostle John to be the writer of it, and show the sense of the ancients concerning it. Nor is it of any moment what is alleged, that this writer makes mention of his name several times, whereas it was usual with John, both in his Gospel and epistles, to conceal his name; since there is a wide difference between writing an history and epistles to friends, and prophecy which requires the author's name, on whom the authority and truth of the prophecy greatly depend: and so likewise the disagreement of style observed in this book, with the other writings of John, has no force in it; since the prophetic style is always different from an historical and epistolary one; and yet, after all, in many things, there is an agreement; John in this, as in his other writings, speaks of Christ as the Word and Son of God and under the character of the Lamb; and likewise the following: passages may be compared together, as **Re 1:2** with Joh 19:35 and **1Jo 1:1 Re 1:5** with **1Jo 1:7**. All which being observed there no room to doubt, neither of the writer nor of the authority of this book; especially when the agreement of the doctrine contained in it with other parts of the Scripture, the majesty of its style, and above all the many prophecies of things to come to pass in it, several of which have been already fulfilled, are considered; and though it was called in question and rejected by some heretical men, because some things in it did not suit with their tenets, yet we have not the least reason to doubt of its being authentic who have lived to see so much of it already accomplished and which could come from no other but God. As for the time of its writing this is not agreed upon on all hands; the place where, seems to be the isle of Patmos, which yet some question. Some think it was written in the times of Claudius Caesar {h}, before the destruction of Jerusalem. In the title of the Syriac version, this revelation is said to be made to John in the isle of Patmos, into which he was cast by Nero Caesar. But the more commonly received opinion is, that he had this vision there, at the latter end of Domitian's reign {i} by whom he was there banished, about the year 95, or 96. But be this as it will, the book is certainly of divine authority, and exceeding useful and instructive; and contains in it the most momentous and important doctrines of the Gospel, concerning a trinity of persons in the Godhead, the deity and sonship of Christ, the divinity and personality of the Spirit, the offices of Christ, the state and condition of man by nature, justification, pardon, and reconciliation by the blood of Christ; and it recommends the several duties of religion, and encourages to the exercise of every grace and gives a very particular account of the rise, power, and fall of antichrist, and of the state of the church of Christ in all the periods of time to the end of the world. And though it is written in an uncommon style, yet may be understood, by the use of proper means, as by prayer and meditation, by comparing it with other prophetic writings, and the history of past times, by which many things in it will appear to have had their accomplishment; and it ought to be observed, that it is a revelation, and not a hidden thing; that it is now not a sealed book, but an open one; and that such are pronounced blessed that read and hear it, and observe the things in it, **Re 1:3**; and which is no small encouragement to attempt an explanation of it.

{a} Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 308. {b} Adv. Haeres. l. 4. c. 37, 50. & l. 5. c. 30. {c} Paedagog. l. 2. c. 12. {d} Adv. Marcion. l. 4. c. 5. {e} Comment. in Matt. p. 417. Ed. Huet. {f} Apud. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 28. & l. 7. c. 23. {g} Suidas in voce iwannhv. {h} Vid. Epiphan Haeres. 51. {i} Irenaeus adv. Haeres. l. 5. c. 36. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. l. 3. c. 18.

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 1

This chapter contains the preface and introduction to the book, and the first vision in it. The preface begins with the title of the book, in which the subject matter of it is pointed at, a Revelation; the author of it, Jesus Christ, who had it from his Father; the minister of it, an angel: the person to whom it was made known, described by his name, office, and the testimony he bore to Christ, his Gospel, and to whatever he saw; and for encouragement to persons to read, hear, and observe it, happiness is pronounced to them **Re 1:1**; the inscription of the book follows, in which are the name of the writer, and the place where the churches to whom it is inscribed were, with a salutation of them; in which grace and peace are wished for them, from God the Father, from the Holy Spirit, and from Jesus Christ; who is described by characters expressing his prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices, and by the benefits, favours, and honours bestowed by him on his people, to whom a doxology or ascription of glory is made, **Re 1:4**; who is further described, first by his future visible coming in the clouds, which will greatly affect the inhabitants of the earth, and then by himself, as the eternal and almighty God, **Re 1:7**; and in order to introduce the vision, hereafter related in this chapter, he that saw it gives an account of himself, by his name, by his relation to the churches, and by his partnership with them in affliction, and of the place he was in; and for what, and of the time when he had the vision, and the frame he was in, and what awakened his attention to it, **Re 1:9**; and how, that adverting to it he saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of them one like the son of man, who is described by his clothes and girdle, by his head, hair, and eyes, by his feet and voice, by what he had in his right hand, and by what went out of his mouth, and by his face shining like the sun in its strength, **Re 1:12**, next is related the effect this vision had on. John, who upon it fell down as one dead, but was comforted by Christ, laying his right hand on him, and telling him who he was, and bidding him write what he had seen, or should see, **Re 1:17**; and the chapter is concluded with an interpretation of the mystery of the seven stars, and the seven candlesticks, **Re 1:20**.

Ver. 1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ,.... Either of which he is the author: for it was he that sent and showed it by his angel to John; it was he, the lion of the tribe of Judah, that took the book, and opened the seals of it, and which is a very considerable proof of his deity; since none but God could foreknow and foretell things to come, or declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet, as is done in this book: or of which he is the subject; for it treats much of his person, offices, and grace, and of Christ mystical, of the state of his church, in the several ages of time; or it is that revelation which was first made unto him, to which sense the following words incline:

which God gave unto him; not to him as he is God, for as such he is omniscient, and foreknew whatever would come to pass, and needed no revelation to be made to him, but as he was man and Mediator; and this was given him by God the Father, and put into his hands, to make known as being a part of the administration of his prophetic office: the end of its being given him was,

to show unto his servant things which must shortly come to pass: the Arabic version adds, "in future ages"; things that were to be hereafter, the accomplishment of which was necessary, because of the certain and unalterable decree of God, the good of his people, and his own glory; and these were to come to pass quickly, in a very little time; not that they would all be fulfilled in a short space of time, for there are some things not fulfilled yet, though it is nineteen hundred years ago and more, since this revelation was made; and we are sure there are some things that will not be accomplished till a thousand years hence, and more, for the millennium is not yet begun; and after that is ended, there is to be a second resurrection, and a destruction of the Gog and Magog army; but the sense is, that these things should very quickly begin to be fulfilled, and from thenceforward go on fulfilling till all were accomplished. Now to show, to represent these things, in a clear manner, as the nature of them would admit of, to the servants of Christ, all true believers, read and hear and diligently observe them, and especially to the ministers of the Gospel, whose business is to search into them, and point them out to and particularly to his servant John, was this revelation made by Christ, who immediately answered this end:

and he sent, and signified [it] by his angel unto servant John; he who is the Lord of angels, and to whom they are ministering spirits, sometimes sent one angel and sometimes another; and by various emblems, signs, and visions, represented and set before John, a faithful servant, and a beloved disciple of his, the whole of this revelation.

Revelation 1:2

Ver. 2. Who bore record of the word of God,.... Of the essential and eternal Word of God, his only begotten Son; as John the apostle did in his Gospel, and in his epistles, and also in this book; and which is a clear evidence of his being the writer of it.

And of the testimony of Jesus Christ; that is, the Gospel, which testifies of the person of Christ, of the truth of his divinity, and reality of his human nature; of the union of the two natures, divine and human, his person: of his several offices, of prophet, priest and King; of what he did and suffered for his people; and of the blessings of grace which they receive by him:

and of all things that he saw; with his bodily eyes, as the human body of Christ, the miracles he wrought in it, the transfiguration of it on the mount, the crucifixion of it, and the piercing of it with a spear, and the resurrection of it from the dead; and also the visions recorded in this book; and such a faithful witness serves greatly to confirm the authority of this book, and to recommend the perusal of it. The Complutensian edition and the Arabic version read, "which are, and which shall", or "must be hereafter", as in **Re 1:19**.

Revelation 1:3

Ver. 3. Blessed [is] he that readeth,.... This book the Revelation, privately, in his closet or family, carefully and diligently, with a desire of understanding it; or publicly in the church of God, and endeavours open and explain it to others; and may allude to the reading of the law and the prophets in the synagogues, which were not barely read, but expounded; see Ac 13:15; and the rather this may be thought to be the sense of the words, since there is a change of number in the next clause,

and they that hear the words of this prophecy; that listen attentively to the reading and exposition of this book, and have ears to hear, so as to understand the prophecies contained in it: for the whole, when delivered to John, was a prophecy of things to come: but some versions read the number alike in both clauses; as either, "blessed is he that readeth, and he that heareth", as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; or "blessed are they that read, and they that hear", as the Arabic version:

and keep those things which are written therein; the last version adds, "concerning this frail world"; who not only read, and hear, but put in practice what they read and hear; for there are some things in this book which are of a practical nature, especially in the epistles to the seven churches; or the sense is, happy are those persons that observe, and take notice of what is written herein, and meditate upon them, and well weigh them in their minds, and retain them in their memories. Now, though eternal happiness does not depend upon, nor is procured by any of these means, as reading, hearing, and observing; yet there is a real happiness, a true pleasure, that does attend these things, which may stir up to a regard unto them; and for which purpose the following words are added:

for the time [is] at hand; when thee things should begin to be fulfilled.

Revelation 1:4

Ver. 4. John to the seven churches which are in Asia,.... In lesser Asia; their names are mentioned in **Re 1:11**;

grace [be] unto you, and peace; which is the common salutation of the apostles in all their epistles, and includes all blessings of grace, and all prosperity, inward and outward: See Gill on "Ro 1:7". The persons from whom they are wished are very particularly described,

from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; which some understand of the whole Trinity; the Father by him "which is", being the I am that I am; the Son by him "which was", which was with God the Father, and was God; and the Spirit by him "which is to come", who was promised to come from the Father and the Son, as a Comforter, and the Spirit of truth: others think Christ is here only intended, as he is in **Re 1:8** by the same expressions; and is he "which is", since before Abraham he was the "I am"; and he "which was", the eternal Logos or Word; and "is to come", as the Judge of quick and dead. But rather this is to be understood of the first Person, of God the Father; and the phrases are expressive both of his eternity, he being God from everlasting to everlasting; and of his immutability, he being now what he always was, and will be what he now is, and ever was, without any variableness, or shadow of turning: they are a periphrasis, and an explanation of the word "Jehovah", which includes all tenses, past, present, and to come. So the Jews explain this name in **Ex 3:14**;

"Says R. Isaac {k}, the holy blessed God said to Moses, Say unto them, I am he that was, and I am he that now is, and I am he that is to come, wherefore hyha is written three times."

And such a periphrasis of God is frequent in their writings {l}.

And from the seven spirits which are before his throne; either before the throne of God the Father; or, as the Ethiopic version reads, "before the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ"; by whom are meant not angels, though these are spirits, and stand before the throne of God, and are ready to do his will: this is the sense of some interpreters, who think such a number of them is mentioned with reference to the seven angels of the churches; or to the seven last "Sephirot", or numbers in the Cabalistic tree of the Jews; the three first they suppose design the three Persons in the Godhead, expressed in the preceding clause, and the seven last the whole company of angels: or to the seven principal angels the Jews speak of. Indeed, in the Apocrypha,

"I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." (Tobit 12:15)

Raphael is said to be one of the seven angels; but it does not appear to be a generally received notion of theirs that there were seven principal angels. The Chaldee paraphrase on Ge 11:7 is misunderstood by Mr. Mede, for not "seven", but "seventy angels" are there addressed. It was usual with the Jews only to speak of four principal angels, who stand round about the throne of God; and their names are Michael, Uriel, Gabriel, and Raphael; according to them, Michael stands at his right hand, Uriel at his left, Gabriel before him, and Raphael behind him {m}. However, it does not seem likely that angels should be placed in such a situation between the divine Persons, the Father and the Son; and still less that grace and peace should be wished for from them, as from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; and that any countenance should be given to angel worship, in a book in which angels are so often represented as worshippers, and in which worship is more than once forbidden them, and that by themselves: but by these seven spirits are intended the Holy Spirit of God, who is one in his person, but his gifts and graces are various; and therefore he is signified by this number, because of the fulness and perfection of them, and with respect to the seven churches, over whom he presided, whom he influenced, and sanctified, and filled, and enriched with his gifts and graces.

{k} Shemot Rabba, sect. 3. fol. 73. 2. {l} Targum. Jon. in Deut. xxxii. 39. Zohar in Exod. fol. 59. 3. & in Numb. fol. 97. 4. & 106. 2. Seder Tephillot, fol. 205. 1. Ed. Basil. fol. 2. 2. Ed. Amsterd. {m} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 179. 1.

Revelation 1:5

Ver. 5. And from Jesus Christ,.... Who, though the second Person in the Trinity, is mentioned last, because many things were to be said of him; and who is described in all his offices: in his prophetic office,

the faithful witness; as he is of his Father, of his mind and will, with respect to doctrine and worship; of his truth and faithfulness in his promises; and of his love, grace, and mercy, to his chosen; and of himself, of his true deity, proper sonship, and perfect equality with the Father; of his Messiahship, and of salvation through his obedience, sufferings, and death; and of all truth in general, to which he has bore a faithful testimony several ways, in his ministry, by his miracles, at his death, and by the shedding of his blood to seal it; by his Spirit since, and by the ministers of his word: he is described in his priestly office by

the first begotten of the dead: being the first that rose from the dead by his own power, and to an immortal life; for though some few were raised before him, yet not by themselves, nor to live for ever, but to die again. Moreover, he is the firstfruits of the resurrection, the pledge and earnest of it, as well as the efficient cause and exemplar of it. This character supposes that he died, as he did, for the sins of his people; and that he rose again from the dead, as he did, for their justification; and that he rose first as their head and representative, and opened the way of life for them. And he is described in his kingly office, for it follows,

and the Prince of the kings of the earth: which is not to be understood figuratively of the saints, who have power over sin, Satan, and the world, through the efficacious grace of Christ, and of whom he is Prince or King; but literally of the kings and princes of this world, over whom Christ is King and Lord, who receive their crowns and kingdoms from him, and rule by him, and are accountable to him, as they one day must be. Next follows a doxology, or an ascription of glory to him,

unto him that hath loved us; his own, his people, his church, his chosen, and who are given him by his Father; these he has loved with an everlasting and unchangeable love, with a love of complacency and delight, which passes knowledge, and will never end: and which he has shown in espousing their persons, undertaking their cause, assuming their nature, and in nothing more than in giving himself for them as a propitiatory sacrifice, or in dying and shedding his precious blood for them, as is next expressed:

and washed us from our sins in his own blood; which shows that these persons were loved before washed; they were not first washed, and then loved, but first loved, and then washed. Love was the cause of washing, and not washing the cause of love; hence it appears that they were in themselves filthy, and unclean through sin; and that they could not cleanse themselves by anything they could do; and that such was the love of Christ to them, that he shed his precious blood for them, which is a fountain opened, to wash in for sin, and which cleanses from all sin. This is to be understood, not of the sanctification of their natures, which is the work of the Spirit, but of atonement for their sins, and justification from them by the blood of Christ, whereby they are so removed, that they are all fair, and without spot. It is afterwards said, that these same persons are made priests; and it may be observed, that the priests were always washed, before they performed their service, as such {n}. The Alexandrian copy and the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "and hath loosed us from our sins in", or "by his blood"; that is, from the guilt of them, which was bound upon them.

{n} Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Revelation 1:6

Ver. 6. And hath made us kings and priests,.... The Alexandrian copy, and Complutensian edition, read, "a kingdom, priests"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "a kingdom and priests"; and the Arabic version, "a kingdom of priesthood"; reference seems to be had to Ex 19:6: "and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests"; which the Jerusalem Targum renders, "ye shall be unto me", Nynhkw Nyklm, "kings and priests"; and so the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel paraphrases it thus, "and ye shall be before me", Nyklm, "kings" crowned with a crown, Nynhkw, "and priests" ministering. Hence it is a common saying with the Jews, that all Israelites are the sons of kings {o}; and sometimes their doctors are called hrwt yklm, "kings of the law" {p}: and they ascribe the same thing to the word of the Lord as is here attributed to Jesus Christ: so the Targum of Jonathan on De 28:13 paraphrases the words;

"the word of the Lord shall appoint or constitute you kings, and not private persons."

Likewise they say {q}

"that even a Gentile, if he studies in the law, is lwdg Nhkk, "as an high priest"."

All which may serve to show to what the reference is had in the text, and from whence the language is taken. But the words are used in a higher and greater sense. The saints are made "kings" by Christ; they are so now; they have received a kingdom of grace, which cannot be taken away; and they have the power of kings over sin, Satan, and the world, and all their enemies; and they live and fare like kings, and are clothed like them, in rich apparel, the righteousness of Christ; and are attended as kings, angels being their lifeguards; and they will appear much more so hereafter, when they shall reign on earth with Christ a thousand years, shall sit upon the same throne, and have a crown of life and righteousness given them, and at last be introduced into the kingdom of glory. And they become such by being the sons of God, which power and privilege they receive from Christ, and so are heirs of God, and joint heirs with him, and by being united to him. And he also makes them "priests" to offer up the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, and those of a broken heart, and of a contrite spirit, and even their souls and bodies, as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice unto God, by anointing and sanctifying them by his Spirit: and they are made such by him

to God, and his Father; not to men, nor to angels. Now to him that has shown so much love, and bestowed such high favours and honours, is the following ascription made,

to him [be] glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen. The glory of his deity, and of all his offices; of his being the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth; and of all the benefits and blessings, favours and honours, received from him by his people: and "dominion"; over all creatures, and over all his saints, and especially in his kingdom, in the last days, which will be an everlasting one; and which is continually to be wished and prayed for, that it would come, and come quickly. "Amen"; so let it be, and so it shall be.

{o} Misn. Sabbat, c. 14. sect. 9. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 67. 1. & 111. 1. & 128. 1. Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. xii. 1. {p} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 1. 2. Vid. Jarchium in. Psal. lxviii. 14. {q} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 38. 1.

Revelation 1:7

Ver. 7. Behold he cometh with clouds,.... John carries on the account of Christ in his kingly office, one branch of which is to execute judgment; and describes him by a future coming of his, which cannot be understood of his coming to take vengeance on the Jews, at the time of Jerusalem's destruction, though that is sometimes expressed in such language, and with such circumstances, as here; see Mt 24:30; because if this revelation was made to John, in the latter end of Domitian's reign, as is commonly reported by the ancients, and in the year 95 or 96, as chronologers generally place it, it must be upwards of twenty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and therefore cannot relate to that; nor to his coming in a spiritual sense to convert the Jews in the latter day; for this coming is personal, and with clouds, when he will be seen by every eye; all which circumstances do not so well agree with that; besides, all the kindreds of the earth will not lament on that account: the wicked will take little notice of it, the tribes of the Jews will rejoice at it, and so will all the converted Gentiles: it is better therefore to understand this of Christ's second coming to judge the quick and dead, which is represented as just at hand, to denote the certainty of it; and a "behold" is prefixed to it, to excite attention, and to denote the importance of it: things of great moment, and very surprising, will then be done; Christ will appear in great glory and majesty, the dead in Christ will be raised, Christ's personal kingdom will take place, and the general judgment come on. The manner of his coming will be "with clouds"; either figuratively, with angels, who will attend him both for grandeur and service, or literally, in the clouds of heaven; he shall descend in like manner as he ascended, and as Daniel prophesied he should, **Da 7:13**. Hence, one of the names of the Messiah, with the Jews, is, ynne, "Anani" {r}, which signifies "clouds"; and his coming is so described, both to denote the grand and magnificent manner, in which he will come, making the clouds his chariots; and to strike terror into his enemies, clouds and darkness being about him, thunder and lightning breaking out of them, as tokens of that vengeance he comes to take upon them; as also the visibility of his coming, he shall descend from the third heaven, where he now is, into the airy heaven, and sit upon the clouds, as on his throne, and be visible to all: hence it follows,

and every eye shall see him; that is, everyone that has eyes shall see him, or all men shall see him; the righteous shall see him, and be glad; they shall see him in his glory, as he is, and for themselves, and be satisfied; they shall rejoice at the sight of him; they will be filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: but the wicked will see him and tremble; they will be filled with the utmost consternation and astonishment; they will not be able to bear the sight of him; they will flee from him, and call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from his face.

And they [also] which pierced him; his hands, feet, and side, when they crucified him; both the Roman soldiers, who actually did it, and the body of the Jewish nation, the rulers and common people, who consented to it, and at whose instigation it was done; these, being raised from the dead, shall see him with their bodily eyes, whom they so used.

And all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him; all the wicked, in the several parts of the world, will lament, and wring their hands, and express the inward terror and horror of their minds, at his appearing; they will fear his resentment of all their wicked words and actions; will dread his wrath, and tremble at his righteous judgment:

even so, Amen, says John, and so say all true believers; what the wicked lament, they rejoice at; they desire the coming of Christ, they love it, look and long for it; they believe it shall be, and wish it may be quickly, as in Re 22:20; This expression of faith in, and desire after the coming of Christ, is signified by two words, the one Greek and the other Hebrew; suggesting, that this is an article of faith among all the saints of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, and is what they are wishing and waiting for.

{r} Targum in 1 Chron. iii. 24. vid. Beckii Not. in ib. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 85. 2.

Revelation 1:8

Ver. 8. I am Alpha and Omega,.... These are the words of Christ himself, appearing at once, and confirming what John had said of him, concerning his person, offices, and future coming: Alpha is the first letter, and Omega the last in the Greek alphabet, and signifies that Christ is the first and the last, as it is interpreted in **Re 1:11**, and is a character often given to the divine Being in prophetic writings; see Isa 41:4; and is no small proof of the proper deity of Christ. Alpha is used by the Jews for the chief of persons or things;

"Macmas and Mezonicha (names of places) are tlol apla, "Alpha for fine flour";"

that is, the best fine flour is there, they are the chief places for it: and again, "Tekoah is Nmvl apla, "Alpha for oil","

or the chief place for oil; the best oil was to be had there {s}: so Christ, he is the Alpha, the chief as to his divine nature, being God over all, blessed for ever; and in his divine sonship, none, angels or men, are in such sense the Son of God as he is; and in all his offices, of prophet, priest, and King; he is the prophet, the great prophet of the church, never man spake like him, or taught as he did; he is the most excellent priest, that exceeds Aaron and all his sons, having an unchangeable priesthood; and he is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; he has the chief place in the church, he is the head of it, and has in all things the preeminence; he is the chief in honour and dignity, is at the right hand of God, and has a name above every name: he also in some sense may be said to be the Omega, the last and the lowest; as in his state of humiliation, he was not only made lower than the angels, but than man; he was despised and rejected of men, and scarcely reckoned a man, a worm, and no man; and he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Moreover, these letters, Alpha and Omega, being the first and the last in the alphabet, may stand for the whole; and it seems to be a proverbial expression taken from the Jews, who use the phrase, from Aleph to Tau, for the whole of any thing, which two letters in the Hebrew alphabet stand in the same place as these; accordingly the Syriac version renders it Olaph and Tau; and the Arabic version Aleph and Ye. It is said in **Eze 9:6**, "begin at my sanctuary";

"R. Joseph taught, do not read "my sanctuary", but "sanctified ones", these are the children of men who confirm "the whole law", wyt dew Plam, "from Aleph to Tau";"

the same as from Alpha to Omega, or from one end to the other: and a little after,

"says R. Levi, Tau is the end of the seal of the holy blessed God, for says R. Chanina, the seal of the holy blessed God is tma, "truth": says R. Samuel bar Nachmani, these are the children of men who confirm the whole law "from Aleph to Tau" {t}."

So Christ, he is the Alpha and Omega, the first and last, the chief, the whole of things; as of the covenant of grace, he is the first and last of it, he is the Mediator, surety, and messenger of it, and the ratifier and confirmer of it, he is the covenant itself, all its blessings and promises are in him; he is the sum and substance of the Scriptures, both of the law and of the Gospel; he is the fulfilling end of the law, and he is the subject matter of the Gospel; he stands in the first verse in Genesis, and in the last of the Revelation; he is the Alpha and Omega, the first and last, the whole and all in the business of salvation, in the affair of justification before God, in the sanctification of his people, in their adoption, and eternal glorification; he stands first and last in the book of God's purposes and decrees, in the book of the covenant, in the book of the creatures, or creation, being the first cause, and last end of all things, in the book of Providence, and in the book of the Scriptures: likewise, as these two letters include all the rest, this phrase may be expressive of the perfection of Christ, who as God has the fulness of the Godhead, all the perfections of the divine nature in him; and, as man, is in all things made like unto his brethren; and, as Mediator, has all fulness of power, wisdom, grace, and righteousness in him, in whom all the saints are complete; and this may also denote his eternity, he having none before him, nor any after him; and which also is signified by some other following expressions:

the beginning and the ending; the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, leave out this; which seems to be explanative of the former clause, Alpha being the beginning of the alphabet, and Omega the ending of it; and properly belongs to Christ, who knows no beginning, nor will he have any end with respect to time, being from everlasting to everlasting; and agrees with him as the first cause of all things, both of the old and new creation, and the last end to which they are all referred, being made for his pleasure, honour, and glory: these things now

saith the Lord; that is, the Lord Jesus Christ; the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, "the Lord God"; and the Ethiopic version only God:

which is, and which was, and which is to come; who is God over all, "was" God from all eternity, and is to come as such; which he will show by: his omniscience and omnipotence, displayed in the judgment of the world: who "is" now a Saviour of all that come to God by him; "was" so under the Old Testament dispensation, being the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and "is to come", as such, and shall appear a second time unto salvation to them that look for him: particularly this phrase is expressive of the eternity of Christ, who is, was, and ever will be; and of his immutability, who is the same he was, and will be for ever the same he is, and was, unchangeable in his person, in his love, and in the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; he is the same today, yesterday, and for ever. This same phrase is used of God the Father in **Re 1:4**; and is a further proof of the deity of Christ; and which is still more confirmed by the following character,

the Almighty; as he appears to be, by creating all things but of nothing; by upholding all creatures in their beings; by the miracles he wrought on earth; by the resurrection of himself from the dead; by obtaining eternal redemption for his people; and by his having the care and government of them upon him, whom he keeps, upholds, bears, and carries to the end, through all their infirmities, afflictions, temptations, and trials.

{s} Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 1. 3. & Bartenora in ib. So Alpha penulatorum, "the chief of beggars", in Martial, l. 50. 2. Ep. 57. {t} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 1. & Avoda Zara, fol. 4. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 52. 1. Baal Hatturim in Deut. xxxiii. 21. & Raziel, fol. 9. & 12. & Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 70. 1, 2.

Revelation 1:9

Ver. 9. I, John, who also am your brother,.... Here begins the narrative of the visions and prophecies of this book, the former verses containing a general preface to the whole; and this, and the two following verses, are the introduction to the first vision, which John saw; who describes himself by his name, "I John", the evangelist and apostle, a servant of Christ, and a beloved disciple of his; one that was well known to the seven churches to whom he writes, and who had no reason to doubt of his fidelity in the account he gives them; and also by his relation to them as a "brother", not in a natural, but in a spiritual sense, they and he belonging to that family that is named of Christ, to the household of God, and of faith, and having one and the same Father, even God: thus, though he was an elder, an evangelist, yea, an apostle by office, yet he puts himself on a level with the several members of these churches, as he was a believer in Christ:

and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; many are the afflictions and tribulations of the saints; these lie in the way to the kingdom; and they are companions and partners with one another in them, both by enduring the same, and by their sympathy and compassion with each other; and as they go sharers in the troubles of this life, so they do, and shall in the kingdom; in the kingdom of grace now, being all of them made kings and priests unto God, and in the kingdom of Christ on earth, where they will all reign with him a thousand years, and in the kingdom of glory, where they shall reign together to all eternity; and in the mean while, they join in the exercise of the grace of patience, of which Christ is the author, exemplar, and object; they are directed by the Spirit of God into a patient waiting for Christ, or a patient expectation of his coming, kingdom, and glory: the Alexandrian copy reads, "patience in Christ"; and the Complutensian edition, "patience in Christ Jesus": this same person John, who gives this account of himself,

was in the isle that is called Patmos; but now "Palmosa"; it is one of the islands of the Cyclades, in the Archipelago, or Icarian sea, and sometimes called the Aegean sea, and had its name from the turpentine trees in it; it is, as Pliny {u} says, about thirty miles in circumference; and it lay next to the churches on the continent, and is said to be about forty miles southwest of Ephesus, from whence John came thither, and to which church he writes first; how he came here he does not say, concealing, through modesty, his sufferings; he did not come here of his own accord; Ignatius says {w}, John efugadeueto, "was banished to Patmos": by Domitian emperor of Rome, as Irenaeus says {x}, at the latter end of his reign, about the year 95 or 96; and, as Tertullian {y} after he had been cast into a vessel of flaming oil, where he got no hurt: and this banishment was not for any immorality, and capital sin he had committed, but

for the word of God; for believing in Christ, the essential Word of God, and for professing and bearing record of him, both in preaching and writing:

and for the testimony of Jesus; for the Gospel of Christ, see **Re 1:2**; for embracing it, adhering to it, and publishing it: it is generally thought that John wrote his Revelation in this isle, though some think it is not to be concluded from these words, but the contrary that he had been here, but now was not, but at Ephesus, where he wrote what he had a vision of there.

{u} Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 12. {w} Epist. ad Tarsenses, p. 76. {x} Irenaeus adv. Haeres. l. 5. c. 30. {y} De Praescript. Haeret. c. 36.

Ver. 10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day,.... Not on the Jewish sabbath, which was now abolished, nor was that ever called the Lord's day, and had John meant that, he would have said on the sabbath day; much less the Jewish passover, but the first day of the week is designed; so the Ethiopic version renders it "on the first day"; and is so called just as the ordinance of the supper is called the Lord's supper, being instituted by the Lord, and the Lord's table, 1Co 10:21, and that because it was the day in which our Lord rose from the dead, Mr 16:9; and in which he appeared at different times to his disciples, Joh 20:19, and which the primitive churches set apart for his worship and service, and on which they met together to hear the word, and attend on ordinances, Ac 20:7; and Justin Martyr {z} tells us, who lived within about fifty years after this time, that on the day called th tou hliou hmera, "Sunday", (by the Greeks,) the Christians met together in one place, and read the Scriptures, and prayed together, and administered the ordinance of the supper; and this, he adds, was the first day in which God created the World, and our Saviour Jesus Christ rose from the dead; yea, Barnabas {a}, the companion of the Apostle Paul, calls this day the eighth day, in distinction from the seventh day sabbath of the Jews, and which he says is the beginning of another world; and therefore we keep the eighth day, adds he, joyfully, in which Jesus rose from the dead, and being manifested, ascended unto heaven: and this day was known by the ancients by the name of "the Lord's day"; as by Ignatius {b}, Irenaeus {c}, Tertullian {d}, Origen {e}, and others; for it must be some day that was known by this name, otherwise it is mentioned to no purpose, because it would not be distinctive from others; for which reason it cannot merely design the day in which John saw this vision, because the Lord appeared on it to him, for this would not distinguish it from any other day. Some have conjectured that this was not the weekly Lord's day observed by the Christians, but the anniversary of Christ's resurrection; and so the Ethiopians still call Easter "Schambatah Crostos", the sabbath of Christ: to understand it of the former is best. Now, though John was driven from the house and worship of God, and could not join with the saints in the public worship of that day; yet he was employed in spiritual contemplations and exercises, and was under a more than ordinary influence of the Spirit of God; and his spirit or soul was wholly intent upon, and taken up with divine and spiritual things, with visions and representations that were made unto his mind, which he perceived in his spirit, and not with the organs of his body; he was in an ecstasy of spirit, and knew not scarcely whether he was in the body or out of it:

and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet; which was the voice of the Son of God, as appears by what it uttered, **Re 1:11**; and is afterwards said to be as the sound of many waters; and it was behind him, as in Isa 30:21, it came to him at an unawares, and surprised him, while he was in deep meditation on spiritual things: and it was a very "great" one; it was the voice of a great person, of the Son of God, and expressed great things, and was very sonorous and loud, it was like the sound of a trumpet; and this was partly to awaken the attention of John to it, and partly to express the certainty of the relation he gives of what it said; had it been a low muttering voice, it might be questioned whether John rightly understood it, and whether he might not be mistaken in the account of what he heard; but it being so loud and clear, there is no room for such a doubt.

{z} Apolog. 2. p. 98, 99. {a} Epist. c. 11. p. 244. Ed. Voss. {b} Epist. ad. Magnes. c. 9. {c} Apud Script. Quaest. & Respons. ad Orthodox. inter Justin. Opera, p. 468. {d} De Corona, c. 3. {e} Homil. in Exod. fol. 41. 7.

Revelation 1:11

Ver. 11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last,.... These characters, which are repeated here, See Gill on "Re 1:8"; are left out in the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; but are very fitly retained, to point out the person that speaks; to express his dignity, deity, and eternity; to excite the attention of John, and to give weight to what he said:

and, what thou seest, write in a book; that it might remain, and be read of all men, and be profitable to the churches in the then present age, and in all future ones:

and send [it] unto the seven churches which are in Asia; from whence it appears, that not only the seven following epistles were sent to the churches, but that after John had written in a book the account of all the visions that he saw, the whole was sent unto them, for their use and benefit; and who are particularly named:

unto Ephesus; which was a city of Ionia, and which Pliny calls {f} the work of the Amazons, and the light of Asia; it was famous for the temple of Diana, but more so for having a church of Christ in it: hither the Apostle Paul came and preached, and continued for the space of two years; where a very famous church was planted by him, and proper officers appointed, to whom he wrote a very excellent epistle: this is now a miserable desolate place, not a city, but a village; and is called by the Turks, Aiasalik: of this place and church; See Gill on "Ac 18:19", See Gill on "Ac 20:17";

and unto Smyrna; another city of Ionia, so called from Smyrna, the wife of Theseus {g}, the builder of it; or from Smyrna, an Amazon {h}, the relies of whose marble bust are to be seen there to this day: it lies about forty six miles from Ephesus, and is by the Turks now called Esmir, and is still a place famous, not for pompous buildings, but for number of inhabitants, riches, and commerce:

and unto Pergamos; this was a city of Mysia, situated by the river Caicus, formerly the seat of the kings of Attalia, and was bequeathed by Attalus, their last king, to the Romans: it is famous for being the native place of Galen the physician, and of Apollodorus the rhetorician, master to Augustus Caesar, and for the invention of parchment in it, from whence it seems to have its name: it is now called by the Turks Bergamo, and is almost sixty four miles from Smyrna:

and unto Thyatira; a city of Lydia, near the river Lycus, formerly called Pelopia, and Euhippia, and now, by the Turks, Ak Hissar, or "the white camp", and is distant from Pergamos about forty eight miles; See Gill on "Ac 16:14";

and unto Sardis; this was another city of Lydia, situated at the side of Mount Tmolus, it was the metropolis of Lydia, and the seat of King Croesus, and is now called, by the Turks, Sart; and instead of a famous city, it is now an obscure little village, of mean houses, and scarce any other inhabitants in it than shepherds and cow keepers, and is thirty three miles from Thyatira:

and unto Philadelphia; another city of Lydia, situated at the foot of Mount Tmolus; it had its name from Attalus Philadelphus, the builder of it; it is now called, by the Turks, Alah Shahr, or "the fair city", though there is nothing beautiful or magnificent in it; it is distant from Thyatira about twenty seven miles:

and unto Laodicea; another city of Lydia, near the river Lycus, first named Diospolis, afterwards Rhoas, and is now, by the Turks, called Eski Hissar, or "the old camp"; and is inhabited by none, unless it be in the night, by wolves, foxes, and jackals, as our countryman Dr. Smith affirms, in his "Notitia" of the seven churches of Asia; from whom I have taken the account of these cities as they now are, and the rest from Pliny and Ptolomy chiefly.

{f} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 29. {g} Herodot. de Vita Homeri. c. 2. {h} Vid. Hiller. Onomastic. p. 932.

Revelation 1:12

Ver. 12. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me,.... The Complutensian edition reads, "and there I turned": and so the Arabic version; that is, to see who it was that spoke, from whom the voice came, and by whom it was uttered; see Ex 20:18;

and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; which represented the seven churches, **Re 1:20**; in allusion to the seven lamps in the candlestick of the sanctuary, Ex 25:37; compared to "candlesticks", for the use of them, which is to hold forth light; these have none of themselves, but what is put into them, and being put into them, they hold it forth; so the churches of Christ have no light of themselves, but what is put into them; and the light which is put into them, is not the mere light of nature, nor the law of Moses, but the Gospel of Christ; which dispels darkness, and is the means of enlightening sinners, and gives light to saints, by which they walk and work; and this light is put into the churches by Christ, whose the Gospel is, and who is himself come a light into the world; and being put here by him, it is held forth by them, especially by the ministers of it, who are the lights of the world, both by their ministry, and in their lives and conversations: and they are compared to "golden" candlesticks, because of their excellency, preciousness, and value, in the esteem of Christ; and for their brightness and purity in doctrine, discipline, and life; and for their splendour, glory, and beauty; and for their stability and duration; and though they are liable to corruption and taint, yet may be melted, refined, and purified as gold.

Revelation 1:13

Ver. 13. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks [one] like unto the son of man,.... By whom is meant not an angel, for he speaks of himself as a divine Person, as the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, phrases not applicable to any created beings; and of himself also as having been dead, which angels are not capable of, and of living again, and of living for evermore, and having power over death and the grave, which no creature has; yea, he calls himself expressly the Son of God, **Re 1:11**; so that Christ is manifestly designed, who, as a divine Person, appeared in a form like that individual human nature which was at his Father's right hand; for that human nature of his, or he as the son of man, was not in the midst of these candlesticks, or churches, but he the Son of God was in a form like to his human nature in heaven; so before his incarnation, he is said to be like unto the son of man, in **Da 7:13**; to which there is a reference here, and not only in this, but in some other parts of the description; so after his ascension, he in a visionary way appears, not in that real human nature he assumed, but in a form like unto it, that being in heaven; but when he was here on earth he is called the son of man, and not like to one; though even such a phrase may express the truth and reality of his humanity, for who more like to the son of man than he who is so? see **Joh 1:14**; now Christ was seen by John in the midst of the candlesticks or churches, and among whom he walked, as in **Re 2:1**; which is expressive of his presence in his churches, and which he has promised unto the end of the world; and of the gracious visits he makes them, and the sweet communion and conversation he indulges them with, to their joy and comfort; as well as the walks he takes among them for his own delight and pleasure; and where he is, abides and takes his turns, particularly as a priest, in which form he now appeared, as the antitype of Aaron the high priest, to him the lamps or candles in the candlesticks, to cause them to burn more brightly and clearly:

clothed with a garment down to the foot; which some understand of the righteousness of Christ; this is called a garment, a wedding garment, the best or first robe, the robe of righteousness; and is fitly compared to one, it being unto, and upon believers, put upon them, and which covers their persons, keeps them warm and comfortable, and beautifies and adorns them; and is a very beautiful, pure, and spotless robe; and reaches to the feet, covers all the members of Christ's mystical body, the meanest and lowest, as well as the more excellent; the weakest believer as well, and as much, as the strongest: but not Christ mystical, but personal, is here represented; others therefore think that this long garment is a sign of gravity and wisdom, it being usual for men of power and authority, and learning, as the Jewish sanhedrim, Scribes and Pharisees, to wear long garments; but it seems rather to design a priestly robe; the robe of the ephod wore by the high priest is called by this name in the Septuagint version of Ex 28:4; and so it is by Josephus {i}, who speaking of the hyacinthine tunic, or robe of blue, says, this is podhrhv, "a garment down to the foot", which in our language is called "Meeir"; rather it should be lyem, "Meil", which is its Hebrew name; and so this robe is expressed by the same word here, used by Philo the Jew {k}, and by Jerom {l}; so Maimonides {m} says, the length of his garment was to the top of his heel: and in the habit of a priest did Christ now appear; and so he is described in his priestly office, in the midst of his churches, having made atonement for their sins by the sacrifice of himself; and now as their high priest had entered into the holiest of all with his own blood and righteousness; bore their names on his breastplate, appeared in the presence of God on their account, and ever lived to make intercession for them:

and girt about the paps with a golden girdle; as the high priest was with the girdle of the ephod, which was made of gold, of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, Ex 28:8; and with which the priests were girt about the paps, or breast, as Christ is here described: it is said of the priests in Eze 44:18, "they shall not gird themselves with anything that causeth sweat"; which some render "in sweating places": and so some Jewish writers interpret it, which will serve to illustrate the present place;

"says R. Abai {n}, (upon citing Eze 44:18) they do not gird themselves in the place in which they sweat; according to the tradition, when they gird themselves they do not gird neither below their loins, nor above their arm holes, but over against their arm holes;"

the gloss says, upon their ribs, against their arm pit, that is, about their breast, or paps; and which is still more plainly expressed by the Targum on the above place, which paraphrases it thus,

"they shall not gird about their loins, but they shall gird Nwhbbl le, "about their heart"."

So Josephus {o} says, the high priest's garment was girt about the breast, a little below the arm holes. Christ's girdle, as a King, is the girdle of faithfulness and righteousness, which is about his loins; and his girdle, as a prophet, is the girdle of truth; but, as a priest, it is the girdle of love; it is that which has constrained him to put himself in the room and stead of his people, to assume their nature, give himself a sacrifice for them, and intercede on their behalf: this is like a girdle, round from everlasting to everlasting; is said to be "golden", because of the excellency, purity, glory, and duration of it; and because it is very strong, affectionate, and hearty, it is hid to be a girdle about the paps, near where is the heart, the seat of love; and this may also denote the power, strength, and readiness of Christ to assist and help his churches in every time of need.

{i} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 4. {k} De Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 671. {l} Ad Fabiolam. fol. 19. H. {m} Cele Hamikash, c. 8. sect. 17. {n} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 18. 2. & 19. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 74. 2. Vid. Jarchi & Kimchi in Ezek. xliv. 18. {o} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 2.

Revelation 1:14

Ver. 14. His head and [his] hairs [were] white like wool, as white as snow,.... In allusion to the white head and hairs of old men, said to be hoary, or like the hoar frost, and compared to an almond tree in bloom, Ec 12:5; and here to wool and snow for whiteness; see Eze 27:18; and according to the Jews {p}, Nbl rmu, "white wool", is the wool of a lamb just born, about which a cloth is bound, that it may not be defiled; now these metaphors are expressive of the antiquity of Christ, who is the everlasting Father, and whose goings forth were of old, even from everlasting; and of his senile gravity and prudence, for with the Ancient is wisdom; he is the wisdom of God, in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid; and also of his glory and majesty, being the brightness of his Father's glory; and likewise of his true and proper deity, since this description is the same with that of the Ancient of days in **Da 7:9**; for by his head is not here meant either God the Father, who is sometimes called the head of Christ, 1Co 11:3, nor his divine nature, which is the chief and principal in him, nor his headship over the church; nor do his hairs intend his elect, which grow upon him, and are nourished by him, and are so called for their number, weakness, and purity:

and his eyes [were] as a flame of fire: see Da 10:6; which may design the omniscience of Christ, which reaches to all persons, and things, and is very searching and penetrating, and discovers and brings to light things the most dark and obscure; and also Christ's eyes of love upon his own people, which have both heat and light; Christ's love never waxes cold, and, being shed abroad in the hearts of his people, warms theirs; and in the light of his gracious countenance do they see light; and his love, like flames of fire, melts their souls into a true and genuine repentance for sin: or else, rather his eyes of wrath and vengeance, as set upon his enemies, are here meant: which will be fierce and furious, bring swift and sudden destruction on them, before which there is no standing, and from which there is no fleeing. It is said of Augustus Caesar, that he had fiery eyes {q}.

{p} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 54. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Sabbat, c. 5. sect. 2. {q} Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 8. p. 13. 55.

Revelation 1:15

Ver. 15. And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace,.... By which is meant, not his human nature in a suffering state; or his people, the meaner and lower parts of his mystical body, in a like state; or his apostles and ministers, who are supporters of his church, and run to and fro with spiritual knowledge, for which, though they suffer much, are permanent and glorious; but either the power of Christ in bearing up and supporting his people, in the care and government and defence of them; or his ways, works, and walks in his churches, and all his providential administrations towards them, which are holy, just, and righteous, and will be manifest; or his wrath and vengeance in treading down and trampling upon his enemies:

and his voice as the sound of many waters; meaning his Gospel, as preached by his apostles and ministers, which was heard far and near; see Ro 10:18; and which made a great noise in the world; or his voice of vengeance on his enemies, which will be very terrible and irresistible.

Revelation 1:16

Ver. 16. And he had in his right hand seven stars,.... The angels or pastors of the seven churches, **Re 1:20**. The ministers of the Gospel are compared to stars, because of their efficient cause, God, who has made them, and fixed them in their proper place, and for his glory; and because of the matter of them, being the same with the heavens, so ministers are of the same nature with the churches; and because of their form, light, which they receive from the sun, so preachers of the Gospel receive their light from Christ; and because of their multitude and variety, so the ministers of the Gospel are many, and their gifts different; and chiefly for their usefulness, to give light to others, to direct to Christ, and point out the way of salvation, and to rule over the churches: nor was it unusual with the Jews to compare good men to stars, and to the seven stars. The Targumist {r} says, the seven lamps in the candlestick answer to the seven stars to which the righteous are like. These are led and held in Christ's right hand; which shows that they are dear unto him, and highly valued by him; that they are his, in his possession, at his dispose, whom he uses as his instruments to do his work; and whom he upholds and sustains, that they shall not sink under their burdens; and whom he preserves from failing, and so holds them that they shall stand fast in the faith, and not be carried away with the error of the wicked:

and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword; which designs the word of God; see **Eph 6:17**; This comes out of the mouth of Christ, it is the word of God, and not of man; and is a sharp sword, contains sharp reproofs for sin, severe threatenings against it, and gives cutting convictions of it, and is a twoedged one; and by its two edges may be meant law and Gospel; the law lays open the sins of men, fills with grief and anguish for them, yea, not only wounds, but kills; and the Gospel cuts down the best in man, his wisdom, holiness, righteousness, and carnal privileges, in which he trusts; and the worst in man, teaching him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts: or the word of God may be so called, because it is a means both of saving and of destroying; it is the savour of life unto life to some, and the savour of death unto death to others; and is both an offensive and defensive weapon; it is for the defence of the saints, against Satan, false teachers, and every other enemy; and an offensive one to them, which cuts them down, and destroys them and their principles: or this may mean the judiciary sentence of Christ upon the wicked, which will be a fighting against them, and a smiting of the nations of the world; see **Re 2:16**; which the Jews interpret of the law {s}:

and his countenance [was] as the sun shineth in his strength; at noonday; such was the countenance of Christ at his transfiguration, Mt 17:2; and designs here the manifestation of himself in the glories of his person, and in the riches of his grace; who is the sun of righteousness that arises upon his people with light, heat, joy, and comfort; see the phrase in **Jud 5:31**, which the Jewish writers understand of the strength of the sun both in the summer solstice, and in the middle of the day, or at noon, at which time its heat is strongest, and it usually shines brightest; the design of the metaphor is to set forth the glory and majesty of Christ.

{r} Jonathan ben Uzziel in Exod. xl. 4. {s} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 95. 4. & 131. 1.

Revelation 1:17

Ver. 17. And when I saw him,.... The glorious person here described, who was just behind him, and of whom he had a full view, being so near him:

I fell at his feet as dead; through consternation and fear, the sight was so amazing and terrible; the appearance of a divine person in any degree of majesty and glory, has had some considerable effect upon men, even upon the best of men; but John seems to be more affected with it than any, as the vision was the more grand and illustrious: Manoah was afraid he should die, but did not fall down as dead; Ezekiel fell upon his face, but had his senses; Daniel's comeliness turned into corruption, and he retained no strength, he fainted, and fell into a deep sleep; see Jud 13:22; but John fell down at once, as dead. This panic which good men were seized with, at any more than ordinary appearance of God, or apprehension of his presence, arose from a notion that present death ensues a sight of him; hence Jacob wonders, and is thankful, that he had seen God face to face, and yet his life was preserved, Ge 32:30; and such an effect as here, upon the body, any uncommon discovery of the divine Being has, partly through the weakness of human nature, which in its present circumstances is not able to bear the rays and glories of a divine person; hence the resurrection of the body in power, glory, and immortality, incorruption and spirituality, is necessary to the enjoyment of God and Christ in a state of bliss and happiness to all eternity; and partly through a consciousness of sin, which ever since the fall of Adam has occasioned fear and perturbation of mind, even in the best of saints, when they have had any sense of the divine Majesty being near, in an unusual form of glory:

and he laid his right hand upon me; even the same in which he had, and held the seven stars; and which showed what an affection he had for him, in what esteem he had him, what care he took of him, and what power he would exert in lifting up, strengthening, and supporting him; for he laid not his hand on him in wrath and angers, but in love; and in order to raise him up and revive his spirits, and remove his fears; hence the Ethiopic version renders it, "and he took hold on me with his right hand, and lifted me up"; as he does all who in a spiritual sense fall at his feet; it is always safe and comfortable falling there:

saying unto me, fear not; language which John had heard from him in the days of his flesh, and might therefore be chose now on purpose that he might the sooner know who he was and be comforted; see Mt 14:27.

I am the first and the last; a way of speaking used by God when he is about to comfort his people, and remove their fears; see Isa 41:4; and is used by Christ for the same purpose here; and so is a proof of his true and proper deity, and is expressive of his eternity, and also of his dignity and excellency: he is the first and last in divine predestination, in the covenant of grace, in creation, in the business of salvation, and in his church, by whom, and for whom, are all things in it; he is the head of the body, the Son over his own house, and the firstborn among many brethren; and so the Alexandrian copy read, here, "the firstborn and the last". Nwvar, "the first", is a name of the Messiah with the Jews {t}; See Gill on "Re 1:8".

{t} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 5. 1. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 63. fol. 55. 2. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 30. fol. 171. 2. & Tzeror Hammor, fol. 71. 4.

Revelation 1:18

Ver. 18. I [am] he that liveth,.... As the eternal God, who has life in himself, originally, essentially, and inderivatively, and is the fountain and author of life to others; and who ever lived as the Mediator and Redeemer, and still does, and ever will, yea, even when he was dead as man:

and was dead; he died the death of the cross, for the sins of his people, in due time, and but once; and it was but a short time he was held under the power of death, and will never die any more:

and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; he was always alive as God, or he was always the living God, and ever will be; and he is now alive as man, and will for ever continue so; and he is alive to God, he lives by him, with him, and to his glory; and he is alive to the benefit and advantage of his redeemed ones, for whom he died; he ever lives to make intercession for them; he rose again from the dead for their justification; their being quickened together with him, and their being begotten again to a lively hope, are owing to his being alive; and as their reconciliation is by his death, so their salvation, or the application of it to them, is by his interceding life; and his resurrection is the cause of theirs: this is very fitly said to John, who was fallen as dead at the feet of Christ, and might be to animate him against the fears of death, or whatever he was to meet with on account of Christ; as well as to make himself known unto him, who had before known him, living, dying, and risen again. The word "Amen" is left out in the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; but is in others, and is rightly retained, either as an asseveration of Christ to the truth of what is before said, or as an assent of John's unto it, who was a proper witness both of the death and resurrection of Christ:

and have the keys of hell and death; or "of death and hell"; as the words are transposed in the Alexandrian copy and Complutensian edition, in the Vulgate Latin and in all the Oriental versions, agreeably to **Re 6:8**, by which phrase is expressed the power of Christ over both: his power over death is seen in taking away persons by death when he pleases, the instances of Ananias and Sapphira are proofs of this; and in delivering persons from death when near it, as the centurion's servant, Peter's wife's mother, and the nobleman's son of Capernaum; and in raising persons from the dead, as Jairus's daughter, the widow of Naam's son, and Lazarus, when he was here on earth; and in his raising up his own body when dead, and which will also appear in raising all the dead at the last day: and his power over "hell", by which may be meant the grave, or the place of the departed, and separate souls, or the place of the damned and of the devils which are there, will be seen in opening the graves at the time of the resurrection, when death and hell, or the grave, will deliver up the dead in them, at his command; and in retaining or sending out the separate souls "in hades"; and in opening the doors of hell, and casting in the wicked, and destroying them, soul and body, there; and in shutting them up, that they cannot come out from thence who are once in; and in binding Satan, and casting him into the bottomless pit, and shutting him up there, the key of which he has in his hand; and in preserving his church and people from his power and malice, so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against them. This is an expression of the sovereignty, power, and authority of Christ; and is designed to encourage and support John under his present concern and anxiety of mind about the person he saw in this vision: hrwbq lv xtpm, "the key of the grave", and of the resurrection of the dead, is frequently said by the Jews to be one of the keys which are in the hands of the holy blessed God, and his only; not in the hands of an angel or a seraph, or any other {u}.

{u} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 73. fol. 64. 3. Targum Jerus. in Gen. xxx. 21. & Jon in Deut. xxviii. 12. Zohar in Gen. fol. 67. 3. Pirke Eliezer, c. 34. T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 2. 1. & Sandedrin, fol. 113. 1.

Revelation 1:19

Ver. 19. Write the things which thou hast seen,.... The Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Complutensian edition, read, "write therefore the things", &c. meaning what he had now seen, the vision of one like to the son of man, amidst the golden candlesticks, with seven stars in his right hand, and as above described; this was what he had seen **Re 1:12**; for it does not refer to what he had seen of Christ in the days of his flesh, but to what he had now seen in this representation of him:

and the things which are; the state of the churches of Christ in the apostolic age, and at that time signified by the Ephesian church, and that part of the Smyrnean which John lived to see:

and the things which shall be hereafter; from hence unto the end of the world, in successive generations, signified by the rest of the churches, and in the visions of the seals, trumpets, and vials.

Revelation 1:20

Ver. 20. The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand,.... The sense is, that John was to write the mystery of these stars, or the mystical sense of them:

and the seven golden candlesticks; the mystery, or mysterious sense of them also; for the words are in a continued connection with **Re 1:19**, and have respect to the following interpretation of them, and to the epistles in the following chapter, which are mystical, and prophetical of the state of the churches in all succeeding ages:

the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; that is, the seven stars which John saw in Christ's right hand, represent the angels, or pastors of the seven churches of Asia, and in them all the pastors and ministers of the churches in all the periods of time until Christ's second coming. Here it may be observed, that the ministers of the Gospel are not only compared to "stars", for which See Gill on "Re 1:16"; but likewise to "angels", which signifies "messengers", as ministers are sent forth by Christ with the message of the Gospel to publish to the sons of men; and as the angels are Christ's ministering spirits, so are the preachers of the Gospel the ministers of Christ, that wait upon him and serve him in the ministry of the word, and in the administration of ordinances; and there is some agreement between them in holiness, knowledge, zeal, diligence, and watchfulness, in their work; as also they may be so called for the honour and esteem in which they are, both with Christ and his churches; and who like the angels rejoice at the conversion of sinners, and the enlargement of the interest of Christ:

and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches; represent the seven churches, of Asia, and in them all the churches of Christ, in successive ages, to the end of time; the reasons why these are signified by "candlesticks", See Gill on "Re 1:12"; and that they are prophetic of the churches of Christ in the several periods of time, until he comes again, will appear from the following considerations: the whole book is called a prophecy, and a revelation of things that were shortly to come to pass, and it would be very strange, and very unsuitable to its title, should the three first chapters contain nothing prophetic in them; the characters of the divine Person under which these seven churches are saluted, as he which is, and was, and is to come, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, show that the things written to them belong to the Gospel church state, from the beginning to the end of it, for what other reason can be given for such a peculiar use of them? the very grand and illustrious appearance of Christ, antecedent to these epistles, when compared with the appearance of God, previous to the opening of the sealed book, and the seven seals of it, may induce one to conclude, that as the latter introduces the book prophecy in this revelation, so the former introduces the church prophecy; nor does it seem that such a magnificent appearance is necessary to the bare sending of some letters of advice to some particular churches: moreover, as there are some things in these epistles too common to all the churches and ministers to be restrained to some particular ones, such as Christ's affording his presence among them, signified by his walking amidst the candlesticks, and his care of, and respect unto the ministers of the Gospel, expressed by holding seven stars in his right hand; for can it be thought that Christ only granted his presence to the seven churches in Asia? or that the pastors of those churches were the only ones Christ holds in his right hand? so there are others too particular to certain periods to belong to those churches, as that Smyrna should have a crown of life, Pergamos hidden manna and a white stone, Thyatira the morning star, and Philadelphia be delivered from a temptation that would reach all the world, and is not yet come; for which no reason can be given in the literal sense of these epistles; and it is strange that only seven churches should be sent to, and these only in Asia; why not to the churches in Africa and Europe? and these churches also, all but Ephesus, very obscure ones; why not to the churches at Antioch, Corinth, Rome, &c. and it is stranger still, if, as Epiphanius says {w}, there was no church at Thyatira till after the writing of these letters: nothing can account for all this but their being prophetic, there being something in the number, names, situation, and case of these churches, which were emblematical of the state of the church in successive periods of time; to which may be added, that the epiphonema at the close of every epistle, "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches", shows that each epistle to every church is not designed for that church only, but for churches; and for what churches but for those who are represented in that period of time, since they must be unsuitable to one another? and besides, this concluding sentence shows, that what is contained in each epistle is something intricate, abstruse, and parabolical, it being only used when some such thing is delivered; see Mt 11:15. There is one observation more to be made, and which runs through all the epistles, and that is, that the names of the several churches, and the titles which Christ assumes in writing to each, as well as the subject matter of the epistles, have respect to the several distinct periods of the church; all which will more clearly appear in the following notes upon them.

{w} Contra Haeres. l. 2. Haeres. 51.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 2:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVALATION 2

This chapter contains the epistles to the churches at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira. It begins with that to Ephesus, in which the sender of it describes himself by some of his characters mentioned in the preceding chapter; takes notice of some things commendable in this church, **Re 2:1**, reproves her for leaving her first love; gives some advice upon it; threatens her in case of non-repentance; yet notwithstanding commends her for her detestation of some bad practices; and concludes the epistle with a phrase exciting to attention to what is written, and with a promise to them that are constant and conquering, **Re 2:4**, next follows the epistle to the church at Smyrna, in which the sender assumes some of his former titles; takes notice of her works in general, and of her afflictions in particular, and of the blasphemy of others, **Re 2:8**, fortifies her against a great affliction to be endured, described by its author, kind, use, and duration; and exhorts to faithfulness and constancy, with a promise of a crown of life, **Re 2:10**, and closes the epistle in the same form as the preceding, promising security from the second death to the persevering and conquering Christian, **Re 2:11**, and next in order is the epistle to the church at Pergamos, in which the sender takes to him one of the above characters in the description of him; observes her works and place of abode, and commends her faithfulness to him in the worst of times and places, **Re 2:12**, yet exhibits a complaint against her for having, and conniving at persons of bad principles and practice, called Balaamites and Nicolaitans, **Re 2:14**, exhorts to repentance, and in failure of it threatens to come and fight against them; and closes the epistle in the same manner as the two former, with a promise of hidden manna, a white stone, and a new name to him that overcomes, **Re 2:16**, and the last epistle in this chapter is that to the church at Thyatira, in which the sender makes use of some other titles and characters of his before mentioned; takes notice of her good works, and yet signifies he had a controversy with her, for permitting a false prophetess to teach in her, who seduced men to fornication and idolatry, **Re 2:18**, whose impenitence is complained of, and which was aggravated by having space for repentance given her, **Re 2:21**, wherefore, in case of continuance in impenitence, he threatens both her and her followers with tribulation and death, whereby the omniscience and justice of Christ would be manifest to all the churches, **Re 2:22**, and then another and better sort of men in this church are addressed, who are described as not having imbibed the doctrine of the false prophetess, and as not approving the depths of Satan, or her doctrines of devils; and these are told that no other burden should be laid on them than was, and are exhorted to hold fast what they had, until the coming of Christ, **Re 2:24**, and for their encouragement to hold on to the end, many promises are made unto them respecting their power and rule over their enemies, and the happy days that they should enjoy, **Re 2:26**, and the epistle is concluded with the usual epiphonema, **Re 2:29**.

Ver. 1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write,.... Of the city of Ephesus, See Gill on "Re 1:11" and
See Gill on "Ac 18:19". The church here seems to have been founded by the Apostle Paul, who continued here two years, by which means all Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, Ac 19:10; of this church,
See Gill on "Ac 20:17"; it is named first, because it was the largest, most populous, and famous, and was nearest to Patmos, where John now was, and most known to him, it being the place where he had resided; and it was the place from whence the Gospel came to others, and spread itself in lesser Asia; but especially it is first written to, because it represented the church in the apostolic age; so that this letter contains the things which are, **Re 1:19**; and in its very name, to the state of this church in Ephesus, there may be an allusion; either to efesiv, "ephesis", which signifies "desire", and may be expressive of the fervent love of that pure and apostolic church to Jesus Christ at the beginning of it; their eager desire after more knowledge of him, and communion with him; after his word and ordinances, and the maintaining of the purity of them; after the spread of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his kingdom in the world; as well as after fellowship with the saints, and the spiritual welfare of each other: the allusion may be also to afesiv, "aphesis", which signifies "remission", or an abatement; and so may point out the remissness and decay of the first love of these primitive Christians, towards the close of this state; of the abatement of the fervency of it, of which complaint is made in this epistle, and not without cause. This epistle is inscribed to the angel of this church, or the pastor of it; why ministers are called angels, See Gill on "Re 1:20"; some think this was Timothy, whom the Apostle Paul sent thither, and desired him to continue there, **1Ti 1:3**, there was one Onesimus bishop of Ephesus, when Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna, of whom he makes mention in his epistle {x} to the Ephesians, and bids fair to be this angel; though if any credit could be given to the Apostolic Constitutions {y} the bishop of this place was one John, who is said to be ordained by the

Apostle John, and is thought to be the same with John the elder {z}, the master of Papias; but though only one is mentioned, yet all the elders of this church, for there were more than one, see Ac 20:17; are included; and not they only, but the whole church over whom they presided; for what was written was ordered to be sent to the church, and was sent by John, see **Re 1:4**; the letter was sent to the pastor or pastors, to the whole body of ministers, by them to be communicated to the church; and not only to this particular church did this letter and the contents of it belong, but to all the churches of Christ within the period of the apostolic age, as may be concluded from **Re 2:7**.

These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand; the Syriac version reads, "that holds all things, and these seven stars in his right hand"; for the explanation of this character of Christ, See Gill on "Re 1:16"; only let it be observed how suitably this is prefixed to the church at Ephesus, and which represents the state of the churches in the times of the apostles; in which place, and during which interval, our Lord remarkably held his ministering: servants as stars in his right hand; he held and protected the Apostle Paul for two years in this place, and preserved him and his companions safe amidst the uproar raised by Demetrius the silversmith about them; here also he protected Timothy at a time when there were many adversaries, and kept the elders of this church pure, notwithstanding the erroneous persons that rose up among them; and last of all the Apostle John, who here resided, and died in peace, notwithstanding the rage and fury of his persecutors: likewise Christ in a very visible manner held all his faithful ministers during this period in his right hand, safe and secure, until they had done the work they were sent about, and preserved them in purity of doctrine and conversation; so that their light in both respects shone brightly before men. Moreover, as this title of Christ is prefixed to the epistle to the first of the churches, and its pastor or pastors, it may be considered as relating to, and holding good of all the ministers of the Gospel and pastors of the other churches; and likewise of all the churches in successive ages to the end of the world, as the following one also refers to all the churches themselves:

who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;
See Gill on "Re 1:12";
See Gill on "Re 1:13"; Christ was not only present with, and took his walks in this church at Ephesus, but in all the churches of that period, comparable to candlesticks, which held forth the light of the Gospel, and that in order as the antitype of Aaron, to him these lamps, and likewise in all his churches to the end of the world; see
Mt 28:20.

{x} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 36. {y} L. vii. c. 46. {z} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 39.

Revelation 2:2

Ver. 2. I know thy works,.... The good works, both of ministers and churches; no evil works are mentioned, nor anything complained of in this church but an abatement of the fervour of her first love. Christ, as the omniscient God, knows all the works of his people, and the springs, and principles, and ends, and views of them, whether they are done in obedience to him, and spring from love to him, and are performed in his strength, and by his grace, and are directed to his glory; and such he takes notice of, approves of, and is well pleased with, not as the ground of his delight in their persons, but as the fruits of his own grace; and during the apostolic age, churches and ministers were very diligent in working; yea, they were laborious, as follows:

and thy labour: particularly the labour of ministers of the Gospel, in these times, in the frequent preaching of it, in season and out of season; and in the constant administration of the ordinances; and in the diligent exercise of church discipline. The work of the ministry is a laborious work to the mind in studying, and to the body in the outward discharge of it; and it becomes more so, through the malice and opposition of enemies, and the weakness of friends; and such as are diligent and laborious deserve respect, even double honour; and though they may not have it from men, yet Christ takes notice of them and their labours, and commends them for them, and will reward them.

And thy patience; as this may refer to the ministers of the word, it may denote their patience in suffering reproaches and persecutions for the sake of the Gospel, which they bore patiently, cheerfully, and constantly; and in bearing the infirmities of weak saints, in their several communities; and in reclaiming and restoring persons out of the way; and in waiting for the success of their ministry, and their continuance and perseverance in it. And as this may respect members of churches, it may point at their patience under afflictions from the hand of God, and under reproach and persecution from men, for their embracing and professing the Gospel; and their patient waiting for the heavenly glory, and their firm expectation of it, and their perseverance unto it.

And how thou canst not bear them that are evil; that were so either in their principles or in their practices, or both; men that lived immoral lives, and held erroneous doctrines, these the primitive ministers and churches could not bear; they had an inward abhorrence and detestation of them in their minds; they could not bear them in communion with them; they admonished them according to the nature of their offence, and cast out such as were obstinate and incorrigible; they withdrew from such as were disorderly, and rejected heretics after the first and second admonition; their zeal for church discipline is here taken notice of to their commendation.

And thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not,
and hast found them liars; this doubtless was done in the church at Ephesus, where, after the Apostle Paul's departure, grievous wolves, in sheep's clothing, entered, and men arose from among themselves, speaking perverse things, Ac 20:29; yet it was not peculiar to that church, though it was to the apostolic age; for in no other could men with any face pretend to be the apostles of Christ; and such there were, who sprung up in the several churches at Jerusalem, Corinth, Galatia, and elsewhere, who called themselves the apostles of Christ, but were false apostles, deceitful workers; they pretended to have their doctrine, call, mission, and commission, immediately from Christ, as the true apostles had, and a power to work miracles, and talked of inspirations and revelations by the Spirit of God. Now the apostles, ministers, and churches of those times, tried their pretensions and doctrines by the word of God, and by the fruits which they produced in themselves and others; and through that discerning of spirits which they had, they found them to be liars; that they were not, nor had they what they pretended to be, and have, and exposed them as such.

Revelation 2:3

Ver. 3. And hast borne,.... Not evil men, nor false apostles, but "burdens", as the Ethiopic version reads, and as the word signifies; meaning afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions, which pressed sore, and lay heavy on these ministers and churches; and yet they bore them with constancy and cheerfulness, and were not moved by them. The Arabic version reads, "and thou hast borne me"; my name and Gospel, among the Gentiles, and carried it from place to place; see **Ac 9:15**;

and hast patience; which they had from God, as his gift, and which they had in their hearts, and in exercise, and found it useful to them. It was in exercise in a suitable time, and it continued with them; it was not worn out through the length and greatness of their trials.

And for my name's sake hast laboured: which may refer either to enduring sufferings for Christ's name's sake, for his Gospel's sake, for righteousness sake, for the sake of the elect, and for the sake of the honour, glory, and interest of Christ; or to labouring in the ministry, not for filthy lucre sake, nor for party sake, but for the honour of Christ, and the good of souls; and there never was an interval in which this was more true:

and hast not fainted: so as to sink under the burden borne; to have patience quite tired out; to, be weary of labouring for Christ's name's sake; and so as to give out, and quit the service of Christ.

Revelation 2:4

Ver. 4. Nevertheless I have [somewhat] against thee,.... So the Jews represent God saying, concerning their fathers, "Abraham", &c.
Mhyle yl vy, "I have something against them" {a}. Christ has nothing against his people, his faithful ministers, and true churches, in a judicial way, or to their condemnation, for there is none to them that are in him; but he has often many things to complain of in them, and to rebuke and chastise them for, in a way of providence: and what he had against the church at Ephesus, and against the churches in the period which that represents, follows,

because thou hast left thy first love: by which is meant, not hospitality to strangers, or an affectionate care of the poor of the church, or a zealous concern to feed the flock, and maintain church discipline; but the love of the saints to God, and Christ, and one another, which appeared at the beginning of this church state, when they were all of one heart and one soul, as generally at first conversion love is the warmest; and so it was at the first planting of Gospel churches, and therefore here called first love. Now this, though it was not lost, for the true grace of love can never be lost, yet it was left; it abated in its heat and fervour; there was a remissness in the exercise of it; what our Lord had foretold should be before the destruction of Jerusalem was fulfilled in this period of time, the love of many waxed cold,
Mt 24:12; through the prevalence of corruption in some; and through an over love to the world, as in Demas, and others; and through a desire of ease and freedom from reproach and persecution; and through the introduction of errors, which damp the heat of love, and spirit of religion; and through the contentions and divisions among themselves, as at Corinth, Galatia, and elsewhere, which greatly weakened their love to one another, and to divine things; and which

was very displeasing to Christ, who, for the restoring of them, gives the following advice. Compare with this **2Ti 1:15**.

{a} Pesikta Rabbati apud Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 60. 4.

Revelation 2:5

Ver. 5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen,.... Believers cannot totally and finally fall away from the grace which they have received; but they may fall into sin, and from a degree of grace, and the exercise of it, as these first and pure churches did, from some degree of their love to God, and Christ, and one another; and therefore are called upon to remember, mind, and observe from what degree of it they were fallen; in order to bring them under a conviction and acknowledgment of their evil, and a sense of their present state, and to quicken their desires after a restoration to their former one:

and repent; of their coldness and lukewarmness, of the remissness of their love, and of those evils which brought it upon them:

and do the first works; of faith and love, with the like zeal and fervour, which will show the repentance to be sincere and genuine; so the Arabic version reads, "and exercise the former works, to wit, charity" or "love". The Jews have a saying {b},

"if a man repents, do not say to him, "remember"
Mynwvarx Kyvem, "thy first works";"

which they seem to understand of evil works; but former good works are to be remembered and done, to show the truth of repentance for evil ones.

Or else I will come unto thee quickly; not in a spiritual way, to pay a love visit, nor in a judicial way, to take vengeance or inflict punishment, but in a providential way, to rebuke and chastise:

and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent; or thee out of the candlestick, the pastor from the church, either by persecution or by death; or else the church, and church state itself, signified by a candlestick; See Gill on "Re 1:12"; and may design a shaking and an unsettling of it, which is sometimes done by violent persecutions, and by false teachers and their doctrines, and by the divisions and contentions of saints among themselves;

and by the former particularly was there a change made in the state of this apostolic church, when it passed into the Smyrnean one, which was a period of great persecution and distress; for this cannot be understood of the total removing of the church state itself quickly, no, not of Ephesus itself; for though there is not now indeed, nor has there been for many hundred years, a church of Christ in that place, yet there was one till the times of Constantine, when there was none in any of the other seven cities, and a long time after; See Gill on "Ac 20:17"; which shows, that this was not a commination or threatening of divine vengence to that church literally, but to the state of the church, which that represented; nor does it intend the utter abolition of that church, for the apostolic church still continued, though it ceased to be in the circumstances it was before.

{b} Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 4. sect. 10.

Revelation 2:6

Ver. 6. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans,.... Though these Christians had left their first love, yet they bore an hatred to the filthy and impure practices of some men, who were called "Nicolaitans"; who committed fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness, and had their wives in common, and also ate things offered to idols; who were so called, as some think {c}, from Nicolas of Antioch, one of the seven deacons in **Ac 6:5**; though as to Nicolas himself, it is said {d}, that he lived with his own lawful married wife, and no other, and that his daughters continued virgins all their days, and his son incorrupt; and that these men, so called, only shrouded themselves under his name, and abused a saying or action of his, or both, to patronize their wicked deeds: he had used to advise paracrhsyai th sarki, by which he meant a restraining of all carnal and unlawful lusts; but these men interpreted it of an indulgence in them, and so gave themselves up to all uncleanness; and whereas, he having a beautiful wife, and being charged with jealousy, in order to clear himself of it, he brought her forth, and gave free liberty to any person to marry her as would; which indiscreet action of his these men chose to understand as allowing of community of wives. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, that these Nicolaitans were not called so from any man, but from the word hlykn, "Nicolah", "let us eat", which they often used to encourage each other to eat things offered to idols. However this be, it is certain that there were such a set of men, whose deeds were hateful; but neither their principles nor their practices obtained much in this period of time, though they afterwards did; see **Re 2:15**. Professors of the Christian religion in general abhorred such impure notions and deeds, as they were by Christ:

which also I hate; all sin is hateful to Christ, being contrary to his nature, to his will, and to his Gospel; and whatever is hateful to him should be to his people; and where grace is, sin will be hateful, both in themselves and others; and men's deeds may be hated when their persons are not; and hatred of sin is taken notice of by Christ, with a commendation.

{c} Vid. Irenaeum adv. Haeres, l. 1. c. 27. & Tertull. de Praescript. Haeret. c. 46, 47. {d} Clement. Alex. Strom. l. 3. p. 436. & Euseb, Hist. Eccl. l. 2. c. 29.

Revelation 2:7

Ver. 7. He that hath an ear,.... Such who have new ears given them, as all have who are made new creatures; such who have their ears circumcised, and opened by the Spirit of God; who hear with understanding, affection, and faith; who try what they hear, and approve, embrace, and retain that which is good.

Let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; let such hearken, and listen with attention to what is said by the Spirit, in what goes before, and follows after, in this epistle, designed for the use of all the churches; from whence it appears, that this epistle was endited by the Spirit of God, and is of divine inspiration; that it was not intended for the single use of the church at Ephesus, but of all the churches; and not of the seven churches only, though the Alexandrian copy reads, "to the seven churches": but of all the churches in that period of time, which the Ephesine church represents; and which may also be useful to the churches of Christ in all other ages and periods of time. And moreover, it may be concluded from hence, that there are in this epistle, and so in all the rest, for the same words are subjoined to them all, some things which are parabolical and prophetic, and not obvious to everyone's understanding and view; for a like expression is used by our Lord, when he had delivered anything in a parabolical way, or was obscure; see Mt 11:15.

To him that overcometh: the false apostles, false teachers, and their doctrines; coldness, lukewarmness, and remissness in love; the impure tenets and practices of the Nicolaitans:

will I give to eat of the tree of life; by which is meant Jesus Christ himself, in allusion to the tree of life in the garden of Eden; and is so called, because he is the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; and because of his fruit, the blessings of life and grace, that are in him, of which believers may eat by faith, and which they find to be soul quickening, comforting, strengthening, and satisfying; and which are Christ's gift to them, even both the food they eat, and the faith by which they eat, are his gifts. So Christ, under the name of Wisdom, is called the Tree of life, in **Pr 3:18**; and this is a name which is sometimes given by the Jews to the Messiah {e}:

which is in the midst of the paradise of God; as the tree of life was in the garden of Eden, **Ge 2:9**. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "the paradise of my God"; the God of Christ, as well as of his people; and by which may be meant, either the church on earth, which is as a paradise, **So 4:12**; in the midst of which Christ is, affording his gracious presence, and reaching forth his grace, and the benefits of it, to his people; or heaven, See Gill on "2Co 12:4", said to be of God, because it is of his preparing, and where he dwells, and in the midst of which Christ, the Tree of life, is; and this shows, that he is to be come at by faith, and his fruit to be eaten, and lived upon; and he is to be beheld and enjoyed by all his saints, as he is now, and will be more perfectly hereafter.

{e} Zohar in Gen. fol. 33. 3.

Revelation 2:8

Ver. 8. And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write,.... Of the city of Smyrna, See Gill on "Re 1:11". That there was a church of Christ here is not to be doubted, though by whom it was founded is not certain; very likely by the Apostle Paul, who was in those parts, and by whose means all Asia heard the Gospel of Christ, Ac 19:10. Some think the present angel or pastor of this church, was Polycarp, the disciple of John. Irenaeus {f}, who knew him, says he was appointed bishop of Smyrna by the apostles. Here he suffered martyrdom, and was buried: the large amphitheatre, in which he was put to death, is still to be seen, and his sepulchre is yet preserved in this place {g}: a very famous epistle, sent by this church at Smyrna to the churches at Pontus, giving an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, and others, is extant in Eusebius {h}. According to the Apostolical Constitutions {i}, the first bishops of Smyrna were Aristo Strataeas and Aristo the second, and Apelles, of whom mention is made in Ro 16:10; and who is reckoned among the seventy disciples; See Gill on "Lu 10:1"; and is said to be bishop of Smyrna before Polycarp; who succeeded Polycarp, I do not find; but it is said there was a church at Smyrna in the "third" century; and so there was in the beginning of the "fourth", since there was a bishop from hence in the council at Nice: and in the "fifth" century, mention is made of several bishops of this place; as of Cyrus, a native of Constantinople; and Protherius, who, it is thought, succeeded him, and was present in the synod at Chalcedon; and Aethericus, who assisted at three synods in this century, at Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon: and in the "sixth" century, there was a bishop of Smyrna in the fifth synod held at Rome and Constantinople: and even in the "eighth" century, one Antony, a monk, supplied the place of the bishop of Smyrna in the Nicene synod {k}. The Turks have in this place now thirteen mosques, the Jews two synagogues, and of the Christians there are two churches belonging to the Greeks, and one to the Armenians {l}. This church, and its pastor, represent the state of the church under the persecutions of the Roman emperors. Smyrna signifies "myrrh", which being bitter of taste, is expressive of the bitter afflictions, and persecutions, and deaths, the people of God in this interval endured; and yet, as myrrh is of a sweet smell, so were those saints, in their sufferings for Christ, exceeding grateful and well pleasing to him; wherefore nothing is said by way of complaint to this church; not that she was without fault, but it was proper to use her tenderly in her afflicted state: and, as Dr. More observes, as myrrh was used in the embalming of dead bodies, it may point to the many deaths and martyrdoms of the saints in this period, whereby their names and memories are perpetuated and eternized.

These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive. Of these characters of Christ, See Gill on "Re 1:8",
See Gill on "Re 1:11",
See Gill on "Re 1:17",
See Gill on "Re 1:18"; and they are very appropriately mentioned, to encourage the saints under their sufferings of death; since Christ, who is the eternal God, had in human nature tasted of the bitterness of death for them, and was risen again; suggesting, that though they were called to undergo the bitterest deaths for his sake, they should be raised again as he was, and live with him for ever. The Ethiopic version reads, "thus saith the holy Spirit"; but it cannot be said of him that "he was dead".

{f} Adv. Haeres. l. 3. c. 3. {g} Vid. Smith. Notitia septem Eccles. Asiae, p. 164, 165. {h} Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 15. {i} L. 7. c. 46. {k} Hist. Eccles. Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. p. 2. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 595, 596. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4. {l} Smith. Notitia, p. 167.

Revelation 2:9

Ver. 9. I know thy works,.... Good works, as before in **Re 2:2**;

and tribulation; this is Christ's legacy to his people, and which lies in their way to heaven; and never was the way of any to heaven more strewed with it than was the way of the saints in this period. But Christ took notice of it, and of them in it; he knew their souls in adversity, and remarked their patience under it, and their constancy, and close adherence to him:

and poverty; which was true in a literal sense, through the spoiling of their goods, to which they were exposed for the profession of Christ: nothing is more contemptible among men than poverty, yet Christ takes notice of it, and owns his people in it; for this poverty came not by sin, but by sufferings for his sake:

but thou art rich; they were rich, in faith, and heirs of a kingdom, though poor in this world; they were rich with the riches of Christ, with the blessings of the covenant, with the graces of the Spirit, and in good works; they were kings and priests unto God, had a kingdom of grace here, and a right to the kingdom of glory hereafter; and were heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

And [I know] the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not; who asserted themselves to be the true Israel of God, Jews that were so inwardly, regenerate persons, or truly Christians; for the Christians, baptized persons {m}, were by the Heathens called Jews; but these were not, they professed Christianity in words, but in works denied it; they were men of bad principles and practices, and both blasphemed the ways and doctrines of Christ themselves, and caused them to be blasphemed by others also; they were false Christians, nominal professors, and shunned persecution for the Gospel; who were not what they would be thought to be: these were the broachers of heresies in this period of time, in which there was a multitude of them, and which chiefly respected the doctrine of the Trinity, and the person of Christ; and they were introducers of Pagan and Jewish rites into the church, and were men of flagitious lives and conversations, and paved the way for the man of sin:

but [are] the synagogue of Satan: were the children of the devil, imitated him, and were influenced by him, and were the forerunners of antichrist, whose coming was after the working of Satan.

{m} Vid. Arrian. Epictet. l. 2. c. 9.

Revelation 2:10

Ver. 10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer,.... God's people undergo sufferings of various sorts, as the Christians of those times did, scourgings, imprisonment, confiscation of goods, and death itself in various shapes; and these are certain, they shall suffer them; they are all known beforehand to Christ, and he sometimes gives his people previous notice of them, nor should they indulge a slavish fear about them. It is reported of Polycarp, bishop of this church at Smyrna, in a letter written by the church itself {n} that three days before he suffered, he dreamed his pillow, on which he laid his head, was on fire; upon which, awaking, he said to those that were by him, that he should be burnt for Christ; and when he came to suffer, as he was led along, a voice was heard by the bystanders, Polycarp, be strong, and play the man.

Behold, the devil shall cast [some] of you into prison; which has been the lot of many of the saints, and was of some, even of the faithful ministers of the word in this interval; in which Satan had an hand, instigating their enemies to prevent and stop the progress of the Gospel, and deter others both from preaching and professing it: the end was in the permission of it,

that ye may be tried; that their graces might be tried, their faith, love, zeal, courage, faithfulness, and constancy. Suffering times are trying times, whether men are real Christians or not; whether they have the true grace of God or not; and whether the principles they hold are right and true, and are worth, and will bear suffering for:

and ye shall have tribulation ten days: meaning it may be the ten persecutions under the Roman emperors; the "first" was under Nero, in the year 64 or 66; the "second" was under Domitian, about the year 93; the "third" was under Trojan, in the year 104; the "fourth" was under Hadrian, in the year 125; the "fifth" was under Marcus Antoninus, in the year 151; the "sixth" was under Septimius Severus, in the year 197; the "seventh" was under Maximinus, in the years 235, 236, 237; the "eighth" was under Decius, in the year 250; the "ninth" was under Valerianus, in the year 257; and the "tenth" was under Dioclesian, in the year 303. Austin {o} reckons the ten persecutions thus: the first by Nero, the second by Domitian, the third by Trojan, the fourth by Antoninus, the fifth by Severus, the sixth by Maximus, the seventh by Decius, the eighth by Valerianus, the ninth by Aurelianus, the tenth by Dioclesian and

Maximianus. Others, inasmuch as Nero's persecution was before this vision, reckon the ten persecutions thus: Domitian, Trojan, M. Antoninus, Verus and Lucius, Severus, Maximinus, Decius, Valerianus, Aurelianus, Dioclesianus, Licinius: the Dioclesian persecution lasted ten years almost throughout: and some think that this last persecution, which held ten years, is here particularly meant, and not without some good reason; since it is usual in prophetic writings, and in this book of the Revelation, to put days for years; so that these ten days may be the ten years the last persecution held, and at which time the period of this church state ended, and that of Pergamos took place.

Be thou faithful unto death: which is an address to the ministers in this interval, to be faithful in preaching the pure and unmixed Gospel of Christ; in a constant administration of the ordinances, as they were delivered; in watching over the souls of men under their care, reproving, exhorting, &c. with all longsuffering; continuing in the discharge of duty, though in continual danger of death, and though it issued in it. And also to the churches and the members of them, to continue believing in Christ, professing his name, striving for his Gospel, attending on his ordinances, and following him whithersoever he went; though this should expose them to sufferings, even unto death, which it became them cheerfully to undergo: and to which they are encouraged by what follows,

and I will give thee a crown of life; which may refer not only to eternal life, which is so called, **Jas 1:12**; because of the glory of that state, and its everlasting continuance, and is in the possession and gift of Christ; but to the deliverance of the Christians from persecution, by Constantine; who coming to the imperial crown, that became not only a crown of glory to him, but of life to the church, and was as life from the dead unto the saints: to dead men is promised a crown of life, in allusion to the Gentiles, who crowned their dead {p}.

{n} Apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 15. {o} De Civitate Dei, l. 18. c. 52. {p} Vid. Minut. Felix, p. 42.

Revelation 2:11

Ver. 11. He that hath an ear, let him hear,....
See Gill on "Re 2:7";

he that overcometh; and is not intimidated by poverty, confiscation of goods, tribulation, persecution, and death itself, but through Christ is a conqueror, and more than a conqueror over all these things:

shall not be hurt of the second death; by which is meant eternal death, in distinction from a corporeal and temporal one; and lies in a destruction of both body and soul in hell, and in an everlasting separation from God, and a continual sense of divine wrath; but of this the saints shall never be hurt, they are ordained to eternal life; this is secured for them in Christ, and he has it in his hands for them, and will give it to them. The phrase is Jewish, and is opposed to the first death, or the death of the body; which is the effect of sin, and is appointed of God, and which the people of God die as well as others; but the second death is peculiar to wicked men. So the Jerusalem Targum on De 33:6; paraphrases those words, "let Reuben live, and not die", thus;

"let Reuben live in this world, and not die anyynt atwmb, "by the second death", with which the wicked die in the world to come."

Of which sense of the text and phrase Epiphanius makes mention {q}. See the same phrase in the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, in Isa 22:14; and in Jer 51:39; and in Philo the Jew {r}.

{q} Contr. Haeres. Haeres. 9. {r} De Praemiis & Poenis, p. 921.

Revelation 2:12

Ver. 12. And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,.... Of the city of Pergamos, See Gill on "Re 1:11". In it was a church of Christ, but when it begun, and how long it lasted, is not certain. Antipas, who is mentioned, **Re 2:13**; is thought, by some, to have been the pastor of it. Though, according to the Apostolical Constitutions {s}, Caius was the first bishop of it; and it appears, that in the "second" century there were several in this place that suffered martyrdom for Christ, as Carpus, Papulus, and a woman whose name was Agathonice {t}. Attalus, the martyr, who suffered in the same century, was also a native of this place {u}. In the "fifth" century there was a bishop of Pergamos in the council at Ephesus; and in the "sixth" century, there was one in the "fifth" synod at Constantinople; and in the "seventh" century, Theodorus, bishop of the church here, was in the sixth synod held at the same place; and in the "eighth" century one Pastilas was bishop of Pergamos; and in the same age, Basil, bishop of this place, was in the Nicene synod {w}; and the Christian name now is not wholly, though almost extinct; for when our countryman, Dr. Smith {x}, was there, there was a little church called St. Theodore's, whither a priest was frequently sent from Smyrna, to perform divine service, there being but a very few Christian families in it. This church represents the church from the time of Constantine, and onward, rising up to, and enjoying great power, riches, and honour Pergamos signifies high and lofty; things that were sublime and lofty, were, by the Greeks, called ta pergama, and also all high and lofty towers {y}. It was built under a very high and steep mountain, upon the top of which a tower was erected, by the lords of the lesser Asia, which still continues {z}. The church it represents had its principal seat at Rome, where Satan dwelt, **Re 2:13**; which signifies exalted likewise; and it introduces the man of sin, antichrist, the popes of Rome, who exalted themselves above all that is called God, princes, kings, and emperors; whom they excommunicated, dethroned, trod upon their necks, kicked off their crowns, and obliged them to hold their stirrups while they mounted their horses, with other haughty action, too many to name.

These things, saith he, which hath the sharp sword with two edges: of which See Gill on "Re 1:16"; This title is used partly to show, that the only weapon this church, and the true ministers and members of it had, to defend themselves against the growing corruptions of antichrist, who in this interval rose up by degrees, and was revealed, and came to the height of his power, was the word of God, the Scriptures of truth; and partly to show, that in process of time, though not in this period, the man of sin should be destroyed, with the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming; of which his fighting against the Nicolaitans, with the sword of his mouth, **Re 2:16**; is an emblem.

{s} L. 7. c. 46. {t} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 15. {u} Ib. l. 5. c. 1. {w} Hist. Eccl. Magdeburgh. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4. {x} Notitia, p. 120. {y} Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 1. p. 403, & l. 2. p. 633. Ed Basil. 1586. {z} Smith. Notitia, p. 112.

Revelation 2:13

Ver. 13. I know thy works,.... Both good and bad, and which in that pure part of this church, which opposed the growing corruptions of antichrist, were for the most part good.

And where thou dwellest, [even] where Satan's seat [is]. Pergamos was a city very much given to idolatry, here Satan reigned while it was Pagan, and so was a fit emblem of the idolatrous church of Rome. Pausanias says {a}, the country the Pergamenes inhabited was sacred to the Cabiri, the chief gods of the Heathens. And the same writer {b} observes, that Aesculapius particularly was worshipped at Pergamos; and hence he is called by Martial {c} the Pergamean god; to his temple here, men used to go from different parts of the world for cure of diseases; hither Antoninus the emperor went for such a purpose, as Herodian {d} relates; and this being a common thing, hence Lucian {e} scoffingly says, that Aesculapius had an apothecary's shop at Pergamos. As Rome, and its dominions, were the principal seat of the church in this period of time, it may well be called Satan's seat or throne; not only because it had been the seat of the Roman emperors, the ten horned and seven headed beast, Re 13:2; but because it was the seat of antichrist, which the great dragon Satan gave him, whose coming was after the working of Satan, and he was influenced by him; and who, like Satan, exalted himself above all that is called God; yea, placed himself in the temple of God, the church, as God, showing himself to be God, assuming that power to himself which only belonged to God. Moreover, he may be called so for his enmity and malice against the saints, and for his art and subtlety, and insidious methods to ensnare and destroy them. Now to dwell where such an one has his seat, his throne, has a kingdom, power, and authority, must be very uncomfortable, as well as dangerous; and required great care, circumspection, and prudence how to behave: and yet to the commendation of this church it is said,

and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith: the pure members of this church are the two witnesses, which rose up at the beginning of the apostasy of Rome, and bore their testimony against it, and for the truth; and continued to do so amidst all the corruptions and persecutions of that state: these are the two olive trees, that, through the golden pipes of the word and ordinances, emptied the golden oil of Gospel truths out, of themselves, pure and incorrupt, and the two candlesticks that held forth the light of the Gospel in the darkest times of Popery; these held fast the name of Christ, or the Gospel, and denied not, but confessed the doctrine of faith in the worst of times. They had the truths of the Gospel in their possession, which were dear and valuable to them; and whereas there was danger of losing them, they held them fast, with great courage, magnanimity, and strength, though the greater number was against them, and they were attended with reproach and persecution:

even in those days wherein Antipas [was] my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. Antipas is the proper name of a man; so a son of Herod was called {f}, even he that beheaded John, and mocked Christ: and there might be a man of this name at Pergamos, that might suffer martyrdom for the Gospel of Christ; and who was an emblem of the confessors, witnesses, and martyrs, that suffered for Christ, in this period of time, through their opposition to the popes of Rome; for Antipas is the contraction of Antipater, and is the same with Antipapas, or Antipappas, which signifies one that is against the pope, an opposer of that holy father; and so intends all those that made head against him, upon his rising and revelation, and when he assumed the power he did to himself; such as the Waldenses and Albigenses particularly, who set themselves against him, openly declared that the pope was antichrist, and that his government was tyrannical, and his doctrines the doctrines of devils, abominable and fabulous. They bore a faithful testimony against all his corruptions and innovations, and became martyrs in the cause of Christ, many thousands of them being slain for his sake within the dominions of this firstborn of Satan. The Alexandrian copy reads "Anteipas"; and his name is left out in the Syriac and Arabic versions.

{a} L. 1. sive Attica, p. 8. {b} L. 3. sive Laconica, p. 215. {c} L. 9. Epig. 14. {d} Hist. l. 4. c. 14. {e} In Icaro Menippo. {f} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 17. c. 1. sect. 3. De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 28. sect. 4.

Revelation 2:14

Ver. 14. But I have a few things against thee,.... The members of this church before their open separation from the apostasy; who still continued in the communion of the corrupt church of Rome, though they remonstrated against the errors and evil practices that crept in; and so were a stumbling block, and a snare to others to join in their idolatry and superstition:

because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel,
to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication: which latter was in order to the former: the instruction Balaam gave to Balak, which is here called his doctrine, was, that Balak should get some of the most beautiful women in his kingdom to ply the men of Israel, and draw them into uncleanness, and so to idolatry; by which means, God being angry with them, he might get an advantage over them: that the Israelites did commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab, and eat things sacrificed to idols, and bowed down to Baal Peor, is certain, Nu 25:1; but that this was brought about through the counsel of Balaam is not so plainly expressed, though it is hinted at in Nu 31:15; but the Jewish writers are very express about this matter. Jonathan ben Uzziel, one of their Targumists on Nu 24:14, has these words of Balaam;

"Come, and I will counsel thee, (speaking to Balak,) go and set up inns, and place in them whorish women, to sell food and drink at a low price: and this people will come and eat and drink, and be drunken, and will lie with them, and deny their God; and they will be quickly delivered into thine hands, and many of them shall fall."

This now was the stumbling block he taught Balak to lay before them. And elsewhere {g} it is said,

"that Balaam, the wicked, gave counsel to Balak, the son of Zippor, to cause the Israelites to fall by the sword; he said to him, the God of this people hates whoredom, cause thy daughters to commit whoredom with them, and ye shall rule over them."

And then they go on to relate how they built shops, and placed an old woman without, and a young woman within; and when the Israelites came to buy, how well they used them, and what familiarity they admitted them to; how they made them drink of Ammonitish wine, which inclined to lust and when the signified their desire, oblige them to worship Baal Peor, and renounce the law of Moses. Both Philo {h} and Josephus {i} speak of this counsel of Balaam, much to the same purpose. The Samaritan Chronicle says {k} that this counsel pleased the king, and he sent into the camp of Israel, on a sabbath day, twenty four thousand young women, by whom the Israelites were so seduced, that they did everything they desired them, which was just the number of those that were slain, Nu 25:9. By Balaam may be meant the pope of Rome, for that name signifies, "the lord of the people"; and is very appropriate to him, who in this interval took upon him to be universal bishop, and lorded it over both church and state, in a most haughty and tyrannical manner; and the Balaamites were those who submitted to his power and authority, and received his doctrines; and by Balak, king of Moab, may be intended the secular powers, the emperors, kings, and princes of the earth, who were instructed by the popes of Rome, to draw their subjects into idolatry, which is spiritual fornication, to eat the breaden God, to worship the host, images, and saints departed; and which proved a snare, and a stumbling to some of this church, as to the Israelites of old, to do the same things.

{g} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 28. 4. & Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 229. 1. Yalkut, par. 1. fol. 244. 3, 4. & par. 2. fol. 76. 4. {h} De Vita Mosis, l. 7. p. 647, 648. {i} Antiqu. l. 4. c. 6. sect. 6, 7, 8, 9. {k} Apud Hottinger. Exercit. Antimorin. p. 109.

Revelation 2:15

Ver. 15. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans,.... These impure heretics sprung up in the time of the apostolic church, but their doctrines were not received, and their deeds were hated, see **Re 2:6**. This seems to design the doctrines of the church of Rome, which in this period took place; which forbid marriage to the priests, and recommended celibacy and virginity to others also; which were the source of all uncleanness and abominable lusts; for which pardons and indulgences were given, and, in process of time, brothel houses were set up, and licensed and encouraged by authority.

Which thing I hate; the doctrine of these men, as well as their deeds.

Revelation 2:16

Ver. 16. Repent,.... This is said to those who were truly godly in those times, but still retained their communion with these corrupt men, and had not, as yet, separated from then; nor had they protested against these evil doctrines and practices, at least but very coldly, and had too much connived at them; and therefore are called upon to repent of their lukewarmness, negligence, and sinful compliances:

or else I will come unto thee quickly: in a providential way, to rebuke and chastise for such remissness, indifference, and evil communication:

and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth; of this sword, See Gill on "Re 1:16". And it is observable, that Christ does not say, "I will fight against thee"; the true members of his mystical body, though lax and supine, for Christ does not fight against his people, but for them; but he says, "and will fight against them"; the Balaamites and Nicolaitans, for their idolatry and uncleanness.

Revelation 2:17

Ver. 17. He that hath an ear, let him hear,....
See Gill on "Re 2:7".

To him that overcometh; the Balaamites and Nicolaitans, and do not give in to the doctrines and practices of the one, or of the other, whatever persecution and trouble he meets with, and endures on that account:

will I give to eat of the hidden manna; in opposition to eating things sacrificed to idols, refused by him. The allusion is to the manna which the Israelites ate of in the wilderness, which may be called "hidden": either because they knew not what it was, when they first saw it; or because it was laid up in a golden pot, and put in the most holy place, where it was secret, and none but the high priest could see it, and who entered there but once a year: or rather, because it was at first, hidden under the dew; for according to the account the Jews give of it, a dew first fell upon the ground, then the manna upon that, and then another dew upon the manna; so that there was a dew under it, and a dew over it; insomuch that it was as if it was laid up, they say, in a box or chests {l}; and they supposed the manna had respect to things future {m} and do expect it in the times of the Messiah. They say {n}, as the first, so the last Redeemer will cause manna to descend from heaven; and the clouds are by them reckoned the mills which will grind manna for the righteous in the world to come {o}: yea, they speak {p} of
amto anm, "hidden manna", as the food of the righteous, the very phrase here used. Now this being the food of the children of Israel in the wilderness, is very fitly mentioned here; since the church, in this period of time, in which antichrist arose, was obliged to flee into the wilderness, and there abide during his reign, and where she is nourished with this hidden manna; by which may be meant the Gospel, which is soul quickening, comforting, strengthening, and satisfying food, by which the saints are nourished up unto everlasting life, and which is hid to the world, which the men of it know nothing of; and especially Jesus Christ, the sum and substance of it, may be meant, and that secret spiritual consolation enjoyed in communion with him, and by eating him, or feeding by faith upon him; in what respects Christ may be compared to manna, See Gill on "Joh 6:32". And he may be said to be "hidden", because he is unknown to men, until revealed; and is wholly hidden from carnal and unregenerate men, and is enjoyed only by believers; and it may denote the private way, in which the true church of Christ had communion with him in his word and ordinances in the wilderness, and during the dark times of Popery. Philo the Jew {q} often interprets the manna by the "Logos", the Word of God, the most ancient Word of God.

And will give him a white stone. The phrase, "to add a white stone", with the Latins, is used to give one's approbation of anything; and could it be applied here, might signify the approbation Christ gives of his church and people here, amidst the testimonies they bear, and the persecutions they endure for his name's sake, and that which he will give of them before his Father, angels, and men, at the last day: white stones were used on various accounts. The Grecians used them to mark good or lucky days with them, as they called them; and could the allusion be thought to be to this custom, the sense would be, that Christ promises, to his people that overcome, happy days, after the times of Popish darkness and persecution were over: white stones were also given to the conquerors in the Olympic games, with their names upon them, and the value of the prize they won; and, here applied, may respect the crown of life and glory given to them who are more than conquerors through Christ, with their right and title to it, and the excellency of it. The Romans in judgment used to give their suffrages for condemnation by casting black stones into the urn, and for absolution white stones; to which Ovid has respect, when he says {r},

"Mos erat antiquis, niveis atrisque lapillis, His damnare reos, illis absolvere culpa."

And this is thought by many to be referred to here, and may denote, that though the pure members of Christ, and who abhorred and protested against the abominations of the church of Rome, were charged with heresy and schism, and what not, yet Christ would absolve them, and justify them from all those charges. But rather the allusion is to a custom among the Jews, who used to examine the priests and Levites before they went to their service, or to the sanhedrim, to judge and pass sentence, whether their ways and works were right; and if they were as they should be, they gave them avdqmd armwx, "the stone of the sanctuary": if not, they might not enter on business, as it is said; "and of Levi he said, thy Urim and thy Thummim be with thy Holy One", De 33:8 {s}. Now on the Urim and Thummim, the stones in the high priest's breastplate, were engraven the names of the children of Israel; and, as the Jews say, the name Jehovah, to which reference may be had in the following clause; and may denote that the church, though in the wilderness, is regarded by Christ, is bore upon his heart and cared for by him; and also its spotless purity in him, and justification by him.

And in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth [it]; by this name may be meant, either the name of "Jehovah" our righteousness, which is the name both of Christ, and of his church, Jer 23:6, or the name of a child of God, sometimes called a new name; see Isa 56:5; and so designs the blessing of adoption; this may be said to be a new name, because renewed, manifested to, and put upon the people of God, when they are made new creatures, though provided in predestination, and in the covenant of grace from eternity; and because a renowned and excellent one, better than that of the sons and daughters of the greatest prince on earth; and because a wonderful one, being an instance of amazing love and grace; and is what "no man knoweth", but the receiver of it; the Father of these adopted ones is unknown to natural men; and so is Christ, through whom this blessing is bestowed; and the Spirit of God also, who witnesses to it; and the persons that enjoy it, and the blessing itself, and the inheritance to which they are adopted: and this new name being on the white stone, may show that the blessings of justification and adoption, though they are two distinct ones, yet they are inseparable: they go together, and both give a right to the heavenly inheritance; and they are also, as well as the hidden manna, gifts of free grace, and not owing to the works and merit of men, and are given by Christ, and in and through him. At Rome, some white stones have been dug up, some lesser, some greater, with names and letters, and other engravings upon them, which Pignorius {t} has given the figures of; and to such some have thought the allusion here is, and may serve to illustrate this passage. The Ethiopic version, instead of a "white stone", reads, a "famous book".

{l} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 75. 2. Jarchi in Exod. xvi. 13, 14. Mitzvot Tora, pr. affirm. 30. {m} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 38. 4. {n} Midrash Shirhashirim, fol. 11. 2. Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 63. 2. Pesikta in Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 75. 4. {o} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Numb. fol. 96. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 68. 4. {p} Zohar in Numb. fol. 88. 1. {q} Alleg. l. 2. p. 93. Quod det. potior. p. 176. Quis rer. divin. Haeres. p. 491, 492. & Leg. Alleg. l. 3. p. 1103. {r} Metamorphos. l. 15. fol. 1. {s} Zohar in Lev. fol. 8. 1. {t} De Servis, p. 342.

Revelation 2:18

Ver. 18. And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write,.... Of the city of Thyatira, See Gill on "Re 1:11"; a church was formed here very likely by the Apostle Paul; Lydia was a native of this place, who, and her household were converted and baptized by him at Philippi, Ac 16:14; though Epiphanius {u} seems to grant, what some heretics objected to the authority of this book, that there was no church at Thyatira when this letter was written; however, it is certain, there was one in the "second" century, as the same writer observes, since, as he relates, it was overrun with the Cataphrygian heresy; and in the "fourth" century there was a bishop from Thyatira in the council of Nice; and even in the "eighth" century there was one Esaias a presbyter, who supplied the place of the bishop of Thyatira in another council at Nice {w}: the Turks have now eight mosques in it, but there is not one Christian church or place of worship to be found in it {x}. Who was the angel, or pastor of this church at the writing of this epistle, is not certain; however, it is designed for all the ministers and churches in the interval this church represents; and this period takes in the darkest and most superstitious times of Popery, until the Reformation. Thyatira is the same as Thygatira, which signifies a "daughter"; and it had its name, as Stephanus Byzantius says {y}, from hence: Seleucus, the son of Nicanor, being at war with Lysimachus, and hearing that he had a daughter born, called this city Thygatira, which was before called Pelopia, and Semiramis; which is a very fit name for this church, and expresses the effeminacy of it, when the virgin Mary, whom the Romanists call the daughter of God, was more worshipped than her son; and was not only made a partner with him in the business of salvation, but even set above him; when there were such swarms of monks and friars, and religious orders of several sorts, as Franciscans and Dominicans, who claimed her as their patroness; when such numbers of them clad themselves in cowls and long garments, that they looked more like women in hoods and petticoats, than really men; hence also the corrupt part of this church is signified by the woman Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal the Zidonian; and it should not be forgot that there was once a she pope, a woman that sat in the papal chair, a whore in a literal sense; wherefore antichrist, or the popes of Rome, are filly called the great whore, the mother of harlots. Mr. Daubuz observes, that the first Christian of Thyatira was a woman, and that the false prophets which first enticed the Christians to apostasy in this church were women, as Maximilia, Quintilia, and Priscilla; to which I would add, that according to Epiphanius, that among those heretics, and which swallowed up this church, their bishops were women, and so were their presbyters, or elders; and Dr. Smith {z} is of opinion, that the inhabitants of this place, when Heathen, were worshippers of the goddess Diana; so that, upon all accounts, the church here was a fit symbol of the effeminate Church of Rome.

These things saith the Son of God; he who is truly, properly, naturally, and essentially the Son of God: this character Christ makes use of to assert his proper deity, as being of the same nature, and having the same perfections with his Father, as well as to command the greater regard to what he ordered to be written to the churches; and chiefly in opposition to the effeminate state of this church; it was time for him to take to him his highest name, as expressive of his highest nature, and to assert himself the Son of God, when Mary, his mother according to the flesh, and who was but a mere creature, was called the daughter of God, and set upon a level with him, and even preferred unto him:

who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire; quick and sharp, and penetrating through the darkness of this state; seeing into, discovering, and exposing the horrid actions and wickednesses of men done in the dark; expressing fury, wrath, and vengeance against the Romish antichrist and his followers; and may also design the light of Gospel doctrine, which broke out in those times at certain seasons, to the dispelling of Popish darkness in some measure;
See Gill on "Re 1:14";

and his feet [are] like fine brass; in the description of Christ in **Re 1:14**; it is added, as if they burned in a furnace;
See Gill on "Re 1:14"; and may denote the strength, stability, and support Christ gave his people while suffering for his sake, when in the furnace and burning for him, which kind of death was much used in those times: hence Dr. More, to whom I am much obliged for many hints in this exposition of the epistles to the churches, thinks that Thyatira is an allusion to yuhtria, which signify "altars" for the burning of sweet odours; and so may be expressive of the burning of the saints, those sweet odours, as they are to God and Christ, with fire and faggot; which was now practised, as in the other period killing with the sword was chiefly used; in the midst of which Christ was present, supporting his people.

{u} Contra Haeres. l. 2. Haeres. 51. {w} Eccl. Hist. Magdeburgh. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4. {x} Smith. Notitia, p. 130. {y} De Urbibus. {z} Notitia, p. 126.

Revelation 2:19

Ver. 19. I know thy works,.... Good works, as appears from the particular enumeration of them afterwards, and the commendation of proficiency in them, the last being more than the first, and the distinction from the evil ones in **Re 2:20**; this is said to the faithful followers and professors of Christ in this interval:

and charity; by which is meant not a relieving the wants of the poor; much less such a charity as connives at the errors and heresies of men; but the divine grace of love to God nod Christ, and the saints, without which a profession of religion is a vain thing; and, generally speaking, this grace is most in exercise in a time of trouble and persecution:

and service; or "ministry", meaning either the ministry of the word, which was exercised by many with great zeal, diligence, and faithfulness, as by Wickliff, John Huss, Jerom of Prague, and others; or the ministering to the necessities of the poor saints, as an evidence of their charity or love; or else the service of God is here intended, which is but reasonable, and is his due, and ought to be performed to him only, and that with fear and fervency, in faith, and with a pure conscience, with humility, and without mercenary views, and in righteousness and true holiness; or the service of love which the saints perform to one another, as praying for one another, bearing one another's burdens, admonishing and reproving for sin, restoring such as are gone astray, comforting the distressed, building up one another in their most holy faith, and exhorting and stirring up each other to the duties of religion:

and faith; not the doctrine of faith, as preached by the ministers of the word, and held and maintained by the true professors of it; but either the grace of faith, or the profession of both; or rather the faithfulness, both of the ministers and private believers of those times, as the Waldenses and Albigenses, the Lollards and Wickliffites, who abode by, and were faithful to the light which they had received:

and thy patience; in suffering for the sake of Christ and the Gospel: and very much it was they did endure, and yet held out to the end:

and thy works, and the last [to be] more than the first; that is, that their works or acts of love to God and Christ and one another, and of service to God and to the saints, and of faith and faithfulness in the cause of God, and of patience in suffering for the Gospel of Christ, were more in quantity, and greater in quality, toward the close of this period, which brought on the Reformation, than at the beginning of it; and which were done by the persons before mentioned, and by others.

Revelation 2:20

Ver. 20. Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee,.... By way of complaint; so the Arabic version renders it, "I have a certain complaint against thee". The impartiality of Christ may be observed in taking notice of the bad deeds, as well as of the good ones of his people, and his tenderness in representing them as few; and these things he had against them not in a judicial way to their condemnation, but in a providential way, in order to chastise them for them, for their good; and they are as follow:

because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel; or "thy wife Jezebel", as the Complutensian edition and Syriac version read; the name of King Ahab's wife, who seduced him, in the Hebrew language is "Izebel", but is read by the Septuagint in 1Ki 16:31, Jezebel, as here; and by Josephus {a} Jezabela; she had her name from lbz, "Zebel", "dung", to which Elijah has reference in **2Ki 9:37**; the Ethiopic version calls her "Elzabel". By her is meant the apostate church of Rome, comparable to Jezebel, the wife of Ahab; as she was the daughter of an Heathen, so is Rome Papal the daughter of Rome Pagan; and as she was the wife of Ahab, and therefore a queen, so the whore of Babylon calls herself; and as Jezebel was famous for her paintings, so the church of Rome for her pretensions to religion and holiness, and for the gaudiness of her worship; and as she was remarkable for her idolatry, whoredoms, witchcrafts, and cruel persecution of the prophets of the Lord, and for murder, and innocent blood she shed; so the church of Rome, for her idolatrous worship of images, for her whoredoms, both in a literal and spiritual sense, and for the witchcrafts, magic, and devilish arts many of her popes have been addicted to, and especially for her barbarities and cruelties exercised upon the true professors of Christ, and for the blood of the martyrs, with which she has been drunk; and as Jezebel stirred up Ahab against good and faithful men, is has this church stirred up the secular powers, emperors, kings, and princes, against the true followers of Christ: and the end of both of them is much alike; as scarce anything was left of Jezebel, so Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, shall be cast into the sea, and be found no more at all: compare **2Ki 9:7** with Re 17:1;

which calleth herself a prophetess; as perhaps Jezebel might do, since she was such a favourer of the prophets of Baal, and so familiarly conversed with them, and kept them, even a hundred of them, at her table: and certain it is, that the antitype of her pretends to an infallible interpretation of the Scriptures, and to have a bulk of unwritten traditions; and which interpretations and traditions are to be regarded as an infallible rule of faith and practice. Now what is complained of in the true members and followers of Christ is, that they suffered this woman

to teach; when it was insufferable for a woman to teach, and especially such a strumpet:

and to seduce my servants to commit fornication; to deceive such who called themselves the servants of Christ, and draw them into the commission of spiritual fornication, which is idolatry; as the idolatrous worship of the Mass, and of images and saints departed:

and to eat things sacrificed unto idols; as Balaam, or the pope, before had done, **Re 2:14**. This may have respect to the latter part of this period, when the eyes of many began to be opened to see these false doctrines and idolatrous practices, and yet had not courage enough to oppose them as they should.

{a} Antiqu. l. 8. c. 13. sect. 1. 4, 7.

Revelation 2:21

Ver. 21. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication,.... Of idolatry. This may have respect to the time of the witnesses, the Waldenses, and others, who bore a testimony against the Romish idolatry, and reproved for it, and denounced the judgment of God in case of impenitence; and as these things were repeated time after time, this may be called a space given to repent in; just as Jezebel had a space given her to repent in, from the time that Elijah declared the word of the Lord, that the dogs should eat her: so the Jews {b} say of the old world, that God gave them bwvl Nmz, "space to repent", but they repented not, as here:

and she repented not; see **Re 9:20**; for the time for, and means leading to repentance may be given, yet if the grace of repentance itself is not given, men, either particular persons, or whole bodies of men, will never repent of their sins. The Alexandrian copy, Complutensian, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, "and she would not repent".

{b} Juchasin, fol. 7. 1.

Revelation 2:22

Ver. 22. Behold, I will cast her into a bed,.... Of sickness and languishing; and which denotes the sickly, pining, and languishing state of the church of Rome, as a just retaliation for her bed of luxury and deliciousness, adultery and idolatry, she had indulged herself in; this was threatened, and was yet to come, and began at the time of the Reformation, signified by the next church state; and, ever since, the whore of Rome has been visibly sickening and decaying. The Alexandrian copy reads, "into a prison":

and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation: the kings of the earth, and their subjects, who have joined in the idolatries and corruptions of the Romish church, Re 17:2, which may be understood either of that distress and uneasiness the Reformation in some countries gave them; or those outward troubles, wars, and desolations they have been since attended with, particularly the empire of Germany; which has been in great tribulation, formerly by the Turks, and of late by internal broils among themselves, and by the armies of other princes entering into it; or it may regard that eternal vengeance that will be recompensed to all such persons:

except they repent of their deeds; their spiritual fornication or idolatry, and all the abominations the members of that apostate church are guilty of. There seems to be an allusion in this verse to Ahaziah and Joram, sons of Ahab and Jezebel, who followed their mother's idolatrous practices, and were cast upon a bed of sickness, **2Ki 1:2**.

Revelation 2:23

Ver. 23. And I will kill her children with death,.... Her popes, cardinals, priests, Jesuits, monks, friars, and all that join in the Romish apostasy, they shall be killed with death; there shall be an utter extirpation of them in God's own time; or they shall be killed with the second death: antwm, when used alone, or as distinct from any other kind of death, signifies the plague; compare with this **2Ki 9:24**;

and all the churches: that shall be in being at the time of Rome's destruction:

shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and heart; or am the omniscient God; which will be known by inflicting punishment on the followers of antichrist; when their hidden things of darkness will be brought to light, and exposed by him; and they shall receive the righteous reward of their evil practices, which they have coloured over, and glossed with specious pretences of religion and holiness, and a zeal for God and his glory, when they only meant themselves, the gratifying their carnal lusts, and securing their worldly interests, and amassing riches and honours to themselves:

and I will give unto everyone of you according to your works; who have connived at, and joined with them in their evil deeds; as many as were seduced by the false prophetess to commit spiritual fornication with her: as Christ is omniscient, and does not judge according to the outward appearance of things, but knows the principles and ends of all actions, however covert they may be; so he is righteous in judging and in punishing, which will be according as men's works are; and not one shall escape his righteous judgment, nor the due desert of their sins, though the punishment of some may be greater than that of others.

Revelation 2:24

Ver. 24. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira,.... The copulative and is left out in the Alexandrian copy and Complutensian edition, and if retained, it may be rendered thus, "even unto the rest"; the persons spoken to are the same, the pastor of this church, with his colleagues, and all the rest of the faithful in it; which shows that this epistle, and so the rest, were not written to the pastors only, but to the churches; and that the pastor and his colleagues, with others, were free from the abominable errors and corruptions before spoken of; and that, in the worst of times, God does, and will reserve a people for himself, who are described as follows:

as many as have not this doctrine; who had not given into, and embraced this doctrine of the antichristian church of Rome, concerning infallibility, the worshipping of images, transubstantiation, &c. the Arabic version reads, "this new doctrine"; for notwithstanding the large pretensions of the Romish church to antiquity, her doctrine is but a novel doctrine:

and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; that is, had not approved of the doctrines of antichrist, which though his followers called deep things and mysteries of their holy religion, such as transubstantiation, &c. yet, to speak in the language of the pure and faithful professors of the Gospel, they are no other than the depths of Satan, or doctrines of devils; or else the sense is, as Jezebel and her followers say, to the contempt of the faithful, arrogating knowledge to themselves, and upbraiding them with simplicity and ignorance, as not knowing Satan's devices, nor how to rescue souls out of them, as they did; but the former sense seems best:

I will put upon you none other burden; meaning not any affliction or tribulation than the present one; nor any other errors and heresies than what were broached; but no other precept or command than what follows; see **2Ki 9:25**.

Revelation 2:25

Ver. 25. But that which ye have [already],.... Which was something good, even the faithful word, the form of sound words, the mystery and doctrine of faith; this they had received from Christ and his apostles; they had it in their hearts, and a comfortable experience of the truth and power of it, and had made a profession of it, which they now held, and are here exhorted to hold fast:

hold fast till I come; meaning the coming of Christ, either at the Reformation by Luther, Calvin, and others, which began at the close of this church state, when the hands and hearts of those professors would be more strengthened, which seems to be the first sense of the words; or to judge Jezebel, destroy antichrist, which will be by the brightness of his coming; till which time the doctrine of the Gospel is to be held fast: and such an exhortation will be always necessary, since, till then, there will be always more or less an opposition to it, and attempts made to wrest it out of the hands of its professors, to cause them to hesitate about it, and to intimidate them in the profession of it, by loading them with reproaches, calumnies, and persecution.

Revelation 2:26

Ver. 26. And he that overcometh,.... Jezebel and her idolatries, her children, and all that commit adultery with her; such as are not drawn into the same evil practices with them, but bravely stand their ground against the Romish antichrist and his followers, and bear their testimony against his impious doctrines and idolatrous practices:

and keepeth my works unto the end; either of life, or of this church state, or of time, when Christ will personally appear, even at the end of the world; and by his works are meant, not the works which were done by him, as his miracles and works of mercy to the souls and bodies of men, and works of righteousness in obedience to the law, and the work of redemption and salvation; though these are works to be observed, and kept in view, and to be preserved in memory, and for the encouragement of faith and hope; but the works which are commanded, and required by Christ to be done by his people; as the public work of the ministry, by the preachers of the Gospel; and every private work, both internal and external, as the work of faith, the labour of love, and every act of obedience, which is constantly to be discharged. The Arabic version reads, "and keepeth my words and my works"; things both relating to doctrine and practice:

to him will I give power over the nations; or Gentiles, the Papists; so called because of the Pagan notions and worship introduced by them; and because they consist of many nations, tongues, and people, who are deceived, and drawn into idolatry by them: and this power over them may be understood in a spiritual sense, through the preaching of the Gospel, which being attended with the power of God, is the means of converting sinners, and so of weakening the kingdom of Satan, and of antichrist; and which had its fulfilment, at least in part, at the time of the Reformation, and onward, and will have still a greater accomplishment in the spiritual reign of Christ and his people, under the Philadelphian church state; and it may also design the temporal power which the saints shall have over antichrist, when they shall take away his dominion, and consume and destroy it, and the kingdom and the dominion under the whole heaven shall be given to the saints of the most High; **Da 7:25**.

Revelation 2:27

Ver. 27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron,.... Either with the Gospel, which is the rod of Christ's strength, and is the power of God unto salvation, and by which the kingdom of Christ is enlarged, and the power of the church of Christ over the antichristian party is increased; or it may design great strictness and severity, with which the man of sin will be used by the saints of the most High, when they shall take away his dominion from him:

as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; which may be expressive either of the breaking of rocky hearts in pieces at conversion, and of making souls humble and contrite; or of the irreparable ruin and destruction of antichrist, when the saints shall consume and destroy him:

even as I received of my Father; Christ, as God, has an underived power and government; but, as Mediator, his rule and power over the nations are asked by him, given to him, and received by him, **Ps 2:8**. This "as" does not intend equality, but similitude; and denotes the participation the saints will have with Christ in the judgment and destruction of antichrist, and in his kingdom and power.

Revelation 2:28

Ver. 28. And I will give him the morning star. So Christ is called, Re 22:16; and here it designs an illustrious appearance of Christ at the close of this church state, and a communication of much light and grace from him, which introduced the Sardian church state, or the reformation by Luther, Calvin, &c. which is the phosphorus, or morning star, to the spiritual reign of Christ under the Philadelphian church state; which will be the bright, clear, day of the Gospel, when the present twilight, which is between the appearance of the morning star and that glorious day, will be removed: for by this morning star is not meant the glory that shall be put upon the bodies of the saints in the resurrection morn; nor the heavenly glory itself, or the hope of it; but the dawning of the latter day glory, which began at the Reformation, and is promised the faithful professors in the Thyatirian church state, who lived in the darkness of Popery.

Revelation 2:29

Ver. 29. He that hath an ear, let him hear,....
See Gill on "Re 2:7".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 3:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 3

This chapter contains the epistles to the churches at Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, and begins with that to Sardis; in which the sender describes himself by some things taken out of a former description of him; and gives an account of the state of this church; that her works were known by him, which were imperfect; and that she had the name of a living church, but was dead; wherefore she is exhorted to watchfulness and diligence, to remember how she had heard and received the Gospel, and to hold it fast, and repent of her sins: if not, he threatens to come as a thief unawares upon her, **Re 3:1**, but excepts some few persons from this general account, who were not defiled with the corruptions of the majority, and who therefore should be favoured with communion with him, **Re 3:4**, and then some gracious promises are made to persevering saints, and the epistle is concluded in the usual form, **Re 3:5**. Next follows the epistle to the church at Philadelphia; in which the sender assumes some peculiar titles not before mentioned, taken from his holiness, truth, and power, **Re 3:7**, signifies his approbation of her works; declares he had set before her an open door, which could not be shut; affirms she had a little strength, and commends her for keeping his word, **Re 3:8**, and, for her encouragement, promises that some persons, formerly of bad characters, should come and worship before her, and should know what an interest she had in his love; and that since she had kept his word, he would keep her from an hour of temptation, which will be a trying time to all the world, **Re 3:9**, and in consideration of his speedy coming, he exhorts her to hold fast what she had, that she might not lose her honour and glory; and promises the overcomer a fixed place and name in the house of God; and closes the epistle as the rest, **Re 3:11**, and then follows the last epistle of all, which is that to the church at Laodicea; in which the sender describes himself by some characters taken from his truth and faithfulness, and from his eternity, power, and dominion, **Re 3:14**, represents the members of this church as lukewarm, and very disagreeable to him, **Re 3:15**, and as having a vain opinion of themselves, being ignorant of their real state and case, **Re 3:17**, wherefore he gives them some wholesome counsel and advice, suitable to their condition, **Re 3:18**, and whereas there were some among them he loved, he lets them know that his rebukes and chastenings were from love, and with a view to stimulate them to zeal, and bring them to repentance, which became them, **Re 3:19**, and then he informs them where he was, what he expected from them, and what they might upon a suitable behaviour enjoy with him, **Re 3:20**, and next promises to the overcomer great honour and glory, such as he had with his Father; and concludes the epistle in his usual manner, **Re 3:21**.

Ver. 1. And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write,.... Of the city of Sardis See Gill on "Re 1:11" when, and by whom this church was founded, and who was the present angel or pastor of it, is not now to be certainly known; however, here was a church in the "second" century, of which Melito was then pastor; and he is thought by some to be the angel here intended; this man wrote upon the book of the Revelation, and an apology for the Christians, sent to the Emperor Antoninus Verus, in whose time he lived {c}; and in the "third" century a church remained in this place; and also in the "fourth", as appears from the council of Nice, which makes mention of it; and likewise in the "fifth", as is evident from the acts of the synod at Chalcedon, in which age it was the metropolitan church of the Lydians; and in the "sixth" century there was a bishop of this church in the fifth synod at Constantinople; and in the "seventh" century, Marinus bishop of Sardis assisted at the sixth synod in the same place; and in the "eighth" century, Euthymius bishop of it was present in the Nicene synod; and even in the "ninth" century mention is made of an archbishop of Sardis {d}: but now there are but very few Christians to be found here, and who have not a place to worship in, nor any to minister to them {e}. This church represents the state of the church from the time of the Reformation by Luther and others, until a more glorious state of the church appears, or until the spiritual reign of Christ in the Philadelphian period; under the Sardian church state we now are: (this was published in 1747, Ed.) that this church is an emblem of the reformed churches from Popery, is evident not only from its following the Thyatirian state, which expresses the darkness of Popery, and the depths of Satan in it; but from its being clear of Balaam, and those that held his doctrine; and from the Nicolaitans and their tenets, and from Jezebel, and those that committed adultery with her; things which the two former churches are charged with; but from these the present church reformed. This city of Sardis was once a very flourishing and opulent city; it was the metropolis of Lydia, and the royal seat of the rich King Croesus, though now a very poor and mean village; and may denote the magnificence and splendour of this church state, at least in name and figure, it has appeared in, in the world; though now in a very low and mean condition, and may be worse before the spiritual reign of Christ begins in the next period: there may be some allusion in the name of this church to the precious stone "sarda", which, Pliny says {f}, was found about Sardis, and had its name from hence; the same with the Sardian stone in **Re 4:2**. This stone, naturalists say {g}, drives away fear, gives boldness, cheerfulness, and sharpness of wit, and frees from witchcrafts and sorceries; which may be expressive of the boldness and courage of the first reformers; of the cheerfulness, joy, and pleasure, which appeared in their countenances, and which they spread in others by preaching the doctrines of the Gospel; and of those excellent gifts and talents both of nature, learning, and grace, by which they were fitted for their service; and of their being a means of delivering men from the witchcrafts of Jezebel, and the sorceries of the whore of Rome: and perhaps some allusion may be in this name, as is thought by Cocceius, to the Hebrew word dyrv, "sarid", which signifies a "remnant", since in this church state there was a remnant according to the election of grace, a few names, whose garments were undefiled; or to the word drv, "sered", which signifies a carpenter's rule or line; since the first reformers were endeavouring to bring every doctrine and practice to the rule and line of God's word:

these things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God; the fulness and perfection of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, as in **Re 1:4**, which Christ, as Mediator, has without measure, and are at his dispose, and which he, having received for men, gives unto them; and at the time of the Reformation bestowed them on many eminent servants of his in a very plenteous manner; for which reason he assumes this character in writing to this church:

and the seven stars; the ministers of the Gospel;
See Gill on "Re 1:16",
See Gill on "Re 2:1"; these were filled by Christ at this time with evangelical light and knowledge; and were sent, and held forth by him as lights in the world; and were instruments in his hand for great good; and were wonderfully held, kept, and preserved by him, notwithstanding the greatness of their work, their weakness in themselves, and the power, rage, and fury of the antichristian party; Luther is a remarkable instance of this: Christ's making use of the same title here as in the epistle to the church at Ephesus, which represents the apostolic church, may show that this church state bore some degree of likeness to that, and that it was a sort of renewing of it:

I know thy works; good works chiefly; the nature and imperfection of them; and also bad works: that

thou hast a name that thou livest: the reformed churches have had a name for spiritual living, by faith on Christ's righteousness only for justification, that article being the great article of the Reformation: there was in them an appearance of liveliness, by their zeal for Gospel doctrine and worship, and a form of living according to godliness; they were esteemed, were celebrated, and famous for these things, especially for living by faith on Christ's righteousness:

and art dead; or "but art dead"; for, the most part, or greater part of the members of these churches, are dead in trespasses and sins; and as for the rest, they are very dead and lifeless in their frames, in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duties; and under great spiritual declensions and decays, just as it were ready to die; and but few really alive in a spiritual sense, and especially lively, or in the lively exercise of grace, and fervent discharge of duty; yea, dead as to those things in which they had a name to live: and this seems to be our case now, who, it is to be hoped, are at, or towards the close of this period.

{c} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 13. 26. & l. 5. c. 24. {d} Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 418. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 10. p. 254. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 9. c. 3. p. 3. {e} Smith. Notitia, p. 138. {f} Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 7. Albert. Magn. de Reb. Metall. l. 2. c. 17. {g} Ruaeus de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 6. Albert. Magn. de Rebus Metall. l. 2. c. 17. Schroder. Pharmacopoeia, l. 3. c. 5. p. 18.

Revelation 3:2

Ver. 2. Be watchful,.... Which may respect both ministers and members: the ministers of the Gospel, whose business is to watch over themselves, their conversation and doctrine, and watch every opportunity to preach it, and the success of their ministry; and that they do not grow careless, or be drawn aside through frowns or flatteries; and over others, as shepherds do, to know the state of their flock; as watchmen of cities to give the time of night, and notice of approaching danger; and to see that the laws of Christ's house are put in execution: and this may also respect the members of these churches, who ought to be watchful, and constant attenders on the word and ordinances, and in the duty of prayer; and should watch over themselves, their hearts, thoughts, affections, words, and actions, and against sin, Satan, the world, and false teachers: or "be awake"; which shows that both ministers and churches are asleep, or much inclined to it; which is the present case of both in this period of time:

and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; not good works; though these may be said to be ready to die when men grow weary of them, are lifeless in the performance of them, and want zeal for them; and may be said to be strengthened when men do their first works: nor the graces of the Spirit; for the whole work of grace remains, and though it is imperfect, yet no part is, or can be taken away from it; yea, there is an increase of it, though it may not be discerned; the work of grace cannot die, or be ready to die; there may be a decline as to the exercise of it, and a want of liveliness in it; and things may be ready to die in appearance, and in the apprehension of believers, but not in reality; and besides it is God's work, and not man's, to strengthen this: therefore they may intend the truths of the Gospel, which at the beginning of the Reformation were revived, and were preached with great life and liveliness; but towards the close of this state, as now, would be just ready to expire, to be almost lost, and dead, and buried, as they are; and which it becomes both ministers and members of churches to hold, and hold up, establish, and confirm: or else the rest of the members of this church may be meant, those of them that remained, that were not wholly sunk and apostatized; and yet were in a very faint and sickly state, scarce any life in them, ready to give up their religion and profession; which should be strengthened, by preaching the pure Gospel, by faithfully administering the ordinances of it, and by speaking comfortable and encouraging words to them. The Complutensian edition and some copies read, "which thou art about lose"; which seems a good reading; and the Arabic version, and some other copies, "which thou art going to reject":

for I have not found thy works perfect before God; meaning that the reformers, and reformed churches, stuck where they first began; and did not carry their works neither with respect to doctrine, and especially with respect to discipline and worship, to a greater perfection, as they ought to have done: and however perfect they might appear before men, they were not so in the sight of the omniscient God, nor found so by Christ, before whom all things are naked and open: the Arabic version reads, "before me"; and the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, "before my God". This church, though she has departed from the corrupt church of Rome, and from her evil doctrines and practices; yet did not go on to that perfection which might have been expected and desired, and which would have rendered her praiseworthy, whereas she is now discommended. It is an observation of a Jewish writer {h}, that

"if one departs from an evil way, and does not do that which is good, he does not whvem Mylvh, "make his work perfect", and he is not pronounced blessed."

{h} R. David Kimchi in Psal. i. 2.

Revelation 3:3

Ver. 3. Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard,.... That is, hast received upon hearing; for hearing goes first, and then receiving: the design of the advice is to put this church in mind of the doctrines of grace she had heard at the beginning of the Reformation, from Luther and others; such as justification by the righteousness of Christ, pardon through his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, doctrines now almost lost and buried in forgetfulness; wherefore Christ would have her remember these things; how that she heard them with attention, reverence, humility, and without prejudice; and with much affection, so as to approve and love them, believe them, feel the power of them, and taste the goodness in them; and how she received them with all meekness, readiness, and joy, when now they are greatly disliked and rejected by many; very few attend to the doctrines of the Reformation. This is exactly our case:

and hold fast; the above doctrines, though the majority is against them, and learned men despise them, and they are charged with enthusiasm and licentiousness. It looks as if there was danger, as there is, that they would be entirely wrested out of her hands:

and repent: of her deadness, coldness, and indifference to these truths; of her unwatchfulness over them, and imperfection in them; not carrying truth to its fulness and perfection, resting in her first light and knowledge, and even going back from that:

if therefore thou shalt not watch: and preserve truth, and hold fast the form of sound words, and keep to the order, as well as the faith of the Gospel, and constantly attend divine worship, and look for the coming and kingdom of Christ:

I will come on thee as a thief; in the night, and at unawares, unthought of, and unexpected; which must be understood of coming to her in a way of rebuke and chastisement, by bringing some affliction, or suffering some sore distress to fall upon her: the phrase, "on thee", is left out in the Alexandrian copy and in the Ethiopic version:

and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee: which, though applicable to the spiritual coming of Christ in the next church state, and to his second coming in his kingdom and glory, which will be both sudden and unexpected, yet these will be to the joy and comfort of the church; whereas what is here spoken is by way of threatening, and must relate to some severe dispensation on her; and which we might now justly expect, were we not in the unwatchful, unthoughtful, and ignorant situation here described.

Revelation 3:4

Ver. 4. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis,.... The Alexandrian copy and others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, "but thou hast a few names", &c. or "a few men", as the Ethiopic version renders it; who were called by name, and were men of renown, excellent men, men famous for holding the truth of doctrine, and for powerful and practical godliness; men of great light and grace, and who were known by name to God and Christ: these are said to be but "few", not in comparison of the world, in which sense all the elect of God are but few, though a large number, considered in themselves; but in comparison of formal lifeless professors of religion, with which this church state abounds; and which, if we were not as dead as we are, might easily be observed; there may not only be hypocrites in churches, but a majority of them: yea, these few may be understood in comparison of the greater number of true believers; for in this period of the church there are but few, even of them, that are lively, zealous, and careful, and are heartily concerned for the purity of doctrine, discipline, worship, and conversation; and a few there are, blessed be God, even in this our Sardian church state. God will have a few in whom he will be glorified in the most declining times; and the Lord knows and takes notice of these few; and for their sake the church state is kept up, the Gospel and its ordinances are continued; nor is a church to be judged of by the number of its members, nor is a multitude to be followed to do evil.

Which have not defiled their garments; the Ethiopic version adds, "with a woman", the woman Jezebel. They were not guilty either of corporeal or spiritual fornication, which is idolatry; they kept their outward conversation garments pure, and maintained a profession of Christ and his truths incorrupt; they did not defile it by an unbecoming walk, or by a denial of Christ and a departure from him, and by embracing false doctrines; they were neither erroneous in their principles, nor immoral in their practices; few there, are indeed of this sort. Defiled garments, in either sense, very ill become members of the reformed churches. Among the Jews {i}, if a priest's garments were spotted or defiled, he might not minister; if he did, his service was rejected.

And they shall walk with me in white; there is a walking in Christ by faith; and a walking before him as in his sight; and a walking worthy of him, in all well pleasing in his ways and ordinances; and here a walking with him, in a way of special and comfortable communion, both here and hereafter: and this is in white; in white raiment, meaning either in the robe of his own righteousness, compared to fine linen and white; or in the shining robes of immortality and glory; and may be expressive of that spiritual joy which such shall be partakers of, as well as of their spotless purity and innocence in the other world. White raiment was used among the Romans as a token of joy at festivals, and on birthdays, and at weddings, and such like times.

For they are worthy; not of themselves, or through any works of righteousness done by them, which are neither meritorious of grace here, nor of glory hereafter; but through the grace of God, and worthiness of Christ. The Jews have a saying somewhat like this {k};

"they that walk with God in their lifetime, Mykwz, "are worthy" to walk with him after their death;"

In the Apocrypha we read:

"Take thy number, O Sion, and shut up those of thine that are clothed in white, which have fulfilled the law of the Lord." (2 Esdras 2:40)

This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version.

{i} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 35. 1. {k} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 10. 3.

Revelation 3:5

Ver. 5. He that overcometh,.... The deadness, formality, and imperfection of this church state; gets over these things, and is among the few names in it:

the same shall be clothed in white raiment; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, "thus shall he be clothed in white raiment"; he shall have abundance of spiritual peace and joy, great success and prosperity, both inward and outward, in himself, and in the church; and triumph over all his enemies, sin, Satan, the world, death, and every other enemy; and not only be clothed with change of raiment, the pure and spotless righteousness of Christ, but shall enjoy eternal glory and happiness! the allusion seems to be to the custom of the Jewish sanhedrim in judging of priests fit for service {l};

"they examined the priests concerning their genealogies and blemishes; every priest in whom was found anything faulty in his genealogy, he was clothed in black and veiled in black, and went out of the court; but everyone that was found perfect and right, Mynbl vbwl, "he was clothed in white", and went in and ministered with his brethren the priests."

And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life; by which is meant the choice of persons to everlasting life and salvation; and this being signified by a book, and by writing names in it, shows the exact knowledge God has of his elect, the value he has for them, his remembrance of them, his love to them, and care for them; and that this election is of particular persons by name, and is sure and certain; for those whose names are written in it shall never be blotted out, they will always remain in the number of God's elect, and can never become reprobates, or shall ever perish; because of the unchangeableness of the nature and love of God, the firmness of his purposes, the omnipotence of his arm, the death and intercession of Christ for them, their union to him, and being in him, the impossibility of their seduction by false teachers, and the security of their persons, grace, and glory in Christ, and in whose keeping this book of life is; which respects not this temporal life, that belongs to the book of providence, but a spiritual and eternal life, from whence it has its name.

But I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels; which shows that Christ has an exact and perfect knowledge of all the chosen ones, he knows them by name; and that he has a strong and affectionate love for them, and is not ashamed of them, of their cause, of their persons, and of their relation to him; and that he does and will own, acknowledge, and approve of them, both here and hereafter: and the confession he will make of them will be in their praise; in praise of their persons and the comeliness of them, which he has put upon them; and of their graces, though they are his own; and of their good works as the fruits of grace: and this will be made before his Father, who chose these persons, and gave them to him to preserve and save; and before the angels, who rejoice at their salvation and happiness; and this will be at the last day;
See Gill on "Mt 10:32".

{l} Maimon. Biath Hamikdash, c. 6. sect. 11, Misn. Middot, c. 5. sect. 3. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 19. 1.

Revelation 3:6

Ver. 6. He that hath an ear, let him hear,....
See Gill on "Re 2:7".

Revelation 3:7

Ver. 7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,.... Of the city of Philadelphia, See Gill on "Re 1:11"; According to the Apostolical Constitutions {m}, one Demetrius was ordained bishop of this church by the Apostle John; but this is not to be depended on; nor is it known who this angel was: however, certain it is there was a church in this place in the "second" century, in the times of Ignatius, who wrote an epistle to it, and which then had a bishop or pastor over it, whom he mentions {n}, though not his name. And in the same century twelve Philadelphians suffered martyrdom at the same time Polycarp did {o}; and in the "third" century a church remained in this place;

and also in the "fourth", since a bishop of this church was in the council at Nice; and in the "fifth" century, a presbyter of Philadelphia was in the synod at Ephesus under Celestine; and in the "sixth" century, a bishop of this place assisted at the fifth synod at Constantinople; and in the "eighth" century, Stephen, bishop of the church here, was in the Nicene synod {p}; and there are now very many that bear the name of Christians of the Greek Church in this place {q}. This church is an emblem of, and represents the church in that period of time, in which will be the spiritual reign of Christ. Its name signifies "brotherly love", which in this interval will be very remarkable; saints shall not envy, vex, and distress one another any more; they shall be one in the hand of the Lord, and among themselves. Love, which is now so cold, and so much wanting in our present Sardian church state, will be exceeding warm and fervent, and in its highest pitch in the Philadelphian state. The characters Christ here assumes point at the holiness of life, truth of doctrine, and purity of discipline, for which this church state will be distinguished: in this period of time an open door for the Gospel will be set; it will be preached in its power and purity, and; will be greatly succeeded; the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in, and the Jews will be converted; hypocrites and formal professors will be discerned and detected; great honour and respect will be shown the church by all men; and this state will be an emblem and pledge of the new Jerusalem state, of which mention is made in this epistle, or the thousand years' personal reign of Christ with all his saints:

these things saith he that is holy; which character not only agrees with Christ, as God, who is the Holy One of Israel, and equally glorious in holiness as his Father, but as man; his nature was free from original sin; his life from any actual transgression; his doctrines were pure and holy, and so were all his works, and all his administrations in each of his offices: and, as Mediator, he is the cause and author of holiness to his people; they are sanctified in him, and have their sanctification from him, and are sanctified by him: this character he chooses now to take, because he was sending an epistle to such as were lovers of holiness, and famous for it, both internal and external; so that while he describes himself, he points at persons, the members of churches in this interval:

he that is true; truly God, and truly man: true and faithful in the discharge of his several offices, and in the trust reposed in him, both of the grace and persons of the saints, and in what he undertook to do for them: he is truth itself, the truth of types, promises, and prophecies; and the sum and substance of all the truths of the Gospel; and is therefore to be depended on in every prediction and promise; and this title of Christ may have some view to the truth of doctrine which shall, in this period, prevail, and to the faithfulness and integrity of his people to his cause and interest:

he that hath the key of David; mention is made of David, because he was a type of Christ; and because from him Christ came according to the flesh, and whose throne he was to sit upon, in a spiritual sense; and because, in this period of time, the Jews are to be converted, who will seek the Lord their God, and David their king: and by the key of David is meant the key of the house of David; that is, the church of Christ, of which David's house and family were a type: and this key is either the key of knowledge, or it is expressive of power and authority. Christ has the key of knowledge, he knows all the persons of his people, all their affairs, and what they do in his house, and how they behave there: he has the key of knowledge in the Scriptures, and gives it to his ministers. And it may also design his authority in his house and church, in fixing the ordinances of it, in bestowing gifts on men, and in dispensing the blessings of grace and goodness; this may have some regard to the pure discipline of this church, as well as to its light and knowledge in the doctrines of the Gospel. The Targum on Isa 22:22 interprets the key of the house of David, of Njlwv, "the dominion" or "government of the house of David".

He that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth; he opens the Scriptures, which are shut to a natural man, as he did in his own personal ministry, when here on earth, and now by his Spirit; and none can shut them, either men or devils, or hinder the spread of light and knowledge by them: he opens the door of the Gospel, and gives an opportunity to preach it, and liberty of mind and expression to his ministers, and a door of utterance to them, and of entrance for it into the hearts of men, which none can shut, or hinder: he opens the door of the church, which is himself, and lets in his sheep into the sheepfold, into a Gospel church state, and the ordinances of it; and he opens the door of heaven by his blood and righteousness, and gives his people liberty and boldness to enter into the holiest of all, and brings many sons to glory in spite of all the opposition of men and devils: on the other hand, when he pleases, he shuts up the Scriptures, and the eyes of men from seeing what is in them; he shuts up the door of the Gospel, and forbids the preaching of it in this and that place; and the door of heaven will be shut by him at the last day, when all called to the marriage of the Lamb are entered, and there will be no opening. This shows the sovereignty, power, and authority of Christ, and which he will exercise in this church state, see Job 12:14. A like phrase is in the Talmud {r}, xtwp wnya bwv rgwov Nwyk, "when he shuts again, there is none that opens".

{m} L. 7. c. 46. {n} Ignat. Epist. p. 39. Ed. Voss. {o} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 15. {p} Eccl. Hist. Magdeburg. cent. 3. c. 2. p. 2. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 6. c. 2. p. 4. cent. 8. c. 2. p. 4. {q} Smith. Notitia, p. 143. {r} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 44. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 70. 3.

Revelation 3:8

Ver. 8. I know thy works,.... Good works, of faith, love, and patience; and which lay much in preaching, professing, and maintaining the pure Gospel, and in acts of charity to one another; and which were done to some degree of perfection, and with great sincerity; since this church is not complained of, that her works were not perfect before God, as the former church is:

behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; or "which no man can shut", as read the Alexandrian copy, and others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions. This "open door" may design an uncommon opportunity of preaching the Gospel; and a very great freedom of mind in the preachers of it, and great attention in the hearers, whose hearts will be opened to observe, receive, and embrace it; and a very large gathering in of souls to Christ, and his churches; much and frequent preaching of the word with great success, which it will not be in the power of any creature to stop or hinder: now will the abundance of the sea, the forces of the Gentiles flow in, and the nation of the Jews shall be born at once.

For thou hast a little strength; which is not to be understood of inward spiritual strength, for of this the church in this period will have a great deal, as well as of courage and fortitude of mind, but outward power and authority: some great men, and princes of the earth, will come into the churches of Christ, even kings will come to the brightness of her rising; for now will all those prophesies have their accomplishment, which respect the secular grandeur of the church, with regard to its numbers, power, and riches; see Isa 49:18.

And hast kept my word; both the commands and ordinances of Christ in practice, and that in their primitive purity, as they were delivered by Christ and his apostles, particularly baptism and the Lord's supper; which have been, one or other of them, or both, most sadly corrupted in all the periods of the churches hitherto, excepting the apostolical one, but will now be restored to their pristine purity and glory; and also the doctrines of the Gospel, which will be kept, not in memory only, but in the heart and life; they will be publicly and openly preached, professed, and defended:

and hast not denied my name: Christ himself, his doctrine respecting his person, office, and grace, neither in words, nor in works, but both ways confessed and owned it.

Revelation 3:9

Ver. 9. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan,.... Which may be understood either of the Papists, the followers of the man of sin, whose coming was after the working of Satan, and whose doctrines are the doctrines of devils, many of whom will now be converted, and brought to the true church; or rather of the Jews, who had, and have, and will have till this time, their synagogues for religious worship in their way; but they are no other than synagogues of Satan; the men that assemble in them are of their father the devil, and do his works, and will do them:

which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; they are Jews by name and nation; they are. Jews outwardly, but not inwardly and spiritually, **Ro 2:28**; they are carnal wicked men, under the influence of Satan, though they pretend to be religious men, and worshippers of God:

behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet; the conversion of the Jews is here intended. The worship here spoken of is not either a religious or civil worship of the church, for the church is not the object of worship; only before whom, and at whose feet, this worship shall be given to God in the most humble and hearty manner: the sense is, that the convinced and converted Jews shall come to the church, and in the most lowly and contrite manner acknowledge their former blindness, furious zeal, and violent hatred of the Christians, and shall profess their faith in Christ; shall join themselves to the church, and partake of the ordinances of the Gospel with them; and shall worship God and Jesus Christ, their Lord and King, in their presence, and at their feet:

and to know that I have loved thee; the Gentile church, and the members of it, in assuming human nature, and dying for, and redeeming them, as well as the Jews; in sending his Gospel to them, and calling them by his grace, and planting them into Gospel churches; giving them a place, and a name in his house, better than that of sons and daughters.

Revelation 3:10

Ver. 10. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience,.... The Gospel; so called because it gives an account of the patience of Christ, in the midst of all his outward meanness and humiliation; and because it is a means of implanting and increasing the grace of patience, which God is the efficient cause of, and Christ is the example of; that patience, which bears a resemblance to his, in enduring afflictions, reproaches, persecutions, desertions, and temptations, and in waiting for his kingdom and glory; and because both the preachers and professors of the word have need of patience, and should exercise it in like manner as Christ did. This word, the churches, in the Philadelphian state, will keep pure and incorrupt, and observe the ordinances of it according to the directions given in it; and will believe the promise of Christ's personal coming, and patiently wait for it: wherefore, Christ promises as follows,

I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth; this hour seems to refer not to any of the vials which will be poured out on the antichristian states, but to some affliction and distress which will befall the reformed churches, and will light upon the outward court worshippers among them It seems to be the last struggle of the beast of Rome, and to denote some violent and sharp persecution, such as what Daniel mentions, that never was before nor since; but it will be but short, but one hour, the twenty fourth part of a prophetical day or year, perhaps about a fortnight; yet it will be very extensive; it will reach all the world, the whole Roman empire, and all that dwell upon the earth, that are called by the name of Christians, and will try them, whether they are so or not; Christ will now have his fan in his hand, and purge his floor of all his formal professors and hypocrites; and it will be known who are his true churches, and pure members; and these he will keep close to himself, and preserve safe amidst all the distress and confusion the world will be in. This cannot refer to the bloody persecutions under the Roman emperors, for from those the church at Philadelphia was not preserved. We read {s} of twelve members of it that suffered with Polycarp.

{s} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 15.

Revelation 3:11

Ver. 11. Behold, I come quickly,.... To bring on this hour of temptation on the reformed churches, which will be at the beginning of this period; to help and deliver, save and preserve the truly godly among them; to destroy antichrist, and introduce the latter day glory:

hold that fast which thou hast; either her grace in the exercise of it, as her faith, patience, &c. or rather the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, which she had received, as delivered by Christ and his apostles: and which she had held in the truth and purity of them, and is now exhorted to hold them fast, since this hour of temptation would be a trying time to her faith, patience, integrity, and constancy:

that no man take thy crown; not eternal happiness, called a crown of life, glory, and righteousness, and which was prepared for her, and promised to her, and would be certainly given her; nor was there any danger of another's taking it from her; not but that exhortations of this kind to the saints are necessary, with respect to that, to excite to diligence, care, and watchfulness; and are no ways contrary to their final perseverance, and certain salvation, but are means thereof: but either her honour for her faith and faithfulness, for her integrity, sincerity, and purity, is here meant; or the glorious things which were spoken of this church state, and to be accomplished in it, Ps 87:3; see Isa 60:1.

Revelation 3:12

Ver. 12. He that overcometh,.... In the hour of temptation, in this period of time; that stands his ground then, sustains the shock of the beast, with courage and intrepidity, and overcomes him:

will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; by which is meant not the church triumphant, though such will have a place, and an abiding one there; but the church militant, so called in allusion to the temple at Jerusalem, for its author, matter, situation, strength, solidity, magnificence, and stateliness, and for its holiness; and may be said to be the temple of God, because it is of his building, and is the place where he dwells, and is worshipped; and the temple of Christ's God, as he is man and Mediator, through whom all worship is given to God in it; and those who are overcomers by the grace and strength of Christ are made pillars by him here, in allusion to the two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, in Solomon's temple; that is, they become very ornamental in the church, they are made honourable members of it; they come in at the right door into it, and fill up their places, and all relative duties in it, and walk becoming their profession; and, like pillars, are a support to it, to the interest of the church, the truths of the Gospel, and to weak and poor saints; and, as pillars, they are upright in heart and conversation, and are steady, firm, and constant:

and he shall go no more out; out of the church, the temple of the Lord, but shall abide in it unto death: it is a promise of perseverance both in the grace of God, and in a profession of religion; there shall not be such instances of apostasy as now.

And I will write upon him the name of my God; in allusion to inscriptions of names on pillars; the sense is, that it should be manifest that such are interested in God, as their covenant God and Father, in like manner as he is the God and Father of Christ; and this should be as plain and as evident as an inscription on a pillar, or as if it was written upon their foreheads, as the high priest had on his forehead written, "holiness to the Lord"; and indeed it will be by their holiness that it will so clearly appear that God is their covenant God; for in this church state, or spiritual reign of Christ, holiness unto the Lord shall be upon the bells of the horses:

and the name of the city of my God; [which is] new Jerusalem, in allusion to "Jehovah Shammah"; meaning the Gospel church in the latter day glory; and the sense is, that such shall be manifestly citizens of this city, in this new and glorious state of the church, and shall enjoy all the privileges of it, which at this time especially will be many and great. This will not be the new Jerusalem church state, or the thousand years' reign of Christ in person, for in that there will be no temple, as in this; but it will have the name, and some appearance of it; it will bear some resemblance to it, and be a pledge of it:

which cometh down out of heaven, from my God; as it is before called new Jerusalem, in distinction from the old, so here it is said to come down from heaven, or to be the heavenly Jerusalem, in distinction from the earthly one. The inhabitants of it will be born from above, and be called with an heavenly calling, and their conversation will be in heaven, and all the glory of this church will come from God.

And [I will write upon him] my new name; either the name of "Jehovah" our righteousness; or rather the name of King of kings, and Lord of lords, Re 19:16; which Christ will now acquire, or at least this will now be made more manifest upon the destruction of antichrist, in this church state; in which conquest he will make all his people sharers, and they shall now more openly appear to be kings, and to reign with him in his spiritual kingdom.

Revelation 3:13

Ver. 13. He that hath an ear, let him hear,....
See Gill on "Re 2:7".

Revelation 3:14

Ver. 14. And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,.... Of the city of Laodicea, See Gill on "Re 1:11"; there was a church here in the times of the Apostle Paul; by whom it was founded is not known; mention is made of it in **Col 2:1**, who was now the angel, or pastor of it, whether Epaphras, who is there named, or another, is not certain. According to the Apostolical Constitutions {t}, Archippus was ordained bishop of it by the apostles; see **Col 4:16**. There was a church here in the second century, for Sagaris, bishop of it, suffered martyrdom in the times of Antoninus Verus {u}; and in the "fourth" century, this church was famous for two eminent bishops, Theodorus and Gregory; and in the "fifth" century, it was the metropolitan church of Phrygia, as it was in the "seventh" century, in which age Tyberius, bishop of this place, was in the sixth synod at Constantinople {w}; but now it is even without inhabitants {x}. This church represents the state of the church, from the end of the spiritual reign of Christ, till the time of his personal appearing and kingdom, to judge the quick and dead; for after the spiritual reign is over, professors of religion will sink into a formality, and into a lukewarm frame of spirit, and into great spiritual sloth and security, **Re 3:15**, which will make those times like the times of Noah and of Lot; and such will be the days of the coming of the son of man to judge the world. Its name signifies either "the righteousness of the people"; and so may point at that popular and external righteousness, which the majority of the professors of religion in this period of time will be boasting of, and trusting in; being self-sufficient, and self-dependent, when at the same time they will be naked, as well as poor and blind, **Re 3:17**; or it signifies "the judging of the people"; for this church state, at the end of it, will bring on the general judgment; the Judge will now be at the door indeed, standing and knocking; and they that are ready to meet the bridegroom, when he comes, will be admitted into the nuptial chamber, and sit down with him in his throne, in the thousand years' kingdom, at the close of which will be the second resurrection, when all the people, small and great, shall be judged, **Re 3:19**.

These things saith the Amen; see Isa 65:16; The word "Amen" is the name of a divine Person with the Jews, and it seems the second Person; for so on those words in **Pr 8:30**; "then was I by him as one brought up with him", they observe {y}, do not read "Amon", the word there used, but "Amen"; and, a little after, "Amen", they say, is the "notaricon", or sign of Nman Klm la, "God the faithful King"; they make {z} "Amen" to be one of the names of the second "Sephira", or number in the Cabalistic tree, by whom the second Person in the Godhead seems to be designed: and they say {a}, that the word "Amen", by gematry (or numerically) answers to the two names "Jehovah, Adonai". Christ may be so called, because he is the God of truth, and truth itself; and it may be expressive of his faithfulness, both to God his Father, and to his people, in whom all the promises he either made, or received, are yea and amen; and also of the firmness, constancy, and immutability of Christ, in his nature, person, and offices, in his love, fulness of grace, power, blood, and righteousness; and is very appropriately assumed by him now, when he was about to give the finishing stroke to all covenant engagements, and to all promises and prophesies; see **Re 1:18**.

The faithful and true witness; who as he was in the days of his flesh, See Gill on "Re 1:5"; so he will be at the day of judgment, a swift witness against all ungodly men; and he may the rather take up this title, not only on that account, but to show that the description he gives of the state and condition of this church is just, **Re 3:15**; and to engage it to take his advice the more readily, **Re 3:18**; and to assure it of the nearness of his coming, **Re 3:20**; and to strengthen the faith of his people, and quicken their hope and expectation of the happiness with him promised, **Re 3:21**; the same character is given to the Logos, or Word of the Lord, by the Targumist in Jer 42:5, let the Word of the Lord be to us Nmyhmw jwvq Kyhol, "for a true and faithful witness"; the very phrase here used.

The beginning of the creation of God; not the first creature that God made, but the first cause of the creation; the first Parent, producer, and efficient cause of every creature; the author of the old creation, who made all things out of nothing in the beginning of time; and of the new creation, the everlasting Father of, everyone that is made a new creature; the Father of the world to come, or of the new age and Gospel dispensation; the Maker of the new heaven and new earth; and so a very fit person to be the Judge of the whole world, to summon all nations before him, and pass the final sentence on them. The phrase is Jewish, and it is a title the Jews give to Metatron, by whom they sometimes mean the Messiah; so those words in
Ge 24:2, and Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, they paraphrase thus {b};

""and Abraham said unto his servant", this is Metatron, (or the Mediator,) the servant of God, "the eldest of his house"; for he is Mwqm lv wytwyrb tlxt, "the beginning of the creation of God", who rules over all that he has; for to him the holy blessed God has given the government of all his hosts."

Christ is the arch, "the Prince", or Governor of all creatures.

{t} L. 7. c. 46. {u} Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 4. c. 26. & l. 5. c. 24. {w} Eccl. Hist. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 2. p. 3. cent. 5. c. 7. p. 418. cent. 7. c. 2. p. 3. c. 7. p. 112. c. 10. p. 254. {x} Smith. Notitia, p. 150. {y} Zohar in Deut. fol. 121. 4. so in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 119. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 111. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 46. 1. {z} Cabal. Denud. par. 2. p. 7. {a} Lex. Cabal. p. 130. & Baal Hatturim in Deut. xxviii. 15. {b} Zohar in Gen. fol. 77. 1.

Revelation 3:15

Ver. 15. I know thy works,.... Which were far from being perfect, and not so good as those of the former church:

that thou art neither cold nor hot; she was not "cold", or without spiritual life, at least in many of her members, as all men by nature are, and carnal professors be; she was alive, but not lively: nor was she wholly without spiritual affections and love; to God, and Christ, to his people, ways, truths, and ordinances; she had love, but the fervency of it was abated: nor was she without spiritual breathings and desires altogether, as dead men are; or without the light and knowledge of the Gospel, and a profession of it, and yet she was not "hot"; her love to God and Christ, and the saints, was not ardent and flaming; it was not like coals of fire, that give most vehement flame, which many waters cannot quench the had not fervency of spirit in the service of the Lord; nor was she zealous for the truths of the Gospel, and for the ordinances of it, and for the house of God and its discipline; nor did she warmly oppose all sin, and every error and false way.

I would thou wert cold or hot; which must be understood, not absolutely, but comparatively; and not that it was an indifferent thing to Christ whether she was one or the other; but he alludes to what is natural among men, it being generally more agreeable to have anything entirely hot, or entirely cold, than to be neither; and so uses this phrase to show his detestation of lukewarmness, and that it is better to be ignorant, and not a professor of religion, than to be a vain and carnal one; Christ desires not simply that she might be cold, but that she might be sensible of her need of spiritual heat and fervency.

Revelation 3:16

Ver. 16. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot,.... A lukewarm professor is one that serves God and mammon; that halts between two opinions, and knows not what religion is best, and cares little for any, yet keeps in a round of duty, though indifferent to it, and contents himself with it; and is un concerned about the life and power of godliness, and takes up with the external form of it; and has no thought about the glory of God, the interest of Christ and truth; and this was too much the case of this church, at least of a great number of its members; wherefore it was very loathsome to Christ, hence he threatens:

I will spew thee out of my mouth; this shows how nauseous lukewarmness is to Christ, insomuch that on account of it he would not own and acknowledge her as his; but even cast her out, unchurch her, and have no more any such imperfect church state upon earth, as he afterwards never will, this is the last; nor is there any church state, or any remains of one in Laodicea; it is indeed quite uninhabited.

Revelation 3:17

Ver. 17. Because thou sayest, I am rich,.... In worldly goods, which occasioned her lukewarmness, as riches often do, and her vanity, pride, and arrogance, afterwards expressed. Laodicea was a very rich city, and so will be this church state, through the accession of kings and princes, and great men of the earth unto it, in the former period: riches seldom do any good to the churches of Christ, they did not in Constantine's time; and it seems that even at the close of the spiritual reign of Christ they will be of bad consequence, since they will usher in the Laodicean church state: or her meaning is, that she was rich in spiritual things; not in grace, but in external gifts, which still remained, upon the very great pouring forth of the Spirit in the last church state; and in good works, on which she too much trusted for salvation, placing her righteousness in them: she is one whom the Jews {c} call hrwtb ryve, "rich in the law":

and increased with goods: with outward peace and prosperity, with much natural and divine light and knowledge, with the purity of Gospel ordinances, even beyond the former church state in her own imagination:

and have need of nothing: contenting herself with these external things: true believers, as considered in Christ, stand in need of nothing indeed, they are complete in him, and have everything in him; but, as considered in themselves, they are daily in need of daily food for their souls, as for their bodies, of fresh light and life, strength and comfort, and of new supplies of grace; wherefore this church shows great ignorance of herself, as well as great pride and arrogance to express herself in this manner:

and knowest not that thou art wretched; as all men are in a state of nature and unregeneracy; which may be the case of many professors, and they be ignorant of it; as to be under a sentence of wrath, obnoxious to the curses of the law, in danger of hell and destruction, lost and undone, and unable to extricate themselves out of such a state: true believers account themselves wretched, as the Apostle Paul did, on account of indwelling sin, and the plague of their own hearts, which the members of this church, the greater part of them, were ignorant of:

and miserable; a miserable man is one that is attended with outward afflictions, but this was not the case of this church; and with spiritual poverty, blindness, and nakedness, and this was her case; some persons neither know their misery, nor their need of mercy:

and poor; not in purse, nor in spirit, nor with respect to outward afflictions, nor as to her church state, but in a spiritual sense; one whom the Jews call a {d} hrwtb vr, "poor in the law"; as such may be said to be who have nothing to eat that is fit to eat; nothing to wear but rags, and have no money to buy either; who are in debt, and not able to pay, nor to help themselves on any account; and this may be the case of professors, and yet not known and considered by them:

and blind; natural men are blind as to a saving knowledge of God in Christ, as to the way of salvation by Christ, as to the plague of their own hearts, as to the work of the Spirit of God upon the soul, and as to the truths of the Gospel, in the power of them; but here it regards blindness with respect to her church state, and its imperfection:

and naked; sin has stripped man of his moral clothing; man's own righteousness will not cover his nakedness; and whoever is destitute of the righteousness of Christ is a naked person.

{c} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 106. 2. {d} Vajikra Rabba, sect. 34. fol. 173. 4. vid. Targum in Cant. viii. 9.

Revelation 3:18

Ver. 18. I counsel thee,.... Christ is a Counsellor, and is every way fit to be one, for he is the all wise God, the Ancient of days, and the Father of his people, and, as Mediator, the Wisdom of God; and he was concerned in the council of peace from everlasting; and when he was here on earth he gave counsel in person, and now he gives it by his Spirit, and by his word and ministers; and the substance of it is, to come to him for grace, life, and salvation; for pardon, peace, and righteousness; for spiritual light and knowledge, and every supply of grace; and his advice is always wholesome, good, and suitable, is hearty, sincere, and faithful, and is freely given, and is wise and prudent; and, being taken, infallibly succeeds; the counsel here given follows:

to buy of me gold tried in the fire; by which is meant either a more pure and glorious state of the church, such as was in the former period, or greater; or a larger measure of light and knowledge in the Gospel, which is better than fine gold; or some particular graces, and a comfortable exercise of them, as fervent love and strong faith, which is much more precious than gold; or rather, all spiritual riches in general, which are in Christ, and are unsearchable, solid, substantial and satisfying; are lasting and durable, precious, excellent, and incorruptible: and the buying of this gold is not to be understood in a proper sense, by giving a valuable consideration for it, for no such is to be given, but in an improper sense; it is a buying without money and without price; Christ and his grace are given freely; Christ of whom it is to be had and of him only, does not sell it, but he gives it to those that come to him for it, and desire to have it, and are willing to part with all, so they may but enjoy it; for that it is to be understood in such a sense, is clear from the character of the persons who are advised to buy, who were poor, or beggars, **Re 3:17**; the end of it is,

that thou mayest be rich; for though this church was rich, yet not in spirituals; and though she was rich in her own conceit, yet not really so: persons are not to be accounted truly rich who have only this world's goods; none are rich but those who have an interest in Christ and his grace; and they who are poor in this world, and yet have grace, are really rich: the next thing advised to is, and white raiment; that is, and buy white raiment, by which some understand the heavenly glory, robes of immortality, a being clothed upon with the house which is from heaven; this may be compared to raiment, for it is a glory, an immortality, an incorruption to be put on; and fitly enough to white raiment, for the purity and spotlessness of it; and being clothed with this, no nakedness, or shame of it will appear; and this is to be had from Christ, and in the same way as gold is to be bought of him; the design of this advice may be to quicken the desires of the church after heavenly things; though it rather seems to respect something suitable to her in this present state: wherefore others think that by it are meant good works, holiness of life and conversation; but these are never called white raiment, but even rags, yea, filthy ones, in the best; and whatever cover they may be from nakedness in the sight of men, they are no cover from it in the sight of God, nor do they preserve from shame and blushing: rather then by it is meant the righteousness of Christ, which may be compared to raiment; it is upon the saints, and is put upon them as such; it covers as a garment does, protects from injuries, keeps warm, beautifies and adorns, as raiment does; and it may be compared to white raiment for its purity and perfection; now this is to be bought of Christ, it is to be had of him, and is to be had of him freely, without money and without price; it is a free gift of grace; and even faith itself, which receives it, is the gift of God: the ends of giving this advice are,

that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; the soul may be naked when the body is well clothed; and notwithstanding a man's moral righteousness, he may not be clothed; they, and they only are clothed, who have on the righteousness of Christ; nakedness arises from want of, righteousness, which is only covered by the righteousness of Christ; and from hence also springs shame, which Christ's righteousness hides:

and anoint thine eyes with eye salve; by which may be meant the word of God, particularly the Gospel; and anointing with it is making use of it for the gaining of light and knowledge: all without this divine revelation are in darkness, and such who reject the authority of it go astray; the Scriptures are the only directory, and rule of faith and practice; the law is a means of enlightening persons to see their sin and misery, and the danger they are in; and the Gospel is a light, whereby is beheld the glory of Christ, of his person and office, of his grace and righteousness, and of salvation by him; and this is the Gospel of Christ, and is to be had of him freely, even the saving knowledge of it. The Jews have adopted the very Greek word here used into their language, and apply it to the law; says R. Chija {e}, speaking of the law,

"Nyel tyrwlyq, "it is a salve for the eye", a plaster for a wound, &c. it is a salve for the eyes, as is written
Ps 19:8."

or else the illumination of the Spirit is meant, by which the eyes of the understanding being enlightened, men see themselves, the impurity of their hearts and nature, the imperfection of their righteousness, their impotency to all that is spiritually good, and that they are lost and undone in themselves; and by which they see Christ and salvation by him, that it is in him, and in no other, and that it is full and suitable, and for the chief of sinners, and that it is all of free grace, and that they have an interest in it; by this they have light into the doctrines of the Gospel, and have some glimpse of the glories of another world; and this is to be had of Christ, who gives his Spirit freely, and an understanding to know spiritual things: and the end of the advice is,

that thou mayest see; who, notwithstanding the conceit she had of herself, was blind; persons may have much human prudence, much knowledge in things moral, yea, in things evangelical, notionally, and yet be blind as to true spiritual light and experience; they only see spiritually and savingly who have the Spirit of God.

{e} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 96. 3. Debarim Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 243. 3. & Vajikra Rabba, sect. 12. fol. 155. 3.

Revelation 3:19

Ver. 19. As many as I love I rebuke and chasten,.... The persons the objects of Christ's love here intended are not angels, but the sons of men; and these not all of them, yet many of them, even all who are his own by his Father's gift and his own purchase; and who are called his church, and sometimes represented as such who love him and obey his commands: the instances of his love to them are many; as his suretyship engagements for them, his assumption of their nature, dying in their room and stead, paying their debts, procuring their peace and pardon, bringing in a righteousness for them, purchasing their persons, his intercession for them, preparations in heaven, supplies of grace, and frequent visits in a kind and familiar manner; and as for the nature of his love, it is free and sovereign, everlasting and immutable, and it is matchless and inconceivable, it is strong and affectionate, and as his Father loved him; and such are rebuked by Christ, not in a way of wrath, but in a tender manner, in order to bring them under a conviction of their sin and of their duty, and of their folly in trusting in, or loving any creature more than himself, and of all their wrong ways; and they are chastened by him, not in a vindictive, but in a fatherly way, which is instructive and teaching to them, and for their good. This seems to refer to some afflictions which Christ was about to bring upon this church, by some means or another, to awaken her out of her sloth and security, and which would be in love to her, and the end be to rouse her zeal and bring her to repentance. Some think this respects the Gog and Magog army, which will encompass the camp of the saints, and the beloved city; but that will not be till after the thousand years' reign, and besides will be no affliction to them; rather it designs the unchurching them, signified by spewing them out of his mouth, **Re 3:16**;

be zealous, therefore, and repent; zeal was what was wanting in this church; which is nothing else than hot, fervent, and ardent love, love in a flame; whereas she was neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, Christ would have her be "zealous" for God; for his cause and interest, for his Gospel, ordinances, and the discipline of his house, and against everything that is evil; against all false worship, all errors in doctrine, all sin and iniquity; and to be zealous of good works, and in the worship of God, both private and public: and "repent"; in an evangelical way, of her lukewarnmess, remissness, and supineness; of her pride, arrogance, and vain boastings of herself; and of her self-sufficience, self-dependence, and self-confidence.

Revelation 3:20

Ver. 20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock,.... The phrase of standing at the door may be expressive of the near approach, or sudden coming of Christ to judgment, see **Jas 5:9**; and his knocking may signify the notice that will be given of it, by some of the immediate forerunners and signs of his coming; which yet will be observed but by a few, such a general sleepiness will have seized all professors of religion; and particularly may intend the midnight cry, which will, in its issue, rouse them all:

if any man hear my voice; in the appearances of things and providences in the world:

and open the door; or show a readiness for the coming of Christ, look and wait for it, and be like such that will receive him with a welcome:

I will come unto him, and sup with him, and he with me; to and among these will Christ appear when he comes in person; and these being like wise virgins, ready, having his grace in their hearts, and his righteousness upon them, he will take them at once into the marriage chamber, and shut the door upon the rest; when they shall enjoy a thousand years communion with him in person here on earth; when the Lamb on the throne will feed them with the fruit of the tree of life, and lead them to fountains of living water, and his tabernacle shall be among them.

Revelation 3:21

Ver. 21. To him that overcometh,.... The lukewarmness, and self-confidence, and security of this state:

will I grant to sit with me in my throne; at the close of this church state, which will be the last of this kind, consisting of imperfect saints, Christ will descend from heaven with the souls of all the righteous, and raise their bodies and unite them to them; which, with the living saints, will make one general assembly and church of the firstborn, all perfect soul and body; among these he will place his tabernacle, and fix his throne; and they being all made kings as well as priests to him, shall now reign on earth with him, and that for the space of a thousand years: and this is the blessing promised the overcomers in the Laodicean state, that when Christ shall set up his kingdom among men, and reign gloriously before his ancients, they shall sit on the same throne with him, or share with him in his kingdom and glory; see **Re 5:10**;

even as I also overcame; sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell:

and am set down with my Father in his throne; in heaven, at his right hand; which is expressive of equality to him, distinction from him, communion with him, and of the honour and glory he is possessed of; but it is not on this throne that the saints will sit, only Christ sits on the same throne with the Father in heaven; it is on Christ's throne on earth, or in his personal reign there, that the saints shall sit down with him; and which honour they shall all have, all that are more than conquerors through him, and are made kings by him. And when this reign is over, then will follow the second resurrection, or the resurrection of the wicked, when will come on the judgment of the people, as Laodicea signifies; and when these, with the devils, will form themselves into the Gog and Magog army, and attack the beloved city, the church of glorified saints on earth, under Christ their King, which will issue in the everlasting destruction of the former; and thus these seven churches bring us to the end of all things.

Revelation 3:22

Ver. 22. He that hath an ear, let him hear,....
See Gill on "Re 2:7".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 4:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 4

This chapter contains an account of the second vision John saw, as preparatory to the sealed book, and the opening of it, as the first vision was to the epistles to the seven churches. The preface to this vision, or the introduction to it, and preparation of John for it, are in **Re 4:1**, which declare the time of it, the position John was in, what he saw and heard, a call to him to come up, and the effect it had upon him; and then follows the vision itself, which is of a throne, described by the place where it was set, in heaven; and by him that sat upon it, **Re 4:2**, who was like to a jasper and a sardine stone; and by what was about it, first a rainbow of an emerald colour, **Re 4:3**, then four and twenty seats, with as many elders upon them, sitting clothed and crowned, **Re 4:4**, and by what went out from it, lightnings, thunderings, and voices; and by what were before it, seven burning lamps, which are the seven spirits of God, **Re 4:5**, and a sea of glass like crystal; and by what were between it all around, and the elders, four living creatures, described in general by their being full of eyes, before and behind, **Re 4:6**, in particular, the first by its likeness to a lion, the second by its likeness to a calf, the third by its likeness to a man, and the fourth by its likeness to a flying eagle, **Re 4:7**, and by what were common to them, first by their wings, of which they had each of them six; and by their eyes, they were full of within; and by their constant employment in celebrating the perfections of God, and in giving glory, honour, and thanks unto him, **Re 4:8**, at which time also the four and twenty elders appear in a worshipping posture, and give adoration to God; partly by deeds, casting their crowns before his throne; and partly by words, ascribing glory, honour, and power to him; giving a reason for it, taken from his creating all things for his pleasure, **Re 4:10**.

Ver. 1. After this I looked,.... After John had seen the vision of Christ, in the midst of the golden candlesticks, with seven stars in his right hand; after he was bid to write what he had seen, and what were, and should be hereafter; and after he had by order written the seven epistles to the seven churches, he looked about him to see what else he could, having his desires and expectations raised of seeing more, and other things, for the eye is never satisfied with seeing; though this is to be understood, not of looking with the eyes of his body, but with the eyes of his mind; of his beholding things in a visionary way, as the prophets did, whence they are called "seers", and their prophecies "visions": how long this was after the first vision is not certain, it may be but a few minutes; and it is to be observed, that as the first chapter of this book, with the vision in it, is the preface or introduction to the church prophecy delivered out in the seven epistles; so this and the following chapter, with the vision therein, contain the preface or introduction to the book prophecy exhibited in the opening of the seven seals of the sealed book:

and behold, a door [was] opened in heaven: not in a literal sense, as the heavens were opened at Christ's baptism, and at Stephen's martyrdom, but in a figurative sense; and the phrase is to be understood of a discovery of things that were, or were to be in the church of God, which in this book is oftentimes signified by "heaven": and it must be conceived as done in a visionary way, just as Ezekiel, in the visions of God, was brought to Jerusalem, and the temple there, and in at a door was shown all the abominations committed in the court and temple; so John, in a visionary way, through an opened door, had a scene of things in the church presented to him, as follows:

and the first voice which I heard [was], as it were, of a trumpet talking with me; this voice is not called the first voice with respect to any other voices that were to follow; but it designs the former voice, the voice that John heard behind him, when he saw the first vision; and this, as that, was clear, loud, and sonorous as a trumpet, so that he thoroughly heard, and rightly understood what was said; it was the same Person that made the following representation of things as did then, even he who is the Alpha and the Omega, the Lord Jesus Christ, the author of the whole revelation; the "first" is left out in the Arabic version: the allusion is to the blowing of trumpets at the opening of the door of the temple;

"every day there were one and twenty soundings of a trumpet in the temple, three Myrev txytpl, "at the opening of the doors", and nine at the daily morning sacrifice, and nine at the daily evening sacrifice {f}."

And one of them was called the great door of the temple; and he that slew the daily sacrifice, did not slay till he heard the sound of that door when it was opened {g}; so here at the opening of the door in heaven, in the church, of which the temple was a type, the voice of the Son of God is heard as the sound of a trumpet, talking loudly and familiarly to John:

which said, come up hither; from the isle of Patmos, where he was, up to heaven; not into the third heaven, where Paul was caught up, but rather up into the Gospel church, the Jerusalem which is above; though this, as before, is to be understood in a visionary way, in like manner as Ezekiel was lifted up by the Spirit between the earth and the heavens; and so John, in a vision, was called up from Patmos into the air, where he had a representation of the church made unto him:

and I will show thee things which must be hereafter; in the world, in the Roman empire, and in the church of God, to the end of the world; not but that there were some things shown him, as before, in the church prophecy, which had been, and were, and which was done to give him a complete view of things from first to last: and these things were shown in the following visions of the seals, trumpets, and vials, and by the Lord Jesus Christ, who talked with him, and to whom this revelation was given to show unto his servants; and it was of things that "must" be, because determined and resolved upon in the unalterable purposes and decrees of God.

{f} Misn. Succa, c. 5. sect. 5. {g} Misn. Tamid, c. 3. sect. 7.

Revelation 4:2

Ver. 2. And immediately I was in the Spirit,.... As he had been before, **Re 1:10**; it seems he had been some little time out of his ecstasy, how long cannot be said, and now, upon this new scene of things, returned to it; upon the opening of the door in heaven, and hearing the former voice, and the things it said, the Spirit of God at once possessed and filled him, in an extraordinary manner; and his soul or spirit was immediately taken from the consideration of all sensible objects, and was fixed and intent upon the things presented to it in the vision, so that it was as if it was out of the body. The Arabic version reads, "then therefore I went in the Spirit"; in obedience to the voice that called him up, in which he was assisted by the Spirit of God, who lifted him up as he did Ezekiel, when he saw what follows:

and behold, a throne was set in heaven; not for the final judgment, on which the son of man will sit, when he comes to judge the quick and dead, for he is not the person that fills this but this is a symbol of the power, authority, and dominion now exercised by God, not over the world in general, who has prepared his throne in the heavens, and governs among the nations, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, but which he exercises in his church, signified by "heaven". The allusion is to the temple, and the throne of God in it, **Isa 6:1**. The temple was an emblem of the Gospel church, Jerusalem, or the Gospel church state, and was to be called the throne of the Lord, **Jer 3:17**, and now his throne is set there. Here he exercises a jurisdiction and government; he is King and lawgiver in it; he has enacted laws, and he writes them on the hearts of his people, and puts his Spirit within them, and makes them both able and willing to obey them.

And [one] sat on the throne; not the trinity of persons in the Godhead, which some think are signified by the three precious stones in **Re 4:3**, the jasper, sardine, and emerald; for, as distinct from him that sat upon the throne, the Lamb is said to be in the midst of it, and the seven spirits of God are said to be before it: nor is Jesus Christ intended, and his two natures; his divine nature by the jasper, and his human nature by the red and blood coloured sardine; since he, the Lamb, is represented as in the midst of the throne, and is often distinguished from him that sat upon it; see **Re 5:6**; but God the Father is designed, who sits on the throne, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit, yet in distinction from them. This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version.

Revelation 4:3

Ver. 3. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper,.... For the brightness, glory, and majesty of his countenance, and for his being light itself, clothed with it, and dwelling in it; see Re 21:11; and for the various perfections of his nature, as eternity, infinity, immutability, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, wisdom, power, goodness, truth, love, grace, and mercy; for the jasper, at least one sort of them, is of various colours, and spotted with divers spots; that which is most valued is the green, spotted with red or purple {h}: hence this stone, which is the twelfth in the high priest's breastplate, and on which the name of "Benjamin" was written, is called, by the Chaldee paraphrase of Onkelos on Ex 28:20, "Pantere", and of ben Uzziel, on the same place, "Apanturin", and on **So 5:14**, "Apantor", because some are variegated and spotted like panthers.

And a sardine stone; the same with the "Sardius": and so read here the

Alexandrian copy, the Syriac and Arabic versions, as in Re 21:20, and in Ex 28:17 on which Reuben's name was written; this is of a red, or blood colour as its name Mda, in Hebrew, shows, and the same that is called a cornelian; and is expressive of the fiery indignation of God whose fury is poured out like fire, and who nakedly and absolutely considered, is a consuming fire to the wicked, his enemies, and the enemies of his church and people. Some jaspers being white and sky coloured and the white colour being most agreeable to deity, as Cicero says {i}, and the sardine being red, and a gem of the ruby kind make up the description of the church's beloved; **So 5:10**; and may denote in general his purity, glory, and excellency, and in particular good will to his people, and wrath to his enemies. And to the comfort of the former it is added,

and [there was] a rainbow round about the throne; which signifies the covenant of grace; see **Ge 9:12**. The rainbow is a reverberation, or a reflection of the beams of the sun upon a thin watery cloud; and the covenant of grace is owing to Jesus Christ, the sun of righteousness; it is he that has formed it, and filled it with blessings and promises; he is the Mediator, surety, and messenger of it, and who in Re 10:1 is represented as clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow on his head: the rainbow is of, various colours and fitly expresses the various promises and blessings, in the covenant of grace, and the various providences, both prosperous and adverse, with respect to soul and body; and as the rainbow was an emblem of mercy, peace, and reconciliation in God to man, after he had destroyed the world by a flood, so the covenant is a covenant of grace and mercy; it springs from it, and is full of it, and provides for the peace and reconciliation of the people of God, by the blood of Christ; whence it is called a covenant of peace: and as the rainbow is a security to the world, and the inhabitants of it, from a destruction by a flood any more, so the covenant is a security to those who are interested in it, from eternal destruction, and wrath to come; herein lies all their salvation, and this is the security of it: to which may be added, that God calls it my bow, as he often calls the covenant of grace my covenant, in distinction from man's; see **Ge 9:12**; and this being round about the throne of God, shows that the covenant of grace does, as it were, include and enclose God in his persons, and in his perfections; all the three divine Persons have a concern in it, and all the divine perfections are glorified by it; and it being around it, it is always in his view; he is ever mindful of it, and constantly remembers it for the good of his people, and faithfully keeps it; and it being in this form denotes, that in whatsoever way he comes forth unto his people, it is always in a covenant way, whether it be in things temporal or spiritual, in adversity or prosperity, with regard to the things of time and eternity; nor is there any coming to him with comfort, but as he is encompassed with the rainbow of the covenant; stripped of this, he is like the jasper and sardine stones, full of sparkling majesty, dread and terror, so that there is no coming nigh him; but being encircled with the rainbow, he may be approached as a covenant God, as the God of all grace, seated on a throne of grace, whither believers may come with boldness, freedom, and cheerfulness: and this rainbow was

in sight like unto an emerald; the stone on which Judah's name was written, in the high priest's breastplate; this is of a green colour, which colour is the prevailing one in the rainbow; it is of an exceeding fine green, very delightful to the eye, and gives pleasure to the mind to look upon it: and what a lovely and delightful sight is the covenant of grace to a believer! to see God as a covenant God, Christ as the Mediator of it, the exceeding great and precious promises and blessings, both of grace and glory, which are in it, yields an unspeakable pleasure to such persons; the covenant of grace, like the emerald, is ever green, it is always new; its promises and blessings are always fresh, and, like that, it is durable; it is sure, and cannot be broken, and is more immovable than rocks and mountains: the emerald is very bright, clear, and transparent; it is reported of Nero {k}, that he could see in his emerald the combat of the gladiators in the theatre; in the covenant of grace, as in a glass, may be seen the glory of all the three Persons in the Godhead, for it is ordered in all things for the glory of each Person; as also all the perfections of the divine nature; here God appears abundant in goodness and truth; here mercy and truth meet together; and righteousness and peace kiss each other: to which may be added, that the emerald is said {l} to help and refresh the memory; now though God stands in no need of any thing to bring things to his remembrance, yet such is his condescension to men, that he sets the rainbow in the cloud, to look at, that he might remember his everlasting covenant; and so he allows his people to put him in remembrance, by making mention of the covenant of grace, and pleading the promises of it. The Alexandrian copy and the Ethiopic version, instead of iriv, "a rainbow", read iereiv, "priests".

{h} Albert. Magn. de Reb. Metall. l. 2. c. 8. Ruaeus de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 1. {i} De Legibus, l. 2. {k} Ruaeus de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 4. {l} Ruaeus, ib. & Albert. Magn. de Reb. Metall. l. 2. c. 17.

Revelation 4:4

Ver. 4. And round about the throne [were] four and twenty seats,.... In a semicircular form, as the rainbow also was; the thrones in the above form, came to both ends, or sides of it; just as when the sanhedrim, or great court of judicature among the Jews say {m}, the "Nasi", or prince, sat in the uppermost seat, at his right hand was "Ab beth din", or the father or the sanhedrim, and at his left hand a doctor or wise man, and all the rest of the members sat in a semicircular form upon seats before them, so that they could see them all; and to this the allusion might be thought to be, did their numbers agree, but in the great sanhedrim there were seventy one, and the lesser twenty three, which last comes very near the number here;

and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting; by whom are not meant the twenty four books of the Old Testament, as some of the ancients thought, and also some of the modern writers, as Lord Napier and others; for the things said of them are such as cannot be applied to inanimate things, such as sitting on seats, being clothed with white raiment, having golden crowns on their heads, falling down before the throne, and worshipping him that sat on it; and besides, in **Re 5:8**, they are said to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, out of very kindred, tongue, people, and nation; for which last reason, angels also cannot be designed, and who, moreover, in the place referred to, are manifestly distinguished from these elders; nor are they to be understood as to the representatives of the Jewish church, or of the Jewish and Christian church together, as triumphant in heaven; and so be signified by the twelve patriarchs and twelve apostles, which together make up twenty four; but rather the members of the Gospel church state, throughout the whole of it, in every succession and period of time, are here meant; and are expressed by the number "twenty four", in allusion to the twenty four courses of the priests, into which they were divided by David, 1Ch 24:1, and to the twenty four stations of the Levites, who in turn attended the service of the temple daily, and represented the whole body of the people of Israel, in putting their hands upon the sacrifices, and praying for them; of which
See Gill on "Lu 1:5"; add to this, that in twenty four places the priests and Levites kept watch in the temple {n}; so these twenty four elders before the throne of God, in his temple, represent the whole Israel of God, all the members of the Gospel church state, from the first to the last of it: and they are styled "elders", not on account of office, as pastors of the churches are called, but because of their senile gravity, prudence, and knowledge; they having a greater degree of spiritual knowledge of the manifold wisdom of God than the Jewish church, which was in a state of infancy, and under tutors and governors, had; but the Gospel church is in a state of manhood, and no longer under a schoolmaster, and so fitly expressed by "elders"; and these are represented as "sitting" on their seats, not only to hear the word of God, but as judging in cases that come before them, respecting the admission or exclusion

of members, the laying on or taking off of censures, &c. and these, their seats being around and near unto the throne, denote their nearness to God, and their communion with him, in his house and ordinances, and his dwelling in the midst of them.

Clothed in white raiment; in the pure and spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, which is comparable to fine linen, clean and white; and is the righteousness of the saints in common, of every true member of Christ's body.

And they had on their heads crowns of gold; being made by Christ kings, as well as priests, unto God; for so these four and twenty elders are said to be, in **Re 5:10**; and they now reign as kings over sin, Satan, and the world, and have a kingdom of grace which shall never be removed; and they shall reign with Christ on earth a thousand years, and then reign with him to all eternity in heaven. It is a common saying with the Jews {o},

"that there is no eating and drinking in the world to come, but the righteous are "sitting", Myhvarb Mhytwrjew, "and their crowns upon their heads"."

{m} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 4. sect. 3. & Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 3. {n} Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 1. {o} Zohar in Numb. fol. 106. 3. & Raya Mehimna in ib. fol. 96. 3. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. Abot R. Nathan, fol. 1. 3. Caphtor, fol. 82. 2. & 86. 2. & 108. 2. & Nishmat Chayim, fol. 30. 2.

Revelation 4:5

Ver. 5. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings, and voices,.... Which may be understood either of the doctrines of the Gospel which come out of Zion, and out of Jerusalem, the church of God, where he has his throne; and which are comparable to "lightning", both for the light and knowledge they give, and for the swiftness with which they were spread over the world, by the apostles of Christ; and to "thunderings", for the awfulness, authority, and majesty of them, especially as they were delivered out by the Boanergeses, or sons of thunder; and as the prophesies of the prophets are called "the voices" of the prophets, Ac 13:27; so may the doctrines of the Gospel be called "voices", as they are the voice of God, and of Christ, and of his ministers; and are voices of love, grace, mercy, peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life. The allusion is to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, when such things were seen and heard, Ex 19:16 or else the judgments of God, and the punishments inflicted upon his enemies, and the enemies of his church and people, and his awful threatenings of them, may be designed; see Ps 18:13; with which compare **Re 8:5**.

And [there were] seven lamps of burning fire before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God; in allusion to the seven lamps in the tabernacle and temple, which were trimmed by the priests, and always kept burning, and are expressive of the Spirit, and his gifts; and these being signified by the number "seven", denote the fulness and perfection of them; and being said to be "before the throne", show that there is always a sufficiency of them for the supply of the churches in all ages, to fit and qualify proper persons to minister the word, and administer ordinances; and these being called "lamps of burning fire", point at the light the Spirit of God in his gifts communicates to the churches; and that warmth and heat, comfort and refreshment; conveyed to them, through the preaching of the Gospel, and the dispensation of the ordinances of it, under his illuminating and quickening influences.

Revelation 4:6

Ver. 6. And before the throne [there was] a sea of glass like unto crystal,.... By which is meant, not heaven, nor the souls of the blessed there, nor the multitude of the holy angels, nor the first converts to Christianity at Jerusalem; for those that got the victory over the beast are said to stand upon this sea, Re 15:2, which these senses, especially the three last, will by no means admit of. Some by it understand the world, which may be compared to a "sea", for the multitude of people in it, as many waters in this book signify people and nations, Re 17:15; and to a sea of glass, which is brittle, for the frailty and transitoriness of the world, of the fashion of it, and of men and things in it; and to the clear "crystal", because all things in it are open and manifest to the omniscient eye of God; but the world, and men of it, used not to be compared to a still and quiet sea, as this is, but to one disturbed and troubled by winds and tempests, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, Isa 57:20. Others think the ordinance of baptism is designed, of which the Red sea, through which the Israelites passed under the cloud, was an emblem; and which may be compared to a "sea of glass", for its transparency, it clearly expressing the sufferings, burial, and resurrection of Christ; and to crystal, for its purity; and to all this for its cleansing nature, as it leads unto the blood of Christ; and its being before the throne may denote its being the way of entrance into the Gospel church. Others think the blood of Christ is meant, in allusion to the brazen sea in the tabernacle, which was made of the looking glasses the

women brought, and for the priests to wash in, before they entered on business, Ex 30:18, and to the molten sea in the temple, which was for the same purpose, **1Ki 7:23**. Christ's blood is the fountain opened to wash in for sin, and may be compared to a sea for its abundant efficacy in cleansing from all sin; and it is this which makes way to the throne, and to him that sits on it; and is a special privilege enjoyed by those who come to Mount Zion, or into a Gospel church state; there is always this laver to wash their garments in, and make them white: though this sea, being of glass, seems not so much designed to wash in; and therefore rather I think by it is meant the Gospel, compared to a "sea" for the deep things of God and mysteries of grace which are in it; to a sea of "glass", because in it is beheld, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, of his person, office, and righteousness, as well as many other wondrous things; and to one like "crystal", for the clearness, perspicuity, and evidence of the truths contained in it; and to a, fixed, still; and quiet sea, because it is the Gospel of peace, love, grace, and mercy, and brings peace, joy, and tranquillity to troubled minds, when the law works wrath: but here are no tossing, foaming, raging waves of wrath, and fury, but all smooth, stable, solid, tranquil, and quiet. And this is said to be before the throne, where the rainbow of the covenant is, of which the Gospel is a transcript; and where the four and twenty elders, or members of churches be, for their delight and comfort; and where the seven spirits of God are, to furnish men with gifts to preach it; and where the four living creatures, or ministers of the word, have their place, who officiate in it. Agreeably to this figurative way of speaking, the Jews call {p} the law, atyrwad amy, "the sea of the law", and the "sea of wisdom"; and frequently give the characters of such and such a doctor, as being very expert and conversant
dwmlth Myb, "in the sea of the Talmud", or "doctrine" {q}. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read, "there was as a sea of glass", somewhat that looked like one. The word "glass" is left out in the Ethiopic version, but very aptly is it so described, the colour of the sea being sometimes green like that of glass.

And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, [were] four beasts; or "living creatures", as the word may be better rendered, agreeably to **Eze 1:5**, to which reference is here had; and by whom are meant not the angels, though there are many things which agree with them; they are said to be the "four spirits" of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth, **Zec 6:5**. They may be rightly called living creatures, since they live a most happy life in heaven; their situation is before the throne, and in the presence of God; and their being so sedulous, diligent, and watchful in doing the will of God, may be signified by their being "full of eyes behind, and before, and within"; their strength may be fitly expressed by "the lion"; their indefatigableness in the service of God, by "the ox": their wisdom, prudence, and knowledge, by "the face of a man"; and their swiftness in obeying the divine commands by "the flying eagle"; their number of wings agrees with that of the seraphim in **Isa 6:2**; to which the allusion seems to be; and their work, in continually ascribing glory to God, suits with them: to which may be added, that the Jews often speak of four angels, waokl bybo, "round about his throne", that is, the throne of God; whose names are Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael; the three first they place in this manner, Michael at his right hand, Uriel at his left, and Gabriel before him {r}. Sometimes thus, Michael on his right hand, Gabriel on his left, Uriel before him, and Raphael behind him, and the holy blessed God in the middle; and they are expressly called {s} by them the four living creatures, meaning in Ezekiel's vision; and they make mention of the intellectual living creatures which are ayorkl Nyrxo, "round about the throne" {t}. Notwithstanding all this, the angels cannot be intended, because these four living creatures are said to be redeemed by the blood of Christ, and are distinguished from angels in **Re 5:8**; nor are the four Gospels, with the four evangelists, here meant; for whatever agreement may be fancied there is between these, and the likeness of the living creatures; as that Matthew may be signified by the creature that has the face of a man, because he begins his Gospel with the genealogy of Christ, as man; and Mark by the lion, because he begins his Gospel with the voice of one crying in the wilderness; and Luke by the ox, because he begins his Gospel with an account of Zacharias the priest, offering in the temple; and John by the eagle, because he begins his Gospel, the first face or leaf of it, in a very high style, and with the divinity of Christ: and with what truth soever it may be said of these that they are full of divine light and knowledge, and swiftly spread it in the world, and are continually giving glory to God; yet it cannot be said of them, with any propriety, as is said of these four living creatures, that they fall down before God, and worship him, and are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb: besides, these four are represented as calling to John at the opening of the first four seals, to come and see what was to be seen; and one of them is said to give to the seven angels the vials of wrath to pour out, **Re 5:8**, to which may be added, that this sense is attended with this inconvenience, that it makes John to be one of the four creatures which he saw: nor are four particular apostles, as Peter and John, Paul and Barnabas, pointed at, as others think; nor the pure apostolical church, for the church is represented by the four and twenty elders, and these four living creatures are distinguished from the hundred and forty four thousand on Mount Zion, in Re 14:1. Dr. Goodwin has a very ingenious thought upon these words, could it be supported; he thinks that these four living creatures design the four officers in the Christian church, the ruling elder, the pastor, the deacon, and the teacher; the ruling elder by the "lion", who needs courage to deal with men in case of sins; the pastor by the "ox", for his laboriousness in treading out the corn; the deacon by that which has the "face of a man", it being necessary that he should be merciful and pitiful to the poor, as is the heart of a man; and the teacher by the "flying eagle", who is quick to espy errors, and soars aloft into high mysteries: but then it should be observed, that there is no such officer ass ruling elder in the church, distinct from the pastor; and that the pastor and teacher are one; so that there are but two sorts of officers in the church, pastor, and deacon; see **Php 1:1**; to which may be added, that the four living creatures are all in the same situation, and are alike full of eyes, and have the same number of wings, and are employed in the same work; all which cannot be said equally of church officers. By these four living creatures, I apprehend, we are to understand the ministers of the Gospel in general, in the successive ages of the church, to whom all the characters do well agree. And though they may not be all found in everyone, at least not in all alike, yet thou are in one or another of them, and in them as together considered. They are said to be "four", being fewer in number than the members of the church, which are signified by the twenty four elders, and yet a sufficient number; and in allusion to the four standards of the camp of Israel in the wilderness, to which there seems to be some reference in the whole of this account; as the tabernacle there was placed in the midst, so the throne of God here; as the priests and Levites were round about that, so the four and twenty elders here; as there were seven lamps, over against the candlestick in the tabernacle, continually burning, so there are seven spirits here before the throne; and as there were four princes, who were standard bearers, placed at the four corners of the camp, so here four living creatures, or ministers of the word, who are standard bearers: the standard of Judah, with Issachar and Zabulon under him, was at the east of the tabernacle; and Ephraim, with Manasseh and Benjamin, at the west; Reuben, with Simeon and Gad, at the south; and Dan, with Asher and Naphtali, at the north; and the Jewish writers say {u}, that on Judah's standard was the figure of a lion, on Ephraim's the figure of an ox, on Reuben's the figure of a man, and on Dan's the figure of an eagle; and to which the four living creatures are likened here. And this number "four" may be the rather mentioned, with respect to the four parts of the world, and corners of the earth, whither the ministers of the Gospel are sent to preach, and whither their commission reaches; there being of the elect of God in all parts to be gathered in by their ministry: and very properly may they be called "living creatures", because they are alive in themselves, being quickened by the Spirit of God; or otherwise they would not be fit for their work; and because their work requires liveliness in the exercise of grace, and fervency in the performance of duty: and because they are a means in the hand of God of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving drooping saints by the word of life, which they hold forth: the situation of these four living creatures agrees with them, who are said to be both in the midst of, and round about the throne, and so were nearer to it than the four and twenty elders, and were between that and them; as the ministers of the Gospel are set in the first place in the church; have nearness to God, and much of his presence, which is particularly promised them; and stand between God and the people, and receive from the one, and communicate to the other, and lead on the worship of God, as these four do; see **Re 4:9**. And these are said to be

full of eyes; of spiritual light, and evangelical knowledge; and they have need of all the eyes they have to look into the Scriptures of truth, to search and pry into them, and find out the sense and meaning of them; to overlook the flock committed to them, they have taken the oversight of; to look to themselves, their doctrine, and their conversation; to espy enemies and dangers, and give notice of them to the churches; to look to God upon the throne, and to the Lamb in the midst of it, for fresh supplies of gifts and grace; and to see to it, that all their ministrations tend to the glory of God, the honour of a Redeemer, and the good of souls. And they had eyes

before and behind; "before" them, to look to the word of God, and the deep things in it, which continually lies before them, and to the things that are yet to come relating to the kingdom and church of Christ; and "behind" them, to observe how all sacrifices and types, predictions and promises, have had their accomplishment in Christ; they have eyes before them to watch over the church they are in the midst of, and which is the flock that is before them; and eyes behind, to guard against Satan and his emissaries, false teachers, who sometimes slyly and secretly come upon the back of them; they have eyes before them, to look to him that sits upon the throne, on whom their dependence, and from whom their expectations are; and they have eyes behind them, to look on the four and twenty elders, the members of the churches, to whom they minister.

{p} Zohar in Numb. fol. 90. 3. & 92. 1. & in Lev. fol. 24. 3. & in Deut. fol. 118. 4. Tikkune Zohar apud Rittangel. not. in Jetzira, p. 133, 134. {q} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 46. 2. & 47. 1, 2. {r} Bemidbar Rabba, sect 2. fol. 179. 1. Vid. Pirke Eliezer, c. 4. {s} Zohar in Numb. fol. 91. 3. {t} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in ib. fol. 95. 4. {u} Aben Ezra in Numb. ii. 2.

Revelation 4:7

Ver. 7. And the first beast [was] like a lion,.... And this figure expresses the strength of the ministers of the word, the lion being the strongest among beasts, Pr 30:30, to do the work they are called to, to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ, and to bear the infirmities of the weak; and also it denotes their courage and boldness in preaching the Gospel of Christ, without fearing the faces of men, or of being afraid of their revilings:

and the second beast like a calf; or "ox", for so the word here used signifies in the Hellenistic language, and with the Septuagint interpreters, and agrees with **Eze 1:10**, and designs the laboriousness of Christ's faithful ministers in treading out the corn of Gospel truth, who labour in the word and doctrine, and are labourers with God; as also their humility, meekness, and patience in bearing insults, reproaches, and sufferings for Christ, and instructing those that oppose themselves:

and the third beast had a face as a man; and points at the humanity and tender heartedness, the wisdom, prudence, knowledge, and understanding, and the use of the reasoning faculty, together with a manly spirit in abiding by the Gospel at any rate; all which are so necessary in the ministers of the word.

And the fourth beast [was] like a flying eagle; which sets forth the sagacity and penetration of Gospel ministers into the deep things of God, and mysteries of grace, and their readiness and swiftness to do the will of God, in publishing the everlasting Gospel; see Re 14:6.

Revelation 4:8

Ver. 8. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about [him],.... As the seraphim in **Isa 6:2** with two of which they might cover their faces as they did, testifying thereby their reverence of God, when in his presence; and with the other two cover their feet, signifying their sense of their sinfulness, weakness, and imperfection, in their conversation, even in their best works, and in the ministry of the word; and with the other two fly about, as denoting their readiness to minister the word and ordinances, to visit the members of the church, and do all good offices of love and service to them that lie in their power:

[and they were] full of eyes within; to look into the sin and corruption of their own hearts, which is a means of keeping them humble amidst all their attainments, gifts, and graces, and of qualifying them to speak aptly of the cases of others; and they have eyes within, to look into and consult their own experience; for besides the word of God, which lies before them, they have a testimony in themselves of the truth of the doctrines of the Gospel, which they do well to attend unto; and they have these inward eyes to look into that treasure which God has put into their earthen vessels, in order to bring out of it things new and old.

And they rest not day and night; they give up themselves to the ministry of the word, and prayer; are wholly in these things, meditate on the word continually, and preach the Gospel in season, and out of season:

saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come; living under a continual sense of the holiness of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and how necessary holiness is in themselves, who bear the vessels of the Lord, and in the churches and house of God; taking care that all their doctrines are according to godliness, and serve to promote holiness of life and conversation; and also under a sense of the power of God, and of their need of it, to carry them through their work, and make their ministry successful; and of the eternity and immutability of God, which is a wonderful support unto them amidst all the difficulties and troubles that attend them. The word "holy" is three times used here, as by the seraphim in **Isa 6:3**; and in some copies it is repeated six times, and in others nine times, as in the Complutensian edition.

Revelation 4:9

Ver. 9. And when these beasts give glory,.... When they give God the glory of all his perfections, covenant, and promises, and of all the gifts and grace bestowed on them, and of the success of their ministry; and in it glorify Father, Son, and Spirit, who bear their respective parts in the business of salvation; and ascribe to each their due glory in election, redemption, and sanctification:

and honour; in the several parts of religious worship performed by them; and not with their lips only, but with their hearts also:

and thanks; for all blessings, temporal and spiritual, bestowed on them, and on the saints: even

to him that sat on the throne; God the Father, **Re 4:3**;

who liveth for ever and ever; he who is the living God, and will always continue so.

Revelation 4:10

Ver. 10. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne,.... The ministers of the Gospel begin the worship of God, and lead in it, who are the four living creatures; when the members of churches, who are the four and twenty elders, follow, and approach the divine Being in a most humble manner:

and worship him that liveth for ever and ever: in Spirit, and in truth, with faith and fervency, in every part of duty they are directed to:

and cast their crowns before the throne; signifying, that they received them, from him that sits upon it, being by the grace of God what they are; and that they are unworthy to wear them in his presence, being but unprofitable servants in all they do; and hereby also acknowledging their subjection to him as their King and lawgiver. Something like this the Jews relate of the family above; they say,

"when the holy blessed God ascends the glorious "throne of judgment", the whole family above tremble; and when they see the holy blessed God "they take their crowns from off their heads"--and pray and seek mercy for Israel; and immediately he ascends the "throne of mercy" {w}."

And such like actions have been done by kings and princes to one another, in token of subjection. Thus Tigranes, king of Armenia, fell down at the feet of Pompey, and cast his crown from his head, which Pompey replaced; and having commanded him certain things, ordered him to enjoy his kingdoms {x}: so Herod meeting Augustus Caesar at Rhode, when he entered the city took oil his crown, and after a speech made to him, with which Caesar was pleased, he set it on him again {y}.

Saying; as follows.

{w} Raziel, fol. 45. 2. {x} Cicero, Orat. pro Sextio. p. 904. {y} Joseph. Autiqu. l. 15. c. 6. sect. 6, 7.

Revelation 4:11

Ver. 11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory honour, and power,.... The Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin version, and all the Oriental ones, read, "thou art worthy, O Lord, and our God, to receive"; that is, to receive the acknowledgment and ascription of glory, honour, and power; for otherwise God cannot be said to receive these from his creatures, than by their confessing and declaring that they belong unto him: and that for the reasons following,

for thou hast created all things; the whole universe, the heavens, the earth, and sea, and all that in them are:

and for thy pleasure they are and were created; God is the first cause, and the last end of all things; by his power they are made, and according to his will, and for his own glory, and therefore is worthy of such a doxology; see Pr 16:4. What is here said is contrary to a notion imbibed by the Jews {z}, that the world was not created but for the sake of the Israelites: and elsewhere {a} they say,

"the world was not created but for David; and one says for Moses; and Rabbi Jochanan says for the Messiah;"

which last is truest.

{z} Zohar in Exod. fol. 6. 3. & Tzeror Hammor, fol. 109. 1. & 161. 3. {a} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 5:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVEALTION 5

This chapter contains the vision of the sealed book, and the opening of it by Christ, which occasions universal joy among all ranks and sorts of creatures. The book is described by the place where it was, in the right hand of God; by the uncommon manner in which it was written within and without; and by the seven seals it was sealed with, **Re 5:1**, next follows a proclamation made by a mighty angel, with a loud voice, to find out a person worthy and able to open this book, and loose its seals, **Re 5:2**, upon which a declaration is made, that none could be found in heaven, earth, or hell, **Re 5:3**, which had such an effect upon John, that it set him a weeping, **Re 5:4**, but was comforted by one of the elders suggesting, that there was a person that could, and would do it, when he calls the lion of the tribe of Judah, and the root of David, which are names of Christ, **Re 5:5**, of which he was assured by what he quickly saw, namely, the same person the elder spoke of, described by his position, standing between the throne, and the living creatures, and elders; and by his similitude and likeness, as a Lamb that had been lately slain, with seven horns and eyes in him; and by what he did, he went and took the book out of the right hand of God, his Father, **Re 5:6**. This occasioned a general joy among all kind of creatures; first among the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders, who are described by what they had, harps and golden vials, the one for praise, the other for prayer; and by what they did, they fell down in a worshipping posture before the Lamb, and sung the new song of redeeming love to him; in which they ascribe worthiness to him, to take the book and open its seals; declare their redemption unto God, by his blood, out of all nations of the earth; take notice of the honour done them by him, in making them kings and priests to God; and express their assurance that they shall reign with him on earth, **Re 5:8**, and next an innumerable company of angels join the living creatures and elders, in a doxology or ascription of glory to him, **Re 5:11**, yea, every creature in heaven and earth, upon it, and under it, and in the sea, are introduced as giving glory both to him that sat upon the throne, and to the Lamb, **Re 5:13**, and the whole is closed by the living creatures saying "Amen", to all, and by the elders prostrating themselves, and worshipping the living and eternal God, **Re 5:14**.

Ver. 1. And I saw on the right hand of him that sat on the throne,.... Of this throne, and who it was that sat upon it,
See Gill on "Re 4:2"; and who had "in" his right hand, or "at", or "upon" his right hand, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, lying by, or near his right hand; though according to **Re 5:7**, the book appears to have been in his right hand, as our version, and others render it:

a book written within, and on the backside, sealed with seven seals: this book was very much like Ezekiel's roll, **Eze 2:9**; which was written rwxaw Mynp, "within" and "without", before and behind, and indeed it was in the form of a roll: the manner of writings in those times was on sheets of parchment, which, when finished, were rolled up in the form of a cylinder; hence a book is called a "volume". This book seems to have consisted of seven rolls, to which was annexed seven seals; and there being not room enough within, contrary to the common way of writing, some things were written upon the backside of the

outermost roll; and such writings were by the ancients called "Opistographi": and the word is used by them sometimes for very prolix writings {b}. By this book some understand the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which were written in rolls; see Heb 10:5; and which came out of the right hand of God, and were given forth by him; and being written within, and on the backside, may denote the fulness of them, they containing a variety of matter, useful and profitable, for different purposes; or else the literal and mystical, or spiritual meaning of some parts of them: or, as others think, the more clear explanation of the books of the Old Testament, by those of the New Testament; and its being sealed may signify the authenticity of those writings, having the seal of God's truth, and the impress of his wisdom, power, and goodness on them; and also the hidden sense and meaning of them, they being, especially in the prophetic and spiritual part of them, a sealed book to natural men, and of which Christ is the truest and best interpreter; but then this book was opened, and looked into, and read, and, in some measure, understood, even by the Old Testament saints, and had been before this time expounded by Christ, concerning himself; yea, he had opened the understandings of his disciples to understand those Scriptures, and had counted them, and others, worthy to open and explain this book to others, and had sent them into all the world for this purpose; and for the same reasons it cannot be understood of the Gospel published to Jews and Gentiles, the one within, and the other without; rather therefore the book of God's decrees is here meant, which respects all creatures, and all occurrences and events in the whole world, from the beginning to the end of time; and so Ezekiel's roll, according to the Targum on **Eze 2:10**; which was written before and behind, signified that which was aywrv Nm, "from the beginning", and which
apwob ywhml dyted, "shall be in the end", or hereafter. This book God holds "in [his] right hand", as the rule and measure of all he does, and of the government of the world, and which he constantly fulfils and executes; and its being written "within and without" may denote the perfection and comprehensiveness of it, it reaching to all creatures and things, even the most minute; and its being "sealed" shows the certainty of its fulfilment, and the secrecy and hiddenness of it, until accomplished; though it seems best of all to understand it of that part of God's decrees relating to the church and world, particularly the Roman empire, which from henceforward, to the end of time, was to be fulfilled; and so is no other than the book of the Revelation itself, exhibited in the following scenes and visions; and this may be truly said to be in the right hand of God, and from thence taken by the Lamb, it being the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, **Re 1:1**; and may be said to be written, both "within and on the backside", to show that it contains a large account of things, a long train of events to be accomplished; as also to

signify, that it regards the church, and the members of it, who are those that are within, in the several ages of time, and the world, or those that are without; for this book prophecy regards both the state of the Roman empire, and of the Christian church; and its being "sealed" shows the authenticity, certainty, and also the obscurity of what was contained therein; and with "seven" seals, with respect to the seven periods of time, in which the prophecies in it are to be fulfilled.

{b} Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 30. & Salmuth in Panciroll. rer. Memorab. par. 1. tit. 42. p. 145.

Revelation 5:2

Ver. 2. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice,.... This was not the uncreated angel, Jesus Christ; for he is after spoken of as the lion of the tribe of Judah, and as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, but a created one; though who he was, whether Gabriel, as some say, because his name signifies the strong or mighty One of God, is not material to be known; angels are said to be mighty, and to excel in strength: this is called so here, chiefly with respect to his voice, which he, by reason of his great strength, exerted so loudly, as to be heard by all the creatures in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth however, this was not John the Baptist, but if a minister of the Gospel, rather some one since, making the following proclamation:

who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? suggesting, that if there was any such person, that he was desired to come, and do it; and it seems, that he must not only be one of power and ability, but of dignity and authority, a person of greatness and worth, from whence his ability arises; as he ought to be that can engage his heart to draw nigh to God, and take a book out of his right hand, this mysterious book of the Revelation, as it was indeed while sealed; and open and explain it to others, unseal it or exhibit it, as it afterwards was in the following scenes and visions, and gave a view of all that is contained in it; and not only so, but fulfil and accomplish all the prophecies in it; and who can, or is worthy to do all this, but he that sits at the right hand of God, and who is God as well as man? and this proclamation was made to stir up an earnest desire in John, and all the saints he represents, to know what was in this book; and to show the impotence of all creatures to make any discovery of it; and to illustrate, and set off with a greater foil, the glory, excellency, ability, and worth of Jesus Christ. There seems to be an allusion to the president of the temple calling to the priests under him, to attend to the

several parts of service assigned them, saying unto them,
hkzv ym, "whosoever is worthy, let him" do so and so {c}.

{c} Misna Tamid, c. 1. sect. 4. & c. 5. sect. 4. 5.

Revelation 5:3

Ver. 3. And no man in heaven,.... Or "no one in heaven", whether angels, or the souls of departed saints; neither the one nor the other know anything of what is to come, until it is revealed unto them:

nor in earth: among all the men on earth, even those of the greatest sagacity and penetration, the wise, the prudent, the scribe, the disputer of this world, such who are most conversant with books, and have the greatest reach into the things of nature, or of grace:

neither under the earth; the dead buried there, good or bad; which may be said agreeably to the notions of the ancient Jews, who believed the immortality of souls, and that they were rewarded or punished, upo cyonov, "under the earth", according to their virtue or vice in life {d}: or the devils in hell; or whoever on the earth are influenced by them, as magicians, sorcerers, soothsayers, and necromancers:

was able to open the book, neither to look thereon; or in it, so as to read it, understand it, and show to John what was in it; for the sense is, there was no creature in heaven, earth, or hell, who were masters of the deepest knowledge, and made pretensions to any, that were able to foresee and foretell things to come; or to exhibit the prophecies in this book, and represent them to John in the manner they afterwards were, and much less to accomplish them.

{d} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 1. sect 3.

Revelation 5:4

Ver. 4. And I wept much,.... Not so much on his own account, because he feared his curiosity would not be gratified, and that strong desire answered, which were raised in him upon sight of the book, and increased by the angel's proclamation; but for the sake of the church of God, whose representative he was, and to whom the knowledge of this book, and the things contained in it, he judged must be very useful and profitable. The Ethiopic version reads, "and many wept"; many of those that were about the throne, as well as John:

because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon; because there was no creature in heaven, earth, or under it, that were of dignity and authority, as well as of ability, to open the book by unsealing it; and read and deliver out the prophecies in it upon the taking off of every seal; and so not to look into it, and foresee and foretell what was hereafter to come to pass, in the church and world: the phrase of being worthy to look on it seems to be Jewish; of the book of the generation of Adam, **Ge 5:1**, the Jews say {e} that

"it descended to the first man, and by it he knew the wisdom which is above; and this book came to the sons of God, the wise men of the age, hyb axgval ykzd Nam, "whoever is worthy to look in it", knows by it the wisdom which is from above."

The whole verse is left out in the Alexandrian copy; and the phrase, "to read", is neither in the Vulgate Latin, nor in any of the Oriental versions.

{e} Zohar in Gen. fol. 28. 2.

Revelation 5:5

Ver. 5. And one of the elders said unto me,.... The Ethiopic version reads, "one of these elders"; that is, one of the four and twenty elders that were round about the throne; not the first of the four and twenty books of the Old Testament; nor the patriarch Jacob, because of the prophecy concerning Shiloh, Judah's son, which stands in Ge 49:10, nor Moses, who spoke of the Messiah as the great prophet of the church; nor John the Baptist, who pointed out the Lamb of God; these are all fancies and conjectures. It was one of the members of the Christian church, who was near the throne of God, had communion with him, and knowledge of his will, who in this visionary way is represented as comforting John under his sorrow and concern, and giving him information: and sometimes persons of superior abilities may receive instruction from meaner persons, as did Apollos from Aquila and Priscilla: the same said unto John,

weep not; cease sorrowing, do not be cast down, nor despair;

behold the lion of the tribe of Judah; by whom is meant Christ, who, according to the flesh, was to come of the tribe of Judah; and certain it is, that our Lord sprang from thence: and he is said to be the lion of that tribe, in allusion to the prophecy concerning Judah in Ge 49:9, where he is said to be a lion, an old lion stooping down and couching, and on whose standard was the figure of a lion. Christ may be compared to one, because of his great strength, he being the mighty God, the able Saviour, and strong Redeemer, and protector of his church and people, and the avenger of their enemies; and because of his courage and intrepidity when he engaged with Satan, and his principalities and powers, when he bore the sins of his people, sustained his Father's wrath, and the terrors of death set themselves in array against him; and because of the fierceness of his wrath, and fury against the wicked, and for his generosity and lenity towards those that stoop unto him, and obey him. So the Jews say {f}, that

"of Messiah, the son of David, who comes forth from Judah, is it said, Ge 49:9, "Judah is a lion's whelp";"

and a little after, Messiah, the son of David, who is hyra, "a lion", shall be on his right hand, and Messiah, the son of Joseph, who is an ox, on his left hand; so the word of the Lord frequently, in the Chaldee paraphrase, is said to be a lion {g}.

The root of David; in like manner is Christ called the root of Jesse in Isa 11:10; and the meaning either is, that he is a branch that springs out of the roots of Jesse and David, is David's son and offspring, according to his human nature; see Re 22:16; or that he is David's Lord, according to his divine nature: and the metaphor of a root well agrees with him as Mediator, he being hidden out of sight, and unknown to a natural man; and may denote his meanness in his state of humiliation, when he was as a root out of a dry ground; and because he is the root from whence all the elect of God spring, in whom they have their being, and by whom they are bore and supported, and from whom are derived to them all the blessings of grace, all their spiritual life, holiness, fruitfulness, and perseverance. Now this illustrious Person, so described,

hath prevailed; or overcome all difficulties, being one of worth and value, of great authority and ability:

to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof; and deliver out all the prophecies in it, and fulfil them; and this through the merits of his blood, and in consequence of his sufferings and death: hence, in the next verse, he is represented as a lamb as it had been slain; and the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, put his worthiness to take the book, and open it, upon his having been slain, and having redeemed them by his blood, **Re 5:9**. And as he, upon his resurrection from the dead, had all power in heaven and in earth given him, as Mediator, for the protection of his church, so he was deserving; and it was fit and necessary that he, as the great prophet of the church, should have and deliver out the prophecies concerning the state and condition of his redeemed ones in all ages.

{f} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 49. 3, 4. {g} Targum in Hos. v. 14. & xi. 10. & xiii. 7.

Revelation 5:6

Ver. 6. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts,.... These words, "in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts", are left out in the Syriac version:

and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb; John, upon the intimation given him by the elder, lift up his eyes, and with great earnestness looked about, and saw the person he pointed at, though not in the form of a lion, but in the appearance of a lamb, to which Christ, both in the Old and New Testament, is often compared; and that very aptly, for his innocence and purity of nature; for his harmless and inoffensive conversation; and for his meek and humble deportment throughout the whole of his life; and for his patience at the time of his sufferings and death; and for his usefulness both for food and clothing to his people; and chiefly for his sacrifice for them, typified both by the passover lamb, and by the lambs of the daily sacrifice: hence it follows,

as it had been slain; or "as having been slain"; Christ had been really slain by the wicked hands of the Jews, and not in appearance only; the as, here, is not a note of mere similitude and likeness, but of reality and truth; see **Joh 1:14**; but he was now risen from the dead, and therefore is said to have been slain some time before, though now alive; and he appeared to have the marks of his sufferings and death upon him, as he had after his resurrection the print of the nails and spear, in his hands, feet, and side; and he was as a lamb that had been newly or lately slain: and it may denote the continued efficacy of his blood, to cleanse from all sin, and of his sacrifice to take it away; he was as a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, with respect to the continual virtue of his blood and sacrifice; and he will be, on the same account, the Lamb as it had been slain, unto the end of the world. The position and situation of this Lamb were, he "stood in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders"; he "stood", being risen from the dead, and ascended up into heaven, but was not as yet set down upon the throne with his Father, but was very near it; he stood before it, ready to be placed upon it, and receive his power and his kingdom; he stood between the throne, and between the living creatures, and the elders, being the Mediator between God, and his church, and people; he, appeared before the throne for them, as their advocate, and stood ready to give them all the assistance, and to do them all the good he could: and this his situation may also denote, that he is continually in view, is always in the sight of God, as the Lamb that had been slain; his blood is carried within the vail, is sprinkled upon the mercy seat, and is always in sight, and calls for peace and pardon; and God the Father always looks upon it, and to his righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction, on account of his people: moreover, his being in the midst of the four living creatures, and elders, may signify his presence in his churches, and with his ministers, which he has promised them to the end of the world. This Lamb is further represented,

as having seven horns; it is very unusual for a lamb to have horns, and especially seven: these horns are expressive of the power of Christ, of his dominion and government, even of his kingly power and authority; so kings are signified by horns in **Da 8:20**; and Christ himself is called the horn of David, and the horn of salvation, Ps 132:17; and signify, that upon his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, he was made and declared Lord and Christ; and the number "seven" expresses the fulness and perfection of his power and authority, having, as Mediator, all power in heaves and in earth given him; and what is above all power, might, dominion, and every name in this world, and that to come; and may have some relation to the seven states of his churches in so many periods of time; and show not only that he has power sufficient to protect and defend his people in all times, and to push at and destroy his and their enemies, but to open the then sealed book, and unloose the seals: and as another qualification for this work, it follows,

and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth; which some understand of angels, and of a sufficient number of them, which belong to Christ, and are at his command, and who are ready to do his will, and to be sent forth by him, into the several parts of the earth, to execute his pleasure: but these rather design the Spirit of God and his gifts, which Christ received without measure, both in his human nature, at his incarnation, and after his resurrection from the dead, and ascension; which he bestowed on his apostles and ministering servants, whom he sent forth into all the world, to preach his Gospel with them; and which he has, more or less, ever since continued to do. The Ethiopic version reads in the singular number, "and this is the Spirit of God which is sent into all the earth"; See Gill on "Re 1:4"; these "seven eyes" may design the perfect knowledge of Christ, his foresight of future events, and his all wise providence, which is always and everywhere concerned to fulfil and accomplish them; so that he is every way qualified to take the book of future events, as to the church and world, and reveal it, open and explain it, and fulfil the things contained in it; see **Zec 3:9**.

Revelation 5:7

Ver. 7. And he came,.... He drew nigh to the throne of God, he engaged his heart to approach unto him, and came up even to his seat, which a mere creature, without a Mediator, cannot do:

and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne; See Gill on "Re 5:1"; it being given unto him, as in **Re 1:1**; and a commission and authority to open it, and make it manifest to others, and to accomplish the several events, in the several periods of time, it points unto.

Revelation 5:8

Ver. 8. And when he had taken the book,.... The Vulgate Latin version reads, "when he had opened the book", very wrongly; for the opening of it by unloosing the seals, one after another, is hereafter mentioned, in **Re 6:1**, but when it was observed, that the Lamb took the book, and his commission to open, unseal, and fulfil it,

the four beasts, and four [and] twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb; by way of religious worship and adoration of him; which shows that he was not a mere creature, who assumed human nature, suffered, and died, and is the Mediator between God and men, but is truly God, and is the proper object of worship; and so he is regarded by all his faithful ministers, and true churches, which are here signified by the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders; who are represented as

having everyone of them harps; which were instruments of music, and with which the saints formerly used to praise God, Ps 33:2; and so may here intend the praises and thanksgivings of the saints, of everyone of them, greater or lesser, upon the present occasion; having their hearts in right tune, making melody with them to the Lord, and giving thanks unto him for all their blessings, temporal and spiritual, and particularly for the Lamb, and his worthiness to open the book, and unloose the seals:

and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints; this is said in allusion to the golden censers full of incense, which ascended upwards, and was of a sweet smell; the vessels on the shewbread table, in which incense was put, are by Josephus {h} called "golden vials", as here; his words are, upon the loaves were put two fialai cruseai, "golden vials", full of incense: the prayers of the saints are compared to "odours", or "incense", as the word may be rendered, and as they are called, Ps 141:2; partly because as incense goes upwards, so do they go up to God, and are received, regarded, and had in remembrance by him; and partly because as incense is of a sweet smell, so the prayers of the saints, put up in the name and faith of Christ, are very grateful and acceptable to God: the "golden vials" said to be "full" of them, may design the hearts of believers, in which they first are, and from whence they proceed; true prayer is that which is inwrought in the soul, and comes from the heart, even from a heart pure like gold, purified by faith in the blood of Christ, a true heart, that asks in faith, nothing wavering; such as are really saints, true believers in Christ, are praying souls; they are full of prayers for themselves and others; they pray always, and for all saints: this makes nothing for praying to angels and saints departed; for these prayers were their own, and not others; and besides, these four living creatures, and four and twenty elders, were not angels, for they are said to be redeemed by the blood of Christ, and are distinguished from angels in the following verses; nor the saints in heaven, but ministers and churches on earth, and who were to reign with Christ on earth, **Re 5:10**; it may be observed, that the Jews sometimes represent prayer in such like figures as here;

"prayer (they say) ascends with those spices which are mentioned in **So 4:14**; and at the time that prayer ascends it is perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, and of this the holy blessed God asks, "who is this that comes up", &c. {i} **So 3:6**;"

and they say, prayer is greater than all offerings {k}. See **Re 8:3**.

{h} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 6. {i} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 48. 3.
{k} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 40. 3.

Revelation 5:9

Ver. 9. And they sung a new song,.... Upon a new occasion and subject, redemption by the blood of the Lamb, and his worthiness to open the sealed book; and in distinction from the old song of Moses and the children of Israel at the Red sea; and this was a most famous and excellent song, an unheard of one, and which none could learn, or sing, but the redeemed of the Lamb:

saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof. The Arabic version reads, "thou, O Lamb"; the reasons why they ascribe such fitness, ability, and dignity to him, are as follow:

for thou wast slain: by men, and for the sins of men; whereby, as he became worthy in his priestly office to take away the sins of his people, and to have all the glory of their salvation, and, in his kingly office, to have all power and authority, and to be exalted above every name, so, in his prophetic office, to have perfect knowledge, as man and Mediator, of all the future events that were to befall his church and people, and to make them known, and fulfil them:

and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; this shows, that as the four living creatures, and four and twenty elders, were not angels, so they were not representatives of the Jewish church; or the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament; not even the apostles of the New; for they were all Jews, and could not be said to be redeemed out of every tongue, nation, and people; and also that not the Jews only were redeemed by Christ, but the Gentiles also, and not all mankind, or every individual of human nature, but some out of all the nations of the earth; for God hath chosen some, both of Jews and Gentiles, and these Christ has redeemed and therefore the Gospel is sent unto all nations, that these among them may be called and saved. The redemption of them supposes them to have been in a state of slavery and bondage, as they are by nature, to sin, Satan, and the law; and signifies a deliverance from such a state, which Christ has obtained, not barely by power, but by price, as the word here used signifies, and may be rendered, "and hast bought us" and the price with which he has bought them in his own "blood", and which is of full and sufficient value, it being not only the blood of a man, of an innocent man, but of one that is God as well as man: and this price was paid "to God", and to his justice, against whom men have sinned, whose law they have broken, and whose justice they have injured and affronted, that he might reconcile them to God, bring them near to him, and that they might serve him in righteousness and true holiness.

Revelation 5:10

Ver. 10. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests,....
See Gill on "Re 1:6". The Alexandrian copy, and Complutensian edition, and the Syriac, Arabic, and the Ethiopic versions, read "them", instead of "us":

and we shall reign on the earth; meaning not merely in a spiritual sense, through grace reigning over sin and corruption, through Satan being bruised under their feet, and through the victory they have in Christ over the world, but in the millennium state, in the thousand years' reign with Christ in the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; see Re 20:4. The Alexandrian copy, and the Complutensian edition, Syriac and Arabic versions, read "they shall reign".

Revelation 5:11

Ver. 11. And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels,.... Immaterial spirits, made by Christ, and worshippers of him, and ministering spirits to him and his, the holy and elect angels, who are confirmed in their state by Christ; these John beheld in a visionary way, and heard the voices and articulate sounds formed by them; and there were many of them; how many there are, or were here, cannot be said; we read of a multitude of heavenly host that appeared at the incarnation of Christ, and of more than twelve legions of angels, that Christ could have had of his Father for a word speaking, at the time of his apprehension, who would have rescued him out of the hands of his enemies; yea, that company is innumerable. The Syriac version reads, "as the voice of many waters"; these were

round about the throne; were near to God, stood before him, behind his face, hearkened to his voice, and observed his orders: so with the Jews, the four angels, Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael, are said {l} to be raokl bybo, "round about his throne", the throne of God: it follows here,

and the beasts and the elders; the sense is not, that John heard the voice of the living creatures, and of the elders, as well as, and together with, the voice of many angels; for he had heard their voice and song before, but that the angels whose voice he heard, as they were round about the throne, so they were round about the living creatures, and round about the elders: the angels are near unto, and encompass the ministers of the Gospel; they are about them, and give them

intimations and discoveries of the mind and will of God, as an angel did to John, **Re 1:1**, and another to Paul,
Ac 27:23, and sometimes direct them where to go and preach the Gospel, as in Ac 16:9, and surround them for their safety and protection: so horses and chariots of fire, by whom angels are meant, were round about the prophet Elisha, **2Ki 6:16**, and they were also round about the elders, the churches, and particular believers; angels and saints are near to one another; and angels are very friendly to the saints, and so them many good offices; they all belong to the same family, and are social worshippers of God; the angels are the guards that encamp round about them that fear the Lord, and often protect them from enemies and dangers; and it may be observed, that the saints are nearer the Lamb and the throne than the angels be; according to this account, there was a throne, and one that sat on it, who is the living God; nearest to the throne stood the Lamb; next to the Lamb stood the four living creatures, the ministers of the Gospel; next to them the elders, or churches, and members thereof; and in the outermost ring, and as encompassing all, stood the ministering angels, they being servants; whereas the saints are the heirs of salvation, and the bride, the Lamb's wife, and therefore nearer him:

and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; that is, an innumerable company of them; a like number is mentioned in **Da 7:10** to which this seems to refer; see Ps 68:17. The Jews speak of nine hundred and six thousand millions of ministering angels, that stand constantly before the Lord {m}.

{l} Bemidbar Rabba sect. 2. fol. 179. 1. {m} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 69. 1.

Revelation 5:12

Ver. 12. Saying with a loud voice,.... To signify their zeal, fervour, and affection for Christ, and to make a free, open, and public acknowledgment of him, and that all might hear of his worthiness, and of the praise and glory that were due unto him:

worthy is the Lamb that was slain; they address him as the Lamb, and not as the Lord of lords, and their Lord; and speak of him as having been slain, and celebrate the virtue and efficacy of his sufferings and death, and ascribe his worthiness to receive glory and honour thereunto; but do not add, as the living creatures and elders do, "and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood"; because, though they were the subjects and objects of confirming grace by Christ, yet not of redeeming grace: it follows,

to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; as the book has seven seals to be unloosed, and Christ had seven horns of power and ability to loose them, and fulfil the things contained in it, and seven eyes to look into it, and discover and reveal what is in it, so here are "seven" words made use of, to express the praise that was due unto him; a like number is used by the angels in **Re 7:12**; and when he is said to be worthy to receive these, it is not to be understood of his receiving the things themselves, but of the praise of them; and that these are to be observed in him, and to be ascribed to him: power belongs to him, as he is the mighty God; and as the Saviour and Redeemer of his people; and as risen from the dead, and as exalted at God's right hand, and made or declared Lord and Christ; having all power in heaven and in earth: "riches" may well be ascribed to him, who has all the perfections of deity in him; whose are the heavens and the earth, and the fulness thereof; and who, as Mediator, is heir of all things, and has both the riches of grace and glory in his hands: "wisdom" also is his; he is wisdom itself, he is the only wise God; and he is the author of all wisdom, natural and spiritual; and, as Mediator, he has the spirit of wisdom and knowledge resting on him, and the treasures of both hid in him: and "strength" may be well attributed to him, which he has shown in making and supporting all things; in saving and redeeming his people with a mighty hand and outstretched arm; and in subduing and vanquishing all his and their enemies; and in giving strength to them to discharge their duty, resist temptations, oppose corruptions, and do their generation work: "honour" is due to him, as the Son of God, he being to be honoured equally as the Father; and who, as man and Mediator, is crowned with glory and honour: "glory" is what ought to be ascribed unto him, even the glory of true and proper deity, and also the glory of salvation; and who, as Mediator, had a glory promised him, and which was due unto him upon his having finished his work, and which he now enjoys: wherefore "blessing" is to be given to him, who is God over all, blessed for evermore, in himself and the perfections of his nature; in whom all spiritual blessings are, and in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed; and to whom praise and thanks are to be rendered, for the blessings of pardoning, justifying, and redeeming grace, and for all other.

Revelation 5:13

Ver. 13. And every creature which is in heaven,.... Animate or inanimate, angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, sun, moon, and stars, and the fowls of the air:

and on the earth; men and beasts, and every creeping thing, mountains, hills, fruitful trees, and all cedars: and under the earth: in the bowels of it, metals, minerals, and everything of that kind:

and such as are in the sea; that sail in ships upon the mighty waters, and fishes great and small that are therein:

and all that are in them; in heaven, earth, and sea:

heard I saying, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever; all creatures in their way praise God, and are subservient to the glory and interest of Christ, and are the occasion of glorifying of both; and even the enemies of Christ, wicked men and devils, will be obliged to own Christ to be Lord, to the glory of God the Father, as well as angels and saints; and the same glory and honour which are given to the one are ascribed to the other, which shows the proper deity of Christ, and his equality with the Father. The Syriac version reads, "and I heard him who sitteth upon the throne, saying, to the Lamb be given blessing and honour", &c. with which compare **Joh 5:22**.

Revelation 5:14

Ver. 14. And the four beasts said, Amen,.... Giving their assent to what the angels and every creature said, and expressing their desires and wishes that so it might be, and also their faith, that so it was, and would be:

and the four [and] twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever; either God the Father, who sat upon the throne, and is so described, **Re 4:9**; or else the Lamb who had been slain, and was now alive, and lives for evermore; or both of them, for the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and the Syriac and Arabic versions, omit the words "him that liveth for ever and ever"; and leave it to be understood of either of them, or both; and the Ethiopic version reads, "and the elders worshipped him"; as the four living creatures and four and twenty elders led the chorus, and begun the song, so they close it, as being the persons more immediately concerned in the death and sufferings of the Lamb, and redemption by him, and in the sealed book, and in the things contained in it; the seals of which are next opened, and an account is given of them in some following chapters.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 6:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 6

This chapter contains the vision of the opening six of the seals of the sealed book, by the Lamb, and of the events following thereupon. The preparation to the vision of the first seal is in **Re 6:1**; the Lamb opens it, John hears a noise like thunder, and one of the living creatures bids him come and see; upon which he saw a horse, of a white colour, and a rider on it, who is described by a bow and crown given him, and by the victory he obtained, **Re 6:2**; at the opening of the second seal, the second living creature invites him as before; and he sees a horse, of a red colour, with a rider on it, described by his power, to take peace from the earth, and suffer men to kill one another, and by a great sword given him, **Re 6:3**; at the opening of the third seal, the third living creature addresses him in like manner as the other; and he sees a horse, of a black colour, and a rider on it, with a pair of balances in his hands; and hears a voice from among the four living creatures, expressing dearness of provisions, and a charge not to hurt the oil and wine, **Re 6:5**; at the opening of the fourth seal, the fourth living creature speaks to John, as the rest; and he sees a horse, of a pale colour, and a rider on it, described by his name, Death, by his follower, hell, or the grave, and by his power to destroy a fourth part of the earth with the sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts, **Re 6:7**; at the opening of the fifth seal, John saw the souls of the martyrs, under the altar; hears their cry for vengeance; observes that white robes were given them, and that they were bid to be quiet until the slaying and suffering time of their brethren was over, **Re 6:9**; at the opening of the sixth seal follow an earthquake, strange changes in the heavens, the sun becomes black as sackcloth, the moon becomes as blood, the stars fall, and the heaven itself departs, and every island and mountain are moved out of their places, **Re 6:12**, the kings and great men of the earth, and even all sorts, of men, upon this, fly to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of God the Father, that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, the opener of the sealed book; giving this as a reason for it, that the time of his great wrath was come, and none could stand before him, **Re 6:15**.

Ver. 1. And I saw, when the Lamb opened one of the seals,.... Of the sealed book; one of the seven seals of it, as read the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate

Latin, and the Oriental versions, and the Complutensian edition; that is, the first; so "one" is used for first in **Ge 1:5**; and as appears from the following seals being called second, third, fourth, &c. These seals express events to be fulfilled; and therefore cannot respect the steps towards, and the signs of Jerusalem's destruction, and that itself, which had been accomplished some years before the vision of the seals; and which vision would have been needless: and these are called seals, because they were sealed among God's treasure, or were resolved on, and decreed by him; and because they were hidden and unknown until they came to pass; and when they were come to pass, they were pledges of what God would do in the destruction of Rome Papal, as here in the destruction of Rome Pagan: for these seals, at least the first six of them, concern the Pagan empire, and the state of the church in it; and are so many gradual steps to the ruin of it, and to the advancing and increasing of the kingdom of Christ; and these, with the seven trumpets, which the last seal introduces, reach from the times of the apostles to the end of time, as appears from Re 10:6. Now the opening of these seals is the revealing of the events signified by them, and expressed in the hieroglyphics here made use of, and the fulfilment of them;

and I heard as it were the noise of thunder; a voice very loud and sonorous, exciting the attention of John:

one of the four beasts saying, come and see; this was the of the four living creatures, for the word one is used in the same sense as in the foregoing clause; and this creature was like to a lion, **Re 4:7**; wherefore his voice was loud, as when a lion roars,
Re 10:3, and is fitly compared to thunder: there is no need to look out for any particular person, as intended by this living creature; or to conclude him to be Peter, as Grotius, who was dead before this seal was opened; or Quadratus, Aristides, and Justin Martyr, who courageously appeared in the Christian cause, and made very excellent apologies for it, with success, since these lived under the second seal; it is enough in general to understand the ministers of the Gospel, who, as sons of thunder, loudly and publicly preached the Gospel, and, as lions, boldly and bravely defended, and took notice of the power and providence of God in succeeding their ministry, and in weakening the kingdom of Satan in the Gentile world, and particularly in the Roman empire; and therefore are represented as calling to John to "come and see"; observe and take notice of the following hieroglyphic, representing the success of the Gospel ministry, yzx at, "come and see", is a phrase often used by the Jews, to stir up attention to what is about to be said;
See Gill on "Joh 1:46".

Revelation 6:2

Ver. 2. And I saw, and behold a white horse,.... Representing the ministration of the Gospel in the times of the apostles, which were just now finishing, John being the last of them, who saw this vision; and the "horse" being a swift, majestic, and warlike creature, and fearless of opposition and war, may design the swift progress of the Gospel in the world, the majesty, power, and authority with which it came, and opposition it met with, and which was bore down before it; and its "white" colour may denote the purity of Gospel truths, the peace it proclaims, the joy brings, and the triumph that attends it, on account of victories obtained by it, and which is afterwards suggested: white horses were used in triumphs, in token of victory {n}; a white horse, in a dream, is a good sign with the Jews {o}; and Astrampsychus says {p}, a vision of white horses is an apparition of angels; and so one of those angels which the Jews suppose to have the care of men, and the preservation of them, is said {q} to ride by him, and at his right hand, upon a white horse; but the rider here is not an angel, but the head of all principality and power:

and he that sat on him had a bow; with arrows; the bow is the word of the Gospel, and the arrows the doctrines of it; see **Hab 3:9**; so called for their swift motion, sudden and secret striking, piercing, and penetrating nature, reaching to the very hearts of men; laying open the secret thoughts and iniquity thereof; wounding, and causing them to fall, and submit themselves to the sceptre of Christ's kingdom:

and a crown was given unto him; by God the Father; expressive of Christ's regal power and authority, of his honour and dignity, and of his victories and conquests:

and he went forth, conquering and to conquer; in the ministration of the Gospel, which went forth, as did all the first ministers of it, from Jerusalem, to the several parts of the world; from the east, on which side of the throne was the first living creature, who called upon John to come and see this sight, as the standard of the tribe of Judah, which had a lion upon it, was on the east side of the camp of Israel; and out of Zion went forth the word of the Lord, which was very victorious, both among Jews and Gentiles, to the conversion of thousands of them, and to the planting of a multitude of churches among them, and to the setting up and advancing the kingdom of Christ; but inasmuch as yet all things are not made subject to him, he is represented as going forth in the

Gospel, still conquering, and to conquer, what remain to be conquered: that Christ is designed by him that sat on the white horse, and is thus described, is evident from Re 19:11; with which compare Ps 45:3, though as this emblem may respect the Roman empire, the white horse may be an emblem of the strong, warlike, and conquering state of it; and the rider which a bow and crown may design Vespasian, whom Christ made use of as an instrument to conquer his enemies the Jews, and who, in consequence thereof, had the imperial crown put upon him; and it may be further observed, that though his conquest of them was a very great one, yet they afterwards rose up in the empire, in great numbers, rebelled, and did much mischief, when they were entirely conquered by Trajan and Hadrian, who seem to be intended in the next seal.

{n} Victor Aurel. de Viris Illustr. in Fur Camill. {o} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1. {p} In Oneiro Criticis, apud Mede. {q} Shaare Zion, fol. 102. 2.

Revelation 6:3

Ver. 3. And when he had opened the second seal,.... Of the sealed book; that is, the Lamb, as before:

I heard the second beast say, come and see; this living creature was the ox, whose situation was on the west side of the throne, as the standard of Ephraim, on which was an ox, was on the west of the camp of Israel; no mention is made of the noise of thunder, as before, the voice of the ox being lower than that of the lion; and this perhaps may point out a decrease in the Gospel ministry; to fix on any particular person, as, with Grotius, the Evangelist Matthew, because he says, Mt 24:7, nation shall rise against nation, which carries in it some likeness to what is said at the opening of this seal; or, as with Brightman, Justin Martyr, whose second apology was not regarded by the emperor, is mere conjecture; the ministers of the Gospel are intended who lived under this seal, who, though they might not be strong and courageous like the lion, or their predecessors, yet were like the ox, laborious in preaching, and patient in suffering; and these are represented in this vision as inviting John to behold and observe the following hieroglyphic.

Revelation 6:4

Ver. 4. And there went out another horse, [that was] red,.... Which may be an emblem either of the suffering state of the church, being answerable to the Smyrnaean one, as the purity and power of the Gospel, represented in the former seal, may answer to the Ephesine church; or else of those contentions and divisions occasioned among men through the Gospel, which, though of a peaceable nature, yet, through the corruption and depravity of men, brings not peace, but a sword; or rather of those bloody wars within the period of time signified by this seal, which came as punishments on the enemies of the Gospel:

and [power] was given to him that sat thereon; not the Lord Jesus Christ, who is said to ride on a red horse, **Zec 1:8**; though indeed he presides over his church and people, and takes the care of them when the most desolating judgments are in the earth, and causes all things to work together for good; nor Satan, the red dragon, who was a murderer from the beginning, and delights in effusion of blood, and in stirring up of men to destroy one another, whenever he is permitted; but Trajan the Roman emperor, in whose reign John died; and who came from the west, and was a Spaniard, as was Hadrian his successor, who may be joined with him; which was the side, or quarter, on which the living creature was that spoke to John; and in the times of these emperors were very bloody and civil wars: wherefore power is said to be given him,

to take peace from the earth; that is, from the Roman empire, which is sometimes called the whole world; and which could not have been done, if power had not been given from him who makes peace, and creates evil:

and that they should kill one another: which refers not to the havoc and slaughter which the Jews made one of another at the destruction of Jerusalem, but to the Jews murdering of the Greeks and Romans, and the Romans the Jews, in the times of the above emperors. In Trajan's time, the Jews who dwelt about Cyrene, under the conduct of one Andrew, fell upon the Romans and Greeks, and killed many, fed on their flesh, ate their bowels, besmeared themselves with their blood, and covered themselves with their skins; many of them they sawed asunder, from the crown of the head down to the middle; many of them they threw to the wild beasts, and many of them they forced to fight among themselves, till they had destroyed above two hundred and twenty thousand men; in Egypt and Cyprus they committed the same kind of outrages, their leader being one Artemion, where two hundred and forty thousand men perished {r}; Lybia was almost emptied of men by them; so that Hadrian, the successor of Trajan, was obliged to send colonies to repeople the places they had made desolate. But at length they were overcome by Lupus, governor of Egypt, and by Marcius Turbo, and by Lucius, whom Trajan sent against them {s}, and destroyed great numbers of them; and for the space of about fourteen years they were quiet; but in Hadrian's time they rose again, and set one Bar Cochab, a false Messiah, at the head of them, whom they proclaimed king: when Hadrian sent forces against them, and with great difficulty subdued them, took the city Bither, where they were, and destroyed at times five hundred and eighty thousand of them {t}; the Jews say, that he put men, women, and children to death in such numbers, that their blood ran down into the main sea, yea, that a horse might go up to his nose in blood {u}; they say that he destroyed in Bither double the number of those that came out of Egypt, even twelve hundred thousand men {w}; some of their accounts are very extravagant, and exceed all bounds {x}; however, the slaughter was very great, that it may well be said,

and there was given unto him a great sword; to slay men with; though Hadrian on his death bed, amidst his pains, would fain have had a sword given to him to have dispatched his own life, and could not obtain one {y}; the Jews say he destroyed all the land of Judea {z}.

{r} Dion Cassius in Vita Trajani. {s} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 2. {t} Dion Cassius in Vita Hadrian. {u} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 57. 1. & Hieros. Taanith, fol. 69. 1. Echa Rabbati, fol. 52. 3. {w} Jucaasin, fol. 142. 2. & 143. 1. {x} T. Hieros Taanith, fol. 68. 4. & T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 157. 2. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 13. 1. {y} Spartianus in Vita Hadriani, & Aurel. Victor. Epitome. {z} T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 20. 1.

Revelation 6:5

Ver. 5. And when he had opened the third seal,.... Of the sealed book:

I heard the third beast say, come and see; this living creature was that which was like a man, who was on the south side of the throne, as the standard of Reuben, which had the figure of a man, was on the south side of the camp of Israel; this was not the Apostle Paul, as Grotius thinks, to whom was made a prophecy of a famine in the days of Claudius Caesar; nor Tertullian, who made an apology for the Christians in the times of this seal, as Brightman conjectures; but the ministers of the Gospel, whose voice was neither the voice of the lion nor of the ox, but of a man, which was still lower, but yet they retained their humanity, reasoning prudence, and wisdom; and these are represented as calling upon John to come and see, and take notice of the following hieroglyphic:

and I beheld, and lo a black horse; an emblem either of the afflicted state of the church, still answering to the Smyrnaean one, being black with persecutions, schisms, errors, and heresies, which were many; or particularly of the heresies and heretics of those times, who might be compared to a horse for their pride and ambition, speaking great swelling words of vanity, and to a black one, for their hidden things of dishonesty, and works of darkness, for the darkness in themselves, and which they spread over others; or rather of a famine, not in a spiritual sense, of hearing of the word, but in a literal sense; see **La 4:7**; not what was at the siege of Jerusalem, or in the times of Claudius Caesar, Ac 11:28; but in the times of the Emperor Severus, and others, as the historians of those times {a}, and the writings of Tertullian show; when the Heathens ascribed the scarcity that was among them to the wickedness of the Christians {b}, whereas it was a judgment upon them for their persecution of them:

and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand; by whom is meant not some noted heretic, or heretics, who had balances of deceit in their hands to prove their tenets by, such as spurious writings, &c. or who made pretensions to the Scriptures, the balance of the sanctuary, to weigh doctrines in; nor Christ, whose name heretics shrouded themselves under, and professed, and who overruled and made use of their heresies for the good of his people, that they might be made manifest. Mr. Mede thinks that Septimius Severus, the Roman emperor, who came from Africa, from the south, on which side was the living creature that spoke to John, is intended, and in which country black horses were in great esteem; and he was the only African that ever was emperor of Rome before {c}: and the same author thinks, that his having a pair of balances in his hand expresses the strict justice that emperor was famous for; but rather it signifies famine, and such a scarcity as that bread is delivered out by weight to men; see Le 26:26.

{a} Spartianus in Vita Severi, & Lampridius in Vita Alexandri. {b} Apolog. c. 40. & ad Scapulam, c. 3. {c} Cassiodor. Chronicon. & Eutrop. Hist. Roman. l. 8.

Revelation 6:6

Ver. 6. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say,.... Not the voice of Agabus to the Apostle Paul, Ac 11:28; but rather of Christ, who was in the midst of them, **Re 5:6**; the Ethiopic version adds, "as the voice of an eagle":

a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; "Choenix", the measure here used, signifies as much as was sufficient for a man for one day, as a penny was the usual hire of a labourer for a day, Mt 20:2; so a choenix of corn was allowed to each man in Xerxes's army for a day, according to Herodotus {d}; the same quantity for a day was given by the Romans to their shepherds and servants, and is generally said to be about two pounds; according to Agricola it was two pounds and a quarter {e}. This measure was very different; the Attic choenix was a measure that held three pounds, the Italic choenix four pounds, and the military choenix five pounds, and answers to the Hebrew Kab {f}; and in the Septuagint version of Eze 45:10; it answers to the Bath; and some make it to be the fourth part of a bushel, and others half a bushel {g}; the first account of its being about two pounds, and the allowance of a man for a day, seems best to agree with this place: so that this phrase expresses such a scarcity, as that a man's daily wages would be but just enough to buy himself bread, without any thing to eat with it; and when he would have nothing left for clothes, and other things, nor anything for his wife and children:

and [see] that thou hurt not the oil and wine; signifying that this scarcity should fall not upon the superfluities, such as oil and wine, which may be spared, and men can live without; but upon the necessities of life, particularly bread: some render the words, "and be not unjust in the oil and wine"; and so think they refer to the laws of the Roman emperors, in relation to wine and oil, and to the just execution of them, that there might be plenty of them; and others understand them in an allegorical sense, of the principal doctrines of the Gospel, comparable to oil and wine, and which Christ takes care of, that they shall not be hurt and destroyed by heretics and false teachers, even when they prevail the most, and bring on a famine of the word, and when the church is blackened and darkened with them; and indeed these may much better be applied to the Gospel, than, as they are by the Jews, to the law; who frequently say {h} that the law is called "oil", and speak of hrwt lv hnyy, "the wine of the law" {i}:

{d} Polymnia, c. 187. {e} De Mensuris Graecis, p. 120. {f} Waserus de Mensuris, l. 2. c. 2. sect. 5, 6. & c. 3. sect. 6. & c. 7. sect. 6. {g} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 20. {h} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 85. 3. & 96. 1. & 97. 4. & 104. 1. & 105. 2. & 137. 2, 3. {i} Zohar in Exod. fol. 51. 3. & in Deut. fol. 115. 3. Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Numb. fol. 94. 3. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 5. 3. Midrash Kohelet, fol. 64. 4.

Revelation 6:7

Ver. 7. And when he had opened the fourth seal,.... Of the seven seals of the sealed book; that is, when the Lamb had opened it, or took it off, as in **Re 6:1**;

I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, come and see; this living creature was that which was like an eagle, and was on the north side of the throne, answerable to the standard of Dan, which was on the north of the camp of Israel, and had the figure of an eagle upon it; and the opening of this seal begins with Maximinus the Roman emperor, who came from Thrace, far north. This living creature was not James, the brother of our Lord, who had been dead long ago, as Grotius imagines; nor Cyprian, as Brightman thinks, though he lived under this seal; but the ministers of the Gospel in general in the times referred to are intended: and it may denote some decline in the Gospel ministry, that they had not the courage and strength of the lion, as the first Gospel preachers; nor the patience and laboriousness of the ox, the next set of ministers; nor the solidity and prudence of the man, the ministers that followed them; and yet they retained some degree of light and knowledge, sagacity and penetration, and contempt of the world, signified by the eagle; these invite John in a visionary way to come and see the following hieroglyphic.

Revelation 6:8

Ver. 8. And I looked, and behold a pale horse,.... An emblem either of the state of the church, pale not with persecution, as some think, for through that it was red; but with the hypocrisy and superstition of many of its members, who were paving the way for the man of sin, and on account of whom the church was grown sickly and dying; or rather this is an emblem of the sickly and dying state of the Pagan Roman empire, through a complication of judgments upon it, hereafter mentioned, as war, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts:

and his name that sat on him was Death; not Satan, who has the power of death, but death itself; who is represented as a person, as he elsewhere is, sometimes as a king, **Ro 5:14**; and as an enemy,
1Co 15:25; see Isa 28:15; and this was a very ancient way of speaking of death among the Heathens; in the theology of the Phoenicians, according to Sanchoniathon {k}, who wrote before the Trojan wars, a son of Saturn by Rhea was called Muth, whom the Phoenicians sometimes called Death, and sometimes Pluto; which is manifestly the same with the Hebrew word twm, "death"; the name of the rider of this horse may well be called Death, both

with respect to the various kinds of death under this seal, and with respect to the short lives of the emperors; for in less than fifty years' time, which is the period of this seal, namely, from Maximinus, A. D. 235, or 237, to Dioclesian, A. D. 284, or 286, there were more than twenty emperors, and who most of them were cut off by violent deaths; besides the thirty tyrants who sprung up under one of them, as so many mushrooms, and were soon destroyed. This is the only rider that has a name given him; and from hence we may learn what to call the rest, as the rider of the white horse "Truth", or Christ, who is truth itself; the rider of the red horse "War"; and the rider of the black horse "Famine": and because both the last, with other judgments, meet together under this seal, the rider of this horse is emphatically called "Death":

and hell followed with him: that is, the grave, which attended on death, or followed after him, and was a sort of an undertaker, to bury the dead killed by death; so these two are put together, **Re 1:18**;

and power was given unto them; to death and hell, or the grave, or rather to death only, for the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, "to him": and the power that was given him reached

over the fourth part of the earth; not of the church, which is never called the earth in this book, but is distinguished from it,
Re 12:16; nor the land of Judea, but the Roman empire; some understand it of Europe, the fourth part of the world:

to kill with the sword; Maximinus, with whom this seal begins, was of a very barbarous disposition, and a more cruel creature, it is said, was not upon earth; and besides his persecution of the Christians, he acted a most inhuman part to the Pagan Romans themselves, so that the senate dreaded him; and the women and children at Rome, having heard of his barbarities, deprecated his ever seeing that city; and he was called by the names of the worst of tyrants; more than four thousand men he killed without any charge or judicial process against them, and yet his blood thirsty mind was not satisfied {l}: Gallienus, another emperor after him, emptied many cities entirely of men, and killed three or four thousand a day of his own soldiers, whom he understood had thoughts of a new emperor {m}; under him thirty tyrants sprung up together in the empire, who made great havoc before they were cut off; and in his time the Alemanni (a people in Germany) having wasted France, broke into Italy; Dacia, which beyond the Danube was added by Trajan (to the Roman empire) was lost; Greece, Macedonia, Pontus, and Asia, were destroyed by the Goths; Pannonia was depopulated by (the people called) Sarmatae and Quadi; the

Germans penetrated into Spain, and took the famous city of Tarracon; the Parthians having seized Mesopotamia, began to claim Syria to themselves; so that, as the Roman historian observes {n}, things were now desperate, and the Roman empire was almost destroyed: not to take notice of the multitudes that were killed in after wars and persecutions, under other emperors, during this seal:

and with hunger; or famine; there was a grievous famine in the times of Gallus and Volusianus, which Dionysius bishop of Alexandria makes mention of {o}; and Cyprian, who lived under this seal, also speaks of famine, and indeed of all these three, war, famine, and pestilence, as then imputed to the Christians, and to their irreligion, which charge he removes {p}:

and with death; that is, with the pestilence, which, by the Targumist {q}, and other Jewish writers {r}, is commonly called
antwm, "death", because it sweeps away and carries off such large numbers with it: now in the reign of the last mentioned emperors was a very noisome pestilence, which raged most cruelly; the Roman historian says {s}, that their reign is only known, or was famous, for the pestilence, diseases, and sicknesses; Hostilianus, who was created emperor by the senate, died of it {t}; Dionysius of Alexandria has given a most shocking account of it, who lived at the same time {u}; it began in Ethiopia, and went through the east, and through all parts of the Roman empire, and lasted fifteen years; to which perhaps, for its large extent and long duration, there never was the like:

and with the beasts of the earth; by which many of the Christians were destroyed in the persecutions of those times; and is also one of God's four judgments, and which goes about with the sword, famine, and pestilence, Eze 14:21, and may be literally understood of destruction by wild beasts, as Arnobius, who lived at this time, observes {w}; or allegorically, of men comparable to wild beasts, as Herod is called a fox, and Nero a lion; and such savage creatures were most of the Roman emperors, and particularly the thirty tyrants under Gallienus: so the Targum on **Jer 3:12**; interprets "the beasts of the field", aymme yklm, "the kings of the nations". The Alexandrian copy reads, "and upon the fourth part of the beasts", as if the power of death reached to them as well as to men. Under this seal all the judgments of God on Rome Pagan meet together; and it is observable that Maximinus, a Roman emperor, and one of the last of the Pagans, boasted, that for worshipping of the gods, and persecuting Of the Christians, neither pestilence, famine, nor war, were in his times, when on a sudden all these three came together at once {x}; to which may be added the following observation, that though the several steps and methods which God took to punish, weaken, and destroy the Roman Pagan empire, were remarkably seen in the distinct periods to which these first four seals belong, yet they must not be entirely restrained and limited to these periods, as if they were not made use of in others; so though the Gospel proceeded with remarkable success under the first seal, in the times of the apostles, to the subduing of multitudes in the Roman empire, it was also preached with great success under the following seals; and though there were most grievous wars under the second seal, in the times of Trajan and Adrian, so there were also in after times; that was not the only period of war, though it was remarkably so; likewise there was a famine in the times of Claudius, under the first seal, Ac 11:28; and in the time of Trajan, under the second seal {y}, and of Commodus {z} as well as under the third; and there were pestilences also in those times, as well as under the fourth seal; and because God did by each of these weaken, break, and at last bring to ruin that empire, they are showed to John one after another.

{k} Apud Euseb. Prepar. Evangel. l. 2. p. 38. {l} Capitolinus in Vita ejus. {m} Pollio in Vita Gallieni. {n} Eutropius, l. 9. {o} Apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 7. c. 22. {p} Ad Demetrianum, p. 278. {q} Targum in 1 Chron. xxi. 12, 14, 17. & in 2 Chron. vi. 28. & xx. 9. {r} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 8. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 1. {s} Eutrop. l. 9. {t} Victor. Aurel. de Caesaribus, & Epitome. {u} Apud Euseb. l. 7. c. 21, 22. {w} Adv. Gentes, l. 1. p. 13. {x} Euseb. l. 9. c. 8. {y} Aurel. Victor. Epitome. {z} Herodian, l. 1. c. 37.

Revelation 6:9

Ver. 9. And when he had opened the fifth seal,.... Of the seven seals of the sealed book; here is no beast speaking here, nor horse and rider presented to view; it was now a very dark time both with respect to the church of God and ministry of the word, and the Roman empire. This seal refers to the times of Dioclesian, and the persecution under him; and instead of the voice of one of the living creatures, John hears the voice of martyrs:

I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain; these include not only all the martyrs that were put to death in the persecution of Dioclesian, but all those that suffered in all the persecutions preceding; for this, being the last, involves them all. "Souls", being immaterial and incorporeal, are invisible to the bodily eye; these therefore were either clothed with corporeal forms, as angels sometimes are, or rather John saw them in a visionary way, as he saw the angels: and these were the souls of such as "were slain"; their bodies were dead, but their souls were alive; which shows the immortality of souls, and that they die not with their bodies, and that they live after them in a separate state: ylwjqd Nytmvn, "the souls of them that are slain", is a phrase used by Jewish writers {a}, and who have a notion that the souls of those that are slain are kept in certain palaces, under the care of one appointed by God {b}: and these were seen "under the altar"; either this is said in allusion to the blood of the sacrifices, which was poured out at the bottom of the altar, **Le 4:7**, in which the life and soul of the creature is; or because that martyrdom is a sacrifice of men's lives, and an offering of them in the cause of God and truth, **Php 2:17**; or with some reference to a common notion of the Jews, that the souls of the righteous are treasured up under the throne of glory {c} they have also a saying, everyone that is buried in the land of Israel is as if he was buried "under the altar" {d}; for they think that being buried there expiates their sins {e}; to which they add, that whoever is buried "under the altar", is as if he was buried under the throne of glory {f}; yea, they talk of an altar above, upon which Michael the high priest causes the souls of the righteous to ascend {g}. Christ may be meant by the altar here, as he is in Heb 13:10, who is both altar, sacrifice, and priest, and is the altar that sanctifies the gift, and from off which every sacrifice of prayer and praise comes up with acceptance before God; and the souls of the martyrs being under this altar, denotes their being in the presence of Christ, and enjoying communion with him, and being in his hands, into whose hands they commit their souls at death, as Stephen did, and being under his care and protection until the resurrection morn, when they shall be reunited to their bodies which sleep in Jesus: and they were slain

for the word of God; both for the essential Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose faith they professed; and for the written word, they made the rule of their faith and practice, and which Dioclesian forbid the reading of, and sought utterly to destroy; and for the Gospel principally, which is contained in it:

and for the testimony which they held; the Syriac and Arabic versions read, "for the testimony of the Lamb"; and so the Complutensian edition; either for the Gospel, which is a testimony of the person, office, and grace of Christ, the Lamb, which they embraced, professed, and held fast; or for the witness they bore to him, and the profession which they made thereof, and in which they continued.

{a} Tosaphta in Zohar in Exod. fol. 79. 4. {b} Shaare Ora, fol. 31. 2. {c} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 152. 2. Zohar in Numb. fol. 39. 4. Abot R. Nathan, c. 12. Raziel, fol. 39. 1. Caphtor, fol. 15. 2. & 112. 2. Nismat Chayim, fol. 16. 2. {d} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 111. 1. {e} Maimon. Hilchot. Melacim, c. 5. sect. 11. {f}

Abot R. Nathan, c. 26. {g} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 85. 3.

Revelation 6:10

Ver. 10. And they cried with a loud voice,.... With great ardour and fervency, being very pressing and importunate; and which shows that they were awake, and not asleep, and that the soul does not sleep with the body in the grave, or is after the death of that in a state of insensibility and inactivity, as some imagine:

saying, how long, O Lord, holy and true; the person they address is either the Lamb in the midst of the throne, with whom they were, and under the shelter of whom they were safe and happy; or God the Father, who sat upon the throne, whom they call "holy", because being so in his nature, and as appears in all his works, he could not but hate, and so revenge the evil that was done to them by their cruel persecutors; and whereas he is "true" to all his threatenings, as well as his promises, and faithful to every word of his, they doubted not but he would judge and avenge them of their enemies; but they seem desirous to know how long it would be first: saying,

dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? the men of the world, idolatrous persons, earthly princes, who had shed their blood; and which they desire not out of any sinful or malicious affection, but that the holiness and justice of God might appear, and also his truth and faithfulness in his promises to them, and threatenings to his enemies; and that God in all things might be glorified, and his church and people on earth might be supported and delivered; see Job 24:12.

Revelation 6:11

Ver. 11. And white robes were given to everyone of them,.... The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read in the singular number, "a white robe", and so does the Syriac version; as a token of their innocence, that they did not suffer, or were slain, for any capital crime or immorality they were guilty of; and of their purity and perfection they now enjoyed; as also of that spiritual delight and pleasure, which was unspeakable and full of glory, they now had in the presence of God and Christ; and in short, of that happiness and glory which souls in a separate state, before the resurrection morn, are partakers of; who besides the righteousness of Christ, comparable to fine linen clean and white, walk with Christ in white, in the shining robes of bliss and glory:

and it was said unto them, that they should rest; or have rest; eternal rest from all their toil and labour, from all their sorrows and sufferings of every kind, which rest remains for the people of God, and into which these were now entered; or that they should cease from expostulating and inquiring after the above manner, and rest satisfied and contented, exercising the graces of faith, hope, and patience, believing, looking, and waiting:

yet for a little season; either until the end of this persecution by Dioclesian, when vengeance would be taken of the Roman empire, and it would be no more as Pagan; or until the day of judgment, when full vengeance will be inflicted on the persecutors of the saints; and which is but a little while with God, with whom a thousand years is as one day, and in comparison of that eternity of blessedness glorified saints are partakers of:

until their fellow servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they [were], should be fulfilled; meaning either the rest of the saints that should suffer martyrdom in the: following part of this persecution; or those who should suffer under the Arian persecution, when the empire would become Christian; or under Rome Papal, and in all the persecutions of the apostasy, unto the end of that state: these are called "fellow servants" and "brethren" of the saints in heaven; for they all worship and serve the same God, and belong to the same family, in heaven and in earth; and the selfsame reason that is made use of to animate the saints below to courage, faith, and patience in suffering, **1Pe 5:9**, is used to keep up the expectation of the saints in heaven, of that vengeance that will be executed on their enemies, and to point out the time when it will be; and it may be observed, that the number of martyrs, or of those that shall suffer and die in the cause of Christ, and for his Gospel, is fixed and determined by God; and that number shall be perfected and completed, and when that is done, he will pour out all his wrath on them that have persecuted them and put them to death: and so the Arabic version renders it, "that the number of their companions and brethren, and of those who are to be killed as they have been killed, is fulfilled"; In the Apocrypha is written:

"39 Which are departed from the shadow of the world, and have received glorious garments of the Lord. 40 Take thy number, O Sion, and shut up those of thine that are clothed in white, which have fulfilled the law of the Lord. 41 The number of thy children, whom thou longedst for, is fulfilled: beseech the power of the Lord, that thy people, which have been called from the beginning, may be hallowed." (2 Esdras 2)

Now though this seal does not introduce any judgment to be executed on the Roman empire, as the others do; yet since it introduces all the martyrs with one united voice requiring vengeance on their blood, it may very well be considered as a step towards, and as making way for, the utter ruin of that empire: and which the next seal being opened brings on, and is a full answer to the cry of these souls.

Revelation 6:12

Ver. 12. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal,.... Of the sealed book which the Lamb took out of the hand of him that sat upon the throne, in order to open it, and unloose its seals. About this seal interpreters much differ; some refer this to the destruction of Jerusalem, because of the likeness of expressions here used, and in
Mt 24:7; but this was past many years before this seal was opened; and besides, though that time was a day of wrath to the uttermost upon the Jewish people, and it was the Lamb's day of wrath, taking vengeance on them for their unbelief and rejection of him as the Messiah; yet they had no sense of the Lamb, nor any apprehension of his wrath at that time, nor have they now, but imputed their calamity to their divisions and quarrels among themselves. Others think this seal belongs to the destruction of the Roman empire by the Goths, Huns, Vandals, &c. but it should be observed, that the empire stood some hundreds of years after the end of the fifth seal and the opening of this; and it was after the seventh seal, and at the sounding of the trumpets, that that destruction came on; moreover, that calamity was by the savageness of some barbarous nations which overrun the empire, but this here spoken of comes from the wrath of the Lamb; add to which, that that calamity distressed the Christians in the empire, and them chiefly, whereas this falls only upon the enemies of the Lamb, and the persecutors of his people. Others are of opinion that this has respect to the strange change of affairs in the church of Christ, through the rise, power, and tyranny of antichrist; by "the earthquake" they suppose is meant the shaking of both church and state by the man of sin; who shook the doctrines, ordinances, and discipline of the church, and threw all into confusion, and introduced a new face of things; and also shook the kingdoms of the earth, and the thrones and crowns of princes: by the "sun" becoming "black", they think is meant the sun of righteousness, Jesus Christ, who was obscured in the doctrines concerning him, as the one and only Mediator, and justification by his righteousness, and pardon through his blood, by introducing the mediation of angels and saints, the doctrine of justification

by works, and the doctrine of merit, works of supererogation, indulgences, pardons, penance, and purgatory: by the "moon" they understand the church, which receives all its light, grace, righteousness, and holiness, from Christ, and which, like the moon, is changeable as to its outward form and circumstances; and this became "as blood", through the persecutions, massacres, and cruelties of the Romish antichrist, who has been made drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus: the "stars" they take to be the ministers of the word; either hypocritical ones, who were like unripe figs, destitute of true grace, and so were easily shaken with the wind of Papal power, and fell into the earth, and apostatized from the faith, and conformed to the corruptions of antichrist; or the true ministers of the Gospel, who were put to death, and that to an untimely and violent one, signified by the shaking of untimely figs by a mighty wind: by the "heaven" departing as a scroll rolled up, they suppose is designed either the church, which fled into the wilderness, and remained invisible during the Papal power and cruelty; or else the Scriptures, which the pope made himself sole judge and interpreter of and shut up from the common people in an unknown language, and forbid the laity the reading of them: by "mountains" they think are intended the kings and princes of the earth, who were obliged to submit to the Romish antichrist, and give their kingdoms to him, and receive their crowns and kingdoms from him, and be his vassals: and by "the islands", the people their subjects, who were forced to acknowledge him as the supreme head, and receive his mark in their right hand or forehead, or they could not buy and sell: and by all ranks and degrees of men, as "kings", &c. hiding themselves in rocks and mountains, and calling upon them to fall on them and cover them, they apply either to their invoking the virgin Mary, and other saints, to intercede for them, and screen them from the wrath of God and Christ, on account of their sins; or else to the persecutors of the saints, of every rank and in every age, and to the punishments that shall fall upon them. But however feasible this interpretation may seem to be, it is certain that this was not the face of things at the close of the fifth seal, or the Dioclesian persecution, and at the opening of the sixth, when Constantine came to the imperial throne, for then the church appeared as she is described in Re 12:1; which is just the reverse of this. There are others, who because of the very awful things here spoken of, and the very awful language in which they are expressed, conclude that this seal respects the day of judgment; not considering that the fifth seal ends about the year 313, at the close of the last of the ten persecutions, and that the sixth seal begins where that ends; and though above 1750 years have elapsed since that time, yet the day of judgment is not come, and we know not when it will; besides, here is another seal, a seventh seal, which follows, and introduces punishments on the Roman empire, and seven vials follow, which pour out plagues upon antichrist, all which can never be thought to be after the day of judgment; moreover, the account of the day of judgment stands in its proper place in Re 20:12; after the destruction of Babylon, the first resurrection, and the saints' thousand years' reign with Christ. But to proceed; the business which is the subject of this seal is the removing of Paganism, and Pagan governors out of the Roman empire; this was the thing the rider upon the white horse, under the first seal, set out upon to effect, and never ceased until he had accomplished it; and this is what ensued upon the close of the fifth seal, when Pagan persecution ceased, on Constantine, a Christian emperor, having the reins of power in his hands; and it cannot be thought, that so wonderful a change of things as this should be omitted in this prophetic history; and it is easy to observe that changes in kingdoms and governments, both as to the polity and religion of them, are sometimes expressed in such like figurative terms as here; see Isa 13:9; and which may be accommodated to this event as follows:

and, lo, there was a great earthquake; or "shaking", both of the heavens and earth, and which, as it denotes in **Hag 2:6**; compared with Heb 12:26; the removing of Jewish worship and ordinances, in order to make way for the Christian ordinances and institutions, which were to remain; so here it intends the removing of Pagan worship and idolatry, and of Pagan magistrates, that the Christian religion and Christian magistrates might take place. This, with what follows, concerning the darkness of the sun and moon, might be literally true; and it seems by historians, that there were such phenomena about those times; for it is asserted {h}, that a very great earthquake in Syria followed the Dioclesian persecution, which shook and caused to fall the tops of houses at Tyre and Sidon, and killed many thousands; and some such like happened at Rome, and at Spoletum, where above three hundred and fifty Pagans perished, as they were serving their idols. It is also observed {i}, that the moon was turned into blood in the times of Galerius, who succeeded. Dioclesian; and that the sun failed, and the stars shined for four hours, when Licinius was conquered by Constantine; but then these may be considered as symbols of the change in the empire.

And the sun came black as sackcloth of hair; which is made of black hairs; see Isa 50:3; as when eclipsed. The sun was the chief deity worshipped by the Heathens, under various names, and this becoming black, may design the removing of their principal gods from their honour and glory, or the downfall of idolatry, which the Jews {k} call hrz hdwbe lv hvmv, "the sun of idolatry", which they suppose is meant in **So 1:6**. And Satan, the god of this world, who was worshipped in different forms, now fell, as Lucifer, the son of the morning, and as lightning from heaven, and was cast down from all his dignity, influence, and power, to the earth; for the casting out of the red dragon, the old serpent, and Satan, after his combat with Michael and his angels, in Re 12:3, refers to this very time; likewise the chief magistrate, the Heathen Roman emperor, may be included; and it is remarkable, that Dioclesian the emperor, who had now retired from the imperial government, and was under a cloud, under disgrace, and in distress, had, in the zenith of his glory, caused himself to be worshipped as a god, and as the brother of the sun and moon.

And the moon became as blood; as when obscured; the Alexandrian copy and some others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, "the whole moon"; this may design the next Heathen deity, or class of deities, for the moon was also worshipped by the Heathens under different names; and may likewise include the Pagan priesthood, which was next, and was annexed to the imperial dignity; and which was disused by, Constantine and his successors; and even the very title, and the robe which was a symbol of it, were laid aside as unworthy of Christian princes; see Mede upon the place.

{h} Magdeburg. Centuriator. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 86. & c. 13. p. 837. {i} Alsted. Chronolog. Thesaur. p. 59. {k} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 6. 2.

Revelation 6:13

Ver. 13. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth,.... All the other inferior deities lost their esteem, worship, and honour; for the idol temples being now opened, the idols and statues were exposed to the common people, and were found to be stuffed with hay and straw, which brought them into great contempt {l}. Moreover, as stars sometimes signify the ministers of the Gospel in the Christian church, **Re 1:20**, and sometimes the priests in the Jewish church, **Da 8:10**; so they may here likewise include the idolatrous priests among the Heathens, who were discharged and removed by Constantine, and had their posts and profits taken away from them; yea, Maximinus, an Heathen emperor, or tyrant, being beaten by Licinius, who was then Constantine's colleague, killed many of the priests and prophets of his gods, which were formerly had in great admiration by him, as deceivers and betrayers of him, by whose oracles he was animated to the war {m}. And in like manner Licinius put to death the priests and prophets of the new idol at Antioch {n}.

Even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind; which figs being young and green, and not fixed, fall off easily, and in great numbers, when a blustering wind beats upon them; and so the rabble of Pagan deities, and idolatrous priests, were easily, and in great numbers, removed through the power of Constantine, which carried all before it.

{l} Sozomen, l. 2. c. 5. {m} Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 9. c. 10. {n} Ib. c. 11.

Revelation 6:14

Ver. 14. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together,.... The manner of writing formerly was on rolls of parchment; hence the word volume is used for a book, which, when rolled up, the writing within could not be seen, not a syllable nor letter of it. In like manner the Roman empire, as Pagan, which was like a large sheet, or rather like the expanse or firmament of the heaven, stretched out over all the earth, was now, as to the Paganism of it, rolled up together, so that there were no more Heathen gods, nor Heathen priests; no more idolatry, and idolatrous worship of that kind were to be seen, and not so much as the names of Heathen gods to be heard of in the empire.

And every mountain and island were moved out of their places; by "every mountain" may be meant the places of idolatrous worship, which were usually upon mountains; see **Jer 3:6**; which were now shut up, or demolished, or used for Christian worship; and "every island" being moved also may show, that Paganism was not only rooted out of the provinces of the empire upon the continent, but out of the islands also; and the ecclesiastical history of these times informs us, that there were Christian churches in the isles, which enjoyed the Gospel free of persecution and distress; as in the isles of Cyprus, Crete, the Cyclades, Sardinia, Siciiy, Corsica, and in ours of England, Scotland, and Ireland {o}. Mr. Daubuz thinks, that as "mountains" design the temples of idols, "islands" signify the revenues of them, which were now taken away, and applied to other uses.

{o} Centuriator. Magdeburg. Cent. 4. c. 2. p. 5, 8.

Revelation 6:15

Ver. 15. And the king's of the earth, and the great men,.... The Roman emperors, and other principal magistrates, governors of provinces and cities:

and the rich men; among the commonalty; these three may design perhaps more particularly the emperors, nobles, and senate of Rome: and

the chief captains; or captains of thousands, that had the command of the Roman legions

and the mighty men; the soldiers that were under them, men of strength, courage, and valour;

and every bondman, and every freeman; which takes in all the inhabitants of the Roman empire, of every state and condition, and which was an usual distinction among the Romans: these

hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; where, through their cruel persecutions, they had forced multitudes of Christians to flee, and therefore, "lex talionis", the law of retaliation was righteously inflicted on them; and not to take notice of any other, this was remarkably true of their kings or emperors Dioclesian and Herculius Maximianus, who were emperors together, in the height of their imperial glory and grandeur, the one being at Nicomedia, and the other at Milan, did, on one and the same day, of their own accord, abdicate the empire, and divested themselves of their imperial crown and government, and retired to a private life; pretending in public, that old age, and the weight of business, were the cause, but to their friends they owned, that it was through despair, because they could not extinguish the Christian religion {p}. Some ascribed this to frenzy and madness {q}; but the true reason was, that the wrath of the Lamb was let into their consciences, and which they could not bear, and which obliged them to take this step, to the amazement of the whole world. Maximinus, who succeeded them, being overcome by Licinius, laid aside his imperial habit, and hid himself among the common people, and skulked about in fields and villages {r}. Maxentius, another emperor, fled from Constantine, the instrument of the wrath of the Lamb, and the pouring it out upon his enemies, and fell into the river Tiber, from the Mylvian bridge, where he perished; and which was the very place in which he had laid snares for Constantine {s}.

{p} Contur. Magd. cent. 4. c. 16. p. 909. Vid. Eutrop. l. 9. {q} Euseb. Hist. l. 8. c. 13. & de Vita Constantin. l. 5. c. 25. {r} lb. l. 9. c. 10. {s} Ib. c. 9. & de Vita Constant. l. 1. c. 38. Vid. Aurel. Victor. de Caesaribus.

Revelation 6:16

Ver. 16. And said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us,.... They chose death rather than life. Dioclesian being invited by Constantine to a marriage feast, excused himself by reason of his old age; but receiving threatening letters, the historian {t} says, in which he was charged with having favoured Maxentius, and with favouring Maximinus, he poisoned himself; and others of the emperors are said to lay violent hands upon themselves:

and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; thus they owned the proper deity, and almighty power of God, and Christ, which they dreaded; so Maximinus being afflicted with a most horrible disease, of which he died, asked pardon of the God of the Christians, and owned that he suffered justly, for his reproaches of Christ {u} Licinius, who sometimes pretended to be a Christian, and joined with Constantine, but afterwards revolted and fought against him, being conquered and taken, was put to death; at which time he, and they that suffered death with him, confessed that the God of Constantine was the only true God {w}. This passage shows, that Christ, God's firstborn, is higher than the kings of the earth; yea, that he is equal with him that sits upon the throne, with God his Father, since his wrath is equally dreaded as his; and that, though he is a Lamb, mild, meek, and gentle, yet there is wrath, fury, and indignation in him, against his enemies, which is very dreadful and intolerable; see **Ps 2:12**.

{t} Aurel. Victor. Epitome. {u} Euseb. Hist. l. 9. c. 10. & de Vita Constantin. l. 1. c. 59. {w} Euseb. de Vita Constantin. l. 2. c. 18.

Revelation 6:17

Ver. 17. For the great day of his wrath is come,.... The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "of their wrath"; both of him that sits upon the throne, and of the Lamb, against the Heathen gods and Heathen persecutors, in answer to the cry of the martyrs in **Re 6:9**.

And who shall be able to stand? against either of them, or in their presence, and so as to bear their wrath and displeasure; all which expresses guilt, shame, fear, and despair.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 7:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 7

This chapter contains a vision seen at the end of the sixth, and at the opening of the seventh seal, which expresses the security of the saints in all ages following, the praises of angels and men on that account, and the happiness of all the people of God in the millennium state. First, a vision of four angels is seen restraining the winds from blowing on the earth, sea, and trees, **Re 7:1**; then of another angel, described by the place from whence he came, the east; by what he had, the seal of the living God, and by his cry to the four angels not to hurt the earth, sea, and trees, until the servants of God were sealed, **Re 7:2**, and then follows the number of the sealed ones in general, **Re 7:4**, and the particular number of them out of each tribe of Israel, **Re 7:5**. After which is another vision of all the elect of God together, described by the numberless multitude of them; by their descent from all nations; by their position and situation before the throne, and the Lamb; by their habit and attire, and by their loud cry, ascribing salvation to God, and to the Lamb, **Re 7:9**, who are joined by all the angels around them, worshipping God, and ascribing glory to him, **Re 7:11**. And next is described the happiness of this numerous company, in the thousand years' reign, introduced by some discourse which passed between John, and one of the elders, **Re 7:13**, who are said to be before the throne, to serve God continually, and to have his presence, **Re 7:15**, to be free from everything troublesome and distressing, **Re 7:16**, and to be fed by the Lamb, and to be led by him to fountains of living water, and to have all their tears wiped away from them, **Re 7:17**.

Ver. 1. And after these things,.... After the opening of six of the seals of the sealed book, and after the demolition of Heathen deities, and of Heathen worship, and of Heathen magistrates, in the Roman empire, and the representation of these to John, he had the following vision; and which therefore does not refer to the preservation of the Christians, before and at the destruction of Jerusalem, which was under the first seal; nor to the security of the saints from the wrath of the Lamb, when it fell upon the Pagan worshippers, of all ranks and degrees, which was under the sixth seal, and was now over; but rather it respects an intermediate space of time between the sixth and seventh seal, as reaching from Constantine to Theodosius; for upon Constantine's being sole emperor, the church enjoyed great peace and tranquillity after the blustering storms of Pagan persecution ceased; and great numbers of God's elect were converted and sealed, and the winds of Heathen persecution were held, and blew no more, unless for a short time under the

Emperor Julian; though the church was not free from the wind of error and heresy; and the storms of contention which arose about them, nor from the tempest of Arian persecutions, which were very grievous; wherefore this refers to what should be between the sixth and seventh seal, which brings on the seven trumpets: and now, before John sees that seal opened, a pause is made, and this vision is shown him, to fortify his mind, and all other saints, that are observers of these things, who by the opening of the following seal would see what judgments and plagues would come upon the empire, now become Christian, and what changes and revolutions would be made in it, and might fear that the church of God would be wholly swallowed up and lost; wherefore this vision is exhibited to show, that notwithstanding the devastations by the Goths and Vandals, and the rise, progress, and power of Mahomet, and the dreadful apostasy of the church of Rome, and all the miseries of it, and the plagues that should come upon the church for it; yet God would have throughout all this, and in, every age of time, a sealed number, a true church, hidden and secured, even until the seventh angel has sounded his trumpet, and time shall be no more, and the mystery of God will be finished.

I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any trees. Four angels are mentioned, in allusion to the four spirits of the heavens, in **Zec 6:5**; and though the earth is not a plain square with angles, but round and globular, yet it is said to have four corners, with respect to the four points of the heavens; and though there is but one wind, which blows sometimes one way, and sometimes another, yet four are named with regard to the above points, east, west, north, and south, from whence it blows. These are commonly called "the four winds of heaven", **Da 8:8**; but here, of the earth, as in the Targum on
Isa 11:12, and he shall bring near the captivity of Judah,
aera yxwr ebram, "from the four winds of the earth". And such things as are chiefly affected with winds are particularly observed, as the earth, upon which buildings are thrown down by them; and the sea, in which ships are wrecked; and trees, which by the violence of them, are blown down, and torn up by the roots. Some by these angels understand evil angels, who are sometimes called angels, without any additional epithet to distinguish them, and that because a desire of hurting seems to have been in them, as well as a power, **Re 7:2**; and who are, in every part of the world, seeking to do all the mischief they can; and may be said to hold the winds, not in a literal sense, for God only gathers the wind in his fist, and holds it there, and lets it loose at his pleasure; but in a mystical sense, as these may refer to the word, and the ministers of the word, whose progress and success are often hindered by Satan and is emissaries; and

some particularly understand by them the four monarchies of the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman; others the four emperors, after that Dioclesian and Maximianus had resigned, as Maximinus, Galerius, Maxentius, and Licinius; others Mahomet, or the Turk, in the east, who hindered the Gospel by his wars and devastations, as well as by false worship; the kings of France and Spain on the west, by fire, and faggot, and sword; and the pope in the south, by bulls and excommunications; and the empire and emperors of Germany on the north, by public edicts; or, in general, all the Popish tribe, popes, cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, and friars, by their decrees, anathemas, sermons, writings, and lying miracles, did all they could that the Gospel might not be preached neither in the earth, on the continent, nor in the sea, or in the islands of it; or that any of the saints, the trees of righteousness, who lived in woods and mountainous places, or were forced to fly into woods, might have any advantage by it. But, after all, rather this is to be understood of good angels, and either of their restraining evil angels from doing mischief, see Da 10:13; or keeping back the winds of false doctrines and heresies from the churches of Christ, in the several parts of the world; or rather, and which is the true sense, of their holding in the storms of calamities and war to the destruction of kingdoms, provinces, islands, and the several inhabitants of them, and intends a general peace throughout the world; see Jer 49:36. This mystical way of speaking seems to agree with the notions of the Jews, who speak of angels standing at the gates of the four winds,
xwr yxtpmw "and the keys of the wind in their hands", whose names they give us {x}; and make mention of axwr ykalm, "the angels of the wind" {y}; and the Magi among the Persians call the angel of the wind "Bad", or "Badran" {z}.

{x} Raziel, fol. 36. 1. 2. {y} Targum in 1 Reg. xix. 11. {z} Hyde, Hist. Relig. Pers. c. 12.

Revelation 7:2

Ver. 2. And I saw another angel,.... Not Constantine, who came from the eastern parts to the empire, with the true knowledge of God, and the authority of God to propagate it; and who repressed the four angels, or evil spirits, contention, ambition, heresy, and war, from doing the mischief they otherwise would; and sealed the saints, by giving them a platform of doctrine at the council of Nice, as Brightman and others think. But the uncreated angel, the angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ; for who but he should have the privy seal of heaven, who is the angel of the great council, as the Septuagint render **Isa 9:6** and who could speak in such an authoritative manner to the four angels, "saying, hurt not the earth", &c. but he who is the head of all principality and power? and who should seal the servants of the Lord, but he who has them in his hands, and keeps them by his power, so that none of them shall perish? And to him agrees all that follows:

ascending from the east; from Judea, from Zion, from whence Christ, as the salvation, or Saviour of Israel, came, Ps 14:7; and whose name is the east, as some render **Zec 3:8**; he is the dayspring from on high, the sun of righteousness, who rose from the east, the place of the rising sun, and brought light, life, and joy to his people, when he came to seal them. Compare with this Eze 43:1.

Having the seal of the living God; having the impress of deity upon him, being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image or character of his person; having a testimony, an authentic proof and demonstration of his being the Son of God, of his being the true and living God; as also a commission from God, as Mediator, being sealed by him; and having all power and authority from him, to seal and secure the people which were given unto him, and for which purpose he now came: to which may be added, that Christ has the Spirit, with his gifts and graces, without measure, by which the saints are sealed unto the day of redemption; and moreover has likewise the seal of the book of life, or of eternal election, in his hands; the elect are chosen in him, and the book of life, in which their names are written to eternal life, is in his keeping, and is therefore called the Lamb's book of life. The Jews speak {a} of the east gate of one of the palaces they suppose above, which they say is shut all the six days, and on the sabbath day is opened, and the governor of this palace has two ministers, one on his right hand, and one on his left, and two seals in their hands, Myyx Mtwx, "the seal of life", and the seal of death, and all the books of the world, before them; an, some are sealed to life, and some to death, with which this passage may be compared. They speak also of an angel that presides at the eastern part of the heavens, who receives the prayers of the Israelites, whose name they call "Gazardia" {b}, as this same angel is said to offer up the prayers of the saints, **Re 8:3**.

And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels; to show his power and authority over them, they being his creatures and ministers; and to express his great concern for his people, his care of them, and affection for them; and to signify the danger they were in through the calamities that were coming on, should they not be sealed:

to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea: they had a commission from God to let loose the winds, or to bring on wars, devastations, calamities, and plagues, of various sorts, upon the Roman empire, now Christian; and on the seat of the beast, not only on the continent, but upon the islands also, even upon all the nations, tongues, and people subject to the see of Rome.

{a} Zohar in Exod. fol. 100. 1. {b} Zohar in Exod. fol. 79. 2.

Revelation 7:3

Ver. 3. Saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees,.... That is, as yet, for their commission was not contradicted, nor taken away by Christ; and at the time appointed, at the blowing of the several trumpets, they let loose the winds, and let in the Goths, Hans, and Vandals, the Saracens and Turks into the empire, and after that poured out the vials of God's wrath upon the Romish antichrist: this retarding of them was but in appearance, that there might be an opportunity to show to John what care would be taken all along of the church of Christ, and true servants of the living God:

till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads; the servants of sin, Satan, and the beast of Rome, were took no notice nor care of; they were the persons to be hurt by the winds, signified by the earth, sea, and trees, even idolaters, small and great; but "the servants of our God", who serve him with grace in their hearts, from a principle of love, in the exercise of faith, without servile fear, and with reverence and godly fear, in righteousness and true holiness, and with a view to his glory; and are worshippers of him in spirit and in truth, being followers of the Lamb, whithersoever he goes; and so are the servants of his God, and their God; the sealing of them does not design the sealing of them with the seal of election, this was done in eternity; nor with the seal of the Spirit, which is common to all the saints in all ages; but it denotes the hiding and concealing, and so securing the saints amidst all the calamities of the empire, and throughout the whole time of the Romish apostasy, from first to last; and respects the time when the church fled into the wilderness, and was hid, and nourished with the hidden manna, for a time, and times, and half a time, Re 12:14. Christ set a mark upon them, as was upon the houses of the Israelites, when the destroying angel passed through Egypt, and destroyed the firstborn in it; and as was upon the foreheads of those that sighed and cried in Jerusalem, when orders were given to slay young and old, Ex 12:23. Christ will have a people in the worst of times; he knows who are his, and he will take care of them; he has his chambers of protection to hide them in, till the indignation is over past: the sealers, "we", are either Father, Son, and Spirit, who are all jointly concerned for the welfare of the eject; or Christ and his ministering angels that attend him, whom he employs for the good and safety of the heirs of salvation: the seal with which these are sealed is the seal of the living God, the foreknowledge, love, care, and power of God; and the name of God, even Christ's Father's name, and their Father's name, in their foreheads; the new name of children of God, by and under which they are known and preserved by him: and this is said to be "in their foreheads", in allusion to servants, who used to be marked in their foreheads; hence they are called by Apuleius {c} "frontes literati"; and by Martial, a servant is called "fronte notatus" {d}: but then these were such who had committed faults, and this was done by way of punishment {e}; wherefore it can hardly be thought that the servants of God should be sealed, in allusion to them: but rather with reference to the mitre on the high priest's forehead, as some think; or it may be to **Eze 9:4**, and shows, that though these persons were hid and concealed from men, they were well known to God and Christ; nor were they ashamed to make a public and open confession of Christ before men, as did the true and faithful witnesses of Christ, the Waldenses and Albigenses, in the midst of the greatest darkness of Popery, and of danger from men; and who seem to be chiefly intended.

{c} Metamorph. l. 9. p. 130. {d} Epigr. l. 3. Ep. 20. {e} Vid. Popma de Operis Servorum, p. 170, &c.

Revelation 7:4

Ver. 4. And I heard the number of them which were sealed,.... And therefore could be sure of the exact number, which did not depend upon his sight, and telling them, in which some mistake might have been made, but he heard the number expressed:

[and there were] sealed an hundred [and] forty, [and] four thousand: which is a square number arising from twelve, the square root of it, being just twelve times twelve thousand; and may denote their being the true and genuine offspring of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, holding their doctrine, and being built on their foundation; see
Re 21:14; and these were

of all the tribes of the children of Israel; not that these were all Jews in a literal sense, for the time of their conversion in great numbers is not yet come. Dr.

Goodwin thinks these sealed ones design the believers of the Greek and Armenian churches, and his reasons are not despicable; but this is to limit and restrain them to a particular part of the church of Christ; whereas they take in all the saints within this long tract of time, even all that are the true Israel of God, who are Jews inwardly, of what nation, kindred, tongue, and people soever; and is a certain and determinate number for an uncertain and indeterminate one; and only intends a large number of persons known to God and Christ; see the Apocrypha:

"Arise up and stand, behold the number of those that be sealed in the feast of the Lord;" (2 Esdras 2:38)

Revelation 7:5

Ver. 5. Of the tribe of Judah [were] sealed twelve thousand,.... Judah is mentioned first, because Christ sprung from that tribe, and the pure worship of God was preserved in it; and that itself was preserved a distinct tribe until the coming of Shiloh; its name signifies "praise God", Ge 29:35; and shows, that it becomes all the sealed ones, all true believers, and every member of the church of God, to praise him for all favours and blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

Of the tribe of Reuben [were] sealed twelve thousand; Reuben was Jacob's firstborn, but by his sin he lost the honour and privilege of birthright, and therefore is mentioned after Judah, who prevailed above him and the rest of his brethren; his name signifies "see the Son", Ge 29:32; and shows that the Son of God is to be looked unto for righteousness, life, and salvation, by all that expect to be saved, and to him does the true church look for eternal life and happiness.

Of the tribe of Gad [were] sealed twelve thousand; his name signifies a "troop", Ge 30:11, and may denote that there would be a numerous company of saints and faithful witnesses during the time of sealing, and amidst all the troubles and afflictions that would attend the church and people of God, and who in the issue would be conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Christ; see Ge 49:19.

Revelation 7:6

Ver. 6. Of the tribe of Aser [were] sealed twelve thousand,.... "Asher", which the Septuagint pronounce "Aser", as here, signifies "blessed", Ge 30:13; as all the sealed ones are, blessed with all spiritual blessings, with grace here, and glory hereafter.

Of the tribe of Nephthalim [were] sealed twelve thousand; the name of this tribe signifies "wrestlings", Ge 30:8; and may design the wrestlings of saints, both with God in prayer, and with their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, and also their strivings together for the faith of the Gospel.

Of the tribe of Manasses [were] sealed twelve thousand; this word signifies "forgetting", Ge 41:51; and shows that the followers of Christ should forget the things that are behind, their sinful lusts and pleasures, the onions and garlic in Egypt, and their former company and acquaintance, their own people, and their father's house, and all their labours and sufferings for the sake of Christ.

Revelation 7:7

Ver. 7. Of the tribe of Simeon [were] sealed twelve thousand,.... The name of this tribe signifies "hearing", Ge 29:33; and such an hearing as is attended with obedience; and denotes the spiritual and practical hearing of the Gospel by those who hear, and understand, and believe, and practise what they hear, and yield the obedience of faith unto it.

Of the tribe of Levi [were] sealed twelve thousand; this name signifies "joined", Ge 29:34; and denotes, that these sealed ones were not only joined one to another in love and holy fellowship, but to Christ, and were one spirit with him, and were members of his body, flesh, and bones, and cleaved to him with full purpose of heart.

Of the tribe of Issachar [were] sealed twelve thousand; the interpretation of this name is "hire" or "reward", Ge 30:18; and may design those rewards of grace which God bestows upon his faithful servants, in times of tribulation.

Revelation 7:8

Ver. 8. Of the tribe of Zabulon [were] sealed twelve thousand,.... Which signifies "dwelling", Ge 30:20; and was the tribe in which Christ had his dwelling, and where he much conversed; and may denote his gracious inhabitation, as well as that of God the Father, md of the Spirit, among the saints and sealed ones.

Of the tribe of Joseph [were] sealed twelve thousand; whose name signifies "adding", Ge 30:24; and may intend the additions both of numbers, and of gifts and graces to the churches of those times.

Of the tribe of Benjamin [were] sealed twelve thousand; this word signifies "the Son of the right hand", Ge 35:18; showing, that these sealed ones are as a signet on God's right hand, and are as near and dear unto him as a man's right hand is to him; see Ps 80:17. Now twelve thousand out of each tribe make just the number of a hundred forty and four thousand, **Re 7:4**; the tribe of Dan is not mentioned, it may be because of the apostasy of that tribe, one of Jeroboam's golden calves being set up there; showing that God had no sealed ones of that sort, and instead of him Levi is reckoned; though that tribe had no part in the division of the land of Israel, yet had a part in Christ, and is therefore mentioned in this mystical account. Nor is the name of Ephraim used, it may be for the same reason; there having been a great defection in that tribe from the pure worship of God, and instead of him the name of Joseph appears.

Revelation 7:9

Ver. 9. After this I beheld,.... What follows is a distinct vision from the preceding one, and is not a continuation of that, as if the sealing of the Jewish believers was designed by the former, and the sealing of the Gentiles in this latter; whereas in this vision there is no mention made of sealing, nor was there, or will there be any need of it in the time it refers unto; and which is not the time of the Reformation; nor when the vials began to be poured out upon the seat of the beast; for though there were great numbers converted in many nations, kindreds, people, and tongues, yet not in all; nor do the characters of this great multitude, and the happiness they shall enjoy, seem to suit with persons in a state of mortality and imperfection, **Re 7:14**; wherefore many interpreters understand this vision of the saints in heaven: but it rather respects the millennium state, or thousand years' reign of Christ with his saints on earth, with which all that is here said agrees; compare **Re 7:14** with Re 20:4; and **Re 7:15** with Re 22:3; and **Re 7:16** with Re 21:4. And the design of this vision is to show to John, and every diligent observer, that after the seventh seal is opened, the trumpets are blown, and the vials poured out; during which time there will be a number sealed that will profess Christ; and at the close and winding up of all things, in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, Christ will descend, and all the saints with him; their bodies will be raised, and the living saints changed, and make one general assembly, who are shown to John here, as in Re 21:9; to relieve his mind, and support his spirits, in a view of the calamities ushered in by the opening of the seventh seal.

And lo, a great multitude, which no man could number; which design all the elect of God in the new Jerusalem church state, the bride, the Lamb's wife, or the new Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven; these will appear to be a great multitude, not in comparison of the inhabitants that shall have dwelt upon earth, nor of the professors of religion in one shape or another; for, with respect to each of these, they are but a few, a seed, a remnant, a little flock; but as considered in themselves, and so they are many who are ordained to eternal life, whose sins Christ has bore, for whom his blood has been shed, and whom he justifies, and who are called by his grace, and are brought to glory; and who make up such a number as no man can number: God indeed can number them, but not man; for they are a set of particular persons chosen by God, and redeemed by Christ, and who are perfectly and distinctly known by them; their number and names are with them; their names are written in the Lamb's book of life; and God and Christ can, and do call them by their name; and when they were given to Christ, they passed under the rod of him that telleth them; and he will give an exact account of them, of every individual person, another day. But then they are not to be numbered by men; and they will be

of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, and therefore must consist both of Jews and Gentiles; these were not all nations, &c. but "of" all nations, some of all nations; and such God has chosen, Christ has redeemed, and the Spirit calls; God has not chosen all the Jews, but a remnant, according to the election of grace, nor all the Gentiles, but has taken out of them a people for his name; and so Christ has redeemed, by his blood, some out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, of Jew and Gentile: and hence the Gospel has been sent into all the world, and to all nations, for the gathering of these persons out of them; and when they are all gathered in, they will all meet together in the new Jerusalem church state, and make up the body here presented to view.

Stood before the throne and before the Lamb; the throne of God, and of the Lamb, will be in the midst of the new Jerusalem church; the tabernacle of God will be with men, and he will dwell, among them; and before the presence of his glory will all the saints be presented; and the Lamb will then present to himself his whole church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; and they will behold his glory, and see him as he is: and as they are described before by their number, and their descent, so here by their position and situation, and, as follows, by their habit and attire,

clothed with white robes; agreeably to their princely and priestly characters: it was usual for princes and noblemen to be arrayed in vestures of linen, as Joseph was in Pharaoh's court; and the Jewish priests wore garments of linen, in their daily ministry and service; and in the thousand years' reign the saints will appear to be kings and priests, **Re 5:10**; and accordingly will be clothed as such: and this may also be expressive of their entire freedom from sin by the blood of Christ, **Re 7:14**; and their complete justification by his righteousness, which is sometimes compared to white raiment, and is called fine linen, clean, and white; and likewise their spotless purity and holiness, sanctification in them being now perfect, which was before imperfect: and these robes may also design their shining robes of glory and immortality; for they will now be clothed upon with their house from heaven, and will have put off mortality and corruption, and have put on immortality and incorruption, and appear with Christ in glory; for such will be the then state of things:

and palms in their hands; or branches of palm trees, as in Joh 12:13 as an emblem of their uprightness and faithfulness, which they had shown in the cause of Christ, even unto death, the palm tree being a very upright tree, Jer 10:5; or of their bearing up under a variety of pressures and afflictions, by which they were not cast down and destroyed, but bravely stood up under them, and were now come out of them; the palm tree being of such a nature, as is reported, that the more weight is hung upon it, the higher it rises, and the straighter it grows; see Ps 92:12; and chiefly as an emblem of victory and triumph over their enemies, as sin, Satan, the world and death, which they had been struggling with, in a state of imperfection, but were now more than conquerors over them; the palm tree is well known to be a token of victory. So Philo the Jew {f} says, the palm tree is sumbolon nikhv, "a symbol of victory". Conquerors used to carry palm tree branches in their hands {g}: those who conquered in the combats and plays among the Greeks, used not only to have crowns of palm trees given them, but carried branches of it in their hands {h}; as did also the Romans in their triumphs; yea, they sometimes wore "toga palmata", a garment with the figures of palm trees on it, which were interwoven in it {i}: and hence here palms are mentioned along with white garments; and some have been tempted to render the words thus, "clothed with white robes", and "palms on their sides"; that is, on the sides of their robes {k}. The medal which was struck by Titus Vespasian, at the taking of Jerusalem, had on it a palm tree, and a captive woman sitting under it, with this inscription on it, "Judaea capta", Judea is taken. And when our Lord rode in triumph to Jerusalem, the people met him with branches of palm trees in their hands, and cried, Hosanna to him. So the Jews, at the feast of tabernacles, which they kept in commemoration of their having dwelt in tents in the wilderness, carried "Lulabs", or palm tree branches, in their hands, in token of joy, Le 23:40; and in like manner, these being come out of the wilderness of the world, and the tabernacle of God being among them, express their joy in this way; See Gill on "John 12:13".

{f} Allegor. l. 2. p. 74. {g} A. Gell. Noctes Attic. l. 3. c. 6. Sueton. in Caio, c. 32. {h} Pausan. Arcadica, l. 8. p. 532. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 8. & l. 6. c. 19. {i} Isidor. Hispalens. Origen. l. 19. c. 24. p. 168. {k} Vid. Lydium de re Militare, l. 6. c. 3. p. 225.

Revelation 7:10

Ver. 10. And cried with a loud voice,.... To show the strength of their affection, and the greatness of their joy, and how sensible they were of the favour they enjoyed, and how hearty they were in the following ascription of glory to God, and the Lamb.

Saying, salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb; by "salvation" is meant, not only temporal salvation, and those many deliverances, which God had wrought for them, and particularly in bringing them out of great tribulation, **Re 7:14**; but spiritual and eternal salvation, which is the salvation of the soul, and is owing to the free grace of God, and the blood of Christ; and the sense is, that God and the Lamb are the sole authors of it, and the glory of it ought to be given to them, and to no other: God the Father, who sits upon the throne, resolved upon it in his eternal purposes and decrees, and contrived and formed the scheme of it in the council of peace, and he made sufficient provision for it in the covenant of grace; and as he from eternity appointed his Son to be his salvation to the ends of the earth, so in the fulness of time he sent him to be the Saviour of the world, and delivered him up for all his people, unto death itself, and spared him not, but awoke the sword of justice against him, and sheathed it in him; and since he had such a concern in salvation, the glory of it in right belongs to him: and the Lamb, the Son of God, he engaged to do the will and work of God, and from everlasting became the surety of the better testament; and in time he came to seek and to save lost sinners, and he is become the author of eternal salvation to them; his own arm has brought it, and it is in him, and no other, even a salvation from sin, Satan, the law, the world, hell, and death, and wrath to come; and it will be the employment of the saints, both in the new Jerusalem church state, during the thousand years' reign, and in heaven to all eternity, to ascribe the glory of all this, not to themselves, to their merits and works of righteousness, or to any creature whatever, but to God and the Lamb only.

Revelation 7:11

Ver. 11. And all the angels stood round about the throne,.... The holy and elect angels, even all of them, the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, the innumerable company of them, who are represented in the same position; See Gill on "Re 5:11";

and [about] the elders, and the four beasts; the churches and ministers; yea, round about the great multitude before mentioned, the camp of the saints, and the beloved city; whose guardians they will be, and to whom they will always be ministering spirits.

And fell before the throne on their faces: in token of submission and reverence:

and worshipped God; by celebrating the perfections of his nature, and ascribing to him the glory of all his works.

Revelation 7:12

Ver. 12. Saying, Amen,.... As approving and confirming what the great multitude of men had said in **Re 7:10**; in ascribing the glory of salvation to God, and the Lamb: the angels, though they have no part in it themselves, yet highly approve of it as right and just, that men should give the glory of it where it is due.

Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, [be] unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. Here a seven fold praise is given to God by the angels, as to the Lamb, in **Re 5:12**, and in words much the same they rightly ascribe blessing to God, who is blessed in himself, and is the source of all blessedness to his creatures, angels and men. And also "glory"; the glory of his divine perfections, who is the God of glory; and of all his works of nature and providence, and especially of the salvation of men by

Christ. "And wisdom"; he being the only wise God, whose wisdom is to be seen in all the works of creation, and in the government of the world, and in nothing more than in the scheme of redemption by the Son of God: "and thanksgiving": for all mercies and favours, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, enjoyed by angels, or by men: "and honour"; which is due to him from all his creatures, as he is the Creator of them; and from all his children, as he is their Father; and from all his servants, as he their master: "and power": which he has exerted, in making all things out of nothing, in supporting the whole universe in its being, and in saving and preserving his own people: "and might"; or "strength", he being the almighty God, the strength of Israel, and the rock of ages, in whom is everlasting strength; and the praise and ascription of all this, the angels wish to be given him by themselves and others, to all eternity; and as desiring that so it might be, and as believing that so it would be, they add their to it.

Revelation 7:13

Ver. 13. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me,.... This elder was not the Apostle Peter, as some Popish interpreters have thought; and still less Pope Silvester, who lived in the times of Constantine; be is much more likely, according to others, to be Constantine himself, the first of the elders, or the chief magistrate when the church sprung out of its troubles, and enjoyed rest and peace; though some have thought of the prophet Isaiah, since many things said by this elder are to be found in his prophecy; compare **Re 7:14**; with **Isa 1:18**; but it is needless to inquire who the particular person was; it is enough to say, that he was one of the four and twenty elders about the throne, one that belonged to the church, perhaps the same as in **Re 5:5**; who, in a visionary way, is represented as accosting John upon the above sight. The word "answered" is a common Hebraism of the New Testament, which is often used when nothing goes before, to which a return is made; and only signifies here, that the elder opened his month, began to speak, and called to John, and said as follows:

what are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? This he said, not as being ignorant of them, or of the reason of their being clothed in this manner, nor of the place and state from whence they came, as appears by the account afterwards given of them by him; but to stir up John to take more notice of them, as being a body of men that were worthy of observation and contemplation, and were worth his while to consider well who they were, and from whence they came; and also to try him whether he knew them or not, and to bring him to a confession of his ignorance; and that he might have an opportunity of giving him some hints about them, which might be useful to him, and to the churches, and for the explanation of this vision, and other parts of this prophecy.

Revelation 7:14

Ver. 14. And I said unto him, sir, thou knowest,.... John replies in a very humble, modest, and respectful manner, to the elder, calling him "sir", according to the usage of the eastern people; and it is observable, that this word is much used in his Gospel, and more than in any other book; see **Joh 4:11**. Some copies, and the Complutensian edition, read, "my Lord"; and so do the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions. John confesses his ignorance, and ascribes knowledge to the elder, and desires information of him; for the sense is, that the elder knew who they were, and from whence they came, but he did not, and therefore desires that he would inform him; and so the Arabic version renders it, "and my Lord, thou art more learned"; that is, than I am, and therefore instruct me, as he accordingly did;

and he said to me, these are they which came out of great tribulation: seeing this company designs all the elect of God, that ever were, are, or shall be in the world; "the great tribulation", out of which they came, is not to be restrained to any particular time of trouble, but includes all that has been, is, or shall be; as all the afflictions of the saints under the Old Testament; from righteous Abel to Zechariah; and all the troubles of the people of God in the times of the Maccabees, Heb 11:35; all the persecutions of the Christians by the Jews, at the first publication of the Gospel; and the persecutions under the Roman emperors, both Pagan and Arian; and the cruelties and barbarities of the Romish antichrist, during the whole time of the apostasy; and particularly the last struggle of the beast, which will be the hour of temptation, that will come upon all the world; and in general all the afflictions, reproaches, persecutions, and many tribulations of all the saints, and every member of Christ in this world, who in the new Jerusalem church state will be come out of them; which supposes them to have been in them, and yet were not overwhelmed by them, and lost in them; but, by divine support and assistance, waded through them, and were now quite clear of them, and never more to be annoyed with them; see Re 21:4.

And have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; not in the blood of bulls and goats, which could not take away sin; nor in their own blood, their sufferings for Christ, on which they did not depend, knowing there is no comparison between them, and the glory revealed in them; nor in any works of righteousness done by them, which are imperfect and filthy, and need washing; but in the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. The "robes" which they washed in his blood may either design themselves, their consciences, which this blood purges from dead works; or their outward conversation garments, which have their spots, and need continual washing; or else the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, or their justification, which is by the blood of Christ, **Ro 5:9**. The act of washing from sin, by the blood of Christ, is sometimes ascribed to Christ himself, as in **Re 1:5**; but here to the saints, and designs the concern which faith has in the blood of Christ, which deals with it for justification, peace, and pardon, for the removing of sin from the conscience, and for cleansing from all impurity, both of flesh and Spirit: and the effect of this is, that their robes were "made white"; that is, that they were freed from all sin, were without fault before the throne, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. This shows that these persons had no trust in themselves, or dependence on their own merits, and works of righteousness, but wholly trusted to, and depended on the blood and righteousness of Christ; which is the only way to come out of tribulation, and enter the kingdom.

Revelation 7:15

Ver. 15. Therefore are they before the throne of God,....
See Gill on "Re 7:9"; not because of their great tribulations, but because they were brought through them, and out of them, by the grace and power of God; nor because of their robes, or conversation garments, but because those were washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; or because of the blood of the Lamb, and their justification, pardon, and cleansing by it:

and serve him day and night in his temple; not in any material temple, but in the new Jerusalem, the general assembly and church of the firstborn, the temple of the living God; for in this state there will be no material temple, or place of worship, but God and the Lamb will be the temple thereof, Re 21:22; nor will there be any night there, Re 22:5; wherefore this phrase, day and night, only denotes the constancy and uninterruption of their service, there being nothing to obstruct them in it, or break them off from it, as now; in allusion to the priests and Levites, who were, one or other of them, night or day in the service of the temple: and the service of these persons in the new Jerusalem state will not lie in attending on the word and ordinances, or in the ministration of them, as in the present state; but in praising God, singing

Hallelujahs to him, adoring the perfections of his nature, and admiring his wonderful works of providence and grace, and ascribing the glory of salvation to him, and to the Lamb; and this their service will be the glorious liberty of the children of God. Hence the Ethiopic version renders it, "and they praise him day and night"; this will be the employment of the saints in the millennium state, and to all eternity:

and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; or "tabernacle over them"; for the tabernacle of God shall be now among men, and he will dwell among the saints; they shall enjoy his presence, and have the most intimate communion with him; it will appear most manifest that he is their covenant God, and they are his covenant people; and he will be a tabernacle, not only of inhabitation, but of protection for them; and the name of this city, this new Jerusalem, will be "Jehovah Shammah", the Lord is there.

Revelation 7:16

Ver. 16. They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more,.... The words are taken out of Isa 49:10, and will be true in a literal and corporeal sense. Now the saints are often in hunger and thirst, then they shall be so no more; and in a mystical and spiritual sense, there will be no famine of the word; for though there will not be the outward ministration of the word, as now, the substance of it will be enjoyed, to full satisfaction; nor will there be any uneasy desires after spiritual things, and much less any hungerings and thirstings, or lusting after carnal, sensual, and earthly things.

Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; not the sun of persecution, see Mt 13:6; nor the heat of Satan's temptations, or his fiery darts; nor of any fiery trial, or sore affliction; nor of the divine displeasure, or any fearful sense and apprehension of it; nor of toil and labour, called the burden and heat of the day, from all which they will be now free.

Revelation 7:17

Ver. 17. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne,.... See **Re 5:6**; not before the throne, as the great multitude are said to be, **Re 7:9**; nor round about it, as the angels in **Re 7:11**; but in the midst of it, being equal to him that sits upon it; sitting on the same throne with him, and having the same power and authority, he shall feed them as a shepherd his flock; for this Lamb is a Shepherd, and this great multitude are his flock; whom he will feed in this state, not by his ministers, word, and ordinances, as now; but in person, and with the rich discoveries of himself, and of his love, signified by a feast, by new wine in his Father's kingdom, and his own, and by eating and drinking at his table, in the kingdom appointed by him to his followers; and hence it is they shall never hunger more: or "shall rule them", as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; for the same word signifies "to feed", and "to rule", as a king rules his subjects; Christ will now be visibly King of saints, and King over all the earth, and will reign before his ancients gloriously; and, in these days of his, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely under his power and protection:

and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; by "water" is meant the grace, love, and free favour of God in Christ, that pure river of water of life, which proceeds from the throne of God, and of the Lamb, from divine sovereignty; and with which the saints in this state shall be sweetly and fully solaced and refreshed; and hence they shall never thirst more: and this is said to be "living", because not only refreshing and reviving, but because it will last for ever; the love of God is from everlasting to everlasting; and it is signified by "fountains", to denote the abundance of it, even as it will be perceived and enjoyed by the saints now; for these waters will not be only up to the ankles, and knees, but a broad river to swim in, which cannot be passed over; and hither will Christ lead his people, which is, one branch of his office as a Shepherd; and which shows his care of them, and affection for them.

And God shall wipe away all tear, from their eyes; or "out of their eyes", as the Alexandrian copy reads; see Isa 25:8. The sense is, that that which is now the occasion of tears will cease, as the sin and corruptions of God's people, which now are the cause of many tears; as also Satan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, and the various afflictions of this life, and the persecutions of the men of the world; there will be no more of either of these; all will be made to cease; see Re 21:4; and in the room of them full and everlasting joy will take place, Isa 35:10. Mr. Daubuz thinks, that the whole of this chapter belongs to the sixth seal, and that the promises in it are such as were to be accomplished at the opening of the seventh, and do not belong to the millennium state; but had their fulfilment in the times of Constantine, who he supposes is the angel that came from the east, who restrained the persecutors of the church, and introduced a general peace in church and state; and as he came with the seal of the living God, which he understands of the cross of Christ, he put upon his standard, and on the shields of his soldiers, so he sealed the servants of God on their foreheads with it, by allowing them to make a public profession of a crucified Christ, and by protecting them in that profession, even men of all nations, Jews and Gentiles; and particularly he thinks the innumerable palm bearing company may design the council of Nice, gathered by him, which consisted of the representatives of the whole Christian church in the several nations of the world, who had great honour, freedom, and immunities conferred upon them; and that the angels are the Christian magistrates, submitting to the Christian religion, and defending the church, which was now come out of the great tribulation of Heathen persecution, and had temples and places of public worship opened for them; in which they had full liberty to serve the Lord continually, without interruption; and were secure from all affliction and persecution, and were filled with joy and gladness; and the Lamb, by the means of Constantine, as Christ's vicar and servant, he declared himself to be, fed and protected the church in peace and quietness; all which are accomplished during the rest, or "silence", under the next seal; and which I should very readily agree to, since this interpretation carries on the thread of the prophetic history without any interruption, were it not for the description of the palm bearing company, both as to quantity and quality, and the declaration of the happy state of those come out of great tribulation, which I think cannot be made to suit with any imperfect state of the church on earth, without greatly lowering the sense of the expressions used; however, if anyone prefers this exposition to what is given, I am not much averse unto it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 8:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 8

This chapter contains the opening of the seventh seal, and the things that followed on it, and particularly the sounding of the first four trumpets. Upon the opening of the seventh seal there was silence in heaven for half an hour, Re 8:1; then follows a vision of seven angels, who stood before God, and had seven trumpets given to them, Re 8:2; then of another angel, described by his position, standing at the altar; by his having a golden censer, and by much incense being given him, the end of which was to offer up the prayers of all saints, which with it went up to God, and were acceptable to him; and by filling his censer with the fire of the altar, and casting it to the earth; the effects of which were voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake, Re 8:3, after which the seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets, Re 8:6; the first blows his, which brings hail and fire, mingled with blood, upon the earth, which burns up the third part of trees and all green grass, **Re 8:7**; the second blows, upon which a burning mountain is cast into the sea, and a third part of it becomes blood, a third part of the creatures in it die, and a third part of the ships upon it are destroyed, **Re 8:8**; the third angel blows; upon which a star, like a burning lamp, falls upon the third part of rivers and fountains, whose name is Wormwood, and embitters them, so that many men die of them, **Re 8:10**; the fourth angel blows, and the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, is smitten, and becomes dark, so that there is no light for a third part of the day and night, **Re 8:12**; and the chapter is concluded with the vision of another angel flying through the midst of heaven, proclaiming three times woe to the inhabitants of the earth, on account of what would be uttered by the three following angels, who were yet to blow their trumpets, **Re 8:13**.

Ver. 1. And when he had opened the seventh seal,.... That is, when the Lamb had opened the seventh and last seal of the scaled book:

there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour; not in the third heaven, the seat of the divine Being, of angels and glorified saints, where are hallelujahs without intermission; but in the church, which is oftentimes signified by heaven in this book, and where now the throne of God was placed, in that form as described in **Re 4:4**, or rather in the Roman empire: nor is this silence the sum of this seal, or the only thing in it; for it includes the preparation of the seven angels to take their trumpets, though none of them were sounded during this period. This space of time some think refers to the time which elapsed, while the angel, who had incense given him to offer it with the prayers of saints, did so, and took fire off the altar with his censer, and cast it on the earth: and while the seven angels had their trumpets given them, and they were preparing to sound. Others are of opinion that this was only a pause, a breathing time for John between the former visions and seals, and the following; nothing being said or done, or anything exhibited to him during this interval; but he was at leisure to reflect on what he had seen, and to prepare for what was to come. Others understand it of the amazement of the saints at the judgments of God, which were coming upon the Christian empire, and of their quiet and silent preparations for these troubles and combats, both within and without, they were to be exercised with; see **Zec 2:13**. Others have thought that this refers to the state of the saints after the day of judgment, when there will be an entire cessation from persecution and trouble, and when the souls under the altar will have done crying for vengeance; but this will be not for half an hour only, but to all eternity; nor will angels and saints be then silent. Rather this is to be understood of that peace and rest which the church enjoyed upon Constantine's having defeated all his enemies, when he brought the

church into a state of profound tranquillity and ease; and this lasted but for a little while, which is here expressed by about, or almost half an hour, as the Syriac version renders it; for in a short time the Arian heresy broke out, which introduced great troubles in the church, and at last violent persecutions. The allusion is, as in the whole of the following vision of the angel at the altar, to the offering of incense; at which time the people were removed from the temple, from between the porch and altar {l}, to some more distant place; and the priest was alone while he offered incense, and then prayed a short prayer, that the people might not be affrighted lest he should be dead {m}: and who in the mean while were praying in a silent, manner without; see **Lu 1:9**; hence the Jews say {n}, that the offering of incense atones for an ill tongue, for it is a thing that is introduced
yavxb, "silently", and it atones for what is done silently, such as whisperings, backbitings, &c. and they call {o} silence the best of spices, even of those of which the sweet incense was made.

{l} T. Tab. Yoma, fol. 44. 1. Maimon. Hilchot Tamidin, c. 3. sect. 3. {m} Misn. Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1. {n} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 44. 1. & Zebachim, fol. 88. 2. {o} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 18. 1.

Revelation 8:2

Ver. 2. And I saw the seven angels,.... Not the seven spirits of God, **Re 1:4**; their names, as well as their office, differ; nor the ministers of the word, though these are often called angels in this book, and blow the trumpet of the Gospel, and lift up their voice like a trumpet; but the angelic spirits, and these either evil ones, since they are the executioners of wrath and vengeance, and bring judgments on the earth; and who, are sometimes said to stand before God, 1Ki 22:21; or rather good angels, who are sometimes ministers of divine wrath; see 2Sa 24:16; "seven" of them are mentioned, as being a proper number for the blowing of the seven trumpets, which would complete all the woes that were to come upon the world, and in allusion to the seven princes the eastern monarchs used to have continually about them, **Es 1:14**, as it follows:

which stood before God; and denotes their nearness to him, and familiarity with him, they always behold his face; and their service and ministrations, and their readiness to execute his will: the allusion is to the two priests standing at the table of fat, with two silver trumpets in their hands, with which they blew, and another struck the cymbal, and the Levites sung, which was always done at the time of the daily sacrifice {p}:

and to them were given seven trumpets: everyone had one; and which were an emblem of those wars, and desolations, and calamities, which would come upon the empire, and upon the world, at the blowing of each of them; the trumpet being an alarm, preparing for, proclaiming, and introducing these things; **Jer 4:19**; these are said to be given them; either by him that sat upon the throne, about which they were; or by the Lamb that opened the seal; and shows that they did nothing but what they had a commission and order to do. Here is manifestly an allusion to the priests and Levites blowing their trumpets at the close of the daily sacrifice, and at the offering of incense {q} as before observed.

{p} Misn. Tamid. c. 7. sect. 3. {q} Maimon. Hilch. Tamidin, c. 6. sect. 5.

Revelation 8:3

Ver. 3. And another angel came,.... The Ethiopic version adds, "from the east", as in **Re 7:2**; pointing to the same angel, and who is intended: for not a created angel, as Gabriel, or any other, is meant; nor any mere man, at least not Pope Damasus, who lived in Constantine's time, as Lyra thought; nor Constantine himself, which is the opinion of Brightman, who thinks that his, and the desires of other good men to make peace, and compose the differences occasioned by the Arian heresy, are designed by the incense and prayers; and this being brought about at the counsel of Nice, when the Arian blasphemy was condemned, and truth confirmed, is intended by the ascent of the smoke of the incense with the prayers, out of the angels hands; when there followed upon this great contentions, heart burnings, and persecutions, signified by fire, voices, thunderings, &c. and others, have been of opinion that the Emperor Theodosius is designed, and that respect is had to his prayer both in the church, and at the head of his army, before the battle with Eugenius, the saints in the mean while putting up united prayers to God for success, and which was obtained; and this victory was attended with a miraculous tempest, and gave a deadly blow to the Pagan religion. Yet neither of those, but Christ himself, the Angel of the covenant, and of God's presence, is here intended, who appeared in an angelic form; so the high priest in the day of atonement was called xylv {r}, "an angel", or messenger, to which the allusion is;

and stood at the altar; either of burnt offerings, and may be rendered "stood upon it"; and so may represent his sacrifice, which had been lately offered up

for the sins of his people, he being both altar, sacrifice, and priest; or rather the altar of incense, since mention is made of a censer and of incense, and the smoke of it; and seeing this altar is a golden one, as that was, and is before the throne, as that was before the vail by the ark of the testimony;
Ex 30:1; and so Christ is here introduced as the high priest, advocate, and intercessor for his people, though both altars may be respected in this verse: "the altar" may design the altar of burnt offering from whence the coals were taken in the censer; and the "golden altar" the altar of incense where the coals being brought the incense was put upon them, and offered; and here he "stood" as everyone concerned in the service of the sanctuary did {s}:

having a golden censer; the Ethiopic version adds, "of fire": for this was a vessel in which were put burning coals of fire taken from off the altar before the Lord Le 16:12, and which may denote the sufferings of Christ, he pains he endured in his body the sorrows of his soul, and the wrath of God which was poured like fire upon him; the altar from which they were taken off was typical of Christ: in his divine nature which is the altar that sanctifies the gift, and gave virtue to his blood and sacrifice; and all this being before the Lord may show that Christ's sufferings were according to the will of God, were grateful to him, and always before him; for these burning coals in the censer were also carried within the vail, representing heaven, where Christ entered by his own blood and where he is as a Lamb that had been slain, the efficacy of whose death always continues; and this being a golden censer shows the excellency and perpetuity of Christ's sacrifice and intercession. In the daily service the priest used a silver censer, but on the day of atonement a golden one {t}; though at the daily sacrifice there was a vessel used, called Pkh, like to a large golden bushel, in which was a smaller vessel full of incense {u}, and may be what is here designed:

and there was given unto him much incense; the intercession of Christ is meant by "the incense", which, like that, is sweet and fragrant, very grateful and acceptable to God and also pure and holy; for though it is made for transgressors, yet in a way of righteousness, and consistent with the holiness and justice of God; nor is there any like it, nor should there be any besides it; the intercession of angels, and saints departed, ought to be rejected: and it is perpetual, or will be for ever; see Ex 30:7; and whereas it is said to be "much", this is an allusion either to the many spices used in the composition of the incense, see Ex 30:34; the Jews say {w}, that eleven sorts of spices were ordered to Moses, and the wise men have added three more, in all fourteen; or to the priest's handfuls of incense, which he took and brought within the vail on the day of atonement, Le 16:12; and which were added to, and were over and above the quantity used every day {x}; and even in the daily service the pot of incense was not only filled, but vwdg, "heaped up" {y}; now this may denote the fulness of Christ's intercession, which is for all his elect, called and uncalled, greater or lesser believers, and for all things for them, as their cases be; for conversion, discoveries of pardon, preservation, perseverance, and glorification; and to support this, he has a fulness of merit, which makes his intercession efficacious; for incense was put upon the burning coals in the censer, or upon the fire before the Lord, Le 16:13, signifying that Christ's intercession proceeds upon his sufferings and death: his blood and sacrifice, from whence all his pleas and arguments are taken in favour of his people, and which always prevail: and this is said to be given him, as his whole work and office as Mediator, and every branch of it is; he is appointed to this work, is allowed to do it, and is accepted in it, by him that sits upon the throne: in the daily offering of the incense, one took the incense and gave it into the hand of his friend, or the priest that was next him; and if he wanted instruction how to offer it, he taught him, nor might anyone offer incense until the president bid him {z}; to which there seems to be an allusion here: now the end of this was,

that he should offer [it] with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne; the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions add, "of God"; the prayers of the saints, rightly performed, are themselves compared to incense, being very grateful and acceptable to God, Ps 141:2; and the Arabic version here renders it in connection with the preceding clause, and explanative of that, "and there was given unto him much incense and much spice, which are the prayers of the saints", as in **Re 5:8**; and at the time of incense the people prayed; see **Lu 1:10**; and these are spiritual sacrifices, which Christ the high priest presents for the saints, perfumes with the incense of his mediation, and makes acceptable to God, being offered upon, and coming up from that altar which is before him, and which gives value to everything that is put upon it: and they are the prayers of saints, who are set apart by God the Father, whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ, and who are sanctified by the Spirit of God; who draw nigh to God with a true heart, and call upon him out of a pure heart, and in sincerity and truth; the prayers of such righteous ones, through faith in Christ, avail much with God; and the prayers of all saints are regarded by Christ, and presented by him, whether they be rich or poor, high or low, greater or lesser believers. The Jews often speak of an angel, whose name is Sandalphon, who is appointed over the prayers of the righteous, and takes them and presents them to God {a}: so Raphael in the Apocrypha:

"I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One." (Tobit 12:15)

says he was one of the seven holy angels that carry up the prayers of the saints; and the heretic Elxai, who was originally a Jew, talked of the holy angels of prayer {b}: so the Jews say, that God "by", or "through his Word", receives the prayers of Israel, and has mercy on them {c}. In the Greek text it is, "that he should give", &c. that is, the "incense", agreeably to the Hebrew phrase in Nu 16:47, and elsewhere.

{r} Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 5. {s} Maimon. Biath. Hamikdash, c. 5. sect. 17. {t} Yoma, c. 4. sect. 4. {u} Misn. Tamid. c. 5. sect. 4. {w} Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 2. sect. 1, 2. {x} Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1. & T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 47. 1. {y} Misn. Tamid. c. 5. sect. 4. {z} Misn. Tamid. c. 6. sect. 3. Maimon. Tamidin, c. 3. sect. 8, 9. {a} Zohar in Gen. fol. 97. 2. & in Exod. fol. 99. 1. Shemot Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 106. 2. {b} Epiphan. Contr. Haeres. l. 1. Haeres. 19. {c} Targum in Hos. xiv. 8.

Revelation 8:4

Ver. 4. And the smoke of the incense,.... For the incense being put, as it was used to be, upon burning coals of fire, caused a smoke to arise like a cloud, Le 16:13; so that the whole house, or temple, was filled with it {d}:

[which came] with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God out of the angel's hand; alluding to the incense the priest took in his hand, and cast upon the burning coals; and shows how that by the smoke of the incense, or the virtue of Christ's mediation, the imperfections of the prayers of the saints are covered; and how they are it perfumed and made acceptable to God; and so are said to ascend up before him, and to be regarded by him, as the prayers of Cornelius were, Ac 10:4; now all this is expressive of the wonderful affection of Christ for his church and people, and care of them; that before the angels sound their trumpets, and bring on wars and desolations into the empire, Christ is represented as interceding for them, and presenting their prayers both for deliverance for themselves, and vengeance on their enemies.

{d} Misn. Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1.

Revelation 8:5

Ver. 5. And the angel took the censer,.... The golden one before mentioned, the use of which was to take and carry in it burning coals of fire:

and filled it with fire of the altar; of burnt offering, for upon that, and not upon the altar of incense, fire was; the allusion is to the priest

"that was worthy to use a censer {e}; who took a silver censer, and went to the top of the altar (of burnt offering), and having removed the coals there, and there took them in his censer, and went down and emptied them into a golden one, and there was scattered from it about a kab of coals;"

for the golden one held a kab less than the silver one {f};

and cast [it] into the earth: the Roman empire: by "fire" some understand the Spirit of God, and his gifts and graces, which sat upon the apostles as cloven tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost; and which they suppose were now plentifully bestowed on the ministers of the word, to enlighten them, inspire them with zeal, and abundantly fit them for the work of the ministry, in consequence of Christ's mediation and intercession: and others think the Gospel is intended, which is sometimes compared to fire, Jer 20:9, or else those contentions and quarrels which, through the corruptions of men, arise on account of the Gospel, Lu 12:49; though rather by fire here are meant the judgments of God, and his wrath and fury poured forth like fire upon the Roman empire, now become Christian; and so was an emblem of those calamities coming upon it at the sounding of the trumpets; and shows that as Christ prays and intercedes for his, own people, for their comfort and safety, so he will bring down, his judgments upon his and their enemies; see Eze 10:2; and the Targum on it:

and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake; which may be understood either of the nature, use, and effects of the Gospel, speaking to the hearts of men by the sons of thunder, enlightening their minds, and shaking their consciences; the like were at the giving of the law, Ex 19:16; or rather of those terrors, distresses, and commotions in the world, because of God's righteous judgments, and which particularly will be at the sound of the seventh trumpet, and the pouring out of the seventh vial, Re 11:15; the allusion is to the sounds that were heard at the time of the daily sacrifice; for besides the blowing of the trumpets by the priests, and the singing of the Levites, of which See Gill on "Re 8:2"; there was a musical instrument called hprgm, "magrephah" {g}, which being sounded, a man could not hear another speak in Jerusalem: yea, they say it was heard as far as Jericho.

{e} Misn. Tamid. c. 5. sect. 5. {f} Vid. Misn. Yoma, c. 4. sect. 4. {g} Misn. Tamid. c. 5. sect. 6. & 3. 8.

Revelation 8:6

Ver. 6. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets,.... Given them, **Re 8:2**;

prepared themselves to sound; they stood up, took their trumpets in their hands, and put them to their mouths; this was giving notice of what was coming upon the earth, and a kind of warning to men, and a call upon them to repentance, and to prepare to meet God in the way of his judgments. The time when these trumpets began to blow was after the opening of the seventh seal, and so after the destruction of the empire as Pagan, which was under the sixth seal; and after that peace and rest from persecution in Constantine's time, signified by the half hour's silence in heaven; and after the prayers of the saints for vengeance, because of their blood shed in the time of Rome Pagan, were offered up, heard, taken notice of, and accepted; and therefore cannot regard, nor have any concern with the state of the church before Constantine's time, as some have thought the three first trumpets had; the first introducing the contradictions and blasphemies of the Jews, and their persecutions of the Christians, and the effusion of their blood by them; the second the ten persecutions under the Heathen emperors; and the third, the errors and heresies which pestered the churches of those times: nor indeed do they concern the state of the church at all; though it seems much more likely that the first four trumpets should bring in; as others have thought, the several heresies of Arius, Macedonius, Pelagius, and Eutyches, which sprung up before the rise of Mahomet, who appears under the fifth trumpet. But all the six trumpets have to do with the empire as Christian; for as the six seals are so many steps towards the destruction of the empire as Pagan, and the vials bring on the ruin of Rome Papal; so the six trumpets are so many gradual advances to the ruin of the empire, now Christian: and it must be observed, that the Emperor Theodosius, at his death, left the empire divided between his two sons, Arcadius and Honorius, the eastern part of it, which had Constantinople for its seat, to the former, and the western part of it, which had Rome for its seat, to the latter; now the first four trumpets bring in a barbarous people out of the north, the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, into the western part, who, by various incursions and wars, at last utterly destroy it; and the fifth and sixth trumpets bring in the

Saracens under Mahomet, and the Turks into the eastern part, who took possession of that, and have kept it unto this day. (This was published in 1747, Ed.) A preparation being made, the angels begin to sound their trumpets.

Revelation 8:7

Ver. 7. The first angel sounded,.... Or blew his trumpet:

and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood; somewhat like one of the plagues of Egypt, **Ex 9:23**; in which was hail mingled with fire, only no blood, but what was caused by its fall on man and beast. Some have thought the Arian heresy is here intended, which may well enough agree with the time; and which may be compared to "hail", for the mischief it did to the vines, the churches; and because of the violence with which it came, and the chillness of affection to Christ and his people, which it brought on professors of religion; and the barrenness which followed upon it, it making men barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ Jesus; and to "fire", because of the wrath, contentions, animosities, and divisions it occasioned among those who were called Christians: and "blood" may be brought into the account, since the like persecutions under Constantius and Valens were raised against the orthodox on account of it as were against the Christians under the Heathen emperors: and this storm fell upon "the earth"; the whole Roman empire; for even all the world was once said to be Arian, except one Athanasius; and particularly upon the carnal and earthly part of the church, who were seeking places and preferments under the Arian emperors: "and burnt up the third part of trees"; the trees of righteousness, the saints, particularly the doctors of the church, the tall cedars in Lebanon; who either seemed to be such, and were infected with this heresy, and destroyed by it, as many were; or were truly such, and were greatly oppressed, afflicted, and persecuted for not embracing it: and also "all green grass"; the common people, private Christians, weak believers, who had the truth of grace in them, and suffered much for not giving into this heresy; or who seemed to have it, but had it not, but withered away, being scorched up and destroyed with this pernicious notion: but rather this trumpet regards not the church, but the empire; and this storm of hail, fire, and blood, designs the irruption of the Goths into it, from the year 395, in which Theodosius died, to the year 408, under Radagaisus their general; with two hundred thousand of them, some say four hundred thousand, be entered and overrun all Italy, but was stopped and defeated by Stilicho; also Alaricus, king of the Goths, penetrated into Italy, came to Ravenna, and pitched his camp not far from Polentia, to whom the Emperor Honorius gave up France and Spain to make him easy, and that he might cease from his ravages and depredations {h}; and these irruptions and devastations may be fitly expressed by hail, fire, and blood, just as the coming of the Assyrian monarch into the land of Israel is signified by a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm, Isa 28:2; and it is remarkable, as Mr. Daubuz observes, that Claudian the poet {i}, who lived at the time of Alarick's war, compares it to hail:

and they were cast upon the earth; the Roman empire, the continent more especially, as Germany, France, Spain, and Italy, which were particularly affected and distressed with these barbarous people:

and the third part of trees were burnt up; by which seem to be meant people of the higher rank, the richer sort of people, who suffered much in these calamities; see **Isa 2:13**; yea, princes, nobles, and rulers, both civil and ecclesiastical, who suffered much at this time, as Jerom {k}, who was then living, testifies; and so "trees" are interpreted of kings, rulers, and governors, by the Targum on **Isa 2:13**; "the trees of the field", in Isa 55:12; are interpreted of kingdoms {l}: the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read before this clause, "and the third part of the earth was burnt"; that is, of the Roman empire:

and all green grass was burnt up; the common people, who may be compared to spires of "grass" for their multitude, being as it were innumerable; and to "green" grass, for their delightful, comfortable, and flourishing condition before these calamities came upon them; and for their weakness and impotency to withstand such powerful enemies; see **Job 5:25**; and these commonly suffer most when a country is overrun and plundered by an enemy.

{h} Cassiodor. Chronicon in Arcad. & Honor. 42. Petav. Rationar. Tempor. par. 1. l. 6. c. 10. p. 275. Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 5. c. 16. p. 871. {i} De Bello Getico, v. 174. p. 209. Ed. Barthii. {k} In Epitaph. Nepotian. fol. 9. I. {l} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 50. 1.

Revelation 8:8

Ver. 8. And the second angel sounded,.... His trumpet:

and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; by which is meant not the devil, as some think; called a "mountain" from his height of pride, a great one from his might and power, and a "burning" one from his great wrath and malice against Christ, his Gospel, and his people; and who may be said to be "cast into the sea" of this world, and the men of it, whom he instigates against the saints, and who are like a troubled sea that cannot rest: but rather some heresy, and, as some have thought, the Macedonian heresy, which was levelled against the deity of the Holy Spirit, as was the Arian heresy against the deity of the Son; the abettors of which looked big, and were supported by power, and showed great zeal for religion, and pretended to great light and knowledge; and which heresy much affected the sea of pure doctrine, particularly the third part of doctrine, in which the third Person, the Spirit of God, is more especially concerned; and was of so pernicious a nature, as to kill many that professed the Gospel, and had a name to live, and destroy many particular churches, comparable to ships; but, as before, it is best to understand this of another incursion of the Goths into the Roman empire, and of the effects of it; and it seems to have respect to the taking and sacking of Rome by Alaricus, king of the West Goths, in the year 410, or 412 {m}. Rome is very fitly represented by a great mountain, as kingdoms and cities sometimes are; see **Zec 4:7**; seeing it was built on seven mountains; and its being taken and burnt by Alaricus is aptly expressed by a burning mountain, as the destruction of Babylon, which is another name for Rome, is by a burnt mountain in Jer 51:25; the "sea" into which this was cast may signify the great number of people and nations within its jurisdiction which suffered, and were thrown into confusion at this time; so distresses and calamities in nations are expressed by a like figure in Ps 46:2;

and the third part of the sea became blood; that is, a third part of the jurisdiction of Rome, signified by the sea, see Jer 51:36; was afflicted with wars and bloodshed by this same sort of people; for while these things were done in Italy, a like calamity fell on France and Spain; the Alans, Vandals, and Sueves, having depopulated France, passed over the Pyraenean mountains, and seized on Spain; the Vandals and Sueves on Gallaecia; the Alans on Portugal; and the Silingi, which was another sort of Vandals, invaded Andalusia {n}; the Goths under Ataulphus entered France, and the Burgundians seized that part of it next the Rhine {o}: see **Ex 7:20**.

{m} Cassiodor Chronicon in Honor. & Theodos. 43. Petav. ib. p. 276. Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. ib. p. 872. Vid. Hieron. ad Gaudentium, fol. 34. M. {n} Cassiodor. ib. Petav. ib. {o} Cassiodor. Chronicon. ib.

Revelation 8:9

Ver. 9. And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea,.... The fishes; by whom men are meant, the inhabitants of the Roman empire; see Eze 29:4, where by fish the Targum understands mighty princes and governors:

and had life, died; were put to death by these savage and barbarous people, who killed all they met with, men, women, and children, young and old, rich and poor, high and low:

and the third part of the ships were destroyed; by which may be designed either the cities and towns within such a part of the Roman jurisdiction, which were burnt or plundered by them; or their goods and effects, which they pillaged, and carried off the wealth and riches of the people, even all their substance, as Austin {p} and Jerom {q}, who lived in those times, affirm.

{p} De Civitate Dei, l. 1. c. 10. vid. L. Vivem in ib. {q} Ad Eustochium.

Revelation 8:10

Ver. 10. And the third angel sounded,.... His trumpet:

and there fell a great star from heaven; not Mahomet, as some think, for this time is too soon for him, who rose up under the fifth trumpet; nor Arius, for whom it is too late, who lived in the times of Constantine; and still less Origen, who lived before his time; but rather Pelagius, who was a man of great eminence in the church, of much learning, and made great pretensions to religion and holiness, and, like a star and lamp, shone forth awhile, with great lustre and splendour, but fell into very great errors; denying original sin, and asserting the purity of human nature, crying up the power of man's free will, and asserting that human nature, without the grace of God, was able to keep the whole law, even to perfection; and his name, according to his doctrine, was wormwood and gall, which embittered the sweet doctrines of the free grace of God, and affected the fountains and rivers, the sacred Scriptures, from whence these doctrines flow; so that instead of being pleasant and wholesome to men, through his false glosses and perverse interpretations of them, they became bitter and poisonous; and many souls, that received and imbibed his sense of them, died spiritually, and were lost and perished, as all must inevitably, who depend on the strength and works of nature, and deny and despise the grace of God: but it is best, as the other trumpets, so to understand this of the invasions of the above barbarous people, particularly the Vandals under Genseric, who being turned out of Spain by the Goths, went into Africa, where peace was made, and part of Africa given them to dwell in; after which Genseric, through treachery, seized upon Carthage, and greatly afflicted Sicily: Theodosius made war against them to no purpose, and peace being made between Valentinian and Genseric, Africa was divided between them; and some time after Rome was spoiled by Genseric of all its riches {r}. Mr. Daubuz thinks Attila, king of the Huns, called the dread of the world, and the scourge of God, is meant by this star; who was a rebel against the Romans, and made sad ravages in the empire; at the beginning of which troubles a great comet appeared; and, according to Cassiodorus {s}, the Huns were auxiliaries to the Romans against the Goths; but Litorius the Roman general was taken; and after this the Huns rebelled, and depopulated Thrace and Illyricum; and Attila, their king, having slain his brother Bleda, and partner, became sole monarch; and though the Romans under Actius, by the help of the Goths, beat him in the fields of Catalaun, and obliged him to depart, yet afterwards, having got a reinforcement, he entered with great force into Aquileia, with whom Pope Leo made peace:

burning as it were a lamp; this star resembled that which is called Lampadias, which Pliny says {t} imitates, or bears a likeness to burning torches; and he speaks of a spark which fell out of a star, which had such an appearance {u}: this is expressive of war, and great destruction in the empire:

and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of water; that is, upon the large provinces and chief cities belonging to the Roman empire, and the governors of them, who suffered very bitterly and severely in these times; compare with this Eze 32:2. The last clause, "and upon the fountains of waters", is left out in the Alexandrian copy.

{r} Cassiodor. Chronicon in Theodos. 44. & in Marcian. 45. {s} Chronicon, ib. {t} Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 25. {u} Ib. c. 35.

Revelation 8:11

Ver. 11. And the name of the star is called Wormwood,.... Because of the bitter afflictions, sorrows, and distresses which it was the instrument of; just as Naomi called herself Mara, because the Almighty had dealt bitterly with her, **Ru 1:20**;

and the third part of the waters became wormwood; that is, the inhabitants of the provinces and cities belonging to the Roman empire were afflicted with grievous and bitter afflictions and calamities; so great distresses are called wormwood, and waters of gall given to drink, **Jer 9:15**;

and many men died of the waters, because they were bitter; through the barbarities and cruelties of these savage people, who afflicted the empire: there seems to be an allusion to Ex 15:23.

Revelation 8:12

Ver. 12. And the fourth angel sounded,.... His trumpet. Some think this refers to the Eutychian heresy, which confounded the two natures of Christ, and of two made one mixed nature, neither human nor divine; and brought great darkness upon the doctrine of Christ's person, the sun of righteousness and into the church, signified by the moon, and among the ministers of the word, the stars. Others are of opinion that that darkness which preceded the rise of the Papacy, and introduced it, is here intended:

and the third part of the sun was smitten and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars, so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise; when the doctrine concerning the person and offices of Christ, who is the sun and light of the world, was obscured by heresies; and the discipline of the church, which, like the moon, has all its light, beauty, and order from Christ, was sadly defaced by the introduction of Jewish and Paganish rites and ceremonies; and the ministers, the stars, were drawn by the tail of the drag on, and cast to the earth, became corrupt in their principles, and carnal and sensual in their lives; so that it was a time of great darkness and gloominess, night and day: but rather this trumpet has respect to that darkness and ignorance which the above barbarous nations, the Goths, Huns, Vandals, and Heruli, spread, and left throughout the empire; for from this time there was a visible decline, as of evangelical light and knowledge, so of all kind of useful knowledge, and nothing but ignorance, stupidity, and barbarity, took place everywhere; and which were very assisting to the man of sin, antichrist, to fix and settle his dominion over the kingdoms which rose up out of the empire at this time; and it also refers to the entire destruction of the western Roman empire, which is expressed by much the same figures as the ruin of the Roman Pagan empire, in **Re 6:12**; and which the various irruptions of these savage people issued in; compare with this Eze 32:7, where the destruction of the Egyptian monarchy is signified in like terms: Jerom, who lived about the time of the first inundation of these nations, in very mournful language expresses the inhumanity and impiety of them, and the ruin they threatened the empire with; and, says {w}, "[Romanus] orbis ruit", "the [Roman] empire is falling". About the year 455, when Rome was taken by Genseric the Vandal, the empire was divided into ten kingdoms; and in the year 476, Augustulus, the last of the Roman emperors, was obliged to quit his imperial dignity: the Heruli, a people of the same kind with the Goths, and originally Scythians, as they, under their king and leader Odoacer seized on Italy, took Rome, killed Orestes and his brother Paul, and deposed Augustulus, the last of the Roman emperors, and banished him into Campania; and so the western empire ceased, Odoacer taking upon him the title of king of Italy, and translated the seat of the empire from Rome to Ravenna {x}; and then might the sun be truly said to be smitten: but still, though Odoacer the Herulian reigned in Italy, the Roman form of government was not altered, the consulship and senate still continued, as they did also under Theodoric the Goth, his successor; but when Italy was recovered by Narses, the Emperor Justinian's general, these, with other magistrates, ceased, and Rome became a dukedom, and was subject to an exarch of Ravenna; and then the moon and stars were smitten also. The phrase of smiting the sun, moon, and stars, is Jewish; for the Jews express the eclipses of the luminaries in this way, and say {y} that when the luminaries Nyqwl, "are smitten", it is an ill omen; when hqwl hmxh, "the sun is smitten", it is an ill sign to the nations of the world; and when hqwl hnbl, "the moon is smitten", it is a bad omen to the nations of Israel {z} and so the phrase, "the day shone not", is also Jewish; it is said {a} of some Rabbins, that they sat and studied in the law amwy ryhnd de, "until the day shone"; and when "the day shone", they rose up and went on their way.

{w} Epitaph. Nepotian. fol. 9. l. Tom. 1. vid. etiam Epist. ad Gerontiam, fol. 32. E. & Epitaph. Fabiolae, fol. 68. H. {x} Vid. Casssiodor. Chronicon in Zenon. 47. Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 5. c. 16. p. 876. Petav. Rationar. Temp. par. 1. c. 18. p. 304. {y} Jarchi in Gen. 1. 14. {z} T. Bab. Succa, fol. 29. 1. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 62. 1. {a} Zohar in Deut. fol. 113. 3.

Revelation 8:13

Ver. 13. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven,.... The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, instead of "an angel", read "an eagle"; and to "fly" agrees with either of them, and the sense is the same let it be read either way; and this angel may design either Christ, or a created angel, or a minister of the Gospel, as in Re 14:6; did the next trumpet introduce Popery, as some have supposed, Gregory bishop of Rome might be thought, as he is by some, to be the angel here intended, since he gave notice and warning of antichrist being at hand:

saying with a loud voice; that all might hear, and as having something of importance to say, and delivering it with great fervour and affection:

woe, woe, woe; three times, answerable to the three trumpets yet to be blown; and which are therefore called the woe trumpets: and these woes are denounced

to the inhabiters of the earth; the Roman empire, particularly the eastern part of it, which the fifth and sixth trumpets relate unto; and even the whole world, with which the seventh trumpet is concerned:

by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound! the design of this loud cry of the angel is to show, that though the distresses and ruin which the barbarous nations had brought upon the western empire were very great; yet those which would come upon the eastern empire by the Saracens and Turks, under the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets, would be much more grievous; and especially the judgments which the seventh trumpet would bring upon the whole world, when all the nations of the earth will be judged. From the sounding of the fourth trumpet, to the sounding of the fifth, was a space of a hundred and thirty five years, that is, from the deposition of Augustulus, A. D. 476, to the public preaching of Mahomet, A. D. 612.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 9:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 9

This chapter gives an account of the blowing of the fifth and sixth trumpets, and of the effects following upon them. The fifth angel blows his trumpet, and a star falls; the key of the bottomless pit is given to him, which being opened by it, out of it comes smoke to the darkening of the sun and air, and out of the smoke locusts, who have power like scorpions, **Re 9:1**; whose power is restrained from using it to the hurt of the grass, or any green thing or tree, only of those who had not the seal of God in their foreheads; but are permitted, though not to kill men, yet to torment them five months, which is worse than death unto them, **Re 9:4**. The shapes of these locusts, which are said to be like horses, are described by their heads, faces, hair, teeth, breastplates, wings, and tails, and are said to have a king over them, whose name is mentioned, **Re 9:7**. The blowing of this trumpet brings on one of the woes mentioned in **Re 8:13**, and the two other follow, **Re 9:12**. The sixth angel blows his trumpet, and a voice is heard from the horns of the altar, directed to the said angel, ordering him to loose four angels bound in the great river Euphrates, where they were prepared, for a determinate time, to slay the third part of men, and they were loosed accordingly, **Re 9:13**. The number of the army, under these angels, is given, **Re 9:16**, and the horses and horsemen are described; the riders by their breastplates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone; their horses' heads as heads of lions, fire, smoke, and brimstone, issuing out of their mouths, by which the third part of men are killed, **Re 9:17**. The reason of this slaughter is, because they had power both in their mouth and tails, which latter were like serpents, and had heads, with which they did mischief, **Re 9:19**; and yet such who were not killed by these plagues, but escaped, did not repent of their idolatry, murders, sorceries, fornication, and theft, **Re 9:20**.

Ver. 1. And the fifth angel sounded,.... His trumpet:

and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: some take this star to be Jesus Christ, the bright and morning star; and understand by falling, no other than his descending from heaven to earth, in which sense the word is used in Ge 14:10; and that because he is not only said to have the keys of hell and death, **Re 1:18**; but particularly the key of the bottomless pit, Re 20:1; but then there is a wide difference in the use of the key by the star here, and the angel there, or between the opening of the pit, and letting out smoke and locusts, and the shutting it up, and Satan in it; the one well suits with Christ, the other not: nor is Satan here designed, as others think, who once was a bright star, and shone among the morning stars, but by sin fell from heaven, his first estate; and the fall of this Lucifer, son of the morning, was as lightning from heaven, Lu 10:18. But then this was a matter over and past, and what was well known to John; nor did he need a vision to represent this unto him: nor is Arius intended, who lived before any of the trumpets were blown; nor the Emperor Valens, who fell from the heavenly doctrine of Christ's divinity into the Arian heresy, which he encouraged and defended; whereby Christ, the sun of righteousness, was obscured, and the air, the church, enlightened by Christ, was darkened; in whose time the locusts, the Goths and Vandals, infected with Arianism, greatly distressed the eastern Christians; but his reign was long before the fifth angel sounded his trumpet, which was after the year 600: wherefore by this star is meant antichrist; but whether the western or eastern antichrist, the pope of Rome, or Mahomet, is a question: some interpreters go one way, and some another: Brightman thinks both are intended, seeing they both are antichrist, and rose to the height of their power much about the same time; and the characters and circumstances in this vision very. Well agree with them both: what is objected to Mahomet is, that he never was a doctor or teacher in the church, or had any dignity in it, which a star in this book most commonly signifies, and therefore could not be said to fall from it; but this may be observed, that the Arabians, among whom he lived, had received the Christian religion before his time; that he himself was conversant with the Scriptures, as appears by his wretched perversion of them in his Alcoran; and certain it is, that his accomplices were such as had professed Christianity, as Sergius, a Nestorian of Constantinople, and John of Antioch, an Arian, and he himself set up for a prophet: others think the pope of Rome is meant by the star, seeing the bishops of that city had shone out in great light and purity of doctrine and practice formerly, but now about this time most sadly apostatized; they had been indeed gradually declining for some time, but now they may be said openly to fall from heaven, when Phocas, who murdered his master, the Emperor Mauritius, and took the imperial crown to himself, gave to Pope Boniface the Third the title and power of universal bishop, about the year 859, which he and his successors exercised in a most haughty and tyrannical manner:

and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit; which shows that this could not be a star in a literal sense, but must design some man, or body of men, and agrees well with the popes of Rome: by "the bottomless pit" is meant hell, out of which the beast arose, and into which Satan will be cast, Re 11:7; and by "the key" is designed the power of it, of opening and shutting it, of saving persons from it, or of casting them into it; and which the popes of Rome take to themselves, even all power in heaven, earth, and hell, signified by their triple crown; and which they arrogate to such a degree as to say, that if the pope should send many thousands into hell, no one ought to say, what dost thou? This is a different key from what were given to Peter; he had the keys of the kingdom of heaven, his pretended successors have the key of the bottomless pit; his were keys of knowledge, theirs of ignorance, and of the depths of Satan, let out of this bottomless pit, of which the antichristian religion, both Popish and Mahometan, consist; his were given by Christ, theirs by Phocas a murderer; or they had their power from the dragon, Re 13:2; from Satan himself, according to whose working and influence they come forth, though by divine permission.

Revelation 9:2

Ver. 2. And he opened the bottomless pit,.... With the key that was given him; he made use of his universal power over all bishops and churches, enacted laws, issued out decrees, made articles of faith, and imposed them on men's consciences, and obliged all to submit to his hellish principles and practices; and this, as it may be applied to Mahomet, the eastern antichrist, may regard the publishing of his Alcoran, and obliging all his followers to receive it as the infallible word of God:

and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; the Complutensian edition reads, "of a burning furnace"; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions; which may design false doctrine, and superstitious worship, which sprung from the decrees of popes and councils, and the Alcoran of Mahomet: and smoke being a dark thin vapour, and very troublesome to the eyes and nose, and of a perishing nature, which soon vanishes away, these are fitly expressed by it; for they are the hidden things of darkness, and the authors and abettors of them are such who darken counsel by words without knowledge; they are empty things, have no solidity and substance in them, are comparable to wood, hay, stubble, smoke, and wind; and are very troublesome and offensive to all enlightened persons, and who have the smell and savour of divine things; and will all perish with the using, being the doctrines and commandments of men, when the true Gospel is an everlasting one. Smoke sometimes designs great afflictions, punishments, and judgments upon men, Ge 15:17; and here may represent those judgments, both spiritual and temporal, which the antichristian doctrine and worship, brought upon the world, and which have been manifest in all ages since.

And the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit; Christ, the sun of righteousness, was greatly obscured by the Romish antichrist, by his false doctrine and worship, in his offices, merits, and grace, he taking upon him to be head of the church, the infallible interpreter of Scripture, and to give out pardons and indulgences; and particularly by the doctrines of merit, of works of supererogation, and of justification by works, &c. as he also was by Mahomet, who represented him only as a mere man, and exalted himself above him as a prophet; and by both were "the air", the church which receives its light from Christ, darkened; or the Scriptures, which are the breath of God, are given by inspiration of him, these were most grievously beclouded, and most wretchedly perverted, both by the decrees of popes, and the Alcoran of Mahomet. And it is remarkable what Abulpharagius {b}, an Arabic writer, reports, that in the seventeenth year of Heraclius the emperor, which was the year 627, and the fifth of the Hegira, in which year Mahomet began to plunder and make war; for in this year was his plundering excursion into Dumato'l Jundal, and the battle of Bani Lahyan, that half of the body of the sun was darkened; and the darkness remained from Tisrin the first, to the month Haziran, so that very little of its light appeared; which might portend that darkness he was introducing by his wretched religion. And frequently the sun and air have been darkened at noonday by the locusts, as Pliny {c} relates; and of which we have had a late account from Transylvania; see **Ex 8:15**.

{b} Hist. Dynast. p. 99, 102. {c} Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.

Revelation 9:3

Ver. 3. And there came out of the smoke locusts the earth,.... Not literally, for these locusts might not meddle with the grass, nor any green thing, or tree, as locusts do, only men, **Re 9:4**; and had a king over them, **Re 9:11**; which locusts have not, Pr 30:27, though the allusion is to such, which spawn and breed in pits, and may be properly said to come out of them; hence in the Hebrew tongue they are called ybg, from abg, "a pit", or "ditch": nor are devils intended, though they may be compared to locusts for their original, hell, or the bottomless pit; and for their numbers, we read of a legion of them in one man; and for their hurtful and mischievous nature: nor are the Goths and Vandals designed; these, though they harassed some parts of the eastern empire, yet chiefly the western; besides, they appeared under the former trumpets: but these are to be understood of the western and eastern locusts, especially the latter. The western locusts are the clergy of the church of Rome, cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, and friars, of every order; these were not instituted by Christ, but rose out of the bottomless pit, from the antichristian smoke of councils, decrees, and traditions; and are fitly compared to locusts for their number, which have been almost as the sand of the sea innumerable, and have spread themselves all over the nations of the earth, that have gone by the name of Christendom; and for their devouring nature, living in plenty and idleness, upon the fat of the land, in the best commons, glutting themselves with the spoils of others, devouring widows' houses, and impoverishing countries and kingdoms wherever they come. The eastern locusts are the Saracens, and who are chiefly designed; and who were to harass and distress the eastern empire, and prepare for its ruin, which is brought on under the next trumpet by the Turks. These are fitly signified by locusts, because the locusts generally come out of the eastern parts: it was an east wind which brought the plague of locusts into Egypt, Ex 10:13; and the children of the east, the Arabians, are compared to grasshoppers, or locusts, in **Jud 7:12**; and one of the names of a locust is hbra, "Arbeh", not much unlike in sound to an Arab. To which may be added, that it is a tradition of the Arabians, that there fell locusts into the hands of Mahomet, on whose backs and wings were written these words;

"we are the army of the most high God; we are the ninety and nine eggs, and if the hundred should be made perfect, we should consume the whole world, and whatever is in it."

And it was a law established by Mahomet, ye shall not kill the locusts, for they are the army of the most high God; and the Mahometans fancy that the locusts were made of the same clay as Adam was: and besides the tradition before mentioned, they say, that as Mahomet sat at table a locust fell, with these words on its back and wings;

"I am God, neither is there any Lord of the locusts besides me, who feed them; and when I please I send them to be food to the people, and when I please I send them to be a scourge unto them;"

hence his Saracens may well go by this name. Now these Saracens sprung up in the times of antichristian darkness, both Papal and Mahometan, and may be said to come out of the smoke of the bottomless pit; and the religion of Mahomet, which they embraced, was no other; and like locusts they were innumerable, they went in troops and bands, as locusts do, Pr 30:27; pillaging and ravaging all they could and their sudden and frequent incursions, the desolations and ravages which they made in the eastern empire, are very aptly expressed by the running to and fro of locusts; see
Isa 33:4.

And unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power; that is, to torment then, by striking them with their stings in their tails, **Re 9:5**. These are called "scorpions of the earth", to distinguish them from sea scorpions, which are a kind of fish: so Aristotle {d} and {e} Pliny speak of terrestrial scorpions, which are the most hurtful; these are of the serpentine kind have an innocent and harmless look, but are soon angry; have stings in their tails, which they are always striking with, that they may miss no opportunity of doing mischief, and with which they strike in an oblique way {f}; and which very fitly describes the Saracens, the race of the Ishmaelites, a generation of vipers, a subtle and treacherous sort of people, very furious and wrathful, and who lived by continual robbing and plundering of others at an unawares: and this may be applied to the western locusts, the monks and friars, who are the seed of the serpent; and who by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple, have a form of godliness, and speak lies in hypocrisy, and lie in wait to deceive; and being provoked, are full of wrath and anger, and strike very hard with their anathemas and excommunications, and other sorts of punishment, which they have power to inflict.

{d} Hist. Animal. l. 5. c. 26. {e} Hist. Nat. l. 51. c. 25. {f} Hist. Nat. l. 51. c. 25.

Revelation 9:4

Ver. 4. And it was commanded them,.... The locusts, by Christ, who has a sovereign power over all men, and lays them under the restraints of his providence:

that they should not hurt the grass of the earth: true Christians, private believers, it may be those of the lower class; who for their numbers, and for their flourishing estate under the dews of heavenly grace, and the distillations of the doctrine of grace, and the clear shining of the sun of righteousness upon them, and for their weakness, may be compared to grass; and yet as these being a company reserved by Christ for himself, who will not break nor bruise them, so neither will he suffer others to hurt them, and resents every offence done to these little ones:

neither any green thing; who have the truth of grace in them, are spiritually alive, and in prosperous circumstances, in a fruitful condition, being filled with the fruits of righteousness from Christ, the green fir tree, and whose leaves of profession continue green; and are themselves, as David says of himself; like a green olive tree in the house of God, **Ps 3:8**.

Neither any tree; any trees of righteousness, good and righteous who are often compared to trees planted by rivers of water, **Ps 1:3**
Jer 17:8; it may be the ministers of the Gospel, then of great grace and gifts, the tall cedars in Lebanon, may be intended; and so by these various expressions, Christians of every size, from the lowest to the highest class, may be signified. Green things and leaves of trees are what the locusts generally destroy, as appears from the plague of them in Egypt, Ex 10:5; and as they did in Syria in the year 1586, as Thuanus reports {g}. Now as grass, green things, and trees, are what locusts most desire to feed upon and hurt, so real believers, truly godly persons, are those which both the eastern and western locusts, the

Mahometans and Papists, have been very desirous of rooting out and destroying; but Christ takes care of these; these are as the apple of his eye, his jewels, his sheep, his sealed ones; none shall hurt them, they shall never perish; he knows them that are his, and he will preserve them amidst fire and smoke, amidst all the corruptions and calamities in the world:

but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads; see **Re 7:2**; the antichristian party, those of the Romish apostasy, the Papists; and these were they that suffered most by the Saracens, who abhorred image worship, and fell foul on the idolaters of this kind: and, on the other hand, the western locusts, the clergy of the church of Rome, had only influence over the reprobate part of mankind, and only wrought with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, who were giver, up to believe a lie, that they might be damned, but not upon any of the chosen ones, **2Th 2:11**.

{g} Hist. sui Temporis, par. 4. l. 84. p. 162. Ed. Francofurt.

Revelation 9:5

Ver. 5. And to them it was given that they should not kill them,.... As the power of the locusts was limited with respect to the persons they should hurt, so with regard also to the mischief they should do; for even those whom they were suffered to annoy they might not kill, that is, utterly root out and destroy, so as that they were no more: and thus, though the Saracens killed great numbers in the eastern empire, by their frequent incursions and ravages, and made large conquests, yet they could never destroy the empire itself, or bring it in subjection to them; nor did they ever take Constantinople, the metropolis and seat of the empire, though they often besieged it. And as for the western locusts, the months, friars, &c. though they kill the souls, yet not the bodies of men that are under their power and influence:

but that they should be tormented five months; that is, not that the locusts should be tormented, but men by the locusts; and so the eastern empire was grievously teased and tormented by the Saracens, and many parts of it were conquered, plundered, and pillaged by them, though it was not killed and put an end to. In the year 628, Mahomet with his Saracens having obtained a place in Arabia Felix to dwell in, died in the year 631; from which time his successors, the Saracens, by little and little, subdued Palestine, Syria, and Egypt; and, in the year 640, took Persis, putting King Hormisda to flight; they laid siege to Constantinople seven years, but without success; in the year 698, Carthage was taken by them; and in following times many countries on the continent, and many of the islands, were grievously infested and distressed by them; though the empire itself did not fall into their hands; it was tormented by them, but not destroyed. And the western locusts have most dreadfully tormented men by their exorbitant dues demanded of them; and by obliging them to confessions, and to attend Mass; by enjoining them whippings, fastings, pilgrimages, and penances, and with the terrors of purgatory, and the like. The time that the locusts should torment men, which is "five months", seems not to design any determinate time; but only that seeing five months is the time that locusts live, and are in their strength and power, even the five, hottest months in the year, from April to September {h}, this seems to denote, that as long as the locusts live, the Saracens in the east, and the monks and friars in the west, so long men should be tormented by them; for it is certain that these have had power to torment men longer time than barely five months; yea, even though these should be understood, according to the prophetic style used in this book, of five months of years, or an hundred and fifty years; and though this should be doubled, seeing they are repeated, **Re 9:10**; and so make up in all three hundred ears; for both the Saracens and the Romish clergy have distressed men, either of them, longer time than this: indeed, the flourishing condition of the Saracens was but about three hundred years, or two five months; but their empire or dominion lasted longer, even from the year 622, which was the year of the "Hegira", or flight of Mahomet, to the year 1057 {i}, when the Turkish empire succeeded it: though it is pretty remarkable, that from the year 612, in which Mahomet began to preach publicly, and so let out the smoke with the locusts, to the year 762, in which the city of Bagdad was built, when and where the Saracens settled, and made no more excursions of any consequence, were just an hundred and fifty years, or five months of years, as Mr. Daubuz observes; and I will not say that this is not intended by this prophecy. Noah's flood prevailed over the earth one hundred and fifty days, or five months, **Ge 7:24**.

And their torment [was] as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man; which gives great pain, is very distressing, and their stings are poisonous and mortal: it signifies how troublesome and afflictive those locusts were; to be among them was to live among scorpions, as in **Eze 2:6**. As these locusts are like scorpions, so scorpions have been seen sometimes with wings like locusts; such an one, Pausanias {k} relates, was brought into Ionia by a Phrygian.

{h} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29. {i} Petav. Rationar. par. 1. l. 7. c. 13. & l. 8. c. 13. {k} Boeotica, sive l. 9. p. 573. Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 25. & Aelian. Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 20. & l. 16. c. 41, 42.

Revelation 9:6

Ver. 6. And in those days men shall seek death,.... Or desire to die, as Job did:

and shall not find it; or shall not die:

and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them; death will be preferred to a miserable life; it will be chosen rather than life, **Jer 8:3**. The ravages of the Saracens, their incursions, and the invasions by them, struck such terror into the inhabitants of divers parts of the empire, that they made death more eligible to them than life.

Revelation 9:7

Ver. 7. And the shapes of the locusts [were] like unto horses,.... The heads of locusts, especially of some of them, are very much like the heads of horses: and here they are compared to horses

prepared unto battle; as they are in **Joe 2:4**. The horse is a warlike creature, swift, strong, and courageous, Job 39:21. Locusts sometimes have appeared in the form of armies, and have marched in great order with their leaders before them, and have pitched their camps very regularly; see **Joe 2:7**; of which we have lately had an account from Transylvania in our public papers. (This was published in 1747, Ed.) This part of their description may denote the wars of the Saracens, and the rapidity, force, and power with which they overran great part of the empire; and as it may be applied to the western locusts, the disputes, contentions, and quarrels raised by the Romish clergy.

And on their heads [were], as it were, crowns like gold; and in this shape some locusts have appeared, to which the allusion seems to be in, **Na 3:17**, "thy crowned men are as the locusts". In the year 1542, it is said {l}, that locusts came out of Turkish Sarmatia, into Austria, Silesia, and other places, which had on their heads "little crowns"; see Eze 23:42. And the Arabians, as Pliny observes, go "mitrati" {m}, with mitres, turbans like crowns, on their heads. This may design the several victories and conquests which the Saracens obtained in Arabia, Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, Spain, and many other places; and supposing this to have any reference to the western locusts, it may respect the triple crown of the head of then, the caps of the cardinals, the mitres of the bishops, and the shaven pates of the priests, in form of crowns.

And their faces [were] as the faces of men; which may be expressive of the affable carriage of Mahomet, and his followers, especially to the Christians, and of his great pretensions to holiness and religion, and of the plausible and insinuating ways, and artful methods, used by him, to gain upon men; and being applied to the clergy of the church of Rome, may denote their show of humanity, and their pretended great concern for the welfare of the souls of men, their flatteries, good words, and fair speeches, with which they deceive the simple and unwary.

{l} Vid. Frentz. Hist. Animal. sacr. p. 5. c. 4. p. 799. {m} Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28.

Revelation 9:8

Ver. 8. And they had hair, as the hair of women,.... Some locusts have smooth, others hairy heads {n}: this fitly points at the Arabians or Saracens, who, as Pliny says {o}, used to wear long hair without cutting it, and attired as women, and have their names also from women: they were called Hagarenes, from Hagar, Abraham's handmaid, by whom he had Ishmael, the father of these people; afterwards they took the name of Saracens, from Sarah, the wife of Abraham, whose posterity they would be thought to be; though they may have the latter name, either from qro, to "rob" and "steal", with the Arabians, or from the same word, as it signifies to "comb", from the combing and plaiting: of their hair. This may also point at the effeminacy of the western locusts, the monks and friars, who dress more like women than men; and many of them claim the virgin Mary for their patroness; and may in general design the votaries of the church of Rome, who are under the vow of a monastic life, as those among the Jews, under a Nazarite's vow, wore long hair.

And their teeth were as [the teeth] of lions; so in **Joe 1:6**; which may denote the ravages and devastations of the Saracens in the empire, robbing, pillaging, and destroying all they met with; and is applicable enough to the devouring jaws of the Romish clergy, their plundering the estates of men, their cruelties and barbarities exercised by their Inquisition, &c. Pliny says {p}, that locusts will gnaw the doors of houses.

{n} Gloss. in T. Bab. Cholin. fol. 65. 1. {o} Hist. Nat. l. 6. c. 28. {p} L. 11. c. 29.

Revelation 9:9

Ver. 9. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron,.... Alluding to the hard skin of the locusts, with which nature has fenced it {q}; see **Joe 2:8**; and denotes the armour with which the Saracens were accoutred: and if to be understood of the western locusts, the hardness of their hearts, their seared consciences, or their protection by the princes of the earth, the many privileges they are possessed of, the laws made in their favour, and for their security; their breastplates were not breastplates of righteousness, faith, and love, nor in defence of truth, but against it. And some think the iron colour may denote the colour of their habit, their black garments:

and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle; see **Joe 2:5**. The sound of locusts, when they fly or march in large companies, is very great. Pliny says {r}, they make such a noise with their wings, when they fly, that they have been thought to have been other winged creatures; hence a locust, in Hebrew, is sometimes called lulu, the same name that is given to the high sounding cymbal. The sound of them is said to have been heard six miles {s}. Aristotle {t} ascribes it to the rubbing of their legs or thighs one against another; and so the Ethiopic version here renders it, "the sound of their feet": this may be expressive of the swift and rapid incursions of the Saracens, and of the dreadful alarms to the nations which their invasions made; and may be applied to the noisy declamations, anathemas, excommunications, and interdicts of the Romish clergy.

{q} Claudian. Epigram. 13. {r} Plin. l. 11. c. 29, 51. {s} Altissiodorensis in Joel ii. 5. {t} Hist. Animal. l. 4. c. 9. Vid. Plin. l. 11. c. 51.

Revelation 9:10

Ver. 10. And they had tails like unto scorpions,.... Locusts are said to have the tail of a serpent, and of the vipers of the earth {u};
See Gill on "Re 9:3",
See Gill on "Re 9:5". And there were stings in their tails; either in the baser sort of them, the Saracens and Papists; or in their doctrines, the prophet being the tail, **Isa 9:15**; with which both Mahomet, who set himself up for a prophet, and the Romish clergy, who set up their decrees and unwritten traditions above the word of God, have poisoned and destroyed multitudes of souls:

and their power [was] to hurt men five months;
See Gill on "Re 9:5".

{u} Scriptores Arab.

Revelation 9:11

Ver. 11. And they had a king over them,.... Which natural locusts have not, Pr 30:27; by whom is meant the false prophet Mahomet, who was at the head of the Saracens, and led them on to commit the outrages they did; and is believed in by the Turks to this day, as the great prophet of God, and by them preferred to all prophets, not only to Moses, but to Jesus Christ; he is the king of the eastern locusts, as the pope of Rome is the king of the western ones; for the Romish antichrist reigns, or at least has reigned, over the kings of the earth, Re 17:17;

[which is] the angel of the bottomless pit; to whom the key of it was given, **Re 9:1**;

whose name in the Hebrew tongue [is] Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath [his] name Apollyon; both which signify a "destroyer"; and are very applicable both to Mahomet, who by his imposture has been the cause of the destruction of multitudes of souls, as well as by his wars, and those of the Saracens and Turks, of the lives of millions, and of the ruin of many kingdoms, countries, cities, and towns. Abulpharagius {w}, an Arabic writer, relates, that in the times of the Chalif Al-walid, there was one Hejajus, who had caused to be slain, of the chief and illustrious men, an hundred and twenty thousand, besides others of the common people, and that fell in war; moreover, that there died in his prison fifty thousand men, and thirty thousand women: and the same writer reports {x}, that the famous Abu Moslem put to death six hundred thousand men, who were known, besides those that were unknown, and whom he slew in wars and battles: both these instances are taken notice of by Mr. Daubuz, who justly observes, that surely nothing can come near this "Abaddon", but the beast, the son of perdition, **2Th 2:3**. And to him, the pope of Rome, may the name be truly applied, who has led thousands into perdition, and will go into it himself; and both he, and the false prophet, with the devil, will be east into the lake, which burns with fire and brimstone, and will be tormented for ever and ever, **2Th 2:4**. "Abaddon", with the Jews, is one of the habitations or apartments of hell {y}, because it destroys all; "Apollyon" is the same with "Apollo", the god of the Heathens, who has his name from destroying {z}.

{w} Hist. Dynast. p. 129. Dya. 9. {x} lb. p. 140. {y} T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 19. 1. Zohar in Gen. fol. 47. 2. & in Numb. fol. 74. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 47. 3. & 93. 4. Raziel, fol. 14. 2. & 35. 2. {z} Phurnutus de Natura Deorum, p. 92. Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 17.

Revelation 9:12

Ver. 12. One woe is past,.... One of the three woe trumpets, the first of them; that is, in the vision which John had of it, not the thing itself designed by it:

[and] behold there come two woes more hereafter; under the blowing of the sixth and seventh trumpets.

Revelation 9:13

Ver. 13. And the sixth angel sounded,.... His trumpet:

and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God; the allusion is not to the altar of burnt offering, which was covered with brass, but to the altar of incense covered with gold; and hence here, and elsewhere, it is called "the golden altar", and was a figure of the intercession of Christ; for on this altar incense was offered, which was typical of the prayers of the saints offered by Christ, through his mediation: the matter of this altar was shittim wood, a wood that is incorruptible, and of long duration, denoting the perpetuity of Christ's intercession; and its being covered with gold expresses the glory and excellency of it; its form was foursquare, as is the city of the new Jerusalem, and shows that Christ's intercession avails for all his people in the four parts of the world: and on it were "four horns", which some think represent the four evangelists, or the Gospel sent into the four parts of the world, and which is the power of God unto salvation; and for the contempt of which, in the eastern empire, the judgments signified under this trumpet came upon it; though rather these may point at the large extent and fulness of Christ's intercession, for all his people, in the four corners of the earth, as well as his power to protect and defend them, and to scatter and destroy his and their enemies. This altar is said to be "before God", in a visionary way, as the altar of incense was before the vail, and the mercy seat, and by the ark of the testimony, Ex 30:1; suggesting that Christ continually appears in the presence of God for all the saints. Now from hence was a "voice heard" by John, and which seems to be the voice of Christ, the advocate and intercessor. In the Greek text it is, "one voice"; not the voice of many angels round about the throne, nor of the souls under the altar, but of the one and only Mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ; and this was a voice, not supplicating, but commanding, being addressed to one of his ministering spirits.

Revelation 9:14

Ver. 14. Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet,.... The sixth trumpet, which was given him, and he had prepared himself to sound, and had sounded:

loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates; not the four angels in **Re 7:1**; they stood upon the four corners of the earth; these were in, or at the river Euphrates; they held the four winds, that they should not blow, or restrained the savage nations, that they should not hurt; these are bound themselves, that they might not do mischief; nor are angels by nature at all intended; not evil angels, though they are bound in chains of darkness, and are reserved to judgment, they are admitted indeed to rove about in the air and earth, but are under the restraints of the power and providence of God; nor good angels, who are at the divine beck, and go in and out, and are detained and sent forth according to the pleasure of God, and are sometimes employed in killing great numbers of men; see 2Sa 24:15; but men are here meant, as appears from **Re 9:16**, and particularly the Turks, as most interpreters agree; who dwelt on the other side the river Euphrates, and were let loose, or suffered to pass over that river into the eastern empire, to ruin and destroy it, as they did: these are called "angels", because of their might and force, their power and strength, with which they bore all before them; and for their great swiftness and rapidity in the victories and conquests which the Ottoman family obtained; who, from very small beginnings, raised themselves, in a very little time, to a large monarchy, and founded the Turkish empire, which, from them, is to this day called the Ottoman empire. Ottoman the First subdued great part of Bithynia, and fixed the seat of his kingdom at Prusa; or rather his son Urchanes, who conquered Mysia, Lycaonia, Phrygia, Caria, and the rest, to the Hellespont, and the Euxine sea. Amurath his son took Callipolis, Hadrianople, and the adjacent provinces. Bajazet added to the empire Thessalia, Macedonia, Phocis, Attica, Mysia, and Bulgaria; and Mahomet the Second took Constantinople itself, and thereby put an end to the eastern empire; and all this was done in a very few years: it is said of this last, that he conquered two empires, and twelve kingdoms, and above two hundred cities {a}. And these Ottoman Turks may be called angels, or messengers, because they were the messengers and executioners of God's wrath upon the eastern empire: they are signified by "four angels", either, as some think, because of the four names of Saracens, Turks, Tartars, and Arabians, though all Mahometans, under which they went, before they were united under one emperor, Ottoman; or rather because of the four principalities, or governments, into which they were divided, while they were upon the banks of, or near to the river Euphrates; the seat of one being at Iconium, another at Bagdad, a third at Aleppo, and a fourth at Damascus; and chiefly because, when they passed the river Euphrates, they had four princes at the head of them, Soliman Shak, and his three sons. Soliman himself, as he passed, not knowing the fords of the river, was drowned in it; at which his sons being so affrighted, two of them, Sankur Zengi, and Gun Tugdi, returned to Persia, but the third, Ortogrules, with his three sons (which made "four" again) Condoz, Sarubani, and Othman, or Ottoman, continued, to whom Aladdin, sultan of Iconium, gave them some land among the mountains of Armenia {b}; and from hence, by degrees, as before observed, a large empire was raised. Now these are said to be "bound in the great river Euphrates"; which river is to be literally understood, and is the same with that which is so called in **Ge 2:14**, and ran through Mesopotamia and Chaldea, and was the boundary of the Roman empire; so it was fixed by Hadrian {c}; and beyond which the Turks, before this time did rarely go, and if they did, retired again: for till this time, as the historian says {d}, the Turks had Asia, entov tou eufratou, "within Euphrates", and the Arabians Coelo-Syria and Phoenicia. Now here these were bound; they were not suffered to pass the river, or to make any inroads of any consequence further into the Roman empire; they were restrained, by the decree of God, from proceeding any further till this time; which, as he fixes a decreed place for the sea, that its waves should come thus far, and no further, so he restrains princes from their enterprises, and settles the bounds of empires, as long as he pleases; and they were kept back by the power of God from pouring in upon the empire, and pouring forth their fury upon it, who causes the wrath of men to praise him, and restrains the remainder of it; and they were also prevented from coming any further, as yet, through the internal divisions among themselves, and by the victories of the Christians in Palestine.

{a} Petav. Rationem. Temp. par. 1. l. 9. c. 7. {b} Pocock, Supplem. Hist. Dynast. Abulpharaji, p. 41, 42. {c} Rufi Fest. Brev. p. 368. Eutrop. Hist. Roman. l. 8. p. 502. {d} Nicephor. Gregor. Hist. Roman, l. 2. p. 29.

Revelation 9:15

Ver. 15. And the four angels were loosed,.... The time being come, fixed by the decrees of God, making use of the Turks for the destruction of the eastern empire, the restraints of divine Providence were taken off from them, and they were suffered to pass the river Euphrates; they were let loose like so many furies, and in a little time overran and destroyed the whole empire, and settled their own, now called the Turkish or Ottoman empire; and which was done about the year 1301.

Which were prepared for an hour and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men; which may in general denote their readiness, vigilance, and quick dispatch: they lay for a good while hovering over the banks of the river Euphrates, as if they were waiting for an order, or a commission to go over it: they were ready not only at a year's, a month's, a day's, but at an hour's warning, and all of them together; and as soon as ever they had the divine permission, they lost no time; they improved every opportunity, every year, every month, every day, every hour, to settle and enlarge their dominions to the ruin of others; and in a very short time did they accomplish what they desired: though others think this refers to a certain time fixed by God, in which they should be employed in killing men; and the sense is, that these people were prepared in the purposes and decrees of God, or were appointed for such a length of time here signified, by several dates, in which they should destroy a large multitude of men, by way of punishment for their idolatries, murders, sorceries, fornication, and thefts, **Re 9:20**. An hour, which is the twenty fourth of a day or year, in the prophetic style, is fifteen days, and a day is a year, and a month is thirty years, and a year is three hundred sixty five years and a quarter, or ninety one days; in all, three hundred and ninety six years, and a hundred and six days; which is the precise time between A. D. 1057, when the Turkish empire begun, the empire of the Saracens being entirely demolished by Togrul Beg, or Tangrolipix, and A. D. 1453, in which year Constantinople was taken by the Turks, and an end put to the eastern Roman empire, signified by the third part of men; or else this space of time may be reckoned from the date of Ottoman's reign, May 19, 1301, which, to September 1, 1697, is just this term of time, when Prince Eugene obtained a remarkable victory over the Turks, the effect of which was the peace at Carlowitz the next year, since which time the Turks have done but little in Europe: and by this it should seem that their time of killing men here is over, and that their own destruction is hastening on. Mr. Daubuz rejects these computations, since a prophetic year consists of 360 days or years, and not 365, as those suppose; and thinks there is no mystery in these dates, and only signify the angels' unanimous execution of their commission at once.

Revelation 9:16

Ver. 16. And the number of the army of the horsemen,.... This shows that the four angels before mentioned were men, and design generals of armies, or armies of men, even of horsemen; and manifestly point at the Turks, who were not only originally Persians, and had their name, as some say {e}, from Turca in Persia, and vrp, from whence the Persians have their name, signifies an horseman; but the armies of the Turks chiefly consisted of horse, and what for show and for use, they had generally double the number of horses and mules as of men {f}; and they are very good horsemen, and very dextrous at leaping on and off {g}; and the horse's tail is still carried before the general, and principal officers, as an ensign expressive of their military exploits, and showing where their main strength lies. And the number of this mighty army, it is said,

[were] two hundred thousand thousand; or "two myriads of myriads"; two hundred millions, or twenty thousand brigades of ten thousand each; that is, a very large and prodigious number, almost infinite and incredible, like the army of Gog and Magog, as the sand of the sea,
Re 20:8. The Turks used to bring, and still do bring vast armies into the field: in the year 1396, Bajazet, with three hundred thousand men, fell upon sixty thousand Christians, killed twenty thousand of them, and lost sixty thousand of his own: against him afterward, in the year 1397, came Tamerlane the Tartar, with four hundred thousand horse, and six hundred thousand foot, and having killed two hundred thousand Turks, took Bajazet prisoner, and carried him about in a cage, in golden chains. In the year 1438, Amurath entered into Pannonia, with three hundred thousand horsemen: and in the year 1453, Mahomet took Constantinople with the like number {h}; yea, it is said, that the army at the siege of that city consisted of forty myriads, or four hundred thousand men {i}. It is reported, that the great Turk contemptuously sent to the emperor of the Romans a camel, or a dromedary, loaden with wheat, with this vow by a message, that he should bring against him as many fighting men as there were grains of wheat therein {k}. And it is related {l}, that when Ladislaus, king of Hungary, went out against Amurath with four and twenty thousand horse, Dracula, governor of Walachia, advised him not to attack the emperor of the Turks with so small an army, since he went out every day a hunting with more men than such a number:

and I heard the number of them; expressed by some angel, and therefore John was certain of it, otherwise he could not have told them.

{e} Laonic. Chalcocondylas de reb. Turc. l. 1. p. 6. {f} Ib. l. 7. p. 227, 255. {g} Laonic. Chalcocond. l. 2. p. 65. {h} Alsted. Chronol. p. 321. {i} Laonic. Chalcocond. l. 7. p. 255. {k} Napier in loc. {l} Bonfinius apud Pareum in loc.

Revelation 9:17

Ver. 17. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them,.... In such numbers, and with horsemen on them, and in such order, and in appearance, as follows:

having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth and brimstone; which may be understood either literally of their external breastplates, which being of polished iron, according to the custom of these people, looked at a distance like sparkling fire, and seemed to be of the colour of hyacinth, or of a sky colour, and appeared as flaming sulphur; though some think that their breastplates were of different colours, some looked like fire, others like jacinth, and others like brimstone; or it may denote that they would be accoutred in scarlet, blue, and yellow, which are the colours the Turks have commonly wore; or this may be understood of their internal breastplates, and the disposition of their minds, having in their breasts nothing but wrath, fury, desolation, and destruction; a fire devoured before them, and behind them a flame burned:

and the heads of the horses [were] as the heads of lions: gaping and roaring for their prey, or all bloody with it, and looked fierce, and savage, and terrible: this designs not so much the strength, boldness, and intrepidity of their horses, which are warlike creatures, and very undaunted in battle, as of the men that sat upon them, who were like David's heroes and warriors, 1Ch 12:8.

And out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone; which may be referred either to the horses, or to the horsemen, or both: some interpret this allegorically, and by "fire" understand either the tyranny of the Turks over their own people, or their fury against others, or their blasphemy against God, and Christ, and his people, being like so many railing Rabshakehs against the God of the Christians; and by "smoke" the false doctrine of Mahomet, which came out of the same bottomless pit the doctrine of the Romish antichrist did; and is fitly compared to smoke for its disagreeableness, darkness, levity, and duration; See Gill on "Re 9:2"; and by "brimstone" the immorality and sad corruption of manners among the Turks, and what is allowed of, or winked at, as fornication, polygamy, sodomy, &c. but rather this is to be taken more literally, and represents the firing of guns on horseback in battle. Guns are a late invention, and the use of them was found out in the age this trumpet refers to; and were much made use of by the Turks in their wars, and particularly great guns or cannons; these were used by Amurath at the sieges of Belgrade, and of Constantinople {m}; and by Mahomet the Second at the taking of Constantinople, where a gun or cannon was used of that size, as to be drawn by seventy yoke of oxen, and two thousand men {n}. Gunpowder set on fire is fitly signified by fire, smoke, and brimstone, which is made of nitre, charcoal, and brimstone; and the firing of guns on horseback is most aptly described by these coming out of the mouths of horses and horsemen: nor could it well appear to John to be otherwise, who could never have seen a gun, and one fired off in his life; nor could he well represent to others what he saw in vision, than in this manner.

{m} Chalcocond. l. 5. p. 152, 163. {n} Chalcocond. l. 8. p. 252.

Revelation 9:18

Ver. 18. And by these three was the third part of men killed,.... The Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, "by these three plagues": as the western Roman empire is in the preceding chapter frequently expressed by the third part of several things, see **Re 8:7**; so here the eastern Roman empire by the third part of men; vast numbers of the inhabitants of which were destroyed by the Turks, through the use of guns, out of which issued fire, smoke, and brimstone; and Constantinople, the metropolis of it, was taken in this way, as before observed, with the taking of which the empire ceased.

By the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths; that is, by the firing of guns.

Revelation 9:19

Ver. 19. For their power is in their mouth,.... In what proceeded out of their mouth, or seethed to do so; in their guns, and what came out of them:

and in their tails; which may design their foot soldiers, which were as the tail to their horse, and who sometimes did great service; or their way of fighting when they fled, by casting up arrows into the air, which would fall upon the heads and horses of those that pursued them; or their ambushments, by which they destroyed many; or their perfidious violation of treaties; or it may be their tails may intend the doctrine of Mahomet, the false prophet, who is the tail, **Isa 9:15**,

for their tails [were] like unto serpents; crooked, crafty, poisonous, and, pernicious:

and had heads; every tail had a head to it; which may be understood of the officers of the foot soldiers, or of the priests and teachers of the Mahometan religion:

and with them they do hurt; with their guns, the power in their mouth, they did hurt to the bodies of men; and with their false doctrines, their tails, they did hurt to the souls of men; the Ethiopic version here adds, "five months"; which seems to be taken from **Re 9:10**.

Revelation 9:20

Ver. 20. And the rest of men which were not killed by these plagues,.... By whom are meant the western antichristian party; and such of them as were not plagued, harassed, and destroyed by the Turks, as in Germany, at least some parts of it, France, Spain, Italy, &c.

yet repented not of the works of their hands: their idols, their images of saints departed, which their hands had made; the goodness of God in saving them from the depredations of the Turks, should have led them to repentance for their idolatrous worship of images, but it did not:

that they should not worship devils; or demons, a sort of deities with the Heathens, that mediated between the superior gods and men; and here design angels and saints departed, which the Papists worship, and use as mediators of intercession for them; and this is no other than worshipping of devils, in God's account, and is downright idolatry, and the doctrine of it is the doctrine of devils:

and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which are the several materials of which the Popish images are made: and what aggravates the stupidity of the worshippers of these images, and of the persons represented by them, is, that these are such

which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk; can neither see their persons, nor hear their prayers, nor stir one foot to their help and assistance; see Ps 115:4.

Revelation 9:21

Ver. 21. Neither repented they of their murders,.... Of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, with whose blood the western antichrist is made drunk, and which will be found in her, and for which she is answerable. Now, though the western parts of the empire escaped the scourge of the Turks, yet this did not bring them to repent of their murderous practices, but they went on to take away the lives of godly men; witness the persecutions of the Waldenses and Albigenses, the murders of John Huss and Jerom of Prague, the burning of the martyrs here in Queen Mary's days, and the massacres in Paris and in Ireland, and their butcheries elsewhere; and which they have continued unto this day, where the Inquisition obtains:

nor of their sorceries; Jezebel the whore of Rome has been famous for, by which she has deceived all nations; many of the popes of Rome have been necromancers, given to the magic art, and have entered into covenant, and have had familiarity with the devil; and one part of the Romish service lies in exorcisms, conjurations, and enchantments, and which they still continue:

nor of their fornication; all sorts of uncleanness; not only simple fornication, but adultery, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; brothel houses have been set up and licensed by authority, which have yielded to the popes a yearly revenue of forty thousand ducats; the Romish clergy, popes, cardinals, priests, monks, and friars, have been dreadfully guilty of all manner of uncleanness, and still are; whence Rome is called Sodom, Re 11:8;

nor of their thefts; who under pretence of granting indulgences and pardons, and praying souls out of purgatory, with other tricks, cheat men of their money, pillage and plunder their estates, and devour widows' houses; rob men of their substance, and make merchandise of their souls: now all these iniquities the Papists in the eastern empire were guilty of, for which the Turks as a scourge were let in upon it, and destroyed it; and yet the western papacy, who did not suffer in these calamities, took no warning by them, did not repent of their sins, and reform their practices; but went on, and still go on in the same wicked way, and by their hardness and impenitence treasure up wrath against the day of wrath.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 10:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 10

This chapter contains a vision of an angel of a wonderful appearance, the voices of the seven thunders, and an order to John to take the book in the hand of the angel, eat it, and prophesy. The angel is described by his strength, a mighty one; by his descent from heaven; by his attire, being clothed with a cloud; by a rainbow on his head; by his face being like the sun; by his feet, which were as pillars of fire, the one foot set on the sea, and the other on the earth; by having a little book open in his hand, and by the loud cry he made, like the roaring of a lion, Re 10:1, upon which seven thunders uttered their voices, which John was going to write, but was forbid, Re 10:4; next follows a solemn oath of the angers; the gesture he used, lifting up his hand to heaven; the person by whom he swore, the living God; what he swore to, that time should be no more, and that the mystery of God would be finished at the beginning of the seventh trumpet, Re 10:5; then several orders are given to John, as to take the open book in the hand of the angel, which he did, to eat it, as he accordingly did; when he found it to be as it was told him it would be, namely, sweet in his mouth, but bitter in his belly; and then to prophesy again before people, nations, tongues, and kings, Re 10:8.

Ver. 1. And I saw another mighty angel,.... Not any mere man, as Justin the emperor, as some have thought, who sent letters abroad in favour of the orthodox doctrine, against the Arians, which they suppose is meant by the little book open in his right hand; and still less the pope of Rome, whether in the sense of Papists or Protestants, which latter represent him as a tyrant, treading upon men both in the islands and in the continent, and holding forth the book of canons and decrees; rather, as Mr. Daubuz thinks, Luther, with the rest of the reformers, is intended, and especially since the prophecy of this chapter respects the Reformation, which began before the end of the sixth trumpet; and the epithets given to this angel may denote his strength and courage, his divine authority, the protection of him, and the clear doctrine of peace and reconciliation he brought: however, a created angel is not intended: not the angel that made proclamation for the opening of the book, and unsealing it, **Re**

5:2; between which, and having the book in his right hand open, is a wide difference; nor any other, though the epithet "mighty" belongs to angels in common; and though this angel swears by the living God; and though it was an angel by whom Christ signified the things contained in this book to John; but the uncreated Angel, the Lord Jesus Christ, seems rather designed, as appears both by comparing this with Da 12:7; and from the power lie gave to the two witnesses, Re 11:3; which cannot agree with a created angel; and besides, who so proper to hold the book open as he who unloosed the seals, and opened it, and to whom the epithet "mighty" may be applied in the highest sense, as God; and who as man may be said to swear by the living God, and to whom the whole description well agrees? he is sometimes called an Angel simply, Ge 48:16; sometimes the Angel of the Lord, and who appears to be Jehovah himself, the second Person,
Ge 16:7, compared with Ge 19:1; and sometimes the Angel of God's presence, Isa 63:9; and the Angel of the great council in the Septuagint on **Isa 9:6**; and the Angel, or messenger, of the covenant, **Mal 3:1**; and may be so called, because he is a messenger from God as man and Mediator, being sent by him to declare his will and redeem his people: and he is a "mighty" one; not only as God, being the mighty God, the Almighty, which appears by his creation of all things, and upholding them in their beings; but as Mediator, having all power in heaven and in earth, and being far above all principality, power, and might; and, as man, made strong by God for himself, and for his people: he appears now as "another" angel, distinct from the seven angels who had trumpets given them to sound, and six of which had already sounded; and particularly from the angel of the sixth trumpet, who had just sounded; though some copies, and the Complutensian edition, leave out the word allon, "another"; and very opportunely does he appear for the comfort of his church, when the trumpets that had been blown had brought such desolations upon the empire, western and eastern, and when both the western and eastern antichrists had appeared, and before the seventh trumpet sounds, and brings in the last and greatest woe: and he is said to

come down from heaven; which does not design his incarnation, that was long before this time; nor his spiritual presence with his people, which is common to them in all ages; nor his second coming to judgment, which will be by a descent from heaven, and in the clouds of heaven, for that is yet future; but in a visionary way, his appearance to and for his church and people in the dark times of antichrist, when afflicted by the Turk on the one hand, and the pope on the other:

clothed with a cloud {n}; which is expressive not of the human nature of

Christ, with which his divinity was veiled in his state of humiliation, so that few saw the glory of his divine Person and the greater part esteemed him a mere man; but rather of the obscurity of him, his person, offices, and grace, in those times of antichristian darkness, and even of the dim light and knowledge which his true and faithful followers had of him in those times; it was a dark and cloudy day with them, as well as the whole earth was covered with the gross darkness of Popery and Mahometanism; though it seems best of all to interpret this phrase of the majestic presence of Christ in his appearances to his people, who went before the people of Israel in a cloud by day in the wilderness, descended in one on Mount Sinai, dwelt in one both in the tabernacle and temple, was overshadowed by one on the Mount when transfigured, ascended in one to heaven, and will return in one, or more: moreover, the cloud may denote the power and protection of God attending the Reformation; see Ps 68:34;

and a rainbow [was] upon his head; which was a token of the covenant; see **Re 4:3**; and the note there: this, with its blessings, is upon the head of Christ, the antitypical Joseph, and who is the head of his church and people; and Christ appearing in this form at this time when the world was overflowed with Popery and Mahometanism, shows that God was still mindful of his covenant, even in those worst of times, and would not suffer his church to be overwhelmed, and sunk in the general deluge of antichristianism, or the gates of hell to prevail against it; Christ, at such a tirade as this, very seasonably appeals with the rainbow of the covenant on his head, as a messenger of peace, and bringer of good tidings, to let his people know that ere long it would be halcyon days with them, and there would be times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, who was ever mindful of his covenant with them; and that the Gospel of peace and reconciliation would be preached unto them:

and his face [was] as it were the sun; or looked like the sun, as it did at the time of his transfiguration on the and as he is described in **Re 1:16**, and may denote clearness and purity of Christ; both as God, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express of his person; and as man, who is holy, harmless, up defiled; and is also expressive of that fight of nature, grace, and glory, which he imparts unto the sons of men; as well as of that beauty, loveliness, and amiableness in his person, which renders him as the sun, delightful to behold; and of the majesty of his person, and the manifestations of himself, to the great comfort, pleasure, and refreshment of his saints:

and his feet as pillars of fire; which may refer to the state of the church of Christ at this time, which was in the fire of afflictions, when many of its members were called to the stake, and burnt there for the sake of the Gospel, and yet were like "pillars", firm and unshaken; the church was like the bush that Moses saw, which was on fire, but not consumed; Christ was with his people as they passed through it, that it could not kindle upon them so as to destroy them; and their faith, which was tried by it, was found to be much more precious than of gold that perisheth: or this may show what Christ then was, both to his people and to his enemies; to his people his feet were as "pillars" of brass and marble, to bear them up, and support them under all their trials and afflictions; his goings forth towards them in a way both of providence and grace, were in such a manner, as to strengthen and confirm them in the faith of him against all the powers of hell and earth; and they were like "fire", to consume his and their enemies; with his feet he trod upon them, and subdued them under him, who were as stubble, briers and thorns, easily consumed by him, when at the same time be was a wall of fire to his people, and the glory in the midst of them.

{n} egkateilhmmenov th nefelh, Philo de Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 608.

Revelation 10:2

Ver. 2. And he had in his hand a little book open,.... By which is meant not the Bible, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; or the book of the Gospel, the substance of which lies in a little room, and is no other than the preaching of Christ, and him crucified, as God's way of salvation; and which is now more open and manifest, and more clearly made known unto the sons of men, under the Gospel dispensation, than it was before, and especially since the time of the Reformation, to which this book, and the prophecies of it, may have respect; but the same book is here designed, which in **Re 5:1** is represented as in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, as shut and sealed; but the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, having taken it out of his hand, unloosed its seals, and opened it; and whereas we never read of his laying this book down, or of his delivering it to any other, he may be well supposed to be this mighty angel, who held it open in his hand: it may be said to be "a little book", because now not only many of the scenes and visions in it were exhibited, upon the opening of the seals; but because, at the time this vision refers to, many of its prophecies were accomplished, so that the bulk of it was greatly reduced; and it may be represented as "open", because the seals of it were unloosed, and the things in it revealed; and it is to be observed, that as the several seals of this book, and the opening of them, refer to the state of the empire, both as Pagan and as Christian, as has been seen; so the little book itself, clear of these seals, sets forth the state and condition of the church in the empire, under its different revolutions and appearances:

and he set his right foot upon the sea, and [his] left [foot] on the earth; which signifies that he was Lord and possessor of both, of the whole terraqueous globe, being the Maker and supporter of it; and that his Gospel should be spread all over the world, both on the continent and in the islands of the sea; and that his kingdom should be from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth; that the abundance of the sea should be converted to him, or the maritime parts of the world should be subject to the sceptre of his grace and government; and that the earth, and the uttermost parts of it, should be his possession, though it was now almost wholly in the hands of the Turk and pope; and it may be observed, that he set his foot upon both earth and sea, out of which the two beasts arise,
Re 13:1, which shall be destroyed by him.

Revelation 10:3

Ver. 3. And cried with a loud voice,.... That all might hear, and to show earnestness and affection, and that it was a matter of great importance, as well as to denote the certainty of it; what he said is not expressed, but seems to be the book of prophecy, or what regarded the state of his church and kingdom, in the several periods of time to the blowing of the seventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world shall become his: and this voice of his was

as [when] a lion roareth; loud and terrible; and indeed it was the voice of the lion of the tribe of Judah, which was heard far and near, throughout the whole world, by his people, and is terrible to his enemies:

and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices; which some understand of the ministers of the Gospel in the times of the Reformation, who were "Boanergeses", sons of thunder, and think that they are the same with the angels in Re 14:6, &c. or rather these may signify the denunciations of God's judgments, and of his wrath, both upon the eastern and western antichrist, the Turk and pope, signified by the seven vials, hereafter to be poured out, mentioned in Re 16:1.

Revelation 10:4

Ver. 4. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices,.... Or declared all they had to denounce upon the enemies of Christ and his church:

I was about to write; John taking particular notice of what they said, and believing it might be for the advantage, comfort, and support of the church of Christ under its suffering circumstances, to be informed of what God had in reserve among the treasures of his wrath for their adversaries, was going to put it down in writing, that he might retain it, and the better communicate it, and in obedience to the order given him, **Re 1:19**;

and I heard a voice from heaven; from God the Father, for the Son of God in a visionary way was come down from heaven, in the form before described; and this voice answers to the Bath Kol of the Jews, and is the same which ordered John to write, Re 14:13, though it here forbad him:

saying unto me, seal up those things; treasure them up in thy mind, keep them within thy breast, hide them from men, for the present, and say nothing of them:

which the seven thunders have uttered, and write them not; that they may not be seen and read at present, because the same things were to be exhibited in another form, and at another time, under the seven vials; only it was thought proper that John should have some intimations of them for his own advantage, and to prepare him for the following vision, for the eating of the book, and for his prophesying before people, nations, tongues, and kings. Mr. Daubuz is of opinion, that by these "seven thunders" are meant seven kingdoms which have received the Reformation, and established it by law within their several dominions, whereby the doctrine and worship of the reformers are become the established religion there; and the laws by which it is established are "the voices" uttered by those supreme authorities; and they are these, 1. The German princes, making one republic. 2. The Swiss cantons. 3. Sweden. 4. Denmark, with Norway. 5. England and Ireland. 6. Scotland. 7. The United Provinces of the Netherlands. And whereas John, who represents the first reformers, and other faithful men, was for writing what these thunders uttered, this denotes the zeal and earnest desires of these good men to push the Reformation further, and make a thorough work of it, as well as their expectation that now was the time in which the mystery of God was to be fulfilled, in which they were mistaken; wherefore John is bid to seal up these things, and not write them, which shows that the progress of the Reformation was to be stopped from doing fully what the first reformers were prompted to by the supreme powers which encouraged them, and that by the opposition of other temporal princes; it not being the will of God that the glorious state of the church should arise from these thunders, and be built on their laws and establishments; and suggests, that this is not the time in which, nor these the ways and means by which the mystery of God will be finished, which will not be until the seventh angel has sounded his trumpet, Re 10:7; whereas this period of time, to which the Reformation belongs, is an event of the sixth trumpet: and this exposition bids very fair to be the right one.

Revelation 10:5

Ver. 5. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth,.... His right foot being on the one, and his left foot upon the other, as described in Re 10:2;

lifted up his hand to heaven; the Oriental versions read, "his right hand"; and so some copies, and the Complutensian edition: the man clothed in linen, Da 12:6, who is the same with the angel here, held up both his hands; the lifting up of the hand was a gesture used in swearing: see Ge 14:22; so the Jews say {o}, "the right hand", or by the right hand, hewby wz, "this is an oath", according to Da 12:7; or whether the right hand or the left, is an oath, according to Isa 62:8.

{o} T. Bab. Nazir, fol. 3. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 58. 1.

Revelation 10:6

Ver. 6. And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever,.... That is, by the living God, who is the true God: and is so described to distinguish him from idol gods, who have no life nor breath in them; and to assert the excellency and perfection of his nature, who has life in himself originally, and independently, is the fountain of life to all creatures living, and who are supported in their life and being by him; and so he always was, is, and ever will be; this is the same as swearing by Ancuialus {p}:

who created heaven, and the things that therein are; the airy, starry, and third heavens, and the inhabitants of them, the fowls of the air, the sun, moon, and stars, and the angels of heaven, as well as the souls of departed saints, and the bodies of as many as are there:

and the earth, and the things that therein are; men, beasts, and creeping things, trees, herbs, minerals, &c.

and the sea, and the things which are therein: the several sorts of fishes in it: this is also said to distinguish the great God from all false gods, who made not the heavens and the earth, who alone is, and ought to be the object of an oath, or by whom an oath is to be made, and not any creature whatsoever; and since the Angel that here swears is the Lord Jesus Christ, this may be understood of him either as man, swearing by God the Father, in which respect the Father is greater than he; or as a divine person, and so swears by himself, **Heb 6:13**; for to himself do these characters belong of living for ever and ever, and of having made the heaven, earth, and sea, and all in them: the thing he swears to is,

that there should be time no longer which is not to be understood of the cessation of time, and the swallowing of it up in eternity, at the end of all things, when it will be no more measured out by the revolutions of the sun and moon, which will then be no more; for this did not take place upon the angel's oath, or at the time this vision refers to; for after this, there is to be time for the seventh angel to sound his trumpet in, though perhaps that is excepted in the next verse; and after the sounding of that, there will be the space of a thousand years, in which Christ will reign with his people on earth; and after that there will be some space of time for the Gog and Magog army to attack the beloved city; all which will be before the end of all things, or before eternity, properly speaking, takes place; and besides, such an illustrious appearing of Christ as before described, and so solemn an oath as is here made, do not seem necessary to ascertain a truth which nobody doubts of; and everyone knows that after this world, and all things in it are at an end, time will be no more. The true key to this passage is Da 12:7; where the man clothed in linen swears, that to the end of wonders should be a time, times, and a half, and here the angel swears that time should be no longer; that is, that these time, and times, and half a time, should be no longer; that these dates would be up, and the events affixed to them be accomplished, when the seventh angel should begin to sound his trumpet: the same divisions of time are made in Re 12:14; and are the same exactly with the 1260 days, or years, and the forty two months of years, so often mentioned in this book: for a time is a prophetic year, that is, 360 years; and times are two prophetic years, or 70 years; and half a time is half a prophetic year, or 180 years, in all 1260 years: now add the several events to be accomplished in this period of time, and it will give the full sense of this passage thus; the angel swears that the thee of antichrist's reign, his tyranny over the saints, his persecution of them, which was to last forty two months, Re 13:5, should be no longer; nor of the holy city being trodden under foot by the Gentiles, the Papists, which bears the same date, Re 11:2, and is called the times of the Gentiles, Lu 21:24; nor of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, which has just the same measure of duration, Re 11:3; nor of the church's retirement, and being hid in the wilderness, Re 12:14; in short, the time of the four monarchies, and of the last of them, the Roman, and of the last branch of that, the Papal, should be no more than till the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; Re 11:15; the words will bear to be rendered, as some have observed, "that there should be delay no longer"; that is, of the coming and kingdom of Christ; though the bridegroom has tarried, he will come, and will not tarry beyond the time the angel swears to; every seal of the sealed book is a delay of, and a stop upon, the open appearance of Christ's kingdom; and the opening of every seal is an advance to it; and when the sixth seal was opened, and Paganism destroyed, and Christianity spread throughout the empire, the kingdom of Christ might have been expected to have appeared; but there was a seventh seal to be opened, which was a stop upon it, and which when opened brought ruin and destruction upon the Christian empire, both western and eastern, under the first six trumpets; and till the seventh sounds there will be a delay of Christ's kingdom, but when that sounds there will be no more a delay.

{p} Martial Epigr. l. 11. ep. 60.

Revelation 10:7

Ver. 7. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound,.... This is an exception to what the angel had said and swore to, that time should be no longer; "but", or "unless", or "except the time of the voice of the seventh angel", as the Ethiopic version renders it; when a new period and sort of time should begin, very different from the former, which then should be no more; for now will be the time of Christ's kingdom on earth, which shall last a thousand years; this time will not be like the former, a time of darkness and ignorance, as was in some periods, partly through the errors and heresies which were propagated in early times, and through that barbarity and ignorance which the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, spread over the empire, when they broke into it, and chiefly through the smoke of the bottomless pit, the false doctrine and worship of the Papists and Mahometans; but in the time of the seventh angel, all this gross darkness will be removed, and it will be a time of unspeakable and everlasting light, so that there will be no need of the sun and moon, of Gospel ministrations and ordinances: nor will it be a time of affliction and persecution; time in that sense will be no more, as it has been under the ten Pagan emperors, and under the Arian emperors, and under the Papal hierarchy; for in this period there will be no more death, sorrow, crying, pain, and tears; though there will be time, it will be another sort of time, quite different from the former, which will be no more when the seventh angel once begins; and as soon as he begins to sound, this will put an end to antichristian time; and at the end of his sounding will begin the time of Christ, or the thousand years' reign: and then

the mystery of God should be finished; that is, the angel not only swears that time shall be no longer, but that also then shall be finished the mystery of God; by which is meant, not the resurrection of the dead, and the change of the living, which is called a mystery, 1Co 15:51; for though when this angel sounds, and has done sounding, and Christ comes, the first resurrection, or the resurrection of the dead in Christ, will be finished, yet not the whole resurrection; for the rest of the dead will not live again till the end of the thousand years: but rather the Gospel is designed, which is often called the mystery, and the mystery of the Gospel, and contains many mysteries in it, which are styled the mysteries of God; which respect him, his being, persons, operations, and grace; and are revealed and made known by him; and the finishing of this may respect the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, which will be before the end of the world, and whereby the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and multitudes of souls converted; wherefore it may be best of all to understand this of the church of God, the general assembly and church of the firstborn, even all the elect of God, whose number will now be finished and completed in the conversion of the Jews, and in the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, both which are called "mysteries", Ro 11:25; and now as the antichristian church is called "mystery", "Babylon", Re 17:5; and "the mystery of iniquity", **2Th 2:7**; so the true Christian church, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, may bear the name of the mystery of God; and this may also take in the mystery of all God's providences and promises, and prophecies, respecting the state of his church and people on earth:

as he hath declared to his servants and prophets; as to Isaiah in Isa 60:3, &c. and Isa 66:8; and to Daniel, in **Da 2:44** **Da 7:25**; and to Zechariah, in Zec 14:9, and others; and which was a Gospel declaration, as the word signifies; it was good news and glad tidings; glorious things were declared to them, and spoken by them, concerning the city and church of God, its happy state on earth, and Christ's reign in it.

Revelation 10:8

Ver. 8. And the voice which I heard from heaven,.... In Re 10:4;

spake to me again, and said, go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth; as John was to prophesy, Re 10:11; it was necessary that he should have a mission and a commission from heaven; and that he should have the open book of prophecy to prophesy out of; and that he should receive this from the angel's hands, who had unloosed its seals, and opened it: and just so to ordinary prophesying, or preaching, it is necessary that men should have their commission from heaven, should be called of God, and sent by him; and that they should have the book of the Scriptures before them, and open to them, and speak according to these oracles, agreeably to the law and to the testimony, which are profitable for doctrine; and that they should also receive the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, with gifts, and a commission to preach it, from the Angel of the covenant, Jesus Christ, who has all power both in heaven and in earth; see Re 10:2.

Revelation 10:9

Ver. 9. And I went to the angel,.... According to the order given him; he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; and, indeed, whither should any go knowledge but to him who has the words of eternal life, and is the great prophet of the church? and to whom should John go to qualify him for prophesying, but to him, who, as man and Mediator, had this revelation of future things given him? **Re 1:1**;

and said unto him, give me the little book; he did not take it without his leave, but in a modest and humble manner asks him to give it him, that he might deliver out the prophecies in it to others: so ordinary prophets and ministers of the word should go to Christ, to have their eyes opened, their understandings enlightened, that they may understand the Scriptures, and explain them to others:

and he said unto me, take it, and eat it up; which must be understood not literally, but mystically; and the sense is this, take the book, and diligently peruse it, and with as much eagerness as an hungry man would eat a meal; so greedy are some persons of reading, and as it were of devouring books; hence Cicero called {q} Cato "helluo librorum", a glutton at books: and in such manner John is bid to take and eat this book, and look into it, and read it over diligently, and consider what was in it, and meditate upon it, and digest the things contained in it, and lay them up in his mind and memory; and for the present hide and conceal them, in like manner as he was bid to seal, and not write what the seven thunders uttered; and so, though this book is represented to him as open in the angel's hand, yet he must take it and eat it, and hide it in his belly, because the things in it as yet were not to be accomplished: so for ordinary prophesying, or preaching, the ministers of the word should diligently read the Scriptures, constantly meditate on them, digest the truths of the Gospel in their own minds, and lay them up in the treasury of their hearts, and bring them forth from thence in due season:

and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey; as Ezekiel's roll was to him when he ate it, **Eze 3:1**; the Alexandrian copy, instead of "thy belly", reads "thy heart".

{q} Cicero de Fittibus Bon. & Mal. l. 3. c. 1.

Revelation 10:10

Ver. 10. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up,.... As he was bid to do:

and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; so is the Gospel in the mouth of a faithful minister of it, who has a spiritual knowledge, and a savoury experience of it; and so it is in the mouth of an understanding hearer, who finds it, and eats it, to the joy and rejoicing of his heart; and so this little book of prophecy being looked into, read, and considered by John, the first taste and knowledge he had of the things contained in it were exceeding grateful and delightful; the view it gave him of the glorious state of the church, and kingdom of Christ on earth, filled with unspeakable pleasure:

and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter; so the ministration of the Gospel occasions bitterness, grief, and sorrow, to the preachers and professors of it, through the persecutions that attend it, the obstinacy and hardness of men's hearts against it, and its being the savour of death unto death to many that hear it; and so the little book of prophecy, upon a perusal of it, giving to John a view of the witnesses prophesying: in sackcloth, and of their bodies being killed, and lying exposed in the street of the great city, and of the church's flying into the wilderness, and continuing there for a time and times, and half a time, and of the barbarities and cruelties exercised on the saints by the whore of Rome, whom he saw made drunk with their blood, made his belly bitter, or filled him with sorrow, grief, and pain.

Revelation 10:11

Ver. 11. And he said unto me,.... That is, the angel, from whom John received the little book; the Alexandrian copy reads, "they said unto me": both the voice of God the Father from heaven, that bid him take the book, and the angel that bid him eat it:

thou must prophesy again before many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings; which is to be understood not of John's preaching again to many people, and nations, after his return from his exile at Patmos, as he had done before his banishment thither; and much less of his prophesying along with Enoch and Elias, towards the end of the world, grounded upon two fabulous notions, the one that Enoch and Elias will appear in person before the coming of Christ, and the other, that John died not, but is still alive somewhere, and will continue till Christ's second coming; but rather of his delivering more prophecies out of the open little book; not "before", as we render it, but either "concerning" many people, nations, tongues, and kings, as the Syriac version renders it: or "against" them, that is, those people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, over which the whore of Babylon reigns, or has reigned, and the ten kings, and kings of the earth she rules over, Re 17:12. Moreover, this may not so much design John's prophesying in person, as the prophesying: of the witnesses or ministers of the word in the several periods of time, whom John personated and represented; and of whom mention is made in the next chapter, to which this seems to be a transition.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 11:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 11

This chapter contains the order to measure the temple of God; an account of the two witnesses, their prophesying: and power, their slaying, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, with what followed upon it; and the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the effects of that. A measuring rod is given to John, with an order to rise and measure the temple, altar, and worshippers, and to leave out the outer court, which was to be given to the Gentiles, who tread the holy city under foot forty and two months, Re 11:1, the same date with the 1260 days the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, Re 11:3, who are compared to two olive trees and to two candlesticks, and are said to stand before God, Re 11:4, and who are further described by their power to destroy those that hurt them with fire that proceeds out of their mouths; to shut the heaven, that it rain not during their prophecy; to turn water into blood, and smite the earth with all manner of plagues at pleasure, Re 11:5; but when the time of their prophecy and testimony is expired, their enemies will have the advantage of them; the antichristian beast of Rome, described by the place of his ascent, the bottomless pit, will fight against them, overcome, and kill them; their dead bodies will be exposed publicly within the Roman jurisdiction, and not suffered to be interred; and their enemies will make a public and general rejoicing over them, Re 11:7; but after a short space of time they will revive, and stand upon their feet, to the surprise of all spectators; and being invited by a voice from heaven, will ascend thither, in the sight of their enemies; upon which will be an earthquake, in which the tenth part of the city of Rome will fall, and seven thousand men be slain; which will cause consternation in the rest, and put them upon giving glory to God, Re 11:11; and this will put an end to the second woe, and the third will quickly follow, Re 11:14, which is the sounding of the seventh trumpet; the effects of which are, voices heard in heaven, declaring that the kingdoms of the world are become Christ's, and that he shall reign for ever and ever, Re 11:15; upon which the four and twenty elders, that sat on their seats before God, congratulate him, worship, and give thanks unto him, at the Lord God Almighty and eternal; partly because of his visible power and kingdom he now takes to himself; and partly because the time of avenging his people that had suffered for him upon the nations, which makes them angry, was now come; as also because now would be given rewards to all his prophets, saints, and those that feared him, as well as antichrist and his followers would be destroyed, Re 11:16; and other effects of this trumpet are, the opening of the temple of God in heaven, a sight of the ark of the testament, lightnings, voices, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail, Re 11:9.

Ver. 1. And there was given me a reed like unto a rod,.... A measuring reed, which with the Jews was six cubits long, Eze 40:5; with the Greeks and Romans, ten feet long; the Ethiopic version here calls it a "golden reed", as in Re 21:15. This was given unto John very likely by the same angel that gave him the little book, since he afterwards bids him arise and measure with it; and by it seems to be designed the holy Scripture, or the word of God, which is sometimes called a line, a rule, and rod, Ps 19:4, and which is the rule and measure of doctrine and faith; and by it all doctrine is to be tried and measured, and whatsoever is not agreeably to it is not of God, nor to be received, but rejected; and it is the rule and measure of all discipline, worship, and practice; it lays down the plan of a Gospel church, which should be gathered out of the world, and separated from it; it shows who are the proper materials of it, what officers are to be constituted in it, and what ordinances are to be administered, and what laws and rules should be observed in receiving and rejecting of members, and according to which the whole community should walk; in short, it directs to all the forms, laws, and ordinances of God's house; and this is the use John, or those whom he represents, were to make of it:

and the angel stood; the same that stood with his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and gave to John the little book, Re 10:1; though it may be not in the same place and situation, but rather at the gate of the temple, as in Eze 40:3. This clause is not in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, but is in the Syriac version and Complutensian edition, and is rightly retained, or otherwise it would seem as if the reed spoke:

saying, rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein; the allusion is to the temple of Jerusalem, with its appurtenances; there were the most holy place, and the holy place, which was the inner court of the priests, into which they only entered, which was strictly speaking the temple, and is referred to here; and there was the altar of burnt offering, which was in the court of the priests, and the altar of incense, which was before the vail that divided between the holy and holy of holies; and then there was the outer court for all the Israelites to worship in, referred to in Re 11:2: and by "the temple of God" is here meant the church, of which the temple was a type; and so particular congregated churches are called temples, **1Co 3:16**. Solomon, a man of peace, was the builder of the one, and Christ, the Prince of peace, the builder of the other; Solomon's temple was built of hewn stones, made ready before they were brought thither, and a true church of Christ consists of lively stones, hewed and fitted for this spiritual building by the Spirit of God; the temple at Jerusalem was built on a high mountain, and on the north of the city, the church is built upon the rock Christ Jesus, and the Gospel church, or churches, in the times of the sixth trumpet, which this vision refers to, and to the close of it, are in the northern parts of Europe; and as the temple was for religious use and service, for the worship of God and sacrifices, so is the Gospel church, and so are Gospel churches, for the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances, and for the offering up the sacrifices of prayer and praise; and as in the most holy place were the ark of the covenant, and the mercy seat, and as it was the place of the divine Presence, where God granted communion to his people, so in the church are held forth the mysteries of the covenant, Christ as the mercy seat and the propitiatory, in whom the displays of grace are made, and through whom the saints have fellowship with God, and enjoy his presence: "the altar" may design Christ himself, by whom the saints draw nigh to God, offer up their sacrifices, and are accepted with him; or the whole of Gospel worship and ordinances, as prayer, preaching, singing of praise, and the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper: and they "that worship therein", or "thereat", are the royal priesthood, or such who are made kings and priests unto God, for none went into the inner court, or served at the altar, but priests; and who make use of Christ, the altar, of his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, in their approaches to God; and who are praying souls, wait at the altar of incense, and draw nigh to the throne or grace with a true heart, and worship God in Spirit and in truth: now "measuring" of these respects not the primitive church for the first three or four hundred years, and the formation of that according to the rule of God's word, and as a pattern to other churches; for though the apostolic church, or the church as it was in the apostles' time, and as described in their writings, was such a church; yet the church for such a space of time as above was not; there were great departures both from doctrine and discipline, the mystery of iniquity began to work, and way was made for the man of sin and it was far from being a pattern to be imitated; and besides, this measuring refers to the times of the sixth trumpet, and the close of it: nor does it respect the sealing of the 144,000 between the sixth seal and the opening of the seventh seal, which was for the protection and security of them during the times of the six trumpets, which brought desolation into the empire, and apostasy into the church; though measuring sometimes may seem to denote protection, as in **Zec 2:1**; and though the outer court is, and will be, a protection to spiritual worshippers, so long as it is not in the hands of the Gentiles, yet this is not the sense, at least not the whole of it: nor does this refer to the hiding of the church in the wilderness, during the reign of antichrist; which might seem to be signified by the internal worshippers retiring to the altar, and to the holy and the most holy place, and being concealed there; and especially since the opening of the temple in Re 11:19, may seem to be opposed to this; but that takes in too large a compass of time, this being an affair relating only to the close of the sixth trumpet, and which was to be before the seventh trumpet sounded: it seems rather to respect the times of the Reformation by Luther, Calvin, and others, when the measuring reed of the word was taken in hand, and used; but then it was used chiefly for the restoration of pure doctrine, and with good success, but not so much for the regulating and orderly discipline of the churches, for the purity of Gospel worship and ordinances; most, if not all the reformed churches, set out upon too broad a bottom, being national, provincial, or parochial; there was a temple, and an altar erected for God, and there were internal and spiritual worshippers; but then they took in the outward court, which should not have been measured in, and circumscribed with them, but should have been left out; but the time for this was not yet come, but now is: in short, I take it that this measuring refers to what was done in the last age, particularly in our nation; and that it has respect to the separation from the national church, when churches, more or less, were gathered and formed according to the Gospel plan and the primitive institution; a work which never was set about and so effectually done before since the age of the apostles: the baptized and congregational churches are the temple, altar, and worshippers measured, who have both the true doctrine, worship, and discipline of God's house among them; a set of men in the last age were raised up, who drew a plan of churches, and of church discipline, according to the ancient model; gathered churches out of the world, and constituted them according to the order of the Gospel; circumscribed them, and enclosed them according to the rules of God's word, admitting none but such into communion who were judged by the churches subjects of the grace of God; and rejected and excluded from among them such as were wicked and scandalous; and so reduced the pure members of churches to a small number, a little flock, a few names in Sardis: and I am of opinion that the measuring reed must be used again; we have got of late, through negligence, or a want of a spirit of discerning, too many of the outward court among us; who must be left out, in order to be given up to other hands, as follows.

Revelation 11:2

Ver. 2. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not,.... The allusion is to the court of the Israelites, where was the great crowd and company of worshippers, even the national church of the Jews, called by Ezekiel the outer court, Eze 42:14, and which was measured in Eze 42:20; but this must not be measured: this designs not the visible church apostatized, as succeeding the pure, primitive, and apostolical church, or the apostate church of Rome, antichrist and his followers, for these are meant by the Gentiles, to whom this outward court is given; this outward court, or the worshippers in it, intend a distinct set of worshippers from the internal worshippers, the priests of God in the temple, altar, and inner court, and from the Gentiles, the Papists; and are no other than carnal Protestants, the bulk of the reformed churches, who have only the name, but not the nature of living Christians, have a form of godliness, but deny its power, are Jews outwardly, but not inwardly, and worship only in an external manner, attend to outward forms and ceremonies, but know nothing of true doctrine, pure worship, or spiritual religion; and which are very numerous, as the worshippers in the outward court were: now these, upon a new measuring and regulating of the churches, are ordered to be left, or cast out, and not taken into the dimensions of the Gospel church; these were to be separated from, and have been, and not to be admitted members of regular and orderly constituted churches, and which is here reckoned a sort of casting of them out; the reason of which follows;

for it is given unto the Gentiles; by whom are meant the Papists, who are no other than Paganized Christians, having introduced a great deal of Gentilism into the divine service; as the worshipping of the virgin Mary, angels, and saints departed, which is in imitation of the demon worship of the Heathens; as also the dedication of their churches to saints, their saints' days, divers festivals, and many other rites and ceremonies, are plainly of Pagan original; and therefore they may very well be called by this name: now it seems by these words that the bulk of the reformed churches, the crowd of outward court worshippers, will be gained, over to the Popish party, and fall off to the church of Rome, to which their doctrines and practices are plainly verging; the pope of Rome, as low a condition as he now is in, will be set "in status quo", before his utter destruction; he will regain all his former dominions, and be in possession of them at the time of his ruin; the whore of Rome, the antichristian Babylon, will sit as a queen, and promise herself a great deal of peace and pleasure, the inward court worshippers and witnesses being slain, and she restored to all her former power and grandeur; when in one day, on a sudden, her destruction will come upon her, when the term of the beast's reign will be expired, mentioned in the next clause:

and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty [and] two months; by "the holy city" is meant all the kingdoms of Europe, or what has, been called Christendom, the western empire as Christian, the main seat of the Christian religion, or all the churches styled Christian, and so called in allusion to Jerusalem, which bears this name, **Mt 4:5**; and which was still of a far larger extent than the outward court: the "treading" of this "underfoot" does not barely design possessing of it, or worshipping in the same place, as the phrase of treading in the courts does in **Isa 1:12**; but a tyrannical power over it, and a wasting, spoiling, and destroying it, in allusion to Jerusalem being trodden under foot, wasted, and destroyed by the Gentiles or the Romans, Lu 21:24; and the duration of this tyrannical and oppressive reign will be forty and two months; see Re 13:5, which being reduced to years, make just three years and a half: but then this date cannot be understood strictly and literally; for such a term can never be sufficient for the whore's reign, who was to rule over the kings of the earth, and all nations were to drink of the wine of her fornication: this is too short a time for her to gain so much power, honour, and riches in, as the 13th, 17th, and 18th chapters of this book show, as well as too short for the afflictions and persecutions of the saints by her; wherefore this must be understood prophetically of so many months of years; and a month with the Chaldeans consisting of thirty days, and a year of 360 days, which account Daniel used, and John after him, forty two months, reckoning a day for a year, after the prophetic style, make 1260 years; which is the exact time of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, of the church's being hid and nourished in the wilderness, and of the beast's reign, and so of the holy city being trodden under foot. Now this date is not to be reckoned from the outer court being given to the Gentiles, but from the first of antichrist's reign, when the pope of Rome was declared universal bishop; and is only here mentioned to show, that the giving of the outward court to his Gentiles will be towards the expiration of this date.

Revelation 11:3

Ver. 3. And I will give [power] unto my two witnesses,.... By whom are meant, not Enoch and Elias, as some of the ancient fathers thought, who, they supposed, would come before the appearance of Christ, and oppose antichrist, and be slain by him, which sense the Papists greedily catch at; nor are the Scriptures, the two Testaments, Old and New, designed, though their name and number agree, and also their office, which is to testify of Christ; but then to be clothed in sackcloth, to be killed, and rise again, and ascend to heaven, are things that cannot so well be accommodated to them: but these witnesses intend the ministers of the Gospel and churches of Christ, who have bore testimony for Christ, and against antichrist, ever since he appeared in the world; and particularly the churches and ministers in Piedmont bid fair for this character; who were upon the spot when antichrist arose, always bore their protest against him, and were ever independent of the church of Rome, and subsisted in the midst of the darkness of the apostasy; and suffered much, and very great persecutions, from the Papists; and have stood their ground, and continue to this day; and have been like olive trees and candlesticks, imparting oil and light to others. Though they ought not to be considered exclusive of other ministers and churches, who also have bore, and still do bear a witness for Christ, and against the idolatries of the church of Rome: no two individual persons can be meant, since these witnesses were to prophesy 1260 days, that is, so many years, but a succession of ministers and churches; and these are called two, both on account of the fewness of them, and because the testimony of two is sufficient to confirm any matter; and it may be in allusion to the various instances of two eminent persons being raised up at certain periods of time, as Moses and Aaron, at the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt; Caleb and Joshua, at their entrance into Canaan; Elijah and Elisha in the idolatrous times of Ahab; and Joshua and Zerubbabel at the rebuilding and finishing of the second temple. Now the Angel, and who is Christ, here promises that he will give something to these witnesses: some supply the words, "I will give it"; that is, the holy city, or the church, to them, to be taken care of and defended; others, "I will give" them a mouth and wisdom, which their adversaries shall not be able to resist, according to the promise in Lu 21:15. We supply the words, "I will give power"; that is, authority to preach the Gospel, and strength to profess it, and to continue to bear a testimony to it, signified by prophesying; see 1Co 14:1.

And they shall prophesy; that is, "that they may prophesy"; which is supported by the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, the former rendering the words, "I will give to my two witnesses to prophesy", and the latter, "I will give in command to my two witnesses that they may prophesy"; the sense is, that Christ will give to them a mission and commission, sufficient authority, all needful gifts and grace, courage and presence of mind to preach his Gospel, to hold forth his word, and bear a testimony for him during the whole time of the apostasy, even

a thousand two hundred [and] threescore days; that is, so many years, which, as before observed, is the date of the beast's reign, of the holy city being trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and of the church's retirement into the wilderness: it is observable, that the date of the beast's reign and tyranny is expressed by months, and the date of the church's being in the wilderness, and the prophesying of the witnesses, is signified by days; and the reason which some give is not despicable, as that the beast and his followers are the children of darkness and of the night, over which the moon presides, from whence months are, numbered; and the church and the witnesses are children of the day, over which the sun rules. The habit of these witnesses during their time of prophesying follows,

clothed in sackcloth; expressive either of their outward state and condition, being poor, mean, and abject, while the followers of the beast are clad in silks, and live deliciously; or else of the inward frame of their minds, as mourning for the sad estate of the church of Christ, groaning under the tyranny and persecutions of antichrist.

Revelation 11:4

Ver. 4. These are the two olive trees,.... Or represented by the two olive trees in Zec 4:3, which there design Joshua and Zerubbabel; and who in laying out themselves, their gifts and wealth, in rebuilding and finishing the temple, were types of these witnesses, the ministers of the Gospel, in the successive ages of the apostasy; who may be compared to olive trees, because of the oil of grace, and the truth of it in them; and because of the gifts of the Spirit of God bestowed on them, or their having that anointing which teacheth all things; and because they freely impart their gifts, and the golden oil of the Gospel unto others, and also bring the good tidings of peace and salvation by Christ, of which the olive leaf is a symbol; and because they are like the olive tree, fat, flourishing, and fruitful in spiritual things; they are sons of oil, and God's anointed ones:

and the two candlesticks; which hold forth the light of the word, in the midst of Popish darkness: this shows that churches, as well as ministers, are designed by the witnesses, since the candlesticks are explained of the churches, Re 1:20, though the simile well agrees with ministers of the word, who are the lights of the world, or hold forth the light of the Gospel, which is put into them by Christ: and these olive trees and candlesticks are represented as

standing before the God of the earth; ministering unto him, enjoying his presence, and having his assistance, and being under his protection. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, "the Lord of the earth"; and so the Complutensian edition; see Zec 4:14.

Revelation 11:5

Ver. 5. And if any man will hurt them,.... Do any injury to their persons, or properties, oppose their writings, blaspheme their doctrines, and hinder their ministrations; whoever; they be, whether they be any that live among them, or in other parts; whether they be secret or open enemies; or whether they be of the outward court, or be really Gentiles or Papists; and especially if they do them any injustice, if they wrong, oppress, afflict, and distress them knowingly and willingly:

fire proceedeth out of their mouth; by which may be meant the word of God, which they preach and hold forth, which is comparable to fire, Jer 23:29, both for light, it being a means of enlightening sinners, who are darkness itself; and of directing saints in their walk and conversation; and of detecting the errors, immoralities, idolatry, and superstition of men, and particularly of the church of Rome, who cannot bear the light of this word, and therefore forbid the reading of it to the laity, and keep it locked up from them in the Latin tongue: and also for the heat of it, it being the means of quickening, or of conveying a vital heat to dead sinners; and of warming and comforting the saints, causing their hearts to burn within them, while they bear or read it, or meditate upon it; and of scorching and tormenting reprobate sinners, and filling them with wrath, pain, and anguish, especially the followers of antichrist; and this is greatly designed, for this has a particular reference to the pouring out of the fourth vial, Re 16:9. Likewise, the word of God may be compared to fire for its purity in itself, for every word of his is pure; and for its purifying nature, when faithfully preached, and powerfully applied, it penetrates deep, it searches, and discovers, and purges from the dross of profaneness, false doctrine, and will worship; and for its consuming nature, as follows, it pronouncing damnation to unbelievers and impenitent sinners, and it being the savour of death unto death to such: or else the prayers of these witnesses are intended by the fire that proceeds out of their mouth, for vengeance on their enemies, who hinder their ministrations, blaspheme the truth, and shed their blood; which do not arise from a passionate and revengeful spirit, but from a pure zeal for the glory of God, and the honour of his name, and truth; and which prayers are heard by God, who will avenge his elect, that cry unto him day and night: the allusion is to the fire, which, at the request of Moses, came forth from the Lord, and destroyed two hundred and fifty persons, that opposed him and Aaron; and to the fire which Elias called for from heaven, upon the captains, and the fifties, that came to take him, who were types of these witnesses; see Nu 16:3. And also this fire may denote the denunciations of God's wrath by them upon the antichristian party, these being as wood, and their words as fire, to consume them; see **Jer 5:14**.

And devoureth their enemies: whether open or secret; just as the fire devoured Nadab and Abihu, the offerers of strange fire, which the Lord commanded not; so the fire out of the mouth of God's faithful servants devours such who introduce divers and strange doctrines, and the inventions of men, into the church of God; the light of God's word convinces and confounds them, though it may not convert them; it flashes in their consciences, and distresses them, so that they gnaw their tongues for pain; there being nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour and destroy them, though not corporeally, yet spiritually and eternally; for even these shall

afterwards make war against them, conquer them, and slay them, and shall see them ascend to heaven,
Re 11:7.

And if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed; this is repeated, partly to show the certainty of this destruction; and partly to point out the manner of it, which will be not by the use of carnal weapons: these enemies of the witnesses will not be killed by the sword, or any other weapon, but by the word of God, and through the prayers of the saints, and by the denunciations of God's judgments on them. The Jews express the doctrines and traditions of their Rabbins, delivered from one to another, by fire, proceeding out of their mouths; who say {r},

"Rab sat before Rabbi, and "there went forth" hymwpm rwnd Nyqwqyz, "sparks of fire from the mouth of Rab", into the mouth of Rabbi, and from the mouth of Rabbi, into the mouth of Rab;"

which the gloss explains of their communicating their doctrines and traditions to one another.

{r} T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 137. 2. Juchasin, fol. 113. 2.

Revelation 11:6

Ver. 6. These have power to shut heaven,.... For these have the keys of the kingdom of heaven given them, and whatever they bind or loose on earth is bound or loosed in heaven; or in other words, having the true key of knowledge in matters, both of doctrine and discipline, given them, whatever they declare, according to the word of God, to be doctrines fit to be received or rejected, and to be the ordinances of God, and matters of worship to be attended to, and what are not, should be so: and in particular,

that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; that is, on their enemies, the antichristian party; for otherwise it must rain on those to whom they minister, their prophecy itself being rain in a spiritual sense: so rain is explained of prophecy in the Targum on **Isa 5:6**, which paraphrases the words thus;

"I will command the prophets that they do not prophesy upon them prophecy:"

for this is to be understood not literally, since the days of their prophecy, or preaching in sackcloth, are 1260, that is, 1260 years, and which is the term and duration of antichrist's reign: wherefore, if this was the case, there must be a famine and great distress, during this long space of time; but as this is not matter of fact, so it would not comport with that plenty, luxury, and deliciousness, in which the whore of Babylon is said to live: but the words are to be taken in a spiritual sense, and to be understood of the Gospel, and doctrines of it, or the word of God, which is sometimes compared to rain, De 32:2. God is the author and giver of rain, and he only; none of the vanities, or idols of the Gentiles, can give it; has the rain a father? it has, but not on earth, only God who is in heaven; and so the Gospel is of God, and it is he only that can make men able ministers of it; the rain comes down from above, from heaven, and of the same original and descent is the Gospel, it is the voice speaking from heaven; the rain falls, according to divine direction, in one place, and not another, on one city, and not another; and so the Gospel is sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; it is forbid here, and ordered there. Showers of rain moisten and soften the earth, and make it susceptive of seed; and the Gospel is the means of softening hard hearts, and of making them capable of receiving suitable impressions: rain refreshes the earth, revives the plants and trees, and makes them fruitful; and so the Gospel, attended with a divine blessing, refreshes drooping saints, revives the work of God in them, and is the means of filling them with all the fruits of righteousness. Now the withholding of this rain denotes a famine, not of bread, or a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord; and as it is a judgment on a nation, or on a city, not to be rained upon, so it is a spiritual judgment upon a people, when God commands his clouds, his ministers, to rain no rain of the Gospel on them; and it is one of the judgments upon the antichristian party, that they have not the Gospel preached unto them, nor any dew of powerful and efficacious grace distilled on them, but are left to their blindness, darkness, and hardness of heart: and these witnesses carrying the Gospel along with them, where they prophesy and preach, is called a shutting up heaven, so that it rain not on the followers of antichrist, from whom they separate themselves, or by whom they are cast out; and this is ascribed to them, and is owing to their removal or ejection; much in the same sense as the night and darkness are to the sun's remove; that is, these follow upon it. The allusion is to the withholding of rain in the times of Elijah, one of the types of these witnesses, because of the idolatries of Ahab and Jezebel, 1Ki 17:1. In like manner is the rain of the Gospel withheld during the reign of antichrist, because of the idolatry and superstition of the apostasy.

And have power over waters to turn them to blood; by "waters" are meant people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, and particularly those over whom antichrist reigns, Re 17:15, and turning of them into blood designs the confusions and wars raised among them on account of the prophesying of these witnesses, and the persecutions and bloodshed which followed upon it; which eventually are the end and issue of preaching the Gospel; see Mt 10:34. The allusion is to one of the plagues of Egypt, and to Moses and Aaron, who were types of these witnesses turning the waters of Egypt into blood, **Ex 7:20**; and answers to the second and third vials, Re 16:3.

And to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will; alluding to the plagues of Egypt, one of the names of Rome, or the Roman jurisdiction, in Re 11:8, and which is meant by the earth here; and referring to the rest of the seven vials poured out by these witnesses, signified by seven angels; and their having power so to do as often as they will, is to be understood of these plagues being inflicted on the inhabitants of the earth, or followers of antichrist, in answer to their prophecies and prayers, which are made according to the will of God, and so always have their effect, being such.

Revelation 11:7

Ver. 7. And when they shall have finished their testimony,.... For Christ, his truths and ordinances; when they are about to finish it, and almost concluded it, even towards the close of the 1260 days or years, in which they must prophesy in sackcloth: or else their testimony and their prophesying may be considered as two distinct things, and the one be finished before the other; their open public testimony, as witnesses, so as to be heard, attended to, and received, will be finished before the last war of the beast against them, in which they will be killed; but their prophesying will continue to the end of the beast's reign, these two being contemporary, of equal date, beginning and ending together; for they will prophesy when they are dead; being dead they will yet speak, and their very death will be a prophesying or foretelling that the ruin of antichrist is at hand; and upon their resurrection and ascension, that will immediately come on. But when their testimony is finished, by a free and open publication of the Gospel,

the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit; the same with that in Re 13:11, with which compare Re 17:8; and which is no other than the Romish antichrist; called a beast for his filthiness and cruelty; and said to ascend out of the bottomless pit, out of hell, because his coming is after the working of Satan: he is raised up, influenced, and supported by him; he is a creature of his, and has his power, seat, and authority from him, the great dragon, the old serpent, called the devil and Satan; his original and rise are the same with those of his doctrine and worship, the smoke of the bottomless pit; they all come out of it, and they will return thither again. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, "the fourth beast that ascendeth", &c. as if it was the same with Daniel's fourth beast, **Da 7:7**, as it doubtless is. Now this filthy and savage beast

shall make war against them; the witnesses; a war he has been making against the saints ever since he was in power, by his decrees, his counsels, his anathemas, and by sword, fire, and faggot, Re 13:7; but this will be his last war, and it will be a dreadful one; it will be the last struggle of the beast; and though it will be attended with the conquest and slaughter of the witnesses, yet it will lead on to, and issue in his own ruin; this is "the hour of temptation", in **Re 3:10**;

and shall overcome them; not by arguments taken out of the word of God, by which their mouths will be stopped, so as to be confounded, and have nothing to say, or so as to yield to him, and give up the truths and ordinances of the Gospel; but by outward force and tyranny, so as that they shall be obliged to give way, and he will take possession of the kingdoms and nations in which they have prophesied: he will first attack the outward court, the bulk of formal professors, and will prevail over them; and then, the outworks being taken, he will more easily come at the inner court worshippers within the temple.

And kill them; not corporeally, but civilly; for as their dead bodies lying three days and a half, that is, three years and a half, unburied, and their resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, cannot be understood literally, so neither the killing of them; not but that in this war there may be a great slaughter, and much blood shed, in a literal sense: but the killing spoken of seems to regard them, not as men, but as witnesses; they will not be suffered to bear an open testimony any longer; they will be silenced; they will be banished, or removed into corners; and they will not only be under the censures, excommunications, and anathemas of the Romish antichrist, but they will lose all credit and esteem among those, who once pretended to be their friends; who will be ashamed of them, and will join in reproaching and rejecting them; so that their ministrations will be quite shut up, and at an end.

Revelation 11:8

Ver. 8. And their dead bodies [shall lie] in the street of the great city,.... Not

Jerusalem, which was destroyed when John had this vision, and which will; not be rebuilt at the time it refers to; nor is it ever called the great city, though the city of the great King; however, not in this book, though the new Jerusalem is so called,
Re 21:10; but that can never be designed here; but the city of Rome, or the Roman jurisdiction, the whole empire of the Romish antichrist, which is often called the great city in this book; see
Re 16:19. The city of Rome itself was very large, and the Roman empire still larger, so as to be called the whole world and the antichristian see of Rome has been of great extent. Now as the street of a city denotes a public open place in it, a place of concourse and resort, **Pr 1:20**, the dead bodies of those witnesses being said to lie here, may design the publicness of their silence, disgrace, and contempt; and that the silencing and degrading them, and depriving them of all privileges, will be known all over the antichristian empire; and that they will be exposed to public ignominy and shame, their persons, their characters, their testimony, their doctrines, their writings, their churches, and families, and all that belong to them: or else this "street" may design some part of the Romish jurisdiction, and it may be Great Britain may be particularly designed; for where should the dead bodies of the witnesses lie, but where they are slain? and where can they be slain, but where they are? and where are they, at least where are there so many as in these islands? It may be objected, that Great Britain is not a part of the see of Rome, does not belong to the jurisdiction of it; to this it may be replied, that in this last war of the beast, the outer court will be given to the Gentiles, the bulk of the reformed churches will fall off to Popery, and their countries again fall into the hands of the pope, and, among the rest, Great Britain. The fears of Dr. Goodwin seem to be too just, and well grounded, that the prophecy in Da 11:45 respects our island, which speaks of antichrist planting "the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain", or "the mountain of delight, of holiness". Now where has God such a mountain of delight, or a people that are the darling of his soul, as here? where in all the globe is there such a spot where God has so many saints, so many Holy Ones, as in this island? it may have been truly called a glorious holy mountain, or a mountain of delight; and what place between the seas is there to which these characters can agree, but Great Britain? Here then antichrist will plant the tabernacles of his palace; but it will be but a tabernacle, or tent; it will be but for a short time, as it follows, "yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him", Da 11:45. Now this great city, in the street of which the bodies of the witnesses will lie exposed, is that

which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt; that is, it is called so in a mystic and allegoric sense, in distinction from the literal sense; see 1Co 10:3; it is called Sodom because of the fulness of bread, plenty and abundance of all outward good things in it; as well as for the pride and idleness of the priests, monks, and friars which swarm in it; and also for the open profaneness and contempt of true and serious religion in it; and particularly for the sin of sodomy, so frequently committed here, with impunity, yea with allowance, and even with commendation. This sin was extolled with praises, as Brightman observes, by John a Casa, archbishop of Beneventum; and was defended in a book, published for that purpose, by one Mutius; and which was allowed by the bulls and letters patent of Pope Julius the Third; and it is called Egypt, because of its tyranny and oppression; as the Egyptians kept the Israelites in bondage, and made them to serve with rigour, and embittered their lives, so the pope, and his Gentiles, or Egyptians, have in a most oppressive and rigorous manner tyrannised over the souls, bodies, and estates of men; and also because of its great idolatry, Egypt being very remarkable for the number of its deities, and the meanness of them; by which the idols and idolatries of the church of Rome may be fitly expressed:

where also our Lord was crucified; that is, in the great city, which is fitly compared to Sodom and Egypt; for Christ was crucified actually in Judea, which was then become a Roman province, and under Pontius Pilate, a Roman governor, and by his order, and suffered a Roman kind of death, crucifixion, and for a crime he was charged with, though a false one, against Caesar the Roman emperor; and Christ has been crucified at Rome itself in his members, who have suffered persecution and death, and even the death of the cross there; and he has been crucified afresh, both by the sins and immoralities of those who have bore the Christian name there, and by the frequent sacrifices of him in the Mass. Moreover, by this periphrasis may be meant Jerusalem; and the sense be, that as the great city, or jurisdiction of Rome, may be spiritually or mystically called Sodom and Egypt, so likewise the place where our Lord was crucified, that is, Jerusalem; and that for this reason, because that as Jerusalem stoned and killed the prophets of the Lord, and upon the inhabitants of it were found all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, so in Rome, in mystical Babylon, will be found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon earth, Mt 23:35. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, "where also their Lord was crucified"; and the Arabic version more expressly, "the Lord of these two", i.e. the two witnesses.

Revelation 11:9

Ver. 9. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations,.... These are either the enemies of the witnesses, who consisted of the people, kindred, tongues, and nations, out from among whom they were chosen, redeemed, and called; and before or against whom John, representing these witnesses, prophesied; and over whom the Romish antichrist sits and rules, **Re 5:9**; or else their friends, either real or pretended; since it is not said "the people", nor "all the people, kindred, tongues, and nations", as it is when the antichristian party are spoken of; and seeing "they that dwell upon the earth", in Re 11:10, are mentioned as a distinct company from these; and these are said to be some "of", or "out" of the people, &c. and accordingly the following words will admit of different senses:

shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. Now, though this is not literally to be understood, yet it may have some reference to the usages of the witnesses enemies, who sometimes have not allowed them a burial: so the bodies of John Huss, and Jerom of Prague, were burnt, and their ashes cast into the Rhine; the body of Peter Ramus was cast about the streets, thrown into ponds and ditches, then dragged out, and beat with rods; and some have had their bones dug up again, after they had been buried many years, and then burnt, and their ashes scattered abroad, as Wickliff and Bucer here in England: but as this is to be understood in a mystical and allusive sense, the meaning is, as it may refer to enemies, that they shall see, and look upon with joy and pleasure, and with scorn and contempt, and insult over the witnesses, being silenced and deprived of power and opportunity of prophesying:, and as quite dispirited, cast down, and trodden under foot; and whereas not to have a burial granted is always reckoned a piece of the greatest barbarity and inhumanity, as well as of ignominy and reproach, and is expressive of a most unhappy and miserable condition; see
Ps 129:2; so it here signifies, that the enemies of the witnesses having obtained power over them, will not only insult them, but treat them in a very cruel and inhuman manner, and expose them to scorn and contempt; and it represents their case as being very uncomfortable, and deplorable: or as it may respect friends, real or pretended, such as had been, or were, the sense is, that they shall see them in their unhappy condition, and look upon them with pity and compassion; and shall thoroughly consider, and lay to heart, their case and circumstances; and shall remember then, their doctrine and testimony, and their godly lives, and not suffer them to be buried in oblivion; and shall also call to mind this prediction concerning them, that they should continue in this state but three days and a half, and then revive; and therefore they shall entertain hopes of them, as persons sometimes do of their friends, when they

are in doubt whether they are dead or not, and therefore keep them above ground for some time, and will not suffer them to be buried; for when put into the grave, there is no more hope, or when a person has been dead, as in the case of Lazarus, four days; so that this conduct may express the kindness and hope of these friends: or it may be, the meaning is, that they will not look at them but very shyly, and at a distance, as being ashamed of them, and having no heart to succour, relieve, and encourage them; but act as did the priest and the Levite towards the man that fell among thieves, and was left half dead, looked upon him, and turned from him, to the other side of the way; as also, that they will not entertain them, or give them any shelter and refuge among them, when, in this their distress, they shall apply to them: the grave is a resting place; there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest, **Job 3:17**. Such resting places the witnesses in former times have found, as the English in Queen Mary's days found at Frankfort and Geneva, and other places, and since in Holland; and as now the French refugees here, who being killed in a civil sense in their own country, are put into graves, or are allowed places of rest and security here: but now these witnesses will find none; those who pretended to be their friends will look shy upon them, and not harbour them, yea, will not suffer any to do it; they will by some public act, through fear of the Popish party, forbid the reception and entertainment of them. The time that this will last will be "three days and a half"; after which, as in Re 11:11, they will live again, which cannot be understood literally of so many precise days; for it will; not be possible, that, in so short a time, the news of the slaying of the witnesses should be spread among the inhabitants of the earth, md they be able to express their general joy and rejoicing, and to send their gifts to one another upon his occasion, as is signified in Re 11:10; nor does this design so long a time, as the time and times, and half a time, elsewhere mentioned; or that it is a period of the same date and duration with the forty two months, in which the holy city is trodden under foot, and the 1260 days, or years, in which the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth; for during that time they will prophesy, and hold forth their testimony, though in sackcloth; but now they will be killed, and during this space will lie dead, and in entire silence: besides, it will be when they shall have finished their testimony, or towards the close of the 1260 days or years, that this war and slaughter will be, and when these three days and a half will take place, which are to be understood of three years and a half, according the prophetic style, a day for a year; and seems intended for the comfort of the saints, that this most afflictive and distressed condition of the witnesses should last but for a little while. It is made a question, whether this war with the witnesses, and the slaughter of them, and their lying unburied, are over or not: some have thought that these things had their accomplishment in the council of Constance, held about the year 1414, and which lasted three years and a half exactly, when those two witnesses, John Huss, and Jerom of Prague, were killed, insulted, and triumphed over by this council, which was made up of almost all nations. Brightman refers it to the Smalcaldic war in Germany in 1547, when the Protestant army was beaten, and John Frederick, elector of Saxony, and Ernest, the son of the landgrave, and after that the landgrave himself, were taken prisoners; which was a grievous blow to the Protestant cause, and occasioned great rejoicing in the Popish party; but in the year 1550, just three years and a half after that defeat, the men of Magdeburgh rose up with great spirit and courage, and revived the cause. About this time was the council of Trent; to which also the same writer accommodates these things, which consisted of men of all nations, and continued three years and a half; when the authority of the Scriptures was destroyed, which he supposes are the witnesses; when they were suppressed and silenced, and lay as a mere carcass, a dead letter, without any life in them: and it is easy to observe, that there have been several periods of time, in which there has been a seeming fulfilment of these things; the persecution under Queen Mary, and the burning of the martyrs in her time, continued about three years and a half; the massacre in France, in 1572, threatened an utter extirpation of the Protestant religion there, which yet revived in 1576, much about the same space of time here mentioned; and there are several others that have been observed by writers; but what seems most remarkable of all is the case of the Protestants in the valleys of Piedmont, commonly called the Vaudois. The duke of Savoy, their sovereign, by an edict, dated January 31, 1685-6, N. S. forbad the exercise of their religion on pain of death, ordered their churches to be demolished, and their ministers to be banished; which was published in the valleys April the 11th, and was put in execution on the 22nd of the same month, by Savoy and French troops, who killed great numbers of them, took others, and put them into prisons, whom they released about the beginning of December, 1686, and suffered them to depart into other countries, where they were kindly received, relieved, and preserved, particularly by the kingdoms and states of England, Holland, Brandenburgh, Geneva, and Switzerland, while the Popish party were rejoicing at their ruin: and toward the latter end of the year 1689, about three years and a half after the publishing of the edict, these people were inspired on a sudden with a spirit of resolution and courage; and, contrary to the advice of their friends, who thought their case desperate, secretly passed the lake of Geneva, and entered Savoy with sword in hand, and recovered their ancient possessions; and by the month of April, A. D. 1690, established themselves in it, notwithstanding the troops of France and Savoy, to whom they were comparatively few, and whom they slew in great numbers, with little loss to themselves; when the duke perceiving they were encouraged and assisted by foreign princes, and he having left the French interest, recalled the rest of them, and reestablished them by an edict, signed June 4, 1690, just three years and a half after their total dissipation, and gave leave to the French refugees to return with them. Now I take it, that these several things which have happened at certain times, in particular places, are so many hints and pledges of what hereafter will be universal to the witnesses in all places where they are. It would be very desirable if it could be ascertained, and concluded upon a good foundation, that this affair of the killing of the witnesses was over; but because of the following things it cannot be; for the outward court is not yet given to the Gentiles, at least not the whole of it, which must be, ere they can come at the witnesses in the inner court to slay them: they have indeed attacked it, and have taken some part of it, as in Germany, Poland, &c. but as yet not in Great Britain, Holland, &c. at least not thoroughly, though it is plain they are getting ground. Moreover, the witnesses have not finished their testimony, they are still prophesying: in sackcloth; whereas it will be when they have finished it, and towards the close of the 1260 days or years, that they will be killed: to which add, that the ruin of antichrist will quickly follow their rising and ascension; so that if any of the above instances had been the fulfilling of these things relating to the witnesses, antichrist must have been destroyed before now. And it may be further observed, that the second woe, which is the Turkish woe, will, upon the fulfilment of these things, pass away; and the third woe, or the sounding of the seventh trumpet, will immediately take place, which brings on the kingdom of Christ; whereas the Turkish government is still in being, and in great power (this was published in 1747. Ed.); and there is no appearance, as yet, of the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ. There may be an allusion, in this space of time, to the time that Antiochus, called Epiphanes, held Jerusalem in his hands, after he had conquered it, which was just three years and six months {s}, during which time he spoiled the temple, and caused the daily sacrifice to cease: this term of time is much spoken of by the Jews; so long they say Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, and likewise Vespasian, and also three years and a half Adrian besieged Bither {t}.

{s} Joseph de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 1. sect. 7. {t} Echa Rabbati, fol. 43. 4. & 46. 3. & 48. 1. & 52. 2. & 58. 3. T. Hieros. Taanith, fol. 68. 4. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 93. 1.

Revelation 11:10

Ver. 10. And they that dwell upon the earth,.... Out of which the beast arose, and over which he reigns, even the inhabitants of the Roman empire, often in this book called the earth, the followers of antichrist, men that mind nothing but earth, and earthly things:

shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; as is usual with persons, and was with the Jews, to do in times of public rejoicing; see **Es 9:18**.

Because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth; not because they were tormented by them, but because they were now freed from their tormenting ministry; they had tormented them by the preaching of the Gospel, which is foolishness, and the savour of death to natural men, and gives them pain, and fills them with vexation and wrath; by their testimony which they had bore for Christ, and against antichrist; by their sharp reproof of them for their false doctrine and will worship, and their impure lives and conversations; by their own holy lives, which would sometimes flash light into their consciences, and make them uneasy; and by their foretelling the calamities and ruin, temporal and eternal, that would come upon them; but now they are silenced, and they hear and see no more of these things at which they rejoice.

Revelation 11:11

Ver. 11. And after three days and a half,.... When it was certain they were dead, and all hope of reviving was over; see Joh 11:39; that is, three years and a half:

the spirit of life from God entered into them; this phrase is expressive of a resurrection the Jews frequently call the general resurrection hyyxt, "a quickening", and have the very phrase here used; for, speaking of the resurrection, they say {u}, yyxd axwr, "the spirit of life" does not dwell but in the holy land. This resurrection of the witnesses is not to be understood of a corporeal resurrection; for there is no reason to believe that there will be a resurrection of any particular saints until the general resurrection, which will be at the personal coming of Christ, and at the beginning of the thousand years, and after the sounding of the seventh trumpet; whereas this will be before that, and towards the close of the sixth trumpet: and besides, the death of these witnesses is not corporeal, as has been observed: nor is a spiritual resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace intended, which is owing to the Spirit of life from Christ; for these witnesses were such who had been quickened, and raised in this sense antecedent to their prophesying and killing; but a civil resurrection of them, or a resurrection of them as witnesses, when their spirits will revive, and they will take heart and courage again to appear for Christ: and this may be understood of the same individual persons that were silenced, or of those that succeeded such that corporeally died in the war of the beast, or during this interval; and so these witnesses may be said to rise in them, they appearing in the same spirit they did; just as John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elias: and this will be owing to the Spirit of life from God entering into them; which is said in allusion to the living soul of man, which returns to God, and at the resurrection, whether particular or general, comes from him, and reenters the body; and which also is owing to the Spirit of God, by whom mortal bodies will be quickened; and in allusion to the breathing on the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision, Eze 37:1; and the sense is, that the Spirit of God will inspire these witnesses with fresh life and rigour, zeal and resolution; so that though they have been so long silent, lifeless, and dispirited, they shall now rise in high spirits, and bravely exert themselves in the cause of Christ; and this will not be by any worldly power and authority, or by any secular arm, that shall encourage them, but by the Spirit of God, who shall breathe upon them, and afresh quicken them, and fill them with resolution and courage:

and they stood upon their feet; in great numbers, like the army in Ezekiel's vision; and will reassume their former station, and be in a position and a state of readiness to serve the Lord, and to defend his truths, and discharge their duty with boldness and courage, fearing the face of none:

and great fear fell upon them which saw them; in this posture; either on their enemies, who may fear that they should be tormented with them again; that the things which they had foretold concerning their ruin are now coming upon them; that they shall be turned out of their places of profit, and lose all their worldly advantages, and carnal pleasures now, and be miserable to all eternity: or upon their friends, either their false hearted ones, that would not succour them when in distress, who may fear that God, whose finger they will see in this matter, will by them resent their conduct towards them; or else their real friends, who may be filled with reverence and awe of the divine Majesty, as the church was upon the business of Ananias and Sapphira, **Ac 5:11**.

{u} Zohar in Gen. fol. 79. 3.

Revelation 11:12

Ver. 12. And they heard a great voice from heaven,.... The Complutensian edition reads, "I heard", i.e. "John"; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions; but the copies in general read "they"; not the enemies, but the witnesses: and this seems not to come from any Christian civil magistrate in the church, but from Christ himself; not but that Christ may make use of, such for the bringing of his people into a more glorious and comfortable state in this world:

saying unto them, come up hither; as the angel said to John, **Re 4:1**, and Christ will say to his people, though on another account, Mt 25:34.

And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; which is to be understood not literally, for no man hath ascended to heaven, nor will any, until the thousand years are ended, when the saints will, in a body, ascend thither; but mystically, of a more glorious state of the church; so to ascend to heaven signifies a more exalted state in a prince, or a kingdom, Isa 14:13; and here intends a state of comfortable communion of the saints one with another, of great purity and holiness, of large enjoyments of blessings and privileges, and of great security from enemies, and of great glory, and honour, and power, that shall be bestowed upon them; they now dwelling on high, and their place of defence being the munition of rocks. This will be the beginning of the spiritual reign of Christ; and this ascension of the witnesses will be in a cloud, in allusion to our Lord's ascension to heaven, and as expressive of that glory and majesty which will be put upon these risen witnesses, and in which they shall enter into this happy state of things; or it may be, that this may denote that the first appearance of these happy times, and of Christ's spiritual reign in his church, and their more comfortable enjoyment, will be at first but dim and obscure, and yet such as, in comparison of their former state, will be visible to, and be taken notice of, even by their very enemies:

and their enemies beheld them; going up to heaven, or entering into a purer, and more glorious, and spiritual state; for the mountain of the Lord's house will be established upon the top of the mountains, and Jerusalem shall be made the praise of the whole earth, an eternal excellency, and the joy of many generations; and this shall be seen and known of all, though to their grief and sorrow.

Revelation 11:13

Ver. 13. And the same hour was there a great earthquake,.... Or the same day, as the Complutensian edition, and some copies, read; that is, at the time of the resurrection and ascension of the witnesses, as there was at the resurrection of Christ; and is to be understood of a very great commotion in the civil affairs of kingdoms and nations within the Roman jurisdiction, as there was when Rome Pagan was near its ruin, **Re 6:12**.

And the tenth part of the city fell. Mr. Daubuz interprets the "earthquake" of the irruption of the Ottomans upon the Grecian empire, and the "tenth" part of the city, of the Greek church, and the falling of it, of its loss of liberty, and falling into slavery; but something yet to come is here intended. By "the city" is meant the city of Rome, the great city, mentioned in Re 11:8; and by "the tenth part" of it may be designed either Rome itself, which as it now is, according to the observation of some, is but a tenth part of what it was once; so that the same thing is meant as when it is said, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen", Re 14:8: or it may design the tithes and profits which arise from the several kingdoms belonging to the jurisdiction and see of Rome, which now will fall off from those who used to share them, upon this new and spiritual state of things; the Gospel daily gaining ground, and enlightening the minds of men, and freeing them from the slavery they were held in; or else the ten fold government of the Roman empire, or the ten kings that gave their kingdoms to the whore of Rome, and are the ten horns of the beast, on which she sits, who will now hate her, and burn her flesh with fire; or rather one of the ten kingdoms, into which the Roman western empire was divided. Dr. Goodwin seems inclined to think that Great Britain is intended, which having been gained over to the Popish party, will now fall off again: but I rather think the kingdom of France is meant, the last of the ten kingdoms, which rose up out of the ruins of the Roman empire, which will be conquered, and which will be the means of its reformation from Popery.

And in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand; the meaning is, that in the commotions, massacres, tumults, and wars which will be throughout the empire, such a number of men will be slain; which is either put for a greater number; a certain for an uncertain, as in Ro 11:4; and perhaps in reference to the account there; otherwise seven thousand is but a small number to be slain in battle; or as it is in the original text, "the names of men seven thousand". Now it is observed by some, that the smallest name of number belonging to men is a centurion, or captain of an hundred men; and supposing that to be meant, then seven thousand names of men will imply, that in an hour, or about a fortnight's time, may be slain throughout all Europe, in battles and massacres, about seven hundred thousand men, which is a very large number: or names of men may signify men of name, of great renown, as in Nu 16:2; and then if seven thousand men of name, officers in armies, should be slain, how great must be the number of the common soldiers? Some have thought, that ecclesiastical dignities, or men distinguished by names and titles, such as cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, &c. and the whole rabble of the antichristian hierarchy, which will now fall, and be utterly demolished, are intended:

and the remnant were affrighted; who were not slain in this earthquake; these will be affected with the judgments of God upon others, and be made sensible of their danger, and of their deliverance, which will so work upon them, as to reform them from Popery:

and gave glory to the God of heaven; will acknowledge the justice of God, and the righteousness of his judgments upon those that were slain, and his goodness to them who are spared; will confess their transgressions and sins they have been guilty of; and give the glory of their deliverance, not to their idols and images, but to the true God, whose religion they now embrace; for this respects the large conversions among the Popish party to the true religion, under the influence of the grace of God, through the preaching of the Gospel, which will now be spread throughout the world.

Revelation 11:14

Ver. 14. The second woe is past,.... Not in John's time, only in a visionary way; the meaning is, that the second woe trumpet, which is the sixth, will now have done sounding, when the four angels, bound in the river Euphrates, shall have been loosed, and they, with their horsemen, shall have done what they were designed to do; when the two witnesses shall have been slain, and are raised again, and ascended to heaven; and the things attending, or following thereon, as the earthquake, and slaughter, and the conversions of men, are accomplished.

[And] behold the third woe cometh quickly; immediately, upon the passing of the other; namely, the sounding of the seventh trumpet, as follows.

Revelation 11:15

Ver. 15. And the seventh angel sounded,.... The last of the seven angels, who had trumpets given them to sound, **Re 8:2**. The days of the voice of this angel, as in Re 10:7, cannot refer to the times of Constantine; for though there was then a strange turn of affairs in favour of the kingdom of Christ, when there was a great spread of the Gospel, and large conversions in many places, and many churches were raised and formed in several countries, and the whole empire became Christian; yet this, as we have seen, came to pass under the sixth seal, before any of the trumpets were sounded, and much less this seventh and last; nor do they belong to the times of the Reformation in Germany. Brightman fixes the sounding of this trumpet to the year 1558, when the kings of Sweden and Denmark set up the Gospel in their kingdoms, and reformed them from Popery; and when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne of England, and rooted out great part of the Romish superstition: but it is certain that this angel has not yet sounded his trumpet, and therefore cannot refer to anything past, but to what is to come; we are yet under the sixth trumpet; the outward court is not yet given to the Gentiles; the witnesses are not slain, and much less risen and ascended; the earthquake, the fall of the tenth part of the city, and the slaughter of seven thousand names of men, with what will follow thereon, are things yet to come; the Turkish woe is not over, and antichrist still reigns, and the kingdoms of this world are far from appearing to be the kingdoms of Christ. Some think, and indeed the generality of interpreters, that this respects the voice of the archangel, and trump of God, the last trump, which will sound at the resurrection of the dead, and the day of judgment; but none of these appear in the account of things under this trumpet; but rather the whole has a view to the spiritual reign of Christ, when both the eastern and western antichrist will be destroyed; the Gospel will be carried all over the world, and there will be large conversions both among Jews and Gentiles, and Christ will reign in a spiritual manner over all the earth. Hence it follows,

and there were great voices in heaven; these are either the voices of the angels in heaven, who rejoice at every appearance, and breaking forth of Christ's kingdom and glory, as in **Re 5:11**; and indeed, if they rejoice at the conversion of one sinner, at a single addition to Christ's interest, then much more will they, when the kingdoms of this world become his; or rather these may be the voices of the multitude of the saints in the churches, the same company with those in Re 19:1; who express their joy at the judgment of the great whore, and at the marriage of the Lamb; and who, as here, are attended with the thanksgivings and hallelujahs of the four and twenty elders: and it may be, that these are also the voices of the four living creatures, the ministers of the word, since the four and twenty elders generally follow them, **Re 4:9**; they may be the witnesses, who were silenced, but are now raised up, and are ascended into heaven, and their mouths are opened, and their voices heard again:

saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; by "the kingdoms of this world" are meant worldly kingdoms, which are set up by worldly power, and are supported by worldly policy, and subsist upon worldly principles and maxims; the government of which proceeds upon worldly ends and views; in distinction from the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, and is not supported by any such methods; and they are the kingdoms, into which the world is divided, which, and the glory of them, Satan showed to Christ, and insolently offered to give him them, if he would worship him; but these were to come to Christ in another way, and at another time. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin version, and all the Oriental versions, read in the singular number, "the kingdom of this world"; the whole government of it, which is his by right of nature, and will be overturned, and overturned again and again, till he comes, whose right it is; and then all power, rule, and authority, will be put down, and his kingdom, which will tilt the face of the whole earth, will take place: all the antichristian states and kingdoms are here intended, particularly the kingdoms into which the Roman empire, sometimes called the whole world, **Lu 2:1**, is divided, which are ten; one of the ten, a tenth part of the city or jurisdiction of Rome, will fall at the close of the sixth trumpet, and the other nine, or the other nine parts, will fall at the sounding of the seventh; the ten kings, that have given their kingdoms to the beast, will have an aversion to the whore, hate her, and burn her flesh, will fall off from her, and into the hands of Christ; there will be a general and thorough reformation from Popery in all the kingdoms of the Roman empire: but though these are greatly intended, yet not only they, but the Mahometan nations also, as the Turkish woe will now be over, and the great river Euphrates dried up, to make way for the kings of the east, those large kingdoms and countries of China, Tartary, and Persia; and these now under the power of the Turk will embrace the Christian faith; and also all the Pagan nations are to be taken into the account, and who will now enjoy the light of the Gospel: and all, and everyone those Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan kingdoms, will "become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ"; by "our Lord" may be designed God the Father, who is the Lord of the whole earth, the Lord God Almighty, and is acknowledged as such by angels and men; and by "his Christ", his Son Jesus Christ, who is equal with him; and what belongs to the one belongs to the other; and who, as Mediator, is his anointed One; anointed to be prophet, priest, and King; anointed with the oil of gladness, the Holy Ghost; see **Ps 2:2**, where the same distinction is. In the Targum on **Isa 4:2** mention is made of yyd axwvm, "the Messiah"; or "Christ of Jehovah": and in the same Targum on Isa 53:10, it is said, "they shall look" Nzhxyvm twklmb, "upon the kingdom of their Messiah"; though it may be rather that Christ is designed by both these phrases, and the words be rendered, "our Lord, even his Christ"; since the phrase, "our Lord", as well as Christ, is generally understood of Jesus Christ in the New Testament; and who is Lord of all, of angels, and of men, and the Christ of God. Now these kingdoms will become his, not merely by right, for so they are his already, by right of nature, and creation, and preservation; but these have shaken off his government, and have refused to have him to reign over them, and have fallen into the hands of usurpers, as Satan, the god of this world, the Romish antichrist, that reigns over the kings of the earth, and Mahomet the king of the locusts; but now these will, in fact, come into his hands, and be under his government; they will acknowledge him as their Lord and Sovereign, and fear and worship him, as King of saints: and this will be brought about, not by force of arms, as Mahomet got his dominions; nor by policy and fraud, by imposture and lying wonders, by which the pope of Rome has obtained his authority over the nations; but partly by the pouring out of the vials of God's wrath upon the seat of the beast, and upon the river Euphrates, that is, both upon the pope and Turk, which will weaken and destroy their power and authority, and make way for Christ to set up his kingdom; and partly, and chiefly, by the preaching of the Gospel: now will an open door be set, which none can shut; many will run to and fro, and knowledge will be increased; the earth will be covered with it, as the sea with waters; multitudes of souls everywhere will be converted; a nation will be born at once; churches will be set up in every place, which are Christ's kingdom, where he reigns, and where his subjects are, and his laws are put in execution; where his word will be now faithfully preached, his ordinances purely administered, and he, in his person, office, and grace, will be alone exalted: the consequence of which will be,

and he shall reign for ever and ever; no usurper will ever start up more, or obtain, neither Satan, nor the beast, nor the false prophet, shall ever regain their power and authority any more; neither Paganism, nor Judaism, nor antichristianism, either Papal or Mahometan, shall ever have place more: Christ will reign in this spiritual way, more or less, until he comes personally, and then he will reign with his people on earth a thousand years; and when they are ended, he will reign with them in heaven to all eternity; for though, at the end of these years, he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, yet he will not cease to reign; indeed he will not reign in the same manner, but he will reign with equal power and authority, and over, and with the same persons. The Vulgate Latin version adds, "Amen".

Revelation 11:16

Ver. 16. And the four and twenty elders,.... The same with those in **Re 4:4**;

which sat before God on their seats; as they are also there described; and which may be expressive of their enjoyment of the divine Presence; and also of their quiet and undisturbed situation, being restored to their former places, which they now possess without molestation and interruption; for as these are the representatives of Gospel churches in all ages, they were with the church in the wilderness during the 1260 days, or years: hence we hear nothing of them from the time of the sealing of the hundred and forty and four thousand, and during the sounding of the trumpets; but now they are restored to their former seats, and upon this wonderful change of things in the world, they

fell upon their faces and worshipped God; in a very humble and reverential posture, and in a way of praise and thanksgiving.

Revelation 11:17

Ver. 17. Saying, we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty,.... The person addressed is the Lord Jesus Christ, whose the kingdoms are become, and who now reigns in great power and authority; he is Lord of all, and truly and properly God, and the Almighty, as his works of creation, preservation, redemption, raising himself from the dead, &c. declare; and each of these titles exceedingly well suit him, when his visible kingdom on earth will be so greatly enlarged:

which art, and wast, and art to come: the everlasting, "I am", the unchangeable Jehovah: the phrase is expressive of the eternity and immutability, See Gill on "Re 1:8"; and it may be observed, whereas in this description of him it is said, "and art to come", this therefore does not belong to his personal, but to his spiritual reign; he will not be as yet come in person, to raise the dead, and judge the world, when these voices shall be in heaven, and these congratulations of the elders be made: the reason of their praise and thanksgiving follows,

because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned; power always belonged to him, as God; he always was the mighty God, and, as such, help for his people was laid upon him, he being mighty to save, and able to bear the government of them, laid on his shoulders; and, as Mediator, all power in heaven, and in earth, was given to him at his resurrection; and he had a name given him above every name, when exalted at the right hand of God, and was made, or declared, Lord and Christ; and from that time he has, in some measure, exerted his power and reigned: he endued his apostles with power from on high; and he went forth in the ministry of the Gospel conquering, and to conquer; and has ever since reigned in the hearts of his people; but now he will manifest and display his "great" power; he will show it more openly, and use it more extensively; his kingdom shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; he shall be King over all the earth; his power has been seen in ages past, but now the "greatness" of his power will be made manifest; he has always had a kingdom on earth, but now the, "greatness" of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, will be his.

Revelation 11:18

Ver. 18. And the nations were angry,.... See Ps 99:1, which the Septuagint render, the "Lord reigns, let the nations be angry". This refers not to the times of the dragon, or the Pagan Roman emperors, who were wroth with the woman, the church, and made war with her seed; but Rome Papal, and its Gentiles, are intended; these are the nations that antichrist reigns over: and it does not so much design their anger against Christ, and his people, expressed by their anathemas, excommunications, murders; and massacres, and bloody persecutions, which could not be cause of thanksgiving to the elders; but their anger and resentment at his power and reign, at having the outward court taken from them, said to be given them,
Re 11:2; and at their loss of power, profit, pleasure, and plenty, through the fall of Babylon, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom; and though these things will make the Gentiles, the followers of antichrist, gnash their teeth, it will occasion joy and thanksgiving among the saints:

and thy wrath is come: the time is come to make Babylon, or the Romish antichrist, to drink of the wine of the fierceness of divine wrath; as the time of the Lamb's wrath and vengeance upon Rome Pagan was come at the opening of the sixth seal, so the time of his wrath and vengeance on Rome Papal will be come at the sounding of the seventh trumpet:

and the time of the dead, that they should be judged; not the time of the wicked, who are dead in sins, while they live, and who die in their sins, not their time to be raised from the dead, in order to be judged, for they will not rise till after the thousand years are ended; nor the time of the dead in Christ, who will rise upon Christ's personal coming, at the beginning of the thousand years; but this trumpet respects not the personal coming of Christ to raise the dead, and judge the world, but his spiritual coming to reign in his churches, and judge their enemies: the time of those that were dead for Christ, whose blood had been shed in his cause, the time for the vindication of them, and avenging their blood, is now come; the souls of those under the altar had been a long time crying to God to avenge their blood on them that dwell on the earth; and now the time will be come, when God will judge his people, vindicate their cause; and when he, to whom vengeance belongs, will repay it, by pouring out the vials of his wrath on the antichristian party, by giving them blood to drink, because they are worthy; this judgment will issue in the fall and ruin both of the western and eastern antichrist.

And that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants; not a reward of debt, but of grace; not the recompence of reward, or the reward of the inheritance in heaven; but some marks of honour and respect; some measure of happiness, peace, and joy, which Christ of his rich grace will give to his ministers and churches, and all that love him in this glorious period of time; and who are distinguished in the following manner,

the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great: by the "prophets" are meant, not the prophets of the Old Testament, but the prophets of the New; and not those extraordinary persons, who are distinguished on the one hand from apostles and evangelists, and on the other from pastors and teachers, who had an extraordinary gift of interpreting the Scriptures, and of foretelling things to come; but the ministers of the word, the two prophets or witnesses, who had prophesied in sackcloth, but shall now be clothed with salvation: and by "the saints" are designed such as were set apart by God the Father from eternity, and whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ, and who are internally sanctified by the, Spirit of God, and externally separated from the rest of mankind, and incorporated into a Gospel church state, and are in holy fellowship one with another: and they that "fear the name" of God are such as truly love and reverence him, and worship him in Spirit and in truth, but are not members of any particular church; who yet will be taken notice of by the Lord, and a book of remembrance be written for them; so the proselytes from among the Gentiles are distinguished from the Israelites by the same character; See Gill on "Ac 13:16"; or rather this is a general character of both ministers and churches, since to fear the name of the Lord is a phrase that includes all religious worship, internal and external. And now all these, "small and great", whether greater or lesser believers, whether men of larger or meaner gifts and abilities, will all have the same reward, enjoy the same church privileges, partake of the same ordinances, in the purity of them, have the same communion with God, and fellowship with Christ, and one another, and share in, the same common peace, and liberty, and security from enemies: the last thing taken notice of by these elders, as matter of thanksgiving, is the destruction of antichrist.

And shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth; or "corrupt it"; meaning antichrist and his followers; who destroy the bodies, souls, and estates of men, and not only the inhabitants of the earth, but even the earth itself; for through that laziness and idleness which they spread wherever they come, a fruitful country is turned into barrenness; who corrupt the minds of men with false doctrine, idolatry, and superstition, and the bodies of women and men with all uncleanness and filthiness, with fornication, sodomy, &c. Re 19:2; and are the cause of their own destruction, and the destruction of others; which, upon the blowing of the seventh trumpet, will come swiftly and irrecoverably. Now will Babylon sink as a millstone into the sea, never to be seen more; both the western and eastern antichrists are intended; the former is called the son of perdition, because of his destroying others, and going into perdition himself; and the latter is called "Abaddon" and "Apollyon", which both signify a destroyer, **2Th 1:4**.

Revelation 11:19

Ver. 19. And the temple of God was opened in heaven,.... The temple at Jerusalem, to which the allusion is, was the place of public worship; this, in times of idolatry, was shut up, and fell to decay; and when there was a reformation its doors were opened, and that repaired; and to this the reference seems to be; and the sense is, that at this time the pure worship of God will be restored, and there will be a free and uninterrupted exercise of it; the temple will be open to all; here everyone may come, and sit, and worship without fear; churches will now be formed according to the original plan, and primitive order and institution of them; and the laws of Christ concerning the admission, regulation, and exclusion of members, will be carefully and punctually observed; the ordinances of Christ will be kept, as they were first delivered, and be purged from all the corruptions introduced by Papists or retained by Protestants; the ordinance of the Lord's supper will be freed from the senseless notions of transubstantiation and consubstantiation, and from all vain and impertinent rites and ceremonies that attend it; and the ordinance of baptism will be administered, both as to mode and subject, according to the word of God, as well as be cleared from the superstitious rites of the sign of the cross, chrism, spittle, &c. in short, all external worship will be pure, plain, and evangelical: hence it appears, that by this temple is not meant the church

triumphant, and the happiness of the saints in heaven, as becoming visible, not even the new Jerusalem church state, or the personal reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years; for in that state there will be no temple at all, nor will the saints then need the sun, or moon of Gospel ordinances,
Re 21:22;

and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: the ark was a chest, in which the covenant or tables of the law were put; upon it was the mercy seat, and over that the cherubim of glory, shadowing it; between which were the seat of the divine Majesty; this ark stood in the holy of holies, and was seen only by the high priest once a year, and was covered with a covering vail, **Nu 4:5**; it was wanting in the second temple {w}; to this the allusion is here; See Gill on "Heb 9:4". Now in this spiritual Gospel church state, through the pure ministry of the word, and the faithful administration of ordinances, the mysteries of the Gospel, into which angels desire to look, signified by the cherubim over the mercy seat, will be clearly revealed to all Christians, Jews and Gentiles; particularly to the former, from whom they have been hid; the vail that is over their hearts will then be done away, when they shall be turned to the Lord; and indeed the vail which is overall people will then be removed; and those truths which have been so much obscured by antichrist will be clearly seen; and especially the Lord Jesus Christ, the antitype of the ark, in whom are hid the treasures of wisdom; by whom the law, and the two tables of it, are fulfilled; and in whom they are pure and perfect; and by whom the covenant of grace is ratified and confirmed; and in whom it is sure; and through whom God is propitious to his people, and grants them communion with him; he will be visibly held forth in the ministry of the word; and be seen in the glory of his person, and offices, and grace; who has been so long and greatly hid, and kept out of sight by Popish and Mahometan darkness;

and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail; which may be understood of the vials of God's wrath, that will be poured out upon the pope and Turk; which though mentioned last, will be first, and make way for this spiritual state; particularly the things here spoken of may be compared with what will be at the pouring out of the seventh vial, Re 16:18; or this may design the powerful "voices", and clear ministrations of the Gospel, and the efficacy of them at this time; which, like "thunders", will awaken the consciences of men, and, like "earthquakes", will make them shake and tremble, and cry out, what shall we do to be saved? and as "lightnings" illuminate their understandings, and give them a clear discerning of divine things; and as "hail" beat down all self-righteousness and self-confidence, and all errors, heresies, superstition, and will worship. Though I suspect, that these several things are expressive of the change and revolution that will be made after a time, in this happy and comfortable state; and that the cold, which generally attends an hail storm, represents that coldness and lukewarmness, into which the churches of Christ will again sink, expressed in the Laodicean church state, in which condition Christ will find them when he personally appears; so that the seven seals, with the seven trumpets, bring us exactly to the same period of time as the seven churches do.

{w} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21. 2. See following in Apocrypha:

"And they took all the holy vessels of the Lord, both great and small, with the vessels of the ark of God, and the king's treasures, and carried them away into Babylon." (1 Esdras 1:54)

"4 And open your hearts in his law and commandments, and send you peace, 5 And hear your prayers, and be at one with you, and never forsake you in time of trouble." (2 Maccabees 1)

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 12:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVALATION 12

This chapter contains a vision of two wonders or signs seen in heaven, a woman and a dragon, and an account of what followed thereon, war both in heaven and earth. The vision of the woman is in Re 12:1, who is described by her being clothed with the sun; by her having the moon under her feet; by a crown of twelve stars on her head; and by her pregnancy, travail, pains, and cry. The vision of the dragon is in Re 12:3, who is described by his size, a great one; by his colour, red; by the number of his heads and horns, and the crowns on the former; by the force and strength of his tail, drawing and casting: down to the earth the third part of the stars of heaven; and by his position, standing before the woman, in order to devour her child when born. Next follows an account of the birth of her child, and what became of that and her: the child is said to be a man child, is described as a monarch, and as advanced to great honour and dignity; but she flies into the wilderness, where a place is prepared for her of God, and where she is hid for the space of 1260 days, Re 12:5; upon this ensues a war in heaven; the combatants on one side were Michael and his angels, and on the other the dragon and his; the issue of which was, that the latter were conquered, and cast out into the earth, Re 12:7, on account of which victory a triumphant song is sung by the inhabitants of heaven, because of salvation and strength that were come to them; and because of the kingdom and power of Christ, which now took place; and because of the ejection of Satan, the accuser of their brethren; in which song also notice is taken of the manner in which Satan was overcome by those he accused, by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and by their death; and it is concluded with an apostrophe to those that dwell in heaven, calling on them to rejoice, and to the inhabitants of the earth denouncing woe to them, because the devil was among them, whose wrath was great, his time being short, Re 12:10. Next follow the dragon's persecution of the woman, and her flight into the wilderness, and the care took of her there, as before described, Re 12:13; then the method the serpent took to annoy her, the help she received from the earth, and the wrath of the dragon upon that; which put him upon making war with the remnant of her seed, who kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus, Re 12:15.

Ver. 1. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven,.... This vision begins a new account of things, and represents the church in the apostles' times, and purer ages of Christianity, and under the Heathen and Arian persecutions; after which an account is given of the beast, mentioned in Re 11:7, of his rise, power, and reign, and then of the victories of the saints over him and of the vials of God's wrath upon him, and of his utter ruin and destruction; when comes on the marriage of the Lamb, and after that the first resurrection, and the thousand years' reign; and the whole is closed with a most beautiful description of the new Jerusalem state, which is the grand point and utmost period this prophetic book leads unto. This vision was seen "in heavens", whither John was called up to, **Re 4:1**; and where the various scenes, in a visionary way, were acted, both before, and after this; and which was an emblem of the state of the church on earth: what was seen is called "a wonder" or "sign", it being very amazing to behold, and very significative of persons and things; and a "great" one, because it respects great affairs, and wonderful events relating to the state of the church in future times, as well as present: and the first thing seen and observed was

a woman: by whom is meant, not the virgin Mary, as highly favoured of God, and big with her firstborn son Jesus; though there may be an allusion to her, and in some things there is a likeness, as is by some observed; as Mary brought forth Christ corporeally, and God in the fulness of time sent forth his Son, made of a woman, so this woman brings forth Christ spiritually, or the manly birth of his kingdom in the world, or one that should be the instrument of enlarging his kingdom; and as Herod sought to destroy Christ in his infancy, and as soon as born, so the dragon here stands watching to destroy the manly birth as soon as brought forth; and as Joseph, with Mary, and her son, by a divine direction, fled into Egypt, where they continued during the reign of Herod, so to this woman are given two wings of an eagle, to flee into the wilderness, where she abides, and is nourished, during the reign of antichrist; and as Herod, after the flight of Mary, killed all the infants of Bethlehem, of two years of age, and under, that he might destroy her son, so the dragon casts out a flood of water after the woman, to carry her away, and makes war with the remnant of her seed; and as the son of Mary, after he had done his work, was taken up to heaven, and made Lord and Christ, so the man child, this woman brings forth, is caught up to God, and his throne, to rule all nations with a rod of iron. But Mary, and the birth of Christ, can never be intended in this vision, that affair being past and over, and would never be represented to John in this manner, who was well acquainted with it: nor is the church of God, among the Jews of the former dispensation, designed; who were highly honoured of God, on whom he shone forth at the giving of the law to them; who had his word and ordinances, to be a light unto them, and had the priests and prophets of the Lord among them; and whose crown and glory it was to descend from the twelve patriarchs; and who were in great expectation of, and most earnestly desired, and longed for, and were, as it were, in pain for the coming of the Messiah; but to what purpose could such a representation of them be made to John now? much less is the church of the Jews, or the Jewish synagogue, as it was at the coming and birth of here designed, which was an evil, wicked, and adulterous generation, and so bad as not to be declared by the tongue and pen of man, and therefore far from answering the description here; but the pure apostolic church is meant, or the church of Christ, as it was in the times of the apostles, and the first ages of Christianity: the description answers to the first of the seven churches, the church at Ephesus, and to the opening of the first seal; and the church apostolical is here called "a woman", because the church was not now in its infancy, in nonage, as under the former dispensation, but grown up, mature, and at full age; and because espoused and married to Christ her husband, to whom she now brought forth many children, in a spiritual sense, as she hereafter will bring forth many more; and, because of her beauty in the eyes of her Lord and husband, which is greatly desired, and highly commended by him; as also because of her weakness in herself her ministers and members, not being able to do anything without her husband, Christ, through whom she can do all things. And who is further described by her habit and attire,

clothed with the sun; which does not point at her future state in glory; see Mt 13:47; but to her then present state on earth; and is expressive of that clear light of Gospel doctrine, which shone out upon her, like the sun in its meridian glory, and of the heat of love to God, Christ, and his people, and zeal for his truths, ordinances, worship, and discipline, which appeared in her; and of that inward holiness of heart which made her all glorious within; and of the outward purity of life and conversation, which greatly adorned her; but, above all, of the righteousness of Christ, who is the sun of righteousness, and the Lord her righteousness; which righteousness, as it was doctrinally held forth by her in the clearest manner, was also as a garment on her, to cover, preserve, and beautify her; and is comparable to the sun for its glory and excellency, outshining that of angels and men; and for its spotless purity, being without any blemish or deficiency; and for its perpetuity, being an everlasting one, and even exceeding the sun in duration.

And the moon under her feet; the church is sometimes compared to the moon herself, because, as the moon receives its light from the sun, so she receives her light from Christ; and as the moon often changes, and has its various "phases" and appearances, so the church sometimes is in the exercise of grace, and sometimes not; sometimes under trials and persecutions, and at other times in rest and peace; one while retaining the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel in their power and purity, and anon almost overrun with errors and superstition; but this cannot be the sense here. The common interpretation is, that it signifies the church's contempt of, and trampling upon all worldly things, which are changeable, perishing, and passing away; and which very well suits with the primitive saints, who did set their affections on things in earth, but on things in heaven, who sold their worldly possessions, and laid them at the apostles' feet. Brightman thinks, that, as the moon is a luminary, it may denote the light derived from the word of God, which was a lamp to her feet, and a lantern to her paths, by which her discipline and public worship were directed, and all the private actions of life were squared; which is no contemptible sense of the words: but I rather think the ceremonial law is intended, which is very fitly represented by the moon; it consisted much in the observation of new moons, and its solemn festivals were governed and regulated by them; see **2Ch 8:12**. There was some light in it, and it gave light to the saints in the night of Jewish darkness; it pointed out Christ to them, and was their schoolmaster to teach and lead them to him; yet, like the moon, it was the lesser light, the light it gave was interior to that which the Gospel now gives; and as the moon has its shots had that its imperfections; had it been faultless, there had been no need of another, and a new dispensation, but that could make nothing perfect; and, as the moon, it was variable and changeable; it was but for a time, and is now done away; it is not only waxen old like the moon in the wane, but is entirely vanished away: and yet, though it was abolished by the death of Christ, it was kept up and maintained by many of the Jews, even of them that, believed: persons are naturally fond of ceremonies; and many had rather part with a doctrine of the Gospel than with an old custom, or an useless ceremony; and this was, in a great measure, the case of the Jews; see Ac 21:20; so that it was one of the greatest difficulties the Christian church had to grapple with, to get the ceremonial law under foot; for though it was under the feet of Christ, it was a long time ere it was under the feet of the church; and a wonder it was when it was accomplished. Mr. Daubuz has given a new interpretation of this clause; and by "the moon" he understands the Holy Ghost, the Governor of the church, next to Christ, his successor and Vicar, and the minister of him, the sun of righteousness; who is said to be "under [the] feet" of the church, to assist her in her labour, and in the bringing forth of her man child; and to support and sustain her followers and members; and to be a luminary to them, to guide them in their ways.

And upon her head a crown of twelve stars; by "stars" are meant the ministers of the Gospel, which Christ holds in his right hand, and the church here bears on her head, **Re 1:20**. And these "twelve" have respect to the twelve apostles of Christ; and the "crown", which was composed of these stars, designs the doctrine which they preached; and this being on her "head", shows that it was in the beginning of this church state that the pure apostolic doctrine was embraced, professed, and held forth; for in the latter part of it there was a great decline, and falling off from it; in the times of the Apostle Paul, the mystery of iniquity began to work; and in John's time many antichrists were come into the world: and also this signifies, that the church openly owned the doctrine of the apostles, and was not ashamed of it before men, and publicly preached, and held it forth in her ministers, to all the world; and that this was her crown and glory, so long as she held it in its power, purity, and was both what she gloried in, and was a glory, an ornament to her: and this was also an emblem of her victory over her enemies, and of her future happiness, and pointed at the means of both; that it was by a faithful and steadfast adherence to the doctrine of the apostles that she overcame Satan, and all her spiritual enemies, and came to the possession of the crown of life and glory.

Revelation 12:2

Ver. 2. And she being big with child,.... Which may be expressive of the fruitfulness of the church in bearing and bringing forth many souls to Christ, and which were very numerous in this period of time, when it was said of Zion that this and that man was born in her; and particularly of her pregnancy with the kingdom of Christ, to be brought forth, and set up in the Roman empire, under the influence of a Roman emperor: and this being her case, she

cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered; which are metaphors taken from a woman in travail; and may either denote the earnest cries and fervent prayers of the members of the church, and the laborious and painful ministrations of the preachers of the Gospel for the conversion of souls, and especially for the setting up of the kingdom of Christ in the empire of Rome; or else the sore and grievous persecutions which attended the apostles of Christ, and succeeding ministers of the word, throughout the times of the ten Roman emperors, and especially under Dioclesian; when the church was big, and laboured in great pain, and the time was drawing on apace that a Christian emperor should be brought forth, who should be a means of spreading the Gospel, and the kingdom of Christ, all over the empire; see Jer 30:6; so the Targumist frequently explains the pains of a woman in travail in the prophets by aqe, "tribulation"; see the Targum on Isa 13:8.

Revelation 12:3

Ver. 3. And there appeared another wonder in heaven,.... Or "sign"; which represents the woman, or the church's adversary, Satan; not that he was in heaven, in the third heaven, the place of glory and happiness, for out of that he had been cast long ago; but in his great power and authority here on, earth, particularly in the Roman empire, where the church was labouring to bring forth her man child:

and behold a great red dragon; the devil, as it is explained in Re 12:9; though not he in person, but the Heathen Roman empire, or the Heathen Roman emperors, acted, influenced, directed, and presided over by him; so Pharaoh king of Egypt, and other cruel and persecuting monarchs and states, are called dragons in Scripture, Isa 27:1; all which places the Targum interprets of aklm, "a king", and particularly of Pharaoh king of Egypt; who is like to a great and mighty dragon: and the Roman Pagan empire, as under the influence of Satan, the god of this world, is fitly compared to a "dragon", for its policy and cunning in circumventing and ensnaring the professors of Christianity; and for its cruelty and inhumanity in persecuting of them; and for its poison of idolatry, will worship, and superstition: and it may be called a "great" one, for its strength and power, which lay in its immense treasure and riches, in numbers of men, in powerful armies, in strong cities, castles, &c. and for its large extent and jurisdiction; and a "red" one, because of the blood of the saints shed in it, by which it became of this colour; suitable to the character and bloody practices of the old serpent the devil, by whom it was influenced, who was a murderer from the beginning; and agreeably to one of the names by which the Jews {x} frequently call the Roman empire Edom, the name Esau had from the red pottage he sold his birthright for, and who himself was born red, Ge 25:29; it seems there were red dragons; Homer {y} says of the dragon, that it is red upon its back:

having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads; the "seven heads" of the Roman empire either design the seven mountains, or hills, on which Rome, the metropolis of the empire, was built, as the seven heads of the beast on which the woman drunk with the blood of the saints sat, are explained in Re 17:9; or rather the seven forms of government which successively should obtain in the empire, as kings, consuls, decemvirs, dictators, tribunes, emperors, and popes; hence these heads are said to have "seven crowns" upon them, as expressive of the imperial power and dignity which were in them, and exercised by them: Mr. Daubuz thinks seven capital cities in the Roman empire are meant, as Rome, Carthage, Aege, Antiochia, Augustodunum, Alexandria, and Constantinople; and nothing is more common than to call chief cities the heads of the countries they belong unto, as Damascus the head of Syria, and Samaria the head of Ephraim, **Isa 7:8**. Pliny {z} calls Babylon the head of Chaldea; and Cornelius Nepos says {a} of Thebes, that it was the head of all Greece; and Syracuse is by Florus {b} called the head of Sicily, as Rome is in Livy {c}, and other writers, the head of the world: and by the "ten horns" are meant either the ten kingdoms which should hereafter arise out of the Roman empire, and whose kings should give their kingdoms to the beast; or the ten Roman emperors, the persecutors of the Christians; or rather the ten provinces, or jurisdictions, which the empire was divided into while Pagan: Brightman out of Strabo has shown, that in the times of Augustus Caesar the Roman empire was distributed into two parts, the one was more immediately under the care of the emperor, and the other was governed by deputies; and each were divided into ten provinces; that which the emperor held consisted of Africa, France, Britain, Germany, Dacia with Mysia and Thracia, Cappadocia, Armenia, Syria, Palestine with Judea and Egypt, in all ten; and that part which was governed by deputies were the outermost Spain, and the isles by it, the innermost Spain, &c. Sardinia with Corsica, Sicily, Illyricum with Epirus, Macedonia, Achaia, Crete with Cyreniaca, Cyprus, Bithynia with Propontis; so that the Roman Pagan empire, as under the dominion of Satan, is manifestly designed by the dragon thus described. The Jews {d} speak of ten horns which the Israelites had, which when they sinned were taken from them, as it is written, **La 2:3**, and were given to the nations of the world, according to **Da 7:20**; "and of the ten horns that were in his head", &c.

{x} Vid. Buxtorf. Lex. Rab. in voce Mda. {y} Iliad. 2. l. 308. {z} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 26. {a} In Vita Epaminond. l. 15. c. 10. {b} Hist. Roman. l. 2. c. 6. {c} Hist. l. 21. c. 30. {d} Echa Rabbati, fol. 53. 2, 3.

Revelation 12:4

Ver. 4. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth,.... So Solinus {e} speaks of dragons that have power not only in their teeth, but in their tails, and do more hurt by striking than by biting; and the great serpent, which Attilius Regulus and his army fought with, not only destroyed many of his soldiers with its vast mouth, but dashed many to pieces with its tail {f}; which serpent, Pliny {g} says, was a hundred and twenty foot long: this is said in allusion to Antiochus Epiphanes, in **Da 8:10**; and designs either the subduing of the third part of the principalities, states, and kingdoms of the known world, to the Roman empire, through its great power and strength; which lay in its tail, in its train of armies which attended it, whereby such a number of nations were drawn into subjection to it, insomuch that the empire was called all the world, **Lu 2:1**; or else the influence the dragon should have upon the ministers of the word, who are compared to stars, **Re 1:20**; by causing them to relinquish their ministry, and drop their heavenly employment, and fall from that high and honourable state in which they were, into a carnal, earthly, and worldly religion; and that either through policy, cunning, and flattery, or through sorcery, magic art, lying oracles, and prophecy; see **Isa 9:15**; or through the violence of persecution they had not power to withstand; of which falling stars there are many instances, as the ecclesiastical histories of those times show:

and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born; just as the dragon Pharaoh lay in the midst of his rivers, in the river Nile, Eze 29:3; to slay the male children of Israel as soon as born; and as the dragon Herod sought to take away the life of Jesus quickly after his birth; and as Satan is like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, so the Pagan empire, or the Pagan emperors, took every opportunity to stifle the kingdom of Christ in embryo, and to prevent the bringing forth of any illustrious person; and sought to destroy him as soon as he appeared, who might be thought, or suspected to be an instrument of encouraging and establishing the kingdom of Christ in the empire: the instances Brightman produces are appropriate, and to the purpose; as of Maximinus destroying Alexander the son of Mammea, who he saw was inclined to the Christians; and of Decius taking off the two Philips, father and son, who were favourable to their cause; but especially the watchfulness of the dragon to destroy the man child was very manifest in the Roman emperors towards Constantine; Dioclesian and Galerius, observing his virtuous disposition in his youth, left nothing unattempted to cut him off privately; he was sent against the Sarmatians, a cruel and savage people, in hopes he would have been destroyed by them; and was set to fight with a lion in the theatre, under a pretence of exercising and showing his valour; and many other methods were used to take away his life, but none succeeded.

{e} Polyhist. c. 43. {f} Valer. Maxim. l. 1. c. 8. {g} Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 14.

Revelation 12:5

Ver. 5. And she brought forth a man child,.... Not Christ, literally and personally considered, or Christ in his human nature, as made of a woman, and born of a virgin, which was a fact that had been years ago; but Christ mystically, or Christ in his members, who are called by his name, because he is formed in them, and they are the seed of the woman, the church; and many of these were brought forth to Christ by the church in the primitive times, who were a manly birth, hale, strong, and robust Christians; or rather this manly birth may design a more glorious appearing and breaking forth of the kingdom of Christ in the Roman empire; for though Christ came as a King, yet his kingdom was not with observation in the days of his flesh; and though, upon his ascension to heaven, he was made and declared Lord and Christ, and had a kingdom and interest in the world, and even in the Roman empire, during the first three centuries, yet this was attended with the cross and persecution; but now, towards the close of that period, Constantine, a Christian emperor, was born, under whose influence and encouragement the Gospel was spread, and the kingdom of Christ set up and established in the empire; and this seems to be the thing intended here, he being of a generous, heroic, and manly disposition:

who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; this has a manifest reference to **Ps 2:9**; which psalm, and the passage referred to in it, evidently belong to Christ; and as this is represented as something future, what should be hereafter, and not what would immediately take place, it may regard the kingdom of

Christ in the last times, of which the present breaking forth of it in Constantine's time was an emblem and pledge; and may denote the universality of it, it reaching to all the kingdoms of the world, and the manner which Christ will rule, especially over his enemies, antichrist and his followers, whom he will destroy with the breath of his mouth, and break in pieces with his rod of iron, and order all that would not have him to reign over them slain before him; and as this may be applied to Christ mystical, the seed of the church, and members of Christ, as it is in **Re 2:26**; it may relate to their reign with Christ on earth, when they shall sit on thrones, and judge the world, when the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to there; but since this is expressly said of the man child in the text, it may be expressive even of the temporal government of Constantine, who was an heroic and victorious prince, and extended his dominions to the several parts of the world; as far as Britain to the west, and all Scythia to the north, Ethiopia to the south, and the remote parts of India to the east, even to the ultimate parts of the whole world, as Eusebius {h} affirms, making his kingdom to be three times larger than that of Alexander the great: and more especially it may describe the kingdom of Christ in his times; which was spread throughout all the nations of the empire; when Paganism was demolished, both in the continent and in the isles of the sea, and the strong holds Satan were pulled down, not by carnal, but spiritual weapons; when multitudes of souls were converted by the word, the rod of Christ's strength, and when the saints were guided, directed, fed, and comforted by it; for the allusion seems to be to the shepherd's rod, with which he leads and feeds his sheep; the same word signifies both to rule and feed:

and her child caught up unto God, and [to] his throne; which is to be understood not of Christ's ascent to heaven in human nature, when he was set down on the same throne with his Father; nor of Christ mystical, or of the saints being caught up into the air, to meet the Lord and be for ever with him, and sit down with him on the same throne; but rather of some glorious advance of the church and kingdom of Christ on earth; for as "to fall from heaven" is expressive of debasement and meanness, and of a low estate that a person is brought into, Isa 14:12; so an ascending up to heaven, as the two witnesses in the preceding chapter are said to do, denotes exaltation, or a rise to some more glorious state and condition, which was the case of the church in Constantine's time: and this may also take in the accession of Constantine himself to the imperial throne, which was the throne of God; for king's have their sceptres, thrones, and kingdoms from him, they his viceregents, and in some measure represent and are therefore called gods, and the children of the most high; yea, since Constantine, as advanced to the empire, was such an instrument in

Christ's hand for the setting up and establishing his kingdom in it, Christ himself may be here represented as reigning over the Roman empire, as a presage and prelude of his reigning over all the earth another day.

{h} De Vita Constantini, l. 1. c. 8.

Revelation 12:6

Ver. 6. And the woman fled into the wilderness,.... Not as soon as she was delivered of her child, which is not reasonable to suppose, and would have been improper if not impracticable; nor indeed was this flight until after the war was over, mentioned in Re 12:13; nor until the dragon and his angels were conquered and cast out; nor until a fresh persecution was raised by the dragon against the woman, as appears from Re 12:14; where this account stands in its proper place, and is here only introduced by way of prolepsis, or anticipation, and that with this view, to show what care was taken of the woman, as well as of her son: and this does not design the flight of the Christians from Jerusalem to Pella, a little before the destruction of the former; nor the expulsion of the Jews or Christians from Rome, either by Claudius or by Nero; but the disappearance of the true church, and its obscure state and condition quickly after the above advance of it; for through the riches and honours which Constantine bestowed upon the Christians, they became vain, proud, ambitious, and careless; false doctrine and superstition obtained; the antichristian apostasy came on apace, and prevailed and increased, and so obscured the true church, that in process of time it became invisible, was in the cleft of the rock, and in the secret places of the stairs, or like persons in a wood or wilderness, not to be seen, as well as desolate and uncomfortable:

where she hath a place prepared of God; God has had, and will have a church in the worst of times; as he reserved a number in Elijah's time, so he did in the times of the antichristian apostasy, who bowed not the knee to idolatry; this woman, the church, and her case, are the same with the 144,000 sealed ones in **Re 7:1**: whom God distinguished, hid, and preserved; for the wilderness is a place of retirement and safety, Eze 34:25, as well as of obscurity; and if any particular place is pointed at, I should think the valleys of Piedmont, which lie between France and Italy, are intended, where God has preserved, and continued a set of witnesses to the truth, in a succession, from the beginning of the apostasy to the present time, living in obscurity, and in safety, so far as not to be utterly destroyed:

that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred [and] threescore days: in allusion to the children of Israel in the wilderness, where they were fed with manna forty years; so the overcomers, or true Christians in the Pergamos church state, have hidden manna given them to eat, the food of the wilderness, with which church state the church in the wilderness must be considered as contemporary, as also with the Thyatirian and Sardian church states; for though, at the Reformation, which the Sardinian church state introduces, the church appeared again, and has been ever since coming up out of the wilderness, yet she is stall in it; where she is fed and nourished with the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, by the faithful ministers of the word, the two witnesses that prophesy in sackcloth; the time of whose prophesying: is exactly of the same date with the woman's bring in the wilderness, and with the reign of antichrist, namely, forty two months, or 1260 days, that is so many years, Re 11:2.

Revelation 12:7

Ver. 7. And there was war in heaven,.... Not in the third heaven, the habitation of God, the seat of the angels and glorified saints, there is no discord, jars, and contentions there, nothing but peace, love, and joy; but in the church below, which is militant, and has in it as it were a company of two armies; or rather in the Roman empire, which was the heaven of Satan, the god of this world, and of his angels; and this war refers not to the dispute between Michael the archangel and the devil about the body of Moses, **Jude 1:9**; nor to the of the angels when they rebelled against God, left their first estate, and were cast down to hell, **Jude 1:6**; nor to that ancient and stated enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, **Ge 3:15**, which has appeared in all ages of time, more or less, since the fall of Adam; nor to the combats which Christ personally had with Satan and his powers when here on earth, as in the wilderness, immediately after his baptism, and in the garden, a little before his death, and on the cross, when he spoiled principalities and powers, and destroyed him that had the power of death, the devil; but rather to the conflict which Christ and his people had with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with the Roman powers, and with false teachers during the three first centuries; though it seems best to understand it of the war commenced by Constantine against Paganism, and which was finished by Theodosius, by whom Heathenism received its death wound, and was never restored since the phrase of war in heaven is not unknown to the Jews; they say {i} when Pharaoh pursued after Israel, there was war above and below, and there was a very fierce war Mymvb, "in heaven":

Michael and his angels fought against the dragon: by whom is meant not a created angel, with whom his name does not agree, it signifying "who is as God"; nor does it appear that there is anyone created angel that presides over the rest, and has them at his command; though the Jews seem to imagine as if the angels were ranged under several heads and governors, of whom they make Michael to be one; for they say {k},

"when the holy blessed God descended on Mount Sinai, several companies of angels descended with him, wtrwbxw lakym, "Michael and his company", and Gabriel and his company:"

"so kings armies", in Ps 68:12; are by them interpreted of "kings of angels"; and it is asked who are these? and the answer is, Michael and Gabriel {l}. Lord Napier thinks that the Holy Ghost is designed, who is equally truly God as the Father and the Son, and who in the hearts of the saints opposes Satan and his temptations; but it seems best to interpret it of Jesus Christ, who is equal with God, is his fellow, is one with the Father, and in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily: he is the Archangel, the first of the chief princes, the head of all principality and power, who is on the side of the Lord's people, pleads their cause, defends their persons, and saves them; see **Jude 1:9**; and by "his angels" may be meant either the good angels, literally understood, who are his creatures, his ministers, and whom he employs under him, in protecting his people, and in destroying his enemies; or else the ministers of the Gospel, who are called angels in this book, and who, under Christ, fight the good fight of faith, contend earnestly for it, being valiant for the truth upon earth; or rather the Christian emperors, particularly Constantine and Theodosius, and the Christians with them, who opposed Paganism in the empire, and at last subdued, and cast it out:

and the dragon fought, and his angels; there is such an order among the evil angels, as to have one of their own at the head of them, they having cast off their allegiance to God and Christ, who is styled the prince of devils, and his name is Beelzebub: hence we read of the devil and his angels; see Mt 12:24; and these may be intended here, unless false teachers, who transform themselves into angels of light, as their leader sometimes does, should be thought to be meant, who resist the truth and oppose themselves to the ministers of it; though rather, Satan as presiding over, and influencing the Roman Pagan empire, and the Roman emperors, who acted under him, are here designed; with whom Constantine and Theodosius, under Christ, combated, such as Maximinus, Maxentius, Licinius, Arbogastes, and

Eugenius, and those that were with them. The Arabic version renders it, "the serpent with his soldiers".

{i} Shaare Ora, fol. 26. 4. {k} Debarim, Rabba, fol. 237. 4. {l} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 14. 3. & 26. 3.

Revelation 12:8

Ver. 8. And prevailed not,.... That is, the dragon, or the devil, and his angels, prevailed not against Michael and his angels; but, on the other hand, were conquered by them, as the above tyrants were by Constantine and Theodosius: some copies read in the singular number, "and he prevailed not", as the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; and other copies in the plural number, "they prevailed not": and as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions:

neither was their place found any more in heaven; in the Roman empire; or "his place", as some copies and versions: this was the time of the judgment of the world, or of the empire as Pagan; Satan the prince of the world, who had long governed in it, was now cast out of all power and authority in it, and all the idol gods in whom he was worshipped, with all the idolatrous priests; nor were there any more any Heathen emperors, for after Constantine's time there was only Julian the apostate, and who reigned but a little while; and after Theodosius, who cleared the empire of Paganism, there never was any, and there is reason to believe there never will be.

Revelation 12:9

Ver. 9. And the great dragon was cast out,.... From heaven, or from power and authority in the Roman empire, namely, the devil, where he had long presided; it is observable that Constantine himself speaks of "the dragon" being removed from the government of the commonwealth by the providence of God, and by the ministry, or means of him {m}; and he had his own effigies on a table placed before the porch of his palace, with the cross over his head, and a dragon under his feet thrust through with darts, and falling headlong {n};

the old serpent; who is so called, because, of old, from the beginning, almost as soon as the world was, he appeared in the form of a serpent, or rather made use of it as an instrument and means, by which he seduced Eve, and so brought on the ruin of mankind, it is very usual with the Jews to call the devil ynwmdqh vxn, "the old serpent" {o}; wherefore John uses this phrase as a known one, to explain who was meant by the great dragon:

called the devil and Satan; the first of these names signifies an accuser, and a forger of calumnies, and such is the old serpent; he accuses God to men, as if he was envious of their happiness, as in the case of our first parents, and of men to God, of which there is an instance in the case of Job; and hence he is in Re 12:10 called the accuser of the brethren; and the latter of them signifies an enemy, one that is filled with hatred and enmity to God and Christ, and to his church and people, whose adversary he is said to be, and at whose right hand he stands to resist, as he did Joshua the high priest:

which deceiveth the whole world; which he did by deceiving our first parents, from whom all mankind spring, and in whose loins they were when they were deceived; so the Jews say {p} of the old serpent, that Mlweh lkl hejm, "he deceives the whole world"; and so he deceived and corrupted the old world before the flood; and so he seduces every age and generation of men in the world; but here the Roman empire, sometimes called all the world, as in **Lu 2:1**, is meant, whom Satan deceived by drawing it into idolatry and superstition;

he was cast out into the earth; he was cast out of the Roman empire, from the rule of it, and worship in it, the Heathen gods and Heathen emperors being no more; when he possessed and instigated, and influenced the Huns, Goths, and Vandals, a meaner and baser sort of people, hereafter in this chapter called the earth, which is said to help the woman, contrary to the intention of Satan; the phrase denotes the greatness of the fall of Satan, his loss of power, and the meanness and low estate of the persons he afterwards had the power of, both the savage people before mentioned, and the antichristian party:

and his angels were cast out with him; the Heathen emperors, magistrates, priests, and other votaries of his, which he made use of as instruments to do his will.

{m} Euseb. de Vita Constantini, l. 2. c. 46. {n} Ib. l. 3. c. 3. {o} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 9. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 1. Imre Binah in Zohar in Gen. fol. 3. 1. & 15. 2. & passim, Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Exod. fol. 50. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 7. 3. & 8. 2. & 26. 3. & 46. 1. & Caphtor, fol. 101. 2. {p} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 13. 3.

Revelation 12:10

Ver. 10. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven,.... Which was a song of praise on account of the victory obtained by Michael and his angels over the dragon and his, or for the overthrow and downfall of Paganism in the Roman empire; for by "heaven" is meant the empire, now become Christian, or the Christian church state in it; and the "loud voice" heard in it by John shows that there was a great number in it, who rejoiced on this occasion, and that they were full of affection and fervency, and therefore expressed themselves in such manner, and in form following:

now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; "salvation" was come when Christ obtained it by his sufferings and death, and comes to particular persons in the effectual calling, and it will only be fully come when it is perfectly enjoyed in heaven: but here it designs a deliverance from Satan, as the god of this world, who was now dethroned, and cast down from his power, authority, and influence in the empire; and from Pagan idolatry and superstition, and from the ten days of tribulation, the cruel and bloody persecutions under the Heathen emperors; and denotes that safety and security, comfort, peace, and happiness, the churches enjoyed under the government of a Christian emperor: and now was come "strength"; not the strength of Christ personal, displayed in the redemption of his people; but rather of Christ mystical, of his church and interest, which had been very weak and low, and under oppression and persecution, but was now exalted, and in a flourishing condition, and was become strong and mighty; or it may design the strength and power of Christ, shown in destroying his enemies, in casting the dragon out of heaven down to the earth, and in bringing to confusion and destruction the Heathen emperors, princes, and others, who fled to the rocks and mountains for fear of him, and because of his great wrath: also now came "the kingdom of our God", the Gospel of the kingdom was preached everywhere and Gospel churches were set up in all parts of the empire, both which are sometimes signified by the kingdom of God; here was now an illustrious appearance of the kingdom of God in the world, such as had never been before; and which was a pledge and presage of the greatness of the kingdom, or of that everlasting kingdom which will be set up hereafter, when all other kingdoms will be at an end: to which is added "the power of his Christ"; or his authority as Lord and Christ, which took place at his resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God, and which will more fully appear at the last day, when he shall come in glory, and exercise his authority in judging the quick and dead, of which there was some resemblance at this time, in dethroning Satan, destroying Paganism, and putting an end to the power of the Heathen emperors and empire; and which is expressed in such language as the day of judgment is, **Re 6:12**; for to the opening of the sixth seal does this passage belong: a further account is given of the matter of this song, and the reason of it:

for the accuser of our brethren is cast down; hence it appears that this is not a song of the angels in heaven, since the saints are never called their brethren, nor the angels theirs, but their fellow servants; rather it may be thought to be the song of the saints in heaven, acknowledging those on earth to be their brethren, as they are, for there is but one family in heaven and in earth, and the saints on earth are called the of the souls under the altar, **Re 6:9**; but as this refers to the state of the church in Constantine's time, it must be the song of the saints in that state, who call the martyrs, that had been slain under the former persecutions, their brethren; for that they are the persons meant is clear from the following verse, whom Satan is an accuser of, for he is designed here; the word rendered "devil" signifies an accuser, and a false one, and is so translated **Tit 2:3**; this is a name frequently given to Satan by the Jews, and have adopted into their language the very Greek word {q} that is here used; and often say of him that he accuses Israel, and particularly that he accuses Israel above, that is, in heaven; and that he stands and dymt grjqm {r}, "continually accuses them", the very phrase used in the next clause: when Israel came out of Egypt, they say {s} the angel Samael (the devil) stood and accused them; the first day of the month Tisri, according to them {t}, is appointed a day for blowing of trumpets, to confound Satan, who comes to accuse at that time; so they say {u} that Satan stood and accused Abraham, and others; and indeed he was an accuser from the beginning, both of God to men, and of men to God; we have instances in Job and Joshua the high priest, **Job 1:8** **Zec 3:1**; but here it refers to the accusations brought against the Christians in the primitive times, during the ten persecutions, which were very horrid ones indeed; as that they had their private suppers, at which they ate their own infants, and their nightly meetings, for the gratifying of their lusts, in which they committed adultery, incest, and all manner of uncleanness; if ever a fire happened in a city, they were charged with it; and whenever there were any famine, or pestilence, or wars, or any public calamity, they were accused as the cause and occasion of it; as appears from the apologies for them written by Justin, Tertullian, Cyprian, Minutius Felix, &c. so that Satan at this time was remarkably the accuser of the brethren; but now this father of lies was cast down, he was cast out of heaven, and deprived of that power and authority he had in the empire, and lost his influence over men, and could not spread his lies, and get his false charges and accusations credited and received as before; he was not indeed wholly destroyed, nor even shut up in the bottomless pit, but he was cast down to the earth; he was in a low condition, his power was greatly diminished, and he was conquered by Christ, and cast down and bruised under the feet of the saints,

which accused them before our God day and night; so the evil spirit in Ahab's time, and Satan in Job's time, are said to stand before the Lord: and this shows the malice, and also the insolence of the devil, that he should stand and accuse the saints before God, who he knew was their God, and was on their side, and therefore his accusations could be of no avail; and though Christ appears in the presence of God for them, and is their advocate with the Father, yet he is constant and indefatigable in going about, and picking up charges against them, and carrying them to God.

{q} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 11. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib. {r} Shaare Ora, fol. 21. 4. & 24. 2. {s} Shemot Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 106. 4. {t} Targum Jon. in Numb. xxix. 1. {u} Zohar in Numb. fol. 107. 2.

Revelation 12:11

Ver. 11. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb,.... The Lord Jesus Christ, by whose blood they were redeemed and ransomed out of the hands of Satan, that was stronger than they; and by which they were justified from all sin, and so all charges and condemnation were of no avail against them, whether of Satan or the world; and by which they were cleansed from all pollution, both internal and external; and by which even their conversation garments were washed and made white; by this they also, drew nigh to God with boldness, as to their own God, notwithstanding the accusations of Satan; and this they could, and did make use of as a shield to defend them against all his charges; and this being sprinkled upon them, as it gave them an inward conscience peace amidst all, so it was their security from the destroying angel; and under this purple covering they went triumphantly to glory, having through it obtained an entire conquest over Satan: as also

and by the word of their testimony; either by Christ, the essential Word, they bore record of, who is sharper than any twoedged sword, and through whom they were made more than conquerors; or rather by the use they made of the Scriptures of truth, the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, to which they bore a faithful testimony, and to which they adhered, and by so doing gained the victory over Satan and his instruments, whether false teachers or persecutors; and particularly by the Gospel, which they embraced, professed, and preached with constancy and courage, and by their last testimony they bore to it at their death, on the account of it, as it follows:

and they loved not their lives unto the death; they did not value them; they made no account of them; they were not anxiously careful to preserve them; they chose to lose them; they ran to the stake, and willingly and cheerfully laid them down; they did not count them dear unto them, as said the Apostle Paul, that they might finish their course with joy, and testify the Gospel of the grace of God, or bear a testimony to it, Ac 20:24; yea, as Christ has directed, Lu 14:26; they hated their lives in comparison of him, and when in competition with him and his Gospel; and by dying thus they conquered Satan; had they loved their lives, and saved them by denying Christ and his truths, Satan would have conquered them; but dying in the cause of Christ, and for it, they got the victory over him.

Revelation 12:12

Ver. 12. Therefore rejoice, [ye] heavens, and ye that dwell in them,.... So in the prophetic language, at times, and upon occasions of rejoicing, the heavens are called upon to join, and bear a part therein, Ps 96:10; and by these may be meant here the angels of heaven, who rejoice at every advance of Christ's kingdom and interest; they rejoiced at his incarnation, and so they do at the conversion of every single sinner; and much more may they be thought to do so at such a time as this, when there were such multitudes of conversions, and the churches and interest of Christ in so flourishing a condition, and Satan's kingdom so much weakened; and to these may be joined the souls of the saints departed, who might be made acquainted with this wonderful change of things in the empire; and it may also be understood of the saints, the members of the several churches, even all heavenly minded persons, who were born from above, and were partakers of the heavenly calling, and whose conversations were in heaven; these are called upon to take their part in this song of praise and thanksgiving:

woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea: such as are of the earth, earthy, sensual, and earthly minded persons; and who are like the troubled waters, and raging waves of the sea, cannot rest, but cast up mire and dirt, and foam out their own shame; the barbarous nations of the Goths and Vandals, carnal professors of religion, and the antichristian party, which quickly upon this sprung up, may be intended, on whom this woe is denounced; the reason of which follows:

for the devil is come down unto you; and a greater woe cannot be upon men on earth, than to have the devil among them, who always brings mischief with him, and breathes nothing but ruin and destruction to men; he having lost his power in the Roman empire, possessed the above persons, and took up his residence among them; he came down, but not willingly, he was forced to it, he was cast down:

having great wrath; because he was conquered, and cast out of heaven, and was deprived of the worship that had been long given him, as the god of the world, and of that authority and influence which he had over men: and this his great wrath was seen in stirring up the Arians to persecute the Christians; and in the times of Julian, when he endeavoured to regain his lost power; and in bringing in the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, into the empire, to waste and destroy it; and in moving the antichristian party, which soon prevailed, to make war against the saints:

because he knoweth he hath but a short time; ere he should be shut up in the bottomless pit, or be confined in the place of torment, and ere his full punishment should be inflicted on him; which time of his to tempt, deceive, disturb, and distress men, is to be no longer than during the forty two months of antichrist's reign, and the 1260 days, or years, of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and of the church's being in the wilderness, and no longer than till the thousand years' reign of Christ with his saints begins, which, in comparison of his long reign in the Gentile world, is but a short time; and though, after the thousand years are ended, he will be let loose, yet it will be but for a season, a very small time, when he will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and be tormented night and day, for ever and ever.

Revelation 12:13

Ver. 13. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth,.... When the devil perceived he had not the power in the Roman empire he formerly had; and that his influence was only over the common and meaner sort of people, or over the earthly part of the church, and the barbarous nations in the world:

he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man [child]: he was enraged at the church, and pursued her with great wrath, who had brought forth a Christian emperor, by whom the kingdom of Christ was encouraged and supported in the empire; and because he could not come at this child to destroy it, that being caught up to God and to his throne, he attacks the woman, the church, in a new way, by stirring up earthly minded professors of Christianity, the Arians, against her, and by bringing in an inundation of the barbarous nations into the empire, now become Christian; for this persecution cannot be understood of the persecution raised by the Jews, under the instigation of Satan, against the Christian church, quickly after the ascension of Christ to heaven, for then the dragon had his place and power in the Roman empire, whereas this persecution was not till after the downfall of Paganism in it; and for the same reason it cannot design the persecution against the Christians begun by Nero, and carried on under succeeding emperors, which were the ten days of tribulation under the Smyrnaean church state, and were now over; these were the pains and birth throes of the woman, the church, antecedent to, and which brought on, the birth of the man child; and the persons that endured them were those that overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and their death, which were all previous to these times: nor does it respect so much the persecution under Julian, which was carried on not by open force and violence, but by subtlety; be abstained from corporeal punishments and shedding of blood, observing that these methods in former times had given the Christians an opportunity of showing their faith, patience: and fortitude, which had been the means of increasing their number; wherefore he betook himself to more private and artful methods, as to content himself with taking away the revenues of the ministers of the word, not suffering any Christians to be in military employments, denying their children the use of schools, encouraging the Jews, their sworn enemies, and tolerating all sorts of heresies among themselves, that so they might destroy one another; to which may be added, that his reign was but one year and seven or eight months, and therefore can scarcely be thought to be pointed at here; but inasmuch as the Arian persecution was the first after the fall of Paganism, and the principal one before the rise of antichrist, this may most reasonably be concluded to be meant here; and this began even in Constantine's time, for by means of an Arian presbyter that belonged to his sister Constantia, he was prevailed upon, towards the close of his days, to believe that Arius was not the man he was said to be, and that he had had hard measure; insomuch that he was recalled, and received into communion, and Athanasius was driven from his church, and banished to Triers in France: and the historian says {w}, that Constantine exercised "vim persecutionis", the force of persecution, or a violent one; bishops were exiled, the clergy were severely handled, and laymen taken notice of, who separated themselves from the communion of the Arians. Under Constantius, his son, the persecution raged much, Athanasius being gone from Alexandria, and one Gregory put in his room; and the people being uneasy at it, some were banished, others cast into prison, and others had their goods confiscated; women were dragged by the hair of their heads to the tribunals, and used very ignominiously; three thousand soldiers entered a church on an Easter day, and killed many women and children; virgins were stripped naked, and the bodies of those who died of their wounds were denied a burial, and cast to the dogs; and the persecution did not stop here, but went through Egypt, where the bishops, some of them, were beaten with rods, others were laid in bonds, and others were banished: in Egypt and Lybia ninety bishops were forced away, sixteen were banished, whose churches were delivered to the Arians. Lucius of Adrianople was bound in chains, cast into prison, and there perished; Paul of Constantinople was first expelled, after that murdered, and Macedonius, an Arian, put in his room; and such who refused to commune with him suffered stripes, bonds, imprisonment, and other tortures, of which they died, and others were banished, where they perished; women that refused had their breasts cut off, or burnt, either with red hot irons, or with eggs roasted at the fire to a very great heat {x}; with other instances too many to recite. Under Valens the emperor things were still worse, who became an Arian at the persuasion of his wife, and was baptized by Eudoxius, the Arian bishop of Constantinople, who, at his baptism, obliged him to swear that he would defend Arianism, and persecute those of a contrary opinion; and accordingly he moved an irreconcilable war against them; at one time he expelled Melesius from Antioch, Eusebius from Samosata, Pelagius from Laodicea, and Barsis from Edessa; and all the rest that would not communicate with Euzoius, an Arian, he punished, either with pecuniary fines or with stripes; and he is said to drown many in the river Orontes. This persecution went through the churches of Thrace, Dacia, and Pannonia; but what is most shocking of all is, that some chosen ecclesiastical men, to the number of four score and one, were sent to him from Constantinople to Nicomedia, with a supplication to redress some injuries and grievances; at which he being angry, ordered Modestus, the governor, to take them and put them to death; but the governor fearing to do it openly, lest there should be an insurrections, ordered a ship to be got ready, pretending to carry them into exile, but directed the mariners to go in a fisher's boat behind, and set fire to the ship, which they accordingly did when at sea, where all the above worthy men perished at once {y}. It would be endless to rehearse all the instances of cruelty under this persecution; it need only be observed, that this was at the instigation of the devil, as all persecution is; and that Satan herein acted like himself, as the great dragon, as he was when Rome Pagan was in power: these were Christian emperors in name, but they exercised all the cruelties of the Heathen ones, if they did not exceed them; and a greater regard was shown to Paganism than to the orthodox religion. Valens tolerated all religions but that, especially Heathenism; all his reign the fire burned upon the altars, images were honoured with libations and sacrifices, the public festivals of the Heathens were kept, and the rites of Bacchus were performed in the streets {z}; and this persecution was followed by the inundation of the barbarous nations, of which hereafter.

{w} Sulpitii Sever. Hist. Sacr. l. 2. {x} Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 50, 56. {y} Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 73, 74. {z} Ib. p. 73. & c. 7. p. 304.

Revelation 12:14

Ver. 14. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle,.... By which are meant, not the two testaments, by which she was supported under afflictions, trials, and persecutions, and against Satan and all his efforts; nor the two graces of faith and hope, by which she rose, and dwelt on high, in the view of invisible things, and with contempt of the world, its frowns or flatteries; nor, as others think, prayer and good works, by the former of which she flew to God for supplies of grace and protection, and by the latter was useful and profitable to men, and gave glory to God, and escaped the just censures of the world; nor are two powerful kingdoms, within the dominions of the dragon, intended, as others have thought, who take them to be France and Spain, to which Britain was an appendix; when they were in the possession of Constantius Chlorus, the father of Constantine the great, where the Christians had refuge in the persecution under Dioclesian; but this was before the war in heaven, and the downfall of Paganism in the empire, and before the above persecution; rather these two wings of the eagle design the eastern and western divisions of the Roman empire: it is not unusual in Scripture for a monarchy, or monarch, as the Assyrian king and kingdom, to be signified by an eagle, and the wings of eagles, Eze 17:3; and it is well known that the eagle is the ensign of the Roman empire, to which the allusion is in Mt 24:28; and at the death of Theodosius the empire was divided, as has been observed before, into two parts; the eastern empire was given to one of his sons and the western to another; and this was between the Arian persecution, and the irruption of the Goths and Vandals, when the church was fleeing and gradually disappearing; and these two empires both went under the Christian name, and supported the outward visible church, though much corrupted, and still more and more corrupting; by which means the pure members of the church, though few and very obscure were preserved. In a word, these wings may denote the swiftness in which the church proceeded to disappear, having lost her former simplicity and glory for which eagles' wings are famous, Pr 23:5; and more especially that divine strength and support by which she was bore up, and carried through, and delivered out of sore afflictions and persecutions; see Isa 40:31. The allusion is to God's deliverance of the people of Israel out of Egypt when he bore them as on eagles wings, and carried them though the wilderness, Ex 19:4, so here it follows,

that she might fly into the wilderness; a place desolate, and full of serpents and scorpions, uncomfortable, and destitute of provisions, and yet a place of safety as well as of solitariness and retirement; and chiefly designs the obscure and invisible state of the pure church in the times of the antichristian apostasy; See Gill on "Re 12:6".

Into her place; which was prepared of God for her, as in Re 12:6;

where she is nourished by the ministers of the word the two witnesses that prophesy in sackcloth who feed the church with knowledge and understanding; with the words of faith and good doctrine, with the Gospel, and the truths of it, which are sweet, comfortable and nutritive; and with the ordinances of the Gospel, the entertainment of Wisdom's house, the feast of fat things, and the breasts of consolation; and with Christ the hidden manna, the food of the wilderness: and that

for a time, and times, and half a time; that is, all the times of antichrist, the forty two months of his reign; during which time the holy city is trodden under foot, and in a desolate and afflicted condition outwardly, as may be learnt by comparing together **Da 7:25**
Re 13:5; and until the end of wonders, or when time shall be no longer or till the seventh angel has sounded his trumpet as appears from Da 12:7. This date is the same with 1260 days in Re 12:6, for "time" signifies a prophetic year, or 360 years; and "times" two years, or 720 years; and half a time, half a year, or 180 years, in all 1230 years; and which are to be reckoned, not from the beginning of the church's flight in Constantine's time, or from the Arian persecution, but from her entering into her wilderness state, or entire disappearance upon the prevalence of the antichristian apostasy; which might be when the bishop of Rome took upon him the title of universal bishop: and here and during this time she is hid

from the face of the serpent; that is, from his wrath so as that he cannot utterly destroy her. God having reserved a sealed number for himself; see **Re 6:16**, or from the sight of the serpent as the Arabic version renders it, so as that he could not discern with all his quick sight where the church was.

Revelation 12:15

Ver. 15. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood,.... Which cannot design any persecution before the fall of Paganism, either of the Jews, or of the Romans; nor indeed the Arian persecution, since the casting out of this flood is distinguished from the above persecution, and was after the church began to flee upon that persecution; though it is not unusual for wicked persecutors, and violent persecutions, to be expressed by waters, and they are called proud waters, Ps 124:1; and these may be said to be cast out of the mouth of the serpent, the devil, who was a persecutor and a murderer from the beginning, and by whom all persecutors and persecutions are instigated, moved, and carried on; but rather, as the words of a man's mouth are as deep waters,
Pr 18:4; and doctrines, good or bad, may be so called; that flood of errors and heresies, which were poured in between the times of Constantine and the rise of antichrist may be here intended; such as the Arian heresy, which denied the divinity of Christ; the Nestorian heresy, which divided his person; and the Eutychian heresy, which confounded the two natures in him; and the Macedonian heresy, which took away the deity of the Holy Ghost; and the Pelagian heresy, which destroyed the grace of God, and set up the power of man's free will: and this flood of errors and heresies may be truly said to be cast out of the serpent's mouth; since the old serpent, the devil, is the father of all lies, and errors: and the above heresies are the doctrines of devils, and damnable ones; and were designed by Satan to destroy the souls of men, and ruin the church: though since this flood followed upon the Arian persecution, and was after the church began to flee, being supported and secured by the two divisions of the empire, eastern and western, the wings of the Roman eagle, it seems best by this flood to understand the irruption of the barbarous nations, which quickly followed that division; the Goths, Huns, Vandals, Heruli, Alans, and Lombards, who were poured into the western empire, and overran, and at last destroyed it; so that this flood is contemporary with the first four trumpets; after which followed the swarms of locusts, the Saracens, which infested, teased, and tormented the "eastern" empire; and after them the Turks, the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates, were let loose, and like a mighty torrent overflowed, and utterly destroyed it; and all this was done at the instigation of Satan, he being filled with wrath, because the empire was become Christian, and his view was to destroy the church in it: for this flood was cast

after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood; along with the empire, and be no more; but his designs were frustrated, and he disappointed; so people, nations, and tongues, are compared to waters in Re 17:15; see **Isa 8:7**, which the Targum interprets of the armies of much people.

Revelation 12:16

Ver. 16. And the earth helped the woman,.... By opening itself, and taking in what the serpent cast out, so that it could not reach the woman, and annoy her, as follows:

and the earth opened her mouth; as it did when it swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Nu 16:30; to which history this may have some respect:

and swallowed up the flood which the dragon east out of his mouth; if the flood refers to the Arian persecution, then the earth helping the woman, the church, and swallowing up this flood, may respect the Goths, who broke into the Roman provinces, under their king, Athanaricus, and fell upon the Arians, with great rage and cruelty, and infested the Roman provinces, which were nearer; they seized upon Thrace, which was the occasion of tranquillity to the orthodox; for Valens being moved by these things, desisted from persecuting them, and, leaving Antioch, he went to Constantinople to form measures for the carrying on of the war against the Goths {a}; and thus the earth helped the woman. But if, by the flood, the errors and heresies of those times are meant, then the councils may be intended by the earth; which, though they consisted of men that were earthly, and greatly apostatized in other things, yet opposed, refuted, and condemned these heresies and errors, and so were the means of preserving the church from them, as some think; though others are of opinion that the barbarous nations are in this also designed, who embracing Arianism, and the corrupt religion, where they came, by which they were, in, some measure, mollified and reconciled to the Christians, did not seek to root them out, and destroy them, as Satan hoped they would; but since they themselves, with the Mahometans, are meant by the flood, the earth must be interpreted of the corrupt and antichristian church, the idolaters which sustained the force of this inundation, and for some time repelled it, and so secured the true church; and when the western empire was overrun by it, as by the Goths, &c. idolaters, earthly minded men, and carnal professors, were the sufferers, and bore the shock of it; and when the eastern empire was overrun by the Saracens, the tormenting locusts, the green things, grass and trees, were not hurt by them;

none of the sealed ones, only those who were not sealed, **Re 9:4**; and the Turkish inundation was a scourge upon the antichristian party: so that it was the earth, or earthly part of professors, the idolaters, that bore the fury and force of this flood, and broke it off from the church. And so sometimes wicked men are helpful to the saints, as the Philistines were serviceable to David, to screen him from the fury of Saul; and Lysias, the chief captain, and Felix and Festus, Roman governors, were instruments of preserving the Apostle Paul from falling into the hands of the Jews, his enemies; and the Christians that were scattered by the persecution at Jerusalem found refuge and safety among the Gentiles.

{a} Hist. Eccl. Magdeburg. cent. 4. c. 3. p. 80.

Revelation 12:17

Ver. 17. And the dragon was wroth with the woman,.... The devil was very angry with the church, because he could not destroy her by the Arian persecution he had raised; and because he could not carry her away with the flood, either of errors and heresies, or of the barbarous nations; and because he could not, by any means, come at her, and indeed did not well know where she was, a place being prepared for her of God in the wilderness, where she was taken care of: wherefore he took another method as follows,

and went to make war with the remnant of her seed; which refers to the war the beast, to whom he gave his power, seat, and authority, is said to make with the saints; and which was entered into and carried on by his instigation, of which there is an account in the following chapter: the persons with whom he went to make war are described as "her seed"; the seed of the church, her spiritual offspring, the sons and daughters she brought forth to Christ; between which seed, and Satan and his seed, there always was an enmity: and these are "the remnant" of her seed, a few persons scattered up and down, a remnant according to the election of grace; who were not in bodies, or in church states, regularly formed, as heretofore, but in private families, and some here, and some there; and who were called out to bear a testimony for Christ in corrupt times: and these are further described as such

who keep the commandments of God: and not the traditions of men: nor are the commands of the moral law of God so much designed, though it is true that these were kept by the seed of the church; but rather the ordinances of the Gospel, the commands of God our Saviour, such as baptism and the Lord's supper; which were kept by these faithful ones, as they had been delivered, when they began now to be sadly corrupted by the antichristian party:

and have the testimony of Jesus Christ; the Gospel, which is a testimony concerning him; See Gill on "Re 1:2". This they had in their hearts, a spiritual knowledge and saving experience of it; and this they had in their hands, they made a profession of it, they held it forth, and held it fast; all which was the reason of Satan's enmity against them, and war with them.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 13:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 13

This chapter contains a description of the Romish antichrist, under the figure of two beasts, the one representing him in his civil power, the other in his ecclesiastical power. The first beast is described by its origin, the sea, and by the monstrous shape its several parts; its heads seven, in which were the name of blasphemy; its horns ten, on which were crowns; its skin like a leopard, its feet as a bear, and its mouth as a lion; and by its state and condition, having power, a throne, and great authority; and having one of its heads wounded, and healed; and by the great regard had unto him, being wondered at, and worshipped by all the world, and declared to be more powerful than any, and none to be like them, Re 13:1. Next an account is given of what he was suffered to have, a blaspheming mouth, and power to continue forty two months, Re 13:5; and of what he said or uttered, his blasphemy against God, his name, tabernacle, and the inhabitants of heaven, Re 13:6; and of what he did by permission, made war with the saints, overcame them, and had power over all people, Re 13:7; and of the worship given him by the reprobate part of the world, Re 13:8; and the whole is concluded with an exhortation exciting attention to what had been said, with a threatening to the beast, and a word of comfort to the saints, Re 13:9. And then follows the description of the second beast, by its original the earth; by its likeness to a lamb, and a dragon; to the former for its two horns, and to the latter for its speech, Re 13:11; and by the actions ascribed to it, which are many; as exercising all the power of the first beast; causing all the inhabitants of the earth to worship that; doing miracles, of which one is mentioned, thereby deceiving the men of the world; ordering them to make an image to the wounded beast; giving life to it, so that it could speak; putting to death all that refused to worship it; obliging men of all ranks and degrees to have a mark in their right hands or foreheads, and forbidding such that had not to buy or sell, Re 13:12. And the chapter is concluded with an epiphonema, exciting men of understanding to search out, and count the number of the beast's name, since it is possible to be done, being the number of a man, and easy to be done, consisting of three Greek letters, c x v, which are numerically 666, Re 13:18.

Ver. 1. And I stood upon the sand of the sea,.... The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "and he stood", &c. and so the Alexandrian copy; meaning the dragon, said to be wroth with the woman, and to go forth to make war with her seed, in the latter part of the preceding chapter, where some versions place this clause; and the Arabic version reads expressly, "and the serpent stood", &c. And this is thought by some to be the better reading, because of the connection with what goes before, and because there is no mention of the name of John, nor of his being called or removed from heaven, where he was beholding sights, and continuing the account of them, **Re 4:1**, as there is when he is shown sights elsewhere; see Re 17:3. And besides, as the dragon was contriving a new way of persecuting the saints, and about to raise up a beast out of the sea, by which he might do it, to whom he would give his power, seat, and authority, he is represented as standing in a proper place for this purpose; it was upon the sand, which may signify a multitude of people employed by him, and also may denote the weakness and failure of his efforts in the issue; yet the Greek copies in general agree in the common reading, and refer it to John, who stood on the shore of the isle of Patmos, and in a fit place, in a visionary way, to behold the following sight: for that the next clause belongs to him is without doubt,

and saw a beast rise up out of the sea: by which is meant, not the devil, because it is in Re 13:2, distinguished from the dragon, who is the devil and Satan, as also elsewhere, Re 16:13, nor the old Roman empire, though there are many things which seem to agree; the Roman monarchy is called a beast it is one of the four beasts in **Da 7:2**; which rose up out of the sea, from a multitude of people and nations, which were gathered to it and composed it. Rome Pagan had, as this beast has, seven heads and ten horns, Re 12:3; and had power over all nations, and is therefore sometimes called the whole world, and exercised great cruelty upon the Christians; but then this is signified by the red dragon itself, in the preceding chapter, and, besides, had risen up before the times of John, whereas this is one of the things shown him, which should be hereafter: this beast then was not, but was to come, **Re 4:1**; and was not to arise, nor did it arise till after the downfall of Rome Pagan, and after the Arian persecution, after the woman's flight into the wilderness, and after, and upon the inundation of the barbarous nations into the empire, as appears from the preceding chapter; nor will the time of this beast's duration agree with the old Roman empire, for this beast is to continue forty two months, Re 13:5; which is the whole time of the holy city being trodden under foot, and of the church's being in the wilderness, and of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth; whereas the Roman monarchy, governed by emperors, did not last four hundred years. Moreover, as this beast is distinguished from the dragon, so it is said to have its power from him; whereas the Roman empire was of God, and obedience and subjection to it are always recommended to the saints in the Scriptures, Ro 13:1, much less can the empire, as become truly Christian, be intended; nor are either the eastern or the Turkish empires designed, for neither of these had their seat at Rome, which the dragon save to this beast, but at Constantinople: it remains then, that by it meant the Roman empire, when divided into ten kingdoms, and united in the Papacy; or it designs Christ in his secular power, with the ten kings, that receive power with him as such one hour, and give their kingdom to him: now this beast is said to "rise up out of the sea"; either out of the abyss, the bottomless pit of hell, see Re 11:7; or out of the sea of this world, and the wicked in it, who are like a troubled sea that cannot rest; or out of the floods of errors and heresies, by which this man of sin was conceived and cherished, and a way was paved for his open rising and appearance in the world; or rather, since waters design, in this book, nations, people, and tongues, see Re 17:15; and the four beasts in Daniel are said to rise out of the sea, **Re 7:2**; and a multitude of people are compared to the waves of the sea, Eze 26:3; see also Isa 17:12, where the Jewish writers say {b}, the nations are compared to the sea, as Israel to the sand, the inundation of the barbarous nations, the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, into the empire, seem to be intended, which made great commotions and changes in it: these set up ten kingdoms in it, upon which antichrist arose, and placed himself at the head of them; these gave their kingdoms to the beast; and so may be said to give rise unto him, especially as to his secular power.

Having seven heads: which some understand the seat of knowledge, and seven a number of perfection; and so may refer to those boasted treasures of wisdom and knowledge which antichrist pretends to have, as being the judge of controversies, and the infallible interpreter of the Scriptures; or else the seven fold form of government among the Romans is intended, as in Re 12:3; or rather as it is interpreted in Re 17:9; the seven mountains on which Rome was built, and so design the city itself built on them, that being the metropolis of the empire; or the seven capital cities of the empire, as Mr. Daubuz thinks; the whole is meant, for it is the same Roman monarchy as before, only in a different form:

and ten horns; the ten kingdoms, into which the empire was divide it upon its being wasted and vanquished by the Goths, and the ten kings of them, which reigned with the beast, and gave their kingdoms to him; so horns signify kingdoms in **Zec 1:18**.

And upon his horns ten crowns; which distinguishes Rome Papal from Rome Pagan; the crowns in Rome Pagan were upon the heads, or the emperors, that resided at Rome; and though it had ten horns, as here, and was divided into so many provinces, which were governed by deputies, proconsuls, &c. yet they were not kings, they had no crowns; but here the horns have crowns on them because the governors of these ten kingdoms are crowned kings:

and upon his heads the name of blasphemy; which refers not to Rome Pagan being called the eternal city, and Rome the goddess, and the like; but to Rome Papal, or antichrist, who elsewhere is said to have the name "Mystery" written upon the forehead, and to have blasphemy on his heads; and is called blasphemy in the abstract, as being a most blasphemous creature against God, Christ, and his people, and so his name is suitable to his character, mouth, and language, Re 13:5; assuming that to himself which only belongs to God and Christ, as power over the conscience, to forgive sin, &c. and even deity itself; see **2Th 1:4**. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, "names of blasphemy".

{b} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 41. 4. & 55. 2. & 63. 3.

Revelation 13:2

Ver. 2. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard,.... To which the Grecian kingdom is compared in **Da 7:6**; because of that rapidity and swiftness with which Alexander overran the world, and set up this monarchy; and to which the Roman Papal monarchy bears some resemblance; for as the Grecian monarchy was divided into several parts, which the leopard's spots may also point out, so the Roman empire was divided into ten parts, and united under the pope, as the head of them; and may be, in this form, compared to a leopard for its swiftness, **Hab 1:8**; because this beast, as soon as he arose and got power, quickly, and in a very short time, extended it over all emperors, kings, princes, bishops, and over all kingdoms and churches; and for its spots, Jer 13:23, which may be expressive both of the spots of sin and immorality of every kind, and of errors and heresies, superstition and idolatry, with which antichrist and his followers abound; and for its insidiousness and cruelty, **Jer 5:6**. It lies in wait for its prey, and suddenly falls upon it, and devours it; and is a lively picture of the cunning sleight of the antichristian party, who lie in wait to deceive, and of their blood thirstiness and barbarity. It is reported {c} of the leopard, that it is of a sweet smell, and by its odour it draws the fawns, does, &c. near it, and then makes a prey of them; so antichrist, by outward riches and preferments, by the external pomp and splendour of his religion, by his living wonders and miracles, and by his great pretensions to holiness and the like, allures multitudes unto him, and destroys them.

And his feet were as [the feet] of a bear; to which the Persian monarchy is compared, **Da 7:5**. And this, as some think, may denote the strength and stability of the kingdom of antichrist, it having already endured a great while, and will be thought to be very firm and stable when its ruin is near; or rather the wars and fightings of antichrist against the saints, the fore feet of the bear being what that creature lights with, and tears and destroys such as oppose it, or fall a prey to it; and may also, as before, express the voraciousness and cruelty of antichrist, with respect to the bodies and souls of men:

and his mouth, as the mouth of a lion: to which creature the Babylonian monarchy is compared, **Da 7:4**, uttering out blasphemies against God, threatening ruin and destruction to men, and injecting fear into them, as the roaring of a lion does, and seizing upon, and devouring their estates and possessions, as well as butchering their persons. This beast has all the properties of the several beasts in Daniel's prophecy, wherefore all the figures there made use of to describe them are put together, to point unto us this monster of iniquity.

And the dragon gave him his power: for the coming of antichrist is after the working of Satan, **2Th 1:9**; he gave him his cunning and subtlety, as the old serpent, and taught him his arts and tricks to deceive mankind; and gave him a power to do signs and lying wonders, as well as communicated his malice and cruelty to persecute and oppress the saints; or an "army" of ecclesiastics to fight under him, and for him:

and his seat; at Rome, for there Satan's seat was, **Re 2:13**, in the time of the Pagan Roman empire, which was quitted by Dioclesian and Maximian, when they resigned the government of it, the one being at Nicomedia, and the other at Milan; and when Constantine came to the throne, he removed to Byzantium, and rebuilt it, and called it after his name Constantinople, and had his residence there, as had all the eastern emperors afterwards; and as for the western emperors, they chiefly resided either at Milan or Ravenna, to which last place Odoacer, Theodoric, and other Gothic kings retired, when the government was in their hands; so that hereby this seat was empty, and way was made for antichrist to take it, as he did.

And great authority; over the Roman empire, and the kings and kingdoms in it; he gave him his authority as the god of this world; what Christ refused at the hands of Satan, that his pretended vicar took, even the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; yea, assumed to himself all power in heaven, earth, and hell, signified by his triple crown, at the instigation of the devil; so that it appears that he is not the vicar of Christ, but the vicar of the devil; and not the successor of Peter, but the successor of Satan; and that he holds his possessions, not by the donation of Constantine, but by the gift of the dragon.

{c} Aelian. de Animal. l. 5. c. 40.

Revelation 13:3

Ver. 3. And I saw one of his heads,.... Not the Capitoline mountain, or the Capitol, the temple of Jupiter, built on that hill, which was burnt by lightning in the times of Titus, and magnificently rebuilt by Domitian, which was a thing past, and of no such moment as to be taken notice of here; nor anyone of the Roman emperors particularly, as Julius Caesar, at whose death the empire received a wound, upon its first erection in him, but was healed by the settlement of Augustus in it; nor Nero, at whose death the family of the Caesars ceased, when the empire was threatened with ruin in the following reigns, but was restored and reestablished in Vespasian, for these were before the times of John: but this is to be understood of the sixth head, or form of government, which obtained in the empire; namely, that of emperors, and of the destruction of Rome itself, the head of the empire, and which was built on seven mountains, designed by the seven heads of this beast: and this head was

as it were wounded to death; when the Roman empire was like a burning mountain cast into the sea; when Rome itself was taken, sacked, and burnt, more than once, particularly by Totilas; when Augustulus, the last of the emperors, was obliged to abdicate the throne; when Odoacer called himself, not emperor of Rome, but king of Italy, and retired from Rome to Ravenna; and when Adolphus, another Gothic king, thought to have changed the name of Rome, and given it that of Gothia: this seemed to be a deadly wound to

Rome, to the empire and emperors.

And his deadly wound was healed; by the setting up of ten kingdoms in it, the kings of which gave them to the beast, to antichrist, the pope of Rome, and so the empire came to have an head again, a governor, though of another kind: some choose to understand this of the wound which antichrist received at the Reformation, by Luther, Calvin, and others, which has since been healing, Popery recovering itself again in some countries where it was driven out, and which, it is thought, will be entirely healed before his destruction:

and all the world wondered after the beast; which expresses the large extent of antichrist's dominion, which reached to all the Roman empire, **Lu 2:1**; yea, to all kindreds, tongues, and nations,
Re 13:7; so that the universality the Papists boast of, as a note of the true church, is manifestly a mark of the beast, or of antichrist; and also the great esteem he is had in by his followers, who admire his power and authority, his grandeur, pomp, and riches, his signs and lying wonders, his pretended infallibility and holiness, his stock of merits and unwritten traditions, his skill to interpret Scripture, and his power to forgive sins, and the like: they went after him, obeyed him, embraced his doctrines, attended his religion and worship with wonder and amazement.

Revelation 13:4

Ver. 4. And they worshipped the dragon,.... The devil, in the idols, images, angels, and saints departed, to whom they give adoration, as did the Gentiles, whose successors they are, and whose name they bear; see 1Co 10:20;

which gave power unto the beast, as in Re 13:2;

and they worshipped the beast; not only in a civil way, being subject to him as their temporal lord, to whom they give homage; obedience, and tribute, but in a religious way; for antichrist sits in the temple to be worshipped as God, showing himself that he is God, and receives adorations from his creatures, the cardinals, and others; but woe to them that worship this beast; see Re 14:9.

Saying, who [is] like unto the beast? using such expressions as are used of God himself, implying that there is none like him, Ex 15:11, yea, they ascribe deity to him, calling him our Lord God the pope, God, and a God on earth; See Gill on "2Th 2:4".

Who is able to make war with him? And indeed, such was his power and strength once, that he was more than a match for emperors and kings; and those were badly off that engaged in a war with him, when his power was such, that he could depose one, and set up other, kick the crowns of kings, tread upon the necks of emperors, oblige them to hold his stirrup, while mounted his horse, and keep them barefoot at his gate for days together, waiting for admittance; of all which there are instances.

Revelation 13:5

Ver. 5. And there was given unto him a mouth,.... The beast is said to have a mouth before, like the mouth of a lion, Re 13:2; but now he was moved and stirred up by the dragon, the devil, to open it, not only in a cruel and voracious way, but in a haughty, lying, and blasphemous manner: and this was given him, it was at the instigation of Satan, and by divine permission; his coming, speaking, and acting, were after the working of Satan, but not without the will of God; who, as he gave up many to a judicial blindness, to believe his lies and blasphemies, gave up him to speak them, as follows:

speaking great things, and blasphemies; great swelling words of vanity; calling himself by high and lofty titles, as Christ's vicar, Peter's successor, head of the church, universal bishop, &c. promising great things to his followers, riches, honours, pleasures, pardons, and heaven itself; and uttering things of a blasphemous kind, or great blasphemies, the particulars of which are mentioned in Re 13:6; so the little horn, who is the same with the Romish antichrist, is said to have a mouth speaking great things, very great things, and his look more stout than his fellows, **Da 7:8**.

And power was given unto him to continue forty [and] two months; to continue in being, or to continue blaspheming and speaking great things; and indeed, as long as he continues, he will continue blaspheming; as soon as he arose he had a name of blasphemy on his heads, and his mouth was immediately opened in blasphemy, and so it continues, and will to the end of this date. The Ethiopic version reads it, "and power was given to him to do signs, whatsoever he would"; miracles, lying signs and wonders; see Re 13:13. Some copies read, and so the Arabic version, "and power was given him to make war"; but he did not make war as soon as he arose, and so not all the time that is here allotted him; and the word "war" seems to be transcribed from Re 13:7. The phrase rather intends his being, and the continuance and duration of it; which is the same period of time in which the holy city is trodden under foot by this beast, and the same with the 1260 days or years, in which the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, and the woman, the church, is in the wilderness, Re 11:2; for forty two months, reckoning thirty days to a month, as the eastern people did, make just 1260 days, for these things are all contemporary: hence it appears, that 1260 prophetic days, that is, years, contain the whole period of antichrist's reign and continuance; so that could we tell where they began, it might be exactly known when his reign will end; but for want of knowing the former, the best of calculators have failed in the latter: but seeing the time when he was made universal bishop by Phocas bids fair for the time of his open appearance, and the beginning of his reign, and of his blasphemy, which was in the year 859, to which, if we add 1260, the expiration of his reign will fall in the year 1866; so that he may have upwards of an hundred and twenty years yet to continue; but of this we cannot be certain; however, the conjecture is not improbable.

Revelation 13:6

Ver. 6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God,.... By sitting as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God; by suffering himself to be called by the name of God, God on earth, Lord God the pope, and to be worshipped as God; and by assuming infallibility, giving out that he cannot err, which only belongs to the God of truth; and by his idolatrous practices commanded by him, as the worshipping of idols of gold, silver, wood, and stone, which is in Scripture called blaspheming God, Isa 65:7; see Da 11:36.

To blaspheme his name; his authority, by arrogating to himself all power in heaven, earth, and hell; by taking upon him to bind and loose the consciences of men, and to dispense with the laws of God, and make them void by his own traditions; and to dispose of the kingdoms of this world, by removing kings, and setting up kings at pleasure, which is the prerogative of the King of kings; and by pretending; to forgive sin, which none but God can do; and by granting indulgences, pardons, &c. Moreover, by the name of God may be meant the Scriptures, which are the means by which God reveals and makes known himself; and these the man of sin blasphemes, by making them a nose of wax, by imposing on them what senses he pleases; by assuming a right of being the sole interpreter of them, and the judge of all controversies; and by setting up his own unwritten traditions upon an equal foot with them, and above them, and by denying the common people the use of them, in their own language;

and particularly the Gospel, which is sometimes called the name of the Lord, **Ac 9:15**, may be intended, which is sadly blasphemed, and evil spoken of by antichrist; as the doctrines of justification by Christ's righteousness, of peace and pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, through the antichristian notions of merit, works of supererogation, pardons, penance, purgatory, and the like:

and his tabernacle; meaning either the human nature of Christ, which God pitched, and not man, the temple of his body, in which the Godhead dwells bodily, and where the eternal Word dwelt, or tabernacled among men; this is blasphemed by pretending to transubstantiate, the bread and wine in the supper of the Lord into the very body and blood of Christ, and to offer him up again in the sacrifice of the Mass, every time that blasphemous piece of service is performed: or else the church of God, which is the temple of the living God, where he chooses, desires, and delights to dwell; this is blasphemed by antichrist, by sitting in it as if he was God; asserting himself to be the head of the church which solely belongs to Christ; taking upon him to coin new doctrines, and make new laws and orders, and impose them on it, and to change and alter the ordinances and discipline of it as he pleases; and by persecuting and destroying all such who will not submit to his decrees and prescripts: or else heaven itself, the habitation of God, and where his throne is, may be designed, which the pope blasphemously affirms to have the keys of; and that he can open and shut it, let persons into it, or exclude front it, at pleasure; and that he can dispose of it, and sell it for money, and make and canonize new saints in it, as often as he thinks fit.

And them that dwell in heaven; either saints below, members of a Gospel church, who are born from above, are partakers of the heavenly calling, and whose conversation is in heaven, who are by antichrist stigmatized and persecuted as schismatics and heretics; or rather angels and saints departed, who are in heaven, and dwell there, and who are worshipped and prayed to as Mediators and intercessors, whose names are used in a very ridiculous and blasphemous manner, to their great dishonour and reproach, as well as to the injury of Christ, the only Mediator between God and men.

Revelation 13:7

Ver. 7. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints,.... The remnant of the woman's seed, Re 12:17, whom God has set apart for himself, Christ has cleansed from sin by his blood, and the Holy Spirit has sanctified by his grace;

and who under the influence of it live holy lives and conversations; against such Satan always bore an enmity; and it is an aggravation of the wickedness of the Romish antichrist, that he makes war with such, which he is stirred up to by Satan, with a malicious intent, and is permitted by God for the trial of the faith and patience of his people: this war of antichrist, with the saints, may be understood not merely spiritually, of his anathemas, excommunications, bulls, and the like, but literally, of his drawing the temporal sword against them; see Re 13:10; and bringing of armies against them, and fighting pitched battles; and it is thought there may be a special regard had to his war with the Waldenses and Albigenses, in which war it is said that a million were slain; and may take in all his ways and methods of destroying the saints, by the bloody Inquisition, murders, massacres, and punishments of all sorts; and also his last war with the two witnesses, in which they will be slain, which is yet to come,
Re 11:7;

and to overcome them: not so as to submit to him, and to forsake the doctrines and ordinances of Christ, but by killing them; and who, by dying in the faith and cause of Christ, overcome Satan, get the victory over the world, and antichrist, and are more than conquerors through him that has loved them.

And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations; in the Roman empire, which wondered after him, and worshipped him, and over whom he has reigned, and has exercised both a temporal and spiritual jurisdiction; see Re 17:15.

Revelation 13:8

Ver. 8. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him,.... The inhabitants of the Roman empire, the idolatrous part of it, the men of the world, earthly minded men; who are as they came into the world, and are of the earth, earthly, and seek only after earthly honours, pleasures, and profits; these are the admirers and adorers of the beast:

whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; by which book is meant God's predestination of men to eternal life, or his decree of election; why this is called the "book of life", See Gill on "Re 3:5"; and their "names [being] written [therein] from the foundation of the world",
Re 17:8, for such a construction the words will bear, denotes that election is

eternal, and is not an act of time, nor dependent upon anything done in time; and that it is of particular persons, and not of bodies of men, of nations and churches, and still less of propositions, or of persons so and so qualified, or under such conditions and circumstances; and that it is perfectly well known to God, and is sure and certain in its effects, and is unchangeable and irrevocable; for what is written in it, is written, and will always stand, not upon the foot of works, but of the sovereign grace of God; and this is called the Lamb's book; that is, Christ, who is compared to a Lamb for its harmlessness, meekness, and patience, and was typified by the lambs in the legal sacrifices; and this book is called his, because he was present at the making of it, and was concerned in putting down the names in it, Joh 13:18, and he himself stands first in it as the elect of God, and the head of all the elect, who, as members, were chosen in him: the act of election was made in him, and stands sure in him; and he is the author and giver of that life, which men are chosen unto both here and hereafter: and he may be said to be "slain from the foundation of the world"; in the decree and purpose of God, by which he was set forth, or foreappointed to be the propitiation for sin, and was foreordained, before the foundation of the world, to redeem his people by his blood, and in the promise of God immediately after the fall of man, that the seed of the woman should have his heel bruised, and he himself should bruise the serpent's head, which made it as sure as if it was then done; and in the sacrifices, which were immediately upon this offered up, and were types of the death and sacrifice of Christ; and in the faith of the saints, which brings distant things near, and considers them as if present; and also in his members, in Abel, and others, in whom he suffered, as he still does in his people; to which may be added, that such is the efficacy of the bloodshed and death of Christ, that it reached to all the saints from the beginning of the world, for the justification of their persons, the atonement of their sins, and cleansing from them; for the remission of sins, that are past, and for the redemption of transgressions under the first testament; for Old Testament saints from the beginning are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus, as New Testament ones are. Something like this the Jews say {e} of the Messiah upon Ge 49:11,

"he washed amle yrbtad amwym, "from the day that the world was created"; who is he? this is the King Messiah.--It is written **Ge 1:2**; "and the Spirit of God", &c. This is the Spirit of the King Messiah; and from the day that the world was created; he washed his garments in wine;"

which the Jewish writers {f} understand of blood, which for its redness is like to wine; though they interpret it of the blood of the slain, with which the garments of the Messiah will be stained. Now such whose names are not written in this book of the Lamb, who have no interest in electing grace, nor in redemption by Christ, the slain Lamb of God, nor any right unto eternal life, who are reprobate persons, vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, who are foreordained to condemnation, and are given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned, these are the followers and worshippers of antichrist.

{e} Zohar in Gen. fol. 128. 2, 3. {f} Targum Jon. & Jerus. & Aben Ezra in Gen. xlix. 11.

Revelation 13:9

Ver. 9. If any man have an ear, let him hear. And diligently attend to this mystical description of antichrist, as being matter of some difficulty to understand, as well as of great moment and importance, and seriously consider it, that he may know him, and his followers, and avoid them; See Gill on "Re 1:7".

Revelation 13:10

Ver. 10. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity,.... As the devil, by whom men are led captive at his will, and the Romish antichrist, who leads multitudes of souls to hell; these shall be taken and cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. The Jews {g} have a saying, that

"captivity comes into the world for idolatry, uncleanness, and murder;"

which three things are notorious in the Romish antichrist: and in the same treatise they say {h}, that the sword, the next judgment mentioned, comes into the world for delay of justice, and the perversion of it.

He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword; the design of the phrase is to show, that there will be a just retaliation made to the antichristian beast, for all his cruelty to the saints, and the murders of them; and that because he has shed much blood of the saints, blood shall be given him to drink, and he shall be used in like manner he has used others; see **Ge 9:6** Mt 26:52.

Here is the patience and the faith of the saints; meaning either that hereby, through the cruelties and barbarities of the Romish antichrist, the patience and faith of the saints are tried; and that they have great need of them, and of the exercise of them, under such usages; and that these being tried, and continue, will receive much commendation, honour, and praise; or else the sense is, that it requires both faith and patience in the saints, to believe that antichrist will be thus destroyed, and to wait quietly till the time comes. The Arabic version reads, "here is the patience and prayers of the saints": who cry, how long will it be ere our blood is avenged? and have need of patience to rest a while, till their prayers are answered.

{g} Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 9. {h} Ib. sect. 8.

Revelation 13:11

Ver. 11. And I beheld another beast,.... The same with the first, only in another form; the same for being and person, but under a different consideration; the same antichrist, but appearing in another light and view: the first beast is the pope of Rome, at the head of the ten kingdoms, of which the Roman empire consisted; this other beast is the same pope of Rome, with his clergy, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, &c. before he is described as a temporal monarch, now as a spiritual lord; there he is represented in his secular character, as having the seat, power, and authority of the dragon, of Rome Pagan, engaging the attention and wonder of the whole world, and striking terror into them, and as making war with the saints, and ruling over all nations and tongues; here in his ecclesiastic character, pretending great humility and holiness, showing signs and lying wonders, obliging to idolatry, and exercising tyranny and cruelty on all that will not profess his religion: that this is the same beast with the first in substance, though not in show, appears from his exercising the same power, causing all to worship the first beast, or himself as a temporal lord, by which he is supported in his spiritual dignity; and by mention being made only of one beast, at the close of this account, and of his mark, name, and number being but one; nor is there any other but one hereafter spoken, of in this book, either as ruling, or as conquered, and as taken, and as going into perdition, and as cast into the lake: this beast is described by his original,

coming up out of the earth; either from under it, out of the bottomless pit, from hell; or out of, a low condition, a poor crawling earthworm; the extracts of many of the popes, cardinals, and religious orders, have been very mean: or this may represent the secret and private manner, and slow degrees by which this monster of iniquity rose; as things gradually rise up out of the earth unobserved; this man of sin was springing up in the apostles' time, and by degrees rose up to the power and authority he is here said to have: or rather, as this beast, in his other form, rose up out of the sea, out of the commotions raised in the empire by the barbarous nations, by whom he was lifted up to his imperial dignity; so he is described in this form, and is represented as rising up out of the earth, out of the earthly part of the church, or out of the apostasy which the visible church was sunk into, through the outward riches and honours bestowed on it by the Christian emperors, which made way for the rising of this beast; and this shows the nature of his kingdom, which is worldly and earthly, and so truly antichristian, being diametrically opposite to the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world:

and he had two horns like a lamb; or "like to the Lamb"; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God; though he has seven horns, denoting fulness of power, this but two; he stands on Mount Zion, with the 144,000, having his Father's name on their foreheads, this upon the earth, with his followers, having his own mark and name upon them. The Ethiopic version renders it, "and he had two horns, and he seemed as a lamb"; he affected a lamb like disposition, pretended to great humility and meekness, calling himself "servus servorum", the servant of servants, to cover his pride, ambition, and tyranny; and would be thought to be a lamb without spot and blemish, ascribing to himself infallibility, and suffering himself to be called his Holiness, when he is the man of sin, and mystery of iniquity: by his "two horns" some understand his two fold power, secular and ecclesiastic; but as these are separately represented by two beasts, rather these two horns intend the two parts of the empire, eastern and western, into which it was divided, when this beast arose, and by which the Papacy was raised to its power, had supported in it; and the two supreme pontiffs, the bishop of Rome, and the bishop of Constantinople; or else the beast's power of binding and loosing, of dispensing with the laws of God, and of imposing his own laws on the consciences of men.

And he spake as a dragon; like the devil himself, affirming as he did, **Lu 4:6**; that the power of disposing of the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, was delivered to him, and he could give it to whom he would: he spake arrogantly, as if he was above all that is called God, and as if he was God himself; and he spake like a dragon cruelly, like the great red dragon, like the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning, breathing out slaughter, and threatenings against the saints, as Rome Pagan; and he spake lies in hypocrisy, blasphemies, idolatries, and doctrines of devils.

Revelation 13:12

Ver. 12. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him,.... Sitting in the same seat, having the same power and authority from the dragon, making war with the saints by preaching and writing against them, by anathemas, excommunications, and bulls, and so overcame and silenced them, or delivered them over to the secular arm to be put to death, ruling over the consciences of men in a tyrannical way, in all nations, kindreds, and tongues, in the empire; and all this before, in the presence, and under the influence of the secular power, of the Papacy, signified by the first beast, and with his good liking, and for his credit and support:

and causeth the earth, and them that dwell therein; the Roman empire, and the inhabitants of it, especially the carnal and earthly part of them:

to worship the first beast; to be subject to the temporal power of the Papacy, or to submit to the pope as a temporal lord, to give homage and tribute to him, and the like, in order to support his worldly power and grandeur; and this was caused or brought about by his emissaries, his spiritual vassals, his legates, cardinals, priests, &c. by their exhortations, persuasions, and commands, delivered both in writing and preaching:

whose deadly wound was healed; which deadly wound was given the Roman empire under its sixth head, the emperors, when they ceased, and was healed by the pope, the seventh head, being set as a temporal monarch over the ten kingdoms in it.

Revelation 13:13

Ver. 13. And he doeth great wonders,.... Or miracles; not real, but pretended ones, lying wonders, which the Popish legends are full of the accounts of, as done by the priests, or by this or the other saint:

so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men; in imitation of Elijah, **2Ki 1:9**; and this single instance is put instead of all others, it being usual with the Jews to express all wonderful and miraculous operations by this miracle of Elijah's: and this may be understood mystically, of the pretensions of the Papacy to confer the Holy Ghost, and his gifts upon men, by breathing on them, which on the day of Pentecost were represented by cloven tongues, as of fire, coming down from heaven; or of their anathemas, curses, and excommunications, at which time burning torches and candles are cast up, and fall down, as emblems of divine wrath, which is called cursing men with bell, book, and candle; or else of the fire of persecution: "from heaven"; the secular powers of the empire: "upon the earth"; the common people: or this may be understood literally; so they tell us, that Pope Zachary, once on a journey to Ravenna, had in the daytime a cloud to protect him from the heat, and in the night time armies of fire appeared in the clouds to go before him; and as Pope Innocent was at Mass, a golden crown was seen, and on it a dove, and under it a smoking censer, and hard by them two burning firebrands: and it is reported of Pope Hildebrand, that, whenever he pleased, he could shake his sleeves, and sparks of fire would come out; and by these miracles deluded the eyes of the simple with a show of holiness, which, with other instances, are taken notice of by Napier, Brightman, and other writers: and so here this is said to be done "in the sight of men"; to their apprehension, seemingly, in their view; they being cheated and deluded with an appearance and show of things which were not real.

Revelation 13:14

Ver. 14. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth,.... The Complutensian edition, and two of Stephens's copies, read "mine", instead of "them"; creatures of God, and professors of Christ, carnal and unregenerate men; not the elect of God, and true believers in Christ, these cannot be deceived by the signs and wonders of false Christs and false prophets; antichrist's deceivableness of unrighteousness only operates in them that perish:

by [the means of] those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; the secular power of the Papacy encouraging, confirming, and giving a sanction to those lying miracles, and obliging all to believe them, and come into the things, doctrines, or practices, they are designed to promote:

saying to them that dwell on the earth: the apostate church, or the carnal inhabitants of the empire: ordering and commanding them

that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live; meaning the Roman empire, which had received a deadly wound in its sixth head, the emperors, by the sword of the Goths, Huns, &c. but now revived in its seventh head, the pope of Rome, to whom the ten kings gave their kingdoms: the image made to this beast some understand of the translation of the empire to Charles the great, and his successors the emperors,

by the pope of Rome, he ordaining so many electors to chose a king of the Romans, and elect an emperor when one was wanting; and this was an image to the first beast, a shadow, an appearance of the Roman empire, and but a shadow; for the power of inaugurating and crowning these emperors, and of setting up and deposing them when the pope pleased, lie reserved to himself: but rather this designs the image worship, or the worshipping of idols of gold and silver, of wood and stone, which he caused the inhabitants of the earth to make, and give adoration to; or else the whole Papal religion, and the Papacy itself, for the beast, and the image of the beast, are all along in this book afterwards mentioned together as being the same,
Re 14:9, which is an image of the Gentile religion, in their high priest, priests, temples, idols, offerings, garments, worshipping of angels, and saints departed, with a numerous train of rites and ceremonies, borrowed from the old Pagan religion; hence the Papists are called Gentiles, Re 11:2, the Roman empire, represented by these two beasts, and this image, had now one head, the pope, as before an emperor, and a religion in it much resembling its ancient one; but, before that was set up, this image was in being.

Revelation 13:15

Ver. 15. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast,.... Or "breath"; he breathed into it, and animated it; he gave this new religion a sanction, he confirmed and established it, and obliged all in his dominions to embrace and acknowledge it; and this he did by his decrees and canons, and those that refused were delivered over to the secular power, which he also exercised under another consideration:

that the image of the beast should both speak: so that it was not like Nebuchadnezzar's golden image that he set up, which required another to speak for it and demand adoration to it; and should seem to be preferable to the dumb idols of the Gentiles, which have mouths, but speak not; and may be understood either of the images of the virgin Mary, and other saints, which it is pretended, and the people are made to believe, that they do at times actually speak, and really weep and laugh, as it may serve their different purposes; or this image may be said to speak by the decrees, canons, anathemas, curses, threatenings, persuasions, doctrines, and blasphemies of the pope and his clergy; so that this image is like both the first and second beast; it has a mouth speaking blasphemies, as the first, and it speaks like a dragon, as the second;

and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed: which, according to the generality of copies, refers to the image itself, that that has a power from the beast as to speak, so to put to death those that refuse to worship it; but the Complutensian edition reads kai poiei, "and causes": that is, the beast causes, or orders all those that will not worship the image, to be killed; that is, that as many as will not embrace and profess the Popish religion shall be put to death; and these are the known orders and decrees of the Papacy, which have been executed by the Inquisition, and other hands, in innumerable instances; the blood of all the saints and prophets is found in Rome Papal, and will be avenged; these are the martyrs of Jesus, with whose blood the whore on the scarlet coloured beast has been made drunk; and this sense is confirmed by the eastern versions.

Revelation 13:16

Ver. 16. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,.... Men of all ranks and degrees, states and conditions, within his jurisdiction; this refers to the beast, and not to the image:

to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; or "that they might give themselves marks", as the Complutensian edition reads; which is an allusion either to the custom among the Romans of imprinting marks upon their servants and soldiers, by which they might be known to whom they belonged; servants had them in their foreheads {i}, and soldiers in their hands {k}; or to the usages of the Jews in binding their phylacteries upon their arms and foreheads, to put them in mind of the law of God, and their obedience to it; or to the practices of the Heathens, in putting the mark of the god they worshipped upon their bodies; Maimonides {l} says, it was a custom with the Gentiles to mark themselves with their idols, showing that they were their bought servants, and were marked for their service: the sense is, that some received the mark in one place, and some in another: those who were obliged to receive the mark in the right hand seem to be the clergy, such who entered into holy orders; who lifted up their right hand, and swore and vowed allegiance to the pope, and testified they were ready to defend and support his religion and interest; and who in their ordination are said to have an indelible character impressed on them: and those who received the mark in their foreheads are the common people in general, who one and all have the same impress upon them; which may intend either the sign of the cross in baptism, or rather their open confession of the Popish religion, which they as publicly avow and declare as if it had been written on their foreheads.

{i} Apulei Metamorph. l. 9. Ausonii Epigram. l. 15. Seneca de Ira, l. 3. c. 3. {k} Aetius apud Turnebi Advers. l. 23. c. 12. {l} Hilchot Obede Cochab. c. 12. sect. 11.

Revelation 13:17

Ver. 17. And that no man might buy or sell,.... Either in an ecclesiastical sense, as to, be in any church office, or perform any such service, to say Mass, hear confession, give absolution, sell pardons and indulgences, &c. or in a civil sense, as to trade, and exercise merchandise, and this was forbidden by several Popish councils and synods; the Lateran council, under Pope Alexander, decreed against the Waldenses and Albigenses, that no one should presume to retain or encourage them in their houses or countries, or "trade" with them; and the synod of Tours in France forbid any reception of heretics, or protection, and that any communion should be had with them "in buying and selling", as Mr. Mede has observed; and it was ordered by a bull of Pope Martin the Fifth, that no contract should be made with such, and that they should not follow any business and merchandise:

save he that had the mark; took the oath to be true to the pope, or made a public profession of the Popish religion:

or the name of the beast; Papists, so called from the pope; thus the antichristians are called from antichrist, as the Christians from Christ:

or the number of his name; which is either the same with the number of the beast in Re 13:18, or is something distinct it; and those who have it may be such persons who neither have the indelible character of the Romish clergy, nor are open professors of the Popish religion, but are in heart inclined to it, and privately and secretly promote it, by their doctrines and practices; and so are numbered, reckoned, esteemed, and accounted of by the Papists, and receive favours from them; or rather such who openly "furnish the drink offering" in the Mass, mixed with wine and water, ynml, "for that number", Isa 65:11.

Revelation 13:18

Ver. 18. Here is wisdom,.... Not only in the above description of the two beasts, but in what follows as to the number of the beast, these two now coalescing in one, and have one and the same number; and to wrap it up, and conceal it in such an obscure manner, shows great wisdom in God, as it requires much in men, and serves greatly to exercise all his intellectual powers to find it out:

let him that hath understanding count the number of, the beast; whoever has skill numbers, let him make use of it, that he may know the name and nature of the antichristian beast, and the numerical letters of his name, or the number of him, and of the time when he arose, and when he will expire:

for it is the number of a man: either a number that may be reckoned by man, or which is in common use among men; see Re 21:17; or that which is contained in the name of a man:

and his number [is] six hundred threescore [and] six: which some think refers to the time of the rise of antichrist, in the year 666; but that seems rather to be in the year 859, when the bishop of Rome obtained the name of universal bishop; others have been of opinion that it refers to the expiration of the beast, which they thought would have been in the year 1666, the number of the thousand being dropped, as it is in our common way of speaking; as when we say the Spanish invasion was in 88, meaning 1588, and the civil wars began in 41, that is, 1641; but time has shown that this was a mistaken sense; the more prevailing opinion is that of Mr. Potter, who has wrote a peculiar and learned treatise upon this passage, who makes the counting of this number to be no other than the extracting of its root, which is the number 25, which when multiplied into itself, and the fraction in working it 41 is added, makes up the square number 666; and now 25 being added to A. D. 33, make 58, which was the time of the beast's conception, to which if 666 is added, it brings us to the year 724, when he arrived to his age of manhood, and when the war about the worshipping of images broke out: but others think that the numeral letters in some man's name which amount to this date, and which agrees with antichrist, are intended; and here various conjectures are made; some have observed, that in genealogical arithmetic the number of Adonikam's posterity is 666, **Ezr 2:13**; whose name signifies "a lord rising up", or "risen"; and suits very well with antichrist, who is risen up, and assumes a lordly domination over the kings of the earth; and it is further observed, that the Hebrew word tyymwr, which signifies "Roman", and, having the word beast or kingdom joined to it, designs the Roman beast, or kingdom, consists of numeral letters, which make up this sum; and so the Hebrew word rwto, "Sethut", which is the name of a man, Nu 13:13, and signifies "mystery", in its numeral letters comes just to this number, and one of the names of the whore of Babylon is "mystery", Re

17:5; but the name "Lateinos" bids as fair as any, which is mentioned by so ancient a writer as Irenaeus, who was a hearer of Polycarp, a disciple of John, the writer of this book; now the numeral value of the letters of this word makes up exactly 666, thus; l 30. a 1. t 300. e 5. i 10.
n 50. o 70. v 200. in all 666; and it is well known that the church of Rome is called the Latin Church and the pope of Rome the head of the Latin church, and his seat is in the Latin empire, and the service of the beast is in the Latin tongue, and the Bible is kept in that language, from the reading of the common people: it has been observed that the numeral letters in Ludovicus, or Lewis, which is a common name of the French kings, and is the name of the present French king, make up this same number; and may denote the destruction of antichrist, which will quickly follow the downfall of the kingdom of France, under a king of this name; and the rather, since this was the last of the ten kingdoms that was set up, and in which the primitive beast subsists, and the only one that has not yet been conquered, or in which a revolution has not been; and since this is the tenth part of the city which shall fall a little before the third woe comes on: and that it may fall under Ludovicus, or Lewis, the present French king {a}, may be hoped for, and is desirable.

{a} The reader will bear in mind that the original edition of this work was published in the year 1747. --Ed.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 14:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVALATION 14

This chapter contains three visions; one of the Lamb on Mount Zion, another of the three angels preaching against Babylon, and the third of the harvest and vintage. The vision of the Lamb is in Re 14:1, which is no other than Christ, described by his similitude, as a Lamb; by the place where he was, Mount Zion; by his position there, standing, and by the company that were with him, whose number were 144,000, and their character, his Father's name written on their foreheads; at the same time a voice was heard from heaven, comparable to the sound of many waters, of thunders, and of harps: and a song sung which none learn but the above number with the Lamb,
Re 14:2, who are described by their purity, chastity, and strict adherence to Christ; by their redemption through him; by their being the firstfruits of God and of the Lamb, and by their integrity and unblemished character, Re 14:4; next follows the account of the three angels; the first comes with the

everlasting Gospel, to preach it to all men, loudly calling upon all to fear and worship God, and give glory to him, since he is the Creator of all, and the hour of his judgment is come, Re 14:6; the second proclaims the fall of Babylon, with the reason of it, Re 14:8; and the third denounces the wrath of God upon the worshippers of the beast in the most public manner, and that for ever, Re 14:9; and this vision is closed with some expressions, showing that, till this was done, the patience of the saints would be tried, and the true worshippers of the Lamb be discovered, and comforting them with an assurance of that rest that remains after death for the faithful followers of Christ, Re 14:12; after this is the vision of the harvest and vintage of the earth. The reaper is described by his form, like the son of man; by his seat, a white cloud; by a golden crown on his head, and by a sharp sickle in his hand, Re 14:14; who is called upon by an angel out of the temple to make use of his sickle, and reap, because the time of reaping was come, the harvest being ripe,
Re 14:15, upon which he thrusts in his sickle, and reaps the earth,
Re 14:16; after this, another angel appears out of the temple, with a sharp sickle, to whom another angel from the altar, that had power over fire, calls to make use of his sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine, since the grapes were fully ripe, Re 14:17; upon which he thrusts in his sickle, and gathers them, and casts them into the winepress of divine wrath, which being trodden, blood comes out of it to the horses' bridles for the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs, Re 14:19.

Ver. 1. And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb,.... The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read "the Lamb"; the same that had been seen before in, the midst of the throne, **Re 5:6**; and all the Oriental versions have the same article also; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for mention is made of his Father in a following clause; the King of Zion, where he is seen standing, and the Redeemer of his people, who are at large described; it is the same Lamb who is so often spoken of in this book before: in the two preceding chapters an account is given of the state of the church, as oppressed under Rome Pagan, and Rome Papal, and here of its more glorious and victorious condition, with Christ at the head of it; in the last chapter antichrist is described, with his followers and worshippers, and as exercising tyranny and cruelty upon the saints, and here Christ and his followers are represented in vision, and some hints given of the fall of Babylon, and of the wrath of God upon the worshippers of the beast, and of the happiness of those who belong to the Lamb: and of him it is here said, that he

stood on the Mount Zion; by which is meant not heaven, but the church on earth; why that is called Mount Zion, See Gill on "Heb 12:22"; here Christ the

Lamb stood, as presiding over it, being King of Zion, or the church; where he stood and fed, or ruled, in the name of the Lord, and in the majesty of his God; and where he appeared in the defence of his church and people, oppressed by antichrist; for he is Michael that standeth for the children of his people, and who stands with courage, and in the greatness of his strength, and is invincible; nor does he stand here alone:

and with him an hundred forty [and] four thousand; the same with those in **Re 7:3**, though all the world wondered after the beast, and all that dwelt upon the earth worshipped him, yet there was a number preserved that did not bow the knee to him; a remnant according to the election of grace, who were called out of the world, and brought to Zion, and were on the side of the Lamb, and abode by him, and cleaved unto him:

having his Father's name written in their foreheads; not baptism, administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as some think; nor eternal election, as others, though as their names were written in the Lamb's book of life, so this was manifest to themselves and others, as if his name and his Father's had been written in their foreheads; but rather adoption, the new name of a child of God, they having the spirit of adoption, whereby they cried, "Abba", Father, and being openly and manifestly the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus; unless it should be thought there is an allusion to the inscription in the mitre on the forehead of the high priest, "holiness to the Lord", and so be expressive of that visible holiness which will be on the saints in the spiritual reign of Christ, which this vision respects; see Zec 14:20; or to the frontlets between the eyes of the people of Israel, to put them in mind of the law, and their obedience to it, **De 6:8**; and so may here denote the engagements of those saints in the service of God; though perhaps no more is intended than their open and hearty profession of their faith, and that they were not ashamed of appearing in the cause of God and truth; nor of Christ and his words, his Gospel and ordinances: the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, "having his name, (the Lamb's,) and his Father's name written in their foreheads"; and the Ethiopic version adds, "and of his Holy Spirit". Mr. Daubuz thinks this vision refers to the times of Constantine, and to the Christians then, and particularly the council of Nice, and as contemporary with that in **Re 7:9**.

Revelation 14:2

Ver. 2. And I heard a voice from heaven,.... The same with the voices heard in

heaven upon the sounding of the seventh trumpet,
Re 11:15;

as the voice of many waters; very loud, and uttered by a great multitude of people, signified by waters in this book, Re 17:15; the same with those that praise the Lord for the destruction of antichrist, and for the marriage of the Lamb, Re 19:1;

and as the voice of a great thunder; to which the Gospel may be compared for its open, loud publication, being heard far and near, as thunder is:

and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps; that is, singing the praises of God, for the fall of Babylon, the happy state and condition of the church, and the blessings of grace; the harp being a musical instrument, used under the Old Testament in singing praise: Brightman thinks that these different sounds represent the course of Gospel doctrine, and the church's voice throughout the reign of antichrist; that when the church first went into the wilderness, her voice was like the murmuring of waters, confused and indistinct; when she began to revive under the Waldenses and Albigenses, Wickliff, Huss, &c. her voice was like thunder, loud and terrible; and at the Reformation, it was as the voice of harpers, when confessions of faith were published with sweet harmony and consent. Others have thought that the different properties and efficacy of the Gospel are designed; as its rapidity and irresistible force, by the many waters; its striking and shaking the consciences of men, by the thunder, Christ's ministers being sometimes "Boanergeses", sons of thunder; and its harmonious music, pleasant sound, peace, joy, and comfort it brings, by the voice of harpers. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, "the voice which I heard was as harpers", &c.

Revelation 14:3

Ver. 3. And they sung as it were a new song,.... The song of redeeming grace; the same with that in **Re 5:9**; see the note there: this is to be understood of the 144,000, who sung it

before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders; that is, publicly in the church, the ministers and members being present; of these; See Gill on "Re 4:4";
See Gill on "Re 4:6";

and no man could learn that song but the hundred [and] forty [and] four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth; out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; from among the men of the earth, and out of the apostate church, called the earth, in opposition to the pure church, which so often goes by the name of heaven in this book; and these, in consequence of being redeemed by the blood of Christ, were called by grace out of the world; and such only can sing the song of redemption with application to themselves; and say he has redeemed us, and loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood; to none but these is it given to know spiritually and experimentally the mysteries of electing and redeeming grace; the natural and carnal man neither knows nor receives the things of the Spirit of God; nor can he learn them by hearing, reading, study, and conversation, unless it be only in a notional and speculative way. The Jews speak of a new song, which the angels have never used {m};

"it is said, Ps 98:1; "sing unto the Lord a new song"; a new song, for there is an old song; but this song is what the angels never praised him with, and therefore it is new;"

and indeed the song of redeeming love is peculiar to men.

{m} Zohar in Numb. fol. 70. 4.

Revelation 14:4

Ver. 4. These are they which were not defiled with women,.... With the whore of Rome, and her harlots, she is the mother of; while the kings and inhabitants of the earth were drunk with the wine of their fornication, or committed idolatry with them, which is spiritual fornication, and is here meant by being defiled with them, these were free from such pollutions, or idolatrous practices:

for they are virgins; for their beauty and comeliness in Christ, chastity, sincerity of their love, uncorruptness in doctrine and worship, and for the uprightness of conversation; See Gill on "Mt 25:1";

these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; as the sheep follow the shepherd of the flock, and which is a character of Christ's sheep, Joh 10:4. These follow Christ in the exercise of the graces of humility, patience, and love; and in the performance of the several duties of religion, and subjection to ordinances, and in the path of sufferings; and in every way in which Christ the Lamb has gone before them, or in his word and providence leads and directs them to, whether it be grateful to the flesh or not; particularly they follow where he is preached, and his Word and ordinances are faithfully administered; and they follow him to heaven, where he is: it was part of the oath taken by the Roman soldiers, toiv strathgoiv akolouyein opoi pot' ai agwsi, "to follow the generals wherever they should lead" {n}, to which it is thought there is an allusion here; see 2Sa 15:21;

these were redeemed from among men; "by Jesus", as the Syriac and Arabic versions add, and so the Complutensian edition; by the blood of Christ, for all men are not redeemed by it; and in consequence of this they were called, and delivered from this present evil world, and the men of it, and from a vain, wicked, and idolatrous conversation with it:

[being] the firstfruits unto God, and to the Lamb; in allusion to the firstfruits under the law, which represented and sanctified the lump, and showed that harvest was coming; so these persons are called the firstfruits to God, and to the Lamb, being called by grace, and consecrated to their worship and service, with reference to the harvest of souls, or that large number of them which will be gathered in during the spiritual reign of Christ, which these persons will be at the beginning of; and as those who are first called and converted in a country or nation are said to be the firstfruits of it, Ro 16:5; so these being the first, in the period of time to which respect is had, bear this name; and as the converted Jews received the firstfruits of the Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, and at other times, so these will receive the firstfruits of the far greater pouring forth of the Spirit in the latter day, which will begin, and usher in the kingdom of Christ; see **Ro 8:23**.

{n} Vid. Lydii Dissert. de Jurament. c. 2. p. 258.

Revelation 14:5

Ver. 5. And in their mouth was found no guile,.... Or "a lie", as the Complutensian edition, the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions read; by which may be meant idolatry, for idols and idolatrous practices are often called lies, and lying vanities; see Jer 16:19; and the sense is, that the superstition and idolatry of the church of Rome were not among them: or it may design false doctrine, and the meaning be, that they did not speak lies in hypocrisy, as the followers of antichrist do; nor were they given up to believe a lie, as they are: the generality of copies read, "no guile"; which is expressive of the sincerity of their words; there was no deceit nor hypocrisy in them; they did not speak with flattering lips to men, nor did they draw nigh to God with their mouths, when their hearts were far from him; they were Israelites indeed, like Nathanael, in whom was no guile; though not in so strict a sense, in which this phrase is used of Christ, **1Pe 1:22**;

for they are without fault before the throne of God; not as considered in themselves, as if they were entirely free from sin, and never committed any; though it might be true of them, that in general they were of unblemished lives and conversations, that is, not guilty of any notorious and scandalous crimes; but rather the sense is, that they were without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, as being washed in the blood of Christ, and so cleansed from all sin, and as being justified by his righteousness from all iniquity; and so were before the throne of God, and in the sight of divine justice, unblamable and unreproveable; see #Jude 24 Col 1:22; the phrase, "before the throne of God", is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in the Complutensian edition.

Revelation 14:6

Ver. 6. And I saw another angel,.... This is to be understood not of one of the ministering spirits so called; for though wings are sometimes ascribed to angels, and Gabriel is said to fly swiftly; and though they desire to look into the mysteries of the everlasting Gospel, yet the preaching of that is not committed to any of them; but a minister of the Gospel is intended, who is the angel of the church, for in this book pastors of churches are so called, **Re 1:20**; and not a single minister of the Gospel is meant, but a set of Gospel ministers; and some think that those are designed who appeared in the eighth and ninth centuries, both in the eastern and western empire, against the worshipping of images; since this angel calls upon the inhabitants of the earth to fear God, give glory to him, and worship him, and not images; but there was little of the everlasting Gospel preached in those times. Others are of opinion that those who preceded, and led on to the Reformation, are pointed at by this angel, such as Wickliff in England, Franciscus Petrarcha in Italy, John Huss and Jerom of Prague in Bohemia, with others; but these also had not the everlasting Gospel in its clearness and purity, nor did they preach it to all the inhabitants of the earth; rather I think a set of Gospel preachers are intended, who will appear at the beginning of the spiritual reign of Christ, and will be a means of ushering it in; and these are the watchmen of Zion, who will give the Lord no rest till he has made Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth; and who will then see eye to eye in Gospel mysteries, and will publish good tidings of peace and salvation, and proclaim Zion's King reigning, Isa 62:6; this angel is called "another", being distinct from the voice heard Re 14:2, though he is the first with respect to the following angels, as appears from Re 14:9; the place where John saw this angel, and the position he was in, follow:

fly in the midst of heaven: the church, the great congregation, the several congregations of the saints; in the midst of which these ministers will preach righteousness, salvation, loving kindness, and truth, as Christ has done before them; and from hence the word of the Lord will go forth to all parts of the world: they will preach the Gospel openly and publicly, with great freedom, boldness, and intrepidity, in the view of all men, not fearing the faces of any; and the Gospel ministered by them will have a swift, sudden, and universal spread; they themselves will run to and fro, and the Gospel will run and be glorified, and the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and multitudes will flock to Christ, who in that day will be alone exalted; for these ministers will come forth publicly:

having the everlasting Gospel; the Gospel in its fulness and purity; the Gospel of the grace of God, of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, of peace and pardon by his blood, and of complete salvation by him; called everlasting, because the substance of it was settled from all eternity, in the council and covenant of peace; it was ordained before the world was, and was hid in God from the beginning; and the revelation of it was of old; it was made to our first parents immediately after the fall, and was spoken of by all God's holy prophets which have been since the world began; it was preached before unto Abraham, and in the times of Isaiah, and by other prophets, and so is no new upstart doctrine: besides, the matter of it is everlasting; it treats of everlasting things; of the eternal election of persons to salvation; of God's everlasting love to them; of an everlasting covenant he made with Christ on their account; of blessings, promises, and grace given to them in him, before the world began; and of his being set up so early as a Mediator, and of his going forth in a way of grace from everlasting; as well as it reveals an everlasting righteousness, and brings life and immortality, or eternal life to light, or shows the way to everlasting life and happiness; to which may be added, that it will abide for ever, it will always remain, and that inexpugnable, maugre all the opposition of hell and earth; it will continue till all the elect of God are gathered in, notwithstanding the violence of persecutors, or the craft of seducers; nor will it be antiquated and made void by another Gospel succeeding it, for there will be no other: now this the ministers of those times will "have"; not in their heads only, by knowledge, but in their hearts, by experience, and will have it in their mouths, and speak it out freely and openly, and will have a commission from Christ to preach it, and gifts qualifying them for it:

to preach to them that dwell on the earth; that are in the apostate church, carnal, unregenerate, and earthly persons. The Complutensian edition reads, "that sit on the earth"; as persons abject, mean, and distressed, to whom the Gospel is acceptable:

and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people; whether Jews, Turks, or Pagans; for the Gospel, as before observed, will now have an universal spread all the world over.

Revelation 14:7

Ver. 7. Saying with a loud voice,.... These ministers shall lift up their voice like a trumpet, and cry aloud, and deliver out the Gospel fully and faithfully, with great authority and power, and with much vehemence, zeal, and fervency:

fear God; or "the Lord", as some copies, the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, read: not the antichristian beast and his followers, as men formerly had done; but God the Lord, and him not with a servile fear, or a fear of punishment, of wrath, hell, and damnation; nor with a distrust of his grace, love, power, and providence, much less with an hypocritical fear; but with a godly fear, which has the goodness of God for its object, and springs from a sense of the love of God, and is a reverential affection for him, and is attended with faith and spiritual joy, and includes all worship of him, both internal and external; hence the Syriac version renders it, "serve God": and this shows that the duties of religion are to be inculcated by Gospel ministers; and that they will be urged by them when the everlasting Gospel is preached in its greatest purity:

and give glory to him; and not to graven images, which he will not allow; and glory is to be given to him, on account of the perfections of his nature, and, the works of his hands; and is given when men ascribe greatness to him, praise his works of creation, and acquiesce in those of Providence, acknowledging the power, goodness, and wisdom of God in all; and when they give thanks for all his mercies, temporal and spiritual, and especially for Jesus Christ; and when they exercise faith on him as their God in Christ, and ascribe their salvation to him and to the Lamb, and not to the works of their hands; and when they attend his worship, and the duties of religion, and so glorify him with their bodies and spirits, which are his:

for the hour of his judgement is come; not of the great and last judgment, but of the government of the Lord Christ, committed to him by God the Father; in which sense the word is used in **Joh 5:22** for now will the time be come, when the kingdoms of this world will be his; and he will take to himself his great power, and reign, in a spiritual manner, in the world; and now also will be his time of judging the dead, or of avenging his people, whose blood has been shed for him, and of his judging the great whore, or of inflicting his judgments upon antichrist and his followers; all which will be under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, to which this vision is contemporary; see Re 11:15

and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters; God, the Creator of all things; and not the beasts, nor idols, the works of men's hands.

Revelation 14:8

Ver. 8. And there followed another angel,.... A "second", as the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and the Syriac version add; and the Arabic version reads, "and the second angel followed"; another set of Gospel ministers, who will immediately follow upon the former, proclaiming the fall of Babylon, which will be brought about through the preaching of the everlasting Gospel. Some think the Waldenses and Albigenses are here designed, who gave a great blow to Babylon, and laid a foundation for her ruin. Others have thought that Luther, and the reformers of his times, are intended, who gave a deadly blow to Babylon, and she has been falling ever since: but to me it appears, that a set of ministers in the spiritual reign of Christ are meant, who will not only signify the fall of Babylon to be certain, and near at hand, but will live to see and declare her actual fall, as follows:

saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city; which is to be understood not of the world in general, which will not now be come to an end, for all nations of the world are distinguished from this Babylon in the next clause, and is only represented as a city, though a great one; nor of Babylon in Chaldea, which was fallen many hundreds of years before this vision; nor is there any likelihood of its being restored, nor any reason to believe that it will ever more be the seat of empire over all the nations and kings of the earth, as the Babylon mentioned in this book is, Re 17:5 though undoubtedly the allusion is to that Babylon, and the very words are used which express the fall of it, and are taken from it; see Isa 21:9 but this is to be understood of Rome, which all along in this book is called the great city; see Re 11:8 and not of Rome Pagan, for that is fallen already; and the account of the fall of that is given before, at the opening of the sixth seal, and the casting the dragon out of heaven, upon the war there, between Michael and him, though Mr. Daubuz is of opinion that this is here meant; but of Rome Papal, called Babylon the great, Re 16:5 and so the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Arabic versions, read here; and the Romish antichrist is so called, because that city was famous for its pride and haughtiness, for its tyranny and cruelty, and for its idolatry; and indeed its name, which signifies "confusion", well agrees with the Papacy, which is a confused mixture of Judaism, Paganism, and Christianity: so Rome is called Babel in some ancient writings of the Jews {o}, where some copies read "Babel", others read "Rome"; and Tertullian, who wrote long before the appearance of the Romish antichrist, says {p}, with our John, Babylon is a figure of the Roman city: and of this it is said, that it "is fallen, is fallen"; which words are repeated for the certain confirmation of it, as matter of fact; for the fall of antichrist will certainly be in the spiritual reign of Christ, in the Philadelphian church state; See Gill on "Re 3:9" now will Babylon come in remembrance before God, and he will pour out the vials of his wrath upon her, and will give men an aversion to her; and through the preaching of the Gospel she will fall, just as the walls of Jericho fell at the sounding of the rams' horns: the reason of which fall will be,

because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication: by her "fornication" is meant the idolatry of the church of Rome; so the idolatry of Israel and Judah is often expressed in the Old Testament by fornication and whoredoms; see **Jer 3:6** and the wine of it designs the alluring methods used to draw into it; such as the riches and honours, and pleasures of this world, promised to men, and the great appearances of holiness and religion, the deceivableness of unrighteousness, the miracles, signs, and lying wonders done by them, by which men are made sottish and stupid, and induced to believe a lie; just as wine intoxicates, and inclines and excites to lust: and by "the wrath" of it is meant either the heat of lust unto it, or the wrath of God against them which is stirred up by it; and now the aggravation of her sin is, that she not only drinks of this wine herself, or commits idolatry, being instigated to it by the allurements of it, though she hereby incurs the displeasure and wrath of God, but she draws all nations into the same idolatrous practices.

{o} Zohar in Numb. fol. 103. 4. & Raya Mchimna, apud ib. in Exod. fol. 49. 3.
{p} Adv. Judaeos, c. 9. & Adv. Marcion. l. 3. c. 13.

Revelation 14:9

Ver. 9. And the third angel followed them,.... The two preceding ones, and that very quickly; by whom is meant not Luther, and his associates in the Reformation, as some think; nor his successors, or the ministers of the Gospel in general from his time till Christ's second coming, as others have thought; but a set of Gospel ministers in the spiritual reign of Christ: the first set of them publish the everlasting Gospel, which leads on to the ruin of antichrist; the second set proclaim the downfall of Rome, and this third set denounce the wrath of God upon all that have professed the Popish religion:

saying with a loud voice; as the first angel did, with like authority and vehemence, in order to strike terror, and express indignation:

if any man worship the beast and his image; give in to the idolatries of the church of Rome, and embrace, maintain, and defend the Popish religion, which bears a resemblance to the worship of the Heathens, and is the very image of Rome Pagan; see Re 13:4

and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand; openly profess Popery, and swear allegiance to the man of sin, and do all they can to support his interest; see Re 13:16.

Revelation 14:10

Ver. 10. The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God,.... Which is a just punishment for their sin; that as such have drank of the wine of the wrath of Rome's fornication, Re 14:8 so they shall now drink of the wine of God's wrath; it is usual in Scripture to express the punishment God inflicts upon wicked men by his wrath, and by the wine cup of his fury; and their suffering such punishment, by their drinking of it; see Jer 25:15 so
azgwrd Nyy, "the wine of wrath", is a phrase used by the Jews {q}:

which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; sometimes called a cup of fury and of trembling,

Isa 51:17 and is sometimes said to be full of mixture,
Ps 75:8 of various ingredients of wrath and fury; and the words may be rendered here, "which is mixed without mixture": and though it seems to carry in it a contradiction, yet is true in different senses; it may be said to be mixed as wine with various sorts, which is the stronger, and sooner inebriates and intoxicates; or in allusion to the cup the Jews gave to malefactors, to stupefy them, when going to execution, which had various things put in it for that purpose;
See Gill on "Mr 15:23" and so designs the several ingredients in the cup of divine indignation, or the several ways in which God expresses his wrath; and yet it is without mixture; it is judgment without mercy, pure wrath, without the least allay; not so much as a drop of cold water granted, or the least your shown, or any mitigation of fury for a moment:

and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone: in allusion to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which are now a burning and a sulphurous lake, called Asphaltites, and is an example, pattern, and similitude of the vengeance of eternal fire, #Jude 7 and hence the beast and false prophet are said to be cast into such a lake,
Re 19:20 and here their followers will be punished; which is expressive of the horrible torments of hell, and the dreadful punishment of the antichristian party there; see Ps 11:6 and what will aggravate their misery is, that it will be

in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; the latter will be their Judge, and will condemn them to everlasting burnings, and pronounce the sentence on them; and the former will be the executioners of it; they will gather them out, and sever them from the righteous, and cast them into the furnace of fire, and will be spectators of their punishment, and rejoice at it; and the sight of their power and glory will increase the torment of the sufferers.

{q} Zohar in Gen. fol. 51. 4.

Revelation 14:11

Ver. 11. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever,.... That is, the smoke of that fire which torments them will for ever arise; or, in other words, there will be no end of their torment; hence their misery is called everlasting fire, everlasting punishment, and everlasting destruction, Mt 25:41 and smoke being very troublesome and distressing, is mentioned to set forth the very uncomfortable state of the wicked; and so it is used by Jewish writers: hence we read of Mnhg Nnt, "the smoke of hell" {r}, with which the eyes of the wicked will be filled in the world to come:

and they have no rest, day nor night; the fire of divine wrath which tortures them is never quenched, and the worm of conscience which gnaws them never dies: this is directly contrary to a notion of the Jews, that the wicked in hell have rest sometimes; they talk of angels blowing away the smoke from them, so that they have rest an hour and a half; and which they say they have three times a day, and whenever Israel says Amen, let his great name be blessed {s}; and particularly that hell fire never burns on the sabbath day, nor does the smoke of it ascend then, and that the wicked have always rest on that days {t}; though sometimes they contradict themselves, and say they never have any rest {u}, which is the truth:

who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name; that is, whoever are the followers of antichrist, or the professors of the Popish religion; so far is salvation from being in the church of Rome, and only there, that there is none in it; and whoever live and die in the profession of Popery, shall surely be damned as this passage is true.

{r} Targum in Psal. xxxvii. 20. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 1. Caphtor, fol. 109. 1. {s} Zohar in Gen. fol. 47. 4. {t} Zohar in Exod. fol. 36. 4. & in Lev. fol. 45. 3. & in Deut. fol. 115. 3. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 65. 2. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 149. 1. Nishmat Chayim, fol. 39. 1. {u} Zohar in Exod. fol. 62. 3. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 152. 2.

Revelation 14:12

Ver. 12. Here is the patience of the saints,.... That which has required their patience, and about which it has been exercised, what they have been patiently waiting for, namely, the destruction of antichrist; and now it will be come, and patience will have its perfect work; see Re 13:10

here are they that keep the commandments of God; and not the inventions of men, and the traditions of antichrist, but the ordinances of the Gospel, as they were at first delivered, without any adulteration and corruption; and who kept them because they were enjoined by God, and from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory: these are distinguished from the worshippers of the beast, and were preserved throughout the apostasy; these are the witnesses who will now be risen, and the remnant of the woman's seed, with whom the dragon made war by the beast: and these are the hundred and forty and four thousand who are before described; these will be in a very glorious and comfortable church state; the word will be purely preached, and the ordinances truly administered, and the doctrines of the Gospel will be heartily embraced and professed: it follows,

and the faith of Jesus; meaning either the grace of faith, of which Jesus is the object, author, and finisher; and which these saints will have from him, and exercise upon him in a very strong and comfortable manner; and which, and the profession of it, they will hold fast to the end; or else the doctrine of faith, concerning the person, office, and grace of Jesus Christ, the faith once delivered to the saints, which they will have contended for, stood fast in, and now will hold in a pure conscience: these seem to be the words of John, declaring the faith, patience, and obedience of the saints of these times.

Revelation 14:13

Ver. 13. And I heard a voice from heaven,.... Like that which was heard at Christ's baptism and transfiguration, certifying the truth of what follows, so that that may be depended upon as an undoubted verity:

saying unto me, write; which is a further confirmation of the following sayings being true and faithful; see **Re 1:9**

blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; merely to die is not an happiness, for death is common to all, good and bad; it is a disunion of soul and body, and cannot be in itself desirable; it is the fruit of sin, and has something in it awful and terrible; and though it is the privilege of believers, as its sting is removed by Christ, yet not as simply and absolutely considered; but to die in the Lord is a blessedness: some render the words, "which die for the Lord"; so the Arabic version, "which die for the faith of the Lord"; and the Ethiopic version, "which die for God"; and so restrain them to the martyrs of Jesus: to suffer death for the sake of Christ and his Gospel is a gift and an honour, and what glorifies Christ; and there is a glory consequent upon it, which such shall enjoy; but then in the spiritual reign of Christ, to which this passage refers, and after the destruction of antichrist, there will be no more suffering for Christ, no more martyrdoms; wherefore this cannot be the sense of the words: nor do they mean dying in the lively exercise of faith and hope in the Lord; for though it is a happiness so to die, both to persons themselves, and to their friends and relations, yet these are not the only persons that are blessed; there are some who all their lifetime are subject to bondage, and go off in the dark, and yet are happy; but to die in the Lord is to die interested in him, in union to him; which union is not dissolved by death, and which preserves from all condemnation, at death or at judgment, and secures the soul's immediate entrance into happiness, and the resurrection of the body at the last day, and therefore such must be blessed: the phrase, "from henceforth", is differently placed; the Ethiopic version connects it with the word "write", rendering it, "write now"; and the Vulgate Latin version reads it with the next clause, "hereafter, yea, saith the Spirit"; and so the Latin interpreter of the Syriac version, though that itself seems rather to place it as ours does, and which is most correct; and is to be understood not of the time of John's writing, thenceforward to the resurrection; for those that died before his time were as happy as those who died after; nor of the time of death, though it is a truth, that from the time of the saints' death, and from the very moment of their separation, they are blessed, and are in a state of happiness until the resurrection; but of that period of time which the declarations made by the three preceding angels refer to, from thenceforward, and after the destruction of antichrist, and during the spiritual reign of Christ: and the sense is, that happy will those persons be that die in Christ within that time, and before the Laodicean church state takes place; when coldness, lukewarmness, and carnal security will seize upon men, and Christ will come upon them at an unawares; and those sharp and severe times will commence, signified by the harvest and vintage of the earth in the following verses, and which seem to be no other than the end of the world, and the destruction of it; wherefore happy will they be that are going to heaven before that time comes; see **Ec 4:1**

yea, saith the Spirit; the third witness in heaven, who sets his seal to the truth of what the voice declares, and shows wherein this blessedness will consist:

that they may rest from their labours; both of body and soul; from all toil of body, and laborious work, from all diseases and distempers of body, and all outward sorrows and calamities men labour under, and are fatigued with in this life; and from all inward troubles, from a body of sin, from the temptations of Satan, and from all doubts and fears, from their present warfare state, and all conflicts with their spiritual enemies:

and their works do follow them; they do not go before them, to prepare heaven and happiness for them; nor do they take them along with them, and use them as pleas for their admission into the heavenly glory; but they will follow them, and will be found to praise, and honour, and glory, and will be taken notice of by Christ, and graciously rewarded by him, at his appearing and kingdom. This is directly opposite to the notions of the Jews, who say, that when a man departs this life, his works "go before him", and say unto him, thou hast done so and so, in such a place, and on such a day {w}; and that whoever does a good work in this world, it shall "go before him" in the world to come {x}; and so they {y} represent good works as saying to a man when he is about to die,

"go in peace; before thou gettest thither, Ktwa Mymydqm wna, we will go before thee, as it is said, Isa 48:8 "thy righteousness shall go before thee"."

Sometimes they say {z}, they go along with him at the time of a man's departure: neither gold, nor silver, nor precious stones and pearls accompany him, but the law and good works, as it is said, **Pr 6:22** "when thou goest it shall lead thee", &c.

{w} T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 11. 1. {x} T. Bab. Sota, fol. 3. 2. & Avoda Zara, fol. 5. 1. & Nishmat Chayim, fol. 21. 1. {y} Pirke Eliezer, c. 34. & Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 55. 4. {z} Pirke Abot, c. 6. sect. 9.

Revelation 14:14

Ver. 14. And I looked, and behold a white cloud,.... In this verse is a description of the person principally concerned in the harvest of the earth, hereafter mentioned; by whom is designed not some great potentate or prince, an encourager of the Reformation among his subjects; nor an angel in an human shape; nor Martin Luther, as others; but the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is described by his form, and by his seat, and by what he had on his head, and in his hand:

and upon the cloud one sat like unto the son of man; so Christ is said to be, **Re 1:13** and in **Da 7:13** where there is a like vision of him as here, and which refers to the same time; it is a name by which the Messiah is often called, and is expressive of the truth of his human nature, who was found in fashion as a man, and was really one; for his being like to the son of man designs reality and truth, and not mere appearance; see Mt 14:5 and besides, as this was in vision, it is very properly expressed, for Christ appeared to John in vision like to that human nature in which he is at the right hand of God: and here he is seen "sitting" upon the "white cloud"; which shows that he was come to judgment in the clouds of heaven, and was set on one of them, as on a throne; and a white cloud represents the purity, uprightness, and justness of his proceedings in judgment; for which reason he is said to be on a white throne, Re 20:11

having on his head a golden crown; as an ensign of royal majesty, showing that his kingdom was now come, the time for him to reign personally with his saints on earth a thousand years; and that it was a very glorious one; and that he should now reign before his ancients gloriously; and that it was pure, solid, and durable; see
Ps 21:4

and in his hand a sharp sickle: to reap the earth with, as hereafter, and is expressive of his power as King of saints and Judge of the world, to gather all nations before him; for the sickle is used to gather with, as well as to cut down.

Revelation 14:15

Ver. 15. And another angel came out of the temple,.... Not the Holy Spirit, who, being God omniscient, knows the day and hour of judgment, which is a secret to men and angels, as Napier thinks; since though he dwells in the church as his temple, yet is never called an angel; nor does this angel represent the souls under the altar, who come out from thence, and importunately desire vengeance on the inhabitants of the earth, the worshippers of the beast, who had shed their blood; but rather the mighty angels who shall descend from heaven with Christ, and who shall be employed by him as reapers, to gather in his elect from the four winds, as well as to bind up the tares in bundles, and burn them; unless a set of Gospel ministers, as before, should be intended, who either by divine revelation, or by the signs of the time being come, and observed by them, will know that the harvest, or end of the world, is come; since this angel is said to come out of the temple, the church, which had been measured, and was now opened in heaven, and from whence angels are said to come, Re 11:1

crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud: as the first and third angels did, Re 14:7 denoting great vehemence and importunity: thrust in thy sickle, and reap: which being spoken by an inferior angel, whether this designs the ministering spirits, or preachers of the word, must be understood not as commanding, nor even directing what should be done, but as beseeching and entreating: see Ps 132:8. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, and not without reason, that there is here some allusion to the putting in of the sickle, and reaping the first corn in Judea, at the feast of the passover, by the order of the sanhedrim, which sat in the temple; nor did any reap till they had the word given them, "reap", by the messengers of the court, called Nyd tyb yxwlv, "the angels", or messengers "of the sanhedrim": to whom the reaper said, shall I reap? and they say to him, rwuq {a}, "reap": the reasons follow:

for the time is come for thee to reap; the time of the end of the world, and of the judgment of it, which is fixed by God; and of Christ's coming to judge both quick and dead, and of the first resurrection, or the resurrection of the saints:

for the harvest of the earth is ripe: the measure of the sins of wicked men will now be filled up, and the afflictions of the saints will be accomplished in them, and the number of God's elect will be completed in the effectual calling; they will be all called, and so things will be ripe for the second coming of Christ. There seems to be some reference to **Joe 3:13** "put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe": the Jewish doctors ask {b}, to whom is this said? R. Phineas, in the name of R. Hilkiah, says, Mykalml, "to the angels"; so the mighty ones, in Re 14:11 are by Kimchi interpreted of the angels.

{a} Misn. Menachot, c. 10. sect. 3. {b} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 92. 1.

Revelation 14:16

Ver. 16. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth,.... He put forth, and made use of that power which he had in his hand, in answer to the entreaty of the angel, the time being fully come which was fixed for this great event:

and the earth was reaped; and the harvest of it was got in; reaping and harvest sometimes are used in an ill sense, and design the wrath of God, and his judgments inflicted upon men; see Isa 17:5. Hence some think, that both this and the vintage following intend the judgments of God upon antichrist, and that they are contemporary with the pouring out of the fifth and sixth vials upon the beast and his followers; and the rather, since the destruction of Babylon, literally taken, is expressed in such language, Jer 51:33 though these seem to have respect to times after the fall of the Romish Babylon, before declared in Re 14:8 and most interpreters refer the harvest to the last judgment at the end of the world; and which sense is greatly countenanced, and to be illustrated by the parable of the tares and wheat, in Mt 13:30 sometimes these phrases are used in a good sense, and intend the gathering in of souls by the preaching of the Gospel; as there are the appointed weeks of the harvest, so there is a time fixed for the calling and conversion of God's elect; and when this time is come, and especially to any number of them in any particular place, it is an harvest, as in Galilee and Samaria in the times of Christ, **Mt 9:37** the reapers are the ministers of the Gospel; such were the apostles of Christ, **Joh 4:36** and the sickle is the Gospel, by which not only men are cut to the heart, and cut down, and removed from their old bottom, and principles and practices, but are gathered to Christ, and into his churches; and when large numbers are brought in, it is an harvest time, as in the times of Christ and his apostles; see **Isa 9:1** hence some interpreters think that the harvest here has respect to the Reformation, which followed upon the preaching of Luther, Calvin, and others, when a large harvest of souls were gathered in, in Germany, France, England, and elsewhere; but rather it may be thought to refer to the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles in the latter day, in the spiritual reign of Christ, to which the preceding visions belong, as we have seen; the earth will be reaped indeed, and a great harvest it will be, when a nation shall be born at once, and the vast multitudes of the Gentiles shall be brought in, as in Isa 66:8 and the rather this may be judged to be the meaning of it, since the passage from whence these phrases are borrowed respects the bringing again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, **Joe 3:1** though it seems best to understand it of the Lord's wheat harvest at the end of the world, when the wheat of the earth shall be reaped, and gathered into Christ's barn, or garner, or into his and his Father's kingdom; this reaping of the earth is the removing of the saints out of it, not by death, but by the resurrection of them from the dead; for when Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven, and sit on the white cloud, or throne, the dead in him will rise first, and the living saints will be changed, and both will be caught up together, to meet the Lord in the air; so that the earth will be reaped, and be clear of them, and there will be none left in it but the wicked of the world; and what will become of them is declared in the following verses, under the representation of a vintage.

Revelation 14:17

Ver. 17. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven,.... It is a strange conceit of Mr. Brightman's, that this angel is Thomas Lord Cromwell, in the days of King Henry the Eighth, a sincere favourer of pure religion; and that the following angel is Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, a martyr, that had power over fire; and that the vintage, here spoken of, refers to the destroying of religious houses, and disposing of abbey lands to other uses; which was done under the king's authority, by the former of these, at the instigation of the latter, when those who were set over that business made such havoc of the goods of the Papists, that their houses seemed to swim in their spoils, as in a river of pressed grapes. Dr. Goodwin much better interprets it of God's vengeance upon the carnal Protestants and professors of religion; since it is an angel out of the temple that will execute it, and another from the altar, zealous of God's worship, that will provoke to it; and since the winepress will be trodden without the city, the church; and which began in the wars in Germany, in the last age, and will have its full accomplishment when the whole outward court is given to the Gentiles; but how these, who are but a few, when compared with the wicked of the world, should be called the vine of the earth, I see not. Mr. Daubuz thinks this vision of the vintage has had, at least in part, its fulfilment in the late wars in the times of Queen Anne, the Popish countries being then made the seat of war, in which they suffered much; rather they come nearest to the truth of the matter, who take this to be the battle of the great God Almighty, under the sixth vial, Re 16:14 fought by the word of God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who will tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, Re 19:15 when the beast and false prophet will both be destroyed: but inasmuch as Babylon is before declared to be fallen, Re 14:8 and since the gathering in of the Lord's wheat at the first resurrection is designed by the harvest, it is best to understand this vintage of the perdition of ungodly men by fire, at the conflagration of the world, which will be at the beginning of the thousand years' reign, and of the gathering of them in at the second resurrection, at the end of it, for the destruction of them in hell, soul and body. And by this "angel" is meant, not the saints of the most High; for though they may be said to come out of the temple, the church, and shall judge the world, yet they will not be employed in gathering together the wicked, and casting them into the lake of fire, or winepress of God's wrath: rather the ministering spirits are intended, who are the reapers at the end of the world, and who will gather the wicked, and bind them like tares in bundles, and cast them into the furnace of fire; though it is best to interpret this of Christ himself, who is often called an Angel in Scripture, as the Angel of God's presence; and the Angel of the covenant; and frequently in this book, as in **Re 7:2** because, as Mediator, he is God's messenger; and he may be said to do that, which he does by others, as instruments, as to gather the vine of the earth, and cast it into the winepress; and he may be said to "come out of the temple which is in heaven": whether this be understood of heaven itself, which the temple, and especially the most holy place in it, was a figure of; here Christ is, and from hence he is expected to come, and will come at the last day, as Judge of all the earth; or of the church of God, for here Christ dwells, and grants his gracious and spiritual presence until his second and personal coming, with all his saints: and now he will have them all with him, both quick and dead, and will be personally in his temple, the church, in the great congregation of the righteous, and out from among them will he display his power in the destruction of the wicked; and the rather he may be thought to be intended, since none but a divine person ever trod the winepress of God's wrath; see Isa 63:1 to which may be added what follows,

he also having a sharp sickle; the same who is described as like to the son of man, on a white cloud, with a golden crown on his head, and such a sickle in his hand, Re 14:14 which is expressive of the same judiciary power and authority.

Revelation 14:18

Ver. 18. And another angel came out from the altar,.... Where are the souls of the martyrs of Jesus, **Re 6:9** and whom this angel is thought by some to represent, in his address to him that had the sharp sickle, crying for vengeance on the wicked of the earth, who had shed their blood: the allusion seems to be to the altar of burnt offerings, where the sacrifices were slain, and on which they were burnt with fire; and which was an emblem of the strict justice of God, showing, that those persons, for whom these sacrifices were offered, deserved to be treated in like manner; and here the angel coming from thence signifies, that he came on the behalf of the justice of God, treating that he, to whom vengeance belonged, would execute it upon all the ungodly, who were ripe for judgment: and hence it is further said of him,

which had power over fire; whether the angels, as they have presided over particular kingdoms and states, Da 10:20 preside over the elements, since this angel had power over fire, and another angel is called the angel of the waters, Re 16:5 may be considered. According to the Jews {c} there are va ykalm, "angels of fire", and
Mym ykalm, "angels of the waters"; particularly it is said {d}, that Gabriel is va lv rv, "the prince of fire", or "that has power over fire", and Jurkemo is drbh rv, "prince of hail", or has power over it: however, fire is to be taken here, not for the Spirit, and his gifts, which not a created angel, but Christ only, has a power over, to baptize with; nor the Gospel, nor martyrdom, but rather the wrath of God, which in Scripture is often compared to fire, of which this angel was an executioner: and indeed here it may be referred, both literally to the burning of the world, and the wicked in it, in which the angels may be concerned, who will descend with Christ in flames of fire, taking vengeance on

the wicked; and figuratively to hell fire, and the destruction of the wicked in it, who will be cast into it by the angels of God.

And cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, as in Re 14:15 expressing like vehemence and importunity,

saying, thrust in thy sharp sickle: not commanding or directing, but entreating as before:

and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; not the vine of God's planting, the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, the church of Christ; but the vine of the earth, of wicked and earthly men, whose vine is the vine of Sodom, &c. De 32:32 and which is spread over the whole earth; a wild vine, whose grapes are gall, clusters bitter, and their wine the poison of dragons; and to such a vine the wicked are compared, for their emptiness and unfruitfulness, their uselessness and unprofitableness, and for their being fit fuel for everlasting burnings; see Eze 15:2. And the clusters of it may denote the great multitude of the wicked now to be cut down, gathered in, and destroyed, the reason given,

for her grapes are fully ripe; their wickedness very great, their iniquity full, the measure of their sins filled up, and they fitted for destruction, and ripe for ruin; see **Joe 3:13**. Some understand this of the degenerate church of Rome, and the destruction of it; see Re 19:15.

{c} Sepher Raziel, fol. 39. 2. Targum in 1 Reg. xix. 11. {d} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 118. 1.

Revelation 14:19

Ver. 19. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth,.... Before "upon the earth", when the harvest was gathered in, the wheat being on the earth, but not belonging to it; but here "into the earth", the vine being the vine of the earth, rooted in it, and natural to it:

and gathered the vine of the earth; the Arabic version reads, "of the whole earth"; in like manner as the tares in the parable are said to be gathered, and bound in bundles, and cast into the fire, which, as here, intends the destruction of the wicked, at the end of the world: this vine may be said to be cut down at the burning of the world, and to be gathered at the second resurrection, as the wheat harvest of the saints will be at the first resurrection:

and cast it into the great winepress the wrath of God; the same with the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, so often mentioned in this book: the torments of the wicked will lie in the wrath of God being poured forth upon them, and into them, which will be that fire that cannot be quenched, and that worm that never dies; and this is signified by the squeezing of grapes in a winepress, as God's judgments in this world sometimes are, Isa 63:3 and which will be very heavy and intolerable, since this winepress will be trod by the Lord God Almighty: and it is said to be a great one, as it must needs be, to hold the vine of the whole earth, or all the wicked of the world, who will be like the sand of the sea, innumerable; and this will be big enough for them all, and they will all be cast into it at once. Tophet is deep and large, Isa 30:33.

Revelation 14:20

Ver. 20. And the winepress was trodden without the city,.... The beloved city, the new Jerusalem, into which none of the wicked will enter, and without which are dogs, &c. Re 20:9. The allusion may be, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, to the olive presses, which were without the city of Jerusalem, from whence Gethsemane had its name, whither our Lord went, and where his sorrows began the night he was betrayed: hell is sometimes expressed by outer darkness, and said to be far off from heaven, and between the one and the other a great gulf is fixed, the distance is considerable; hence men are said to go forth to behold the miseries of the wicked; see
Mt 22:13.

and blood came out of the winepress; alluding to the juice squeezed out of grapes, called the blood of grapes, Ge 49:11.

Even unto the horses' bridles, for the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs; which is only an hyperbolical expression, setting forth the largeness and universality of the destruction of the wicked, and the impossibility of their escaping it. In like manner the Jews express a great slaughter of men; so of the slaughter at Bither, by Adrian, they say {e}, they went on slaying wmjwx-de Mdb
owoh eqvv de, "until a horse plunged in blood up to his nostrils", and the blood ran four miles into the sea; which is not to be understood literally, but as expressing a prodigious effusion of blood: and as to

the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs, perhaps there may be an allusion to the measure of the land of Israel, and the common notion of it among the Jews, who make it to be the square of four hundred parsoe {f}: hence they often speak of the land of Israel shaking and moving four hundred "parsoe", upon some extraordinary occasions {g}; and a "parsa" contained four miles {h}, so that four hundred "parsoe" made a thousand and six hundred miles; and if miles and furlongs are the same, in which sense only the land of Israel could be so large, here is the exact space; for Jerom {i}, who was an inhabitant of it, says, it was scarce 160 miles in length, to which agrees R. Menachem {k}; and it may be observed, that the Arabic version renders the words, "by the space of a thousand and six hundred miles". The Ethiopic version, very wrongly, reads, "sixteen furlongs".

{e} T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 69. 1. {f} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 28. 1. Gloss. in ib. {g} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 3. 1. & Bava Kama, fol. 82. 2. & Menachot, fol. 64. 2. {h} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 92. 2. Gloss. in ib. {i} Ad Dardanum, fol. 22. 1. Tom. 3. {k} In Gen. fol. 60.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 15:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 15

This chapter is a preparation to the pouring out of the seven vials, and contains a vision of the seven angels in heaven that should do this work, of a chorus of harpers on this occasion, and of the same seven angels coming out of the temple, and receiving the vials, in order to execute their commission. The vision of the seven angels, having the seven last plagues, so called because filled up with the wrath of God, is said to be a sign, great and marvellous, Re 15:1 a sea of glass, mingled with fire, is seen, with persons standing on it, described by the victory they had got over the beast, his image, mark, and number of his name; by having the harps of God in their hands, and by the song they sung, called the song of Moses, and of the Lamb; in which they ascribe to Christ deity, dominion over the saints, omnipotence, justice, truth, and holiness; give him glory, celebrate his works, commend his ways, and suggest that he ought to be the object of the fear and worship of all, Re 15:2. Next the temple in heaven is seen opened, out of which come the seven angels, described by the place they came from, the temple; by what they had, the seven plagues; by their habit, clothed in pure white linen; and by their golden girdles about their breasts, Re 15:5 to whom one of the four living creatures, made mention of in **Re 4:6** delivers to them seven golden vials full of divine wrath, upon which the temple is filled with smoke from the Lord; so that it was not possible for anyone to enter into it, until these seven plagues were ended, Re 15:7.

Ver. 1. And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous,.... This chapter is a preparation to the pouring out of the seven vials, as Re 16:1 is to the sending of the seven epistles, and **Re 2:1** to the seven seals and seven trumpets: the vision is called a "sign", because what was seen was significative of future events; a sign of the coming of Christ, of his kingdom, and of the destruction of antichrist; and it is said to be a sign "in heaven", where John was called up, and where he had his visions; and it was "another", a different one from that in Re 12:1 which represented the downfall of Paganism, but this the downfall of Popery; and it is a very "great" one, it is expressive of great things, as the fall of Babylon the great, or the judgment of the great whore, and the great glory of the church and kingdom of Christ; and it is "marvellous", for the two grand events it respects are very wonderful; as that antichrist, who was once in such power, should be destroyed, and that by such weak means, in the esteem of men, as the preaching of the Gospel, which is no less marvellous than the fall of Jericho by the sound of rams' horns; and that the church, which was in so low an estate in the wilderness, for the space of 1260 days or years, should become so glorious. The vision follows,

seven angels, having the seven last plagues; these are not the same angels that blew the seven trumpets, for they are not contemporary with them, but are more likely the same with those in the preceding chapter; though they seem rather to be different from them: if these were angels literally understood, their having plagues is no objection to their being good angels, since such are often the executioners of God's wrath; and that these good ones, appears from one of them talking with John, and showing him the judgment of antichrist, and another the bride, the Lamb's wife, and her glory, Re 17:1 though they seem rather to be the ministers of the Gospel, since they are said to come out of the temple, Re 15:6 and since the destruction of antichrist will be by the breath of Christ's mouth, or by the preaching of the Gospel; unless it should be thought that members of churches are designed, since these angels receive their vials from one of the four living creatures, Re 15:7 or preachers of the word; and may denote some very principal men, as kings, who will now be come to Zion, and be members of Gospel churches, and will be the nursing fathers and protectors of them; and these will hate the whore, and burn her flesh with fire; but of these angels, see more on Re 15:6. They are said to have "the seven last plagues"; that is, in their vials; for these seven plagues are the same with the seven vials of the wrath of God, to be poured out upon antichrist; and are no other than so many steps, ways, and means, by which God will bring on and finish his destruction: these are called the last plagues, because they will be in the last days: there have been plagues before, as at the destruction of the old world, and of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the plagues of Egypt, and the downfall of several monarchies and kingdoms, and of Paganism in the Roman empire; but these will fall upon antichrist, and will be the last upon him, for they will issue in his utter ruin; they will be the last plagues upon the earth, there will be no other after them, but the conflagration of the world, and the general destruction of the wicked in hell. These plagues are the same with the third woe, and are an explanation of it, and belong to the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which brings in the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of Christ, and the time of God's wrath upon the nations, or Gentiles, the Papists, and of judging the dead, and destroying them that destroyed the earth, Re 11:15 for these plagues do not follow upon the harvest and vintage, nor has this vision any respect to them, nor to be connected with the preceding chapter, but with Re 11:1 and gives an enlarged view, both of the glory of Christ's kingdom, and of the ruin of antichrist, by these plagues, called the last:

for in them is filled up the wrath of God; upon the beast, and his followers.

Revelation 15:2

Ver. 2. And I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mingled with fire,.... Not baptism, but rather the blood of Christ, which may be compared to a sea, for its abundant virtue and efficacy in cleansing from all sin; and to a sea "of glass", since in it are clearly seen free justification, full pardon, peace and reconciliation; and may be said to be "mingled with fire", being attended in the application of it with the Spirit of God, whose gifts and graces are sometimes signified by fire: and so, according to others, this sea may represent the pure church of God, as washed in the blood of the Lamb; compared to a sea for the multitude of which it consists, and to a sea of glass, because of the transparency and clearness of its principles and practices, and may be said to be mingled with the fire of love and zeal: most interpreters understand it of the world, which is like a sea for the multitude of its inhabitants; and sometimes to a troubled one, because of the restlessness and disquietude of the wicked in it; but here it is like a sea of glass, for the quiet, and peace, and rest it shall be in at this time; though it is commonly said to be like such a sea, partly because all things are manifest, and open to an omniscient God; and partly because of its

outward splendour, and the brittleness, frailty, and transitoriness of it; and to be mixed with fire, either because of the light of the Gospel, and the operation of the Spirit in the hearts of some that are in it, or because of the afflictions and persecutions the saints in it; though it seems best of all to understand it of the Gospel, as in See Gill on "Re 4:6"; and which may be said to be mingled with fire, either because of the powerful and clear demonstration of the Spirit that attends it to the minds of many, or that heat of persecution which is raised by it; see
Lu 12:49 or rather it denotes the purity of the Gospel in those times, its general spread, and the great zeal and fervour of the professors of it, since persecution will now be at an end.

And them that had gotten the victory over the beast; over antichrist, signified the beast, that rose up out of the sea, and out of the earth, Re 13:1 and which are the same, and were but one, though in different forms, as from hence appears: the beast first overcame the saints, by slaying of them; and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, by preaching and professing the Gospel, by their close and constant adherence to it, and by dying for it:

and over his image; caused by him to be made to the first beast; and is no other than the Popish religion, which bears a resemblance to Paganism; and which the saints may be said to get the victory over, by standing out against it, opposing and refuting it, not giving into it, but bearing their testimony against it:

and over his mark; refusing to receive it either in their forehead, or in their right hand; that is, either to swear allegiance to him, or profess his religion. This clause is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, Syriac. Arabic, and Ethiopic versions:

and over the number his name; that is, they would not own his supremacy and authority, nor embrace his doctrines, nor obey his orders, nor be reckoned his followers in any form or shape; see
Re 13:15. These conquerors John saw

stand on the sea of glass; which, if applied to the blood of Christ, shows that these confessors were purified by it, and were more than conquerors through it; that they were come out of great tribulation, and had washed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and were just come up from the washing, and stood upon, or rather by, or "near the sea", as the Arabic version renders it, in allusion to the priests at the molten sea, in the temple: but if the world is meant by the sea, their standing upon it designs their victory and triumph over it by faith, their having it under their feet, and their contempt of it; but rather, since the Gospel is intended, it may denote their solid standing upon the doctrines of it, the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and their steadfast continuance in them, and faithful abiding by them, whereby they got the victory over antichrist:

having the harps of God: their hearts in an excellent frame, tuned and disposed by God, to sing his praise, and set forth his glory; having them filled with spiritual joy and gladness, and with great thankfulness, on account of their victory, the happy state of Christ's church, and the destruction of its enemies: the allusion is to the people of Israel, Moses and the men, and Miriam and the women with timbrels and dances standing on the sea shore, when the Egyptians were destroyed, singing the praises of God; as is still more manifest from the following verse.

Revelation 15:3

Ver. 3. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God,.... Not that in De 32:1 but that in Ex 15:1 and the sense is, either that they observed the law of Moses, which he as a servant in the Lord's house faithfully delivered, and kept it distinct from the Gospel, and did not blend them together, as in the times before; or rather, that they sung a song like that of Moses, and on a like occasion. Pharaoh was the very picture of the pope of Rome; his oppression and cruel usage of the Israelites represent the tyranny and cruelty of the Romish antichrist; and the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, and the destruction of the Egyptians at the Red sea, which occasioned the song of Moses, were an emblem of God's bringing his people out of antichristian bondage, and of the ruin of antichrist, upon which this song is sung; and Rome, in this book, is called Egypt, Re 11:8. The Jews have a notion, that the very song of Moses itself will be sung in the world to come, in the days of the Messiah; for they say, there are in it the times of the Messiah, and of Gog and Magog, and of the resurrection of the dead, and the world to come {l}. And this song was sung by the Levites in the daily service {m}.

And the song of the Lamb; the Lamb of God, who was slain for the sins of men; the same song of which mention is made, **Re 5:9** the song of redeeming love, a song of praise for the blessings of grace which come through him, and of deliverance by him:

saying, great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; Christ is in this song addressed as a divine person, as Lord of all, God over all, blessed for ever, the Almighty God, as his works declare him to be; his works of creation, providence, and redemption, which are all great and marvellous, particularly the accomplishment of the glorious things spoken of his church, and the destruction of his enemies, which are here designed:

just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints: made so by his Father, and acknowledged by all his people, and especially at this time, when his kingdom will more visibly and gloriously appear: the Alexandrian copy, one of Stephens's, the Complutensian edition, and Arabic version, read, King of nations, as in Jer 10:7 from whence this, and the beginning of the next verse, seem to be taken; the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "King of ages", an everlasting King, as in Jer 10:10 but the generality of copies read as we have it: and the ways of this King are just and true; his purposes, decrees, and counsels of old, are faithfulness and truth; all his proceedings towards his own people, his subjects, are mercy and truth; his precepts and ordinances, his worship and service, are just and true, in opposition to every false way; and all his judgments upon his enemies, which are intended, are just, being what their sins deserved, and are true, being agreeably to his word and threatenings.

{l} Zohar in Exod. fol. 23. 2. & 24. 3, 4. & 25. 2. & T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 2. {m} Maimon. Tamidim, c. 6. sect. 9.

Revelation 15:4

Ver. 4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord,.... At this time the people of the Jews shall seek after Christ, and fear him and his goodness; the forces of the Gentiles shall be brought into Zion, whose heart shall then fear, and be enlarged; the fear of the Lord will be in all places, and in all men, both Jews and Gentiles, **Ho 3:5**

and glorify thy name? by ascribing all divine perfections to him, giving him divine worship and adoration, and attributing the whole of salvation to him, and the glory of all that is done for his church, and against its enemies:

for thou only art holy; not only perfectly holy, as man, but infinitely and essentially holy, as God, and the fountain of holiness to his people, as Mediator: this character seems to be given in opposition to antichrist, who arrogantly assumes the title of holiness to himself, when it only belongs to Christ.

For all nations shall come and worship before thee; the Gospel shall now be preached to all nations, and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of it; the kingdoms of this world will become Christ's, and his kingdom shall be to the ends of the earth, and all people shall obey him: the words seem to be taken, with some other phrases before used, out of Ps 86:8

for thy judgments are made manifest; or "thy justifications", or "righteousnesses"; the perfect righteousness of Christ, and the doctrine of justification by it, will now be most clearly revealed, and generally received, in opposition to the Popish doctrine of merits, works of supererogation, &c. or the judgments of the King of saints upon antichrist, who will now avenge their blood, which he has shed; see Re 17:1 and the justice and righteousness of his proceedings against the man of sin will be notorious and manifest to all, and be acknowledged, as in Re 16:5.

Revelation 15:5

Ver. 5. And after that I looked,.... That is, after John had seen the above vision, he looked again, and saw what follows:

and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened; this does not refer to heaven itself, the antitype of the holy of holies, which is opened by the blood of Christ, by which he himself has entered, and his people have boldness to enter now by faith, and where their souls always enter upon their departure from their bodies; for of this temple cannot be said what is in Re 15:8 nor to the Jerusalem state, or the most glorious state of the church on earth, during the thousand years' reign; for in that there will be no temple, Re 21:22 much less to any material temple on earth; the temple at Jerusalem was destroyed before this vision was, and is never to be rebuilt; nor will there be any third temple, as the Jews vainly expect: but to the church of God in the spiritual reign of Christ, under the blowing of the seventh trumpet; and designs the same thing as in Re 11:19 and this is to be understood as what will be, not before, but after the seven angels have poured out their vials; for till they have fulfilled the seven plagues, there is no entering into the temple for smoke, Re 15:8 and besides, it was after these things; after John had seen the seven angels, with the seven last plagues, Re 15:1 that he beheld the temple opened. The church is called "the temple", in allusion to Solomon's temple, because of its builder, materials, situation, magnificence, strength, holiness, and use; See Gill on "2Co 6:16" and the tabernacle, in allusion to the tabernacle of Moses, which was before the temple, because God dwells in it, as he did in that; and because like that it is movable, and but for a while; and points at this church state, which will not always be so, but change and sink into the Laodicean state: and it is called "the tabernacle of the testimony", as that was; the testimony was the law, or the two tables of stone, so called, because they testified what was the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God; and these being put into the ark, were a testimony of the covenant between God and the people of Israel, and were a witness against them, when they transgressed them, De 31:26 and over these were the mercy seat, and cherubim, as a testimony of the divine Presence; and the law being put into the ark, hence the ark was called the ark of the testimony, and that being placed in the tabernacle, that was called the tabernacle of the testimony, or of witness, **Nu 1:50** and all these were types of, and came to signify Christ, and the covenant of grace, the Gospel, and the mysteries of it: so that by the opening of the temple, &c. is meant a free exercise of the true religion, a setting up of Gospel churches according to the original plan, a keeping of the ordinances, as they were first delivered, and a more clear discovery of Gospel truths: it is the same with the open door in the Philadelphian church state, **Re 3:8** as well as that at this time there will be a full manifestation of the judgments of God upon antichrist: the Alexandrian copy leaves out the word "behold".

Revelation 15:6

Ver. 6. And the seven angels came out of the temple,.... By which it appears, that they are such who are of, or belong to the church of Christ; and are either ministers, or members of churches, who will be the executioners of God's wrath upon the beast, and his followers; some copies, and the Complutensian edition, read, "out of heaven":

having the seven plagues; that is, they were appointed to inflict them, and were preparing and furnishing for it, and quickly had orders to do it:

clothed in pure and white linen; in which habit angels have been used to appear, as at our Lord's resurrection and ascension, and is by some thought to be expressive of the purity and holiness of angels; but rather saints are meant, who appear in the habit of priests, being all made kings and priests; and denotes their being clothed with the pure and spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, which is fine linen, clean and white, and the righteousness of the saints, Re 19:8 and also their spiritual joy in their present situation, and in the view of the destruction of antichrist, their sackcloth being put off, in which they, the witnesses, before appeared. So the linen garment of the high priest was, as Philo the Jew says {n}, made of "fine linen", kayarwtatov, "most pure". The Alexandrian copy, and some copies of the Vulgate Latin version, and some exemplars mentioned by Andreas Caesariensis, an ancient commentator on this book, read, "clothed with a stone, pure and white"; as if they were arrayed in garments of stone, which is not likely; unless reference is had to the stone asbestos, of an iron colour, found, as Pliny says {o}, in the mountains of Arcadia, of which linen was made, called "asbestinum", and of that garments; which were so far from being consumed by fire, that they became clean and brighter by it; or to the Carystian stone, which the inhabitants of Carystus used to comb, spin, and weave, and make carpets of {p}.

And having their breasts girded with golden girdles; such an one as Christ himself was girded with, **Re 1:13** and this some understand of the love, which the breasts of angels are filled with towards the saints, and their readiness to perform all good offices to them, and to execute the judgments of God upon their enemies, whenever they have orders: but since these angels come out of the temple, and members of Gospel churches seem designed, rather this is to be understood either of the grace of faith, which is much more precious than of gold that perisheth, which receives the righteousness of Christ, puts it on, and girds it about the believer; or of love, the love of God and Christ, which encompass the saints about, and constrain them, and engage them in fervent love to them, and one another: or of the girdle of truth, **Eph 6:14** which is near and close to them, and which keeps them close to Christ; nor can they depart totally and finally from him, or that; or in general, this may denote their strength and readiness for what service they shall be called to; see Lu 12:35.

{n} De Somniis, p. 597. {o} Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 10. {p} Pancirol, rer. memorab. par. 1. tit. 4. & Salmuth in ib. Plin. l. 19. c. 1. Turueb. Adversar. l. 23. c. 1. Schotti Thaumaturg, l. 2. sect. 10. p. 118.

Revelation 15:7

Ver. 7. And one of the four beasts,.... Or living creatures: now we hear of them, as of the four and twenty elders, under the blowing of the seventh trumpet, Re 11:16 with which this vision is contemporary; these living creatures are the ministers of the Gospel;

See Gill on "Re 4:6" and this was one, or the first of them, who was like a lion, for fortitude and courage, and whose voice was as the noise of thunder, **Re 4:7** and so fitly represents those ministers who shall give out the vials of God's wrath: not any particular person is designed, who shall be at this time; and much less Luke the evangelist, as Lord Napier thinks; nor Peter, who prophesied of the last time, **2Pe 3:10** as Grotius; but a set of Gospel ministers, comparable to one of the living creatures John had before seen; of whom it is said, that they

gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever: these seven vials are for the seven last plagues to be put into, and out of which they are to be taken, or poured, and inflicted; see Re 21:9 hence it appears, that the seven plagues, and the wrath of God, are the same thing, and both design God's judgments upon antichrist; and these being expressed by "vials", which are measures, and large ones, show the large abundance and plenteous effusion of God's wrath, and the secret, sudden, and irresistible power of it; and yet that it will be poured out in measure, according to righteous judgment, and therefore it is put into vials; and these golden ones, expressive of the purity, holiness, and justice of the divine proceedings: and it will be very terrible; it will be, not the wrath of men, but of God, and a cup of the fierceness of his wrath; it will be the wrath of the living God, of him that lives for ever, and as he is, such will his wrath be; it will continue for ever, for this wrath will issue in the everlasting destruction of antichrist: so the wrath of God is signified by a wine cup of fury, Jer 25:15 and that destruction, and those plagues which God designed to bring upon Pharaoh, are by Jonathan ben Uzziel, in his Targum on Ge 40:12 called azgwrd
alyyp, "a vial of wrath", which he should drink of: and in the pouring out of there seven vials, there is in some of them a manifest allusion to the plagues of Egypt. So the cup of trembling, in Isa 51:17 is by the Targumists called ylyp, "a vial", and also "the cup of fury",
Isa 51:22 and that these vials were not small narrow mouthed vessels, but large broad mouthed ones, and more properly basins or bowls, is manifest from the use of the word with Jewish writers. The dishes on which the loaves of the shewbread were set, each of which loaves was ten hands breadth long, and five broad {q}, are by the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem on Ex 25:29 called tlyyp, "vials"; and so the chargers offered at the dedication of the tabernacle, **Nu 7:13** are, by the same, rendered vials, which weighed 130 shekels; and so the silver bowl they offered, is, by Josephus {r}, called a vial: the bowls in **Am 6:6** are, by the Targum there, said to be "silver vials". The lordly dish brought by Jael to Sisera, **Jud 5:25** the Targum calls the vial of the mighty ones; and the earthen vessels used at the trial of the suspected wife, and at the cleansing

of the leper, are both by Jewish writers said to be "vials" {s}. Now these vials were given to the seven angels by one of the living creatures, the ministers of the word; from whence it seems that these angels design members of churches, as distinct from ministers; and may intend civil magistrates, and very principal ones, as kings of the earth, who, in this state of things, and times, will belong to the churches, and will be the instruments of destroying antichrist: and these vials may be said to be given to them by the ministers, since they will execute this vengeance in consequence of their prayers, and the churches', called vials full of odours, **Re 5:8** and because these great men will be stirred up by the ministers of the Gospel, and by their ministrations, to do this work; see Re 18:4.

{q} Misn. Menachot, c. 11. sect. 4, 5. {r} Antiqu. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 10. {s} Misn. Sota, c. 2. sect. 2. Joseph Antiqu. l. 3. c. 11. sect. 6. Misn. Negaim, c. 10. sect. 1.

Revelation 15:8

Ver. 8. And the temple was filled with smoke,.... Not with the smoke of false doctrine and superstition; that comes out of the bottomless pit, this from God, **Re 9:2** and besides, Gospel churches will grow purer and purer, while the seven angels are pouring out the vials: but rather this may be understood of judicial blindness and hardness of heart, upon the antichristian party, which will come upon them from God in righteous judgment; so that they will not be reformed by the plagues, and vials of wrath, nor repent of their sins; but blaspheme God, who has power over the plagues, and so shall not be able to enter into the temple: or else this may design God's powerful and gracious presence in his church, in allusion to the cloud which filled the tabernacle, so that Moses could not enter; and which filled the temple, so that the priests could not minister, Ex 40:34 since this is said to be

from the glory of God, and from his power; whose presence is the glory in the midst of his church, and a covert, a protection and defence, to the saints, so that none can come into the temple to hurt them: see **Isa 4:5** or rather this intends "the smoke of the anger of God", as the Ethiopic version renders it, and which is intolerable; and it may have respect not only to the wrath of God, which is insupportable, but to that great affliction which will befall the saints in those times, through the last struggle of the beast; called the earthquake, and the hour of temptation, and a time of trouble, as never the like was, and which will be shortened for the elect's sake:

and no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. None of the anti-Christian party will attempt to enter in, because of their blindness and obduracy; nor can they get in to do any mischief, because the glorious and powerful presence of God is a defence against them: and this may also have some respect to the darkness of God's judgments, which will not be clearly manifest until these seven plagues are accomplished; till that time God's judgments on antichrist will remain a great deep, and be unsearchable; there will be no entering into the temple, so as fully to understand them, which is meant by going into the sanctuary of God, Ps 73:17 and this makes the interpretation of the pouring out of these vials, in the next chapter, very difficult.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 16:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 16

This chapter gives an account of the pouring out of the seven vials by the angels; their orders for it are in Re 16:1. The first angel pours out his vial on the earth, the effect of which is a noisome and grievous sore upon the followers of antichrist, and the worshippers of his image, Re 16:2. The second pours out his upon the sea; the events of it are, the sea became blood, and every living creature in it died, Re 16:3. The third pours out his upon the rivers and fountains of water, which thereby became blood; upon which the angel of the waters applauds the justice of God, declaring the righteousness of his judgments, and giving a reason for it; and which is confirmed by another angel from the altar, Re 16:4. The fourth angel pours out his vial on the sun, the effects of which are, scorching men with heat, their blasphemy against God, and impenitence, Re 16:8. The fifth pours out his on the seat of the beast, the consequences of which are darkness in his kingdom, men gnawing their tongues because of their pains, their blasphemy of the name of God because of them, and their impenitence, Re 16:10. The sixth angel pours out his on the river Euphrates, and what followed upon it are, the drying up of that river to make way for the kings of the east; there unclean spirits are seen, described by their original, coming out of the mouths of the dragon, beast, and false prophet; by their form, like frogs; by their internal nature, spirits of devils; by their works, doing miracles; by the errand they are sent, and go upon, to gather the kings of the earth to the battle of God Almighty, which they succeed in; but before this is done, a declaration is made of the suddenness of Christ's coming, exciting the saints to watchfulness, and to keep their garments, that they might not be naked, and exposed to shame, Re 16:12 Then the seventh angel pours out his vial into the air, the consequences of which are, a voice from heaven declaring it is done: other voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake; a rupture of the great city into three parts; the fall of other cities; the remembrance of Babylon before God; the flight of every island and mountain, and a great hail storm, which causes men to blaspheme God, Re 16:17.

Ver. 1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple,.... The church, which in the preceding chapter is said to be opened; this was either the voice of God, whose temple the church is, and where he dwells, and who, has power over these plagues, Re 16:9 and who, when he is about to bring judgments on the earth, is said to roar out of Zion, Re 16:16 or of Christ, who is always in the midst of his church and people, and whose voice is as the voice of many waters; see Re 16:15 or it may be of one of the four living creatures, the ministers of the word, in and by whom Christ often speaks; and the rather, since one of these gave the seven angels the golden vials of the wrath of God, they are now bid to pour out.

Saying to the seven angels, go your ways and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth; for though these angels had the seven last plagues to inflict, and the seven vials of God's wrath to pour out, and were in a readiness to do it, yet they did not move without an order, which is here given them; and they are bid to go their ways, from the temple, the church, where they were, and of which they were members, to the several parts of the antichristian empire; and there pour out all the wrath and vengeance of God upon his enemies, and theirs, and leave nothing behind, but give them the dregs of every cup of his fury: the earth here is to be taken in a larger sense than in the following verse, and includes the land and sea, the fountains and rivers, and even the ambient air, and also the sun in the firmament, as the pouring out of these vials upon them show; and designs the whole apostate church, consisting of earthly men, all the inhabitants of the earth, that worship the beast. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and the Complutensian edition, read, "the seven vials of the wrath of God"; these seven vials are not contemporary, much less the same with the seven trumpets; there is indeed a likeness between them in some things, especially in the first four; for as the first four trumpets affect the earth, the sea, the fountains, and rivers of water, and the sun, so the first four vials are poured out on the same, and that in the same order; first on the earth, and then on the sea, &c. and which will give some light, and be a direction to observe the several parts of the antichristian empire, which will suffer by these vials, and the in which their

ruin will proceed; and as the trumpets were so many gradual steps to the ruin of the Roman empire, eastern and western, when become Christian, so these vials are so many gradual steps to, and which issue in the ruin of, both the eastern and western antichrist; though they do not respect the same things, nor the same times: the trumpets respect the Roman empire as Christian, under the government of emperors, after the downfall of Paganism in it; and the vials respect the antichristian powers in their several branches, under the pope and Turk. Antichrist did not appear until the fifth trumpet sounded, whereas the first vial is poured out upon his followers and worshippers, Re 16:2 from whence it is a clear point, that the first trumpet and the first vial cannot be contemporary; and the same judgment may be made of the rest: and it may be further observed, that these vials are only poured out on the enemies of God and of Christ, and of his church and people; for no wrath can be poured out upon the saints, not the least drop of it can fall upon them; this would not be consistent with God's everlasting love to them, with the satisfaction of Christ made for them, nor with the blessings of justification, pardon, adoption, &c. bestowed on them; not but that they may meet with trouble in the of these vials, through the wars that will be in the world, and through the struggles of the beast of Rome, especially its last, which will be the hour of temptation, and that time of trouble than which never was the like; yet all will work for, and issue in their good, and they will rejoice in God's righteous judgments; the blow will be upon antichrist, the vengeance of God will fall upon those that have the mark of the beast, and the worshippers of his image, upon the seat of the beast, even upon Babylon, and the whole Romish jurisdiction, as appears from
Re 16:2 and also upon the Turkish empire, and all the nations engaged in the interest of both pope and Turk, Re 16:12 and it is easy to observe, that there is in many of these vials an allusion to the plagues of Egypt; in the first, Re 16:2 to the plague of boils, **Ex 9:8** in the second and third, Re 16:3 to that of turning the waters of Egypt into blood, **Ex 7:19** in the fourth, Re 16:10 to the darkness that was over all the land of Egypt, Ex 10:21 and in the fifth there is a manifest reference to the frogs that distressed the Egyptians, **Ex 8:5** and in the seventh, to the plague of hail, **Ex 9:23** and they have much the same effect, even the hardening of those on whom they fall, being far from being brought to repentance by them, Re 16:9 and this confirms the application of the vials to the destruction of Rome, which is spiritually called Egypt, Re 11:8 and may assure that they will issue in the ruin of antichrist, and in the salvation of God's people, as the plagues of Egypt did in the destruction of Pharaoh, and in the deliverance of the children of Israel; and may also lead us to conclude, that there will be a like quick execution of the one as of the other; for as the plagues of Egypt came very quick one after another, so it seems as if the

pouring out of these vials would be in like manner; the angels receive them together, and have their orders at the same time; and they go forth immediately, one after another, if not together, to the respective parts where they are to pour them forth, and which they do directly; see Re 16:8. Moreover, these vials will affect antichrist both with respect to his civil and ecclesiastic capacity, or both in temporals and spirituals, and, both antichrists, eastern and western: whether they are begun to be poured out or not, is a question. I am ready to think they are not, because they seem to me to refer to the seventh trumpet, which as yet has not sounded, and are the same with the wrath of God, and the time of the judging the dead, or avenging the blood of the saints, which will be come when that sounds, Re 11:18. Besides, the outer court is not entirely given to the Gentiles, nor the witnesses slain, which must be before this time of wrath upon antichrist; not but that there has been some manifest marks of the divine displeasure upon the whore of Rome, and she has been sinking ever since the Reformation, at which time some begin these vials, or before; and she is reduced to a low estate; yet I think not to such a degree as these vials express.

Revelation 16:2

Ver. 2. And the first went,.... The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "the first angel", and who undoubtedly is meant, who readily and cheerfully obeyed the orders given him, as did the rest; by this angel cannot be meant Pope Adrian, as Lyra, a Popish interpreter, imagines; for a pope would never hurt the worshippers of the beast, as this angel does; rather some Christian Protestant prince or magistrate is designed, and Brightman applies it to Queen Elizabeth; though a set of kings and princes yet to come seem to be intended:

and poured out his vial upon the earth; not upon the whole earth, and the inhabitants of it; not upon the temple or church of God, and the worshippers in it, which are measured, hid, and protected; nor upon the Roman Pagan empire, which was destroyed under the sixth seal, and which never had any worshippers of the beast and his image in it, for then he was not risen; nor upon the whole apostate church, only a part of it: some think the meaner and vulgar sort of Papists are meant, who were reformed by the Waldenses, Wycliff, Huss, and others before Luther; but rather the antichristian powers on the continent are designed, and particularly Germany; for as the first trumpet affected the earth, **Re 8:7** and brought the Goths into Germany, and other inland countries on the continent; so this first vial affects the earth, and brings distress upon the Popish party in the same place: and this respects not the

Reformation by Luther, as some have thought, nor the wars of the Turks here in the last age; though were it not for some things unfulfilled, which are to precede these vials, one would be tempted to think that this vial was now pouring out upon the empire; but I rather think this refers to a time of distress yet to come on those parts, and which will issue in a reformation from Popery again; for it should be observed, and it may be observed once for all, that though these vials are so many plagues upon antichrist, they are each of them so many steps to the advancement of Christ's kingdom and glory:

and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image; that is, who were professors of the Popish religion, and adherents of the pope of Rome in those parts; see Re 13:15 who will only feel the effects of this vial, and that by a noisome and grievous sore falling on them, in allusion to the plague of boils in Egypt, **Ex 9:8** by which may be meant, either literally something external, but not the plague in Dioclesian's time, for then the beast was not risen; and there were none that could have his mark or worship his image: some have thought the French disease is intended, which first appeared in the world in 1490, among the Papists, as a just judgment upon them for the horrible and unnatural lusts and uncleanness of the Romish clergy; and others understand it of a very great heat, which will be before the burning of the world, and will raise blisters and boils upon men: or rather this may design something internal, either the remorse of their consciences, reflections on their past practices, and black despair and horror of mind; and their madness, wrath, and fury, their malice and envy at the success of the preachers of the Gospel, and of Protestant states and princes against them; see De 28:27. Moreover, their secret and wicked practices, both in political and ecclesiastical affairs, will be discovered, and they will appear with boils and blotches upon them all over, which will render them odious to the people, and be the means of a general reformation. Mr. Daubuz thinks the curse of wickedness in the ninth and tenth centuries, after the invocation of saints and angels, and the worship of images were settled, is meant.

Revelation 16:3

Ver. 3. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea,.... Not literally; and so does not design the stagnation of it, which it is thought will be before the general conflagration; see **Am 7:4** nor is it to be understood of the sea of this world, and the men of it, who are like a troubled sea; but rather of Popish doctrines and councils, which are a sea of errors, and will now be confuted and put an end to. Brightman applies it to the council of Trent, and makes this angel to be Chemnitius, a German divine, who wrote a confutation of it; but as the sea is a collection of many waters, and many waters in this book signify the people and nations under the Romish yoke, sea here may design the whole jurisdiction of Rome, or mystical Babylon; see Jer 51:36 and particularly its maritime powers, Spain and Portugal: and as the second trumpet affected the sea, **Re 8:8** and brought the Vandals into Spain and Portugal, so this second vial affects the sea, and brings great wars, slaughter, and bloodshed into these parts, when they also will be reformed from Popery:

and it became as the blood of a dead man; thick, clotted together, and putrid, and so never to be returned to their former state:

and every living soul died in the sea: those, that are not reformed will either die by the sword, or fly into other parts; for there will be no comfortable living for the Popish party in those countries where now they live in power, ease, and affluence. This, and the following vial, are referred by Mr. Daubuz, the one to the first crusades, or holy wars, for the regaining of the holy land, and the other to the latter of them.

Revelation 16:4

Ver. 4. And the third angel poured his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters,.... Which also is not to be literally understood of a stagnation of them, before the burning of the world; nor of the destruction of Popish fleets and navies, such as the Spanish armada in 1588, and others since; but rather of Popish writings, of the most learned and subtle men among them, who like rivers and fountains, which supply and fill the sea, support and keep up the Romish jurisdiction and hierarchy; and of the confutation of them by Protestant writers; and of the utter destruction of their principal orders, and chief men among them, as cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, Jesuits, &c. though it seems chiefly to design the places near to Rome, such as Italy and Savoy; for as the third trumpet affects the rivers and fountains, **Re 8:10** and brings in the Huns into Italy, and issued in the destruction of the empire; so the third vial affects the same, and brings terrible wars, and great effusion of blood, where so much of the blood of the saints have been shed: hence it follows, and they became blood; these countries will be covered with blood, and a reformation will ensue upon it; the allusion is to **Ex 7:19**.

Revelation 16:5

Ver. 5. And I heard the angel of the waters say,.... So we read in Jewish writings {t} of an angel that was amyd arv, "the prince of the sea", and of angels that were over the waters, and others over fire {u}; though here is designed not one of the Mym ykalm "angels of the water", that presided ove the waters, as another over fire;
See Gill on "Re 14:18", but the third angel that poured out his vial upon the waters; when he had so done, he said as follows. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, and that not without reason, that since these angels appeared in the garb of priests, Re 15:6 and since there was a priest appointed to take care of the wells, and fountains, and ditches about Jerusalem, that the people might have water at the feasts {w}, there is an allusion to him; and certain it is that there was such an officer; there was one Nechoniah, who was over the fountains and ditches {x}; and in the same office was Nicodemon ben Gorion {y}, thought to be the Nicodemus mentioned in the New Testament.

Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shall be: which may be understood either of God the Father, who had power over these plagues, Re 16:9 and sent them; or of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, and is righteous in all his ways and works, in all his judgments on antichrist, and is the eternal "I AM", which is, and was, and shall be; see **Re 1:8**. The Alexandrian copy, and most others, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read "holy", instead of "shalt be"; for the purity and holiness of Christ will be seen in the judgments which he will exercise, as follows:

because thou hast judged thus; or "these things"; or "them", as the Ethiopic version reads; that is, has brought these judgments upon the men signified by rivers and fountains, and made great havoc and slaughter of them, expressed by their becoming blood; the justice of which appears from the following reason.

{t} T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 68. 3. {u} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 58. 4. par. 2. fol. 167. 4. {w} Maimon, Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 15. {x} Misn. Shekalim, c. 5. sect. 1. {y} Abot R. Nathan, c. 5. fol. 3. 2.

Revelation 16:6

Ver. 6. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,.... Which shows that rivers and fountains cannot be literally understood, but men are designed, wicked and bloody men; and it is notorious to all, how much of the blood of the saints, of the preachers of the Gospel, of the prophets and witnesses, have been shed in Italy, Savoy, and other places near Rome, as well as in Rome itself; see Re 17:6.

And thou hast given them blood to drink; sent the sword among them, making great slaughter and devastation; see Isa 49:26

for they are worthy; or deserving, to have their blood shed by the law of retaliation.

Revelation 16:7

Ver. 7. And I heard another out of the altar say,.... That is, another angel that came out of the altar; see Re 14:18 and who represents the souls under the altar, whose blood had been shed by the above persons; compare with this **Re 6:9** though, there, such whose blood had been shed by Rome Pagan are described; the Ethiopic version calls this angel as before, "the angel of the fountains of water"; and the Alexandrian copy, and Syriac and Arabic versions, read, "I heard the altar saying": as follows,

even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments; the same as in Re 15:3. This angel joins the other, and approves and confirms what he says; applauding the judgements of Christ upon the worshippers of the beast, from the verity of them, being what were threatened, and from the justice of them, being what they deserved.

Revelation 16:8

Ver. 8. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun,.... Not literally; and so designs not a violent heat, which shall go before, and be a preparation for the burning of the world; nor any sore famine arising from it, which would be common to all, good and bad; but mystically: some understand this of Christ, the sun of righteousness, not of any wrath that shall be poured forth on him again, being now justified in the Spirit; but either of that clear shining of Christ in the ministry of the word, in those times this vial refers to; when Zion's light will be come, and the light of the sun will be seven fold, and Christ alone will be exalted; which clear ministration of Christ, though it will not savingly enlighten, yet will convict and confound the antichristian party; they will be scorched with the beams of heat and light, which will dart from hence; these will torture them, and fill them with envy, rage, and malice, because they will not be able to obscure this light, or stop the progress of it; they themselves will be so enlightened by it, as to see and know the truth of Christ's person, and offices, and grace, and yet will sin against it, and so be guilty of blasphemy against the Spirit of God, a sin which will greatly prevail among them; and they will, like the clay, be the more hardened by this light and heat, and will not repent of their sins and errors, nor confess them, nor own the light and conviction they have received: or else of the wrath of Christ, which he will be moved by this angel to stir up against the antichristian party, and which they will be sensible of, and be fearfully looking for. Others, and which comes much to the same sense, understand this of the Scriptures, the fountain of spiritual light, and of the clear interpretation of them in those times; when the watchmen shall see eye to eye, and when the day shall declare and make manifest every man's work, and the fire reveal and try it; and the same effects upon the antichristian party shall follow as before: but I rather think this refers to some part of the antichristian state, as in the other vials, or to something belonging to it; some have thought that the house of Austria, the chief family in the empire, or the king of Spain, or the emperor, who were both formerly of that house, or Germany itself, is meant; but the empire, as we have seen, seems to be designed by the earth in the first vial; wherefore, rather as the smiting of the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, under the fourth trumpet, signifies the utter extirpation of the Roman emperor, and all other Roman magistrates, who were the sun, moon, and stars in that empire; so this vial upon the sun refers to the pope, and his creatures, the cardinals, &c. who is the sun in the antichristian kingdom; and this angel may design the kings of the earth, who will be stirred up against him, by whom he and his dependents will suffer sorely, if not destroyed.

And power was given unto him to scorch men with fire; which may either respect the burning of Rome, and the adjacent parts; or rather the filling of the antichristian party with rage and malice, at the destruction of the pope, and his creatures; for these men are the same with those in Re 16:2.

Revelation 16:9

Ver. 9. And men were scorched with great heat,.... Burned with rage against the followers of Christ; were filled with envy at the success of his Gospel, and with fury and madness at the ruinous condition of the antichristian state, being deprived of its head, and chief officers:

and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; plagues or judgments are from God, when and wherever they come; they are sent and inflicted by him, and he can lessen or increase them, continue or remove them, as he pleases; and these, unless sanctified, will not reform men, but harden them, and set them a blaspheming the author of them. And this blasphemy may either respect the nature and perfections of God, charging him with inequality in his ways, and with injustice and unfaithfulness; or the Gospel, and the truths of it, which declare his glory, and his greatness; and which will now have a general spread, to the great mortification and confusion of the followers of antichrist:

and they repented not to give him glory; that is, they did not repent of their wicked deeds, their idolatries, murders, sorceries, fornications, and thefts, as in **Re 9:20** so as to own and confess them, which is, the meaning of giving glory to God in repentance; see **Jos 7:19**. This shows that repentance is not in man's power, but in the gift of God's grace; for though he may give space, yet if he does not give grace to repent, no man will repent; nor will any means of themselves produce it; as not the most powerful and awakening ministry, as the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Christ, and of the Gospel preachers that will be in those times, this vial refers to, nor the greatest mercies and favours, so not the severest judgments; see **Am 6:6**. The event of this vial, or the plague of it, is applied, by Mr. Daubuz, to the wars between the emperors and the popes, and between the Guelphs and Gibelines.

Revelation 16:10

Ver. 10. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast,.... The beast is the same with that in Re 13:1 and which again shows that to be one and the same: the seat or throne of the beast is Rome, which, when the empire was Pagan, was the seat of Satan, or the dragon, **Re 2:13** and when the beast or antichrist was risen, the dragon gave this seat, as well as his authority to him,
Re 13:2 and is that city which is so often called, in this book, the great city, and is manifestly pointed out by its seven mountains, on which the city of Rome stood, Re 17:9 and the pouring out of this vial upon it denotes the destruction of it, when it will be burnt down, and become desolate, an habitation of devils, of every foul spirit, and hateful bird, Re 18:2 and this corresponds with the fifth trumpet; for as that brings in the rise of antichrist, both eastern and western, who rose much about the same time, so this vial

affects him particularly; the western antichrist, his seat and kingdom. Mr. Daubuz refers this plague to the expulsion of the western and eastern emperors from their capital cities, Rome and Constantinople, and to the mischiefs caused by the antipopes in the west, and to the quarrels and schism in the Greek churches in the fourteenth century.

And his kingdom was full of darkness; not only of the darkness of false doctrine and superstition, for so it was always, being filled with the smoke of the bottomless pit; nor only of judicial blindness and darkness, which the subjects of the antichristian state are given up unto; but rather of a discovery of all this, with all their hidden works of darkness, which will now be brought to light; though it seems chiefly to design the great affliction and distress the antichristian state will be in at this time, which darkness sometimes signifies; see **Isa 9:1** it having lost its sun, the pope, under the preceding vial, and its seat, the city of Rome, under this: the sense is, that it will be greatly obscured in its glory and magnificence, in its traffic and riches, Re 18:11 its power and authority will be greatly diminished, and it will be had in contempt by the princes of the earth; though it will not as yet be utterly destroyed, for its utter destruction is reserved for the seventh and last vial. The allusion is to the plague of darkness in Egypt, Ex 10:21. And they gnawed their tongues for pain; these are the men of the antichristian party, the subjects of the antichristian kingdom, now become full of darkness, the worshippers of the beast, and his image; these will gnaw their tongues, which expresses their inward anguish and distress, their anger, wrath, and fury, their being filled with revenge, and yet in an incapacity to execute it, and will even be afraid to express it; and therefore will bite their tongues in madness; and this for pain, for the pain of their mind, at the sad and low estate of the antichristian kingdom.

Revelation 16:11

Ver. 11. And blasphemed the God of heaven,.... Who made it, and dwells in it, and from whence wrath is revealed, and comes upon the seat of the beast, upon the kingdom of antichrist, and the subjects of that kingdom; they will curse him who is of right their King, and their God, and look upwards to heaven, where he is, **Isa 8:21** and this,

because of their pains and their sores: see Re 16:2 the inward frettings and distresses of their minds, the gallings and gnawings of their consciences, the horror and terror of their souls, and their fearful looking for of judgment, which the present face of things upon antichrist will bring upon them; just as the Egyptians, in the time of their darkness, were distressed with internal guilt, and black horror of mind, and with evil spirits, which were sent among them, and haunted them during that season; see Ps 78:49 and repented not of their deeds; their antichristian works of darkness; see **Re 9:20**.

Revelation 16:12

Ver. 12. And the sixth angel poured his vial on the great river Euphrates,.... Which is not to be understood literally of the river Euphrates, which ran through Mesopotamia and Chaldea, and by the walls of Babylon; and of the drying of it up to make way for the Jews in the eastern parts of the world, to pass into their own land, and possess it; when a like miracle will be wrought for them as was when they came out of Egypt, by dividing the Red sea for them; and as when they entered into Canaan's land, by laying the waters of Jordan on heaps, so that they passed over as on dry land; in favour of which sense the passage in Isa 11:15 is thought to be, which the Targum interprets of God's smiting the river Euphrates; though the river Nile in Egypt seems rather to be meant: but it does not appear that there is any number of Jews beyond the river Euphrates; the far greater number of them is in the western and northern parts of the world; so that there will be no need for the drying up of this river for their passage into their own land; nor, if there were any in those parts, can any reason be given why they should be called the kings of the east, who, wherever they are, are a poor contemptible people, and have never had any ensigns of royalty among them for many hundreds of years; nor can that river be thought much to hinder, were all other impediments out of the way, nor the drying of it up much facilitate their passage to Judea, and much less affect their conversion: besides, this vial, as the rest, is a plague on antichrist, in some branch or other, or on some part or other, of the antichristian state; which, if not designed here, is nowhere in the account of this vial, and therefore this must be understood mystically; there is no doubt an allusion to the draining of this river at the taking of Babylon by Cyrus, according as was predicted in prophecy, Isa 44:27 who, making sluices and drains, turned the river another way, and marched through it with his army, and surprised and took the city at once, while Belshazzar and his nobles were indulging themselves in rioting and drunkenness, as Daniel relates, **Da 5:1**. Now some, because that Babylon was situated upon the river Euphrates, and Rome, or the Romish antichrist, is mystical Babylon, think that is here designed, and is the object of this vial; and that the drying up of this river designs the withdrawing of nations and kingdoms, signified by waters, Re 17:15 from its jurisdiction and power, which will bring on its ruin; and also the stoppage of dues and tithes, annates, Peter's pence, and of all its traffic in indulgences, pardons, &c. whereby it will be greatly impoverished, and brought to nothing: but it should be observed, that the fifth vial affects Rome, the seat of the beast; and as for the beast himself, he will not be destroyed till the battle of Armageddon; and mystical Babylon, or the antichristian state, in the whole compass of it, will not be destroyed until the pouring out of the seventh vial; wherefore rather the eastern antichrist, the Turks are meant, in whose dominions this river is; for as the Assyrian monarch is signified by the waters of this river, when he was in his glory, and had his seat at Babylon, by which this river ran, **Isa 8:7** so may the Turks, who inhabit by this river, be intended by it; and the rather, as this sense exactly corresponds with the sixth trumpet; for as the sounding of that trumpet looses the four angels bound in the great river Euphrates, which founded the Turkish empire, as we have seen; so the pouring out of this sixth vial affects the same empire, and brings it to ruin. Mr. Daubuz is of opinion that this plague refers to the depopulation and destruction of the Grecian empire, and the bringing of the Turks into Europe, who have greatly distressed and tormented the corrupted Christians or Papists.

And the water thereof was dried up; the Ottoman empire will be extinct, just as the destruction of the Babylonish monarchy is expressed by the drying up of its sea, Jer 51:36 so the destruction of the Turkish empire is signified by the drying up of the water of this river, which is in the heart of it: and this is the passing away of the second woe, Re 11:14

that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared; which some understand of Christians in general, who are made kings and priests unto God, and of Christian kings in particular, whose way will be prepared, by the declining state of antichrist, to express their hatred to the whore of Rome, and burn her flesh with fire; but the Romish antichrist is not here intended: others think, as before observed, that the Jews are designed; that the Jews will be converted in the last days seems manifest from **Ho 3:5** and other places; and that they will return to their own land is suggested in abundance of prophecies, particularly in Eze 37:21 **Am 9:14** and it must be allowed that the eastern, as well as the western antichrist, is a stumbling to them; and especially the advantage which the Turks have gained over the powers that go under the Christian name, and their possession of their land is an hinderance to their return to it; so that the destruction of the Turkish empire will undoubtedly make way for their conversion, and restoration to their own land; but then this will be equally advantageous to the Jews in the west as to those in the east, if there be any numbers of them there, which does not appear, and therefore there seems no reason why they should be pointed at, and be called the kings of the east: rather therefore to me it seems, that, through the fall of the Ottoman empire, way will be made for the kings and princes of the east, literally understood, to have and embrace the Gospel of Christ; for, the Turks being destroyed, the Mahometan religion will decline, the Gospel will be carried into the eastern parts of the world, into those vast kingdoms and countries which lie in those parts, when they will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and the kings and princes of them will come to the brightness of Zion's rising; so that the ruin of this monarchy will pave the way for the spread of Christ's kingdom from sea to sea, and front the river, the river Euphrates, to the ends of the earth; and this also will prepare the way, and lead on for all the saints, who are kings, and shall reign with Christ a thousand years, who is said to come from the east, **Re 7:2** or from the rising of the sun, as these are said to do, as the words may be rendered, to possess the kingdom under the whole heaven: Philo the Jew {z} has some expressions illustrating the literal sense of this, where he speaks of a Roman army on the banks of Euphrates, which kept the passage of "the eastern kings".

{z} De Legat. ad Caium, p. 1022.

Revelation 16:13

Ver. 13. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs,.... Rome, the seat of antichrist, being destroyed, and the kingdom of the beast darkened, and brought into great contempt, Mahometanism greatly declining, the Gospel succeeding everywhere, the Jews being converted, and resettled in their own land, the devil bestirs himself more than ordinary; and dispatches his, and the emissaries of antichrist, to the kings of the whole earth, that can any ways be engaged on their side, and against the saints; and these are no other than the creatures of antichrist, such as cardinals, priests, and particularly Jesuits, as their original from the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, show. Mr. Daubuz thinks these "three" are the "monks", the "religious knights", and "secular clergy": and these are called "spirits"; not because they are what are called familiar spirits, or devils themselves, for they are the spirits of devils, as in the next verse; but either because they pretend to be spiritual men, ecclesiastics, men in spiritual offices, and indeed are spiritual wickednesses in high places; or because of their agility, swiftness, and expeditiousness in going to and fro, Satan like, to do mischief: and they are said to be "unclean"; as the evil spirits and devils are, being so by nature, and delighting in uncleanness, and giving themselves up to work it with greediness: and they are "like frogs";

the allusion is to the plague of frogs in Egypt, **Ex 8:5** and these antichristian emissaries are fitly compared to them, for their impurity, and pleasure they take in it, as frogs do in dirt and filth; and for their being talkative, impudent, and troublesome, like the noisy croaking frogs; so "rhetoricians" are by Cicero {a} compared to frogs; and as the frogs of Egypt got into the king's bedchamber, **Ex 8:3** so these get into the private retirements of princes, into their cabinet councils, and stir them up to war and bloodshed: and as for the number, "three", this is only used to express a sufficient number of them, or to make the account square with the dragon, beast, and false prophet, from whom they proceed; and besides, this is omitted in the king's manuscript. Now John saw these, in a visionary way,

come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet; by the dragon is meant the devil, Re 12:9 not as acting in Rome Pagan, which has been long ago destroyed, rather as in the Pagan parts of the world, and as in the Turkish empire, now ruined; who, seeing his cause declining everywhere, bestirs himself to support and revive it, though this issues in the binding of him for a thousand years, Re 20:2. By the beast is meant the first beast, in Re 13:1 and so the Ethiopic version renders it; the antichristian civil state, now sadly shattered and weakened, by the pouring out of the fifth vial: and by "the false prophet" is meant, not Mahomet, or the supporters of his religion, but the second beast in Re 13:11 or the antichristian ecclesiastic state, as appears from the description of this prophet in Re 19:20 compared with that: so then these spirits manifestly appear to be the emissaries of antichrist, under a diabolical influence; his creatures, that are made, and sent forth by him, have their commissions and orders from him, to act for him in every shape, to support his interest, civil and religious, by lies, murders, and false doctrine; a further account is given of them in the next verse.

{a} Ad Atticum, l. 15. Ep. 16.

Revelation 16:14

Ver. 14. For they are the spirits of devils,.... They are of their father the devil; they are acted and influenced by him, he works effectually in them, and leads them captive at his will; they do his lusts, and are murderers and liars, and false teachers, like him:

working miracles; lying ones, to deceive men; this clearly points out who are meant, namely, the followers of antichrist, who, as they spread the doctrines of devils, endeavour to confirm them by signs and lying wonders:

which go forth unto the kings of the earth: those who have committed fornication with the Romish antichrist, such of them as will remain:

and of the whole world; as many Pagan princes as they can come at, and engage by any ways and means in their interest; they will go forth to them like the lying spirit to Ahab's prophets, 1Ki 22:22

to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty; that is, they will persuade them to gather together, to fight against the saints, the Gentile Christians in the several parts of the world, and the Jewish Christians, now settled in their own land; and this will be the battle of the Lord, who is God Almighty, and it will be fighting against him; and therefore the attempt must be vain and fruitless, and issue in the ruin of those who are gathered to it, who will be deceived and drawn into it by these diabolical spirits: and this is called "the battle of that great day of God"; not of the day of judgment, for it will be before that time; but of that day of vengeance upon all the remains of his and his church's enemies, both Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan, who will for this purpose be gathered together; "which", as the Ethiopic version renders it, "God has appointed".

Revelation 16:15

Ver. 15. Behold I come as a thief,.... These are the words of Christ, inserted in a parenthesis in this account, before it is concluded, to acquaint his people with his near and sudden approach, and to give them a word of caution and exhortation in these times of difficulty; for he is the Lord God Almighty, who sent forth these angels to pour out their vials, and whose judgments are applauded as righteous, Re 16:1 and who so often in Re 22:7 says "I come quickly"; and which is to be understood not of his spiritual coming, which will be already at this time, but of his personal coming: and which will be "as a thief": as it is often expressed, **1Th 5:2** not in the bad sense, to steal and kill, and to destroy, though Christ's coming will issue in the everlasting destruction of the wicked; but the phrase is designed to express the suddenness of his coming, and the surprise of it:

blessed is he that watcheth; against sin, the lusts of the flesh, and the cares of this life, lest they bring a sleepiness upon him, and so the day of the Lord come upon him at an unawares; and against Satan and his temptations, who goes about seeking whom he may devour; and against his emissaries and false teachers, who lie in wait to deceive; and blessed is he also who is wishing and waiting for the coming of Christ, and so, being ready, will enter with him into the marriage chamber, and partake of the supper of the Lamb:

and keepeth his garments: either his conversation garments, unspotted from the world, and whenever defiled washes them, and makes them white in the blood of the Lamb; and keeps them from being stripped of them, by those who would lead them into sinful ways; or that keeps and holds fast the robe of Christ's righteousness, and garments of his salvation, which are the righteousness of the saints, that fine linen clean and white, that white raiment which only can cover their nakedness, that the shame thereof does not appear, Re 19:8

lest he walk naked; twumh Nm Mwre {b}, "naked of the commandments", or good works, according to the Jewish phrase; having lost, or dropped his conversation garments:

and they see his shame; or lest, being naked, he be exposed to shame and confusion, yea, to everlasting ruin and destruction; see
Mt 22:12 the allusion is to the burning of the garments of those priests who were found asleep when upon their watch in the temple: the account that is given is this {c};

"the man of the mountain of the house (the governor of the temple) goes round all the wards (every night) with burning torches before him; and in every ward where the person does not stand upon his feet, the man of the mountain of the house says to him, peace be to thee; if he finds he is asleep, he strikes him with his staff, and he has power to burn his clothes; and they say (in Jerusalem) what voice is that in the court? (it is answered) the voice of a Levite beaten, and his clothes burnt, because he slept in the time of his watch; R. Eliezer ben Jacob says, once they found my mother's brother asleep, and they burnt his clothes:"

now imagine with what shame the poor Levite so served must appear the next morning among his brethren, with his clothes burnt, and he naked; and with greater shame and confusions must he appear at the last day that is destitute of the righteousness of Christ.

{b} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 91. 3. {c} Misna Middot, c. 1. sect. 2. T. Bab. Tamid, fol. 27. 2. & 28. 1. Maimon. Beth Habbechira, c. 8. sect. 10. & Cele

Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 4.

Revelation 16:16

Ver. 16. And he gathered them together,.... Or rather "they gathered them together", as the Syriac version renders it; for though the verb is singular, a noun plural goes before it, as in
Re 16:14 and the same spirits that are there said to go forth, to gather the kings gether, these will gather them together; will persuade the Papal, Pagan, and Mahometan powers, the remains of them in the several parts of the world, to join together, and make one effort for the reviving of their declining, and almost ruined interests: for which purpose they will be brought together,

into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon; which may be the same with Har-megiddo, the mountain of Megiddo; for the Hebrew word rh is read "Ar" by the Greeks; so the city Argarize is interpreted the mountain of the most High {d}: and this refers either to the slaying of Josiah in the valley of Megiddo, which occasioned such mourning, that it became proverbial for any great sorrow; see 2Ch 35:22 where it is called the valley of Megiddon; or rather to the slaughter of Sisera's army at the waters of Megiddo, by Barak, **Jud 5:19** suggesting that the same would be the fate of these united powers. Some derive the word from
Nwhdg and amrx, which signify "the destruction of their troops", or "armies"; and so designs not any place, that has been or is, but which will be so called from the issue of this battle; and since it is an Hebrew name that will be given it, it may lead us to conclude it will be somewhere in Judea, and very likely no other than the valley of Jehoshaphat, where all nations will be gathered; and which is called the valley of decision, where will be the day of the Lord, and multitudes will be slain, **Joe 3:2** though the name will suit any place where there will be a defeat of these enemies; but this vial only brings them together; the utter destruction of them is reserved for the next.

{d} Euseb, Prepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 17. p. 419.

Revelation 16:17

Ver. 17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air,.... Or "upon the air", as the Alexandrian copy, Syriac and Arabic versions, read; by which is meant the kingdom of Satan, he being the prince of the power of the air, **Eph**

2:2 not that he has power over the air, to raise or lay winds and storms in it at pleasure; but he is so called because he is the prince of that posse of devils, the principalities and powers of darkness, that have their dwelling in the air; hence the air, encompassing the whole earth, stands for the kingdom of Satan all the world over: and this vial differs from all the rest; that whereas the rest only affect some part or branch of the antichristian state, this will affect all the remains of the Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan powers, gathered and united together at Armageddon; and the pouring out of this vial is the execution of divine wrath and vengeance upon them all at once; and the effects of this vial will not only reach to the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, and their armies, or the united forces of the remains of Pagans, Papists, and Mahometans, who will be slain, and their flesh given to the fowls of the air; and not only to the beast and false prophet, who will be taken in this battle, and cast alive into the lake of fire, which is expressive both of their temporal and eternal punishment, Re 19:17 but to the binding of Satan upon the second coming of Christ, of which notice is before given,
Re 16:15 and even to the destruction of Gog and Magog at the end of the thousand years' reign; yea, to the casting of the devil into everlasting fire, since this vial is the last plague, in which the wrath of God is filled up, and so brings to the end of all things,
Re 20:1. The first accomplishment of this vial will be the decisive battle at Armageddon, when the remains of all Christ's and his church's enemies will have a total defeat; and this will be the third and last woe, which will utterly destroy those that have destroyed the earth, Pagans, Papists, and Mahometans, even all the open enemies of Christ, so that nothing will lie in the way of his kingdom; now will the spiritual reign of Christ, which has been gradually advancing by the pouring out of each vial, be in its full glory: but though antichrist will be no more, and Satan will have no more in form an open kingdom upon earth; yet, towards the close of this reign, great lukewarmness and coldness will seize professors of religion, and immorality and profaneness will abound again; which will bring on the times of the coming of the son of man; who, upon his personal descent from the third heaven into the air, will drive Satan and his posse of devils from their territories, and quickly will the general conflagration begin, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; and which is no inconsiderable part of the pouring out of this vial into the air.

And there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne; this voice is said to come "out of the temple of heaven", that is, out of the temple which is in heaven, which will now be opened, as under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, with which this vial corresponds, and indeed is

contemporary; and which designs the church, enjoying the pure worship of God, the word and ordinances, and the free exercise of religion; and this shows that when this voice will be uttered, as yet the Jerusalem church state will not be begun, since there will be no temple in that; see
Re 11:19 the words, "of heaven", are left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, which read, "out of the temple from the throne"; the seat of government in the church, described in **Re 4:2** the voice came with power, authority, and majesty; not from any of the four and twenty elders, or four living creatures, or angels about the throne; but either from God the Father that sits upon it; or from Christ the Lamb in the midst of it, and rather from the latter, since a like phrase was used by him on the cross, Joh 19:30 and the same is expressed by him who is the Alpha and Omega, Re 21:6 and this voice is called a great one, being the voice of a great person, the King of kings, and coming with great power, and was spoken aloud:

saying, it is done; what the angel swore should be in the days of the seventh angel, namely, that time, antichristian time, should be no more, and the mystery of God in his purposes and providences should be finished, and all the glorious things spoken of his church and people be accomplished; See Gill on "Re 10:6",
See Gill on "Re 10:7" the word gegone may be rendered "it has been", or "it was", and the sense is, but now is not; and the meaning may be, Babylon was, but is not, it is now fallen; the beast and false prophet were, but now are not; the Turk, or Mahomet, was, but is no more; all the antichristian powers are destroyed; Christ's body, the church, will be completed, the Jews will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in, all the elect called, and the new Jerusalem prepared as a bride for her husband; and when the utmost effects of this vial will take place, the end of all things will be; by the same "fiat" that made the heavens and the earth, they will disappear, and new heavens and earth succeed in their room.

Revelation 16:18

Ver. 18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings,.... As at the giving of the law, Ex 19:16 and at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, See Gill on "Re 11:15" and may intend either the pure ministry of the Gospel in the spiritual reign, the voices of Christ's ministers, and the effects of them, who will be "Boanergeses", sons of thunder, and will be the means of enlightening the minds of many, as well as of shaking the consciences of men, signified by the earthquake following; or rather, the tremendous and awful judgments of God upon the remains of the antichristian party, as the very great commotions and changes that will be made in the world are expressed in the next clause:

and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great: for as the changes made in the Jewish state, civil and ecclesiastical, are signified by the shaking of the heavens and the earth, and as the fall of Paganism is expressed by an earthquake, and the fall of the tenth part of the city is the effect of another; so the destruction of all the antichristian powers, and the mutations made in the earth thereby, are designed by this; see Heb 12:26 **Joe 3:16**. Mr. Daubuz applies the whole of this vial to the, Reformation, when such a revolution was made in a short time, as has not been known since the world was, or men became worshippers of the beast; at which time Christendom was divided into three parts, the eastern or Greek church, the western or Latin church, and the reformed churches.

Revelation 16:19

Ver. 19. And the great city was divided into three parts,.... By which is meant not Christendom, distinguished into Protestants, Papists, and neutrals, which has been long the case; nor the city of Jerusalem, as inhabited by Christians, Jews, and Turks; nor the city of Rome itself, the seat of the beast, which will have suffered under the fifth vial; but the whole Romish jurisdiction, which is the great city, that reigns over the kings of the earth, as it will now be; though some think the Turkish empire is meant, which they suppose was only afflicted under the preceding vial, but will now be divided into three parts, and afterwards into six, Eze 39:1 and so come to ruin; and others are of opinion that it is included in this great city at least; and doubtless the remains of it are to be taken into this account, and probably are considered in the following clause; wherefore it is better to understand this of the Romish jurisdiction, so often called the great city in this book,
Re 11:8 and its division into three parts is either in reference to the three heads of it, the dragon, beast, and false prophet, or to the three unclean spirits that come out of them, which will lead on to this ruin; though the allusion seems rather to be to the destruction of Jerusalem, **Eze 5:2** and denotes the utter ruin of the Romish antichrist, in all its branches and remains; a tenth part of this city will fall towards the close of the sixth trumpet, Re 11:13 and now all the other nine parts will fall, a threefold division will be made of the city, each division containing three parts: the Jews {e} have a prophecy, that upon an

appearance of a star at Rome, which they suppose will be when the Messiah comes, the three upper walls of that city will fall, and the great temple, or church (St. Peter's), will fall, and the governor of that city (the pope) will die:

and the cities of the nations fell; of the Pagans and Mahometaus; or as there will be an utter extirpation of the Papacy, so of Paganism and Mahometanism, in the several nations where they have obtained, and where there will be now any remains of them;

and great Babylon came in remembrance before God; not Constantinople, as Brightman thinks, because that Rome, the seat of the beast, is affected under the fifth vial, and the great city under this; but since no other is called Babylon in this book but the Romish antichristian state, it must be meant here; see Re 14:8 for many hundreds of years Babylon seemed to be forgotten by God, no notice being taken of her sins and iniquities in a judicial way; but now God will remember her sins, Re 18:5 and inflict deserved punishment upon her:

to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; as a just retaliation for the wine of her fornication, with which she has intoxicated the kings and inhabitants of the earth; the wrath of God is sometimes signified in the Old Testament by a cup, a wine cup, a wine cup of fury, see Ps 75:8 and here the exceeding greatness of his wrath is expressed by the phrases used, and intends the pouring out of all his vengeance, to the utter ruin of the Romish antichrist.

{e} Zohar in Numb. fol. 86. 1.

Revelation 16:20

Ver. 20. And every island fled away,.... This may be understood either of the dissolution of the world, the present heavens and earth, when there will be no more sea, Re 21:1 and so consequently no islands:

and the mountains were not found; for the earth and the heaven will be fled away at the appearance of Christ the Judge, and there will be no place found for them, Re 20:11 and new heavens, and a new earth, without sea or mountains, will succeed: or rather this may signify the utter extirpation of all the antichristian powers in every shape, whether on islands or on the continent; for this day of the Lord will be upon every high mountain and hill, to bring them low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted, **Isa 2:14** and may particularly respect the dissolution of monasteries, and the plundering them of their riches and revenues.

Revelation 16:21

Ver. 21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven,.... Which must be understood not as after the fall of the cities, and the flight of the islands and mountains, but at the same time; and it looks as if such men that shall escape at the battle of Armageddon, that hail stones from heaven will fall upon them and destroy them; just as the kings of the Amorites and their men were killed by hail stones, cast down by the Lord from heaven, as they fled before Joshua, when more were killed by the stones than were slain by the sword, Jos 10:11 the allusion seems to be to the plague of hail in **Ex 9:23**

every stone about the weight of a talent; which is threescore pound weight, a prodigious weight indeed for a single hailstone! such hail stones were never known to fall; the largest I have read of is what Caspar Wesserus assured Mr. Broughton {f} of, at Zurich, which being brought from a field afar off, to the consul, and so must melt in carriage, yet weighed a pound. It may be said of this hail storm, as of the earthquake in a preceding verse, that it will be such as never was since men were upon earth; and denotes the sore, heavy, and even intolerable judgments of God upon the antichristian party: God's judgments are sometimes signified by hail storms, Isa 30:26 and particularly the judgments upon Gog and Magog, Eze 38:22 which may respect the same as here: the Jews {g} now expect a great hail in the times of Gog and Magog:

and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; the plague of hail brought down the hard heart of Pharaoh, and humbled him, so that he acknowledged his wickedness, and the sin of his people, and owned the justice of God; but this more terrible storm will have no effect upon these men, to convince and reform them, but, on the contrary, they will break out into blasphemy against God, who caused it to fall on them; it will have the same effect as the fourth and fifth vials:

for the plague thereof was exceeding great; it must beat down all before it, and be intolerable: whether this hail storm may not also have some regard to coldness and lukewarmness, as Naplet suggests, and so may point at the close of the spiritual reign of Christ, or the Laodicean state, which will bring on the second coming of Christ, and so this effect of the seventh vial will end where the seven churches and seven trumpets do, may be considered; See Gill on "Re

11:15".

{f} See his (Zohar's) Works, p. 491. {g} Shemot Rabba, sect. 12. fol. 99. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 17:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 17

This chapter contains a vision of a beast, and a woman on it, and the interpretation of it; one of the seven angels that had the seven vials proposes to John to show him the whore of Babylon, the Jezabel before spoken of, who sits on many waters, with whom the kings and inhabitants of the earth have committed fornication, being intoxicated by her, Re 17:1 in order to which he carries him into the wilderness, and there he sees a woman, who is described by the beast she sat on, of a scarlet colour, full of blasphemous names, with seven heads and ten horns; by her array, in purple and scarlet, decked with gold, pearls, and precious stones; by a cup she had in her hand, full of abominable filth; by a name written on her forehead, given at large, and by the condition she was in, drunk with the blood of the saints; which sight filled John with great wonder and admiration, Re 17:3 wherefore, to remove his astonishment, the angel proposes to explain to him the mystery of the woman, and the beast she sat on, Re 17:7 and first the mystery of the beast is explained, by its several states, past, present, and to come; by its original and end, ascending out of the bottomless pit, and going into perdition; by the veneration it would be had in by the reprobate part of the world, Re 17:8 its seven heads are interpreted of the seven mountains on which the city of Rome, designed by the woman, stood, and of seven kings, or forms of government, five of which had ceased, and one was in being in John's time, another was to come, which should not continue long, and the beast would be an eighth, Re 17:9 its ten horns are explained of ten kings, described by their kingdom they had not as yet received, and which they should have one hour with the beast; by their agreement in mind and conduct; and by their war with the Lamb, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and those that are with him, the called, chosen, and faithful, and the issue of it, Re 17:12 the waters on which the whore sat are interpreted of a multitude of people, nations, and tongues, Re 17:15 the hatred and destruction of her by the ten kings, and the manner of it, are declared, Re 17:16 which is owing to the will of God, who put it into their hearts to agree to give their kingdom to the beast till the prophecies and promises were fulfilled respecting this matter, and now to destroy the whore that sat upon it, Re 17:17

which woman is explained of the great city of Rome, that reigns over the kings of the earth, Re 17:18.

Ver. 1. And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven vials,.... It may be the first of them, since one of the four beasts designs the first of them, in **Re 6:1** though Brightman thinks the fifth angel is meant, because he poured out his vial on the seat of the beast, who is by this angel described; but rather this is the seventh and last angel, concerned in the utter destruction of antichrist: and therefore proposes to John to show him the judgment of the great whore:

and talked with me, saying unto me, come hither: he conversed with him in a friendly manner, see **Zec 1:9** and desires him to come nearer to him, and go along with him, adding,

I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore; that noted and famous one, known before to John by the names of Jezabel and Babylon, who taught and caused many to commit fornication, **Re 2:20**
Re 14:8 and is no other than Rome Papal; for that a city or state is meant is clear from Re 17:18 and it is usual for idolatrous or apostate cities to be called whores or harlots, see **Isa 1:21**
Eze 23:2 and she is called a "great" one, because of the largeness of the Papal see; and because of the multitude of persons, the kings of the earth, and the inhabitants of it, with whom the Romish antichrist has committed spiritual fornication, or idolatry: her "judgment" signifies either her sin and wickedness; in which sense the word is used in **Ro 5:16** and which is exposed, Re 17:5 namely, her idolatry and cruelty; or else her condemnation, and the execution of it, suggested in Re 17:8 and more largely described in the following chapter:

that sitteth upon many waters; which in Re 17:15 are interpreted of people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, subject to the jurisdiction of Rome; and so several antichristian states are in the preceding chapter signified by the sea, and by rivers and fountains of water: and this is said in reference to Babylon, an emblem of the Romish harlot, which was situated upon the river Euphrates, and is therefore said to dwell upon many waters, Jer 51:13 her sitting here may be in allusion to the posture of harlots plying of men; or may denote her ease, rest, and grandeur, sitting as a queen; and is chiefly expressive of her power and dominion over the kings and nations of the earth, Re 17:18.

Revelation 17:2

Ver. 2. With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication,.... These are the ten kings, who being of the same mind, and of one religion, the Popish religion, gave their power, strength, and kingdom to the beast, Re 17:12 and have been enticed by the whore of Rome to commit spiritual fornication with her; that is, idolatry, to worship, as that church enjoins, idols of gold, silver, brass, and wood, the images of the virgin Mary, and other saints; hence this whore appears to be no mean strumpet, but one of great note, and in much vogue, being sought after and made use of by the great men of the earth;

and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication; that is, the inhabitants of the Roman empire, or earthly minded men, mere carnal persons, have been drawn into idolatrous practices by the allurements of the church of Rome; such as riches, honours, pleasures, lying miracles, and great pretensions to devotion and religion; whereby they have been intoxicated as men with wine, and have been filled with a blind zeal for that church, and the false doctrines and worship of it, and with madness and fury against the true professors of religion.

Revelation 17:3

Ver. 3. So he carried me away in the spirit,.... Not in body, as if he was removed from the isle of Patmos to some other place; but in a visionary way, just as Ezekiel was carried between earth and heaven, in the visions of God, to Jerusalem, **Eze 8:3**. It was represented to the mind of John, to his spirit, or soul, as if he had been taken up by the angel and carried through the air:

into the wilderness; by which may be meant either the wilderness of the people, the world, the church hereafter described, being a worldly one, and consisting of worldly men; or Gentilism, the Gentile world is often in the prophecies of the Old Testament called a wilderness; the Romish church having much of Heathen worship, and Heathen customs and practices in it, hence its votaries are called Gentiles, Re 11:2 or this circumstance may be mentioned, and the thing so represented to John, because that a wilderness is a solitary place, and fit for retirement and meditation; and where he might, without any interruption, take a full view of the following sight, and make proper observations upon it; and it is worth notice, that this is the place where the true church and became out of sight, in the room of which this apostate church appears: or, as others have thought, John is had into the wilderness, where the true church was hid and nourished, and the false one is there shown him, that seeing both together, he might compare them, and observe the difference between them; to all which may be added, that a wilderness is a fit place for such a beast as hereafter described to be seen in:

and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast; the beast is the same with that in Re 13:1 as the description shows, and is no other than the Roman empire as Papal; the "scarlet" colour is expressive of its imperial dignity, its power and authority, it received from the dragon; and also of this beast's cruelty and tyranny, and of its shedding the blood of the saints: the woman sitting upon it is the great city of Rome, as is manifest from Re 17:18 or the Romish antichrist, the apostate church of Rome, represented by a woman, as the true church is, Re 12:1 but in a very different form, and is the same with the second beast in Re 13:11 and the false prophet; and as the two beasts respect the same, under different considerations, namely, the Papacy, in its civil and ecclesiastic capacity, so this strange phenomenon, a woman sitting on such a beast, means one and the same thing as the horse and his rider in the seals, though in different views; the woman designs the Romish church, with the pope at the head of it, and the beast the Roman Papal empire as civil, by which the former is supported and upheld, bore up on high, and exalted in the manner it has been: moreover, as purple and scarlet are the colours of garments wore by the pope, and cardinals, hence the woman in the next verse is said to be "arrayed in purple and scarlet colour", so even the very beasts on which they rode were covered with scarlet. Platina {h} says that Pope Paul the Second

"ordered by a public decree, on pain or punishment, that no man should wear a scarlet cap but cardinals; to whom also, in the first year of his popedom, he gave cloth of the same colour, to put upon their horses and mules when they rode; and besides, would have put into the decree, that the cardinals' hats should be of scarlet silk:"

upon which Du Maulin {i} makes this remark;

"Pope Paul the Second was the first that gave scarlet to the cardinals, as well for themselves as for their mules, to the end that this prophecy, which agreeth in general with the see of Rome, might likewise appertain particularly to everyone of the pillars of the said see, which is to be set upon a "scarlet coloured beast"."

It follows,

full of names of blasphemy: that is, the beast, or Roman Papal empire, was full of them; in Re 13:1 a name of blasphemy is said to be upon his head, and he to have a mouth speaking blasphemy; but here his whole body is represented as full of them, and may refer to the blasphemous doctrines of worshipping of images, of pardons and indulgences, of transubstantiation, &c. and to the multitude of images, of the virgin Mary, and other saints, in the antichristian state, in every part of it; and to those blaspheming persons, the cardinals, priests, and Jesuits, which abound in it; as well as to those blasphemous names and titles which are given to the pope, the head of it, or assumed by him; such as God on earth, the vicar of Christ, the head, and husband, and foundation of the church, with many others:

having seven heads, and ten horns: the seven heads are the seven mountains, on which the city of Rome, the metropolis of the empire, is seated; and the seven kings, or seven forms of government, under which it has been, as appears from Re 17:9,
See Gill on "Re 13:1" and the "ten horns" signify the ten kings over the ten kingdoms, into which the empire was divided, when overrun by the Goths and Vandals; and which ten kings gave their kingdoms to the beast, the Romish antichrist; they gave their strength and power to him, being of his religion, and have been his horns, his defenders and supporters, ever since, as may be gathered from Re 17:12.

{h} De Vitis Pontiticum, p. 312. {i} Defence of the Catholic Faith, &c. c. 3. p. 38.

Revelation 17:4

Ver. 4. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour,.... Which may be expressive of her grandeur, authority, and power, sitting as a queen, and sovereign in the empire, ruling over kingdoms and nations in it; and also of her bloody disposition to the saints, with whose blood she is afterwards said to be drunk;

and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls; which may denote her hypocrisy, she being gilded with these things, as the word signifies, when she was inwardly rotten, corrupt, and filthy; and may point out the things by which persons have been enticed into the communion of the church of Rome, and to comply with her idolatrous worship and practices; and may also respect the prodigious riches, which have, by various methods, been brought into the pope's coffers; these, with other things, are reckoned among the merchandise of Babylon, Re 18:12 and particularly this may have reference to the adorning of their temples, or churches, and the decking of their images, with those things; which gaudy pompous shows strike the minds of carnal men, amuse them, and engage their attention. So Philo {k} the Jew describes an whore as arrayed in purple, and adorned with gold and precious stones; see **Pr 7:10**.

Having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication; in allusion to Babylon, Jer 51:7 and also to harlots, who give philters or love potions to men, to excite lust, and draw their affections to them; and this being a golden cup may design the external lustre and splendour of the worship of the church of Rome, by which many have been drawn into a compliance with it, which is attended with many abominable, filthy, and idolatrous practices: and perhaps some regard may be had to the golden chalice, in which, it is pretended, is the very blood of Christ, which the priests take as such, and worship and adore, and is no other than an abominable and filthy piece of idolatry; and such are the persons that partake of it; like the Pharisees of old, they make clean the outside of the cup and platter; glister, and make a great show of devotion, but within are full of extortion and excess.

{k} De Mercede Meretricis non recip. p. 861.

Revelation 17:5

Ver. 5. And upon her forehead was a name written,.... As the high priest had on his mitre upon his forehead written, holiness to the Lord, Ex 28:36 only a different inscription from that; the allusion is thought to be to harlots, who not only used to put their names over their doors, but some of them upon their foreheads, that all might know who they were; of which Mr. Daubuz has given proofs out of Seneca, Martial, Juvenal, and Petronius; and such might be said to have an whore's forehead indeed: and this is expressive of the openness and impudence of the church of Rome, in her idolatrous worship; she openly declares it, and pleads for it, and invites and ensnares persons to join with her in it: the name follows,

mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth; her name is "mystery"; not the mystery of godliness, that she dislikes and opposes, but the mystery of iniquity; which is the name antichrist went by in the Apostle Paul's time, when he was but in embryo, **2Th 2:7**. Some reference may be had to the mystery of the Mass, in which the Papists pretend are the very body and blood of Christ; to their seven sacraments, for wherever almost they find the word mystery, they make a sacrament of that to which it is applied; and to their unwritten traditions, and the sense of the Scriptures, which are locked up in the pope's breast: and it is very remarkable what has been observed by some, that the word "mystery" was formerly upon the frontlet of the pope's mitre, and was removed by Pope Julius the Third, when it was observed that the Protestants made use of this passage of Scripture, and applied it to the Romish antichrist. Joseph Scaliger {l} affirms, that he saw mitres at Rome with this inscription on them. Though others think that this is not any part of the name, but only signifies that this woman was, in a mysterious or mystical sense, called Babylon, &c. just as the great city is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, Re 11:8 but to me it seems to be a part of the name, as well as what follows, "Babylon the great"; that is, the great city, Re 14:8 by which name the church of Rome may well be called, because of the signification of it, confusion, Ge 11:9 its doctrine and worship being a confused mixture of Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity; and because of the pride and haughtiness of it, its tyranny and cruelty, and its sorceries and idolatry; see Isa 14:12.

And the mother of harlots, of all antichristian states and kingdoms; and is different from the heavenly Jerusalem, the Gospel church, which is the mother of true believers, **Ga 4:26** or the "mother of fornications": as some copies read, and the Vulgate Latin and eastern versions render it; that is, the author and encourager of them, as the church of Rome has been; of corporeal fornication, by commanding celibacy, and forbidding marriage to priests, and setting up of brothel houses; and of spiritual fornication or idolatry, everywhere required and encouraged by it: and of "the abominations of the earth"; of abominable doctrines and practices; all manner of wickedness that is to be found in the earth, as murder, adultery, sodomy, perjury, &c. these, with everything that is vile and wicked, are practised and connived at by her.

{l} In Scaligeran.

Revelation 17:6

Ver. 6. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints,.... To see a woman drunk is a shameful sight; but to see one drunk, not with wine, but with blood, is monstrous, cruel, and shocking; the sword, when it devours, and is satiate, is said to be drunk with blood, Jer 46:10 but for a woman to be so is unexampled; and not with her own blood, as she will be, Isa 49:26 but with the blood of others; and not with the blood of wicked men, but with the blood of saints; such as God the Father has set apart from everlasting, and chosen to be holy; whom Christ has sanctified by his blood, or whose sins he has expiated, and to whom he is made sanctification; and who have principles of grace and holiness wrought in them by the Spirit of God, and live holy lives and conversations:

and of the martyrs of Jesus; the saints, whose blood is shed by antichrist, are martyrs also; but they seem to design the common people, and these the ministers of the Gospel, who are the martyrs of Jesus, both in life and death; they are his martyrs or witnesses, by their doctrine and ministry, bearing testimony to him as Jesus, a Saviour; testifying that he is the only Saviour, that there is salvation in no other, in opposition to the antichristian doctrines of merit, penance, purgatory, &c. for which they have been cruelly put to death, and in great numbers, and so have sealed their doctrine by their blood. Now the woman being drunk with their blood, denotes the blood thirstiness of the church of Rome, her greedy aud insatiable desire after the blood of the saints, and her delight in it, being exceeding mad against them; and the multitude of it shed by her, as the slaughters of the Waldenses and Albigenses, the butcheries of the duke d'Alva in the Low Countries, the massacres in France, Ireland, and other places, the burning of the martyrs in Queen Mary's days here, with numerous other instances, show.

And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration; not at the sight of the beast, which he had seen before, but at the sight of the woman, as, upon the beast; he wondered that one of her sex, generally timorous and fearful, should ride on such a monstrous creature; he was amazed at her dress, and grand appearance, whereas the church in his time consisted of poor persons, meanly arrayed; it was astonishing to him that one bearing the name of a Christian church should rise to such grandeur; and he wondered at the name upon her forehead, what the whole of that inscription should mean; but, above all, at her drunkenness with the blood of the saints; at her inhumanity and cruelty, being as savage as the beast she rode on; and also at God's forbearance of her, that he, who is a pure and holy Being, a lover of his saints, an avenger of his elect, should suffer such a brutish, barbarous, and blood thirsty creature, to live upon earth; see **Hab 1:13**.

Revelation 17:7

Ver. 7. And the angel said unto me,.... The same as in Re 17:1

wherefore didst thou marvel? which is not said by way of reproof, as questions of this kind sometimes are, **Ac 3:12** for John did not wonder at her with a sinful admiration, so as to have her in great veneration, and to do homage and worship to her, as the inhabitants of the world wondered after the beast, Re 13:3 but his admiration was an amazement, or stupefaction of mind, joined with indignation at her; and this is said by the angel to lead on to what he had to declare unto him.

I will tell thee the mystery of the woman; that is, what is mysteriously or mystically designed by her; for till it was made known to John by the angel, it was a mystery to him; and when it was revealed, the interpretation is given in such an obscure manner, that it is only understood by the mind that has spiritual wisdom; and still remains a mystery to carnal men, just as the Gospel itself does. The hidden meaning of this woman, or the mystery of her, is told by the angel in Re 17:18.

And of the beast that carried her, which hath the seven heads, and ten horns; the mystical sense of the beast, its heads and horns, and which is also delivered in a mysterious manner, is given in
Re 17:8.

Revelation 17:8

Ver. 8. The beast which thou sawest was, and is not,.... It is added at the end of the verse where the same description is given, "and yet is"; this beast is to be understood not of the devil, who "was" the god of this world, "is not", being cast out by Christ, and yet is in being; for he, the dragon, is distinguished from this beast, and indeed from him the beast has his seat, power, and authority, Re 13:1 nor any particular emperor, as Domitian, a cruel and savage one, who was in power in Vespasian's time, when he was abroad, and then was out of it upon his return, and yet afterwards was in again, being as one sent from hell, and went at last into perdition; but the Roman empire itself is intended, as we have seen, which carried and supported the Papacy; and variously may this be interpreted; as that it was in the hands of the Romans originally, and long continued with them, but now "is not", in John's time, being in the hands of Trajan, a Spaniard, "and yet is" in being, Rome being the metropolis of it: it was a very powerful and flourishing empire, "and is not", being destroyed by the Goths and Vandals, "and yet is" a large empire under the jurisdiction of antichrist; it was an idolatrous empire, which encouraged the worshipping of Heathen gods, "and is not" guilty of the same idolatrous practices it was, as the worshipping of Jupiter, Mars, &c. "and yet is" much given to idolatry in another way, worshipping the virgin Mary, and other saints; it "was" under kings, consuls, dictators, tribunes, decemvirs, and emperors, it "is not" in such a form of government, "and yet is" under its seventh head the pope; "Rome was", but "is not" the same it has been, in some respects, and yet is the same, for idolatry, cruelty, &c. it has the image of old Rome, when Pagan, and under the power of the dragon; and though antichrist was not risen up in the empire to an head, to supreme power yet it was in being in the apostles' times, and began to work, and by degrees to show itself. In short, the meaning is, that this beast "was" the Roman empire, as Pagan, described by a dragon with seven heads, and ten horns, with crowns on the heads, but is not as yet in the Apostle John's time, as Papal, described with seven heads, and ten horns, and crowns on the horns.

And shall ascend out of the bottomless pit: out of hell, from whence the antichristian beast has its power; see Re 11:8 otherwise all civil power is from God, but not antichristian power, that is from the devil:

and go into perdition; everlasting destruction, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; this will be the end of the beast, Re 19:20.

and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder; the inhabitants of the Roman empire, earthly minded men, shall have the beast in great veneration, and follow and worship him; see Re 13:3

whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world; none but reprobates, not any of the elect of God, are the admirers and worshippers of antichrist; See Gill on "Re 13:8"

when they beheld the beast that was, and is not, and yet is; the Roman empire in glory, under the emperors, destroyed by the Goths, and revived in the Papacy. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the last clause,

and yet is.

Revelation 17:9

Ver. 9. And here is the mind which hath wisdom,.... This refers either to what goes before, concerning the beast, his various states, rise, and ruin, and his admirers; or to what follows after, concerning the meaning of his heads and horns, or to both; and the sense is, that notwithstanding the interpretation of these things by the angel, yet it requires a large share of wisdom to understand them; and here is enough to exercise the mind that is ever so well stored with knowledge and understanding; and so the Arabic version renders it, "here it is required that one should have judgment and wisdom"; for to a man that has not, the affair will still be obscure and unintelligible. The words may be rendered, "here is the mind, he that hath wisdom"; that is, let him make use of it, as in Re 13:18 and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "and this is the sense, he that hath wisdom"; this is the sense of the beast, and of his heads and horns; and he that has wisdom, let him consider it, and take it in, and apply it to proper persons, things, and times; and so the Ethiopic version, "he that has wisdom and understanding, let him know this"; or take cognizance of it, it being a matter of importance, and attended with difficulty:

the seven heads are seven mountains of which the woman sitteth that is, they signify seven mountains, or are symbolical representations of them; just as the seven good kine, and seven good ears, in Pharoah's dream, signified seven years of plenty, and seven thin kine, and seven empty ears, seven years of famine, Ge 41:26. As the woman is a city, Re 17:18 these seven mountains, on which she sits, must be so many mountains on which the city is built; and what city can this be but Rome, which is so famous for being built on seven hills? This is taken notice of by Virgil {m}, Horace {n}, Ovid {o}, Claudian {p}, Starius {q}, Martial {r}, and others; and indeed there is scarce a poet that speaks of Rome but observes it: hence it has been sometimes called, by writers, the seven hilled city, and sometimes Septiceps, the seven headed city, which comes near to the language here: the names of the seven mountains were these, Capitolinus, Palatinus, Aventinus, Esquilinus, Coelius, Viminalis, and Quirinalis; the four first of these were taken in by Romulus, the first founder of it, and the three last by Servius Tullius, when he enlarged it; and upon the addition of the seventh mountain there was a feast kept, called Septimontium; and which was kept in seven places in the city {s}; and was annually observed; and in this situation it was in John's time; for Pliny {t}, who was contemporary with him, expressly says, that in his time it took in seven mountains; and that this refers to a city in John's time, then reigning over the kings of the earth, is certain from Re 17:18. Now there was no imperial city, so built in his time, but Rome: for though Constantinople is built on seven hills, yet this was not in being in John's time, but was built by Constantine many years after, in imitation of Rome; and though the situation is much altered now, being in Campus Martius, it being greatly reduced, and in a less compass, yet this hinders not but that it is the same city here designed: and this confirms that the beast before spoken of, on whom the woman sat, is the Roman empire, since she is here said to sit on the seven mountains, on which Rome, the metropolis of that empire, was built; and this shows the pope of Rome to be antichrist, the great whore, Babylon, the mother of harlots, since no other has his seat at Rome but he.

{m} Aeneid. 6. {n} In Carmine Seculari. {o} De Trist. l. 1. Eleg. 4. {p} L. 3. de Laud. Stilicon. l. 3. ver. 135. {q} Syl. l. 1. Syl. 2. ver. 191. {r} L. 4. Ep. 53. {s} Alex. ab Alex. Genial Dier. l. 6. c. 11. {t} Nat. Hist. l. 3. c. 5.

Revelation 17:10

Ver. 10. And there are seven kings,.... The Arabic version renders it, "who are seven kings"; and it should be rendered, as it is by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Ethiopic versions, "and they are seven kings"; that is, the seven heads signify seven kings also, for they have in them a double representation, first of seven mountains, and then of seven kings; by which are meant not seven ages of the world, as from Adam to Noah; from Noah to Abraham; from Abraham to David; from David to the Babylonish captivity; from the Babylonish captivity to Christ; from Christ to antichrist; and from antichrist to the end of the world; the five first of which were gone in John's time, the sixth was then in being, and when the seventh shall come it will continue for a short time: this is a foolish and absurd interpretation of the Papists, who make the beast to be the devil, and these his seven heads; whereas he rather is the head, or god of the world: nor are seven emperors of Rome intended, which are differently reckoned, according to the different times John is supposed to have had this revelation. Grotius, who is followed by Hammond, supposes this was written in the times of Vespasian, and reckons them thus; Clandius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, and Titus; the first five of these were dead in John's time, one was then, the sixth, Vespasian, the then reigning emperor, and the other, Titus, was yet to come to the empire; and when he came to it, continued but a short time, two years and two mouths: others, who more rightly judge that John wrote in Domitian's time, reckon them after this manner; Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, and Nerva; the first five of these were dead; Domitian was then living, and Nerva, the other that was to come and succeed him, reigned but a little while, not quite two years; but to this sense must be objected, that there were other emperors before either Galba or Claudius; and before John's time there were more than five fallen or dead; according to the first account, there must be nine dead, and according to the latter eleven; for before Claudius there were Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, and Caius: besides, if these were the seven heads of the beast, the beast must have been long ago without any head, and consequently must have expired; whereas it is still in being, and will be under the fifth, sixth, and seventh vials, which are yet to come; it will be at the battle of Armageddon, and will be taken then, and cast alive into the lake of fire; to which may be added, that the beast, in the form in which John now saw it, was not yet risen in the times of these emperors; but by the seven heads are meant so many forms of government which took place successively in the Roman empire, and were all of them idolatrous heads, as kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, tribunes, emperors, and popes; it being usual for any sort of governors, or governments and monarchies, to be called kings, De 33:5.

Five are fallen; or ceased, are no longer in being as kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and tribunes; at least, the supreme power was not lodged in any bearing either of these names in John's time:

and one is; the Pagan emperors; an Heathen emperor, Domitian, then reigning, when John had this vision; and these continued to the opening of the sixth seal, which put an end to that succession, as Pagan, and till the woman brought forth the man child, or till Constantine's time:

and the other is not yet come; which some understand of the Christian emperors, who immediately succeeded the Pagan ones, and were another, and different from them, as to religion, though the form of government was the same, and were not another head; for they were not an idolatrous head, on which were names of blasphemy, but another king; for from the following verse it appears, that there are eight kings, and but seven heads, and therefore one of them should seem not to be a head; and these, when they came, continued but a short time in comparison of the Heathen emperors that reigned before them, and of the hope, or antichrist, who was to reign after them 1260 years; for they reigned not, put them all together, more than 150 years; and especially at Rome their stay was short, for Constantine removed from thence to Constantinople, in the nineteenth year of his empire. But these emperors, though in religion they differed from the others, yet their form of government and title were the same, and therefore must be included in the sixth head: according to some, Theodoricus the Ostrogoth, and his successors, are meant, who continued about an hundred years; others have thought that the exarchs of Ravenna, who rose up upon the destruction of the western empire, are intended, and who continued but a short time; but then these had not their seat at Rome, which it seems necessary each head of this beast should have; it is better, therefore, to understand this of the popes of Rome, the seventh and last head of the Roman empire; these were not yet come, in John's time, to their supreme dignity and authority:

and when he cometh he must continue a short space; forty two months, or 1260 days; that is, so many years, which, though a long time in itself, and in the account of man, yet with God, with whom a thousand years is as one day, and in comparison of the everlasting kingdom of Christ, and his people, it is but a short space; and so the reign of the beast, and of the ten kings with him, is said to be one hour, Re 17:12 and this is said for the comfort of the saints, and to keep up their faith and patience under their sufferings in antichristian states. Mr. Daubuz makes these seven heads, or kings, signified by seven mountains, seven capital cities, which by degrees came to belong to the Roman empire; as first Rome itself, the capital of Italy; next Carthage, the capital of Africa; then Aege, the capital of Macedonia; after that Antiochia, the capital of the east; then Augustodunum, the capital of the Gauls; and Alexandria, the capital of Egypt; five of these six, with the monarchies belonging to them, were fallen; one, or the first of them now, was the mistress of all; and the other seventh was to come, namely, Byzantium, or Contantinople, which continued not long. This passage is so interpreted, as also the seven heads, in Re 13:1 by this writer.

Revelation 17:11

Ver. 11. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth,.... That was in embryo in John's time, and yet was not come to its power and grandeur, is the eighth king; and this is the Papacy, which takes the name of the beast, because it is the head of the beast, and the only surviving head of the beast, or Roman empire, now become Papal:

and is of the seven; one of the seven heads, and the last of them, and is an idolatrous one, as the rest were, requiring and encouraging the worship of angels, of the virgin Mary, and saints parted: the pope of Rome is the eighth king, and seventh head, the latter with respect to his temporal power, and the former with respect to his ecclesiastical authority; for his government is quite of a different sort from the rest, being of a mixed kind, partly civil, and partly ecclesiastical, and therefore is signified by two beasts in the thirteenth chapter:

and goes into perdition; being the son of perdition, and is justly deserving of it; See Gill on "Re 17:8".

Revelation 17:12

Ver. 12. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings,.... Not ten Christian emperors, which are reckoned up by Brightman from Constantine to Theodosius; for these did not reign with the beast, or give their kingdoms to him, and much less did they make war with the Lamb; they are rather the angels of Michael, that fought for him, the Lamb, against the dragon, and his angels, Re 12:7 nor ten kings that will rise up and divide the Roman empire between them, towards the end of the world, which is a sense devised by Papists to obscure and hide from men the true meaning of the passage; but the ten kingdoms which rose up, and into which the Roman empire was divided upon its being ruined, and torn to pieces by the Goths, Huns, and Vandals. They are the same with the "ten toes" of Nebuchadnezzar's image, and the "ten horns" of the fourth beast, or kingdom, in **Da 2:42**. These are differently reckoned up by interpreters: by Napier thus; Spain, France, Lombardy, England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Hungary, Italy, and the exarchate of Ravenna: by Mr. Mede after this manner; the Britains in Britain, under Vortimer their king; the Saxons in the same place, under Hengist; the Franks in Gallia Belgica, or Celtics, under Childeric; the Burgundians in another part of France, under Gunderic; the Wisigoths in Aquitain, and part of Spain, under Theodoric; the Sueves and Alans in Gallaecia and Portugal, under Riciarius; the Vandals in Spain and Africa, under Genseric; the Almains in that part of Germany called Rhetia, under Sumanus; the Ostrogoths in Pannonia, and after in Italy, under Theodomir; and the Greeks in the rest of the empire, under Marcianus: and by another {u} writer they are accounted for in this way; the Almains in both the Rhetia, and in Pannonia, who rose in the year 356; the Ostrogoths, first in Pannonia, and then in Italy, in 377; the Wisigoths in Pannonia, and then in Italy, afterwards in France, and last of all in Spain, in 378; the Huns in Pannonia, and for some time throughout all Europe, in 378; the Britian Romans in Britain, and afterwards the Saxons, in 406; the Sueves, first in France, and then in Spain, in 407; the Alans, first in France, and then in Spain, in 407; the Vandals, first in France, then in Spain, afterwards in Africa, in 407; the Burgundians in France, in 407; the Franks in France, in 410. And it is generally thought all these ten kingdoms were up by the year 450 at least. Though Dr. Allix makes the epocha of them A. D. 486, when the western empire was taken from the Romans, and fixes them in the following order; the Almains in Rhetia and Pannonia; the Franks in Belgica; the Anglo-Saxons in Britain; the Wisigoths in Gallia Aquitania and Hispania Tarraconensis; the Sueves and Alans in Portugal; the Vandals in Africa; the Burgundians in Gallia

Sequanensis; the Ostrogoths in Pannonia, and afterwards in Italy; the Lombards in Pannonia, and the Heruli and Turcilingi, who conquered Augustulus: and though these kingdoms were thrown into different forms and shapes afterwards, yet it is remarkable they were just of this number; as, 1. Italy and Germany; 2. France; 3. Spain; 4. England with Ireland; 5. Scotland; 6. Hungary; 7. Poland with Lithuania; 8. Denmark, with Sweden and Norway, Sweden being since divided; 9. Portugal; 10. The Grecian empire seized by the Ottomans. And as these kings cannot be understood of single persons at the head of these kingdoms, or of so many kings succeeding one another; so neither is it necessary to consider these kingdoms as being in the same state, and made up of the same sort of people always; it is enough that they are in the same place, and within the empire; for we, may observe, that different things, at different times, are ascribed to them, or at least to some. They all are at first of one mind, and give their kingdom to the beast; then they, at least some of them, hate the whore, and burn her with fire; and yet others lament the destruction and burning of Rome, Re 17:16.

Which have received no kingdom as yet: in John's time, when the Pagan empire was in being, and the beast was not risen, with whom they were to reign; hence these horns have no crowns on them,
Re 12:3.

But receive power as kings one hour with the beast; as soon as he was risen; and therefore the horns are represented with crowns upon them, Re 13:1. Their rise was with the Papal beast, who rose not to his supreme power and dignity until the western emperor, which let and hindered, was removed out of the way; which was done by the barbarous nations, who set up these kingdoms, which made way for the lordly and tyrannical government of the pope of Rome; so that he and they rose up together: and this may he meant by the "one hour"; namely, that at one and the same hour or season he came to his supreme authority and grandeur, and they received their kingly power with him; or this may denote the time of their continuance in their honour and greatness; it was but for an hour, or a short time, as that phrase sometimes signifies, **Phm 1:15** and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "for one hour"; to which agrees the Arabic version,

and their power shall be of one hour: and this shall be "as kings"; for they only have the title of kings, but not sovereign power; they are vassals to the beast, the pope, who reigns over them, Re 17:18 and sets up kings in these kingdoms, and deposes them at pleasure; exalting himself above all that is called God, or above all civil magistrates; so that these have only the name, not the thing;

they are as kings, and look like such, but are not really so; though what power they have, they receive not from the beast, but from God; the beast receives his power and authority, as well as seat, from the dragon; but civil power and magistracy is from God, who suffers these princes, and gives them up to such stupidity as to give their kingdom to the beast, and to exercise their power as he directs.

{u} De Excidio Antichristi apud Poli Synops. in loc.

Revelation 17:13

Ver. 13. These have one mind,.... The princes of these kingdoms, and their subjects, become, in time, of one religion; first they were Arians, and then Papists; and for a long series of time there was great unity between them, with respect to religious sentiments, being zealously attached to the church of Rome, its principles and practices:

and shall give their power and strength unto the beast; the Papal antichrist, the eighth king, and seventh head; to him they have given power to exercise all ecclesiastical authority in their kingdoms; as to ordain bishops, and deliver the pall to whom they will; to excommunicate offenders, and even lay their kingdoms under an interdict when they pleased; and have assisted and defended the popes of Rome with all their force, with all their might and main, and to the utmost of their power, and have engaged in what have been called the holy wars, at their motion; they have given their riches and wealth, which are called the forces of strength, Job 36:19 which they have, by various methods, drained them of; hence the whore of Rome came to be decked with gold, and pearls, and precious stones; yea, they have given them their kingdoms, and have received them from them, and become tributary to them.

Revelation 17:14

Ver. 14. These shall make war with the Lamb,.... The Lord Jesus Christ, so often spoken of in this book under this character, **Re 5:6**. And this war is not to be understood of a war with him personally, or of that last and decisive, battle at Armageddon, in which will be the kings of the earth; but of a war with his members, of their persecuting of the saints, and faithful witnesses of Christ in all ages, within their jurisdictions, being instigated to it by the beast, under whose influence they are:

and the Lamb shall overcome them: partly through the constancy of his people, who will not love their lives to the death, but freely lay them down for him; nor can anything separate them from the love of Christ, or prevail upon them to desert him, his truths and ordinances, cause and interest, but are more than conquerors through him, and so he overcomes in them; and partly through a reformation which he effects, as in some of those kingdoms already, as Sweden, Denmark, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and others, and will do in others hereafter; see Re 17:16

for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; he is so by nature, as God and Creator, to whom the kingdom of nature and providence belongs; and by office, as Mediator, being made higher than the kings of the earth; hence he is more than a match for them, they cannot stand before him; this is a reason why he overcomes them, and it cannot be thought it should be otherwise: this Lamb is the lion of the tribe of Judah, and when he rouses himself, and stirs up his wrath, and exerts his power, kings and great men flee from him; see **Re 6:15**. This is a proof of Christ's proper deity, the same titles being given to him, the Word and Son of God, as to God himself, Re 19:16.

And they that are with him: his servants and his soldiers, that fight under him, and abide by him,

are called, and chosen, and faithful; they are chosen in Christ from all eternity, to grace here, and glory hereafter, and so stand opposed to the admirers of the beast, whose names are not written in the book of life, Re 17:8 for this is to be understood of their eternal election, and not of their separation by the effectual calling in time, for that is expressed by their being "called"; and though their calling is here set before election, as in **2Pe 1:10** yet it does not precede it; the Arabic version reads, "chosen, called, faithful"; first "chosen" by God the Father, then "called", not with the bare external call by the ministry of the word, for, so, many are called, and not chosen; but by special grace to special benefits, and with an holy and heavenly calling, and which is irresistible, and without repentance; and being called they remain "faithful": the meaning is, either that they have faith, or are believers in Christ; which faith they have bestowed on them in the effectual calling, as a fruit of electing grace; and by this they overcome the world: or else, that they are persons of integrity and uprightness, that are on the side of Christ; they are the faithful in the Lord, and are made so by him; and they are faithful to him, and abide by his Gospel and ordinances, and in his cause and interest, even unto death; and so this character is expressive of the perseverance of those who are chosen and called, even unto the end.

Revelation 17:15

Ver. 15. And he saith unto me,.... That is, the angel, who proposed to give John the interpretation of the vision, he went on with it as follows:

the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth,
See Gill on "Re 17:1",

are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues; denoting the vast multitude of people, of which the several kingdoms, of divers languages, consist, which belong to the jurisdiction of Rome Papal: it is an eastern way of speaking, and is particularly used to express the various kingdoms, and infinite number of people belonging to the Babylonish monarchy, which was an emblem of the antichristian state, **Da 3:4** and these are compared to waters, to many waters; which phrase sometimes is used for the sea,
Ps 107:23 because of the vast numbers of them; the whole world wondered after the beast, and the kings and inhabitants of the earth have been subject to the see of Rome; and because of their overbearing force, carrying all before them; see **Isa 8:7**
Re 13:3 and because, like waters, they are continually upon the flux, one generation succeeding another; and because of their instability, fickleness, and inconstancy, as in religion, so in their constitution, they will hate the whore they love; and as they frequently change and alter in their form, at last they will utterly cease: so the Jews {w} interpret many waters, in **So 8:7** of all people, and of the kings of the earth, and of the nations of the world; and they say, that many waters never signify any other than all the nations, and those that are appointed over them {x}. So, "he drew me out of many waters", Ps 18:16 is by the Targum on the place explained, he delivered me from many people. And so Ps 46:4 is paraphrased by the Targumist;

"people, "as rivers", and their streams, shall come, and make glad the city of the Lord;"

see the Targum on **Isa 8:7** and in Eze 32:2 where it is observed kingdoms are compared to waters {y}.

{w} Targum in Cant. viii. 7. Shirhashirim Rabba fol. 26. 1. {x} Zohar in Gen. fol. 51. 3. & Raya Mehimna in ib. & in Numb. fol. 105. 3. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 179. 4. {y} Yaikut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 93. 2.

Revelation 17:16

Ver. 16. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast,.... Re 17:3 and which are interpreted of ten kings, Re 17:12. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and the Syriac Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, "and the beast"; and then the sense is, that the ten kings and states in particular, who have defended antichrist, and the whole empire in general, which has bore up and supported the whore of Rome:

these shall hate the whore; her principles and sentiments, her doctrines, which are doctrines of devils, her wicked practices, her idolatries, adulteries, murders, and thefts; they will repent of their fornications with her, and cease from them; their love will be turned to hatred, and the latter will be greater than ever the former was, like Amnon's to Tamar; and as it usually is with men towards harlots, when they see their follies, and how they have been deceived and abused by them:

and shall make her desolate; leave her, quit her communion; no more commit fornication with her, or join with her in her idolatrous worship; but come out from that apostate church, and renounce all fellowship with her, and persuade and engage as many as they can influence to do the same:

and naked; strip her of her purple, scarlet colour, gold, pearls, and precious stones; cease to give their power and strength, withhold their taxes and tribute, deprive her of her power and authority, civil and ecclesiastical, in their realms, and take away even her patrimony from her; and not only so, but expose her shame and filthiness, her abominable principles and practices, to all the world; which has been in part done already:

and shall eat her flesh; not literally, but mystically; not out of love, but hatred; they shall take that to themselves, and make use of, which have fattened her, as bishoprics, and other benefices, lands, endowments belonging to abbeys, and monasteries, and other religious houses; an instance and example of which we have in King Henry the Eighth's time; so some understand this phrase of devouring the substance of others, in Ps 27:2. So the Targumists often interpret "flesh and fatness"; by "riches, goods", or substance; the phrase in Isa 17:4 "the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean", is paraphrased, hyrqy rtwe, "the riches of his glory shall be carried away"; and the words in **Mic 3:3** who shall also eat the flesh of my people", &c. are rendered, "and they who spoil" yme yokn, "the goods", or "substance of my people, and take away their precious mammon, or money, from them. And again, Zec 11:9 "let the rest eat, everyone the flesh of another", is in the Targum, "let a man spoil" yokn, "the goods or substance of his neighbour"; and in Re 17:16 he shall eat the flesh of the fat; the paraphrase is, "he shall" spoil yokn, "the goods or substance of the rich".

And burn her with fire: alluding to the law in Le 21:9 which required that the daughter of a priest, that played the whore, should be burnt with fire; and this is to be understood literally of burning the city of Rome, the seat of the whore, with fire; of which see Re 18:8. It has been very near being burnt in times past, as by Alaricus the Goth, Attila the Hun, Genseric the Vandal, and by Totilas, and in later times by Charles the Fifth; and would have been, had they not been dissuaded or diverted from it; and which were so many preludes and warnings of its future fate: and we may learn from hence, that Rome, and the Romish antichrist, will not be destroyed by the Turks, but by the Christians; and by the same states, and kingdoms, and princes, by which the whore of Rome has been supported in her grandeur, power, and authority, who will revolt from Popery, and embrace the pure Gospel of Christ: and this shows, that the ten horns, or kingdoms, into which the Roman empire has been divided, will subsist in this form at the destruction of Rome; wherefore, it has been rightly observed by some, that not one of these kingdoms shall ever be able to rise to universal monarchy. France has been for many years attempting it, but in vain; and we may sit down easy and satisfied, assuring ourselves with the greatest confidence, that all attempts this way will be fruitless; there never will be another universal monarchy on earth but that of Christ's; see **Da 2:37**.

Revelation 17:17

Ver. 17. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will,.... By doing the preceding things to the whore of Rome, whose destruction is according to the will of God; it is his approving will, what he likes of, and will be well pleased with; it is his will of command, what he will order to be done, Re 18:6 and it is his determining will, his will of purpose, his decree, what he has resolved shall be done; he has fixed the time of her reign, and longer than that she shall not continue: and these kings, in destroying her, will not do so much their own will, as the will of God, and God will put it into their hearts to do it; he will work in them both to will and to do; he will fill them with hatred to her; he will incline their minds to do the above things, as it will be in the power of their hands to do them; he who has the hearts of all men, and even of kings in his hands, and can turn them as rivers of water, will move them hereunto, Pr 21:1 he that turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate his people Israel, Ps 105:25 will turn the hearts of these kings to hate the whore, and do unto her as is here predicted; and the same God will do this, who has, on the other hand, already put into their hearts to do the following things:

and to agree: this clause is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin version, and is the same with that of having one mind, Re 17:13 that is, being of the same religion; God giving them up to a reprobate mind, to believe a lie, that they might be damned; which must be understood not of the same individuals, but of their predecessors; unless this is to be interpreted of their agreeing together against the whore, to pull her down, and set up the pure worship and service of God; for this is a blessing of grace from God, who gives his people one heart and one way, that they may fear him, Jer 32:39 but the former sense seems best, since it follows,

and give their kingdom unto the beast; the eighth king, and seventh head, the pope of Rome; to whom they have given their power and strength in things civil and ecclesiastical, their wealth and riches; and have received their crowns from him, and have held their kingdoms by him, and become tributary to him: and this is done, and will be,

until the words of God shall be fulfilled; concerning the afflictions of his church and people, and the reign of antichrist, for the space of forty and two months, Re 11:2 all which while they are fulfilling the secret will of God, unknown to them, and yet act against his revealed will, and break his commands; just as the Jews, ignorant of the prophecies of the Old Testament, fulfilled them in condemning Christ, Ac 13:27. That God should put it into the hearts of these kings to fulfil his will, in destroying the whore of Rome, is easily received; but there seems some difficulty that he should put it into their hearts to agree and give their kingdom to the beast, which was sinful: now this he did, not by infusing sin into them, which is contrary to his pure and holy nature; but by leaving them, and giving them up to their own hearts' lusts; stirring up, and moving upon their minds, and directing the motions of it, to such and such objects, which they readily and voluntarily fell in with; and yet the concern of God herein does not, nor do his decrees about sin infringe the liberty of the will in acting, or excuse the sinfulness of the action, or make God the author of sin; as the instances of selling of Joseph by his brethren, and the crucifixion of Christ by the Jews, show.

Revelation 17:18

Ver. 18. And the woman which thou sawest,.... Re 17:3 as there described,

is that great city, often mentioned in this book; great Babylon, the city of Rome, Re 11:8 which reigneth over the kings of the earth; which then reigned in John's time over the kings of the earth; and this clearly points out the city of Rome, for there was no other city then, but that, which reigned over the kings of the earth; that was then the metropolis of the Roman empire, to which the whole world was subject; and therefore it is called all the world, **Lu 2:1** and since, all the kings of the empire have been under the jurisdiction of Rome Papal. It was formerly called Urbs Regum, a "city of kings" {z}, either for the reason in the text, or because its inhabitants looked like kings.

{z} Justin. l. 18. c. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 18:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 18

This chapter gives an account of the fall of Babylon, and of the lamentation of many, and of the joy of others, by reason of it; which account is published by several angels: the first that declares her fall is described by his original, descending from heaven; by the great power he had; by his resplendent glory, and by his mighty cry in publishing her destruction; which is illustrated by the desolate condition she will be in upon her fall; the reasons of which are given, became the nations and kings of the earth had committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth were enriched by her luxury, Re 18:1. Another voice is heard from heaven, calling upon the people of God, first to come out of her, lest partaking of her sins they should share in her plagues, seeing her iniquities had reached to heaven, and were remembered before God; and next to take full vengeance on her, because she had glorified herself, lived deliciously, and in great security,
Re 18:4. And then follows a continuation of the account of her destruction, what her plagues would be, death, mourning, famine, and fire; and which would be sudden, in one hour, and certain, from the power and justice of God, Re 18:8. Next follow the lamentations of the kings, merchants, and masters of ships, because of her greatness, riches, and merchandise, which are all come to

nothing,
Re 18:9. And then the church; the saints, apostles, and prophets, are called upon to rejoice at the vengeance taken on her,
Re 18:20 upon which a mighty angel appears, who by an action signifies the manner of her destruction, and the irrecoverableness of her state and condition,
Re 18:21 and declares her utter ruin, by affirming that nothing that was either delightful or profitable, or necessary or comfortable, should any more be found in her; giving the reasons of it, because of her luxury, idolatry, and bloodshed,
Re 18:22.

Ver. 1. And after these things,.... The vision of the woman on the scarlet coloured beast, and the interpretation of both by the angel:

I saw another angel; not the Lord Jesus Christ, though the several things said of this angel agree with him; nor one of the ministering spirits, though the characters of him will also suit with one of them, but rather a minister of the Gospel, or a set of Gospel ministers, who will arise a little before the downfall of Babylon, in the spiritual reign of Christ; though not the same with the angel of fire, Re 14:18 as some have thought, because of his illustrious appearance, and the loudness of his voice; but the same with the angel, or third thundering voice in Re 14:6 for not only the times of both agree, but the selfsame words are expressed by one as by the other; and this angel is distinct from him that showed John the preceding vision, and gave him the interpretation of it, and from all the seven angels that had the vials, and is described as follows: and first by the place from whence he came, John saw him

come down from heaven; denoting the suddenness of his appearance and cry; he came down at once, and cried out immediately; the subject of his cry, the destruction of Babylon, being what will be at an unawares; and also the commission and authority of the ministers signified by him, who will have their warrant from heaven to say what they will deliver; so that this likewise expresses the truth of their message, since both that and they come from heaven:

having great power; to do great work, to declare the fall of Babylon the great: or "having great authority"; being sent from the King of kings, in his name, as his ambassador, to proclaim what shortly will come to pass; an event of the greatest importance to the glory of God, the interest of Christ, and the comfort of his people:

and the earth was lightened with his glory; see Eze 43:2 by which is meant the glorious Gospel of Christ, the light of which will at this then be very great: these ministers will run to and fro the earth, and knowledge will be increased, and the earth will be filled with it: the Arabic version reads, "with the splendour of his countenance"; and the Ethiopic version, "with the splendour of his countenance, and his glory"; see Isa 60:1.

Revelation 18:2

Ver. 2. And he cried mightily with a strong voice,.... Which shows not only the vehemence and affection of the ministers of the word, who will publish what follows, but the greatness and importance of it; and this loud voice may be, as for the sake of the whole church in general, that all may bear, so for the sake of those of the Lord's people in particular, that will be in Babylon at this time; and it may have regard to that deep sleep and spirit of slumber that Babylon itself will be in, which, notwithstanding this loud cry, will remain insensible of its ruin till it comes upon her, as was the case of old Babylon, Jer 51:39,

saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen: the whole world is not designed by Babylon, for it is distinguished from all nations in the following verse; nor Babylon in Chaldea, which was fallen long before John saw this vision, but Rome Papal; See Gill on "Re 14:8" so the woman is called in Re 17:5 who sits on seven mountains, and is that great city, the city of Rome, that reigns over the kings of the earth, Re 18:9 this is said to be fallen, because, in a very little time after this declaration, it will fall; for as yet it was not destroyed, since after this the Lord's people are called upon to come out of her, and are bid to reward her double; and it is declared, that her plagues, should come in one day, and she should be burnt with fire; and an angel after this throws a millstone into the sea, saying, that so should Babylon be thrown down,
Re 18:4 and it is repeated to denote the certainty and utter destruction of her: and which is more fully expressed by what follows,

and is become the habitation of devils; as old Babylon was of satyrs, Isa 13:21 demons, which appeared in a hairy form, like goats, and the word is rendered devils in Le 17:7 and the inhabitants of Rome now are no other; the pope and his cardinals, the priests, Jesuits, monks, and friars, are the spirits of devils, and their doctrines the doctrines of devils; see Re 16:14

and the hold of every foul spirit: devils are frequently called unclean spirits, and these appear in desert and desolate places,
Mt 12:43 where they are either of choice, or rather are obliged to it; and so the

word translated "hold" signifies a prison, or place of confinement; and such as are comparable to unclean spirits now haunt and abound in Rome, and its territories; see Re 16:13

and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird; such, as vultures, kites, owls, &c. which generally reside in desolate and uninhabited places; the Alexandrian copy, the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, add, "and the hold", or "seat of every unclean and hateful beast"; and so the desolation of old Babylon is described by wild beasts and doleful creatures dwelling in it, Isa 13:21. Some consider all this as a reason of the destruction of Babylon or Rome, because it now is the residence of persons comparable to devils, foul spirits, hateful birds, and beasts of prey; but this account rather describes its state and case in which it will be after its ruin, being never more to be inhabited by men, in allusion to old Babylon, Isa 13:19.

Revelation 18:3

Ver. 3. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication,.... That is, all the nations of the Roman empire, the European nations, otherwise the Pagan and Mahometan nations have not; but these have, being made to drink by her, and made drunk therewith, that is, with her idolatries; See Gill on "Re 14:8".

And the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her; joined with her in her idolatrous worship and practices, and encouraged the same, and obliged their subjects to them in their dominions; See Gill on "Re 17:2".

And the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies; or "luxury"; which is not to be understood in a literal sense; though it is true that many merchants, in all ages, have enriched themselves by sending their commodities to Rome, where, through the vast consumption and luxuriousness of the place, they have bore a good price; but this is to be interpreted of spiritual merchants; these are such who do not merchandise by sea, but are land merchants, the merchants of the earth, and are said to be the great men of the earth, Re 18:23 such as are equal to princes, lords, and nobles; such are the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops; though the inferior clergy of the Romish church, who are under these, may be included: to which may be added, that one part of their wares is said to be the souls of men, Re 18:13 which plainly shows what sort of merchants these are; they are such who make merchandise of men, and pretend to sell them heaven, and the salvation of their souls; these are they that deal in pardons and indulgences, which they sell to ignorant people, and for a sum of money say Mass to fetch souls out of purgatory: all things have been saleable at Rome, crucifixes, priests, altars, temples, prayers, heaven, Christ, yea, God himself, as the poet Mantuan expresses it; and because of these idolatries, and wicked practices, Rome will be at last destroyed.

Revelation 18:4

Ver. 4. And I heard another voice from heaven,.... Either of another, or of the same angel, or rather of God, or Christ himself, since the persons addressed are called his people:

saying, come out of her, my people; meaning either his elect ones, till now uncalled, being such whom God had chosen for his people, and were so by virtue of the covenant of grace, were given to Christ as his people, and were redeemed by him, though, till this call, in an unconverted state; or else such who had been secretly called by the grace of God, but had not made a public profession of the Gospel, nor bore an open testimony against the Romish idolatry; for as the Lord had a righteous Lot in Sodom, and saints where Satan's seat was, Rome Pagan, so he will have a people in Rome Papal, at the time when its destruction draws near; and these wilt be called out, not only in a spiritual sense, to quit the communion of the church, to forsake its idolatries, and not touch the unclean thing, separate themselves from her, and bear a testimony against her doctrines and worship, but in a literal sense, locally; they shall be bid to come out of her, as Lot was ordered to go out of Sodom before its burning, and the people of the Jews out of Babylon before the taking of it, Jer 50:8 to which reference is here had: and as the Christians were called out of Jerusalem before the destruction of it: this shows the particular knowledge the Lord has of his people, be they where they will, and the gracious care he takes of them, that they perish not with others; and that it is his will they should be a separate people from the rest of the world; and this call of his sufficiently justifies the Protestants in their separation from the church of Rome, and every separation from any apostate church;

that ye be not partakers of her sins: by conniving at them, or committing the same; and all such are partakers of them, and have fellowship with these unfruitful works of darkness, that are in the communion of that church; and those that dwell at Rome are in great danger of being so, and cannot well avoid it: yea, even those that only go to see it, and stay but for a time in it, and that not only through the strength and influence of example, but through the force of power and authority:

and that ye receive not of her plagues; or punishments; the seven last plagues, which belong to her, the vials of which will be poured out upon one or other of the antichristian states, and the fifth particularly will fall upon Rome, the seat of the beast, and is what is here referred to.

Revelation 18:5

Ver. 5. For her sins have reached unto heaven,.... Or "have followed unto heaven"; one after another, in one age after another, until they have been as it were heaped up together, and have reached the heavens; the phrase denotes the multitude of them, God's knowledge and notice of them, and the cry of them to him; see
Ge 18:20 the Alexandrian copy and Complutensian edition read, "have cleaved", or "glued", and so the Syriac and Arabic versions seem to have read; her sins were as it were soldered together, and stuck fast to her, and being joined and linked together, made a long chain, and reached to heaven, and cleaved to that, and cried for vengeance:

and God hath remembered her iniquities; and is about to punish her for them; for as forgiveness of sin is signified by a non-remembrance of it, so punishment of sin by a remembrance of it, and of the persons that commit it; see Re 16:19.

Revelation 18:6

Ver. 6. Reward her even as she rewarded you,.... This is spoken to the people of God, who are before called out of Babylon; and the chief of them are the seven angels with the seven last plagues of the wrath of God, and the same with the ten kings that will burn the whore with fire; these are called upon to take vengeance, by way of retaliation, for what she had done to them, in allusion to what is said of old Babylon, **Jer 1:15** and must be understood not of what she will have done to them personally, but to their predecessors in the faith of Christ in former ages; that as she had hated them, and made war with them, so now they should hate her, and make war with her; and as she had stripped them naked of their clothes, and spoiled them of their worldly goods and substance, so now they should strip her naked of her harlot's attire, of her

gold, silver, and precious stones, and make her and her territories desolate; and as she has burnt many of the precious saints in the flames, as here in England, and elsewhere, so now they shall utterly burn her with fire; and as she has shed the blood of the righteous, and drank it, and been drunk with it, they shall give her blood to drink; and as she hath killed multitudes with the sword, so now shall they kill her and her children; see Re 13:12 nor is this contrary to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, and the spirit of Christianity, which will not admit of revenge, **Mt 5:38**
Ro 12:17 since this will not be private, but public revenge, inflicted by Christian princes and magistrates, who are ministers of God, and revengers to execute wrath on them that do evil:

and double unto her double according to her works: the meaning is not to inflict upon her a punishment doubly greater than her sins, for this would be contrary to the justice of God; nor does ever God punish men in this life more, but less, than their iniquities deserve; nor can any temporal punishment be doubly greater than sin, which deserves eternal death; and with this she will be punished hereafter, and therefore will not have her full punishment now, and much less a greater than her sins required; to which may be added, that this will be according to her works, her wicked works, and therefore will not exceed the demerit of her sins: but the sense is, that if it was possible to be done, they should use her with double severity to that she had used them with; seeing her sins deserved a severer treatment than even they had had from her; the phrase signifies an abundant and utter destruction, a punishment which was suitable and sufficient; see Isa 40:2 and it suggests that they should not spare her, nor pity her, but use her with the greatest severity imaginable, it being not possible to exceed her due deserts, or what her works required:

in the cup which he hath filled, fill to her double: not in the cup of her abominations, her errors, idolatries, and wickedness; but in the cup of afflictions and trouble, which she wrung out to the people of God, in that give her double portion: the sense is the same as before.

Revelation 18:7

Ver. 7. How much she hath glorified herself,.... And acted the proud and haughty part in exalting herself above all emperors, kings, and princes, above all kingdoms and states, and also above all churches, assuming arrogant titles, and even blasphemous names; see Re 13:1

and lived deliciously: in a very luxuriant manner, as the popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, monks, and friars have done; some being clothed in purple and scarlet, and in gold and silver, and all living upon the fat of the land, and in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness:

so much torment and sorrow give her: by pulling down her pride, which goes before a fall, than which nothing could more torment and afflict her; by stripping her of her fine clothes and rich apparel; and by taking away her fat benefices from her, which will cut her to the heart; and by burning her with fire, which will be very excruciating:

for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen; a lady of kingdoms, as in Isa 47:5 to which the reference is; having a temporal power and authority over the kings of the earth, and a spiritual jurisdiction over all churches, apostate ones, being the mother of harlots; and her "sitting" as such, as it well agrees with the whore on many waters, and the woman on the scarlet coloured beast and seven mountains, who are all the same, and is very suitable to antichrist, who pretends to sit in Peter's chair, and does sit in the temple of God, as if he was God; so it is expressive of her empire and government over nations and churches, and of the continuance of it, as she imagines, see Isa 46:7 and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "I shall reign always": to which she adds,

and am no widow; nor never shall be, as she flatters herself, see Isa 47:8. Were she the true spouse of Christ, as she boasts herself, she indeed would be no widow, for Christ is an everlasting and never dying husband; but she is the whore of the kings of the earth, and though she fancies she shall be no widow, that is, bereft of people and power, see **La 1:1** because she now sits on many waters, people, multitudes, and nations and tongues; yet ere long, like old Babylon, she will have no men in her, but will be inhabited by devils, foul spirits, and hateful birds:

and shall see no sorrow; through loss of children, power, and authority; see Isa 47:8 but in this also she will be mistaken; her children will be killed with death, as is threatened to Jezebel, **Re 2:23** and her plagues shall come upon her at once: now these words may be considered either as spoken by her when in the height of her power and glory, as she was about three or four hundred years ago; or just before her destruction, which seems to be the case, and looks as if she would regain her power, and be in her former state before her utter ruin; See Gill on "Re 11:2".

Revelation 18:8

Ver. 8. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day,.... The seven last plagues, which will be in a very little time executed upon her, very speedily and very quickly, one after another, if not all together; and particularly the fifth vial may be respected, as well as the plagues that follow; see Isa 47:9

death; not the second death, which will not be till after the decisive battle at Armageddon, when the beast will be taken, and cast alive into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death; but either the pestilence, which is called so, **Re 6:8** or rather death by the sword, war, which will be brought upon her, and in which she and her children will be slain with the sword:

mourning; for the loss of her children, the destruction of the city of Rome itself, the seat of the beast, and for the darkness of his kingdom, the inhabitants of which shall be in such pain, as to gnaw their tongues for it:

famine; which generally attends war, at least sieges; and it looks as if Rome would be besieged awhile before it is destroyed, which will produce a grievous famine in it; this is opposed to her living deliciously, as well as the two former are to her notion of sitting a queen for ever, and knowing no sorrow:

and she shall be utterly burnt with fire; the burning of Rome has been attempted several times, by different persons, and has been burnt in part, but not wholly, See Gill on "Re 17:16" but now it will be entirely destroyed by fire; either by fire from heaven, as Sodom and Gomorrah were; or by fire breaking out of the earth, it being very manifest that there are volcanos, burning mountains, and subterraneous fires in those parts, which seem to be so many preparations in nature for the burning of that city; or rather by the ten kings, who will set fire to it; and it may be by all these ways. The Jews have a notion, that, at the coming of the Messiah, Rome will be burnt {a}, as Sodom has been; you will find, say they {b}, that of Sodom and of that kingdom (Rome, of which they are speaking, and which they afterwards call the fourth kingdom), it is decreed concerning them both, that they "should be burnt with fire"; of Sodom, Ge 19:24 and of the fourth kingdom (Rome), Isa 34:9.

for strong is the Lord God that judgeth her; the Alexandrian copy reads, "that has judged": and so the Syriac and Arabic versions; that is, has purposed and determined her destruction, and therefore it is unavoidable; he that has resolved upon it, and foretold it, and has condemned her to it, is the Lord God

Almighty; and he is able to execute the sentence determined and pronounced, and it is impossible she should escape: it may be understood of Christ the mighty God, the Judge of quick and dead; see Jer 50:34.

{a} Zohar in Gen. fol. 74. 3. & in Numb. fol. 86. 1. {b} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 48. 2.

Revelation 18:9

Ver. 9. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication,.... Idolatry, Re 17:2

and lived deliciously with her; Re 18:3 joining with her in her sensual, as well as in her idolatrous practices:

shall bewail her, and lament for her: shall mourn inwardly, and by various gestures outwardly express their sorrow at her desolation; see Eze 27:30 these will not be the ten kings who will burn the whore with fire, and then repent of what they have done, and weep over her, as Titus did at the destruction of Jerusalem, as some Popish writers have fancied, for they will hate the whore, and eat her flesh; but earthly and idolatrous kings, who will be in the communion of the church of Rome:

when they shall see the smoke of her burning: as Abraham saw the smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah go up like the smoke of a furnace; by which they will perceive that her judgment is come, and her ruin begun.

Revelation 18:10

Ver. 10. Standing afar off for the fear of her torment,.... Lest they themselves should share in it, who have partook of her sins; either they will not be in a capacity to help her, or they will be dispirited, and will be in awe and dread of God's righteous judgments:

saying, alas! alas! that great city Babylon! that mighty city! it will aggravate their sorrow, when they reflect upon the former grandeur, magnificence, power, and authority, of the city and see of Rome, so often called in this book the great city; and so it is by other writers; the Jews call it so: they say {c}, when the Messiah comes, "the kings of the world shall be gathered to atbr atrq, "the great city" of Rome; and the holy blessed God will cast upon them fire and hail, and great hail stones, (with which compare Re 16:21), and they shall perish from the world, except those kings that do not come there."

It is common with the Jewish writers to call the Roman empire Edom; and Magdiel, one of the dukes of Edom, Ge 36:43 who has his name from "greatness", is interpreted by one of their commentators {d} of Rome; the reason of which, another of them says {e}, is because Rome is become great above all kingdoms: the mount of Esau in **Ob 1:21** is interpreted abr akrk ty, "that great city" of Esau, which is Rome {f}, and the same epithet it has in the Talmud {g}; and Porphyry calls it thn megalhn polin, "that great city", without making mention of its name, as here; so among the Latins {h}, "Magnoe spes altera" Romae:

for in one hour is thy judgment come: the Ethiopic version reads, "the hour of her judgment"; the time of her punishment fixed by God; but the sense is, that her vengeance was suddenly come upon her; this is the judgment of the great whore, which the angel proposed to show to John, Re 17:1.

{c} Zohar in Gen. fol. 74. 3. {d} Jarchi in Gen. xxxvi. 43. {e} Abarbinel in Dan. fol. 42. 3. {f} Jarchi in Obadiah, ver. 21. {g} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 2. {h} Servius in Virgil, Eclog. 6. p. 67.

Revelation 18:11

Ver. 11. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over over her,.... Who these are, See Gill on "Re 18:3" and, what their lamentation, Re 18:16 the reason of their weeping and mourning follows: for no man buyeth their merchandise any more; what their merchandise is, is expressed in the two next verses; and this shows that it is not to be understood merely in a literal sense; for such commodities in general as are there mentioned, if they do not sell at one place, they will at another; and the decline of trade in one city does not put a stop to business all the world over; and often so it is, that the ruin of commerce in one place is the rise of it in another; and all the things hereafter spoken of, excepting the last article, are what will be merchandised in one place or another to the end of the world; unless the sense should be, that no man at Rome, and the parts adjacent, will buy of this merchandise any more; but though they should not, this could not be cause of such lamentation as is afterwards expressed, since their goods might be sold elsewhere; but it looks as if this must be understood of such kind of wares as will be disused and despised all the world over, and they will meet with no customers any where to deal with them in them.

Revelation 18:12

Ver. 12. The merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls,.... Things for treasure and ornament, and with which the great whore is said to be decked, Re 17:4 and, literally understood, may denote the vast riches which these spiritual merchants, or factors for Rome, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, monks, and friars, bring into their own coffers and the pope's, by the trade they drive in her wares with the souls of men; and may have also a regard to what their images, chalices, crowns, mitres, &c. are made of, and what some of them are adorned with; and as Tyre, to whom the reference is in the several particulars of this account, had her merchants for these things, Eze 27:12 so Mr. Brightman thinks that in these, and in some following ones, Spain is Rome's merchant, which fetches them from the Indies for her: but these things, mystically taken, sometimes design the doctrines of the Gospel, **1Co 3:12** and which are to be preferred to, and more to be esteemed than thousands of gold and silver; and these Rome's merchants pretended to deliver out; but instead of them, they put off wood, hay, and stubble, yea, doctrines of devils, and lies in hypocrisy; and sometimes the grace of God is meant, **Re 3:18** which is more precious than gold that perisheth; and this they pretend to convey to men "ex opere operato", in the ordinances, as baptism, &c. and to communicate the Spirit, with his gifts and graces, for money, which is direct simony; yea, they pretend to sell eternal life, nay, Christ, and God himself:

and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet: things which belong to apparel and dress; and, literally taken, the "fine linen" is for their copes, wore by bishops and by chanters, and sub-chanters, and for surplices wore by their priests, in imitation of the Jewish priests, and for Mass clothes, &c. the "purple, silk", and "scarlet", were for the popes, cardinals, archbishops, and bishops; so the woman on the scarlet coloured beast is said to be arrayed in purple and scarlet, Re 17:4, Tyre had its merchants for these, Eze 27:7 the fine linen and silk may mystically denote the holy lives, good works, and merits of the saints, those of them called works of supererogation, which become the church's stock, and they sell out for others that want; which is a monstrous kind of ware, and a dreadful imposition upon men, since men cannot be saved and justified by works; and the best of men are so far from having a redundancy of works, that in everything they sin and offend, and are greatly deficient: and they are so far from helping others, that they are unprofitable servants themselves: the purple and scarlet may signify the blood of Christ, which they pretend to sell in the Mass; nay, they have pretended to have had the very liquid blood of Christ, which they have carried in a crystal glass, thick on one side, and transparent on the other; and so could not be seen by persons in a mortal sin, until they had given a good deal of money, and then the clear side was by sleight of hand turned to them; and which was no other than the blood of a duck, renewed weekly by the priest; which trick for a long time brought in vast sums of money, and was detected at Hales in Gloucestershire, in Henry the Eighth's time; or these may intend the sufferings of the saints, which likewise come into the treasure of the church, and are at its dispose for money, the virtue of which being very great for the salvation of men's souls:

and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble: things for utensils and furniture, not so much for their houses, as for their churches; Tyre had its merchants for these,
Eze 27:5. "Thyine wood", Pliny says {i}, was very durable, and of it the rafters of ancient temples were made; and may design such like lasting and odoriferous wood as cypress, cedar, &c. used in the Popish churches, for the embellishing of them, and for images in them; it may be the same with the wood of the Almug, or Algum trees, since these are rendered thyine wood in the Vulgate Latin version in 1Ki 10:11 vessels of ivory may be boxes made thereof, in which the host is put, and the relics of saints are preserved: and "vessels of most precious wood", or "stone", as the Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions read,

and of brass, iron, and marble, may intend various vessels used in their churches; as vessels for holy water, fonts of marble, and other valuable stones, for baptism, censers of iron and brass to burn incense in. Cocceius thinks that by these vessels of different materials are meant good men; who are like sweet smelling wood for the fragrancy of their doctrines and lives; and like iron, brass, and marble, for their courage, constancy, and patience; and who have been canonized for saints, which has brought in much money into the pope's coffers: this is a practice in imitation of the Heathens, who deified men, and set them over particular days and affairs; and the privileges of such canonization among the Papists are, that such a saint has his name set in the calendar in red letters, may have churches and altars dedicated to him, and his image set up in them, and a holiday be kept for him, and may be prayed to, and worshipped; a practice dreadfully derogatory to the glory of Christ's person and office, but is that in which these merchants have found their account; for through references, commissions, and reports, for proof of the saint's character and miracles, his friends are at very great expense before the affair is issued, especially if rich; our King Henry the Seventh was very desirous of having his kinsman Henry the Sixth canonized, and solicited the pope for it, but he would not do it under fifteen hundred ducats of gold, which the king thought was too much, and so declined it.

{i} Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 16.

Revelation 18:13

Ver. 13. And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense,.... Things for delight and pleasure, for the gratifying of the senses; cinnamon, and odours were used for perfuming, **Pr 7:17** anointing with oil was used at feasts, Ps 23:5 and "frankincense", or censings, at banquets, and for the regaling of persons after food {k}: these customs obtained among the eastern people. Tyre had its merchants for these things, Eze 27:19 and Mr. Brightman thinks Italy is Rome's merchant in these, which it fetches from Greece, Arabia, and Egypt; it may be these rather respect the ecclesiastical use of them; "cinnamon, odours", and "frankincense", may signify the perfumings and censings used in churches, or the burning incense in imitation of the sweet incense under the law; and "ointments" may denote their chrism, or anointing with oil at baptism, imagining that Christ was anointed with material oil at his baptism, whereas it was with the Holy Ghost: moreover, these things may be mystically understood, "cinnamon" being used by harlots in perfuming their bed, **Pr 7:17** may intend the stews and brothel houses erected at Rome, and licensed by authority, each whore paying so much per week; the revenues of which would sometimes yearly amount to twenty thousand ducats: "ointments" may be understood of chrism in baptism, and extreme unction at death: "odours" and "frankincense" may mean their prayers and pater nosters, their prayers for the dead, which were never made without the pence; hence that proverbial expression, no pence, no pater noster.

And wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep: things for civil use; these are things which belong to food, to eating and drinking, and are the most material and necessary things of life, **Ps 4:7**. Tyre had her merchants for these, Eze 27:17 and Mr. Brightman will have Italy to be Rome's merchant for wine and oil; Sardinia and Sicily her merchants for fine flour and wheat; Germany for beasts, and England for sheep: and with respect to the ecclesiastical use of these things, wine is for the chalice, used in daily Masses, and drank only by the priests; "oil" for chrism at baptism, and for the extreme unction: "fine flour" for the Mass, or to make their breaden god of; and "wheat, beasts, and sheep" for tithes for the clergy:

and horses, and chariots, and slaves; things for splendour, equipage, and attendance; horses and chariots for the popes, cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, to ride in state and grandeur, and slaves to wait upon them. Tyre had her merchants for these
Eze 27:14 and Mr. Brightman's opinion is, that the French are Rome's merchants for horses and chariots, and the Swiss for slaves, or "bodies", as the word may be rendered, who live by exercising their bodies, and hiring them out in war; and who are many of them the guards of the person of the pope of Rome: and last of all it is added,

and souls of men; still in allusion to the merchandise of Tyre, some of whose merchants are said to trade in the persons of men, Eze 27:13 which the Targum and Septuagint render, in the souls of men; the popes have some of them sold their own souls to the devil, to get into the chair, and, when in, have been the means of destroying of thousands of others; they assume a power over the souls of men, of binding and loosing the consciences of men, imposing new laws upon them, and freeing them from obligation to the laws of God and men, to the ruin of their souls; and it has been said by their sycophants, that if the pope should send thousands of men to hell, no one should say to him, what dost thou? The Romish priests pretend to redeem souls out of purgatory for such a sum of money, and sell pardons and indulgences, say Mass, and promise heaven itself for money; and this they get at the expense of men's souls, by their false doctrine and superstitious worship, and so make merchandise of them, as is said of the false teachers, **2Pe 2:3** moreover, as by "slaves", or bodies, in the preceding clause, are meant such who serve with their bodies, either by way of attendance, or in unnatural lust; so by "souls" of men may be meant men of soul, of great natural wit and understanding, of great parts, abilities, and learning, with which they serve the man of sin, and his interest, such as Bellarmine, and others.

{k} Misn. Beracot, c. 6. sect. 6.

Revelation 18:14

Ver. 14. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee,.... Or "the autumn of the desire of thy soul"; the desirable fruits which are then in season; the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions render it "apples", which are ripe in autumn; and may design all such fruit as Italy abounds with, which will now be destroyed; and seems to point at the time of year when Babylon's destruction will be: but, in the mystical sense, these fruits may intend universal dominion over nations and churches, the obedience of kings and princes, riches, honours, and pleasures of all sorts; things greatly affected by the Papacy, and of which a large harvest was expected, but now all will be at an end:

and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee; all that were palatable to the taste, and pleasant to the sight, that were excellent and desirable; as the triple crown, cardinalships, archbishoprics, bishoprics, deanaries, fat benefices, and good livings:

and thou shalt find them no more at all; for this will be an utter destruction; at the Reformation these desirable things were taken from her in several nations, and in some places she has recovered them again, as in Germany and other places; and the outward court, or the reformed church, sinking into an outward show and form, will be wholly given to the Gentiles, the Papists, and they will have these things in their hands again before Rome's utter destruction, but after that they will no more be regained.

Revelation 18:15

Ver. 15. The merchants of these things,.... Before mentioned, who have traded in them for themselves and for Rome:

which were made rich by her, see Re 18:3

shall stand afar off for fear of her torment; as the kings of the earth before, Re 18:10 being conscious to themselves of their being partners in her crimes, and so might justly fear they should share in her punishment; and it may be, they will outwardly deny they are now of her religion, and will externally embrace the reformed religion; though they will be inwardly weeping and wailing for the destruction of Rome, and the loss of their merchandise and goodly things.

Revelation 18:16

Ver. 16. And saying, alas, alas! that great city,..... Using the same words the kings of the earth do, Re 18:10 only adding, suitable to their characters as merchants, and the things they traded in with her,

that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls; See Gill on "Re 18:12" see Gill on "Re 17:4", see also Eze 27:32.

Revelation 18:17

Ver. 17. For in one hour so great riches is come to nought,.... That is, in a very short time, expressing the suddenness and speediness of Rome's destruction, the quick dispatch and expedition that will be made in it, by the instruments of it, as in Re 18:10. Rome was always famous for its great wealth and riches; the Jews have a saying {l}, that if ten kabs of riches descend into the world, the ancient Romans take nine of them, and the other the whole world:

and every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off; the lamentation of the kings and merchants of the earth being ended, masters of ships, sailors, and seafaring men begin theirs: by "ships" are meant dioceses, abbeys, priories, and monasteries; and by the masters, or governors of them, bishops, abbots, priors, the heads of monasteries, and of the several orders of the Franciscans, Dominicans, &c. and by "all the company in ships", or "every shipmate", the fellows that belong to every religious house and order; and by "sailors" and "traders at sea", all such who compass sea and land to make proselytes to the Romish religion, like the Pharisees of old, and who, as they, make them two fold more the children of hell than themselves; and, in general, these traders abroad may design the pope's legates, sent by him into various parts, to collect his revenues, and the Jesuits, who are everywhere sent abroad to sow sedition and false doctrine, and the priests that travel about to sell pardons and indulgences: these

stood afar off; as the kings and merchants before, for fear of sharing in the condemnation and punishment of Babylon; knowing full well that they deserved it, having been associates with her in her crimes.

{l} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 49. 2.

Revelation 18:18

Ver. 18. And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning,....
See Gill on "Re 18:9"

saying, what city is like unto this great city? as before for magnificence and grandeur, so now for sorrow, desolation, and ruin; nor was any city like it for power and authority, for pride and luxury, for idolatry and superstition, blasphemy and impenitence; the like the sailors say of Tyre, Eze 27:30 from whence this and other expressions are borrowed in this lamentation.

Revelation 18:19

Ver. 19. And they cast dust on their heads,.... As the seafaring men on account of Tyre, Eze 27:30 this was a gesture used in mourning when persons were in afflicted and distressed circumstances, denoting disorder, confusion, and debasement; see **Jos 7:6**

and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, alas, alas! that great city; as in Re 18:10 so it was once, though now in flames:

wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea; not only the merchants of the earth, as in Re 18:3 the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, but the governors of religious houses; these accumulated great wealth to themselves, and got the best of lands into their possession for the use and support of their abbeys and monasteries:

by reason of her costliness; or costly things; pardons, indulgences, absolution, saying Mass, and praying souls out of purgatory, all which are costly, and hereby these traders have been enriched; and now the remembrance of these things, of which they will be deprived, will affect and grieve them, as well as the suddenness of Rome's ruin:

for in one hour is she made desolate; her judgment come, and her riches come to nought, Re 18:10.

Revelation 18:20

Ver. 20. Rejoice over her, thou heaven,.... This is said by the voice from heaven, Re 18:4 which having called upon the saints to come out of Babylon, and to take vengeance on her, now calls upon all good men to rejoice at her ruin, while others were weeping and wailing; not at that, simply considered, but as the justice of God is displayed therein: heaven may be literally understood, which sometimes is addressed when anything of very considerable note and moment is done or spoken of, whether it be something exceeding bad, as in **Isa 1:2** or something exceeding great and good, as in Ps 96:11 or else the inhabitants of heaven, either the angels, who as they rejoice at the good and happiness of the saints, so at the confusion and destruction of their enemies; and the Syriac version reads, "heavens and angels"; or else the souls of men departed, particularly the souls under the altar, that have been long crying for vengeance on account of the shedding of their blood, **Re 6:9** who may be made acquainted with Rome's destruction; or rather the true church of Christ upon earth, which in this book often goes by the name of heaven, in opposition to the apostate church, called the earth, because its members, doctrines, and ordinances, are from heaven, and its happiness lies there:

and ye holy apostles and prophets; the Alexandrian copy and Complutensian edition read, "and the saints, and the apostles, and prophets"; making three distinct sorts of persons, of which heaven, or the church, consists: by "saints" may be meant private members of churches, who are sanctified by the Spirit of God, and live holy lives and conversations; and by "apostles", not the twelve apostles, or persons in such an office as they were, but ordinary ministers of the word, who are sent forth to preach the Gospel, and will be upon the spot at the destruction of Babylon, and will be such as shall have preached and defended the pure apostolic doctrine; and by "prophets" are intended not the prophets of the Old Testament, nor such under the New who had the gift of foretelling things to come, but such who have a gift of interpreting the Scriptures and preaching the Gospel; the same with the two witnesses, who till this time will have prophesied in sackcloth, but shall now put it off, and put on the garments of praise and joy:

for God hath avenged you on her; or "judged your judgment on her"; that is, has executed righteous judgment on her, for all the evils done by her to the saints in ages past, the predecessors of the persons here mentioned, as well as to themselves: vengeance belongs to the Lord, and he will avenge his elect sooner or later.

Revelation 18:21

Ver. 21. And a mighty angel,.... Not Christ, nor one of the ministering spirits, but some man or set of men, perhaps the same with him in Re 18:1

took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea; just as Jeremiah took a stone and bound it to his book after he had read it, and cast it into the river Euphrates, as a sign and token of the destruction of old Babylon, Jer 51:63

saying, thus with violence shall that great city be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all; which is expressive of the utter destruction of Rome, and of the violence, force, and power with which it will be destroyed, and of the suddenness and swiftness of its destruction, and of the irrecoverableness of its state and condition.

Revelation 18:22

Ver. 22. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers and trumpeters,.... Which were for mirth, delight, and pleasure:

shall be heard no more at all in thee: the words seem to be taken from Isa 24:8 and may not only regard the loss of every thing that was delightful and pleasant to the ear in private houses, at festivals, and nuptials, and the like, but the ceasing of church music; there will be no more bells, nor organs, or any other instruments of music; no more chanters, and sub-chanters, choristers, singing men and boys:

and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be shall be, found any more in thee; which are very useful and necessary in cities and societies; it is threatened to Judah, that the cunning artificer should be taken from her, **Isa 3:3** and it is reckoned as a considerable part of the distress of the captivity that the carpenters and smiths were away from Jerusalem, Jer 24:1 and this judgment may fall on Rome for her worshipping idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, the works of men's hands, artificers and craftsmen, and who are employed in making other trinkets and wares for antichrist:

and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; to grind corn with, see Jer 25:10 there will be a famine at the time that Rome is besieged, Re 18:8 and after it is destroyed, there will be no corn to grind, nor inhabitants to eat it, and so no use of the millstone; this is said in opposition to her luxurious and delicious living, Re 18:3 and this may also refer to feasts and rich entertainments, for which spices were ground and prepared by an hand mill {m} in the house; and so may signify here that there would be no more of such entertainments and rich living; with which sense agrees what follows. This clause is wanting in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions.

{m} Schindler. Lex. Pentaglott. in Voce xwr, Col. 1712.

Revelation 18:23

Ver. 23. And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee,.... Either for common use, or at feasts, or at marriages, which being kept at night, required candies, lamps, or torches; this shows that Babylon, or Rome, shall be deprived of everything, even of the least thing that is comfortable in life; see Jer 25:10 this will be a just punishment upon her for her abuse of this blessing of life; so where wax candles in great numbers have been burning in the daytime, there will not be so much as a single candle to give light in the night; and where candles have been lighted up for the dead, there will not be one for the use of the living:

and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: there will be no marrying, nor giving in marriage; no procreation of children, or propagation of posterity, in this place; which denotes the utter extirpation of the inhabitants of it; the phrases are taken from **Jer 7:34** Jer 25:10 and this will be in righteous retaliation for the prohibition of marriage; which God has instituted, and is honourable, **1Ti 4:2** the reasons of Babylon's destruction follow:

for thy merchants were the great men of the earth: in allusion to the merchants of Tyre, said to be princes, Isa 23:8 for by trading and dealing in the wares and merchandise of Rome, persons of mean extract, and of very low circumstances of life, have grown exceeding rich, and have equalled the princes of the earth; as for instance, Cardinal Wolsey here in England, a butcher's son at Ipswich; and on the other hand, the princes and great men of the earth have become Rome's merchants, and have thought it an high honour to get a cardinal's hat, as the Cardinals Albertus duke of Austria, Bourbon, Pool, and others, mentioned by Brightman:

for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived; meaning her false doctrines, traditions, idolatry, superstition, and will worship, with which, as another Jezebel, she has bewitched, allured, and deceived the nations of the empire, and the kings thereof, Re 18:3.

Revelation 18:24

Ver. 24. And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints,.... Such as before mentioned, in Re 18:20 this is another reason of her destruction, besides her luxury and idolatry, namely, her shedding the blood of the saints, with which she is said to be drunk, and therefore blood is now given her to drink, Re 17:6 for she will now be found guilty of slaying the witnesses, who are meant by the prophets and saints, that have been from the beginning of the apostasy:

and of all that were slain upon the earth: not only of those that have been slain in the city of Rome, but of all those that have been slain throughout the empire; they being slain by her order, or with her consent, and she conniving at it, encouraging it, and therefore will be justly chargeable with it all; see Mt 23:31 the Ethiopic version adds, "for the name of Christ".

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 19:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 19

This chapter contains the triumph of the saints over Babylon, and their thanksgiving to God because of his judgments on her; the marriage of Christ and his church, and a battle between him and his and her enemies, with the success of it. The congratulations are first of a promiscuous multitude in the church, ascribing salvation, praise, honour, glory, and power to God, because of the righteousness of his judgments, and because of the perpetuity of them, Re 19:1 and then of the four and twenty elders and four living creatures, who worship God, assent to what had been before said, and join in praising the Lord, Re 19:4 and then another voice out of the throne is heard, calling upon all the servants of the Lord, and those that fear him, whether small or great, to praise our God, Re 19:5 after which is heard the voice of a great multitude, stirring up one another to praise, because of the reign of the Lord God Almighty, and to rejoice and be glad because the time of the Lamb's marriage with his bride was come; who is described by her dress, the righteousness of the saints, comparable to fine linen, clean and white, Re 19:6 upon which an angel bids John write those persons happy who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and affirms these to be the true sayings of God; wherefore

John, in a transport of joy, was just going to worship the angel, had he not been forbidden by him; from which he dissuades him, by observing that he was his fellow servant, that God only is the object of worship, and that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, Re 19:9 next follows a vision of a battle between Christ and his enemies; and first he the General is described, by the horse he sat upon, a white one; by the characters he bears, faithful and true; by what he did, judging and making war in righteousness; by his eyes, which were as a flame of fire; by his having many crowns on his head; by having a name, or names unknown, and particularly one, which is the Word of God; by his habit, a vesture dipped in blood; by the armies he was at the head of, riding on white horses, and clothed in fine linen; by a sharp sword coming out of his mouth, with which he should utterly destroy the nations; and by having a name on his vesture and thigh, King of kings, and Lord of lords, Re 19:11 upon which an angel is seen standing in the sun, and calling to all the fowls of the heaven to come to the supper of the great God, and to eat the flesh of kings, captains, mighty men, horses and horsemen, of all ranks, and degrees, Re 19:17 and next an account is given of the armies of the beast, and of the kings of the earth, that came to make war with the above warrior, Re 19:19 the issue and success of which follow; the beast and false prophet are taken, and cast alive into a lake of fire and brimstone; and the rest are killed by the sword of the above General, and the fowls have a feast of their flesh, Re 19:20.

Ver. 1. And after these things,.... After the angel had declared the fall of Babylon, a voice from heaven had called the people of God out of her, and had ordered them to take vengeance on her; after the mournful lamentation of the kings, merchants, and seafaring men; after another voice had called upon the saints to rejoice at her overthrow, and a mighty angel had described the manner of it, and had expressed her ruin in the strongest terms, with the reasons of it, John heard the songs of the righteous, as follow:

I heard a great voice of much people in heaven: not literally taken, for these are not the innumerable company of angels, who are never called people; nor the spirits of just men made perfect, or the souls of departed saints, but men on earth; wherefore heaven designs the church, as in Re 18:20 and frequently in this book; the people are the same with the 144000 seen with the Lamb on Mount Zion,
Re 14:1 and with those on the sea of glass, who had got the victory over the beast, Re 15:2 and are no other than God's covenant people, who are given to Christ, and made willing to be his in the day of his power; and though they are but a seed, a remnant, a small company, when compared with the world and carnal professors; yet are a large body of themselves, especially they will be at

this time, when the nation of the Jews shall be born at once, and the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in: and their voice on this occasion, the downfall of Rome, is said to be "great" partly on account of their number, who will join together in acclamations of praise, and partly on account of their great affection and vehemency of spirit, which will be raised hereby:

saying Alleluia; an Hebrew word, which signifies "praise ye the Lord". The Jews say {n}, that the book of Psalms consists of ten sorts of songs, but Hallelujah is the greatest of them, because it comprehends the name (Jehovah) and praise in one word: and it is observable that this word, which is often used in the Psalms, is first used when the Psalmist desires the utter consumption and destruction of sinners and wicked men on earth, and is here taken up by the saints at the destruction of the man of sin and son of perdition; see Ps 104:35 and its being an Hebrew word shows that at this time the Jews will be converted, and that Jews and Gentiles will become one church state, and will worship and praise the Lord together; for the word is a call upon the saints to join together in solemn praise and thanksgiving; who is to be praised for the perfections of his nature, for the works of his hands, both of nature and grace; and for his righteous judgments on his and his church's enemies; and this is to be done in concert:

salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: salvation, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, is of God; "salvation" from antichristian power and tyranny, and from all enemies, and the everlasting salvation of the soul; and the "glory" of it belongs to all the three Persons; they are glorious in themselves, and deserve all glory to be ascribed to them by man, and especially by the saints: "honour" is also their due; God the Father is to be honoured because he is the Father, and the Son is to he honoured as the Father is, and the Holy Spirit is not to be grieved, but to be highly esteemed and valued, and equally with the other two Persons: and "power" belongs to them all, and is seen in the works of creation, redemption, and sanctification.

{n} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 89. 1. T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 117. 1.

Revelation 19:2

Ver. 2. For true and righteous are his judgments,.... As in
See Gill on "Re 15:3",
See Gill on "Re 16:7": this is to be understood of God's judgments in general, and is a reason of the attribution of praise and glory to him; which may be said

to be true, because, being threatened, are now fulfilled; and to be "righteous", because according to the demerit of sin; and particularly God's judgments on antichrist are intended:

for he hath judged the great whore; Jezebel, Babylon, the Romish antichrist, before spoken of, Re 17:1 not only by passing a sentence of condemnation on her, but by executing it, putting it into the hearts of the kings to hate and burn her, and utterly destroy her; and which is judging right, since it follows:

which did corrupt the earth with her fornication; drew the kings and inhabitants of the Roman empire into wicked and idolatrous practices, and so corrupted and destroyed them in soul, body, and estate; See Gill on "Re 11:18" for this vision is contemporary with the seventh trumpet:

and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand; shed by her, Re 18:20 and this being done in righteous judgment, is matter of joy and praise to the saints.

Revelation 19:3

Ver. 3. And again they said, Alleluia,.... Or a "second time" they said it; they began and ended their solemn worship and service with it; so some psalms begin and end with this word, translated in the Old Testament by the words "Praise ye the LORD", as in Ps 106:1 &c. and the repeating of the word shows how hearty, arnest, and constant they were in the work of praise on this account:

and her smoke rose up for ever and ever; they repeated their hallelujah, or gave one spiritual "huzza" more at the burning of Rome, and this followed: or the words may be rendered, "for her smoke rose", &c. and so are a reason for the second "hallelujah": it looks as if Rome, like another Sodom and Gomorrah, would sink into a sulphurous burning lake, and continue so: respect is had to the everlasting punishment of antichrist and his followers in hell, and to the everlasting burnings that will follow Rome's temporal destruction, which was an example and symbol of the vengeance of eternal fire; see Re 14:11 so the Jews {o} say of the burning of Rome, that its fire shall not be quenched for ever, and that "its smoke shall rise up for".

{o} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 48. 2.

Revelation 19:4

Ver. 4. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts,.... Mentioned in **Re 4:4** and who represent the churches of Christ and ministers of the Gospel in the several periods of time, these join in the chorus, and praise the Lord on the account of the destruction of Rome, and ruin of antichrist; so they are often heard of in this book, when any remarkable thing is done, or when there is any breaking forth of the kingdom and glory of Christ; see **Re 5:8** these

fell down; on their faces before God, as in **Re 4:10** in great reverence of him, and of his righteous judgments:

and worshipped God that sat on the throne; described in **Re 4:2** this refers to the public worship of God in the churches, by the ministers and members of them:

saying, Amen; Alleluia; they said "Amen", and signified their assent to what the much people in heaven had said, Re 19:1 and joined in the same "hallelujah", or expressions of praise to God, for this great appearance of his in the downfall of Babylon. Both these words are used together in Ps 106:48, see **Re 5:14**.

Revelation 19:5

Ver. 5. And a voice came out of the throne,.... Not from God the Father, that sat upon it, for the phrase,

praise our God, could not be said by him with propriety and pertinence; but rather from Christ, the Lamb, in the midst of the throne, who as Mediator could say of him to his people, my God and your God, and my Father and your Father, Joh 20:17 though it seems best to understand it of the voice of one of the angels about the throne, since one of these is afterwards spoken of, whom John would have worshipped, but was forbid, Re 19:9 and which may design either one of the ministering spirits, or a preacher of the Gospel, and a set of such, calling upon the saints to the discharge of their duty, or to return to it on this occasion:

saying, praise our God, all ye his servants; meaning not the ministers of the Gospel only, who serve in the Gospel of Christ, by preaching and defending it,

and in the administration of Gospel ordinances to the comfort of the saints, but all the people of God; for though they are sons, and no more servants to sin and Satan, and the world, yet they are servants of God and of righteousness, and serve him willingly and cheerfully in a way of duty, and without slavish fear, and with a godly one, and from principles of love and gratitude, and without mercenary views and selfish ends; and these are called upon, as a part of their service, to say hallelujah, or to sing the praises of God for his judgments on antichrist; see
Ps 134:1.

and ye that fear him, both small and great; who fear the Lord, not with a servile, but filial fear, with the new covenant grace of fear, which springs from, and is increased by, the goodness and grace of God; whether greater or lesser believers, fathers, young men, or children; whether Jews or Gentiles, or of whatsoever nation, kindred, or people; see Ps 115:13.

Revelation 19:6

Ver. 6. And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude,.... Even of all the servants of the Lord, and them that fear him, small and great; a vast multitude of converted Jews and Gentiles, in the several parts of the world, who in answer to the voice out of the throne, which came with great power and energy, lift up their voices in praise to God, both for their own conversion, and for the downfall of Babylon:

and as the voice of many waters: falling down in a descent, or in rough and rocky places, which make a great noise, and is heard afar off; and such must be the united voice of so great a multitude of converts as will be gathered together everywhere at this time: the same metaphor is used of the voice of Christ in **Re 1:15**

and as the voice of mighty thunderings; violent claps of it, which are sometimes so loud that they rend the very heavens, and strike the inhabitants of the earth with the utmost consternation: these are the same voices which will be heard in the church when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, Re 11:15

saying, Alleluia; or praise ye the Lord; they will call upon one another to celebrate the praises of God, on account of the above things, in the same manner, and using the same word the people in heaven, and the four and twenty elders and four living creatures, do; and this is the fourth time the word is used in this context, and confirms the observation that has been made, that this vision refers to the conversion of the Jews, which will quickly follow the destruction of Rome: and the Jews themselves have a notion, that when Rome is destroyed the Messiah will come; and so he will in his spiritual reign. They say {o},

"our redemption will be immediately upon the destruction of Rome."

And again {p},

"the root of our redemption depends upon the destruction of Rome."

The reason for their saying "hallelujah" follows,

for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; by whom is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, and God over all, blessed for ever, and is the Almighty; and though he was set up as King over the holy hill of Zion, and has reigned over the church in every age, and came as King into this world, though his kingdom was not of it, and at his resurrection was declared Lord and Christ, and his kingdom was then more manifest, and he has ever since displayed his kingly power in defending his church, and defeating the enemies of it; yet now will he reign more visibly and gloriously, his kingdom will be enlarged from one end of the earth to the other, and he will be King over all the earth, which will occasion great joy to Jews and Gentiles; see Ps 47:1 and See Gill on "Re 11:17".

{o} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 148. 1. {p} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 163. 4.

Revelation 19:7

Ver. 7. Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him,.... The saints particularly; the converted Jews will call upon one another to express their gladness at the glorious display of Christ's kingly power and authority, and at the destruction of his enemies, and the happy and comfortable state of his church and people; and to rejoice in him as the Lord their righteousness and strength, and to give him the honour and glory of salvation, and to return him thanks for all the benefits they shall have received from him, particularly on account of what follows:

for the marriage of the Lamb is come; that is, of Christ, the Son of God, with the Jewish church more especially; there was a secret betrothing of all the elect to Christ before the world began; and there is an open espousal of every individual of them at conversion; but the public and general solemnization of the nuptials will not be until the new Jerusalem church state takes place in the personal reign of Christ, hereafter mentioned, Re 21:1 but here, and as previous to that, there will be a very general and open marriage of Christ with the people of the Jews, who have long rejected and forsaken him; for if the conversion of a single person may be called a marriage with Christ, much more the conversion of such members; and which is often prophesied of under this metaphor of a marriage, as in Isa 62:4. And now the time will be come for the accomplishment of it, the evidence of which follows:

and his wife hath made herself ready, or "dressed herself"; by decking herself with jewels, and putting on her wedding garment provided for her, and given to her by her husband, the Lamb, as appears from the next verse: this preparation will lie partly in the number of converts that will be brought into the Jewish church, which she will receive and clothe herself with, as with the ornament of a bride, Isa 49:18 and partly by the exercise of the several graces of the Spirit upon Christ, comparable to the jewels of a bride, with which she will be adorned for her husband; and also by putting on the robe of his righteousness, hereafter mentioned, which the old Jewish synagogue rejected, and therefore was cast off,
Ro 10:3. The Arabic version reads, "the marriage of the Lamb is now come with his spouse, prepared for him"; and the Ethiopic version, "the marriage of his Lamb is come, and the wife is prepared"; and that her preparation is not by her own merits and works of righteousness, but by the grace of her husband, is clear from the following verse. Mr. Daubuz, by "the marriage of the Lamb", understands the first resurrection, and the state of the church at that time; and by "the fine linen", the dress of the church, next mentioned, the incorruptible body of the saints compared to a garment, 1Co 15:53 and by those who are afterwards said to be "called to the marriage", the converted nations in a mortal state: but all the saints will share in the first resurrection; besides, as yet the beast and false prophet are not destroyed, which must be before the first resurrection, as the following vision shows.

Revelation 19:8

Ver. 8. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen,.... Or "Byssine": the "Byssus", of which fine linen is made, is said to grow on a tree, in height like to a poplar, and its leaves like a willow, and to be brought out of Judea into Egypt, which the Egyptians used in most of their holy things {q}. A dress neat and modest, and not like the attire of the whore of Rome, Re 17:4 and this is said to be

clean and white, and is interpreted in the next clause:

for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints, or "righteousnesses"; not good works, or their own righteousness; for though these are evidences of faith, by which the saints are justified, and are what God has prepared for them, that they should walk in them; yet these are not comparable to fine linen, clean and white, but are like filthy rags, and cannot justify in the sight of God; but the righteousness of Christ is meant, and justification by that; for that is the only justifying righteousness of the saints: and though it is but one, yet it may be called "righteousnesses", or "justifications", in the plural number; partly because of the several seasons in which the act of justification passes, first in God's mind from eternity, next on Christ as the surety, when he rose from the dead, and on all the elect in him, and then in the consciences of the saints when they believe, and the sentence of it will be notified and declared to men and angels at the last judgment; and partly because of the many persons that are justified by it, as also because of the excellency of it; so the Jews use the word in the plural number: the Targumist on **Zec 3:4** paraphrases the text, "I will clothe thee" Kwkz, "with righteousnesses" {r}; upon which words Jarchi has this note,

"change of beautiful garments is all one as if it had been said twykz "righteousnesses": and because sin is like to filthy garments, righteousness is like to garments beautiful and white."

Christ's righteousness may be compared to fine linen, clean and white, because of its spotless purity; those that are arrayed with it being unblamable and irreprovable, and without spot and blemish, and without fault before the throne; with this the Jewish church will be clothed; all the Lord's people will be righteous, they will have on the best robe, and wedding garment, which was despised by the Jews in Christ's time, who refused to come to the marriage feast; and their being arrayed with it will be owing to the grace of Christ, who grants it; and so Christ's righteousness is called the gift of righteousness, the free gift, and gift by grace, and abundance of grace; and faith, which receives it, and puts it on, is the gift of God, **Ro 5:15**. Not only the garment is a gift of grace, but the putting of it on is a grant from Christ, and what he himself does, Isa 61:10.

{q} Philostrat. Vita Apollon. l. 2. c. 9. Vid. Apul. Apolog. p. 225. Pausan. l. 5. sive Eliac. p. 294. {r} See Isa. lxi. 10. & Targum in Hos. x. 12.

Revelation 19:9

Ver. 9. And he saith unto me, write,.... What follows, because of the importance of it, and to show the certainty of it, and that it may be regarded and remembered: the person speaking is either the voice from the throne, Re 19:5 or the angel that attended John all along, and showed him this revelation, **Re 1:1** or the angel that proposed to show him the judgment of the great whore, Re 17:1.

Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb; by which is meant the Gospel ministry and ordinances, and communion in them, to which the Jews will be called to partake of in the latter day; these at the first of the Gospel dispensation are called a "dinner", to which, the Jews were invited, but refused to come, and now a "supper", because made in the evening of that dispensation; to which being called with an effectual calling, they will come and partake of it; on which account they are pronounced blessed, being the bride, the Lamb's wife, having on his righteousness, partaking of his benefits, and being called unto, and made meet for eternal glory and happiness; or else these may design converted Gentiles, who will be invited to join with them, and will.

And he saith unto me, these are the true sayings of God; the Syriac version reads, "these my true words are of God"; being true, it is plain they are of God, and being of God, it is certain they are true; for he is the God of truth, and cannot lie, and therefore may be depended upon.

Revelation 19:10

Ver. 10. And I fell at his feet to worship him,.... Being transported with the news he brought him of the marriage, or conversion of his countrymen the Jews, and struck with reverence and awe of the glory and majesty in which the angel appeared to him; and forgetting himself, that worship was only due to God, he behaved in this manner; which is not to be excused nor justified, as appears from the angel's words:

and he said unto me, see thou do it not; the words are in the original very short and concise, and are spoken in an abrupt manner, and in great haste; as fearing he would be guilty of idolatry, before he could speak all his mind, and use the arguments that were necessary to dissuade from it:

I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; if this was one of the ministering spirits, he was a servant of the same Lord as John; and if he was a minister of the Gospel, he was still more literally a fellow servant of his, and of the apostles, and preachers of the Gospel; which is meant by the testimony of Jesus, that bearing testimony to the person, office, grace, obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ, and the glory following; and therefore being but a servant, and a servant in common with John and his brethren, was by no means to be worshipped; not the servant, but master; not the creature, but the Creator:

worship God and him only, even God the Father, Son, and Spirit; not the Father to the exclusion of the Son, the firstborn, whom all the angels are called upon to worship; nor of the Spirit, who is equally joined with the Father and Son in baptism, a part of religious worship, and in other parts of it also; but this excludes all creatures, angels, and men, things animate or inanimate, and images of them; the worshipping of which will now be no more, or at least will be quickly at an end.

For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy that is, the testimony of Jesus, or the Gospel which John and his brethren had, is the very spirit, life, and soul of the prophecy of this book; for as all the prophets bore witness to Christ, so does the Spirit of God in this; or the testimony which they had, and bore to Christ, was equal to the spirit of prophecy with which this angel was endowed; so that he and they were upon an equal foot; and he was no more a proper object of divine and religious adoration than they were.

Revelation 19:11

Ver. 11. And I saw heaven opened,.... This vision refers not to the same time the first seal does, **Re 6:2** for though a white horse, with a rider on it, is seen here, as there; that respects the first times of the Gospel, this the latter part of the dispensation of it; nor to the war in heaven between Michael and the dragon, and their angels, Re 12:7 that issued in the downfall of Paganism in the Roman empire, this will issue in the downfall of the Papacy in it; nor to the personal coming of Christ to the last judgment, of which an account is given in

the following chapter; but to the battle at Armageddon, to which the sixth vial is a preparation, and which is finished under the seventh, Re 16:13 and what is briefly hinted at there is at large related here; in which Christ, the General, and his armies, on the one hand, and the kings of the earth, with the beast and false prophet, and their armies, on the other hand, appear to give battle to each other: and the issue of the battle is particularly represented, in order to have a view of which, "John saw heaven opened": not literally, as at Christ's baptism, and at the stoning of Stephen, nor in a spiritual sense, by the blood of Christ, but visionally, as in **Re 4:1** and since heaven, often in this book, signifies the church on earth, a more glorious and comfortable state of the church may be designed; when her gates shall be opened continually, and not shut day nor night, to receive the forces of the Gentiles, and their kings, Isa 60:15 such a state as is referred to in
Re 11:19 to which visions this is contemporary; and it may denote a very glorious appearing of Christ, not in person, which will be after this, but in his kingdom and power, in defeating his enemies, and reigning spiritually with his saints: and it may also design the clear revelation and discerning John had of the following things:

and behold a white horse which, as in **Re 6:2** may be a symbol of the Gospel, and Gospel ministers, as there in the former, here in the latter part of the Gospel dispensation; signified by a horse, to denote the swift progress of the Gospel in the latter day, the majesty, power, and authority with which it will come, bearing down all opposition made against it; and by a white horse, to express the purity of the Gospel, and of its preachers and professors, and the peace it publishes, and gives, and the joy it brings, and the triumphs that will attend it.

And he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True: that Christ is here meant, is evident from the description of his eyes, Re 19:12 being the same as in **Re 1:14** and from his name, Re 19:13 which is the peculiar name of the Son of God, **Joh 1:1** and he sits upon, and is bore by, and rides forth in the Gospel, and the ministry of it, with glory and majesty, and prosperously, Ps 45:3 and the characters of faithful and true well agree with him;
See Gill on "Re 3:7".
See Gill on "Re 3:14". He is "faithful and true" to God, who appointed him a Leader and Commander of the people, and to them he is the Commander of: and these characters well suit him now, when he will accomplish all the glorious things spoken of the church, relating to her spiritual and happy state in the latter day, and serve greatly to recommend him as a General.

And in righteousness he doth judge and make war; which is to be understood not of the last judgment, though that will be executed in righteousness, and therefore is called the righteous judgment, yet in that day there will be no war, no opposition, the wicked will at once submit; but of Christ's judging of his people, and avenging their blood on their enemies, and the remainder of them among Papists, Pagans, and Mahometans; who will be gathered together at Armageddon in battle array against them, when there will be an utter discomfiture of them in righteous judgment; for as in times past the beast made war with the saints and witnesses, and overcame them, Christ will enable his people to make war with him and his accomplices, and overcome them, as the sequel of this vision shows, Christ being at the head of them, though not in person, yet in power.

Revelation 19:12

Ver. 12. His eyes were as a flame of fire,.... Which denotes the perspicuity and penetration of them, the omniscience of Christ to look into and discover the secret machinations, schemes, and devices of his enemies against his people, and his exercise of it in favour of them, his eyes, like a flame of fire, running to and fro on their behalf; and also this may signify the fierceness of his anger against the enemies of his people, the eyes of his glory being provoked by their cruelty and wickedness; and likewise the suddenness of their destruction, and the inevitableness of it.

And on his head were many crowns; for he has not only a crown, as the Creator and Governor of the universe, in right of nature, but he has one which his Father has put upon his head, when he set him as King over his holy hill of Zion, Ps 21:3 and there is another which his mother, the church, crowned him with in the day of his espousals, **So 3:11** and besides these, every believer puts a crown on his head, gives him the glory of their salvation, and all of them cast their crowns at his feet: to which may be added, that the crowns of all the kings of the earth are his; they reign by him, and are accountable to him. This part of the description may be expressive of that all power in heaven and earth, given to Christ at his resurrection, and exercised by him ever since; and particularly of the extensiveness of his kingdom at the time this vision refers to, when the kingdoms of this world shall be his, Re 11:15 for this vision, and the seventh trumpet, are contemporary; and it may be a symbol of the many victories obtained by him, and of the last and closing one that should now be obtained by him.

And he had a name written that no man knew but he himself; which seems to be his name, the Son of God, as the unknown name of the overcomer, in **Re 2:17** is a child of God; and the sense is, that his divine nature, in which he is the Son of God, is incomprehensible, and that the begetting or generation of him, as such, is ineffable,
Pr 30:4 and that without a divine revelation the name itself could not be known; or it could not be known that God had a Son, and that Christ is he, and bears that name, Mt 11:27 or else his name Immanuel. The incarnate God may be intended, which is a secret and wonderful name, and contains in it, without controversy, a great mystery, which cannot be comprehended by finite minds; or his name,
alp, "wonderful, secret", **Isa 9:6**. This name is said to be "written"; that is, in the Scriptures of truth, in which it is revealed that Christ is the Son of God, and Immanuel. In Re 19:16 the name of King of kings, &c. is said to be written on his vesture, and on his thigh; and the Ethiopic version makes this to be written on his crown or diadem, reading the words thus; "and upon his head a crown, and there was written in his diadem a name, and no man knew it, but he himself only"; as the high priest had "holiness to the Lord" written on his mitre. The Syriac version inserts a clause between the two last, "having names written", and then follows, "and a name written", &c. and so the Complutensian edition.

Revelation 19:13

Ver. 13. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood,.... Either in his own, by which he became the Saviour of his church and people; or else in the blood of his saints, he now comes to avenge; or rather in the blood of his enemies, with which he appears as stained, before the battle is fought, the victory being sure, and their slaughter unavoidable: the metaphor is taken from persons treading in a winepress, whose garments are stained with blood of grapes; see Re 19:15. Here may be also an allusion to the Roman general's vesture, which was sometimes purple or scarlet, in which he fought, as did Lucullus {s}.

And his name is called the Word of God; the name of Christ, often used by John in his Gospel, epistles, and in this book, **Joh 1:1** **1Jo 1:1**. Of the signification, reason, and import of this name, See Gill on "Joh 1:1". The reason why he is called by it here may be partly to express his greatness, glory, and majesty, this being a name which principally belongs to him, is a person, as the Creator of all things, and as previous to his incarnation; and partly because all the promises of God in his word, and which are all yea, and amen in Christ, will be now shortly fulfilled.

{s} Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 20.

Revelation 19:14

Ver. 14. And the armies which were in heaven,.... Not the angels, though they are God's host, and are the armies of the heavens; they are in heaven, and dwell there, and follow Christ, attend upon him, and minister to him, and have been sometimes represented by horses and horsemen, **2Ki 2:11** and they are pure and holy creatures, and will come with Christ to judgment: but this vision refers not to the day of judgment; and besides, the saints are meant, as appears by their habit, for the fine linen, white and clean, is the righteousness of the saints, Re 19:8 and the righteousness of angels and saints is not the same. Moreover, these are the same company described in Re 17:14. The saints are in a state of warfare, have many enemies to fight with, sin, Satan, and the world; they are enlisted as volunteers under Christ, the Captain of salvation; they are provided with the whole armour of God, and are very numerous, and always more than conquerors through Christ: these are described by the place where they were, "in heaven"; not being glorified saints in heaven; with these indeed Christ will come to judgment, even with all his saints with him; but members of the church militant, said to be in heaven, because that is often called the kingdom of heaven; and because their names are written in heaven, and they are of heavenly extract; they are born from above, and are partakers of the heavenly calling; they belong to heaven, they are citizens of it, and are pressing on to it. And these

followed him; Christ, their Leader and Commander in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duty; having gone on in his ways through a train of sufferings, and cleaved unto him, and now attend him; not to assist in fighting, but to add to the glorious and triumphant appearance of their General; and therefore are said to be

upon white horses; they had served Christ in his Gospel, which some of them had preached, and all professed, and had maintained the purity of it in doctrine and practice, and now triumphed in Christ, and along with him, riding upon horses of the same colour with his, as being his princes and nobles, and whom he had made kings as well as priests; the former may be signified by their horses; see **Jud 5:10** and the latter by their following habit, clothed in fine linen, white and clean; not the horses, but the armies on them; which designs not their inward purity, which was very glorious; nor their outward conversation garments, washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; but the robe of Christ's righteousness, which is pure and spotless: these have no armour on, for they are not to strike a blow, only their General, who has the bloody garment on, is to tread the winepress, and destroy antichrist with the breath of his mouth, or with his sword proceeding out of it, as follows.

Revelation 19:15

Ver. 15. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword,.... The Complutensian edition, and all the Oriental versions, with the Vulture Latin, read, "a sharp twoedged sword". The word of God, or the judiciary sentence of Christ according to it, and which he will fully execute, to the utter destruction of all his enemies;
See Gill on "Re 1:16" that with it he should smite the nations; the Gentiles, the Papists, the antichristian states, those that have adhered to Babylon, and have drunk of the wine of her fornication. This is predicted in Nu 24:17 and on account of this the nations will be angry under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, with which this vision is contemporary, Re 11:18.

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; use them with the utmost severity; the phrase is taken out of **Ps 2:9** a prophecy of Christ, and mentioned twice before in this book, See Gill on "Re 2:27",
See Gill on "Re 12:5":

and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God; the fierce wrath of God against sinners is compared to a winepress; and the wicked antichristian party are likened to clusters of grapes; who being ripe for destruction, are cast into it, and pressed, squeezed, and trodden down by the mighty power of Christ, the Word of God, whose vesture is therefore before said to be dipped in blood; the same metaphor is used in Re 14:19 the allusion seems to be to Isa 63:3.

Revelation 19:16

Ver. 16. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written,.... This name, afterwards expressed, is said to be written on his vesture, in allusion to the custom of persons of note and eminence having their names interwoven in their garments, and which was sometimes done in letters of gold, as Zeuxis had {t}; and it is expressive of the conspicuousness of Christ's kingdom, which now will come with observation; his judgments, the administrations of his kingly office, will be manifest, and he will reign before his ancients gloriously: and its being said to be written on his thigh may mean either that it was upon that part of his garment which covered his thigh; or else that it was also on his sword, which he sometimes girt upon his thigh. Mr. Daubuz has given an instance out of Victor Vitensis, of Clementianus, a monk, who had written on his thigh,

""a manichee" disciple of Jesus Christ."

And this being done in Africa, he supposes it to be a Phoenician custom continued. It may here denote the perpetuity of Christ's name, power, and dominion, which will continue to the latest posterity, Ps 72:17 which spring from the thigh; and it may denote the subjection of his people to him, signified by the putting the hand under the thigh,
Ge 24:2. And this name is

King of kings and Lord of lords; which will well suit him now when he shall be openly King over all the earth; See Gill on "Re 17:14".

{t} Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 35. c. 9.

Revelation 19:17

Ver. 17. And I saw an angel standing in the sun,.... By whom is meant, not the angel of the fourth vial, who poured it on the sun, taken in another sense than here, and therefore could not stand in it; nor the archangel with the last trumpet, for as yet the dead rise not, nor does the judgment come on; nor one of the ministering spirits; nor Christ himself, for he is the great God, to whose supper this angel invites, but a minister of the Gospel; or rather a set of Gospel ministers, such as in Re 14:1 who may be said to stand in the sun, in like manner as the woman, the church, was seen clothed with it, Re 12:1 and may denote the conspicuousness of Gospel preachers; for, as the church now will be established upon the top of the mountains, so her teachers shall not be removed into corners any more, but her eyes shall behold her teachers; and also the clear sight they shall have of the doctrines and mysteries of the Gospel, who shall now see eye to eye; and particularly the further breakings forth of the glory of the latter day, and the ensuing victory of Christ over all his enemies; and also shows the great strength of their sight, who, far from being like moles and bats, will be able both to look upon the sun, and to stand in it: and it may likewise signify the glory and majesty of Christ's kingdom; the comfortable influence of him, the sun of righteousness, who will now arise upon his people with healing in his wings; and the steadfastness of Christ's ministers to him, and his pure Gospel, and the glorious truths of it.

And he cried with a loud voice; that he might be heard far and near, having something of moment and importance to publish:

saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven; meaning not the barbarous nations, the Goths, and Vandals, and Saracens, which overrun and destroyed the western and eastern empires; these times are too late for them, they rose up under the six first trumpets; nor devils and unclean spirits, which will prey upon and torment antichrist, and his followers, in hell; nor military and avaricious men among Protestants, but Christian princes, and their people, are designed; they are such as are in heaven, the church, and of note there, who will share the spoils of the antichristian people, and possess their kingdoms, substance, and estates: these are invited by the angel, saying,

come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, read, "to the great supper of God"; and so the Complutensian edition; not the Lord's supper, where not the flesh of men, but the flesh of Christ is eat, by faith; nor the marriage supper of the Lamb, which will be of another kind than this; nor is any spiritual repast intended, such as living by faith on Christ, and supping with him, being entertained with his promises, presence, and the discoveries of his love; but the slaughter of Christ's enemies, and his victory over them, which is his sacrifice; and these are the guests he bids, see **Zep 1:7** and whom he calls to share in the conquest and spoils, and to express their joy on this occasion: "the great God" is no other than Christ, the general of the armies in heaven, called before the Word of God, and King of kings, and Lord of lords; who will gain this victory, and will be known to be the great God by the judgment he will execute. This is a proof of our Lord's divinity; see **Tit 2:13**.

Revelation 19:18

Ver. 18. That ye may eat the flesh of kings,.... Of the earth, and of the whole world, who will fall in the battle at Armageddon; see

Re 16:14 and design either those antichristian kings and states, which have drunk of the wine of Rome's fornication, and will bewail the downfall of Babylon, Re 18:3 or those Pagan kings which will be drawn in by the pope and Turk, to aid and assist in this war, or both, when, upon the defeat of them, the Christian princes will seize upon, possess, and enjoy their kingdoms and dominions, which is meant by eating their flesh;
See Gill on "Re 17:16".

And the flesh of captains; of their generals, and officers under them:

and the flesh of mighty men; the common soldiers, who are so called, Jer 46:5 who will be rifled and plundered:

and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them; whose rich trappings and clothes will be taken away from them:

and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great; that is, the substance of all the inhabitants of the antichristian empire, both eastern and western, of whatsoever rank, state, and condition they be, Re 13:16. The metaphors are taken from, and there is a manifest allusion to, Eze 39:17 and the whole denotes the entire slaughter and utter ruin of the whole antichristian army, and the certainty of Christ's victory over it before hand; and also the destruction of all that are the followers of antichrist, throughout his dominions, which will now wholly fall into the hands of the saints, and be enjoyed by them.

Revelation 19:19

Ver. 19. And I saw the beast,.... Not the devil, for after this he is taken and bound for a thousand years, and then loosed, and laid hold on again, and cast into the lake of fire; not but that this war will be by his instigation, and under his influence, Re 16:14 not the Roman Pagan empire, which has been destroyed long ago, under the sixth seal, and was the issue of the battle between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his; but the antichristian civil powers, or antichrist in his civil capacity; and which, though it may chiefly regard the western antichrist, and the remains of the Latin idolatry, yet may take in the eastern antichrist, or the Mahometan powers, which may all join together in this battle; the beast will survive for a while the downfall of his seat, Babylon or Rome.

And the kings of the earth; these, as they stand distinguished from the beast, or the antichristian kings, and civil states, may design as many of the Pagan kings and princes, as the pope and Turk by their emissaries can persuade to assist them in this war;
See Gill on "Re 16:14".

And their armies gathered together; at Armageddon, or in the valley of Jehoshaphat, Re 16:16

to make war against him that sat on the horse; the white horse, Re 19:11 as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, which must be downright folly and madness, since he is the Word of God, the great God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords:

and against his army, Re 19:14 who, though unarmed, and only clothed in fine linen, have nothing to fear, since Christ, the Captain of their salvation, is at the head of them.

Revelation 19:20

Ver. 20. And the beast was taken,.... At the first onset, as soon as ever the battle begun, and carried away captive, as it was threatened he should, Re 13:10 and this by Christ, who will destroy him with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming, **2Th 2:8**.

And with him the false prophet; that is, the second beast in Re 13:11 as appears by the characters by which he is here described, or antichrist in his ecclesiastic capacity; that is, the pope with his clergy: and indeed, when the antichristian princes and states are taken and destroyed, which are the support of the Papacy, that must in consequence sink, be crushed and ruined; the Alexandrian copy reads, "and they that are with him, the false prophet Jezebel"; the false prophetess and her children, who will now be killed with death, **Re 2:20**

that wrought miracles before him: the beast, or the civil antichristian powers, even signs and lying wonders, which were approved of, and applauded by him, by which, believing them, he was confirmed in antichristian principles:

with which he deceived them that had the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image; the several subjects of the antichristian states; see Re

13:14 but none of God's elect, who cannot be seduced by such means, Mt 24:24.

These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone; which is the second death, Re 21:8. The severe punishment of antichrist, considered in both his capacities, civil and ecclesiastic, is expressed by being "cast into a lake of fire", not material fire, but the wrath of God, which will be poured out like fire, and will be intolerable; and by this lake "burning with brimstone", which, giving a nauseous stench, aggravates the punishment. Says R. Joden {t}, when a man smells the smell of brimstone, why does his breath draw back at it (or catch)? because he knows he shall be judged with it in the world to come. The allusion seems to be to the place where Sodom and Gomorrah stood, which is become a sulphurous lake, and is an emblem of the vengeance of eternal fire, **Jude 1:7** and these two are said to be "cast alive" into it, which shows that they will not only suffer a corporeal death at this battle, and in the issue of it, but will be destroyed, body and soul, in hell: the phrase denotes the awfulness, inevitableness, and severity of their punishment; there seems to be some reference to the earth's swallowing up Korah and his company alive, Nu 16:33 see **Da 7:11**.

{t} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 51. fol. 45. 4.

Revelation 19:21

Ver. 21. And the remnant were slain,.... Not only the kings of the earth, and their armies, that will now be gathered together, but all the remains of Papists, Pagans, and Mahometans, in the several parts of the world, even all the enemies of Christ: these will be slain

with the sword of him that sat upon the horse; upon the white horse, as the Ethiopic version reads; the Arabic version reads, that sat upon the throne,

which sword proceedeth out of his mouth, Re 19:15 and is the word of God, or the judiciary sentence of Christ according to it; and the meaning is, either that these shall be subdued, conquered, and converted by the word; and so are fitly called a "remnant", a remnant according to the election of grace among the antichristian party; and which sense agrees with Re 11:13 or else that they will be convicted and confounded, and not be able to stand against the light and evidence of the word of God, and will be sentenced by Christ to everlasting punishment; and it may be partly one, and partly the other.

And all the fowls were filled with their flesh; all the Christian princes and people will be satisfied with their kingdoms, riches, and wealth, and will rejoice at their destruction, and in the righteousness of God, which will be displayed in it; and now the world being clear of all Christ's enemies, Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan, the way will be prepared for Christ's open and glorious kingdom in it.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 20:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 20

This chapter contains the binding of Satan, the saints' thousand years' reign with Christ, the loosing of Satan again, the destruction of him, and the Gog and Magog army, and the last judgment: the angel that is to bind Satan is described by his descent from heaven; by his having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand; and by the use he made of them, laying hold on Satan, binding him, casting him into the bottomless pit, and then shutting it up, and setting a seal on him; by all which he will be prevented from deceiving the nations for the space of a thousand years, Re 20:1. After this thrones are seen, with persons on them, to whom judgment is given; who are said to be such as had been martyrs for Jesus, and had not worshipped the beast, or professed his religion; whose happiness is represented by living and reigning with Christ a thousand years, when others will not; the second death will have no power on them; they will be the priests of God, and Christ, and reign with him during the said term, having a part in the first resurrection, Re 20:4. At the expiration of which term Satan will be loosed, and go out of prison, deceive the nations, and gather Gog and Magog to battle; who, being exceeding numerous, will cover the breadth of the earth, encompass the camp and city of the saints, when fire will come down from heaven and destroy them, and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and false prophet are, and be tormented for ever and ever, Re 20:7. And next an account is given of the general Judgment; and the judge is described by the throne he sat on, a white cloud, and by his majesty, which is such, that the heavens and the earth flee from before him, Re 20:11. And next the persons judged are described by their common state, the dead; by their age or condition, great and small, and by their position, standing before God; and then an account of the procedure, or rule of judgment; the books are opened, and the execution of judgment according to what is found in the books, Re 20:12 in order to which the sea, death, and the grave, give up the dead in them, and the two last are cast into the lake, and with them those who are not in the book of life, Re 20:13.

Ver. 1. And I saw an angel come down from heaven,.... All Christ's enemies, and Satan's instruments being removed, the devil is left alone, and only stands in the way of Christ's kingdom; and what will be done to him, and how he will be in the issue disposed of, this vision gives an account: by the "angel" John saw, is not to be understood Constantine the great; for though he is the man child that was taken up to God, and his throne, being advanced to the empire, yet he cannot, with that propriety, be said to come down from heaven; and though he vanquished the Heathen emperors, in which the dragon presided, and cast Paganism out of the empire, by which the devil ruled in it, yet the binding of Satan is another kind of work, and seems too great for him; and besides, did not take place in his time, as will be seen hereafter: nor is an apostle, or a minister of the Gospel intended; such are indeed called angels in this book, and may be said to come down from heaven, because they have their commission from thence; and particularly the apostles had the keys of the kingdom of heaven, but not the key of the bottomless pit; and a chain and system of Gospel truths, which they made good use of for the establishing of Christ's kingdom, and weakening of Satan's, but not such a chain as is here meant; and they had the power of binding and loosing, or of declaring things lawful or unlawful, but not of binding and loosing of Satan; nor was he bound in the apostolic age: nor is one of the ministering spirits, or a deputation of angels designed; for though Christ will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, and will make use of them, both to gather together his elect, and to cast the wicked into the lake of fire, yet not to bind Satan; but the Lord Jesus Christ himself is this angel, who is the angel of God's presence, and of the covenant; and who is in this book called an angel, **Re 7:2** to whom all the characters here well agree, and to whom the work of binding Satan most properly belongs; for who so fit to do it, or so capable of it, as the seed of the woman, that has bruised serpent's head, or as the Son of God, who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, yea, to destroy him himself; and who dispossessed multitudes of devils from the bodies of men, and is the strong man armed that dislodges Satan from the souls of men, and is the same with Michael, who drove him from heaven, and cast him out from thence before,
Re 12:7. And his coming down from heaven is not to be understood of his incarnation, or of his coming from thence by the assumption of human nature; for Satan was not bound by him then, as will be seen hereafter; but of his second coming, which will be from heaven, where he now is, and will be local, visible, and personal: of no other coming of his does this book speak, as seen

by John, or as future; nor will the order of this vision, after the ruin of the beast and false prophet, admit of any other.

Having the key of the bottomless pit: the abyss or deep, the same out of which the beast ascended, Re 11:7. And the key of this becomes no hand so well as his who has the keys of hell and death, **Re 1:18** who has all power in heaven and in earth, and has the power of hell, of opening and shutting it at his pleasure, which is signified by this phase; see **Re 9:1**. The Ethiopic version reads, "the key of the sun", where some have thought hell to be; and yet the same version renders the word, the deep, in Re 20:3.

And a great chain in his hand; the key in one hand, and the chain in another; by which last is meant, not any material chain, with which spirits cannot be bound, nor indeed sometimes bodies possessed by evil spirits, **Mr 5:3** but the almighty power of Christ, which he will now display in binding Satan faster and closer than ever.

Revelation 20:2

Ver. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon,.... By whom is meant not Paganism, for that was destroyed in the Roman empire under the sixth seal, and was the consequence of the war between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his; and before this time it will be destroyed in other parts under the sixth and seventh vials, when the kings of the earth, being gathered together at Armageddon, will be slain, and the cities of the nations will fall, not only Papal, but Pagan, and Mahometan; and what will not will be converted, for before this time the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of Christ: but the devil himself is intended, so called, partly because of his great power, authority, and cruelty he has exercised in the world; and because of the venom and poison of idolatry, superstition, false doctrine, and worship, with which he has infected the inhabitants of it.

That old serpent; so called with respect to his cunning and subtlety, as well as his antiquity, being from the beginning of the creation, and having as early beguiled our first parents;

which is the devil and Satan; the accuser of God and men, and the adversary of them both. The Complutensian edition and Syriac version add, "which deceiveth the whole world"; and the Arabic version, "the deceiver of the whole world"; which seems to be taken out of Re 12:9, See Gill on "Re 12:9". Him Christ "laid hold on", and whom he held fast, as the word signifies: Christ will now take him, apprehend him, and detain him, as his prisoner; in the wilderness, Satan only felt the dint of his sword, the written word of God, and was obliged to leave him: but now he will feel the weight of his hand, and the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger; in the agony or conflict with him in the garden, he was conquered by prayer; and on the cross Christ destroyed him through death, but now he will be seized by his power, and crushed under his hand.

And bound him a thousand years, with the great chain he had in his hand: the devil is in chains now, is under the power of divine Providence, and can do nothing without divine permission; but this chain is long, and he appears oftentimes to have great liberty, and ranges about the air and earth, and does much mischief; but now he will be so bound by the power of Christ over him, that he will not be able to stir hand or foot, to disturb the saints, or deceive the nations, whether with false worship, and false doctrine, or by stirring them up to persecute the saints. So of the devil, Asmodaeus, it is said in the Apocrypha,

"And Raphael was sent to heal them both, that is, to scale away the whiteness of Tobit's eyes, and to give Sara the daughter of Raguel for a wife to Tobias the son of Tobit; and to bind Asmodeus the evil spirit; because she belonged to Tobias by right of inheritance. The selfsame time came Tobit home, and entered into his house, and Sara the daughter of Raguel came down from her upper chamber." (Tobit 3:17)

that the angel Raphael, whroa "bound him". The space of a thousand years is not a certain number for an uncertain, or a large and indeterminate space of time, as in Ps 90:4 these years are to be taken, not indefinitely, but definitely, for just this number of years exactly, as appears from their having the article prefixed to them; and are called afterwards, no less than four times, ta cilia eth, "the thousand years", or these thousand years, Re 20:3 and from the things which are attributed to the beginning and ending of these years, which fix the epoch, and period of them; as the binding of Satan, when they begin, and the loosing of him when they end, as well as the reign of the saints with Christ during the whole time; to which may be added, the resurrection of the saints at the commencement of them, and the resurrection of the wicked at the close: but the great question is, whether they are begun or not? if they are begun, when they began; and if not, when they will. Some think that they began either at the birth of Christ, or at his resurrection, or at the destruction of Jerusalem. I put these together, because they were all in one century, within the compass of seventy years, or thereabout; so that if the thousand years began at either of them, they must end in the same century, in 1100. Now though, upon Christ's coming Satan fell like lightning from heaven, and multitudes of men, possessed with devils, were dispossessed by Christ, and he that had the power of death, the devil, was destroyed by him; and upon the preaching of the Gospel by the apostles in the Gentile world, the prince of the world was cast out, his oracles were struck dumb, multitudes were converted, and churches were set up everywhere, yet still Satan was not bound: he was not bound before the death of Christ; witness the many bodies of men possessed by him; his tempting Christ himself in the wilderness; his attacks upon him in the garden, and on the cross; his putting it into the heart of Judas to betray him; and filling the chief priests and scribes with malice and envy against him, to seek his death, which they brought about: nor was he bound, so as not to deceive the Jews, either before or after the death of Christ, nor is he to this day; they were in Christ's time under the influence of their father the devil, whose lust they would do, and did, in putting Christ to death; and after his death, they were instigated by Satan to persecute his apostles in Judea, and elsewhere; and though after the destruction of Jerusalem they had no more power to act in this way, yet they had no less ill will and malice against the Christians, and are to this day filled with enmity against them, and are led captive by Satan, and given up to believe a lie, that the Messiah is not come, and to reject the true Messiah, and to expect a false one: and as for the Heathen world, notwithstanding the progress of the Gospel in it, yet for the first three hundred years Paganism was the established religion of the Roman empire; and Christianity was everywhere spoken against, despised, and persecuted, and sometimes triumphed over, as if it was extinct; and Satan could never be said to be bound, and in prison himself, when he cast such multitudes into prison, and caused them to have tribulation ten days, **Re 2:10** in which so many martyrs suffered; nor did Satan appear to be bound, with respect to the church; the mystery of iniquity began to work in the apostle's times, and there were then many antichrists in the world, deceivers, false teachers and heretics; there was a synagogue of Satan, **Re 2:9** and such a set of vile persons under the name of Christians, as scarce ever was in the world; to which may be added, the great decline of love, and other graces, and of the purity of doctrine and worship in the best churches, and the many contentions among themselves, in which Satan had a great hand, and therefore could not be bound: moreover, some hundreds of years before the thousand years ended, beginning from either of the above dates, the man of sin, the son of perdition, the pope, or western antichrist, was revealed, whose coming is after the working of Satan, **2Th 2:9** and therefore surely he could not be bound then; besides, Mahomet, the eastern antichrist, sprung up, who opened the bottomless pit, and let out the smoke of it, by the Alcoran he delivered, and the false worship he set up: nor was there anything in the eleventh century, which answered to the loosing of Satan, to the Gog and Magog army, their war with the saints, and the issue of it; nor were the nations then more deceived than they had been in some centuries past; at least they were deceived in centuries past, both by the pope and Mahomet, which they would not have been, had Satan been bound then: to which may be subjoined, that if Satan was loosed, then he cannot be said to be loosed a little season, as in Re 20:3 in comparison of the thousand years, as that must be understood; since it is now between six and seven hundred years since, which is more than half a thousand years. Others begin these years at Constantine's coming to the imperial throne; but though there was at that time a great spread of the Gospel, an enlargement of Christ's kingdom, and a weakening of Satan's, yet Satan was far from being bound; see Re 12:7 witness the flood of errors and heresies which he quickly brought in, as the Eutychian and Nestorian heresies, the one confounding the natures, the other dividing the person of Christ; the Pelagian heresy, which obscured the grace of God, and advanced the free will of man; the Macedonian heresy, which denied the divinity of the Spirit: and especially the Arian heresy, which was opposed to the deity of Christ, and which introduced great contentions and confusion the churches, and issued in a violent persecution of them, being embraced by the sons of Constantine: not to take notice of Julian, an Heathen emperor, ascending the throne, who by many devilish arts endeavoured to extirpate Christianity; nor what has been observed before, the rise of both Mahomet in the east, and the Romish antichrist in the west, which were both within this period; in process of time the western empire was overrun by the Goths and Vandals, and the eastern empire by the Saracens and Turks; to which may be added, the violent persecutions of the Waldenses and Albigenses, before the year 1300, about which time the thousand years must cease, according to this computation, for opposing the pope of Rome, and who were slain where Satan had his seat, **Re 2:13** and therefore not bound; nor was there anything happened in that century which might answer to the loosing of him. Others date these thousand years from the Reformation, and so not much more than two hundred of them are yet passed; but that Satan was not bound then, and is not now, is manifest. All the Popish nations have not been reformed, but still remain under the deception; and some, that have been, have revolted again; and the devil has continued to deceive the nations with that false worship, and to stir them up to persecute the reformed. Witness the burning of them here in Queen Mary's days, the massacres in France and Ireland, the present inquisition in Spain and Portugal, and the persecution of the Hugonots in France, and other Protestants elsewhere: and this is further evident from the decline in the reformed churches, both as to doctrine, discipline, and conversation; from the spread of errors and heresies of all kinds ever since, and especially in our age; and from the general profaneness and infidelity of the times, which, when considered, no man in his senses can ever think that Satan is bound; nor indeed will he be bound, or these thousand years begin, till after the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, and the destruction of all the antichristian powers, Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan, as appears from the order of this vision, and its connection with the preceding chapter.

Revelation 20:3

Ver. 3. And cast him into the bottomless pit,.... Or deep, into which the devils desired they might not be sent, and which they dreaded as a torment, it may be, because a place of confinement, **Lu 8:31** for this is called a prison, Re 20:7 and is distinguished from the lake of fire, into which the devil is afterwards cast, Re 20:10.

And shut him up; that so he might not rove about in the air, nor go to and fro in the earth, nor walk about like a roaring lion, seeking to affright, disturb, or devour:

and set a seal upon him; or upon the door of the pit, for further security, as was upon the stone at the mouth of the lion's den, **Da 6:17** and of Christ's sepulchre, Mt 27:66. The Jews {u} make mention of a stone they call "Shetijah", with which the Lord of the world "sealed the mouth of the great deep", or bottomless pit, at the beginning; but here not that, but Satan in it, is sealed. The Alexandrian copy reads, "and sealed him firmly", so that it was impossible for him to break out: the end of this apprehension, binding, imprisonment, and security of Satan is,

that he should deceive the nations no more; that is, by drawing them into idolatry, false worship, and false doctrine; and by exciting them to make war against the saints, or to persecute them, as appears from Re 20:8 as he had done before; and it is notorious enough that he has deceived them both these ways; he deceived the Pagan nations not only before, but since the coming of Christ, to worship the Heathen deities; and the Papists, who are called Gentiles, or nations, Re 11:2 to fall down to idols of gold, silver, stone, and wood; and the nation of the Jews to entertain a false and deluded notion of the Messiah; and all of them, in their turns, to persecute the people of God, as the Jews at the death of Stephen, and afterwards; the Pagan emperors for the first three hundred years after Christ; the Papists from the rise of the beast, who had power given him to make war with the saints, and overcome them; but now he will be under such restraint, and in such close confinement, that he will not be able to move the wicked nations to anything of this kind, as he will when he is loosed at the end of the thousand years; nor will he be able so much as to tempt any of the saints, during this term of time, nor give them the least molestation or uneasiness.

Till the thousand years shall be fulfilled; or ended, the whole space of them run out:

and after that he must be loosed a little season; a small space of time, in comparison of the thousand years; how long it will be exactly, cannot be said; and this "must" be, not because he cannot be held any longer, or through any weakness in Christ; but because of the decree of God, who has so appointed it, for the glorifying of himself, in the salvation of his people, and in the final destruction of the devil, and the Gog and Magog army.

{u} Targum Jon. in Exod. xxviii. 30.

Revelation 20:4

Ver. 4. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them,.... Besides the throne of God the Father, and the throne of glory, on which the Son of God sits, and the twelve thrones for the twelve apostles of the Lamb; there will be thrones set, or pitched, for all the saints, **Da 7:9** who will sit on them, in the character of kings, and as conquerors, and shall sit quiet, and undisturbed, and be in perfect ease, and peace, for they that sit on them are the same persons hereafter described in this verse; for after the binding of Satan, an account is given of the happiness and glory of the saints during that time:

and judgment was given unto them; that is, power, dominion, regal authority, possession of a kingdom, answerable to their character as kings, and to their position, sitting on thrones, **Da 7:22** unless it should be rather understood of justice being done them, which does not so manifestly take place in the present state of things, and of which they sometimes complain; but now righteous judgment will be given for them, and against their enemies; their persons will be openly declared righteous; their characters will be cleared of all false imputations fastened on them; and their works and sufferings for Christ will be taken notice of in a way of grace, and rewarded in a very glorious manner. And so it may respect their being judged themselves, but not their judging of

others, the wicked, which is the sole work of Christ; nor will the wicked now be upon the spot to be judged; nor is that notion to be supported by
See Gill on "Mt 19:28",
See Gill on "1Co 6:2",
See Gill on "1Co 6:3". The Jews fancy that their chief men shall judge the world in the time to come; for so they say {w},

"in future time, (or in the world to come,) the holy blessed God will sit, and kings will place thrones for the great men of Israel, and they shall sit and judge the nations of the world with the holy blessed God:"

but the persons here meant are not Jews, but sufferers for the sake of Jesus, as follows:

and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God: these, with the persons described in the next clause, are they who will sit on thrones, during the thousand years of Satan's being bound, and will have judgment given them; even such who have bore witness to the truth of Jesus being the Son of God, the true Messiah, and the only Saviour of sinners, and to him as the essential Word of God, or to the written word of God, the whole Gospel, all the truths and doctrines of it; and who have been beheaded for bearing such a testimony, as John the Baptist was, the first of the witnesses of Jesus: and since this kind of punishment was a Roman one, it seems particularly to point at such persons who suffered under the Roman Pagan emperors, and to design the same souls said to be under the altar, and to cry for vengeance, **Re 6:9**. This clause, in connection with the former, is differently rendered; the Syriac version renders it thus, "and judgment was given to them, and to the souls that were beheaded", &c. the Arabic version, "and to them was given the judgment the souls killed", &c. the Ethiopic version, "and then I saw a seat, and the son of man sat upon it, and he rendered to them judgment for the souls of them that were slain for the law of the Lord Jesus".

And which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, see
Re 13:1. This describes such who shall have made no profession of the Popish religion, nor have supported it in any way; who shall not have joined in the idolatry of the Romish antichrist, but shall have protested against it, and departed from it, and shall have adhered to Christ, and to the true worship of God; see
Re 14:1. And so this, with the preceding character, includes all the saints that

lived under Rome Pagan, and Rome Papal, to the destruction of antichrist, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom; not that these martyrs and confessors, or even all the saints of their times, are the only persons that shall share in the glory and happiness of the thousand years' reign of Christ, and binding of Satan; for all the saints will come with Christ, and all the dead in Christ will rise first, or be partakers of the first resurrection; and all that are redeemed by his blood, of whatsoever nation, or in whatsoever age of the world they have lived, even from the beginning of it, shall be kings and priests, and reign with him on earth,
Zec 14:5 though John only takes notice of these, because the design of this book, and of the visions shown to him, was only to give a prophetic history of the church, from his time, to the end of the world; and these particularly are observed to encourage the saints under sufferings for Christ:

and they lived; meaning not spiritually, for so they did before, and while they bore their testimony to Christ, and against antichrist, and previous to their death; nor in their successors, for it would not be just and reasonable that they should be beheaded for their witness of Christ and his word, and others should live and reign with Christ in their room and stead; nor is this to be understood of their living in their souls, for so they live in their separate state; the soul never dies; God is not the God of the dead, but of the living: but the sense is, that they lived again, as in Re 20:5 they lived corporeally; their souls lived in their bodies, their bodies being raised again, and reunited to their souls, their whole persons lived; or the souls of them that were beheaded lived; that is, their bodies lived again, the soul being sometimes put for the body, Ps 16:10 and this is called the first resurrection in the next verse:

and reigned with Christ a thousand years; as all that suffer with him will, and as all that will live godly must, and do, **2Ti 2:12** **2Ti 3:12**. Christ being descended from heaven, and having bound Satan, and the dead saints being raised, and the living ones changed, he will reign among them personally, visibly, and gloriously, and in the fullest manner; all the antichristian powers will be destroyed; Satan will be in close confinement; death, with respect to Christ and his people, will be no more; the heavens and the earth will be made new, and all things will be subject to him; and all his saints will be with him, and they shall reign with him; they shall be glorified together; they shall sit on the throne with him, have a crown of righteousness given them, and possess the kingdom appointed for them; they will reign over all their enemies; Satan will be bruised under their feet, being bound; the wicked will be shut up in hell, and neither will be able to give them any disturbance; and sin and death will be no more: this reign will not be in a sensual and carnal way, or lie in

possessing worldly riches and honours, in eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage; the saints will not be in a mortal, but in an immortal state; the children of this resurrection will be like the angels; and this reign will be on earth, **Re 5:10** the present earth will be burnt up, and a new one formed, in which these righteous persons will dwell, **2Pe 3:13** of which
See Gill on "Re 21:1" and it will last a thousand years; not distinct from, but the same with the thousand years in which Satan will be bound; for if they were distinct from them, and should commence when they are ended, the reign of Christ with his saints would be when Satan is loosed, which is utterly inconsistent with it. The Syriac version very rightly renders it, these thousand years, referring to those of Satan's binding. Nor are these thousand years to be understood prophetically, for as many years as there are days in a thousand years; for as this would defer the judgment of the wicked, and the ultimate glory of the saints, to a prodigious length of time, so it should be observed, that prophetic time will now be no longer, according to the angel's oath in Re 10:6 but these are to be understood literally and definitely, as before, of just such an exact number and term of years; see **2Pe 3:8** this is a perfect number, and is expressive of the perfection of this state, and is a term of years that neither Adam, nor any of his sons, arrived unto; but Christ the second Adam shall see his seed, and shall prolong his days longer than any of them, Isa 53:10. It is an observation of the Jewish Rabbins {x}, that the day in **Ge 2:17** is the day of the holy blessed God (i.e. a thousand years), and therefore the first Adam did not perfect, or fill up his day, for there wanted seventy years of it: and it is a notion that prevails with them, that the days of the Messiah will be a thousand years {y}; and so they will be at his second coming, but not at his first, which they vainly expect, it being past: and also they say {z}, that in these thousand years God will renew his world, and that then the righteous will be raised, and no more return to dust; which agrees with John's new heaven and new earth during this state, and with the first resurrection: and so Jerom, who was conversant with the Rabbins, says {a} that the Jews expect a thousand years' reign.

{w} Yalkut Simconi, par. 2. fol. 41. 4. {x} Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 5. fol. 185. 4. vid. Jacchiad. in Dan. vii. 25. {y} Midrash Tillim, fol. 4. 2. {z} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 1, 2. & Gloss. in ib. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 42. 1. & 49. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 150. 2. {a} Comment. in Zach. xiv. 16, 18.

Revelation 20:5

Ver. 5. But the rest of the dead,.... Meaning not the dead saints, for they will be all raised together, but the wicked dead; and not them as morally or spiritually, but as corporeally dead: these

lived not again until the thousand years were finished; so that there will be such an exact term of years between the resurrection of the saints and the resurrection of the wicked; nor will there be any wicked living upon earth, or in bodies, during that time; for the wicked dead will not be raised with the saints at Christ's coming, and the wicked living will be destroyed in the conflagration of the world, and neither of them shall live again until the end of these years. This clause is left out in the Syriac version.

This is the first resurrection; which is not to be connected with the living again of the rest of the dead at the end of the thousand years, for that will be the second and last resurrection; but with the witnesses of Jesus, and the true worshippers of God living again, in order to reign with Christ a thousand years; for this resurrection is not meant of a resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace; though the work of grace and conversion is sometimes so represented, it cannot be designed here; for such a resurrection the above witnesses and worshippers were partakers of before their sufferings, and which was antecedently necessary to their witness and worship; besides, this resurrection was future in John's time, and was what was to be done at once, and was peculiar to the commencement of the thousand years; whereas the spiritual resurrection was before his time, and has been ever since the beginning, and is successive in all ages, and not affixed to anyone period of time, though there may be more instances of it in one age than in another; nor is this ever called the first resurrection, nor can any reason be given why it should; for though one man may be converted before another, his conversion cannot be called the first resurrection, since there are many instances of this nature before, and many more after; besides, at this time, there will be none of God's people to be raised in this sense; they will be all quickened and converted before; the nation of the Jews will be born again, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in; to which may be added, that if the first resurrection is to be understood in a spiritual sense, then the second resurrection of the wicked dead, at the end of the thousand years, must be understood in like manner: nor is a reviving of the cause of Christ and his interest here intended, particularly through the calling of the Jews, and the numerous conversion of the Gentiles; for though the former of these especially is signified by the quickening of the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision, and is expressed by bringing the Jews out of their graves, and is called life from the dead, Ro 11:15 yet that cannot with any propriety be called the first resurrection; for there was a great reviving of true religion in the time of John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles, especially after the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, both among Jews and Gentiles; and there was a revival of the Christian religion in the times of Constantine, and again at the reformation from Popery; and as for the conversion of the Jews and the Gentiles in the latter day, that will be the last reviving of the cause and interest of Christ, which will usher in his spiritual reign, and therefore should rather be called the last, than the first resurrection; besides, this affair will be over before this time; this is signified by the marriage of the Lamb in the preceding chapter; and the kingdoms of the world will become Christ's under the seventh trumpet, and both will be in the spiritual reign: moreover, this does by no means agree with the character of the persons who shall share in this resurrection, they are such who shall have lived and suffered, at least many of them, under Rome Pagan and Papal, Re 20:4 and therefore can never be understood of Jews and Gentiles in the latter day, when neither one nor other shall be any more. To which may be subjoined, that if this was the sense, then this cause must revive also among the wicked at the end of the thousand years, whereas when they are raised, they will attempt the very reverse. It remains then, that by this first resurrection must be meant a corporeal one; for as some of those that will live again were corporeally beheaded, and all of them corporeally died, they will be corporeally raised again; and in such sense will the rest of the dead be raised at the end of these years; with respect to which this is properly called the first resurrection; it is the first in time, it will be at the beginning of the thousand years, and the second will be at the close; the dead in Christ will rise first in order of time, See Gill on "1Th 4:16"; they will have the dominion in this sense over the wicked in the morning of the resurrection: Christ's resurrection is indeed first, but that is the cause and pledge of this; and there were particular resurrections both before and after his, but they were to a mortal state; and there were some saints that rose from the dead immediately after his resurrection; but these were but few, and were designed as an earnest of this; besides, though it was a resurrection, it was not the resurrection; and it may be further observed, that the resurrection of the righteous will be the first at the coming of Christ, 1Co 15:22 there will be none then before theirs; theirs will be the first; the resurrection of the wicked, to which this is opposed as the first, will not be till a thousand years after: add to all which, that this resurrection will be, h prwth, "the first", that is, the best, as the word is used in Lu 15:22 the chief, the principal; the resurrection of the wicked can hardly be called a resurrection in comparison of it, and in many places theirs is not taken notice of where this is, as in 1Co 15:12 the righteous will be raised by virtue of union to Christ, in consequence of his having the charge both of their souls and bodies, and in conformity to his glorious body, and to eternal life, which will not be the case of the wicked,

Revelation 20:6

Ver. 6. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection,.... This may be considered either as descriptive of the persons that shall partake of this privilege; as that they are only such who are blessed with spiritual blessings, with a justifying righteousness, with pardon of sin, and regenerating grace, and who are sanctified by the Spirit of God; these, and these only, will be first raised, and will be called to inherit the kingdom prepared for them, Mt 25:34 or else as expressive of their happiness and holiness when raised; they shall be perfectly blessed in soul and body, and perfectly holy in both: they shall be "blessed", for

on such the second death hath no power; which is the lake of fire, Re 20:14 the sense is, they shall escape everlasting burnings, the fire of hell, the torment and misery of the wicked; they shall be delivered from wrath to come; and as their bodies will die no more, their souls will not be subject to any sense of wrath, or to any sort of punishment: and they will be "holy"; they will have no sin in them:

but they will be priests of God and of Christ; of God the Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ, being made so to the former by the latter, **Re 1:6** or of God, even of Christ, that is, of God, who is Christ, since it follows:

and shall reign with him; they will be wholly devoted to and employed in the service of God and of Christ, and will be continually offering up the sacrifices of praise, or singing the song of the Lamb, adoring the grace and goodness of God and Christ unto them, shown them both in providence and in grace:

and shall reign with him a thousand years; this is mentioned again, partly to assert the certainty of it, and partly to point at the blessedness of the risen saints.

Revelation 20:7

Ver. 7. And when the thousand years are expired,.... Which are not yet expired; not in the year 1000, or 1033 or 4, reckoning from the birth or death of Christ, when Paganism, which had been destroyed in the Gentile world, was introduced into the church, which bore the Christian name, through the man of sin; for this had been bringing in by degrees more or less from the times of Constantine; whence it appears, that Satan in this respect was loose before, and therefore this was not the time of his loosing; nor in 1073, reckoning from the destruction of Jerusalem, and the carrying and spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles, in which year Hildebrand came to the popedom, who may be truly called the brand of hell; Damianus, a brother cardinal, who lived at the same time with him when he was archdeacon of Rome, calls him the holy devil; he was an impostor, sorcerer, and necromancer, and by wicked arts got into the Papal chair; this pope raised the Papal power over princes to a very great height, and made the see of Rome absolutely independent, and all bishops dependent on it; he forbid bishops receiving their investiture from the emperor, or any lay person, under pain of excommunication: this is the pope that made the emperor, with his empress and child, wait three days barefoot at his gates, in the depth of winter, before they could be admitted to him; that doctrine of devils, forbidding priests to marry, was established by him; and in his days that monstrous and absurd notion of transubstantiation began to prevail, though he himself used his breaden god but very roughly; for taking it to be really God, he required an answer from it against the emperor; but it not speaking, he threw it into the fire, and burnt it. Now it will be allowed, that the devil was loose at this time, but then so he was before: there had been popes before this who were conjurers, necromancers, and had familiarity and confederacy with the devil; and near five hundred years before this time, the pope was declared universal bishop by Phocas; and the forbidding priests marriage was started in the council of Nice, and was approved of by Pope Siricius, long before this time, though it was now more firmly established; add to this, that if the expiration of the 1000 years and the loosing of Satan were at this time, he must have been loosed near 700 years, which can never be called a little season, as in Re 20:3 especially in comparison of the 1000 years, the time of his binding; when it is two thirds of that time: nor did these years expire in or about 1300, reckoning from Constantine, about which time Pope Boniface the Eighth lived, of whom it is said, that he came in like a fox, railed like a lion, and died like a dog; upon his accession to the popedom, he instituted a jubilee, and on the first day he appeared in his pontifical habit, and gave the benediction to the people, and on the next day he clothed himself with an imperial habit, and put on a rich diadem, and sat on a throne, with a naked sword bore before him, when he uttered these words, "Ecce hic duo gladii", "Behold here are two swords", referring to Lu 22:38 which the Papists would have understood of the temporal and spiritual power which Peter and his successors are possessed of; at the same time Ottoman was crowned emperor of the Mahometan nations, who founded the Turkish empire, and spread the Mahometan religion in Asia and Greece; and by both these, great disturbances and wars were occasioned, both in the east and west: but still this does not make it appear that now was the time of Satan's loosing; since before this time the Papal power was at its utmost height, and the Mahometan religion had been hundreds of years in the world, and had greatly prevailed; and therefore Satan must be loosed before; and indeed it is in vain to seek after the expiration of these years, and the loosing of Satan, when as yet the years are not begun, nor has Satan been bound, as has been shown on Re 20:2 but however, when they will be ended,

Satan shall be loosed out of his prison; during the thousand years he will be in a state of confinement, being bound, shut, and sealed up in the bottomless pit, which is therefore here called a prison, as is the place of damned spirits, in **1Pe 3:19** but when these will be at an end; his chain will be taken off, at least will be lengthened; the seal upon him will be broken off, the bottomless pit will be opened, and he let loose; which will be done not by himself, but by him that bound him, or by divine permission.

Revelation 20:8

Ver. 8. And shall go out,.... Of his prison, the bottomless pit, and shall walk to and fro in the earth, and go about like a deceitful serpent, and roaring lion, as before:

to deceive the nations: as he had done before the thousand years began, and from which he was restrained during that time; he had before deceived the Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan nations, and now he will go forth to deceive those at this time

which are in the four quarters of the earth; all the world over: the names of which nations are,

Gog and Magog: not the same which are mentioned in Eze 38:1 though there is an allusion to them, and from thence the names are taken, and some of the figures borrowed, and design the enemies of God's people, who will be in the world at this time; so the Jews {b} speak of a Gog and Magog, that will come up against Jerusalem in the days of the Messiah, whom they still expect, by whom they shall be destroyed:

to gather them together to battle; not one against another, as some think, as the pope against the Turk, and the Turk against the pope, nor are they designed at all; nor "to kill them", as the Ethiopic version renders it; but against the saints and people of God, in the beloved city and camp; herein will lie his deception of them:

the number of whom is as the sand of the sea; that is, innumerable, in allusion to Gog and Magog in Eze 38:9 but the great question is, who are meant by these?--Not the Papists, the nations made drunk with the wine of Rome's fornication, the Gentiles, by whom the holy city is trodden under foot, and who will be angry when the time of avenging the saints is come, Re 11:2 for these will be all destroyed, even all the remains of them, at the battle of Armageddon; nor is antichrist himself intended, who will be destroyed in the spiritual reign of Christ, with the breath of his mouth; and at the above decisive battle the beast and the false prophet will be taken alive, and cast into the lake of fire: nor are the Turks designed, the people of Magog being Scythians originally, as Josephus says {c}, from whence the Turks sprung; or Tartarinns, for Paulus Venetus {d} says the countries of Gog and Magog are in Tartary, called Jug and Munjug; hence some think these are the same with the four angels bound at the river Euphrates, and loosed, whose armies are represented as exceeding numerous, **Re 9:14** but though the Turkish dominions are very large, yet they do not extend to the four quarters of the world; and when the Turks were let loose, and came even into Europe, it was not against the true Christians, the camp of the saints, the beloved city, as here, but against the antichristian party; the Papists have suffered most by the incursions of the Turks, though it has not brought them to repentance; besides, the loosing of the four angels, or the Turkish nations, and their chiefs, is long before these thousand years begin; that is past already, under the sixth trumpet, whereas the seventh trumpet will be blown, and all the seven vials poured out, and the world cleared of all Christ's enemies, and after that a thousand years must run out, before this Gog and Magog army will appear: nor are the Americans the nations, here spoken of; for they are but in one quarter of the world; nor is there any reason to believe there will be there more enemies of Christ's people than in any other part, since in the spiritual reign of Christ the earth shall be full of his knowledge, and his spiritual kingdom will be to the ends of the earth: and as for that notion that those inhabiting the other hemisphere will be saved from the general conflagration, there is no reason to believe it, since the earth, and whatsoever is therein, shall be burnt up, **2Pe 3:10**. Some think that the wicked living in the distant parts of the world, in the corners of the earth, are meant, who, upon Christ's coming, will flee thither, and remain in continual dread and terror to the end of the thousand years, when Satan will gather them together, and spirit them up against the saints; but this cannot be, because they will all be destroyed at the universal conflagration of the world; nor will there be any in the new earth but righteous persons: but these will be all the wicked dead, the rest of the dead, who lived not again until the thousand years are ended, when will be the second resurrection, the resurrection of all the wicked that have been from the beginning of the world; and these, with the posse of devils under Satan, will make up the Gog and Magog army: all the characters agree with them; these may be called nations, or Gentiles, being aliens from the true Israel of God, the dogs that will be without the holy city; these may be said to be in "the four quarters" of the world, since where they die and are buried, there they will rise and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army; and as they will die enemies to Christ and his people, they will rise such; as they will go down to hell with their "weapons of war", as is said of Meshech and Tubal, the people of Gog, Eze 32:27 they will rise with the same; the grave, the dust of the earth, will make no change in their vile bodies, nor the flames of hell any alteration in the disposition of their minds; yea, as is said in the above place, they will "lay their swords under their heads", and so be in a readiness, when they rise, to make use of them against the saints, and to avenge themselves; for their envy, malice, and revenge, will be heightened and increased by their confinement and punishment in hell: nor need this be wondered at, since the devils, notwithstanding they have been so long expelled the realms of light, and have been in chains of darkness, and in expectation of everlasting torment, retain the same enmity as ever; and though the deception will be very great, to attack saints in an immortal state, who are like the angels that die not, nor will these die any more, and especially since Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who rules the nations with a rod of iron, will be at the head of them; yet it need not seem strange, when they will rise as weak and feeble, and as little able to resist temptation, and as much exposed to seduction, as they were before; Satan will have as much power over them as ever; and what with their own numbers, and the posse of devils at the head of them, and especially considering the desperateness of their state, and that this is their last struggle and effort for liberty, they will animate themselves and one another to this strange undertaking. These now may be called Gog and Magog, as the one signifies "covered", the other open, or "uncovered": these being all the enemies of Christ and his people, both secret and open: and this sense well accounts for their number, being as the sand of the sea; and which the Arabic version seems to confirm, "and Jagog and Magog shall rise with him". The Jews have a notion that this deception of Satan will be at the day of judgment, which agrees with this account; for immediately upon this will follow the judgment of the wicked: they say {e},

"in the day that judgment shall be found in the world, and the holy blessed God shall sit upon the throne of Judgment, Satan attw alyel yjoa, "shall deceive above and below" (angels and men), and he shall be found to destroy the world, and to take away souls."

{b} Targum in Cant. viii. 4. & Targum Hieros. in Numb. xi. 26. {c} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 1. {d} In Schindler. Lex. Pentaglott. col. 288. {e} Zohar. in Gen. fol. 73. 1.

Revelation 20:9

Ver. 9. And they went up on the breadth of the earth,.... Either the whole earth, in the several parts of which they will be raised; or the land of Israel, where Christ and his people will be; and so the wicked being raised, will come up from the several parts of the world, and spread themselves over the holy land; just as Gog and Magog are said to cover the land of Israel, as a cloud, Eze 38:16 and it may be observed, that the very phrase of Kura bxr, "the breadth of thy land", is used of Immanuel's land, or the land of Israel, in **Isa 8:8**

and compassed the camp of the saints about; these are the blessed and Holy Ones, who have part in the first resurrection, even all the saints; not only the martyrs under the Heathen persecutions, and the confessors of Christ under the Papacy, but all the saints from the beginning of the world; these will be all encamped together, with the tabernacle of God in the midst of them, Re 21:3 and Christ their King at the head of them, **Mic 2:13** the allusion is to the encampment of the children of Israel in the wilderness, about the tabernacle, which was in the midst of them, **Nu 2:2** &c. afterwards the city of Jerusalem itself was called a camp, and answered in all respects to the camp in the wilderness {f}, to which the reference is in Heb 13:11 and which serves to illustrate the passage here, since it follows:

and the beloved city: not Constantinople, as some have thought, but the holy city, the new Jerusalem, Re 21:2 the general assembly and church of the firstborn, beloved by God and Christ, and by the holy angels, and by one another; and these very probably will be with Christ upon the same spot of ground where the Old Jerusalem stood, a city so highly favoured, and so much distinguished by God; so that where Christ suffered so much reproach and shame, and such an accursed death, he will now be glorified, and live in triumph with his saints:

and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them; not material fire; with this the earth, and the bodies of the wicked then upon it, will be burnt at the beginning of the thousand years; but now their bodies will be raised immortal, and not capable of being consumed with such fire; but the fiery indignation of God, or his wrath, which will be poured out like fire, is here meant, which will destroy both body and soul; this is no other than the lake of fire, or second death, into which they will be cast; and which will not be until the judgment is over, though it is here related to show what will be the event and issue of their attack upon the saints: the allusion is to the fire sent upon Gog and Magog, and to the burning of their weapons, in Eze 38:22 and so the Jews {g} say of their Gog and Magog, that

"they shall be killed with the burning of the soul, with a flame of fire, which shall come from under the throne of glory."

{f} T. Bab Zebachim, fol. 116. 2. Maimon. Hilch. Beth Habbechirah, c. 7. sect. 11. {g} Targum Jon. in Numb. xi. 26.

Revelation 20:10

Ver. 10. And the devil that deceived them,.... Both before death, in the present life, by tempting and drawing them into immorality and profaneness, or idolatry, superstition, and will worship, or persecution of the saints; and after their resurrection, by instigating them to make this foolish attempt upon the saints of the most High:

was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone; the same with the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; this will be his full torment, in which he is not as yet; and this will not be until the judgment is finished hereafter described; though it is here mentioned to issue the account of Satan at once, and to show what will be his final state and condition:

where the beast and false prophet are; Re 19:20 who for so many years have been companions in wickedness together; the beast being the first beast that received his power, seat, and authority from the dragon, or devil; the false prophet being the second beast, or antichrist in his ecclesiastical capacity, as the beast is antichrist in his civil power, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with signs and lying wonders:

and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever; that is, not only the devil, but the beast and false prophet, for the word is in the plural number: and this will be the case of all wicked men, of all whose minds are enmity to God and Christ, and to his people; and is a proof of the eternity of hell torments.

Revelation 20:11

Ver. 11. And I saw a great white throne,.... This vision refers not to the Gospel dispensation, from the exaltation of Christ to his second coming; when he sat down on his throne at the right hand of God, and was declared Lord and Christ; when there was a shaking of the heavens and the earth, a removing of the Mosaic economy, and the ordinances of the ceremonial law in Judea, and of Paganism in the Gentile world; when the Gospel was preached to all nations, and the dead in sins were quickened, and arose and stood before the throne of grace; when the books of the Scriptures were opened and explained, and the book of life was also opened; and by the conversion of some, and not others, it was known who were written in it and who were not, and men were judged to be alive or dead in a spiritual sense, according to the influence the opening of these books had upon them; and the powers of the world, comparable to a sea, and of death and hell, were not able to hold in the dead in sin, when they were called to life, with respect to whom death and hell were destroyed; nor was the Gospel the savour of death to any but to such who were not written in the book of life. This, in other words, is the sum of Cocceius's sense of this vision; but this affair will be over, and all God's elect gathered in by the preaching of the Gospel, before this vision takes place: nor does it respect the restoration of the Jews, who now are as dead, like Ezekiel's dry bones, but will at this time be quickened, and stand upon their feet an exceeding great army, and will be gathered from the several parts where they are as dead; and when it will be known by their conduct and behaviour who are God's elect among them, and who are not; which is Brightman's interpretation of the vision: but this, as we have seen, will come to pass according to the vision in the preceding chapter, before the thousand years begin; whereas this vision will not begin to be accomplished until they are ended: it is best therefore to understand it of the general judgment at the last day, which is the common sense of ancient and modern interpreters; though it seems only to regard the judgment of the wicked, for no other are made mention of in it: the "throne" here seen is a throne of judgment; it is called a "great" one, because a great Person sat upon it, the Word of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, even he who is the great God, and Judge of the whole earth; and because of the great work that will be transacted upon it, the judgment of all the wicked; this will be the greatest assize that ever was held; it is called the judgment of the great day, and the great and dreadful day of the Lord, #Jude 6 Mal 4:5 this throne is also said to be a "white" one; just as the same Person is said to sit upon a white cloud, and ride upon a white horse, Re 14:14 it may be in allusion either to a white and serene cloud, or to a throne of ivory, such an one as Solomon made, **2Ch 9:17** and this is either expressive of the majesty and splendour of it, it being a throne of glory, or a glorious throne, Mt 25:31 or else it may denote the purity and justice of him that sits on it, according to which he will proceed in judgment, and finish it; his character is the righteous judge, and the judgment he will execute will be righteous judgment:

and him that sat on it; the throne was not empty, one sat upon it, who is no other than the Son of God; to whom all judgment is committed, and who is ordained to be Judge of quick and dead; and is every way fit for it, being of great knowledge, wisdom, and sagacity, and of great integrity and faithfulness, as man and Mediator, and being, as God, both omniscient and omnipotent, and so capable both of passing a right sentence, and of executing it; to which may be added, his great majesty and glory, necessary to strike an awe, and command an attention to him:

from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them; which is to be understood not figuratively, as in **Re 6:14** where in the one place is described the destruction of Paganism, and in the other the destruction of the Papacy, and all antichristian powers; but literally, and not of the present earth and heaven, as they now are, for these will be burnt up with fire at the beginning of the thousand years, but of the new heaven and new earth, at the end of them; and the phrases of fleeing away, and place being found no more for them, show the entire annihilation and utter abolition of them; after this there will be no place in being but the heaven of angels and saints, and the lake of fire, in which are the devils and damned spirits: but though this is mentioned here, it will not be till after the judgment is over; for how otherwise will the dead have a place to stand in before the throne, or hell, that is the grave, and also the sea, give up their dead, Re 20:12 but it is observed here, though afterwards done, to set off the majesty of the Judge upon the throne, at whose sight, and by whose power, this will be effected.

Revelation 20:12

Ver. 12. And I saw the dead,.... An account being given of the Judge, next the persons to be judged are described, and in this clause, by the state and condition in which they had been; for it cannot be thought they were dead when they stood before the throne, but were raised from the dead; for this character is not descriptive of them as dead in trespasses and sins, though they are such as die in their sins, and rise in them, who are meant, but as having been corporeally dead; these are the rest of the dead, the wicked, who lived not again until the thousand years were ended, Re 20:5 as for the righteous, they will be judged upon their resurrection from the dead in the beginning of the day of the Lord; and will be declared righteous and blessed, and be called upon and introduced to inherit the kingdom prepared for them, which they shall have possessed a thousand years when these wicked dead will be raised: who are said to be small and great; which may refer either to their age, being children and adult persons; or to their condition, being kings and peasants, high and low, rich and poor; or to their characters, as greater or lesser sinners; and this description respects them as they are in this world, and is designed to show that no consideration whatever, of age, condition, or character, will exempt them from the general judgment. This is a way of speaking used among the Jews {h}, who say,

"in the world of souls, Mynjqxw Mylwdgh, "the great and the small", stand before God."

The disputations of the schoolmen, about the age and stature in which mankind will rise and be judged, are vain and foolish: these John saw stand before God; that is, Christ, who is God and Judge of all; before his judgment seat and throne, in order to be judged; for they will stand not as ministering to him, nor as having confidence before him; in this sense they shall not stand in the judgment, **Ps 1:5** but as guilty persons, to receive their sentence of condemnation. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions read, "before the throne"; the sense is the same; for if they stood before the throne, they must stand before God, that sat upon it: and the books were opened; the book of God's omniscience, which contains all the actions of the wicked, in which all their sins are taken notice of, and will now be brought to light; and the book of his remembrance, in which they are all written as with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; and the book of the creatures, which they have abused, and which will witness against them; and the book of providence, the riches of whose goodness have been despised by them; and the book of the Scriptures, both of law and Gospel, as well as the book of nature, of the light of nature, see **Ro 2:12** to which may be added, the book of conscience; the consciences of men will be awakened, and will accuse them, and bear witness against them, and be as good as a thousand witnesses:

and another book was opened, which is the book of life: the same that is mentioned in **Re 3:5** the book of eternal election,

See Gill on "Re 3:5",
See Gill on "Re 13:8",
See Gill on "Re 17:8". No other use seems to be made of this book in the judgment of the wicked, than only to observe whose names were not written in it, as appears from Re 20:15 reference seems to be had to **Da 7:10**. It is a notion that has obtained among the Jews {i}, that

"at the beginning of the year (or every new year's day) Nyxtpn Myrpo g, "three books are opened", one of the wicked perfect, another of the righteous perfect, and a third of those between both; the righteous perfect are written and sealed immediately for life; the wicked perfect are written and sealed immediately for death; the middlemost are in suspense, and continue from the beginning of the year to the day of atonement; if they are worthy, they are written for life, if not worthy, they are written for death:"

and in the same treatise {k}, they represent God at the same time of the year as a

"King, sitting on a throne of judgment, and the books of the living, and the books of the dead, Nyxwtp, "open", before him:"

this with them was a prelude and a figure of the future judgment:

and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works; that is, they were sentenced to everlasting condemnation and death, according to the just demerit of their wicked works; for no other are done by wicked men, nor can any other be in the books, since they are without God and Christ, and destitute of the Spirit, have no principle of grace to act from, nor any good end in view in any action of theirs. So the Jews say {l},

"all the works which a man does in this world are "written in a book", and they come into thought before the holy King, and they are manifest before him."

{h} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 154. 2. {i} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 16. 21. {k} T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 32. 2. & Erachin, fol. 10. 2. {l} Zohar in Gen. fol. 118. 3.

Revelation 20:13

Ver. 13. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it,.... Which is not to be interpreted metaphorically of the world, and the men of it, who are like the troubled sea; but literally of the sea, and of all such who have been drowned in the waters of it, as were Pharaoh and his host; or have died upon the mighty waters, and have been cast into them, and devoured by the fishes; and particular regard may be had to the men of the old world, drowned by the flood; these shall be raised from thence; the sea shall deliver them up: now this, and what is expressed in the next clause, will not be done after the judgment is set, the books are opened, and the sentence passed, but before all this, and in order to it, as the last clause of this verse shows:

and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; "death", which is here represented as a person, and elsewhere as a king, reigning and having power over men, signifies death in general, and every kind of death of which men have died, whether natural or violent, over whom it will now have no longer dominion, but will be obliged to deliver up all its subjects; and "hell" signifies the grave, which will now be opened, and deliver up all its prisoners, all that have been buried in the earth; see Job 26:5 the Ethiopic version adds, "and the earth delivered up them that were dead in it": but this seems unnecessary after the former:

and they were judged every man according to their works; some to greater, some to lesser punishment, as their sinful works deserved.

Revelation 20:14

Ver. 14. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire,.... Death cannot be taken properly, nor hell be the place of torment, for devils and damned spirits; since that is that lake of fire, for then the sense would be, hell is cast into hell; but either by these the devil is meant, who has the power of death, and is the prince of hell, were it not that the casting of him into this lake is mentioned before in
Re 20:10 or it denotes the destruction and abolition of death and the grave, that from henceforth they should no more have power over men, nor have any under their dominion, and in their hands; and so what has been promised will now be fully performed, Ho 13:14 see
Re 21:4 or rather the wicked dead, which they shall have delivered up, and will be judged and sentenced to eternal death, Re 20:13

this is the second death; or the destruction of the soul and body in hell, which will consist in an eternal separation of both from God, and in a continual sense of his wrath and displeasure. The Alexandrian copy and the Complutensian edition read, "this second death is the lake of fire"; and so the Arabic version, "and this is the second death, even the lake of fire"; and not much different is the Ethiopic version, "the second death, which is the fire of hell".

Revelation 20:15

Ver. 15. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life,.... Upon the opening of it, Re 20:12 as all that worship the beast, and wonder after him, Re 13:8 and all wicked men, everyone of them:

was cast into the lake of fire; where are the devil, beast, and false prophet, Re 19:20. It is a saying of R. Isaac {m},

"woe to the wicked, who are not written aqtpb, "in the book", for they shall perish in hell for ever and ever:"

and in the Targum on Eze 13:9 it is said of the false prophets,

"that amle yyx btkb, "in the writing of eternal life" (or in the book of eternal life), which is written for the righteous of the house of Israel, they shall not be written."

There seems to be some allusion in the phrase used here, and in the preceding verse, and elsewhere in this book, to the lake Asphaltites, a sulphurous lake, where Sodom and Gomorrah stood, which the Jews call the salt sea, or the bituminous lake; and whatsoever was useless, or rejected, or abominable, or accursed, they used to say, to show their rejection and detestation of it, let it be cast into the sea of salt, or the bituminous lake; thus, for instance,

"any vessels that had on them the image of the sun, or of the moon, or of a dragon, xlmh Myl Mkylwy, "let them cast them into the salt sea", or bituminous lake {n}."

{m} Tosaphta in Zohar in Gen. fol. 78. 2. {n} T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 42. 2. Vid. ib. fol. 49. 1. &. 53. 1. & 71. 2. & Nazir, fol. 24. 2. & 26. 1, 2. Bava Metzia, fol. 52. 2. Temura, fol. 22. 2. & Meila, fol. 9. 2. & 10. 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 21:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 21.

This chapter contains an account of the happy state of the church, consisting of all the elect, both Jews and Gentiles, which will take place upon the first resurrection, and will continue during the thousand years' reign mentioned in the preceding chapter. The seat of the church in these happy times will be the new heaven and the new earth, Re 21:1 the church that will dwell there is described by its names, the holy city, and new Jerusalem; by its descent, from heaven; and by its state and ornament, being prepared and adorned as a bride for her husband, Re 21:2 and her happiness is expressed by the presence of God with her, and communion with him enjoyed by her, and by a freedom from all evils endured in the present state of things, Re 21:3 after which John hears the voice of him that sat on the throne, declaring himself to be the author of the new heaven and earth; ordering him to write, that what had been said was true and faithful; affirming that things were now done and finished; calling himself the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: promising grace to the thirsty soul, the inheritance of all things to the overcomer, and also divine sonship; and threatening the second death to sinners, whose characters are given, Re 21:5 next John has a vision of the bride before spoken of; the preface to it is in Re 21:9 in which is signified that one of the seven angels that had the seven vials talked to him in a very free and familiar manner, and proposed to show him the Lamb's wife; and in order to it carried him to an exceeding high mountain, and showed him the city before mentioned, said to be great, holy, and heavenly; and which is described by the glory of God upon it, and the light that was in it, comparable to a crystal jasper stone, Re 21:11 by its wall, which is great and high; and by its, gates and foundations; its gates are in number twelve, twelve angels at them, and on them written the twelve names of the children of Israel, and these situated three at each point, east, west, north, and south; and its foundations are also twelve, having the names of the twelve apostles on them, Re 21:12 by the measure of it, which the angel took with his golden read; of the city, which was twelve thousand furlongs, it being four square, and its length, breadth, and height equal; and of the wall, which was a hundred forty and four cubits, Re 21:15 and next the city is described by the matter of which it was built; the wall of jasper the city of pure gold, like to clear glass; the foundations of precious stone, each foundation being of one stone; the gates of pearls, each gate being of one pearl; the street of the city of pure gold, like transparent

glass,
Re 21:18 and then by the temple in it, which is no other than the Lord God and the Lamb; and by the light, which is the same, it having no need of sun or moon, Re 21:22 and next by its inhabitants, the nations of the saved ones, who walk in its light, and the kings of the earth, that bring their honour and glory to it; by its safety and security, and by the purity of it, none but undefiled persons, and such who are written in the Lamb's book of life, being admitted into it, Re 21:24.

Ver. 1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth,.... This vision relates to a glorious state of the church, not in the times of the apostles, or first dispensation of the Gospel; when the old Jewish church state, with its ordinances, rites, and ceremonies, passed away, and a new church state, a new dispensation, new ordinances, and a new people, took place; and when saints came not to Mount Sinai, but to Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and when God tabernacled and dwelt with men in particular churches and congregations; and the curse of the law and the sting of death were taken away by Christ, and there was no condemnation to them that were in him; which is the sense of some: but death did not then cease, it has reigned over men in common ever since, in a natural way, and immediately upon that dispensation arose persecution unto death, both by Jews and Gentiles; and for the first three hundred years, instead death being no more, and sorrow and sighing fleeing away, there was scarce anything else: nor can it be said that there was no temple, or places of pubic worship, or that the church had no need of the sun and moon of the Gospel and Gospel ordinances then, since these have continued ever since, and will to the end of the world; nor did the kings of the earth bring their honour and glory into that church state in any sense, but set themselves against it, and endeavoured to destroy it; nor were the churches even of that age so pure as here described,
Re 21:27 many persons both of bad principles and bad practices crept into them; there were tares among the wheat, goats among the sheep, and foolish virgins with the wise: nor does this vision refer to the times of Constantine, when the old Pagan idolatry was removed out of the empire, and the Christian religion was revived, and came to be in a flourishing condition, and a new face of things appeared, and Christianity was embraced and honoured by the emperor, and the great men of the earth; there was not that purity as in this state; the Christian doctrine and worship were soon corrupted, being mixed with Judaism and Paganism; a flood of errors was brought in by Arius, Eutychius, Nestorius, Macedonius, and Pelagius, and others; yea, doctrines of devils, and which at length issued in a general apostasy, and in the revelation of the man of sin; nor was there that peace and comfort, and freedom from

evils, as from death, pain, and sorrow; witness the Arian persecution, the incursions of the Goths and Vandals into the empire, and the inhuman butcheries and numerous massacres and murders of the Popish party since. Nor has this vision anything to do with the conversion and restoration of the Jews, when they will become a new people, quit their old principles and modes of worship, and there will be no more among them the sea of corrupt doctrine, respecting the Messiah, the works of the law, &c. for this will be over before this vision takes place, as appears from the 19th chapter: nor does it belong to the spiritual reign of Christ, which will be in the present earth, whereas this glorious state of the church will be in the new heavens and new earth; that will be at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and in the Philadelphian church state, this will not be till prophetic time and antichristian times will be no more, when the mystery of God will be finished, and after the Laodicean state is at an end; in that there will be public worship, the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances, but not in this; and though there will be then great spirituality and holiness, yet not in perfection, nor will the churches be clear of hypocrites and nominal professors, and will at last sink into a Laodicean state. Nor is this vision to be interpreted of the church triumphant in heaven, or of the ultimate glory of the saints there; since the new Jerusalem here described descends from heaven, that is, to earth, where the saints will reign with Christ; and since the church is represented as a bride, prepared and adorned for her husband, but not as yet at the entrance of this state, delivered up to him; and since the tabernacle of God is said to be with men, that is, on earth; and this dwelling of God with them is as in a tabernacle, which is movable, and seems to be distinct from the fixed state of the saints in the ultimate glory; to which may be added, that in this state, Christ, as King of saints, will be peculiarly and distinctly glorified, whereas in the ultimate one, when the kingdom is delivered to the Father, God will be all in all: this therefore is to be understood of the glorious state of the church during the thousand years of Satan's binding, and the saints' living and reigning with Christ; the holy city, and new Jerusalem, is the same with the beloved city in Re 20:9 what is there briefly hinted, is here largely described and insisted on; this will be the time and state when the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, will first meet together, and be brought to Christ, and be presented by him to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and Christ will reign gloriously among them: the seat of this church state will be the "new heaven" and "new earth" which John saw, and which are the same that Peter speaks of, in which dwelleth righteousness, or in which righteous persons only dwell, **2Pe 3:13** for as the first heaven and earth both here and there are to be understood literally, so in like manner the new heaven and new earth; which will be new, not with respect to the substance, but their qualities; they will be renewed, or purged from everything that is disagreeable, and is the effect of the sin of man; the first heaven and earth were made chiefly for men, but, on account of the sin of man, the earth was cursed, and brought forth thorns and thistles, and both the earth and air, or the heaven, were attended with noxious vapours, &c. and the whole creation was made subject to vanity and corruption; from all which they will be cleared at the general conflagration, and a new earth and heaven will appear, fit for the habitation of the second Adam, and his posterity, for the space of a thousand years. So the Jews speak of new heavens, as Myvdwxm, "renewed" ones, which are the secrets of sublime wisdom {o}: and they say {p}, that the holy blessed God will renew his world a thousand years, and that in the seventh millennium there will be new heavens and a new earth {q}:

for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; not those in Re 20:11 but the heaven and the earth which were first made, which passed away, as Peter also says, adding, with a great noise; meaning not as to their substance, but as to their form, fashion, and qualities:

and there was no more sea; which may be understood either as to the being of it; it was "exhausted", as the Ethiopic version renders it, being dried up by the conflagration; see **Am 7:4** and if Mr. Burnet's hypothesis can be supported, that the paradisiacal earth, or the earth fore the flood, was without a sea, that being made, with the mountains and hills, by the falling of the surface of the earth into the waters under it, there is a surprising agreement between that earth and this new one; but the Alexandrian copy reads, "and I saw the sea no more"; it might be in being, though John saw it not and since, at the end of the thousand years, the sea will give up the dead which are in it, it must be in being, unless it can be interpreted of the place where the sea was: wherefore it seems best to understand it with respect to its use and qualities; and that as the heaven and earth will pass away, not as to their substance, but quality, so in like manner the sea will be no more used for navigation, nor may it be a tumultuous and raging one, or have its flux and reflux, or its waters be salt, as now; the schoolmen say it will no more be a fluid, but will be consolidated into the globe as the sphere; and, in a mystical sense, there will be no more wicked men; tumultuous and turbulent men are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, Isa 57:20 for in the new heavens and earth only righteous persons will dwell, **2Pe 3:13**.

{o} Zohar in Gen. fol. 5. 2. vid. Kimchi in lsa. lvi. 6. {p} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 92. 2. & Gloss. in ib. Zohar in Gen. fol. 69. 1. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 150. 2. {q} Zohar in Gen. fol. 35. 3.

Revelation 21:2

Ver. 2. And I John saw the holy city,.... The same with the beloved city in Re 20:9 the church of God: sometimes the church militant is called a city, of which the saints are now fellow citizens, governed by wholesome laws, and enjoying many privileges; but here the general assembly and church of the firstborn, or all the elect of God, are intended, the whole body and society of them, being as a city, compact together; called holy, not only because set apart to holiness by God the Father, and their sins expiated by the blood of Christ, or because he is made sanctification to them, or because internally sanctified by the Spirit of God, which now is but in part; but because they will be perfectly holy in themselves, without the being of sin in them, or any spot of it on them: and John, for the more strong ascertaining the truth of this vision, expresses his name, who saw it, to whom God sent his angel, and signified to him by these Apocalyptic visions what should be hereafter; though the name is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions:

new Jerusalem; the church of God, both in the Old and New Testament, is often called Jerusalem, to which its name, which signifies the vision of peace, agrees; it was the city of the great King, whither the tribes went up to worship; it was a free city, and a fortified one: the Gospel church state in its imperfection is called the heavenly Jerusalem, and the Jerusalem above, which is free, and the mother of all; and here the church in its perfect state is called the new Jerusalem, where will be complete peace and prosperity; and which is called new, because it has its seat in the new heaven and new earth: the inhabitants of which will appear in their new and shining robes of immortality and glory; and to distinguish it from the old Jerusalem, and even from the former state of the church; for this will be hatylt "the third time" that Jerusalem will be built, as say the Jews, namely, in the time of the King Messiah {r}:

coming down from God out of heaven; which designs not the spiritual and heavenly original of the saints, being born from above, on which account the church is called the heavenly Jerusalem; but a local descent of all the saints with Christ from the third heaven into the air, where they will be met by living saints; and their bodies being raised and united to their souls, they will reign with Christ in the new earth: and this is

"the building which the Jews say God will prepare for the Jerusalem which is above, atxnl, "to descend into" {s}:"

prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; Christ is the husband, or bridegroom, and the church is his spouse, and bride; and in these characters they will both appear at this time, when the marriage between them will be consummated: and the church may be said to be prepared as such, when all the elect of God are gathered in, the number of the saints is perfected; when the good work of grace is finished in them all, and they are all arrayed in the righteousness of Christ: and to be "adorned", when not only they are clothed with the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation, and are beautified with the graces of the Spirit, but also with the bright robes of immortality and glory. The phrase is Jewish, and is to be read exactly as here in the book of Zohar {t}.

{r} Zohar in Gen. fol. 126. 4. {s} Ib. fol. 103. 4. {t} Zohar in Gen. fol. 53. 2.

Revelation 21:3

Ver. 3. And I heard a great voice out of heaven,.... Either of an angel, or rather of Christ, or God himself; since the Alexandrian copy and Vulgate Latin version read, "out of the throne",

saying, behold the tabernacle of God is with men; in allusion to the tabernacle being with the Israelites, and the "Shechinah", or divine Majesty, being in the midst of them, and as an accomplishment of the promise in Eze 37:27 in the fullest sense of it; and designs something distinct from the spiritual presence of Christ in his church, as his tabernacle and temple, and in the hearts of his people; and from the heavenly glory, or ultimate state of happiness, in which they will be "with him", and that not as in a tabernacle, but as in a city, which has foundations: the phrase seems to denote the personal presence of Christ with his saints in human nature, like, though different from, that in the time of his humiliation; then he dwelt or tabernacled with men on earth, but it was in the form of a servant; but now he will appear in a glorious body, and indeed in all his personal glory, and reign among them as their King:

and he will dwell with them; in person and not by his Spirit, or by faith, as before, nor as a wayfaring man only for a night; but he will dwell with them for the space of a thousand years, and after that for ever: Christ and his church will now be come together as husband and wife:

and they shall be his people; that is, they shall appear to be his covenant people, that will be out of all doubt; this is made manifest in some measure in the effectual calling; but it does not yet appear neither to the saints themselves, nor to others, what they are, and shall be, but now it will be evident and unquestionable.

And God himself shall be with them; the "Immanuel", God with us; not by his Spirit, as he was after his ascension to heaven, and since is; but in person, he himself will descend from heaven, when his church, the new Jerusalem does; the Lord their God will come in person with all the saints, and will be King over all the earth.

[And be] their God, as Thomas styles him, my Lord, and my God, Joh 20:28. The covenant of grace, with all its blessings and promises, are in him, and now will it have its full accomplishment, and the saints be in a state inexpressibly happy; see Ps 144:15.

Revelation 21:4

Ver. 4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes,.... Occasioned by sin, Satan, the hidings of God's face, and afflictive dispensations of Providence; for these will be no more:

and there shall be no more death; natural or violent; there will be no more putting of the saints to death, or persecution of them unto death, as in former times; nor will they die a natural death any more; these children of the resurrection, and inhabitants of the new heaven and earth, will be like the angels, who die not; there will be no more deadness as to spiritual things among the saints; and as for the second death, that will have no power over them. So the Jews say {u}, abl
dytel htym Nya, "there is no death in the world to come"; good is laid up for the righteous in the world to come, and with them is no death {x}; and after the resurrection the body is perfect, and shall never after taste the taste of death {y}.

Neither sorrow, nor crying; on account of sin, or because of oppression and persecution, or through the loss of near relations and friends; sorrow and sighing will flee away, all occasions thereof being gone: neither shall there be any more pain; either of body or mind; there will be nothing to afflict the mind, and make that uneasy, but all the reverse; nor will there be any sickness or diseases of body, for the body will be raised glorious, powerful, incorruptible, and spiritual.

For the former things are passed away; not only the first heaven and earth, the world, its fashion, and its lusts; but the former grievous times under Rome Pagan and Papal, and everything which in this present life gives uneasiness and distress.

{u} Echa Rabbati, fol. 48. 2. & Midrash Kohelet, fol. 61. 2. {x} Maimon. Teshuva, c. 8. sect. 1. {y} Midrash Hanneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 70. 1.

Revelation 21:5

Ver. 5. And he that sat upon the throne said,.... By whom is meant, either God the Father, who is often represented in this book as sitting on the throne, and as distinguished from Christ the Lamb; see **Re 4:2** **Re 5:13** and who may seem the more to be intended, since he is by adopting grace the God and Father of his people, and they are his sons and daughters; or rather Christ, who not only is set down on the same throne with his Father, but has a throne of his own, called the throne of the Lamb, and was seen upon one by John in the preceding vision, Re 20:11 which though in order of time will be after this, yet in the order of the visions was seen before; and especially since the person on the throne speaking, calls himself the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, as Christ does in **Re 1:8** and seeing he it is that gives to thirsty souls of the water of life, **Joh 7:37** and makes promises to the overcomer so largely and frequently in **Re 2:7**. He addresses John, and delivers the following things to him,

behold, I make all things new; which is to be understood not of the renovation of persons at conversion, when a new heart and spirit are given, and men are made wholly new creatures; for this is the work of the Spirit, and which is done daily, and is not peculiar to any particular period of time; nor of the renewing of the church state at the beginning of the Gospel, when the Jewish church state and ordinances waxed old, and vanished away, and a new covenant took place, a new and living way was opened, and new ordinances appointed, since all this was before John had this vision; nor was there any need of it to represent it to him; but of the making of the new heaven, and the new earth, which Christ ascribes to himself and of his forming his church anew, making it a new Jerusalem, bestowing new glories upon his people, both in soul and body, and so presenting them to himself a glorious church; and of the new administration of his kingdom in a very singular and glorious manner;

so that it respects a new people, a new habitation, and a new manner of ruling over them; all which is his own doing, and is marvellous; and because it is a matter of great importance, and is wonderful and certain, therefore a "behold" is prefixed to it; see Isa 43:19. The Jews say {z}, that the holy blessed God will make ten things new in the future state, or world to come; the first is, he will enlighten the world; (See Re 21:11) the second is, he will bring living water out of Jerusalem; (see Re 21:6) the third is, he will make trees to bring forth their fruit every month; (see Re 22:2) and the fourth is, all the waste places shall be built, even Sodom and Gomorrha; the fifth is, Jerusalem shall be built with sapphire stone; (see Re 21:19) the sixth is, the cow and the bear shall feed; the seventh is, a covenant shall be made between Israel, and the beasts, fowls, and creeping things; the eighth is, there shall be no more weeping and howling in the world; the ninth is, there shall be no more death in the world; the tenth is, there shall no more be sighing, and groaning, and sorrow in the world; see Re 21:4.

And he said unto me, write; what John had seen, and Christ had said, and was about to say; and particularly what concerned the renewing of all things, the whole being a matter of moment, and worth noting and taking down in writing, that it might be on record for saints to read, and receive comfort and advantage from; and to denote the certainty of it, as well as to show that it was a clear point, and to be known, whereas, when it was otherwise, he was bid not to write; see **Re 1:11**.

for these words are true and faithful; both what he had said, and was about to say; they were "true", because they came from God, who cannot lie, and "faithful", because they would be punctually and exactly fulfilled; see Re 19:9. The Syriac version adds, they are God's, and so the Arabic version.

{z} Shemot Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 101. 3.

Revelation 21:6

Ver. 6. And he said unto me, it is done,.... The end of all things is come; it is all over with the first heaven and earth; these are no more, and the new heaven and earth are finished: there seems to be an allusion to the old creation, he spake, and it was done, Ps 33:9. The whole election of grace is completed; every individual vessel of mercy is called by grace; all the saints are brought with Christ, and their bodies raised, and living saints changed, and all together are as a bride prepared for her husband; and the nuptials are now solemnized;

all the promises and prophecies relating to the glorious state of the church are now fulfilled; the mystery of God, spoken by his servants, is finished; the kingdom of Christ is complete, and all other kingdoms are destroyed; the day of redemption is come; the salvation of the saints is perfect; what was finished on the cross, by way of impetration, is now done as to application; all are saved with an everlasting salvation.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; which are expressive of the primacy, perfection, and eternity of Christ; of his being the sum and substance, the first cause and last end of all things, relating both to the old and new world, to things temporal and spiritual;
See Gill on "Re 1:8".

I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely; he that is athirst is one that is so not in a natural, much less in a sinful, but in a spiritual sense; who as he has thirsted after Christ, and salvation by him; after pardon of sin, and a justifying righteousness; after communion with Christ, and conformity to him, and a greater degree of knowledge of him; so after the glories of his kingdom, and the happiness of a future state: to such an one Christ promises to give such large measures of grace and glory, and in such abundance, as will continue to refresh and delight, and as may be compared to a fountain of living water, namely, for refreshment, abundance, and continuance; and all this he will give "freely", without money, and without price; for as pardon, and righteousness, and the whole of salvation, are all of free grace, so are all the enjoyments of the kingdom state, the riches, honours, and glories of it, and eternal life itself; also plentifully, and in great abundance, and answers to the Hebrew word Mnx; see Nu 11:5.

Revelation 21:7

Ver. 7. He that overcometh,.... All spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, the antichristian beast, his image, mark, and number of his name; who is more than a conqueror through Christ; one that perseveres to the end, notwithstanding all temptations, trials, and difficulties;
See Gill on "Re 2:7",

shall inherit all things; the kingdom of Christ in the new Jerusalem state, and all things in it; heaven, eternal glory and happiness, and everlasting salvation; yea, God himself, who is the portion, and exceeding great reward of his people, and will be all in all. The Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, "these things": the new heaven, and new earth, the presence of God with men, freedom from all evils, and divine refreshments from the fountain of living water before mentioned:

and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son; Christ is not only concerned in predestination to the adoption of children, in making way by redemption for the enjoyment of this blessing, and in the actual donation of it; but he himself, who is the mighty God, is the everlasting Father, and his people are his spiritual seed and offspring, and in his kingdom he will see his seed, and prolong his days; he will long enjoy them, and present them to himself, and afterwards to his Father, saying as in **Heb 2:13** and though they are now, in the present state of things, the sons of God, yet it does not appear so manifest that they are, or at least what they shall be; but in this new and glorious state of things, it will be abundantly manifest that they are the sons of God and seed of Christ; and it will be known how glorious they are, and shall be, when they shall see Christ in his glory, and be like him; who will now be pathr tou mellontov aiwnov, "the Father of the world to come", as the Septuagint render the phrase in **Isa 9:6**.

Revelation 21:8

Ver. 8. But the fearful,.... Not the timorous sheep and lambs of Christ, the dear children of God, who are sometimes of a fearful heart, on account of sin, temptation, and unbelief; but such who are of cowardly spirits, and are not valiant for the truth, but who, through fear of men, either make no profession of Christ and his Gospel, or having made it, drop it, lest they should be exposed to tribulation and persecution; these are they that are afraid of the beast, and live in servile bondage to him.

And unbelieving; meaning not merely atheists, who do not believe there is a God, or deists only, that do not believe in Christ; but such who profess his name, and are called by it, and yet do not truly believe in him, nor embrace his Gospel and the truths of it, but believe a lie; these are condemned already, and on them the wrath of God abides, and they will be damned at last; though it may have a regard to such also who are infidels as to the second coming of Christ to judgment, and who are scoffers and mockers at it:

and the abominable: every sinful man is so in the sight of God; but here it denotes such who are the worst of sinners, given up to sinning; who are abominable, and to every good work reprobate; who are addicted to the worst of crimes, as were the Sodomites and others; the Ethiopic version renders it, "who pollute themselves" with unnatural lusts. The Syriac and Arabic versions express it by two words, "sinners and polluted", filthy sinners; the character well agrees with Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, and to all that adhere to her, and join with her in her abominable idolatries.

And murderers; of the saints, and prophets, and martyrs of Jesus, with whose blood Babylon, or the whore of Rome, has made herself drunk, and in whom it will be found.

And whoremongers; all unclean persons, that indulge themselves in impure lusts, in fornication, adultery, and all lewdness; as the clergy of the church of Rome, who being forbidden to marry, and being under a vow of celibacy, and making great pretensions to chastity and singular holiness, give up themselves to all lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

And sorcerers; conjurers, dealers with familiar spirits, necromancers, and such as use the magic art, as many of the popes did to get into the chair, and poisoners of kings and princes; whoredoms and witchcrafts go together sometimes, as they did in Jezebel, an emblem of the Romish antichrist.

And idolaters; that worship devils, idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, representing God, and Christ, and the virgin Mary, and saints departed, **Re 9:20**.

And all liars; in common, and particularly such who speak lies in hypocrisy, as the followers of the man of sin, and who are given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned; all lies being of the devil, and abominable to God. All and each of these

shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. The Jews {a} speak of several distinct places in hell, for several sorts of sinners, as particularly for sabbath breakers, adulterers, and liars; and say of the wicked, that when he is condemned he shall take wqlx, "his part" in hell {b}; See Gill on "Re 19:20"

which is the second death; See Gill on "Re 2:11".

{a} Raya Mehimna in Zohar in Lev. fol. 7. 2. {b} T. Bab. Chagiga, fol. 15. 1.

Revelation 21:9

Ver. 9. And there came unto me one of the seven angels,.... Either the first of them, as one of the four beasts is the first of them, **Re 6:1** or it may be the last, and very likely the same as in Re 17:1

which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues; that is, the wrath of God poured out by them on the antichristian party; see
Re 15:1.

And talked with me, saying, come hither; see Re 17:1.

I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. The "Lamb" is Christ, who is often so called in this book; see **Re 5:6**
Re 19:7 and is the Son of God, the heir of all things, the Maker and Governor of the universe, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and who, as Mediator, has all accomplishments and qualifications to recommend him as a bridegroom, such as beauty, riches, and wisdom: the bride, his wife, is not any particular believer, nor any particular church; not the Gentile church, nor the Jewish church only, but all the elect of God, consisting of the raised and living saints at the coming of Christ; who will make up one body, one general assembly, and be as a bride, prepared and adorned for her husband: these were first betrothed to Christ in eternity, and were openly espoused by him, one by one, at conversion; and now being all gathered in by the effectual calling, the dead being raised, and the living changed, and all glorified, the marriage is consummated, and they are declared publicly to be the bride, the Lamb's wife; See Gill on "Mt 22:2". And now, though John had had a sight of her before, Re 21:2 yet that was but a glimmering one, at a distance, he being in the wilderness, Re 17:3 wherefore the angel calls him to him, and proposes to give him a clear, distinct, and particular view of her, in all her glory; and a glorious sight this indeed! to see the bride brought to the King in raiment of needlework, and the queen stand at his right hand in gold of Ophir. This is a sight of a quite different nature from that of the filthy strumpet, which the same angel proposed to give to John in Re 17:1.

Revelation 21:10

Ver. 10. And he carried me away in the Spirit,.... John was in an ecstasy, as in **Re 1:10** and in the thoughts and apprehensions of his mind and spirit, it seemed to him as if he was carried away from one place to another; for this was not a corporeal sight, nor were any of the visions he had, but what was represented to his mind or spirit; it being with him as it was with the Apostle Paul when he was caught up to the third heaven, who knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body. The Ethiopic version renders it, "the Spirit brought me"; not the evil spirit Satan, who took up our Lord corporeally, and carried him to an exceeding high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of this world, and their glory, **Mt 4:8** but either a good angel, or the Spirit of God:

to a great and high mountain; to such an one was Ezekiel brought in the visions of God, when the frame of a city and temple was shown him, with their dimensions, Eze 40:2 as here a city is shown to John, with its wall, gates, foundations, and their measures: and he was brought to such a place, partly that he might have the more plain and full view of it; and partly to suggest unto him, that now the church of Christ was established upon the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and was a city on a hill, which could not be hid, **Isa 2:2**.

And showed me that great city; which is no other than the church, the bride, the Lamb's wife; just as the apostate church, all along in this book before, is called the great city, Re 11:8 but now that being demolished, there is no other great city in being but the church of Christ, called a city before; Re 21:2 here a "great one", not only because of its prodigious large dimensions, Re 21:16 but because of the number of its inhabitants, being such as no man can number; and because it is the residence of the great King, the tabernacle of God will be in it; though this epithet is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and all the Oriental versions: "the holy Jerusalem"; called "the new Jerusalem", Re 21:2 here "holy", in allusion to the city of Jerusalem, which was called the holy city, **Mt 4:5** on account of the temple in it, the place of divine worship; but here this city is so called, because it is the residence of the holy God, Father, Son, and Spirit, inhabited only by holy men, made perfectly so, and encompassed by holy angels.

Descending out of heaven from God; See Gill on "Re 21:2".

Revelation 21:11

Ver. 11. Having the glory of God,.... Not only upon their souls, which will lie in the glorious robe of Christ's righteousness, the bride's wedding garment being on them, in the perfect holiness which will be in them, and in that complete knowledge of all spiritual and heavenly things they will be possessed of, they will have a glory revealed in them; but upon their bodies also, for this city, the church, the bride of Christ, will consist only of risen and changed saints, whose bodies will be freed from all dishonour; deformity, diseases, and imperfections, and will be made like unto Christ's glorious body, and will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God. Moreover, the presence of God may be intended by his glory, as the Shechinah, or the divine majesty of God in the tabernacle and temple was called, Ex 40:35 **1Ki 8:11** for the glorious presence of God will now be in this church state, which will cast a lustre on all that are in it; for if the face of Moses, and of Stephen, shone so bright and glorious, through the presence of God with them; see **2Co 3:7** how much more gloriously will the saints shine in this state, when they shall enjoy the presence of God in a far more illustrious manner? to which may be added, that Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, will now appear in that, and in his own, and in the glory of his angels; and all the saints will appear with him in glory; and to see them in all this glory is a glorious sight indeed!

And her light was like unto a stone most precious; by her "light" is not meant the light she will have in her, though that will be exceeding great, but the fountain of it from whence it comes; that which holds it forth to her, and supplies her with it: the word fwsthr signifies an illuminator, and is used of the ministers of the Gospel, that hold forth the word of life and light to others, **Php 2:15** but here it intends Christ, who is the sun of righteousness, the church's light or enlightener, Re 21:23 not with the light of nature, as he enlightens every man, nor with the light of grace, with which the saints are enlightened by him in the present state of things, by his Spirit, through the word and ordinances, but with the light of glory: and he is comparable to the most precious stone; he is more precious than rubies; he is so now to them that believe, in his person, offices, grace, and righteousness, and will be more so in his light and glory in the new Jerusalem state:

even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal: God the Father, who sits on the throne, is said to be to look upon like a "jasper";
See Gill on "Re 4:2"; and here Christ, the illuminator of his church, is said to be like one, because of the exceeding brightness of this stone, and the durableness of it, expressive of the perpetuity of Christ, as the light of his church and people; he is the everlasting light of it, Isa 60:19 and he is compared to the crystallising "jasper". There is one sort which is called "Aerizusa", like to air {c}, and another "Crystallizusa" {d}, clear as crystal. So Pliny speaks {e} of a white "jasper" called "Astrios", and which, he says, is

crystallo propinquans, "near to crystal", found in India, and on the shores of Pallene. To this Christ is like, because he is light itself, and in him is no darkness at all, and will cause an everlasting day; and such a clear and bright state of things, as that there will be no night, nor any more darkness, nothing but everlasting joy, peace, prosperity, and happiness; there seems to be some reference to Isa 60:1.

{c} Ruaeus de Gemmis, l. 2. c. 1. {d} Dioscorides, l. 5. c. 160. {e} Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 9.

Revelation 21:12

Ver. 12. And had a wall great and high,.... Not the Spirit of God, who separates, sanctifies, and preserves the saints, as Cocceius thinks, for this account respects not the church militant; nor the eternal decree of God, the unpassable gulf between heaven and hell, which everlastingly fixes the state of men; for this regards not the ultimate state of happiness: many interpreters understand it of the doctrine of the Gospel, which, as it secures the church now from heretics, and is like a wall very strong and well built, is durable and impregnable; and may be called "great", because of the great Author of it, and the great things contained in it; and "high", since it is not to be reached by carnal minds; so none but such who have embraced it shall enter into the new Jerusalem; for all liars, and forgers of doctrinal lies, and who embrace the antichristian lies, shall be without. Though rather the almighty power of God, which guards his church and people now, and will be their defence in this state, is meant; and which shows the state not to be that of the ultimate glory, which will need no wall, but this will; since an attempt will be made upon the saints in it, though it will be a foolish and fruitless one: and this wall of divine power is very great indeed, and is insuperable by men; God himself is a wall of fire about his people; though it may be best to interpret this of salvation itself, which is by Jesus Christ, if we compare with this text Isa 26:1 for those, and those only, who are interested in it, will dwell in the new Jerusalem; and salvation in this state will be enjoyed in its fulness; and this is very great in its author, objects, and matter, being wrought out by the great God, for great sinners, at a great expense, and including grace and glory, and not to be got over or enjoyed by those who have no interest in it.

And had twelve gates; though, strictly speaking, there is but one gate, and that a strait one, which is the Lord Jesus Christ, his person, blood, righteousness, regenerating and sanctifying grace; for as he is the only door into the sheepfold, the church, in its present state, or he only that has faith in him has a right to enter there, and is the only way to heaven and eternal happiness; so he is the only gate into the new Jerusalem, or such only will be admitted there, who are interested in him: but these gates are said to be twelve, in allusion to the twelve apostles, who pointed out to men the way of salvation by Christ; and to the twelve tribes of Israel, who represent all the elect of God, who enter in thereat; and to the twelve gates of Ezekiel's city, Eze 48:31.

And at the gates twelve angels; meaning either the ministering spirits, in allusion to the cherubim in **Ge 3:24** who are watchers, and encamp about the saints now, and will, as it were, stand sentinels in this camp of the saints, as it is called, Re 20:8 and besides, will be made use of in gathering the saints from the several parts of the world, and introducing them into this state; or else the apostles and ministers of the word, often called angels in this book, who will shine with peculiar lustre now, and will appear at the head of the several companies they have been useful to, and bring them as their joy and crown of rejoicing into this glorious state: this clause is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Syriac version. The Jews speak of
Myrv, "princes", being appointed over the gates of heaven, east, west, north, and south, with the keys in their hands, whose names they give us {f}.

And names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel; not literal, but mystical Israel, whom God has chosen to salvation, Christ has redeemed by his blood, and the Spirit calls by his grace; denoting that all, and each of these, have a right to enter into the new Jerusalem, and will be admitted there, and none but they. In like manner the Jews {g} make mention of a court of the Lord,

"which has twelve gates, according to the computation of the tribes of Israel; on one gate is written Reuben, on another is written Simeon; and so all the tribes of Israel are written on those gates; in the time they go up to appear before the Lord of the world, whoever goes up to this gate, (on which the tribe of Reuben is written,) if he is of the tribe of Reuben they open to him, (and receive him,) if not they cast him without; and so of all whom they do not receive; they open to none but to him who is of that tribe, or whose name is written on the gate."

{f} Raziel, fol. 35. 2. {g} Zohar in Numb. fol. 70. 4.

Revelation 21:13

Ver. 13. On the east three gates,.... On which were written the names of Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan:

on the north three gates; on which were written the names of Reuben, Judah, and Levi:

on the south three gates; on which were written the names of Simeon, Issachar, and Zabulon:

and on the west three gates; on which were written the names of Gad, Asher, and Naphtali; see Eze 48:31. This denotes the collection of the saints from all parts of the world, who shall come from east, west, north, and south, and sit down in the kingdom of God; and therefore here are gates at every point to enter in at; see
Isa 43:5.

Revelation 21:14

Ver. 14. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations,.... Christ is the one and only foundation of his church and people, of the covenant of grace, and of salvation; and of faith, hope, peace, and joy, and of eternal happiness, and so of this glorious state of the church; he will be the light and temple of it, the glory and safety of it; he will be all in all in it; but because he has been ministerially laid as the foundation, by the twelve apostles, for men to build their present and future happiness upon, therefore the foundations of the wall of salvation are said to be twelve; see **Eph 2:20**. Moreover, this may denote the firm and immovable state of the church at this time, it being a city which has foundations, or is well founded,
Heb 11:10 with which compare Isa 14:32. Hence it follows,

and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Arabic versions, read, "the twelve names of the twelve apostles"; the allusion seems to be to the inscribing of the names of builders on stones laid in the foundation, in memory of them; and so these wise master builders will be had in everlasting remembrance.

Revelation 21:15

Ver. 15. And he that talked with me,.... One of the seven angels, Re 21:9 for not a man is the measurer of this city, as in Eze 40:3 nor John, as of the temple, Re 11:1 but an angel, the same that showed to John this great sight:

had a golden reed; not a common measuring reed, or rod, as in Eze 40:4 but one covered with gold, denoting the present glorious state of the church, being without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing:

to measure the city; the new Jerusalem, its length and breadth; see **Zec 2:1** to show how exactly conformable this church state will be to the rule of God's word, even to perfection: and the gates thereof; to signify who had a right to enter into it, and who not:

and the wall thereof; its height, it being exceeding high.

Revelation 21:16

Ver. 16. And the city lieth four square,.... To the four corners of the world, from whence its inhabitants come, and denotes the regularity, uniformity, perfection, and immovableness of it.

And the length is as large as the breadth; this church state will be all of a piece, perfect, entire, and wanting nothing.

And he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs; or fifteen hundred miles; a monstrously large city indeed! such an one as never was upon earth; see Eze 48:35 and which shows, that this is not to be understood literally, but mystically; and intends the capaciousness of it, here being room enough for all the twelve tribes of Israel; that is, for all the elect of God; for as in Christ's Father's house, so in this kingdom state of his, there will be many mansions, or dwelling places, enough for all his people. This city will hold them all. The Jews {h} say of Jerusalem, that in time to come it shall be so enlarged, as to reach to the gates of Damascus, yea, to the throne of glory.

The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. A perfectly uniform state! according to the Ethiopic version, it is in length twelve thousand furlongs, and every measure equal, so that it is so many furlongs in length, breadth, and height.

{h} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 24. 1.

Revelation 21:17

Ver. 17. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits,.... The root of which is twelve, for twelve times twelve is a hundred and forty four; which number is mystical and apostolical, and suited to the perfect state of this church: hence twelve gates, and twelve angels at them, and the names of the twelve tribes on them, and twelve foundations of the wall, and twelve thousand furlongs, the measure of the city.

According to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel; who talked with John, and measured the city, gates, and wall, and who appeared in the form of a man; and his reed might be, as some have supposed, the length of a man, six cubits, or six feet, as in Eze 40:5 and may denote that this business requires the utmost wisdom and understanding of a man, and even of an angel, to look into, and find out; see
Re 13:18 and also may signify the angelic state of the saints at this time, when the children of the resurrection will be like the angels of God, for immortality and glory.

Revelation 21:18

Ver. 18. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper,.... Which is expressive of the impregnableness, duration, brightness, and glory of salvation by Christ, the jasper being a very hard, durable, and bright stone; and salvation can never be made void, and of none effect; it will last for ever, and in this state will come forth as light, and as a lamp that burneth; it is represented by the same precious stone as God and Christ themselves are; see **Re 4:2**. And the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass; it was made or built of gold; its parts, buildings, houses, and palaces, were all of gold, and that the best; and it was like to transparent glass; that is, either the city, as most copies read, or the gold; for the Alexandrian copy reads,
omoion, and so the Vulgate Latin version; the gold of which it was is different from common gold; and as this city, the new Jerusalem, designs the saints, the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, the inhabitants of the new earth; this denotes the solidity, excellency, and preciousness of them, the rich and happy state they will be in, as well as their purity and freedom from all sin and corruption, and the clear knowledge of things they themselves will have,

and others will have of them; their hearts and actions will be open to all; nor will this gold have any rust upon it any more, or ever be changed, and become dim.

Revelation 21:19

Ver. 19. And the foundations of the wall of the city,.... Which were twelve; see Re 21:14 were garnished with all manner of precious stones: see Isa 54:11 not that there were all manner of precious stones in every foundation, but in them all there were, and each foundation had its stone peculiar to it, as follows; and which are not applicable to the persons of the apostles, who were not the foundations, but on them their names only were written: and besides, the order of them, as given in the Evangelists and Acts of the Apostles, is not certain, and always the same, to which these several stories may be adjusted; though they are doubtless comparable to them for their preciousness in the sight of God, and Christ, and all the saints; and for the brightness and purity of their doctrine and lives; and for their zeal in the cause of Christ; and for their solidity, and invincible courage and constancy: much less are these precious stones applicable to a set of ministers in the latter day, who are to be useful in the conversion of the Jews in the several parts of the world, where these stones are found, as Brightman thinks, but to Jesus Christ, the one and only foundation: and without entering into the particular virtues and excellencies of these stones, in general, they set forth the worth and preciousness of Christ, who is the pearl of great price; the pleasure and delight had in viewing his excellencies and perfections; his brightness, purity, and glory, and his firmness and durableness, as a foundation. There may be some allusion to the twelve stones in the breastplate of the high priest, on which the names of the tribes of Israel were written {i}.

The first foundation was jasper; it was laid with a jasper stone, of which see **Re 4:3**. On this stone, in the breastplate, Benjamin's name was written.

The second, sapphire; its colour is azure, or sky blue; it is transparent, and exceeding hard. Schroder says there are very good ones found in the borders of Bohemia and Silesia; but those which are brought from Pegu are most valuable: on this stone Issachar's name was engraven.

The third, a chalcedony; it is of a misty grey colour, clouded with blue, yellow, or purple; the best is that which has a pale cast of blue; it is very much like the common agate; and the Hebrew word dkdk, "cadcod", is rendered agate in Isa

54:12 though it is thought to answer to the carbuncle in the breastplate, on which was written the name of Levi. And Pliny {k} speaks of carbuncles, called "charcedonies", which R. Leo Mutinensis says {l} had their name in memory of the city of Carthagena. There is a precious stone mentioned in the Targum of Jonathan, called Nydwkdk, "cadcodin", which answers to the diamond in the breastplate, on which Zabulon's name was written; and in the Jerusalem Targum it is called andkdk, "cadcedana", and answers to the emerald, which had Judah's name on it, and seems to be put for "chalcodin" and "chalcedana", which agrees with the name of this stone.

The fourth, an emerald; of which see **Re 4:3**. The best of this sort are the eastern ones. Schroder says {m} they are found in Cyprus, Britain, and other places, but not so good as the rest. On this stone Judah's name was written.

{i} Vid. Targum Jon. & Jerus. in Exod. xxviii. 17. Targum in Cant. v. 14. Shemot Rabba, sect. 38. fol. 138. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 178. 3. {k} Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 7. {l} Shilte Hagibborim, fol. 45. 4. {m} Pharmacopoeia, l. 3. c. 5. p. 18.

Revelation 21:20

Ver. 20. The fifth, sardonyx,.... Which is partly of the sardian, and partly of the onyx stone, which resembles a man's nail, from whence it has its name; it is reddish, bordering on white; it may be thought to answer to the onyx in the breastplate, on which was written the name of Joseph.

The sixth, sardius; the same with the sardine stone, **Re 4:3** of a blood colour, and what is commonly called a cornelian: it is found in Sardinia, from whence it has its name, and in Bohemia and Silesia, though those of Babylon are the best. This was Reuben's stone.

The seventh, chrysolite; a stone of a dusky green colour, with a cast of yellow; by its name it should have the colour of gold. Schroder says it is found in Bohemia, and that it is the same the moderns call the topaz. Some think it answers to "tarshish" in the breastplate, rendered "beryl", on which was the name of Asher.

The eighth, beryl; a stone of a pale green colour, thought to be the diamond of the ancients: it may answer to the "ligure" in the breastplate, which the Targum on **So 5:14** calls "birla", and had the name of Dan on it.

The ninth, a topaz; a stone very hard and transparent, of a beautiful yellow, or gold colour: the topaz of Ethiopia was counted the best, Job 28:19. Some say it is so called from the island "Topazus"; on this stone Simeon's name was engraven.

The tenth, a chrysoprasus; a stone of a green colour, inclining to that of gold, from whence it has its name; for this is the agate in the breastplate, which was Napthali's stone.

The eleventh, a jacinth; or "hyacinth": a stone of a purple, or violet colour, from whence it has its name; though what the moderns so call is of a deep reddish yellow, pretty near a flame colour. Zabulon's stone was the diamond.

The twelfth, an amethyst; a stone of a violet colour, bordering on purple: it has been thought a preservative from drunkenness, from whence it seems to have its name. On this stone was written the name of Gad. Agreeably to this account of John's, the Jews speak {n} of the tabernacle above being built on twelve precious stones; and sometimes they say {o}, that the holy blessed God will found Jerusalem with ten kind of precious stones, and which they mention, and several of which are the same with these.

{n} Zohar in Gen. fol. 17. 2. & in Exod. fol. 65. 4. {o} Abkath Rocel, p. 150. Vid. Zohar in Exod. fol. 96. 3.

Revelation 21:21

Ver. 21. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls,.... Denoting the purity and preciousness of Christ, by whom the saints enter, and of the saints who enter in thereat, as well as of the place into which they enter.

Every several gate was of one pearl; the pearl of great price, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only gate, door, and way into this happy state: this shows that this account cannot be taken literally, but mystically, for no such pearl was ever known, large enough to make a gate of.

"A pearl is a hard, white, shining body, usually roundish, found in a shell fish resembling an oyster, but is three or four times the size of the common oyster; and which ordinarily yields ten or twelve pearls, and sometimes more. Those of the largest size that have been known are that of Cleopatra, valued by Pliny at centies H S, or at 80,000 pound sterling; and that brought in 1574 to Philip the Second, of the size of a pigeon's egg, worth 14,400 ducats; and that of the Emperor Rudolph, mentioned by Boetius, called "la peregrina", or the incomparable, of the size of a muscade pear, and weighing 30 carats; and that mentioned by Tavernier, in the hands of the emperor of Persia in 1633, bought of an Arab for 32,000 tomans, which, at three pounds nine shillings the toman, amounts to 110,400 pounds sterling {p}."

But what is one of these pearls to make a gate of, for a wall which was an hundred and forty four cubits high? Re 21:17. The Jews say {q}, that the holy blessed God will bring precious stones and "pearls" of thirty cubits by thirty, &c. and place them "in the gates of Jerusalem", as it is said, Isa 54:12 which must be understood also not in a literal but mystical sense: and L'Empereur {r} makes mention of an ancient commentary on Ps 87:1 which says, that the holy blessed God will make a gate at the east (of the temple), and in it two doors, each of one pearl. So R. Joshua ben Levi says {s}, that there are in paradise two gates of agates or diamonds; some render the word rubies.

And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass; denoting the preciousness and delightfulness of the saints' conversation one with another; and the purity and cleanness of it, there being no mire and filth of sin in these streets; and the sincerity and openness of it, each one walking in his uprightness; which will be seen and known of all, as clearly as anything can be beheld in a transparent glass. So the Jews say {t} of paradise, that the ground is paved with precious stones, the lustre of which may be compared to the light of burning torches.

{p} Chambers's Cyclopedia in the word "Pearl". {q} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 100. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 1. & Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 54. 1. {r} Misn. Middot, c. 4. sect. 2. Vid. Yalkut Simconi, par. 2. fol. 54. 1. {s} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 1. fol. 7. 1. {t} Sepher. Avodah Hakkodesh, fol. 46. 1.

Revelation 21:22

Ver. 22. And I saw no temple therein,.... No material temple, as was in the old Jerusalem, or such as is described in Ezekiel's vision; nor any place of public worship, as under the Gospel dispensation; for in this state there will be no such external form of worship as now, such as preaching the word and administering ordinances. The Jews expect a third temple, but in vain.

For the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it; God will be immediately present with his people, whose face they shall see, and whom they will serve in the most pure and spiritual manner; and Christ in his human nature, in the temple of his body, that tabernacle which God pitched, and not man, which is filled with the train of the divine perfections, and in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, will be the only medium of the divine Presence, and of the communications of glory to men, and of the saints' praise to God, which will be the service they will be employed in; and the Lamb being joined with the Lord God Almighty, shows his deity and his equality with his Father.

Revelation 21:23

Ver. 23. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it,.... Which may be understood either literally of these two luminaries, which all earthly cities need; and which, though they may be in being in the new heavens, yet will not have the use with respect to this city they now have. The Jews say {u}, the orb of the sun is in this world; and the gloss adds, but not in the future state, for the lights shall be renewed: and they further say {w}, as here, that

"in the world to come, "Israel hmxh rwal Nykyru Nya, will have no need of the light of the sun, nor of the light of the moon", neither by day nor by night,"

as they say {x}, the Israelites had not in the wilderness. So they represent the Lord speaking to Moses, and saying {y},

"thy days shall cease, but thy light shall not cease; for thou shall have no need for ever of the light of the sun, nor of the light of the moon, and of the stars."

Or else it may be understood mystically, but not of Christ, the sun of righteousness, whom the saints will always need and enjoy; but of the governors and discipline of the church in its present state; and of the written word, which is a light unto them now, and the ministration of it, and the ordinances of the Gospel, by which light and knowledge are conveyed; but in this state all will be immediately taught of God; nor shall everyone teach his neighbour, but all shall know the Lord perfectly; and also of political governors, who will be no more; see
1Co 15:24.

For the glory of God did lighten it; the Shekinah, or glorious presence of God, which filled the temple of Solomon, and shone round about the shepherds at the incarnation of Christ; with the presence of God, who is light itself, which will be enjoyed in a much more glorious manner, will the church now be enlightened; and this will be an everlasting light unto her: and the Lamb is the light thereof; in whose light they will see the face of God, and see God face to face; they will see Christ as he is, and behold his glory; and look upon the angels, those glorious forms of light, and all the glorified saints, and know and converse with each other; and they will look into, and clearly discern all the mysteries and doctrines of grace, and all the various scenes of Providence, which will all be opened and laid before them. And this light will be always without any change and variation; which is no small part of the commendation of this city, which is the inheritance of the saints in light. So the holy blessed God is said by the Jews {z} to be Mylvwry lv wrwa, "the light of Jerusalem"; he is the light of the new Jerusalem; see Isa 60:19 and the light of, the world to come is, by {a} them, called "the great light".

{u} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 101. 1. {w} Raziel, fol. 17. 2. {x} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 57. 2. {y} Petirat Moseh, fol. 23. 2. {z} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 57. 2. & 98. 1. {a} Ben Gorion apud Aben Ezram in Psal. xlix. 19.

Revelation 21:24

Ver. 24. And the nations of them which are saved,.... In distinction from them that will be deceived by Satan, Re 20:8. These are not all the nations of the world, which will be gathered before Christ, the Judge, for all will not be saved, there is a world that will be condemned; nor the Gentiles only, which shall come into the church state of the Jews when called, for that state is not here designed; and besides, all Israel shall be saved then; nor the living saints at Christ's coming, who shall have escaped, and are saved from the general conflagration; for these, with the raised ones, will be caught up together to Christ, and descend and dwell together on earth, and make one church state; but all the elect of God, both Jews and Gentiles, whom God has chosen, Christ has redeemed, and the Spirit has called out of all the nations of the earth: these are only saved ones; such are already saved, not only are determined to be saved, and for whom salvation is wrought out by Christ, and to whom it is applied at conversion, and who are representatively set down in heavenly places in Christ, and are already saved by hope and faith, and with respect to the certainty of salvation; all which may be said of saints in the present state; but these will be such, who will be actually and personally saved, will be in the full possession of salvation, enjoying all the blessings of it: they will be partakers of the first resurrection, and the glories of it: the tabernacle of God will be with them, they will be free from all sorrows and death, and will inherit all things: the Syriac version reads, "the nations that are saved"; who are redeemed and saved by Christ: this may teach us how to understand those phrases, which seem to favour general redemption, as all men, the world, the whole world; see Isa 45:20. These words, "of them which are saved", are left out in the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, but are in all the copies. These nations are the inhabitants of this city, and they

shall walk in the light of it, which is Christ; they shall enjoy it; they shall have the light of life, and be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light, and that continually: they shall not only come to it, but continue in it, and walk at it, and by the light of it: the walk of these will be different from the walk of saints now, who walk by faith, and not by sight; but these shall walk by sight, enjoying the beatific vision of God, and the Lamb. The Jews say {b}, that Jerusalem, in time to come, will be made a lamp to the nations of the world, hrwal Myklhm Mhw, "and they shall walk in its light", or by the light of it, which is the sense of Isa 60:3 "the Gentiles shall come to thy light"; see **Isa 9:1**

and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it; by whom may be meant either mystically all the saints, who will be kings as well as priests unto God, and will reign as such with Christ in this state, will cast their crowns at his feet, and give him all the honour and glory; or literally, the kings of the earth, who shall have relinquished antichrist, hated the whore, and burnt her with fire, and who will have been nursing fathers in the spiritual reign; or rather all good kings that ever have been in the earth: not that they will be kings of the earth at this time, for now all rule, authority, and power, will be put down; nor will any worldly riches, honour, and glory, be brought by them into this state, nor will they be needed in it; but it is to be understood of who have been kings on earth, though not of their having brought earthly riches and grandeur into the interest and churches of Christ; as David gave much towards the building of the temple, which was begun and finished by King Solomon his son, and as Constantine greatly enriched and aggrandized the church when he became emperor; but the sense seems to be this, that such who have been Christian kings on earth will prefer the happiness of this state to all their riches and greatness here; and that could all the glory of the kings of the earth be put together, it would not equal, but be greatly inferior to the glory of the new Jerusalem; Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of the inhabitants of this place; see Re 20:6 besides, these shall do all homage, and submit to

Christ the King of kings in the midst of the church, which may be meant by "glory" and "honour".

{b} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 56. 3.

Revelation 21:25

Ver. 25. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day,.... Which does not design the free communication between the living saints on the new earth, and the raised ones in the new heaven, as some have thought, for these shall be together, and make up one body; but rather the universal collection, and free admission of all the saints from all parts into this city; though it seems best to interpret it of the safety of the inhabitants, see Jer 49:31 who will have no enemy to fear, and therefore need never shut their gates; the beast and false prophet will have been taken, and cast into the lake of fire long ago; ungodly men will be destroyed in the general conflagration, and Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit during the thousand years:

for there shall be no night there; this is a reason given why it is before said the gates shall not be shut by day, since it is unusual to shut gates in the day, unless in time of war, because there will be no night in this city, and so no need of ever shutting the gates; the night time being the season for thieves and robbers, and for enemies to make their incursions, and to surprise: but here will be no night; either literally, times and seasons, as measured by the revolutions of the sun and moon, will be no more, they will not have the use they have; at least this city will stand in no need of them. The Jews say {c}, that the world to come will be Mwy wlwk, "all day": or mystically and figuratively, there will be no night of spiritual darkness and desertion, of drowsiness, sleepiness, and inactivity, of error and heresy, or of calamity and distress of any kind; all which are sometimes signified by night in Scripture; see **So 3:1**
Isa 26:9.

{c} Bereshit Rabba, sect. 91. fol. 79. 4.

Revelation 21:26

Ver. 26. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. The glory of the nations are the people of God, who, though they are reckoned the filth of the world, are the excellent in the earth; these will be brought into this city, and be presented to the King of it, in a glorious manner, and that by the kings of the earth; either such who have been ecclesiastical rulers over them, who will introduce them as their joy and crown of rejoicing; or who have been political governors of them, their fathers and protectors; or the sense is as before, that whatever is great and glorious in the nations of the world, will be counted as nothing in comparison of the glory and magnificence of this state, and not to be mentioned with it: the Arabic version renders it, "the nations shall bring glory and honour to it"; in the sense before given.

Revelation 21:27

Ver. 27. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth,.... As evil thoughts, words, and actions do; and therefore he that enters into this city must be free from all these: or "that is defiled", as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read; or "that is unclean", as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; alluding to the tabernacle and temple, into which no unclean person might come; see
Isa 52:1. No profane sinner, whose mind and conscience are defiled, and whose conversation is defiling, may enter here; nor any self-righteous person, whose righteousness is as filthy rags, and he himself is as an unclean thing, shall be admitted here; only such who are washed in the blood of Christ, and have on his righteousness, and so are without spot or wrinkle; which shows the pure and perfect state of this church and therefore cannot design any state of the church previous to the coming of Christ and the first resurrection:

neither whatsoever worketh abomination; commits sin, which is abominable in the sight of God, lives and dies in a course of wickedness; or particularly is guilty of idolatry, either makes idols, or serves them, or both, which are an abomination to the Lord; see
1Ki 11:7

or maketh a lie; any lie in general; who is a common liar, loves and invents a lie, and speaks one; delivers that which is false with an intention to deceive; or in particular, who embraces and propagates antichristian lies, doctrinal ones, lies spoken in hypocrisy; such shall be damned; see **1Ti 4:1** but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life; who are predestinated to eternal life; and though they are naturally, and in themselves defiled and sinful creatures, yet they are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and sanctified by his Spirit, and so are made meet and fit to enter this city; See Gill on "Re 13:8". It is by the Jews observed {d}, that

"the Jerusalem of the world to come is not as the Jerusalem of this world; the Jerusalem of this world, whoever would go up to it (or enter into it) might; but that of the world to come, hl Nynmwzmh ala Nylwe Nya, "none may go up to it (or enter into it) but those who are prepared", or appointed for it."

{d} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 75. 2.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible.

Revelation 22:1

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 22

This chapter contains a further account of the above city, a confirmation of the visions of this book, and the conclusion of it. The city is further described by the river that ran by it, or through it, called a river of water of life, said to be pure and clear as crystal, and to have its rise from the throne of God and the Lamb; and by the tree of life in the midst of it, situated on each side the river, bearing twelve sorts of fruit, yielded every month, the leaves of which heal the nations, Re 22:1 and the happiness of the inhabitants of it is set forth, by there being no curse in it; by the throne of God and the Lamb being in it; by the service of the saints in it; by the pleasure they enjoy, and the honour put upon them; by the light of the place, and the duration of the saints' reign, Re 22:3 next follow testimonies concerning the authority of the book, and the truth of things in it; and first, the testimony of the angel that talked with John, declaring that the things in it were true and faithful; and that he was sent from the Lord God of the prophets to show to the saints things that would quickly come to pass; and that Christ himself would quickly come; and that they were happy who kept and observed the sayings and prophecies of it, Re 22:6 then the testimony of John who saw and heard them, and was about to worship the angel that declared them, but was forbid by him, and dissuaded from it, by observing to him who he was, a fellow servant of his and of his brethren, and that God only was to be worshipped, Re 22:8 who is ordered, as it seems by Christ, not to seal up the prophecies delivered to him, since the time of their fulfilment was at hand, when men would remain just as they were, whether ungodly and filthy, or righteous and holy, Re 22:10 and who declares that he should quickly come to reward every man according to his works; and that he was the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last; and that they were happy that did his commandments, since it would appear they had a right to the tree of life, and to entrance through the gates into the city before described, when wicked men, whose characters are given, would be without, Re 22:12 and still more clearly and fully Christ asserts himself to be the author of this revelation, and the sender of the angel, to testify it to the church, who is David's root and offspring, and the morning star, whose coming is to be wished for by the Spirit and bride, and every truly gracious soul, Re 22:16 and to show the perfection and authority of this book, as well as of the whole Scripture, and to deter persons from adding to it, or taking from it, he threatens to inflict on such persons the plagues herein written, and to take the names of such out of the book of life, out of the holy city, and from the things written in this book, Re 22:18 and then he delivers out a fresh asseveration of his speedy coming, to which John adds his hearty "Amen", and earnest request that he would come quickly; and the book is concluded with a benediction usual in the epistles, especially in those of the Apostle Paul, Re 22:20.

Ver. 1. And he showed me a pure river of water of life,.... Not baptism, which used to be administered in rivers and pools of water; and which engaged to purity of life; and, the power and authority of administering which was from God and Christ; but in this Jerusalem state there will be no use nor need of ordinances; for Re 22:1 belongs to the preceding chapter, and is a continuation of the same account, this being not a new vision, but a part of the former, which the same angel, as in Re 21:9 proceeds to show to John: nor is the Holy Ghost intended by this river, whose gifts and graces are sometimes, for their plenty, purity, and quickening virtue, compared to rivers of living water; and who is a pure and holy Spirit, and proceeds from the Father and the Son: nor the doctrine of the Gospel, which comes from the blessed God, and is the Gospel of Christ; and, when purely and faithfully preached, is clear as crystal; and is the means of conveying spiritual life to men, and of supporting it in them: nor the ultimate joys of heaven, which may be called a river of pleasure, for the fulness and variety of delight; pure, and clear as crystal, for the holiness and perfect knowledge of that state; and be said to proceed from the throne of God and the Lamb, being the free gift of God through Christ; but this state is not designed here: rather, therefore, by this river is meant the everlasting love of God, which may be compared to a river for its largeness and abundance, its height and depth, its length and breadth; and for the large displays of it in this state, when its waters will increase, and be a broad river to swim in, and be unpassable; and for the streams of it in election, redemption, calling, justification, pardon, adoption, and eternal life, which make glad the city of God; and for the pleasure it yields, and the fruitfulness it gives to those who drink of it: it may be called a river "of water of life", because in the present state of things it quickens such who are dead in trespasses and sins; revives the saints when dead and lifeless, supports their spirits, and is a cordial that preserves from fainting; it keeps and secures from dying the second death and is the spring and source of eternal life; and that itself will last and flow for ever, it is ever running water, it is everlasting love: and it may be said to be pure and

clear as crystal, it being free from all hypocrisy and dissimulation, being real, hearty, and sincere, both in the Father and in Christ, of which the fullest proofs and demonstrations are given; and being clear of all motives and conditions in the creature, by which it might be influenced; and it engaging to purity and holiness of life and conversation; for the doctrine, which brings the account of it, and the inward principle of grace, which is the fruit of it, and every discovery of it, have a tendency hereunto:

proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb; not taking its rise from man's obedience, nor from his love to God, nor from his faith in Christ; for the love of God is prior to all these, and is the spring and cause of them, and therefore cannot be moved and influenced by them; but it has its origin from the sovereignty of God and of Christ, signified by the throne of both, who will be gracious to whom they will be gracious; nor can any reason be given why they love any of the sons of men, but their own sovereign will and pleasure; this is the sole motive, spring, and cause of their love; and God and the Lamb being mentioned together, shows both the equal dignity of their persons, being on the same throne, and the equality of their love to the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem: and thus, as a river adds to the pleasure, use, convenience, and wholesomeness of a city, this glorious city is commended by such a river running by it, or in the midst of it: there may be an allusion to the river which ran out of the garden of Eden, for this will be a paradisiacal state, **Ge 2:9** or rather to the waters in Eze 47:1 which came from under the threshold of the Sanctuary; though this river proceeds not from the temple, there being no temple in this state, but from the throne of God and the Lamb, which is instead of it.

Revelation 22:2

Ver. 2. In the midst of the street of it,.... That is, of the city described in the preceding chapter, which shows that this vision belongs to that, and is a continuation of it, and which street was all of pure gold, Re 21:21

and on either side of the river was there the tree of life; not that it stood either

in the midst of the street of the city, which being a pavement of gold, a tree could not well stand there; nor on both sides of the river, which is impossible, unless the tree of life is put for many trees of the same kind, as in Ezekiel's vision, to which the allusion is; and so some were on one side of the river, and some on the other, as there; see Eze 47:7 or unless it can be thought that such a solution of the difficulty is sufficient, that the root of it was on one side, and the branches grew over to the other; though the words may be better rendered, and the difficulty will be removed, and the sense be clear, "between the street of it", the city, "and the river, on this side, and on that side"; that is, the street on one side, and the river on the other, was the tree of life; compare with this Joh 19:18. So the Jews say {e}, that the tree of life is in the midst of paradise, and its body covers all the garden; and that there is in it five hundred thousand different tastes; and that there is no likeness and smell like it. By the tree of life is meant not the Gospel, nor godliness, nor eternal life, nor any other of the divine Persons, but Christ, who is the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal;
See Gill on "Re 2:7" and its situation between the street of the city, where the saints commune and converse together, and the river of God's everlasting love, which in this state will appear in its fulness and glory, shows that Christ will be seen and enjoyed by all in the most delightful and comfortable manner that can be wished for:

which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; not one sort of fruit one month, and another sort another month, and so on, but twelve sorts every month; which is expressive of the fruits and spiritual blessings of grace from Christ, enjoyed by saints in the present state, and of that variety of happiness and pleasures to be had in this glorious state, and of the continuance of them; they being always ever fresh and new, and will be always sufficient for the twelve tribes of the true Israel of God, and for all that have embraced the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; whose drink in this state will be the everlasting love of God, and whose food will be the fruit of the tree of life; both which they shall enjoy in great abundance:

and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations; not for the curing of diseases, or repairing of health; which in the present state of things is done by the application of the blood of Christ for the pardon of sin, which is a healing of diseases, and by the discoveries of the love of God; through the ministration of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, which might be thought to be signified by leaves; for there will be no disease either of body or mind in this state; besides, the nations that will walk in the light of this city will be saved perfectly and completely, Re 21:4 but these leaves will be for the preserving and continuing the health of the people of God in this state, as the tree of life in Eden's garden was for the preservation of the health and life of Adam, had he continued in a state of innocence; and it denotes that everything in Christ will contribute to the comfort, health, and happiness of the saints. The Jews interpret the passage in Eze 47:12 to which this refers, of future time, or the world to come {f}; and speak of various trees and herbs of great fragrancy and medicinal virtues, which grow quite round on the sides of a laver that stands in paradise {g}.

{e} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 1. fol. 7. 1. {f} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 19. 1. {g} Sepher Avodah Hakkodesh, fol. 46. 1.

Revelation 22:3

Ver. 3. And there shall be no more curse,.... As there was in Eden, from whence a river came, and where was a tree of life; for there the serpent cursed for his concern in man's transgression, and the earth on account of it; but in this new earth, and paradisiacal state, and on the inhabitants of it, will be no curse; here will be no sin, the cause of the curse, nor pain and sorrow, nor death, corporeal, spiritual, and eternal, or the wrath of God, the several effects of sin, and parts of the curse; the curse of the law cannot here take place; for, besides the righteousness of Christ, which all in the new Jerusalem will be clothed with, and so be blessed and secure from the curse, they will be perfectly pure and holy in nature, and constant and complete in their obedience and service; they will always do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven; no accursed person, or anyone devoted to ruin and destruction, will be here; not the old serpent, the devil, he will be shut up in the bottomless pit; nor the blasphemous beast and false prophet, they will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire before this time comes; no cursing, or accursed men will dwell here; not such who curse themselves, or the saints, or such who will be bid to depart as cursed, these will be destroyed in the general conflagration; nor will there be any anathema denounced against any person, for here wilt be no introducers of another Gospel, nor any that do not love the Lord Jesus Christ; nor will any be an anathema, or accursed from Christ, excommunicated from the church of Christ, for that will have no members deserving of that; none but what are pure and undefiled; see Zec 14:11

but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; God himself will be there, his tabernacle will be among men; the name of this city will be "Jehovah Shammah", the Lord is here; the pure and spotless Lamb of God, the Son of the Blessed, will be here, whose presence will make it an happy state; these will both have their throne, or seat, here; they will sit on one throne, being the one God over all, blessed for ever; this city will be the city of the great King, where his royal glory and majesty will be most illustriously displayed, and which will greatly make for the felicity of this state, and secure it from the curse:

and his servants shall serve him: either the angels, who are ministering spirits, and the servants of God and of the Lamb; or the ministers of the Gospel, the servants of the most high God; or rather all the true followers of Christ, who shall be where he is, and "serve him": both God and the Lamb, who are one in nature, though two distinct persons; wherefore serving them both is not serving two masters: and the service the saints will be employed in, in this state, will not be preaching the word, or attending on the ministry of it, or subjecting to ordinances, which will now be at an end, but celebrating the praises of God, adoring the perfections of his nature, ascribing the glory of every providence, and of all salvation to him, and magnifying the riches of his grace; and this they will perform in the most spiritual, fervent, and perfect manner, and that continually; see **Re 7:15**.

Revelation 22:4

Ver. 4. And they shall see his face,.... The face of God, so as he is not to be seen now; they shall see him as he is; not only the angels, who always behold the face of God, but all the saints, risen and changed, being pure in heart, and perfectly holy; they shall see him face to face, they shall have intimate and familiar communion with him; they shall enjoy his favour, and have the freest and largest discoveries of his love; and they shall see the face of the Lamb; they shall behold Christ and his glory both with the eyes of their understanding, and with the eyes of their bodies; and this is a very desirable sight, and will be very glorious and delightful; it will be fully satisfying, and will make the saints like unto him; it will be free from all darkness and any interruption, and will always continue.

And his name shall be in their foreheads; they shall be known to be his servants, as if his name was written and bore on their foreheads; it will be a clear case that they are the children and people of God; now they are, but it is not known, at least not so known as it will be in this state; and they will also in the fullest and freest manner own God to be their God, and the Lamb to be their Redeemer; they will be under no fear of man, nor be under any temptation to be ashamed of Christ, or of his service; see Re 14:1. Some think there is an allusion to the inscription on the mitre of the high priest's forehead, "holiness to the Lord", the saints being now openly, visibly, and perfectly holy.

Revelation 22:5

Ver. 5. And there shall be no night there,.... This is repeated from Re 21:25 to express the certainty of it, and to observe, that the happiness of this state will greatly lie in the light thereof; it will be one everlasting day, hmera aiwnov, "day of eternity", or eternal day, as in **2Pe 3:18**

and they need no candle, nor the light of the sun; neither artificial nor natural light; neither the dimmer light of the ceremonial law, under the legal dispensation, which was like a candle lighted up in Judea; nor the more clear light of the Gospel and its ordinances, under the present dispensation, which now will be at an end:

for the Lord God giveth them light; immediately from himself, without the use of means and ordinances; and in his light the saints will see all things clearly; who will be always communicating it to them, and will be their everlasting light; See Gill on "Re 21:23".

and they shall reign for ever and ever; they are made kings now, and in this state they shall reign with Christ for the space of a thousand years; and when they are ended, they shall not cease to reign; nor will Christ, when he delivers up the kingdom to the Father, for his and their kingdom is an everlasting one, **Re 1:6** and here ends the account of this glorious state of things; what follows is the conclusion of the whole book.

Revelation 22:6

Ver. 6. And he said unto me,.... That is, the angel that talked with him, and showed him the above things:

these sayings are faithful and true; not only what are delivered in particular concerning the new Jerusalem state, in which are many things new, and unheard of before, and which may seem strange, and even incredible, but all that are written in this book, Re 22:7 all which are "faithful"; to be believed by all that read them, and in the fulfilment of which the faithfulness of God is engaged and displayed: and they are true; for they come from the God of truth, that cannot lie, and are to be credited, and will have a certain accomplishment: this is said to secure the divine authority of this book against the gainsayers of it, whom the Holy Ghost foresaw would arise in the world; and which is here, and in the following part of this chapter, supported by the testimonies of Christ, of his angel, and of John his servant.

And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done; the "Lord" God is the Lord Jesus Christ, as appears by comparing this with **Re 1:1** and this is a very glaring proof of the deity of Christ, since he is not only called the Lord God, but the Lord God of the holy prophets; of the prophets of the Old Testament, who foretold things to come, and spake of the Messiah, his person, office, sufferings, death, and the glory that should follow; and of the prophets of the New Testament, who had a gift of explaining the prophecies of the Old, as well as some of them predicted future events; and both sorts were holy men, set part by God for this office, and had principles of holiness wrought in them, and were moved by the Holy Ghost; these Christ inspired, and qualified with gifts suitable to their work; and he is, as the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin version, and the Oriental versions read, "the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets"; see 1Co 14:32 who had power over their spirits, could come at them, and did impress them with a sense and knowledge of divine and future things, which none but God can do: the same sent an angel of his, one of his ministering spirits he has under his command, perhaps the same that here speaks, for so reads the Syriac version, "sent me his angel": to show to John, and by him to all the saints, and to all the servants and followers of the Lamb, things that were in a very little time to begin to come to pass, till all were fulfilled; and even those at the greatest distance were, and are to be fulfilled within a little time, with respect to God, with whom a thousand years are as one day, and in comparison of eternity, and even of the time which had elapsed from the beginning of the world; and these things were shown in the various visions of the seals, trumpets, vials, and others; see **Re 1:1**.

Revelation 22:7

Ver. 7. Behold, I come quickly,.... These are the words not of the angel, but of Christ, as is manifest from Re 22:12 and which are to be understood not of Christ's coming in his power to destroy Jerusalem, for this was past when John had these visions, and wrote this book; but of the second and personal coming of Christ to judgment, as is clear from Re 22:12 which though it will not be sooner than the time appointed, yet will be as soon as that time is come, and sooner than is generally expected by men. The Ethiopic version adds, "as a thief", as in Re 16:15 and because the second coming of Christ is an affair of the utmost moment, and will be attended with events of the greatest consequence and importance, in which the visions of this book issue, a "behold" is prefixed to it, as a note of attention and admiration:

blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book; this book is a prophecy of things to come, and therefore cannot refer to the times of Jerusalem's destruction, which some interpreters make it chiefly to concern, for then it would be a narrative of things past; the sayings of it are the things contained in it; to keep these sayings is to read them with observation, to take notice of the accomplishment of them, so far as it has taken place, to keep them in mind and memory, to meditate upon them, and through the grace of God to steer the life and conversation according to the instructions, directions, and cautions here given; and such are blessed in life, and will be in death; they will die in the Lord, share in the first resurrection, and enter through the gates into the city.

Revelation 22:8

Ver. 8. And I John saw these things, and heard them,.... He was both an eye and an ear witness; some things he saw, and others he heard; and to render his testimony the more authentic, he puts his name to it; and he being an apostle of Christ, and a man of great sincerity and probity, is to be believed.

And when I had heard and seen; the things related in this book, being amazed at them, and filled with joy on account of many of them, and firmly believing the whole as coming from God:

I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. This is the second time John did so, though warned of it, and rebuked for it, which shows the proneness even of good men to fall into sin again and again; and what a propensity there is in mankind to idolatry; and very likely this might be suffered, that a second reproof might be given, and repeated instructions be on record, to prevent the worshipping of angels, introduced in the first ages of Christianity.

Revelation 22:9

Ver. 9. Then saith he unto me,.... The angel at whose feet John fell down to worship:

see thou do it not; this he said in great haste, and with much vehemence, to hinder him from doing it, as his short way of speaking shows:

for I am thy fellow servant: of God, and of Christ, and am no more the object of worship than thyself; and both of us are, and ought to be, the worshippers of God, whose servants we are:

and of thy brethren the prophets; the apostles and ministers of the word; for prophesying and preaching are the same thing; these were the brethren of John in a spiritual sense, and by reason of their function:

and of them which keep the sayings of this book; see Re 22:7 and this is said to encourage the observation of them, and is the character of private Christians, and shows the great condescension of the angel to put himself, not only upon a level with John, and the ministers of the word, but with common believers:

worship God; and him only, and that in a spiritual manner, with reverence and godly fear, in faith, and according to his revealed will;
See Gill on "Re 19:10".

Revelation 22:10

Ver. 10. And he saith unto me,.... Not the angel, but Christ, as is manifest from Re 22:12. This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version.

Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; as the orders are, when things are intended not to be published, but concealed, at least as yet, because of the distance of the accomplishment of them, which was not the case here; see Re 10:4. Christ would have the things John saw and heard, written, and made public, sent in an open book, unsealed, to the churches, that they might be seen and read of all; that so the afflictions and persecutions of the people of God, both under Rome Pagan, and Rome Papal, might be known, and the saints not be offended at them when they came, but be prepared for them, to endure them patiently; and that they might be apprised of the errors and heresies that were to spring up, and of the appearance and wickedness of the man of sin, and his followers, and beware of them; and that they might have some assurance of the destruction of antichrist, and of the glorious state of the church, both in the spiritual and personal reign of Christ, and so be comforted in the midst of their tribulations, and rejoice in the faith and hope of these things. We may learn from hence, that the Scriptures in general are not to be locked up, and concealed from the common people, but lie open, and are to be read by all; and in particular, that this book is not so dark and obscure as it is thought to be:

for the time is at hand; when the things in this book shall begin to be fulfilled; see **Re 1:1**.

Revelation 22:11

Ver. 11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still,.... These words are not to be considered as ironical expressions, such as in Ec 11:9 much less as an allowance to do injustice and commit filthy actions; nor even as deterring persons from these things, by tacitly suggesting, that should they continue unjust and filthy, they would be severely punished; nor as an anticipation of an objection that might be made against the publication of this book, and the sayings of it, taken from the ill use that some men might make of it, who might be provoked to injure and persecute the saints more and more, or indulge a filthy conversation; but as a prophecy of what would be at the close of time, at the second coming of Christ. The imperative is put for the future, as is usual in the Hebrew language, in which it is said, let such and such things be, when the sense is, that they shall be; see **Eze 3:27**
Zec 11:9 and so the meaning of this expression is, he that is now found without a righteousness, and full of all unrighteousness, and acts unrighteously, will continue so; there will be no change made in him, no regeneration, renovation, repentance, or reformation; he will remain the same wicked man he ever was; or he that hurts, or does injury to his fellow creatures, will still do mischief; at least he will have the same inclination, though not the opportunity and power, but will attempt it, of which there will be an instance in the wicked dead, when raised; see Re 20:8.

And he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: or he shall be filthy still: all mankind are originally, naturally, and universally filthy, or defiled with sin. Some are cleansed from it by the blood of Christ, others are not; and these will continue polluted, nor will the fire of hell fetch out the filthiness of their hearts and nature: or the words may be rendered, "he that defileth, let him defile still"; though he will not be able to defile the temple of God, or corrupt the good communications of the saints, yet he will continue to defile himself; the same evil thoughts, &c. will proceed out of him as ever, which defile the man.

And he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; a truly righteous man is one that is righteous, not by his own righteousness, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; he is one, who by faith looks to Christ for righteousness, and receives it from him, and, in consequence of it, lives soberly, righteously, and godly, and such will continue righteous; not that they will be made more righteous, though they may have a clearer view of their justification, for the sentence of it will be afresh pronounced upon them; but the meaning is, they will ever remain in a justified state, and never enter into condemnation, their righteousness being an everlasting one. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, Syriac and Arabic versions, read, "and the righteous man, let him do righteousness still"; as he will do, for such will ever be before the throne of God, and serve him in his temple day and night, **Re 7:15**. And he that is holy, let him be holy still. They are holy who are sanctified by the Spirit of God, and none but such will be admitted into the pure state of things upon Christ's second coming; and such will then be perfectly holy, and without sin, and shall continue so: hence we may learn, that justification and sanctification are two distinct things, and that both are durable. With these sayings may be compared some expressions of the Jewish doctors {h}, as the sense of Le 11:43

"if a man defiles himself a little, they defile him much; the gloss on it is, they let, or suffer him to be more defiled; if below, they defile him above; if in this world, they defile him in the world to come; if a man sanctifies himself a little, they sanctify him much; if below, they sanctify him above; if in this world, they sanctify him in the world to come."

{h} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39. 1.

Revelation 22:12

Ver. 12. And, behold, I come quickly,..... This is repeated, to confirm the truth of Christ's second coming, and the speediness of it, and to point at the time when the above shall be, and to add what follows.

And my reward is with me: which words are taken out of Isa 40:10 and which being compared together, furnish out a clear proof of Christ being the true Jehovah, the eternal God. There is a reward of debt, or a due reward, a reward of punishment, which is the just recompense of reward, which, shall be righteously given to wicked men for their sin, **Heb 2:2** and there is a reward of grace, which is also called the recompence of reward, the reward of the inheritance, which is no other than the gift of eternal life, which God of his free grace bestows upon his people, Heb 11:26 and both these are with Christ; they are in his hands, he has authority from God, as Mediator, to inflict vengeance on the wicked, and to give eternal life to his people; both which he will do, for this is with him:

to give every man according as his work shall be; if his work is evil, and he is an unjust and filthy man, and the course of his conversation has been vicious, the reward of debt, or just punishment, will be rendered to him; but if his work is the fruit of grace, and he has had his conversation in the world by the grace of God, and he is a righteous person, justified by the righteousness of Christ, and a holy, good man, sanctified by the Spirit of God, the reward of grace, the crown of righteousness, will be given to him.

Revelation 22:13

Ver. 13. I am Alpha and Omega,.... See Gill on "Re 1:8". These characters are all put together here, which are before used in **Re 1:8** and are very pertinently mentioned in this place, when all promises and prophecies, relating to the glorious kingdom of Christ, were just finishing, and that itself was ready to appear, in which Christ alone should be exalted, the mystery of God would be completed, and time itself be no more. The Ethiopic version adds, "the beginning and end of days", or time. A testimony this, of the deity, eternity, infinity, and perfection of Christ.

Revelation 22:14

Ver. 14. Blessed are they that do his commandments,.... Either the commandments of God, Re 12:17 the precepts of the moral law, which are the whole duty of man; which are done either legally in order to obtain life, and then they must be perfectly done, which no man can do; hence none live, and are justified by the deeds of it, and consequently are not blessed, but cursed; or evangelically, when they are done in the strength of Christ, from love to God, in the exercise of faith upon him, with a view to his glory, and without dependence on them, acknowledging the imperfection of them, and looking unto Jesus for righteousness and life, in whom such find both, and so are blessed persons: or else the commandments of Jesus are intended, who is speaking in the context, Re 22:12 and is speaking of himself, and his, as the angel does in Re 22:6 Christ's commandments are his new commandment of love, and the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper; which are to be observed in the same evangelical manner as the commandments of God, and to be kept exactly as they are delivered, without any alteration, addition, or diminution; and they are to be attended to immediately, and without delay; and such as regard them in a right way and manner are blessed; they have much pleasure and delight in the observance of them; these commandments are not grievous, especially when they have the presence of Christ, the discoveries of his love, and are under the gracious influences of his Spirit: or it may be rather the commandments in this book are designed, for it may be rendered, "that do its commandments"; keep the sayings of this book, as in Re 22:7 such as relate to the worship of God, and forbid the worship of the beast, which caution against idolatry, and exhort to come out of Babylon, and direct to follow the Lamb, and charge not to add or take from anything written in this prophecy; and such persons as keep the words of it are pronounced blessed, **Re 1:3**. The Alexandrian copy reads, "that wash their garments"; and so the Ethiopic version, and also the Vulgate Latin, which adds, "in the blood of the Lamb", agreeably to **Re 7:13** and such whose persons and garments are washed in the blood of Christ are blessed indeed; they are justified by it, pardoned through it, and both they and their services are accepted on account of it. The instances of their happiness follow,

that they may have right to the tree of life; or "power over the tree of life"; that is, Christ, not of government over him, but of enjoyment of him; a liberty of eating of the fruit of this tree, having interest in it, and so a right to partake of it; which right, or liberty, is not obtained by obedience to the commands of God, or Christ, or of this book, for this is what is due to God, and obligatory on men; and which, when done, is but their duty, and can merit nothing; though a cheerful and evangelical obedience to the divine will makes such appear to have a right to such a privilege, as the disciples of Christ are not made so, but appear to be such by bringing forth fruit, Joh 15:8 but to have interest in Christ, the tree of life, and a right, power, and liberty to eat thereof, is a free grace gift, **Re 2:7** and happy are those who enjoy such a privilege! **Pr 3:18**.

And may enter in through the gates into the city: the Ethiopic version reads, "into this holy city": and which intends not entrance into a particular church of

Christ, the way into which is faith in Christ, and a profession of it, and submission to the ordinance of baptism; nor entrance into heaven, which, as a Gospel church, is often called a city, and into which none shall enter, but such who are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and are regenerated by his Spirit, the gates of it are Christ and his grace; but the holy city, the new Jerusalem, is meant, and entrance into that, which is so largely described in the preceding chapter, and particularly its gates; and they must be happy persons, indeed, who enter there; and their right to it is from, and lies in Christ, his blood, righteousness, and grace, under a sense of which they yield a ready obedience to his will, which makes their right to appear. Frequent mention is made of the gates of this city in the book of Zohar; and, says R. Isaac {i},

"when the soul yrevb onkl hkwz, "is fit" (or worthy, or has a right) "to enter through the gates of Jerusalem" that is above, Michael the great prince goes with it, who anticipates for it the peace of the ministering angels, wondering at him, and inquiring concerning it, saying, "who is this that comes out of the wilderness", &c. **So 3:6**."

{i} Medrash Haneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 77. 1.

Revelation 22:15

Ver. 15. For without are dogs,.... That is, without the holy city are such persons who are comparable to dogs for their filthiness, impudence, and voraciousness, as are persecutors, heretics, and apostates, **Mt 7:6**. Some think Sodomites are intended, as in De 23:18. So Abarbinel and others interpret the law; and who abound in the Roman jurisdiction, called therefore Sodom,
Re 11:8 and indeed all wicked men, who will be cast out into outer darkness, may be signified hereby. The Jews say {k},

"when a man dies, if he be worthy (or righteous) he descends in the likeness of a lion to receive "his" soul, but if not, in the likeness of "a dog", concerning which David says,
Ps 22:20."

And sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters; characters of the antichristian party, who will have no place in this city, or glorious kingdom of Christ; See Gill on "Re 21:8".

And whosoever loveth and maketh a lie; who loves both to invent and tell lies, and loves to hear them told by others; meaning more especially the doctrinal lies of antichrist, which are spoken in hypocrisy by him, and his followers are given up to believe.

{k} Raya Mchimna in Zohar in Numb. fol. 95. 2.

Revelation 22:16

Ver. 16. I Jesus have sent mine angel,.... As John, the writer of this book, sets down his own name, who was an eye and ear witness of the things contained in it, that they might be more surely believed,
Re 22:8 so Christ, the author of it, puts his name Jesus to it, to engage the greater attention to hear and read, and keep the words of it, as well as to make it plain and manifest, who is the person speaking of his coming, Re 22:7 and who that has any value for Jesus the Saviour, but will give credit, and pay a regard to this revelation of his, which he sent by his angel, one of his ministering spirits, made by him, and under his command, he being the Creator, Lord, and head of angels: this expresses the dignity of his person, and is no inconsiderable proof of his deity: and this was done, in order

to testify, to bear witness to the truth of the things contained in it; to signify and show them, to set them forth in emblems and visions:

unto you these things in the churches; to the servants of the Lord,
Re 22:6 to John, and by him to others, to the pastors of the seven churches, who were epi, "over" the churches, as it may be rendered, and to the members of the churches, to all that were in them; for the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read en, "in"; the Syriac version renders it, Mdq, "before the churches". What John saw he wrote in a book, and sent it to these churches, **Re 1:11**. The words may be rendered, "concerning the churches"; and then the sense is, that the angel was sent to show to John, and by him to others, even to all the saints in all ages, the things relating to the church of Christ, in the several periods of time, represented in succession by the seven churches of Asia. Christ gives a further account of himself, for the greater confirmation of the faith of his people, in the certain accomplishment of the things herein written, by saying,

I am the root and the offspring of David. The former of these is mentioned in the note, See Gill on "Re 5:5"; and the meaning of it is, either that Christ, as God, is David's Lord and head, from whom he had his being, both in a

temporal and spiritual sense, and by whom he was supported and sustained; or that, as man, he sprung from the root of David, or descended from him; and so it falls in with the latter, which may be explanative of it, "the offspring of David"; that is, the soft of David, according to the flesh, a frequent name of the Messiah;
See Gill on "Mt 1:1". God promised that the Messiah should be of the seed of David, and according to his promise he raised up unto Israel of his seed, a Saviour Jesus, the same person here speaking,
Ac 13:23 who adds,

and the bright and morning star; Christ is compared to a "star", as in Nu 24:17 for its light, the light of nature, and of grace, and of the new Jerusalem state being from him; and for its glory, his glory being the glory of the only begotten of the Father, and he having a glory, as Mediator, which his saints will ever behold, and be delighted with; and for its influence, all the blessings of grace, life, and righteousness, being from him; and to a "bright" star, because he is the brightness of his Father's glory, and so splendid, shining, and illustrious, that he is light itself, and in him is no darkness at all; and to a bright "morning" star, which shows the night is going off and the day is coming on, and is the phosphorus, or bringer of light; as Christ by his first coming, who was then the dayspring from on high, put an end to the night of Jewish darkness, and sprung the great Gospel day, so often spoken of by the prophets, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel, and showed the way to eternal life by himself; so by his second coming, to which this character refers, he will put an end to the night of antichristian darkness, Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan; so that there shall be no more night, and shall make an everlasting day, and bring such light into the holy city, that it shall need no candle, nor light of the sun or moon. The dawn of light at the Reformation was a presage of this, **Re 2:28** called there the morning star. With great propriety and pertinence are these titles here assumed by Christ, as "the root and offspring of David", or David's son, when he was about to sit on the throne of his father David, and possess his kingdom in the most visible and glorious manner; and "the bright and morning star", when he was going to usher in such light into the new Jerusalem, as would make all other light unnecessary. Aijeleth Shahar, in the title of Ps 22:1 which is a psalm that belongs to the Messiah, is, by some Jewish writers {l}, interpreted, rqwbh bkwk, "the morning star", the title of Christ here.

{l} Apud Kimchi in loc.

Revelation 22:17

Ver. 17. And the Spirit and the bride say, come,.... Hearing Christ say that he should come quickly, Re 22:7 the Spirit and the bride express an earnest wish, and a most affectionate desire after his coming: by "the Spirit" may be meant the Spirit of God in the hearts of his people, who not only convinces them of, and acquaints with the coming of Christ to judgment, and gives them reason to expect it, but fills their souls with the love of his appearance, so that they look and long for it, and hasten in the breathings of their souls after it: and this in like manner he may be said to wish for, and desire it in them, as he is said to cry "Abba", Father, in them, **Ga 4:6** and to make intercession for them, **Ro 8:26**. Hence, some interpreters, by the spirit, understand such as have the Spirit, and are spiritual men; either have spiritual gifts, the gift of prophecy, as John, who in
Re 22:20 expresses an ardent desire that Christ would come quickly; or regenerate men in common, who are born of the Spirit, and bear his name, **Joh 3:5** and so by an hendyadis, "the Spirit and the bride" signify one and the same; namely, the spiritual bride of Christ, who is sanctified by the Spirit of God; even all the elect of God, whom Christ loved from all eternity, and who are espoused to him as a chaste virgin; the new Jerusalem, who is as a bride adorned for her husband, and is the bride, the Lamb's wife: these wait for the bridegroom's coming, and most earnestly desire it, as there is good reason for them so to do, since his appearing in itself will be a glorious one, being in his own glory, and his Father's, and the holy angels; and seeing then will be the solemnization of the marriage day between Christ and his church; it will be the saints' redemption day; they will then possess full salvation in soul and body; complete grace will be given to them, and glory will be revealed in them, and they shall be for ever with the Lord.

And let him that heareth; what the Spirit and the bride say; or the words of this prophecy; or that has spiritual ears given him, and he hears so as to understand spiritual things, the kingdom of Christ, and the glories of it, let him join the Spirit and bride, and

say, come likewise; or express his wishes and desires in the same earnest and affectionate manner, that Christ would hasten his second coming:

and let him that is athirst come. These seem to be the words of Christ inviting such who thirst after him, his grace and righteousness, after more knowledge of him, and communion with him, to come unto him, by faith, and partake thereof, **Joh 7:37** or who thirst after his second coming, and the glories and delights of the new Jerusalem state, to come into it, and eat of the tree of life, and drink of the river of water of life in it; for the character seems to design such, to speak in the language of the Jews, who use like phrases with this, who hunger, Myyx Mym twtvl Myamuw, "and thirst to drink living water" {m}, as appears by what follows:

and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. The water of life designs the free favour and love of God, and the communications and displays of it in the new Jerusalem state, even the comfort, refreshment, and glories of that state: to "take" it is to enjoy it, to partake of it, being led unto it, and that being given to them by Christ the Lamb in the midst of the throne, **Re 7:17** and which is had "freely", without money, and without price, as in Isa 55:1 which seems to be referred to; for the happiness of this state, as well as eternal life, is the free gift of God through Christ; and the persons encouraged to partake of it are "whosoever will"; that is, whoever has a will to divine and spiritual things, wrought in him by God, for no man has such a will of himself, **Php 2:13** though this does not so much regard the character of the person that may take of the water of life, as the free manner in which he may take it: so the Jews are wont to express themselves, when they would signify the liberty that might be used, or the free way in which anything might be taken, particularly when speaking of the law, and the things of it, lwjyw aby lwjyl huwrx lk, "whosoever has a mind to take, let him come and take", as it is said, Isa 55:1 "ho, everyone that thirsteth", &c. {n} that is, he is free to take, he is welcome to it; which passage referred to, is thus paraphrased by the Targumist, "ho, ybud lk, "whosoever "will" learn, let him come and learn, &c.

{m} Raziel, fol. 31. 2. {n} Abot R. Nathan, c. 4l. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 79. 4. & 82. 4. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 54. 3. & 100. 2.

Revelation 22:18

Ver. 18. For I testify to every man,.... These are not the words of a scribe, who having wrote out a copy of this book, added the following adjuration to it, to deter persons from adding to it, or diminishing it; for the book is not yet finished, and both Christ and John speak after this; and to insert such a passage into the text would be a bold and daring action; nor are they even the words of John, the inspired writer of it, but of the Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, as appears from Re 22:16 who in a most solemn manner declares to every man, high or low, rich or poor, of whatsoever character, or however dignified, either in a civil or ecclesiastic way, that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book read or explained,

if any man shall add unto these things. To "add" to the things contained in this book, is not to deliver, or write an exposition of it, in a modest manner, with a sincere view to give light into it, agreeably to the analogy of faith; for to expound Scripture, or to preach from it, consistent with it, is not to add unto it, but to give the sense of it; but then may it be said to be added unto, and so this book, when it is wrested and perverted, and a false gloss is put upon it, as the Pharisees did upon the law; and when unwritten traditions are made to be equal to it, or above it, as the same persons made the traditions of the elders, whereby they transgressed the law, and made the word of God of none effect, and so broke through the precept given, **De 4:2** as do the Papists in like manner; and when men pretend to visions and revelations, and make them the rule of faith and practice, and to confirm things that are neither in this book, nor in any other part of the word of God; and when men interpolate it, and set up human fictitious writings upon equal authority with it; which shows the authenticity of this book, and of all the whole Scripture, and the perfection of it, whose canon is closed with it: the punishment of such a crime follows,

God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; the things threatened to the antichristian party, **Re 2:22** the seven last plagues in which the wrath of God is filled up, which will be inflicted on the same, Re 16:1, the lake of fire and brimstone, into which the beast, the false prophet, the devil, and all wicked men will be cast, Re 19:20 see Pr 30:5.

Revelation 22:19

Ver. 19. And if any man shall take away from the prophecy of this book,.... As he may be said to do, who denies the authority of this book, which has been done by some, and which the Holy Ghost foresaw; or takes it away from, or denies the reading of it to the people, as the Papists do with respect to the whole Scripture; and who wilfully pervert the sense of it, and will not have the things in it, relating to antichrist, to belong to him.

God shall take away his part out of the book of life; by which is meant eternal election, which is the meaning of the phrase throughout this book, in which whoever are written shall certainly be saved. The worshippers of the beast, or the antichristian party, who are chiefly regarded here, are not written in it, Re 13:8 wherefore taking away the part of such, is only taking away that which they seemed to have; see **Lu 8:18** and the sense is, that such shall be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death, and will be the portion of all that are not written in the book of life, Re 20:15. The Alexandrian copy, one of Stephens's, and the Complutensian edition, read, "the tree of life"; and so do the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; the sense is the same; see Joh 15:2 and out of the holy city; the new Jerusalem, before described, a part in which is a right to enter into it through the gates, and possess the glories of it: what is mentioned here is only a seeming one, which wicked men may flatter themselves with; and the meaning is, that such shall never enter into it, and enjoy the happiness of it, but shall ever be without, Re 21:27

and from the things which are written in this book; the blessings promised to the overcomers in **Re 2:7** which such as detract from this book shall have no share in. The Alexandrian copy, with some others, and the Syriac version, leave out the copulative "and", and read "which are written", &c. connecting them with the book of life, and holy city, which are written, and spoken of, in this book. The Ethiopic version connects the words with the holy city, only reading them, "which is written", &c. The Jews say of their Talmud, that nothing is to be added to it, or diminished from it {o}.

{o} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 34. 1.

Revelation 22:20

Ver. 20. He which testifieth these things,.... Not the angel, Re 22:16 nor John, who sometimes used this way of speaking, Joh 21:24 but Christ, as appears from what follows; for he

saith, surely I come quickly; who not only asserts the speediness of his coming, as in Re 22:7 but expresses the certainty of it, so that it ought not to be doubted of by any, especially by his own people; though it may seem to be deferred, and, upon that account, be derided by ungodly men; and Christ may have some respect, in this strong repetition of it, to the certainty of the punishment that will then be inflicted upon such who add to, or diminish from this book; for he himself will certainly come in person, and execute the vengeance threatened. John next puts his

Amen to it, signifying his assent unto it, declaring his faith in it, and expressing his earnest desire after it, and wish for it: and in words at length adds, even so come, Lord Jesus; quickly, speedily as thou hast said, and in all thy glory; set up thy kingdom, let that come, introduce thy people into it, and destroy thine enemies; this he said as one that loved the appearance of Christ, longed for it, hastened to it, and was impatient at the delay of it.

Revelation 22:21

Ver. 21. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. That is, let a sense of the love of Christ, shown in all his regards to his church and people, which is always the same in itself, though the saints have not always the same perception of it, abide upon you: may you see your interest in the redeeming grace of Christ, in all its branches, and in his justifying, pardoning, sanctifying, and persevering grace; let the fulness of grace in Christ be the object of your trust and confidence; may you have a supply from it to enable you to overcome every temptation, to exercise every grace, and discharge every duty. This shows this book was written in the form of an epistle, and sent to the seven churches of Asia, **Re 1:11** and through them to the churches in all ages. It begins with a salutation of them, **Re 1:4** and ends with one commonly used by the Apostle Paul in all his epistles, **2Th 3:17**. The Arabic version, instead of "you", reads "us"; and the Complutensian edition and the Syriac version read, "with all the saints".

END OF THE NEW TESTAMENT